

Dias Ex Machina Presents

AMETHYST

Apotheosis

Chris Dias





Amethyst



APOTHEOSIS



CREDITS

Creator & Head Writer

Chris Tavares Dias

Contributors

Christopher Stilson, Conan Veitch

Cover Design & Layout

Joshua Raynack

Cover Illustration

Nick Greenwood

Cartography

Jeremy Simmons

Editor

Christopher Stilson

Interior Illustrations

Nick Greenwood, Jamie Jones

Logo Designs

Nick Greenwood

Military Advisor

Geoffrey Lamb

Playtesters

Aaron Hamilton, Aaron Hengst, Ahmed Alex Nasla, Alex Hofer, Alex Tendy, Andrew Cermak, Andrew Howes, Andrew Impellezari, Andrew Young, Angela Berry, Bill Yon, Brad Scoble, Brandon Allen, Brian Barngrover, Cameron Lauder, Charla Anderson, Charles Mitchell, Chris Baker, Chris Brown, Chris Brown, Chris Clouser, Chris Dias, Chris Oveson, Chris Tyler, Chris Young, Christopher Baker, Christopher Hunt, Christopher Stilson, Chuck McGinnis, Clarence Sterling, Daryl Anderson, Dave Lee, Dave Painter, David Baker, David Guyll, David Henderson, David Hoyer, Denny Glau, Derek

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CHRIS TAVARES DIAS

The literary equivalent of that crusty burnt cheese at the bottom of the fondue pot. Creator of Amethyst, NeuroSpasta, and Ultramodern4. Some people claim he looks like Mathew Perry. He would like that to be true. It's not. In July of 2008, Chris was last seen staring at a dead raven that had fallen beside his car. Two months later, his watch and notepad were found in the stomach of a basking shark that washed ashore off the coast of Florida.



CHRISTOPHER PEREGRIN STILSON

Editor, obnoxious pedant, retired evil overlord, and contributor of unsolicited ideas backed up by the threat of saber-like teeth. Could fly as fast as a supersonic jet if it weren't so much of a bother; tends to hoard unfinished manuscript copy for the same reason. Easily bribed with chocolate and kittens. Many thanks to all those who've been trampled underfoot up to this point.

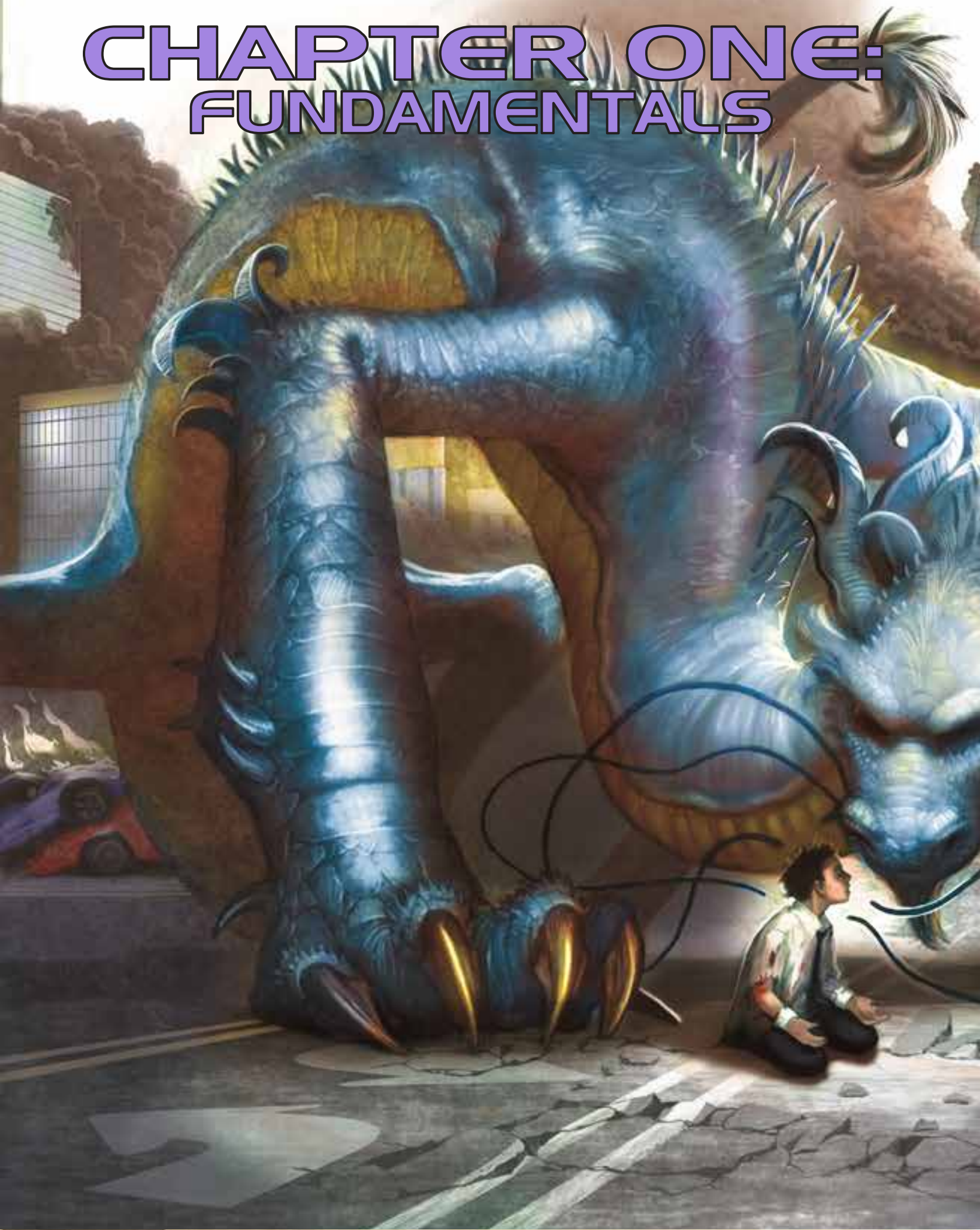
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CHAPTER ONE: FUNDAMENTALS





When Aiden Camus was twelve, his watch stopped. He sat frozen on a field of broken glass, eyes fixed on the sky. Screams filled his ears coming from the wounded, the dazed onlookers at the edge of the devastation, and from the fallen boy beside him.

He was older than Aiden by several years, with mottled chin stubble and crewcut hair. His eyes were shut as he wailed. He reached for Aiden, still locked out of time as the events of the past minute began to sink in.

Blood dripped from deep slices across Aiden's palms as he held up his weight. Pain started to jostle his attention. His eyes fell back to the destruction surrounding him. The overturned cars, the shattered windows, the buckled pavement, the memories that would never fade.

On its surface, his watch looked undamaged. It hadn't broken when he fell. The battery hadn't died. It had a miniature electric motor powered by the motion of his arm, intended to keep perfect time forever.

Both children lay crumpled in the middle of the street, flanked by splintered wood and twisted steel. A fountain sprayed from a broken hydrant at the intersection corner a few yards away, trickling water over Aiden's matted brown hair.

He noticed survivors at the periphery desperately attempting to rally support. The vehicles on the fringe had stalled, blocking traffic into the scene. Traffic lights had gone dark. Cellular phones refused to turn on. Scores of people were still fleeing from what they saw, or rather what they refused to believe they saw.

Aiden remained still, even when the surrounding yells blended into sirens or when the aircraft began swarming above. He felt emergency workers attempting to rouse him from his daze. He repeated the last few moments over in his mind, trying to find some rationale for what had happened and why. It wasn't that it shouldn't have happened, rather that it couldn't have.

His watch's balance wheel which charged the battery had seized. The ratchet and rotor locked the hands three seconds into the third minute past ten o'clock.

It was a Sunday.

Aiden's life until then had been filled with concessions—moments of happiness he accepted only because his dreams could never be fulfilled. He preferred aspirations over practical goals. Aiden, like all children, desired the impossible, until reality forced its way in.

The recovery would be orderly. The damage would soon be repaired. The dead would be mourned. The events of the last few minutes would be reported and then forgotten. Everything would fall back into place.

Except Aiden and his stopped watch.

...

It wasn't his birthday. Aiden could tell it was a book. He knew to be careful in unthreading the burlap knot and tearing the hemp paper away. He rolled his fingers across the swells and dimples of the embossed cover, then rattled his nails across the uneven pages, thick with coarse edges. Aiden was impressed. It looked recently unearthed from an ancient tomb, brushed of errant dust, and dropped into a shopping bag. The pearl-shaded dragon on the cover had perfectly enmeshed scales, making its skin a uniform matted silver. Only the spine showed the title.

The Codex Dracontis.

"Where do you find these?" Aiden asked his mother.

Aiden had passed that age when parents read to their kids. He missed that. From her, every word was impeccably pronounced, never a slur or stumbled phrase. Through his mother's lips, those stories had

carried the weight of gospel.

"Is it good?" his mother asked.

Aiden kept his eyes on the book. "Best one yet."

The window was open. Between them and Martin's empty bed sat his own collection of books, modern stories and science fiction. Aiden liked the ones with frayed edges, bent spines, and old words.

"This old, must be magic," she teased. "Looked like no one had touched it in a century."

"How much did this cost?" He turned to her.

"Twelve year olds are never supposed to ask how much something is."

"Mom?" he pushed.

She patted his lap. "Come on, read me one."

Aiden swung the wooden cover open; it groaned like a satisfied lion. The first cockled leaf repeated the book's title flamboyantly, like it was hand written on the page. Aiden rolled it over carefully. He flipped several more until reaching the first illustration.

The dragon was sketched in graphite and accented with thick strokes of India ink. The image's title was fitting for such a beast, *The Death Dragon, Zmey Gorynych*. They held the book between them.

"Zmey was a sickly creature," Aiden started. "Muscles stretched tightly around his bones. He appeared too feeble to flap his pitted wings, let alone fly. This dragon needed magic to take to the air. He belched soot and flame and blackened the ground when he landed. Where death lurked in abundance, one would find him. He required the long deceased to feed upon."

"Well that's...appropriate," his mother muttered. Aiden had weathered far worse stories.

"It's a story, Mom," Aiden replied.

"Sorry, go on."

Aiden scanned his finger to find his spot. "He belched soot—"

"You read that part."

Aiden smirked. "It was worth mentioning twice." He returned to the story. "But he was no match for Willum Raenis. Willum was a farmer's child. Neither a favored son nor a fond sibling, he dreamt himself as a knight of legend. But the only thing bigger than his dream was his appetite. He couldn't run. He couldn't he lift great weights. In school, brothers above and below excelled where Willum faltered. He desperately wanted to be special. Without stature or charisma, there was no way for Willum to win the heart of one to suit his wishes. He looked no higher than the nice—"

"Niece—" his mother interjected.

"Niece of the elven lord, Elisa Stormbringer, a petite flower of golden petals. She was..." Aiden fell silent as his finger continued to run down the page.

"What are you doing?" his mother asked.

"Skipping."

He flipped a page. And then another. His finger skimmed through the paragraphs.

He resumed, "Zmey's shadow was peppered with breaks of sunlight—"

"Wait, wait. Why did you—" his mother started.

"Girl stuff," Aiden answered.

"I think I'd disagree with that—"

"Can I continue?" Aiden interjected with a smirk. His mother shrugged and pointed back to the book. "Zmey's shadow was peppered with breaks of sunlight, piercing through the cracks and holes in his leathery wings. He swooped down and sliced open Willum's brothers as they tended the crops. Willum knew the legend of the dragon of death as well as its appetite. It had already turned its sights to the nearby castle. Willum offered no deal to the kingdom."

"You know the rest of the story would probably make more sense if you knew what the elf princess was like—" his mother said.

"Nope," Aiden interrupted. Cut to the dragon. He flipped a page. "Willum's father, a once proud servant of the realm, owned a blade of refined steel and nobility. Willum took his father's blade and wielding no skill, cut down his farm's livestock. The meat rotted until the aroma was irresistible to the mighty creature—"

"It takes days for food to spoil," said his mother.

"Wouldn't the dragon have killed them all?" Aiden gave her a frustrated look. She chuckled, shook her head, and beckoned him back to the book.

"The beast turned from its pillaging to enjoy the impressive feast placed before it by an obvious admirer," Aiden continued.

"Little did Zmey know that in the stomach of every corpse, Willum had sewn in fresh food. Berries, plums, turnips, even a bushel of green bananas. This meal didn't sit well. Zmey tried desperately to spit up its meal, but the food sat. It gripped the beast in unbearable pain. When the creature breathed its last, all Willum had to do was pull on the withered carcass to tear the head from its body. Willum then carried his trophy to the castle."

Aiden closed the book. He looked to his mother.

"Awesome," he admired, then rolled more pages by. "Dozens more."

"Yes, but enough for now," said his mother. She closed the book and placed it among his collection.

"I missed it when you read to me...but I know I'm too old."

"Doing quite fine on your own," she replied.

"But they sounded real coming from you."

"Well, stories don't need a voice to be any more real."

She patted his lap. "They don't even need a reader."

He slumped into the bed and rolled on his side. She kissed his cheek. His eyes were closed, but he wasn't close to being tired. His mother exited quietly.

As she slinked to her bedroom, she noticed the stern look Martin was giving her from the end of the hall. Four years older than his brother, with pruned hair and optimistic goatee, he already resembled their late father. He inherited the same stare mixing bewilderment with annoyance. She paused to offer a forehead kiss and made for her room. He didn't respond and waited for the door to close before returning to the computer and his blog that no one read.

Aiden opened his eyes moments later and stared through the open drapes to the night sky where a thin film of orange pollution garnished the skyline. The view, half way up a strata juggernaut of a thousand apartments, the city appeared to spread to the vanishing point. Aiden

couldn't see the city wall.

Bright lights and a narcissistic waning moon blotted out the stars, except for one brilliant white spark hanging off the edge of a lunar sea.

Aiden stretched out his arm to the shelf and dug his nails into the headband of the codex. He held it precariously by the edge of its spine and carried it back to the bed. The glow bleeding from the window precluded the need of a nightlight.

Aiden flipped to the first story, past the sketch of Zmey, past the introductions, to the part about the elf.

Elisa and Willum married. The magic of an elvish bond gave him centuries of youth. And she bore him sons for a new kingdom they would create.

Aiden turned another page, before the start of the next story, to a pencil sketch of the fictional couple. Willum on his knee, the tall elf princess smiling upon him. Aiden angled the book under the window light to illuminate the girl. Unlike the rough interpretation of the dragon, lacking features from a deficient imagination, the elf showed detail like she had posed for the artist. Flawless skin, a pointed nose, almond eyes, and a delicate figure. The sharp ears were subtle, barely nudging through straight uncolored hair.

Aiden just remained there a moment, hoping for that impossible chance when her eyes might meet his.

* * *

A close second to Aiden's obsession with books was his affection for video games. Martin's favorites had guns, robots, and tanks vaporizing whatever monsters moved before the reticule. Aiden favored sword-wielding and spellcraft, but those were growing difficult to find. His mother located a free download from an obscure website.

"Hey! Homework!" Martin barked as he approached behind Aiden.

"Done," Aiden replied, attention fused to the screen. His warrior dodged and flipped in burdened armor, cleaving with a blade that never wore down. The hero's meal was some generic ration devoured in a single swallow and supplying energy for another twelve hours of continuous movement. Wounds sustained vanished with a moon's pass.

"Where?"

"In the kitchen," Aiden replied with a nudge.

"I have to get on there, by the way." Martin poked him.

"Mom said I had until 5:00."

Martin stepped closer, offering a distracting shadow on the screen. "How many hours you into it?"

"Last save was sixty five."

Martin coughed a laugh. "Why don't you go out?"

Aiden's retort was worth him breaking his focus from the monitor, "This is more interesting." Aiden returned to his game.

"You're going to have to do something with your life eventually, you know."

"Honor roll. How are your grades?"

Aiden's hero's clothes were always comfortable, the romance always willing. The woman the champion had

won was a meagerly decent falsehood with long lines of exposed skin and the brassiere of a medieval dominatrix. She never complained of the cold and fell at the hero's feet when the programmer deemed it appropriate. Death was as quickly resolved as one's finger moved to the hot-key. Castles were a minute's walk apart. Money was easily acquired from the bellies of wandering beasts.

Before leaving, Martin reached a foot across to the machine's power supply and turned it off.

"Marty!" Aiden screamed. Martin laughed as he was chased from the room. Aiden had only lost a few minutes progress. The hero and his world, secured within the last save file, waited patiently for his player's return. The sprite never complained to its god about the lack of refrigerators, central heating, or proper medicine.

* * *

Aiden's eyes followed the passing lights of the tunnel in the Underground Transit Rail. While the train wasn't moving, a flush flat panel television on the outside of the train played through various ten-second commercials, most involving the necessity to improve one's appearance with cosmetics or the latest synthetic drug made to placate the anxieties of modern life.


The transit system was meticulously controlled, with stringent fines against litter and vandalism to keep it and the city above clean. Walls were unspoiled by graffiti, the floor was practically hygienic, and the air was conditioned. Aiden's mother sat beside him, holding his books under her arm. Aiden saw a portable electronic game in the hands of a boy half his age on an opposite seat. The boy's father ignored him as he held onto the railing.

Aiden leaned forward to see the inside of the train bending through the tunnels at speeds he couldn't comprehend. He imagined the transit rail was a giant serpent, gnawing its way through the rock. Aiden embraced the creature's course mane, or perhaps boney frill, and commanded the monster to burst from the shell of the Earth. It lifted the child on its head, taller than the tallest tower in the city. Maybe it dangled little legs behind so it could shuffle about the ground. He would trick the beast to dig too deep or breach a barricade to the canal and drown. Then Aiden could follow the tunnel to the monster's lair and rescue his own princess.

* * *

Mother and son scaled the crowded stairs and exited the UTR station into downtown. Pine trees genetically altered to survive in the shadow-plagued skyscraper forest flanked the sidewalk. The cars whizzing by them hummed like single-note violins. The sun was bifurcated by the dagger-tip of a corporate monolith looming several blocks down. The ivory tower, covered in a checkerboard of white tinted windows and photovoltaic panels, paved a shadow ahead of them.

Aiden asked for bubble-gum at a passing vendor. His mother relented but told him to choose quickly. Between cherry, apple, watermelon, long-lasting, sugar-free, and extrachewy, there were a hundred varieties. Eventually,



his mother stepped in and snagged a cinnamon and paid with a bank card. He didn't want cinnamon but didn't object.

They walked leisurely down the walkway. Occasionally, the cloudless sky would be invaded by a passing aircraft—helicopters mostly—hopping between the peaks.

An elderly man with clean skin and weathered eyes stood at the summit of the ashen citadel, breath slow and calm. He was topped with unkempt white hair which blew madly around his face. The people below looked only as a mélange of reds, oranges, and blues.

The noises below resonated up the spine of the building. The stranger smiled as he leaned forward. Workers, prioritizing their own safety, crawled upon the ridge, screaming for sanity. The stranger spread his arms wide and drifted over the edge. Swollen white garbage bags flopped firmly in his grip. They were stuffed but nearly weightless in the wind. The workers failed to catch him.

From the altitude, his descent resembled a crawl. The wind didn't slam him into the tower or drift him away from its shadow. He fell straight, the rushing torrent rupturing the bags in his hands. Thousands of wisps of paper fluttered away like feathers from a dying bird.

At ground level, iron-gilded stone supports lent themselves to some dictator's dystopia. Two storey glass shutters opened quickly and effortlessly for customers. The crowds shuffling about the entrance didn't notice the body until the stranger disintegrated through an empty bus. Screams followed, and people gathered quickly.

Aiden's mother noticed the swarming onlookers before her son did. She could see the crushed vehicle and stopped a block away. Aiden was an inch too short to catch the commotion.

His mother guided him down another street. "Honey, let's...let's walk around that."

"What's going on?" he asked.

"Let's just avoid it."

Aiden spotted the falling shreds of paper.

"Mom, look!" he shouted, waving his hands to swat the tatters around. One wrapped around his finger. "Like snow..." He noticed hand writing. "It's raining words."

"What's it say?" He showed it to her. She read it, and then grimaced. She pulled him down the side street. "Let's go, we'll be late."

Aiden stroked the paper in his hand as he read it again. Our dreams are a prison.

* * *

Aiden's school was separated from neighboring skyscrapers by an alienation of white walls, heavy iron gates with brass balls atop the posts, and a stretch of genetically engineered, perfectly permanent emerald grass. Aiden's mother fixed his clip-on tie under his brown sweater. "I know it's a Friday but no walking home this time," she said. "Wait for Marty."

"Gotcha."

"You didn't lose the essay did you?"

"No. There's not going to be a test on it, you think?"

"Test? What do you think this is, school?" She smiled; he smiled. "Here." She reached into her pocket. "I got something for you." She pulled out a necklace, a delicate silver chain. Hanging from it was a coin bearing an embossed image of an elderly man wielding a staff in one hand and an infant in the other. The letters that ringed the coin were in an old tongue that few people in the city could read. She dropped it around his neck. "It's a charm. He protects children. Especially brave ones."

Aiden lifted it to his eye and could tell it was old. "Is it magic?"

She tucked it in his shirt. "It's a flashlight to remind God where you're standing."

"He can see us all the time?"

"Every second, every step. Where you've been and where you're going."

"How can he know that?"

"He knows everything."

"But he can't control everything."

"No...You're right." She pointed at Aiden's chest. "He can't control you."

"Then how can he know where I'm going?"

She thought about it. "Because he knows you so well,

he knows where you'll go, what you'll do and what you'll see. We all have a place."

Aiden looked at the pendant again and whispered, "But what if I want to do something else?"

"All right, enough of that." She eased him past the gate.

"Off with you and for everything you learn, teach something."

* * *

"Camus-kun," interrupted the teacher.

Aiden snapped his attention back from the window, the scrap piece of paper still rolling around his fingers. His thoughts had been on the bedtime story, about the parts he skipped. What was she like? Did she read books or play sports? Would she finish Willum's sentences and laugh at his jokes?

"Yes...sorry, Leach-sensei," Aiden answered.

It was a class for advanced students, and Aiden was the youngest by a year. Unlike Willum Raenis, Aiden Camus was exceptional. "You know, you might actually find this subject interesting."

"I was following," Aiden lied.

"Eyes on me then, please." Leach shifted across the front of the small class waving a thousand page opus in his hand. The blank digital tablet hanging behind him had the color of a chalk blackboard. "What defines a civilization?" He let the moment linger, the students wondering if it was rhetorical. "It could be said that the author believes it's based entirely on its builders and thinkers, and not the kings and presidents at the top or the consumers and peasants at the bottom. You take them away, civilization collapses. A society is worthless if it doesn't develop...both socially and technologically. So what causes a civilization to stop growing?"

As in every class, the students looked to each other and waited for one of them to break the silence. "War," Lara popped up.

"War. I don't think so," Leach corrected. "Actually war, and the prospect of it, encourages change. War gave us nuclear power. The potential of war gave us computers, rockets, the internet."

"Segregation," spoke up William, another student, the oldest and largest. Leach nudged for clarification. "The separation of upper and lower class," he continued.

"Peasants farm, soldiers fight, nobles rule...and sometimes think."

Leach nodded. "That can cause a civilization to slow down."

A fourteen year old girl across from Aiden asked "Religion?" Leach waited for her to continue. "Burned libraries," she continued, "executed or imprisoned anyone questioning the church."

"Absolutely. We've had famous libraries burned, technological breakthroughs suppressed as being too dangerous... all from religion. They may claim to encourage scientific progress but they've always been its rival." Leach made his way back across to Aiden's side. "A great author once said that if suppressed breakthroughs and progressive ideas had been embraced by their societies, we'd be living in an era 3,000 years advanced from where we are

now. Civilization has to expand. It can't help it. We teach our children, and they learn and better our achievements. Something like religion can slow progress but can't stop it. For one, the world is big. You halt the progress of a civilization on this part of the planet; it won't stop another civilization on the other side.

"Take pasta. It wasn't Marco Polo that cultivated it across the world. Pasta just appeared naturally around the same time across the globe. It's necessity that forces us to build and expand." Leach brought up the novel again. "This is why the book has that flaw. If you take away the builders, new builders will emerge from the rabble. You remove a ruler, someone else will step forward." Aiden was listening now, but his thoughts were to the books he had been reading, of ancient mythologies and empires that marked their progress by millennia.

"You can impose religion," Leach continued, "suppress dangerous knowledge, but you can't stop progress. Eventually, people will start building."

"Magic?" Aiden offered. The class turned to him. An awkward pause followed, broken by the larger William.

"Magic?!" William mocked.

"What do you mean?" Leach asked calmly.

Aiden cleared his throat, keeping his eyes on the teacher rather than the class. "If you can create anything you want out of thin air, you wouldn't need to build it."

"That's stupid--" William barked

"No," Leach interrupted, "that's actually a good point. In a fantasy world, thousands of years pass without even the hint of technology, beyond carts and swords. But that can never happen."

"Why?" Aiden asked.

William butted in, "Because magic isn't real!"

Leach flicked William's ear as he answered. "Because like I said, necessity forces us to build. That's why it's a fantasy." Leach worked his way towards his youngest savant. "I read one of those when I was your age. George-something. There was magic but it was uncommon. Kingdoms lasted centuries without ever changing. You can include a caste system, religion, ironclad traditions, some ancient law against the use of machines, but eventually, technology will develop. Fantasy novels don't need to explain why. It's fantasy. It doesn't have to make sense. The moment you apply logic to a fantasy novel, it falls apart. Their worlds are too small, timelines are too long. Monsters are too many and there's usually a frighteningly insufficient lower class. And if that world has magic, there'd be chaos. If any child could be raised to wield a wand, you'd have anarchy. But even considering that, those without magic would still build. In our history, there were empires which lasted beyond a thousand years, but even those had moments of social and technological innovation." Leach was imposing but lowered his voice to not impose. "You simply cannot suppress the desire for humans to grow. I'll also say that I would loathe any civilization that existed for thousands of years and not be able to figure how to make a machine that washes my dishes."

The class laughed, and Leach returned to head of the room.

Aiden could still see a few eyes on him from the older students. From Lara, smiling at him. From William, an-

noyed at the time wasted.

As the class ended, Aiden filed out last, avoiding William's hex-vision stare. As he passed the teacher's desk, Leach called out, "Aiden?"

"Yes, sensei?" Aiden answered, noticing the teacher beckoning him back. After the last student departed, Aiden stepped back to the desk. "Was I out of line?"

"Nothing of the sort," Leach answered. "But perhaps it's best you keep such talk about magic private?"

Aiden furrowed his brow. "Why?" he asked.

Leach prepared a detailed answer, but then paused and answered simply with, "It's just best...for now." Aiden still didn't comprehend the issue. Leach leaned forward and spoke, "The people around you, parents, teachers, engineers, they need the world around them to work...in a specific way. They lay down rules and permit only a narrow field of thought. Nationality, technology, theology, they can't allow something rejecting those tenets."

"I don't understand," Aiden replied.

"Do you believe in Santa Claus?" Leach said suddenly.

Aiden shot glances about the room as he answered. "Of course not."

"Why?"

"Because he's not real."

"And what if he knocked on your door and said 'Hello?'"

Aiden's answer came quickly. "I'd ask for a bike."

Leach chuckled, covering his mouth to prevent a louder reaction. "And that's the difference between you and the rest of the world," he answered. "They would point and say, 'you're not real'. They can't allow something to break from what they know. They need order; they need a reflection of their beliefs." Leach pointed to the fantasy novel nestled under Aiden's arm. It was an old edition, and one of the last printed. Aiden glanced down at it. "And not to be reminded of what can't exist."

"That's odd," Aiden answered, still honestly confused. He knew there was something not being said. "I still don't understand the big deal."

Leach smiled and patted the desk in front of Aiden. "You'll have to ask your mother that one day," he said.

* * *

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William expressed his dissatisfaction with Aiden after school, only feet away from the exit. "Don't waste the class's time, Aiden!" he snapped. He loomed inches over

Aiden's face, ensuring a moderate amount of spittle landed in the boy's eye.

Aiden wiped his face and leaned back. "Okay," he answered calmly.

"You don't belong in that class. You're too young anyway. And why you reading this?" He snatched the novel under Aiden's arm and gave it a glance.

"Pratchett!" he snapped. Aiden jumped up to the taller student, flimsily pawing at the distant book over his reach.

"Magic isn't real!"

"Give it back," Aiden shouted, slapping around William's limbs. William pushed Aiden to the pavement with his free hand. The Pratchett novel fell to the fallen boy's lap as a pair of larger arms wrapped around William's col-

lar and lifted him off his feet. Martin had three inches, twenty pounds, and two years on the bully.

"Bill!" Martin barked. "You're smart. Smarter than me. So, I'm going to start hitting you until you talk me out it. Good?!"

William wrestled free and made his escape. He grabbed his bag and ran for the gates. Aiden retrieved his book and accepted Martin's offer of a hand.

"Okay?" Martin asked.

"Thanks," Aiden muttered.

"What d'you say to piss him off?"

"I didn't say anything!" Aiden snapped

"Let's just go." Martin pushed Aiden ahead of him. Aiden checked his book for damage. A corner had frayed and a new rip had appeared on the casewrap.

"So that's why?" Martin said.

"What?" Aiden replied.

"Aiden, I don't care for those books Mom gets you, and a lot of people would agree. And if I wasn't your brother, I might act the same, so keep that stuff guarded. Don't tell anyone you read them, and don't show it off."

"What's the big deal?" Aiden replied. "Sensei said the same thing. How are mine any different than yours?"

Martin stopped and spun around to face his brother. Aiden instinctively dropped the book to his side in case Martin tried to reach for it. "Because mine deal with what can happen," Martin snapped, "They're about science, progress. Fantasies are not about that; they're about what can't happen. They're about dreams and myths."

"But...we go to church," Aiden muttered. Martin resumed his walk.

"Yeah, well, let's not go there," Martin grumbled. Aiden kept still, glancing at his book. He gently nuzzled it back into his pack and raced to catch up to his brother.

"I liked what you said to William, by the way," Aiden said.

"I've wanted to say that to him for like a year."

* * *

Their mother was not one for the kitchen. Dinner was prepackaged imitation parmesan cheese and powdered milk mixed with stabilizers and corn starch. It was layered over a bed of rock-hard tortellini softened after five minutes in the microwave. Aiden moved his eyes across the open book beside his plate as his mother followed the rhythms of an artificial cook.

The book was grey with green letters and gilded pages. Aiden read about the lives of pale skinned, subterranean fae called the tenenbri that lived in underground lairs and had vestigial cataract-covered eyes. Oversized pointed ears gave them the senses of a bat. They were an arrogant sort, clashing often the dwarvish people called the narros that shared some of the tenenbri's religious beliefs.

The book was advanced. Aiden had to look up some of the words. He didn't care. Octagon-shaped glasses edged precariously off his nose.

After the meal, his mother began to fill the dishwasher. Aiden remained at the table and stared at the cover of his novel. "Mom?" he asked.

"Yes."

Aiden ran his fingers around the crevices and grooves in the book. "...Someone died today, didn't they?"

She stopped loading and turned to him. "Yes." She never lied. "Yes, someone died."

"Why'd he do it?"

She placed a mug down and orbited around to sit beside him. He didn't look at her. "I don't know, honey. Some people have a pain that no medicine or words can cure. To them, death is the solution; but they don't realize how selfish and narrow-minded that solution is."

"But what he wrote. It was like he was trapped. Are we trapped?"

She smiled, patted his shoulder, and returned to her dishes. "You're only trapped if you can't find the door."

She cleared out half the machine when Aiden closed the book and made for the living room, dominated by its 47" liquid crystal flat-screen television. Aiden stopped and voiced another question. "Mom, is Santa Claus real?"

She stood up quickly, bewildered. "That's a strange..." she answered, "No."

"Just checking," Aiden said as he left.

* * *

A Sunday morning meant Sunday service. Aiden refused to set his alarm. Face crammed into his pillow, he rolled his head as his mother parted the blinds. The window was open and the sirens and screams of morning traffic were already polluting the city. The orange sun was poking between several distant buildings. Aiden could see the peaks of the tallest towers parting clouds. Solar cells twisted like blossoms. On the horizon, a forest of smokestacks belched pollution to be carried by the wind out to the ocean. A helicopter caused a mild distraction as it passed by Aiden's window.

Before Aiden had swallowed his morning yawn or flicked the crust from his eyes, his mother laid out the good clothes.

By the time his mother had returned, Aiden was still undressed, listening to the news broadcast from the screen in his bedroom. "Find out which food supplement is deadly, after the next break--" Aiden changed the channel. "Guilty is the verdict today in the murder of pop sensation--" Click.

"Get dressed, come on," his mother said.

"Just trying to find a channel while I change," Aiden pleaded.

"There's nothing good on. All this news." She left and called out from the hall, "You've got five minutes." Another channel showed green grass and tall trees put to old music.

"Aiden!" Martin shouted, already dressed with his head poking through the doorway, "let's go!"

* * *

Aiden, Martin, and their mother took the UTR to church. On the train, Martin sat on the left of his mother, Aiden on the right. Martin watched a rerun on a portable flat-panel screen.

Aiden watched the train. Their mother's left hand held

a purse; her right played with Aiden's hair.

The church of the Sacred Mary was a five-storey wooden A-frame as old as the city. No ration was given to parking and every curb was filled with a variety of electric vehicles.

Aiden's mind wandered during the plodding repetitious mass. The priest was old with a comical lisp and mumbling words. Aiden ran grooves in the soft wood of the bench with his nails. A hand slap from Martin only discouraged Aiden for a short time. A prayer, a passage, and a Eucharist later, and Aiden was clear from his obligations for another week.

As they left the mass, Aiden pondered his day's plans. Part of it involved his armor-clad digital warrior slashing through an improbable number of foes in an equally preposterous dungeon built illogically to geometric precision.

The three of them quickened their pace from the church doors to the sidewalk to catch the street lights before they changed. Aiden checked his watch. It ticked two minutes past 10:00.

An air siren jolted the crowd, the high pitch oscillation bouncing off buildings. People ran blindly into the streets, some to their vehicles. Martin's instinct pulled Aiden and his mother close, wrenching them to the UTR tunnel entrance a block away. "Come on, let's go! Hurry!"

The second sound was not a siren, not a helicopter. It was louder, not mechanical, from an empty sky. People followed with their own yells. The source of the sound revealed itself as a silhouette unfurled its wings to eclipse the sun.

Daggers of daylight broke through the holes in its leather wings. Talons as long and sharp as swords tore the church peak apart as it landed. Wood splintered, and a poorly carved soapstone Christ shattered upon the pavement. Twice the size of the church, the beast roared and spit a torrent of liquid fire across the sky. Aiden was unable to look away as his brother dragged him by the cuff. The creature's black skin was drawn tight across its body. Its eyes like drops of cream in strong coffee. Its teeth were jagged and jumbled. Lips were too thin to close around its mouth.

"Zmey?" Aiden whispered. He was sure of it. He had pictured it larger and more pestilent. The stream of flame struck an approaching military helicopter. It melted the craft instantly. The vessel toppled to the ground as a forged chunk of glass and iron.

"Aiden! Come on!" his mother snapped.

The creature looked down at the scattering masses before it. Leaping from the church peak, it crushed a half-dozen of them underfoot. It snatched more from across the road, throwing them against the walls of nearby buildings.

Its rampage migrated down the street towards the crowd rushing to the safety of the UTR entrance. Martin held his younger brother's collar, pulling vigorously, indifferent to the monster gaining ground. Aiden's curiosity forced his gaze back.

If it was Zmey, why was it not dead? How much of that story was wrong?

"Is that Zmey, mom?" Aiden shouted.

"Shut up!" Martin snapped.





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"Mom?!"

"Aiden, I'll explain everything later!" she answered. Her heel broke, and she fell to a knee behind her boys.

"Mom!" Martin shouted, turning quickly back. Aiden stopped as well, but his attention was still on the dragon. The more he stared at it, the more real it became; the less Aiden believed he was dreaming. Perhaps then he could be frightened of it.

Zmey's claw came down in front of them. Martin fell back with a slash suffered on his arm. The concussion of air brought Aiden to his knees. Martin ignored his wound and clenched his fists. He closed his eyes waiting for his end.

Aiden could smell the putridness wafting from the dragon, felt the heat of the inferno brewing in its belly. A part of Aiden kept reminding him that this couldn't happen. This was a normal world and a dragon can't fly, can't

spew flames from its mouth. Aiden believed he would awaken, perhaps in his bed, perhaps in a pew.

As Aiden fell, he cut his hand on a shard of glass. The quickness of the pain pulled the air from his lungs. The numbness, the detachment that accompanies a dream, started to pass. Aiden began to notice what had happened, what was happening. People had been killed. Buildings had been destroyed. Crowds were fleeing. Aiden felt a cool sprinkle from a broken hydrant. He heard his brother wailing. Like a shock through this spine, Aiden saw the beast for what it was, the monster he should fear. It was real.

As Zmey's brought its claw back up to claim another victim, the beast fell back from a tackle, tossed into the empty church. The cathedral collapsed from the weight of two monsters.

No one had seen the other beast slam into Zmey.

Zmey's opponent pulled away to plot another attack. The new arrival was longer with smaller wings. Its gold and blue scales broke light into colors. Long white whiskers flapped like gravity had no control of them. Each of its four arms ended in four ivory claws. The monster snaked in the air, and its jaws opened wide enough to swallow a car. Its forked tongue sparked a flame, but it only belled. As the echo bounced off the buildings, lights within rooms went dark. The traffic signals went dead. Cars drifted to a stop.

The newcomer's eyes were those of a man's, soft blue and brilliant. Its body twisted around Aiden and Martin. It blocked them from harm as Zmey slashed with a bladed tail. The monster of gold and blue scales kept its defense and suffered a deep gash to its belly. In its counterattack, it leapt across the road and dug talons and teeth into decaying flesh. The creatures coiled around each other, but the black beast could not match the dexterity of its rival. A solid bite and its golden opponent had torn off an arm. Dark molasses dripped as blood from the wound. The black beast tore itself free from gripping claws, causing more damage as it took to the sky.

The one with golden scales swiveled its head to look at the boys. Its eyes were the same shape but the size of a child's head. Aiden couldn't help it. He raised his bloodied palm from the pavement and offered a feeble wave.

The dragon smirked back. It winked.

It twisted its form again and leapt back to the sky to chase down its opponent. It pursued the cripple around a distant building where Aiden lost sight of them. A dozen military fanjets slipped overhead to take up the chase.

Martin shouted Aiden's name and repeated it until the syllables merged to a wail. Aiden's attention drifted back to where the beast had come down. Aiden's daze had begun to lift; his breathing quickened. Whatever lingering strength he had bled away, and Aiden felt a sharp tightness in his chest. His fingers began to tremble as he realized what had happened.

She was gone.

Martin crawled to his brother. He lost the strength to pull Aiden to him but refused to let go. He slumped to the ground.

Aiden turned his attention back to the sky while Martin cried.

* * *

The brothers had barely talked since the morning. Aiden sat on his bed with the opened Codex Dracontis on his lap.

Aiden ignored the clothes he was supposed to take. He rummaged in his coat pocket for his glasses. He curled them around his ears. He tried to ignore the stabbing pain from the stitches in his palms but couldn't avoid the tension in his chest when he thought of his mother. When he thought about the dragon, about the questions he had, the weight would lift slightly.

Aiden had blisters over his lips and rings around his eyes from previous breaks in concentration. He sniffed and rubbed his nose as he frantically flipped through the pages.

Finding the entry for Zmey, he studied the sketch. There were differences. Its head was larger in proportion to its body in the drawing. Eyes were white, not black. Aiden was positive the book took inspiration from the real beast, which was then altered by the artist's foggy recollection. Aiden slumped upon his bed and stared at it. He flipped through the other pages, other dragons, some with white feathers, others with silver scales. He searched for the one that saved him. Aiden glanced at the other books he had acquired, ones on elves, sorcerers, and sword wielding.

"What are you doing?" Martin asked from the door-frame, an empty suitcase under his arm.

Aiden looked up from the book. "I can't find it."

"What?" Martin responded, quickly and cold.

"The gold and blue dragon. He's not here. It has Zmey but not the other."

"Mom's dead, Aiden."

Aiden paused. His bottom lip quivered and his throat clenched. He didn't want to cry in front of his brother. "I know...But--"

"Enough..." Martin whimpered. "Just leave it. Please...leave it. Pack and let's go. People are waiting." He left his brother alone, staring at the book. Both brothers had wanted to remain home, but Martin wasn't old enough, and there was no one willing to stay with them. Cousins willing to take them in lived half way across the city, closer to the "crown".

Martin lingered on his locked softside suitcase and did so for five minutes. He crammed and crinkled five changes of underwear, three dress pants and five shirts, leaving substantial space for a pair of albums and a photo of him and his mother from his Confirmation. He had previously wedged in more photos but realized he hadn't packed any shirts. He always considered himself the surrogate adult, the proxy for his father, someone that Martin knew but Aiden never did. When Martin returned to his brother's room, he noticed the half-full holdall occupied by one change of clothes and topped with the codex.

"Leave the book," he said.

"No," Aiden replied, still focused on the tome.

"Aiden--"

"You knew." Aiden could discern with his brother the difference between fear and surprise. Martin was fright-

ened of the beast, but its existence was not a shock to him.

"Please Aiden," Martin answered.

"You knew."

Martin opened for a lie but couldn't. "Not everything. Just that...this city...is all people like us have left."

"And what's past it?"

"I don't know."

"Has anyone left?" Aiden asked.

"No one leaves," Martin replied. "They only try to get in."

"Then someone knows. There are dragons." Aiden reached for the book.

"They killed mom--"

"And saved us--"

"They took everything Aiden," Martin snapped. They took...everything we were and could ever be."

"You never wanted to look?"

"Don't have to."

"Why not--"

"Aiden!" Martin shouted. "It's not our world. She wanted you innocent. Everyone is...for a while. That's over. I'll make sure we stay together. It's just us now."

"But the other dragon?"

"Who cares?! It's done! No more of this!" Martin stepped forward hastily to snatch away the book. Aiden instinctively clutched it to his chest. He grasped it tightly as his armor, tears rolling as he began to cry. Martin tried to wrest the tome from his brother's grip. He shouted as he tried to separate book and boy. "Burn them all! They killed mom!"

Aiden curled fetal around the book. He stayed tightly wound in a bundle of clenched limbs. Martin pinned one leg on Aiden's shoulder and pried an arm free, ripped the book from his brother's hand. Martin was hurting Aiden; cries turned to yells.

Martin felt it had to be done, like tearing a bandage off or striking a disobedient child, the act of an adult. "It's not a fantasy, Aiden! Grow up!" Martin stormed out of the room. "Two minutes! I'll drag you if I have to!" Aiden could hear the sound of the kitchen garbage can opening and the loud thump as Martin dropped the book into it. Martin knew Aiden could just take it back from the trash, but Martin knew rules needed to be followed and he expected Aiden would respect that.

He didn't.

Aiden waited until hearing the slam of his mother's bedroom door down the hall before shuffling quickly to the kitchen to take back his book. Martin fell upon the queen mattress and began crying while Aiden stroked his fingers across the front cover of the codex, at the embossment, at the image of the dragon's eye.

Aiden glanced across his arm to his watch. There were no cracks or scratches, no signs of impact damage. It had stopped three minutes past ten.

He opened the book again and noticed the stamp at the bottom of the inside cover. It was printed in two languages, English and Sinitic, but Aiden only knew a few of the Asian characters. The ink had faded. Aiden read the book's origin: David Obatala Chen's Biblio, 23C Huangxia Street, Genai.



A STORY

Don't check your brain at the door.

Don't settle for the dream.

This is real.

Amethyst is a role playing game that postulates what would occur if a true-to-book fantasy setting was forced upon our reality. Our world is populated by many people wanting more from their lives. Our fantasies are filled with nymphs, valiant knights, and fire breathing dragons. We dream about being carried away by the fancies our mothers tell us every night. But what if it was real for everyone? What if it invaded our society? How would humanity truly respond?

This is not some stylized fanciful view of Earth seen in books and on TV. It is a world with all the problems, both social and political, intact. Would we welcome the world of fantasy into our lives or would we fear its very presence? Magic cannot exist; there's no scientific basis for it. How could these creatures of whimsy exist and match so closely to our mythology and religious canon?

This future emerged from the world we know—a world where books and movies written about fantasy existed. People that survived into this new age saw firsthand what they had previously thought to be fiction. The new world matched so closely to their imaginations. How would major religions respond given such a massive shock to their dogma?

On top of this dilemma, magic breaks down many of the normal rules of the universe which technology requires to operate. It is a chaotic system that overwrites itself on reality, and although this influence won't destroy life, it does retard the progress of civilization, preventing technology from operating beyond simple mechanisms like windmills and bicycles. Where magic is prohibited, normality returns and evolution and technological advancement can continue.

What remains of our modern society and its technology survive in cities resembling those of the previous age, walled in against the encroaching magic around it. Here, they have their cars, their central heating, and their televisions. Outside, the fantasy world may be wondrous, but it is also real. People die from the simplest calamities. Despicable rodents with weapons and wicked brains prey on the innocent and unarmed.

Will mankind be able to retake the planet and push the fantasy back into the realms of our imagination, able to resume our blind passion for consumerism and industrialization?

Or is this world better than the one mankind squandered?

From the fantasy world rises a mythology suggesting that there are two realms of magic: one dark, the other light. The source of this energy originates from two powerful gates, the white star of Attricana and the black gate of Ixindar. The main axis between evil and good is not one where the law-abiding, civilized nations of good battle against the destructive force of chaos, but where the chaotic tendencies of life clash with the controlled and methodical might of syntropy. The conflict – at its

root – sets anarchy against order, uniformity against unpredictability, and determinism against free-will. Where life needs a level of uncertainty to blossom, homogeneity breeds only death. The fantasy world is not some singular entity, but a complicated multi-layered world of warring nations, political strife, and monsters clever and powerful, as well as stupid but numerous.



Amethyst is a campaign I ran inconsistently from 2002 to 2013, encompassing three campaigns of about 2 to 2 ½ years each. The setting dates back to 1996, though little remains of that original concept. This core book (and thus every Amethyst core book) details only the first three months of that first campaign. What I present is the skeleton of the setting I used to craft my campaign with guides on how to replicate it. In truth, Amethyst only refers to that first game in 2002, part of a trilogy seldom referred to by name but now revealed as the "Shattered Trilogy". Hints of Amethyst's story can be seen in the core book's framing fiction as well as subtle cues about where the Amethyst artifacts can be found. The second campaign, Logos, set 500 years after Amethyst, involved two different character groups being played by the same party—one on Earth, the other in deep space. The last, Cradle, was set back on Earth a considerably amount of time later and involves a mixed techan/echan party. Each campaign had a unique story with a different mix of fantasy- and technology-based characters. This proves there is no wrong way to play Amethyst.

AMETHYST EVOLVES

Cities collapse, heroes rise, and the future falls into the hands of a few. The world alters, grows, and plummets into shadow. These heroes encounter their greatest fears and challenge true evil in all forms. They find depth in an easy situation, complexity in a single idea. A world that changes around a band of adventurers. A setting with a point and a climax. A world where an ending waits. Solve it and discover the truth. Fail and the planet crumbles underneath.

The setting of *Amethyst* relies on the clash between magic and technology. Many fantasy worlds blend the two, usually with magic gaining the foothold and technology falling behind. *Amethyst* presents a world where the two sides stand almost at war and – from a metaphysical point of view – actively disrupt each other's existence. This is not to say that individuals from both sides cannot coexist: it is the differences between people that make them stronger when together. Although an individual might not be able to wield both a

spellbook and a gun, this does not extend to the limits of the group. Perhaps, despite growing tensions and mounting enmity, a balance between the two worlds can be found.

Player characters in *Amethyst* are neither sitting on the sidelines nor are they following braver and more powerful leaders into glory: they are meant to change the world. They do not dig ditches or hand out food while armies march into combat, but command legions, infiltrate empires, save princesses and slay kings. The end of the game should be different from the beginning. Of course, a player can claim a kingdom after vanquishing his enemies, but the real journey takes one's soul across the world, to meet one's final destiny after a very long crusade. A GM is encouraged to plan out her strategy for the game—whether the characters will travel to their final destinies in Canam (the continent described herein) or only progress part of the way before tackling the next chapter in a foreign land.

THE HISTORY

The history of the world begins with the conundrum of the chicken and the egg.

Millions of years ago, a fracture occurred in the fabric of space and time. It exhibited traits that were scientifically measurable, yet it broke many acceptable rules regarding electromagnetism, gravity, and quantum mechanics. Scientists later deduced that this rip, called Attricana, was a bridge between two universes. The alternate side contained a cosmos with rules of science abnormal to our own. As this universe spilled into ours, the conflict of two orders of nature encouraged aberrations upon the Earth, impossible until that point.

But what opened the gate?

Amethyst is a modern name given to a dragon from this age—the first creature of fantasy born upon the Earth. Legends also maintain Amethyst was the architect of the gate's creation. But if Amethyst created the gate, then what created Amethyst? Creatures born from magic require magic to survive. If Amethyst came before, then he would be the single exception in this world. Some historians believe he is not a dragon at all but something else.

Some proclaim him a god, but gods cannot die.

For millions of years, before Earth was called Earth, the denizens of the planet called it Terros—a land of magic and wonder, spared from the wrath of malevolence. Dragons flew overhead while fae creatures scurried below. Attricana encouraged life in every possible form. Monsters did emerge but never with the coordination to form an organized civilization. Meanwhile, the elder races were witnessing a slow degradation of enlightenment. The fae were not evolving; they were degenerating. Their descendants were begetting feral beasts. At the bottom of this inverted tree were uncultured boggs, violent skeggs, and voracious and swarming puggs. The chaparrans hid in their forests. The laudenians took to the sky. Damaskans recorded knowledge and history. Narros defended the cities.

GLOSSARY

After Enchantment (A.E.): The progress of time in this new era. The game begins for many in the year 508 A.E., just a little over five-hundred years from when the white gate reopened. Note that many communities retain their own system of reckoning, and there is no consistent calendar accepted by all.

Arkonnia: The region occupied by the continent of Africa and the Arabian peninsula in old Earth.

Amethyst: The first intelligence to emerge on Earth, Amethyst was a powerful dragon-god whose death ended the time of magic millions of years before man.

Anathema: Devolved fae, most of limited intelligence, generally regarded as monsters by all civilized folk.

Attricana: The term given to the enchanted realm existing beyond the white gate. It hovers between the Earth and Moon and is bright enough to read by at night.

Bastions: Sanctuaries of men and machines. These are technological enclaves heavily fortified and densely populated. Most are echophobic and forbid the use of magic within their walls. Each bastion stands as its own country, with very little to no contact with either the outside world or other bastions.

Blinder: A common derogative nickname mages and other magically imbued individuals call techans.

Canam: The continent previously occupied by Canada, the USA, and Mexico. Mostly pristine wilderness, with a number of large kingdoms and free houses loosely connected by a few well-maintained roads.

Chaparran: One of the oldest species of fae, who inhabit the woods and wild places of the world and are known as peerless archers.

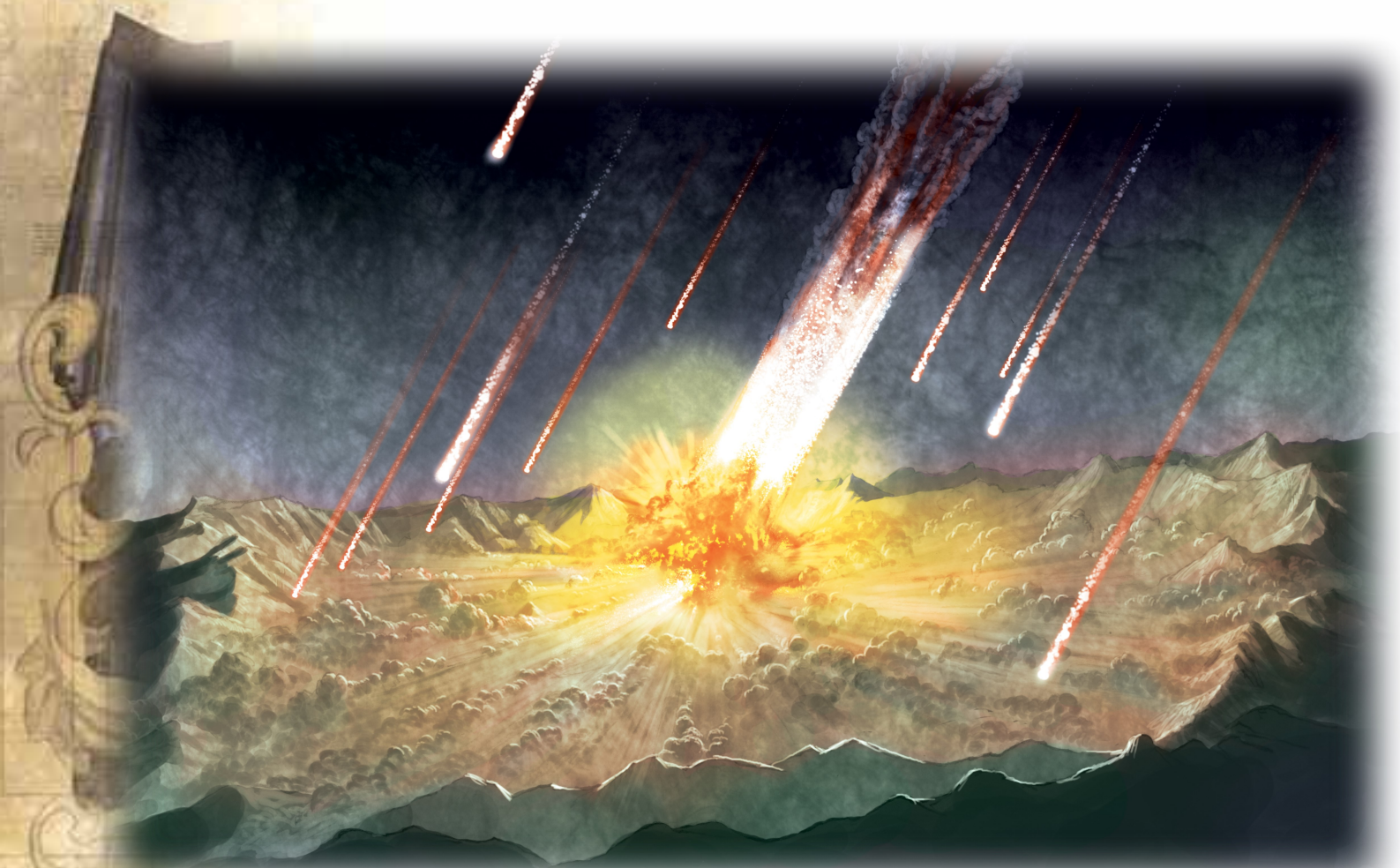
Corpus Continuity: This is the belief, mostly spiritually-based, that the humanoid form shared by humans and fae descends from a common origin. While some claim it related to echological influence—that humans look humanoid because of a lingering echo from the fantasy age—others claim a divine origin.

Damaskan: A younger branch of the fae, dedicated to the accumulation and preservation of knowledge and the principles of settled civilization.

Disruption: This is magic's capacity to disrupt the laws of nature that technology requires to function. This process only occurs in one direction—technology cannot disrupt magic. The entire planet is covered in a disruption field (see EDF), though the risk of disruption is not uniform, meaning certain areas have a higher rate of disruption than others. Disruption is at its minimum within bastions.

Echa: The slang term for magic or 'enchantment'. It often refers to visual use of magic as well as being used as a blanket term for the fantasy world. Someone touched by magic or using magic is commonly called 'echan,' although this term mostly refers to humans specifically embracing the path of enchantment, and occasionally to fae. Some still consider this ugly bastardization of 'enchantment' derogatory, but it is now too widespread to do anything about.





This left the gimfen to ignore such concerns and remain forever at play, remaining innocent against the encroaching violence.

Whether or not this could have endured would never be known.

The residents of Terros never questioned the origin of Amethyst. He was the greatest and wisest of them. They called him a god. They called him an avatar. He was connected to Attricana more intimately than any other entity. No one really knew the truth.

This changed when Ixindar arrived.

Unlike Attricana, records on the black gate's arrival are detailed. It drifted over the planet, sweeping across the night. From it spilled the corruption of order. If Attricana was a wellspring from a chaotic universe (perhaps one in the founding minutes of its creation), then Ixindar was the fountainhead of syntropy. It led to a realm of perfect harmony, perhaps to a cosmos of death and tranquility—a universe in its final moments. This gate had its own avatar, its own god to warrant worship. This was Mengus, a disembodied entity that whispered corruption without creating anything on its own. In one night, Ixindar had distorted a million fae to follow it. Servants gathered at the place where Ixindar came to rest, a spreading expanse of black glass later dubbed Kakodomania.

The noble forces of chaos had difficulty forming an army while their opponents quickly expanded and reproduced into battle lines. Within a thousand years, war had torn the planet apart. It would be several mil-

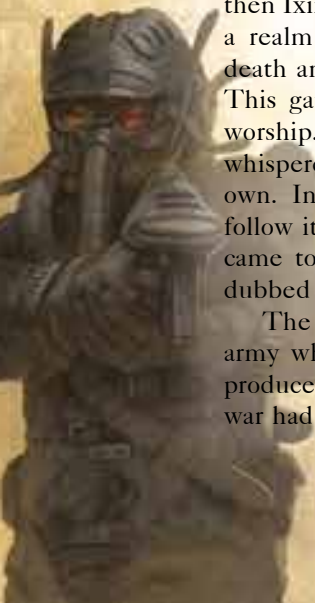
lennia before both sides realized mutual attrition was the only possible outcome. But elements from beyond the world would prevent this ultimate fate.

Mankind knew this incident at the K-T Extinction event—when a ten kilometer bolide impact off the Yucatan Peninsula created the 180 kilometer Chicxulub crater, wiping out the vast majority of plant and animal life on the planet. The fae called it the Hammer of God. Both sides of fantasy agreed separately to seek refuge on the other side of their gates, within dream realms formed by those gate's avatars. Mengus faked complicity in order to ambush Amethyst when isolated, believing Ixindar would survive the calamity to come.

The forces of chaos gone, Amethyst found himself surrounded by the soldiers of order. The general of this army, an intelligent construct known only as Gebermach, inflicted the killing blow, driving the dark sword Dogurasu into Amethyst's heart.

In his reprisal, Amethyst sacrificed his physical body. The resulting eruption of chaos wiped out the armies of Mengus and shattered the sky above them. A single beam of light from the gate before its closing drove Ixindar deep underground, sealing it under impenetrable stone. Attricana closed upon Amethyst's death. All remaining constructs and creations of magic fell to dust. All evidence was washed away. Earth belonged to no one.

With nothing to compete with, the principles of our universe regained control. The natural order of evolution took root, leading eventually into mankind.



Through his history, he told stories he could not possibly know, about mythical monsters and warring gods. These tales came from the whimsy of imagination but all carried a portion of truth, some more than others.

These stories became myths, books, films, and religions. This influence from a time no man had seen carried onto crests, flags, and banners. Their origins were explained, connected to other stories and faiths. Some were tied to science—seeing a manatee and believing it to be a mermaid. Fantasies remained locked in the dreams of a real world. Pushed aside as fancy, mankind continued his evolutionary drive to build, understand, and conquer. Society advanced as did the machines in servitude. Gaining a full understanding of science in all its unchanging rules, there was nothing man could not achieve given enough time.

History unfortunately would repeat itself.

A second bolide impact occurred, this time directly over Ixindar. To this day, no one knows the cause, as there was no warning before impact. It was a smaller event compared to the last but enough to reveal Ixindar to the world. The forces of syntropy emerged and corruption followed.

The following events are muddled, another case of a chicken and an egg. Ixindar opened, and some indeterminate time later, Attricana followed – but did Attricana’s first stirrings perhaps provoke Ixindar’s reemergence, or was some mechanism in place to open the white gate if Ixindar were ever exposed? By the time of the white gate’s reappearance, mankind had already been reduced to less than a tenth of its peak population, though whether due to disasters born in the wake of the Second Hammer or through wars over resources or ideologies, no one is truly certain.

Mankind did not have the luxury of philosophy. He was fighting a losing battle on two fronts, from order and from chaos. To make the situation even more desperate, the technology mankind had been relying on for hundreds of years had begun to fail. From the fountain of Attricana flowed rules of nature antithetical to the science machines required to function. The more advanced the technology, the greater the chance of disruption. Surviving humans had to make a choice: wall themselves in from the flood of encroaching enchantment, or settle for a primitive life surrounded by the wonders of fantasies they once could only read in fiction.

Five hundred years later, the humans that clove to their machines have built immense cities of technology. These bastions are the last bulwarks of a time these men and woman refuse to surrender, a world run by science where mankind held dominion. Some of these cities have grown to the size of small countries. Outside the bastions live the empires and wastelands of fantasy. Dragons and elves have returned to lay claim to the mountains, woods and fields. Monsters hide in dungeons and prowl in mirky forests. The wilderness has become dangerous but at the same time all the more romantic. Magic will always be a lure to those willing to wield it.

GLOSSARY (Cont.)

Echagenics / Echalogy: The study in both echan and techan cultures of the similarities between humanity and its recorded history against the fae, dragons and their recorded history. This analyzes the obvious physical similarities between fae and man in conjunction with historical coincidences in their religions, legends, and mythologies. Theologians studying echalogy are referred to as echalogians.

Enchanted Disruption Field (EDF): The enchantment disruption field prevents radio communication beyond a few miles, inhibits electrical conductivity and disrupts electronic circuits like an electro-magnetic pulse when extremely powerful magic is nearby. It also has the tendency of jamming mechanical devices above a certain complexity (the limit of which varies based on the strength of the field). While most early industrial-age technology up to (approximately) the level of the steam engine is usually safe from disruption, anything that relies on moving parts or electrical current (no matter how minor) can be affected with sufficient exposure.

Echalogical Influence: The belief that the history of the fae and dragons inspired human fiction through an immeasurable, unproven, undetectable echo which somehow resonated through sixty million years of evolution until minds advanced enough to understand that echo listened.

Fae: A catchall term for the several humanoid species which inhabited the Terros age alongside dragons millions of years ago, and reappeared in the modern age with the reopening of Attricana. As creatures of magic, they are antithetical to the technological societies of Mankind.

First Hammer: The first impact that destroyed the dinosaurs and ended the first reign of magic. It initiated the Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event.

Gimfen: The youngest branch of the civilized fae, and the only ones who can handle technology without risk of disruption.

Inosi: The region of Earth previously referred to as the Indian subcontinent and southeast Asia.

Indoaus: The region of land previously occupied by Australia and Indonesia.

Ixindar: The name given to the realm existing through the black gate. The gate is across the world, sitting half buried at the center of Kakodomania.

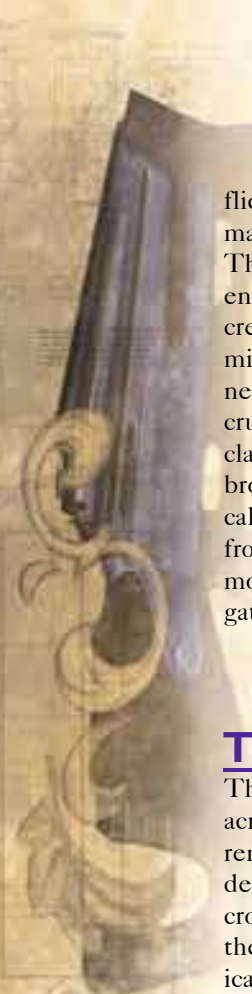
Kaddog: The general term for the three most common branches of damaskan anathema (and the most prolific monster species in Canam): puggs, boggs, and skeggs.

Kakodomania: A smooth obsidian glass which spreads radially from Ixindar. This realm envelops most of central Slav in permanent darkness.

Kodiak: Intelligent, bipedal grizzly bears native to northern Canam.

Laudenian: The oldest branch of modern fae and the most magical, who fled from contact with the ground for fear of devolving into lesser beings.





Order versus chaos, science versus magic; these conflicts make fanatics of everyone. An unspoken stalemate has arisen, with none gaining the upper hand. This may change with the proof of a once forgotten legend. When Gebermach slew Amethyst, the dragon's crest of stone fell upon the ground and shattered. For millions of years, the fragments drifted to the far corners of the world. Now, one has been found, and the crusade to find the others has begun. The legend claims that if the pieces of Amethyst's crown were brought together at the place of his death, one could call the god back to life, or take the mantle of command from him. With such a power, one could resurrect the most powerful creature to walk the Earth, or close the gate of magic forever. Who will find these artifacts?

Who will emerge victorious?

And, ultimately, will it be worth the cost?

THE CONFLICT

The world is not engulfed in war, but widespread peace across the land is still a distant dream. Not only are the remaining bastions of pre-Hammer mankind fighting a desperate and seemingly hopeless struggle against encroaching enchantment, but the individual bastions themselves are also paranoid about their own technological sovereignty over rival bastions. Further, the world of fantasy is not all of wonder. There are two realms of magic, flowing from two different breaches in the normal universe: the white gate of Attricana floating high above the sky, and the black gate of Ixindar half-buried in rock in the land of Kakodomania. Their influence and the armies loyal to them provoke conflicts whenever both sides meet. While Attricana encourages creation and chaos, Ixindar promotes order and syntropy. While many people directly involved in this conflict do so from an obsessive desire to protect their ways of life, others have been tempted to cross over, embracing an alternative way of thinking.

MAGIC AND FAITH

In *Amethyst*, there are only three ways magic can be focused, and thus, at least partially, controlled:

- **The Language of Dragons.** The power of these god-like creatures is to create something by naming it—the magic possessed in the language of the greatest species. Even the script extends itself into multiple dimensions. Wizards utilize this for all their magic. This language is called Pleroma.
- **Magical Reactivity.** There are thousands of elements and combinations of elements that produce different magical results. The practices of alchemy and metallurgy have returned. Those with such knowledge forge items of enchantment by simply being aware of the exacting ratios of components required. Fae iron, coruthil, and angelite are such examples as well as the myriad forms of magical potions. Nearly every magic item features this to a degree.

- **Inborn Magic.** Fae beings and monsters are magical by their very nature, even if they cannot consciously wield magical forces. Some, be they fae, monster, or even human, possess magical abilities on their own from birth. A few claim this power as divine, but many others refute that. Just as it was with man's time, god or gods are as silent as he, she, or they always were. There are no proven sanctified or blessed users of magic in a world with a silent and unproven god. Still, the rare priest or druid often finds no other reasonable explanation.

Religion does exist in *Amethyst*. Most are old-established, dating back through humanity's history – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and the like; others are far older and yet new as well, reconstructed from the memories of the fae; still others blend disparate elements as it suits their practitioners. Every faith can claim to possess one or two folk supposedly blessed with the spark of divinity. There are also those with no faith able to wield magic purely from a natural endowment they cannot explain. Others know very well where their power originates and understand there is no intelligence or deification beyond said gift. Because of this doubt, there is still no proof of god in *Amethyst*, despite the claims of many who believe.

REAL MAGIC

Despite appearances, the world of *Amethyst* is a low-magic setting; powerful spells are rare and obtained only at great cost and difficulty; major magical items are just as rare and hardly ever to be found outside the hands of the great and powerful; true artifacts are the stuff of legends, and most are completely mythical.

All magic, whatever its supposed provenance, comes from the gates, but spell casting techniques are unique depending on the caster. Those who claim to have a spark of the divine, called either gneolistics or vivicators, gain their power directly from Attricana. Whether this power is granted to them by some unknowable intelligence, drawn into their soul by the power of their belief, or merely a quirk of birth is unknown. Druids and shamans also obtain their power from the gate, though not directly. They receive their abilities from a conduit, namely the Earth. They worship nature and the world around. In their belief, the world channels the power from the gate and casters gain their power from below, not from above. Shamans harness the wind, earth, fire, and water as well as the animals and plants around them, shaping and controlling them as they wish.

Mages disregard channeling and mysticism, approaching the gate with an almost scientific eye. They claim while clerics and druids blind themselves to the mysteries of the gate, mages dive head first, taunting the cosmos to reveal its darkest secrets. Long before man or even elves, the first power from the gates was channeled through the immense capacity of the draconic language, known as Pleroma. This practice continues

today and remains the most popular form of spell casting. Only with lifelong persistence and an innate gift for understanding such intricate mysteries can the extremely rare few channel anything more than cantrips.

REQUIRED TO PLAY

The list of other books required for *Amethyst Apotheosis* is long and tedious.

The 13th Age Roleplaying Game Core Book

...and that's it. The only books required to play are those classed as "core" books. With other d20-based editions of Amethyst, three other books were required (a player's book, a game master book, and a book of monsters), but as *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* helpfully provides all this material in a single core rulebook, that one book is all that is needed. Not only that, but this book was written having not read any of the currently available supplements for *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* order to remain uninfluenced - while you can use these additional books with *Amethyst*, they are not nor never will be required. *Amethyst Apotheosis* is written in a style similar to that of *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* core book in order to ease transition; this includes the appearance of creator notes and sidebars. Feats are also listed under classes and races instead of all lumped together in one chapter.

THE AMETHYST AGE

The story of *Amethyst* involves a group of heroes from perhaps different nations, ideologies, and traditions, banding together to affect a permanent change to the world—a change which depends on said group's motivations. Despite some assumptions, this setting does not assume a certain party composition or motivation. It might not be about fantasy heroes fighting against the encroachment of technology or embracers of technology fighting against the chaos of magic; it may actually involve a mixed party reaching a compromise in order to fight a greater threat. This book (and other iterations for other systems) directly encourages romantic entanglements which can cross race, tradition, gender, and (new to this world) magical boundaries. *Amethyst* deals less with the past and more about the present—about how the world is today. As such, very little is mentioned about the events which brought the world to this point: to most people living in the world, this information is either unavailable or, more likely, irrelevant. For some, most of this information is simply unavailable. Even a character's history may be vague, pointing more to motivation than a detailed list of exploits and an itinerary of locations. At the beginning of this story, characters may not be in fact unique or special in any way. Their importance emerges from their actions as the game begins. *Amethyst* also involves a story where the world eventually focuses upon the quest the players are undertaking, eventually leading into clashing armies and world-changing events.

GLOSSARY (Cont.)

Lauropa: The term given to the region covering the lands of Europe west of the former Ural mountains. Consists mostly of neo-feudal kingdoms, with the fae empire of Damaska occupying most of the central landmass.

Mengus: The disembodied intelligence that resides within Ixindar, whispering corruption to any creature disposed to hear her. The most implacable enemy of Amethyst.

Narros: The middle fae, short and stocky, dwelling primarily underground and obsessed with tradition and perfection.

Pagus: Corrupted fae of ages past who answered the call of Ixindar and were transformed into huge, brutally effective warriors.

Second Hammer: The second impact that destroyed the technological empire of man. It struck Siberia, exactly where Ixindar lay buried and exposed its influence to the world.

Shemjaza: The proper term for the fae-like creatures known by humans as 'demons,' the ultimate servants of Ixindar. Although all look practically identical, each shemjaza is designed for a particular purpose.

Slav: Often separated into Western and Eastern Slav, this region on Earth covers the majority of China and the entire former Eurasian region east of the Urals. Rendered mostly uninhabitable by the Second Hammer and the subsequent spread of Kakodomania, most of the survivors of the eastern region migrated to Canam centuries ago.

Southam: The region of Earth formerly known as South America. Consists mostly of feuding underground kingdoms, and rainforests populated by ogres who hunt primitive humans for food and sport.

Syntropy: The principle of infinite static existence, embodied in the power of Ixindar. It is the antithesis of magic, and indeed, of the fundamental principles of life itself.

Techa: The slang term given to the technology of man and is usually reserved for the bastions and their machines. Its wielders use the title 'techan' as a badge of honor.

Terros: The era before man, from when the dragons and fae appeared until their disappearance 65 million years ago.

Tenenbri: Blind, but hardly handicapped cousins of the damaskans, masters of an underground theocratic empire beneath the mountains of Southam.

Tilen: Another cursed fae line whose ancestors embraced the power of Ixindar to transform themselves into free-willed undead. Their modern descendants, freed by Attricana's resurgence, struggle against the urges of their blood and fight for the survival of their species.

U.C. (Universal Credits): A currency that most bastions and wandering techans trade in. Only techans accept and use uc. Unlike fantasy currency like gold and silver coins, uc has no face value.



Right from the onset, you will see where this can differ from *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* on a cursory level. Amethyst does not have NPCs iconic to the setting. Deities may or may not exist; few kings and prelates have the time to deal with adventurous scoundrels; the few wizards whose power is spoken of in whispers are either hidden away in secluded places, jealously guarding their secrets, or are long since dead, their notes picked over by opportunistic thieves and librarians. The focus is entirely on the players and how they affect change to the entire setting. Humble origins may lead to legendary titles. In many ways, this holds true to *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*'s basic tenants, one we plan to honor.

Here is a general list of what to expect in Amethyst Apotheosis as we address our adaptation of *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*.

AFFILIATIONS

Affiliations function exactly like Icons from *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*, except ours can refer to a relationship with an organization, nation, or even an entire race. Unlike backgrounds, which determine where you come from, an affiliation measures how you actually feel about the people and places most significant in *Amethyst* and how they feel about you. Obviously, it would make sense for a Limshau Custodian background to have a relationship with a city in Limshau, but would that be positive or negative? Or perhaps one is trained in the ways of the Custodian but through the teachings of a hermit rather than an empire.

DURABILITY

Important characters, player's included, are not easily felled by normal injuries. Their survivability flies in the face of logic. Since *Amethyst* discourages magical resurrection, I wanted players to avoid the humiliation of dying at the hands of pushovers with lucky die rolls. Therefore inspired by a suggestion in the *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* core book, *Amethyst* has created a new set of death rules—simply put, characters can only be killed in “important ways.” They suffer status effects when staggered, and when reduced to 0 hit points or lower, said status effects worsen. Characters are still killed regardless of opponents when reduced to *negative half* but no longer fall unconscious automatically below 0 hit points (this is called being *wounded*). Status effects from being staggered or wounded do not go away quickly and usually can only be recovered via full heal-up or *treatment* (another new rule). Being wounded carries huge penalties and, if the situation is dire, a player may wish to attempt a sacrifice (see below).

LEGENDS

Legends are like prestige classes in the older d20 games, replacing the final three levels of a character class. They offer optional divergent paths unique to *Amethyst* with specific rewards as much based on role playing than combat rewards. Although this is a new

mechanic to *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*, I think it's still in the spirit of the system. This system, while flavorful, is entirely optional.

ORGANIZATIONS

A feature from previous *Amethyst* publications, organizations denote where the players as a group are now. Where affiliations are who you know and backgrounds are where you come from, organizations are what you do. This can be as simple as a wandering band of adventurers or retinue to a lord.

SACRIFICE

Important characters (players included) in *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* and *Apotheosis* are now able to employ sacrifice when death is near. In *Apotheosis*, players cannot be easily killed, with only certain situations emerging where a character's life truly is in danger. However, when reduced to below 0 hit points (being *wounded*), a character can attempt a sacrifice. Most status effects are recovered and the character receives a considerable boost in abilities for a short time. This can come in the form of a single climactic strike or a heroic stand to hold back an army in the face of certain death. Despite appearing irrevocable, characters still have an opportunity to recover from such an act, though chances are strong that the character's fate is sealed, galvanizing one's place in history. Important NPCs and even singular powerful villains can also attempt sacrificial acts.



3E (OGL) and 4E (GSL) editions of Amethyst were nearly identical in philosophy, and those aforementioned games provided the launching point for 13th Age. However, we wanted to embrace the vagueness encouraged with 13th Age so the heavy “crunch” from our previous games may be lacking here. There are also a few new rules meant to encourage “my way of play”.



I am contractually obligated to critique absolutely everything in this book, even if I happen to agree with it. My approach to the game is more influenced by modern narrative games, such as Fate Core, than it is by older d20 games, so you can be assured of some useful variety in the commentary.



Experts in dressing death had reconstructed what was left of her body. They placed a plastic smile on her face. The waxy finish of the skin convinced Aiden this was less his mother and more an imitation. Friends of his father, military veterans, brought the closed casket up. Father Tom, like the church, was new. One by one, friends neither he nor Martin knew offered hands and hugs. The mass was long with prayer passages reminding the mournful of god's grand purpose. Aiden ignored them. He never paid attention during regular mass; the words felt equally hollow now. Aiden hoped the blue eyed and golden scaled dragon would rip off the roof and whisk him to a new life. The church's packed capacity marched to the casket, touching, praying, crying.

Aiden was relieved to see the afternoon light as he followed the pallbearers out of the church. Martin offered tears for each weeper and wailer walking by. Aiden nodded and hugged but remained dry save an occasional sniff. More words of divinity leapt from a priest's lips as the casket slipped through the open maw of the marble wall at the necropolis.

Aiden looked scornful at the cross at the entrance. He wondered if God was real as well. An omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient being, benevolent and divine? Then why was she dead? Did the dragon break the rules? No creature shaped like that could fly, yet it did. No animal could breathe fire, yet it did. They couldn't exist, but there they were.

Father Tom's words, though carefully chosen, were no more uplifting than the compassionate whispers of distant family members.

"Men pale in the wisdom of God," he said to Aiden. "Not even I can understand why things happen when they happen. There is a reason for everything, Aiden. God has placed you on a path; there is something to learn from this. Even the worst of times are intended, by his will, to guide us. Occasionally, his hand must be firm. In times like this, our faith in his plan must remain strong."

"She was killed by a dragon, father." Aiden emphasized dragon as much as killed. Father Tom didn't say much after that.

As they exited the mausoleum, Aiden glanced at the wall, the periphery of the city. The monstrosity stood twenty stories and topped with battlements. It enclosed all ten thousand square kilometers of the city. It was only the latest iteration, with monuments of previous walls counted like tree rings to mark age and expansion. The last one was the tallest, the longest to build, and the most resolute in keeping everything that wasn't in, out. Aiden heard people calling it the crown. Years ago, when Aiden asked Martin what was beyond the wall, his brother had said, "Nothing you should care about."

He'd lied.

Aiden wished he had asked his mother. He wished he had discovered the truth by her telling him, by closing the codex and whispering, "It's all real." He should have followed what Leach had suggested and just asked her. Aiden wished that if the cost was to be that great, he would've preferred ignorance a few more years. Wishes kept Aiden a child. Wishes separated Aiden from his

brother. Wishes were magical and romantic and had a peculiar tendency of coming true. Aiden wished his mother would come back, but that could never happen.

* * *

After a week, Aiden was back in class. The students kept their distance, even William. Lara was the only one that attempted to console him, offering a hug and asking how he was. No one else bothered, keeping a wide berth as the orphan passed them. To acknowledge his loss would be to admit that it occurred, that something abnormal could happen in an ordinary world. Were all the victims that day as disregarded? If only it had been cancer like Aiden's father, something average, common, and predictable. Lara offered him a half sandwich at lunch.

Martin sat with Aiden on the UTR. Such a wonder was lost on Aiden. He wanted to open a book and read but was afraid of Martin's reaction. Aiden just leaned forward, feeling the breeze across his face. He didn't close his eyes and imagine a dragon. He thought of when his imagination was all that was required.

What about magic and Elisa the elvish princess?

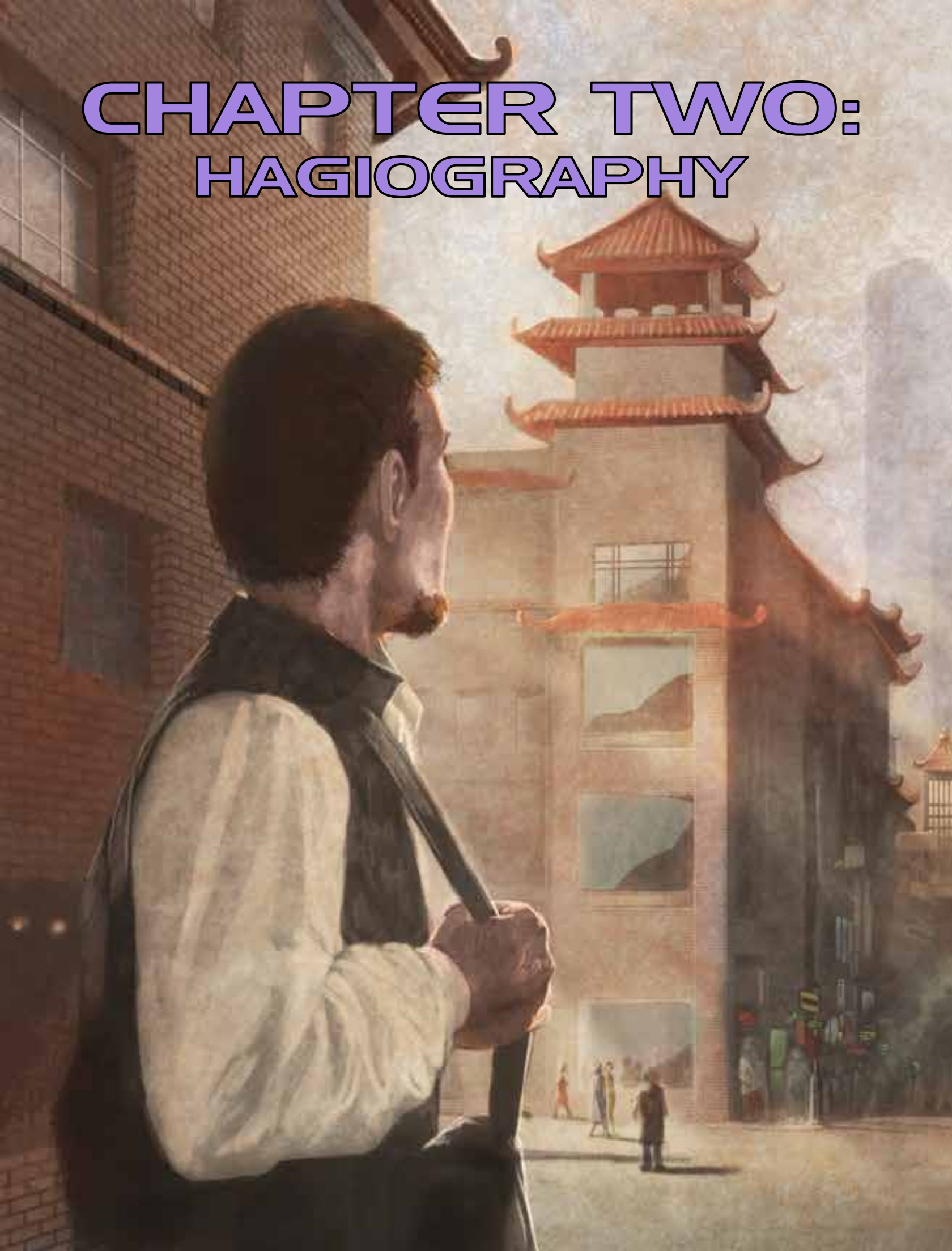
Aiden pondered what other fictions could invade his life. Martin reached over and began to coddle his brother's hair.




Rejected laudenian sketch



CHAPTER TWO: HAGIOGRAPHY





Affiliations, Backgrounds, and Organizations are related, though their roots and functions in the game are not. Where affiliations describe who you know and backgrounds where you came from, organizations explain who you are with. Affiliations are built to replicate the effects of Icons from *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* and thus offer specific benefits based on the relationship and how often said relationship appears in the game. Backgrounds function identically to the core rules, except that *Amethyst* provides a number of predefined backgrounds with detailed descriptions, which provide a benefit for investing more deeply in them, in addition to the bonus they grant toward related applications. Organizations, a new mechanic to those unfamiliar to *Amethyst* involves an association the players have with a larger group, akin to membership or employment. However, association is strictly by choice and having no membership in an organization is a choice in itself. The benefits from organizations are usually more tangible, in the form of special missions, additional equipment, or bonuses to specific kinds of checks.

AFFILIATIONS

As it cannot be stressed enough, affiliations replicate icons. Though affiliations can result in singular powerful NPCs being involved, by using affiliations, *Amethyst* doesn't force bizarre machinations into effect in order for players to encounter specific characters (or even two degrees of relation to them) in a very large continent at regular intervals. Although reoccurring NPCs are encouraged, it may not always be logical for that to happen. Affiliations encompass empires, cults, organizations, and even entire armies.



Yeah, about that, I would suggest not using the relationship dice at all. Have the player invest points, but beyond that use those points as more a guide to organically create your story utilizing affiliations. Dice rolling—in my opinion—forces a random element into a game master's game he or she doesn't require to weave a good and—more importantly—logical story. So I'd recommend using the points to determine how often affiliations appear but not feel compelled to do it immediately or even at next game session.



Personally, I'm also against anything that artificially constrains the GM's ability to shape the story, but on the other hand, it's important for the relationships the PCs have built to be relevant to the game, and the GM has enough on her plate without having to keep track of 3-6 characters' connections. To that end, I suggest placing the benefits of the affiliation strictly in the players' hands: each 6 on the relationship dice provides the player with a 'trump card' related to their affiliation that they can use to help themselves out in any situation during the session, as long as they can justify it (the GM can veto any suggestion that doesn't seem relevant). A 5 provides a similar benefit, but at a cost that the GM defines (she can also veto these, but it's much more fun to allow players to get away with outrageous things at a similarly outrageous cost).

ABIDAN

(HEROIC)

"If you still wish to pay some tribute or prove your devotion, then take my side as a knight of the line. In my view, I ask too much, for the trials are taxing and the glory less a token, but I ask you the same. Will you join and stand?"

LOCATION

Abidan occupies the land once known as Michigan, spreading into Indiana and Ohio in the south. There are virtually no ruins of the old city of Detroit where the new capital of Janoah sits. Abidan is one of the lands most washed clean by the winds of chaos. The great lakes have formed into one, leaving a single pass, the Tethuss Bridge, connecting the north to the south (not including a treacherous water journey or more threatening mountain pass). Abidan is run by a monarch seated at the capital Janoah which blocks the Tethuss Bridge from pagus attack.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Abidan is ruled by the only human monarchy in Canam blessed by a dragon's kiss—meaning a dragon has actually adopted the ruling line into its own family. This came after decades of altruism on the part of the first king, Vincent I (Vincent Savarice, also known as the Paladin King), as self-declaration never earns such patronage. By that point, the nation of Abidan had already been formed from a handful of neo-feudal baronies: calling it a kingdom was an easy transition. Vincent's descendants have since attempted to honor his name and legacy. Despite criticisms from outsiders on the promotion of religion in Abidan, the kingdom still prides its morality and ethical laws. There is no suppression of free speech, and despite the encouragement of faith, there is no sponsored state religion. Public tolerance has prevented violent clashes between sects. This hasn't stopped emigration and the creation of dominant faiths in several major cities. It is thought that this stability only exists because of the threat of a common enemy in the pagus that pound against the Janoah walls in an attempt to invade the rest of Canam.

ADVENTURES

Virtuous knights fighting fantasy monsters—what more is there? There are actual dragons attacking the cities of Abidan. Kings send forces into the northern lands to cull the pagus population or make contact with sympathizers. Occasionally, these groups are just glory hounds or treasure hunters marching into the most hostile land in Canam. There is no shortage of possible adventures around Abidan and no shortage of people willing to pay in the name of the king.

ALLIES

Abidan maintains a solid alliance with both Limshau and Kannos with less public agreements with Gnimfall, York, and the Finer Fire Pits.

ENEMIES

Outside of the obvious pagus threat to the north, often flanked by the odd dragon, Abidan is one of the few nations openly advocating war with Baruch Malkut, a conflict which has yet to occur.

HISTORY

Abidan came about after the famous "caravan of the king" where the future ruler Vincent Savarice traveled from where he washed ashore in the southeast of Canam, with nothing but a notched sword and a shabby shield to his name to the new land, spawning followers in his wake. After the founding of the capital, supporters continued to flock from every corner of the continent which heard of this famous pilgrimage. The nation grew to absorb surrounding towns, though this annexation was not always jovially received. Initial conflicts were dealt with and the nation expanded, finding its ultimate purpose in the defense of southern lands from pagus invaders that insisted on crossing the Tethuss Bridge. Pagus hate water and mountains, preferring to wage war with enemies they can see with their eyes, knowing full well their deaths against better armed foes. It was decades later when the dragon "Silver River" (true name and title unknown) adopted Vincent I as dragon-kissed, forever sealing the land as a kingdom.

ANGEL

(AMBIGUOUS)

"In almost every way, Angel personifies the way mankind was—ignorant of what occurs outside of its borders, distracted by the minutia it could control, and content to let the rest of the world crumble from a misguided sense of exclusivity."

LOCATION

Angel is a bastion built upon a massive city of Earth's past. Utilizing old political lines, Angel occupies the entire Los Angeles - Long Beach - Santa Ana urban regions, including Huntington Beach, Ontario, Santa Monica and Thousand Oaks. The area claimed and controlled by Angel is fringed by a colossal wall 175 feet tall, the last of four such walls, each inner one shorter than the previous and dating the bastion like tree rings (though most of these inner walls have been dismantled). Angel requires such a bulwark because of the encroachment of magic from nearly all sides. The magical forest of Cyon pushes from the south while infestations of anathema swarm from the north. This has encouraged Angel's isolation.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Angel is the most populous bastion in Canam. It is not the most advanced, only slightly more developed than York. After the first wall was erected, the techans accepted the assistance of echan immigrants in exchange for a protected enclave within the walls. The first Genai wasn't much more than a refugee camp, but when the last wall was erected, the Asian-distinctive reserve was given both borders and special administrative status. With little oversight, Genai became a sanctuary of magic-accepting, although officially non-magical individuals within the protection of techan walls. Despite this, Angel is still considered one of the more xenophobic bastions, with children being kept in ignorance of the true nature of the world as long as possible, and even then, largely regarding the magical realms beyond the walls in the same way they would think of Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy. The only people who really know the status of the world are politicians and the military personnel tasked with protection.

ADVENTURES

Angel is fanatical about protecting its interests against the vague threats beyond. "Vague" is the appropriate term as there are no named armies or nations at war with Angel. The greatest threats are the dozens if not hundreds of wandering bands of anathema. Angel has attempted diplomatic relationships with other bastions like York and Selkirk, but their isolation prevents any contact more regular than a few messages a year. Because most of Angel's military is assigned the defense of the city and its outer wall, it delegates foreign issues to mercenary companies (mostly techan though hiring fantasy groups is not unheard of). Missions include ferrying personnel or supplies to other nations or bastions as well as more dangerous missions eradicating threats from the dense magical forests surrounding the city.

ALLIES

Technically, Angel is allied with other bastions like York and Selkirk but communication is sporadic. Angel also has unofficial but profitable economic ties with Salvabrooke, which welcomes those brave and edgy souls who consider a carefully organized and controlled tourist trip beyond the walls to be a taste of danger.

ENEMIES

Angel has no official enemies other than such wandering monsters as are not deterred by the massive walls. Unofficially, they have far more to fear from agents of other bastions than they do from the nearby echans.

HISTORY

Like all bastions, Angel's origin predates the birth of Attricana, but also like other bastions, Angel has virtually no history of the time before. Only a few patchy and unsubstantiated accounts survived along with old maps telling of sprawling cities now virtually forgotten. One

such rumored account claims Angel, similar to Selkirk and Sierra Madre, began life as a military base which merged with a fallout shelter and subsequently expanded into the old metro line. Functioning technology was used to retake the old city ruins which were then subsequently torn down and rebuilt. However, encroachment of puggs and boggs caused setbacks which plagued the first hundred years before the arrival of echan immigrants from both east and from overseas. They were given protection within the walls in exchange for aiding in the defense of the city and the erection of the outer walls, an arrangement which continued through three more subsequent larger and builds.

ARCHON DRAGONS

(HEROIC)

"Amethyst is his name and it was always, as every other name he was called and shall be called. One title deserves no greater attention because it was spoken by lips older and wiser."

LOCATION

There is no location in Canam where archon dragons congregate although they are known to socialize with each other. Archon dragon can't generally be found unless they wish to be.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Archon dragons were the first magical creatures birthed unto the world, with Amethyst the first of the first which commanded the others into being. Some believe they were created from the genes of the apex predators of the Terros age, the great dinosaurs: others believe that Amethyst created them in his own image, and that their superficial similarities to the Cretaceous reptiles is no more significant than the similarity between fae and humans. The archons, few that they were, still survived into the modern age, though scattered throughout the world (though rumors persist there is a place where a group have gathered across the ocean). There are three classes of archon dragon, holy, guardian, and noble. Holy dragons are feathered and act as spiritual leaders. Guardians exhibit humanoid traits and protect the lands they reside in, finally noble dragons act as administrators and diplomats and are the ones most people see (odd looking that they are given their smooth silver skin). They are reports of at least two noble dragons in Canam, perhaps a guardian, though these would be vastly outnumbered by the typhox dragons in control of the northeast. All archon dragons, despite their generally good intentions, are vain and self-important, and adopt grandiose and arcane titles as part of their given names, such as 'Baraus of Rose,' 'Thysaz of Lightning,' or 'Lethe of Rivers.'



ADVENTURES

Dragon motivations are mysterious, save for the fact that three archon species are united in their preservation of life in all forms. Anything trying to destroy life, even if said thing was birthed by chaos, must be dealt with, and in the old days, the dragons would take it upon themselves to be enforcers. After the fall of Amethyst, archons fell quiet and became hesitant to act. Those that do prefer to enlist the help of sympathetic souls believing in the same cause. Archon dragons also do not work well as a group, and tend to be fairly jealous of their chosen portfolios: a person with this affiliation would generally be an agent of a specific dragon, and their relationship is of no particular benefit (and may indeed be a drawback) dealing with a different archon.

ALLIES

Dragons are technically allied to all virtuous and honest nations. Despite not directly contacting any nation in hundreds of years (the dragon's kiss marked on the Abidan king was the last noteworthy exception), dragons are still technically allied with Abidan, Limshau, Fargon and Vanaka, each blessed with a specific dragon's endorsement.

ENEMIES

One of the longest standing feuds in all history stands between archon and typhox dragons, their greatest ire reserved for the fallen dragons who once numbered among their brethren until Ixindar corrupted them. Being loyal disciples of Amethyst, archon dragons are also staunch opponents of all things touched by Ixindar, not just dragons but undead creatures, pagus, and shemjaza.

HISTORY

Not much is really known about dragon history. They recorded this knowledge into the Gospels of Drasago. Rarely found compiled and imbued with great magic, the bible is written in an undecipherable alphabet which resists even magical decryption. What is rather believed is that either Attricana or Amethyst came first and the dragon god created companions in the archons. The first fae would arrive much later, followed by their continually devolved descendants. The Seven Lords of Ažhi were the first to fall but there are disagreements about what came first (as before), the fall of Goch of Wrath, first of her wicked kind, or the Black Gate of Ixindar. Regardless, the fallen dragons emerged around the time of the exodus when a million fae turned into pagus. In the new age, when the archon dragons returned, most went into self-imposed exile across the ocean, still brooding from the loss of their god.

BARUCH MALKUT

"God unlocked the doors of deliverance; we must carry the strength to open them to salvation."

LOCATION

Baruch Malkut occupies all of once was considered Florida, reaching north to occupy most of Georgia and part of Alabama.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Baruch Malkut is a bizarre amalgam of three forms of government. It is a monarchy because of its standing ruler King Darius I. It is also a theocracy as there is religious law surrounding said monarch. It is also technically a dictatorship as Darius has never relinquished his throne since ascending three hundred years ago, a peculiar situation given that Darius is human. The kingdom's doctrine claims humans following the one true faith are the only ones allowed to inherit God's utopia, and that those following the one true faith are those that adhere to the laws put forth by the "final prophet", Darius Koenig. Malkut embraces a "new-age" Abrahamic faith which encourages the enslavement of fae and the eradication of those that remain free. Technology not used to further God's will is prohibited, this includes any attempts to understand the natural world in ways endorsing rationality and logic.

ADVENTURES

Those loyal to Baruch Malkut seek adventure only in the service of their king and the words of God passed down from the king's lips. This includes the hunting and enslavement of fae as well as interdiction missions into rival territories. Baruch Malkut is not against sabotage or outright assassination. Enemies of Malkut attempt to disrupt slaver caravans and even infiltrate the kingdom to sow dissent around the cult of personality which has arisen.

ALLIES

Baruch Malkut maintains no alliances with anyone.

ENEMIES

Take your pick, from every fae nation to every human nation, bastion or fantasy.

HISTORY

Baruch Malkut rose to prominence after the emergence of a cult of personality around self-declared prophet Darius Koenig. The birth pains of the kingdom began with their annihilation of the bastion of Sebring and the erection of the city of Faustis upon its ruins. Surrounding fae nations were either wiped out or driven out—a pogrom which continued until the potential for an economic opportunity arose. And through the hands of slaves, Baruch Malkut became the fastest growing nation in Canam, gaining power so quickly, it became ob-



vicious that not one nation could fight them on equal terms. Eventually, the aggressive expansion into other territories stopped, but it is believed this pause is only temporary and war will eventually break out over all of Canam.



Baruch Malkut emerged organically from a side effect of other elements in the game, and was not intentionally meant to be an allegory. It started out justifying having half-breed fae in a logical world, and from that begot bonding, and from that begot slavery. Baruch Malkut was born.



Culturally, Baruch Malkut has more in common with 17th-century New England puritanism (crossed with the Levantine crusader states, specifically as depicted in the first "Assassin's Creed" game) than it does with stereotypes of the pre-Civil War South. That said, we've written story fiction in which people familiar with pre-Hammer history have assumed those stereotypes apply, so it's not something that has completely vanished from the cultural consciousness.

COUNCIL OF ELDER TILLEN (HEROIC)

"I am not that which I remember. A corruption destroyed that soul long ago. I am that perversion cursed with remorse, made accountable for the sins committed and with desire to repair the damage caused."

LOCATION

Most elder tilen live isolated lives as the leaders of small hidden villages, or wander the land, alone or with itinerant caravans of their descendants. There are rumored to be at least a half-dozen elder tilen in Canam with most across the ocean. Specific locations are known only to a few and as such can appear based on random chance.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The elder tilen are those few fae infected by corruption which were then flushed of it with the opening of the white gate in the new age. Using old fantasy tropes, elder tilen are ex-vampires, though not ones turned by choice. Even among those whose hands were forced, only a few managed to turn to the light. Estimates place the current elder tilen population between 15 and 40 worldwide and yet, through their descendants, this small group is responsible for all the tilen seen in the world. However, only the elder tilen carry the stain of their past lives, passing on the obligation to their kin to maintain the struggle to stave off corruption and battle

against the forces of darkness. More than any other species, the tilen are the most unified in their singular obsession with wiping out Ixindar and the forces of corruption.

ADVENTURES

Elder tilen are generally assumed to be family leaders and village chiefs. They are the most powerful singular fae on the planet (on average) and this commands significant power. Examples of elder tilen include Azula Jaheer, Lhamah Cyrose, Mira Diemasko and Saleena Kaaris, the latter being one of the few nomadic elder tilen one may encounter randomly along a journey. Elder tilen are committed to one thing, wiping out those unredeemable souls tainted by the corruption of Ixindar. To aid an elder tilen on such a mission would be greatly rewarded.

ALLIES

Elder tilen don't have many allies because of their past transgressions while being vampires. Even their descendants have been occasionally ostracized. This doesn't mean the tilen don't have allies. Limshau, Kamos, and Abidan have all officially supported the tilen, as have many chaparran forests.

ENEMIES

Raiders from Baruch Malkut enslave most fae they encounter with the notable exception of the tilen. While most tilen are killed on the spot, others, including the elder fae, are sent to the capital to be executed in one of a half-dozen extremely slow and painful manners such as 'baptism' (ritualized drowning) or the 'death of a thousand cuts', a procedure done over a day in the town square with onlookers invited.

HISTORY

After the Fall (in the first age), several fae used forbidden knowledge to steal the power of Ixindar for themselves, to bring life after death and extend the lives of those willing to turn their souls to corruption. This became known as necromancy, a branch of Ixindar magic banned by the rest of Kakodomania (as it encourages a selfish approach to negative magic rather than one dedicated to the god Mengus). It swallowed up dragons and fae alike, the latter turning into creatures that could live forever, as long as they could devour the essence of the living. Through echalogical influence, this became known as vampirism. The first necromancers were also the first vampires, and back then, the names were synonymous (though to themselves, they were called ghulath). They tempted or forced others to be thralls. During the exodus, when fae and dragon fled into the formless void of the gates before the first hammer, the ghulath lords followed, returning during the age of man. However, when the white gate opened, the flood of magic washed the corruption free from many of the ghulath thralls—especially those whose hands were



DAWNAMOAK



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forced. They became penitent, wracked with guilt, and fled their lords to seek sanctuary where they could. Many were killed just trying to escape. Others were hunted down by old enemies repudiating absolution. Eventually some found solace, settled down, and started families, all the while maintaining contact with the others, promising to gather in secret locations every ten years to ensure they have followed the path of virtue. Their descendants took the task to create a race, and after five hundred years their numbers have grown, though their slow breeding rate and the dire actions of fearful humans leave them always teetering on the edge of extinction.

DAWNAMOAK **(AMBIGUOUS)**

"Like a mother forgiving all the sins of the son, nature absolved man of his past transgressions. The hammer was an act of God, not of nature."

LOCATION

Dawnamoak is a massive forest occupying most of what was New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. Although the towers of Jibaro can be considered its capital, there are no maps denoting specific villages within the forest. It is all assumed chaparran territory.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The towers of Jibaro are the equivalent of Mecca in the chaparran culture. It is their holiest city and fervently defended by fanatical fae to the extent that non-chaparrans are prohibited from getting close to the towers. Most never even make it that far into the forest. There have been a few notable exceptions—specifically druids and respected holy men from various races. Each tower focuses on a specific facet of chaparran culture, one for the unique chaparran spellcraft, one for the chaparran holy warriors, and the other the virtually inaccessible central tower and pillar of the chaparran faith. Saturated through the rest of Dawnamoak are perhaps hundreds of even thousands of chaparran villages, shifting and amalgamating so often as to make detailing them pointless. Although chaparrans can be found in most most of the forests of Canam, they are most concentrated within the forest of Dawnamoak.

ADVENTURES

Adventurers entering the forest may affront the locals if not showing respect. Most chaparrans leaving the forest do so because of a quest bequeathed from an authority within the tower. Though rare, the high priests and generals of Jibaro have congregated with outsiders for a common need, most often involving human and corrupted threats.

ALLIES

Technically, Dawnamoak has no alliance with anyone. They respect laudenians but rarely encounter them. They have no misgivings about the other fae peoples, but hold no particular alliances with them either, preferring the solitude of the forest.

ENEMIES

Like most chaparrans, those in Dawnamoak have declared a jihad against Baruch Malkut. There is also considerably animosity between the chaparrans within the towers and most of the bastions, despite most bastions not even knowing Dawnamoak exists.

HISTORY

Dawnamoak was probably one of the first fae communities established after Attricana's opening. The chaparrans gathered in a location of heavy magic and began shaping the wood to their whim. These towers of Jibaro are not the same as the ones from the first age—they're not even close to their original location—but are considerably larger. After the towers grew, the knowledge of them resonated through every chaparran village, even ones too distant to receive the message. And like the Hajj, most chaparrans are expected to renew their faith within a tower of their choosing. Those not embracing the way of war or the way of magic are permitted within the tallest tower to undergo the greatest tests of faith, ones which those who enter never speak of.

FARGON

(HEROIC)

"Bring down sin and rock. They both crumble under the pick of truth. Climb up brothers. More treasures await those in Oaken's good graces."

LOCATION

Fargon is incredibly isolated with most people only hearing or reading stories about it. Cut off by forest, rock, and beast, it resides in the far north, in a region once called Alaska.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Despite the largest narros city being the Finer Fire Pits, most narros come from Fargon, a legendary empire of dwarves that, after a brief rebellion, suffered no setbacks in their expansion across a virtually empty landscape. Simply put, the empire ran out of narros. The cities are too tall, too expansive, and life beyond spiritual growth or martial discipline can get a little boring. After the cities went up, the dwarves dug down, though not to the extent their brethren in the Finer Fire Pits did. As result, many of their largest cities look empty, and their realm and the lands nearby are filled with ruins built centuries ago and then simply abandoned to the elements. Those in Fargon don't fit the cliché of the fantasy dwarf like their southern cousins, with only a small portion of the population focused on mining. The others dedicated themselves to military or farming, resulting in even more narros leaving their cities. The armies defended convoys and engaged with the rising anathema and kodiak threats. And then there are those that find the constant obligations to the state taxing and the lack of any non-narros contact tiresome. They undergo the months-long trek to escape from their lands to stake a claim in the south.

ADVENTURES

Fargon's armies seldom operate within the kingdom, utilized primarily in eastern defense preventing an invasion from kodiaks or fae anathema. The narros also defend the convoys between Fargon and their trading partners elsewhere. Occasionally, missions demand longer journeys, ones taking years to complete.

ALLIES

Fargon's alliance with Selkirk and Seliquam is common knowledge. They also share common ground with the Finer Fire Pits. Despite how close they are, Fargon does not enjoy any positive relations with Laudenia.

ENEMIES

Fargon is under threat from the various fae anathema and from bandits, some admittedly armed by the narros themselves in a perhaps overly successful attempt to entice the bears to turn their aggression to the boggs and skeggs.



HISTORY

Nations in the south had no idea Fargon even existed until convoys started appearing from the north. Up until that point, the only civilized outsiders they had encountered were the techan humans of Selkirk, with whom they forged a profitable trading agreement that persists to this day. Fargon's history until then wasn't tranquil by any sense. The first city built by the narros was a modest metropolis called Rhinforge which became very successful very quickly and led its ruler, Rarikon Baxs to declare himself king of everything he could see. He amassed a fortune in efforts to bribe kodiak and anathema to fight for his side in an attempt to conquer the known world. There was a fanatical expansion where the narros built city after city with few people to live in with the expectations that the narros would congregate in time under their singular emperor.

This didn't go well with the other fledging towns, and the other narros rose up behind a new ruler, Thalagos Gin. Gin razed Rhinforge to rubble and rebuilt his capital, Thos Thalagos, upon the ashes. Despite assumptions that Gin would make the same mistakes, he in turn began an extended rule defined by humility and respect. His first decree was to draw his narros back to the northern lands, abandoning many of the southern colonies to be repopulated by humans and other fae. His second decree was to re-establish the traditions of ancient narros, moving away from the greedy disposition of those like in the Finer Fire Pits. Despite scaling back the reach of the kingdom, Fargon rose quickly to be the largest narros nations ever seen on the Earth.

FINER FIRE PITS

(HEROIC)

"Foolish Humans. The best route is down, never up. I read their history—always building up. Up...why? What is up there? Clouds. Water. I can dig and get that and it would cost far less."

LOCATION

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The passing traveler is most likely to miss the Finer Fire Pits unless specifically looking for it. Completely subterranean, there are virtually no marks of civilization on the surface outside of the main gate. A sprawling kingdom contained within a single underground metropolis, the Pits occupy a patch of land once known as Rockford Illinois, stretching out for seventy-five kilometers in every direction, the largest single echan community in Canam. Technically, a portion of the Finer Fire Pits resides underneath the Kingdom of Kannos.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The narros of the Finer Fire Pits fit the clichéd mold of the dwarves read about in fiction. They grow their beards; they mine for riches; they treat other races like dirt though never to the point of goading armed conflict. At least these dwarves bathe, and despite their crusty demeanor to non-narros, those who live in the

Pits endorse an open gate-policy to outsiders. Everyone is welcome as long as they provide a function. It is not a tourist attraction, and the population disdains sightseers. Traders, merchants, miners, farmers and even armies are all welcome. Finer Fire Pits is extremely profitable, leading to the nation acquiring considerable influence compared to its neighbors. The militarization of the foundries could arm a nation in a week.

The side effect of this industry is a rather unhealthy atmosphere pervading the entire subterranean complex. It's altogether too hot, even in the winter months. Many outsiders can't stand the environment for more than a few days, probably an intentional design.

ADVENTURES

With tens of thousands of miles snaking underground, connecting the huge foundry chambers to smaller furnaces, colonies and mines, there is no short of adventure. A party of sellswords could earn a living for decades without ever walking down the same tunnel twice or even seeing the sun. There is no shortage of demand to protect the miners from the threats that lie in the depths.

ALLIES

Being a civilized fae nation, the narros of the Finer Fire Pits enjoy a healthy relationship with the elvish neighbors in Limshau and with the gimfen of Gnimfall, the latter helping design the foundries that define the landscape of the Pits. The narros even maintain a positive relationship with the human nations of Abidan and Kannos, though the general attitude to humanity is ironically cold given the heat generating from the nation of Finer.

ENEMIES

Like most fae nations, Finer Fire Pits abhor the internal and foreign policies of Baruch Malkut. The narros, like their fictional dwarven counterparts, also have a sworn ancient hatred against the pagus and tenenbri. Finally, they hold a special grudge against the Bugbears of Dagon, the skegg lords of the north whose constant raiding frequently disrupts the flow of much-needed supplies to the forges.

HISTORY

The Finer Vallis was claimed by the still living nation's founder, Garach (Garachthinakus) Glim, purchased from local humans hoarding the land on hopes of buying their way into a bastion. Glim and his followers carved out the first and largest cave—it wasn't discovered like the techans of Sierra Madre. A technology alliance with the gimfen provided the know-how to build the foundries and the dwarves never looked back. In its 400 year history, Finer Fire Pits has never suffered an attack by any sizable force despite facing small threats daily from unearthed abominations. In the present, Garach Glim continues to work alongside his comrades, delegating

his authority to a council of elders, all of whom defer to his wisdom when needed. However, many neighboring nations whisper accusations that Glim and his people keep themselves underground in order to prevent being dragged into a war.

IRON SONS (AMBIGUOUS)

"I've seen every horror this fantasy world could throw at me, so I know where the chaos will lead. This civility they parade around in, it's a farce, and it could be a generation, two maybe, until it crumbles. Bastion born are a sorry lot of cradle-crying newborns desperate to escape but too afraid to climb. We're the ones with the guns, the manpower, and most of all, the resolve. They can have their magic—we have the laws of the natural world."

LOCATION

Seemingly everywhere—the Iron Sons are known for operating dozens of cells across Canam. In every bastion, in dozens of atolls, there will be someone representing the famous mercenary company.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The Iron Sons' singular leader is General Chauk, though the organization rarely requires his guidance. Barely maintaining a public image, many people believe he either never existed in the first place or has been dead for decades. Chauk's doctrine is embraced by his many cells scattered about the world and they function autonomously, lacking little direction from quadrant commanders. There have been a few occasions where cells have united to tackle larger missions but there has yet to be a situation where there has been a general call to arms. With over a hundred cells comprised of between 5 and 500 personnel, the Iron Sons are stretched thin across Canam, though still numbering larger than any other mercenary company on the continent. It is each cell's responsibility to interpret Iron Son policy which best suits their environment. Being left to their own judgment, not all cells act alike, with some acting malicious while others civilized. Though their mission statement includes the annihilation of the world of magic and the retaking of nature by the will of man, some cells have tolerated fae involvement. There have been occurrences where a cell has been disavowed, even branded criminals by the rest of the organization. Given the number of cells across Canam, it's difficult for said groups to move through techan communities without being discovered.

ADVENTURES

There are both missions an Iron Sons cell undertakes on its own as well as those handed to them from above. These usually include missions promoting the organization's own agenda or those of bastions. Occasionally, cells are hired long-term to augment local military, though this usually only occurs with techan caravans or atolls.

Rarely do cells act altruistic but exceptions have been known to occur. Regardless, missions rarely involve the assistance of echan civilians, as this goes against the Iron Sons charter.

ALLIES

The Iron Sons are technically allies with most bastions, though some cities publicly denounce them. Because General Chauk has technically broken several bastion laws in the operation of the Iron Sons, he is considered a criminal. Many bastions have banned the Iron Sons in their cities though employ them for foreign work. Both Angel and York have employed the Iron Sons (despite Angel officially labeling them a terrorist organization, the Sons maintain a public message box just outside the gates of the bastion and never want for work in that region) as well as Selkirk on fewer occasions, but they have not been employed by Mann or Sierra Madre.

ENEMIES

The Iron Sons represent the worst of techan culture in the eyes of the echan world so are banned in Kannos, Abidan, and Baruch Malkut. Iron Sons are allowed to enter Limshau as long as they leave all their high-tech equipment at the gates, but all other fae cultures despise them. There are stories of whole cells vanishing in chaparran woods.

HISTORY

The Iron Sons are believed to have been around for about a hundred years and have gone through four commanders in that time, Chauk being the longest standing commander in the company's history. The founder was William Pentecost, a fanatical religious figure banned from Angel after gathering a cult of armed soldiers. Outcast, Pentecost led his people to what he believed was the new promised land where all machines would function, a valley where he would build his city of Topia. Alas, Pentecost never found his prophesized valley and the Cult of Iron Sons began leasing themselves out to wandering techan caravans and atolls. Pentecost vanished, was presumed killed, and left his fragmenting society to the first real general, Falco Young. Young adapted Pentecost's visions and the modern interpretation of the Iron Sons was born. The echo of their once religion fanaticism can still be heard today, though greatly muted.


KANNOS (HEROIC)

"Give me a horse and I will ride God down."

LOCATION

One of the largest kingdoms in Canam, Kannos is a sprawling land of plains, valleys, and rivers claiming most of the former northern Middle America east of the mountains, claiming (at least in name) large parts of the





lands once known as Montana, Wyoming, the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Manitoba. The borders of Kannos are vaguely defined, as controlled regions brush against the wildlands of Alpinas as well as the deadly Sana Marsh. Kannos is often considered an immense buffer zone preventing many of the wilder species from pushing into the more civilized nations of the east and south like Limshau, Abidan, Gnimfall and Finer Fire Pits. A low population density has resulted in wide expanses between towns and cities.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Kannos is known for livestock, horses, and a bizarre form of government. Basically, only those that own land can rule the people of said land. However, the economy is run by the farming and manufacturing industry, which landowners are not allowed to involve themselves in. They can only rent out a property and possess the land. Business owners have the wealth while the landowners set the policy. Despite such a strange arrangement, the “kingdom” of Kannos continues to function. The established ruler of the nation is determined by the family with the largest claims to property, despite not being even close to the richest. A royal family can remove themselves out of power by selling their land and going into business, forfeiting their claim to the throne but acquiring amazing wealth—something which has occurred more than once. Although this does mean that a wealthy businessman can sell his assets and buy his way onto the throne, the established king or queen is prohibited from altering the constitution: only a conclave of twenty-seven leading landowners with very specific and sometimes bizarre qualifications can alter the ultimate law of the land (the one time a king tried to usurp this power, his reign did not last very long).

The present monarch is Queen Bodika Nezekin, a woman with a manner as steely as her hair, who openly supports the war hounds calling for a preemptive strike against Baruch Malkut but cannot yet persuade those who hold the kingdom's purse strings to finance such an action.

Kannos cities are separated by ranches, military outposts, and “saddlements”—villages more built to accommodate resting mounts than their owners. One aspect of the nation a traveler won't find a lot of are temples, churches, or synagogues. For reasons historians find fascinating, a rational “naturalist” movement swept through the kingdom in its fledging decades, supported by the king. As royalty is determined by human ingenuity, the founding ruler Tarazed Matvala declared God as being unnecessary. There is no state religion and those establishing centers for worship are forced to pay taxes as much as any business. This has resulted in many religious centers branching into business or folding altogether. Religion and worship still occurs in Kannos—it's something which cannot be avoided—but its rarity is a shocking occurrence in such a fantasy world as modern Earth.

ADVENTURES

Kannos is a vast, expansive kingdom with no shortage of adventure. Despite being known for its flatlands, Kannos has its fair share of mountains, the most famous being the home of the infamous Kereptis Rifts and the catacombs he built from magic in order to store magic. As for serving the nation, Kannos is under constant attack in the west from puggs and boggs. From the south, the state enlists brave souls to venture in the Sana Marsh in hopes of finding a secret to end the curse there. Heading into the north finds the windy wastelands of Alpinas, along with skeggs, kodiaks, and possibly dozens of other undocumented beasts. The kingdom is also known throughout the continent for a tradition known as the Great Hunt, which the current ruler calls whenever a particularly dangerous monster appears within the realm: a fabulous reward is offered (paid for by the business owners most affected by the creature's depredations) to anyone who brings in the monster's head. The Great Hunt draws adventurers both echan and techan from across the land, for the reward is usually enough to set the winner up for life.

ALLIES

Kannos has a firm alliance with Abidan and an even stronger one with Limshau, probably the strongest bond with between any two nations in all of Canam. Kannos and Limshau share many basic philosophical principles, principles which prevent stronger ties with Abidan. Despite this, Abidan and Kannos still possess a solid peace treaty and friendly relations.

ENEMIES

Of all the nations of Canam, Kannos has been the loudest voice to start a war with Baruch Malkut. Despite not being directly attacked, the Kannos line has been unwavering in their defense of Limshau. Beyond rival kingdoms, Kannos is also under threat from all manners of monsters.

HISTORY

Kannos was a later kingdom formed after the collapse of the bastion of Appareci (which was itself built upon an old city called Billings, Montana. Unlike Sebring, Appareci was not destroyed, rather it just suffered too many disruption events in a highly saturated land and the people simply couldn't hold onto their technology. They adapted, the nation survived, and with no walls to govern them, their claims expanded. Appareci's great keep and the inner ward of the town that now surrounds it still show the signs of their techan past, although the steel-and-concrete buildings have subsequently become ornamented with buttresses, crenellations and gargoyles, and the machines have lost since sputtered and stopped. It was at some point that the first king, Tarazed Matvala, took the throne and established the state policy still being followed today. It was also around this time that diplomatic relations were forged

with the older nation of Limshau. Abidan would occur later and the three nations would form an alliance in hopes of pushing back the encroaching Baruch Malkut. Kannos hoped such an alliance would lead to a massive crusade with Kannos Cavalry as the spearfront. However, Limshau has stalled war in hopes of sowing the seeds of rebellion within the local populations, something which has yet to occur. Today, Kannos continues to defend against anathema from the west while maintaining trade and relations with allies to the east. It has made it their personal responsibility to clean out the Sana Marsh as well as cull the populations of anathema before it becomes a plague. Given such declarations, it's no surprise Kannos has one of the largest armies in Canam.

LAUDENIA (AMBIGUOUS)

"We look upon those below and they appear as ants...I find no illusion in this comparison. The manners and ways of insects should not bother us. It's a game of numbers and those with the most hoard over those with little. With an ear to heaven, we see how pointless it all is. Chaos begets magic and those who control the chaos control the universe."

LOCATION

No one is really sure where Laudenia is. Like an aerial Brigadoon, dozens if not hundreds of people across the globe claim to have spotted it briefly and then been unable to find it again, but the only reliable accounts have it drifting somewhere between Selkirk and Fargon, among the coastal mountains of the former Pacific Northwest.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

What's known is just conjecture. The Laudenians took to the sky in constructed keeps and flying vessels to avoid ground contact. Fae anathema come about because of the degradation of the fae over thousands of years. Being the oldest, the Laudenians are now the fewest, and fled to the skies in order to prevent further degradation. It was only a theory but it proved correct, and the legend of the Ascension was born—a network of castles floating about the clouds only the Laudenians had access to. Flying vessels from techan aircraft to magically amplified thermal ships have tried finding these keeps and rumors claim a few succeeded. There are legends of colossal citadels like Aeronopolis and Selmana, but the most sought after is Laudenia itself, the nexus of Ascension and the home to the majority of laudenians. Within their territory, most laudenians don't care much for the affairs of others, especially those on the ground, and it would take a lost to jostle them from their meditation.

ADVENTURES

Having any connection to Laudenia or the Ascension in general would be a rare one indeed, even if one was a native to the city. When one leaves, they seldom return, as the migrations of the floating keeps is known only to a few. The cities have been known to send caravans to the Earth, most often to either seek out lost magic, or more commonly, finding rare materials the elves have difficulty replicating with magic. Many of the ruling laudenians have a fascination for powerful magic, especially the legendary foundation anchors.

ALLIES

Laudenia maintains no contact with anyone and has no alliances.

ENEMIES

That being said, the empire in the sky also has no enemies to speak of, not unless you count time.

And dragons...maybe the occasional dragon.

HISTORY

Laudenians fled to the sky well before the fall of the First Hammer. When Attricana returned, so did the exalted fae. Limshau records claim only the *Alkanost* (the largest vessel) actually survived from the previous age, and everything, including the capital of Laudenia, had to be rebuilt. With the fae's extensive knowledge of magic, this wasn't hard. Today, the cities grow and change depending on the moods of the designers. After the laudenians secured their foothold in the sky, they cut themselves off from the ground world and declared their race apart from all matters of the surface. By general policy they avoid any conflict, even ones in their best interest. This is not the consensus of the entire population, only the majority of the ruling echelon. There are voices, even within the echelon, of taking are more interest in the world, as coming wars may be unavoidable.

LIMSHAU (HEROIC)

"Only by uniting and merging our knowledge with those of humans, narros, and gimfen, can we build a future."

LOCATION

Limshau is a large nation with indefinite borders given its proximity to Tranquiss and the Sana Marsh. The Continental Cross bisects the kingdom which occupies most of the lands once known as Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Illinois. The white-walled city of Limshau itself was built upon a grassy plain that was, in the distant past, the location of the town of Wichita, Kansas.





COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Limshau breaks many rules assumed integral to any nation. Although technically considered a monarchy, and its leader is called a king by everyone (except himself and anyone within earshot of him), the position is an elected one, with the winner ruling for the duration of his life or until he retires. That said, damaskans tend not to fix what isn't broken, and as a result the descendant of the city's founder, Ravenar Limshau, still rules the nation. Additionally, the vast majority of the nation dedicated most of its resources to the non-profitable pursuit of acquiring and documenting knowledge: everything from historical records to religious texts, techan engineering manuals, novels, plays, and comic books. Additional resources were spent on the cataloguing and protection of the millions of books and scrolls acquired in this nation-wide obsession. Being a custodian or librarian is not so much a profession as it is a calling, a life-long committed discipline. Each walled city is a glorified library with businesses and residences lodged between collections. Nowhere is this more clear than the namesake capital, with other cities occasionally having a lower ratio of books to people. Zorahn is committed more to the defense of the nation while Primmer holds the largest collection of printing presses. Limshau is also the most multi-ethnic kingdom in Canam, having a nearly equal population of humans and fae with the largest collection of half-fae found anywhere.

ADVENTURES

Beyond the fact that both librarians and custodians are sent on missions to either collect research or acquire lost or stolen books, Limshau also contracts out missions to those loyal to the nation. Very often these free-lances contain at least one custodian or librarian. Limshau's interests include missions into Tranquiss and the Sana Marsh as well as destabilizing the nation of Baruch Malkut.

ALLIES

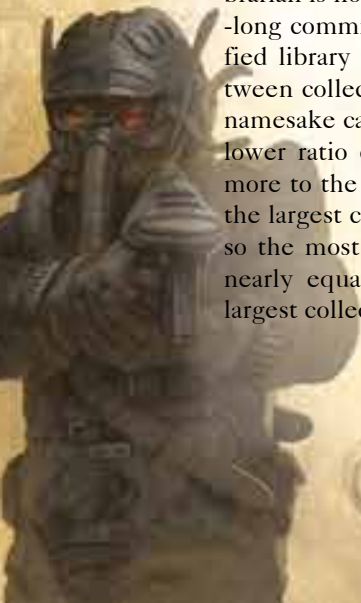
Limshau is a proud nation with many allies, including Kannos, Abidan, Gnimfall, and Finer Fire Pits. Librarians and custodians have representatives in each of their neighbors. Limshau even has connections with the bastions of Angel and York, and there is regular communication between Limshau and the enclave of Genai (many of whose residents have distant relatives in the city).

ENEMIES

Despite their commendable social structure and foreign policy, Limshau still has enemies, namely Baruch Malkut. They also come under threat from anathema from the west.

HISTORY

When Ravenar Limshau III arrived in Canam, he went about gathering followers and learning about the new world (not unlike what Vincent Savarice would do centuries later). When he found the fledging bastion of Angel, he discovered the potential of mankind and the



strengths they possessed in ingenuity which fae lacked. When Ravenar left to found his own nation, his followers numbered in the tens of thousands, many being techans skilled in architecture and engineering gleaned from millennia without magic. Together they built the most advanced nation of fantasy, cities with indoor plumbing and gas lamps, heat insulation, and fireproof buildings. Spreading from the central capital of Limshau, the nation expanded with similar looking white-walled city-libraries including Abarbanel, Athenaeum, Escorias, Kodex, and Warrageen. They later formed the Continental Cross—a singular highway connecting Angel to York. Limshau has never suffered from invasion or engaged in outright war, though it is expected to face a conflict eventually with Baruch Malkut when the overly tolerant and procrastinating fae finally come the realization that patience won't destroy their southern enemies.



Limshau is one of the more useful affiliations for a character to have, as its central location and cosmopolitan attitudes make it a good staging ground for adventures.

MANN

(VILLAINOUS)

"What you call a nightmare of brutalist architecture encouraging a fanatical view of the world where only the righteous judged by few are allowed to live in a technological utopia...I call home. Let's burn it to the ground."

LOCATION

Mann is an immense stronghold of near featureless interconnecting buildings so tall, they are within visual range of the rival bastion of York. The original island Mann sits upon was mostly washed away from past manmade global climate change, but a colossal reclamation project not only rebuilt it but expanded it as well. An outer wall now not only protects the inner city but also the landmass—not an inch of soil is visible from the water line. The island was once innocuously known as Martha's Vineyard.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Mann is the most technologically advanced bastion in Canam, rumored only rivaled by the bastion of Porto across the ocean. They are also fanatically protective of their privacy. About the only information circulating about Mann is that it fires upon anyone who approaches their self-claimed jurisdictional waters who isn't a citizen of their city and that it hunts down expatriates like criminals to be either extradited back to the city or executed. The city is also known for turning their devotion to technology into a religion which encompasses every facet of city life.

ADVENTURES

Mann seldom sends people outside of their walls, knowing full well that they may not be allowed back in. Even the slightest taint of magic can result in extermination. They have employed smaller mercenary companies occasionally, but when it comes to retrieving Mann citizens or lost technology, Mann sends its own personnel.

ALLIES

Mann has no allies.



I admit in early versions of Amethyst, bastion locations kept shifting locations. Angel shifted to Los Angeles to San Diego and then back again. Mann used to be Manhattan Island, but I felt that was too much an on-the-nose reference to a certain movie of my past. I also thought the concept made no sense, so I shifted it to Martha's Vineyard, east of Montauk Point. My layout designer then went and shifted both bastions to somewhere in Maine (could be Boston). Technically, I am right—York is most of what's left of Long Island and Newark while Mann lies in sight.



There are some advantages to being vague in a setting book, but it also tends to infuriate collaborators - I've learned in the course of editing this book that I'd been hugely wrong about some locations for years. Even with the directions provided here, there are bound to be some places that aren't easy to pinpoint. Also, published adventures may have a certain amount of travel time built in which doesn't necessarily match up with the canonical locations. Best thing to do is not sweat it - if it bothers you, invent some reason for why it takes two weeks to travel a distance you should be able to cover in two days, otherwise just ignore it and hope nobody notices.

ENEMIES

Everyone, up to and including some of its own citizens. Mann's crusade involves nothing less than the elimination of all life touched by magic. Oddly enough, Mann's dogma also insists that only their way of life is to be allowed, so bastions like York, Selkirk, and Angel—known to practice certain measures of tolerance to the outside world—are fated for elimination as well. There is no one outside of the bastion of Mann that those on the inside don't look down upon.



HISTORY

Like many bastions, the history of Mann is marred in mystery, but in Mann's situation, even the origin of the city's construction remains a conundrum, with theories including that the city is a gift from God, the result of man's last forays into nanotechnology, or the consequence of discovered alien knowledge.

PAGUS WARBANDS

(VILLAINOUS)

"We are the brush in which the master paints. Cleaned of all pigment, we await a stain to define us. If our gods fail to direct us, the blood of society will paint the canvas."

LOCATION

Pagus warbands are concentrated mostly in the secluded lands of Apocrypha though quite a few have been spotted in the rest of Canam. Pagus have a natural fear of water and mountains unless their wills are overridden by shemjaza or dragon, and have such kept mostly in their nation. Exceptions have occurred and attacks have been reported as far south as Sierra Madre.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The modern pagus are descended from the original strain of elves corrupted by the fall of Ixindar. They despise all other fae and find their various cultures repulsive. Set to their own devices, pagus generally don't exhibit any positive emotions and are incapable of feeling anything other than hatred. They respect power and will answer respectfully to only that which they have no hopes in defeating. Although able to respect more powerful enemies, pagus will not stop an attack if they believed themselves capable of winning, and as such will die not realizing they were overmatched. Only faced against clearly superior commanders will pagus fall in line, and thus far, only dragons have been able to do this. The only exception are the shemjaza which the pagus are programmed to follow blindly. Despite being corruptions of Ixindar, the pagus still carry with them the echo of Attricana, and left without supervision, turn wild and unpredictable. With no underlying fae culture or even a place in the fae ladder, pagus generally fall into tribes and begin developing unique traditions based on their warlike nature. A few tribes have actually acted civil in certain circumstances under the leadership of wiser minds.

ADVENTURES

Pagus generally don't undertake or offer missions. They find a village or caravan to raid and then raid them. Pagus don't think three or even two moves ahead. They only care about satisfying their own immediate needs. Civilized pagus tribes, few that they are, have issues surviving against their own kind the racism of their enemies.

ALLIES

Depending on the tribe, pagus can sometimes depend on other tribes or typhox dragons, but that's about it.

ENEMIES

Pagus are hated by most everybody, even their own kind. Just about everyone would rather see them wiped off the Earth.

HISTORY

In an event known as the Fall, the black star of Ixindar swept over the Earth, and in that moment, a million fae rose up and walked away from their families and their villages. When they were seen again, they had lost their entire fae identity and resembled blank-faced organic automata slaved under the voice of their living god, Mengus. A fast reproductive cycle created an army the other fae had troubles dealing with. Most pagus were killed by the first Hammer but managed to return with the reopening of the gates millions of years later. It didn't take long for their numbers to grow. However, lacking the unifying voice of Mengus, many pagus have started to act uncontrollably, going insane, and attacking indiscriminately. Worse still—in the eyes of other followers of Ixindar—some pagus have begun acting civil, regaining some measure of self-control. This is all believed to be a fragment of their chaotic origins not completely flushed away by corruption. Pagus are still programmed to follow the voice of Mengus, or in her absence, the voice of her champions, but this need of total control has shown the forces of evil that the pagus can no longer be relied upon to be the singular force to wipe the planet clean of chaos.

SALVABROOKE

(HEROIC)

"I remember reading about this constructed amusement park in Earth's past where people would pay to interact with fairy tales, where magic was a fabrication of strings and electronics. You could ride wooden dragons and play fantasy with actors in rubber suits. This is just like that... only the fairy tales are real.

The dragons are still wood though."

LOCATION

Salvabrooke is a small civilization by Canam standards though is still the largest population of gimfen one can find in the world. A single large everlasting oak tree marks the only unconcealed entrance to the valley, believed to have been built over the ruins of an old city known as Salt Lake, though the geography has altered considerably since then.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Salvabrooke's geography makes it extremely difficult to find or even gain entrance to the valley without the native gimfen discovering it. Most general travelers ap-



proach from the western gateway, marked by a magically imbued oak tree rumored to be the extension of a fallen chapparan that was buried at that spot. The gimfen welcome outsiders but discourage many from staying very long. The entire economy of the nation (which is not much more than a scattering of towns within a day's walking distance) is based on recreation, generating income from visiting tourists. Like Finer Fire Pits, there is some revenue earned from manufacturing and farming, but the highest earnings come from the leisure industry. Every form of fantasy can be entertained and fae from across the world have gathered to earn money showcasing their uniqueness. Salvabrooke is part circus, part freak show, part burlesque house, and in some places, part bordello.

ADVENTURES

The humorous irony is that under normal circumstances, Salvabrooke would be considered an adventure, though one where no one's lives were at stake. Salvabrooke is a popular destination for techans looking to encounter the outside fantasy world without the hardships that face the people that actually live there. However, under the surface, Salvabrooke is constantly monitoring the migration patterns of nearby anathema, who often come very close to stumbling into the valley. Salvabrooke also operates a diligent police force to make sure tourists behave (while at the same time turning a blind eye to the gimfen pickpockets, confidence tricksters, and fraudulent sellers of knockoff goods, which are treated as 'part of the experience.')

ALLIES

Salvabrooke technically has no allies as it has made no attempts to forge treaties with any neighbors. Despite this, it is expected that if the gimfen were to come under threat, Kannos and Limshau would rush to defend.

ENEMIES

That being said, Salvabrooke also has no real enemies as they are too small to be a concern to anyone. Even anathema mostly leave them alone, since actually reaching the valley is far more difficult than seeking easier prey elsewhere.

HISTORY

Salvabrooke emerged very organically over several centuries as gimfen continued to congregate in the valley beyond the lone tree. Although not resulting in conflict, these were fae that swore against the technically curious gimfen, creating a bizarre schism in the species-identical gimfen focusing on a different aspect of their stereotype. Many of their kind fall in between, but where gimfen engineers dedicate themselves to learning about the machines of man, the playful gimfen of Salvabrooke only care about joviality and relaxation. In fantasy books, these were different species, gnomes and halflings. The evolution to a nation-wide amusement

park was a slow process starting with one town and expanding to others. The defining traits of the valley are only a hundred years old, but since then, the population of the valley has exploded, mostly from gimfen immigrants but also from outsider looking to join the industry. The visiting population has been known to shift from a few hundred to tens of thousands depending on season and periodic festivals. The recent arrival of techan tourists in the last fifty years has caused an economic boon, and the strangest visual marker of progress as huge echan terrain transports shuffle about in echan villages looking for parking.

SELIQUAM

(HEROIC/AMBIGUOUS)

"Most fantasy worlds in fiction are all too small, so that walking from empire to empire wouldn't take more than a day, lest the book be more about the journey. That's where I'm from, a fantasy world within one."

LOCATION

The Seliqum Federation occupies the lands once known as southern British Columbia and northern Washington state, including Vancouver and the other coastal islands, Haida Gwaii, and the Olympic Peninsula, with most of the nations concentrated around the valley of the former Fraser River (now known as the River Seliqum). It is a vibrant landscape featuring every type of topography contained in a small space.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Oftentimes considered a forgotten land, Seliqum is surrounded on nearly all sides by predatory anathema and magically imbued beasts. As such, the civilized fae and human settlements have gathered together into localized communities ranging from a few connected villages to small nations. These alliances are defined more through proximity and shared threats than ethnic or racial similarities. Even in the remote rainforests, there is some accepted mingling between chapparans and their neighbors. There are accepted tolerances within Seliqum that would be appalling in larger nations.

This does equate Seliqum somewhat to the United Nations of Earth's past—in other words, almost completely ineffectual as a governing body, filled with petty squabbling, divided by centuries-old grudges, mostly paralyzed by a general inability to compromise, and politically dominated by a small handful of powerful member states that favor their own goals over the general good. If the anathema threat were to suddenly vanish, it's generally assumed that the tenuous agreements between these nations would crumble. Until then, Seliqum stands as an inexplicable microcosm of the entire continent—one still naïve of the true evils waiting to infect the land.



ADVENTURES

Finding adventure is not hard. Nearly every caravan travelling from town to town runs the risk of being raided by feral monsters or less civilized folk. There are those that don't recognize political borders or ethnic tolerances. Mercenaries have been paid by one nation to attack another and then receive money by their targets for the counterattack. Hostile landscapes sit over hills; dungeons wind within every hill.

Seldom are people hired for missions outside of Seliquam, but there is no ending of quests within in. As an affiliation, one must be specific as to which nation to ally with, as this can create negative relationships with other Seliquam nations. This is the only affiliation you can have both a positive and a negative relationship with. The only organization that is united under the banner of Seliquam is the Train Guard, a peacekeeping force only tasked with defending the region from outside threats, not to handle internal conflicts. Someone can also forge a relationship with all of Seliquam by making a connection with the Grand Council, the united governing body which attempts to keep the nation's common interests inline.

ALLIES

Seliquam's only known alliances comes from Selkirk via the town of Gateway and from Fargon traders in the north.

ENEMIES

The only known enemy of Seliquam other than Seliquam itself is the region of Xixion and the invading anathema.

HISTORY

During Rarikon Baxs' fanatical expansion of Fargon (before it was known as Fargon), the narros erected cities and mines almost all the way to Xixion. The downside was that there was virtually no narros to inhabit them, and when the Bax Empire collapsed under the weight of Thalagos Gin's crusade, many of these southern cities were abandoned save for a few proud and belligerent dwarves unwilling to walk away from their own accomplishments. Human and other fae migrated into the region afterwards to claim many of these abandoned cities, though most were left to be overgrown by ferocious vegetation. These cities became the capitals of the first republics, most of which remain today. Others grew from smaller adjacent towns sharing mutual interests.

The chaos to geography from magical saturation created hundreds of lakes and rivers, forcing most travel between nations by boat. This division created an environment where the nations within Seliquam developed at different rates and into different methods of government. The Grand Council eventually formed when the infighting grew so extreme that the region was in dire danger of being overrun: while it does little to foster re-

lations between the nations, at least they are more inclined to snipe at each other with sternly worded missives from across their desks than with well aimed rifles from across the river.

SELKIRK

(HEROIC)

"Six in the day

Six in the shade

Half at play

While the others trade

A shovel in the ground

Beats a rifle in the hand

When the dwarves come round

Charge the military band"

LOCATION

Selkirk resides inside a mountain range of the same name, east of Seliquam, nearby the ruins of an old techan town called Revelstoke. Virtually isolated, only a few roads exist from the colony, the most well-known being the pass of Dianaso which runs from Selkirk to Fargon in the north.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Selkirk is an extremely remote bastion few people have accidentally stumbled upon. It is the only bastion to openly maintain trade with echan nations, notably Fargon. Isolation has also spared the colony direct attack save for a few flying creatures. As such, Selkirk's military only encounters resistance when escorting convoys to trading posts. Still functioning manufacturing facilities are one of the few aspects of Selkirk still keeping it as a bastion, as the miners seldom encounter any of the high technology of the upper levels in their day-to-day lives. Selkirk uses lighter than air vehicles and magnetically elevated ground vehicles and trains.

ADVENTURES

Every square inch around Selkirk is teeming with potential "adventure"—if you equate adventure with terrifying risks no person should ever put themselves through. The hostile landscape would be enough, but couple that with bands of anathema wandering the forests that love to prey on humans when not at war with the kodiaks. Selkirk, unlike other bastions, is not self-sufficient, so must trade with outsiders like Seliquam and Fargon in order to survive. These caravans need constant protection and nearly every one suffers an attack.

ALLIES

Selkirk prides itself in being forthcoming to strangers, rare that they are, and maintains successful trade and military treaties with both Seliquam and Fargon. Trade agreements have also been established with Kannos, Angel, and a half-dozen techan atolls around the region, though these are sporadic.



ENEMIES

Officially, like all bastions, Selkirk has an enemy in Mann despite never having contact with that bastion. Beyond this, Selkirk has suffered direct attack from a few dragons and from creatures uncovered in the process of mining. The anathema around the region are also a nuisance but little more than that as they often make bad climbers.

HISTORY

Unlike other bastions, Selkirk is well aware of the fact it started life as a fallout shelter, but what is less known is that said shelter began life as a remote mine which became renown internationally when remarkable though inexplicable deposits of rare metals were discovered, including silver, gold, platinum, and most extraordinarily, rhodium—perhaps the largest deposit on the planet. As the population grew, the city quickly ran out of supplies. With inadequate resources to develop renewable staples, Selkirk began reaching out to the outside world, quickly discovering the elves of Laudenia, the dwarves of Fargon, and other magical oddities. Selkirk has maintained its isolation out of necessity rather than choice, protecting its resources, knowing full well that it may all stop working or dry up one day, and the colony would then be unceremoniously abandoned.

SIERRA MADRE

(HEROIC)

“Our sun is manufactured. Our food is engineered. We live in a chamber forged by magic into a Euclidian geometric shape. We accept that. It’s unexceptional.”

LOCATION

Despite assumptions, Sierra Madre is not located under the ruins of Mexico City. It’s in fact Toluca, starting life, like most bastions, as a fallout shelter. Its distant and subterranean location has spared it from most conflict, though it also means that those from the bastion are the least experienced of the outside world.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Sierra Madre is an isolated bastion stationed underground under the ruins of an old city still with the remnants of old mankind atop. Unlike Selkirk, isolated by geography, Sierra Madre is isolated by distance and by choice. The torus is the largest enclosed chamber ever recorded, lit by an artificial sun and populated by a culture only rivaled by the bastion of Mann in its technological advancement.

Having pushed out the remaining fragments of Bronze Age religions centuries ago, what remains is a spiritual belief that endorses an immortal soul without the belief in deities.

ADVENTURES

Adventure is a broad word, and for the people of Sierra Madre it mostly means including a unique ingredient in supper. They seldom want to leave and with a battery of automated weaponry and a wasteland filled with zoological nightmares protecting their territory, they don’t have to. Those that do are truly extraordinary in their capacity for curiosity—to see a world that frightens others. Missions from Sierra Madre come because of a need of some vital piece of knowledge the city lacks, perhaps technology from a rival bastion (Sierra Madre’s technological advancement tends to be very idiosyncratic, and many advances a lower-tech bastion would take for granted can be completely unknown). Perhaps a prior expedition was lost. Regardless, to see anyone from Sierra Madre is rare.

ALLIES

Although the bastion has made contact with both York and Angel, there is no official treaty with either. The nearest nations to Sierra Madre are echan and formal relations have never been established.

ENEMIES

Oddly enough, Sierra Madre is the only bastion Mann has not outright declared an adversary. Although there are plenty of wandering monsters in the area most are unintelligent primordial beasts, and none of them have coalesced into a worthy threat. As the bastion is easier to access than Mann, Sierra Madre has also been targeted by rival techans looking to pilfer valuable technology.

HISTORY

The catalyst of expansion from the original fallout shelter began with the uncovering of a bizarre magma pocket, the result of the magical saturation after the opening of Attricana. The chamber was named after its distinctive shape, the Torus, though later the entire expanse took on the name of the shelter, Sierra Madre. The torus is so large that after 450 years, the city has yet to expand to the surface. There are rumors that Sierra Madre has records which predate Attricana’s open but such records have been locked up away from prying eyes.

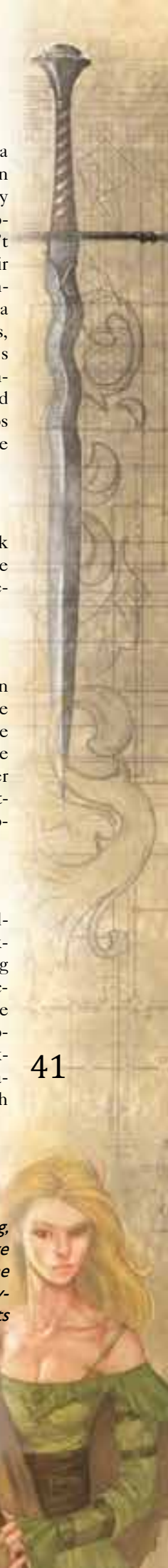
THORNSHROUD

(VILLAINOUS)

“Don’t think of this as a good death. It means nothing, just as your life was up to this moment. Those you gave your life to protect will die soon after you. And in the timeframe of galaxies, everything you have done, everything your ancestors did, or anything your descendants will ever do...is meaningless.”

LOCATION

Unknown, though it is believed he is in Canam.



COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Thornshroud is a legend to most, so even common knowledge is scarce. He is described as little more than a decaying head atop an enchanted armor of such impressive complexity, some have confused it as being mechanical in origin. In the ranking of followers of Ixindar, it is believed Thornshroud is a singular authority answerable to no one. He can command pagus, shemjaza, and even dragons, though it is thought to the latter he has not extended this authority. The first rumors of Thornshroud emerged from books smuggled from the other side of the world but only date back about 75 years, meaning he is a recent creation. These same rumors compare his construction to that of the famous legend of Gebermach, the living machine which killed Amethyst. Gebermach was created by Mengus but since Mengus has been silent in the modern age, no one is sure who built Thornshroud.

ADVENTURES

Thornshroud rarely employs those not corrupted by Ixindar, and like dragons, he respects intelligent creatures willingly swearing their souls to Ixindar. However, he takes issue with those believing themselves a higher authority or more powerful than him. Any tasks he would dispense would be those to destabilize echan nations or raid villages. Thornshroud is also an admirer of powerful magical items.

ALLIES

Thornshroud is a devout follower of Ixindar, so is an ally to any creature sworn to the same faith. That being said, his ranking also means most all other creatures of darkness must answer to him.

ENEMIES

Basically any creature valuing individuality and free will should be frightened of Thornshroud.

HISTORY

42 Thornshroud was a member of a powerful village in the Far East dedicated to the eradication of all creatures of Ixindar. At some point, this individual was captured and turned into that which he had sworn to destroy. It's unknown how much of the original mind is intact, though Thornshroud has acted in ways indicating his memories suffered little undamaged. He has yet to show any remorse for his actions and appears to be wholly enveloped by corruption. Despite this, he was never sent back to destroy his village and was instead set across the ocean to Canam in an attempt to marshal the uncontrolled armies of Ixindar. The pagus were running wild and the dragons operated on their own agenda. Meanwhile, the shemjaza were having difficulty controlling the pagus. Thornshroud's singular purpose is to muster these armies and get them to begin their crusade to wipe out all uncorrupted life in Canam.

TYPHOX DRAGONS

(VILLAINOUS)

"We command our people with absolute discipline. The fae continue to devolve into discord. The universe is on our side. In the end, patience assures our victory."

LOCATION

Unlike archon dragons, typhox dragons do have a central location and it is, unfortunately, located in Canam, claiming the immense patch of land known once as Eastern Canam starting with Quebec. This region is thankfully locked out from the rest of Canam thanks to the widening of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and engorging of the great lakes into one singular body of water. The land pass has also been obstructed by a hazardous mountain pass that rose from the Earth after the opening of Attricana to ensure the pagus were kept in place.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The typhox dragons are not loyal followers of Ixindar, though they are a corruption of them, same as the shemjaza and pagus. But they follow their own wants and desires rather than the orders from Mengus, which explains their separation from Ixindar and their migration to Canam. They still wish the destruction of Attricana and the elimination of all creations of chaos and have enslaved the local pagus to serve them rather than the shemjaza which are trying to wrench control back. Typhox dragons fall into a bizarre hypocrisy—they are corruptions of Ixindar, and wish the destruction of anything they can't control, but they also don't want to destroy their own individuality, the ultimate outcome if Mengus were to be victorious. Typhox dragons are even more conceited than archon dragons, and the titles they adopt tend to be as grand as they are unpleasant.

ADVENTURES

Typhox Dragons employ servants and will reward loyalty when it is placed before personal safety. It's actually an unhealthy business practice for evil creatures to kill loyal servants, and most typhox dragons are intelligent enough to keep their followers loyal by not killing them for the slightest mistake. This extends to anything non-pagus, as the corrupted fae have no choice and typhox have little respect for that. But other fae or humans which come willingly may be pleasantly rewarded, especially if the dragon's ego is stroked. This really only applies to fallen dragons as cancer dragons are nearly insane and death dragons prefer to kill their subjects and raise them as mindless drones.

ALLIES

Typhox dragons have no friends. Especially not other typhox dragons. You would think other denizens of Ixindar would fall into this category but typhox dragons dance to a different tune, in that other creatures corrupted by Ixindar tend not to dance at all.

ENEMIES

Typhox believe the entire world is their enemy, and they are most likely right. They have an especially hot-blooded hatred for archon dragons and laudenians. They also dislike other creations of Ixindar but this is because they don't want their monopoly of evil in Canam threatened. If Mengus or one of her emissaries were to emerge, typhox dragons would have no choice but to fall in line.

HISTORY

The first typhox was a fallen dragon named Goch of Wrath, who either brought Mengus to this world or was the first corrupted. The others were most certainly corrupted, starting with the most powerful (the other Lords of Ažhi), Baenis of Gorge, Balaur of Debauch, Lindis of Avarice, Lotan of Scorn, Verkelen of Spite, and Zilant of Indolence. They became the first generals of Ixindar but their overpowering chaotic origins took the best of them and they soon parted ways to follow their own wicked desires. Most other fallen dragons are their descendants, though the wyms have no family feeling and most do not even bother to acknowledge their lineage. Cancer dragons emerged from an Ixindar curse upon normally kind-hearted archon dragons. Death dragons followed later as several became enamored with the Ixindar-related field of necromancy. Because of the difficulty in suppressing the personalities of the typhox dragons, Mengus would later create the shemjaza in the image of the fae to enact her will, leaving the dragons largely to their own devices. In the new age, the typhox dragons congregated in Apocrypha and Ažhi Dahaka to distance themselves from Ixindar. They remain their still, building up their armies waiting for the day they can sweep across the continent and wipe out all life not under their control.

YORK

(AMBIGUOUS)

"I sit 'ere watching de' game, enjoying a calzone, and in walks one of dem elfs. Away from the 'Walk. Struttin' like he can walk in'ere and just order a sarsaparilla or something. He obviously needs to be told where he can and cannot be. There is an order and there are signs... and I know dem types can read."

LOCATION

Where Angel is the most populous bastion, York is the largest in landmass, encompassing the entirety of what was once called Long Island, west to what was once Newark. The fae-proof fence that encircles the bastion spreads out to include Staten Island, Yonkers, and even Trenton. Most of this is dedicated to farmland with most of the city secluded to the Village Wall which separates Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and the remainder of the island from the rest of the continent. Unlike other bastions, the names of these boroughs still persist. York is also blessed with have few immediate threats.

It brushes borders with Gnimfall and is near Abidan, and Limshau.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

York is frozen in time; for five hundred years magical saturation and limited resources has prevented the bastion from advancing far beyond the 20th century—at least on the surface. To protect the city, its most primitive buildings are the ones most people see, with the advanced power, security, and manufacturing facilities kept beyond this near façade of unsophisticated architecture. The most obvious example of this contradictory presentation is the inclusion of robotic servants which permeate the city. York has never been able to keep back the influx of fae but the lack of aggression and initial positive relations has created a community of surface tolerance. A lesser known fact of these robots, which York tries to actively repress, is that they were designed and built with the collusion of the gimfen from Gnimfall.

ADVENTURES

York has a very large standing military and utilizes it beyond its fae-proof fence often. York also employs contracted security companies to beef up areas of the fence where anathema attacks are more common. York doesn't have to worry about attacks from the north because of Abidan and threats from the west are pacified by Gnimfall and Limshau. However threats from the south have been increasing as anathema continue to reproduce. York also has to contend with sea creatures as well, and they have ranged from the annoying to the epic.

ALLIES

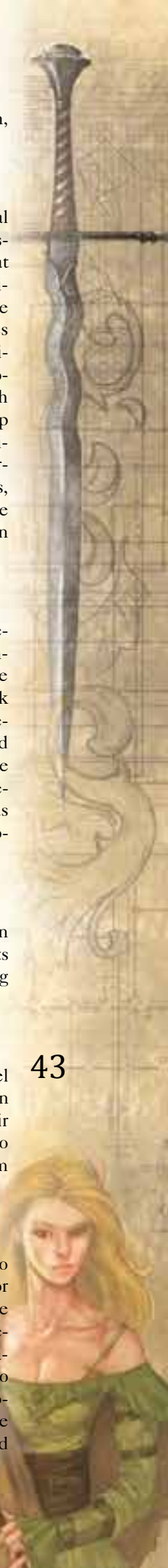
York's main treaties with Gnimfall and Limshau remain the strongest though York also has non-aggressive pacts with Abidan as well. They also have a long standing trade alliance with Angel which has born little fruit.

ENEMIES

York's primary adversary is the sinister looking citadel glowering at them from over the horizon—the bastion of Mann, which has sworn to destroy York first in their eventual crusade to retake the planet. That has yet to occur. There have also been issues with fanatics from Baruch Malkut.

HISTORY

It is entirely possible that York is the only bastion to have survived the intervening centuries. Either that or the culture managed to rebuild very quickly atop the ruins of the old metropolis. The city was unable to prevent the initial influx of curious fae though the installation of the now famous fae-proof fence limited access to areas with unregulated tech in order to prevent disruption. This gave York its famous inconsistent tone as the visible technology of the city becomes more advanced



the further one travels from the fae-walks—specifically the Broad Way, the main thoroughfare which connects York’s western gate to the docks in the East. Fae intolerance also increases the further they are found away from these regions. Initial altruism came as a result of technology agreements with the gimfen which were able to design a self-sustaining robotic force known as zeros which enable York to build its infrastructure much faster than previously expected. Generations later, these zeros still exist, self-evolved from their primitive ancestors.

BACKGROUNDS

The world is a vast and varied. Cultures and customs have developed with no outside influence for centuries. Huge kingdoms have formed and claimed land, occasionally absorbing smaller ones in the process.

With man, there were immeasurably different traditions despite being a single species. This is a unique aspect of man the fae do not share. Narros in Fargon are the same as the narros in the Finer Fire Pits, although human influence resulted in the damaskans of Limshau deviating from the traditional damaskans of Damaska across the ocean. Where on Earth a player chooses to nurture her character can radically alter the result, influencing her chosen class and even her destiny.

In *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*, backgrounds are a broad concept describing a character’s suit of skills, talents, knowledge, and experience. However, in *Amethyst*, some backgrounds offer additional unique benefits for those who invest in them more deeply. Not all backgrounds feature these benefits, and they often have background point requirements—you have to spend a minimum number of points on the background to gain this additional unique feature. Moreover, *Amethyst* backgrounds also give examples on which situations can offer the invested background bonuses, though these suggestions are just that and cases can be made for alternative approaches.

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Just to be clear, the talents under backgrounds do not come at the price of background points—they are an award if you spend those points. You still get those background points.

There are three types of backgrounds, regional, discipline, and supernatural. The more points spent on a background, the more dominant that path in your life. There are no limits on the number of backgrounds chosen (assuming you have points to spend), though supernatural paths do have limitation in themselves (see later).

Regional: You originate from a unique location. You are born and live the majority of your life in this territory. You are not required to take this background if you are from this region; likewise, you could have

been born elsewhere, but still take the background if you were raised or spent a significant part of your life in the region.

Discipline: Although some disciplines are rooted in specific regions, this background is for those that commit themselves to a specific field of expertise. There is no recommended class choice when choosing a discipline.

Supernatural: There are only three ways to tap into magic: the words of Pleroma, the mixing of elements (alchemy), and the natural unexplained gifts of an exclusive few. You possess exceptional abilities that defy all reason. Some ascribe it to a divine gift while others view it as the next step in the evolution of the species. Others simply believe themselves especially sensitive to the saturation of Attricana. When choosing this background, you are a distinct individual. This gift is bestowed from birth.

Limitations: You can only select one supernatural background, no matter the number of points invested in it. All supernatural backgrounds are echan by default and as such you disrupt technology. You have a saturation value of 20 which can never drop below this value unless your soul switches from Attricana to the negative energies of Ixindar (see Corruption). Only one character in a player group should be permitted to choose a supernatural background and a supernatural path should only be selected during character generation.

ANCIENT WUXIA

Path: Regional

Suggested Applications: Religion, mysticism, acrobatics, athletics.

Possible Origins: Genai or any Narros community.

Martial Hero (+4): All one-handed melee weapons which inflict 1d4 damage now inflict 1d6 damage.

Champion Feat: If you spend a recovery (for any reason), you also gain resistance all damage 17+ until the end of your next turn.

The narros love to take credit for influencing the ancient Asian martial arts, as well as their mythology and culture. They place a great deal of pride in this and were happy to see the pillars of their disciplines replicated and honored across the millennia, remaining virtually unchanged on their return. Some humans don’t appreciate the assumption, claiming the narros had no influence in the development of human martial arts. Damaskans certainly make no such claim and only admit to a mild cultural inspiration; those from Limshau absorbed so much human and particularly Asian culture into their nation, it’s hard to determine what was fae-influenced and what was originally a human concept. Despite this disagreement, three similar styles of unarmed combat emerged in three different regions in Canam. It is thought those from Limshau gleaned theirs from their Genai neighbors when so many residents of Angel left to help build the empire of

knowledge. The narros from Fargon were too remote to make this claim. Their discipline stems back to the old age, where they perfected their art over thousands of years; despite their pride, it irritates them profoundly to know that humanity was able to create more complicated systems with greater physical and mental conditions in a tenth the time.

One trained in this practice may prefer weapons endowed with magic, but a follower of wuxia is not helpless while unarmed. This path does not encourage violence. Instead, it is designed for self-control and mental clarity. Many narros and humans teach this discipline alongside book studies and commit time to its practice as another might perform aerobics in the morning. Some practitioners refuse to apply their discipline in a violent fashion, believing to do so would be a failure of their philosophy. For others, to commit this practice to violence is a logical progression. Some take this to an extreme, using it only to benefit themselves. Others are considered heroes, fighting for

noble causes and refusing to stand idle while the innocent suffer. These adventurers love sparring and often duel aggressively with allies to test their mettle and skill. Though not a requirement for friendship, it goes a long way to match a wuxia in combat. Even enemies matching their skills in a fair duel will garner respect.

BARUCH THUGGEE

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: Human

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (South), stealth, wetlands and woodlands survival.

Assassin Ways (+4): You are counted as +1 your level when calculating your sneak attack damage. If you do not have the Sneak Attack class feature, once per round you deal +1 damage per level on a hit with a melee weapon attack against an enemy engaged with one or more of your allies.



Marshes and swamps cover most of the countryside in the kingdom of Baruch Malkut. A massive landscaping effort connects distant towns and cities by roadways. This has led the more nefarious segments of Malkut society to adapt their skills to the surrounding environment. Bandits and outlaws master subterfuge and stealth, utilizing the natural cover of the landscape. A few have found a calling within the military, working as spies or assassins. These individuals are known as Baruch thuggees.

Thuggees leaving the "Blessed Kingdom" for any reason find their title a burden or a curse. Declaring yourself a thuggee in Limshau or Gnimfall may likely net you jail time or expulsion. Openly wielding your title in a free house may get you executed. You must keep your identity secret, either because of a mission or to prevent a lynching. Most following this path by choice seldom have problems using their training to net themselves personal benefit, as their morals and values have already been stretched. The qualifying mission for the order is to sneak into a rival city and slay a figure of importance. A few rare cases found the final deed abhorrent to their nature and escaped, carrying their training with them into the outside world. Some try to find new lives pursuing a nobler course. These are declared traitors, with bounties are placed upon their heads.

BASTION-BORN — ANGEL

Path: Regional

Prerequisites: Human, born and raised in Genai or Angel.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge, engineering, sciences, techan knowledge, vehicle operation

Good Neighbors (+1): You gain Sinitic as a bonus language.

Of the World (+3): If you fail a check related to knowledge of the fantasy world, you can reattempt it with a +2 bonus: if you succeed the second time, your information is mostly wrong, but there is a sizeable grain of truth to it (although you have no way of knowing what is true and what isn't until you try to apply that knowledge).

Although Angel does not fear the outside world as much as Sierra Madre and Mann, they still insist on keeping that world as far away as possible, erecting a vast wall to keep the enchanted world out; despite their traditions and general acceptance of fantasy, even Genai residents are still techan. Despite their voluntarily isolation, those from Angel are far from ignorant of the world beyond the walls – they just wish it wasn't there. Angel characters are not exposed to the enchanted world for much of their youth. Television doesn't talk about it. Books don't discuss it. Even schools avoid the topic. Like tales of oversized mutant rabbits carrying baskets of eggs or jolly obese contortionists offering gifts to children, eventually the truth is revealed, not consciously, but because it becomes increasingly

impossible to deny. With the semi-echan town of Genai within the walls, one would expect Angel residents to be tolerant to the ways outside, but the adverse is actually true. The purpose of the wall is not just to keep enchantment out, but to shield themselves from having to acknowledge the reality of what's around them. Very few leave. Those who do are either nomads hoping to find riches, part of a defense force who patrol the outside of the wall hunting down the raiders that plague the forests around the city, or followers of childish dreams inspired by excursions into the echan town hidden in the shadow of the southeastern wall.

BASTION-BORN — MANN

Path: Regional

Prerequisites: Human, born and raised in Mann.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (East Cross), engineering, science, techan knowledge, vehicle operation.

Expertise (+3): Your bonus to science or techan knowledge checks with this background increase by +1.

Mann characters face an uphill struggle. Outcast, they are prohibited to return to their bastion of birth. Mannites either take jobs in other bastions or they roam the outside world, selling what they find in echa to trade in techa. To gain the benefits from choosing this background, a character must have lived in Mann for some time. Perhaps they committed a crime or took a liking to the outside world and were ostracized for it. Leaving might have been by choice, but the separation was not amicable, for Mann is jealous of its secrets and prefers to 'disappear' rather than banish subversive elements. The Mann character is most likely alone and clearly inexperienced with dealing with the outside world. Despite the circumstances of her escape, she may be the most fundamental in her beliefs. Mannites not only dislike magic, they despise it. Among other techans, the person from Mann is looked upon with respect and trepidation. Mann is the most advanced bastion in Canam, as well as the most mysterious. No one attempting to enter has ever survived and those that have escaped have a mark on their heads, for the knowledge locked in their minds is too dangerous a commodity to be allowed to roam outside the bastion.

BASTION-BORN — SELKIRK

Path: Regional

Prerequisites: Techan human, born and raised in Selkirk.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Kesakas), engineering, science, techan knowledge, vehicle operation.

Brother Tongue (+2): You gain Narroni as a bonus language.

Miner's Eyes (+5): You gain nightvision—able to see in near darkness, though not in complete darkness.

Characters from Selkirk are born into a world of darkness and live most of their lives in the mines. Those that do depart are aware of the echan folk outside, particularly the narros, and trade and military patrols find their company acceptable. Selkirk's military seeks to make the Pass of Dianaso safe. Others trek south to find warmer climates and warmer beds. Those that end up taking root around Angel often sign up for military duty outside the walls.

There is a stereotype attributed to Selkirk, that the residents are all brutish and loud. This is unfortunately true. The chance that a character from Selkirk stems from the mines is high. They have been trained from birth to extend their body's endurance and survive in conditions that would kill most others. Since all must serve in the military at some point, they are also trained to live in the outside world. Rarely does a single Selkirk grunt lose a hand-to-hand fight against an equivalent rank from any other bastion. They are usually the most prepared in the open world and don't often experience the culture shock that plagues many other techans.

BASTION-BORN — SIERRA MADRE

Path: Regional

Prerequisites: Human, born and raised in Sierra Madre.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge, engineering, science, techan knowledge, vehicle operation

Expertise (+2): Your bonus to science checks with this background increase by +1.

Those who leave Sierra Madre are the most unprepared for the outside world. A techan from Sierra Madre is often considered the most naïve of any bastion resident (save perhaps for the youth of Angel). Being hidden underground, the population has had virtually no contact with the outside. Not even Selkirk can boast that level of isolation. Nevertheless, because the majority of Sierrans follow a faith of internal meditation and personal discovery, many citizens brave the landscape outside to fortify their souls and open their minds. Those that find the courage to leave often conceal their origins, analyzing what they find, and when possible returning it to their home for study. Even though they possess unique technology, they strive to adapt what they find to better their own society. Unlike Mann, swept up in xenophobic paranoia, characters from Sierra Madre are the most hopeful for a time when the two worlds can live together. Their technology is the most advanced on Canam in the field of disruption resistance but they remain locked tightly in their underground fortress. Of all the techans found in the open world, those from Sierra Madre are the fewest.

Being from Sierra Madre, characters take their strength more from their own skills than on the technology they flaunt. Despite being naïve and prone

to cowardice in the face of enchantment, those from Sierra Madre are the quickest to adapt when forced to. This also means the majority of those from the underground bastion rarely return, taken in by the whispers of a fantasy world.

BASTION-BORN — YORK

Path: Regional

Prerequisites: Human, born and raised in York.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge York (East Cross), engineering, science, techan knowledge, vehicle operation.

Expertise (+2): Your bonus to regional knowledge checks with this background increase by +1.

With no imposing city walls to keep the outside where it belongs, the people of York welcome tourists and travelers. However, tolerance of magic does not equate to acceptance of it. Those taking advantage of their friendliness and flaunting such enchantment may find themselves victims of a mob, or at very least a polite warning from the YSDF to remove themselves from the bastion forthwith. Due to the prevalence of passing magic users in York, citizens neither fear nor loathe the echans: they just prefer living their lives with air conditioning, elevators, and parking meters. York citizens can leave and re-enter the bastion as they wish, and are some of the most commonly seen techans in all of Canam. York is also the most aggressive in patrolling their borders. Although York has a fenceline, it is a vastly inadequate barricade, leaving the city to depend on open fields patrolled by a large militia of soldiers and low-tech robots known as zeros to protect it. They must stand on constant guard from attacks. They also operate a counter-intelligence organization that monitors activity within the rival bastion of Mann.

Characters from York have known about magic from the day they were born. They see it passing through the city to the docks. The main highway is a common route of passage of all residents and is the only safe route for echans. York characters have gotten used to not voicing their opinions of the world outside. They privately bemoan the enchanted world and what it has sullied man into. Other bastions look at York with distrust, believing one false step could send a massive ED burst throughout the city, demolishing the brightly lit bastion and causing it to crumble into the madness of magic.

A character from York has had the most experience with echans despite their feelings towards them. They also probably know someone that has ventured into the outside world and returned to tell the tale. Of all the bastion-born, those from York are the most romantic and experience the largest number of emigrants of any techan city. Thankfully, they are the largest growing, so this small migration is not noticed.



BLOOD ROYAL

Path: Supernatural

Prerequisite: You must pick a royal line (Savarice, Limshau, or Alkanost). Your species must coincide with that line (human or half-fac, damaskan, or laudenian, respectively). You cannot be evil.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge related to your chosen lineage and house, diplomacy, bluff, intimidation, general leadership.

Aura of Admiration (+3): You gain a +1 bonus to this background when attempting to rouse crowds or inspire followers.

Champion Feat: If you score a critical hit, stagger an enemy, or bloody an enemy, each ally nearby gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls against that enemy until the start of your next turn.

The People You Know (+5): Gain an additional relationship point at character generation.

The history of royalty amongst mankind is marred with bloodshed. The bearers of crowns have always claimed themselves and their descendants as the chosen of God, but the path to reach such consecration was often paved with the bones of their competitors. Each conquering warlord claimed the mandate of heaven while their hands were still stained with the blood of the previous claimant, and earthly envoys professing to speak for the divine took their side, lest they fall under the same fate. This process continues today, despite the supposedly morally evolved view of modern man. As the old ways returned in the absence of true civility, new declarations of nobility emerged. Some of these first aristocrats and generals had no entitlement, but called themselves kings and queens regardless. Most of the first rulers of man either witnessed the collapse of their virgin kingdom, or were executed by those that deposed them. These included Saran Sana, Avraham Torquil, and Darius Konig; of these, only the last has maintained his lineage (and his life).

The fac ascribe a much more humble approach to royalty. The title is not claimed, but given to them from a higher power – not from a silent god but from the endorsement of a dragon. This has only taken place with four such individuals on this half of the world: Elrenar Alkanost of Laudenia, Sharajaclypse of Vakai, Ravenar Limshau, and Vincent Savarice of Abidan.

To receive this blessing, one must be in an esteemed position of authority and not be corrupted by the power it offers. One must show true humility and benevolence in the application of authority. Even then, such an exalted title is uncommon. If it does occur, the individual is approached in a brilliant fashion by a dragon of the Noble or Holy lines. That dragon announces that he or she has adopted that individual under the wing of protection. Said noble's name is now synonymous with the dragon's. It is even believed the first fac royals possessed dragon's blood from a pairing with a dragon taking elvish form. Their lineage carries

through to today. Alkanost and Limshau are believed (albeit not by themselves) to possess such a pedigree, though Sharajaclypse and Savarice are most definitely not. As with all royalty, the mark continues through later generations, though with fac, this had only spread to a handful of offspring, though the dragon's blessing has occasionally been known to grace members of the ruler's extended family. Sharajaclypse is unmated; Alkanost has only sired a half-dozen over 5,000 years; Limshau has only two children, each with one child of his own. Savarice's line has sired many, making the dragon-touched human royalty the largest in Canam.

Being of true royal blood, you are a descendant of one of these glorified family lines (Alkanost, Limshau, or Savarice). You currently don't have a claim to the throne; why that may be is entirely up to you, but these houses are highly respected, so betrayal and expulsion is unlikely. It's also unlikely that you would openly announce your title to those around, as to do so without the presence of armed men tends to attract unwelcome attention. Your voice resonates to those with open ears. You possess a natural charismatic gravity that followers are eager to orbit around.

BOTTLED BEAST

Path: Discipline

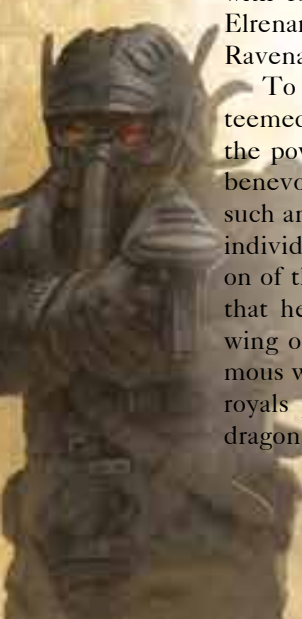
Prerequisites: Tilen

Suggested Applications: Racial knowledge (tilen), intimidation.

Regression (+5): Once per battle, use a quick action to start *regression*. Until you end it, you gain a +2 bonus to Strength-based damage rolls. You cannot use any attacks or checks that involve Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma until you end *regression*.

Champion Feat: Your *regression* power improves to +3 to Strength-based damage rolls.

Tilen loathe the idea of returning to their roots. The elders remember the old ways and detest their traits more so than their descendants. They preach the ways of redemption with an emphasis on the obligation to repair the damage caused by their hands and others in the name of syntropy. Although virtually every tilen follows this tenet, not all of them agree to ignore their inner strengths, despite the worry it may cause a regression to old habits. When their blood pumps too quickly or if adrenaline starts to flow, their previous characteristics surface, though only on a visible layer. They remain themselves in every way that is important. Some think greater power sits buried within, and proper meditation and self-control could tap this resource without risking degeneration. Many tilen consider it too much of a risk and elders prohibit its practice. This hasn't stopped some from trying, often with noble intentions. During this moment, the tilen gains a heightened sense of his surroundings. He hears the footfalls of enemies, the beating of their hearts, their lungs heaving with exhausted breath. The tilen's blood



BOTTLED BEAST



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pumps faster. Muscles quiver and spasm. He moves with speed and agility unseen, weaving through enemies, delivering quick and deadly blows, like a four legged predator racing through a herd of prey.

There is no set discipline, no books to read, and no teachers to find to learn this talent. Each tilen must discover the necessary circumstances to bring this inner power to the surface. Because of this uncertainty, some consider it too risky and many tilen would be prepared to kill a loved one if she went too far down this path. The tilen are a fragile people, few and scattered, dedicated to repairing the harm they inflicted centuries

ago in another life, and they will not risk further damage to their reputation.

CROSSROAD DRIFTER

Path: Regional

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Central, East Cross, and West Cross), survival experience, streetwise, thievery, bluff.

Instinct (+2): You gain a +1 bonus to this background when rolling for regional knowledge around the Continental Cross.



CRYPHTARON



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Many individuals are raised in a stable environment, dependent on reliable income from parents that are always present. The Crossroad Drifter is not one of these lucky people. If he actually had a family, they were nomads or merchants. Nearly every wanderer, in packs or alone, eventually migrates to the Continental Cross—the singular highway that bisects Canam. There are thousands – if not tens of thousands – of miles of road that criss-cross the continent, but they are mostly unnamed and unmonitored. Only the Cross has regular patrols and has been cleared wide enough for three caravans to sit side by side. It is generally accepted that travelers will pass oncoming traffic at least once a day. It is the only safe route to Angel and the only direct road that connects the bastion, through Antikari, to Limshau and Gnimfall. Large tributary roads break off to several nearby free houses and the kingdoms of Kannos, Abidan, and the Finer Fire Pits.

Because of slow travel time and the long distances between locations, thousands are born with no real home to speak of. These drifters learn to walk early in life and never stop moving for the entirety of their lives. Despite loyalties to family present or past, they prefer to keep few ties. Their homes are temporary bed, wagon, and stable rentals. Crusades, causes, or jobs they take on are often considered peripheral, and they never believe them obligatory. They refuse to be tied down to rules or by the laws passed down by some

egotistical government, despite the veneration of its rulers.

Even fae drifters cannot stand the idea of staying rooted in one place, and the company they keep should share that desire. They outlive their welcome early as they don't consider diplomacy a useful talent. If feathers are ruffled, these nomads simply pack up and move on.

CRYPHTARON

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: Pagus, over 20 years of age.

Suggested Applications: Intimidation, regional knowledge (Northern Shield), racial knowledge (pagus), monster knowledge (pagus, dragons, shemjaza), diplomacy against pagus.

Ritual Scarring (+5): You gain one additional recovery.

In locations where pagus are allowed to develop their own culture and their actions are not compelled by others, they still often develop traditions based around the same levels of violence. One ritual coincides with a pagus reaching the Second Age of Krenkallakoss. A pagus at nine becomes an adult and is assumed to be a warrior. Upon reaching the age of twenty, a pagus is permitted the opportunity to reach a higher level of authority within the village, the equivalent to a lieutenant.

The subject undergoes repeated punishment under sensory deprivation. The pagus is blindfolded and rendered deaf. He is lowered into water and repeatedly stabbed. Salt is packed into the wounds to induce permanent scars. These marks (assuming the pagus survives) denote the pagus as a cryptaron—a trusted warrior all pagus can respect. If a pagus encounters a cryptaron in passing, it is automatically assumed the elder warrior is a free pagus, for those who serve the shenjaza and death dragons rarely last long enough to be so honored. Even pagus loyally following their demonic masters have a profound adoration for the order. Cryptaron are rarely taken alive in combat, but if rival pagus do manage to capture one, the cryptaron is permitted to take his own life; afterwards, his body and belongings are returned unspoiled to the rival village. Sometimes a captured cryptaron is permitted the opportunity to fight for his freedom. He is given impossible odds against the village's greatest heroes. If he succeeds, the cryptaron is permitted to either challenge the chief for control of the village (which he usually does) or leave with additional scars to return home.

Outside of pagus circles, a cryptaron looks even more revolting than his cousins. To a pagus, however, the cryptaron is a walking angel.

CUSTODIAN

Path: Discipline

Suggested Applications: Acrobatics, athletics, regional knowledge (Central, and a neighboring region), history, an area of special knowledge of the custodian's choice.

Custodian Training (+3): You can also use Dexterity instead of Strength for all melee attack and damage rolls.

Lotus Blade (+5): When fighting with a katana and a wakizashi or tanto (longsword and shortsword), or a yari (spear) or naginata (halberd), you can reroll your attack on a natural roll of 2 or 3, but you must use the reroll.

Adventurer Feat: While using lotus blade, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. This bonus increased to +2 when the escalation die reaches +4.

Champion Feat: When the escalation die reaches +6, you gain your re-roll to your attack with lotus blade with a natural 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Epic Feat: Enemies engaged with you require a hard save (16+) to avoid an opportunity attack. You only require an easy save (6+) to disengage.

Behind the white walls of Limshau, elite guardians patrol the stacks, defending knowledge and people against anyone wishing to destroy such riches. Because of the tight confines of narrow city streets and alleys, this elite force eventually developed a discipline

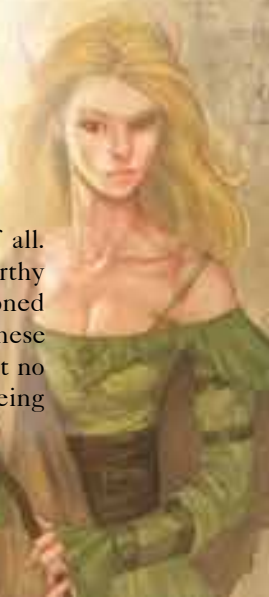
revolving around fast movement and quick, decisive strikes at critical enemy weaknesses.

After an attack from a large and somewhat organized bogg force 300 years ago left a section of the geology branch in ruins, Ravenar Limshau IV decreed that a specific echelon of elite librarians be trained exclusively in combat, relegating their librarian skills to lesser importance. Even before the custodians were formally commissioned, there was Stratos Stormguard, a master of all arms and trusted ally of Ravenar Limshau. He stayed behind to watch the flock when the leader went on crusade. Stratos developed the martial practice all custodians would soon follow. The martial art was known as *gorna sersannis*, though later masters would use the modern English term "Lotus Blade." Oddly enough, Stratos preferred the use of a halberd to the common twin swords employed by most custodians today. Stratos is one of the few to use both ends of his weapon without losing balance. He advanced his art to perfection before even attempting to train another. In the end, he required Ravenar to fill in the gaps in the defense Stratos could not satisfy. It would take 150 years before Stratos considered the discipline finished. The new discipline incorporated an agile battle stance, able to maximize maneuverability in a restricted field of movement. Heavy armor weighed down combatants and blocked the advance of reinforcements; shields also proved a hazard. Pure speed became the greatest ally, along with the insight to anticipate and counter a foe's every move and attack. Lighter weapons were preferred. In their natural habitat, the custodian finds no equal.



The previous d20 editions of Amethyst pretty much pigeonholed custodians into certain classes, which weren't always the best thematic fit. In 13th Age, because the Custodian background itself takes care of all the parkour skills that are emblematic of the library ninja, and anyone can use two-weapon fighting, there can be a lot more class variety for custodians, although rangers will still get the best use out of the dual-wielding style. My personal favorite combination is the bard, with the weapon totem (a rare exception to the tradition of Limshau mages using the book), and interpreting bardic songs and battle cries as 'calling your attacks'.

A custodian's priorities are on the freedoms of all. Free speech and the written word are both worthy causes for a custodian to die for. Some have abandoned those beliefs, turning away from their great city. These rogues seek adventure for their own satisfaction, but no evil soul survives the training process without being





CUSTODIAN

discovered, and it is seldom necessary to hunt deserters down.

A loyal custodian outside the walls stands ever vigilant to fight for the freedom and the retrieval of information. Being sent on fact-finding missions or quests to retrieve priceless tomes, a crusading custodian climbs the tallest mountains and digs into the deepest

dungeons to seek their treasure. An independent soul still believes in the value of his training but seeks personal adventure more than the acquisition of knowledge.

DARAWREN

Path: Discipline, Regional

Prerequisites: Trained in Jibaro.

Suggested Applications: Arcane knowledge, regional knowledge Jibaro. Racial knowledge if you are a chaparran, nature.

The Ways of Wood (+5): You gain either a ranger's pet or a wizard's familiar. If you select ranger as your class, instead of the above benefits you can reduce the cost of the animal companion talent to one slot.

Many wizards across the world classify the Towers of Jibaro as the greatest collection of arcane magic, even compared to the repositories of Limshau and Laudenia. However, the knowledge locked inside Jibaro is accessible only to a select few, the elite spellcasters of Jibaro, the darawren. With only one wizard graduating each a year, Jibaro is considered one of the most prestigious and daunting learning experiences in arcane wizardry on the planet, more so than even Laudenia. Where Laudenia's limited enrollment stems from its prohibition of non-laudenians, Jibaro's is due to a lengthy and unorthodox teaching model. Although still employing totems, the mandatory standard of all wizardry, Jibaro teaches an altered viewpoint of their purpose, being only a repository of words, and not the focus of magic. Jibaro instructs its students that magic rises from the Earth, not falls from the gate. The gate may be the ultimate source of magic in the world, but the chaparrans cite one observable fact—there's no magic in space. All creatures rise from the soil, and it follows logically that magic, too, derives from Earth; magic would not exist without it. The wizards of Jibaro are taught to channel Pleroma—the language of magic—through material components brought up from the Earth. This can be as extravagant as jewels but often enough it only a handful of dirt or sand. A darawren often carries a pouch of soil when entering a dungeon or building.

The tests of admittance to enter the order of darawren are extremely taxing, and despite not forbidding non-chaparrans to enter, such exceptions have been rare. No laudenian, damaskan, or tenenbri has endured the opening trials. Several narros have claimed the honor, as have a few kodiaks. There have been stories of one or two humans managing to accept the title of darawren but no one has been able to confirm their names.

DAWNAMOAK KITARRI

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: Chaparran

Suggested Applications: Racial knowledge (chaparran), regional knowledge (Kesakas), diplomacy when dealing with chaparrans, acrobatics, athletics, bow use.

Kansi Name (+2): You gain +1 to diplomatic checks against chaparrans who have heard of your exploits.

Power Arrow (+3/+5): You can use Strength instead of Dexterity for all ranged attack and damage rolls with bows. Additionally, once per battle, make a ranged

weapon attack as a free action after one of your ranged attacks drops an enemy to 0 hp. At +5 in this background, you can do this twice per battle but only once per round.

Champion Feat: Double your Strength bonus to damage with ranged weapons when firing at nearby enemies.

Many of the tales about chaparrans describe them as phenomenal archers, able to send arrows clear over the horizon to strike a bull's-eye. They carry bows of inflexible wood only they can coax to bend. When a chaparran fires his bow, the arrow flies with enough strength to pass through trees or skulls. When images of these archers come to mind, people are thinking of the Dawnamoak kitarri. Technically the order did not originate from Dawnamoak, having derived from a much older chaparran forest-nation from the previous age. With the immigration of echa, all the grand masters of *kitarri-kansi* (the chaparran name for their martial discipline) were gathered by Sylvanakassus to her three tower-trees of Jibaro and allowed to perfect their art. It was thought originally this effort was meant to compete with the emerging *gorna sersannis* style, but Sylvan insisted this was not the case. Regardless, chaparrans from all over the world converged to the towers to accept training. They returned to their people in hopes of passing their skills on to others, but in every situation, the second generation kitarri was a pale imitation of the original student. Eventually, potentials were sent straight to Dawnamoak to complete their training under the grand masters, all of whom are alive today. They are Korrissessoro, Marrisikorna, and Skylenaskanna, the latter being the only one to have left the towers. Skylen took her knowledge to other forests to train their chieftains and splinter-hounds (the leaders of a splinter-pack). The other two grand masters have forbidden her to teach non-chaparrans the art, a directive she doesn't necessarily agree.

With the exception of the rare kitarri trained under Skylenaskanna, all adepts of the discipline must embark to Dawnamoak (unless already living there) to receive the black-bow of the order. Most kitarri live in the nation pierced by the three tower trees but most chaparran villages across Canam can claim at least one member of the order. No chaparran would even think of wielding a black longbow fraudulently and a non-chaparran carrying a black kitarri bow is considered to have taken it from the original wielder's body, and is dealt with accordingly.



DEATH HUNTER

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: From or trained in Jairus.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Central), knowledge of necrotic effects, survival, intimidation.

Corrupted Resistance (+2): For every +1 in this background, you are counted as having +10 hit points for the purposes of resisting fear.

Champion Feat: The first time you are staggered in a battle, you gain additional standard action on your next turn. If the enemy that staggered you generates fear, you gains a +2 bonus to attack it until the end of your next turn.

Epic Feat: If the escalation die is +6 and you are staggered and engaged with an enemy which can generate fear, the enemy cannot disengage from you without provoking an opportunity attack and is vulnerable to your attacks.

Jairus was a poor mining village with a small but promising lumber industry. Centuries ago, word came from the lips of dying refugees from the south of the collapse of a great kingdom of men. The bravest and best of Jairus took it upon themselves to see the extent of the calamity. They expected to see razed buildings and scorched soil. They were not prepared for the Black Marsh of Sana. A curse had taken the entire land, spreading into the soil, flora, and the sky. Thick, black oil – unable to burn – seeped from the ground. The few plants that did grow had no color or leaves. The Jairus militia found only empty huts and keeps, no bodies. Then they saw the shadows move. Silver claws lashed from the darkness and only a handful of the group escaped to tell the tale.

The first legends of the marsh were born and generations later, brave warriors take it upon themselves to venture into the marsh in hopes of destroying the source of the corruption. The Jairus death hunters believe that if the shapeless wild of the Marsh are destroyed, the marsh would weaken. The true key to its elimination is the discovery and destruction of King Sana's old castle, Kardia-Gothas. To prepare themselves for the trauma of the marsh, recruits are taught to control their fears by undergoing a battery of ordeals to tax their mental stability. Outsiders claim this leaves emotional scars so cavernous that incoming terrors simply fall into the depths. They assert that death hunters are no longer stable and would be prone to sudden, unpredictable acts of extreme violence if they didn't temper that need with excursions into the Marsh. The hunters may possess some demented addiction to such horrors; if Kardia-Gothas were to be found and destroyed, and the Marsh was to fade away, the death hunters of Jairus may turn on their own people in some manic dependence on sadism.

Outside of their duties, death hunters are detached and unfriendly. They are not necessarily mean-spirited, but care nothing for manners or etiquette. They speak bluntly of their personal demons, ranging from simple addictions to the perverse pleasures of dominance and masochistic activities. They are neither welcomed at parties nor do they make a point to socialize with groups. Even those with a shred of charity left don't reveal those emotions and their rare acts kindness often come to the surprise of others.

Jairus death hunters skirt the line between nobility and wickedness and many admit – even to themselves – that they have crossed the line, believing only their oath to eliminate the corruption of Sana and other infections like Tranquiss, Ixindar, and the Necrosea keeps them from turning on those they swore to protect.

DOPPELSHIDO

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: Narros

Suggested Applications: Racial knowledge (narros), athletics, acrobatics, endurance.

Double Form (+4): Any javelin, spear, halberd, or polearm you wield counts as a two-handed weapon and as two weapons.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, when using Double Form, if an enemy hits you with an opportunity attack, you can immediately counter attack as a free action with a basic attack.

Epic Feat: Any time you make an opportunity attack, roll twice and take the highest result.

Normal narros circulate through many careers in their early life, only settling on their final calling after experiencing many others. Families support this for their youth and adult narros can often claim many feathers in their caps. A few find their calling early and desire no other. They take to weapons as quickly as their eating implements, learning early skills by swinging at shadows and driving their blunt wasters into benches and walls. When their talents are allowed to develop, they crave no other path. In a few cases, these narros are granted an audition to tutor under (and possibly become) one of the ravnorra lords. They undergo brutal training including walking and running for hours laden with heavy weights, as well as being beaten with sticks over their legs and arms until they no longer stumble or wince. They do not choose their own weapons: the master chooses the weapon best suited to each student. They learn every balance point, every edge with the capacity to kill, every inch of the weapon in the art of war.

By the time they reach adulthood, they can perch upon their hilt, edge in the soil, and stand there for days without falling. They can twirl their swords behind their back, juggle them between their arms, and strike

on the upswing as well as the downward cleave. These proud knights take positions as telokkrim—the honored guards of kings and favored guests. They climb the ladders of prestige and set themselves apart as the most devout disciples of combat.

Their path to perfection, however, is not yet over. The final test still waits—becoming a ravnorra lord, the greatest and most legendary line of narros in history. These fae equivalents of ancient samurai are considered the greatest soldiers of all the fae and the envy of every doppelshido student from the moment they pick up their first blade. The majority of narros that join multi-cultural adventuring parties begin their lives as doppelshido. Whether or not they intend to pursue the final tests is dependent on their individual personality. Some find the final grueling tests too taxing and escape with only basic skills and little honor. Some may be masterless ronin, their sworn lord or father felled by a coward's weapon. The lost student must now follow an unfocused path in search for vengeance, which might never be fulfilled.

EXPERTEERING ENGINEER

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: Gimfen

Suggested Applications: Racial knowledge (gimfen), knowledge of technology, engineering, quick learner of machines.

Adaptation (+5): You learn how to reverse engineer technology you acquire and gain the ability to rebuild it with increased insulation and redundant electronics and gears for it to operate in ED fields without disruption. First, you must find or purchase a piece of technology. You dismantle the item and reassemble it. The new item replicates the old in every way except it grows in size and weight. As a result, many large items cannot be converted.

The time to accomplish the adaptation is one day (8 hours of hard work) per tech level of item. You must also invest gp equal to half cost of the original the item.

Its weight increases by 100% if it weighs less than 10 lbs, +50% if it weighs between 10 lbs and 50 lbs, and +20% if it weighs over 50 lbs.

Weapons: One-handed small arms become two-handed small arms. Two-handed small arms become heavy weapons. Heavy weapons become super heavy weapons. Super heavy weapons cannot be adapted as they would be too large for an adventuring party to carry (though rumors suggest a few grind towers have them built in). Specialty weapons and grenades cannot be adapted. Weapons requiring tripods when adapted automatically come with one during the procedure. Techan melee weapons do not need to be adapted unless they are powered: adapted melee weapons with the augment keyword can only be mounted on exo-armor.

Exo-Armor: Because the increased weight and the need to adapt it to gimfen appendages, exo-armor's check penalty incurs a further -2 penalty.

Vehicles: Vehicles can be adapted but the resulting creation suffers a -2 penalty to maneuverability and a -1 reduction to speed. Adapted vehicles can still be modified; modifications don't require adapting.

Equipment: Medical gear and professional equipment cannot be adapted. Neither can battery cells as they benefit from the shielding of the adaptation while inside the weapon (EDF checks are only for batteries when outside of equipment). You should purchase an EDF muffler bag. Batteries cannot be adapted as the procedure would drain the battery in the process.

The original item being adapted is not retained as it is taken apart and incorporated into the new shape. This new shape is no longer sleek or beautiful. It is ugly, clumsy, and heavy. It spits, whines, and creaks with every movement, seemingly on the verge of blowing apart at any second, though never doing so. The technology looks clumsy, with exposed tubes and cables running to backpack mounted insulated power packs. Goggles become massive helmet assemblies. Armor hobbles around quickly, shifting its weight left and right like a drunken narros. Worse, the style of adaptation is unique to you. Only you know exactly how you adapted the item and attempts to teach others the technique results in utter confusion for anyone other than a gimfen with equal craft ranks. Even if explained, the exact supplies would be required, including the original item.

Furthermore, the adapted item is so fragile and requires so much fine-tuning by you that if the item is given to another to use, it breaks after a round. Not even another gimfen could figure out the eccentricities of the device before it fails. As a result, you can neither lend nor sell your monstrosities to anyone and they are only useful to you.

Results: Adapted technology does not disrupt from ambient EDF. It can still disrupt from active attacks (EMP weapons) or if an attempt is made to enchant the weapon.

For reasons that are not well understood, gimfen do not short out technology by their mere existence. This permitted them to slowly build a technological industry. They were one of the very last species to break off from the first fae branches, and like to claim that their race's capacity to hold technology without disruption proves them to be the final form of the fae – the end result, the ones meant to escape the cradle of Earth.

The inherent problem with this theory is the fae's natural imperceptiveness of technology. The various fae peoples have developed languages, cultures, and even expanding empires. They have forged swords, laid down paths, and erected communities. After a certain point, however, they simply stop; even if their presence was not toxic to machines, the mere concept of industry and mechanization simply would not occur to a fae if they had not been exposed to it from outside. Some claim that because they did not evolve, they lack the instinct to better themselves that drove humanity to its technological peak. Despite their wisdom and



EXPERTEERING ENGINEER



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creative brilliance with poetry and song, lack the drive to push and dominate their world, a natural byproduct of a short-lived evolved species. The gimfen, although not subject to their cousins' technical antipathy, still lack the drive to develop their own, especially in comparison to the fast pace of mankind. For thousands of years they languished with the few advances they stumbled upon through mere luck. All of that changed when they returned and discovered humanity. The short-lived hairless apes found industry and technology second nature.

Gimfen cannot innovate, but they can replicate and improve. After gleaning every nugget of information they could acquire, they started to adapt what they learned to operate outside the walls of bastions. The experteering engineer is the result of this growth.

Instead of hiding inside or underneath the grind towers of Gnimfall or the dozens of other communities around Canam, experteering engineers embark into the outside world in search of even more knowledge. They travel the world finding technology they can either use outright, or return home to their people. Their greatest ability is their knack to reverse-engineer human technology they encounter and modify it to operate without disruption in the lands of magic. Most employ this ability in the field of high tech weapons, but some utilize it with standard gear as well. They are limited in what they can adapt, as the result is usually clumsier and substantially larger than the original. Experteering engineers are an unusual sight in Canam but their presence proves that technology's eventual dominance over magic is inevitable.

(EX) TRAFFIC HUNTER

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: Human

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (South), deception, forgery, stealth, general knowledge of fae, tracking.

Know Their Tricks (+2): You gain a +2 to MD against charm, illusion, or sleep effects cast by fae.

There is a small but vocal portion of the human race that firmly believes that they are the true inheritors of the planet. The invading fantasy creatures either had their chance and failed or are the result of a breach in the laws of reality and don't truly exist at all. As such they are not afforded any dignity or rights. Any commandments or tenets that pertain to humans do not apply to fae; these creatures can be dismissed or categorized as demons, fiends, or any other evil force mentioned in religious and mythological texts. They must be more than just disregarded; they must be suppressed, dominated, or destroyed. After a few decades, this belief extended to enslavement, as the massive economic possibilities of an indentured population could not be ignored. King Darius founded Baruch Malkut on the elimination of the fae races, but relented in the face of the opportunities offered by the businessmen and landowners of the new properties he had conquered.

Either you came into this career naturally or were bequeathed it from a family's legacy. You were trained on how to track and capture every type of fae. For reasons that are unquestionably complicated, you have moved away from this profession. More than likely, when faced with this birthright, you rebuffed the responsibility, appalled by the actions of your ancestry. Unfortunately, one cannot simply walk away from his or her duty. The kingdom knows everyone under its law. It never forgets, and it seldom forgives. Rejecting the traditions of your heritage, you have escaped the kingdom, obsessed with making amends for actions you might never have committed.

FARGON DISCIPLINED

Path: Regional

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Dianaso), endurance, any dedicated focused set of skills (specify when selecting this background).

Dedication (+3): Once per day, if you fail a check using this background, you can reroll.

As is their way, most narros dedicate the entirety of their energy in the application of the task at hand. They reserve nothing for the possibility of failure. They consider one plan, one option, one course for their life. There is no casual hobby. When a narros enters the military (which most are required to do for at least ten years in their youth), they think of nothing else. Waking at sunrise, they train until the fall of night. Others turn to spellcraft. Some embrace medicine.

Many take to the mines. When they finally choose their preferred career, there is very little that will change their minds. And in turn, they throw everything of themselves into that path, rejecting hobbies or passing fads. Despite this being a common stereotype of nearly all narros, those of Fargon take this course to near fanaticism. Each city has a skew towards a certain path, but it hasn't changed a broad range of dedicated warriors and wizards coming from the sprawling kingdom in the North.

FINER MINER

Path: Regional

Prerequisite: Narros, from the Finer Fire Pits.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Central), strength feats, endurance, searching

Like it Hot (+3): You gain resist fire (11+your rank in this background)+. All fire-based attacks against you must have a natural attack roll of higher than this number or deal half damage.

The narros from Finer fit the stereotype of their fictional parallel. The city's founder, Garach Glim, desired an underground kingdom to rival anything found in Fargon. When he stumbled upon an astounding treasure of unmined minerals in the Finer Vallis, he knew his search was over. Three centuries later, Glim can still be found in any one of the thousands of miles of tunnels that branch off the colossal Finer Cavern, a single chamber large enough to fit the entire city of Limshau. From there, huge smelters constantly burn, laying heavy deposits of grime and heat over everything inside.

Being from this region, you probably served more time in the mine than in the military. The greatest by-product of this life is a natural resistance to heat and a canny eye to notice what others don't. Narros from Finer take after the gimfen of Gnimfall—uncaring for personal grooming and fascinated by whatever glitters. But where gimfen take interest in machinery, narros look for the sparkles in stones. Narros from Finer consider those from Fargon too militant. A discipline that focuses on punching shadows and meditating on balance beams is pointless in contrast to a hard day's work where the sweat and physical exertion is reflection enough. In the end, something gets accomplished. To a Finer narros, that's all that matters—*be useful*, a feeling shared by damaskans. Damaskans, however, believe it applies to the pursuit of mental growth while the narros prefer physical perfection.



FREE HOUSE CITIZEN

Path: Regional

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge of a specific house and surrounding/neighborhood region, nature, religion, stealth, streetwise and/or thievery.

Expanded Language (+3): You gain one additional language from the following list: Argose, Damaskan, English, Englo-Lingo, Indic, Narroni, Onespeak, Romanic, Semitic, Sinitic, or Slavic.

What I Know (+5): When in your home nation, your bonus for any checks using this background increase by +1.

A very small segment of the echan population in Canam considers themselves free from obligations. They have no debts and answer to no one but themselves. With growing concerns of raiding bogg and pugg swarms, the number of truly free people dwindles daily. Many congregate around the huge nations of Canam like Limshau, Kannos, or Baruch Malkut. Others try desperately to win favor with a bastion. Many others simply settle for one of the many free houses across the land. The free houses are sovereign states squeezed between and around larger kingdoms. They are relatively self-sufficient and, despite their pride, spend most of their diplomatic capital towards earning favor with larger kingdoms. They do this either through trade goods or noble marriage, though the latter is unsuccessful with the fae houses.

Those raised in free houses must contend with a chaotic upbringing. Free houses are notorious for being unable to supply the needs of their people. There is not enough food, not enough shelter, not enough clean water, and not enough law enforcement. Those adept in the skills required for adventuring often acquired these skills from nefarious sources – robbing or pilfering their necessities on the streets. Before finding their calling, many of these travelers lived a sordid past with sins they would prefer not bring up.

On the converse, those seeking adventure with roots in a free house may have come from a rich bourgeois household, adorned in the rare and costly purple-dyed tunics that set them apart from the serfs. It's possible they were related to royalty or to a family with ties to the inner circle of the aristocracy. Why these individuals would choose to leave such a station could be obvious or rooted in issues best suited for privacy. If their path keeps them around their homeland, they will obviously have needed expertise when dealing with the local customs and practices. If outcast, they may wish to remain as far away from their home as possible.

FRINGE FANATIC

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: Pagus between the ages of 35 and 40.

Suggested Applications: Racial knowledge (pagus), monster knowledge (pagus, dragons, shemjaza), endurance, athletics.

Unhinged Aggression (+5, Wisdom score of 12 or lower): *Focused aggression* increases its effectiveness. The attack and damage bonuses increase to +2 to attack and +3 to damage. *Focused aggression* also lasts until the end of your next turn (whether you want it to or not). If there are no enemy targets in range at the start of your next turn, charge the nearest target, regardless of its affiliation.

Stalwart Conviction (+5, Wisdom score of 13 or higher): All allies in the battle gain a +1 bonus to saving throws.

As an elder pagus, one of two futures is fated to happen. There is no avoiding this destiny. You will either grow wise and steadfast in your cultivated ethics, or you will go insane. With the latter, your rage possesses you more and more. Few pagus are able to manage their emotions. Pagus under the thrall of demon or dragon are killed in the unlikely event that they make it past 35, as their madness makes them more of a threat to their own kind than to enemies. If wise, they soon become respected leaders and spiritual guides, an equal if not greater threat. All free pagus tribes are led by elder pagus. Unlike other races that drift into frailty, pagus continue to grow in size. A pagus has never died of old age and few ever maintain their sanity into their senility. They are often put out of their misery before becoming a threat to others. Only a handful of pagus have managed to keep their minds together, showing potential to lead their kind into an enlightened future.

GNEOLISTIC

Path: Supernatural

Prerequisite: None

Suggested Applications: Nature, healing, religion.

Indeterminate Consecration (+1): If you select cleric or sorcerer as your character class, you do not require a totem for that class. If your class is sorcerer, you cannot choose the Chromatic Destroyer, Metallic Protector, or Undead Remnant heritage talents.

Touched (+5): Choose one 1st-level at-will spell from any spellcasting class. You can cast this spell once per battle.

From the moment of your birth, those around you knew of your blessing. You possess a natural affinity with the power of Attricana. You can alter the very order of nature and the universe around you. You are an apotheosis of the might of chaos. You can create life, heal injuries, and even recall souls from the afterlife. You channel the spirit of Attricana in everything you do. Some have claimed this power is bestowed solely from a divine source. Others say faith has nothing to do with it.

If all souls are siphoned from Attricana then a gneolistic is simply a channeler of life-force.

A gneolistic is an exceptionally rare soul to encounter in worldly travels. Very often, a gneolistic is taken in (or captured) by a religious sect and convinced or conditioned to believe his power comes solely from the gift of God or gods. In these cases, their path is cleansed and rewritten by the place of worship, erasing pesky personal stains like social standing and ethnicity. They parade the gneolistic as proof of piety, convincing others to join the congregation. Even if a holy order does not locate a gneolistic early, very often the child's own family will assume such responsibilities and a village idol is born. This would often still draw the attention of said holy order, forcing the idol to convert. A church has also been known to alter its doctrine to retroactively accommodate the village's traditions in order to win over a resident gneolistic.

On a few rare exceptions, enlightened individuals have located and raised these prodigies under the umbrella of secular tutelage.

A gneolistic is not a proof of divinity but another example of how Attricana's influence knows no limits. A study from Limshau revealed that the ratio of gneolistics to vivicators is almost exactly one in ten thousand, with a similar ratio between vivicators and normal individuals. These ratios slightly improve among laudenians and chaparrans, but a larger population leaves humans with the highest number of gneolistics.



Normally clerics (or other historically divine caster classes) are not available in Amethyst, other than with this background. While 13th Age does not really make the strong distinction between different types of magic that other d20 games do, and while it would be easy to ignore the fluff and just play the mechanics, there is still a very strong priestly flavor to the cleric class features which does not really mesh well with the view presented of magic as an art or science. That said, if someone really wanted to play a cleric and call it a wizard, I for one wouldn't stop them.



If a player selects this path, there should be considerable backstory as to what happened when his or her powers emerged. Know that said character would be one of only a handful on the entire continent, and unless concealed, would affect everyone around.

HALFMASTER

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: From or trained in Kannos.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Central), acrobatics, riding, out of combat weapon acts.

Reach of Choice (+3): You gain the Reach Tricks feat.

Champion Feat: You can use Reach Tricks three per battle.

Not everyone in Kannos is privileged enough to be trained on a horse since learning to walk. As Kannos lacks fruitful mines, their only other major donation to warfare is their renowned spearmen. There are dozens of different schools in Kannos, each teaching a different approach to spear and lance use. Some soldiers are trained how to use massive spears that root in the ground while others learn how to tuck a lance under the shoulder and brace for a solid hit. Some launch them against distant enemies while others prefer their use as thrusting weapons in close combat.

The most exclusive and taxing discipline is the art of *habaukeedo*, which involves using every inch of a polearm. This brings the weapon closer, holding it more like a quarterstaff. Like all soldiers in Kannos, halfmasters are usually forced to take to the field with inadequate armor; the need to deflect incoming attacks as best they could resulted in the evolution of the halfmaster's art.

A halfmaster can brace the weapon at its full length for a decisive kill before the opponent's weapon can sneak in, but then they may switch to a tight formation when surrounded. It is thought the art of *habaukeedo* derived from either the narros doppelshido technique or from masters of the ancient naginata skills who brought their art to Canam via Genai. Unlike a slow and disciplined spear wall, halfmasters often break ranks, running after enemy squads after the cavalry has broken them. They seldom form lines with other halfmasters, preferring to allow room for their wide range of attacks.

HERBALIST

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: Wisdom 14 or higher

Suggested Applications: Healing, religion, nature, diplomacy in small echan communities.

Wildcrafting (+5): You gain a medicine pouch (wildcrafting bag) which offers the equivalent of one healing potion of your tier a day. Through normal standard adventuring, you recover enough materials to recover the potion after four battles. The GM may award additional potions dependant on certain conditions (skillful search rolls).

Champion Feat: Your pouch can create one potion of one tier higher than you instead of one equal to your tier.



Passed from master to disciple, this old knowledge reappeared when the advanced technologies of MRIs and CAT scans fell apart in the world of magic. By using whatever is found or on hand, an herbalist can perform basic medical aid. An herbalist can create analgesics, sedatives, or even stimulants. They can sterilize wounds or simply determine which nearby plants are edible or poisonous. It is not uncommon for an herbalist or wildcrafter, as they are also known, to pick leaves, berries, or stones from the ground as they walk and this talent has earned some of them positions of authority in smaller or less developed communities. They are even revered in a few locations where they are given the title medicine man or shaman. A lesser accepted (and more derogatory) term is witch doctor. This is neither a magical art nor a pseudo-science like homeopathy. The techniques the herbalist uses are tested and proven knowledge passed down through centuries of trial and error. In this new age, more items of benefit can be found on the roadside, with more impactful effects, but the basic wisdom hasn't changed.

INCARNATE

Path: Supernatural

Suggested Applications: Minor magical tricks and physical feats related to your element, sensing your element, nature.

Descent from Harmony (+1): If you choose sorcerer as your class, you do not require a totem. You can only select spells related in some way to your chosen element (air, earth, fire, or water).

Elemental Tuning (+5): Before you make any kind of attack, you can change the damage type of that attack to one of the damage types associated with your element, chosen when you gain this trait: Air (cold, lightning, or thunder), Earth (acid, force, or thunder), Fire (fire, holy, or lightning), Water (acid, cold, or poison).

Many of the fae claim an intrinsic connection with the primal elements. Impossibly graceful laudenian children, and narros youth with an intuitive understanding of stone and earth are two examples of Attricana's whimsical influence. The incarnate are those rare individuals with the ability to harness these forces and direct them. Each incarnate generally reflects their bonded element in both personality and appearance. Chaparran fire incarnates can be very quick-tempered and rash, even for a chaparran, whereas earth-bonded narros would be even more stoic and reserved than the rest of their taciturn race. An air incarnate is generally flighty, imaginative, and difficult to pin down in conversation. The water incarnate is subtle and usually adapts to any society he or she is living within. It can be difficult to discern an incarnate from birth, but the telltale signs begin emerging in early childhood. Earth-bonded children's voices are coarse, their skin easily calloused. Air incarnate are very light-skinned, where the fire-bonded are dark, almost bronzed. Of all the incarnate, only wa-

ter is easily discovered, as not many children can swim underwater for hours at a time without surfacing.



This supernatural type was a feature of the earlier editions of Amethyst and mysteriously vanished from the first 4e version (and has been absent from the first draft of the other system conversions that I didn't write ever since), but I keep putting it back in because I like it. It's a little bit more overtly animesque than others, but in a world where there are elf ninja librarians that can walk on ceilings and blade-balancing dwarf monks and samurai, I don't think it's all THAT over the top.

JUGGERNAUT

Path: Discipline

Suggested Applications: Feats of strength, endurance.

Sympathetic & Hardy (+4): Str 14—While wearing heavy armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC; Con 14—You gain +5 hit points. *Note:* You cannot have both benefits.

Champion Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls if wielding a shield.

The juggernaut cares nothing about nature or the will of gods. They may not believe in warmongering but do know the benefits of wielding such weapons in the modern age. Juggernauts simply wish to maximize their potential in combat. One must wield a blade to survive. You sleep with one eye open and seldom get a full night's rest. In the open field, you guard the casters and protect the fire. You are always close to your armor. You practice daily to hone abilities, maximizing your capacity in combat. You know when at the peak of your skill, you will never be out of work. A juggernaut is ready for combat at a moment's notice. You prepare your armor before sleeping, able to don it in less time than a rogue takes to put on his shoes.

Juggernauts are not ones for speeches or promotion. You are the heavy brute brought forward to scare the front lines of the opposition, the one beside kings to demonstrate the might of an army. When seen in a tavern as a possible hire, you never have to worry about being passed over. Even if your intelligence can't net you glory or gold, a few rounds in an arena will do the task nicely.

KAVALIER

Path: Discipline, Regional

Prerequisite: Trained in Kannos.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Central), animal control, riding.

Mounted Combat (+3): *Natural 16+:* If you are mounted and hitting a target not on a mount and your size or smaller, you inflict an additional 1d6 damage for every two levels you have.

Adventurer Feat: If you use a saddle with your mount, you can stand on it, hang down one side, or ride underneath the animal if you so wish. You gain a +1 to PD while mounted and have a +2 to all acrobatic checks while mounted.

Champion Feat: Anytime you recover hit points, any amount can be diverted to your mount instead.

There are horsemen and cavalry across the world. Some are honored and have a long lineage. It takes an especially brilliant soul to be among the chosen of the Kannos cavalry, the elite kavaliers. What distinguishes a Kannos kavalier from other mounted military is the lack of heavy armor. Kannos is rich in fertile land; huge livestock populations result in the largest number of horses in Canam. Kannos is weak, however, in mineral resources and must trade with the narros and their human allies in Abidan. Since most farms have to survive on their own, every farmhand, stable boy, and wrangler learns to ride and control a steed the moment they could balance on two legs. By puberty, reins are an afterthought and the saddle an indulgence rarely taken. Armor – especially barding – was an extravagance few could afford in the early days of the kingdom. The front lines of a Kannos army are populated with such seemingly simple cavalry, offering the illusion of an inept and under-equipped host until it charges.

Kannos kavaliers ride light in armor and nimble in their saddle (when they use one). Their horses are lifetime partners and often share sleeping quarters. Some traditions match a young fighter to a steed early in life. The squire and mount live their lives responsible for the other, loyal to the end. They form an unspoken bond and never leave each other's side if it can be avoided. More often than not, kavaliers prefer the company of their animals to people and often sleep in stables, as horses make great alarms.

Kannos kavaliers are quick on both two feet and four. They leap upon their mounts without a stir and drive even the most skittish animals into combat without a stutter. There is no greater waste in warfare than a trained warhorse with an incompetent rider and there is very little more dangerous than a Kannos kavalier and his mount.

KINETASSANA

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: Tenenbri

Suggested Applications: Religion, stealth, bluff, concentration.

Snap Draw (+4): At the start of a battle, you can use a recovery to gain a +6 bonus to initiative. This can occur after you rolled and after order is established. If you strike a target that has not had an action yet in the battle, you inflict double damage.

Champion Feat: At the start of a battle, if there is a nearby enemy, you can gain a +4 to initiative, and start the battle engaged with one enemy (if you employ the bonus, you must start engaged).

Epic Feat: When you hit with a readied attack, add +1d8 damage to the hit.

Zatou (+5): You can use Wisdom instead of Strength for all melee attack and damage rolls.

The dominant religious movement sweeping the tenenbri nation of Vanaka endorses a xenophobic stance, decrying other species save their own, and prohibiting any contact with foreigners. This is despite the natural tendency of tenenbri to be interested in companions that differ from the image of perfection their priests claim tenenbri to be. The faction in power has convinced the masses to ostracize anyone not like them, even members of their own species that are slightly against the norm. This belief is encouraged more in cities than smaller villages and many traditional tenenbri denounce the practice. Even so, there is a small segment of underground fae that have no home to speak of, with some venturing into the light to start anew. Tenenbri that are forced out or leave willingly because of a desire for isolation often spend years in the darkness of Vanaka, learning to hone their abilities to see without seeing. Most tenenbri encountered north of Southam are nomadic. Some are drifters that have gathered in a family caravan to escape their land or explore the world. A few are hermits, keeping to themselves and staying out of harm's way. When encountering such a recluse, passers are advised to leave them alone, for they may be a member of an exclusive order of wandering warriors, the kinetassana.

Kinetassana may be wise, even friendly to outsiders, able and willing to lend their skills to the innocent. But compared with other tenenbri they are quiet and unsofiable, seldom traveling shoulder-to-shoulder with others. Even when enticed or forced to accompany a party, the kinetassana trails behind and volunteers little.

On the surface, a kinetassana appears nonchalant, almost unaware of her surroundings. She rarely brandishes weapons openly, preferring light varieties kept hidden, exposing them only the instant they are ready to swing and sheathing the instant the stroke concludes.

Kinetassana are nearly impossible to catch off-guard and rarely charge into combat, preferring to let enemies ap-



proach and attack. They don't play with targets during a fight. They don't dance, jump around, or tumble. They kill quickly and efficiently and do so with hardly a sound.

KNIGHT OF THE WALL

Path: Discipline, Regional

Prerequisite: From Abidan.

Suggested Applications: Religion, intimidation/inspiration, feats of strength, endurance.

Shield Lock (+3): If you and at least two allies (but no more than four) can link shields and form a wall as quick action, each member of the line receives an additional +1 to AC until the line is broken.

Champion Feat: If an enemy hits a member of the shield wall, one nearby ally can make a basic attack as an interrupt action.

On the bridge Tethuss, the holy warriors of Janoah live their lives in defense of a single cause—to hold the wall against the pagus hordes threatening to sweep down the continent. Bound in by mountains on one side and gulping waters on the other side, all but the bravest pagus see the isthmus as the easiest route to the unprotected south despite its towering fortress rampart.

The knights on the wall, standing atop the buttresses and manning the bridge, are rarely taken from their footing. Their defensive stance turns into an offensive one and opponents find themselves facing a stronghold of shields covered in spikes and blades.

This knight looks to his shield as his primary ally. By combining their efforts, many knights can link to form an impenetrable barrier against attack. This practice began with the first assault across the bridge, with thousands of pagus battering the walls. The front line facing the hordes were ill equipped and the wall behind had yet to be completed. The phalanx held fast, with the front warriors standing guard with light shields on each arm while forces behind held onto long spears. The pagus could neither push nor break the wall and the battle was quickly won.

To date, few have ever bested a Janoahn knight in shield and sword combat. They are proud to stand on Tethuss and few ever leave the fortress. And yet some do, venturing either across the bridge, or south from the city. The reasons may be their own, but their shields represent their honor, so are never separated from them. They avoid mounted combat and prefer to be charged rather than the ones charging. An entire industry has stemmed from this art form. Janoahn shields are a highly prized commodity throughout Canam. Even some pagus have been seen using them, though only the knights on the bridge wield them properly.

KOANA STUDENT

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: From or trained in Limshau.

Suggested Applications: Virtually unparalleled arcane knowledge, regional knowledge (Central), history.

Dedicated Researcher (+2): You gain a +1 bonus to this background when rolling for arcane knowledge.

Arcane Comprehension (+5): A spell carries a spark of life within it. Once per battle, as a free action, you can re-roll a missed attack roll for any spell.

It is said that Limshau's rise to prominence as one of the world most respected and admired nations didn't hit its stride until it absorbed nearly 5,000 humans from Angel, thanks to Ravenar Limshau III's "Crusade of Knowledge." Until then, all damaskans were the same across the world. It was at that point the obsessive drive to record history reached a fevered state. Damaskans have always been social creatures with a preference for learning and acquiring knowledge, but bookbinding was a complicated procedure few of them had mastered in the Terros age, and the printing press was just beyond their capacity to imagine. The influx of mankind changed that, which explains why, after only 500 years, damaskans in Canam look and act slightly askew from those across the Ocean. The addition of movable type catapulted their society in a direction unheard of before. As no books or scrolls came with them when the gate opened, the damaskans only had their memories to work from, and even then, few remembered the details of their history. It was assumed they were similar to the damaskans of Damaska – towering spires filled floor to ceiling with color-coded scrolls with little else to differentiate them. It is thought the prevalence of the book totem didn't become fashionable until the damaskans began to have extensive contact with humans. Circulation of books in the ancient age was reserved almost exclusively for the early damaskan wizards. Today, Limshau sports the greatest number of wizard academies in Canam, though not the largest nor most respected actual schools. Laren oak and Jibaro in Dawnamoak, the Logos Academy in Abidan, and the Elsis Tower in Laudenia are all much larger and more prestigious, though all pale in comparison to Kirjath-Sepher on the other side of the world.

No particular school stands out from the crowd in Limshau. All of them are respected in different ways. Nearly three hundred years ago, they allied to found the Koana District—a geographically unbound organization of all the schools in the Limshau kingdom. They set a standard of quality control maintained by every school. Despite different learning techniques and totem endorsement (though every damaskan student chooses the book), every Koana academy must follow strict guiding principles which includes heavy arcane study, daily lectures, and rigorous repetitive exams and workshops. Unlike other fae schools, which try to apply a theological approach to magic, supporting a "gut intuition" and encouraging natural talent, Koana schools

maintain that true wizard mastery only comes with heavy research and exercise. A Koana student is expected to remain at the school for at least twelve years (although 'field study' is part of most curricula), though they are encouraged to remain longer if they wish.



I've never been a fan of this whole 'wizards only' thing for Amethyst - possibly that stems from becoming familiar with it during the 3e days, when it was a lot less restricted. There's no reason that you should be prevented from using a class's mechanics just because the default fluff doesn't match. I would allow a Koana scholar to be any kind of spellcaster (appropriately reflavored, and with the book totem).



I've read about gamers throwing out huge chunks of Amethyst in their own interpretations, but my responsibility is to present the actual setting. I mentioned often that the first 3.5 OGL Amethyst was about 75% accurate. The 4E and subsequent editions were closer to 90%, so even editions like this one do not reflect the literary Amethyst I wish to present. In a faithful representation, there is truly only one way of spellcasting, and those who master it are rare and scattered. When someone categorizes Amethyst as limiting, I ask them if they can wield a plasma pistol in Middle Earth.

LAUDENIAN MAGOS

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: Laudenian

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Dianaso and Sky Network), arcane knowledge, history, racial knowledge (laudenian).

By Instinct (+3): You can use Wisdom instead of Intelligence for all wizard class features and spells.

One Word (+5): You learned your spells from the most powerful teachers. After each battle, you can select one daily spell to be recharge 17+. All daily spells become recharge 16+ battle when in Laudenia or any sky keep.

Champion Feat: Once per day, don't bother rolling for One Word—the spell is recharged.

The arcane arts might have originated with the dragons, as all the words of power derive from their language, but it is the laudenians that created the modern concept of the wizard. They found a way to tap into the holy language of the oldest magical race and transplant the

capacity of their written form into totems that wizards can use in the application of their art. Until then, all fae were in awe of the power of dragons and forever slaves to the whims of Attricana. Laudenians, frightened by the concept of being slaves to anything, even magic, tried to discover a way to control it. This path began because of a dire need to prevent the degradation of their species. They hoped the words would uncover a way to control the chaotic power of the gate.

They failed in this endeavor but did discover a way to harness some of the gate's power through the use of the dragon language. They believed that by learning how the dragons direct their power by focusing on a single word in all its meanings, a wizard could replicate the same effect. The laudenians, ever disdainful of change, found the staff the most reliable totem and never supported another option. Eventually, the chaparrans would adopt the same when several of them stole the knowledge from acquiescent laudenians. It would not be until the damaskans arrived that alternative totems emerged. They embraced the book and soon after, the narros also developed a similar practice utilizing shields and weapons.

In the modern age, nearly every race uses every form of totem available except for laudenians, who still stubbornly use the staff. They have used this single implement for their totem since the dawn of their species. Unlike any other casters, the laudenians are known to be the most numerous in proportion to their population and the most powerful on average. They know this and make a point of reminding those who know, don't know, or don't care.



Ignore what I said in my last note. This one should be wizards only. For those who were playing in the olden days, remember that guy who only played wizards and lorded it over the rest of the party because they became a walking 'win' button after about 8th level? Yeah... just this once, be that guy (not that the rules support it, but pretend they do).



LIBRARIAN

Path: Regional

Prerequisite: From or trained in Limshau.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (everywhere), general history—basically all documented knowledge, research.

Branch Expertise (+3): Select one specific subject, either a specific nation or time period, a group of people or science. You gain a +2 bonus to this background when making a check on that subject.

Champion Feat: Your bonus to your chosen subject is now +10—yeah, you're pretty much an authority. Plus you can select another Branch Expertise to receive +2.

My City (+5): When in a Limshau city, your bonus for any knowledge checks using this background is doubled. Employing this feature may involve time for research.

Initially, the servants of Limshau, those responsible for the organization and defense of knowledge, referred to themselves simply as librarians, a title still in use today. The emergence of the custodian order freed them of part of their responsibility for defending the pages they index, and the librarians were delegated to the uninspiring but necessary duty of maintaining the treasures of the cities the custodians protect. Their combat prowess dipped significantly in the waning centuries.

Modern librarians have an encyclopedic recall of every book they are exposed to in the wing they call home. Some librarians remain in a certain wing of the city for their entire lives, but like the custodians, the librarians are often found outside of the walls of the cities, having taken on a duty to retrieve some precious bit of knowledge. Perhaps a single volume among the thousands under their care has gone missing. Perhaps the final critical tome of a series has finally been located, a retrieval too important to be tasked to apprentice or mercenary. As always, simple curiosity may also possess them to leave, but most librarians are settled in their daily tasks, taking enjoyment in their duties behind a desk.

Even more so than the custodians, the librarians treasure the written word and will most certainly carry several books wherever they go. They are also prone to chronicling every moment of their excursions beyond the walls. Though they may certainly possess some combat prowess, they normally lack the extreme physical disciplines required of custodians. Often, the librarian has left because of a singular need. They are frequently not as prepared for the outside world, despite having intimate knowledge of its inner workings.



I don't read nearly enough to justify the amount of allegory involving literature I've inserted in Amethyst. Three backgrounds based around books, revolving around a kingdom of library-cities. The framing fiction heavily references the value of recorded knowledge, and I believe truly that people and nations cannot rise without standing on the books written by their ancestors.



Libraries are just that awesome.

MALKUT OUTCAST

Path: Regional

Prerequisites: Human from Baruch Malkut.

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Baruch Malkut), stealth, nature, religion (Baruch Malkut).

Awkward (+1): You automatically gain 1 negative relationship point against Baruch Malkut. You can negate this point by spending a relationship point (though why would you want to?).

Call it...My Land (+3): You gain a +1 bonus to this background when rolling for checks within Baruch Malkut.

You are profoundly ashamed of your origin. You were raised in a world where humans have declared themselves superior, children of the true god, and as such are masters of all creatures of the Earth. You were raised under the leadership of a king blessed with immortality. He accuses others outside his realm of being heathens and heretics or worse, patsies for demons parading around in pleasant clothes and alluring skin. As judgment, these demons deserve extermination, but if they can be indentured to aid the kingdom's exaltation, so much the better. You had no option and no cause to think otherwise. You believed this was true, for it came from the lips of your elders. Your teachers explained the history of the world and the slow extermination of the human race through a gradual process of corruption by whispers rather than swords.

You might have lived on a farm alongside these loathsome chattel, whip in your hand and revulsion in your heart. Then one day, or maybe over many, something changed. It is possible you always had issues with the practice. You couldn't understand how such evil could be attached to such innocence. Regardless of the shape of their ears, who were the demons that enslaved others? As a slaver, you might have been born into the career, or took to it easily in a culture that supported it, but that doesn't mean you believed in its practice. You might never have approved of the system but went along silently because of pressures from your government or family.

When you reached an age where rebellion was the norm, you might have recoiled from the business and escaped the hated reputation. Despite talents learned, you want nothing to do with your past and actively try to destroy the machine you operated within. Likewise, you might have rebelled against the system because of events that occurred late in life, when you are forced to face the sins you have committed. Perhaps you saw the eyes of an innocent face and realized the truth of the evils you were perpetrating. But there is no room in the kingdom for those who do not absolutely support their king in his plan for the world. You are either with King Darius and his crusade against the infidels or you side with those fated for the gallows or a cross. You must swear absolute fidelity to Baruch Malkut or be counted among the enemy. Therefore, you left, abandoning your family, your holdings, and any claim to any land. Sometimes, you appear overtly friendly to face, trying desperately to offset any accusation that that you remain loyal to that old belief. You keep your origin secret, but you know it will surface eventually. You also believe it is fate you will eventually return to face your sins and family directly, and this time you won't flee.



I generally don't allow my players to be evil. Very often they associate evil with selfish, and spend more time disrupting the group than advancing the plot. So even though a player could be a slaver, I prefer the path of one that has escaped and must live up to the sins of the past. I have only had a game group enter Baruch Malkut once...most likely because the nation didn't exist until 2006.

MYSTIC

Path: Supernatural

Prerequisite: None

Suggested Applications: Religion, nature, heal, insight, mysticism, simple arcane knowledge.

Lost Traditions (+5): You can cast the 7th level wizard utility spell *scrying* as a ritual. The ritual takes between 3 and 6 hours to complete before any results can be gleaned. You must also choose a focus for your craft. This may include bones, rocks, leaves, entrails, a book, dice, or even a deck of cards.

In the history of every culture, there have been practitioners and disciples of ancient rituals who call upon unseen forces to offer guidance when hope is fleeting or altogether lost. These conduits of wisdom employ ancient customs passed down from their ancestors, tracing back an unbroken line of hundreds or thousands of years. As a mystic continuing the old 101 ways, you utilize implements ranging from as basic as a scattering of bones to as complicated as a library of books. Every evening, you recall the teachings of your master, hoping to earn the illumination of the spirit that may grant sal-

vation in the life beyond. Mystic traditions have hundreds of different names. Although this may certainly be called a religion, it may also be based in the ethnic traditions of a culture. Some mystics claim their insight derives from an awareness of the world and is not handed to them from a divine power. It is their own soul, the untapped potential of their spirit, which inevitably guides them. Your choice is your own but many races and cultures have their preferences. Chaparrans credit spirits for their guidance, studying fallen leaves off trees and the arrangements of their veins. Damaskans use bibliomancy and numerology and gain understanding through the books they read. They gain wisdom through raw knowledge but also from the patterns of words and sentences, finding further enlightenment where others find nothing. Gimfen roll dice, but the type of dice and the images on their facings are unique to each sage. Laudenians have the longest and most complicated form, using both incense and drops of water in stagnant pools as their channel. Narros shatter stones and study the fallen fragments to hear advice straight from the lips of Oaken. Tenenbri, the most subtle, use their fingers to touch and feel every flaw and perfection in something to learn from it, such as reading palms or marks upon a skull. When pagus are allowed to develop their own culture, their mystics employ animal entrails. The way the creature was killed changes the outcome of the answer. A quiet, peaceful death is required when choosing a path or seeking answers to a question while a violent death is needed in matters of war. As for humans, throughout their history, they have tried them all, from the study of flying birds to the analysis of rat feces.



Prognostication is tricky for the GM who doesn't want to be accused of railroading. I suggest allowing a player who takes this background to roll it to make minor retcons--just having happened to pick up a needed piece of equipment before leaving town, or having let the authorities know before jumping into the den of thieves that captured and tied them up, for instance. Those that attempt to abuse it should be stricken with blindness, afflicted with terrifying nightmares about the future, or suffer the curse of Cassandra and never have anyone believe their visions.



REDCAP

Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: Gimfen

Suggested Applications: Racial knowledge (gimfen), acrobatics, intimidation.

Hip Shot (+3): The shortbow in your hands counts as both a melee weapon and a ranged weapon—it does not prompt opportunity attacks when you are engaged, regardless of the opponent you are attacking.

Redcap Reputation (+5): When you score a critical hit on an opponent, you also inflict 4 ongoing damage.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, if you kill an engaged enemy, you can immediately engage another nearby enemy as a free action without provoking an opportunity attack.

Epic Feat: If you kill an engaged enemy, you gain a +2 bonus to damage until the end of your next turn. If you drop another engaged enemy before then, the duration extends until the end of the next turn and the damage increases by another +2 (cumulative to a maximum of +6 damage).

Before gimfen were renowned for their capacity for suppressing the disruption of technology, they were desperate to claim their own niche. They were a young race broken from the damaskans late after the emergence of the pagus, at a time when all the fae were coming to terms with the possibility of extinction at either the hands of their corrupted cousins, or from their own degraded forms. As the chaparrans were vanishing in the forest as nymphs and faeries, and the narros into the depths of the earth as ogres and trolls, gimfen emerged as a bright, bubbly light of playfulness. They fought for many years to find an area where they could excel. Because of their diminutive forms, several of them took to being fast, quick-strike hunters. They would squirm and wriggle through battle lines, striking targets as they passed through legs. They eventually chose the shortbow as their preferred weapon because of its versatility and compatibility to their size. It even adorns the Salvabrooke flag.

These gimfen love getting close for the strike, and whether wielding a bow or blade, don't find it a satisfying kill unless blood stains their clothes. This gave them a disturbing nickname taken from human mythology, which most gimfen don't respond well to. Some hate the term on pedantic grounds because they don't wear hats. Others simply think it sullies a reputable profession as a close-combat warrior which commands as much respect as any chaparran ranger or damaskan fighter.

Regardless, the name stuck and some of the more renowned assassins and war heroes in gimfen history have been labeled as such. Gimfen that choose an honorable path prefer the term, "siddosamma", which they claim means "Warfueled" in the ancient gimfen

tongue (the astute will note that there *is* no ancient gimfen tongue). The more wicked ones embrace the redcap legend even to the extent of donning a hat.

REKII

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: Chaparran

Suggested Applications: Racial knowledge (chaparran), awareness/perception, insight.

Hand Signs (+2): You can communicate with an ally without alerting you or the ally as long as you are in line of sight using hand signs.

Keen Eyes (+4): You gain a +1 bonus to the background when attempting to notice something in a forest environment.

Chaparrans are nearly as xenophobic as laudenians, but where the laudenians abhor all other species for fear of being 'tainted', chaparrans simply prefer solitude. When they do form bonds, they swear oaths that transcend generations. A chaparran that has joined an adventuring party has learned to work within a group and has shared the key signs of her gestural language. All chaparrans possess the innate ability to communicate silently and once others pick up the important signs, a chaparran is able to pass her impressive eyesight onto others.

The rekii spots targets from a hidden position. She then passes critical information to an ally (via hand signs, animal calls, and whispers) in order to improve their accuracy or position. It's a unique gift few other chaparrans possess.

It only takes a few days of exposure among new friends for them to take full advantage of his gift. It also allows the chaparrans to maintain their oath of loyalty while also remaining away from the social circle. Chaparrans cannot stand the need of other races (especially gimfen and humans) to fill silence with the noise of conversation, and even those rekii that have elected to join with such raucous noise polluters still prefer to be on their own. Often enough, the rekii remains away from the fire and discourse; while ringing in the occasional comment, a rekii for the most part stays hidden and watchful.

SALVABROOKE SEEKER

Path: Regional

Prerequisites: Gimfen from Salvabrooke; cannot be Lawful Good.

Suggested Applications: Acrobatics, thievery, stealth, bluff, racial knowledge (gimfen), regional knowledge (West Cross).

Petite Larceny (+4): If you roll a natural 1 or 2 when using this background to attempt thievery or stealth, you can re-roll. You must take the second result.

Gimfen are overeager to try anything once. They live their lives as the mirror opposite of narros. Where the narros eventually decide the path they would take for

the entirety of their lives and never deviate, gimfen rarely settle. Many that grew up near machinery have embraced engineering as their chosen profession, but their shops are often littered with half-completed projects and ideas only partially realized.

In Salvabrooke, most citizens are shopkeepers, shop workers, or members of the small but ferocious military. Others take to thievery or careers where similar talents can be exploited. Regardless of their path, they always add a zest to their performance. Messengers run over roofs, flipping and sliding in their sprint. Tricksters are theatric and take minutes setting up their scam, entertaining their marks, and making the ruse almost welcoming in the end. These unguided individuals love the chase – the pursuit of anything, either as the target or as the arrow. If you point them, they will run. Some apply this in a respectable craft while many employ more nefarious ones. Occasionally, they steal just for the thrill of taunting a chase, abandoning their pilfered possession around the block or even returning it and thanking the pursuer for a good run. Some sell it back to the owner for a mild fee, claiming they are enriching the lives of those around by disturbing the order of their lives.

In the eyes of many gimfen, governments and rules are part of the corruption of the other side. As Attricana encourages its chaotic drive for life in all forms, said lives prefer the anarchy of an unpredictable existence. They strive to introduce some chaos in the world around to remind everyone else that laws are part of a method of control and thus, part of the problem. To them, life is designed to rebel against conformities and laws need not be a requirement for civility.

These gimfen don't like being called anarchists, preferring the term "seeker", as they are always searching for something they hope they never find, because the pursuit is the true purpose in life. For many of them, the chase ends when they die, hopefully a long ways away from where they started.

SKY-BORN

Path: Regional

Suggested Applications: Regional knowledge (Sky Network), perception, acrobatics.

No Fear of Falling (+3): As a free action, you can use a recovery to double the bonus offered by this background when rolling for any acrobatic or athletic stunts.

You don't claim the Earth as your home. You fell from the womb and were not afraid. You clung onto ropes before learning to walk. You walked on the planks of a ship before you ever touched loose soil. You can dance on the railing of a skyship thousands of feet up.

Like any other nomad, you have no real roots, but unlike those on the ground, you do have a home; it's just mobile. You may have a family and might have owned your own ship at one point. Some catalyst has brought you on the ground. Perhaps you crashed. You could have been outcast for a crime. If you're a laudeni-

an, you are most likely banished or have some need to see the world. Very often, that requires walking upon it.

SPIRIT BOND

Path: Supernatural

Prerequisites: None

Possible Application: Perception, insight, general knowledge, general wisdom.

Spirit Animal (+5): You gain a spirit animal (uses the same rules as the ranger's pet or the wizard's familiar). You cannot have a familiar or ranger's pet if you have a spirit bond, although you can still have an animal companion.

The animal that joins its spirit to another is not a normal creature. It materializes beside its compatriot, never venturing far, never getting lost, and always appearing in places it could never be. It finds its way into bedrooms, out of jail cells, and can find its bonded ally from anywhere on the planet.

At first, the animal is dream-like, only appearing to the mortal. With time and meditation can one pull the animal into the real world. The bonded animal is thought to be either a physical manifestation of the person's soul or a spirit from the magical realm, the dream-like expanse that flows from Attricana and covers the globe.

This spirit guide has its own personality and is not a slave. It will depart forever if abused. Often enough, the spirit tags along as a loyal pet, unassuming and innocent. It appears well trained and docile unless it feels the fear of its bondmate. Although the two cannot communicate through speech, they are able to detect each other's moods and emotions. Neither spirit nor bondmate would ever abandon the other unless their partner ordered them to.

SQUIRE OF ABRAHAM

Path: Discipline


Prerequisites: Choose any religion, from Abidan.

Possible Application: Religion, intimidation, bluff, diplomacy, regional knowledge (East Cross), rousing speech.

Righteous Belief and That's Enough (+5): When engaged with a target that has inflicted damage on you, you gain a +2 damage bonus.

Abidan is the religious nexus of Canam, a nation where its constitution demands freedom of religion for all. Unlike the nation of Trinitas on the other side of the planet, Abidan's government is committed to a rejection of theocracy even as it embraces faith as a core value. Nevertheless, it does maintain a dedicated order of holy knights, an order known across the land for humility and valor. This is the Line of Abraham, the envy of every apprentice in the kingdom. A knight fights only when necessary. They carry a strict faith in themselves or in the religion they are associated with and swear





absolute loyalty to that devotion and its tenets. They believe the shields of truth and virtue protect better than any armor forged by man. A potential squire is selected young and trained alongside a great knight for many years, well into adulthood. Some of the most respected soldiers in the Janoahn army are still awaiting approval into the line. Eventually, one is asked to take a personal crusade—to find a personal truth and to discover one's soul in the exploration of the outside world. Only when students feel the path directs them home do they finally do so, in hopes of being accepted in the order. To be of this group is not to be some church bound priest or a zealot screaming from a soapbox. This devout disciple has taken it upon herself to preach the word of god to the unbeliever while also defending the tenets of faith against the heathen and infidel. This champion could be a crusader to inspire the masses, marching along the front line of an army, motivating troops and rousing faith in the cause. A crusader loves preaching the power of faith, usually reserving such displays for when potential combat occurs. Crusaders often lead charges, standing proud, commanding holy warriors into battle, and further solidifying their status among the others. Crusaders hope for the day when they control armies of their own. This champion could also be a fanatic. Fanatics think of nothing other than upholding their faith against the heathens of the world. They may even subscribe that redemption falls only to the worthy. A truly noble fanatic wishes to help the needy but believes destroying one's enemy is the best way to accomplish that.

Finally, the champion could be a missionary. These followers of the faith don't consider themselves extremists. They seldom enlist others for the glory of combat and rarely join an army bent for war. Surprisingly though, missionaries handle themselves almost or equally well in situations where they must protect themselves or those who need defending. Their calling forces them from the church to venture as nomads – with or without the assistance of other missionaries – into the wilderness of the outside world. There, they would not seek the believers but the doubtful. One would appear not as the prancing paladin marching proud and tall, but as a simple follower, wise beyond their years.

Missionaries frequently approach areas of need and depart without ever expressing a belief or preaching a cause. In their eyes, being loyal by the doctrine of their faith and helping those less fortunate, even to the point of raising weapons against evil, comes before attempting to preach to the potentials. They neither require conversion as a prerequisite for offering wisdom or assistance nor agreement with their beliefs as a condition for friendship and loyalty. They help first. Almost all settlements welcome the missionary. Of course, fanatics and paladins may enter claiming the same title. The missionary is well educated and survives alone in the dangers of the wild when others run screaming or die in the cold.

Regardless of the result, some squires never return, finding a calling far more important—a calling only a god could bestow. A few do return, shaped by the world into an either a broken soul bent for drunken tavern tales of better times or a noble knight of the Line of Abraham.

SWORN HAND OF VENGEANCE

Path: Discipline

Prerequisites: None

Possible Application: Intimidation, survival, endurance, knowledge of your sworn enemy.

Sworn Enemy (+3): Choose one of the following creatures: evil dragons, boggs and puggs, chaparrans, humans (choose a specific nation), kodiaks, pagus, shemjaza, skeggs. Against creatures of this type, you gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the first time you hit one in an encounter. The first target hit takes double damage from the attack.

Champion Feat: When the escalation die is +6, your next hit on a sworn enemy is a critical hit.

Childhood can often be a wondrous time. For an unfortunate few, like yourself, it is the source of unrelenting trauma. This nightmare could have occurred while still clinging onto your mother's hand, or the mental and physical scars could have been set later. Something no one should ever have to experience recurs every evening when you close your eyes. A hand came down and destroyed everything you had. They wiped out every family member, maybe friends, or perhaps an entire village. This could have been a surgical raid or a random act of passing bloodshed. Maybe you were on hand to witness the carnage, pushed under a bed or dropped in a basket. Perhaps you arrived too late, ready for a fight, only to be tasked to digging graves. As the lone survivor, you think of nothing else but revenge to placate the nightly terrors.

This rage is not intended for a specific nation, king, or thug. Retaliation is unfocused, intended for an entire species. This world is populated by tremendous evil, minions of a gauntlet of shadow that stretch slowly over the land. When violent opposition presents itself, you will act without thinking and not stop until your enemies lie dead, in hopes the nightmares will cease.

TASKIN-KADA WATCHER

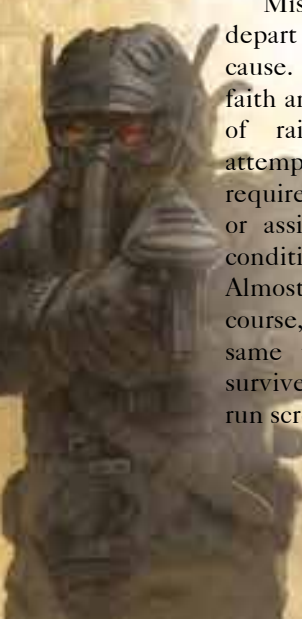
Path: Discipline

Prerequisite: From Taskin-Kada.

Possible Application: Regional knowledge (Central, East Cross, South), perception, insight, stealth.

Double Take (+3): Once a day, you can re-roll any check using this background if you don't like the final result.

Taskin-Kada, a respected city in Abidan, developed a counter-intelligence group for the express purpose of maintaining surveillance on potential enemies, and



occasionally, potential allies. This gave rise to the watchers, an echelon of individuals trained in the art of stealth to rival even the assassins from Baruch Malkut. The watchers are not spies but observers. They never steal anything other than the unaltered history revealed before their eyes. With a reputation for honesty and accuracy, the word of a watcher carries weight in an Abidan court. Among other accomplishments, that reputation allowed the organization to expose corruption within a trading guild in Sclavia and recover Savarice's pilfered holy blade when stolen by thieves under blessing of Darius Konig. When the watchers are not observing within the kingdom, the majority are committed to external actions, dealing with neighbors both friendly and hostile. Dozens patrol lands north of the Tethuss Bridge, a necessary task though it costs the most lives. The majority of them travel south, to watch the nation of Baruch Malkut. Despite the impressive distance between the two nations, and the fact that several other kingdoms lie in between, Savarice never forgot his experiences near that land and considers the rival nation the greatest threat to Canam, more so than the pagus to the north. Taskin-Kada took an especially vested interest in Baruch Malkut. Home to the largest single Jewish population in Canam, Taskin-Kada despises the use of Hebrew words as a name for one of the most malevolent nations on Earth.

As a member, you can either be tasked by a secret mission or be one that has left the order for personal reasons. Your specialty deals with espionage in other nations and you are not cut for dungeons, though you would not be frightened by the concept.

VIVICATOR

Path: Supernatural

Suggested Applications: Heal, mysticism, nature, herbalism.

Hand of the Unspoken (+1-+5): You gain the paladin's *lay on hands* feature. At +2 in this background, you are able to select the adventurer feat for *lay on hands*; at +3, you can select up to the champion feat, and at +5 you can select all three feats.

Regardless of magic, despite position or lineage, death is still certain. Almost everyone believes that souls continue past their mortal prison. While some believe the spirit rises to an afterlife, others affirm that the soul recycles from animal to animal, only occasionally being blessed into one of higher intelligence. Some religions forbid the interrupting of this process for any reason. Forcing a spirit back to its original body interrupts the fate written for that soul when God blessed that baby emerging from the womb. This never stops the obsessed and the mournful from attempting any course of action to bring someone back from the dead.

Those that claim to be blessed with magic from their deity cannot prove their gift came from any divine power. In the end, most are con men or take shortcuts to a god via some proven magic from an ungodly source.

Stories began circulating in the past centuries of aberrations of magic, more so than the already numerous oddities covering the globe. These are creatures of higher intelligence gifted with a powerful magic with apparently no source or explanation. Several monsters already flaunt powerful magic, but these are limited to less potent spells. No magical beast can spontaneously bring the dead back to life. How is it then that a few humans and fae have been rumored to be able to generate great magic with no source? Some of these gifted individuals stumbled upon this talent in childhood. Most lose control of their power, killing themselves and, unfortunately, others in the process. Some are murdered by a fearful public, declaring the youths servants of darkness. A modicum hid their powers, turning to clerical and arcane studies to master and mask their ability with the accepted arts. No one would question how one spell is cast differently than others. This leaves a minute group that live their lives possessing a single immense power: the ability to manipulate the very essence of life, to heal or to harm. Casting it always comes with a heavy internal price, resulting in the eventual death of the user if the ability is abused.

A few have taken to being regular healers with no sworn deity with an uncanny ability to lift those from near death. All keep this power from the public eye, offering it in private to a select few with desperate causes or deep pockets. Most aware of the legends refuse to acknowledge these aberrations exist, for a hermit with life's dedication to his god could commit as great a power as the head priest of a temple. But what of the story of the child with a gift which could only be from a god? Echalogians believe this gift is the result of magical saturation. Since more humans are emerging with this power than fae, some echalogians speculate that mankind is undergoing a similar change as the fae, but in much more positive ways. The knowledge of these beings is kept silent and the majority of the world is unaware of their existence.

Though some claim to be gifted by a god or gods, there are others that boast the same abilities with no such faith.

ORGANIZATIONS

Rarely do characters meet in taverns or stumble upon each other on a dirt road. Many are not foolish to venture into the outside world alone and unprepared. Often, they've made friends and forged their alliances long before seeking adventure. Characters can be either part of a much larger organization or they can be independent, answering to no one but themselves.

Players should work together in forging a group that maximizes each other's abilities. They know their names, their strengths, and their weaknesses.

At character creation, a group of players may select one of the following affiliations. Being signed under an organization offers funds or equipment while independence offers the greatest gift of all, freedom. The GM



may select an organization for the player group if the choice affects the campaign being designed. Not all members of a party need to select a single organization, though the party can only receive the benefit of one, regardless of the number of players in the party. To receive the benefits of an organization requires at least three members of party to share that affiliation. Players can only belong to one organization at a time. It is not impossible for players to switch their affiliation but this is not easy and requires the GM's complicity.

ABIDAN MISSIONARIES

Tasked with protecting the innocent and encouraging hope and virtue throughout the kingdom, Abidan missionaries are gathered by a mutual desire to help others in need. They need not all be followers of the same faith, neither are they required to promote said faith to those requiring their help. These missionaries care nothing for political or theological agendas, preferring to show the rightness of their faith to the world through their actions. They only concern themselves with helping the needy and serving the cause to defeat evil whenever they encounter it. Generally, missionaries are multi-talented; they're not all just trained swords. Members are educators, leaders, and healers. As the threat of an encroaching darkness looms, these missions have been found more and more often outside of Abidan borders.

Prerequisite: All members of this organization must have a good alignment.

Benefit: All party members gain a +1 bonus to any check related to religion - even religions they don't belong to. All party members gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls against troops, leaders, and wreckers. Players also receive +1 point of positive relationship with Abidan.

CRIMSON STARLIGHT

The CS is the military arm of Angel, often taking missions outside of the city walls in all-terrain vehicles, ETVs, or VERTOL flyers. The CS operates from four immense towers situated around the outer perimeter of the city. Response time to an outside attack is measured in seconds. Recently, attacks on the wall have subsided, with boggs and puggs shifting their attention to those passing to and from the city. This has forced the CS to leave the walls and take a more aggressive stance on outside threats. They clash not only with surrounding raiders but with the growing armies of puggs and skeggs in the region of Xixion to the north. Of all the bastion organizations, the CS receives the most combat experience. Squads are often sent to patrol the great outer forests of Cyon.

Another branch of CS handles internal problems dealing with Genai. Rumors tell of a smuggling route under the city leading past the walls to the outside, allowing free passage for those wishing to avoid the main gates. Then there is the matter of the temple, a giant tower in the center of Genai and the great beast supposedly living underneath it.

Benefit: The player group signed to work for the Crimson Starlight receives a wheeled truck or a tracked APC for free. It is a loan and cannot be sold. They also gain a preferred enemy, gaining a +1 bonus to attack against puggs and boggs. Players also gain +1 point of positive relationship with Angel.

FREE-LANCE

Outcast or deserted from a lord or king, the free-lance travels from town to town seeking money or purpose. Often mistakenly dubbed mercenaries or sellswords, a free-lance began its life as military unit sworn to a specific flag. For reasons which may be good or bad, this lance found itself unbound from its original authority. Did they abandon their assignment? Did they violate doctrine, or challenge the word of a lord? Were they arrested, sent to prison by a military court for a crime they didn't commit, only later to escape? Whatever the reason, wanted by their nation or kingdom, they survive as soldiers of fortune. If there's a problem, if no one else can help, and if they can be found, a free-lance may be hired.

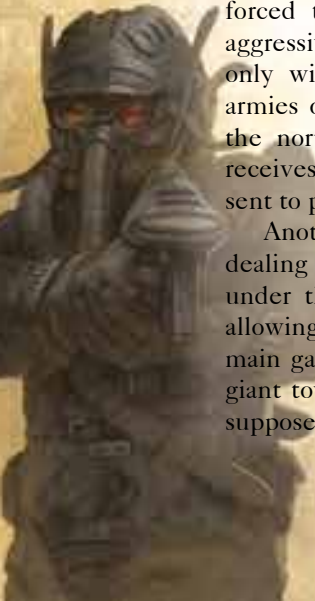
They may be on the run from their homelands, where they are definitely persona non grata, although good-aligned nations like Abidan and Limshau rarely put prices on the heads of such expatriates, and bastions usually wash their hands of offenders once they have been put out of the walls.

Benefit: Members of a free-lance must select a kingdom, free house, or bastion. Party members suffer a -2 penalty to diplomacy checks against any resident of this nation. Because of shared training, if ALL members of the free-lance are in line of sight within one another, they each gain a +1 bonus to MD.

IRON SONS

The Iron Sons is the largest techan free company operating in the world. They command thousands of troops through a decentralized control network connected via a series of mobile command posts. They operate fixed offices in both York and Angel, though their operations are outlawed practically everywhere else. Although able to function independently, each command node can receive directives from a central voice, known as General Chauk. Instructions from this authority are seldom relayed but when issued, all units are compelled to act. Only a few people in the world know where Chauk is at any time, and his location shifts daily.

Although the Sons are classed as mercenaries, and are easy to hire out, they receive their primary income through York and Angel service contracts. This does not account for their entire budget, and it's believed the company receives significant investment from unknown third parties using the Sons as their proxy in Canam. The objective of these third parties is shared by most others that hire out the Sons—destroy the world of echa and return the planet back under control of man. While



some cells are known to be lenient if not diplomatic in their relations with fantasy, most are ruthless.

Benefit: A party signed under the Iron Sons receives a scrambler. It is a loan and cannot be sold. If the party breaks from the Iron Sons (or attempts to sell the scrambler), Iron Son command will put out a contract for the party's elimination. Each player also receives +1 point of positive relationship with the Iron Sons.

LOGOS LANCE

It is not uncommon to see Limshau custodians operating outside of city walls. Clad in black kawabari armor instead of the city-white of most custodians, members of this group are often sent out to either retrieve a previously lost tome of knowledge or authenticate an important event. Although occasionally they travel alone, most join up with a group of companions with similar goals. Circumstances have occurred where an entire party of Limshau citizens is gathered together to venture into the open world. Not all have to be custodians, though one of them usually is (or perhaps a librarian). The logos lance, as it is called, is tasked for a specific mission. It is often difficult, involving a journey encompassing months or even years. This lance is commissioned by a higher authority, up to and sometimes including the king himself.

Prerequisite: At least one member of a logos lance must have a background connected to the kingdom of Limshau.

Benefit: Any party member with a background connected to the kingdom of Limshau receives a +1 bonus to checks with that background: any party member without one gains a temporary "Logos Lance +1" background while on a mission, which can be used for most knowledge and diplomatic checks related to that mission. The entire party receives +1 point of positive relationship to Limshau, and are supplied with riding horses when on a mission.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

This group from Sierra Madre is more interested in subversion and intelligence gathering than anything else. Even though flaunting advances few other bastions even dream of, Sierra Madre still lacks many developments even bastions like York claim. This comes from the lack of outside threats and from a naïve, narrow-minded population. Groups sent out from the subterranean bastion often travel north to 'acquire' technology from others, especially York and Angel (Mann remains a hard target and most attempting entry are killed upon discovery, and Selkirk is just plain hard to get to). The Ministry also tracks all movement above the city, intercepting and dealing with forces marching over their soil.

Prerequisite: Techan human from Sierra Madre.

Benefit: All players working for the MFA receive the shielding modification for free to all pertinent start-

ing equipment. Players also receive a +1 point of positive relationship with Sierra Madre.

NOMADS

Strictly speaking, to be among this group is to be classed as an itinerant rather than a nomad, but that doesn't trip off the tongue nearly as well. This group doesn't follow a herd; they don't migrate with the passing seasons. They wander the world because of a personal need to see it or because of a fear of discovery. They may have secrets or carry something of value others covet. Of course, this need not be so melodramatic. Techan nomads, those outcast or unable to enter bastions, migrate to keep within areas with a low ED value. Echan nomads may be outcast from their own society, bound to wander aimlessly without a home. Either type may possess a stigma preventing their settlement. Despite being labeled as an organization, this group is not affiliated with any establishment.

Benefit: Once per level, a player can declare a forced full heal-up without any negative campaign effects. Such an occurrence is unique and there must still be situation for a party to lick their wounds.

OROBAS

The Selkirk defense authority, unlike many other interdiction forces from bastions, doesn't consider echans their enemy. Most Orobas missions entail escorting and protecting Fargon and Seliquam patrols through the Selkirk controlled section of the Dianaso pass. Orobas personnel are usually selected from the mining population and trained separately. Orobas personnel are especially well trained in squad actions. Already used to working in groups, the operatives quickly learn to offset each other's weaknesses and operate as a cohesive unit. They seldom display internal personality conflicts and stay together, even when on vacation. Other missions include scouting and recon outside the Dianaso pass, as well as interfacing with the Train Guard to defend against encroachment from Xixion. A few groups are occasionally loaned to Angel for a short time.

Prerequisite: Techan human from Selkirk.

Benefit: Orobas personnel gain one additional adventurer feat. Players also receive +1 point of positive relationship with Selkirk.

RETINUE

Willing or unwilling, this company are the cohorts of a noble. The aristocrat may be a childhood friend or a stranger, arrogant and pretentious or kindly and down-to-earth. Regardless, you are assigned to this task, sworn to ensure the safety of the noble, even at the cost of your life. The reasons for this undertaking can be varied. It may be part of some undisclosed diplomatic mission to a foreign land or a quest the noble is insisting on performing personally. It may be the beginning or the unfortunate end of a crusade. Rarely, the noble



may be an outcast, the last living heir to a throne claimed by a usurper, the noble's allies being all that stands in the way of a hangman's noose.

Prerequisite: A party belonging to this organization must have one member (a PC, companion character, or non-combatant NPC) who belongs to the nobility (i.e. has the Free House Citizen or Blood Royal background, or equivalent).

Benefit: Each member of the party receives +1 positive relationship die with the nation the retinue is sworn under. If this point is not applicable, the group may instead gain a free caravan with riding horses.

SLAVER CARAVAN

Citizens of Baruch Malkut found outside of its borders are defectors, outcasts, or slavers, the last of which only leave the country when on the hunt for chattel. They present a cold demeanor, mated to a desire for profit at the expense of the freedom of creatures they consider inferior. Regardless of the campaign they find themselves in, slavers are seldom noble. They care about themselves and their next payoff. Trained swords are bound only by gold. Barring this, loyalty is earned through family blood, a common occurrence with slaver caravans. Fathers train their sons to carry the tradition of racial superiority and malice that make the family name what it is. The only path of redemption lies with those that escape the life, but for those who are part of an active caravan, their morality has long since died.

Prerequisite: A party of active slavers cannot have any members of good alignment. A party using the caravan as cover to aid escapees cannot have any members of evil alignment.

Benefit: The group receives a slaver caravan, consisting of two sleeper carriages and one slaver carriage outfitted with fae iron bars (draught horses are included). Every party member receives a riding horse. The party receives a +1 bonus to attack rolls against fae creatures (if active slavers) or against agents of slave-keeping nations (if aiding escapees). Players also receive either +1 point of positive or negative relationship with Baruch Malkut. This point must be used in the same way for each party member.

TECHAN MERCENARIES

Some people prefer working alone. Though they receive no benefits from governments or corporations, they set their own clocks and answer to no higher authority. They are on their own in the face of a wild landscape of wonders and monstrosities reserved usually for bedtime tales. Some mercenaries work out of bastions, though many actually travel between them. Some consider themselves wandering souls, looking for a noble fight to join. Others seek only profit. Regardless of their motives, they have thrown their lot in with technology over magic. Alas, these groups often fail early on, unable to replace their technology fast enough when it disrupts or simply falling victim to

enemies they have underestimated. Mercenaries, heroic or selfish (or both), must keep constant vigilance on the acquisition of funds. Jewels, gold and rare items fetch a high price in bastions and mercenaries need to keep themselves funded and armed.

Benefit: Each member of a mercenary group gains one relationship point to spend towards one bastion (and which must be spent the same way, positive or negative, by each party member), and one relationship point which can be spend anywhere.

TRAIN GUARD

Impressive as the Redoubt at Last Hope is, it is a mere fence compared with Abidan's Bulwark or the city walls of Angel, and it cannot completely hold Xixion at bay – there are far too many tunnels and lesser passes through the mountains to block them all. The military order known as the Train Guard make regular patrols of the passes, exterminating any pugg bands and other predatory monsters that they come across. Though the order's training regimen was designed and perfected by the ravnorra lords of Fargon, only a fraction of the Guard is made up of narros (and then, often commanders) – in fact, the largest demographic are kodiaks, who make up fully thirty percent of the force. Joining the Train Guard is considered a highly prestigious career for all the people of Seliquam, but the high mortality rate of the membership keeps their numbers from growing too strong. Puggs may be no real threat in small groups, but they are hardly the only dangers in the region.

The Train Guard is the only truly cosmopolitan military force in Canam, consisting of the finest warriors contributed by the disparate nations of the Seliquam Confederation. When not wiping out pugg incursions, they often take exploratory and punitive expeditions into Xixion itself; occasionally, a unit will travel farther afield on orders from the Grand Council. Within the Train Guard, it is not uncommon to see humans and narros fighting side-by-side with kodiaks, damaskans, chaparrans, or even tenenbri – the Guard will take anyone, so long as their blades are keen or their magic potent. The constant infighting that plagues the rest of Seliquam is totally absent from the Train Guard, a comradeship forged in fire that is not hastily thrown aside for any national loyalty. As the Guard's actions directly benefit Selkirk, the bastion is only too happy to trade disruption-immune equipment with them at a substantial discount.

Prerequisite: At least one party member from Seliquam, Selkirk or Fargon.

Benefit: Guard members receive either a revolver or a bolt rifle at no cost at 1st level, and receive +1 point of positive relationship with all of Seliquam (this can counter negative points with specific factions within Seliquam).

UNITED

And sometimes the adventurers just met. It does happen occasionally—weaving a story which includes the main characters encountering each other for the first time. For this, though a couple of them might possess a shared history, it's not significant enough to warrant another organization selection. Of course, a boring story would involve the characters meeting up for no particular reason, and remaining together with no defined motivation. Simply associating because people seem friendly may be enough of a reason in real life, but this is an adventure, and those gathering to take on a quest must have some united cause—a reason to stay together. It could be a piece of vital information, a powerful piece of magic or technology. This organization is not an organization at all, and only really falls into play if the entire party is comprised of previously unrelated backgrounds with little to no common ground. Their association begins the day of the adventure and each must now earn the trust of the others.

Benefit: The group receives a macguffin, which can be virtually anything—a major magical artifact, a piece of technology well beyond their level of expertise, a dangerous secret. One of the player characters might even be the macguffin. If a party member is ever in a position where their defeat would compromise the ability of the party to deliver the macguffin to wherever it needs to go (at the GM's discretion), they can only die by performing a sacrifice. Naturally, the GM should never tell the players exactly when this is the case, in order to maintain tension.

WATCHERS

The city of Taskin-Kada is the home of a very unique society charged with counter-intelligence for the entire nation of Abidan. Operations involve scouting in the pagus-controlled land of Apocrypha as well as extensive surveillance of Baruch Malkut. Very often, a mixed band of trained operatives will be sent on a long-term mission vital to the security of the kingdom. Although Watchers may comprise the majority of this unit, this is not always exclusive. The team consists of intelligence agents, military men, and operatives specialized in various scientific and magical fields. They can be tasked with espionage or sabotage, but Abidan has never officially sent the Watchers on assassination.

Watchers have a reputation for moving quickly without being noticed, escaping from any situation, and trudging on while others fall to exhaustion. They cannot rely on support from the home country if a crisis occurs. Should any member of the Watchers be caught or killed, Abidan will disavow any knowledge of their actions.

Prerequisite: From Abidan; at least one party member belongs to the Taskin-Kada Watchers.

Benefit: All party members gain a +1 bonus to skill checks requiring diplomacy or when sneaking or bluffing.

YORK SELF DEFENSE FORCE (YSDF)

The largest techan standing army in Canam is the York Self Defense Force. They walk the streets and defend the outlining fields from impending invasion. They break up drunken tavern brawls and lead assaults against dragons. Some escort echan through the city and forcefully eject others for unnecessary magic use in violation of the strict limits the city places on its echan visitors. The most boring job is patrolling the defense installations between York and Mann, which have never sparked a conflict. On the other hand, the northern barracks often suffer attacks from dragons. The YSDF works alongside the robotic zeros, but the droids are never allowed to depart the fields of Halyc surrounding York.

Prerequisite: Techan human from York.

Benefit: Members of the YSDF receive +1 point of positive relationship with York. When operating within York, each member gains +2 to diplomatic checks against York residents and techan visitors and +1 to diplomatic or intimidation checks against echan visitors.

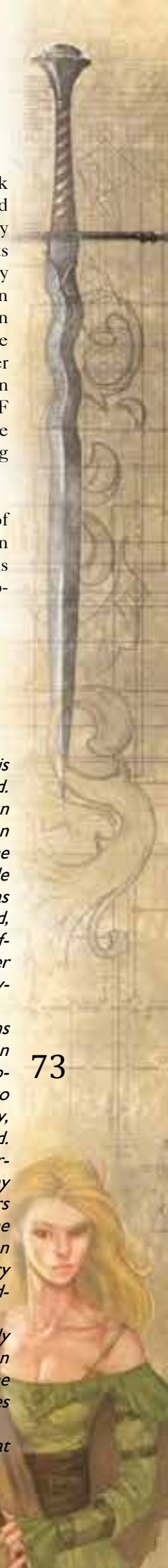


It was a week before Aiden could sneak out of his new house. He waited until everyone had settled. Their house was cast in an early night as the sun dropped behind the crown. Past 10:30 pm, Aiden saw the crack of light peeking under the bottom of the bedroom door go dark. He heard his relatives conclude their evening bathroom rituals. The opposite bed was empty; Martin was hanging with friends that weekend, drinking and forgetting his problems. Their guardians offered him a wide berth. He would have taken it either way. Aiden knew Martin was doubtful to return for several hours, if at all, until morning.

The UTR station was a two-block walk. The few coins in his pocket would get him to Genai. The navigation screens were easy. The ride was forty minutes in an empty car. Each time the train stopped, Aiden leaned out to see if anyone was boarding. He tapped his feet uneasily, waiting for the seconds to pass before the doors closed. Just as Aiden's imagination had turned the train into a serpent, it was now unwillingly generating various subway denizens, none of them terribly friendly. The doors closed and shuffled Aiden to the next station, where he had to change lines, forcing a five minute wait alone on the platform. His head twitched in the direction of every little snap or pop. Distant laughs from drunken teens faded as they diverted down another street.

The next train contained a single passenger, an elderly olive-skinned man that stared incessantly at Aiden. Aiden looked up occasionally, wondering who would break the silence. Neither did. Aiden disembarked twenty minutes later.

He finally stopped at the concrete barricade that



sealed Genai from the rest of the city. Every road had a gate any card-carrying member of the city could cross. Pedestrian walkways were seldom watched with turnstiles installed to monitor traffic. Aiden wondered if the gates were meant to keep out or in. He dodged under the ratchet bar as there was no guard on hand to prevent him.

Genai bore no resemblance to any other district in the city. Unlike the rest of the city, organized and methodically laid out, Genai was a model of chaos. Roads split into dead ends; walkways looped around onto themselves. Buildings were built with wood and concrete, topped with ceramic tiles or gardens. The temple, a pagoda atop a pyramid, stood at the center of the town, towering the buildings around it. Aiden only caught it from the corner of his eye as he tracked the passing street signs.

Aiden found the address. Huangxia Street was an alley branching from the towering monument. The lights barely reached into the dark chasm Aiden had to venture into. Bottom lip quivering, Aiden forced himself deeper down the alley, waiting for his eyes to adjust.

A hundred feet in, he found it. The store was three stories, probably an apartment complex at one point. A large set of unlocked wrought iron gates stood ajar and portentous, like a patient basking shark. Behind them, tattered wooden doors tapped in the breeze. Aiden rechecked the address. From the outside it looked like either the place had been robbed or abandoned years ago. The sign above rocking like a metronome was in the same Asian type Aiden had read inside the codex. At least the number 23C was understandable.

Aiden realized that he hadn't considered what he was going to do next. He was half-way across town, past most adults' bedtime, staring at a store that appeared to have been forsaken. Even if it wasn't, it would still have been closed. He knew he wasn't being rational. Part of him was wishing he had stumbled on an elderly Asian man with a crooked wooden cane, round glasses, and a white fu-manchu beard running a 24-hour corner store stocked with a witch's brew of spices, frozen food, and bottled soda with a curtained-off backroom hiding wands, magic powders, and tiny creatures that looked adorable but acted as monsters if you angered them.

Aiden considered returning home. However, since the door was open, there was no harm in taking a peek. He saw only glimpses in the darkness as he peaked past the threshold. A few shelves sat in silhouette. Cheap tables and bamboo chairs lined one-half of the store. A dim lantern with a faint glow hung over an oak desk sitting at the other end. A few books waited open for a reader. Aiden willed himself through the iron jaw and past the tapping doors.

He squeaked a "hello" to announce himself but only managed a whisper. He snuck across the room and approached the oak desk. The immense open tome before him had broken its spine at the gutter like it sat at this page for a hundred years. The cover had the finish of marble and as Aiden scrapped his finger across the tail, he realized it was. He removed his glasses from his coat and tried to read.

Aiden could make out most of the words though a few

were hidden in the shadow of the gutter. He was apprehensive about touching anything but fought through it to turn the nozzle on the lantern. The light grew bright and Aiden shifted his attention back to the book.

Humans suffer from the obsolete notion that they are the dominant species upon this world. Man's strength for conquest comes only from population. He exists in numbers. Using numbers, by all rights, puggs deserve dominion. The Earth requires penance from man for he committed sins against the world that gave him birth.

Aiden didn't notice the light from the lamp was growing brighter. He was engrossed in the words, wondering what puggs were, what sins the writer was referring to. The light began to drift slightly over Aiden's head, illuminating the gutter nicely. Aiden continued to read.

Nature offered man renewable resources, friendly denizens, and land uncontested by evil. He abolished this unwritten rule to care for the world. He committed unforgivable sins against nature when he embraced the machine. Technology offered man growth beyond what he could accomplish by natural means. He turned his back on life.

Aiden finished and then realized that the light on the page had shifted from his right to his left. He twisted slowly to spot the flicking flame hovering in the air beside his head. It had opened the lantern door, drifted gently from its cage, and moved closer to offer better illumination.

Aiden screamed and spun around, pinning himself against the desk. The spark of flame jumped from its spot and fluttered around him. It was no dragon, but Aiden's growing anxiety of being so far from home made him jumpy. He also didn't like bugs, and this thing moved very bug-like.

It floated to the book and then tapped the page repeatedly. Aiden didn't know how to respond, or even if he should. It didn't have legs or a head; it was just a lantern flame that had floated from its lantern. Aiden bent his head and leaned forward. It tapped the page again.

"What?" Aiden asked.

Tap. Tap.

"You want me to read?"

Tap.

Aiden's heart started to temper. The light drifted up over the book. Aiden stepped back to the desk. "If... you...insist."

He was about to look back down, then it occurred to him that a flame with no fuel source was floating in the air in front of him. "You can't be real," Aiden whispered. It bobbed in the air, floating on an invisible ocean. Aiden didn't know if that was an answer. "You shouldn't... exist."

"Its life has no meaning unless it can light the way for others," spoke the tall figure approaching from the shadow. Aiden jumped upon hearing him. "If only all things had such simple ambitions."

The man wasn't a dumpy figure with almond eyes and shriveled skin. This stranger towered over Aiden by several feet. His eyes were a radiant blue, skin darker than the room. He had fuzzy grey hair with matching whiskers under his chin, thin with a granite physique.

Aiden backed away from the desk into the shelf behind him, jostling the heavy books resting upon it. The youth glanced back and noticed a hefty volume toppling over. It had a cover of obsidian, parading gold bosses of the gaping maws of dragons. Their front claws reached across the outer edge to the single oversized clasp keeping the book closed. Aiden righted it quickly—with considerable strain—and turned back to the man.

"I'm sorry," Aiden started, "I was just--"

"Quite all right, Mr. Camus," he answered. The spark orbited the two of them. "It likes you." His voice was deep and rough, with a heartening charisma in the way he addressed the child. Aiden couldn't place the accent but he had no problems understanding him. The man stopped opposite of the desk and looked down to the book. "The memoirs of Renar Alkanost, laudenian council leader, written 300 years ago." Aiden offered only a blink. "Though personally I think the fae is arrogant in his opinion. Most laudenians are like that."

"I just wanted to look..." Aiden trailed off. "You know my name--"

"I knew your mother. I sold her the books. She talked about you at length. Sorry about..." he paused to choose an appropriate word, "everything."

"Who are..." Aiden's voice faded and he mouthed the last word formed.

"I'm a collector. You may call me David...or Chen."

"You collect books, Davidorchen?"

"I share them," Chen corrected. He opened his palm and the spark flew obediently to it. A whisper from his lips and it leapt from his hand. It bounced and fluttering across the room, igniting every candle and lamp.

Aiden's eyes followed the spark as it made its journey. Aiden's mouth fell open as he took sight of the forty rows of books that encircled the chamber, every wall, floor to ceiling. Each volume looked as old as the book on the desk, like the books Aiden owned. They were magnificent. The only break in the books came from a glass showcase of old weapons modern man never used. They were obsolete devices and implements from a time Aiden delighted to remember. They gleamed with polish as if forged and shaved into shape yesterday--broadswords, throwing axes, and a single longbow shaped from black wood. The flame finally returned to its home and closed the door behind it.

"How did you..." Aiden started.

"I asked it to."

"But it's not alive."

"First rule of Attricana: Anything you can think of...thinks for itself."

Aiden gathered his thoughts. "Attricana?"

Chen approached a window and opened the shutters to the moonlight. He pointed to the bright star brushing the crescent.

"By way that everything that can't happen, does."

"Can't happen...Dragons," Aiden said.

"Quite right. Hard to miss when they appear as they did."

"They aren't real," Aiden forced himself to say, "Can't."

"So says the normal world," Chen replied with a shad-

ow of a smirk. Aiden was not smiling. Desperation had set in.

"I don't understand."

"Should you?"

"Was it Zmey?"

"Zmey?" Chen pondered the sudden question. Aiden could see the man rifling through old thoughts. "Zmey is a myth, based on several stories. What attacked you... was a death dragon."

"I couldn't find the other one in my book."

"Book?"

"Codex Dracontis--"

"Oh yes. I remember that one. There are better resources."

"That show the other dragon? The one with gold and blue scales, blue eyes, white whiskers and white talons. A long snake body. Four arms, four talons."

Chen circled around the desk, rolling his fingers across the spines on the shelf behind Aiden. "You know, they say spotting a Yok-ani is a good omen. Seeing two portends a blessed life." Chen found the book in question and pulled it out. It was almost as large as the one already on the desk, but with no cover art. There was only a single large Asian-sinitic letter and the English words underneath Myths of the Kuraukou-Puru.

"Yok-ani? Are they good?" Aiden asked.

"Some people certainly think so," Chen responded as he placed the book gently on the table. He respectfully slid the other to the side. "What do you think?" He unclasped the latches at either end of the new book.

"I think it was good."

"You sure it had four talons?"

"Yes."

"Good eye for detail, considering. They grow more as they age. Three to four to five." He opened the book. The heavy-stock pages were rough on the leaf, a hemp-pulp hybrid. The letters were pounded heavily into the stock. "This one talks of them. They are quiet, reserved, renowned for wisdom, and worshipped for the humility of their power. Under their guidance, lands see no war, famine, or grief. At least that's the claim. Reality, well...I guess they try their best." Aiden broke from the book to look at Chen. "Read it," Chen added. "Stay if you wish."

"My brother will kill me if he finds out."

"Yes, I imagine he will."

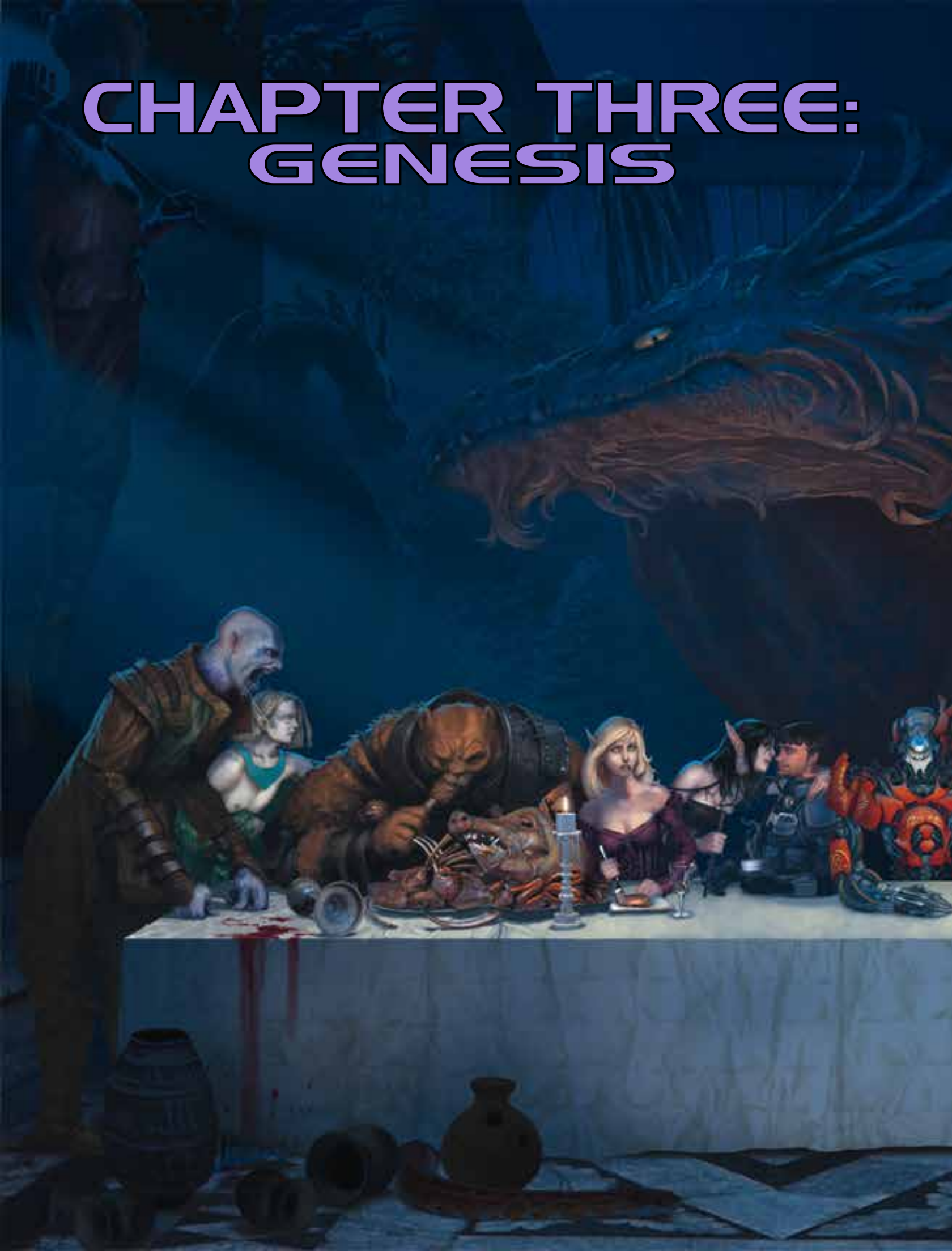
Aiden smiled and reassured himself. He thought of Martin's shoulder punches and whatever punishment his new guardians would inflict if he got caught. "I'll stay," he said.


"I'll make tea," said Chen as he walked to his kitchen.

"Uhh, Mister?" Aiden still wasn't ready to call him by name. "How much is true? Dragons? Elves?"

Chen looked back at the young boy. A quiver of a smile crept on his face. "All of it."

CHAPTER THREE: GENESIS





Earth remains a crowded place. Millions of humans survived the holocaust they may or may not have brought on themselves. Added to that is the flood of peoples only previously believed to exist in fiction, with their own cultures matching closely to those portrayed in human mythology. In those ancient tales, the interlopers went by many names. To this day, humans still often refer to them by these labels, sometimes thought of as endearing, other times taken as insult.

How these peoples respond to them is based strictly upon the individual. Some take it a compliment being likened to noble and whimsical creatures of legend. Others despise the comparison. None of them ever match the mold precisely. Some may look the part, but their personalities may differ radically. Some exhibit traits from a variety of different legends while others are wholly unique without a mirror in mythology. There are also creatures birthed from enchantment which are new to this era, possessing no history from the previous age.

The following races (or more properly, species) are broken up into three categories:

- **Fae:** These are naturally born from magic, with no original primordial form to track evolution back to. They began as the original fae, but have been continuously slaves to magic's whim. As time progresses, they continually "devolve" into more tribal, animalistic forms. It is believed the initial fae have long since vanished. Fae peoples include descendant species like damaskans, laudenians, and narros. Although some claim they no longer fit into the category, the tilen can also be found here. In truth, there are dozens of fae species and only a few of the oldest fae actually know them all. Other variations are dealt with later as monsters.
- **Evolved:** Humanity stands as the only example of an evolved race (at least on Earth) that has achieved intelligence without the assistance of magic.
- **Spawn:** Spawn are those that were once normal evolved creatures that have succumbed to magic's influence and have been altered and enhanced. For the purposes of this chapter, spawn races listed here are those that have been pushed by enchantment into a form that possess enough intelligence to form a community. All non-natural creatures on Earth which are not fae or human are spawn. In Canam, only the kodiaks have advanced to the point of developing a culture.

THE LINE OF FAE

No one is certain how the fae appeared. Some insist they birthed from trees while others claimed the sky. Others profess neither, pointing to the soil as the source. Only dragons knew for certain and they regard such things as trivial, not worthy of remembrance. Considering the oldest fae maintain a connection with nature, the exact specifics of their origin seemed inconsequential (though never state that to a laudenian or a chaparran). The word "fae" is another controversial debate. While the etymology points to a simple "touched by magic" description, it shares its root with "faerie."

Echological influence appears in numerous cultures, connecting threads from various human legends and myths to the time of Terros. The fae would later influence mythologies previously thought unconnected. Though damaskans, laudenians, and chaparrans would fall under a wide range of Germanic elf legends, other distant cousins would appear in Greek or Egyptian lore, with no apparent connection

between these influences. Even obscure concepts of Attricana found its way into Chinese and Japanese myths. Most fae are aware how they were represented in human literature. Oddly enough, the traditional prejudices of fantasy tend to match the new reality as well. The more dominant fae look down on their lesser brethren, thinking of them only as outcasts—uncivilized and primitive offshoots prone to violence. Few survived the exodus, but magic kept its persistence and they reappeared soon after in the modern age, as if their introduction could not be stopped.

As fae continued to grow and develop, a rising concern emerged as the newer species appeared less developed and intelligent than their ancestors. Though some claim a higher status, there is no denying the recent branch species exhibit a primitive mentality, preferring to pillage and devour rather than develop and civilize. Fae wonder if they are doomed to devolve into mindless animals while man continues to grow and expand. The fae take pride in their rich culture and a growing fear has taken root that it may all bleed away in time.

Then there are the pagus, appearing with the Ixindar migration when the black sun passed over the world and settled in its new home in the previous age. Pagus break most of the rules associated with fae. They are the oldest species without a deviation branch of their own. After Mengus created them, they never changed, as if Attricana stopped talking to them.

In the present, the descendants of the original fae continue their traditions and beliefs with hardly a hiccup from the old time. Tenenbri dig, laudenians fly, narros protect, and damaskans remember. Meanwhile, their new ape-evolved neighbors continue to expand.

- *Body weight is shockingly low for the apparent mass of the body...*
- *An attempted biopsy of marrow from the scapula found the bone hollow. Interesting. Almost like a flying mammal. Will attempt another location.*
- *Other cavities located within the sternum and ribs. I know why birds have hollow bones, but how does a humanoid survive with a fragile...oddly enough the bone structure itself feel very rigid, stronger than expected, though still flexible.*
- *Bone mineral density test inconclusive, as it does not match with other findings.*
- *Finger bones also hollow but ulna and radius are solid.*
- *Final results: This fae's skeleton accounts for 8-10% of its total body mass, this is in comparison to an average human, where it is closer to 20%. In conclusion, this means this chaparran's skeleton is built more like a bird's than a human's.*

<Audio recording>

Autopsy on unidentified chaparran (excerpt), Angel
July 15th, 227 A.E.

RELATIONS AND TRADITIONS

Despite some common ground, there exist major cultural differences between human and fae nations. When the first fae encountered humans, they assumed that by understanding one group of men, they could comprehend the entire species, as there is little if any cultural deviation between fae of the same type.

Disastrous initial encounters between fledging fae and human communities in southern Canam soured relations for decades. Early chaparran encounters with mankind were so dire, it curdled the entire race's opinion of the 'monkey-folk,' a conflict that largely persists to this day; as the details of the incident are lost to human history, it seems unlikely ever to be resolved. Laudenians also share a resentful opinion of man after an unfortunate incident with the miners of Selkirk, the only bastion without an intrinsically adversarial relationship to the fantasy world. Selkirk had already benefitted from a successful first encounter with the narros years earlier. Though the miners were not immoral or wicked in any way, and tried their best to impress the elder elves, the humans' brash and unkempt nature fell afoul of the decorous and conceited attitude of the laudenians. They judged the whole of the human race upon that single meeting as offensive and unpleasant, and isolated as they are, the majority has had little reason to change that opinion.

In Southam, where humans were a minority, their bitter opinions of the fae came from constant conflict. With the exception of the narros, most fae in Southam think of mankind as little different from an animal, to be hunted or domesticated like any other. Thankfully, other encounters in the north were not nearly as soiled. Damaskans and narros discovered kindness and loyalty among the humans in their first encounters. They also found to their initial shock that human traditions change with each nation and that time and distance encourage greater deviations. After only a few decades, two separate human societies populated with identical humans would create distinct traditions and even new languages. Unlike the chaparrans, laudenians, and tenenbri, inconsiderate and inflexible in their traditions and their acceptance of other customs, damaskans and gimfen grew to tolerate and even welcome cultural diversity.

Thankfully, ecological influence preserved many of the social customs from the ancient past, allowing a certain common ground in basic relations even when there is no other common language. Though each nation has their own cultural standards, there has never been a major diplomatic incident between nations over traditional practices. Hand shaking is understood, though damaskans abhor unnecessary physical contact with strangers despite having no concept of personal space, and gimfen wipe sweat from their face before shaking hands. Waving one hand to another is a greeting to many human cultures, and in fae nations, though gimfen hate any hand gesture where the palm is

exposed to them. The many variations of saluting and bowing are understood and even practiced by several fae peoples. Narros salute by touching the first knuckle of a clenched fist to the middle of their brow. Since damaskans don't officially recognize royalty (regarding 'king' as a mere job description) or religion, the concept of bending knee or prostrating before a lord or faith is unknown to them, causing accusations of disrespect. Meanwhile, gimfen kowtow to virtually anybody, including their own tools (considering how close their heads are to the ground, this is hardly an impedance or strain on their backs). Chaparrans will kneel but never bow.

Standards of politeness and decorum are also very different from group to group. Tenenbri curse and swear loudly during the course of their daily affairs, while laudenians are encouraged to speak diplomatically even in private. While damaskans are very reserved and frown on direct contact in public even between intimates, chaparrans and tenenbri are generally very exuberant and openly affectionate: chaparrans tend to limit their expressions to hand kissing and the brushing of noses and cheeks, but tenenbri think nothing of open public snogging. The basic kiss, thankfully, rarely changes and is still a sign of affection with both human and fae nations.

Laudenians never wear undergarments and usually keep to single layers, especially at home, regardless of company entertained; narros like to flaunt their self-mastery by wearing silk in the bitterest cold and layers of wool in the fiercest heat.

These traditions, though many and varied, are not considered serious faux pas when violated: most human and fae cultures are aware that other cultures are varied and intricate and will not greatly begrudge another for not understanding every nuance of their own (except laudenians, who take politeness very seriously and consider that it is an outsider's responsibility to fit in, rather than theirs to make a guest feel welcome).

However, there are many more serious tripping hazards. Holding one's hands up, palms open, is considered a sign of submission or greeting in many human cultures, and is repeated with both damaskans and laudenians. However, the narros take it as an insult, insinuating that one is "raising a wall" in defiance to the other. Other misunderstandings include the use of connecting the forefinger and thumb to form an "O" or the crossing of the index and middle fingers, both considered sexual insults with chaparrans and laudenians, though each sign insinuates opposite slurs between their cultures. To the tenenbri, all silent hand signals are considered rude, akin to talking about someone behind their back; even the most basic manual communication is frowned upon unless joined by a verbal accompaniment. On the other hand, laudenians despise noise and relish silence, thus screaming in joy is considered unforgivably coarse, regardless of the situation. Applause is welcomed among the tenenbri, accompanied by roars and foot pounding, while the laudenians show praise with simple bowing. Gimfen

find both methods an inadequate expression of appreciation, and instead throw money. Showing only the middle finger is a human insult with no equivalent in any fae culture: however, one of the most bizarre misunderstandings involving hand gestures is the corna, or "horn" sign. This involves extending the two outer fingers from an otherwise closed fist. Though initially considered an insult and a symbol of the devil in many human cultures, it is well known throughout most fae nations as a sign of greeting, often used by fae to display racial pride. It is welcomed from humans, interpreted to saying "I respect you and your species." However, the thumb must be kept closed for this salutation, as extending it out the side indicates a request for intercourse. Since this discovery, some humans have created a variation, where placing the gesture unknowingly behind a human's head insults him or her as a "fae lover," a slur in some communities.



These are a few examples of the many cultural confusions that have arisen when fae mingle with humans. In places with extensive contact between cultures, boundaries tend to erode, although the fae nature is such that usually humans adopt fae practices rather than the other way around, though extended contact will wear away even the most hidebound fae's resistance to change. In Limshau, for instance, damaskans have adopted the practice of slapping the raised hand of another in celebration despite their general taboo on physical contact; this tendency has been exhibited by no other fae as far as anyone knows.

Most humans find the honesty of fae alarming, Damaskans display the tendency most, but all fae find the concept of untruth somewhat baffling (even the gimfen, whose fast-and-loose attitude toward fact is explained as being 'poetically true'). Though they might not answer a question directly or volunteer a secret willingly, they rarely lie directly (not that they are incapable, but it requires conscious effort; the closest thing the fae have to the concept of a pathological liar is called *aeshomu*, or 'mockingbird' – one who uses half-truths to mislead). The sometimes brutal application of this belief has ruffled more than a few feathers, especially among the noble human houses. This, accompanied by the fae's tolerance for alternate lifestyles and practices among their own people has made them unpopular with fanatical human religious movements. Many fae have been declared corrupt and wicked by church leaders. Some fae are guilty of this as well, considering mankind barbaric and primitive, regardless if he uses magic or technology. Some fae have accused man of being inferior, both in breeding and in brains. Humans have countered with similar accusations, adding that fae are tools of the devil, an image personified in the zealous ramblings of King Darius of Baruch Malkut and his disciples.

And yet, many fae nations maintain a positive relationship with humans in spite of the massive casualties the fae suffered at the hands of humans in the first century and their capture and enslavement by raiders and evil nations, a practice as prevalent now as it was when it began 350 years ago. With the fae's long life and even longer history, the intricacies of their culture are so extensive that the rare humans who marry a fae can take the entirety of their extended lives learning the details and still be surprised at the end.

FAE DESCENDANTS

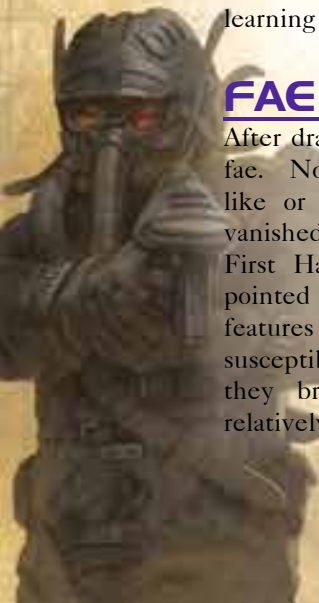
After dragons, the first species born on Earth were the fae. No one remembers what they originally looked like or how many there were, for the original fae vanished hundreds of thousands of years before the First Hammer struck (though they must have had pointed ears and sharp features, as these dominant features still survive in all their descendants). Their susceptibility to magic altered their original form and they broke off into dozens of smaller offshoots relatively quickly. These offshoots remain genetically

compatible and physically similar in basic ways, for all that they are commonly considered separate species. They are usually bipeds with ten fingers and ten toes, stereoscopic vision and hearing, no unusual organs (though they lack certain vestigial ones, and those they have often work in unusual ways) and sexual reproduction. Human scientists, even after a few centuries of examination, have always failed to determine how fae resemble evolved apes to such an extent. Although it has been commonly agreed upon that alien life would evolve naturally along similar lines, the parallels between fae and man are too numerous to be considered a coincidence.

Those believing in a creation by a divine hand take the numerous similarities in enchanted species of fae and the evolved species of man prove the existence of God, a philosophy known as Corpus Continuity. The humanoid form, consisting of binocular vision, binaural hearing, base ten appendages, erect stature, and mammalian physiology match the fae species exactly, a species not evolved from primitive animals but formed from magic itself. With the exception of the pointed ears and the variations of fae species when they adapt to their environment, there still remain remarkable similarities scientists cannot explain. Because fae arose first, many believers in Corpus Continuity also subscribe to Echalogical Influence. Those of faith on both sides believe in the idea that God liked the humanoid form but tried different ways to succeed at it. Scientists refuse to acknowledge this and believe a genetic reason exists for the similarity. To them echalogical influence may be the reason itself--the previous age influencing evolutionary paths to make humans resemble their long dead progenitors.

Another popular theory claims it to be a coincidence; base ten appendages, binocular vision and stereoscopic hearing simply makes sense and that all intelligent life will eventually move towards that end. Others cling to the prevalent theory that the fantasy world doesn't exist at all, only emerging because of man's desire for it to exist: thus, man dictates the physique of fae, rather than the other way around.

Fae all share several common qualities. They are peaceful within their own species (i.e., laudenians never fight laudenians). They are also monogamous and loyal to their mates; divorce is virtually non-existent, and though remarriage upon the death of a spouse is not unheard of, neither is it common. When single, they are also known to be somewhat promiscuous. Even the laudenians, with their strict heritage and tradition, do not consider sex for pleasure either sinful or immoral between consenting non-bonded adults. Although they denounce the use of sex slaves by human masters, fae do not prohibit pre-bonded (pre-marital) sex. Prostitution is rare given their sexual freedom, but it has been known to occur. There are virtually no crimes dealing with vices in fae cultures: as they are immune to the ravages of addiction, most things humans would consider vices simply are not harmful to them either personally or culturally. Additionally, they do not



consider homosexuality a sin and bonded same sex couples occur openly in all fae communities. Some observers claim fae are all pansexual, though this is not entirely the case: most exhibit distinct preferences, but often these preferences are based on previous exposure rather than biological imperative. Some human nations frown on these freedoms and expressions, especially within those nations that use religion as a device of fear to keep the population in line (a tendency not exhibited in any fae nation).

These non-strictures apply when the fae cultures are allowed to govern themselves. In some locations, where fae are not in places of authority, they abide by the rules of the nation they inhabit, usually without complaint. As a rule, all fae abhor social conflict and will do anything they can to prevent it, though the extremes they will go to vary from type to type: laudenians and chaparrans will generally remove themselves (or the offender) from the equation, damaskans and narros will attempt to mediate, the boisterous tenenbri will turn the conflict into a formal debate with clear parameters for victory, and the accommodating gimfen will quite happily concede anything to an intractable enough opponent and find some way of making up lost ground later.

Studying sample 345B

Subject: Larena Senarius, Damaskan (Volunteer)

Analyzing sample discovered a standard long polymer of nucleotides in a double helix configuration. Initial investigation found the helix to be super coiled. Twenty-three pairs of chromosomes were identified. However, chemical imperfections have been located along several pairs. A few nucleotides are missing in key areas for life to sustain itself.

Defects have been detected on the adenine, thymine, and cytosine. Five copying errors have been located, leading evidence towards extensive somatic mutations of a severe variety. At least two chromosome inversions appear along the strand. Many of these mutations seem of a dominant phenotype. These anomalies cover the spectrum of patterned genetic diseases, some being autosomal dominant, while another is autosomal recessive, and yet another will be mitochondrial.

Thinking logically towards this, the patient should be affected by sickle cell anemia, hypophosphatemia, and leber's hereditary optic neuropathy. I also personally identified two other defects connecting to hemophilia and spinal muscular atrophy. This subject should be dead. I have confirmed that EDF had no part in corrupting this data.

I am in no way experienced with this level of genetic abnormality. By all accounts, the patient should not be able to walk, talk, or even breathe, let alone hunt and have a family. I will thank the volunteer for her services and forward my data to the Tilthe. Personally, I find this breakdown of scientific reasoning disturbing and hope that my data is flawed.

Walter Krause
Porto Medical Journal, smuggled to York
January 2, 495 A.E.

RACE	STR	CON	DEX	INT	WIS	CHA	ANY
Chaparran	+2				+2		
Damaska			+2	+2			
Gimfen			+2			+2	
Human							+2
Kodiak	+2	+2					
Laudenian				+2	+2		
Narros		+2			+2		
Pagus	+2		+2				
Tenenbri					+2	+2	
Tilen			+2		+2		

FAE RACIAL TRAITS

There are several features applying to all of the fae descendants:

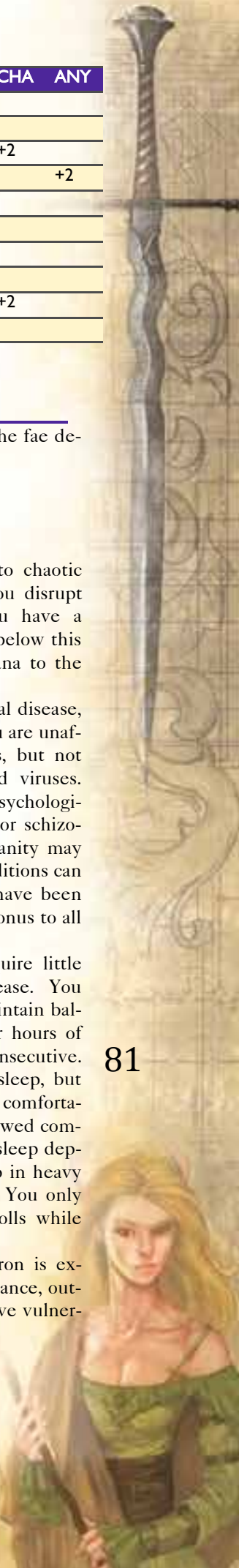
UNIVERSAL FAE RACIAL TRAITS

Echan: All fae (except pagus) are tied to chaotic energies of the white gate of Attricana. You disrupt technology on you and around you. You have a saturation value of 20 which can never drop below this value unless your soul switches from Attricana to the negative energies of Ixindar (see **Corruption**).

Immunities: You are immune to all natural disease, and cannot be a carrier of such ailments. You are unaffected by all genetic diseases and disorders, but not mutated genes from radiation or enchanted viruses. Furthermore, you are unaffected by natural psychological or behavioral ailments such as addiction or schizophrenia, though concerted attacks on your sanity may still affect you. Enchanted diseases and conditions can still affect you, as can natural diseases that have been imbued with magic, although you gain a +1 bonus to all defenses against such attacks.

Light Sleeper: Unlike humans, fae require little sleep and they jostle awake with surprising ease. You can sleep comfortably in any position and maintain balance while doing so. You require only four hours of sleep every 24 hours, which may be non-consecutive. Like all living creatures, you require REM sleep, but this only requires four hours of consecutive, comfortable sleep every three days. If you are not allowed comfortable sleep in order to reach a REM state, sleep deprivation will eventually set in. You can sleep in heavy armor for three days before fatigue sets in. You only suffer a -3 penalty to all Perception skill rolls while asleep.

Fae-Iron: A specific ratio of lead and iron is extremely toxic to all fae. It is a forbidden substance, outlawed in most civilized communities. You have vulnerability fae-iron.



CHAPARRANS

The huntress sat perfectly still in the canopy above as the prey blundered carelessly along the forest path. Though they bore no signs of their allegiance, she recognized their bearing: slavers, almost certainly from the despoiler nation to the east, invading her forest in search of chattel. The more fools they. The huntress stood silently, balancing effortlessly on the thin branch, and fitted an arrow to her bow.

The first human died with the arrow in his throat. His companions turned sharply at his last gurgling scream, and then looked up at the ominous shadow perched among the leaves.

"Ambush!" the leader yelled, drawing a crossbow.

"Get—" his words were cut off as he suddenly felt the pressure of a knife at his throat. He could have sworn the elf hadn't moved, and yet somehow she had fallen from the trees and crossed the clearing in the blink of an eye.

"Who's next?" whispered the chaparran as she melted back into the trees, leaving the slaver captain bleeding out onto the mossy ground.

Average Height: 5'8" – 6'3"

Average Weight: 80-120 lbs.

Average Starting Age: 100 years

Estimated Life Expectancy: 3,000 years

Bonus Language: Chaparra

+2 Wisdom or +2 Strength

LISTEN TO THE WIND

Your perceptions are so keen you could use an enemy's breathing in the dark to aim your shots. When wielding a shortbow or longbow, you may use Wisdom as your primary ability for all attack and damage rolls.

WEALD WALK (RACIAL POWER)

Once per battle, if there is a tree nearby, you can teleport beside any other tree you can see. The trees must be rooted in the Earth.

82

Champion Feat: You gain three uses per battle of *weald walk*.



This power can be supernatural, or not - up to you. I personally prefer to think of it as 'slipping into the shadows and running really fast to a new location'.

Hiding in the deep woods across the world, the chaparran fae have evolved concealment to an art form. Where the laudenians are merely disdainful of those unlike themselves, chaparrans are downright xenophobic and hostile to outsiders. Their kind date back further than anyone can recall, including themselves, for they keep few records, and almost none

of these written - where other fae take pride in their books and scrolls, chaparrans seldom write anything down. Chaparrans believe most other fae have forgotten their origins. They believe that the original fae were birthed from the forests and should always remain tied to them. The chaparrans live almost exclusively among the woods, growing towers, temples, and whole communities from the soil and roots. Their mere presence encourages vegetation, and the tallest, thickest trees in the world grow where chaparrans live.

The actions of the past are simply covered up. Rings of wood grow over old wounds, protecting damage. As long as the wood grows, all is good. The trees spoke of terrible sins of man committed upon nature, the raping of the earth to construct false idols. But man refuses to hear the song of the wood, even now. Man ambles unaware. When they walk into the forest, they fear. They fear the unknown. They fear resentment and retaliation. They walk oblivious to the truth.

Nature forgave man.

Like a mother forgiving all the sins of the son, nature absolved man of his past transgressions. The Hammer was an act of God, not of nature. They seldom got along anyway. The mother created life. God gave them ambition. God punished them. Nature simply gave life another chance, forcing the planet to erase and try again. Man should consider himself blessed. If they embrace the ways of nature, following us into the wood, speaking the ageless tongue, we would - as would the tress - welcome them into open arms...and they shall never fear again.

Ambition. It should be a sin.


Sylvanakassus
356 A.E., from a speech

Most communities are small. With such an obscure people, accurate numbers are impossible to come by. Estimates range from 80,000 to 800,000 chaparrans across the world (even the most optimistic guess falls just shy of a million), scattered among a thousand forests of varying size. Chaparrans mostly keep to themselves, refusing to become involved in the affairs of outsiders. One could walk through a chaparran forest without ever knowing of their presence. Unless threatening fae or tree, trespassers often cross without worry or encounter: more nefarious individuals vanish after entering. They defend the forests when necessary with their inestimable archery skills. Their bows and arrows grow naturally from wood, a result of their symbiosis with the trees around them.

Their outward emotional displays are reflected mostly in their music and dance. They pound beats into fallen logs with amazing speed and augment those sounds with kinetic syllables of phrases strung so fast as to make the words meaningless. Chaparrans' passion for dance knows no equal. A chaparran's heartbeat will increase to virtually that of a hummingbird in the grip of a dance. Bodies move almost violently, with fists pounding and legs striking, only their absolute discipline preventing injury to others. Watching a chaparran dance charges the soul and pumps the heart.

Every move denotes a meaning others seldom understand. To outsiders, the dance looks chaotic with





thrashing appendages and whirling bodies without care for people or objects around. Those involved in the dance hardly open their eyes, confounding outsiders as to how the dancers don't crash into each other. All chaparrans know this dance and practice it daily. The art connects to a form of martial art called Manora Chaparra, believed to purge the darkness from their souls, allowing them to fight with clean spirits. This form developed after the First War. The majority of the pagus created on the night of migration came from chaparrans and the fae left behind swore an oath to eliminate their cursed brothers from the world. Their obsession continues to this day.

The chaparrans believe the fae are not devolving but becoming one with nature. Their descendant offshoots are not necessarily violent, but more xenophobic, becoming increasingly skittish of outsiders. They also grow more connected with nature, even to the point of exhibiting animal physical traits. Chaparrans respect their descendants and scold the laudenians for hanging onto what they call a "bankrupt obsession."

When chaparrans die, tradition decrees that the body must be dropped into a grave without a coffin. After prayers are finished and before dirt pushed over, a single acorn is placed in the mouth. This seed always grows, despite surrounding competition and available water. These trees grow taller and wider than any grown from nature and many claim the great temples of Jibaro and Libanus emerged from fallen chaparran priests. This tradition extends to wandering chaparrans as well, and travelers across the world always know where one is buried by the massive tree dwarfing all those around. Such lone sentinels have appeared in deserts, atop great peaks, and even in caves, declaring to all those who see it that a chaparran rests there. They contend that their souls will move from wood to flesh every generation. Killing one simply moves their soul to a tree for its lifetime. After an era, the soul returns to flesh.

Physical Description: Chaparrans are only slightly taller than damaskans, on par with the average human, but give the illusion of much greater size due to their increased muscle mass and physical stamina. Of all the fae descendants, the chaparrans have the greatest spectrum of skin tones, from light tan to ebony black. Their ears are short and flush with their heads, making them almost indistinguishable from humans at a distance. A chaparran's eyes usually are of green and bluish hues and they will often pierce their ears in several areas and color their bodies with tattoos, especially around the face, shoulders, and back. Fae in general remain youthful in appearance throughout their long lives, but this tendency is the least pronounced among the chaparrans due to their constant exposure to the elements. While chaparrans spend most of their lives with an apparent age ranging from a human young adult to a healthy adult in their late 30s, those past their second millennium more often resemble a human in their sixties. Most chaparrans have brown hair (dark

brown is most common, but any brunette shade is possible), though a few have black or even red hair. This is curly more often than not, and generally worn short or in tight dreadlocks to avoid catching on branches. All their joints are capable of hypermobility, and a chaparran's big toes, while not fully opposable, are significantly more dexterous and strong than normal, enabling them to grasp branches equally well with feet and hands and giving them improved balance in the tree canopy; a chaparran archer hanging upside down from a branch to set up a shot is a truly fearsome sight. They often wear furs and pelts, adding to their girth, but exposing a great deal of skin to maintain agility. They hate adorning themselves with gems or shiny rocks and seldom wear metal of any kind.

Playing a Chaparran: Chaparrans are the best species to play because they are the most like the traditional elves of legend. They have the oldest history and the most exotic beliefs. They are proud and powerful and are the envy of many others. To play a chaparran is to wholly embrace the fantasy world and all of its possibilities.

Chaparrans seldom seek adventure outside their forests. Of all fae peoples, they and the tenenbri are the least encountered outside of their regions. Since only a laudenian-chaparran crossbreed can result in chaparran offspring, few outcasts can be identified as such. Only in extremely rare cases do chaparrans brave the outside world. Only the young and curious disobey their culture and heritage to embark on such a voyage.

A player creating a chaparran should be aware of their propensity of solitude. Though some will obviously forge and protect friendships with outsiders, they still prefer fae to humans and seldom invest time or emotion in relationships with the latter. Chaparrans rarely bond with non-chaparrans and less so with humans.

Chaparrans avoid heavy armor and favor wooden weapons over metal; if metal is unavoidable, the weapon will be crafted with a wooden grip. For most, the bow is the weapon of choice, followed by the spear, fighting knives, or even the scythe; while chaparrans will use swords, they prefer makana (a wooden club inset with sharp protrusions of stone or metal).

Many assume chaparrans are utterly wild in demeanor and decorum. In truth, they are quite civilized and maintain good grooming and health. Unlike other fae, known for being austere, chaparrans wear their emotions on their sleeves...if they actually had sleeves. Everyone knows immediately when a chaparran is upset. Thankfully, this openness spreads to more upbeat emotions as well. Chaparrans enjoy the outdoors and need to see the sun to orientate themselves. Without this, they often grow confused about the time of day, sleeping at odd hours for random lengths. Chaparrans also have the dual disadvantage of being both agoraphobic and claustrophobic: they are intensely uncomfortable outside of a forest, edgy almost to the point of uselessness in a dungeon or town, but virtually unstoppable in their forest homes.

Chaparrans are also highly religious and commonly profess a faith in Berufu, the fae mother god who gave life to their ancestors. Nearly all chaparrans openly pray to the woods every morning, noon, and night, thanking her for their life.

A chaparran player character is one who wishes to see what lies beyond the trees of home. They may still be skittish of strangers but brave enough to take chances where others would run away. Chaparrans have a flight instinct and will bolt instead of standing ground unless allies or the innocent are threatened.

They assumed men all acted alike. Trees were just wood to us, construction and kindling, as worthless as dirt, trodden on with equal disdain. I remember and recounted a different view. I spoke of ancient lore, where the tree stood tall in its rightful place of worship. I brought up the Garden of Eden, the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge, though I do admit starting with that later anecdote probably wasn't wise. I moved onto the Kabbalah's Sefirot tree, depicting the map of creation. I mentioned the Ashwath Vriksha, the banyan tree that represented eternal life in the Hindu religion. I even remembered the Lote tree at the end of the seventh heaven. Of course, I refrained from mentioning Christmas trees as I imagine that may really upset them. When I spoke of the ash tree Yggdrasill from Norse and how it supported the heavens, I finally got the attention of the priests. I told how the tree connected the sky, the earth, and the underworld together, and how its existence was vital to the entire universe—referred in popular myth as the World Tree. I even added that the last humans would survive Ragnarök by hiding within its branches.

These are all legends and taste of the flamboyance my ancestors were known for. One of the priests scolded my scoff, declaring a similar concept in their faith. They claimed Berufu, the mother of all fae, planted a single tree to remind the fae where they came from and where they were destined to end. Berufu proclaimed any who climbed to its tallest branch would feel her breath and understand the world's true purpose and form.

This great tree cannot be found in this forest or any other on this side of the planet. It grows from another on the far side of the world. It is not a stout tree with a trunk of mighty girth. It resembles the trees seen here, though indigenous to that land. It towers through clouds, upon clouds, reaching a point where one could observe the curvature of the planet. This tree can neither be seen by flyers or from the ground at any distance. A tree growing to the stratosphere would be a grand climb indeed.

Sugi Gantilanna
The New Irminsul

Names: Unlike other fae, often taking human-like names to better associate with the human world, chaparrans refuse to do so. Their names, like all fae, are personal and are only meant to be heard by pointed ears. A chaparran's family name merges with their given name: this full name is usually four or more syllables long and always features both hard consonants and hissing sibilants (multiple instances of K, G, or S when spelled in the English orthography) interspersed with elongated, rich vowels. Since they don't adopt human names and refuse to let humans address them

by their given titles unless they are true intimates, most simply ask that outsiders refer to them as "Krysid" which means "Fae-Born" in their language (it was more than a century after mankind's initial contact with chaparrans before the humans figured out why they all had the same name). With proven comrades, the chaparran *may* permit a human to address them by an adopted title which describes their accomplishments or role in society. Under no circumstances will any human, even the closest of friends, be allowed to use a shortened form of their true name.

Example Truenames: Brassekonnas, Jassakerak, Killikassawar, Marakenassa, Taneggoras, Sathrassin

Example Titles: Darawren ("Earth-seer"), Hiinodoran ("Fire Dancer"), Kitarri ("Black Bow"), Merawrak ("Swift Birdcatcher"), Nathash ("Red-Bellied Salmon"), Shikkakarri ("Deer Stalker")



I really wanted to upset the expectations people had about the fae. I never agreed with the black-skinned dark elves of "tradition". The first thing I did when I broke from "license" was to make my subterranean elves albinos and my wood elves dark skinned.



Surprisingly, this works even though the conceit of the setting is "all the myths are true".



The illustration and some of the background does suggest a Native American allegory, though in truth, I was pushing for more Eastern and Southern Africa. Speaking of the illustration, the chaparran image was the first finalized image by Nick Greenwood, DEM's long-time primary illustrator. As time went on, I began to rely on my other artists less and less, delegating all illustrations to Nick. Initially, it was because he was the only artist I found with the talent I required that would accept commissions in black & white. As time progressed, it became obvious that I had caught lightning in a bottle and would never have considered doing Amethyst without his contributions.



DAMASKANS

I sidestepped the bravo easily and delivered a precise chop to the back of his neck. He went down without a sound. The remaining thugs regrouped, hefting their tet-subo nervously. One came for me, but I ducked and threw myself to the side, one finger catching ahold of the shelf on the wall beside me. Twisting in mid-air, I scuttled backwards up the shelf, noting as I did so that I had been remiss in dusting this section of the stacks and reminding myself to attend to it once I had dealt with these hooligans. Drawing two shuriken from an inside pocket of my leather coat, I removed two of the remaining combatants with accurate strikes to the hamstrings, then drew my blades and looked down at the last one. His downed companions were moaning most annoyingly. "Did you not read the notice?" I asked the band of ruffians. "It plainly says 'silence in the library.'"

Average Height: 4'8" – 5'7"

Average Weight: 70-100 lbs.

Average Starting Age: 100 years

Estimated Life Expectancy: 1,500 years

Bonus Languages: Damaskan, one other language.

+2 Dexterity or +2 Intelligence

THINK BEFORE ACTING

Your intellectual pursuits, far from impeding your combative edge, have only honed it. You may use Intelligence as your primary ability for attack and damage rolls with all ranged attacks.

GRAVITY FOCUS (RACIAL POWER)

Once per battle as a free action, until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 bonus to AC and PD and you do not provoke opportunity attacks.

Champion Feat: While using *gravity focus*, your bonuses to AC and PD increase to +3. You can now walk on walls, allowing you to move across a wall, ignoring opportunity attacks and engagement. You must still come down at the end of your movement. You also gain one additional use of *gravity focus* (2 total) per battle.

Epic Feat: While using *gravity focus*, your bonuses to AC and PD increase to +4. You can now walk on ceilings. You also gain one additional use of *gravity focus* (3 total) per battle.

The first Damaska, before the Hammer fell, was the oldest empire in history. After the gate re-opened, damaskans rebuilt their civilization, though split into two different empires on opposite sides of the planet. In the ruins of the laughably termed 'old world' of Lauropa, Damaska was restored to mimic its former glory. Conversely in Canam, the fae erected the empire of

knowledge, Limshau. Because of the peculiar homogeneity of all fae, both nations looked initially identical. All damaskans favor stone or adobe for building, rather than wood. Most of their cities are built into tall mountains or next to cliffs and always facing a major river or body of water. Where they differ is that Damaska's cities expand with abandon across open fields stopped only by water and cliffs, whereas Limshau restricts its cities with stout walls. Damaska's cities scrape the sky with sharp spires—a landscape of porcupine quills—while Limshau's jigsaw of flat, interlocking, and tessellating buildings allow one to sit atop a roof and watch an unobstructed sunset. The Damaskan fae across the ocean in Lauropa wear looser clothes, wield different weapons, and are more open in public, whereas the Canam damaskans are more reticent, with clothing and weaponry largely influenced by the former Asiatic human cultures. Since fae never change unless branching into a new species, this deviation in Canam is solely due to their interactions with humanity, a species almost completely foreign to the Damaskan Empire in the East.

Damaskans are the most common, most often seen, and most widely circulated fae in the world. Though the people of both Damaska and Limshau are considered the same species, damaskans from Limshau often refer to themselves as 'Limshau fae' to emphasize their cultural distinctions. Damaskans are also one of the few fae species to permit the term 'elf' to be applied to them, often using it themselves. Of all fae, damaskans are the most numerous with the largest kingdoms. Because of their circulation over the globe, no one can be sure how many damaskans live on Earth, but it's probably between 2 and 3 million, although only about half reside in Canam. Narros hold rights to the largest armies, but damaskans claim all other records. They have the most artisans, the most diplomats, the most historians, and the most architects. Their wizards all employ the book as their totem, which makes them hard to distinguish from others since nearly all damaskans (at least in Limshau) carry books through their day-to-day activities.

Damaskans migrated across the globe very quickly. Even though Damaska remains the largest fae empire, dozens of others appeared in a matter of decades. The Damaskan and Limshau empires remain loyal to each other, though not often in contact.

Damaskans loathe pagus as well as the majority of the lesser fae due to their destructive tendencies, but if they encounter a free pagus with no overtly hostile intent they will not distrust him instinctively as another species might. They have a deep mutual respect for dragons. Limshau places its trust in their proven alliances with the gimfen, chaparrans, and humans – specifically with the kingdoms of Abidan and Kamos. They are generally indifferent to other species in general, preferring to judge individuals on a case-by-case basis. Limshau is currently in conflict with Baruch Malkut due to said nation's policy on fae slavery but war remains undeclared.





Each individual damaskan possesses an encyclopedic knowledge on a subject defined by their individual tastes. Where those from Damaska prefer internal recall for this information, citizens of Limshau insist on writing all of it down. Until the damaskans appeared, fae seldom recorded anything. Their history was marred with inaccuracies, legends claimed as fact, or facts discredited as myth. This was part of the reason why fae history from the time of Terros is so vague and sporadic. Alas, damaskans could bring nothing with them to the new world and had to reconstruct their past from memory – and although their memories are good, they are not eidetic. One distinction damaskans are clear to make is that they never volunteer their own opinion in their papers or journals, nor clog the books with judgment, sentiment, or meaningless diatribe. Where humans believe any individual can stand on a box and preach prose worthy of print, damaskans remain quiet, recording events objectively.

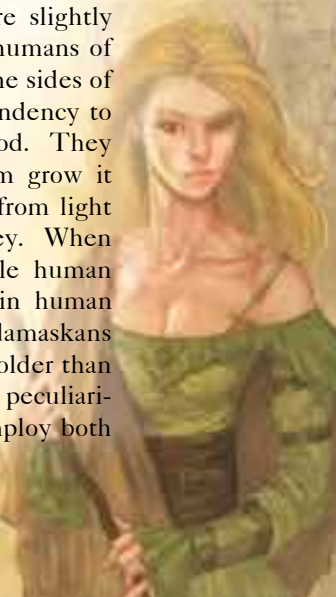
The damaskan written form is substantially different from other fae languages. Damaskans know both the classical cursive and a shorthand variation they invented called *sonna-eliano*, which has been translated into English as ‘orthoglossy’. Every damaskan from both empires knows this writing style. Using orthoglossy allows a damaskan to write five times faster than any other scholar. With some effort, non-damaskans can be taught this writing style, but its intricacies require con-

siderable study to master, and those without a damaskan brain simply cannot manage the mental gymnastics required to write it at full speed.

Damaskan musicians prefer quiet, more subdued music as a rule, and favor woodwind instruments. Their preferences in the physical arts tend naturally toward calligraphy, followed by the arts of illustration: drawing, illumination, woodcuts, lithographs, and the like. Lauropan damaskans maintain a certain interest in architecture; Canam damaskans have largely substituted this for an appreciation for the aesthetics of craft and engineering.

When they die, their bodies are burned and scattered to the wind.

Physical Qualities: A damaskan’s eyes are slightly slanted and have epicanthic folds similar to humans of Asian descent. Their ears taper straight out the sides of the skull to a very sharp point and have a tendency to flutter and vibrate slightly depending on mood. They generally have darker hair tones and seldom grow it beyond shoulder length. Their skin ranges from light tan to olive color with eyes of brown and grey. When reaching adulthood, damaskans still resemble human young adults barely out of puberty (17-19 in human years). Even at their most venerable age, damaskans don’t often look a day past 30 and none look older than 40 when they finally shuffle on. Because of a peculiarity of the damaskan brain, they are able to employ both





lobes simultaneously, and their analytical and creative centers are diffuse rather than localized. This makes them functionally ambidextrous, as well as enabling them to work on one project while thinking about another. Damaskans frequently wear new clothes, or at least pressed and clean. They abhor getting dirty.

They also rarely pierce their skin or adorn their bodies with tattoos, although this has little to do with any philosophy other than just not seeing the point.

Playing a Damaskan: Damaskans are clearly the best species to play because they are built on the strengths of being a fae without the arrogance and xenophobia of other peoples like the laudenians and chaparrans. They are the easiest to get along with, are possessed of a wide range of talents suited for almost any class, and have a virtuous path ingrained in their soul—the pursuit of knowledge. What path could be more honorable? They are civilized, numerous, and are the least stigmatized of all the fae species.

A player creating a damaskan should be aware of their timid nature. Damaskans are often reserved, seldom speaking out of turn, but can be prone to sudden bursts of emotion when finally pushed. Some might

call them shy, often staying quiet during conversations, but in reality they merely prefer to speak only when having something useful to say. Until then, they keep back and avoid making their presence intrusive. This makes them appear distant, detached, and even cold.

They are not actually emotionless, but prefer not to be demonstrative except in private or when not on duty. When dedicated to a task, they think of little else and speak only when necessary; however, get them started on raw knowledge or ask them to recite some nugget of information and they talk like uncorking a champagne bottle.

They believe in discipline and order and find disorganization of any kind unsettling, and deliberate falsehood sets their teeth on edge. Damaskans seldom understand fear and often engage in fights they know they cannot win to save the life of another. They also place an unnatural level of security on the written word, putting themselves in harm's way to protect a book; even the less scholarly-inclined from Damaska find this urge nearly unavoidable.

Due to the shape of their ears, damaskans avoid wearing helmets whenever possible, and because of

their slight builds favor lighter armor over heavy plate. Limshau fae prefer light, form-fitting leather armor with a generally Asian cut, and their preferred weapons are similarly of oriental styling; all damaskans favor polearms or light weapons that can be dual-wielded whenever possible.

The world evolves.

Magic and science are interchangeable. Interpreting one from the other depends on your vantage point. Elves, much like any other intelligent race aware of its own progress, observe life from a sword's edge, with the past and the future on either side. I fear elves never bother to walk this line, choosing to live in old ways. Humans arose and – given the chance – failed at greatness. Their weakness is mortality. Man's obsession with compressing time doomed their species. How I respect those humans that can sit for a week under a tree and pray, close one's eyes for a whole day without opening them. What courage that must take for a species so short lived. Most elves, including those reprehensible laudenians, don't appreciate the small victories in other species. The path remains the same.

Utilizing our patience, elves gain the opportunity to learn from Man's mistakes. We live enchanted. Magic flows through us but does not control us. Earth is a shared planet. Only by uniting and merging our knowledge with those of humans, narros, and gimfen, can we build a future.

Limshau Historical Entry 2534A
Ravenar Limshau IV

Damaskans maintain a deep pride in whichever beliefs they profess and are known to defend their convictions to the death, but at the same time they do not consider it their place to criticize another person's beliefs. Due to their large numbers, damaskans follow several belief systems. The largest percentage worship the dragon god, Amethyst, believing his soul exists beyond the gate. Others worship the fae god Berufu, while others follow the earth god Oaken. A smaller number have even embraced a few human faiths. But regardless of their proclivities, a truly pious damaskan is a rarity: less than 10% of damaskans worldwide endorse any religious belief, and fewer still are inclined to proselytize what faith they do have.

For most, the pursuit of knowledge takes the place of other spiritual concerns. Damaskans welcome adventure for the sheer experience of it, and often engage on what has been sometimes termed a 'scholarly pilgrimage' to discover new learning. Some also embark on quests for their people. A common sight in open echa, damaskans are ever expanding and rely on the adventuring spirit of their people to establish a growing civilization. They react to threats to knowledge in much the same way that zealots react when their beliefs are challenged: threatening to put flame to parchment is the surest way to enrage such fae.

Names: Unfortunately, while phonetically pleasing to the ear, the damaskan language can somewhat difficult for those unfamiliar with it to get their tongues around. Damaskans often adopt a human-sounding name when in public: their contact with humans has been so extensive over the centuries that modern damaskan parents generally give this name alongside the

traditional one at birth, even in all-fae communities. Some damaskan families, especially in Limshau, have adopted their chosen human name as their true name, nearly forgetting their heritage. Not just due to integration, many believe a new world requires a clean slate, and a new family name is a good place to start. Other fae frequently deplore this practice and a few damaskans without native names have been denied entry in fae-only communities on this basis.

Most damaskans keep their fae names if they have them, privately known only by loved ones and family. Even in situations where the damaskans use their family name, they still regularly select a human given name because the damaskan language contains many phonemes and tonal variances that sound similar to humans, and consequently their native names can be difficult to pronounce accurately. Their chosen human names are usually simple, with little cultural identification, and are often picked to reflect an attribute of the individual. Family names are very culturally specific and sometimes reflect an attribute of the family or important individuals within it. Damaskan names are not gender-specific. While both Limshau and Damaska place the given name before the family name, a damaskan will usually adopt the name order of whatever community they are currently in (so a damaskan visiting Fargon or Genai will give their family name first).

Examples: Ravenar Limshau III is his real name, but his sister's husband elected to adopt the human title "Strongbow" to replace their damaskan family name of Kaixiu'Ooria. Centuries later, few in that family ever use that title. Their fourth child, a daughter was given the damaskan name Reivune, which eventually turned into Raven, which she elected as her open name, as well.

Limshau is repeating events of Earth's past and will fall under a hailstorm of fire and brimstone the like of which only god has seen before. Those with ears pointed and round commit the most grievous sins of hedonism. Its capital and all its cities both walled and open are cursed by god. It is too late for prayer, for they are all doomed.

This damnation spreads to all those within the white walls, especially the impenitent human sodomites who fall for the pleasures of the sinned, soiled flesh. Divine punishment shall come quick. When their flesh burns away, we will mock their calamity. It is not a sin to take pride in god's fury.

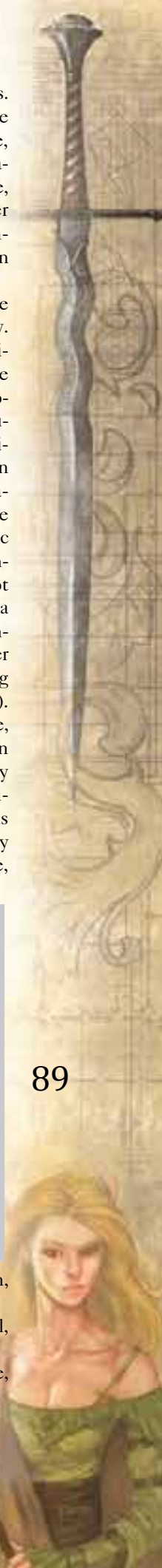
Shall we be the hands of god?

Father Prias
Selected Sermon
Faustis, Baruch Malkut

Example Given Names: Demosin, Keeilian, Oourokess, Ravenar, Reivune, Zallamber

Example Family Names: Anaiquore, Ekka'Vraiuul, Hastalleiki, Kaixiu'Ooria, Talassezri, Uotha'Vuesti

Example Open Names: Damon, Chandlcer, Hope, Peregrin, Raven, Salla



GIMFEN

He might have been small, but I've never seen anyone put away booze like Errrick. Yeah, that's how he spelled his name—he liked to roll it off his tongue, particularly around the ladies. And there were plenty of ladies crowding around him at the moment, at his table in the middle of the tavern, as he downed shot glass after shot glass of something pungently green. Across the table, his opponent, a big burly human, was starting to look a bit queasy as he placed another glass shakily upside-down on the table. The human burped, his eyes crossed, and he fell sideways off his chair.

"Well, demoiselles," said Errrick, "looks like I win. And with my winnings I'll buy a drink for any lass who wants a kiss—" he took a small tin out of his pocket – "after I freshen up, of course!" As he chewed the mint leaf, however, three of the human's friends, equally mas-sive, got threateningly to their feet.

"Hold your horses, runt," one of them growled. "Your kind always cheats. I bet you got a bottle strapped to your leg or some other weird gizmo." The gimfen looked up, smiled, then reached down and pulled up his trouser leg. There was indeed a bottle strapped to his calf... full of a golden amber liquid, into which was set some sort of plastic straw leading up through his clothes and out his collar. He winked and took a swig from the straw. Then, as the giant blinked at him, he moved like a cannonball, bowling the man over and shoving the barrel of the plasma rifle which had, until that moment, rested against the table leg into his interlocutor's eye.

"'Tis not a manly thing to call a gentleman a cheater, dear fellow," he said evenly. "What say we all settle this outside?"

Average Height: 3'3" – 4'3"

Average Weight: 40-60 lbs.

Average Starting Age: 30 years

Estimated Life Expectancy: 500 years

Bonus Language: Damaskan

+2 Dexterity or +2 Charisma

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Small: Gimfen have a +2 AC bonus against opportunity attacks.

DISRUPTION REDUCTION

Gimfen do not disrupt technology like other echan races. You do not increase the penalties to EDF in an encounter.

LITHE & IRRATABLE

Size is not an obstacle to you in a scrap. You may use Dexterity as your primary attribute for attack and damage rolls with all melee attacks.

JUMP CHARGE (RACIAL POWER)

Once per battle, if unengaged, you can engage any nearby target and make a basic attack as a standard ac-

tion. This movement cannot provoke an opportunity attack and your critical range increases by +2 for the attack. If you don't inflict a critical hit, you regain the use of this power.

Champion Feat: If you score a critical hit with *jump charge*, increase the escalation dice by +1. Once per battle, when the escalation dice reaches +6, you recover the use of *jump charge*.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, if you kill a target with *jump charge*, you can immediately use it again as a free action.

No one is sure how the gimfen broke off from the other fae, being only superficially similar in body and utterly distinct in mind. They possess at the same time a natural curiosity about the world and a near-total lack of imagination. They embraced many human customs when relationships blossomed between the two species, and are the second most common nonhuman species (after the damaskans) seen in echan human communities. They have a flare for fine food, good tobacco, and comfortable clothes. Gimfen love dance from every culture but have never developed one of their own.

The curiosity of gimfen eventually spread to technology. Most fae reach an impasse when encountering human technology: touching or even being in the same vicinity of any complex device inevitably causes it to eventually break down. However, the gimfen don't share this curse. This strange deviation, once thought to be a production of corruption from Ixindar, was later accepted by the other fae as another attribute of a late branch in the fae tree. The gimfen desire to pursue technology in an age where machinery didn't work reliably turned into a fixation. Many of them obsessed about discovering a way to allow machinery to operate in a realm of magic. The gimfen eventually turned out numerous masterful technicians, engineers, alchemists, and inventors, though nearly always refining existing accomplishments rather than pioneering new ones. Where laudenians pioneered totem magic and narros the forging of magical items, gimfen took pride in alchemy, stumbling into potion brewing soon after. What they lack are spell casters – not because they are incapable, but because for most the principles of magic simply aren't interesting (and get in the way of the study of mechanism). Gimfen are never content simply to observe the world, but believe it can always be improved. Even the most sedentary pursue constructive hobbies such as basic carpentry and metalwork, while others found a happy medium with minor gadgets and tools. Many a gimfen's home is adorned with never-used inventions.

After the return of magic, the first bastions were barely more than a few buildings. They grew slowly under constant attack from the outside. A few collapsed or turned to magic, abandoning the old ways of science. Others remained stubborn and fought against the en-



chantment. Such was the case with the eastern Canam city of York, under barrage from dragons and pagus. The bastion turned to a nearby growing civilization of gimfen for assistance. The gimfen were welcomed into the libraries to learn everything they could about human technology, sciences of the body, machine, and atom. With the help of the resourceful and inventive gimfen, York was able to defend itself against predators, and their expansion became reinvigorated. Despite their invaluableity, this agreement with an echan people was unofficial and kept secret: the gimfen were not allowed to live within the population or enter through the main gates. After their usefulness expired, the gimfen returned to their homes leaving only a few behind in the city for maintenance. Thankfully, they did not mind being ostracized, and got a more than fair exchange for their labors: they now held the secrets of

magnetism, electricity, and internal combustion – advances they would not have discovered on their own. The neighboring gimfen town, Gnimfall, accepted back its pilgrims and the nation flourished.

Despite lacking the spark of genius necessary for true innovation, gimfen knew one thing mankind didn't: how to insulate technology from magic. Although not perfect by any means, this clumsy procedure could help certain machinery operate without the constant fear of disruption. The gimfen combined what they discovered with what they already knew and within a century the landscape of gimfen communities changed. Where once there were tiny shops and garages surrounded by farmlands, now the villages were dominated by grind towers—oddities of mutated technology. They hold few people, designed primarily for defense, sound baffling, and temperature





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maintenance for underground factories. Gnimfall, the largest collection of towers, is not an open-air city, but hundreds of levels stretching more than a mile underground. The levels are a mixed lot of housing, factories, and processing plants so jumbled and seemingly disorganized that tourists often get lost without a guide. Grind towers now dot the globe, marking the presence of gimfen communities.

Not all have embraced the way of technology, preferring to keep a balance between nature and machine. Gimfen communities like Salvabrooke are laid back, agrarian places, possessing little technology beyond that known in the immediately pre-industrial era of humanity's lost history. Currently there are more than three million gimfen in various villages and colonies about the world. They get along with the narros and damaskans, but their relations with other fae have strained since the gimfen have so often turned away from their roots. Gimfen often welcome humans, especially ones with a new toy.

Most of gimfen worship "Mecha," which they believe allows them and only them to operate machinery in the presence of magic (the fact that other

fae who turn to the worship of Mecha in the hopes of obtaining the same grace do not lose their toxic effect on machinery is explained as them 'not doing it right'). Mecha's symbol of faith lies in the gimfen's tools, which he prays to every morning. They hold that Mecha, the Machine God, is responsible for all the devices the gimfen make.

Physical Qualities: Gimfen are the shortest of the major fae. They feature thin, lightly slanted eyes of bright green and blue tones. Their hair is often vibrantly colored and their ears taper straight back, with the tips sometimes as much as an inch from the back of their head. Their skin is often lightly colored, and unlike other fae, they are known to freckle. Because of their quickness to adopt other cultures, anything goes when it comes to their attire and whatever else they do to their bodies. Gimfen enjoy their sense of humor as well as a desire to possess shiny objects. Their connection with nature has largely fallen by the wayside in favor of the new knowledge from man and their obsessive fascination with human machinery.

Gimfen look like pubescent youths through the majority of their lives. This makes many humans

uncomfortable when dealing with gimfen adults. They only break from this in their final years, when their age rushes upon them, growing wrinkles and spots, aging decades in days. Most gimfen have difficulty growing facial hair, but that doesn't stop them from trying: a flamboyant moustache or goatee may be the work of decades and is seen as a major accomplishment.

Playing a Gimfen: Gimfen are the best people to play because they have no inhibitions. They are not bound by foolish honor or some obsolete drive to survive. They are neither arrogant nor afraid. They don't worry themselves about the petty issues that absorb so many others. They are the best because they are the only fae able to embrace a new world while remembering the old one. No other fae can enter a town tavern with laser rifle on his back. They are the life of the party and the center of attention.

A gimfen player character always follows one of two paths: nature or technology, with technology being by far the most common. Gimfen are the first to try anything. They are naturally inquisitive, but this often gets them into trouble. Despite being great liars, an attribute the other fae dislike, gimfen share with the other fae a propensity for naiveté. They believe everything is safe and everyone is honest unless proven otherwise. One prevalent route is the thief, as gimfen look naturally innocent and inconspicuous (and are known to let their enthusiasm for baubles get the better of legal constraints, usually without malice; when confronted, a gimfen kleptomaniac will usually express surprise at their thoughtlessness and promptly return the stolen goods with a smile), though dungeon delvers are equally as popular. An alternative approach is the techan enthusiast, walking around with a modified human firearm she can hold and fire safely. When brandishing such a trophy, a gimfen is no longer unassuming. There have even been gimfen spotted sporting a heavily insulated plasma rifles on their backs.

All gimfen leave their village at some point in their lives but seldom make roots. They leave for a variety of reasons including adventuring or the acquisition of treasure, fame, or technology (which for many is treasure). For them, adventuring is more of a career than an opportunity. Gimfen are curious, inquisitive, and extremely impulsive. They love to see the world and often feel other cultures should be gifted with the odd knowledge they alone possess. Gimfen come close to developing addictive personalities. They are happy to try new things, especially in regards to dance and food. Their unending curiosity makes them open to anything.

Names: Gimfen have no language of their own. In the old world, they spoke damaskan; in the new, they are just as likely to speak English as a first language. Like the damaskans, gimfen adopt a human first name either at birth or when leaving an all-fae community, but – unlike the damaskans – they intentionally spell these names idiosyncratically, and think nothing of gender-bending names or adopting a human surname as a given name and vice versa. They also change their

names every century or so. Family lineage means nothing to them. Because of this constant variation, some outside critics grow concerned with potential gimfen inbreeding. Gimfen never seem to worry about it. Their names sometimes reflect the cultures they integrate in, adopting narros and or human titles. They also frequently, but not always, use alliterations.

Examples: Xris Jiggadaxion, Glynn Glengarric, Kimma Kutaming, Malachi Boomfellow, Maris Nippentuck

The smallest room is still the universe to whoever lives inside. Fae have preferred in the past to close all the doors around and sit, comfortable they understand the entire world— (Noise from the Grind Tower muffles the transmission).

They fear to open the door and discover that more waits across the threshold. That is what prevents us from moving forward, the refusal to expand beyond our universe. The laudenians, the tenenbri—yes, even the narros—all sit in a room bricked in by ignorance and held by fear. Like all fae, the gimfen emerged into a room not unlike them.

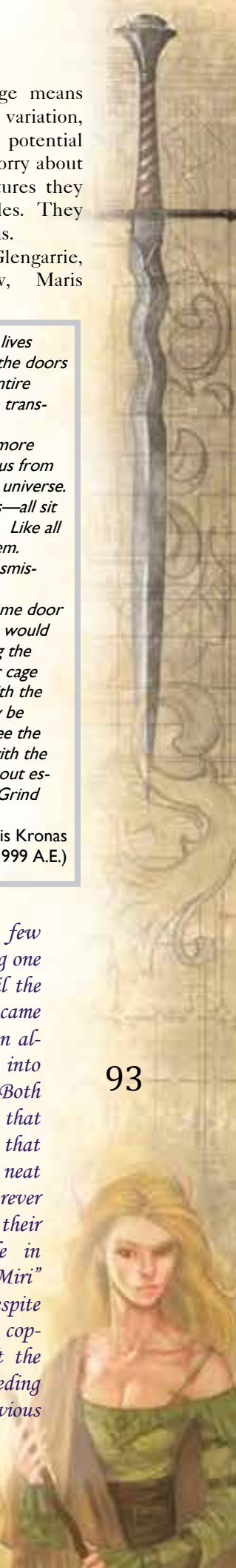
(Noise from the Grind Tower muffled the transmission).

It had the same bricks bound by mortar, the same door all others refused to open. One would assume we would follow the lead and pat ourselves for understanding the universe, as we perceived. Unlike our cousins, our cage was different. Someone put in windows. Faced with the truth, who would not open the door? Gimfen may be small. We may be ridiculed and insulted, but we see the truth. The room is shrinking. How ironic those with the most room to breathe are the ones so adamant about escaping. In conclusion, we must— (noise from the Grind Tower muffled the transmission).

Karlis Kronas
(Gnimfall Address, July 23, 999 A.E.)



Initially, I had played with a few other ideas with gimfen, including one where they remain child-like until the last few decades and then became "adults" in order to sire offspring, and an alternate take involved them morphing into adults once they bonded with another. Both ideas were saddled with the side effect that gimfen would age like a human when that occurred. I thought it was initially a neat idea—gimfen could remain children forever until they decided to have children of their own, being forced to accept a mortal life in trade (somewhat inspired by the episode "Miri" of the original Star Trek). In the end, despite the value in the fluff, I thought it was a cop-out and abandoned both ideas and left the potentially disturbing idea of gimfen breeding in the setting. It may return to that previous idea in the future.



LAUDENIANS

No railing separated the platform from the clouds below, despite the thousands of feet to the ground. Only a narrow path, scarcely wide enough for one to put two feet together, connected it to the tower behind. Hassanah walked along it steadily, gliding from foot to foot so gracefully that he hardly seemed to take a single step. The clouds beneath him roiled in the mountain wind, yet not a flutter disturbed his flowing robes or a single strand of his long hair. He reached the platform and raised his long, spindly hand to the crystal staff that sat upon a plinth at its center. With his other hand, he made a gesture, and the pale, transparent image of a laudenian woman with a pinched face appeared in the air. "You are certain of this?" the illusion said. "Completely," said Hassanah. "This experiment will conclude my research."

The female wrinkled her nose. "But, such a noisome creature..."

The magos slowly shook his head. "Necessary, my friend. But fear not, I shall not let it touch me." From within his sleeve, he took a small transparent cube and tossed it across the plinth, where it hung in the air, turning gently. He made a gesture across the staff, and the cube seemed to fold itself inside out. From the distortion of space emerged a very large, confused and angry skegg, which had been minding its own business torturing a caravaner when this weird silvery thing had come down and stuffed it into a tiny box. Now released, its eyes alighted on the laudenian, and it growled and went for his neck. Without seeming to move, the magos sidestepped the fuming beast, extended a finger, and spoke a single word. The skegg froze, eyes wide, and in an instant was transformed into a statue of pure crystal. "Hypothesis confirmed," the magos said, rubbing his cheek. "Ever to earth they do return."

Average Height: 5'10" – 6'7"
Average Weight: 40-55 lbs.
Average Starting Age: 150 years
Estimated Life Expectancy: 10,000 years?
Bonus Language: Laudanian

+2 Wisdom or +2 Intelligence

EMERGENCE

When employing a light or simple melee weapon, you can use Wisdom in place of Strength as your primary attack/damage attribute.

SLIDE WALTZ (RACIAL POWER)

Once per battle, if an enemy hits you, you can interrupt that action and increase your AC or PD by +2. If the attack misses, you can make a basic attack. If the enemy still hits, you recover the use of *slide waltz*.

Champion Feat: The bonus to AC and PD with *slide waltz* increases to +3

Epic Feat: If the escalation die is +6, *slide waltz* is always in effect (though as an interrupt, it can only affect one hit per round).

Of all the fae, a laudenian would be the most pompous. Laudenians, like most of their cousins, believe they are the true descendants of the original fae. The difference is that they might actually be right. Some claim their embracing of the sky made them immune to the physical changes brought on by interacting with the Earth. Before the First Hammer, most laudenians lived in a floating city no one could locate unless the laudenians wished it to be found. After their return after the Second Hammer, the city reemerged, then promptly vanished once again. Everyone aware of its existence knows the city floats around the Nankani Mountains, but steers clear of the sparsely inhabited lowland passes in favor of the virtually impassible high rocks. The city often remains rooted next to a mountain for years, then seemingly at random it uproots and drifts elsewhere. Since returning to Earth, the laudenians have retaken the skies, rebuilding a vast network of floating keeps shrouded in the clouds.

Most people have never seen a laudenian and could not describe one if asked. Laudenians commonly prohibit outsiders from entering their keeps. Their land is rich in natural resources and they use these riches to trade with the few other nations they find agreeable, Fargon being the chief recipient of their largesse. Few non-fae ever see these floating keeps. Their single city appears on the surface to be one of technology, but underneath the shine of the walls flows pure magic. Laudenia is a dream to many that swore they saw it.

Laudenians commit to this life because of a fear of degradation. If they truly were the first branch from the original fae, then they have watched helplessly as their children turned into the chaparrans, narros and damaskans. This might not have alarmed them initially beyond the observation that the laudenians themselves were growing fewer. Then the chaparrans started to beget deviations, and then the narros. Damaskans followed shortly behind and with each branch, the emergent race acted more feral, more uncivilized than their ancestors. Fearing a fate similar to the original fae, the laudenians fled to the sky, convinced the magical influence stemmed from the fae's interaction with the Earth. Their theory may have had some merit, for the dwindling of the laudenian population slowed...but did not stop completely.

Today, laudenians number less than 20,000, though some suspect this number is much lower, closer to 5,000. Despite near immortality, their population continues to fall. This is largely the product of the whispering influence of magic from which they cannot escape, resulting in children of lesser quality in their eyes. Laudenians reproduce extremely rarely and their eventual fate appears fixed, ultimately leaving a vast, sprawling empire of empty and forgotten castles in the air.



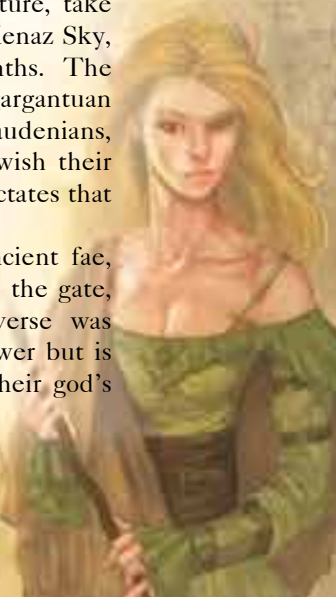
Laudenians rarely mate with non-laudenians, and they strictly forbid bonding with humans under penalty of expulsion from the sky.

As part of their claim to be the most ancient fae, the laudenians believe that they pioneered the modern study of magic, the use of Pleroma to encode spells, and the construction of totems to hold those spells. Their approach to the practice of magic reflects this attitude. While earthbound mages favor individual style and regard the method of magic to be largely a matter of personal preference, laudenians are very formulaic. They treat magic the same way techans treat the principles of science, and for much the same reason: their entire culture is dependent on it, and most laudenians know at least the basics of magic even if they do not practice it themselves. A laudenian sky-keep is almost indistinguishable on the surface from the more advanced bastions. The old adage that any sufficiently advanced magic is indistinguishable from technology is plainly at work in Laudenia, with magical constructs and enchanted barges taking the place of robots and vehicles, phan-

tasm spells for communication and entertainment, and spell-coded items fulfilling day-to-day conveniences even for the non-magically adept; unfortunately, most of these devices do not work outside of the magical field of the aerial realm.

Laudenians enjoy the music of strings and their dance often involves slow, subtle movements. Their rituals, like everything involved in their culture, take several days to complete. One festival, the Kenaz Sky, occurs once every 500 years and lasts six months. The few laudenians that ever die are placed in a gargantuan mausoleum at the base of their city. All laudenians, even the ones that perish far away, always wish their bodies returned to their home. Their faith dictates that is the only way they may find peace.

The laudenians worship a god of the ancient fae, Berufu, whom they believe lives not beyond the gate, but in the shadow realm where the universe was formed. Attricana to them is a source of power but is neither a divine entity nor the gateway to their god's domain.



Physical Qualities: Laudenians tower over all other fae and even most humans. They have olive to dark skin and often long and flowing dark hair. Their ears are smaller than a chaparrans, tapering quickly to a point. Their eyes, usually dark brown and grey, always reflect a glint of light as if a candle always hangs suspended over their eyes. Braided hair is common but tattoos and piercings are not. Most wear long robes of white or green terminating just above the ankle. The more a fae species is connected to the earth, the more animalistic they become: chaparrans and narros are all on average stronger and sturdier, their later branches even more robust. Laudenians, by contrast, are almost impossibly slender and light-bodied, with subtly alien body proportions. Their senses are adapted in the opposite way from the common expectation of fae: while their hearing is acute (out of necessity, since sound carries far less well in thinner air), instead of superior vision in the dark, their eyes can see slightly into the ultraviolet spectrum. Additionally, thanks to a nictating membrane that both filters out harmful rays and guards against dust and dryness, laudenians need neither squint or shy away from a blinding glare, nor do they even need to blink, only closing their eyes to sleep. Their unyielding stares can be as disconcerting to outsiders as their strangely elongated frames.

There is a claim that no laudenian has ever died of old age. Some have been rumored to have lived for 15,000 years or more, though with a mere five centuries since the gate's reopening, it is impossible to verify this. They reach adulthood after 150 years and don't show any discernible growth for another 1,000. No laudenian has ever looked over 50.

Playing a Laudenian: Laudenians are the best species because they are the oldest fae and the most proud. The wisest of them have their names etched in books in every library of every other fae species. Laudenians forged the first magical items, pioneered the use of totems and the language of dragons, and built an empire in the sky to look upon others below. They are arrogant and believe themselves always to be right...but that's because they usually are.

It should be noted that a laudenian character would be a rarity. This laudenian would be the only one in a group and probably would not have seen another of his kind in years. There would most assuredly be a reason, even if they withhold it from their companions, why this laudenian has taken the risk of walking on the soil. Laudenians dislike nature. They have no problems wearing metal armor and wielding forged weapons, but they abhor the natural world and have lost their empathy for it. The only reason why they have been able to survive unchanged these thousands of years is by fleeing to the sky, since the magic of Attricana reflects off the Earth. They never walk around in bare feet and cannot stand being immersed in water. Since they never perspire, the concept of washing only becomes necessity when dirtied from earth-walking. Even essential natural resources are harvested for them by autonomous magic constructs, so a true laudenian never needs set foot on the corruptive ground. To meet a laudenian

outside of the city is practically unheard of and few ever leave their home except under orders, on an extremely important quest that requires their undivided attention; only the rarest of the rare wish to see the world for themselves.

They almost never wear armor, and when they do it is usually light chainmail constructed out of magically-infused materials – they find heavier armor insufferably burdensome. The weapon of choice for nearly all laudenians is the longsword or rapier, and although they do not have the same martial traditions as the narros, laudenian philosophy holds the blade and the wielder to be one. Swords themselves do not run in families due to their wielders' long lives even compared to other fae, but each lineage has their own style which is never taught to outsiders.

Laudenians are known to be extremely arrogant. They are the longest-lived of echan kind outside of dragons and most of the elders date back to before the gate exodus. Their egotism refused to die when they lacked corporeal forms and only amplified when returned to the world. Laudenians consider themselves superior and often patronize those unlike them. Laudenians are often revered by other fae, a fact a laudenian is sure to bring up. They command respect and believe themselves correct in every assumption. Laudenians are known to have the most powerful spellcasters of all fae. A laudenian character could be more humble than her parents, whom most likely still live in the sky, but this would not mean the character isn't still arrogant.

Names: Laudenians refuse to adopt human names. Thankfully, their fae names are much easier to pronounce than a chaparran's or damaskan's would be, being softly sibilant and roll quite easily with the slightest effort, like all the words in their language. Instead of having a family name, laudenians list a roll of their ancestors, every generation adding a name. Most laudenians only mention one or two generations, but fanatics to laudenian heritage will often insist on announcing themselves tracking back five or six generations. The greatest elders, of course, do not have even five or six generations to trace back: if a laudenian names three generations of ancestors and proclaims quietly 'That is all,' it would be best to take them very, very seriously. The one bizarre aspect with laudenian names is that every name in a given lineage has exactly the same number of syllables. Most despise foreigners shortening them, though quite easy to do so.

Examples: Brassana Halcyos, Massinan Lasseriss, Milanus Serani Lissero Renessan, Nazarini Kolbessito Thassatera Engiraini, Sirenus Fellerose, Sulei Kandoss Mentar



Laudenians were heavily inspired by Middle Eastern cultures. In older versions of Amethyst, their sky culture and network were more developed, a fact I'll be re-addressing in the next book.

NARROS

“Strike! Up! Hold! Strike! Low! Hold! Middle! Strike!” The drillmaster called the moves, and the students followed them, each warrior moving as one. Each stood balanced on one leg atop a small, sharp pyramid, and periodically the senior students would pass along the line, striking the examinees’ shins with heavy wooden rods. Not one wavered, nor even flinched. But that was only to be expected. This was not a test of the students’ dedication, or even of their technique. The ravnorra’s eyes narrowed as she passed down the line. At last she came to one of the students, to the untrained eye seemingly no different from any other. “You!” she declared. “Step out of line!” The young narros obeyed without hesitation. “Are you left- or right-handed?” she demanded.

“Neither, Tomannik-mir,” the student replied, “but I am accustomed to write with my left hand.”

The instructor nodded to one of the seniors. “Bind his left hand behind his back.” She reached out her own hand and another of the older students placed her long-spear in it. “Defend yourself,” she said simply, raising the spear to the ready.

Average Height: 4' – 4'9"

Average Weight: 195-395 lbs.

Average Starting Age: 75 years

Estimated Life Expectancy: 1,000 years

Bonus Language: Narroni

+2 Constitution or +2 Wisdom

IRON ROOTS

When staggered, you have a +2 bonus to MD.

Champion Feat: You gain a bonus to damage rolls equal the escalation die bonus.

STUBBORN RESOLVE (RACIAL POWER)

After you are staggered for the first time in a battle, your next attack roll against a single target, unless a natural 1, automatically hits.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, as a free action, spend a recovery to regain the use of *stubborn resolve*.

Despite ignorant stereotyping claiming them to be squat, long-nosed dirty miners, narros don't really resemble the fantasy creature they're often compared to. While the majority live underground, they are not singular in their purpose of greedily digging for riches in the Earth. In fact, narros are among the most selfless of all fae, taking on the role as protectors for all their allies.

Even when outnumbered, narros often win in open combat. They are the greatest soldiers of the fae, with only the pagus threatening the claim. Almost every narros citizen knows how to use a weapon. Soldiers enforce a strict discipline in the art of war, a reflection

of the culture as a whole. There is a martial skill attached to every facet of their lives. The same techniques and movements used in warfare are duplicated in the mines, planned and coordinated with precision.

Narros love the horn and drums and their battle marches move to the sound of heavy bass from trumpets and skins louder than the footfalls of a thousand feet. Narros don't dance – they don't lack for physical coordination, but the wild abandon of dancing runs contrary to their cultural precision and discipline.

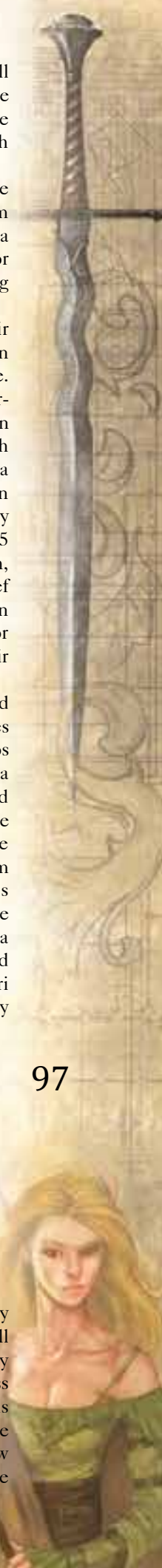
The narros estimate more than five million of their kind walk the Earth. Narros live almost exclusively in Canam and Southam and rarely appear anywhere else. Their biggest concentration lies at Fargon in the uttermost north, with another collection in the western mountains of Southam, where the people often clash with the tenenbri over an ancient religious dispute; a smaller colony of about a hundred thousand resides in the Finer Fire Pits in Canam's midwestern region. By sacred law, narros caves never burrow beyond 1.25 miles below sea level. Their mines are like a labyrinth, covering hundreds of square miles. Part of their belief system demands that they climb the highest mountain in their city (every narros city is built around and/or within a mountain) every year to reaffirm their confidence that the sun remains above.

The few narros holy men worship an idol-less god referred to as Oaken – the spirit of Earth. Oaken lives deep underground at the core of the planet. The narros dogma explains that Oaken, originally a fragment of a much larger being, drifted into the Solar System and the Earth formed around him. To them, the white gate created the fae, but Oaken provided them with a shape and a world. Narros believe their power comes from below, not above, which may explain why most narros hate to fly despite having no fear of high places. The root of their abhorrence for the tenenbri leads from a belief that their cousins dug too far and suffered Oaken's punishment. In the narros view, the tenenbri never got the message. Like man, most narros bury their dead, though usually in stone.



When Amethyst was a free homebrew game, I asked Nick Greenwood permission to use his artwork (always a good idea—artists love it when you actually ask them). The image which sold me was of a dwarf in monk robes assuming a martial arts pose. It was not a difficult task getting Nick to reimagine that old image for a new game.

Physical Qualities: Narros do not possess the heavy trunk torso many would expect though they are still much stronger than other similar bipeds (this is simply not immediately obvious). They are slower and less agile than their cousins, but their every movement is made with utmost precision. Where all other fae have hollow bones, the narros claim their skeletons' marrow is solid iron. The proof is in their unbreakable





physiques and shockingly heavy frames. Narros hate the water and are all tremendously bad swimmers, due to their size-to-weight ratio. A narros will avoid any body of water where he cannot keep his feet on the bottom and still breathe.

Narros' silvery skin reflects a glitter in sunlight. Their skin tones range usually between peach and pale white. Their ears are long but remain flush to their heads. Their eyes, seemingly always squinting, can open extremely wide and their irises loom large in their sockets, though their colors, dull browns and matted grays, don't shine even in the brightest light. Narros eyes can adapt between light and dark vision in an instant, and their vision extends far into the infrared spectrum, allowing them to see almost perfectly even in total darkness.

Narros insist on a high degree of personal grooming. Males despise painting their bodies in any way but women often do: the same abhorrence does not apply to tattooing, but this is still a rare practice. Body piercing is unknown among them. Unlike their stereotyped

equivalents, narros have a general aversion to body hair. Males sport tight trimmed beards, patterned sideburns or short braids when they grow them; the only moustaches considered fashionable are thin side-whiskers. Their hair is often pulled back to a tail, loose strands tightly controlled. Some narros males shave themselves completely bald. Unlike the legends they inspired, female narros neither grow facial hair nor look overtly masculine. It is only when narros dress for war that males and females become indistinguishable. Narros age proportionately to humans at an approximately 12:1 ratio.

Playing a Narros: Narros are well and beyond the best people as there is no subtlety behind them. They scoff adversity and seldom run from a fight. They are the strongest and take pride that the entire fae species would have been wiped out long ago if it weren't for them. They are soldiers from birth. In the end, why would anyone want to be anything but the greatest warriors of legend?

A narros character should not just be some loud fighter with an axe. They can be anything they choose and commit themselves 100% to that duty, often ignoring other concerns. They are fanatical about any crusade they are on. A narros would be the first to awake in the morning to tackle the day's goals. They will ignore fleeting pleasures like smoking and sex when committed to a quest. When sworn to a lord, friend, or party, a narros will risk everything including his own life to protect them. This focused spirit is admirable but can sometimes make a narros a real drag at parties – unless they have decreed that it is now time to enjoy themselves. The narros believe in hard work and hard play. It is common for a narros to work past the point of exhaustion during the day, party and drink until past midnight, sleep insufficient hours, and start everything again the following dawn, apparently none the worse for wear. They are extremely regimented in whatever direction they take in life. Mages own more books. Priests pray longer. Soldiers train much more fiercely. They are focused in their view – some human would-be wags claim that the name 'narros' is synonymous with their mentality.

Narros favor medium to heavy armor, if they wear armor at all. Those from Fargon prefer heavy steel lamellar and crested helmets superficially similar to those of the ancient Japanese samurai, but they tend to prefer heavier weapons as a rule; though every narros has a particular favorite, spiked maces, hooked halberds, and double swords are in overwhelming evidence in narros armies. Rare is the narros mage whose totem is not the weapon, and most of those few instead favor the shield.

Because of their polar opposite concepts of an appropriate attention span, the narros and gimfen don't always get along. They are otherwise at least tolerant of most other fae, and particularly of humans – indeed, the narros boast the only open trading agreement between a fae kingdom and a techan bastion. However, they overwhelmingly despise the tenenbri. The schism between the two is rarely mentioned – its roots stem from a religious dispute, a divergence of dogma that can be tracked back thousands of years in the pre-Hammer age. Some have accused the narros of holding grudges far longer than socially acceptable. Still, this discord is a poor rubbing of the hatred the narros feel for the pagus. Not even the ogres, a lower fae branch from the narros, can match the loathing felt to the corrupted fae of Ixindar. Being the primary military force for all good and honorable fae, the narros have clashed with pagus more often than other peoples. A narros need not require a reason to fight them and the opportunity to do so would be reason enough to join a quest.

Narros uphold their discipline when on their own or outside of their community. Personal and family honor is very important to all narros, although their definition of it is a trifle unusual: a person's honor is defined by how thoroughly she dedicates herself to her task, and a family's honor is wrapped up in how thoroughly they have taught their scions to do this. A narros warrior's

greatest shame is to lose his liege lord on the battlefield, for this means that he has failed to perform the duty that should have been utmost in his mind, and he will likely never be able to find another lord with such stained honor. Warriors shamed in this way traditionally forswear their family names and depart from narros society on quests to redeem themselves, in order to prevent their dishonor from reflecting upon the clan. Those who lost their community or their lord often travel alone across the world as masterless ronin. All narros adventurers maintain an utter dedication to their chosen path, even without a crusade or cause in their hearts.

Names: Unlike gimfen and damaskans, placing little stock in their family names, narros cherish their family names more than their given ones. They place their family names first when writing them down and announcing themselves in public. Narros refer to each other by their given names only in private or when asked; using a person's given name without their permission is considered at best a breach of etiquette, at worst a deadly insult. Married couples call themselves by their given names in their homes. Friends and family members often refer to each other by the additional titles Kar (Father/Ruler), Mir (Mother/Mistress), Lan (Son, first born), Sen (Son, second born or later), Jes (Daughter) or the generic titles Nor (senior or social superior), Kin (male equal), Mon (female equal), and Dan (junior or social inferior), appended to the end of whichever name is used. The given names are usually shorter than their family titles, thus making their full names somewhat front-heavy.

Examples: Ballakoya Kasey, Kranerose Jibbs, Ragerrick Griff, Sollomas Karan, Sorannik Mogh, Ungnarona Mina

Foolish Humans. The best route is down, never up. I read their history—always building up. Up...why? What is up there? Clouds. Clouds made from water. I can dig and get that and it would cost far less. Now I am not saying that humans are stupid. They value gold and respect the steel we forge.

However, I don't know how they could have missed coruthil. Such a wondrous element, bestowed from Oaken himself. The almost mystical properties of it lead me to believe that coruthil, before the saturation of magic, looked ordinary, containing no special properties, useless. When enchanted energies passed through it, coruthil emerged from this dead rock. So much the better. The bastion humans sat on riches beyond what they can imagine for thousands of years. Millions of years of unmined riches. This is a great time to be a narros. The humans have no idea what they were missing.

*Garach Glim
Finer Fire Pits
225 A.E.*



Originally I had the honorifics appended to the beginning of the name to try to shake up the Japan-isms just a bit. But then I kept forgetting to actually do it myself, and so I changed it back.



PAGUS

Murok always sat by himself, away from the fire. We assumed it was because he wanted to spare the rest of us the sight of his ugly mug, but one day I plucked up the courage and went to ask him why, as he sat in the dark and the cold sharpening his notched blade.

"Because I don't want to look at your ugly mugs," he told me, and I went away satisfied.

Average Height: 6'3" – 6'7"

Average Weight: 200-250 lb.

Average Starting Age: 9 years.

Estimated Life Expectancy: 40 years

Bonus Language: Paggin

+2 Dexterity or +2 to Strength

STEADFAST

If you fail a saving throw other than death saves, you may spend a recovery as a free action but regain no hit points: instead, you can reroll that save. You gain a +4 bonus to the roll.

FOCUSED AGGRESSION (RACIAL POWER)

The first enemy that hits you in an encounter becomes your focus. Your critical threat range against that enemy increases by 1.

Champion Feat: You gain a damage bonus to your focus equal to your level until the focus is staggered.

Epic Feat: If your focus makes a critical hit on you, your critical range against your focus increases by +2 (total +3) until you score a critical (then it reverts back to +1 until it scores a critical again).

100

The pagus emerged over a single night during the age of Terros—the era before man when fae and dragon reigned unopposed. When the black gate of Ixindar drifted over the sky on its arrival, the whisper of Mengus corrupted a million fae to its cause. They abandoned their families and friends. Most of these tainted creatures were chaparran, though no part of faekind was left unspoiled. They vanished on an unspoken pilgrimage to the land where Ixindar finally settled.

Loved ones that followed who had not heard the whisper were killed by their own corrupted families or cursed themselves. When finally emerging in their initial raids against their ancestors centuries later, the fae no longer resembled the peoples they escaped from. They had grown in muscle. They had lost their hair. Their skin had grown pale. They looked nearly identical to each other and shared a single disposition,

one single desire—to eliminate anything as commanded by their masters.

When the black gate was unearthed again at the beginning of the new age, the pagus were the first to emerge, even before the whisper of Mengus could have tainted the nearby humans as well. Five centuries later, the pagus number in the tens of millions with concentrations on every continent.

A little known fact about the pagus is that Ixindar's control is lessened the further one travels from Ixindar. Mengus strengthens its influence by channeling the gate's syncretic power through the will of its loyal disciples, the shemjaza. Separated from that influence, it falls under corrupted dragons to enforce the will of syntropy, despite not always following their avatar's will. Without the control of these authorities, pagus act independently, though still bound by a compulsion for violence and a brutal culture that reflects that propensity. This is not helped by the tendency of pagus to degenerate into madness as they grow old (if they survive that long). Only a noteworthy few maintain their sanity. These singular elders gain an enlightened view of the role pagus are forced fill in this world. Their wisdom and strength of personality is such that younger pagus around them will bind themselves without thinking to any action the elder commands. Unfortunately, this usually entails the same bloody conflict forced upon them from demons and dragons. Even more uncommon are the elder pagus that preach a rejection of the ideals imposed by their creator and controllers. These pagus attempt an unpretentious life filled with hunting, revelry, and reproduction. They avoid the wars demanded by others. Regrettably, these pagus are often still called into conflict as they must habitually defend their lands from outsiders, often their own kind.

Pagus have no concept of godhead. The pagus of Kakodomania fear and worship Mengus and the shemjaza as powerful beings much stronger than themselves, and the same with the hordes of Apocrypha for their death dragon masters, but there is no apprehension of divinity in this adoration, merely the deference of a bully for an even greater bully. Even free pagus continue this tendency, holding warleaders and the few pagus elders (usually the two are synonymous) in almost fawning esteem. A few free pagus who fall in with more open-minded fae will turn half-heartedly to the worship of Berufu, but those few pagus who become truly devoted members of a religion tend to favor human religions – usually Islam (the tenet of absolute submission before God being a comforting familiarity for them), but there have been reports of at least a few pagus *Buddhists* who, by abandoning all worldly attachment, have managed to abandon the brutality and rage that is the pagus' birthright.

Most travelers upon encountering roaming pagus in Canam immediately assume an impending bloody encounter. This is a proper and entirely warranted assumption. The number of enlightened and peaceful pagus is miniscule, and they are seldom seen wandering



on open roads. Every fae people has sworn to their destruction and will not stop to consider whether the target of their ire be redeemed, although those who travel with companions of the 'civilized' fae are usually given the benefit of the doubt. While non-fae like humans and kodiaks don't always reflect this racial hatred, they all know to beware of the pagus. To see one is to assume combat; to see more is a portent to invasion.

In Canam, the vast majority of pagus currently live in the landlocked region of Apocrypha. As creatures of syntropy, they find the overwhelming chaos of nature distasteful and generally avoid mountains and large bodies of water. This has kept them sealed in this region for centuries. Pagus that are found outside this are often raiding bands free from the will of Ixindar. They may also be expeditions seeking a safe route from Apocrypha. The enemies of pagus seldom ask for details. It is unknown how many civilized pagus have lost their opportunity to develop because of this.

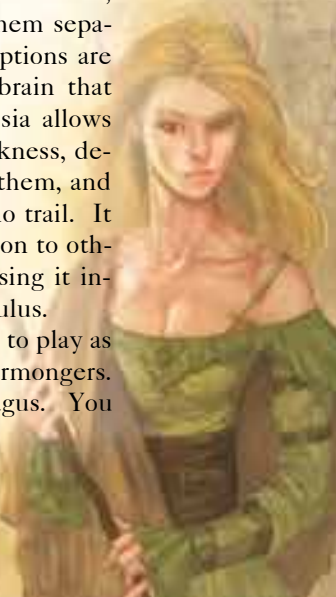
Physical Qualities: Pagus are taller than most men, looming over all other fae save laudenians. Pagus have pale, cracked skin marked with raised veins and bruises from rapid aging. The only recognizable feature from

the old fae are their ears—still pointed, but short and flush to their heads. Although pagus don't appear "stretched" like laudenians, they still look thin given their height. They are muscular but not well built like the shorter narros. This is deceptive, as the pagus are among the strongest fae. The arms of a pagus dangle nearly to his knees.

Pagus are completely hairless, and there is no sexual dimorphism, with females as strong and as violent as the males.

Pagus have strong but animalistic senses of smell, hearing, and sight, but they do not process them separately as most creatures do; instead, all perceptions are fed directly into the centers of the pagus' brain that control their instincts. This strange synthaesia allows pagus to seem to be able to see in perfect darkness, detect even magically silenced enemies behind them, and track by scent creatures that normally leave no trail. It is not possible for them to relay this information to others, however, as they are incapable of processing it intellectually: all they can do is react to the stimulus.

Playing a Pagus: Pagus are the best species to play as they are committed and single-minded warmongers. There is no strategy when dealing with a pagus. You





point him in a direction, let him go, and keep your distance.

A pagus joining a party has an uphill journey. Where the tilen are unjustly pigeonholed as predators, the pagus' reputation has been well earned. Creating a pagus character must begin with an origin. Where was this pagus born and how did he reach this point in life? If joining an evil party, no explanation is required.

However, if the group is populated by noble warriors, an initial encounter should be established (if not fully played out). Kodiaks carry no inherent grudge with pagus nor do tilen or even most humans outside of Abidan, but all other fae are more inclined to decapitate first and ask questions later. This generally prevents pagus from being encountered alone in a tavern.

Once the pleasantries of introductions have passed, a pagus can be a fierce and effective (as well as loyal) contributor to a party.

Names: Pagus speak a guttural language assembled from other fae tongues. Paggin borrows heavily from narroni and chaparran into a patois mixed with the shemjaza tongue of ignotan. This language forms the basis of their names, despite that pagus are forbidden to speak pure paggin in any village controlled or influenced by Mengus. Pagus place their given names at the end and their clan names at the beginning, forming it into a single title broken by clicks and glottal stops. Outside of pagus villages, these additional names are dropped in favor of a more fearful title like Manik the Malign and Kallis the Monster.

Examples: Alik'asti-Kross, Bagga'kes-Naga, Ghraal-Shotek, Manik'kalik-Manik, Monko'Kallis, Zakka'shoon-Kagin



Conan Veitch was a strong advocate for pagus being influenced by certain MMA fighters, exclusively those with abnormal reach. I had started with Nathan Jones, but Conan insisted on Stefan Struve. He won, and my idea turned into the half-pagus. In the 3.5 OGL Amethyst, we introduced the idea that pagus get stronger as they get older, playing with the old senility rules in that edition. It is something I still endorse in games without "aging rules". So if a GM wishes to make a powerful pagus as an important villain, simply make him older. They can grow wise or insane as they age, but regardless, they always get stronger. In the monster section later in the book, there is a guide for equating levels to how old a pagus is, but this is not set in stone. A pagus player can still be young and high level.

TENENBRI

On the far side of the wall, Mustafarnis could feel the human construction machines shoring up the barrier. She had no doubt that she could climb it faster than the snipers atop the wall could react to her presence – they had not seen her come this far, after all, and they were accustomed to watch the forest line rather than the base of the wall – but such was not her intent. The men in Limshau had said there were secret entrances, and none could find a secret better than a tenenbri. Patiently, she traversed the wall, feeling the vibrations from the machines through her hand and training her brain to ignore them, focusing all her attention onto her feet.

There! A tiny opening, barely wider than a sewer grate, but no trouble for a slim fae to slip through. She made her way unerringly through the many branching tunnels until she emerged once more into the light, her sightless eyes unblinking. She lingered in the shadows until an unobservant peasant wearing a conical straw hat wandered near the alley where she lurked, and then emerged wearing his hat and tying a strip of silk torn from his sleeve across her eyes.

Taking care to deliberately stumble every few feet as she tapped along the street with her sword-cane, Mustafarnis waylaid a passing yoriki and spoke in perfect, unaccented Sinitic: “Excuse me, but can you tell me where to find David Chen’s bookshop?”

Average Height: 4’5”-5’3”

Average Weight: 50-75 lb.

Average Starting Age: 55 years.

Estimated Life Expectancy: 500 years

Bonus Language: Tenenbra

+2 Charisma or +2 Wisdom

BLINDSIGHT

You are blind but gain an extrasensory ability to compensate. You cannot read with blindsight, but you can read Pleroma--its glowing words illuminate even those who cannot see. You are immune to being blinded. Invisible opponents gain no advantage over you; you don’t suffer any penalties attacking invisible targets.

PIEZO SCREAM (RACIAL POWER)

Once a battle, you can emit a high-pitched scream to disorientate or damage enemies.

Target: All engaged enemies

Attack: Ability + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target is dazed.

Special: When you create your character, choose Constitution, Strength, or Wisdom for the key ability for *piezo scream*. This choice remains throughout your character’s life.

Adventurer Feat: Recovering from *piezo scream* is now a hard save ends, 16+. Targets also suffer damage (1st level—2d4, 3rd level—2d8, 5th level—4d6, 7th level—6d6, 9th level—10d6).

Champion Feat: You can increase the range of *piezo scream*, affecting up to three additional nearby targets of your choosing.

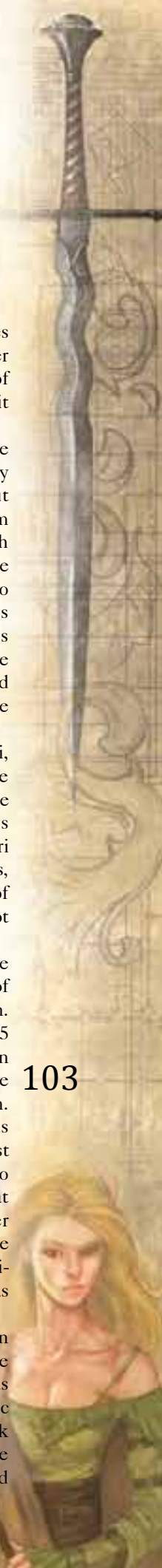
Many human cultures have tales of wicked creatures that live beneath the Earth, but all of them differ drastically on the particulars. As with most elements of human mythology derived from the age of Terros, it bears only a passing resemblance to reality.


The tenenbri mark a point in fae history where the naiveté of free-thinking fae was stained with bloody civil conflict. The tenenbri live underground, but unlike the similarly subterranean narros, they seldom return to the surface: only one of many points on which they differ from their cousins. Although both share some common heritage and religious beliefs, the two peoples oppose each other on many fundamental values and had already been involved in smaller ethnic clashes by the time the pagus arrived. After the War of the Fallen—the conflict between the fae and pagus—had defused from immediate fear to daily concern, the clashes between the narros and tenenbri resumed.

The narros are a much older people than the tenenbri, having broken directly from the laudenians, while the tenenbri branched later from damaskans. Tenenbri are in many ways more fanatically religious than the narros and worship the same god, Oaken. However, tenenbri differ on interpretation and several fundamental beliefs, including the approach to daily rituals, the formation of culture and government, and their views of those not sharing their beliefs.

The focal-point of conflict in the previous age revolved around the ownership of the Well of Salvation—a holy monument to all that worship Oaken. The well, a smooth, naturally-formed circular pit 345 feet wide and 1.25 miles deep, was said to have been formed by Oaken to be his voice. He commanded the fae to emerge into existence from this very mouth. Naturally formed steps allowed a long and dangerous trek to the flat and featureless bottom. Only the most devout narros were allowed to make the pilgrimage to its base. The well carried a breath of cold, moist air that continuously spilled from its mouth, felt by believer and unbeliever alike that lined the perimeter. Suicide was an unfortunate common side-effect of the experience (history does not relate whether this was considered a theological problem or a sociological one).

The narros, long before the tenenbri had even been formed, forged the great surface city of Antok to serve as the haven for all religious fae that endorsed Oaken as their creator and savior. One of the basic commandments of Oaken passed by the Antok cardinals was that no fae was to dig deeper than the depth of the pit. It was this sin the tenenbri had





committed, and had done so willingly and repeatedly. While the tenenbri claimed they had already embraced the darkness when this occurred, the narros contend the tenenbri lost their eyes and their desire for daylight the moment they affronted their god.

The smaller conflicts that broke out over minor religious disagreements continued until a tenenbri cardinal, Nihilochrysis, founded the Enos movement—a subset of tenenbri dogma that revolved around the guilt of being cast down by Oaken for the sin of digging too deep. This differed from standard doctrine that claimed the tenenbri were a master race and the only ones with the right to venture into God's sworn land. Thousands of followers of Enos, including Nihilochrysis, marched upon Antok on pilgrimage with the peaceful intent of praying alongside their narros cousins, but the guards of Antok, on orders from the religious hierarchy, prohibited the tenenbri's entrance.

The fall of the Hammer precludes an accurate account of history, but what is known is that this refusal sparked a crusade, despite the peaceful intent of the original pilgrims. When the battles had ceased, the tenenbri were in control of Antok, and some say that they survived the Hammer's fall not by passing through Attricana but by hiding within the Well. By some miracle, the Well also reemerged into the new era, and the tenenbri and narros of Southam are now locked in a bitter struggle over the possession of the holy city of Antok.

The dominant tenenbri faith holds that they are Oaken's chosen people, all other fae having been failed experiments suitable only to serve the tenenbri. Exactly how humans, coming after the fae as they do, fit into this worldview is a matter of some theological debate which most tenenbri resolve by simply categorizing humans as unusually articulate animals. The tenenbri are passionate about whatever beliefs they hold and show their emotions visibly. Their faith, while self-aggrandizing and xenophobic, is neither evil nor overwhelmingly corrupt, but is also rarely seen outside of Southam. The Enos movement, though sparking a campaign that cost thousands of lives, never endorsed the use of violence in aggression, though its tenets do not preclude fighting to defend one's beliefs.

The few tenenbri that don't follow a specific belief system or are not fanatical about their faith are still notorious for being stubborn and close-minded about what they consider to be true. They are demonstrative with their preconceptions, and will often volunteer them freely even if not asked. Tenenbri honesty comes from their natural ability to detect deception and hidden emotions in others. Like the narros, tenenbri bury their dead in stone.

Tenenbri are astoundingly selfish most of the time, thinking only of themselves or the group they travel with. While they often go to even suicidal extremes to protect their loved ones, the same individual might callously allow someone unknown to them to perish because it simply wasn't their business. In closed tenenbri communities like the kingdom of Vanaka,

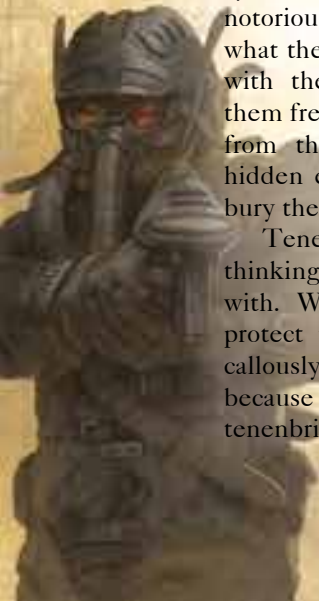
bonding and even consorting outside their species is strictly prohibited, although this runs entirely counter to most tenenbri's natural preferences.

Everything about their culture is a consequence of them losing their sight. The tenenbri are far and away the loudest fae one will ever encounter on any continent. Keeping one's voice low is considered impolite in their society, and whispering is downright rude; any sort of hand gesture, though not difficult for a tenenbri to perceive thanks to their ability to feel air currents, is seen as a deliberate snub. They stamp their feet when they walk (as long as they are not trying to sneak up on an enemy) and are constantly performing tiny non-vocal sounds, such as snapping fingers, clicking tongues, or whistling through their teeth even when not speaking; they also indicate that they are still listening through a variety of non-articulate vocalizations, sometimes overlapping with their interlocutor.

Additionally, tenenbri don't rate physical attractiveness the same as those with normal vision. Perfect bodies with perfect skin are boring to them. They find imperfections and physical flaws attractive, especially if they are natural or from accidental injury. Tattoos are worthless to them. Scars from combat or labor, missing digits, or simply hereditary features that are different from the norm are naturally attractive, an aspect the religious elite have been trying to train their people to reject. Since there are few humans in Southam and the majority of non-tenenbri peoples are in open war, it's an easy law to enforce. When the tenenbri escape from their land and venture north into Canam, this often changes. Outcast tenenbri have bonded with a variety of fae and non-fae, from humans and pagus, to oggraks and kodiaks. The rare cases when tenenbri marry outside their race are often described as avidly passionate. Other words to describe them in a relationship are hot-blooded, fiery, and lustful.

No one is sure how many tenenbri there are but estimations place them between three and six million, over ninety-eight percent of which live in the mountains of Southam.

Physical Qualities: In size, build, and general features, tenenbri are almost identical to damaskans, albeit slightly shorter. However, their entire race is blind. Their eyes are glossed over; irises are faded to near nothing, concealed under cataracts. The slightest light reflects a glint off the back of their corneas, shimmering with a white glow in direct illumination. Their deathly pale skin feels cool to the touch and tastes salty, a sign in humans of cystic fibrosis, a condition the tenenbri would all probably suffer from if magic did not suppress the gene in their body. Their long ears respond to vibrations in the air, detecting movement in total darkness, and like the damaskans, their ears are prone to twitch depending on their emotional state. Though their enhanced hearing greatly assists them, it is their connection to the ground that offers them the greatest awareness of their surroundings. Even though the tenenbri have no vision





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to speak of, they still maintain a surprisingly high level of personal grooming. Their clothing is rarely overtly ostentatious, as their aesthetic sense is attuned to texture rather than color: what to a tenenbri may seem like an outrageous costume is quite often puritanically plain to others.

Playing a Tenenbri: Tenenbri are the best species to play because they have a single feature that sets them apart from all others; they can see without seeing. They can feel the beating hearts of those around them. They can notice enemies while all others are helpless. They look through walls, through crowds, and through deceit. They are bizarre and graceful without the petty naiveté that so many other fae exhibit.

Tenenbri outside of Southam are often outcasts. Some communities are so fanatical that even talking to a non-tenenbri may exact banishment, and even among more moderate societies expulsion is the preferred punishment for most serious offenses (unorthodoxy being considered a serious offense by most). Virtually all tenenbri found in Canam are those who have been exiled from Southam, usually for rejecting the dominant belief that the tenenbri are a master race others should serve. Even though the tenenbri would be valuable in mines, most narros refuse to employ them, though gimfen have no such prejudices except insofar as a tenenbri in a gimfen community would have to be kept away from sensitive equipment that can't be shielded. Canamite tenenbri find surprising acceptance in echan human kingdoms, considering the treatment that humans are subjected to in Southam. Limshau finds the tenenbri braille books fascinating additions to their collection and will always allow a tenenbri to settle within their borders.

The narros, of course, still hold a grudge, with the majority of the narros judging the tenenbri as dishonorable and untrustworthy. Unsurprisingly, narros and tenenbri are almost polar opposites in their mentalities. Where the narros take pride in their discipline and military might, tenenbri play life loose, letting their emotions carry them; as warriors, they employ stealth and trickery more than a daunting shield wall. Tenenbri prefer talking their way out of fights or finding a way to trick two enemies into killing each other. Their extraordinary hearing and vibration sensitivity have allowed them an impeccable awareness of people's intents. Tenenbri are considered extremely exotic and many humans get tongue-tied when dealing with them, for while most fae are merely uncomfortably honest, tenenbri can casually identify when someone is not telling the whole truth and are not shy about telling the world.

Tenenbri have little use for armor, preferring to strike from the shadows and then retreat before an enemy has the opportunity to target them. They favor light short blades, easily manipulated in tunnel fighting; tenenbri travelers, freed from the constraints of the underground, frequently adopt walking sticks with concealed blades, easily drawn and easily stowed. They do not care overmuch for ranged weapons, though some

develop a taste for knife throwing or small, powerful spring-loaded crossbows.

Regardless of their natural proclivities, a tenenbri willingly sworn into a group of adventurers will seldom steal from them or betray their trust. However, a tenenbri may invite trouble with her very presence because of her exotic appearance and unnerving behavior. If not, she is likely to cause a stir the moment she starts talking: tenenbri are the most opinionated and demonstrative of all fae and have even less patience for tact and diplomacy than damaskans.

Names: Tenenbri have no use for family names; they have only one name, using phonemic similarity to denote relation. For example, two names like Sharajaclypse and Lamaclypse, the ending '-clypse' denotes their genetic similarity. The common syllable may occur at any point in the name: siblings usually have the same sound on the same syllable, but the rules for other relations are byzantine and only make sense to tenenbri. Most children are raised in communal crèches and some tenenbri children don't even know who their parents are (tenenbra has no generic terms for family members in any case, everyone being addressed by name). In larger cities, this is not always the case.

Examples: Sianodell, Mianodell, Farianoda (These would mark similar genetic markings based on the "iano" in their names. Sian and Mian may be sisters but Fari could be an uncle or cousin), Mazicalatte, Ranasorrei, Tepsidra.



The tenenbri are my personal favorites, so it annoys me that they come from the wrong continent (so I always have to come up with a contrived explanation for using them). I've always been keen on the 'blind warrior' archetype, although I wasn't introduced to the popular "Zatouichi" character until relatively recently.



In the next expansion, there is some explanation why the tenenbri are apparently absent from Canam. They aren't. To summarize, humans aren't the only creatures fleeing from the south. Beyond slavers and predatory oggraks, many just wish to escape the tenenbri/narros war engulfing the continent. Boats landing on southern shores of Canam are actually relatively common. Librarians and custodians from Limshau have been known to travel to south, offering sanctuary and passage back to the kingdom. Many in the south don't know of the situation up north and many fae immigrants land in Baruch Malkut, unaware of the hell awaiting them.

TILEN

Kinien had told her there was nothing to it: just stare at them with wide eyes, smile, laugh at their jokes, and they would be putty in her hands. But Kinien wasn't here, and Sallah was becoming increasingly nervous surrounded by the three drunken aristocrats. She flinched as one of them put his arm around her bare shoulders, his fingers questing for the neckline of her elaborate dress. She fended him off with a forced coquettish giggle, and shuddered inwardly as she smelled the jealousy rising in the others. At this rate, they would start fighting over her no matter who she chose to dance with. She didn't think she could handle that... the shouting, the acrid smell of sweat, the blood pounding in the brawlers' hearts, the sweet, delicious blood she just couldn't help but imagine how it tasted how it felt she wanted it NOW... the tips of her teeth pricked her tongue and she realized what she was doing, hurriedly chastising herself. She had always been more sensitive than her brother; why wasn't he here to keep her in line? As she sat there miserably, feigning smiles and wondering how to extricate herself from the trio of boors, a fourth man broke away from the crowd on the dance floor and came toward her. Sallah looked up at him as he held out his hand – one of her gallants looked like he was going to object, then recognized the newcomer and decided against it. Her breath caught in her throat. This man smelled nice... very nice. She found herself unconsciously glancing at his neck, and forced herself to look up into his limpid blue eyes.

"May I have the pleasure of this dance, mademoiselle?" he asked. "Ah..." Sallah stammered, and then smiled genuinely. "Of course, milord."

(These traits do not apply to the elder tilen, who are substantially more powerful and are not suitable as player characters)

Average Height: 5'8" – 6'4"

Average Weight: 45-70 lbs.

Average Starting Age: 30 years

Estimated Life Expectancy: 600 years

Bonus Languages: Two human languages, one fae language.

+2 Wisdom or +2 Dexterity

REDUCED HEALING

You recover only half the normal hit points from recoveries and other healing effects. Your recovery value is not changed, and temporary hit points are unaffected.

VAMPIRIC REMNANTS

When you get emotional in any way (in battle, when angered, or in passion), old vampiric traits emerge: your eyes glow and your incisors extend. When in this state, you gain a +2 bonus to intimidation checks but suffer a -4 penalty to diplomacy.

BLOOD SURGE (RACIAL POWER)

Out of necessity, but still filled with trepidation, you drain the blood of a target to heal your wounds. Once per battle, you can make the following attack on a target

Target: One living creature

Attack: Ability + Level vs. MD. If you miss, you regain the use of *blood surge*.

Hit: You grab the target. Spend a recovery. The target takes damage equal to your full recovery value. You recover hit points equal to the damage inflicted. If the target is willing, you inflict half damage and you regain 1.5times your recovery value.

Special: When you create your character, choose Strength or Dexterity for the key ability for *blood surge*. This choice remains throughout your character's life.


Adventurer Feat: You can reverse your power, inflicting damage upon yourself to heal the target. You can control the amount of damage dealt: even though you are willing, hit point recovery is 1:1 rather than 2:1.

Champion Feat: Instead of healing damage, hit points you gain through *blood surge* can be temporary hit points. You choose which when you use the power.

Epic Feat: You gain a second use of *blood surge* per battle.

The tilen are scions of an ancient evil dating back to the First War. They descend from the servants and consorts of the Lords of Death, *ghulath* in the tongue of the ancient fae, who discovered how to take Ixindar's power for themselves and used it to create unspeakable undead horrors that served only their own selfish whims, and not the whisper of Mengus. The *ghulath* and their spawn walked the nights of Terros and used their mesmeric powers and colossal strength to drain the blood of the living to sustain their wicked unlife. When Attricana reopened in the modern age, some of these unwilling slaves found their souls returned to them, and ever since they and their children have struggled to throw off the shackles of their dark legacy and return to the light.

The birth and history of the tilen is marred with pain, suffering, and mystery. How they came to cherish life from origins steeped in evil points to the tenacity of their spirit. The details of their curse and crusade for redemption are known only to a few, and they rarely speak of the past. Before the time of man, when the war with the dark forces of Ixindar was sweeping the planet, a group of corrupted rebels created a land that refused to follow either path. They embraced the negative energy of Ixindar but believed that death was the true gateway to everlasting power. Among these insurgents appeared the initial lords of decay, the *ghulath* (creatures of darkness that have gone by dozens of names throughout human history: draugr, vrykolakas, chupacabra, vampire). They created armies of mindless



undead and forged a kingdom to call their own. They were despised by both sides. Requiring servants, allies, slaves, and lovers, these initial lords brought others into their fold. These disciples were horribly corrupted to the wicked will of their seducer. Ghulath may be creatures of the night, barred from the land of the living, but they never actually died. Like all the forces of Ixindar, the ghulath lords and their kin hid within the realm past the black gate, waiting for the opportunity to be brought to solid form again. Upon their return, they found a world very different from the last. They claimed their own patch of grass and soaked it with blood, starting the infection known as the Necrosea.

Their devotees followed their lords in their crusade to forge an army of death to even rival Kakodomania. They were expecting neither the white gate to burst open nor the effect of its flood across the world. When the white gate returned, a deluge swept over the Earth. Records are vague on specifics, but the wave changed everything, sending the armies of Ixindar back into their realm of Kakodomania and destroying the undead hordes where they stood. It forced the ghulath to rebuild, but they would do it alone. When the flow of Attricana hit their loyal spawn, those who were not destroyed were forced back into the light. Those minions taken from Kakodomania and the ghulath lords themselves were unaffected, being willingly bound to Ixindar, but a precious few of those taken against their will awoke from their feral existence and remembered their lives. Many died trying to escape the darklands. The remaining survivors vanished from the sight of man or fae, but their determination allowed them to endure. These individuals became known as the elder tilen. They were the most powerful and the most shamed over past sins. Their children would resemble them, but exhibited only a pale imitation of their power. Elder tilen never die, only able to leave this planet through an accident or through the brutality of a deliberate death by another's hands. They are psychologically incapable of taking their own lives. This curse of immortality is not shared by their descendants.

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Tilen don't need blood to survive, but it is the only way they can heal major wounds since the natural regenerative rate of their own body is impeded by the necrotic power of their heritage. They are extremely sensitive and avoid violence when they can, both for moral reasons and because the numbers of their species are so few. Pairings between tilen are almost always childless, with a birth rate of only three percent. This rises nearly twelve percent when bonding with a non-tilen (there are no half-tilen: the child of a mixed union is always a pureblooded tilen). Their bonding ritual is a passionate and extended kiss that nearly suffocates the non-tilen partner.

Most tilen are nomadic, hiding from the light and judgmental outsiders. They spend most of their time fighting against their own untamed natures, believing themselves one step from regressing back to the undead. They carry that fear to this day, though

throughout their history, only one has ever fallen back to darkness, and that only temporarily. Tilen both fear and despise undead and many of them have vowed to remove from the Earth all mindless mockeries of life. They consider necromancers, nihilancers, and their old ghulath masters sworn enemies.

There are less than 10,000 tilen in the world but with their appealing nature and hospitality to outsiders, their numbers are beginning to grow.

Consider this; the majority of tilen born are females, all tall, beautiful, without blemish or wrinkle, not an ounce of fat on them. Exotic and rare with both a chill and a warmth for every desire, you could scour every royal line and not find such fortune in gaining one's favor.

I will not repeat the misguided and insufferable opinions of those wishing their demise. I am simply asking the questions that sit on so many of our lips. Look at the facts:

A) Tilen produce offspring more successfully with non-tilen than themselves.

B) Their offspring are always tilen. Sure they may have the other's hair or cheeks but the resulting race is still the same.

C) In the centuries they have lived in this age, tilen show no signs of creating a descendant species like the other fae.

I can figure two possibilities out of this. The first is that tilen have been placed on the planet to save the fae from turning into monsters. If tilen truly look the closest to the original fae like some, including them, claim, then this is a path to saving the fae species in its entirety. Second, this is the nefarious plot by evil hands to wipe out the fae, and humanity as well, by seducing them all into producing a singular species of tilen with no others. With only tilen, their population growth would grind to a crawl and they would potential decline to extinction given enough time. As they were once creatures of darkness, this theory may have some weight, making the tilen one of the most gilded plagues in all of the history.

I want to make clear this does not make them all evil. I personally believe the tilen may be innocent in this conspiracy. It would not serve the forces of evil to make them all deceitful for the truth would eventually be revealed. Tilen would have no control over their desires. It's natural as it is in all of us, to find companionship, to seed a further generation with your offspring. How could they be blamed for wishing what we all wish? I truthfully believe that if this matter is ignored, the tilen could be the only civilized people left in the world.

Logan Markus

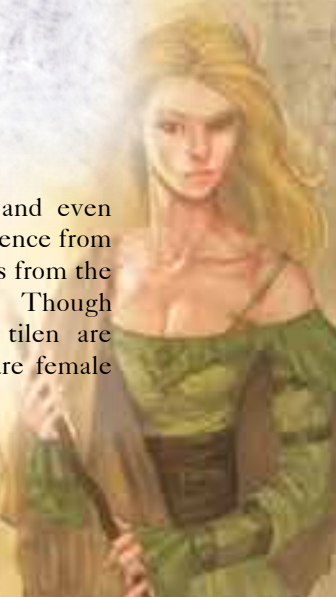
Public Address (before his forced retirement), Kannos

Physical Qualities: Like their vampiric forebears, tilen have pale skin (though without the pallor of unlife), faintly prominent canines, and a sensitivity to light: they also cast no reflection and only weak shadows. They are generally thin, almost frail, but their strength is deceptive given their slender bodies. The elder tilen came from every fae species and retain their original basic forms, but all their descendants now have the same basic physique regardless of their lineage. This fact has brought accusations of corruption—believers claiming the tilen were intentionally released by the darkness to convert the planet to their form. Tilen age at nearly the same rate as humans, reaching



maturity in their twenties but then remaining in that state for nearly 200 years before slowly aging, though never appearing older than 50 human years. Their skin is cool to the touch but not cold, dry, or cracked. Their hair is usually bleached gold or white, often streaked with silver. Their ears taper long and straight up, though the edges tend to become jagged with age. Their eyes stand out from their monochromatic skin

and attire, reflecting brilliant greens, blue, and even orange. Their eyes often expose a tilen's presence from across a crowded room, as their radiance bursts from the shadows where they frequently try to hide. Though passionate and kind creatures in general, tilen are incapable of crying. The majority of tilen are female and are on average taller than the males.



When tilen get profoundly excited, stressed or angered, their ghulath traits become more exposed. Their eyes glow bright red or yellow, their upper canine teeth sharpen and extend nearly to their lower gums, and their nails grow long, sharp and strong. They despise showing this side of themselves, especially to those they care about.

Tilen claim the uniformity of Ixindar resulted in a shape closer to the original fae. Many laudenians and chaparrans view this as an insult, since each claims their own form to be direct descendants of the original stock. The narros and tenenbri never made an official stand on the matter, but secretly disapprove of the tilen claim. Most humans don't understand why this matters to the fae: gimfen know why it matters, but simply don't care. The tilen don't assert arrogance or superiority with their contention—in their view, it is only common sense.

Playing a Tilen: Tilen are the best people to play because their colorful heritage will encourage role playing outside of combat. They are the best choice because they are the fewest on the planet. When a tilen enters a crowded room, they are the only ones of their kind in it, and heads will turn. They are a double-edged sword because of their dark past and kind nature. In the end, such a rich palette will create a more interesting character to play.

A tilen player character must accept that their species is stigmatized as much as the tenenbri – in some cases, even as much as the pagus. Tilen are executed on sight in some nations in the world (not just in Baruch Malkut, where all fae run this risk). They usually keep to themselves and seldom advertise their presence outside their own villages. Though almost entirely benign and peaceful, tilen suffer greatly at the hands of others. Most fae avoid the tilen and several human villages openly hunt them. Despite this, tilen numbers continue to rise, as their demure nature and statuesque good looks are distinctly appealing, especially to humans—which in turn often provokes others (mostly humans as well) to accuse them of being evil tempters and servants of darkness, planning a clandestine campaign to destroy all children of God by breeding them out. They regard the tilen as demon masters of seduction—modern day succubae and incubae—whose only purpose is to tempt men away from chaste and loyal human marriages, to produce an army of cambion half-breeds. More than 85% of all tilen are female, which does not help this growing stereotype. Nevertheless, tilen continue to live their lives, willingly offering the hand of friendship at the risk of having said hand removed.

Tilen have little culture of their own. Their desire for acceptance makes them quick to adopt the customs of whatever community is willing to welcome them. Contrary to the traditional view of vampires as beings of consummate style, tilen on their own will often adopt drab, unassuming clothing, preferably covering as much skin as possible to prevent sunburn, often adopting wide-brimmed hats, deep-hooded cloaks, or veils for good measure. Being deeply opposed to violence, they

have no native martial traditions. If forced to fight, they prefer heavier armor and reach weaponry, or better still, crossbows or magic, the better to minimize the chance of injury.

Tilen are emotional and expressive but rarely lose control of their facilities. Even when they do, their fear of a relapse that will turn them back to darkness is strong enough to prevent them from doing anything truly heinous. They loathe exposing their ghulath traits: it unmasks them, and tilen fear that, if others were to see them in that state, it would cause a violent reaction and endanger them and those they care about. Living so close to the specter of death, they are not only driven to survive, but have a pathological abhorrence of causing an unnecessary death.

Among allies, friends, or family, tilen are open, honest, gentle, and fiercely loyal. Once they establish a bond in any form, they honor and relish such attachment, knowing perfectly well how rare they are when images of tilen can be seen on so many city walls proclaiming them to be demons from a wide range of legends and religious books.

As religion is usually used as an excuse for expelling them from a community, most tilen have a healthy distrust for any organized faith. This is more pronounced with human religions, as the fae faiths have no concept of 'hell' or 'demons' beyond the very real embodiments of Kakodomania, but even so, the tilen always harbor a suspicion that any gods they might pray to do not want them. Those who still yearn for the sacred tend to be drawn to religions that are more philosophy than faith; Buddhism in particular has a moderate following among tilen. Of course, those who integrate into another society will adopt the customs and religion of their adopted home—until such time as that religion is turned against them.

Names: The first tilen elders adopted new names when they were pulled back into the light, mostly human-inspired, to sever their connection with the past. Their descendants continue the trend, usually choosing a new name when they enter a new community (a useful practice, given their propensity for being driven out of town for perceived offenses). There is no consistent naming scheme among tilen, as they have no native language of their own, usually adopting that of the nearest community for their day-to-day business.

Examples: Azula Jaheer, Lhamah Cyrose, Mira Die-masko, Naga Sorenti, Saleena Kaeris, Zacheria Korvek



Tilen began with a single character, Saleena Kaeris, and the race expanded around her. She was pulled from a much older campaign I ran from the 90s called Terminals—about parallel realities collapsing in on each other—and created the tilen to justify her introduction. This was years before the vampire craze took off and I considered removing them before the 4E edition.



NON-FAE RACES

HUMANS

"I do not understand, Nejima-san," said the damaskan child, her lip curling in distaste. "What is the purpose of this exercise, if it is not combat training?"

Nejima sighed and adjusted the straps on his boxing gloves. "It's many things, Denka-chan," he explained. "I find it serves me better than meditating for clearing the mind."

The little girl shook her head. "But, if you hurt someone—or if you get hurt—" Nejima smiled. "That's part of the fun," he said. "You have to focus on your opponent so you don't get hit, and if you do you have to condition yourself so you don't feel it, and you have to trust that he'll do the same. It's almost spiritual, when you think about it."

The elf still did not seem convinced. "But... but... Men... touching!" she stammered. "And in shiny underwear!"

Nejima looked at the child's red-faced visage for a moment, and then burst out laughing. "Yes, well," he said, when he had regained his composure, "Perhaps I should try to explain again when you're older."

(See *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game Core Book* on Human Racial Traits)


Average Starting Age: 20 years

Estimated Life Expectancy: 80 years

Evolution is the adaptation of a natural animal to its environment. Further generations of a species may not necessarily be superior, but those that survive would be better suited to their surroundings with an advantage over the competition. This process eventually resulted in humanity – with no signs that evolution has ceased. The fae continue to adapt to their surroundings as well, but their development degrades their form, making them more animalistic and feral. Even the laudenians, the most magically endowed of all fae, fled to the skies to prevent degradation. Some humans, especially those of echa, firmly believe mankind's turn to magic will be the key to their final path to perfection, able to master the world of enchantment in all its forms while fae continue to be slaves to it. Since only humanity has arisen with any notable footprint as an evolved species, they are the only ones listed, however broken into two groups: echan humans and techan humans. Though humanity is still the most numerous intelligent species on the planet, less than 400 million humans live today, many of them outside of bastions.

Humans emerged millions of years after the last magical creatures escaped or fell to dust. Mankind grew from hairy apes to the form that walks with pride today. Since their peak in the age of technology, most of the human population has died off, leaving less than 3% to rebuild. The origins of this disappearance are not fully understood; some claim it was natural disasters resulting from the Second Hammer, others blame the encroachment of Kakodomania in the early days of the gate's reopening, and there are those who believe that





mankind had already practically destroyed himself through war, pollution, and disease by the time magic changed the world. Some escaped into bastions while others embraced the ways of magic. Many more were killed in the first few decades. After five hundred years of living on their own, mostly xenophobic of outsiders, the citizens of bastions can sometimes be looked upon in a wholly different light than their magically saturated brethren. Techa-folk often fear magic, claiming it steals their souls or changes them irreparably. The use of magic *does* change a human: he stops being a creation purely of nature, and his mere existence begins to break down the laws of the known universe just as the fae do. Techa-folk claim this removes them from the human race. Echa-folk claim this is how man is supposed to be. They are both wrong, but that's beside the point. Until magic infuses a human, by embracing it as a mage or accepting its touch in weapon or armor, she has a choice whether or not to let the enchantment into her spirit. Once one does, she is borne along with the tide, and it is very difficult to come down from it.

Mankind emerged into the new dawn with nothing. The old cities were gone. No corporations or organizations, no clubs or allegiances, nothing that defined mankind as a species, or anchored them to their fidelity to god or country, endured. Fragments of the old age were scattered in the few ancient ruins that somehow endured. Survivors had to set aside their ignorance and stubbornness. Many refused and died praying for a deliverance that never arrived. Suicide took many in the first few years. Later – when the first fledging communities encountered the first non-humans – hostilities followed.

Many more humans fell under the blade in conflicts they often initiated. A pause in their fear and paranoia resulted in a stay of annihilation, preventing man's second near extinction. Eventually, these first communities grew enough to sustain themselves. Though nations changed, ethnic groups continued to grow. Racism died in the face of other, very real monsters. Bastions formed with wide spectrums of color and creed. Some cities (like Angel) did separate regions for specific groups, but this usually came at the request of the segregated group, wishing to preserve their ancient cultures against the melting pot. Outside of the bastion walls, any remaining propensities for facism were usually diverted onto other species.

Humans have short memories, and there is nobody alive today who remembers the ancient hatreds and conflicts in times before the second Hammer. Few nations advocate hatred of other humans, although techan humans often act superior to outsiders. Echan human nations respond well to each other with Baruch Malkut being a notable exception. With Darius Konig's doctrine of Sapien Superiority and their murder and enslavement of thousands of fae and humans who don't share their views, no other human echan kingdom will trade with them. Other nations like Kannos and Abidan maintain good relations with their surrounding fae neighbors. Specific diplomatic ties depend on which

species are found in proximity to the settlement. Outside of the major human nations, dozens of villages and communities dotted across Canam and even the world practice bigotry against the fae ranging from shunning or enslavement to expulsion or eradication, but there are just as many communities who simply welcome them with open arms.

Humans have maintained most of their old religions, but virtually all religious zealotry disappeared when less than 200 million people survived to the new age. They quickly banded together, abandoning old bigotries and conceits from the old world. The holy lands many fought, killed, and died for were gone, and with nearly all of the ancient sacred relics gone with them, most took this as a sign to live for the betterment of all mankind and not die over the buried remnants of forgotten conflicts. Sworn enemies put aside their pasts in favor of rebuilding. Many of them found new enemies, as well as new friends, with arriving echan peoples. In this new world, the big five religions survived: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Chinese Folklore, and Buddhism. They remain the majority by an enormous margin. Smaller faiths – Judaism, Sikhism, Shinto, etc. – appear in certain regions. With 95% of humanity eliminated at the dawn of the new age, the survivors believed that Armageddon either had passed or was yet to come. The majority of man, even within the bastions, is still controlled by rulers professing a faith in an almighty power. With the exception of a scant few, most use this belief to lead the people in wisdom and kindness, not in fear and lunacy. Those embracing echa believe in the gate as a lens of their faith and not necessarily a symbol. Faiths including a heaven believe it sits beyond the gateway of Attricana. Those without a heaven (or even a god for that matter) believe the gate to be either a reflection of nature or a mirror of their own soul.

Before the gate opened, the world was divided on the origin of man, firmly separated between a scientific theory and a religious belief. This all changed when Attricana opened. With this new angle on the world, many humans faced new facts: the introduction of the fae and dragons, and a past world and history unknown to them. Some elected to believe their dogma accurate despite contradictory evidence, concocting extravagant theories claiming the previous age did not exist at all, and the new arrivals were demons meant to be repressed or destroyed. Others took these new peoples and their similarities as the final proof of divine creation, still placing man atop this ladder of progressive superiority. Many older religions did adapt and changed their scripture based on the new world. Some still attempted to use fear to suppress their believers while others took this as an opportunity to start over. The vast majority of humanity accepts natural selection as the origin of humanity, whether or not they have integrated it into another belief system.

Many human languages died within a few generations of the Hammer's fall. Others merged to create new variations. Now only a handful remain.

Surviving vernacular soon divided into regional slangs and patois, becoming recognized languages themselves with distinct lexicons, syntaxes, and phonetic pronunciations. Of the major languages, the only ones that survived more or less intact are English, French, Spanish, and Mandarin Chinese, and most of these are relegated to purely academic use in favor of more modern amalgams of a variety of regional languages. English was the dominant language of the world before it changed and often the only one that two disparate groups of survivors would have in common, so most modern languages are hybridized with it. In Canam, the major dialects are Common English (English grammar with additional vocabulary drawn from Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and a variety of indigenous tongues, most prevalent in western and northern Canam), Native English/Englo-Lingo (distinct dialects, but both mostly pure English with French and German influences, found in eastern Canam), and Onespeak (roughly equal parts Spanish and German with some English influences, the dominant language of southeast Canam). Common English is the lingua franca of the human race in Canam and the few ports outside the continent that maintain any regular contact, and is the language most non-humans pick up when wishing to communicate with mankind.

The majority of bastion-born believe mankind earned his right for total dominion of the globe and wait for the day when technology will recover the planet again. A few believe in a shared future where technology can exist side by side with magic, though with mankind as the true proprietors of the world.

In echa, this belief is reversed. While some think the new races are intruding and should be eliminated or enslaved, many have embraced the new world, considering it the utopia and haven predicted in religious texts. Only when the dark hordes and their minions are eliminated and the hell gate closed will this world truly turn into Eden.

Physical Qualities: Humans continue to be more varied than any other civilized race on Earth. They possess virtually every possible skin color (including a few that were physically impossible in the old world), range in height from three feet to a towering seven, are thin and fat, and sport a variety of hair colors and styles. Since almost every religion and ethnic group is represented on Canam, a player can select any ethnicity of his choosing. It is suggested that upon choosing an ethnic group, the player takes the time to research the unique strengths of said group.

Playing a Human: With such a wide range of possibilities, humanity is the best people to play. They have the greatest variety of options. In this new world, they have the most to gain (and lose) with the coming events to follow. In the end, humanity will be the force that will decide the fate of the world.

A player creating a human should first determine his origin: from a bastion or from the outside world. The player character choosing a path of technology must have access to said technology on a regular basis.

Without upgrading their technology, techan characters won't fare much better than low-level echans.

A techan character is a stranger in a strange land. It might be Earth but centuries under the glare of Attricana have changed the landscape. Techans leaving the walls are truly entering a fantasy world for which they have little to no preparation. Some may leave willingly while others are forced to because of obligations or because of an obsession that haunts them. Some may open their eyes, welcoming the wonder of this new world. Others watch with jealousy and resentment. Regardless, techans are loyal to their own kind and don't often welcome foreigners. While outside, they miss their refrigerators and computers. On the other hand, some techans have given up their central heating and televisions to pursue a path of magic, embracing the new world with a romantic naïveté, unaware of the horrors awaiting them. Loyal techans strive for the day when the gates close, orphaning the fae to the ravages of the real world, a time where mankind could retake the planet as its true inheritors. The fae would be forced to escape back into the formless void of dreams and delusions. Those unable or unwilling to make such a journey would be subject to the harsh reality of natural laws and perish quickly. Techans fear the future of a world where magic reigns uncontested and humanity lives stagnant, in limbo, never changing, forever in a fantasy world without consequences.

Most echan humans have wholly accepted their path with no desire to settle within the walls of industry. They take on magic without worry of the consequences. They believe techans follow an obsolete conviction, frantically clinging to a dying mind-set. Echan humans insist this new world is as real as the one that came before and it deserves to exist as much as anything else. Those with a faith in the unseen believe it to be the ultimate solution to humanity's avarice. If man continued alone, he would have destroyed the world in his greed. With magic and disruption, it keeps mankind humble and in check—Nature finally striking back for sins committed on its soil. Even those without religion believe this new world is the proper one. At the very least, it's far more interesting. Some just don't care about the fate of humanity and have turned their back to selfishly embrace the romance and exotic nature of their new neighbors.

Then there are those on either side who simply have yet to make a choice. It must be stressed that though millions of humans would be considered 'echan' simply because they live in regions that accept the existence of magic as a reality of life, only those who actively use or expose themselves to magic are actually enchanted (and thus generate EDF). At the same time, there are plenty of so-called techans who hearken after either a simpler life or merely a less predictable one outside the bastion walls.

Humans often seek excitement for the sheer thrill of it. Some escape their bastions while others dedicate themselves to entering one. Humans follow whims and





dreams more than any other species. They are caught up on causes while others let things pass. Their short lives force them to condense as much experience as possible in a brief span of time.

Names: Human names continue to evolve today. Now with the commingling of many ethnic groups, first and last names can (and usually do) represent several cultures. The degree of infusion of Asian blood and languages into the general Canamite population means that old Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Indian names are as common, if not more so, than those originally of European extraction.

Examples: Chiaki Jones, Kim Jansen, Kiba Hebrus, Delacroix Lin-Wei, Miranda Okama, Robert Naseen

Mixed Groups: Of course, one could mix both echan and techan players together into one group. Why they would choose to unite is left up the imaginations of the players or DM. One idea could be a shared past between several characters (both raised in Angel, one in Genai, the other in the main city), a techan out of place in the world or even characters romantically linked. Either way, they attempt to survive together, flying in the face of convention insisting the worlds live apart. In this situation, the techan must exercise caution and not

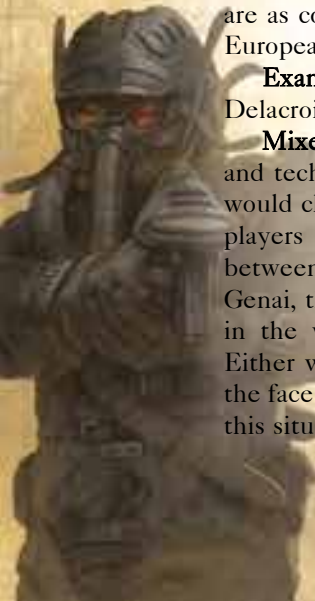
wield or use magic though surrounded by it. The techan or techans also must be careful to keep their more sensitive gear away from the powerful magic items in the group or risk disruption. This problem escalates as levels progress and more powerful technology shorts out more often and more severely, despite the shielding techniques some bastions developed. This struggle reflects in the rest of the world as well.



There should be a lot more Chinese names in the examples, but I'm a lot less familiar with Chinese than I am with Japanese, and I thought that just grabbing names at random out of Hong Kong action films would be in slightly poor taste.



David Obatala Chen was inspired by Egg Shen from Big Trouble in Little China. So yeah, there's that.



KODIAKS

In light above, I see fires by man and unman. I tell not apart. They better for sparking fires? I make fire here. No need to set them to sky. Here they cook and warm. We thank wood for burning. We plant again to make grow more.

No wood in sky. Man pray fire. Seek fire. Wrong for this.

*No pray fire, pray wood. Wood better.
Pray Wood.*

Average Height: 6'4" – 7'2"

Average Weight: 350 -450 lb.

Average Starting Age: 15 years.

Estimated Life Expectancy: 80 years

Bonus Language: Argose

+2 Strength or +2 Constitution

IMPOSING BUT CLUMSY

You suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls with weapons you wield in one hand. You can wield larger weapons; these weapons have their damage dice scaled up: 1d6>1d8>1d10>1d12. So a 1d8 spear inflicts 1d10 and a greatsword inflicts 1d12.

NATURAL WEAPONS

Your claws are powerful weapons. They deal 1d6 damage each level. Your claws cannot be enchanted, but can benefit from magic items that grant their enhancement bonus to other items. They are eligible for two weapon fighting.

Champion Feat: Your claws have their damage dice scaled up: 1d6>1d8>1d10>1d12. They also gain +1 bonus to attack (cumulative to a max +3).

Epic Feat: Your claws have their damage dice scaled up: 1d6>1d8>1d10>1d12. They also gain +1 bonus to attack (cumulative to a max +3). Their critical threat range is also increased by +1.

In the north of Canam, influence from Attricana has forced the native bears upright. At first, these creatures remained lawless. They quarreled amongst themselves and raided neighboring communities for food. Even today, kodiaks still lack sufficient success at civilized society. Most cling to the quest for survival with such an obsession that they care for little else.

A band's disposition relies on its leader, dictating how the tribe will act and where they will travel. Will they hunt or forage? Will they attack or trade? A few tribes close to the narros in Fargon or migrating into the sparsely settled lands down the Dianaso pass, understanding that their future depended on pushing past their fear of others, attempted a dialogue. The kodiaks developed into trained hunters and farmers. As they brought in food, the civilized folk repaid their

allies with knowledge, clothes, tools, and finally weapons. Better armed, these civilized kodiaks overwhelmed their unfortunate rivals, whether they be boggs, skeggs, or other kodiaks.

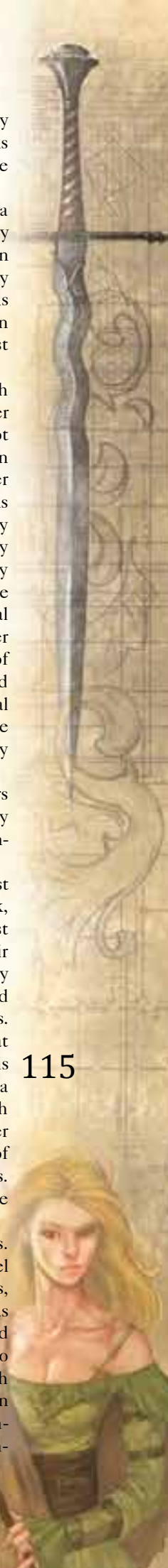
Almost all kodiaks reside in Northern Canam with a few migrating through the rest of the continent. They are virtually unknown elsewhere. Their presence in any non-kodiak community is uncommon; the only place in Canam where kodiaks and non-kodiaks regularly mingle is in the confederacy of Seliquam, in and around the Dianaso Pass, and even there, most kodiak bands keep to themselves.

The kodiak belief system is essentially animist, with everything in nature having a spirit. Where they differ from other animist traditions is that kodiaks do not believe that the spirits should be importuned or even bothered unnecessarily. Where a human tribal hunter might give thanks to the spirit of the prey, kodiaks descend from predators higher on the food chain; if they are able to catch something, that is proof that they deserve to have caught it, and no thanks to any noncorporeal power are needed. Their beliefs are more a means of explaining natural and supernatural phenomena to a culture that has no traditions of either science or magic, and they find other species' notions of gods and afterlives to be eccentric at best and delusional at worst. A few kodiaks who deal extensively with the narros have converted to the worship of Oaken, but this is uncommon and usually scoffed at by their brethren.

Kodiaks speak in a series of grunts and whimpers known as Argose; they can manage other languages only with difficulty, and always heavily accented. Few non-kodiaks comprehend their language.

Physical Qualities: As their name suggests, most kodiaks are derived from northern grizzly bear stock, though there are a few bands whose ancestors must have interbred with polar bears or black bears from their size and coloring. Kodiaks are enormous, with many towering over seven feet. They are covered from head to toe in heavy fur with large eyes and articulate claws. Their snouts are shortened to fit a proper mouth that can articulate speech (albeit not terribly well). It is nearly impossible to tell a female from a male upon a cursory examination, or for that matter even distinguish one individual from another: kodiaks tell one another apart by smell more than sight. There are a branch of elder shamans revered by the kodiaks as living deities. These are not true kodiaks, being proportioned more like normal bears, with shorter limbs and larger torsos.

They also rarely wear clothes or wield weapons. Kodiaks only wear layers for protection. If they travel too far south, they stop wearing unnecessary clothes, except armor. While not dependent on magic to live, as fae are, kodiaks are still an inherently echan folk and disrupt technology just as the fae do. They are also immune to most, but not all, human ailments, although they can be carriers – but they also have their own unique disorders, which can be difficult for a non-kodiak physician to even diagnose let alone cure with-





out the aid of magic. Kodiaks also retain some vestiges of their ancestral hibernation instinct, and although they can easily overcome it, they tend to be sluggish in the winter months: however, they also are able to survive on practically no food during that time, having stored up sufficient reserves during the summer and autumn.

Playing a Kodiak: Kodiaks are the best species; there can be no argument. A kodiak enters the room and all eyes turn. Every mouth gulps its drink. Respect is bestowed without knowing anything further. It's a

gigantic, bipedal bear. Its roar can be heard from across the room. Seeing one in battle fills enemies with dread. They are the biggest and the strongest. Who cares about anything else?

Kodiaks are a rare addition to any adventuring party. They seldom leave their tribes and when they do find themselves thrown together with non-kodiaks, they are often taken advantage of. Kodiaks may be the strongest and most durable, but they are rarely the smartest. There has never been a kodiak wizard mentioned in any book, and even the darawren of Jibaro have only

ever accepted four kodiak druids. They prefer loose-fitting armor to heavy plates. They avoid shields and relish two-handed weapons, especially heavy clubs and battleaxes. Kodiaks are brought into a party for their strength and not their colorful conversation. They say little, making others skittish around them. When they do associate with outsiders, it's often with other peoples bound to nature (chaparrans being the noteworthy example). Other semi-feral species often take a liking to kodiaks. There have even been a few rumors of kodiaks taking changelings or nariisa as mates.

No one dares cross a kodiak. They defend their friends with violent fervor, building themselves into a crazed frenzy like a mother bear with a cub. Kodiaks suffer from low intelligence but should not be considered stupid. They are simple and talk in basic phrases but only speak this way because of apathy towards conversation. Kodiaks can't stand small talk. They despise politeness and rarely return courtesy. Words like "please" and "thank you" have no mirror in their tongue. A kodiak character has likely left his tribe because of dishonor or less commonly because of a command or need to wander the world. He may even be the last of his family.

Names: Kodiaks can tell each other apart easily, differentiating sex, age, and family line. Because of this, they have no need for complicated names or family titles. They have single names of few syllables, which are easy to pronounce, and are not usually used within their own communities. One account claims the kodiaks only have thirty different actual names they continually recycle, but this has never been proven.

Examples: Donan, Goran, Haggga, Koa, Rogan, Warro.

Half Kodiak: Kodiaks rarely breed outside their species. Like humans they can mate with any fae (most commonly with nariisa), but their children will always be a pureblood fae of the fae parent's species. Humans and kodiaks cannot produce children.



I tend to give kodiaks a disproportionate amount of attention relative to how rare they are in the canon setting. In fact, the entire concept of the nation of Seliquam was originally born from learning that the Lushootseed name of my hometown roughly translates to "There Are Bears Here."

INTER-SPECIES ROMANCE

Each line of the fae is technically a separate species, and were it not for magic, they would not be genetically compatible with one another. Likewise they are genetically incompatible with humans. Magic, however, enables crossbreeding between fae lineages and even with evolved and spawn races, with varying degrees of success. The first issue in fae-human crossbreeding is time. Fae are generally long lived, imbued with an amazing degree of patience. Most fae gestations take more than fourteen months, and their fertility cycle ranges from one to two years, not monthly as with human females. Additionally, many fae refuse to take non-fae mates not out of bigotry but fear of loneliness. Nearly all fae mate for life and the idea of outliving the short lifespan of their mate by hundreds or thousands of years frightens them. However, a strange side effect does occur in those rare situations where fae bond for life with a shorter-lived species. Throughout all fae species, the process of pair bonding forces both sides to sacrifice part of their soul to the other. The ceremony, differing with each species, can take less than five minutes in a private encounter, to several hours or even days in a public venue. The consequences are eternal. Humans and fae cannot reproduce with each other without this ceremony. The bonded souls push past scientific barriers. Humans may not be born enchanted creatures, but they instantly become one when they bond with a fae. Although





bonding is technically not necessary between fae, many frown on married couples not bonding (and it does increase the chances of conception). Though a few have tried, no one has ever successfully forced a bonding in order to extend one's life. Both parties must be willing or the procedure can never finalize.

Unfortunately, there exists one exception to this rule: the pagus. They somehow found a way to mate with anything successfully, bound or not, and they do it often. Pagus can bond for life like all fae, but this situation is extremely rare and reserved for those embracing the path of good (bonding is strictly forbidden in Kakodomania and in any villages ruled by evil dragons, resulting in immediate execution of both parties). The pagus ceremony looks strangely alluring and involves hours of synchronized chanting from the couple and friends. The chants blend into a moan that shakes the ground. Compared to the usual negative views many have of them, this remains one aspect of the pagus still beautiful.

The longest bonding ceremony (taking three days without sleep, exchanging thirty pages of vows) is with the laudenians, who rarely take human mates. Laudenians share magical spirit via a special chant cast by an arcane priest. The shortest ceremony, that of chaparrans, takes less than five minutes: a tree is planted and the blood of both sides drips into the roots. The tenenbri have no ceremony; their bond occurs merely by both sides allowing it to do so. Gimfen ceremonies involve some poetry and vow exchanging, drinking from enchanted waters, and prayers to whatever god/s they worship (if any). Damaskans

include vows but also exchange colored ribbons, sashes, or scarves (depending on family tradition), which the married couple wear for life. Limshau custodians exchange small blades, not much use in combat, ornately decorated with merging family symbols. Sometimes offering said ribbon or blade is akin to a marriage proposal. Fae never jump into marriage and few fae marriages have ever ended in divorce. Even when elders frown and forbid the pairing, once it occurs, nothing more is said on the matter.

In the decades after first contact, many suitors attempted to woo fae maidens, some for conquest and others for marriage. This seldom worked: initially, the fae were skittish of mankind, and most initial meetings ended in violence. Eventually, saner minds began to reach out, but the mingling of breeds would not occur for many more decades. In the first century, the entire planetary population of fae-human hybrids could be counted on a single hand.

There is no record about which species was the first to yield, but the balance of probability is that it was a damaskan. As is usually the case, it probably occurred from shared experiences. Not a single fae people or nation condones arranged marriages, not even within their royalty. Fae establish a connection that overcomes personal beliefs and interests. Most of the time, this remains mere friendship, though this comradeship can be as resolute as any marriage. Occasionally, it continues to form an intimate sharing of souls, and the two sides bond for life. This surmounts such pesky hurdles as age, sex, or race. As humans and faekind shared their lives, bonded couples began to emerge.



In nations like Laudenia and Dawnamoak, pairing fae with human is frowned upon or outright forbidden (due to simple prejudice in the case of the chaparrans and an ingrained fear of degradation among the laudenians). This fanatical view is most prevalent at the core of their societies: chaparrans (more than laudenians) are often more approachable outside of their nations, and the farther one travels from the labyrinth of Vanaka, the more likely one is to find a tenenbri who appreciates a non-tenenbri partner as anything more than a novelty. Narros' discipline and their preferred environment have made interracial couples relatively uncommon. The same goes for gimfen, but with them, it's their visible age that turns most away. This leaves the vast majority of interracial couples from damaskan blood. Since Limshau permits and encourages mingling races on every level, the kingdom became the hub of romantic voyages. In the end, most suitors encounter failure. Despite being quixotic, fae are skittish to bond, especially damaskans, known for their distant emotions in public. Fae often act alien compared to common human customs. They are all brutally honest and find deception rather repugnant. Coupled with their long lifespans and aged wisdom, most wooers are apprehensive to speak up. Fae do not fall in love in a day like humans. For them, it takes time and most pursuers don't have the necessary patience. Those doggedly determined to win the favor of a fae's attention can be rewarded with a prize greater than the trophy of the exotic catch or the years the bond offers.

Because fae are immune to all human disease and without a bond are not capable of producing offspring with humans, females became sought after for slaves. Sexual merchants bought and sold stock from the backs of carriages for centuries. Many governing bodies attempted to close these crime rings, but rumors point to a few still circulating. Baruch Malkut, for example, still employs thousands of slaves. Some believe those are urban legends meant to scare fae from leaving their homes.



I was single and very lonely when writing Amethyst; just FYI. What I find interesting was that my collaborators judged that half-fae couldn't exist if we were approaching the setting from a logical point of view. Unsatisfied by that, I created bonding to allow half-breeds to exist...the unfortunate side effect of all of this was the creation of Baruch Malkut.



It does, thankfully, mean that we can legitimately talk in terms of 'species' rather than 'races' - something that I wish more mainstream RPGs would pick up on.

BONDING BENEFITS

Locator: Both mates know each other's exact position within 5 miles and general direction within 25 miles.

Life Sharing: The side with the lesser life span lives longer. 20% of the difference between their maximum ages is added to the age of the lesser-lived species. All other age quantities are unchanged. This information is uncommon and few outside of the fae know it. The longer-lived side loses that same 20% quantity from his or her age. It's the trade-off both must be willing to accept. This also applies to different fae species with vastly different age limits: for calculation purposes, assume a lifespan of 5000 years for laudenians. (Example: A tilen female bonds with a human male. The human has the capacity to live to 184 years while the tilen drops to 496 years.)

Whisper: Mates can both whisper messages and receive whispered replies from each other with little chance of being overheard. They must be within a mile of one another or be able to see each other by some means, directly or indirectly. Magical silence, one foot of stone, one inch of common metal (or a thin sheet of lead), or 3 feet of wood or dirt blocks the whisper. The effect transmits sound, not meaning. To speak a message, one must mouth the words and whisper, possibly allowing observers the opportunity to read lips.

Dreamspeak: After two hours of sleep, both sides can carry on a conversation as if they were next to each other. The effect lasts for ten minutes and has no range limit.

Consequences: If one side dies for any reason, not only do all these bonuses vanish (sometimes resulting in the surviving mate dropping dead instantly if their time is up), but they also suffer a -1 penalty to their PD or MD for life (random). This cannot be removed by any means. Re-bonding to a new mate does not recover this penalty (although it does restore the other benefits) and another death compounds it. The shortened life of the longer-lived side stays shortened.

Note: A 1st-level character can only begin the game bonded with the GM's permission.

FAE MIXED BLOOD

Crossbreeding between fae species occurs relatively frequently, but the offspring of such a union, even though they may take equally after both parents in terms of appearance, are always the same species as the parent lower on the devolutionary ladder:

Laudenian > Chaparran > Narros > Damaskan > Tenenbri > Gimfen > Pagus > Lesser Fae (bogg, skegg, pugg, etc.)

A pagus mating with any other of the major fae can only produce a pagus child, for instance, whereas only a laudenian-laudenian pairing can produce a laudenian child. Tilen are an exception to this rule: any offspring



of a tilen, even with a laudenian or a human, is a pure-blood tilen.

Human-fae unions are unusual. Instead of being wholly of one species or the other, the children of such a pairing are true hybrids.

HALF-FAE (HUMAN/FAE)

Occasionally it bothers me that I'll outlive my father by two centuries at least, and that my mother will never be able to see the colors I paint on this canvas. My sensei tells me not to worry about it. Focus on what they made when they made me, he says, and the gifts that both have given me to bring their worlds together. And so I search the world for new pigments to astound the eyes of the tenenbri who feel it: two worlds wrapped up in a single canvas. I've made many friends on my journey, many of whom will outlast me, some of whom I'll say goodbye to long before I'm ready to go, not a single one of them like me. But I can't say that I regret getting to know a single one of them, for any of that. We just keep on going one day at a time.

Average Height & Weight: Average of human and fae

Average Starting Age: 20 years

Estimated Life Expectancy: Average of human and fae

Bonus Language: Fae parent's language

Half Half-Fae: The child of a half-fae and another fae (full or half) is a half-fae of the species of the parent further down the ladder. Any child of a half-fae and a human is a human.

You inherit the fae parent's ability bonus choices.

FAE BLOOD

For all effects related to race, you are considered a fae of your parent's species.

120 FAE GIFT

You receive the racial power of your fae parent.

BONUS FEAT

Being part human, at 1st level, human PCs start with two feats instead of one.

When humans first found their world invaded by these pointed-eared humanoids, speciesism quickly followed. Most human communities openly hated them: indeed, the oldest may have resulted from just such a xenophobic settlement. But nearly all such populations without sufficient infrastructure to support their technology either destroyed themselves or were destroyed by predators, lacking allies to defend them. Most human echan civilizations that flourished did so by declaring no ill will to their new neighbors. Laudenia and chaparrans still hold the humans in

distrust and seldom communicate, and the Southam tenenbri avoid everyone equally. Only damaskans, narros, and gimfen embraced their new fellow inhabitants, occasionally in more than one sense.

Those born from the rarer species like tenenbri, chaparran, and laudenian often find their lives difficult, as their fae parent is almost always an exile from their native society (or becomes one shortly after the child's birth). Thankfully, this problem does not occur with damaskans, who embrace their children, regardless of who they are, and value individual differences more than most fae (this significantly increased the population of Limshau in its early days, as the lack of stigma resulted in a migration of half-fae of other species to its cities). Nearly all half-fae in Canam reside in Limshau, but that still accounts for a very small portion of the kingdom's population (some say less than a thousand). Gimfen and narros half-breeds do not occur frequently, but when they do, they are treated no differently from their fae parents except insofar as allowances must be made for their height.

Half-fae have never developed nations or communities of their own. They either remain in their homelands, or venture to others if not accepted. Because a half-fae cannot be born except to a bonded couple (except half-pagus), if the child is expelled from their home culture, the entire family typically leaves as well. In human circles, feelings towards them depend on how the community responds to integration. Some fearing the fae ostracize the half-breeds as much as the laudenians do. The only bastion which tolerates the presence of half-fae is York, and even then, their movements are as tightly regulated as the infrequent fae visitors: half-fae generate just as much EDF as purebloods do, after all.

Physical Qualities: Half-fae share the most dominant characteristic of their fae parent. Their ear size is midway between the human size and the fae parent. They are also between their parent's heights. Their skin always favors the darker tone. Magic often forces submissive genes into dominance when humans and fae breed; blonde hair will sometimes surpass black, blue eyes over brown. Thankfully, the fae parent filters out genetic defects or inherited disease. Human physical features not seen in fae but considered appealing (like freckles or snaggleteeth) often pass on, but negatively viewed genetic traits such as a predisposition for baldness or obesity almost never do, for reasons which science is unable to explain. Half-fae may grow beards regardless of their fae parent.

Playing a Half-Fae: Many believe the half-fae are the future of the Earth, the eventual course for everyone. Together, as one mixed species, the planet's population can truly be in peace, to unite against the coming darkness. Half-fae often let the winds call them to the open country. Though longer lived, like their fae parent, they still desire to seek adventure like their human progenitor. This makes them the best species to play because they have the versatility of humans with the exotic strengths of the fae.



Because a half-fae results only from bonded parents, raising one is a blessed affair, despite the feelings of the community. Half-fae rarely encounter abuse within the family and consequently seldom abandon their loyalties. Only acts of fate can result in a half-fae not having a normal childhood (this, of course, assumes both parents are good; evil parents can commit whatever atrocities they want against their children).

Half-fae, like humans, develop their personality more from how they are raised than what their racial stereotype denotes. Ones raised in open and welcoming cultures like Limshau will usually retain more of their cultural roots, but with a general cosmopolitan attitude; those raised in isolated or insular societies will mostly conform to those cultural norms. A half-fae player character will be shaped by their home culture more than their species; to that end, it is helpful to know which parent is the fae, and in which parent's culture the family resides. This will help create a believable back-story.

Despite a probable pleasant childhood, when a half-fae ventures into the world, she might encounter problems in traveling. Some nations accept those of mixed blood as no different as any other person while others revere or revile them as they would other fae. In

locations hostile to fae, their unique heritage may be enough to prevent instant lynching (and, if nothing else, it is a lot easier for a half-fae to pass as a human), but the best they can hope for in such places is immediate ejection. Fae communities that deride mankind consider themselves too civilized for such harsh action, and merely shun an unwelcome interloper or politely ask them to conclude their business and leave swiftly. Half-fae, for the most part, tolerate this unpredictability.

Despite attempts to quash the use of the term "half-elf" as a racial slur, it still gets bandied about. Many half-fae try to use the term "minaan", which is damaskan shorthand for "gifted from two" or "mesinaan" which is similar, but comes from laudenian as "strengths with differences," though the laudenian term is not used in their language to that effect. Many half-damaskans actually do not object to being called "half-elf," many of them being familiar with human legends in which this was a term of respect. Unfortunately, in many communities, those of mixed human blood are labeled as half-castes or worse, half-breeds, a derogatory slur no "minaan" takes lightly.



The tea was no simple drop-bag of disheveled twigs and bark. Chen had brought a kettle of scolding water, a saucer and cup, and a smaller kettle. Inside the smaller kettle was a collection of dried herbs, flowers, leaves, and honey. Chen poured the hot water in the small kettle, and then emptied the small kettle into the cup. Aiden repeated that process and emptied the larger kettle before finally speaking to the man again.

"Do you have more?"

"Tea or dragons?" Chen replied.

"About everything outside."

Chen waved to the room. "They're all on that subject."

"I want to read them all."

"There will be time for that. It's getting late."

"Then I want to see it myself."

Chen raised a brow. "A zeal for adventure got you already?"

"It's just like the books. Just like the games I play." Aiden was getting excited. "I want to see it all, everything that they said wasn't real, castles, magic, fae."

"It may look the dream, child, but it'll carry the chill of reality. And what will it prove? Even if it feels like your fantasy, you're not the storyteller." Aiden didn't appear dissuaded. "How will you survive out there? Can you wield a sword, shoot an arrow?"

"Maybe," Aiden responded in reflex before realizing that the most strenuous physical activity he had ever done was avoid a soccer ball when playing goalie because he didn't want to get hit in the face. Chen saw through the boy's naivety.

"I don't mean to turn you away," he said, "just understand that many people claim that world as home, and you would not be any more special out there than in here. You may wish to be a character in your own fantasy, but this is no work of fiction. It's real. You're not chosen by fate. Your parents were ordinary. No gods kissed you upon your birth. What do you do well?"

Aiden crunched his lips, shrugged, and sighed. "I read books. Don't suppose that means much." The sudden wash of insight over his face was unmistakable. "Magic. I could do that."

"How?" Chen motioned to the lamps. "You've just seen that. How could you know? Maybe it's something I do naturally no one else can."

"If it's all real then magic can come from books! I can learn!" he begged. "I can do that! Just give me the right books!" The wide-eyed appeal of the youth showed his commitment.

Chen reached out and grasped Aiden's wrist. He pulled the boy's sleeve to reveal the broken watch. Chen pointed to the timepiece.

"This world," he said, pointing to the east, "and that world do not mingle. What you have here doesn't work out there--no cars, no computers, no phones. Once you commit to that path, you can't come back."

"I..." Aiden trailed off. He was about to say I understand, but he didn't. Why was it that way? Why were there walls around the city? Why did the mere presence of dragon make his watch stop? Aiden remembered

books about the kid that discovered he was a demigod, or an heir to a kingdom, or a member of a secret order, or a wonder child with a wand. That's what he wanted; those characters never had to give anything up. He wanted his fantasy. "I don't like this place. I prefer the world I read about."

"Why?" Chen answered.

"Because...I don't know...because it's different, because it's amazing. Because..." Aiden felt a drop run out of his nose. He sniffed it up quickly and swallowed. "Because my mother made it sound so wonderful." Aiden held back a tear. "And I want my dreams to be real."

Chen placed his hand gently on Aiden's shoulder and a tear finally broke free from his eye. "If you run from a life, running will be your life. A fulfilling existence is defined by moving towards something, not away from it. You can read about that world for as long as you like, but I can't let you make that decision."

"Isn't it mine to make?"

Chen nodded. "But you need to know why you make it...and now's not that time."

Aiden's shoulders slumped and he tried to hold back in his emotions. He threw Chen's arm away and bolted for the door. He didn't look back. Aiden wanted to abandon his normal life, the one filled boring classes, imposing bullies, overbearing brothers, and callous gods, a life commonplace in the real world. He wanted to be like the characters he read about, like the computer avatar he controlled, someone of consequence, with a life ending in a happily ever after, not a number on a marble cover wedged alongside hundreds of others in a mausoleum.

Aiden slammed the gate open, and it ricocheted off the concrete wall. He was too angry and confused to be frightened of switching stations or running down streets with inadequate lighting. He darted across intersections without alerting the crosswalks and ducked into darkened paths between buildings to shortcut his return home. All the while he thought of what could be out there. He imagined the dragons, the fae, the princesses, and the possibilities that, until now, had only existed in fiction. Out there was everything he could not be in here.

* * *

Aiden returned only minutes before sunrise. The door to the apartment didn't creak. He snuck into his room and navigated around the unpacked boxes. The moon was about to fall under the crown. Aiden slipped under the sheets and closed his eyes. Despite being tired, he opened them moments later and rolled back to see Martin's still empty bed. Aiden moved his attention to the window, to the setting moon and its companion, to that one bright star floating near the lunar horn.

Attricana.

It wasn't a star but a hole in the cosmos, a door to another place. From it flowed the chaos that shaped a new world while destroying the old one.

Aiden closed his eyes and dreamt, though not of dragons and elves, of knights and wizards. He dreamt of his mother.

* * *

Aiden looked at the passing businessmen, politicians, policemen, and teachers. They all knew. Maybe not of magic and monsters, but they'd known enough and hadn't told him. They didn't care. They didn't want to know, to be reminded about what wasn't normal. Children played the games. They dreamt. The avatars they took on in the digital world offered them the role they could never fulfill in life. Aiden looked over his classmates and wondered how many of their dreams had been denied.

"Computer programmer!" William shouted. Aiden realized that the books given to him were old and worn for a reason. No one wrote these stories anymore. No one wanted to be reminded about what they had lost.

"Nice, Jeffery. Lara?" Mr. Leach asked. Aiden wondered why his mother had made the exception. Why did she tell him those stories, search for that rare freeware?

"An architect," Lara answered.

"Good, that's productive, Aiden?"

Weeks before, Aiden had been daydreaming of riding dragons and rescuing princess, engrossed in forgetting the world around him. Now he wanted to know everything, every why and every how. Leach didn't repeat himself; he leaned in to force Aiden's attention.

"Hmm?" Aiden responded, oblivious to the subject. The class never taught him what he really wanted to know. He learned it because society expected him to, because he was adept at it, because eventually childhood must end. But fantasies were now fact, and Aiden could learn of that without the mockery of embracing a dream.

Leach was about to scold him again, but stopped. "What do you want to do when you're older?"

"What I want?" Aiden almost mumbled.

"Yes...I mean we have an architect, programmer, doctor." He pointed to another child. "A janitor for some reason. What do you want to be?"

Aiden thought it over. He didn't care how the class would react. "I want...to be a wizard."

The students looked to him. A few chuckled. William gritted his teeth. He had been warned to keep quiet. "A...wha...Aiden." the teacher stuttered. Leach could piece together in an instant what thoughts had been circling like a maelstrom in Aiden's mind.

"Yes," Aiden answered.

"Why?"

Aiden tried to think of a better answer but his mind had been fixated on the how, not the why, so no better answer slipped out. "Because I can," he said.

* * *

Martin was leaning on a railing outside of Aiden's school as his little brother ran out.

"All good?" Martin asked. Aiden nodded. Martin led his brother away. He took the responsibility seriously, checking traffic and passersby.

"Aiden!" Lara shouted from a playground. The brothers noticed and stopped. "We're playing at the grounds, wanna come?"

Aiden looked back to Martin with his doe eyes on cue.

"Yeah...it's ok?" Martin answered. Aiden smiled and hobbled with his heavy bag to the girl. "Be home by 4:00," he added. "Go nowhere else!"

Aiden finally turned back and waved. "Thanks, Marty!" he shouted. Martin watched them approach the swings with other children. Aiden placed his bag on the sand. When Martin was satisfied that Aiden wasn't walking into a bully trap, he continued walking. When he was out of sight, Aiden immediately turned to Lara.

"Thanks Lara," Aiden said, picking his bag back up and strapping it to his back for the long haul.

"You are invited," she answered.

"Thanks...I know." Aiden made for a nearby path that bisected two houses and led back to a main road.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

Aiden stopped and turned back. "Better you don't know."

"You're weird, Aiden."

"Thanks." He smiled. He stepped away to the path but kept looking at her. "Lara? Do you know about what's beyond the city?"

"Past the wall?" she asked. Aiden nodded. "It's wild and dangerous. Why?"

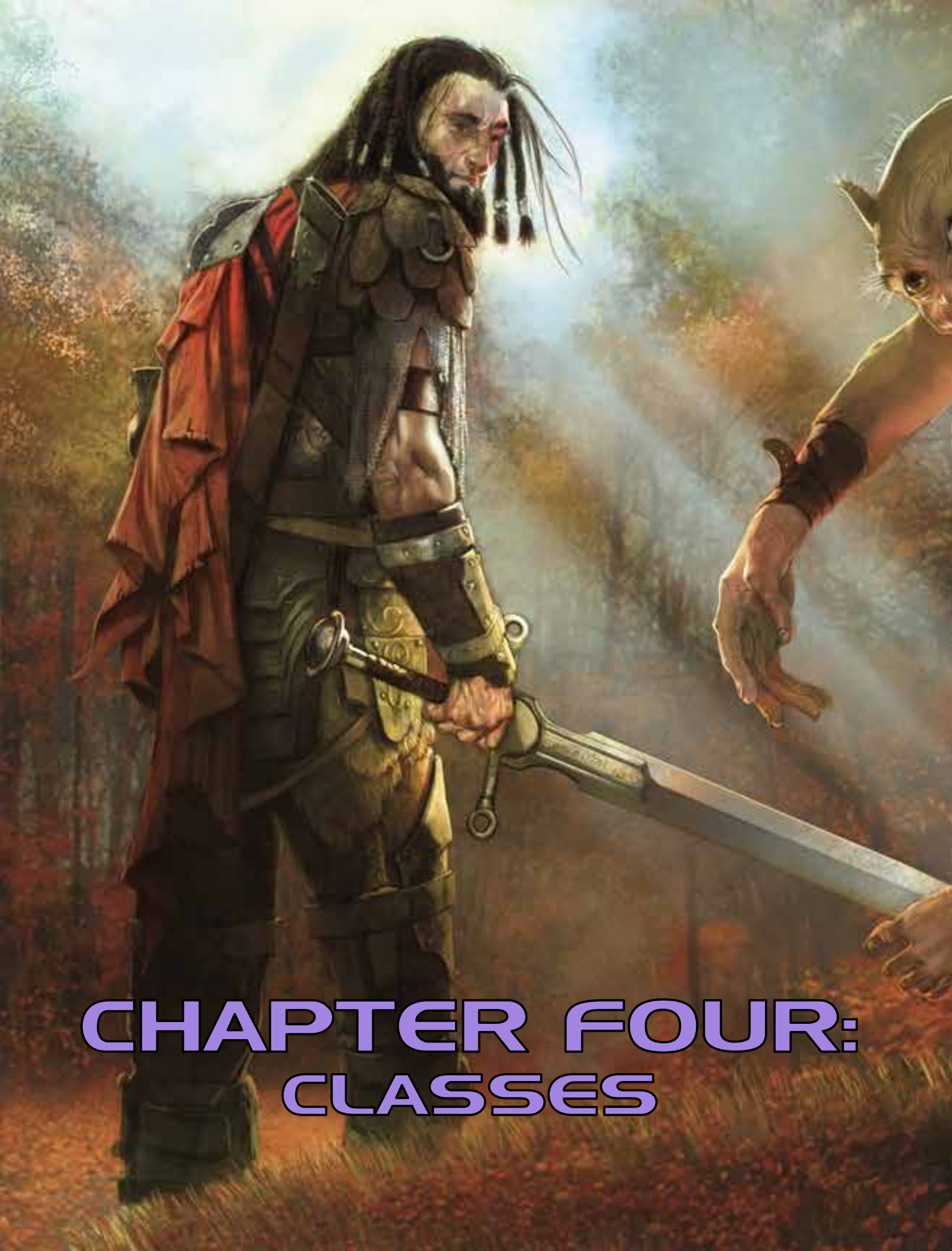
"No reason," Aiden replied, turned and upgraded his walk to a run as he reached the path.



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Rejected tenenbri sketch





CHAPTER FOUR: CLASSES



In the fantasy world of *Amethyst*, there are real people and there are heroes, but mostly there are real people. The tales about great warriors are often fictionalized or heavily exaggerated. This story is not about the ordinary, but the exceptional. The same is true for the world of science. Players are creating those few extraordinary examples of heroism, regardless if they wield a sword or a firearm.

This chapter presents the class options available to player characters in *Amethyst*, including five new classes suitable for techan characters.

FANTASY CLASSES

Certain *13th Age Roleplaying Game* classes are restricted in canon *Amethyst*:

- The only canon spellcasting class in *Amethyst* is the wizard, though other spellcasting classes like sorcerer and cleric can be included through the use of backgrounds (incarnate, gneolistic). Regardless, spellcasters are extremely rare in the setting—there should only be one in a party.
- In *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*, the bard and paladin are “optional” spellcasters. To remain canon, they are not able to select spells. Bards can still select songs.
- Barbarians are not common in the more civilized modern age, and as such the class is restricted to chaparrans, echan humans with wilderness or wasteland backgrounds, kodiaks, and pagus.




If you desperately want to play a different type of spellcaster but still want to stick roughly to canon, pick a totem as a cosmetic choice and ignore the standard fluff for your class: as far as the story's concerned, you're a wizard. Only the wizard class gets mechanical benefits from choosing a totem - reflavored 'wizards' just need to have the thing on hand in order to cast their spells.

TOTEM MAGIC

The term ‘wizard’ covers a wide spectrum of spellcasters and magic users across the world. They may wish to protect good, or destroy everything around. They still, however, follow one common belief: The gates contain unlimited power and sit waiting to be harnessed. Wizards discovered long ago that certain shortcuts exist to channel energies from the gates. It is an almost scientific study of the ways of magic.

Non-human mages revealed that certain words in vocal and written form channel immense power from the gates. This power lay with the dragons for millions of years before the fae pursued this path. These words, found in the ancient tongue of the first language ever spoken, Pleroma, have been described as the base code of the universe: the word is the thing, and the thing is the word. A wizard must first understand how the word works in all ways by contemplating it in every dimension (quite literally – both written and spoken Pleroma extend into at least four dimensions), absorbing its meaning into his or her soul. Wizards all share a common desire to study the behavior of these ancient words and discover new ways to utilize their potential. The books of a spell caster reflect this wish. The bigger the library, the greater the understanding the wizard possesses of the arcane arts.



A mage need not be completely fluent in Pleroma to use this power, of course, since it defies human and even fae psychology to truly master it: instead, each mage is bound to a totem, a metaphysical cheat sheet that helps them visualize the multi-dimensional script that makes up a spell formula. The final key to the spell is the power word. The mage inscribes the word on his totem and memorizes it. When the mage speaks that word, the energy channels through the totem and the spell is cast. Each spell resembles a different symbol or sets of symbols, depending on the complexity or power from the spell – to those without understanding, they are meaningless squiggles, but to the arcane adept they leap from the totem's surface, glittering in three dimensions and extending backward and forward in time. Some, particularly magic rituals, are so large they cannot fit on a totem and must be in their own book for recall. The most common focus totem is the spellbook; however, different cultures favor different totems. Nevertheless, each totem is unique to the caster – what precise form it takes and how mundane or extravagant it looks depends on the staidness or flamboyance of the wizard.

MAGIC SOURCE

Magic stems from one of two sources. One choice comes from Attricana, the other from Ixindar. Where Attricana is chaotic and whimsical, Ixindar is never-changing and uniform. There is little flash with Ixindar magic. It is also a corrupting force, whispering new thoughts and ideas into its caster. It's not a healthy option for heroic characters, but it does offer a variety of different abilities and powers, not the least of which is the replication of magic without disruption.

Spellcasters bound to Ixindar can replicate many of the effects of those bound to Attricana, but their magic is always devoid of the spark of life that Attricana magic has. The disciplines of necromancy (manipulating life force) and nihilimancy (directly negating matter and energy) are tied exclusively to Ixindar: this includes all powers that deal negative energy damage, which are not available to Attricana casters in a canon *Amethyst* game.

TOTEM MASTERY

A totem is required for all spells, and serves as an implement for spellcasting (even if the implement type is not normally permitted for the class). A wizard can only cast spells if his totem is in his possession (i.e., holding it or simply touching it). The word in physical form must be in hand when the wizard speaks it. If the totem is stolen or taken in combat, the wizard is powerless. Stealing a totem is useless to a thief as there is not enough information about the word for another caster to use it. Another wizard could learn the spell but by the time they understand it, they have already committed enough research to find the words on their own.

Certain high-level spells (9th level) are so rare they can only be found inscribed on unique items spread around the world. Sometimes, wizards must quest for

them as others would quest for magic weapons. A wizard's honor insists these items either remain in their location or be taken to Kirjath-Sepher or Limshau for storage. The wizard must be able to cast the spell to inscribe the word on his focus totem.

At 1st level, a wizard chooses a totem. Specific totems offer certain abilities depending on their type. Wizard can change his totem later, but it takes time and money. Totems can never be spread over multiple pieces (so it could never be armor).

Available Totems include:

Book of Knowledge: The most common totem on Earth is the book. It is the most powerful totem and the easiest to master. Schools dot the planet dedicated to this belief. More wizards use book totems than any other. Limshau employs them almost exclusively: all damaskan mages trained in a Koana academy use the book, and as most human mages learn their craft from Limshau, the tendency has carried over. They believe that power from Attricana and Ixindar has its own rules and is not random, which means it can be eventually understood. All mages carry books, but the final Pleroma power words rest inscribed in the book wizard's totem. When you cast a spell, it emanates from your hands, not your book. A few cautious wizards have even strapped their books to their belt to grab at a moment's notice while keeping their hands otherwise free. The advantage of a book is that it can include Pleroma trigger words and several rituals all in one (in contrast to other totems where additional books are needed for rituals).

Benefit: Utility Spells become recharge 17+ after each use. This means regardless of the utility spell you use, after casting it, you have a chance to immediately recover it.

Orb of Imposition: The orb is an uncommon choice for most fae and is often found with wizards practicing the darker side of magic, the energy tied to the polar power of Ixindar. Occasionally, a few tenenbri have been seen using an orb, but this choice is seen predominantly with negative casters or with humans that come about their training from a less than respectable source.

Benefit: You are counted as one level higher for calculating damage with attack spells.

Shield of Strength: Although wizards cannot use armor as a totem, they can choose a shield. The symbols usually start on the inside, but as the wizard learns more spells, they must eventually cover the front as well. The narros are regarded as the instigators of this totem, and only they and the occasional human mage use it.

The shield can only be light steel, wooden, mag-narros, coruthil, or angelite. You use this shield as an implement.

Benefit: You suffer no attack penalties for holding a shield. Additionally, you gain a +5 AC bonus with Abjuration instead of +4.

Staff of Defense: Outside of the book, the staff is one of the most common totems used, being the oldest known application of the craft. Many less civilized com-

munities capable of competent wizardry often use it. A staff also remains popular with the traveling wizard, as it's less clumsy and can easily be disguised as a walking stick. Staff totem mages continue to stay fashionable with many fac races, especially chaparrans and laudenians, the latter admitting the efficacy of no other totem except for the rare laudenian sword magos.

Benefit: You gain the champion feat for *counter-magic*—you can now cast *counter-magic* twice per battle. The epic feat for *counter-magic* is now a champion feat.

Weapon of Confrontation: Although choosing a weapon seemingly appears without penalty, the benefits are double-edged. First, weapons have the smallest available surface area of any totem, limiting the number of spell triggers that can be encoded on it. Additionally, wizards with weapon totems often have a need to wield them in combat despite never being able to match a fighter on even ground. This does not stop a large number of wizards from using weapons, chiefly those for whom magic is a tool rather than an art. Narros and tenenbri, of course, argue about who developed it first. Narros began with the shield but claim the transition to weapon was an obvious one while the tenenbri claim they hold the sole claim on the weapon totem. Complicating the matter further is a small tradition of laudenian sword magos who claim that *they* originated the practice. Many human cultures embrace the weapon totem as well.

The weapon can only be a sword, axe, falchion, maul, or warhammer. The weapon must be composed mostly of wood and/or steel (or magnarros, coruthil, or angelite).

Benefit: You suffer no attack penalties wielding a light or simple one- or two-handed weapon. The attack penalty for wielding a heavy or martial one- or two-handed weapon is reduced to -2.

Adventurer Feat: Your penalty for wielding a heavy or martial one- or two-handed weapon is reduced to 0.

TECHAN CLASSES

Techan classes are cut from a different cloth from traditional fantasy roles. Where one group stumbles into each other after a round of mead in a dingy tavern, techan parties have usually trained together as a cohesive unit long before attempting a voyage in the wastelands. A techan party must operate as cohesive unit, remaining in contact and providing support. They can't act selfishly or abandon their comrades in need. In the middle of battle, their loyalty is not for their government or for the coins in their purse, but for the brothers and sisters alongside them in the thick of combat. Techans have no healing magic, no elemental control over water or air, no symbiosis or sympathy from the surrounding environment. When in open echa, they are foreigners at best, unwelcome invaders at worst. In order to survive, they must form groups, loyal bonds

that remain stalwart even in the face of overwhelming horrors.

Of course, many bastion-born take jaunts into echa without fear of reprisal, but tourists stick to the main road and sleep in large caravans escorted by guns and swords, spending most of their time in large cities, safe from the dreadful fiends of fairy tales. Such travelers are naïve, their adventures sanitized, pre-chewed for their consumption to be swallowed easily. A techan party has no such luxuries. They venture in the deep forest, into the darkest dungeons, taking on the worst of horrors. They rescue lost vacationers, scavenge technology, and defend their cities from invading forces on all sides. Techans don't take on these jobs for glory, but out of duty for the bastion where they were born, out of loyalty to another, or for the acquisition of power and wealth.

In this new time in this new world, techans care nothing for gender, race, age, or religion. They don't judge their comrades based on beliefs, preferences, or vices. In the end, they are all human—techan humans, and as members of the true human race, they must work together to push back the wave of enchantment which threatens to drive out mankind's footprint forever.

NON-TECHANS AND TECHAN CLASSES

The military skills of the techan classes are not exclusive to the bastions, although the technology that supports them is. With the GM's permission, an echan human or even a non-human might take a techan class (although only gimfen can fully benefit from such a selection). It should be stressed, however, that such a choice would be highly unusual, and should only occur under exceptional circumstances.

TECHAN AMMUNITION

In other editions of *Amethyst*, we insisted that players track their ammunition. To honor the philosophy of *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*, we are removing that limitation. A GM is encouraged to insert a shortage from time to time, perhaps tied to negative relationships with bastions. A party should make contact with a supplier (bastion or atoll) once ever few weeks to re-supply. If they don't, a GM should/could inform the group they only have one or two battles left in which to use their firearms before running out. Alternately, you can have the groups' ammunition last four to six battles before requiring a supply. This resupply could involve visiting a merchant or simply returning to the party's vehicle, equating a full heal-up to an ammunition re-supply.

This rule does not apply to special weapons which very much have a limited ammo supply.

Additionally, this refers to only total ammunition supply and not clip size, as weapons still need to be re-loaded when empty. Each time an attack roll is made, ammunition is expended, even if it is an attack roll made twice.



GRUNDER

Grunders in the military are often soldiers, occasionally referred to as grunts. They occupy the largest ratio of the armed forces of any bastion. You stand out from the others. You have exhibited a natural talent that could have paved the way for officer training, but for a variety of reasons, you declined. You prefer to be a member of a team rather than the leader of an army. If you are part of a mercenary company, you could have become disenfranchised, tempted by the offers of wealth, or took on a personal mission that forced you to leave the service.

Although demonstrating some natural leadership skills, your range of authority is usually limited to those brothers-in-arms you can see around you. When the firing starts, you rely on training and inherent reflexes to save yourself and your team. You have embraced this path with a profound gusto. You can handle any weapon and any armor, up to the largest powered suits. You are a grunder, and like the medieval knights of ancient legend (and those that have taken their place today) you are the first and last line of defense. Your rifle is your sword and your faith absolute—faith that the group you have joined operates as a well-oiled machine. And unlike technology, this is not a machine that can be broken by magic.

Play Style: You are responsible for the safety of the comrades next to you. Since you are considered the source of the heaviest weapons, you will also gather the most attention. Without you, the others would be overrun. There are two variations of grunder, the front grunder and the heavy grunder. One is committed to mobility and lighter weapons, the other is dedicated to heavier weapons at the cost of maneuverability. Grunders fill a variety of roles. You can be the leader or the heavy support. You can target enemies from a distance or get up close. You are only as good as the men and women next to you. The majority of your abilities require the help of others to succeed. Your power is the weapon in your hand and the strength you offer your allies as backup. On your own, you are

doomed to fail. Let others deal with objectives and just let you shoot something.

Buids: Both the front grunder and heavy grunder have the same stats, gear, and basic attacks but have different level progression tables.

Ability Scores: You need Dexterity or Strength to wield weapons, based on your inherent training. You gain a +2 bonus with one as long as it isn't the same ability you increase with your racial bonus. Additionally, you can either use Strength or Dexterity as your attack and damage attribute with ranged weapons.

GEAR

At 1st level, grunders start with a one-handed simple melee weapon for emergencies along with one or two firearms. They also gain one armor set. Additionally, a grunder can start with either 25 UC or roll 1d6 x 10 UC.

ARMOR

Grunders can wear either light or heavy armor. Generally, it is believed that a heavier weapon specialist would also lumber in the heaviest armor, though this is by no means a rule. Because of the need to wield two-handed weapons, grunders seldom use shields.

Grunder Armor and AC

Type	Base AC
None	10
Light	13
Heavy	15
Shield	+1

WEAPONS

Firearms can be pistols, rifles, or heavier weapons like machine guns. Although a player certainly can select a special weapon at 1st level, these have limited ammo, and after being used, are effectively worthless until new ammo can be procured. It is suggested a grunder take a two-handed weapon along with a backup pistol. Cer-

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FRONT/HEAVY GRUNDER STATS

Ability Bonus	+2 Strength or Dexterity (different from racial bonus)
Initiative	Dex mod + Level
Armor Class (heavy armor)	15 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Armor Class (light armor)	13 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Physical Defense	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
Mental Defense	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
Hit Points	(8 + Con mod) x Level modifier (see level progression)
Recoveries	(probably) 9
Recovery Dice	(1d10 x Level) + Con mod
Backgrounds	8 points, max 5 in any background
Icon Relationships	3 points
Talents	3 (see level progression chart)
Feats	1 per Level

FRONT GROUNDNER LEVEL PROGRESSION

Grounder Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Maneuvers Known	Maneuver Pool Available	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
Level 1	(8+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	3	1st level	3		ability modifier
Level 2	(8+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	4	1st level	3		ability modifier
Level 3	(8+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	4	3rd level	3		ability modifier
Level 4	(8+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	5	3rd level	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
Level 5	(8+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	5	5th level	3		2x ability modifier
Level 6	(8+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	6	5th level	4		2x ability modifier
Level 7	(8+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	6	7th level	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier
Level 8	(8+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	7	7th level	4		3x ability modifier
Level 9	(8+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	7	9th level	4		3x ability modifier
Level 10	(8+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	8	9th level	4	+1 to 3 abilities	3x ability modifier

tain weapons have a single shot option while others can fire multiple times an action.

Auto Weapons: Weapons in the equipment section denoted as being auto can be used with any powers, maneuvers, or talents

Heavy Auto: These weapons require the use of powers, maneuvers, or talents with the AUTO descriptor and cannot be used with powers, maneuvers, or talents without it. This is important when detailing which class features you plan on implementing and the weapons you choose to use (see OUTFITTING).

(Auto) Property: Both front and heavy grounders have powers or maneuvers with this descriptor. If they have the auto property, auto and heavy auto weapons can be used, but single shot weapons cannot.

(Any) Property: Any type of weapon can be used with a power or maneuver with this descriptor.

Primitive Ranged Weapons: There is nothing stopping you from wielding medieval ranged weapons in a pinch, especially if your normal weapons suffer disruption or run out of ammunition (by hand of a cruel GM). However, because they are not your specialty, you suffer attack penalties with such weapons. Crossbows are fairly similar to guns, and only inflict a -2 penalty: other ranged weapons inflict -4. The GM may also rule that particularly primitive firearms (such as muzzle-loaders) are sufficiently far removed from what you're familiar with to warrant the -2 penalty, depending on your home bastion's tech level.

Grounder Melee Weapons

One-Handed	Two Handed
Small	
1d4 knife	1d6 club
Light or Simple	
1d6 shortsword, tonfa	1d8 spear

Grounder Ranged Weapons

One-Handed Firearm	Two-Handed Firearm
Light	
1d4 pistol	1d6 rifle
Medium	
1d6 pistol	1d8 machine gun
Heavy	
1d8 hand cannon	1d10 heavy gun

BASIC ATTACKS

MELEE ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

RANGED ATTACK (ANY)

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength OR Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Strength OR Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level





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GRUNDER

CLASS TALENTS

Choose three of the following class talents. The front grounder gains an additional talent at 6th level.

DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

You and one ally you are next to gains a +1 bonus to AC and PD. This is not cumulative with other uses of *defensive perimeter*.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, if an enemy scores a hit on you or your ally benefitting from *defensive perimeter*, the damage is halved.

Champion Feat: If an enemy scores a critical hit on either you or your ally benefitting from *defensive perimeter*, the damage can be inflicted on either you or your ally.

FROM THE KNEE

Wasted ammunition is wasted time. You crouch, securing your weapon to your body as you fire. You can use a move action to gain a +1 bonus to your next attack roll.

Adventurer Feat: When you use your move action with *from the knee*, you crit range also increases by +1 on your next attack roll.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, if you still miss after using *from the knee*, re-roll. If you still miss, you recover the use of this ability.

DOUBLE TAP

You don't haphazardly waste ammunition in a strafing line, but instead train carefully and purposefully to multiple targets. If you are unengaged, use a move action at the beginning of your turn and for your next attack, roll twice and take the higher result.

Adventurer Feat: If you hit and roll a natural even number with your highest attack roll with *double tap*, double your attribute damage on the hit.

Champion Feat: If you hit and roll a natural 18+ on both your attack rolls, you actually hit twice.



I do encourage players to create a "rounded grounder", and not be a one-note, gun obsessed soldier that fires first, fires second, and maybe asks a question when the clip is empty. To make a comparison, I prefer Zoe than Jayne from Firefly.

FRONT LINE ASSAULT

You inflict additional damage depending on the type of weapon you are wielding. You cannot use *front line precision* with *front line assault*.

Auto Property: Weapons with the auto property inflict +2 bonus to damage. At 5th level, this increases to +4 damage. At 8th level, it increases to +6.

Heavy Auto Property: Weapons with the heavy auto property inflict +4 bonus to damage. At 5th level, this increases to +7 damage. At 8th level, it increases to +10.

Adventurer Feat: Once per battle, change the clip of a auto or heavy auto weapon as a quick action.

Epic Feat: You can elect to not inflict extra damage with *front line assault* and instead make an extra basic ranged attack against another enemy.

FRONT LINE PRECISION

When wielding a two-handed small arm or heavy weapon, you do not suffer the -2 penalty to firing after moving. You cannot use *front line precision* with *front line assault*.

Adventurer Feat: If you score a critical hit on a ranged attack roll using a weapon without the auto or heavy auto property, you increase the weapon damage by one die.

Champion Feat: Spend a quick action to gain a +1 bonus to your next attack roll with a weapon without the auto or heavy auto property.

FULL SUPPRESSION (AUTO)

You gun down the terrain in front of your enemies, preventing their advance. If you hit a normal-sized target that is nearby or far away, you can choose to inflict half damage and the target is unable to move closer to you or any nearby ally until the beginning of your next turn. You decide this after you hit.

Adventurer Feat: You can use *full suppression* against large enemies. Additionally, you can elect to do only 1 point of damage (not halved) and gain a second basic attack on a different enemy. If you hit with this attack, you must employ *full suppression* on that target as well.

Champion Feat: You can use *full suppression* against huge enemies. If you kill a non-mook with *full suppression*, you gain a basic attack.



SLOW IS SMOOTH (ANY)

Only idiots and players of first person shooters run headstrong into a firefight. Take it easy and check your targets. Once per battle, use a move action to pop free from one enemy.

Adventurer Feat: Your enemy meets the butt of your rifle as you pop free, taking damage equal to your attack ability score (x2 at 5th level; x3 at 8th level).

Champion Feat: You gain a second use per battle of *slow is smooth*. Additionally, you can pop free from two enemies instead of just one. You can still only inflict damage on one enemy each time.

FRONT GROUNDER

Even if you answer to another authority, when the bullets fly, you act on instinct as part of a unit. You keep your weapons light so you can move without stumbling. You will seldom employ heavy auto weapons and prefer maneuvers to frontal assaults. The majority of your abilities should be ones that assist the group as a whole rather than deliver the maximum damage to a target.

CLASS FEATURES

The front grounder has two class features: *action shot* and *brotherhood*.

ACTION SHOT

If an enemy engages a nearby ally, you gain a basic attack as an interrupt against the triggering enemy.

Champion Feat: You can use *action shot* against enemies which close in from far away to nearby.

Epic Feat: The target of *action shot* is vulnerable to your attack.

BROTHERHOOD

132 If a nearby ally is hit by an attack, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against the enemy that made that attack until the end of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: If you hit the enemy while benefiting from the bonus, one ally engaged with the enemy can pop free.

Champion Feat: If you hit the enemy and the natural attack roll was even, the enemy suffers a -2 to attack until the end of its turn.

1st LEVEL MANEUVERS

BRACED SHOT

Enough limp wrist, hold your weapon tight!

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any miss

Effect: Re-roll the attack. If you hit, you inflict half damage.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to attack on the re-roll.

Epic Feat: Damage is no longer halved.

FIRE SUPPORT (ANY)

Back! Back vile fiend! This...is an actual fiend, right?

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 16+ on a nearby unengaged target.

Effect: The target is pushed to far away.

Champion Feat: If you score a critical hit on the target, it is dazed.

Epic Feat: If you score a critical hit on the target, it is weakened as well as dazed.

CAUTERIZE (ANY)

It has to hurt if it's going to heal.

Flexible ranged attack

Special: You can use this maneuver once per battle.

Triggering Roll: Any hit.

Target: You or an ally you are next to.

Effect: The target can heal using a recovery but only recovers half hit points.

Adventurer Feat: The target also automatically passes the next save required before the beginning of your next turn.

Champion Feat: The target recovers full hit points instead of half.

COVERING FIRE (ANY)

Crap! Out of ammo. Uhh, little help!?

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any natural even miss and you run out of ammo.

Effect: One nearby ally can make a ranged attack, inflicting half damage on a hit.

Adventurer Feat: You also reload your weapon as a free action.

CRIPPLING WOUND (ANY)

That pinch you're feeling isn't regret...it's a bullet.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any critical hit

Effect: The target is hampered until the beginning of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: To recover hampered is now a normal save (11+).

Champion Feat: To recover hampered is now a hard save (16+).

Epic Feat: If you hit the target again while it is hampered, it automatically fails its next save.

HEAD DOWN (ANY)

Option one, stand and fight; option two, run away. We good for two?

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any miss

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you suffer a -2 to attack rolls and enemies cannot inflict critical hits on you.

Champion Feat: Your penalty to attack rolls is reduced to -1.

MAGIC BULLET

That's some bullet.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any natural 20

Effect: The bullet exits the target and makes another ranged attack against any other nearby enemy.

Adventurer Feat: If the second attack rolls a natural 20, you can use *magic bullet* again.

Champion Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to any subsequent attacks rolls with *magic bullet*.

Epic Feat: *Magic bullet* can now activate if you kill a non-mook target with any natural even hit.

MEMBER OF A TEAM (ANY)

You're not part of some fantasy party where everyone is selfish.

Flexible ranged attack

Special: This can only be used once per battle.

Triggering Roll: Any hit

Effect: Use an available move action this turn and rally.

Adventurer Feat: One ally next to you can also rally as part of your turn.

Champion Feat: After using *member of a team*, each ally gains a +5 bonus to their next attempt to rally.

Epic Feat: Every conscious ally in the battle can choose to rally the same time as you.

QUICK RELOAD (ANY)

This was not how you wanted this day to go

Flexible ranged attack

Special: This can only be used once per battle.

Triggering Roll: Any natural miss that also empties your clip.

Effect: You reload your weapon.

Adventurer Feat: *Quick reload* works on any natural hit as well.

Champion Feat: *Quick reload* can be used twice per encounter.

STUPID MANEUVER (ANY)

"Hey ugly! Look at me! Your mother fornicates with...with something uglier than you!"

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any miss on an unengaged target.

Effect: The enemy you missed suffers a -2 penalty to any attack which does not include you until the end of its next turn.

Champion Feat: It's really pissed; the target can suffer a -4 penalty instead of a -2 but then it will have a +2 bonus to attack you.

Epic Feat: You can use *stupid maneuver* on a hit with a natural 16+ as well.



STRAFE (AUTO)

A common maneuver in a FPS—it shouldn't work, but it does.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 14+

Effect: You inflict half damage; make a second ranged attack against another enemy that is near or next to the previous one. If that is a hit with a natural 14+, inflict half damage and make a third ranged attack against another enemy that is near or next to the previous one. This also inflicts half damage. If you hit with every attack roll, *strafe* cannot be used for the rest of the battle.

Adventurer Feat: If the third ranged attack is a hit with a natural 14+, make a fourth attack against another enemy that is near or next to the previous one. This inflicts half damage.

Champion Feat: You can decide to inflict full damage on the second or third hit; by doing so, you recover the use of *strafe* and the chain ends.

WEAPON SPECIALITY

This is my rifle, this is my gun; this is for fighting, this is for fun.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 16+.

Effect: You gain a damage bonus with this attack equal to your Wisdom or Intelligence modifier.

Adventurer Feat: Increase the bonus damage by your final attack roll -20.

Champion Feat: *Weapon specialty* now triggers any natural roll 14+.

3rd LEVEL MANEUVERS

FIRST PERSON SHOOTER (AUTO)

Conserve ammo? Why?

Flexible ranged attack

Special: You can use this maneuver once per battle.

Triggering Roll: Any miss with a natural 2 or 2

Effect: Use two more bursts of ammunition and re-roll the attack. You cannot inflict a critical hit. If you still miss, you recover the use of this maneuver.

Champion Feat: *First person shooter* now triggers on a 2, 3, or 4.

FOCUSED FIRE (AUTO)

This is not some spell in an MMO; this involves real bullets.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: A natural even hit. You must have at least two shots left in your clip.

Effect: Double your attribute bonus to damage (x2 at 1st level; x4 at 5th level; x6 at 8th level) and your weapon runs out of ammo.

Champion Feat: If you kill a non-mook enemy with *focused fire*, make an additional attack on another nearby enemy. If you hit, you inflict the remaining damage leftover from the first enemy.



If a player abuses this power (using it every turn), have them run out of clips on a 16+...oops.

GLOWING WEAK SPOT (ANY)

I think I hit him in his gentleman's sausage.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Natural 20

Effect: Until the target is staggered, you and all allies gain a damage bonus against the target equal to the escalation die.

Champion Feat: *Glowing weak spot* now triggers on a natural roll 19+.

Epic Feat: *Glowing weak spot* now triggers on a natural roll 18+.

PULL BACK! (ANY)

TIME! TO! GO!!

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Your first natural hit against an unengaged target.

Effect: You and all allies next to you can move away from the target—the target is one additional move away.

5th LEVEL MANEUVERS

AGGRAVATE THE WOUND (ANY)

Keep on the pressure, don't let up.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 16+

Effect: Until the beginning of your next turn, all allies gain a damage bonus to your target equal to your attack attribute modifier.

Champion Feat: Increase bonus damage by Intelligence or Wisdom modifier (it cannot be the same as your attack attribute).

Epic Feat: While in effect, one ally increases their critical threat by +2.

TRACKING FIRE (AUTO)

Don't look at me; look at where I'm shooting!

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural even 16+

Effect: All allies gain a +2 bonus to attack your target until the beginning of your next turn.

Champion Feat: If you score a critical hit, all allies also gain a +1 bonus to their critical threat.

Epic Feat: You gain the benefits from *tracking fire* when it comes around to your turn.

TRAILING BLOOD (ANY)

It can be hurt.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: You inflict a critical hit.

Effect: The target also takes ongoing damage equal to twice your level + twice your attribute bonus.

Champion Feat: Quadruple (instead of double) either your level bonus or attribute bonus to the ongoing damage.

Epic Feat: It is now a hard save (16+) to recover from the ongoing damage.

7th LEVEL MANEUVERS

ALL IN (AUTO)

This engagement is making me very cross indeed.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any natural odd hit.

Effect: Spend a recovery but regain no hit points—half the value is added to the damage roll.

Champion Feat: Increase the added damage to your full recovery but you suffer half your recovery damage.

Epic Feat: Make a hard save 16+ to no longer suffer half damage from inflicting full recovery damage.

BLOODY MESS (ANY)

OH MY GOD THE QUARTERBACK IS TOAST!

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any natural hit.

Effect: You must hit the target three times (using *bloody mess*) consecutively without missing or hitting another target. On the third hit, you inflict two more dice of weapon damage and increase the multiplier of your damage bonus your from ability score by 1.

Champion Feat: Weapon damage increased by 2.

Epic Feat: Weapon damage increases by 2 (4 total) and multiplier of your damage bonus your from ability score by 1 (2 total).

SUPPORT ROLE (ANY)

Am I doing all the work around here?!

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any even hit.

Effect: Select one nearby ally to make a save for one effect the ally suffers from.

Champion Feat: Two allies now benefit.

Epic Feat: If you score a critical hit with *support role*, one ally automatically recovers.

9th LEVEL MANEUVERS

METICULOUS AIM

That thing just walked in front of the crosshairs.

Support Maneuver

Effect: Use a quick action before your next attack roll and gain a +4 bonus to attack.

Epic Feat: Once per battle regardless of your next roll, it is a hit.

NERVE SHOT

It's all in the reflexes.

Flexible ranged attack

Triggering Roll: Any hit with a natural 18+

Effect: The target is dazed until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: Once per battle a target is stunned instead of dazed.

ONE LINER

"I'm gonna get medieval on yo' ass."

Flexible ranged attack

Special: This can only be used once per battle. You also must actually give a cheesy one-liner.

Triggering Roll: Any natural even non-critical hit

Effect: This hit becomes a critical hit.

Epic Feat: Increase weapon damage by 1 die.



I suggest if the player does not give an appropriately memorable and/or cheesy one-liner (voted on by the group), then the player cannot use this power again until a full heal-up.



And just going to the Wikiquote page for any Samuel L. Jackson movie is cheating.

HEAVY GROUNDER LEVEL PROGRESSION

Grounder Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Powers Known	Pool Available	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
1	(8+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	4	1st level	3		ability modifier
2	(8+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	5	1st level	3		ability modifier
3	(8+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	5	3rd level	3		ability modifier
4	(8+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	6	3rd level	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
5	(8+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	6	5th level	3		2x ability modifier
6	(8+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	7	5th level	4		2x ability modifier
7	(8+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	7	7th level	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier
8	(8+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	8	7th level	4		3x ability modifier
9	(8+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	8	9th level	4		3x ability modifier
10	(8+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	9	9th level	4	+1 to 3 abilities	3x ability modifier

HEAVY GROUNDER

Your job is not to talk but to deliver maximum stopping power. You wield the heaviest weapons and the heaviest armor. You are also often the slowest. You take orders rather than give them in hopes those orders include the release of hundreds of rounds of ammunition. You will have the most powerful weapons in the entire team and you use them to keep enemies at bay, pinning them and bringing down the largest opponents in the encounter.

CLASS FEATURES

The heavy grounder has two class features: *Area denial* and *solid stance*. They also gain powers based on their level. There are powers which are at-will and those which can only be used once per battle. Some are attacks while others are support.

AREA DENIAL

You...shall not...PASS!

Support power (auto)

At-Will

Target: Any region between you and up to 1d3 enemies in a group.

Effect: You can make a ranged attack against one target that passes through said zone as an interrupt. All targeted enemies need one extra move action to pass through the zone until the start of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: *Area denial* now only takes a move action to use.

Champion Feat: Roll 1d3 twice and take the highest value when determining possible targets.

Epic Feat: Enlarge the area—you can affect 1d4 enemies (roll twice and take the highest value).

SOLID STANCE

If you don't move on your turn, you gain a +2 bonus to PD and a +1 bonus to AC until the start of your next turn.

1st LEVEL POWERS

BACKUP WEAPON

Always have something handy...for close encounters.

At-Will

Interrupt action

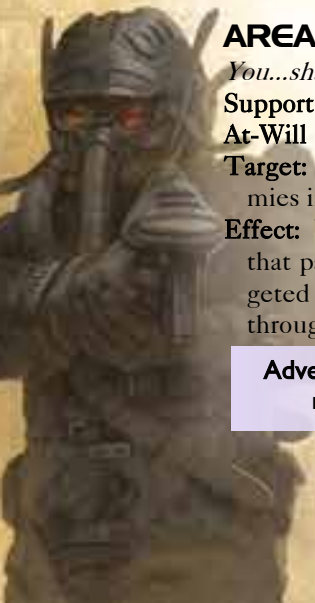
Trigger: An enemy engages you while you wield a two-handed firearm.

Effect: You switch to a one-handed firearm or light melee weapon and make a basic attack.

Adventurer Feat: Your interrupted ranged attack gains a +2 bonus to attack.

Champion Feat: Your enemy is vulnerable to your interrupted ranged attack.

Epic Feat: Roll twice for your interrupted ranged attack and take the highest result.



CHAIN ATTACK

Use the first attack as a guide to strike the next.

Ranged attack (auto)

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and make an identical attack to the nearest enemy to the last one. Repeat this process until you miss or until you hit three enemies. Each enemy can only be attacked once.

Miss: Damage equal to your level. Subsequent attack rolls can benefit from miss damage.

Adventurer Feat: You can chain up to four enemies.

Champion Feat: You can chain up to five enemies.

Epic Feat: You can chain attacks back to enemies you previously attacked, but you still can't attack the same enemy twice in a row.

CREEPING BARRAGE

You lay down suppressing fire to hold back the enemy

Ranged attack (auto)

Battle

Target: 1d4 enemies in a group

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage and the target is stuck until the beginning of your next turn.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Special: On your next turn after using *creeping barrage*, you can use it one additional time, though you must target different enemies.

Adventurer Feat: Roll twice for the number of targets and take the higher value.

Champion Feat: Increase the number of targets by +1.

FOR THE COMMON HONOR

There he stands alone. But in the field, what? Part of a team.

Battle

Interrupt action

Trigger: One nearby staggered ally is hit with an attack that does not include you.

Effect: You are hit by the attack instead of the ally.

Adventurer Feat: You can use this power twice per battle and you only suffer half damage.

Champion Feat: After suffering damage from this power, you can then make a free basic ranged attack. If this attack misses, you recover the use of this power.

FROM OUT OF NOWHERE

I will remain combat effective.

Support power (any)

Battle

Effect: Spend a recovery, but regain no hit points; instead, you recover one battle power you have used this encounter.

Adventurer Feat: This becomes an at-will power.

FULLY AUTOMATIC CONTROL

Wildfire is for amateurs; I prefer to hold onto my gun.

Ranged attack (auto)

At-Will

Target: One enemy.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Re-roll the attack. You must accept the new result. If you rolled a natural 1, you cannot re-roll. If you hit with the second attack, you inflict half damage. This power inflicts no miss damage.

Adventurer Feat: You can re-roll twice if the second is also a miss.

Champion Feat: Inflict full damage with the first re-roll but not the second.

JUMP IN FRONT

Tell my wife I love her! Forgot...not married...

Support power (any)

Battle

Interrupt action

Trigger: You and at least one ally is struck by the same attack.

Effect: You are targeted by a number of attacks equal to the number of allies affected by the original attack. Your allies are pushed out of the attack area (if one) and are not hit. You can limit the number of allies you take the hit for.

Adventurer Feat: You suffer half damage from hits other than the one originally targeted on you.



This is much less immediate-death-save-inducing than the original 4e iteration, but you still don't want to make a habit of it. It helps if you use it to save the medic.



MICRO BURST

Just a quick splash of bullets.

Ranged attack (auto)

At-Will

Target: 1d4 enemies in a group

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat: If you kill a non-mook enemy, leftover damage can be added to another hit made from *micro burst* this turn.

Champion Feat: You can add your Dexterity bonus to damage.

Epic Feat: Roll twice for the number of targets and take the higher value.

RAPID FIRE

It's like holding down a hotkey.

Ranged attack (auto)

At-Will

Target: Two enemies next to each other up to far away.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON damage.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat: Target 3 enemies next to each other.

Champion Feat: For every 1 less target you attack, roll another attack roll with *rapid fire* and take the higher result. You can elect to attack one target and roll three times.

Epic Feat: Add your Dexterity bonus to damage.

RIDDLE THE TARGET

Don't let up until the body hits the floor.

Ranged attack (auto)

At-Will

Target: One nearby enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage. You can increase the weapon damage by 1 die by using one additional burst from your weapon. You must have available ammunition in your clip.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat: You can increase your weapon die by 2 at the cost of two bursts of ammunition.

Champion Feat: You can increase miss damage the same as hit damage by adding bursts; for every additional burst, increase miss damage by your level (max +2).

Epic Feat: You can now add +3 weapon damage at the cost of three bursts of ammunition. This includes miss damage as well.

SHOOT AND SCOOT

Slow is smooth; smooth is fast.

Ranged attack (any)

At-Will

Target: One nearby enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and you move away from the target (taking one additional movement to reach you—though this can move you away from allies). You suffer no penalties to attack from moving until the beginning of your next turn.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat: Use *shoot and scoot* against engaged enemies—you gain a +5 bonus to all disengage attempts with this power.

STANDING BARRAGE

Hold still and carefully bring down hell.

Ranged attack (auto)

Battle

Target: 1d4 enemies in a group

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and the target is stuck until the beginning of your next turn.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Reckless: You can be reckless with *standing barrage*, targeting an additional 1d4 enemies but any allies nearby an additional target suffers one fourth the damage inflict on the enemy.

Adventurer Feat: Roll twice for the number of targets and take the higher value (including reckless).

Champion Feat: Increase the number of targets (including reckless) by +1.

Epic Feat: Only allies engaged with enemies suffer reckless damage.



WILDFIRE

Sometimes you just have to spray and pray.

Ranged attack (auto)

Battle

Target: 1d4 enemies nearby or engaged with you.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Adventurer Feat: Enemies suffer a -2 penalty to opportunity attacks during *wildfire*.

Champion Feat: You can elect not to roll for targets and instead attack all enemies engaged with you.

WIND KNOCKED OUT

If you never give up, you can't possibly lose.

Support power (any)

Daily

Interrupt Action

Trigger: You take damage from a hit

Effect: You suppress the damage and all effects of the hit until the end of the battle or until you are reduced to zero hit points.

Adventurer Feat: You ignore the damage completely.

3rd LEVEL POWERS

GREATER AREA DENIAL

They're not getting near us!

Support power (auto)

Battle

Target: A region between you and up to 1d4+1 enemies in a group.

Effect: You can make a ranged attack against any targets that passes through said region as an interrupt. All targeted enemies need one extra move action to pass through the region until the start of your next turn.

Special: Use a move action at the beginning of your next turn to continue using *greater area denial*. You can only target the same enemies as last time and only ones that weren't attacked the previous turn.

Champion Feat: Roll 1d4+1 twice and take the highest value when determining possible targets.

Epic Feat: Enlarge the area—you can affect 1d6 enemies (roll twice and take the highest value).

MINDLESS MAYHEM

I totally did not close my eyes. I'm a professional.

Ranged attack (auto)

Battle

Target: Five nearest targets.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: Allies hit suffer half damage.

Epic Feat: You can ignore one nearby target and target one further target.

TAKE OUT THE KNEES

Those could be testicles; at this point, I don't care.

Ranged attack (any)

At-Will

Target: One nearby non-flying enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and the target stumbles and falls prone. It disengages from any of your allies, and until it takes a move action to stand up, it is vulnerable.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: Use an auto weapon and increase the damage by your Dexterity modifier.

Epic Feat: The target is also hampered while prone.

5th LEVEL POWERS

BLITZ

Eyes open, still firing blind.

Ranged attack (auto)

Battle

Target: Up to 5 nearby enemies.

Attack: Dexterity -2 + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Special: Any allies engaged with targeted enemies suffer one fourth damage inflicted on the enemy.

Champion Feat: Double the ammunition usage for each attack to remove the attack penalty.

Epic Feat: Increase the number of targets by +1. Allies no longer suffer damage.



SHORT CONTROLLED BURST

I'm being civilized and checking my targets.

Ranged attack (auto)

At-Will

Target: One or two enemies.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: Target up to three enemies.

Epic Feat: Instead of targeting three enemies, you make three attack rolls, breaking the attacks up against any combination of enemies.

7th LEVEL POWERS

CLOUD OF HELLFIRE

Time to blot out the sun.

Ranged attack (auto)

At-Will

Target: 1d4 enemies far away.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and the target is hampered until the beginning of your next turn.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Champion Feat: Allies gain a +2 bonus to attack hit targets until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: Enemies hit are vulnerable until the beginning of your next turn.

MACHINE OF DESTRUCTION

Say hello to my really, really big friend.

Ranged attack (auto)

Battle

Effect: You are stuck until the end of your next turn.

While stuck from this power, all additional powers are reduced from a standard action to a move action. You cannot use this power if already stuck from an outside source

Champion Feat: While stuck from this power, you gain a +2 bonus to PD and AC.

Epic Feat: If stuck from an outside source, as long as you are not helpless or hampered, you can activate *machine of destruction*, even if you already activated it this battle.

9th LEVEL POWERS

FALL OF HEAVEN

Death am I, and my present task Destruction.

Ranged attack (auto)

Daily

Requirement: The escalation die must be +4 or higher.

Target: Each nearby enemy.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage, and the target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn.

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Epic Feat: You can target all enemies you can see.

MEASURED RESPONSE

Proportionate retribution only. No point in wasting ammo on the dead.

Ranged attack (auto)

Daily

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC. The target is vulnerable to this attack.

Hit: WEAPON + 2x Dexterity damage. Increase your weapon damage by 1 die.

Miss: No damage, but you recover the use of *measured response*.

Epic Feat: Increase you weapon damage by 1 die, and increase your attribute modifier to x3.



The grounder was originally a single class from 4th Edition, but as time went on, it became split into two variations—one that rains down area effects and one involved in direct one-on-on fighting. I've always kept them connected, which resulted in grounder being the largest and most complicated class in the 13th Age adaptation. I always figured a five-person party would actually have one of each build. Snipers and gun-slingers I always considered optional. The grounder was simply the most realistic option.



Archetypally speaking, this is the least interesting option, due to the spectacular lack of grunt soldier protagonists in movies (and the spectacular lack of personality in modern FPS avatars). Try looking at 'Starship Troopers', 'Full Metal Jacket', 'Stalingrad', and the quirkier '90s or '00s shooter games for inspiration.

GUNSLINGER

The gunslinger is all about being close. Employing skill and a stroke of luck, you maneuver until the enemy cannot avoid your attack. You evade fire while returning it with pinpoint accuracy. Although occasionally using stealth and trickery in your attacks, just as often you leap boldly—and some may say insanely—into the thick of enemy fire. You avoid any weapons or gear which could encumber you—agility is vital in everything you do. While the rest of your allies remain back, you move through enemy lines, disrupting their strategies, and striking important targets. Like the sniper, your role is detached from the rest of the party, but just because your friends can't see you doesn't mean they don't benefit from your contribution.

However, unlike the sniper, said contribution does not come in the form of status effects and hindrances. It's about a copious amount of firepower dedicated to one or many opponents at once. It is not unheard of for you to jump into a dense collection of enemies, downing every one before they even see you. You employ light weapons in this practice, slipping by fallen enemies and dancing through battle lines to find your target.

Play Style: You are responsible for the safety of the comrades in your party. You use movement and agility-based maneuvers to move within close range in order to maximize the potential of shorter range, one-handed weapons. Your maneuvers are just that. You employ them in conjunction with kata powers that allow increased gunfire, either to one or multiple targets.

Ability Scores: You use Dexterity for gunslinger attack rolls. You also employ Wisdom with certain powers, maneuvers, and talents. You gain a +2 bonus with one of your choice.

GEAR

At 1st level, gunslingers start with a one-handed simple melee weapon for emergencies along with up to two pistols. They also gain one armor set. Additionally, a gunslinger can start with either 25 UC or roll 1d6 x 10 UC.

ARMOR

Gunslingers should wear light armor in order to remain mobile. If they attempt to wear heavy armor, they suffer attack penalties with one-handed firearms.

Gunslinger Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Attack Penalty
None	10	—
Light	14	—
Heavy	15	-2
Shield	+1	-2

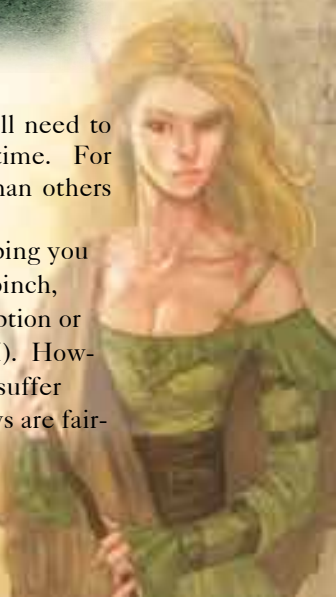
WEAPONS

Kata powers can only be used with one-handed small arms. It is suggested you either wield one or two (this affects which talents to select). They don't need to be



the same weapon, though if different, you will need to state which weapons are being used at any time. For example, certain firearms do more damage than others while some have automatic settings.

Primitive weapons: There is nothing stopping you from wielding medieval ranged weapons in a pinch, especially if your normal weapons suffer disruption or run out of ammunition (by hand of a cruel GM). However, because they are not your specialty, you suffer attack penalties with such weapons. Crossbows are fair-



GUNSLINGER LEVEL PROGRESSION

Gunslinger Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Maneuvers Known	Kata Powers	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
1	(8+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	2	1	3		ability modifier
2	(8+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	2	2	3		ability modifier
3	(8+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	2	2	3		ability modifier
4	(8+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	3	2	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
5	(8+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	3	3	3		2x ability modifier
6	(8+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	3	3	3		2x ability modifier
7	(8+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	4	3	3	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier
8	(8+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	4	4	3		2x ability modifier
9	(8+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	4	4	3		2x ability modifier
10	(8+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	5	4	3	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier

GUNSLINGER STATS

Ability Bonus	+2 Dexterity or Wisdom (different from racial bonus)
Initiative	Dex mod + Level
Armor Class (light armor)	14 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Physical Defense	11 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
Mental Defense	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
Hit Points	(8 + Con mod) x Level modifier (see level progression)
Recoveries	(probably) 8
Recovery Dice	(1d8 x Level) + Con mod
Backgrounds	8 points, max 5 in any background
Icon Relationships	3 points
Talents	3
Feats	1 per Level

ly similar to guns, and only inflict a -2 penalty; other ranged weapons inflict -4. The GM may also rule that particularly primitive firearms (such as muzzle-loaders) are sufficiently far removed from what you're familiar with to warrant the -2 penalty, depending on your home bastion's tech level. They do not count as one-handed small arms.

Gunslinger Melee Weapons

One-Handed	Two Handed
Small	
1d4 knife	1d6 club
Light or Simple	
1d6 shortsword, tonfa	1d8 spear

Gunslinger Ranged Weapons

One-Handed Firearm	Two-Handed Firearm
Light	
1d4 pistol	1d6 rifle
Medium	
1d6 pistol	1d8 machine gun
Heavy	
1d8 hand cannon	1d10 heavy gun

BASIC ATTACKS

MELEE ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

RANGED ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

GUNSLINGER CLASS FEATURES

You have the following class features.

CINEMATIC STYLE

You are functionally ambidextrous, and can wield one-handed weapons in either hand without penalty. This really has no bearing on game mechanics; we just think it's cool to mention.

Additionally, you can use a one-handed small arm as a melee weapon (treat as a club). You also do not provoke attacks by using one-handed small arms against targets engaged with you.

KATA POWERS

Kata powers allow you to engage multiple enemies or focus fire on specific ones. They are not attack powers in themselves but do allow you to employ your basic ranged attacks in unique ways. Kata can only be used with one-handed small arms. Like feats, there are kata powers only available at adventurer, champion, and epic levels.



The single biggest fictional influence on this class is the movie 'Equilibrium', which consists mostly of Christian Bale doing frankly impossible things because the director doesn't believe in flawed heroes. The flavor text we've traditionally used for the various gunslinger abilities and powers reflects an in-universe awareness of how unrealistic things like 'gun kata' are... and yet, in Amethyst's world, they somehow work. GMs who enjoy mind screw might suggest that perhaps these things only work because the gunslinger believes they will, and that if the gates were to close, they'd suddenly become impossible again...



The references to the movie are not meant to be allegorical in anyway about altering reality. I separate most game mechanics from setting material, and in this case, I throw realism out the window in favor of player enjoyment. In reality, why specialize in pistols when a machine gun can mow down goblins from a safe distance?

MANEUVERS

Maneuvers are movement based powers that affect how you move and how you employ your attacks.

At 1st level, you begin with two maneuvers. When you reach a level when you are able to select an additional maneuver (4th, 7th, 10th), you can elect to gain an additional feat instead.

CLASS TALENTS

Choose three of the following class talents.

ACT ON INSTINCT

Swap Wisdom with Dexterity (and vice-versa) for all maneuvers, powers, and talents. This is a single swap at character generation and you cannot use this talent on the fly later.

BULLET BALLET

Use two one-handed small arms and increase the crit range of your ranged attacks by +1 against enemies that are not staggered. The feats attached to *bullet ballet* require the use of two one-handed small arms.

Adventurer Feat: The crit range increases by +2.

Champion Feat: Your first ranged attack against an undamaged enemy has its crit range expanded to +5.

Epic Feat: If you kill a non-mook with a critical attack using a ranged weapon, you can immediately make an additional basic attack.

CONVERGING FIRE

You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls with one-handed small arms against targets you are engaged with.

Adventurer Feat: If you miss with an attack roll with a one-handed small arm, increase your next hit by a WEAPON die (max 1).

Champion Feat: Your maximum increased WEAPON die increases to 2 (missing two attacks consecutively).

Epic Feat: Your maximum increased WEAPON die increases to 3.



COWBOY ACTION

If using a single one-handed small arm, increase its damage die by one step (1d4 to 1d6 to 1d8 to 1d10). The feats attached to *cowboy action* require you to wield only a single one-handed small arm.

Adventurer Feat: If you kill a non-mook, you can make a second attack using the same bullet against another enemy near the first.

Champion Feat: Increase your miss damage with ranged attacks by your Wisdom modifier.

Epic Feat: Use a recovery as a free action and regain no hit points; gain a +20 bonus to your last attack roll.

DEFENSIVE FIRE

If you hit an enemy with a one-handed small arm, said enemy suffers a -2 penalty to attack you with a ranged weapon until the beginning of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: The penalty applies to all attacks.

Champion Feat: The penalty increases to -3.

Epic Feat: Your critical threat range against an enemy suffering from above penalty increases by +1.

DUAL WIELDING

When wielding two one-handed small arms, you are counted as wielding two melee weapons (re-roll all natural 2 attack rolls). In addition, you can reduce the damage die of your weapons by one step (1d10 to 1d8 to 1d6 to 1d4) and make a ranged attack. If you hit, you can make a second attack as a free action.

Adventurer Feat: If attacking different targets, do not reduce your damage die.

Champion Feat: If you hit with the second attack, you can inflict half damage but gain a +2 bonus to AC and PD until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: If you hit with the first attack and attack the same target with the second, increase your crit range with the second by 2.

FAST SWITCH

You can switch to any of your weapons as a single quick action without dropping any weapons.

Adventurer Feat: The first time you need to reload a one-handed small arm in a battle, you do so with quick action.

Champion Feat: Reloading a one-handed small arm always takes only a quick action.

Epic Feat: You can reload two one-handed small arms with a single quick action.

GUNPLAY

You gain a +1 power bonus to AC and PD against ranged attacks.

Adventurer Feat: Use a move action to increase these bonuses by +2.

Champion Feat: Your AC and PD bonus to ranged attacks increase to +2.

Epic Feat: Your bonus to AC and PD now applies to all attacks.

HYDROSTATIC SHOCK

If you are wielding a single one-handed small arm, once a round as a free action, select one creature you have hit during your turn. The target suffers an additional 1d4 damage at the beginning of its turn.

5th level gunslinger +2d4 damage.

8th level gunslinger +3d4 damage.

Adventurer Feat: Increase the die from d4 to d6.

Champion Feat: Increase the die from d6 to d8.

Epic Feat: Increase the die from d8 to d10.

QUICKDRAW

You gain a +2 bonus to Initiative.

Adventurer Feat: Increase your initiative bonus by your Wisdom modifier.

Champion Feat: If you act first in a battle, on your first turn, roll twice for all attacks and take the higher result. Also, re-roll all damage dice where the result is 1.

Epic Feat: If you act first in a battle, on your first turn, all attack rolls have their crit range expanded by +2.



REFLEX SHOT

When wielding one-handed small arms, you can make a basic ranged attack as an opportunity attack.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to attack with opportunity attacks.

Champion Feat: If you hit an enemy your size attempting to disengage with an opportunity attack, it cannot disengage.

Epic Feat: If you hit a creature larger than you with an opportunity attack, you can pop free from all other enemies and move with the enemy you hit.

KATA ADVENTURER BETWEEN THE EYES

"If you want to shoot, shoot. Don't talk too much."

At-Will

Standard action

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack. Target PD instead of AC. Inflict no ability damage on the hit.

Adventurer Feat: Gain a +1 to attack with this power.

Champion Feat: Outthink your enemy, target the lowest of your enemy's defenses.

BOUNDARY THRESHOLD

"There was a firefight!"

At-Will

Standard action

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack against each enemy engaged with you. Inflict no damage on a miss.

Adventurer Feat: You can pop free from any enemies you hit.

Epic Feat: If you make three ranged attacks with this power, all attacks gain a +2 bonus to attack. This bonus increases by 1 for every engaged with you.

GUN-FU

"I saw this in a movie once..."

Battle

Standard action

Effect: Make three basic ranged attacks. If you miss with all three attacks, you regain the use of this power.

Adventurer Feat: You regain the use of this power if all three attacks are even misses.

HARD BOILED

"Give a guy a gun, he thinks he's Superman. Give him two and he thinks he's God."

At-Will

Quick action

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack. If you hit, inflict miss damage. If you miss, you inflict no damage.

Adventurer Feat: Add your Wisdom modifier to a hit.

Champion Feat: Double your Wisdom modifier on a hit.

Epic Feat: You can inflict a critical hit.

JUST ONE BULLET

"I tip my hat to you...one legend to another."

Battle

Free action

Requirement: You must wield a single one-handed small arm.

Effect: Add your Wisdom modifier to all damage rolls until the end of your turn.

Adventurer Feat: Use a recovery as a quick action and sustain this power for one additional turn.

RAPID KILL

"Guns don't kill people! But they sure help."

At-Will

Move action

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack, but if you hit, you only inflict 1/4 damage. You cannot inflict a critical hit.

Adventurer Feat: You can score a critical hit.

Champion Feat: You inflict 1/2 damage to mooks.

WAY OF THE GUN

You leap over obstructions and enemy heads, and land in the thick of evil. A tornado of gunfire ensues.

Battle

Standard action

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack against all nearby enemies and enemies engaged with you (max 6). Only apply damage to one hit. All others you hit cannot engage you until the beginning of your next turn. You also pop free from enemies engaged with you that you hit.

Adventurer Feat: If you attack at least four targets, you can apply damage to two hits.

Champion Feat: You can move once between your attacks in order to engage more targets.



KATA CHAMPION

BLOOD IN THE EYES

“Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

At-Will

Interrupt action

Requirement: You are staggered

Trigger: You regain hit points (either on your turn or outside of it)

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack.

Champion Feat: You gain a +3 bonus to attack with the basic attack.

Epic Feat: If staggered, anytime you take damage, you can use *blood in the eyes*. You can only use this ability once per round.

DESPERATE MEASURES

Enemies are all around you! They're closing in! Do what you do best.

Battle

Standard action

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack against up to three nearby targets. Enemies not suffering hit damage are dazed until the beginning of your next turn.

Champion Feat: Target up to four enemies.

Epic Feat: Target up to five enemies.

GRAND SLAM

You unleash your weapons on the target until your fingers tire.

Battle

Standard action

Effect: Make three basic ranged attacks against one enemy. If the target is staggered, you cannot make the second or third attacks.

Champion Feat: If you miss all three attacks, you recover this power.

Epic Feat: You can re-roll one missed attack roll with this power.

PARTING SHOT

You give the illusion of cowardice but turn quickly and fire back as you move away.

Battle

Standard action

Effect: Pop free from an enemy and make a basic ranged attack. If you miss, you regain the use of this power.

Champion Feat: This power is reduced to a move action.

Epic Feat: You can target two enemies engaged with you.

REACTION TIME ZERO

Responding to an ally's need should be a reflex, and thankfully for you, it is.

At-Will

Interrupt action

Trigger: An ally is staggered.

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack.

Champion Feat: You gain a +4 bonus to attack with the basic attack.

Epic Feat: If you hit the target, the staggered ally can make a basic attack or pop free.

TARGETING LOCK

You focus on the target and think of nothing else.

Battle

Move action

Effect: Target one enemy you can see. You gain a +2 bonus to attack said target until it is killed. Until the target is killed, you suffer a -2 penalty to all defense against all other enemies (except the one you have the bonus against).

Champion Feat: Your penalty to defense is reduced to -1.

Epic Feat: Your crit range against the enemy increases by +2.



KATA EPIC DIRECT FIRE

You let out your loudest war cry as your pummel your target. No seriously, you have to do that now. You owe the other players candy if they don't like your yell.

Battle

Standard action

Effect: Make basic ranged attack against the nearest enemy. If you hit, repeat the attack and continue repeating until you miss or until you run out of ammo. If you miss the first attack, you recover the use of this power.

Epic Feat: You recover the use of this power if you miss the first and second attack.

FANNING FIRE

Fill the air with enough lead and it doesn't matter if your aim sucks.

Battle

Standard action

Effect: Make a ranged basic attack. If you hit, make another basic ranged attack and continue until you miss or hit four times. You can alternate with secondary weapons or just one a single one. If you miss the first attack, you regain this power.

Epic Feat: You regain this power if you miss the first two consecutive times.

SUSTAINED FIRE

You leave nothing for later, unleashing a storm of gunfire.

At-Will

Standard action

Effect: Make three ranged basic attacks. Each attack suffers the following penalty to attack: First -2, second -3, third -4.

Epic Feat: The penalties are reduced to -1, -2, and -3 respectively.

VECTORED VOLLEY

You open a firing arc in front of you.

Battle

Standard action

Requirement: Two enemies in range that are next to each other.

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack against each target. If you miss both attacks, you regain this power.

Epic Feat: You can attack three targets next to each other and regain the power if you miss all three times.

WEAK SPOT

Go for the eyes! Does it have eyes?! Hit in the neck! It's gotta have a neck. Does it have a reproduction system?

At-Will

Standard action

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack. If you hit, you can inflict only miss damage, and the target is weakened until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: If you inflict a critical hit, the weakened requires a normal save (11+).

MANEUVERS

ABNORMALLY FAST

Running, ALL THE TIME!

At-Will

Standard action

Effect: You gain two move actions but must either move or use maneuvers with them.

Adventurer Feat: You gain your Wisdom bonus to any acrobatics or athletics checks you need to make while moving with this power.

Champion Feat: If you use all available move actions to move, you gain a +3 bonus to PD and AC.

CLASSIC TUMBLE

And sometimes, you just need to roll.

Battle

Interrupt action (once per round)

Trigger: You are hit with a melee attack

Effect: You take 1/4 damage.

Adventurer Feat: If you are staggered or the hit is a critical, you recover this power.

Champion Feat: The power also triggers on ranged attacks.

Epic Feat: You can decide to take half-damage and you recover this power.

ENDORPHIN RESPONSE

You pull energy from a hidden reservoir and achieve something borderline paranormal.

At-Will

Quick action

Effect: Use a recovery but regain no hit points. Instead you gain a move action.

Champion Feat: You can combine two move actions and replace them with a standard action.



KINESICS

Study your enemy and anticipate their next move.

At-Will

Move action

Target: One nearby enemy.

Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. MD

Hit: The target cannot engage you until the beginning of your next turn.

Champion Feat: Gain a +2 bonus to attack with this power.

KINETIC AND FLUID

You spin, tumble, and jump through an enemy's flank, avoiding fire and counterattacking with deadly accuracy.

Battle

Move action

Requirement: You must be unengaged.

Effect: Move twice. Enemies cannot engage you until the beginning of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: If you have an available standard action, you can take it between your moves.

Champion Feat: You gain a +4 bonus to AC and PD from ranged attacks.

OUT OF THE FIGHT

You know when your body has taken enough punishment. You pull yourself out of combat.

Battle

Interrupt action

Trigger: You are staggered.

Effect: Pop free from all enemies.

Adventurer Feat: You also cannot be engaged until the beginning of your next turn.

Champion Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks until no longer staggered or killed.

SLIPPERY BUGGER

It's like you're covered in grease...you could still be, but that has nothing to do with this power.

At-Will

Move action

Target: One engaged enemy.

Attack: Wisdom + Level vs. PD

Hit: You pop free from the target.

Champion Feat: This power is reduced to a quick action.

WETWORK

Zero body count? We'll see.

Battle

Move action

Target: One enemy far away or closer.

Effect: Move closer to the target, and repeat using the same action each turn. No enemy can engage you until you engage your target. This effect ends if you change targets or stop moving to the target.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until you engage your target.

Champion Feat: You gain your Wisdom bonus to all damage rolls until you engage your target.

EQUILIBRIUM

*"The geometric distribution of antagonists in any gun battle is completely f***ing unpredictable. But it sounds way cooler the other way."*

Battle

Interrupt action

Trigger: An enemy misses with a melee attack.

Effect: Make a basic ranged attack against the enemy that missed you. If you miss, you recover the use of this power.

Adventurer Feat: Make two basic ranged attacks but only one against the triggering enemy. You must miss twice to recover the power.

Champion Feat: You use the triggering enemy as a shield; you gain a +4 bonus to AC. The next enemy attack that misses hits the first enemy. If the attack still hits, you recover this power.

LIMBER UP

It's the eighteenth rule.

At-Will

Move action

Effect: You gain a +5 bonus to all checks to balance, jump, or climb until the end of your turn.

Champion Feat: Increase the bonus to +10 but this power cannot be used the rest of the day.

WHERE THEY DON'T EXPECT YOU

Float like a butterfly, sting like a gun.

Battle

Interrupt action

Trigger: You are hit.

Effect: The attack is a miss.

Adventurer Feat: Spend a recovery as a quick action to recover the use of this power.

Champion Feat: Make a ranged basic attack as part of this power.

MARSHAL

You possess either a natural talent for leadership or have undergone extensive training to deal with stressful situations. You know the dangers that lurk in the open world and can anticipate the actions of your enemies. You went through basic like everyone else but were separated early in life, groomed and greased into an elite commander of war. Whether your troops follow you because of earned respect or because their contracts demand it, you have a duty to do your best for them: poor leadership in the field results in a short lifespan for all involved. Out of combat, you are often the first and last to speak. You can talk your way out of a situation or be the one to instigate a fight. In the end, the marshal points the way.

As a marshal, you often began your career training to be grounder but moved into a command position either by accident in the field when your commanding officer fell to enemy attack, or by taking classes on how to be someone responsible for a team. Perhaps you have a natural talent for leadership despite being a soldier like the rest. Alternately, you might have been funding the team, so leadership is assumed. Thankfully, you are no rank amateur and have experience dealing with the expected issues of the outside world.

Beyond your combat abilities, you are the public face of the group. Outside of combat, you do all the talking. You consider it a failure if a situation devolves to violence, since ammunition is scarce in the fantasy world. You would much prefer to talk your way out of situations and depend on your charisma to handle the crises that occur.

But when the bullets fly, you are as expertly trained in combat situations as everyone else. You can analyze a battle before the first weapon is raised. You can pinpoint threats and coordinate the group to ensure a quick and decisive victory.

You bolster the line, keeping the unit aware of oncoming threats. You inspire others to fight beyond their limits. They would die for you and you for them, but the real mark of a leader is to fortify your line of attack to be so indomitable as to ensure your enemies die for their own causes, whatever they may be.

Play Style: You are responsible for the safety of the comrades next to you. You organize the actions of others in the fields to maximize firing potential while also keeping allies out of potential crossfires. Without you, the team's coordination begins to break down.

Ability Scores: You need Charisma or Wisdom to properly coordinate your group. You gain a +2 bonus with one as long as it isn't the same ability you increase with your racial bonus.

GEAR

At 1st level, marshals start with a one-handed simple melee weapon for emergencies along with one or two firearms. They also gain one armor set. Additionally, a marshal can start with either 100 UC or roll 3d6 x 10 UC.

ARMOR

Grounders can wear either light or heavy armor. There is not real preference.

Marshal Armor and AC

Type	Base AC
None	10
Light	13
Heavy	15
Shield	+1

WEAPONS

Firearms can be pistols, rifles, or heavier weapons like machine guns. It is suggested a marshal take a two-handed weapon along with a backup pistol. Certain weapons have a single shot option while others can fire multiple times an action. Unlike grounders, marshals gain no additional class bonuses from auto weapons.

Primitive weapons: There is nothing stopping you from wielding medieval ranged weapons in a pinch, especially if your normal weapons suffer disruption or run out of ammunition (by hand of a cruel GM). However, because they are not your specialty, you suffer attack penalties with such weapons. Crossbows are fairly similar to guns, and only inflict a -2 penalty: other ranged weapons inflict -4. The GM may also rule that particularly primitive firearms (such as muzzle-loaders) are sufficiently far removed from what you're familiar with to warrant the -2 penalty, depending on your home bastion's tech level.

Marshal Melee Weapons

One-Handed	Two Handed
Small	
1d4 knife	1d6 club
Light or Simple	
1d6 shortsword, tonfa	1d8 spear

Marshal Ranged Weapons

One-Handed Firearm	Two-Handed Firearm
Light	
1d4 pistol	1d6 rifle
Medium	
1d6 pistol	1d8 machine gun
Heavy	
1d8 hand cannon	1d10 heavy gun



MARSHAL LEVEL PROGRESSION

Marshal Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Command Presence Auras	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
1	(7+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	2	3		ability modifier
2	(7+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	2	3		ability modifier
3	(7+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	2	3		ability modifier
4	(7+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	2	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
5	(7+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	3	4		2x ability modifier
6	(7+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	3	4		2x ability modifier
7	(7+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	3	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier
8	(7+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	3	5		3x ability modifier
9	(7+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	4	5		3x ability modifier
10	(7+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	4	5	+1 to 3 abilities	3x ability modifier

MARSHAL STATS

Ability Bonus	+2 Wisdom or Charisma (different from racial bonus)
Initiative	Dex mod + Level
Armor Class (heavy armor)	15 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Armor Class (light armor)	13 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Physical Defense	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
Mental Defense	11 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
Hit Points	(7 + Con mod) x Level modifier (see level progression)
Recoveries	(probably) 8
Recovery Dice	(1d8 x Level) + Con mod
Backgrounds	8 points, max 5 in any background
Icon Relationships	3 points
Talents	3
Feats	1 per Level

BASIC ATTACKS

MELEE ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

RANGED ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

CLASS FEATURES

All marshals gains the following class feature.

BIG PICTURE

Use an interrupt to boost an ally's effectiveness. The ally inflicts extra damage equal to your Wisdom or Charisma modifier + your level on his next hit. The modifier damage doubles at 5th level and triples at 8th level. When you use *big picture*, you lose your standard action on your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: Add both your Wisdom and Charisma modifier as a damage bonus. Both modifiers double at 5th level and triple at 8th level.

Champion Feat: Double your level damage to the hit.

Epic Feat: You only lose your move action instead of your standard action on your next turn.

ENCOURAGING SUPPORT

Once per battle, when you rally, one ally next to you with 1 or more hit points remaining can rally for free as well. The ally is not counted as having rallied.

Adventurer Feat: You affect up to two allies next to you or one nearby.

Champion Feat: You can use *encouraging support* twice per battle.

Epic Feat: You gain a +2 bonus when attempting subsequent rallies. Each time you fail, the bonus increases by +1 until you pass.

FIELD ADVICE

Once per battle, you can use a move action to grant an ally next to you a +3 bonus to their next save. The bonus does not apply to saving throws against unconsciousness or death.

Adventurer Feat: If the ally still fails the save, they obviously weren't listening, and you recover the use of *field advice*.

Champion Feat: FIGHT DAMN YOU! FIGHT!
Field advice now works on saves against death.

Epic Feat: Once per day, *field advice* can make the affected ally automatically pass the save.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE TEAM

You can sacrifice your standard action on your turn to give another ally in line of sight a move action either on your turn or as an additional move action on his turn. Likewise, you can also sacrifice your move action to give another ally a quick action either on your turn or as an additional quick action on his turn. Additionally, once per day, you can swap your initiative order with another ally.

Champion Feat: When you sacrifice an action, the target ally gains the same type of action.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, when you sacrifice a move action to give an ally a move action, the ally can take a standard action instead.



This is where I impose an unfortunate house rule that the player with the least amount of social graces cannot play the marshal. I know that character attributes are what matters, but it won't prevent a player from putting his foot in his mouth. Die rolls can only do so much.

CLASS TALENTS

Choose three of the following class talents. You can select an additional talent at 5th and 8th level.

BOAR'S HEAD

If you move, one unengaged ally next to you can move with you. This is usually used to move ranged weapons further away from oncoming opponents.

Adventurer Feat: If you use a move action for any reason, you can still use *boar's head*—you can move allies without moving yourself.

Champion Feat: Target one engaged ally and said ally pops free.

Epic Feat: You affect up to two allies next to you.

CONTROL THE BATTLE THEATRE

If you nominate an ambush, two allies with the highest initiative can ambush with you.

Adventurer Feat: During the ambush, all enemies are vulnerable to your and allies' attacks.

Champion Feat: Three allies with the highest initiative can ambush with you.

Epic Feat: If in an ambush, you and all allies gain a +2 bonus to initiative. You and allies gain a +2 bonus to attack until the first enemy's turn.



FACE SLAP

Once a day, you can use a move action to wake up an unconscious ally next to you. If the target was unconscious from being reduced to fewer than 0 hit points, she is healed to 1 hit point. The target is also dazed until the end of the battle.

Adventurer Feat: Ally can spend a recovery and regain hit points.

Champion Feat: You can spend a recovery with *face slap* and the ally recovers the hit points.

Epic Feat: Slap the target silly. Spend an additional recovery and remove the dazed condition.

FOCUS TARGET

If you hit an enemy with an attack, select one ally. If the ally hits with an attack before your next turn, the ally gains a damage bonus equal to half the damage you inflicted. This bonus damage uses ammunition from your weapon.

Adventurer Feat: Selected ally gains a +2 bonus to attack.

Champion Feat: If the ally misses and you hit again on your turn, you can add half the damage from your last turn and this turn.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, your selected ally automatically hits, regardless of the roll.

KNOW A GUY WHO KNOWS A GUY

You gain a +1 bonus to a positive relationship of your choice.

Champion Feat: Once per level, you can reroll your relationship dice.

Epic Feat: Each time you roll relationship die, you can increase one die roll result by +1.

MARK OF THE PUPPETEER

If you hit an enemy with a ranged attack that is not engaged with you but is engaged with another ally, you can inflict half damage and said ally can pop free.

Adventurer Feat: If you kill the target with your attack, said ally can pop free of all enemies.

Champion Feat: Said ally gains a +2 bonus to PD and AC until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: You can now affect two allies engaged with the targeted enemy.

PAT ON THE BACK

When the party uses a quick rest, you can award a recovery to an ally that used one during the previous battle. Allies cannot have more recoveries than they are allowed.

Adventurer Feat: You gain two recoveries you can award (you can award two recoveries to one ally or one recovery each to two allies).

Champion Feat: Once per day, you gain three recoveries you can award.

READING BODY LANGUAGE

You gain a +2 bonus to skill checks relating to bluffing, diplomacy, and sensing motive.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus increases to +3.

Champion Feat: Once per day, if you don't like your skill check with this talent, re-roll.

Epic Feat: You can skip rolling with this talent and just take a natural 10.

PLAN OF ATTACK

If an ally scores a critical hit, you can select another ally to gain a +2 to his critical threat on his next attack roll.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus to critical threat increases to +3 instead of +2.

Champion Feat: Once per day, instead of scoring a critical threat, the selected ally's hit can be turned into a critical hit.

Epic Feat: If the escalation die is 5+, the benefitting ally can roll twice and take the higher result.

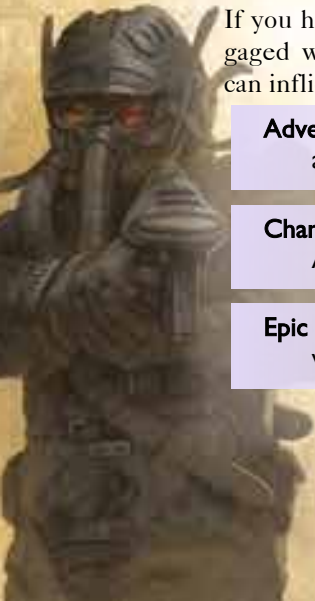
SACRIFICIAL BOOST

Once per turn, as a quick action, you can sacrifice a recovery to give an ally a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: Instead of gaining a recovery, the selected ally can gain an additional move action on his turn.

Champion Feat: Instead of gaining a recovery, the selected ally can use your recovery value as a damage bonus on his next hit that turn.

Epic Feat: When spending a recovery you have given, the selected ally gains a bonus equal to half your recovery value.



MARSHAL



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TRUE LEADER

Once per turn, you can use a quick action to reduce the escalation die by 1 (you can't reduce it below +3), and use it to give another ally an additional standard action on their turn.

Adventurer Feat: You can reduce the escalation die twice with a single action and select two allies.

Champion Feat: If the escalation die is +6, you can turn an ally's hit into a critical hit as an interrupt; the escalation die is reduced to +3.

Epic Feat: Once per day, you can reduce the escalation die from +6 to 0, and all allies gain the benefits of a quick rest.

VIVO!

If you use a sacrifice, you gain a +5 bonus to your reprieve save. This bonus reduces by 1 each time you use it.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus to reprieve increases by +3.

Champion Feat: The bonus to reprieve increases by +3.

Epic Feat: The bonus to reprieve increases by +3; additionally, you can offer your bonus to an ally.

COMMAND PRESENCE AURAS

You can use words and actions to inspire those around you. These come in the form of command presence auras. You gain two at 1st level, gaining an additional aura at 4th level, 7th level, and 10th level. Auras affect nearby targets (sometimes allies; sometimes enemies).

You activate an aura as a standard action, which lasts until you end it as a quick action or until you fall unconscious. In addition, each aura can also be temporarily boosted. You may have multiple auras in effect.

Booster: Each command presence aura can be boosted once a day. Boosting one still allows the boosting of others. This means multiple auras can be boosted. Boosting takes a quick action and can occur anytime the referenced aura is in affect. Once boosted, the effect lasts until the end of the battle.

Affect: Auras affect nearby allies or enemies. It affects all eligible nearby targets but the GM can prohibit certain allies from benefitting, most likely because they cannot hear the marshal.

BY EXAMPLE

You don't keep back and order from a distance; you stand shoulder to shoulder with those you lead.

Effect: Nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to PD or MD.

Booster: Targeted allies in range gain a +1 bonus to AC.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus is to PD and MD

Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +2 for PD, MD, and AC.

Epic Feat: After the booster is activated, the first critical hit on an ally is turned into a normal hit.

ENCOURAGING FIRE

You stand with your allies and support their fire.

Effect: When a nearby ally misses with an attack, the "encouragement" pool increases by +1 (max +6).

When a nearby ally uses the pool, it is reduced to 0.

Booster: The pool increases by +2 for each miss.

Adventurer Feat: The encouragement pool is not used up when an ally using it misses.

Champion Feat: If the pool reaches +6, the next hits using the pool is turned into a critical hit.

Epic Feat: When an ally rolls a natural 1, the pool is increased by +2 (+3 when boosted).

FOLLOW MY LEAD

You see, that's how it's done. Now suck less!

Effect: If you score a critical hit, The next nearby ally's critical threat increases by +1; if the next ally fails to score a critical hit, this bonus increases to +2 for the next nearby ally, and so on (max +5) until the beginning of your next turn. When an ally scores a critical hit, this bonus is removed.

Booster: All nearby allies gain a +1 to their critical threat.

Adventurer Feat: If no allies score a critical hit, you gain the threat bonus on your next turn.

Champion Feat: You or any ally benefitting from the max +5 threat bonus can turn a hit into a critical hit automatically.

Epic Feat: The threat bonus begins at +2 and increases by +2 to a max of +6.



HEARTEN THE SQUAD

You are only as good as your weakest link.

Effect: When using recoveries, allies increase their recovery die by one step (1d6 to 1d8 to 1d10 to 1d12).

Booster: When using recoveries, nearby allies roll one die twice and take the higher result.

Champion Feat: When boosted, nearby allies roll two die twice and take the higher results.

Epic Feat: When boosted, nearby allies roll three die twice and take the higher results.

INTIMIDATING MUG

Opponents take one look at you and begin to rethink their approach.

Effect: All nearby enemies require one additional move action to engage you and allies next to you.

Booster: Nearby enemies must make a save to engage allies next to you.

Adventurer Feat: Affect nearby allies as well.

Champion Feat: When boosted, each ally can pop free as a quick action once.

Epic Feat: When boosted, select one enemy—it now takes two actions to engage you or any ally.

MASK OF AUTHORITY

Your friends believe themselves better knowing you are around.

Effect: Nearby allies gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls.

Booster: If an ally in range misses with an attack roll, he gains a cumulative +1 bonus to his next damage roll (max +10).

Adventurer Feat: Damage bonus increases to +4; boosted damage increases by +2.

Champion Feat: Damage bonus increases to +6; boosted damage increases by +3.

Epic Feat: Damage bonus increases to +8; boosted damage increases by +4 (maximum is now +12).



Marshals are a bit out in the cold too with regard to iconic representations in fiction, although not as badly off as grounders. Richard Sharpe, Jack O'Neill, Malcolm Reynolds - these are the kinds of examples the class is meant to evoke: the front-line commander who is more concerned about their troops' well-being than the mission and wouldn't ask anyone to take a risk that they wouldn't take themselves.

MOST INTERESTING PERSON IN THE WORLD

I don't always save the world, but when I do...

Effect: Nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to any skill checks they apply a background to.

Booster: The range of this aura becomes unlimited.

Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +2.

Epic Feat: When boosted, allies can add the escalation die to their skill checks.

POWERFUL UNITED

We are more powerful than the sum of our parts.

Effect: Each nearby ally can sacrifice his or her action to give another nearby ally a lesser action on either one's turn.

Booster: At the end of the initiative order, pick one nearby ally to gain a single standard action.

Adventurer Feat: When boosted, the selected ally gains a full turn.

Champion Feat: When an ally sacrifices an action, the target ally gains the same type of action.

Epic Feat: Once each per battle, each ally can sacrifice a move action to give another ally a standard action.

SELF ABSORBED

Actually, it's all about me.

Effect: Each time you suffer damage from a non-critical hit which does not include another ally, you divert half of the damage to a nearby ally you can see. The affected ally is pulled next to you if not already (if the ally cannot be moved, the ally cannot take damage).

Booster: If an ally is staggered by the shunted damage, said ally gains a basic attack immediately.

Adventurer Feat: You can control the shunted damage (up to half damage inflicted to a nearby ally).

Champion Feat: You can divert any amount of damage to a nearby ally (including all of it).

Epic Feat: You can now divert critical hit damage as well. Additionally, two allies gain basic attacks.



OPERATOR



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STIRRING SPEECH

Using only your words, you call your comrades back from the most harmful of afflictions.

Effect: Nearby allies double their hit points when calculating their resistance to fear.

Booster: Allies quadruple hit points when calculating their resistance to fear.

Adventurer Feat: Targeted allies are immune to being confused.

Champion Feat: When boosted, targeted allies are immune to being hampered.

Epic Feat: When boosted, targeted allies are also immune to being vulnerable.

SUBTLE ENCOURAGEMENT

What is this “know thy enemy” crap? It isn’t about what you read in books.

Effect: Nearby allies gain a +2 bonus to saves to recover from conditions and ongoing damage.

Booster: Each nearby ally can automatically make one save.

Champion Feat: Increase bonus to saves to +3.

Epic Feat: When boosted, allies pass normal saves.

OPERATOR

The general-use operative, the jack-of-all-trades – the techan group will be hard pressed to survive without their operator. The operator is a vital member, especially as a group ventures deeper and deeper in the world of fantasy. You found the outside world fascinating, but you are not one to forget the damage it has done to your species and their legacy. The progress of man has faltered and you strive to get it back.

But to destroy a thing, you must understand a thing. You refuse to turn a blind eye to that world, for naiveté is a sure path to death. Just shooting stuff that doesn't conform is a sign of archaic military monsters. That primitive attitude is a sign of archaic military monsters. True survival deals with mankind's unique ability to adapt, to understand the ways and flaws of a system. As an expert in this world, you know how to survive in it, but more importantly, you know how to survive in it without magic.

You don't specialize in one talent but many. You are the linguist, the mechanic, the medic, and the professor rolled into one. You understand the relationship between magic and technology and can repair the results when they clash. You have seen the types of injuries sustained on human flesh by the claws and spells of monsters and the conditions other doctors would scratch their heads over. You know more about the regions and monsters of the world than any other. Of all the members of a techan group, you are probably the only one that could survive on your own—not that you would want to.

The operator is the foremost authority on the outside world and its effects on man and machinery. You have studied echa and know it as well as anyone that has spent their entire life out there. Unlike others, you may not have the fevered hatred of the world of fantasy. You have been accused of being a sympathizer, but one must know an enemy in order to defeat it. You address this with two possible approaches. One is to support the group as a doctor and the other is to maintain the technological supremacy of the team as a whole.

Play Style: You are responsible for the safety of the comrades next to you. You maintain the scientific superiority of the group, keeping machinery operating, patching injuries when they arrive, and disabling and enabling demotions. You are also, on average, the most experienced member in regards to echa. Without you, the others would be lost with broken technology.

Builds: Both the mechanic and the medic have the same stats, gear, and basic attacks but have different level progression tables.

Ability Scores: You need Intelligence more than anything if you wish to be an operator. You gain a +2 bonus with it, and unlike other classes, it can be the same ability you increase with your racial bonus (yes, we went there). You still need Dexterity as your attack and damage attribute with ranged weapons.



Unlike standard 13th Age classes, there is no alternate ability modifier for operator. I mean, why would you add to anything else?

GEAR

At 1st level, operators start with a one-handed simple melee weapon for emergencies along with one or two firearms. They also gain one armor set. Additionally, an operator can start with either 100 UC or roll 3d6 x 10 UC. They should use these funds to purchase needed equipment like medical and engineer kits.

ARMOR

Operators usually only wear light armor as heavier armor impedes their scientific work. Shields would also be unwise. Mechanics have a tendency of tweaking their armor for bonuses.

Operator Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Attack Penalty
None	10	
Light	12	
Heavy	13	-2
Shield	+1	-2

WEAPONS

Firearms can be pistols, rifles, or heavier weapons like machine guns. Although a player certainly can select a special weapon at 1st level, these have limited ammo, and after being used, is effectively worthless until new ammo can be procured. It is suggested an operator take a two-handed weapon along with a backup pistol. A medic often only uses weapons to hold off enemies as he patches his friends, while mechanics use weapons they've modified. What good is a weapon modification if you don't use it?

Primitive weapons: There is nothing stopping you from wielding medieval ranged weapons in a pinch, especially if your normal weapons suffer disruption or run out of ammunition (by hand of a cruel GM). However, because they are not your specialty, you suffer attack penalties with such weapons. Crossbows are fairly similar to guns, and only inflict a -2 penalty; other ranged weapons inflict -4. The GM may also rule that particularly primitive firearms (such as muzzle-loaders) are sufficiently far removed from what you're familiar with to warrant the -2 penalty, depending on your home bastion's tech level.



MECHANIC OPERATOR LEVEL PROGRESSION

Operator Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Shiny Red Button	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
1	(8+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	1	3		ability modifier
2	(8+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	2	3		ability modifier
3	(8+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	2	3		ability modifier
4	(8+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	2	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
5	(8+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	3	4		2x ability modifier
6	(8+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	3	4		2x ability modifier
7	(8+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	3	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier
8	(8+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	4	5		3x ability modifier
9	(8+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	4	5		3x ability modifier
10	(8+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	4	5	+1 to 3 abilities	3x ability modifier

MECHANIC / MEDIC OPERATOR STATS

Ability Bonus	+2 Intelligence
Initiative	Dex mod + Level
Armor Class (light armor)	12 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Physical Defense	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
Mental Defense	12 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
Hit Points	(8 + Con mod) x Level modifier (see level progression)
Recoveries	(probably) 8
Recovery Dice	(1d8 x Level) + Con mod
Backgrounds	8 points, max 5 in any background
Icon Relationships	3 points
Talents	3
Feats	1 per Level

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Operator Melee Weapons

One-Handed	Two Handed
Small	
1d4 knife	1d6 club
Light or Simple	
1d6 shortsword, tonfa	1d8 spear

Operator Ranged Weapons

One-Handed Firearm	Two-Handed Firearm
Light	
1d4 pistol	1d6 rifle
Medium	
1d6 pistol	1d8 machine gun
Heavy	
1d8 hand cannon	1d10 heavy gun

BASIC ATTACKS

MELEE ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

RANGED ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

MECHANIC OPERATOR

In combat situations, a mechanic operator is useful by improving the effectiveness of technology (namely weapons and powered armor). Outside of the fight, they can build and maintain the technology a group possesses.

MECHANIC CLASS FEATURES

All mechanic operators gains the following class features: *Advanced technical degree, midas touch, shiny red button.*

ADVANCED TECHNICAL DEGREE

You can gain a +2 bonus to any skill check regarding engineering, electronics, or learning or adapting technology. At 5th level, this increases to +3, and at 10th level, it increases to +5.

MIDAS TOUCH

While you are wielding a firearm, its damage die increases by one step (1d4 > 1d6 > 1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12). This stacks with any other effect that increases damage die size.

For every step above 1d12, add additional damage with each hit as indicated below.

1 step above 1d12	+1d6 damage
2 steps above 1d12	+2d6 damage
3 steps above 1d12	+2d8 damage
4 steps above 1d12	+3d8 damage
5 steps above 1d12	+3d10 damage

Adventurer Feat: Increase *midas touch* by one step.

Champion Feat: Increase *midas touch* by one step.

Epic Feat: Increase *midas touch* by one step.

SHINY RED BUTTON

Your friends don't know about this little red button you put on this device. Don't you just want to press it? And when you do, it can do a variety of things. You press the button as a free action and can do so before, during, or after an action has taken place. It generally works mostly with weapons, but any device which could theoretically be tweaked given a valid enough argument.

Each day, you gain a number uses of *shiny red button* equal to your Intelligence modifier + 1, gaining an additional use a day at 2nd, 5th, and 8th level. There are features and feats which can modify this number. You can use *shiny red button* in any combination, even using them all in once brilliant show of technological superiority.



Okay, I'm not saying there's some magical button on your gun; it's more a metaphorical approach to modifying technology to work in your favor. I also would restrict this power to weapons the operator actually owns and spent time modifying. He should be able to find a decent reason why something he picks up suddenly works better in his hands.



While the mechanics for this ability (and those that play off of it) call for regular effects, the name of the feature suggests a degree of randomness. For those special "I wish to press it, but I'm not sure what will happen if I do" moments, the GM can introduce an additional minor non-mechanical effect (flip a coin to see if it's positive or negative) on an odd d20 roll, and make up an unusual effect on a natural roll of 13 (or whatever number you prefer that isn't 1 or 20).

Condition	Effect
Before a ranged attack roll	Unless you roll a natural 1, you hit.
After a ranged attack roll	Increase the "natural" value on the dice by +1
When rolling for damage	Increase the weapon damage die by +1; this increases to +2 at 5th level and +3 at 8th level.
After making a skill check involving technology	Gain a +5 bonus to your skill check result.
After making a skill check involving technology	Gain a +5 bonus to your skill check result.
An enemy hits with a non-critical attack	You gain a +2 bonus to AC and PD

Adventurer Feat: You can push the button 2 additional times per day.

Champion Feat: You can push the jolly, candy like button 2 additional times per day.

Epic Feat: You can succumb to the maddening urge to push the button 2 additional times per day.



CLASS TALENTS

Choose three of the following class talents. You can select an additional talent at 5th and 8th level.

A LABORIOUS TASK

If you fail a skill check related to engineering, electronics, or any sciences, you can spend a recovery as a free action and re-roll.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +5 bonus to the reroll.

Champion Feat: The bonus to the reroll increases to +10.

Epic Feat: You can't fail the reroll.

A SCIENTIST, NOT A SOLDIER

If you hit an enemy with any type of attack, you can inflict half-damage and you can pop free of that enemy.

Adventurer Feat: You now inflict full damage and can still pop free.

Champion Feat: You can still pop free if you miss.

Epic Feat: If you pop free, you can move to be near the target instead of next to it.

BUTTON SAVANT

If you score a critical hit without the benefit of pushing the *shiny red button*, you gain a use of *shiny red button*. You cannot have more than your total allowed button pushes.

Adventurer Feat: At the end of a battle, you gain a push of the *shiny red button*.

Champion Feat: As a move action, spend a recovery, but recover no hit points; instead, you gain an additional use of *shiny red button* you must use before the end of the battle.

Epic Feat: Once per day, you can implement two effects when pushing the *shiny red button*.

CRIPPLING MODIFICATION

You can now push the *shiny red button* to add additional effects when rolling damage.

Condition	Effect
When rolling for damage	Target is hampered until the beginning of your next turn.
When rolling for damage	Target is vulnerable until the beginning of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: Push the *shiny red button* twice and the target is dazed until the beginning of your next turn.

Champion Feat: Push the *shiny red button* thrice and the target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: Push the *shiny red button* thrice and inflict ongoing damage. The ongoing damage equals 5 times your level. As usual, a normal save (11+) ends the damage. A critical hit doesn't double this ongoing damage.

DISRUPTION INSURANCE

It turns out, it only needed a bolt twist. Any technology you wield gains +3 bonus to disruption saves.

Adventurer Feat: All allies next to you benefit from your disruption bonus as well.

Champion Feat: Any technology you wield automatically passes all disruption saves.

Epic Feat: All allies next to you automatically pass all disruptions saves.

ECONOMIC PLATING

You gain a +2 bonus to AC when wearing light armor.

Adventurer Feat: If you push the *shiny red button* to boost AC and PD and are still hit, you recover that use of *shiny red button*.

Champion Feat: Your bonus to AC increases to +4

Epic Feat: When you push the *shiny red button* to boost AC and PD, you gain a +4 instead of +2.

FIRING MECHANISM TWEAK

You can now push the *shiny red button* to reroll a missed ranged attack roll. Like usual, rerolls use ammunition.

Adventurer Feat: Push the *shiny red button* before a ranged attack roll to roll the attack roll thrice and take the higher result.

Champion Feat: Once per turn, you can push the *shiny red button* after hitting a target to make a second attack roll against the same target.



INCREASE FIRING POTENTIAL

You can now push the *shiny red button* after hitting a target but before rolling for damage to increase your critical threat range by +1.

Adventurer Feat: Push the *shiny red button* twice to increase the critical threat range by +2.

Champion Feat: Push the *shiny red button* thrice to increase the critical threat range by +3.

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

If you score a critical hit, add your Intelligence modifier to the hit. This damage doubles at 5th level and triples at 8th level.

Adventurer Feat: You can add your *intelligent design* damage with a natural even hit as well.

Champion Feat: Replace Dexterity with Intelligence when adding attribute bonus to ranged attacks.

Epic Feat: Press the *shiny red button* to add your *intelligent design* damage to your hit if not a critical or an even hit.

MACGUY SOMETHING

Once a day, you are able to construct useful items or tools to accomplish something generally not allowed given the available resources available. The GM can either supply a random assortment of items you can use to create a tool or you can make a case for common items one is likely to find in order to solve an immediate crisis. This may involve searching an area or assuming certain items are available. If the GM is convinced by your argument, roll a normal save (11+) to see if the improvised gadget or solution works.

Adventurer Feat: Add your Intelligence modifier to the save.

Champion Feat: You can use *MacGuy something* twice per day. If you fail a save, you recover that use of *MacGuy something*.

MORE SCIENCE

You gain a +3 bonus to one specific scientific field for the use of skill checks. This can be astronomy, physics, archeology, anthropology, chemistry, any scientific field you think may be useful in the outer world. This becomes a personal interest and character focus, as it was your focus in school before leaving home (your backstory should reflect this).

Additionally, once per day, you can convince your GM that your understanding of the interaction of science and magic can give you an advantage in the current crisis. If the GM is convinced by your argument (perhaps based on a thesis you wrote in school), roll a

normal save (11+). Results can include improved critical threat on an enemy, the disarming of dungeon traps, or applying logic to resolve situation before it devolves into violence.

Adventurer Feat: Your bonus increases to +6. You also gain a +1 bonus to MD.

Champion Feat: If you roll a natural 2 through 9 with your skill check, you actually rolled a 10.

Epic Feat: Your bonus to MD increases to +3. You can also add your Intelligence modifier to your normal save employ *more science*.

OVERDRIVE

Once a day, you can attempt to temporarily overdrive a weapon or device, offering it a quick boost at the sacrifice of its reliability. Use a standard action and select a piece of equipment you can access. Make an engineering skill check and consult the following table: you can apply any one modification for which you meet or exceed the DC. The modification lasts until the end of the battle (or five minutes). After the battle has concluded or time has elapsed, you must make another skill check against the same DC. If you fail, the item becomes non-functional until the end of the next battle or the next full-heal up (whichever comes first). You can only have one item on overdrive at any one time.

	Bonus	Engineer DC
Weapons		
	+1 to damage	20
	+2 to damage	25
	+3 to damage	30
	+1 to attack, +2 to damage	30
	+2 to attack, +3 to damage	35
Electronic Devices		
	+1 skill bonus	20
	+2 skill bonus	25
	+3 skill bonus	30
Vehicles		
	+1 to maneuver	20
	+1 to maneuver	25
	+2 to maneuver	30

Adventurer Feat: You can use *overdrive* twice per day.

Champion Feat: You can double your Intelligence modifier when rolling the *overdrive* skill check.



MEDIC OPERATOR LEVEL PROGRESSION

Operator Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Powers Known	Pool Available	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
1	(8+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	4	1st level	3		ability modifier
2	(8+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	5	1st level	3		ability modifier
3	(8+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	5	3rd level	3		ability modifier
4	(8+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	6	3rd level	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
5	(8+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	6	5th level	3		2x ability modifier
6	(8+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	7	5th level	3		2x ability modifier
7	(8+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	7	7th level	3	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier
8	(8+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	8	7th level	3		3x ability modifier
9	(8+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	8	9th level	3		3x ability modifier
10	(8+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	9	9th level	3	+1 to 3 abilities	3x ability modifier

TECH SUPPORT

Once a day, if your weapon disrupts, make a ranged attack with said weapon. If you hit, double the damage inflicted. If you miss with the attack, the weapon backfires and you take half damage. The weapon does not disrupt.

Adventurer Feat: You either take a quarter of the damage on a miss or inflict half damage on an ally next to you.

Champion Feat: Allies next to you also benefit from *tech support*.

Epic Feat: You no longer suffer damage on a miss. You can also use *tech support* twice per day.

WEAPON GURU

Increase your *midas touch* by one step.

Adventurer Feat: When you score a critical hit, *midas touch* increases by one step.

Champion Feat: Push the *shiny red button* to increase *midas touch* by one step.

Epic Feat: Push the *shiny red button* to increase *midas touch* by two steps but your weapon cannot be used on your next turn.

WIDGET BAG

You keep pieces handy for on-site repairs and for building technology. You have 200 uc worth of widgets. Widgets cannot be sold or traded. They are useless to others. It cannot be disrupted and the parts work with the device you attempt to repair or items you want to build. You can increase the size of this widget bag later by investing in more widgets. This can come by dismantling found technology or just locating widgets from wrecks and broken machines. When you scavenge technology, the GM may award a certain value in additional widgets.

MEDIC OPERATOR

Techan parties for the most part can't benefit from the miracles of magical healing, and thus are forced to employ more scientifically consistent methods to recover from injuries. Considering most characters can't remove a bandage properly from the package, they require the use of a medic.

MEDIC CLASS FEATURES

All medic operators gains the following class features: *advanced medical degree*, *hippocratic oath*, *intelligence resistance*, and *risk an aneurysm*.

ADVANCED MEDICAL DEGREE

Once per day, as a free action, you can gain a +3 bonus to your next heal check. At 5th level, this increases to +5, and at 10th level, it increases to +7.

HIPPOCRATIC OATH

The medic operator has access to powers, but unlike other classes, yours are entirely daily. Fret not, because you can spend a recovery as a quick action, regain no hit points, and recover the use of one of your powers. Unless otherwise stated, you can only recover a power once.

INTELLIGENT RESISTANCE

You gain a +1 bonus to all saving throws.

Adventurer Feat: The save bonus increases to +2.

Champion Feat: Once a day, you can automatically pass one saving throw.

Epic Feat: The save bonus increases to +4.

RISK AN ANEURYSM

Once per round, use a move action and spend a recovery, but regain no hit points; instead, you gain a standard you must use before the end of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: You use a quick action instead of a move.

Champion Feat: You use a free action instead of a move action.

Epic Feat: You gain a move and a standard action.

CLASS TALENTS

Choose three of the following class talents.

DEFILADE

Twice per battle, if an enemy hits you with a non-critical ranged attack, you can turn that attack as a miss as an interrupt.

Adventurer Feat: You can use *defilade* four times per battle.

Champion Feat: All nearby and closer allies gain a +1 bonus to attack any creature that misses you with a ranged attack.

Epic Feat: You can use *defilade* against melee attacks.

DIAGNOSE AND CURE

Once per battle, as a move action, select one ally next to you suffering from a condition requiring a save. The ally gains a +4 bonus to the save.

Adventurer Feat: The ally makes the save immediately on your turn.

Champion Feat: The bonus to save increases to +6; the ally automatically makes any normal saves.

Epic Feat: You can use *diagnose and cure* twice per battle.

EVASIVE OVERDRIVE

Target one enemy you can see with a move action. You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses against the target until the creature is dead, the battle ends, or you select another enemy.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus to all defenses increases to +3.

Champion Feat: The bonus to all defenses increases to +4.

Epic Feat: You can target two enemies.

LIFE AND LIMB

Once per battle, if you hit a target, you can pop free and the target cannot engage you until the end of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: You can use *life and limb* twice per battle.

Champion Feat: You can use *life and limb* thrice per battle.

Epic Feat: *Life and limb* can be used at will.

MEDICAL CARE

Target one ally with a move action to gain a +3 bonus to MD until the end of the battle or until you select another ally.

Adventurer Feat: You can replace the +3 bonus with your Intelligence modifier.

Champion Feat: You can target two allies.

Epic Feat: All allies next you benefit from the bonus.





MEDICAL EXPERTISE

If an ally next to you hits a creature, as an immediate action, you can grant a damage bonus to the hit equal to your Intelligence modifier. This bonus doubles at 8th level.

Adventurer Feat: The damage bonus is equal to your Intelligence + Wisdom modifier.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, you can double your damage bonus on an ally's hit.

Epic Feat: If the escalation die is +4 or higher, *medical expertise* also increases the threat range by +1.

NATURAL HEALER

Twice per battle, you can use a standard action to heal yourself or a target next to you. The target uses a recovery but regains hit points equal to your recovery value + your Intelligence modifier.

Adventurer Feat: The target regains hit points equal to your recovery value + 3x your Intelligence modifier.

Champion Feat: You gain a third use per battle.

Epic Feat: You gain a fourth use per battle.

NOD AND SAY "INTERESTINGLY"

You gain a +2 bonus to any Intelligence checks; this increases to +3 if it pertains to any science.



You can alternately stop the game and look up the answer on the internet...because your character is obviously smarter than you.

Adventurer Feat: The bonuses increase to +4 and +6 respectively.

Champion Feat: You gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence.

Epic Feat: You gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence.

1st LEVEL POWERS

EMERGENCY PATCH

You stop what you are doing and see to the injuries of an ally.

Daily

Target: You or one ally next to you.

Effect: The target regains hit points equal to your recovery value. The target can spend a recovery to regain additional hit points equal.

Adventurer Feat: Target regains additional hit points equal to twice your Intelligence modifier.

Champion Feat: If the target was killed in the previous round, you bring them to 1 hit point.

DELAY CONTAMINATION

Nothing helps more like a whole lot of drugs

Daily

Target: You or one ally

Effect: Target passes its next saving throw and gains a +4 bonus to saves against the same condition until the end of the battle.

Adventurer Feat: Target passes all saves for that condition until the end of the battle.

Champion Feat: This is reduced to a quick action.

FIND THE VEIN

It's so much easier when they don't squirm.

Daily

Effect: You gain a +5 bonus to any heal or medical checks required by the end of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus increases to +10.

MOVE TO ASSIST

An ally requires assistance. You race over to them in hopes of helping.

Daily

Effect: Move next to any nearby ally without provoking opportunity attacks. You can make a basic attack at any point. Targeted ally can spend a recovery.

Adventurer Feat: You can move next to a ally that's far away.

Champion Feat: If you score a critical hit, the ally can spend two recoveries.

PROTECT THE FALLEN

You would rather die than allow an ally under your care to come to harm.

Daily

Effect: Make a basic attack and an ally next to you can rally.

Adventurer Feat: Roll twice for your attack and take the higher result.

Champion Feat: Two allies next to you can rally.

SACRIFICIAL RECOVERY

If they were in place, they'd do the same.

Daily

Target: One ally next to you

Effect: You lose 1 recovery; the target gains 1 recovery.

Special: When you use this power, make a normal save (11+) to recover it for free.

Adventurer Feat: You no longer need to make a normal save to recover this power.

Champion Feat: This power only requires a quick action to use.

Epic Feat: When the target receives your recovery, they can make a normal save (11+) to gain two.

SUPPORT ROLE

Your attack is more of a diversion to allow others the opportunity to recover.

Daily

Effect: Make a basic attack, and two allies you can see can make saving throws against conditions they suffer from.

Adventurer Feat: Allies gain a +4 bonus to the save.

Champion Feat: Targeted allies automatically pass normal saves.



3rd LEVEL POWERS

AMPHETAMINE INJECTION

This one boosts focus and alertness.

Daily

Target: Two allies (which can include you)

Effect: Target is immune to being dazed for the rest of the battle.

Adventurer Feat: Target three allies.

Champion Feat: When you first use this power, increase the escalation die by 1.

CATECHOMALINE INJECTION

This one boosts the target's fight or flight hormones.

Daily

Target: Two allies (which can include you) next to you

Effect: Target gains a +2 bonus to AC and PD until the end of the battle.

Adventurer Feat: Target three allies.

Champion Feat: When you first use this power, the first attack against an affected ally misses.



This power and others like it do make the broad assumption that the medic operator has access to drugs and is able to administer them without access to a lab. I would normally say, just go with it. There are justifications which can be made, but the truth is I didn't want to force the medic to track his ingredients. If this still feels thin, one could always rebrand the powers.



Despite the clinical connotations of the word, pharmaceuticals are mostly natural derivatives anyway. It should be assumed that a field medic in a hostile environment where machines regularly break should at least know the medical uses of stinging nettles, leeches, and moldy bread.

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EXOTIC CONCOCTION

You dose up your allies with something which is most definitely illegal in the rest of the world.

Daily

Target: You and all allies next to you.

Effect: Each target can rally a second time at any point in a battle without requiring a save.

Adventurer Feat: Instead of using a second free rally, a targeted ally can turn a hit into a critical hit.

Champion Feat: When you use this power, all allies can immediately spend a recovery.

GOT NO GURNEY

No one, no one gets left behind.

Daily

Effect: You and one ally next to you pop-free from all enemies and move away from any previously engaged enemies (they become nearby). Your ally can make a ranged attack.

Adventurer Feat: You also make a ranged attack.

Champion Feat: All enemies are vulnerable to your attacks during this power.

Epic Feat: Roll twice for all attacks and take the higher result.

THEREPUTIC NIHILISM

Most treatments do more harm than good. This is not that.

Daily

Flexible attack

Trigger: You hit with an attack

Effect: You inflict ongoing damage equal to five times your level plus your Intelligence modifier.

Adventurer Feat: Double your Intelligence modifier.

Champion Feat: The save to recover from the damage increases to hard (16+).

Epic Feat: If you use a recovery and reset this power, the enemy fails it's first save.

5th LEVEL POWERS

MEDICAL MASTER

No, really, I don't have a god complex.

Daily

Target: Two allies (which can include you) next to you

Effect: The target can spend one recovery, recover hit points, and gain a +2 bonus to MD for the rest of the battle.

Champion Feat: The bonus to MD is equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Epic Feat: The target can spend two recoveries.

SLIPPERY LIKE A HUMAN

You jump out of the grasp of some mighty big hands.

Daily

Effect: Until you make an attack on an enemy, you can pop-free of any enemy as a quick action.

Champion Feat: You pop free of all enemies with a quick action.

Epic Feat: You can choose to make an attack without ending this power by taking a -4 penalty to your attack roll.

UNHEALTHY DOSE OF METHYLXANTHINES

"ENERGY! ALL THE TIME!"

Daily

Target: You or one ally next to you.

Effect: Target spends a recovery but the hit points gained become temporary hit points.

Champion Feat: If you spend a recovery and use this power a second time in the same battle, the escalation die increases by 1.

Epic Feat: Target also gains a +3 bonus to all saving throws while having temporary hit points as well as a +1 bonus to attack.

7th LEVEL POWERS

MINOR MEDICAL MIRACLE

"We all thought you were a goner...well, they all thought..."

Daily

Target: One ally next to you killed anytime this battle.

Effect: The target is raised to 1 hit point but is unconscious for the rest of the battle.

Champion Feat: The target is dazed instead of unconscious for the rest of the battle.

Epic Feat: The target can recover from the daze by making a normal save (11+).

PATTERN RECOGNITION

You quickly ascertain your enemy's tactics and motives. You taunt it to open a weakness.

Daily

Effect: Until the end of the battle, add your Intelligence bonus to all damage rolls. This bonus doubles at 5th level and triples at 8th level.

Champion Feat: Stop your damage bonus as a free action and increase the escalation die by 1.

Epic Feat: Stop your damage bonus as a free action and your next hit becomes a critical hit.

POUND THE CHEST

"LIVE, DAMN YOU! LIVE"

Daily

Target: One ally next to you that has been reduced to zero hit points or has been killed in the previous round.

Effect: Target spends a recovery, is stable, but remains unconscious until making a hard save (16+).

Champion Feat: If the target has no recoveries, use one of your own.

Epic Feat: The save to wake up is now normal (11+).

THE DOCTOR IS OUT...OF HIS MIND

You screw up and take it out on the enemy. Some may consider this a mild overreaction.

Daily

Requirement: You make a skill check and don't like the result, or an ally is reduced to below zero hit points.

Effect: Make a ranged attack. Continue making ranged attacks until you score a critical hit, run out of ammunition, or make four ranged attacks.

Champion Feat: You can make up to five ranged attacks, and ignore your ammunition use for these attacks.

Epic Feat: You can make up to six ranged attacks and score up to two critical hits. Ignore your ammunition use for these attacks.

9th LEVEL POWERS

CRIPPLING ROUND

You hit a tender spot and gain precious time to plan your next attack.

Daily

Flexible ranged attack

Trigger: You hit with an attack.

Effect: The target is hampered until the end of your next turn.

Champion Feat: The effect now requires a normal save (11+).

Epic Feat: The effect now requires a hard save (16+).

MAJOR MEDICAL MIRACLE

"'Playing' god? Please."

Daily

Target: One ally next to you.

Effect: If the ally has been killed in the battle or the last ten minutes, she awakens with one hit point. Alternately, an ally can spend as many recoveries as he wants.

Special: This power cannot be reset.

Epic Feat: A target can be revived if killed in the past hour.



SNIPER LEVEL PROGRESSION

Sniper Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Powers Known	Class Talents	Level-up Bonuses	Ability	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
1	(6+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	3	3			ability modifier
2	(6+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	4	3			ability modifier
3	(6+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	4	3			ability modifier
4	(6+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	5	3	+1 to 3 abilities		ability modifier
5	(6+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	5	3			2x ability modifier
6	(6+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	6	3			2x ability modifier
7	(6+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	6	3	+1 to 3 abilities		2x ability modifier
8	(6+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	7	3			2x ability modifier
9	(6+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	7	3			2x ability modifier
10	(6+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	8	3	+1 to 3 abilities		2x ability modifier

SNIPER STATS

Ability Bonus	+2 Dexterity or Wisdom (different from racial bonus)
Initiative	Dex mod + Level
Armor Class (light armor)	10 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Physical Defense	11 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
Mental Defense	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
Hit Points	(6 + Con mod) x Level modifier (see level progression)
Recoveries	(probably) 8
Recovery Dice	(1d8 x Level) + Con mod
Backgrounds	8 points, max 5 in any background
Icon Relationships	3 points
Talents	3
Feats	1 per Level

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SNIPER

You are as important as any member of the group, but you don't spend your travel time walking in step. You scout ahead, away from the distractions of the others, ever vigilant against any interlopers. You slither under bushes, stalking your prey. You strike close with the blade or pistol or at distance through the scope.

Snipers are still members of the team and can contribute to the effectiveness of the group by creating chaos in enemy lines. Nothing is more frightening than an enemy no one can see. As a distant set of eyes, you can communicate, via whispers and movements, necessary information on approaching enemies. When engagements get messy, you will still join the thick of it, never abandoning others despite the ambiguity of your location.

In the anarchy of the outside world, you can compensate for every situation. If an enemy presents you with a target from over a hill, so be it, but you are equally skilled if you can see their eyes and feel their breath. You don't wish to see a magical monstrosity unless it is behind the targeting reticle of your scope or dead on the ground after you claimed it as a kill.

You are a master of long-range fire. You take out targets well beyond the range of any of their weapons. By using gut instincts and field experience you can compensate for wind, gravity, and even the curvature of the planet. Your goal is to never be in direct combat and to prevent your allies from coming to harm.

Play Style: You are responsible for the safety of the comrades next to you. You move by stealth and strike at range. You observe enemies and relay information



back to the group so they can properly coordinate an ambush. Without you, the others would be unprepared for the shocks and surprises that await them.

Ability Scores: You can use either Dexterity or Wisdom for sniper attack/damage rolls. You gain a +2 bonus with one of your choice. At character creation, select which ability to be your “attack” attribute. The other becomes your “alternate” attribute. Class features and powers refer to “attack” and “alternate” attributes.

GEAR

At 1st level, snipers start with a one-handed simple melee weapon for emergencies along with two firearms—with at least one being a sniper weapon. They also gain one armor set. Additionally, a sniper can start with either 25 UC or roll 1d6 x 10 UC.



ARMOR

Snipers mostly wear light armor to stay mobile. If you wear heavy armor, you can employ no sniper powers.

Note: Some powered armors allow the use of sniper powers.

Sniper Armor and AC

Type	Base AC
None	10
Light	10
Heavy	11
Shield	+1

WEAPONS

Snipers will generally wield a one-handed firearm (pistol) and a long-range, two-handed sniper rifle. Sniper weapons employ a stabilization mechanism of some form (generally a bi- or tri-pod) and a targeting scope. Technically, you can turn virtually any single-shot weapon into a sniper weapon given such modifications. Almost all powers require the use of a sniper weapon and cannot be used on weapons without a brace and a targeting system of some kind. Automatic rifles with single-shot functions can be sniper rifles, as can pistols with an added shoulder stocks. It is generally assumed that if you acquired a pistol at character creation, it will be one with an removable stock. Likewise, it would make sense any two-handed or heavy weapon you acquire would be compatible with your sniper powers (rocket launchers and gatling guns do not apply).

Primitive weapons: There is nothing stopping you from wielding medieval ranged weapons in a pinch, especially if your normal weapons suffer disruption or run out of ammunition (by hand of a cruel GM). However, because they are not your specialty, you suffer attack penalties with such weapons. This starts as low as -2 for crossbows but can be as high as -4 for longbows and slings.

Sniper Melee Weapons

One-Handed	Two Handed
Small 1d4 knife	1d6 club
Light or Simple 1d6 shortsword, tonfa	1d8 spear

Sniper Ranged Weapons

One-Handed Firearm	Two-Handed Firearm
Light 1d4 pistol	1d6 bolt rifle
Medium 1d6 pistol	1d8 sniper rifle
Heavy 1d8 hand cannon	1d10 sniper rifle cannon

BASIC ATTACKS

MELEE ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

RANGED ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

CLASS FEATURES

You have the following class features.

MARKSMAN TALENT

Once per round on your turn, when using sniper weapons (a braced weapon and employing a targeting system), you gain the ability to inflict additional effects depending on how much you defeat your enemy's defense by.

You decide to use *marksman talent* after resolving an attack, and you only apply one condition listed above per hit. You can choose any result equal to your roll or lower. If you score a critical hit, you must still determine by how much you beat the enemy's defense.

Enemy's Defense Beaten by	Additional Effect
5	Target is hampered until the start of your next turn.
10	Target is dazed until the start of your next turn.
15	Target is weakened until the start of your next turn.
20	Target is stunned until the start of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: After hitting a target with a sniper ranged attack, increase the attack roll by +1.

Champion Feat: After hitting a target with a sniper ranged attack, increase the attack roll by +2 total.

Epic Feat: After hitting a target using a sniper ranged attack, increase your attack roll by +1 (+3 total).



RANGE ADJUSTMENT

In addition to the standard *13th Age Roleplaying Game* ranges of engaged, nearby, and far away, *Amethyst* introduces **distant** and **extreme**. Attacking distant targets (3-5 moves away) suffers a -4 penalty to attack rolls while attacking extreme targets (6-10 moves away) suffers a -8 penalty to attack rolls. The sniper is able to reduce these penalties with the following feats.

Adventurer Feat: Reduce range penalties by half.

Champion Feat: You suffer no range penalties to distant targets.

Epic Feat: The penalty to extreme targets is reduced to -2.



The sniper is a considerable departure from what you come to expect with 13th Age. In the core game, combat is expected to be close, while the sniper requires to be at range—resulting in the two new range increments. If the future game is expected to take place entirely in dungeons, players should be made aware of this. 13th Age philosophy runs against tactical combat, and the sniper embraces that role.



GMs, you will find it difficult to engage a sniper directly. My advice is not to try - instead, make it so that the sniper has to make a hard choice of who to provide fire support for. Avoid obvious 'boss monsters,' or have them come in twos or threes. If you really want to offer up the sniper some immediate threat, you still have some options: tougher monsters that can shrug off an initial shot and then come running for revenge, swarms that can overwhelm the sniping position, or cutthroat types who sneak up on the sniper. Just bear in mind that the ideal position for a sniper is some ways away from the main battleground, and by devoting extra attention to one character you're more likely to do a disservice to the bulk of the party.

SNIPER POWERS

As a sniper you have access to powers. Some enable a specific state which remain in effect until you hit, enable another state, or commit an action dictated in the power. Sniper powers don't have level requirements.

Alternately, at 4th, 6th, and 10th level, you can elect to gain an additional feat instead of selecting an additional power.

SNIPER RANGED ATTACK

In addition to your basic ranged attack, you also have access to a sniper ranged attack.

At-Will

Target: One enemy far away or further

Attack: Attack attribute + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Attack attribute damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

Adventurer Feat: Increase your miss damage by your alternate attribute.

Champion Feat: Increase your hit damage by your alternate attribute.

Epic Feat: If you score a critical hit, triple your alternate attribute bonus to damage.

CLASS TALENTS

Choose three of the following class talents.

BLOODY OR PIERCING

When you make a sniper ranged attack with a weapon with the sniper property against a target at least 5 squares away, you can choose to target AC or PD. If you hit PD, you inflict no damage but add a +5 to your attack roll for the purposes of *marksman talent*.

Adventurer Feat: Increase the bonus to *marksman talent* to +7.

Champion Feat: If you hit the target's PD, you still inflict damage as if you missed.

Epic Feat: Increase the bonus to *marksman talent* to +9.

BOOM! HEAD SHOT.

If you kill a non-mook with a ranged sniper attack, all enemies nearby are dazed until the start of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: All nearby non-mooks also suffer damage equivalent to a miss with a ranged sniper attack.

Champion Feat: If you kill a mook with a sniper ranged attack, you can make another sniper ranged attack with a move action.

Epic Feat: Instead of being dazed, targets are nearby targets are stunned.



DIRECT DAMAGE

Instead of inflicting a condition with *marksman talent*, you can inflict additional damage equal to half difference between the final attack roll and the target's AC (round down).

Adventurer Feat: Inflict the full difference in damage.

Champion Feat: One per battle, double your direct damage value.

Epic Feat: Once per battle, inflict damage and inflict a condition with *marksman talent*.

FROM THE HIP

You can now use sniper ranged attacks against nearby targets but suffer a -4 penalty to attack rolls.

Adventurer Feat: The penalty decreases to -2 .

Champion Feat: The penalty decreases to 0.

NO EXIT WOUND

If you score a critical hit, the target suffers a lingering wound. At the beginning of your next turn, the target suffers 1 die of weapon damage. This can only occur once. The damage increases to 2 weapon damage at 4th level, 3 weapon damage at 6th level, 5 weapon damage at 8th level and 7 weapon damage at 10th level.

Adventurer Feat: *No exit wound* occurs for two consecutive turns.

Champion Feat: Increase damage inflicted by your alternative ability.

Epic Feat: *No exit wound* occurs for four consecutive turns.

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You can use a move action to aim at a target. This target becomes your focus. You can only have one focus at a time. Your next attack roll against your focus gains a $+2$ bonus. Until you target another enemy, move, or make an attack roll, you can continue to use *perfect aim* and stack the attack bonuses (max $+8$). After you make the attack roll, the bonus is lost.

Adventurer Feat: If you reach a $+4$ bonus, you can reroll all natural 1s on the attack roll.

Champion Feat: If you reach a $+4$ bonus, you increase your level by 1 when calculating damage.

SHARPSHOOTER

Once per battle, if you hit, you can add $+2$ to the attack roll for the purposes *marksman talent*.

Adventurer Feat: Increase the bonus to $+5$.

Champion Feat: You gain a second use of *sharpshooter* per battle.

Epic Feat: You gain a third use of *sharpshooter* per battle.

TWITCH

You gain a $+1$ bonus on initiative. If you act first in a battle, you gain a $+2$ bonus on your first attack roll.

Adventurer Feat: Bonuses increase to $+2$ on initiative and $+3$ on your first attack roll.

Champion Feat: If you act first in an battle, set the escalation die to $+1$ after you turn is finished.

POWERS

ACT OF GOD

"Sniping is poetry in slow motion until you pull the trigger".

Daily

No action

Trigger: You hit with a sniper ranged attack.

Effect: Make a second sniper ranged attack against an enemy near the first enemy—this uses no additional ammunition.

Adventurer Feat: If you hit with the second attack, make a third attack against another target.

Champion Feat: If you miss the second attack, you regain this power.

CHECKING THE WIND

You examine the leaves, the way the grass sways, and compensate your next shot to follow the winds.

Daily

Quick action

Requirement: You hit with a sniper ranged attack this turn.

Effect: Your gain a $+2$ bonus to *marksman talent* with your hit.

Adventurer Feat: Use a recovery to reset this power.

Champion Feat: The bonus increases to $+5$.

COUP DE MAIN

Your body responds before you do—a reflex response to an incoming threat.

Daily

No action

Trigger: Your group is ambushed (surprise).

Effect: Roll for initiative. If you beat any enemies acting in the ambush, you can act before them.

Adventurer Feat: If you have the highest initiative, the ambush is nullified.

FAILURE NOT AN OPTION

You can't afford to miss this shot.

Daily

No action

Trigger: You miss with a ranged sniper attack.

Effect: Re-roll the attack, using no additional ammunition. If you hit with the re-roll, you cannot use *marksman talent*.

Adventurer Feat: You can employ *marksman talent* with the first re-rolled attack.

Champion Feat: You gain a second re-roll.

Epic Feat: Continue re-rolling a miss until you hit or roll a natural 1.

FAKE ECHO

The sound of your weapon's discharge bounces off a distant wall or the flash is marred by the sun. Enemies have trouble finding where the shot came from.

Daily

Quick action

Requirement: You make a sniper ranged attack from a hidden location this turn.

Effect: Enemies cannot locate you with a skill check. They may know a shot rang out if you didn't use a suppressor, but cannot pinpoint your location.

HAND SIGNS

With silent communication, you instruct an ally to move into an advantageous position or convey important information.

At-Will

Move action

Effect: Target an ally you can see that is distant or closer. The ally can move if not engaged.

Adventurer Feat: You can affect any ally you can see.

Champion Feat: Use a standard action instead of a move, and you can affect two allies.

MARKERLIGHT

You paint the target to allow allies a chance to concentrate fire.

At-Will

Standard action

Effect: Make a sniper ranged attack. You neither inflict damage nor impose any condition; instead, you paint the target with a reticle allies can use to aid aiming. Your allies gain a +2 bonus to attack until the beginning of your next turn or until you make another sniper ranged attack.

Adventurer Feat: You can denote one ally to benefit from the *markerlight* and improve the bonus to +3.

Epic Feat: Allies gain a +1 bonus to their crit range against the *markerlight* target.

OSWALD MANEUVER

Multiple shots in quick succession with no decrease in accuracy...could be done.

Battle

Move action

Requirement: You hit with a sniper ranged attack this turn.

Effect: Make a second sniper ranged attack against the same target. You suffer a -2 penalty to attack and only inflict half damage if this attack hits.

Adventurer Feat: You no longer suffer the attack penalty.

Champion Feat: You now can inflict full damage.

Epic Feat: This power is reduced to a quick action and if the second attack hits, you can make a third, though this one suffers a -2 penalty to attack and inflicts half-damage.

PENETRABLE SHOT

You know instinctively where the enemy is hiding. He won't be expecting this.

Battle

Quick action

Effect: Your next attack this turn can ignore any attack penalties by an object blocking line of sight between you and the target (the hit may still inflict less damage determined by the GM).



PERFECT CAMOUFLAGE

"Invisible soles leave gaping holes."

Daily

Quick action

Effect: Gain a +5 bonus to skill checks to hide and move silently until the end of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: You can sustain this power for one additional turn.

Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +10.

SWIFT, SILENT, DEADLY

From across the field of battle, your bullet finds its mark.

Battle

Quick action

Effect: You gain a +2 bonus to all sniper ranged attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Adventurer Feat: You can sustain this power with a quick action for one additional turn.

Epic Feat: You can sustain this power until you are hit with an attack.

SYSTEMIC INFLAMMATORY RESPONSE

The bullet pierced a vital organ and the subject struggles to breathe.

Battle

Quick action

Requirement: You hit with a sniper ranged attack this turn.

Effect: You also inflict ongoing damage equal to your alternate ability. This value doubles at 5th level and triples at 8th level.

Adventurer Feat: If you hit the target while suffering from this ongoing damage, the save increases to hard (16+).

Champion Feat: If you hit the target while suffering from this ongoing damage, the target fails its next save for it.

TENDER SPOT

"Two lines you should never cross....horizontal and vertical."

Battle

Quick action

Requirement: You hit with a sniper ranged attack this turn.

Effect: You are counted as one level higher when calculating damage.

Adventurer Feat: Use a recovery and reset this power.

Champion Feat: You are counted as two levels higher when calculating damage.

THAT'S ONE, TWO, THREE

"God is not on the side of battalions, but on the side that shoots best."

Daily

Standard action

Effect: Make three sniper ranged attacks.

ZERO YOUR WEAPON

You take a moment to configure the targeting scope to compensate for the range to the target.

Battle

Quick action

Effect: Any range penalties with your next sniper ranged attack suffers is reduced by 2.

Adventurer Feat: If you miss with the attack, you recover this power.

Champion Feat: Until you move, this power does not expire.



VANGUARD

You are specialized in the application of a craft that some people consider primitive. Despite any ranged combat skills you may have, you prefer to make things personal. You have practiced day and night in the perfection of the craft. There may be countless reasons why you prefer close combat over firearms, but the primary one is usually self-empowerment. Your strengths rely on your lethality in every situation. You require no augmentation, no steel or explosives to articulate your skill. Your weapons cannot be removed. There is no scanner or sensor to identify you as a threat. You often lead a group through the door. You can suppress opponents without causing harm; remove a threat without making a sound. Firearms are a final, violent solution and most times a restrained hand is needed.

As a warrior, you've been trained from an early age by choice or by inheritance to take the role of a combatant. Your natural gifts were discovered and focused into a lifelong dedication. This is not to assume you're a warmonger, as such training comes early with the responsibility to know restraint. For many, having the skills is a means for self-discovery. This can apply in the application of hand-to-hand combat, the use of melee weapons, or in the proficiency of small-arms. You might have devoted your life to the implement of one craft or the broad use of many.

Play Style: The vanguard can fill a vital role in a techan party. Being a close combat defender means the vanguard may be the only opposition from monsters wishing to close the distance to your ranged allies. Even if opponents attempt to move, you can keep with them and prevent your allies from coming to harm.

With martial feats, you can specialize in a variety of different regional variations of melee and unarmed combat. This will radically alter how you apply the powers of the class. You can be a direct fist and kick fighter or a wrestler. You can specialize in flips, locks, or direct blunt force trauma. You also have stances which are always in effect unless you activate another stance.

Ability Scores: You use Dexterity or Strength as a vanguard (see class features). You gain a +2 bonus with one of your choice.

GEAR

At 1st level, vanguards start with a melee weapon or two along with one firearm. They also gain one armor set. Additionally, a vanguard can start with either 25 UC or roll 1d6 x 10 UC.

ARMOR

As a vanguard, you can technically wear any armor you want, though this may affect how your class operates. You gain a bonus to AC depending on which ability you select for your vanguard attack and damage rolls and which armor you wear.

Vanguard Armor and AC

Type	Base AC
None	10
Light	13
Heavy	14
Shield	+1

WEAPONS

Despite classed as a techan, the vanguard is often seen sporting medieval weapons. Though possibly forged from machines, their dated inspiration cannot be denied. It is only later in life could you possibly wield more advanced melee weapons. However, when requiring range, you still prefer civilized firearms.

Primitive weapons: There is nothing stopping you from wielding medieval ranged weapons in a pinch, especially if your normal weapons suffer disruption or run out of ammunition. However, because they are not your specialty, you suffer attack penalties with such weapons. This starts as low as -2 for crossbows but can be as high as -4 for longbows and slings. They do not count as one-handed small arms.

Vanguard Melee Weapons

One-Handed	Two Handed
Small	
1d4 knife	1d6 club
Light or Simple	
1d6 shortsword, tonfa	1d8 spear

Vanguard Ranged Weapons

One-Handed Firearm	Two-Handed Firearm
Light	
1d4 pistol	1d6 bolt rifle
Medium	
1d6 pistol	1d8 rifle
Heavy	
1d8 hand cannon	1d10 rifle cannon

BASIC ATTACKS

MELEE ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength or Dexterity + Level vs. AC*

Hit: WEAPON + Strength or Dexterity damage*

Miss: Damage equal to your level

*: See **Martial Discipline**

RANGED ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level



VANGUARD LEVEL PROGRESSION

Sniper Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Martial Feats	Martial Stances	Class Talents	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
1	(8+CON mod) x3	1 adventurer	1	1	3		ability modifier
2	(8+CON mod) x4	2 adventurer	2	2	3		ability modifier
3	(8+CON mod) x5	3 adventurer	3	2	3		ability modifier
4	(8+CON mod) x6	4 adventurer	4	2	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
5	(8+CON mod) x8	4 adventurer 1 champion	5	3	3		2x ability modifier
6	(8+CON mod) x10	4 adventurer 2 champion	6	3	4		2x ability modifier
7	(8+CON mod) x12	4 adventurer 3 champion	7	3	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier
8	(8+CON mod) x16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	8	4	4		2x ability modifier
9	(8+CON mod) x20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	9	4	4		2x ability modifier
10	(8+CON mod) x24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	10	4	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2x ability modifier

VANGUARD STATS

Ability Bonus	+2 Strength or Dexterity (different from racial bonus)
Initiative	Dex mod + Level
Armor Class (heavy armor)	15 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Armor Class (light armor)	14 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Physical Defense	10 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
Mental Defense	10 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
Hit Points	(8 + Con mod) x Level modifier (see level progression)
Recoveries	(probably) 8
Recovery Dice	(1d10 x Level) + Con mod
Backgrounds	8 points, max 5 in any background
Icon Relationships	3 points
Talents	3 (see level progression chart)
Feats	1 per Level

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The inclusion of the vanguard initially was to counter what I felt was an overtly magical monk class in other fantasy books (so the addition of techan weapons is entirely optional). That aside, I kept it as a techan class because of its need in games pushing for more melee combat.

VANGUARD CLASS FEATURES

You have the following class features.

ARMOR SPECIALITY

If you select Dexterity as your martial specialty (below), you gain a +1 bonus to AC when wearing light armor; if you select Strength, you gain a +1 bonus to AC when wearing heavy armor.

Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +2.



DISTINCT ADVANTAGE

You gain the *distinct advantage* power.

Battle

Free action

Trigger: You hit with an attack

Target: One creature you hit.

Effect: Increase WEAPON damage by 1 die. At 5th level, increase this bonus to 2 dice, and at 8th level, increase it to 3 dice.

Special: If using this power with an unarmed attack, you instead add your level to your damage roll.

Adventurer Feat: You gain a second use per battle.

Champion Feat: You gain a third use per battle.

Epic Feat: You gain a fourth use per battle.

MARTIAL DISCIPLINE

Pick either Dexterity or Strength as your primary attribute. This decides if you use Dexterity or Strength with basic melee attacks. Additionally, you do not suffer the usual -2 penalty to unarmed attacks.

MARTIAL TRAINING FEATS

You gain access to a unique set of feats—the martial training feats. These feats are selected over and above

your normal feats, and you can also choose them when you normally gain a feat. You gain a number of martial feats equal to your level.

MARTIAL STANCES

At first level, you gain a martial stance. These are abilities which remain in effect until you end or replace them. Unless otherwise stated, you cannot have more than one stance in effect at any time. You activate a stance with move action and can end it as a free action, though you cannot begin a new one until the beginning of your next turn. If you are confused, hampered, helpless, or stunned, your stance automatically ends and you cannot activate one until you recover from the condition.

You gain an additional stance at 2nd, 5th, and 8th levels.

Champion Feat: Although they must be activated separately, you can use two martial stances simultaneously.

Epic Feat: Although they must be activated separately, you can use three martial stances simultaneously.



MARK FOR DEATH

Once per battle, when you engage a target, you can elect to mark said target as a free action. As long as you are engaged with it, a marked target suffers a -2 penalty to any attack that does not include you as one of its target. This remains in effect until you or the target disengages.

Adventurer Feat: The target remains marked even after it disengages but not if you disengage.

Champion Feat: You gain an additional use per battle and, you can mark two targets at once.

Epic Feat: You gain an additional use per battle and you can mark three targets at once.



That's right, marking rules are now in 13th Age, although mostly just for the vanguard class. It does add a level of strategy to a game attempting to avoid it, but the vanguard is admittedly the least common techan class in a party.

NATURAL WEAPON

Your hands and feet are natural weapons. Technological expansions (like power gloves and lightning gauntlets) are still considered natural weapons. As such, you cannot be disarmed. Obviously, your weapons are one-handed. They have a base damage of 1d6. You can still wield melee weapons and there are stances and feats specializing in either natural weapons or melee weapons.

Champion Feat: The base damage of your natural melee weapons increase by one step (1d6 to 1d8 to 1d10 to 1d12).

Epic Feat: The base damage of your natural melee weapons increase by one step (1d6 to 1d8 to 1d10 to 1d12).

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In case it isn't obvious, this means that you don't suffer the normal -2 penalty to all unarmed attacks. You'd think that for a medium largely influenced by action movies, brawling would get more love in RPGs...

CLASS TALENTS

You start with three talents; select an additional at 6th level.

C-C-C-COMBO BREAKER

When an engaged enemy scores a critical hit on you, you gain a basic melee attack against that enemy as an interrupt.

Adventurer Feat: You can elect to not roll to attack, hit automatically, but only inflict 1/4 damage.

Champion Feat: You now inflict half-damage if not rolling to attack.

Epic Feat: If the target is marked, you roll to attack and inflict half damage on a miss.

HURTS WHEN I LAUGH

Your total hit points each level increase to 9.

KUNG-FU GRIP

You gain a +4 bonus to opportunity attacks.

Adventurer Feat: Enemies attempting to disengage from you need a hard save (16+) to avoid an opportunity attack.

Champion Feat: Enemies cannot disengage from you without provoking an opportunity attack (they can still pop free).

IN YOUR FACE

Once a day point to a non-staggered target far away or closer and mark it (suffering a -2 penalty to attack any other target but you) as a quick action. The target remains marked as long as you are in line of sight and are in range. The mark also ends when the creature is staggered.

Adventurer Feat: Marked targets are vulnerable to you.

Champion Feat: You gain a second use of this ability.

Epic Feat: Targets marked this way remain so until killed.

FEAR THE REAPER

You gain an additional use per battle of *mark of death*.

MAKE AN OPENING

You gain an additional use of *distinct advantage* per battle.

MOBILE ONE

If you are wearing light armor, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against any targets you have marked.

Adventurer Feat: If you are engaged with two or more enemies, you can use a move action to pop free of one of them.

Champion Feat: Your bonus increases to +2.

PROTECTIVE SHROUD

When wearing heavy armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC against any targets you have marked.

Adventurer Feat: Once per day, when you are staggered by your marked target, your next hit against it is a critical.

Champion Feat: Your bonus increases to +2.

STUMBLE STRIKE

Once per round, if an enemy in reach rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll against you, you gain a basic melee attack against that enemy as a reaction.

Champion Feat: If you miss the enemy with the above attack, spend a recovery—regaining no hit points—to turn it into a hit.

MARTIAL STANCES COUNTER POSE

Until you end the stance, if an enemy hits you, you gain a +2 bonus to your next attack against that enemy.

Adventurer Feat: If you miss your attack roll with the bonus, decrease the bonus to +1 on your next attack. This stacks if your enemy hits you again.

Champion Feat: The bonus increases to +3 the first attack and +2 on the second.

DEFENSIVE POSTURE

Until you end the stance, you gain a +1 bonus to AC and a +2 bonus to attack rolls with any attacks made outside of your turn.

Adventurer Feat: If an enemy scores a critical hit on you, make a basic melee attack as a reaction.

Champion: If an enemy staggers you, make a basic melee attack as a reaction.

Epic Feat: You gain a basic melee attack as a reaction if you are hit a second time before your turn.

DOMINATOR

Until you end the stance, target an enemy's PD instead of AC but don't add ability damage to the hit.

Adventurer Feat: Add the escalation die to damage.

Champion Feat: You gain a +4 bonus to overcome damage resistance.

EPIC RISE

Until you end the stance, you gain a bonus to MD and PD equal to half the escalation die.

Adventurer Feat: You can now ignore damage with each hit you take equal to half the escalation die.

Champion Feat: You can now use a move action to recover hit points equal to the escalation die. At 8th level, this increases to the full die value.

EXTERNAL STYLE

Until you end the stance, you can add your Constitution modifier to damage rolls with melee weapons. If you activate this stance, all hit point recovery is halved until the end of the battle.

Champion Feat: Spend a recovery as a free action after a hit, recover no hit points, but add half that value to your last hit this turn.

Epic Feat: Targets staggered by your attack are stunned until the beginning of your next turn.

FOCUS SIGHTS

Once per battle, when you begin this stance, select a target you can see, until you end the stance or the target is killed, it is vulnerable to your attacks. This is your focus. You suffer a -2 penalty to attack any other enemies until you end the stance.

Adventurer Feat: Add your ability modifier when rolling a miss against your focus.

Champion: If you roll a natural even hit on your focus, you gain a use of *distinct advantage* against your focus and use it immediately.

Epic Feat: If you inflict the killing blow on your focus, you can select a new focus.



FULL WUSHU

Until you end the stance, you can use a move action to make a basic melee attack against a marked target you are engaged with. You can only make one attack per enemy each turn. If you hit, do not add ability modifier to damage.

Champion Feat: If free, you can move to and engage one nearby enemy and make a basic melee attack as a standard action.

Epic Feat: Unless grabbed or stuck, you can pop free at will as a move action.

GRAPPLER

Until you end the stance, hitting marked targets while wielding natural weapons can also grab them. You can only grab one at a time. While a target is grabbed, you suffer a -4 penalty to attack other targets.

Adventurer Feat: You can spend a move action to render a grabbed target stuck until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: Double your ability modifier to damage rolls against targets you are grabbing.

INTERNAL STYLE

Until you end the stance, you gain a $+2$ bonuses to all saves and are immune to being confused. You cannot be confused when you begin this stance.

Adventurer Feat: The bonus to saves increases to $+4$ and you are immune to fear.

Champion Feat: If you started this stance on your first turn and maintain it until the end of the battle, after the battle, all healing effects are doubled.

Epic Feat: You pass any attempts to rally.

OPPONENT CONTROL

Until you end the stance, the penalty for marked enemies making attacks not including you as a target increase to -3 .

Adventurer Feat: If you hit a marked target, one ally also engaged with that enemy can pop-free.

Champion Feat: If a marked enemy you are engaged with hits another ally it is engaged with, you gain a basic melee attack as a reaction.

Epic Feat: If you are staggered, the penalty for marked enemies making attacks not including you as a target increases to -4 .

MARTIAL TRAINING FEATS

These feats represent expanded possibilities for unarmed combat.

CLEAR ADVANTAGE

Champion Feat: When using *distinct advantage*, you can elect to not inflict additional damage; instead, the target is dazed until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: If you hit a target suffering from Clear Advantage, you extend the daze another turn.

BALANCE AND DIRECTION

You are trained in the advanced hand-to-hand skills of karate, muay Thai, taekwondo.

Adventurer Feat: While wielding natural weapons, you gain a $+1$ bonus to AC and PD against melee attacks.

BOUNCING COMBO

Adventurer Feat: If you stagger or drop a non-mook with an unarmed attack, you gain a move action that must be used before the end of your turn.

CAN KICK

Adventurer Feat: Use a move action on the same turn after you hit a target to inflict additional damage equal to your $2 +$ level.

Champion Feat: Increase the damage to $4 +$ your level.

Epic Feat: Increase damage to $8 +$ your level.

EVOLUTION OF PANKRATION

You are trained in the contact martial art of hapkido, jujutsu, or sambo.

Adventurer Feat: If you engage a single opponent your size, your crit range is expanded by 2.

Champion Feat: If you engage a single marked opponent your size and roll a natural even hit, the target is stuck until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: You can use your Evolution of Pankration abilities on two engaged and targets at once.



GAME OF STICKS

You are trained in kalo, jogo do pau, silambam, or any stick-based martial art.

Adventurer Feat: If you are wielding a staff weapon roll twice for opportunity attacks and take the higher result.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, you can attack a nearby target without engaging it. If you miss, you regain this ability.

GUNKATA

Adventurer Feat: One-handed small arms count as melee weapons when attacking engaged targets.

Champion Feat: If wielding two one-handed small arms, gain a +1 shield bonus to AC against engaged enemies.



If you want more than enhanced pistolwhipping and point-blank attacks, consider playing a gunslinger instead. These feats are geared more toward the protagonists of Hong Kong crime films.

JUMPING KNEE

Adventurer Feat: If you move and engage a single target in the same turn, roll twice to attack, take the higher result, and add 1 additional weapon die of damage. This is an unarmed attack.

Champion Feat: If you use jumping knee against a target adjacent to an obstruction, they take triple your attribute damage.

KAYFABE MANEUVER

Adventurer Feat: If you roll a natural even hit against a marked and engaged enemy currently also engaged with an ally, said ally can pop free.

Champion Feat: Said ally can also make an opportunity attack against the disengaging enemy.

MASTER DEGREE MARTIAL ARTIST

Epic Feat: If you score a critical hit, increase weapon damage die by 1.

NERVE CLUSTER

Adventurer Feat: If you roll a natural even hit against a marked target and use Distinct Advantage, increase the weapon die by 1.

Champion Feat: If you add damage from Nerve Cluster and the target becomes staggered, increase the weapon damage by 1.

NON-LETHAL INTENT

Adventurer Feat: If you inflict damage with a melee attack equal to half the enemy's staggered hit points, you can elect to inflict no damage and the target is stunned for five minutes or until hit with an attack.

Champion Feat: When employing Non-Lethal Intent, add two weapon dice damage.

SWORDS OF GRACE

You are trained in gatka, kendo, or various other defensive weapon-based martial arts.

Adventurer Feat: Once per round, when wielding two melee weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn if you miss a marked target.

Champion Feat: If you score a critical hit wielding a one-handed weapon on a marked target, the bonus to AC increases to +4.

TAG TEAM

Adventurer Feat: If an ally engaged with a marked enemy you are engaged with and hits said enemy, the ally inflicts additional damage equal to your Dexterity or Strength modifier.

THE RITUAL OF DANCE AND DAMAGE

Like many martial arts like capoeira and wushu, your combat style has become flamboyant and entertaining.

Champion Feat: While using only natural weapons, you can use a move action to engage nearby targets without disengaging from existing targets (GM discretion in case certain targets cannot be reached).

Epic: If you score a critical hit on a marked enemy with a natural melee weapon, you can pop free of any number of enemies you want.



TOSSER

Champion Feat: If you score a critical hit on an enemy your size, use a move action that same turn to throw the enemy, disengaging him from you and all other allies. It suffers additional damage equal to a missed basic attack.

TRUE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE ART

The core belief system of many martial arts.

Adventurer Feat: As a quick action, spend a recover, gain no hit points, but gain resist all damage 11+ until the end of your next turn. If you suffer not damage by the time the resist expires, you regain the recovery.

Champion Feat: The resist increases to 16+.

Epic Feat: The resist increases to 18+. You can spend a standard action once to sustain the resist without spending a recovery.

WAY OF THE TURN

You specialize in aikido, judo, shuai jiao, or other martial arts specializing in redirecting an opponent's momentum.

Champion Feat: If you hit with a melee attack, you can inflict half damage and the target is weakened until the beginning of your next turn.

Epic Feat: If you score a critical hit, you can elect to do no damage and target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn.



While options for more mystical martial artists exist in other 13th Age supplements, if you want to use the vanguard as the basis for a fantasy martial artist (with or without the Ancient Wuxia background), you can do so: names of the feats aside, the mechanics serve just as well for a narros monk as they do for a MMA fighter from York. Just ignore the high-tech weapon options and the restriction on using low-tech ranged weapons, and change the names of your features and feats to something a little bit more archaic-sounding.



David Chen held a paper bag of various fruits, purchased from Genai farms, grown under sunlight with rain fallen from clouds. They weren't genetically modified replicas designed to be cultivated in foreign environments. They weren't grown in atmospheric controlled multi-leveled greenhouses. The shop was still open, being tended by Chen's single employee, a fifteen-year-old Asian girl with trimmed straight black hair, oversized glasses, a long neck and a chest as flat as Ganymede--moon or myth. As Chen approached the open gate with his groceries, he heard Aiden's shout behind him.

"I don't want to be what they tell me!"

Aiden had gotten his attention. Chen turned around. "Pardon?" Chen asked.

"I don't want to be like them, like my brother!"

"There are many things you can do to be different, Aiden."

"I want to be what I want!" Every sentence got louder. "Why do I have to settle for what they say I can be? I don't have to now! I don't want to be part of this! How can I go back, knowing what I know? I want magic! I want dragons! I want everything they said I couldn't have!"

Chen stepped forward. Aiden had also gotten the attention of Chen's employee, leaning in from her duties to see the commotion. "It will take a long time," Chen answered. "Not all the books were right. It'll be years before you're ready, and it doesn't always take."

"The sooner I start..."

"Even knowing what you'll have to give up. Cars?"

"Don't drive."

"Television?"

"Nothing good on."

"Computers?"

"I play games with magic." Aiden had an answer for everything, he thought ahead.

"Refrigerators?" Except that one. "Central heating?" Chen paused and emphasized the next one. "Electricity?"

"Can't I make my own?"

Chen smiled with nod. "Yes, you may actually." He nudged his chin in the direction of the door. "Enter then." Aiden approached the entrance and noticed the girl staring at him.

"Aiden," Chen said, "this is Min Xia Wen, my employee." The girl waved and Aiden, suddenly revolted by his school clothes, responded bashfully with a nod. Chen motioned Aiden to a desk. "Have a seat."

Aiden followed, dangling his legs over the uncomfortable stool. A fifty pound book weighted with gold leaf and wooden toggles slammed onto the desk. Chen unlocked it and flipped a few of the metallic pages. There was no artwork and the phrases were complicated and convoluted, containing numerous syllables with meanings beyond a twelve-year old's comprehension.

"What's this?" Aiden asked.

"The first of many," Chen answered as he walked away. Aiden shared a look at Min, who shrugged back.

Aiden examined the intimidating hardback. "You're only trapped if you can't find the door," Aiden repeated his mother's passing comment.

Aiden leaned in and began to read.

* * *

Children assumed the truth until learning the virtue of doubt. They reached an age when they began to question the world around them. They turned to parents for reassurance. The goblins were never under the bed. No one snuck down the chimney to take cookies or leave presents. The disappointment that followed discovering the truth never settled. Aiden had reached that point when dreams rooted in reality replaced those impossible to achieve.

Every legend, myth, and tale his mother had narrated was a fiction that Aiden had so badly wanted to be real. He realized that every one of them held some fragment of fact. Historical accounts of modern empires, works of whimsy from when mankind ruled the planet alone. She was preparing him for the inevitable day when he would discover it for himself. There was no set time when someone was told. Like sex, it was just something picked up or stumbled through mostly by accident. The wrong book was opened, the wrong program watched. The child asked the proper questions at an improper time. Parents muddled their way through the answers.

Aiden had a dragon.

His mother had known the real world better than most, better than her husband, better than Martin. She knew more than most people about what was out there. With those books, she had told him everything.

* * *

Aiden looked up at the long flight of stairs, up the side of the crown. To call the outer wall a crown implied to Aiden that everyone behind it thought of themselves as royalty, claiming supremacy over everything they saw.

He clambered clumsily upwards, glancing occasionally to gauge the length of the climb. The steel railing didn't feel safe. The stairs were draped in darkness from the sun setting behind the wall. A gust of cool wind struck Aiden as he reached the summit.

Aiden walked to the edge of the fortification. He stood between the jagged and uneven ramparts that topped it. Aiden would only have a few minutes before the next patrol. When standing on the peak of the crown, the city appeared to expand forever, over the horizon until heat radiating from concrete and iron mountains blurred to the sky. Skyscrapers, farms, manufacturing facilities and the last scraps of humanity's past. Aiden had seen such a view from his family's condo; anyone else would be amazed by it. But Aiden only offered it a passing glance, as much acknowledgement as traffic he wanted to cross.

He discarded one view for another, across the wall to a towering emerald forest of wild trees. They were alive and growing as tall as the city wall, without pruning or any arbortecture. Aiden had read that it was called Cyon, a dense pack of woods that encircled most of the south and east sides of the bastion. Aiden picked up noises from the forest—calls and yells from massive lungs. None of them sounded familiar. A high pitched screech resembled

something a young girl could emit, though greatly amplified. A throaty bellow shook the trees and scattered birds. It was followed by something immense under the canopy shuffling leaves, shifting branches, and snapping undergrowth.

A hawk with a span to cross an expressway lifted from a lower perch, jostled by the unseen beast brazenly bullying its way through the forest. The bird vanished back into the thick.

Aiden assumed that a jutting rock larger than Chen's store was the peak of small crag only a few kilometers from the city. He then noticed it gradually turning. The rock was not attached to the ground; it hung silently, dangling from an unseen string.

Aiden caught a faint whisper in the breeze, not as such carried by the wind but part of it. He leaned to the edge of the wall. The whisper was from no beast; it was comforting, tempting, an aria of the air--feminine and beautiful.

Aiden imagined everything that could be out there, all the wonders denied by science. Everything he had read about, hiding past those trees, as easy as crossing a street. Aiden made a promise to himself at that moment while standing at the edge of the wall. He would become what he had read about, what he was told he could not be. He would pass from his world to one echoing the whims of writers for thousands of years. He would have his fantasy. It would be real.


Aiden smiled.



Early pagus sketch



CHAPTER FIVE: ADVANCEMENT



Amethyst introduces the concept of **legends**—optional branches characters can take as they become the greatest heroes the world has ever seen. Legends can be chosen upon reaching level 8 but do not replace the character's original class. Instead the player opts out of selecting normal level 8, 9, and 10 feats in exchange for the abilities listed in the legend. More importantly, legends offer the character greater integration into the setting. The majority of legends are not blank slates, and should not be chosen unless the background is found appealing.

This is not to say a character is forced to take every ability, though some later ones do require earlier ones to function. A player can elect to pick the level 8 ability (thus not selecting a level 8 feat), and still select feats and levels 9 and 10 (ignoring the abilities offered by the legend at those levels). A character can even ignore all said abilities and be accept the legend in title only.

As many legends are integral to the setting in some way, many do carry prerequisites which should be met (exceptions can always be made).



Admitted, legends are prestige classes / paragon paths from earlier editions of Amethyst. I carried them over because I just...like the idea of them. I enjoy the backstory put down, and I hope players will appreciate just that little additional option, which they could totally ignore if they wish.



A lot of these options could also be used as back-grounds, especially those representing organizations or common archetypes (such as the Academy of Logos, the Crimson Leaves, the Guild of Ilm, or the York gun dancer, for instance). You don't get any additional mechanical benefit from it, but it allows you to get involved with them at 1st level if you want.

ECHAN LEGENDS

ACADEMY OF LOGOS

Very few wizards are actually religious. Since the study is based around a discipline that many have claimed as scientific, they usually prefer to explain the methods of magic through what they see and understand rather than depend on the unexplained. To wizards, the universe is still knowable, even if it appears to make no sense.

During the reign of Vincent Savarice, an order of priests in Abidan, with the support of their paladin king, began investigating the position of the magical Pleroma language in various fae faiths. They wanted to determine if Pleroma and its abilities might have any spiritual connection with the Abrahamic religions still widespread across the world. Some priests, clerics, and rabbis denounced the practice as heresy, but as one noteworthy and respected cleric supporting the practice put it, “God could wink out the sun and stop the Earth from moving – throwing a lightning bolt from a wand pales in comparison.” A similarly modest Jesuit complimented the remark by adding, “Wizards are merely priests in denial.”

Eventually, this small community of faith-bound wizards determined that the Pleroma language was most likely written by God and then given to the dragons. While some fundamentalist zealots have classified dragons as the advocates of hell, many in Abidan, and espe-

cially those in the order, believe them to be generals of God's army, nothing short of angels that the mortals were taught to respect and fear. If so, then Pleroma is the divine language in which the words 'let there be light' were spoken. They called it the power of logos—the ability of God to create something by speaking it, given to His servants as a reward for piety and from thence bestowed upon man and fae for some unknowable purpose.

Within a decade of the Abidan investigation, the Academy of Logos was formed—an elite order of Abrahamic holy men that study Pleroma not as a path to controlling the universe but as a path to becoming closer to God. They exhibit unique powers known only to them, variations on common spells with abilities the casters have professed as divine. Other wizards, especially Kona students, consider them too highly specialized to attain true enlightenment: Logians claim that other academies cannot be properly enlightened because they do not know what lofty peak they seek to reach. There is still respect between the two sides, and conflicts don't break out when they share a room. Like most organizations born in Abidan, the Academy of Logos is one of the most humble, benevolent religious sects in Canam, with fingers in humanitarian needs and missionary duties.

Prerequisites: From Abidan; religious background suggested; spellcaster required.

ACADEMY OF LOGOS FEATURES

Act of God? (8th level): You gain the cleric's *heal* spell. You have access to *heal* feats.

Grace of God? (9th level): You gain the Healing domain (requires Act of God).

Finger of God (10th level): You can select a feat from either the *heal* spell or the Healing domain.



With the GM's permission, you could justify taking the cleric class if your concept involves joining the Academy. You'd still be a wizard canonically (and choose a totem: book or staff would be most appropriate), and you wouldn't take the 8th-level feature of this legend (although you'd be considered to meet the requirement for the 9th-level one, assuming you don't take the Healing domain normally).

CRIMSON LEAF

Not much is known about the Salvabrooke assassin's guild, the Crimson Leaf. What marks them apart from other such guilds is that, despite being labeled a radical order against the greater good by the nation's ruling government, there is no bounty placed on their capture. One Salvabrooke state official labeled them in private statement as being "a humorous irritation." Despite calls for their apprehension from Limshau, Kannos, and Abidan, Salvabrooke has made no effort to rein them in,

publicly or privately. Part of this may be because of Salvabrooke's laissez-faire view of law enforcement: gimfen don't consider something a crime unless it does serious harm to someone, and the worst the largest communities complain about are pickpockets and the occasional confidence scam, though both are practically an infestation across the land. The fact that a criminal organization has been tolerated for so long baffles those who don't know the full details.

The Crimson Leaf actually considers itself the final word of law in Salvabrooke. They are a ruthless vigilante force of trained gimfen whose sole purpose is to protect the innocent of the land from the greater evils that aim to exploit them. Every Malkut slaver that attempts to invade gimfen territory becomes their target and few of their caravans have survived the journey.

The Crimson Leaf claims a membership between 100 to 250 which travel throughout Salvabrooke and beyond, acting nonchalant and going about their lives until given a mission. This usually takes the form of a short, specific list of crimes, unique to each member, which the assassin is expected to punish immediately upon becoming aware of them. A farmer may be minding his crops and observes a crime detailed on his or her response list. He would leap into action and return to his duties before anyone knew he was gone. A Crimson Leaf may interfere to prevent in a crime not on his list if he actually witnesses it, but otherwise is expected to leave it to another of the brethren to avoid compromising the order's secrecy.

As a member of this group, you possess your own list of crimes to respond to. There is no jury, just an executioner. These crimes are not petty or trivial, but severe transgressions: slavery, rape, robbery with violence, and theft of sentimental treasures are common entries. Despite what other purposes you have in life, regardless of the mission you may be on or the job you have accepted, your duties as a Crimson Leaf always take precedence. Nothing else matters, even if it leads to the failure of your job and the abandonment of your friends. As a Leaf, you are not foolish, employing all your skills, whether direct or stealthy, to accomplish your goals. You're patient, willing to hold until the target's fate is certain. When the course is set, nothing else matters.

Prerequisite: Gimfen from Salvabrooke.

CRIMSON LEAF FEATURES

Slippery Little Bugger (8th level): Once per battle, you can replace your standard action with two move actions. You can pop free as a free action this same turn.

Nemesis (9th level): Once per battle, if you hit a target, it becomes your nemesis. It suffers a -2 penalty to any attack which does not include you. Your crit range against your nemesis increases by +1.

Nothing Else Matters (10th level): As long as you move on your turn and end your movement closer to your nemesis, you gain a +2 bonus to AC against all enemies. Once engaged with your nemesis, the bonus applies only against it.

JANOAHN WALL CAPTAIN

As captain of the Janoahn wall, you have served selflessly for the protection of nothing short of the world. The Tethuss Bridge is the only route pagus take when attempting to cross from their lands into the south. They hate water and despise the treacheries of mountain travel. All that remains is the bridge and, as a wall captain, you direct your phalanx to maintain their shields in firm lock against whatever evil attempts to crash against it. You effortlessly guide your line to repel armies ten times the size. As a team, your group could withstand the onslaught of dragons, giants, or a pagus invasion.

You don't need religion to have a crusade and your belief is secure in the church of the shield wall. Your devotion to this faith is unwavering and your piety in this conviction ensures its walls will never crack against any assault to its tenets. As shields are locked and weapons are brandished, you preach to your choir to defend the house of blades and plates against the heathens desperate to break your line. But the walls of this church are held by the wills of men, not gods, and as long as they have conviction in themselves and their captain, the house will never crumble. You are the pastor of a devout order, your followers hanging on your words – the sage of this church of war.

Prerequisite: Knight of the Wall.

JANOAHN WALL CAPTAIN FEATURES

Rooted Defense (8th level): You gain a +3 bonus to AC against enemies the turn they engage you.

Maintain the Line (9th level): If you and another adjacent ally both wield shields, you and your ally's shield bonus to AC increases by +1. This is considered a shield lock.

Lockdown (10th level): While in a shield lock, you may wield two-handed weapons with one hand.

KINSHOA MASTER

"It will come to all of us. In time... Chaparrans will become plants and animals, narros will become rocks, damaskans will become memories, laudenians—clouds, gimfen—dreams...and us...we'll become the darkness."

Sharajaclypse

Most tenenbri are social creatures, but only among themselves. Tenenbri understand well the distaste other races have for them, and to a certain extent, a deep current of repressed self-loathing extends throughout the entire species. It appears a natural instinct for tenenbri to seek contemplative isolation at some point during their lives.

The tenenbri that pursue this path of isolation eventually discover their attuned senses pick up far more than the normal world presents. The tenenbri's widespread faith in Oaken claims that the only way to truly experience their god's grace is to remove all other physical senses. Temples in Vanaka have prayer chambers with stagnant pools that can be sealed from external

stimuli. Many followers have reported encountering visions that have either reaffirmed their faith or disillusioned them. After this period of isolation, the disciple is then encouraged to leave his home to contemplate on the experience, waiting for a moment of clarity. Those that depart often return to question the morals and motives of their empire. On a few rare occasions, they do not return, and either take to the open road, become hermits, or turn into kythix.

As a Kinshoa master, you realized that enlightenment comes from the discipline to control one's body and mind. You can perceive what cannot be seen. You can taste emotions on your lips and smell the impulses of your enemies. With such perceptions of the world, nothing comes as a surprise, and you never know fear. It is said you are aware of your own death moments before your final breath. You despise deception and have left your people because the corrupted values of its government made you ill.

Prerequisite: Tenenbri

KINSHOA MASTER FEATURES

Wisdom Like an Ocean (8th Level): If you have a higher initiative than all enemies in an encounter and are not surprised yourself, you ambush your opponent.

Laodona (9th Level): You gain the following bonuses to all ambushed targets: +1 bonus to attack rolls; +4 bonus to damage rolls, and your crit range expands by 2. This lasts until the enemy's first turn.

Awakening of Enlightenment (10th level): If an adjacent enemy scores a critical hit on you, as a reaction you can spend a recovery, but regain no hit points; instead, you gain a basic attack that must include the target. This attack automatically hits.

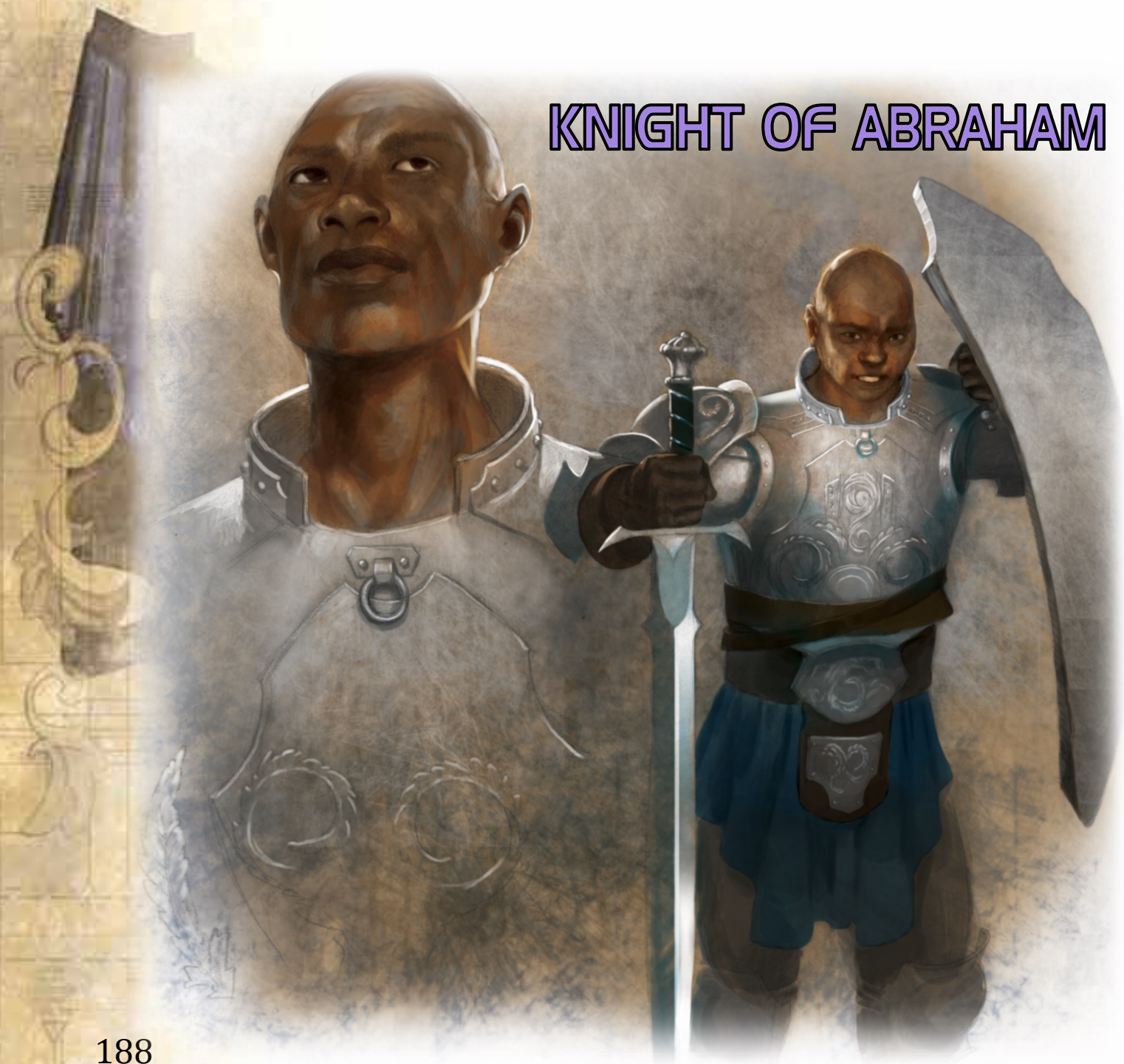
KNIGHT OF ABRAHAM

A member of the order of Abraham stands as the iconic knight of legend, the quintessential guardian in shining armor known previously only in story and myth. Across many barriers of language and culture such valiant defenders reveal themselves through determined purpose, ironclad beliefs, and unwavering integrity. You maintain your moral fiber, especially when those morals are the most inconvenient. You respect the laws of your faith, not necessarily the laws of where you reside. You believe in chivalry and honor, mercy and valor. You will never take the life of one who cannot defend himself. You will always prefer to protect the innocent, the poor, or the weak over the defeat of your enemies.

Courage is important, but you must temper that courage with common sense – to know when to fight and when not to. You must maintain your faith in the integrity and kindness of civilized people and/or to your God. Since a good and merciful God never asks a follower to die needlessly, you are not required to die for your faith, your lord, or even for your own honor. You only willingly die to protect others or to defeat evil in whatever forms it takes. You give to charity but will not give away your last sovereign if it means you are unable



KNIGHT OF ABRAHAM



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to be charitable on the morrow. You are courteous to others, will forgive the sins of anyone if asked in sincerity, and act in humility of your own strengths and abilities. As a member of the order, you must follow these simple edicts: benevolence, faith, humility, integrity, loyalty, mercy, and patience. You must adhere to these and keep the standards you wish to uphold. Breaking any of these ideals brings upon you a personal shame even if no others witness the act. You never look for an excuse to bypass your morals. You must never slay an enemy unarmed or helpless, never turn against an ally for selfish motives, and never ignore those in need.

Prerequisites: Squire of Abraham background, Rousing Speech; you also must return to Janoah to receive the honor.

KNIGHT OF ABRAHAM FEATURES

Of Legend (8th level): Your air of nobility strengthens those around. At the start of battle, every nearby ally receives a +2 bonus to every attack roll until they score a hit.

Strike Down the Infidel (9th level): You bring forth all remaining might, saving nothing for your victory march. If you score a natural even hit with a melee weapon, apply your Wisdom bonus to damage.

Devout Aura of Courage (10th level): You are immune to fear.

KOANA ACADEMIC

Upon finally graduating, the Koana apprentice is believed to have a greater comprehension of the arcane arts than equivalent graduates do from other schools, endowed with the understanding that all power from Attricana attempts to encourage life in every possible form, from the beautiful to the revolting. Koana teachings encourage this ideal, which is why their spells have an unusual slant for being slightly whimsical. Instead of mere balls of fire or lightning leaping from fingers, Koana wizards create living, semi-intelligent beings that act apparently on their own in service of their master for the brief time they exist. They live for their creator and willingly die for them, happy that they were able to fulfill such a noble life in such a short time. The Koana professors, or academics, play with their spells with an especially creative whimsy. The spells run, dance, or fly around while normal spells accomplish their task and vanish. In the scope of the brilliance that is Attricana magic, Koana wizards know how to add gusto to their spellcraft.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 16, spellcaster with a totem; either the Koana Student background or an honorary degree from any Koana academy.



Although the Koana academies are happy to study gneolistics and incarnates, there is very little incentive for such people to enroll, since on a fundamental level, those who have inborn magic and those who must study Pleroma to practice it are as different in their approaches as chalk and cheese.

KOANA ACADEMIC FEATURES

Thinks for Itself (8th level): Once per battle, you may re-roll one ranged spell.

Mastery of the Unknown (9th level): Any damaging spell you cast increases its number of damage dice by one.

Spellcraft Mastery (10th level): You gain one additional 7th level spell.

KRYSTALLIS

Chaparrans accept chaos in all its forms. Their communities are often small. They act on instinct and allow emotion and personal morality to maintain the fundamental civility of their culture over the peskiness of actual laws. They also embrace the idea of the overall fate of the fae to succumb to eventual anarchy. They believe nirvana and true heaven in the Eden promised by Berufu awaits when the fae unreservedly accept their fate—to merge with the world around, to vanish from reality altogether. Each further branch takes them one step closer to understanding the purpose of existence and the chaparrans hold a devout faith that their descendant races like the nariisa and sylphids are one step closer to paradise.

Many chaparrans pursue this devotion through their children, hoping they are gifted as one of these cousin races. They think of their species as a whole and don't preoccupy themselves with the lack of their own enlightenment. A few radicals have gone to burying themselves in fertile soil for years at a time, never jostling save for the donations of food from family and passers-by. Others refuse to leave their named-tree for their entire lives and make its survival and development the only priority. Others decide to reach unity with nature by the absolute discipline of their craft. This can come in the form of adept magic use or the perfection of melee and ranged combat, of which the latter is the most common. As one of these rare chaparrans, you begin to exhibit strange properties, mostly physical. Your hair is the color of grass, leaves grow from the strands, and when you curl your fingers around your totem or weapon, you become one. Whether a weapon or a totem, your hand vanishes into the wood and you feel every bend and twist of the item as if it was a complete appendage. You may separate as easily but this is only the first step ... eventually, you may be able to push yourself further, to take the next step in fae evolution.

Prerequisite: Chaparran

KRYSTALLIS FEATURES

Weapon/Implement Synergy (8th level): Choose one ranged weapon or totem you wield, which must be made predominantly of wood. You and the object become one, and you cannot be disarmed. When you hit, re-roll the two lowest damage dice results and take the higher values.

Inner Reservoir (9th level): Once per battle, you can turn any even hit into a critical hit.

Drawing from Temporary Paradise (10th level): The first time you rally in a battle, your next attack roll gains a +4 bonus to attack.

MUTAHARRIK CAPTAIN

Leading the Kannos Cavaliers are the Mutaharrik Captains. You've probably spent more hours on your horse than others have on their own feet. Regardless if you raised your steed from birth or bought it from a stable, as an elite from Kannos, you can prepare any animal for combat within a week. You do not afford yourself any luxuries over the men under your command. You wear the same light armor, ride a horse with no barding, and charge alongside the line rather than behind it.

You and your animal are now one combined spirit and you no longer need to whistle for its attention or whip it to speed, requiring only a few words or a nudge. It may even act on its own if needed. The elite officers of Kannos forego all other pleasantries in favor of their bond. You don't bother with wives or children. It has even been said a Captain's steed lives for the entire life of its master, dying the second its Captain does.



Prerequisites: Kavalier or Halfmaster background; you must have a horse, and return to Kannos for promotion.

MUTAHARRIK CAPTAIN FEATURES

Whisperer (8th level): While riding a horse, you can pop-free as a quick action.

High Ground (9th level): You gain a +1 bonus to attack enemies with a melee weapon if you are on your mount. You also do not provoke opportunity attacks if you fire ranged weapons while on your mount.

Master Warhorse (10th level): While you are mounted, your mount can use a move action without costing you an action.

ORDER OF THE CLOTH

You are a member of Baruch Malkut's inner circle—an elite order that traces their line back to the loyal guards of the king, when he traveled from Southam to stake his domain. The crusade consisted of him and a loyal retinue of oath-brothers that were referred to only as “cut from the cloth,” forsaking even their individual names. As he claimed his kingdom, Darius Konig kept his guards close, and they wished for nothing else, neither



land nor titles.

Since these humble beginnings, the order has grown in number, but their reputation has never faltered. Newer members are not so enigmatic. Keeping their names and accepting claims of property and treasure, they are still as devout in the faith as their founders. They are brought in from various military channels and trained separately in isolation to be the greatest line of assassins the land has ever known.

Each bears a golden death's-head ring with ruby eyes as their only badge of office, a magical device that projects the feared red robes and golden skull mask of the King's agents over their normal appearance, allowing them to disappear completely into a crowd once their deadly work is done.

You are not one to play fair. To be of the order is to know every cheat, every dirty play you can exploit to eliminate your target. You might have been once a bandit or a slaver or a paid assassin. Now a loyal member of the cloth, you follow the edicts of their holy cause, to eliminate all who disagree with the commandments of King Darius. Any who fail to understand his wisdom will meet the fate of all heathens, regardless if their ears are pointed or not.

If you venture from your homeland, you do so on a mission for the betterment of the king's power. Your loyalty is to the king and the king only. Even other citizens of Baruch Malkut are not immune to your wrath if they don't show total piety to the true authority.

Prerequisite: Human from Baruch Malkut.

ORDER OF THE CLOTH FEATURES

Death Grip (8th level): You can grab an enemy you hit with a melee attack. The target remains grabbed until it disengages. While grabbing an enemy, any time you hit that enemy with an attack you deal extra damage equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Pull to the Ground (9th level): Once per battle, if a target is grabbed for three turns, at the start of the fourth, the target helpless until the end of your turn.

Cheat (10th level): If you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll, spend a recovery surge as a free action, but regain no hit points; instead, that attack roll becomes a natural 20. It is neither a critical hit nor an automatic hit.



The Order of the Cloth underwent some metamorphosis during the writing of the Fate edition of Amethyst, due to my efforts to make Baruch Malkut character options a little more interesting. The illusory red uniforms in particular were my additions, inspired in equal parts by the Red Death costume of 'Phantom of the Opera', the Imperial guard of 'Star Wars,' and the iconic hooded robes of 'Assassin's Creed'.

RAVNORRA

Narros take pride in their vocation and seldom break their disciplined lives for merriment or debauchery, lest they bring dishonor to their names. Though many narros devote themselves to mining and the acquisition and creation of goods, some dedicate themselves to the noble path of defending their house and the innocent. Narros soldiers all follow a strict code of honor, but a few take their discipline to an amazing degree.

All your life, you have lived alongside your blade. The crest on your shield is father and mother. Your house is an ideal you will defend to the end. You wake to don your armor and seldom remove it save for sleep or death. You will know neither mate nor child: your defense of the house and realm take precedence over all other desires. To break these oaths not only brings dishonor to you, but to the house and family as well. If such a code is broken, or if the house and/or lord is destroyed, you become an outcast, a 'vorronar' or ronin, set adrift on the waves of fate to find a cause or to live by the sword. You may continue your code, or do your best just to stay alive.

Many humans have remarked upon the similarity between the narros noble warrior and the ancient samurai, and most ravnorra, ronin or not, adopt the term when dealing with humans: to them, it is the proper translation.

Prerequisites: Doppelshido background.

RAVNORRA FEATURES

Hatamoto (8th level): Gain additional damage with your doppelshido weapon equal to your level.

Inner Spirit (9th level): The first time you rally, you gain a +2 to all attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Weapon Mastery (10th level): Once per battle, as a quick action, you can make your enemy vulnerable until the end of your turn.

SCHOLAR WARDEN

The Guild of Ilm, formed in 365 A.E. by Fisher Calibannis, took on the duties to administer and coordinate the external operations of custodians on the periphery of Limshau and beyond. They operated from the Limshau capital until Calibannis's death at the ripe human age of 205, where he left his power and assets to his bonded companion, Lannis Aerialiss. Lannis was responsible for the aggressive push of custodians outside of the borders of Limshau. Before, the custodians would defend the cities and the farms but never actively seek out knowledge beyond their borders. Librarians would commit to such crusades all the time, though their quests usually took them to private collections and other libraries to seek their prizes. The Guild of Ilm was an elite order tasked with retrieving knowledge from riskier locations, dungeons, and abandoned (or not so abandoned) castles. The guild carries considerable respect in this field and has never been seriously chal-





URMAGE

lenged on the accuracy of their accounts. Librarians take the lackluster assignments: the Guild of Ilm sends their custodians only where a librarian's life would be in danger or if the situation itself requires a more aggressive hand. Of all the custodians in Limshau, those of Ilm are truly warrior scholars, earning the nickname, "Scholar Warden."

You are an elite member of the guild. You returned to the Guild's office in Warrageen and have taken on the oath of the order. To be a member of the guild is to be nearly fanatical in the perseverance of knowledge and free thinking. Unlike other custodians, you are expected to record your adventures and missions for planned documentation and publication later. You do not quest for your own greed. You do not travel the land seeking gold or glory. You are selfless in your path to free the world from those that would suppress the truth. Words are gold; books are the real treasure, and heaven is a world without fear.

Prerequisite: Custodian

SCHOLAR WARDEN FEATURES

Instant Reflexes (8th level): Instead of readying a single action, you can defer your entire turn until a specified trigger occurs (this otherwise follows the normal rules for readying an action).

Lightning Strike (9th Level): Once per battle, you can take a standard action in response to any event outside of your turn, as if you had readied an action. This does not change your position in the initiative count.

Balance of Power (10th level): You can pop-free as a quick action.



The scholar warden in my group envisions himself as a fantasy version of Indiana Jones.



In the setting background, any prominent custodian or librarian can be a Warden of Ilm—we only declared high level characters eligible for the game. With that, a GM could easily have a low level Scholar Warden and even allow a player to be one earlier on, though not benefitting from the legend bonuses until reaching 8th level.

URMAGE

The question of who first acquired the arcane arts from dragons may never be resolved, any more than the debate over whose physical form most resembles the ancient fae. Despite this uncertainty, laudenians have the most credible claim and are still known as some of the most powerful mages on the planet. Their upper echelons of wizards are the urmages, the first masters of arcane power. Their home tower of Elsius stands higher in the sky than any other constructed object (though not actually the tallest building). They do have proof of design for nearly two dozen spells, and a full quarter of the magic items that scatter the landscape are theirs.

Your position as an urname represents the elite, the





ANGEL SNIPER

envy of all wizards in Canam. Though not possessing the absolute book knowledge and history of every spell like Koana mages, you possess a mastery of the Pleroma language that nearly equals the dragons themselves. You can play with magic, dance it around with your whim, and even create new variations of spells no one has seen before. You can even resist the magical might of your enemies. True, Limshau mages know more about the history of arcane, the who and the when, but you know the why and the how, and with that power you can control the very fabric of the universe. The only faith you need is in your totem. You strive to reach that moment when you are fully adept in Pleroma, as fluent as any finite god. At this point, you may be able to understand the cosmos itself and control your fate. With the onslaught of Attricana, laudenians' days are few, with every fifth child born as one of the lesser fae species. As once the ancient fae vanished to obscurity, so your people may one day soon. But the elder race never fully understood the influence of Attricana. Perhaps, with enough power, you can finally comprehend the ways of magic. Perhaps, you will stop being a slave to it and finally be its master.

Prerequisite: Laudanian, spellcaster with totem.

URMAGE FEATURES

Alter Power Type (8th level): You can switch the damage keywords of any of your spells freely between Cold, Fire, Force, Lightning, Radiant, or Thunder. You can reassign keywords again whenever you gain a new level.

Element Synergy (9th level): Choose one of the following damage types: Cold, Fire, Force, Lightning, Radiant, Thunder. You gain resist to that type.

Magic Recall (16th level): Once per battle, if a spell you cast misses, you immediately recover it but there is no miss effect.

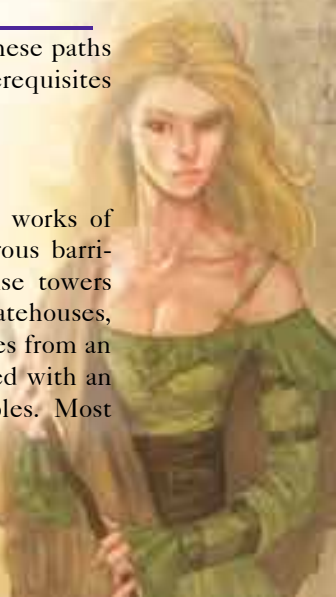
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TECHAN LEGENDS

While intended for use with techan classes, these paths are open to any character that meets the prerequisites (even echan characters).

ANGEL SNIPER

The Angel outer wall is one of the greatest works of construction in the known world. A monstrous barricade surrounds the city, accented by defense towers able to see as far off as Antikari. Along with gatehouses, flanking towers prevent even the largest armies from an easy assault. The wall is not solid, being filled with an intricate network of battlements and sniper holes. Most



of the bogg raiders migrating towards the wall never see their enemies. The Angel snipers take them out while still deep in the forest. As an Angel soldier, you are trained not only to deliver long range fire, but to do so to several targets. When boggs or puggs emerge to attack, they do so in overwhelming numbers. There is no time for aiming. You must take out as many of those little bastards as you can before they get too close to your city.

Angel snipers surpass all others on Earth, even those from the xenophobic city of Mann, another bastion boasting a defensive wall. Most Angel snipers carry out their tours inside or on the walls of the bastion, but almost every single mission outside the walls—whether in a shuttle or in a scrambler—carries at least one sniper with them. Rival bastions have copied their discipline and training, but the results have never been exactly duplicated.

Prerequisite: Techan human from Angel.

ANGEL SNIPER FEATURES

Automatic Reflexes (8th level): Once per battle, you can make two basic sniper attacks as a single standard action.

Waste of Skill (9th level): Once per round, if you score a critical hit with a sniper weapon on a mook and kill said mook, make one additional regular basic attack against a different target.

Second Shooter (10th level): If you kill a target with a miss effect from a basic sniper attack, you gain a basic sniper effect against an enemy near the first. It's the same bullet.

BANNER HEAD

You may not be the leader, but everyone across the battlefield thinks you are. You stand taller and bolder than the rest. Your stare can lock upon an enemy from across a field. Your foes know well and truly if you have them in your crosshairs. You have no concept of subtlety and are known to do foolish acts in the cause of intimidation. Your allies may object but often times, these attempts work. You can make even the most fearless monsters flinch from your stare.

You are not a pretty individual. You are not one for arts and crafts. You have no hobbies. You have one job. You shoot people twice in the chest and once in the head. You do it for no other reason than the objective you have been asked to carry out. Your loyalty runs only to the men and women next to you. To them, you're the champion hero. To your foes, you are the one target they need to take down. You want them to think that. What good is war if there is no one to shoot at?

Prerequisite: Member of a techan-style military or paramilitary organization.

BANNER HEAD FEATURES

Point a Finger (8th level): Once per day, mark any enemy you can see. The enemy suffers a -2 penalty to attack any ally until it or you are dead.

The War Pose (9th level): You can wield two-handed small-arms as one-handed small arms. If you do so, any attack suffers a -1 penalty for each weapon. The weapon still counts as a two-handed small arm for provoking opportunity attacks and movement penalties.

Onslaught (10th level): Your feet are planted and you wait until the enemy forces are close enough to see your eyes. They expect you to run. You don't. They realize too late your unshakable will. At the start of your turn (before any actions), you can choose to be stuck until the start of your next turn. If you do so, all your basic attacks have their actions reduced from standard to move.

BROTHER OF BLOOD

On the battlefield, every ally is a brother. You are a member of a team and you've all worked together long enough to understand each other's patterns. You know when one is hurt, regardless of where on the battlefield. You would never take risks that will endanger another brother's life. You would never step out of formation; never leave a brother's side. They must depend on you as you depend on them. If one of your own falls, nothing short of god's finger on the battlefield will stop you from carrying your injured out of combat.

Those in the fantasy world think nothing of teamwork. They've their own little places staked out in the combat theatre. Good for them. They probably met in a tavern yesterday. As for you and your team, you are perfectly tuned machine that is far greater than the sum of its parts.

Prerequisite: At least one other party member also selects this legend.



BROTHER OF BLOOD FEATURES

More Like Family (8th level): If an allied brother of blood is staggered or falls to 0 hit points or below, make a basic attack against the creature that attacked your ally as an interrupt.

Allied Support (9th level): If you pass a check to rally, all other brothers of blood pass their rally check as well.

Team Effort (10th level): All members of the team synchronize their actions to operate as one organism. Once per turn, you can spend a recovery as a move action to give a brother of blood within line of sight an additional standard on her turn.



Since you don't actually have to take all the features to belong to a legend, this option is a lot less restrictive than it was as a paragon path. Although there are advantages to all participants taking all three features, you can also maximize your flexibility by only taking one or two, and relying on your comrades to fill in the gaps.

ECHAN GENERALIST

This whole concept of specializing is not wise when dealing with such a vast and varied landscape outside of bastions. You prefer to be an expert in many fields. You know weapons to defend yourself, foreign tongues to communicate, and the experience with unfamiliar cultures to avoid violence. Of all the techans, you're clearly the most prepared for the outside world. You studied every nation, their histories and heroes. Such a commodity is valuable and you are wealthy in such stocks. Others may be skittish around you, the way you talk about the outside world. You may be a "blinder"—a lover of echa. However, your allies know your knowledge has gotten them out of situations that normally would have ended poorly.

Prerequisites: Techan human.

ECHAN GENERALIST FEATURES

Direct Experience (8th level): The first creature you hit in a battle is your focus for that battle. You gain a bonus to damage rolls against that creature equal to half your level until the end of the battle.

Book Smart (9th level): Gain a +2 bonus to any skill checks involving arcana, dungeoneering, history, nature, and religion.

Weakness Recognition (10th level): You find a soft spot in the enemy. Add +2 dice of weapon damage to your first critical hit against your focus.

FIELD MACHINIST

You have a niche. Without you, the others don't amount to much more than a bunch of poorly equipped primitives with clubs. As a specialist in the field, you are the most experienced in echa when dealing with disruption. You are a devout follower of the technological supremacy of man and are probably the most hardline defender of the old ways.

Prerequisites: Techan human or gimfen, mechanic operator class or any engineering background.

FIELD MACHINIST FEATURES

Artisan of Gears (8th level): If your weapon disruptions, it instantly recovers and you gain a basic ranged attack.

False Reading (9th Level): You gain a +5 bonus to your engineer checks.

Precautionary Insulation (10th level): You and all allies gain a +2 bonus to their disruption saves.

FIELD MEDIC

You specialize in the treatment of the injured during combat situations. You know when to keep your head low, but more importantly, when to rise in defiance to protect those under your care. You might have been a doctor back home and found a calling out in the wilderness. If so, your allies probably wonder why you've chosen this path.

Prerequisites: Techan human, medic operator class or any medical background.



At first it might seem odd for this to be human-only, but remember: not only is modern medicine hugely dependent on technology, but fae have vastly different (and in some cases, totally illogical) internal biology. Magical healing is preferred over traditional medicine among fae because even closely related species like damaskans and tenenbri have completely different plumbing, and none of them truly grasp the idea that humans need to fit together properly in order to stay alive.

FIELD MEDIC FEATURES

A True Healer (8th level): Gain a +3 bonus to any medical checks.

Physician, Heal Thy Self (9th level): You always pass attempts to rally.

No Longer Civilized (10th level): If an ally in line of sight is reduced to 0 or less hit points, you gain your 10x your Intelligence modifier as a bonus to damage with your next hit.



INFANTRY SUPPORT SPECIALIST

You are not placed on this world to lead. You support those that have earned your loyalty. You are an infantry support specialist. You carry the largest weapons and know how to employ them effectively without endangering the lives of your allies.

Your only weakness is your speed. Being the heaviest hitter has also often made you the slowest. Your abilities are based upon lying down heavy fire and to prevent the approach of invading forces.

Prerequisite: Sniper class.

INFANTRY SUPPORT SPECIALIST FEATURES

Weapons Platform (8th level): If you use a move action to plant yourself and not move, you gain a +1 bonus to attack with all heavy auto weapons.

Selective Fire (9th level): You target 1 additional enemy when using powers which attack multiple targets.

Amazing Control (10th level): Once a day, when making multiple attacks with a single power, two attacks automatically hit regardless of the attack roll.

MAN-AT-ARMS

You are a professional soldier. You've been so since the moment you picked up a weapon. The only thing you can depend on is your firearm. By the end of the day, it is the most reliable friend you have. Having ventured into this wasteland these outsiders call home, you dedicate most of your time to ensuring your weapon does not break or jam. War is all you know, and you're good at it. You track your line to the honored knights of a previous age, when they used swords and shield crests to display their honor: now you have chevrons of rank and a properly oiled firearm. Outside the bastion border, the old ways have returned. You can also almost respect those embracing the old code. You could even see yourself riding a horse as a knight—a trusted and proven sword in your hand. But that wasn't your path. You were born in a bastion, so your sword is your gun, and those with blades are your enemy. Such is the way of war.

Prerequisite: Proficient with two-handed small arms.

MAN-AT-ARMS FEATURES

This Is My Rifle (8th level): Select one specific two-handed small arm: you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls with that weapon.

My Rifle Is My Best Friend (9th level): The first time you change a clip or a cell on your chosen weapon in a battle, it requires a free action.

Fire My Rifle True (10th level): You are not one to waste bullets or strain your rifle with unnecessary automatic fire. If you drop a non-mook target using an auto weapon firing one round of ammunition, you gain a

basic ranged attack as a free action. You can only use one round of ammunition with the follow-up attack.

OVERSEER

You are not as combat effective as the others. The most efficient application of your skill is to remain back and coordinate the actions of your team members. You relay, through radio and the volume of your voice, instructions to your partners. From your vantage, you have a unique perspective on the battle and can maximize the arrangement of your allies for optimum firing potential. Although sometimes present alongside allies, your talents often place you in the safety of vehicles or behind fortifications, which presents the greatest advantage for managing the team's assets. Some may accuse you of being a coward, but oftentimes the team cannot work without you.

Prerequisite: Intelligence or Charisma 14+.

OVERSEER FEATURES

Superior Surveillance (8th level): Once per battle, as a standard action, two allies in line of sight can make a basic attack against a target of your choosing.

Battle Sweep (9th level): If any ally rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll, choose another ally you can see to make a ranged basic attack.

Take the Opportunity (10th level): When the escalation die reaches 6, select two allies in the battle gain basic attacks.

RECON SNIPER

You dig yourself in and become one with the terrain. You ignore wind, rain, or even wandering monsters. Nothing distracts you. An entire army could pass without noticing. Even your attack is as silent as a mosquito bite, though far deadlier.

You approach your target and wait for the perfect moment. You adjust for every possible condition, from gravity to wind. When finally squeezing the trigger, only God could stop that round from finding its target. You never miss, as your purpose is to never give a foe the benefit of a reload. When you take out your target, your single goal, you slither away to your next objective. Your foes can dissect the terrain looking for you, but you were never where they thought. As they hunt you down, you aim for your next victim.

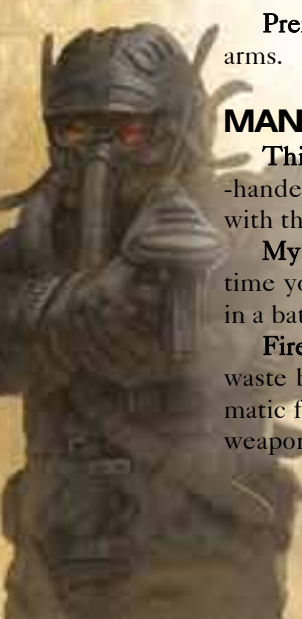
Prerequisites: Sniper class

RECON SNIPER FEATURES

I Didn't Miss (8th level): Once per battle, if you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll with a sniper weapon, turn that attack into a hit.

Yowie Specialization (9th level): If you use a gillie/yowie suit in its proper environment and don't move, you can use a move action to become invisible until the beginning of your next turn.

Minute of Arc (10th level): Use a move action to gain a +1 bonus to your next ranged attack roll before the end of your next turn. If you take a standard action



to aim, your next ranged attack roll before the end of your next turn gains a +2 bonus. These two bonuses are cumulative.

RING FIGHTER

You have the belt. You've claimed the trophy. Few others boast the record you have. You fought hard and trained hard for the respect and it is well earned. In the realm of physical training, there is no better.

Prerequisite: Strength or Constitution 14+.

RING FIGHTER FEATURES

Guard Control (8th level): You gain a +2 bonus to all saving throws.

Tolerance Threshold (9th level): Each time an enemy hits you with a melee attack, you ignore as much damage as your level.

Submission Attack (10th level): When the escalation die is +6, your next melee attack stuns your enemy until the beginning of your next turn.

SAPPER

Combat engineers have a long and respected history. You can be a bridge builder and a bridge destroyer. You approach bombs while others turn and run. With sec-

onds on the clock, others give up while you take it as incentive.

Prerequisites: Techan human or gimfen.

SAPPER FEATURES

The Long Walk (8th level): Gain a +2 bonus to engineer and demolitions checks. When detonating explosives, roll twice for targets and take the higher value.

Render Safe Procedures (9th level): You gain a +2 bonus to any defense when you are targeted by an attack that targets multiple creatures. Additionally, once per battle, if hit by such an attack, you can turn that into a miss.

Controlled Demolition (10th level): All explosives do +1 die damage. You increase the number of targets of explosives you set by 1.

SELKIRK BRAWLER

Isolated for hundreds of years, the miners of Selkirk have learned to make the most of what they have around, the greatest asset being their brute strength and unflinching will. This is seen most clearly in their national sport, which superficially resembles rugby in much the same way that war superficially resembles chess. Every guild maintains its own team, and the seasons never technically end.



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SIERRA MADRE PISTOLERO

There is no downtime and seldom a moment's rest. Everyone plays; everyone wins; everyone loses; everyone gets plastered afterwards. The only time a Selkirk citizen is not on a team is when they are 'traded' to the military. Fairly quickly, the same approach warriors took on the game field was adapted to the battlefield.

Considering that the bastion is located in the middle of one of the highest concentrations of magic in Canam, little of the Selkirk technology could operate outside of their mountain. This forced them to adopt melee techniques as a standard military practice, a tendency strengthened by their association with the narros. Although many from Selkirk still insist on carrying heavy weapons and heavier armor, a few prefer to translate their game skills to combat. When the Selkirk miners first arrived in Fargon, the narros were impressed with the great skill of the miners in unarmed fighting, despite the apparent lack of discipline in the technique – a deceptive lack, for the brawler's style in application is as focused and precise as the wushu-like practices the narros have always held dear. The Selkirks brought over another pastime—wrestling—that the narros quickly embraced, to the point that there is now an annual tournament in Thos Thalagos in which echans and techans show off their skills on equitable terms. The Selkirk brawler has become a common sight on all caravans from the bastion and every citizen knows how to behave in a scrum.

Prerequisites: Techan human from Selkirk (or with GM's permission, narros from Thos Thalagos), Strength or Constitution 14+.

SELKIRK BRAWLER FEATURES

Born in the Mines (8th level): Select a 7th level or lower maneuver from the fighter class.

Big Gloves (9th level): If using natural weapons, you grab a target by hitting them. They remain that way until they or you disengage. Once per battle, as a quick action, you can increase your grip one a target. They are stuck and cannot disengage until the end of your next turn.

Head Slam (10th level): You deliver the attack directly, noggin to noggin. Use a move action to inflict 2d6 damage on a target you are grabbing. If you have one grabbed creature in each hand, use a minor action to inflict 2d6 damage on each target. You can only use *head slam* once per round.

SIERRA MADRE PISTOLERO

From the flamboyant culture of Sierra Madre comes the natural successor to the ancient gunslingers of legend. You believe your abilities to be naturally canny skills developed over years of hard training and discipline. You possess the capacity to be in the right place at the right time in close combat to place a perfect shot. You prefer to present yourself in close quarters, preventing enemies from striking from a distance. You maneuver to get close, maximizing your firing potential while reducing the capacity to be hit in return. It is not

unheard to jump in the midst of an enemy squad, take every one down at point blank range, and walk away without a scratch. To do that, you must get close, study your targets, and make every shot count. You study a scene in seconds and know exactly where to stand and in what position to offer the greatest level of defense while making your weapons lethal with a single shot.

Prerequisite: Techan human from Sierra Madre.

SIERRA MADRE PISTOLERO FEATURES

Elegant Reload (8th level): While wielding two one-handed small arms, you can reload both as a single move action.

Gun Maga (9th level): With a dazzling show of skill, you unleash a hail of ammunition against everyone around you. Once per round, if you are wielding two one-handed small arms and score a critical hit, you gain a basic attack with your off-hand weapon against another target.

Mayhem Sonata (10th level): You perform a ballet of destruction. Once a round, while wielding two one-handed small arms, you can double your ammunition usage (split between your two weapons any way you choose) and double your ability bonus to damage. You can apply *mayhem sonata* after you hit. If you do not have enough ammunition, you cannot perform Mayhem Sonata.

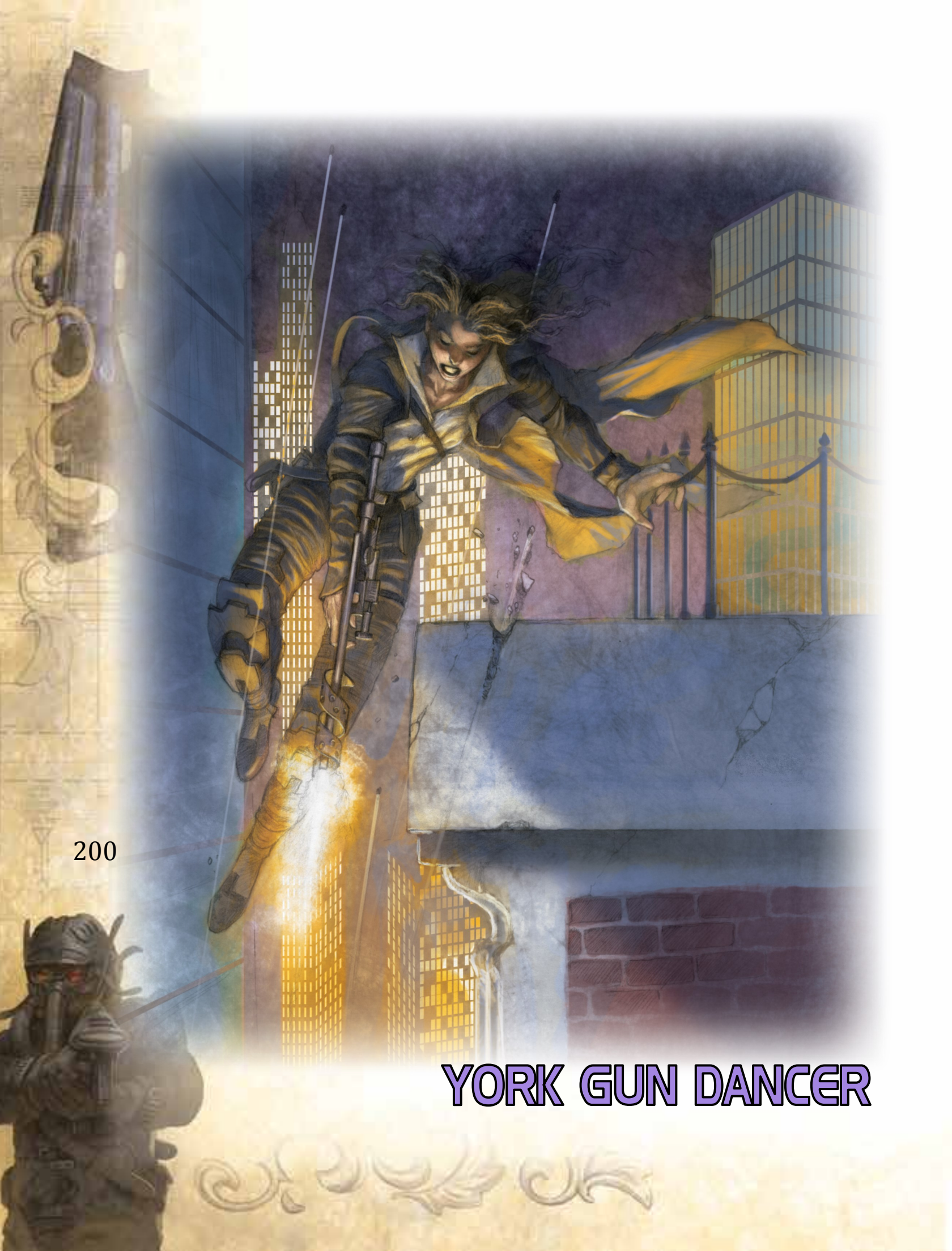
YORK GUN DANCER

Residents of York cope with echan encroachment daily. The natives watch, warily or willingly, as travelers walk along the main avenue from the west gates to the docks. While the income from the docks and immigrants force even the least open-minded citizens to tolerate this traffic, York continuously deals with racial violence between the techan population and outsiders, be it directed inward or outward. The military and police are taught early on that most of their weapons will break down or be ineffective against most forces attacking their city. With training from those skilled in echan lore, the York military developed a system of analyzing enemies and determining the most sensitive place to strike with the most damage.

'Gun dancer' is a slang term attached to those individuals exhibiting remarkable skill in this martial art. There is no formal academy or dojo where one acquires the title: it is acquired through the school of hard knocks, its warriors emerging with a prowess exceeding the others – a natural grasp of the skills, as if never needing to be taught.

You have been given such a moniker. You are able to examine a target in an eyeblink and determine the perfect point at which to inflict the greatest harm. In addition, you have developed a harmony with the area around you, always analyzing your surroundings for the best cover and field of fire. This allows you to avoid hits while still maintaining your concentration on the





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YORK GUN DANCER

target. You rarely remain still in combat, constantly moving from cover to cover, always with a vital enemy weakness firmly locked in your crosshairs.

Prerequisite: From York, proficient in one-handed small arms.

YORK GUN DANCER FEATURES

Precise Shot (8th level): Once per battle, you can add an additional 2 dice of weapon damage to your last hit.

Improved Reaction Time (9th level): You gain a +2 bonus to initiative. If you act first before any enemies, you can't miss your first attack roll.

Gun Waltz (10th level): Like a ballet, you sashay and sidestep, firing at opponents and avoiding every counterattack. Every time you drop, stagger, or score a critical hit on an engaged non-mook target with a one-handed small arm, you can pop-free (if needed) and engage another nearby target as a free action.



The outer gates of the southern wall groaned open for morning travelers. The rising spring sun brushed a graceful wave of heat across Aiden's face. He looked back at Angel's wall, perforated with sniper holes and artillery placements. He wasn't rethinking his decision, only taking in how unambiguous the boundary between the two worlds was.

Aiden had hardly spent a day away from Chen's biblio. Reading about dragons were only the beginning. Anything science denied as true, Aiden desired to learn. He remembered the story his mother had told him, of the singular focus of Willum Raenis. The character's aspirations were above his station, no higher than a princess, a target that could never be struck. All Aiden needed to do was sacrifice his central heating, internet, and cable TV. Martin thought it was selfish, and that Aiden's decision was like a virus that would spread to others, somehow disavowing thousands of years of progress, rejecting what mankind was most proud of--the very automation of his society.

As Aiden walked further past the gate, the level and planed pavement began to show cracks from shifting soil and snaking roots. At the edge, it had turned to rubble. The dirt felt the same as those in parks and planters in the city. The sun looked no different. Ahead was the forest. Against the barricade and under cover of shade sat hundreds of shacks and shanties populated by thousands that took pilgrimage to Angel in hopes of being blessed with admittance. If born inside, your citizenship could not be refuted. Trapped between the forest of Cyon and the city of Angel, refugees scavenged the city's garbage along with fragments leftover by more successful travelers. Some eked out a simple existence selling horses or trinkets from either side of the crown. There were no fae here,

not this close to a magical dead zone. The village of Genai was ignored because of a long forgotten arrangement made centuries ago with the city's original builders.

Aiden's destination was hundreds of miles away. Deep in an area his brother called a wasteland was a city populated by millions of fae, humans, and books. It had been described more as a library than a city. Aiden could further his reading, having spent Chen's biblio nearly dry of words. He couldn't deny his ulterior motive, a city of fae and humans. Every pointed eared female a princess in his eyes.

Aiden had imagined her with unblemished naked skin riding a unicorn through an unspoiled landscape. He, the noble knight or wizard watches through the bushes, smitten. He jumps out to save the virtue of the virgin against a mob of hungry orcs, or boggs, whatever the story endorsed. She beds him against a tree in her gratitude. He follows her into the woods, taken by the fae into their flock to live for an eternity in enchanted bliss.

Despite aspirations of fancy, Aiden had proven himself an academic with enough saved and invested for the best universities. Out of high school, he could have been scooped up quickly and molded into an efficient, grounded, and functional member of society. He would do Martin, and his vision of their parents' ideals, proud. Now Aiden was nineteen and a hundred feet from all he had ever seen. Ahead lay everything he had read about. Some books were fiction, written by authors hundreds of years dead. They spoke of faeries and demons, dragons and kings. Following that, Aiden would find a book claiming to be fact which told similar tales.

Dragons and unicorns had adorned crests and flags for centuries before being discovered as truth. It could not be coincidence.

Aiden hated the prospect of booking passage on an Echan Terrain Vehicle, but there was little hope of him making it through the forest on his own, not with boggs on the rise. On occasion, an armed caravan would arrive at the wall and pick up passengers for a price bordering extortion. The passengers would be escorted to one of the safe primitive human havens on the other side, most of which were controlled by the free house of Antikari.

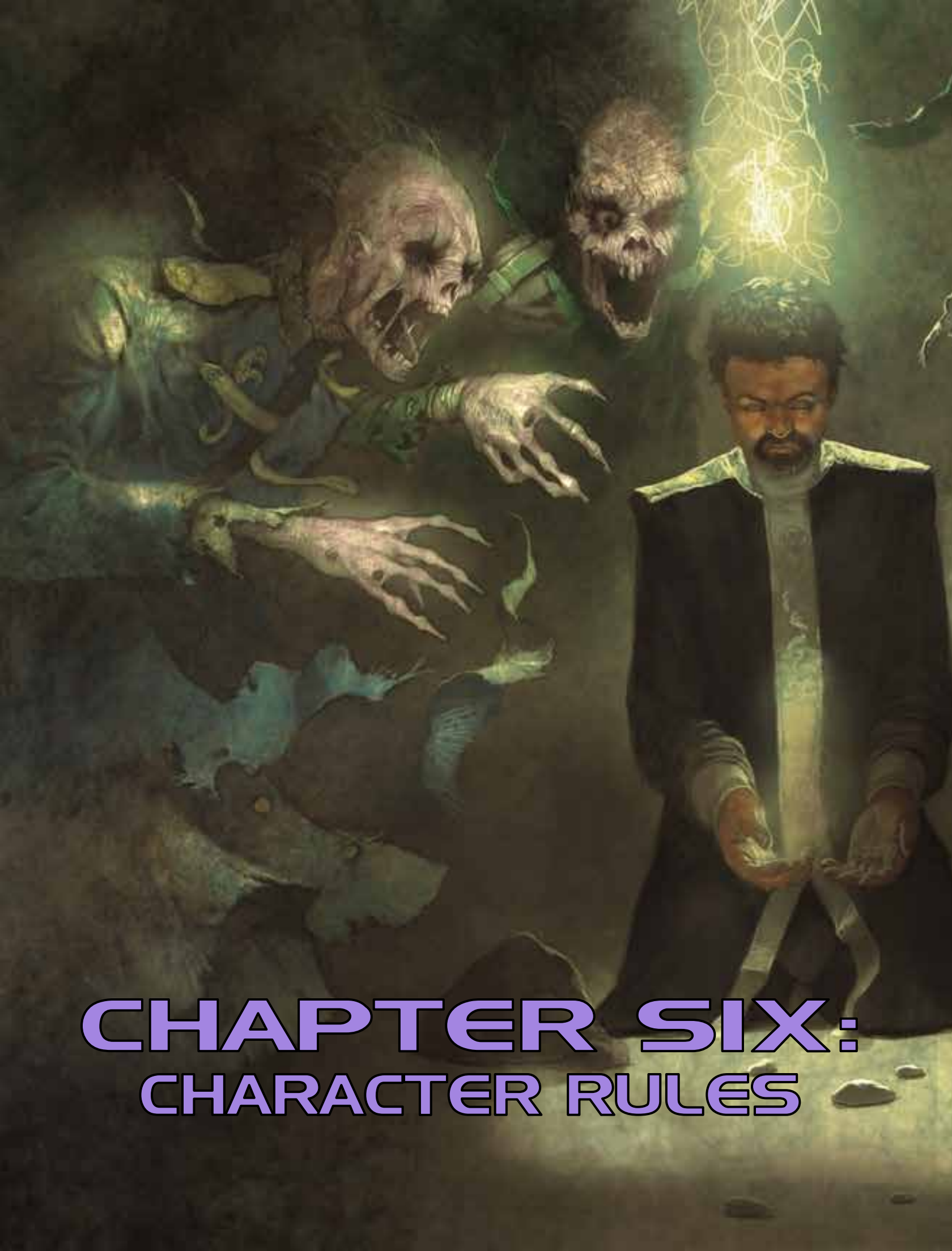
This was one of those occasions, and Aiden was unwilling to wait for a medieval wagon. He planned his departure weeks ahead; only those in the biblio knew of it. A note on a countertop was all he afforded Martin.

Martin

I'm not going to waste time explaining. I got my passcard and I'm leaving. I'm going to Limshau. I don't know how long I'm going to be, or where I might go from there. I know you don't understand which is why I won't bother explaining.

Aiden





CHAPTER SIX: CHARACTER RULES

DURABILITY

Following *13th Age Roleplaying Game* philosophy, *Amethyst* endorses rules meant to increase player survivability. Despite not being included in other editions, we support this inclusion in all versions of this setting (and its adaption would be relatively simple).

The most important element of these rules is sacrifice—making the player rather than the GM or the dice responsible for when a character's life ends. Additionally, there are rules meant to impose status affects at several stages of injury.



Most of these rules are dependent on a simple presumption—the utter lack of any <easy> resurrection in Amethyst. It is a staple of fantasy gaming that I personally never cared for. In order to prevent players from utterly crucifying GMs when that saving throw versus death is failed, many games placated the masses by making death...well...annoying. Dying means very little. Don't bother with tears or burial rights. Just make sure the body is intact until you can FedEx it to Miracle Max, ensuring the corpse is only mostly dead. Let's get the obvious out of the way; there is no society in any reality which can function with commonplace resurrection. When mortality and economics combine, what you have left are legions of suffering peons which would hold every cleric to the fire to bring their dead wife or child back to life. Death should mean something more than a slight financial burden.

These rules only apply to players and important NPCs, including pivotal characters and villains. GM's shouldn't go overboard—only one villain in a campaign should benefit. As for allied NPCs, the GM must be wary of supporting too many “Pet NPCs” and leave it to only one or two characters.

STAGGERED

When staggered, you suffer a -3 penalty to all saves. This includes ongoing damage. Additionally, when you suffer a hit which drops your hit points to below staggered, you are also dazed until the end of your next turn.

The penalty to saves persist until you are restored to full hit points or until the end of the battle (not when your hit points are raised above staggered). Special healing like the cleric's *mighty healing* spell, healing potions, or a nano injection if healing above your staggered value will also remove the penalty.

Optional Variation: An alternative to the above rule—increase the penalty to -5 and allow the players to modifier this penalty by their Constitution modifier (with the maximum bonus of negating the penalty completely). This could be especially cruel with those suffering a penalty to Constitution.

WOUNDED (0 HP OR BELOW)

When reduced to 0 hit points or less, you neither fall unconscious nor are you required to make death saves. You are considered “wounded”.

You are still able to make full actions; however, while below 0 hit points, you are also weakened and unable to rally. At the beginning

of your turn, you suffers 1d4 points of damage which cannot be reduced by resistance. Additionally, any attempts to recover hit points only recover half their value. The penalty to saves from being staggered persist.

These penalties continue until you are healed above 0 hit points or reduced to negative half your hit points, which is when you are finally killed. Additionally, you remain weakened until restored to full hit points or until the end of the battle (not when your hit points are raised above 0). Special healing like the cleric's *mighty healing* spell, healing potions, or a nano injection if healing above 0 hit points will remove the weakened condition but not the penalty to saves (that require additional healing above the character's staggered value).

Optional: There are many variations to this rule. The GM can have players make death saves and fall unconscious when stabilized or they could voluntarily fall unconscious in order to make death saves and perhaps recover. This also hopefully removes the player as a potential target from enemies.

SACRIFICE

Committing an act of sacrifice should not be taken lightly. Even if you survive the ordeal, it should leave a lasting impact on you (obviously), your allies, and the entire campaign.

You can voluntarily sacrifice only after being reduced to below 0 hit points. You immediately recover from every condition you suffer from, including those from being staggered and below 0 hit points. You no longer suffer from hit point degradation from being below 0 hit points. You also cannot recover hit points by ANY means, including magical healing and rallying.

You can commit to sacrifice either as a free action on your turn or as an interrupt. After the benefits of the sacrifice have passed, the character moves onto the aftermath.

The important aspect with sacrifice is creating an objective—what drives the character's will to survive a few moments longer. This objective allows the player to properly select the benefits as well as creating the trigger for the aftermath.

EXAMPLES OF SACRIFICE

One Final Attack: A primary villain or monstrous thug has critically wounded you and/or an ally. Your wounds are severe but the survivability of others demands this evil be taken down now and at any cost.

Holding the Line: Your allies just need one more minute—just one more—to succeed. It's all up to you to hold back the masses. As allies escape and/or succeed at their task, you fall knowing your side has won.

Take the Bullet: A colossal enemy, either in size or importance, is about to execute the killing blow on you, an ally, or an innocent bystander. You leap in and take the hit.

Rush Into Legend: You dive into the thick of combat, knowing full well that escape is not an option. You break up enemy lines, throwing them into chaos. Even-

tually, one opponent will land a killing blow and end your diversion.

Hit That Switch, No Matter the Cost: Sometimes it's not about killing an enemy or breaking up an army. Perhaps it's about just making it one more foot—even a few extra inches—to reach something important. Hit that button; throw that switch; live long enough to discover who the murderer was. It could even be more noble than that—holding the very life of an ally in your hands, and you simply cannot let them slip from your fingers.

SACRIFICIAL BENEFITS

When committing a sacrifice, you receive several benefits. Several trigger the end of the sacrifice (most often equaling death, see aftermath) when finished. When you commit to a sacrifice, select up to three benefits you wish to receive.

Attack Boost: When making an attack roll, you can alter the natural result by 1 or 2. This can result in the triggering of maneuvers or in the scoring of critical hits.

Broad Skill Bonus: You gain a +10 bonus to all skill checks you already have a bonus in.

Damage Immunity: If you make no attack roll on your turn, you are immune to all damage. If you make an attack, a skill check, or succeed in your objective (if not an attack or skill check), the sacrifice ends.

Damage Sponge: You gain resist (all damage) 16+.

Increased Defense: All your defenses increase by +4.

Increased Speed: Instead of gaining a quick, move, and a standard action on your turn, you gain a move and two standard actions.

One Hit: One single attack against an enemy is not only an automatic hit but also a critical hit. You inflict additional damage equal to your level x 5. After the hit, the sacrifice ends.

Specific Skill Bonus: You pass any skill check you already have a bonus in. Once you apply this bonus, it only applies to these checks and no other. Once you no longer have to roll for the skill, the sacrifice ends.

Wall: You engage all nearby enemies and said enemies are stuck. All allies engaged with nearby enemies automatically pop free. All engaged enemies suffer a -3 penalty to any attacks which don't include you. Enemies moving near you become engaged automatically.

AFTERMATH

If the sacrifice has not ended by the time you reach negative half your hit points, the sacrifice ends. You move onto the aftermath. If an NPC is committing the sacrifice, said NPC is dead. He has ceased to be. He's expired and gone to meet his maker. A stiff, bereft of life, he rests in peace. However, players have one final chance to recover (assuming they have not found themselves in a situation which they in no way can find themselves out of. This is known as a reprieve save. If you pass a 16+ save, you are stabilized but unconscious. You could still die (like, falling from space). If you fail



the save, if you still want to live, and there is the possibility of doing so, you can recover but at the cost of 1 point of constitution and 10 hit points which are not recoverable.

If your fate is decided and your end is near, depending on the situation, you can still be afforded a final moment. Do with it what you wish—yell the name of a loved one, make a short heroic speech, perhaps include a flashback or two, ponder the sudden appearance of cherry blossoms. In the end, you die, and your allies will remember you fondly afterwards (unless it's not that sort of game).



Yes, that's a reference to 1995's Mekton Zeta. My early gaming was almost exclusively sourced from R. Talsorian Games.



The GM always has the option to save you by fiat. Bear in mind that, if your GM is anything like me, she will probably do this in order to subject you to a fate worse than death and thereby advance the plot: having you wake up naked in a dark hole with no memory of how you got there is a classic routine. Don't rely on this - you have no control over if, when, or how it happens.

EXPLOSIVES

Explosives come in two forms, thrown and planted. Thrown explosives are most often grenades, but ultimately, virtually any explosive can be thrown and any explosive can be primed in a location to explode when certain conditions arise. Many techans are able to plant or throw explosives.

THROWN

To throw a primed explosive (including grenades), make the following ranged attack against each.

Target: 1d4 enemies nearby or far away (preferably far away, see below)

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD

Hit: WEAPON+ Dexterity damage

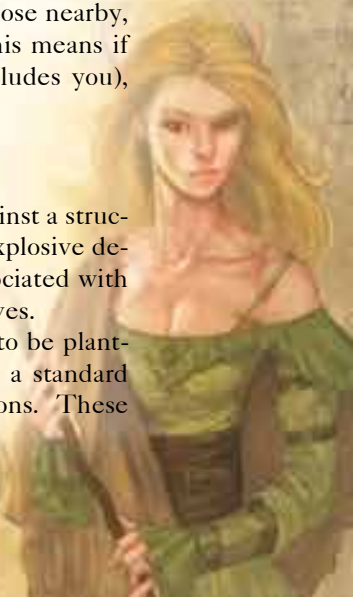
Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Special: Any targets not hit, as well as those nearby, suffer miss damage equal to your level. This means if you throw an explosive near allies (this includes you), they will suffer miss damage as well.

PLANTED

Placing an explosive for maximum effect against a structure calls for a check, as does disarming an explosive device. Only someone with a background associated with demolitions should attempt planting explosives.

Action: If the explosive is already built to be planted, (like a mine or claymore), it only takes a standard action to set. If not, it takes 4 standard actions. These



can done in with any number of allies contributing (assuming they have similar skill). The detonation itself is based on the detonator.

Explosive Attack: Unlike thrown weapons, planted explosives require an Intelligence-based attack.

Target: 1d4 enemies nearby or far away (preferably far away, see below).

Attack: Intelligence + Level vs. PD

Hit: WEAPON+ Intelligence damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Special: Any targets not hit, as well as those nearby, suffer miss damage equal to your level. This means detonate an explosive near allies (this includes you), they will suffer miss damage as well.



Here's a concept—certain actions require multiple actions to complete. These can be accomplished in the requisite number of turns, but if you are able to use more than one standard action in a turn, or if an ally near you is able to help, you can accomplish tasks quicker.

Wiring Explosives: A DC15 skill check is required to wire an additional explosive to the first one. This does not increase damage—it only allows you to target 1 additional target (1d4+1). Only one detonator is required unless the explosives are spread out. There is technically no limit on the number of additional explosives wired up, but when reaching +3 targets, the explosive instead targets an additional 1d4 targets (the increase is as follows: 1d4, 1d4+1, 1d4+2, 2d4, 2d4+1, 2d4+2, 3d4, etc.).

DETONATORS

Timed Detonator: A DC15 skill check is required to plant a timed detonator. Timed explosives detonate at a set time and cannot be prematurely detonated. Detonation requires no action.

Remote Detonator: A DC15 skill check is required to plant a remote detonator. Detonation requires a quick action. Regardless of who takes the action to detonate, who sets the explosive makes the attack.

Triggered Explosives: A DC20 skill check is required to plant a triggered detonator. These go off when a target is nearby the explosive. Detonation is considered a reaction attack.

Failure: If you fail the skill check, the explosive fails to detonate. Since the roll is usually known, you may attempt to reroll on a later turn.

Proper Placement: You can carefully set the explosive in such a way to do maximum damage. If you beat the DC roll by 10 or more, you deal additional damage with the explosive equal to your level + your Wisdom modifier.

Grenades: These explosives come equipped with either an impact detonator or a 1-round timer detonator (exploding at the beginning or end of your next turn—your choice), chosen when you use the grenade. They

can be thrown or fired from a launcher without requiring a skill check. A grenade can still be used with another detonator, but this requires a separate detonator and the use of the demolitions check to plant it.

Explosives: Explosives all require a separate detonator. Some explosives are not designed to be used as an explosive and may be overly sensitive as well as cumbersome. Explosives can be triggered without a demolitions check, but one is required to plant a detonator.

DISARMING EXPLOSIVES

Disarming an explosive that has been set by someone else requires a check using the same skill. It requires a standard action per attempt and the DC is either set by the GM or by the skill check by the one that set the explosive. Unless you fail by ten or more, the explosive does not go off if you fail the check.

DIRECT ATTACHMENT

If you attach a planted explosive directly to a creature or structure, you roll for attack but automatically hit. If a structure, it is automatically considered a critical hit.

SYMPATHETIC DETONATION

Explosives caught in an explosive blast have a chance to explode as well. For every nearby sympathetic explosive, make a 10+ save. On a fail, it explodes as well, counting as an additional wired explosive (increasing the number of targets attacked)—meaning it target 1 additional enemy (the increase is as follows: 1d4, 1d4+1, 1d4+2, 2d4, 2d4+1, 2d4+2, 3d4, etc.).

PROXY DETONATION

If a character who sets an explosive with a timed detonator (or one that is not directly triggered) is killed, rendered unconscious or otherwise indisposed, the explosive still goes off per its conditions on the indicated turn. If an explosive is triggered by someone other than the character who made the skill check, the one who set the explosive still makes the attack, but the one triggering it uses the action.

ENGINEERING

One of the aspects of technology is the using of machines to add convenience to daily life and create solution to problems previously believed unsolvable. Magic, despite being a shortcut, is often considered too difficult a path to use, but for many, it is the only option considering the plague of disruption sweeping the world.

You use engineering (if you have a background related to it) to craft and repair mechanical objects, including electronics, general machines, techan armor, exo-armor, techan weapons, and vehicles.



REPAIRING BROKEN GEAR

Most repair checks are made to fix complex electronic or mechanical devices if they break either from an attack or from disruption.

Time: Repairing objects usually take one hour. The time can be reduced to 10 minutes by increasing the DC by 5.

DC: Base DC15 + 2/tech level.

Success: The item works again.

Failure: The device is not repaired. GM's discretion whether the repair can be attempted again.

BUILDING TECHNOLOGY

If you have the time and the parts, but are nowhere near a bastion or a market that sells technology, you may try to build the item from scratch.

You can only build items with a rated tech level (0-6). You must have the item's cost in widgets (not just the uc, the widgets) on hand. The item's TL is the time in days it takes to build the item. You need at least 6 hours of work on the item for it to be considered a day's work. At the end of each day, you must make an engineering check to beat the build DC. If you beat the DC, you count the day in question towards the time required to build the item. TL0 items and items without a listed level take one day to construct. Vehicles and exo-armor take twice as long. You cannot build demolitions, medical, or repair kits, or boosters or medical injections.

Failure: If you fail, the work time is wasted (1 day) but the widgets are not.

REVERSE ENGINEERING

You can use engineering to convert found technology into widgets to be used in the creation of other technology, and to figure out how the item works in the case of unfamiliar devices.

Time: 1 hour. Reverse engineering destroys the item.

DC: 15 + 2/tech level.

Success: You acquire half the item's value in widgets, and figure out how the thing works.

Failure: You acquire one-tenth of the item's value in widgets.

SABOTAGE

You can use engineering to sabotage devices and vehicles. With this technique, you can inflict effects instantly or when certain conditions occur.

Time: Standard action.

DC: The base DC is 15 with modifiers depending on which effect you are attempting (GM's discretion).

Opportunity Attacks: Sabotage attempts provoke opportunity attacks.

Duration: Until the effect is repaired, unless stated otherwise.

Activation: The effects of the sabotage occur instantly. You can increase the DC by 3 to set a triggering

condition for the sabotage.

Detection and Removal: An engineering check is required to spot and remove sabotage (one check for each). The DC is the same as the DC to perform the sabotage.

VEHICLE OPERATION

In previous editions of *Amethyst*, there were complicated rules for driving and vehicle operation. We have decided to remove the majority of them. If you have a background near or in a bastion (or similarly tech-orientated society), then you know how to drive or pilot both ground vehicles and/or aircraft. Routine tasks such as ordinary driving don't require a skill check. You only make a check when experiencing unusual circumstance (such as stormy weather or a slippery surface), performing a stunt, or if trying to operate a vehicle while being attacked or attacking.

Speed: There are six stages of movement, very slow, slow, normal, fast, very fast, and extremely fast. A vehicle can increase its movement by one step each time it moves, and each vehicle has a top speed. Speed really only comes into play when ramming and when attempting to move alongside another vehicle. We've left the rest up to you based on the situation.

Vehicle Action: Operating a vehicle can be part of a move or standard action. If you simply control a vehicle, it's a move action. If you perform an attack with it, it's a standard action. If you fail a skill check, you could lose control or crash the vehicle depending on the circumstances. There shouldn't be one singular roll to determine if a vehicle crashes or not. If you fail the skill check, you should be allowed a saving throw to regain control of the vehicle.

Crash: A crash is a catastrophic failure in vehicle control. If you crash, you hit difficult terrain or an obstruction. The vehicle and all occupants inside take damage according to the vehicle's original speed.

Speed	Damage
Very Slow	1d8
Slow	2d8
Normal	3d8
Fast	4d8
Very Fast	5d8
Extremely Fast	6d8

Escape: If all appears hopeless during a crash, occupants can try to escape. This involves a DC 15 Dex check (DC 20 for the driver, +5 if the creature is strapped in). A driver who attempts to escape no longer has any control over the vehicle. Any target failing the escape roll by 5 or less still escapes but takes damage equal to the vehicle's original speed.

Conditions: Vehicles cannot be affected by a condition though drivers can.

Destroying Vehicles: Reducing a vehicle to zero hit points renders it non-functional. A vehicle reduced to its negative hit point value bursts into flame, immediately inflicting 3d6 damage to every nearby creature until the end of the battle.



RAM

Action: Ramming requires a standard action.

Target: You can ram any nearby creature or object you could target with a melee attack, assuming it's possible given the vehicle's current speed and direction.

Attack: Dexterity or Intelligence vs. PD

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity or Intelligence damage. A vehicle is counted as a WEAPON. Dice is determined by the size and speed of the target vehicle.

Normal Vehicles: Normal-sized vehicles inflict 1d6 damage on a hit.

Large Vehicles: Large vehicles inflict 1d10 damage on a hit. Additionally, if the vehicle is driving fast or faster, increase damage dice by one step.

Huge Vehicles: Huge vehicles inflict 1d12 damage on a hit. Additionally, if the vehicle is driving Normal or faster, increase damage dice by two steps.

Huge+ Vehicles: Vehicles larger than huge inflict 2d8 damage on a hit. Additionally, if the vehicle is driving Normal or faster, increase damage dice by two steps.

Speed Adjustments: The damage dice of a vehicle can increase or decrease depending on how fast the vehicle is going. The dice steps are as follows: 1d4 to 1d6 to 1d8 to 1d10 to 1d12 to 2d8 to 3d6 to 2d10 to 3d8.

Very Slow: Reduce damage by one step.

Slow: No dice adjustment.

Normal: Increase dice by one step.

Fast: Increase dice by two steps.

Very Fast: Increase dice by three steps.

Extremely Fast: Increase dice by four steps.

Price of Ramming: The ramming vehicle suffers half damage from the ram. A vehicle general reduces speed when it rams (often times to a stop).

This can result in additional damage from a crash.

Miss: The target avoids you, and you continue moving your speed.

Colliding: If the target is a vehicle moving itself, the ramming damage may alter accordingly.

ECHAN DISRUPTION FIELD (E.D.F.)

Magic retards the progression of technology. It breaks down lubrications. It jams gears and shorts out electronics. It overloads batteries. Everything more complicated than basic clockwork is vulnerable, given enough exposure, but the more advanced the technology, the more susceptible it is; in most places, anything up to a simple combustion engine can manage with minimal difficulty, but even something as basic as a bicycle will break down if caught in the backblast from a dragon's breath (of course, at that point, you have bigger things to worry about). Because magic grows as more people use it, bastions are relatively safe within the confines of their walls or city limits. The moment they leave their borders and brave the outlands, their machinery and electronics begins to degrade. As technology comes into contact with higher concentrations of enchantment, it becomes prone to interference. This leads some machines to become less efficient, cease working altogether, or – in some rare cases – violently destroy themselves. Whenever technology is outside of a bastion, there is little anyone can do to impede this disruption. At best, they can slow or delay the effects for a short time.



Magical energies and creatures generate what is called an Echan Disruption Field (or Enchanted Disruption Field), or EDF. Some bastions even rate an ED-I, or ED Index, which charts the hot spots in the world which users of technology need to avoid. The low level EDF saturating the entire world interrupts radio waves and abrogates the ability of anything other than gold wires to channel electricity, preventing communication between the bastions and limiting the lifespan of batteries.



Yes, we've taken out the roll at the end of the initiative order. As long as the players behave, I no longer believed they should be punished for embracing technology. They know the threat is there. I stopped rolling years ago, reserving it for role playing events.



I firmly believe in making their gear fail at dramatically appropriate but highly inconvenient moments. Some games, such as Fate, have a means of compensating players when something goes wrong unexpectedly. Since 13th Age doesn't, I recommend allowing the character to re-do their action with something that works, as long as they do it with a suitable display of frustrated badassery.

The GM makes a single d20 roll to check if an item is disrupted and which tech level is affected.

STUNT OR CONDITION	DC	ACTION
Driver's attack	15	Standard
Evasive driving		
+1 to AC & PD (for one turn)	15	Standard
+2 to AC & PD (for one turn)	20	Standard
+3 to AC & PD (for one turn)	25	Standard
+4 to AC & PD (for one turn)	30	Standard
+5 to AC & PD (for one turn)	35	Standard
Flight conditions		
Strong wind	+5	—
Raging storm	+10	—
Tornado / Hurricane	+15	—
Jump	15-30	Standard
Road conditions		
Gravel	+5	—
Rain / Snow	+10	—
Easy Stunt	15	
Hard stunt	20	
Crazy stunt	25	
Insane stunt	30	

DISRUPTION EVENTS

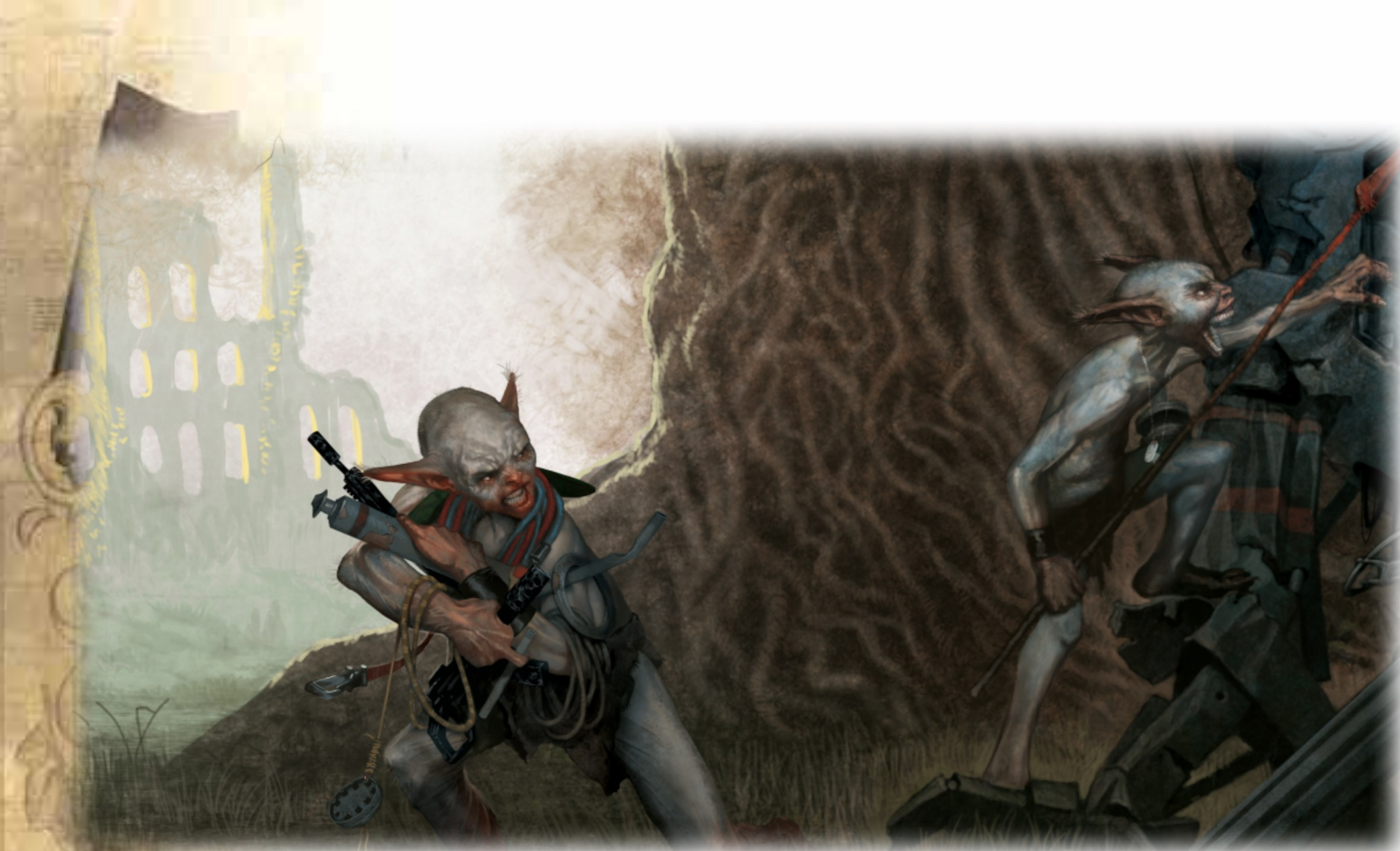
Disruption is a constant threat, but the rules applying to it usually only occur when they are the most inconvenient. Disruption events can occur under the following circumstances:

- The first time in an battle that someone attempts to use the device;
- Whenever a creature that generates EDF touches the device (echans attempting to *use* the device always results in disruption of TL1 and higher devices, no roll required);
- Any time the device or its wielder is directly affected by magic (any spell or supernatural effect; enchanting the weapon always disrupts it, no roll required);
- Whenever the device or its wielder suffers a critical hit from a magical creature;
- If the device or its wielder is hit by an attack from a pincher weapon.
- Any time outside of a battle that the GM judges appropriate (using technology in a highly magical area, etc).

Modified Disruption D20 Roll	Result
0 or lower ¹	All Tech Levels affected
1	Tech Levels 1 and up affected
2	Tech Levels 2 and up affected
3	Tech Levels 3 and up affected
4	Tech Levels 4 and up affected
5	Tech Levels 5 and up affected
6	Tech Levels 6 affected
7-20	No disruption effects
Natural 20	Critical Collapse

¹Tech Level 0 items are only affected if the roll is modified. The result indicates the highest tech level items which are affected that round, if at all.





The result of the disruption roll determines the minimum tech level that can be affected by a disruption event, with the highest TL items not currently suffering disruption being affected first.

A targeted disruption always affects the item or character targeted. Any number of targeted disruptions can occur in a round. General disruption events usually only affect one device at a time. Outside of a battle, treat disruption events as targeted disruptions or choose the affected character randomly. If a general disruption event occurs in combat, the character with the lowest initiative is affected by the first event, the next lowest by the second event, and so on. If the character has no devices of the affected level, no disruption event occurs. Once all players have been rolled for, return to the bottom of the initiative order. Monsters using technology have their own rules and are not affected by a disruption roll.

If the player has multiple items at the same tech level, equipment disrupts in the following order: Weapon currently in hand, gear in use, armor being worn, and any vehicle occupied. If the character does not have a device of the given type, move on to the next in sequence. Equipment not actively in use disrupts in the same order, if there are no active devices. If there are multiple items of the same type, only one is affected (chosen either randomly or by what would be most immediately inconvenient for the character).

A player cannot be subject to another disruption event until every player has been subject to one this sequence. Additionally, an item cannot be disrupted twice (even after it recovers) before every disruptable item the character is carrying has been disrupted once this sequence.

EDF Roll Modifiers: The GM is invited to increase the risk of EDF by adding penalties to the EDF roll.

Roll Penalty

-1 for every non-gimfen echan PC in the encounter (including echan humans).

The following penalties are not cumulative, but do stack with each other:

-2 if any aberrations creatures are in the encounter.

-1 if any magical or natural beasts are in the encounter.

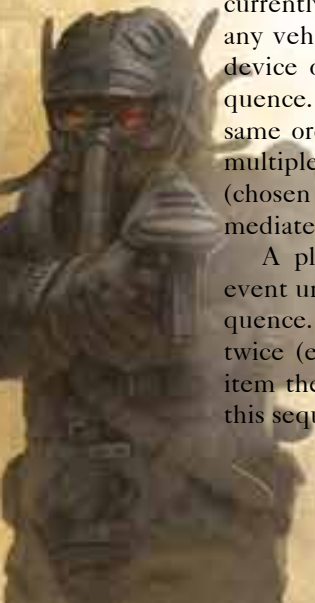
-1 if any fey/fae creatures are in the encounter.

EFFECTS OF DISRUPTION

A disrupted item no longer functions. Any special abilities or properties the item has cannot be used. Ballistic weapons jam and energy weapons lose their charge. Most exo-armor stops moving, rendering the user either immobile or restrained. The effect remains until the character makes a disruption saving throw. A character with a background in engineering can replace the disruption save with the following check: DC15 + (2 x Tech Level of item). The character makes one save or skill check per round per affected item at the end of their turn. If the roll succeeds, the device is immediately restored to normal functioning. If the roll fails, it suffers one of the following additional effects (determined by how many consecutive failed rolls have been made for the device).

1st Failure: If the first saving throw fails, the item remains disrupted.

2nd Failure: If the second saving throw fails, the item remains disrupted.



3rd Failure: A third and final failed saving throw renders the item broken. It is non-functional. It must now be fixed.

ECHA-SAFE TECHNOLOGY

Various technological items are more resistant to disruption: either the technology is so basic that there is nothing for magic to latch onto, or it is so heavily shielded that the EDF cannot affect it.

The following cannot be affected by a routine disruption event:

- Items with the immune property;
- Any item created by the experteering engineer's *adaptation* feature;
- Any armor not requiring a battery cell
- Boosters and medical injections;
- All TL0 gear except TL0 weapons;

This does not mean that the item can never be disrupted, but doing so requires a targeted disruption event. Magic can get at anything that depends on moving parts or variable energy states, even something as simple as a windmill or waterwheel, so it's best not to invite it in.

RANGE EXPANSION

Amethyst introduces ranges beyond what is discussed in *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*. In addition to engaged, nearby, and far away, *Amethyst* introduces **distant** and **extreme**.

DISTANT

While nearby targets are one move away and far away targets are two, distant targets are 3-5 moves away. When the GM sets the stage of the battle, she factors in environmental conditions as well as the size of the area to classify distant range.

Weapons able to shoot targets far away can still do so against distant targets, but they suffer a -4 penalty to attack rolls (this is in addition to the penalties already incurred for weapons like axes, javelins, and spears at far away targets).

EXTREME

Extreme range is beyond the limit of normal vision. Targets this far out general take 6-10 moves to reach. Like distant range, when the GM sets the stage of the battle, he factors in environmental conditions as well as the size of the area to classify extreme range.

Generally, medieval weapons cannot reach targets this far out, especially weapons like axes, crossbows and slings; however, extremely strong creatures and characters may be able to reach this range with spears, javelins, and longbows. All small arms, one-handed and two-handed, can reach targets at extreme range.

Regardless of the weapon used, it suffers a -8 penalty to attack rolls against targets this far out (this is in addition to the penalties already incurred for weapons like axes, javelins, and spears at far away targets).

FEATS

Amethyst characters may select any feats from *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* for which they meet the prerequisites.

ADEPT ENGINEER

Adventurer Feat: You gain a +3 bonus to all skill checks regarding engineering.

AIRCRAFT SPECIALIZATION

Adventurer Feat: Gain a +3 bonus with all checks involving aircraft.

BETTER THAN 20/20

Adventurer Feat: Weapons without a sniper scope gain the properties of one.

BURST FIRE

Adventurer Feat: When firing a weapon with an auto setting, you can fire five rounds per attack roll and add an additional +1 damage.

CROSSFIRE

Adventurer Feat: If you attack the same nearby enemy as another ally previously has this round with the Crossfire feat, you gain a +1 bonus to attack.

DISCHARGE BURN

Adventurer Feat: When firing a one-handed small arm at an engaged target, you inflict +1 damage.

GROUND VEHICLE SPECIALIZATION

Adventurer Feat: Gain a +3 bonus with all checks involving ground vehicles.

GUN-SOMETHING-SOMETHING

Adventurer Feat: You treat one-handed small arms as melee weapons against engaged targets.

LIKE A WIDGET BAG

Adventurer Feat: You gain the operator's *widget bag*.



FEAT LISTS

GENERAL FEATS

FEAT NAME	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Adept Engineer	None	A: Gain a +3 bonus to engineering skill checks.
Aircraft Specialization	None	A: Gain a +3 bonus to checks involving aircraft.
Better Than 20/20	None	A: Weapons without a sniper scope gain the properties of one.
Burst Fire	None	A: Auto weapons add +1 damage.
Crossfire	None	A: You and ally with Crossfire gain +1 bonus to attack the same target.
Discharge Burn	None	A: One-handed small arms inflict +1 damage to engaged targets.
Ground Vehicle Specialization	None	A: Gain a +3 bonus to checks involving vehicle.
Gun-Something-Something	None	A: One-handed small arms are melee weapons to engaged targets.
Like A Widget Bag	None	A: Gain the operator's <i>widget bag</i> .

BACKGROUND FEATS

BACKGROUND NAME	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Ancient Wuxia	Ancient Wuxia	C: Spend a recovery and gain resistance 17+ for one turn.
Blood Royal	Blood Royal	C: Nearby allies gain a +1 attack bonus if you stagger or bloody or score a critical hit on an enemy.
Bottled Beast	Bottled Beast	C: Regression improves to +3 to Str-based damage rolls.
Custodian	Custodian	A: +1 bonus to AC (+2 if escalation is +4) when using lotus blade. C: Reroll attack rolls on natural 2-5 when escalation die is +6 E: Enemies require a hard save to disengage; you require an easy save to disengage.
Dawnamoak Kitarri	Kitarri	C: x2 Str modifier with ranged weapons against nearby targets.
Death Hunter	Death Hunter	C: Gain a standard action after being staggered. E: If escalation is +6 and you're staggered, fear generating enemies are vulnerable to your attacks.
Doppelshido	Doppelshido	C: 1/ battle, counterattack if an opportunity attack hits you. E: When making an opportunity attack, roll twice.
Halfmaster	Halfmaster	C: Use reach tricks 3 times per battle.
Juggernaut	Juggernaut	C: Gain a +2 bonus to damage if wielding a shield.
Kavalier	Kavalier	A: If using a saddle, gain +1 to PD while mounted and a +2 to acrobatic checks while mounted. C: When recovering HP, any amount can be given to your mount.
Kinetassana	Kinetassana	C: At the start of battle, if there is a nearby enemy, you gain a +4 to initiative and start the battle engaged. E: When you hit with a readied attack, add +1d8 damage.
Knight of the Wall	Knight of the Wall	C: If an enemy hits the shield wall, a nearby enemy makes a basic attack as an interrupt.
Laudenian Magos	Laudenian Magos	C: 1/day, recharge One Word.
Librarian	Librarian	C: Increase subject to +10; Select another <i>branch expertise</i>
Redcap	Redcap	C: 1/battle, if you kill an engaged enemy, engage another enemy as a free action without provoking opportunity attacks. E: If you kill an engaged enemy, you gain a +2 bonus to damage until the end of your next turn. If you drop another engaged enemy before then, the duration extends until the end of the next turn and the damage increases by another +2 (cumulative to a maximum of +6 damage).
Sworn Hand of Vengeance	Sworn Hand of Vengeance	C: When the escalation die is +6, your next hit on a sworn enemy is a critical hit.

RACIAL FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Weald Walk	Chaparrans	C: You gain three uses per battle of Weald Walk.
Gravity Focus	Damaskans	C: Your bonuses to AC and PD increase to +3. Walk on walls, ignoring opportunity attacks and engagement. You must still come down at the end of your movement. Gain one additional use of <i>gravity focus</i> (2 total) per battle. E: Your bonuses to AC and PD increase to +4. You can now walk on ceilings. You also gain one additional use of <i>gravity focus</i> (3 total) per battle.
Jump Charge	Gimfen	C: If you score a critical hit with <i>jump charge</i> , increase the escalation dice by +1. Once per battle, when the escalation dice reaches +6, you recover the use of <i>jump charge</i> . C: Once per battle, if you kill a target with <i>jump charge</i> , you can immediately use it again as a free action.

RACIAL FEATS (Continued)

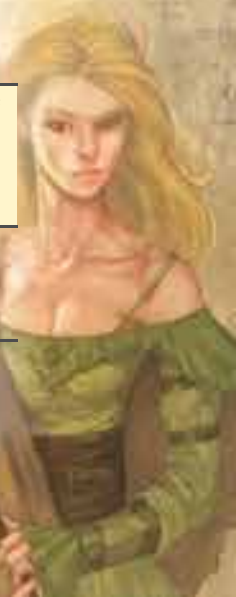
POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Slide Waltz	Laudenians	C: The bonus to AC and PD with <i>slide waltz</i> increases to +3. E: If the escalation die is +6, <i>slide waltz</i> is always in effect (though as an interrupt, it can only affect one hit per round).
Iron Roots	Narros	C: You gain a bonus to damage rolls equal the escalation die bonus.
Stubborn Resolve	Narros	C: 1/battle, a free action + recovery regained the use of <i>stubborn resolve</i>
Focused Aggression	Pagus	C: Gain a damage bonus to your focus equal to your level until the focus is staggered. E: If your focus makes a critical hit on you, your critical range against your focus increases by +2 (total +3) until you score a critical (then it reverts back to +1 until it scores a critical again).
Piezo Scream	Tenenbri	C: Recovering from <i>piezo scream</i> is now a hard save ends, 16+. Targets also suffer damage (1st level—2d4, 3rd level—2d8, 5th level—4d6, 7th level—6d6, 9th level—10d6). C: You can increase the range of <i>piezo scream</i> , affecting up to three additional nearby targets of your choosing.
Blood Surge	Tilen	A: You can reverse your power, inflicting damage upon yourself to heal the target. You can control the amount of damage dealt: even though you are willing, hit point recovery is 1:1 rather than 2:1. C: Instead of healing damage, hit points you gain through <i>blood surge</i> can be temporary hit points. You choose which when you use the power. E: You gain a second use of <i>blood surge</i> per battle.
Natural Weapons	Kodiak	C: Your claw have their damage dice scaled up: 1d6>1d8>1d10>1d12. They also gain +1 bonus to attack (cumulative to a max +3). E: Your claw have their damage dice scaled up: 1d6>1d8>1d10>1d12. They also gain +1 bonus to attack (cumulative to a max +3). Their critical threat range is also increased by +1.

WIZARD FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Weapon of Confrontation	Wizard	A: Your penalty for wielding a heavy or martial one- or two-handed weapon is reduced to 0.

FRONT GROUNDER FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Defense Perimeter	Talent	A: Once per battle, if an enemy scores a hit on you or your ally benefitting from <i>defensive perimeter</i> , the damage is halved. C: If an enemy scores a critical hit on either you or your ally benefitting from <i>defensive perimeter</i> , the damage can be inflicted on either you or your ally.
From the Knee	Talent	A: When you use your move action with <i>from the knee</i> , you crit range also increases by +1 on your next attack roll. C: Once per battle, if you still miss after using <i>from the knee</i> , re-roll. If you still miss, you recover the use of this ability.
Double Tap	Talent	A: If you hit and roll a natural even number with your highest attack roll with <i>double tap</i> , double your attribute damage on the hit. C: If you hit and roll a natural 18+ on both your attack rolls, you actually hit twice.
Front Line Assault	Talent	A: 1/battle, change the clip of a auto or heavy auto weapon as a quick action. E: You can elect to not inflict extra damage with <i>front line assault</i> and instead make an extra basic ranged attack against another enemy.
Front Line Precision	Talent	A: If you score a critical hit on a ranged attack roll using a weapon without the auto or heavy auto property, you increase the weapon damage by one die. C: Spend a quick action to gain a +1 bonus to your next attack roll with a weapon without the auto or heavy auto property.
Full Suppression	Talent	A: Use <i>full suppression</i> against large enemies. You can elect to do only 1 point of damage (not halved) and gain a second basic attack on a different enemy. If you hit with this attack, you must employ <i>full suppression</i> on that target as well. C: You can use <i>full suppression</i> against huge enemies. If you kill a non-mook with <i>full suppression</i> , you gain a basic attack.
Slow is Smooth	Talent	A: Your enemy meets the butt of your rifle as you pop free, taking your ability score damage (x2 at 5th level; x3 at 8th level). C: You gain a second use per battle. You can pop free from two enemies instead of just one. You can still only inflict damage on one enemy each time.



FRONT GROUNDER FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Action Shot	Class Feature	C: Use <i>action shot</i> against enemies which close in from far away to nearby E: The target of <i>action shot</i> is vulnerable to your attack.
Brotherhood	Class Feature	A: If you hit the enemy while benefiting from the bonus, one ally engaged with the enemy can pop free. C: If you hit the enemy and the natural attack roll was even, the enemy suffers a -2 to attack until the end of its turn.
Braced Shot	Maneuver (1st)	A: You gain a +2 bonus to attack on the re-roll. E: Damage is no longer halved
Fire Support	Maneuver (1st)	C: If you score a critical hit on the target, it is dazed. E: If you score a critical hit on the target, it is weakened as well as dazed.
Cauterize	Maneuver (1st)	A: The target also automatically passes the next save required before the beginning of your next turn. C: The target recovers full hit points instead of half.
Covering Fire	Maneuver (1st)	A: The target also automatically passes the next save required before the beginning of your next turn. C: The target recovers full hit points instead of half.
Crippling Wound	Maneuver (1st)	A: To recover hampered is now a normal save (11+). C: To recover hampered is now a hard save (16+). E: If you hit the target again while hampered, it automatically fails its next save.
Head Down	Maneuver (1st)	C: Your penalty to attack rolls is reduced to -1.
Magic Bullet	Maneuver (1st)	A: If the second attack rolls a natural 20, you can use magic bullet again. C: You gain a +2 bonus to any subsequent attacks rolls with magic bullet. E: Magic bullet activates if you kill a non-mook target with any natural even hit.
Member of a Team	Maneuver (1st)	A: One ally next to you can also rally as part of your turn. C: After using <i>member of a team</i> , allies gain a +5 bonus to their next rally. E: Every conscious ally in the battle can choose to rally the same time as you.
Quick Reload	Maneuver (1st)	A: <i>Quick reload</i> works on any natural hit as well. C: <i>Quick reload</i> can be used twice per encounter.
Stupid Maneuver	Maneuver (1st)	A: It's really pissed; the target can suffer a -4 penalty instead of a -2 but then it will have a +2 bonus to attack you. E: You can use <i>stupid maneuver</i> on a hit with a natural 16+ as well.
Strafe	Maneuver (1st)	A: If the 3rd ranged attack is a hit with a natural 14+, make a fourth attack against another enemy that is near or next to the previous one. This inflicts half damage. C: You can decide to inflict full damage on the second or third hit; by doing so, you recover the use of strafe and the chain ends.
Weapon Specialty	Maneuver (1st)	A: Increase the bonus damage by your final attack roll -20. C: <i>Weapon specialty</i> now triggers any natural roll 14+.
First Person Shooter	Maneuver (3rd)	C: First Person shooter now triggers on a 2, 3, or 4.
Focused Fire	Maneuver (3rd)	C: If you kill a non-mook enemy with <i>focused fire</i> , make an additional attack on another nearby enemy. If you hit, you inflict the remaining damage leftover from the first enemy.
Glowing Weak Spot	Maneuver (3rd)	C: <i>Glowing weak spot</i> now triggers on a natural roll 19+. E: <i>Glowing weak spot</i> now triggers on a natural roll 18+.
Aggravate the Wound	Maneuver (5th)	C: Increase bonus damage by Intelligence or Wisdom modifier (it cannot be the same as your attack attribute). E: While in effect, one ally increases their critical threat by +2.
Tracking Fire	Maneuver (5th)	C: If you score a critical hit, all allies also gain a +1 bonus to their critical threat. E: You gain the benefits from <i>tracking fire</i> when it comes around to your turn.
Trailing Blood	Maneuver (5th)	C: Quadruple (instead of double) either your level bonus or attribute bonus to the ongoing damage. E: It is now a hard save (16+) to recover from the ongoing damage.
All In	Maneuver (7th)	C: Increase the added damage to your full recovery but you suffer half your recovery damage. E: A hard save 16+ to not suffer 1/2 damage from inflicting full recovery damage.
Bloody Mess	Maneuver (7th)	C: Weapon damage increased by 2. E: Weapon damage increases by 2 (4 total) and multiplier of your damage bonus your from ability score by 1 (2 total)
Support Role	Maneuver (7th)	C: Two allies now benefit. E: If you score a critical hit with <i>support role</i> , one ally automatically recovers.
Meticulous Aim	Maneuver (9th)	E: Once per battle regardless of your next roll, it is a hit.
Nerve Shot	Maneuver (9th)	E: Once per battle a target is stunned instead of dazed.
One Liner	Maneuver (9th)	E: Increase weapon damage by 1 die.

HEAVY GROUNDER FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Area Denial	Class Feature	A: <i>Area denial</i> now only takes a move action to use. C: Roll 1d3 twice and take the highest value when determining possible targets. E: Affect 1d4 enemies (roll twice and take the highest value).
Backup Weapon	Power (1st)	A: Your interrupted ranged attack gains a +2 bonus to attack. C: Your enemy is vulnerable to your interrupted ranged attack. E: Roll twice for your interrupted ranged attack and take the highest result.
Chain Attack	Power (1st)	A: You can chain up to four enemies. C: You can chain up to five enemies. E: You can chain attacks back to enemies previously attacked.
Creeping Barrage	Power (1st)	A: Roll twice for the number of targets and take the higher value. C: Increase the number of targets by +1.
For The Common Honor	Power	A: You can use this power twice per battle and you only suffer half damage. C: After suffering damage from this power, you can then make a free basic ranged attack. If this attack misses, you recover the use of this power.
From Out Of Nowhere	Power	A: This becomes an at-will power.
Fully Automatic Control	Power	A: You can re-roll twice if the second is also a miss. C: Inflict full damage with the first re-roll but not the second.
Jump In Front	Power	A: You suffer half damage from hits other than the one originally directed on you.
Micro Burst	Power (1st)	A: If you kill a non-mook enemy, leftover damage can be added to another hit made from <i>micro burst</i> this turn. C: You can add your Dexterity bonus to damage. E: Roll twice for the number of targets and take the higher value.
Rapid Fire	Power (1st)	A: Target 3 enemies next to each other. C: For every 1 less target you attack, roll another attack roll with <i>rapid fire</i> and take the higher result. You can elect to attack one target and roll three times. E: Add your Dexterity bonus to damage.
Riddle the Target	Power (1st)	A: You can increase your weapon die by 2 at the cost of two bursts of ammunition. C: You can increase miss damage the same as hit damage by adding bursts; for every additional burst, increase miss damage by your level (max +2). E: Add +3 damage at the cost of three burst of ammunition. Includes miss damage as well.
Shoot And Scoot	Power (1st)	A: Use <i>shoot and scoot</i> against engaged enemies— you gain a +5 bonus to all disengage attempts with this power.
Standing Barrage	Power (1st)	A: Roll twice for the number of targets and take the higher value (including reckless). C: Increase the number of targets (including reckless) by +1. E: Only allies engaged with enemies suffer reckless damage.
Wildfire	Power (1st)	A: Enemies suffer a -2 penalty to opportunity attacks during <i>wildfire</i> . C: Elect not to roll for targets and instead attack all enemies engaged with you.
Wind Knocked Out	Power (1st)	A: You ignore damage completely.
Greater Area Denial	Power (3rd)	C: Roll 1d4+1 twice and take the highest value when determining possible targets. E: You can affect 1d6 enemies (roll twice and take the highest value).
Mindless Mayhem	Power (3rd)	C: Allies hit suffer half damage. E: You can ignore one nearby target and target one further target.
Take Out The Knees	Power (3rd)	C: Use an auto weapon and increase the damage by your Dexterity modifier. E: The target is also hampered while prone.
Blitz	Power (5th)	C: Double the ammunition usage for each attack to remove the attack penalty. E: Increase the number of targets by +1. Allies no longer suffer damage.
Short Controlled Burst	Power (5th)	C: Target up to three enemies. E: Instead of targeting three enemies, you make three attack rolls, breaking the attacks up against any combination of enemies.
Cloud of Hellfire	Power (7th)	C: Allies gain a +2 bonus to attack hit targets until the beginning of your next turn. E: Enemies hit are vulnerable until the beginning of your next turn.
Machine of Destruction	Power (7th)	C: While stuck from this power, you gain a +2 bonus to PD and AC. E: If stuck from an outside source, as long as you are not helpless or hampered, you can activate <i>machine of destruction</i> , even if you already activated it this battle.
Fall of Heaven	Power (9th)	E: You can target all enemies you can see.
Measured Response	Power (9th)	E: Increase you weapon damage by 1 die, and increase your attribute modifier to x3.

GUNSLINGER FEATS

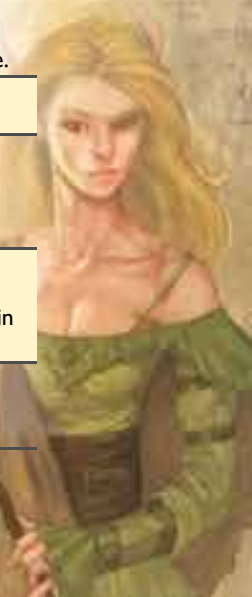
POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Bullet Ballet	Talent	A: The crit range increases by +2. C: Your first ranged attack against an undamaged enemy has its crit range expanded to +5. E: If you kill a non-mook with a critical attack using a ranged weapon, you can immediately make an additional basic attack.
Converging Fire	Talent	A: If you miss with an attack roll with a one-handed small arm, increase your next hit by a WEAPON die (max 1). C: Your maximum increased WEAPON die increases to 2 (missing two attacks). E: Your maximum increased WEAPON die increases to 3.
Cowboy Action	Talent	A: If you kill a non-mook, you can make a second attack using the same bullet against another enemy near the first. C: Increase your miss damage with ranged attacks by your Wisdom modifier. E: Use a recovery (free action), regain no hit points; gain a +20 bonus to your last attack roll.
Defensive Fire	Talent	A: The penalty applies to all attacks. C: The penalty increases to -3. E: Your critical threat range against an enemy suffering from above penalty increases by +1.
Dual Wielding	Talent	A: If attacking different targets, do not reduce your damage die. C: If you hit with the second attack, you can inflict half damage but gain a +2 bonus to AC and PD until the beginning of your next turn. E: If you hit with the first attack and attack the same target with the second, increase your crit range with the second by 2.
Fast Switch	Talent	A: The first time you reload a one-handed small arm in a battle, you do so with quick action. C: Reloading a one-handed small arm always takes only a quick action. E: You can reload two one-handed small arms with a single quick action.
Gunplay	Talent	A: Use a move action to increase these bonuses by +2. C: Your AC and PD bonus to ranged attacks increase to +2. E: Your bonus to AC and PD now applies to all attacks.
Hydrostatic Shock	Talent	A: Increase the die from d4 to d6. C: Increase the die from d6 to d8. E: Increase the die from d8 to d10.
Quickdraw	Talent	A: Increase your initiative bonus by your Wisdom modifier. C: If you act first in a battle, on your first turn, roll twice for all attacks and take the higher result. Also, re-roll all damage dice where the result is 1. E: If acting first in battle, on your 1st turn, attack rolls have their crit range expanded by +2.
Reflex Shot	Talent	A: You gain a +2 bonus to attack with opportunity attacks. C: If you hit an enemy your size attempting to disengage, it cannot disengage. E: If a creature is larger than you when you hit with an opportunity attack, you can pop free from all other enemies and move with the enemy you hit.
Between The Eyes	Kata (A)	A: Gain a +1 to attack with this power. C: Outthink your enemy, target the lowest of your enemy's defenses.
Boundary Threshold	Kata (A)	A: You can pop free from any enemies you hit. E: If you make three ranged attacks with this power, all attacks gain a +2 bonus to attack. This bonus increases by 1 for every engaged with you.
Gun-Fu	Kata (A)	A: You regain the use of this power if all three attacks are even misses.
Hard Boiled	Kata (A)	A: Add your Wisdom modifier to a hit. C: Double your Wisdom modifier on a hit. E: You can inflict a critical hit.
Just One Bullet	Kata (A)	A: Use a recovery as a quick action and sustain this power for one additional turn.
Rapid Kill	Kata (A)	A: You can score a critical hit. C: You inflict 1/2 damage to mooks.
Way Of The Gun	Kata (A)	A: If you attack at least four targets, you can apply damage to two hits. C: You can move once between your attacks in order to engage more targets.
Blood In The Eyes	Kata (C)	C: You gain a +3 bonus to attack with the basic attack. E: If staggered, anytime you take damage, you can use <i>blood in the eyes</i> . You can only use this ability once per round.
Desperate Measures	Kata (C)	C: Target up to four enemies. E: Target up to five enemies.
Gland Slam	Kata (C)	C: If you miss all three attacks, you recover this power. E: You can re-roll one missed attack roll with this power.
Parting Shot	Kata (C)	C: This power is reduced to a move action. E: You can target two enemies engaged with you.
Reaction Time Zero	Kata (C)	C: You gain a +4 bonus to attack with the basic attack. E: If you hit the target, the staggered ally can make a basic attack or pop free.
Targeting Lock	Kata (C)	C: Your penalty to defense is reduced to -1. E: Your crit range against the enemy increases by +2.

GUNSLINGER FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Direct Fire	Kata (E)	E: You recover the use of this power if you miss the first and second attack.
Fanning Fire	Kata (E)	E: You regain this power if you miss the first two consecutive times.
Sustained Fire	Kata (E)	E: The penalties are reduced to -1, -2, and -3 respectively.
Vectored Volley	Kata (E)	E: You can attack three targets next to each other and regain the power if you miss all three times.
Weak Spot	Kata (E)	E: If you inflict a critical hit, the weakened requires a normal save (11+).
Abnormally Fast	Maneuver	A: You gain your Wisdom bonus to any acrobatics or athletics checks you need to make while moving with this power. C: If you use all available move actions to move, you gain a +3 bonus to PD and AC.
Classic Tumble	Maneuver	A: If you are staggered or the hit is a critical, you recover this power. C: The power also triggers on ranged attacks. E: You can decide to take half-damage and you recover this power.
Endorphin Response	Maneuver	C: You can combine two move actions and replace them with a standard action.
Kinesics	Maneuver	C: Gain a +2 bonus to attack with this power.
Kinetic And Fluid	Maneuver	A: If you have an available standard action, you can take it between your moves. C: You gain a +4 bonus to AC and PD from ranged attacks.
Out Of The Fight	Maneuver	A: You also cannot be engaged until the beginning of your next turn. C: You gain a +2 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks until no longer staggered or killed.
Slippery Bugger	Maneuver	C: This power is reduced to a quick action.
Wetwork	Maneuver	A: You gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until you engage your target. C: You gain your Wisdom bonus to all damage rolls until you engage your target.
Equilibrium	Maneuver	A: Make two basic ranged attacks but only one against the triggering enemy. You must miss twice to recover the power. C: You use the triggering enemy as a shield; you gain a +4 bonus to AC. The next enemy attack that misses hits the first enemy. If the attack still hits, you recover this power.
Limber Up	Maneuver	C: Increase the bonus to +10 but this power cannot be used the rest of the day.
Where They Don't Expect You	Maneuver	A: Spend a recovery as a quick action to recover the use of this power. C: Make a ranged basic attack as part of this power.

MARSHAL FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Big Picture	Class Feature	A: Add both your Wisdom and Charisma modifier as a damage bonus. Both modifiers double at 5th level and triple at 8th level. C: Double your level damage to the hit. E: Only lose your move action instead of your standard action on your next turn.
Encouraging Support	Class Feature	A: You affect up to two allies next to you or one nearby. C: You can use <i>encouraging support</i> twice per battle. E: You gain a +2 bonus when attempting subsequent rallies. Each time you fail, the bonus increases by +1 until you pass.
Field Advice	Class Feature	A: If the ally still fails the save, they obviously weren't listening, and you recover the use of <i>field advice</i> . C: <i>Field advice</i> now works on saves against death. E: Once per day, <i>field advice</i> can make the affected ally automatically pass the save.
For The Good of The Team	Class Feature	C: When you sacrifice an action, the target ally gains the same type of action. E: Once per battle, you can scale up a sacrificed a move action to a standard.
Boars Head	Talent	A: If you use a move action for any reason, you can still use <i>boar's head</i> —you can move allies without moving yourself. C: Target one engaged ally and said ally pops free. E: You affect up to two allies next to you.
Control The Battle Theater	Talent	A: During the ambush, all enemies are vulnerable to your and allies' attacks. C: Three allies with the highest initiative can ambush with you. E: If in an ambush, you and all allies gain a +2 bonus to initiative. You and allies gain a +2 bonus to attack until the first enemy's turn.
Face Slap	Talent	A: Ally can spend a recovery and regain hit points. C: You can spend a recovery with <i>face slap</i> and the ally recovers the hit points. E: Spend an additional recovery and remove the dazed condition.



MARSHAL FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Focus Target	Talent	A: Selected ally gains a +2 bonus to attack. C: If the ally misses and you hit again on your turn, you can add half the damage from your last turn and this turn. E: Once per battle, your selected ally automatically hits, regardless of the roll.
Mark Of The Puppeteer	Talent	A: If you kill the target with your attack, said ally can pop free of all enemies. C: Said ally gains a +2 bonus to PD and AC until the beginning of your next turn. E: You can now affect two allies engaged with the targeted enemy.
Plan Of Attack	Talent	A: The bonus to critical threat increases to +3 instead of +2. C: Once per day, instead of scoring a critical threat, the selected ally's hit can be turned into a critical hit. E: If the escalation die is 5+, the ally can roll twice and take the higher result.
Reading Body Language	Talent	A: The bonus increases to +3. C: Once per day, if you don't like your skill check with this talent, re-roll. E: You can skip rolling with this talent and just take a natural 10.
True Leader	Talent	A: You can reduce the escalation die twice with a single action and select two allies. C: If the escalation die is +6, you can turn an ally's hit into a critical hit as an interrupt; the escalation die is reduced to +3. E: 1/day, you can reduce the escalation die from +6 to 0, and all allies gain the benefits of a quick rest.
Know a Guy Who Knows a Guy	Talent	C: Once per level, you can reroll your relationship dice. E: Each time you roll relationship die, you can increase one die roll result by +1.
Pat On The Back	Talent	A: You gain two recoveries you can award (you can award two recoveries to one ally or one recovery each to two allies). C: Once per day, you gain three recoveries you can award.
Sacrificial Boost	Talent	A: Instead of gaining a recovery, the selected ally can gain an additional move action on his turn. C: Instead of gaining a recovery, the selected ally can use your recovery value as a damage bonus on his next hit that turn. E: Instead of gaining a recovery, the selected ally can use your recovery value as a damage bonus on his next hit that turn.
Vivo!	Talent	A: The bonus to reprieve increases by +3. C: The bonus to reprieve increases by +3. E: The bonus to reprieve increases by +3; you can offer your bonus to an ally.
By Example	Aura	A: The bonus is to PD and MD. C: The bonus increases to +2 for PD, MD, and AC. E: After booster activates, the first critical hit on an ally is turned into a normal hit.
Stirring Speech	Aura	A: Targeted allies are immune to being confused. C: When boosted, targeted allies are immune to being hampered. E: When boosted, targeted allies are also immune to being vulnerable.
Follow My Lead	Aura	A: If no allies score a critical hit, you gain the threat bonus on your next turn. C: You or any ally benefitting from the max +5 threat bonus can turn a hit into a critical hit automatically. E: The threat bonus begins at +2 and increases by +2 to a max of +6.
Powerful United	Aura	A: When boosted, the selected ally gains a full turn. C: When an ally sacrifices an action, the target ally gains the same type of action. E: Each can scale up a sacrificed move action to a standard once per battle.
Intimidating Mug	Aura	A: Affect nearby allies as well. C: When boosted, each ally can pop free as a quick action once. E: When boosted, select 1 enemy—it now takes two actions to engage you or any ally.
Mask of Authority	Aura	A: Damage bonus increases to +4; boosted damage increases by +2. C: Damage bonus increases to +6; boosted damage increases by +3. E: Damage bonus increases to +8; boosted damage increases by +4 (max +12).
Hearten The Squad	Aura	C: When boosted, nearby allies roll two die twice and take the higher results. E: When boosted, nearby allies roll three die twice and take the higher results.
Subtle Encouragement	Aura	C: Increase bonus to saves to +3. E: When boosted, allies pass normal saves.
Encouraging Fire	Aura	A: The encouragement pool is not used up when an ally using it misses. C: If the pool reaches +6, the next hits using the pool is turned into a critical hit. E: When an ally rolls a natural 1, the pool is increased by +2 (+3 when boosted).
Most Interesting Person In The World	Aura	C: The bonus increases to +2. E: When boosted, allies can add the escalation die to their skill checks.
Self Absorbed	Aura	A: You can control the shunted damage (up to half damage inflicted to a nearby ally). C: You can divert any amount of damage to a nearby ally (including all of it). E: Divert critical hit damage as well. Additionally, two allies gain basic attacks.

MECHANIC OPERATOR FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Midas Touch	Class Feature	A: Increase <i>midas touch</i> by one step. C: Increase <i>midas touch</i> by one step. E: Increase <i>midas touch</i> by one step.
Shiny Red Button	Class Feature	A: You can push the button 2 additional times per day. C: You can push the jolly, candy like button 2 additional times per day. E: Push the button 2 additional times per day.
A Laborious Task	Talent	A: You gain a +5 bonus to the reroll. C: The bonus to the reroll increases to +10. E: You can't fail the reroll.
A Scientist, Not A Soldier	Talent	A: You now inflict full damage and can still pop free. C: You can still pop free if you miss. E: If you pop free, you can move to be near the target instead of next to it.
Button Savant	Talent	A: At the end of a battle, you gain a push of the <i>shiny red button</i> . C: As a move action, spend a recovery, but recover no hit points; instead, you gain an additional use of <i>shiny red button</i> you must use before the end of the battle. E: Once per day, you can implement two effects when pushing the <i>shiny red button</i> .
Crippling Modification	Talent	A: Push <i>shiny red button</i> twice: target is dazed until the beginning of your next turn. C: Push <i>shiny red button</i> thrice: target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn. E: Push the <i>shiny red button</i> thrice and inflict ongoing damage equals to 5 times your level. A normal save (11+) ends the damage. A critical hit doesn't double this damage.
Disruptive Insurance	Talent	A: All allies next you benefit from your disruption bonus as well. C: Any technology you wield automatically passes all disruption saves. E: All allies next you automatically pass all disruptions saves.
Economic Plating	Talent	A: If you push the <i>shiny red button</i> to boost AC and PD and are still hit, you recover that use of <i>shiny red button</i> . C: Your bonus to AC increases to +4 E: When you push the <i>shiny red button</i> to boost AC and PD, gain a +4 instead of +2.
Firing Mechanism Tweak	Talent	A: Push the <i>shiny red button</i> before a ranged attack roll to roll the attack roll thrice and take the higher result. C: Once per turn, you can push the <i>shiny red button</i> after hitting a target to make a second attack roll against the same target.
Increase Firing Potential	Talent	A: Push the <i>shiny red button</i> twice to increase the critical threat range by +2. C: Push the <i>shiny red button</i> thrice to increase the critical threat range by +3.
Intelligent Design	Talent	A: You can add your <i>intelligent design</i> damage with a natural even hit as well. C: Replace Dexterity with Intelligence when adding attribute bonus to ranged attacks. E: Press the <i>shiny red button</i> to add your <i>intelligent design</i> damage to your hit if not a critical or an even hit.
MacGuy Something	Talent	A: Add your Intelligence modifier to the save. C: Use <i>MacGuy something</i> twice per day. If you fail a save, recover that use.
More Science	Talent	A: Your bonus increases to +6. You also gain a +1 bonus to MD. C: If you roll a natural 2 through 9 with your skill check, you actually rolled a 10. E: Your bonus to MD increases to +3. You can also add your Intelligence modifier to your normal save employ <i>more science</i> .
Overdrive	Talent	A: You can use <i>overdrive</i> twice per day. C: You can double your Intelligence modifier when rolling the <i>overdrive</i> skill check.
Tech Support	Talent	A: Take a quarter of the damage on a miss or inflict half damage on an ally next to you. C: Allies next to you also benefit from <i>tech support</i> .
Weapon Guru	Talent	A: When you score a critical hit, <i>midas touch</i> increases by one step. C: Push the <i>shiny red button</i> to increase <i>midas touch</i> by one step. E: Push the <i>shiny red button</i> and increase <i>midas touch</i> by two steps but your weapon cannot be used on your next turn.

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MEDIC OPERATOR FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Intelligent Resistance	Class Feature	A: The save bonus increases to +2. C: Once a day, you can automatically pass one saving throw. E: The save bonus increases to +4.
Risk An Aneurysm	Class Feature	A: You use a quick action instead of a move. B: You use a free action instead of a move action. C: You gain a move and a standard action.
Defilade	Talent	A: You can use <i>defilade</i> four times per battle. C: All nearby and closer allies gain +1 bonus to attack any creature that misses you with a ranged attack. E: You can use <i>defilade</i> against melee attacks.

MEDIC OPERATOR FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Diagnose and Cure	Talent	A: The ally makes the save immediately on your turn. C: The bonus to save increases to +6; the ally automatically makes any normal saves. E: You can use <i>diagnose and cure</i> twice per battle.
Evasive Overdrive	Talent	A: The bonus to all defenses increase to +3. C: The bonus to all defenses increase to +4. E: You can sustain two targets.
Life And Limb	Talent	A: You can use <i>life and limb</i> twice per battle. C: You can use <i>life and limb</i> thrice per battle. E: <i>Life and limb</i> can be used at will.
Medical Care	Talent	A: You can replace the +3 bonus with your Intelligence modifier. C: You can target two allies. E: All allies next you benefit from the bonus.
Medical Expertise	Talent	A: The damage bonus is equal to your Intelligence + Wisdom modifier. C: Once per battle, you can double your damage bonus on an ally's hit. E: If escalation die is +4 or higher, <i>medical expertise</i> increases the threat range by +1.
Natural Healer	Talent	A: The target regains HP equal to your recovery value + 3x your Intelligence modifier. C: You gain a third use per battle. E: You gain a fourth use per battle.
Nod And Say Interestingly	Talent	A: The bonuses increase to +4 and +6 respectively. C: You gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence. E: You gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence.
Emergency Patch	Power (1st)	A: Target regains additional hit points equal to twice your Intelligence modifier. C: If the target was killed in the previous round, you bring them to 1 hit point.
Delay Contamination	Power (1st)	A: Target passes all saves for that condition until the end of the battle. C: This is reduced to a quick action.
Find The Vein	Power (1st)	A: The bonus increases to +10.
Move to Assist	Power (1st)	A: You can move next to a ally that's far away. C: If you score a critical hit, the ally can spend two recoveries.
Protect the Fallen	Power (1st)	A: Roll twice for your attack and take the higher result. C: Two allies next to you can rally.
Sacrificial Recovery	Power (1st)	A: You no longer need to make a normal save to recover this power. C: This power only requires a quick action to use. E: When the target receives your recovery, they can make a normal save to gain two.
Support Role	Power (1st)	A: Allies gain a +4 bonus to the save. C: Targeted allies automatically pass normal saves.
Amphetamine Injection	Power (3rd)	A: Target three allies. C: When you first use this power, increase the escalation die by 1.
Catechomaline Injection	Power (3rd)	A: Target three allies. C: When using this power, the first attack against an affected ally misses.
Exotic Concoction	Power (3rd)	A: Instead of a second free rally, targeted ally can turn a hit into a critical hit. C: When you use this power, all allies can immediately spend a recovery.
Got No Gurney	Power (3rd)	A: You also make a ranged attack. C: All enemies are vulnerable to your attacks during this power. E: Roll twice for all attacks and take the higher result.
Therapeutic Nihilism	Power (3rd)	A: Double your Intelligence modifier. C: The save to recover from the damage increases to hard (16+). E: If you use a recovery and reset this power, the enemy fails it's first save.
Medical Master	Power (5th)	C: The bonus to MD is equal to your Intelligence modifier. E: The target can spend two recoveries.
Slippery Like A Human	Power (5th)	C: You pop free of all enemies with a quick action. E: You can still make attacks but suffer a -4 penalty to attack rolls.
Unhealthy Dose of Methylxanthines	Power (5th)	C: If you spend a recovery and use this power a second time in the same battle, the escalation die increases by 1. E: Target also gains a +3 bonus to all saving throws while having temporary hit points as well as a +1 bonus to attack.
Minor Medical Miracle	Power (7th)	C: The target is dazed instead of unconscious for the rest of the battle. E: The target can recover from the daze by making a normal save (11+).
Pattern Recognition	Power (7th)	C: Stop your damage bonus (free action); increase the escalation die by 1. E: Stop your damage bonus (free action); your next hit becomes a critical hit.
Pound The Chest	Power (7th)	C: If the target has no recoveries, use one of your own. E: The save to wake up is now normal (11+).

MEDIC OPERATOR FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
The Doctor Is Out...Of His Mind	Power (7th)	C: Make five ranged attacks. E: Make six ranged attacks and you can score two critical hits.
Crippling Round	Power (9th)	C: The effect now requires a normal save (11+). E: The effect now requires a hard save (16+).
Major Medical Miracle	Power (9th)	E: A target can be revived if killed in the past twenty minutes.

SNIPER FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Marksman Talent	Class Feature	A: After hitting a target with a sniper ranged attack, increase the attack roll by +1. C: After hitting a target with a sniper ranged attack, increase the attack roll by +2 total. E: After hitting a target using a sniper ranged attack, increase your attack roll by +3 total.
Range Adjustment	Class Feature	A: Reduce range penalties by half. C: You suffer no range penalties to distant targets. E: The penalty to extreme targets is reduced to -2.
Sniper Ranged Attack	Class Feature	A: Increase your miss damage by your alternate attribute. C: Increase your hit damage by your alternate attribute. E: If you score a critical hit, triple your alternate attribute bonus to damage.
Bloody Or Piercing	Talent	A: Increase the bonus to <i>marksman talent</i> to +7. C: If you hit the target's PD, you still inflict damage as if you missed. E: Increase the bonus to <i>marksman talent</i> to +9.
Boom! Head Shot	Talent	A: All nearby non-mooks suffer damage equivalent to a miss with a <i>sniper ranged attack</i> . C: If you kill a mook with a <i>sniper ranged attack</i> , you can make another <i>sniper ranged attack</i> with a move action. E: Instead of being dazed, targets are nearby targets are stunned.
Direct Damage	Talent	A: Inflict the full difference in damage. C: One per battle, double your direct damage value. E: Once per battle, inflict damage and inflict a condition with <i>marksman talent</i> .
From The Hip	Talent	A: The penalty decreases to -2. C: The penalty decreases to 0
No Exit Wound	Talent	A: <i>No exit wound</i> occurs for two consecutive turns. C: Increase damage inflicted by your alternative ability. E: <i>No exit wound</i> occurs for four consecutive turns.
Perfect Aim	Talent	A: If you reach a +4 bonus, you can reroll all natural 1s on the attack roll. C: If you reach a +4 bonus, you increase your level by 1 when calculating damage.
Sharpshooter	Talent	A: Increase the bonus to +5. C: You gain a second use of <i>sharpshooter</i> per battle. E: You gain a third use of <i>sharpshooter</i> per battle.
Twitch	Talent	A: Bonuses increase to +2 on initiative and +3 on your first attack roll. C: If you act first in an battle, set the escalation die to +1 after your turn is finished.
Act Of God	Power	A: If you hit with the second attack, make a third attack against another target. C: If you miss the second attack, you regain this power.
Checking The Wind	Power	A: Use a recovery to reset this power. C: The bonus increases to +5.
Coup De Main	Power	A: If you have the highest initiative, the ambush is nullified.
Failure Not An Option	Power	A: You can employ <i>marksman talent</i> with the first re-rolled attack. C: You gain a second re-roll. E: Continue re-rolling a miss until you hit or roll a natural 1.
Hand Signs	Power	A: You can affect any ally you can see. C: Use a standard action instead of a move, and you can affect two allies.
Markerlight	Power	A: Denote one ally to benefit from the <i>markerlight</i> and improve the bonus to +3. E: Allies gain a +1 bonus to their crit range against the <i>markerlight</i> target.
Oswald Maneuver	Power	A: You no longer suffer the attack penalty. C: You now can inflict full damage. E: This power is reduced to a quick action and if the second attack hits, you can make a third, though this one suffers a -2 penalty to attack and inflicts half-damage.
Perfect Camouflage	Power	A: You can sustain this power for one additional turn. C: The bonus increases to +10.
Swift, Silent, Deadly	Power	A: You can sustain this power with a quick action for one additional turn. E: You can sustain this power until you are hit with an attack.
Systemic Inflammatory Response	Power	A: If you hit while suffering from ongoing damage, increases save to hard (16+). C: If you hit the target suffering from ongoing damage, the target fails its next save for it.



SNIPER FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Tender Spot	Power	A: Use a recovery and reset this power. C: You are counted as two levels higher when calculating damage.
Zero Your Weapon	Power	A: If you miss with the attack, you recover this power. C: Until you move, this power does not expire.

VANGUARD FEATS

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Armor Specialty	Class Feature	C: The bonus increases to +2.
Distinct Advantage	Class Feature	A: You gain a second use per battle. C: You gain a third use per battle. E: You gain a fourth use per battle.
Martial Stances	Class Feature	C: Although activated separately, you can use two martial stances simultaneously. E: Although activated separately, you can use three martial stances simultaneously.
Mark For Death	Class Feature	A: The target remains marked even after it disengages but not if you disengage. C: You gain an additional use per battle and, you can mark two targets at once. E: You gain an additional use per battle and you can mark three targets at once.
Natural Weapon	Class Feature	C: Base damage of natural melee weapons increase by one (1d6 > 1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12). E: Base damage of natural melee weapons increase by one step (1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12).
C-C-C-Combo Breaker	Talent	A: You can elect to not roll to attack, hit automatically, but only inflict 1/4 damage. C: You now inflict half-damage if not rolling to attack. E: If the target is marked, you roll to attack and inflict half damage on a miss.
Kung-Fu Grip	Talent	A: Enemies attempting to disengage from you need a hard save (16+) to avoid an opportunity attack. C: Enemies cannot disengage from you without provoking an opportunity attack (they can still pop free).
In your Face	Talent	A: Marked targets are vulnerable to you. C: You gain a second use of this ability. E: Targets marked this way remain so until killed.
Mobile One	Talent	A: If you are engaged with two or more enemies, you can use a move action to pop free of one of them. C: Your bonus increases to +2.
Protective Shroud	Talent	A: Once per day, when you are staggered, your next hit is a critical. C: Your bonus increases to +2.
Stumble Strike	Talent	C: If you miss the enemy with the above attack, spend a recovery—regaining no hit points—to turn it into a hit.
Counter Pose	Stance	A: If you miss your attack roll with the bonus, decrease the bonus to +1 on your next attack. This stacks if your enemy hits you again. C: The bonus increases to +3 the first attack and +2 on the second.
Defensive Posture	Stance	A: If an enemy scores a critical hit on you, make a basic melee attack as a reaction. C: If an enemy staggers you, make a basic melee attack as a reaction. E: Gain a basic melee attack as a reaction if you are hit a second time before your turn.
Dominator	Stance	A: Add the escalation die to damage. C: You gain a +4 bonus to overcome damage resistance.
Epic Rise	Stance	A: You can now ignore damage with each hit you take equal to half the escalation die. C: You can now use a move action to recover hit points equal to the escalation die. At 8th level, this increases to the full die value.
External Style	Stance	C: Spend a recovery as a free action after a hit, recover no hit points, but add half that value to your last hit this turn. E: Targets staggered by your attack are stunned until the beginning of your next turn.
Focus Sights	Stance	A: Add your ability modifier when rolling a miss against your focus. C: If you roll a natural even hit on your focus, you gain a use of <i>distinct advantage</i> against your focus and use it immediately. E: If you inflict the killing blow on your focus, you can select a new focus.
Full Wushu	Stance	C: If free, you can move to and engage one nearby enemy and make a basic melee attack as a standard action. E: Unless grabbed or stuck, you can pop free at will as a move action.
Grappler	Stance	A: You can spend a move action to render a grabbed target stuck until the beginning of your next turn. E: Double your ability modifier to damage rolls against targets you are grabbing.

VANGUARD FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
Internal Style	Stance	A: The bonus to saves increases to +4 and you are immune to fear. C: If you started this stance on your first turn and maintain it until the end of the battle, after the battle, all healing effects are doubled. E: You pass any attempts to rally.
Opponent Control	Stance	A: If you hit a marked target, one ally also engaged with that enemy can pop-free. C: If a marked enemy you are engaged with hits another ally it is engaged with, you gain a basic melee attack as a reaction. E: If you are staggered, the penalty for marked enemies making attacks not including you as a target increases to -4.
Clear Advantage	Martial	C: When using <i>distinct advantage</i> , you can elect to not inflict additional damage; instead, the target is dazed until the beginning of your next turn. E: If you hit a target suffering from Clear Advantage, extend the daze another turn.
Balance And Direction	Martial	A: While wielding natural weapons, gain a +1 to AC and PD against melee attacks.
Bouncing Combo	Martial	A: If you stagger or drop a non-mook with an unarmed attack, you gain a move action that must be used before the end of your turn.
Can Kick	Martial	A: Use a move action on the same turn after you hit a target to inflict additional damage equal to your 2 + level. C: Increase the damage to 4 + your level. E: Increase damage to 8 + your level.
Evolution Of Pankration	Martial	A: If you engage a single opponent your size, your crit range is expanded by 2. C: If engaging a single marked opponent your size and roll a natural even hit, the target is stuck until the beginning of your next turn. E: Use your Evolution of Pankration abilities on two engaged and targets at once.
Game of Sticks	Martial	A: If wielding a staff weapon roll twice for opportunity attacks and take the higher result. C: Once per battle, you can attack a nearby target without engaging it. If you miss, you regain this ability.
Gunkata	Martial	A: One-handed small arms are melee weapons when attacking engaged targets. C: If wielding 2 1-handed small arms, +1 shield bonus to AC against engaged enemies.
Jumping Knee	Martial	A: If you move and engage a single target in the same turn, roll twice to attack, take the higher result, and add 1 additional weapon die of damage (unarmed attack). C: If you use jumping knee against a target adjacent to an obstruction, they take triple your attribute damage.
Kayfabe Maneuver	Martial	A: If you roll a natural even hit against a marked and engaged enemy currently also engaged with an ally, said ally can pop free C: Said ally can also make an opportunity attack against the disengaging enemy.
Master Degree Martial Artist	Martial	E: If you score a critical hit, increase weapon damage die by 1.
Nerve Cluster	Martial	A: If you roll a natural even hit against a marked target and use <i>distinct advantage</i> , increase the weapon die by 1. C: If you add damage from <i>nerve cluster</i> and the target becomes staggered, increase the weapon damage by 1.
Non-Lethal Intent	Martial	A: If you inflict damage with a melee attack equal to half the enemy's staggered hit points, you can elect to inflict no damage and the target is stunned for five minutes or until the target is hit with an attack. C: When employing non-lethal intent, add two weapon dice damage.
Swords Of Grace	Martial	A: Once per round, when wielding two melee weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn if you miss a marked target. C: If you score a critical hit wielding a one-handed weapon on a marked target, the bonus to AC increases to +4.
Tag Team	Martial	A: If an ally engaged with a marked enemy you are engaged with and hits said enemy, the ally inflict additional damage equal to your Dexterity or Strength modifier.
The Ritual Of Dance And Damage	Martial	C: While using only natural weapons, use a move action to engage nearby targets without disengaging from existing targets. E: If you score a critical hit on a marked enemy with a natural melee weapon, you can pop free of any number of enemies you want.
Tosser	Martial	C: If you score a critical hit on an enemy your size, use a move action that same turn to throw the enemy, disengaging him from you and all other allies. It suffers additional damage equal to a missed basic attack.



VANGUARD FEATS (Continued)

POWER AFFECTED	PRE-REQ	TIER: WHY YOU'D WANT IT
True Enlightenment Of The Art	Martial	<p>A: As a quick action, spend a recover, gain no hit points, but gain resist all damage 11+ until the end of your next turn. If you suffer not damage by the time the resist expires, you regain the recovery.</p> <p>C: The resist increases to 16+.</p> <p>E: The resist increases to 18+. You can spend a standard action once to sustain the resist without spending a recovery.</p>
Way of The Turn	Martial	<p>A: If you hit with a melee attack, you can inflict half damage and the target is weakened until the beginning of your next turn.</p> <p>E: If you score a critical hit, you can elect to do no damage and target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn.</p>



The ETV was due to arrive in a few hours, assuming it survived the trip through Cyon. It wasn't just the boggs but the radiant magic permeating the forest that people feared. Aiden leaned against the warm concrete wall of the bastion crown, overhearing pilgrims making cases in hopes of admittance. They tried to barter their passage by claiming possession of some vital knowledge to better mankind.

Aiden was reading a book, as he often did. This one was fiction; he had checked. A sharp page corner nicked a small divot of skin from the base of his index finger, not enough to bleed. He caressed the redness, his finger skimming over the old scar on his palm from when he grabbed the broken window during Zmey's attack. Aiden still thought of the creature as Zmey, though its real name was Goetion is Lifeless. Dragon names were like that, part name, part phrase. Aiden's finger followed the scar as it bisected every line in his palm, from life to mercury. His left had fared better with only a leathery patch at the wrist to mark the event.

Aiden's black button shirt and grey trousers were from Angel but a gifted Asian girl in Genai with no technology to assist her handcrafted the brown wool sweater. His longcoat was also purchased off the benches of the Genai market. Aiden hadn't changed his style of glasses since acquiring his first set. Technology had fashioned his thermal underwear and orthopedic hiking shoes, extravagances he allowed himself. The only visible mark connecting him to Angel was the broken watch still wrapped around his wrist.

"Going out or coming in?" a child asked. She was maybe twelve, tall for her age but narrow enough to fall through a rabbit hole. She looked surprisingly fashionable, no doubt in an attempt by her family to prove they weren't indigent. Aiden was unsure why she singled him out. She spoke his English, not one of the various patois Aiden had been warned to expect.

"Going out," Aiden answered.

"Why?" she asked.

"Why not?" Aiden closed the book. "What about you?"

"Going in." She nudged to her mother, the woman layered in linen with a talc-covered face discussing credentials with the outer guard. "Mom grows spiky fruit. Apparently that's hard."

Aiden nodded. "I'm sure she'll get in then."

"Why are you leaving?" she asked. She wanted to know; it wasn't idle banter. She had never been inside a bastion in her life. She was looking forward to frozen dinners.

"Because there are things you can't do in there."

"Like what?"

Aiden placed the novel between his legs and removed a larger book from his pack. This one was crafted by amateur hands with a badly sewn cover wrapped in leather. The pages were rough and frayed and had a dappled texture. The words were written with the flaws and imperfections of a clumsy human hand. Aiden held the book up edge on. He brought his lips to the spine and whistled.

A glowing ball of catkin lifted from the center of the book. A tail of glitter, its only appendage, dangled behind

it as it danced around the tome, happy and delighted at having been called, for its life was meaningless if it had nothing to shine upon.

The child was taken back. She recoiled from Aiden, her bottom lip quivering. "Y-You're magic?"

Aiden shrugged. "Not really. It's a gift from my teacher." This did not alleviate the child. She stepped back, turned, and fled to her mother. The catkin fluttered beside Aiden, as confused as he was. If a parent wanted to train her child to seek life in a bastion, it began early and fear was an easy implement to wield. "I guess that's necessary," Aiden whispered. He held up the open book to the spark. It blinked and hid between the pages. Aiden slipped his spellbook back into his satchel. It was a convenient term for it, spellbook. Wizards referred to them as totems, requiring to always be in contact when attempting magic. It didn't matter what Aiden called it; he had yet to cast any spells. He wasn't, what some people called, a radiant. Yet. All fae were born that way. For humans, it was a choice, one which Aiden was required to make if he wanted to cast any spells. He very much wanted it, but for some reason it had yet to take.

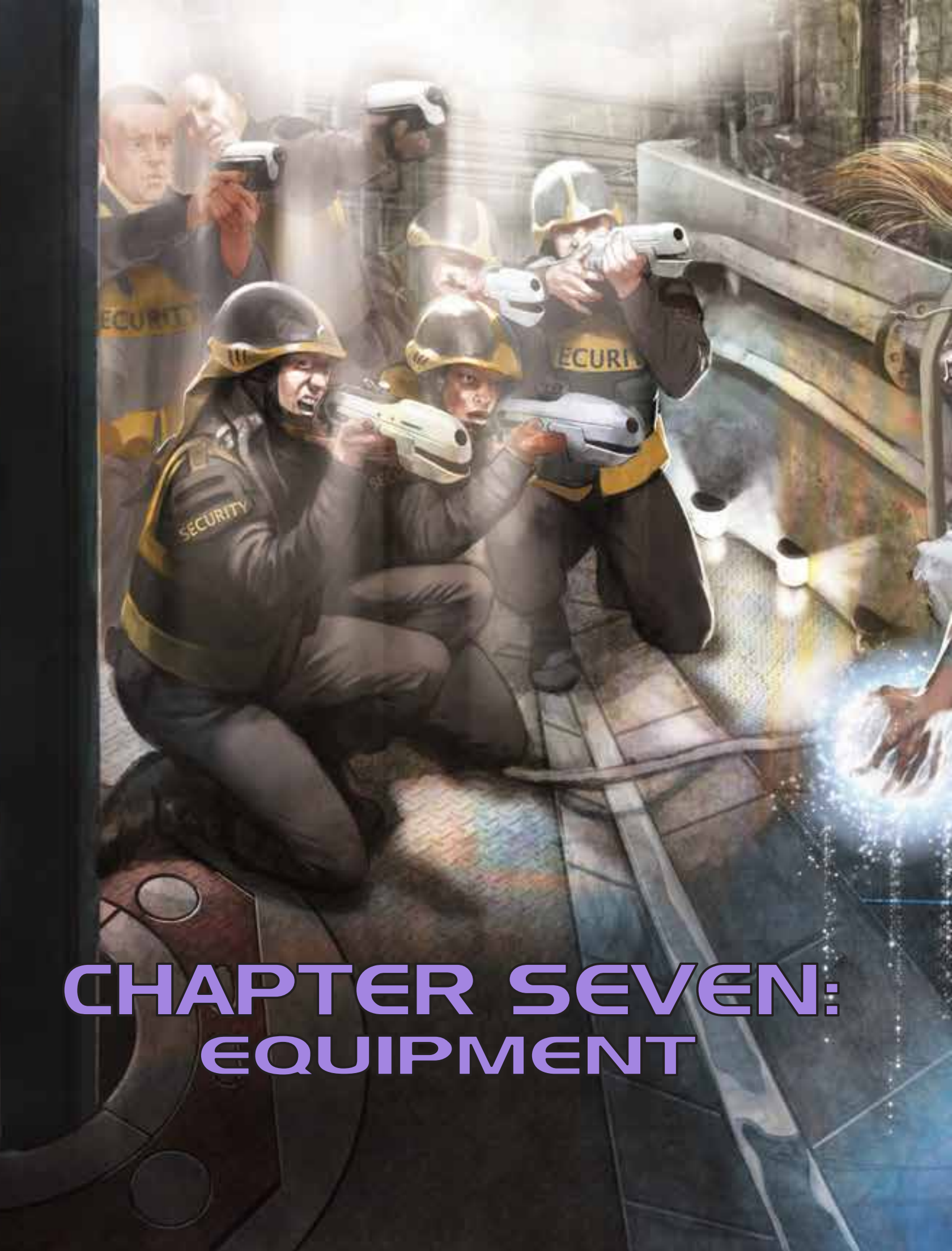
The laudenian totems were of ivory, bone, or steel. Chaparrans were always wood. Narros took to using weapons, swords and axes mostly, a few shields. The idea of wands came mostly from the whims of writers. Few casters ever needed them. They were the training wheels of sorcerers. Children used them in areas where magic was taught young. Aiden was never given such a crutch to depend on. No competent caster ever employed a wand. Hands were needed open to fiddle the fingers properly in controlling the spells cast. With one hand taken by the totem, putting a wand in the other was a colossal waste of digits.

All that was important were the words, to say the right one, the right way, and to understand its meaning. To speak the name and create it from nothing. There were other ways to harness magic, but Pleroma—the language of magic—was the most powerful and the path chosen by wizards. The spark that Chen had given Aiden was a living light drawn from nowhere, created with intelligence, and aware its life only lasted until dismissed. It knew this and didn't care, lovingly loyal to its creator or controller until discharged.

No matter how many laws of the universe the white gate modified, none of them were altered in ways that destroyed life. They allowed greater variations without voiding existing ones. Aiden remembered what Chen had said, that anything Aiden could think of thought for itself.

Humans not employing magic created dead zones where the disruption of technology was moderated, but never fully suppressed. The city of Angel was one of the few bastions left.





CHAPTER SEVEN: EQUIPMENT




Although Earth now resembles the ancient landscapes of fantasy, medieval it is not. The push for survival did not retard progress, and those building the first cities after gate-fall, even if outside the first fledging bastions, still possessed enough talent to build insulated housing and double-paned glass. Most basic technology still works the majority of the time, despite the occasional hiccup. Most of all, the knowledge from thousands of years of trial and error remained. The armor of today is lighter, stronger, and more maneuverable than the armor of legend. Swords are sharper and more balanced. Purely mechanical devices below a certain complexity, especially agricultural machinery, are retooled to accept animal or human power. Additionally, the functional limits of technology vary from place to place according to the density of the EDF. Prevented from developing complicated machines, many survivors delved into new areas, pioneers in alternative paths of development previously considered obsolete given the onset of the industrial revolution.

Simultaneously, bastions have employed their advanced expertise to weaving better clothes and forging better armor. Originally intended only for their own populations, some have learned the value of these goods outside their walls. Though their high tech weapons and devices are useless on the outside, bastions could still sell mass-produced, durable creature comforts, and even advanced versions of low-tech technologies, replacing tempered steel with carbon nanotubes, wood with advanced plastics, wool and cotton with synthetic fibers. This resulted in a torrent of new exports, boosting the economy of growing nations. The process to create these items in bulk necessitates the use of bastion knowledge and machinery, methods only replicated where the EDF is low or virtually nonexistent; thus markets usually sell these items for outrageous markups. Bastions like Angel and especially York turned this into a substantial windfall as the money turned in (gold, silver, and platinum) could be converted into raw materials. Disruption-immune bastion exports have found their way across the echan countryside, employed by almost every manner of individual, though often only held by human hands. Many of the more old-fashioned echa, especially laudenians and chaparrans, despise these items.

It is clear, therefore, that the chief obstacle faced in open echa to a lifestyle not entirely unlike that of, say, the mid-20th century pre-Hammer is not lack of knowledge and development, but the lack of the dedicated infrastructure required to take advantage of it. The rare echans granted a peek inside the bastions (and allowed to come out again) often wax rhapsodical about two things: electric lighting and flush toilets. In fact, indoor plumbing is far from an impossibility in echan communities, powered as it is entirely by simple mechanical processes – what most of echa lacks is the extensive sewage and water table management facilities necessary to maintain such conveniences (even so, many present-day castles are equipped with running water and modern lavatorial facilities). Electricity is more problematic; though the processes for generating it work normally, even simple batteries lose their charge two to ten times faster than in techan communities, and even the most conductive wiring is incapable of carrying a current more than a few hundred feet. Thus, electric power is an extreme rarity in echa.

The greatest distinction between technology and magic is progress. Technology improves as a civilization endeavors to better itself. The desire to advance from a primitive design encourages the development of better materials, better processes, and better machines. There has never been a point where a society was content



with what it had achieved. Based in the most basic evolutionary drive, a species must expand both in knowledge and in scope in order to remain competitive against rivals. These rivals include other nations as well as other species. This compulsory habit in humans is almost totally absent in non-evolved species like the fae, and even magically uplifted species like the kodiaks are slow to embrace this biological obligation to subsume or subjugate underdeveloped people, building upon a ruined foundation of past accomplishments.

Magic does not improve; when it changes, it does so on its own, and in random and unpredictable ways. Creatures of magic are the same the world over, except when they devolve, and even then the mutation usually takes the same form whenever it occurs from the same stock. The spells of yesteryear are the same cast today. Arcane knowledge and the ways of Pleroma passed down from the dragons in the previous age are finite. Though occasionally new spells are uncovered, they have not improved the knowledge of the language or how it is able to alter the world when uttered. No matter how powerful magic is, it does have limits, and only the most powerful dragons seem capable of transcending those limits. Additionally, the only creatures gifted with such enlightenment about Pleroma are creatures without the biological compulsion to better their species. Therefore there has never been an attempt by the fae to improve upon it, and a human lifetime is too severely limited to understand all the chaotic variables associated with magic.

With this impediment, many echalogians on both sides of the magical/technological axis have predicted that eventually, science will inevitably discover how to overcome their sensitivity to magical effects; theories of quantum mechanics already posit machines capable of making minute adjustments to their own inner workings to compensate for the vagaries of the EDF. Additionally, bastions like Porto and Mann have put forward proposals for creating a field that simulates a negative energy signature not unlike the energy from Ixindar. This would result in an “anti-magic field” that would render all magic within it inert. If successful, the retaking of the Earth by men and machines would be inevitable.

RESOURCES

Before man fell from his seat of power, he managed to strip Earth of almost all non-renewable resources. He extinguished nearly all fossil fuels, forcing bastions to develop alternate sources. Oil and gasoline are scarce after the Hammer, and with a lack of industrial-scale cultivation, vegetable-based fuels are not easily manufactured on the scale required by a techan population. The biggest hurdle for any formed authority was location. Many centers of techa positioned themselves on the coast for obvious reasons. Some utilize the sinful energy of the atom while others embraced cleaner resources like geothermal, tidal, or solar power. However, while coastal locations are generally rich in these kinds

of energy resources, the only mineral wealth they can usually claim is plentiful quantities of silicon. Only Selkirk sits on or near a mine. This left most available resources in the hands of echan cultures. The narros, of course, are the best miners and control the most valuable pits, but human settlements frequently grew around the narros mines to aid in exporting the excess mineral wealth.

The remaining resources are the common elements most took for granted years ago: copper, silver, gold, platinum, iron, coal, etc. In the new age, new riches like angelite and coruthil have also emerged. The bastions need such resources badly and some have secretly established trade agreements with outside sources.

CURRENCY

Without an extensive system of banking and trade exchanges, each kingdom issues its own currency. Since the concept of paper money in any great quantity relies on a trust that market economies are simply unable to match, nearly all of these currencies are issued in coin. Thankfully, the fae nations, long before man’s arrival, already decided that – despite what stamp was cast into the coin – the best way to ensure fair commerce was to make the value of the coin equal to that of the metal it is made from. It is not unheard of for travelers to pay their way in coins of equal value, but from a dozen different kingdoms. Because magic has difficulty forging valuable metals without the aid of a philosopher’s stone (the holy grail of alchemy and still only legend), the fae restricted their coins to a small branch of metals, namely gold, silver, and copper. This was standardized amongst the gimfen, damaskans, and narros (the latter being believed to have pioneered the practice); chaparrans and laudenians preferred barter to money in their own communities (and still do). Narros eventually added two more to the range, a dull silver coin made from palladium and platinum, and an ultra-rare angelite mint. In the modern world, the fae continued this practice and have endorsed a set of rules when dealing with currency.

Rather than deal with the complexities of money-changing in a culture where trade is sporadic at best, most human nations have simply adopted the fae tradition wholesale. Coins trade at the fair market value of their constituent metals. They are all properly stamped for authenticity and are distributed in near identical weight to other coins of equal value. Though each nation issues its own currency with its own unique signature, a coin from Abidan and a coin from Torquil are of more or less equal purity and value. As the most prolific mines in Canam are operated by the narros and nearly all nations must deal with them for the raw metals necessary to make the coins in the first place, they alone have the economic clout to ensure the system remains equitable across the continent.

Baruch Malkut is the only nation that still employs a standardized banknote system for higher

denominations, issuing paper with no face value to represent stored riches. Baruch shopkeepers, though encouraged to report those passing unfamiliar money, often take foreign gold, as the coins can be melted and re-stamped. Despite a continued push to eliminate the exchange of this money within their borders, it still occurs. The Malkut slavers, for example, freely accept foreign coins.

ECHAN CURRENCY

For simplicity, all echan coins trade equally with each other. Many kingdoms take foreign gold, melt it, and re-stamp it with their mark. Because of this practice, the Limshau chryso is the most widely circulated currency in Canam, followed distantly by the narros golden foot. Here are some examples of Canam currency:

Copper/Brass/Bronze Coins (=1 cp)

Abidan/Limshau/Gimfen penny (plural: pennies)

Baruch Malkut copper

Kannos kuedo

Narros copper tooth

Orchis casten

Torquil penny (plural: pence)

Silver Coins (=1 sp)

Abidan dagot

Kannos kroenan

Baruch Malkut silver

Gimfen pebble

Limshau carmot

Orchis noman

Narros silver finger

Torquil sterling

Gold Coins (=1 gp)

Abidan sovereign

Kannos kannon

Baruch Malkut dollar

Gimfen gold stone

Limshau chryso

Narros golden foot

Torquil crown

Platinum/Palladium Coins (=1 pp)

Limshau tollar

Narros pallis spirit

Unique Currency (Various)

Narros angelite opus (=500 gp)

Laudenian enchanted mark (=10,000 gp)

Gimfen pearl (=50 gp)

Quinox crystal (=5 gp)

Houses Antikari, Ogium, Plicato, and Solum all use various other nations' currencies. When Torquil was in its prime, it instigated a massive run of its coins, which was the dominant tender for nearly a century until the kingdom's collapse. Even after, it continued circulation for many decades and is still found today, though overwhelmed by the distribution of Limshau coins. Unique currency is often not accepted outside of the region of issue, except by collectors. The gimfen pearl is an actual pearl but with nearly pin-thin etch-work all

over it, making its aesthetic worth far higher than the pearl's value itself. It is often used when flamboyant purchases are made, especially in front of prospective mates. It is commonly considered a sign of arrogance if used for mediocre acquisitions. The laudenian mark is merely a glossy disk of brass but is enchanted with a permanent magical endowment. The coin has no apparent weight and can float in midair. It cannot be broken, or bent, nor can it be picked from its owner's purse. The coins reappear in the owner's possession until willingly handed to another. Though the magic can be pulled off it and used in a constructive way, only the laudenian elder casters know how to accomplish this.

The narros opus does not have enough angelite to forge an item but enough coins gathered could be employed in such a way; however, the coins are worth more in their issue than they are in their content and the cost of extracting the usable angelite from the coin would increase the cost of forging the item by upwards of 10%.

Quinox has a unique currency used in the high court and in prestigious markets. It is a small monocrystal three inches across. The unbroken crystal is completely pure with no grain boundaries—a perfect crystal lattice. The ingot boules issued by the state are identical with no markings for their authenticity. None is required, as no single person within and without the House of Quinox knows how the treasury creates such perfection. Chaparrans and laudenians prefer a barter system, but when forced to use money they employ their neighbors' (in this case, Limshau).

Games need not employ this system of currency; just assume the gold they acquire is universal. As an optional rule, GMs are welcomed to include the currency titles above purely as flavor to a scene, or they may impose a rule system upon them, forcing players to track what kinds of money they have and its local value. If so, a few guidelines should be followed:

- Unique currency is only accepted by the race in question and they are often unwilling to trade it over to more acceptable legal tender.
- No one outside of Baruch Malkut accepts their money and no legitimate vendor in the “blessed kingdom” converts their coins or bills to foreign money.
- Banknotes are legal tender, but are usually issued in the form of custom letters of credit and have an accepted range from their bank. Usually, this range is within 100 miles. Outside of this, the notes are refused. Several shops in large cities refuse to deal with large monies (over 500 gp) and will only accept banknotes from local banks. Banknotes are seldom exchanged back to coins unless given as loose change in a purchase.
- Gems and jewelry are not legal tender and must be traded for currency or banknotes.



UNIVERSAL CREDITS (UC)

It would be great to think that one could pass into the walls of a city of industry with a bag of gold and buy a laser gun. Alas, it is not that simple. Because of bastions' desperate need for resources, currency is printed on the cheapest of materials. They all commonly feature a half-plastic/half paper medium impossible to copy with more than 300 counterfeit measures including holographic imagery and computer encoding. Each has special imprinting from its home bastion. No bastion currency can be exchanged with any other bastion currency. For the sake of clarity, these moneys are given the term Universal Credits (uc), for they represent the legal tender of all bastion currency.

Various Bastion Currencies: Angel dollar, Mann credit, Sierra Madre bar, Selkirk shilling, and York dollar.

Although you cannot trade one bastion currency for another bastion currency, they are all considered equal in value in regards to echan currency. Bastions are always happy to convert echan currency into their own denominations, because echan currency is worth the value of its metal, and bastions are always in the need for echan currency. Converting money the other way generally involves finding a black-marketeer, who will exchange uc for gold at a ruinous markup; most people leaving a bastion find it easier and more economical to convert their money into exportable trade goods and sell them at the first large market town outside.

Every bastion except Mann will accept echan currency regardless of its national stamp. For this purpose 1 uc = 1 gp. There are no fractions or change and exchange banks will not accept lower value currencies unless they add up to a single uc. Banks will also not give out or return echan currency as they are smelted and put to applicable use; gold in particular is essential, as most modern electrical wiring is made from it due to its near total impermeability to most magic. No bastions accept unique echan currency.

The Treasure Conundrum: Alas, unlike echans, techan characters will seldom (if ever) find their technology in the lair of a dragon (or any other creature for that matter). This means techans must return to a bastion or techan merchant to re-arm and upgrade their technology or depend on a trained engineer to build arms or armor over a long period of time. Nothing they find in field will be applicable to them (except as widgets).

If characters gain a level in a dungeon, they won't conveniently find a higher level weapon after they slay the next big monster. In long, protracted adventures, this may create problems. Vehicles are a wise base of operations as they may hold many times over the ammunition capacity of a single techan character. This may solve the problematic issue of ammunition but not about the eventual need to upgrade technology. Alas, the echan wilderness is not called a wasteland by the techans for nothing. The GM has options to offset this.

In the end, very little is more satisfying than returning to a bastion with your holds overflowing with gold.

TECH LEVELS

Tech levels indicate the differences between the bastions. Some of these city-states reached pinnacles of advancement before others. Some struggled to survive while others flourished. With the EDF making long-range communication impossible, the bastions grew and developed separately from their brethren. After 500 years, they are not about to start sharing. Bastions would not only fight for technology but for the people possessing the knowledge to build it. Tech levels indicate the possible origin of a weapon as well as its damage potential. Anyone finding and using high tech gear is skittish about flaunting it in a lower-TL bastion for fear it will be confiscated, dismantled, and reverse engineered.

Seven tech levels exist. These are broad categorizations reflecting both how advanced a device is and how easily disrupted it is by EDF. There are often exceptions when a bastion develops a device higher than their stated tech level. Higher tech level bastions gain access to all levels below them. 'Tech Level' is not a term that is used in-universe, but most bastions are broadly aware of the tiers of distinction between one another and have their own methods of classifying those differences.

Tech Level 0: This level covers all technological development from the early industrial level to the start of the microchip revolution. Most, but not all TL0 technology is relatively safe from disruption, although this depends on the strength of the local EDF, and as always, the less advanced the machine, the safer.

Vehicles: Wheeled or tracked ground vehicles and propeller-driven aircraft running on simple chemical fuels instead of electricity (alcohol-based fuel is more accessible and stable in EDF than petroleum or bio-diesel, but limits the output of the engine significantly) or human- or animal-power. Military craft flaunt armor and tank treads. Fly by wire.

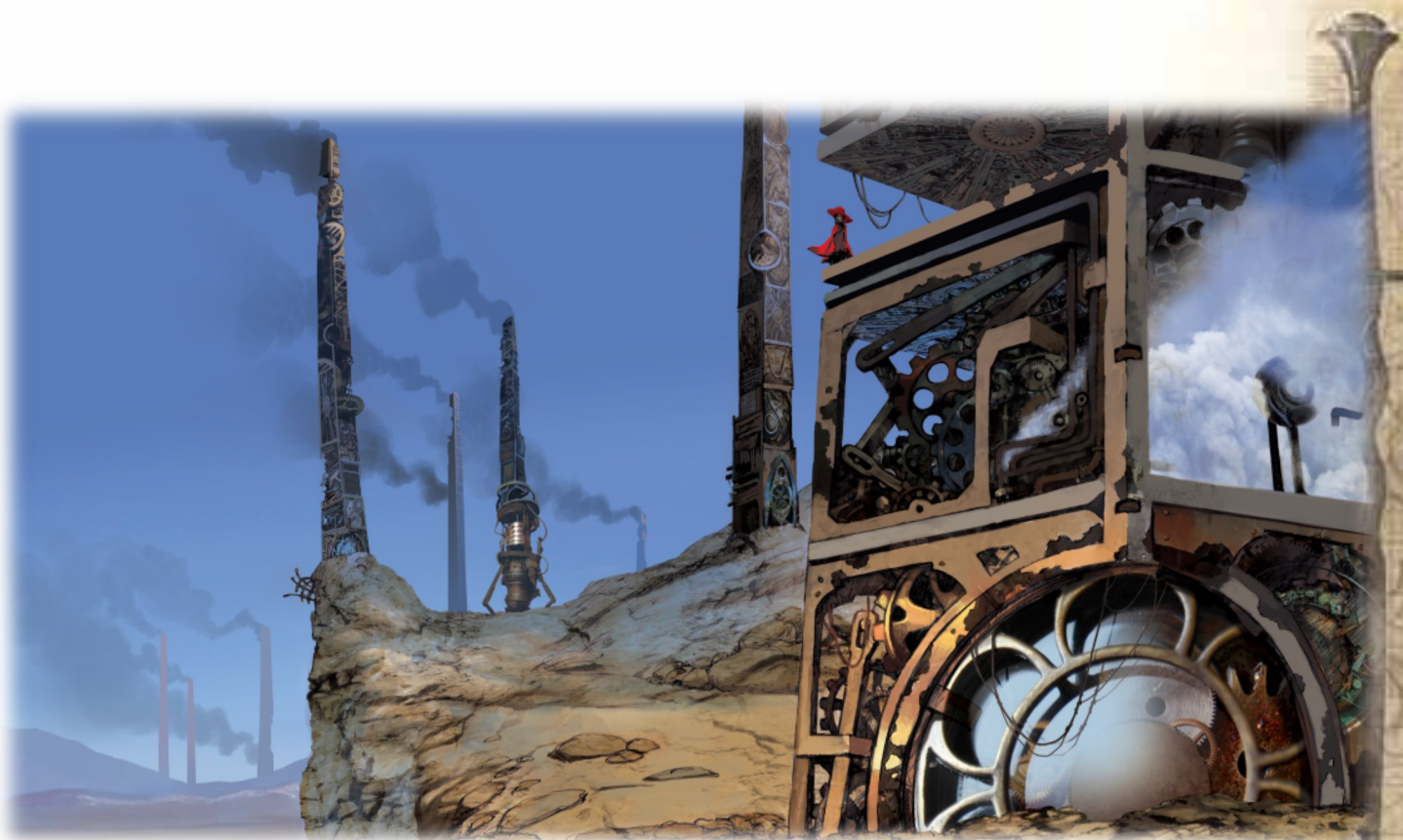
Weapons: Bolt action and flechette rounds fire from most guns. More primitive black-powder firearms are in use in some areas, but advanced versions of bows and crossbows are more generally favored.

Medical: Natural healing only. Surgery can cure most wounds, but recovery can last a while.

Tech Level 1: This is the most basic level required to be considered 'high-tech'. Almost all technological advances from this point on are dependent upon electricity.

Vehicles: Aircraft utilize aero-forms with jet engines or propellers. Vehicles roll on wheels but possess traction control and anti-lock brakes. Armored vehicles become lighter and radar-resistant.

Weapons: Electronically stacked projectiles and caseless ammunition. Basic energy weapons are limited to short range electric shocks.



Medical: Natural healing mostly, assisted by EKGs and X-Ray machines. Surgical recovery times are improved by synthetic skin and anti-rejection drugs.

Tech Level 2: At this level, almost every form of technology has integrated electronics and advanced computer control.

Vehicles: Ground vehicles now sport computer navigation, climate control, and electronic stability. Aircraft can now fly themselves if need be. Advanced aerospace has given way to vectored thrust and vertical-take-off aircraft.

Weapons: Computer tracking and targeting. Infrared and thermal imaging is available, but not standard. Firearms haven't changed but have grown more complicated with advanced reloading and higher firing rates. Advances in construction make them lighter with larger calibers.

Medical: Computer diagnostic beds, MRIs, and robotic assisted surgery.

Tech Level 3: This is a liminal stage. Old technologies are simultaneously being advanced and refined at the same time as their inevitable (but still somewhat primitive) replacements are entering circulation. This is the last tech level that an observer from the 21st century pre-Hammer might still find familiar.

Vehicles: Vertical take-off fan craft and wingless jets keep aircraft aloft, are much more stable, and can fly rings around more primitive craft. Aircraft designs are no longer dominated by their massive aero-forms. Ground vehicles still use wheels but now mass transit magnetic vehicles appear as an alternative.

Weapons: Bolt weapons remain the choice for most but the way they fire improves. Railcannons and self-propelled projectiles exist, but are not common.

Medical: Rapid healing injections, designer drugs, gene therapy, and beneficial viruses. Healing time cut in half with medical attention.

Tech Level 4: Refinements in the manipulation of magnetic fields and energy levels characterize this stage.

Vehicles: Magnetic vehicles reduce in size and now replace wheels in common transport. Fanjets shrink and become more efficient.

Weapons: The beginning of basic laser weaponry. Advanced magnetics. Prototype exo-armor appears.

Medical: Most known diseases are curable. Healing time cut to one-third with medical attention. Nanotech healing is in its infancy.

Tech Level 5: At this level, energy is almost as freely manipulable as matter and nanotechnology is ubiquitous.

Vehicles: Robots appear beyond the role of "dumb tool." Exo-armor is mass produced. Wheeled traffic virtually nonexistent or, if it exists, can traverse any terrain. Ramjets shrink and provide massive thrust in small packages, revolutionizing transportation outside the magnetic-traffic.

Weapons: Laser weapons "tunable." Plasma weaponry. Bolt weapons are outdated.

Medical: Nanotechnology can heal any wounds and even regenerate limbs.

Tech Level 6: Any sufficiently advanced technology would be indistinguishable from magic, if magic didn't break sufficiently advanced technology.

Vehicles: Antigravity replaces all previous transportation.

Weapons: Disruptors, vapor rifles, disintegrator weaponry.

Medical: Complete body reconstruction.



APPLICATION OF TECH LEVELS

The tech level determines how easily the item is affected by disruption rolls (see below) and affects the difficulty and cost of repairs and modifications to the item. Tech levels can also be used as a guide to determine when certain items should be made available to characters. High tech levels also generally pair up with bonuses (attack and damage for weapons, AC for armor, etc.)

TECH LEVEL	TIER	BONUS
TL0	Adventurer	0
TL1	Adventurer	0
TL2	Adventurer	+1
TL3	Champion	+2
TL4	Champion	+2
TL5	Epic	+3
TL6	Epic	+3

ECHAN WEAPONS

Most fae races remain steadfast in their traditions and techniques. A laudenian bow looks the same now as it always did. Only the damaskans continue to evolve with knowledge collected from their human allies, and weapons from Limshau revel in a newfound understanding of the forge and hammer.

BASTION EXPORTS

Some manufacturers in bastions employ advanced technology to create melee weapons of amazing quality. The materials melt at exacting points and are chemically combined to a perfect ratio, their edges shaved to almost an atom's sharpness. Bows are no longer strung animal hides around bent wood but cables wound around a mechanism of levers. All bastion export weapons are finely calibrated, lighter and sturdier than their echan equivalents. However, bastion exports look plain and somewhat ordinary; maker symbols offer some style, usually engraved in the steel itself, but are rarely ostentatious. Often enough, they are built for effectiveness, not glory, so seldom do they strike fear in opponents when raised in anger. They won't rouse the masses when pulled from their scabbard. Because of the niche market for such items, echan weapons made and exported from techa fetch steep prices and rarely can buyers justify the expense. A prospective buyer can usually spot one of these rare weapons by their extravagant cost. They are still counted as echan weapons and are not affected by disruption. Most fae (except gimfen and damaskans) disdain bastion exports, but anyone else who can get them wields them as proudly as if pulled from a narros fire pit, a result of technological know-how, not magical aptitude.

Property: Generally, bastion exports inflict slightly more damage than traditional weapons (1d6 to 1d8 to 1d10 to 1d12), see table.

Brass Knuckles: A no fuss weapon, brass knuckles are a simple melee weapon.

Carbon Crossbow: This super light crossbow was exported from York originally, but replicas have been found across Canam. The weapon is a sleek, smooth, multi-piece item of black and silver, constructed not of steel, but of plastics and carbon fiber. This makes the weapon less clumsy than ancient designs. It is not a weapon starting characters can own.

Property: The carbon crossbow comes with a range-finding scope.

Compound Longbow: Compound bows are fashioned of steel or aluminum – a few rare models are constructed from magnarros or angelite. They are bolted and adjusted by computer. Their power comes from a series of pulleys, cams, and levers. They do not warp and can be adjusted for a variety of conditions. It is not a weapon starting characters can own.

LIMSHAU WEAPONS

Modern Limshau weapons were adapted from knowledge acquired from refugees leaving Angel when Ravenar visited the walls hundreds of years ago, and the designs and names of these weapons were taken from the traditions of old Asia from which most of these displaced peoples descended. All Limshau weapons look plain and featureless, sporting neither jewels in their pommels nor intricate weavings on their handles, but the swords are extremely sharp and feature holes along the blade to lighten the weapon without sacrificing tensile strength by a significant margin. Additionally, modern Limshau weapons benefit from advanced forging techniques and significantly better quality steel than their original namesakes, making them much less brittle and given them significantly more longevity than an equivalent from the old world.

Special: Characters with Limshau backgrounds are able to select these weapons at creation.

Property: Wielding a Limshau melee weapon bestows a +1 bonus to AC until the beginning of your next turn if you hit an enemy with a melee attack.

Limshau Repeating Crossbow: This unique weapon has found popularity recently with custodians in the outer cities, and has since spread into wider circulation. This single-hand crossbow carries a strap around the user's arm, allowing the weapon to be reloaded with a single hand, making it the only full-size crossbow that can be loaded and fired repeatedly with a single hand.

Property: Reloading takes a free action, but after six shots, you must take a standard action to reload it.

ECHAN WEAPONS

WEAPON	Recommended Damage	Price
One-Handed		
Makana	1d6	15 gp
Bastion bastard sword	1d10	350 gp/uc
Bastion short	1d6	310 gp/uc
Limshau katana	1d10	400 gp
Limshau nagamaki	1d8	230 gp
Limshau tanto	1d4	250 gp
Limshau wakazashi	1d6	350 gp
Narros krollish	1d10	50 gp
Two-Handed		
Compound longbow	1d10	350 gp/uc
Carbon crossbow	1d8	330 gp/uc
Bastion greatsword	1d12	330 gp/uc
Bastion longsword	1d10	315 gp/uc
Kitarri black bow	1d10	— gp
Limshau crossbow	1d8	300 gp
Limshau odachi	1d10	400 gp
Limshau naginata	1d10	400 gp
Limshau yari	1d10	380 gp

OTHER ECHAN WEAPONS

Makana: Chaparrans do not like using metal weapons if they can avoid it. While they will use swords if they have to, most prefer the makana – a thin, sharp-edged club made of very dense wood, studded with stone, bone, or occasionally steel studs at regular intervals along opposite sides of its length. The makana handles similarly to a sword under normal usage, but can also be wielded like a club without requiring the user to shift their grip.

Narros Krollish: The narros krollish was considered the standard weapon of choice for most narros serving in the military. This practice has waned in the centuries since the narros' return, only keeping the tradition within Fargon. Narros born or raised elsewhere run the risk of never picking up one. The krollish is a multi-function weapon featuring no less than three different ways to inflict damage on a target. Its business end sports both an axe and a hammer, formed from a single block of steel. That head is topped on a long staff towering over most narros wielding it.

Kitarri Black Bow: Legend claims that the wood inside of a kitarri black bow is partly infused with the spirit of dead chaparran. It is commonly known that when a chaparran dies, it is placed without coffin in the dirt along with a single acorn. The tree which grows requires neither light nor water. Chaparrans are able to command wood to naturally grow objects for them to use, including weapons. It was at some point where these two traditions merged, and these trees enchanted with the spirit of passed fae were used/asked to create great structures and items for the elite of chaparran society. The temples of Jibaro are thought to be such examples. Kitarri black bows are believed to be another,

capable of adapting themselves to any chaparran (or other worthy spirit) wielding them. Black bows do not bond permanently to a user but they have been known to “play favorites”. Being a non-chaparran and gaining the benefits of a black bow is rare, but has been known to happen.

Property: You can use Strength instead of Dexterity with ranged attacks while using a Kitarri Black Bow (and it is one of the few bows able to inflict 1d10 damage).

TECHAN WEAPONS

Techan weapons are listed by broad examples: if every variation from every bastion were to be detailed, the list would take up half the book. However, some unique weapons are included.

Standard Equipment: At character creation, a player can select any TL0 weapon fitting for their class except for super heavy weapons and specialty weapons.

WEAPON RULES

The following rules apply to all weapons included here:

Reloading Weapons: All weapons are manual or clip-loading. Though these clips may be energy cells, they all necessitate the same time to reload. Reloading one techan weapon of any type requires a move action. Certain powers.

Switching Weapons: Although drawing a weapon is a quick action, switching weapons without dropping one requires two quick actions (one to return—or sheath a weapon – the other to draw the second). Although this would never be an issue with fantasy players, techan players may often switch weapons several times during an encounter. Some abilities and feats may alter this rule.

Basic Chemical Projectiles: The vast majority of techan weapons in echa rely on basic chemical propulsion. The earliest firearms used chemical explosives to propel its deadly shell toward its victim. Although the chemicals evolved as knowledge did, the result remained the same. Requiring no energy cell, standard ballistic firearms seldom broke down. As time continued, the chemicals became easier to locate. Even in the largest, most advanced bastions, chemical firearms are still popular among those leaving the safety of their walls. Assault rifles, autoloaders, bolt sniper rifles, all caseless weapons, light machine guns, machine pistols, all shotguns, pocket pistols, sniper cannons, and submachine guns utilize chemical projectiles. There are also two subsets of BCP weaponry:

Caseless Ammunition: Caseless weapons use unique clipless, caseless ammunition. A square-shaped round is the entire firing mechanism. The shell is encased inside a solid propellant coffin, connected to others, and fed as a clip. Each bullet, when fired, incinerates its case, ejecting the remnants with the bullet. Caseless weapons possess massive clip capacities.

Electronic Stacked Projectiles (ESP): No longer are bullets loaded from an external clip and launched via a



- A. Plasma Rifle (Collapsed/Deployed)
- B. Caseless Pistol
- C. Pocket Pistol
- D. Pulse Carbine
- E. Plasma Grenade
- F. Submachine Gun
- G. SPP Rifle
- H. Rail Pistol
- I. Ion Rifle

- J. Rotary Cannon
- K. Thumper Laser Cannon
- L. Vapor Rifle
- M. Gauss Repeater (Medium & Large User Configuration)
- N. Caseless Rifle
- O. Pulse Capacitor Rifle

firing pin. Now they are loaded directly into the barrel, separated only by the propellant. The concept dates back to traditional fireworks except the stacked projectile weapon does not need to fire its entire payload when ignited. Electrical pulses launch the bullets in the proper order. Misfires are pushed out by the next round, preventing backfire. This removes the need for a clip, a firing pin, or for that matter, any moving parts at all. The greatest advantage of this technology is a phenomenal firing rate, capable of discharging rounds literally as a stream of bullets.

WEAPON GROUPS

The weapons covered here are grouped into the following categories based on their general utility. They do not fall into the normal categories of simple, military, or superior weapons.

Heavy Weapons: These are large weapon systems that require a tripod, a base, a platform, or any other stable point from which to fire.

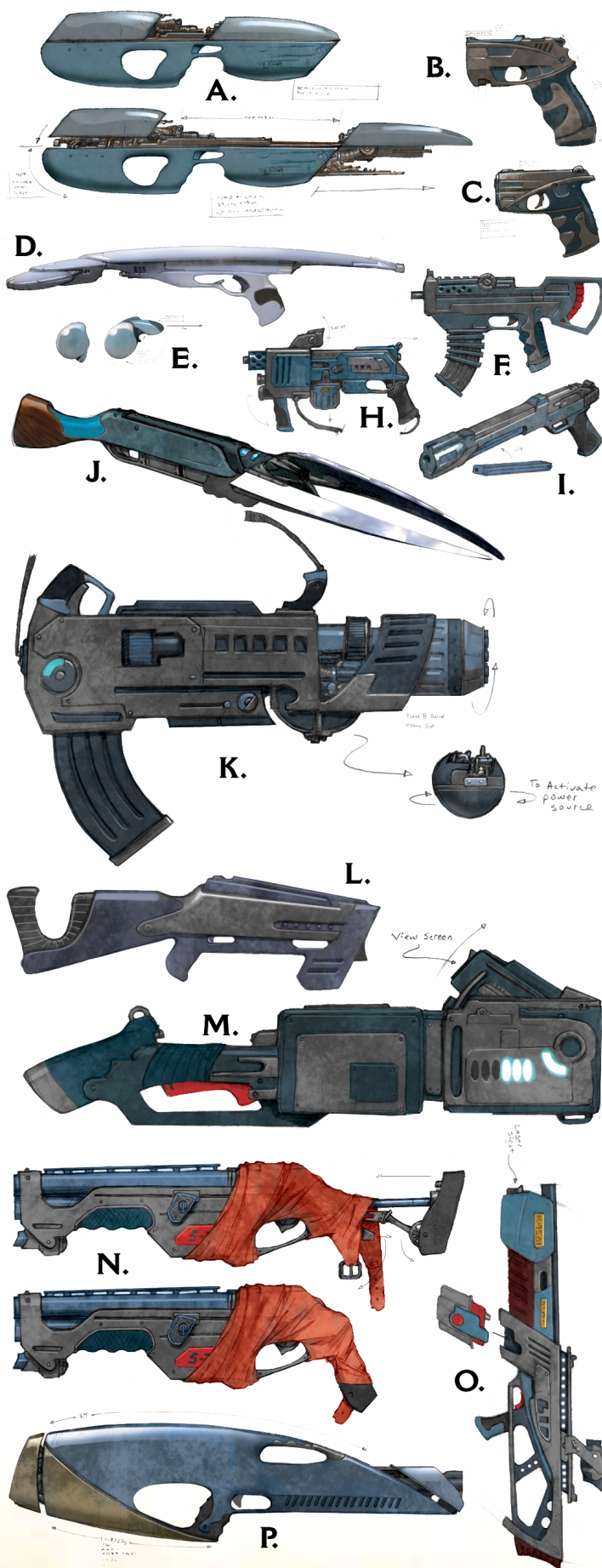
Properties: Because of their cumbersome nature, if you move or are moved any distance you suffer a -4 penalty to attack rolls with heavy weapons until the start of your next turn (you can shoot first and then move to avoid the penalty on your turn). You also suffer the penalty when using a heavy weapon against targets engaged with you.

Small Arms, One-Handed: These are single-handed firearms which are renowned for their ease of use and compact style, making them an easy choice for those preferring stealth. These weapons include basic pistols and small machine guns.

Properties: Firing a one-handed small arm does not provoke opportunity attacks. These weapons include basic pistols and small machine guns. They cannot be wielded by larger creatures (i.e.: exo-armor or vehicles).

Small Arms, Two-Handed: These are larger, slightly clumsier weapons usually preferred for their long range, high stopping power, and larger clip capacities. These include machine guns, most sniper rifles, and assault rifles.

Properties: Because of their cumbersome nature, if you move more or are moved, you suffer a -2 penalty to attack rolls with two-handed small arms until the beginning of your next turn (you can shoot first and then move to avoid the penalty on your turn). You also suffer the penalty when using a two-handed small arm against targets engaged with you.



ONE-HANDED SMALL ARMS

WEAPON	PRICE	CLIP/CELL	TL	BONUS	PROPERTIES
Autoloader	25	15	0	0	BCP
Machine pistol	40	30	0	0	Auto, BCP
Revolver	20	6	0	0	BCP, immune
Pocket pistol	20	6	0	0	BCP, immune
Dragoon	15	2	0	0	Immune
Break-action shot pistol	30	2	0	0	Immune, shotgun
Caseless pistol	2,250	40	1	0	BCP
Light machine pistol	2,350	30	1	0	Auto, BCP
ESP pistol	8,800	40	2	+1	Auto, BCP
ESP swarm	9,600	40	2	+1	Auto/heavy auto***
SPP pistol	8,800	10	2	+1	SPP
Coil pistol	34,000	10	3	+2	Gauss
Solid laser pistol	58,000	20	4	+2	Laser
Rail pistol	60,000	10	4	+2	Gauss, high crit
Plasma pistol	98,000	15	5	+3	Plasma
Thumper laser pistol	98,000	30	5	+3	Auto, high crit, laser
Capacitor plasma pistol	128,000	30	6	+3	Auto, plasma

TWO-HANDED SMALL ARMS

WEAPON	PRICE	CLIP/CELL	TL	BONUS	PROPERTIES
Assault rifle	50	50	0	0	Auto, BCP
Shotgun	50	6	0	0	BCP, shotgun
Bolt rifle	35	5	0	0	Immune
Bolt sniper rifle	45	6	0	0	BCP, sniper
Machine shotgun	2,500	30	1	0	Auto, BCP, shotgun, under
Submachine gun	3,000	60	1	0	Auto, BCP
Sniper cannon	4,000	6	1	0	BCP, sniper
Caseless rifle	4,000	100	1	0	Auto, BCP
ESP rifle	5,000	10	2	+1	Auto, BCP
ESP Legion	5,000	100	2	+1	Auto/heavy auto***
SPP rifle	18,000	20	2	+1	SPP
SPP Vortex	35,000	70	2	+1	Auto, SPP
Coilgun	34,000	16	3	+2	Gauss
SPP sensor gun	34,000	10	3	+2	SPP, sniper
Ion rifle	25,000	20	3	+2	Pincher
Cyclotron rifle	38,000	20	3	+2	Nuclear
Kinetic flash rifle	36,000	50	3	+2	Auto, gauss
Nuclear pulse rifle	42,000	80	3	+2	Auto, nuclear
Solid laser rifle	72,000	20	4	+2	Laser
Ultimate sniper rifle	80,000	10	4	+2	Gauss, High crit, sniper
Gauss repeater	85,000	40	4	+2	Auto, gauss, high crit
Plasma rifle	128,000	15	5	+3	Plasma
Thumper laser rifle	135,000	60	5	+3	Auto, high crit, laser
Pulse capacitor rifle	145,000	80	6	+3	Auto, plasma

***Weapons with both the auto and heavy auto properties allow you to declare which property you are using at the time you activate a power.

Specialty Weapons: These are weapons with a unique function that require specific training. These include sonic weapons, pulse weaponry, and rocket launchers. Specialty weapons also count as one- or two-handed small arms, heavy weapons or super heavy weapons for all purposes except proficiency.

Properties: Specialty weapons can only be used with a no-frills basic ranged attack (no maneuvers or triggered special abilities) or its own special attack.

Note: Specialty weapons are often rare and ammo is generally scarce and limited. Unlike normal weapons, players need to track ammunition for these weapons and understand that it can and will eventually run out.

Super Heavy Weapons: These are weapons with the potential of incredible damage but with a cumbersome design. All super heavy weapons come equipped with either a vehicle mount or a tripod. These large weapon systems require a tripod, a base, a platform, or any other stable point from which to fire. Examples



HEAVY WEAPONS

WEAPON	PRICE	CLIP/CELL	TL	BONUS	PROPERTIES
Machine light cannon	65	120	0	0	heavy auto
Rotary cannon	2,300	300	1	0	heavy auto
ESP maelstrom	10,000	400	2	+1	heavy auto
“God’s Eye” sniper gun	14,000	10	2	+1	high crit, sniper
Ion cannon	22,000	40	3	+2	Pincher
Coil light gun	42,000	40	3	+2	Gauss
Nuclear particle lance	43,000	30	3	+2	High-crit, nuclear
Linear collider	45,000	60	3	+2	heavy auto, nuclear
Sonic devastator	28,000	40	3	+2	Sonic
Railcannon	75,000	120	4	+2	Gauss, heavy auto, high crit
Solid laser cannon	80,000	30	4	+2	Laser
Thumper laser cannon	134,000	100	5	+3	Heavy auto, high crit, laser
Pulse mini-gun	144,000	100	6	+3	Heavy auto, plasma
Capacitor apocalypse	162,000	100	6	+3	Heavy auto, plasma

SUPER HEAVY WEAPONS

WEAPON	PRICE	CLIP/CELL	TL	BONUS	PROPERTIES
Mortar**	1,200	1	1	0	Grenade
Volley gun ESP	3,400	600	2	+1	heavy auto
Autocannon	3,400	200	2	+1	Auto
Super-Kill Sniper	105,000	5	4	+2	Gauss, sniper
Mass driver	325,000	10	5	+2	Gauss
Particle beam gun	25,000	20	3	+2	Nuclear
Dense Plasma Focus Cannon	625,000	200	5	+3	Heavy auto, high-crit, plasma

SPECIALTY WEAPONS (Can only be used with a “no-frills” ranged basic action)

WEAPON	PRICE	CLIP/CELL	TL	BONUS	PROPERTIES
Capsicum spray	20	3	0	0	1-handed
Grenade launcher	60	1	0	0	1-handed, grenade
Grenade light weapon	300	6	0	0	2-handed, grenade
Electroshock gun	2,000	1	1	0	1-handed
Glue gun	2,000	1	1	0	Exp, heavy weapon
Net gun	1,000	1	1	0	2-handed
Rocket launcher	500	1	1	0	Heavy weapon, exp
Grenade launcher, mark II	2,000	4	3	+1	1-handed, grenade
Laser guided rocket launcher	3,500	1	2	+1	2-handed, exp, guided
Tank heavy gun	3,400	1	2	+1	2-handed, exp
Grenade launcher, mark III	19,200	6	5	+3	1-handed, grenade
Sonic stunner	18,000	10	3	+2	2-handed
Restraintment field	45,000	1	4	+2	1-handed
Smart guided rocket launcher	5,500	1	4	+2	2-handed, exp, guided
Plasma thrower	34,000	10	5	+3	2-handed, plasma
Plasma artillery	98,000	4	6	+3	Plasma, exp, super heavy weapon
Vapor rifle	200,000	6	6	+3	2-handed

TECHAN MELEE WEAPONS

WEAPON	PRICE	TL	BONUS	PROPERTIES
Brass Knuckles	5	0	0	1-handed, augment, immune
Buzz Baton	32,000	3	+1	1-handed, pincher
Piton-Gauntlet	2,500	1	0	1-handed, augment
Power-Hooks	48,000	4	+2	1-handed, augment
Tesla glove	62,000	5	+3	1-handed, augment, pincher

**Mortars cannot target creatures nearby or closer.



include heavy guns and artillery weapons.

Properties: Unless the weapon is mounted on a vehicle, exo-armor, or another fixed weapon mount, you must use a standard action to plant it in the ground before firing. Once planted it cannot be moved unless you use a standard action to uproot it. If you fire a super heavy weapon without planting it, the attack automatically misses and you are dazed until the beginning of your next turn. You cannot target creatures engaged with you with a super heavy weapon.

Additionally, all super heavy weapons inflict +2 damage per die.

Techan Melee Weapons: Close combat training is hardly obsolete since the development of chemical propulsion and large-clip firearms, but it is not the focus of the modern high-tech military. Though a knife will always be standard equipment, it is more often used as a utility item rather than a weapon, at least until the pistol ran out of bullets. As expected, the concepts of laser swords and mono-molecular whips are constructs of pure science fiction, and are considered neither possible nor practical for a modern military.

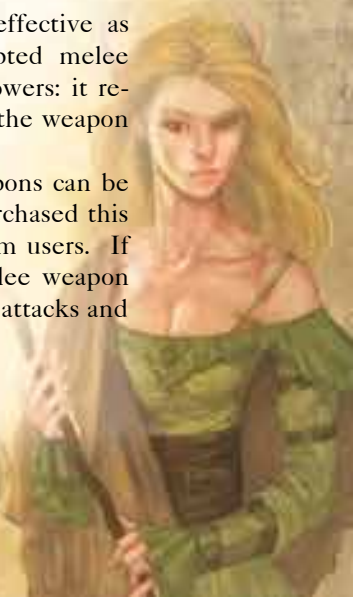
While a gun will almost always be the best choice for taking down a ravaging monster, free companies and other technological-based organizations actively engaged with outside forces have often found themselves squaring off against foes able to reduce the effectiveness of ranged weapons, including invisibility, supernat-

ural speed, or being able to ambush opponents from a concealed and inaccessible location. Add to that the cramped quarters of most dungeons along with the capacity of monsters to sustain significant punishment before dying, and the necessity of creating advanced melee weapons became an urgency.

The issue with employing active technology with close-combat weapons in a fantasy world is that, by their very nature, the weapon has to physically touch a creature that generates a disruption field in order to do any damage. As a result, these melee weapons have to be especially insulated against magical influence; hence the absence of the aforementioned energy swords, even in the bastions whose technology is only limited by the human imagination.

Disruption: Melee weapons are still effective as weapons even when disrupted. A disrupted melee weapon loses any bonus, properties, and powers: it retains damage unless indicated otherwise in the weapon description.

Size: Like firearms, techan melee weapons can be enlarged for Large users (exo-armor). If purchased this way, they no longer can be used by Medium users. If used by exo-armor, use the TL of the melee weapon when determining enhancement bonuses to attacks and damage.



RESIZING WEAPONS

Weapons can be held or mounted, wielded by ground troops or by massive armored robots. Weapons do not scale in damage if adapted for a vehicle or by a larger user. However, since weapons are listed as three different classifications, larger ones can be treated as smaller ones if wielded by a larger user or mounted on a vehicle. Usually, a weapon must be specially engineered (or re-engineered) to fit a larger wielder, at which point it cannot be used by wielders of its original size.

One-Handed Small Arms: These weapons cannot be resized, though they can be mounted.

Two-Handed Small Arm: A Large user treats resized two-handed small arms as one-handed small arms for purposes of attack penalties due to movement, and requires only one hand to wield them. If you mount a two-handed small arm to a vehicle, it becomes a detachable weapon and does not inflict attack penalties through movement while mounted, though it still requires two hands to use.

Heavy Weapons: A Large user treats resized heavy weapons as two-handed small arms for purposes of attack penalties due to movement. If you mount a heavy weapon to a vehicle, it becomes a detachable weapon and is treated as a two-handed small arm for purposes of attack penalties due to movement, though it still occupies the turret as a heavy weapon.

Super Heavy Weapons: A Large user treats resized super heavy weapons as heavy weapons for purposes of attack penalties due to movement. If you mount a super heavy weapon to a vehicle, it is treated as a heavy weapon for purposes of attack penalties due to movement, though it still occupies the turret as a super heavy weapon.

Weapon Mounts/Turrets: Several vehicles and exo-armor feature weapon mounts or turrets. Each entry will list what kind of weapon can be mounted. When a maximum size of the weapon is indicated, this is the unmodified weapon's size, not a resized weapon. You can always mount smaller weapons than indicated, but never larger. You cannot combine smaller weapons mounts into one larger mount unless a vehicle allows it.

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A point about the table. Advanced techan weapons should be treated the same as magic items are treated in 13th Age. The more advanced ones are extremely rare in open echa. 13th Age discourages monetary gains and costs for magic items, but we are listing them because it's a logical byproduct of a technological society.



TL2 is about the limit of what you can see in regular use, even from more advanced bastions - because the more complex something is, the more likely it is to disrupt, even techans used to more advanced machinery tend to use simpler weapons in the field. You tend see more plasma rifles in use by gimfen than you do by humans.

WEAPON PROPERTIES

Where magical weapons have enhancements, techan weapons have properties.

Augment: An augment weapon uses your unarmed attack to determine damage dice. An unarmed attack can only benefit from one augment weapon at a time.

Auto: A weapon with the auto property can fire 1 round of ammunition per attack roll with any power without the auto keyword. You fire 5 rounds of ammunition per attack roll with powers with the auto keyword. Some powers have additional abilities when firing weapons with the auto property.

Capacitor: Capacitor weapons resulted from plasma bottle research. It builds upon this by combining elements from both plasma and laser technologies. For the capacitor weapons, the shooter can dial up the strength of the energy burst. The weapon charges up by siphoning energy from its cell. The weapon discharges plasma energy but also uses plasma as its accelerator.

Property: Capacitors have three settings. Each additional charge spent per attack roll increases its damage die by one step (1d4 > 1d6 > 1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12 > 2d6 > 2d8 > 2d10), to a maximum of 3 steps with 4 charges.

Special: All capacitor weapons also have the plasma property.

Exp: Explosives are area effects. When using a weapon with an Exp effect, roll 1d4 for the number of targets the weapon can affect. There has to be that number of targets in a reasonably close area.

Gauss: These weapons are the most popular weapon for techan soldiers in the echan wilderness after the standard firearm. Magnetic fields are not affected by disruption, a welcome blessing to those living under Earth's blanket of protection. The specific process of accelerating metal shells using magnetism is complicated, and coil-based and rail-based technology fire their shells using different means. All magnetic accelerated weapons feature long ranges and high critical ratings. They also require changing both a clip and a cell. These weapons deliver astounding kinetic potential.

Property: For every maximum result on any of your damage dice on a hit (including on critical hits), all other damage dice on that same hit (including extra dice) gain a +1 bonus to damage.

Barrel Shot (recharge 11+): When you drop a creature with a rail weapon attack; you can make a single ranged basic attack on one creature in direct line of effect in the weapon's range.



Guided: These weapons assist in aiming after being fired and can even make a secondary attack if the first one misses.

Seeker Shot (recharge 11+). Reroll if the attack misses (you must take the second result).

Heavy Auto: These weapons function the same as auto weapons, but have no single shot option. They always fire at least 10 rounds of ammunition per attack roll, regardless of the power being used. Some attack powers have additional abilities when firing weapons with the heavy auto property.

Immune: These weapons cannot be disrupted by ambient EDF because of their archaic construction. They will still suffer disruption if enchanted or subjected to direct magical attack.

Laser: Any condensed, well-defined beam of light can be considered a laser. In history, the initial weapons concentrated radiation to a focal point, burning the target with intense heat: such beams were usually invisible, which is useful for stealth but less so for accuracy. Later developments increased the size, damage potential, and visibility of these beams. Often, lasers are confused with pulse plasma weapons. The largest difference is that lasers cut while plasma splashes. Laser weapons give away their firer's position but deliver devastating damage few can resist. They can also track targets easier with subsequent damage. There are laser pistols, rifles, and thumper cannons.

Property: If you hit with a laser, you gain a +1 bonus to attack that same target until the end of your next turn.

Slice (recharge 11+): If you score a critical hit, make a second attack against the same target.

Nuclear: These are directed energy weapons similar to plasma and laser guns. Where a laser inflicts con-

densed radiation and plasma inflicts severe heat, weapons with the nuclear property inflict damage via a high-energy beam of atoms. Upon impact, they disrupt the molecular structure of the target. Tissue damage from radiation is a frequent side effect. This technology has been dubbed a "dirty solution", as it emerges frequently before the advancement of high-powered lasers and plasma weapons.

Property: If you hit with a nuclear weapon, every subsequent consecutive hit on the same target gains a +1 power bonus to damage (cumulative up to +3).

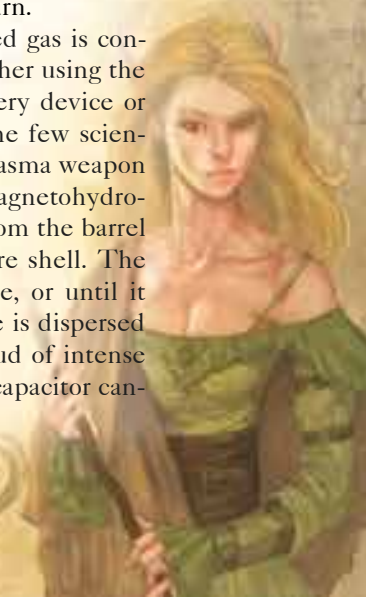
Radiation (recharge 11+): The target is weakened (normal save ends 11+).

Pincher: These weapons deliver an electromagnetic pulse that disrupts any item that requires a battery or an electric current to operate.

Property: All battery-powered technology on the target suffers a disruption roll at -2. If the target takes any damage from your weapon, you can use the following power against it:

Lightning Pulse (recharge 11+): The target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn.

Plasma: Any weapon employing ionized gas is considered a plasma weapon. This involves either using the magnetically conductive matter as a delivery device or as a weapon itself. Magnetism is one of the few scientific constants not broken by the EDF: a plasma weapon fires a toroid of superheated gas inside a magnetohydrodynamic bubble that is then accelerated from the barrel in the same way a railgun fires its iron-core shell. The bubble remains solid for a significant time, or until it strikes its target, at which point the bubble is dispersed and delivers its energetic payload as a cloud of intense heat. There are plasma pistols, rifles, and capacitor cannons.



Property: On a hit, you may deal extra fire damage equal to your miss damage to one creature near the target.

Ignition (recharge 11+): The target takes 20 extra ongoing fire damage.

Self Propelled Projectile (SPP): SPP weapons started emerging from Angel R&D and eventually found use across the world due to parallel development or stolen designs. They are small rockets fired from pistols or rifles that continue to accelerate after an initial air compression push fires them from the shell. Although more expensive than traditional firearms, SPPs proved useful for engagements when range mattered. The ammunition for SPP weapons are sabot rounds, as the shell ejected breaks apart, and the contained self-propelled projectile ignites, breaking from its seal. All SPP weapons can fire underwater, though their range is halved. They are not common but have definitive advantages, such as explosive warheads and guidance systems.

Property: SPP weapons also have the *guided* property.

Shotgun: Shotguns impact with tremendous force at close range, but this stopping power diminishes rapidly further out. They are fairly distinct and few models are on the market.

Property: Shotguns inflict +1 damage per die if fired at nearby targets. At far away, they deal half damage.

Sniper: These weapons contain advanced targeting systems for long-range fire. They are available in chemical, laser, and magnetic variations.

Targeting Scope: All sniper rifles are equipped with a sniper scope by default.

Sonic: The first sonic weapon was no more than a simple high-powered oscillating pain siren generating 175 decibel (dB) acoustic waves in all directions. Newer sonic weapons utilize high frequency ultrasound to carry the painful audio waves in a straight, focused path. This technology offers increased range with no adverse side effects for the user.

Deafened (recharge 11+): A hit target is hampered (normal save ends 11+).

Special: A sonic weapon may be downgraded to transmit a normal voice to any target you can see without fear of anyone else overhearing unless they are in line of effect.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Capsicum Spray: This item employs a chemical irritant like capsaicin (common in some fruits, plants, and most chilies), also known as a lachrymatory agent. When a target is struck, a sticky, waxy, colorless and odorless liquid adheres to the skin. The spray contains almost pure capsaicin, with a Scoville rating of more than 10,000,000 – double the intensity of ancient pepper spray, the better to inflict pain on the new magical beasts roaming the world. The exact formula changes with each bastion. Most are built with a compressed canister while others eject a breakable projectile.

Range: The spray can only target nearby targets.

Property: On a hit, the target suffers no damage; instead, it is dazed and hampered until the start of your next turn. On a miss, the target is only hampered.

Electroshock Gun: This wand-shaped device fires air-compressed barbed darts attached to coils towards a target. Upon impact, the coils conduct a massive electrical current, disrupting superficial muscle functions. The darts can penetrate enough to attach to anything, and are also magnetic. The electrical pulse does not need to penetrate skin to be effective.

Firing Rate: Tension springs recoil the darts back to the gun as a free action, making it available to fire again. However, it cannot fire again for 10 rounds as its capacitor needs to charge.

Range: Because of the length of coil, you can only attack nearby or engaged targets.

Property: On a hit, the target suffers no damage; instead, the target is weakened (normal save ends 11+).

Flamethrower: This weapon has shrunk in size over the years. Though still two-handed, it no longer requires an unsafe nozzle to an even more hazardous backpack. Modern flamethrowers keep their tank mounted under the weapon stock. The tank is comprised of a relatively safe solid fuel. When combined with air, it reacts into expanding foam. A small battery compresses air in a separate chamber. The foam enters the final chamber and, when allowed to decompress, sprays out in liquid form. A magnesium igniter at its barrel sends the superheated stream of flame to its target. Despite rumors and urban legends, neither older nor modern flamethrower tanks explode easily if ruptured or if a spark flicks nearby. If the weapon tank is ruptured, the foam would break and spray but not automatically ignite. Even older models would only burst like aerosol cans and not violently explode. Advanced versions release superheated plasma.

Property: An attack with a flamethrower uses the following basic attack.

Target: 1d4 engaged or nearby enemies.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD

Hit: WEAPON+ Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Literally on Fire (recharge 11+): The target suffers ongoing damage equal to twice your level (normal save ends 11+).

Glue Gun: This large weapon, resembling a rocket launcher with an oversized ammo drum, utilizes a magnetic accelerator to launch metallic spheres which break apart upon impact, releasing expanding foam that solidifies soon after. This traps the target and anything else unfortunate enough to step upon or roll over it.

Property: An attack with a glue gun uses the following basic attack.

Target: 1d4 enemies up to far away.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD

Hit: The target is stuck (hard save ends 16+).

Miss: Target is stuck until the beginning of your next turn.

“God’s Eye” Sniper: The “God’s Eye” uses a proprietary digital scope that analyzes intended targets and

determines weak points for improved stopping power. It is able to find holes in cover, faults in armor plating, and spots on a target to cause the most damage (axles, hearts, etc). However, the weapon was deemed too costly and now is only sold to private security agencies and mercenary groups.

Property: This weapon adds a +1 bonus to all attack rolls for the purposes of *marksman talent*.

Netgun: Similar to the glue gun, the net gun is designed only for personal use and is less messy.

Property: An attack with a netgun uses the following basic attack.

Target: 1 enemy up to far away.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD

Hit: The target is stuck (hard save ends 16+).

Miss: Target is stuck until the beginning of your next turn.

Piton-Gauntlet: These devices are not strictly speaking gauntlets, as your fingers are free to hold other objects. The gauntlet mounts to your forearm. This weapon is effectively a captive bolt pistol. When activated, it propels a titanium rod three inches from your fist (or as much as a foot for larger models). Spring action recoil returns the rod to its housing an instant later. The ejection system utilizes compressed air supplied by an internal power cell.

Property: If you score a critical hit, you inflict 1 additional die of weapon damage.

Driver (recharge 11+): After a hit, increase WEAPON damage by one level.

Plasma Thrower: Plasma throwers are weapons that eject superheated compressed gas without the magnetic bubble. They operate like flamethrowers.

Property: An attack with a plasma thrower uses the following basic attack.

Target: 1d4 engaged or nearby enemies.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD

Hit: WEAPON+ Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level.

Literally on Fire (recharge 11+): The target suffers ongoing damage equal to twice your level (normal save ends 11+).

Power-Hooks: These impressive devices are oversized augmented manipulators attached to synthetic muscles and hydraulic pumps. The entire assembly wraps around the arm and most of the shoulder. Purchasing two links the two assemblies around the back.

Property: Power-hooks increase the damage die of unarmed attacks by one step (1d4 > 1d6 > 1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12 > 2d6 > 2d8 > 2d10). You also gain a +2 item bonus to Strength checks (but not Strength attacks). Your hands are not free and you can wield no other weapons if using power-hooks.

Restraint Field: This pistol-shaped weapon from Mann launches a balloon-like force field, capturing a target by warping its containment matrix around its victim and then compressing the field to restrain the target from moving.

Property: An attack with a glue gun uses the following basic attack.

Target: 1 enemy up to distant range.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD

Hit: The target is stuck and hampered (hard save ends 16+).

Miss: Target is stuck and hampered until the beginning of your next turn.

Sonic Stunner: Very similar to a normal sonic weapon, the sonic stunner is designed only to be non-lethal. Some variations of other sonic weapons incorporate this configuration as an adjustable switch (though they are commensurately more expensive).

Property: An attack with a sonic stunner uses the following basic attack.

Target: 1 nearby or engaged enemy.

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. PD

Hit: The is vulnerable and confused (normal save ends 11+).

Miss: Target is vulnerable until the beginning of your next turn.

Tesla-Glove: This unique item is equipped with more than a half-dozen resonant transformers that conduct severe electrical shocks to a target.

Property: If you don't hit any target on your turn, at the start of your next turn, increase the damage of your next hit with this weapon by +2. This is cumulative up to +10 damage. After you hit, the bonus resets to 0. When an encounter begins, unless you are surprised, the glove is assumed to be primed to +10 damage.

Overdrive (recharge 16+): After a hit, you inflict 40 extra damage but the tesla-glove's property no longer works until *overdrive* recharges.

Vapor Rifle: No one is entirely sure who created this weapon: an import first appeared in Angel several years ago, and examples still pop up occasionally, but all bastions but Mann have banned it. Porto refused to accept responsibility of the design, claiming a rival bastion known as Motego developed it in reprisal to Porto and to strike fear into a subservient population currently under their control. It fires a plasma bottle similar to other pulse weapons, but the gas inside is of a particular volatile mix. When struck, the victim is literally torn apart by the massive heat and chemical reaction some compare only to fluoroantimonic acid, as molecules are torn apart upon contact. The pulse appears to simply vaporize a section of the victim, sometimes the entire body itself, leaving nothing but vapor and a clean cauterized cavity.

Property: The vapor rifle is like any other two-handed small arm. It inflicts 1d8 damage, but if a damage die inflicts less than 4 points of damage, it inflicts 8.

Frightening Effect (recharge 16+): A hit becomes a critical hit.



WEAPON	DMG	TYPE	COST	TL	SYMP	BONUS	DETONATOR
GRENADES							
Concussion	1d6	Physical	20	1	No	0	Detonator
EMP	None	None	300	3	No	+2	Detonator
Flashbang	1d6	Special	100	1	No	0	Detonator
Fragmentation	1d8	Physical	50	1	No	0	Detonator
Nerve toxin	1d8	Poison	1,000	4	No	+2	Detonator
Plasma	1d10	Fire	5,000	5	No	+3	Detonator
Riot	None	Poison	125	1	No	0	Detonator
Smoke-signal	None	None	5	0	No	0	Detonator
Smoke-screening	None	None	15	0	No	0	Detonator
White phosphorus	1d8	Fire	150	1	No	0	Detonator
EXPLOSIVES							
Auto fuel	1d6	Fire	5	0	Yes	0	Ignition
Exposed gunpowder	1d6	Physical	8	0	Yes	0	Ignition
Fertilizer / ANFO	1d6	Physical	10	0	No	0	Explosive
Jet Fuel	1d8	Fire	10	0	Yes	0	Explosive
Composition	1d8	Physical	50	2	No	+1	Detonator
Nitroglycerin	1d10	Physical	50	0	Yes	0	Explosive
TNT	1d8	Physical	20	0	Yes	0	Explosive

AMMUNITION

Supplies for adventurers are often extremely limited, and are a major factor in the elevation of magic over gunpowder. This is reflected in the cost of ammunition. As stated earlier, players don't need to track normal weapons. Specialty weapons are a different matter, however.

AMMUNITION TYPE	COST
Flame tank	50
Net cartridge	4
Rocket	360
Rocket, guided	1,500
Capsicum cartridge	10
Electroshock cartridge	250
Glue cartridge	250
Sonic cell	2,000
Plasma cell (thrower or artillery)	5,000
Vapor cell	10,000
Tank shell	20

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In other editions there are rules for specialized ammunition - armor-piercing rounds, silver or fae-iron bullets, and so forth. While ultimately this proved to be more complexity than we wanted to deal with in 13th Age, you could still use them as narrative conceits: for example, to explain a particularly lethal crit, or to explain how you're able to hit an otherwise resistant target. No need to track this 'special' ammunition - just assume that you did your homework at loadout time and came prepared with what you'd need in the field, or use one of your relationship dice with your home bastion to retroactively have remembered to bring the silver bullets 'just in case'.

GRENADES AND EXPLOSIVES

Cost: This is the price to acquire the explosive.

Type: The explosive type—not terribly useful unless it's poison or fire.

TL: The tech level of the explosive. This is used to factor disruption.

Detonator: Indicates the type of detonator required to trigger the explosive:

Ignition—requires an ignition source (a flame or another explosive).

Explosive—requires another explosive

Detonator—requires an actual detonator.

Note: Grenades are automatically equipped with impact detonators.

Symp (Sympathetic): A sympathetic explosive will be detonated if caught in the radius of another explosion.

EXPLOSIVE AND GRENADE TYPES

Composition Explosive: This soft, malleable explosive is also commonly referred to as 'plastic explosive,' and is the standard explosive for breaching demolitions because of its ability to be formed into shaped charges. It can be cut, formed, wrapped, and combined with others of its type. Composition explosive is more expensive than standard explosive but effective in its capacity. It is also extremely stable.

Special: A composition explosive can affect intended targets without affecting nearby unwanted targets

Concussion: This light explosive uses air pressure as well as the shrapnel from its casing to disrupt enemy lines. They are often employed in mines to break up dense collections of personnel.

Special: Hit targets are also dazed until the start of your next turn.

EMP: EMPs don't inflict any damage, but instead

discharge an electromagnetic burst that disrupts electronics.

Special: All the target's TL1 and greater technology that employs a cell suffers a targeted disruption effect. Vehicles suffer a -5 penalty to all driving checks for five minutes.

Flashbang: Also simply referred to as a stun grenade, a flash bang reduces the combat effectiveness of opponents by confusing and disorientating them with a sudden blinding magnesium flash and a deafening blast. The grenade body doesn't actually fragment so no shrapnel is dispersed.

Special: The target is weakened until the start of your next turn.

Fragmentation: Frags are designed purely as an antipersonnel explosive by discharging dozens of plastic or steel flechettes blowing out along with fragments of the explosive's own shell. This deadly shrapnel shreds anything it touches. The fragmentation device is the standard grenade configuration.

Fuel, Auto/Jet: Despite what movies will have you believe, it's not easy to set jet fuel ablaze. Standard automotive fuel doesn't burn in liquid form, but fumes do, and the heat of a flame is more than enough to start the surface of a liquid slick evaporating.

Special: The area is on fire until the end of the battle (or 15 minutes). Any target moving through or starting in the fire on its turn takes additional WEAPON fire damage.

Nerve Toxin: A deadly and illegal weapon, this grenade expels a potent gaseous mixture blending a batrachotoxin and taipoxin and several other agents produces a deadly gas that causes complete paralysis of all muscles by stopping the release of acetylcholine. By blocking nerve pulses to the muscles, the subject dies from asphyxiation or heart failure.

Special: The target suffers 5 ongoing poison damage.

Nitroglycerine: One of the oldest explosives, nitro is no longer actively used due to its instability.

Special: Nitroglycerine will always detonate if caught nearby another explosive, if dropped from a height of more than 5 feet, or if ignited.

Riot Grenade: Riot grenades are used usually to disperse crowds and disorientate attackers. The grenade doesn't explode but rather opens valves, releasing compressed tear gas. In addition to creating an obscuring field of smoke, the gas causes skin and eye irritation on contact, throat and nose irritation if inhaled.

Special: These grenades expand to conceal all nearby targets. Targets that start a turn in the affected area of pass through it are weakened until the end of their next turn.

Smoke Grenade: There are three types of smoke grenades: screening grenades, signal grenades, and white phosphorous grenades. Most smoke grenades are employed as signaling devices, though they can also be used to screen unit movements, conceal advancement and hinder enemy fire. Signal smoke grenades cannot be used for screening, though screening grenades can

be used as a signal grenade. Screening grenades either expel a hexachloroethane/zinc (HC) mixture that is also an irritant or a terephthalic acid mixture (TA), which is harmless. Signal grenades use potassium chlorate, lactose, and a colored dye to work. Signal grenades are available in several colors, including white, red, yellow, green, and purple. The white phosphorus grenade is a smoke grenade with an explosive burst. Rather than burning to make smoke, the phosphorus ignites in the air after spreading. The brilliant yellow flame produces phosphorus pentoxide, the smoke, as a by-product. The intense heat allows the grenade to double as an antipersonnel weapon. The heat is devastating in close quarters.

White Phosphorus: Ongoing 4 fire damage.

Screening: The smoke grants a +2 bonus to PD and AC to targets within or behind the area.

TNT (Trinitrotoluene): TNT is the standard explosive to which all others are compared. Although not employed in modern industry or military applications, it is still common in black market circles and in civilian use (e.g.: mining). Unlike moldable explosive, TNT can accidentally detonate if caught in the blast of another explosion.

ARMOR

EXO-ARMOR RULES

Powered armor, or exo-armor, is a powered mechanized unit controlled by a pilot inside. While several are not much bigger than their controllers, others weigh several tons and can tower over fifteen feet. Even though these are machines rather than creatures, Large suits can still squeeze like any other creature.

Hit Points & Threshold: Despite having hit points, exo-armor also possesses a threshold, which is the maximum value of damage you can remove with each hit from the suit's hit points. If exo-armor is reduced to 0 hit points, it can no longer absorb damage, but is still functional.

READING THE ARMOR TABLES

Tech Level (TL): The tech level of the item is applied as an enhancement bonus to AC. Unlike other equipment, armor continues to apply its TL to defenses when disrupted.

Hit Points (HP): Exo-armors are machines with their own hit point value. When reduced to 0 hit points, it is still functional as armor (but usually can't move anymore).

Threshold (TH): The maximum number of hit points per attack you can soak using a powered armor's hit points.



LIGHT ARMOR

ARMOR	BONUS	PRICE	TL
Synthetic weave	0	25	0
Ballistics armor	0	35	0
Limshau kawabari	0	50	0
Force body vest	0	50	0
Aramid combat suit	+1	8,000	2
Aramid survival suit	+2	17,000	3
Blinder-mail	+2	31,000	4
Spider-silk suit	+2	25,000	4
Nanotech combat armor	+3	53,000	5

HEAVY ARMOR

ARMOR	BONUS	PRICE	TL
Flack longcoat	0	45	0
Carbide armor	0	55	0
Class 1 yowie Suit	0	750	0
Tactical body armor	+1	9,750	2
Advanced wasteland	+1	24,600	3
Class 2 yowie Suit	+2	21,750	4
Full combat warrior	+2	35,000	4
Tech-mail	+3	40,750	5

EXO-ARMOR

ARMOR	BONUS	PRICE	TL	HP	TH
LIGHT ARMOR					
Gladiator	+2	45,000	3	20	1
Skinplate	+3	78,000	5	25	5
Covenant	+3	95,000	5	10	1
HEAVY ARMOR					
Amarok	+2	50,000	3	50	50
Vulture system	+2	65,000	4	10	1
Combat exoskeleton	+2	96,500	4	25	5
Mobile motor armor	+2	99,500	4	25	5
Apostle motor slave	+3	141,000	6	50	10
Rack power suit	+2	110,000	4	25	5
Tanker	+2	110,000	4	40	5
Mobile motor armor	+3	125,000	5	25	5
Mann Testament	+3	175,000	5	40	40

244 ARMOR DESCRIPTIONS (LIGHT)

Aramid Combat Suit: Over the regular survival suit, the combat suit employs and blends harder materials, rigid plates and flexible aramids. Additional layers of nylon separate staggered sheets of thin polymer plastic.

Resistance: Resist fire 11+

Aramid Survival Suit: This suit initially appeared in York. It employs a combination of flexible aramid fabrics and rigid ceramic and metal plates. The suit covers the wearer completely, sealing her from the outside environment.

Resistances: Resist fire and cold 11+

Ballistics Armor: This is a light, but still somewhat clumsy, collection of ceramic and polymer plates placed strategically to withstand impacts without hampering maneuverability significantly.

Blinder Mail: This resembles a lightened version of the heavier titanium carbide armor. What it offers in addition is a holographic camouflage net that can alter the physical properties of the suit to resemble nearly any terrain it is using.

Stealth: Gain a +5 item bonus to stealth-related checks.

Limshau Kawabari: Overlapping layers of leather pieces sewn together to form fit the wearer, Limshau kawabari looks as unique as it feels. A master leatherworker must individually fit each suit of Limshau leather to its owner, making Limshau kawabari distinctive against other leather armors. The most obvious telltale signs are numerous belt latches over the whole body. It is only available in white or black.

Nanotech Combat Armor: This advanced suit emerged with refugees from Mann, but even they admit to not developing it. They claim it was taken from a Porto craft, confiscated while on a diplomatic mission to Mann. It is an extremely rare item and according to rumor, less than a dozen can be found in Canam. The suit uses molecule-sized machines to alter the composition of the suit at the instant of impact. Usually, the combat suit remains elastic and comfortable. Anytime any impact occurs the micromachines react with a response time of less than 0.035 seconds. The impact point becomes immediately inflexible and solid, deflecting the attack.

Defense Boost: The first critical hit suffered in a battle is nullified—you only suffer normal damage

Hard Shell (recharge 16+): After taking a normal hit, you suffer no damage.

Spider Silk Suit: Selkirk sold this technology to Angel, which was later stolen by Mann (thus being about the only time in history when any other bastion had something Mann wanted). Computer-controlled looms weave super thin synthetic silk into an extremely flexible nylon. When struck with any attack, the spider silk resists as hard as steel but will still flex more than soft rubber. It employs several thicker pads of carbon fiber in key areas. The spider suit allows for extreme maneuverability.

Defense Bonus: You gain the enhancement bonus to PD as well as AC.

Resistance: You gain resist lightning 11+.

Agility: You gain a +2 bonus to all skill checks when balancing or jumping.

ARMOR DESCRIPTIONS (HEAVY)

Advanced Wasteland Armor: An evolved form of the full combat warrior, the wasteland suit was designed to combat more severe threats to techa, based off of old designs used in space travel. Cooling systems maintain internal temperature in the harshest environments. A sealed helmet processes external gases.

Resistance: You gain resist cold, fire, and poison 11+.

Carbide Armor: Super-strong plates of tungsten carbide are strapped inside a flexible nylon suit to offer remarkable stopping power. However, these plates are heavy and significantly reduce the user's flexibility.

Flak Longcoat: This clumsy but stylish piece of subtle outerwear contains a thick inner layer of flexible aramid patches able to resist cutting and piercing. It comes available in brown or black. It leaves the head vulnerable, even with the collar up. Most importantly, it flaps dramatically in the wind.

Full Combat Warrior: The full combat suit is a mixture of aramid padding and titanium plates in water-resistant layers of nylon and metallic fibers covered by patterned camouflage. It offers an insulated backpack-mounted computer system that controls various systems on the suit.

Equipment: Short-range communicator and night-

vision goggles. All systems run off the main power cell.

Resistance: You gain resist fire 16+.

Stealth: You gain a +2 item bonus to stealth-related checks.

Targeting System (recharge 16+): Gain up to a +3 bonus to your last natural die roll (max natural 20)

Tactical Body Armor: This is a slightly detuned version of the full combat warrior armor. It offers similar protection in a lighter package. It sacrifices several of its carbide plates to make the suit less expensive for those on a budget, and does not have a computer system built in.

Resistance: You gain resist fire 11+.

Stealth: You gain a +2 item bonus to stealth-related checks.



Tech-Mail: The most advanced non-powered armor available from the bastions appeared from various sources nearly at the same time. Based on medieval scale mail, tech-mail utilizes overlapping discs no bigger than gold coins interlaced together to form a durable but flexible covering. The discs, comprised of silicon, ceramic, and titanium, spread out impacts across the entire body, allowing for greater protection. The exacting pattern of the scales is proportioned perfectly to maximize protection where needed most. Of course, to most of its users, the fact that it has no complex components to disrupt is what makes it of superior value.

Resistance: You gain a +3 item bonus to saving throws against any ongoing damage.

Removal (recharge 16+): As a free action, instantly recover from a condition you suffer from.

Yowie Suit: Not designed for actual combat, this clumsy but effective piece of camouflage offers some rudimentary protection. It is not terribly heavy but its overlapping layers of fake foliage renders fast movement nearly impossible. Pouches and straps conceal various other camouflage patterns which can unfold or release to alter the appearance of the suit.

Stage 1 Stealth: In any earth or forest terrain you gain the benefits from the suit. You gain a +2 bonus to stealth-related checks, a +5 if you move.

Stage 2 Stealth: As a move action, you gain invisibility until you move or make an attack. After five uses, this ability requires a day to charge.

EXO-ARMOR DESCRIPTIONS

Amarok: Angel developed its first powered armor after recovering a disabled Mann design some years ago. By a miracle of engineering skill, the Angel scientists successfully circumvented Mann's failsafes: before the armor destroyed itself, a basic understanding of compact robotic design had been gleaned. The amarok is the direct descendant of that knowledge. Angel being far less insular than any other bastion other than York, the amarok has since become the most common exo design seen outside bastion walls.

Large Armor: The amarok is a Large armor.

Weapon Limbs: You have neither limbs nor manipulators to hold onto external weapons. You have no threatening reach and cannot make opportunity attacks. You are equipped with three heavy weapon

mounts. Because the amarok is Large, you can install super heavy weapons as heavy weapons. Likewise you can install heavy weapons or two-handed small arms in these mounts as two-handed small arms and one-handed small arms, respectively. You suffer a -3 penalty to attack rolls against medium or smaller targets engaged with you.

Auto-Reload: You have a mechanism to reload your weapons (since you have no arms). You can reload three clips/cells before needing external loading (you either have to exit the suit to reload or have an ally do it for you). Reloading still takes a move action using this system. External reloading requires a standard, a move, and a quick action.

Nightvision: You can see in complete darkness.

Mecha: The amarok motive system allows you to



COMBAT EXOSKELETON

pop free from any enemies smaller than you as a move action.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC bonus and *EDF recovery* power. You are also stuck until you take a standard action, a move action, and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

Apostle Motor Slave: The main front line defender of Mann, this intimidating armor requires its user to slip into a form-fitting suit that mounts tightly in the control area. The pilot's head fits only partially into the machine's helmet with most of the user sitting in the trunk of the armor. The pilot's arms extend to the elbows and the legs only to the knees. The apostle is banned technology outside of Mann: the secretive bastion has threatened dire retribution on any foreign government caught using them and considers their use outside of Mann's walls blasphemy, claiming the knowledge was bestowed upon them from God. Although this prevents their deployment in other bastions, mercenary units have no such loyalties to the fanatical city. The security systems of earlier models are also less advanced than later Mann developments, as nearly all powered armor technology in Canam is reverse-engineered from this design.

Amplified Strength:

The apostle gains a +2

bonus strength checks (but not Strength-based attacks).

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC bonus and *EDF recovery* power. You are also stuck until you take a standard action, a move action, and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Gauntlets: Gauntlets inflict 1d8 damage. The enhancement bonus of the armor is also the bonus for the gauntlets.

Large Armor: The apostle is a Large armor.

Motive System: If you are unengaged, you can traverse two move positions as one move action.

Regeneration: Apostle regenerates its own hit points at 1 per turn.

Resistances: Resist fire, acid, cold, and poison 11+.

Weapon Mount: Gain a shoulder or arm mounted assembly, which frees up a hand. This mount acts as a hand or a brace for holding or mounting weapons.

Combat Exoskeleton: The combat exoskeleton initially appeared in Selkirk, reverse engineered from stolen Mann technology. The suit resembles an oversized piece of medieval plate, reinforced by limbs of titanium and amplified by synthetic muscle fibers running through the entire assembly. Though not very pretty, the Com-Exo has proved its usefulness in combat.

Amplified Strength: The CE gains a +5 bonus strength checks (but not Strength-based attacks).

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC bonus and *EDF recovery* power. You are also stuck until you take a standard action, a move action, and a quick action to manually release yourself from



the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Gauntlets: Gauntlets inflict 1d6 damage. The enhancement bonus of the armor is also the bonus for the gauntlets.

Large Armor: The exoskeleton is a Large armor.

Resistances: Resist cold and fire 11+.

Special: Donning and powering the combat exoskeleton requires at least 5 minutes.

Covenant: The most advanced armor currently available in open echa, the covenant tracks its origins to a secret caste of the same name within Mann society. This organization is charged with recovering and/or eliminating dissident factions from their own civilization. They are one of the few permitted to leave Mann with the sole objective to eradicating any possibility of their technology falling in enemy hands. Unfortunately, despite numerous failsafes in Mann hardware, a few of these armors have found themselves in the hands of those very same adversaries.

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC and *EDF recovery* power. You are also stuck until you take a move and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Gravity Anchors: You can climb without a skill check.

Gravity Drive: You suffer no damage from a fall.

Jump Jets (recharge 16+): As a move action, pop free from all enemies and move up to two categories.

Maneuverability: You gain a +2 bonus to all acrobatic skill checks.

Gladiator: Originally built as a heavy lift assistant for use in the Selkirk mines, the gladiator found popularity later as a muscle augmenter for weapon applications by the defense division. Eventually a new suit, the tanker, was purpose-built for the role, but the gladiator's smaller size kept it in regular use, and it remains the more popular model. Depending on its loadout, it can serve as both a ranged weapons platform and a close-combat vehicle.

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC and *EDF recovery* power. You are also stuck until you take a move action and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted,

the machine comes back online.

Firearm Stabilization: Even though you are medium-sized, you can wield heavy weapons as if they are two-handed small arms and super heavy weapons as if they are heavy weapons.

Gauntlets: Gauntlets inflict 1d8 damage. If you already inflict 1d8 or more damage with unarmed attacks, increase the damage dice by one step (1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12 > 2d6 > d28 > 2d10).

The enhancement bonus of the armor is also the bonus for the gauntlets.



MOBILE MOTOR

Weapon Mount: You have a shoulder or arm mounted assembly, which frees up a hand. This mount acts as a hand or a brace for holding or mounting weapons.

Mobile Motor Armor: In the wasteland of open echa, not all treasures are enchanted. In the mad dash to traverse this dangerous environment, occasional travelers fail, leaving their bodies clutching on to the lingering threads of their failed technology, to be found by others. There are rumors of some mercenary companies that refuse allegiance to any bastion and flaunt technology that rivals anything behind the walls by reverse engineering found relics, lost between bastion states, fallen from orbit, or survived from the previous age. Other than the named exo-armor flaunted by bastions, mercenary companies have produced prototypes of their own design, even selling them to other mercenary companies (though reserving the more advanced models for themselves). These unique designs are simply called mobile motor armors. No two look alike, but they all share similar properties.

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC and EDF recovery power. You are also stuck until you take a standard action, a move action, and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Gauntlets: Gauntlets inflict 1d6 damage. The enhancement bonus of the armor is also the bonus for the gauntlets.

Large or Agile: The armor can either be medium and agile or large and intimidating. If medium, the armor gains a +2 item bonus to all acrobatic skill checks. If large, you can wield two-handed weapons as one-handed weapons.

Resistances: Gain resist cold and fire 11+.

Special: Donning and powering the mobile motor armor requires at least 5 minutes.

'Rack' Power Suit: Following the trend of virtually all other exo armors, the Rack resulted from Sierra Madre reverse engineering an apostle motor slave with the intent of creating an anti-echan armor specialized in close combat. Adding their own sense of flamboyance, the end result is smaller and more agile, though still not to the extent of the Skinplate design. The suit is large but thinner in areas to reduce weight. The catchy nickname comes from the positioning of the pilot within the frame, which to an outside observer looks profoundly uncomfortable (though it feels just as well-fitted as the Skinplate).

Amplified Strength: Gain a +2 item bonus to athletic skill checks and Strength ability checks (but not Strength attacks).

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC (+TL), Fortitude bonus, and EDF recovery power. You are also stuck until you take a move action and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Gauntlets: Gauntlets inflict 1d8 damage. The enhancement bonus of the armor is also the bonus for the

gauntlets .

Jump Jets (recharge 16+): As a move action, pop free from all enemies and move up to two categories.

Large Armor: The Rack is a Large armor.

Special: Donning and powering the Rack requires at least 5 minutes.

Skinplate: This is a small powered armor, every suit of which is adjusted specifically to the user and conforms tightly to the contours of the body. It employs a combination of lightweight polymers and aramids reinforced with carbon fullerene rings. Solid limbs are made from silicon carbide ceramic which slide perfectly to allow movement via a magnetorheological fluid. The suit covers the entire body, with an attached helmet that seals it completely.

Defense Bonus: Gain +5 item bonus to Reflex defense and +5 item bonus to Fortitude defense.

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC EDF recovery power. You are also stuck until you take a move and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Jump Jets (recharge 11+): As a move action, pop free from all enemies and move up to two categories.

Resistances: Resist fire, lightning, acid, and poison 11+.

Special: Donning the skinplate requires at least 5 minutes.

Tanker: The successor of the smaller gladiator, the impressive tanker has unfortunately not found as much recognition. The military division has critiqued the size of the machine and the logistics division has criticized its cost in comparison to its lighter and cheaper cousin. Despite this, the tanker is still the preferred model for Selkirk military in long duration trade missions with the narros and as an intimidating adjunct to diplomatic Orobas and Train Guard escorts, though it is seldom seen outside of these roles. In truth, its reputation as a weaker system is undeserving, as the tanker is considered one of the most powerful weapon platforms on the continent.

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC and EDF recovery power. You are also stuck until you take a standard action, a move action, and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Firearm Stabilization: You can wield heavy weapons as if they are one-handed small arms and super heavy weapons as if they are two-handed small arms.

Gauntlets: Gauntlets inflict 1d8 damage. The enhancement bonus of the armor is also the bonus for the gauntlets. If you already inflict 1d8 or more damage with unarmed attacks, then increase the damage dice by one step (1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12 > 2d6 > d28 > 2d10).

Weapon Mount: You have a shoulder or arm mounted assembly, which frees up a hand. This mount acts as a hand or a brace for holding or mounting weapons.

Testament: The most dominant and imposing suit



SHIELDS

SHIELD	TL	HP	TH	PRICE
Active dissuasion system	5	—	—	27,500
Energy envelope	5	20	20	50,000
Janoahn master shield	0	—	—	40
Limshau buckler	0	—	—	50
Repulsor engine	4	—	—	20,000

in the known world, the testament appeared only recently as Mann started to take a more vested interest in external affairs. Often flanked by a lance of Mann military hardware, the testament isn't subtle: it is designed to take on the largest of targets or engage entire enemy squads by itself. There has not been a report of a testament being operated by anyone not in service of the fanatical bastion. If this were to occur, Mann would stop at nothing to ensure its retrieval or elimination.

Disruption: All functions cannot be used except AC and EDF recovery power. You are also stuck until you take a standard action, a move action, and a quick action to manually release yourself from the armor.

Gauntlets: Gauntlets inflict 1d8 damage. The enhancement bonus of the armor is also the bonus for the gauntlets.

Gravity Drive: You suffer no damage from a fall.

Large Armor: The testament is a Large armor.

Nightvision: You can see in the dark.

Phase (recharge 16+): As a move action, teleport to any position up to distant away from your current location..

Regeneration: Testament regenerates its own hit points at 1 per turn.

Resistances: Resist fire, lightning, acid, and poison 11+.

Sensor Net: You gain a +3 bonus to checks to notice movement.

Repair Drone (recharge 11+): As a move action, the armor recovers 5 hit points.

Vulture-System: This basic powered suit enables flight via a set of turbines, control surfaces, and vectored thrusters, but offers only rudimentary protection for its pilot. It also suffers from a limited range for each flight.

Boosters: You gain a +5 item bonus to athletic skill checks when jumping. You take no damage from a fall and always land on your feet.

Disruption: The booster system and jump jets cannot be used.

EDF Recovery (recharge 16+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Hyperjets (recharge 16+): As a free action, you gain flight. This ends until you stop using it or until the end of the battle.

Special: Donning and powering the Vulture-System requires at least 5 minutes.

SHIELDS DESCRIPTIONS

Active Dissuasion System: The successor of the energy envelope, the ADS contains a more powerful capacitor to respond to outside attack. The resulting system does not actually offer superior protection; if anything, it is slightly worse, but is kept in production due to an unintended side-effect. The ADS capacitor prevents breakdown of its energy shield by temporarily overcharging the repulsor field a microsecond before impact. This maintains shield integrity, but also discharges a significant electric shock which can disable or kill nearby soft targets. The ADS takes two battery cells: one for its shield and one for its force feedback system.

Force Feedback: Enemies that inflict a melee attack on you take damage equal to a melee miss.

Energy Envelope: The most advanced active defense system available, the energy shield covers its user only a centimeter from his skin, and thus is capable of protecting against all incoming attacks. Its only drawback is its tendency to temporarily neutralize when its user makes a melee physical attack.

Backpack Mount: The energy envelope does not use up a hand.

Hit Points: The envelope has its own hit points, the same as exo-armor. These hit points cannot be repaired. The energy envelope regains all lost hit points after a full heal up.

Limitation: You lose your shield bonus to AC until the start of your next turn if you hit with a melee attack.

Janoahn Master Shield: Though many from the Bulwark employ the standard fare from the armories in the kingdom, the front line, and most knights and paladins sworn to the Wall, guard with a more advanced shield exclusive to Abidan. The master shield is lens-shaped giving it increased rigidity. It is also wrapped with hide leather and additional steel belts for reinforcement. Most shields destined for the Wall are also spiked.

Limshau Buckler: The Limshau buckler is not a common sight but it has found popularity with some custodians. The buckler occupies a hand and is designed for offense as well as defense.

Property: Along with its bonus to AC, the buckler counts as a club for purposes of two weapon feats and powers.

Repulsor Engine: This device is less a method of resisting damage and more of a way of discouraging attack. It resonates an acoustic, magnetic, and gravitational pulse from its user, preventing or dissuading targets from delivering melee attacks.

Property: Gain a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.

Induce Pressure Wave (recharge 16+): As a quick action, you pop-free from all engaged creatures affected targets are stunned until the beginning of your next turn.

TECHAN GEAR

COMBAT ACCESSORIES

ITEM	COST	TL
Laser sight	1,000	2
Suppressor	50	0
Scope, digital	1,000	3
Scope, targeting	680	0
Bayonet plug	20	0

DETONATORS

ITEM	COST	TL
Friend/ foe trigger	300	3
Impact trigger	5	0
Magnetic trigger	150	2
Motion trigger	150	2
Pressure trigger	50	1
Radio remote	75	2
Timer	20	0
Trip trigger	10	0
Wired remote	25	0

SKILL SYNERGIES

ITEM	COST	TL
Demolitions kit	360	1
Medical kit	360	1
Repair kit	360	1

UTILITIES

ITEM	COST	TL
Battery flare	2	1
Binoculars	50	0
Chemical light sticks (5)	1	0
Compass	1	0
Digital audio recorder	10	2
Digital camera	20	2
Digital video camera	25	2
Electric torch	15	2
Fire extinguisher	20	0
Gas mask	50	0
Handcuffs	5	0
ESR pack (1 week)	4	0
Lighter	1	0
Sleeping bag	5	0
Standard techan adventurers kit	15	0
Tent (2-6 person)	10	0
Two-way radio (1)	20	2
Watch, automatic	10	2

TECHAN GEAR

As many seeking adventure migrate closer to bastions, the saturation of bastion exports increase. More and more goods constructed by the simply skilled find themselves replaced by the refined exports of sophisticated manufacture. Most conventional trade goods and adventuring gear are available in both their traditional forms and as bastion exports. In addition to being considered status symbols due to their comparative rarity, such goods are often (but not always) more durable and better able to weather the hazards of dungeoneering. The base cost of such items is the same as their echan equivalent, but is usually

UNIQUE ITEMS

ITEM	COST	TL
Anti-echan network	3,000	3
Anti-gravity generator	16,000	5
Big ear	3,000	3
Boosters	Special	1-6
Camera ball	1,400	3
EDF muffler bag	250	2
Disruption muffler crate	500	3
Disruption patch	20	1
Electro optical sensor	10,000	4
Flash goggles	2,600	2
Gravity lens	9,000	6
Grip gloves	1,800	3
Holographic generator	25,000	5
Infrared goggles	12,000	3
Lie detector	2,500	3
Light bender	20,000	6
Metal detector	1,500	3
Nano-healer	100	5
Rover robot	3,000	3
Ultrasound goggles	25,000	5

subject to a significant markup by canny merchants well aware of the demand for such machined goods.

READING TECHAN GEAR

Price: All costs are listed in uc.

Tech Level (TL): The tech level where the item can be found. This affects its availability, its sensitivity to EDF and its final price.

TECHAN GEAR DESCRIPTIONS

Anti-Echan Network (AEN): This York-designed device exhibits a level of ingenuity many other bastions don't attest to the lower-tech city. It has found circulation across the world by mercenaries and military groups. While battery-powered, it utilizes the EDF to its advantage. The AEN consists of metal poles driven into the ground or supported by tripods: each pole cannot be more than 50 feet (ten squares) apart from another. They generate an electrical field which transmits a signal back to the base system at camp. If any creature that generates EDF passes through the field or interferes with one of the poles, the localized disruption is detected and an alert message is sent back to the transmitter. If the receiver shorts out, it breaks a connection to a backup mechanical siren, which goes off. Their only weakness is subterranean infiltration, assuming approaching echans notice the network. The receiver can locate where a break occurs. The AEN poles receive power from the transmitter so only one battery is required. Each charge used maintains four poles for one day. Each additional charge per hour allows the addition of four more poles.

Effect: A DC25 stealth check is required for an echan creature to cross the net without it going off.

Anti-Gravity Generator (Personal): The subject using this belt device is able to fly.



Effect: You can fly. After ten rounds of flight, you are grounded until a full heal up.

Battery Flare: A battery-powered bright candle, the charge only lasts for four hours but illuminates to a 50-foot radius.

Big Ear: This tiny device wraps around one's ear and amplifies incoming acoustic data.

Property: Gain a +3 for skill checks when listening.

Binoculars: Ranging in size from small and concealable to large and clumsy, binoculars bring distant objects into close focus. They are sturdy, waterproof, and survive falls up to 50 feet. If broken, they cannot be repaired.

Bayonet Plug: This is not a weapon but an adapter to add a melee weapon to any small arm. Only one- and two-handed small arms can be equipped with a melee weapon. One-handed small arms can be equipped with a dagger only. Two-handed small arms can be equipped with any light blade. The melee weapon cannot be enchanted. You cannot equip a specialty weapon with a bayonet.

Property: You can attack with either the mounted weapon or your firearm.

Camera Ball: This three inch rubber ball with a weighted flat bottom can be thrown or fired from a grenade launcher. Once it lands, it transmits audio and video input from a full 360 degree arc up to 500 ft. (100 squares) to a receiving monitor. The TL5 version contains a small antigravity unit, enabling it to hover for 1 minute per charge used.

Compass: Thankfully, magnetic fields are unaltered in magical saturation. Magnetic north remains strong and true. Modern compasses diligently point to it loyally. Rumors indicate that Ixindar emanates a large magnetic field, but this power source cannot be detected from Canam.

Demolitions Kit: Needed for any decent work with explosives, the Demolitions kit includes wires, plugs, and various tools. It does not include detonators or explosives. It includes a small battery that powers a circuit tester that uses a charge every time it is employed, though that is only required for disarming explosives.

Property: Grants a +3 bonus to all demolition skill rolls.

Detonator: Planted explosives require a detonator to explode.

Friend/Foe Trigger: This detonator can be programmed to detonate the moment a specific monster enters its blast radius. It can also be programmed to detonate for everything but specific people. There is no limit on its parameters.

Impact Trigger: After the safety is pulled, impact triggers detonate upon impact with any rigid surface. This detonator is rarely used except with grenades.

Magnetic Trigger: These unique detonators only function on explosive payloads of 2 lbs. or less. When armed, the detonator detects any sizeable metallic object (such as a vehicle, exo-armor, or suit of plate) passing within 30 feet and is pulled (together with its explo-

sive) towards it, detonating on impact. If there is any form of cover or impedance, the detonator stops at the blocked square and detonates.

Motion Trigger: This detonator detects movement in its burst area and detonates regardless of the target.

Pressure Trigger: These trigger the moment a weight is pressed upon the detonator. Large and larger targets automatically trigger pressure detonators upon entering a square containing one. Medium and smaller targets make a saving throw to avoid the sensor on entering the square unless the person placing the explosive succeeded on a demolitions roll for proper placement. The sensor can be manually adjusted to only detonate for Large or larger targets.

Radio Remote: The EDF suppresses radio waves, making remote detonators less reliable, but that doesn't prevent them from being useful within those limitations. The range limit of a radio remote is 500 feet, which cannot be boosted in any way. Both the transmitter and receiver require batteries.

Timer: Timers utilize a mechanical clock to countdown compared to a digital timer (unpopular in echa due to disruption). Although one may purchase a RDR (red digital readout) for the same price, this makes the detonator a TL2 item. The actual trigger is usually chemical or mechanical.

Trip Trigger: This detonator is a simple mechanical or chemical trigger attached to an explosive with a trip wire: a creature passing through the wire pulls the pin and detonates the device. You can run up to 5 squares of wire but the detonation only occurs in the square where the explosives are placed. Because the wire needs to be raised to be triggered, it can be detected.

Wired Remote: This simple form runs an electrical pulse that triggers the mechanical, chemical, or electrical detonator. Because EDF increases the resistance of electrical wires, the maximum range of any wired detonator is 30 squares.

Disruption Muffler Bag/Crate: Though designers succeeded in creating a small container rendering its contents immune to disruption, larger attempts resulted in failure. The amount of insulation required increases proportionately to the size of the container, resulting in only slightly larger capacity for much large containers.

Property: Items in the container are protected against disruption.

Disruption Patch: A small square plastic tab the size of a bottle cap, the disruption patch is often hung from necks or from wrists. Each bastion developed their own unique approach to the patch though a common practice is a colored dye (red being the obvious choice) that breaches into the top layer of the patch when an extremely sensitive microwave thermionic diode is disrupted via enchantment. The patch detects increased disruption from localized increases in magic though one must be careful to keep the vacuum seal each patch is sold in enclosed as a patch will often naturally disrupt after a day in the open.

Power (Consumable): No action. The patch activates whenever it is placed against a creature or item

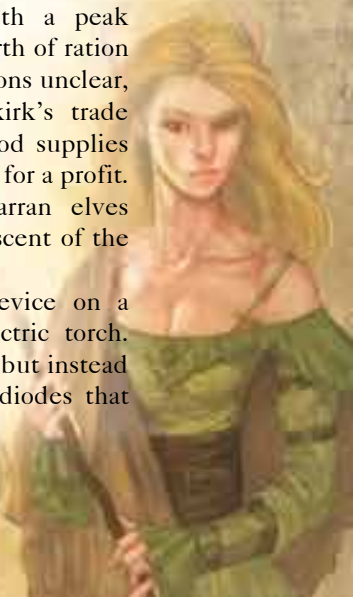


that generates EDF, whenever it is subjected to a targeted disruption effect, or whenever a general penalty to disruption rolls is in effect.

Echan Survival Rations (ESR): Modern techans count their blessings every time they eat in the wilderness. They rarely need to fish or hunt. They are not required to stalk prey, gut and clean the kill, and cook them for hours over an open flame risking a number of contaminations when finally consumed (unless, of course, they want to). They simply tear open a ready-made meal and eat. These military rations, also called techan rations or bastion rations, began in Selkirk (which pioneered the modern product) as ESRs or Echan Survival Rations. They are no longer limited to freeze-dried meat and crackers, but offer a full range of cuisine including chicken and beef fajitas, hamburgers, meatloaf, beefsteak, and pastas with

various sauces, beef stew, and jambalaya. Six days of rations for one person weighs one pound. Each package requires little preparation and can be eaten on the go. Beverages can be ingested right from the pouch. Each ration has a shelf life of five years with a peak temperature range of 60° C. Each day's worth of ration supplies, on average, 3000 calories. For reasons unclear, the narros adore ESRs and part of Selkirk's trade involves converting the imported narros food supplies into ESRs, which are then sold back to them for a profit. On the other side, laudenian and chaparran elves despise the stuff to the point that just the scent of the "human food" nauseates them.

Electric Torch: The most common device on a techan adventurer is the flashlight or electric torch. Modern torches do not employ fragile bulbs but instead use electronically regulated light-emitting diodes that



make the end product more efficient, brighter, and more durable for the wilderness adventurer. It employs a miniature electrical generator and capacitor. By either shaking the light or winding a crank, the capacitor charges, allowing the unit to power its LED transmitter.

Electro Optical Sensor (EOS): The EOS is equipped with a 360 degree motion sensor meant to detect both ground and aerial targets within 250 feet. It sends all information to a source monitor that cannot be more than 100 feet away.

Property: Targets must make a DC30 stealth check or be detected. It sends all information to a source monitor that cannot be more than 100 feet away. The sensor detects only movement and cannot detect incorporeal targets. One charge is used up every hour.

Fire Extinguisher: Centuries of development resulted in a new multipurpose chemical which smothers the flame and cools the target. The result is a compressed container capable of putting out almost any kind of fire from combustible metals to burning oils.

Power (Consumable 10): Standard action. Remove ongoing fire damage on a target or douse a small area of fire.

Flash Goggles: This simple eyewear protects the wearer from any blinding effects from bright light, whether natural, technological, or magical. Flash goggles respond to incoming illumination and darken within 0.0005 seconds.

Property: Flash goggles respond to incoming illumination and darken within 0.0005 seconds, nullifying any blindness effects.

Gas Mask: This flexible and compact unit, when donned, attempts to filter all outside gasses and will protect the wearer from many airborne poisons. It will not protect the user if the environment has no proper earth atmosphere at all.

Property: +2 to PD and MD against gas-based attacks.

Gravity Lens: An ingenious invention Mann stole from Porto and Motege, the lens resembles a 10x13 photo frame with a handle on one side when unfolded from its compact package. When attached to a wall, it allows to the user to peer through it as if looking through a window. It detects secret doors, compartments, caches and so forth as well as snares and pits.

Property: Gain a +4 bonus to skill rolls related to opening locks, disarming explosives, or searching for hidden compartments or traps.

Grip Gloves: This Selkirk prototype allows the user to climb walls with ease.

Property: You gain a climb speed equal to half your base speed. A DC of 30 is required to forcefully remove you from the wall.

Handcuffs: These high tensile steel restraints require a DC25 Strength check or a pick locks check to break.

Holographic Generator: This backpack-carried device deploys its own legs when activated. The fabric of the pack conceals most of the gear. Only a reflective

sphere on a pintle rises from the top. The device can make a 50-foot circle look and sound like some other sort of natural terrain and can hide structures, equipment, and creatures within the area: multiple generators can be set up to conceal larger areas. All sounds within the dome are muffled from the outside. The effect is not solid, so interacting with the hologram reveals its illusory nature. This device cannot be moved when activated.

Property: Targets inside the field are concealed from outside detection, assuming they don't make much noise. Targets inside are effectively invisible unless they attack from the field or exit from it.

Infrared Goggles: These non-telescoping goggles still provide stereoscopic vision and allow the wearer to see in total darkness.

Property: You can see in the dark.

Laser Sight: Laser sights may be used in conjunction with scopes. They paint targets with precision where the weapon's fire will strike. This also doubles as a psychological attack, as most individuals find a green target on their chest to be a great incentive to negotiation. A sniper may, if they wish, swap it for an infrared diode, which is invisible to everything except for night vision (darkvision). The standard sight uses a green diode solid-state laser which is effective for the maximum range of any weapon.

Property: Gain +1 bonus to your attack roll for purposes of *marksman talent*.

Lie Detector: No paper, needles, or wire; this device is a simple palm-shaped item that is placed gently on the subject's body.

Property: Gain a +4 bonus to detecting deception.

Light Bender: Thought once to be the realm of magic, the bender moves light around it, effectively making itself and its wearer invisible. The device, usually a backpack stored with a remote bracelet to operate, creates a magnetic field, removing the target from sight, even from darkvision and infrared. As bending *all* light would necessarily prevent the user from seeing out of it, light of very specific wavelengths is allowed through the field, creating a 'shimmer' effect when the field moves (to the wearer, the world merely looks constantly twilit): sudden movements or attacks disrupt the field entirely.

Power (recharge 16+): Standard action. You become invisible until the end of the battle or until you are hit by a melee or ranged attack.

Light Sticks: Scientists battled for years to uncover a new chemical combination that provided the light of glowsticks without the danger of disruption (despite being very low-tech, the traditional mixture mysteriously became inert after five minutes of exposure to EDF). When activated, the chemicals mix with a fluorescent dye. They usually glow red, green, or blue. Light sticks are popular in echa and often impress many where flamboyant spellwork fails.

Effect: Illuminates a nearby area for an hour.

Medical Kit: The formidable medical kit holds bandages, pills, trauma shears, ointments, and basic

stitching implements for basic injuries. Larger kits have eye pads and cooling gel pads for burns. Along with wound irrigation, syringes supply help with delivering various medications. Other implements include splints, alcohol pads, an epinephrine injector, hemostatic pads, and various scalpels and scissors for emergency surgical procedures. Trained medical professionals can pull off miracles with a medical kit. More advanced models feature scanning gear with ultrasound and x-ray emitters. Diagnostic tools assist with a prognosis. Advanced kits also feature robotic probes capable of injecting short-lived nano-machines to repair internal injuries.

Property: You gain a +3 bonus to all heal checks.

Metal Detector: This small device extends a small probe that scans for metal objects.

Property: You gain a +5 bonus to search for any metals.

Nano-Healer: Beyond just patching holes, these nanobots enter the body via an injection gun and repair it from within. Despite results verging on the miraculous, these are lower technology creations compared to some of the prototypes Porto is testing. The bots quickly run out of power after a few minutes, and disrupt instantly on exposure to echan flesh, making them impossible to use on any creature that generates EDF.

Consumable: Same as healing potion—the target recovers 3d8 + recovery hit points.

Repair Kits: Electronic tool kits include diagnostic tools, a soldering gun, fine point insulated needle pliers, and wire cutters at TL1. Above that, it employs a battery for a digital multi-meter measuring ohms, amps, and volts. It also comes equipped with a variety of wires, clips, resistors, banana plugs and crocodile clips. Further advances include miniature diagnostic computers; advanced kits contain micromachines, which can reassemble entire motherboards. All diagnostic tools in the kit use gold wiring and are shielded by design, as it would be incredibly inconvenient to have to repair the kit before repairing another device.

Property: You gain a +3 bonus to all engineer skill checks.

Special: Regardless of its tech level, the repair kit is immune to disruption.

Rover Robot: This tiny machine resembles a small, flattened box with four large wheels. Regardless of how it lands or tumbles, it still can operate, as its wheels are larger than its body. A camera adjusts automatically to any change in orientation. It receives instructions from an operator that cannot be more than 100 squares away and sends back both visual and audio information. The machine rolls at a speed of 25 feet and can tread through rough terrain or even over water. It has AC 20 and 20 hit points. It has a +15 bonus to stealth-related checks. It uses one charge per minute and both the machine and the controller require batteries.

Scope, Digital: This replaces a regular targeting scope. It enables someone using a sniper weapon to reduce range penalties by 1.

Scope, Targeting: This is a standard long-range targeting scope which can be fitted to any two-handed small arm or heavy weapon without an auto, blast, heavy auto, or sonic property. It cannot be used with specialty weapons. Attaching the targeting scope enables the weapon to become a sniper weapon.

Sleeping Bag: Sleeping bags now enclose one (or two snugly) occupant in a synthetic bag capable of protecting the occupant(s) from temperatures as cold as -50 degrees C. It resists wind and combustion (though it is still susceptible to magical fire). It is externally waterproof.

Property: While inside, gain a +5 to endurance skill checks against cold weather. If the bag is not sealed, the bonus is reduced to +2.

Standard Techan Adventurers Kit: This kit includes the following: Two battery flares, five chemical light sticks, one compass, one sleeping bag, one lighter, one canteen (waterskin) and one week of ESR rations.

Suppressor: These attachments muffle the flash and sonic blast of explosively propelled firearms. By slowing the expanding gases exiting the barrel, the suppressor stems the acoustical signature, but does not silence it completely – reducing it to merely loud instead of deafening. Suppressors cannot be used on shotguns, heavy weapons, or weapons rated higher than TL3 (most of which don't need it in any case). Affixing a suppressor takes a standard action.

Property: Reduces the checks to be detected when using a ranged weapon.

Synthetic Tent: Tents come in 2, 4, and 6 person capacities. Most tents utilize flexible poles and are available in dome, tunnel, single-hoop, and geodesic styles. It takes 5 minutes to set up and take down properly.

Property: While inside, gain a +2 to checks against cold weather.


Two-way Radio: Civilian and military radios use frequencies chosen specifically to avoid eavesdropping and interference with other machines or day-to-day electronics. Military models can tune to any frequency: civilian and emergency service radios are each restricted to a certain range. With the expanse of the echan landscape, keeping this communicator bottled in the low bands or with reduced power is no longer required. It has a clear range of 5 miles in open echa, 20 miles within a bastion. Even basic models can withstand some punishment and water pressure.

Ultrasound Goggles: These goggles translate sonic vibrations into visual stimuli. In the absence of ambient sound, they transmit high frequency pulses and detect the ricochet off objects. Any loud noise over 120 decibels causes the goggles to white out.

Property: You can see in the dark.

Blueshift (recharge 16+): Quick action. You can see invisible creatures as if they were visible until the end of the battle.

Watch, Automatic: Digital watches have fallen out of favor in the world of today. Modern watches employ a balance wheel that winds via the motion of the wearer's



arm. This allows the watch to keep perfect time without requiring manual winding or any power source. The compact and complicated device is water resistant, shock resistant, and cannot be over-wound with abuse. They are also completely silent.

SPECIAL MATERIALS

Most techan humans adept in the knowledge of chemistry were bewildered when magic refused to follow certain rules of nature. Controlled laboratory experiments confirmed that in the presence of magic (which many claim *prevents* controlled laboratory experiments), certain elemental properties change, some in minor ways, a few in major ways. Heavier radioactive isotopes (like Uranium 235 and 238) stop degrading while others (like Radium 226) break down more rapidly. This makes nuclear energy a hazardous technological path for bastions seeking alternative energy sources. Chemical reactions also change—not enough to impede the continued existence of life, but enough to change the rules of natural evolution, and even some basic chemical processes are altered in ways that are not obvious or straightforward. There are even numerous chemical compounds that, according to traditional science, simply cannot exist. Because of these newfound rules, the ‘science’ of alchemy has returned with vigor (and much to the chagrin of techans, actually works). It is assumed that if magic were to suddenly vanish, the changeover back to the traditional rules of science would be a deadly one to life forms requiring these new rules to survive. Most scientists are unable to explain the new rules of magically altered physics scientifically. Even more frustrating is the unpredictability of magic, which takes an almost intelligent delight in suspending any rules on a whim.

Bastions continue to find new and unconventional applications to materials with altered capabilities. New chemical elements, thought previously unstable, now can not only be synthesized for more than a few fractions of a second, but can even be found in nature. Industry and architecture both echan and techan value these new substances; furthermore, in the world of commerce, certain rare and expensive metals critical to the economy of particular civilizations become worthless or dangerous when magic is removed.

Silver and gold retain their traditional value, although gold is particularly valuable to techans for another reason: while magic may be able to touch it, it cannot saturate it, rendering the metal invaluable for use in bastion power grids. Techan industry and manufacturing has also made titanium a highly valuable commodity. The common isotopes of uranium are no longer strongly radioactive, opening up a wide range of uses for the metal. Traditional fantasy would have miners searching for iron and gold, but now mines like the Finer Fire Pits and Thos Thalagos also search for molybdenum, iridium, and rhodium, all of which can be extracted safely with narros expertise. There are also

new materials that defy traditional categorization: the existence of angelite and coruthil confounds scientists to this day.

All magical items are made of one of these materials.

ANGELITE

When the Second Hammer hit Ixindar, the virtually impenetrable stone shell that encased the gate was fractured. This mountain of rock blew apart and scattered across the globe. Some refer to this stone as ‘absolute rock’. Techans believe this material to have once been rhodium, the most precious metal on Earth. This made the shell around Ixindar more valuable than all the gold, platinum, and uranium on the globe combined. When infused with magic when both gates reopened, the silver-sheened stone became the hardest substance on Earth. On cursory examination, rhodium and angelite exhibit similar properties (resistance to corrosion, amazing durability): lacking the ability to properly analyze it on the molecular level, techan scientists have squeezed angelite onto the periodic table between rhodium and ruthenium. Despite its amazing density (12.38 g/cm³) angelite feels extremely light, over five times lighter than its other precious brothers. This has never been explained. Angelite is seldom found in mines and the largest concentration still sits in Kakodomania. Only the fragments found around the world or in mines can be refined. Demons have tried to chip off and process pieces from the original shell, but have never gotten the temperature high enough to melt. Usable fragments can be found as small as splinters and as large as houses (although the only known cases that large are the heads of Ramkava).

Application: Metal weapons and armor.

Effects: The weapon can be used to cause targeted EDF effects. Angelite radiates natural magic and cannot be used in the construction of techan equipment. Angelite cannot be degraded or destroyed by any attack.

CORUTHIL

Coruthil simply did not exist until magic saturated the Earth. Techan scientists believe that this influence created a new transitional metal between scandium and titanium. When magic flowed through the mineral, coruthil emerged. Narros miners were overjoyed to discover these riches were unmined after 65 million years, not realizing until later that mankind never had the opportunity to exploit it before. When worked like steel, it becomes a wonderful material from which to create items. Despite its origins, coruthil is naturally magically inert, although it can be enchanted just like steel.

Application: Metal weapons and armor.

Level: As original item.

Effect: Coruthil is immune to all corrosion, natural or magical.

FAE IRON

This ore sears the flesh of all fae. Almost every fae culture has banned this ore except for Kakodomania, where it is wielded almost exclusively by shemjaza, despite their own reaction to it (or, given their disposition, because of), though some pagus brandish these weapons insulated at the hilt (these are always rebels, as the shemjaza do not allow such potent weapons against themselves to be wielded by their peons). It was first discovered – accidentally – by the tenenbri, which has often led to the narros claiming it as evidence of the tenenbri's sins against Oaken. When the pagus migration occurred, corrupted tenenbri took the invention to their new masters.

In modern times, techans analyzed samples and determined fae iron (or “leaded iron” or “cold iron” as it's sometimes referred, though not terribly accurate) is comprised of iron with extremely low trace amounts of carbon and lead (less than 3%). These ratios are extremely specific, as are the procedures for converting the material into a malleable substance for weapons. A simple deviation of half a percent of carbon or lead in either direction, and the metal is merely impure iron. No study has ever explained why this specific substance harms fae as it does. Some humans, especially those from xenophobic cultures like Baruch Malkut, began trying to crack this ratio to arm their forces in mass with fae-iron weapons, but those who wield their obvious speciesism openly will find every hand of civilized echa turned against them. Narros will not forge it: even modern tenenbri refuse to have anything to do with the metal and consider its discovery the greatest sin of their past. It will never be found in any community with a fae population or in any city with good relations with fae. Even boggs and skeggs don't use fae iron purely because of the risk of personal injury.

Effects: Fae/fey creatures have an adverse reaction to fae iron (see **Universal Fae Traits**).

GOLD

Apart from its aesthetic value, the benefit of gold as currency is that magic cannot touch it. Any other material transmuted into gold will bleed off the magic used to transform it and revert to its natural form within a few hours, making it impossible to counterfeit in this way. Furthermore, it can be added to any other magical item, even one that gains its powers from an alchemical alloy, to dampen or direct the effects without impacting the properties of the final item. Most magical items have at least a bit of gold about them to ensure that their negative properties are not transferred to the wielder. Gold wires are able to conduct electricity without any chance of being affected by EDF (even over very large distances in open echa, although the chance of theft is an obstacle to regular use), and gold is an integral component in most forms of anti-EDF shielding.

Application: Metal armor or shields.

Effects: Gain a +1 bonus to all defenses against spells and arcane powers.

MAGNARROS

Already stubborn to ignite, magnesium becomes increasingly more difficult to combust in magical fields. This caused many echan blacksmiths to try to forge swords in magnesium for a time until they discovered this property had a knack of suddenly reversing without warning, making the weapon burst in a fiery white flame in a clash. It certainly was impressive and intimidating, but ultimately costly and dangerous to all, especially the wielder. A narros forge in Thos Thalagos, run by elder Magnalus Eneg, claimed to have perfected an alloy that prevents this dangerous combustion. He kept the process as a family secret until his death, forging weapons only for narros and never allowing the fruits of the technique to pass outside the species. Since his passing 50 years ago, more non-narros weapons have been appearing from forges. Other narros have learned the secret of its construction, although the method is still guarded from outsiders. It is a point of respect and awe for a narros adventurer to wield a magnarros blade. Magnarros is a very rare silvery, glistening metal that is lighter than iron but just as hard.

Application: Metal weapons and armor.

Effect: *Armor*—Heavy armor loses attack penalties.

Weapons—Lose attack penalties if there is any.

TECHAN VEHICLES

Though the overwhelming majority of travelers in the echan wilderness (or wasteland, depending on who you ask) still prefer beasts of burden for their transportation, a few still favor progressive methods. Vehicles designed to operate outside of bastions look different than those traveling effortlessly inside them. They are more rugged, with armored shells designed to withstand punishment both physical and magical. Though some vehicles in cities may employ internal combustion or short-life batteries, vehicles outside mostly utilize battery power, either from disposable cells or from rechargeable ones, generating electricity from solar power. Operating vehicles are rare in the echan landscape and many wandering travelers have come across ravaged and gutted techan vehicles, gears seized from disruption, their crew long dead with no way to return home. Along the Continental Cross it is not uncommon to see these vehicles towed along by horses like wagons when out of power or when conserving energy. All vehicles use batteries as they are far more efficient, clean, and supply rechargeable power where internal combustion requires a fuel source not easily accessible since most bastions don't sit on stockpiles of fossil fuels.

VEHICLE RULES

For the most part, vehicles should not be featured in combat, as the logistics of handling two separate scales are too complex for general purposes. When they are



GROUND VEHICLES

STANDARD GROUND VEHICLES

NAME	CAP	CARGO	MAN.	SPEED	AC	RESIST.	HP	SIZE	COST	TL
4-wheel ATV	1+1	100	-1	Fast	10	—	20	Medium	900	1
Armored truck	1+6	3000	-2	Fast	15	8+	60	Large	2,500	1
Tracked APC	1+8	1000	-2	Fast	20	11+	75	Large	8,500	1
Tank	1+3	500	-2	Normal	22	11+	100	Large	10,500	2
Wheeled bike	1+1	20	0	Very fast	10	—	15	Medium	420	1
Wheeled buggy	1+1	50	0	Very fast	15	—	30	Medium	1,700	2
Wheeled truck	1+4	1500	-2	Fast	13	6+	30	Large	8,500	1

ETV-ECHAN TERRAIN VEHICLES

NAME	CAP	CARGO	MAN.	SPEED	AC	RESIST.	HP	SIZE	COST	TL
Behemoth	1+50	30000	-5	Very slow	20	11+	400	Huge+	212,000	3
Land shark	1+20	5000	-5	Sloq	20	16+	200	Huge	162,000	2
Nomad	1+10	2000	-2	Slow	20	16+	150	Huge	112,000	2
Nuke truck	1+10	3000	-2	Slow	18	11+	100	Huge	162,000	3
Panther	1	50	+1	Very fast	15	—	30	Medium	10,500	2
Scrambler	1+5	1500	-1	Normal	20	11+	100	Huge	32,500	2
Wanderer	1+1	150	-1	Slow	17	11+	80	Huge	22,500	2

featured, they involve a departure from regular movement rules.



The easiest way to handle vehicle combat or fights between vehicles and extra-large creatures is to treat them as only moving relative to each other rather than to the terrain. For instance, if a party in a scrambler happens to be trying to escape from (just for the sake of argument) a rampaging gigantic dire moose charging at them along a forest path, you can just track the relative positions of the vehicle and the moose and treat ruts or twists in the road as special events that modify other actions (making it harder to aim, etc).

VEHICLE STATISTICS

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Capacity (CAP): The standard capacity or crew. Only one person is needed to drive the vehicle; other crewmembers serve as gunners or co-pilots. Each unused passenger slot allows the vehicle to carry an additional 300 pounds of cargo.

Cargo Capacity (CARGO): The amount of cargo the vehicle is designed to carry in pounds.

Maneuver (MAN): The modifier added to any vehicle skill checks.

Speed: The maximum speed of the vehicle

AC: The vehicle's base AC. Add the driver level to determine the final AC. Attempts to target creatures within vehicles use the vehicle's AC instead of the target's normal AC or PD.

Resistance (RESIST): The vehicle's resistance to various attacks. This number is to resist (all damage). Enclose vehicles protects those inside.

Hit Points (HP): The vehicle's hit points.

Size: The size of the vehicle. A huge+ is twice the size of a huge creature.

Cost: The purchase price to acquire the vehicle.

Tech Level (TL): Unlike other equipment, a vehicle's tech level does not grant enhancement bonuses, only determines its susceptibility to disruption.

Weapon Mounts: Certain vehicles come equipped with mounting hardware to attach weapons. When available, the mount is able to house any class of weapon listed (the vehicle's size is not taken into account when determining the class of weaponry, as is the case with exo-armor). Adding a weapon mount to a vehicle that doesn't have one costs 1000 uc for a two-handed small arm and 5000 uc for a heavy weapon. A vehicle must have a hit point total greater than 60 to mount a heavy weapon.

ENERGY SUPPLY

Vehicles use rechargeable energy cells, not internal combustion. In canon *Amethyst*, only ETVs have the capacity to either recharge themselves or run indefinitely from a bastion. Most of the time, this involves solar replenishment; in the case of the nuke truck, it's from its namesake reactor. Other vehicles don't have such luxury. Generally a GM has one of two options: ignore fuel for all vehicles, or have non-ETVs run on one rechargeable energy cell per day. Energy cells are rechargeable and can be purchased for 50 UC spares. Cells can be recharged at any bastion, techan atoll, or in a pinch, even larger ETVs. Vehicles like nuke trucks and behemoths can easily recharge energy cells, providing a mobile base of operations.



Despite organizations and player origins, I generally always give my techan players transportation. In the campaigns I run, only one group has had enough techan players to justify an ETV. In another game, the players rode around atop a giant snail called "Pig".

It was an odd game.

STANDARD GROUND VEHICLES

4-wheel All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV): All-terrain vehicles are miniaturized motorized buggies that are seldom employed for long missions outside of a bastion, though York survivalists and thrill seekers occasionally employ them on short excursions from the city. They don't offer the protection their larger cousins have. When seen in deep echa, they operate as scouts from a larger convoy.

Special: ATVs operate like mounts for the purposes of combat instead of vehicles.

Armored Truck (AT): Armored trucks offer amazing resistance to outside damage without the high costs of dedicated ETVs. Tires are run-flat, and the wheels are as protected as the rest of the truck. The enclosed cabin may have open gun-hole sliders while offering cover to those inside. Since most outside techan expeditions from Angel employ ETVs, most armored trucks outside of bastions are used by York.

Weapon Mounts: ATs are equipped with a single turret heavy weapon mount.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Bike: Though motorbike variations number in the hundreds, the ones employed in echa often rest mounted behind ETVs and larger trucks, used for scouting and emergencies. These are durable basic machines with strong chassis and thick, large, run-flat tires with heavy treads. They don't offer any protection to the rider. Some manufacturers refer to them as enduros.

Special: Bikes operate like mounts for the purposes of combat instead of vehicles.

Buggy: Outside of echa, this title usually refers to semi-enclosed vehicles with a wide footprint upon the ground with tires spaced far to the corners. They are much larger than a standard car. The buggy encloses the crew in a steel and plastic frame that offers protection from a crash but not from the outside environment. The body is formed in such a way that shifting a tumbled vehicle back to its wheels is a relatively simple procedure. Thick steel roll bars prevent damage to the frame or the people inside, provided they are strapped in. These buggies, though designed for wild terrain, don't possess the lifespan or durability for extended excursions within it. Like enduro bikes, they usually supplement convoys rather than dominate them.

Tracked Armored Personnel Carrier (APC): Slow, awkward, but reliable, the tracked APC design dates back to ancient man. The modern model employs a half-track configuration—easy for the common driver to use as its controls match those of the common truck. Primary propulsion is delivered through a caterpillar tread replacing the rear axle while a pair of massive tires controls the steering in the front. The enclosed cabin and cargo area provide sufficient protection through heavy gauge steel. From the outside, the halftrack APC appears primitive, and it is certainly less prone to disruption than more advanced vehicles, but the power requirements of the tracks remain steep, limiting its range. In York, where they first appeared, they found use with the military patrolling around the city.

Weapon Mounts: Halftrack APCs come equipped with two turret heavy weapon mounts.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Tank: It is a fact of progress that weapons technology will always outstrip armor. The classic tank was almost engineered into extinction as advances in armor-piercing weaponry continually surpassed the ability of tank designers to compensate. However, when those same anti-tank guns have a better-than-average chance of misfiring, many crews find several inches of composite armor separating them from the outside to be a great comfort. Even most monsters have trouble combating the matrix of synthetic diamond tiles sandwiched between layers of steel. Add to that a sealed, self-contained environment and soon, the number of tank volunteers surged within large bastion expeditionary armies. Modern tanks offer the security and safety of solid weight. At more than 40 tons, the modern tank (namely the York Mark V Partisan and the ugly Angel TDM-001 "Toad") can still zip over the landscape despite the profusion of obstacles willing to stand in its way.

Weapon Mounts: Tanks contain three turret mounts for a heavy weapons.

Special: Tanks suffer no penalties for passing through rough terrain. Terrain behind a tank movement is no longer rough. They may even be totally submerged in water, bringing in air from an outside snorkel that rises up 10 feet from the hull.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Truck: This descriptor covers a wide range of vehicles, from the open flatbed to the all terrain 4x4. Not even remotely designed for the echan world, wheeled trucks are still employed regardless: thankfully, their lack of complicated parts compared with other vehicles makes them easy to repair when they inevitably break down. Smaller mercenary groups use them, and York operates hundreds, shepherding people between the bastion and various military outposts surrounding the city. Like most all-terrain wheeled vehicles (save ETVs), wheeled trucks seen outside of bastions are from York.



LAND SHARK



Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Wheeled Vehicles: Almost all vehicles seen outside of bastions still use wheels. In case of critical disruption, they can still unlatch their drive train, hook on some beasts of burden, and convert into wagons (some remain that way). Even the most advanced bastions still employ wheeled transportation for the majority of their population. The only real exception is Selkirk, which has no roads. Despite Mann's and Sierra Madre's magnetic technology or Angel's hover vehicles, most of the population still lumbers over pavement. The most advanced variations of these are the ETVs listed later. Some expeditions can't afford such luxuries and modify city vehicles to serve their purposes outside of bastions. Because of dwindling fossil fuels, all wheeled vehicles run off battery powered electric turbines.

ECHAN TERRAIN VEHICLES

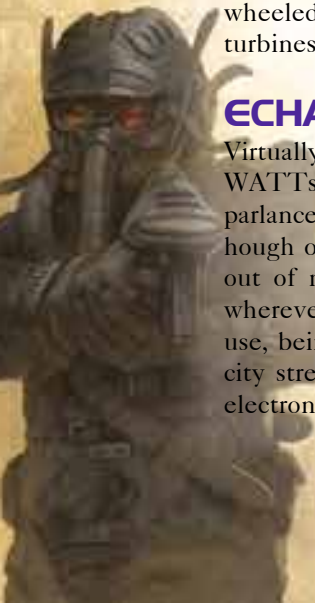
Virtually all Wasteland All-Terrain Transports, or WATTs (usually referred to just as ETVs in standard parlance), come from Angel or Selkirk originally, although organizations such as the Iron Sons that operate out of multiple bastions make use of the technology wherever they go. These models are impractical for city use, being generally too large and/or clumsy for narrow city streets. They employ a modular design, shielded electronics, massive wheels, and grunt horsepower.

They start from svelte and nimble bikes to gargantuan dirt trains like the behemoth and sand shark.

Behemoth: The behemoth matches its name perfectly. This goliath lumbers over the landscape, delivering power equally to its 8x8 drivetrain. Massive steel-reinforced rubber/carbon tires supply little cushioning, relying on the beast's floating platform suspension system to keep it smooth and stable. Its eight wheels cover a footprint 40 feet wide and 60 feet long, and the three-level atrocity towers nearly twenty-five feet tall. This monster usually heralds its approach with the cracking of trees and snapping of bushes as it pushes and heaves through forest and grassland. Though at home in the arid and rocky terrain around Selkirk where it was built, in the varied landscape of the southern lands, the behemoth is somewhat overkill. The brute clumsily bullies its way through whatever stands in front. The fat and awkward TDM-001 Toad prances gracefully in comparison. When spotted outside Dianaso, the behemoth serves a broader purpose, as either a mobile base of operations for mercenary groups or as a nomadic home for families. The behemoth was not designed to be a military vessel so lacks any weapon mounts, counting on its population for defense.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Scaled: The behemoth is waterproof. The crew is immune to all external inhaled diseases and poisons until the vehicle is destroyed.





NOMAD

Terrain: The behemoth suffers no penalties for passing through difficult terrain. Terrain the behemoth passes over is no longer difficult. It may even be totally submerged in water, bringing in air from an outside snorkel that rises up 10 feet from the hull.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Land Shark: Also from Selkirk, this successor to the behemoth is substantially smaller, and while its redesigned motor system requires roughly as much power intake, it is much more efficient and can make do on a single battery instead of two. The 8x8 wheel system was replaced by an even more durable 4x4 tri-drive sprocket caterpillar system. In the middle of the 40-foot long vehicle is a pivot segment, allowing the vehicle enhanced mobility in tighter areas. Despite its convoluted drive system, the land shark is faster than the behemoth but not as roomy. It gained more popularity as a mobile command post for mercenary groups and military, and armed variants lead most Selkirk convoys into the Deep Pass. While the behemoth is wide and fat, the land shark is thin and tall. Even though only 20 feet wide, it still stands 25 feet high, as tall as its predecessor.

Armament: The land shark carries a single heavy weapon turret mount.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Nomad: The final Selkirk land cruiser variant released is the smallest of the trio, and by far the most

popular outside of the Dianaso pass. The nomad uses wheels like the behemoth, though only having six. It features a center pivot so the vehicle can maneuver in tighter confines like the land shark. It is the smallest at only 20 feet tall and 30 feet long. This model has found use all over Canam and, along with the scrambler, is the most common ETV seen in open echa.

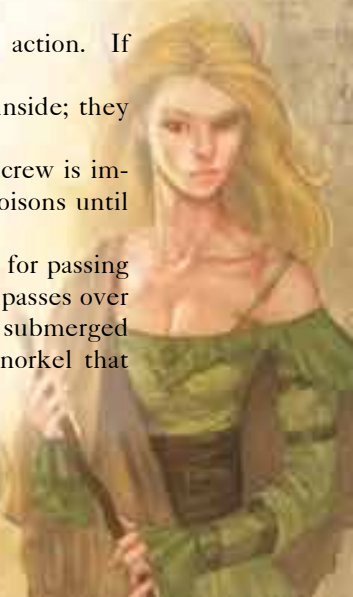
The nomad moves via four separate electric motors contained in each of the axles. It receives power to all of them from its contained main drive in the rear of the vehicle, snuggled next to its ample cargo hold. The cabin occupies the entirety of the forward module. Unlike the land shark and behemoth, the nomad only has two levels but an efficient design makes it almost as roomy as the shark, with separated cabins and full air and waste management system. The nomad is both waterproof and self-sustaining. However, because of its smaller size, a rechargeable power system was never offered standard.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Sealed: The nomad is waterproof. The crew is immune to all external inhaled diseases and poisons until the vehicle is destroyed.

Terrain: The nomad suffers no penalties for passing through difficult terrain. Terrain the nomad passes over is no longer difficult. It may even be totally submerged in water, bringing in air from an outside snorkel that rises up 10 feet from the hull.



“Nuke Truck” (TDM-002 Maco): In order to combat EDF interference outside their walls, Angel R&D created a vehicle with its own shielded micro-nuclear fission power pack. The result is an extremely expensive and risky long-range carrier, the TDM-002 maco, mostly referred to as the “the nuke truck.” The reactor, though miniature, is enough to keep the vehicle going and its systems fully powered for a full year before needing service. Because of the reduced degradation of Uranium-235 in the EDF and its increased resistance to shedding neutrons, scientists switched to Radium 226 and Thorium 232, which accelerate their decay while in magic. Since these materials cannot be found easily in nature, the only way to service and re-supply a nuke truck involves taking it to one of only two breeder reactors in Canam: one in York and the other in Angel. The breeder reactors expel more fissionable materials than they receive, but the process is not cheap and a full service and re-supply of a nuke truck takes a week and costs 10,000 uc. However, the advantages are plain to see. The extensive radiation shielding virtually removes any chance of the reactor shorting out in the EDF, although the rest of the vehicle’s onboard systems aren’t quite so well protected.

Critical Mass: If the nuke truck is destroyed, the reactor melts. This causes everything up to far away

suffers 10d10+100 points of fire damage. Everything up to distant suffers a +20 attack vs. PD for 10d10 points of damage (half damage on a miss).

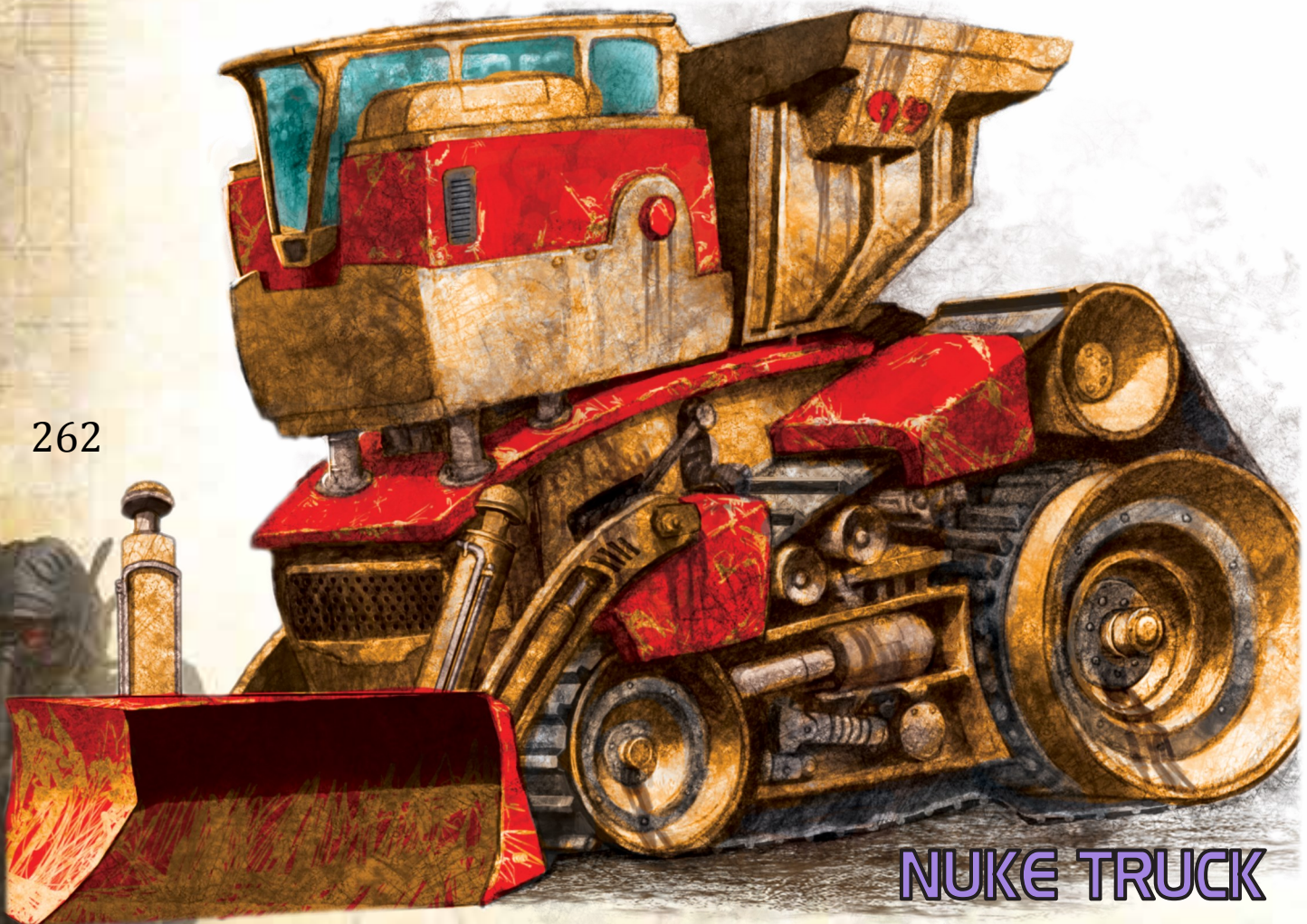
EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Sealed: The nuke truck is waterproof. The crew is immune to all external inhaled diseases and poisons until the vehicle is destroyed.

Special: To repair or even work on an engine of this complexity imposes a -5 penalty to the engineer skill check.

Panther, Verkelen Alpha-1: Angel’s government-funded arms maker dedicated to ETV and anti-echan R&D, Verkelen, started drawing plans to compete in the ETV market just under a century ago. The result, after millions of uc in development and testing, proved brilliant. The panther features a completely enclosed stretched ovoid body with two forks sticking forward and back where the spoke-less wheels are mounted. Huge computer-controlled gas shocks absorb impact by predicting upcoming terrain and adjusting accordingly. The panther features a gyroscopic stabilization control system (GSCS), preventing it from toppling over. Unless fully deactivated, the panther can never be unbalanced from any maneuver or attack. The



NUKE TRUCK



PANTHER

computer works with the driver, allowing the bike to lean over when the vehicle intends to maneuver but sensors detect if it will result in a fall. The GSCS even allows the vehicle to adjust its angle of attack on upcoming terrain. The panther's wheels are magnetically driven, capable of stopping and forcing its wheels into a lock. Each wheel carries enough torque to lift the entire body of the panther on one axle. The GSCS can then maintain that angle. With this ability, the panther could even climb a steep hill it has no hope of scaling by simply walking up its side.

Properties: The Panther requires a DC25 Strength check to be pushed over or moved. It can fit another medium sized creature, but all drive rolls in the cramped space suffers a -4 penalty.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Sealed: The panther is waterproof. The crew is immune to all external inhaled diseases and poisons until the vehicle is destroyed.

Scrambler, Verkelen Mark IV: Selkirk produces the largest ETVs in the world but at one point Angel made a play for the prize. They released two models within ten years, both large and somewhat clumsy, though in the end, nowhere near to the immensity of those from Selkirk. The most popular of all these was the scrambler ETV. This vehicle keeps the crew in a tightly sealed environment, elevated twenty feet above the ground. It rolls on six massive thick-treaded, steel-sidewall supported run-flat tires eight feet across. The scrambler can lose up to two tires without being disabled. The multi-level cabin can hold five people in relative comfort with many of the amenities the crew enjoys at home, including full sewage recycling and kitchen as well sleeping areas. It also sports one of the largest headlight assemblies of any vehicle, equipped with twenty forward-mounted high intensity discharge lights capable of illuminating a cone of terrain hundreds of feet long. Much smaller than the behemoth or land

shark, the scrambler is the preferred choice among smaller techan groups.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Properties: The scrambler can illuminate a 100 foot area. Despite its size, the scrambler suffers no penalties to movement.

Sealed: The scrambler is waterproof. The crew is immune to all external inhaled diseases and poisons until the vehicle is destroyed.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Wanderer, Verkelen Mark II: The wanderer began its life as a next generation ground interceptor for the Angel military. As time passed before a successful prototype could reach testing, advances in hover technology surpassed ground possibilities and the newly formed Crimson Starlight soon captured the public attention and the entirety of military funding. Verkelen shelved the designs and mothballed the prototype for almost a hundred years until the increase in mercenary forces and the desire for echan expeditions encouraged a revisit to the old design. The wanderer measures thirty feet long but the main body only measures eight feet across. A complex motor system involving four large axles mounted on hydraulic powered limbs is capable of raising the craft anywhere from five to fifteen feet off the ground and/or widening its wheel placement to as far as twenty feet across. Two wheels are attached at each axle. The entire motor assembly also sits under a large swivel joint, allowing the entire cabin to rotate on its center. When traveling at any substantial speed or when committing any hazardous maneuvers, the wanderer must widen its drivetrain or risk tumbling over.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Motor System: The motive-limbs are neither fast nor articulate, and require a move action to shift configuration. By default, the wheels are spaced twenty feet



SCRAMBLER



apart. The wanderer can squeeze by adjusting this configuration.

Sealed: The wanderer is waterproof. The crew is immune to all external inhaled diseases and poisons until the vehicle is destroyed.

264 *Turrets:* The wanderer comes equipped with two turret mounts for two-handed small arms.

AIRCRAFT

Generally, most techans avoid air travel outside of bastions, stemming from the susceptibility of avionics to disrupt. Techans are paranoid enough worrying about an ETV breaking down: add in the possibility of falling to one's death and most people opt for ground travel. There are noteworthy exceptions, and these all come in the form of lighter-than-air vehicles.

AIRCRAFT DESCRIPTIONS

Angel Hammerhead: This military aircraft uses fanjets to keep itself airborne and is unable to stay aloft otherwise: thankfully, the fanjets have a built-in redundancy that can compensate if the craft loses one of its

engines. It operates as both a transport and as an attack vehicle capable of parking over a location and securing ground like a tank. It doesn't deliver the massive punch of a focused attack helicopter but can nearly equal one when accounting for maneuverability. It is equipped with a laser range finder, thermal imaging night sights, and a digital ballistic computer. Both the fuel and ammunition are compartmentalized to enhance survivability.

Armament: Two heavy weapon turrets or three two-handed small-arm turrets.

Auto-Reload: You have a mechanism to reload your weapons. You can reload three clips/cells before needing external loading. Reloading still takes a move action using this system. You must land for external reloading.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Pressurized: The crew is immune to all poisons and gas effects until the vehicle is destroyed.

Sensors: You can see in the dark.

ANGEL HAMMERHEAD



Armored Zeppelin: Thankfully, along with magnetic fields, lighter than air vehicles depend on a science undisrupted by magic. Before they developed magnetic technology, Selkirk employed low-tech rigid airships filled with helium to transport themselves around the mountains. Because of its resistance to disruption, the zeppelin remains a popular choice for long journeys. Even if its fanjet nacelles short out, the craft will remain airborne. Engineers later added retractable sails for emergency propulsion if the primary drive fails. Internal cells separate the helium to prevent a catastrophic collapse in case of a puncture. The craft can lose pressure from more than half of its twelve segments and still not fall. Its ultralight polymer and metal envelope covers an internal aramid skin. The shell, wrapped around an aluminum skeleton, maintains its shape even when deflated, unlike standard balloons or blimps. This allows a greater capacity of gas and cargo. The majority of the crew lives in a pressurized segment inside the superstructure. Though several echans and techans use airships, the armored zeppelin from Selkirk

is the only model employed by a bastion.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

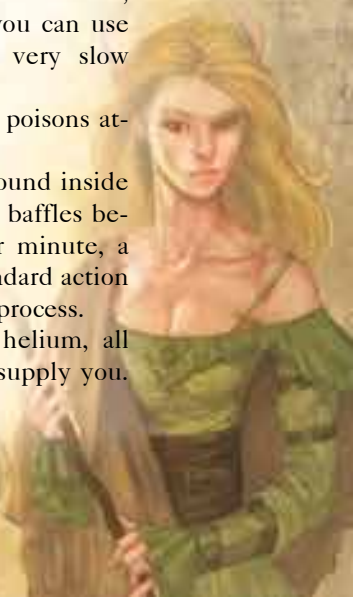
Lifting Bags: This aircraft is equipped with eight lifting bags. If deflated, you can use heated air in lieu of helium but the vessel suffers a -1 penalty to maneuverability for each bag filled this way.

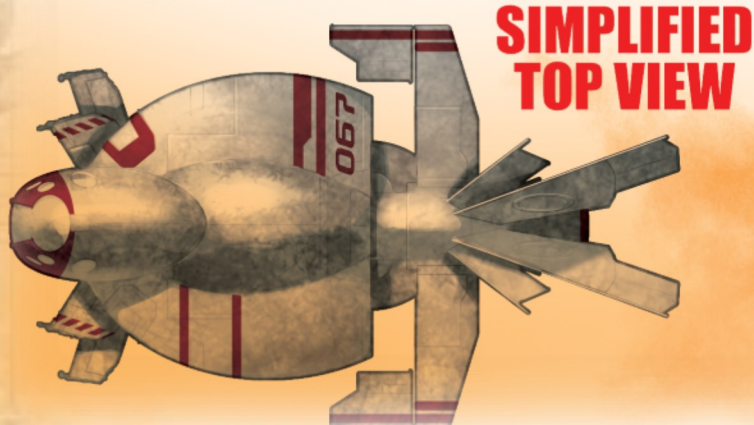
Movement: The zeppelin can hover. In addition, the zeppelin has sails. In an emergency, you can use them to substitute normal propulsion at very slow speed.

Pressurized: The crew is immune to all poisons attacks until the vehicle is destroyed.

Repair Drone: A repair drone buzzes around inside the superstructure, patching breaches in the baffles before they hemorrhage their gas. Once per minute, a repair drone can seal a single breach as a standard action (taken by the pilot), using one charge in the process.

Special—Resupply Helium: If out of helium, all bastions and even some techan forts can resupply you.





PANTOKRATOR

AIRCRAFT

NAME	CAP	CARGO	MAN.	SPEED	AC	RESIST.	HP	SIZE	COST	TL
Angel Hammerhead	2+2	500	-2	Extremely Fast	15	11+	60	Large	15,000	2
Armored zeppelin	1+15	2000	-3	Normal	15	11+	80	Huge+	63,500	2
Mann Pantokrator	1+6	1500	-1	Extremely Fast	15	16+	100	Huge	162,500	4
Thermal blimp	1+4	300	-5	Normal	13	6+	50	Huge	22,500	,0
Thermal frame standard	1+15	1000	-6	Slow	15	6+	100	Huge	42,500	0
Thermal frame, large	1+30	2000	-7	Slow	16	6+	150	Huge+	52,000	1
York Wasp	1	5	-2	Very Fast	15	11+	40	Medium	5,000	3

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The price varies depending on the location but the average cost to fill a balloon is between 300-600 uc.

Mann Pantokrator: The only known Mann aircraft seen outside of the bastion's walls, the pantokrator was intentionally over-engineered to increase survivability in echa. Two pylon-mounted fanjets provide lateral movement and rudimentary lift if the vehicle's primary any-gravity module is damaged. The vessel also features visible weapon pods to increase intimidation. Its size and payload have dubbed it a "flying fortress". Increased armor makes it virtually impenetrable to ground small arms fire. The rear cargo area can hold up to six

fully armed soldiers.

Armament: Two two-handed weapon turrets and one heavy weapon turret OR two heavy weapon turrets OR one super heavy weapon turret.

Auto-Reload: You have a mechanism to reload your weapons. You can reload three clips/cells before needing external loading. Reloading still takes a move action using this system. You must land for external reloading.

EDF Recovery (Recovery 11+): Quick action. If disrupted, the machine comes back online.

THERMAL AIRSHIP



Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Movement: The pantokrator can hover.

Pressurized: The crew is immune to all poisons and gas effects until the vehicle is destroyed.

Regeneration: The pantokrator can regenerate its own hit points at 3 per round.

Sensors: You can see in the dark.

York Wasp: The wasp is a one man aerial transport popular in the eastern bastion. It is used in law enforcement, traffic control, and military divisions assigned to urban warfare. The wasp is occasionally fitted with weapons but is mostly used for reconnaissance. It has no room for passengers, as the craft wraps around its user.

Armament: Wasps have a single weapon turret to hold a two-handed small-arm.

Auto-Reload: You have a mechanism to reload your weapon. You can reload three clips/cells before needing external loading. Reloading still takes a move action using this system. You must land for external reloading.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Movement: The wasp can hover.

Pressurized: The pilot is immune to all poisons and gas effects until the vehicle is destroyed.

Sensors: You can see in the dark as well as invisible targets.

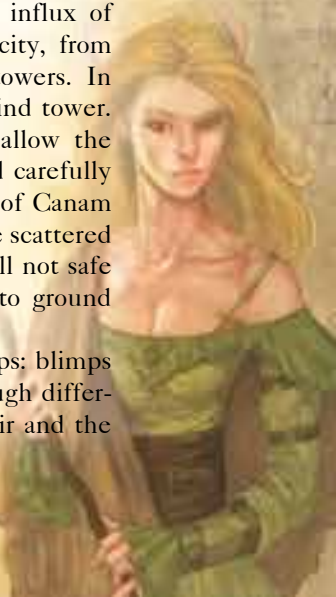
THERMAL AIRSHIPS


Since helium or hydrogen are hard to come by in the modern world, designers started brainstorming alterna-

tives. With the exception of Selkirk, still employing a model of gasbag craft when flying outside of its perimeter, all the other bastions abandoned airships in favor of faster, more maneuverable vectored-thrust and rotor-lift variations. This knowledge refused to fall into antiquity and a few stubborn engineers, relics proclaiming a lost art, sold or imparted this expertise to the outside world. Airships moved in their own direction. Though a few rare models employ solar or battery powered propulsion, the majority (including all those under control of echan) utilize reliable methods including wind, steam, and dependable manpower. The laudenians are believed to employ a variety of airship powered by magic to travel between their semi-mythical castles in the air, but no non-laudenian has ever seen such a craft.

Thermals (as they are often known) remain popular in Canam and Lauropa more than in any other region in the world, though few attempt to cross the expanse between these great lands. In Canam, they proved more popular given the continent's girth and the influx of ground-based raiders. Almost every echan city, from Janoah to Limshau to Victrix, sports mooring towers. In Gnimfall, mooring cables hang from every grind tower. York and Selkirk are the only bastions to allow the mooring of echan thermals. Pilots must tread carefully when plotting a course: the northeast region of Canam swarms with dragons, and airship skeletons are scattered across the Gloam to the south. The sky is still not safe but is considerably healthier in comparison to ground travel.

Thermals are broken up into two subgroups; blimps and frames. All variations gain their lift through differentials in temperature between the outside air and the





gasses contained within airbladders resting inside the structure. The choice of thermal lift over lighter gas comes from access: refining helium (the safer choice) is costly and requires tech processes to produce. The method of heating the air inside the balloon comes either from a natural heat (a coal fire for example) or from a magical one. All models are controlled by non-amplified mechanical flight control systems. This involves a series of pulleys and cables that directly transmit instructions to the control surfaces – though ineffective on faster aircraft, this method is perfect for slower-moving airships. Even on the larger thermal frames, a slightly more advanced servo-tab system allows the shifting of these massive fins with little force-feedback. All thermals are equipped with a basic pedal-based motor system requiring simple brute constitution for acceleration, making travel by flier just as exhausting as travel by foot, at least for a portion of a group. Rumors persist that it is possible to permanently enchant an airship. Though a basic blimp or standard frame without any propulsion or control modifications could theoretically be enchanted, the possibility of the enchantment disrupting the control surfaces may be too high. Moreover, the amount of spellwork required would be staggering. Not only would the entire craft need to be animated, but so would its propulsion system and flame. Add to that the need to make the spells permanent and the result is a procedure probably costing upwards of 3,000,000 gp not even taking into account the rarity of casters capable of accomplishing such a feat.

Lift: All thermals come with a torch to heat the air. It is either coal or propane. Usually a thermal has enough flame to keep it airborne for a week. This simple energy source can be resupplied at any village-sized or larger settlement at a negligible cost (anywhere between 5-10 gp).

Movement Mode: All thermals can hover.

Properties: The maximum altitude of any thermal is 12,375 feet. Being a lighter-than-air vehicle, thermals do not suffer from altitude loss if they begin to crash.

Blimp: Blimps are hot-air ships with a non-rigid structure. Without pressure, they deflate. After cold air is pumped in and then heated, the baffles fill up and the final shape takes form. Only the passenger car or gondola has rigid construction. The difference between blimps and simple hot-air balloons is the addition of tail fins and propulsion.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Lifting Bags: This aircraft is equipped with four lifting bags.

Frame: This refers to a rigid airship—a dirigible maintaining its shape from a framework instead of internal pressure via a lifting gas. The rigid design offers the advantage of an increased lift capacity as the vessel can feature more and larger lifting bags inside the superstructure.

Unlike blimps, where the crew sits in a gondola underneath the main balloon, frames appear to only have a small cockpit with the cargo and crew compartments

residing inside the balloon assembly. Some models come equipped with galleys and sleeping bays. Two sizes fly over most of Canam with the larger reserved for mercenary units, public transportation, and charter flights. Manual propulsion keeps this vehicle incredibly slow, and most of those who can afford it and justify the disruption risk opt to upgrade to an automatic system.

If using the manual system, the standard frame requires 1 additional crewmember and the large model requires an additional 3. The large variant is by no means the largest; it's just the largest public option. Gnimfall flies the *Ziggurat-Ex-Mundi* between the various grind towers around Canam. It can hold up to fifty gimfen in comfort (though humans find the accommodations cramped). The ZEM's advanced steam drive makes it the fastest airship known. The largest frame of all comes from Limshau, the *Abeccedarian*. Measuring a thousand feet long and weighing 150 tons, this 120-passenger transport connects with all the smaller cities in the kingdom.

Enclosure: This vehicle protects those inside; they gain the benefits of the resist value.

Lifting Bags: This aircraft is equipped with six lifting bags.

Properties: The larger thermal frame uses a slightly more complicated flight control system over the smaller frames and blimps, and thus, counts as a tech level 1 vehicle, though receiving a +5 bonus to all saving throws against disruption.

OTHER LOW-TECH VEHICLES

EDF is not kind to mechanical propulsion systems, especially those that rely on regularity – although the chemistry and physics work the same as ever, the systematic processes required by a fuel injection system is too easily interrupted. Interestingly, the chance of disruption seems to rise according to the volatility of the fuel source: steam power (relying only on pressure) is almost totally safe, while high-octane gasoline, even if it were readily available, causes the vehicle's engine to break down almost the instant it is turned on. Alcohol-based carburetors are the most stable combustion engines, functioning with minimal difficulty in low-EDF areas and disrupting once or twice a day or so but easily set to working order again, and even the occasional engine burning refined vegetable oil can be made to run as long as one has a capable mechanic on hand to repair it a half-dozen times a day. This presumes that the device only sees low-grade use, and is kept out of combat – a crop harvester is far more reliable than a jalopy, and not only are such low-powered engines totally unsuitable for the stress of conflict, but the pressure of EDF that builds up in such circumstances would inevitably get to the unshielded mechanism. Low-tech vehicles are all TL1, can move up to fast and have no tactical properties – such vehicles disrupt immediately if combat breaks out.

VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

MODIFICATION	COST	TL	DESCRIPTION
EPCM I	500	1	+1 item bonus to AC
Parachute	500	--	Emergency escape method
Weapon mount (2-handed small-arm)	500	--	Mount a 2-handed small arm
Electronics flash reprogramming	900	--	Increase Speed by one category
Fly by wire**	1,700	2	+3 maneuverability
Reinforced chassis I	900	--	+10 hit points
Suspension upgrade I*	900	--	Reduce maneuverability by 1
EPCM II	2,500	2	+2 item bonus to AC
Reinforced chassis II	2,500	--	+20 hit points (min 40 hit points)
Sails**	2,500	--	Increase Speed by one category
Suspension upgrade II*	2,500	--	Reduce maneuverability by 1
Weapon turret (heavy weapon)	2,500	--	Mount a heavy weapon
Reinforced chassis III	6,500	--	+30 hit points (min 80 hit points)
Weapon turret (super heavy weapon)	6,500	--	Mount a super heavy weapon
Complete composite retrofit I	8,500	--	+2 item bonus to resistance
Repair drone**	8,500	3	Repair holes in balloons
Suspension upgrade III*	8,500	2	Reduce maneuverability by 1
EPCM III	12,500	3	+3 item bonus to AC
Premiere performance suspension*	12,500	2	+1 item bonus to maneuverability
Steam drive**	12,500	1	Increase Speed by two categories
Complete composite retrofit II	22,500	1	+4 item bonus to resistance
Reinforced chassis IV	32,500	1	+50 hit points (min 100)
EPCM IV	62,500	4	+4 item bonus to AC
Visual active camouflage	62,500	5	Total concealment / invisibility

*Ground vehicle only **Thermal only

VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

Each higher level is a substantial increase in product quality. There is no limit on the number of modifications you can place on a vehicle, but you can only have one of each type.

Auto-Reloader: You have a mechanism to reload your weapons. You can reload three clips/cells before needing external loading. Reloading still takes a move action using this system.

Complete Composite Retrofit: Ultra high molecular-density polyethylene plates are bolted to the outer panels of the vehicle, removing any illusion of the transport's purpose.

Level I Property: +1 bonus to the vehicle's resistance value (11+ becomes 12+ for example).

Level II Property: +2 bonus to the vehicle's resistance value.

Electronic/Physical Counter Measures (EPCM): This is not one modification but several accomplishing similar ends. Reactive plating, adaptive camouflage, and regenerative countermeasures assist in making even an immobile vehicle harder to target with both close and ranged attacks. Reactive systems run off the vehicle's power source and any gains by this system are lost if the vehicle is disrupted.

Property: Any weapon with the Guided property that employs its daily power automatically misses.

Level I Property: +1 item bonus to the vehicle's AC.

Level II Property: +2 item bonus to the vehicle's AC.

Level III Property: +3 item bonus to the vehicle's AC.

Level IV Property: +4 item bonus to the vehicle's AC.

Electronics Flash Reprogramming: EFP involves removing the vehicle's engine control system which limits the vehicle's power output by dictating throttle response injection timing. The unit is then replaced or reprogrammed for higher and more efficient output.

Property: Increase the speed of the vehicle by one category.

Fly-by-Wire: This system completely replaces the primitive control system with a digital fly-by-wire system common in all other techan aircraft. This turns the entire vessel into a TL2 craft.

Property: +3 power bonus to maneuver rating.

Parachute: Parachutes attach to the main cabin or cockpit of an aircraft and deploy in case of freefall. A mechanical barometric switch triggers parachutes to prevent a terminal crash. The vehicle must be at least 200 feet above the ground for the parachute to operate safely.

Premiere Performance Suspension: This expensive modification involves installing an intelligent active suspension system which includes computer enhanced systems like TCS (Traction Control System), ASR (Anti-Slip Regulation), and ESC (Electronically Stability Control).



Property: +1 item bonus to maneuver rating.

Reinforced Chassis: By strengthening the chassis with strut and sway bars, adding run flat tires, and replacing key components with harder and lighter materials like carbon fiber, the vehicle can endure more punishment.

Level I Property: Vehicle gains +10 hit points.

Level II Property: Vehicle gains +20 hit points. Vehicle must have at least 40 hit points for this modification.

Level III Property: Vehicle gains +30 hit points. Vehicle must have at least 80 hit points for this modification. Maneuver rating decreases by 1.

Level IV Property: Vehicle gains +50 hit points. Vehicle must have at least 100 hit points for this modification. Maneuver rating decreases by 1.

Special: Levels in reinforced chassis stack. The vehicle cannot have more than two levels of this modification.

Repair Drone: A repair drone buzzes around inside the superstructure, patching breaches in the baffles before they hemorrhage their gas. The driver of the vehicle can use a standard action to make the repair drone patch one breach.

A repair drone can seal a single breach once per minute.

Sails: These pectoral and dorsal mounted sails provide a small boost in speed and can provide movement in an emergency if other means are neutralized. The sails can be drawn in and unfurled in one minute. This modification can only be added onto frames, not blimps.

Property: Increase the speed by one category when deployed.

Steam Drive: This basic powerplant uses steam to not only power the propellers but also heat the air balloons as well. It replaces the basic standard torch with a much more powerful boiler, connected to a double-action steam engine. This requires a source of heat as well as a supply of water. The average thermal can run for four days before requiring more water, a week before requiring more coal or propane. Being a basic engine, the steam drive counts as TL1 but gains a +5 bonus to any disruption saves.

Property: Increase the speed by two categories.

Suspension Upgrade: This modification improves maneuverability with stiffer coils and springs. Various parts of the vehicle are replaced with lighter carbon fiber and aluminum components.

Special: You can add multiple levels of this modification to the same vehicle: its effects stack.

Level I Property: Reduce maneuverability penalty by 1 (maximum 0).

Level II Property: Reduce maneuverability penalty by 2 (maximum 0).

Level III Property: Reduce maneuverability penalty by 3 (maximum 0).

Visual Active Camouflage System: This is an active cloaking system that can conceal a vehicle when not engaged in combat.

Thermoptics (recharge 16+): As a standard action,

you become invisible until the end of the battle or five minutes. If you are hit by a melee or ranged attack, you enter water, are hit with debris, or fire any weapons, you become visible.

Weapon Mount / Turret: A vehicle must have a listed hit point total equal to or greater than 30 to mount a two-handed weapon turret, equal to or greater than 60 to mount a heavy weapon (unless stated otherwise), and equal to or greater than 100 to mount a super heavy weapon (unless stated otherwise). Most vehicles can have only one weapon mount. Weapons use their original size when determining what can be fitted to a mount, even if they nominally count as a smaller weapon for a larger user.



Aiden needed to change his money. Bastion currency was worthless plastic and paper. The bank was a wooden hut with a steel door guarded by three men wielding dull broadswords, archaic revolvers, and crater-ridden faces. The man inside sat on a plush chair and looked thin enough to pass through the iron bars separating him from Aiden. A safe behind him had sunken into the dirt.

"How much?" the cashier barked.

Aiden passed his bills through the bars. "Five hundred."

"Looks like four--"

"It's five," Aiden snapped. There was no way to exchange money in the bastion. Angel would accept echan currency because of the raw materials involved, gold and silver, but they would never trade it back. The cashier counted the bills twice.

"Exchange rate isn't good this time of year."

"Exchange? There's no trade, how could there be--"

"It's not good this time of year," he interrupted. The cashier opened the safe and rattled a few bags. "What do ya want?" he continued. "Kroenan? Carmots? Tence? Torquil tence does quite well. A lot of places take it."

"Limshau currency please, carmots, chrysos--actually. Yes, tence would be good. I don't know...fifty?" Aiden had no idea.

"Want gold?"

"Yes, lovely."

The man chuckled and tendered the coins in a bag. Aiden knew it was short but had no angle to argue.

* * *

The Echan Terrain Vehicle wasn't a simple pantherbike but scrambler, all thirty feet and forty tons of it. It rolled on six thick-treaded, steel-sidewall run-flat tires, each ten-feet across. Twenty high-intensity discharge bulbs breathed a swath of light across the clearing. The vehicle had a center pivot separating the engine cluster from the cabin, allowing it to navigate around tight spaces and keep its drive train insulated from magical disruption. Despite the layers of padding, the vehicle still needed servicing

every thousand miles; magic always found a crack to work itself through. This specific scrambler had a battery of photovoltaic cells glued to the roof for additional range.

Aiden followed the other passengers to the entrance, the last to climb the steps, and the only one to notice the black wooden arrow shaft embedded in the side of the vehicle. It had caved a crater in the panel twice the size of Aiden's head. Aiden motioned to the scrambler captain, a thin man with neither a nametag nor hair. "Uh...excuse me?" Aiden called out.

Hairless looked up and followed Aiden's eyes to the arrow rooted in the plate. At first, Hairless was unsure what had drawn Aiden's attention. The arrow was obviously an annoyance that had paid him no mind when it occurred. He stepped up to Aiden's level and reached out to grab the exposed shaft.

"Oh don't worry about that," Hairless said as he strained against the arrow. "Picked it up on another run."

Aiden nodded and placed a foot inside the cabin. He immediately noticed the still sharp and polished bodkin sticking an inch into the compartment. That made him uneasy. Aiden leaned out again. "Aren't these hulls armored?"

"Six inches."

"Who?" Aiden started. He glanced inside, following the shaft through the foot-thick sandwich of kevlar, steel, carbon, titanium and plastic. The arrowhead had kept its point unbroken through the armor. "I mean. That's clean through."

Hairless moved in closer as he pulled hard against the wood. "Look..." He pulled hard and the shaft finally broke free. "Don't worry yourself, and don't scare the others. We're not going anywhere near them on this run. We'll be a minute covering this up. Gotta keep the chaos out." Aiden nodded timidly and entered the cabin.

The seats were of little comfort but a world apart from a horse's back. The crew sat on the deck above and seldom came down. Aiden didn't introduce himself to the other passengers, offering them only a nod and indirect eye-contact.

The older couple and their prepubescent child, all dressed in tatters, must have been stranded outside the wall for years before affording the tickets to return to a world they tried to escape. The two adult men opposite of the cabin were obviously brothers; one lost in music from headphones, the other reading a tablet computer. Both looked naïve with polyester pants and rayon jackets, probably fated for Salvabrooke, the vehicle's penultimate destination.

Salvabrooke was an adulterated sampling of the outside world, watered down and sanitized for ignorant outsiders, a secluded enclave with few predators and legal brothels, all run by welcoming fae.

The scrambler produced a canine-like yap, followed by further woofs as the engine's various electric motors activated. The growling increased to a whine and the vehicle launched with surge that tossed loose bags about the cabin. The vehicle moved at the pace that technology found comfortable.

It was a cumbersome machine, flattening unscarred terrain, marking its path with uprooted vegetation. The

trees fell out of focus at this speed. Aiden couldn't hear anything; the vibrations in the suspension transmitted its noise through the frame of the vehicle.

The grey wall of Angel faded behind, and Aiden felt an unexpected level of anxiety wash over him. Would the dragon save his life again if he were in need? Its name was Genai, a title the city within the city took in tribute. Every time Aiden approached the pagoda atop the pyramid where Genai was rumored to reside, he was shooed away by the sentinel monks.

"If you walk from this city, from these walls, you will always be a child. You will always live in your fantasy." Martin's words came back to him as Aiden closed his eyes and imagined what and whom he would find. No dream would do it justice. No fantasy could be too extreme. Anything he could think of was real. Why would anyone want anything else? Was the library city of Limshau encircled by a pristine white wall? Was there a marsh that marked the corruption of a fallen human kingdom? Were there faerie shapechangers that would marry a man if he stole their scarf?

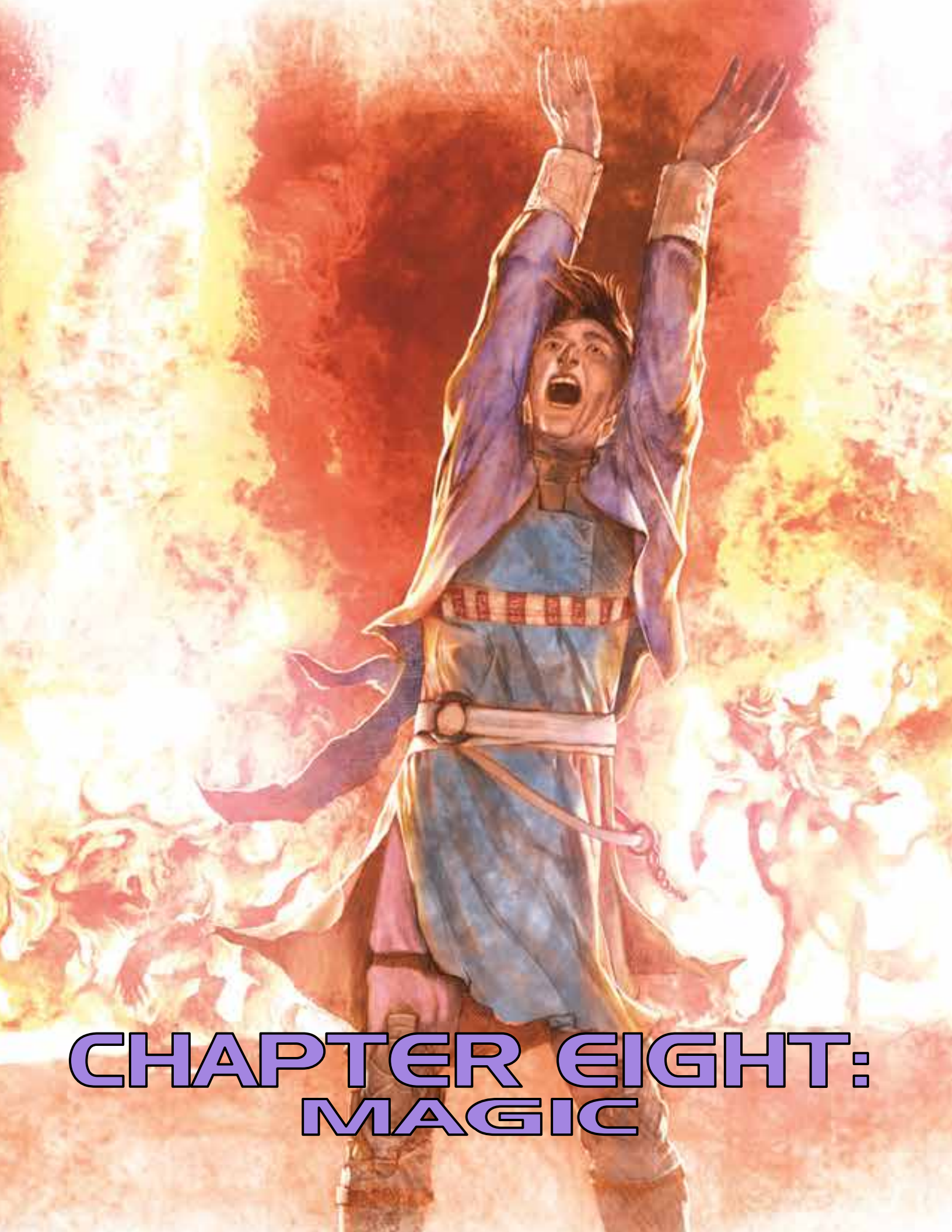
At first Aiden thought the quick thuds outside came from loose stones on the road or tree branches scraping across the scrambler. Aiden looked out the window and made out a squat humanoid shape with a fat head losing ground in its pursuit of the vehicle. Aiden couldn't make out much more than that given the vehicle's speed. The creature hobbled clumsily, a bundle of rock-tipped spears under its arm. Another creature appeared ahead, poking up from behind a bush, launching similar projectiles ineffectually against the reinforced hull of the vehicle. Unlike the refined arrow Aiden had seen embedded in the scrambler previously, these had no possibility of penetrating the ETV. Not even the run-flat tires could be pierced by these weapons. Nevertheless, to quell passenger concern and possibly just for the thrill, Aiden heard the high-pitched oscillating mechanical buzz of the techans' retaliatory response.

A second later, a torrent of chemically propelled projectiles sheared a path across the horizon, cutting down the fae and any other wildlife unfortunate enough to get caught in the crossfire. A half-dozen more shapes emerged from cover, unafraid of the gatling gun's onslaught. The fae deflected their ineffective spears off the tires and windows. The vehicle shuddered a moment and the passengers all jumped from their seats as the scrambler flattened an obstruction.

"Holy shit!" The driver's voice resonated from the top level. "Did you see that? Head came off from the jaw!" The other passengers were terrified. Aiden was still glued to the window. There were two more collisions as the fae were torn apart under the tires. One leapt up and pounded its head across the door. Aiden jolted back from the window as a bloodied hand thumped across it. Aiden still couldn't catch the details though he was pretty certain the creature had a smile that ran ear to ear.

The attack ended as quickly as it began.

"Don't worry, folks," Hairless voiced over the intercom. "Nothing we haven't dealt with a dozen times before." The scrambler continued without incident through the remainder of Cyon.



**CHAPTER EIGHT:
MAGIC**



THE SOURCE

Magic focuses its power through three sources:

Pleroma: The root of all spellcraft is the power to create something by speaking its name. This magic is imbued in the language of dragons. All wizards access magic in this way. To the uneducated, this language is simply called draconic. To everyone else, it is Pleroma.

Magical Materials: Not only are there new elements like angelite, coruthil, and magnarros (born from previously rare minerals), there are also thousands of materials and combinations of elements that produce different results in the presence of magic. The arts of alchemy and magical crafting are born from these materials. Those with the knowledge to forge items of enchantment are simply educated in the exacting ratios of alloys and ingredients required. Miscalculate by only 0.01 percent or 1 milligram, and the material becomes magically inert.

Magical Beings: Just as some monsters are inherently magical creatures, some people possess magical abilities on their own, whether from birth or spontaneously manifested later in life: gneolistics, mystics, vivicators and the like are some such, although all the forms such 'blessings' take are many and varied. These appear at random, though some people claim that this gift must come from some divine source. Both creatures wicked and wise have claimed such power. They can offer mild magical enhancements or powerful spell-like effects to almost rival wizards.

THE GATES

Many scientists dedicating their lives to the study of Attricana ascribe to the theory that the white gate is a tear in the fabric of space connecting our universe to another. This other universe has rules of chemistry and physics abnormal to our own. Radiating from this tear is an unquantifiable aura where the clashing of two universes results in the bizarre repudiation of scientific laws currently infecting the globe. Authorities on the side of magic refute this, arguing that the white gate does lead to another world, but not another universe: a realm reserved for gods and/or those who pass on through at the ends of their lives. Still another argument goes that the white gate leads to outside our universe, to the flotsam our cosmos floats in, a literal infinity impossible to comprehend or even quantify in our reality.

Despite these arguments, physical laws change within the wake of this white gate. These changes are not always constant and often change with little to no warning. Because of this chaos, the principles of natural selection and evolution are rendered ineffective, as they cannot compensate fast enough for the changes in reality. Mutations that do occur create huge deviations that are systemic through a species, changing many suddenly but all in the same way. Interestingly, magic tends to suppress harmful mutations in any body it affects; while defects may still exist within a magical creature's genome, the influence of enchantment usually prevents such traits from becoming manifest (as is the case with the tenenbri and cystic fibrosis).

In the Terros age, the fae (the only beings to achieve intelligence after the dragons) never tried to define the rules of Attricana. Since they had no concept of any previous world, there was no frame of reference to define the differences. Humanity on the other hand, was able to differentiate which rules were unchanged and which were altered. For one, no matter how many scientific laws the white gate modifies, none are altered to such a degree as to prevent any existing forms of life from continuing to live. Many of the laws concerning biology and chemistry are amendments rather than wholesale altera-

tions. These allow greater variations of life without voiding existing ones.

The laws of physics are more varied and inconsistent. Certain principles are fixed and have never shown any signs of changing. Magnetism works the same as ever, as does electricity, although the conductivity of any material other than gold over long distances is severely reduced in the presence of EDF. Other laws work mostly the same way, but with varying degrees of inconsistency depending on the strength of the local magical field. Gravity is particularly susceptible to alteration by magic, and it is suspected (though not confirmed) that the range of the electromagnetic spectrum has expanded (researchers take as proof of this the fact that creatures subjected to invisibility magic can still see, when by all rights they should be rendered blind). Pressure and kinesis are problematic: while on a basic level they work the same as they did before the gate reopened, in closed systems above a certain complexity, the laws of thermodynamics suddenly take a vacation as mechanical systems simply lose their built-up energy, causing pumps to void and gears to seize spontaneously with no indicator of where the lost energy has gone.

One group of intrepid scientists believed they found the secret to understanding the chaos from Attricana. They referred to it as the "Flow of Everything," a massive cause-and-effect chart of millions of entries of data that connect with other entries via 2 to 2000 different yes/no questions. These scientists became obsessed with explaining all the altered rules and the conditions causing one to go into effect in one moment and then do the opposite in the next. With the millions of different factors involved, all the original scientists died before ever solving even 1% of the entire system, without even discovering proof that it worked. Though subsequent experts have picked up the torch, modern disciples of flow theory accept that even if every single altered rule is explained and connected, it would not make the slightest bit of difference. One echalogian dismissed the entire escapade as pointless, as the number of factors actually needing to be observed was implausible. Some point out that this is exactly the same approach that echan wizards take to the study of magic, but such commentators are rarely given credibility.

In locations saturated with magic via casters and monsters, the overall influence of Attricana increases. Observations have proved that more spawn creatures appear in regions populated by other magical beings or in populations where magic use is prevalent. Magic also appears to be drawn to life; in areas where life does not exist, magic does not follow. In light of this discovery, several techans have proposed moving to Antarctica, or even to the moon (if some way of overcoming the ambient EDF long enough to get an orbital vehicle out of the atmosphere could be found).

Inversely, humans – being natural beings graced with intelligence and thus capable of observing the universe in a quantum sense – can actively suppress the influence of magic if enough of them refuse to accept it into themselves; it is not necessary to deny the exist-

ence of magic, but the human mind can seemingly tell magic that it is not wanted here, and it appears to listen. However, magic is constant and though it can be reduced, it can never be fully suppressed.

Most animals wandering the wild, despite being evolved creatures and theoretically resistant to magical influence like man, eventually succumbed to its power. Though not every member of every species turned into some kind of monster, every major genus (even plants and bacteria) has produced at least one species begotten of magic. Some grew massive in size while others were able to channel great energy previously untapped. Given time, a few of them developed rudimentary intelligence of their own (kodiaks being a prime example).

Unlike animals, in the 500 years mankind has been exposed to magic, there has been virtually no major alteration to human physiology. There are reports of a few minor aberrations occurring in northern Canam and across the world in Lauropa and Slav, but overall humans seem resistant to the whims of the wave. One popular theory states that, if a race is intelligent enough to handle magic, they can prevent its total dominance. Dumber animals become slaves while smarter ones become masters. The fae, of course, are not an evolved species and thus not factored in to this theory.

Almost all magic in the world is from Attricana and finding sources of Ixindar magic is difficult except in Kakodomania, the heart of its power. The black gate of Ixindar corrupts rather than creates. Where Attricana is the embodiment of chaos and spontaneity, Ixindar codifies order and structure, allowing it to mimic many of Attricana's spells, though without its spark of life. The source of corruption has been hotly contested. Does Ixindar lead to hell or to a universe at the edge of death? If Attricana is every possible permutation, would it be also every type of dimension, and if so would Ixindar then be a doorway to nothing? If Attricana is infinity, then Ixindar would be zero. Magic from Ixindar radiates stasis, and therefore does not disrupt scientific laws. The creatures do not radiate EDF, nor do their spells. Instead, Ixindar fills the minds of those using its power with the conviction of perfect order: with every use, the wielder becomes more and more rigid in their thinking and set in their ways.

PLEROMA

'Pleroma' is a pre-Hammer philosophical concept, representing the entirety of divine power. It was adopted first by human wizards and thinkers and later by the fae as the name for the draconic language, since the tongue itself has no internal name. Even spellcasters, renowned for their logical approach and cynical minds, use the term despite its divine connotation. To many of them, it may still be a light above our world, and to a greater extent, our universe, but there may be nothing divine or spiritual about it; even so, it does represent the ultimate power to change the universe with a word. Pleroma allows individuals to direct power normally reserved for gods in myth.

Pleroma is known to exist in at least three physical dimensions. Though more are theorized, humans and fae are only capable of perceiving three, giving each letter three views: this occasionally makes different symbols look identical when viewed at the same angle. Most mages have no knowledge of the true nature of Pleroma, as it is possible to cast any spell ever conceived by man or fae with a mere fifty-five letters, less than twenty percent of the total characters of the language. Some casters suspect even more powerful spells exist hidden in the script's barely-glimpsed fourth physical dimension and point to foundation anchors as proof, constructed as receptacles for these rare and powerful spells. This may explain why one cannot copy the spell from an anchor, as it is impossible for a three-dimensional being to transcribe it properly even if they can (barely) conceive of it in mind.

Learning the true language of dragons and their written word is extremely difficult and even the oldest laudenians can only claim partial fluency. The original Bibles of Drasago were created in the original tongue, though thankfully, they can be converted to the flat variety with a simple wave of the hand: more poetic passages lose much in the translation. The small number of souls aware of Pleroma's true complexities point to the impossibility of this language occurring naturally as proof of their divine origin and the existence of God: no species could ever evolve a language requiring so many dimensions to fully comprehend. Another theory is that the language was not naturally evolved, but rather constructed and tied to the universe in a way no one has been able to explain. Yet another theory was put forward by Kereptis Rifts, who postulated, "As three-dimensional beings, we project our language onto two dimensions. A naturally-evolved four-dimensional language would then logically only emerge from a species existing in five." It is possible, however, that Rifts was not thinking big enough.



Pleroma came about because I wanted a language the Decipher Language spell couldn't decipher.

ATTRICANA SPELLS

Most spells originate from Attricana. The white gate does not force a particular morality upon its casters, but the general disposition of magic supports life in all its forms, beneficent and harmful alike. Unique Attricana spells are those blessed enchantments exclusive to the white gate, including all spells with the Good descriptor as well as monster summoning spells. In the case of the latter, monsters are not actually summoned—they are created at that moment by will of the spellcaster, happy to return to the chaos of Attricana once that purpose is fulfilled.

All spells drawing upon Attricana appear alive when cast; they exist with enough intelligence to accomplish their task along with the drive to succeed at it. To fail would be worse than death, even if that death occurs

anyway moments later. From dancing lights to lightning leaping from fingers, every spell carries some indication that an intelligence other than the spellcaster is at work. Some wizards, particularly of the Koana schools, nurture this intelligence, while others constantly attempt to refine their spell in an attempt to minimize the apparent outside influence – with only limited success.

ENCHANTMENT

As the famous quote passed among wizards goes, "Anything you can think of thinks for itself." Attricana is about life in every possible combination, breaking rules that nature declares incontrovertible. A creature or force derived from these broken rules emanates that same chaos. Since technology is based on the principle that a given procedure will produce the same result every time, machines and magic cannot long commingle. This created a chain reaction 500 years ago, forcing all remaining fragments of working technology into the bastions. Although all fae are slaves to magic, humans have a choice, being born via the normal rules of biology. They can choose to accept the world of magic or remain disciplines of science. There is no good or evil in this conflict. There is only opinion, and there is no wrong answer. However, the choice is often permanent. By wielding that magic sword or by casting that spell, a human ties his soul to Attricana, becoming one with the world of magic, and disrupting technology just as an elf would.

SATURATION POINT

Saturation Point: Human characters start at level 1 with a saturation point total of 0. You gain saturation points under the following circumstances:

- +1: You wield a magic weapon (per minute).
- +1: You wear magic armor (per hour).
- +1: You benefit from magic items in your possession (per hour).
- +1: You study the arcane arts (per day).
- +1: A beneficial magical effect (including magical healing) is placed upon you.
- +1: You drink a potion.
- +10: You are brought back from the dead via a spell or spell-life effect.
- +20: You bond with a non-human.
- +20: You select a supernatural trait.

The moment you reach a saturation point of 20, you begin to generate EDF (but you do not stop accruing saturation points). As long as you do not accrue any additional points, you remove 1 from your saturation point total every week (unless bonded or selecting a supernatural trait; if so, your total can never drop below 20).



IXINDAR AND MENGUS

It is a common misconception, fed by the religions of many cultures, that Ixindar is the physical manifestation of Hell. Such proponents point to the demons that emerged from it as proof. Yet Ixindar, for all its malice, is not a force for chaos but for order – absolute, unyielding, incontrovertible structure. Its drive, more a natural law than a goal, is that all life must end or operate in service of order. When Ixindar corrupts, what it really does is subvert any originality in a subject. Its form of order results in degrading the real world to a constant level. This would not be the null background radiation the universe may be fated to reach but a collective consciousness possessing a power only described as absolute and divine. Another way to describe it would be that of a hive or overmind—to unify all thought and to make that thought able to control the universe. A cosmos with one occupant would have neither emotions nor a sense of individuality. Another concept follows the idea that Attricana may be infinity while Ixindar is zero. One is everything while the other is nothing. Given this, a single consciousness in an infinite space would be zero, while a single conscious in zero space would be infinite. That would-be infinite being has a name, and it is Mengus.

For as long as anyone cared to remember, Mengus has not been referred to by any other name; no mis-translation or even spelling error has ever marred the name of the embodiment of perfect order. No creature has ever claimed to have seen Mengus and everyone accepts that it no longer possesses a physical body or lacks the capacity to form in the real world. A few dragons suggested Amethyst and Mengus are two sides of a single metaphorical coin – a balance the world requires. Perhaps they were one god-like creature split into two, and Amethyst retained the body. Even a common gender assignment given to Mengus is up to debate. In the Gospel of Lazarus, page 956, paragraph 10 verse 5, Lazarus was quoted as saying, “I once allowed Mengus to peer into my soul. I do believe she flinched. Not all can be corrupted.” Lazarus never explained this passage, but whatever the case, the gender assignment stuck in some circles.

Because Mengus could only look outward from Ixindar, when Amethyst buried the gate, her influence was frozen and locked inside. Nevertheless, some echalogians have theorized that the great acts of barbarism that have marred human history were due to the whisper, and the continual fear of hell and demons emerged from her playful manipulation of mankind’s nightmares. Even now, despite the great force of the second hammer, Ixindar is still not completely free: Mengus must strive towards her ambitions of godhead through her proxies the shemjaza and typhox dragons, and through the subtle influence of the whisper spreading secretly across the world from Ixindar’s resting place in Kakodomania.

SAEQAAR

The deified language of Pleroma has a dark counterpart, brought to this world by Ixindar and Mengus’ whisper. This tongue is both the metaphorical and literal mirror of Pleroma, but draws its power from the black gate instead of the white, further reinforcing the theory that Pleroma is not the language of dragons at all. The symbols of this corrupted tongue resemble that of Pleroma as seen through a mirror, and are able to replicate similar results, but it only imitates the might of Attricana without the energy of chaos behind it. Ixindar does not spontaneously create anything; it must infect and convert what it finds to its side. There was originally no accepted name for this language; as with Pleroma, the name of the thing is the thing itself. Later it received its own sobriquet, *saeqaar*, a word with no meaning that can be rendered in any human tongue. While Pleroma utterances can be colorful and dancing with life, *saeqaar* words when spoken are sonorant and uniform – those who have heard them and lived to tell the tale speak of them as sounding like the tolling of funeral bells, with only their disturbing harmonics distinguishing different words. Appropriate, then, that the typhox dragons found in this language the tools for creating the most corrupt of the magical arts, necromancy.



The concept of flipping the law/chaos dynamic began from a conversation with Conan Veitch regarding the pagus and how they act. It was a simultaneous revelation which unfortunately led to certain elements of the prior 2008 3.5 OGL game being rendered non-canon (revealing how recent that change was). Conan, for example, loved the chaos monsters—the grotesqueries—we created, and has been trying to justify their re-inclusion ever since.

NIHILIMANCY

For those falling for this lure, the price far outweighs the gains. The damage is paid by both the user’s mind and by those around. This path to immortality, later known as nihilimancy (pronounced either *ny-li-mansy* or *neel-li-mansy*), is growing amongst humans. Those few powerful enough to take advantage of the total potential of nihilimancy have risen to positions of authority, though none of them would admit it. Those opposed to corruption have yet to see the disciples of nihilimancy congregate. They don’t send out newsletters or coordinate strategies. There’s no need to. Since they all share common motivations, they all strive to follow the whispers of their unseen, unheard, and unacknowledged idol.

The practice of nihilimancy will be dealt with at more length in a future book. For now, there are a few general rules:



DISRUPTION

Corrupted magic has no flamboyance in its casting. There is no life behind anything emanating from a corrupted spell. However, the corruption of saeqaar does allow a spell to be bottled in, preventing the eruption of magical disruption. Like all energy from Ixindar, saeqaar does not disrupt technology, and Ixindar-based equipment and creatures do not generate EDF. It is even technically possible to enchant a piece of technology using corrupted magic. Enhancement bonuses for magic and TL do not stack, and the enchanted en-

hancement bonus actually *replaces* the enhancement from TL (as opposed to the higher bonus applying). The item still has its original TL and is still affected by disruption effects originating from Attricana.

CORRUPTION

There can never be a good spellcaster bound to Ixindar: eventually, the syntropic energy coursing through their bodies stratifies their worldview, and they become convinced that no perspective other than their own can even exist, let alone be valid. Those drawn too far



down the path of corruption become perfect narcissists, convinced that the entire universe exists only for their benefit, or even that it would not exist without them. When you use magic tied to Ixindar, you will fall under the influence of corruption. This works the same as echan saturation, but saturation and corruption points are recording separately. You gain corruption points under the following circumstances:

+2: During an encounter, you wield a magic weapon with the Ixindar keyword.

+2: During an encounter, you wear magic armor with the Ixindar keyword.

+2: During an encounter, you benefit from magic items with the Ixindar keyword.

+2: Every day you study the corrupted written form of atar draco sigilia, required to cast negative spells.

+2: You drink a potion with the Ixindar keyword.

+5: Any time you use an arcane power using atar draco sigilia.

The moment you reach a corruption value of 20 or more, you begin to fall under the influence of Ixindar. You cease to generate EDF, if you originally did so: magic items you carry, and any spells that use pleroma, remain bound to Attricana, and thus generate EDF. If you continue to use normal magic, you are subject to the normal rules of EDF saturation, but if you ever regain enough saturation points to become an echan, you do not do so unless your corruption value first drops to 0. Recovering from corruption is a slow process, like recovering from exposure to magic: if you do return to Attricana, or are otherwise separated from the influence of corruption, you reduce your corruption point value by 1 every week. Currently, only time away from Ixindar's corruption can expunge it from one's soul. You cannot be tied to both Attricana and Ixindar.

Oh yeah, and you start to be evil. So act like it.



Specifically, you believe that only you know what's best for the world and that if everyone would just shut up and obey your orders, there would be world peace. In the meantime, you willingly cooperate with more powerful corrupted beings until such time as you grow powerful enough to subjugate them. If your original allies are still 'good,' you don't need to kill them, or even particularly conceal your goals from them - unless they actually get in your way, it's a waste of resources to destroy them, and they could eventually be useful if brought to your side or even just aimed in the direction of a rival. While most d20-based games treat 'chaotic evil' as the ultimate darkness, in Amethyst this nadir is exemplified by 'lawful evil'.

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IXINDAR SPELLS

Negative magic uses the corrupted inversion of pleroma to cast spells, known as saeqaar. It requires essentially the same practices and discipline as learning pleroma. Learning saeqaar is difficult, as there are no libraries in Canam that deal with the subject: the only known location in Canam confirmed to have these words is the fortress of Kardia-Gothas in the Sana Marsh, and the only other known means of learning the language is to be taught it by a shemjaza (which few spellcasters are willing to risk unless they are already corrupt). Ixindar also has many exclusive spells. These are vile spells with few redeeming qualities. All spells that deal necrotic damage are unique to Ixindar and thus are not available to casters bound to Attricana. Otherwise, Ixindar casters can use any spell except summoning spells and those that deal radiant damage. Casting Ixindar magic also locks the caster's thinking into the ways of the black gate, corrupting them eventually into an agent of absolute order.

MAGIC ITEMS

Almost any magical item can theoretically have a corrupted counterpart, excepting those that have effects similar to the proscribed spells above. Such items function identically to their Attricana mirrors, save that they do not generate EDF. Negative magic items are extremely rare in the world, and they will never be found legally in any city controlled by the fae: even Baruch Malkut rarely deals in such artifacts, although possibly more due to the difficulty in obtaining them than any moral quandary. Negative magic items can only be located in areas already under the eyes of corrupted creatures. These regions include the Sana Marsh, Tranquiss, and numerous hidden dungeons scattered across the continent. If trying to acquire negative magic items on the black market, expect them to cost up to 10%-20% more than their normal disrupting alternative.

ARTIFACTS

THE BIBLE OF DRASAGO AND THE ARCHON GOSPELS

When the dragons emerged from Attricana, Lazarus (the oldest and most powerful of the survivors) went about commissioning tomes of knowledge from the other dragons. He picked one representative from each lineage and exhorted them to write in their ancient language a gospel of all that they believe in and imbue it with the very power they possess. These books chronicle all their knowledge and tell about the history of Terros through their ageless eyes. To read a gospel of Drasago is to peer into the very soul of a dragon.

Those who read such a tome are never the same, assuming they can find one in the first place. These books are extremely rare: only three or four copies exist of each gospel and the complete Bible of Drasago itself is owned and protected by Lazarus. Excerpts from these books have been found all over the globe. A

reprinting of some passages translated into damaskan can be located in Limshau and Laudenia, but they lack the magical impact of the originals; only fragments have ever been translated into English, and these are often too cryptic to have any value even as proverbs. Dragons often share these books with each other, though never gaining the abilities from them. If a non-dragon skilled in Pleroma reads this book, which takes a total of 48 hours over a minimum of six days, he gains inherent bonuses dependant on the book. Once the book is read, the knowledge will always be present to that reader. A reader can only be affected by one book in their lifetime, no matter how many they read, and can only be thus affected once no matter how many times they read that book.

The books are very large, embossed with real scales sacrificed by the writer. They are laced with platinum and silver and gilded with gold. Surprisingly, they are all quite light and will float upon water if dropped. The books are locked with fragments of a dragon's talon and cannot be opened without their key, nor can they be destroyed by any means other than a *wish* or the breath of the dragons that authored them.

THE GOSPEL OF THE HOLY

Written by Aurannis of Dust and Greka of Babel

Leave it to holy dragons to write such a massive book, by two members as they couldn't agree who would write what. Only Greka's portion carries the gospel's enchantment; Aurannis' chronicle, while complementary to it, exists as a semi-apocrypha and is technically considered a separate book. Greka's book requires 72 hours to read over 8 days compared to the other books. It's a long, slow read, bouncing between subject matter and often diverting into seemingly boring and superfluous tangents. The holy book can be identified by the mirror-polished feather affixed to the cover. The book displays no artwork and the typeface is small and harder to translate than normal. A full quarter of the book is dedicated to the flight dynamics of holy dragons in comparison to other breeds.

After being read, the book imparts these abilities:

Manifestation: You inflict +2 damage on a hit against Ixindar and undead creatures, or +4 against death dragons.

Resistance: You gain resist fire 11+.

Natural Vigor: You gain 25 hit points.

Holy Verve: You gain 1 additional recovery.

THE GOSPEL OF THE GUARDIAN

Written by Kelto of the Guard

Kelto, a battle champion of a thousand engagements, refused to die despite losing an eye, two claws, and the end of his tail. His claws were severed by an unnamed and forgotten cursed blade which he later destroyed. His eye was plucked and stolen as a prize when Goch and Kelto dueled over the skies of old Terros thousands of years before the First Hammer. Goch keeps it still, hanging the undamaged orb from his neck, unknowing

that Kelto can still gaze through it as long as the injury remains unhealed. Not even the book goes into details on how Kelto lost his tail tip. Despite these injuries, Kelto is still one of the more approachable dragons, seldom taken to pomposity. The book, marked by a bright orange/red smear of Kelto's own blood, details the arrival of the guardian dragons and their crusade to defeat the armies of darkness. Guardian dragons are warriors, champions, and knights of the oldest order, and consequently the book details many battles. The accounts are exhaustive, graphic, and not for the squeamish, for Kelto and his guardians have seen the very darkest creations of evil.

After being read, the book imparts these abilities:

Raiment of Battle: The enhancement bonuses of your armor and weapons (if they have them) are increased by 1 (maximum +3).

Vision: You can see in the dark.

THE GOSPEL OF THE NOBLE

Written by Lynissa of Essence

Lynissa's family and the responsibilities they have taken on are far more interesting than the noble dragons as a whole. As nobles are considered the intellectual leaders of the dragons (the holy being the spiritual leaders), one would expect the book to detail their administration of dragon culture as well as their structure of authority. Thankfully, Lynissa intermixed this with anecdotes about her family line and their connection with the humans and elves of Akoya (in Euras), which is far more interesting. Euras possesses only one human line of blood royal, the Lamontaes of Akoya. This endorsement came from Lynissa herself, passed down to the first Lamontae, Raymonde. The silver hair of all the royals and their offspring regardless of the appearance of their consorts encourages rumors across the land that Lynissa of Essence dipped into the royal line herself, siring a child while in human form with the king at the time. Such a pairing is not technically forbidden, though extremely rare and difficult to propagate (dragons must bond just like fae in order to reproduce with humans, although the side-effects of bonding for the human are unpredictable and often dangerous). If she endorsed the Lamontae line before or after the coupling is not known but Lynissa and her dragon offspring from the Terros Age all live within the kingdom, swearing to its protection. The diplomatic and noble landscape of Akoya is featured heavily in her gospel. Alas, the majority of the book still details the history of the noble dragons, and their arrogance and condescension about their intelligence does show through the words.

After being read, the book imparts these abilities:

Blessed Presence: You and all nearby allies gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls.

Somewhat Arrogant: You gain a +2 bonus to MD.

True Leadership: You gain a +5 bonus to any skill checks regarding bluff and diplomacy.





Hold the Door: Your minimum initiative count at the start of a battle is 1 point higher than your highest ally's result.

THE GOSPEL OF LAZARUS

Written by Lazarus himself, this tome does not go into any details about general dragons but more into Lazarus's own life, as the most ancient living dragon. He talks about his feelings about the world and the fall of Amethyst. This book is extremely hard to find outside of the realm of dragons.

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Of all the books, the Lazarus volume is by far the most cryptic. The words and speech meander from normal vernacular to poetry, with messages and meanings only revealing themselves after days, months, or years of contemplation and meditation. It is not an easy read to be sure. After appreciation of the words is finally reached, his thoughts and feelings carry through in clarity. Those finally understanding the book and its meanings often feel melancholy afterward, sharing with the author the curse of knowing too much. Though Lazarus does not impart many secrets, he does express his dissatisfaction about knowing them. After reading the book, one truly begins to understand the mentality of dragons, the immense responsibilities they carry, and the knife-edge they balance between wisdom and corruption. Lazarus knew the world the longest, and his book speaks of times known to no others, including

the stretch of time between when Amethyst called the first dragons into being and the arrival of the fae.

After being read, the book imparts these abilities:

Immunities: You are immune to attacks which target MD. You are also immune to all disease.

Sanctified: Once a month, if you are killed, you are subjected to the effects of a *resurrection* 1d4 hours later.



One of the few ways of coming back from the dead in this setting. Feel free to indulge in any 'tunnel of light' tropes you like, but ultimately, this way doesn't confirm the existence of an afterlife either.

THE CHRONICLE OF AURANNIS

The Chronicle of Aurannis is a single tome separated from the rest of the Bible of Drasago. It holds the knowledge of Amethyst, the shards of his crown, and the artifacts forged around them. It also details the history of echa, the fall of the great dragon and by what means. It mentions Gebermach and the other gospels of Drasago. The book is quite well written in comparison to Greka's tome and is an easier read despite the ancient tongue. Thankfully, unlike other books, there is a "Rosetta-stone" translation matrix on the back cover, though some trickery in magic has

concealed it unless someone knows it's there. The matrix lists the same first page in laudenian and in damaskan. With this knowledge, one can translate the words but must still understand Pleroma to fully understand the content. Rumor has it that a complete English translation of this work exists somewhere within Genai, inside the bastion of Angel; regardless of whether this is true or not, any translation would have none of the special powers of the original.

On its own, the chronicle has no particular effect other than the advancement of knowledge, but it does glow brighter when an Amethyst relic is within 1 mile in any direction.



The Chronicle is one of the key books of the entire setting. I threw in a magical effect, but it's truly secondary. The Chronicle was a launching point of my original campaign and there remains more truth in its pages than I have revealed here.

STAFF OF KERIF

Many of the rumors involving Kereptis Rifts are false, conflicting with other tales spoken at the same table about his greatness. Was he a savior or a scoundrel? Was he a philanthropist or a villain? Many agree he had a temper, but no one contested his power or the loyalty he gathered because of that power. He is credited with numerous discoveries and creations, some later proven inaccurate. The one item everyone agrees came from his hand was the Staff of KeRif.

When Kereptis reached Ramkava, their behavior and triviality sickened him and he stormed away, unfulfilled. As he left, he discovered a piece of one of their heads that had broken off in an engagement with a death dragon. With this, he managed to gain their attention an unprecedented second time. After this second audience, Rifts took the shard back with him. He constructed a normal oak quarterstaff and topped it with the grayish shard of rock. The KeRif staff looks boring and only reveals its power with the testing of magic. Beyond empowering the holder to communicate with Ramkava, the staff can do the following when held:

- You always know the direction of true north.
- You gain +2 bonus to all knowledge-based skill checks.
- You gain the cleric *invocation of knowledge/lore* domain ability. You also gain both the Adventurer and Champion feats.

THE EIGHT SHARDS OF AMETHYST

The eight are the most powerful relics on the planet. Before Amethyst died, he cast a stream of white flame to heaven. It reflected back to drive Ixindar deep underground and solidify the Earth around it. His body turned to vapor soon after. Amethyst was gone and all

that remained was a great violet crystal that shattered upon striking the rocks below. They scattered across the world, lost after the Hammer's impact. Despite a few shards surfacing throughout history, most of them remained quietly buried for millions of years. The fragments were of all different sizes and shapes – with some smaller than a pebble, others longer than a leg. Some were spherical while others held a razor's edge. One can imagine stumbling upon such a gem. It would not be fastened to rock and no amount of force and commitment could lay a scratch upon its surface. Despite their unusual properties, any that were found never received attention during the time of man before the Second Hammer, being indistinguishable, apart from their durability, from unremarkable quartz. Discarded and ignored, they stayed inconsequential for centuries.

After the gate's return, by some unexplained factor, the crystals all rose to the surface, regardless how deep in the earth they rested. Unlike before, their brilliance and power were impossible to deny. Before anyone knew of their potential, their fate, or their true origin, they had been sold, traded, and killed over. Armies clashed for their control despite knowing nothing of their history.

Those with wealth and weight of authority felt their power would be amplified if said crystals were imbued into ordinary items. Very soon, these items emerged with their own local legends, wielded by warriors and kings both noble and wicked. After their existence reached erudite ears, but before anyone could act, they vanished again. Some were stolen; some were taken as trophies when their wielders were slain. When the virtuous and mighty discovered the fragments of Amethyst had returned, they scoured the planet to locate them. Like an unnamed curse, the original owners, all of those that had created the artifacts, had lost them or died, often both at once. The relics fell into obscurity, passing through further hands until the trails and clues had faded. All that remained was the hope they would emerge again.

Paranoia and silence by the oldest races conspired to keep the knowledge of Amethyst and his shattered crown secret. Factor in a small portion of arrogance and many of those who knew the truth never bothered to seek out these relics. Despite the calls for their retrieval, some individuals honestly thought they were best kept buried, unaware of their vital significance in future events.

How Aurannis of Dust managed to write about them in her Chronicle has never been revealed, but the elder dragon disclosed specific details of the fragments, the items they were implanted into, and their potential power as a result. Though it does not give their locations, the Chronicle of Aurannis is a vital read to anyone seeking the power of these relics.

Though there are known to be eight artifacts of Amethyst, only three can be found in Canam. All the artifacts exhibit the same violet glow, growing intensely when other artifacts are brought closer. Their power



increases as well, making them the few magic items that can grow along with the group questing for them. It is thought that when placed near each other, their total power would almost equal that of the original dragon. If that were to happen, perhaps he could even be reborn.

To increase in power, the gems must all be within 100 feet. Out of that range, the bonus abilities are no longer applicable. The items do not have to be wielded or carried by the same person. An evil creature carrying any Amethyst artifact loses 4 corruption points each day and gains 2 saturation points each day.

Because of the age and the history of the artifacts, they often go by different names and many cultures worship them without knowing what they truly are. Their stats are listed with their individual abilities and whatever abilities are boosted with additional nearby fragments.

The gems CANNOT be destroyed by any means. No spell or weapon cracks them, and even the strongest techan lasers and drills will blow up before they make a mark, assuming they do not instantly disrupt.

THE AMULET, STORMCAGE, THE EYE OF GOD

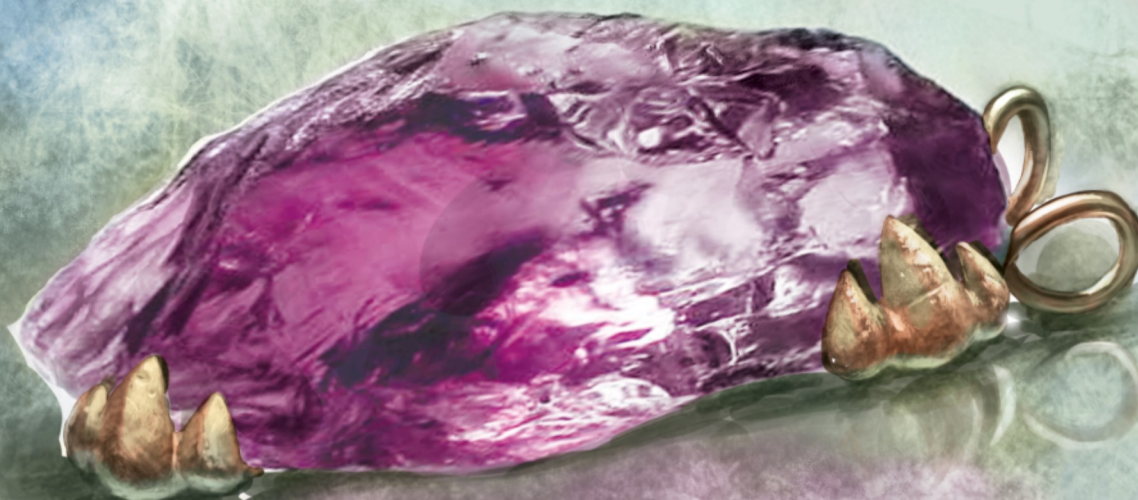
The amulet of Amethyst fell originally to Torfin Gendron, across the ocean. The mighty wizard stumbled upon the circular but jagged stone by accident,

pulling it from the sediment of a shallow river he was walking alongside. Believing the stone a sign, he continued upriver and discovered the outcropping rock that would later be the home of Torfin's great library and school of magic, Kirjath-Sepher. He never bothered to create a great device to channel the power of the crystal. Torfin forged a simple frame and hung it from his neck, and those years found the halls blessed with a newfound wisdom unseen in any human at that time or since. Torfin continued his work for years, as a nearby castle watched with fanatical and envious eyes. The fortress was Myre, a zealous order of knights committed to keeping magic from mortal hands. To them, magic was destined for a select few (themselves, of course, being among the few). Wilhelm Myre believed Kirjath-Sepher to be the greatest threat to the world and had ordered his knights to raze it to ash if the keep didn't willingly hand over all magic. Torfin and his loyal disciples refused.

To prove his piousness and dedication, Myre challenged Torfin to open combat, spell against sword, with no limits. Torfin agreed, and the Manora Vallis of Lauropa became the site of the greatest magical duel in history. Hundreds watched as the landscape erupted. Hours passed and the two were nearly exhausted, but neither accepted defeat. In the end, a final heedless charge brought Myre close enough to impale his sword into the heart of Gendron, but Torfin's retaliation struck lightning and fire from the heavens. Though his heart had stopped, the blade still skewered in his chest, Gendron remained precariously standing. The amulet slipped from around his neck and fell into his hand. He

lifted his palm to the sky, and an eagle promptly swooped down to snatch the crystal.

The order of Myre and the mages





of Sepher returned with their lords' bodies, declaring no further conflict would occur that day. The crystal vanished from the minds of both armies, and passed from hand to hand until it was found among the treasure hoard of a group of boggs annihilated by a patrol from Porto and taken back to the bastion for study. The intellectual elite of Porto poked and prodded the crystal but could not understand its mysterious properties. This item, unlike other echan artifacts, generated little disruption in comparison to its power. In a final attempt to unlock its secrets, they surreptitiously contacted an echan expert in another bastion, David Chen from Genai. However, while it was being transported there, a wandering dragon attacked the flyer, sending it plummeting to earth in the midst of the forest of Crax and scattering the cargo for miles. To the best of anyone's knowledge, the amulet was never recovered.

THE AMULET/STORMCAGE/ THE EYE OF GOD

Property: The amulet grants an enhancement bonus to PD and MD.

On Its Own: +1 enhancement bonus

3 Total Amethyst Relics: +2 enhancement bonus

7 Total Amethyst Relics: +3 enhancement bonus

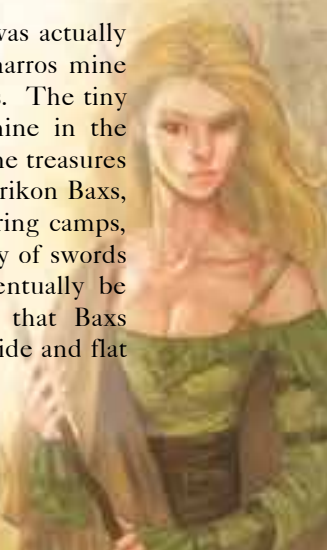
8 Total Amethyst Relics: +4 enhancement bonus

Reserve (recharge 11+): Free action; reset one daily spell.

Power (recharge 11+): Free action; if the group possesses all Amethyst Relics. Until the start of your next turn, all spells require only a quick action to activate.

THE BRACERS / ARMS OF TRUTH / THE PRESENCE OF RHINFORGE

The great dwarven city of Thos Thalagos was actually built atop the ruins of a previous smaller narros mine called Rhinforge, though few remember this. The tiny village of Rhinforge was the wealthiest mine in the north. Storehouses had to be built to hold the treasures they had unearthed. The mine's leader, Rarikon Baxs, refused to share this treasure with neighboring camps, with plans to use the money to hire an army of swords to conquer all of the land that would eventually be called Fargon. It was during this time that Baxs discovered the amethyst shards, two long, wide and flat pieces, just slightly shorter than a forearm.





To his amazement, Baxs realized the shards could not be cracked by any weapon in his arsenal and ordered them to be set within his cuirass, but this ended up not being feasible and he later had them placed within a set of forearm protectors in hopes they would improve his bowmanship. This they could not accomplish, but he found that they did protect him from harm. Near invulnerable, Baxs took it as a sign to crusade, to finally take the land as his own.

To prevent the formation of a corrupted empire, all the surrounding camps banded together. They struck Rhinforge before mercenary reinforcements could arrive. The combined might broke the back of the city's lackluster militia and Baxs was forced to flee south, his hands and pockets bursting with pilfered gold. Considering him too dangerous to allow free, the commander and now ruler of the mine, Thalagos Gin, placed a hefty bounty upon Baxs' head. The despot was finally located and chased up the face of Mt. Tirocinia, an active volcano. To deny the prize of his opponents, Baxs hurled himself to the flames and was engulfed by the molten rock. Thalagos Gin had the mining town renamed and decreed that none should

ever speak Baxs' name again, excising this dark period from the narros' history.

More than 200 years passed before the bracers resurfaced, having somehow traveled another 450 miles south to wind up under Mt. Selkirk, eventually appearing intact from the back of a mining machine operated by the techan humans of the new bastion. Finding the discovery unusual, the miners brought them to their supervisor, who immediately ordered them locked in the company vault, where they remain in hiding to this day.

THE BRACERS / ARMS OF TRUTH / THE PRESENCE OF RHINFORGE

Property: The bracers, on their own, grant a +1 shield bonus to AC without requiring the use of a hand; therefore the user can attack with either or both hands without losing the bonus.

+5 Amethyst Relics: The shield bonus to AC increases to +2.

Property: The bracers grant an enhancement bonus to PD and MD.

On Its Own: +1 enhancement bonus

3 Total Amethyst Relics: +2 enhancement bonus

7 Total Amethyst Relics: +3 enhancement bonus

8 Total Amethyst Relics: +4 enhancement bonus

Resilience: You increase your maximum hit points by the total number Amethyst artifacts nearby multiplied by 4.

Force Shield (recharge 11+): Free action; if the group possesses all Amethyst relics, until the end of your next turn, you gain a +6 bonus to AC. If you are hit with attack during that time, you recover the use of this power.

THE BUCKLE / THE BELT, BOOTS, or BRACELET OF DRAGONKIND

The only group or individual more obsessed with locating powerful magic than the Order of Myre is Darius Konig, king of Baruch Malkut. The kingdom has always been magically underprivileged; therefore, the king ordered all items of any significant power belonged to the kingdom and required them to be handed over to prolocutors trained to categorize and quantify their powers. Konig also demanded any texts or records of such items be tendered for examination. The prized trophy he sought was the manifest of Myre, the massive tome detailing all which lays within the Castle Myre vaults, be they magical or remnants from the old age of man. Darius coveted these artifacts and any others with the promise of power.

It was in their fervent pursuit that an Amethyst crystal was found, worn as a belt buckle by the noble of a small village called Eathar, who claimed the item was found on the corpse of a slain elvish princess. In truth, he had stolen the buckle from its former owner, but upon its discovery Konig insisted such treasures belonged to the kingdom and appropriated it for himself.

The amethyst gem had a longer history than that, having been forged into its present form by a mage from Laurama, Rhuunazodacus. Rhuuna was not a powerful caster but did have a reputation amongst the other chaparrans of the forest. She stumbled upon the amethyst crystal in the most fitting way for a chaparran, finding it within a tree. A lightning strike during an unusually intense storm cracked an old conifer from tip to root. As Rhunna examined the char, she found the violet crystal embedded in its bark. This specific tree had predated the chaparrans' arrival and was dubbed the "Mending Tree" by their holy order for its ability to repulse the Tranquiss plague. Realizing the purity of the tree lay in this crystal, Rhuuna took it and fled back to her village. The Mending Tree was dead, but the crystal took on its name initially, as the Mending Sap. Rhuuna, in hope of channeling the crystal's power, affixed it to a buckle and tied it around her right wrist, believing she could channel its energy into her knowledge of Pleroma to cure the plague. She would not have her chance, as she was taken by slavers shortly thereafter, her ultimate unfortunate fate a mystery. The buckle, its true powers unknown, was passed

through many owners over the intervening years, appearing at various times mounted as a bracelet, a belt buckle or a boot buckle by various dignitaries of the Blessed Kingdom.

THE BUCKLE / THE BELT, BOOTS, or BRACELET OF DRAGONKIND

Flash (recharge 11+): Minor action; you gain a standard action. For every additional Amethyst relic the group possesses, the recharge difficulty reduces by 1.

Good Boots (Boots): You gain a +1 bonus to balancing or jumping. This bonus increases by 1 for every additional Amethyst relic the group possesses.

5 Total Amethyst relics: Your weight is reduced to nearly zero. You can both walk on water without sinking and over pressure traps without setting them off.

Property (Belt): You gain 1 recovery.

3 Total Amethyst Relics: 2 recoveries

7 Total Amethyst Relics: 3 recoveries

8 Total Amethyst Relics: 4 recoveries

6 Total Amethyst relics: Once a day, as a move action, you can release yourself from the bonds of gravity. This is not a fly speed as this provides no means of propulsion; you simply have a weight of zero. Once you begin the effect, it remains until you end it with a move action or you take a full heal up. Because you are weightless, you pass all required checks when jumping, climbing, balancing and you cannot fall (thus, you cannot suffer falling damage). Your speed while airborne is dependent on your capacity push away from objects. You continue in a straight line unless you are able to grab another object or able to push yourself in another direction. If you end the effect while still in the air, you fall.

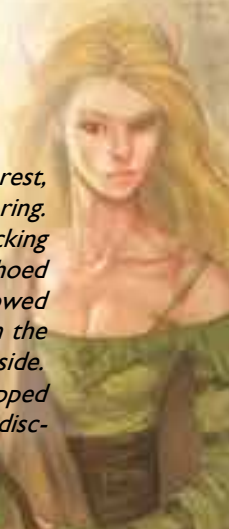
Property (Bracelet): You can climb any surface allowing a DC. Additionally, if you roll a natural 1 on any damage die, re-roll

2 Total Amethyst relics: You do not suffer any attack penalties when wielding weapons.

4 Total Amethyst relics: If you roll a natural 1 or 2 on any damage die, re-roll.

8 Total Amethyst relics: The enhancement bonus of any weapon you wield with the same hand as the bracelet increases by +1 (max +4).

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Several hours later, just outside the forest, Aiden heard the whining of a failed bearing. The vehicle surged then decelerated, bucking the passengers inside. A small pop echoed from the cockpit above. Clear English curses followed and the vehicle stopped. Hairless jumped down from the upper hatch and opened the lower door from the outside. "What's the problem?" Aiden asked. Hairless snapped open a hand-sized plastic container and pulled out a disc-

shaped piece of plastic. It was red around the edge and white in the center. He placed the disc close to one of the passengers, but nothing changed, then to another with the same result. When the innocuous plastic approached Aiden, the red expanded to fill the disc. Hairless brought the sensor down and seized Aiden's collar roughly.

After being tossed to the dirt, Aiden shouted, "What's the matter with you?!"

"Son of a bitch," Hairless snapped. He grabbed Aiden's bag and dropped it abruptly on the dry crimson soil. "You book my ride and don't bother telling me you're magic?"

"I'm not!" Aiden glanced at the other passengers. They stared back at him, confused, angry, and scared.

"That ident card even yours?" Hairless snapped as he took a step to the fallen boy.

"You can't forge those!"

"Where is it then? What you got on ya?" Aiden sat there, unable or unwilling to answer. Hairless kicked Aiden's shin. "Where is it?" Aiden fumbled in his pack and drew out his spellbook. He might have yet to turn, but the words and Chen's spark hidden inside were still enchanted. "You got to be kidding. You want to be a wizard?"

"Yes," Aiden muttered almost to a whisper.

"From a bastion?"

"Yes," Aiden answered more resolute as he got back to his feet. "What's wrong with that?"

"The hell's your problem?"

"I'm not a radiant. I haven't turned."

"Regardless, you're walking now. Back or forward, your choice. Forward's safer."

Aiden looked to a barren gravel field, the bushes and the scattering of short trees. "This isn't Antikari."

"We're at the border. Safe out of Cyon."

Aiden's eyes wandered around at the expanse. It was nearly a desert. Echa had a tendency to glorify extremes. Woods to wasteland, plains to peaks, with hardly a bush or hill to mark the transition. Aiden could see a dark patch of forest at the edge of the horizon. "There's nobody here."

"Don't care," Hairless replied as he closed the lower door and began scaling up the ladder to the upper hatch. "Soil my machine with what you got. Should've taken a wagon."

"I didn't think it would break down. Honestly. I thought these were insulated?"

"Only from the outside. You could blow the whole works with a spell if you were stupid enough." Hairless opened the hatch and sat in the copilot's chair. He stuck his head out. "No need to be too scared. Boggs rarely migrate this far from cover. Just keep your eyes open for puggs."

"Puggs?" Rodents of the fae tree, a wingless locust swarm, a growing infestation that plagued the land. If found alone or in small numbers, puggs were no better than rabid dogs, dogs with fingers to hold any weapons they found. Aiden had read stories.

"Oh, don't worry," Hairless replies. "A swift kick usually kills one. You've a gun or a blade?"

"Blade," Aiden answered. It wasn't much. Minx made

him carry one. It wasn't more than a dagger; it was off balance, not very sharp, and not worth enough to be stolen. Aiden had desired one of the untarnished swords from Chen's collection. Brandishing it confidently against an opponent was effective if it was held right. He never really held it right.

"Know how to use it?"

"Not really," Aiden mumbled.

"Well...neither do they." Hairless went to close the door.

"Which way!" Aiden shouted.

Hairless poked his head out and pointed. "The road, eight hours. Make good progress, you'll beat nightfall." Aiden's head followed the man's point to a river of mismatched rocks that wound under a skeletal canopy of leafless trees.

"That's a road?"

"You expecting golden bricks? Just stick close to the path and pray it doesn't end." Hairless tapped his throttle and the engine belched. "At least this way, we don't have to detour. You were the only one going to Antikari."

"Glad I could help," Aiden muttered low enough to not be heard. Hairless closed the hatch and the vehicle lurched forward without giving its passengers time to prepare. The scrambler swiveled past Aiden, picking up speed after it passed, leaving a small cloud of dust in its wake.

* * *

It wasn't much of a road, but someone once strewn these rocks here with a purpose. The trees and bushes were pulled aside creating a path wide enough to accommodate a wagon. It was not an often used road.

Aiden kept his walk brisk. He didn't pass any travelers or found any evidence that there ever had been any for a hundred years. He couldn't see Angel.

Aiden wasn't sure why he had noticed the rock. It was a small round stone not unlike a million others on the path. It was smooth and grey with specks of black. It would offer a couple skips if tossed skillfully across a lake. It stood straight on a point against an ocean of flat brothers. Aiden reached down and picked it up. The bottom wasn't flat. He rolled his thumb across its surface and wondered how it found itself standing and how it could remain that way all this time. Was it chance or was it magic? Aiden placed the rock back. It immediately fell over. He tried again, but failed. Aiden finally kicked the stone casually off the path before continuing down the road.

* * *

Aiden was not on the Continental Cross--the moderately traveled highway that bisected Canam which he had read about. In order to save time, the scrambler crew had gone northeast and made Aiden walk south. Aiden wondered if it truly was eight hours or eight days at his pace.

Night fell with no Antikari. Aiden hoped to find gas-fed fires atop of posts and the revelry of rowdy humans

behind tavern walls. When he entered the forest the road began to narrow. The light from Attricana beamed down from a cloudless night. Aiden could almost read by it. It looked as any star. It warranted worship as he imagined the constellations did when people could still make most of them out. Now this single brightness reigned orphaned in the night. It was not like the other stars. This star required no cresting backbone over the darkness to stay up. Aiden walked but every step was predicated by the dread of breaking a twig and beckoning predators. The canopy above was thickening, dimming the light as Aiden braved deeper.

The lake Aiden approached was almost inviting. He stared at its stillness, its perfectly smooth skin. It unnerved him. He felt the wind but the water refused to obey. Aiden's mouth crumpled and he swallowed. His canteen had been emptied by dusk. He approached the beach slowly and unscrewed the top off the decanter. The strap fell off his shoulder and dangled precarious close to the mirrored surface. Aiden stopped before breaking the surface. He carefully pulled the canteen back. He was positive he'd read something about this, but he couldn't recall the details. He would rather be thirsty. Aiden backed from the beach and continued alongside, following the fading path. It led him back into the dense growth.

When Aiden began his journey, he had refused any working technology. No flashlight. The perky and loyal spark that hovered around him tried to settle his nerves by shining as brightly as it could, but even that only reached a few feet. The spark was only an aide in reading and lighting candles. In a pinch, it might be able to light a fire, but that could cost its life and Aiden wasn't prepared to cast it to oblivion just yet. He still had no capacity to make one on his own. Aiden kept his pace slow but committed as Attricana became nearly completely obscured.

The vegetation started to clear, instilling some momentary hope in him that the road would return. Instead, it opened into a small clearing dominated by a jarring and unbecoming metal tree. Vines had begun winding their way through the shell. A few charred segments of titanium sat behind it. Aiden recognized it as only the tail end of some great beast. Beast, Aiden had to get out his fantasy thinking. It was an aircraft, or was rather a portion of one larger than he had ever seen back home.

Aiden's spark knew it was important and buzzed around the silver hull, delighted that it was able to cast its own reflection. The tail had opened a hole in the forest canopy when it fell, breaking apart bushes and branches on impact. Aiden could tell it wasn't an Angel aircraft. There was something too faultless about the hull, perfectly smooth, without an exposed rivet or puckered seam save where the rest of the hull was torn away. The skin was a sword-thin carbon composite, a sandwich weave beyond the likes seen in Angel. A jagged opening offered Aiden cover from the elements.

He let his satchel fall aside and took a moment to eat. He unfurled the foil of an Angel nutrient supplement--500 calories of everything one might need in the wilderness, bound tightly in a pressed package of grains, nuts, and dried fruits. It was genetically engineered to maximize

dietary needs without the pesky drawbacks of weight. It was supposed to be filling. It wasn't.

Still savoring the last few bites, Aiden began pushing through the fragments of debris around the crash. The faintest violet glow concealed in a broken crate caught his eye. As Aiden approached, he fell under the shadow of the steel sentinel, leaving only the purple light upon his face.

His hand rolled through fluttering pieces of snow that felt neither cold nor wet and refused to melt in the warmth of his hand. Sprinkles of the white packing foam fell onto the soil.

The item dropped to his knees; the violet light grew beyond a glint. The spark considered it competition and flew down to illuminate the stone as best it could. Aiden noticed four pearl-colored claws clamped around the outer edges of the unrefined jagged gem inset. The fingers of the lizard curled around back, not to form a hand, but to merge with other fingers. Two golden loops could support a chain if Aiden were inclined to flaunt the jewel from his neck. Such an item was jarring amongst the jagged metal and broken technology.


Aiden stared into the crystal.

He felt it staring back.





CHAPTER NINE: CULTURE



The world of *Amethyst* may be one of fantasy, but it is nevertheless built upon the common knowledge earned throughout human history dealing with building construction, agriculture, medication, and sanitation. Even though anyone with advanced knowledge to better a technological society was allowed entry into bastions, many people outside still possessed the general knowledge developed centuries before nuclear power, computers, and antibiotics. In addition, many on the outside soon progressed on their own, rediscovering advances their protected brothers and sisters embraced years earlier. A few possessing this knowledge used it as currency to earn themselves entry into bastions. Others realized this knowledge, primitive by the standards of advanced cities, begot more power and influence on the outside.

Of course, any technical knowledge past about the point when electricity comes into play is rendered more or less useless by surrounding magic, preventing progress and forcing immigration for those wishing to pursue this path. Still, every bastion and even the free cities have sprawling villages outside their walls of people either trying to get in or pandering to those entering or leaving. Outside, the world of fantasy still shares some striking similarities with the world of the past.

ALIEN SIMILARITY

One of the greatest examples of echalogical influence—the first after the shock of how human-like fae appeared—occurred soon after the first civilized meeting. It had been widely accepted that Angel was the first city to have contact with the echan world, making sense given the age of the bastion. Despite the vagueness of history, there was one known positive initial encounter between the elders of Genai and Ravenar Limshau III when he and his loyal retinue came before the fledgling walls. The human elders were modern and understanding, not obtuse and arrogant about tradition. Ravenar's group was open and thoughtful, despite the language barrier that Ravenar was quick to defeat with his astonishing skill. The Genai hosts opted for vegetarian food, believing it to be the most amicable, and not knowing the damaskans' traditions, presented an assorted selection of cutlery to use. How shocking it must have been when Ravenar Limshau chose the chopsticks without hesitation and handled them with a skill reserved for his mirrors across the table. Many said later the relationship that blossomed between humans and damaskans began in that room. Was he reading their minds? Had he been taught beforehand? No: all damaskans had always used them, as did chaparrans (though theirs were always formed out of living wood), while narros and tenenbri had always used utensils similar to those of the ancient Greeks. In the same way, the narros culture had always borne a surprising resemblance to that of the human civilizations of old Asia, and the more agrarian gimfen culture to the agricultural societies of the old British Isles. Even the cleverest scholars were at a loss to explain such similarity between peoples separated by millions of years.

ECHALOGICAL INFLUENCE & CORPUS CONTINUITY

Neither the fae nor dragons questioned their origins or the purpose of life. If *Amethyst* knew, as many believed he did, he never shared such knowledge, lest he wish someone to share his withdrawn disposition. Even after Mengus arrived, the world and how it worked made perfect sense. For better or worse, they knew enough of the universe

to be complacent, something an evolved species like man would never settle with.

The very appearance of man confused many fae upon their return. They discovered that without magic, suppressed rules of nature resumed their original function: species adapt to their environment and do so much slower and less drastically than before. Not only that, but this intelligent new creature evolved from a primitive form – a social animal with bestial ways. Fae could not understand how intelligence could *arise* through evolution: their experience of the process was as a spontaneous degradation rather than a steady improvement. Added to that, these creatures looked nearly identical to the fae on the outside, and layered throughout their history, this species had generated a vast literary canon professing the existence of fabled creatures as such that roamed the world in a time when their own ancestors had been nothing but tiny shrew-like creatures. Mankind encountered their own mystery, barely surviving the holocaust of the Second Hammer only to discover a sudden population appearing literally from nowhere. Not only that, but they coincidentally resembled creatures from fiction and legends dating back thousands of years.

Both sides suddenly faced the prospect of reexamining their belief system. Echalogians appeared offering answers and using ancient literature and modern observations as proof. Two new terms entered the lexicon in an attempt to appease the masses looking for an explanation: Corpus Continuity and Echalogical Influence. Corpus Continuity is an overtly religious perspective, based on the assumption that God created mankind in his own image; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the fae were a previous creation in the same image. As this theological theory runs into a slight difficulty when considering that dragons were the first intelligent life form on Earth and look nothing like humanity, others prefer the theory of echalogical influence without recourse to an intelligent creator. This theory assumes that the influence of the Terros age was encoded somehow, magically or otherwise, in the genetic memory of the natural species existing at that time: humans being the only evolved race to reach sentience were the only ones to unlock that ancient potential. In essence, had lizards or insects become the dominant species of Earth instead of primate mammals, they would still have ultimately evolved to resemble fae and carried that ancient legacy into their mythology. Echalogians often point to spawn races like the kodiaks developing hominid traits such as upright carriage and opposable thumbs as proof of this theory.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The one attribute of man that fae find most surprising involves his capacity of adaptation beyond simple evolution. Fae adapt their forms to their surroundings spontaneously, their children assuming a completely new genotype according to the needs of their environment. Place them in darkness and they go blind, learn-

ing to see through sound and vibrations. Place them in water and they will grow gills and fins. Their language and their attitudes alter, and soon they even refer to themselves as a new species within a generation. Man, conversely, prefers to adapt the landscape to suit his needs. Place him in darkness, and he will make a light. Place him in water and he will build a boat. Humanity is hardly bothered by the breakdown of the processes of evolution, since human ingenuity has the power to trump even natural selection. Furthermore, Man remains Man despite creating a new culture. Language, clothing, diet, architecture, cultural attitudes all may change, yet they are the same people. Two human nations a distance apart with no means of communication will inevitably create completely different cultures. Yet despite differences in skin tone and minor variations in body structure, humans are still close to being clones, with less than 1% genetic variation between them.

With fae, cultural variation is the same as species variation: identical fae produce identical societies. Gimfen grind towers dot the world with no communication to share information on their construction, but they are all nearly identical. The narroni language is the same in Fargon as it is in the Finer Fire Pits, and the same as it was spoken in ancient Terros – not so much as a different accent impedes communication. Even Limshau and Damaska, separated by five hundred years and an ocean and showing the most marked cultural division within a single fae species, have similar beliefs and attitudes. Conversely, the human nations of Kannos and Abidan are separated by only a few hundred miles but have entirely distinct accents and cultural practices. The bastions of Angel and York both speak English, but with vastly different vocabularies drawn from different outside influences, and neither of them much resembles the language as spoken before the Second Hammer.

As the speech changed, so did values and motivations. Abidan became a bright light of peaceful religious equality while Baruch Malkut focused its energy in the exploitation and slavery of a species they considered inferior in the name of the very same god as Abidan. As these new nations developed, most grew tolerant of their neighbors and the various vices and viewpoints of their citizens, considered taboo or inappropriate in the past. Biases over ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and religion were subdued and silent. Controversial topics polarizing communities were no longer a serious concern in comparison to the essential issues of food and security. Given this, Baruch Malkut is considered an anomaly, though a large and dangerous one. Some fae and humans accuse mankind of only accepting his differences in lieu of finding new people to hate.

LANGUAGES

Many languages died following Attricana's opening. Others faded within a few generations while a few merged to create new variations. Before the gates, hundreds of languages dotted the globe: now, only a





handful remain. Surviving vernacular soon divided into regional slangs and patois, eventually becoming recognized languages themselves with distinct lexicons, syntaxes, and phonetic pronunciations. English surfaced as the only surviving dominant language in Canam, though divided into dozens of regional dialects, coopting vocabulary from upward of a hundred different languages, from the old Latin languages to the tongues of Asiatic immigrants fleeing the spread of Kakodomania, to the few surviving pockets of native tribal speech.

While each fae species has its own distinctive accent if not entirely separate language, fae tongues sound similar to one another, though different enough that a speaker could not fake one if fluent in another. Narros and pagus tongues sound more jagged and sharp, while other fae races sound more fluid and poetic. Even though sounding similar to their languages, humans have found learning any fae tongue extremely difficult.

Language: This is the language name as translated into English.

Script Type: This is the system of writing the script uses. There are six variations:

Abjad – Very similar to Alphabetic, Abjad uses symbols representing consonants with little to no vowel use. This system includes some of the oldest languages still being spoken today.

Abugida – This system is similar to Alphabetic and Abjad in that it uses consonants, but it combines vowels with its consonants rather than having separate vowels.

Alphabetic – The root for many languages, this uses simple symbols representing individual consonants and

vowels. This often creates a smaller spectrum of letters but added complexity may occur with a complicated vocabulary.

Featural – This is a strictly phonetic-based writing system often employing syllabic blocks. This language is not often seen but is easier to learn than most others.

Logographic – Symbols represent words and phonemes (though mostly the latter). These scripts can be extremely complex as the symbols can be intricate.

Pictographic – Symbols represent specific titles, vague concepts, or ideas. This is not considered a strong written language and is nearly impossible to translate without reference. These symbols have been known to be very extravagant.

Syllabic – Symbols represent syllables of words rather than whole words or consonants. This system can be nearly as complicated as pictographic or logographic but can convey a spoken language better.

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We like linguistics. The information provided on languages in this chapter is probably far more than will ever be necessary in any game - and that's AFTER a whole bunch of additional fluff was removed. Use or ignore as you see fit, although to maintain flavor you should at least make it harder for English-speakers from the west coast to understand those from the east coast, and vice versa.



LANGUAGE	SCRIPT TYPE	SCRIPT NAME	ECHAN
Argose	Pictographic	Argose	Yes
Chaparra	Pictographic	Faen	Yes
Damaskan	Logographic	Damaskan	Yes
English	Alphabetic	English	No
Englo-Lingo	Alphabetic	English	No
Ferran	Pictographic	Ferran	Yes
Gutturán	None	None	Yes
Ignotan	Featural	Kakkonin	Yes
Indic	Abjad	Shahmukhi	No
Laudenian	Logographic	Faen	Yes
Narroni	Featural	Narroni	No
Old Fae	Pictographic	Faen	Special
Onespeak	Alphabetic	Terran	No
Paggin	Featural	Kakkonin	Yes
Pleroma	Logographic	Adonnic	Special
Romanic	Alphabetic	Romanic	No
Saeqaar	Logographic	Adonnic	Special
Semitic	Abjad	Aramaic	No
Sinitic	Logographic	Kanja	No
Slavic	Alphabetic	Cyrillic	No
Tenenbra	Logographic	Tenenbra	Yes

LANGUAGE DESCRIPTIONS

Argose: Argose is the primitive language of the kodiaks. Argose consists of growls and mumbles barely distinguishable to the untrained ear from the random noises of an unintelligent animal. The specific patterns are hidden deep in the inflections of those growls, a system few outside of the attuned ears of the kodiaks could even pick up, and which no other species can pronounce due to not having the right shape of vocal cords.



It sounds like Chewbacca (literally - those howls and growls were mostly sampled from a bear).

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Chaparra: The chaparrans refused to alter their language from their roots and have been obtuse to adapt given the exposure from other cultures. Chaparrans believe their tongue is the closest to the original old language, Faena. Later chaparran branch species have an even more complicated version of this vernacular. Chaparran written form, an elegant and beautiful style known as Faen, has never been adapted or altered. It is also nearly impossible to translate unless one is chaparran. Chaparra is syllable-timed, making the speech sound like lasting poem of perfect rhythm though, unlike Laudenian, it is filled with hard alveolar and glottal sounds. The written form of chaparra and laudenian are nearly identical.

Damaskan: The language used by the fae of Damaska and Limshau, as well as all gimfen, is the most widely known non-human tongue in the world. More humans speak Damaskan than any other fae language. It is substantially easier to learn than

Chaparra or Laudenian, though still presenting some complications, but is far easier to learn through exposure than any other fae tongue. The damaskan language is both compact and fusional, able to express quite complicated concepts in a short span of syllables, akin to old Finno-Ugaritic languages. Being a stress-timed language, the vocalization sounds similar to Sinitic: those fluent with the Asian tongue often find picking up Damaskan easier than English. Modern Damaskan has adapted in the last few centuries, amalgamating elements from Narroni and Sinitic into its syntax and vocabulary. Damaskan is very fluid language with soft sounds and few hard stops.

English: English is not really English, but a mixture of older English with fragments of French, German, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Punjabi, with a smattering of Salishan, Pueblo, Cree, or Algonquian thrown in (depending on the region). The Angel dialect of the language is the lingua franca of the continent, by dint of their early association with Limshau, and is one of the most frequently learned human languages by non-humans. This language is more heavily influenced by Sinitic and Spanish, to the point that nearly half the classical English vocabulary has been replaced by Asian or Latin equivalents.



An element in the original game from 2001 had Common as an amalgamation of several languages similar to Cyberpunk's Cityspeak—and not the English we would normally hear. This was hidden from my group until I revealed a strange “new” language which was actually “True English”, dating back to before the time of magic. This made no linguistic sense so I threw out the idea and changed Common to English. I still imagine English deviating somewhat from what we hear today.

Englo-Lingo: This bizarre patois popped up around the eastern bastion of York and is thought to have emerged from the bastion of Mann, where it is the national language. Englo-Lingo filters out most of the Sinitic donations that found themselves in modern English and added older French and German slang to create a bizarre phonology that shifts through three different Germanic languages every sentence. Dozens of villages on the east coast insist upon it and York accepts it as their second official language, being different enough from common English to make the bastion effectively bilingual.



Despite the fact that I'm reasonably fluent in German but only know cereal-box French, I always put a lot more French into Englo-Lingo than either German or Dutch, because Quebec.

Ferran: A simplistic version of Damaskan, Ferran is a jagged, rough tongue used by the lower branches from the damaskans like puggs, boggs, and skeggs. It differs slightly with every village, making a proper translation from any source difficult.

Gutturán: Even harder to learn is the sharp dialect of the narros branch species (like chiggoths and oggraks). Since they have no real culture and are extremely phobic of society, their language is chaotic and hard to define. Gutturán as a term is a misnomer since there has never been a consensus of the phonology to define it as a language. It is thought that every group has personalized the language intentionally to prevent even neighbors from relating to them easily.

Ignotan: The native language of all denizens of Kakodomania and servants of Mengus, Ignotan is a simple sounding language easy to pick up but hard to master. Its written form is perfection itself. Completely phonetic, one could learn the basics of its speech in a day. The language is complicated but every phoneme makes intuitive sense. Like all creations of syntropy, it is nearly mechanical in its application, and thus makes for lousy poetry. All shemjaza, typhox dragons, and most pagus speak Ignotan.

Indic: This is an amalgamation of old human languages Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu. It is not often spoken in Canam but still pops up from time to time.

Laudenian: There is a seemingly never-ending debate between the chaparrans and laudenians about which species is closer to the original fae. The laudenian language is slightly more askew from its roots, an evolution of the original that would progress into Damaskan later. Their written form, however, is closer to the chaparran system. The language flows beautifully and is extremely poetic and fluid with a strong base in syllable-stress. Only laudenians speak laudenian; they are unwilling to teach it to anyone else, and find the mispronunciations of the few self-taught speakers highly distasteful.

Narroni: The narroni tongue is often confusing to linguists (though surprisingly easy to learn), its grammar being superficially similar to certain old Asian languages but with a sound system like a roughly equal mix of pre-Hammer Gaelic, Russian, and Turkish, despite being constructed out of wholecloth. The original narros' speech was a local patois of Laudenian, but as time went on, they found that the language was completely impractical for their present needs. Modern Narroni was constructed in committee and implemented instantly after it was cleared. As a constructed language, it is efficient and elegant in its simplicity, and is neither hard to learn nor hard to master. It is the simplest echan language to use and thus can be picked up easily by even techans.

Old Fae: Further chaparran branches continued to degrade the syntax of their parent tongue until finally, the lower species like faeries, sylphids, and dojenn began speaking in a bizarre language of songs and whispers even the chaparrans couldn't understand.

Along with the holy language of dragons, Old Fae is impossible to learn by most mortals.

Onespeak: Similar to Narroni, Onespeak is a partially manufactured language devised by Baruch Malkut and imposed on the population. Using a regularized form of classical English as its structure, it borrows heavily from Spanish and Portuguese, and contains thousands of words with no known etymology. This language was devised to unite mankind but it ended up further isolating the kingdom from the rest of the world. It is the only official language of Baruch Malkut, and although the upper classes are usually perfectly conversant in Englo-Lingo, use of any language other than Onespeak by the general populace is discouraged.



Any bits of Onespeak in the flavor text throughout the book are meant to be read in a thick (but very clipped and precise) Jamaican accent. It really should be closer to Brazilian, but more people in North America know what a Jamaican accent sounds like.

Paggin: This language formed secretly among the pagus that lived out of control of the shemjaza. Pagus in Kakodomania speak Ignotan only. Those in Apocrypha and Ažhi Dahaka speak only Paggin unless a shemjaza strolls into their village: any pagus that speaks paggin to a shemjaza is instantly executed (of course, any pagus who speaks to a shemjaza unbidden runs the risk anyway). Rebellious pagus consider paggin the first mark of an independent pagus culture.

Pleroma: The language of the dragons, called Adonnaisis in all fae languages but having no name in its own, is considered the very first language spoken by any intelligent creature on the planet. The language and its written form are intrinsically linked with Attricana and it is thought that the dragon god Amethyst created the world of magic by speaking the correct words. This is the language all spellcasters use when casting magic but even they cannot carry a conversation with it. Only dragons are fluent. The language itself cannot be pronounced by any creature that doesn't have a prehensile tongue and an intrinsically pandimensional understanding of reality, so the intensity of magic with mortals will always be limited.

Romanic: Another language seldom heard in Canam, this merging of French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish is thought to be the lingua-franca of Lauropa and the dominant language of the bastion of Porto.

Semitic: A growing dialect in Canam, this language underwent the fewest changes over the past few centuries. A descendant of Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew, it is a common second language to those in Abidan and its outlining villages. It is often heard in locations of religious importance.

Saeqaar: The mirror of the dragon language, this tongue has the same written form (albeit mirrored) and



a similar pronunciation. It is spoken solely by typhox dragons and shenjaza for the purposes of spellcasting. Its actual name is not known (saeqaar being an Ignotan word), and it is probable that like Pleroma, the name for the language would have to encompass the entire language itself. There is no word for the tongue in any fae language and they refuse to create one.

Sinitic: A fast growing language in Canam, Sinitic came into being with the influx of various Asian refugees that appeared on the continent's west coast seeking an escape from the fallout of the Hammer and the growing power of Kakodomania. There, they combined with the already large Asian-derived population gathering in the fledgling city of Angel, and out of necessity their cultures and languages began to merge. Modern Sinitic uses the more regular grammar of old Korean and Japanese, with a roughly equal mixture of vocabulary from Mandarin and Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Thai and Vietnamese. Most of the tonal features of the original languages have been abandoned, though a few remain. Written Sinitic uses a refinement of the old Japanese kanji and hiragana scripts called kanja, but can be written equally clearly in English orthography. It is the common second language in Angel and a common tongue for hundreds of miles around, including Limshau, where it was a popular choice among damaskans when first learning a human language, and Fargon (due to the inexplicable cultural similarities between old Asia and the narros).



I like to make jokes about how nobody can read katakana anymore except the Limshau librarians responsible for preserving and cataloguing old doujinshi manga.

Slavic: An extremely rare language in Canam, Slavic amalgamates Belorussian, Bulgarian, Czech, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatia, Slovak, and Ukrainian. There is no village in Canam that uses it exclusively. It is thought to emerge from several echan and techan nations in the similarly named continent of Slav, including the bastion of Krevet.

Tenenbra: The tenenbri (a lesser seen fae in Canam) are the sole speakers of this tongue, which stands clearly as the most bizarre of any fae language. Tenenbra is an agglutinative language that compounds flowing vowels, sibilants and fricatives with sudden and sometimes harsh dental and labial stops, interspersed with whistles, clicks, and chirps. This strange phonetic characteristic came from their voices' capacity to double as echo-location devices. Most words are three or more syllables long, but may encompass concepts that English would require four or five words to express. The phonology also deals with the stress level of voice, implying different meaning depending on the volume of the words. Other than Old Fae, Tenenbra is the hardest for any outsider to learn.

RELIGION

A common belief in many religions is that the Almighty, whatever form it may take, wrote the rules of the universe everyone must follow. Some say the only way to hear the voice of the divine is beyond the grave. Some also say the Almighty exists in the flotsam that keeps the universe from flying apart. Others think it lives within Attricana, and/or it may be the realm itself. Some others say it is a "they", as hundreds if not thousands of spirits or gods watch us from an identical world on the other side.

There is no right.

Catastrophes are good for religion, and the wave of enchantment sweeping away the old world was no exception. Religion offers hope and order in a world seemingly on the brink of destruction. It promises a plan stemmed from intelligence – that everything happens for a reason. As Earth falls more towards the realms of magic and enchantment, many have flocked to religion to answer their questions. In this age, miracles occur daily, and worshippers find proof of god everywhere. After more than 6 billion people died following the Second Hammer and subsequent fallout, the religions that survived found little reason to fight over conviction, and in any case the old holy lands were gone or made inaccessible, their idols and icons shattered into dust. Many smaller faiths died along with those who had once believed in them. When Attricana opened, newer beliefs arrived with newer populations. A few humans embraced these faiths while some fae embraced human ideology.

Given their immense power, it is no surprise that dragons are the focus of many faiths, either as gods themselves or as angels of a god. Those who still profess belief in a less tangible supreme power, though, still have no proofs one way or the other. God or gods remain as quiet and as elusive as before.

Atheism is surprisingly rare, even among bastion populations (although bastions have a higher rate of them). Agnosticism is far more common. Almost 60% of all humans in the world, and a clear majority of the bastion-born, don't subscribe to any specific faith though almost all subscribe to some form of spirituality.



We have occasionally been accused of allowing our skepticism to show too much in our treatment of religion, or using the outsider's perspective of the dogma to influence our depiction of it. We've tried to keep this kind of intrusion to a minimum, but if we've slipped up somewhere and accidentally caused offense, we apologize in advance. It is merely important to us that there not be any clear proof of one faith over another, that the possibility of divinity remains ambiguous, and that religious tolerance is more common than violent anathematizing.

FAITH EVOLVED

Many religions of man survived, though none were unchanged. Most offshoots of major religions either merged or vanished, leaving only a handful. The modern dogma of these faiths rarely resemble their forebears in many or even most particulars, even to adopting certain traditions and conventions of their erstwhile competitors. Although many people embraced religion as an explanation of recent events, an almost equal number abandoned their faith, claiming the destruction of the world was proof of God's nonexistence. This led several splinter religions to claim God created this cataclysm to punish Man, or even (as with the faith endorsed by Baruch Malkut) to cleanse the Earth of the undeserving and bring forth the true Kingdom of Heaven for the survivors. Apocalyptic cults snapped up fanatical followers in the first few years, believing Judgment Day had occurred. As the centuries passed, such zealotry dwindled, leaving only a few begging for attention among the moral majority. Even fundamentalist sects of major religions rarely lasted long, with the sole exception being the bitterly intolerant Abrahamic offshoot endorsed by Baruch Malkut.

The only locations where the faiths of old have remained nearly unchanged are in bastions, which kept their faith as stable as possible (those that still followed it, that is). They still adapted to their environment, some in positive ways and some not so positive. Outside, in the open enchanted, faiths adjusted quicker and more severely. The Christian-based communities took the longest to accept the new world, as the Christian doctrine had always held that Man was meant to rule over all other beings of Earth. Islam, with its emphasis on submission to the divine and its ready acceptance of mala'ika and djinn as articles of faith, adapted much faster and more cultures rooted in that faith adapted to the new age than any other. Nearly all secular, agnostic, atheistic, and spiritual (but not religious) societies accepted the new world with few hurdles.

ECHAN FAITHS

Amethyst: Amethyst, the dragon god of the Terros age, fell to dust when the demon armor, Gebermach, plunged the Sword of Dogurasu into the dragon's heart. Many believe his spirit lives in the Gate, waiting for the time to return. In many ways, faith in Amethyst or Attricana is interchangeable, but subtle differences appear in the symbols. Amethyst represents all things good. He believes in creation and life. He frowns on destruction and those who wish to control others. In Canam sits an ancient temple as old as the Second Hammer. Its exact location has been lost to all but a select few. Mentioned in the Gospel of Greka, the temple stands atop a mountain, surrounded by a fortress of stone. Only a few know of the significance of this temple but refer to it as the Temple of Amethyst. Those following the faith hope to eventually locate it.

Every decade or so, a crusade begins with as few as five or as many as five thousand to search the continent for this fabled temple. With little to work on, no crusade has ever succeeded.

The symbol of Amethyst is a chunk of Amethyst rock. To pray to Amethyst, worshipers place the stone to their forehead and repeat a non-magical Pleroma chant four times in different directions. Many fae races worship Amethyst. Amethyst himself never wrote any scripture or preached any gospel. He resented the deification of him or his power, though not of the dragons as a whole – a race he always tasked with shepherding all the other souls of the world. One record quoted from Amethyst, "If there is a God, then he is truly infinite, and I am as far from his eternal greatness as any other."

Attricana: Like Amethyst, followers of Attricana believe in creation and despise evil in all forms. Unlike other religions, faith in Attricana does not presume a divine intelligence. Believing in Attricana translates to believing in a creation beyond science but not necessarily with a conscious design. Attricana followers consider their faith more a study of creation, the closest thing to a science echans have. Other faiths accuse followers of Attricana of being infidels, disbelievers finding a shortcut around faith to explain the new world. Worshipping Attricana proves that faith in an intelligent divinity is not required to rationalize magic. Some right-wing religious groups have sworn to crucify followers of Attricana for betraying God's gifts. Across the ocean, an entire culture has developed with a population of Attricana-endorsing theists. When one who follows Attricana gains wisdom or power, he or she believes it derives from an internal source and not from a divine creator. Worshipping would be an incorrect word to even describe it. The Attricana symbol is an amulet of the white star itself. Followers do not exactly pray, but stare at the gate in the morning, studying it, and gaining wisdom from internal meditation. Being of no intelligence, Attricana is simply neutral.

Dragons: Many people worship dragons, the most powerful creatures on the planet. They are immortal, predating all others by millions of years. Most dragons refuse such responsibility, frowning on such beliefs. Others accept and respect such faith but remain humble to their mortal origins. A few embraced the belief and maintain active roles in the lives of their worshippers. Evil dragons manipulate this belief to create hordes of followers to do their bidding. All dragon symbols resemble the dragon specifically being worshipped. The appropriate method of worship varies from dragon to dragon. Dragons are worshipped across the world.

Berufu: Many elves still follow their original faith in the creator of all things, Berufu – the mother of all fae. They believe Berufu lives in the shadow realm where the universe was formed. Attricana to them is a source of power, but not the home of God. According to legend, Berufu released the fae to hundreds of worlds across the universe through the gates. This view holds that shemjaza are alien fae brought into the world from



the black gate, and the Berufu legend explains that both tap into the same resource. Amethyst and Mengus are not gods to them and there is no dark opposite of Berufu in the faith. The concept of hell is a purely human invention.

Another variation claims Berufu was willed into existence by the god of all matter, Oaken, to be his mate. Together, they would create a species bound of both their strengths to populate the universe. The two gods formed the original fae, seeding billions if not trillions of fae in Berufu's womb, only letting a fraction upon the worlds they chose. This womb is a spiritual chamber in the ethereal realm known as Otsharus (which may be the etchological root of the Hebrew word, Otzar). The number of fae souls released from Otsharus is fixed and when it is emptied, the species will no longer expand into new worlds. Nothing is listed in the books on Berufu about mankind except one controversial excerpt that claimed every human born steals a soul from Otsharus and the reason for the fae de-evolution is due to the dwindling souls in the chamber. Only fanatical laudenian and tenenbri priests hold this belief. Shemjaza also use fae souls, another reason why their destruction is paramount with followers of Berufu.

The sacred symbol of Berufu is a string of white pearls wrapped around one's arm. Praying involves a wide variety of chants in one's native tongue while rubbing the pearls between open palms. This procedure takes as much as an hour every morning. Every fae descendant culture makes her look like themselves, but all depictions show Berufu graceful and tall for the worshipper's species.

Ixindar: Opposite of Attricana, Ixindar promotes an ordered, uniform existence, everything under complete control. To believe in Ixindar means to encourage a state where the universe no longer changes. Worshipers obsess about control. They don't preach their faith; they enforce it. Their homes are perfectly organized. Though they may not wish to create a world devoid of life, they do believe a perfect society involves perfect order and absolute discipline without the pesky distractions of imagination, emotions, or independent thought.

Like Attricana, Ixindar possesses no intelligence, only an ideal. Worshipping Ixindar, like Attricana, may be incorrect wording. There is no deity, more the disciplined study of the phenomenon. Some of the most loyal followers of Ixindar are scientists, thinking Ixindar possesses a uniform, constant, and stable power source to help retake the planet for techa.

The symbol for Ixindar is a simple black pearl, featureless. Being of no intelligence, Ixindar is simply evil.

Mecha / Machine God: Only the gimfen worship Mecha or Machine God. Gimfen subscribe to the idea that the knowledge of technology is passed down by a powerful deity beyond the gate and only to a precious few. Only by worshipping the Machine God can technology be safely used alongside magic. Gimfen

believe that most bastions fight against the word of Mecha and could solve all their problems with simple belief in their almighty.

Gimfen hold that Mecha was the firstborn of Berufu and Oaken and became so powerful that it began questioning the form of the universe. The parents forbade their child from giving precious knowledge to the fae, but it did so anyway. In response, Berufu took away Mecha's true name and Oaken robbed it of its gender. Mecha would only be a half-god. Though some devout followers have become eunuchs as part of their devotion, this is not widely endorsed. Mecha's symbols are tools, any tools. Everything the mechanic uses is laid out in the morning and the devout thanks the machine god for the tools and the knowledge, picking up every single item and expressing gratitude for its existence. For gimfen, known to have many tools, this sometimes takes half the morning before any work is done. Churches in gimfen communities are shops where followers can discuss their god and faith and pick up a few items at a divine discount.

Mengus: This spirit still exists beyond the black gate. Like Amethyst and Attricana, Mengus and the black gate of Ixindar are virtually interchangeable. Worshipers of Mengus believe in an overall plan for the world: not merely to reduce the universe to an unchanging state, but one ordered by a single infinite intelligence. Those who worship hope to share in her power, to combine with a greater intelligence and be one with a god. The Mengus symbol is a collection of tentacles curling around each other. Mengus is the sole deity of all shemjaza and typhox dragons as well as any pagus under their control.

Oaken: Narros elevate Oaken above all other deities, and though they acknowledge that Berufu has a place in their mythology, it is always a subordinate position. Oaken's myth claimed he arrived into this galaxy by breaking off a monstrous intelligence billions of years ago. This intelligence had no name but scattered to form all the planets of the universe magic would eventually appear on. The greatest segment drifted into the loose particles around the Sun before the planets were formed and the matter that drifted to Oaken formed the Earth. In this regard, Oaken is not one god, but hundreds, thousands, or even millions scattered across the cosmos. Some speculate Oaken is a hive mind, a combined gestalt of all the fragments. Either one or all of them together created Berufu (a singular entity no matter which version of the dogma) and decided to spawn the populations of the universe. Berufu however, wanted fae to dominate the worlds and Oaken wanted dragons. Eventually, Berufu and Oaken created the Otsharus and deposited the fae across the many worlds, while Oaken snuck dragons onto a few of them as a pet project. Oaken's mythos does not include Mecha except for one or two stories, all written by Mecha disciples.

Though technically part of the same religion, the dogma of the Oaken and Berufu faiths differ drastically and are full of inconsistencies. Both make huge



assumptions on other fae species outside of the Earth with no evidence of their existence. Oaken dogma includes Otsharus but claims the souls from this great chamber exit via the black or white gates and thus both fae, pagus, and demons all use them. Man is innocent in this and receive their souls from another power altogether.

Narros and tenenbri (the highest ratio of believers) believe that Oaken tests the fae on his soil. If they don't prove worthy, they eventually devolve to dust. If all the fae eventually die, Oaken will verify to Berufu that dragons were the correct choice (oddly enough, no dragon professes faith or even curiosity in Oaken). The narros mythology contends that Oaken never agreed on the final form of the fae and since Berufu disliked dragons, Oaken eventually created the narros as his favorite children. Because Oaken lives underground, he forbids digging too deep into his realm. Narros believe the tenenbri dug too deep and were cursed; some tenenbri actually agree with this judgment and pray to Oaken for forgiveness, while others claim that their defiance of divine law was another test that proved their superiority.

Oaken loves picks and hammers and his symbol is each of them crossing against an unrefined rock. To pray involves kissing the soil and chanting straight into the ground, rising back up with dirt on one's lips.

Yok-Ani: Unlike most other dragons, yok-ani accepted and respect the faith granted them. They trust in nothing but balance. The majority believe in endorsing neither good nor evil; or rather, that the mere concepts of 'good' and 'evil' represent a fundamental misunderstanding of the truth of the universe. Despite this belief, yok-ani are kind and benevolent. A few enforce pure neutrality as the only belief, but most preach that their followers must be as a leaf on the river of life, flowing where it takes them without fighting the current. Yok-ani also despise unnecessary violence and believe drawing the sword to be the final solution. Most devotees seldom even see a yok-ani dragon. Most of them live across the planet in the mountains of Kuraukou; one, the dragon Genai, can be found in the massive temple at the center of the town which bears his name in the midst of the bastion of Angel. This enormous pagoda marks the focus of the faith for the entire continent, but few can brave the bastion walls to reach it, and fewer still ever receive an audience with the dragon himself.

Disciples must be able to speak Sinitic, considered by the yok-ani to be the most poetic and philosophical of human languages. The yok-ani symbol is the dragon shape, snaking around a staff or sword hilt. Praying to yok-ani involves striking the sword or staff into the ground and singing, in Sinitic, a poem declaring one's faith.

HUMAN FAITHS

It should be noted that the following pages are extremely brief summaries of extremely complex

religions and belief systems. If you choose a real faith, you should research the details of the religion and make sure you understand the demands put forth. Don't insult half the world by not doing your own research.

Chinese Folk Religion: Also known as Chinese Traditional Religion, this encompasses a vast amount of practices including Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. It involves the worship of animals, deities, the sun, the moon, and the stars (although the latter has depressed somewhat in recent centuries). This also includes the worship of legends, ancestors, gods, goddesses, and demigods. In all, there are hundreds of different figures for followers to worship. These include the Jade Emperor, Cai Shen, Tu Di Gong, Hu Yi and Zau Shen. The concept states that a mirror of Earth floats beyond Heaven with a social hierarchy in which all these spirits, gods, and legends live in peace and war. In the past, they often clashed over control of what once was called China. Most modern worshippers believe this double Earth sits beyond Attricana. One must research a path before choosing the right deity. Today, hundreds of temples dot the landscape, and the religion appears across the globe, but the single largest concentration of followers is found in Genai.

Christianity: Once the most schismatic faith on Earth, the Second Hammer put an end to nearly all sectarianism in Christianity; without the bureaucratic organizations that had supported it in the old world, followers of the Cross reverted to a state similar to that of the earliest days of the Church, with only their sacred writings to guide them instead of popes and patriarchs. Which articles of faith survived the transition are unclear, but as a whole, Christians adhere far more to the notions of tolerance and mercy than in pre-Hammer days. Christianity falls into two major camps on modern Earth: Techan and echan Christians. Echans believe the Second Coming has already occurred and this new world of miracles stands as a result of a new design. The existence of Ixindar places the image of Hell back into public acceptance, and many believe the purpose of all life on the new Earth is to crusade against this evil, to finally free the world of sin forever.

Some fanatics still exist. It is believed Baruch Malkut began initially as a Christian kingdom, though its tenets of faith have deviated so far from the original scripture that the only thing it has in common with mainstream Christianity are some of the names. Thankfully, this is the only real exception as most other Christian kingdoms are well respected with kind and fair rulers (like Abidan). The cross symbolizes everything and its placement dominates worshipper attire. Prayers have seldom changed, and morning mass takes just under an hour with a strict progression of prayers and actions. Christianity is found the world over.

Hinduism: One of the oldest religions of man, Hinduism maintains that the soul lives eternal, undergoing a continuous circle of life, death, and rebirth. The beliefs of Dharma, Samsara, Moksha,



Jnana, Ishvara, and Karma remain unchanged. They hold Brahman as the eternal and all-powerful spirit to which everything stems and that Ishvara is the only way mankind can interpret Brahman. Several denominations of Hinduism place Vishnu or Shiva as the seat of eternal and omnipotent power. No matter the course, the faith encourages virtue and acts of good, believing that will put a soul on the road to enlightenment, and that evil acts lead to darkness.

A soul's status at birth and their life is determined by their karma. Karma is more than just the sum and balance of your good and bad deeds: it is work or action and the results of that work or action. Karma is cause-and-effect on a cosmic scale. It determines what lessons you have to learn in this and other lives and what fortunes will befall you in this and future lives as a result of actions in this and previous lives. Gods and goddesses exist, but according to certain schools of Hindu thought, they are just another form of life, higher than humans but ultimately mortal. They will eventually die (some believe many have died in the intervening millennia). Even after the fall of the Second Hammer, Hinduism remains as much a complex religion as it ever was. Most believers of Hinduism live around the outside of Western and Eastern Slav, but like many faiths, it can be found in smaller numbers everywhere there are humans.

Unlike Islam, which frowns on idolatry, Hinduism showcases several examples, the most common being the Aum, a symbol found throughout the faith. Many others embrace the mandala and even the manji (swastika), any last negative connotations of which were wiped away along with the old world.

Islam: Of all the human faiths, Islam has changed the least. Muslims share six basic beliefs: in the god Allah, in the books sent by Allah, in all the prophets and messengers god sends, in predestination, in angels (or mala'ika), and in the day of qiyama (Judgment Day). Sunni and the Shi'a branches (and many others), like Christian branches, amalgamated into modern Islam. They believe in the Towers of Islam (obviously related to the Five Pillars or Core beliefs of Islam), Shahadah (sole god worship), Salah (five daily prayers), Sawm (fasting during Ramadan), Zakat (giving charity), and finally Hajj (the pilgrimage to Mecca), the final one still mandatory to all Muslims once during their lifetime.

When Attricana reshaped the Earth, much of the eastern Mediterranean coastline sank below the waves, submerging the ancient city of Jerusalem and putting an end to the wars of faith for good. The city of Urtioch (part of the kingdom of Trinitas) sits on the new coastline. Founded by migrating Muslims, the city stands as a shining beacon of religious equality. The trek to Mecca is no longer simple or safe: the Hajj now tests all. No longer safely nestled in city walls, by a miracle of godly proportions, the Kaaba exists atop a mountain simply called Makkah. Dangerous peaks prevent a strong civilized foothold. Every year, tens of thousands attempt the voyage. Since many modern Muslims in Canam no longer know the specific

direction to Mecca, many simply pray facing towards the east.

In modern days, some progressive Muslims have suggested that God may one day bless the world with another prophet. Though Mohammed was the greatest prophet of mankind, this new one would strive to unite all species of Earth under a common shroud of wisdom and guidance. This belief is not popular across the world and no one is sure how such a figure would be greeted.

Muslims are taught to reject idolatry, needing no symbol but their own articles of faith. Muslims are everywhere but many live in Arkonnia and Canam. In Canam, the largest population outside of bastions can be found in the city of Taskin-Kada in Abidan.



I began Amethyst as a non-practicing Catholic and slowly turned to agnosticism and later atheism. I was a highly skeptical individual even as a child, but always was a bit of a dreamer, which is where the fantasy comes from. I realized as Amethyst developed, it became a representation of my own struggles with spirituality. But even before that, while I was still a disciple, I insisted on removing divine proof from the setting. It's such a staple of fantasy that gods are ever present and engaging in the matters of mortals. They create the world, set the dogma, create the monsters, define the quests, and then sit back while everything starts to fall apart. Amethyst repudiates the idea of deus ex machina (ironic, I know), divine involvement, and the concepts of fate, destiny, and prophecy.

Judaism: Related to Islam and Christianity, Judaism, involves the worship of one, all-powerful, all-knowing, omnipotent, and everlasting god who created the universe and continues to influence its development. He created the Tora (or five books of Moses), which dictates the laws and commandments (613 in total) of the Jewish people. Following these rules and worshipping God earns merit, rewarding one in the afterlife. This afterlife exists in the Garden of Eden that many believe sits behind Attricana. What this afterlife looks like has never been defined.

Further, even though there are many rules and principles of faith, no official creed or dogma is recognized as fully binding. The common points are that God exists, is all-powerful, has no physical form, is eternal, and is singular in presence. God gave humanity purity at birth with a free will to choose his or her own path. Mankind may atone for sins through sincere acts of redemption.

Followers of Judaism must commit to prayer three times a day, although specifics differ with interpretation. They still recognize the Shabbat, the

weekly day of rest, as well as all other Jewish holidays. Like all monotheisms, Judaism also operates temples in Trinitas across the ocean. In Canam, those of Jewish faith fight an unfortunate constant stigma. Since Baruch Malkut uses a distorted Yiddish translation of the term “Blessed Kingdom,” some incorrectly accuse the kingdom of the south as being Jewish, when in fact they follow a hideously warped version of Christian doctrine. Thankfully, the fae – the greatest sufferers from Baruch Malkut’s dogmatic excesses – rarely judge humans on the basis of religion.

Sikhism: Sikhs follow the teachings of the Ten Gurus, dating back centuries before the Second Hammer. Over one million worshippers still live today, scattered across the planet. The followers adhere to the thousand page-plus scripture known as the Guru Granth Sahib. Thankfully, this tome, like the Qur’an and Holy Bible, survived through the end of the last world. The book preaches a simple approach to spirituality, a message directly revealed by God (Waheguru), who is singular and all-powerful. All created by God stand equal in all ways, regardless of race, sex, or religion. After the gates opened, many Sikhs accepted the new races without question, being all created by God. A laudenian priest once spoke highly of the Sikhs and their faith, claiming it made more sense than all other human beliefs. All Sikhs defend life in all its forms, especially those of fellow human beings and fae. They also believe in reincarnation. Followers wake before the sunrise and meditate on God’s name. They must live their life in peace, give to those in need, and open their doors to all. Sikhs are encouraged to form communities where everyone is equal, and are prohibited from acquiring possessions based solely on greed, acting illogically, or treating any intelligent species less than they would treat themselves.

Shinto: The “Way of the Gods,” Shinto still survives across the world today, often practiced alongside faith in the yok-ani. A few have even combined the two. Once one of the official religions of Japan, Shinto professes reverence and respect for nature and veneration of important spiritual figures from the mythic past of the adherent’s nation. The religion lacks a specific dogma or a fixed way to act. One does not even need to profess a belief in Shintoism, as in many respects it exists purely as a way to express humanity’s need for ceremony. Shinto believes in family and welcomes anyone. Its only simple commandment insists on a simple life unifying one’s soul with nature. Spirits worshipped in Shinto are called kami. There are kami of various orders of power in all things, be they physical, metaphysical, or conceptual, but the most powerful remains the sun-goddess Amaterasu. Some believers claimed they found a connection between the dogma of fae and Shinto. They allege the Otsharus is the realm of the kami, the spirits of the kami are these unbirthed fae refusing to enter our world, and modern fae are, in fact, kami taking physical form in this world. The largest concentration of Shinto worshippers in the world is found in Genai.

MEDIEVAL TRAPPINGS

While every society is keen to claim its own system of government as right and natural, it cannot be denied that feudalism is one of the most enduring social systems ever contrived. As Attricana opened, the entirety of the planet was unclaimed. Those few flaunting influence over land or people took this opportunity to declare what they found as theirs. Calling themselves lords was an obvious next step. Even most fae, even the truly noble and chivalrous ones, would make such declarations on lands they deemed acceptable to build a nation upon, even if those lands were already populated. Generation passed onto generation, and a landowner would pass their holdings to an heir. Some claimed a lordship by simple right of wealth or military power, while a few arrogantly declared their title bestowed by a higher power. Eventually, the old titles returned. Some houses were led by lords, others by dukes, khans, counts, marquises, landgraves, or barons. A few humans even went as far to declare themselves monarchs of the highest order, kings and queens of divine royalty, defended by knights or royal guards.

Several changes did occur with the new age, influenced by the new landscape and people considering themselves “morally evolved.” The concept of designating any gender or ethnicity as second-class citizens had been expunged by the years of travail, when everyone banded together on equal terms for mere survival. Furthermore, the fledgling aristocracy was of necessity forced to knight local landowners and betroth their children to lesser houses to increase their power. Added to that the fact that anyone could simply claim nobility upon the forming of a town, and the criteria for rulership became much more egalitarian. If the town became a city, the noble would become a ruler of grand stature.

Those human nations not declaring racial hatred to the fae would often embrace or even worship their neighbors as long-lived paragons of all things desirable. Many fae took this idol worship to heart, never having encountered such reverence before. This caused an increase in human-fae half-breeds as fae were often as romantic as the most quixotic humans. Powerful human monarchs sought marriages with ruling members of fae nations, desiring their patronage, their allegiance, and – more importantly – their popularity in keeping their own people loyal. When the positive side effects of human-fae pairing were discovered, many human aristocrats went mad pursuing a noble marriage with a similar classed fae. Alas, fae never bond for reasons other than love and these initial requests were always rejected.

A few nobles would eventually mix their blood with the fae lines, though this occurred more often by circumstance with lower class fae than by arrangement to forge an alliance. Human nobles having a fae spouse or being a half-fae themselves guaranteed respect and loyalty from the people. The public considered their rulers true royalty, for such long-lived sovereigns must





contain stately blood. But to the fae, true royalty could only be bestowed from a higher power, one that could destroy kingdoms with its bellowing breath of fire.

In the history of all the fae and their descendant races, the highest rung of the social ladder was given to those blessed, metaphorically speaking, by a dragon's kiss. A benign dragon would declare the fae of noble heritage, to be one apart from the rest, exhibiting extraordinary charisma and moral fortitude. By such blessing, the dragon would swear to channel wisdom to the members of the family name, even beyond the end of its own life. The royal's family name would be synonymous with that of the dragon. This is not an act done lightly or on impulse: only one or two families in each major species have been so exalted across the world. The laudenians have Elrenar Alkanost; damaskans have Ellenthos Tellurian and Ravenar Limshau; chaparrans have Valentiarankerr, while tenenbri have Sharajaclypse. Despite some claims to the contrary, no narros or gimfen have been so christened.

This has not stopped several fae from declaring themselves king or queen or the land they control a monarchy, citing the righteousness of their conquests as proof of their royalty. No dragon needs to consecrate them as proof of their sovereignty. Furthermore, the blessing is by no means a guarantee of overlordship: even though Sharajaclypse is the only tenenbri gifted with a dragon on her crest, she is only a lord in Vanaka, ruled by Queen Karellancrebet in the capital of Vakai. A few nefarious gimfen and humans have fabricated such symbols upon their crest but dragons take forging their blessing seriously. Only archon dragons ever bestow such titles on others, reserving their endorsements

to those with the charisma and benevolence to become great and wise leaders. Such titles are not given to beggars or shopkeepers, but to those already exhibiting promise, already leading others in virtue and gallantry. Many are already leading nations, but few ever declare themselves royalty. Assuming such a position guarantees no endorsement. Though most of these fae are appointed by word from a dragon's lips, some are thought to actually have dragon blood running through their veins, inherited from bonded love between crossed species generations ago. Such pairings are known to have occurred but are infrequent, only happening when a dragon takes mortal form and falls for its emotions and urges while in that state.

This knowledge was not known to humans and when the new world took shape, many materialistic and selfish leaders with too much power and too many men declared themselves royal only for the purposes of christening their land a kingdom. The most notable exception was King Savarice of Abidan, the only human in Canam to have ever received such endorsement from a dragon's hand. Savarice's blessing by the holy dragon Silver River guaranteed a stature other kingdoms could only dream of. The title did create controversy. Several great fae leaders like Thalagos Gin of Thos Thalagos and Karlis Kronas of Gnimfall expressed resentment for being overlooked and the laudenian archmagos Nacola Falconyr condemned the choice, declaring that the blessing of a human devalued the practice entirely. This view was not felt by Alkanost himself, who immediately accepted the king, further declaring Savarice and his noble line "the first true king of men and the only leader fit to guide his species." Ravenar Limshau

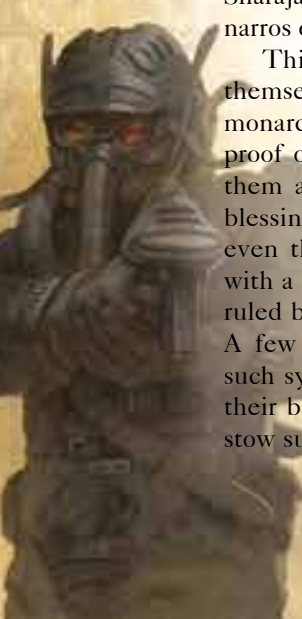


TABLE: TRAVEL COSTS

SERVICE	COST	OVERLAND SPEED	PER DAY	PER HOUR
Dragonflyer (routine)	2 sp per mile	125 (Flight)	300 miles	12.5 miles
Dragonflyer (charter)	4 sp per mile	125 (Flight)	300 miles	12.5 miles
Thermal (coach)	1 sp per mile	100 (Flight)	240 miles	10 miles
Thermal (luxury)	2 sp per mile	100 (Flight)	240 miles	10 miles
Wavecrasher	1 sp per mile	100 (Sea)	240 miles	10 miles

agreed with the godly sanction and hoped it would rally a greater influx of immigrants to Abidan and threaten the stability of Baruch Malkut. King Darius Konig, upon hearing of the legend and of Savarice's title, snorted at the notion, arrogantly alleging that God himself—outranking any such blessing from a primitive dragon—hallowed *his* noble blood. King Darius pronounced Savarice's title a blasphemy, punishable by death. If the Savarice line is eliminated, it is unlikely mankind will be fortunate to receive such an honor again for many centuries. Thankfully, because of the necessity of expanding their control, royalty rarely if ever intermarry. Though some suspect other families of such controversy, no dragon-blessed royal family ever mixed sibling blood. The commodity of their lineage was too valuable to squander on selfish ideals.

TRAVEL

Most fantasy worlds in fiction present a world of expanding beauty but short distances, or else mystical means of traveling between far-flung locales. The real world is no less fantastical but far less forgiving. Travel time is a problem. Roads are few and far between, and overland travel between distant locations can take weeks or even months. Even on the Continental Cross, the only highway and reasonably maintained road in Canam, it takes just under a month to reach Limshau from Angel by horse, and another six weeks from there to reach York – assuming that travel is not marred by bandits or wandering monster attacks or the more mundane depredations of tollbooths and competing tax and excise collectors from the various free houses along the road. Most travelers who must traverse long distances, therefore, prefer to do it by air.

DRAGONFLYERS

The architects and engineers of the tower of Dromos across the sea designed and mass-produced an enchanted flying craft for use in the southern lands of Arkonnia, but a lack of population and financially viable investors prevented wide distribution in their homeland. However, when they reached Canam, the Dromos enchanters sold off all their stock and filled backlogs for two centuries. The dragonflyers resemble oversized ancient Asian boats referred to as “junks” with large eagle wings made from marble or limestone extending from the sides. They don't flap and appear to have no purpose other than cosmetic, but the boats cannot fly without them. Each one can hold between six and twelve people though a few larger ones have been known to hold up to a hundred. Most of them only require a sin-

gle controller. They don't travel anywhere near bastions, Apocrypha, Azhi Dahaka, or Baruch Malkut and severe winds prevent travel to or through Alpinas. They seldom accept charters to unknown destinations. In the century since the introduction of the dragonflyer, a network has formed in the skies over Canam, though most of the traffic is still comprised of thermals.

THERMAL SHIPS

The most common aircraft by far in echa is the thermal, a slang term for all buoyant, lighter-than-air aircraft. The term refers to their common attribute of using heated air instead of helium or hydrogen to supply lift. Before the Second Hammer, the progress of these aircraft was halted in favor of faster, mass-produced winged vehicles, but even in areas of increased magical disruption, hot air still rises in an atmosphere. Though a helium dirigible would be more stable, the gas is hard to come by in the modern day, and advances in thermal designs have offset the disadvantages of hot air. Their moderate flying altitude allows more people to see them in use and their presence in echan cities and even some bastions is relatively common. The mooring towers for thermal ships are easy to spot. Where there are thermal towers, dragonflyers often sit nearby, though flyers are more often employed for charter bookings, leaving the thermals for regular city-to-city travel. Thermals rarely travel to locations without a mooring tower, although exceptions can sometimes be made for the right price.

WAVECRASHERS

As the Moon was pushed into a closer orbit by Attricana, the swells and waves in large bodies of water increased in severity. This, along with Attricana's encouragement of ocean storms, has thrown atmospheric sciences out the window. Air currents constantly shift, making meteorology and climatology useless. Chaotic pressure systems have generated the largest oceanic storms ever recorded, separating the continents behind walls of weather. This maelstrom is continuous through every ocean and they dissipate only slightly when approaching shore. Massive coastal docks like those at York and Angel have installed immense breakers to halt the assault.

Nations from both techa and echa tried for centuries for a safe route across the water. The only real option was to travel above the clouds; Porto's Sail Galleons and Beluga carriers easily accomplished this task, but the altitude required was unrealistic for thermals and dragonflyers are not designed for such distances without the



ability to restock supplies. For the longest time, therefore, contact with bastions across the ocean was sparse at best, and communication with distant echan empires was practically nonexistent. This lasted until only recently when the first wavecrasher appeared at the docks of York.

The sea is rife with monsters. Some grew from evolved oceanic behemoths like sharks and whales while others were unique creations of Attricana, grotesque or beautiful. Some were timid while others were hostile, swallowing anything they could wrap their impressive maws around. These leviathans were initially hunted for their meat or other resources. Short-range boats braved the weather to harpoon the mammoths and drag their hulks back to shore.

With the application of moderate magic and clever trapping, several of these goliaths were captured alive. Their wills were broken and they were trained to carry a load. This weight eventually turned into an entire vessel, built around the creature. Not a single wavecrasher looks the same, from monstrous sea turtles to whales larger than villages. The vessels dominate the waves by rolling effortlessly over or diving underneath them. Even with these audacious designs, the majority of wavecrashers seldom survive more than a dozen journeys before finally destroying the creature or the boat built around them. Some of the beasts near retirement are demoted to following coastlines, where they become shorerunners. It is thought there are less than a dozen of these beasts of burden roaming the oceans. Apart from the rare docking at York, they frequent only echan ports and rarely appear on the west coast of Canam, running exclusively across the narrow strip of Okeanos.



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ts body was the size of Aiden's fist with eight pencil-thin legs longer than a forearm. Every step taken was careful and quiet, slipping over branches and sidestepping leaves. It stalked up the wool and polyester coat Aiden was using as cover as he slept. A pair of black lidless eyes floating on truncated stalks glanced over the sleeping man. Its legs inched closer to Aiden's neck. Two spidery limbs reached up and tapped each other in front of Aiden's face. Aiden, eyes still closed, turned a nose up and blew out a breath. The creature repeated the soft drum but received no response. One leg from the arachnid stretched out and hung precariously over Aiden's nose. It tapped him gently. Aiden slept soundly. Then twice again.

Three firmer pats and Aiden cracked open an eye. He failed to focus on the blurry mass in front of him. As he adjusted, he stared at the vapid eyes and short jaws and two long legs in front that tapped each other once more to gain his attention.

The scream that sprung from Aiden's throat was loud from adult lungs but pitched high from childish fear. Aiden swatted the creature to the ground and rolled to his feet, flailing arms and legs outrageously. He checked his limbs and digits, shouting as he squirmed away from the calm arachnid as it tapped its two front legs again. Aiden jolted his head around to check for an ambush. Surely, the tapping was the cue for a face-lock from a falling predator Aiden would be too distracted to notice. There was nothing, just Aiden and the arachnid, both waiting at a distance. The spark had taken the cue to rest with the rising sun. Aiden reached forward and quickly snatched his bag. He pulled the blade from within it. The chunk of purple stone sat by the bag. Aiden stretched a hand and took it as well, tucking it to the bottom of his pack.

Aiden walked backwards down the path. He took a moment to ensure he wasn't returning the way he entered. Aiden finally remembered the entry from that long forgotten manual and announced it as if the creature could understand. "Book of Many Bugs. Page 346. Harvestman." It tapped its legs. Aiden continued on the road. The creature matched his pace. Aiden paused and so did it, drumming its legs until starting up again to follow him.

"Get lost!" Aiden flailed his sword arm. It followed. "Get out of here!"

Aiden stopped, then it stopped and tapped its legs. Aiden shouted as loud as he could, stepped closer, and stomped a foot down. It jumped nearly to Aiden's face. Aiden squealed, bolting down the road like his hair was ablaze. The spider ran surprisingly fast and kept up with him for five minutes before giving up. As Aiden ran out of sight, the harvestman tapped its front legs again.

* * *

Emerging from the forest, Aiden squinted from the sun's glare. The road resumed as empty as before to a blurry horizon. Before the afternoon, he would eat three more bars and still be hungry. The plains passed to a valley. Dried grass turned to green fields. All Aiden could do was walk, and did so until coming upon the wreck.

Its steel axle had bent. The wooden spokes had splintered. Aiden circled the broken wagon with a wide berth. The horses had been torn from their harnesses, leaving bloodied bits and hair tufts on the straps. The half eaten hoof suggested a fast and messy meal by indiscriminate predators. Aiden was unsettled. The blood had the gloss of lingering moisture. A caravan had gone astray, no doubt. No wagon would chance solitude on a barren path. Aiden knew he was close to Antikari. A sane captain would take the extra day and follow the continental cross, the same detour the scrambler had made. The door was pinned closed by a rock-tipped spear half Aiden's height, too large for dog-sized puggs. They had been larger monsters.

Aiden orbited and checked the opposite door, unlocked. He almost missed the cage, half in the grass and overturned. The simple lock had broken with hammer falls with most missing their mark. Teeth indents around bars, dried spit at every corner, a dozen animals inside

had molested each other for the shred of an inch of room. It hadn't been a detour. The slavers turned the moment their stocks were stuffed.

The door came loose off the hinges and fell. Aiden dropped his pack and swallowed as he leaned in. The spear had struck between the stomach and liver of the man but caught more of the latter. The spear had jammed the body against the wagon. "Oh god," Aiden mumbled.

"Huh," the body burbled after lifting his head. Aiden shrieked and fell back onto the door. He quickly composed himself and reentered.

"Oh my god! Can you talk? Can you..." He said nothing. "Say anything?"

"Mi y'ada," he groaned. Aiden held up his palms. "Hold that...don't move!" Frantic, Aiden paced around the wagon, unable to act, unable to freeze. He crawled back in. "I can't move you with the spear. Can't take it out either." Aiden reached for his pack and the dull blade meant for threats. He squeezed himself behind the body. He held the sword as high as he could in cramped quarters. He had hoped one slash would do it, but it only dented the spear, pushing the end further into the victim's chest. The man had lost any reserve for a scream and only choked. Aiden squirmed and tried for a harder strike, not that he had held anything back the first time. A second failed. A third cracked and the sword was wedged in the wood with a splinter holding the spear together. Aiden snapped it the rest of the way.

The man's head rolled flaccidly as Aiden pulled him onto the fallen door. He used the bloodied leather straps from the horses' harness and bound the man to the wood. Aiden swatted the man's lazy arm to finish the restraints.

"How far is Antikari?" Aiden asked. "An hour...two?" A cough was all that was afforded. "Just hold on." Aiden pulled another strap around the door and wrapped the other end around his shoulders. The man wasn't scrawny and the door was spruce. Aiden pulled a shoulder muscle lifting it up. Stones barely shuffled as he struggled for an inch. "You've got to be kidding me."

"Esta finderlohn por mia lebon," he moaned.

"Yeah, you said it." Aiden began to walk, slowly at first. Within a few steps, the gravel gave and his shoes slipped, stumbling Aiden to the ground. He punched earth, quietly cursed, and raised himself and the door again. "Come on! Come on!"

Aiden got momentum and dragged the door over a trivial summit and to the base that followed. The next climb bruised his pectorals and sprained an ankle. The body slipped off at the second crest. Aiden was sure to meet another night at this pace.

"Still with me?" Aiden called out. He wanted to keep talking but was loosing breath. Every lungful of air pulled his battered diaphragm. He should have exercised more. He couldn't stomach a meal and didn't bother offering one.

The saw a tree with branches twisted through a vehicle, lifting the wreck before the ground could swallow it. Only by pure chance had it survived. Boughs had peeled it apart, crucifying the car across the span of wood. Wheels were forged soft alloy with inadequate tread for

unpaved terrain. Red and black and flaking from rust, the one remaining door tapped in the wind on its last unseized hinge. A stainless exhaust refused to wither. Aiden noticed its license plate, a flake of blue on a number, another of red on the word above. From his vantage, Aiden couldn't make out the number or the origin, not that it mattered. It was a relic from a lost time, five centuries forgotten. He couldn't afford to slow and kept on.

By late afternoon, the rain started and mixed with the dry clay into a viscous mud. The door built up a layer of sludge and Aiden's boots slithered across with little progress. He grimaced through it, letting the water roll down his face. The muck had slipped over his boots and into his socks. The water had pushed into his thermal ware. The clouds were ash, a constant slate which mixed the horizon to the mud.

Aiden lost his footing nearing another summit. The body and the door slid back down the incline until Aiden dug his cleats deep and cut his hand on the strap with whatever lingering strength he had. He could hear his sword fall down the hill, but he had no energy to retrieve it. He pushed back up the hill, dragging the door behind. Each boot slammed deep to get root. Reaching the crest, Aiden pulled the door back up to his shoulders and he stood cold and damp, a thick layer of grey running down his back.

He sighted the wagons, horses, and people of Antikari before dusk, emerging as a rising wave. The grass took a breeze and opened like a splitting river to guide him to town. A pair of aides by a wagon took notice and made for him. Aiden collapsed onto the ground. He stared at the passing clouds, coughing and wheezing as others ran to help.

* * *

"Did you knew him?" A monitor guard asked him. A strong accent and muddled words meant this wasn't his first language. He tried too hard to pronounce every word.

"No," Aiden answered.

"We could not have saved him."

"Yeah...I know." He didn't.

"He was already half-dead."

"Thought perhaps you'd have a healer."

"Doctor tended. Too far gone."

"Vivicator?"

"Magic?" The guard shook his head. "One in a million, fewer with men."

"Nothing else?"

"Not more than chicken bones and blind prayer, I'm afraid. Doctors leave for bastion when good enough." The guard said nothing more, leaving Aiden by the roadside.

Aiden's ward had been a notoriously ungrateful slaver recognized for his stocks of broken puggs. He snatched his chattel in Xixion and passed the cross every six months to trade with caravans bound for Malkut. There was neither a reward nor grateful praise for his recovery. The corpse was tossed to a collective grave, a layer of lime the only consideration.



CHAPTER TEN: THE WORLD



The world once went by the name Terros, dating from the beginning of Amethyst's emergence (or landfall, depending on the legend) to the falling of the First Hammer, when the planet fell back under control of nature. In geological terms this span of time was only an epoch of the Cretaceous period, lasting only a few million years and explaining the relatively normal development of reptilian and mammalian life in fossil records throughout ancient history. Further, since fae developed their culture rather slowly, they never reached a point of creating materials capable of surviving 65 million years of erosion and decay. Any other evidence disappeared when magic dissipated. Even the bodies of these new creatures fell to dust with the closing of the gates, another odd feature of those birthed by magic. After only a few years, every remnant of what magic created was gone. Everything else escaped to the gate, into a deep slumber, hoping for a chance to return.

Man always knew a major bolide impact would be an extinction level event, but he hoped it would not repeat until his technology reached a level to detect and defend himself. The First Hammer, as it was later known, struck what was then known as the Yucatán Peninsula at the moment of Amethyst's death and created the Cretaceous-Tertiary extinction event, wiping out many of the non-avian dinosaurs and planktonic organisms on the planet. It was followed by a massive environmental shift resulting in further losses over the next few thousand years. The planet never fully recovered and the impact, along with massive volcanic activity, shifted the entire ecosystem. It allowed other lifeforms to prosper and permitted natural selection to evolve to mankind. The collision, environmental aftereffects, and simply time itself, removed any surviving evidence of the old world's existence. Though some bizarre artifacts were encountered pointing to the possibility of a hidden history of the world, these discoveries were dismissed as aberrations or hoaxes.

The second collision, now dubbed the Second Hammer, occurred with apparently so little warning as to not warrant a single announcement. The few surviving accounts never reported the discovery or the anticipation of the impact. Modern views believe the resident population knew nothing of the collision until it masked the sun and shook the entire planet. The bolide struck a region of land once called Eastern Siberia. By seemingly pure coincidence, this impact occurred exactly at the location of the buried Ixindar gate. Though the rock coffin sealing the tear inside could never be broken by mankind's hand given his then-current level of technology, a two-mile asteroid succeeded rather dramatically. Fragments of angelite scattered across the globe and Ixindar's wave of corruption flowed out like a broken dam. Coupled with Attricana's reopening, either shortly before or shortly thereafter, the world would never be the same.

The return of Attricana caused severe changes in the physical landscape of the Earth. Several large volcanic eruptions rocked the planet. Physical landforms became more extreme: mountain ranges rose higher, lakes grew deeper and vaster, disappearing glaciers replenished themselves, rivers burst their banks and expanded to many times their former size, while others dried to dust. Cliffs rose higher while valleys sank deeper. Fossil fuel deposits shifted: some sank to the crushing depths while others exploded upon the surface. According to *The Final Word of Echan Influence on Geochronology*, by Marikarma, magic disturbed the calm status of the globe by increasing the rate of seafloor spreading. For nearly a century, the amplified geologic turmoil destroyed every last fragment of mankind's presence. Harsh winds washed across skies. Earthquakes ripped the ground apart. Although the volcanoes and earthquakes eventually

subsided, they never reached a level of calm like mankind was blessed with in the thousands of years prior to the Hammer's fall.

The wave of magic sweeping the globe altered nearly everything. When the enchantment saturated the world's every molecule, the planet convulsed and shuddered. The first century saw great loss of life, especially with man, already weathered and battered from the previous age. No one is sure how many humans survived the pre-gate turmoil, but many more lost their lives to the ravaging Earth. More fell victim to monsters choosing them as prey. Finally, after a century, the planet fell back asleep. The earthquakes stopped. The winds died down. Nature swallowed up nearly every machine and building. Even the scars left by industry were overrun by plants and moving dirt.

BASTIONS

After the massive birth pains of Attricana's opening passed, the aura of enchantment finally subsided to a less chaotic level. Something passing for normality began to reassert itself. With what was left of humanity banding together, those still possessing technology also possessed the influence that comes with it. However, most of these initial communities could not expand that influence relying only on malfunctioning machines, and the majority eventually turned to magic, forgetting their heritage and the bulk of thousands of years of technological development. A few, however, grew fast and large enough to maintain their technological footprint. These surviving cities discovered caches or ruins from Earth's past intact enough to catapult the community to prosperity. The bastion of Sierra Madre discovered a colossal cavern and easily accessible thermal power; with Mann, an entire city pre-built by unknown hands was the catalyst to develop. Of course, the positioning of some bastions defies explanation: nobody, not even its current residents, knows what possessed the founders of Selkirk to build their society inside a mountain within one of the most magically active regions on Earth.

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Like a weather map displaying topical zones and low and high pressure isobars, Earth displays regions of heavy and light magical saturation. Low disruption zones allow technology to function with virtually no side effects, although the EDF is always present and certain problems never cease. The more a bastion expands, the larger these dead zones grow. Most bastions have placed their highest technology or R&D facilities as close to the center of their cities as possible, to keep the EDF's effects on them to a minimum. If a bastion was to collapse (which has been known to happen), the background magical saturation would reassert itself very shortly after; and if the collapse was due to an invading enchanted force, the reversion could be instantaneous. Even a single echan in a bastion can cause havoc, if their inherent disruption field shorts out part of a power grid or disrupts a communications line. Some bastions are more concerned about this effect than others: in

York, a main road through the bastion allows echans to walk freely to the docks, mingling peacefully with techans (though it is advised they don't linger); in Angel, an entire section of the city was partitioned for the residential echans that helped build the first walls of the bastion; but in other bastions like Selkirk, Sierra Madre, and Mann, echans are strictly forbidden. For some, the prohibition is strictly to protect technology, but some communities have migrated towards bigotry with an unfortunate scientific justification.

Magic shrouds the Earth, blocking both low and high frequency waves. This suppresses cosmic radiation but also suppresses radio signals, preventing bastions from communicating. The rapid expansion of gas and plasma is slowed, preventing explosives from detonating or even combustion engines from running. While theoretically possible to communicate by laser with a satellite outside of the EDF's influence, no individual bastion has the resources to place such an object in orbit or the knowledge to locate any that might still be in operation. Therefore, like human nations of ancient Earth, bastions progressed completely independently from each other, altering their beliefs, their technological profile, and even their language. Even after messengers finally revealed these bastions were not alone in the world, regular communication was still unfeasible. As long as Attricana remains open, there is no way for the techans' way of life to escape their cities.

Calculating the rate of destruction and the amount of alteration to the climate and the geography of earth, I have come to an unforeseen conclusion. The increased tectonic activity occurs from altered gravity fields and reduced basal and slab friction along the plates. The sudden torrent of enchantment that proclaimed the opening of the gate was akin to a bursting dam, flooding the world in excess before reaching the level most swim comfortably in now. This great deluge resulted in a massive schism, causing more loss of life across the globe.

Even this increase does not explain the washing of nearly all evidence of the human footprint upon the planet. Not even 100 years of floods, winds, volcanoes, and earthquakes could account the total erasure of virtually every building or every foot of road. Little survived with the most prized possessions being a handful of books found surrounded by computers long neutralized. My confusion deals with these said books along with a few other artifacts that survived from the old time. These relics are few in number, never larger than a clothes hamper. They also all weathered badly. Is this all that remains of old man? I believe mankind had already reduced his technological footprint either by will or forced upon them by some great war or natural disaster before the impact finished the job.

There are other theories including a fault in my own experiments or a dating error between the opening of Ixindar and the follow-up by Attricana. Evidence is hard to come by dealing with this era. This question may forever be unanswered.

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The Final Word of Echan Influence on Geochronology

BASTION TECHNOLOGY

Bastions all flaunt a technological supremacy over their neighbors. Though their machines and electronics cannot survive long away from their city's borders without servicing, they still revel in such accomplishments as light bulbs, flat-panel televisions, and fuzzy-logic rice cookers. Still, not all bastions are on the same level of accomplishment. A bastion's listed tech level is the degree of sophistication at which the majority of the bastion sits, but prototypes and cutting-edge developments will always provide exceptions; likewise, the existence of higher-tech variations rarely renders lower developments entirely obsolete.

ANGEL

Kieran looked at his watch. He was going to be late for school again, even though he'd taken the early train. But Xiu-lin wasn't here yet, and he wasn't going to leave without seeing her. He tapped his foot impatiently, looking idly across at the illuminated billboard on the other side of the highway. This close to Genai, the lower corner of the LED display always flickered in the wrong colors. The owners of the fireworks factory just across the way claimed that their work was entirely mundane... but Kieran was at a loss to explain the amazing shapes that they formed in the sky when Xiu-lin took him to the festivals, trees and flowers and twisting, snakelike dragons in the sky.

He sighed, remembering, when a soft voice behind him spoke up. "I didn't keep you waiting, did I, Kieran-kun?" He turned, a little too abruptly, his face bright red. Say what they would, the vision before him could not be considered anything but magic.

Angel is the largest bastion in Canam, is usually the image outsiders picture when they think of the techan cities. From a distance, it resembles an oversized fortress, hundreds of miles across. Angel's development was the most troubled of all the Canam bastions. Setting up on a shoreline rich in the necessities of life and devoid of neighboring contested territories, its population grew quickly, but it was unable to maintain a high technological standard for that population. When Angel erected its first buildings hundreds of years ago, bogg raiders emerged from the surrounding forests, and sporadic attacks and supply raids kept Angel struggling for more than fifty years, until the immigrants arrived from across the ocean. Arriving as if by miracle, in a makeshift fleet ranging in size from rowboats to tankers, came a legion of displaced humanity fleeing the no-man's-land that had overtaken the far east in the wake of Ixindar's opening. They had fled from the mainland to the large archipelago off the coast, and from thence across the perilous ocean, braving horrifying typhoons and ravaging sea monsters in the certain knowledge that what they left behind was worse. When they arrived, they found another human population equally desperate for survival. Needing workers desperately, the governing body of Angel made a decision, controversial to this day: they welcomed the settlers despite

the taint of magic that some of them carried, and offered them their own protected piece of land within the walls in exchange for a labor force. With this influx of manpower, Angel expanded to three times its original size and built a bastion wall worthy of the name.

Soon, the boggs found themselves incapable of harming the massive castle-city, but the goblin-folk are not noted for their intelligence and they still frequently launch assaults against the walls, though all they can hope to achieve now is to rustle a few head of cattle from the outlying villages; the city's crack snipers and quick-response VTOLs make short work of any concerted attack. Angel's population grows each year and plans have been put in order to build a larger wall several miles out, doubling the effective size of what is already believed to be the world's largest bastion.

The unique aspect of Angel is not the city itself so much as it is Genai, the settlement within. Built by its own residents, Genai cares nothing of its isolation. Legally, Genai is a separate enclave within the city of Angel: it has its own government, its own infrastructure, and its own laws and traditions, but shares certain civic responsibilities with the surrounding bastion. Citizens of Genai are also citizens of Angel, and are issued government identification cards when dealing outside the township, but many residents are born, live, and die having never stepped foot outside Genai. Their heritage insists on recording their history as well as the names of all of those who have died in the construction of the great wall. But the greatest legend of Genai is the source of its name and the identity of its most illustrious resident. It is said the pilgrims could not have survived the journey across the sea and made their way safely to the land of techans without the protection of a great dragon, almost as old and as wise as Amethyst himself: the yok-ani, Genai. Whether true or not, the story holds that this beneficence resides inside the colossal pagoda temple at the center of the district. Only the good and righteous are allowed to enter in hopes the rumors are true and that the great dragon lives inside, out of sight from prying eyes.

Angel is surrounded by major deposits of magic. With enchanted forests on every side, Angel suffers from radiant disruption and wandering monster attacks more than any bastion in Canam despite its massive wall.

Layout: Angel's central governing buildings stand in the center of Tower Park. The primary avenues spread out from this, intersected by thousands of circular streets. Fragments of the older walls can still be seen, circling the city like tree-rings. Genai resides in the southern corner, against the seaward wall. Outside the city are over a dozen satellite villages, home to hundreds of merchants and shops allowing visitors to buy horses or black market goods from echa or techa. Unlike Angel, organized and methodically laid out, Genai is scattered, jumbled, and cluttered. Occupying 500 square blocks of Angel, Genai's roads split into dead ends, major walkways loop around onto themselves and buildings rise and fall weekly. Most build-





ings are constructed using traditional methods due to a scarcity of supplies, with the result of Genai's cityscape looking a thousand years out of date. Asian influences are dominant – Genai is the last lingering shred of anything anyone remembers from China, Japan and the south Asian peninsula before the Hammer. Not a single building stands more than four stories, dwarfed by the skyscrapers around, except for the Great Temple of Genai at the center, set atop an eighty-foot-tall stepped pyramid. A traditional torii gate, painted a bright crimson with two supports and two curving crossbars bordering the realm of the mundane to the magical, greets those preparing to climb the massive flight of stairs. Atop the long climb is a five-storey iron and red brick pagoda with eaves stretching out to shadow the base of the pyramid. The pagoda itself is hollow, as a double-helix spiral staircase orbits around a massive shaft leading one deep into the pyramid. Within the depths, it is said, the yok-ani dragon slumbers, though few have ever ventured into the pit to confirm this and none have ever spoken of what they found there.

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Entering Angel from outside is not easy. Only techan humans can pass through the main door. Outsiders must prove they are free of enchantment and that they have some useful skill. Echans are only granted provisional entrance on a case-by-case basis due to extant treaties with Genai, and even this depends largely on knowing someone with clout on the inside. Such visitors are carefully shepherded from the gates to the echan enclave with all due expediency. Several secret passageways are said to lead from Genai to the outside

world, forgoing the gates of Angel.

Population: 55 million (Angel); 2.5 million (Genai)

Tech Level: 1 and 2; Genai is mostly TL0, but some TL1 technology can be found within it.

Government: Democratic republic. The ruling council sits at the center building of Tower Park and seats six people. Alan Miller holds the current Head Chair. He holds the power of veto but not the power to push legislation through on his own. Genai has no formal government, but is represented by the most respected community elders, with local neighborhood organizations keeping order in most of the district.

Military: Angel prides itself on how small its army is. Its distance from other bastions and from any significant echan community, combined with its great wall, make a large standing army unnecessary. Angel's military and police force are one in the same. The Crimson Starlight tower in the western side of Angel houses the aerial division. The police force is comprised of volunteers and trained professionals, working by choice to defend the walls. 95% of the armed forces on Angel patrol the outer perimeter. Internal crime in Angel is shockingly small for a community of its size and density, with fewer than fifty violent crimes being reported each year, but as the punishment for any violent offense is banishment, few are willing to risk repercussions. The Crimson Starlight Armed Forces (CSAF) operates mostly fanjet powered assault shuttles. In Genai, a volunteer police force using primitive weapons (and often, unusually fearsome martial arts) keeps the peace. Angel security only crosses the threshold when a serious crime is

committed or when a public crime is seen from their positions at the edge of town.

Religion: The majority of the population is not spiritual, but Christianity and Judaism are highly respected even by atheists. The people of Genai are, if not actively religious, at least willing to give lip service to their ancestral faiths (Buddhism, Shinto, Chinese Folk Religion, and yok-ani worship) and even those that profess no religion are highly superstitious. Dozens of Shinto temples provide for a myriad of festive events throughout the year, in which all residents of the district (even those with no Japanese ancestry) partake.

Relations: Angel has virtually no regular contact with other bastions, being isolated at the uttermost west of the continent. Communications to and from Selkirk amount to little more than a page of script every year, and though travelers to and from York are not uncommon, they rarely carry the weight of an official embassy. Unofficially, Angel maintains hundreds of spies and isolated outposts as near to rival bastions as possible, in the hopes of poaching some useful technological development from them. Angel often trades supplies via Porto Beluga Carriers which arrive once every five years. Genai has no formal relationship with any outside bastions, though the elders do exchange communications with Limshau as often as possible, but even their relationship with Angel itself seems distant at times; Genai prefers to remain as self-sufficient as possible and does not trade with the bastion if they can avoid it. Genai merchants accept gold but not (usually) uc. A few will trade even though their exchange rates can be atrocious. Almost any echan goods, including a few basic enchanted items, can be found in Genai's markets (legitimate or not), but attempting to bring these goods into Angel proper is usually stymied by tight customs controls.

Names: Angel's variant of English is the closest thing to a common tongue Canam has, as its wide-ranging influences (encompassing elements of at least four old European languages and six Asian ones) make it a very popular human language in Limshau. Angel's original population was drawn from every major pre-Hammer ethnicity and a few less prominent ones, so there is a great variety and intermingling of ethnic names, but names of Gaelic, Spanish, Greek, and Japanese extraction are most common. In Genai, where more than half the population is ethnically Chinese, even families descended from other Asian nationalities tend to adopt a Chinese-sounding 'social name' despite everyone speaking the same Asiatic creole. Both Angel and Genai habitually use the 'given name – family name' structure on a day-to-day basis and the reverse in formal circumstances and on legal documents.

Despite ethnic Japanese representing less than 10% of the overall population, residents of both Angel and Genai use traditional Japanese honorifics (-san, -kun, -chan, -sensei, etc.) in most formal situations, regardless of their own ethnic background.

Angel Examples: Aiden Camus, Joachim Annikos, Kimiko Ross, Martha Tsukigawa, Shelley Delacruz,

Xavier Moran

Genai Examples: David Obatala Chen, Ji-hu Kim (Jimu Qi-Hu), Hiroyuki Nogoe (Nuoguo Xiaoyou), Mana Sieng (Xian Mana), Yeong-Sun Park (Pake Yun-Sung), Xiaolong Li



Before Amethyst was Amethyst, it was a post-apocalyptic science fiction story involving a walled city surrounded by a desert wasteland plagued by dragons. Amethyst wasn't a deity, but the name of a dragon residing in Genai. These weren't mindless dragons but the true high-fantasy variation, with intelligence and shape-changing. But that was it—no elves or spellcraft. Angel was the only city in the setting, and it remains virtually unchanged, a relic from that original story from 1996. I shelved it after the film 'Reign of Fire' came out, and only dusted off the setting to make the Amethyst you now read when I was pressured to run a D&D campaign.

MANN

Adolphus should be here. I keep worrying I may to say the wrong thing to these abominations. Adolphus knows how to talk to the filthy beasts without giving the game away. We have been out of the bastion for a month now, and he still has not told me what our true mission is. I wonder if he even knows. I feel myself tainted by our contact with these creatures, so like humans and yet nothing like us. Yet it troubles me even more to think that all my family, my friends, my comrades must think me a traitor to my own species. Some days I wonder if I will ever see them again – whether my interaction with these inhuman things will forever mark me as an undesirable. Adolphus assures me that our work is for the greater good, and I must trust in him. I feel my purpose more strongly when he is nearby. When he is gone, I begin to doubt.

Glory to the Covenant, I pray – Glory to the Covenant. Yet some days, it does not seem as though I really mean it.

Whenever anyone looks upon the City of Mann, they blink—like staring into a great void. No one is sure how old the city is, only that it predates its neighbor, York. The most popular story tells of humans arriving to the east coast and discovering an island fortress standing empty, waiting for someone to claim it. Someone built it. It was erected for Man.

The construction mimics old human techniques, but to extremes. The buildings sport few windows and rise thousands of feet into the sky. A massive wall, taller than any other bastion, surrounds the island. The city includes a massive self-sustainable hydroelectric system. The first residents of Mann concluded that the city must have been built soon after the Hammer's fall by the initial survivors, but these had died off, possibly from a plague or echan army. This does not take into account that the city was left behind with no bodies or





records.

Regardless, the humans living in the city found themselves isolated both from the outside world and from each other. As the centuries trudged on, the native population grew more xenophobic and paranoid of the world beyond the walls. Few have ever left – few have even expressed even the merest curiosity about what lies outside. The majority of the population of Mann believes everything outside to be blasphemous and immoral. They abhor all magic in any shape and the use or presence of magic within Mann carries a death sentence, not only for the practitioner but for anybody unfortunate enough to witness it lest they be tainted by the experience. No non-humans are allowed to enter for any reason; they receive broadcast warnings to stay away as they approach the shoreline, and pulse lasers are put through their heads if they do not make a move to depart within thirty seconds. Even the wall is rumored to be covered in sheets of fae iron.

Mann sits upon an island and rises as a dark blemish on an otherwise colorful horizon. Unlike Angel, bristling with lights and life, Mann looks dead and deserted. The only time movement is ever evident upon its outer wall is when it fires on approaching targets. No one outside knows how the city was built, how it sustains itself with no external trade, or how the residents inside developed such a technological level surpassing all others on the continent. Those who leave it never speak of such things, out of terror that someday the city's masters may track them down and silence them if they reveal the bastion's secrets.

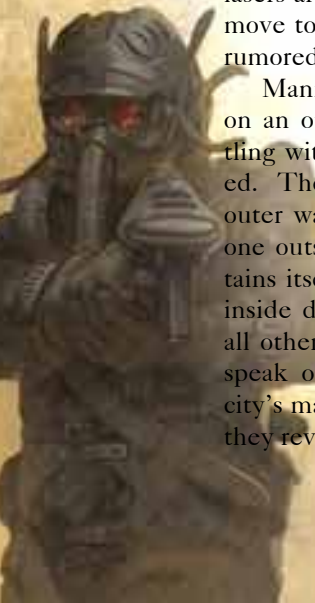
Layout: Mann covers nearly every square inch of the island it rests on, enclosed by a massive wall bordering the edge of the water. Each building within stands at least a thousand feet, with the tallest towering almost a mile overhead. The blocks run uniform and everything fits to a perfect metric unit. The entire city represents a mathematical perfection unseen anywhere else in the world. The buildings all stand at a height of prime numbers to the tenth power. Leaving or entering Mann is difficult: there are no land approaches, no doors, no docks anywhere along the perimeter, and every square millimeter of the wall is defended by high-powered lasers. Stories abound of infiltrators somehow pushing back the rapids and sneaking in through the hydro-pipes, but these accounts are unlikely.

Population: 12 million (estimated)

Tech Level: 5

Government: Theocratic oligarchy. Mann's ruling body is known as "The Ghosts." They dictate all laws but no one is sure how many there are or their identities. They walk among the population as normal people but meet every day at random locations to decide policy. Their numbers have been guessed at between eight and sixteen. When one Ghost dies, another is brought in to replace him or her. No one knows how the selection process works. Three Ghosts appear in a judicial court every day to pronounce judgment; while one would expect that rulings would be handed down by majority vote, all three always render the same verdict in unison, without apparent consultation.

Military: The Kir protects Mann from anything that



appears hostile. Trained for defense rather than assault, the Kir patrol the outer wall, tracking every moving object above, below, or on the water. The Kir uniform is black as the city they live in, and their duty is to kill any echan found in the city or anyone possessing magic without hesitation. They have created technological machines capable of detecting not only magical devices but magical effects as well. Behind the wall, for emergency reasons only, several large cannons have been built against York in case their neighbor falls too far into chaos. The majority of the weapons patrolling outside the walls are automated machines. Rumors of a clandestine organization operating outside the bastion, dedicated to assassinating those who reveal any of Mann's secrets to outsiders and destroying any technology that falls into infidel hands, are unsubstantiated (and to ensure that everybody within the walls knows about it, discussing the rumors is high treason).

Religion: The entire bastion population follows a single state religion, though its details are known only by its residents. Based on Abrahamic roots, its central tenet is that the entire world of magic, without exception, is the corruption of demons trying to bring the world into a dark age of damnation. The only solution is the utter extermination of all magic, those who use magic, and those that associate themselves with magic users.

Relations: Mann seeks no relations with any other bastions. Only Sierra Madre is more isolated, but for Mann, isolation is by choice. They refuse contact with Angel and consider York and Selkirk anathema for maintaining friendly relations with outsiders and even allowing echans to enter their borders. York prepares for an inevitable invasion that may never arrive. Even though a few Porto aircraft have been seen entering Mann, no official relationship has been formed with the utopia across the ocean. Though they share with Baruch Malkut their hatred for non-humans, the southern nation is just as sinful because of their endorsement of magic. The loathing is mutual.

Those who leave Mann are not permitted to return without a signed permit from a "Ghost": otherwise, they are warned away like echans and shot if they do not comply instantly. The longer the resident stays outside, the less chance he or she will be allowed to return. All citizens' DNA imprints are encoded in the Mann supercomputer and are the only form of identification used within the city. It may be possible to temporarily place a DNA recorder that confuses the sensors to make a person register as someone else, but where someone with the knowledge to perform this can be found inside or outside of the city remains a mystery.

Names: Pure Englo-Lingo is the only language spoken in Mann, and their names have a strongly Teutonic cast to them.

Examples: Adolphus Rasmussen, Henrietta Schelber, Mila Eisdottir, Niermann Kessler, Olga Vandeker, Theodor Hanssen.

SELKIRK

"C'mon! Call that a try? My old mother can make a better score than that!" the foreman shouted from the sidelines.

"That's not the only kind of score your old mother's made!" Jersey shot right back. "Why don't you come out here and put your money where your mouth is? When's the last time you won a championship?"

The foreman took off his cap and stamped on it. "Shut yer gob! I took fifteen points against the stonebones not two years back!"

Jersey's teammates laughed. "Yeah, and then they put you on the ground for a forty-wink penalty when you tried to tackle their mater around the chest!" they heckled their manager. It was all good-natured, but there'd probably be a fight in the locker room later. Good – this team needed to work off some steam before they went back into the mines. They'd lost two men in a cave-in just two weeks since, and tempers had been flaring on the line ever since. A good match should get things back to working order before they went back on military rotation. Even if they ribbed each other in here, they would need to be tighter than the foreman's sphincter to survive the bag of foulness that was Outside without a canary.

No one remembers when or how Selkirk erected itself on such an unstable precipice. The bastion is located in the midst of the most magically active terrain in all of Canam, carved into a towering mountain surrounded by equally impassible peaks. Although they have access to the pass of Dianaso, to reach it requires going through a jagged section of rock and would be virtually inaccessible but for the bastion's magnetic tram lines – which none can now remember being put in place. Selkirk's strength lies in its goal of continued expansion and wealth. Their loyalty is to the almighty shilling. Holding onto ancient ways, Selkirk represents a massive mining consortium. Internally known as TERMINAM – TERran MINing AMalgamated – the bastion's entire population works in service of the syndicate. Everyone works. Everyone serves. Everyone has a share.

Selkirk's farms, bountiful as they were initially, lacked the resources to supply the entire population when it grew past their initial estimates, so they opened negotiations with the narros to the north in Fargon. The Echan Trade Authority (ETA) was soon formed to regulate trade between the narros of Thos Thalagos and the miners of Selkirk. Surplus foodstuffs and exotic mined goods travel down the pass in armed caravans or loaded aboard a steam-powered armored train that makes a single run through the pass every month. The supplies are offloaded in the village of Gateway at the base of the pass: no echans, not even gimfen, are allowed to board the Mag-Trains to Selkirk. In return, the narros gain access to the massive gold and coruthil deposits under the Range of Rock. The ETA maintains the trade agreement and shipments usually arrive every week. Since the early days, ancillary treaties have been struck with the scattered echan settlements that grew up in the Seliquam river valley, ensuring that Selkirk will never lack for food and is defended against incursions by the puggs and boggs of Xixion, though these





attacks grow more and more savage year by year. The agreements are beneficial to all sides and none has any reason to break this profitable exchange.

Selkirk is the smallest bastion in Canam, sports no walls, and is not paranoid of its neighboring nations. They don't obsess over expansion or political domination like other techan nations. They only work to live and survive.

Layout: Selkirk sits half inside and half outside the mountain it was built upon. Large open areas sit under artificial lighting. Many of the mining levels supply minimal illumination, relegating some members of the population to perpetual darkness for nearly their whole lives. As one climbs higher, the construction appears more thought out, brighter with larger spaces. Colors blend in and the areas are more sanitary. The vibrations of the air circulators rumble through the whole mountain, the only real sounds until one dives into the catacombs, thousands of miles of tunnels where automated machineries buzz. Workers follow behind and dig up the treasures found by the mining machines. "Mags" are the primary method of transportation – vehicles of varying size that travel along iron-core beams that criss-cross through and outside the mountain. A massive lattice of rails covers the eastern face, the side most exposed. The magnetic vehicles don't connect to the "roads" but float alongside, allowing many vehicles to cross along a single rail. Some wealthy administrators utilize sports-car style single person speeders while the majority of the population runs on the magtracks (multi-segmented trains). One single bar travels miles from

high in the mountains to the town of Gateway below.

Population: 8 million

Tech Level: 3

Government: Socialist corporation. The entire mountain is governed by a single amalgamated corporate entity, but the workers banded together more than two centuries ago into the four core unions: The South East Moles, The South West Rakers, The North West Boilers, and the North East Strykers. Each one competes with the other and often takes out their frustration on the field, playing a sports game reminiscent of rugby. Shop stewards lead their unions with the understanding that no one strikes or prevents the flow of goods: as everyone has a stake in the corporation, there is rarely any need to do so in any case. The supervisors monitor the lower levels of administration. The high levels of administration are run by chief superintendents, finally culminating in the main board of twelve with the president of the colony, currently Tyler Norton. The miners take up more than 95% of the population even though the majority of them don't appear in the top fifteen levels of the city.

Military: Selkirk has no standing military force. The miners volunteer for service lasting three months to a year, allowing them to work on higher levels and even outside the walls. Few of them ever see action, as no sizeable force can easily approach the bastion and the raids that beset the lowlands and occasionally reach the Dianaso caravans are mostly driven off by the echans who live in the surrounding lands. The military operates a variety of hidden turrets and hard points along



the outside walls. Most of the time, they perform escort duty when carry-alls are required to travel north to Fargon.

Selkirk does maintain a special forces unit known as Orobas, whose members--despite holding other jobs as usual--can be recalled to active duty at any time to deal with unusual problems, usually regarding the bastion's relations with its echan allies.

Religion: The bastion is driven by the principles of an ancient economic philosophy which holds a distrust of organized religion, believing it to be too easily swayed into a tool of worker oppression. Consequently, there are no churches or temples in Selkirk, and any spiritual beliefs a miner may hold are purely on their own time. Most would say they are far too busy to worry about such things.

Relations: If Selkirk were to vanish off the planet, it is possible no one far beyond the Dianaso pass would hear of it for several years. Isolated, the city barely appears on the radar of the other bastions. Selkirk's isolation works for and against it. It is the only bastion never directly attacked by any outside force with a chance of overtaking it. A one-time conference resulted in a modest technology trade with Angel, a relationship that has since dissolved from Selkirk's lack of communication, though according to that ancient treaty each bastion is bound to aid the other in dire need. Selkirk has a more productive relationship with echan civilizations. The continued trade with the narros of Fargon and the confederation of tiny nations in the Seliquam river valley keeps Selkirk alive. Occasionally, gimfen from the south are welcomed for their expertise and curiosity. Selkirk wishes to be more in touch with their neighbors, but their location prevents it. Other than their paranoia over disruption, Selkirk and TERMINAM do not hold the revulsion for echans many other techans exhibit. Since Selkirk primarily deals with narros (which basically look like short versions of Selkirk miners) and gimfen (who do not disrupt technology), the population has no reason to hate them.

Names: Selkirk's isolation and focus has made its population very homogenous and its language very utilitarian. Most of the original population was ethnically of Scottish, Irish, and Welsh extraction, with the result that fully fifty percent of the population has the surname 'Brown,' 'Jones,' 'Owen,' 'Smith,' or 'Walsh'.

Examples: Andrew Walsh, Maisie Nelson, Moira Owen, Patrick Kelso, Sean Smith, Tanith Westenra



Selkirk has always suffered in my fluff because of its remote location. In my campaign, players only visited it once...and ended up starting a union riot. As for the city's legacy, I believe Selkirk would be the last bastion standing if enchantment were to take over the planet...not saying that's the future of the setting, only one possible future.

SIERRA MADRE

"In my homeland, we have no poverty, no hunger, no prejudice," Marco said smugly. "Everyone has everything they need and is free to pursue their own self-perfection. I honestly cannot see why anyone would prefer starving, dirt roads, those horrible furry things with the teeth, and throwing crap out of the windows over safety, cleanliness and plenty for all."

Roka snorted. "You can see the sky, for one thing," she replied.

Marco grimaced. "I hardly call that a benefit," he said. "It is unnatural, living without a ceiling over your head."

The burly bodyguard raised an eyebrow, scratching the back of her head with her spiked club. "And yet, here you are," she remarked.

Sierra Madre could be the oldest bastion on the planet. Some believe it could be older than the new age, surviving the Hammer's fall, though how that can be considering the geological damage to the planet when the gates opened is unknown. It is believed Sierra Madre was originally some ancient vault or military base from Earth's past. The massive cavern the bastion was built inside may have formed later from magical influence, as it is simply too huge to form naturally and not collapse. The bastion made a point to reinforce their ceiling despite showing no signs of weakening.

Sierra Madre enjoys its isolation but does not hate and fear the outside world as some do. Tapped into massive geothermal energies, the population of Sierra Madre lives with unlimited power and limitless promises for the future. Unlike many bastions, gripped in fear of the outside world and the encroaching magic, the people of Sierra sleep safe at night. Armies could walk over them, completely unaware of the city underneath. With the Gloam to the south, few people travel needlessly within the region, so there is little chance of accidental discovery. Sierra Madre, like Porto across the ocean, strives forward with reckless abandon to develop new techniques and new advancements. Clean power and virtually no crime gives the bastion a virgin mindset. Those who leave are more unprepared than any other pilgrims into echa for the harshness outside. The majority don't outlast a month, dying in the wastelands between civilization or fleeing back to their homes. Being isolated from all external contact convinced the population they were the only survivors of the last age. When they emerged from their vault, they found a wilderness populated by monsters with no other refuge in sight save for the caverns behind them. A few expeditions only confirmed their fears. A frightening fog covered the south and nothing lived for nearly a hundred miles north that didn't immediately attack upon seeing prey. It would be centuries before anyone from Sierra Madre even knew of other human survivors. When it was finally confirmed, they expressed delight at the prospect, and then promptly returned to their city. They were self-sufficient and had no capacity for sustained trade over such long distances: the knowledge that civilization was not utterly lost was enough for





them. Underground and out of sight, they remain safe, which no other bastion can boast. The city continues per the status quo, hoping their solitude will continue until it is no longer necessary.

Layout: The entire city is built throughout a single gigantic cavern. Unlike Selkirk, no conspicuous mountain marks the bastion's location, and there is no sign whatsoever that a thriving civilization exists beneath the ground. There are few exits to the surface, most being hidden service elevators. Without natural light sources, the bastion glows with a constant light of civilization. Over a controlled geothermal vent and blessed with an underground river, it continues to live off boundless energy. The presidential palace doubles as the power center and the focal point of the entire militia, small that it is. Every major street expands from that center, winding through the cavern and its branches. Sierra Madre's cavity is the largest enclosed space on the planet, stretching for more than 50 miles from one end to another with nearly a dozen sub-chambers radiating from that. The palace sits in a gigantic stone column almost a mile across. This makes the layout vulnerable, as the Column is also a major supporting structure for most of the bastion. Its destruction would not only cut the power of the bastion and send hazardous volcanic gas into the city; it would most likely crash more than ten square miles of roof above. The death toll would be catastrophic. Luckily, nothing short of a nuclear blast has the capacity of inflicting enough damage to compromise the stability of the column.

Population: 15 million

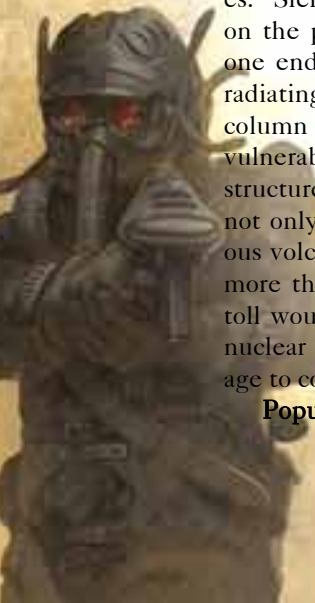
Tech Level: 4

Government: Hereditary dictatorship. The Column houses the single ruling family. They are not considered royalty, but the rulership is nevertheless passed on from parent to child. If no heir apparent is available, a new family takes control. The current family is the Valterras who have ruled for more than 75 years. It is uncertain how long this method of government has persisted. Sierra Madre has the fewest codified laws of any bastion, and the rulers rarely abuse their power.

Military: Sierra Madre prides itself on having the best trained but smallest military, perfectly specialized in operating underground. The standing force is less than 1000, but with massive numbers of ceiling-mounted automated weaponry, to fight the Madrians on their home turf would be suicide. There are no surface patrols, as the bastion prefers invisibility to armament.

Religion: While the bastion's population has by and large abandoned faith, they have not turned aside from spirituality. Most embrace the power of the individual, channeling one's energy and maximizing their potential in society. Many embark on meditation and personal quests in order to fulfill their spirit. This philosophy is an incongruous mix of old-world Buddhism and Epicureanism, though neither term would be familiar to a Madrian. The updated expression they employ is "Spherist."

Relations: Sierra Madre sits below the radar of most bastions. With no exports and no communication with the outside, other bastions that know about Sierra Madre don't really care. However, with massive energy



deposits and hardened workers, Sierra Madre could make a useful ally if anyone could find them.

Names: Much of the bastion's original population was of Latin descent, and their propensity for large extended families has resulted in almost every Madrian having a surname derived from Spanish roots even if they originally came from other ethnic stock.

Examples: Andre Semana, Cynthia Calabrea, Maria Jimenez, Sancho Milardes, Tomas Real, Zanetta Valterras



Bastions emerged from scouring the internet looking for ideas. I found many on the various online art galleries, which is also where I found the artists I would later hire with the first book. If you're looking to create your own setting, online art galleries are a great source of inspiration. I recommend asking for permission from the artist though. I did, and artists love being asked. They almost always say yes. I guess they assume someone will take without asking, so it shows respect when you respect them.

YORK

Blue light flickered across the nearby buildings as Gerard knelt over the body. Damaskan female, dressed in a pilgrim's dust-caked traveling cloak, but beneath which was hidden that distractingly tight leather armor those Limshau library ninjas wore. No signs of violation, which was good – there had been a rash of echan rapes and murders some months back, but the creep who did it was locked up tight. Still, best keep this one quiet. The last thing the department needed was another moral scare. Gerard looked more closely. Actually, there weren't even any signs of struggle – the elf's fingernails were undamaged, a short curved sword at her back hadn't even been drawn, and the way she was laying suggested she had been walking along and then had suddenly fallen: the body didn't appear to have been moved, even. He pulled out a flashlight – dead fae don't disrupt anything – and looked for a gunshot wound. Sure enough, right between the shoulderblades – the entry point of a high-powered rifle bullet, probably fired from the upper floor of one of the abandoned warehouses at the back of the alley.

“So the first question is,” the policeman murmured to himself, “what was an elf doing so far from the Broad Way?”

York relied on old technology and building techniques to recover the lost glory of mankind. The second largest bastion after Angel, York never constructed a wall, despite the threat of the pagus and evil dragons of Apocrypha and Ažhi Dahaka. Thankfully, with Limshau, Gnimfall, and Abidan as their strongest echan neighbors, York has never had to worry about invasion from a superior force, and can easily repel attacks from the pitiful local bogg tribes.

Like Angel, York relied on echan means to build

their city, but where Angel coopted the hard labor of human refugees, York turned to the technical services of the gimfen. A self-repairing robotic force known as zeros run all of York's hard labor and defenses, a system designed and built in concert with the gimfen of Gnimfall. In the earliest days of construction, York and Gnimfall signed an agreement whereby York would supply the gimfen with precious raw materials and knowledge of the advanced sciences which mankind had acquired over the centuries, and the gimfen would use their ingenuity to apply that knowledge to the problem at hand, advancing York and helping them build a power system based on tidal energy. This required the construction of massive generators deep underground that, according to rumor, still contain gimfen technicians, living for hundreds of years without ever seeing the light of day. Many in York's hierarchy refuse to acknowledge the gimfen's connection, insisting human expertise single-handedly built the city; Gnimfall does not care whether they are given credit or not, since they have already been amply paid for their services.

With no walls to hem them in and no serious threats from outside, York expanded quickly but could do little to resist the constant magical influx into the city from other races and magically endowed humans. With the largest port on the east coast, York became the mouth of the vital corridor between Canam and Lauropa. As a result, the bastion's progression became severely hindered and could not advance as quickly or as consistently as other techan cities. The only notable exception to their technological footprint was the zeros, which being derived from gimfen designs remained somewhat resistant to disruption. The relatively low technological level has allowed some mingling of magic and science, although relations between the two groups have never been smooth. York exhibits the widest variety of attitudes toward echans, some decrying them as defilers of humanity's destiny and others accepting them as signs of Earth's progress, with the majority remaining guarded but noncommittal.

Layout: York resembles a city of Earth past. Old style construction sped development and allows for quick expansion. The only clear sign of advancement is near the coastline, where the tallest and most advanced buildings stand. The coast also sports the largest dock in Canam and the tallest techan structure, the tower of Shinar (at 7,000 feet). Beyond that, the western half of the city is somewhat disjointed and unorganized. Most tourists get lost in the jumble of roads and highways. A single eight-lane freeway passes in a more or less straight line through the city to the port, with a wide verge separating it from buildings on either side. Those travelers that generate the most EDF are gently encouraged to restrict themselves to the innermost lanes and not to linger within the bastion.

Population: 35 million

Tech Level: 0-1

Government: Judiciary democracy. York does not separate its legislative, executive, and judicial processes, the entire city being governed by a High Court,





headed by an elected President who governs with no fixed term until recalled by a vote of no confidence. Any citizen has the right to argue a case or propose a motion before the High Court, and any citizen can be chosen to serve on it by appointment from the President or by garnering enough signatures on a petition. All motions are carried by a simple majority. Laws are enacted by judicial precedent and can be overruled by the Court with sufficient justification. The ruling body battles constantly with the problem of crime in the city. The current President's priority is keeping the populace stable and on ways to minimize the city's dependence on its robot workforce.

Military: The York Self Defense Force (YSDF) is tasked with defense of the city and is the largest standing techan army in Canam: however, 85% of the law enforcement in the city is robotic. Should the YSDF ever be called upon to operate extensively outside the bastion, they would find their manpower seriously reduced as the zeros do not work reliably far beyond the periphery.

Religion: Various. York is the only bastion with cathedrals dedicated to echan faiths. These churches are permitted as long as no magic is performed within and no illegal acts are witnessed. Beyond this, virtually any human religion has a representative in York, with the various Abrahamic faiths dominant due to the bastion's proximity to Abidan.

Relations: Paranoia lingers between Mann and York, and many fear armed conflict is inevitable. Besides Mann, York's other relations are strong, though many other bastions look down on them for their tolerance of echans within their borders and the commensurate lim-

its this has placed on their technological development. York maintains good relations with Gnimfall in spite of downplaying the echan nation's role in the construction of the bastion, remains on reasonably good if somewhat distant terms with Limshau, and while they have no official relationship to the other echan settlements nearby, they neither interfere with them nor prevent their entry for trade or transport. Unfortunately, racism and crime often follows those non-humans who enter unless protection is provided. A day pass for non-humans and mages costs 40 uc; the cost for non-resident humans is 10 uc. Those found without a pass or resident identification is politely escorted to the bastion's borders and instructed to go through proper channels for entry.

Names: York's population has always been ethnically diverse, but with a large population that speaks Englo-Lingo as a first language (even though it is not the primary language of the bastion), most names have a strong French or Germanic influence.

Examples: Celeste Dupont, Clement Morel, Jeanne Milokovic, Konrad Tombs, Marie Kandler, Theo Vandersaar

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York is the bastion whose design and technology is closest to our present world, and is one of the two assumed starting points for a first-time techan party (the other being Angel). The Broad Way serves the same purpose that Genai does in Angel - a touch of alienness in the midst of familiar scenery, to stimulate the appetite for adventure.

THE WORLD BEYOND

While bastions represent beacons of humanity's ancient legacy, they are not the dominant forces in Canam. The majority of what would commonly be considered civilized life on the continent falls under the dominion of several major kingdoms, communes and confederations. Because of the great distances between them, diplomatic and trade relationships between these nations are sporadic at best, but by the same token open warfare between them is also rare. Most of the major nations are connected by tributary roads to the Continental Cross and thus are relatively easily reached by travelers, but a few are isolated by hostile wilderness, only safely traversed by thermal flyer.

ABIDAN

The bucket chain ran from the fountain at the center of the courtyard, up the steps leading to the crenellated wall – a line of mostly townswomen, passing the water from hand to hand to put out the balls of flaming pitch that flew over the Bulwark, keeping their husbands, brothers, sisters and children on the wall safe from fire to focus on holding the line.

Two days ago, the fountain had been abuzz with chatter and laughter. Today, the chapel bells tolled the alarm, and every citizen of Janoah was either safe indoors or lending what help they could to defend the city. God willing, in another two days only the burn marks would indicate that there had been a battle here – and there would not be many new crosses scratched into the wall's unyielding stones as silent memorials to the fallen.

Abidan, land of faith and chivalry, is located in north-eastern Canam in the crux between the Grand Lakes and a yawning gulf leading out to the sea. It guards the land bridge of Tethuss, the only safe route into the civilized lands of southern Canam from the darklands of Apocrypha. Its capital Janoah is a massive fortress stretched across the bridge's entire breadth, whose doughty knights man the Bulwark keeping the pagus armies at bay.

The nation was founded by the Christian Paladin King, Vincent Savarice, who gathered fleeing refugees throughout the north and personally oversaw the guard of the city until his death at the ripe age of 134. It is said his longevity was due not to any magic, but to divine purpose – one of the few individuals in history to have this claim almost universally acknowledged.

Savarice's true origins are lost to legend. According to the tales, he washed ashore on the eastern seaboard, battered and bruised from rapids and rocks, his armor rusted, cracked, and falling off his body. He offered the salvageable pieces of refined steel to a nearby forge in exchange for nothing more than a loaf of bread and a lump of cheese. The fragments contained pieces of a symbol, a great crest of a house of prominence from across the ocean. The man cast them aside easily and watched the seals melt in the fire. Then he traveled north along the shore, never lingering more than a day

at any dock or village. He lived simply, not wishing to impose and accepting only the barest fare he was offered, always insisting on paying for even this largesse with his own labor. He wore rough clothes, simple boots, a rough, uninspiring metal shield at his back, a notched and pitted blade with a wrapped leather hilt his only weapon, yet wherever he went his charisma shone out like the kings of legend. Wherever he walked, he spoke, and crowds gathered to listen. He spoke of nobility and truth. His tales told of bravery and kindness. In a land of slavery and spite, his words resonated with people praying for dignity and chivalry. Though a cross hung from his neck, Vincent never preached his faith and contended that kindness from the heart surpassed any grace from heaven. He spoke simply of kindness of the soul and the capacity of civilized men to rise above what the animals inside told them to do.

Followers followed, as followers do. Savarice refused to call himself their prince or even their commander, but did not turn away any who came to him with chivalry in their hearts. These few men and women remained at his side as they made their way up the coast. The King's Caravan, as it came to be known later, was hardly any legendary ride: merely a dozen-odd warriors in mismatched armor on mismatched steeds, leading a great refugee camp away from lands wracked by slavery and intolerance. Among them were such storied names as Nobah Kohein, a brave holy warrior from another faith, and the Monster of Mauron, an enormous gladiator with a gentle soul, forced to fight until Savarice freed him. The caravan clashed with slavers and defeated monsters both mythical and modern. They freed the oppressed and championed virtue and honor to those in fear. In one town, outside of York, Vincent would meet Devorah Miller, a steel-eyed woman of fierce will and his future wife, though they would not marry for many years.

Throughout this journey, Savarice never accepted any title from his followers, despite the legends that have grown in the subsequent centuries. Besides, a king needed a kingdom and Savarice had only people, not yet a nation. But as his caravan grew to the hundreds, Savarice felt a calling. He knew a destination waited at the end of his unnamed crusade.

When the caravan, after many years, at last came to the lands surrounding the mouth of Tethuss, every fiber of Savarice's soul told him this land was to be their home. Here was a land empty of settlers, but showing all signs of being rich in natural resources. A kingdom needs growing land, mineral wealth, stone and timber more than faith. It also needs allies, but these Savarice's caravan had earned in plenty with their good and selfless deeds. From Limshau and Finer, he hired carpenters and engineers, miners and architects. The Bulwark on the southern side of the bridge was erected in less than a year, though it would undergo extensive renovations over the next century. Behind the fortress wall, the town (later the city) of Janoah grew just as quickly. Though Savarice insisted the homes and agricultural networks of the realm be built first, his closest





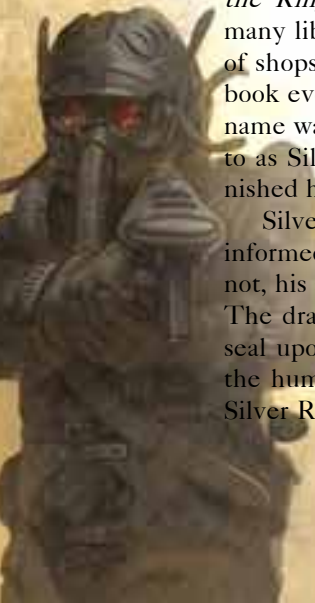
friends and most loyal subjects put pencil to parchment almost immediately to design a great keep for their new ruler, named after the wall.

It was not until Savarice and his order of knights, the Line of Abraham, took it upon themselves to rescue a Limshau caravan attacked by a superior force of boggs, however, that the king's legend was spread throughout the continent. Though the Line suffered losses, the fae were freed and carried back to Janoah for tending. When they returned to Limshau, they spoke of the courage and charisma of the knights and their Paladin King, the first time Savarice had been referred to by such a title. Several well-regarded librarians traveled to the city to record the many tales of the knights' bravery, which they later edited into a hefty book that found circulation across Canam, *Accounts from the Caravan of the King*. The book became a prized possession of many libraries and found distribution among thousands of shops and bibliotheca across Canam. A copy of this book eventually came to a powerful holy dragon, whose name was never revealed and would be further referred to as Silver River, on account of his long mane of burnished hair.

Silver River arrived dramatically at the bulwark and informed Savarice that, whether he wished the honor or not, his actions had earned him the grace of blood royal. The dragon claimed to speak for Lazarus and placed a seal upon Savarice's palm, which would forever render the human immune to any disease, natural or magical. Silver River then decreed since the paladin had no her-

itage he could recall, the holy dragon would adopt the human as its child, making the name of Savarice a symbol of power and faith. The dragon's proclamation echoed throughout the skies of Canam, and Savarice, though ever humble, could no longer deny the title laid upon him. The Kingdom of Abidan was born in truth.

Within a few years, the kingdom expanded to encompass more towns and thousands more people. Immigrants to Janoah ballooned to such an extent that even a few nearby communities with no prior connection to the blossoming nation raised Janoahn flags, voluntarily annexing themselves to the new kingdom. Savarice and his Line of Abraham were inundated with requests for patronage and blessings. Though its founders variously followed the three Abrahamic faiths, and many of the immigrants also professed one of these religions, the king insisted that no single faith be allowed to dominate: Abidan would be a haven for all faiths and philosophies. All its ruler demanded of his people was kindness. Savarice, a devout holy man, also believed in logic and his teachings, although derived from old Christian books, promoted more flexibility and acceptance of new ways and theories on life. That said, other human and fae religions do not have a strong presence within the kingdom. The advantage of the Abrahamic triad is that they are founded on the principle of the Word of God, and their doctrine is revealed through holy texts which have been reinterpreted and debated by scholars for millennia. Such religions naturally lend themselves more to the philosophical and scholastically-



minded people of Abidan than ritualistic animist faiths or contemplative spirituality.

The king died as he had lived: not from old age, but defending his people on the Bulwark against the death dragon Laban of Miserere. Laban, critically wounded, his army wiped out, fled into the uttermost north and was never seen again. To this day, the kingdom remains strong. Its current king, Claudas, prefers his knightly duties than his kingly ones, but his siblings maintain the image of complete authority and wisdom. Abidan's nearest neighbors are the human kingdom of Kannos, the gimfen of Gnimfall, damaskans and humans of Limshau, and the narros from the Finer Fire Pits. Abidan has a strong relationship with all of them, with oaths of brotherhood with Kannos and Limshau. Baruch Malkut, however, is anathema to all their traditions; the so-called 'Blessed Kingdom' placed a price on the head of the Paladin King during the march of the Caravan, and the rulers of Abidan have always considered the southern nation to be the greatest threat to peace in Canam, not the pagus and dragons of the north. Kannos and Abidan have shared noble blood, but in keeping with the fae traditions of the blood royal, the kings and queens of Abidan have never matched for political purposes. Abidan is strong in farmland and livestock, but is nowhere close to Kannos. They have rich mines but nothing compared to Gnimfall or Finer. Abidan is only extraordinary in the wills and dedication of its people and the goodwill of its allies; should open war ever erupt in the south, Abidan's knights will be there to defend the innocent.

On the surface, Abidan is much like any other echan kingdom, though it has a distinct old-world feel to it reminiscent of the pre-Hammer classical romances – a characteristic, incidentally, also found in modern Lauro-pa. Some cynics have suggested that the only reason the country sustains its 'fairytale kingdom' aesthetic is because of how clean it is, and such commentators would not be far off the mark. Abidan has a strong tradition of civic service, and consequently is a great deal cleaner and better tended than a truly medieval kingdom would be. Streets in the towns are well-maintained – some are even paved – and public parks and gardens are plentiful. The old Abrahamic traditions of constructing great edifices to the glory of God are very much in evidence throughout the nation. Every major city contains at least one great cathedral or mosque, usually both (often situated on the same square and designed by the same architects); the city of Taskin-Kada also bears an impressive Hebrew temple modeled after the long-lost Temple of Solomon.

Because of its alliances with Limshau and Gnimfall, Abidan is also a center of learning and progress. Its people push the boundaries of what is possible in a world saturated by EDF. The larger farms use horse-drawn combine harvesters to bring in their crops, and even smaller homesteads boast early industrial conveniences. The cities even maintain a rudimentary sewer system and coordinated public sanitation. Unlike many echan nations, Abidan maintains a public school system, free

to any citizen, where the kingdom's youths are taught to read and learn at least the basics of mathematics, literature, the arts and sciences. Though some nobles hire private tutors for their children, all royal scions attend the same schools as the children of burghers, merchants, and farmers, and so most of the nobility follows their example. Dozens of faith-based schools exist as well to educate their followers on the finer points of their own, and neighboring, religions.

Other noteworthy towns in Abidan other than the capital of Janoah include Clarvus, Pilbara, Selavia, and Taskin-Kada, this last being home to the largest Islamic and Jewish populations in Canam and the center of operation of the Watchers, the closest thing Abidan has to a secret service.

Names: Englo-Lingo and Semitic are the dominant languages in Abidan, albeit more archaic and formal dialects that emphasize the classical French and Arabic elements, and it is not uncommon, especially among the nobility, to hear names that would not have sounded out of place in the ancient crusader states. Given that the kingdom still sees a constant stream of immigrants from elsewhere in the continent, names of any ethnic extraction (or combination thereof) are possible.

Examples: Claude Guiscard, Elise Beauchamp, Fatimah Mosoul, Mahan Vaaris Farcon, Roland Amuad, Sarah Minaschent



Abidan is the setting's obligatory 'Kingdom of Good.' In its original form, it was basically Gondor with the serial numbers filed off, but after watching the CBC documentary 'Canada: A People's History,' I started to inject a few cultural elements of late French Canada into the mix - medieval attitudes lingered a bit longer in Quebec than elsewhere in our history, and shared the stage with early industrial advances, making it a good representation of Canam in general and Abidan in particular.



In the next book, you'll read how not everything is roses in Abidan, and how ideological differences and internal politics have prevented ideal relations with Abidan's closest allies. In retrospect, I should have revealed a bit more, the fact their existence was required due to their strategic position in Canam, thus a greater tolerance is offered them. The ultimate point being that Abidan still rides the pristine reputation as a noble and righteous kingdom...a reputation that is become more a façade each generation.



BARUCH MALKUT

Caleb sneered. "You think be all siesta on ta verandah, sippin mint juleps, lookin out atta diabos toilin inta fields and zappin they wita lightrin wand when they get stroppy, no?" He spat. "You be watchin too many puppet shows. Be nothin like tha, even for ta ricos. You plain never had sleep hip-deep in mud, hopin ta heat don kill you before ta mosquitos do, prayin your toes don get chomped by thievin caimans, thata chaparrans won come take your head off while you sleep, and thata succubus won steal your caralho in your dreams. Tha what real life be like. An our bastardo of a king has ta bolas to call it ta 'Blessed Kingdom'—though he slept rougher in his time if you believe ta legends." Instinctively, he looked shiftily back over his shoulder. "Anta worst of it be," he went on in an undertone, "me own mǎe'd probably turn me in jus for sayin all tha."

A prosperous nation in the midst of swamps and saltwater marshes, dependent on slave labor to work its fields while its populace indulges in the twin national pastimes of luxury and bigotry, Baruch Malkut is a land held in the iron grip of a seemingly ageless prophet, who uses his peoples' religious ardor as part of a scheme to rule the world – a world of magic, in which only humanity has a right to exist.

Southam is not a hospitable terrain for humans. Between the ravening monsters that suddenly populated the jungles and rivers, and the more civilized monsters who viewed humans as just another strange animal to be hunted for food or sport, those humans who stayed after Attricana's opening were almost wiped out. A few managed to find respite with a few narros and ogre towns, but these were rare occurrences. Thousands attempted to migrate north, but many failed attempting to cross the Gloam, and others were devoured by sea

monsters attempting to follow the shoreline by boat. However, four hundred years ago, a small population reached the shores of southeastern Canam. Exhausted, unable to travel farther, they settled into the swampy lowlands and began the slow work of recreating a civilization.

Then Darius Konig arrived.

Legend tells that Konig came from Southam or at least near the border of the Gloam almost two centuries ago. He gained a few avid followers, captivated by his charisma and physical discipline. With life dangerous for humans, Konig and his people (the Cloth) immigrated north through the Gloam. They passed through the darkness, but only half survived the journey. Few reports tell of Konig's disposition before the pilgrimage but many tell of the fanatic that arrived in Canam. Konig believed himself the new prophet of God. During his eastward trek, he wrote the Helios Codex. The book does not teach followers virtue or kindness, but preaches a rabidly xenophobic view of the world. According to Konig, God deemed technology a sin no longer welcome in His kingdom, rejected man's old ways and brought the Rapture. To those that remained, He granted the secrets of magic, but also brought forth inhuman demons from Hell to test Man's faith.

As they entered the southeast of Canam, Konig and the Cloth were welcomed into the small echan town of Faustis. The people there lived in the shadow of a small bastion called Sebring. Sebring resembled Angel in many ways, although smaller, with less than 150,000 residents. They lacked advanced technology, being like York limited to the most basic of conveniences. Even though Sebring never harmed or suppressed the people of Faustis, Konig created a feeling of fear and hatred towards the techans. Zealots and fanatics



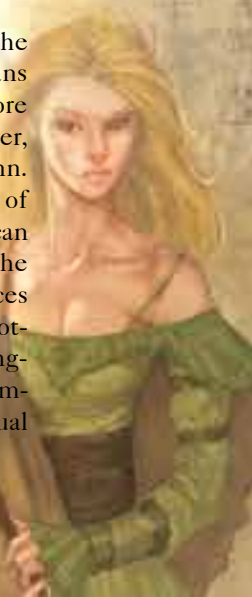


flocked from surrounding villages. Sebring never realized how large this force had grown, and did not even anticipate an attack until magical bombardment brought the short walls of Sebring down in less than three days. The armies of Faustis ravaged the bastion, taking no survivors and showing no mercy. According to one report, Konig demanded the city be burned to ash, with the surviving population inside. Anyone trying to escape was crucified and their bodies posted around the bastion as a message to others. By the time the last flame died out three weeks later, a thousand grisly crosses surrounded the gutted bastion of Sebring. This fanatical hatred spread quickly through the land, the zealots founding new towns or subjugating existing ones. When all the land of the marshy peninsula was under his sway, Konig appeared once again to the masses. He revealed a new vision from God: the world still belonged to magic, but it also belonged only to Man. Fae creatures were nothing less than Hell-spawned demons, and only when the last fae had been exterminated would the Kingdom of Heaven come to being on Earth. The frightening pace on which Konig swayed the masses alarmed non-humans already living in the kingdom. Half-breeds were exiled or lynched. Pure blood fae were murdered wherever they were found, or captured by slavers and brought south to work the humans' lands as beasts of burden. Of all non-humans, Konig despised the tilen above all else, labeling them succubi dedicated to coopting the pure blood of humanity. Tilen were never officially taken as slaves; whenever they were captured (or discovered as slaved), they were marched to the sea under the blazing sun and ceremonially drowned. This resulted in them being prized

by rich landowners, and exceptions are known to have occurred.

Within a century, the Blessed Kingdom claimed all the land of southeast Canam, from the Great River to Okeanos. As Konig closed his grip on new lands, his eyes turned to nearby territories like Tranquiss, Laurama, and especially Limshau. The first delegation from Limshau was brought before Konig who had them executed on the spot, their books burned and the ashes sent back to the fae. The custodians of Zorahn (who sent the delegation) swore to avenge their brothers and books: a few small clashes have occurred in the following century but an official declaration of war has never been announced. Limshau remains alert to the Malkut threat, and is backed by powerful allies in Abidan and Gnimfall. Meanwhile, the armies of the Blessed Kingdom have been unable to stage a successful attack on Laurama, and Tranquiss demoralizes any army that looks upon it. Konig refuses to let such a setback hold him and swears Malkut will cover all of Canam in his lifetime.

The greatest threat to Canam, and maybe the known world, is the growing fanaticism of the humans of Baruch Malkut. The kingdom is, in some ways, more dominated by religion than Abidan – for that matter, more than any other state in Canam except Mann. Their entire way of life is dominated by the strictures of the Helio Codex – not that most of the population can actually read it, but they are told what it says by the kingdom's fanatical priests and missionaries in services that everyone attends at least once a week. The zealotry that characterized the early days of the Blessed Kingdom has largely died down, replaced by a low-key simmering callousness for all non-human life and a casual



assumption that followers of Konig's way are inherently superior beings, but the spiritual atmosphere of the realm is such that Konig or his followers in the Cloth could easily whip the populace into another religious frenzy should it become politically expedient to do so. Baruch Malkut missionaries also travel extensively throughout Canam, preaching human superiority, the sinfulness of technology, and warning of the retribution to come if the local population does not submit to Darius Konig before his armies come for them. Other than these itinerants and other agents of the Kingdom, there are no followers of this religion outside of Baruch Malkut.

Time has refused to claim Darius Konig after these years and the dictator continues his maniacal crusade against technology and non-humans, despite being more than two hundred years old. Not a stupid man, Konig has recently allowed plans to be set in motion for a traditional rail network ridden over by stream powered trains (steam power being, according to Konig's proclamation, the limit of God's acceptance of technology). Though it is estimated this effort will take fifty years to complete, Konig hopes the rail network will ferry troops and supplies to outer towns, allowing him to finally overcome the stalemate and subjugate Limshau once and for all. Limshau, in turn, hopes that over the next few years or decades, as society progresses united past Baruch Malkut, the native population would overthrow the man responsible for retarding their civilization's potential. Furthermore, many believe the kingdom's fanaticism will die with its king, though as Konig is over 200 years old and shows no signs of age, unheard of in any unbonded human, no one knows exactly how long they may wait for this deliverance.

Though the kingdom can no longer expand its borders, its population continues to grow and it boasts some of the most fertile crops in all of Canam, tended exclusively by enslaved fae. Though Konig preaches the eventual extermination of all faekind, he is unwilling to overlook the economic potential of exploiting them, though he prohibits breeding of fae slaves within his demesne. He also personally despises fae indentured prostitution, declaring it a sin against God and Humanity – however, there are no actual laws against it, and even if there were it would likely not stamp out the thriving trade in fae bordellos. Almost all towns, save for Itinera and Nassau, use and sell slaves though the prime exports emerge from Matronis and Tobias. They hardly refer to them as elves or even slaves, preferring more dispassionate, but equally merciless terms like merchandise, property, goods, or furniture. The Malkut slave markets move the most gold in a day of any place on Earth, which helped secure the kingdom as one of the most stable and successful in the world. Because of this, although few who live there would realize it (education being somewhat discouraged within the realm in favor of mass indoctrination) Baruch Malkut's way of life fairly closely mirrors that of the region's distant colonial past in the old Age of Man.

Noteworthy cities in Baruch Malkut include Archytas, Faustis, Itinera, Karum, Kavus, Maskell, Matronis, Miynos, Nassau, Orlov, Sykar, Tobias, and Vallis.

Names: The official language of Baruch Malkut is Onespeak, which has a strong Portuguese component thanks to the most common background of its populace, but it also contains many terms with strange or completely invented etymologies. Names with a religious significance are particularly common.

Examples: Abel Medeiros, Carla Danassan, Eneas Ferreira, Fabia Albeirao, Henrique Araullo, Nathalia Victoris



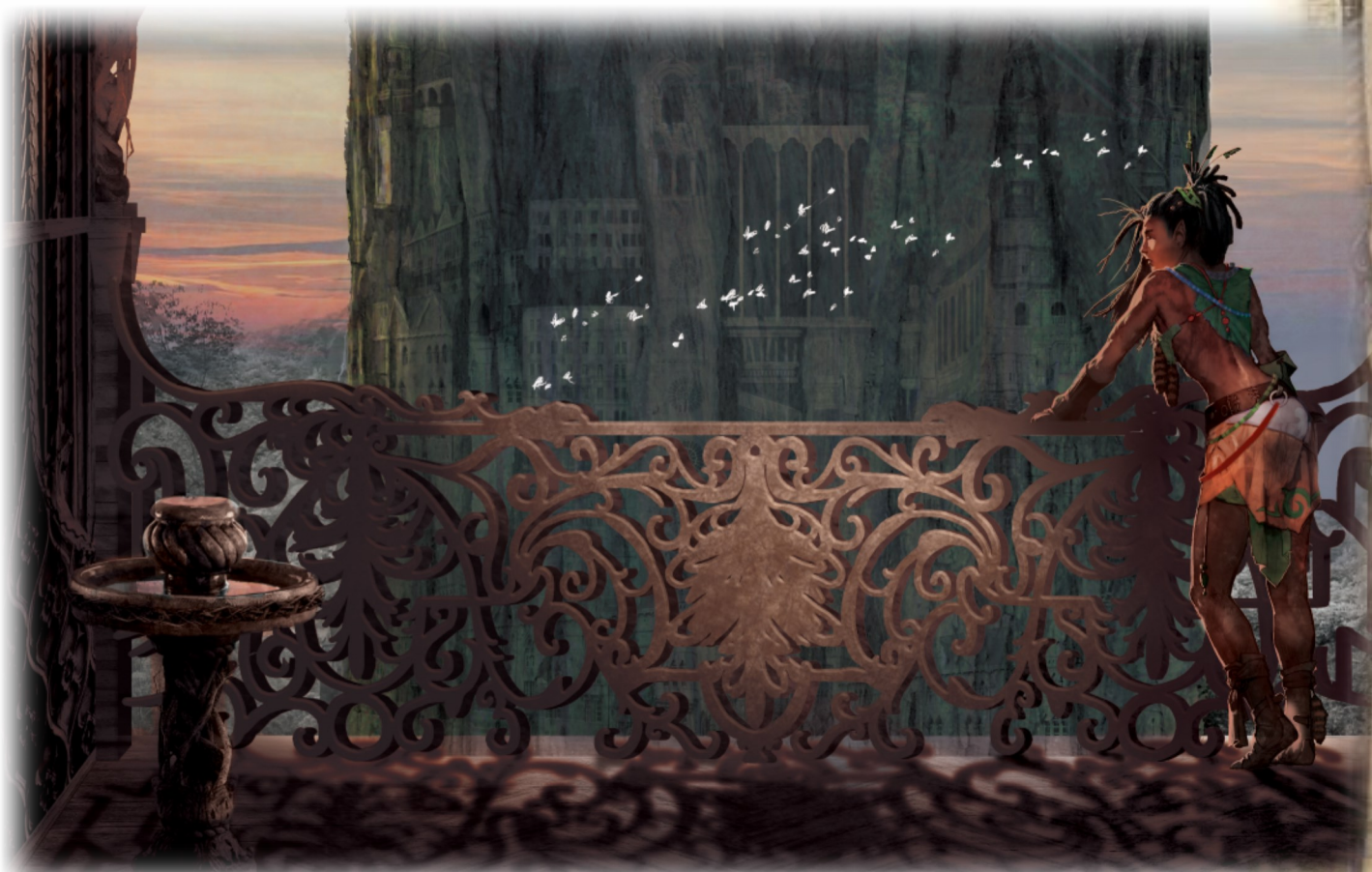
Baruch Malkut is a bit of a problem. It's deliberately designed to have no redeeming features, and yet we provide a disproportionate amount of options for characters to come from there. It's also easy for it to be overshadowed by our equivalent of Mordor, despite being a far more immediate and insidious threat than the northern wastelands. Although it is (purely superficially) similar to the Confederacy, the role it plays in the setting is more like the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War - a monolithic, hostile totalitarian ideology with both the power and the will to conquer, only kept in check by constant vigilance on the part of its enemies and rampant internal corruption.



Resulting from the idea that if fae could only reproduce by bonding that they would eventually be enslaved by monsters wishing to exploit them, Baruch Malkut was born. Creating an allegory of other empires employing slave labor was obvious, though I never specifically followed one as a mirror. Yes, some of the fluff points are taken near verbatim from the slave trade in the colonial United States, but that was only one portion—the non-slavery bits were modeled off of North Korea, specifically elements of the cult of personality which Baruch Malkut has, and what would happen of the personality was actually immortal.

DAWNAMOAK AND THE TOWERS OF JIBARO

Looking down from the balcony, her reaching hands draped over the polished railing that grew from the living wood of the tree, Valakkinye's keen eyes could pick out the newcomers even from this distance, despite the intervening tree canopy. From up here, the visitors' horses looked like ants, and the



men themselves like grains of sand. “Why are they here, *chichya?*” she asked her father as he stepped out into the evening sunlight beside her.

“They are here to study,” he told her. “They want to know about our ways.”

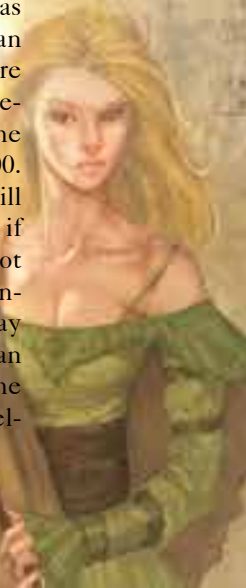
The girl’s brow wrinkled in confusion. “But Mistress Kalkirrin says that the monkey-folk are brainless *yahsor*—”

Her father rapped her sharply on the head. “We do not use that word, even if Mistress Kalkirrin does,” he said firmly. *Valakkinye* pouted and rubbed her scalp as he went on. “And it is true that humans are an ignorant people, but a few of them are just wise enough to realize that they know nothing. That is what brings them here – to learn a better way. With diligent teaching, we may grow them into better creatures before their brief time on this world is over.”

Dawnamoak is the largest chaparran civilization in Canam and what most outsiders – at least those who have ever heard of the place – think of when they envision chaparrans. Spotting the great forest of Dawnamoak is easy. The fields of grass and bushes stop abruptly, replaced by wooden behemoths. The trees of Dawnamoak stand many times taller than other forests. Many of them stretch more than 80 feet across at their base and tower a mile up, and yet even they are dwarfed by the Towers of Jibaro at the center, trees grown from the graves of the wisest elders. A fortress graces each peak, grown directly from the wood: Strongwood, Berustar, and Larenoak. Berustar is the heart of the chaparran religion, with their highest priest, Syl-

vanakassus, governing the tower and its inhabitants. The tower Larenoak holds the chaparran scroll library and the Darawren academy, with Ramankasagranthos maintaining order. The last, Strongwood, is home of the military and governing body. From here rules the highest chaparran and leader of Dawnamoak: Valenti-arankerr.

No-one knows whether the forest came before the chaparrans or the chaparrans before the forest. The woodland fae do not keep extensive historical records, and although there are a few chaparran elders who could probably remember, they consider such questions not worth worrying about. Certainly, if someone were to tell any human of the neighboring territories that the land where Dawnamoak now stands was once desert and scrubland, they would be met by disbelief, for the enchanted forest gives off the sense of unimaginable age, far older than five mere centuries. How long it has been inhabited, none can say. There are many human settlements just beyond the fringes of the forest that are not even aware that the woods are the chaparrans’ *demesne*. No one is sure how many chaparrans live in the forest but numbers guess between 35,000 and 65,000. Visitors are not automatically turned away, but they will find no welcome unless they speak chaparra (even if they know another language, the residents will not speak anything else). Those who speak the proper language may stay... for a short while. This is not to say that outsiders are entirely unwelcome, but they have an uphill struggle ahead of them. Sometime within the first century after *Attricana* opened, humans sent a del-



egation into the forest to make contact with its reclusive residents. What happened at that exchange has not been recorded, but the humans were soon thereafter escorted out of the wood and warned never to return. But in 355 A.E., the human wizard Sugi Gantilanna entered the great forest in hopes of establishing a sociable relationship with the fae, something no human had ever succeeded in doing previously. Though the chaparrans of Dawnamoak still regard mankind as a whole with mistrust, Sugi struggled against the stereotype for many months and eventually earned acceptance. Despite sending occasional correspondence, Sugi would never leave the forest in his lifetime. During the following fifty-five years, Sugi found a greater respect offered to him than to any human before or since.

Although most believe the trees to be oak, the majority are actually conifers, specifically cupressaceous variants like giant sequoias and dawn redwoods. While in a traditional forest, the lack of sunlight resulting from such a dense canopy would starve out lesser trees, a side-effect of magical saturation also allows smaller deciduous flora to survive and flourish beneath the huge cedars, and even a few grasses and wildflowers below them. Search hard enough and one could even find a coconut palm, a flowering cherry, or any one of a dozen species of flowering and fruiting trees not indigenous to the region (or even to the prevailing climate). A strange attribute only seen by the chaparrans of Dawnamoak is their family attachment to specific trees. Every child born in the forest is given a tree to care for. Although this is not uncommon for all chaparrans across the world, in Dawnamoak specific species of trees seem to equate to specific chaparran ethnicities: those with the darkest skin tones always bond with the sequoiadendrons, while the lighter tan chaparrans always choose giant pines. There are more than a dozen other connections made between the various families of chaparrans and specific species of trees.

Chaparrans become more agreeable to the outside world the farther away they are encountered from the three towers. Although those residing in the towers claim all forests they see as theirs, there are dozens of smaller villages hidden in the woods that claim no loyalty to them. Their beliefs can often be different than those in the capital. Noteworthy villages include Koonas, Kerrana, Ulknas, and Widdig.

FARGON

Lorrask grunted as he pulled himself up onto the ledge. It wasn't that he resented the obligation of climbing the mountain – if nothing else, it got him out of earshot of his younger sister, who talked like a tenenbri and had about as much tact as one – but he had been perhaps overly dedicated to his last piece of work and had ended up putting off the pilgrimage until the middle of winter. Narros were supposed to be hardy folk, but sometimes Lorrask secretly suspected that this was partly an act that his people put on to impress the other fae with their dedication, and had made the mistake of buying their own hype. His sister would say that he was a disgrace to the family

for thinking so, and the thought of her disapproval made him feel warm again. Only a little further to go. He gritted his teeth and climbed to the next ledge and then the last few feet to the worn pinnacle of the mountain. Balancing atop it, he exhaled into the thin air and looked about him, just as the sun rose over the eastern horizon. Moments like this made it all worthwhile – the whole vastness of Fargon spread out before him, from the mountains to the tundra to the sea, the rooftops of the great temples further down the mountainside flaring red in the morning light. He gave a sniff of satisfaction. Now, to climb back down...

When the fae returned to the world, each lineage appeared in a place that suited their kind best, whether by some subconscious desire or merely by fortuitous chance. Most of the narros fell in the north. They must have wished for isolation, as they landed in an area that virtually locked them off from the rest of the world. Being stalwart and rugged, they easily could have crossed the Nankani Mountains and joined their cousin fae to the south, but they chose to remain and gladly planted roots in a land still chilled but no longer wracked by permafrost, slowly made more habitable by the influence of magic. By the end of the second century, half a dozen cities and twice as many villages had emerged. This land was still far from being entirely hospitable, however, and every city contains a monument to the thousands dead in the creation of their nation.

The harsh environment created a people of unshakable will. The narros of Fargon are the most relentless in the application of whatever path they embrace. They work hard and play even harder. Unlike those in Finer, living their lives in the mines and getting dirty with the spoils of hard labor, Fargon narros are far more spiritual, taking pleasure in a cold breeze or a frigid waterfall with no other noises to distract them. They are also a proud folk even by narros standards, quick to anger and slow to forgive.

Despite the isolation of their distant country, Fargon narros can be found everywhere in Canam. They find pesky obstructions like rivers and mountains a welcome challenge rather than an impediment. A featureless desert would be more of a barrier to narros expansion than a mountain range, though no more difficult to circumvent. Their first contact with outsiders occurred shortly after their largest and most southern city Thos Thalagos was formed. After Thalagos Gin finished erecting his castle, he sent a dozen pilgrim convoys to search for allies or treasure. Travelers east found kodiaks, who wanted little and had less to offer, and also boggs and skeggs, who wanted exterminating. West found nothing but rivers and rumors. South stumbled into a safe crossing of valleys and plateaus later called the Deep Pass at Dianaso, and followed it until they reached the fledgling bastion of Selkirk. After sharing knowledge and company with the resident humans and discovering the unfortunate side-effect of their nature on technology, the pilgrims returned to Thalagos with



something better than treasure: a trade agreement and a firm alliance that has never faltered in the intervening centuries. Eventually, these narros would push past Selkirk to finally encounter fellow fae in Limshau and Salvabrooke. As they traveled, they would build waystations to mark their passage, some of which grew into small settlements centered around some monument or temple, and yet when their exploratory phase was concluded most of these were abandoned by their creators, to be filled by humans or fae stragglers of other species. Sadly, the greatest of these structures now lie under the thrall of Xixion, their stately halls defiled by puggs.

Narros don't dig and mine only for the sake of mining; they are builders as much as they are warriors. Although they use wood, they do so only when stone cannot be employed. Narros were bitter at the lack of artifacts and ruins from the previous age. Of all the nations, the narros are most obsessed with leaving their mark upon the world. Narros cities are the greatest of all the fae. They boast perfection in construction. Every corner is a sharp edge. Every line is without fault. Every building is a mark of mathematical precision. Every tower is an avatar of the narros' faith in their own skill. Narros fortified themselves and created a nation of stone. Their sworn enemies, the pagus, dare not approach these lands unless they arrive in the thousands in preparation for war.

In addition to the treaty with Selkirk and informal agreements with Salvabrooke, the Fargon narros maintain regular diplomatic relations with the Seliqum

Confederation, most of the nations of which (at least the human and damaskan ones) sprang up in the wake of the narros' explorations, moving into abandoned narros camps and deciding to expand on them. Narros ravnorra train the elite warriors of Seliqum, and often travel with them on expeditions into Xixion to explore or cleanse narros-made monuments of the kaddog's filth. They maintain less frequent relations with the kodiaks of Alpinas, although they are happy to fight beside them against the boggs and skeggs who infest north-central Canam. They have few trading relationships with the rest of the continent, as the southern nations find the Finer Fire Pits more convenient. All narros mines in Fargon feature thermal mooring towers but no dragonflyer flyer posts.

Noteworthy cities in Fargon include Hardstone Sig, Mag-Farg, Majed, and Thos Thalagos.


THE FINER FIRE PITS

"So, can you make it for me or not?" I looked back at the human through narrowed eyes, not stopping my work. "Oh, I can make it for you. But it comes with a price."

He frowned. "I already said money was no object—"

I shook my head. "I ain't talking about money. The properties you want placed on this thing – you must be hunting some pretty big game. Big, scaly game by the look of it." I hefted my hammer, the forge-fire glinting in my eyes. "I want a piece of that action."





Over a hundred thousand narros call this gargantuan underground metropolis home. In total, twelve forges are found within the cavern, each as large as a human castle, dwarfed inside the colossal cavern that has never fallen despite a lack of supports. The founder (and still ruler after four centuries) Garach Glim still digs alongside his people. He has shown no signs of senility or exhaustion. When asked why he put down roots so far from Fargon, Garach's answer was simple: "I hate cold." Huge deposits of coruthil and titanium can be found in the Pits, along with practically every other mineral necessity in the modern age.

Above the mines, the narros settlers carved out an immense cave, miles across with the only exit being a single massive staircase leading to the surface. This massive construct, more than 300 feet wide, descends for almost a quarter-mile before finally reaching the Fire Pits. A consistent and uncomfortable red glow radiates over the cavern, which the narros continue to hollow out. Inside, ovens a dozen stories tall work overtime constructing materials and smelting precious ores. The city grows from the walls and roof of the cavern as well as from the ground. In the dark, with only the slight glow of the smelters, the city resembles a Christmas tree turned inside out and spread across every available surface of the cave. Ugly, utilitarian box-shaped buildings grow down, up, and out. Many live out their whole lives without ever seeing the sun, in spite of the strictures of the narros faith. Despite four hundred years of constant digging, the pits continue to be fruitful and were the most profitable narros mines in the world until a recent windfall at Thos Thalagos. Though many in Fargon look down on the Finer Fire Pits, Thos Thalagos is the exception, with Thalagos himself expressing admiration for the tenacity of the narros of the Pits, though also expressing concern that the name is false advertising (the forges are called 'Finer' not because they are in any way superior to other narros cities, but because the name of valley the Pits were dug into was called Finer Vallis by a group of local humans).

A narros from Finer often looks distinct from those from Fargon. While Fargon strives for self-perfection, Finer permits the occasional personal flaw, on the assumption that this frees the individual to focus on their work rather than their self. One of the personal imperfections that Finer tolerates in its residence is a looser approach to spirituality and faith. While all narros give at least token credence to the worship of Oaken, many of the associated traditions of the faith are laid by the wayside by the necessities of life in the Pits. While thus far there has been no occasion to violate the narros' ultimate taboo, some have come to believe that given a rich enough vein, Garach Glim would not hesitate to dig below the proscribed depth. Whether his workforce would continue to support him in that event remains to be seen. That said, few narros are disposed to take advantage of this freedom. Given a choice, most narros would prefer to remain isolated with their brothers and sisters in Fargon, and if the Pits weren't so profitable,

the entire system would collapse. The Fire Pits maintains its success not so much because of its rich veins, but because of the diversity of its neighbors and the trade goods they can provide in exchange for Finer's metal and craftwork. They are able to bring in goods that narros in the north envy.

Traders, however, do not like to stay in Finer itself. The forges work nonstop and are built with inadequate insulation, keeping the average temperature of the entire complex at 46 degrees Celsius, with only a 5-degree drop during the winter. Though the resident population is acclimatized to the severity, visitors are greeted by a wall of heat that hits like an ogre immediately upon entrance. Many of the few non-narros residents are opportunistic hedge wizards peddling heat resistance spells to the narros' customers.

The Fire Pits house the largest repository of narros weapons and armor: only narros gear are kept in storage, while other goods are crafted to order. Though finding magic items can be a chore, many mages from across the world seek out the Pits – not for items or armor – but for Galla Sagard, the famous spellcaster and her well-known Open Library for Arcane magic. Galla loves entertaining visitors even though she seldom gains the opportunity to share her wisdom with other casters.

Most caravans travel through the Limshau city of Kodex before continuing north to the Pits, and few other allies take alternative routes. Even Kannos, their nearest and most profitable human ally, transports their supplies from Warrageen to Kodex before traveling north. Most of the visiting population is damaskan though a few humans have appeared time and again. Many of those are either independent merchants or wanderers looking for work. Since the narros here never developed a tight bond with humans like Thos Thalagos, the Finer populace considers humans another non-narros race best avoided when there is no business to be done. The Fire Pits feature a dragonflyer flyer service but no mooring towers.

KANNOS

My master was too fat to ride a horse, yet he owned dozens. He never even came down to the stables to care for them – that was my job. I fed them, groomed them, mucked out their stalls, exercised them: as far as they were concerned, they were my horses. He just happened to possess them. Then the skeggs came and raided the ranch, and took the horses away. My master ordered me, then pleaded with me, then begged me on his knees to get them back for him. All his wealth was tied up in those horses, and without them he'd have to sell the land – he'd be ruined. Instead, I gave my notice, took down my grandfather's halberd and chainmail, and went north. If I find them, I'll take them back... for someone who will appreciate them. Finders keepers.

Kannos formed from the remnants of a failed bastion, Appareci. Now the kingdom's capital, more towns flourished in the lands around and became steadily ab-



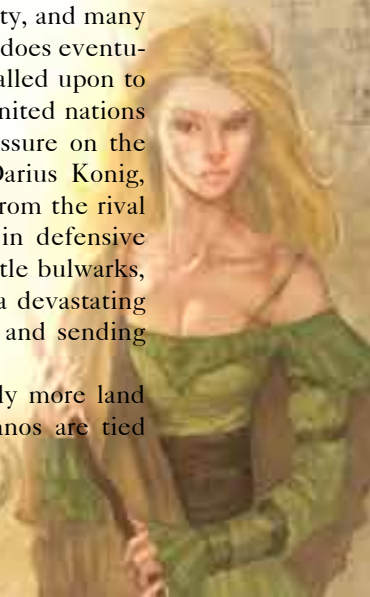
sorbed into the greater whole. The name ‘Kannos’ was offered by the damaskans of Limshau, meaning “Iron Will” in their tongue. The king at the time approved and adopted it as the name of his proto-empire.

Kannos, along with Abidan and Baruch Malkut, are the three largest human-dominated echan kingdoms in Canam. Kannos and Abidan have approximately the same population, though Kannos claims nearly double the land area, with the same strengths in numbers and weakness in magic. Kannos is somewhat more cosmopolitan than Abidan, though not nearly as much as Limshau, and not nearly as obvious because of the kingdom’s low population density. Some outsiders, especially in more xenophobic communities, believe this is the reason for the notable lack of religion in Kannos. Fae tend to be private about religion, assuming that they have one at all, and those that do pray do so without ostentation. The human population follows suit: even those that are openly atheist or agnostic do not make a big deal of the fact, regarding other peoples’ beliefs to be none of their business. The kingdom’s mixed population and perceived atheism makes them an avowed enemy of Baruch Malkut, but Abidan counts them as one of their closest allies, even more so than Limshau and Gnimfall.

Kannos is rich in land and precious materials, but lacks the population to properly maximize its potential. The kingdom’s greatest treasure is its livestock. With rich farmland but without the military presence to defend it against migrating pagus from the east and boggs from the north, Kannos developed a profitable breeding

program for a more mobile form of agriculture: cattle, pigs, chickens, and especially horses. Horses are more abundant than dogs in Kannos, with many children given a young steed as soon as they learn how to walk. These horses are treated as equals within the family. The kavaliers, Kannos’ elite mounted warriors, spend the majority of their lives training their mounts and develop a bond with their steeds bordering on the telepathic. But despite their proud cavalry traditions, Kannos has yet to be involved in any major war. As all of its civilized neighbors are staunch allies of the kingdom, the largest engagements occur between lance companies and swarms of puggs, boggs and skeggs threatening outlying towns, and the encroaching evil of the Sana Marsh to the south. Like many horsemaster nations of humanity’s past, Kannos generals glorify combat, but rarely have the opportunity to indulge in it; jingoism is thus a common failing of the Kannos nobility, and many have expressed a hope that Baruch Malkut does eventually invade Limshau so that they can be called upon to defend their damaskan allies. Of all the united nations of the north, Kannos places the most pressure on the others to preemptively declare war on Darius Konig, despite never having sustained an attack from the rival kingdom. Compared to Abidan, trained in defensive warfare and the use of shield walls and castle bulwarks, Kannos considers the best defense to be a devastating cavalry charge, trampling down their foes and sending them screaming back to their lands.

Because raising livestock requires vastly more land than farming, wealth and nobility in Kannos are tied



directly to how much land a person can control. The throne, as well as the most land in the kingdom, belongs to the Nezekin family of Appareci, and there has not been a significant threat to their seat of influence in 150 years. The first lord of any given city is the one in possession of the most physical acreage and the beasts to go with it. The kingdom's aristocracy is often considered very homespun and provincial by other kingdoms, as fine clothes and ostentatious jewels are considered lesser status symbols than good horseflesh and plentiful grazing land. Furthermore, Kannos values bloodlines more in its breeding animals than in its nobility, so a sufficiently wealthy merchant or businessman can simply buy himself a sizeable plot of land and a landgrave or count's title to go with it. Kannos has such a small population relative to its borders that often, an aspiring investor only needs to purchase unclaimed acres from the royal charter. Less scrupulous investors may build a ranch or even a free house beyond the border and request, or most likely bribe, the reigning monarch to appropriate the claimed land into the charter and expand the borders of the kingdom. This has occurred several times in Kannos' history, but no major land grabs have occurred recently, as Kannos is reaching the limit of what it can safely annex: with allied nations to the east and hostile wilderness encroaching on its remaining borders, there are currently only three such houses awaiting the protection of the Kannos Cavalry, with as yet no royal word if their petitions will be accepted.

Though humans are on average weak with magic, Kannos is proud to name one of Canam's most powerful wizards as a past resident. Kereptis Rifts claimed a keep in Sarnathi, and even though that town was not absorbed into the kingdom until after Rifts' death, Kannos has given him posthumous citizenship (despite rumors that Rifts was a vile tyrant and that Sarnathi's people celebrated upon his death). Downplaying the rumors as baseless, the city of Sarnathi now cherishes the name of Kereptis Rifts, or rather the booming tourism industry that name brings in the form of adventurers tempted by the tales of treasures in the labyrinthine and treacherous tunnels of the Kereptis Catacombs.

Notable towns in Kannos include Appareci, Golana, Jairus, Sarnathi, and Xiphos.

Names: With its nearest neighbors being Limshau and Salvabrooke, the dominant languages in Kannos are common English and Damaskan. Due to freely absorbing minor houses and smaller kingdoms in their formative years, there is little ethnic consistency within the kingdom, but their preoccupation with mercantilism and the record-keeping that goes with it has resulted in some idiosyncratic modification of the common alphabet, ostensibly for more efficiency (most immediately notable in the firm distinction between 'C'—now a 'CH' sound—and 'K'). Most common names reflect these changes.

Examples: Adryin Kesig, Karl Waldun, Kordylva Harkos, Sesily Mondavé, Shon Makavoi, Wilma Shyn



Or, rendered more familiarly: "Adrian Käsig, Carl Waldon, Cordelia Harkos, Cecily Mondavay, Sean McAvoy, Wilma Sheen." Basically, Kannos is a place where you can get away with naming characters like celebrities name their children.

LAUDENIA

Lannik goggled at the sight of the enormous tower, held in the sky by nothing more than a wish and a prayer. "Stop staring, boy," the wizard chided. "You are already attracting enough attention to me. Acting like a tourist makes it the worse." The boy hurriedly shut his mouth, but he still continually shot wide-eyed glances around him as they walked among the floating island, across white bridges draped with crimson like inverted sunsets. All around the pair, the graceful figures of the city's inhabitants passed by, very pointedly not noticing them—save for one; as they approached the tower, a willowy laudenian came forward and greeted the wizard with a bow. "You have returned, Temmosus," she said. "But why have you brought this groundling here?"

The wizard returned her bow, his expression unchanging. "Lannik will be my apprentice. I am not inclined to explain my reasons. They will become clear in time."

The woman did not look shocked, but her porcelain features became even more masklike. "The council may demand those reasons of you," she warned. The wizard gave an imperceptible shrug. "And I will give them the same answer."

Laudenian arrogance refused to die when they lacked corporeal forms, and has only grown stronger in the centuries since they were restored to them. After their arrival, they utilized their greatest magic and built a mighty city atop a mountain in the west. Deliberately isolated from almost every other culture and guarded by enchanted shrouds, those few ground-dwellers who claim to have seen the city are often dismissed as dreamers or madmen. Its location is vague, floating among a hundred different mountains in the Nankani range, never appearing in the same place twice. On the surface, Laudenia resembles a city of technology, a marble-white floating bastion of towering skyscrapers; but underneath the shine of the walls flows pure magic. The city floats on air, connected to whichever mountain it currently anchors on only by a bridge of solidified cloud. The *Alkanost*, the massive dragon-shaped flagship the laudenians arrived in, floats atop a river of enchanted air alongside the city. The Council of Six runs Laudenia. Elrenar Alkanost, the oldest fae descendant alive and nominal king of Laudenia (although laudenians do not have the same concept of royalty as ground dwellers) still sits at the head of the council. Nacola Falconyr, the most powerful fae mage, also holds a seat. Laudenians commonly turn those who do find their land away without even bothering to learn their business. The only culture they find even tolerable are the




narros of Fargon, with whom they infrequently trade the rich resources of the western Nankani Mountains for those few commodities they cannot obtain themselves. Even then, the laudenians insist on bringing the narros traders into the sky with them and alter their memories afterwards, so that no ground-dweller has a clear idea of the skyrealm's true nature. Visitors are thus not only extremely rare but practically unheard of, and those who enter must adhere to a strict code of respect for the inhabitants: make fewer waves and an outsider's presence may go unnoticed by those who do not want her there. No evil acts are permitted within the realm of Laudenia, with 'evil' being defined entirely at the discretion of the laudenians (who are, thankfully, fairly discerning when not being knee-jerk reactionaries). Voluntary isolation does not prevent those looking for rare items, both magical and not, seeking out the floating city.

When they emerged from the gate, the laudenians found the land below remote and hazardous, an ideal place to build their floating city away from prying eyes. Laudenia was raised in a single day, using the combined magical power of the entire laudenian people, the city emerging right from the mountain stone smooth as polished marble. They ensured all surviving laudenians that did not arrive with the *Alkanost* migrated to the

same point to help in rebuilding their society. Because laudenians have the most spellcasters of any species besides humans, and their magical prowess far surpasses that of other folk, they never endured many of the hardships suffered by other races. Anything they wished for formed itself from thin air before their thought could finish. Looms wove cloth by themselves; food and drink sprang forth from magical cornucopias and endless fountains; crystals projected illusory images from one place to another, so distant friends could speak to each other as though they were in the same room; and for what they could not simply create, the laudenians built giant quicksilver golems to go down to Earth and mine and harvest what they needed.

Once their new capital was built and the ship's population disembarked to their new home, the *Alkanost* departed to begin the long journey of exploring the skies and the wilderness underneath. During this time, the magos traveling aboard began forming the network of floating keeps. Applying the same power that made their city, the laudenians harnessed the ambient magic found in rare stones that enabled them to disobey gravity and elevated them above the clouds, laying down the foundation of an expanding empire. When they wandered too far east, they were turned back by increasing dragon attacks; traveling north or west, they struck an





impenetrable wall of wind; and they possessed enough wisdom to turn back rather than brave a passing over the Gloam. After three centuries, the *Alkanost* returned to Laudenia and moored itself, having completed its work of building castles in the air across the whole breadth of Canam. The keeps peer down from high above, out of sight of most ground-dwellers, never offering the hand of friendship to anyone, rarely lifting a finger for those in need. The laudenian belief professes that to help would offer false hope to the needy, for they themselves are too few to offer any sort of reliable aid. They must choose their battles carefully, only rising to the call when they feel the time is suitable. Some would say that this is merely an excuse to justify the laudenians' fundamental distrust of the ground and all that live upon it, but the laudenians don't care what the earthbound think of them.

The city of Laudenia shines with its own inner light. Even at night, the towers glow with a soft white shimmer emanating from the polished stones themselves. The inhabitants have no need of torch or candle, and can control the light wherever they wish with the simple wave of the hand. As the sunlight refracts through the atmosphere and shifts the sky to different hues, the city often echoes those same changes. As the sky turns orange to red, the city's exposed stone flushes to a rosy tint. Beyond this, the glimmering white stone is carved to precision to build every step, every bridge, every building, and every vase; no cracks nor mortar foul the sheer, smooth surfaces of the fantastical structures. Flowers and fruit grow freely in the public walks and gardens that line the roadways and many of the roofs. Each building in Laudenia supports itself on its own floating island, connected to one another via stone bridges. Seen from above, the city resembles a spider's web with buildings at the intersections and hundreds of bridges and roads connecting them all. The buildings range from short, expansive coliseums to thin and soaring towers scaling nearly as high as the city is wide. Red banners are the most common adornment of the walls, growing in complexity with the height of the building; the peaks of the greatest towers dangle tapestries of intricate designs or wave flags longer than a dragon's wingspan. Inside, the buildings reflect dozens of colors depending on the artistry of the designer, though white brick with red fabric remain the popular choice. There is neither a need of window glass, as no rains fall or winds blow except when and where the Council wishes it so, nor any need of doors, for there are no thieves or vagabonds in Laudenia. No pollution from noise bothers anyone over the tinkling of endless fountains, the chanting of priests and sonant utterances of magical ritual, and the clanging of bells in the cathedrals. Not a single piece of woodwork can be found in the city: close inspection of the flowers and fruiting trees reveals them to be magical constructs, hewn from the same stone as the buildings. Throughout the city, the white stone is carved with waves, circles, and inscriptions many forget to admire. The markings swirl like water through the supports and pillars, across the

arches, and even through the seamless walks. Many of the designs flow towards the center of the city-web, to the tallest tower of Elsius which spears through the cloud cover, dwarfing the highest skyscrapers. At the peak, the tower blossoms like an oak tree to a half dozen platforms and pedestals where the Council meets and the *Alkanost* docks. From here, the panorama offers little of the city through a veil of clouds. The city floats perfectly calm without threat or thrill.

With a city of such majesty, the laudenians seldom wish to show it off to anyone but themselves. A massive artificial cloud shrouds the periphery of the capital. From high, only the peak of Elsius is visible. The inhabitants appear to those they wish, usually reserving such an honor for the greatest dragons and the most powerful fae leaders. Those who leave only do so for one reason: to alleviate the unending boredom of living in a city without dangers, adventure, or responsibilities. Such malcontents are few and far between.



I wanted to create a secret sanctuary of aristocratic elves in the setting—a Shangri-La in Northern Canada. Locked away in the mountains, it was originally intended to not be reachable by anyone. Certain elves depart and are unable to locate it again. It was intended to be a legend. Then the characters in my game found it—not so much an unreachable utopia. As a result, I created Selmana to be the Eden that Laudenia ended up not being...and then my characters found it as well.

LIMSHAU

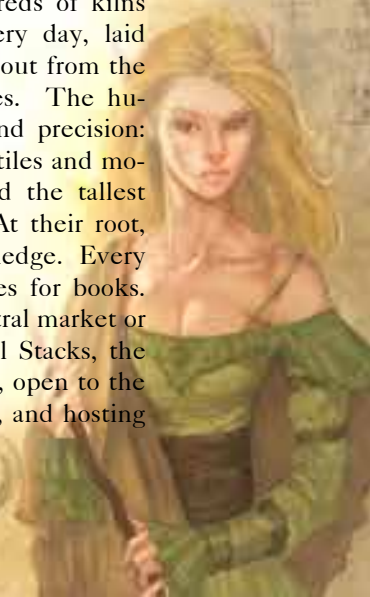
The city looks very different from above than it does from below. Down there it's all mazelike streets, where you might find the walls beside you suddenly replaced by bookshelves at any moment; hawkers, harlots and storytellers vying for your attention from a hundred alcoves, librarians listening to travelers' tales and writing everything down, and overwhelmed tourists desperate to find a place to lose their money; intermittent areas of noise and silence, a crushing crowd only a corner away from a completely deserted street. But up here on the rooftops is a traceur's paradise: a wide open, boxy landscape of stone and adobe, criss-crossed with ropes, ladders, staircases leading to open patios, makeshift bridges across the crowded streets... it looks chaotic, but consider who built it. The drone of the city below filters up only dimly, and you can be free to ponder whatever mysteries you choose as you climb and jump. You could just run from one end of this city to the other forever and never get bored.


Fae exist everywhere, and central Canam accommodates the oddest branch of them, the Limshau damaskans. They erected great academics and training facilities and then did something no fae expected: they invited others in – humans, narros, gimfen, anyone will-



ing to teach and to learn. The Limshau librarians thus became the keepers of the largest repository of knowledge on Earth. These damaskans first appeared on the vast field of Serapea, home to plentiful food stocks, verdant plains, wide rivers, ample supplies of limestone and the raw materials for adobe, and less violent wandering monsters than those that graced the forests and mountains. The leader of the damaskans, Ravenar Limshau III, left most of his followers behind to build the new capital while he himself traveled westward with a small embassy. He had many adventures in his perilous journey (now referred to as the ‘Crusade of Knowledge’), and none are entirely sure how far he traveled, for these crucial records were lost, along with their transcriber, in the first major assault on the city. What is known is that he eventually came before the fledgling walls of the bastion of Angel, and there met with the elders of Genai. Upon his return to the plains, he brought no promises of alliance, but hundreds of Angel humans, mostly of Asian descent, as loyal followers of a new age. The empire grew quickly upon these foundations. Ravenar, the oldest damaskan and one of the oldest living fae at the time, looked upon the new world and understood that a new path awaited him. He told his thousands of followers, both human and fae, to think of this new kingdom as the utopia all other future civilizations would look upon for reference. They would welcome all outsiders and respect their beliefs and laws. The realm would be bound by reason and compassion, with an eye towards knowledge, for in their eyes, knowledge separates the civilized from the barbaric.

Ravenar encouraged his fae brothers to mingle freely and accept his new human friends. Although the process took time, eventually a cosmopolitan community grew from the first seeds. Of all the fae, damaskans are most physically similar to humans, and their peculiarly Asiatic features meant that the earliest human immigrants to Limshau were not that different on the surface from their new fae neighbors. These humans were carpenters, architects, hunters, smiths, tailors, bricklayers, plumbers, doctors, teachers, and civil engineers. They brought vital knowledge the damaskans quickly absorbed. Despite the fae’s superior skill in art and song and their renowned mental and physical discipline, they were astounded by the breadth of applicable knowledge offered by the short-lived humans. Together, they truly believed their new nation would set an example for others to follow. Assisted by magic and enhanced by the perseverance of its population, the town’s progress was unstoppable. Hundreds of kilns fired thousands of pale-white bricks every day, laid down while still warm. The roads spread out from the center, intersected by streets and avenues. The humans’ planning gave the city structure and precision: the fae gave it personality. They painted tiles and mosaics across plain white walls and topped the tallest buildings with the grandest sculptures. At their root, the city would be a storehouse of all knowledge. Every wall in every house would support shelves for books. Where other settlements might have a central market or a grand bazaar, Limshau built the Central Stacks, the most expansive public library in the world, open to the air, protected by magic from the elements, and hosting





at least one text on every subject known to man or fae as well as a catalogue of all other books to be found anywhere within the growing empire. Citizens were encouraged to donate works or words to the collections for all to share. As a community, they would learn from each other and strive to create a civilization based upon the freedom of choice and speech, uncorrupted by religious bias or corporate preference. Churches were not permitted within the walls of Limshau (though its citizens could worship privately as they wished), nor were merchants and shopkeeps allowed to expand into a chain. Ravenar promoted freedom with laws designed to protect those from others that victimize them, but otherwise did not impede the individual. If a vice caused no harm to society at large, it was permitted; if it could be controlled and regulated by the government to minimize or prevent harm, it was also permitted. Although such decisions mired the city in controversy for many years, the necessity of such measures was ultimately recognized.

The number of books and scrolls arriving eventually proved too extensive for one town to handle, and Ravenar decreed that more cities be built, with each satellite city dedicating itself to a specific field of knowledge. A few towns expanded to a dozen by century's end. Ravenar did not share the paranoia of other fae and encouraged the uniting of the peoples, not only culturally but by blood. Limshau was not the first city to birth half-breeds between fae and human, but it did eventually possess the largest ratio of them. The humans were attracted to the fae's beauty, grace, and wisdom and the fae were attracted to the humans' spirit, determination, and enthusiasm. More than a quarter of the first human settlers took fae mates, and though this ratio dropped into the single digits after the first century, the human breeding cycle and the fae long life generated a massive population boost.

In response to the first concerted attack against the city by a large force of unusually organized boggs, Ravenar's successor, Ravenar Limshau IV, formed the custodian order, devout disciples of knowledge. The protectors of paper, these scholar-warriors would defend the walls and the words inside. With cities and an army, the sovereignty of Limshau was official, though Ravenar refused to be called a king despite being blessed by a dragon. Even today, publicly referring to the Limshau family as royalty is a serious faux pas within the kingdom, though in private nearly everyone calls them such. Ravenar IV has no official title, being referred to informally as the 'First Citizen' in public and simply 'Limshau' on formal documents; he is not even the head librarian of the Central Stacks, only of an admittedly extensive collection of historical texts located in his large and central but otherwise ordinary residence. Should the Limshau line ever become remiss in their duties, no doubt another family would displace them in prominence, but thus far none has ever challenged them.

Damaskans were and are known for being fearless and approachable. They neither fear change nor the

unknown. They offer the courtesy of respect even to their enemies and expect the same regard in return. They welcome outsiders, but expect them to pull their own weight. Relations with other fledging nations took time to develop, as most grew much slower than Limshau. The first foreign ally was the failed bastion of Apareci, visitors from Limshau even giving the newborn kingdom of Kannos its name. Despite Limshau's stance on religion, they still opened a dialogue and forged a profitable alliance with Abidan. Damaskans and gimfen have always been friendly, and Limshau soon made allies of both Gnimfall and Salvabrooke. However, later clashes with Baruch Malkut stained the continent in blood, although instead of openly engaging in a costly conflict, Ravenar suggested to his people that they take refuge in the cities, whose fortifications rival the walls of Angel for security. Many fae chose to remain in their villages and often suffer at the hands of Malkut slavers, though fewer since the construction of the city of Zorahn to guard the border. A few fae now and again still vanish, especially from the free villages south of Zorahn. Ravenar is still unwilling to commit to open warfare, despite strong pressure from Kannos and promises of support from Abidan and Gnimfall. They all understand that, even though a conflict may result in a short-term victory over the outer towns and villages of Baruch Malkut, the marshlands and swamps of the south could only be taken after a long and costly war of attrition.

That was not the first time an elf asked me that question nor I imagine the last. I see them burning symbols of human faith, destroying the icons of their history. They expect me to understand. All I know is that one cannot justify evil in reprisal for another evil. I will admit my kind can bloat their bellies in ignorance and it truly shocks me. We, of all, should learn from our past. Humans must record their history, given their lifespan lies in a breath of ours. We remember them from experience. Chaparra and Laudenia claim superiority for we never enslaved another species or hunted them down in xenophobia. How dare they forget our past? The humans I speak to know nothing of our unsmothered hate. Pagus were elves. They still are fae despite the ignorant claims to the contrary. The humans' personal decree of corruption is but a candle to our bonfire. I will not judge all of mankind based on the paranoid actions of the hated few or for the deeds they committed in the past. Those people are dead in a world long forgotten. This world has changed. Adapt. Accept it.

*Limshau Historical Entry 4684G
Ravenar Limshau IV*

Despite being at the center of what may be the greatest brewing conflict between man and fae, most damaskans are trusting of humans, if for no other reason than that a large number of them are related to a human at some point in their family tree. Thanks to this multi-ethnic influence, a uniquely Limshauan culture formed away from the other damaskans across the ocean. Damaskan culture had always had superficial similarities with the cultures of old Asia, but these influences became more pronounced in Limshau, to the point that many Sinitic terms completely displaced the native

Damaskan words for similar concepts, particularly in the fields of cuisine, weaponry, and fashion. The Asiatic propensity for reservation and propriety, interspersed by short periods of intense revelry, resonated with the Limshau fae, who became quieter and less disposed to levity than their brethren in Damaska. All damaskans, of course, abhor public physical contact, but the fae of Limshau also began to resist being referred to by their personal names except among close friends and relations. Most unusually, Limshau damaskans will voluntarily eat fish and certain kinds of meat, while those of Damaska and other fae nations are strictly vegetarian. At present, Limshau is the only place on Earth that a fae culture has altered so significantly without a corresponding species shift, and thus far nobody is able to propose a suitable theory explaining this.

Every Limshau city contains both a thermal mooring tower and a dragonflyer dock. Though Limshau is filled with hundreds of small villages, there are only a handful of walled library-cities. These are Abarbanel, Athenaeum, Enchridia, Escorias, Kodex, Limshau, Primmer, Serapea, Warraqeen, and Zorahn. Every city has its own proud division of librarians and custodians, save for Zorahn, which only has custodians.

Names: While damaskan naming traditions are fairly consistent with the rest of their species, placing the given name before the family name, due to the influence of Asian immigrants Limshau fae are less likely to use their given name than their family name in public (assuming they do not adopt an 'open name') and using a person's given name without their permission is considered rude. Limshau fae frequently draw their open names from old Japanese history and mythology. Limshau humans have tended to retain their original family names (Japanese-derived names still dominate by a large margin despite later immigration from elsewhere in Canam), but have adopted the fae naming sequence, and in the modern day there is no cultural consistency with given names: a Limshau human is just as likely to have an African, German, or Welsh given name as a Japanese one, or even use a fae-style open name as their given name. Limshau's gimfen population, of course, is as idiosyncratic as ever. Regardless of their cultural extraction, everybody born in Limshau learns to write their name in Damaskan rather than whatever writing system it originated in.

Example Human Family Names: Oda, Miyamoto, Nakamura, Suzuki, Yamada, Watanabe

Example Open Names: Enma, Grasscutter, Juubei, Raiden, Shinobi, Tetsubo



Limshau has been accused by some as being the Mary Sue nation of Amethyst—an idealized vision of what an author perceives a perfect. I'm not going to lie, that's exactly what was intended. In the fiction written, damaskans are presented as cold and unfeeling, almost Vulcan-like, staining the perception that Limshau is a haven of human/fae relations. Beyond that, the empire was always a favorite.



Limshau wasn't originally written with such a large ethnic Japanese population - that's an editorial addition to justify the prevalence of Japanese-influenced weaponry and the general 'anime-ness' of damaskans. And so that I could make jokes about otaku librarians, but that was a secondary concern.

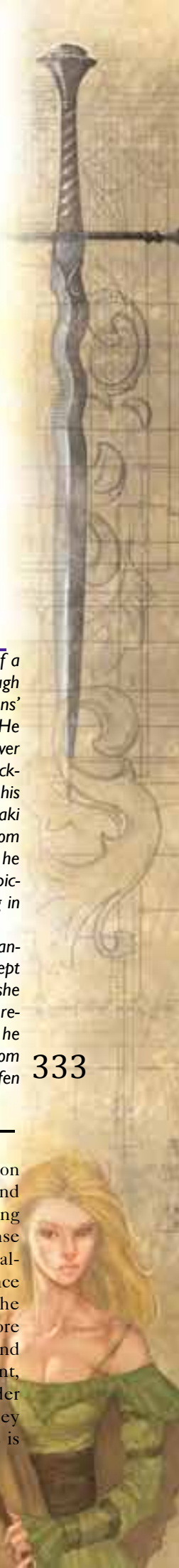
SALVABROOKE

"Ten pebbles? Nine? Eight? C'mon, chipper, it's the deal of a lifetime..." Waving the peddler away, Marconi dodged through the fairground crowd. Fortunately there were enough 'bigguns' here, even a few techans, that he didn't stand out. He stopped for a moment to haggle with a certain merchant over a string of glass beads, another to inspect and discard a pocketwatch of dubious provenance, and briefly bent down to tie his shoelace next to a completely insignificant stall selling takoyaki - he briefly wondered where they'd gotten the octopus from this far inland, and decided he didn't want to know. Then he made his way to a picturesque little tavern - deliberately picturesque, for he had seen the original pre-Hammer painting in a gallery in Limshau.

His diminutive contact was waiting at one of the human-sized tables, looking amusingly like a lost child. Marconi kept the smirk off his face - despite her appearance, he knew she could gut him ten different ways before he could draw his revolver, if ever she felt like it. "The word is on the Books," he said, gesturing to the tapkeep for an ale. "Every leaf from here to Angel will be whispering in the wind." The gimfen woman smiled, showing her perfect white teeth.

333

A lone oak tree that never changes with the season stands like a centurion to mark the gateway to the land of light-hearted gimfen, a huge expanse of spreading homes and villages. One seemingly continuous expanse of civilization spreads to the corners of the massive valley. Mountains line the perimeter, making the entrance marked by the Lone Tree the only safe passage to the inner fields. The population of the entire valley is more than 150,000 with houses spread thin along a flat land 150 miles across. There is no centralized government, leaving each patch of land under control of a clan elder or sheriff. The population shifts so much in the valley that naming the individual clans and their townships is



pointless. Every year, all the headmen and women meet to discuss affairs. Little is actually accomplished at these meetings; most motions (particularly ones involving large and expensive construction projects) are proposed, planned, and then tabled until the next year, at which point everyone will have forgotten about them because nobody bothers to take the meeting minutes. The most powerful ruler is Lora Longfellow, peacefully running a community of more than 3,000 gimfen in the area closest to the Lone Tree and whose judgment represents the norm followed in the rest of the valley.

The farming soil in Salvabrooke is extremely fertile and fresh water flows from nearby mountains to large clean lakes, as close to a natural paradise as one may find, corrupted by as little technology as possible. The majority of the gimfen wish to keep it that way. Celebrations are central to Salvabrooke's life, with revelry and festivals occurring every week. Gimfen welcome outsiders and treat those who enter as kings or queens with hopefully deep (but easily accessible) pockets. Crime is quite low across Salvabrooke, although this is due in part to the gimfen predilection for not considering anything a crime that can be dismissed as a harmless prank: pickpocketry is an epidemic across the land, with the culprits happy to return their stolen goods with a laugh and a wave if they happen to be caught (no gimfen considers this in any way illegal). They adore human exports, but they adore even more the propensity for humans to buy cheap knockoffs of those same exports in the name of tourism. In the larger communities, huge open markets begin business at the crack of dawn, peddling shoddy imitation trinkets to anyone interested. Tourists drifting through one of the many walking streets in a gimfen village should expect to be accosted by no less than a dozen different wandering merchants attempting to vend designer clothes, imitation gadgetry, or on occasion, legitimate pieces of folk art, though not of gimfen culture (since gimfen culture consists of wholesale robbery of other peoples' ways of life). All prices are negotiable and begin at an outrageous markup, since haggling is perceived to be part of the fun. There are a few respectable merchants, but these are not the ones harassing passing non-gimfen. What law enforcement a community might have (which usually amounts to only a couple of stout lads with shill-laghs) attempts to keep the dishonesty in check, but most of the time, the enforcers just break up the fights and shift the few homeless from the streets to maintain a positive image.

Salvabrooke is a common destination for echan tourist trips by techans. It's echan enough to shock them but safe enough to keep them at ease, and since most of its merchants are happy to take payment in barter, they don't have to find some way of turning uc into gold. Since such tourists infrequently approach by land, they remain blissfully unaware of how precariously close Salvabrooke is to the ravaging hordes of Xixion, and nobody in the valley is going to disabuse them. Salvabrooke is one of the few echan locations where

techan ETVs are commonly seen. Salvabrooke features a thermal mooring tower and a dragonflyer flyer service.

SELIQUAM

Lelan looked nervously behind her. The shrieks and squeals were getting closer. "Hurry up!" she hissed to the third member of their band.

"Nearly finished," Mescalos called back, calmly fiddling with the chalk. The damaskan had drawn a complicated series of lines from one end of the nearly hundred-foot-wide bridge to the other, and was now running down the length adding finishing touches. Lelan held her rifle at the ready, really wishing at that moment that she were a chaparran and could see the swarm coming in the dark. By the time the puggs entered the circle of light that was the limit of her vision, it would be too late to stop them. Of course, at that point the vermin would have overwhelmed Kobur, on guard at the bridge's entrance, so there wouldn't be much chance left for either of them.

"All right!" Mescalos shouted. Lelan didn't wait before running to join him. "Kobur, get over here!" There was a scream, a sickening ripping sound, and out of the darkness lumbered a huge kodiak, half of a pugg still grasped in his hand. Wordlessly he threw the carcass over the rail and carefully hopped over the line. Ten steps behind him, the swarm descended, crowding so close onto the bridge that many were forced over the edge into the deep waters below. Mescalos shouted a word that tried to force Lelan's brain out through her ears, and the puggs crashed against an invisible wall, piling up against each other, crushing and suffocating the beasts in the lead. "Good, but it will not hold them forever," Mescalos said with an impish grin. "Now, shall we see what lies on the other side?"

Though most travelers are quick to characterize the central west coast of Canam as a monster-infested wilderness due to the inhospitable expanse of Xixion, this is not entirely accurate. Amid the forested highlands of the northern mountains, the peninsula to the south, the islands that dot the coastal sea protected from typhoons by high cliffs and twisting fjords, and the fertile valley of the river that flows through the Pass at Dianaso can be found dozens of tiny tribal nations, minor houses, and small fiefdoms. These nations live in an uneasy truce with one another, having little in common except the threat of Xixion to the south and the distant support of the bastion of Selkirk to the east. Collectively, they are known as the Seliquam Confederation.

During the narros' explorations south from Fargon, they found the lack of impressive buildings to be galling, so as they went they built superb structures, which they then simply abandoned as they moved on. Many of these monuments found themselves inhabited by squatters, mostly descendants of human survivors from the region who had banded together into small neo-tribal groups out of mutual need, some turning to magic to survive while others held on to as much of their technology as possible (it is possible that the founders of Selkirk were one such group that got lucky). Many of



these settlements were joined by lost damaskans and gimfen who had appeared separately from their kindred, and even by a few wandering narros who, for one reason or another, elected to leave Fargon permanently. In time, these camps coalesced into communities, counties, even a few moderately-sized cities, but limited numbers prevented any one nation from ever growing powerful enough to impose its will over the entire region. However, the growing pugg and bogg raids on the settlers' farming and hunting lands eventually forced them to make common cause. Unfortunately, the strength of that alliance is far less strong than similar treaties elsewhere in Canam have proven.

The peninsular rainforest holds little of interest for the puggs, and by and large they leave it alone save for the occasional raid. More than twenty small tribes—mostly chaparran, but with a few human and mixed-race, even several kodiak bands—inhabit the peninsula, living largely by hunting and fishing, and trading with (and sometimes thieving from) their neighbors. Settlements in the rainforest tend to be seasonal rather than permanent – there are a few large, rooted towns (usually quite literally, as it is far safer to live in a tree than on the ground even for non-chaparrans), but for the most part each tribe maintains a summer and a winter camp, with certain grounds—such as the shellfish flats at Shiwoos, home of the largest kodiak settlement west of Alpinas—held in common between them. Though hardly on the level of the great forests to the south, the rainforest is home to several unique and highly valued creatures and plants. Legend has it that a guardian dragon sleeps beneath the mountain at the peninsula's core, but evidence of this is sorely lacking.

The central islands, home to some of the most impressive narros monuments, were once heavily populated by humans, but the growing strength of the pugg 'city' of Seclanus eventually drove them north to the coastal islands. Here, free as they are from the threat of a Xixion invasion (puggs do not like to swim and build no boats), can be found the most proud and carefree of the member nations. Consisting largely of free houses, pirate ports, and militant tribal groups, they trade their military prowess for food and finished goods from the mainland, although 'extort' might be a more apropos term in the case of some.

The valley of the River Seliquam, which flows from the mountains bordering Alpinas to the sea, is one of the most fertile farmlands in the west. Many believe the river itself to carry a potent enchantment that keeps the pugg hordes very firmly on the southern bank, but magical scholars have thus far found little evidence of this. As this region is at greatest risk of invasion, those living there have largely opted for a feudal lifestyle, but as they still greatly value their independence, the result is a motley collection of small baronies. Practically every hill worth the name hosts a castle, with a handful of tiny ramshackle villages huddled around it. Every year in the midst of the harvest season, the puggs swarm into the valley to plunder. Every year, the inhabitants gather their crops as hurriedly as they can, take what posses-

sions they can carry, leave their homes to be burned by the horde, and travel upriver to the Redoubt at the city of Last Hope, a massive fortress wall built, with narros expertise, across the approaches to the mountain passes. The wall is manned by soldiers sent by every member nation of Seliquam, the central tenet of the treaty binding the confederation together. Last Hope is the one place where all of Seliquam stands united. The unofficial representatives of Selkirk are also in attendance, trading bastion-engineered goods, weapons and armor (including a limited supply of masterwork bolt rifles and revolvers) for the valley's surplus harvest and the assurance that the defenders of the Redoubt will continue to keep the puggs far, far away from the bastion.

Each nation within the Seliquam Confederation has its own method of government, from tribal councils to rough democracy to feudal fealty, but each member nation sends a delegation to the Grand Council. Ostensibly the purpose of the Council is to discuss the business of the whole confederation and to resolve grievances brought by one member nation against another, but in practice it is a hotbed of suspicion and corruption as councilors finagle and make backroom deals to advance their own nations at the expense of long-standing rivals. The people of Seliquam may stand united against Xixion, but they have a long history of raiding and swindling one another, and each nation clamors for a bigger share of the limited supply of bastion-produced goods. To prevent this hornet's nest from being completely ungovernable, the eight most prominent nations set up the Inner Council, which enforces the few laws that hold over the entire confederation and appoint the commanders of the Redoubt and the Train Guard.

The dominant powers in the region are the eight nations on the Inner Council: Last Hope (human/narros), Victrix (human), Shiwoos (chaparran/kodiak), Gwain (human), the Abbey (human/damaskan), Vanguard (techan human), and Squalmos (human/gimfen), plus Gateway as the unofficial face of Selkirk. Victrix and Last Hope have thermal mooring towers. Most transport between the major regions of the Confederation is by boat, but most watercraft must hug the coastline to defend against storms.

Names: Non-humans in the Confederation use their traditional naming systems. For some reason, the upheavals of Attricana spared much of the aboriginal human culture of the region, and while the actual original languages are long since extinct, the Seliquam dialect of English is liberally peppered with terms derived from Salish and Haida roots, including a disproportionate number of personal and place names (even though few remember what they actually mean anymore).

Examples: Bella Mallaquin, Gwenuit Hosten, Kallumi Brown, Mahcut Rowan, Robert Jacks, Teqmut Caseway





While I've been able to make additions and expansions to existing setting material here and there, Seliquam is 100% my own creation. Although I live on the prairies now, I was born in the Pacific Northwest, and on the 14-hour drives to the coast to visit relatives, I like to imagine castles gracing every mountaintop and river bend. I always thought it was a shame to bury this stunning landscape under a sea of ravenous goblinoids, so I was grateful for the opportunity to contribute an entire new region to the canon.

FREE HOUSES

Canam's most distinct feature lies with its large number of independent houses. Lauropa's larger empires quickly absorbed every spare inch of land, brushing borders within decades of Attricana's opening. With Canam, more than a century passed before any nations encountered others. Those with slightly more power absorbed smaller adjacent villages, usually by oath of betrothal or by threat of violence, forming the first feudal principalities. But much of Canam remained unclaimed, and without the ability of the larger kingdoms to patrol and hold vast fiefdoms, many villages could declare themselves free from alliance or external obligation.

Hundreds of small villages dot the land, though most are tied to a larger house. Most free houses control one small town and perhaps a half-dozen villages, bonded to the ruling house because of a need of protection or by forced hands. Large nations usually don't directly border each other, most being buffered by several such small nations. Many of these houses are short-lived, especially if a larger nation sets sights on them, but even then, such empires rarely have the manpower to maintain their conquests and they often break away again within a few decades. The majority of the rulers of free houses (sometimes also referred to specifically as "free-lords") are human. Their culture, relations, and diplomatic standings are varied but seldom extreme. The most notable free-houses are Antikari, Ogium, Orchis, Plicato, Quinox, Torquil and Skyrose.

THE WILD

Canam has no specific borders between its nations. Kingdoms patrol as much territory as they think they can hold, but wide expanses between their territories prevent most conflict. Dozens of villages claiming no allegiance fall between them. This creates more of a wide blur instead of a defined line. The only way to know if one enters a specific kingdom is to ask the citizens of a village. There are no border markers or sentries on many of the trodden paths, though well-patrolled roads such as the Continental Cross and its tributaries leading into the major nations will maintain

border guards, especially those along the roads controlled by the house of Skyrose and eastern Limshau because of their nations' proximity to Baruch Malkut. This leaves tens of thousands of square miles unclaimed, a sea of wilderness in which islands of civilization flourish. Many of these would be dangerous locations in which to settle, thanks to the presence of magic or monsters.

The easiest way to check if a forest is enchanted is to look at the variety of trees growing. If the trees are of radically different species, growing in the same region without regard for light or temperature (conifers mixing with fruit trees, or cactus growing on mountain slopes), it is a forest populated by magic. Oftentimes, the creatures that inhabit the forests spill out into the surrounding scrub and plains, making open space only slightly safer to traverse than the paths under the trees. The upheavals caused by Attricana's opening also opened many spaces beneath the mountains and under the ground, into which less than savory new life-forms quickly descended. Some of these chasms even swallowed up artifacts of the old age, so it is not unknown (though hardly common either) for a dungeon delver to descend into a natural cave system and find an expanse of steel and concrete inside. These unchecked areas of the world feature the most dangerous life forms. Some rumors claim the largest percentage of chaparrans in the world is spread over the unclaimed forests in Canam. Beyond chaparrans, not known for their hospitality anyway, these forests, plains, and mountains showcase the greatest ratio of magically endowed life, from dire and elemental animals to monstrous beasts of ill will.

ALPINAS

The eastern slopes of the northern Nankani Mountains are covered with thick conifer forests that stretch far out onto the central plains, jutting up against the icy tundra of Ashur in the north. Even though kodiaks control this area in force, they have never formed an organized nation: instead, hundreds of villages and roaming bands dot the landscape for hundreds of miles. No town lasts more than a few years before being broken up or destroyed. The few open plains are cold and windswept, forbidding travelers from making roots. No one is sure how many kodiak camps there are. Few bands sustain a population of more than a hundred. The largest and only permanent settlement, over 1500 strong, is Makniculsh, ruled by Raknash.

Though animalistic and tribal, the kodiaks prefer to keep to themselves. They have a devotion to nature many other species admire but skeggs in particular do not share. The kodiaks of Alpinas are considerably larger and more savage than their kindred in Seliquam, and remain disdainful of the trappings of civilization which some of the southern lines have come to embrace. Nevertheless, many now wield weapons forged for them by the narros of Fargon to aid in their endless war against the skeggs of Dagon. This may eventually



cause problems in the future if the kodiaks finally overwhelm their enemies; the narros hope the trading relationship will eventually civilize the northern kodiaks before their newly acquired weapons can be turned against their benefactors.

HALYC

The western plains from York stretching almost all the way to Gnimfall were given the broad name of Halyc. While nominally York claims this territory as part of its domain, in practice it leaves most of it alone. The majority of the plains are untamed grasslands leading up to mountain foothills, turning to dense forests in the north leading up to the Gulf of Tethuss. More than thirty small chaparran villages call the forest home, and defend it vigilantly against intruders of all sorts. Independent farms and villages along the road between Gnimfall and York sell to both echa and techa, with those nearer to York receiving the blanket of protection offered by the YSDF. Most military patrols in this region are mere formalities to guard against the possibility of pagus crossing the water or to clear the road of wandering monsters. Less dedicated patrols roam the southern border, as York has never considered Baruch Malkut a serious threat.

KESAKAS

The isthmus of land between Dawnamoak and the Gloam is a twisting labyrinth of mountains, deserts, mesas, scrub plains and savannah. Few people live here, as it is home to innumerable savage beasts. With the advent of magic, the land regressed to the Pliocene epoch. Dire animals of every description hunt each other through the canyons and grasslands, and most settlements in the area are either itinerant or perched precariously on and within the sides of cliffs. The bastion of Sierra Madre is located somewhere underneath this dangerous terrain, the terrors of which serve to protect the techan city far better than any artificial defenses could but which make excursions from the bastion a harrowing experience that discourages casual tourism.



Kesakas hearsens back to the obligatory 'hunting zone' you find in a lot of computer RPGs (especially Final Fantasy games) - a big wild space largely isolated from the rest of the world where you can grind for XP. Not that you'd do that quite so much in 13th Age, of course, but there are other adventure opportunities beyond hunting giant beasts.

LAURAMA

The chaparrans occupy a great forest and mountain range. Unlike their western cousins, the fae of Laurama are extremely militaristic – not surprising, when you consider their neighbors. To the north, they are bound-

ed by the pestilent forest of Tranquiss; to the west, the holy but perilous wood of Skepsis; and to the east, the despoilers of Baruch Malkut, with whom the chaparrans have been engaged in an ongoing guerilla war since the first Malkut slavers came to their lands in search of fae flesh. Even before the Blessed Kingdom began to encroach upon their borders, the chaparrans lived in constant dread of the infection spreading from Tranquiss, and this fear altered their attitude towards life. No longer being content with patience and relaxation, they grew increasingly aggressive with each other and other surrounding lands. Their already reduced magical aptitude virtually vanished save for a few unique adepts and savants, most of which end up traveling to Jibaro to study due to the lack of avenues to learn at home. They do not grow cities, but spread their community out to cover a wider footprint within the forest. Their presence is quiet and looming, more hidden than even the fae of Dawnamoak. Many travelers through Laurama have no idea that a chaparran kitarri lurks in the trees above them, watching their every movement for the slightest sign of aggression. Laurama fae are intensely distrustful of humans more than any other chaparrans: Malkut slavers are usually killed on sight, and any others that the chaparrans even suspect of harmful intent never leave the forest. Even innocent travelers have been known to be attacked, stripped of their armor and weapons, and dumped at the borders of the forest, a clear sign that outsiders are not welcome. Other nations do not acknowledge Laurama as a sovereign power – even Jibaro considers them a satellite colony of Dawnamoak – and so their open declaration of war against Baruch Malkut has thus far brought no allies.

NANKANI MOUNTAINS

A huge mountain range dominating western Canam, the Nankani Mountains stretch from Kesakas to Fargon, bisecting the western third of the continent. Several tributary ranges lead into it, particularly in the north, where the highest and most dangerous peaks sprout between Selkirk and Thos Thalagos. While many isolated echan settlements and even techan atolls can be found among the peaks and valleys, the most populous species within the range are puggs and boggs, who claim large cave systems and build ramshackle 'cities' inside them, where the strongest goblinfolk rule over their lessers with fear and violence, and send them out on raids into the lowlands to take food, treasure, and slaves. Dire wolves roam the forested slopes, and many a rogue dragon has been sighted among the peaks. The only safe path through the mountains is the Continental Cross, kept clear of monsters by the various free houses that claim portions of the road. The mountains are also full of ruins, including monuments from the days of the Fargon expeditions, as well as older structures locked away within the earth, some full of remnants from the last age of Man.



WASTELANDS

The wilds of Canam are full of many dark and dangerous regions. No goodly folk live in such places; they are the preserves either of monsters or wicked creatures whose 'societies' are born of violence and malevolent will. Often, a nameless and shapeless evil will infest a portion of the wild, turning into an unhallowed land of danger and death. Travelers learn to avoid such places, or tread carefully if they have no choice but to cross them.

APOCRYPHA

After the puggs, the largest individual fae population in Canam is the pagus. They control a massive expanse of land dubbed Apocrypha by humans, or Sollasum by many fae. Most of the pagus armies on the continent fall under the control of typhox dragons, which brought them across from Kakodomania when the dragons discovered an unspoiled land across the polar ice and resolved to spoil it. Separated from the darklands by thousands of miles of ice and tundra, the dragons could enslave and ravage as they willed without needing to answer directly to Mengus. The recent arrival of several shemjaza in Canam threatens to disrupt the dragons' monopoly. The pagus are bound in their souls to follow the orders of the generals of Kakodomania, who outrank the dragons, though so far the shemjaza have not attempted to exert their authority on a grand scale. There is a growing number of pagus that have thrown off the influence of their masters and attempt to live free in the inhospitable wastes.

Pagus with their souls bound to Ixindar are not necessarily tied to its control. With the dragons killing and enslaving them to the east, the pagus must look elsewhere to expand. Cold and water awaits them to the north. Mountains, skeggs, and kodiaks sit over the horizon in the west, leaving only the narrow land bridge of Tethuss to the south, guarded by the Janoahn Bulwark. This great fortress of man has never fallen, even when a dragon lord attempted to storm the walls and was only repulsed at the cost of the Paladin King's own life. Since pagus fear the natural elements of earth (mountains, winds, water), they prefer to continue to slam against the Janoahn wall, plummeting to their deaths into the churning gulf when they cannot retreat. Though a massive land with rich potential, Apocrypha will, within 500 years, no longer be able to support any life thanks to the despoilment of dragons and pagus.

The best-known tribal leaders are Mennos, Nemis the Gatherer, Saemus, Amon the Nomad, Arrenna, and Kallis the Monster, leading camps named after themselves. The biggest issue with these camps lies with the pagus' short lifespans: since even the eldest seldom live past forty, most of the villages are equally short-lived. Their successors seldom follow the same ethics (or lack thereof) as their antecedent, and the village often tears itself apart in very uncivil wars with few survivors. Only a few rare exceptions have allowed certain villages to survive past a generation, and these mostly

where power is maintained by a loyal cadre of the toughest warriors.

AZHI DAHAKA

The greatest typhox dragons, the Ažhi seven, claim this region under their direct control, though most of them are never seen, living out their lives in solitude within self-proclaimed kingdoms deep in the northern regions, leaving their lesser brethren to impose order and terror on the land. Pagus followers give most of their own food as offerings, or risk being snatched up as food themselves. There is no border between Apocrypha and Ažhi Dahaka; any land that falls beneath the shadows cast by the winged monstrosities is the evil dragons' domain. The only thing stopping the dragons from launching a full-scale invasion of Canam, other than their relative small numbers, is the lack of any centralized control of the region. No typhox dragon will bow before another, despite victories proven by scars, age, or size. Though they may respect and envy the power of their elders, they will not rally to any common cause.

The seven dragon lords of Ažhi maintain keeps of varying strength across the land, and none can be entirely sure where they roost at any given time. These dragon lords are rarely seen, but are known across the continent through tales to frighten troops and children: Baenis of Gorge, who forces his slaves to raise exotic beasts, feasting on them as he sees fit; Balaur of Debauch, who captures free pagus to engorge his numbers and maintain the high population of his slaves; Goch of Wrath, one of the surviving dragon kings who, with no citadel of her own, wanders the lands taking what she wills (though stories tell that she once gutted and claimed a laudenian sky keep as her throne); Lindis of Avarice, who keeps her storehouses of treasures hidden and never lingers in any one place for long; Lotan of Scorn, whose massive citadel, built around an entire mountain with walls as high as its peak, lies mostly empty due to constantly driving his pagus to war; Verkelen of Spite, who despises and distrusts all the other dragons and never reveals his location to anyone; and Zilant of Indolence, who is far too lazy to do anything other than lie on a bed of treasures brought to him by his fearful followers, and occasionally eat one of those followers who doesn't show sufficient deference to his majesty. Though each of the seven claims to rule the entire land, they do not fight each other for control of it except by proxy, sending their pagus slaves to massacre and plunder the slaves of the others.



Ažhi Dahaka and Apocrypha are not meant to be Mordor—that's somewhere else. The lands to the north are meant to be a region where a few dragons have been able to corral bands of pagus from the masses of uncontrolled tribes plaguing the region. The fear is that commanders from the real evil land will arrive and lock a million pagus in line.

CYON

Though not enchanted and tall like chaparran woods over the horizon, Cyon is still equally massive, encircling the entire northeastern wall of Canam. In their fledging first years, Angel clear-cut most of the landscape in their frantic construction, but the trees returned as dense and stout as before in barely a generation. Each time the trees were felled, they grew back just as strong, until the branches began to brush against the Angel wall; there are rumors that a few saplings have begun to spring up inside the walls themselves, but the Crimson Starlight suppresses these whisperings in the name of public morale. On their own, the trees don't appear to be magical at all, but they do radiate an ambient EDF far above that of the surrounding lands. Other than boggs, no other intelligent species are known to inhabit the woods, though the Angel snipers who patrol the outer wall pass locker-room stories that tell otherwise: not just boggs but puggs, skeggs, and even rumors of a chiggoth once. Along with the horrors, there are tales as well of the more obscure fae anathema like faeries, dawnlings, and sylphids.

DAGRON

Over two hundred years ago, the kodiaks of Alpinas, trained and supplied by the narros of Fargon, drove a large swarm of skeggs out of the central Nankani Mountains into the unclaimed wilderness to the east. They adapted to the bitter cold very quickly and grew in size and numbers. They formed several large communities both underground and on the surface, and their disposition grew colder than even their brothers to the south. They became known as the "Bugbears of Dagron," making regular raids south into more temperate human lands and attacking travelers and undefended communities, even those of their erstwhile brethren. They leave few survivors of these raids, stripping their victims of valuables and taking them back as slaves, destined for the cookpots when they can no longer work. Only two villages are believed to have survived more than a few years: one, Lilecrog, is ruled by the despicable Numak; the other is Silcroge, ruled by Omerogroge, resting at the entrance of a large dungeon filled with stolen treasure. Despite their prosperity in their new homeland, the skeggs have not forgotten their defeat by the kodiaks and wage endless war against them, the longest sustained conflict in Canam's history. The skeggs' superior numbers and greater intelligence might have doomed the Alpinas kodiaks long ago but for the support of others; Fargon continues to supply the largest kodiak bands in the north, and many of the kodiak among Seliquam's Train Guard have kindred fighting in the ancient feud.

The skeggs are not alone in their land: trolls and various ice monsters also rampage throughout the region. Further north, in the frostlands of Ashur, frost dragons control and rule over a small fae population. The largest known frost dragon in Canam, a creature known only as "The Snow Devil," resides here, but its

exact location is unknown. Above the tundra lies the great glacier Chronzia, worshipped and feared by all the denizens of the north, and somewhere beyond that the mythical titan city of Selmana.



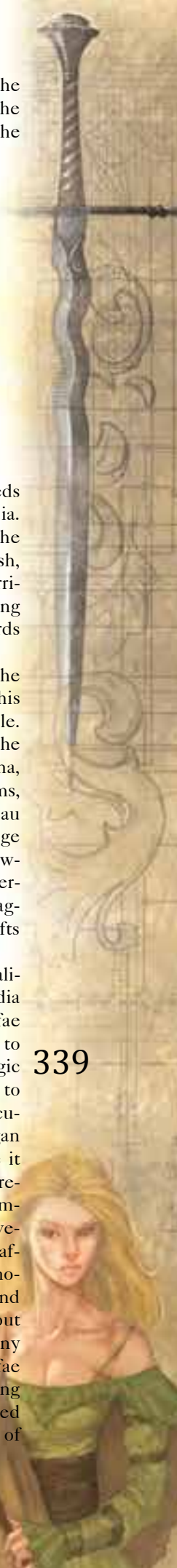
It's not entirely clear where Alpinas ends and Dagron starts, partially thanks to the dodgy maps we used to have, but that's a good thing - there should be some overlap. It makes for good adventures when you don't know from day to day whose territory you're in, particularly when you can't be certain that the 'good' side isn't going to try to eat you too.

SANA MARSH

A perpetual and permanent fog has spread for hundreds of miles in the land once called the Kingdom of Kardia. The Marsh is the single most dangerous place on the continent. Beasts shuffle into the black and vanish, waiting for an unsuspecting foe. Rumors tell of a terrible evil that lurks in the castle once controlled by King Saren Sana, gathering the power of the Marsh towards it.

Legends tell of one of the first kings of man in the new age, and how his arrogance and naivety reduced his empire to eventual damnation for him and his people. The legend claims that King Sana ruled over one of the first kingdoms in Canam after the opening of Attricana, Kardia. Older than any other surviving human realms, Kardia expanded to dozens of villages while Limshau was still building its first walls. Kardia used knowledge gleaned from the first bastions to create a stable, growing empire with well-paved roads, a reliable underground sewer system, plentiful crops and powerful magic. It is even said that the master mage Kereptis Rifts originally came from Kardia.

Sana, however, grew troubled over his own mortality. Unlike the bastions, afraid and xenophobic, Kardia embraced the new world, almost to a fault. As the fae and half-fae population of the kingdom continued to grow, with much of the population obsessed with magic and the elder folk who had mastered it, Sana came to realize that his own lineage was threatened with obscurity. Though already married with two sons, he began seeking a fae bond – at first not for gift of long life it would bestow on him, but so that his heirs would receive the adulation that the merest peasant could command as long as their ears were pointed. However, every one of his invitations was rebuffed, and not long after, both of Sana's young sons given to him by his innocent wife fell to a rare infection, taking them slowly and painfully. Without heirs, Sana became paranoid about losing his lineage and set his wizards to examine any avenue that might extend his life or grant him the fae bride he desperately needed. Finally, in his declining years, a great dark dragon with decayed skin, perforated wings, and a near-barren skull appeared at the gates of





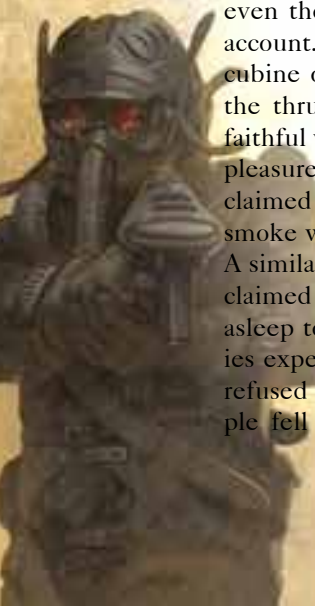
Gothas. The creature promised to return the empire to power and vowed to force the arrogant fae to kneel to true immortality. Though tempted by the offer, Sana had no desire for immortality, only the endurance of his lineage. The dragon then offered him something else: his long-sought bride.

Her name was Umala. A tightly wrapped silk bandage covered her eyes, though she could still sense her surroundings with ease. She possessed the ears of the fae but little else Sana could recognize as chaparran, gimfen, or damaskan. The dragon declared its own blessing was proof of the fae's noble blood. Umala even possessed a great book of magic claiming to hold a power the gods feared to offer man. Though Saren's first wife objected to the pairing, the king agreed to the bonding.

The events that followed have fallen into obscurity: even the libraries of Limshau do not hold an accurate account. The public was not permitted to see the concubine of the king. Though elderly and near senility, the thrust of Sana's manhood returned. His old and faithful wife was cast aside quickly in favor of newfound pleasures. After Sana's lust was satisfied, one story claimed he would bellow a great exhalation of soot and smoke which would settle and float about the kingdom. A similar account, less popular but likely more accurate, claimed that the very citizens of the empire would fall asleep to awaken aged to the point of death, their bodies expelling a great darkness upon their demise which refused to evaporate with the morning dew. More people fell to dust, replaced by the growing mist, which

wafted about the living, whispering dark thoughts in their ears, turning some to madness and violence and the rest to dull servitude. Little food grew in the mist-racked land, and those who ate what did grow turned into monsters and fed on those who remained. The castle of Gothas became infested with sourceless shadows. Where Sana walked, they followed, they watched, yet never revealed themselves. As more of his people died, the shadows increased; the fog thickened. Sana's forgotten bride perished in the empty halls, along with all who had once been loyal to him. Years passed into decades, finally leaving only a few souls lingering in the darkness, unable to change their fate. The fog seeped into the soil and salted the earth. Contaminated water rose from the depths. The castles and manors of the great houses collapsed to rot and ruin, until only the tower of Kardia-Gothas remained. The shapeless forms roamed the landscape as an army, raised from the ashes of withered corpses. A few soon spread from the dark shroud into the outer lands, encouraging others to enter the Marsh with similar promises of immortality and magic, knowing protracted stays ensured another meal for the king and the demon at his side.

It is said that Sana lives still, twisted and aged but refusing to die, an empty shell of a man driven by the twin curses of boundless sorrow and unquenchable desire. Umala, unchanged in those years, refused her husband's undying appetite unless new souls entered the Marsh. Those daring to breach the cursed land should exercise caution not to stir the attention of the mistress of Sana or her king, lest they fall victim to their lust.





There has previously been some confusion about how big Sana Marsh is, given that the earliest version of the adventure at the end of this book erroneously talked about it being 'nearby' to a ruined castle in Torquil (northern Mexico). To clarify, the Marsh is Yellowstone: its exact borders are expanding all the time and are flexible depending on the needs of your campaign, but they don't extend quite THAT far.

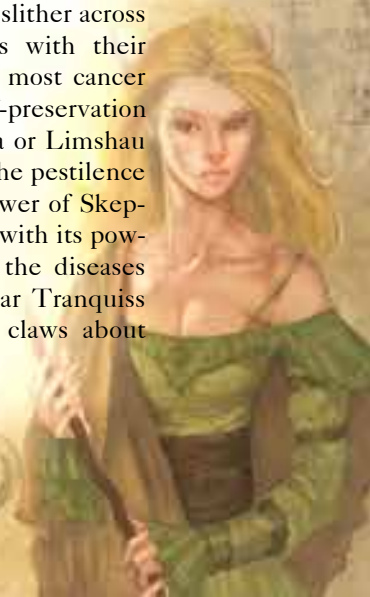
TRANQUISS

Twisted with evil, blackened with corruption and cloaked in darkness, Tranquiss is, after the Sana Marsh, one of the most dangerous territories of Canam. It began with the infection of a single tree but soon spread to others, then dozens, and then hundreds. The trees lost their leaves and the sap turned to blood. Hairlike tendrils grew from the bark which gravitated toward living flesh, and anything they touched was sucked dry of its energy and left as a desiccated husk. The wood can neither be burned nor cleansed of its infection by any known magic. Even the most powerful spells only halt the spread temporarily rather than cure it. The plague known as Trendance covered hundreds of square miles before any even realized the threat. The canopy of the

central hive of the forest is so tightly packed with long, sharp branches, no creature has ever successfully found the first tree which started the calamity. Though some believe destroying this tree would cure the entire forest, there is no evidence for this.

The infection has taken most of the natural trees and now threatens both Skepsis and Laurama. Much of Laurama has already been taken though not enough to threaten the chaparrans there. Some believe enemies of the fae created the deadly forest in hope the infection would suffocate or consume them.

The only creatures that reside in Tranquiss are unnatural monstrosities that carry the infection with them like a symbiote, and the cancer dragons, one of the most notorious of which is Carcin of Pathos, a despicable creature known to belch living tumors that slither across the ground to attach and infect victims with their plague. Carcin is even more insane than most cancer dragons, and only a lingering sense of self-preservation keeps him from blindly attacking Laurama or Limshau directly. Cancer dragons feel welcome in the pestilence of Tranquiss and fear the holy, healing power of Skepsis, dreading that the fabled Skepsis Tree, with its power to cure all ills, might free them from the diseases wracking their immortal forms. Every year Tranquiss grows another few meters, spreading its claws about Laurama and Skepsis.



XIXION

Puggs, even more than pagus and humans, are the fastest-growing intelligent species on the planet. They broke off late from the damaskans and are considered one of the least civilized of all fae races. They have little culture of their own, preferring to steal and corrupt the trappings of it from their more civilized neighbors, and reproduce at an alarming rate. Puggs spread across the globe quickly, though the highest concentration remains where they first appeared, on the central west coast of Canam. Their elder brethren, the more intelligent boggs, found that they could use their own size to subjugate the smaller goblinkind and use their strength of numbers to amass great wealth and power, though most puggs live a feral life beholden only to the strongest of their swarm.

The pugg-infested region known as Xixion covers almost half of the land west of the Nankani Mountains, but no roads cross it. Their growing armies push ever to the north, south, and east, encroaching on the bastions of Selkirk and Angel and the lands around them. A brief siege of Angel resulted in the total annihilation of the attacking army, and they have not attempted it again. With the bastions' official policy of non-involvement in the realms of magic, it is left to the echans to keep the pugg population down, though both bastions have been known to offer covert support. In the north, the Seliquam Confederation formed to combat the menace, while in the south the various free houses and independent settlements take arms against the swarms' incursions. Narros and damaskans are particularly fierce in clearing out large concentrations of their evil little cousins wherever they occurred. To the east, the onward push is stymied by the unpassable evil of the Sana Marsh and a strange power that somehow prevents them from simply swarming over the mountains protecting Salvabrooke. Instead, they pushed south throughout the Nankani Mountains, burrowing into holes and filling them up with stolen treasure, piles of decaying garbage, and more puggs. Passing travelers in the lands surrounding Xixion still need to contend with raiders, but otherwise the 'nation' lies quiescent but for their annual invasion of the Seliquam river valley, where they batter their oversized heads against the Redoubt at Last Hope for a few weeks before returning to their holes. This may turn out to be a sleeping lion, as their frantic reproduction continues.

Puggs do not coordinate or plan, only rage. They have no talents for strategy or stealth, and no appreciation for the things they steal. They are a mass of living death – a humanoid locust swarm that ravages terrain and then moves on. The central areas of Xixion are barren and lifeless. Even the trees have been stripped of their bark and burned. Several years ago, a bevy of custodians and librarians attempted to analyze the patterns of the pugg swarms and managed to distinguish four different masses of puggs, which all continually shift positions and are slowly approaching civilized neighbors. The Etaraki ('Cockroach') swarm comprises

of 70,000 puggs while the Eletharius ('Grasshopper') swarm has 100,000 and the Ephesia ('Cicada') swarm has 50,000. But all these together are a mere pint in a gallon in comparison to the pugg 'city' of Seelanus ('Millipede'), dug into the crater of a slumbering volcano in the north coastal Nankani range and which, at last count, had nearly 1,200,000 puggs.



Hive Seelanus (I pronounce it 'say-lah-nus,' but I didn't come up with the name so maybe that's not how it's supposed to be said) is meant to be a bit like Goblin-town from 'The Hobbit', only a lot more feral. There's obviously something in the hollowed-out crater of what was once Mt. Ranier that's keeping the puggs from simply devouring each other... but who knows what that could be?

Puggs viciously attack anything that doesn't look like them, and if nothing immediately presents itself, they turn their violence on their own kind. They are one of the most primitive species and what many higher fae fear all faekind is destined to devolve into. Puggs paint no pictures, write no poetry, and carve no sculptures, though they will gladly carry such things off, deface them, and use them to adorn their foul pits (or, more often, use them as toilets). Their towns and villages are nothing more than huts of logs and mud, holes in the ground, or cliff faces strung haphazardly with rotting timbers and ropes. They despise farming and prefer to hunt or steal. If they run out of prey, they eventually turn on each other.



Antikari was unimportant in the world until progressive humans and fae from Limshau decided to set a road across the land, uniting its various kingdoms. The town nurtured a business of escorts and travel guides armed with allies and swords. Rising costs forced some committed pilgrims to chance the journey to Angel alone. At this late hour, gas powered lamps flickered with flame.

The continental cross was a beaten path that connected the bastion of Angel, through house Antikari and house Orchis, and finally to Limshau. Although not always safe, it was the easiest route to take with reduced risk. All Aiden needed to do was book passage and follow the single road to Limshau. He hobbled to the station, still forcing air into his lungs.

The Corrigan caravan was a string of a dozen slow moving conestogas, coaches, and carriages, laced together and towed by a group of oversized oxen. Endowed with magic, the two storey beasts never slept and seldom ate. They could pull a

hundred tons for weeks before needing rest. It was what Aiden had waited his life to see, something truly unbelievable and impossible given the rules of science. It was real and alive and beautiful. The conestogas were double in height and the two monstrous bovine dragged them like living locomotives. Aiden had read about gargantuan snails with houses formed out of their shells and flying boats with stone wings which never flapped. This would do for now.

Ten silver Limshau carmot later and he had sleeping provisions that would travel during the night. Though the caravan was slower than galloping horses, it allowed a cushioned bed.

Antikari was a small house of questionable nobility in a town that ruled a dozen smaller farms. The main keep was a fenced house slightly larger than the surrounding buildings. Antikari also hated fae. Anyone approaching the town picked up that nugget of gossip. Any moral opposition to the population's xenophobic view needed restraining for those wanting to approach Angel. Travelers needed to unite as the raiders preferred smaller, less defended targets.

Most of the residents of Antikari believed anything non-human was responsible for man's fall from grace. Many of them wished to enter and live in Angel but their lack of useful knowledge prevented it.

The house baronet, Renan Torquil, inherited the keep when Stellen Antikari died from disease, leaving no heirs. Renan, his half brother and 2nd in line to Torquil, claimed the seat before any bastards or distant relations could object.

After taking in a proper meal of rice and chicken, Aiden found himself staring at the restaurant's bathroom. The paper was rough hemp. There was no seat, no plumbing, and no cover, only a hole in the ground with a bucket of water beside it. It ran to a closed pit a few meters away. Aiden took a glance outside and then back to the task. The ring around the hole wasn't clean, with muddy boot prints and various other stains he would rather not touch with bare skin. Indoor plumbing with moving water was a blessing Aiden instantly missed. There wasn't even a handle to maintain balance. Matters beckoned him and Aiden grimaced his way through it.

* * *

Caravans alive and rolling as well as sacked and burned could be spotted along the Cross's route. Wandering shops sold trinkets from the backs of wagons. Carts stayed together for protection, creating nomadic markets that roamed the roads.

A day after leaving Antikari, the Corrigan passed Arciducha—a caravan of 35 wagons that sold fine clothes, rare foods, and even protective lodging with optional vendible flesh to keep merchants and adventurers warm and satisfied. It took four minutes for the road trains to pass each other. Flowers and drinks were share through windows. The drivers passed gossip and news about the road ahead. Aiden noticed various passengers waving and smiling. None of them were techan. All were human.

For the first few days, Aiden was forced to sleep alongside a farmer with leather skin forged from fifty years in the sun. After passing the village of Nymanis, Aiden slept beside two miners that smelled of week-old cheese. As the caravan left the land of Antikari and made for the free house of Orchis, Aiden was upgraded to a wool covered bed of straw in one of the conestogas with four other humans, three from Antikari

and the fourth from Plicato.

After the second week, the caravan stopped in Orchis. The "sand-castle," as it was often mocked, was spotted on the horizon, flapping into vision from the waves of heat from dried desert soil. The ruling founders preferred the term "Desert Flower." Regardless of its name, the smooth towers of the relatively small keep soared over those in Antikari or any other buildings outside of a bastion.

A mockery of a legend claimed a demigod of child-like whim packed the sand with water and sculpted the keep with his own hands. Upon completion, he ordered a dragon to fire the castle to an ironstone ceramic. The castle was then given to the Orchis family on condition that neither the immediate family nor their direct descendants ever sleep beyond the limits of the castle. They ruled over a dozen smaller villages across seventy miles including stops along the continental cross like Archena, Kerria, and Bitterblush.

The Book of Free Houses, read to Aiden when he has nine. It was true to.

It was there when Aiden switched over to a larger stagecoach. It had two floors, a hallway, and four rooms with a narrow set of stairs and drapes separating the cabins from the beasts and their reigns. The population increased the further he approached Limshau. The caravan stopped at Blackbaronne and Kendelkorne, swelling in wagons and people. Aiden began recognizing cultures and landmarks from the books he had read. Still no fae. He shared the cabin with a pleasant looking musician wielding an acoustic bass guitar marked with colorful rosettes sprinkled with damaskan elvish. Aiden was still trying to pick up the tongue. It was one of the easier of the elvish languages.

"Ou frei casa y'habit?" the man asked.

"I'm sorry," Aiden answered, "I don't speak...whatever it is your saying."

"Ou niima bastion?" Aiden was sure it was Englo-Lingo, a strange dialect no one at Angel knew.

"Yes...bastion, yes." The man plucked a few chords, evolving with each pass into a complex melody. It was far superior to any of the synthetic tunes Aiden had heard from his youth, only matched by the ethnic songs from Genai. "It's very good."

"Muzak esta sin knacko civila est verbessern de mecha"

"Whatever you said, I'm sure you're right."

Aiden appreciated the talent the man exhibited, and the level of hygiene was a blessing considering the weeks prior. It was between a surprisingly lengthy tune when the caravan shuddered and stopped. The coach drivers were all trained to pull their breaks in chorus but the vehicles still struck each other, causing Aiden to fall onto the floor. Aiden poked his head out to see what caused the halt.

It was a dumpy figure jabbing a dead jackrabbit repeatedly with a sharpened stick. Despite the state of the prey, the predator continued to perforate the body. The creature resembled a hairless dog walking on bipedal legs. Floppy ears ran down a flattened head. The caravan was understandably cautious. One could mean thousands. A forward guard readied a crossbow shot. Despite the racket of animals and passengers, the pugg ignored the group. They couldn't allow it to live, even if it did pay them no mind. It turned sharply and uttered a scream that crossed the laugh of a monkey with the shriek of a bat.

Dozens more vermin swarmed from the trees towards the

caravan. Aiden fell back into the coach and slammed the shutter down. The voices and clatter of armed guards rushed past him.

"All able bodied men to the front!" screamed Captain Rothschild as he walked by the coach. "Grab a sword. If you can hold it, you can wield it."

"Esta sang froid!" said the musician as he took the call and departed. Aiden leaned forward to follow. The screams of the innocent forced a moment of pause and Aiden froze.

The captain poked his head through the door. "Out of the room, this duties' for all," he snapped. Out of reflex, Aiden grabbed his totem book as he left. "What's that?"

"Spell book," Aiden answered.

"A mage, we've hit the fools luck." He snatched Aiden's shirt and pulled hard. "Get behind a sword and throw some fire."

"I actually—" Aiden was cut short as he was tossed onto his feet out of the coach. He fell in behind a hefty fellow draped in mail and topped with a burgonet. His weapon was a well weighted often-used broadsword already blessed with pugg blood. The rodents were rolling over each other to get to their prey. A few wore scraps of clothes, many were naked, wielding sharpened sticks with the rare pack leader with a rock or steel tip. The guard cleaved one on his downswing and caught another as he brought his blade back.

In history, puggs had been attributed to brownies, boggles, leprechauns, and various other sprites. They were the fastest growing species to emerge from the gates. All they cared for was breeding and eating and finding the easiest and fastest solutions to both. They painted no art, wrote no poetry, and carved no sculptures. If they ran out of prey, they turned on each other.

"I heard right...mage?" the guard asked Aiden behind him.

"Apparently. Watch out!" Aiden shouted as a pugg dove to impale a stick into the guard's shin. It was kicked away by a spiked boot.

"Human wizard," he responded with hardly a strain, "good marks on ya. Barking storms and cackling fire, eh?"

Aiden held a tuff of steel loops in his hand to ensure his cover remained in front. "I don't really follow you, no."

The guard leaned back. "Well, cast something."

"I could..." Aiden had a hard enough time concentrating on his normal thoughts. To keep such a word in his mind, to recall all his knowledge of it, and in its expression, alter the physical rules of the world, was out of his reach when ferocious monsters were within theirs. "You know, I'm not good with a sword, but perhaps I should—"

The guard turned sharply back. "Are you a mage or not? Throw down the pillars, boy—"

"Holy fuck!" Aiden shouted. The guard turned back to see the blurry point of a rock-tipped spear only an instant before it drove into his eye. The lumbering corpse fell back on Aiden, pinning his legs under 300 pounds of dead flesh and steel. The pugg pulled the spear from the wound and smiled teasingly. The terrified wizard kicked and struggled under the weight. His book was still in his hand. This pugg had more than a few scraps of cloth draped over it, the chief. Aiden waited for his rescue, for that moment in every book where the hero would be saved at the last second. A dragon would be good but a well placed arrow would—

The creature's spear drove an inch through layers of cotton

and polyester and into Aiden's leg. The pain was shockingly intense. The pugg pulled it back quickly and strolled over the corpse to aim for Aiden's face. The leather-bound spellbook had a skeleton of wood. It was heavy for its size and durable. Only a handful of pages were pierced as the book was held up as a shield. When Aiden pushed the book back, the creature fell off the guard's body.

After dislodging himself from under the armored carcass, Aiden rolled back and slammed the tome as hard as he could upon the pugg's head. He brought it down again, hearing a crack, and another, which added a blemish of blood on the cover. All his strength in a third cracked the creature's bones and snapped the spear. A fourth, fifth, eighth, twelfth, and there was little left other than broken bones and blood. Aiden kept at it up until jostled by the shout.

"Hey...Wizard!" shouted the captain sarcastically. Aiden looked up from his kill. The remaining puggs had been driven off or killed. Three guards had fallen along with two passengers. "You done wowing it with your magic? It's over." Aiden lifted himself from the ground, looked at the nearly destroyed book, and limped back to the carriage. As he struggled up the steps, the captain added, "That was some spell you got there."

Aiden ignored him.

* * *

It was hours after the caravan got moving again did a doctor see to Aiden's injury. As the healer pulled the broken layers of clothing away, they both realized how pathetic the wound was. The doctor didn't comment and went about with three stitches. Aiden didn't voice his concern if the needle or thread was sterile or if brandy was the best cleaning solution. The sutures were clumsy and the brandy hurt as much as the needle sewing his flesh. Aiden winced away the pain the best he could but a single tear still found itself rolling down his cheek. He lifted the cover of his spellbook. It was beautiful once, blind tooled with symbols from Chen that Aiden was still trying to decipher. The uneven and muddled pages were a requirement, filled with scratches and notes on the sidebars. Equations and shorthand filled every space. Sitting perfectly even and parallel were the symbols of Aiden's devotion, the words of Pleroma.

The leather cover was broken. The spine was cracked. A bushel of papers fell out as he placed the book on his lap. The spark flew out of a fallen page and whizzed around Aiden's head, around the room, before flying back to its written word on the scattered leaf. The blood had gotten through the hole and stained the first few pages. Aiden gathered the fallen notes and minor incantations and slipped them back into the broken book. After he was left alone in the coach, Aiden glanced at the abandoned guitar and realized who one of the fallen passengers was.

"Shit..."

* * *

Captain Rothschild called Aiden to the reigns at mid afternoon on the next day. Aiden was still nursing a mild limp as he pushed through the drapes and stepped onto the front of the road train.

"Captain?" said Aiden.

"Yes, have a seat." The captain had a cushion. Leaf springs didn't soften every rock. The vantage was impressive. Three storeys up and Aiden could just see over the crest of trees. Looking down brought him square into the ass of a cow twice the size of an elephant.

"How's the wound?" The captain emphasized the last word.

Aiden stroked the bandage he could see through the hole in his pants. "It's nothing."

The captain shook his head. "Could have told me you couldn't do magic. My fault for not knowing better. Human casters were rare enough."

"I know the words, but—"

"Not in combat. If you want a light, make a fire. That's a useful skill. Carpentry, metalwork—hell—musician, there's some value in that. Do something productive. Wizard...same spells then are the same today. Nothing changes, never gets better. Can't build on a spell, son." Aiden nodded. He didn't wish to engage in an argument, not now, not here. Aiden had practiced the basic words for years. The pain had been distracting. The creature's scream had been unsettling. Those were good reasons but they were probably wrong. "So which house?"

"House?"

"A peasant-born would know a blade. You've got skin as pure as a fae's ass. You were raised in sanctuary. So which house? Antikari? Torquil? You don't look inbred."

"You need to slow down." The captain looked ahead to see the approaching dust plume, moving fast.

"Storm? Stampede, maybe?"

"I don't think so."

The captain stood up and shouted to the controller at the rear of the coach, "Full stop!"

The man at the back stood up and a chain of screams followed down the line, "Full stop!" The captain pulled on the huge brake and the coaches slowed with the animals. "You know what that is?" Rothschild asked. "If it's a chiggoth, we're all dead."

As it rose over the hill, Aiden recognized it. It was taller than all the trees around, with eight wheels that dwarfed even the caravan's beasts of burden. The goliath lumbered over the landscape with carbon-kevlar wrapped tires, scarring the earth with deep treads. The brute clumsily pushed and bullied its way through whatever stood in front. The scrambler Aiden had ridden in pranced gracefully in comparison. It was twice the height of the caravan and held twice the people. Its main body was lifted high over its axles, allowing it to drive over the forest rather than through it. Only leviathans like this ever made it this far from a bastion and even then, they were a rarity. It was flanked and escorted by a half dozen all-terrain bikes with enclosed cockpits and chunky tires.

Aiden grimaced at the eyesore as it passed.

"My God, what a monster!" the Captain admired.

"Aptly said," Aiden replied. Monster was related to monstrosity, an abomination, something exaggerated, perverted, a sin against nature.

"Still beautiful in its own way. Nothing to fear with that. Not dragon or chiggoth. That's traveling in style."

"It's 2500 tons of iron and carbon driven by an energy that would vaporize this forest if it were released." Unlike the scrambler, this vehicle couldn't generate enough power from

solar cells alone. Hidden deep inside, locked in an iron shell, was the energy of the sun.

"Still beats walking," the captain replied. Aiden turned to reenter the coach. "What would you call something like that?"

"Mark 13 Behemoth, via the Angel Strongyards " Aiden answered as he left the captain.

The captain turned and watched Aiden vanish into the vehicle. "Well, good luck out there, techan."




Future monster sketch
(I know, scary)





CHAPTER ELEVEN: MONSTERS



Earth was, and always shall be, a dangerous place for those who venture into shadow. Across the entire world, no valley, mountain, forest, or town is immune to the influence of magic. Where humanity did not take root to at least moderately direct the land's development, the flow from Attricana would saturate it, giving birth to the truly bizarre, fantastic, beautiful, or revolting. Classed together as spawn creatures, the majority of these beasts possess no culture and many never develop an intellect that can be measured or tested. A scant few have broken from these primitive and primordial bonds to stake a claim as a species worthy of respect.

FAE ANATHEMA

When magic first flooded the world, the saturation of enchantment began to reshape the animals and landscape. The dragons arose in imitation of the shape of the dominant life-form of the time, and an indeterminate amount of time later, well after the dragon kings had spawned their own descendant races, a new species appeared without warning from the forests. These new creatures resembled nothing that had come before. They were intelligent and beautiful, with the power and will to form a civilization while the other creations of chaos could only hunt and reproduce. Communities formed, towns were built, and cultures flourished.

The elder fae had emerged.

These creatures were tiny in comparison to the dragons, but reproduced a hundred times faster and were just as ageless and deathless except through unhappy accident. They spoke a single tongue, looked the same, and their traditions were mirrored in every civilization they founded. Yet, though creatures wrought of magic and able to imitate a fraction of the powers of dragons, they were not masters over magic. One day, without warning, every new fae child began to be born as a completely different species. They resembled the original fae in only the broadest ways. This first branch was seen as a deviation or worse, an abomination. They instinctively rejected the ironclad traditions of their elders: even their speech was slightly different. Most of these children were cast out of their communities, and soon began to seek each other out. They shared similar beliefs and in time, they developed a culture aberrant to that of their parents, their idiosyncrasies of speech developing into barely-related languages. As more and more came into the world, the original fae realized a drastic shift in their species was occurring. The members of this first offshoot had sprouted from the fae communities formed in plains and valleys. Shortly thereafter, the fae that took the forests as their home spawned their own unique subspecies. Fae in the mountains formed another.

This entire process took less than a thousand years, but by the next millennium, only one child in ten thousand was born a 'true' fae, and by the following millennium the original species was completely stillborn, the entire culture slowly becoming extinct as accident or quarrel claimed them one by one. Three young species rose to replace them: the laudenians, chaparrans and narros. Unlike the original fae, these three branches were shorter lived and took pride in cultural distinctions from their cousin races, though identical within their own communities. Narros built underground empires and cities atop of mountains while laudenians erected vast and expanding empires in valleys. The chaparrans vanished in the dense forests that birthed them.

These new fae were settled and complacent, but in less than half the time the original fae had reigned on the planet, the laudenians suffered another deviation. This new branch was shorter, with larger ears and a frenzied desire to learn and record what they knew. The laudenians became petrified at the prospect of vanishing like their ancestors. Believing the earth itself was the cause, laudenians employed their power of magic to uproot themselves and took to the sky, leaving their ground cities to their children, the damaskans.

The narros and chaparrans were not immune, and soon started to branch their own deviations. Through this chaos, there did appear a pattern to these mutations: they emerged more often in areas bountiful with life, and regardless of where the parent species settled, as long as the environment was similar, the offspring species was identical across the world. In the time it took the damaskans to emerge as a distinct people, chaparrans—the most varied and widest-ranging of the new fae—spawned not one, but three different distinct subspecies, each bound to a specific element of the forest (water, earth, and air). Later, these lines broke off still further, amalgamating animal and insect parts into their physiology. Many of these subspecies grew smaller, more isolated to their particular niche, and were harder to categorize and define by outsiders. There were other odd idiosyncrasies. The chaparran branches produced fewer and fewer males with every iteration, with the youngest species being over ninety percent female. The narros, due to their homogenous environment, produced descendant races less frequently, unchanged for millennia before branching to the ogres, which themselves mutated almost immediately thereafter into variations with one eye and two heads. As the chaparran branches became smaller and overwhelmingly female, narros were becoming larger and predominantly male, with the monstrous chiggoth towering over them all. The most devolved creations became known as the fae anathema.

Building upon the foundations of the fleeing laudenians, the damaskans grew fast. They became the most populous of all fae, helped along by their increased reproduction cycle and social structure. While the chaparran anathema vanished into their woods and the narros in their mountains, the damaskan anathema spread quickly over the globe. The first were the skeggs and boggs, then finally the puggs, a locust swarm of fairy vermin that had no purpose beyond eating, rutting, and pillage. But not all the damaskan branches were entirely uncivil; a portion of their population had vanished under the ground, lost their sight and became the tenenbri. Another group begot the gimfen, curious and playful creatures which thus far has not spawned a devolved species of their own, a fact that most gimfen take as proof (together with their lack of technological disruption) that they are the final form of fae to inherit the planet.

Setting aside these last, newer fae branches always emerge less civilized and more perilous than their ancestors. The chaparrans thought they had escaped

this, believing their future awaited them in the trees and that the faeries and nariisa were a preferred fate, until these almost angelic creatures descended into harpies and hags and finally the dojenn, one of the ugliest creatures on the planet, appeared from the watery depths. The ultimate narros anathema, a fate feared by even the ogres, is the dumb and massive chiggoth: the builder folk's descendants are fated to grow large and stupid, smashing down the mountain keeps the narros spent their empire's span building. Tenenbri have pushed their dark side into the crevices of their underground labyrinths, but as these subterranean fae begin moving north, their secret has begun to move with them, the kythix. Damaskans, alas, cannot bury their descendants in dungeons or in the depths of oceans. The skeggs are large and mean, but of limited and controllable numbers, but their descendent species of boggs was more numerous, and these in turn have been displaced (when they do not rule over) by the growing mass of puggs, an unstoppable feeding frenzy of animalistic fae.

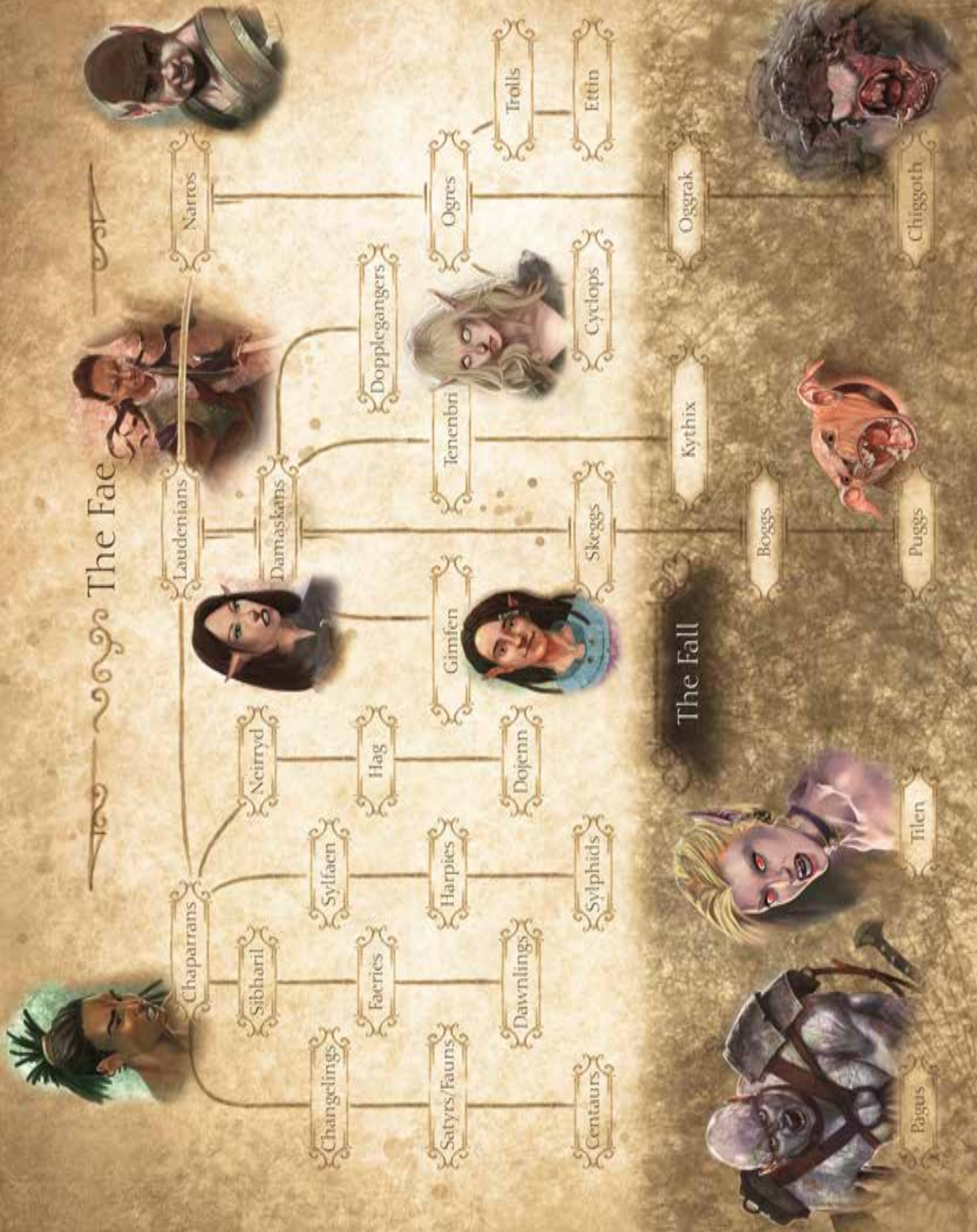
Then there are the tilen. With a complicated history of emergence, this young people has never branched into a descendant species. Tilen always produce pure tilen even when they breed with other species, even the never-changing pagus. Since the tilen look the most like the original fae (according to their claim), their existence may be the solution the fae need to maintain their heritage and prevent the madness of a chaotic future.

THE FALL

The exact date was never recorded, though assumed to have been thousands of years after the emergence of the fae. Darkness washed across a starry night. There was no fire or brimstone, no oracle to herald the end of days, no trumpets blown, no seals broken. A gloom settled with the passing wind and a million fae walked from their homes and families, following an undeniable temptation. They were no longer slaves to whimsy, no longer products of chaos. They embraced a way that would ensure the stability of their lives – an order of things, never changing; masters instead of slaves to enchantment. They were corrupted by the Fall – the arrival of Mengus. This influence could only corrupt what Attricana created, and an army of followers emerged in a single day, a stream of pilgrims to the shores of a distant land, a growing expanse of black glass where the dark star settled. Of all the fae, the chaparrans were the hardest hit. Many years passed before these corrupted fae returned as the pagus, their bodies transformed into identical, perfect killing machines, their might unleashed upon their unwitting former kindred. Unlike the fae birthed from Attricana, those from Ixindar never changed, neither devolving nor evolving. They simply were, are, and will forever be. While Ixindar cannot encourage spawn races, it can twist any existing life to its own purposes. The most feared of these transformations is the dark mirror of the



The Fae



elder fae, the shemjaza. Like the old fae, these creatures were tall and beautiful in their own ways, but obsessed with control and order rather than dance and play. They put forward methods of war while their opponents pondered and argued over celebration and joviality. Mankind now calls them devils or demons, and there is more than a little justification behind those titles.

SPAWN

Most monstrous creatures of the wilds are, of course, ultimately not of fae extraction, but are results of At-ricana's influence on the world's natural flora and fauna (and, occasionally, the natural elements themselves). The most common effect of this influence is to expand the creature to tremendous size, similar to the dire beasts that flourished in the epochs prior to the ascent of Man, but occasionally a creature is subjected to some particular magical mutation which gives it unusual supernatural powers. A few rare animals are gifted with limited intelligence in this way, though few have yet developed any sort of civilization or culture. As any mutation caused by magic is invariably passed on to the monster's descendants, over the centuries many of these initial sports have produced true-breeding sub-species. They are usually far more dangerous than their animal forebears, as they have no intrinsic fear of humanity and will not hesitate to attack people when they feel hungry or threatened (or, in the case of some of the more intelligent species, when bored).

AVAILABLE MONSTERS

What follows is a list of the monsters from *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game Core Book* available in canon *Amethyst*. These creatures either exist in the real setting of the story or their inclusion would not break the setting's logic. If a creature is not listed, there is usually a good reason. You are welcome to include other monsters from any valid source, but non-canon monsters should be treated as accidental or deliberate magical mutations, without a developed history or a natural place in the ecosystem. Summoned and shapechanged monsters, of course, are constructs of the imagination and are not bound by this limitation; it is highly unlikely, however, that any spellcaster capable of such effects would produce a creature that has no canon analogue.

Some monsters included in the *Amethyst* bestiary may seem obviously inspired by mythology, which fits well within the setting, and thus, may be similar to monsters in *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*. *Amethyst* is meant to imply these are the creatures that mythology and fairy tales are based on, but did not get entirely correct. Since there is no dialogue with these monsters, the English name for them is the same as their historical mirror. In that case, *Amethyst* does refer to them by their original name and they would use the proper entry in *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*.

MONSTERS IN CANON AMETHYST

(part of the setting)

Animals/Critters (All)
Ankheg (spawn)
Bulette (spawn)
Chimera (spawn)
Ettin (fae)
Gargoyle (spawn)
Ghoul (spawn)
Golem (spawn)
Hellhound (spawn)
Harpy (fae)
Human
Hungry Star (spawn)
Hydra (spawn)
Manticore (spawn)
Medusa (fae)
Minotaur (spawn)
Ogre (fae, narros branch)
Ooze (spawn)
Otyugh (spawn)
Owlbear (spawn)
Phase Spider (spawn)
Skeleton (Ixindar)
Troll (fae, narros branch)
Vampire (Ixindar; commonly known as 'ghulath')
Wight (Ixindar)
Wraith (Ixindar)
Wyvern (spawn)
Zombie (Ixindar)

OTHER COMMON MONSTERS IN AMETHYST

(Not from The 13th Age Roleplaying Game Core Book)

Basilisk (spawn)
Bat (spawn)
Centaur (fae, chaparran branch)
Crocodile (spawn)
Cyclops (fae, narros branch)
Doppelganger/changeling (fae, damaskan branch)
Elemental (spawn or construct)
Griffon (spawn)
Hag (fae, chaparran branch)
Human
Hyena (spawn)
Lycanthrope (spawn)
Panther (spawn)
Roc (spawn)
Satyr (fae, chaparran branch)
Snake (spawn)
Specter (Ixindar)



MONSTERS REPLACED IN AMETHYST

(These monsters don't exist because there is a duplicate monster already present in the setting)

All elves, replaced by equivalent fae

All goblinoids (goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears), replaced by puggs, boggs and skeggs

All dragons (both chromatic and metallic), replaced by archon and typhox dragons.

Giants (but not the giant type), replaced by oggraks and chiggoth

Kobolds, replaced with puggs

Orcs, replaced by pagus

RULE AMENDMENTS

Descriptions: No monster flavor text from an outside source is canon in *Amethyst*. If a player inquires, be inventive. Only monster knowledge relating to the creature's physical capabilities and habitat is canon.

Fae = Fey: For dealing with magic items and monster origins, the fey keyword is part of the fae tree. However, only specific fey like nymphs and hags are canon. Any creature on the above list designated as fae has the same common fae traits as PC fae, but only has the common traits of the fey type if it normally has that type.

Ixindar: Ixindar is a new monster keyword. An Ixindar creature does not generate EDF. It does not alter disruption rolls or cause a targeted disruption effect when it scores a critical hit. All creatures on the above list designated as Ixindar creatures, as well as all undead, have this keyword. Any non-canon creature with Evil alignment may also be an Ixindar creature at the GM's discretion.

BOGG

Before the puggs emerged, the boggs were considered the largest growing threat in Canam. They were numerous enough to be a hazard on their own and just smart enough to realize stealth and numbers prevailed against smarter and tougher enemies. Although it is believed boggs came from the larger harrier skeggs, there have been reports of boggs emerging directly from damaskan roots. Skeggs are often chiefs among bogg tribes, especially when a bogg mother has not been established, and individual boggs have in turn been known to set themselves up as the leaders of pugg swarms. The common trait of a bogg is its perpetual smile and hideously distended mouth. With three times as many teeth as a human, the bogg can show nearly them all when it grins, and does so often. Boggs' pain receptors are wired differently from other species, releasing a flood of endorphins and adrenaline when the creature is hurt. This may explain their giggling laughter even when impaled upon an enemy's sword.

BOGG SCABB

1st level mook [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +4

Sharpened Stick or Blunt Blade +6 vs. AC—4 damage.

Impulsive Cruelty: The bogg scabb deals 3 ongoing damage when it score a critical hit on an enemy.

AC 16

PD 15

MD 11

HP 6 (mook)

Mook: Kill one bogg scab mook for every 6 damage you deal to the mob.

BOGG THROWER

1st level archer [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +4

Sharpened Stick or Blunt Blade +6 vs. AC—4 damage.

R: Throwing Axe +6 vs. AC—4 damage

Masochistic Response: If the bogg thrower is hit, it gains a +6 bonus to its next melee or ranged attack.

AC 16

PD 14

MD 12

HP 22

BOGG THROWER TACTICS

Bogg throwers are larger and smarter than the average scabb. They achieve this from puberty, which is a sudden and uncomfortable affair. A bogg thrower will let the scabbs or puggs (if they have them) run into combat first, approaching cautiously while hurling its axes at any target available. If forced, the thrower will join melee combat but only if there are a few other boggs there first.



The bogg replaces the goblin, its defining feature being the gigantic head and mouth—not uncommon in movies where the adorable creature reveals itself for having a menacing jaw.





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BOGG RAKE

2nd level spoiler [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +3

Actual Sword (stolen) +7 vs. AC—5 damage.

Natural even hit: The bogg rake inflicts an additional 5 poison damage.

San In Yer Eye: As a standard action, the bogg rake can daze an enemy it is engaged with until the beginning of its next turn.

AC 17

PD 12

MD 16

HP 35

BOGG RAKE TACTICS

Bogg rakes tend to be the more clever members of the bogg species. Like the spitters, they are older and can often lead villages if a bogg mother has not emerged. They utilize a poison given to them by the spitters that is distilled from rotten animals and whatever else boggs find laying on the ground. Rakes tend to skirt the out-sides of a combat, letting the lesser boggs and puggs get into the thick of it before making their move.

BOGG MOTHER

3rd level troop [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +2

Meaty Fists +7 vs. AC—10 damage.

Natural even hit (once / turn): The bogg mother makes a second attack. If both attacks hit the same target, the target is grabbed. Both hands grab and the bogg mother can only grab one target at a time.

Gnaw: As a standard action, the bogg mother inflict 15 damage on a target it is grabbing.

My Babies: When a bogg or pugg is killed within sight of the bogg mother, the mother can make a meaty fists attack as a reaction.

AC 18

PD 16

MD 14

HP 80

BOGG MOTHER TACTICS

The bogg mother is a force to be reckoned with and shares none of the cowardly instinct of its offspring. The bogg mother wades into combat as quickly as possible to protect the puggs and boggs, and will drop a victim in order to attack another, if it thinks one of its “children” is being harmed.



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BOGG MOTHER



BOGG LORE

A character knows the following with a successful knowledge check.

DC 15: Boggs delight in both giving and receiving pain, and the saying ‘that which does not kill us makes us stronger’ is particularly apt when applied to them. Any physical harm that does not kill them outright makes them more dangerous.

DC 20: Each bogg nest contains at least one bogg mother. This grotesquely obese female bogg is pregnant one hundred percent of the time, with between four and six uteri and an incubation period of twelve weeks. Each pregnancy produces between four and six bogg whelps or puggs (puggs born to bogg mothers are usually eaten, but a few are allowed to live as slave labor).



Yup, I'm keeping lore checks. I wrote them for a previous edition and loved them so much, they have popped up in every subsequent edition, regardless of the rule system. It's a simple concept and can be included with or without rolling.

DOJENN

Chaparrans were proud of their pedigree. Their descendant races were not massive ugly monsters with stone appendages or feral rodents devouring everything they could wrap their grotesquely oversized mouths over, but became beautiful, angelic creatures sought after by lustful mortals. Even when taking on the

attributes of their environment, these descendant races had flair and artistry in how they expressed these features. Their echological echoes were represented with respect and worship, called centaurs, nymphs and faeries. This aspiration died when the dojenn appeared, rising from the depths of rivers, lakes, and oceans to feed upon drowning victims before the water claimed them. Dojenn are the dark reflection of everything the chaparrans had hoped to become.

Another noted difference between the dojenn and their cousin races is their appearance. Dojenn are one of the most feared creatures to look at in the world. They have lifeless eyes over a jaw of needle-like incisors. They can disengage their jaws and swallow creatures twice the size of their own head, and have been known to do so to live prey, using their long teeth to keep food from escaping. As time progresses, these monsters are appearing more and more, migrating farther inland, following rivers deeper towards established and unsuspecting nations. They have already started attacking Baruch Malkut and York, striking during the night and pulling dock workers before an alarm can be raised. Like all fae anathema, the dojenn are fated to be the ultimate legacy of the chaparrans unless something even more monstrous should emerge.

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DOJENN

DOJENN MATARK

4th level wrecker [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +8

Bite or Harpoon +9 vs. AC—15 damage

Feeder Tendrils +9 vs PD—5 damage, and the target is grabbed.

Caustic Excretion: When the dojenn is hit with a melee attack, the attacker suffers 5 poison damage.

Feeding Time: The dojenn can make a bite attack as a move action against a target it is grabbing. It can still make a harpoon attack against another target as a standard action.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 14

HP 101

DOJENN LORE

A character can know the following information with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 10: Dojenn prey on the innocent and complacent, and take joy in the terror of others. They have no qualms in devouring both fae and humans, with marked preference for their own cousin races like faeries and nariisa. It has been suspected that the dojenn have eliminated several faerie branches, forcing these innocent creatures from their waters and woods.

DC 15: Dojenn scales ooze a toxic secretion which burns the flesh of dryfoots on contact, but it evaporates quickly in air and washes off just as quickly in water.

DC 20: The dojenn are an offshoot from an earlier chaparran deviation; a merfolk-like aquatic fae species called the jeilynn. The dojenn systematically destroyed each jeilynn home, and the vast oceans now contain little intelligent life other than scattered dojenn tribes and the occasional spawn creature. Rumors still persist some jeilynn have survived, hiding from their progeny.

DC 25: All dojenn most ever see are female. The males may still be visible as tiny, remora-like parasitic creatures that attached themselves to the female's underside and merge with her for life.

DOJENN TACTICS

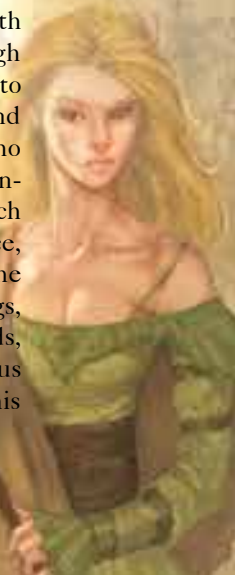
Dojenn prefer quick strikes to pull prey into their environment to continue the attack. When in the open, they don't conceal their presence, attacking openly and visibly, letting their revolting forms dissuade enemies from establishing a defense. The dojenn immediately rush into combat with the first creature they see and attack viciously.

DRAGONS

The most iconic symbol of fantasy, when the world of magic swept over the globe, dragons became a confirmation more than a realization, the final evidence that fantasy had invaded reality. Unlike many other fables, legends of dragons can be found in every corner of every nation in history, the symbol of both the greatest wisdom and the greatest evil. Across the globe, they took many shapes. Some walked upon two legs, some four, or even six. Many twisted in coils with snake-like bodies through the clouds while others slumped across beds of gold, silver, and skulls like lumbering cows. Winged or not, most dragons of legend could fly. Some devoured maidens, staving off a greater appetite for villages offering the sacrifice. Some fell to lances wielded by saints or squires while others died by the hands of their own tricks, fooled by clever wizards. Throughout the legends, dragons were either dumb lizards or keepers of great knowledge and magic. Some brought fire and disease while others water and plentiful crops. The sight of a dragon in the skies rained fear on everyone below. Their deaths heralded both ages of wisdom and despair. Their images upon coats, crests, and colors signified a country's dominance over the monster or their reverence for it.

Modern dragons were exultant over the respect they had received in their absence, regardless of the source. They were shocked at the amount of detail that had survived and the accuracy or liberties taken both condemning and glorifying them. Some were especially surprised at the singular attitudes dragons would take dependent on the nation. Rarely would dragons be represented in different lights within a single culture, causing no end of disagreement regarding their actual nature – how their bodies moved, what powers they controlled, or even how many toes they had.

Nevertheless, to many people, defacing an image of a dragon regardless of its character was considered insolent and unlawful. The dragons' elevation to godhood was an obvious transition to some. Most dragons insist that such worship is undeserved, but even the noblest dragons have a streak of vanity in them, and few despise the adulation they receive. In one form or another, almost every dragon from human literature is represented on Earth, from the grotesque soot-belching eaters of the young, to the erudite masters of fire and water. Even the aberrations with many heads and tails and legs can be found, though somewhat rarer. Their origins are uncertain, even to themselves: it is suspected that Amethyst, the first and greatest dragon, created them from the dinosaurs who roamed the ancient Earth, but this is by no means confirmed. Initially, four dragon kings arose, each controlling a section of Earth. Lazarus of Grace, controller of the West and Shaka of Dawn, ruler of the East, remain the only known surviving dragon kings, though Goch of Wrath, one of the seven Ažhi lords, claims to have been a dragon king at one point. Lazarus believes, although he omitted such a conclusion in his



book, that Jahada of Glass is that fourth, taken by Amethyst as a mate. Her fate remains a mystery.

Soon after the kings appeared, many more dragons emerged. The yok-ani, born from Shaka's will, were the first, though with their slow reproductive cycle, they quickly became the fewest (only nine exist in the modern day). Over the rest of the world, holy, noble, and guardian dragons fell under the umbrella title of 'archons'. Later, corruption from Ixindar claimed its first victims: from Goch came (whether as her offspring or her corrupted minions, none are sure) the Seven Lords of Ažhi, the first fallen dragons. Soon after, more dragons of hideous disposition appeared, including the cannibalistic death dragons and the cursed cancer dragons; these were feared and cursed by the name of 'typhox'. Many dragons, including Lazarus, believe that it was a beacon from Goch that originally summoned Mengus to Terros, and that the despoiled dragon king has within her hearts an evil not claimed by Ixindar.

CLASSIFICATIONS

There are three types of dragons: archon, typhox, and neutral dragons. All have decidedly different roles and cultures, but all of them are proud: any ancient or older dragon should bear a title appropriate to their nature. Among these three types are several unique individuals of great power who stand out from the rest. The dragon kings stand above even these.

Dragon Abilities: Like *13th Age Roleplaying Game* dragons, roll for *Amethyst* dragons on the **Random Dragon Abilities** table, once for medium and large, twice for huge.



An aspect of dragonkind that was only lightly touched on in previous editions is their naming scheme.

Dragons in every setting are incredibly arrogant and grandiose, but Amethyst's dragons take it a step further - most, with only a handful of exceptions, actually believe they are divine beings, and incorporate titles into their names so that people know how to worship them (and even those who eschew claims of godhood have such titles granted by those who worship them regardless). To make your dragons stand out better from each other, you should give each one a name and a title (even if you never reveal them to the PCs) and perhaps a unique ability related to their chosen portfolio. For instance, a death dragon with the name 'Thallas of Sargasso' might fancy herself the god of drowning victims, and might add seaweed-related trappings to her attacks.

ARCHON DRAGONS

The title of 'archon dragons' applies to the three broad classifications of holy, guardian, and noble dragons – categorized not by their powers and nature, but by their role in draconic society. Holy dragons are the keepers of draconic faith and mysticism, a complex discipline of which lesser beings are fundamentally incapable of understanding more than a fragment: their wisdom is great, but frequently cryptic to mortals, and they are renowned for being long-winded. Guardian dragons are the warrior class, defenders of the dragon way of life and the lower creatures under their care: they are all expert strategists and deadly combatants in both body and spell. Noble dragons are administrators and adjudicators, the bureaucracy of dragonkind: they all have formidable minds and are more focused spellcasters than the holy dragons, but they have a tendency to focus on their own areas of interest or expertise, which is not a problem for dragons but may be difficult for the rare mortals they interact with.

No game statistics are provided here for archon dragons, as they refuse to get involved in mortal conflicts: if attacked, they will use powerful spells to confound their opponents and simply vanish. Archons summoned by magic are always presumed to be just powerful enough to accomplish whatever task they have been summoned for without difficulty.

TYPHOX DRAGONS

Goch was the first fallen dragon, corrupted from within, though whether by her own supremacy and immortality or by Ixindar during the first migration, none can say for sure. Although there are hundreds of typhox dragons, only seven are called Ažhi, the first corrupted dragons. After them emerged three distinct classes of dragons of the typhox line. These are the fallen and death dragons, both bound to Ixindar, and the cancer dragon which is not bound to Ixindar but rather cursed by it.

CANCER DRAGONS

The ugliest of them all, cancer dragons live their lives wracked in agony. They cannot die from any disease but have no way to defend themselves from any infection. They are receptive to any ailment afflicting any creature. Acid and poison courses through their very blood, their eyes are bloodshot and ooze puss. Many archon dragons sympathize with these pathetic creatures unable to rest or even sleep. This constant suffering has turned the dragon's disposition bitter and spiteful, wishing only to inflict their pain unto others. The only time the misery subsides is when the creature transfers disease or poison to a victim.





MEDIUM CANCER DRAGON

4th level spoiler [DRAGON]

Initiative: +8

Vulnerability: If a healing spell is cast on the cancer dragon, it is vulnerable to all attacks until the end of its next turn.

Infected Claws +9 vs. AC—10 damage

Natural 11+: Make an *infection attack* as a free action against the same target.

[*Special Trigger*] **Infection Attack +9 vs AC**—5 ongoing poison damage.

Natural 16+: Chain attack—make another *infected claw* attack.

C: Infection Breath +9 vs PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—5 poison damage, and the target is weakened until the beginning of the dragon's next turn.

Natural 16+: The target is weakened (save ends), and after the breath attack is resolved against all targets, it cannot use *infection breath* for 1d4 rounds.

Resist Poison 16+: When a poison or disease attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 20
PD 18
MD 14

HP 76

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Cancer dragons are meant to be sympathetic—once archons that had been infected by a necrotic curse. Some cannot be saved, but the first inclusion of them in my campaign involved a cancer dragon being cured and attempting to find redemption for its past. This created an encounter where the players had to fight an archon dragon unwilling to offer forgiveness.





LARGE CANCER DRAGON

Large 7th level spoiler [DRAGON]

Initiative: +11

Vulnerability: If a healing spell is cast on the cancer dragon, it is vulnerable to all attacks until the end of its next turn.

Infected Claws +12 vs. AC—20 damage

Natural 11+: Make an *infection attack* as a free action against the same target.

[Special Trigger] **Infection Attack +12 vs AC**—15 ongoing poison damage.

Natural 16+: Chain attack—make another *infected claw* attack.

C: Infection Breath +12 vs PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—20 poison damage, and the target is weakened until the beginning of the dragon's next turn.

Natural 16+: The target is weakened (save ends). If you roll a natural 16+ on any *infection breath* attack rolls, after the breath attack is resolved against all targets, it cannot use *infection breath* for 1d4 rounds.

Resist Disease/Poison 20: When a poison or disease attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 20 on the attack roll or it only deals half damage.

AC 23
PD 21
MD 15

HP 250

HUGE CANCER DRAGON

Huge 11th level spoiler [DRAGON]

Initiative: +14

Infected Claws +12 vs. AC—85 damage

Natural 11+: Make an *infection attack* as a free action against the same target.

[Special Trigger] **Infection Attack +12 vs AC**—20 ongoing poison damage.

Natural 16+: Chain attack—make another *infected claw* attack.

C: Infection Breath +12 vs PD (1d3 nearby enemies)—80 poison damage, and the target is weakened until the beginning of the dragon's next turn.

Natural 16+: The target is weakened (save ends). If you roll a natural 16+ on any *infection breath* attack rolls, after the breath attack is resolved against all targets, it cannot use *infection breath* for 1d4 rounds.

Immune Disease/Poison 11+: When a poison or disease attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 11+ on the attack roll or it deals no damage. Passing the roll inflicts half damage.

AC 24
PD 24
MD 19

HP 450

CANCER DRAGON LORE

A character knows the following with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 15: Cancer dragons are among the most revolting, loathsome creatures to walk the earth. Their enormous bodies are carriers for every malady known to man, and the oldest of their kind have complete and utter mastery over the maledictions that afflict their enemies. A cancer dragon's breath is a disturbing mixture of bone shrapnel, diseased fluids, and gas.

DC 20: It is a common misconception that cancer dragons are Ixindar-bound creatures; they are not. They were originally desert dwelling elemental dragons that were cursed by Goch. They are still Attricana-bound creatures, only suffering from a curse from Ixindar. Simply being in an area where a cancer dragon is or has been is hostile to a creature's health. Vegetation withers, animals grow tumors, and the ground oozes with rot.

DC 25: Cancer dragons live in hot climates and seldom in areas that are cold or damp. Their skin carries a natural bluish tint often marred by scars and lesions. A few cancer dragons, old and near decrepit, have killed enough and infected enough that they have finally vanquished the pain in their bodies, but they remain infectious and their blood is as toxic as ever. Avoid any attack from a cancer dragon which can penetrate skin; an infection will surely set.

DC30: On a few rare occasions, a few sympathetic souls have used intense magic to cure a cancer dragon of their afflictions. If they survive the ordeal, the pain passes and the contagious blood purifies, allowing them to vanish and live peacefully in solitude from then on. Few cancer dragons have undergone the practice and even fewer have survived it: most will go to any lengths to avoid the treatment, fearing change more than pain. Those that emerge healthy find a new zeal for life. The stains of their sins remain, however, and those cancer dragons turning away from darkness have few allies on either side.

DEATH DRAGONS

Despite many assumptions, death dragons are not undead. They embraced Ixindar and dedicated their souls to its power, pursuing its ability to decay rather than create. When Mengus ceased to have any interest in necromancy, the death dragons – until then thought to be her favored children – were outcast. They possess astounding negative energy. They can control undead and cast necrotic spells. This effect decays their flesh and rots their souls. Death dragons look thin, with barely an ounce of fat and thin muscles hanging off their bones. Even their wings are pitted and frayed; however, the unchanging power of Ixindar keeps them as strong and deadly as they were in their prime. They cannot consume any food unless it has been dead at least a week. Anywhere death lurks in abundance, you will find them.

MEDIUM DEATH DRAGON

4th level leader [DRAGON]

Initiative: +9

Vulnerability: Holy

Rotting Claws +8 vs. AC (2 attacks)—4 damage.

Natural 16+: Both the dragon and its target take 1d8 damage.

R: Essence Breath +9 vs. PD—4 damage and the dragon recovers 4 damage. After using *essence breath*, the dragon cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds.

Natural 16+: Attack a target near the first (max 3). If you hit a second or third target, the dragon can divert the hit point recovery to any of its zombies.

Resist Negative Energy 16+: When a negative energy attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it deals half damage.

Grave Call: The cancer dragon will always be teamed up with at least 4 humanoid zombies at the start of a battle. Any dead creatures nearby the dragon on its turn rise as human zombies.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 15

HP 50

LARGE DEATH DRAGON

Large 6th level leader [DRAGON]

Initiative: +13

Vulnerability: Holy

Rotting Claws +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)—18 damage.

Natural 16+: Both the dragon and its target take 4d6 damage.

R: Essence Breath +11 vs. PD—20 damage and the dragon recovers 20 damage. After using *essence breath*, the dragon cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds.

Natural 16+: Attack a target near the first (max 3). If you hit a second or third target, the dragon can divert the hit point recovery to any of its zombies.

Resist Negative Energy 20+: When a negative energy attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 20 on the attack roll or it deals half damage.

Grave Call: The cancer dragon will always be teamed up with at least 4 big zombies at the start of a battle. Any dead creatures nearby the dragon on its turn rise as big zombies.

AC 21

PD 18

MD 17

HP 160





HUGE DEATH DRAGON

Huge 9th level leader [DRAGON]

Initiative: +17

Rotting Claws +14 vs. AC (2 attacks)—30 damage.

Natural 16+: Both the dragon and its target take 6d10 damage.

R: Essence Breath +11 vs. PD—50 damage and the dragon recovers 50 damage. After using *essence breath*, the dragon cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds.

Natural 16+: Attack a target near the first (max 3). If you hit a second or third target, the dragon can divert the hit point recovery to any of its zombies.

Immune Negative Energy: 11+ When a negative energy attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 11+ on the attack roll or it deals no damage. Passing the roll inflicts half damage.

Grave Call: The cancer dragon will always be teamed up with at least 4 giant zombies at the start of a battle. Any dead creatures nearby the dragon on its turn rise as giant zombies.

AC 25

PD 22

MD 20

HP 500

DEATH DRAGON LORE

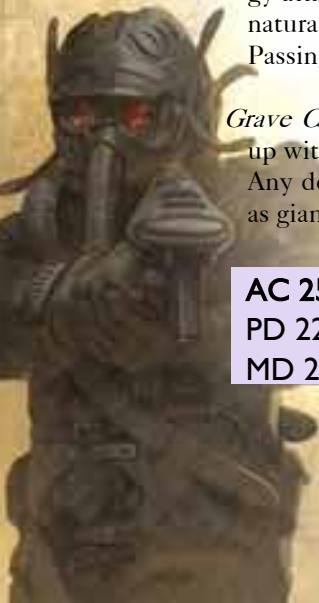
A character knows the following information with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 15: Death dragons will always be near areas with high concentration of undeath, as simply being near the dragon acts as a catalyst for nearby carrion or the corpses of the creatures the dragon kills to rise and obey their master.

DC 20: Of all the typhox dragons, the death dragon is the most magically adept, if only in a single form. Though the dragons did not create the discipline of necromancy, they are now, undoubtedly, the masters of it.

FALLEN DRAGONS

Most dragons of legend slain by brave knights or braver squires tell of fire dragons. Their scales are either dark blood-red or green as ancient bronze, and they bellow smoke and flame with every breath. The closest match to them in the modern age is the fallen dragon. The fallen were the first corrupted dragons, loyal followers of their greatest, Goch of Wrath. Unlike the repellent death and cancer dragons, fallen dragons are beautiful, with uniform scales and proud manes. Their teeth interlock without a gap or chip and they never display a stain or smudge upon their skin. They are the parallel of holy dragons, equally as ravishing to the eyes. Their voices are deep and commanding. They refuse to sully themselves by acting like undomesticated or uncultured monsters. Indeed, they believe themselves



to be fair in their actions and just in their role as the most powerful creatures on the planet. They consider themselves to be the highest authority and superior to all others – a responsibility not to be taken lightly. A fallen dragon will gladly accept the worship of an inferior being and feel perfectly entitled to it: and when these followers march to war, they are the only force on Earth that can say without a doubt that god is on their side.

Fallen dragons rule over Ažhi Dahaka in Canam and often fight with the shemjaza for control over the pagus. Because of this rivalry, few of these dragons live near Ixindar, preferring to stake their claims elsewhere.

They strive for dominance, resulting in more attacks from fallen dragons on civilized lands than from any other typhox. They prefer controlling land to dungeons or keeps, and will rarely be found underground or hiding behind castle walls. Fallen dragons will attempt to control everything they can see. That which they cannot outright command, they will destroy.

MEDIUM FALLEN DRAGON

6th level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +11

Vulnerability: Psychic

Primeval Weapons +11 vs. AC—8 damage

Natural Miss: Re-roll; a hit inflicts 12 damage.

Berserk Rage: While the dragon is staggered, it can make two *primeval weapon* attacks.

C: Napalm Breath +11 vs PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—10 fire damage.

Miss: Half damage

Counter Rage: If the fallen dragon is hit by three or more creatures in a round, on the dragon's next turn, it can make 1 additional *primeval weapons* attack as a free action.

Intermittent Breath: A medium fallen dragon can use *napalm breath* 3 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Resist All Damage 8+: When any attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 8+ on the attack roll or it deals half damage. Once per round, if the fallen dragon suffers full damage, it can make a *primeval weapons* attack as a reaction.

AC 20

PD 19

MD 18

HP 90

LARGE FALLEN DRAGON

Large 10th level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +13

Vulnerability: Psychic

Primeval Weapons +15 vs. AC—35 damage

Natural Miss: Re-roll; a hit inflicts 50 damage.

Berserk Rage: While the dragon is staggered, it can make two *primeval weapon* attacks.

C: Napalm Breath +15 vs PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—40 fire damage.

Miss: Half damage

Counter Rage: If the fallen dragon is hit by three or more creatures in a round, on the dragon's next turn, it can make 1 additional *primeval weapons* attack as a free action.

Intermittent Breath: A large fallen dragon can use *napalm breath* 4 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies with 72 hit points or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Resist All Damage 11+: When any attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 11+ on the attack roll or it deals half damage. Once per round, if the fallen dragon suffers full damage, it can make a *primeval weapons* attack as a reaction.

AC 25

PD 24

MD 22

HP 400



Fallen dragons are the default evil dragons of legend in Amethyst. They are the oldest, the ones rumored to have started the plague which created the cancer dragons. And yet, despite all that, I have never included one. I'll have that rectified in my next game, I swear.

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HUGE FALLEN DRAGON

Huge 13th level wrecker [DRAGON]

Initiative: +19

Primeval Weapons +15 vs. AC—70 damage

Natural Miss: Re-roll ; a hit inflicts 105 damage.

Berserk Rage: While the dragon is staggered, it can make two *primeval weapons* attacks.

C: Napalm Breath +15 vs PD (2d3 nearby enemies)—80 fire damage.

Miss: Half damage

Counter Rage: If the fallen dragon is hit by three or more creatures in a round, on the dragon's next turn, it can make 1 additional *primeval weapons* attack as a free action.

Intermittent Breath: A large fallen dragon can use *napalm* breath 6 times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

Fear: While engaged with this creature, enemies with 144 hit points or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Resist All Damage 16+: When any attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it deals half damage. Once per round, if the fallen dragon suffers full damage, it can make a *primeval weapons* attack as a reaction.

AC 27

PD 25

MD 25

HP 1200

FALLEN DRAGON LORE

A character knows the following with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 15: Fallen dragons have absolute control over flame. Where they go, mundane fires flare to follow them, and dry kindling may burst into flame of its own accord. The ground beneath their massive bodies is scorched black. Mages beware to use fire spells where a fallen dragon is, for fear that the wyrm will turn the magic against its wielder.



There's no really good universal rules method to depict this: I suggest having any fire magic the wizard possesses go hideously awry at a dramatic point in the conflict, by GM fiat, and find a way of making it up to the unfortunate player later.

DC 20: Pagus in Canam are almost always under the direct control of a fallen dragon, and only rarely are led

by their own unbound chieftains. The fallen will usually dominate every living creature in a massive area around its lair.

DC 25: The fallen were the original typhox dragons, and have always been the most powerful. They loathe the shemjaza for some long-past transgression but will rarely face them directly, choosing more subtle means to dispatch them.

THE SEVEN LORDS OF AZHI

These powerful fallen dragons are all huge. In canon *Amethyst*, these are the only huge dragons. There should never be a point at which a fight against them should be anything less than grueling: apply new powers for them (on the fly if necessary) from the Random Dragon Abilities table in *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* core book to ensure that they can always challenge any party.

Baenis of Gorge: Baenis sits bloated on his treasure, growing fatter on the rich livestock his pagus followers bring for him. Baenis is huge, but also slow and cumbersome. He stopped being able to fly long ago. He gorges on food every day with an insatiable appetite. In his prime he feasted on elves, giants, and even other dragons. Today, if his pagus don't feed him, Baenis will feast on them.

- Baenis cannot fly and suffers a -2 to all attack rolls. He has 800 hit points.

Balaur of Debauch: Balaur follows neither logic nor reason. It is hermaphroditic, capable of shifting its sex and preference on a whim dependant on daily desires. It only acts out of passion and instinct and never out of rationale. Balaur desires continued physical gratification and the desire for external stimulus. It craves destruction and lusts for beauty. Balaur enlists slavers to capture those of beauty of various sexes from various species and often has its way when assuming their form. Balaur is even rumored to have sent emissaries to purchase slaves from Baruch Malkut (without their knowledge as to the source of funds). It lusts over the youth, the striking, and the otherwise unattainable. It cares not for emotion and prefers only personal indulgence. These slaves never live more than a year before Balaur grows bored and slays them in the most violent ways possible.

- Balaur can change shape at will into any creature.
- Targets Balaur hits with *counter rage* are confused (save ends).

Goch of Wrath: Goch feeds on violence, fear, and anger. Goch, the oldest and most powerful fallen dragon, prefers to allow enemies to destroy each other. Using her unique complement of abilities, she can inspire rage and violent actions in others, corrupting them to commit the most despicable acts. Goch is far older and powerful than the other Azhi Seven but is often lumped in with them, a categorization she despises.

- Goch has 1200 hp.

Lindis of Avarice: This fallen dragon spends every moment searching for more treasure. She ravages narros mines, attacks wandering travelers, and ambushes mage towers. She considers the taking of wealth of higher importance to causing destruction, and Lindis will often be very selective in her attacks, even sparing the lives of her victims in exchange for all their magic and wealth, especially if her attack may blemish or damage possible loot. No matter how much Lindis acquires, it is never enough. She is not arrogant as Verkelen and has the most guarded lair of any dragon known. Her dungeon is littered with symbols of varying magical potency with layers of multiple traps over many levels.

- Lindis' treasure horde is quadruple.

Lotan of Scorn: Lotan is proud. His over-inflated ego often nets him trouble as he brazenly strides into enemy lands, where he is often forced to retreat from greater foes. Legend claims Lotan lives in a great castle, though its location is a mystery. From a bed of gold, he commands others to do his bidding. He believes himself too important to go into combat, but will if a single enemy challenges him. Several opponents have tried but none have succeeded, increasing Lotan's already bloated self-image.

Verkelen of Spite: This dragon hates all other dragons and intelligent creatures and covets all they own. Verkelen assumes the world belongs to him and takes whatever he wishes. He is the last creature anyone wishes to make deals with, as he never keeps his side of a bargain. Verkelen keeps a large cadre of creatures as personal servants.

Zilant of Indolence: Zilant is a lazy beast. He wishes to do nothing but sleep and eat. He believes he has done enough for the cause of evil and wishes just to be left alone. Every single time he closes his eyes, he sleeps for a century. When he awakens, he finds quick and easy prey for a feast. His dungeon supports an array of defensive battlements, making him difficult to slay. He never initiates an attack, believing it uses far too much energy, though will still defend his lair from assault. He also sleeps with one eye open and as light as an elk. He may be too lazy to commit evil acts but finds good acts an even greater waste of energy.

NEUTRAL DRAGONS

Many dragons rejected the whisper of Mengus, but neither did they adhere to the side of Amethyst, whether out of some ideological prohibition or simple self-interest. While birthed from Attricana, they hold themselves apart from the rest of draconic society, content to pursue their own agendas preferably a long way away from their kindred.

Neutral Dragons will be expanded in a later book.

ELEMENTAL DRAGONS

Many neutral dragons were concerned only for their own affairs, maintaining strict neutrality in the conflict except when it spilled into their own domains. These

dragons exhibited every conceivable shape and power, but the majority reflected in some way a connection to the natural elements of the world. There are dozens of unique lineages among the elemental dragons, most with only two or three members across the world. They exhibit no particular moral proclivities, beyond their typical draconic arrogance and self-centered nature. Only one lineage, the frost dragons, has been particularly prevalent in their interactions with the mortal world, and unfortunately they tend to have some of the nastiest dispositions: many lower beings classify them with the typhox dragons, which frost dragons find supremely offensive.

YOK-ANI DRAGONS

The yok-ani were the first dragons born after the dragon kings, and bore more than a passing resemblance to the four that came before them (and indeed, to Amethyst himself). They most closely resemble the dragons of Asian mythology: wingless and sinuous, swimming through the air like snakes with no obvious means of support. Their scales are usually bright and colorful, and their mane-like crests resemble jeweled crowns. They are among the most powerful spellcasters ever seen upon this Earth, in either age, surpassed only by the dragon kings. Unlike other dragons, yok-ani do not claim titles.



Not necessarily because they don't see themselves as divine (maybe they do, maybe they don't), but more because being title-less among a species that defines itself with titles makes them even harder to understand. Remember, just because they like peace and occasionally help people, that doesn't mean they're good. A yok-ani's actions and motives should be completely beyond mortal comprehension.

Only nine yok-ani were ever born, and none has ever been killed or subverted by Ixindar. The only reason they are not classified among the archon dragons is their strict adherence to neutrality. They count themselves as the world's ultimate diplomats. They even believe if the dark gate and its denizens remained in their own land, they could be allowed to exist in peace. In wars, yok-ani refuse to take sides, preferring to maintain the peace when finally forced to intervene; this they only do when an ongoing conflict (such as that between the narros and the tenenbri) becomes so bitter and protracted that genocide becomes a very real threat. When this occurs, the dragons use their magic to stop the fighting and force the warring leaders to a truce. Breaking such a peace treaty brings immediate and conclusive, though rarely terminal, retribution.

Of the nine, only one yok-ani dragon resides in Canam: Genai-Dilong, after whom the echan township within the walls of Angel is named. It is said that it was





IRON SONS

by his power alone that the refugee fleet was able to make the crossing across the turbulent ocean to the shores of western Canam, and that he now resides somewhere within the temple at the center of the town; there have only been a handful of confirmed sightings in the intervening centuries, however. For a mortal to see a yok-ani once in their life is thought to be a sign of the greatest good luck: two sightings are considered a sign of lifelong blessing. No lesser being, not even the eldest laudenian, has ever seen a yok-ani three times in a lifetime.

364 IRON SONS COMPANY

The Iron Sons is the largest techan free-company in Canam and possibly the world. Very few people outside of the Iron Sons' ranks knows how old the company is or who originally founded it, although it is believed that the current operating general is not its first commander or even its second.

Though virtually every community apart from Angel and York thinks of them as a terrorist organization, the Iron Sons take contracts from all bastions and – occasionally – from echan nations. They don't care who pays, and their success rate is extremely high. The Iron Sons continue to spread their fingers across the land, operating independent cells in several bastions and in nearly two dozen stationary and roaming bases across the continent. Their membership is wide, comprising of humans from every walk of life. Though many members would prefer taking assignments that allow

them to act like heroes, all of them are willing to swallow that preference for a steady paycheck. Most of them have contempt for the fantasy world and believe what they are doing is patriotic for the human race.

IRON SONS CORPSMAN

3rd level mook [HUMAN]

Initiative: +5

Close Combat Knife +6 vs. AC—4 damage.

Natural 16+: The corpsman can pop free from the target.

R: Assault Rifle +8 vs. AC—6 damage.

Bad Timing: If the corpsman misses an attack roll by 10 or more, he cannot use *assault rifle* on his next turn.

AC 17

PD 15

MD 13

HP 13 (mook)

Mook: Kill one iron sons corpsman for every 13 damage you deal to the mob.

IRON SONS GRENAДИER

3rd level spoiler [HUMAN]

Initiative: +5

Close Combat Knife +8 vs. AC—4 damage.

Natural 16+: The corpsman can pop free from the target.

R: Assault Rifle +8 vs. AC—10 damage.

Bad Timing: If the grenadier misses an attack roll by 10 or more, he cannot use *assault rifle* on his next turn.

R: Grenade Attack +8 (1d4 enemies near each other)—10 damage.

Intermittent Grenades: An Iron Sons Grenadier can use his *grenade attack* times per battle, but never two turns in a row.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 14

HP 45

IRON SONS SERGEANT

4th level leader [HUMAN]

Initiative: +5

Close Combat Knife +9 vs. AC—12 damage.

Natural 16+: The sergeant can pop free from the target.

R: Assault Rifle +9 vs. AC—14 damage.

Natural Hit: One other Iron Sons ally can make a ranged attack.

Look Into My Eyes: Once per battle, two killed Iron Sons this battle stand back up. They now have hit points equal to their staggered value.

AC 20

PD 16

MD 18

HP 54

IRON SONS LORE

A character knows the following with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 25: The current general of the Iron Sons is a man known only as Chauk. He has personally commanded several contracts and possesses such high-level intelligence on bastion technology and knows so many of the bastions' darker secrets that the same bastions which hire him have also posted bounties on his head. As such, he has not been seen outside of his inner circle in several years.

KODIAK

Kodiaks are one of the few spawn races to emerge in modern Earth with any semblance of a culture. They began as simple folk in the frigid north, slowly developing a social structure, farming skills, and the first signs of a spoken tongue. Their massive size encouraged a preference for violence and a brutal first encounter with the skeggs affirmed it. While a few communities have grown in size and civility, others have degraded back to feral ways, retaining enough intelligence to plot their attacks on the unsuspecting. The region in which a band originates determines its proclivities. Most live wild, ignoring the outside world and ignored in turn. Those kodiaks bordering on Fargon forged a trading relationship, bartering animal hides for weapons and education. The narros dealing with the kodiaks also hoped their civilized neighbors would beget a safe border and an eventual host of unstoppable warriors ready to rally if the narros were called to battle. Unfortunately, some of these kodiaks took this knowledge of weapons and went to war immediately against their own brothers as well as the skeggs. After the skeggs were pushed back by the modernized mass of muscle and steel, the victors continued their blood rage until they were killed or ran out of food. A few bands, smaller and less savage, moved west of the mountains as far south as the lands bordering Xixion, where they have become almost civilized. Although kodiaks have rarely been seen southeast of Quinox, the rumors of their migration grow each year. They are often sought after as bodyguards, thugs, or as savage warlords on the battlefield. Regardless of their role, they stand the tallest and instill the greatest fear on those that see their eyes.

ENRAGED KODIAK

4th level Double-Strength troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +8

Iron Chains +8 vs. AC—24 damage.

Staggered: While staggered, the enraged kodiak inflicts 30 damage.

Slavering Bite +8 vs. AC—15 damage, and the target is grabbed.

Ravenous: While staggered, the enraged kodiak can make an *iron chains* attack and a *slavering bite* attack.

AC 20

PD 18

MD 14

HP 108

365



KODIAK BRUTE



KODIAK LORE

A character knows the following with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 15: Kodiaks have wide, trunk torsos but are still humanoid and easily differentiated from the bears they came from. Few people can tell the males and females apart. Kodiaks don't need to hibernate but they do eat massive amounts of food, nearly four times any other creature. They have no table manners.

DC 20: There are three distinct subspecies of kodiak. The best-known are the hulking brutes that most resemble the natural Kodiak grizzly bear after which the species was named. A smaller variety, more akin to the smaller coastal brown bear, is found primarily in the Seliquam valley and peninsular rainforest. The least known is a tiny population of throwbacks who are barely distinguishable from the animals they spawned from, and are revered as the closest thing the kodiak religion has to saints. The eldest of these, said to be as old as the present age, is rumored to reside atop a mountain somewhere in the far east of Canam.

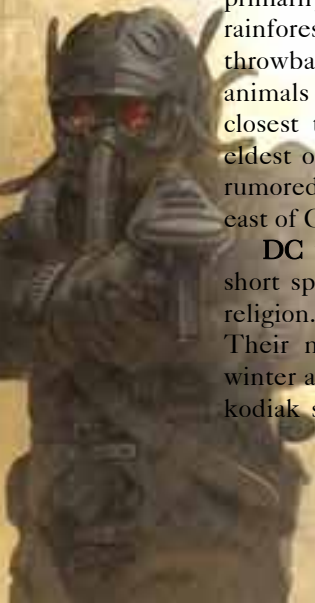
DC 25: Kodiaks have developed a culture in their short span of time. Little is known about the kodiak religion. They worship several gods unique to them. Their major deities include Fressen, the maiden of winter and slumber. She attempted a mortal life with a kodiak shaman and was punished for her actions with

the death of her lover. She birthed Chronzia, the kodiak devil, creeping from the north in the form of a colossal glacier. Fressen returned to her realm to rejoin with her other half, her twin brother Kwuoia, who is always silent and spends the entirety of his existence planting and growing trees.

M.A.X.

(Mobile Anti-echan eXoskeleton)

The appearance of this armored figure is rarely reported, as few ever survive the encounter. Despite the rumors and accounts, no one knows what its goals are, its origin or destination, or if more than one even exists. It resembles an oversized exo-armor, but with no apparent openings to accept a pilot. Its body is black without any insignia, and its arms and legs are as thick as the torsos of similar sized enemies. MAX possesses rudimentary intelligence and problem solving skills. Its low, deep voice demands obedience and its sympathy is non-existent. No bastion in Canam has claimed its construction. It is never found with anyone else, has no marks of origin, and has never been found as wreckage to be salvaged. It seems to be on a mission and is singular in that purpose, never resting, never stopping until it has completed its objective—after which, it vanishes until another assignment is downloaded into its memory banks by its faceless masters.



M.A.X.

Large 10th level wrecker [CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +13

Slam +26 vs. AC—100 damage and MAX pops free from the target.

R: Reliquary Plasma Caster +26 vs. AC—116 damage, and 15 ongoing fire damage.

Resist Variable Damage 11+: On its turn, the MAX can select an energy type. When any attack of said type targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 11+ on the attack roll or it deals half damage.

Reactor Meltdown: If MAX is reduced to zero hit points or less, all creatures up to far away suffer a +26 vs. PD attack, suffering 200 damage on a hit, half damage on a miss.

Immunities: MAX cannot be marked and is immune to poison attacks and disease.

Resist Physical 16+: When a physical attack targets this creature, the attacker must roll a natural 16+ on the attack roll or it deals half damage.

AC 26

PD 20

MD 24

HP 432

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M.A.X.



M.A.X. LORE

Nothing is known of MAX.



...Yet.

M.A.X. was intended to invoke theories and questions about the future. Anyone that owns our original 3.5 OGL edition from 2008 already has an idea where MAX comes from. This origin has not changed. Theories can include a relic from the old age, or an automaton from a bastion across the ocean, or something from...SPACE!

MERFOLK

As these chaparran descendants lived their lives on and under the water, they eventually replaced their legs with fins and a tail. It is believed these fae branched around the same time as other nymphs, specifically water-based ones like nereids and naiads. Being so tied to nature, and thus the world that reflected the power of Attricana, they were especially vulnerable to its effects.

The few fae legends that speak of them refer to them as jeilynn, but many modern fae are unaware that such a creature ever existed; it was only their substantial consistent inclusion in human mythology that verified their existence in the previous age. They kept to themselves for thousands of years in the ancient world, and in the modern one they are virtually invisible, having been hunted close to extinction by their children, the dojenn. As it stands, sailor tales are the only evidence of their continued survival. The legends claim the females are as beautiful as the men are revolting—as close to vicious animals as can be before they stop being fae altogether.

Despite many fairy tales, there has never been a factual record of a bonding between any land creature and a jeilynn. Though human sailors seem fascinated by the idea, there are obvious physical hurdles popular fiction seems to ignore on a regular basis, which require fairly substantial magic to overcome (since bonding does not grant either partner the power to survive in their mate's hostile environment).

Though they are classed as mammals and reproduce the same as dolphins, this is as close as they come to being related to other fae or humans. Another unfortunate misconception insinuates that eating the flesh of a jeilynn grants one immortality. This is false but has led to some barbaric attempts to test the theory.

Merfolk are not expected to be direct opponents and so monster stats are not included.

PAGUS

Ixindar cannot create, only transform. Within a single night, as the black star fell from the sky, a million fae walked from their homes and vanished into the night. Many of the unfortunate victims came from the chaparrans that lived in a large forest near the land later called Kakodomania. When they returned a century later, they were completely unrecognizable: not only had they been transformed to be physically identical regardless of their original species, but their carefree hearts had been replaced with dark, destructive purpose. Ixindar's corruption caused their skin to become thin, cracked and veiny. They lost all their hair from head to toe and their once slender forms bulged with slabs of corded muscle. After centuries in darkness, only their ears remained the recognizable feature from the old fae, around the same length as chaparrans. An oddity of modern pagus is that some survivors of their attacks have reported pagus with naturally round ears, though there has never been an explanation for this.

All other fae descendants have disowned this breed. Chaparrans and narros have sworn to their annihilation. Alas, the most unfortunate side effect of the pagus' corruption is their reproductive system. Unlike other fae species, pagus females enter into season every two weeks and gestation only takes three months. Worse, pagus do not require pair bonding to breed outside their species, causing their numbers to increase at an inconceivable rate. Pagus know how to forge their own weapons and beat their own armor from an early age. They are taught every facet of war and the quickest routes to success. Pagus warbands rarely fail in their goals, if only because their innumerable hordes can simply overwhelm all but the strongest opposition.

By the time the First Hammer fell thousands of years later, pagus outnumbered all other fae combined. While Amethyst reduced most to ash in his death throes, when the black gate re-opened, they returned with an obsessed fervor. Thankfully, Ixindar lost control over most of them as the pagus spread throughout the globe. Kakodomania found itself without much of an army, forcing Mengus to reconsider her plans and wait for their numbers to replenish. However, she is nothing if not patient. Without the dominating whisper, the unbound pagus went wild. Some pagus claimed freedom from Kakodomania but most followed the dictates of the corruption implanted in their souls hundreds of generations prior. Raiding bands appeared across the globe. Evil dragons took control of many to form their own personal guard, claiming lands in Canam for themselves. Many of those that were left became nomadic. Their hatred for the other fae never died, and they found new enemies aplenty in this new time. Oddly, every year, more and more pagus are trying to better themselves. The further they are raised from Ixindar, the greater the chance for redemption, but first they must somehow escape



from the self-destructive tendencies of their kindred and find their own place in the world.

The human mage Kereptis Rifts calculated that more than six million pagus walked the earth in his day, and with their rate of reproduction (even considering their high mortality rate) that number must have easily doubled or tripled in the modern day. Their communities never grow larger than a few hundred before internal conflict splinters them. Their culture does not predate the present age, for they were neither permitted nor interested in expressing themselves while under the influence of Ixindar. This culture is noteworthy for what it lacks: they have no independent writing style (unnecessary, as they keep no histories and the only tales they tell are braggartly retellings of their battle exploits), they don't play music (excluding war drums), and they never dance. Since they were created for war and reproduction, the society that developed indulges in such actions.

One notable development of this is a festival of procreation called San Lossom ("The Founding"). All sexually mature pagus in the community divide by gender, and the males challenge the females to single combat: the women may wield weapons in this battle, the men may not. The males must disarm their opposites to earn the right to mate with them, while the females resist with deadly force. After the highest-ranked couples have concluded their private duels, the festival degenerates into an orgiastic grand melee. All the while, the war drums beat rhythmically, no different from any other battlefield. Because female pagus are as large and dangerous as the males, there is no separation of gender in their day-to-day life. Females have as many rights as the males and if a female reaches the rank of chief, she is expected to never be defeated by challengers; most female chiefs have already birthed a dozen or more whelps in their lives, so this is rarely a problem for them. Most shemjaza and dragons discourage the pagus forming their own culture, but a few have tolerated the San Lossom as it accomplishes two tasks: weeding out the weak and ensuring continued pagus stock.

Pagus were created to be perfectly obedient armies: separated from Kakodomania, their barbaric tendencies intensify because they no longer have a clear authority to follow and turn to the simple expedient of obedience to the strongest. As it is hard to dispute the physical superiority of dragons, this makes the winged gods natural choices for leadership. Sympathizers believe that, if instructed in ways of peace and given a benign figure of respect, pagus could civilize. Evidence of this has already been seen in Apocrypha.

Pagus are despised by every single race, even the ones that rule over them. Shemjaza think of them as hounds, dragons as cattle. All other races swear to their destruction. Only a small number of nations and rulers have permitted pagus to exist within their borders, and only when it has been conclusively proven that they do not live under the influence of Ixindar.

PAGUS STRIFEBRINGER

5th level mook [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +8

Maul +10 vs. AC—9 damage.

Mounting Mob: Each time a strifebringer is killed in the battle, all other strifebringers gain 3 hit points (cumulative).

AC 21

PD 19

MD 15

HP 18 (mook)

Mook: Kill one pagus strifebringer for every 14 damage you deal to the mob (see *mounting mob*).

PAGUS BATTLESWORN

5th level troop [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +10

Maul +10 vs. AC—18 damage.

Focused Aggression: When an enemy staggers the battlesworn, said enemy becomes the focus of the battlesworn's aggression. The battlesworn gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and its damage increases to 21 against its focus.

AC 21

PD 19

MD 15

HP 72

PAGUS OUTRUNNER

5th level archer [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +10

Falchion +10 vs. AC—18 damage.

R. Crossbow +10 vs. AC—18 damage

Natural 16+: The outrunner makes a second crossbow attack (no more) as a free action.

Furious Anticipation: Any enemy that hits an ally of the outrunner is vulnerable to the outrunner's crossbow attack.

AC 21

PD 19

MD 15

HP 72

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PAGUS SHAITAR

5th level Double-Strength wrecker [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +8

Morningstar +10 vs. AC—36 damage.

Natural 16+: Target is dazed until the beginning of the shaitar's next turn.

Shattering Blows: If the shaitar is engaged with at least two enemies, it can make two *morningstar* attacks instead of one as a single action.

Unfocused Aggression: When the shaitar is staggered or hit with a critical hit, on its next turn, the shaitar can make *morningstar* attacks as a move action.

Charge: The shaitar can move to engage an enemy from far away as a single move action.

AC 21

PD 19

MD 15

HP 144

PAGUS CHIEFTAIN

5th level Double-Strength leader [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +10

Heavy Flail +10 vs. AC—36 damage,

Natural 16+: An allied pagus makes a basic attack as reaction.

Actual Strategy: Once per round, if an allied pagus is killed in the battle, an allied pagus an additional standard action during the chieftain's turn.

Unshakable Conviction: All nearby allied pagus are immune to fear, and cannot be confused. When the chieftain is staggered, all nearby pagus gain a +2 bonus to all damage rolls.

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AC 21

PD 17

MD 17

HP 144

PAGUS JANNISHAR

8th level wrecker [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +13

Maul +13 vs. AC—38 damage,

Natural 16+: The jannishar makes a second maul attack (no more) as a free action.

Onslaught: If an enemy the jannishar is engaged with is dropped, the jannishar can move to engage a new enemy as a quick action.

Focused Aggression: When an enemy staggers the jannishar, said enemy becomes the focus of the jannishar's aggression. The jannishar gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and its damage increases to 50 against its focus.

AC 24

PD 22

MD 18

HP 144



PAGUS LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Knowledge (nature) check.

DC 15: Pagus are militaristic to a fault. Each pagus whelp is trained harshly and vigorously from a very early age to become a vicious warrior. When in combat, the pagus are regimented and single-minded, unlike the riotous skeggs or the often solitary oggrak. The pagus take pleasure only in death, not in torture, and as such they are very quick in dispatching any opponents remaining after a battle. Pagus don't believe in much other than what they see and feel. They act on instinct and seldom with reason. Because of their skewed disposition, their intuition endorses violence and an unwavering dedication to the one they consider their leader. When pagus mark an individual as their chief, they swear untiring loyalty to that authority. For thousands of years, that fidelity was firmly tied to the forces of Kakodomania. No matter how powerful a pagus chief was, she always answered to a shemjaza, dragon, or occasionally the direct whisper of Mengus. When freed of that authority, pagus wander wild. Uncontrolled, they follow their last directions—to kill anything that opposes Mengus. Unfortunately, pagus must be told to stop fighting and, without those instructions, their path of blood will continue unabated.

DC 20: Pagus think forward, never backward. They desire what they see and rarely plan ahead. They were created to kill and do so very efficiently. Unlike the shemjaza, pagus seldom play with their kills. They dispatch as quickly as possible, razing villages and eliminating its population before moving on. If they have carnal desires, they commit them quickly in order to resume their regular duties. Pagus are impatient and easy to rouse. They will take to war over a morning meal with no preparation from the previous night. They are decisive in action and when ordered to commit or if taking a quest by choice, pagus are narrow-minded in their fixation. They cannot be distracted and have been known to refuse sleep for days in their obsession.

Crossing a pagus is unwise and in battle, opponents are warned never to leave pagus alive. If they survive, they will remember who wounded them and will think of nothing but vengeance. Pagus don't taunt opponents, and they never cheer. On the battlefield, they are silent, cold-hearted machines. They march forward and mark their targets. When a rival sees a pagus locking eyes upon him, that opponent must be ready, for that pagus is coming to kill them.

DC 25: Pagus are a dominated race. The shemjaza and typhox dragons have held them under their thumbs since the fall and ruthlessly murder any pagus that begins to chafe under the yoke of Ixindar's rule. There are few pagus in Kakodomania older than twenty years of age. As a pagus ages, it doesn't become weaker and decrepit as do other races. A pagus continues to grow larger and larger until the day it is killed. However, the mental health of the pagus, unless strong to begin with,

degrades until little is left aside from an insane monster. Most of these creatures are killed by the shemjaza before they can destroy the settlements they inhabit, but some are enslaved and brought from battlefield to battlefield in chains. These pagus are called the shaitar – the breakers. The pagus strong-willed enough to avoid this horrible fate find their mental agility increasing, rife with thoughts of free-will and culture.

PUGG

Unlike other fae descendants like the chiggoth, kythix, and dojenn, the puggs are not difficult to find. Collectively, they are a massive, destructive organism quickly advancing beyond nuisance to real threat, a danger to nearly every nation on Earth. In some areas, they are a random and uncontrolled pest, amounting to little more than a handful of rock-throwing, blunt-spear-jabbing animals. While not dumb beasts, they have no avenues for directing their intelligence and when not given clear and explicit commands (backed up by the threat of force) they generally default to the most destructive action they can perform. However, they have proven to be domesticable, and when raised in a culture that doesn't promote thievery or deception, puggs can sometimes be raised to live normal lives as servants. Whenever someone hears the term "house elf," it is usually a pugg that is being referred to. For every chaparran or damaskan captured or broken in the slaver markets, there are ten puggs that are processed and forgotten. Domestic puggs are usually bred in pens like pigs, as the feral ones are too difficult to re-educate, but many slavers will still capture wild puggs to replenish their breeding stock. They are trained for simple chores, hard labor, and occasionally cooking. Sad to say, they still live longer and happier lives than if they had been born into a bogg or skegg encampment, or even one of their own swarms. Freeing a house elf is no kinder than throttling it in its sleep, as even when they retain their feral instincts, they lack the brutal experience necessary to survive on their own. In open echa, when left to their own devices, puggs are inevitably savage and destructive. In history their likenesses have been attributed to several fantasy creatures like boggles, brownies, leprechauns, and various other malicious sprites.



Puggs are one of my favorite monsters—gifted with a mob ability that was once distinctive in the genre. Their Bloody Innumerable ability is meant to allow larger groups of puggs to emulate more powerful opponents. I have no problem if you want to continue scaling the bonuses if four, five, or even six puggs gang up on one target.



PLAIN PUGG

0 level mook [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +6

Sticks +5 vs. AC—3 damage.

R. Stones +5 vs. AC—3 damage

Bloody Innumerable: Two or more puggs can combine their efforts on a target with a melee attack (make one attack per group). 2 puggs = +1 bonus to attack and a +2 bonus to damage; 3 puggs = +2 bonus to attack and a +4 bonus to damage.

AC 16

PD 14

MD 10

HP 5 (mook)

Mook: Kill one pugg for every 5 damage you deal to the mob.

PUGG TACTICS

Puggs are cowards at the best of times, and refuse to attack unless they have overwhelming numbers on their side (or are so hungry they forget themselves, which is more common than not). They will gang up and swarm one enemy at a time, biting, scratching and kicking until it comes down.

PUGG LORE

A character knows the following with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 10: Puggs have no aspirations, and only desire the freedom to eat and kill whatever they want. They have no self-control and only stop eating when their stomachs are too full to fit anything else. Their bodies can process any organic substance they can wrap their jaws around, and many will cheerfully attempt to eat inorganic matter as well. The two most common causes of accidental death among puggs are choking on something too big to chew and being crushed or suffocated in a swarm.

DC 15: Puggs can be found anywhere on Earth but are especially prevalent in western Canam where they grow at an alarming rate. Female puggs can produce a litter of two to four offspring every three weeks, though only one in five hundred survives the eight months required to reach maturity (the rest usually being eaten by their siblings and occasionally their parents). Estimates indicate that every square inch of the planet will be covered in puggs within a thousand years if drastic measures are not taken.

DC 20: Slavers often capture puggs to sell as house pets to human owners. The puggs often don't even realize they've been captured, as they are beaten less under human care than under the skeggs'. Small groups of puggs have been known to wander into slaver camps and give themselves up for the promise of food, especially if they don't have numbers to overwhelm

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PUGG

their enemy. On their own or when in small numbers, puggs are absolute cowards.



Puggs are stupid, animalistic, and driven by instinct, but you shouldn't always play them as completely mindless: occasionally, you might surprise the PCs with a group of puggs acting with what passes for cunning.

SATYRS

Satyrs, called scians by themselves and other fae, were represented somewhat accurately throughout human history. They are one of the earliest chaparran branches, eventually leading to centaurs. However, satyrs are not the peaceful skittish creatures the centaurs are. While less feral and animalistic than puggs and boggs, they are still wild creatures, and additionally are hypersexual, orgiastic, and hedonistic. The neurochemicals which in humans cause happiness and satisfaction instead produce an adrenaline response and a strong hallucinogenic effect in satyrs. They quickly crash from this high and must immediately seek out new pleasures or lapse into a dull fugue, during which they are easily provoked into mindless, wild rages. Satyrs are also incapable of bonding with any creatures, and thus can only breed with their own kind. Because their conception rate is the lowest of any fae, satyrs engage in as many sexual encounters as possible. However, the species has a strong sexual dimorphism, with female satyrs (also known as maenads) being virtually indistinguishable from human women, albeit with slightly pointy ears and profoundly unstable minds. Male satyrs are not generally patient enough to determine their partner's species beforehand, preferring to seduce first and not bother asking questions. They are incredibly charismatic and never take a lover by force, although their passions have been known to result in broken bones.

Satyrs seldom get involved in combat and are considered by many of the other races to be cowardly. They hide in forests the same as chaparrans and centaurs, though keeping away from both. Because of the increasing population of humans and their heightened sexual drive, many satyrs have migrated to nearby human communities to persuade passing locals.

Satyrs should not be confused with fauns, a very miniscule later branch from satyrs. Fauns are smaller, less cowardly, equally as hedonistic but in different ways, preferring drink and song as their pleasure of preference.

Satyrs are not expected to be direct opponents and so monster stats are not included.



I generally don't include stats for good creatures or creatures the characters are not expected to directly engage with. This was more about space than creating a wide range of monsters—given the ration allowed for this book, we kept with evil creatures the players would most often fight. This will change with future books.

SHAPELESS WILD

Many opponents swear these creatures are undead, while others claim them to be shadows, but they are neither. They are born from the death throes of lost souls within the Sana Marsh but are neither ghosts nor wraiths. They breathe, but have no faces one can see; they have claws but no arms. They throw no shadows but seem to emit darkness, concealing their true shape (if they even have one). Only illuminated white eyes, jaws of knives, and dripping silver claws twice the length of human fingers emerge from a mass of blackness. Their sole purpose is to protect the Marsh and follow the commands of their demon mother. They have recently been seen outside the Marsh, attempting to drag victims back to the darkness to increase their numbers.

THE SHAPELESS WILD

3rd level troop [BEAST-IXINDAR]

Initiative: +8

Reflective Claws +8 vs. AC—10 damage.

Natural 16+: Make a second *reflective claws* attack.

Evergloom: All light near the shapeless wild is reduced to dim, shadow casting light.

Shapeless Distortion: The shapeless wild can pop-free as a quick action.

Hidden Ways: The first time in battle someone hits the shapeless wild, it misses (unless a critical hit).

AC 19

PD 16

MD 17

HP 45


THE SHAPELESS WILD LORE

A character knows the following with a successful knowledge skill check.

DC 15: One must take the tales told by tavern drunkards with a grain of salt. Though many stories of formless beasts beyond the bogg-controlled forests are told, no one worth the price of a pint ever recounted a reliable tale. Some described the shapeless as living shadows, as if the shade they cast peeled from the walls and enveloped them. Others proclaimed them to be smooth-skinned creatures with nary a hole or wrinkle in



SHAPELESS WILD



374 their bodies save for a pair of white eyes floating in their featureless skulls. A similar story adds claws of silver sticking from black fingers. Because of the lack of definition, all one can see is a pair of glowing eyes looking out from a black void, and vicious talons whirling about it. Some claimed the creatures were cursed fae, maybe *tenenbri* or some offshoot of nymphs turned to shadow, while others insisted they were rejects of death, raised to inflict their rage upon the living.

DC 20: The shapeless are moving beyond their marsh and attacking nearby villages, or reaching far beyond to entice distant rulers with similar promises of immortality that drove the king of Kardia to madness and evil. The Torquil town of Barbecallis is rumored to have fallen to shapeless hands, but in that case, it was because the two lords in charge of the keep had rejected the advances of the demon succubus as they had already taken each other as lovers.

SHEMJAZA

The greatest departure from legends, the modern commanders of the dark armies of Ixindar don't wield pitchforks, have cloven hooves and spiked tails, or sport horns, though they do have pointed ears. They resemble the oldest fae races, but are not fae: they are the pure manifestation of the power of syntropy, given the form of the ancient fae by the intelligence of Mengus. How this came about remains a mystery. The fact that they closely resemble *tilen* gives credence to the claim that the *tilen* are the nearest to the original fae form, but has not helped the *tilen*'s desire for peace with the various nations of the world. Their appearance was uncommon in the time of Terros and unseen in Canam until only a few years ago. The *shemjaza* are usually the ones leading armies and committing secret tasks bestowed by their lords or god. Each one is worth a hundred *pagus*.

They stand much taller than any fae, growing in



stature as their power increases, and have solid black eyes with no differentiation of the pupil, iris, or sclera. They feel nothing except for physical and emotional extremes. Everything must be pushed to an excessive limit, even pain, a sensation they are fascinated by and go out of their way to inflict on both themselves and others. Some intentionally mutilate themselves to keep their sensations constant. Despite their size and the intimidating aspect of their eyes, they are described as being astoundingly attractive and charismatic. Another misconception claims they are all sadistically evil, which is not entirely true: what they are is the epitome of amorality. The concepts of good and evil are meaningless to them, and even chaos and order confuse them as philosophical notions. All they understand is obedience, and unlike the pagus and typhox dragons, they do

not need to be prodded or threatened to obtain that obedience. To a shemjaza, fulfilling the interests of Mengus and Ixindar are as natural as breathing. They are permitted the greatest latitude of any of Ixindar's creatures, for they regard freedom as the greatest evil in the universe. All pagus in Kakodomania are controlled by the shemjaza, and a few have even appeared in eastern Canam to usurp the dominion of the typhox dragons. Shemjaza still number quite few even in Kakodomania, though they are by far the most dangerous servants of Mengus.

Shemjaza are all unique creatures with capabilities and powers tailored for a particular role in the armies of Ixindar. There should never be a point at which shemjaza are a pushover for player characters. Shemjaza will be expanded in a later book.



PCs shouldn't be able to kill shemjaza for the most part, but that doesn't mean they can't defeat them. If you decide to make a shemjaza the big bad of an adventure, you should give it a poetic-sounding One Unique Thing (like a PC) representing its appointed task, and then interpret that Unique absolutely literally. For instance, a shemjaza charged with raising prehistoric monsters as undead might have the Unique "Untouched by all that bites and slashes, burns and bashes," making things like swords, bullets, fire and acid simply stop a few inches from its skin. Make sure the PCs see that their attacks don't even reach the target, and focus their attention on foiling whatever the shemjaza's plan is (such as smashing the necromantic artifact it wields, or dropping half a mountainside on top of it to slow it down while the party takes out its minions).

SKEGG

The skeggs share the boggs' desire to achieve satisfaction through violence. However, they are not capable of the boggs' casual masochism, and so direct all their energy into harming others. Since they have no talent for building large communities, they must raid for food and supplies. On their own, they attack caravans and hamlets but rarely towns or villages unless they have enslaved boggs or puggs to wear down the enemies. Skeggs are the smartest of the damaskan anathema, just intelligent enough not to rush head strong into a fight, driving the lesser castes up first. They have a love/hate relationship with the boggs, but feel nothing but disgust for puggs, which they regard as little better than useful vermin.

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SKEGG PUGG-DRIVER

3rd level, leader [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +7

Pugg Prodder +8 vs. AC—10 damage.

R. Nice Throw +8 vs. PD—8 damage from throwing a nearby pugg at the target. There is now pugg engaged with the target.

Rabble Rouse: All puggs in the battle gain a +1 bonus to attack and a +2 bonus to damage rolls. This is cumulative with the puggs' *bloody innumerable* ability.

Crowd: The skegg pugg-driver is always flanked by a mob of puggs—the details are left up to the GM.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 13

HP 45

SKEGG INCITER

3rd level, leader [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +7

Morningstar +8 vs. AC—10 damage.

Natural 16+: An enemy is vulnerable to an ally's next attack roll.

You're Not Finished: If an ally falls in the battle, the skegg inciter can make a *morningstar* attack as a reaction.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 13

HP 45

SKEGG THUG

3rd level, wrecker [HUMANOID-FAE]

Initiative: +5

Heavy Bone Warclub +8 vs. AC—10 damage.

Natural even hit: Make a second *heavy bone warclub* attack (only one) as a free action. This second attack inflicts 14 damage.

Amplification: The skegg thug benefits from the escalation die.

AC 19

PD 17

MD 13

HP 45

SKEGG LORE

A character knows the following with a successful Knowledge (nature) check.

DC 15: The skeggs consider themselves the ruling caste of damaskan anathema and will always assume control over boggs and puggs whenever they encounter them. Both skeggs and boggs look upon their descendant puggs with contempt, offering them no rights or privileges, throwing them in front of a battle line, assigning them the hardest labor, occasionally using them as furniture, and even breeding them as a food source.

DC 25: Skeggs will not breed with boggs and will oftentimes keep a bogg mother in chains to maintain order over a nest. Skeggs also have a basic knowledge of weapons and armor and enough intelligence to appreciate treasure and the affectations of culture—skills worth their weight in a chained bogg mother. Pugg-drivers occasionally sell some of their stock to human traders.

THORNSHROUD

In the darklands, there is a complex hierarchy, which not all of Mengus' minions care to follow. Shemjaza, typhox dragons, and other powerful evil creatures engage in an intricate dance of dominance and deference. In theory, shemjaza overrule all other subjects of Ixindar, but in practice they often have their own concerns and feel no compulsion to enforce their will, enabling other overlords to take power. None of this mattered when Thornshroud arrived.

Thornshroud is a construct of living armor with the head of a human grafted onto it. The head is withered and decrepit but still conscious and aware. Negative energies keep the psyche intact, though twisted by whispers from the darkness. When Thornshroud arrived in Canam, he swayed any forces he approached. Pagus, shemjaza, and dragons wilted under his will. Instead of corralling the masses of evil behind him in an assault on Canam, this armor vanished on a mission no one else was aware of, one he wouldn't share with his subordinates. He told them it came from the highest authority, orders from the greatest voice of all.

Thornshroud takes joy in the torture and suffering of those he deems inferior, which includes every living and unliving creature on the planet. Unlike a pagus, Thornshroud wears his emotion visibly, laughing at the pain he inflicts, taking trophies of those he kills, brandishing pelts and skulls as marks of this glory. His ears are round, proof that such depravity could only come from a human. Not even he knows his own age or where on the planet he fell under the shadow of corruption.



SKEGG



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THORNSHROUD

10th level Double-Strength wrecker
[IXINDAR-CONSTRUCT]

Initiative: +14

Holocaust (sword) +26 vs. AC—116 damage

Natural even hit: The target loses a recovery. If it has no recoveries, the target is stunned (save ends).

Natural odd hit: The target is grabbed and is vulnerable to *holocaust* attacks until free. Only one target can be grabbed at a time.

Engine of Ixindar: As a standard action, Thornshroud may use a recovery to regain 75 hit points after using *engine of ixindar*.

Holocaust Riposte: Use a recovery as a free action and gain a standard action.

Structural Integrity: When Thornshroud is reduced to 0 hit points, his head detaches from his body, grows four spidery legs and attempts to escape. In this form, Thornshroud has 42 hit points and an AC/PD/MD of 28.

AC 26
PD 24
MD 20

HP 432

THORNSHROUD LORE

There is currently no lore associated with Thornshroud.



Currently, Thornshroud is part of a massive shift in how Ixindar runs its war campaign. Expect more information in the next book. But as you might have predicted, his design and that of Gebermach (mentioned in the fluff and seen in the Death of Amethyst illustration) are similar for a reason.



Natural therianthrope would be a good Unique for a character. Transforming obviously wouldn't provide any direct mechanical benefits on its own, but if paired with an appropriate background, it could be a very interesting and viable choice.



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WEREBEAST

Contrary to popular belief, one does not contract the disease of lycanthropy by being bitten by a werewolf. Most werecreatures are born that way, either to fae (mostly chaparrans) or humans unusually susceptible to magic. Afflicted lycanthropy is not a disease, but a deliberate curse, usually inflicted by a particularly invidious spell.

Throughout human history, therianthropes, as some prefer to call them, have been described as being tricksters, villains, wise shamans, or faithful lovers. There is no distinct therianthrope culture, though the condition passes along family lines and may influence local traditions. Natural werebeasts are believed to have originated when one of the rare spirit-bonded grew

so close to their spirit animal that the two became merged. As with most magical mutation, some of the traits of the now hybrid being would have passed on to its progeny. Of course, this theory does not account for the number of such creatures relative to the rarity of spirit-bonded, and it is possible that other forms of magical shapeshifting may contribute to the phenomenon. The therianthrope condition has also been seen in reverse. Though magic usually creates a dire creature, occasionally a normal animal may develop a level of intelligence equal to or higher than humans or fae. The darawren believe that when such an uplifted animal develops a connection with a humanoid, it can eventually discover how to take their form, though rare is the animal, even an intelligent one, that can pass for a hominid without any tells. Regardless of its source, the transformative condition is only passed on to the werebeast's offspring about half the time, even when they bond with another werecreature.

Natural-born werecreatures are not predisposed to any alignment, although the majority have an at least semi-feral lifestyle and live in their hybrid and transformed state almost as often as their original form. Those cursed by magic often turn into psychotic monsters, as their minds are unable to handle the shock of the first transformation and crack under the strain. However, it is not unknown for a werecreature's mate to voluntarily accept such a spell, and while such folk tend to be more capricious than most due to not having the psychology of shapeshifting ingrained since birth, they are no more disposed toward antisocial behavior than a natural therianthrope.

It was four days later when Aiden heard the shout. "Custodians! What fortune!" Captain Rothschild shouted from outside. Aiden jumped from the bed and scratched frantically at the wood to slide open the shutter. The parade had passed into Limshau's borders during the night.

"The anathema flee further into the west," a sharp, clear, and charismatic voice answered, a master of the language, "chasing food and from that which feeds upon them." Aiden poked out his head to see. When that failed, he went for the door.

"Yeah, they were here, 'bout two dozen. Never seen

THORNSHROUD



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them this far," the captain replied. Still with half his layers on, Aiden threw open the doors, missed the steps, and slammed into the dirt. He flinched from the pain still in his leg. It passed quickly as he saw them, as real as every wish wanted them to be.

The damaskans noticed Aiden with their piercing almond eyes as he rounded the carriage. These two wore new clothes, pressed and clean--a common feature of the species. They abhorred getting dirty. The ears, their most distinguishing feature, tapered straight out a few inches from the sides of the skull to a sharp point. Both these guards were male. Supposedly, a female's ears were pointed higher and fluttered depending on her mood.

Their hair was dark and cut under shoulder length. Their skin was light tan. Aiden took note of their visible age, younger than himself. They wore the black kawabari and overcoat distinctive of the warrior scholars from the city of books. The kawabari armor was the uniform and signature of the custodian. Overlaying leather, both conditioned and boiled, covered nearly every inch of their bodies. The longcoat of thick split leather, ran down to the base of waist in the back, but flowed down past the knees in front. Their blades were locked and safe on their backs.

"Perhaps the speculation of a chiggoth in this region is accurate," the one custodian said.

"Either way, you here for escort?" Rothschild replied.

"No. You are three days from the city. You will find no other threats in your approach. We patrol to find the nest. We suspect it not far from your path. Have you suffered losses?"

"A few, yes."

Aiden just watched and admired the accuracy of those stories. They walked with such subtlety and lightness, they were hardly leaving impressions in the soil. Every arm movement was intended, no peculiar itches or nervous ticks, no idle hands. They stood straight and balanced without shuffling. Their very existence was a denial of common sense and if the gate above were to close, their deaths would come quick under the unforgivable wrath of logic.

"Unfortunate," the custodian said.

Other passengers had emerged from the convoy to get their glimpses. Some had seen the likes of them before. The women were smitten. The men were unsettled but unsure why.

"Should we worry over contraband?" the custodian added. Aiden noted they had no horses. They ran without a drop of water or sweat since the city and would continue to do so until nightfall.

"Never gave you reason to suspect before," the captain answered. "Still, you're in your place and welcome to check."

"We already are."

The third custodian wore white and was orbiting the opposite side of the caravan. Aiden turned back to notice and instantly became aware of his unbuttoned undershirt, his damaged pants, his unshaven face and morning hair.

She studied every passenger, scrutinized each vehicle, and did so with only a passing glance. She looked like a human girl barely at the sunset of her teens. Aiden could-

n't find a single flaw on the modest amount of exposed skin. Gentle enough to be swept away by a stiff breeze, strong enough to push the breeze back. A sharp nose led to brilliant green eyes. Narrow in face but high in cheeks, her slender body floated towards him.

Aiden's jaw became unclenched. In a beat, he was fourteen again, ogling the sketches under the bedsheets. He became ashamed by his imperfections and hygiene. The light caught her flowing straight dark hair thrown back from a head turn. Strands pulled aside to expose the ears. Her smooth, light brown skin peeked from gaps in her armor. She was close and he appreciated the perfection. The coat had round buttons that continued up from the hips to the high collar, where it was topped by a firmly secured short belt. The collar continued half way up her long neck.

She passed him and stopped as they locked eyes. He wanted that to last forever. Everything everywhere led to this instant. It was beyond anything he had imagined or prepared. She broke the moment and looked down at his arm. When she reached for and grabbed it, the adrenaline could be measured in wattage. She pulled his sleeve and revealed the watch. "Romper?" she asked

"Pardon?" Aiden answered.

"Non functional." She shared the accent of the others, a strange sort similar to Minx's, but with an emphasis on perfect pronunciation.

"Yes."

She released him. "A wizard's book but bastion born. You have a tale."

"I do indeed." Aiden tried to form the best smile he could. His thoughts quickly migrated to remind him of the unbuttoned shirt and rumpled hair.

She tilted her head and a slight smirk to lift the spirits of the dead crept over her face. "Then the city will welcome you."

"Thank you," was all he could marshal as his brain rambled on with other distracting thoughts.

"Anything of concern, Raven" called out the lead custodian.

She answered him. "There is nothing tainted or corrupted. No advanced technology."

"Very good."

Aiden glanced at his watch. "Prohibited?" he asked.

"Not exactly," Raven answered as her smile faded. "Unprotected power cells are unsafe in environments such as these."

Aiden attempted to impress. "Actually, I know... I've...I've read."

"Then reminding you of it was avoidable," she answered directly and stepped away. Aiden furrowed his brow, unsure how to make of that.

The lead custodian resumed his conversation with the captain. "We will leave you to your journey," the custodian said. He called out, "let us continue, Raven."

Raven started for the other two. Aiden stepped up to follow her. "Raven, nice name."

She continued walking. "It is," she replied. Fae seldom sported curves. Detractors complained of their lack of definition, that females missed many of the voluptuous aspects of women, and males the tone and muscle of

stout and sturdy men. All Aiden could think was how those critics never spotted a damaskan from behind strapped in kawabari leather.

The captain offered his hand to the lead. "Thank you again." When it wasn't accepted, the captain let it drop. The two custodians approached Raven.

Aiden watched her slip away. He didn't want to follow but he couldn't let it drop.

"My name's Aiden," he finally announced.

She looked back as she walked away. "I did not ask." He had read they had no concept of deception, that their outlook and behavior was foreign to those unaware. A year visibly older or younger could mean a century. A century of traumas and delights can change a person. His hand under no conscious control finally took the initiative and flattened his hair and buttoned his shirt. The elves vanished into the woods, her white leather the last to fade. The passengers and guards boarded the caravan. Aiden kept his eyes on the fluttering leaves.

The captain walked back around. "Hoping for an impression?" he asked, finally jostling Aiden out of his delirium.

"I don't know. I guess...yes."

"Next time don't ask a question you know the answer to." Aiden broke his stare to finally look at him. "Don't fret, you'll see more where that one came from." He patted the disillusioned wizard on the shoulder.

"Yeah, but..." Aiden had ceased being an adult some time ago.

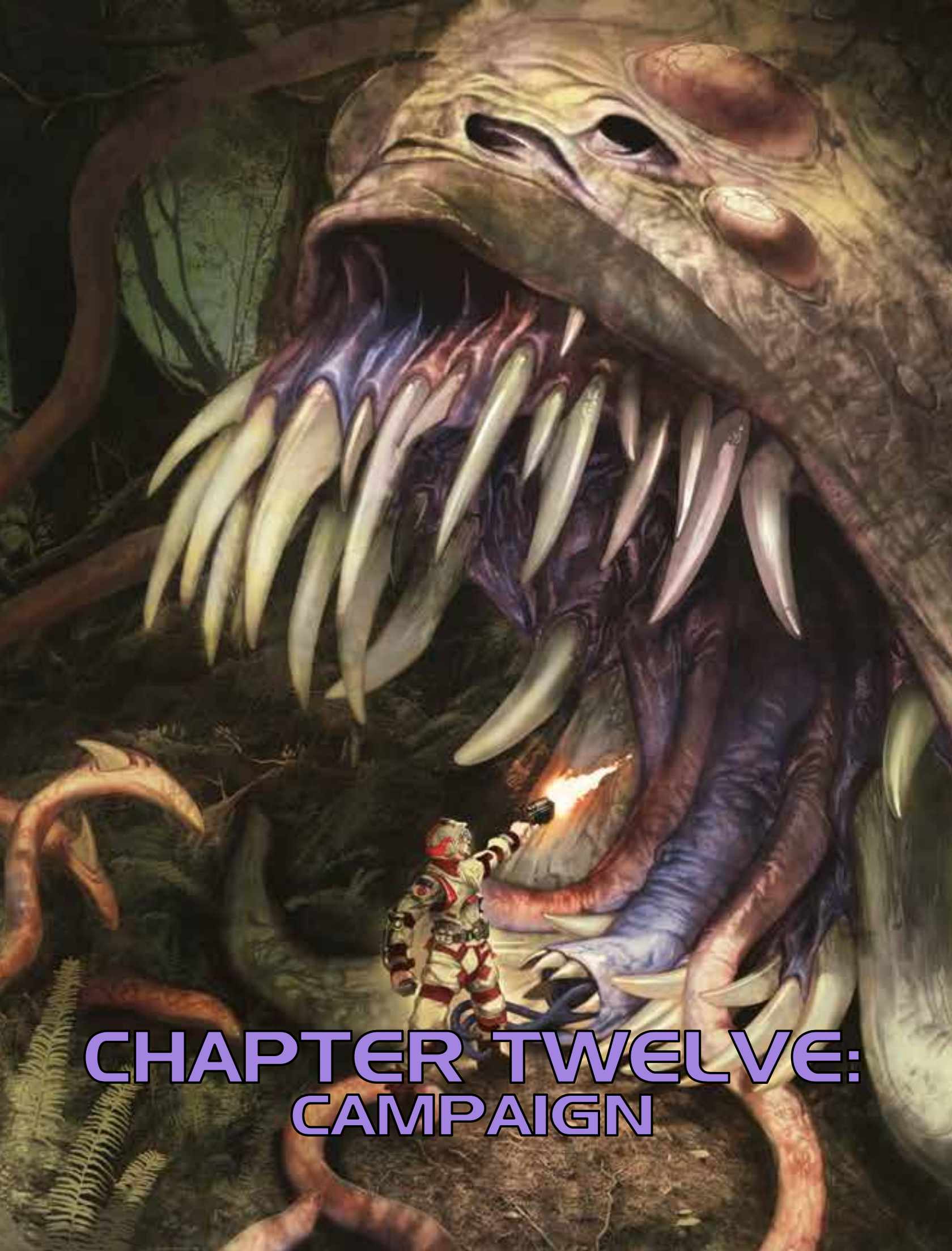
...no higher than a princess, an exotic, a target that could never be struck...

"You'll remember this meeting, but it's not memorable. Sorry to say." The captain climbed on top of the lead coach. Aiden brought his eyes back to the forest. He wasn't sure what the captain meant. "Hey! Wanna walk the rest of the way?" was the final snap Aiden needed to recover his adulthood. He walked up the steps, back into the coach. "God have mercy on you in Limshau."




Future fae creatures





CHAPTER TWELVE: CAMPAIGN



Ultimately, what distinguishes *Amethyst* from other fantasy settings is the contrast between the familiar and the alien. Merely the act of looking at the map and seeing the broad outline of North America cements the idea that the adventure is taking place in a familiar world, even if it has no other elements in common. Both GM and player will approach the setting with their own preconceptions drawn from their own real experiences, and want to integrate those elements into their play.

THEMES

The overarching theme of the setting is 'lines between extremes'. The line between fantasy and technology is the most obvious, but this is only the tip of the iceberg. There is the line between humanity and the fae peoples, and the discrimination that often results therefrom; the line between the religion that betters the believer and that which subjugates the outsider; the line between civilization and wilderness, and the difficulty each has in co-existing with the other.


What is most important is the way in which these lines manifest. At first, it is appropriate, even encouraged, to represent them as dividing lines: partitions between extremes, and never the twain shall meet. Over time, however, they should evolve to represent a continuum, as the characters' experiences with the world beyond their preconceptions cause their ways of thinking to change. Not just the characters' attitudes, either – player characters are dynamic and powerful individuals capable of making a global impact. The actions of the party should have the potential to change the world, even if only one small corner of it.

Where most fantasy settings start from an exotic basis and grow gradually more familiar as the players are exposed to them, *Amethyst* should start from a basis of familiarity and grow more and more outlandish. The modern-style techan, with his day-to-day conveniences that roughly equate to the player's everyday life, is thrust into a realm of floating stone heads, trees the size of skyscrapers, teleporting wild cats, and impossibly beautiful and graceful near-immortals. The staid librarian is forced to leave her peaceful stacks in pursuit of a lost tome, and begins to experience the things that once she only read about. The miners who have never left their underground tunnels must venture out into the daylight and fresh air. In every case, no matter how jaded the character may claim to be, these experiences should be presented to them as the greatest of wonders. The one dividing line that underpins any *Amethyst* adventure is the line between isolation and experience.

CONCEPT

Virtually any adventure concept can be fit into *Amethyst*; the basic dungeon crawl; the epic quest; the noir mystery; the war story; the fairy tale; psychological or body horror; even sports stories have their niche. The only thing necessary to give the adventure a particular *Amethyst* feel is to emphasize any contrast between familiarity and otherness, injecting symbols of modernity into fantasy and symbols of fantasy into modernity.

The foremost manifestation of this theme is the conflict between magic and science. Even if they never leave the bastion, a techan party has to deal with at least a low-level of disruption, not to mention the consideration of why they're in a bastion in the first place. Even if they never encounter techans, a fantasy party likely has some synthetic equipment or would give up a large chunk of a



treasure haul to obtain some. Regardless of the adventure concept, therefore, the first decision to be made when planning an *Amethyst* adventure should be whether the party will be echan, techan, or a mix of the two. Some adventures will only be possible with one type of party, while others can easily switch between the two, but the choice will inevitably impact the way the players approach the adventure.

An adventure with the same locations and the same monsters can often have radically different approaches, outlooks, and outcomes depending on whether the party follows the path of technology or fantasy. The characters themselves will have different motivations. A traditional fantasy character adventures to make a name for themselves, to acquire wealth, or because they are called by a higher power (whether a personal moral calling, a command from a superior, or an undefined sense of destiny); an echan party tends to have a variety of individual motivations and approaches the adventure with much less focus as a result. A typical techan character is part of a unit, often paramilitary, and thus pursues the adventure's objective more single-mindedly because it's their job. A techan party will usually play through an adventure in a more linear fashion, even if the details of the adventure are unchanged.

ORIGINS

The choice of path also determines the physical starting point of the adventure. For fantasy games, the old expedient of 'you all meet in a tavern', while cliché, is nevertheless a viable option. Fantasy characters are presumed to be capable individuals, can come from virtually anywhere in the world, and have no real need to know their companions prior to the start of the game. A fantasy party will usually be broadly diverse, with characters more often created according to the whims of the individual player rather than the needs of the group. While most groups tend to cover as many of the tactical bases as possible (rare is the party that will set out into the wilderness without a healer, for instance), sometimes this will require the adventure to be tweaked to accommodate a deficiency in the group.

Techan parties do not have the luxury of individuality. As outsiders in the fantasy realm, without ready access to the means to repair and resupply, they only have one another to rely on for support. As such, they should know each other extensively before the adventure begins. Techans who meet over a brew and decide to take on the world tend to have their bones scattered across the wilderness in very short order. A techan group is usually part of an organization. They are accustomed to hierarchy and uniformity, their equipment is issued to them rather than found or crafted, and with very few exceptions, they all come from the same bastion. The bastion is the default starting point and 'home base' for a techan party, and the group will have to periodically return to it to restock their batteries and ammunition, to convert their

unenchanting loot into the means to upgrade their equipment, and to indulge in the luxuries that they are fighting to preserve. As part of the techan experience is dealing with the fantasy world on its terms with often-inadequate equipment, even if there is a hole in the team's strategic makeup, the adventure should not be adjusted to compensate unless the disparity between the capability of the party and the power level expected by the adventure is too great.

RELATIONS

In *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game*, characters are defined more than any other game by their relationship to the setting elements. Although *Amethyst* lacks Icons as *The 13th Age Roleplaying Game* defines them, the concept is still there, and remains just as vital. In *Amethyst*, your allegiances and associations may be the most important things on your character sheet—they define your perspective on the world, and who your friends and enemies are, not merely on a local scale, but in the epic struggle taking place every day for the very soul of the Earth.

The techan group should define its perspective on the fantasy world before starting play. If dragon attacks are threatening bastion and village alike, this is usually merely a matter of flavor – whether the techans look down on their echan allies as ignorant bumpkins, are uneasy around them for the effects they may have on technology, or are even fascinated by their seeming exoticism, they do not require any additional motivation to make common cause. When offered a quest, however, a party that despises echans is probably going to demand some pretty hefty compensation in exchange for interacting with them. On the other hand, a group that is curious or even sympathetic to fantasy (but not enough to want to give up refrigerators and microwave ovens) is just as likely as any echan adventurer to help a dragon-ravaged village out of the goodness of their hearts (and for the less philanthropic, the lure of the dragon's hoard applies as much to techans as it does to unlikely heroes out for adventure). As the techan game lends itself strongly to military or paramilitary groups, those with no opinion one way or the other may be content to simply follow their orders. Regardless of their motivations, though, techans tend to view all echans as essentially the same, until they are confronted by the realms of variation throughout the world. A techan adventure, despite being very focused, should take care to accentuate both the common and the epic fantasy elements: these are all new and unique experiences to the characters, and even if they try to shut them out, they cannot help but be affected by the novelty.

An echan group does not need to define its position relative to the bastion-born, but each individual should consider where they come from and how that background relates to the world at large. An ex-slaver from Baruch Malkut is going to relate very differently to a Limshau damaskan than a knight of the Bulwark. A

party from Limshau and a party from Seliquam might be equally cosmopolitan, but the one comes from a background of cooperation and cultural exchange while the other comes from an untrusting, cutthroat society. Additionally, while echanans are broadly more experienced with the wonders of the world than techans, most are just as isolated, having never traveled more than a few miles from their homes, or ventured off the beaten paths if they are habitually nomadic. They are used to the standard elements of the fantasy world – the diversity of peoples, the idea of magic if not necessarily all its implementations, the dangers of the wild – but they are also aware that there are many things in the world that they have not seen yet. An echan adventure should accentuate the differences between the characters' home experiences and what they encounter on the road, or the strange similarities that can arise despite very different circumstances.

TALENTS

Techan and echan parties each have some things they can do that the other cannot. Obviously, the techan group cannot perform magic, and while some may have access to sufficiently advanced technology that can replicate some of its effects, that technology must be carefully guarded and rationed. An echan party has more reliable access to efficient healing, large-scale damage effects, powers that boost individual prowess, and spells and items with the potential to change the way they think about obstacles. An adventure for such a group must take into account the possibility that someone can fly over a wall to open a gate from the inside, or use magic to read a hostile courtier's mind and devise a counter for his arguments the night before their audience with the king.

A techan team, while lacking the ability to affect the world in such profound and unusual ways, has a slightly broader base of power. They are better able to compensate for one another's deficiencies. With very few exceptions, any techan can use any other techan's equipment, so very rarely will the outcome of a plan depend entirely on one character's special abilities: techans have more latitude to adapt as a result. As their abilities focus on improving the ability of the group rather than the individual, their damage output and defensive ability are more consistent than an echan party, and while they do not have ready access to instant healing, they do have fortress-like vehicles that they can retreat to when the going gets tough. An adventure for a techan group should account for their ability to take down large numbers of low-powered enemies without much difficulty, their ability to amplify their effectiveness with concentrated fire or explosives against more potent threats, and their power to overcome or simply demolish physical obstacles, depending on what means of transportation they have access to.

ADVERSITY

The most crucial consideration for any techan party is the threat of disruption. Sooner or later, all their nifty toys are going to break, and oftentimes their survival depends on their ability to either repair them or find some way to do without them. As a result, techan parties rarely venture far from home, as it is too difficult to find replacement parts far from their bastion of origin. Techans will never find useable treasure in the hordes of the monsters they dispatch. Any technology they might find would have been disrupted and rendered useless after such long-term exposure, and the only value magical items might have for such a group is the paltry amount they would be able to sell them for at the nearest village, since the prolonged exposure to EDF required to find a suitable buyer is rarely worth the risk. As a practical consideration to ensure the characters do not fall behind the curve expected by the game, treasure drops for techans should rarely include magical items unless those items have major plot significance (and that importance should be made obvious at the time). When fighting techan monsters (Iron Sons, MAX, etc.), this is not an issue, and salvaged technology can be a viable reward. Even if the enemy carries nothing that can be retrieved whole, it would be reasonable to award the group with an appropriate value in widgets a character with the Engineer skill can use to resupply and upgrade the group's equipment.

Another inevitability that techans must contend with is their own attitudes toward echa. Although there are exceptions, most techans have no idea how to relate to echanans, and constantly risk causing offense with their perceived superiority complexes. They intrinsically view fantasy as something that doesn't belong in the world – a view which echanans do not hold of them in turn, and which they will have to come to terms with in the event, increasingly likely with prolonged exposure, that they become saturated with magic and are unable to return to their home.

As much as techans do, echanans must contend with the fact that the world at large is a dangerous place, and unlike techans they have less reliable refuges to retreat to. Echanans as a whole do not have the same sense of solidarity that the bastion-born do, and the variety of peoples and attitudes throughout the civilized world, let alone the wilderness, means that they cannot be certain of how they will be treated from one settlement to the next. While the ability to freely use magic is a great help in defending against the unknown, the unknown can often use it right back, frequently with more expertise. Furthermore, while anyone in an echan party can benefit from magic, only a few can actually use it, and if those few are somehow incapacitated, the group's collective effectiveness is substantially reduced.

Closeness with the fantasy world can be a double-edged sword, because the problem with magic is that it is inherently chaotic. Familiarity breeds contempt, and that can be deadly when one expects to easily dispatch a clutch of mindless puggs and instead falls into a pit



trap contrived by one of the few wily ones. Forejudgment is a particular problem for fae, who are accustomed to homogeneity within populations: even a Limshau damaskan would have difficulty understanding that challenging the tough but good-natured barbarian to an arm-wrestling contest, despite being certain to lose, would be a better way to get information out of a group of rival adventurers than defeating his touchy wizard companion in a battle of wits. An echan group must be constantly made to realize how much they don't know about their own world, preferably in the most inconvenient way possible.

MIXED GROUPS

Though the game separates fantasy and technology by default, the dominant theme of the setting is the interaction rather than the segregation of the two. While normally this applies on a macro-scale, it can just as easily apply to interactions within the party. Mixed groups have hurdles, but this has never stopped them from trying. All that is required is a suitable justification for why echans and techans would be working together. The biggest consideration from a gameplay perspective is the impact of disruption on the team dynamic. The GM should monitor this situation carefully: if the party is getting constantly tripped up by the default disruption rules, consider adopting one of the less punitive variants in the interests of the group's fun.

In a standard group, the most common mix is the inclusion of a single outsider. Perhaps techans have allowed a fantasy character in their fold to help them with diplomacy and regional expertise. Maybe a techan has fallen prey to the lure of enchantment. As not all 'echan' humans actually generate EDF, the inclusion of a single non-mage human may not actually impact a techan party at all. A mage or a fae (gimfen aside) would be a different matter, as consideration would have to be made for their effect on the group's technology. Furthermore, as many techan adventures promulgate the cause of technology over magic, a truly echan character would have to be highly unusual to hold similar goals.

A lone techan amidst fantasy characters would have more difficulty. Most techans leaving bastions on their own are tourists looking for a temporary escape into enchantment. They keep to the main roads like the Continental Cross, never witnessing the hardships of those living under fear of pugg or bogg attack. They travel to a secured and safe echan nation like Limshau or Salvabrooke, have a happy little adventure among the elves, and return thinking they have gone rugged and tackled the harsh world. If forced to endure for long in that world, their equipment will start to fail, and unless they have the expertise to maintain it on their own (or can make friends with a gimfen mechanic) they may soon have to become echan themselves if they want to survive. Mixed echan-dominant groups are

therefore more likely to contain two techans than a single one. If a lone techan joins an echan party, it may be reasonable for the GM to create an NPC party member with the necessary technical skills that the player character lacks.



What your players want should usually trump canon difficulties in a mixed party, unless you've got a story reason to emphasize the divide. In a mostly-techan party (especially one with a vehicle), it can be as simple as just not letting the echans touch the high-tech things, keeping them outside the vehicle and ignoring the ambient EDF rules. In a mostly-echan party it's a little tougher to square with canon, but unless the player wants to deal with her equipment constantly breaking down as a roleplaying event, don't press the issue without a good reason.

PATTERNS OF LANDSCAPE

In fiction, the focus of the quest is the journey rather than the goal. The lands that they pass through should take up more of the party's attention than what awaits them at their destination. In order to retain the sense of familiarity versus otherness, *Amethyst's* regions are only broadly defined, allowing the GM to populate them with wonders as the adventure requires. The following general descriptions can aid the GM in converting adventures from other sources to *Amethyst's* world. Over the course of a single adventure, the party should travel to between one and three locations: even if they remain within the same region (or even the same city), every adventure should involve going somewhere amazing and seeing something fantastic.

Abidan: Abidan is a civilized and well-populated country with little excitement to offer adventurers beyond those serving on the Wall. Though not as safe as Limshau, Abidan is blessed with friendly neighbors and a solid infrastructure, albeit one constantly under threat of pagus attack (only really a consideration for the inhabitants of Janoah – most others feel themselves perfectly safe). Unlike Limshau, Abidan is more like a traditional fantasy kingdom – it actually has a king, for one thing, and knights and priests as well as wizards. Its strong basis in religion but lack of a single state-sponsored church makes it less prone to corruption than other nations, with such occurrences being largely limited to the outer fringes. Abidan is most suitable as a homeland or base for an echan party, the destination for a delivery or escort quest, the site of a great battle between forces of good and evil, or merely as an example of what Man is capable of if the best parts of his nature are indulged.

Baruch Malkut: Konig's kingdom would less likely be a passing diversion and more appropriately a major element of a larger quest, if not the catalyst of the quest itself. The rich live in fabulous mansions and employ every type of magical convenience, their wealth ensured by the slave-tended fields. The poor are crowded into cities with inadequate sanitation and amenities, denied the ability to read and better themselves, and conditioned to accept the word of the theocracy as fact. Thieves and assassins lurk in the shadows. The swamps that surround the cities are rife with bandits, slavers, and other examples of human monsters. Chaparran and damaskan guerillas striking back against their oppressors are unlikely to distinguish would-be heroes from Malkut mercenaries, and may attack without asking questions. Players venturing into Baruch Malkut must always be on guard against everything around them.

Bastions: Bastions are launching points and home bases for techan groups, but rarely quest goals. Each bastion has a slightly different attitude toward echan, but all ultimately want to keep them out. Nevertheless, an echan party might be forced to penetrate bastion defenses on a retrieval or a rescue mission; a techan group might defect from their own society or infiltrate an enemy bastion, and have to use stealth to evade the authorities or steal away secrets. Non-humans will have the most difficulty in a bastion-based adventure, as their physical traits immediately give them away: pointy ears are a lot harder to disguise than just wearing a wide headband, not to mention that their mere presence shorts out high-tech equipment, making them fairly easy to track. Angel and York are the most obvious bastions for an echan party to infiltrate, whereas Mann is the most exciting and dangerous option for anyone to try to sneak into: the other bastions are simply too hard to actually *get* to for the purposes of most adventures.

Enchanted Forests: Dawnamoak, the triad of Laurama, Skepsis and Tranquiss, the forests to the north of York, and the various other mystical woods of Canam are perilous places even for those with a right to be beneath their caves. The traditional role of a forest in a fantasy quest is as an obstacle that must be passed through, and the denizens of the woods do not make this easy. Chaparrans value their privacy and will attempt to hinder those who approach lacking their blessing, and outright attack those who come with hostile intent. The beasts that inhabit the woods are liable to treat any adventurer they come across as food, and some of them are intelligent enough to set traps for the unwary. Even the trees may resist onward passage. Traveling through a forest should be as dangerous, if not more so, than traveling through the mountains. Rarely will any of the chaparran settlements within the woods be the destination of a quest, but they may be a waypoint where a party stops to gain knowledge of how to proceed.


Fargon: Myth and literature are full of tales of the wonders of the dwarven underground halls, and many a quest has such a citadel as its terminus. The reality is

slightly less impressive, as most narros living spaces are very dimly lit and tend to be somewhat claustrophobic for taller species (it being somewhat impractical to build high vaulted halls when you have to contain your city's entire population within a single mountain and your religion forbids digging too deep). That said, virtually every mountainside and peak in Fargon is replete with wide-caved temples, as if all the architectural wonders of the Orient were crammed into a single mountain, and even the isolated, unpopulated regions are home to fantastic monuments. Fargon is a relatively peaceful place as narros aren't known for being bandits or thieves. However, the constant warfare between skegg and kodiak forces has upset the tranquility of the nation, and the farther east characters travel, the greater the threat; furthermore, dragons and beasts of cold claim mountains the narros dare not touch. Fargon is the most remote of Canam's civilized lands, and is most likely to be seen either as the homeland of a wandering echan party or as the destination of a quest, perhaps to craft a particularly potent magical item, to study an ancient magical or martial technique, or to slay some ancient monster of legend.

Kannos: Assaults from the Sana Marsh, with boggs and skeggs approaching from the north and waves of puggs shifting from the west, means that no caravan is safe in Kannos. All merchants have mercenaries guarding their interests. Lost merchandise needs to be reacquired. Burnt wagons are an often sight on Kannos roads, and sellswords never go hungry. The larger cities have rarely suffered attacks, but they have dangers of their own: opportunistic businessmen, arrogant nobles itching for a fight, the organized crime that comes with a highly capitalistic society, bored mercenaries between jobs, and inconstant attitudes towards outsiders make for an interesting, if not necessarily a dangerous sojourn. Along the roads between the distant settlements, opportunities for side-quests are plentiful. Kannos is perhaps the most typical of all the human kingdoms, showcasing neither the best nor the worst of humanity in a neo-medieval world, but plentiful elements of both the bad and the good.

Laudenia: There are any number of reasons for adventurers to travel to Laudenia, but actually getting there is difficult enough to be the focus of a quest on its own. Most people are only dimly aware of the existence of the laudenian capital and fewer still know anything about the network of floating castles that criss-cross the continent; most non-laudenian airships don't fly high enough to encounter them, and magic cloaks the keeps from idle scrutiny. The only ways of reaching the sky realm are by accident or by enlisting the aid of a laudenian willing to overcome their species' scruples for a good cause or good cash. Once there, the challenge becomes not being kicked straight back off again. Laudenia can be the ultimate destination of an adventure, or the party may travel there in search of powerful magic or secret lore, but whatever their reason, they will never be just passing through.





Limshau: Limshau is urbanized and safe. Travelers can pass from town to town with little fear of being assaulted by anything other than merchants. The walled cities are well guarded, with little bureaucracy and therefore little corruption. Every city is also a library and an academy, and whenever the party requires specialized knowledge to complete a quest, this is likely where they will go to find it. The outer villages are more typical fantasy fare as might be seen in any other setting – or would be, if they were not the only place on Earth that such settlements are common. Nowhere but Limshau are you likely to encounter settlements with at least a few members of every civilized species. Limshau is the Constantinople of the new world, the hub of trade between the urbane peoples of the continent, and the place where every adventurer will find herself eventually, even if just passing through.

Salvabrooke: The agrarian gimfen settlement is somewhat unique in not being often a destination nor a home base for a party. It is more of a waystation, an opportunity to stock up supplies, gather intel, possibly meet new friends, take in the majestic beauty of the lands within the ancient caldera, and generally play tourist in a relatively safe environment. It is fairly easy to get to from anywhere, for all the various threats in between, and may serve as a staging area to reach more inaccessible regions of the continent.

Seliquam: While collectively as cosmopolitan as Limshau, Seliquam is a political viper's nest of conflicting interests and cultural grandstanding. Mixed communities are common, but usually no more than two or three species at a time, and homogenous settlements still outnumber them. Despite the fact that this is the only place in Canam where one can see a kodiak walking down a town street and nobody will bat an eyelid, where castle ramparts are patrolled by riflemen, and where ancient narros monuments can be seen without the long trek to Fargon, most Seliquam communities are intensely suspicious of outsiders, and adventurers must earn their welcome. Thankfully, there are plenty of opportunities to do so: the lands to the north and the south are replete with ruins and treasures waiting to be explored and cleaned of their monstrous filth. A quest from one end of Seliquam to the other would pass through every type of fantasy cliché, and even a few venturing beyond fantasy.

Wastelands: It is ill-advised to linger in such places. There are few settlements of any kind and those that do exist tend to be hostile to outsiders. Most have been uninhabited since the Hammer fell, and so any ruins or dungeons of interest are few and far between. More vicious and unusual monsters can be found in the wastelands, making them of greater usefulness for monster hunting quests, and caches and artifacts of the last age of Man tend to surface more often in such places, having had fewer adventurers survive the process of picking them over. Of the great wastelands of Canam, only Xixion provides much general adventuring opportunities because of its

location and proximity to the ancient centers of civilization: the other lands are far more remote and hazardous to travel in, and are more likely to be the focus of a more epic quest.

THE SINGLE STONE

The following short adventure can serve as the group's introduction to the *Amethyst* setting, or serve as a campaign seed for a more experienced group. It involves travelling to different locations, researching the history of the setting, and fighting off some truly fiendish foes. Simultaneously, the party will involve themselves in a conspiracy that may take them across the world and involve enemies singular and powerful as well as numerous and influential. They will find evil parading in the light and allies hiding in shadows.

This is an adventure for four to five 1st-level characters of either echan or techan origin; the specific events do not change, though certain obstacles along the way may. Although this adventure can serve as the starting point for a campaign focused on the Amethyst relics, the party is under no compulsion to follow this path at the adventure's conclusion. Where they go after this is for you and the group to decide.

SUMMARY

Greedy or generous, techan or echan, the group of heroes stumbles upon or is sent to investigate the rotting carcass of a crashed transport plane. No one is sure where it came from or where it was going, but apparently its sole purpose was to transport a small item a great distance: the Amethyst amulet. Little does the group know that they are not the only ones aware of this crash, for a rival organization has been tasked to take the amulet for themselves and eliminate any obstacles.

ECHAN INVOLVEMENT

The characters are on their way to Limshau, but before they arrive they are asked to escort a merchant caravan along the Continental Cross. When a band of boggs attack and make off with a rare piece of treasure, the players will give chase and stumble upon the plane wreckage, starting their quest.

TECHAN INVOLVEMENT

Regardless of which bastion the players are from, they should be around the bastion of Angel when they are dispatched to a specific set of coordinates and investigate an aircraft from another bastion that crashed on its way to Angel. This may be a normal mission for this group or their first outing from the walls. The story begins just outside of Crax in Antikari.

SECTION I: THE CARBON CRUCIFIX

If the players are chasing boggs, they will encounter them at the following location. If they are travelling here intentionally, then they will be ambushed. As the heroes press through the forest, read or paraphrase the following:

You push through the heavy foliage and come upon a tree stouter than the others. The sheen of its silver skin glints in a fading sunset. Only two branches reach from its peak, spreading its arms to the sky. Jagged roots have sliced into the soft dirt, an invader among its neighbors of wood.

The towering centurion left a scar of ashes and death behind it when it fell from heaven. This was not some great hammer of god cast to Earth but a machine made from the hands of men. Where once it obeyed undeniable rules to allow its flight, now a carcass rests to prove the chaos of a new age. From dirt to sky, it stands taller than most trees.

This is the tail section of a very large aircraft. Over 100 feet tall, it's still only a small section of the monstrosity it once was. It plainly does not come from anywhere around here.

A bastion-born player can make a DC20 history skill check to determine the following: *The craft comes from Porto—the utopian bastion known to prosper far east, across the ocean. How it got here would be an obvious question without a speedy answer. Though they have been known to send flights as far west as Angel, they rarely send more than one a decade. To find a wreck would be a rare prize indeed. Porto flaunts the greatest technology of the planet though the chances of any of it still working by this point would be slim.*

A DC20 search of the wreckage will uncover 300 uc in widgets from the wreckage.

BATTLE

If the characters are chasing the boggs, they only have a few brief moments before reinforcements arrive. If not, the group is ambushed by a horde that has been using the towering tail of the aircraft as their chief's hut.

- 1 Skegg Thug
- 2 Bogg Rake
- 5 Bogg Scabbs

The chief, although a skegg and thus of superior stock, wasn't bright enough to understand the distinctiveness of his metallic keep. He stacked crates and used them to form a throne without bothering to attempt breaking them open, not that the steel reinforced plastic boxes would have yielded to his simple tools. The locking mechanism is intricate and far beyond his limited intel-

ligence.

There are three boxes, two larger ones the skegg used as armrests and one small one he used as a seat. The security on each box is a mechanical but complex disk tumbler lock, making it virtually impossible to break.

Each box has 50 hit points and requires a Strength DC25 to break.

BOX	LABEL	LOCK DC	CONTENTS
1-Large	Security	20	4 disruption patches, 3 sets of handcuffs
2-Large	Emergency	20	1 standard techan adventurer's kit
1-Small	See below	15	See Below

The small box carries the label, "Open under controlled conditions—EDF Hazard" but no other indicators. It also appears the lock has suffered some damage and may be easier to pick. Upon opening it, read or paraphrase the following:

Echan: *Your hands roll through fluttering pieces of snow that feel neither cold nor wet and refuse to melt in the warmth of your hand.*

Techan: *Your fingers rifle through the packing foam. You can see a faint violet glow through the packing.*

You reach in and curl your fingers around the light, and from the box you pull a strange purple jewel. Four pearlescent silver dragon's claws are clamped around the outer edges of the unrefined, almost jagged gem. The fingers of the lizard coil around back, not to a hand, but across to other fingers. Two golden loops could support a chain if one were so inclined to flaunt the amulet from his or her neck.

If any of the players attempt a closer look (or with an additional DC18 skill check), read or paraphrase the following:

You notice movement within, as glints of light jolt through the imperfections in the jewel, like lightning bolts arcing from one side of the gem to the other, following the sharp angles of the stone. No outside light source reflects in it, but it does reflect your faces perfectly in the glossy finish. It also gives off its own light; visible only when staring past the arcs of sparks, into the heart of the rock itself. This is unusual even for magic.

At night, this item glows much brighter. Though magical, no one can identify its properties or origin. No spell can discern any information about it. Its oddest property is that for some reason, the item does not disrupt technology.



Techans have no chance of identifying the item on their own, and echans will find it difficult without access to a library. Either way, Limshau is the obvious next destination.

A DC18 skill check on magic or arcana can find the following: Obviously a magical item, this relic was likely forged by a wizard of great power: the Pleroma lettering running down one side of the setting proves that. But enchanted jewels never glow with an internal furnace like this one. This is a natural enchantment that someone later set into an amulet. One of the Pleroma letters has been marred by a gash, possibly from a powerful sword strike. Further, this is most likely created by human hands: chaparrans would set it in wood; tenenbri wouldn't have used only one metal, and narros would not have used one as mundane as silver; gimfen have few competent wizards and none of this caliber; and neither damaskans nor laudenians would have allowed such an artifact to become lost in the first place. This leaves a human mage, but there have been very few of those on this continent of any significant power. If this check is successful, gain a +4 bonus to the history check.

A DC18 skill check on religion can find the following: There is a faith based around the dragon god, Amethyst, but this is not a symbol of faith (though it is obviously made to resemble one). The markings on one side are Pleroma, indicating it was made by mage. If this check is successful, gain a +4 bonus to the history check.

Any player can attempt a history skill check at DC30 (including bonuses for the two other skill checks above): To cause a gash on a magic item of this magnitude would require a powerful enchanted weapon. The only notable account of a duel between a powerful mage and an equally adept swordsman comes from Lauropan history, and the mutual destruction of the mage Torfin Gendron and the fanatical knight Wilhelm Myre.

This is Stormcage, Torfin's most prized magical possession. The heroes, however, are not made aware of the amethyst's true power or history: only the legends surrounding Torfin's famous duel and the mysterious disappearance of the amulet. For more information on the amulet's properties and history, it will be necessary to do extensive research in Limshau.

SECTION 2: BY THE BOOKS

When the heroes arrive at Limshau, read or paraphrase the following:

They call them the White Walls of Limshau—a maze of dense stone and adobe walls dozens of miles across, radiating from a central archive. It holds the combined knowledge of a hundred nations, modern and extinct. One could find the rhythmic dance rituals of the chaparrans or the spastic drum beats of the narros. Look further and one could even stumble across tomes smuggled from the human bastions. Diligently, the damaskan fae and humans of Limshau maintain their city. Ten storeys tall and virtually uniform in texture, the white walls encircle the entire library, every branch, every building. The wall twinkles in the orange sun. The marble facing of the granite walls seem fragile at first... until you realize how thick the barrier really is.

When the heroes pass through the gates, they must check their weapons with the storehouse. Only custodians and the militia are allowed weapons in the city. Clever deceit or sleight of hand may allow smaller weapons to cross but anything bigger than a short sword would be confiscated. The guards provide detailed receipts for everything before passing the party through. When the heroes enter the city, read or paraphrase the following:

Limshau is orderly, calm, and beautiful. Hundreds move without a shove in the streets. The various buildings blend together in uniformity. Footbridges pass overhead, connecting higher buildings. As you wander deeper, the city grows taller, bridges crisscrossing over each other as the levels climb. A pair of leather-clad custodians with katana at their backs chats with merchants. An orange-haired gimfen stands atop his cart, selling various silks gathered from his village to the northwest. A few legal tall-eared scarlet women promote their pleasures from a second level window.

A huge form eclipsing the rising sun bathes the street in shadow. You glance up to see the silvery-white skin of a 1,200-foot long airship floating over the walls with hardly a whisper. Only a small cabin hangs underneath the perfectly smooth untarnished body, with most of the crew and passengers resting comfortably inside the superstructure. Propellers bigger than men spin as the vessel slows towards the mooring tower at the city center.

Limshau is enormous and the heroes may feel somewhat confused on where to start. If they have never been to Limshau before, this is a perfect opportunity to get lost and pick up some local color while they search for the arcane history stacks. If they do not wish to wander, any passing librarian or custodian can direct them to the appropriate branch. Once they begin searching around the branch, they can introduce themselves to the local chief librarian, a human female named **Inara Setinga**, and the custodian assigned to this branch this week, a damaskan male, **Baelin Stonesthrow**. Both will help the best they can.

Special: If the PCs failed the previous history skill check, they must reattempt it before continuing. They gain a +4 to their roll while researching, gaining an additional +2 from Inara and +1 by Baelin if the characters enlist their help. They may repeat the challenge each day. If they previously passed the religion or arcana checks but fail the history check, they begin the next skill challenge with one success for each. This can continue until the players give up or they succeed.

If the players do give up, or are stuck, or when they do read the history of the item, eventually, either Baelin or Inara will volunteer the following.

"There is someone that might be able to help. He's an expert on lingering legends and relics that refuse to be buried. A very devout man, too, but we won't hold that against him. His name is Filipe Paraerra-sensei. You'll find him in the Philosophy branch of the University."

FILIFE PARAERRA

Paraerra is not an old man with worn and weary eyes, pinching his nose when his heavy glasses strain his head, but barely into his 40s, 230 lbs. of toned muscle. He is not about brute strength but total physical perfection. As an athlete, he could outrun the stoutest of knights even without their laden steel. He is also a Buddhist. When the heroes enter his classroom, they find thirty students of various ethnicities, ages, and races squatting straight-backed upon mats placed erratically about the room. The desks have been pushed to the walls. No one pays the heroes any mind, regardless of how they enter and how they look. They find Paraerra at the head, wrists resting on his knees, addressing the room.

"Does the pursuit of truth without finding it have purpose?" Paraerra asks slowly, almost at a whisper. "You will find evil if you chose to seek evil. You will find faith if you chose to seek faith. But do not seek truth. A drive to find a truth will lead to faith, and will be perceived only in your eyes as fact. Truth...is what you find along the way of seeking. Truth...is stumbled upon, never fought for. The same it is with the salvation of the soul. The harmony we establish within ourselves,

the love we accept, comes along the path, never at the end. Faith, belief, are yours to claim ...truth is for all of us." He looks over the group, then rubs his palms together. "This week, pick one of the following books. Have it read by the end of the month. We'll then discuss them at length, including the possibility that I may have wasted your time in the assignment. Fear & Loathing by Soren Kierkegaard, Prophetic Fragments by Cornel West, Novum Organum by Francis Bacon, or The High Cost of Death by Marikama."

The class files out, passing the heroes looks ranging from curiosity and confusion to annoyance, leaving Paraerra alone. He makes one passing glance at the heroes and says, *"By your presentation, I assume you're not nihilists."*

The heroes can present their information and what they have learned. If they have not solved the previous skill checks by this point, he'll answer it for them, giving the heroes any information they may need about the item. It may take him a few minutes and he would have to see the artifact, but he will be successful against all the checks required. Beyond this, he confirms the unique powers of this item.

"It's as powerful as a foundation spell but apparently requires no sacrifice for its use. It's also possible it gains in power with its owner. The markings on the inside suggest that. You have in your possession a powerful relic that binds the arcane with faith, a declaration even I must acknowledge is more than a little incongruous. There could only be one other explanation, but that answer does not lie with me."

<Response>

"If you'll permit me a momentary indulgence, I believe I know where the answer rests."

<Response>

"As with everything else in Limshau, this truth rests in the pages of a book."

Although there is a library branch dedicated to the history of relics, there is also another smaller one doubling as a museum, dedicated to the study of the relics themselves. Paraerra believes what the heroes seek is there and decides to help them look for it. The book in question is the *Chronicle of Aurannis*. The chronicle was once part of the great *Bible of Drasago*, the holy book written by dragons, but was removed due to its length. Unlike the other gospels, Aurannis' collection does not enchant the user if read but is still magical itself. Paraerra flipped through it once and could have sworn to have seen a relic like this amethyst among its pages.

When the group arrives at the specific branch, Paraerra questions the librarian, an attractive damaskan elf wearing bifocals named **Chenai Pagekeeper**. She has



some unfortunate news as she leads them to the location in the branch the book was kept: it has been stolen. *"I hate to say, we lost that tome recently. It even carried a marker to prevent theft, but obviously they found some way around that. The book was taken not more than a few days ago. Interesting that nothing else was stolen."*

This is obviously not coincidence but who would take it is a mystery. If the heroes ask the significance of the amulet, Filipe answers with, *"From what I remember reading, if the fragments of his heart are brought together at place of his death, Amethyst can be brought back ... and then the armies of order will have no hope against the power of his will."*

Filipe doesn't know how many fragments there are or how powerful they have the potential to be. All of that was in the book. Limshau will also offer a 2,000 gp reward for the book's retrieval.

TO FIND THE CHRONICLE

The *Chronicle of Aurannis* was stolen by thieves belonging to a techan mercenary company known as the **Iron Sons**, a cell-based organization and one of the largest and most successful free companies in the world. This cell operates out of the crumbling kingdom of Torquil, and is currently heading back to wait at their rendezvous in the abandoned keep of Zellis.

If the players inquire about the theft, Chenai is very forthcoming.

"The last people to look at the book were a pair of techans, judging from the way they were dressed. At least, they were wearing techan-style combat fatigues. One sported a badge on his arm—a sun dipping below a line with a solid sphere of wrought iron below. They just flipped through the book briefly, then left without a word."

A DC25 history skill check can discover the following (a techan gains a +5 bonus): This is the symbol of the Iron Sons. They operate across the continent, but most bastions technically classify them as a terrorist organization, so they operate like a secret society, soliciting contracts privately rather than advertising their services. Rumor has it that a major cell is operating out of Torquil.

If nobody is able to make the above check, they are directed to the lead custodian in charge of the investigation: a human, **Robin Hataori**. While he suspects the Iron Sons to be responsible, he is unable to track them beyond the city gates, having ascertained from the gate guards' registers that a group of five arrived in the city four days ago and left again the next day, heading west. Among their equipment were several disruption muffler bags, which any techan in the party realizes could be used to shield the chronicle against magical alarms and scrying. Hataori presently lacks the manpower required

to track the Iron Sons and has been engaged in research to try to narrow down their possible destinations: if the heroes offer to help, they can make the above check with a +5 bonus. On a success, Paraerra-sensei suggests that Zellis keep is the most obvious destination, as it is the closest. On a failure, Hataori is only able to suggest that the heroes may be able to pick up the trail again in Antikari.

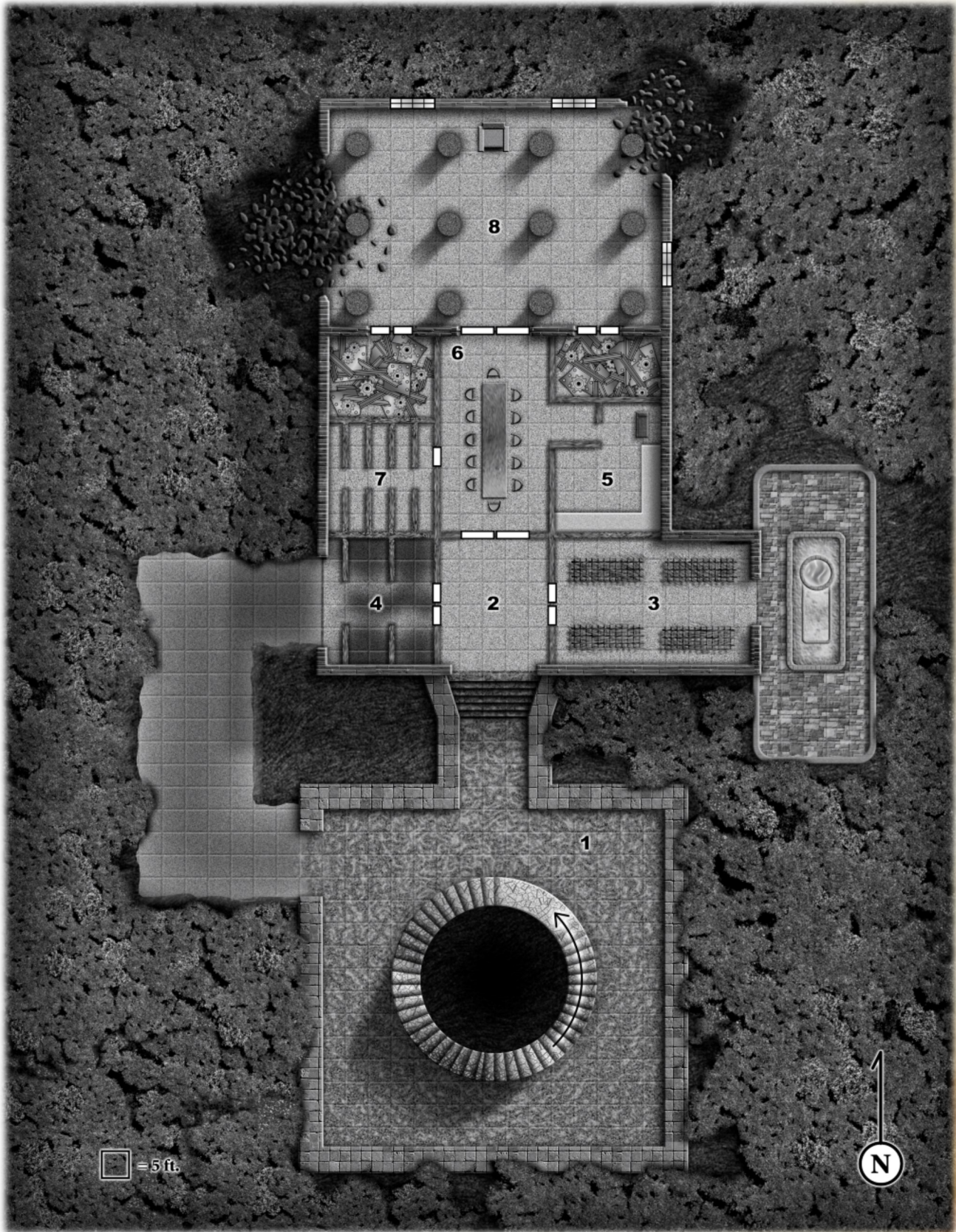
If the heroes note that it seems odd to entrust the recovery of a valuable tome to a bunch of perfect strangers (especially if they are techans), Hataori tells them that he has perfect faith in their abilities and trusts to their word and the offer of the reward to bring them back once they've found the thieves. After they leave, he also dispatches two custodian apprentices to follow them secretly and make sure that the book comes back to Limshau. These shinobi are too well trained to be noticed by the heroes and will not intervene overtly: their only purpose is insurance (and to take over the mission should the heroes fail).

SECTION 3: SHADOW OF TORQUIL

From Limshau to Zellis is two weeks by horse, one week by ground vehicle, and four days by air. If they are certain of their destination, Hataori will commission a thermal to transport them to Antikari: otherwise, Paraerra will offer to hire them horses and sufficient stores for the journey (if they have their own transport, the offer of supplies still stands). If they are tracking the group via ground travel, the journey is much longer but would be an opportune time to insert one or two random encounters.

THE JOURNEY

If traveling by land, the group keeps to the Continental Cross for most of the journey. The cross is a beaten path that connects the bastion of Angel, through House Antikari and House Orchis, and finally to Limshau. The highway is inconsistently paved, being little more than a wide dirt road in some places, gravel in others, even asphalt in a few, depending on the resources available to the house or kingdom that maintains that stretch. The road is commonly used by thousands of people. A traveler can count on at least three encounters with fellow wayfarers or caravans every day. Wandering shops sell trinkets from the backs of wagons. Some carts stay together for protection, creating nomadic markets that roam the road, never straying apart. The most well-known is the Arciducha, a caravan of 35 wagons selling fine clothes, rare foods, and even protective lodging between Antikari and Gnimfall, usually staying near Limshau borders, where the road is patrolled more frequently. When the group reaches Antikari, they easily pick up the trail of the Iron Sons, which requires them to break from the road and push through Crax.



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BATTLE

Pugg raid. Swarms of puggs storm from the forest. They emerge 10 at a time for three rounds.

30 Puggs

After three days through Crax, the group pushes through an opening into a huge valley, where they can see the majesty that once was Zellis Keep.

THE TOWER OF ZELLIS

Read or paraphrase the following:

The peak holds just enough room for the keep constructed atop it. Many of the battlements overhanging the cliff point down rather than across. The outer walls and towers curve at every corner to deflect siege works, though no ballista, catapult or trebuchet could reach this height. Only cannon could breach these walls. Battlements circle the keep with three rows of embrasures atop each other. Hundreds of arbalests could rain straight down with gravity as their ally. Buttresses from the sides of the mountain rise up to join the walls of the castle. Most likely, the same construction of the mountain catacombs was employed in the building of the fort. The blackness of the entrance is reflected in the outer wall of the keep, formed of huge slabs to prevent handholds. The construction must have taken the kingdom a king's lifetime to complete. Those who planned its construction never lived to see its completion. Now, moss and weeds have crept up the sides and breached the indestructible walls. Grass pushes from arrow slits. Most of the castle has crumbled into ruin.

As the group reaches the base of the tower, read or paraphrase the following:

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Though the wood rotted a century ago, the massive opening still remains, three storeys tall. The main door sits at the back of a thirty-foot corridor into the side of the mountain. The lintel above, carved from polished limestone, took an army to lift into place. It stretches from the doorframe, across the ceiling, sticking out of the entrance just far enough for a pair of weathered soapstone dragons, no bigger than a man, to perch, greeting those who entered. Their wings have long since broken to stumps, the gems encrusting their eyes stolen. Both walls around the architrave are divided by intersecting lines, opening squares wide enough for a man to reach to either end with his fingertips. Several engravings fill a few

openings. At least two show bears, one foraging on all fours, the second rearing back to ward off enemies. Another image is of a great spread-winged eagle. A few others show animals lesser known, spawn species finding form after the wave of magic swept the globe: short, squatty puggs, flightless cockatrice, and various boggs.

There is significant damage to the entrance door, having broken from all but one hinge, opening the inner chamber to the light outside. As the players enter the keep's entrance, they spot three fresh corpses. Everything of value from weapons to gear has been stripped.

A close examination (DC15) reveals deep slashes across their chest, most likely from a talon rather than from a knife. What remains of their clothing indicates a techan origin but anything more than that is a mystery. Such a fate would surely fall anyone lost in the keep. There is a shaft of light coming from up ahead but the passage between entrance and light is long and dark.

When the heroes reach the shaft, read or paraphrase the following:

You reach the light. Cylindrical and wide enough to fit an adult dragon, the shaft carries up through the entire mountain to an opening to the sky. There might have been glass or shutters at the top, but no longer. Unfiltered daylight glints off the embedded crystallized chips within the granite. The bouncing bands are visible through floating dust. Stone and wood beams run across the shaft, climbing up the sides all the way to the light. The sound of sporadic rain dapples to the ground level. A spiraling pathway orbits the tunnel to the top. The path is wide enough for a two horse-drawn carts abreast.

The crossing beams of wood and stone form part of a complicated pulley system, connecting by sprockets and chains to a warped wooden gondola suspended half-way up the shaft. The system is surprisingly well maintained and complicated, using the pulleys as a way to lift the gondola instead a bulky counterweight. It even appears automatic, requiring no slaves to strain in its use. If anyone attempts to use it, the entire construction will fall apart, raining wood and steel to the base. Everyone underneath is targeted by an attack at +9 vs. PD, for 8 points of damage.

The collapse ricochets and reverberates through the entire mountain. Unfortunately, the heroes must climb all the way to the keep above.

THE KEEP OF ZELLIS

Timetable: The climb is lengthy. No matter what happens as they ascend, the group arrives at the peak near sunset.

AREA I: GARDENS

As the heroes reach to the top of the passage, read or paraphrase the following:

To slowly crumble through centuries is not a fate fitting for such a keep. The granite stone of the castle will take eons to fall to dust. The potential for recovery still lingers in its foundation. Yet, no one has come to claim its prize. The fragments of House Torquil have enough problems maintaining their keeps in the south; other free houses are too far east. Not to mention, the new tenants would also need to act graciously to the chaparrans of nearby Dawnamoak. But even considering the costs of maintenance, it's still quite the treasure in itself, rivaling anything stolen from its coffers since the empire's collapse. The surrounding lands are plentiful, and once cleared and secured the keep could be a stout defensive post. All one would need is ambition, masses of loyal indentured workers, and an army large enough to daunt neighbors.

When you burst into the late afternoon sun, you are greeted by a moss- and weed-plagued court. There had been glass covering the shaft at one point, and thick shards still jut from the sides. This beautiful court would have been covered with flowers and short grass surrounding a glass-covered pit where one could peer down into the bowels of the nation. Around the perimeter of the court, which fills half the peak, several broken windmills shudder rather than spin in the breeze. Across the field, you can see what remains of the keep itself.

Your attention, however, is diverted elsewhere as more than a dozen figures on the other side of the pit notice you and begin to approach. They wear loose mail and old blades but their cloak of velvet black appears cared for. Up the path to the keep, a roar bellows like a trumpet out of the entranceway. Under the shade of the keep, you see only the massive torso of a form twice the height of any of you.

Zellis is one of many abandoned castles and forts in the failed kingdom of Torquil. This one fell into darkness when a shemjaza attempted to seduce one of its two lords. Rejected, the demon set loose the shapeless wild upon the population. Most died in the carnage, others rose up as shapeless as they slept—a side effect of the curse the shapeless bring with them. Cultists followed,

believing everlasting life awaits those that allow the shadow to embrace them. They are led by a necromancer, Katho Kovacs, who believes he has found a way to control the shapeless in the shemjaza's stead. Many of the shapeless are still here, hiding until night falls. Kovacs had been waiting outside the keep for sacrifices and found them when the Iron Sons arrived on their own business. Most of the Iron Sons have already fallen victim to the cultists.

The beast at the entrance to the keep is a kodiak the cultists have tortured into servitude and now guards the keep.

BATTLE

The cultists are west and south of the pit. While most engage the heroes, at least one will run north to free the kodiak. The cultist requires two rounds to free the kodiak, though he is killed immediately after by the beast (only Kovacs can control it). It enters combat the following round.

20 Disciples of Kovacs

DISCIPLE OF KOVACS

2nd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +4

Ritual Weapon +7 vs. AC—5 damage.

Martydom: When a Disciple of Kovacs dies, the next target from a Disciple of Kovacs is vulnerable to the attack.

Blood Will Tell: For every 4 disciples that die in the encounter, one rises from the dead to continue the fight.

AC 18
PD 16
MD 12

HP 9 (mook)

Mook: Kill one Disciple of Kovacs mook for every 9 damage you deal to the mob.

The cultists hope to take the group alive, and tie them up until night arrives. Shapeless don't attack those sleeping or restrained, preferring to let their curse produce more of their kind. As the victim sleeps, their soul is devoured by a shadow that withers the body to dust and emerges fully formed as a shapeless. The cultists wish to join this order, believing their souls are reborn as immortals. Their leader believes he can control the wild and is hoping to create an army of shapeless under his control.

All this information can be retrieved by careful interrogation of a captured cultist. These cultists are loyal to Kovacs but are apprehensive about dying, since this will prevent them being reborn as shapeless. If the fight goes badly and the disciples are unable to break



the kodiak free, they will attempt to push past the kodiak and alert their master.

AREA 2. GATE GUARD

Read or paraphrase the following (ignore the second paragraph if the kodiak entered combat in the first encounter):

The massive oak gate doors lie slightly ajar, creaking in the wind. A portcullis has long since rusted and fallen to broken bars upon a granite path. The doors do not sit at the top of the stairs but a distance underneath an overhanging round archway thirty feet up. Unlike the rest of the keep, this construction has survived time with every impost still standing. The painted white stone has flaked from weather, creating a speckled finish. Two doors, nearly the size of the main entrance, stand to your left and right.

The beast you saw before waits for you to step closer. A tortured kodiak hurls phlegm from a tongueless maw, rough and jagged. Its grey and black fur covers every inch, right to its black claws. Still primitive, many kodiaks have been exploited by more intelligent beings for their strength and brutality. This creature has been scared and tormented, broken and brainwashed into serving its captors. The once-proud warrior that could rise to its hind legs and hold onto tools with its claws has been reduced to nothing more than vicious guard dog.

BATTLE

The kodiak can move within reach of every door but not beyond the archway. Every round it is injured, it can make a DC20 Strength check to break its chain. If it does, nothing will prevent it from trying to kill everything it sees.

BROKEN KODIAK

2nd level Double-Strength troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +6

Bloody Claws +7 vs. AC—14 damage.

Natural even hit: The kodiak inflicts up to ten damage on himself in order to inflict that same damage on an opponent.

Slavering Bite +7 vs. AC—10 damage, and the target is grabbed.

Ravenous: While staggered, the enraged kodiak can *bloody claws* attack and a *slavering bite* attack

AC 18

PD 16

MD 12

HP 72

AREA 3. ATRIUM

Read or paraphrase the following:

The influence of magic has had its way with the unmaintained plants of this garden. The atrium's glass roof has long since shattered and fallen to sharp fragments upon the stone floor. Four stone trellises in the room are overgrown by weeds and hanging ferns. On the opposite side of the room, it opens to the outside where you spy a moss- and algae-covered fountain.

The horticulturist that saw after these gardens grafted together several bizarre species and had others imported from all over the world. Unmaintained for all these decades, they crossbred and basked in the chaos of Attricana and now have turned into a mass of killing writhing thorns that lash out to anyone trying to cross.

BATTLE

The mass waits until the group is between the trellises before surrounding the group. There is one for each trellis. They drag victims to their trellis where they can be devoured slowly with caustic juices.

4 Triffids



TRIFFID

2nd level spoiler [BEAST]

Initiative: +7

Slashing Vine +7 vs. AC —7 damage.

Natural even hit: The triffid makes a second *slashing vine* attack.

Night Quill: If the slashing vine rolls a critical hit with a slashing vine, the target is rendered helpless after the attack is resolved (save ends).

Thrashing Tendrils: The triffid can engage a target far away.

AC 18

PD 16

MD 12

HP 36

The fountain beyond is open the sky, outside of the keep. It is covered in mold and moss and the water is slick and sickening. A search at DC20 will reveal one of the following (roll 1d6, each result only occurs once):

- 1: A pouch with 4 gp, 10 sp, and a fingernail
- 2: A jade pendant worth 10 gp and a book of carpet samples.
- 3: Triffid poison (3 uses; +8 vs. PD, 1 point of damage and the target falls unconscious [save ends]).
- 4: A leather scabbard filled with salt.
- 5: A skeleton with 4 gold teeth (1 gp each)
- 6: *Potion of healing*

AREA 4: STABLES

Read or paraphrase the following:

The dozen horses the cultists had brought were once tied safely within the stables. Their bodies have been torn apart by the dark shape that refuses to show its form despite the light coming from the open stable door beyond. The shapeless form shifts and weaves under the bands of light cast through breaks in the wall. The creature casts no shadows. Its arms seem to vanish when covered by its body. Its eyes cast their own light, reflecting off matte silver claws.

BATTLE

This is a shapeless wild that has woken early. Shapeless Wild don't convert basic animals, only those with high intelligence. It immediately attacks. On round three, two more rise from a pile of hay.

3 Shapeless Wild

Characters checking the horses notice the excessive level of violence inflicted on the poor animals. A DC15

skill check to search will locate the pouches and saddlebags the horses had when they were killed. In one, they find 30 sp; in another, a fine black powder used in some more nefarious rituals. There is food in two bags, although it has been saturated by horse entrails. Further searching will find a silver chain (2 gp), a diary detailing the obsessive desire to convert to the shadow of one Ennis Carson, and a single holy dragon scale (5 gp, though not many people will trade for it).

A DC25 check to search will find a crushed silver and bronze goblet under one carcass. This is used often in rituals and is worth 120 gp given its current state.

There is an exit here that proceeds down a small dirt path, all the way around the keep, to the pit stairwell.

AREA 5: KITCHEN

This is the main kitchen of the banquet hall. Read or paraphrase the following:

A large stone counter jutting from all the walls of this kitchen rests under a coat of dust. An open oven still has its spit and a thick layer of char and burned bone. Blackened chairs sat at either side of the spit for unlucky servants to spin. Anything else in the room has long since been stolen save for a few broken steel bowls and a hanging rack of cast iron cookware, black as oil and slicker than ice. At the far corner sits a pile of old bodies, withered and dried like raisins.

The characters will have passed the chef's office (so he could check and double-check all the food that came and went). His papers are scattered, faded, and worthless. There are eight bodies in the corner, all naked and mummified to such a degree as to prevent any identification. They are decades old.

Under the charcoal, a character can search against a DC of 20 to notice a small black lockbox amidst the ash. It has a simple lock (DC18 to unlock) and inside, the characters will find two gold wedding rings (2 gp each) and a silver pendant (10 gp).

AREA 6: BANQUET HALL

Read or paraphrase the following:

Instead of leading into a royal chamber, this keep opens directly into the banqueting hall. A long stained wood table extends for 25 feet down the length of the room. Worn but sturdy chairs surround the room. A large serving hatch connects the hall to the kitchen. A hallway beside the hatch leads to the head chef's office. Another door is closed on the opposite wall from the kitchen. Across from the entrance is an equally large set of oak doors, leading into the receiving chamber. Empty metal bars once held tapestries, and the



nails in walls once hung paintings, but anything of value has been stolen. This makes the three bodies tied to chairs at the table all the more alarming.

Despite being bruised and bloodied, these match the descriptions of three of the five Iron Sons thieves. They are not dead, only deep asleep, suffering from the curse of the castle. They cannot be awakened in any way, not even if they are injured. When night falls, the bodies will wither and shapeless will emerge. If they are aware of this, the players can kill the techans to prevent an ambush later, but it is too close to nightfall to get them out of the castle in time to save them. There are score marks in the floor, indicating the table has been moved often.

Treasure: The techans' gear is all still here and both echan and techan players can take what they like. The techan gear is still functional.

Two TL0 machine pistols (only one with a clip with 30 rounds), three battery flares, one electric torch, one lighter, two two-way radios, three sets of spare combat fatigues, and 10 uc from various bastions.

A DC25 search discovers a loose stone beneath the pile of gear. Under the stone is a pouch filled with 20 sp and 50 cp and a letter written in English:

If the sun sets, stay awake, lock yourself in. Bar the doors. Light torches about the room. Avoid the darkness. The shapeless will scrape and claw to get in. By day, defend the keep. Cultists want their offering and will kill those that try to leave. Only half of us sleep every morning while others fight. If you find this, look at the light. You live as long the sun still shines. By nightfall, be somewhere else. Don't bother praying for salvation. We tried.

AREA 7: SERVANTS QUARTERS

Read or paraphrase the following the moment the characters open the door:

Echan: *Three loud bangs like thundercracks echo from the room as you open the door. Instinctively you pull back behind the frame. You noticed two humans inside but you couldn't see what weapons or magic they might have brought to bear. Three holes explode from the open door. This room seems to have been the servants' quarters and these poor souls appear to have been locked within for who knows how long. They don't appear in the talking mood.*

Techan: *Three loud gunshots echo from the room as you open the door. Instinctively you pull back behind the frame. You noticed two humans inside, both armed with assault rifles with an obvious intent to use them. They*

don't appear much better equipped than you, but you don't know how much ammunition they have. This room seems to have been the servants' quarters and these poor souls appear to have been locked within for who knows how long. They don't appear in the talking mood.

BATTLE

These two men, David Stone and Martin Wood, represent the surviving members of the Iron Sons cell that stole the *Chronicle of Aurannis*.

2 Iron Sons Survivors

IRON SONS SURVIVOR

3rd level troop [HUMAN]

Initiative: +5

Teeth & Nails +8 vs AC—7 damage, and the target is grabbed.

R (David): Shotgun +8 vs. AC—14 damage to engaged targets; 7 damage to targets nearby and far war away.

Natural 16+: A hit target is dazed until the beginning of the survivor's next turn.

R (Martin): Assault Rifle +8 vs. AC (two attacks)—10 damage.

Linked Targeting: Once per round, if one Iron Sons Survivor hits with a ranged attack, one other Iron Sons Survivor can make a ranged attack against the same target as a reaction.

AC 19

PD 16

MD 14

HP 45

If either survivor is taken alive, the following can be made with the proper checks.

What happened here is not obvious. The PCs will have to take one alive and push through the temporary insanity in order to get any answers.

A DC18 check involving insight or empathy reveals the following: He's obviously traumatized, but more importantly, he appears sleep deprived, which doesn't help matters in the slightest. They were probably ambushed in the receiving room or banquet hall. Given that his friends have yet to turn to the shapeless, he's only been locked in here for a day or so. Perhaps these two locked the other two out when the fight became too severe and they made a decision which cost the team.

A DC18 check involving healing or medicine can reveal the following: He isn't physically wounded beyond the sleep deprivation, which appears to have been

going off and on for the better part of a week. You are able to stabilize him, but he needs sleep to properly recover. His lucidity may only be temporary. You are not properly equipped to determine the long term psychological effects.

A DC18 check involving diplomacy: You try to talk him down; assuring him you mean no harm. Your appearance must have been initially alarming, but the offer of food and water helped greatly. Seeing the light outside has also helped.

Success: Through his frantic speech and hyperventilation, he says the following:

“It-it-it was just a j-j-job. Taking the book was ea-ea-easy. Cakewalk, good money, low risk, no w-w-weapons. They said h-h-here—wasn’t our idea—they said here. Ok, w-w-why not.”

“I don’t know. The general set it up. He got the c-c-contract. Whoever they were, they c-c-c-can’t handle magic for very long. They said they were c-c-c-coming here to pick up the book. I-I-I c-c-c-can’t fall asleep. They t-t-took it. The hoodoo and his flock, p-p-p-preparing for tonight. Don’t be here. G-G-G-Got to g-g-get out.”

This warns the PCs that something is due to happen at nightfall. They each receive +2 to all defenses against the first attack by shapeless wild against them in the upcoming encounter.

Failure: He is irrational and babbles meaningless nonsense while thrashing and trying to escape. Nothing will sway him.

No amount of diplomacy will convince the survivors to stay and help in the fight. If allowed to depart, they will flee without looking back, not even stopping to try to help their comrades.

AREA 8: RECEIVING ROOM

Read or paraphrase the following:

How magnificent this receiving hall must have been hundreds of years ago when two great lords welcomed anyone willing to trek up the mountain to request an audience. Now only fractured brick and decayed wood remains. The two thrones, once carved from oak and gold, sit in tatters, the wood rotted away and the gold long since been pilfered. Only stone feet, barely a foot high and embedded in the floor, remain. Tiles of jade checkered with marble have cracked with time and abuse. The thrones are not elevated. A stone table, shaped like a crescent moon, curves around the two chairs. Here, knights, businessmen, and landowners would convene to discuss affairs of the day. The room stretches a fair distance to the wooden doors at the entrance.

Broken pillars occupy the remaining empty space in this dilapidated room. In front of the table, a dozen cloaked figures – the same as those you killed before – silently kneel before a taller man gleaming in silver and platinum plates. His complexion is perfect, his smile charismatic. He appears like a noble, beaming with allure and chiseled features, but his eyes give away his lack of virtue as he looks across the room to you. This is no knight, but a human monster.

“Do you grow restless, my children?” he asks. “You wish to waken anew. Cast off your mortality. All that is required is your desire. No bloodletting, no sacrifice. Just the will. Sit with us.”

When the characters refuse, he concludes, *“Then the shepherd must cull his flock.”* He then motions his followers to attack.

“Alive if possible, let’s be merciful.” Of course, his brand of mercy involves forcing victims to slumber for the oncoming curse of the shapeless.

BATTLE

The cultists will not attempt to kill the characters if they drop below 0 hit points. If all the characters are reduced below 0, then the cultists will stabilize them and the characters will be restrained. They may make a saving throw after 10 minutes to rouse before the curse sets in, but their weapons will be removed and they will still be restrained.

Katho Kovacs
9 Disciples of Kovacs

KATHO KOVACS

2nd level Double Strength Spoiler [HUMAN]

Initiative: +6

Black Staff +8 vs. AC—14 damage.

Natural 16+: The target loses one recovery; Kovacs gains one recovery. He can use a recovery in one of the ways listed below as a standard action.

Ashes to Ashes: Use one recovery to attack all nearby enemies; +8 vs PD—8 ongoing damage.

Deliver to My Hand: Use one recovery to attack all nearby enemies; +8 vs MD—target is weakened (save ends).


Assembly of the One: Use one recovery and Kovacs regains 18 hit points.

AC 18
PD 16
MD 12

HP 72

The cultists will rush in to attack and protect their master. Apart from the furnishings already detailed, there is





a pile of gear and treasure in the corner of the room, pilfered by the cultists as well as the other bandits and mercenaries that have frequented this keep.

Treasure: Although there is substantial treasure here, every piece retrieved takes a standard action. The most accessible are: one suede pouch with 50 gp, two linked gold rings worth 30 gp, four short swords in sellable condition, one magic item worth no more than 520 gp, and the *Chronicle of Aurannis*.

PREDATOR AND PREY

Once only three or fewer cultists remain, or if Katho Kovacs is staggered, read or paraphrase the following:

All remaining natural light bleeds from the room. The shadows begin to grow long and fill the entire chamber. A few formless shapes rise from the casting blackness. Illuminated solid white eyes glint off the silver sheen of razor claws which slide and dance in the blackness, making you unable to see arms or shifting legs. As they emerge from the crevices about the room, whatever light still lingers refusing to reflect off them, they quickly close in.

Four shapeless will emerge from each corner and go about attacking both the characters and the cultists. Their first attack should kill one cultist instantly regardless of his remaining hit points, to impress upon the players that this is not a fight they can win. Every two rounds after this, one more shapeless emerges. This will continue until the heroes make their escape or are all reduced to 0 hit points or below. Kovacs will attempt escape through the rubble in the west. If he makes it to the edge without pursuit, he escapes. None of his followers will survive. As the group passes through the banquet hall, the restrained techans transform into shapeless and attempt to block the escape. If the shapeless in the stables have not been killed, they emerge when the players pass that door.

400 When the heroes emerge back into the courtyard, read or paraphrase the following:

The sun has fallen and what few stars can fight against the glare of Attricana poke out from the curtain of night. Splinters of a few clouds thinly stretch out to the horizon. The black silhouette in the sky at first appears part of the night as it carries stars down with it.

The vessel is taller than it is long, longer than it is wide, hovering just under the clouds and just over the trees. As a floating centurion, it dwarfs the mountains and the keep perched atop them. The Moon and Attricana bare their light through a temporary break and the glisten of the shape's metallic skin begins to twinkle. The top looks like inverted boat bigger than any ocean vessel ever seen.

Underneath expands into gaping maw. The vessel is daunting in its profile—an overturned boat settling on a dragon's skull. Bumps and divots pepper the hull. No smoke escapes from the exhaust, no glow from idling engines. It hangs as if on wires suspended from heaven. Metal boarding ramps reach out; too thin to sustain weight at that distance, but without supports, the bridge doesn't bow, even as the first figures cross it.

Six shapes under the shadow of the vessel scurry over, taking the keep in no time. The technological level of this group appears far beyond anything the characters have seen before. As their weapons dispatch the shapeless quickly, the players should make their escape. If they approach the interlopers, they will be fired upon. The first shot will miss and vaporize a nearby statue. Next round, if the characters have not taken the hint, fire a real shot (+15 vs. AC, 25 damage). Any attacks by the heroes fail to do any damage even if they hit their mark: this is not a fight the characters should have a hope of winning.

As the players race down the tunnel, at least two shapeless will emerge behind them. As they reach the base of the shaft, two more shapeless will emerge below. The characters can fight or continue their escape. If the players had horses, they are still waiting outside. The shapeless will not pursue outside the keep if the heroes continue their escape. When the heroes have reached the edge of the valley, read or paraphrase the following:

The monstrosity pulls slowly away from the keep. It begins to lift to the sky, pushing through the threshold of clouds. Before the bottom jaw finally vanishes above, a small prick of light leaps from its point. It moves with precision to the keep. A brilliant flash strikes the landscape an instant before the wave of thunder reaches you. It shatters the peak and splinters the mountain as a hammer to a sand sculpture. Smoke and cinders covers what remains under the moonglow. Shards of grass fly like knives past your skin. The first trees lose their needles.

The blast is not radioactive, only a destructive concussion wave. All characters suffer a +8 vs. PD attack that inflicts 12 points of damage (half damage on a miss). The blast continues all the way to the forest, where it strips the needles and leaves off the trees. The keep, as well as most of the rock tower, has been destroyed. Dust and pebbles are all that remains. If the players have not acquired the book, they can search the debris.

CONCLUSION

Even if they did not defeat Kovacs, they receive a 1000 gp reward for his defeat if they return to Antikari. If

they also recovered the book, the heroes can return to Limshau and deliver the book for the 2000 gp reward, or they can take it to Paraerra-sensei before rendering it up to the librarians for the reward. He will open the book and read the following:

"Before the First Hammer, the greatest dragon—he of violet and lavender scales—gave up his soul to stop the encroaching darkness of Ixindar. It was Gebermach that wielded the demon blade Dogurasu, plunging it into the dragon's heart, ending the mortal life of an immortal soul. In his final scream of defiance, this dragon of violet and lavender scales brought down a mountain upon Ixindar and orphaned the world to science. The impact that followed closed the world from magic. Before that instant, the crown of this dragon fell upon the ground. It was shattered, scattered, and forgotten."

"Amethyst was the living deity that forged the first world before it was our world. Before the Hammer. Before science had its reign. And there are others ... all infused into artifacts by owners since passed and forgotten. As they bond to their owners, or as they are brought closer to other fragments, their powers amplify. Eight they are in number. They have earned names across various kingdoms."

"Amethyst opened the first gate, or maybe he was inescapably connected to it. To control them would be to control the fate of this world, and the fate of his soul. According to myth, to bring them together at the point of his death would allow one to call him back to life. And, in that moment, he could save the world. The power to open or close the gates is contained in these items. With Attricana gone, Earth would fall back to science, leaving man unhindered in his pursuit to retake it, but for Ixindar of course. Some of techa insist the gates are connected and with one goes the other: perhaps they are right, though reality is rarely so simple. Where these artifacts rest, dark souls converge. Those bound to science wish a normal world while those bound to darkness wish only to see it burn. It is to be hoped that those reading this are more moderate in their desires."

"To find the other artifacts means to seek out those brought to their knees by overwhelming evil. Seek out the greatest temples, the tallest towers, and the deepest dungeons. Seek out the vaults closed tight. Seek out the obsessions that drive men mad. The answers have been recorded. Somewhere, at some time, someone noted their presence ... For they have already all been found. And no one would give up such power willingly or without compensation regardless of their motives."

Bank on greed as your bitterest enemy and staunchest ally."

LEADS

Where the players go from here is up to them and you. They may continue this quest or continue with their lives. If they choose not to take on this responsibility, then Paraerra will offer an additional 2,000 gp for the relic and insist that the amulet stay in the city (if they refuse, it is stolen from them within a week of leaving Limshau, by high-level custodians who leave no sign of their presence and are not detected, regardless of how good a watch the party keeps). This would be the opportunity to plan out the campaign with some clues ... or leave the quest hanging for now to allow the players the chance to develop their characters with other adventures until the quest calls upon them again.



By sunbreak, Aiden had checked from the hostel and made his way to the eastern gates. He reached the front of the line before the crowds gathered. The seam in the door was nearly invisible until it broke the instant the sun's rays drifted down the wall. The simple assemblage of gears and pulleys moved the huge slabs of stone effortlessly. On the other side, a smaller gate of chain and iron was guarded by a handful of custodians. Two damaskans guarded either side, armed with katana and tanto with a human custodian sitting behind a podium, brandishing a clipboard and pencil. They were dressed in the black kawabari Aiden had seen before. The human greeted him.

"Hola. Sprache?"

"English?" Aiden answered and asked.

"Lingo or Franca?"

"Franca."

"Early morning sir. You carry papers?"

"Yes." Aiden brought up the various papers proving his identity. This included the Angel Ident Card and a letter of recommendation from David Obatala Chen. The custodian stopped at the latter and didn't bother flipping through the others.

"Aiden ka-moo?" the custodian verified.

"Kae-mus."

"Just arrived or spent the night?" The guard filled out Aiden's temporary passport.

"The night."

"No aggravations, I hope?" The custodian stamped the passport and handed it back with the papers.

"Just some Malkut immigrant pandering his paranoia."

"Odd they still do after escaping that madness."

"Keeps them safe I suppose, a delusion to depend on. Thank you." Aiden retrieved the papers and made his way through the gate.

As he passed through, the custodian said to his back,



"The gods may be dead but faith is no delusion. Enjoy your stay in Limshau." Aiden turned back and paused, but didn't comment.

* * *

Thousands moved without a shove in the streets. No one needed to control the crowds, though wagons and horses often found it difficult to press through faster than a crawl. The buildings blended together. As Aiden wandered deeper, the city grew taller.

He navigated through the narrow cobblestone streets. He pushed against the chalk walls as beasts and wagons plowed by. Various silks were danced in front of him to entice a sale. Another peddler promised increased lovemaking in a pouch filled with powdered dragon testicles. A pair of custodians chatted with a merchant. An orange-haired child-like gimfen stood atop his cart, selling various silks gathered from his villages in the north.

Gimfen came from those playful tales about helpful spirits that would lend a hand in need or work without compensation making toys in the bitter cold inside some fat man's sweatshop. The gimfen was barely four feet with the thin body and eyes of a child.

A few legal tall-eared scarlet women promoted their pleasure from a second level window. They were damaskans. Aiden made himself stop. The fae smiled and flaunted their thin subtle curves to passing eyes that viewed them. They did what they wished and needed few laws to keep them ethical. Aiden forced his eyes back on the road as the temptation was increasing as he stared.

More books rested on the shelves of Limshau libraries than anywhere else on Earth. The namesake capital was the largest of all of them. Escapees from the bastions often smuggled forbidden manuals from their home to barter into Limshau to get a head start on a new life.

Twinkling chips of granite fell across his face as a heavy cart rolled over a stone bridge above. Limshau was as a stacked city, with a lattice of stone and wooden paths above the main roads. Aiden took the lure and diverted to one of the wooden overpasses to get a look across the ocean of stone, wood, and flesh. The market ran for miles with a hundred thousand humans and fae going about their lives.

There was nothing out there, Martin had said. Aiden leaned his weight on the railing and admired the labyrinth. It reminded him of Genai—a network of mathematical imperfection. The outer walls might have been faultless but city was a delightful mess. Obstructing statues standing in intersections. Living trees peeling apart stonework to gain their roots.

Aiden heard two long high-pitched notes boom over the market. It brought up his eyes along with all those of the street. Considering the volume, Aiden had expected a colossal horn atop a citadel, coiling around the tower to a tiny mouthpiece connected to an embouchure of a broad-lunged dwarf. The notes repeated, calling out for attention from the entire city. Aiden's eyes focused on an immense silhouette climbing over the shrouded sunrise. It bathed Aiden and the market in shadow. He recognized the colossal outline of an airship, the Abecedarian--an

illustration Aiden had previously seen in a book. It was real to.

The golden coat of the 1200-foot long vessel floated past the outer wall. Only a small cabin hung underneath the smooth untarnished skin with most of the crew and passengers resting comfortably inside the superstructure. Aiden took a moment to drink in the sight. Such a vessel sat on the border of disruption, relying on unbroken physics to keep itself aloft. It was a thermal, lifted by heated air. The behemoth hadn't touched more than a single wheel on the ground in 115 years. Propellers bigger than men spun as the vessel slowed towards the mooring tower. The sun appeared again behind it, turning the dirigible black. It wasn't a forty foot French horn, but it would suffice.

* * *

The appraiser had a desk plate announcing him as Roland Gauss. Gauss rolled his fingers over the spine of the book. He opened the cover and checked for bends, ensuring the bleed was undamaged as it folded over the front. Aiden's book was without rips, and the leaf had significant strength. Gauss was impressed. The room resembled Chen's biblio but with more collections and total works over singular novels.

"The Glory of Her Sacred Majesty Queen Anne in the Royal Navy and Her Absolute Sovereignty as Empress of the Sea, Asserted and Vindicated by Joseph Gander, amazing," the appraiser complimented. "Printed in 1703 and only once, a treatise for an age no one remembers. You weren't brandishing this book openly, were you?"

"No," Aiden lied, and Gauss could tell.

"Good thing no one out there appreciates real treasure," Gauss answered as he examined the book. "Gold is such a distraction. How many riches wait ignored by the rabble? Chen must have faith in you to offer this as a trade."

Aiden still hadn't checked in. His pack sat across his lap, covering the hole in his pants. "You know him?" Aiden asked.

Gauss was pleasantly plump with three inches of growth across his face and a mop of chestnut hair. His teeth were straight and gleamed white across his dark beard.

"Every custodian worth his sword, every librarian worth his books knows him," Gauss said. "His life is priced more than the tomes in his collection." Gauss danced his articulate fingers across the embossed cover. "He's invested greatly in you, my friend. You looking for passes or currency?"

"I think both."

Gauss rolled his chair across to a nearby shelf and retrieved a ledger. "Well, passes translate to more for you. Compensation will be higher. Wizardry?"

"Uh...yes." Aiden was almost apprehensive to answer.

"What I love to hear," was his legitimate jovial response. "Human mages are rare in this world. A perchance for wonders and whimsy." Gauss loved words and enjoyed their expression. "You flipped?"

"Not yet."

"Well, it's not easy. I know too well." He opened his book and began logging in the details of the transaction. "Could never manage more than a card trick myself." After filling out some initial documents, he opened a drawer and revealed a piece of hard cardstock barely bigger than a pocket photograph. "This is an access pass. Hold that." He offered it to Aiden and he accepted. Aiden's signature, which he hadn't given, and his likeness, which he hadn't offered, etched upon the surface. "Pretty clever?"

Aiden flipped it around in his hand. "Actually it is."

"Can't even be stolen now. Hand it over." Aiden did so. Gauss dropped it in his drawer and closed it. "Check your pocket." Aiden followed and reached in, felt the card, and removed it. Aiden smiled at the real magic. Gauss opened hands and leaned back in his chair. "Your approbations are drippings from a Christmas turkey. I do have a hand with card tricks."

"You a wizard?"

"No," Gauss laughed. "Parents forbid it. Dad recommended I pick up a serious profession like silversmith. In the end, he settled for alchemy. Not all magic comes from the spoken word. There are those naturally blessed and those that mix materials fallen from heaven." Aiden disputed the use of heaven as science had its own theories. He didn't voice those thoughts. "Don't get jealous. Pleroma is still the standard. You figure that out, kingdoms will open their legs for you."

"No pressure though."

"If it was easy, everyone would do it, and a genocide by fools would follow."

"I thought all genocides were by the hand of fools."

"Point. Unfortunately, to master Pleroma requires intelligence, not wisdom."

"If everyone could wave a wand, there'd be anarchy," Aiden quoted his memory.

"Exactly. Thankfully for every hundred students following the arcane, usually only one emerges a wizard. If you're interested in classes, start with Dr. Paraerra. He doesn't teach spellcraft but many say you can't walk the path without him." Gauss pointed at the card in Aiden's hand. "Regardless, that will get you into any branch. With Chen's recommendation, you have the red banner. Flash it to borrow private editions from homes if you require. Trust and respect is assumed."

"Thank you."

"You were expecting...exploitation?" Gauss leaned forward as he toyed.

"The trip here...was—"

"Anyone claiming a journey is half the fun lost faith in the destination." Gauss pulled out a stack of papers and signed the bottom of each. He then offered them. "Six months paid room and board. Private accommodations, you have a guest?"

"No," Aiden answered, though trailing off at the end.

"Planning on one?"

"I don't think so."

Gauss tendered the currency next. "And carmot, only currency we deal in. Four hundred remains after lodgings. Keep it in ration." He filled out a receipt. "Even

a white city has shadows." Aiden looked at the paper in Gauss's hand. "We have banks," Gauss added.

"Oh--" Aiden accepted it receipt.

"Didn't think I'd hand you a stack of gold and silver in a leather pouch, did you?"

Aiden laughed it off, "Sorry, of course." He looked at the receipt as his signature and face drew themselves onto its surface. He looked back to Gauss as the realization washed over him. "You said you knew alchemy?"

"A hankering is all I'll admit."

Aiden opened his pack and pulled out the stone he found in the crash. It still glowed with its own fire, uncaring for having been ignored. "What do you imagine this is?" He offered it without worry.

Gauss looked at it over indifferent. "A glowing rock."

"Thank you," Aiden answered blankly.

"It could be sapping your life force as we speak or gifting you with foresight. Suffer from either?"

Aiden smirked. "I believe the melancholy is purely self-induced."

Gauss handed it back. "I like the clasp. Someone thought it was important. There's a religion based around purple stones. Something about a dragon god, I think. Older faith, pre-gate. Never seen one glow. Could be naturally imbued. You ever get drunk?"

"No--"

"In human mythology, amethyst would stave off drunkenness. Many of those stories had some measure of truth."

"That they did."

"I'll take it off your hands if you need extra coin. Limshau has an artifact library. I can tender a price when I know more."

Aiden casually slipped it back in his case. "I'll hold onto it for now." Aiden wasn't sure why. He trusted Gauss but preferred caution.

"Well, it's been nice having you," said Gauss. Aiden held out his hand and Gauss accepted. The appraiser turned over Aiden's hand to see the watch. "That can't be working."

"It's not."

"Well here time can stop if asked to. It's all in the wording." Gauss released Aiden's hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Gauss. It's been enlightening."

Gauss exclaimed as Aiden left, "It's Roland, and may the milk of mermaids quench your thirst."

* * *

Aiden stared at the toilet. It was wood and stone, but it had a seat. The chain flushed water from the large cistern above. It was primitive, using gravity fed water from towers about the city, but it was heaven compared to the past two months. The seat was hard. The stone was cold. He didn't care and neither did his bowels. The bed was cushioned with a down pillow. The white walls were more than a design aesthetic. A cool breeze flowed to every crack and corner. Aiden found a second floor room with a view of a market street. The circular stone window held no glass, only a wooden shutter to block out

the noises if needed. It was never too loud and the overlapping voices in various languages reminded Aiden of traffic clatter in Angel. A pull of a similar chain ran a pump bringing clean water. The toilet and the sink was knowledge brought over by bastion-man, what the fae could never manage on their own. It wasn't stupidity but a lack of the obsessive drive to better one's life that only came from evolution. Fae found a simple solution and never attempted progress. The disruption of their very being on even the most basic mechanisms did the rest. Before men and their printing press, the fae stuck mostly with scrolls. Books for them were a luxury reserved for special editions as each had to be stitched by hand.

The sun hadn't set before Aiden shut his eyes. He slept for twelve hours. He woke without an ache and thoroughly cleaned himself in the communal showers on the lower level. Aiden felt scrawny and bare amongst the hairy, barrel-chested human men in the other stalls. The water was freezing as was everything else that morning. The city was still a slave to weather. He had a brazier and a few sconces in his room but they would do little against the cold when winter hit, mild that they were at this latitude.

There was no way to keep food cold so it was to the market for produce every morning. Aiden raced for an empty seat, fought through his deficient proficiency of the sinitic tongue the server's used, and ordered a plate of what looked like raw sewage. He tasted garlic. He didn't recall seeing garlic. Aiden felt something crunchy and hoped it was intended. He left his remaining Angel grain bars for emergencies. He knew he had to acquire a stout stomach if he had any chance to acclimatize to echa. The caravan had helped but that was mostly bread.

By afternoon, he found the arcana wing, three blocks of libraries, stores, and schools. Aiden slammed his tattered tome of incantations and power words in front of a storekeep that specialized in totems. It jostled the spark out of the book, which quickly went back into hiding. Aiden was awaiting some castigation from the owner but only heard, "I've seen worse," as the clerk took the book and went about finding the rare components required to repair it. Later, Aiden wondered if the keeper had seen worse from many of his patrons, or just the humans, few that they were.

Before lunch, Aiden signed up for a philosophy lecture. The teacher was not some old man with worn and weary eyes pinching his nose when his heavy glasses strained his head. He was barely into his forties with dark skin with toned muscle. There were thirty other students of various ethnicities, ages, and races sitting with backs straight upon mats placed erratically about the room. Aiden had entered late and noticed the desks pushed to the walls.

"I'm Doctor Philippe Paraerra and if you have any hope of understanding this world, you have to begin with your awareness. Of how you perceive it. This class does not deal with specifics. It deals with color." Aiden furrowed his brow at the statement. Others followed. "Got you all looking crooked, didn't I?" A few laughed. "I'm serious. Color is a name we give our perception of the basics of what we see. Something is blue. Something is

yellow. Something is black and something is white. In this world, what we see is interpreted by our brains. What we perceive we take instantly as reality. What we are taught we accept...as gospel, even to the extent of altering our perception of the world around it. Yellow and blue do not make green and the true color blue isn't even something our brains can handle. If you have any hopes of understanding this world, you have to accept that there are no absolutes."

"Anything is possible--" Aiden found himself whispering.

"Damned straight," Paraerra exclaimed with a clap. It jolted Aiden as eyes focused on him. "Sorry," he said.

"Don't be. Anything IS possible. God has been replaced by the will of the very people he created. This is his parting gift, the keys to the kingdom. It's not a test. There's no virtuous morality at play, no good versus evil. For the first time, the world is malleable. Why do you think they send all wizards to me first before they put any spells in your head. You're a dreamer."

"Is that a problem?"

"No, but you're sitting near me for your stay in my class."

Aiden held up his hands in protest. "No, no, that's quite all right." Paraerra raised his hands as if preaching to god, and then firmly pointed to an open area next to him. Aiden sighed and shuffled to the position.

"Let me start with a rhetorical question. If there was no intelligent life in the universe, does the universe have meaning? We all know the adage about the tree falling in the forest. I move beyond that by saying that if no one hears the falling tree, even though it makes a sound, the act of the fall and the sound it generates is utterly worthless. Intelligence is the universe's way of acknowledging its own existence, and a cosmos with no eyes to see it, ears to hear it, or brains to understand it...has no value. So if intelligent life is the ultimate goal of the cosmos, is there room or even a need for a greater intelligence? If there was a divine creator--a greater thought--behind everything, then that could devalue our own importance. This would lead me to say that there's meaning to the universe, but not a purpose. It may have a function, but not necessarily significance. That would transfer the responsibility onto us. We are not obligated to find purpose in our lives, but it may be something only we can seek ourselves, as no guiding light will show us the path.

"We now have the capacity to alter the universe, actually change how it functions. Only a cosmos aware of itself could control how it acts and if we're the gestalt of this consciousness, then God is only the sum of all the minds in the universe and had no capacity to think until we thought of it." Paraerra smiled. "...and I'm only four minutes into my first class."

The students laughed and Paraerra continued, "If you follow this logic any further, then the removal of god and science simultaneously allows us absolute freedom to pursue personal meaning without any obligation to the universe, which, as I said, may not have a purpose at all."

"So there would no predetermined path for anyone,

by science or by God, real or not?" Aiden asked.

"There may still be a set path but one you may be only partially in control of. Think of it as...cosmic socialism.

"That sounds somewhat absurd."

"My thoughts exactly...but that's a conversation for another day."

* * *

As evening fell, Aiden sat at the edge of the window. The moon and Attricana were bright but a few well placed candles were still required for Aiden's reading. He didn't feel the need to flaunt the spark. He glanced at his open pack and the azure glow inside. Aiden walked over and pulled out the amethyst. He returned to the window and his book, placing the jewel on the open face. He could see the storms swirling away inside. He resumed his reading.

She was a fae. That much Aiden could easily tell. She was taking in the breeze from her larger window across the street. Second floor, the same as him. His height but half the weight, with a frame of a normal person that had been stretched. She leaned from her window to let her blonde hair dry naturally in the wind. Her neck was long and thin, uncovered by a flowing layer of silk which danced about the air. She wore nothing underneath the simple gown but nature's current refused to reveal anything by whisking away the cloth. It would only permit Aiden a glimpse of her slender legs below the knee and everything above the shoulders. As her hair dried and lifted in the air, the strands parted to reveal her ears.

Aiden didn't notice the amethyst sliding off his book until it clanged on the floor. He bolted from view of the window to snatch it back up. When he returned to his admiration, he noticed the human male entering the room behind her. He wore well pressed blues and purples, satin and linen with accents of leather. He removed his coat as she turned. She slowly embraced him. He paid generously. She placed him on the bed and walked to the window. Her's had two shutters. As she closed one, she looked across the street and met Aiden's eyes. He flinched but continued his stare. She smiled and rolled her fingers in a wave and closed the final shutter.

Aiden sat himself back on the window edge and dropped the rock back on this book. It slid down to his hand, brushing across his wrist. He stared at the storm caught within it. Tick.

Aiden wondered if he had been so lucky to find some unique item, a mcguffin to start him on a great quest. If this was, would he take it, accept such responsibility? If it was worthy for midgets and melancholy mages, why not? But in fiction, the storyteller ensures the survivability of his characters and Aiden had no such guardian watching over him.

Tick.

Aiden didn't spot it initially. His mind was lost not on the stone but on the lingering image of the prostitute in the window. Tick. Right next to the amethyst, the gem commanded all attention. Tick. When the second hand moved again, Aiden spotted his watch. Tick, the second had moved.

Tick, again. Aiden tilted his head rather than risk shifting the watch as it rolled over to 10:04 am. He saw the hand mark off another second. Aiden mouthed a curse as he palmed the Amethyst and moved it away from his watch. The second hand stopped abruptly before 10:05. He brought the stone back alongside the mechanism. Time resumed, closing to the end of the minute. "How is that possible?"



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129 6807 Westgate Ave.
Prince George, British Columbia,
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The Gleam

Which side will you choose?
Which weapons will you wield?

Earth is torn between the order of science and the chaos of fantasy. These two worlds cannot mix. Venture into lands once claimed by skyscrapers and factories, now overrun by elves, goblins, and dragons. Choose your path and commit to the quest. Monsters will hunt you; machines will track you. No gods will help you; no prophecies will choose you.

The fate of the world rests with you.

This rulebook includes:

- A new adaptation of Amethyst based on the 13th Age Roleplaying Game.
- Eleven playable species, twenty-one icon-like affiliations, over forty backgrounds.
- Eight new classes, over 270 feats.
- Players can now select legends to expand their characters at high levels.
- High-tech equipment from revolvers to railcannons, pickup trucks to powered armor.
- Over thirty new monsters.
- New rules including vehicles and ranged combat which can be added to any game.

