

Sundara
Dawn of a New Age

CITIES OF SUNDARA ARCHBLISS



AZUKAIL
GAMES

CITIES OF SUNDARA: ARCHBLISS

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WHAT IS “CITIES OF SUNDARA”?

In fantasy tabletop roleplaying games there is a tendency for settings to constantly be looking backward to a lost golden age, or a time of legend where great feats of magic and the techniques for creating potent items of power have been lost. Whether this downfall comes as a result of an apocalyptic event, societal collapse, destruction of knowledge or some combination thereof, players often find themselves struggling through a world that, for all its wonders, is not what it once was.

Sundara: Dawn of a New Age takes the opposite approach.

The world of Sundara has all of the monsters, magic, dangers and hardships you would expect in a fantasy RPG. However, the people of Sundara tend to look for the other side of the coin, harnessing the raw forces of their world in order to overcome trials and tribulations in strange, unexpected ways. Through discovery, industry, understanding and sheer grit, the people of Sundara are boldly stepping forward to master the world around them.

“Cities of Sundara” offers game masters and players alike a peek into this world. By visiting unique locations across the setting, it gives you a taste of what life is like in this setting. Not only that, but you can choose to use the cities in their original setting, or incorporate them into your own. Each supplement will also include resources such as new materials for weapons and armor, new creature types, as well as new weapons, magic items and more to enhance your game!

As the setting grows, even more elements will be included. So come, step out into the dawn of a new age with us, and revel in all the fresh possibilities that Sundara has to offer!

APPLICANT

Kadar sat in the small, stone chamber, tapping his foot nervously. The young man's face was drawn, and the dark circles around his eyes suggested he hadn't been sleeping much of late. Fresh scorch marks ran along the walls, and the air smelled of char. He'd been waiting there for three days, eating meals slid through a hole in the wall, and drinking herb water that made him sluggish.

He couldn't tell if the herbs made the fire in his veins better, or worse.

When the door opened, Kadar shot to his feet fast enough that he nearly knocked his chair over. A woman he'd never seen before stood in the doorway, her hair and eyes both the deep red of fresh blood. Power radiated from her skin like heat from a baking brick, and the silk of many colors she wore slid and shushed more like a fine oil than a fabric. A golden arch glimmered on her breast, but Kadar hardly needed to see it to know who she was.

His village's summons had been answered.

"Kadar," she said, nodding to him as if she'd known him for years.

"Yes ma'am," he said, bobbing his head. He swallowed hard, and felt the skin on the back of his neck go taut. Clammy sweat beaded in the hollows of his temples, and then rapidly evaporated. His stomach went sick. Kadar felt it coming up again, and he knew he had to stop it.

The woman crossed the room on light steps, and cupped Kadar's chin. She tilted his head up, looking down into his eyes. She held him with her gaze, pinning him to the stones. She spoke words he'd never heard before. Words that hung in the air like whispered thunder. He had no idea what they meant, but a part of him understood them all the same. He felt the sullen heat in his guts recede, and the burning in his head quiet. He let out a breath he hadn't been aware he was holding, and a heat haze curled from his lips. The sorcerer nodded, and smiled at him. It was the first smile anyone had given Kadar since reap night, when fire had starting bursting from his hands.

"Your gift burns hot," she said, the words appreciative. She glanced around the stone chamber, taking in the scoring left over generations of those who'd had to stay within the stone walls while they waited for a teacher to come for them. Kadar saw her gaze linger on the number of fresh scorches, and he flushed. He couldn't tell if he was proud, or embarrassed. "You will need to learn to control it, however, or it will burn you out."

"Will... will you teach me how?" Kadar asked. He knew, almost instinctively, that she could. The only question is whether he would be allowed to learn.

She gave him another smile. This one was smaller, but just as warm. "We shall see what you are capable of, when the time comes, Kadar. I have no doubt that we will find a place for you, though."



ARCHBLISS: THE CITY OF THE SORCERERS

High above the Kerren Plateau looms an impossible sight; the floating city of Archbliss.

Borne aloft on wind and cloud for millennia, Archbliss was raised into the sky by the most powerful sorcerers of a bygone age. The city is a place where all persons who inherit potent magical gifts are welcome, and it is said to be a place where the laws of the groundling world do not apply. In Archbliss it is those without magic who are the unusual members of the population. Breathtaking sights from forests of crystal trees, to rainbows that run like water, are everyday miracles that residents barely notice. It is a place where, if one believes the legends told about it, anything is possible.

Legends are never quite what they appear to be once someone gets a glimpse beneath their skin, however...

OF MYTHS AND MAGIC

None can say for certain when it was that the first conclave of great sorcerers met, or precisely what purpose it was that drew them together. Some histories claim it was because they had been outcast from their lands, driven away out of fear by those who didn't understand who they were, or what they could do. There are one or two surviving tomes that reference a great cataclysm, claiming that those who raised the city had been empowered by the raw stuff of the Prim that changed them, and made them gateways to power that few could ever dream of. And there are some who believe that like simply calls to like, and that the original sorcerers were drawn to one another as surely as iron is drawn to a lodestone.

What all agree upon, though, is the sorcerers who founded Archbliss wished to use their gifts to create a refuge for others like themselves; to use their powers to make a paradise for those who came after. It was through their combined might that they reshaped the very land around them, call-

ing up wonders as they bent the fabric of reality the way a smith would shape metal. With every hammer blow of their wills ripples shivered throughout the world, and those ripples drew others like them. Some were great, and others small, but all were welcomed. This was a place for those who had been touched by things beyond the purely mortal, and who sought to harness their gifts in order to do more with them. To serve a purpose greater than themselves.

Like all such endeavors, this meeting of minds and wills started out as something pure. As time went on, though, covetous and fearful eyes were turned toward this commune of sorcerers. Outsiders attempted to bleed away more prominent sorcerers, offering them wealth and position if they would turn their backs on others of their kind. Some attempted to recruit spies in order to find out what the sorcerers were doing, and how they could sabotage it. Many of these outsiders formed alliances and compacts, hoping to present a unified front against what they perceived as a growing threat to their own power. Several of these outside forces put out a call for holy warriors, so-called witch hunters and others who could stand against the sorcerers if doing so became necessary.

Surrounded by a growing threat on all sides, the sorcerers banded together to once again perform an impossible task. Storms wracked the heavens, winds howled and the earth all around the fledgling city of Archbliss cracked asunder... before the city itself lifted out of the ground and into the sky. Those who feared the sorcerers were awed by this display of raw might, and though taking to the air didn't assuage the fears of those below, it insulated Archbliss from the machinations that had been corrupting it from the edges. With their new self-imposed

isolation, the sorcerers were free to shape their own laws, their culture and the very laws of reality around them without interference.

Which is precisely what they did.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF ETERNITY

Though magic may take nearly infinite forms, and it can be crafted to suit nearly any purpose, there remain eight schools that all spells fall into. Using a defined quantity to describe infinity was, in many ways, how the sorcerers saw themselves. Mortals with access to power usually reserved for gods, they were finite conduits to an infinite (and infinitely variable) source of energy.

It was with this symbolism in mind that Archbliss formed the eight Great Houses, each one focusing on the mastery of particular schools of magic. The Houses allowed those of similar bloodlines to come together, to pool their energies, to learn from one another and to find a special kind of kinship that only those with sorcerous gifts could truly experience. While it was rare for any bloodline to fall entirely under a single Great House (especially given that many sorcerers tended to stretch their magic in a variety of directions), the Houses were often fluid entities that exchanged knowledge and members freely as the need arose.



The goals were to ensure that sorcerers were free to choose their own destinies, to walk their own paths and to associate with those they wished.

From the Great Houses came the Peers; those who had been elected to speak for the city as the masters of particular forms of magic. Each House chooses its Peers according to its own standards and customs, but general-

ly speaking those who are allowed to speak with the voice of the House do so because they are respected and trusted by those who agreed to elevate them to the rank.

It was the first gathering of the Perpetual Peers who laid down the foundations for what Archbliss would strive to become. They declared that their city would be a haven away from the concerns of the world below. That Archbliss would be a place of beauty and art, and where the creation of a new (and better) way forward would be their goal. Only once they had unlocked the secrets of magic, and truly mastered its ways, would they descend again from their heights to spread their knowledge to those who lived in the shadows below.

SIDEBAR: SORCERER'S QUARTZ

The foundations of the entire city of Archbliss are lined with veins of a unique stone referred to by most arcane scholars as sorcerer's quartz. This crystalline substance reacts to the presence of magic, absorbing and storing the power of spells inside itself. Though small chips of this stone are used in the construction of wands, amulets, rings, and a variety of specialist magical items, it is far from a common element. Even today, after literal centuries of study, there's no telling for certain what events will lead to the creation of these crystals; all that's truly agreed upon is that they tend to be found in the thin places of the world, where the Prim bleeds through into the very rocks and soil.

The ability for the city to store huge amounts of magical power to be used as needed is one reason Archbliss has been able to keep itself aloft as long as it has. In addition to maintaining the city's flight, though, there are

siphons all across Archbliss that tap directly into these veins for various day-to-day uses. From spigots and fountains that conjure fresh water from nothing, to the teleportation circles engraved into several of the city's squares, to the lamps that run along most streets, the energy stored in these veins is used to accomplish almost all of the city's everyday miracles.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SORCERY

The youth of Archbliss is obscured today by the myths surrounding the deeds of the early sorcerers, and the fantastical reports of those few people who were not themselves inductees of one of the Great Houses. The city flew across the world like a great ship, or the home of some god, often coming to the aid of those who had lost all hope. Many poems and ballads are still recited today, telling the tales of how great sorcerers felled dragons with a wave of their hand, called down rains from the sky to end droughts or who turned entire armies into fields of statues with a fell word and a withering glare.

Layers of grandeur and romance have been added to these songs and stories over the years, and they often gloss over (or outright omit) certain facts when it comes to deals made with Archbliss. Because while the sorcerers did offer aid and comfort to many towns and villages in their times of need, there was always a price asked by the city in the sky. Sometimes it was the right to seek those with a gift among the populace, and to take them to Archbliss to be trained in the use of their power. Other times it was a spouse, or even a squire, who would leave with the sorcerer. The price was always set by the white-veiled members of House Territus, whose members



could read the skeins of fate the way sailors could find their way with nothing more than the stars in the night sky.

Archbliss thrived, or seemed to, and the tales of what was possible in the city from that age can scarcely be believed, even today. It was nearly a thousand years ago now that Archbliss stopped moving, though, taking up its current position above the empty grasslands of the Kerren Plateau. This was where the City of the Sorcerers came Termites down from its heights (metaphorically speaking) and truly joined the rest of the world for the first time since its ascendance.

THE GREAT ANCHORING

When Archbliss ceased roaming the skies after so many centuries of floating through the clouds, there were many earthbound peoples who wondered what it meant. The world below waited with bated breath. Fears of the past emerged anew, and whispers that Archbliss would finally declare war spread through the halls of power across the continent. Equally grim were speculations that after so many years of living higher than the rest, Archbliss was about to come tumbling down out of the sky.

In the end neither of these things came to pass.

Instead, Archbliss established a boundary of terrain on the ground below, and it sent messengers to those bloodlines and settlements it had formed agreements and pacts with over the years. News spread along the highways and trade routes that after all their years of wandering, Archbliss felt it was time to take a step back toward the world it had left so long ago. It was to this end that the city had stopped above an area of unclaimed wilderness, allowing itself to be found reliably by those who needed to reach them. And though the city had kept itself largely closed off from those

who lacked sorcerous gifts in the past, it began to open its gates to the common folk.

Only a crack, at first, but even that crack was more than most would ever dream of.

Arcane scholars, many of whom had long dreamed of seeing the wonders of Archbliss, petitioned to be allowed to enter the city. Merchant princes and trade guilds tried to outbid each other for the privilege of being allowed to form contracts with the city. Ripples were sent throughout the region as eyes turned toward the floating relic of an age that had long since passed from living memory in the lands below.

SIDEBAR: THE ECONOMY OF ARCH-BLISS

One of the most peculiar things about Archbliss is that it almost completely lacks a form of understandable currency. Gold and other precious metals are nearly worthless, since they can be created at will by many mid-ranking transmuters. Magic items that would fetch hefty prices in the world below are often worth significantly less in the City of the Sorcerers as well, sometimes regarded as mere trinkets or baubles unless they are of significant power or rarity.

Those in Archbliss often find value in unexpected things, however, which has led to commodities once thought worthless (or nearly so) growing in demand in certain quarters. From a vial of blood from a rare magical creature, to fresh fruit raised without magic (a noted status symbol among certain of the city's elite), to the latest inventions and artifice from the world below, it's always surprising what one might be able to barter for in exchange for the potent enchanted items that are as common as dirt in Archbliss.

The most reliable commodity one can use to trade with the City of the Sorcerers,

though, is sorcerer's quartz. Difficult to find, and nearly impossible to manufacture reliably, there's always a market in Archbliss for it. Additionally, many locations within the city will accept a trade in spell slots put into their siphon. The energy required will vary based on the service being asked for (a handful of repeated cantrip castings for a meal, while a 1st or 2nd level spell slot will typically cover the cost of lodging), but it allows many locations to provide services without putting a strain on the city's energy reservoir.

ARCHBLISS TODAY

While Archbliss still remains isolationist in many respects (particularly when it comes to remaining a neutral party in matters of large-scale conflict), they have been making overtures to other entities over the past century. From powerful cities like Ironfire, to long-standing organizations like the Silver Wraiths, Archbliss ensures there are open lines of communication should they be required.

Archbliss has won a great deal of friends in high places by offering the services of the city's acolytes as a gesture of goodwill. Whether it's as advisors on matters magical, or to provide aid in dire situations, the City of the Sorcerers does its best to at least appear open-handed with its support. Just as in the tales of old, however, there must always be some form of compensation. Every bargain has its price, as they say.

Those who wish to trade with Archbliss often bring their goods to the plains below the city. Even those who have business with city officials (such as those who seek to present themselves for training as burgeoning sorcerers, or to offer their services to Archbliss as a whole) will usually meet with officials on the ground level before being transported to the city above.

Gaining access to Archbliss itself is often

a matter of cost more than anything else, these days. While those with pressing official business (as well as citizens of the city) may be allowed to use the city's teleportation circles, visitors will often seek out alternative means of transportation. The plain is littered with teamsters that command exotic mounts, ranging from manticores, to wyverns, to winged horses, and these beasts can often make dozens of flights a day to bring travelers up to the city itself. Some even boast saddlebags of holding, allowing travelers to bring their gear with them for an extra fee.

No matter how many goods (and people) enter Archbliss, however, it sometimes seems like nothing much leaves the city except for trinkets and stories. There are always rumors of everything from potent grimoires to weapons of legend being removed from the city's vaults in exchange for some dire promise or terrible cost, but there are those who wonder if those are just more whispers meant to draw people to the city so they can leave whatever items of value behind when they eventually descend once again.

THE PERPETUAL PEERS

While sorcerers are more common in Archbliss than anywhere else in the world, there are sorcerers and then there are sorcerers. Those who are born to the bloodlines of the Great Houses, or who are accepted into their fold as sworn members, tend to be among the most prosperous and powerful members of the city.

And it is traditionally from this population that the Peers are drawn.

Each of the Peers who sit on the Perpetual Council speaks for their House, and symbolically for the school of magic that House is dedicated to. It is the Peers who weigh in on the weighty matters of governance, and who decide the laws of the city. It is also the Peers who appoint representatives

to Archbliss's government bodies, and who are privy to the full breadth of the city's vaults, as well as of information that is typically kept hidden from the public.

THE SECRET OF ARCHBLISS: THE WELL OF MAGIC RUNS LOW

There is a secret the Peers have kept hidden not just from the world below, but from nearly everyone in Archbliss itself; the city is closer to falling out of the sky than anyone could possibly guess. For while the veins of sorcerer's quartz that run through the city's foundations are as strong today as they have ever been, there is barely enough power being poured into them to keep the city running.

The problems that led to this state are legion. As the world below grew and changed, sorcerers were welcomed in more places than previously, which meant Archbliss had fewer newcomers to the city. While many pairings among the Great Houses did produce sorcerous offspring, nothing was guaranteed, and the city hasn't replaced its numbers over the long centuries. Not only that, but when Archbliss was first established the power stored within the sorcerer's quartz was only used for large rituals, and for energy-intensive needs; it was assumed the day-to-day requirements would be handled by the population casting their own spells. As time went on, though, the well was tapped for more and more everyday necessities and magical luxuries. Today it's used for conjuring food, creating water, creating entertainment and nearly every other aspect of daily life in Archbliss. This strain was, in truth, the reason the city ceased its movement so long ago; it takes far less power to remain floating yet anchored in place than it does to fly across the world.

The two biggest issues exacerbating this problem, though, is the secrecy of the Peers, and the hoarding of resources and

energies by the Great Houses.

In order to maintain a facade of strength and power, the Perpetual Council has come up with alternative explanations for nearly every action taken to ration the energy within the city's grid. Not only that, but they often allow extravagant displays to happen in order to impress visitors and assuage the suspicions of the city's populace. Making matters worse, the Great Houses (which could make serious progress if they worked together the way the sorcerers of old did) have grown selfish and insular. They keep their power close, often tapping into the grid rather than using their own spells even for mundane requirements. Each expects the others to contribute, with each House falsely believing they are the only ones siphoning more energy out of the city than they're contributing.

The desperation of this situation has pushed many of the Peers (as well as their closest advisors) to sponsor several secretive projects over the years to try to recharge the city without sacrificing their own energies to do so.

Some of these measures are relatively benign, such as attempting to capture lightning bolts from the surrounding skies, or creating social mores among the common citizens that leads them to expend their energies into the crystalline reservoir as a measure of pride or proof of their own power. Others are rather more sinister, such as arresting those with spellcasting abilities for minor infractions, and putting them in cells that leach away their stored energy as long as they're inside, or attempting to instill sorcerous power into average people via arcane experiments that lead to monstrous results far more often than they do to creating a newly-minted sorcerer. It's even rumored that refugees from Moüd were conscripted to duplicate the rite that punched a hole into the Prim, drilling into an inexhaustible well of power (albeit on a far smaller scale than the rite

that doomed the City of Bones).

This desperate need for power and energy is the reason Archbliss has allowed in so many non-sorcerer spellcasters over the past several decades. However, the city's culture of only allowing those with sorcerous bloodlines to rise to positions of power, ensuring wizards, witches, clerics and others remain firmly in the lower class, camouflages this need as a kind of back-handed charity. How much longer the illusion of prosperity will last, and how much more extreme the measures taken by the Peers might become if it is threatened, are questions better not contemplated.

GAZETTEER

The following is a district-by-district breakdown of Archbliss. Each entry contains places of interest within each district, as well as notable NPCs players are likely to come across if they spend any amount of time in a particular part of the city. Additionally, each entry has rumors you can use to create side quests, or to act as fodder for your own stories within the City of the Sorcerers!

SUNRISE WAY

Gates of burnished bronze worked with fanciful patterns of silver open onto a golden road winding through the district. It seems like every surface in Sunrise Way gleams, and nothing is ever truly permanent. Benches that appear to be made of stone run like melting wax to assume new shapes, windows become lattices to allow in fresh breezes and fountains may move or change to become different scenes in their entirety. The residents seem to take the mutable nature of their home in stride, and many of them seem to change their flesh as easily as others might change their clothes.

One of the most impressive entrances into

Archbliss is found in Sunrise Way. The gate was supposedly one of the first things formed by Trixus, the original Peer of transmutation. Perhaps the most common place for pilgrims and travelers to enter through, Sunrise Way leaves many visitors awed and humbled at the enduring majesty (and majestic strangeness) of how magic re-writes the rules of what one might consider normal.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Street of Gold:** The road that leads through Sunrise Way to the heart of Archbliss itself, the Street of Gold is another relic from the founding of the city. It's said Trixus formed the initial bricks with a gesture and a breath, taking every base substance that could be found and turning it to a brick of this pure, noble material. Though nearly every brick in the road has been replaced over the long years, this is always done by a member of House Altarius; often as a final test of power and skill before an acolyte is granted full standing as a member of the House.
- **The Brimming Court:** A large plaza in the southern part of the district, the Brimming Court is filled with strange, metallic arches, and free-standing panes of crystal. The stones of the plaza shift underfoot, often changing color or glowing with light of varying hues when someone steps on them. Those who walk beneath the arches find that their voices change, or that their hair, clothes, skin or eyes take on fanciful changes and appearances. The changes tend to be temporary, but there are more than a few travelers who leave the city with "a kiss from the Court" in the form of changes that last for months... or even years, in some cases.
- **Rainbow's End:** Located around an oddly-shaped courtyard in the western part of the district, Rainbow's End is a place where people go to find their true selves, and to embrace change.

Residents come in a variety of shapes and species, many of whom have been altered, augmented or otherwise transformed by magic. Shapeshifters are at home here, and from women with silver skin and glowing eyes, to dogs that walk upright and bark in the tongues of man, Rainbow's End can feel like one is walking through a dream rather than a place firmly in the material world.

many years ago. Though he's repaired foundations with his magic, and helped restore some semblance of order when things occasionally go awry in the district, there's a kind of resignation to his work. As if Tash knows he'll never rise any higher in his profession, barring some truly unexpected change that imbues him with a sorcerous bloodline.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Vieren Vaughn:** Colorful even by the standards of gnomes, Vieren is constantly shifting in hair color, eye color, skin tone and voice pitch. A regular fixture in the Brimming Court, Vieren seems to be attempting to understand the patterns of the seemingly random effects created by the arches and crystals in this strange place. Usually willing to share whatever insights they have, Vieren comes across as more than a little obsessive on the matter of the Court, and what it was meant to do.
- **Ran Houndstooth:** With his long muzzle and drooping ears, it's clear that Ran was a bloodhound in his former life... and in many respects, he still is. Though he walks upright now, and he wears an oft-patched robe of many colors and fabrics, he still has a nose that can scent danger from halfway across the city. Always happy to meet new friends, and to act as a guide around his neighborhood, Ran doesn't like troublemakers. He especially doesn't care for those who bear the badge of the Black Tower, and they're some of the only people in the city he'll growl at.
- **Tash Horwen:** An old man with a bald head and a thick beard, Tash always seems to have a smile for those who cross his path. Dressed in the coppery robes of a mid-level public servant of Archbliss, he spends most of his days pointing his wand along the Street of Gold, polishing and repairing it with a spell he learned as a wizard's apprentice

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- It's said that the Brimming Court is more than just a place for amusement and diversion; some people believe that if someone exposes themselves to the proper effects in the correct order at the right time that it will infuse them with energy, and transform them into a sorcerer. Whether it's supposed to awaken a latent heritage, or instill magic into the blood, there are several different theories about how the process supposedly works. Most say it's just a flight of fancy, but with some of the unusual effects that have been reported by those who've passed beneath the arches, it's far from impossible that this could be true.
- Though the Street of Gold bears thousands of names on its bricks, it's said there remains a single brick that was originally placed there by Trixus in the early days of the city. This brick moves to a new location with every sunrise, however, following a pattern none but the original Peer of House Altarius can fathom. If one can find the brick, and unlock the puzzle engraved on it, it's said they will find a key placed inside it by Trixus. What the key goes to, or why Trixus felt the need to hide it in such a place, are matters of great debate.
- Most who walk into Rainbow's End come out changed, which makes it rather difficult to keep track of whose path takes them through that particular neighborhood. There are whispers that visitors from outside the city who come to Archbliss to remake themselves slip

through the cracks behind closed doors, vanishing into the shadows cast by the bright lights of this neighborhood. Who would take them, and for what purpose, is a subject rarely discussed in public, however. The ears of the Black Tower are always too close for comfort, and no one wants to be the next person who vanishes into thin air.

GLASSWOOD

A gleaming district of spires and stone, the air in Glasswood feels positively charged with violent potential; like the electricity in the air before a storm. Spark lights shine in most windows, and bright banners fly from shops and homes alike to declare loyalties. Standing in neat rows along most streets are the crystal spires Glasswood is named for. These stalagmites of sorcerer's quartz shimmer and glow, drinking in the errant discharges and wayward spells that tend to fly from a district known for evocation.

The seat of House Torrent, Glasswood is widely regarded as one of the more dangerous sections of Archbliss, if for no other reason than the amount of destructive potential possessed by average residents there. Most agree that if Glasswood wasn't filled with so many nodes of sorcerer's quartz, which conduct discharges straight into the well of power beneath the city, it's likely that the district would have been destroyed a dozen times over by now.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Glass Spire:** Located near the heart of the city itself, the Glass Spire is supposedly where the ritual was conducted that raised Archbliss into the sky so many centuries ago. Even now, all these years later, the air

around the Spire seems to hum with power. It's a humbling sight, even for the most gifted magic users, and it is often thought of as a place of pilgrimage for sorcerers who don't reside in Archbliss who want to gaze upon what can be done with their gifts if they're properly applied.

- **The Arcanum:** Located in the southern part of Glasswood, this center of learning has trained sorcerers to control their talents for well over a thousand years now. With sweeping staircases, high-ceilinged halls and a huge practice yard, there is a weight of tradition and history that's almost palpable in the stones of this institution. And for those who are sensitive to the residue of magic, the Arcanum is saturated in echoes of the past; overlapping signatures on its walls from hundreds of generations of students who came before.
- **The Lightning House:** A tower built in the heart of the district, the Lightning House is a kind of hostel for those seeking the favor of House Torrent. Though never unoccupied, the number of non-sorcerers who call this place home has grown over the years... perhaps more than anywhere else in the city. Though even here, those whose power flows in their blood will always be given preference over those who rely on other means to master their magic.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Eranor Irons:** With a heavy, professional beard and a bald head that's just starting to show his first age spots, this dwarf has tutored half a dozen generations of sorcerers in the fine arts of overwhelming force. Always surrounded by a breeze, even in rooms that are closed to the elements, Eranor's voice is far larger and deeper than even his impressive chest should account for; a clue to the storm that boils in his veins.
- **Thuvia Glass:** The mistress of the Lightning House, Thuvia has held her

current position for nearly two centuries. An elven woman with limbs that are a little too long, and dark eyes that are entirely black, she has the air of a particularly large spider. A friendly, pleasant spider, as many of her charges admit, but a spider nonetheless. Though the Lightning House has a staff these days, most of the chores still seem to do themselves when no one is looking... and no matter how many times someone asks, Thuvia won't disclose precisely how that happens.

- **Jentari Cloudwalker:** Barely three feet tall, with a head full of frizzy hair, Jentari is one of several "glass lighters" employed by the district. Regularly checking the fingers of sorcerer's quartz that fill the district, it's far from uncommon to see Jentari singing to the stones until they glow brightly with the inherent magic of her song. Far from the only bard to take up this role in the city, many nights it can feel like there's a concert going on in the district's streets once the sun goes down, and the glasses need to be lit.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- An unusual construction is being built atop the Lightning House. This collection of massive metal rods makes the tower look like it's wearing a crown, and it tends to draw even more strikes from the stormy skies than was previously the case. Every time it happens the veins of sorcerer's quartz running through the structure glow brightly, before subsiding several minutes later. While some think nothing of it, seeing the crown as simply a protective measure to safeguard one of the tallest buildings in the entire district, others suggest the Lightning House has been turned into a conductor for some other purpose.
- The Arcanum still has students in it, but the halls that were made for hundreds of students barely contain two dozen

most years. While some say that's because more sorcerers come to the city with full command of their powers, and a majority of those born to the Great Houses are tutored by those around them as they grow up, others are worrying that the emptiness of the university is a dire portent of the future of the city itself. Some have even discussed expanding the curriculum to allow wizards and other traditions of spellcaster to fill the classes, but it's proven a divisive subject in both the district and the city.

- It's considered good luck to "charge" the crystals all throughout Glasswood. Much like throwing a coin into a wishing well, firing cantrips and similarly low-powered spells at the crystals is said to bring good fortune to those who do it. This tradition has become fairly common over the past several decades, and it's a favorite among younger sorcerers who are just starting to come into their magic. No one can quite remember why this tradition started in the first place, though, but there are several spirited debates about the purpose it probably served when it first began.

SAMEN'S WAY

Dragons fly through the skies on pearlescent wings, belching forth flames that leave no mark on the surrounding buildings. Beautiful dancers flicker in and out of walls like phantoms and music seems to erupt out of thin air. Entire plays are performed by actors who float a dozen feet off the ground, and mythical battles are re-enacted in brutal, visceral details, only to vanish as soon as the story draws to a close. It's impossible to tell what is real and what isn't when one enters Samen's Way... but that's all part of the experience one comes to the district for in the first place!

The seat of House Samen, this district of the city is famed for the bizarre entertain-

ment it boasts, and the impossible illusions that can amaze even those who are jaded to the constant presence of powerful magic. Samen's Way boasts perhaps the largest number of visitors to Archbliss, and it's been said that on the nights of some of the larger festivals half the population of the city makes its way into this southern stretch.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Respite:** A collection of inns, shops, parks and shaded lounging areas to the south of the city beyond the wall, the Respite is where a number of travelers who come to Archbliss to see the sights stay. Originally a place for those who'd had enough of the illusions so common throughout the district, the more flamboyant spells that are commonly seen in Samen's Way are banned in this place. It's a haven where people can trust their senses... at least until they walk back into the rest of the district.
- **The Court of Lights:** A large plaza on the border of Samen's Way and Glasswood, the Court of Lights is where some of the city's greatest illusory performances have taken place over the years. From conducting ghostly orchestras, to re-creations of the deeds of the sorcerers who first raised Archbliss into the sky, there are shows of light and wonder that have never been seen anywhere else. Even the acolytes of House Samen, who come to prove their mastery over the sound and thunder of illusion, can leave audiences howling for more.
- **The Lost Ways:** A difficult-to-find set of alleyways hidden by illusory walls and curtains of shadows, the Lost Ways is the dark side of illusion's typically bright and cheery face. Filled with those who weave filaments of dangerous darkness into their magic, none of the illusions found in the Lost Ways are harmless. Not only that, but if the rumors about

what lurks down these hidden alleys are to be believed, many of them can be downright lethal.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Nierena Gilded Eye:** The gatekeeper at the border between the Respite and the rest of the district, Nierena is an impressive sight to say the least. With skin the color of burnished bronze, she stands a head taller than most men. With a soft voice that seems to travel further than it should, her left eye is a bright, emerald green. Her right eye has been replaced with an engraved silver sphere bearing strange glyphs that seems to rotate when she grows irritated. It's said that this eye allows her to see through all but the most subtle (or powerful) of glamours.
- **Laranna Dandra:** With flowing hair that changes color like an indecisive rainbow, and a voice that rings like silver bells, Laranna has a good deal of elven blood in her veins. One of the regular "conductors" at the Court of Lights, her shows are chaotic and bombastic, reveling in color and sound rather than illusions which tell carefully conceived stories or accurate narratives of the past. While there are plenty of traditionalists who turn up their noses at her style, she draws crowds not just from around the city, but throughout the entire region when she steps up to the stand.
- **Tarrak Shadowborn:** A long, lean man with a noted orc heritage, Tarrak's skin is a stony, pebbled gray. His eyes are entirely black and his shadow seems to be darker than it should be... it also has a tendency of moving of its own accord, which can be more than a little unsettling. Soft-spoken and polite, Tarrak nevertheless has a fearsome reputation throughout the district, and there are dozens of particularly nasty rumors that dog his heels. None seem to know precisely where the line between specula-

tion and the truth is, though, and Tarrak has no interest in clarifying even if someone is bold enough to ask him to.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- It seems like there's always events of one stripe or another in the Court of Lights, but those who watch the trends in the district have remarked that many of the shows have been smaller and more intimate of late. Not only that, but the latest trend seems to be incorporating teams of spellcasters, rather than allowing the creative vision and talent of one person to define the show. Some are suggesting the entertainment is too much of a drain on the city's resources, but whenever those rumors get too loud is when another of the extravaganzas is scheduled. Is the speculation just tiresome worrying, or is there something more to why fewer and fewer illusionists tap into the city's sorcerer's quartz to fuel their shows?
- The Lost Ways has always been something of an open secret in the district, but it seems to be drawing more attention than ever before these days. Some are suggesting that the more dangerous operators in the community have been given a free hand by the Peers, as long as they utilize their skills on behalf of the city's rulers when called upon to do so. Several people consider this laughable, but there are others who take it quite seriously. After all, making the impossible happen with nothing but smoke and whispers is illusion's stock in trade.
- Though it's currently seen as something of a low-rent place to house visitors, there are rumored to be hidden theaters all throughout the Respite. These places

were originally used by those attempting complicated illusions, and they're carefully warded in order to protect one's privacy. They were forgotten over time, but it's said that if someone can stumble across these hidden places, they may find illusory tutors left by the city's oldest sorcerers who will teach them lessons no one living today even remembers.

SPIRIT TOWER

Filled with monuments of gray stone and wide walkways, this district has the feeling of a memorial park. Mausoleums and crypts hold the remains of Archbliss's ancestors here, and they are watched over by the servants and acolytes of House Calvaria. Always colder than the rest of the city, Spirit Tower is a sanctuary for those who have been touched by death... in one way or another.



Dedicated to the art and preservation of necromancy, Spirit Tower was built as a reminder that for all the mastery of the arcane Archbliss may boast, death always waits. While death can be circumvented, and even cheated, House Calvaria reminds those beneath its wings that death is still to be respected. As soon as someone starts to think they have become death's master, that's when it will lay them low.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Crypt:** A huge stone edifice surrounding a central courtyard, the Crypt is a traditional gathering place for members of House Calvaria to come together to discuss their affairs. From complex rituals, to induction of new members into the Great House, it is said that

whatever happens within the Crypt stays within the Crypt.

- **Dead Town:** A large neighborhood in the southwest part of the district, Dead Town was first established to house sorcerers who drew their powers from bloodlines associated with death and the undead. The neighborhood also became a haven for sentient undead creatures who sought a place they could live their lives (or unlives, as they case might be). Today it boasts one of the largest populations of half-deads outside of Moüd itself.
- **The Obelisk:** Raised at the center of the district's two major crossroads, this large monument radiates a bone-deep chill. Initially formed by a sorcerer recorded in the annals of the city as the Mummified Queen, the stone is carved from tip to base with a slew of strange symbols and unusual pictograms. It often draws a crowd of the curious, but few can bask in the aura for long before feeling the need to move on and seek warmth.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Belarius Caul:** A huge man with a heavy influence of orc ancestry in his features, Belarius's pallid skin and dark veins clearly mark him as a blackblood. Slow of speech, though quick of wits, the sorcerer is one of the better-known residents of Dead Town when it comes to spellcasters who operate outside the sanction and membership of one of the Great Houses. His relationship with House Calvaria is a fraught one, and it's a subject he prefers not to speak about.
- **Rafesh Nightbloom:** Dark-skinned and white-eyed, with a head of thick, pale hair, Rafesh is barely three feet tall in their bare feet. Those who stand

near the halfling, though, can feel the aura of power (and the air of authority) that radiates from them. The majordomo of the Crypt, Rafesh often acts as the leader of ceremonial rites, as well as the holder of the keys for those who need to access the vaults beneath the Crypt itself.

- **Erium Longfoot:** A woman whose elven blood comes out in her lavender eyes and blue hair more than in the curve of her ears, Erium has been studying the architecture and monuments of Spirit Tower for more than a decade now. A collector of stories and histories, she knows more than nearly any living person about the strange secrets and hidden places that lurk within Spirit Tower. And in the rare event she doesn't know where something might be found, chances are good she knows someone who does.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- The Obelisk is one of the city's oldest standing monuments, but for centuries rumors have swirled suggesting that it's far more than meets the eye. Some say the lost language carved into it is a message from the past that's been lost over the years, but others scoff at the idea of a language being lost in Archbliss. Instead, they suggest that the Obelisk is a riddle meant to test the wisdom, skill and power of those sorcerers who would come after it was raised. Even among those who believe the Obelisk is a riddle none can agree what solving it will unlock, though each suggestion is more fanciful than the last.
- The Crypt is usually thought of as little more than a ceremonial location by the district's residents, but there are others who suggest the old rituals from the earliest days of the city still endure.



From potent rites that resurrect the soul of the dead instead of just the body, to spell workings that can instill the power of death into the blood of a non-sorcerer, there's always dark tales surrounding what may or may not go on in the shadows of that place.

- It's far from unusual to see undead servants on the streets of Spirit Tower, as they were once used to clean the streets, haul burdens and perform all the daily labors the early necromancers didn't wish to burden themselves with. There are fewer of the undead in the district now than there have been for centuries, though. While the official reason is that it's to make a better impression on visitors to the city, as well as to make living room for sentient citizens, there are some who suspect the true reason for this is the amount of energy it took to create and maintain the labor of the animate dead was putting too great a strain on the city's veins of sorcerer's quartz.

NORTH GATE

At a glance, the streets of North Gate seem remarkably unremarkable when compared to the rest of Archbliss. The corners are straight, the stones are perfectly laid, and while there are banners and flags, fountains and parks, it has the look of a painting. The longer one looks, though, the more they realize that North Gate is just a little too perfect. Like a shop window kept pristine as the years roll by, North Gate's unchanging nature is what makes it stand out from the rest of the city.

Considered the back door of Archbliss, North Gate is akin to the city's tradesman's entrance. The seat of House Lethane, the abjurers of this district do not officially control the organization and agents of the Black Tower. However, with so many members of the House among the ranks of city's chosen enforcers, the Tower is Lethan's left hand in all the ways that truly matter.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Black Tower:** Formed from volcanic glass, the tower rears up from just inside the wall at the edge of North Gate. Visible from nearly anywhere in the city, this place is the central headquarters of the black-garbed Watchers. While the Tower is beautiful in a hard, brutal sort of way, the implicit threat it represents means that those who come to North Gate tend to remain on their best behavior so as to avoid the attention of the city's guard.
- **The Vaults:** Located in the northern part of the district, the Vaults were originally a place used to house sorcerers who were considered a danger to themselves and others due to their lack of control over their abilities. The Vaults would absorb wayward magical discharges, and help siphon off excess power until the sorcerer could control themselves, at which point they could safely be allowed to continue their studies at the Arcanum. Forged from a marriage of sorcerer's quartz and black glass, layered with wards and protections, the area is now used as holding cells for spellcasters who've been taken into custody, or for magic items that are too dangerous or unstable to be housed in alternative facilities.
- **Wardstone:** A wide plaza in the eastern part of the district, Wardstone is not a place of leisure no matter how scenic it might appear at first glance. The smooth stones worked with intricate enchantments are a place where sorcerers come to solve their differences without any outside involvement. While duels of magic are still fought there from time to time, Wardstone is more commonly used as a training ground these days; particularly for the elite members of the Black Tower who specialize in apprehending targets capable of using magic, and who need a safe, controlled location to hone their skills to a razor's edge.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Nasha Vore:** Long and languid, with her perpetually half-lidded eyes and her hair shorn on one side of her head, Nasha is one of the quietest sorcerers most have ever seen. Those who watch this gate guard long enough, though, notice that good fortune seems to have a permanent place on her shoulder. Spilled food never falls on her clothes, rain almost never touches her and from arrows to lightning bolts, everything seems to veer away from her at the very last moment. It's given her a rather laid-back attitude, making her unworried and unhurried as she executes her duties.
- **Arazani Marsh:** Sallow-skinned and gimlet-eyed, Arazani has spent years earning her place in the Black Tower. Perhaps the only witch allowed to wear one of the Tower's black badges on her chest, she's made her share of enemies throughout the city; some for the things she's done, others for simply being who and what she is. The little yellow songbird that often rides on the brim of her hat seems harmless enough, but there are few creatures in Archbliss that spark as much fear. Because where that familiar goes, the Marsh Witch cannot be far away.
- **Verdura Flick:** Wide-hipped and broad-chested, Verdura runs the Potent Potables potion shop with her halfling husband Ganner Flick. Born with a unique resistance to magic even over and above what one would expect from a dwarven woman, Verdura brews small batch potions while Ganner carves and enchants bespoke wands. Considered community figures after so many years living and working in the district, their services are more often sought by visitors and guests to Archbliss than by residents.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- It's said there are midnight duels going on at Wardstone. The participants wear masks and plain robes, concealing their identities from onlookers who might stumble upon the duel. Why these mysterious figures would take such precautions is a matter of speculation, and which faces lurk beneath the cowls and masks are a hotly debated part of this rumor. There are some, though, who scoff at this rumor. Even in a place like Archbliss, it sounds too fanciful to have more than a grain or two of truth to it.
- The Vaults are being used far more often than most suspect, and for reasons beyond maintaining the safety of the city. If one listens very carefully to the whisper stream, it's said that the Black Tower is far more interested in keeping the cells full than they are in either protecting the populace or in serving justice. While reasons for why so many individuals would be thrown in these cells range from political maneuvering to retribution for actions taken against the Watchers, no one is willing to speculate too loudly lest they find themselves in a cell of their own.
- There's rumors the little black book Verdura Flick keeps locked up in her shop contains the secret orders of some of the city's most powerful figures. Potions and wands are tools for hedge wizards and commoners, or so the culture among many of the Great Houses dictates, and it would be something of a scandal if it came to light that members of the city's elite were relying on these baser tools to fulfill their needs. The Flicks, of course, insist there is no such book. Rather than laying the rumors to rest, though, it just makes them burn that much hotter.

WINTER GATE

Surrounding Castle Archbliss itself, enfolding it like a protective embrace, Winter

Gate looks like something out of a fairy story one would tell a child. Filled with glimmering towers and fanciful bridges, the district often feels far larger than it is to those trying to find their way through it. The streets seems to loop back on themselves, the glamours and charms leaving people confused and unsure of how they found themselves where they are. A place that twists perspective and perception, the enchanted quarter is unsettling to those who are used to being able to trust their own hearts and minds.

Perhaps the smallest district in the City of the Sorcerers, Winter Gate is the demesne of House Mitharian. While enchantment is not as outwardly flashy as many other forms of magic, those who can speak with its voice are respected and feared in equal measure in Archbliss. This is, in no small part, because of all the sorcerers in the city, those blessed with bloodlines of enchantment tend to come from the oldest wellsprings of power.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Dragon's Den:** Found in the northwest corner of the district, there is no sign to mark the Dragon's Den. In fact, the door itself is hard to even notice for those who don't know what they're looking for (or who aren't strong-willed enough to resist the compulsion to ignore the entrance). Inside the Den is a beautiful, high-ceilinged place filled with heady smoke, and the crooning voices of incomparable singers. An elite club even in a place like Archbliss, there are few in the city who can claim they will always be welcome there.
- **Charmer's Way:** A small, shady side street, this picturesque parkway is rumored to be a place one

can acquire all kinds of strange charms and unusual enchantments... if they're willing to pay the price for them, that is. Whether one seeks the courage they can't find within themselves, to speak with a silver tongue or to forget painful things they'd rather not remember, these small miracles can be found behind the rather plain-looking storefronts.

- **The Cottage:** Difficult to find even for those who know where it is, the Cottage was the home of the powerful sorcerer Saruil. Her gifts were said to be so strong that her words could sway the very stones beneath her feet, and that even the strongest mind was clay to be molded in her hands. The Cottage sits alone, surrounded by magics that cause those who see it to forget it, and for those who know where it is to be unable to speak of it outside its walls. It is a place where the powerful of House Mitharian come to settle their affairs, it's also been used as a safe house for those under the protection of this Great House.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Kano Phan:** A huge man with a heavy belly and thick hands, Kano has a magnetic air to him that makes people like him almost despite themselves. A regular patron of the Dragon's Den, Kano is a connoisseur of sensory indulgence. From food, to song, to beautiful company, exotic wines and unusual substances, it's said there are few lines that remain uncrossed when it comes to his desire to experience every state of mind he possibly can.

- **Hestevia Crowne:** With a sleek head, perfectly-groomed plumage and an almost regal bearing, Hestevia is difficult to miss. The aarakocra is the official herald of



House Mitharian, and her words carry the weight of her office in addition to the potent charge of her magic. Friendly, and with a love of beautiful stones and shining silver, Hestevia has many friends throughout the district despite the rather fearful position she holds within the Great House.

- **Dagomar:** A working-class enchanter, Dagomar's leathery green skin and uncouth speech makes the orc stand out in a district that is so concerned with beauty, poise and elegance. Despite being a wizard rather than a sorcerer born to a bloodline, Dagomar is often regarded as one of the more talented spellcasters in the district when it comes to geases, bindings and other forms of compulsions... both putting them in place, as well as breaking someone of their effects. For those who cannot gain an audience with members of House Mitharian, Dagomar's door is often where they turn next.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- No one is certain where Hestevia's magic originates, but many believe it runs far deeper than she shows. Even her feathers hold a tiny portion of her power, and it's said that if one of them is used as a quill to pen an enchantment scroll it will add extra potency to the spell. No one is sure who started this particular rumor, but there are at least a few people who are sure it was Hestevia herself having a bit of a laugh at what people will and won't believe.
- Common wisdom is to always be polite and courteous to those one meets in Winter Gate, as the district is built on the ancient laws of hospitality as much as it is on stone. Debts must be balanced, and promises kept lest they bring down dire consequences. Those who understand the nature of certain bloodlines, particularly those connected to fey creatures, know there may be some basis for this belief. However, the

superstition has grown so commonplace that everything from engagement vows to business agreements are made in the district in an attempt to invoke the power of a pact. Of course, as with a great deal of enchantment, belief can go a very long way toward reality.

- There are always salacious rumors about the private practices of the members of House Mitharian. While the House of Enchantment retains much of the power it's held for centuries, it's said their bloodlines are particularly hard to pass on to children. As such, there are always new techniques, spells, potions and other "aids" used to try to ensure that any offspring carry not only a parent's smooth features or haunting eyes, but also the power that beats in their blood.

EAST DISTRICT

Wide-open boulevards seem inviting, and strange creatures are commonplace as they flit here and there on the bidding of their masters. Citizens ride atop floating discs as often as they do bizarre beasts of burden, and the place looks almost like the woodcuts of storybooks told about the ancient days of the City of The Sorcerers. There is a tinge of something in the air, though; a raw scent that says the barriers between worlds are thinner here than anywhere else in Archbliss.

The district dedicated to conjuration, the East District is the first part of the city those who enter Archbliss through the dedicated teleportation gates see. Kept lush and clean, wearing its magic on its sleeve, the conjurers of House Navari have created something akin to a paradise... or so it seems, at least.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **The Arches:** Located in the western part of the district, this wide plaza contains the twin gates that allow goods

and people to be teleported from the city to the ground below. Once constantly active to provide a permanent doorway between Archbliss and the community beneath it, the gates are now opened on a set schedule by teams of sorcerers from the district's Great House.

- **The Menagerie:** The large eastern clearing in this district was set down by the original sorcerers of House Navari as a proving ground for those who wished to show they had mastered the subtle arts of summoning and binding. Strange beasts from across Sundara are kept in this bizarre zoo, and it's even possible to catch a glimpse of impossible creatures drawn from the Prim if one arrives on the right day. The Menagerie is one of the most popular places for visitors to the city to take a stroll through, and there are always merchants, vendors and performers clinging to the edges hoping to draw some of the crowd's attention.
- **Feng's Familiars:** Found near the eastern wall of the district this gilt-edged shop deals in bizarre and unusual companions for the discerning sorcerer. While snow ravens, shadow owls and golden weasels are common enough offerings in the shop, Feng's can also locate more exotic companion creatures should a client have a particular need. The cost to do so will always be higher, of course, but that is the price that comes with needing something that is more difficult to acquire.



away when she speaks. One of the gate wrights of the Arches, her position requires a great deal of personal strength and focused willpower... especially since the Arches (and the instant transmission they offer the city) are more important now than they've ever been before.

- **Rory "Roarin" Traskar:** A halfling man with an impressive scar up one side of his round face, the smiling, leather-clad ranger has been a groundskeeper in the Menagerie for several years now. One of hundreds of visitors to the city who'd come to see the sights, Rory was present when a griffon managed to escape its cage. Using quick thinking, a length of rope and all the lessons he'd learned breaking riding birds back home, he managed to wear the creature out. Officially granted his position soon after by representatives of House Navari, Rory has an almost child-like love of all the creatures under his care. Not only that, but he seems to have a genuine rapport with even the deadliest of the beasts.
- **Alistair "Lefty" Rockhammer:** A shifty dwarven man with a drooping mustache and a round, hard-top hat, Alistair lost his left hand, replacing it with a uniquely crafted hook. Though rejected by House Navari as a squire (the highest rank the Great Houses allow a wizard to hold among them), he's found others in the city who are more than happy to avail themselves of his dubious talents. Often accompanied by the green, acid-spitting rabbit Citrine, Alistair is never difficult to find even in a district noted for its colorful characters and eccentric personalities.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Alessa Starwinds:** With hair like the night sky and eyes that shine like moonsilver, Alessa's voice always seems to come from somewhere far

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- The Arches usually run on a tight schedule, but exceptions can be made for the

needs of the city and those who wield the authority of the Peers. Recently, however, the gates have been used more and more often for unexpected jaunts. Not only that, but it seems the people arriving in or leaving Archbliss are not coming from the plains below. This has speculation buzzing about whether the old networks of sending stones and gates that had been largely forgotten in centuries past are being re-discovered and re-activated. Like all good rumors there are plenty of individuals who are certain these jaunts represent something else entirely, and it seems everyone has their own angle on the conversation.

- Feng's is always a reliable shop, but if you believe the rumors it's been branching out beyond companion animals under-the-table. For those who need unusual spell components, and who don't want to answer a bunch of questions, it's said Feng can provide... as long as, in return, you don't ask how the shop managed to lay hands on the components in question. From Roc feathers, to gorgon scales, to wyvern venom, to pixie skulls, if you've got a need, then Feng's can help you fill it for the right cost.
- It's been said the Menagerie is undergoing some serious changes, and that something new is going to be added to the displays in the very near future. What that might be, or how it's going to be brought in, is currently a mystery. Still, that hasn't stopped people from putting their own ideas forth as to what is going to be coming to the district, and arguing back and forth over whether the suggested creatures even exist outside of old grimoires and half-remembered legends.

CASTLE ARCHBLISS

A fanciful construction of soaring buttresses and high towers, Castle Archbliss was formed from raw will, and the stuff of the

Prim. Even now, millennia after its construction, every stone in the entire castle radiates magic as if the spells binding it in place were laid down mere days ago. The seat of power of the entire city, Castle Archbliss is where the Peers meet in conclave, and where the future of the City of the Sorcerers is charted.

A symbol of the cooperation and power of the sorcerers who first raised Archbliss above the clouds, the castle that bears the city's namesake is the closest thing Archbliss has to a holy site. Currently the seat of power for House Territus, whose oracles and diviners can glimpse the skeins of the future, these far seers have governed the city's efforts for several centuries now.

NOTEWORTHY LOCATIONS

- **Stargazer's Tower:** The highest tower in the castle, Stargazer's Tower boasts several arcane devices, gazing lenses and orreries to track the movements of the stars and planets. Initially established by Jensen Far Seer, whom legends say was the first of the city's great sorcerers to arrive at the spot the city rose from, the tower has traditionally been a place where House Territus conducts the more complicated rites and rituals to see into all the possibilities that the future holds.
- **The Eight Arches:** Kept in the eastern yard outside Castle Archbliss, these slender, glimmering arches are arrayed like a compass rose, stemming outward from a single point. The area is off-limits to everyone, and may only be accessed with permission from a majority of the current Peers. The area shimmers with power, and the arches are far more than mere sculptures... but what purpose they were made for is known only to those with positions of authority in Archbliss.
- **Sorcerer's Court:** The meeting place for the Perpetual Council, this is one of the most heavily warded areas in

the entire city. The business conducted within this chamber requires a guarantee of absolute privacy... safety is less of a concern, though, as only a madman would attempt to threaten the Peers from each of the Great Houses gathered together in common purpose.

PERSONS OF INTEREST

- **Thuranen Guard:** While less of a person than a concept, the Thuranen Guard are the eternal watchers of Castle Archbliss. Huge figures in potent suits of enchanted armor, the Thuranen Guard never speak, never tire and they seem immune to even the most potent of magics. Identical to one another, none but the Peers even know how many of the Guard there are, or what each one's particular capabilities truly is.
- **Verrine Dubroc:** Born and raised in Archbliss, Verrine possesses a powerful gift of prophecy. Blue-lipped and green-haired, her eyes are covered with milky cataracts. That doesn't seem to stop her from seeing far more than those who lack her particular abilities, however. The castellan of Archbliss for several years now, she handles the day-to-day affairs that keep the City of the Sorcerers functioning, but which aren't important enough to be brought to the attention of the Peers.
- **Highvalin Greenhurst:** An enigmatic figure to say the least, this elven man has been a high advisor to the Peers for several centuries. While not a sorcerer himself, he has often been in council with the most magically powerful members of the city, and when he speaks even the Peers listen to what he has to say. Aloof, but polite, there is something unnerving about being in his presence. Between his slender build and big eyes, as well as his unmoving countenance, he seems more like a giant insect than an elf in his stance, manner and his regard for others.

WHISPERS AND RUMORS

- A common rumor throughout Archbliss is that the Thuranen Guard are automations bound to the will of the city's rulers. Others argue that the armor is merely ceremonial in nature, and that it is used to disguise the true identity of the sorcerers who wear it. After all, the Thuranen Guard has been seen unleashing powerful spells of their own, so there must be someone capable of casting said spells beneath the ensorcelled steel. There have been some whispers, though, which claim that a posting to the Guard is a punishment, and that the sorcerer cannot remove the armor and return to their lives until they've served out their sentence.
- There are some who believe that most of the city's truly unusual marriages (and couplings that occur outside the marital chamber) are a direct result of Highvalin Greenhurst's influence. Referred to as the Matchmaker in sardonic tones by some in the Great Houses, there are entire generations of sorcerers who have been born as a result of Greenhurst's machinations. There are even some who whisper (though not very loudly) that more goes into these conceptions than his suggestions. Admixtures, rituals and other bizarre practices have been laid at the elf's feet, though there doesn't appear to be any proof of these scandalous accusations.
- A heavier guard than normal has been placed on the Eight Gates recently, and though there's a great deal of speculation about why, no one seems to have any hard answers. Some say it's because people have been trying to sneak into the eastern yard to get a closer look at the arches... others say that it's because members of the Great Houses sought access without the Peers' approval. Why they would want to do so is anyone's guess, however.

NEW WEAPON: SPELLWARPER

Barrels of blued steel and intricately carved bone grips cannot hide the slender core of sorcerer's quartz that is the heart of this weapon. Created by a squire of House Torrent, the wizard's name has been lost to the annals of the city... if, indeed, it was ever recorded. While these weapons are regularly carried by officers of the Black Tower, they are extremely rare outside of Archbliss. It is not unheard of, adventurers being what they are, but someone who carries a spellwarper paid a dear price for it one way or another.

A spellwarper weapon emits a focused beam of force from the energies of an interior core of carefully-shaped sorcerer's quartz. Beams cannot pass through force effects such as *shield* and *wall of force*, though they can pass through *mage armor* (however, the AC bonus from *mage armor* does apply against attacks from a spellwarper weapon).

A spellwarper weapon must be charged by expending spell slots while touching the central crystal assembly (accessed by opening the weapon's housing), or by draining magic items like wands or scrolls to fill the sorcerer's quartz. An expended spell slot, scroll or charge from a wand provides a number of charges equal to the level of the spell slot used, but any left-over charges from a casting are lost as the weapon cannot absorb them. So if a spellwarper pistol had 7 charges, using a 4th level spell slot would fill the weapon to capacity, but the last level of the spell slot would simply dissipate. Opening a spellwarper weapon to charge it is considered interacting with an item, as is closing it once more.

Spellwarper weapons are manufactured using magic, and their beams are considered magical for Resistance and Immunity.

SPELLWARPER PISTOL (ONE-HANDED FIREARM)

Price: 1,000 gp; **Type:** one-handed ranged; **Proficiency:** firearms; **Damage:** 1d8 force; **Range:** 75/150 feet; **Usage:** 1 charge; **Properties:** light, semi-automatic, reload 10; **Weight:** 1 pound

SPELLWARPER RIFLE (TWO-HANDED FIREARM)

Price: 2,000 gp; **Type:** two-handed ranged; **Proficiency:** firearms; **Damage:** 2d6 force; **Range:** 120 feet; **Capacity:** 20; **Usage:** 1 charge; **Properties:** semi-automatic, two-handed, reload 20; **Weight:** 5 pounds

NEW MAGIC ITEM: COLLAR OF BINDING



Wondrous Item; Rare

DESCRIPTION

A beautiful collar, this magical item can be made of nearly any material and come in nearly any style. From supple leather collars fit for a hunting hound, to burnished copper that makes an elegant accessory for a cat, to a buttery gold chain fit for a pseudodragon. Worked with intricate runes of binding, these collars allow a familiar spirit to occupy the body of a beast.

Any character capable of casting the spell *find familiar* can use a Collar of Binding to anchor their familiar spirit into the physical form of an existing animal. Animals who

are not sentient receive no save, but magical or intelligent animals (those with an Intelligence score of 4 or higher) can resist the attempt to bind them as a host with a DC 15 Wisdom save if they are unwilling. An animal that is both intelligent and magical makes this save with Advantage. The binding happens when the collar is put on, and it is automatically undone when the collar is removed. Also, an intelligent or magical animal who was willing initially who becomes an unwilling host later may attempt to make the Wisdom save to break the connection, and expel the familiar spirit from its body.

While wearing this collar, the familiar spirit takes on the physical traits of the animal it's been bound to. Often the animal will show some sign that it is possessed, such as glowing eyes, an unusual aura or a gleam of intelligence in its gaze. The animal has all the functions of the familiar spirit (ability to communicate telepathically with its master, deliver touch spells using its Reaction, etc.), but it now has the hit points, attributes, attacks and any other relevant abilities of its host body. If the host is slain then both the animal and the familiar cease to be. The spirit cannot be re-summoned for 24 hours if this happens, though it can be re-bound to a new host at that time.

NEW BACKGROUND: SCION OF THE GREAT HOUSES

Whether born into the bloodlines, or accepted by one of Archbliss's Great Houses and inducted via their secretive ceremonies, your power has been expanded beyond that of normal sorcerers.

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana or History, Intimidation or Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: N/A

New Language: Two of your choice from any list.

Equipment: A piece of heraldry showing

your House membership, an appropriate arcane tool or instrument, a small chunk of sorcerer's quartz that acts as a flashlight when fed energy from a single cantrip casting.

FEATURE: POWER IN THE BLOOD

The Great Houses of Archbliss do not allow just any sorcerer to join their ranks. These sorcerers are known throughout the city, and even in distant lands, often accorded respect as a member of a powerful sect. Whether it's the attention and training the Great Houses lavish on their acolytes, or the rites and rituals of induction, it always seems to awaken power in a sorcerer's veins. You gain access to Spell Points at 1st level instead of 2nd level, and at second level you gain a bonus Spell Point over and above what you would normally have.

LIST OF THE GREAT HOUSES

House Lethane (Abjuration): Carefully composed and valuing preparation and defense, the blessings of House Lethane allow their sorcerers to be prepared for nearly any sort of attack that might come their way.

House Navari (Conjuration): It takes great strength of will to pull anything from the ether. House Navari long ago discovered the secrets of summoning, and their blood sings with crackling potential.

House Territus (Divination): The current first-among-equals of Archbliss, members of House Territus are often thought of as mysterious and secretive. The ability to glimpse the future with such clarity is rare, however, and leaves even other sorcerers in awe.

House Mitharian (Enchantment): Often thought of as arrogant or prideful, concerned with fashions and ceremony, House Mitharian occupied the seat now held by House Territus for centuries. They have

never forgotten either how they achieved power, or why they lost it.

House Torrent (Evocation): Embracing the wild nature of their bloodlines and the magic they tend to favor, House Torrent is often compared to a storm. Awe-inspiring from a distance, and exciting to be caught up in, but there is a chance you will be where the lightning strikes next.

House Samen (Illusion): Whether dressed in elaborate robes or a simple tunic, it's said that no member of House Samen is ever truly what they appear to be. Often glamorous in a way that only celebrated entertainers are, most people who see them on the street would never recognize these sorcerers out of their performance glammers and makeup.

House Calvaria (Necromancy): Typically associated with mourning and severity, House Calvaria has a pragmatic streak to it that often makes them a breath of fresh air among sorcerers. Looking death in the eye has a way of lessening one's patience for political niceties, and the concerns of the purely material world.

House Altarius (Transmutation): Colorful and flamboyant, the sorcerers of this house rarely feel the need to conform to rules and expectations. Often disorganized and self-involved, nothing brings them together like a threat to them and theirs.

NEW ROGUE ARCHETYPE: SPELL HUNTER

The sorcerers of Archbliss have opened their city to wizards, witches, clerics and more, but always have they kept a watchful eye on their "cousins" in the magical arts. Spell hunters are those specifically trained by the Black Tower to combat magic users the Peers have deemed dangerous... and while they were never intended to be used against any of the citizens of

the city itself, there are more than a few rumors about sorcerers who've disappeared into these spell hunters' black bags, never to be seen again.

Bonus Proficiencies

Spell hunters are specifically trained in dealing with magic users, and identifying their unique differences, tools, and methods. They gain Proficiency in Arcana and Religion.

Occult Combatant

Spell hunters are specifically trained to fight creatures capable of using magic, whatever form that takes. At third level a spell hunter has Advantage on any attack rolls made against creatures who cast spells, or have in-born abilities that mimic spells (such as a tiefling's Infernal Legacy).

Inured to Magic

Spell hunters are constantly exposed to the effects of magic in order to help them better resist the effects in the field. At 9th level they are considered to have proficiency in any saving throw made against a spell, or an in-born ability that mimics a spell. If the spell hunter was already proficient in this save (such as a Dexterity or Intelligence saving throw, which all rogues are proficient in), they instead gain Advantage on the save.

Cutting the Ties

One of the most feared abilities of a spell hunter is their skill at unraveling ongoing magical effects. At 13th level a spell hunter's sneak attack carries the effects of dispel magic using a 3rd level spell slot. The spell hunter's spellcasting ability is the higher of their Dexterity and Intelligence scores for the purposes of this ability.

Cut to the Quick

Spell hunters strike deeper than the heart... they can attack the very magic in one's blood. At 17th level any time a rogue successfully dispels an ongoing spell using Cutting the Ties the attack is considered a critical hit. Additionally, the initial caster of the spell (or person who used the item/ability if it came from a source other than a spell) must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your Dexterity modifier + your proficiency bonus) or gain the Stunned condition.

GAME MASTER ADVICE: USING ARCHBLISS

Sundara is a setting without alignment, but the theme of the world is that places and people should be attempting to move forward to find collective solutions to the problems they face. Archbliss, by contrast, is a place that's mired in a glorious past that's been heavily edited to preserve the ego (and the magical caste system) of the current generation.

The City of the Sorcerers is still a place of great power, and the problems it faces could be solved if the modern Peers embraced the spirit of cooperation that its founders used to accomplish many of their early wonders. Infighting, selfishness and a need to hide the problems from not just the world at large but the citizens of the city, however, have greatly hampered any effective solutions. Not only that, but the Peers have bought so completely into their own ideas of superiority that the solutions they are implementing tend to be cruel and inhumane, ranging from eugenics to preserve their own bloodlines, to exploiting the spellcasting abilities of non-sorcerers (and even sorcerers who have not been

inducted into the Great Houses) to act as batteries for the city's failing power grid. Genuine solutions (reducing the rampant consumption of resources in the city, ensuring the citizens from the Peers on down actually contribute enough energy to sustain Archbliss, recruiting aid from other organizations and centers of power to help accomplish the "impossible" task or going so far as you gently return the city to the ground) are simply unthinkable because they require giving up the illusions of superiority, and the myths of the "great" bloodlines that built and sustained the city for so long.

In short, the City of the Sorcerers is a place that's swollen with corruption, and which is in genuine danger of total collapse in the most literal of terms.

This provides game masters a lot of leeway with the kinds of stories they want to tell, and how Archbliss fits into those stories. At its most basic, Archbliss can be used as a bizarre set piece, where magic items unavailable anywhere else in the world can be acquired. And since gold is nearly worthless to the sorcerers, the party will usually need to perform some service in exchange for the items in question. Alternatively, Archbliss might be a destination for a party heavy on arcane casters as they begin to dig beneath the surface of the city's glitz and glamour only to discover that the Peers are barreling toward disaster but aren't willing to spend the resources necessary to truly avert it. You could even cast Archbliss in a more antagonistic role, forcing the party to make hard decisions like breaking out those unjustly jailed in the Vaults, but knowing the loss of so much power all at once could have dire repercussions for the city and those who live in it.

PROMISES

Kadar panted, sucking air into his burning lungs. The air was hot and thin, and it made his head spin. He closed his eyes, pressing his cheek to the stone floor. It was incongruously cool, and it helped stop the world from pitching and yawing behind his eyes.

"Again," Soria said through the grate in the wall.

Kadar bristled, clenching his teeth. He had been in the black cell for weeks, now, and he had done everything asked of him. The walls had glowed, and he'd unleashed everything he had until the fires had burned down to embers. He slept, he ate and he trained, but it never seemed enough.

"Again," Soria repeated, lowering the grate once more.

Letting out a wordless cry, Kadar exploded in flames. They rose higher and higher, slamming against the ceiling and licking down the walls. The veins within the cell burned bright, sucking in the fire, until there was nothing but a slightly charred smell on the air. Kadar collapsed bonelessly, shivering in every limb.

"Good," Soria said, the single word of praise more than she usually offered. "You're almost ready, now."

Kadar wanted to believe her. He wanted to believe that soon Soria would open that door, and guide him out into the city where he could meet others like himself. Where he could finally breathe the cool, open air, and feel the sun on his face again. As the light faded from the walls, and he heard Soria's steps whisper down the hall, Kadar closed his eyes.

He wanted to believe they'd let him out. He wanted to believe the promises were true. But deep down, he didn't. Not anymore.

MORE 5TH EDITION COMPATIBLE SUPPLEMENTS

[10 Ammunition Spells \(5E\)](#)

[100 Bits of Miscellaneous Tat to Find \(5E\)](#)

[100 Encounters in a Fey Forest \(5E\)](#)

[100 Pieces of Flotsam and Jetsam To Find On A Beach \(5E\)](#)

[100 Random Encounters for on the Road or in the Wilderness \(5E\)](#)

[A Baker's Dozen of Rumours \(And The Truth Behind Them\) \(5E\)](#)

[Cities of Sundara: Hoardreach \(5E\)](#)

[Cities of Sundara: Ironfire \(5E\)](#)

[Cities of Sundara: Moüd \(5E\)](#)

[Cities of Sundara: Silkgift \(5E\)](#)

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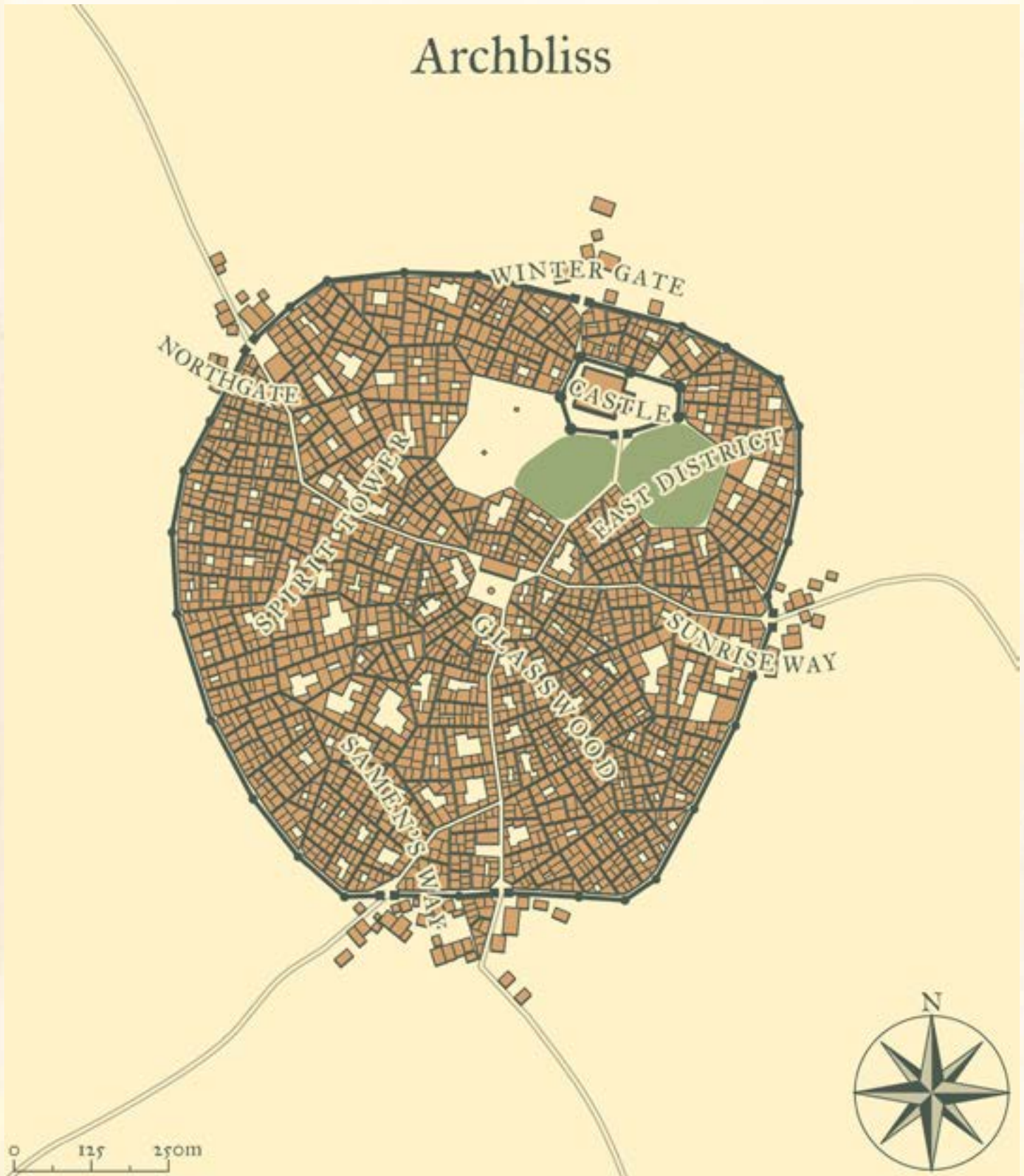
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ARCHBLISS MAP



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Sundara

Dawn of a New Age

Like a scene from a dream, Archbliss hangs above the plains. It gleams from its place just below the clouds, its enchanted spires and graceful towers giving it the appearance of some massive, fanciful ship docked in the sky. An amazing location spoken of in myth, it is a place of palpable magic.

Those who ascend the sky, and who find themselves treading the stones of The City of the Sorcerers will enter a whole new world. In Archbliss gold is practically worthless, and even potent spells are common enough as to go unremarked among most people. It is a city of amazement and wonder, where just for a moment you might believe the legends told about it.

There are truths not spoken of in well-loved poems and romantic songs, though. Truths about the price that must be paid for power, and about the toll magic takes. Tales of people who've gone missing, of forgotten secrets stumbled upon by the wrong people, and of arrogance that could turn beautiful dreams into terrifying nightmares.

“Archbliss: The City of the Sorcerers” is meant for use with Sundara: Dawn of a New Age, but this particular supplement may be adapted for an existing game! This particular supplement includes:

- City map and history of Archbliss.
- District-by-district breakdown, including notable NPCs, unique locations, and rumors to act as jumping off points for fresh plots.
- Rules for unique items like spellwarp weapons, the spell hunter rogue archetype that's trained to dispatch magic users, as well as background mechanics for those who are part of the power structure of Archbliss itself.
- GM advice for themes and plots to help you get the most out of using Archbliss in your game.