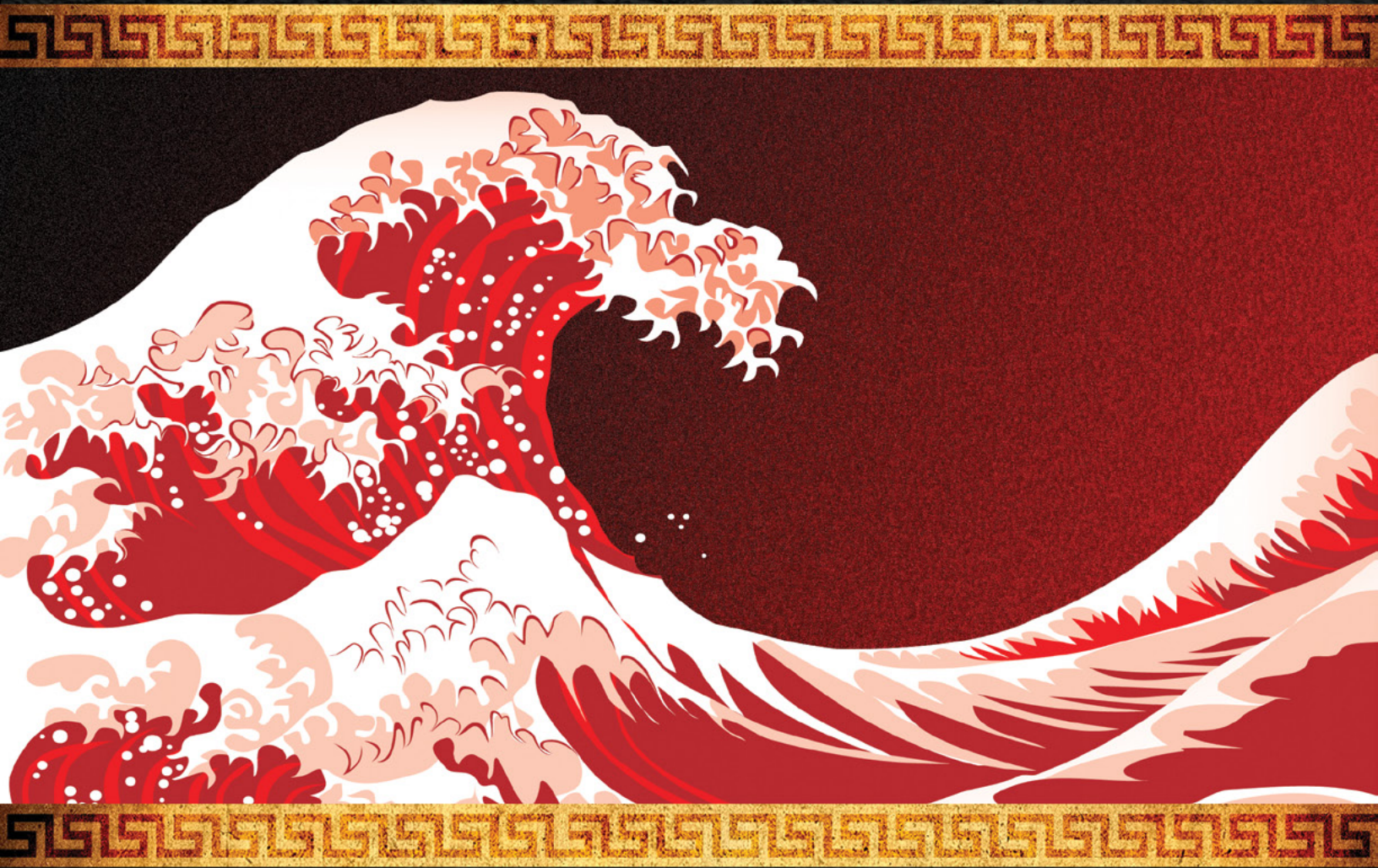


# RED TIDE



ADVENTURE IN A CRIMSON WORLD

Labyrinth Lord  
Compatible Product

# RED TIDE

ADVENTURE IN A CRIMSON WORLD

*By KEVIN CRAWFORD*



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# A RISING TIDE

The world has drowned in crimson.

Here in the harsh wilderness of the Sunset Isles, the last remnants of a ruined world have gathered for shelter against the Red Tide. The walls of crimson mist and demons have consumed the rest of the world, and it was by a seer's vision alone that the few survivors reached the Isles. The ancient lodes of black godbone keep back the red mist and the demons within, but who is to say how long this reprieve will last?

In the three centuries since the world's ruin, the refugees have made a home in this unfriendly land. The savage Shou tribes of the interior ravage the western borderlands constantly, and have even dashed their howling hordes against the very walls of Xian, the greatest of the cities of the Isles. If they ever cease their tribal squabbling the cities of men will not long survive their rage.

Despite this constant struggle, the refugees have forged polities and city-states out of the steaming jungles and jagged hills. The Mandarinate of Xian dominates the eastern end of the great isle of Ektau with its wealth and hardened legions. To their north, the demonic Shogunate hungers for land and souls for their Hell King masters, having traded the hope of paradise for strength in the living world. Decadent Tien Lung squats like a toad on the southern coast, its necromancers and reckless sorcerers daring enchantments that no wise wizard would attempt. And in the northwest, hard against the Shou-infested mountains, the city of Hohnberg stands as a grim shield against the tribes.

In their deep mountain delves the dwarves of Altgrimmr seek gold to gild their warring afterlife, while colonies of elven refugees struggle to maintain the ancient Creeds that have guided their people for ages unnumbered. Wilder breeds lurk in the jungles and hills and lush forests of the Isles, often with little love for the interlopers and their land-hungry ways. On isles far from Ektau, the crumbled remains of former colonies and mad exiles stand as monuments to the dangers of the Isles, and invitations to those brave enough to seek the treasures of a dead past.

And all the while, a hundred miles from the wave-washed shores, the Red Tide waits in wailing mists. Its whispers infect the dreams of the weak and send them praying to red purposes. The Shou take counsel in the western mountains, and the Hell Kings' hunger burns brighter each year. It is an hour for heroes to rise against the Tide and all the ruin that awaits- for without them, this reprieve from destruction will come to a bloody end.

## How To Use This Setting

Red Tide is intended to provide a Labyrinth Lord with all the tools necessary to run a campaign of sandbox adventure in the wild Sunset Isles. While this book can be used as a conventional campaign sourcebook, it is intended to give you the resources necessary to support a free-form sandbox game in a way that doesn't chain a referee to the design desk for hours before each session.

You will find information inside on the numerous peoples and polities of the Isles, along with extensive tools for the quick generation of political intrigue, urban adventures, threatened borderland outposts, and crumbling ruins. Resource lists at the back of the book can be used for the fast generation of names, NPCs, businesses, and room dressing for the lairs you construct.

The resources also include several unkeyed maps for quick integration with the site generators, allowing a GM to produce a fully-furnished ruin or dungeon in minutes. These tools do not replace the kind of intricate hand-design that many referees find to be enjoyable, but they allow for the quick creation of basic outlines and one-off sites that can support an evening's adventure when the players suddenly decide to charge off in an unexpected direction.

Finally, the new classes, spells, magic items, and site creation resources can all be easily transplanted to your own home games, taking selected pieces from Red Tide to help your existing campaign run more smoothly and enjoyably.

# A CRIMSON PAST

Three hundred years ago, the world ended.

There was no warning to the nations. The omens were silent about the doom that was at hand, the seers blind to what was to come. One man alone saw the rising of the Red Tide, and his fellows thought him mad. Archmage Lammach, First Seer of the Ninefold Celestial Empire saw what was approaching his world, but none would listen. Would not such an end give signs to other diviners? Lammach's wild talk could only disturb the serenity of the Empire and embolden its enemies, and the Emperor himself warned him to keep his silence.

Lammach prepared for what was to come. His visions had shown him a place of refuge, an isolated archipelago beloved of pirates, outlaws, and exiles. It was a savage land without law or security, but it would be a haven for those that fled in time. The archmage's gold bought half the timber afloat in the Empire's western ports, and men could only shrug at the madness of seers. A few heard the whispers that the archmage's warnings had started before the imposition of silence, and a handful among those thought carefully on what the future might hold.

The Red Tide made landfall in the east, three years to the day after Lammach had received his visions. A wall of red mist taller than a city's wall billowed in from the silent sea, consuming all before it in a silence broken only by the screams of those who could not flee in time. Things walked from the creeping mist that had no place in the world of men, and they harvested all they found. The Emperor received word from his eastern mandarins, and he knew that Lammach had been right.

The last command that Lammach received from his lord was an order to take the Tablet of Heaven and the treasures of the Empire and flee with his fleet. The realm's greatest sorcerers were marshaled to fight the Tide, but a few of them were dispatched to wing the precious relics to the western ports. They arrived in time to see the fleet groaning under the weight of its refugees, half the cities of the west emptying out to fill the hulls of the creaking armada. Lammach led them, and by his sorceries and his sight he gathered in the ragged remains of a dozen other fleets that had fled the approaching doom.

The Red Tide was universal. It was encroaching upon every land, devouring all that it touched and sending the wretched populace into headlong flight. No magic seemed capable of penetrating its veil or halting its advance. Contact had already been lost with the elven Creeds of the House of Peace and the dwarf-lords of the Un-

dermost. Ships fled before the rolling Tide and it was Lammach's art alone that guided his fleet to find them and bring them together. In six months, the Tide had rolled over every known land in the world save for a single broad island chain in the middle of the Western Sea.

## The Landing

Lammach had foreseen what would be needed, and the great, fat-bellied grain barges of the Empire had fed those that the fishermen could not supply. Yet the exile fleet was huge, more than a hundred thousand men and women clinging to every rotten scow and raddled fishing boat that could float. The ceaseless efforts of the surviving sorcerers and demoralized priests of the fleet were able to keep the ships intact and the weather fair, but they had to make landfall soon. It was time to tack for the Sunset Isles.

The Isles were a vast archipelago deep within the Western Sea, a stormy land balanced between the great cold currents of the north and the humid heat of the great Southern Gyre. A few empires of old had made efforts to claim the land, but the inhabitants were too savage and the distances too great for success. For ages, the Sunset Isles had served as a place of exile and wild dreaming for those souls cast out by their people or seeking a new life far from the haunts of men. Most had left their bones there to be gnawed by the savage Shou.

The Shou were like men in most ways. Indeed, were it not for the piercings of beaten gold they wore, and the ritual scarification, and the ferocious patterns inked into their skin, and the tendency to sharpen their teeth with pieces of rough sandstone, they were difficult to distinguish from humans. A few small pockets of their kind could be found in other lands, but in the Isles, they were a tide of howling fury that dashed to pieces any interlopers upon their ancient lands.

But the Sunset Isles were the only place of refuge in all the world. Only there would the exiles be safe from the Red Tide. Deep beneath the stones of the Isles were great veins of glossy black stone that the Shou called "godbone", stone that Archmage Lammach had seen in his visions. Something about this stone was hateful to the Tide, and it would keep back the red mist that threatened to devour the world. Archmage Lammach ordered the fleet to make for the Isles, and the ships turned their groaning prows to the west.

They made landfall at the head of Refuge Bay, at the mouth of the Sungari River on the great southern island of Ektau. Some ancient

people had labored to raise a city there in time long past remembering, and Archmage Lammach and the other sorcerous heroes of the fleet wielded their magic to raise a refuge there for the exhausted exiles. Great towers of seamless stone burst skyward from the ruins of old, the ancient city buried beneath the rising cobbles of the new. In three months the sorcerers raised a refuge from the stones, the heart of the city that they named Xian. From that point on, dates on the Isle were counted from that day of arrival, and years were named as "After Landing".

The lands surrounding the city were crowded with bands of Shou, hunting the wild game of the semi-tropical plains and forests and fighting with each other in their old, well-practiced hates. Their numbers would have crushed a colonizing expedition, but the hundred thousand refugees of the exile fleet were a force fueled by burning desperation. They fought with their backs to the sea, and they drove the Shou tribes further west. The demoralized remnants of the tribes were enslaved by their stronger brethren or killed out of hand.

The refugees poured into the opened lands, desperate to start new lives and salvage what they could of the past. So much had been lost in the flight from the Red Tide. It was the will of the refugees to hold to what little they had left.

## The Clearing Wars

The land did not welcome the refugees. The Isles were wild and terrible, Shou merely the worst threat out of uncounted others. Terrible beasts, strange hot-land plagues, crops that did not grow in the native soil, and an array of floods, tempests, and the occasional earthquake all taxed the new colonists. Many died in the early years. The survivors learned, gaining much from the few small colonies of outsiders that had managed to eke out an existence. These native-born were able to teach the newcomers vital truths about surviving this new land.

Perhaps the most important of these settlements was Nordheim, on the far opposite end of the archipelago. The small population of Skandr who had kept the rocky outpost as a waystation for their trade ships had learned much of the Isles, and they were willing to share their knowledge with the newcomers. It was difficult to reach them, however; the meeting of the hot and cold currents in the Isles created a savage belt of storms across the middle reach of the archipelago. Ships had to sail perilously close to the roiling red walls of the Tide in order to circumvent it. A few bold ships managed to make it through, however, and a tenuous trade in knowledge bolstered the refugees in their first years.

This knowledge was vital in driving back the Shou. The savages were uncoordinated, each tribe hating the other with a fury even greater than their hatred of the human interlopers. Each tribe was convinced that they were the chosen favored of their god Shakun, the Skybreaker, the Shaker of Mountains. All other Shou tribes were meant to serve as slaves to their glory, and any truce or pact was observed only until it became a burden for one of the tribes so involved.

This disunity was all that saved the initial refugees. The Shou were ferocious fighters and their witch-priestesses had powers that shocked the arcanists of the fleet. The greatest among the Shou had abilities that challenged even Archmage Lammach, and if the Shou hadn't spent most of their time trying to kill each other, the story of the exiles would have been a brief one. Lammach's divinations revealed the fault lines within each temporary alliance and grudging truce, and the exiles were able to strike exactly where they could do the most damage. Crippled tribes were torn apart by their erstwhile allies, covenants abandoned at the first scent of blood.

These "Clearing Wars" went on for decades. They were dirty, ugly battles fought in the green shadows of the tropical forests and in bloody clearings of the high plains. The Shou outnumbered the intruders and outclassed his common soldiers, but Lammach's fore-



sight and their own quarreling forced them to slowly give ground to the invaders. Within thirty years after the Landing, the humans had pushed all the way into the western mountains of Ektau. The eastern tribes were broken and scattered.

This victory did not come cheaply. It was at the end of the Clearing Wars when the last surviving witch-priestesses of the eastern tribes banded together. In a furious, suicidal assault on Xian they managed to reach Archmage Lammach and burn him down with sorceries that banished him utterly from the world. The few remaining hierarchs powerful enough to call back the dead could do nothing for him, and it was with the tears of a city that he was sent to his rest. His son was appointed in his place, the first Mandarin of Xian in a line that has continued unbroken to the present day.

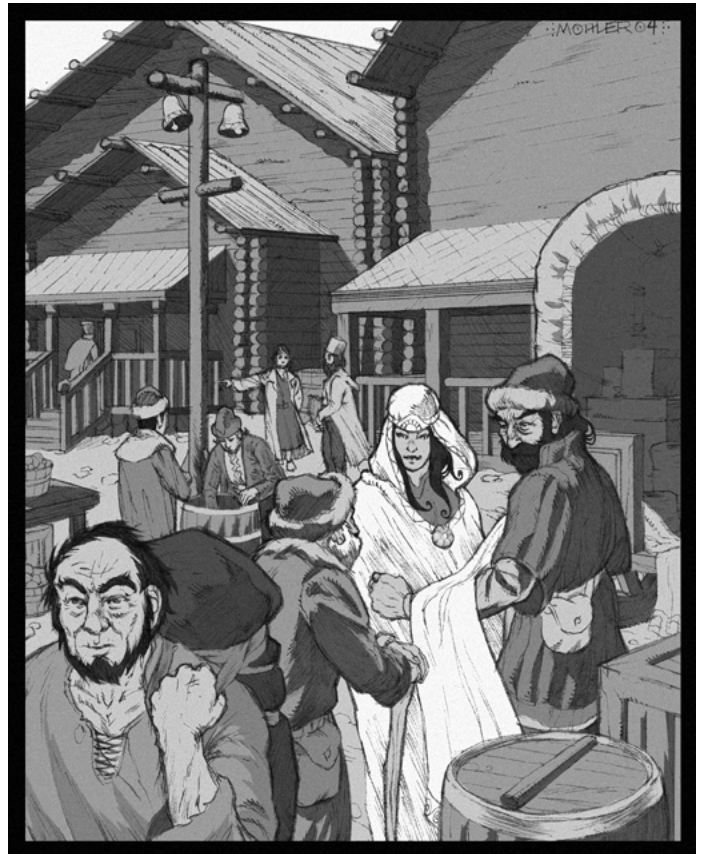
This loss blunted the human advance. Too many of the great mages and high priests had died in the fighting, and there had been no time to train apprentices to follow after. The great magics of the Ninefold Celestial Empire and the potent priestcraft of the old world was no longer to be had, and the humans already had seized more land than they could comfortably work. The Shou were left to brood in the western mountains, and the people of the Isles settled down to build anew.

## The First Respite

The seventy years that followed the end of the Clearing Wars amounted to a kind of golden age for the refugees. They still had many of the elders that remembered life before the Tide and could teach their children the arts and customs of lands now lost beneath the red mist. The Shou were cowed in the western mountains, and the many refugee warriors that remained could hold the savage beasts of the Isles in check. There was once again time to build farms and towns and cities to echo what they had lost.

Starting around 30 AL, three great cities were built on Ektau to keep company with Xian. In the north, the Kueh people among the refugees raised the graceful walls of Kitaminato, a refuge for their people and a place where the old ways of their kind could be preserved. Much of it was more a creation of imagination than truth; the survivors of the exile had not often been great nobles or blue-blooded aristocrats, but poor fishermen who had boats and the wit to sail them. This distinction soon evaporated as the proud rulers of Kitaminato conjured up pedigrees of impeccable quality. The ruler of Kitaminato was the great Archmage Rai, an arcanist of the Kueh who was content to obey the Mandarin in Xian so long as his pronouncements did not unduly interfere with the Kueh of Kitaminato.

In the northwest, in the shadow of the mountains and hard against the sea, there rose the gray-walled city of Hohnberg. The Eirengarder people who built it had a marrow-deep mistrust of the Shou to the west, and Hohnberg was intended as a bulwark against them. Bands of the famed Eirengarder pikemen were trained in Hohnberg and the glorious House of the Maker there vied with the Temple of the Nine Immortals in Xian for beauty and divine serenity. The Thusundi of Hohnberg bowed his head to the Mandarin in Xian, but his allegiance was always of a practical variety. Disunity in the



face of the Shou could only lead to catastrophe, and the early Mandarins were wise enough not to press the Hohnbergers.

To the southwest, amid the thick jungles of the southern coast, came the amber city of Tien Lung. With the threat of the Shou fading and the decimation of the arcanists and priests among the exiles, a few of the most powerful remaining spellworkers found it necessary to have a mind for the future. Tien Lung started as a magical college safely remote from inhabited lands, but it rapidly drew so many colonists eager for the protection of the wizards that it became a city in short order. The verdant hillsides around Tien Lung proved superb for the cultivation of crops and assorted medical and recreational plants, and the Enlightened Sage that ruled Tien Lung swiftly grew to rival the Mandarin himself in his influence. The Sage and the scholars of the Academy of Refulgent Wisdom had their own ideas about how the society of the Isles should be more properly ordered, and not all were content to obey.

Among these four great cities many lesser towns and settlements sprang up to fill the newly-claimed lands between. The broad stretch of wilderness stretching along the western foothills between Tien Lung and Hohnberg became known as the Westmark, after the Eirengarder word for the rugged borderland. A vast tide of exiles and their kindred migrated from the more crowded east to take up farms and trades in the shadow of the Shou-haunted mountains. The last of the great magi of the exile worked to help construct the new cities, laboring beside the dwarven masons of the Altgrimm range to fashion new homes for the refugee peoples.

For a long time, they prospered.



## The Ravaging

In the mountains of the west, the Shou brooded. They fought and they struggled amongst each other, quarreling over the richer western lowlands while the losers were forced up into the mountains, up against the humans to the east. They were a danger to the interlopers, but never a great one. There were too many humans, too well-organized and ready to repel anything larger than a raiding band.

That ended in 120 AL. The Witch Queen Agrahti led a powerful western lowland tribe, the force of her magic compelling obedience from the quarreling Shou chieftains. Rather than spend her warriors uselessly against her neighbors, she commanded the broken fragments of the mountain tribes to join her banner and make war upon the hated humans. The remnants despised each other, but they feared Agrahti more. They joined, and together they swept down on the east like a storm.

The exiles had grown complacent with almost a hundred years of peace. Their great sorcerers and high priests were almost all long dead, and the wizards remaining to them had only a fraction of the strength of old. Their heroes were only names, their legions ill-equipped and practiced only in hunting raiding bands. The Shou horde smashed the Westmark and roared east into the Xianese heartland.

Land that had been settled and secure for generations was transformed overnight into a wasteland of ruins and char. In the north, the pikemen of Hohnberg formed a wall of steel around their homes and drove back the undisciplined Shou- but only for a time. There were ten mountain Shou for every pikeman, and men died because they were too weary to lift their weapons in defense. The horde drew back from Hohnberg eventually, but only because there were other, easier places to take first.

In the south, Tien Lung's sorcerers conjured forbidden powers and wielded magics they had secretly developed in their dark Academy. Thousands of wretched commoners died on Tien Lung's raised stone summoning circles to fuel the magic necessary to repel the Shou, but the savages were in the end driven back. Scholar say that though the walls of Tien Lung were never breached, only one in three citizens still lived by the time the defense was complete. The need to enlist laborers to work in the cursed city thereafter led to the practices of slavery now so common to that blighted place.

In the northeast, Archmage Rai of Kitaminato was among the last of the great arcanists of the Empire, clinging to life through alchemical means and sinister research. When the horde crashed on Kitaminato's walls, it seemed certain that the Kueh would be butchered in their homes and their gilded culture lost forever in the bellies of ravaging Shou. Rai did not have the power to save them, but he could strike bargains with those who could. That night, in a terrible ritual worked with all the great families of the city,



the arcanist made a pact with the Hell Kings. A legion of demons erupted from the earth about Kitaminato and ravaged the Shou army until it was forced to turn back. The price that the Hell Kings charged was predictable. There are no gods in Kitaminato now save the fanged idols of the city's masters, and the undying Shogun Rai sends sacrifices to his infernal lords to ensure their favorable regard for his people.

But it was in the east that the Witch Queen and her horde drove deepest, the great mass of Shou hammering against Xian and the terrified refugees huddled within the city. The army was scattered in the west, struggling to contain the bone picker tribes of Shou that flowed into the void the horde had made and unable to join up with the defenders of Xian. The dwarves were barricaded within the Altgrimmr peaks, too hard-pressed to break out and cut through the sea of Shou that surrounded the human capital. City wizards even went so far as to call up legions of the city's dead to march against the Shou, but there were just too many of them and the wizards were dying from the strain of their black sorceries.

It was then that a ragged band of tomb-robbers, ruin-plunderers, and renegade arcanists accomplished what all the serried ranks of Xianese defenders could not. Sages cannot agree who exactly numbered among this band; a dozen different names are commonly given and commonly disputed. All agree that they alone were able to infiltrate the Shou camp, cut their way through the Witch Queen's guards, and slay the sorceress at the very heart of the horde. None survived their act of heroism, but with the Witch Queen dead the horde swiftly collapsed into a welter of blood and ancient quarrels.

With the help of forces for Hohnberg and Tien Lung, the horde was driven back from the eastern lands, once more pushed into the ravaged provinces of the Westmark. But with many dead and so many Shou, there was no hope of reclaiming the lost lands. After the Ravaging, the Westmark was a haunted land of empty cities and desolate plains, pinpricked by those few settlers daring to live under the eyes of the angry Shou.

## The Lessened Age

Xian could do nothing to help the other great cities during the Ravaging. Indeed, it had been Hohnberg and Tien Lung that had saved it in the end with the steel of pikes and the fires of unclean sorcery. The Mandarin was still the greatest of Ektau's nobility, but the Thusundi and the Enlightened Sage now paid him no more than lip service, and sometimes were notably disinterested in Xian's best interests when dealing with border disputes. In the north, Shogun Rai brooded in his bone-walled city and did as his masters demanded. Their demands were rarely pleasing to anyone, least of all the Mandarin.

The Ravaging had cut a scar through the heart of the human provinces. The Westmark still crawled with Shou bands and the beasts and other dangers of the wilds were no longer kept in check by the Xianese army. Relations between the great cities grew colder and more strained as each tried to make the best of what had been left behind. And always there was the fear that the Shou would come again, and that some new warlord or witch would bind them together into a weapon that would succeed where Agrahti had failed.

Still, there was growth and recovery in the decades that followed the Ravaging. Xian strengthened its ties with the Skandr colony of Nordheim at the far end of the archipelago, and the settled lands of the east grew more densely stitched by roads and villages and market towns. A hundred miles west of Xian one could almost imagine it a piece of the Empire reborn, peaceful and bucolic.

A hundred miles more would put a traveller into the heart of the Westmark, where things were very different. Hard bordermen and prospectors eked out an existence in the shadow of the Shou, clustering around fortified hamlets and the few military outposts placed there by the land's aspiring masters. Every season's survival was in question, but men came for the free land and the hope of something better.

## Within Memory

In the past century the human numbers have recovered from the scourge of the Ravaging. The population of the city-states and their supporting towns has swollen almost beyond the ability of the farms and seas to support them. Ever-greater numbers of poor men and women are pressing into the Westmark, goading the Shou tribes there and sparking short, savage raids on human settlements.

Within the past ten years, the Shogun Rai has abandoned his policy of subtle corruption and embraced more open hostilities. Xianese border patrols have been attacked, and hidden agents of the Shogun are cropping up throughout Ektau's cities. Some say that it is a war in all but name, but for now the armies die by the patrol rather than the regiment.

Perhaps more alarming still, increasing numbers of Tide Cults have been discovered within the cities and villages. These congregations are led by dreams and visions, terrible images that terrify and entice the worshippers. Those who serve the Tide are granted potent magic and uncanny blessings, but extended service always twists and bends the devotees until they are scarcely recognizable as human. These cults are rarely as actively malevolent as the servants of the Hell Kings. Their masters seem to wish only a poisonous worship, but their blandishments entice more and more people into their forbidden rites.

The rise of the Tide gnaws at the peace of the cities. It seems that any soul can be tempted by these red dreams, from peasant to highest prince. The Tide is unable to approach the Isles but it can approach its people, and its people can open a way for an unfinished apocalypse. For now, men pray, or roister, or work to put their minds from the shadow. And if sweet red dreams should come to them in the night, promising them every delight for just a simple little ritual, they do what they can to forget them.

## A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	DATE	EVENT
-2000? AL	A thriving dwarven civilization exists in the remote archipelago of the Sunset Isles, centered on the mountains of the Altgrimmr range on Ektau. A very few surviving documents make mention of them, but details are tantalizingly scarce. The civilization appears to have vanished by -1500 AL, for reasons that remain unclear.	0 AL	Lammach sets sail from the western coast of the Empire, forming the exile fleet out of his own ships and countless other small boats that are fleeing from both the Empire and other Tide-wracked nations. After six months, the exile fleet makes landfall on the island of Ektau.
-1500 to 0 AL	Rogues, criminals, exiles, explorers, and aspiring colonists all make their way to the Sunset Isles at various points in history. Small groups can sometimes avoid too much notice by the native Shou, but all known major attempts at colonization ultimately end in failure. The Isles gain a traditional reputation as a desperate land for desperate men.	1 AL	The desperate refugees drive the disorganized Shou tribes away from their landing site. With the sorceries of the surviving magi, the walls of a new city are raised on the site of an ancient ruin. Dubbed "Xian" by the Archmage Lammach, it serves as the center of early human settlement on Ektau.
-350 AL	Skandr merchant-reavers establish the waystation of Nordheim on the cold northern island of Aktau. Comparatively few Shou dwell on its rocky and bleak coasts, and Skandr fortifications prove sufficient to hold them back. Skandr ships use this settlement to resupply on their long journeys across the Western Sea.	4 AL	Human scouts contact the beleaguered dwarven colony in the Altgrimmr mountains of the southeast. Dwarven smith-mistresses provide vital arms to the human refugees.
-320 AL	Attracted by the Skandr tales of the ancient dwarven ruins, several ambitious dwarf clans attempt to recolonize the ancient delves. Some take up residence in the Angrimmr range on the northern island of Aktau, while others attempt to reclaim the halls in the Altgrimmr ranges of the semitropical southern island of Ektau. Both experience severe challenges and find themselves struggling for survival.	4-30 AL	<b>The Clearing Wars.</b> Organized human military forces and the mighty sorcerers that survived in the exile fleet drive back the quarreling, leaderless Shou into the western Godbarrow mountains. The Shou are unaccustomed to dealing with such huge numbers of human interlopers, and are too fractious to work together against the humans.
-3 AL	Archmage Lammach of the Ninefold Celestial Empire receives a vision of the impending destruction of the world, drowned beneath the Red Tide. The only land spared the destruction will be the remote and savage archipelago of the Sunset Isles.	30-120 AL	<b>The Bright Years.</b> Humans found major cities in Kitaminato in the north, Hohnberg in the northwest, and Tien Lung in the southwest. These cities prosper under their lords, though all maintain at least nominal allegiance to the Mandarin of Xian. Human settlement pushes up to the very base of the Godbarrow mountains, with the furthest reaches known as the Westmark.
-3-0 AL	Lammach is forced to silence by the Emperor, who does not believe his warnings. This does not prevent him from buying up most of the floating timber on the western coast of the Empire, and laying in supplies for a long voyage.	120 AL	<b>The Ravaging.</b> The Witch Queen Agrahti rises to power among the Shou. Instead of turning her attention to the fertile western end of the island, she forcibly recruits the ragged mountain tribes and turns them against the humans. Under her leadership the Westmark is razed and the human cities are besieged.
0 AL	<b>The Red Tide rises.</b> Looming walls of red mist boil in off the eastern ocean and begin to cover the land. Any trapped within die in terrible ways, and demons stride from the mist to claim human prey for hideous transformations. All attempts to drive back the Tide prove futile. The Emperor entrusts Lammach with the Imperial regalia and commands him to save who he can. The Emperor himself remains behind to die with his people.	121 AL	Tien Lung forces the Shou to lift their siege by use of dark sorceries fueled by the lives of its citizens. Hohnberg breaks the attacking Shou against its high walls and the expert pikemen of its military forces. Archmage Rai of Kitaminato agrees to offer his city and soul to the Hell Kings in exchange for their aid. The ensuing flood of demons drives away the Shou, but the Shogunate of Kitaminato is born with the dark lord Rai at its head.

DATE	EVENT
122 AL	The main body of Shou forces strikes Xian. Legions of the dead are raised by the surviving Xianese wizards to fight the Shou, but their numbers are not enough, and the strain of the rituals kills many wizards. All seems lost until a band of adventurers successfully infiltrates the Shou horde and strikes down the Witch Queen. None survive, but the horde falls swiftly to infighting. The arrival of reinforcements from Hohnberg and Tien Lung put the Shou to flight.
123 AL	The void left by the disintegrating horde is filled by tribal remnants. Bloody fighting reclaims much of the eastern end of Ektau, but the lands of the Westmark remain a desolate region of gutted cities and crumbling towns. Xian claims nominal rulership of the waste, but practical authority extends no further than the point of a soldier's spear.
125-225 AL	<i>The Lesser Times.</i> Embittered by Xian's inability to aid them, Hohnberg and Tien Lung become effectively independent of the Mandarin. To the north, Shogun Rai does not even give the pretense of obedience, turning his attention toward transforming his city-state into something suitable to his new masters. The four city-states engage in constant low-level struggles over control of the rich east-central plains. Human population begins to recover from the Ravaging.
225-300 AL	Farmland is at a premium. The secure central plains are crowded with poor sharecroppers and hired laborers on great plantations. Tien Lung makes substantial use of slave labor, while Xian makes lesser use of convicted criminals. Brave or desperate colonists start to form settlements in the borderlands of the Westmark, daring Shou raiders and wild beasts for the sake of free land for the taking. Xian, Tien Lung, and Hohnberg begin to take more interest in control of the Westmark.

DATE	EVENT
275-300 AL	Stirred by the human incursions into the Westmark, the Shou become more active in their raids and depredations. Many border communities are scourged or destroyed by the raiders. Food scarcity begins to strike the cities, and many commoners find themselves forced to choose between landless hunger and likely death in the Westmark. Growing numbers begin to turn toward forbidden Tide Cults or worship of the Hell Kings, willing to sacrifice the hope of eternity for the sake of present power.
290-300 AL	The Shogun abandons his former policy of methodical corrosion and becomes openly hostile to Xian. The Mandarin's long-standing ban on Hell King worship is used as an excuse for open skirmishing on the border and the dispatch of special agents to Xian and its market towns. Some Xianese daifus are willing to take Shogunate gold for "considerations". A few even adopt the infernal faith for the sake of its very tangible blessings.
300 AL	Ektau seethes with tensions between and within the city-states. The Shogunate is on the brink of outright war with Xian, while Hohnberg attempts to ignore the outside world and Tien Lung conducts ever-more dangerous experiments with bloody forms of ritual magic. The dwarves have a tenuous alliance with Hohnberg and Xian, but are doing their best to stay clear of human infighting. In the west, the Shou grow more restive by the year, and Tide Cults are cropping up with increasing regularity. The worship of strange gods fills the temple-streets of market towns and cities, and men and women wonder what is to become of the Isles.
300 AL	The Red Tide begins to move again.



in a separate part of the delving, with central areas reserved for commerce and government. Dwarven social roles are strictly segregated by sex; males mine, build, and fight, and females craft, trade, and perform all the other duties of society. Clans are ruled by the eldest members, and groups of clans are brought under the authority of a king or queen from the strongest clan among them.

Dwarves had a settlement in the southern reaches of the Isles, the ancient delve of Altgrimmr that some say was the first place where they burrowed up from the world below. It was abandoned countless centuries ago for a cause that no dwarf living can name and no ancestor-spirit will answer to explain. In more recent centuries a second settlement of Angrimmr was founded on the northern isle of Aktau, where the dwarves presently trade with the Skandr of Nordheim. Many clans among the northern dwarves are wearied by the hard life on that rocky isle, and in recent years have come south to reclaim the lost delves and holdings that once belonged to vanished Altgrimmr.

*Dwarven adventurers* are very often driven by the aim of gaining gold for their tombs. This is especially common among young males who lack any good mining prospects but are forbidden by social custom from trade or craftwork. Their only prospect of advancement is through the sword and axe. Dwarven women might also take up a warhammer if their clan is shattered or their mind is sufficiently determined. Such trespass against custom assures that they will never marry or be honored as an elder in the clan, but for those who are kinless or resolved, it is a price they are willing to pay. Both might seek for allies and friends in the south as well, the better to help rebuild the ancient delves of Altgrimmr.

## Eirengarders

Eirengarders are a big, blonde, pale people renowned for a piety unusual in the Isles. Most of them remain steadfast believers in their god, the Maker, and are convinced that the world's present misery is either caused by human sin or by the Maker's wisdom in testing His creation. Their grim war-priests continue to hand down the sacred writings of the Law and the teachings of the Iron Prophets and the common folk continue in their humble services.

The pikes of Eirengard were the dread of nations in the days before the Tide. The dry, cold scrub of the Eirengard plains was bad land for farming, and the Eshkanti raiders to the south harried the Eiren towns. In the ancient days the Iron Prophets formed the bands of warriors that became the famed pike legions, teaching them the arts of war so that the Maker's beloved could withstand their enemies. When the Eshkanti were turned from their adventures, these pike bands hired out their service to foreign princes, fighting far from home to bring back gold to their poor land.

Even today, Eirengarders are as often soldiers as they are farmers or fishermen, and it is considered a proud thing to carry a spear in one of the surviving bands. Most that remain are in permanent service to Xian, with a few renting out their services to Westmark border lords, the better to clear out goblins or drive back orcish warbands. The mountain city-state of Hohnberg is populated largely by Eirengarders, and the House of the Maker there is one of the most beautiful shrines in all the Isles.

Eirengarders are notorious for the countless peculiar taboos of the Law of their faith. Different sects of Makerites insist on different restrictions and demands, but daily prayer, refusal to eat pork, and ritual purification after the shedding of blood are all common requirements. While these points may seem trivial to outsiders, devout Makerites have been known to prefer death to willful violation of their Law.

This Law has remarkably little to say about mercenary work, but supplementary Sayings have been preserved from famous Eirengarder mercenary captains. These Sayings usually forbid the abuse of civilians and insist on a degree of discipline and mercy unusual in mercenaries. Some bands have rejected the Sayings, claiming them unnecessary supplements to the Law and a needless interference to their trade.

Eirengarder family life has been shaped by the demands of the mercenary bands and the harsh losses of the battlefield. An Eirengarder man takes only one wife for himself, but the eldest son of a family also obligated to accept the widows of any of his brothers until and unless they are able to remarry. An Eirengarder woman can decline this arrangement, but she can expect little aid from her family unless the husband in question is too poor or too cruel to be acceptable.

Some young women who are either disinclined to marry or widowed early set off on lives of adventure, taking posts with the bands or falling in with freebooters. The strongest of them serve in the pike line, while others serve as archers or slingers. While in camp, the women work at fletching, mending harness, and tending animals. By custom, traditional women's work such as cooking or cleaning is considered an insult to such warriors while they are under arms. More than one adventurer has earned a mailed gauntlet against his ear for innocently suggesting to his Eirengarder companion that it was her turn to do the camp's cooking.

*Eirengarder adventurers* might be young women shunning marriage or wife-inheritance in favor of the excitement and potential profit of the freebooter's life, or they may be young men laboring to earn enough to afford a marriage of their own. Grim-handed Makerite priests and holy warriors find their own quests on the road, bringing the truth of their god to the needy and his burning hammer to the wicked. The occasional survivor of a shattered mercenary band can be found as well, scarred and dark with memories, and perhaps with a score to settle.

## Elves

In the dawning ages of the world, the human forebears of the elves turned from the gods of men. Their philosopher-kings taught that the deities were simply a greater order of creature, one that mortals could aspire to join through the correct rites and ambitions. By joining the immortal substance of their souls to the carnal fabric of their flesh, they too could ascend to the level of the divine.

In a great rite performed together as a people, their lords drew down the fire of their immortal souls and forced it into the base matter of their living flesh. For all their ambition, the rite was not the success they had imagined. The people who were to become the elves did

not become gods, but they became something very much more than human.

There are precisely one hundred thousand elven souls in the world, every one bound to the circles of the earth. When an elf dies, his soul awaits sleeping until an elven child is conceived to house his wayward spirit. Elves do not enter the afterlife of other races, nor can their souls be touched by mortal magic. Their spirits are tangible in their living flesh, granting an immortality of a different order.

Elves do not die save by violence or disease. They are invariably beautiful and well-formed, touched by a subtle sheen of idealized grace. They appear in every shape and hue found among humans, but they often seem just a little bit *better* in every way that matters. Yet elves are denied the very hope of transcendence that their soul-ancestors aspired to have, and some are bitterly envious of the immortality unique to humankind.

Every elf is touched by memories of their past incarnations. These echoes are rarely complete or controllable, but this sense of shared memory binds the elves together in a strange sort of communion. They have all known each other before and they will all know each other again. Grudges can be played out over the span of a dozen lifetimes and debts are repaid from millennia lost. No enemy is ever truly defeated- just delayed.

This sense of recurrence leads elves to live ferociously passionate, hard-driven lives. Even death is but a temporary setback, and elven disputes can become spectacularly bloody as disagreements are settled by sorcery and bare steel. Denied the hope of heaven and the dread of hell, elves struggle to leave behind some legacy greater than their temporary lives, some great deed or perfect creation that will stand as a mark in time.

Like-minded elves draw together in circles known as Creeds. These paths are all dedicated to some great work of self-improvement or glorious accomplishment. Every member of the Creed is expected to strive constantly to further the cause or perfect their own nature in the way the Creed teaches. Elves who no longer can share that passion leave to join a different Creed; some with simple regret at parting, and others with six inches of steel through their “traitor” hearts. Not all Creeds aspire to benevolent ends.

A few elves dream of breaking the shackles of their eternal recurrence. They work alone or with like-minded Creeds to master the arts necessary to escape the circles of the world, completing the great ritual that their soul-selves participated in so long ago. These elves are known as Apotheons, and elven legend claims that the greatest of them become like the gods that their ancestors had intended to become. The noblest or most driven among them commit ritual suicide in order for their soul-selves to await their people’s future call, waiting to be called back from the grave to aid their kindred in some hour of terrible need.

Elves are no longer cross-fertile with humans, but sometimes, very rarely, an elven soul goes astray in its reincarnation and is born within a human infant’s body. These “half-elves” or “Scions” are



born with an elven degree of awareness in a human child’s form. They grow, live, age, and die as men do, but the interplay of an elf’s maimed soul-self with the unshaped energies of a human soul creates a flux of strange, eldritch power around the Scion. It is impossible to channel mortal sorcery through that sparking interface of elven soul and human flesh, but the Scions demonstrate certain strange powers of their own, powers that echo a little of the divinity their ancestors sought.

*Elven adventurers* are almost always part of some high-minded Creed, aspiring to some glorious deed or noble calling. Elves are very rare in the Isles, and known as notorious crusaders for causes only they truly understand. The sorcery innate to elven adepts is limited by their inability to use their souls as a lens for channeling geomantic energy, but many of them compensate with a degree of mystical understanding honed over uncounted lives.

## Eshkanti

The golden city of Eshkant was the mercantile nexus of the world, a mighty metropolis settled at the narrow waist of land that separated the Western Sea from the Sea of Pearls. Traders from across the world were forced to portage their goods across the narrow neck until the Sultan of Eshkant decreed the carving of a canal fifty miles long, to pass beneath the shadow of the city's walls. The seven locks that balanced the differences in elevation were necklaced with dens of vice and trade, the Seven Gardens of Paradise beloved by sailors and merchants alike.

Such trade was necessary, for Eshkant had little else. The southern mountains shielded the land from the moist south winds, and Eshkant was equal parts rocky desert and dry steppe. The Sultan was usually strong enough to keep the desert tribes from raiding the canal, and so they were forced to turn their attention northward to the Eirengarders and outward to trade of their own. Many of the hard-bitten desert clans of one generation became the fat merchants of the next, spreading outward until there was hardly a town in the world that did not have at least one Eshkanti trading family. This diaspora and the many merchant ships they owned gave an uncommon number of Eshkanti a chance for survival when the Red Tide rose.

In the Isles, many Eshkanti follow their old traditions, trading among the villages and towns. Some thirst for adventure, occasionally convincing their families to back some trade expedition to find a new market or new source of goods. Others are content to work as peasants and rice-farmers, accepting a wealthier family as patrons and protectors of their humble farms.

The Eshkanti people are dark-skinned in the main, with dark hair and eyes to match. While not so large as Eirengarders or Skandr, both men and women are sturdily knit and often graceful. Eshkanti home life revolves around wealth and prestige. A spouse who brings no dowry, famous name, bride-gift or income of their own into a family may be loved, but their opinion is not consulted on matters of importance.

**Eshkanti adventurers** are often young men and women from poor families, ones with no prospect of esteem in their society unless they can get gold and fame from their deeds. Others are the offspring of hard-pressed merchant houses, ones in desperate need of funds to stave off hungry creditors and the prospect of bankruptcy or worse. Some simply hunger to find new prospects for trade, or wish the freedom of the open road in place of a stale life in a trader's shop.

## Gadaal

The dark mountain-folk of the southern lands were also numbered among the exile fleet. Archmage Lammach himself was a Gadaal who took service with the Ninefold Celestial Empire, and many of his people listened to his warnings when the Imperials still counted them no more than a false prophet's ravings. Had the stony southern lands possessed more ships, still more would have lived.

The Gadaal have always been worshippers of the night sky and the stars that watch above it. They are a dark folk, ebon-hued and black-haired with the occasional speckling of white not unlike stars amid



the darkness. Their eyes are often jewel-toned in colors strange to other men, especially in those who show natural gifts in astromancy or divination. They are a little taller than Imperials or Eshkanti on the average, with slim, muscular builds for the men and ripe curves among the women.

The Gadaal were always a poor people by the standards of outsiders, more so even than the Eirengarders on their dry plains. The mountains and rough hills of their homeland were poor for farming, and their herds of goats and mountain sheep were never large. A few gem mines provided what little wealth the nation had to its name.

Their true wealth was in their knowledge. The Gadaal astromancers who dwelled high on the crowns of their greatest mountains were some of the finest diviners in the world, superior even to the archmages of the Ninefold Celestial Empire. The astromancers could not foretell all things, but what conclusions they drew were almost invariably both clear and correct. If mortal will did not interfere with events, that which they prophesied would always come to pass.

The Gadaal clan-chiefs who led their people to the Sunset Isles were not able to preserve all of this celestial knowledge. Archmage Lammach had no time to properly train apprentices, and much precious knowledge were lost in the early years after the Landing. Still, enough remained to keep Gadaal astromancy alive in the hotter climes of the Isles, and many aspiring diviners seek out Gadaal teachers for the sake of this tradition.

The Gadaal in the Sunset Isles keep largely to their traditional ways, families banding together in extended clans that sometimes cooperate and sometimes feud with their neighbors. They are herdsmen and small farmers, hunters in the wild places and sturdy mountaineers amid the peaks. It is a free life but a poor one, and many sons and daughters are forced to make their own way in the world.

**Gadaal adventurers** are often bordermen, natives of the raw, rough land that stands between the settled eastern end of Ektau and the Shou-infested wilds of the west. Rangers, mountaineers, and hard-handed peasant sons can all be found looking for their fortune in the lost places of the wild, along with those ambitious young men and women who have mastered the essentials of the enigmatic astromantic arts of their people.



## Halflings

Far more halflings survived the Red Tide than their peaceful, bucolic ways would suggest. The small-folk have always lived among humans, following their own customs but paying tribute to the local lord for protection and the benefit of law against human interlopers. They are famously talented farmers and herdsman, and few have any ambition of leaving their modest villages. They live and they prosper beneath the notice of more ambitious races.

At least, until those races decide to have sport with the small folk. It usually only takes one such attempt before their tormentors learn the better of it. Halflings are almost constitutionally incapable of being intimidated. They are aware of threats and respect dangers, but they never permit such things to cloud their calm judgment. Even the rawest halfling militia never panics on the field or routs in disarray, every last one of the little folk either retreating in close order or dying where they stand.

Facing a crisis, entire villages are capable of calmly resolving to courses of action that ensure that most of them will die in order that some might live. Tyrants who try to exact too much from their short subjects find half the small folk in their domain turned assassin, each willing to die if only they can get close enough to kill their persecutor. This clear-headed, methodical, relentless violence will not stop until their tormentor either eases his exactions or exterminates every halfling in his domain.

It is said that the halflings were humans, once, who long ago turned from the gods. They did not fight as the dwarves did or seek to surpass them as the elves did, but instead simply turned away from the quarrels of the divine and chose an inward peace. Some among the pious claim that the halflings were cursed with their short stature by the angry deities, who declared that if the halflings refused to fear gods, they would be given reason to fear mortals. Whatever the truth of matters, the gods seem strangely disinclined to interfere with halflings, neither blessing them nor cursing them, but simply leaving them to live as they choose.

Traditional halfling customs are known as “the Quiet Way”, and inform every aspect of halfling life with their sober, rustic wisdom. Those who follow its strictures are promised a peaceful life and a dreaming afterlife of family and comfort. Those unfortunates who are cut loose from the community by need or their own misdeeds are in consequence a reckless, heedless lot, and it is a folk saying on the Isles that there is no one so trustworthy as a “village” halfling, and none so thieving as a “wild” one.

*Halfling adventurers* are usually young men or women forced to leave their village by some disaster or hardship. When the settlement hasn't enough food or land to support a new generation, some are obliged to leave and seek a different home. Most die on the road, but a few become wealthy enough to found their own new villages, or else find themselves acquiring a positive taste for the excitement of a wandering life. Halflings can always find good wages as mercenaries, as “a cowardly halfling” is a byword for a beast that doesn't exist.

## Imperials

The descendants of those men and women who fled the fall of the Ninefold Celestial Empire are commonly called “Imperials” and form the dominant human culture on the southern isle of Ektau. Both men and women tend to slenderness, with dark golden skin, dark almond eyes, and straight black hair. The other humans of Ektau tend to be taller by a few inches, but generations of intermarriage have evened out the height to some extent.

The Ninefold Celestial Empire was a magocracy, one supported by numerous mighty Imperial Archmages who maintained the magical marvels that made the Empire the foremost human nation in the world. Every Imperial family dreamed of having one of their children ascend the exalted heights of sorcery, and the intellectual pursuits of reading, writing, and devoted study were greatly honored by Imperial culture.

Even in their exile, the Imperials have maintained this love of learning. Parents view the need to teach their children their letters to be equal with the need to feed and clothe them, and this love for literacy has rubbed off to a large extent on many of the other ethnic groups on Ektau. Insulting an Imperial's education is considered an offense on par with questioning the virtue of his mother.

Imperial families are close-knit, with households led by the eldest adult. It is expected that the first-born son or daughter and their spouse should remain in the parents' household to look after them, while the other children are expected to contribute to their keep if they do not share the same house. Imperials prize filial obedience, and directly disobeying a parent is considered a grave offense against decency.

Imperials keep only one spouse, and adultery is grounds for divorce among the common class of people. The very wealthy and powerful might keep concubines or male lovers, but the aristocracy are permitted many such foibles so long as they do not flaunt them before the public.

Imperials usually give desultory reverence to the Nine Immortals, the ancient divinities of the Empire. Religion of any kind has suffered much since the coming of the Red Tide. Priests are few among the Imperials and their labor is largely restricted to birth-blessings, marriages, and funerals.

*Imperial adventurers* are often poor young men and women who dream of acquiring the wealth and fame they need to move up into the land-owning class, or even the nobility. The cleverest and most fortunate of these often wrangle their way into one of the numerous small magical schools found wherever Imperials settle, but many of them find their funds running out before their education is complete. These half-finished magic-users are obliged to join their less scholarly brethren on the road, digging up from the past what the present declines to teach them.

## Kueh

The Kueh were once a minority ethnicity within the Ninefold Celestial Empire, a race of famed warriors and nature-sages conquered after long struggle by the sorcerous legions of the Empire. Such was the ferocious resistance offered by the Kueh that the Emperor found it wisest to treat gently with his new subjects, and commanded that the mandarins appointed to lead them marry into the foremost Kueh families to blend the lordly classes together. Over long centuries of unity the sense of separation the Kueh once cherished faded, and they joined into the vigorous Imperial culture.

Kueh samurai proudly served Imperial mandarins as trusted retainers, and Kueh yamabushi cultivated their ancient earth magics in the arcane academies of the Empire. Kueh generals led Imperial legions, and even their tradition-bound thieves and scoundrels found places in the underworld beyond the wild northern coasts of home. But much of this unity was an affair of the rich and important. The humble Kueh fisherfolk of the northern coasts lived much as they always did, one master the same as another and all of them indifferent to the ways of common peasants.

This humble existence saved most of the Kueh who managed to survive the Tide. Flotillas of little village fishing boats set out to rendezvous with the exile fleet, and gilded nobles died in their palaces while their lessers fought wind and wave to reach safety. Few among the great survived the Tide, but whole villages of common folk won through to the Isles.

One of those who survived was the Archmage Rai, a renegade yamabushi who rejected the traditional arts of his people for darker researchers into planar sorceries and the forging of otherworldly pacts. He rapidly came to influence many of those Kueh who survived, drawing them to his cause through a mixture of intimidation and protection. Archmage Lammach never trusted the sinister binder, and Rai soon withdrew from Xian with his followers. The Kueh in his service founded the city of Kitaminato in the north, and it became a hub for those ambitious young men and women who had conceived dreams of restoring the ancient independence of the Kueh.

When the Shou retaliated against the interlopers during the Ravaging two centuries ago, it looked as if Kitaminato would never get the chance to be the capital of any living land. It was during the darkest hours of the fighting that Archmage Rai used his unholy arts to forge a pact with the Hell Kings in order to save his city. A flood of demons swept away the attacking Shou- but at a terrible price. From that day onward, Archmage Rai was the Shogun of Kitaminato, and his people were consecrated to the service of Hell.

Most Kueh outside the Shogunate are refugees from the grim daimyos of that land, and bitterly opposed to the monstrous ways that have come to be commonplace there. Imperials sometimes mistrust Kueh, thinking them hidden servants of the Shogun. Most come to understand otherwise after seeing the ferocity with which these men and women root out the followers of the Hell Kings.

Thanks to centuries of mingled blood, Kueh tend to resemble Imperials in physical appearance. The men tend to be slightly taller, however, and both sexes cultivate an aristocratic pallor when

their station permits. Most Kueh are humble farmers or fishermen, though some continue to practice the ancient arts of the samurai and the yamabushi.

***Kueh Adventurers*** tend to be a hard-bitten lot. Those who have successfully escaped the Shogunate are often toughened by their ordeal and those from families fortunate enough to have evaded Shogun Rai's grasp usually owe it to a tradition of martial or mystical prowess. Kueh samurai can often be found seeking a worthy lord to serve, and yamabushi roam widely in search of lost fragments of their venerable lore. Kueh outside the Shogunate are often fired by a bitter loathing for their decadent brethren, and many Kueh adventurers make a point of scourging the devil-worshippers whenever possible.

## Shou

As far as any scholar can tell, the Shou are the native inhabitants of the Sunset Isles, with records of their existence reaching back to the first mainland explorers and renegades to make landfall on the Isles. There is no doubt that they remain masters of much of the archipelago still, and are a constant threat to the fragile human civilization that remains.

The Shou are broken up into varying tribes, commonly called after the Eirengarder words for their kind- "orcs", "goblins", "bugbears", and "hobgoblins". These beast-men had been known in other lands, but never in such overwhelming numbers as were found in the Isles- and never with such terrible power. Their witches were a match for the mightiest sorcerers to arrive with the exile fleet, and their war chiefs cut a red road through the heroes of men.



The Shou would almost certainly have crushed the refugees in short order had they not been even more hostile to each other than to the humans. Every clan was against every other, each one convinced that they were the “true sons” of their god Shakun and that the other tribes were fit only for slaves and concubines. Archmage Lammach and his fellows cunningly played one tribe off against the other until they were so bloodied that the weaker humans were able to drive them out of the eastern end of Ektau entirely. In the north, the Skandr were able to make a home on rocky Aktau where the great hordes of Shou could not live, for the savages have always had a great dread of the ocean and will not willingly go on ships.

This respite has held with some interruptions for three hundred years. The Shou almost came together to smash the humans on Ektau two hundred years ago in the march known as the Ravaging, and indeed went so far as to depopulate the province of what is now the Westmark. A band of courageous adventurers managed to slay their dread Witch-Queen Agrahti at the very walls of Xian, and the horde collapsed into squabbling tribes that were eventually driven back west. Many ruins from this era remain lost in the western hills.

The Shou look almost identical to humans, though each with small differences in skin color and facial features. Orcs tend to have dark skin, though not as dark as Gadaal, while bugbears are hairy and pale, and hobgoblins and goblins are dusky or greenish. All prefer to sharpen their teeth and perform ritual scarifications, brands, and piercings to indicate their clan and achievements. Orcs are the size of Eirengarders, if broader in the shoulders, while hobgoblins tend to lean wiriness. Bugbears are as much as a foot taller and powerfully built, while few goblins pass five feet in height. Devoid of their terrifying ornaments and brands, the Shou males are considered almost handsome by human standards- and the females very much so. The relentless bloodshed between humans and Shou leaves little opportunity for peaceful engagement, but the races are interfertile.

The hatred between humans and Shou is incandescent in its purity. The humans are constantly pushing Shou clans further west into the mountains in order to clear enough new land for their growing population, and the Shou respond with constant raids and the occasional full-dress invasion of a border province. It is an existential struggle for both races; without more land, the humans will watch their children starve, and a Shou clan driven back against its rivals can expect only death or enslavement. If the Shou were ever able to put aside their internecine strife, they might be able to exterminate the humans yet. The harder they are pushed, the more likely this is to come to pass.

*Shou adventurers* are almost unknown. Those that refrain from sharpening their teeth or accepting clan brands can pass as human, though the green-tinted clans or those of even more unusual colors are not so fortunate. A known Shou can expect immediate mob violence from any humans in the vicinity. Shou-human halfbreeds are not unknown in human societies, however, though the Shou kill any infant of “impure blood”. These half-castes face almost uniform rejection and scorn from other humans, and many find themselves forced into a wandering life simply to avoid becoming a convenient scapegoat for whatever notorious crime was last committed in their vicinity. Many seek homes far from their birthplace, the better to pass as wholly human.

## Skandr

Sons and daughters of the cold northern coasts, the Skandr have been in the Sunset Isles for almost seven hundred years. The northern isle of Aktau served as a useful way station on their long trade journeys between their home coasts and the western continents, and a small settlement remained there for ages before the coming of the Tide. When it first billowed up from the south, many Skandr took flight in their longships and were guided by Lammach to the safety of the Isles. Those that did not look to their kinsmen on Aktau made landfall in the south with the rest of the fleet.

The Skandr are a black-haired folk, pale of skin and eye and given to big frames. They are famous stonemasons, traders, and sea-raiders, as often at war with their neighbors as bringing them the wealth of far countries in their holds. Numerous raids of reprisal were launched against the cold shores of Skandrheim in the years before the Tide, but they always came to nothing. The bleak gray walls of the north were too high and too strong for the invading forces to ever dislodge their masters.

It is said that the Skandr were slaves to the dwarves in ancient days, though the Skandr say that there was simply great friendship between them and the lords of Undermost. It was from the dwarves that the Skandr learned their arts of stonecrafting and metalwork, and while the dwarf-mothers would say that Skandr walls are good “for human work”, there is no question that the northmen are the best among men at the building. The Imperials say that if you leave a Skandr on a rocky shore for a night, he’ll have built himself a wall of stones, and if you leave him for a month, he will have claimed the land with a tower.

And if you leave him for a year, they say, his cousin will have come to knock it down. The Skandr are prone to feuding and grim vendettas between matrilineal clans. They are fiercely loyal to their lineage and their shipmates, and an offense to one is an invitation to a general melee. They are valued masons and sailors in the Isles, though their employers occasionally have cause for distress when some Skandr captain forgets that he is a merchant and not a pirate.

The Skandr have blended in well with the other humans on the Isles, and outside their ancestral fastness in the far north they can be found mixed in with most sizable populations. A few of the more clannish bands remain in isolated fishing villages or on rocky isles, maintaining their old ways and firm in the worship of their ancient gods.

*Skandr adventurers* might be following the ancient traditions of their people, a youthful roaming in search of trade and plunder. While the more civilized areas of Ektau frown on the latter, there are never any shortage of bandit crews, Shou raiding parties, or renegade lords to exercise their swords. Other Skandr find themselves driven by an unquenchable lust for journeying, a questing need to roam both earth and sea. Few of these restless souls ever find peace, but many do deeds worthy of remembering before they die.

# THE LAY OF THE LAND

The archipelago known as the Sunset Isles is a vast sprawl of islands deep within the Western Sea. While intrepid explorers and storm-tossed merchants have managed to map out much of the archipelago's coastline, many of the islands remain all but unexplored within recorded memory. The northern island of Aktau hosts the modest city-state of Nordheim and the dwarven holding of Angrimmr, while the southern island of Ektau is large and fertile enough to accommodate several contentious powers. Still, the wave-wracked islands between are often home to mysteries unknown to all save the bravest explorers and most intrepid adventurers.

## Climate

The Isles are located between two massive oceanic counter-currents. The Great Northern Flow has carried generations of Skandr merchants and raiders across the Western Sea, but the icy waters render the northern end of the archipelago snowy and unfriendly to plant life beyond the tough evergreens and scrub brush that mat the northern islands. In the south, the Southern Gyre brings hot, humid air to blanket much of Ektau and leave the rest warm and welcoming to agriculture.

There are four main climate bands in the Isles. From north to south, they are sub-arctic, cool temperate, warm temperate, and sub-tropical. The oceanic currents dominate the climate of the Isles, and the interior of the land masses can actually be more temperate than the coastlines. The mixing of hot and cold air also gives rise to the terrible storms that wrack the central region of the archipelago, making travel between the north and south a perilous affair for ships.

The sub-arctic regions of the Isles have long, snowy winters and brief growing seasons. The Skandr of Nordheim largely rely on fishing to feed their numbers, along with limited agriculture. The dwarves of Angrimmr have vast fungus-farms underground that keep them adequately supplied, supplemented with herds of meatbeetles and a few surface ranches stocked with long-horned ice aurochs that fear few predators.

The cool temperate regions have four sharply-delineated seasons and are better-suited to agriculture. The more abundant plant and animal life make control of these regions hotly contested among tribes of Shou and other intelligent beings. The warm temperate zones also have seasonal variation, but their winters tend more to rain than snow, though the latter is relatively common at higher altitudes.

Sub-tropical zones have two seasons, wet and dry, corresponding to the more temperate seasons of summer/fall, and winter/spring. The torrential rains of the wet season can make travel very difficult and occasionally imperil villages with floods and mud slides. Still, the earth in these regions can give forth three or even four harvests a year with careful husbandry.

## Travel

Roads in the Sunset Isles are primitive at best, usually no more than muddy tracks or the occasional desultory wooden bridge. The exception is in the mountains of Altgrimmr and Angrimmr, where ancient dwarf-roads often cut through entire mountainsides without so curving so much as a handspan in a mile's distance. Even thousands of years after their construction, these roadways and bridges still endure.

Most travelers make do with horses, wagons, or foot porters when an inland journey is necessary. Most of the limited roadwork done in the Isles is done to facilitate the movement of food from the inland villages to the great cities of the coast, and those towns and villages that do not send much trade to the coasts might not have more than a weathered footpath to connect them with the rest of civilization.

An unburdened traveler crossing grasslands can make as much as twenty-five miles a day if he's fortunate. A swift rider on a blooded steed might travel twice that. Most of those who journey are not so fortunate, and navigating the rough roads and winding jungle trails can cut speeds in half, or even to a quarter in the worst terrain.

The sea is the main road between the great coastal cities, swifter and often safer than inland travel. A fast ship can make as much as a hundred miles in a day, and carry passengers in far more ease and comfort than an unruly horse or mud-bogged wagon. Still, pirates are known to pounce on unwary coasters, and there always remains the threat of some storm hurling a ship into the roiling Red Tide that prowls a hundred miles from shore.

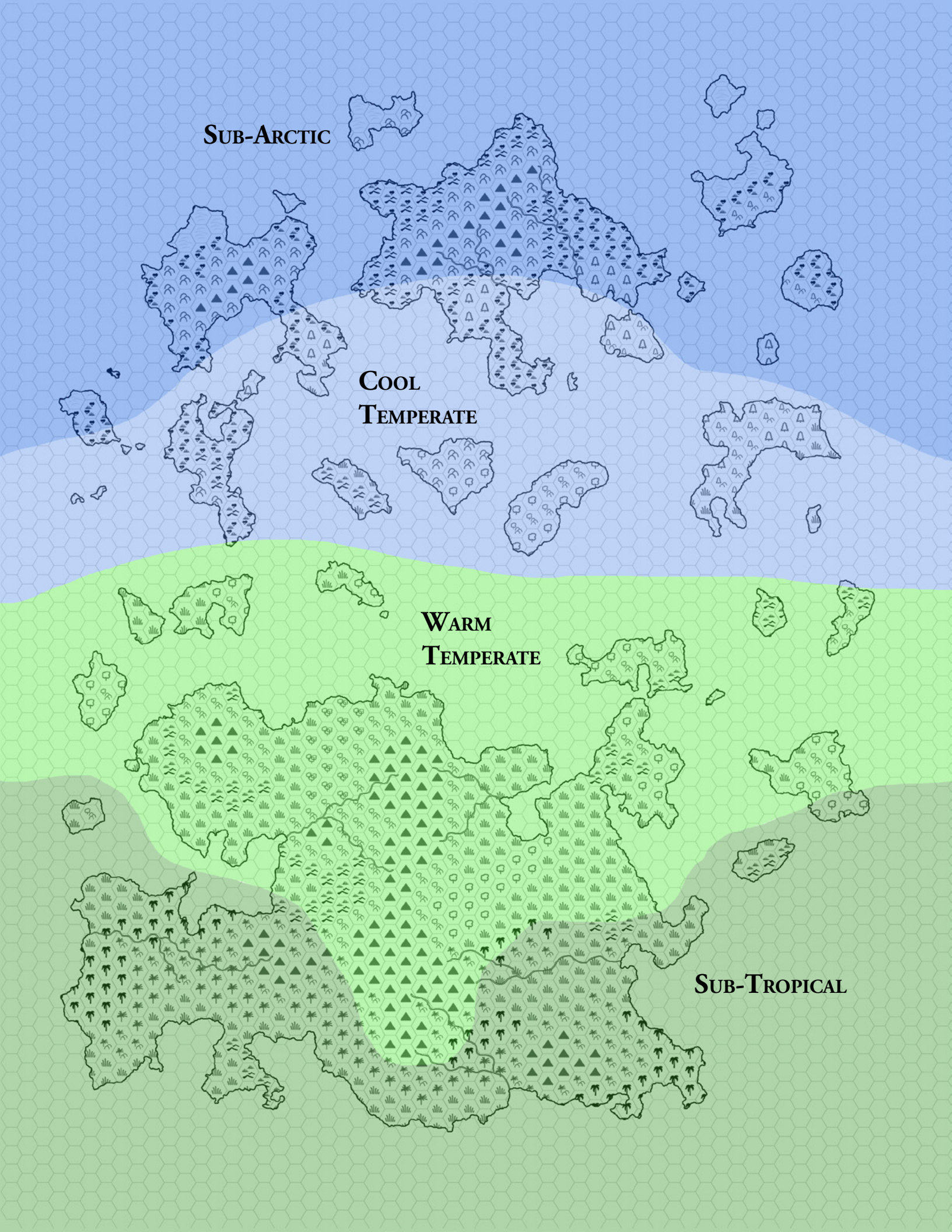
Travel between the northern and southern ends of the archipelago is highly dangerous. The central zone where the cold and warm currents of the Isles meet is thick with ferocious storms and ship-killing winds. These tempests are worst in the middle of the archipelago, so most travel skirts the eastern or western edges of the archipelago, gambling that a good captain can pass the storms without being driven into the hungry mists of the Red Tide.

**SUB-ARCTIC**

**COOL  
TEMPERATE**

**WARM  
TEMPERATE**

**SUB-TROPICAL**



## Wilderness Encounters

Even in the heart of the human-settled lands of the Isles, the empty spaces between cities and villages are not entirely safe. The wild verdancy of the jungles and mountains gives birth to many strange and terrible beasts, and there are always some prowling closer to human habitations for the sake of easy prey.

Aside from the hazards of the natural world, bandits, outlaws, and raiding Shou bands are a constant danger. The worst of these ruffians do not long survive in the closely-guarded lands near the great cities, but in the Westmark and along the borders of the polities they can infest the land unhindered.

Even in the settled lands, most travelers prefer to journey in groups of four or five, and in the Westmark and other wild lands men count travelers fools if they haven't a half-dozen skilled warriors among them.

The following tables list some of the more likely wilderness encounters in the Isles, keyed to terrain type. Some of these foes will be far more than any low-level group can expect to handle in combat, so the referee should give such parties an honest chance to avoid the encounter. Spoor, claw-marks, evidence of burnt farmsteads, and other indicia can be used to hint that a different route is advisable.

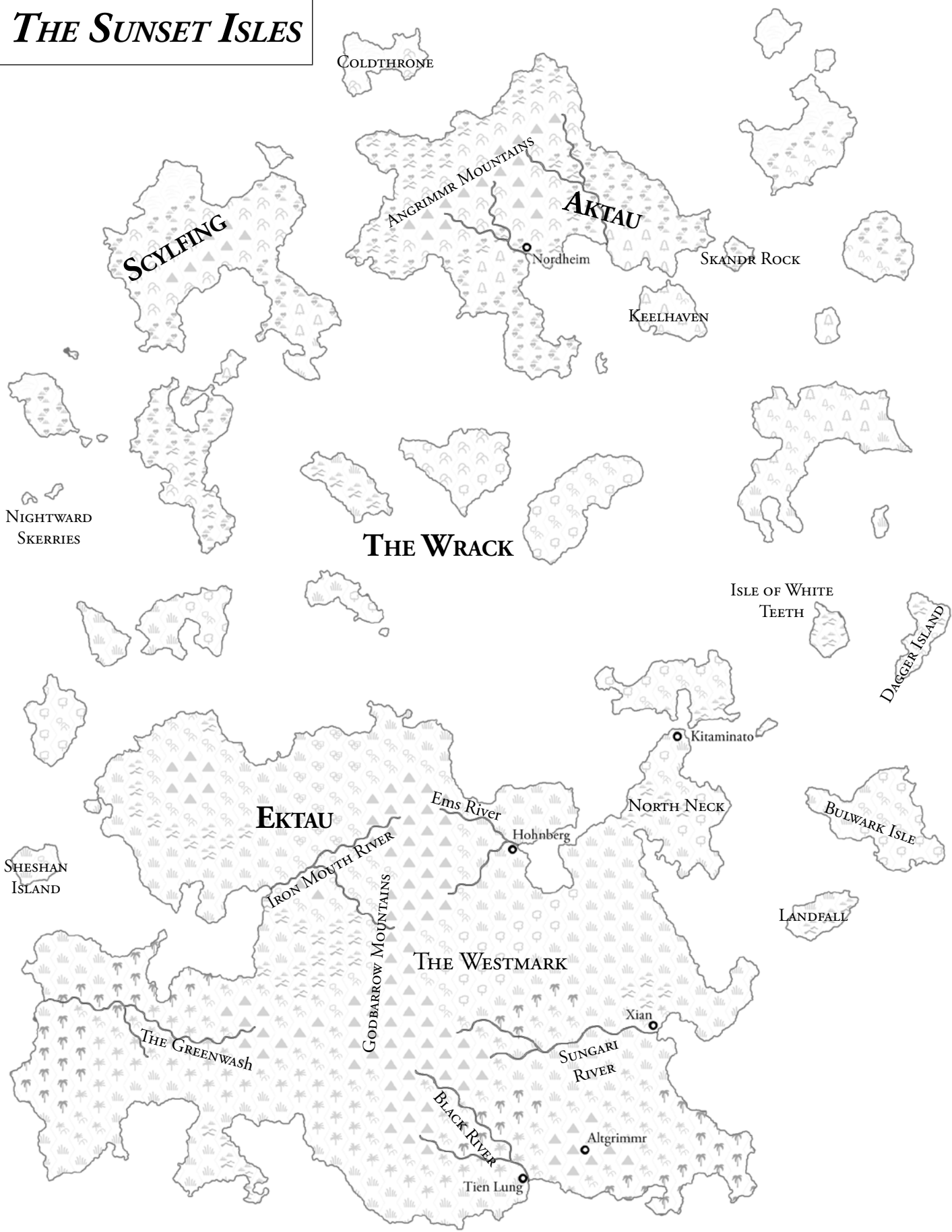
Encounter frequencies should be adjusted based on the degree of civilization and the proximity of human settlement. Next to Xian, there might only be a 1 in 20 chance of encountering any trouble, and such trouble is almost certainly human. In a hex deep in the Godbarrows, there might be no more than a 1 in 6 chance of *not* encountering some kind of Shou presence in a given hex. For most Westmark hexes or border zones, a 1 in 4 chance of encountering some peril in a hex is appropriate.

### WILDERNESS ENCOUNTER TABLES

1d12	TEMPERATE FORESTS	JUNGLES	HILLS	MOUNTAINS	PLAINS
1	Bear, Black	Ant, Giant	Cat, Mountain Lion	Cat, Mountain Lion	Ant, Giant
2	Bear, Cave	Ape, Albino	Cat, Sabre-Tooth Tiger	Chimera	Boar
3	Bee, Giant Killer	Baboon, Higher	Dwarf	Dwarf	Cat, Lion
4	Ferret, Giant	Cat, Tiger	Giant, Hill	Giant, Hill	Hippogriff
5	Lizard, Draco	Fly, Giant Carnivorous	Kobold	Giant, Stone	Kobolds
6	Men, Brigand	Gnoll	Men, Brigand	Griffon	Men, Brigand
7	Ogre, Isle	Insect Swarm	Ogre, Isle	Hawk, Giant	Ogre, Isle
8	Owl Bear	Lizardfolk, Isle	Shou, Bugbear	Morlock	Shou, Goblin
9	Shou, Goblin	Men, Brigand	Shou, Goblin	Scorpion, Giant	Shou, Orc
10	Spider, Black Widow	Phase Tiger	Shou, Orc	Shou, Bugbear	Snake, Giant Rattler
11	Stirge	Scorpion, Giant	Shrew, Giant	Shou, Goblin	Troll
12	Wolf	Shou, Goblin	Wolf, Dire	Shou, Orc	Wolf

1d12	SUB-ARCTIC	SEA	ROAD	SCRUBLAND
1	Bear, Polar	Eel, Sea	Dwarf	Fly, Giant Carnivorous
2	Cat, Tiger	Ghoul	Elf	Ghoul
3	Giant, Hill	Hawk, Giant	Ghoul	Giant, Hill
4	Gnoll	Hydra, Aquatic	Halfing	Gnoll
5	Griffon	Lizardfolk, Isle	Men, Brigand	Kobold
6	Hawk, Giant	Men, Merchant	Men, Merchant	Lizardfolk, Isle
7	Men, Brigand	Men, Pirate	Ogre, Isle	Shou, Goblin
8	Ogre, Isle	Octopus, Giant	Shou, Bugbear	Shou, Orc
9	Rhinoceros, Woolly	Sea Serpent	Shou, Goblin	Spider, Black Widow
10	Shou, Bugbear	Shark	Shou, Orc	Stirge
11	Shou, Orc	Squid, Giant	Wolf	Toad, Giant
12	Wolf, Winter	Whale	Zombie	Troll

# THE SUNSET ISLES



## Places of Importance in the Isles

Many of the islands and sandspits in the Sunset Isles have no commonly-agreed names. Much of the central zone of the archipelago is too storm-wracked and dangerous for explorers to linger, and those few who manage to survey the land often fail to escape with their lives. Some of the more familiar- or at least agreed-upon- locations are described in this section.

**Aktau:** The largest of the northern islands in the Sunset Isles. Relatively few Shou bands inhabit Aktau due to the cold climate and sparser food supplies. The Skandr of Nordheim have the advantage of their fishing boats, while the Shou dread the sea and can only fish the often-iced rivers and streams. The dwarven colony of Angrimmr regularly trades with the Skandr, in between periodic outbreaks of Shou violence.

**Altgrimmr:** Capital and chief delve of the Altgrimmr dwarves. Roughly 2,500 dwarves make their home in the delve under the leadership of Underking Pyotr.

**Angrimmr Mountains:** A harsh, jagged spine of volcanic mountains along the length of Aktau in the north. Some of Angrimmr's peaks are not entirely devoid of life, and the local dwarves are obliged to dig carefully.

**Black River:** Washing down from the hills around Tien Lung, the Black River's dark waters are tainted by traces of godbone leached from the rich soil of the hill country. The bitter taste is unpleasant to most locals, who prefer well water, but some Stitched Path magi drink it in the belief that it strengthens their magical powers.

**Coldthrone:** A small island off the north coast of Aktau, Coldthrone is said to be the home of a powerful and malevolent wizard who relies upon the perpetually icy clime to preserve his undying flesh. Mariners who have dared to approach the island have reported the sight of high towers inland, and seemingly deserted coastal settlements of white stone and sculpted ice.

**Dagger Island:** Once the home of a thriving colony planted by some long-forgotten people, some disaster seems to have driven the locals underground. Mazes of deeply buried tunnels thread beneath the ruins of their ancient settlements.

**Ektau:** The largest body of land in the Sunset Isles and the chief home of humanity in the archipelago. All of the known major human polities are on Ektau, with the exception of the Skandr colony of Nordheim. Still, other islands might yet hold substantial populations unknown to the inhabitants of Ektau.

**Ems River:** A clean and swift-flowing river that descends from the northern Godbarrow mountains to wash the walls of Hohnberg.

**Godbarrows:** The tallest and most rugged mountains in the island chain, forming a spine down the center of the island of Ektau. The Shou claim that the Godbarrow range was formed from the flesh of their god Shakun when he sacrificed himself for his people. The richest veins of the black rock known as "godbone" are found in the high reaches here.

**Greenwash, The:** A river running through the Shou-held jungles of western Xian. The few brave explorers who have dared to navigate it report several massive ruin complexes flanking its length, most thickly overgrown with jungle life. The ferocious Shou tribes in the vicinity have prevented any more detailed exploration.

**Hohnberg:** Capital of the Hohnberg Pact under the Thusundi Amalric Gram and home to 8,000 men and women. Most of the inhabitants of Hohnberg are of Eirengarder descent, and the worship of their god, the Maker, is by far the most common in the city. Hohnbergers stand constantly vigilant for raids by Shou bands coming down from the western mountains.

**Iron Mouth River:** Named for the rich deposits of iron ore around the river mouth, the Iron Mouth is lined with numerous Shou tribes who often fight over the deposits. A few captured Shou claim that the headwaters of the river high in the mountains spring from a great smithy once worked by their god Shakun.

**Isle of White Teeth:** Travel to and from this island is made dangerous by the sharp reefs that ring it. Only an expert sailor or a very small boat can make it over the reefs to land, and this additional measure of privacy has encouraged many outlaws and renegades from Ektau to flee there. The small village of Whiteport is the only settlement with significant trade with the outside world, though rumors persist that a band of Kueh renegades plot the downfall of the Shogunate somewhere in the island's interior.

**Keelhaven:** The tall pines of this island make for good keels and shipbuilding timber, which is not always easy to get in the cold, scrubby lands of the northern archipelago. Skandr sailors from nearby Nordheim are reluctant to linger overlong on the island, however, as they say that there are "green devils" there that harvest and cut men the way that men cut trees.

**Kitaminato:** Capital of the Shogunate of the North under the Shogun Rai, and inhabited by 10,000 people of largely Kueh extraction. Kitaminato's master bought his people's salvation in exchange for the worship of the Hell Kings. Beautiful temples of natural grace and harmony conceal fanged idols and hideous rites of propitiation. Outsiders are advised not to offer anything resembling worship to any other gods while in the city, on pain of sacrifice.

**Landfall:** The first patch of land spotted by the exiles when they arrived in the Sunset Isles, Landfall is dotted with shrines raised in gratitude. Most have been deserted by their keepers for generations, but some still contain lore and artifacts long since lost on Ektau. Unfortunately, those that retain their wealth are usually guarded by deathless protectors, or located in the heart of a Shou tribe's lands.

**Nightward Skerries:** These small spits of land would have little to remark them were it not for the springs of fresh water there that are often used by ships making the dangerous western passage between Aktau and Ektau. Many ships shattered by the Wrack have their wreckage spun outward to pile on the shores of the Skerries, and mariners speak of a small ruined town perched on the coast that appears to have once been inhabited by humans. Those that investigate too closely tend not to return, however, so most mariners stay clear.



**Nordheim:** A Skandr settlement on the southern shore of Aktau, ruled by Konung Hrothgar and a council of wealthy ship-owners. Eight thousand Skandr and others live within the city's massive stone walls. Outlying villages provide such agricultural produce as can be grown on cold Aktau, but most such settlements rely just as much on their fishing boats. Nordheim has friendly relations with Xian, though it is dangerous and difficult to cross the stormy waters between them.

**North Neck:** A rolling, hilly country under the rule of the Shogunate of the North. The terraced hills are dotted with picturesque villages, but also the haunted ruins of many small towns and fortifications shattered by the Shou invaders during the Ravaging. Outsiders are advised to stay well away from Shogunate patrols, who consider foreigners without travel papers to be free occasions for amusement.

**Scylfing:** A large, mountainous island west of Aktau, even colder and less clement due to the icy waters of the Great Northern Flow. Skandr tales claim that it was warmer once, centuries ago, and that the first Skandr settlements on the Isles were built there. The skalds claim that the Skandr there even found cities inhabited by Shou before the ice came, though many scoff at the idea of nomadic Shou ever settling into cities, let alone building them.

**Sheshan Island:** An outpost of human civilization in the west, Sheshan relies on the fact that Shou hate water travel to keep itself alive against the teeming hordes of savages that infest western Ektau. A few fishing villages dot the island, along with the market town of Jing Hao, which does a side business in supplying adven-

turers who dare to venture onto the mainland. Jing Hao is ruled by its Magistrate, and while his great-grandfather pledged loyalty to Xian no local takes any mainland authority seriously any more.

**Skandr Rock:** Once a home for Skandr exiled from the clans of Nordheim, Skandr Rock is now haunted by the sullen remnants of their huts and the small stone settlements they built.

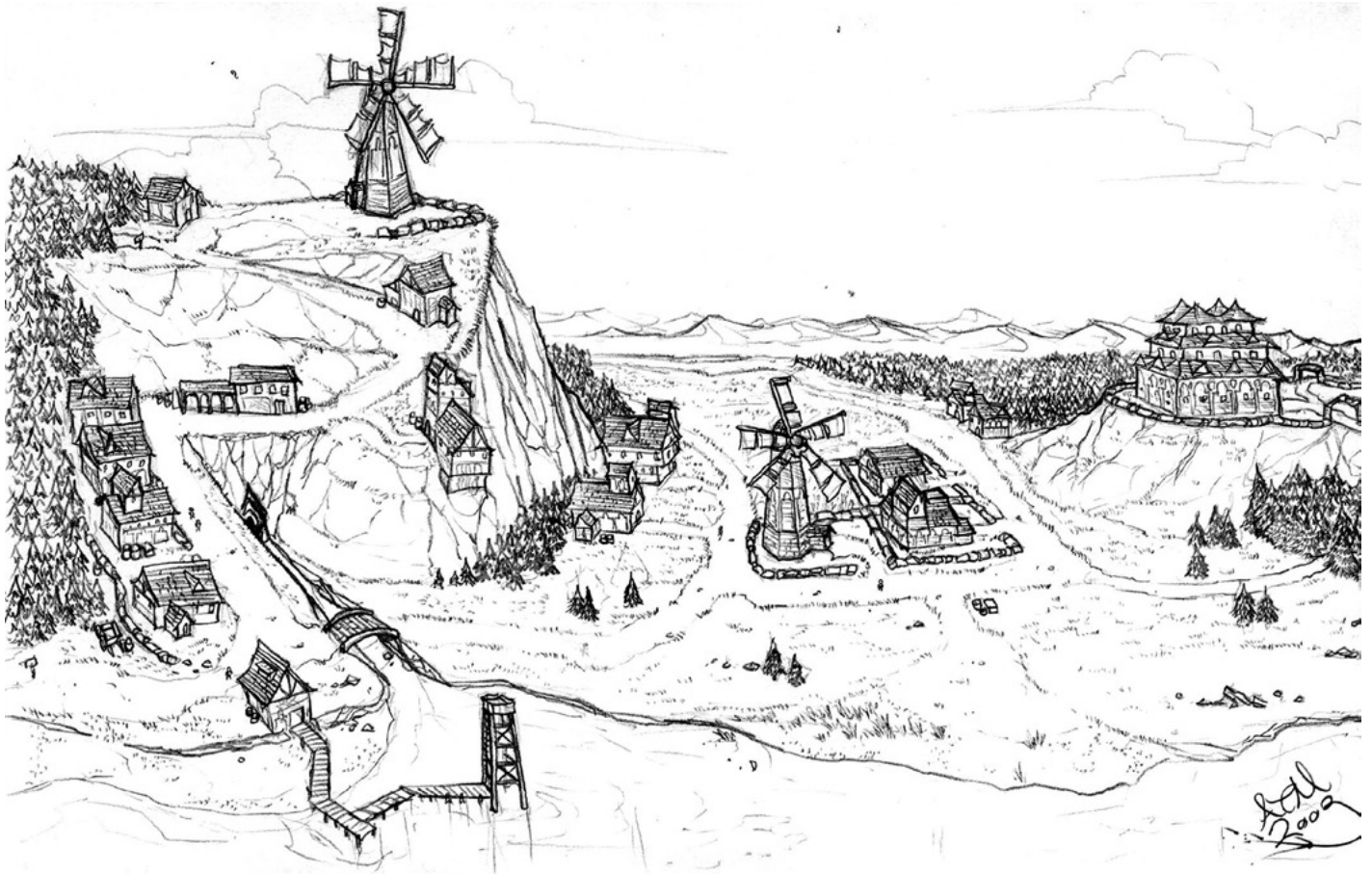
**Sungari River:** A great river that flows into Refuge Bay, providing the city of Xian and its farmlands with needed water.

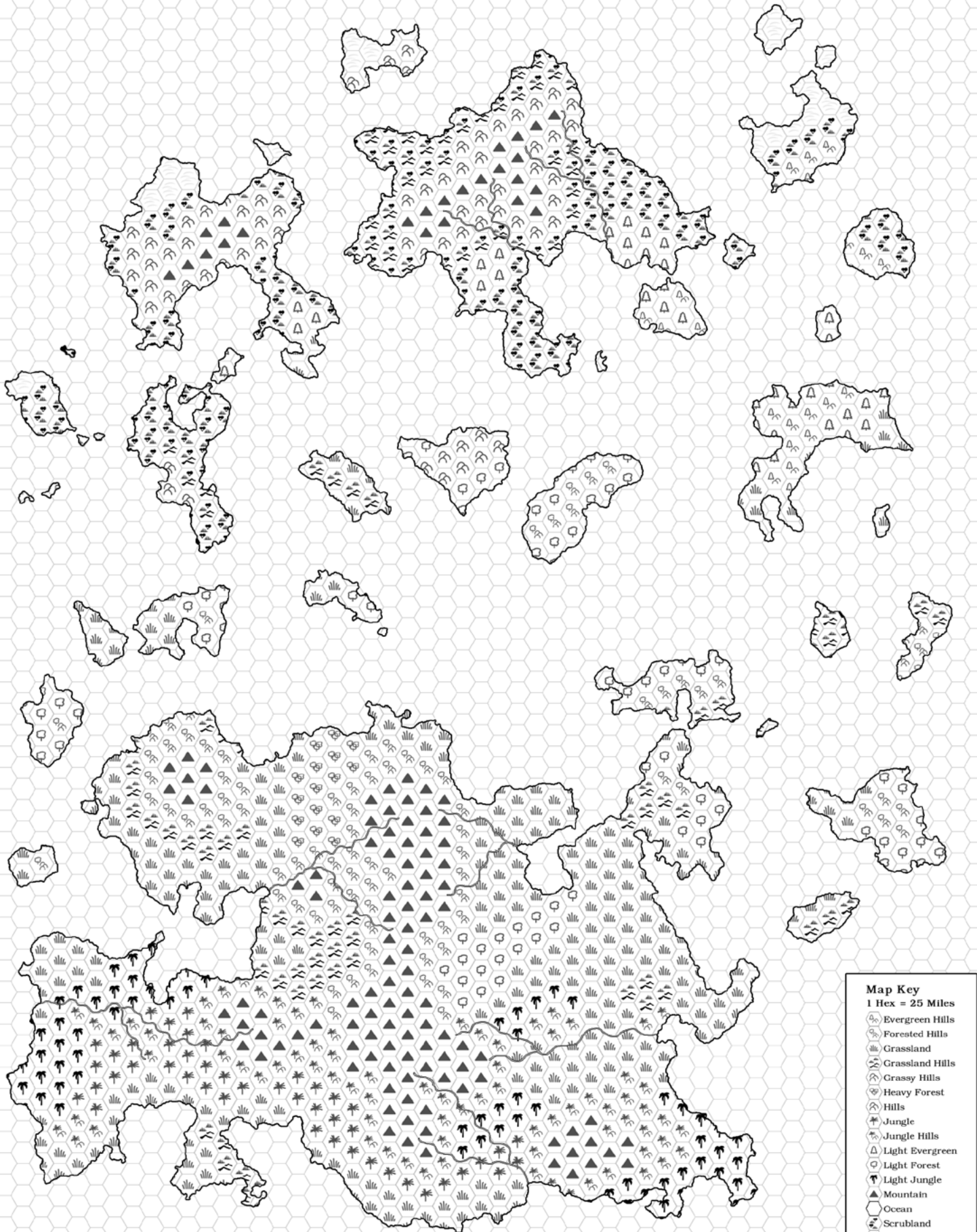
**Tien Lung:** Amber city of sorcerers, Tien Lung is ruled by the Enlightened Sage and is home to 11,000 people. Its wizards are the unquestioned masters of the city and a commoner who dares defy them will be lucky to die quickly rather than being taken for use in the hideous rites of the Stitched Path.

**Westmark, The:** A province of blasted cities and ruined villages destroyed during the Ravaging of 120 AL. A few brave colonists try to reclaim the rich land for humanity, but border perils claim many of them.

**Wrack, The:** A band of ferocious currents and fierce storms spins at the center of the archipelago. Few captains can navigate their dangers.

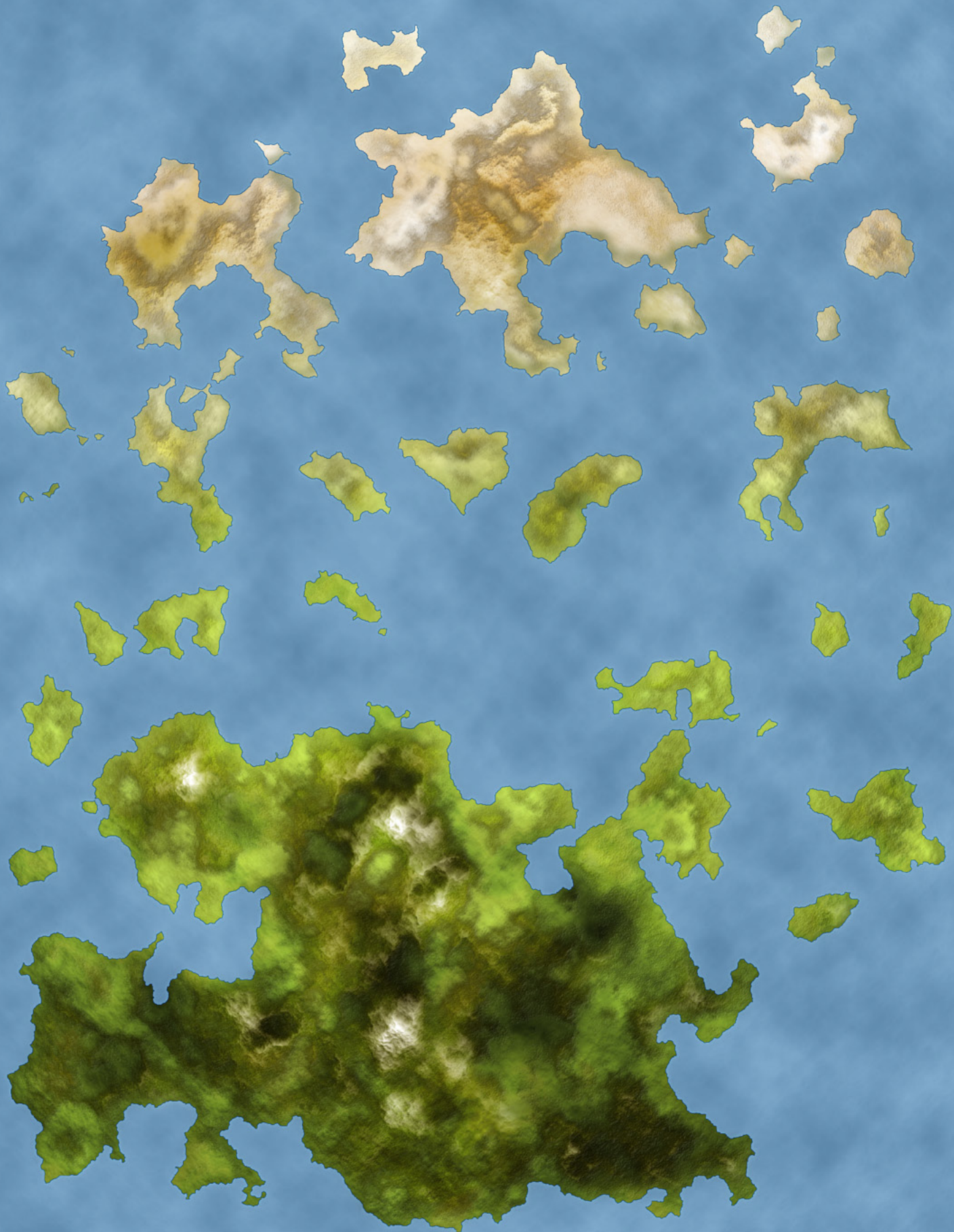
**Xian:** Greatest known city of the Sunset Isles and capital of its polity, ruled by the Mandarin Sei-Wen MacLammach. 14,000 inhabitants call the city home, many of them of Imperial extraction.





**Map Key**  
 1 Hex = 25 Miles

- ⊗ Evergreen Hills
- ⊗ Forested Hills
- ⊗ Grassland
- ⊗ Grassland Hills
- ⊗ Grassy Hills
- ⊗ Heavy Forest
- ⊗ Hills
- ⊗ Jungle
- ⊗ Jungle Hills
- ⊗ Light Evergreen
- ⊗ Light Forest
- ⊗ Light Jungle
- ⊗ Mountain
- ⊗ Ocean
- ⊗ Scrubland
- ⊗ Scrubland Hills
- ⊗ Snow Fields



# STATE AND SOCIETY

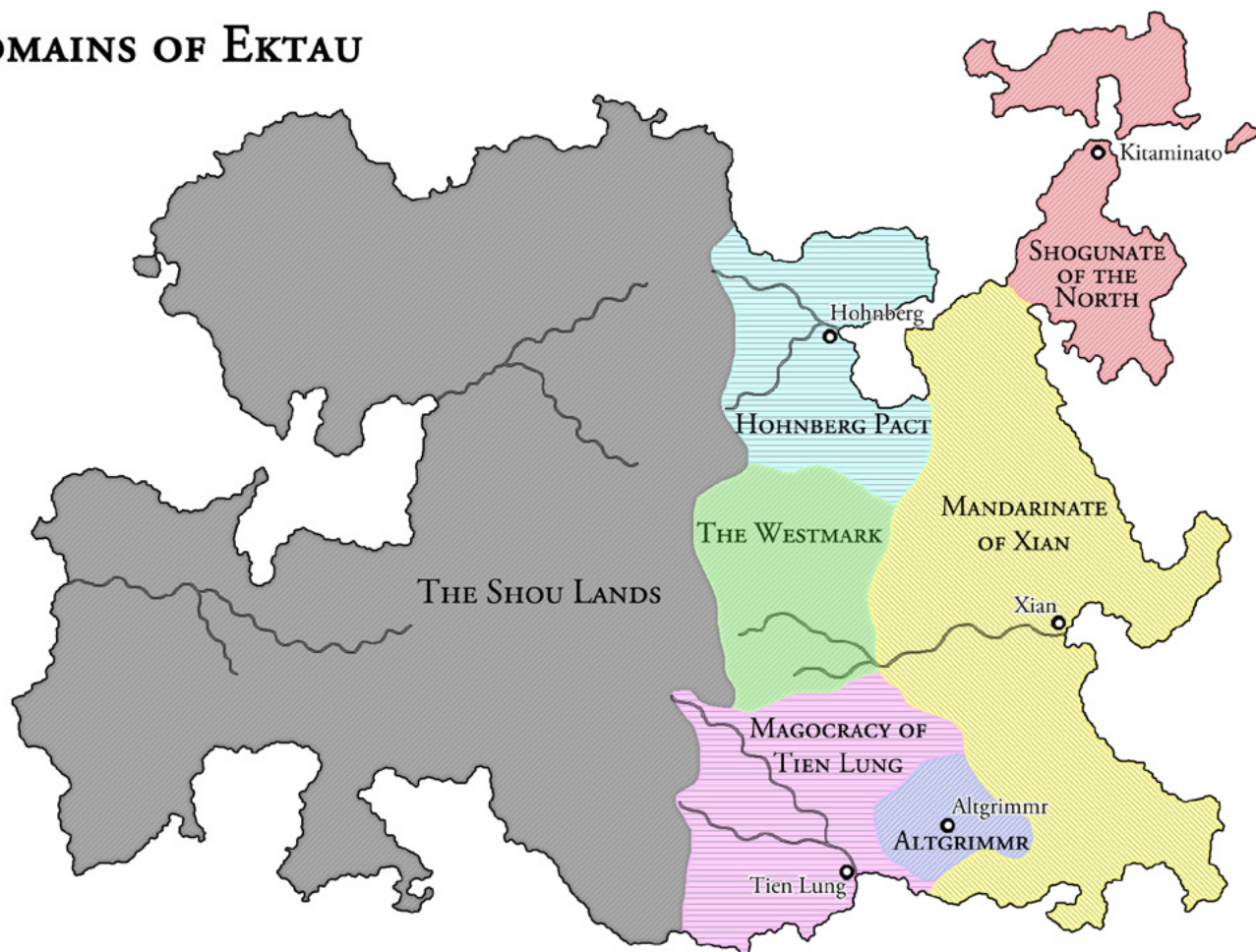
In the three hundred years since the Landing the humans of Ektau have splintered into several major polities, all born from the first settlement at Xian. The land has always been too rough for quick communications, and the seas too perilous for easy trade. Provincial trade cities grew more and more distant from their nominal overlord at Xian, and in the end the pretense was abandoned entirely. Some of the other polities of Ektau may still have a degree of deference to Xianese wishes, but they are their own masters now.

Humans are not the only intelligent inhabitants of Ektau. The dwarves of Altgrimmr maintain their own counsel in their name-sake mountains, cautiously allied with the Hohnberg Pact and the Mandarinate against the detestable practices of Tien Lung and the Shogunate of the North.

The Shou remain active in the west, a steady stream of vengeful tribes creeping over the spine of the Godbarrow mountain range to strike against the hated human invaders. Hohnberg and Tien Lung fight a constant battle against these raiders, and Xianese troops meet them at the border of the old Westmark to defend the lands beyond.

The Westmark itself remains largely empty, much as it has since the Ravaging almost two centuries past. Dead cities and ashen villages stand in silent memorial of that great overthrow, waiting for those souls brave enough to reclaim what their ancestors lost in fire and screams. There is no law in the Westmark beyond the strength of a man's sword arm, and the empty land attracts many who desire a new life, or the opportunity to prey on those who do.

## DOMAINS OF EKTAU



## ALTGRIMMR

<b>Population</b>	23,000 overall, 2,500 in Deep Altgrimmr.
<b>Ruler</b>	Underking Pyotr

The dwarves of the Altgrimmr range have been here for long before the arrival of the humans. In the deep fastnesses of their ancestors, they held back the Shou and made a hard-pressed home on the Isles. Since the coming of the exile fleet and the establishment of the human polities, the dwarves of Altgrimmr have been much less troubled by the Shou and have been able to grow their numbers in a way impossible before. Still, even with so many young dwarves now coming up, no more than a fifth of the ancient delves in the Altgrimmr range have even been cleared, let alone reoccupied.

The Underking weighs his alliances carefully, and is loathe to send his people to fight the wars of men. Still, he recognizes the threat that Tien Lung presents, and while he has a strong dwarven distaste for the judicial slavery practiced in Xian, he is better-disposed to them than the red sorcerers of the west. The land most congenial to his people is the Hohnberg Pact in the northwest, as both polities share an intense distaste for slavery. The Makerite zeal of his human allies grates at times, but their sober, stern cultures share much in common.

For now, the Underking does what he can to shepherd his people's strength for the hard times to come. It is only a matter of time before the Shou come again, and he means the dwarves of Altgrimmr to be ready for them. In the meanwhile, many among the restless young find their attention turn to the human lands, and the prospect of the tomb-gold and glory that is hard to find in the wary tunnels of home.

### Altgrimmr Society and Government

Altgrimmr is made up overwhelmingly of dwarves, with only a handful of other races living among them as artisans and foreign merchants. As such, their way of life is unusually uniform among the polyglot nations of Ektau. The dwarves make no great point of this, secure in their knowledge that their way is the best.

Altgrimmr is divided up into clans, each clan generally holding an entire delving. In the capital of Deep Altgrimmr, the clans each have their own branch of tunnels and are responsible for repair and extension. Marriages are by custom made between clans, and most delvings are affiliated with their neighbors in a complex web of matrimony.

Social roles are divided sharply between males and females. Males are responsible for mining, building, and war, while females conduct all the other business of society, including crafting and administrative work. The Underking is traditionally the male leader of the strongest clan in Deep Altgrimmr, but the leaders of the crafting guilds are all female. The leaders of the ancestor cults may be of either gender, having risen to their authority through their own insight and wisdom rather than being formally apprenticed to the role. Elderly female lorekeepers might know much of the ancestors, but a true bond with them must be demonstrated by action and perfect emulation of their virtues.

Altgrimmr dwarves revere the shades of their ancestors, and indeed, most of a dwarf's life is given over towards accumulating the tomb-gold they will need in the afterlife. When a dwarf dies, his soul is cast into the underworld without the good offices of a god to protect him. All that stands between him and the broken shards of the ravaging Mother Below is the aid of his dead ancestors and the power of the spirit-gold he brings with him. The metal has fantastic ritual virtues in the underworld, and spirit-weapons and armor forged from the essence of the buried gold allow the dead dwarves to hold their own against the hungry legions of the Mother Below.

Tomb-gold must be buried with a dwarf, but as soon as the deceased's spirit has journeyed to the afterlife the gold can be removed without loss. Some dwarven wraiths are too frightened to leave, however, and must be encouraged or driven onward by ancestor cultists. The tomb-gold is considered their fair pay for such labor.

Some dwarves turn away from the ancestors, however, and go crawling back to the Mother Below in an appeal for her mercy and forgiveness. The scattered fragments of the goddess grant these "Repenters" a kind of forbearance, but only so long as they demonstrate appropriate repentance for their crimes. These demonstrations take the place of ritual scarification and self-torture- and the methodical capture and torment of their wayward brethren. In exchange for these services, Repenters are promised a glorious role in the afterlife as captains of the Mother Below's spectral legions and safety from the unending torment she will bring upon dwarvenkind in time.

### Altgrimmr Laws

Laws among the dwarves are strict and unbending. Most clans do not have laws as humans understand them so much as they have customs of unbreakable force. Life underground is dangerous and demanding, and the sort of carelessness or personal liberty humans cherish is an expense few holdings can afford. Dwarves are expected to do their duties no matter the cost, and those who fail in them can expect harsh punishment. Dwarves do not kill dwarves, however, and even the worst criminal is simply exiled to the surface. This loathing for kinstrife is sometimes abandoned in convulsive wars beneath the earth when tight confines and unquenchable disputes erupt into frantic bloodshed.

### Altgrimmr Clothing and Cuisine

Altgrimmr trades much worked steel and iron for human crops, as the mountains are poor farmland. Vast underground caverns provide staple fungi and meatbeetle breeding pens for those holdings without these ties, and while the food and drink acquired in this way are not overly palatable, they can support a delving.

Dwarven clothing is largely fashioned of metal and fungus-leather, with surfacer cloth being a luxury for the wealthy. The heat of the forges and geothermally-active mines leaves many dwarves in little more than a work harness, while others in colder pits or doing surface work are bundled up thickly against the chill and the uncomfortably alien sun.

## THE HOHNBERG PACT

<b>Population</b>	93,000 overall, and 8,000 in Hohnberg itself.
<b>Ruler</b>	Thusundi Amalric Gram

The grim gray walls of Hohnberg stand on a high coastal promontory, looking west toward the looming peaks of the Godbarrow mountain range. Its men and women are largely Eirengarder in extraction, and their faith in the Maker is an uncommon point of fierce belief among the largely disinterested peoples of Ektau. The Eirengarders have their Law and their Iron Prophets to guide them, and they stand fast against the western Shou with the strength of their famed pikemen and ferocious Makerite warpriests.

Hohnberg's prosperity comes largely from the coastal grasslands that surround the city and the rich soil they provide. The dwarves make better steel, but enough small gold and silver mines exist in the western foothills to make Hohnberg a little coin, and iron is sufficient for local use.

Trade with the other cities is very difficult for Hohnberg. The sea route to Xian requires either a dangerous western circumnavigation of the entire isle of Ektau or else a daring captain willing to run the hostile coasts of the Shogunate and the dire tempests of the central archipelago. Only renegade Hohnbergers will trade with Kitaminato, for the Makerites hate and despise the devil-worshippers of the Shogunate. The inland paths are sufficient for individual travelers to reach other cities, but by the time a heavy wagon of coastal wheat traveled the 300 overland miles to Xian, its carters would have eaten half of it.

Hohnberg is thus the most isolated of the great cities of Ektau, and this lack of trade leaves them poorer than their natural resources might suggest. More than one young pikeman has been forced to seek his fortune in foreign employ.

### Hohnberger Society

The social organization of Hohnberg is still faintly redolent of the military traditions once common to the Eirengarders. Social status is pinned largely to wealth and military accomplishment, and sufficient amounts of either can make up for a lack of the other. Those rich enough to own real estate, whether peasant or townsman, are "Landser" and entitled to vote on questions put before them by their leaders. Those without the money to afford land but with a sterling military reputation can usually parlay the latter into a grant of land from a wealthier Landser in exchange for service in war.

Almost all Hohnbergers have membership in a "Company", a group dedicated to mutual help and assistance in much the same way as the tongs of Xian and Tien Lung. These Companies exact modest dues in exchange for ensuring that their members are decently buried and those widows and orphans without a male relative to take them are given some subsistence. Companies also offer a chance to socialize between the richer and poorer members of the city, as membership cuts across all social classes. In times of crisis, these Companies are marshalled as additional militia units for the defense of the city.

Beyond membership in a Company, most Hohnbergers also are affiliated with a particular Makerite church. The Makerite belief is



substantially more demanding than most faiths on the isles. Individual churches interpret their inherited Law in different ways, but most agree on the essentials. Makerites are forbidden from eating pork, must pray at least three times daily, must spend at least one day a week in prayer and rest, and must purify themselves with water and prayer after killing. Makerites are also forbidden from lying, adultery, theft, murder, and the worship of other gods. The laws against murder and theft are suspended during war, but some Makerite fundamentalists argue that the “exemption of self-defense” is drawn far too generously in the modern age, and that the Iron Prophets only ever intended it to apply to immediate personal defense rather than mercenary fighting.

Many Hohnbergers make their wealth on mercenary work, hiring out to Xian and to Westmarker settlements as defenders and hire-spears. Some mercenary bands have existed since long before the coming of the Tide, and these proud units cherish their long tradition of valor. Most Hohnberger mercenary units are substantially more civilized and disciplined than other military units, but there are a few who are little more than devils in human skin, guilty of terrible atrocities wherever they go.

## Hohnberger Government

The city is ruled by a Thusundi, chosen by Landser vote on the death of the former lord. If the Thusundi dies during wartime, the vote is suspended until the end of hostilities and his second-in-command steps in to fill the position. Beneath the Thusundi are the Obersts chosen by the Companies, each one in charge of a city department or service. The Obersts then employ men and women drawn from Landser families in other city posts. It is not impossible for a commoner without Landser status to receive an official post, but it is uncommon.

The High Priest of the Maker has a strong voice in city government, albeit an indirect one. While numerous Makerite churches exist in Hohnberg, and not all agree on the specific details of doctrine, the High Priest of the House of the Maker is invariably the most powerful divine spellcaster in the city. If he speaks out against a man or woman, it is highly unlikely that they will find an auspicious political future.

Religious governance is strictly in the hands of the individual church, whether Makerite or a foreign god. Each church is owned by the clergy as a whole, and any disputes over internal organization must be settled without recourse to city law. Exceptionally intractable arguments sometimes are referred to the High Priest, though most other churches are jealous of their independence, and reluctant to draw in clerical outsiders. Private citizens are sometimes engaged to sort out such affairs.

The Hohnberger polity is known as the “Pact” because of its relationship with the villages and market towns that owe allegiance to it. These subject settlements are allowed to govern themselves as they please in exchange for paying tribute to Hohnberg. If the tribute is interrupted, the settlement loses the benefit of Hohnberg’s protection and law. While the city will not attack such recalcitrant villages, they will do nothing to defend them, either, and their neighbors often take prompt advantage of the opportunity.

Most subject settlements are ruled by a village council and an elected Burgomeister. Individual settlements have their own rights of justice, but a death sentence is automatically appealed to the justice of Hohnberg’s magistrates.

## Hohnberger Laws

The laws of Hohnberg are much the same as in Xian, except that slavery is forbidden in Hohnberg. Any slave brought onto land claimed by a settlement of the Pact is automatically considered a free man or woman, and the locals will often prove willing to fight over the point. The condition is widely considered blasphemy to the Maker, and slavers venture to Hohnberg at peril of their lives.

Where Xianese laws might prescribe slavery, the Hohnbergers instead require execution. Their justice is harsh by the standards of the Isles, unforgiving of error and ungenerous to the accused. Judges are appointed by the Thusundi, and carry out their duties with the aid of a city watch. The defendant has the right to a lawyer, and a serious crime allows him to ask for a jury, but there is no presumption of innocence. Custom requires that judge, jury, and defendant do not belong to the same Companies.

While on active duty in the military or serving in a mercenary band, judicial procedure is even more abbreviated. A unit’s commander can order the summary execution of anyone in the ranks, and sub-commanders can order beatings, fines, and other punishment. Discipline is considered of utmost importance, and any failures of it will invariably bring punishment, whether or not mitigating circumstances are involved.

Hohnberg has a few additional laws related to their Makerite beliefs that sometimes take outsiders by surprise. Work and mercantile affairs are forbidden on the seventh day of every week, which is generally given over to prayer and public worship. Pork is forbidden within Hohnberg’s walls, and many Eirengarder villages of the Pact have prohibitions against it as well. While worship of most gods is tolerated within the city, open reverence of the Hell Kings is considered a crime that earns a fine and a beating at the least, and execution if the culprit is actually a priestly servitor of those powers.

## Hohnberger Clothing and Cuisine

Hohnberg has a cooler climate than Xian or Tien Lung, and tunics and leggings of wool or linen are common to its citizens. The grasslands around the city make for good grazing for sheep, and the wool is often dyed in elaborate patterns of bright color to suit the Hohnberger tastes. Some mercenary bands have more elaborate uniforms still. They favor bright colors that are easily spotted in the roil of battle, particularly since their armor is so often austere.

Rice plays less of a role in Hohnberger cuisine than in the southern cities, as the climate around the city is better suited to wheat, barley and root crops. Hohnbergers have an especial love for wheat and barley beers, and each Company has a few brewers specially favored by their membership. Seafood is not uncommon in Hohnberg, but the rough waters of the central archipelago discourage the sort of fishing that is common in the other great cities.

# THE MAGOCRACY OF TIEN LUNG

<b>Population</b>	128,000 overall, and 11,000 in Tien Lung itself.
<b>Ruler</b>	Enlightened Sage Hou-Wei bin Taleer

The sullen city of Tien Lung squats on the southern coast of Ektau, beside the murky, godbone-stained waters of the Black River. Its Academy of Refulgent Wisdom is one of the greatest schools of arcane knowledge in all the Sunset Isles, but the terrible price it exacts of its students has left more than one apprentice fleeing the power that it promises.

Tien Lung's wealth comes largely from its vast rice paddies and drug plantations. Most of the recreational and medicinal herbs on Ektau were grown on a Tien Lungan plantation, and slave labor is used to harvest tons of rice and other edibles. As close to the Shou lands as Tien Lung remains, many such slaves are lost to raiders or the hazards of the wild. The masters of the city are largely indifferent to this cost, so long as fresh stock is easily obtained.

Both Xian and Tien Lung have always respected the powers of sorcery, but Tien Lung's rulers have given over all sense of restraint or humanity in their pursuit of occult power. Originally, such steps were considered necessary to drive back the constant threat of the Shou. In more recent decades, the sheer intoxicating pleasure of the power so gained has moved many wizards to conduct experiments that would shock and horrify the arcanists of Xian.

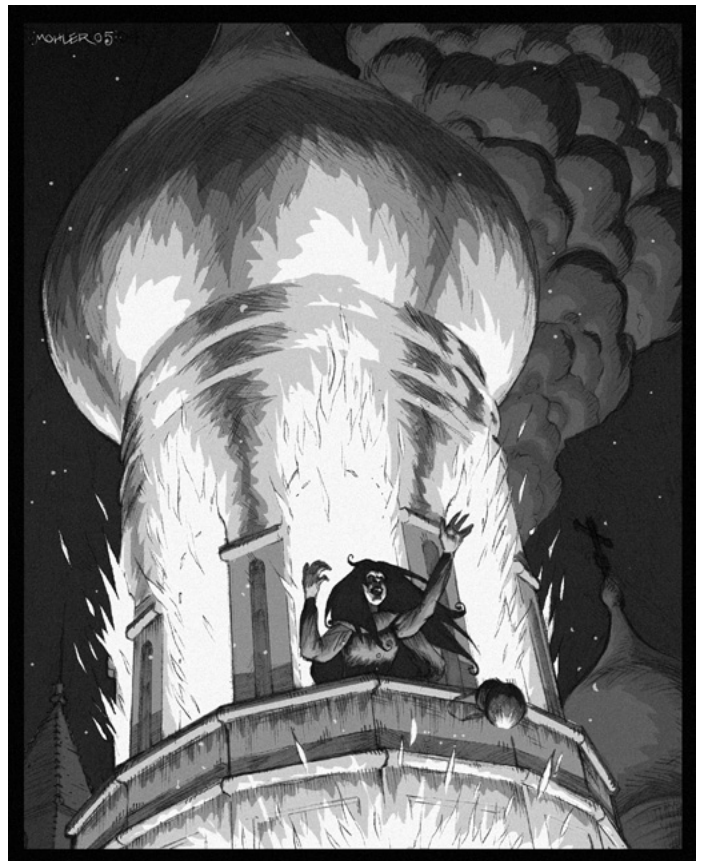
Most Tien Lungan sorcery is "Stitched Path" magic. Shunned by the ancient magi of the Ninefold Celestial Empire, it ultimately corrupts and limits its practitioners. Yet for those wizards willing to make the bloody sacrifices it demands, it offers a swift and glorious ascent to such powers as a less gifted mage might never taste at all. The Stitched Path is fundamentally about theft- theft of life, of magic, of the quintessential forces that surround a wizard. Such thieving gives quick power, but the scars it leaves on a sorcerer's soul hinder a Stitched Path magus from reaching the elevated heights of arcane mastery.

## Tien Lungan Society and Government

Tien Lung has a narrow majority of Imperials living within its walls, and their habits and customs have strongly influenced Tien Lung and its outlying villages and market towns. Many things would be familiar to a stranger from Xian, if all subtly tainted by the city's obsession with occult power.

Tien Lung is a strange blend of tyranny and anarchy within its walls, a settlement where might is the first and last concern of the law. The Academy of Refulgent Wisdom is the ruling order of the city, and its leader, the Enlightened Sage, is the unquestioned despot. He is deposed only by main force and treachery, and keeps his position by deft manipulation of the other great wizards of the city. The Enlightened Sage is not always the most powerful sorcerer in Tien Lung, but he is invariably the most diabolically cunning.

Civil society in Tien Lung is divided between the Learned and the commoners. The Learned are those humans who have accrued some degree of magical power, whether arcane or divine in nature. The



simple ability to cast a spell elevates a man or woman above the common class, and entitles them to certain privileges not granted to their lessers.

The city magistrates will not hear a commoner's complaints against the misbehavior of the Learned. A wizard can kill, steal, and mistreat commoners with legal impunity. Yet by the same token, the magistrates recognize self-defense as a legitimate defense against accusations of murder, and so a peasant who manages to put a knife into a rampaging sorcerer faces no punishment for his deed. By the standards of the magistrates, any Learned who lets a commoner kill him was plainly incompetent to hold his title. Of course, any peasant who attacks a Learned without sufficient justification can expect a short and interesting life as a subject for magical experimentation or Stitched Path vivisection at the Academy.

Disputes between the Learned are strictly outside the magistrate's remit. Two wizards can duel in the streets without incurring official legal displeasure. In practice, the Academy maintains a number of legbreakers to take care of those wizards who fail to demonstrate due restraint, and making a politically unsupported move against a rival wizard can be a terminal error in judgment.

In consequence of these customs, most commoners avoid the Learned whenever humanly possible. A few braver or more desperate than the others might seek to attach themselves as servants or minions to a powerful wizard, however, accepting the risk of being used for some experiment in exchange for the wealth and borrowed authority that comes from serving the Learned.

In the villages and market towns associated with Tien Lung, the magistrate is invariably one of the Learned, and exerts an author-



ity over the populace tempered only by the threat of open revolt. Most such magistrates are willing to give *carte blanche* to outsiders provided a sufficient supply of bribes is forthcoming.

## Tien Lungan Laws

Tien Lung shares the same corpus of laws that Xian inherited, but they tend to apply only to exchanges between commoners. Slavery is a much more common punishment in Tien Lung than in Xian, often inflicted for the most trivial offenses. These slaves are then sold to wealthy Learned or rich merchants, or else employed in one of the numerous lethal magical experiments conducted by the Academy.

Unlike Xian, however, magic use of any kind is permitted within Tien Lung. Scryings, detections, mind-reading, mental influence... all these things are permitted and accepted under the law. In practice, openly using any of them against a Learned is considered grounds for a vendetta.

## Tien Lungan Clothing and Cuisine

Tien Lung is even hotter and more humid than Xian, and most of the commoners go about in as little as modesty permits- or less, depending on their employment. The Learned prefer to go about in heavy and ornate robes, remaining cool through assorted cantrips and petty charms. Their ability to defy the climate is considered just one of the more practical signs of their natural superiority over their less enlightened brethren.

Members of the Academy of Refulgent Wisdom will wear the insignia and colors of their particular school or faction, warning onlookers of the strength of their allies and the dangers inherent in crossing them. Outsiders often have a difficult time reading such insignia, and run the risk of offending some powerful mage without realizing their trespass.

Food and drink in Tien Lung turn heavily toward rice and fish, along with numerous jungle fruits and the produce of the slave-worked plantations. The spices of the hot lands around the city are cheap and used liberally in Tien Lungan cooking, occasionally augmented by some of the recreational drugs that are so easily grown around the city. These drugs are not always harmless, and Tien Lungan poisoners are notorious for their ability to slip some lethal herb past the attentions of a food taster.

## Stitched Path Magic

PC magic-users are presumed to be "High Path" mages, reliant on the cleaner and safer magical practices of the Ninefold Celestial Empire or similar traditions from other lands. This breed of magic is difficult and demanding, and only a rare few High Path practitioners will ever amount to anything more than a caster of petty sorceries.

The Stitched Path offers quick power to its devotees at the cost of permanent damage to their souls. By spiritually grafting fragments of the souls of other intelligent beings to their own spirits, they render themselves capable of wielding powers that would otherwise be far beyond their capacity.

A Stitched Path magic-user can fill any spell memorization slot with a spell one level higher than it could otherwise hold. Thus, for example, a 1st level Stitched Path wizard could memorize *Web* as his initial spell, or a 3rd level wizard memorize *Fireball* in a second-level spell slot. These spells are cast with an effective caster level equal to the magic-user's true level, so that *Fireball* would do 3d6 damage. Stitched Path magic-users can add any found or taught magic-user spells to their spellbook that they are capable of casting.

This power requires fuel. A Stitched Path magic-user must ritually vivisect the soul of an intelligent being of his own species in order to graft the most magically powerful fragments onto his own soul. The tattered remnants continue on to the afterlife, while what remains fuels the magic-user's powers. These spiritual grafts wither and rot away within one week. The Stitched Path magus must sacrifice a total number of hit dice worth of victims equal to the highest level of spell he means to cast. Therefore, a human Stitched Path magus who wants to cast 5th level spells during the next week must sacrifice 5 HD worth of humans.

A Stitched Path sorcerer who fails to sacrifice any victims at all during a week loses this benefit, and also loses the use of one spell slot per level known. Thus, a 1st level Stitched Path sorcerer who fails to sacrifice cannot cast any spells until he does so, while a 5th level magic-user has only 2 1st and 1 2nd level spell slot while his scalpels are unbloodied.

These spiritual scars permanently hinder the wizard's arcane development. No Stitched Path magus can advance beyond 9th level without an extraordinary volume of blood sacrifice. Because elven souls are inextricably bound to their material bodies, they cannot practice Stitched Path magic.

# THE MANDARINATE OF XIAN

<b>Population</b>	162,000 overall, and 14,000 in Xian itself.
<b>Ruler</b>	Mandarin Sei-Wen MacLammach

The Mandarinate of Xian is the strongest human polity in the Sunset Isles. With the city of Xian nestled in the security of Ektau's Refuge Bay, its venerable capital is the chief trade center for the Isles. It was at Xian that Archmage Lammach led the exile fleet to anchor, and it was the magic of those Imperial firstcomers that raised the city atop the crumbled ruins of a long-forgotten prehuman settlement.

Much as with its neighboring powers, the Mandarinate is centered around its capital city. Xian holds the great majority of the Mandarinate's wealth and power, and the smaller towns and villages scattered throughout its territory are little more than agricultural outposts and market towns to feed Xian's hunger. Many ambitious young peasant dream of finding their fortune in the great city, away from the rice paddies and fishing nets.

The polity is led by the Mandarin Sei-Wen MacLammach, the seventeenth Mandarin to descend in an unbroken line from Archmage Lammach himself. His word is law and his loyal officials carry it out diligently, but he has given them few orders to obey of late. The Mandarin's attention has been absorbed in studying the records of his glorious ancestor and plotting strange ambitions to retrieve much of the magical lore that was lost in the chaotic years after the Landing.

The officials begin to grow uneasy. While the Mandarin wed a princess of Tien Lung five years ago, there has been no sign of progeny, and it is commonplace knowledge that he has always taken far more interest in the handsome young guardsmen of his seraglio than the women within. While the practices of the great are beyond questioning by Xian's lower orders, the lack of an heir is threatening to destabilize the polity into a welter of competing relations should the Mandarin suffer an untimely end. Certain of his less loving kinsmen are rumored to contemplate eventuating such misfortunes.

## Xianese Society

Civil society in Xian is divided into three large groups- the commoners, the "daifu" scholars, and the "zhuhou" princely ones. The divisions are deep and very clearly marked, and anyone who spends any time in the city will be expected to be acquainted with them.

Commoners comprise roughly 98% of the citizens of Xian and its settlements. They are foreigners, peasants, fishermen, artisans, and other lesser folk who have not distinguished themselves in the service of the city-state. Adventurers are generally considered to be of the commoner class unless they are of exceptional distinction, in which case promotion into the daifu class is a possibility. Commoners can generally expect a reasonably fair hearing when pressing a case against another commoner, and most magistrates won't take bribes against them unless it's a very good bribe. Attempting to get justice against one of higher station is generally a lost cause unless the offending scholar is greatly disliked or the victim can move the magistrate to sentimental pity. No commoner with any sense

ever tries to proffer a case against a princely one- they'd be lucky to escape with their lives for such insolence.

The scholarly class, or the "daifus", composes a little less than two percent of the populace, with the status awarded to the scholar, his or her spouse, children, and parents. Grandchildren return to commoner status unless they or their parents acquit themselves fittingly. A daifu may not necessarily have anything to do with scholarly education, and instead have acquired the rank through public service or prowess in war. They alone are permitted to wear jade ornaments at their belt, and this sign is invariably flaunted lest a commoner mistake them for their own kind.

No more than one hundred people in Xian bear the august rank of "princely one", or "zhuhou"- the ministerial "Junzi", and the leaders of the army, navy, and city watch. They and their immediate families alone are permitted to wear the blue-buttoned cap of a zhuhou. Commoners tend to avoid them at all cost, as their will is utterly unquestionable by one of so lowly an estate. Very rarely, a great hero will be elevated to this estate, though this has only happened a dozen times since the founding of the city. The status of zhuhou is restricted to the deserving bearer only- his or her spouse, parents, and children to the third generation are treated as daifus.

## Xianese Government

Xian is ruled by the Mandarin, a descendant of Archmage Lammach and the regent of the Emperor of the Ninefold Celestial Empire. No one seriously imagines that the Empire has survived, but the custom remains as a reminder of glories now lost. The Mandarin rules until death or abdication, whereupon his chosen heir is appointed to the place. When an heir is not to be found, other branches of the family may step forward in an ugly succession struggle that can last for years.

Beneath the Mandarin are the Junzi, the ministerial overseers of the various ministries of Xian and its domain. The ministries of Interior Affairs, Foreign Relations, the Upright Law, the Army, the Navy, the Treasury, and Arcane Learning all have Junzi overseers. Each is of the zhuhou class, and their will is not to be disputed. Numerous daifus and commoners are employed in each ministry to carry out the necessary works of the city.

Beneath the Ministry of the Upright Law are the "Hundred Magistrates", the daifus appointed to hear disputes and resolve legal cases according to the laws of the polity. Their precise number fluctuates with need, as Xian claims dozens and every significant market town or major farming village in the hinterlands requires a magistrate to oversee it. Rural postings are viewed as punishments by most daifu, an exile from the delights of Xian to some grim backwater infested with Shou raiders and surly peasants.

The Ministry of Interior Affairs oversees the city watch and its numerous watchman guards. While the Hundred Magistrates give out the law, the city watch is expected to enforce it and to apprehend evildoers. While watchmen have no special rights beyond any other commoner, their testimony tends to be viewed very favorably by the magistrates, and some find it more profitable to 'encourage donations' from wrongdoers than to rely on their modest city pay.

## Xianese Laws

Law in Xian is derived from the old legal code of the Ninefold Celestial Empire, enforced by the Mandarin by means of his chosen magistrates. When the city watch finds an offender, the culprit can expect to be left to cool in a cell until the next magistrate is available to hear his case. He is allowed to hire a pleader to speak for him if he wishes. When called to the court, the facts of the accusation are presented by an official accuser, the pleader or accused gives his defense, and the magistrate then makes his decision and sentence. Petty crimes are disposed of in five to ten minutes, while grave ones might consume as much as an hour. Citizens of the daifu class may demand a jury of seven of their peers, the jury in question being those currently appointed to the duty. The princely class of zhuhous can be judged only by the Mandarin, and they are effectively immune from all prosecutions relating to crimes against those of less than scholarly class. Only the most egregious and public sins against a commoner can leave a zhuhou in the dock.

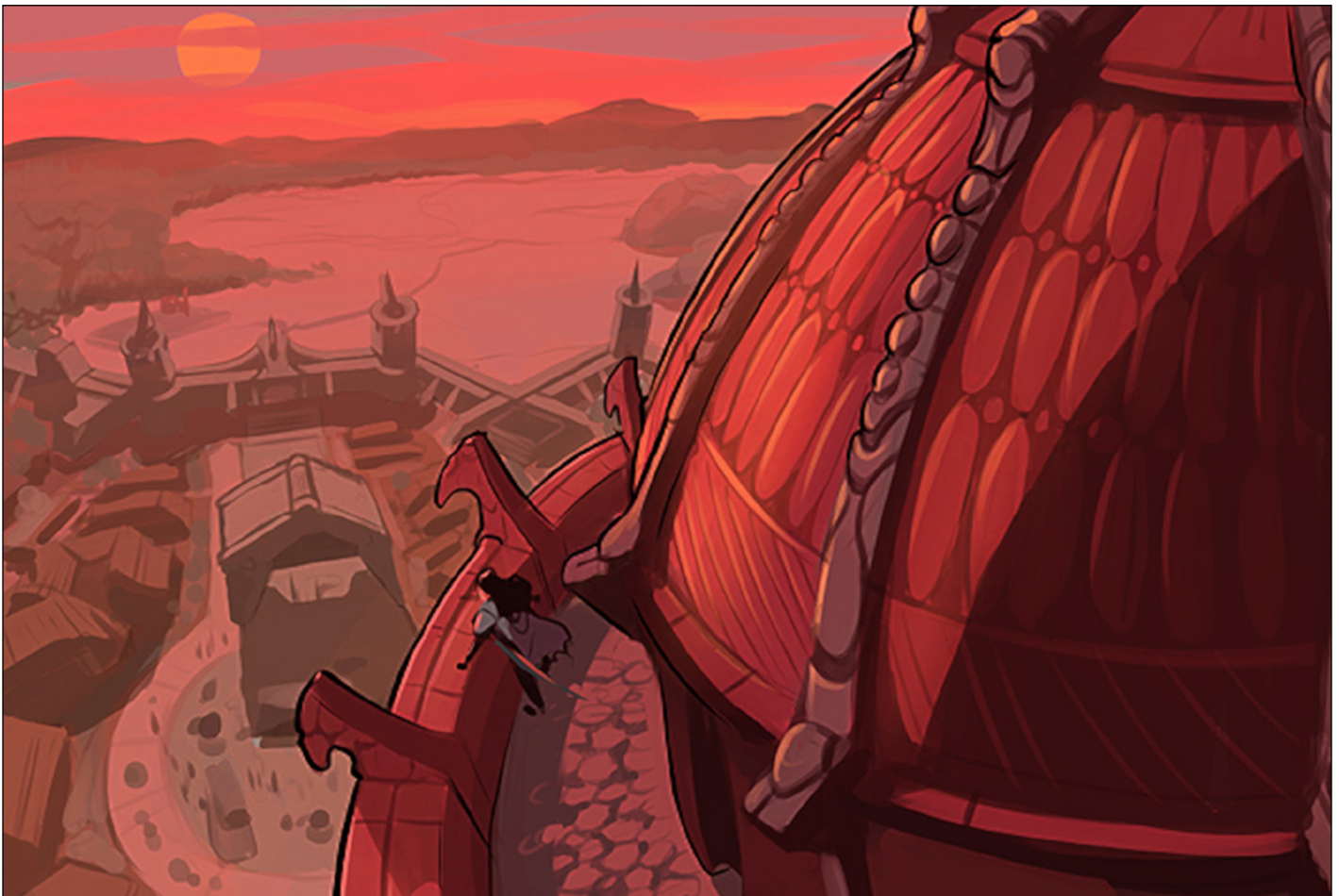
Punishments are fines, beatings, mutilation, enslavement by the city, or execution. Long-term imprisonment is almost unknown in the Isles, as few cities are wealthy enough to afford the keep of useless criminal mouths. Some slight parallel does exist in enforced rustication, when some misbehaving magistrate or questionable high official is banished to a wretched post in the hinterlands, there to stew on his misdeeds- and often as not, to make the peasants beneath him miserable.

Crimes are traditional and much as might be expected. Theft or fraud is punished by sevenfold restitution. Should the thief be

unable to pay, they may be enslaved by the city or suffer mutilation, depending on the magistrate's inclination. Assault of a commoner is fined, assault of a daifu is punished with enslavement, and assault of the princely class results in execution in the unlikely case the offender is still alive. Rape is punished on the same scale, with repeat offenders being gelded. Murder is punished with enslavement, should the victim be a commoner, execution if the victim is a scholar, and execution after torture if the victim is of the princely class.

Insulting behavior towards a daifu is fined, and insults towards the zhuhou are punished with fines and whipping. Impersonation of a city official or a class above one's own is met with slavery or death. Disturbing the peace or creating a public hazard results in fines, with slavery for those who cannot pay. Sufficiently obnoxious behavior of any other kind may be treated as criminal, depending on the charm and importance of the accused and the irascibility of the magistrate.

Magic is an acknowledged and expected part of Xianese law. Magical testimony, such as that gained by scrying or divination, is accepted as evidence on the magistrate's discretion. Most will decline it, as easy as it is to fake magical evidence, though a spellcasting magistrate may resort to it himself. Crimes committed by magic are rare, but severely punished when proven. Magic used in execution of an ordinary crime is punished by execution in all but the smallest of crimes, as renegade magic-users are greatly feared in Xian. "Lucky" defendants are sometimes sentenced to "community service" in some near-suicidal mission. There are few formally outlawed forms



of magic- even necromancy is not technically forbidden. In practice, there is no family however humble that wouldn't bring suit against a necromancer who defiled the corpse of a kinsman, and no magistrate who wouldn't award them a heavy fine. City-owned slaves and other kinless sorts can sometimes end up as fodder for necromancers, but all such activities are conducted very quietly or under the auspices of a very discreet church. In times of crisis, this social rule has been known to be temporarily overlooked for the sake of a few regiments of tireless, fearless corpse-warriors, though no one in the modern day is thought to have power enough to call such a force from the grave.

A few crimes only exist in magical form. Mind-influencing spells are rarely prosecuted, as difficult as it is to prove that a particular choice was made under a spell, but the wealthy and powerful often have wards and protections against such influence. Still, if a magistrate can be convinced that a particular enchanter is guilty of bewitching someone, death or "community service" is not at all uncommon. It is also against the law to employ magical means to scry upon or otherwise divine the particulars of another person, unless employed by the city in that capacity. City officials have absolutely no compunction about scrying on dangerous sorts, but other spellcasters are well advised to keep their detection spells and scrying concealed lest they be fined or enslaved.

Almost any variety of religion is permissible in Xian, provided its rites do not involve violation of the polity's laws. One exception is reverence offered to the Hell Kings. Worship of these demonic powers is considered proof of treacherous allegiance to the Shogunate and its devil-serving lord. Prayers and obedience to the Tide, of course, are utterly proscribed, and when such worship is discovered the culprits rarely survive their neighbors' anger long enough for the magistrate to condemn them.

Outside of Xian, in the provincial villages and towns, law generally remains the same. Most major villages and towns are under the rule of a magistrate expected to enforce the laws, though humbler settlements make do with an appointed headman who reserves the judgment for serious crimes to the decision of the nearest magistrate.

## **Xianese Clothing**

The weather is warm in Xian, and the climate is almost sub-tropical at times. As such, clothing tends to be light and minimal among the lower classes. Most laborers go about their duties in little more than a loincloth and sandals, while few housewives wear more than a light, brightly-hued sari when doing their daily shopping. When dressed more formally, the laborer might wear a patterned sarong with a sleeveless shirt, while the housewife might choose a gauzy wrap to put over her shoulders and extra jewelry to adorn her. In all cases, plain and practical treads and tunic are popular among foreign visitors.

Even the wealthy take care not to overstep their sumptuary bounds, however, and the sight of jade ornaments on a belt are a sure indication that the wearer is of the scholarly class- or is willing to risk

being enslaved as an impostor. Otherwise, these daifu tend to favor flowing robes in bright linen, with pen-cases dangling at their sides even among the illiterate. Foreigners are allowed more extravagance in their clothing than locals, but only so long as they remain obvious foreigners.

The wealthiest scholars and the princely ones of the city almost require attendants to help them with their costumes, so elaborate is the gold-thread brocade and sweeping train that they favor. Tall platform shoes are popular among both men and women, and the haughtier zhuhou will go so far as to have a magnificently-garbed attendant at his side and require all address to him to pass through his servant. Even the most austere of the princely ones can be identified by the blue-buttoned cap they wear. The sight of such a hat is enough to send most commoners discreetly fleeing lest they prove an object of unwelcome interest to the great one.

## **Xianese Cuisine**

Cuisine in Xian tends heavily towards rice and seafood, those two foodstuffs being most common in the city. Locals tend to eat better than do most in the Isles, as much of the food traded in the archipelago passes through Xian's harbor. Even the poorer craftsmen can expect a bowl of rice porridge at the end of a day's work, and the wealthy have tables groaning under delicate viands.

Porridges and gruels are common fare among the poor, thickened by whatever vegetables and protein is at hand. Cakes of sticky rice take the place of bread in most cases, though some wheat, barley, and millet is grown in the drier hills. The common drink is rice beer, with the wealthier commoners being able to afford potent rice spirits. Food is eaten with chopsticks or spoons and knives, depending on the customs of the diner.

The wealthier citizens can afford fish as a regular matter, with the occasional addition of a chicken or chunk of pork to the fare. Grilling, stir-frying, and steaming are popular methods of food preparation. The nouveau riche often make a point of serving "traditional Imperial cuisine" at their table, no matter how impractical it may be or how vague the ingredients. Of some gourmands, it's said that they'd serve soup with chopsticks if that's what the old recipe said.

The elite of the city are known for the decadent abundance of their tables, with countless dishes presented, all spiced and flavored with condiments brought from all over the Isles. Many of these meals are scarce tasted before they're sent away. Many estates of the wealthy have particular rooms set aside in the kitchen for "jewelers" to come and pay the head cook to pick through the meal leavings, fashioning meals from the leftovers that they later sell in the market. At the center of town even a respectable scholar would not turn up his nose at the remains of a princely one's meal, so splendid are the offerings, while the further the meal travels, the cheaper and less savory it becomes. At the outskirts of the rice fields, old crones sell flyblown rice cakes and leathery scraps of nameless meat for half a copper coin.

# THE SHOGUNATE OF THE NORTH

<b>Population</b>	116,000 overall, 10,000 in Kitaminato.
<b>Ruler</b>	Shogun Rai, Most Favored of Hell

The Shogunate is a rich land, but one shadowed by its master and a pact made long ago. The people prosper in material wealth, but from greatest to least, they live with the haunting fear of what is to become of them after their final breath.

The Shogunate is marrow-deep in its devotion to the powers of the Hell Kings. These infernal masters demand service and sacrifice from the populace in exchange for the blessings they grant, and the Shogun brooks no competitors to their faith. Open worship of foreign gods can expect to be met with the frantic denunciations of some commoner desperate to improve his standing with the devil-priests, and other faiths are forced to meet by midnight or in desolate places.

At present, the Shogunate is engaged in a low-level border war with Xian, with Shogunate junks attacking Xianese shipping and “bandits” launching repeated, disciplined raids into Xianese land. The Mandarin seems uncertain as to how to deal with these provocations, and many nobles of Xian fear an open war against the Shogunate while Tien Lung waits eagerly for an opening to press their own claims on Xianese land.

Some daifus in the Ministry of Internal Affairs are beginning to encourage the hiring of “bandits” of their own, mercenaries and sellswords willing to make strategic strikes on Shogunate leaders and devil-priests. Some entertain the idea that many in the Shogunate are eager for a change in leadership, and would leap at the chance to see the Shogun dead and safely in Hell. Others are not so certain. It may be that the rot has sunk too deep in Shogunate society, and its people are too willing to barter what they cannot see for things very real to the touch.

## Shogunate Society

The Shogunate is largely made up of ethnic Kueh, and most of the social organization is based on the traditions of that people. Families are associated in clans of shared descent, with most villages composed of the families of one extended clan. Marriages are engaged with the residents of neighboring villages, or in the case of noble or wealthy families, with those candidates most suitable for political alliance.

Merchants are the lowest strata of Shogunate society, as they are forbidden to own land and must rent their premises from samurai families. Farmers rank somewhat above merchants as they at least can hope to own some plot of rich earth, and above them the samurai families provide the swords and officials for the service of the daimyos, who compose the town governors and district chieftains beneath the Shogun himself. Women can hope to marry upward in station, but only a desperate family would consider giving a daughter to a lesser-ranked man, and then only for substantial considerations.

Adventurers and other wanderers are outside the Shogunate caste system entirely, and are largely outside the law. Anyone can mistreat and abuse them, and unless they have the patronage of a more powerful protector, many will take advantage of the opportunity. Outsiders will not be heard by the magistrates of the Shogunate, and their complaints will fall on deaf ears.

Since the dark pact was forged by Shogun Rai in 121 AL, Shogunate society has been remorselessly twisted by its service to the Hell Kings. All the traditional cardinal sins are celebrated by the Hell Kings, as the practice of these evils make a soul all the more certain to descend into the grip of Hell. Those who induce these sins in others win merit with the Hell Kings, and might hope to be granted a position of less painful servitude in the life to come. The greatest corruptors are promised a jeweled afterlife in glorious sin for their labors. Some may doubt in the wisdom of having faith in a Hell King's pledge, but those who have questions are wise enough to keep silent on them.

Shogunate society is a web of lies, treachery, blood, and avarice beneath a polished exterior of grace. The Hell Kings insist that the traditional laws be enforced, as the executions and punishments hasten souls to their care. Shogunate citizens are very careful to appear upright and noble in their comportment, as such deep and polished deceit is considered a tribute to the Hell Kings in itself, but when given the opportunity there is almost no depth to which a dedicated believer will not sink. These crimes may never be sufficiently proven, but they are invariably celebrated by the cultists of the Hell Kings.

Not all citizens of the Shogunate are such willing followers of damnation, however. Some are grimly defiant, worshipping better gods in secret and defying the Hell Kings by upright and noble behavior. Such acts are often excused as merely elaborate lures and credibility-building, but they genuinely believe in the good that they do. These heretics are despised by the devil-priests and hunted down whenever their true motives are revealed.

Shogunate society celebrates the customs and traditions of the Kueh. Indeed, Shogun Rai initially founded its capital city of Kitaminato in the hopes of restoring the imagined glorious past of his people, and it was his desperate wish to save them that drove him to make the bargain he made. Despite this, the actual truth of the Shogunate is that of hideously distortion, a domain that makes a grotesque parody of the beliefs and customs of its founders. The Shogun saved the bodies of his people, but the very ways and traditions he wanted to rescue are now found in pure forms only outside the Shogunate's borders. The locals do not appreciate being reminded of this.

## Shogunate Government

The Shogun Rai is the undying ruler of his domain, his existence fueled by dark sorceries and the favor of his masters. Before the Ravaging and the desperate pact he struck to save his city, he was a remarkably powerful summoner and a skilled Archmage of the Ninefold Celestial Empire. His magical abilities have not deserted him since his pact, and he commands a number of demonic entities lent to him by the Hell Kings.

While useful for slaughtering potential rivals, these particular demons lack the necessary adroitness to manage a bureaucracy. The Shogun has appointed the most powerful and influential men and women of the Shogunate as daimyos, rulers of the major market towns and districts of the domain. These dozen men and women are all pledged to the Hell Kings body and soul, and the atrocities they celebrate within their gilded mansions defy description.

Beneath them, samurai families carry out the will of the daimyo and form much of the devil-priesthood and magistracy. Every village, however humble, has at least one samurai family to help keep the locals in line. The lesser castes have no rights whatsoever against their betters; a daimyo or the samurai families in his service may do whatever they please to their inferiors, and the most that might come of it is a complaint from another daimyo over the destruction of his "property".

Most Shogunate citizens are bound to the village or town where they were born, and it requires special permission to move about. Travelers found on the roads had best have a license obtained from a border guard or port official, or else the patrol that finds them is apt to consider them a free morsel of entertainment sent by the Hell Kings.

## Shogunate Law

Law in the Shogunate of the North is a perverse thing, a set of restrictions and punishments designed to keep the society functioning even under the strain of the Hell Kings' corruptions. The magistrates and the people have no special respect for the law, but view it only as a necessary organizing tool to prevent the entire domain from collapsing into bloody anarchy. For the sake of expanding their rule and prolonging their control, the Hell Kings require that the law be enforced.

The law and the magistrates do not serve to prevent evil so much as they force it to take more subtle and unprovable forms. Murder, theft, assault, fraud and every other species of wrongdoing are applauded by the devil-priests, but their enactors can expect a lingering death all the same if their crimes can be proven. It's true that the world is thereby deprived of a criminal that might otherwise inflict much suffering on the world, but at least the Hell Kings are almost assured of receiving the perpetrator's soul in recompense. Other malefactors are taught to keep their oblations discreet enough to avoid provable fault.

The daimyos, of course, are entirely above the law, as are those acting on their behalf. The magistrates also sometimes spare petty criminals with no prior record; these souls are unlikely to have accrued the grave moral faults that would ensure their damnation, and so executing them runs the risk of depriving the Hell Kings. They are released with a caution, the better to let them ripen in their evil before they finally overstep their mark.



## Shogunate Clothing and Cuisine

The Shogunate is a rich land materially. The blessings of the devil-priests fill the nets of Shogunate fishermen and swell the rice fields and vegetable gardens with abundance. Even a poor man in Kitaminato rarely goes to bed with an empty belly, and a village samurai family often lives with an opulence greater than that of a Xianese daifu.

This tradition of cuisine also emphasizes the sins of gluttony and avarice, with such table games as "snatch"; a diner watches carefully to see what morsel most pleases his table mate, only to snatch it from their chopsticks or bowl at the last moment. Truly expert practitioners can pluck a dainty from a victim halfway down the table. Those who have incurred the displeasure of a superior are occasionally invited to feasts wherein they are given plates of ashes, filth, or other noisome material and required to eat it without complaint as their lord dines on succulent morsels. Inventiveness in such cruelty is considered a credit.

Clothing tends toward silk and linen kimonos for the well-to-do, while laborers make do with tunics and loincloths when the weather is cool, or breechcloths alone during the hot summer season. The wealthy favor elaborately brocaded and patterned cloth, often adorned with disturbing scenes or blasphemous characters. Beauty is cherished in every aspect of Shogunate architecture and couture, but it is beauty in the service of the selfish and base. Ancient graces have been corrupted in this land, and not even the Shogun is permitted beauty for its sake alone.

# THE SHOU LANDS

<b>Population</b>	Unknown, but at least a half-million.
<b>Ruler</b>	None at present, fortunately.

From the first records of the explorers that discovered the Sunset Isles, the Shou have been a scourge on any interloping colonists that dared land. While pockets of these beings were known in other land, nowhere else did they form such enormous hordes. The tribes of the Shou once held the entire island of Ektau for their own, quarreling and fighting amongst themselves, just one swarm among many that were scattered among the Isles.

The landing of the exile fleet changed that as the desperate colonists drove back the Shou into the western end of the island. Despite the near-destruction of human civilization during the Ravaging of 120 AL, the Shou have never been able to unite long enough to break free of the western lands. There they remain to this day, tribes of savage warriors and ineffable witch-women who thirst for revenge upon the human invaders. If they ever come to hate men more than they hate each other, the human politics will not be long for this world.

## Shou Society and Government

The Shou are divided up into three major breeds- orcs, bugbears, and goblins. Among the goblins, some tribes are favored with unusually strong and savage warriors; these “hobgoblins” are often leaders of their smaller brethren. Otherwise the breeds do not generally mix except as masters and slaves.

In theory, the Shou are divided into tribes, each with its own range in which they hunt and gather. The strongest male is the chieftain of a tribe, aided by other powerful males who might serve to replace him if he grows weak or elderly. When a chieftain fails due to wounds or age, the transfer of power is generally peaceful. When an aspirant seeks to take power from a more vigorous chief, more surreptitious means of regime change are necessary. Openly challenging a chief is suicidal, unless the challenger can call upon the support of sufficient allies to win the ensuing battle. This is unlikely, as most allies would consider such blatant defiance to be unforgivably stupid; a real leader would poison or murder the chieftain without giving him a chance to fight back.

In practice, much of Shou society is controlled by their witch-priestesses, who carefully manage the males of the tribe with a combination of blandishments, religious demands, and sorcery. Exceptionally powerful witch-priestesses abandon even this pretense and rule directly over the tribe. Other females are not so fortunate, and are treated as little more than chattel to be traded among the males. A female who births many strong sons is prized, while those who are barren or give only girls are scorned as worthless mouths.

Shou males hunt, war, and raid, while the females tend the other domestic duties around the camp and gather wild produce under the protection of males too young and untried to be trusted in raids. Most tribes are forced to travel constantly around their territory in order to support their numbers. A few settle down in ruins to an agricultural existence, but only when they can get enough slaves to

do the work. Farming and herding is “slave work” to the Shou, and unthinkable for a proud Shou tribal. Those humans who survive Shou captivity for any length of time are often sold to these tribes as laborers.

Shou pride themselves on the purity of their blood, and view their tribe as exemplars of the virtues of Shakun, their god. The witch-priestesses swear that some day Shakun will return and elevate the best of his children to rule the skies beside him, and every tribe struggles to prove themselves the best and strongest of all their brethren. This feuding is a religious imperative, and the division it sows is all that has saved the human settlements from destruction.

Deep in the Shou lands, evidence lingers that the Shou were not always the tribals they are now. Great cities and glorious works of masonry have been reported by the handful of intrepid scouts who have made it into the western interior. These works would normally be waved away as legacies of some long-forgotten human empire, but the symbols marked on the stone match the clan-markings of some of the oldest of the western tribes. The true nature and origins of the Shou remain a mystery, but most humans are content to simply hate them.

## Shou Law

The Shou have few formal laws, recognizing custom and tradition instead. A Shou who violates these traditions is judged by the chieftain, though a crime meriting death must be judged by all the strongest males of the tribe. Females who commit serious crimes are judged by the tribe’s witch-priestess. In the rare case that the chieftain or the witch-priestess commits a trespass, the tribe itself will often rise against them and kill or drive them out.

Almost all Shou tribes have a burning hatred of humans, and refuse to deal with them in any way. Even half-humans sired by human soldiers are exposed at birth. A tribe’s peaceful negotiation with a human settlement is one of the few ways to unite the local Shou in a shared ambition to destroy their traitorous brethren, though a few are cunning enough to trade with amoral human smugglers for goods their raiders cannot bring them. “Shou-traders” are hated by humans even more ferociously than Tide Cultists.

## Shou Clothing and Cuisine

Shou invariably favor barbaric tattoos and piercings, and relish outlandish clothing and sharpened teeth. Without these adjustments, a Shou might well pass for a human, save for those tribes that have clearly unnatural skin colors such as orange, green, or blue. Half-Shou are often considered quite handsome by their fellow humans, though this appreciation often turns to horror should their true nature be revealed. Half-humans are bitterly hated by the Shou, who consider them abominations against the purity of divine Shakun’s blood.

Shou eat wild game and gathered fruits and vegetables in the main, along with whatever human produce they can steal or plunder. A few settled tribes have slaves to work agricultural plantations for them, but these tribes are rare in the borderlands, and are found most often deeper into the wilds of the Shou lands.

# THE WESTMARK

<b>Population</b>	Roughly 20,000.
<b>Ruler</b>	None universally recognized.

Once a thriving province of the Mandarinate, the Westmark is now a broken borderland of hardscrabble villages, isolated military outposts, and cities gutted by time and Shou. The Ravaging that swept over these lands in 120 AL destroyed almost a hundred years of prosperity in a few short months of rampant Shou pillaging and slaughter. The few survivors fled for safety in the neighboring lands, seeking shelter in Hohnberg, Tien Lung, or Xian. Even after the great horde was broken at the walls of Xian, lesser tribes had already filled the vacuum behind them and left the Westmark infested with ruthless Shou warriors.

For almost two centuries after the Ravaging, the depleted number of human survivors were hard-pressed simply to hold to what they had left. There was ample fertile land remaining closer to the great cities, and it took time for the population to slowly recuperate to fill it. But in the past thirty years, the population pressure has finally started to force more and more hopeful young commoners into the wilderness of the Westmark, there to attempt to forge a new life for themselves in the shadow of the past destruction.

For all the dangers that infest the isolated land, the soil remains rich and the ruins still contain much wealth un plundered by the Shou, who cared far less for gold and precious ornaments than men did. Every season, fresh bands of ambitious adventurers head westward to relieve the gutted cities of their last bright trinkets. Far fewer ever return.

## Westmark Society and Government

The bordermen of Westmark are a wildly disparate lot, with every polity on Ektau sending their own contingent of ne'er-do-wells and poor dreamers to recolonize the land. Two villages not ten miles apart may be completely different in their customs and society, and might view each other as bitter enemies or trusted allies. There is no greater organization in the Westmark than what is found within a single settlement or hardscrabble market town.

The surrounding polities would like very much to cure this condition, and Hohnberg, Tien Lung, and Xian all have military outposts within the Westmark. Open conflict is rare, but each commander strives to bring more and more of the local settlements under the authority of his masters. Many settlements are reluctant to pledge this fealty; the great polities cannot afford to spare the troops they would need to actually protect these remote settlements, and so most prefer to remain unallied with any but their closer neighbors, who might actually be of use in a crisis.

Many bandit kings and renegade lords make their homes in the Westmark, though few of them have more than a salvaged tower or crumbling keep to their name. Some manage to seize control of a farming village to support their men, while others rely on what their "army" can steal from the locals. A few are actually idealists who dream of forging a new nation from the scattered fragments of the west. To date, none have had any success worth mentioning.

## Westmark Law

There is no law in the Westmark outside a settlement's wall or beyond the point of a soldier's spear. What does exist is a rough and ready justice that has few graduations between fines, exile, and execution.

## Westmark Clothing and Cuisine

The climate of the Westmark is warm and temperate, and the clothing of the locals will usually reflect that in whatever idiom they brought from their former home. Leather, linen, and wool are common fabrics, usually dyed with the rustic colors provided by the plants found near the settlement. Now and then some more elaborate dress can be found, usually some cherished memento of more civilized lands.

Bordermen usually eat well. There's as much good land ready for the taking as a man can manage to work, and the land is rich in game and natural produce. Gathering any of it can be fatal, however, with the Shou tribes and other raiders that infest the Westmark. Most settlements live on what they can grow in their immediate surroundings, and few fields extend far from the wooden palisades of a village.



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# INSTITUTIONS IN THE ISLES

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## Slavery

Xian, Tien Lung, and the Shogunate all practice the institution of slavery, albeit in different degrees. In Xian, slavery is reserved as a judicial punishment for criminal wrongdoing or inability to pay fines or taxes. Such thralls are owned by the city, and might eventually hope for liberation if they serve Xian well. Any offspring born to such slaves are nominally free, but if no family member steps in to support the child, the infant is raised as a ward of the city and expected to pay off their debt on reaching adulthood. Some such slave-born commoners must work for as long as a decade to clear their accounts, though they remain technically free.

Slaves in Xian are not treated gently, but they are valuable sources of labor and not abused senselessly by the city officials. The shame of the felony that brought them to this end lingers about their station, but the city is jealous of its prerogatives with them, and any outside abuse of a slave runs the risk of leaving the offender in the coffle as well. Most slaves are indistinguishable from any other commoner, though they are tattooed on hand or cheek with a few words relevant to their crime to prevent them from blending in too well with the free. Slaves are commonly kept in groups, the better to work together on heavy labors and to be guarded by their keepers.

Tien Lung has much harsher standards of slavery. People may be bought and sold like cattle in its decadent markets, and the offspring of a female slave is as much the property of her owner as she is. Most such slaves are put to work in the drug fields and processing houses of the city, aside from those reserved for personal service by the rich and powerful rulers of the city. Almost any soul without a strong patron or fearsome personal prowess runs the risk of being snatched by prowling gangs of pressmen, a few clumsy stabs of a tattooing-needle marking them out as new field-slaves for some cruel wizard-lord. The least fortunate are sometimes used in the sinister sorcerous experiments favored in that decaying city.

The least fortunate thralls of all inhabit the Shogunate. Entire villages are composed of the human property of some Shogunate daimyo, and the difference in treatment between them and other commoners is often negligible. In a very real sense, a daimyo views all his subjects as his personal property, and no one questions the uses to which he might put them. Outsiders sometimes say that the Shogunate does not practice slavery so much as it fails to practice freedom.

The Makerites of Hohnberg flatly refuse to have anything to do with slavery. A few sub-sects of the belief have countenanced it in the past, but most Makerite churches view it as a blasphemous insult to a divinely-created soul. Where other polities might enslave wrongdoers, Makerites prefer to execute them. Hohnberg natives traveling through other lands are often obliged to tolerate its practice, but only their renegades ever actually own human beings.

Elves vary in attitudes toward slavery based on their Creed, but most of them find it as detestable as the Makerites do. Halfings have a hard time even understanding the idea of working for another's sole

profit, and refuse to inflict slavery on their own wrongdoers, exiling them at most.

Dwarves have a burning, marrow-deep hatred of slavery. Their relations with the exiles of Xian were severely strained until they grudgingly allowed that the slaves of that polity were really criminals put to forced labor rather than possessions, and to the present day the Underking in Altgrimmr refuses to have anything to do with the Shogunate or Tien Lung. The idea of owning another being as property reminds them too much of their ancient thralldom to the Mother Below, and anything reminiscent of it is hideous to them. The only dwarves that will own slaves are those traitorous souls known as the Repentants, who have turned back to worship of the Mother Below. A dwarven slave is all but unknown in the Isles. Even the meekest dwarf will usually prefer to die rather than become property.

The Makerites and the dwarves form a strong current of abolitionism in the Isles, and Xian's employment of slave labor has slowly decreased over time. Most of what holds it in place presently is the vested interest of the city in having free labor available. Tien Lung and the Shogunate have only grown harder and more obdurate in their ways, however, seeing such "rabble-rousing" as the invitation to slave uprisings that some abolitionists would very much like to lead.

## Money

Coined wealth in the Sunset Isles is most often found in the city-state of Xian's three major coins. The copper "stalk" is the smallest coin of exchange, named for the rice shoot crudely stamped on one face, the other being embossed with the name and year of the current Mandarin. A copper stalk will buy a fist-sized cake of dubious rice in the market, or a mug of bad beer at a shabby tavern.

The silver "wheel" is stamped with the Wheel of Rebirth on one side, and the image of the current Mandarin and his regnant year on the other. One silver coin is worth ten copper, and can buy a day's good prepared food in the market, the work of a dock laborer for a day, or the work of a cheap harlot for a night. Most common workers earn this much for a day's labor, and a housewife's art often lies in making it stretch beyond its usual measure.

Ten silver coins make one gold "koku", a coin carefully marked with a basket of rice on one side and an intricate pattern on the other. The tools used to fashion these coins leave a milled, ridged edge around its rim. Should a clipper try to shave the edges, the milling will be worn down. When it is no longer possible to tell one ridge from the next, the coin is no longer valid as currency, and must be turned in to the Xianese treasury to be re-minted. Those fortunate enough to be in possession of a koku can afford an excellent harlot's attentions for an evening, the rental of a simple room for two weeks, or a day's steady drinking in a good wine house.

Other states rarely mint their own coins, lacking either the precious metal or the expertise. Most use a mixture of coins from Xian, Nordheim and the dwarven holds. For most purposes, these coins are treated as equivalent, though merchants will tend to prefer meticulously-pure dwarven currency over Xian's, and Xian's over

that of Nordheim. The dwarves occasionally mint platinum coins that are accepted as worth ten gold, but few ever have occasions to see them. Most trade above ten gold takes place in merchants' ledgers, with some amount of goods traded against another commodity.

Sometimes ancient coins are found in long-lost caches, treasure brought to the Isles by colonists or exiles long dead. These coins are usually accepted at par with modern currency, though some exceptional money is worth even more than its face value due to its exquisite beauty or greater weight of metal.

## Gender Roles

Human society on the Isles is a hodgepodge of countless different ethnicities and cultural mores. Yet all of these cultures share the same experience of the hostile and dangerous land which their forebears came to inhabit. While traditions back in the "old country" may have varied widely, simple force of circumstance has produced a fairly consistent understanding of male and female roles in the Sunset Isles- at least, among the refugee humans and settler villages.

The default condition for women is as mothers and homemakers, with poor women often adding small manufacturing work or hand-craft piecework that can be done in the home. Men are generally expected to work outside the home, and to serve as in the military forces and other martial branches of society. Leadership roles tend to be ambiguous, but the fact that most of them in the Isles are based on meritocratic principles means that they're oft as likely to be filled by a woman as a man. By Imperial tradition, unmarried women are expected to remain at home under the custodianship of their father or an elder male relation until being transferred into the custody of their husband. Such customs tend not to hold in modern Xian unless it proves politically convenient for a rival powerful enough to enforce that role on an unwilling woman, and even then it tends to last no longer than the magistrate who confirmed it can be kept bribed.

In practice, these customs and traditions are no more than vague ideas to most citizens of Xian and the surrounding towns. The simple necessities of daily life make cloistered women a luxury that the society cannot afford. Only the most hidebound and traditional Imperial would ever want to raise so decorative a daughter, quite aside from the wealth required to keep such an effectively ornamental family member. Most families have the sense to make as much use of all their members as they can wring from them. Sons may be put to martial training or seamanship apprenticing more commonly than daughters, but daughters are most often simply put into different practical topics of education. The great majority of soldiers, sailors, watchmen, miners, and woodsmen are male around Xian, but an equal proportion of accountants, brewers, weavers, cobblers, lawyers and architects are women. Arcane and clerical professions tend to be fairly equally represented by sex.

As Isle society is essentially meritocratic, any member that shows adequate drive, talent, and competence in a field is apt to be accepted into it. The famous Xianese admiral Ten Fires Carp is a woman, and the Xianese army maintains separate military units of female warriors that are employed in precisely the same fashion as males. There

have been several female Mandarins over the course of history, and the Magistracy inevitably is well-numbered with ambitious female courtiers who aspire for lasting wealth and glory for their children. People of the uncustomary sexes may have a somewhat higher barrier to entry into certain professions, but once they've demonstrated their competence the people of the Isles are much more interested in their results than their plumbing.

Among the nonhuman races, responsibilities tend to break down along similar lines. The Elves are even more egalitarian, and while the halflings tend to more strongly prefer the traditional roles, it's more a matter of habit and custom than any clearly-articulated ideal. The only allied race with very firm contrary opinions are the Dwarves, who are highly reluctant to confirm males in the traditional female roles of crafting, manufacture or scholarship, or grant females leave to take up male employment as warriors, builders, or miners. Still, a vocal minority of dwarvish male rights enthusiasts have been making increasing demands to be permitted wider access to the crafting professions, insisting that male dwarves are every bit as capable as females of superior craftsmanship. Despite widespread skepticism over the quality of 'mannish' goods, a few male dwarven crafters have emerged among those willing to accept the social ostracism involved. The enthusiasm among female dwarves for access to the soldiering profession has not been as widely reciprocated, though there is still the rare dwarven female who proves herself in battle alongside her brothers, even if she thereby dooms her chances for a respectable marriage.

## Religion

Countless gods and spirits are worshipped by the natives and refugees of the Sunset Isles. Most of the traditional theology surrounding these entities has been garbled by the trauma of the Red Tide and



the death of so many trained priests, and so the cults that remain tend to be very simple faiths with little concern over contradictions or paradoxes. Two priests of the same god can honestly hold to very different interpretations of his divine nature, and these arguments occasionally become violent when the interpretations are deeply opposed. Despite this, most locals are more interested in what the gods can do for them than in any duty to the divine.

The gods have been singularly distant towards the world since the Red Tide arrived. While *Commune* spells and other forms of divine communication still function to give practical information, the gods seem very reluctant to say anything about the Tide, or clarify the doctrinal confusion among their worshippers. Before the last of them succumbed to age or battle, the great hierarchs that survived the flight from the Tide found themselves deeply frustrated by these divine silences. The gods no longer plainly spoke their will, and even great priests and sages could not agree on the right way to serve them.

## The Nine Immortals

The traditional gods of the Ninefold Celestial Empire, the Nine Immortals are the most widespread deities among the Sunset Isles. Popular as they are, most devotions are no more sophisticated than quick prayers for good luck or pinches of rice tossed into the kitchen fire as a sacrifice. The most complex rituals that most folk ever take part in are the elaborate funerary rites intended to prevent devils from stealing away the souls of the recently dead. Even in that case, the poor or confident often make do with no more than a few prayers uttered over the body and the waving of an incense-stick or two.

The nine deities are composite in nature, having absorbed many sub-aspects of local gods and goddesses and often receiving worship in ways orthodox to the particular location they are found in. The Imperials tended to simply aggregate any foreign gods into whichever of the Nine Immortals most closely matched their portfolio, often representing them as powerful devil-avatars or kindly tulpas of the god. The yamabushi of the ancient Kueh empire resisted this impulse by attempting to develop a more sophisticated theology that still had room for native Kueh nature-spirit worship, and their theological handbooks and scriptures are still highly respected as being “pure” understandings of the Immortals.

The Nine Immortals are represented by traditional colors and attributes. Kusha, the Red Goddess, represents warfare and struggle. Fa Chia, the Yellow God, embodies the concept of law and integrity. Mimamsa, the Blue Goddess, represents learning and intellect. Sankhya, the Gray God, is a mystical deity revolving around being-as-such. Shinrai, the White God, is the principle of ending and negation. Kega, the Green Goddess, is the deity of becoming and transformation. Tendai, the Black God, oversees distortions and corruptions. Hesika, the Vermillion Goddess, keeps charge of sensation and perception. Lastly, Inren the Purple God is the god of that-which-is-overlooked and the blank spaces within any theological schema. Unsurprisingly, Inren does not have many clergy.

Each of these gods is reputed to be served by legions of devils and armies of benign “tulpas”, celestial emanations of their divine

power. The devils enact the more negative, chastising aspects of the divinity, while the tulpas act to succor and maintain. The devils of Fa Chia scourge lawbreakers and hypocrites, punishing them for their failings, while the tulpas enlighten judges and reveal the right paths to those who faithfully seek them. In a similar vein, the devils of Tendai corrupt and confuse, seeking to cause pain and suffering through twisted words and customs, while his tulpas bring innovations and revelations of new possibility to the worthy. This attitude is to be contrasted with the devils and demons of the Hells, whose Hell Kings have no sense of proportion or limit and desire only to swell their stock of tormented souls.

## The Skandr Gods

The Skandr were never a terribly pious folk, and their descendants in Nordheim are no different. Small temples remain to the three major Skandr gods, but their worship is a thing honored chiefly in the breach. Still, merchants and raiders both pause to pour beer for Sifr, the lord of the waves. Farming villages around Nordheim itself are careful to propitiate Anghad, the mistress of the mountains, in trust that she will permit the rocky land to bring forth food. And almost all Nordheimers have reason to sooner or later seek the favor of red-handed Hjal, the god of battle.

For the most part, Skandr religious observances are longer on words than actions. Beer might be poured out in honor of a deity, but most worship simply consists of an oath to a particular god to give him so much beer, so many burnt sacrifices, or so many foemen’s heads if the god will help accomplish the task at hand. Due to this very practical attitude towards divine help, Skandr tend to pick up whatever gods seem most useful for the moment- and are quick to drop them when they prove ineffectual.

## Other Gods

The other ethnic groupings that arrived in bulk on the Sunset Isles left most of their gods behind them. The Gadaal never had the sort of pantheon that other nations had, instead preferring to worship rather impersonal conceptions of destiny and free will in a subtle, complex way that was almost completely lost in the exodus. Now it usually serves as no more than a simple folk creed, with Gadaal peasants praying that Destiny might spare them from evil fates and Liberty might let them attain greatness.

Eirengarders hold to a monotheism that is peculiar by the standards of their neighbors, revering a Maker thought to have created all that was good in the world out of a chaos of formless evil. This cosmogony was not much appreciated by the worshippers of other gods, who found the idea to be laughably arrogant, but Eirengarder warpriests were responsible for some of the most impressive battlefield miracles recorded in the world before the Tide. Eirengarders adhere to a sacred Law supposedly handed down by the Maker Himself, with interpretations and elaborations of the text given by the ancient Iron Prophets who taught the Eirengarders how to defend themselves from their hostile neighbors and their own barbaric ignorance. Makerite churches tend to disagree on details of the faith, but most of them are able to deal in civil fashion with their brethren even when they cannot agree on specifics. Makerite believers are adjured to follow numerous strange, detailed taboos,

often including demands for daily prayer, shunning pork, ritual purification after bloodshed, and other details of behavior.

The Eshkanti did not lack for gods, and indeed, collected them as other traders collected souvenirs. Merchants would bring back little shrines and tokens for their god-niches, and a clan would boast of how many deities it served and how mighty the blessings they received from all their divine patrons. Even today, small Eshkanti clans can often be found venerating gods completely forgotten to the rest of the Isles. The exact details and nature of these gods varies almost from family to family, hinging largely on how much of their belief the Eshkanti managed to remember in the chaos of the exile.

The Kueh had ceased to exist as a clear ethnic grouping centuries before the Red Tide struck. Their ancient traditions of nature-spirit worship and isolated meditation still existed in the northwestern corner of the Empire, but they were practiced by men and women who considered themselves as Imperial as any mountain heartlanders. Their yamabushi had acquired an honored place as spiritual sages and hierarchs, but the tradition was seen as an Imperial one by most moderns rather than as the special province of the Kueh.

## The Hell Kings

The hungry lords of the Hells are eager for worshippers, though their veneration is forbidden in Xian and Hohnberg and mistrusted most other places. The Shogunate of the North is the greatest center of Hell King worship in the Isles, and indeed, any other faith is forbidden open practice there. The Shogun Rai has his masters, and they will brook no competitors.

The Hell Kings teach their followers that the whole world is ultimately damned to the torments of the Hells. Those that escape their grasp after death are only spared for a little while, their souls given temporary refuge in the paradises of the kinder gods. In time, those redoubts will fall to Hell and its occupants will be fed to the fire like all the rest. Only those who submit utterly to the will of Hell will be spared the general torment, and have some hope of being rewarded with a place of security and power.

The Hell Kings are generous with bestowing clerical power upon their servants, but they demand utmost obedience. Corruption, malice, and sin are to be spread among the inhabitants of the world so as to ensure they end up all the sooner in the Hell Kings' grasp. Those worshippers who harvest the greatest crop of souls can be assured of the greatest place below, and the dreaded Red Jade Templars of the Shogunate assist the fainter-hearted believers in remembering their duties.

Of course, the Hell Kings have no intention of sparing their servants. They speak of pacts and promises, but it is the delusion of the theurgists to imagine that the Hell Kings can be bound by their promises or compelled by sacred words. Their hunger is insatiable,

and even their most loyal and effective tools are guaranteed only a more cleverly-disguised damnation in the world to come. Still, there are always those believers willing to imagine that they will be specially spared- or those desperate enough for aid that they do not care what the price may be.

## The Godless Races

Dwarves, elves, and halflings all share a certain indifference to the gods. The dwarves remember well their enslavement at the hands of the Mother Below, and revere only the spirits of their own ancestors. Halflings have simply never been interested in the gods or what they could offer. The Quiet Way is sufficient for their spiritual needs and altogether less inclined to lead them to the wild excesses that religion seems to provoke in others. The elves refuse to worship the gods, instead seeking to equal them through their Creeds and their strange, sorcerous rites.

This refusal to revere the gods has its price in the afterlife, of course. The dwarven shades are forced to fight the scattered fragments of the dead Mother Below, wielding mighty weapons of spirit-gold in the company of their honored ancestors. The halfling dead seem strangely impervious to the threat of the Hell Kings, ignoring their authority much as they ignore everything else about the gods. The ancestors of the elves were too proud to rely upon the gods for mercy in death. Their eternal reincarnation leaves them no afterlife, but only an unending cycle of rebirth for their earthbound souls.

These races may not possess clerical magic, but the miracles of the divine will work on them as well as on any human. The power of the gods can restore them to life, heal their injuries, and wash away their afflictions. Most clerics have little love for the Godless, but the gods have largely commanded their clergy to treat them as any human, the better to show that the power of the divine reaches even those who reject its source.

Very rarely, a Godless nonhuman will turn to divine worship. While their nature is such that they can never share in the clerical powers that are sometimes granted to a human, many gods are as willing to accept nonhumans as earnest worshippers as any other.

## Strange Faiths

Almost any deity of any particulars can be found somewhere among the worshippers of the Isles if a long enough look is taken. While the gods noted above are the most commonly known and revered in Xian, hardly a year goes by without some new divinity being proclaimed as the saviour of all who shall worship and believe. The locals are notably resistant to such appeals- if the new gods are so mighty, they reasonably ask, then where were they during the Red Tide's advance?

# HEROES OF THE ISLES

The Sunset Isles are rife with dangers that require a calm mind and a strong sword arm to overcome. Every borderman in the Westmark knows that sooner or later he must expect to fight for his life, and the gutter-runners of Tien Lung's slums can hardly go a night without facing some peril to their poxy skins. Only in the most peaceful and bucolic of civilized lands is there any real safety, and even that is a tenuous and temporary state of affairs.

Many of the defenders of the civilized lands are simple soldiers and border rangers, men and women sworn to defend their people or die trying. These soldiers are often hard-pressed to keep back the Shou raiding parties, bandit chieftains, and nameless jungle horrors that lurk deep within the untamed wilderness, but they can usually contain the worst of the perils. Their lives are hard, dangerous, and respected by the common folk.

Not everyone with an appetite for danger is cut out for a guardsman's work, however, and there are always those bold young men and women who seek something more from their days than quiet labor and unremarkable living. The Isles have always been rich in opportunities for these souls, and the following chapter discusses the ways in which each common character class functions within the social context of the Isles.

## The Role of the Adventurer

The politics of Ektau are no stranger to adventurers, and some basic social expectations have gradually built up around the role. Adventurers serve as human society's early warning network. They form a ceaseless stream of sellswords and tomb-robbers who are always plunging into the wilderness or voyaging to far islands, and if a great danger is brewing in the unknown, they're likely the first to discover it. News brought back by adventurers has often provided the critical margin of warning for the defense of a town or an outlying village.

Adventurers also serve as cheap, disposable hireswords for those unfortunate tasks that military officials and wealthy nobles want done but don't care to expend trustworthy men in accomplishing. There is rarely anyone of importance to complain about an adventurer's death, and if they never come back from the task, well, who is to miss them? Most novice adventurers are also poor and gold-hungry enough to take coin for jobs that more temperate warriors would never dare attempt.

Adventurers also serve as a societal release valve for the pressure of the most ambitious, driven young men and women in a polity. Rather than staying at home and causing trouble with their frus-

trated ambitions, they take up the adventurer's pack and set forth to find gold and glory in the borderlands. Most of them die terrible and unmourned deaths, of course, but the few that survive can become powerful and time-tested warriors in defense of human civilization. If a gutter urchin manages to accomplish great deeds and stuff his vaults with ancient gold, few practical nobles in the Isles would deny that he deserves a place among them.

Adventurers that manage to survive the perils of the early profession often form the driving force behind expeditions to reclaim lost human territory or colonization attempts amid the ruins of past glory. Most of the hardscrabble border villages of the Westmark owe their survival to the leaven of grizzled former adventurers among the peasantry and their practiced familiarity with the ugly, brutal warfare that scorches the western borders of Ektau. The wealthy merchants and jeweled magistrates who often back these colonies may not care to dine with the rough characters that man them, but they know better than to send out colonists without a proper number of hardened bordermen to protect them. Some of these retired hireswords eventually find themselves village headmen or captains of lonely border outposts.

Until then, however, adventurers are generally viewed as violent, untrustworthy, lawless figures who are to be lauded for their usefulness in times of danger and sent on their way during other seasons. Everyone rejoices in a hard vagabond's sword hand when a Shou raid is impending, but afterwards they tend to encourage such men to find further adventures elsewhere. If an adventurer perseveres through this quiet scorn, however, they may yet manage the deeds that will turn them first into a folk hero and then into a legend to light the annals of the Isles.



## CLERICS

Clerics capable of spellcasting are rare in the Sunset Isles. Most priests are simply religious experts versed in the correct rites and beliefs of the faith, and indeed, when men and women speak of a “priest”, they speak of these ungifted souls. A true cleric, on the other hand, is prized by a faith as proof of their god’s strength and usefulness to humanity. True clerics often rise to preeminence in a temple, but this rise is often accompanied by numerous difficult and dangerous missions. Great things are expected of them.

Among the major races of the Isles, only humans and Shou worship gods in a way that humans would recognize, and the Shou clergy take the form of the sinister, sorcerous witches of their god Shakun rather than clerical devotees. Halflings practice the Quiet Way for their spiritual needs, dwarves venerate the spirits of their dead ancestors, and elves prefer their Creeds for philosophical consolation.

The greatest daily challenge for most clerics is simply convincing ordinary men and women that the gods have not forsaken them. While the services of a priest are always desired for births, funerals, and weddings, day-to-day piety is a rare thing in the Sunset Isles. The catastrophe of the Tide has forced deep cracks in the spiritual confidence of the populace, and many await the miracles that will prove the gods have not forgotten men.

## DWARVES

Adventuring dwarves have often been driven forth from their homes under the mountains by the destruction of their clan or some unendurable personal shame. Some are males or females who wish to reject their traditional gender roles as warriors or crafters, others are the last ragged remnants of a destroyed delving, and a few are poor young dwarves who have a burning need for the gold that will gild their afterlife. Dwarves leave their people for a purpose, and they are not inclined to let anything get in their way of accomplishing that end.

Dwarven ancestor-priests do not have clerical powers, but they are familiar with the necessary details of tomb-carving, burial, and funerary adornment necessary to ensure that the dead are ushered safely to the ghost-cities of the ancestors. These priests occasionally leave their homes in order to seek out the restless dwarven dead who are too fearful to venture into the land of the ancestors. Once found, the priests either reason the cowardly shade into moving on or banish it in more forcible fashion. The tomb-gold of these unfortunates is considered fit payment for the priests’ services.

Dwarves in general are not too concerned about the propriety of “reclaiming” the gold of their own dead ancestors or fallen delves. The spirit is thought to have moved on after a year or two, and the gold may then be brought forth and returned to the use of the clan. They are, however, extremely sensitive about strangers plundering the tombs of their ancestors. Those who would rifle a lost tomb or delve had best either have a dwarf of the appropriate clan with them or else ensure that word of it never reaches the true heirs.

Dwarves of the Sunset Isles use the normal rules for their class as given in the *Labyrinth Lord* core rulebook.



## ELVES

Elves are by far the rarest of the demihuman classes, with no more than four or five thousand spread among all the Isles. When among their own kind, they tend to live in remote and hidden enclaves where they can study the Creed that guides them and live peacefully with their own kind. Elves who venture out into the world are almost always questing souls, ambitious to fulfill some great purpose and ready to run grave risks to attain it. Even death is simply a temporary setback, as each has vivid, uncontrolled memories of interludes in their own past incarnations.

Most elves use the standard *Labyrinth Lord* rules for their class. Some elves, however, are reborn in the bodies of human infants when the transmigration of their soul somehow goes awry. These “Scions” have the memories of elven lifetimes in the skin of human children, and they often are objects of fear and mistrust by others, “changelings” bewitched somehow or born of demonic congress. The ferocious spiritual energy thrown off by the interface of a manifested elven soul in a human body creates far too much interference for these Scions to ever master arcane spells the way that other elves do, but they are compensated somewhat by special powers known as “wyrds”.

These wyrds are the result of the interplay of their elven soul with their human form, manifestations that relate to subtle alterations of the basic fabric of reality around them. Just as elven enchanters often suspend or distort physical laws when creating their magical craftwork, Scions are living exceptions to the laws of mundane reality. The solid substance of the world melts and runs around a

powerful Scion, and events collapse into existence in accordance with the Scion's will.

Wyrds are divided into levels, much the same as spells, and a Scion can master a certain number of wyrds based on their level. A Scion can master any wyrd of an available level without a teacher or other object of study, but once a wyrd is mastered it cannot be unlearned. Each wyrd given in the sorcery chapter lists the number of times it can be used per day. To refresh any expended wyrds, the Scion needs at least eight hours of rest. Scions cannot learn or use magic-user spells and cannot use scrolls or other items normally specific to magic-users.

In all other regards, Scions are treated as elves and have all other elven abilities save for the use of magic-user spells.

SCION WYRD PROGRESSION					
Class Level	Wyrd Level				
	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	-	-	-	-
2	1	-	-	-	-
3	2	-	-	-	-
4	2	1	-	-	-
5	2	2	-	-	-
6	2	2	1	-	-
7	2	2	2	-	-
8	2	2	2	1	-
9	3	2	2	2	-
10	3	2	2	2	1

## FIGHTERS

A vast range of warriors in the Sunset Isles fall within the scope of the fighter class. Kuch samurai, Eirengarder spearmen, Eshkanti knife-fighters, and simple slum brawlers can all be described with the class abilities of the fighter. Any man or woman with the grit and resolution to make their way in the world through the force of arms can fall under this class heading.

Skilled fighters tend to be highly esteemed in human society on the Isles. The perpetual threat of the Shou and the dangers of the untamed wild make a strong sword hand vital in holding on to the existing human lands. Few societies have yet grown so decadent and self-absorbed as to scorn the abilities of a trained warrior, and a fighter of skill and resolve can often find their fortune as an honored landowner or border noble- assuming they survive.

Fighters in the Sunset Isles use the standard *Labyrinth Lord* rules for their class, but the weak are winnowed early by their hard life. They may reroll any hit die that rolls less than 4 hit points.

## HALFLINGS

Halfling adventurers are almost always driven forth from their villages by the press of necessity. In times of crisis and privation, many among the younger and more promising inhabitants of a village are

sent forth to find their own way in the world. Many die, but those that live often accumulate enough wealth and fame to establish their own village. Others lose the taste for a peaceful life entirely, and dream of an existence of excitement and gold unknown in the serene world of the Quiet Way.

Halflings use the rules given for their race in the *Labyrinth Lord* core rulebook. The halflings of the Sunset Isles are notoriously courageous, however, and are immune to non-magical sources of fear. They also gain a +4 on saving throws versus magical fear effects. This immunity does not result in blind contempt for a threat, but allows the halfling to respond calmly and rationally to danger, no matter how sudden or severe.

## MAGIC-USERS

Tide Cultists, demon worshippers, necromantic experimenters, Imperial academy graduates- all these and more can be described by the abilities of the magic-user. The great mysteries and awesome arcana of the world before the Tide may be lost, but the humbler sorceries of the present day are still to be feared. It is the hope of mastering these powers that brings so many to the study of the occult arts, or to seal bargains with powers that a wise man would not choose as allies.

Magic-users are rare but not unknown in the Isles. The Ninefold Celestial Empire that gave so many people to the initial refugee



population was a magocracy, and the Imperials still pride themselves on the power and elegance of their magic. Gadaal astromancers also made the journey, as did the yamabushi of the Kueh and the wise among the elves. Still, despite these many traditions, there remain few who have the natural aptitude and intelligence necessary to channel the powers of the arcane.

Petty magic is almost unknown on the isles. The countless little sorcerous baubles and minor enchantments that made life so sweet in the Ninefold Celestial Empire are unknown in the Sunset Isles, and most rural peasants go their entire lives without more than hearing stories about wizards. Despite this, most cities have at least one magical academy to train the more promising candidates, and a pupil with genuine magical talent is almost never denied training due to a simple lack of coin. The city expects a return on its investment, however, and such young magi are often dispatched on missions for the local government, working off their debt in the coin of service.

Magic-users on the Sunset Isles use the normal rules for their class. Many of the local academies have copies of the new magic-user spells provided in the magic chapter of this supplement, though a few of them are rare enough that they require special effort or luck to locate.

## SHOU

A Shou player character is profoundly unlikely in most games, unless they manage to completely conceal their origins. Half-breeds are much more likely, and these social outcasts often find the adventuring life to be one of their few possible routes to wealth, if not societal acceptance. Whether part-human or not, Shou can take any class available to humans, including fighter, magic-user, cleric, or thief. Tribal chieftains are often fighters or thieves of some accomplishment, but tribal Shou culture has no tradition of training as magic-users or clerics. Instead, the enigmatic Shou witches serve as the magical experts and religious leaders of the clans.

All Shou and Shou-blooded humans share an almost instinctive antipathy for the Tide and all its servants. All Shou gain +4 to hit against Tidespawn or Tide cultists and +4 on any saving throws versus magic employed by Tide-touched entities. This bonus applies to both spells and supernatural abilities that involve a saving throw. Shou cannot be permanently corrupted by the Tide. Any power or spell cast by a Tide-touched being which creates a permanent mental or physical change in the Shou lasts no more than 1d4 minutes. The Shou will still take normal damage from Tide-cast spells, but it is impossible to keep them enchanted for long. Any being of at least one-half Shou extraction shares this natural aptitude for fighting the Tide.

Shou females sometimes demonstrate magical talent, and these rare figures are initiated into the mysteries of the Shou Witch. A very few males occasionally exhibit these same talents, but so strong is the taboo in most Shou tribes that they are considered ritually and socially female as soon as they complete their initiation. In theory, the occult practices and disciplines involved in becoming a Shou Witch need not be exclusive to females, but customs are strong in the Shou clans and the females are jealous of their privileges.

## Shou Witch

<b>Requirements</b>	Must be at least half-Shou
<b>Prime Requisite</b>	Wisdom
<b>Hit Dice</b>	1d6
<b>Maximum Level</b>	None
<b>Weapons</b>	Dagger, Bow, Sling, Quarterstaff, Spear
<b>Armor</b>	Leather or Studded Leather, and no shields.
<b>Attack Table</b>	As per cleric
<b>Saving Throws</b>	As per cleric

Shou Witches channel the ancient magic of their people to protect, guide, and strengthen their tribe against its enemies. Every tribe's lineage of Witches teaches its daughters that they can become the true heirs to the power of divine Shakun, but only by wisdom and strength can they rise to their rightful place among the tribes. If they are weak and foolish, they will never be blessed by the mandate of the god.

Shou Witches guard their lore jealously. Much of their training is self-directed and intuitive in nature; once the essential mysteries are taught and the Witch is initiated, they can pursue their own growth through meditation, questing, and personal sacrifice. The mysteries of new spells come to them in visions and are grasped at an intuitive level that cannot be taught. A few human magic-users have attempted to wring the secrets of the witches from mind-ensorceled subjects, but all attempts to date have been vain. Only a willing witch can initiate another.

Shou Witches can cast a certain number of spells each day, with the number determined by their experience level. They may cast any spell they know of the appropriate level, and have no need to prepare specific spells beforehand. A Shou Witch knows as many spells of a given level as they can cast, with a maximum of four spells known of each level. Thus, a tenth level Shou Witch knows 4 first level spells, 4 second level spells, 3 third level spells, 3 fourth level spells, and 2 fifth level spells. So long as she has an unexpended spell of the appropriate level, she can cast any of the spells she knows. Refreshing her magic requires half an hour of meditation and a

SHOU WITCH PROGRESSION		
Level	Hit Dice	XP
1	1d6	0
2	2d6	1,510
3	3d6	3,020
4	4d6	6,020
5	5d6	12,040
6	6d6	25,080
7	7d6	50,160
8	8d6	100,320
9	9d6	200,640
10	9d6+1	300,640
11+	+1 HP per level	+100,001 per level



mind rested by at least eight hours of sleep. Spells can be refreshed only once per day.

Shou Witches cannot learn new spells from scrolls or teachers. They can only acquire them as they rise in experience level. Whenever they learn a new spell for a level in this way, they can choose from any of the spells given on the Shou Witch spell list for that level. Shou Witches cannot teach their spells to other casters, and any magical scrolls they might make can only be understood and used by other Shou Witches. They may develop new spells in the same way as other spellcasters, but such research replaces an existing known spell rather than adding to the total known.

So long as the Shou Witch has at least one uncast spell left, she can hurl bolts of eldritch energy commonly called *witchfire* at a target. Using witchfire does not consume her magic, as the power simply requires that she have some arcane reserves remaining to her. The precise appearance of this witchfire varies with the caster, usually reflecting their personality in some regard- steely gray bolts from a particularly strong-willed witch, for example, or coruscating red flames from a passionate soul. The bolts have a short range of 50', a medium range of 100', and a long range of 150'. Their hit roll is modified by DEX and the bolt does 1d6 points of magical force damage, rising to 2d6 damage at level 7. Witchfire is treated as a missile attack rather than a spell, but has the unique property of never harming anyone the Shou Witch does not intend to harm. Witchfire can thus be fired into a melee with impunity.

Shou Witches can wield daggers, bows, quarterstaves, slings, and spears, but they can wear no armor heavier than studded leather and cannot use shields. Shou Witches are treated as clerics for the purposes of class-based effects and rules. Shou Witches can use clerical scrolls, including scrolls of spells not normally on the Shou Witch spell list, along with any other magic item usable by the cleric class.

## THIEVES

The thieves of the Sunset Isle come in every shape and from every extraction, each culture giving over its share of those men and women who prefer an easier life than work can get them. Whether golden-tongued charlatans with pocketed cloaks full of tricks or grimy street urchins, they have ways of getting to what they want and dealing with those who try to stop them.

In one sense, the thief's arts are commonplace. Any adventurer can try to climb a wall or hide in a darkened corner, and many can manage a quiet footfall around enemies. Thieves, however, have an almost supernatural talent for such stealthy pursuits. The best of them are capable of scaling planes of smooth glass or vanishing into a shadow no wider than a man's hand. Some practice ancient traditions and delve into secrets of stealth, such as the ninja clans of the Kueh or the assassins of certain venerable tongs. Others simply possess an uncanny intuition for the work. Whatever the source, the unique arts of the thief seem reserved for humankind, for even the stealthiest of elves or the most unobtrusive of halflings never seem to develop the same unnatural skill as the most adept human thieves.

SHOU WITCH SPELL PROGRESSION							
Class Level	Spell Level						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
5	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
6	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
7	4	3	2	1	-	-	-
8	4	3	3	2	-	-	-
9	4	4	3	2	1	-	-
10	5	4	3	3	2	-	-
11	5	4	4	3	2	1	-
12	5	5	4	3	3	2	-
13	6	5	4	4	3	2	1
14	6	5	5	4	3	3	2
15	7	6	5	4	4	3	2
16	7	6	5	5	4	3	3
17	8	7	6	5	4	3	3
18	8	7	6	5	4	4	3
19	8	7	6	5	5	4	3
20	8	7	6	6	5	5	4



The law in the Isles is not gentle, and many thieves die young on the gallows or find their career cut short by the loss of important limbs. Still, the utility of a gifted skulker in dealing with Shou war parties and ancient ruins is acknowledged by the powers of the Isles, and an adventuring thief can usually expect to be left in peace so long as he restricts his larcenous urges to enemies.

## VOWED

Many faiths maintain secret disciplines and austerities that promise to bring the practitioner into closer communion with the perfection of their god. By harsh mortification of the flesh, stern practice, and a rigorous mental discipline, even the humblest petitioner may become a mighty exemplar of physical and spiritual excellence. In the years since the exile, many of these techniques have become lost or confused, and some masters now teach the arts without the spiritual content that was once so important to their transmission. These Vowed now often gain their abilities through simple training, experience, and discipline rather than as part of an organized faith. Certain insular ninja clans practice the way of the Vowed with traditional familial arts that owe nothing to conventional piety.

Still, even the vaguest and most philosophical schools retain a slender thread of connection to the divine, and so the Godless races cannot master the arts of the Vowed. Elves, dwarves, and halflings may become impressive brawlers and fistic artists, but the supernatural gifts of the Vowed are forever denied to them. Shou can become Vowed if any can be found to train them.

### Vowed

<b>Requirements</b>	None
<b>Prime Requisite</b>	Wisdom
<b>Hit Dice</b>	1d6
<b>Maximum Level</b>	None
<b>Weapons</b>	Dagger, Quarterstaff, Club, Dart, Short Sword, Flail
<b>Armor</b>	None, and no shields.
<b>Attack Table</b>	As per fighter
<b>Saving Throws</b>	As per cleric

Vowed rely on their particular style of unarmed combat for defensive purposes, and are forbidden the use of armor and shields. While the chief weapon of a Vowed is their own unarmed fighting prowess, most novices are also taught the handling of daggers, flails, darts, quarterstaves, short swords, and clubs for those times when fists and feet are not the best tools for the task at hand. Vowed can otherwise use any magical item allowed to fighters and are treated as fighters for the purpose of any special effect or rule based on class.

Vowed unarmed attacks strike for increasing amounts of damage as their class level rises. Vowed can make unarmed attacks so long as at least one limb is free, and their training allows them to avoid injury when striking otherwise hazardous objects such as fire elementals, iron golems, or other such entities. At third level, their unarmed attacks count as silver weapons for the purpose of injuring supernatural beings, and at seventh level they count as magical weapons of whatever "plus" value is necessary to hurt a target.

Vowed learn to dodge enemies with almost supernatural agility, and their armor class progressively improves as they rise in level. This armor class is improved by natural DEX bonuses as is normal.

Vowed belong to specific schools of martial expertise, and learn the style associated with their school. At first level, they pick one of three styles based on their school's tradition: Iron Tempest, Water Hand, or Ninjitsu. They immediately gain the novice benefit from that style. At fourth level they gain the student benefit from the style, and at eighth level they gain the master benefit from the style. At ninth level they may choose to learn the novice level of a second style, and rise in ability according to the class ability table.

Vowed also learn unique abilities as part of their program of spiritual and physical discipline. At second level, they may pick one ability from the Novice Art list. At fifth level, they may pick a Student Art, and at eighth level they may pick a Master Art. Truly legendary Vowed may learn additional Arts as they rise in expertise.

At twentieth level, the Vowed attains to the perfection of the *radiant master* ability, and may make two attacks per round, roll twice on any saving throws, and obtain immunity to level drain, magical aging, paralysis, slow, and instant death effects.

## Vowed Martial Styles

### Iron Tempest Style

<b>Novice</b>	Add +2 to unarmed attack damage.
<b>Student</b>	The student can strike inanimate objects with great focus and ferocity. Double any unarmed damage rolls against a stationary object.
<b>Master</b>	Add +4 to unarmed attack damage. This does not stack with the Novice style benefit.

### Water Hand Style

<b>Novice</b>	All unarmed damage can be treated as subdual damage. A living creature reduced to 0 HP by subdual damage is optionally either unconscious for one turn or helplessly pinned by the Vowed, depending on choice and practicality. Subdual damage vanishes one hour after infliction. Subdual damage is useless against undead and constructs.
<b>Student</b>	The Vowed may strike to throw a target of human size or smaller; on a successful hit, no damage is done, but the victim must make a saving throw versus Paralysis or be thrown to the ground at a location of the Vowed's choice within five feet. Prone characters fight at -2 to hit, grant melee opponents +2 to hit them, and must spend a round's movement allowance to stand up.
<b>Master</b>	The master's control over vital force is so subtle that he can inflict subdual damage without even alerting the victim of the attack. The master must touch the target, even in a fashion as innocent as a handclasp, a brush of fingers, or resting a hand on the target's forearm. For each round in which the master does so, normal unarmed subdual damage is done. The victim is unaware of this damage until they either fall unconscious at zero hit points or are struck for normal damage and recognize their sudden lassitude and weakness.

## Ninjitsu Style

<b>Novice</b>	The novice may Move Silently, Hide in Shadows, and Climb Walls as per a thief of one level lower, to a minimum of level 1 skills. Such focus takes away time from efforts otherwise spent on physical conditioning, and a practitioner of this style rolls only 1d4 for hit dice instead of 1d6. If this style is learned as a second style at ninth level, the Vowed must reroll their hit dice.
<b>Student</b>	The student is an artful wielder of poisons. He knows how to keep a toxin fresh and useful, and a weapon he poisons will remain effectively envenomed until it successfully hits a target. Victims suffer a -2 saving throw penalty against any poisons used by the student, whether ingested or on an envenomed blade. The student also becomes immune to poisons.
<b>Master</b>	The master is not seen unless he chooses to reveal himself. Twice per day, the master may become <i>Invisible</i> as per the magic-user spell, with the effect lasting up to one turn per level. A master cannot attack on the same round he becomes invisible.

## Vowed Arts

### Novice Arts

**Spirit Breath:** The Vowed respire through the spiritual light of his discipline. Each day, he can hold his breath for one turn per level, divided as necessary. He gains a permanent +2 saving throw bonus on saves against gaseous attacks, even those that do not require inhalation to take effect.

**River Reed Bridge:** For one round per level per day, the Vowed can walk or run across a liquid or muddy surface as if it were solid ground. The Vowed may take damage if the liquid is dangerous to touch.

**Cherry Blossom Stair:** The Vowed makes himself light as a feather for a brief instant as he falls, reducing the damage from the plunge. When determining fall damage for the Vowed, subtract ten feet per level from the total distance fallen.

### Student Arts

**A Boil With Nine Openings:** The Vowed's body rejects all impurity. The Vowed becomes immune to both normal and magical diseases, and gains +4 on all saving throws versus poison.

**Uttering Noble Truths:** The Vowed's words can be understood by any intelligent creature, and any speech heard by the Vowed can be understood regardless of language.

**Summer Snow, Winter Fire:** The Vowed's body becomes resistant to extremes of heat and cold, ignoring all natural extremes of climate and causing any open flames or icy assaults to do only half normal damage.

## Master Arts

**Harmonious Path:** The master is in such perfect harmony with his surroundings that twice per day, he may move completely unimpeded by non-magical walls, earth, and barriers. He may pass through such obstructions without leaving a trace, and will not be injured by contact with them even if the barriers are composed of otherwise dangerous substances. This freedom of motion lasts for one round per level of the Vowed. If the effect ends while still immured within a solid barrier, he is immediately ejected into the nearest empty space able to contain him and is stunned and helpless for 1d4 rounds.

**Celestial Wisdom:** While the gods are not inclined to speak directly to mortals in this fallen age, the master has an intuitive grasp of the correct path. Once per week, they may gain the benefits of a *Commune* spell, gaining an instinctive sense of the answers to three yes-or-no questions. Using this ability too often or for trivial ends tends to cloud the master's harmonious intuition and render the ability useless for a month or more.

**Inexorable Fist:** Once per day, the master may focus his inner strength to unleash an overwhelming assault on a luckless foe. Invoking this power allows the master to treat an attack as if a natural 20 had been rolled to hit. This attack does double the maximum damage possible for the strike. This power must be used before the master attacks. It cannot be invoked after the dice are rolled to hit.

### VOWED PROGRESSION AND ABILITIES

Level	Hit Dice	AC	Damage	Powers	XP
1	1d6	7	1d4+1	Novice Style	0
2	2d6	7	1d4+1	Novice Art	2,005
3	3d6	5	1d6+1	Silver Fists	4,010
4	4d6	5	1d6+1	Student Style	8,020
5	5d6	5	1d6+1	Student Art	16,040
6	6d6	4	1d6+3	Magical Fists	32,080
7	7d6	4	1d6+3	Master Style	64,160
8	8d6	3	1d6+3	Master Art	128,320
9	9d6	3	1d8+3	Second Novice Style	250,640
10	9d6+1	3	1d8+3		370,000
11	9d6+2	2	1d8+3	Second Novice Art	490,640
12	9d6+3	2	1d10+3	Second Student Style	610,640
13	9d6+4	1	1d10+3		730,640
14	9d6+5	1	1d10+3	Second Student Art	850,640
15	9d6+6	1	1d10+5	Second Master Style	970,640
16	9d6+7	0	1d10+5		1,090,640
17	9d6+8	0	1d10+5	Second Master Art	1,210,640
18	9d6+9	0	1d12+5		1,330,640
19	9d6+10	-1	1d12+5		1,450,640
20	9d6+11	-1	1d12+7	Radiant Master	1,570,640

# RED SORCERY

The Sunset Isles seethe with magic deep under the earth. A slow tide of sorcery flows through innumerable geomantic lines, and deposits of glistening black godbone hide strange virtues from all but the learned. The people of the Isles come from cultures that have long acknowledged the power and mystery of magic. Though few have the natural aptitude for the art, those that have the gift can expect to find instruction from others who recognize their value.

The following chapter discusses the nature of magic in the Sunset Isles, and gives new spells for magic-users, clerics, and the new Shou witch class. At the end of the section is a selection of some of the magical items unique to the arcanists of the Isles, and a discussion of how to personalize the magical blades and implements in your campaign to fit particular cultures.

## A Question of Soul

At the heart of things there are as many different theories of magic as there are wizards and priests to argue them. Every spellcaster experiences the flow of eldritch power in their own way and with their own understanding, shaped by the idioms and traditions of their teachers. A Gadaal mage raised among Imperial High Path sorcerers would understand his magic as being an inexorable confluence of mystically potent words, signs, and substances, while an Eshkanti girl taught by the astromancers of the Gadaal would feel the alignment of the skies above opening the hidden doors of the world of light. The effects of their spells would be identical save for small details of manifestation, but the experience would be very different between them.

Most spellcasters would agree, however, that magic is ultimately a confluence of effect between geomantic power and the caster's soul. The earth and natural world around the caster provides the raw force for the enchantment, while the strength of the mage's soul provides the necessary shaping and control to render the raw force into specific magical effects. Different magical traditions provide different means of strengthening the caster's soul or improving their ability to tap the surrounding geomantic power, but all the myriad techniques revolve around manipulating these two essential elements.

The soul is something deathless in a human, dwarf, or halfling. It is the immortal fragment of their identity, the portion of their self that contains their mind, memories, and will. Upon death, the soul is freed from the body. Those reconciled to their passing or urged on by funerary rites vanish into the gray expanse of the afterlife, there to be gathered into the paradise of their god. Those who have led

good and noble lives can hope to be saved by kindly deities even if they never specifically pledged obedience to a god, but those who are wicked and faithless must journey forever in the gray, perpetually at risk of being snatched up by the Hell Kings to swell their ranks of tormented souls. Funerary rites protect the dead, and shield them from the grasp of the Hell Kings.

Those who die without them must trust to their own faith and good heart to rescue them, and many spirits are too frightened to risk the gray road without help. They linger in the world of the living, becoming twisted by their fear and envy until they are left to animate dead flesh or manifest as spectral monstrosities. These "hungry ghosts" must be forced onward by violence, by due funerary rites, or by the comforting power of a cleric.

Demihumans have no gods, and meet death differently. A dwarf is laid in a tomb filled with gold, and he takes the spirit of the metal with him into the afterlife. There, he dwells with his dead ancestors in great gray tomb-delves, wielding mighty weapons of spirit-gold against the raving hordes of the Mother Below. It is a grim afterlife, but dwarves have the comfort of their families and ancestors to uphold them, and there is joy even in that gray place. For halflings, the gray road leads to places unknown to men. Neither gods nor Hell Kings can bar their way. Elves have no afterlife at all. Their souls linger for a time in the world before being reborn in the flesh of an elven infant. A powerful cleric can summon life back into the husk that remains if they do so before the elf's next incarnation, but there is no fragment that continues to an existence separate from their bodies.

Such an immortal nature within a human gives them power over the geomantic force around them, and allows them to perform what men know as magic. Elves share a little in this power, but because their souls are permanently embedded in their corporeal forms they are forever limited in the amount and strength of the geomantic energy they can control. Old legends speak of elves who have learned to overcome this limit, either through black sorceries such as those practiced by the Wearers of the Mantle, or through a strange sort of self-transcendence achieved by the elven Apotheons. Dwarves and halflings seem to be barred from the use of magic as men understand it. Some say it is a curse from the gods for their disobedience, while others suggest simply that the magic of dwarves and halflings is something different by nature.

## The Many Schools

There are several major traditions of magic in the Sunset Isles, each with their own schools and academies. Schools for sorcery are not common in the Isles, but every great city has at least one, and most market towns have at least one wizened scholar willing to take on an apprentice or three. Even remote villages might have a teacher available, perhaps one educated by some bored and frustrated magistrate exiled far from home for his failure at the courtly game of politics.

The traditional Imperial school of magic is the High Path, taught by the arcanists of the Ninefold Celestial Empire and practiced by their mighty Archmages. Much of its lore was lost in the chaos of the exile, and more still died with arcanists who were too hard-pressed to take apprentices in the frantic years after the Landing. Still, the organized, literary nature of the High Path made it comparatively easy to write down in grimoires and silk-corded tomes. Most of the wizards of the modern Isles practice some form of High Path magic.

The High Path relies on carefully-developed magical incantations, somatic gestures, and the occasional use of symbolic ritual ingredients. The symbol is the crucial thing, so these ingredients are rarely costly or exotic, and most can be substituted with anything else that serves to form a material symbol of the purpose desired. A truly hard-pressed High Path magus can cast many spells with no material components whatsoever, though the strain of visualizing the necessary symbols can be difficult to maintain in battle. High Path magic is intellectually demanding and requires extensive strengthening of the soul through meditation, ritual incantations, and focused repetition. For those magi who can bear up under the demands, it offers a wealth of clearly-formulated spells.

The Gadaal often prefer a different path, relying instead on their traditional astromancy. The Gadaal draw their power not from the geomantic forces of the soil, but from the conjunctions of the heavens. By intoning the correct harmonic sounds and assuming the correct postures, the astromancer briefly transforms himself into a connection between the heavens and the earth, manifesting the power in a tangible form to accomplish a spell. As with the High Path, this use of the mage's own soul as a conduit is very taxing, and novice astromancers can rarely manage more than one spell before they need to rest and recuperate. Masters of the celestial arts can wield power as deftly as any High Path magus, however, effortlessly assuming the postures and intoning the strange, wailing chants that resonate with the cold stars above.

Some say that the Gadaal are the finest diviners in the world, for their astromancy seems particularly well-suited to divining the future in a clear and precise way. The Archmage Lammach himself practiced astromancy rather than the traditional Imperial High Path, and it was his astromancy that foretold the Tide. Many of these secrets have been lost in the centuries since, however, and modern astromancers struggle in vain to find their ancestors' sacred stone books and jeweled astrolabes.

Not every wizard is content to spend the kind of effort and dedication necessary to rise in power as an astromancer or a High Path wizard. Some want an easier route to power, and for these wizards



the Stitched Path beckons. Just as it is a strong soul that channels greater magic, so the Stitched Path wizards study esoteric means of spiritual vivisection. Their golden scalpels and red brass tweezers cut apart the souls of living humans in order to extract the most magically-important parts. These intangible fragments are then mystically sewn to the Stitched Path wizard's own soul, temporarily borrowing the innate force of the victim's spirit. While these grafts inevitably wither and fade away into the afterlife within a week, while they remain "fresh" the Stitched Path wizard has power far beyond what his natural expertise would suggest. For the actual exertion of their magic, they most often borrow the spells and techniques of the High Path.

Stitched Path magic is loathsome to the wizards of civilized lands, but it is the common practice of the city of Tien Lung and its tributary settlements. This horror is not simply humanitarian in nature; Stitched Path magic permanently disfigures the souls of those wizards who practice it. The scars and suture-wounds that pucker their spiritual aspect hinder them from ever attaining the exalted heights of mastery that a High Path mage could achieve. For most of them this is a small sacrifice, as they never would have attained such power in the first place. The Enlightened Sage who rules Tien Lung is said to be experimenting with ways to overcome this disability, and the cost in the lives of slaves has driven the price up by thirty gold koku a head in the flesh markets of Tien Lung.

Clerical magic is not so much a formal arcane school as it is a gift from the gods. The most ignorant and foolish of peasants can be granted the might of a hierarch if his deity so wills, and the use of these powers is very little more complicated than gesturing toward the target of an enchantment and then praying that the deity will send the miracle. In a very real sense, the cleric himself does not cast the spell; he simply asks the god to send the desired effect. The chief difference between clerics and ordinary priests is that the god will actually listen to the cleric when he asks. The flare of power in a cleric's mind leaves them vulnerable while casting, however, and a stiff blow to the miracle-worker can leave the prayer fizzling out uselessly and the deity's favor expended to no effect.

Elves have their own way of channeling magic. Many of them never learn- or relearn- the specific arts of spellcasting at all, and are content to simply live in the refined bodies that their ancestors bestowed on them. Others choose to make use of these half-divine forms, and learn to channel power through their flesh as other wizards direct it through their souls. This is invariably harder and more dangerous to the caster than a more spiritual means of invocation, and there is a limit to the amount of power any elf can channel before his flesh simply explodes into metaphysical flames. Even lesser enchantments can leave white spirit-flames licking along the caster's limbs in an excruciating but otherwise harmless display of magical overload.

Some elves have sought ways to overcome this limit. The Wearers of the Mantle have taken Stitched Path sorcery even farther than human magi have dared. They cut apart the souls of men and stitch them together to wear them like a cloak, adding new souls as old ones wither away into the afterlife. The greatest are said to be capable of fixing a soul forever in place, and wear unseen but hideous cloaks fashioned of a thousand tormented human souls. Others speak of the elven Apotheons and their rites of half-divinity that burn away all that is mortal in them. Whatever the talk, few elves in the Isles ever live to even test their limits, let alone concern themselves with passing beyond them.

## Magic and Life in the Isles

While almost every educated dweller in the Isles understands that magic exists, few lives are immediately touched by this fact. Most villages have at least one "wise woman" or "cunning man" who knows a little hedge sorcery and can mix up herbs to ease a childbirth and throw charms against hungry ghosts, but genuine magic-users and divinely-empowered clerics are rare. Perhaps only one in five hundred humans have the right mix of talent and intellect to succeed as a wizard, and no more than the same number are blessed with the favor of the gods. The great cities attract most of the aspiring wizards from the hinterlands, drawing them with the prospect of libraries and the society of their own kind.

Most wizards are minor mages, few ever reaching beyond the third or fourth rank of expertise. Most of their daily income comes from feng shui consultations, astrological foretellings, petty charms against evil, and the occasional *Detect Magic* spell to assure a frightened daifu that their latest costly acquisition has not been cursed by a rival. The worst showmen among such wizards are sometimes forced to accept mere coppers for their labors, but the most impressive and suitably mercantile can charge vast sums to grateful clientele. Adventurers tend to get the stiff rates.

Clerics are most often called upon to sanctify births and perform funerary rites. Even the largely indifferent populace of the Isles

fears to face the afterlife without the security of a proper burial, and the proven divine favor that a cleric wields makes them highly in demand for such work. Some clerics also are consulted for healing and for luck blessings. Any cleric powerful enough to master the *Cure Disease* spell can make a fat living off the fears of rich and sickly petitioners.

NPC SPELLCASTING COSTS		
Spell Level	Magic-User	Cleric
1	10 gp	10 gp
2	25 gp	30 gp
3	50 gp	100 gp
4	200 gp	500 gp
5	500 gp	1,000 gp
6*	1,000 gp	5,000 gp
7*	5,000 gp	10,000 gp
8*	10,000 gp	-
9*	25,000 gp	-
* Spellcasters this powerful require an adventure just to locate, let alone hire them.		

A rare handful of the most powerful clerics are even able to call back the dead. Most such clerics are stern holy men and women who dwell in the wilderness or in remote border monasteries, away from the worldly blandishments of the cities. Some of them are sufficiently flexible to wield such mighty miracles for mere pecuniary recompense, but others demand favors from petitioners before they will consider using such potent prayers.

Unfortunately for most of the dead, the clerical powers of resurrection function only on those who have not yet been snared by the Hell Kings or received by the paradise of their god. In the former case, the Hell Kings refuse to release their lawful prey, and in the latter, the soul is too transfixed by the delights of paradise to return to the pains of life. Adventurers are usually stubborn enough to linger before the gates of the afterlife, but many others are not so slow to meet their reward.

Among elves, those who choose to pursue the magical arts are respected for their dedication and willingness to endure the intense pain of channeling the geomantic power through their own flesh. These elves can often be identified by the dark patterns that etch their limbs, the blackened marks of soul-flesh burnt by the channeling of sorcerous power. Some elves have enough of a memory of their past lives to simply recollect the lore they need, but most must piece together their past echoes with more immediate study in their current life. Some can get teaching from their brethren, while others are forced to turn to human institutions to obtain what they require.

## NEW CLERIC SPELLS

While all the cleric spells on the *Labyrinth Lord* spell list are available to all clerics regardless of faith, some creeds have mastered unique prayers specific to their faith. All of the new spells listed below exist in one form or another for every god's followers, but they remain carefully-guarded secrets by those who know the correct invocations and suitable prayers for obtaining them. A cleric cannot prepare any of these new spells until they have been taught the prayer by a cleric of the same faith who already possesses the knowledge. Certain rare prayer books might also contain the secrets of these miracles.

### ABJURATION OF LIGHT

<b>Level</b>	3
<b>Duration</b>	Instant
<b>Range</b>	120'

Even the malevolent gods have always been enemies of the Hell Kings and their insatiable lust for the souls of the dead. This incantation summons a brilliant eruption of light in a 20' radius within the spell's range, inflicting 1d6 damage per two full caster levels on all undead, infernal demons, and Hell King cultists within the area of effect.

### LAMP OF THE NINE IMMORTALS

<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Duration</b>	1 turn/level
<b>Range</b>	Self

While referred to as a "Lamp", the faint glowing lens created by this spell casts only a very subtle radiance little brighter than a candle flame. A cleric who looks through the lens can see the presence of magic as if using a *Detect Magic* spell. If undead have been present in the area within the past week, signs of their presence will also be clear to the caster, with more recent unliving intruders leaving brighter signs. These indicia are too vague to allow for successful tracking, however.

### MAKER'S PEACE

<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Duration</b>	Instant
<b>Range</b>	60'

While this spell was first used by Makerite warpriests, versions of it have shown up in the liturgies of numerous other faiths. When the prayer is invoked, a single undead target within range takes 1d6+1 damage for every four levels of the cleric, rounded up. If the undead has been created within the past two weeks, the surge of divine power has a chance of breaking the fresh bonds of unquiet magic- the undead must save versus Spells or be destroyed if it has fewer hit dice than the cleric has levels.



### MARTYR'S FURY

<b>Level</b>	4
<b>Duration</b>	1 round/level
<b>Range</b>	Self

This spell is very rarely taught to clerics, as the blessing it confers upon a priest can be granted only once and comes with a terrible cost. Unlike most spells, a cleric familiar with the invocation of the *Martyr's Fury* can cast it even if he has not prepared it that day, and even if he lacks any unexpended spell slots. However, this spell will only function when the cleric is fighting on behalf of his faith, or for some ideal of his beliefs.

This prayer sheaths a willing caster in a mantle of burning radiance, imbuing him with incredible resilience and prowess. Every attack the cleric launches while this spell is in effect will automatically hit and do maximum damage. The cleric can cast any spell known to him regardless of whether or not he has prepared it. The cleric will succeed on every saving throw and cannot be killed, though enemies can throw up barriers against the priest. The spell will persist to its full duration and cannot be ended early or dispelled.

At the end of the spell's duration, however, the force of the divine power channeled through the cleric reduces their body to a fine, glittering ash. Their equipment remains, but the cleric himself is drawn directly into the presence of his deity and cannot be resurrected, cloned, reincarnated, or otherwise returned to life by any mortal magic. If the referee allows players to rejoin campaigns with characters of roughly the same level as the ones they have lost, it is recommended that this spell not be given to such a new cleric until the new character has ceased to become disposable.

## SCION WYRDS

The uncanny abilities of elven Scions derive from their unnatural birth. As elven souls incarnated in human flesh, the crackling interplay of power between their materially-infused souls and a human body meant for a more immaterial essence grants them a strange aptitude for molding the world around them to fit their own will. The following wyrds are those that most commonly manifest in a Scion, though stranger powers are not unknown in some rare cases.

### ALL POSSIBLE KNIVES

**Level** | 1

The Scion's personal belongings begin to flicker in and out of existence as his attention shifts among them, shuffling the lines of possibility in which he does or does not possess an item. Any of the Scion's worn or carried items can be instantly banished from reality, returning only when the Scion dies, goes unconscious, or wills it. The items can be called back with equal alacrity, immediately appearing on the Scion in the same pouch, hand, or arrangement in which they vanished. Time passes normally for items that have been banished, and all items count against the Scion's encumbrance limit whether or not they're tangible to anyone else. A Scion cannot banish animate creatures or items larger than a suit of armor. This wyrd can be used any number of times per day and functions instantaneously.

### ALREADY THERE

**Level** | 3

With a brief moment's concentration and the movement of no less than fifteen feet in a straight line, the Scion can transport himself to the side of any living creature whom he has seen with his own unaided vision within the past half hour. The Scion is not automatically aware of the location of their target, but can choose where to appear so long as it is within ten feet of the subject. Onlookers will assume that the Scion has always been present with the target unless such a circumstance would be greatly implausible. Wards that prevent teleportation will bar this ability, but it will function even across planar barriers. This wyrd can be used once per day, or twice per day at tenth level.

### BAD OMEN

**Level** | 2

An icy chill grips the bowels of the Scion's enemies as a sense of inexorable doom washes over them. All enemies within sixty feet of the Scion suffer a -1 morale penalty and a -1 to their attack and damage rolls as their weapons twist in their hands and bad luck dogs their strokes. Foes afflicted by this blight remain cursed for 6 turns, but the effect is instantaneous, and new creatures moving close to the Scion are not affected after the power is triggered. This wyrd can be used once per day per every three levels, rounded up.

### DREAM LOGIC

**Level** | 2

A brief exertion of will allows a Scion to force a group of victims to perceive the Scion's actions as rational, reasonable, and justified, no matter how excessive they may be. The Scion can trigger this wyrd as part of a single round's action. The onlooker with the best save versus Spell can then roll a saving throw; if he or she succeeds, the wyrd fails to take effect, while otherwise all subjects present are affected. Those affected by the wyrd will view the Scion's action as reasonable and justified for up to one hour or until confronted on the point by someone not affected by the wyrd. If the action is an attack or other hostile activity, the targets may defend themselves normally, but will not consider that round's attack to be cause for umbrage. This wyrd can be used once per day for every four levels of the Scion, rounded up.

### FALSE REMEMBERED FACES

**Level** | 2

The Scion may alter their physical appearance and the appearance of their clothing and equipment to that of any human, elven, dwarven, or halfling subject whom they have seen before. This illusionary alteration lasts until the Scion abandons it, but any person who touches the Scion may make a saving throw versus Spells to break the wyrd's enchantment. A person who fails their save perceives the form as real and cannot attempt to pierce the illusion again for one hour. This ability can be used only once per day, but may be maintained for as long as desired.

## SCION WYRD LIST

### Wyrd Level

	1	2	3	4	5
1	<i>Not My Time</i>	<i>All Possible Knives</i>	<i>Already There</i>	<i>Inexorable Step</i>	<i>Foreordained</i>
2	<i>Solipsistic Forge</i>	<i>Bad Omen</i>	<i>Ghostwalker</i>	<i>One Shadow</i>	<i>Left Hand Road</i>
3	<i>Twice Seen Blade</i>	<i>Dream Logic</i>	<i>Roll The Bones</i>	<i>The Other Way</i>	<i>Undestined</i>
4	<i>Walker In Dreams</i>	<i>False Remembered Faces</i>	<i>Speed of Nightmare</i>	-	-



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## FOREORDAINED

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*Level* | 5

The Scion exerts a ruthless control over someone else's destiny. Once per day, they may simply declare the outcome of a particular die roll made by a person within 120' of the Scion. If the Scion is affecting an attack roll or saving throw, the victim may make a save versus Spells to resist the effect. If the declaration is used to aid an ally by improving their dice, the target of the attack or damage can make a saving throw versus Spell to instead take the original roll. The Scion may wait until after the subject rolls to ordain the new result.

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## GHOSTWALKER

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*Level* | 3

The Scion and his allies become briefly invisible to the senses of other creatures. This wyrd has much same effect as the magic-user spell *Invisibility 10' Radius*, but also conceals sounds, smells, and unintentional physical alterations of the landscape such as footprints in mud or smears in dust. This ability can be used once per day.

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## INEXORABLE STEP

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*Level* | 4

The Scion can no longer be hindered by rough terrain, heavy encumbrance, or liquid surfaces. He moves at his full normal movement rate regardless of the weight he carries or the condition of the terrain, and can cross liquids as if they were solid ground. Any solid or liquid surface can bear his weight, no matter how fragile it may be. This wyrd does not grant the Scion the ability to carry more than his normal encumbrance maximum.

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## LEFT HAND ROAD

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*Level* | 5

The Scion gathers his allies and walks with them through twisted veils of space, arriving at a far distant location in mere minutes. This spell functions as does the *Teleport* spell, except it can affect up to ten allied creatures and requires that the Scion and his companions be able to move at least three hundred feet in a straight line. If the result of the teleport table check is "high" the group appears 1d6 miles away from the target, while a "low" result means that the group ends up 2d20 miles away. Travelers appear on solid ground if such is available at their destination. This wyrd can be triggered once per day.

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## NOT MY TIME

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*Level* | 1

The Scion instinctively rebels against a future in which he is gravely wounded, unconsciously forcing the lines of possibility to bend away from that outcome. Once per day, when struck by an enemy's weapon or spell, the Scion can trigger this wyrd after seeing the damage roll; the damage immediately becomes the minimum possible for the attack.

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## ONE SHADOW

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*Level* | 4

For a single round, the Scion's presence blurs and coalesces into two separate beings. Each copy of the Scion has the same equipment, hit points, and physical condition, though neither can use wyrds or use charged magic items. Each copy can act independently, but at the end of the round, one of the two copies vanishes along with all their equipment. If either copy is killed during the round, the other suffers 3d6 hit points of damage. This wyrd can be triggered once per day.

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## ROLL THE BONES

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*Level* | 3

The will of the Scion begins to bleed over into the mundane world, with random events now subtly conforming to his wishes. Invoking this wyrd allows the Scion to control one essentially random event, such as a roll of dice, a round of cards, or the indifferent selection of victims for a mad sorcerer's experiments. The Scion must be able to perceive the event or the person making the choice, and intelligent creatures gain a saving throw versus spell to resist the effect. The Scion can sense the presence of these nodes of randomness. They can tell whether a given choice or event is purposeful or essentially random, and so can determine whether or not the wyrd would be helpful. This wyrd can also be triggered to grant the Scion or an ally within sight a reroll on a failed saving throw. This ability can be invoked once per day.

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## SOLIPSISTIC FORGE

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*Level* | 1

The Scion brings a piece of his own inner world into the outer one. He can instantly conjure any non-magical object no larger than a suit of armor. He can only conjure replicas of specific items if he has carefully examined such items before, such as particular keys or book pages. These items last for six turns and serve the Scion as a normal item of their type, but they appear as a ghostly, intangible image to any other living or animate creature. A Scion could pull a rope and grappling hook from their own imagination and use it to climb a wall, but any onlooker would be unable to touch the rope. An unseen pickaxe would chop holes in a wooden door, but be completely intangible to an earth elemental or puzzled miner. The Scion can summon two items each day for each experience level he possesses.

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## SPEED OF NIGHTMARE

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*Level* | 3

The Scion moves with impossible speed, defying the ordinary bonds of motion with incredibly swift movement. This wyrd has an effect equivalent to that of a *Haste* spell lasting three turns, but it affects only the Scion. Only one wyrd can be used per round while under the effect, and this ability can be triggered once per day. As a side-effect of mastering this wyrd, the Scion becomes permanently immune to *Slow* and paralysis effects, whether mundane or induced by *Hold* spells.

## THE OTHER WAY

*Level* | 4

The Scion's control over probability and the subtle aspects of reality sharpens and intensifies. Once per day, the Scion can "take back" an action he has performed within the prior round, reverting the state of reality around him to the condition it was in before he acted. It is as if the Scion never performed the action at all, but simply stood still for a round. This wyrd can be triggered even if the choice made during the round resulted in the Scion's death, but it cannot be used to avert deaths that came about from another creature's choices, such as that of an attack or spell, unless the attack was directly resulting from a choice made that prior round.

## TWICE SEEN BLADE

*Level* | 1

The Scion bends the strands of possibility, forcing an outcome that leaves a foe nudged into the path of his blade. After missing an attack roll, the Scion can invoke this power to gain a reroll on the attack. This wyrd can be used once per day at first level, twice at fifth, and three times a day at tenth.

## UNDESTINED

*Level* | 5

The Scion becomes enormously difficult to affect with mind-controlling spells and enchantments which inflict permanent mental or physical changes. The Scion now fails saving throws against mind-affecting magic or powers which induce permanent changes only on a natural 1. Once per day, the Scion may touch a subject and grant them a saving throw versus any compulsions or enchantments which have been laid on them; this saving throw is successful on anything except a natural 1. If the saving throw fails, this wyrd cannot be applied again to the same conditions.

## WALKER IN DREAMS

*Level* | 1

The Scion briefly vanishes into nothingness, letting go of his identity for a brief moment before remembering himself in a location within 25 feet. The Scion must be able to see the targeted location, and use of this power takes the place of his normal movement allotment. This wyrd can be used safely twice per day; every use after the second requires a saving throw versus Spells or the Scion is lost forever within the void. Such unfortunates cannot be revived by anything short of a *Wish*.



## SHOU WITCH SPELLS

A Shou witch has access to a limited number of spells, each enchantment coalescing within her mind when she achieves the necessary degree of insight to cast it. The following are some of the new spells available to these sinister priestesses of Shakun. The other spells given on the table below function identically to the clerical spells of the same level.

### BIND CHAMPION

<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Duration</b>	24 hours
<b>Range</b>	120'

This enchantment binds the witch to a willing champion, allowing the two of them to share each other's strength. During any one round, the two may shift up to 3 points per witch level of incoming damage from one subject to the other. A 2nd level witch hit for 8 points of damage can thus transfer 6 points to her champion. If struck again during the same round, no further injury can be shared. The witch decides how damage will be apportioned, and can deliver fatal injuries to the champion if she so chooses. The champion must be within 120' in order to share wounds.

### BLIGHTING CLOUD

<b>Level</b>	3
<b>Duration</b>	Instant
<b>Range</b>	120'

The witch summons a burst of corrosive geomantic power, with the shock filling a 20' radius sphere within range. This sorcerous assault does 1d8 damage plus the witch's level to all living creatures within the area except those whom the witch considers allies. Undead and constructs are not affected. Targets can make a saving throw versus Spells to take only half damage.

### CLEANSE THE EARTH

<b>Level</b>	7
<b>Duration</b>	Instant
<b>Range</b>	120'

The witch summons the powers of the earth to rise up and scour foreign magic from the sorceress' foes. A 20' radius zone within the range of the spell is suddenly struck as if with a *Dispel Magic* spell cast by a cleric of the witch's level. Any non-Shou spellcaster within the zone must also save versus Spells or suffer 1d6 damage per level of the witch, taking half damage on a successful save. For this purpose, "spellcasters" include any entity capable of casting a spell, including magic-users, elves, clerics, and monsters that have spell-like powers. Tidespawn and Tide cultists get no saving throw versus this spell, and the *Dispel Magic* effect is always successful against their sorceries.

### EARTHEN GUIDE

<b>Level</b>	3
<b>Duration</b>	1 hour/level
<b>Range</b>	1 mile/level

Spirits of the earth direct the witch to a particular natural feature, provided the feature exists within the spell's range. The spell grants the witch an unerring sense of the feature's direction, but no hint as to how far it may be. Natural features such as springs, particular trees, a specific rock outcropping, or an exposed lode of ore may all be found with this spell, but two feet of earth covering a feature will block the spell's effect. This spell can also be used to find normal varieties of game animals.

## SHOU WITCH SPELL LIST

		Spell Level						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	<i>Bind Champion</i>	<i>Bless</i>		<i>Animate Dead</i>	<i>Charm Monster</i>	<i>Conjure Elemental</i>	<i>Conjure Animals</i>	<i>Cleanse the Earth</i>
2	<i>Charm Person</i>	<i>ESP</i>		<i>Blighting Cloud</i>	<i>Create Food and Water</i>	<i>Cure Critical Wounds</i>	<i>Control Weather</i>	<i>Earthquake</i>
3	<i>Cure Light Wounds</i>	<i>Hold Person</i>		<i>Cure Disease</i>	<i>Cure Serious Wounds</i>	<i>Flame Strike</i>	<i>Heal</i>	<i>Mass Invisibility</i>
4	<i>Detect Magic</i>	<i>Invisibility</i>		<i>Dispel Magic</i>	<i>Plant Growth</i>	<i>Raise Dead</i>	<i>Move Earth</i>	<i>Restoration</i>
5	<i>Remove Fear</i>	<i>Phantasmal Force</i>		<i>Earthen Guide</i>	<i>Polymorph Self</i>	<i>Spirit Warband</i>	<i>Stone Tell</i>	<i>Reverse Gravity</i>
6	<i>Shakun's Law</i>	<i>Scent Intruder</i>		<i>Lightning Bolt</i>	<i>Shakun's Scourge</i>	<i>Wall of Stone</i>	<i>Wrath of the Mountains</i>	<i>Wind Walk</i>
7	<i>Shield</i>	<i>Speak With Animal</i>		<i>Protection from Normal Missiles</i>				
8	<i>Sleep</i>	<i>Spirit Guardian</i>		<i>Remove Curse</i>				



### SCENT INTRUDER

<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Duration</b>	Instant
<b>Range</b>	1 mile/level

The witch gains a brief impression of the presence of any intelligent beings within the spell's range who are actively intending harm to her or her allies. The witch can detect numbers and a vague sense of direction, but not distance.

### SHAKUN'S LAW

<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Duration</b>	1 hour
<b>Range</b>	120'

This spell is equivalent to *Charm Person*, but affects up to 3d6 Shou within the area of effect. Creatures lacking at least one-half Shou blood are unaffected. While under the influence of the spell, the affected Shou will have an overwhelming urge to obey the orders of the witch, and will do so as long as the outcome does not appear suicidal. Targets may make a saving throw versus Spells to resist the effect.

### SHAKUN'S SCOURGE

<b>Level</b>	4
<b>Duration</b>	Instant
<b>Range</b>	240'

A lash of geomantic energy erupts from the witch to scourge a single target. The victim suffers 1d6 points of damage per level of the witch, up to 10d6 maximum. A target can save versus Spells for half damage, though Tidespawn and Tide-worshipping cultists get no saving throw versus this effect, and suffer 1d6+1 damage per caster level.

### SPIRIT GUARDIAN

<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Duration</b>	1 turn/level
<b>Range</b>	30'

The witch invokes the spirit of a slain member of her tribe to protect and serve her. The spirit summoned is tangible and has statistics equivalent to a normal warrior of the witch's tribe but is undead, and immune to *sleep*, *hold*, and *charm* effects. The spirit has no memory of its prior life and does nothing without being commanded by the witch, but will obey even self-destructive commands.

### SPIRIT WARFARER

<b>Level</b>	5
<b>Duration</b>	1 turn/level
<b>Range</b>	120'

The witch calls for the shades of dead tribesmen to serve her. This spell functions much like the second-level Shou Witch spell *Spirit Guardian*, except that one spirit is summoned for every level of the witch, or one for every two levels if the witch is a bugbear. These spirits remember nothing of their former lives, but will obey the witch's commands unflinchingly.

### WRATH OF THE MOUNTAINS

<b>Level</b>	6
<b>Duration</b>	1d4+1 rounds
<b>Range</b>	Self

This spell fills the witch with a brief surge of overwhelming fury, goading her to fight on even after suffering mortal wounds. For the duration of this spell, the witch cannot be reduced below 1 hit point, though she may be killed by poisons or other effects that produce instant death. If the witch has been reduced to 1 hit point by the time the spell ends, she immediately falls unconscious for 1d4 rounds.

## NEW MAGIC-USER SPELLS

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The grimoires of the wizards of the Isles are laden with numerous relic-spells saved from the Red Tide's depredations, but many more have been lost to the relentless press of time. A few of these old spells survive in the crabbed writings of isolated hermits and brooding sorcerer-lords, but still more exist only in forgotten books and inscriptions in places long since lost to Shou and time.

### AUSPICIOUS WARD OF COMITY

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<b>Level</b>	3
<b>Duration</b>	1 turn/level
<b>Range</b>	Six allies

There are times when a wizard cannot afford to be too finicky over the placement of his spells. The *Auspicious Ward of Comity* allows a caster to protect up to six allies from the consequences of their spellcasting. For the duration of the Ward, those affected will take no damage from the wizard's spells and will automatically save against any of his other spell effects. Those protected can suppress this effect in order to gain the benefit of an aiding spell. Each subject protected by the ward must be anointed with a costly unguent worth 50 gp per person to be protected.

### BECKONING THE BONES

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<b>Level</b>	4
<b>Duration</b>	Permanent
<b>Range</b>	60'

Most mortal remains are nothing more than the husk of their original owner, devoid of spirit or soul. Yet the marks of life are still subtly present in the bones of the dead, and a skilled necromancer can evoke these faint memories to call up aid when the purpose is pleasing to the dead. This spell functions identically to the 3rd level cleric spell *Animate Dead*, except the undead can only be animated for a purpose that they would have found acceptable in life. If commanded to act in a way inimical to their earthly lives, they will collapse back into a pile of inanimate bone and flesh. Sometimes the dead can be persuaded to serve for less immediately compelling ends by the offering of gold or other valuables that they would have prized in life.

### BROAD BACK OF THE TIRELESS LABORER

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<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Duration</b>	1 hour/level
<b>Range</b>	Touch

The ancient Imperial wizard who developed this spell used it to ensure that his assistants never flagged in their labors. The spell affects one willing subject of human size or smaller. For the spell's duration, the subject grows no hungrier, thirstier, or more weary no matter how great their exertions. Maintaining this spell for more than a day at a time can be hazardous, however; if the spell is maintained for more than 18 hours out of every 24, the subject must save versus Poison or fall unconscious for 1d6 hours from the strain on their system.

### JADE-WHEELED CHARIOT

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<b>Level</b>	4
<b>Duration</b>	1 hour/level
<b>Range</b>	Special

This sorcery calls forth a large chariot of luminous white jade, drawn by a pair of half-translucent steeds. The chariot will move as the caster commands over even the roughest and most intractable terrain, moving at a rate of 5 miles an hour regardless of the terrain type. The chariot can hold up to eight occupants and will keep them warm, dry, and comfortable regardless of the climate outside. The chariot can even travel over water, though strong waves or storms may swamp it. The chariot and horses are considered AC 6 for purposes of resisting attacks, and have a number of HP equal to twice the caster's level. If reduced to 0 HP or dispelled, the chariot instantly vanishes.

### JIE TOU'S WISE ELEGANCE

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<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Duration</b>	24 hours
<b>Range</b>	Touch

A favored enchantment of the elite of Xian's nobility and the decadent sorcerers of Tien Lung, this spell allows a single target and their worn or carried possessions to remain neat, clean, and dry regardless of their surroundings for the next 24 hours. This spell will not protect against caustic liquids, but it will prevent them from adhering for more than one round, and will keep carried objects dry even while submerged.

### LITTLE HOUSE OF SERENE JOY

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<b>Level</b>	5
<b>Duration</b>	Permanent
<b>Range</b>	Special

This variant form of the *Wall of Stone* spell was devised in the Ninefold Celestial Empire to help support their elaborate building programs. While only the most powerful sorcerers are capable of casting it, it can produce large edifices far more quickly than a standard *Wall of Stone* spell. By coaxing up bedrock from beneath the soil, the caster may form up to 1,000 cubic feet of stone per level into any structure desired. The spell takes ten minutes to cast for every thousand cubic feet of stone shaped, and the detail produced by the spell is very basic- doorways and windows can be formed, but not engravings or sculptures. The stone summoned is whatever rock lies beneath the topsoil, so some areas may not have serviceable rock to utilize. Because the rock is entirely natural, it cannot be eliminated by a *Dispel Magic* spell or other forms of countermagic.

## REFULGENCE OF SAGACITY

<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Duration</b>	2 turns/level
<b>Range</b>	20'

The light of the sorcerer's wisdom gleams forth in a nimbus of steady golden radiance, illuminating the area within 20' of the caster. This refulgence cannot be doused without ending the spell. It can be intensified into a brief burst of scorching energy, however, and will do 1d4 fire damage to everything within 20' save the caster, with a saving throw versus Spells to avoid the injury. Once the spell is discharged in this fashion, it ends.

## SEJADI'S CORUSCATION

<b>Level</b>	3
<b>Duration</b>	2 turns/level
<b>Range</b>	30'

An improved version of the *Refulgence of Sagacity*, the Archmage Sejadi found it useful for dealing with troublesome assassination attempts. The glow produced by the *Coruscation* illuminates up to 30' around the caster, and can be discharged to do 2d6 damage to all others within range, with a save versus Spells to ignore the damage. If the caster is struck by a physical attack while the *Coruscation* is still in effect, they may focus the light into a small, tangible shield to lessen the impact of the blow. This discharges the *Coruscation*, but reduces the incoming damage by 2d6 points.

## TEUTOHARD'S INKED APPREHENSION

<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Duration</b>	1 hour/level
<b>Range</b>	Sight

The wandering sorcerer Teutohard had a fervent urge to bring the sights of his far explorations back home to Hohnberg, but his lack of one eye rendered his artistic efforts somewhat lacking. He developed this spell to compensate. By holding a sheet of parchment and focusing upon a particular subject, the caster can cause a colored ink image of the subject to appear on the parchment, done in a very accurate if somewhat pedestrian style. The subject can be as large as can fit in the caster's visual range, but the detail of the drawing is limited by the size of the parchment. A large subject rendered onto a small sheet is likely to be unrecognizable. An image takes one minute to form, and the caster must remain focused on the subject while the spell works.

Copies of this spell are in common circulation in many magical circles. Most wizards claim that it is indispensable in perfectly capturing the details of any ancient inscriptions or fragile grimoire pages they may discover, but some murmur quietly of wealthy nobles being given near-instantaneous portraits of their kindred, servants, and the occasional house pet.



## THE EMPEROR'S ROAD

<b>Level</b>	7
<b>Duration</b>	Special
<b>Range</b>	Special

This rare and powerful spell is rumored to survive in a few long-lost spellbooks maintained by the most powerful of the magi who made the journey to the Sunset Isles. It functions in a fashion identical to that of an ordinary *Teleport* spell, but it allows the caster to carry along up to ten human-sized companions. The spell also never plants the caster off-target; on a roll of "High" or "Low" on the teleport table, the spell simply fails.

## THE GOLDEN NEEDLES OF ENTHRALLMENT

<b>Level</b>	2
<b>Duration</b>	Special
<b>Range</b>	Special

This "improved" version of *Charm Person* was developed in the sinister city of Tien Lung in order to assist the invidious Stitched Path sorcerers there in preparing their servants for use. A subject under the influence of this spell is utterly obedient to the caster, and will accept even suicidal commands. Victims may save to throw off this spell only once per month. This remarkably effective charm requires that the victim be carefully prepared beforehand by means of golden needles that cost 100 gp to fabricate. The needles must be left embedded in the victim, though they can be reused on new servants when the old expire. The preparation process requires several undisturbed hours and permanently reduces the victim's Intelligence by 2 points. It also destroys any spellcasting capacity in the victim. This damage can be remedied only by a *Cure Disease* spell or other enchantments of similar strength.



## THE PANDECT OF INIMITABLE VERITY

<b>Level</b>	6
<b>Duration</b>	1 hour/level
<b>Range</b>	Special

The *Pandect of Inimitable Verity* is the product of late-era thaumaturgical research in Xian, the fruits of some of the last work done by Archmage Rai before he finally broke with Lammach. That masterful summoner utilized a number of captured Tidespawn to develop a formula that served to repulse both them and other extra-planar beings. By an unfortunate irony, there are very few magi left in the Isles with the strength to cast the *Pandect*.

The *Pandect* requires the drawing or inlay of an elaborate pattern to center the enchantment. Drawing a quick temporary pattern requires one round and rare gem dust worth 500 gold pieces, while inlaying a permanent one requires 5,000 gold pieces worth of materials. Temporary patterns serve only one use of the *Pandect*, while inlaid ones can be used repeatedly as long as they remain mostly intact. Once cast, the *Pandect* bubbles an area up to 50' in radius around the pattern in a zone of protection against Tidespawn and extra-planar entities such as demons or tulpas. The zone also effects Tide Cultists, as their senses have been fatally compromised by their masters.

Creatures affected by the *Pandect* cannot enter the protected area under any circumstances, either by teleportation or mundane travel. They cannot perceive the interior of the warded area either, whether by scrying or ordinary sight. Indeed, they are unable to even notice the warded area and its occupants unless it is pointed out by some other being or they are attacked from within the wards. Once an affected subject has been attacked from inside the *Pandect*, the spell collapses.

## THE SUMMONS UPON THE WAY

<b>Level</b>	5
<b>Duration</b>	Special
<b>Range</b>	Special

This spell is common only to expert elven sorcerers, as it contains the secrets for calling a dead elf back into his physical form. Only elven souls that have chosen to defer reincarnation can be beckoned by this enchantment, and the soul can choose whether or not to answer the petitioner. This spell is most often used to call back a long-dead Apotheon who has consented to linger in this world in order to return and aid his brethren at some hour of need. The spell will function on any such soul, regardless of the amount of time they have spent dead.

Unlike the *Raise Dead* spell, this spell does not require the physical remains of the dead elf, though possessing them does make it easier. Without the remains, the caster must be able to recite the name not only of the subject, but the names of his prior five incarnations as well. Many mighty Apotheons are likely to wait forever, as much of this lore was lost in the chaos of the exile and now exists only in the echoed memories of certain elves, or in texts long since lost to mortal knowledge.

## MAGICAL ITEMS AND ESOTERIC MATERIALS

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**Gadaal Astrolabe:** One of the rare and precious jeweled astrolabes brought over by the Gadaal astromancers during the exile, this artifact is very useful for diviners. Provided it is used by someone who has been instructed in its operation by a Gadaal astromancer, the astrolabe improves the operation of a *Contact Other Plane* spell cast by the user. Beings contacted through the astrolabe never lie, though they may not know the answer to a question, and the “insanity” result is reduced to “inauspicious stars”, inflicting a -2 penalty on the caster’s saving throws for the duration of the effect.

**Creed Blade:** These blades are crafted by magesmiths of the elven Creeds, each one intended to echo the profound truths and glorious ambitions of the elves that wield them. Creed blades are commonly found in the form of a sword or dagger, always of at least +1 enchantment bonus. They have a special virtue in the hands of an elf, granting the bearer a second saving throw versus any mind-compelling charm or spell if the first save is failed. While the elf carries the weapon, however, the principles of his or her Creed are limned in faint lines of white fire on the blade of the sword, allowing any observer able to read the elven inscription to get an excellent idea of their true motivations.

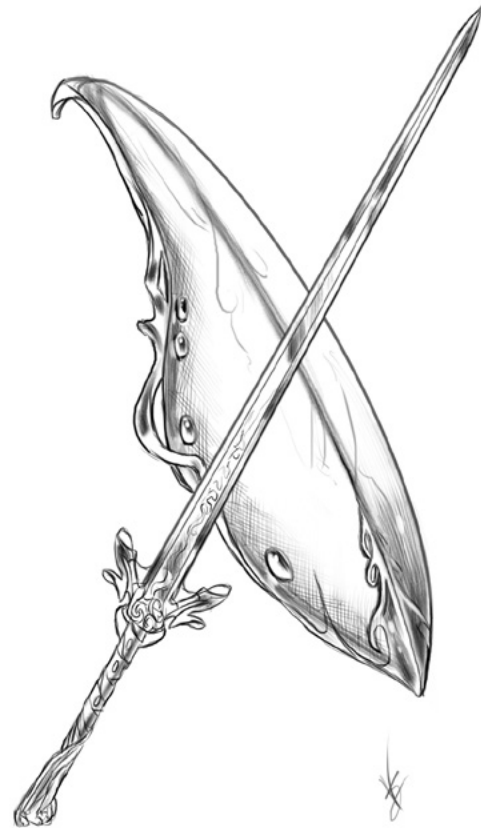
**Godbone:** Few substances on the Isles are as strange and little-understood as the glossy black stone called “godbone” by the native Shou. Their witch-women insist that the rock is the solidified remains of their god Shakun, who sacrificed himself in this world to save his chosen people. The jagged black shards of the stone can be used to open a channel to the sleeping god’s power by those versed in the ancient secrets.

The Shou witches share these secrets with no one but their apprentices, and certainly not with the hated human invaders. Captured Shou witches have been interrogated by human sorcerers, but even under the influence of spells of charming and domination, the instructions they provide make no sense. Some magi have theorized that the secrets are only comprehensible to a Shou who has undergone the initiations required of a witch.

“Raw” godbone is the crude black stone itself, chipped from veins deep in the mountains or unearthed from scraped hillsides. The rock is rare, with the veins less common than gold and each one guarded with savage fervor by any Shou that find it. Most are crowded with local tribes, each one waiting for their chance to seize the sacred stone from its current keepers.

In its raw form, the godbone has powerful warding effects against the Red Tide and all its creations. A person bearing at least a pound of raw godbone on his person gains the benefit of a *Protection from Evil* spell against the attacks or influences of Tidespawn. Such creatures cannot touch a person bearing godbone unless the bearer attacks them first, though they may use ranged attacks and spells. Under the arts of certain elder witches, the raw stone can be shaped and formed into sharp weaponry and tough armor.

Godbone can also be used to fuel magical spells with its innate geomantic power. One pound of raw godbone is required per level of the spell to be augmented. When so employed, the spell auto-



matically functions at its most powerful, with all random effects maximized. If the spell involves rolling on a random table, such as *Reincarnation* or *Teleport*, the caster may roll three times and take the preferred result. Shou witches are aware of this quality of godbone, and the most powerful are not reluctant to use it against the hated humans.

Godbone is exceedingly expensive on the open market, with Tien Lungan sorcerers often making a point of purchasing or confiscating every scrap they can lay hands on. A pound of raw godbone will easily fetch as much as a thousand gold koku in the marketplaces of Xian or Hohnberg.

**Godbone Armor:** This armor is equivalent to either leather, splint mail, or very rarely plate mail, depending on its manner of construction. Countless tiny stone plates of godbone are painstakingly drilled and bound with leather thongs and backing into suits of enchanted armor. This armor always has at least a +1 bonus. While wearing the armor, the possessor gains the benefit of a *Protection from Evil* spell applicable only to Tidespawn. Godbone armor gives a -4 hit penalty to the attack rolls of any extra-planar creature attacking the wearer, including Tidespawn.

**Godbone Weaponry:** This weapon is invariably of at least +1 enchantment, and usually takes the form of a club, mace, spear, or dagger. While carrying the weapon, the wielder gains the benefit of a *Protection from Evil* spell that applies only against Tidespawn. While godbone weaponry appears to be made from that brittle,



jagged black stone, nothing short of powerful magic or the thews of a giant can damage such a weapon. Godbone weaponry is always able to injure extra-planar beings, including Tidespawn, regardless of their normal weapon immunities.

**Jade Seal of August Rank:** This thumb-sized seal is carved with intricate Imperial characters and a distinctive flowing pattern along one face. A hole at one end allows for its wear on a silken cord or thong. Non-magical versions of this seal are common among Xianese daifu and other nobility, but in the glorious days of the Ninefold Celestial Empire, most magistrates possessed one of these enchanted versions. While carried by a possessor, the magic of the seal leaves the bearer as pristine as the jade; clean, dry, and neatly-appointed regardless of their environment. The effects are identical to that of the first level magic-user spell *Jie Tou's Wise Elegance*. If the jade is stained or dirtied this virtue is lost, and is not regained until the jade has been clean and dry for an hour. The open wearing of jade belt ornaments is forbidden in Xian save to the nobility, so possessors are advised to keep the Jade Seal of August Rank concealed while in use.

**Prayer-Wheel Hammer:** This *war hammer +1* has a small prayer wheel crafted into its head, one designed to spin swiftly every time the hammer is swung. Each successful hit with the hammer accrues spiritual merit to the wielder and emboldens them in battle. After a hit, the wielder regains 1 lost hit point. Smiting allies or harmless beings is an act of impurity, and inflicts 1 hit point of damage on the impious wielder.

**Red Debt Katana:** This bastard sword is always at least of +1 enchantment and Kueh manufacture, and is usually inscribed with the *mon* crest of a samurai family. Many brave samurai were slaughtered by the Shogun Rai when they refused to bow to the Hell Kings, and this blade possesses an almost sentient hatred for the demons

and their infernal masters. When the blade is drawn, the possessor automatically senses the presence of infernal demons within 60', and any attack rolls made with the blade against infernal demons or Hell King worshipers may be rolled twice, with the better roll used to determine a hit. The blade will twist to bite a wielder who serves the Hell Kings; such a bearer suffers 1d6 damage every round they use the sword in a life-or-death battle.

**Ring of the Mountain Sage:** This enchanted ring grants the wearer a certain lighthearted indifference to the external world, and a carelessness about grave concerns of life and death. The ring allows the wearer to choose to ignore one source of harm for one round; a specific enemy's blade becomes useless against the wearer, a plunge off a cliff does no harm, a stroll through a bonfire does not scorch, and so forth. The wearer must then immediately abandon the ring and can never benefit from another *Ring of the Mountain Sage* again. Until the wearer discards the ring, they suffer a -4 penalty on all saving throws as it weights them down with misfortune in rebuke of their grasping nature.

**Skull of the Longfathers:** When a dwarven master craftswoman's husband perishes in battle, his skull is sometimes preserved as a memorial to his courage, jeweled and inlaid with gold by his wife. At times, the grief of the crafter creates a mystical bond between the skull and the shade of the dwarven warrior. When the skull is clasped tightly in one hand, the possessor gains a pool of additional hit points equal to half the maximum hit points of the deceased dwarven warrior- usually 15, though the skulls of great dwarven heroes might have as many as 30. Any injury done to the wielder is taken from those hit points first, with the jewels and gold of the skull progressively cracking and dulling until the whole skull collapses to dust when the last bonus hit point is lost. These skulls cannot be repaired.

## STYLING MAGIC ITEMS AND EQUIPMENT

It's a common complaint that experienced characters often end up with caddies full of magical weapons that can be distinguished only by their relative plus totals. Many referees would like to make the discovery of magical items more flavorful, but it can be difficult to think of some way to specially distinguish one *potion of healing* from another, or some way to set off a *sword +1* from a more ordinary blade. The following tables can help jump-start a referee's creativity and give an easier path to individualizing magical finds.

The first question to answer is "Who made this item?" Magical items are notoriously durable, and can survive centuries of neglect without so much as a rust stain. Still, most magical items in the Isles were either created by the refugees from the Red Tide or imported from the homelands of the exiles and colonists who came here earlier. In some cases, a particular villain or patron associated with an adventure might be powerful enough to make their own magic items, but usually your best bet is to roll or pick off the chart.

1d20	ITEM CREATORS
1-7	<i>Imperials</i>
8-10	<i>Eirengarders</i>
11-12	<i>Kueh</i>
13-14	<i>Shou</i>
15-16	<i>Dwarves</i>
17	<i>Eshkanti</i>
18	<i>Gadaal</i>
19	<i>Prehistoric entities</i>
20	<i>Elves</i>

Once you've determined the original makers of the item, you can decorate it with styles and elements appropriate to those people. Each section below includes some common traits and characteristics of magical items created by the group.

### Imperial Items

**Weaponry:** Favored Imperial weapons are crossbows, spears, long swords, short swords, battle axes, and hand axes. The weapons are fashioned of high-quality steel and usually decorated in elaborate fashion, with textured grips, inscribed hilts, and auspicious Imperial characters worked into the metal promising long life or good fortune in battle to the wielder. Gold and silver fittings are common on fine weaponry, along with brightly-colored silk cording for grips or tassels. Red is the most common color for fittings, but blue and green enameling is sometimes used, or yellow for the equipment of high officials.

**Armor:** Most Imperial magical armor is either leather, chain mail, scale mail, or splint mail. Magical shields are known but uncommon. The decoration on such armor is similar to that of weaponry, except for armor crafted for the expert Xianese Scouts, elite rangers skilled in the deep infiltration of Shou-held lands. Their armor is aggressively inconspicuous, with muted jungle colors.

**Potions:** Individual potions vary widely in smell, texture, and appearance, but traditional Imperial High Path mages prefer to use thumb-sized vials of treated jade to hold their creations. The exterior of these bottles is always fashioned in shapes easy to distinguish by touch- some bulbous, some cylindrical, some square in shape, the better to prevent disastrous errors in the heat of the moment. Most mages etch Imperial characters on the surface of the bottle to help indicate the contents.



**Scrolls:** Imperials usually ink their magical texts on thin strips of hard white wood, with a winding of silk through the strips to bind them together into a single page. When the spell is cast or copied from the scroll, the discharge of energy reduces the wood and silk to a fine dusting of ash.

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Jade is always a favored element of Imperial magical working, and most wands, staves, and rods have at least a little of that magical mineral involved in their creation. Some of the more paranoid magi avoid inscribing command words on the item itself, but there is almost always a sheath or case somewhere nearby with the command word either on it plainly or encrypted in some code or allusion that the original creator would understand. Some Imperial wands take the form of fans, triggered by waving the fan toward a target while speaking the command words.

## Eirengarder Items

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**Weaponry:** Eirengarders love spears and pole arms, and exert the kind of care in crafting these weapons that other people take with tempered blades. Makerite paladins favor long swords and two-handed swords when in the line of battle, or war hammers as a symbol of their deity. Eirengarder weapons are usually very austere and devoid of decoration, but exquisitely balanced and durable. What little decoration is used revolves around Makerite prayers and the holy hammer symbol.

**Armor:** Eirengarders tend to shun light armor for those warriors who operate away from the pike line, and most magical armor they craft is no lighter than splint mail or plate mail. Heavy Eirengarder plate is second only to dwarven armor for thickness and weight, and some of the more elaborate sets would be unusable by a human were it not for the enchantments on it. Eirengarder armor is almost never enameled or decorated in any way save with memorial inscriptions dedicated to prior owners who died while wearing it. The ancestral war plate of the Thusundi of Hohnberg is so thickly covered with these inscriptions that hardly an inch of metal is left bare.

**Potions:** Eirengarder warpriests sometimes fabricate blessed unguents for their warriors, encasing the liquids in small glass tablets etched with a prayer appropriate to the contents. To use these “potions”, the user must recite the last lines of the prayer before smashing the tablet and anointing himself with the potion.

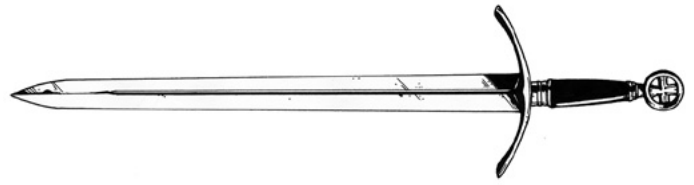
## Kueh Items

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**Weaponry:** Kueh weaponry tends to spears, pole arms, daggers, bows, short swords, and two-handed swords. The famed Kueh *katana* is a form of bastard sword, and is often paired with the *wakizashi* short sword. Kueh blades tend to be of high quality, though blades that predate the exile vary widely. Some of the most ancient swords actually appear to be of battered and poor quality, but have acquired powerful magical virtue after all the feats of heroism they helped perform. Most Kueh blades have silk-wrapped wooden hilts with small round metal guards, often inscribed with the *mon* crest of the samurai family that first received the blade. It is considered exceedingly unlucky to replace this guard should the blade come into different hands.

**Armor:** Magical Kueh armor is almost always chain, splint or banded mail, based on traditional Kueh designs from their iron-poor homeland. Some versions created after the exile take advantage of the more abundant ores of Ektau to create intricate coats of interlaced metal plates that are equivalent to plate mail in function. Most Kueh armor is enameled; often black, but sometimes in brighter colors. Most full suits also come with a stylized metal mask known as a *mempo*, usually depicting the Hell King patron of the creator.

**Potions:** Small bamboo flasks contain conventional Kueh potions, but some yamabushi traditionalists continue their practice of fashioning magical flower blossoms imbued with a particular potion's



**Scrolls:** Magical Eirengarder scrolls are easily recognized by the intricate lacework cuttings trimmed into the sides of the parchment. Magic-users cut the patterns to help contain and channel the energy of the scroll, while Eirengarder warpriests elaborate them to do homage to the artistry of the Maker. The actual inscriptions are of eye-watering intricacy, and in the case of Makerite prayer scrolls, usually illuminated with gold leaf and colored inks.

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Most Eirengarder staves and rods are fashioned with a cruciform head reminiscent of a stylized hammer, while wands and some staves tend to have a pointed, spear-like head. Many Eirengarder artifacts are cut with puzzle-lines, patterns that depict some stylized logic puzzle derived from the Makerite Law. Before the item can be used, the puzzle must be solved and the patterns touched in the correct order. Most of the modern artifacts use patterns that can easily be solved in a day or two at most, but ancient Eirengarder items might draw on materials that did not survive the exile or that have since been lost in some long-forgotten borderland temple.

effect. To gain the benefits of these blooms, the user must utter a brief prayer of propitiation to the flower's spirit before crushing it. Priests of certain religions are forbidden from using these spirit flowers, as it constitutes a form of impermissible worship.

**Scrolls:** Kueh scrolls often take the form of ofudas, strips of cloth or paper inscribed with mystically significant sigils. Once used or copied into a spellbook, they vanish in a puff of flame. Ofudas for spells which require the caster to touch a subject usually involve placing the scroll in contact with the subject as part of the triggering process.

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Kueh enchanters have always preferred very natural, unworked appearances for their magical implements, attaining beauty by the careful selection of striking natural products or juxtaposition of two graceful elements from nature. The magic inherent in most Kueh wands, staves, and rods comes from the elaborate purification rites that imbue the artifact with its power. As each charge is used, the item becomes more and more weathered, until it finally disintegrates into natural decay when fully discharged. Such artifacts can often be easy to overlook, as ordinary as they seem, but an expert sorcerer familiar with Kueh aesthetics can usually pick them out by the subtly auspicious lines of the objects.

## Shou Items

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**Weaponry:** Shou are capable of rudimentary metalworking, but those tribes forced to make their own weapons rarely have access to the necessary infrastructure. Shou-made weapons are usually stone, bone, or wood: clubs, spears, bows, daggers, maces, morningstars, axes, and darts. Enchanted examples of the art might look only a little more refined to outside eyes, but a little experimentation shows them to be more durable and better-balanced than tempered steel.

**Armor:** The lack of metal leaves most Shou using leather or bone-studded leather armor, save for those fortunate enough to have plundered metal equipment. Armor enchanted by the witch-priestesses is usually intricately stitched, embossed, and ornamented with teeth and feathers. The fact that none of these adornments can be torn away or easily effaced is quick proof of the enchantment.

**Potions:** Witch-priestesses brew potions that are stored in small resin-stoppered gourds, usually painted with a symbol to suggest its use. The potions can have a spectacularly unpleasant taste, but the deep Shou familiarity with local plants and mineral extracts allows Shou witch-priestesses to fabricate enchanted elixirs far more easily than the alchemists and arcanists of the human cities.

**Scrolls:** The Shou do have a written language, though few outside the witch-priestesses ever have cause to learn it. For many of them, it is more a secret lexicon of symbols, marks of power able to anchor a spell to some wooden stick or slat of polished wood. The priestess thumbs the symbols on the spell-stick as she incants the final portion of the prayer, and the power manifests through her as the stick crumbles to ash. Shou magic-users are very rare, but when they manufacture scrolls, they tend to borrow the techniques of the witch-priestesses. Human priests are usually highly reluctant to use Shou spell-sticks, but necessity obliges at times. Makerite warpriests, however, will not use them under any circumstances.

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Shou witch-staves are usually adorned with skulls, feathers, the bones of enemies, and the occasional fragment of godbone embedded in the wood. Many such staves are nothing more than ornaments for the witch-priestess who bears them, but some have genuine power. Shou wands, staves, and rods almost never have the command word inscribed on them, and their former owners are rarely in a condition to reveal it. Most often it is necessary to consult an urban sage to divine the correct word.

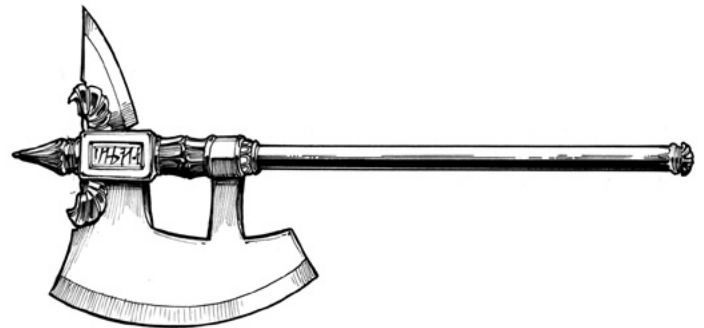
## Dwarven Items

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**Weaponry:** The usual run of dwarven weaponry is without question the finest steel in the Isles. The work of dwarven craftsmen is incredibly tough and resistant to corrosion; a warrior can use a dwarven sword as a crowbar without damaging the metal, and a dwarven war pick can be used to hack through six feet of limestone without losing its edge. Dwarven weapons of quality are always adorned with gold, and usually built in broad-bladed, angular styles. Most weapons are engraved with the name of their crafter and their relationship with the warrior first meant to bear it. Dwarves make many kinds of weapons, but almost never fashion bows, flails, two-handed swords, or pole arms.

**Armor:** Dwarven armor is designed for the geometry of the dwarven body, and thus is usually not serviceable for humans, elves, or halflings. Magical dwarven armor always adjusts itself to fit the wearer flawlessly, however. Non-metallic dwarven armor is almost unknown, and dwarven armor of quality always has at least a little gold involved in its manufacture. This gold is often hidden on a surface unseen to others, in hopes that a dwarf slain and unrecovered by his kinsmen might go unlooted long enough for his spirit to enter the afterlife with the essence of the gold in his armor.

**Potions:** Dwarven alchemists occasionally manufacture oils and powders that function much as other potions. These substances must be liberally splashed on a target in order to affect them, and are usually stored in small stone flasks with cunningly-threaded stoppers. Substances that are intended to be used against enemies are sealed into globes of green glass, the surfaces banded with other colors to indicate the nature of their contents.



**Other Magical Items:** Dwarves do not have spellcasters as other races recognize them, so dwarven-made scrolls, wands, staves, and rods are not normally found. The dwarven soul focuses geomantic power in more subtle ways, and sometimes a master craftsman manages to forge some strange power into a masterwork. Deep passions are most conducive to producing these artifacts. Hatred, sorrow, obsession, and love can all give forth strange wonders from beneath a dwarf's hammer.

Male miners and builders can have the same subtle influence on their work, with the roaring currents of geomantic energy deep below the earth focused by the communal effort of groups of dwarven laborers. Stonework and architecture that defy ordinary physical laws can be constructed in this way, with wonders impossible to surfer builder fabricated with nothing more than determination and the dream of some beautiful expression in stone.

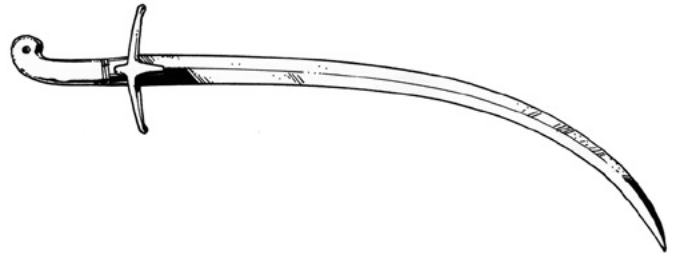
## Eshkanti Items

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**Weaponry:** Traditional Eshkanti weaponry lends itself to such weapons as can be used on their famously swift horses, even though such steeds are far rarer on Ektau. Scimitars, shortbows, daggers, spears, javelins, and lances are all characteristic of Eshkanti work. Elegant curves and intricate inlay characterize fine Eshkanti manufacture, along with numerous invocations and holy symbols from the clan gods of the crafter. Makerites dislike using such weapons, but others find them beautifully balanced and fluid.

**Armor:** Eshkanti commonly prefer lighter armor, such as leather, studded leather, padded, scale mail, and chain. Shields are rarely used, with the off hand occupied with a parrying dagger instead. Eshkanti magical armor is very light- indeed, some examples seem unreasonably scanty at first glance and gain their protection from the powerful interplay of luck charms and auspicious purifications. Many warriors prefer Eshkanti armor designs when dealing with hot jungle patrols.

**Potions:** Eshkanti produce potions of familiar types, but also produce magical perfumes that induce their effect on those who breathe deeply of their scent. Once the “potion” takes effect, the remaining perfume loses its magic, if not its pleasing scent.



**Scrolls:** Eshkanti practice elaborate calligraphic traditions, and their scrolls are often a meshwork of beautiful but seemingly random lines and arcs. A suitably educated magus can find the beginning of the text in the decoration and read the pattern embedded there.

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Eshkanti sorcerers rarely create traditional wands, staves, and rods, finding them a little too obvious in their function. Instead, they prefer to enchant seemingly unrelated objects such as jewels, small idols, crystal balls, lamps, and other hand-held objects to serve the same purpose as a magical item. The command words for such devices are often carefully etched on an interior surface.

## Gadaal Items

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**Weaponry:** The Gadaal are not a naturally warlike people, but the occasional clan feud has always demanded the proper tools for mountain fighting. Spears, bows, short swords, daggers, and picks are favored traditional Gadaal weapons, and many of them find modern use on the borders of human civilization in the Isles. Gadaal weapons tend to be rustic and simple in manufacture. Their enchanters empower magical blades not with superior craftsmanship, but with astrologically auspicious materials and crafting circumstances.

**Armor:** The Gadaal have never favored heavy armor, finding it too cumbersome in the craggy peaks they called home, and too noisy in the perilous green borderlands of Ektau. Metal armors are not often enchanted by Gadaal sorcerers. Instead, they use intricate patterns of bone chips, precious stones, embroidery, or flecks of astrally-significant metal to create sympathetic star charts on the armor of their champions, drawing good fortune down on the wearers. One such “suit of armor” consisted of a single pair of goatskin boots so powerfully sorceled that the wearer was as hard to injure as a man wearing Eirengard plate.

**Potions:** Gadaal rarely create potions in the same way as other people, instead fashioning small, hard pastries of barley flour and “ingredients”. The astromancers are always quite vague about what the “ingredients” are, and most Gadaal are wise enough not to ask.

The pastries remain nominally fresh indefinitely, and release their effects with the first bite taken by the user.

**Scrolls:** The astromancers of the Gadaal favor permanent things for recording their wisdom. While their most important books take the form of thin plates of etched granite, even temporary enchantments are often cut into paper-thin sheets of copper. When held up to the light, the cuttings form a mandala that a suitably educated magus can use to focus the geomantic energy of the surrounding area into a spell effect. The copper crumbles into flecks of verdigris once expended.

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Gadaal walking sticks are not always simply walking sticks in the hands of an astromancer. Their tools are rarely so ostentatious as the staves of other wizards, but some are adorned with polished gemstones of fabulous size and clarity taken from their mountain homes. Others are carefully studded with a small constellation of lesser gems, creating a sympathetic bond between the night sky and the artifact that allows its sorcery to pour into the world. Some go so far as to enchant large quartz crystals with charges of power. It is said that the common crystal ball of the diviners originally derived from these crude quartz crystals, yet true astromancers shun them as being unacceptably tainted by human workings.

## Prehistoric Items

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**Weaponry:** Many peoples and races have called the Sunset Isles home over the centuries, and many more have vanished into the mists of an uncertain past. All that remains are their magical artifices, the blades and bulwarks they crafted that are still immune to the march of days. Almost any weapon can be found from their hands, yet these blades are often strangely balanced or shaped, as if designed for hands that were never human. Some of the most powerful artifacts have clean, gleaming lines and exquisite metallurgy, but are adorned with sigils that have a disquieting resemblance to Shou witch-writing. Most scoff at the idea that the Shou could ever create anything so sophisticated.

**Armor:** Much prehistoric armor would be useless to humans were it not normal for such equipment to shift to fit the wearer. Even then, there is often a subtle distortion to the plates and hides that leaves it to rest uncomfortably on human shoulders. Some such armor is enameled in strange, noisome colors, while others are inscribed with script that even magic cannot identify. Certain suits of heavy armor have been discovered that are remarkably light and strong—and marked with the same sort of Shou characters found on other artifact weapons.

**Potions:** Consuming potions created by some long-vanished race is always a dangerous prospect. Most potions serve to trigger static magical phenomena, regardless of the race of the user. Some potions rely more heavily on amplifying a specific species' biology, however, and these potions can have unpleasant and unpredictable effects on beings not biologically equipped to process them. One form of ancient potion intended to cause spikes to sprout from a lizardman's scales has been known to cause hideous death in reckless adventurers as their very bones erupt with barbed spurs.

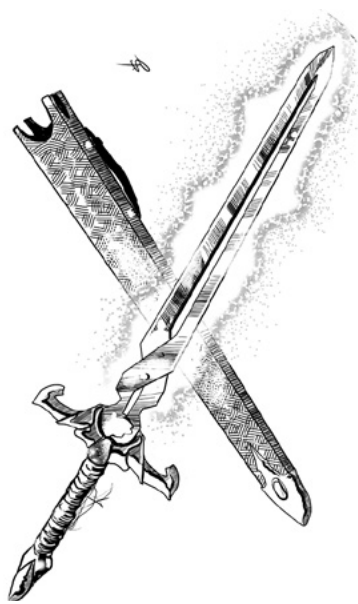
**Scrolls:** Most ancient scrolls create effects broadly identical to the spells of the modern day, as each race ultimately discovers the same underlying patterns of phenomena that provide magical results. It can require extensive research, however, before some carved stone cylinder or clay tablet can even be recognized as a spell "scroll".

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Wands, staves, and rods rarely appear in a straightforward fashion in prehistoric ruins. Curved lengths of bone, metallic rattles or bells, horns, chimes, fans, whisks, long cords of knotted and decorated leather, and almost any other object that can be held in one hand and brandished toward a target might be some prehistoric race's idea of a proper *Wand of Cold*. These items can usually be distinguished from their mundane equivalents by how well-preserved they are, with organic materials persisting undamaged for millennia even amid rot and decay.

## Elven Items

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**Weaponry:** Not all elves are of a naturally martial inclination, but all of them retain the memories of war held by their long-recurrant souls. As such, elves tend to prefer weaponry intended for trained individual combatants rather than simple tools for mass peasant levies. Bows, swords, and daggers are almost universally favored. Enchanted elven weapons tend to casually violate some physical principle in their manufacture. A sword blade might be composed of a dozen disjointed fragments of steel, each one holding its place with no visible support, while a bow might appear to be fashioned entirely of glass. Elven enchanters do not so much augment the power of existing materials as they change the basic physical laws around them to something more serviceable to their ends.



**Armor:** Mundane elven armor tends to be light chain or heavier scale armor suitable for hard use and field repair. Enchanted armor often appears to be violently impractical. Armor of colored glass, intricate wire meshwork, angled and spired plates that practically

beg to catch a swordstroke, and even less serviceable shapes predominate. Yet such is the strange magic of the elves that this armor always serves perfectly well, as if it forced attacking blades to accept it on its own terms rather than by the common measure of reality.

**Potions:** Some elven Creeds make a study of alchemy, and produce delicate glass vials or twists of braided plant matter that produce the effect when broken. Different vials or twists are usually distinguishable by the texturing of the glass or the knot pattern of the braid.

**Scrolls:** Elven "scrolls" most often take the form of tightly-woven spheres of a black, rubbery substance. When the caster tightly grips the sphere, it snaps open to wrap an intricate pattern of black markings around their forearm. By correctly focusing on the patterns, the magus can channel the magic of the "scroll" through the markings and ignite the spell. The process is invariably painful, but inflicts no lasting damage. Releasing the sphere without triggering the spell causes it to fold back up into a ball.

**Wands, Staves, and Rods:** Elven wands, staves, and rods are similar to their weaponry in the way they defy physical laws in their manufacture. Humans can trigger their use without pain, but elves suffer the usual brief excruciation from activating the artifacts as the magic is forced to burn a path through their soul-infused flesh.

# A BESTIARY OF THE ISLES

## Constructs

In the old days before the Tide, certain expert sorcerers and master enchanters experimented with the creation of new life out of inanimate matter. Some powerful nations such as the Ninefold Celestial Empire even went so far as to fashion small armies of these beings, the better to undertake work too tedious or dangerous for human labor. Still, after the first rush of creation, many of the vital ingredients necessary for imbuing dead matter with life became scarce and difficult to acquire, and eventually it became cheaper to simply hire more ordinary men to do the work.

The remaining constructs were gradually forgotten, used only occasionally by those mandarins or powerful magi who wished to make a point of their wealth and power. Some were consigned to guard structures and places of no present interest to human wardens, while others were dispatched to aid Imperial colonization missions at the far corners of the earth. Many of those that still survive are stubbornly bound by commands that admit of no free will, but a few were last given orders that they have successfully subverted or reinterpreted into greater liberty than they were ever intended to possess.

All constructs are immune to *sleep*, *hold*, and *charm* effects, and need not breath, eat, drink, or sleep.

## Constructs, Servitor

	<i>Man of Clay and Jade</i>	<i>Porcelain Servitor</i>
No. Enc.	1	1
Alignment	Neutral	Neutral
Movement	120' (40')	120' (40')
Armor Class	7	5
Hit Dice	2 + 2	1 + 1
Attacks	1 fist or weapon	1 fist or weapon
Damage	1d6 or weapon	1d4 or weapon
Save	F2	F2
Morale	12	8
Hoard Class	None	None
XP	47	21

Servitor constructs were designed with significantly more intelligence than ordinary golems, and some were capable of actual

independent thought. The Men of Clay and Jade were originally mass-produced for agricultural labor and simple, repetitive tasks. Their earthenware bodies were animated through several carefully-positioned pieces of embedded jade, with the precious stone crumbling to dust with the "death" of the Man of Clay and Jade. These constructs are stupid by human standards, but can reason through basic obstacles to the completion of their tasks. Most speak only the language of their creators.

Porcelain Servitors have the appearance of beautiful maidens or handsome young men, and a subtle enchantment to give their fired porcelain shells the texture and appearance of living flesh. Porcelain Servitors were intended for more sophisticated house service requiring delicacy and diplomatic nuance, and the intelligence required for such duties makes them among the constructs most likely to find holes in the their master's commands. Some Porcelain Servitors have actually developed something akin to free will over the centuries since their creation.

Both Men of Clay and Jade and Porcelain Servitors are capable of using armor or weaponry if given such by their creators, though Men of Clay and Jade have difficulty maintaining armor in serviceable condition.

## Constructs, War

	<i>Ancient War Golem</i>	<i>Black Jade Juggernaut</i>
No. Enc.	1	1
Alignment	Neutral	Neutral
Movement	120' (40')	180' (60')
Armor Class	2	4
Hit Dice	8	10
Attacks	2 (blade and fist)	3 (2 blades, 1 bolt)
Damage	1d12/1d12	2d6/2d6/2d10
Save	F4	F5
Morale	12	8
Hoard Class	None	None
XP	2,065	3,100

Whereas servitor constructs were intended for flexible employment as laborers and house servants, war constructs were only ever intended for killing. Their intelligence is quite limited compared to that of a Man of Clay and Jade, let alone a Porcelain Servitor,

but they are quite capable of navigating difficult terrain and overcoming physical obstacles in their efforts to kill their appointed targets. Many were originally designed to launch the initial attacks on fortified positions and break open a path for human soldiers to follow. Those that survive to the present day are usually guardians of some long-abandoned outpost or wardens to a place that has been desolate for centuries.

Ancient war golems are usually fashioned in the shape of monstrous ogres wrought of bronze and polished steel. They cannot speak, but they can understand commands given in the language of their creator. With their original masters unable to authorize new owners, they are often locked into their old commands until someone should come along with the correct keywords or override wands to shut them down.

Black Jade Juggernauts are not only possessed of multiple scything blades on their humanoid frames, but also a large black jade globe embedded in their chest that enables them to spray bolts of geomantic force at targets within 300'. The bolt attack can hit any number of targets within a 10' radius of the target point, with a separate attack roll against each.

Both Black Jade Juggernauts and ancient war golems are immune to non-magical weaponry. They also take half damage from all fire, electrical, cold, or acid attacks, and are immune to mind-affecting spells.

## Demon, Infernal

The Hells have always burned beneath the bottom of the world, and the Hell Kings have always ruled amid the flames. Priests and sages argue over the origins of these places of damnation, and half a hundred theories and legends have been advanced to explain the reason for the existence of such a terrible place. None have been conclusive, but no sage worth his writing brush would deny that the Hell Kings exist, and that they hunger for human souls.

Enemies of the gods from the dawn of the world, the Hell Kings rule their own burning realms beneath, insatiably hungry for the souls of men. Torment and despair are their meat and drink, and they draw down the souls of the dead who are weighted by the sins of their mortal lives. Hatred, bloodlust, avarice, treachery, deceit, and other vices make a soul vulnerable to the claws of demons, and even upright men and women dread the thought of death without the benefit of protective funerary rites offered by a trained priest. Even these rituals are sometimes not enough to save a soul sufficiently damned by its conduct in life.

Infernal demons are rarely summoned up into the living world. It requires an expert cleric of the Hell Kings and a cult with devotion fierce and depraved enough to form a beacon to the powers below. The more powerful the demon, the more elaborate the rites that must be conducted to open a way for it. The cult activity necessary even to summon a lesser infernal demon is normally such as can only be conducted in hidden places in the wilderness, or in domains that embrace public worship of the powers of night below. Even then, the sacrifices required for such propitiation discourage all but the most zealous worshippers.

Some demons can yet be found in old forgotten places, locked there by wizards long dead or trapped by some holy man. These demons are usually frantic with a mixture of bloodlust denied and terror at the prospect of facing their masters after so long away from their post. Some that escape will hide away in desolate places, hoping to avoid the summons of the iron bell below which will call them to their punishment.

Infernal demons all share certain powers appropriate to their station. They can speak and understand all languages and have *infravision* out to a 90' distance. They can use the powers of *Detect Magic* and *Detect Invisible* at will, using one per round. Even the least of them has strength equivalent to that of a hill giant and they need neither breathe, eat, drink, nor sleep. They are immune to all damage from fire, and take only half damage from cold or electrical attacks. They cannot be poisoned save by certain special, blessed toxins and they are immune to disease. Infernal demons cannot be injured by unenchanted weapons.

All demons are highly intelligent, but prone to underestimating the threat that stout-hearted heroes can pose to them. Many are also subject to distraction, losing precious time in the corruption of innocents and torment of victims while their plans would otherwise profit from more direct attention. Demons crave elaborate rites of worship directed toward them, and the more perfectly such ceremonies ape the worship of the gods, the more pleasing they find them.

## Infernal Demon, Hell King

No. Enc.	1
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	120' (40') Fly: 150' (50') Teleport: 150' (50')
Armor Class	-3
Hit Dice	20 (99 hit points)
Attacks	1 (1 gaze)
Damage	2d20
Save	Special
Morale	9
Hoard Class	X x 4
XP	7,500

The everlasting lords of damnation, the Hell Kings include thirteen of the greatest princes of Hell. Their names vary with the cultures and cults that hate or revere them, but names that crop up regularly are Yinjian, Huokang, Kishin, Zugen, Charun, Kontilanak, Neqael, Shemyaza, Xaphan, Rangda, Raiju, Namahage, and Hannya. These demonic powers formerly never dared to enter the mundane world lest the gods be given an opportunity to strike at them. But in these fading centuries when worship of the gods is so weakened, some Hell Kings are said to consider making a new domain of the upper lands, and their servants are preparing the way for their ultimate arrival.



The Hell Kings are said to appear as beautiful human figures, male or female as their whim suggests. They are inevitably clad in the impossibly elaborate raiment of their rank, and their simple disapproving gaze can strike down all but the strongest foes with a single glance, forcing the victim's sins to manifest as vermin-like creatures that erupt from the subject's bleeding flesh. Genuinely sinless creatures are said to be immune to the gaze of the Hell Kings, but their common pursuits rarely place them in a position to encounter such beings.

The Hell Kings are immune to any weapon of less than +3 magical enhancement and fail saving throws only on a roll of 1 or 2. They regenerate 5 hit points every round and can cast any cleric or magic-user spell they choose once per round as a spell-like ability, with the exception of *Wish*, which they cannot manifest.

### Infernal Demon, Lesser

No. Enc.	1 (1d3)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	120' (40')
Armor Class	0
Hit Dice	8
Attacks	3 (2 claws, 1 scourging)
Damage	1d6/1d6/1d10
Save	F8
Morale	11
Hoard Class	XXI
XP	2,060

The lesser servitors of the Hell Kings are fashioned from those mortals "fortunate" enough to have impressed those lords of the damned with the quality and quantity of their corruption and wrongdoing in life. After untold hideous torments, these favored souls are shaped and molded into beings capable of carrying out the Hell Kings' will among lesser entities. Most retain some memory of their former life, but any strength to defy their masters is usually long lost under the lash of unspeakable agonies.

Lesser infernal demons are capable of disguising themselves as they appeared in life, but in their natural form they are invariably hulking, twisted parodies of their natural shape, bound about head to foot with shackles of red-hot iron or piercings of stygian ice. The particular torments visible on a lesser demon's body are usually characteristic of the tastes of its Hell King master, and the demon always takes full damage from attacks of that same type. Hot iron shackles render the demon vulnerable to flame, icy needles leave it susceptible to cold, cruel piercings of black bronze leave it vulnerable to edged weapons, and so forth. If not specially susceptible to a type of weapon, infernal demons can be harmed only by magical weaponry.

Aside from their cruel claws and their ability to scourge a foe with their own smoking bindings, lesser infernal demons can use all the standard demonic spell-like powers. Most such demons are substantially more intelligent than the average human, but they are suscep-



tible to distraction when summoned into the living world. Such a wealth of living souls to torment can delay a demon's obedience to its orders, even though such tardiness will surely be punished when they must finally return to the Hells.

Lesser demons can appeal to their masters for arcane knowledge, gaining the ability to cast a specific cleric or magic-user spell of third level or lower once before needing to petition a second time. Such petitions usually require extensive human sacrifice. The demon may optionally choose to teach this spell to an allied magic-user if given suitable inducement.

### Infernal Demon, Mandarin

No. Enc.	1
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	120' (40') Fly: 150' (50')
Armor Class	-1
Hit Dice	12
Attacks	3 (2 fists, 1 curse)
Damage	1d8/1d8/1d12
Save	F12
Morale	11
Hoard Class	XVIII
XP	5,200

As the servitors of the Hell Kings advance in their obedience, some special few are elevated from the ranks of lesser servants and are

accorded the title of demonic mandarins. The chains and violations of their flesh are removed and they are granted wings fashioned of defiled prayer flags and blasphemous ofudas. In their natural form, their faces are always those of the human they were in life, though the rest of their body remains huge and scarred with the marks of their former physical torment. Certain hierarchs insist that these demons are tortured even more horrifically than their lesser brethren, because the torments they suffer are those of the heart and mind rather than mere flesh. They are cursed with a more perfect understanding of the Hell Kings' purpose and their own contribution to its ultimate victory.

Where lesser demons are sent to enforce the will of the Hell Kings and serve as leaders to important infernal temples, the demon mandarins are charged with more subtle, sophisticated work. They operate in conjunction with secret cells of worshippers hidden even from other infernal cultists, as the purposes they have for their less enlightened brethren are not always the sort that are survivable. They spin plans and purposes of diabolical cunning and explain nothing to their servants save the next step they must complete.

The huge fists of these demons can smash most mortal foes, and the dreadful curses they utter can strike down enemies 300' distant. Aside from the usual supernatural powers of demons, the infernal mandarins can also use spells of *The Emperor's Road*, *Charm Monster*, and *Geas* each once per day. Granted a full day in which to petition their masters, they can cast any spell of seventh level or less once before needing a new petition. Only magical weapons of +2 power or greater can injure a demon mandarin.

## Devil, Celestial

No. Enc.	1
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	120' (40') Fly: 150' (50')
Armor Class	-1
Hit Dice	15
Attacks	3 (2 wing buffets, 1 weapon)
Damage	1d6/1d6/1d12
Save	F15
Morale	12
Hoard Class	X, IX
XP	6,400

The gods have their agents of punishment and correction, and celestial devils serve that purpose well. These beings represent the negative and destructive aspect of their deity and punish those beings that have defied the law. Such is their hunger to harm that even those who have committed no crime against their god's principles are at risk of a swift and terrible end.

Celestial devils appear in many forms, most commonly that of a ragged-winged figure wielding a great weapon. Other aspects suggest the nature of the god, such as Sifr's tormentors of black foam and white-clawed brine or the Immortal Tendai's enforcers of



twisted black jade that blind all who look on them with a cloud of horrible and unnatural images.

The devils may use any clerical spell as a spell-like ability once per round. They may also *Teleport* without possible error and are immune to ordinary injury by weapons or physical matter, even magical varieties. Only a weapon specially consecrated to the killing of divine things can injure them. As part of their godslaying heritage, any dwarven hero of 8th level can injure a celestial devil with any weapon he wields, and any fighter of 16th level or greater can do the same by virtue of their legendary prowess in war.

## Lizardfolk, Isle

	<i>Warrior</i>	<i>Old Sleeper</i>
No. Enc.	2d4 (6d6)	1
Alignment	Neutral	Neutral
Movement	60' (20') Swim: 120' (40')	90' (30') Swim: 120' (40')
Armor Class	5	5
Hit Dice	2 + 1	7
Attacks	1 bite or 1 weapon	1 weapon
Damage	1d6+1 or weapon +1	By weapon
Save	F2	MU7
Morale	12	10
Hoard Class	XIX	XVIII
XP	47	1,140

The lizardfolk of the Isles are a cold, serpentine race of beings somewhere between men and snakes. They dwell in jungles, swamps, and along warm sea-coasts, and generally keep away from human settlements. They are capable of interbreeding with humans, and some tribes strive to mix their kindred accordingly for reasons that are clear only to them.



Some appear like walking snakes with legs and arms, while others have only serpentine hindquarters and a man's torso. Some appear almost wholly human save for some little trait like a forked tongue or unusual hairlessness. All are ferociously strong, and do +1 damage with their

weapons, or their bite if they have a serpentine head.

Most lizardfolk are content to live reclusive lives in their swamps and jungles, tending their egg-clutches and living by hunting and fishing. They are not friends of men, but they will rarely outright attack humans unless strangers trespass on their holy ground or they are goaded to attack by some charismatic chieftain or priest of the Old Sleepers.

The Old Sleepers are said to be great heroes of a forgotten lizardfolk empire that ruled "before the stars marched". These heroes fell into a deep slumber to await a time of need, and now their discovery can drive a lizardfolk tribe into dreams of red conquest. These Old Sleepers are manlike, and while they are not as physically powerful as their descendants they have the arcane powers of a 7th level magic-user. Whatever the true nature of their past may be, the Old Sleepers can rarely remember anything more than vague images of cities of cyclopean stones and a burning hatred for the hairy mammals that usurped their people.

## Ogre, Isle

No. Enc.	1d6 (2d6)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	90' (30')
Armor Class	5
Hit Dice	4 + 1
Attacks	1 fist or 1 weapon
Damage	1d8 or by weapon + 2
Save	F4
Morale	9
Hoard Class	XX
XP	270

The ogres of the Isles are hulking, misshapen brutes that are born not from their own species, but from the hates and unclean cravings of human beings. Occasionally, some man or woman of hideous appetites and brutal nature attracts the attention of evil spirits. If the human continues in his appetites, committing greater and greater

crimes with them, the spirit finds an opening to infuse them with their own power and transform them into depraved monsters.

Ogres are hideous creatures with massive limbs and bodies stained by the gruesome marks of their depravities, but they can disguise themselves as the human being they once were with a round's concentration. This illusion is perfect in sound and appearance, but if the ogre is touched by a child the false seeming will vanish.

Ogres commonly lair with a cabal of their own kind in the wilderness not too far from human habitation. They crave a constant supply of victims to slake their unholy desires and can even be driven to attack each other when the supply vanishes for too long. When not too frustrated, however, ogres can demonstrate a diabolical cunning in luring and betraying innocents into the grasp of their fellows.

## Shou

The Shou of the Isles have hated humans from their first arrival in the archipelago, fighting savagely to repel the intruders. Few colonies lasted so much as a decade under the steady, grinding attrition of Shou raids, and even now the exiles of the east are hard-pressed to hold back the tribes from their ancestral lands.

Shou live in hunter-gatherer tribes of their own kind, led by a chieftain who acquires his position by being the biggest, fiercest, most cunning member of the tribe. The witch-priestesses of the Shou act as advisors to the chieftain, and many of them are the actual powers behind the steady succession of expendable male chiefs. Lesser females are often treated as chattel, with the most beautiful taken by the chief and the others seized by whatever males can keep them. Shou children grow quickly, and by their tenth year have their full adult size. Shou remain strong and unmarked by age until somewhere around the age of fifty, after which they rapidly decline and die. Few Shou ever live long enough to concern themselves with such things.

Shou witch-priestesses teach that at the dawning of the world, their god Shakun sacrificed himself to preserve his children from a great evil that threatened the world. It is the duty of the Shou to fight and become strong, that the strongest and greatest of the tribes should be ready to lead the others in a world-conquering horde when their god Shakun returns from the grave. The tribes have taken these teachings to heart, and it's rare that two Shou clans can stand to have civil dealings with each other. Females and children are regularly stolen in raids, and when two tribes clash decisively the males of the losing side can expect nothing better than death or slavery. Were it not for this relentless intertribe fighting, the Shou almost certainly would have wiped out the human refugees long ago.

There are four kinds of Shou found in the Isles. By their Eirengarder names, they are known more particularly as bugbears, goblins, orcs, and hobgoblins. The first three varieties breed true in their own tribes, while hobgoblins are rarer sub-breeds of goblins that can suddenly crop up in any goblin tribe. They have an uncanny degree of charisma and magnetism and often lead the goblin tribes that birthed them.

Shou tribes prefer to live by hunting and gathering, scorning agriculture and husbandry as “slave work”. This does not prevent them from taking prisoners from other tribes and human lands in order to conduct such labor if they find a good site for a settlement. These Shou villages are rare, and most often are found in ancient ruins built by long-lost peoples. They are prime targets not only for human attackers but for fellow Shou as well, and so only the strongest or most foolhardy tribes attempt such a settled existence.

Shou adorn themselves with elaborate brands, tattoos, piercings, ear-clippings and ornaments. Were it not for these savage markings, they might easily be taken for well-favored humans, save for the tribes that have unusual skin colors such as green or deep orange. They rarely have any metalwork that isn't stolen, but their natural ornaments are of bone, teeth, polished stones, and carved wood.

Shou are cross-fertile with each other and with humans. “Impure blood” is hated by the Shou, and any halfbreeds are commonly killed out of hand at birth. Among humans, those born of Shou depredations are often feared and scorned by other humans in the cities and market towns. Those who dwell in the borderlands, however, tend to be marginally more accepting of the Shou-blooded, as these rough folk know that the Shou hate them even more than they hate ordinary humans. There are even rumors of half-breed witches who wield the powers of Shou sorcery against their own kindred.



## Shou, Bugbear

No. Enc.	2d4 (5d4)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	90' (30')
Armor Class	5
Hit Dice	3 + 1
Attacks	1 weapon
Damage	1d8 or by weapon +1
Save	F3
Morale	9
Hoard Class	XXI
XP	100

Bugbears are the biggest of the Shou tribes, often reaching as much as seven feet in height. They tend to hairiness and pallor, with blonde, green, red or white hair common among them. Their physical strength is enormous, and even the females among them can crush an ordinary man with one blow of their fist. Bugbears are expert sneaks and hill stalkers, and gain a 50% chance of surprising targets when in hill country or forests.

Bugbears are less fertile than other tribes of Shou, and are often the most reluctant to go raiding- not out of any innate peacefulness, but because they can seldom afford to lose the hunters that a bad raid would cost them. Their great size and physical power often provoke fear in other Shou tribes, and few will raid bugbear encampments unless they are confident that they vastly outnumber their hulking foes. This unusual equilibrium of relative peace has left many bugbear tribes in better condition to maintain and hand down the

ancient lore of their people, and some scholars of the Shou say that bugbear witch-priestesses are privy to secrets long since lost to any other tribe.

## Shou, Goblin

No. Enc.	2d4 (6d10)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	60' (20')
Armor Class	6
Hit Dice	1 - 1
Attacks	1 weapon
Damage	1d2 or by weapon
Save	0 level human
Morale	7
Hoard Class	III (XX)
XP	5

Smallest of the Shou tribes, goblins rarely clear five feet in height. They are slender, nimble folk that are most likely of the tribes to be born with exotic skin colorings such as green, blue, or deep orange. They are consummate survivors, able to subsist on far less food and water than humans and having few qualms about where they get it. Goblins are found almost everywhere in the Isles, with even the harshest and most inhospitable lands giving up sustenance enough for at least one spindly tribe.

Goblins are even more nomadic than the usual run of Shou, often forced by more fearsome enemies to move on before their tribe suffers unacceptable losses. They are also least inclined of all the tribes

to stand and fight in the face of a direct assault, and many tribes will prefer to give up even rich hunting grounds rather than be forced to defend it with their blood.

## Shou, Hobgoblin

No. Enc.	1d6 (4d6)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	90' (30')
Armor Class	5
Hit Dice	1 + 1
Attacks	1 weapon
Damage	1d2 or by weapon
Save	F1
Morale	11
Hoard Class	XIX
XP	15

Every so often, a tribe of goblins will inexplicably begin to birth children of unusual height and strength. Hobgoblins are man-high, whipcord-lean and muscular compared to their smaller brethren. Even branded and savage as they are, hobgoblins are invariably strikingly handsome or beautiful in their Shou fashion, and have an almost instinctive grasp of leadership principles and small unit tactics. In the absence of strong leadership, young hobgoblins will often fight and kill each other, but under a strong chieftain they become superb unit leaders. The birthing phenomenon is sporadic, however, and goblin tribes never seem to have more than two or three years of hobgoblin births every twenty years. Hobgoblins born to different goblin tribes hate each other just as vigorously as they hate all other outsiders.

Hobgoblins leading fellow goblins of their own tribe increase their effective morale to 9 and substantially improve their combat tactics. Small groups of hobgoblins are occasionally found operating separately from the tribe, usually on some sort of commando operation or the targeted assassination of a troublesome human leader.

## Shou, Orc

No. Enc.	2d4 (1d6 x 10)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	120' (40')
Armor Class	6
Hit Dice	1
Attacks	1 weapon
Damage	1d2 or by weapon
Save	F1
Morale	8
Hoard Class	XIX
XP	10

Shou orcs are man-sized, with the males built heavily and broad across the shoulders. Skin and hair color varies widely, from a pallor

like that of the bugbears to skin only a little paler than a full-blooded Gadaal. Orc females are often quite handsome by human measure, beneath their fearsome tribal markings.

Orcs are among the most numerous of the Shou, as they are the most likely to settle down in human ruins or abandoned places and compel slave tribes to perform agricultural and herding work for them. Some of these orcish domains can grow to hundreds of skilled warriors keeping watch over a helot population of other Shou and human slaves. Fortunately for the other exiles, the more powerful a single orcish tribe becomes, the less inclined their neighbors are to maintain any kind of peace with it.

## Tidespawn

The red mist roils a hundred miles off the shores of the Sunset Isles, keeping its distance from the godbone-infused earth of the islands. Still, there are times when long arms of red fog creep in at night to touch distant shores, and in hidden places petitioners send up prayers to powers they cannot name. The Tide's reach is long, and sometimes it reaches into the houses of men.

The Tidespawn are denizens formed within the red mist, usually fashioned out of the men, women, and children caught within the creeping Tide or captured by its devils. They are not undead as men recognize the name, but living creatures infused with hideous magic and a consuming, maddening purpose. Most have only ragged shreds of awareness left to them, and none are capable of resisting the urges woven into them by their new masters.

Tidespawn can be found not only where tenuous fingers of mist reach to touch the Isles' shores, but also deeper inland, where some reckless Tide Cult has opened a way for their masters. Most such cultists rapidly become prey to the mists, but some are occasionally permitted to retain their human identity, the better to gather in further prey. Tide Cultists that have metastasized to such a stage are rarely capable of functioning in human society any more, however, and so such dire infestations are most common in the wilderness and borderlands where they can fester unconstrained.

Perversely, the best defense against the Tide Cults of the wilderness are the tribes of the Shou. Shou have an instinctual and overpowering hatred for the Red Tide and all its creations, and are remarkably resistant to the blandishments of the mist. As given in the Heroes of the Isles chapter, all Shou have substantial bonuses towards killing Tidespawn and Tide cultists and resisting corruption by the Tide. By another odd coincidence, Tidespawn are never found in close association with undead.

In the days of the ancestors, Tidespawn were so rare as to be little more than a terrible old story. But in the past ten or twenty years, the number of Tide Cults has steadily increased as more and more weak-willed men and women are tempted into red worship by poisonous dreams. These visions promise safety, hope, and abundance for those who perform small and trifling reverences, and the initial obeisances of such cultists are rewarded with a steadily-growing and delusive sense of happiness and good fortune. Even as the cultists begin to collapse into madness, the joy of the Tide within them keeps them faithful while their bodies twist and distort under the

caress of the Tide. The lucky ones are caught and executed before the final stages of transformation, and the sanity-shattering realization of what they finally have become.

### Tidespawn, Creeper

No. Enc.	2d4 (6d10)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	60' (20')
Armor Class	7
Hit Dice	1d4 hit points
Attacks	1 weapon
Damage	1d2 or by weapon -1
Save	0 level human
Morale	12
Hoard Class	I (XIII)
XP	5

These short, hideously misshapen creatures are the remains of children, halflings, and smaller humans who have fallen prey to the mists of the Red Tide. They possess a few shreds of intelligence barely superior to that of an animal, fighting in mad packs that swarm any living thing not tainted by the Tide. They are all but incapable of any tactics more sophisticated than a spear thrust or the swing of a club. Their simple proximity produces a dizzying distortion of thought and will in normal creatures; anyone in melee with a Creeper suffers a -1 penalty to hit rolls and a +1 penalty to Armor Class as they are forced to ignore creeping visions and strange urges. This penalty applies only once, regardless of how many Creepers surround a warrior.

### Tidespawn, Dream Lord

No. Enc.	1
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	180' (60') Teleport: 360' (120')
Armor Class	-3
Hit Dice	25 (125 hit points)
Attacks	1 vision
Damage	1d20 plus save versus Spells or die
Save	F25
Morale	12
Hoard Class	VIII, IX, XII
XP	15,000

The Dream Lords are not so much individual entities as they are animate nodes of the Red Tide. Dream Lords manifest as dark echoes of a great nation's last ruler, focal points for the dread and panic of its countless Tidespawn-taken victims. They do not consciously act to expand the Tide, but simply emanate it by virtue of their presence. If some band of heroes were somehow able to cut through the countless leagues of mist-wracked overland to beard



one of these beings in their twisted palace, entire nations might be freed from the Red Tide at a stroke.

Aside from their incredibly resilient exterior forms and their funhouse-mirror distortions of the land's last ruler before the Tide, Dream Lords have almost complete control over the environment in their presence. Reality warps and twists to suit their unguessable whim, and only groups equipped with *True Seeing* enchantments are capable of avoiding near-instantaneous obliteration.

Even if the group is able to avoid destruction beneath some suddenly-conjured devastation, they must render the Dream Lord vulnerable by proving that it is not, in fact, the real ruler of the domain. Some sort of token must be presented to prove that the true lord of the land opposes them. In the case of the false Emperor of the Ninefold Celestial Empire, this might be the Tablet of Heaven that Archmage Lammach spirited away to the Isles during the exile. Unfortunately, the Tablet was lost during the chaos of the Ravaging, and has yet to be rediscovered. Other, similar regalia or ritual consecrations may be necessary to confer rulership of other conquered lands to some appointed champion.

Once a Dream Lord has been robbed of its authority over the land, it can still fight back with terrible, killing visions hurled at its enemies and the ability to cast any spell it chooses once per round.

## Tidespawn, Magistrate of Ashes

No. Enc.	1
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	120' (40') Teleport: 120' (40')
Armor Class	0
Hit Dice	10
Attacks	3 (2 burning claws, 1 flame strike)
Damage	1d6/1d6/2d6
Save	F10
Morale	12
Hoard Class	XIX x 2, XVIII
XP	2,400

The Magistrate of Ashes is rarely seen by humans- or at least, few live to report any sightings. The figure bears a vague, distorted resemblance to an Imperial magistrate, yet it is wreathed in a perpetual cloud of burning embers and smoke. It speaks but rarely, and is always perfectly understood by those who hear it. What few reports exist of this creature suggests that it serves as a sort of intermediary between the Dream Lords of the Tide and their misshapen servitors, planning and organizing incursions into the Isles.

When it is forced into personal battle, it flickers like a malevolent will-o-wisp among its enemies, teleporting away from them and towards safety and leaving clouds of smoke and flame to scorch its foes. Any creature adjacent to it when it teleports takes 1d4 points of fire damage. Aside from its blazing claws, it can also call down a bolt of flame on a single target within 60'. It is uncommonly vulnerable to the ice and snow of sorcerous cold, and takes double damage from such attacks.

## Tidespawn, Red Apostle

No. Enc.	1
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	90' (30')
Armor Class	2
Hit Dice	6
Attacks	3 (2 claws, 1 Burning Breath)
Damage	1d4/1d4/1d6
Save	F6
Morale	12
Hoard Class	XVIII
XP	820

The Red Apostle is the husk of a wretched devotee of one of the Tide cults that have been forming with increasing frequency in the Isles. Some devotees of the Tide prove unsuitable for the incomprehensible purposes of their masters, and rather than permitting them to be transformed into a mere Stretched One or Creeper by the mists, they are infested with a burning disease that racks them with unending pain. The only possible cessation of this suffering



comes from exhaling shards of burning meat and bone and sharing the torment with those not graced by the Tide. The burning breath of a Red Apostle is a cone 10' long and 10' wide at the far end. All within it must save versus Breath Weapon or take 1d6 damage.

Most Red Apostles retain a surprising amount of human awareness, and they are some of the more effective low-level leadership of the swarms. They can even share some of their agony with a "fortunate" subordinate, goading it on to slaughter the weak; a fellow Tidespawn with fewer hit dice immediately takes 1d6 damage but gains +4 to hit for the remainder of the combat.

## Tidespawn, Stretched One

No. Enc.	2 (1d8 x 2)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	120' (40')
Armor Class	6
Hit Dice	1
Attacks	2 or 1 (2 claws or vertebral lash)
Damage	1d4/1d4 or 1d8
Save	F1
Morale	12
Hoard Class	XIX
XP	10

The Stretched Ones were probably humans or demihumans at one point, until the forces of the Tide elongated their limbs and torsos to grotesque lengths. While hulking and powerful, their musculature is not enough to support this great height, and they shamble and

creep at great speed in a hunched posture save when they rear up to rend a foe. They fight with claws or chains of vertebrae and sinew and love to work in pairs, flanking a victim and letting one force an opening that the other exploits to grab the luckless prey. They rarely show tactics more sophisticated than that, but their intelligence is almost humanlike, and they can usually deduce who the most “interesting” enemy to stretch might be.

### Tidespawn, White Chanter

No. Enc.	1 (1d4)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	90' (30')
Armor Class	7
Hit Dice	4
Attacks	1 (shriek, 60' range attack)
Damage	1d8
Save	F7
Morale	12
Hoard Class	XIV
XP	135

The White Chanters are a rarity among the Tidespawn in that they appear to maintain their native intelligence. While they almost never communicate with non-Tidespawn in any comprehensible manner, their combat tactics are effective and practical. While they do not command or lead other Tidespawn, they are most effective at helping their more intellectually limited brethren achieve their ends of destruction.

The haze of delirium around White Chanters is stronger than around most other Tidespawn, and they can produce murderously lethal delusions in their victims. Anyone standing adjacent to a White Chanter must save versus Spells or become disoriented; each round they must roll 4+ on 1d6 or else they can do nothing but defend themselves. This disorientation lasts as long as the Chanter is standing beside them.

Those few who get a good look at the White Chanter and live to tell of it describe a gaunt, fever-thin creature twisted into strange angles. It drones a steady mutter of gibberish that can injure the reason of those that listen too closely.

### Tidespawn, Wormwalker

No. Enc.	1 (2d4)
Alignment	Chaotic
Movement	90' (30')
Armor Class	5
Hit Dice	3
Attacks	3 (worm tendrils)
Damage	1d4/1d4/1d4
Save	F3
Morale	12
Hoard Class	XIV
XP	80

The Wormwalker was once a man-sized creature, but its true size is sometimes difficult to discern under the halo of writhing, pallid worms that slide constantly through the creature's body. The entity is not undead, but appears to be some sort of symbiont process gone horribly wrong. Occasionally the husk of the Wormwalker retains some consciousness of what and who it once was, but it is helpless to resist the will of the alien worms that infest it. Rumor has it that the humans captured by the Stretched Ones are often brought to a Wormwalker to be converted.

The worms break down any ordinary flesh that comes too close, and are driven into an especial frenzy by the scent of fresh blood. A wounded foe that gets too close to a Wormwalker is likely to be attacked by dozens of thirsting worms lunging for their open wounds, and automatically is attacked at the start of each round for 1d4 damage on a successful hit. The first time a wounded enemy comes adjacent to a Wormwalker, an exceptionally large worm will erupt in an attempt to impale them. On a successful hit, 1d6 damage is done each round until someone spends a round's action tearing the worm away. Damage done by this worm will not kill a victim, but any humanoid brought to 0 hit points by it will become a Wormwalker within an hour. There is no cure for this fate if a *Cure Disease* is not applied before the transformation is complete.



# THE HOUSES OF THE LOST

This chapter is intended to provide the Labyrinth Lord with the tools he or she needs to fit the Sunset Isles out as a proper sandbox for the freebooting adventures of the player group. Still, players should feel free to read over the information in this section, if only to get a better grasp on the kind of information a Labyrinth Lord is likely to need in order to make the best game possible. As in every sandbox campaign, both the players and the Labyrinth Lord need to do their own share of the work to bring out all the fun that the game can provide.

## What is a Sandbox?

“Sandbox gaming” is one of those imprecise phrases that implies a great many things to a great many people. This supplement does not pretend to define the term past argument, but for the benefit of those referees who aren't familiar with the idea, it's necessary to lay out some of the more common elements associated with a sandbox campaign.

The first and most important element of a sandbox campaign is something that isn't there- namely, an overarching plot. The Labyrinth Lord does not sit down and create a storyline and then carve it into adventures for the PCs to run through. There is no foreordained commitment to any particular end state for any particular event. If there is any point during an evening's play at which a PC can “do the wrong thing for the story” or “lose the plot”, then what's being played isn't a pure-strain sandbox game. This is not necessarily a bad thing, and the popularity of storyline games is evidence of the great fun they can be, but the tools and mindset that help a Labyrinth Lord run a great storyline game are not going to be as helpful when trying to run a sandbox campaign.

The second element of a sandbox game is that it is about what the players do. If the players fixate on a particular corrupt noble of Xian and decide that they're going to bring him down one way or another, then that is what the game is about. If they suffer a terrible reverse two sessions later, decide that the noble is just too much for them right now, and then head west to try and rally a Westmark border settlement to their cause in order to overthrow the noble, then that's what the story becomes. And if four sessions later they've completely forgotten about the noble in a desperate attempt to hold a borderman militia together against the savage onslaught of a horde of mountain Shou, then that's the story in turn. The focus of the players is the center of the campaign, and everything else in it simply exists to give them meaningful choices and interesting things to catch their attention.

The third element of the sandbox campaign is that it is alive. Things happen even when the PCs aren't there to see them. Actions have reactions and choices have logical consequences. If the PCs finally murder the noble and escape the vengeful guard, his domain will probably collapse into chaos as numerous rivals struggle to take control. If they left the noble's daughter breathing, they might just get a visit six months later from the assassins she and her newly-ennobled husband have sent to settle the score. The players regularly experience the consequences of their past choices, good and bad, and also see those choices play out on the world around them. NPCs act as their goals dictate, and the only limit on how sophisticated and independent these actions are is the amount of attention the Labyrinth Lord can afford to spare for them.

These three elements combine to form the essence of a sandbox game. The PCs are in a world that can go on without them, but one that is also ready to change and respond to the actions they take. The only limits on what they can achieve are those dictated by their own wit, cunning, and luck.

## Preparing the Battlefield

The first thing a Labyrinth Lord needs to do when creating a sandbox campaign is to talk to the players involved and make sure that everyone understands the idea and is keen on playing in such a game. Sandbox campaigns can be remarkably accessible fun, but they're also susceptible to going down in flames if some of the participants don't quite understand what is expected from them.

Players need to understand that the motive force of the campaign has to come from them. The Labyrinth Lord will provide plenty of hooks and interesting situations for them to encounter, but the players need to be the ones driving the campaign. Every PC needs to have a goal, and needs to be ready to take action to achieve that goal. Even ambitions as simple as “fight evil”, “acquire a noble rank”, or “become ludicrously wealthy” are sufficient, so long as the PC actually works toward that goal. Players should not expect to be pushed in any particular direction. If they see an opportunity to advance their purposes, they should grab it with both hands and no prompting.

Players also need to understand that the world is not gated to their experience level. If an enemy or situation looks lethally dangerous, it's probably because it's going to kill them if they jump into it. They need to exercise informed judgment about what sort of challenges they are capable of handling, and that while the Labyrinth Lord will not shove them into any no-win situations, he'll let them get

themselves killed if they insist on ignoring warnings and prudent caution. Because there is no grand overarching plot in a sandbox game, none of the PC participants can rely on “plot armor” to save them from their own bad judgment.

Of course, the Labyrinth Lord has a set of duties specific to a sandbox campaign, too. While the players are responsible for driving the campaign, the Labyrinth Lord has to make their decisions count. Actions need to provoke reactions, and the players need to be able to see the consequences of the choices they make. A Labyrinth Lord does not have the convenience of a pre-designed plot to fall back on, or some base storyline towards which they can steer events. Every session is going to require a steady stream of judgment calls from the Labyrinth Lord, and he or she needs to be able to make them with minimal hesitation. They may not be perfect, but they don't need to be perfect. They just need to come fast and reasonable enough to keep the PCs from dangling in helplessness or confusion.

The Labyrinth Lord needs to provide opportunities for the ambitions of the players. This doesn't mean that they need to be provided with a royal road to the attainment of all their dreams, but if their burning ambition is to depose a noble, the Labyrinth Lord needs to be able to tell them something interesting or useful in response to their investigations. It may be that their investigations reveal that the noble would crush them like lac beetles, in which case they should also be given some leads on different ways in which they could increase their personal power and influence. The Labyrinth Lord's answer to their efforts doesn't always have to be “yes”, but it should always point to something useful the PCs can do.

Finally, the Labyrinth Lord has an obligation to prepare the sandbox for the players beforehand. Some people are so sublimely talented at improvisational running that they can whip up a coherent and interesting world with minimal prep, and keep it going without any kind of structured means of tracking events. Those people are to be commended, but for most of us, building an interesting and exciting world is not a trivial undertaking, and keeping it coherent and well-understood after a half-dozen sessions of typical PC insanity is not something to be taken lightly. This chapter will provide the referee with a number of techniques for building a useful version of the Isles and keeping it in motion with a minimum of stress.

## Campaign Folders and You

The first thing you're going to need is a good folder, preferably one with several internal pockets. A three-ring binder can work too, if you've got a convenient hole punch. While not exactly redolent of mythic heroism and blood-curdling peril, having a well-organized campaign folder can often spell the difference between a smooth and quick-moving game and a campaign that gets bogged down in confusion and indirection. Being a good sandbox referee is a skill like any other, and a good campaign folder is a useful tool for the job.

Divide the folder into sections. For purposes of this example, split it up into “People”, “Places”, “Encounters”, “Chronicle”, and “Maps”. For any page you put in the folder, write its section and page number at the top to help keep things in order after a busy night of shuffled pages. A few words at the top giving a quick summary of the contents can be useful, too, if the pages are tucked into a pocket that doesn't let you see the whole page at once. It can otherwise be



tough to find just the right encounter sheet out of a thick sheaf without pulling them all out and rifling through them.

For the “People” section, write down the particulars of every NPC the PCs interact with. This doesn’t need to be more than a name, a defining characteristic, and a progressive series of notes about the PCs’ interaction with them- something like “Daifu Wen Hou-Li. Rabbit-faced magistrate of Yellow Toad Well village. PCs set his barn on fire while driving off a Shou attack.” After every significant interaction with the daifu, you can scratch a quick note at the end of his entry. To make room for such, leave a few inches of space between names when writing them down. For initial organization purposes, it can be handy to devote one page to each letter of the alphabet, and organize the NPCs accordingly.

“Places” provide brief write-ups for consequential villages, towns, monasteries, country estates, or any other locations of importance to the PCs. Each page is devoted to a particular location, with progressive notes on any important merchants, NPCs, or events located there. This section may also include ruins or dungeon areas, with encounter keys paperclipped to the maps. You should take care to note down any important acts the PCs perform in an area, as they may come back to haunt them the next time they come through. It can be helpful to run off a very lightly-printed map of the Isles or Ektau itself and stick it in the front, and then key the places to locations you’ve marked off on the map.

“Encounters” are sheets of pre-generated NPC and monster statistics, preferably organized alphabetically for easy reference. Each encounter write up should include the full statistics for the enemies, the number of foes encountered, and a general idea of their likely wealth and important possessions. After you use an encounter, don’t throw it away- save it for later and “reskin” it as something comparable that happens to have the same statistics. The statistical grain of the game is coarse enough that most players honestly won’t even notice, especially if you mix things up a little by changing enemy spell selections, weapon choices, or combat tactics.

The “Chronicle” of a campaign is something you take care of after the end of each session. Write down a brief summary of the events of the game and any important consequences on NPCs or places the PCs have been. It can be difficult to remember exactly what a group did a month ago, and it’s vital to have a consistent record of a sandbox campaign if you want to be able to leverage past PC actions into future PC adventures. A well-developed chronicle is a perpetual wellspring of adventure ideas and gives heft and coherency to the game world.

“Maps” are useful for any location, but they’re especially important for places in which PCs are likely to fight. The exact dimensions and layout of a hardscrabble border village are just not important to most players if all they’re doing there is talking to the locals and conducting a little business. They become vital when they need to defend the village from an oncoming horde of Shou or need to infiltrate it after a bandit chief suddenly rides in and takes the locals prisoner. If you’re expecting a brawl in some location, you’re probably going to need a map of it, even if it’s just a quick diagram sketch of where walls or natural hazards are located. Maps of specific locations can be taken out and clipped to the appropriate Places sheet.

## The Creation and Use of Sites

Included in this chapter are guidelines on creating *sites*. Sites are simply places of interest, locations that have something worth an adventurer’s time. They help a Labyrinth Lord focus his or her creative energy on something specific rather than trying to simply make a hex worth of land “interesting” somehow. They’re not intended to be a universal replacement for a referee’s good judgment and creativity, but they do greatly simplify a Labyrinth Lord’s life when it comes to fleshing out a sandbox campaign.

The sites listed here come in four kinds: court sites, urban sites, borderland sites, and ruin sites. Each one is meant to cover a particular type of place that often presents something interesting or worthwhile to an adventurer. They serve as convenient shorthand for a referee, and keep things wrapped together in a way that allows for easy reskinning and swapping of unused sites. This is important, because one of the most vital skills for a sandbox referee is the ability to repurpose content that would otherwise go unused. You want to waste nothing of your work, and sites help you ensure that.

Court sites represent social situations more than they do physical places. They’re noble courts, important businesses, temple hierarchies, magic academy faculties, tong halls, and other loci of social, financial, and political power. If you want to emulate a place where political or social intrigue is most important and the players need to manipulate the relationships between important people, then you’ll want to create it as a court site.

Urban sites are either cities or neighborhoods within cities. City maps can be lovely and inspirational, but in a game like Labyrinth Lord exact spatial relationships are not quite so important in urban settings as are vivid hooks, local flavor, and interesting events going on in the streets. Urban sites might serve as “home bases” for an adventuring group, providing vital services to them in between their expeditions or political games, or they might be a different kind of dungeon, one where ruffianly hireswords navigate the treacherous waters of a corruption-poisoned neighborhood or brutal slum.

Borderland sites are loci of human or demihuman settlement in rough, untamed land. They’re the mining camps, farming villages, country estates, dwarf delves, military outposts, and other isolated oases of civilization in a land teeming with Shou and dangerous beasts. Adventurers often see out borderlands sites as home bases during wilderness exploration, but it’s also important to make these sites vivid and interesting in of themselves. Even if the players choose not to get involved in the local troubles, the outcome of events can shape the future of the site. Ignoring the situation can result in the PCs suddenly finding themselves stranded in the middle of the Westmark, with their home base collapsing in a welter of infighting and disaster.

Ruins sites are classical dungeons, wizard’s towers, abandoned dwarven delves, mysterious prehuman ruins, and other traditional places where bad things dwell. For PCs who just want to do some old-fashioned dungeon crawling, a ruin site is exactly what the doctor ordered. Handily enough, ruin sites are very easy to insert elsewhere in a campaign if the PCs happen to overlook it or ignore it the first time around. If they’ve never visited the ruined Ravaging-era town of High Rock, they’ll never realize that the cyclopean black

stones of the ancient prehuman city they found just happen to share the same map and contents.

The following material will show you how to quickly and easily generate these sites, the better to fill out your campaign folder with the support material necessary for a sandbox campaign.

## Stocking the Campaign Folder

Once you've got your folder, you're going to need to stock it. As time goes on, your campaign folder is going to swell with accumulated resources, until eventually you'll be able to respond to the plans of the players by just pulling out a few relevant sheets, and get all the inspiration you need for new adventures by checking the campaign chronicle for loose ends the PCs have left behind. At the beginning, though, you're going to be investing some time in filling out your campaign with the resources for your first session.

The first thing you're going to need is a home base for the PCs. At this point, your players probably haven't even rolled up their characters, so it's unlikely you're going to know just what their plans might be. You don't want to overcommit yourself by building an elaborate home base that turns out to be totally unsuitable for what the players want to do- a hardscrabble Westmark mining camp, for example, when it turns out the players want to play sophisticated Xianese urbanites. In some cases the players will let you know beforehand about the sort of place they want to use as a home base, but it's often just as convenient to have different options available at the start of the game- whatever you don't use as a home base you can recycle the first time the PCs venture outward. Therefore, you're going to need to make at least two potential home bases and you don't want to burn yourself out in detailing either.

For your first base, pick a city. Xian is always a good choice, and Hohnberg can be convenient as well. Tien Lung and Kitaminato tend to be a little grim for home bases for most PCs, though if your group likes a darker campaign they might serve. Write down the details of the important services a group of PCs might need, and who it is that provides them. You can use the NPC naming and creation tables in the back of the book to generate merchants and local color. You should have some idea of where the PCs can get drinks, equipment, magical healing, sage services, and jobs. You should have a name for a local magistrate or city watch captain in the likely case that the PCs get on the wrong side of the law. You should also generate three or four NPCs for bit use- urchins, fishwives, harlots, street astrologers, or the like. Finally, write down three or four pieces of local color- sights and sounds that are characteristic to the city and help place events specifically there rather than in some generic urban zone.

In this and any other stocking work, respect the value of a well-done reskin. Your write up of Xian can be transformed into a write up of Hohnberg just by changing NPC names and slotting different local color. Your time and creative energy is precious, and you should never waste the work you do just because it's not labeled correctly. Whichever of the home bases the players don't use, for example, can be saved and recycled for when they finally do make it to the big city or venture out into the borderlands.

Once you've got your city established, now you want to cook up a border settlement for those players who want to start closer to the ruins. You can turn to the site-building chapter of this book and run through the process to create a Borderland Site. As with your urban home base, keep this write up on hand even if your PCs decide to start their game in an urban setting. Once they venture out into the Westmark or other back-country places, you can drop your border settlement in seamlessly.

Once your potential home bases are complete, you'll want to start generating additional sites of interest. Both the borderlands site and the city site should each have a court and a ruin attached to them, to provide PCs with both social and exploratory play options. If you're strapped for time, try to pick ruins or court sites that could just as easily be used for either home base. Simply swapping the hooks and switching the skins can let you turn a moldy cavern complex full of bandits who have kidnapped the village headman's daughter into a cracked Xianese sewer system occupied by tough tong thugs who have stolen away the neighborhood magistrate's youngest son.

## Playing the First Session

Finally, you should generate an initial adventure for the group. Normally, you're going to be relying on the players to decide where they intend to seek adventure; they'll tell you at the end of each session where they want to go or what they want to do for the next one. But for the very first session of the game you're going to have to take a more active role in the process. You need something to get the PCs working together and situated in their home base.

Pick one of the adventure outlines off the list given here or generate your own. Whatever outline you choose, it should be one that gets the players together quickly, directs them at a clear goal that is in their own mutual best interests, and should have room to easily insert new characters should some PC catch an unlucky roll early in the session. The conclusion of the adventure should leave the PCs free to choose their next goal, and should not lock them into a specific course of action. If the end of the adventure is going to leave the PCs forced to deal with a specific villain or overcome a specific challenge before they can do anything else, it's probably not suitable for an initial adventure.

After the adventure is complete and the players have come out the other side of whatever trouble they've gotten into, you should get a clear statement from them about their next intended course of action. With this information, you can use the resources in this book to generate enough content to stay one session ahead of the players at all times. If you get a fit of inspiration or just really enjoy generating a particular ruin or village or mysterious wilderland range, you should feel free to make it up, but try to keep usability in mind with everything you make. Even a ruin that has nothing to do with the players' current goals can prove useful five sessions from now when you suddenly need a dungeon for one reason or another.

At the end of the session or very shortly afterwards, write down a brief entry in the campaign folder's Chronicle section indicating what happened and giving a few notes about effects on important NPCs or locales. Check the rest of the relevant pages in your folder and make sure you've updated your notes in the Places and People

sections accordingly. This may seem a trivial bit of busywork, but a week later it can be extremely hard to remember exactly what happened last week, and it can damage the feel of a campaign when details keep shifting around from session to session.

## Between Sessions

In between sessions, use the information the players have given you to generate the next piece of content you're going to need. If they decide to pay a visit to an important Xianese nobleman to get his aid in deposing a tyrannical border magistrate, generate a court site for the nobleman's home and think about the kind of challenges they're going to face in getting an audience with such an important figure. You don't need to plan for every contingency, but you should work to make sure you have at least a session's worth of material completed.

There are times when the players choose to do something that you know won't give them a session's worth of action- either it's something they're actually going to accomplish very quickly or else they'll find it's not practical at the moment. Think past that immediate goal and try to think about what they'll want to do next in order to flesh that out as well. It may be that they'll throw you a curveball and hare off in a completely different direction, but that's why you've got a campaign folder- pull something out of it that they haven't seen yet and throw it in their path to buy yourself some time for the next session. If you keep enough write ups in your folder, you'll eventually reach a point where you'll have something for virtually every occasion if you just tweak a few details and shift some local color around.

Once you've generated material for the next session's activity, go back to your campaign folder's Chronicle section and look over the past few entries. Are there any actions the PCs took that really need to earn a reaction? Did they disrupt some local power balance or eliminate an obstacle that was holding back a local figure

## The Golden Rule of Sandbox Preparation

One of the greatest threats to any sandbox game is referee burnout. It is far too easy for an enthusiastic Labyrinth Lord to spend hours generating reams of material; first content that he finds exciting and interesting, and then content that he finds necessary for completeness and finally content that is blisteringly tedious but seems like the sort of thing he really should establish. This is not good.

***Don't prepare it unless it is fun to make it or you expect to need it for the next session.***

Are you going to need this material for the next session? No? Then are you having a good time making it up? No? Then don't do it. The more the game becomes a burden and a load of tedious paperwork to you, the more likely it's going to burn you out. If you aren't going to need it for your next session and you're not enjoying its creation, then just put it aside. Your game won't suffer for it.

of influence? Make a note of the three or four most important consequences that have emerged from their recent activities, and try to make sure the PCs see them all in the next session. It could be something as simple as getting a wedding invitation from the young woman they saved from the bandits, or it might be a notice that they're all now wanted outlaws after an unsuccessful attempt on a tyrannical magistrate's life.

This callback to prior choices is an extremely important part of sandbox gaming. The players need to see the consequences of their actions in the world, or else it starts to feel like a simple backdrop to their activities, without life or substance of its own. When they see the world reacting to the choices they make, it helps them feel engaged with the campaign and makes their choices seem all the more significant. What they do matters, and what they choose will have effects far beyond their own individual lives.

# COURT SITES

Court sites include not only the Byzantine households of important rulers and nobles, but any sort of site where the fundamental interest lies in the relationships between several actors. Extended families caught in a quarrel, villages in the throes of choosing a new headman, temples negotiating the rise of a new dogma among their ranks- all of these sites revolve around the relatively non-violent engagement of multiple NPCs. The preparations necessary for detailing a court site tend to be substantially different from those necessary for creating a ruin or a borderland site, but there's nothing that prevents a referee from blending these together. An abandoned dwarven delve occupied in part by a contentious family of refugees can require the engagement both of political talents and an adventurer's sharp sword.

## Choose the Court

The first step lies in determining the particular type of court that exists on the site. In most cases this will be obvious, or you will have a clear idea of the kind of site you want to establish. If you've no such specifics in mind, you can roll or select from the following chart. Each court type is further described on the following pages.

1D6	COURT SITE TYPE
1	Noble Court
2	Extended family
3	Business
4	School
5	Temple
6	Tong

## Define People of Importance

Once you've decided on the type of court, you need to determine the number of important people within it. These people reflect those participants who are too important or influential to be ignored. Their will must be acknowledged by others, as they have control of some power source that the rest of the court is bound to respect. You should usually restrain these numbers to no more than three, as more than that can make it difficult to keep track of the dynamics of the court. You can choose these personages from the suggested list for each type of court site, assuming the details aren't already clear to you.

1D6	PERSONS OF IMPORTANCE
1	One person
2-3	Two people
4-6	Three people

People of importance should be obvious to outside observers like the PCs, or else discernible with only a little investigation. A secret manipulator can be an interesting participant in a court, but you should reserve such figures for specific purposes and schemes. A personage whom the players never have cause to consider is a person unlikely to be terribly involved in the game.



## Determine Details and Power Sources

After this, you should assign details to each of the people, giving them names and a few particulars of appearance. Each person should also be assigned a power source, indicating the nature of their authority and the reason that the rest of the court is obliged to respect their wishes.

Each type of court on the following pages provides some potential power sources for its people of importance. You might decide that some important people have relatively obvious sources of authority, but all of the residents of consequence should have some resource which compels the others to consider their wishes.

## Identify Conflicts

The next step consists of choosing one or more conflicts, preferably placing at least one for each person of importance. At least one of these conflicts should be obvious or easily learned by the PCs. A court site in serene harmony and with all its membership well-contented with their lot is not a court site that is going to hold much interest for your players.

These conflicts should be of a kind that can be resolved with the help of the party, and the persons of importance should be ready to enlist them to help. The purpose of the site is to draw the players into the conflict, and a problem that they can neither influence nor find themselves recruited to resolve is unlikely to hold their attention. Take a moment to think about how the PCs might be drawn into each of the conflicts, and what sort of hooks you can present to catch their attention.

Conflicts should generally exist between people of importance. The struggle of two or more important figures in a court provides action and dynamism to the situation, and allows more openings for the

players to affect the outcome. A noble lord with a bitter grudge against a stable boy is unlikely to require the help of the PCs to get his revenge.

Still, there are times when less significant figure at court is useful, such as the subject of an unacceptable love or the instigator of a questionable affinity. In that case, you can roll on the “Other NPCs” list given for each type of court site.

1d10	CONFLICTS
1	<b>Adultery.</b> One of the people is engaged in an adulterous liaison.
2	<b>Treachery.</b> One of the people is actually in the service of an enemy, and wants the court ruined.
3	<b>Illegitimacy.</b> One of the people is actually not the legitimate holder of their wealth or title.
4	<b>Theft.</b> One of the people has stolen something important and hidden his involvement in the theft.
5	<b>Ambition.</b> One of the people has extravagant and dangerous plans for expansion.
6	<b>Madness.</b> One of the people is mentally ill, and convinced of certain things that are not true.
7	<b>Love.</b> One of the people is passionately in love with one who does not requite their devotion.
8	<b>Need.</b> One of the people desperately needs an object or land owned by another.
9	<b>Folly.</b> One of the people is making a terrible hash of their duties but will not give it up.
10	<b>Affinity.</b> One of the people is deeply attached to someone inappropriate to their station.

### Tie Up Loose Ends

Once you’ve established the conflicts between the participants, you should take a few moments to decide what is going to happen should the conflict be resolved for or against a given person of importance. Some idea of the kind of rewards offered to helpful PCs should be noted down, as well as any important outcomes in the site’s dynamics or leadership. Having proven the adulterous entanglements of Lady Wu with the dwarven warrior Hargrim, the players are apt to expect some sort of highly visible consequence to follow from their actions, and these outcomes are handy elements for later inclusion in adventures that call back to their earlier acts.

Finally, you should sketch a few peripheral characters and servants to flesh out the site, as it’s not unlikely that the PCs will be spending more time dealing with the servants of some important personage than with the great man himself. It can also be useful to have their statistics on hand should the PCs decide that the woes of the court are best remedied with steel.

Unlike some other sites, it’s not generally necessary to provide a map of court sites. If you anticipate that a running battle might break out inside the estate walls, however, you may wish to pull together a few notes, just in case.

### An Example Court

In preparing a few adventures around the Westmark market town of Hulun Bir, the referee decides that it would be wise to lay out some facts about the local temple. Adventurers are always getting into scrapes, and it’s likely that sooner or later they’re going to want a favor from the priests.

The referee already knows he wants a temple, so skips rolling for the site type. Since Hulun Bir is mostly Imperial in character, it’s a temple to the Imperial gods, the Nine Immortals. To find out how many important people are involved in the temple’s operation, the referee rolls 1d6 and gets 4- according to the table, that means 3 important people reside in the temple.

Turning to the “Temple” site entry, the referee rolls 1d10 three times, looking up the results on the list. A brief detour to the NPC name tables provided in the back of the book shows us that we have Lu Hao, the aged temple guard chief, Greta Feng, an enthusiastic visionary, and old Brother Kenjiro, a reclusive ascetic.

Since it’s very likely that the PCs are going to need clerical help sooner or later, the referee decides that Brother Kenjiro’s power source is his impressive breadth of clerical magic. He hates to be bothered by worldly concerns, but he has powerful magic when induced to aid others. Lacking specific ideas about the other, the referee rolls 1d10 twice to determine the power sources for the other two. Lu Hao, while an old guardsman, is a master of doctrine and orthodoxy. He evidently views his role in the temple as not merely the guardianship of its physical site, but also of its theological purity. Greta Feng has no real clerical abilities, but the local magistrate is convinced that her prayers cured his sick daughter after Brother Kenjiro angrily refused to be drawn from his meditations. As such, it is Greta’s good offices that are keeping the magistrate from retaliating against the temple.

Now a conflict is required for each, and 1d10 is rolled three times. The first roll is Treachery. It looks like old Lu Hao is convinced that the temple is being irrevocably drawn from the right path, and he’s looking for the opportunity to turn it over to a faith more to his theological liking. And if the current priests get hurt, well, the gods do make demands, no? Greta Feng has Madness; she’s actually convinced she really does have clerical powers, and any attempt to persuade her otherwise sets her off in a fury. Brother Kenjiro’s powers gnaw at her, and she spends a great deal of time rationalizing why she cannot perform the same visible miracles. Brother Kenjiro, on his part, is secretly engaged in an adulterous liaison with... and here the referee rolls on the “Other NPC” table, and comes up with 10, “a seller of religious supplies”. He would be doubly disgraced were his unchaste activities ever to come to light.

Finally, the referee takes a moment to think about how the PCs might interact with the situation. Lu Hao might seek to use them to “purge the rot” from the temple, only to turn it over to some harsher, darker faith. Greta might enlist them to spy on Brother Kenjiro to prove the demonic pacts he must be using to gain his unnatural powers. Finally, Brother Kenjiro’s lover might be an NPC they save from some disaster, one who recklessly tells them that his or her lover can repay the favor they have done.

## Court Types

The following tables provide brief descriptions of various possible types of court sites. Each one includes a list of important people appropriate to the site, power sources that might justify their importance, and a selection of other NPCs commonly encountered in such a place.

The Labyrinth Lord should feel free to take these tables as simple suggestions for their own creativity. If a seemingly illogical result is rolled, something more appropriate can be picked. It can occasionally prove interesting to go with these unusual rolls, however, and think of a reason that justifies such a connection. The results that follow can be surprising to both referee and players.

## Business

The great cities of the Sunset Isles are all built on trade and the exchange of peasant produce for the handicrafts of skilled artisans. Even the smaller towns can expect to have a few of the more ubiquitous trades represented among its businesses. This business is more than just a village smithy or small-town rice exchange. Great wealth flows through its account books, and many crave control of its wide holdings and deep coffers. Spice traders, rice brokers, shipwrights, mining concerns, plantation owners... all such great concerns have their share of woes.

1D10	IMPORTANT PEOPLE	POWER SOURCES	OTHER NPCs
1	Founder	Owens title to the business' facilities	Hard-working laborer
2	Chief accountant	Knows the secret methods for the business' success	Worker kept on as a favor
3	Head salesman	Has proof of past lawbreaking by the business	Aged assistant
4	Top foreman	Close ties with the business' suppliers	Innovative researcher
5	Chief buyer	Due to inherit control of the business	Enthusiastic artisan
6	Owner	Has the right to buy the business for a fixed sum	Owner's lover
7	Owner's spouse	Friend to the local ruler whose approval is needed	Querulous buyer
8	Owner's child	Business owes them a large amount of money	Spy for another business
9	Largest creditor	Workers greatly love and respect the person	Thief casing the business
10	Biggest customer	Only one who fully understands the business' finances	Business shareholder

## Extended Family

The ties of kinship are strong in the Sunset Isles, and in many places the only souls one can really trust are those united by ties of blood. Such closeness has its price in tensions, treachery, and ambitions thwarted for the good of the clan. This extended family has significant wealth or local standing, but its members are often at each others' throats beneath the seeming of filial comity.

1D10	IMPORTANT PEOPLE	POWER SOURCES	OTHER NPCs
1	Grandmother	Family lands are titled to them	Foster child from a cadet branch
2	Grandfather	Knows the secrets of the family business	Maidservant
3	Mother	Great personal wealth	Field hand
4	Father	Has blackmail material on relatives	Aged invalid
5	Son	Holds the authority of age and experience	Child back from school
6	Daughter	Sacrificed marriage to tend to elders	Widowed relation
7	Aunt	Related to a powerful family that will brook no insult	Crippled relation
8	Uncle	Has good relations with the local ruler	Black sheep wanderer
9	Cousin	Universally loved in the household	Prodigal offspring who has returned
10	Nephew	Will eventually inherit the family house or estate	Newly-arrived spouse



## Noble Court

Whether the exalted court of the Mandarin of Xian or the humble house of a small-town magistrate, noble courts are hotbeds of intrigue and deceit. Fabulous wealth awaits those who can attain favor with important nobility, and forgiveness of legal irregularities and commercial missteps can drive men and women into making all manner of bargains with the powers that be. Most noble courts revolve around the person of the noble him or herself, though occasionally a spouse of equal inherited rank has his or her own ideas about how the court should be run.

Every noble court has its share of hangers-on and petitioners, and it can often be difficult for adventurers of humble station to get through to the master or mistress of the house. The very fact that adventurers are such social outsiders can occasionally make them very attractive to nobles who need to get certain activities accomplished by people who are not famously fastidious about trivial legal niceties. And if in the end, these tools should prove to have outlived their worth... well, who is to doubt that whatever might befall them is not perfectly just and deserved?

1d10	IMPORTANT PEOPLE	POWER SOURCES	OTHER NPCs
1	Noble	Family lands are titled to them	Poor relation
2	Spouse	Great personal prowess or past glory	Guard
3	Chamberlain	Great personal wealth	Clerk
4	Spymaster	Has blackmail material on people	House servant
5	Concubine	Inherited noble title	Hostage from a rival family
6	Merchant Partner	Others are sworn vassals to them	House priest
7	Guard Captain	Related to a powerful family that will brook no insult	Desperate petitioner
8	Old Family Servant	Someone owes them a great deal of money	Assassin
9	Noble's Parent	Universally loved in the household	Tutor
10	Noble's Child	Will eventually inherit wealth or title	Tax collector for the fief

## School

Scores of small schools of magic dot the Sunset Isles, most of them heir to the Ninefold Celestial Empire's magocratic reverence for the study of the arcane arts. Others maintain the customs and arcana of other cultures, often jealously aware of the dwindling interest in such things in the face of Imperial ways. Few formal schools in the Isles are without some instructors in the arcane arts, even if these teach only the most basic and rudimentary of spells. Even the fashionable finishing schools for young nobles strive to impart at least some theoretical grasp of the arts along with the literacy, court etiquette, and management skills expected of a noble of the Isles. Schools often include adult scholars among their students, ones willing either to pay for access to instruction or to give some of their own knowledge to the other students in turn.

Some adventurers of a more scholarly bent or noble upbringing might owe some of their education to such a school, or find an old teacher employed by a new establishment. Imperial culture has always prized deference to one's teachers, and sometimes an educator in a grim bind bethinks himself of a promising pupil who could be of great help in his hour of need.

1d10	IMPORTANT PEOPLE	POWER SOURCES	OTHER NPCs
1	Headmaster	Powerful magic-user	Sullen house servant
2	Eldest teacher	Favorite among wealthy alumni	Student's personal servant
3	Ambitious young scholar	Beloved by the students	Guard
4	Treasurer	Family owns the school estate	Kitchen urchin
5	Master of Admittance	Has knowledge of others' forbidden research	Bookseller
6	Librarian	Forges documents for the local nobility	Weathered traveler
7	Favorite pupil	Provides magical assistance to the local ruler	Maid-servant
8	Chief servant	Famous instructor in an important topic	Older student's spouse
9	Groundskeeper	Family provides substantial funding to the school	Faculty spouse
10	Head Cook	Has unique, closely-guarded skill or expertise	Bored, indifferent student

## Temple

The shrines and holy places of the Sunset Isles are rarely extravagant. The people of the Isles have lost much of their faith in the gods since the Red Tide rolled up from the sea, and the largest temples these days rely more on their lands and sharecroppers than on the steady tithes of the faithful. Still, these temples often retain the last vestiges of the miraculous to be had in the Isles, and the few men and women capable of bringing the power of the gods down among humanity. Control of a powerful temple provides not only the income from their farms and resident artisans, but access to powers of healing and divination unavailable elsewhere.

Temples can be located even in the most remote portions of the isles. Most of them rely on their own peasants for food and handicrafts, and sometimes entire small villages can sprout up in the shadow of a strong temple. It is the custom of some nobles to retire from public life at the end of their lives, handing over their titles to their heir and retreating to the sanctity of a monk's cell. Such pious withdrawal ensures a favorable afterlife to the noble and a sizeable donation to the temple. Then again, some nobles find religion under the strenuous urgings of others, and some troublesome young women and men find themselves fitted for a very closely-guarded life of piety.

1d10	IMPORTANT PEOPLE	POWER SOURCES	OTHER NPCs
1	High priest	Actually has clerical powers	Cook
2	Noble turned monk	Unimpeachable priestly lineage	Maidservant
3	Temple guard chief	Has visions widely reputed to be genuine signs	Inept acolyte
4	Temple treasurer	Family lends the title to much of the temple's land	Grumbling peasant
5	Farm tenant leader	Beloved by the temple's peasants and servants	Desperately hopeful petitioner
6	Somewhat heretical priest	Comes from an important noble family	Curious scholar
7	Wealthy believer	Exquisite mastery of doctrine and church law	Largely-ignored reformer
8	Popular evangelist	Friends in other temples of the faith	Crippled mendicant
9	Reclusive monastic	Many of the believers will follow his or her lead	Temple virgin
10	Enthusiastic visionary	The local lord is convinced he or she provided a miracle	Seller of religious supplies

## Tong

Tongs are brotherly fellowships at heart, groups of otherwise unrelated men- and occasionally women- who band together in mutual defense against the depredations of the wealthy and powerful. The more upright tongs take on the character of mutual aid societies, providing for the widows and orphans among their numbers and ensuring that their dead are accorded a decent burial. Those of a more venal stripe often maintain a regular commerce in thievery, extortion, vice, and other criminal pursuits along with their charitable work. Disputes over territory and revenge for insults often result in street fighting between rival tongs.

Civic tongs are organized loosely, with a Grandfather presiding over a circle of Fathers composed of the wealthiest or most influential tong members. Beneath them are the Elder Brothers who have contributed substantially to the tong's goals, and the Younger Brothers who have yet to prove their value to the organization. One of the Fathers is customarily counted the Master of Rites, charged with conducting the initiation ceremonies and sacred festivals of the tong, while the Stern Master oversees discipline within the tong- and in criminal organizations, oversees the enforcing of the tong's will on outsiders. The Honored Sage manages administrative and financial matters, while the Favorite Uncle aids in negotiating disputes between fellow tong members.

1d10	IMPORTANT PEOPLE	POWER SOURCES	OTHER NPCs
1	Grandfather	Eldest descendant of the tong's founder	Tong enforcer
2	Father	Tong property title is in his name	Prostitute
3	Elder brother	Extremely popular among the Younger Brothers	Widow of a tong member
4	Master of Rites	Related to most of the Fathers	Orphaned child of a tong member
5	Honored Sage	Has well-placed child widely desired in marriage	Caretaker of the tong meeting hall
6	Favorite Uncle	Greatly feared by local extortion targets	Shopkeeper asking for forbearance
7	Spouse of a member	Notoriously tough and dangerous person	Aspiring membership candidate
8	Allied merchant	Financed many tong projects	Elderly invalid member
9	Associated noble	Lends substantial respectability by their own reputation	Peasant come to seek justice
10	Stern Master	Possesses abilities as a magic-user or cleric	Spy from a rival tong

# BORDERLAND SITES

Civilization's grip on the Sunset Isles has always been tenuous. Even three hundred years after the Landing, humans and their allies find their existence hemmed in by the savage tribes of native Shou and the perils of the untamed islands. Close to the great cities such as Xian, Hohnberg, and Tien Lung, the lands might be peaceful and bucolic, but the further away from these strongholds of men a traveler goes, the more wild and dangerous the land becomes.

Borderland sites are those places that stand between the settled lands of men and the wild ranges of the Shou and other untamed dangers. Hard-bitten mining settlements on the edge of Shou territory, farming villages planting rice on terraced western hillsides, temples raised during the first flush of expansion that still stubbornly hold to their place- all these places are borderland sites. They stand close enough to civilized lands to maintain a modicum of order but they must face dangers unknown to the snug citizens of Xian.

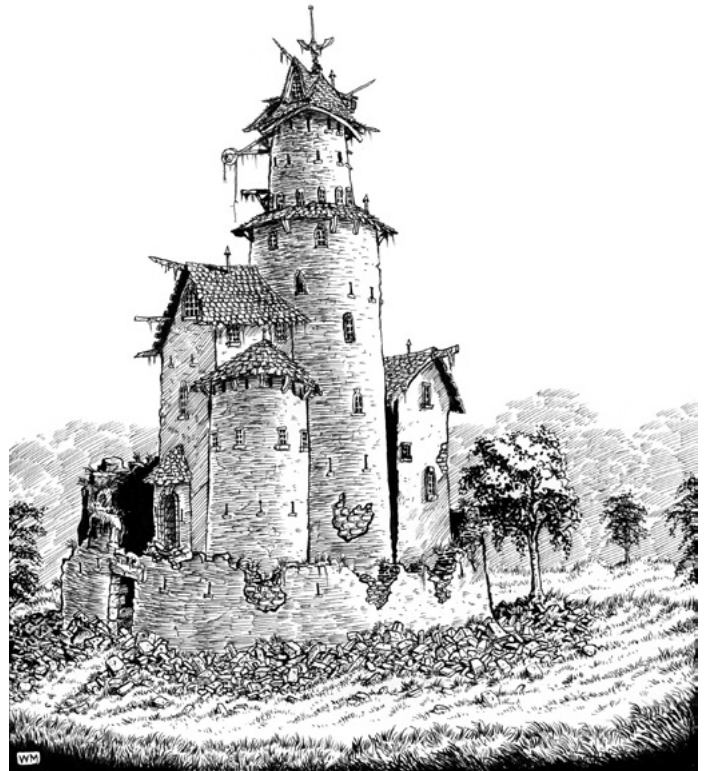
Borderland sites are often visited by adventurers, as they're usually the last outposts of human civilization before entering the untamed wilderness. A friendly face and a willing merchant in a remote trading post can make a world of difference to a battered band of adventurers fresh from a dangerous foray into the wild. Yet any who choose to live so far from the security of civilization are apt to face their own problems, and these troubles are often of the sort that can be best solved by a brave soul with a trustworthy blade in hand.

## Choose a Borderland Site

In many cases, you will already know what kind of settlement you wish to make. In others, however, a little initial inspiration can be useful. When in doubt, you can roll on the table below to get a hint on an appropriate settlement type. To get a name for the place, you can resort to the place name tables provided in the back of the book.

1D10	BORDERLAND SITE TYPES
1	Country Estate
2	Dwarven Delve
3	Elven Enclave
4	Farming Village
5	Fortified Outpost
6	Mining Hamlet
7	New Colony
8	Reclaimed Ruin
9	Remote Temple
10	Trading Post

**Country Estates** are usually fortified manor buildings owned by nobles or wealthy merchants. Their masters may be addicted to dangerous wilderness hunts, or they may have important business holdings in the area which occasionally require their personal oversight. Country estates on the borderlands are cautious about strangers, but suitably civilized-sounding visitors can often hope to be put up in the outbuildings for a few nights in exchange for news from more settled land, and the steward of the estate can



sometimes be persuaded to buy loot at only moderately thieving prices. Few borderland estates have fewer than a dozen men-at-arms in residence, and about twice as many servants and peasant laborers.

**Dwarven delves** are cut into mountains or hillsides, burrowed by preference into solid rock. Some delves on Ektau are ancient, dating from the lost dwarven civilization that predated the more modern dwarven colonists that first arrived five hundred years ago. Delves are always built to withstand siege, and only the most powerful and determined Shou tribes dare launch a serious attack against these settlements. Interior water supplies, stocks of dried grains, and grim determination force sieges to drag longer than most Shou tribes can tolerate, and forcing an entrance is often lethal when it is not outright impossible. Yet where outside enemies cannot reach, internal quarrels can strike. More delves have fallen to clan squabbling and the machinations of desperate Repenter heretics than have gone under the edge of Shou spears. The dwarves are not a populous race, and even the largest border delves rarely house more than eighty adult dwarves and half as many children.

**Elven enclaves** are very rare, as uncommon as elves are in the Isles. They tend to be remote and well-hidden from casual discovery. Elves rarely have the numbers to withstand serious attacks by Shou or outsiders, and so prefer to leave a place rather than win a ruinous victory in defending it. Most elven settlements are small enough to be supported by hunting and gathering, though a few cultivate crops if the land is rich enough. There are rarely more than fifty or sixty elves in an enclave. Each enclave tends to be dominated by a single Creed, with every elf in the group sharing in the beliefs and philosophical perspective. Most Creeds are somewhat esoteric

and harmlessly peculiar by human measure, but a few are positively malevolent towards outsiders.

**Farming villages** are usually composed of hard-working peasants who are no stranger to the perils of the land. In the more dangerous reaches, men tend their fields with a spear propped atop their plows, and gongs and alarm horns stand ready to call the militia together at any hour. The inhabitants endure these dangers for the sake of the land. Serviceable farmland is ruinously expensive in the safe, civilized portion of the Isles, so those who would make a better life for themselves and their children are forced to dare the perils of the borderland. Many arrive unprepared for the dangers, but those who remain learn quickly or perish. Most borderland farming villages number one or two hundred souls, and tend to be closely built around a village center. Farms too distant from the hamlet's clay and timber walls are often tempting to raiders.

**Fortified outposts** represent the limited effort that the greater powers of the Isles can make toward holding the border safe. Sponsored by whatever great power is nearest to this patch of borderland, these outposts are staffed by hard-bitten veterans and rough wilderness scouts. A stone tower and a wooden palisade form the heart of the outpost, with a few small farms and trade buildings clinging close to their skirts. Strangers can expect a wary but tolerant reception, and many outpost commanders can find work for strangers as capable- and expendable- as adventurers. Few outposts have more than twenty or thirty men assigned to them.

**Mining hamlets** are built up around some lode of valuable ore. Iron, lead, tin, or even the precious metals of copper, silver, and gold can all attract the reckless miners willing to risk their neck for the sake of a good strike. Some hamlets on the borderland are old, long-standing pits and pipes with stone walls to guard them and wary watchmen at their gates. Others are little more than clusters of tents and a few rough timber buildings where merchants trade supplies and women for gold dust at ruinous rates. Strangers are rarely noticed in mining hamlets, though some of the more watchful inhabitants might find adventurers useful in clearing out some Shou-infested claim or "clarifying" matters with a rival. Young mining hamlets rarely have more than two hundred inhabitants.

**New colonies** are freshly-founded settlements in the wilderness, hamlets that have yet to get in crops or sink mines. They're usually settled on some worthwhile patch of terrain, but without experienced bordermen to work them, raw eastern civilians are unlikely to survive their first Shou raid. These settlements usually have a wealthy backer willing to pay well for assistance in ironing out the inevitable difficulties of a new settlement. Most such colonies have no more than two hundred brave souls to build them.

**Reclaimed ruins** are sites that were once dangerous piles of crumbling masonry or noisome holes in the earth. Some brave band of settlers decided to reclaim the place, and now they make a living farming the surrounding land or digging out precious valuables from the guts of the ruin. In both cases the work tends to be hazardous, and some such colonies end up digging up more than they can handle. Adventurers are a common sight in these places, always willing to press into peril for the sake of what can be found.

No more than one or two hundred people usually call an old ruin home.

**Remote temples** are usually relics of the early years of human settlement after the Landing, when triumphant armies of refugees and their mighty heroes drove back the disorganized Shou and took great swaths of the Isles. When the furious natives struck back during the Ravaging many settlements were destroyed as the border was pushed back far from its high-water mark. Temples such as these are often remnants of those days, stubbornly holding on amid a wilderness that was once a peaceful and civilized district. Many farmers and peasants from those dark days sought refuge around the fortified temples, and most still have a modest village worth of lay servants and temple-sworn peasants to serve them. The temple itself rarely has more than thirty or forty priests and servitors, but the outworks can number as many as two hundred more farmers and artisans.

**Trading posts** are fortified inns or camps where traders meet the wild bordermen for liquor and bargaining. Furs, rare herbs, and the plunder of lost settlements all can be sold here with few questions asked and few laws respected. Most trading posts rarely number more than twenty or thirty merchants and their guards.

### Select Tags For the Site

Once you've determined the type of borderland site, you should take a moment to determine what qualities make it interesting. It's well enough to simply have a random mining hamlet near a ruin of interest to the PCs, but it's more satisfying if there's something about that hamlet which catches the players' attention. Every site should have *something* about it that sets it apart from the other places the PCs have been.

For this purpose, borderland sites have "tags". Tags are brief labels that point to a particular quality or situation of interest about the site, such as "Bad Water" or "Tyrannical Leader". Tags aren't intended to cover all the potential points of interest about a place, but they do give a referee a few quick, easy elements to hang on the character of a settlement.

This section lists forty potential tags. Each tag includes a brief description of what it entails, and five additional categories of elements: enemies, friends, complications, things, and places.

Enemies are simply those NPCs that might have reason to have an antagonistic relationship with the PCs. For the "Cheating Merchant" tag, for example, the head bully of the merchant's goon squad might well take umbrage at the PCs expectation of fair dealing for the fruits of their adventuring. If you need an antagonistic figure to start off an adventure or provide a hook, you can select someone from this list and then detail them with the NPC resources given in the back of the book.

Friends, by the same token, are those NPCs that might have a reason to be friendly toward the PCs, or seek them out for help. The PCs can usually provide something they need, so they can also serve as hooks for an adventure reliant more on the PCs' cooperation rather than the animosity of an Enemy.

Complications are additional twists that you can throw in to spice up the situation. There's no obligation to throw in a complication, but it can be useful to do so when things might look a little too pat and straightforward to be interesting.

Things are objects of monetary worth or importance to the situation. Conflicts in the settlement might revolve around possession of these things, or recovering them from some outside enemy.

Places are those locations characteristic of the tag. They're places that underline the themes and qualities of the trait and help emphasize the particular uniqueness of the site.

To determine the tags for a site, roll on the tag table one or two times, using 1d4 and 1d10 to produce a result. If you decide to use two tags, consider blending them together into a single situation. Too many tags or complications can turn out muddy and difficult for players to follow, while blending two tags together can result in situations that are more interesting than a single straight-up trope. For example, the results of "Dwarven Outcasts" and "Faded Glory" might be blended together, giving a settlement dominated by the inbred remnants of a once-mighty dwarven clan that still holds jealous control over the settlement through their inherited weapons and dwarf-forged armor.

### Determine Services and Available Funds

Borderland sites usually serve as bases and resting places for adventurers, and it's likely to be important to know what kind of services are available. Most borderlands sites will have a blacksmith capable of basic armor and weapon repair and the crafting of simple gear such as leather armor, spears, and daggers. Foodstuffs, torches, lamp oil, and other adventuring staples can be bought in almost any village-sized settlement, though prices are usually double normal as the locals take advantage of outsider gold. Most villages have a priest or two to tend to funeral rites and other important religious services, but only 20% of such priests have even a minimum of actual clerical powers, and only 10% of villages have a first level magic-user present as a hedge witch or local wise man.

Most villages can usually afford to buy up to five gold pieces worth of adventuring plunder for every inhabitant. Major sales normally require the wealth of a city. This same fund is available for rewards for services rendered, though settlements backed by a powerful patron might be able to offer substantially more.

Once the PCs gain a few levels and can afford to enlist powerful clerical aid, you should take a moment to consider the location of the nearest cleric capable of such adventuring staples as *Cure Disease*, *Remove Curse*, and *Raise Dead*. Many of the most powerful clerics in the Isles tend to prefer life as isolated hermits or abbots of remote monasteries, so it's not impossible that such a hierarch might be found in some humble farming village or little-visited temple.

ID4	IDIO	TAG	ID4	IDIO	TAG
1	1	<i>Bad Neighbors</i>	3	1	<i>Master Artisan</i>
	2	<i>Bad Water</i>		2	<i>Motherlode</i>
	3	<i>Bungling Leadership</i>		3	<i>Natural Fortifications</i>
	4	<i>Buried Evil</i>		4	<i>Pacifistic Folk</i>
	5	<i>Cheating Merchants</i>		5	<i>Powerful Local</i>
	6	<i>Class Tensions</i>		6	<i>Pre-Exile Site</i>
	7	<i>Corvee Demand</i>		7	<i>Raiders</i>
	8	<i>Crop Failure</i>		8	<i>Rebels</i>
	9	<i>Crop Theft</i>		9	<i>Recurring Disease</i>
	10	<i>Dangerously Naive</i>		10	<i>Religious Tension</i>
2	1	<i>Dwarven Outcasts</i>	4	1	<i>Rich Land</i>
	2	<i>Ethnic Tensions</i>		2	<i>Secret Recipe</i>
	3	<i>Exiled Magistrate</i>		3	<i>Shou Blood</i>
	4	<i>Faded Glory</i>		4	<i>Sinister Alliance</i>
	5	<i>Feng Shui</i>		5	<i>Tide Cult</i>
	6	<i>Faded Glory</i>		6	<i>Toxic Environment</i>
	7	<i>Grasping Noble</i>		7	<i>Tyrannical Leader</i>
	8	<i>Hell King Cultists</i>		8	<i>Uncertain Title</i>
	9	<i>Heretical Strife</i>		9	<i>Wanted Outlaw</i>
	10	<i>Malevolent Creed</i>		10	<i>Xenophobia</i>

### Provide Statistics, Maps, and Hooks

Finally, take a moment to give statistics to those NPCs that are most likely to need them. This is especially important for tagged Enemies and other antagonists, as PCs tend to make a habit of applying sharp metal to these kinds of troublemakers.

Most borderland settlements don't require precise maps that lay out the exact location of the village blacksmith and the town rice paddies. A simple sketch is usually more than sufficient, indicating the general outline of the settlement and its relationship to any important local features. You may choose to draw a more specific map if you anticipate fighting in the area. It can be useful to have a more detailed layout if the PCs might be expected to lead a band of rebels on an attack against the corrupt magistrate's country estate, for example.

As a finishing touch, take a moment to write down a hook or two for the settlement, some small event or overheard observation that will give the players a reason to take a closer look at the settlement. The most finely-crafted border village is useless if the players never have any cause to take in the local atmosphere. Give them a hint about the local tags and potential adventure. Even if they don't give it any immediate interest, you can call back to it later with future events, giving it all an air of foreshadowing and giving them the option of going back to investigate what they originally passed over.

## Borderland Site Tags

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### BAD NEIGHBORS

The settlement has a grudge against one or more of its neighbors, and a steady low-level conflict is going on between them. This antagonism may be the product of old wrongs long since lost in the mists of self-serving memory, or it might be the result of some fresh ambition on the part of the settlement or its neighbors.

ENEMIES	Local who thinks the PCs are friends of the rival settlement, Local who wants to use them against the enemy
FRIENDS	Aspiring peacemaker, Agent of the other settlement who sees the PCs as useful
COMPLICATIONS	The settlement is actually completely at fault in the feud, The quarrel was started by a manipulative third party who wants both settlements weakened, The quarrel is the result of a ridiculous misunderstanding
THINGS	Proof of the guilt of one of the sites involved, A precious relic of legitimacy, The object the sites are fighting over
PLACES	Ambush site, Disputed fields, Funeral of someone slain by the rivals

### BAD WATER

There are problems with the local water supply, either because the current source is no longer serviceable, or because some outside power is interfering with the free flow of water. Peasants might be fighting over irrigation rights to the local streams and rivulets, old wells might be running dry, or some malefactor might be poisoning the locals' water supply at the source.

ENEMIES	Hidden poisoner, Aspiring water baron, Desperate neighboring farmer
FRIENDS	Water diviner, Local negotiator, Investigating magistrate
COMPLICATIONS	The locals need to move as the land can no longer support their crops, Some vital local industry is poisoning the waters, A curse has fallen on the water due to some local crime
THINGS	Location of hidden spring, Ancient dwarven dam controls, Deed of water rights
PLACES	Parched field, Local irrigation dam, Bottom of a dry well

### BUNGLING LEADERSHIP

The settlement's leader is hopelessly incompetent. Such leaders are usually new to their posts, as they rarely last long amid the dangers of the borderlands. While they persist, however, they can cause dramatic damage to a settlement until their people either force a replacement or fall prey to their blind bungling.

ENEMIES	The fumbling leader, Secret power behind the throne, Blindly devoted servant
FRIENDS	Grizzled elder who sees the problem, Relative who wants to save the leader from himself, Itinerant magistrate
COMPLICATIONS	The incompetent is the only acceptable leader by local customs, The incompetent is personally powerful, The incompetent would be a splendid leader if he were not being misled
THINGS	Relic that gives the possessor's rule legitimacy, Proof that someone else was meant to be leader, Proof that the leader's advisors are corrupt
PLACES	Confused and riotous audience hall, Decaying and unrepaired wall, Untended farm field

### BURIED EVIL

Something dark and terrible lurks beneath the buildings of the settlement, lost in some entombed ruin or simply waiting in the dark of the earth. It may be some malevolent spirit entombed by people long-dead, or it might be a cyst of some noxious life or poisonous material. Whatever its nature, someone among the locals threatens to unearth it.

ENEMIES	Greedy treasure-hunter, Deluded seeker, Person enslaved by the evil's influence
FRIENDS	Wary elder who remembers old stories, Roaming historian, Itinerant ghost hunter
COMPLICATIONS	The evil can influence people at a distance, The evil appears as some remarkably valuable object, The evil is contagious in its effects.
THINGS	The key to unlock the evil, The precious object in which the evil was bound, The ancient tome that warns of the evil's nature.
PLACES	Forgotten and long-buried ruin, Disordered house of someone in the evil's thrall, Building's basement that twists and warps under the influence of the evil.

## CHEATING MERCHANTS

Some important local merchant is a grasping knave who cheats those who deal with him, yet is protected from the consequences by his power and servants. Something he sells is vital to the inhabitants, and they have no other source for the necessary commodity.

ENEMIES	Head bully of the merchant's guard, Corrupt magistrate, Quisling local
FRIENDS	Local who has been cheated, Merchant who wants to break the monopoly, Former employee of the merchant
COMPLICATIONS	The merchant cheats because he can make no money selling the commodity otherwise, The locals abused the merchant in the past, The merchant sells vital adventuring equipage
THINGS	Proof of the merchant's chicanery, Information on a new source of the commodity, The merchant's hidden trove
PLACES	Quarrelsome and impotent magistrate's court, Sullen trading post, Tavern dominated by the merchant's thugs

## CLASS TENSIONS

The social classes of the settlement are at each others' throats. Peasants might hate landlords, soldiers might hate officers, lay folk might hate priests, or any other conceivable fissure between the powerful and the less-powerful. Such anger is usually fueled by some recent event that serves to catalyze years of resentment.

ENEMIES	Tyrannical member of the overclass, Bloodthirsty agitator of the underclass, Outsider who profits from the hate
FRIENDS	Someone with ties to both classes, Peacemaking local elder, Local seeking aid for their side of the conflict
COMPLICATIONS	The overclass is actually innocent of wrongdoing and the underclass is moved largely by greed and envy, The overclass provides some vital service the underclass needs, The tensions are about to break into open fighting
THINGS	Relic of a martyred victim of the other class, Proof that one side was at fault in the event that touched matters off, The ill-gotten treasure of the overclass
PLACES	Burnt homestead, Pillaged estate, Poisonously tense local festival

## CORVEE DEMAND

The settlement's ruling authority demands that the locals perform some sort of labor for their rulers, providing their own food and shelter while at work. Most credit old customary laws requiring such service, but the laws may have fallen into disuse or be fabrications. Peasants hate corvee labor, as it takes them from their fields, and other settlements often resent the demand for their unpaid work.

ENEMIES	Grasping local official, Cruel corvee taskmaster, Greedy merchant who misdirects the labor to his own profit
FRIENDS	Angry peasant elder, Historian who remembers the old laws, Magistrate who feels the labor is being misused
COMPLICATIONS	The corvee is actually a legitimate demand, The corvee is being used to build some vital infrastructure, The corvee was supposed to be paid work
THINGS	The pay that was supposed to be given to the workers, Proof of the demand's falsification, Evidence of corrupt redirection of the corvee labor
PLACES	Sullen labor site, Empty fields, Tavern with knots of angry men

## CROP FAILURE

The community has recently suffered a failure of its crops. For those settlements that don't grow their own food, the surrounding villages that normally supply them have suffered bad harvests and cannot sell what is left. Crop failures can range from an unpleasant season of hardship to village-destroying famines.

ENEMIES	Desperate local who thinks the PCs have riches, Local convinced the PCs are to blame for stirring up curses, Local witch convinced that human sacrifice will propitiate the gods
FRIENDS	Local priest trying to help the villagers, Itinerant magistrate offering aid, Merchant trying to move in food to sell
COMPLICATIONS	The crop failure is caused by a curse, The crop failure is a contagious plant disease and what little food remains must be burnt before it spreads, The crops were destroyed in the field by enemies
THINGS	Hidden cache of grain, The settlement's chest of emergency funds
PLACES	Empty storehouse where people have plucked rice grains from between the boards, Barren market, Tavern that offers nothing but water

## CROP THEFT

Someone or something has stolen much of the settlement's food supply. In most cases, this will be a large amount of food to move, so whoever accomplished it must have access to wagons or numerous strong backs. Herding settlements might face rustlers, robbing their food on the hoof. In some cases the theft might have come under color of law, as some noble or magistrate empties their storehouses through some manipulation of the law.

ENEMIES	Grasping noble, Aspiring bandit warlord, Desperate leader of a famine-struck neighboring village
FRIENDS	Settlement leader in need of aid, Local merchant who needs crop surplus to sell, Plundered farmer
COMPLICATIONS	The thieves stole because they will starve otherwise, The food hasn't been preserved yet and will spoil soon if not reclaimed, The thieves took even the seed grain for the next crop
THINGS	Map to the food's hiding place, Proof that the requisition was unlawful, Newly-discovered food source
PLACES	Barren field, Crude infirmary filled with those injured in the raid, Quarrelsome courtroom

## DANGEROUSLY NAIVE

The locals are convinced of the safety and security of their settlement, despite clear evidence to the contrary. They may be a band of fresh colonists from the settled east, ignorant of the dangers of their new home. They might be converts to a charismatic religious leader who promises them peace and security under his god's protection. They may be blindly overconfident thanks to new weaponry and a blustering new militia leader. Whatever the cause, these men and women fail to respect the danger that surrounds them.

ENEMIES	Charismatic leader who brooks no doomsaying, Conniving land salesman, Amused bandit chieftain
FRIENDS	Wise old elder, Clear-sighted young local, Grizzled warrior who knows what's out there
COMPLICATIONS	The leader really does have supernatural powers, The evil is waiting to harvest the village, The villagers punish those who spread "fearful talk"
THINGS	Cache of weapons, Proof of the leader's folly, Evidence of the plans of the surrounding enemies
PLACES	Unguarded wall, Remote and undefended farm, Elaborate ceremony of praise for the leader's wisdom

## DWARVEN OUTCASTS

Some dwarves are forced from their homes by threats from Below or dissention within. The settlement has a group of these outcasts living within it, likely focused overwhelmingly on gold with which to earn safety in the afterlife. Some outcasts might be renegades from dwarven tradition, such as male smiths or female warriors. Others might just be so vicious that their clan could stand them no longer.

ENEMIES	Ferociously greedy outcaste robber, Dwarven Repentant cultist, Visiting dwarf who despises these outcasts
FRIENDS	Earnest young dwarven idealist, Dwarf seeking vengeance on those who cast him out, Dwarf craving gold
COMPLICATIONS	The outcasts were justified in their dissent, The outcasts hold true title to their former home, The outcasts are secretly a band of Repentants.
THINGS	Ancient clan relic, Location of a sizeable vein of gold, Token of hereditary leadership from their former clan
PLACES	War-scarred dwarven delve, Makeshift burrows in a hillside, Half-gilded dwarven tomb

## ETHNIC TENSIONS

Most of the varying ethnicities of the exiled have made peace with each other over the centuries since the Landing. Dissention is an open invitation to the predators of the Isles, and a community that cannot pull together rarely lasts long. Still, the fear of cultural dissolution and the loss of precious history goads some groups into resentment of others, while others grow embittered that their obvious superiority is not better recognized. Those settlements with strongly-distinct ethnic groups can fall to such squabbling disputes and resentments.

ENEMIES	Cultural supremacist who scorns outsiders, Enemy of the settlement who profits by the tension
FRIENDS	Local of a mixed ethnicity, Village elder trying to make peace, Zealot who thinks the PCs are on their side
COMPLICATIONS	The blame for the tension can really be placed largely on one side, One of the groups is the last known enclave of that ethnicity in the isles, One or both of the groups has repugnant traditions or customs
THINGS	Ancient history records of a Tide-lost nation, Precious relic of the old world
PLACES	Building elaborately adorned by ethnic decorations, Local shrine defiled by opponents, Multi-ethnic wedding rife with suppressed violence



## EXILED MAGISTRATE

Court politics can be an ugly business, and some magistrates or other nobles are invariably on the losing end. Officials who come out on the raw end of political entanglements are often exiled to remote borderland settlements, there to rusticate as overseers for nonexistent projects and judges for courts that are never called into session. Many burn with resentment at their lot, and will do whatever they must to return to “civilization”.

ENEMIES	Enemy who wants the magistrate dead and not just exiled, Resentful local displaced by the magistrate
FRIENDS	Magistrate who sees the PCs as a tool, Upright magistrate trying to do an impossible task, Sympathetic local
COMPLICATIONS	The magistrate is a hopeless bungler, The magistrate wants to remain in exile despite his family’s pleas, The settlement wants the magistrate to remain
THINGS	Exquisite poetry or art done in exile, Proof of the injustice of the exile, The magistrate’s uncollected pay
PLACES	Rustic country estate, Humble peasant hovel, Unworked project site

## FADED GLORY

The site was once a famous or powerful settlement, perhaps with the remains of grand buildings falling into disrepair. Something happened to cast down the glory, whether it was an incursion of Shou in years past, the changing of a river’s bed, or some noisome plague.

ENEMIES	Arrogant local lord who demands undue reverence, Greedy treasure-hunter, Lord seeking dominion over the site
FRIENDS	Curious antiquarian, Proud local son, Ambitious dreamer seeking to restore the settlement
COMPLICATIONS	Several outside powers seek to control the settlement, The locals are divided over looking to the past or seeking a better future, A sudden rush of outsiders pours in as some lost treasure is found
THINGS	Ancient treasure, Long-lost relics of some glorious event, The charter granting lordship of the site to a noble clan
PLACES	Decaying but still-splendid building, Huts in the shadow of a masonry hulk, Structure fashioned from strange ancient building material

## FENG SHUI

Something about the site of the settlement has potent geomantic significance. Strange things are more likely to occur in and around the settlement, and some sites might provoke exceptionally bad or good fortune for those who live there. Such places often attract the attention of magic-users and seekers after occult power, along with beasts that thrive in places of mystical power.

ENEMIES	Magical beast, Ambitious magic-user who wishes to rule the settlement, Mistrustful local convinced that the PCs have come to make trouble
FRIENDS	Curious magic-user from distant lands, “Benevolent” creature drawn by the power
COMPLICATIONS	The site’s energy is subtle but invariably malevolent and harmful, The local luck becomes worse and worse as the site is tapped by others, The geomantic significance is new after a recent earthquake or riverbed change
THINGS	Delicate geomantic measuring tools, Wealth unearthed by unsettled earth, The notes of a long-dead scholar
PLACES	Remarkably fortunate kitchen where everything always goes well, Fields left withered and feeble by the dark geomantic energy, Ritual site prepared in secret to draw on the local power

## FEUDING

Two or more families or affiliations have somehow managed to bitterly offend each other, and a feud has racked the settlement. Others are pressured to fall in with one side or the other, and the conflict can range in intensity from dirty looks and cuts direct to murder in the streets. Some feuds last for generations, with the original causes lost beneath generations of bloodshed and ambush.

ENEMIES	Patriarch of a feuding clan convinced that the PCs are with their enemies, Someone who mistakes a PC for a member of the enemy clan, Someone prospering from the violence and discord.
FRIENDS	Young scion of one house in love with someone in the other, Peacemaking elder, Ghost of a murder victim
COMPLICATIONS	A clan’s leadership now depends on the fighting to legitimate their rule, Clans that stop feuding will turn on the rest of the settlement, A cold tension is about to turn into a hot war if a recent crime is assigned to one clan
THINGS	Plunder taken from ambush victims, Stolen livestock, Proof that the original slight was a fabrication
PLACES	Graveyard with segregated monuments, Fortified homestead, Ambush site outside the village

## GRASPING NOBLE

Whether magistrate, chieftain, or some other person of note, a grasping noble seeks to seize control of the settlement against the wishes of its occupants. The noble might aim to steal the land through legal chicanery, or call in fabricated or real debts to take control. Some might simply resort to hired “bandits” who make life intolerable for the occupants.

ENEMIES	Ruthless lieutenant of the noble, The noble him or herself, A local secretly in the pay of the lord
FRIENDS	Plucky farmer, Resolute village elder, Scholar familiar with the real legal history of the land
COMPLICATIONS	The noble’s claim is actually legitimate in the eyes of the law, The settlement is divided over the question, The settlement is being run badly and the noble might be an improvement
THINGS	Proof of the settlement’s liberty, The hidden treasure the noble seeks to seize, Relic precious to the noble’s clan
PLACES	Raucous courtroom, Meeting-hall filled with worried villagers, Farm seized by the noble’s men

## HELL KING CULTISTS

The Hell Kings are practical demons, and those mortals who pledge their souls to their infernal service are often rewarded. The hard life of a border village can make such bargains tempting, with each petitioner deluding himself into thinking that he will be among the precious few spared from an eternity of damnation and torment. In some lands the worship of the Hell Kings is permitted, but in places ruled by Xian such service is considered treachery and a sure sign of fealty to the demonic Shogunate lords.

ENEMIES	Priest of the Hell Kings, Local desirous of a human sacrifice, Sorcerer gone half-mad with degenerate needs
FRIENDS	Secret traitor to the cult, Cleric of a nobler pantheon, Local enemy of the cult’s spread
COMPLICATIONS	The cultists try to restrict their depredations and demanded cruelties to outsiders, The settlement needs the Hell Kings’ magic to survive, The cultists hide their service in the guise of a local god
THINGS	Precious sacrificial offerings, Property from dead victims, Gifts granted the faithful by the Hell Kings
PLACES	Secret blood-stained shrine, Abandoned temple to a kinder god, Frantic communal rite of devotion

## HERETICAL STRIFE

A faction of believers in a local deity has become convinced of a strange and heretical body of doctrine. This innovation may involve sacrifices, stern austerities, or actual violence against non-believers. More traditional faithful now quarrel with the new zealots.

ENEMIES	Clerically-empowered heretic priest, Corrupt traditionalist priest, Cold-blooded opportunist seeking profit
FRIENDS	Moderate from one of the factions, Venerable local theologian, Local seeking help for a newly-zealous relative
COMPLICATIONS	The traditional faith is corrupted and enfeebled, The new faith is morally upright but very harsh, The new faith has seized much of the older tradition’s property
THINGS	Jeweled holy relics, Transcription of a new prophet’s visions, Magical artifact empowered by local faith
PLACES	Poisonously divided temple, Isolated shrine outside the settlement, Secret meeting of believers

## MALEVOLENT CREED

Elves seek spiritual fulfillment through “Creeds”, particular philosophical schools that provide structure and meaning to their lives. Most elven Creeds are relatively peaceful, but a few espouse beliefs that leave them poorly-suited to cooperating with others. The settlement is likely completely composed of followers of this Creed, because it’s unlikely they could get along with anyone else. Such Creeds espouse ideas such as elven superiority, amoral hedonism, brutal ambitions for conquest, or a soulless regard for non-believers as mere cattle.

ENEMIES	Megalomaniacal elven philosopher, Brainwashed zealot, Sinister being summoned up by the Creed
FRIENDS	Elven crusader of a different Creed, Aspiring reformer, Oppressed local minion
COMPLICATIONS	The Creed has degenerated from a nobler past, The Creed includes many who would like to leave it if they dared, The Creed has access to rites and formulae that strengthen true believers
THINGS	Plunder taken from outsiders, Relics of a more glorious past, Exquisite works of art
PLACES	Ceremonial chambers, Slave-built structures, Worn and decayed buildings inherited from the ancestors

## MASTER ARTISAN

Someone living in this settlement is possessed of remarkable skills at a particular craft or discipline. A master alchemist, a peerless armorer, a sage renowned throughout the land- this person can do something very useful for adventurers. The artisan may be dwelling on the borderlands in order to be closer to some vital raw material, or they might simply resent the constant importunings of others. Often their services cannot be bought, but must be earned by favors.

ENEMIES	Rival artist who wishes to use the PCs, Angry petitioner turned down by the master, Rapacious tax collector
FRIENDS	Apprentice of the master, Grateful past client, Supplier in need of collectors for a valuable material
COMPLICATIONS	The artisan is unbelievably obnoxious to work with, The artisan's abilities have faded with age or dissipation, The artisan has been forbidden to work for outsiders by the local lord
THINGS	Fruits of the artisan's craft, Payment offered for goods, Valuable raw materials
PLACES	Age-worn workshop, Bustling auction hall, Tavern serving aspiring customers

## MOTHERLODE

The locals have struck a vein of something precious, most often a vein of gold or a rich lode of gemstones. Mining settlements will be in an uproar, while less geologically-inclined sites will be struggling with a sudden influx of hopeful miners. Local officials will rush to ensure that the appropriate taxes are paid- and some that are rather less appropriate, if possible.

ENEMIES	Gold-crazed prospector, Greedy local lord, Local spirit guardian of the lode
FRIENDS	Cheerfully hopeful miner, Local merchant serving the newcomers, Mine foreman needing help with troubles
COMPLICATIONS	The lode is a hoax, The lode is a trap and has been salted to draw people into the reach of some dark power, The lode is intermingled with some dangerous material
THINGS	The lode itself, Refined materials, Land deeds for the lode site itself
PLACES	Grubby open pit mine, Despoiled stream poisoned by mine tailings, Tavern roaring with miners and their gold

## NATURAL FORTIFICATIONS

The site is located somewhere even more well-protected than is normal for a site of its kind. A farming village might be located in the bend of a fast-flowing and rocky-banked river on a raised spit of land. A dwarven delve might be burrowed into a needle of rock jutting amid steep crevasses. Whatever the specifics, the site has substantial military value in its location, and such advantages can sometimes make the locals a little impetuous about taking advantage of their good fortune.

ENEMIES	Ambitious settlement ruler, Advisor murmuring dreams of conquest, Agent of a suspicious neighboring site
FRIENDS	Peaceful captain of the local militia, Chief mason for the new walls, Visiting military observer
COMPLICATIONS	The settlement has been forbidden to fortify itself further but is under threat of attack, The settlement's leadership dreams of local dominance, A neighboring power wants to seize the site for its own fortress
THINGS	Valuables kept in a place of security, Money gathered to build new walls, A storehouse of supplies against a siege.
PLACES	A view overlooking the site's defenses, A guarded bridge over a moat or crevasse, Atop a high wall

## PACIFISTIC FOLK

For one reason or another, a significant number of people in the settlement refuse to fight. They recognize the dangers that surround the community but insist that a peaceful, pacifistic existence is preferable to resisting them with violence. Such pacifists are often motivated by charismatic religious leaders or an esoteric cultural demand. Whatever their motivation, they are a heavy burden to bear for a community surrounded by the dangers of the wild.

ENEMIES	Eager bandit chieftain, Zealous religious leader, Local leader embittered at the pacifists
FRIENDS	Earnest pacifist, Frustrated settlement leader, Scout warning of impending danger
COMPLICATIONS	The other locals have effectively enslaved the pacifists, The pacifists would be superb warriors if they chose to fight, The pacifists are allowed to fight only under very specific conditions
THINGS	Handicrafts fashioned by the pacifists, Earthly wealth they have eschewed, Taxes levied harshly on the pacifists
PLACES	Serene pacifist farmhold, Tavern full of locals angry at the "cowards", Shrine kept by religious leader

## POWERFUL LOCAL

One of the locals has unusual personal power. They may be a retired master swordsman, rusticating adept of wizardry, reclusive holy man, or former master thief. The locals may or may not recognize the prowess of this man or woman, but it is very likely that old enemies have taken an interest in the current doings of their former nemesis.

ENEMIES	Old foe seeking to even the score, Young gun looking to make a name for himself, Local leader embittered by the powerful person's refusal to do more for the settlement
FRIENDS	Servant of the powerful person, Local spouse or child of the person, Petitioner come to ask the hero for help
COMPLICATIONS	The hero's abilities have crumbled since retirement, The hero is embittered and declines to help others, The hero feels too much self-doubt to act at a time of need
THINGS	Trophies gathered by the hero, Money gathered to try to hire him, Valuables brought by old enemies
PLACES	Rustic country house decorated with mementos, Town meeting of pleading locals, Grave site of the hero's spouse

## PRE-EXILE SITE

This site has existed here long before the exile that brought the refugee fleet to the Isles. Some such sites date back thousands of years, long before human record of the Isles, while others are simply the crumbled remains of some foolish colony or over-ambitious explorer's dream of their own private kingdom. The buildings remain sturdy enough to invite occupation, but more than buildings might still remain.

ENEMIES	A beast long-buried, A local leader wishing to conceal an ancient treasure, Outsider claiming rule of the site
FRIENDS	Curious archaeologist, Avid treasure-hunter, Local in need of help in dealing with a local danger
COMPLICATIONS	Portions of the site are taboo, An outside power claims legal rights to the site, A tax collector vigilantly collects extortionate taxes on any wealth acquired from the ruins.
THINGS	Buried treasure, Ancient relics that have modern use, Tome of forgotten lore in an alien tongue
PLACES	Cyclopean stone structures, Farm field amid strange stones, Human household in a building built for others

## RAIDERS

A nearby ruin provides a base for raiders that scourge the community. The band is not strong enough to take the settlement by storm, but they can make life miserable for the locals. A referee may wish to consult the ruin site section to determine what kind of raiders torment the settlement and the nature of their base of operations.

ENEMIES	Raider chieftain, Bandit taking advantage of the chaos caused by the raiders, Local leader preaching appeasement
FRIENDS	Local militia commander, Escaped raider slave, Reformed bandit that settled in the site
COMPLICATIONS	The raiders are actually exiles from the community, The raiders are secretly in the pay of a rival local leader, The raiders were originally greatly wronged by the locals
THINGS	Raider plunder, Treasure buried to keep the raiders from getting it, Bribes to encourage the raiders to depart
PLACES	The ruins from which the raiders operate, Burnt farmstead, Infirmary with victims of the raids

## REBELS

Some members of the community are rebels against the authority that claims rule over them. Whether Xianese noble or dwarven lord, these rebels denounce their suzerain as a tyrant and a brute, and work to overthrow him with varying degrees of directness. The rest of the community may or may not agree with the rebels, but they likely have at least some measure of sympathy for them or else they would soon be uncovered to agents of the lord.

ENEMIES	Ruthless agent of the lord, Pitiless rebel leader who will sacrifice innocents for the cause, Greedy traitor to a cause
FRIENDS	Wretched peasant caught between warring sides, Righteous official seeking the truth of matters, Local leader seeking freedom from both rebels and lord
COMPLICATIONS	The lord is just and honorable despite the rebels' accusations, The rebels are in cooperation with bandits in the nearby wilds, The rebels are actually a covert cult in service to the Tide or the Hell Kings.
THINGS	Plundered tax collection money, A trophy stolen from a noble's official, Proof of the noble's lawless demands
PLACES	Hidden camp in the wilds, Interrogation chamber in the settlement, Tavern full of low mutterings

## RECURRING DISEASE

The land the settlement occupies is not good, and bad air or unfortunate feng shui has left the inhabitants prey to some recurring outbreak of disease. Leprosy, the Pale Cough, dengue fever, malaria, or some other insistent illness often strikes the occupants. Many who still live there do so because it's the only land nearby that no one is trying to take from them. Others might linger for the sake of rich soil or some precious local resource. Merchants tend to come, trade, and go quickly.

ENEMIES	Villager resentful of healthy outsiders, Demented scholar convinced he can cure the sickness with sufficient 'experiments', Cruel lord who forces the occupants to remain and work the land for him
FRIENDS	Local healer seeking help, Sick local needing aid for his family, Brave and curious physician investigating the area
COMPLICATIONS	The sickness comes from a lingering curse due to some long-lost crime gone unrevealed, Visitors to the settlement are shunned by others who know of the trip, The sickness lies dormant for a long while before erupting suddenly
THINGS	A cure for the illness, A scholar's notes on how to remedy the bad air, Funerary goods for the dead
PLACES	Pest-house full of the ill, Market where business is conducted at arm's length, Fields full of thin laborers

## RELIGIOUS TENSIONS

While most inhabitants of the Sunset Isles tend to have a tepid regard for religion, the latter days have driven some into desperate zealotry- and some faiths have always had difficulty in getting along with their neighbors. This settlement is plagued by such a division, perhaps between two rival faiths, perhaps between believers and a group of Godless demihumans. Hard words come often, and things may yet come to open violence.

ENEMIES	Bitter zealot, Fanatic convinced the PCs are angering the god, Cold-blooded priest who means to use the PCs
FRIENDS	Temperate-minded local, Frustrated village elder, Priest attempting to contain his flock's bigotry
COMPLICATIONS	The two faiths both claim the same temple in the settlement, The one faith forbids what the other requires, The quarrel's leading figures are actually unbelievers interested only in profit
THINGS	Religious relic precious to one or both factions, Jeweled idol of a deity, List of "apostates" to be punished
PLACES	Ranting religious meeting, Aftermath of a riot, Schoolhouse where students are taught the divine truth

## RICH LAND

The soil around this settlement is rich and fertile, and the crops come easily. Even settlements not normally dedicated to agriculture can expect to have peasants relocating to work the land. Of course, such agricultural wealth brings its own share of attention.

ENEMIES	Rapacious leader of a neighboring settlement, Merchant trying to gain monopoly rights on local grain, Bandit chieftain looking for supplies
FRIENDS	Ambitious young farmer, Priest of a fertility deity, Elder attempting to defend the site's legal claim to the land
COMPLICATIONS	The farming is rapidly ruining the land, The fertility comes from dark sacrifices, The fertility comes from jealously guarded agricultural techniques
THINGS	This year's harvest, Deed to the land, Ornate idol of the local fertility deity
PLACES	Luxuriantly ripe fields, Village feast, Bustling market day

## SECRET RECIPE

The locals build or brew something that cannot be found elsewhere, a native product that is in some way valuable or useful to an adventurer. Exquisite liquors, rare medicines, superb armaments, or magically-useful ingredients are all possibilities.

ENEMIES	Outsider seeking to steal the secret recipe, Competitor merchant seeking to put them out of business, Tax collector seeking to squeeze further exactions
FRIENDS	Master artisan in need of ingredients, Curious scholar seeking the secret, Young crafter struggling to set up a shop
COMPLICATIONS	The goods are dangerous or toxic to the users, The goods require some morally-dubious ingredient, The true source of the goods is actually some malevolent group using the site as a front
THINGS	The precious good itself, Payment for a shipment, Valuable raw ingredients
PLACES	Hushed workshop, Hard-bargaining auction hall, Hidden glen where the vital ingredient is grown

## SHOU BLOOD

The Shou leave more than ashes in the wake of their raids. Many such children are left to die of exposure, but this settlement has a substantial population of Shou-blooded occupants. In some villages, these people may be little more than slaves, mistreated and used for hard labor. In others, they are accepted equals, and in some they form almost the whole of the population. Outsiders fear and distrust such villages, rumoring them dens of terrible crimes. In truth, however, Tide Cults never seem to form in any settlement with a significant number of Shou-blooded occupants.

ENEMIES	Zealous racial purist, Angry neighbor blaming the Shou-blooded for his troubles, Shou chieftain who loathes the “impure mongrels” of the settlement
FRIENDS	Naive Shou-blooded local, Obstinate visionary of racial peace, Parent of a Shou-blooded child
COMPLICATIONS	A local agitator is trying to provoke strife, A local Shou tribe is actually willing to deal peacefully with the settlement, Neighbors accuse the locals of participating in Shou raids
THINGS	Trophy taken from raiders, Lineage tablets proving a Shou-blood is a noble heir, Potent Shou fetish
PLACES	Hardscrabble farmstead, Market with segregated stalls, Merchant’s camp outside the settlement

## SINISTER ALLIANCE

The locals have struck a secret bargain with some malevolent power. Whether bandit warlord, open-minded Shou warchief, Tide Cult leader, foul necromancer, or some other brand of villain, the settlement has agreed to cooperate with their intentions in exchange for aid and plunder. Some settlements do so out of desperation. Others agree simply out of greed and indifference to the lives of outsiders.

ENEMIES	Elder who fears the secret will come out, Agent of the dark power, Local who sees the PCs as convenient marks
FRIENDS	Investigating magistrate, Conscience-wracked local, Native of neighboring settlement looking for answers
COMPLICATIONS	The settlement was forced to cooperate or be destroyed, Most of the locals don’t know about the pact, A powerful noble is covering for the settlement
THINGS	Plunder taken from victims, Valuable trophy of the dark power, Proof of the alliance
PLACES	Secret meeting place outside the settlement, Hidden prison for kidnap victims, Concealed shrine to dark powers

## TIDE CULT

The Tide infects the minds of some weak or desperate enough to imagine it a saviour. It promises everything its prey could desire, and rewards them with both power and delusion. Some settlements become plagued with such dreamers, and fall under their dark sway.

ENEMIES	Tide priest, Deluded local convinced the PCs must die as sacrifices, Corrupt local lord that profits from the cult
FRIENDS	Elder in desperate need of help, Tidehunter from the city, Outsider seeking a vanished friend
COMPLICATIONS	The cult masks itself as a harmless faith, The cult is needed for the settlement to survive, The cult has allies in the local nobles
THINGS	Offerings to the Tide, Wealth taken from victims, Treasures summoned from the red mist
PLACES	Mist-wreathed sacrificial site, Defiled temple, Houses full of sleepers

## TOXIC ENVIRONMENT

The settlement is located on poisoned ground, prey to some environmental toxin that leaves the residents sickly and short-lived. It may be the product of foul gases that seep up from volcanic fissures or steaming marshes, or it might be the accumulated tailings of a mining enterprise leaching into the water. It may even be some exceptionally bad feng shui filling the settlement with poisonous magical emanations.

ENEMIES	Rapacious mine owner, Ruthless noble demanding the locals work the land, Careless sorcerer
FRIENDS	Sickly local in need of help, Eager engineer with a way to clean the land, Assassin wanting concentrated toxins
COMPLICATIONS	The poison is inextricably tied to the settlement’s livelihood, The poison can be refined into something precious, The poison gives unusual abilities to its victims
THINGS	A cure for the toxin, A container of refined poison, Geomantically powerful field marker
PLACES	A site of a toxin eruption, House full of sickly residents, Work-site amid poisoned fields

## TYRANNICAL LEADER

Some brutal master lords over the settlement, crushing any hint of resistance and demanding extravagant service from the locals. Such overlords rarely take well to troublesome strangers, but sometimes find them useful for enforcing their will on the more recalcitrant residents. Most such leaders have at least some thin veneer of legitimacy, leaving their victims to fear not only their own retaliation, but the consequences of defying their masters.

ENEMIES	Corrupt magistrate, Brutal headman, Jungle-crazed military officer
FRIENDS	Secretive rebel, Embittered victim, Rival tyrant
COMPLICATIONS	The tyrant's skills or prowess are needed for the settlement to survive, The tyrant is all that's holding off an even worse master, The rebel leader plots to replace the tyrant
THINGS	List of rebels, Extorted plunder, Magical artifact the tyrant uses to keep control
PLACES	Gallows hill, Hushed taproom, Opulent estate

## UNCERTAIN TITLE

The settlement's occupants have a less certain claim on their land than they would like. If in the wilderness, a powerful lord or local chieftain claims the land as their property. If closer to civilization, a complex web of legal suits might make their tenancy uncertain. Impatient landowners might send thugs to 'encourage' the occupants to move.

ENEMIES	Impatient merchant, Ambitious noble, Tribal chieftain
FRIENDS	Young farmer striving to make a farmstead, Upright magistrate, Start-up merchant trying to begin a business
COMPLICATIONS	The outsider really does have legal title to the land, The outsider doesn't want the land, but instead wants what's beneath it, The outsider is being pressured by a more nefarious power to get the land- or else
THINGS	Title deed, Land payment, Map proving the settler's case
PLACES	Tumbled boundary stone, Fortified farmhouse, Angry courtroom

## WANTED OUTLAW

Some nefarious outlaw has made his home in or near the settlement, and the locals feel obligated to protect him for some reason. It may be that he's a local Robin Hood to the poor, or that they fear the retaliation of his men, or the magistrate who seeks to have him arrested is especially hated. Outsiders are likely to face suspicions of bounty hunting.

ENEMIES	The outlaw himself, The settlement's headman, Corrupt noble in alliance with the outlaw
FRIENDS	Investigating magistrate, Secret village informer, Embittered former minion of the outlaw
COMPLICATIONS	The outlaw is actually innocent, The outlaw is singled out for his attacks on a corrupt noble, The outlaw is an exiled nobleman
THINGS	The outlaw's plunder, The bounty on his head, Map to the outlaw's buried treasure
PLACES	Forest glade, Hidden room, Mustering-ground for pursuing guardsmen

## XENOPHOBIA

The locals fear and mistrust outsiders. This may be due to reclusive religious principles, an ethnocentric pride in their heritage, or the simple fact that outsiders have repeatedly victimized them. Strangers are 'encouraged' to move along, and services are offered only grudgingly. It may be possible to win their trust in time, but they have been primed to think the worst of outsiders.

ENEMIES	Village headman, Town tough, Suspicious wise woman
FRIENDS	Curious youth, Fellow stranger in town, Local who returned after years away
COMPLICATIONS	The outlaw is actually innocent, The outlaw is singled out for his attacks on a corrupt noble, The outlaw is an exiled nobleman
THINGS	The outlaw's plunder, The bounty on his head, Map to the outlaw's buried treasure
PLACES	Forest glade, Hidden room, Mustering-ground for pursuing guardsmen

## An Example Borderland Site

The referee has a spare half-hour one afternoon and decides that it would be useful to have a spare borderland settlement in his campaign folder, just to be sure of having something available to drop in if the players suddenly decide to hare off into the Westmark. He can't necessarily predict the kind of terrain the settlement will be located in, so it should be the sort of site that he can plant almost anywhere.

The first step is to determine the kind of settlement it will be. Having no preferences, the referee rolls 1d10 and comes up with "Country Estate". Evidently, it's a remote, fortified manor owned by a rich merchant or powerful noble.

With that established, the referee decides to roll twice on the site tags table to see what qualities make this manor all that interesting to adventurers. The results are "Faded Glory" and "Hell King Cultists". Well, now. It looks like this humble country seat may not be the safest waystation for the PCs.

The referee turns to the site tag list and reads over the elements associated with each tag. After some reflection, he decides that the country seat won't seem to be dangerous at first glance. Whatever's going on at the estate is subtle enough that wayfarers won't be instantly attacked as potential sacrifices.

Since the country manor is a little like a noble court, he rolls on the Court Site tables to get the roles of the three most important people at the estate. According to the dice, the three big names there are the Noble, the Spouse, and the Noble's Child. A roll on the random NPC tables in the back of the book shows that the Noble is a woman and the Child is a daughter. Recourse to the random name tables give their names as the noble Daifu Tanaka Rei, her husband Tanaka Hengest, and their daughter, Tanaka Maiko.

Now the referee looks back at the tags and decides to start creating adventure hooks. The Tanaka family was once a trusted Kueh samurai clan, one faithful to their service to the Mandarin of Xian. One hundred years ago, however, one of their ancestors committed a great treachery on behalf of the Shogun. The ancestor was executed and his family was permanently exiled from the city, forced to dwell on a remote country estate. Their scions were barred from returning until they had performed a service of suitable expiation- yet their enemies delighted in spoiling their every attempt to win the Mandarin's forgiveness.

Over the decades, their hopes guttered and died. Piece by piece, the family lands were sold in order to pay for the bribes necessary to have each new generation elevated to the scholar-nobility. Without such recurring ennoblement, the laws of the city would have the Tanakas as mere commoners within two generations. Tanaka Rei's grandmother spent the last of their money. Tanaka Rei's mother made bargains she should not have sealed.

Tanaka Rei is wed to a beast of a man, one of the peasants that serve the country estate. She has been damned from girlhood, and her husband was chosen for his biddable and obedient nature. He has willingly participated in the infernal rites of the Hell Kings. Tanaka Maiko knows little of the affair, having been raised on the estate and isolated from the outside world and its customs. If her mother instructed her to cooperate in the rituals, she would almost certainly obey. She is a good-hearted and trusting girl, and adept with a huntswoman's bow, but she trusts her mother too much.

Her mother is looking for alternatives, though she dares not admit this even to herself. If she can scrape together the five thousand gold koku her contacts require to arrange for Maiko's ennoblement, she will not be forced to bring her into the family faith and join her to her mother's damnation. The Hell Kings will doubtless torment her soul spectacularly for this treachery in the world to come, but she loves her daughter dearly, and wants to save her from the choice she made.

With this backstory in mind, the referee decides that Daifu Rei will impress the PCs as a greedy, driven woman with an insatiable hunger for gold. She'll give them leads on likely ruins and possibly even use her infernal contacts to set up opportunities for the PCs. All she will demand for her help is a cut of the money. She might even come to be an ally of sorts to the PCs, as long as they seem to be a useful tool for getting her daughter ennobled.

Of course, if the PCs come to realize just what sort of woman she is, things may get messy. The referee pulls the statistics for a Red Jade Templar from the Hell King Cultist section of the ruin encounter to use for Tanaka Hengest's statistics, and an Infernal Priest for Tanaka Rei. Their daughter Maiko has the abilities of a level 1 thief. The estate has a dozen ordinary men-at-arms, some of which are privy to the truth of matters, and two dozen peasants who know little except that it is very unhealthy to inquire after private family business. Should the PCs slay the cultists and plunder the estate, the referee decides that only about 1,000 gold pieces worth of coinage and portable valuables will be found; if Tanaka Rei were a rich noblewoman, she wouldn't have ended up as she did.



# CITY SITES

Building a city site is simple in some ways. A city is a city, after all, and a referee isn't often faced with a wild multiplicity of forms. By the same token, however, it can sometimes be a little more difficult to present PCs with immediate adventure opportunities when they're so closely enfolded in the civilized surroundings of a large human city. Direct and violent solutions aren't always practical in a city, and the kind of social maneuvering that is often necessary can be difficult for players who aren't completely confident in their grasp of the setting and its social mores.

When running adventures in a city site, don't make this unfamiliarity a bigger handicap than it has to be. If the players make some mildly erroneous assumption about how the city works, don't contradict it unless it's important to the adventure. Let it ride, play along with it, and note it down in the campaign folder on the Places sheet for the city. Every time you correct a player about the setting, you emphasize both their ignorance and the setting's strangeness. Too much of it and it tends to spoil the sense of immersion in the game and turns the setting into a puzzle to be solved rather than a context to be enjoyed.

The four great cities of the Isles are Xian, Hohnberg, Tien Lung, and Kitaminato, but there is no reason that these guidelines can't be used to create somewhat lesser towns. Aside from the great cities of Ektau, there's also no telling what awaits brave explorers on the storm-wracked isles of the central archipelago, or what hidden jewels might be found in the heart of the Shou-infested western lands.

## Building the Physical City

Cities in the Sunset Isles are small by the standards of the modern world. Xian itself has no more than 12,000 people within its walls, and the other major cities of Ektau are even smaller. Still, these teeming thousands make up the largest and most sophisticated settlements on the island, and they support a society of far more wealth than is found in the hardscrabble borderlands.

If you prefer a genuine megalopolis for your adventures, you can multiply the populations in the Isles by a factor of 10. The existing numbers were chosen based on a realistic and plausible reading of how many peasants and city folk could be supported by the land and techniques available to the natives of Ektau. Unless your players are hard-core realism fiends who count hexes and calculate available farmland, they're unlikely to even notice the difference.

Cities in the Isles are invariably walled. The history of violence is too recent and too pressing for any polity to feel comfortable without thick stone between them and the dangerous outside world. Even country villas and farming villages usually have at least a log palisade as a defense.

Cities are often broken up into specific districts and neighborhoods, often divided by internal walls. Originally, these measures were enacted to improve the city's fortifications and make it harder for an invader who breaches the walls or takes a gate to spread out through the city. In modern days, it tends to give each district its



own distinct culture and flavor, with like professions, social ranks, and ethnicities often clustering together.

Cities are colorful. The Imperials who arrived in the exile loved brightly-colored buildings and ornaments, and brilliant painted hues and vivid tilework are often present on structures. This is most pronounced in Xian, while Hohnberg tends to be the most subdued city in its coloring, with gray granite buildings unadorned and plain. Tien Lung favors arcane symbols and auspicious seals painted over its buildings and vulgar displays of wealth and ostentation in its structures. Kitaminato enjoys impeccably refined taste and subtle interplays of pastels and natural colors, a beautiful veneer over the darkness within.

Cities usually have rivers flowing through them, or some other large-scale source of water for drinking and industry. In Xian, this is the Sungari coming down from the northern hills. In Hohnberg, this is the Ems that flows down from the Godbarrows to the west. Tien Lung is watered by the Black River, tainted dark by the black hill soil and traces of gleaming godbone. Most natives get their drinking water from wells when they can, though some of the Stitched Path sorcerers of the city imagine that they augment their powers by drinking the river's dark water. Kitaminato is supplied by deep wells into a large underground aquifer and a few smaller streams coming down from the central hills of the isthmus.

Cities stink. Xian and Hohnberg have good sewer systems but the masses of people in close proximity and the fish processing and industrial work inside the walls can't help but add a particular piscine miasma to the air. Kitaminato is more aggressive about maintaining clean air, though its sewer systems are said to be infested with terrible things spawned from demonic sires. Tien Lung has the most desultory systems for disposing of waste, and their streets are often rancid in the worst parts of the city, where the serfs and foreigners live.

## Building the Social City

Cities have contours of legal authority. It's unfortunately likely that the PCs are going to eventually cross the law in a city, or else deal with others who have. You'll want to have some idea of how the local city watch operates and what sort of process an offender is likely to face. Adventurers who commit relatively minor crimes can expect to be put to "public service" in dealing with some dangerous task rather than being fined or beaten. Serious crimes might require severe fines in conjunction with the completion of some important and potentially lethal mission for the city. *Geas* or *Quest* spells might be involved for powerful adventurers, or the simple threat of a noose for those who do not merit the employment of such impressive magic. Characters can always skip out on these jobs, but they'd better not be caught in that polity's territory again.

Cities have conflicts between professions, classes, ethnicities, and religions. The refugees of the exile fleet have been thrown together for three centuries, and in that time many of the sharp edges and disagreements between peoples have been ground down by the press of necessity. Every so often, however, some group sparks up in a fit of anger or resentment, and the consequences can be ugly. The increasing costs of food and the rising danger of the Shou, the Hell Kings, and the resurgent Tide have all put people on edge, and disputes that might have been glossed over a few decades ago can now birth torch-bearing mobs.

Novice adventurers are very much members of the city's underclass. They're not quite as disreputable as actual criminals, but nobles and the wealthy are unlikely to wish to be seen socializing with them, even if they often find use for their special talents. After adventurers have accomplished suitably impressive feats of arms in service to the people of the Isles, they might expect to be toasted by the elite, and possibly even offered titles of their own. The societies of the Isles are too pressed by outside threats to ignore the value of a proven hero, and dreams of a daifu's jade ornaments often drive on gutter orphans and peasant youths in their often-fatal pursuit of glory.

## Building the Adventurer's City

Details of a city's structure and lines of authority are useful in order to handle the kind of on-the-spot schemes that PCs often develop, but finding interest in a city often requires a more active set of events to engage the PCs. Cities can have site tags much as borderland settlements can, and they can be used in much the same way. Some tags relate to persistent features of a city, such as a Magical School, or Ruins Beneath, while others involve immediate situations that

1D20	CITY SITE TAGS
1	<i>Corrupt Officials</i>
2	<i>Crackdown</i>
3	<i>Enemy Polity</i>
4	<i>Ethnic Unrest</i>
5	<i>Forced Evictions</i>
6	<i>Geomantic Flaw</i>
7	<i>Hell Cult</i>
8	<i>Important Temple</i>
9	<i>Incompetent Ruler</i>
10	<i>Magical School</i>
11	<i>Malignant Slum</i>
12	<i>Pirates</i>
13	<i>Plague</i>
14	<i>Precarious Food Supply</i>
15	<i>Rival Families</i>
16	<i>Ruins Beneath</i>
17	<i>Slave Uprising</i>
18	<i>Tide Cult</i>
19	<i>Tong War</i>
20	<i>Zealous Builder</i>

the city needs to resolve, such as Ethnic Unrest or a Slave Uprising. Transient tags will tend to change based on the progress of events and the interference of the PCs.

You shouldn't feel obligated to detail the adventure hooks of an entire city at once. It's perfectly acceptable to simply scratch down the particulars of just one district or neighborhood, and bill the others as requiring guard passes for foreign visitors that will take a while to get. If the players conceive of a burning urge to visit one of these other neighborhoods, you can simply generate it for the next session. As always, be parsimonious with your effort, and don't sweat over making what you don't expect to need in the near future.

Site tags for a city can also be restricted to specific neighborhoods, and reflect the particular traits or events of a given district rather than the city as a whole. You can also dragoon many of the borderlands site tags into service, simply changing the contexts to apply to a city rather than a border settlement.

As in any use of site tags, you should take care to make the events accessible to the players. You should have at least one rumor or event to serve as a hook for the tags, and you should be ready to introduce them into other events if it seems reasonable that they should be involved. A developed tag that the PCs can neither influence nor involve themselves in is not a terribly useful asset to a sandbox referee.

## City Site Tags

### CORRUPT OFFICIALS

Corrupt city officials are targeting a friend or associate of the PCs, or a business that is important to their current activities. The associate might be squeezed for protection money, framed up for a crime in order to expropriate their belongings, or targeted for “corrective adjustment” because of a personal grudge. If nothing is done to help them, the corrupt official will very likely prevail.

ENEMIES	Crooked city watch captain, Corrupt magistrate, Sinister court wizard
FRIENDS	Relative of a PC, Only seller of a vital good or service, Mentor of a PC
COMPLICATIONS	Both official and victim are corrupt, A clean local magistrate wants the PCs to gather information for him, The corrupt official offers the victim's goods or services at a cheaper rate
THINGS	Bribe money, Evidence of corruption, Remains of the last person to tell the official "No".
PLACES	Smoke-filled room, Ransacked shop, Sickroom with badly-beaten victim

### CRACKDOWN

The locals have had enough of lawless misbehavior and felonious outsiders. Troublemakers like adventurers are obliged to watch their behavior scrupulously lest eagle-eyed citizens report them for breaking one of a hundred petty regulations. Optionally, the locals might happen to have incurred some special loathing for a demihuman race or human ethnicity because of recent events, and persecute PCs of that variety for the sins of others.

ENEMIES	Zealous watch captain, Local snoop, Ranting demagogue blaming "outsiders".
FRIENDS	Fellow outsider trapped in the city, Local thieves' guild chief, Tong being persecuted by wealthy do-gooders
COMPLICATIONS	The locals are getting frustrated with all the new enforcement too, The numerous new petty regulations are actually part of a huge and sinister ritual, The new legalism is part of a zealous religious revival.
THINGS	A universal pardon for crimes committed, Confiscated goods, Contraband forbidden by the new laws
PLACES	Crowded jail cell, Hushed plaza where no one dares say anything, Mass meeting denouncing foreign troublemakers

### ENEMY POLITY

The city has a number of active agents of an enemy polity. Their foe may or may not be in open warfare with them, but the bad blood is deep enough to provoke constant low-level espionage activities. On Ektau, there's fierce enmity between Xian and the Shogunate, while no polity has better than frosty relationships with Tien Lung. Hohnberg has a strong detestation of both the Shogunate and Tien Lung, while the dwarven underhome of Altgrimmr is friendly with Hohnberg and despises the slavers of Tien Lung and the Shogunate.

ENEMIES	A secret agent of the rival, A zealous investigator, A murderous saboteur
FRIENDS	Agent who wishes to defect, Local watch captain, Local victimized by enemy agents
COMPLICATIONS	Enemy agents strike at a secret program that really is detestable and vile. An old ally of the PCs is an agent. An old ally of the PCs is framed as an agent.
THINGS	Stolen ciphers, Bribe money for local officials, Proof of a noble's treacherous allegiance
PLACES	Darkened alleyway, Top-secret project's meeting room, Mob roused by accusations of treachery

### ETHNIC UNREST

Most ethnicities get along peacefully on Ektau, and intermarriage is common in most towns and cities. Every so often, however, the hot sparks of resentment or imagined offense light off a short, sharp bout of ethnic unrest. Imperials often get the worst of this. Some agitators complain that the heirs of the Ninefold Celestial Empire are plotting to intentionally erase the remaining cultures that survived the Red Tide, and that violent action is necessary to maintain the “pure culture” of their ancestors.

ENEMIES	Racist demagogue, Cold-blooded opportunist, Pure culture zealot
FRIENDS	Young inter-ethnic married couple, Magistrate trying to keep the peace, Vigilante defenders
COMPLICATIONS	The local magistrate ignores minor crimes against an unpopular group, The unrest is being driven by Hell Cultists, The unrest is being manufactured by agitators who plan to profit from the ensuing pogroms
THINGS	Relic of earlier days of friendship, Land registry proving the local claims, Treasured cultural artifact
PLACES	Aggressively mono-ethnic tavern, Plaza between two ethnic neighborhoods, Gate of a walled ghetto

## FORCED EVICTIONS

Some locals are planted on valuable land, either because it's the last scrap of territory inside the walls that hasn't been extensively developed, or because it has access to good water, or perhaps it lies on some auspicious geomantic nexus. Others want them gone, and they're ready to use both fair means and foul to evict the troublesome locals.

ENEMIES	Heartless merchant, Arcanist needing a particular site, Dweller beneath the streets
FRIENDS	Poor local merchant, Family that has lived there for time out of mind, Relative of the PCs
COMPLICATIONS	The PCs own land there, The locals are holding down some dark evil, Treasure is buried on the land
THINGS	Title deed to the land, Precious geomantic crystal, Lost land payment
PLACES	Ancestral home, Ruined house, Stretch of newly-barren land

## GEOMANTIC FLAW

The city or some neighborhood within it is located on a geographically appealing location- but one that is tainted with dark geomantic forces. Something about the particular arrangement of terrain or some buried artifacts of darkness has cast a gloom of misfortune and dark magic upon the place, leaving it prone to undead infestations, remarkable bad luck, and sour manifestations of magic. It may be the flaw is a recent event caused by some evil sorcery or a dark cult fouling the geomantic environment with their rites.

ENEMIES	Malevolent arcanist, Magic-spawned monster, Cultist of dark powers
FRIENDS	Curious scholar, Desperate local, Former ally of the PCs who has accidentally bought land there
COMPLICATIONS	Magic holds down an ancient peril, A lizardfolk temple lies beneath the earth, Undead rampage in the streets
THINGS	Crystallized shards of raw geomantic power, Belongings of dead locals, Mundane items transmuted to crystal
PLACES	Courtyard of remarkable misfortune, Crack in the earth, Cave blackened and rotted with sour magic

## HELL CULT

Cults devoted to the Hell Kings worship openly in cities such as Tien Lung, but it is in the Shogunate that the infernal masters are strongest. There they are the subject of the only permissible faith, and all outsiders must keep their gods hidden or suffer for it. In Xian and Hohnberg such worship is considered an open declaration of disloyalty to the state, but that does not prevent wealthy or desperate people from meeting in hidden rooms to offer worship and adoration to gods that promise them good things in this world and forbearance in the life to come. Even small Hell Cults often have at least one member blessed with clerical powers, for the lords of Hell are generous in their blessings to those greedy or needful enough to worship them.

ENEMIES	Hell Cult priest, Deluded local convinced that only the cult can help him, Zealot convinced the PCs are cultists
FRIENDS	Renegade cult member seeking redemption, Xianese inquisitor, Local seeking help for a relative
COMPLICATIONS	The local magistrate belongs to the cult, The cult's outer circle is disguised as an innocuous faith, The cult will soon be strong enough to summon a lesser infernal demon
THINGS	Jeweled religious implements, Hell-granted gold, Wealth offered by worshippers
PLACES	Hidden ritual chamber, Salon of decadent pleasures, Deathbed of a sick and terrified cultist

## IMPORTANT TEMPLE

There is a powerful temple in the city or neighborhood, and the locals are obliged to respect the wishes of its high clergy. Most such temples have powerful clerical magic available to them, and the nobility and the wealthy are reluctant to anger them and lose access to the life-saving miracles they offer. Some of these temples become little more than ornate extortion outfits, ruthlessly oppressing the common folk while the powerful avert their eyes. Others become problematic to the nobility as they press for requirements or prohibitions appealing to their faith.

ENEMIES	Tyrannical high priest, Zealous sectarian, Noble who wants to make sure no one else profits from temple magic
FRIENDS	Benevolent cleric, Worried lay worshipper, Local who owes the temple a debt
COMPLICATIONS	The temple has only mundane power and no true clerics, The temple has recently suffered a schism in its ranks, The temple is preparing to revolt against the city authorities
THINGS	Holy relic, Temple offerings, Lost tome of potent clerical prayers
PLACES	Temple courtyard, Chamber filled with sick petitioners, Private chapel for the use of wealthy patrons

## INCOMPETENT RULER

The ruler of the city or the local magistrate is hopelessly incompetent. Few people rise to high station in the Isles without possessing some rudiments of intelligence, but the ruler's bad judgment, addiction to pleasure, obligation to other masters, or sheer relentless bad luck is driving the city or neighborhood into near revolt.

ENEMIES	The leader's remaining allies, An outside agent who wants to take advantage of the folly, An enraged local noble
FRIENDS	Last victim of the ruler's bungling, City patriot seeking improvement, Magistrate sent to investigate
COMPLICATIONS	The incompetence isn't really the ruler's fault, The ruler is as great a military leader as he is incompetent as a civic one, The leader is a puppet for sinister masters
THINGS	Regalia of leadership, Written proof of the ruler's unfitness, Ruler's vast store of private wealth
PLACES	Chaotic audience chamber, Overstuffed seraglio, Important civic ritual that the ruler fails to attend

## MAGICAL SCHOOL

Schools of the arcane arts are not common on Ektau, but neither are they unknown. Particularly in Xian, the Imperial heritage of sorcery has been maintained as best as the harsh conditions of the Isles allow, and several small magical academies with one or two dozen students can be found sprinkled throughout the neighborhoods. The famed Academy of Refulgent Wisdom in Tien Lung actually rules the city, while smaller market towns and isolated lyceums in the countryside teach small handfuls of talented students the arts that will make them famous or make them damned- and occasionally both.

ENEMIES	Head of a rival school, Headmaster conducting forbidden research, Megalomaniacal young prodigy
FRIENDS	Concerned new instructor, Adventurer-idolizing student, Scholar wanting "field researcher" help
COMPLICATIONS	The school was once far more powerful and is filled with half-sour old magics, The local magistrate has a grudge against the school for expelling his son, The school has a bad reputation from a student turned necromancer
THINGS	Tome of forbidden lore, Questions for the final examination, Powerful artifact long since forgotten
PLACES	Hushed classroom, Ozone-scented practice chamber, Austere dormitory

## MALIGNANT SLUM

Every city has its poor quarters, but most ordinary urban slums are still inhabited by hard-working men and women who keep a certain order amid the squalor and who would bristle at being thought in any way less civilized than their high-quarter neighbors. That is not the case here. This slum is a cess of misery, depravity, and brutal violence, where the strong dominate the weak and the only recourse is a sharp blade. The local magistrates may be unable to maintain order here, or they may simply consider it unworthy of the effort.

ENEMIES	Gang boss, Depraved tong leader, Supernatural entity responsible for the corruption and decay
FRIENDS	Local who wants to escape the slum, Fallen hero who has sunk into it, Local desperate for help against the tongs
COMPLICATIONS	The local nobility find the slum useful, Sorcerers use the slum denizens for experiments, The slum's condition is due to a sinister cult among them
THINGS	Forgotten relic of better days, Gang boss' stash, Tawdry finery of a tong elder
PLACES	Stinking street shin-deep in mud, House about to fall over, Filthy brothel with diseased inmates

## PIRATES

Most large-scale trade on Ektau takes place along the coasts, with flat-bottomed coastal runners making regular trips to gather in the produce of shore villages and the collection points for inland farming hamlets. It's only natural that pirates should come to prey on such traders, and there are times when they can become as great a scourge as Shou. The Xianese navy is strong, but there are too many small islands ready to receive a pirate junk, and too many coastal towns and villages where foreign cargo can be sold with no questions asked. This city has something to do with pirates, either as a waystation for them or as a victim of their depredations.

ENEMIES	Pirate captain, Landside fence for their cargo, Corrupt magistrate in cahoots with the pirates
FRIENDS	Honest sea captain, Merchant facing ruin, Local desperate to rescue a pirate prisoner
COMPLICATIONS	The "pirates" are actually commissioned warships of a rival power, The pirates are vengeful undead, The pirates mean to subvert the entire city's government to their service
THINGS	Pirate booty, Stolen cargo, Map to buried treasure
PLACES	The heaving deck of a storm-tossed junk, A sandy desert island, A roistering pirate settlement

## PLAGUE

There are always small outbreaks of poxes and coughs and fevers going on in any major city, but recently a truly savage affliction has wracked the place. The few true clerics capable of magical healing can name their prices to the local nobility and quacks and hedge menders of every description are thick on the ground. Some neighborhoods may be quarantined, or entire cities sealed until the sickness burns through the population. Those with money or connections elsewhere will seek to flee this place of death.

ENEMIES	Adepts of a plague-worshipping cult, Quack selling vain nostrums, Noble who wants to control magical healing
FRIENDS	Local cleric striving against the plague, Magistrate trying to keep order, Local who wants help escaping
COMPLICATIONS	The plague is magical in nature, The plague drives some victims violently mad with delirium, The PCs are accused of bringing the plague from some long-lost ruin
THINGS	Cure for the plague, Dead man's valuables left behind, Bribe offered to quarantine officials
PLACES	Crowded infirmary, More crowded corpse-burning yard, Temple full of fervent worshippers praying for health

## PRECARIOUS FOOD SUPPLY

Every city requires an elaborate network of farming villages and fishing hamlets to keep it fed, often at least ten farmers to support one townsman. When something happens to disrupt this supply, whether Shou raids or bad harvests or pirate attacks on the rice transports, the consequences show up rapidly in the city markets. City rulers fear the ensuing mobs of hungry commoners.

ENEMIES	Enemy power bent on starving the city, Grasping grain merchant, Mob leader who demands control of the food
FRIENDS	Farming village headman trying to get food in, Philanthropic nobleman, Brave sea captain
COMPLICATIONS	The food stocks are infected with hallucinatory fungi, Rebels are secretly destroying food stocks to worsen the crisis, Pirates are holding the rice transports for ransom
THINGS	Cache of food, Ship full of rice, Extravagant payment for food
PLACES	Market full of empty stalls, Tavern without food to sell, Rice riot in the streets

## RIVAL FAMILIES

Two or more families are locked in a struggle to control the neighborhood or city. The factions have too many supporters to be easily contained by the local magistrates, and the magistrates themselves might be in the pay of the families. Outsiders will be recruited swiftly to serve as armed help and expendable minions.

ENEMIES	Ambitious family patriarch or matriarch, Paranoid family loyalist, Arrogant favored child of a great family
FRIENDS	Local struggling to survive the fighting, Magistrate trying to contain the rivalry, Priest trying to make peace
COMPLICATIONS	One or more families are having recourse to dark sorcery, Foreign agents are getting involved to back different sides, The families are crippling the city's law enforcement and criminals are taking over
THINGS	Treasured family relic, The keys to the city treasury, Bribes paid to powerful local supporters
PLACES	Riotous street brawl between partisans, Tavern where neutrals are unwelcome, Venomously polite meeting

## RUINS BENEATH

A good place for a city is much the same in any age, and many modern towns and cities are built on sites that knew inhabitants in former years. These low mounds are full of ruined buildings and passages lost beneath yards of soil, but sometimes dark things can be found creeping up from forgotten fanes. Criminals and the most bitterly impoverished sometimes use these ruins for shelter, or for scavenging the lost treasures of the ancients. Sometimes they find things that follow them back into the light.

ENEMIES	Thing from Below, Criminal lord of the undertown, Cult leader who uses the undertown for privacy
FRIENDS	Urchin explorer, Scholarly archaeologist, City sewer engineer
COMPLICATIONS	The ruins are contaminated with toxic geomantic energy and dangerous mutations, The ruins are forbidden by local authorities, The ruin entrances are in buildings owned by a dangerous tong
THINGS	Ancient treasure, The belongings of an unfortunate explorer, An accurate map of the undertown
PLACES	Forgotten temple, Buried house set as if its residents will soon return, Dirty burrow inhabited by slum dwellers

## SLAVE UPRISING

Tien Lung and the Shogunate have open slavery, and Xian enslaves criminals for public work. In any place where forced labor exists, it is necessary to guard the slaves- and sometimes those guards aren't sufficient. Slave uprisings are savage and bloody affairs often marked out by massacres on both sides as the slaves try to escape or avenge themselves on their captors. In places without significant populations of slaves, it may be that poor laborers rebel with similar ferocity against tyrannical lords and grasping merchant princes.

ENEMIES	Ruthless slave owner, Bloodthirsty uprising leader, Stitched Path sorcerer who wants the slaves for sacrifice
FRIENDS	Slave leader seeking freedom for his fellows, Dwarven abolitionist, Secret Tien Lungan or Shogunate abolitionist
COMPLICATIONS	The Xianese slaves are all violent criminals, The slaves want to avenge themselves on their captor's women and children, The captors are willing to let the rank and file rebels live if they hand over their leadership and the PCs
THINGS	A map to a remote settlement that can take in the slaves, The slaves' purchase price, A precious relic of their past
PLACES	A field empty of laborers, A gallows festooned with guards, A training field full of slaves with improvised weapons

## TIDE CULT

The ranks of the Tide Cults swell with each passing year as more and more weak-willed or fearful humans are beckoned by the red dreams of safety and power that the Tide offers them. Their petty rituals grow into more elaborate rites as the Tide fills them with confidence and eldritch power. In the end, they are less than human, but until that final condition they and their fellows can open the door to things that otherwise could never have defiled the earth of the Isles.

ENEMIES	Cultist magistrate, Old ally who has turned cultist, Cultist employer who wants the PCs dead
FRIENDS	Azure Ministry agent, Local witch-hunter, Servant fearful of the strange goings-on in his master's house
COMPLICATIONS	Hard proof of cult involvement is unavailable, The cultist is widely loved by others, The cultists are responsible for some vital civic duty and only they know how to perform it
THINGS	Poisonous yet precious artifact of the Tide, Wealth gifted by the mist, Property offered by the cultists
PLACES	Chamber of dreaming cultists, Cell for cultist too deformed to show publicly, Shrine inscribed with dark images

## TONG WAR

Some tongs are honest brotherhoods pledged to tend to each others' widows and orphans and ensure that their members receive an honorable burial. Their work to ensure that their members are not trampled by the great sometimes becomes an occasion to do some of their own trampling. Protection money, fencing, prostitution, blackmail, and smuggling come easily to these corrupt tongs, though they often maintain a veneer of humble righteousness even as they fight in the streets over control of the local underworld.

ENEMIES	Tong Grandfather, Ambitious Elder Brother who wants to make a point, Tong Father who mistakes the PCs as minions of their rivals
FRIENDS	Honest merchant seeking help, An escapee from a tong-run brothel, A tong member furious at the corruption
COMPLICATIONS	The local nobles would savage the commoners were it not for the tong, The tong uses assassins against its enemies, The tong has bought off most of the local law enforcement
THINGS	Tong protection payments, Shrine relics of the tong hall, Cache of smuggled contraband
PLACES	Incense-fragrant tong meeting hall, Frightened merchant's shop, Street brawl with no witnesses willing to speak

## ZEALOUS BUILDER

A noble is bent on constructing some costly and elaborate structure, whether a higher tier of city walls, an ornate temple, or a bigger palace. The exactions are impoverishing the locals, and some are being impressed as corvee labor on the work. Adventurers might well face unanticipated "taxes" that amount to rank confiscation.

ENEMIES	The driven noble who tolerates no protest, A master builder who wants to keep the project as expensive as possible, The secret occult puppet master who is compelling the noble to build the structure
FRIENDS	A merchant driven to ruin, An impressed local, An owner of land to be seized by the noble for the structure
COMPLICATIONS	The structure is actually a giant geomantic focusing array, The construction is actually intended to unearth a buried ruin, The construction of fortifications is part of the noble's eventual plan to rebel against his masters
THINGS	Unearthed treasure, Pay for the builders, Precious materials for the structure's adornment
PLACES	Massive building site, Camp with exhausted laborers, Market empty of men of working age

## An Example City Site

Having earlier created the temple in the Westmark border town of Hulun Bir, the referee decides that it would be worth his while to flesh out the town itself a little further. It's a bit large for a conventional borderlands site, so he decides to use the city site process to define it.

The first step is to decide on its physical parameters. The referee chooses to make Hulun Bir the biggest market town in its section of the Westmark, so it's probably got about 2,000 residents. Its markets and buyers can absorb up to 10,000 gp worth of loot sold by adventurers, and that same pool can be used to pay out for jobs that the city leaders need accomplished. If the adventurers soak up those ready funds, it'll be a few months before they refresh.

The referee has already fleshed out the temple to the Nine Immortals in the city, but he's going to need to cover the other services commonly needed by adventurers. Turning to the Resources section and its NPC generation tools, he produces a list of merchants: Zafira bint-Tamir the Eshkanti expedition supplier, Wen Ku the smith, One-Eyed Hrothgar the innkeeper, Black Head Tou the fence, and Goto Arisa the young scholar-scribe who can serve as a cut-rate sage. For most cities as small as Hulun Bir, there probably aren't a lot of other merchants serving these same niches, so the PCs are advised to stay on good terms with them.

The referee then takes a blank sheet of paper in hand and crudely sketches out the general shape of Hulun Bir, marking out the relationship between the city walls, the river that waters the city, and the various important buildings inside the city. A detailed and elaborate map might look more appealing, but it's a waste of effort at this stage. All that's really important is that the referee be able to convey general relationships between major points of interest in the city. Later, if he expects to have a pitched battle roll through the city streets he can take the time to draw up or download a more precise map.

If the referee knew exactly where Hulun Bir was going to be located in the Westmark, this is the point where he'd pull the island map out of the Places section of his campaign folder and mark it down. Since the city's simply being kept in reserve should it prove useful later, he omits that stage. He can drop it in later as necessary.

Next, the referee needs to establish the social relationships and power structures in the city. He knows the temple is going to be a major player, but to get some more inspiration, he rolls once on the

city sites tag list and once on the borderland sites tag list. He gets "Precarious Food Supply" and "Toxic Environment".

Clearly, Hulun Bir is a mining town, and the delvings in the nearby hills have been going on for generations. They must have progressively poisoned a number of streams and rivers around the city with their toxic tailings, and now the citizens of Hulun Bir are often afflicted with coughs, trembling hands, and progressive nerve damage.

On consideration, the referee decides that the magistrate of the town is a man named Chen Jie, dispatched to this unlovely town after a drastic political misstep back in Xian. Hulun Bir has always been a punishment post, but Chen Jie is driven to distraction with worry over his daughter Chen Lanying. He doesn't dare leave her where his political enemies can get at her, but the water of Hulun Bir is making her very sick. The prayers of Sister Gretta Feng at the temple have saved her once, the magistrate believes, but it is only a matter of time before she succumbs. He nurses a savage grudge against Brother Kenjiro at the temple, convinced that the holy man could purify all the water that his daughter needed if only chose to do so.

For less exalted figures, sacred purification of the water is not an option. Local legend claims that beer lessens the poisons, but mostly what it does is get the locals drunk enough to tolerate their hungry, hard-working lives. The city is abundant in metal goods, and most such wares can be had for book prices, but food costs double what it does in Xian.

The referee then sits back for a moment and thinks about ways the PCs could deal with this situation. There should always be something the PCs can do to alter a site's dynamics. On consideration, the referee decides that the worst of the poisons are leeching from an abandoned mining site dating back before the Ravaging. Exotic pre-Tide magical artifices were used there to extract the ore, but since they were left abandoned, they've begun to geomantically poison the water. If the PCs can get in and remove certain vital magical components of the equipment, they will become inert and harmless. Goto Arisa the scholar-scribe has unearthed these particulars from the town's archive, and she's eager to help adventurers find the old mining site and render it harmless. Unfortunately, the site is now inhabited by more than old memories, but that complication the referee leaves for another time....



# RUIN SITES

Most ruin sites are intended to provide exploration and combat opportunities for the PCs. While social negotiations are by no means impossible with many ruin inhabitants, most players will expect to find trouble when picking over the stones of some ancient keep or long-buried dwarven delve. When building a ruin site, it's important to establish those details that will give players the sort of adventure they're likely to be seeking.

## Choose the Ruin Type

Different sorts of architectural remains will have different kinds of inhabitants. In some cases, the type of ruin will be obvious based on the plans you have for a site. In other cases, you may not be certain what kind of crumbling relic to stock. If you're in search of inspiration, you can roll on the ruin site type table provided in this section.

## Determine How It Became Ruined

Having established what sort of structure it once was, you now need to decide how it became a ruin. One of the simplest ways is to just roll on the borderland site tag table once or twice and then extrapolate the tag out into ruination. A Crop Failure tag suggests that the inhabitants fled starvation, for example, or a Raiders tag implies that it was put to the torch.

If that option is more work than you want to worry about, you can roll on the types of destruction table in this section. You should also decide when this destruction took place, and whether the ruin was a relic of some pre-Landing settlement established by reckless colonists or embittered exiles, or if it was a ruin lost to a Shou incursion or to overambitious human expansion after the exodus fleet landed.

## Choose Inhabitants

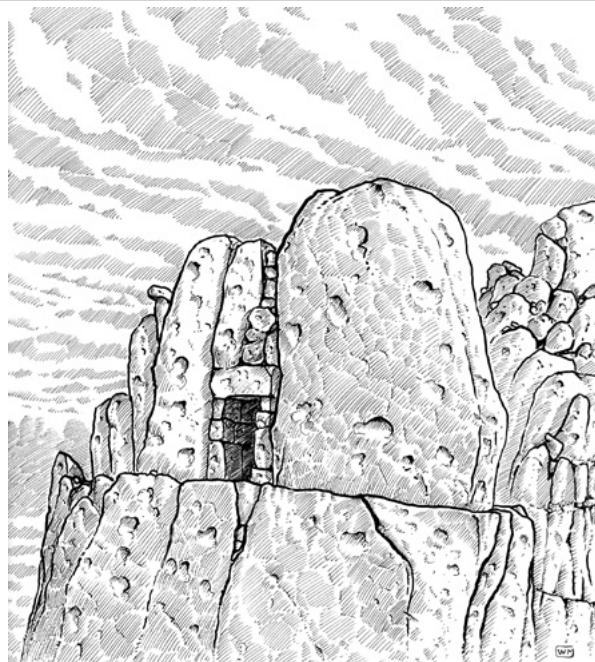
In some cases, you'll have the inspiration and the time to hand-stock the ruin's inhabitants. You can select specific NPCs and monsters appropriate to the site and adjust things for the purpose the site is intended to serve. In other cases, you'll want some inspirational assistance in sorting that out.

For that, you can roll one or more times on the ruin inhabitants table to see what nefarious entities have made the ruin their home. Most such groups tend to get along poorly with strangers, so any ruin with multiple groups of inhabitants should be large enough to give living room for all without forcing them into close contact. Once you've established the main occupants of the ruin, you can fill it out with trimmings of wild animals and lone monsters.

## Stock the Ruin

Once you have an idea of the occupants and their belongings, you can split them up among the various locations in the ruin. For this purpose you can use a map of your own devising or pull one of the example maps from the back of the book. A few factors should be kept in mind when stocking a ruin.

Intelligent occupants will need places to sleep, eat, and defecate. They will have storerooms for their provisions and areas dedicated to whatever pursuits are important and necessary to them. These areas should be fairly easy to get to, and should not be bristling with



lethal traps. If more than one group of intelligent occupants dwells in the ruin, they either have a friendly truce or they both have defensible home areas that discourage attempts to drive them out.

Empty rooms are not a bad thing. You should not feel obligated to fill every room with something interesting or dangerous. When in doubt, one "interesting" room for two "boring" rooms is usually a safe ratio, unless the ruin is so small that necessary activity areas eat up all the available space.

Valuables may be guarded, but combat should not be inevitable. If every bent copper in the ruin is clutched in the wary paw of a guardian beast, you discourage players from thinking of alternate ways to get at plunder and leave the thieves in the party less than useful. Some treasure in the ruin should be accessible simply to those smart or skillful enough to locate and retrieve it.

## Give It Life

Having established the ruin, its occupants, and their plunder, the last step is to breathe a little life into the place. You should give some thought to how the occupants live out their days and what sort of schedules they maintain. You should also think about how they're going to react to adventurer attacks, and how it will affect their guard patterns and long-term tenancy of the place.

Adventurers are scary people, and some groups may find it the better part of valor to simply pick up and leave after a particularly brutal assault. The occupants of a ruin are not going to simply sit there and wait to be slaughtered by interlopers. After every incursion by the PCs, you should take a moment to stop and think about events from the perspective of the occupants. What is the most rational course for them to take? For some it will be to heighten their guard patrols. For others, it will involve rapidly decamping from the area. For a few, it might involve sending some messages to their friends in the city, the better to arrange a little welcome at home for the conquering heroes.

## Diagram Dungeons

The classic old-school ruin map involves an 8.5 x 11 sheet of graph paper, 30' x 30' square rooms, and careful mapping of corridors, doorways, and walls. Creative and artful cartographers spice this up with interesting architecture and plausible layout, but the basic recipe has been around since 1974. This is a perfectly good and serviceable model to take for your mapping, and most *Labyrinth Lord* players will have no problem adapting to it.

It can, however, be overkill for what you need. In many cases, you'll be dealing with a basic ruin, cavern, palace, or other structure that has several interesting rooms or locations within it and a set of corridors and connecting passages that just aren't all that important. For these situations, you may wish to use a diagram dungeon instead. It's much faster and easier to construct one than to draw out a conventional old-school map, and the trade-offs in accuracy might well be worth it for your group.

You'll find a diagram dungeon record sheet in the Resources section of the book, but it amounts to a 7 x 7 grid of empty squares spaced evenly a little distance apart from each other, with rows labeled A through G and columns labeled 1 through 7. Each square represents a room or location of importance. Corridors or connections are represented by drawing a line from one room to another connecting the appropriate walls. If two rooms are side-by-side, for example, with a short corridor running east-west between them, you would draw a line from the eastern side of one square to the western side of the other.

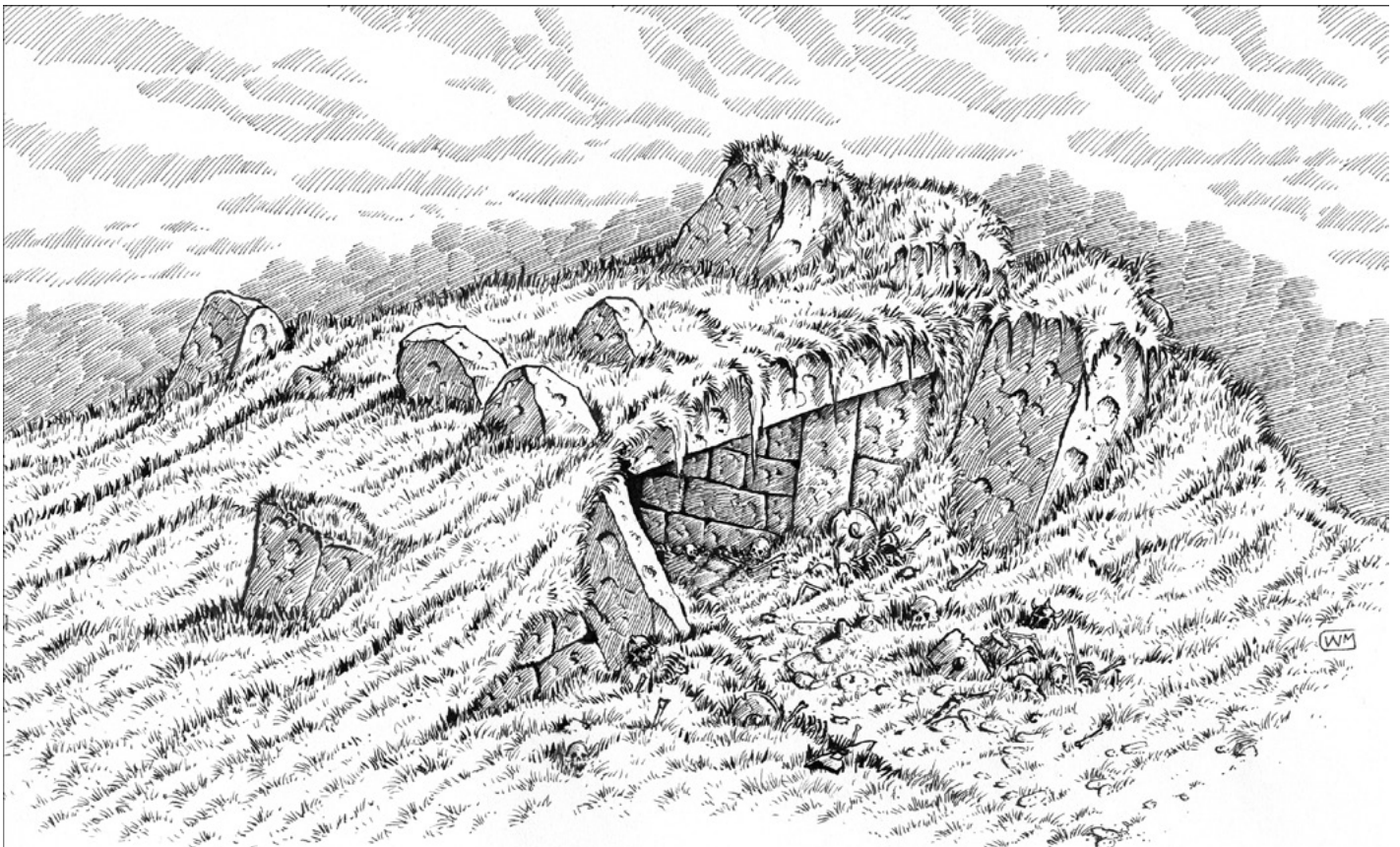
You can sketch in or around each square to give an idea of the general shape of the room. Don't worry about indicating precise

distances; you can note that down in the room description later. Just use the diagram to establish the general relationship between rooms. For multi-level dungeons, you can draw a crooked staircase up from the corner of one room connecting to the corner of another group.

Once you've sketched out the rooms, stock the ruin key as normal. The rooms are numbered based on their position in the grid, from A1 in the top left corner to G7 at the bottom right. Write down the room's name on the key below the diagram and expand as necessary on additional sheets of paper.

When it comes time to actually run the dungeon, make sure the players understand that you'll be glossing over those parts of the structure that don't really matter. If they head down a corridor to a crumbling ballroom that dates back before the Ravaging, you're not going to give them the exact measurements of the corridor or put anything interesting or relevant within it. If for some reason the dimensions of the corridor become important, just make a spot decision and write it down on the diagram.

Diagram dungeons work best for places with a set of discrete interesting locations, as opposed to a wide-open area with few internal barriers. They're a good choice for a cavern complex, ruin interior, or decadent magistrate's country estate, but not optimal for laying out a village or a stretch of jungle trails. You should also think twice about using them if you expect the entire structure to become a unified battlefield, with the exact positions of multiple groups of combatants becoming an issue.



## Types of Ruin Sites

When a referee has no special ideas about what manner of ruin a site should represent, the table below can provide a starting idea.

1D6	RUIN SITE TYPE
1	Ancient Colony
2	Dwarven Delve
3	Lost Temple or Monastery
4	Non-Human Construction
5	Ruined Settlement
6	Wizard's Tower

### Ancient Colony

Exiles and renegades and dreamers have been making their way to the Sunset Isles for time beyond memory. Skandr merchants and raiders brought word of the Isles and their unspoiled beauty to every land beneath the sky, and for many desperate or ambitious souls it sounded to be the perfect place to set up a new home or a colony of the mother empire. True, the Skandr warned of the savages of the island, but what trouble could a rabble of Shou tribes give a properly-prepared expedition?

Most of these colonies learned the truth eventually, and some even managed to send a few survivors back to civilization to tell of the tides of furious Shou and their diabolical witch-priestesses. Other colonies were consumed by jungle plagues, or starvation when their native crops did not grow, or disaster when a volcano erupted close by or a great wave washed them from the land. Now all that remains of their ambitions are the ruins of their stone construction and the occasional crumbling keep or tower raised against enemies they could not hope to defeat.

### Dwarven Delve

The Sunset Islands have numerous ancient dwarven holdings buried beneath the stones of the mountains and hillsides. The Altgrimmr mountain range is thick with these long-forgotten delves. Tens of thousands of the sturdy folk once lived among the peaks, but the halls of old Altgrimmr had been empty for millennia when the first dwarven colonists came over the sea some five hundred years ago.

This still leaves hundreds of unexplored delvings in the isles, each one the legacy of some long-forgotten dwarven clan and their patient labors. Many have been plundered in the thousands of years since their makers vanished, but others remain sealed to this day, with ancient tomb-gold and lost dwarven artifices still waiting in silent vaults. No living clan claims kinship with these lost ones, and the dwarves of the Isles will grudgingly tolerate the “salvaging” of the gold and other precious artifacts from the ancient holds. Still, “salvagers” would do well to maintain a suitably respectful attitude toward the dead and their works.

### Lost Temple or Monastery

Organized religion has never been powerful in the Isles, and many clergy who desired to have land of their own were forced to take up residence in very marginal and isolated places. Determination, ascetic living, and a little help from divine magic often made these

remote temples havens of civilization in the howling wilderness, and colonists both pious and otherwise often arrived to work the temple land and serve its needs. Many such temples grew to be surrounded by small farming villages.

Not all of them succeeded, however, and even those that managed to form some manner of home in the wilderness were sometimes devoured by its perils. Shou raiders, bandits, heretical infighting, or crop failure could all conspire to empty out a temple and disperse its lay brethren. Many treasures might yet linger for those brave enough to venture into their long-neglected halls.

### Non-Human Construction

Scattered among the more isolated regions of the Isles stand great edifices of dark stone and strange lines. These ruins defy any easy recognition, showing no special traits of dwarven or elven construction, and no easy match to any human styles, either. The doorways are proportioned strangely and the furnishings within seem shaped to bodies not wholly akin to those of humanity. Some might be the work of ancient lizardfolk, while others have the cruder lines of troll-work or the massive labors of giants. Most have no clear builders at all and no way to tell how old they might be. Few modern inhabitants relish the idea of living in such places, but necessity or the lust for the treasures of the unknown past move some to overcome the uncanny air that lingers over many of the sites.

### Ruined Settlement

Even with their long experience in settling the land, the refugee humans do not always succeed in planting a new village or maintaining a market town. During the early years of the second century of settlement, overconfidence spread a mesh of towns and farming villages deep into the borderlands. These fate was to be wiped out by a tide of savage mountain Shou who were goaded to unity by this intrusion so near to their lands. Many of these settlements were overwhelmed before the occupants had any chance to escape.

Other ruined settlements are of more recent vintage, prey to bandits, Shou, plague, or simple bitter quarreling among the occupants. These settlements might still have claimants to ownership of the land or remaining buildings, and not all of them take well to “looters” helping themselves to the contents.

### Wizard's Tower

Magic-users have always gravitated toward towers, estates, and fortified manors far away from the bustle of busy cities. While it is substantially more tedious to bring in equipment and servants, the privacy is precious to any wizard engaged in such work as would inspire the concern of city officials. In the wilderness, runaway conjured beasts, explosions at unseemly hours, noises, stench, eldritch lights and the occasional embrace of systematic human sacrifice can all be comfortably concealed by distance and isolation.

Unfortunately, when things go very badly wrong at such a tower, there is also no way to call for aid. Surviving apprentices and servants generally flee without lingering to provide awkward answers to any investigating officials, and what locals dwell in the area are usually clever enough to stay clear of the tower. Adventurers often lack such protective aversion.

## Types of Destruction

The ruin was brought to its present condition by some manner of disaster. If the referee is uncertain what doom best fits the site, the following table can provide inspiration.

1d8	DESTRUCTION OF THE SITE
1-3	Invasion or Infighting
4-5	Pestilence
6	Famine
7	Migration
8	Natural Disaster

### Invasion or Infighting

Sites destroyed by invasion and internal warfare will almost always be marked by a thick layer of char, with most of the flammable surface structures reduced to ashes and rubble. Sites overwhelmed by an exceptionally disciplined foe might escape this fate, but even then, all it takes is one toppled lamp to start a blaze that no one has time to quench.

Beast-gnawed bones, shattered weapons, and the signs of sack and pillage will characterize most of the visible remains. Those treasures that have gone unplundered will most often be found buried or hidden well out of sight. More recent occupants of the site might have gone to the trouble of finding some of these caches and bringing them together in more easily-located hoards.

### Pestilence

The verdant jungles of the Isles give birth to an extravagant profusion of sicknesses. The mix of folk from all over the world make a rich cauldron of plague and disease, and every so often some new pestilence bubbles up to erase some luckless village or isolated town. Clerical blessings can often serve to save the wealthy and noble-born, but in the fallen present day even the greatest holy men of the Isles cannot turn back a full-fledged plague.

Plague-struck ruins will tend to feature living quarters sealed shut in quarantine, shrines thick with desperate offerings, and much of their former owner's belongings intact and present. Looters fear old pest-ruins, dreading a sudden reawakening of the plague that burnt out the original dwellers. Still, some with stronger stomachs or less interest in the consequences can still be found to search among the poxy dead.

### Famine

Much of the Isles consists of rich volcanic soil and well-watered earth, but the depredations of Shou or other dangers can ruin a harvest before it can be gathered in. Worse still, their raids can make it impossible to farm the land around a site, forcing its inhabitants to flee or face creeping starvation.

Famine sites are among the most orderly, furnishings and buildings often standing much as their original owners left them. Many of the valuables possessed by the builders will have gone with them, though forgotten caches owned by men and women who did not live to flee can sometimes be found among the hollow homes.



### Migration

Sites do not always collapse overnight in the face of some sudden, cataclysmic disaster. Some of them die by inches, suffering a slow trickle of departures by those who found the life too hard and unrewarding to endure. Such depopulation is often the result of a constant, low-level strain of hunger, Shou raids, internal fighting, and the occasional epidemic.

These sites tend to be large, but with the periphery substantially more crumbled and decayed than the more central portions. As the population shrank, the people drew inward, until the last either left or died in their last redoubt. Their treasures may yet survive where their home did not.

### Natural Disaster

The death of a site can be slow, or it can happen in instants. Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, mud slides, floods, forest fires, or tsunamis can all spell a sudden and complete end to a site's inhabitation. Whatever manner of destruction ruined the site must not have been too complete if any remains should linger, but whatever it was must have been complete enough to kill or disperse the population.

The exact condition of the site will vary depending on the specific disaster that annihilated it. Unlike most other causes of ruination, however, much of the site's wealth will be intact beneath whatever layers of ash, mud, silt, or rubble might bury it. Despite this convenience, sites ruined by natural disaster are often haunted by unusual numbers of restless dead, with so many killed so quickly and with so few given the comforting rites of burial.

## Ruin Inhabitants

For those situations when a referee needs a ready-made group of foes for their intrepid players, the following table will provide some options for quick inhabitant selection.

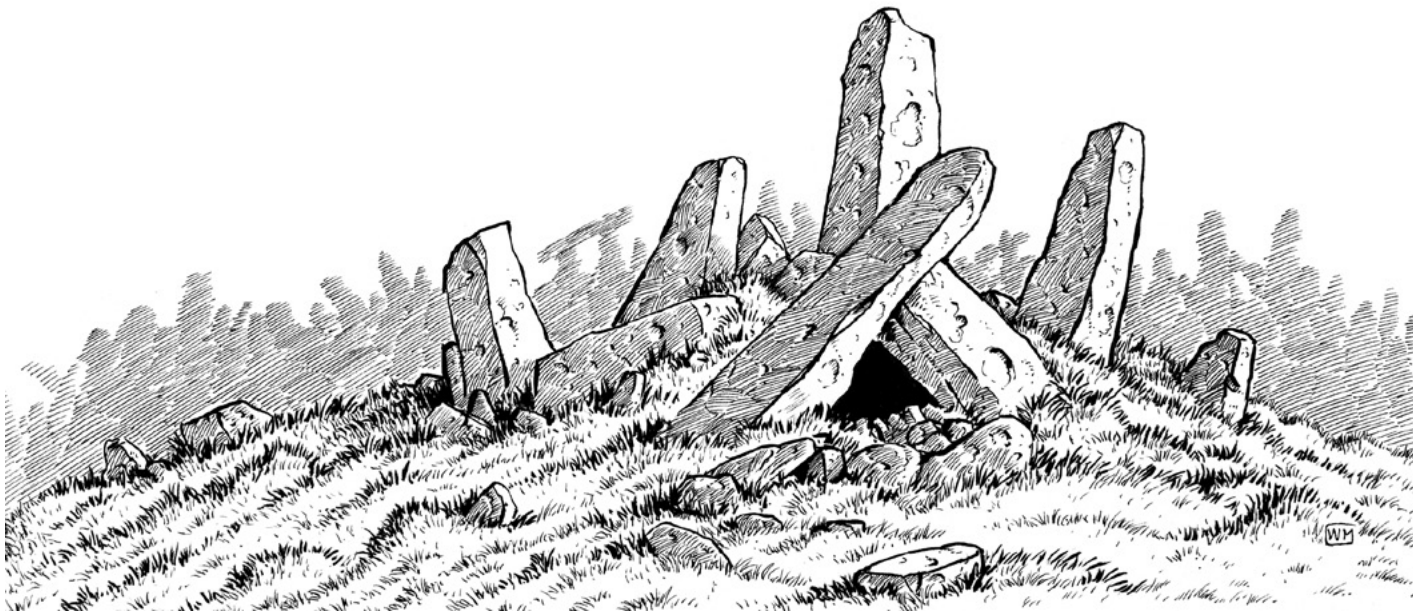
The ruin inhabitants overviews provided in this section give summaries of statistics and encounter groups appropriate for a given type of inhabitant. Sample monster statistics are provided, along with common weapons and parenthetical THAC0. Each type of occupant is shown in three different encounter groups- weak groups, suitable for challenging a party of levels 1-3, average groups, which can test a party of levels 4-6, and strong groups, who are worthwhile adversaries for parties of level 7-9.

These groups are not intended to be all clumped up in one large room, but are meant to be split up and sprinkled around the ruin in appropriate groupings. Bunching too many of them together runs the risk of either trivializing the encounter when a magic-user hurls his *Fireball* spell or else slaughtering a party when two dozen enemies all launch attacks at once.

Each group is also shown with a sample treasure breakdown. This wealth rarely exists in neat piles of gold coins, but is often split up in copper, silver, or cumbersome objects of art. Magic items will naturally be used by enemies aware of their properties. If you have the time and inclination, you may prefer to roll randomly for an encounter based on the creature's standard Hoard Class.

Finally, each type of encounter is listed with 6-10 twists that can be used when additional flavor is wanted for a group. In some cases, you will already know everything you need to know about the motivations of a particular group inhabiting a ruin, but for those situations when you want to add spice to an otherwise unremarkable den of wickedness, you can use these twists to complicate matters.

1D20 RUIIN INHABITANTS	
1	Ancient Constructs
2	Dwarven Outcasts
3	Exiled Noble
4	Hell Cultists
5	Hermit Wizards
6	Kobold Clan
7	Lizardfolk Clan
8	Malign Elven Creed
9	Necromancers
10	Ogre Cabal
11	Outlaws
12	Remnants
13	Restless Dead
14	Shou Bugbears
15	Shou Goblins
16	Shou Orcs
17	Squatters
18	Tide Cultists
19	Tong Base
20	Zealots



## ANCIENT CONSTRUCTS



The ancient Imperials were just one of several cultures that made use of automatons. The Men of Jade and Clay were faithful servants to the ancient Imperial wizards, but over time specific forms of jade and the exotic clays required for their manufacture became more and more difficult to find. Still, even in the latter days more elaborate artificial servants were created for purposes more sophisticated and specialized than those served by the Men of Jade and Clay. Other peoples occasionally were known to make false men as well, though these efforts were rare and localized. The effort and expense required to make even the simplest automaton was so great that it was almost invariably easier to enlist humans made in a more ordinary way. Some ruins still have caches of these ancient automatons awaiting the circumstances that will trigger them to live once more.

### Ancient Construct Encounters

**Weak:** 6 Porcelain Servitors. These constructs may be the decayed servitors of some long-abandoned noble's dwelling. They will protect their dead master's possessions fiercely.

**Treasure:** None of their own.

**Average:** 15 Men of Jade and Clay, 5 Porcelain Servitors. In this group, the Porcelain Servitors act to guide their duller cousins to accomplish their purpose. If the Porcelain Servitors are destroyed or separated from their charges, the Men of Jade and Clay may become confused or aimless.

**Treasure:** None of their own.

**Strong:** 5 Porcelain Servitors, 2 Ancient War Golems, 1 Black Jade Juggernaut. The Porcelain Servitors are tenders to the bulk of their warlike companions, and will not hesitate to unleash them on those who trespass on forbidden ground.

**Treasure:** None of their own.

### Porcelain Servitor

HD: 1+1 AC: 5 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 21

### Man of Jade and Clay

HD: 2+2 AC: 7 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d6/Fist (17) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 47

### Ancient War Golem

HD: 8 AC: 2 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d12/1d12 (11) Save As: Fighter 4 XP: 2,065

### Black Jade Juggernaut

HD: 10 AC: 4 Move: 180' (60') Morale: 12  
Atk: 2d6/2d6/2d10 (9) Save As: Fighter 5 XP: 3,100  
Note: Immune to normal weapons.

1d6	TWISTS
1	The automatons are Men of Jade and Clay, left here by an ancient Imperial wizard to guard the ruins against intruders.
2	The automatons are Porcelain Servitors, once charged with serving the inhabitants of the ruin. A few may have developed independent will during the long years of stillness, but the rest are dangerously inclined to flip back and forth between interpreting adventurers as honored guests and seeing them as intruders to be repelled with lethal force.
3	The automatons are nonhuman in nature, ancient servitors of some alien race. Perhaps the ruin's original owner discovered them and mastered their use, or they may have been here for ages unnumbered.
4	The automatons were largely destroyed at some time in the past by invaders or adventurers. The surviving automatons will be singularly disinclined to parley, even if otherwise capable of doing so.
5	The automatons have gone rogue, developing in strange ways. They may imagine themselves human, or conceive a burning hatred for their makers, or have become twisted by old, soured magics.
6	The automatons are inert at present, but someone or some group is active in the ruins and attempting to seize control of them.

# DWARVEN OUTCASTS



Some dwarves driven from their holdings by war, hunger, or kin-strife make new lives for themselves in human lands. Others fall to less scrupulous ends, and become a scourge on the land as grim as any Shou raiding band. Some turn Repenter, offering worship to the shade of their tormentor-goddess in exchange for magical power and the hope of salvation in an afterlife that will not require tomb-gold or the help of ancestors. Others try to fashion tombs of their own, and are willing to kill whomever they must to get the gold their restless spirits will require.

## Dwarven Outcast Encounters

**Weak:** 6 Dwarven Outcasts. A group this small is likely a pack of bandits or thieves, cast out from their brethren for their plundering ways.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of coinage and crafts.

**Average:** 25 Dwarven Outcasts, 5 Dwarven Elders. This number of outcasts suggests a losing faction in a delve power struggle, or a small delve that has withdrawn from the society of their peers. Many such groups will have noncombatant females and children equal to their number.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-3 gems, 1-3 piece of jewelry, one magic weapon, 25% chance of magic armor and two potions.

**Strong:** 40 Dwarven Outcasts, 10 Dwarven Elders, 1 Dwarven Chieftain. A strong force of dwarves such as this is likely intending to found their own delve, or else seize one from a weaker clan. Some such groups are Repenters, and may have dwarves with clerical powers and an unholy appetite for tormenting their fellows and any interlopers they can capture.

**Treasure:** 4d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 2d6+2 gems, 2d4+1 pieces of jewelry, one magic weapon, one suit of magic armor, plus a 50% chance of two more magic items.

## Dwarven Outcast

HD: 1 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d6/Warhammer (19) Save As: Dwarf 1 XP: 10

## Dwarven Elder

HD: 2 AC: 3 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d8/Heavy Pick (19) Save As: Dwarf 2 XP: 50

## Dwarven Chieftain

HD: 5 AC: 3 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d8/Battleaxe (16) Save As: Dwarf 5 XP: 200

## 1D8 TWISTS

1	The dwarves are Repenters, led by a traitor-priest. They especially seek to capture and sacrifice dwarves to their goddess' ghostly remains, but will make do with any sentient being.
2	The dwarves were driven from their delving by enemies from below, and have come to the ruins in search of shelter. Some are desperate enough to murder strangers, but others are willing to ask for help.
3	The dwarves are convinced that the ruins belonged to their ancestors, or in cases where that is patently impossible, that a dwarven holding was buried beneath them. They may or may not be correct, but will fight fiercely to repel "trespassers".
4	The dwarves were forced out of their holding by the rest of their kindred for their treacherous and troublesome ways. They've turned robber since, but might be willing to try to negotiate with those who might help them avenge their exile.
5	The dwarves are social outcasts from their holdings, having left rather than endure further humiliation and scorn. They may include males who wish to be crafters and artisans, and females who wish to be warriors or builders. They will be unfriendly toward outsiders, being accustomed to scorn from others, but not necessarily violent out of hand.
6	The dwarves are infected with a creeping fungal plague and were driven from their homes before they infected the others. The plague will kill them eventually, but in the meanwhile they are hungry and desperate.
7	The dwarves are the tattered remnants of a mercenary band or adventuring group that found only failure. Embittered, they are inclined to take what they wish from strangers.
8	The dwarves seek to build a new holding here, having split off from their parent clan over numerous points of dispute. They guard "their" new land jealously.

# EXILED NOBLE



The wrong end of a political dispute can be very sharp in the Isles, and some nobles find it necessary to avoid long conversations with judicial torturers. Few are content to rusticate in peace, and most nurse elaborate plans of revenge against the enemies real and imagined who put them in this awkward circumstance.

## Exiled Noble Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Faithful Minions and a noble with the statistics of a Veteran Bodyguard. These few are likely some unfortunate nobleman and his handful of remaining retainers, fleeing ahead of the magistrates for some dire crime.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 100 gold pieces worth of coins.

**Average:** 20 Faithful Minions, 10 Veteran Bodyguards, 1 Skilled Noble. This collection is a full noble household transplanted into the wilds, its members evidently loyal enough to their master to endure this privation without complaint.

**Treasure:** 2d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d4+1 gems, 1d4 pieces of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions and one magic item.

**Strong:** 40 Faithful Minions 20 Veteran Bodyguards, 1 Skilled Noble, 1 Renegade Sorcerer. A noble with this many retainers is forging a real base of power out in the wilderness, and likely has at least one village in thrall to supply so many servitors.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6 gems, 1d4 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

### Faithful Minion

HD: 1 AC: 7 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d6/Spear (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Veteran Bodyguard

HD: 2 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 20

### Skilled Noble

HD: 5 AC: 3 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (15) Save As: Fighter 5 XP: 200

### Renegade Sorcerer

HD: 7 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (18) Save As: MU 7 XP: 1,140

Spells: 1st: *Sleep, Charm Person, Detect Magic*  
2nd: *Invisibility, Web*  
3rd: *Hold Person, Fireball*  
4th: *Confusion*

1d8	TWISTS
1	The noble was forced to flee Xian after the regalia of Hell King worship was found in his estate. He may have simply been a dabbler, or he might possess real clerical powers.
2	The noble was framed for treachery by a backstabbing relation, and is actually innocent of the crimes imputed to him or her.
3	The noble nurses wild dreams of forging a new polity in the wilderness, and will attempt to recruit others to this ambition.
4	The noble is hiding from assassins sent by a relation impatient for his or her death, and is apt to mistake adventurers for such hired thugs.
5	The noble has committed crimes so awful that even their high rank cannot shield them from the consequence. Addicted to the evil, they view the wilderness as a free range for their sins.
6	The noble is convinced the ruins belong to them. Whether or not they have evidence to that effect, they will fiercely fight any "plunderers" as they search the rubble for plunder.
7	The noble was driven from their estates by Shou or other assailants, and have been forced back into the ruins for temporary shelter. They are eager to return to their home and drive out the invaders.
8	The noble keeps a number of troublesome people imprisoned in the ruin, using it as a private dungeon. He or she makes regular trips to the ruin to "converse" with the victims.



# HELL CULTISTS



The Hell Kings promise innumerable gifts to their loyal servants, and the Shogunate has enshrined their worship as the state religion. Xian and its associated polities shun these believers, and open worship of the Hell Kings is considered tantamount to a declaration of disloyalty. Still, the Hell Kings are much more generous with divine blessings than most other gods, and those in dire need of aid are often willing to pledge what the Hell Kings demand. Many Hell cultists are in direct coordination with the Shogunate's External Directorate. These agents work to chip away at the strength of Xian and its neighboring states in order to soften them for eventual submission to the demonic masters of the Shogun Rai.

Many of the most dangerous Hell King cults are disguised as some less offensive faith, luring in the fearful and yearning with demonstrations of demonic power. Souls cannot be bargained away accidentally, however, and sooner or later the initiate must be brought before an idol of brass and black stone and invited to seal his devotion. Those who think better of it do not leave the temple alive.

## Hell King Cult Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Infernal Devotees, 1 Infernal Priest. This cabal might be the fruit of a newly-converted servitor of the Hell Kings, or it might be an agent of the Shogunate and his support staff.

**Treasure:** 3d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of coins and possessions.

**Average:** 15 Infernal Devotees, 2 Infernal Priests, 1 Red Jade Templar. This sect is under the guidance of one of the dreaded Red Jade Templars, the zealot enforcers of Shogunate orthodoxy.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions and one magic item.

**Strong:** 20 Infernal Devotees, 5 Infernal Priests, 2 Red Jade Templars, 1 Infernal Demon. This dread congregation is under the personal oversight of one of the demonic servitors of the Hell Kings. Such unholy cults can rarely hide within cities, and must seek the privacy of long-desolate ruins and remote peaks- yet not so remote that their members cannot find the sacrifices their lords require.

**Treasure:** 2d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 2d4 gems, 1d8 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

### Infernal Devotee

HD: 1 AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Infernal Priest

HD: 2 (d6) AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d6/Mace (19) Save As: Cleric 2 XP: 100  
Note: Can cast *Cause Light Wounds* twice per day.

### Red Jade Templar

HD: 5 AC: 3 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (14) Save As: Fighter 5 XP: 200

### Infernal Demon

HD: 11 AC: -1 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d4/1d4/2d4 (9) Save As: Fighter 11 XP: 4,400  
Note: Immune to normal weapons. Can use *Darkness 10' Radius*, *Dispel Magic*, *Fear*, *Levitate*, *Polymorph Self* and *Phantasmal Force* at will, once per round. Takes half damage from fire, cold, electricity. Can communicate with any intelligent creature.

1d6	TWISTS
1	The cultists are led by a Shogunate devil-priest and are charged with weakening surrounding settlements by sabotage and raiding.
2	The cultists are locals, lured to the service of the Hell Kings by the promise of divine miracles and glory in the afterlife.
3	The cultists were drawn into worship of the Hell Kings by desperation, needing their aid to overcome some local disaster, and they now dread the consequences of disappointing their devil-priests.
4	The cultists are renegade members of some other faith who have cast aside their old gods for the divine magic offered by the Hell Kings.
5	The cultists are learned theurgists convinced that they can control the Hell Kings and their envoys with rites and ceremonies, and that their magic will yet redeem their souls before death. As far as anyone can tell, the Hell Kings find that absolutely hilarious.
6	The cultists are led by a genuine demon, and are desperate to appease its demands lest they end up as the sacrifices of choice.

# HERMIT WIZARDS



Imperial culture has always highly esteemed the arts of magic, and many other societies on the Isle have found much to commend its study. Not every aspiring wizard cares to remain within the accepted boundaries of the art, however, and some prefer to reach for the quick power of forbidden studies. These seekers after forbidden lore can often be found laired in ruins where they can find relative comfort and security for carrying out their rites.

## Hermit Wizard Encounters

**Weak:** 4 Loyal Servitors, 1 Apprentice Scholar. Any wizard this far from civilization is likely up to unsuitable ends, but only the most megalomaniacal apprentice will risk conflict on anything but his own terms.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of coinage.

**Average:** 10 Loyal Servitors, 5 Veteran Assistants, 2 Apprentice Scholars, 1 Adept Wizard. This small cabal is likely sharing in some project of sinister wizardry, one that likely has side effects or necessary ingredients too unpleasant for the confines of civilization.

**Treasure:** 1d8 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-3 gems, 1-3 piece of jewelry, two scrolls plus a 50% chance of two potions or scrolls and one magic item.

**Strong:** 15 Loyal Servitors, 10 Veteran Assistants, 4 Apprentice Scholars, 2 Adept Wizards, 1 Learned Hermit. This convocation is as large as some small schools of magic, and its master may have a sinister fame for teaching certain forms of magic that less decadent cities do not permit.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6+2 gems, 1d4+1 pieces of jewelry, three scrolls and one magic item plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions or scrolls.

### Loyal Servitor

HD: 1 AC: 8 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 7  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Veteran Assistant

HD: 3 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (17) Save As: Fighter 3 XP: 50

### Apprentice Scholar

HD: 1 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: MU 1 XP: 15  
Spells: 1st level: *Sleep*

### Adept Wizard

HD: 4 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: MU 4 XP: 140  
Spells: 1st level: *Sleep, Charm Person*  
2nd level: *Invisibility, Web*

### Learned Hermit

HD: 7 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (18) Save As: MU 7 XP: 1,140  
Spells: 1st: *Sleep, Charm Person, Detect Magic*  
2nd: *Invisibility, Web*  
3rd: *Hold Person, Fireball*  
4th: *Confusion*

1D6	TWISTS
1	The wizard seeks power through pacts formed with extraplanar powers. Strange familiars haunt the ruin.
2	The wizard is convinced that the ruin is a place of power that can be tapped to augment his abilities.
3	The wizard has gathered a circle of henchmen and minions to assist him in performing elaborate and bloody ceremonies to strengthen his magic.
4	The wizard believes that ancient magical texts can be found in the ruins.
5	The wizard is hiding from a rival from whom he has stolen a precious text or item. If the rival learns of the object's resurfacing, he is apt to come reclaim his property.
6	The wizard is working in conjunction with a renegade cleric in an attempt to plumb the secrets of divine magic.

# LIZARDFOLK CLAN



The lizardfolk are a reclusive race, cold-blooded, meditative, and indifferent to the wishes of men. They sometimes find it useful to inhabit the ruins that others have left behind, and fight fiercely against those who would try to dislodge them. Humans and other sentient beings are but animals to them, to be harvested for food and cleared away from holy ground. As numerous as these unscaled meat-beings are, however, some tribes find it wisest to deal peacefully with the cattle lest their small tribes be overwhelmed. A few have even interbred with human settlers, though the half-reptilian children that result are often viewed with more human horror than their full-blooded brethren.

## Lizardfolk Clan Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Lizard Warriors. This small band is likely out raiding for food or plunder, or guarding some sacred site distant from their home nest.

**Treasure:** 1d8 x 10 gold pieces worth of baubles and coins.

**Average:** 15 Lizard Warriors, 1 Lizard Warchief, 1 Lizard Shaman. These combatants might represent the full fighting strength of a small lizardfolk tribe, or they may be a powerful raiding band sent to plunder nearby human settlements or dig up old ruins for holy relics.

**Treasure:** 1d8 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-6 gems, 1-4 piece of jewelry.

**Strong:** 30 Lizard Warriors, 5 Lizard Warchiefs, 2 Lizard Shamans, 1 Old Sleeper. This tribe has been fortunate enough to awaken one of the Old Sleepers, the ancient lords of their kind. Freed from the cursed slumber which entombed them, the Old Sleeper is eager to reclaim the world from the hot-blooded and hairy beasts that have since overrun it.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6+1 gems, 1d4 pieces of jewelry, 50% chance of two magic items and two potions or scrolls.

### Lizard Warrior

HD: 2+1 AC: 5 Move: 60' (20') Morale: 12  
Swim 120'

Atk: 1d6+1/Spear (17) Save As: Fighter 4 XP: 47

### Lizard Warchief

HD: 4+1 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 12  
Swim 120'

Atk: 1d6+2/Spear (15) Save As: Fighter 6 XP: 215

### Lizard Shaman

HD: 4+1 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 12  
Swim 120'

Atk: 1d6+1/Spear (15) Save As: Cleric 4 XP: 290

Spells: 1st level: *Cure Light Wounds, Cause Light Wounds*  
2nd level: *Hold Person, Snake Charm*

### Old Sleeper

HD: 8+2 AC: 3 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 12  
Swim 120'

Atk: 1d6+1/Spear (12) Save As: Cleric 8 XP: 1,220

Spells: 1st level: *Cure Light Wounds x2, Cause Light Wounds x2*  
2nd level: *Hold Person, Snake Charm, Speak with Animal*  
3rd level: *Animal Growth, Striking, Dispel Magic*  
4th level: *Lower Water, Sticks to Snakes*

1d6	TWISTS
1	The lizardfolk have chosen the ruin as a nesting site, and are guarding a large cache of eggs. If given time to hatch and mature, the clan will be forced to raid neighbors for food.
2	The lizardfolk are led by a powerful shaman who has ambitions of enslaving nearby human communities for food and agricultural slaves.
3	The lizardfolk have discerned omens and signs which indicate that the ruins are holy ground. They will fight to the death to retain control of it.
4	The lizardfolk are of a tribe that has interbred with humanity; some may be willing to negotiate a peaceful coexistence, and others may simply have added human savagery to their implacable reptilian hunger.
5	The lizardfolk have been driven from their customary lands by a more powerful source, and many are wounded or crippled. They will fight desperately to hold to what little they have left.
6	An Old Sleeper is buried somewhere near the ruins, and is either sought or has actually arisen from its slumber. The clan seeks to serve it and exalt it as a god.

## KOBOLD CLAN

Wretched, degenerate little humanoids, kobolds are born, live, and die in varying shades of misery. While rather comical with their yipping speech and their scabbling gait, most kobolds nurse a deeply sadistic nature. They have a passionate love for tormenting those even weaker than they, and some exceptionally brutal lords keep kobolds as something of a combination of pet, jester, and torturer. Kobolds are miserable cowards, and their society is based on a hierarchy of fear and intimidation. They can readily be forced to serve more terrible beings, but they have a tendency to flee when not directly supervised.



### Kobold Encounters

**Weak:** 8 Kobold Spearmen, 1 Kobold Alpha. This scrawny pack is likely sniffing for lone wanderers and other vulnerable prey.

**Treasure:** 1d20 gold pieces worth of coins and petty plunder.

**Average:** 30 Kobold Spearmen, 3 Kobold Alphas, 1 Kobold Witch. This pack is likely the better part of an entire kobold clan, and may have been living in the ruins for some time. Kobolds breed quickly, but they're also the favored meal of many monstrous creatures.

**Treasure:** 1d2 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions or scrolls.

**Strong:** 50 Kobold Spearmen, 5 Kobold Alphas, 2 Kobold Witches, 1 Kobold King. This tribe is mighty (by kobold standards) and is nominally united under the paw of the kobold king, a remarkably large and aggressive example of his kind. Such kings readily draw the obedience of lesser kobolds, but their ambition often makes for short and exciting reigns.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-4 gems, 1-2 pieces of jewelry, one magic item plus a 25% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

### Kobold Spearman

HD: 1d4 hp AC: 7 Move: 60' (20') Morale: 6  
Atk: 1d6-1/Spear (20) Save As: Human 0 XP: 5

### Kobold Alpha

HD: 1-1 AC: 7 Move: 60' (20') Morale: 7  
Atk: 1d6/Spear (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Kobold King

HD: 3 AC: 5 Move: 60' (20') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d6/Spear (17) Save As: Fighter 3 XP: 50

### Kobold Witch

HD: 3 AC: 6 Move: 60' (20') Morale: 7  
Atk: 1d6/Mace (17) Save As: Cleric 3 XP: 65  
Spells: 1st level: *Cause Light Wounds* x2  
2nd level: *Bless*

1d8	TWISTS
1	The kobolds are fleeing an even more fearsome foe, such as a band of Shou raiders or an ogre cabal. The little dog-men have stolen something important and the original owners pursue them to take it back.
2	The kobolds are hiring out their services to some local thug or corrupt noble in order to attack his enemies. They aren't terribly courageous, but they work cheaply.
3	The kobolds have become infected with a rabies-like illness that is driving them to uncontrollable violence toward outsiders, banishing their usual cowardice.
4	Some powerful renegade priest or sinister wizard has taken control of the tribe, and forces it to assist- much to the bitter resentment of its alphas and king.
5	The kobolds have been enslaved by another power and are being used to dig the ruins for buried treasure or lost artifacts. They hate their masters even more than they hate adventurers.
6	The kobolds seek vengeance for some recent attack by humans. Of course, the kobolds were planning on eating their children, but they hadn't nerved themselves to attack yet.
7	A sorcerer is conducting dangerous experiments in kobolds, mutating them into dangerous warriors, freakish aberrations, and the occasional living bomb.
8	The kobolds have unearthed some magical artifact, and are filled with a possibly unfounded confidence in their newfound prowess. They intend to use the artifact against their enemies at the first available opportunity.

# MALIGN ELVEN CREED



Most of the Creeds followed by the elves of the Isles are peaceful philosophies. Some of them may be peculiar in the demands they place on their followers, but their devotees are capable of dealing peacefully with those outside the faith. A few Creeds, however, are so toxic in their principles that non-elves are in danger simply by their presence. Some of these malevolent zealots have beliefs so murderous that even elves that do not belong to their faith are considered prey. The rank and file of most malign creeds have not undertaken the training necessary to channel their natural talent into sorcerous spellcasting, but their leaders are often potent casters.

## Malign Creed Encounters

**Weak:** 6 Elven Fanatics. This little band is likely the product of a charismatic elven philosopher or one of the shattered remnants of a Creed that made too many enemies.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of coinage.

**Average:** 15 Elven Fanatics, 5 Elven Veterans, 2 Elven Magi. This Creed might have settled down with their spouses and children, keeping a reclusive distance from the intolerable ways of their lessers. They might be a fragment of a more tolerant creed, turned harshly extreme by a demagogue or crisis.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-3 gems, 1-3 piece of jewelry, one scroll plus 50% chance of two potions or scrolls and one magic item.

**Strong:** 30 Elven Fanatics, 10 Elven Veterans, 4 Elven Magi, 1 Aspiring Apotheon. This Creed is strong enough to seize control of a village or other modest settlement, and may well have plans of doing so in the near future. Its leader likely dreams of future glory as an Apotheon, and what few strictures a malign Creed has can end up bent beyond recognition if they interfere with this ambition.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6+2 gems, 1d4+1 pieces of jewelry, two magic items and a scroll plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions or scrolls.

### Elven Fanatic

HD:	1 (d6)	AC:	5	Move:	90' (30')	Morale:	8
Atk:	1d8/Sword (19)	Save As:	Elf 1	XP:	10		

### Elven Veteran

HD:	2 (d6)	AC:	3	Move:	90' (30')	Morale:	9
Atk:	1d8/Sword (19)	Save As:	Elf 2	XP:	50		

### Elven Magus

HD:	4 (d6)	AC:	3	Move:	90' (30')	Morale:	10
Atk:	1d8/Sword (17)	Save As:	Elf 4	XP:	190		
Spells:	1st level: <i>Sleep, Charm Person</i>						
	2nd level: <i>Invisibility, Web</i>						

### Aspiring Apotheon

HD:	7 (d6)	AC:	3	Move:	90' (30')	Morale:	11
Atk:	1d8/Sword (14)	Save As:	Elf 7	XP:	1,140		
Spells:	1st: <i>Sleep, Charm Person, Detect Magic</i>						
	2nd: <i>Invisibility, Web</i>						
	3rd: <i>Hold Person, Fireball</i>						
	4th: <i>Confusion</i>						

1d8	TWISTS
1	The Creed is murderously apotheonic; the elves are convinced that they can extract divinity from human sacrifices.
2	The Creed is exaltationist; the elves are convinced that they can remake society into ordered perfection, and strangers are enslaved in order to help build this utopia.
3	The Creed is deophobic; the elves despise all but the Godless races, and ritually torment and slay any others they can capture.
4	The Creed is amorally hedonistic, rejecting the concept of morality and seeking personal pleasure at all costs. Fellow believers are useful for providing enjoyment, but strangers can be used with less concern for damage.
5	The Creed is essentialist; the elves view their own nature as essentially superior to that of all other sentient life. Other beings may be treated as wayward children- or as mere cattle.
6	In addition to whatever philosophical traits they may have, the Creed is being hunted by elves from an enemy Creed or vengeful locals.
7	The Creed believes an elven Apotheon of their Creed is buried somewhere within the ruins, and seeks to revive him to further their cause.
8	The Creed is brutal, but not so much as to ignore the possibility of diplomacy. They seek to use the ruins as a base for eventual control of the region.

# NECROMANCERS



Necromancy is despised by most of the cultures in the Isles, especially the ancestor-venerating Imperials of Xian. Its dark arts can be used to disturb the eternal peace of the afterlife, with the lesser sorceries merely defiling the bones of the dead and the greatest pulling an unprotected soul from the serene stillness of death. Some necromancy can be used to protect against such unquiet souls or facilitate their journey to the afterlife, but most necromancers embrace the art for the power it gives them over the helpless dead. Ruins provide them not only with a useful supply of parts, but the privacy necessary for their research. Few necromancers are powerful enough to use such potent spells as *Animate Dead*, and so they are forced to manufacture their servitors with longer and more tedious rites that often require the aid of amoral, degenerate human servants.

## Necromancer Encounters

**Weak:** 2 Servitor Drudges, 4 Zombie Minions, 1 Minor Necromancer. Such little cabals are often the result of a young magic-user seeking privacy and fresh corpses for his studies.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 100 gold pieces worth of coins and valuable ingredients and books.

**Average:** 6 Servitor Drudges, 15 Zombie Minions, 3 Minor Necromancers. These necromancers have clearly been working together for some time, and may form a sinister secret society based out of a suitable ruin.

**Treasure:** 3,000 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions and one magic item.

**Strong:** 15 Servitor Drudges, 30 Zombie Minions, 4 Minor Necromancers, and 1 Master Necromancer. This cabal is led by a mage of rare skill and power, one that has attracted several apprentices and colleagues to assist in plumbing unholy lore.

**Treasure:** 6,000 gold pieces, 3-4 gems, 3-4 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

### Servitor Drudge

HD: 1 AC: 7 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Zombie Minion

HD: 2 AC: 8 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d8/Claws (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 29  
Note: Always loses initiative each round.

### Minor Necromancer

HD: 3 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: MU 3 XP: 100  
Spells: Knows *Magic Missile*, *Shield*, and *Web*. Can cast each spell once per day.

### Master Necromancer

HD: 7 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (18) Save As: MU 7 XP: 500  
Spells: 1st: *Sleep*, *Charm Person*, *Shield*  
2nd: *Invisibility*, *Web*  
3rd: *Hold Person*, *Protection from Good* 10'  
4th: *Charm Monster*  
Can cast 3/2/2/1 spells per day.

1d6	TWISTS
1	A necromancer has some personal tie with the ruins, as someone of importance to them died here. The necromancer seeks to locate their remains, nursing mad dreams of contact or revivification.
2	The remains are filled with well-preserved tombs or burial sites from which many faithful servants can be crafted and much useful research conducted. One or more necromancers have moved in to make use of the supplies.
3	A powerful necromancer once dwelled in the ruins, and the new occupants seek to uncover his forgotten lore.
4	The site is close enough to civilization for the necromancers and their minions to "recruit" living subjects for their study of the narrow boundary between life and death.
5	A wealthy patron has commissioned the necromancers to study means of prolonging life in the aged, and has supplied them with research subjects culled from his slaves or servants.
6	The necromancers are actually a branch of the Companions of Silence, come to put down an eruption of unquiet dead in the ruins. They fear themselves too weak to accomplish the necessary work.

# OGRE CABAL



The ogres of the Sunset Isles are the result of human malice and depraved craving. When a man or woman gives themselves utterly to some cruel and sordid desire, they leave their souls vulnerable to the attentions of certain dark powers. These malevolent spirits infest the mortal's frame, twisting and strengthening it even as they inflame the mortal's unholy passions. Soon the subject becomes incapable of dwelling among more wholesome folk, and they are forced into the wilderness to dwell with other ogres. The same spirits that infest them guide them to others of their kind, where their particular foul craving can be accommodated with kidnapped victims and weaker creatures. Ogres are constantly hunting for new prey lest denial leave them so frantic with need that they turn on each other.

## Ogre Cabal Encounters

**Weak:** 2 Ogre Degenerates. This little band has likely recently split off from a larger group, in hope of finding some village or settlement they can “enjoy” without need to share their victims.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 100 gold pieces worth of coinage.

**Average:** 4 Ogre Degenerates, 2 Ogre Tyrants. This small tribe preys on nearby settlements, but the degenerates often fume at the unfair share of the victims taken by the tyrants. Such cabals are held together largely by hate and fear.

**Treasure:** 1d8 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-6+2 gems, 1-4 piece of jewelry.

**Strong:** 10 Ogre Degenerates, 5 Ogre Tyrants, 1 Ogre Witch. Such a large cabal of ogres must remain in close proximity to some large source of victims, or else frustration and need will drive them to splinter into smaller groups of hunters. The witch that leads them will go to great lengths to ensure his or her “loyal” minions are not forced to such steps.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6+3 gems, 1d4+2 pieces of jewelry, 25% chance of one magic item and two potions or scrolls.

## Ogre Degenerate

HD: 4+1 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 8  
 Atk: 1d10/Club (15) Save As: Fighter 4 XP: 215  
 Note: Can shapeshift into a human form at will.

## Ogre Tyrant

HD: 6+1 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 9  
 Atk: 1d12/Club (13) Save As: Fighter 6 XP: 380  
 Note: Can shapeshift into a human form at will.

## Ogre Witch

HD: 7 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 9  
 Atk: 1d12/Club (13) Save As: MU 7 XP: 790  
 Note: Can shapeshift into a human form at will. Can cast *Charm Person*, *Sleep*, *Invisibility*, *Fly*, and *Dimension Door* once each per day as a 7th level magic-user.

1d6	TWISTS
1	The cabal is plotting some spectacular atrocity, and have captured dozens of victims. If they not rescued soon, there will be little left to save.
2	The ogres mimic a group of squatters, adventurers, or other human wilderness dwellers. They seek to lure victims into lowering their guard before striking from ambush.
3	The ogres have captured the son or daughter of a local noble. They know that they must dispose of their victim quickly before a rescue party comes, but they argue amongst each other over whose particular awful appetites are to be sated by their prey.
4	The ogres are led by an ogre sorcerer, who has prepared numerous elaborate traps to torment and slaughter intruders.
5	An important local has been “kidnapped” by the ogres. In actuality, he or she is a newly-developed ogre and has willingly gone to join the others.
6	One of the ogres in the cabal has been cooperating with an important local in a series of hideous depravities. Evidence of the connection can be found in the ruins.



Life is harsh in the Isles, and some men and women find it easier to get their daily rice in ways that the law cannot countenance. Murderers, robbers, smugglers, and even hated Shou-traders can be found lairing in the ruins of the wilderness. The larger cities of the Isles have some care for proper legal forms and measured justice, but in the borderlands such outlaws can expect only a noose at dusk and a few mumbled funerary prayers against their return as angry ghosts. Most village headmen and town magistrates care nothing for what happens to likely criminals in the wild, so long as it does not involve any of their people.

## Outlaw Encounters

**Weak:** 4 Outlaw Bandits and 2 Outlaw Archers. They may have a kidnap victim, but they are unlikely to have any other hangers-on.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 10 gold pieces, the value often in the form of plundered commodities rather than coins.

**Average:** 15 Outlaw Bandits, 5 Outlaw Archers, 1 Outlaw Chief. A group this size usually has three or four noncombatant camp followers who may be kidnapped victims or may be willingly cooperating with the outlaws.

**Treasure:** 600 gold pieces, 1 gem, 1 piece of jewelry, 15% chance of two potions and one magic item.

**Strong:** 40 Outlaw Bandits, 20 Outlaw Archers, 1 Outlaw Magic-User, 3 Outlaw Chiefs, and one Outlaw Captain with 5 hit dice, AC 3, and +2 to hit and damage over a normal chief. A bandit enclave of this size usually requires a village worth of followers and helpers to support it, or else regular infusions of food from tributaries or allies.

**Treasure:** 5,000 gold pieces, 3-4 gems, 3-4 pieces of jewelry, one magic item plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

## Outlaw Bandit

HD: 1 AC: 8 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 7  
Atk: 1d6/Spear (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

## Outlaw Archer

HD: 1 AC: 8 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 7  
Atk: 1d6/Shortbow (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

## Outlaw Chief

HD: 3 AC: 6 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (16) Save As: Fighter 3 XP: 50

## Outlaw Magic-User

HD: 3 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: MU 3 XP: 100  
Spells: Knows *Sleep*, *Charm Person*, and *Invisibility*. Can cast each spell once per day.

1d8	TWISTS
1	These outlaws are victims of some grave crime committed by a magistrate or daifu, having been driven from their land or oppressed beyond endurance. They still think of themselves as decent people but will show no mercy to agents of their tormentor.
2	These outlaws are starving, and will launch attacks on any likely food supply, even in the face of losing odds. They will cooperate with anyone who can feed them.
3	The outlaws are a band of deserters who fled their company after a defeat at the hands of enemy humans or Shou. They have much better discipline and equipment than ordinary bandits, but may be hunted by their former comrades or enemies.
4	The outlaws are a band of slaves escaped from the ownership of a Shogunate or Tien Lung noble. They cannot hope to live peacefully until the noble abandons his claim to them or they pass completely out of his reach.
5	The outlaws are smugglers, working to facilitate a trade in untaxed or forbidden goods. Drugs, necromantic ingredients, liquor, spices, and other relatively low-weight, high-value cargo are most often favored. Some might even trade with Shou.
6	The outlaws are the remnants of a destroyed farming village or mining hamlet. Privation and need have driven them to this life, and they are resolved to survive at any cost.
7	The outlaws are degenerate cannibals, driven to such behavior by the dark influences of the Tide or their own desperate hunger. They hunt for flesh as much as gold.
8	The outlaws are failed adventurers, those without the luck or courage to make much of their trade. Rather than plunder the enemies of their people, they find it easier and safer to prey upon their own kind.



# REMNANTS



These remnants linger from the original settlement of the ruins. They've managed to eke out a harsh existence here, possibly predating the arrival of the refugee fleet. Most such tribes view all outsiders as mortal threats, having accustomed themselves to such dangers as recurring Shou raids present. Fragments of their old culture and skills might linger, though advanced magic and technological skills such as metalworking may well have collapsed. Outsiders can negotiate with some of these tribes, but past experience has taught most of them to attack strangers on sight.

## Remnant Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Remnant Warriors, 1 Remnant War Leader. So small a group is likely a raiding party send off from a larger settlement, or the wretched handful left from an older settlement. The latter will have noncombatant women and children equal to their number.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of old coins and crafts.

**Average:** 20 Remnant Warriors, 5 Remnant War Leaders, 1 Remnant Chief, 1 Remnant Shaman. A group this size likely consists of all the combat-capable men and women of a small remnant settlement. Noncombatants will be present equal to their number.

**Treasure:** 2d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-3 gems, 1-3 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions or scrolls and one magic item.

**Strong:** 40 Remnant Warriors, 10 Remnant War Leaders, 1 Remnant Chief, 2 Remnant Shamans. This powerful force likely consists of the military of a relatively strong remnant settlement, one that has somehow managed to survive with a hundred or more of its noncombatant population intact. Such a band might still preserve some of the more sophisticated skills of sorcery and artisanship.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6+2 gems, 1d4+1 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

### Remnant Warrior

HD: 1 AC: 7 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d6/Spear (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Remnant War Leader

HD: 2 AC: 6 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 50

### Remnant Chief

HD: 4 AC: 4 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (15) Save As: Fighter 4 XP: 200

### Remnant Shaman

HD: 3 (d6) AC: 6 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d6/Mace (17) Save As: Cleric 3 XP: 200  
Spells: 1st level: *Cure Light Wounds, Cause Light Wounds*  
2nd level: *Bless*

1D8	TWISTS
1	The remnants actually date from a relatively recent failed colonization attempt of the ruins. The survivors are convinced that strangers have been sent to "steal their land", and are very difficult to persuade otherwise.
2	The remnants have embraced abhorrent practices to survive, becoming cannibals or worse in order to endure the dangers that surround them.
3	The remnants have been enslaved by a more powerful being that both protects them and demands their worship or service.
4	The remnants nurse strange beliefs about the outside world, such as imagining that other humans are simply new forms of Shou, or thinking that the rest of the world is inhabited solely by monsters.
5	The remnants have preserved a few fragments of powerful magic or exotic technology from their former culture, and they use them against intruders.
6	The remnants welcome new blood from outsiders- but have no intention of permitting any of them to leave, and plan to eventually cripple them in order to ensure they remain.
7	The remnants have retained much of their former sophistication, but view outsiders as primitive barbarians to be driven off, away from the sanctity of their ancient home.
8	The remnants are divided, some wishing to rejoin the outer world. The leadership remains convinced that outside contact can only result in their eventual destruction.

# RESTLESS DEAD



A corpse left without funerary rites leaves its owner's soul naked to the hunger of the Hell Kings in the afterlife. Good and pious souls can hope for the intercession of the kindly gods and their protection for their wayward soul, but less noble spirits have no such guarantee. Some are too frightened to leave this world, and so linger as fearful ghosts who nurse an unthinking hatred for the living who left them unshriven. It requires either a blessed servant of the gods or a stout weapon to force them onward into the afterlife. Places where great numbers of people died without the care of priests or funerary rites often serve as nests for groups of angry, frightened undead. Due to their lack of souls elves can never become undead, but dwarves and halflings sometimes experience the same terror of the world to come.

## Restless Dead Encounters

**Weak:** 3 Skeletons, 2 Animate Corpses. Little cysts of undead such as this often form by chance when one corpse rises to slay others who also fear the afterlife.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of scattered possessions.

**Average:** 10 Skeletons, 10 Animate Corpses, 5 Hungry Ghouls. The sweet flesh of the living eases the pain of death for the ghouls that haunt this place. Their victims join their kind if not consumed entirely, or if not so badly chewed as to rise as confused, angry zombies.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 1,000 gold pieces worth of coins, 1-3 gems, 1-3 piece of jewelry.

**Strong:** 30 Skeletons, 20 Animate Corpses, 10 Hungry Ghouls, 1 Restless Specter. This major infestation is likely the work of some unholy massacre or dark rite.

**Treasure:** 1d8 x 1,000 gold pieces worth of coins, 1-4 gems, 1-4 pieces of jewelry, one magic item, 25% chance of two more potions or scrolls.

### Skeleton

HD: 1 AC: 7 Move: 60' (20') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d6/Claws (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Animate Corpse

HD: 2 AC: 8 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d8/Claws (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 29  
Note: Always loses initiative each round.

### Hungry Ghoul

HD: 2 AC: 6 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d3/1d3/1d3 (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 47  
Note: Turns as 3 HD. Successful hits force save vs. Paralyze for 2d4 turns. Elves are immune to this paralysis.

### Restless Specter

HD: 6 AC: 2 Move: 150' (50') Morale: 12  
Fly 300'  
Atk: 1d8+drain (13) Save As: Fighter 6 XP: 1,070  
Note: A successful hit drains 2 levels. Immune to normal weapons.

1d6	TWISTS
1	The dead are composed largely of the original inhabitants of the site, many of which were killed when the ruins were destroyed.
2	The dead are adventurers who have perished here with none to tend their bones.
3	The dead are colonists who tried to establish a new community in the ruins, only to be wiped out by some peril.
4	The dead are the results of a necromancer's unholy meddling. The dark sorcerer may still be present.
5	The dead are soldiers who fought a great battle here, perhaps as part of the ruin's destruction.
6	The dead are ancient, having boiled upward after some even older edifice was disturbed by the ruin's original inhabitants.

# SHOU



The Shou have despised humans since the weak interlopers first landed on the shores of the Sunset Isles. The invaders spread like a plague, eagerly embracing the slave-work of farming and building, proving their natural purpose as thralls to the stronger Shou. Tribes can be found throughout the Isles, squabbling and warring with each other. The orcs prefer mountains and hills, the bugbears favor rocky hills and deep jungles, and the goblins roam wherever sufficient prey can be found. Wild tribes subsist by hunting and gathering, while those fortunate enough to enslave other Shou or humans practice agriculture- or cannibalism. With all Shou, farming and the raising of livestock is considered “slave work”, and intolerable to warriors. The statistics given here are for orcs, but the same model can work just as well for other breeds of Shou.

## Shou Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Shou Orc Warriors and 1 Shou Orc Leader. Groups this small are almost always raiding parties and do not take along females or children. A few are the tattered remnants of a tribe that’s lost many members, and they may have an equal number of noncombatants with them.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 10 gold pieces, the value often in the form of plundered commodities rather than coins.

**Average:** 20 Shou Orc Warriors, 2 Shou Orc Leaders, 1 Shou Orc Witch, and a Chief with 3 hit dice and +3 to hit and damage compared to an average warrior. This is either a strong raiding party or a small tribe. If the latter, it will have an equal number of noncombatant females and children.

**Treasure:** 2,500 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 pieces of jewelry, 15% chance of any 2 magic items and 2 potions.

**Strong:** 60 Shou Orc Warriors, 6 Shou Orc Leaders, 3 Shou Orc Witches, one under-chief with 3 hit dice and +3 to hit and damage, and a Great Chief with 5 hit dice, AC 3, +5 to hit, and +3 damage compared to an average warrior. This encounter represents a powerful Shou tribe with an equal number of females and children somewhere within the lair.

**Treasure:** 5,000 gold pieces, 3-4 gems, 3-4 pieces of jewelry, one magic item plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

### Shou Orc Warrior

HD: 1 AC: 6 Move: 120’ (40’) Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d6/Spear (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Shou Orc Leader

HD: 1 (8 hp) AC: 6 Move: 120’ (40’) Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d6+1/Spear (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 15

### Shou Orc Witch

HD: 3 AC: 7 Move: 120’ (40’) Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d6/Witchfire (16) Save As: Cleric 3 XP: 100

Spells: 1st level: *Cure Light Wounds*, *Remove Fear*

2nd level: *Bless*

Can cast 2 first and 1 second level spell per day.

Witchfire has range 50’/100’/150’ and never hits allies.

1d10 TWISTS	
1	The surrounding land has been hunted out, and the neighboring tribes or humans are too strong to push them from their territory. The Shou face starvation.
2	A powerful witch has commanded her tribe to seize the ruins as a base for further expansion.
3	Human renegades are trading with the Shou, and the ruins serve as a market between them.
4	More than one tribe has settled here to maintain it as neutral ground for the trade of goods, females and slaves. While the witches of each tribe agree that the others are “pure”, the warriors strongly mistrust each other.
5	A witch has received visions of a potent magical artifact hidden somewhere in the ruins, and her tribe works to find it.
6	A Tide Cult is active in the ruins or surrounding area, and a Shou witch has brought her tribe to destroy it.
7	A more powerful tribe has driven the Shou out of their old grounds, and the survivors have regrouped in the ruins.
8	The Shou have lived in the ruins for time out of mind. If the site is close to human habitation, either the humans are new arrivals or the Shou feel too weak to confront them.
9	The Shou have been enslaved by some greater power they disturbed in the ruins. This power may simply want its privacy, or it may aspire to reach out and seize nearby settlements.
10	The Shou have moved in to enslave another group that once dwelled in the ruins, and now use them as farming slaves and occasional meals.

# SQUATTERS



Squatters differ from ordinary bandits and outlaws by their desire to make a lasting home of the ruins. Occasionally the depredations of Shou raiders or the oppression of a ruthless magistrate can drive a community into the wilderness, and these wretched souls often find themselves inhabiting the sites of ruins for much the same reasons that drew the first occupants. These squatters take what shelter they can find in the wreckage, and are usually prepared to fight in defense of their new home. For those ruins deep enough into the borderlands to escape any official ownership, squatters sometimes nurse ambitions of becoming the formally-recognized owners of the land. A mixture of desperation and hope mingle to give them the courage to stand against interlopers- and the recklessness to meddle with old things that ought not to be touched.

## Squatter Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Squatter Militiamen, 1 Squatter Veteran. Almost all squatter communities will have women and children equal in number to the arms-bearing population, and they may attempt to fight in desperate circumstances.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of old coins and crafts.

**Average:** 20 Squatter Militiamen, 5 Squatter Veterans, 1 Squatter Headman, 1 Squatter Priest. The ruins likely have some valuable plunder, good construction, or important location to have attracted a band with this many combatants.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions or scrolls and one magic item.

**Strong:** 40 Squatter Militiamen 10 Squatter Veterans, 1 Squatter Headman, 2 Squatter Priests. This many combat-capable vagabonds implies that more than one band of squatters has joined together at this site in order to make a home here. They may or may not get along as smoothly as their leaders hope.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6 gems, 1d4 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

## Squatter Militiaman

HD: 1 AC: 7 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d6/Spear (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

## Squatter Veteran

HD: 2 AC: 6 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 50

## Squatter Headman

HD: 4 AC: 4 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (15) Save As: Fighter 4 XP: 200

## Squatter Priest

HD: 3 (d6) AC: 6 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d6/Mace (17) Save As: Cleric 3 XP: 200  
Spells: 1st level: *Cure Light Wounds* x2  
2nd level: *Bless*

1d8	TWISTS
1	The squatters have awoken some ancient evil which now preys on them from within the ruins.
2	The squatters have uncovered a treasure, and the prospect of such wealth threatens to tear the group apart in the struggle to possess it.
3	The squatters are still being hunted by some high official for unpaid taxes, damages from their departure, or their harboring of runaway slaves. They will pay much to anyone able to convince their tormentor to leave off pursuit.
4	The squatters have failed wretchedly in making a new community in the ruins, and have been driven by hunger to cannibalism and worse.
5	The squatters have come at the urgings of an ostensible holy man who may or may not actually possess any clerical powers. Roll 1d6; on an odd number, the holy man is a malevolent schemer, and on an even number, he is a hopelessly impractical visionary.
6	The squatters are lepers or other sufferers of some contagious, detestable disease. They have been forced to live in the ruins by the fear and loathing of others.
7	The squatters are a band of escaped slaves masquerading as peasants from a distant district. They live in terror of discovery, and will try to kill those who unearth their secret.
8	The squatters formerly belonged to a nearby village or town until an accusation of some great conspiracy of malice or witchcraft was leveled against them. They maintain their innocence; on a roll of 4+ on 1d6, they actually are innocent.

# TIDE CULTISTS



The dark blandishments of the Tide seep into the skulls of the unfortunate. Borne on infectious dreams, these images fill the head of a susceptible man or woman, promising safety and security for them and those they love. Most touched by such dreams refuse them, shutting away the haunting images and promises they represent until they fade and do not return. Weaker souls submit. They perform the small rites or petty sacrifices to the red mist that open wider the door. Each new submission brings a new gift from the mist, a new favor or help for their needs. Eventually, the demands of the mist grow too great for them to conceal, and they must flee with their fellow cultists into the wild. Hated by Shou and human alike, these Tide cultists are hard-pressed to capture enough victims for the hideous rites their twisted, deformed priests demand.

## Tide Cult Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Cult Wretches, 1 Cult Myrmidon. These little cults often come about when some charismatic man or woman leads the rest of their family into dark practices. Their insular ways make them difficult to root out.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of coins and possessions.

**Average:** 15 Cult Wretches, 5 Cult Myrmidons, 1 Cult Sorcerer. These cults prosper under the guise of innocent shrines or private businesses, drawing in Tide-touched worshippers discreetly.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions and one magic item.

**Strong:** 20 Cult Wretches, 15 Cult Myrmidons, 3 Cult Sorcerers, 1 Cult Magus, and 1 Tidespawned Demon. A cult as powerful as this one has managed to call forth one of the demons of the Tide, who now leads the cult in its dark worship. Such a powerful cabal is unlikely to be able to hide within a city, and so usually occupies a distant and secure ruin.

**Treasure:** 2d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 2d4 gems, 1d8 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

### Cult Wretch

HD: 1 AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

### Cult Myrmidon

HD: 2 AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 20

### Cult Sorcerer

HD: 3 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: MU 3 XP: 100  
Spells: Knows *Magic Missile*, *Sleep*, and *Web*. Can cast each spell once per day.

### Cult Magus

HD: 7 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: MU 7 XP: 500  
Spells 1st: *Sleep*, *Charm Person*, *Shield*  
2nd: *Invisibility*, *Web*  
3rd: *Hold Person*, *Protection from Good 10'*  
4th: *Charm Monster*  
Can cast 3/2/2/1 spells per day.

### Tidespawned Demon

HD: 9 AC: -2 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d3/1d3/1d4 (11) Save As: Fighter 9 XP: 3,100  
Note: Immune to normal weapons. Can use *Darkness 10' Radius*, *Fear*, *Levitate*, and *Sleep* at will, once per round. Takes half damage from fire, cold, electricity. Can communicate with any intelligent creature.

1d6	TWISTS
1	The cultists are a noble and his wretched entourage, forced to flee his former home before his crimes were discovered.
2	The cultists are simple villagers, driven out by furious neighbors.
3	The cultists include one or more magic-users, a cabal of sorcerers who sought the wrong kind of secrets.
4	The cultists are a degenerate tong infected by the conversion of their leadership.
5	The cultists proselytize aggressively, sending out covert agents to nearby villages and towns to lure potential converts back to the ruins.
6	The cult leadership has masked its true nature, and much of the rank and file is convinced that they serve completely different spiritual masters. This facade rarely lasts long, but it can be effective in the short term.

# TONG BASE



Some tongs are simply fraternal brotherhoods of poor commoners, sworn to rely on each other to endure the hardships of life and the sudden reverses of fate. Others, however, are sophisticated criminal organizations that run extortion, vice, and fencing operations for a membership indistinguishable from any other thieves' guild. Some of these criminal tongs require remote bases for storing hot goods and wanted members. The leadership of the tong rarely resides so far from the city, but many of their most bloodthirsty lieutenants find themselves rustivating there in order to avoid awkward conversations with the local magistracy.

## Tong Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Tong Highbinders, 1 Tong Hatchetman. This little band is either lying low in the wake of some crime or guarding a cache kept by the tong.

**Treasure:** 1d6 x 100 gold pieces worth of pay or plunder.

**Average:** 25 Tong Highbinders, 5 Tong Hatchetmen, 1 Tong Sorcerer. This is a tightly-held tong stronghold under the oversight of the tong's Master of Rites.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions or scrolls and one magic item.

**Strong:** 30 Tong Highbinders, 15 Tong Hatchetmen, 1 Stern Master, 2 Tong Sorcerers. This site is practically an entire tong's worth of highbinders and thugs, under the command of the tong's Stern Master. It may be a training site for a very large and important tong, or it may be the whole of a tong recently driven out of their former domain in a city.

**Treasure:** 2d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6 gems, 1d4 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

## Tong Highbinder

HD: 1 AC: 8 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 8  
Atk: 1d6/Hand Axe (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

## Tong Hatchetman

HD: 2 AC: 8 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d6/Hand Axe (18) Save As: Fighter 2 XP: 50

## Stern Master

HD: 8 (d4) AC: 7 Move: 120' (30') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d10/2H Swd (17) Save As: Thief 8 XP: 1,060

Note: Can backstab for x2 damage. Thief abilities PL 65%, FRT: 63%, PP: 63%, MS: 63%, CW: 94%, HS: 57%

## Tong Sorcerer

HD: 5 (d4) AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 9  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (18) Save As: MU 5 XP: 350

Spells: 1st level: *Sleep, Charm Person, Shield*  
2nd level: *Web, Invisibility*  
3rd level: *Fireball*

1d8	TWISTS
1	The tong uses the ruin as a storehouse for goods too hot to move openly in the city. They've recently stolen something very important, and its original owner wants it back.
2	The tong members resident in the ruins are plotting to seize control of the tong and eliminate the leader in the city. The leader may be inclined to send trouble their way.
3	A sinister cult has formed in the ruins and the tong there are gradually spreading it among the rest of the organization.
4	The tong leadership nurses dreams of a fortified stronghold in the ruins, and are working to make the site an actual fortification rather than a simple hideout.
5	The ruin site is actually owned by a rich merchant, who wants the tong gone but doesn't dare appear openly responsible for any ejection of the roughs.
6	The tong is actually descended from the original inhabitants of the ruin, and they jealously guard the land as their ancestral property.
7	Something dark and vile is going on in the ruins, and its orchestrators are simply enlisting the tong as cover and guardians while they carry out their purposes.
8	The "tong" is actually an intelligence agency operated by some power inimical to the nearest government.

# ZEALOTS



With the general decay of organized religion in the Sunset Isles, not many zealots are actually inspired by burning religious fervor. Instead, these men and women adhere to some set of beliefs which make them incapable of living peacefully among others. Some are fired by faith, convinced that their truth alone will save them from the Tide and the Hell Kings and that all outsiders must be converted by the sword. Others are simply convinced that their particular culture or ethnicity is unjustly oppressed or denied its rightful place of superiority by the villains of the Isles. A few communities are bound

together by exotic social ideologies that grant their adepts the right to take what others have made whenever a need is felt. Such groups are usually soon forced out of the communities of the isles, and often take refuge in abandoned places where they can nurse their bitterness at the denial of their obvious enlightenment.

## Zealot Encounters

**Weak:** 5 Zealot Commoners, 1 Zealot Priest. This may be a small band of enthusiasts seeking to fight for their “just cause” from a remote wilderness base or from within a secret cell in a city or village. Most such cults cannot escape notice for long.

**Treasure:** 2d6 x 10 gold pieces worth of coins and possessions.

**Average:** 10 Zealot Commoners, 2 Zealot Priests, 3 Zealot Templars. This cult has found a handful of expert warriors to take up their cause, either for devotion to the faith or the gleam of gold. Templars hired out with the offerings of the faithful may not have the unshakable morale of their more pious brethren.

**Treasure:** 1d4 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1-2 gems, 1-2 piece of jewelry, 50% chance of two potions and one magic item.

**Strong:** 30 Zealot Commoners, 3 Zealot Priests, 5 Zealot Templars, 1 Zealot Prophet. A cabal this strong is possibly the militant arm of an entire village of faithful believers, led by a holy man consecrated to the cause. A force this powerful compels respect and occasional reverence from those sympathetic to their cause, and dread from those nearby communities that are counted enemies.

**Treasure:** 1d8 x 1,000 gold pieces, 1d6 gems, 1d4 pieces of jewelry, two magic items plus a 50% chance of one more magic item and two potions.

## Zealot Commoner

HD: 1 AC: 9 Move: 120' (40') Morale: 10  
Atk: 1d4/Dagger (19) Save As: Fighter 1 XP: 10

## Zealot Priest

HD: 2 (d6) AC: 5 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d6/Mace (19) Save As: Cleric 2 XP: 100  
Note: Can cast *Cause Light Wounds* twice per day.

## Zealot Templar

HD: 4 AC: 3 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d8/Sword (15) Save As: Fighter 4 XP: 200

## Zealot Prophet

HD: 7 (d6) AC: 2 Move: 90' (30') Morale: 12  
Atk: 1d6/Mace (17) Save As: Fighter 11 XP: 1,140  
Spells: 1st level: *Cure Light Wounds*\*2, *Cause Light Wounds*\*2  
2nd level: *Hold Person*, *Bless*, *Know Alignment*  
3rd level: *Animate Dead*, *Striking*  
4th level: *Sticks to Snakes*

1d8	TWISTS
1	The zealots are convinced that their holy men and women are sinless, and that anything they command or desire must be theirs by divine right.
2	The zealots despise others not of their race or culture, convinced that the other peoples of the Isles are savage brutes who constantly seek the destruction of their culture and “pure blood”.
3	The zealots loathe those not of their own kind, embittered by the failure of others to recognize their manifest racial and cultural superiority.
4	The zealots are moved by religious fervor, ‘inviting’ others to partake of their shared truth and obedience to their priests. Those who decline must be persuaded by the sword.
5	The zealots are members of a radical political group, convinced that a particular local government is composed of savage tyrants. Any sacrifice is acceptable in order to overthrow the brutes, whether or not those sacrificed approve.
6	The zealots have laid claim to the ruins as their own tiny sovereign domain, and will treat any intruders who fail to recognize their authority as invaders to be dispatched.
7	The zealots have been enslaved by sorcery or methodical application of certain rare drugs, and serve their sinister master with helpless enthusiasm.
8	8: The zealots have recently lost their leader, and have fractured into multiple factions, each one struggling to impose its interpretation of their beliefs upon the others.

## An Example Ruins Site

Another evening finds the referee with a little more time on his hands, and he decides it would be a good idea to flesh out the old mining site that's poisoning the land around the town of Hulun Bir. If the players never get near the Westmark market town, he can still repurpose the ruin later, and let them stumble across it when the situation recommends. They might end up fixing Hulun Bir's problem without even realizing what they've done.

The referee already knows what kind of ruin site he's going to be building. Its going to be an abandoned underground mine, possibly with a few open pit scrapings and tailing piles on the surface. He also knows how it ended up abandoned- it was overrun during the Ravaging in 120 AL, and it's too deep into Shou territory to be reclaimed. A few bands of adventurers have come out to pick over the leavings, but most of them were wiped out by the hazards of the place.

The referee decides that there should be something interesting about the mine environment, to keep it from being a simple hole in the ground with monsters in it. On consideration, he decides that the geomantic poison leaking from the old pre-Exile mining equipment has fouled the air and land around the mines. Every 3 hours spent around the mines will force a saving throw versus Poison. On a failure, the PC will lose 1d4 points of Constitution from nausea and exhaustion. A PC brought below Constitution 3 will fall unconscious, and one brought below 1 will die. The lost Constitution will recover at the rate of 1 point per day spent away from the mines.

Of course, whatever dangers inhabit the mine should either be adapted or immune to this geomantic fouling. Just to get a few ideas, the referee rolls twice on the Ruin Inhabitants table, getting "Restless Dead" and "Necromancers". Well, this seems clear enough- a cabal of necromancers has come here to the mines to harvest the supply of unburied dead. Some of the old bones have animated on their own, driven by the restless spirits of miners slain and left without proper burial. The dead naturally don't need to worry about the geomantic poisons, and the necromancers use alchemical extracts to resist the toxins. Just as a tie-in to Hulun Bir, the referee decides that the necromancers get their herbs and ingredients from Zafira bint-Tamir back in town, who might know more than she ought to about their activities in the mines. The referee makes a note to make sure some sort of note or invoice is present at the mines to reveal the connection- a tie that the PCs have no chance of discovering isn't terribly useful.

Having gotten a general idea of the ruin's occupants, the referee takes a blank sheet of paper and sketches out the mine's surface. Circles and squiggles mark out the pit scrapings and tailing piles, and the entrance to the mine proper. A few sketched boxes show the foundations of the old mine smelter, and the stone structure might still be partially roofed. It's possible that the referee will put some monsters in there later to give a hint about what's down below, but

the immediate goal is just to have a description to give any players who stumble on the site.

Next the referee prints out the sample cavern map in the Resources section and selectively blocks off a few of the passages. Even if the players prefer to map their ruins, they won't necessarily realize that the referee simply reuses this map when necessary by blocking different passageways and sketching in different cavern shapes.

Next, he keys the individual cavern rooms, keeping in mind that the necromancers, at least, will need the usual human facilities for eating, sleeping, defecating, and working. The Resources section provides ideas on room dressing. Once he's established that, he plants three or four pre-Exile digging devices in among the rooms. Pulling out their geomantic cores will render them harmless and halt the poisoning effect of the environment. The necromancers simply never realized this was possible, as their arcane studies aimed rather more to death than life. Also, the referee decides that at least one of the digging engines is guarded by the angriest and strongest of the restless dead.

The referee then looks to the inhabitants entry for necromancers and restless dead, and decides what groups to use. Since the referee expects a mid-level group to eventually discover the mines, he uses the mid-range packages of enemies. He sprinkles the necromancers among their section of the caves and places the treasure he rolled accordingly. He also takes a moment to jot down notes about how they'll react to intruders, since they're fully intelligent enough to respond sensibly to bloodthirsty adventurer incursions.

The restless dead are less intelligent, and the referee puts them in appropriate groups in the less inhabited section of the mines, saving the fiercest for the half-dug chamber where the last digging engine is. The best treasure the restless dead possess, however, is hidden in the miners' living quarters. The referee knows not to put everything of importance behind something fangy and dangerous, or else the players won't have a chance to be rewarded for avoiding unnecessary combat.

As a final touch, the referee takes a moment to sketch in a few natural hazards on the mine map, perhaps marking a patch of loose rocks or bad air or a spongy slide of dirt concealing a half-dozen skeletal miners. He takes care not to put any of these where the necromancers would have to navigate them on a daily basis.

As it is, the mines are done now- all except for a name to help organize them in his folder. A brief musing leads him to dub it "The Scar of Red Water", after the ruddy tint that the geomantic poison leaves on the local water. If he intended the ruin for near-term use he'd want to decide on how to make sure the players become aware of it, but for now he is content to simply slide it into his files. The next time he needs a ruin in the middle of nowhere, he can pull it out with minimal fuss and be sure of a session's worth of entertainment from it.



# SECRETS OF THE MISTS

This chapter is intended to cover a few of the secret truths and lost verities that a Labyrinth Lord is likely to need before running a campaign in the world of the Red Tide. Players may want to avert their eyes from this section, but none of the information in this chapter will really spoil them. As always, Labyrinth Lords should feel free to remix or alter the facts revealed in this chapter to suit their own taste.

## The Nature of the Red Tide

There are predators at every point on the scale of creation. Insects are preyed upon by larger insects, and beasts are eaten by larger beasts. Everything has something that exists to prey upon it, and worlds are no exception to this rule. The Red Tide is a predator of realities.

It is not a sentient, self-aware thing, at least not as humans would understand it. If the Tide could be said to have wants, they would be wants for consumption, absorption, and destruction of all sentient life on the face of a world. It is a cancerous dream, a metastasizing physical law as inexorable as gravity with a grudge. It is incredibly subtle, complex, and responsive, but it does not think the way that human beings think.

It is impossible to be certain just how the Red Tide evolved, whether it was some ineffably vast magical ritual that went awry and gained an awful purpose, or if it was simply the consequence of some brute conjunction of circumstances and physical law. Whatever its origins, it has eaten many, many worlds before it came to this one. It bleeds through the thin points between worlds, entering through the weakest points in the barriers between realities. In the case of the Tide, this is most often somewhere deep within the seas, without the walls of mundane human existence to thicken the barrier.

The Tide's usual mode of operation is simple. It bleeds through a planar nexus into a world and expands, the red mist seizing on the innermost dreads and horrors of those trapped within and then echoing them back in the form of demons. The inhabitants of the world generate their own means of destruction. Their dreams, their fears, their yearnings all react with the Tide to catalyze unspeakable horrors. Animals and plants lack the sophistication necessary to trigger this generation of horrors, and thinking creatures that are not alive are somehow indigestible to the Tide. Constructs and undead are usually completely ignored by Tidespawn unless they do something to interfere with the expansion of the mist.

Gods are rarely a difficulty for the Tide. The consumption of a world is often so quickly accomplished that the gods have no time to sort out their squabbles and disputes and unite as a whole against the invader. Even when deities do manage to put aside their disputes and strike back against the Tide, the very impersonal, formless nature of the assault makes it difficult to stop. The gods may as well decree an end to light, or gravity, or age as try to take apart the laws that empower the Red Tide. Once the mist has a solid foothold on a world, it also creates a further shell of metaphysical resistance which makes contact with human worshippers even more difficult. The transcendent thrones of the gods are blocked from their creation until the mist finally passes, only to leave nothing left but a world scoured clean of every thinking creature.

Once the Tide has become anchored in a world, it builds most thickly on areas of heavy human habitation. Even after the inhabitants have been digested by the Tide and reduced to puppets of their own terrors, the residue of human lives creates a more elaborate structure for the Tide to inhabit, like a crab in a nautilus shell. Populous nations produce Dream Lords in parody of their rulers, and serried ranks of monsters serving as officials and vassals. These Tidespawn rarely have active purposes. Most often, they simply exist, a shadow and echo of the people that once dwelled in that land.

Rarely, the inhabitants of a world are somehow able to check the Tide, to hold it back from its steady and remorseless expansion. If the steady march of the mist walls does not suffice to devour a world, the Tide begins to cast out feelers into the protected areas, sneaking faint, almost imperceptible tendrils of influence into the heads of the inhabitants. Most creatures don't even notice the Tide's emanations, but a few weak-willed or mystically sensitive souls experience the contact as a series of vivid dreams in which the performance of some simple, trifling rite is rewarded with luck and good fortune.

Most creatures realize the danger of listening to such sendings, but there are always a few desperate or foolish enough to do as the visions ask. The "harmless" ritual actually opens wider the channel of influence that the Tide has upon them. The Tide is able to influence their emotional state, making them feel fortunate, optimistic, powerful, and successful. Things start to go well with them, as even disastrous personal reverses start to feel like auspicious beginnings. The more elaborate the rites that these subjects perform, the wider the hole they make for the Tide to reach them.

Eventually, a dedicated worshipper can create such a powerful channel that the Tide begins to bestow tangible blessings upon him. Minor magical powers, valuables, and sustenance begin to appear as rewards for his service. Because the Tide is so deeply influenced by the mind that perceives it, these rewards are always precisely what the worshipper desires, always those gifts that they want most dearly. Few are ever able to recover from this stage as the Tide begins to give them all they ever really wanted to have.

As the influence progresses, the power of the Tide begins to warp the worshipper. The changes are mental at first, as the devotee starts to see things that aren't there and experience vivid, pleasing delusions. Their magical powers may increase, but the true rewards of the Tide are most often hallucinatory in nature. After the subject's mind has been completely enthralled to the Tide, the physical changes begin as their body is shaped to more perfectly amplify the Tide's influence through them. Elevated priests of a Tide cult are rarely recognizable as human beings, either physically or mentally.

Eventually, of course, the worshipper either dies under the strain of the transformation or experiences the utter horror of clarity as the Tide no longer requires them in order to reach their corner of the earth. Bereft of the direct control of the Tide, they can finally understand the monster that they have become, and yet they remain helpless to resist the mindless purposes of the Tide. Many are rendered down into physical portals for the entry of Tidespawn into their protected enclaves, and others simply become one more implement for the expansion of the Tide into their homelands.

Tide cults invariably seek to grow in numbers, as each additional devotee is one more path into the protected lands. Until the Tide can directly push through the barrier that guards them, their living bodies serve as channels for the Tide's power. Once their services are no longer necessary, they can expect to be transformed and fed upon like all the rest.

Once the Tide has completely overcome the inhabitants of a world, there is a slow period of digestion and absorption as the last agonized fragments of the former inhabitants' minds are degraded down to their component flickers of ego-identity. This meal serves to give the Tide the energy it needs to probe its way through another planar weak point, while simultaneously eroding the barriers between worlds as no more sentient life exists to harden the planar walls. Eventually, the last tormented puppet collapses and the last Dream Lord loses coherency in his empty palace, and it is time for the Tide to move on to the next world.

For many ages, this has been a process without flaw or difficulty. But the world before this one gave the tide an unexpected setback, and now this world fights back with a vigor and effectiveness that the Tide has never before experienced. The rest of the world's intelligent life is being steadily digested, but the intelligent holdouts in the Sunset Isles are maintaining the strength of the barrier between worlds. If the Tide cannot break down their defenses and consume them soon, it may find itself too weak to break through the planar walls in pursuit of new prey. It needs to infest and erase the Sunset Isles if it is to have the energy and the environment necessary to reach fresh prey.



## The Role of the Tide

For a Labyrinth Lord, the Tide is intended to serve as a constant background threat. It's not something that needs to crop up in every adventure or an element that every session needs to acknowledge, but it's a constant red shadow in the background coloring every possible future for the inhabitants of the Isles. It's the world-eating abomination that might eventually force the warring peoples of the Isles to work together for mutual survival, or it might be the agent that tolls the death knell for all sentient life on this world.

The Tide also serves as a long-term enemy in the campaign. It's very likely that a group of powerful PC heroes is going to take an interest in striking back against the Tide, and they may well seek to salvage lore and precious relics left behind in the human lands when the exiles were forced to flee for the Isles. When a group of PCs grow too powerful for the Isles to hold them, the Tide presents a red land big and fearsome enough to keep them occupied.

For Labyrinth Lords who prefer a note of Lovecraftian horror in their campaigns, the Tide also serves as the alien, implacable outside force that is constant pressure on the portals of human sanity. The Tide is not something with intentions and desires as humans understand them, but a being more on the order of a natural law. Struggling against the Tide should have much the same flavor as fighting some Great Old One, a being that can and will erase an unwary human in pursuit of purposes that only incidentally involve the destruction of all life on the planet.

For those who prefer more of a pulp feel to their cosmic horrors, Tide cultists are useful as gnawing fifth-columnists in human society, maddened devotees who practice hideous rites in hidden places and who are richly deserving of all the righteous steel that the PCs bring against them. Depending on the degree to which you emphasize the power of the Tide's blandishments, you can change the tenor of these encounters from the two-fisted punishment of willful, slaving traitors to humanity to the awful culling of wretched, deluded half-innocents who never really understood what they were getting into.

Whatever use you make of the Tide, you should be careful to take your cues from the players. When using cosmic horrors on the scale of the Tide, it's all too easy to transform a campaign into a steady

sequence of desperate struggles and vital clashes, to the point where a PC group can hardly do anything else without being haunted with worry over what they're leaving undone. While this can be a fun sort of campaign to have, it can trample on some of the freedom that makes many players want to play a sandbox game in the first place. If your players don't want the campaign to be about the constant struggle against the Tide, you should take care that you don't force the point with them.

## The Shou

In truth, neither the Shou nor the Sunset Isles are native to this world. Both they and their entire archipelago are fragments remaining from the last world consumed by the Tide, cast forth to a temporary refuge in this world by the sacrifice of their god.

Long, long ago, before the humans of this world had built great nations, when lizardfolk princes ruled cities of sun-warmed black stone, the Red Tide was occupied in consuming the native world of the Shou. Their world was an old one, and over long millennia the struggles of the gods had played out until only one deity remained—Shakun, Lord of the Pillars of the Sky. The Shou worshipped him and him alone, and so when the Red Tide first crashed in on their reality, Shakun had both the strength and the focus to fight back immediately.

Aided by a world's worth of believers, Shakun and the Shou slowed the march of the Tide, containing it within limited zones of infection. The manipulations of reality necessary to contain this cancerous set of physical laws started to degrade the rest of the world, however, like fabric left frayed and tearing from too much strain on the threads. Shou arcanists and fleshmolders worked in conjunction with the priestesses of Shakun to develop warriors capable of banishing the Tide once and for all. If only the Tidespawn could be exterminated, they reasoned, the Tide would “starve” from lack of sustenance. The Tidespawn were the mouths that fed the Tide on terror, pain, and fear, and their euthanization would deprive the mist of what it needed to exist.

It took centuries to perfect the new bloodlines, centuries in which the Shou were slowly but inexorably pushed back. Too many warriors were taken by the Tide, too many cults sprang up outside the containment zones. Time was running out.

But the fleshmolders succeeded in the end. The new breed of Shou was perfect. The powerful orcs were fecund and ferocious, able to endure hardship fearlessly and readily accept orders from their officers. Bugbears were harder to breed, but their stealth and massive thews could strike to destroy Tidespawn leaders and cast the hordes into confusion before the legions of the orcs. Goblins were scouts and skirmishers, able to go in after Tidespawn no matter where they hid and provide archery support for the orcish legions. The hobgoblins came last—perfected officers for their Shou brethren, imbued from birth with an instinctive knowledge of how to lead and how to fight.

Yet these martial virtues meant little in comparison with the subtle blessings and potent virtues woven into the flesh of the new Shou race. These thaumic nodes and sculpted soul-channels baffled the

inroads of the Tide and scattered its otherworldly energies. The Tidespawn were sluggish and confused before Shou blades, and their magic could not take a firm hold on these new Shou. Tide cults could not form, Tidespawn could not be made of them, and even the noncombatants among them could do terrible injury to a Tidespawn with their bare hands. They were a perfect warrior race against the Tide.

Unfortunately, they came too late. There just wasn't enough time left, and there were only a few tens of thousands of new Shou bred by the time the containment zones finally fell. It appeared as if all the labor and devotion of the Shou would be for naught, and their world would be just one more victim to the alien hunger of the Tide.

It was in that dark hour that Shakun called his hierarchs to him and commanded that most of the new Shou be brought together on a large island archipelago that stood as one of the last redoubts of their race. While the remaining Shou stood behind in a courageous last stand to buy their brethren time, the last of them congregated in the Isles, each unit coming ashore at the first scrap of land they could reach.

The last lines of defense were crumbling when Shakun made his final divine act. He sacrificed his celestial essence, burning away all that was left of his divinity in order to hurl the entire island archipelago to safety on a different world, one free of the scourge of the Tide. The titanic magical forces unleashed in the act left charred streaks of his godhood embedded in the very rocks of the Isles, the godbone that Shou still revere as the tangible flesh of their fallen deity.

The primitive humans of the new world were in no position to realize that their local geography had just drastically changed, and the lizardfolk lords of the planet were already deep into their final decline. The Shou had a free hand in the Isles, but they were crippled by their own nature. They had been bred and taught to fight, and very little else. There had been no time to “waste” new Shou warriors in more pacific pursuits, or teach them more than they needed to know in order to fight the Tide. They were surrounded by the ruined cities of their people and the detritus of an advanced civilization, but they lacked the tools to make use of it. A few “civilian” Shou had been carried along with the divine translocation, but most of the non-combatant inhabitants had been long since evacuated. The Shou were alone on their new world with nothing but their swords.

The collapse was inevitable. Without the Tide to fight, without a god to lead them, without more than the barest understanding of how to support themselves, the Shou rapidly devolved into savage tribal barbarism. Their glorious past and heroic purpose were both subordinated to the simple need to find something to eat. They could not leave; the seas around the Isles were infested with the terrible lizard-fish of the age of lizardfolk princes. They were trapped on the Isles, even if they had possessed the skills necessary to make ships capable of crossing the Western Sea.

Over time, the Shou culture adapted to their environment. They became skilled hunters and gatherers, and even learned something

of agriculture from the few lizardfolk or early humans to make their way to the Isles. Always they fought, always they struggled to prove their worthiness and their readiness for Shakun's eventual return. Some day he would come back, and lead them forth to conquer the world and drive away all evil with their spears and sorcery.

The Isles had known small and indifferent colonization attempts before, but the arrival of the exiles was a thunderbolt to Shou culture. They had never before faced such a tide of desperate humans with advanced military organization and powerful sorcerers. They were hurled back in confusion and even now the tribes are not completely certain how to drive off the hated invaders. Some say that the humans were the ones who brought the red doom with them, the evil that so infuriates the Shou and fills them with inexplicable rage and loathing.

A few tribes, however, are beginning to wonder. To voice their thoughts would ensure their destruction at the hands of their enraged neighbors, of course, but some chieftains and witch-priestesses are starting to wonder if the humans are perhaps not responsible for the red doom. If perhaps they could be allies against it, or tools to prove once and for all their tribe's right to be counted the greatest before their god. None of this can be admitted, of course, and it is only whispered talk among the most temperate and thoughtful of the Shou. But still, there are whispers, and thoughts grow large beneath deep forest boughs.

## Using the Shou in Your Game

On one level, the Shou provide that vital staple of old-school adventuring; humanoid that can be fought with few moral qualms. The Shou are brutal, violent, savage in their pillaging and vigorous in their atrocities against humanity. They almost never negotiate with humans and they rejoice in slavery and cannibalistic consumption of the PC races. If you want to run them as classic fantasy orcs, you have all the tools and justification you need for doing so.

With some groups, this is exactly the angle you'll want to use. Applying a deeper, more nuanced take to the Shou might be aesthetically appealing from an artistic standpoint, but if your group simply wants to have morally acceptable targets, they're not going to thank you for making them choose what to do with a little six-year old Shou girl with big teary eyes after they've stabbed her father to death.

If you really want to play up the humanity of the Shou while giving players old-fashioned acceptable targets, you'll need to make allowances for these situations and give the players some morally acceptable options for what to do with noncombatant Shou and those who surrender. Perhaps there are tribes that retain truces with the humans, and prisoners can be handed over to them. It could be that other Shou tribes take in the noncombatants of destroyed bands as new members. Whatever you choose, you need to give the players options that don't leave them feeling like every ruin expedition is an occasion for them to star in their own psycho slasher movie.

Some players will prefer a grittier, more morally ambiguous feel for their gaming. The humans are, after all, invaders in the Sunset Isles. They were facing certain destruction if they stayed behind, of

course, but the Sunset Isles inarguably belonged to the Shou and there was no question that a lot of Shou were going to have to die if humanity meant to survive. Just because the humans had no choice in the matter doesn't mean that their arrival and invasion need to be treated as morally innocent actions. Some players will enjoy feeling out the ramifications of that, and of dealing with the balance between Shou possession of their ancestral lands and human subsistence in the face of growing population pressure.

It's likely that many players will have some interest in the idea of building diplomatic relations with Shou tribes, especially if they ever come to understand the effectiveness of the Shou as warriors against the Tide. If the players exhibit a genuine interest in accomplishing this, you shouldn't shut it down out of hand. For some players, the idea of finally brokering a peace between Shou and humankind can be a real driving goal in a campaign, and goals like that should never be dismissed in a sandbox setting. You can make it hard to start, and you can make it difficult to progress, but you should let the players at least have the chance of success if that's what they want to do with their campaign.

Shou player characters are also likely sooner or later, either as full-blooded Shou or as half-Shou. The Azure Ministry detailed later in this section provides one way of justifying half-Shou PCs, or such folk might be vagabonds and wanderers trying to make their way in a world that fears and mistrusts them. Even full-blooded Shou might pass for a half-blood if they avoid the markings of their tribe. A player who wants to play a Shou PC is likely interested in exploring the tension of being an adventurous protector of humanity while enduring the scorn in which his wards hold him. You should give the player the chance to sample that, but take care that you don't make the game unplayable for the PC, or leave them cut off from too many activities. It's enough for locals to sneer at the half-Shou and mutter curses behind his back. It's not necessary to leave them standing outside every time the PCs want to have a civil conversation with someone.

## The Gods Above, the Hells Below

Both gods and Hell Kings are largely incapable of directly combating the Tide. To reach down into creation and banish it would require unraveling the essential fabric of reality, like cutting out a tumor by carving away the person around it. Not only are the gods unable to directly combat the Tide, but the red mist weakens the bonds between the deities and their worshippers, making it very difficult to communicate with the faithful or manifest miracles for them.

Both gods and Hell Kings have ample reason to hate and fear the Tide. If unchecked, it will consume both the worshippers of the gods and the natural prey of the Hell Kings, leaving them bereft of fresh souls for their paradises or personal damnations. Eventually, they may be left to rule over an empty domain and shrivel away to mere names and withered memories.

Gods in a Red Tide campaign are not intended to play a major role in the events that play out in the Sunset Isles. They have their servitors and their temples and their cults, but if the world is to be saved, it must be saved by its mortal inhabitants. Gods are distant, vast-minded beings with wills that are difficult for mere created

beings to understand, and even such exalted servitors as the celestial devils and holy tulpas do not completely comprehend the goals of their masters. Doctrinal disputes and vowed prophecies must be worked out by humans. There is no convenient voice from on high to resolve such uncertainty.

This is not to say that you should never insert a miracle into your game, or that clerics should be allowed to do whatever they like without repercussions on their divine powers. It's intended as a caution to avoid letting the vast, otherworldly menace of the Tide be neatly answered by the vast, otherworldly aid of the gods. Gods have their uses, but in a sandbox campaign, the locus of action and choice should ultimately be in the hands of the players rather than the will of the heavens.

## The Azure Ministry

The flyspeck island of Qincheng juts near the coast of eastern Ektau, no more than five miles square and shunned by pirates and merchants alike. Its forested hills are home to the dread House of Unnumbered Tears, where the venerable Azure Ministry conducts hideous experiments upon captured Shou and criminal half-breeds. The yellow-sailed ships that carry the hooded condemned are counted as signs of ill omen, and captains steer wide of their dark wakes.

According to the chroniclers, the House was established not long after Xian itself as a prison for Shou awaiting "questioning" by adept Xianese torturers. Even today, half-breed Shou and prisoners of war are hooded and dispatched there aboard yellow-sailed ships to answer the questions of the interrogators. It is said that none ever return.

In truth, the nature of the House is somewhat different, and its origins are long buried in shame and disgust. When the Archmage Lammach first led his people ashore, it was thought that the Shou would see reason after their first few crushing defeats. Once they were broken upon the steel of the refugee legions, they could be assimilated as a respected subject people, much as the Kueh were so long ago. As a token of this anticipation, Lammach himself took a captured Shou priestess among his diplomatically-chosen wives. Her name was Ilahti.

The truth of the Shou became clear in time. They would not bow to the human invaders, and they would not cease their war. The initial enmity of the refugees hardened into burning hatred, and Lammach was pressed to be rid of his Shou bride. Yet by this time the archmage and the priestess had come to a strange sort of understanding- to real love despite the circumstances. Lammach refused to be rid of Ilahti. She was with him until the night of his death, and she avenged his murder on his Shou assassins with her burning sorceries.

Lammach's heir knew that Ilahti would be blamed in the matter, accused of treacherously conspiring with her brethren and killed- or worse. He immediately declared that she would be "questioned" with full vigor and that she and her half-blooded children would be seen in Xian no more. The island of Qincheng was appointed for their prison, and the populace assumed first that Ilahti must have



been executed after being drained of every detail of her treachery. Later, her very existence was blotted from the chronicles lest the name of great Lammach be tainted by detestable association.

In truth, the new Mandarin knew his father had loved Ilahti dearly, and that she had done no treachery. Qincheng was to be her refuge rather than her prison. He could not protect her from his enraged people in Xian, but on Qincheng she and his half-siblings could have something of a life. The House of Unnumbered Tears was raised there to shelter her family, and the Azure Ministry was set in place to guard them. The Mandarin let it be known that the Ministry was in charge of dire torments, but the handpicked wardens knew their true duties. In time, some of them even wed the half-blooded sons and daughters of Ilahti after such long familiarity on the small island.

It was not twenty years later that the role of the Ministry changed. Ilahti had taught the ways of Shou witchcraft to her daughters, sharing the knowledge with them even if their own children would be too thin-blooded to be initiated into the secret ways. But it was not until one of the young priestesses first discovered and then ruthlessly crushed a Tide Cult initiated by one of the newest Ministry wardens that Ilahti realized what potential her family had. They could still serve the Isles as warriors against the Tide, even if Shou and human alike scorned them.

The Azure Ministry was in no position to protest. The shame of being infiltrated by the Tide was too fresh, and they agreed to help Ilahti in her purpose. Their grizzled drillmasters taught Ilahti's children well, and brought in carefully-chosen half-blood Shou from

elsewhere in the Isles to round out the tiny corps of agents. For all the bitterness that many half-breeds felt against the humans of the Isles, it was an opportunity to have a place, a home where they were important and did noble and honored work. Even if the outside world could never know the truth of the Azure Ministry, they had family and loved ones on Qincheng whom they could protect with their strength and valor.

The Azure Ministry started slowly, carefully infiltrating half-blooded agents into the market towns and backwoods villages of the Mandarinate. Scorned and ignored by “decent” people, the agents were able to pick up on dozens of Tide Cults that had successfully avoided the attention of human inquisitors. Their natural Shou gifts against the Tide made the least of them a fearsome enemy against the cults and their Tidespawn allies, and there were many early successes.

There were also failures; almost a dozen of that first generation of agents were eventually caught and executed for the “senseless murders” of “innocent human families”. The Ministry could not afford to let their association with Shou be known, or to let the common people of the Isles realize just how pervasive and deep-rooted the Tide Cults were in their own towns and villages. To this day, most young agents are bound with marrow-deep sorcery not to reveal the

truth about Qincheng Island and the Azure Ministry. The Ministry rescues its agents when it can, but its people are expected to protect their families with the silence of death, if need be.

Currently, the Ministry is hard-pressed by the rise in Tide Cults, and many agents are scrambling to contain the threat. If the humans of the Isles ever come to realize just how common Tide Cults are in their communities, whole cities might end up convulsed in mindless witch-hunts. The situation is so bleak that some agents are even starting to hire adventurers and sellswords to aid in their work, using them to investigate suspicious regions or “accidentally” stumble across cells in need of purging.

Within the Azure Ministry, the half-blooded Shou remain grimly dedicated to their work. Even those who care little for the humans who scorn them recognize that the Tide will not spare them or their families. Some of the agents who were recruited from beyond Qincheng have shown distinct disinterest in the number of collateral losses inflicted in expunging a Tide Cult, while others nurse dreams of someday letting the humans realize just who- and what- has been protecting them for the past three hundred years. For now, the leadership of the Azure Ministry is holding fast in its silence. The rising Tide may not permit them their secrets for much longer.

# GAME RESOURCES

The following tables include a number of resources for the convenience of the Labyrinth Lord, including naming tables for all the major ethnicities and demihuman races in the Isles, business listings for cities, towns, and villages, quick NPC creation tables, several pages of unkeyed maps, and a sample diagram dungeon to demonstrate the use of the included sheet.

Some referees may find it useful to download the free PDF for the sci-fi RPG *Stars Without Number* from Sine Nomine Publishing to get some additional name tables and referee resources. Many of the offerings provided in that book can also be used in a fantasy setting.

## Quick Cult Creation

Need a congregation of blasphemous believers in a hurry? Just roll on one or more of the following tables to give yourself some sacrilegious fundamentals. Not all of these cults may be strictly *illegal* in the more tolerant lands, but all tend to be highly malevolent.

1d12	OBJECT OF WORSHIP
1	A twisted version of the Maker
2	The Red Tide
3	One of the Hell Kings
4	A negative aspect of one of the Nine Immortals
5	A wizard seeking divinity through worship
6	A maddened clerical prophet of future doom
7	An ancient, magical prehuman relic
8	A half-feral God Beast, shard of a forgotten divinity
9	A coldly manipulative human with no special gifts
10	A hungry shard of the dwarven Mother Below
11	A power-mad elf aspiring to become an Apotheon
12	A natural beast that scarcely recognizes their worship

1d6	SOURCE OF INFLUENCE
1	Wealthy supporters
2	Magical powers of the leadership
3	Secret popular support
4	Membership among the nobility
5	Brutal cult enforcers
6	Traditional fear and obedience from others

1d8	AN AGENT AMONG THE PUBLIC
1	Crazed but carefully attentive local beggar
2	Sinister and reclusive magic-user
3	Madame of a brothel reserved for the elite
4	Local business leader
5	Mole placed within another temple's hierarchy
6	Local tong Grandfather
7	Seemingly benevolent local philanthropist
8	Local noble or magistrate

1d12	TRAITS AND RITES
1	All go hooded or masked in the shrine
2	Human sacrifice is required on days of high ritual
3	All devotees have a special tattoo or brand
4	The devotees have a special language
5	Only the inner circle knows the true god of the cult
6	Only one race or ethnicity is allowed to join the cult
7	The cult conducts terrible feasts of unholy viands
8	The cult reads omens in the chaos their acts cause
9	The devotees become more- or less- than human
10	The cult has animate servitors of bone or stone
11	The cultists are forbidden some common act
12	The cult has an obsession with a color or symbol

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	CLAN NAME
1-4	Aleksandr	Aglaya	Bellowgust
5-8	Arkadi	Agnessa	Blackshaft
9-12	Bogatir	Anastasiya	Boundstone
13-16	Boris	Anja	Brassfist
17-20	Dimitry	Borbala	Breakblade
21-24	Feodor	Esfir	Bronzewrought
25-28	Fyodor	Irina	Chimerock
29-32	Gennadi	Isidora	Claywheel
33-36	Gorya	Karina	Copperhew
37-40	Ilarion	Katja	Deepcart
41-44	Ilya	Kira	Deepcleft
45-48	Ivan	Nadezda	Godbreaker
49-52	Kazimir	Nastasia	Greathammer
53-56	Kiril	Natasha	Grindstone
57-60	Koldan	Oksana	Heavypick
61-64	Leonid	Olga	Hewnspire
65-68	Nikita	Raisa	Highdoor
69-72	Pyotr	Sonya	Ironbender
73-76	Semyon	Svetlana	Longburrow
77-80	Timur	Tatyana	Nickelpate
81-84	Vasily	Valeriya	Orefinder
85-88	Yakov	Varinka	Silverlude
89-92	Yevgeny	Yelena	Tallhelm
93-96	Yosif	Yulia	Tinspike
97-100	Yuri	Zoya	Undercord

1D100	PLACE ADJECTIVE	1D100	PLACE NOUN
1-4	Black	1-4	Axe
5-8	Brass	5-8	Barrow
9-12	Bright	9-12	Brand
13-16	Bronze	13-16	Cleft
17-20	Copper	17-20	Crest
21-24	Deep	21-24	Crown
25-28	Earthen	25-28	Delve
29-32	Far	29-32	Door
33-36	Gold	33-36	Faith
37-40	Gray	37-40	Hall
41-44	Great	41-44	Hammer
45-48	Heavy	45-48	Hearth
49-52	Held	49-52	Hill
53-56	Hewn	53-56	Mine
57-60	High	57-60	Mountain
61-64	Iron	61-64	Pact
65-68	Long	65-68	Peak
69-72	Nickel	69-72	Pick
73-76	Old	73-76	Pit
77-80	Red	77-80	Shield
81-84	Silver	81-84	Stone
85-88	Steel	85-88	Sword
89-92	Tall	89-92	Throne
93-96	Tin	93-96	Tunnel
97-100	True	97-100	Vow

## Dwarven Names

Dwarves distinguish between use-names and blood-names, the former being the form used in common conversation and records, while the latter is the ritual form used in funerary rites and occasions of high ceremony.

Most dwarven use-names are formed of a personal name followed by a clan name, the latter usually rendered in the Imperial language to outsiders. Those dwellers below who are forced to leave their kindred sometimes abandon their clan name entirely, replacing it with an epithet fitting their deeds.

Blood-names include a list of the dwarf's same-sex ancestors back as many generations as family records allow. Most dwarves can go back forty generations without difficulty, and the lists of "son of..." or "daughter of..." are monotonous to outsiders. Still, blood-names are vitally important to dwarves, as they give the bearer knowledge of which spirits to seek out in the afterlife for protection and succor. A dwarf without a blood-name has no idea where safety is to be found in the afterlife, and must rely on the charity of the elder dead for aid.

Place names are commonly transliterated into Imperial, with one part adjective and the other noun- "Redshield", "Truebarrow", etc.

## Dwarven Clothing

Dwarven clothing is fashioned for hard wear in the mines and forges of their people. Most delves make do with tunics, gloves, and treads fashioned of thick leather bought from surface traders. The richest and most important dwarves wear clothing woven of gold-shot silver fashioned into cloth-fine sheets of woven wire. Dwarven cloth-of-gold actually *is* gold, yet soft to the touch as Tien Lungan silk.

Male dwarves favor elaborate geometric daubings of phosphorescent clays or glowing, colored stitchwork in order to stand out in the darkness of a mine beyond the range of dwarven infravision. Females favor much the same sort of tunic and treads, often with finely-tooled aprons for those who work as crafters. Dwarves do not wear dresses or robes, finding such things to be impractical, unsafe human frippery.

## Dwarven Cuisine

Most delves are close enough to the surface to conduct some agriculture and animal husbandry. Those burrowing deep raise docile, sheep-sized meatbeetles and fungus farms that provide feedstock for beer and bread alike. While such foods are traditional dwarven staples, all but the most hidebound dwarves greatly prefer surface food and grain-brewed beer when they can get it.



1D100	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1-4	Adalbrecht	Adabel	Adler
5-8	Adalric	Adala	Altmann
9-12	Amalric	Athala	Bergmann
13-16	Ariaric	Bertine	Brandt
17-20	Beremud	Brunhild	Diederich
21-24	Beringar	Clotilda	Eberhardt
25-28	Donar	Dagma	Frey
29-32	Eberhard	Elfrida	Gottlieb
33-36	Egon	Ermintrude	Himmelreich
37-40	Fritigern	Ferika	Knecht
41-44	Gothard	Fleta	Kruger
45-48	Hadabern	Greta	Lang
49-52	Heilgar	Haldisa	Maurer
53-56	Hilderic	Henka	Neustadt
57-60	Hilt	Hildegard	Osterhagen
61-64	Hlodovic	Irmenhild	Reiniger
65-68	Hrolf	Isold	Ritter
69-72	Ivo	Kirsa	Schmidt
73-76	Reginhard	Malasinth	Strauss
77-80	Safrac	Marelde	Traugott
81-84	Sigmar	Methilde	Unger
85-88	Tancred	Rohesia	Vogel
89-92	Thiudoreik	Thora	Volkerode
93-96	Thuruar	Vigdis	Waechter
97-100	Wigo	Walburga	Wulf

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Aescsdun	51-52	Hamtun
3-4	Aethelinga	53-54	Haslau
5-6	Basingas	55-56	Hertford
7-8	Bedaford	57-58	Hinxwal
9-10	Butlinge	59-60	Hoflas
11-12	Caegines	61-62	Hreopedun
13-14	Ceodre	63-64	Hythe
15-16	Cippen	65-66	Kelheim
17-18	Cirencaster	67-68	Kolm
19-20	Cruland	69-70	Lindisse
21-22	Culmbach	71-72	Lintich
23-24	Darghun	73-74	Lundenwick
25-26	Defenas	75-76	Meredune
27-28	Dirscham	77-78	Mulessen
29-30	Egerlandt	79-80	Nornberg
31-32	Elbogen	81-82	Oberlosa
33-34	Englafeld	83-84	Rehaw
35-36	Eoforwic	85-86	Rosenow
37-38	Ethandun	87-88	Rugi
39-40	Exancaster	89-90	Tanna
41-42	Freiberg	91-92	Thirsheim
43-44	Gautar	93-94	Wedmor
45-46	Gota	95-96	Wildenfels
47-48	Grambow	97-98	Witancaster
49-50	Greutung	99-100	Zellenrode

## Eirengard Names

Eirengarders have both a personal name and a familial surname, with the firstborn taking the father's surname, the second taking the mother's, and children alternating thereafter. The harsh life of a pikeman encourages the spreading of familial names as widely as possible, as many bold youths may not last to carry on the family name. Eirengarder women do not take their husband's surname on marriage, but retain their own. If their husband dies before children are born, some wives will take a surname as a memorial.

Eirengarders who belong to the clergy of the Maker often abandon their surnames, simply using the titles "Brother", "Father", "Sister", or "Mother" depending on their rank within their church. Exceptional piety and wisdom have their own credit within Makerite churches, and humble old "Sister Magrethe" might actually be the temple's chief leader if she has the wisdom and influence required.

## Eirengard Clothing

Eirengarders prefer tunics and treads, practical clothing that grants some concession to fashion by the bright colors and fine stitching they favor. Makerite clergy tend to wear dull or dark colors as a sign of their distance from the pleasures of the world, but the ceremonial raiment of their high rituals is brilliantly elaborate in its white silk and golden needlework.

## Eirengard Cuisine

Fish and rice are eaten in Hohnberg, just as elsewhere in the Isles, but the Eirengarder fishermen have a more difficult time with their catches in the tempestuous waters of the central archipelago. In consequence, more use is made of livestock and upland wheat. Sausages, beer, bread puddings, pasta, and other sturdy staples are commonly found on Eirengarder tables.

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	CREED NAME
1-4	Chakkal	Aimati	Amber Sky
5-8	Chamant	Barahiti	Bitter Moon
9-12	Chohelek	Binnah	Bright Name
13-16	Chontak	Calai	Broken Stone
17-20	Daktan	Chael	Clean Book
21-24	Gendai	Chalani	Empty Hand
25-28	Getak	Dalah	Five Names
29-32	Hechkai	Eshana	Golden Crane
33-36	Jeddak	Ganna	Great Wall
37-40	Kishgadan	Halai	Great Winds
41-44	Kom	Heshkentai	Noble Light
45-48	Lachdan	Indesha	Other Hand
49-52	Maganak	Jemai	Proven Road
53-56	Mahach	Jhael	Red Way
57-60	Mhek	Kalmi	Righteous Fire
61-64	Nomelach	Kesanta	Sea Blue
65-68	Rendak	Kishani	Seven Ways Out
69-72	Ruel	Komai	Shade In Summer
73-76	Shekkad	Lachada	Still Water
77-80	Shindai	Liana	Tenfold Faith
81-84	Shom	Mora	That Within
85-88	Shudun	Nindai	That Without
89-92	Tlachtul	Renda	Unfettered
93-96	Ulrach	Shilmati	Upright Word
97-100	Veddak	Sillai	Without Number

1D100	PLACE ADJECTIVE	1D100	PLACE NOUN
1-4	Beloved	1-4	Birth
5-8	Bloody	5-8	Building
9-12	Despised	9-12	Coming
13-16	Devout	13-16	Death
17-20	Faithful	17-20	Defilement
21-24	False	21-24	Eating
25-28	Fervent	25-28	Embrace
29-32	Final	29-32	Enlightenment
33-36	First	33-36	Forgetting
37-40	Foolish	37-40	Hate
41-44	Gentle	41-44	Joining
45-48	Ignoble	45-48	Laughter
49-52	Impure	49-52	Learning
53-56	Joyous	53-56	Leaving
57-60	Last	57-60	Rage
61-64	Mistaken	61-64	Rebuke
65-68	Pitiless	65-68	Refusing
69-72	Prideful	69-72	Remembrance
73-76	Refuted	73-76	Slaying
77-80	Schismatic	77-80	Stand
81-84	Second	81-84	Sundering
85-88	Sorrowful	85-88	Teaching
89-92	Treacherous	89-92	Tears
93-96	True	93-96	Wait
97-100	Wise	97-100	Wedding

## Elven Names

Elves are raddled with names, their own and the ones carried by their prior incarnations. Each elf commonly identifies him or herself by a personal name and the name of their chosen Creed. Those who identify most strongly with their Creed will place its name first, while others will place it after. When greater specificity is required, an elf will include the personal names of the past five incarnations that he or she can remember- which may or may not be the last five lives they have led. Most elves avoid casually discussing such name-lists among strangers, as there is always the risk of discovering some unavenged slight or unanswered murder from an incarnation three deaths back.

Elven place names rarely refer to geographical traits or natural scenery, but instead most often mention some particular event of importance that took place there, often with the name of the chief figure in events added in. The elven name for Xian, for example, is “Lammach Came Ashore”, while the name for their own ancestral homeland translates out as “House of Peace”.

## Elven Clothing

Elves tend to wear whatever the situation recommends, whether moss-dyed leathers in the wilderness or silken robes in the streets of Kitaminato. When left to their own devices, however, they often dress in outlandish and archaic fashions long since forgotten among others, blending them together in a strange and striking unity. The subtle elven aura of perfection allows them to carry off the most exotic ensembles with an ease to make an Imperial society matron snap her fan in envy.

Elves almost always wear some token of their Creed in a way that leaves it plain to onlookers. Admittedly, many Creeds are so small or esoteric that only another of their kind would have any hope of recognizing the insignia or its meaning.

## Elven Cuisine

Elven cuisine tends to partake of the same eclectic tastes as their couture. The results can sometimes be rather difficult for those who have not had the requisite number of lifetimes to acquire all the tastes involved. Elven banquets tend to partake equally of magnificently exotic flavors and indescribably unpleasant tastes.

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1-4	Abdun	Abdah	Adami
5-8	Ali	Aminah	Aliyya
9-12	Anas	Asiya	Asamm
13-16	Bakir	Chiklah	Aswari
17-20	Bishur	Durra	Bahili
21-24	Habib	Fazila	Buzjani
25-28	Hakim	Hakima	Ghallabi
29-32	Hasan	Hala	Halabi
33-36	Hisham	Ijliyah	Halali
37-40	Jabir	Jaida	Jaludi
41-44	Jafar	Jamila	Kalbi
45-48	Khalil	Jumana	Karmani
49-52	Mansur	Khalida	Misri
53-56	Muadh	Leila	Muzani
57-60	Rahim	Maridah	Naqit
61-64	Saad	Maysun	Qattan
65-68	Salim	Munisa	Raqashi
69-72	Sayf	Rabia	Razi
73-76	Shahib	Rayya	Rumi
77-80	Sinan	Raziya	Saffar
81-84	Umar	Sabiha	Sakhawi
85-88	Yamin	Shaima	Shaybani
89-92	Yazid	Thana	Tabari
93-96	Yusuf	Zainab	Tamimi
97-100	Zayd	Zuleika	Zuhri

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Ahsa	51-52	Magrit
3-4	Andalus	53-54	Manarah
5-6	Asmara	55-56	Manzil
7-8	Asqlan	57-58	Masqat
9-10	Ayyub	59-60	Maydan
11-12	Baqubah	61-62	Qalat
13-14	Basit	63-64	Qantarah
15-16	Baysan	65-66	Qasr
17-18	Baytlahm	67-68	Sharbah
19-20	Burj	69-70	Sharqia
21-22	Bursaid	71-72	Suffah
23-24	Dawhah	73-74	Sur
25-26	Gibuti	75-76	Tabuk
27-28	Giddah	77-78	Taifah
29-30	Hajarah	79-80	Tangah
31-32	Hamara	81-82	Tarifah
33-34	Harmah	83-84	Tariq
35-36	Hibah	85-86	Tisit
37-38	Hims	87-88	Uman
39-40	Hubar	89-90	Urdunn
41-42	Jabal	91-92	Wasqah
43-44	Jayyan	93-94	Yaburah
45-46	Karbala	95-96	Yadh
47-48	Khanat	97-98	Yaman
49-50	Kut	99-100	Zulayj

## Eshkanti Names

The Eshkanti give their children a personal name, but the surname is one the child chooses for him or herself upon reaching adulthood. Surnames are prefixed by “al-” and tend to refer to some trait in the Eshkanti tongue that the child aspires to possess. To lessen ambiguity while trading abroad, many also adopt a place-name related to their home, such as “al-Adani” or “al-Yamani”. Some from wealthy or illustrious lineages reference their ancestors as well, in the form of “bin-” or “bint-” for men or women. “Ali al-Jaludi al-Bursaidi bin-Sinan”, for example, is the man Ali al-Jaludi from the village of Bursaid, son of the village headman Sinan.

## Eshkanti Clothing

For daily wear, the Eshkanti prefer tunic and trousers, with field-hands wearing as little as possible in the southern heat and traders and artisans allowing themselves more elaborate couture. The traditional long robes and cloth headdresses of their forebears are largely reserved for ceremonial and festive wear in the usual climates of the Isles, but both males and females favor large amounts of jewelry and adornment when their circumstances allow. By custom, men do not wear golden ornaments, but the wealthy obviate that stricture by wearing platinum instead.

## Eshkanti Cuisine

Roasts form the center of Eshkanti cookery, whether roast fish, roast game, or roast livestock. Eshkanti barbecues are day-long affairs and cause for hot rivalries between families. The abundant spices of the Isles allow for richly fragrant dishes, with even the humblest bowl of rice spiced with yellow false-saffron and a scrape or two of cinnamon bark. A few Eshkanti families are required by custom to eschew meat, and these clans have developed quite remarkable culinary talents in compensation. Many of the more ascetic, meat-denying temples quietly arrange for their cooks to be chosen from these clans.

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1-4	Adair	Annis	Achmuty
5-8	Aidan	Bradana	Bannatyne
9-12	Alastair	Coira	Chisholm
13-16	Callum	Daracha	Dalmahoy
17-20	Cameron	Eamhair	Fairholm
21-24	Cormac	Fiona	Fordoun
25-28	Diarmad	Glenna	Grimond
29-32	Domnall	Ina	Haldane
33-36	Eanraig	Iona	Imrie
37-40	Gavin	Jinty	Jarvie
41-44	Goraidh	Keita	Keir
45-48	Ian	Lachina	Kinloch
49-52	Jock	Mae	Lindoch
53-56	Lachlan	Mhairi	Lyll
57-60	Lammach	Morag	Mar
61-64	Logan	Moyna	Nairn
65-68	Morgan	Muriel	Niven
69-72	Muireach	Osla	Ord
73-76	Murdoch	Rona	Pire
77-80	Parthalan	Scathach	Quinn
81-84	Sawney	Senga	Reith
85-88	Tamhas	Shona	Shaw
89-92	Tearlach	Tavie	Tassie
93-96	Torquil	Tira	Veitch
97-100	Valan	Una	Walker

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Annishadder	51-52	Garrafad
3-4	Ardmore	53-54	Harrapool
5-6	Armadale	55-56	Hartacorry
7-8	Arnisort	57-58	Hinnisdale
9-10	Ashaig	59-60	Holmisdale
11-12	Auchtertyre	61-62	Horneval
13-14	Balmacara	63-64	Inverarish
15-16	Beinn Na	65-66	Kilmore
17-18	Brochel	67-68	Kyleakin
19-20	Brogaig	69-70	Lorgill
21-22	Bruach	71-72	Olach
23-24	Calligarry	73-74	Ramasaig
25-26	Caolas	75-76	Reisaburg
27-28	Clachan	77-78	Rudha
29-30	Clachnay	79-80	Sallachy
31-32	Claigean	81-82	Scudda
33-34	Coire	83-84	Sithean
35-36	Conon	85-86	Sligachan
37-38	Conordon	87-88	Stenscholl
39-40	Cuillin	89-90	Suardal
41-42	Cullaidh	91-92	Tocavaig
43-44	Drochaid	93-94	Toravaig
45-46	Dungeary	95-96	Treaslane
47-48	Dunliath	97-98	Tulm
49-50	Fiurnean	99-100	Unish

## Gadaal Names

Gadaal men and women commonly name themselves by luck-filiations, taking a personal name followed by a surname appointed by the astrologer who casts their first horoscope. As such, names may vary widely from generation to generation. When among strangers, the Gadaal often add the name of their extended family's chief residence, prefixed by "Mac". A boy of the Gadaal might be named Tearlach by his parents, for example, and receive the luck-name of Lyall from the astrologer. Around his home village of Coire he would be called "Tearlach Lyall", and when venturing abroad he would identify himself as "Tearlach Lyall MacCoire".

A few Gadaal retain the names of mighty ancestors as their place-names. The Mandarin of Xian, for example, still goes by "MacLammach" to emphasize his descent from the saviour of the refugee fleet, even though the remaining Gadaal blood in his lineage is very thin indeed.

## Gadaal Clothing

Gadaal traditionally prefer snug-fitting clothing unlikely to catch on mountain rocks or scraggly brush. Wool from their flocks or leather from their herds makes up much of their customary dress, though in the hot climes of southern Ektau this has given over to leather loincloths and chest wraps. Many Gadaal are bordermen still, living on the rough, wild edges of civilization and wearing few ornaments or colors that they cannot produce themselves.

## Gadaal Cuisine

Gadaal are not great seafarers and few settle on the coasts. Some remain as farmers eking out holdings in places too dangerous for most, while others live as hunters and trappers. Grain, game, and garden produce form the bulk of the Gadaal diet, along with numerous enigmatic hashes compiled from foodstuffs that are supposed to be lucky to the eater. It's commonly thought that a Gadaal will eat anything if there is sufficient luck in it, and some are wont to observe that it is a justifiable custom. After a Gadaal breakfast, they point out, nothing worse will happen all the day long.

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1-4	Adam	Abigale	Atwater
5-8	Albert	Ada	Baldwin
9-12	Alfred	Adelaide	Barleycorn
13-16	Benedict	Amelia	Blackwood
17-20	Edward	Bess	Curley
21-24	Edwin	Caroline	Dalton
25-28	George	Eleanor	Forrester
29-32	Hiram	Elizabeth	Goodwin
33-36	Jack	Flora	Grasswidow
37-40	James	Georgia	Hurley
41-44	John	Hannah	Kerslake
45-48	Martin	Helen	Macklin
49-52	Nathan	Hortense	Mouldsdale
53-56	Ned	Jane	Muggins
57-60	Oswald	Julia	Noonan
61-64	Percival	Lucy	Patternson
65-68	Phillip	Margaret	Polmear
69-72	Raymond	Mary	Quickstep
73-76	Silas	Mercy	Runciman
77-80	Simon	Nancy	Simcocks
81-84	Steven	Nora	Thompson
85-88	Theodore	Sally	Toprail
89-92	Thomas	Sarah	Walker
93-96	Warren	Sofie	Wilkes
97-100	William	Vivian	Wright

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Alethorp	51-52	Lindon
3-4	Appleby	53-54	Linking
5-6	Bacstone	55-56	Ludington
7-8	Banton	57-58	Lunderthorp
9-10	Burwell	59-60	Maringhill
11-12	Carlton	61-62	Mortown
13-14	Claypool	63-64	Navenby
15-16	Denton	65-66	Norton
17-18	Dunesby	67-68	Offinton
19-20	Eastdeep	69-70	Owensby
21-22	Edenham	71-72	Radburn
23-24	Eldingby	73-74	Rossby
25-26	Franton	75-76	Roxbury
27-28	Fulctonby	77-78	Scalthorp
29-30	Gainsburg	79-80	Strakerthorp
31-32	Greatford	81-82	Talinton
33-34	Holswell	83-84	Torsby
35-36	Holtham	85-86	Ulstanton
37-38	Howe	87-88	Ulvesby
39-40	Huntington	89-90	Wellby
41-42	Isleby	91-92	Wenfleet
43-44	Iswitch	93-94	Westdeep
45-46	Iverdown	95-96	Willingham
47-48	Leaham	97-98	Wrothby
49-50	Lindeep	99-100	Yorkton

## Halfling Names

Halflings have both a given and a surname, carried down through either the male or female line depending on the particular traditions of the family. As closely-knit as most halfling villages are, there's rarely any need for naming more distinct than this, though a halfling far from home might provide his home village name as a middle name to strangers- thus, "Jane Holtham Runciman".

Halflings exiled from their home village by hunger or necessity go without a village name, though if they manage to eventually accumulate the wealth and standing necessary to found a new village, they may title themselves simply as "the" village. Thus, if Jane Holtham Runciman is forced to leave her village by hunger and want, she becomes Jane Runciman. If she eventually finds the new village of Iverdown, she may be expect to be called simply "the Iverdown" by her people.

Halfling village leaders who perform deeds equal to that of a founder may find themselves called the same way, but most successors simply take the title of "Sheriff" over the village. In halfling villages, such honors can only be granted by the agreement of their neighbors and so the post is rarely inherited.

## Halfling Clothing

The Quiet Way teaches modesty and practicality in dress, though practicality often wins in the hot south. Halfling weavers are as expert in their trade as are halflings in all the domestic arts, and their fine, sturdy cloth is valued in every market. Halflings manufacture much of the finest patterned silk to be had in Xian's market. Despite this, the silk is despised in the Shogunate, for the Hell Kings nurse a grudge against halflings for their untouchable souls.

## Halfling Cuisine

Halfling cookery is legendary, as the arts of the kitchen are as close to a religious rite as halflings appear to possess. Halflings excel at taking simple, homely ingredients and creating marvelous meals through the application of skill and discerning taste. Pies, roasts, stews, soups, pastries, breads, and other peasant fare become almost transcendent in the hands of an expert halfling cook. By custom, females tend to focus on baked goods, pastries, and soups, while males pride themselves on their roasts, steaks, and stews.

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1-4	Aiguo	Bilai	Bai
5-8	Bai	Daiyu	Chang
9-12	Chao	Hui	Gong
13-16	Dai	Jia	Guo
17-20	Enlai	Lian	Hong
21-24	Feng	Lihwa	Hou
25-28	Guang	Mei	Kang
29-32	Heng	Miahua	Kong
33-36	Jian	Mingxia	Lai
37-40	Jing	Nuwa	Lei
41-44	Kang	Peijing	Liao
45-48	Liu	Qianru	Niu
49-52	Minghua	Rou	Pan
53-56	Nianzu	Song	Quan
57-60	On	Sulin	Shao
61-64	Peng	Sya	Shi
65-68	Qiang	Ting	Song
69-72	Renshu	Ushi	Tang
73-76	Shan	Xia	Wan
77-80	Tung	Xiulan	Wu
81-84	Wang	Xiuli	Xiong
85-88	Wencheng	Ya	Yan
89-92	Xue	Yanmei	Ye
93-96	Yusheng	Yuke	Yin
97-100	Zixin	Zhilan	Zhong

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Baijia	51-52	Malian
3-4	Baiwang	53-54	Manba
5-6	Benmiao	55-56	Nancha
7-8	Bincaowa	57-58	Nanshan
9-10	Changgu	59-60	Naozishan
11-12	Daiwan	61-62	Panpo
13-14	Dalu	63-64	Qingdao
15-16	Datanli	65-66	Shangshapo
17-18	Dawaju	67-68	Sigou
19-20	Ebao	69-70	Sujiasi
21-22	Feicheng	71-72	Taian
23-24	Fengsi	73-74	Tengzhou
25-26	Guanghe	75-76	Tianshih
27-28	Guantan	77-78	Tongren
29-30	Haliang	79-80	Weifang
31-32	Heishan	81-82	Xigou
33-34	Jianqiao	83-84	Xishan
35-36	Jiawan	85-86	Xunhua
37-38	Jinan	87-88	Yanzhou
39-40	Kengwoli	89-90	Yaowan
41-42	Linjiaping	91-92	Yaping
43-44	Lintao	93-94	Yenchou
45-46	Liuchan	95-96	Yingwu
47-48	Machuan	97-98	Youfu
49-50	Majia	99-100	Zhangping

## Imperial Names

Imperial names are customarily used with the surname preceding the given name- so Xiulan of the Wu family is “Wu Xiulan”. In the melange of cultures that make up the Sunset Isles, it’s not uncommon for a person to mix elements of Imperial naming with those of another culture, resulting in names like “Lachlan Tang”, or “Zhong Anna”. When addressing a person with an Imperial name, it is common to use both elements of his or her name, rather than simply using their given name.

Imperial pronunciation can be tricky. As a quick reference, here are only some of the larger differences from standard English:

**C** is pronounced with a sharp ts as in *spats*.

**G** is pronounced in most of the worlds above as if it were a k as in *skill*.

**Q** somewhat resembles the sound of ch in *cheek*.

**X** is pronounced with a sh sound, similar to that of *she*.

**ZH** is pronounced in a somewhat similar fashion to ch as in *choke*.

## Imperial Clothing

Most Imperials make their living as farmers or fisherfolk, and dress accordingly. The well-off wear tunics and trousers, skirts or sarongs to keep the sun off their skin, while workers are swiftly sun-dark in loincloths and chest wraps for the women. When dressed for socializing, flowing, wide-sleeved robes are favored for both sexes, with women sometimes donning snug-fitting dresses or closely-drawn saris.

Imperials greatly favor bright colors in their dress and ornamentation. In the ancient days, red was considered a particularly auspicious color. In the present hour blue is rather more preferred.

## Imperial Cuisine

Imperial cuisine varies widely with available comestibles, but rice is the staple grain and is used in the fashioning of noodles, buns, dumplings, fermented drinks, and other foodstuffs. Tofu is sometimes found in place of meat, and rice wine and tea are common drinks. Stir-frying is a common preparation technique for many foods, and the copious amount of fish eaten by most coastal folk is often grilled and seasoned with ingenious use of local spices.

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1-4	Akira	Aina	Asai
5-8	Arata	Akiko	Asakuma
9-12	Daichi	Asami	Aso
13-16	Daisuke	Asuka	Endo
17-20	Goro	Chikako	Fujiwara
21-24	Hachiro	Emi	Hayashi
25-28	Hayate	Hana	Inoue
29-32	Hideyoshi	Haruko	Ishikawa
33-36	Ichiro	Hina	Ito
37-40	Jiro	Izumi	Kamei
41-44	Katsuo	Junko	Kawaramono
45-48	Keisuke	Kaori	Kimura
49-52	Kiyoshi	Kasumi	Kitano
53-56	Masaru	Kimiko	Matsudaira
57-60	Minoru	Mariko	Matsumoto
61-64	Noboru	Mayumi	Nakagami
65-68	Nobu	Midori	Nakatomi
69-72	Osamu	Mika	Nonaka
73-76	Ren	Noriko	Sato
77-80	Saburo	Sachiko	Shimizu
81-84	Shiro	Sakura	Suzuki
85-88	Takashi	Suzume	Takahashi
89-92	Tetsuya	Ume	Tanaka
93-96	Yoshi	Yumi	Watanabe
97-100	Yudai	Yuzuki	Yoshida

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Akita	51-52	Kiryu
3-4	Ashiya	53-54	Kishiwada
5-6	Atsugi	55-56	Kofu
7-8	Beppu	57-58	Kure
9-10	Chigasaki	59-60	Kusatsu
11-12	Chitose	61-62	Machida
13-14	Chofu	63-64	Matsu
15-16	Daito	65-66	Miyazaki
17-18	Fuchu	67-68	Nagaoka
19-20	Fujioka	69-70	Naha
21-22	Furano	71-72	Ogaki
23-24	Gifu	73-74	Okazaki
25-26	Goshogawara	75-76	Otaru
27-28	Hachioji	77-78	Sakai
29-30	Hiratsuku	79-80	Shimizu
31-32	Hirosaki	81-82	Takamatsu
33-34	Ibaraki	83-84	Takasaki
35-36	Ibusuki	85-86	Unzen
37-38	Ichinomiya	87-88	Urawa
39-40	Ikoma	89-90	Wakkanai
41-42	Imabari	91-92	Yamagata
43-44	Imari	93-94	Yokkaichi
45-46	Izumo	95-96	Yonago
47-48	Kagoshima	97-98	Yuzawa
49-50	Kasugai	99-100	Zushi

## Kueh Names

The Kueh share the Imperial tradition of placing family surnames before personal names. Thus, Yumi of the Watanabe family would introduce herself as “Watanabe Yumi”. In the Shogunate, priestly devotees of the Hell Kings replace their family names with that of their patron devil to better represent their single-minded devotion to the glory of their infernal lord. When Kueh marry, the children commonly bear the family name of the father, but the parents’ names are unchanged.

## Kueh Clothing

Traditional Kueh clothing tends toward lustrous kimonos, with male fashions preferring dark solid colors and female dress favoring elaborate prints and patterns, often with a light solid-colored over-robe atop multiple layers of harmonious patterned silks. Noble families tend to be fastidious about such things, some keenly aware of their humble fisherfolk ancestors and others sharply denying such modest roots.

Kueh laborers favor light short-legged trousers and tunics, with headbands against the sweat of the sun.

## Kueh Cuisine

The common folk of the Shogunate subsist on rice, when they can get it, and barley and millet when they cannot. Some of the more enthusiastic worshippers of the Hell Kings practice cannibalism amid hideous feasts, while others spare no suffering to enjoy the most exotic morsels that their servants can bring them.

Kueh elsewhere in the Isles despise such polished savagery, and cultivate a simple palate that emphasizes fish, vegetables, and rice. Kueh banquets are rarely as ornate as the feasts of an Imperial table, but they bespeak the same refined elegance and temperate good taste as the rest of their arts.

1D100	MALE	FEMALE	LINE NAME
1-4	Ahunwakar	Abisimti	Adad
5-8	Askur	Agrahti	Akshak
9-12	Eluti	Ahassunu	Anunit
13-16	Ibal	Ahati	Badtib
17-20	Inbusha	Ahuna	Damgalnuna
21-24	Liblut	Alittu	Dumash
25-28	Lubau	Arwia	Ekur
29-32	Malgum	Belessunu	Kalama
33-36	Mattaki	Eslamassi	Karkar
37-40	Munawirtum	Gamela	Kildigir
41-44	Mutubisir	Humusi	Larak
45-48	Nawirum	Hunaba	Larsa
49-52	Puzur	Ilahiti	Malkat
53-56	Sagilzimu	Iltani	Ninazu
57-60	Seskalla	Ilusha	Ninbanda
61-64	Shamashazir	Kammani	Ningirsu
65-68	Shubnal	Kuaya	Ninkarak
69-72	Sillashu	Nakurta	Nintu
73-76	Taklaku	Nindada	Shidlam
77-80	Taribat	Rabiat	Sumula
81-84	Ubarsun	Sharrat	Tutul
85-88	Warad	Shiptu	Udkib
89-92	Yaggitlim	Tabni	Urash
93-96	Yashub	Ummi	Urnammu
97-100	Zummabu	Yadida	Zarpanit

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Adab	51-52	Ishmedagan
3-4	Agadeh	53-54	Kabtalamas
5-6	Albanti	55-56	Kalamdug
7-8	Amarsin	57-58	Kisnugal
9-10	Balatu	59-60	Lidinam
11-12	Baragsi	61-62	Mashkan
13-14	Cuthah	63-64	Mesanepada
15-16	Dilbah	65-66	Meskalam
17-18	Dingirkaba	67-68	Nepada
19-20	Durilu	69-70	Ninlugal
21-22	Ebabbar	71-72	Nisaba
23-24	Ebarra	73-74	Nugalla
25-26	Egalmach	75-76	Shulg
27-28	Emish	77-78	Silissa
29-30	Enzuasa	79-80	Silizi
31-32	Ereshk	81-82	Sinmubal
33-34	Esagil	83-84	Sinremeni
35-36	Eshidlam	85-86	Sippara
37-38	Girsu	87-88	Tagunu
39-40	Gishirgal	89-90	Tanuri
41-42	Gismi	91-92	Tinisaba
43-44	Harsag	93-94	Umma
45-46	Ilidinam	95-96	Urmani
47-48	Ilumkabta	97-98	Utusipad
49-50	Ishin	99-100	Zamama

## Shou Names

The warring Shou commonly live together in small tribes that have little need for much distinction between the names of their members. Most receive only a given name, though each can usually trace descent from some noble hero or cunning witch-priestess of earlier days. These “line names” are spread among many different tribes, and Shou of the same line are somewhat more likely to deal peacefully with each other. Most of the limited peaceful exchange in goods and mates that goes on between Shou tribes takes place between members of the same line name. A Shou has his or her choice of which parents’ line name to take, but once chosen, they must remain faithful to the name.

Shou tribes are commonly named after some tribal totem or token of past glory. They shift slowly with the years as old deeds become myth and new ones take greater prominence. This drift is one reason why it is occasionally difficult to determine the history of a given tribe- the human records may well refer to them by a name no longer current.

## Shou Clothing

Shou wear little when hunting or in camp, as most of them dwell in the hotter southern reaches of the archipelago. At war or when on a raiding party, they favor thick hides and furs, sometimes boiled for stiffness or stitched with countless small teeth or stone chips to better deflect weaponry. Shou witches prefer elaborate headdresses of feathers and bright stones and rarely wear much more than that.

The bugbears and orcs of the high mountain peaks are often obliged to dress in goatskins and other hides, sometimes ornamented with baubles of hammered raw copper or gold. Most Shou scorn human clothing, even that captured in war. They dress their slaves in it, or cut it up for use in their own styles.

## Shou Cuisine

Shou are hunters and gatherers by custom, and most live off the natural produce of their territory- and fight with predictable ferocity to maintain it against invaders. They are not ignorant of the idea of farming or herding, but they consider it slave work fit only for subjects and thralls, and tribes without such will rely on the bow and spear for their food. Some Shou fish the coasts and rivers as well, but they have a great dread of the ocean as a general matter, and will not set out on ships unless compelled.



1D100	MALE	FEMALE	SURNAME
1-4	Ageirr	Askatla	Alsgaard
5-8	Bergfin	Birla	Birkeland
9-12	Bjorn	Dagmar	Bjornstad
13-16	Dagr	Disa	Eide
17-20	Eider	Eydis	Folkow
21-24	Erik	Finna	Garborg
25-28	Fastulf	Gudrun	Gunnestad
29-32	Geirbjorn	Hallabera	Halvorsen
33-36	Haruk	Inga	Hanevold
37-40	Ingimarr	Jutta	Ingstad
41-44	Jatmund	Katla	Kaland
45-48	Kolbrand	Luta	Leirfall
49-52	Lofrik	Maeva	Lindhahl
53-56	Munolf	Nauma	Malmstrom
57-60	Njall	Otkatla	Ramsfjell
61-64	Ogmund	Ranka	Riseth
65-68	Ormulf	Runa	Skarsgard
69-72	Ornolf	Signy	Svasand
73-76	Ragnbjorn	Spana	Tangvik
77-80	Ringulf	Thordis	Thorsen
81-84	Sigdan	Thyrna	Thules
85-88	Tumar	Toka	Ulstein
89-92	Tyrfing	Ursula	Ulving
93-96	Ulfkell	Valka	Veitberg
97-100	Vigthorn	Yrsa	Wikborg

1D100	PLACE NAME	1D100	PLACE NAME
1-2	Aebeltoft	51-52	Kalbaek
3-4	Aeblegarden	53-54	Kallekot
5-6	Borgarey	55-56	Laugarbrekka
7-8	Bregentved	57-58	Lervik
9-10	Breivik	59-60	Lund
11-12	Brettabister	61-62	Meretun
13-14	Budir	63-64	Ravndal
15-16	Dalkey	65-66	Sandvik
17-18	Dalstad	67-68	Selvik
19-20	Dumazbakki	69-70	Seterby
21-22	Dursey	71-72	Shieling
23-24	Egilsey	73-74	Sida
25-26	Erikstad	75-76	Skellig
27-28	Essetofte	77-78	Stenhus
29-30	Eyinhelga	79-80	Sundheim
31-32	Fjellheim	81-82	Swarthoull
33-34	Gareksey	83-84	Thirsk
35-36	Grunasound	85-86	Thormanby
37-38	Haraldssun	87-88	Thusater
39-40	Healfdanby	89-90	Torsby
41-42	Helgistad	91-92	Torstvedt
43-44	Hjalpandisey	93-94	Tresta
45-46	Holbaek	95-96	Vestrey
47-48	Hrolfsay	97-98	Wicklow
49-50	Hulgade	99-100	Wirchall

## Skandr Names

The Skandr use a personal name and a surname much as many other peoples do, but the surname can vary somewhat. Some families hold to a single surname down through the generations, while others have the custom of adopting a father or mother's name and suffixing it with "-son" or "-dottir". Thus, Signy the daughter of Toka might introduce herself as "Signy Tokadottir".

It is not uncommon for Skandr freebooters to take a "raid name", the better to conceal their identity. Such attempts are not always successful, and Skandr memory burns nearly so long as the Gadaal for the reckoning of old debts.

## Skandr Clothing

Many Skandr are fisherfolk or sailors, and can be expected to wear the short-trewed outfit of tunic and sun-wrap when in southern climes. Their homeland favored more in the way of furs and heavy wool against the northern ice, but few Skandr on Ektau have much call for that dress any more.

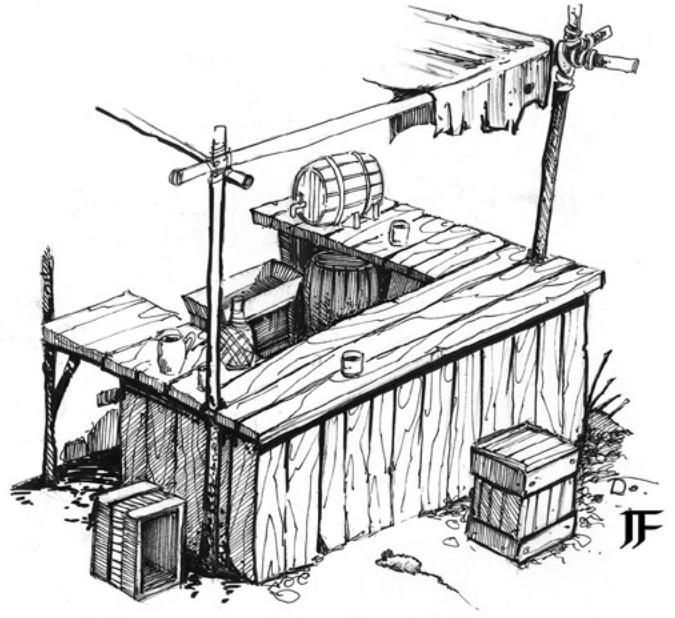
## Skandr Cuisine

The Skandr are a roving people, and their food bespeaks a life aboard ship. Fresh and salted fish, dried grains, and cask meat combine in arrangements that are extremely portable, if not always terribly appealing. Skandr have a profound love of alcoholic beverages in all their forms, and their distillers often show remarkable creativity in finding new things to render down into at least a semi-drinkable liquid.

## Businesses

A Labyrinth Lord occasionally needs to know whether or not a particular business can be found in a village, town, or city. There are also times when it is convenient to be able to pick out a business for a particular Court site, or as an element of some larger adventure. The following table gives a list of businesses, the smallest population center capable of supporting them, and a brief description of their function.

A glance at the table will show that the average village supports very few businesses. The surplus from a farming village usually goes to the nearest market town to support the artisans there, and few of them actually do business in a humble rice-growing village. Those few business folk that actually do conduct their trade in a hamlet are almost all at least partially occupied in farming or livestock raising as well. The village herbalist might have a wide variety of plants and extracts for sale, but most of the time she's going to be minding the chickens out back and seeing how her garden is coming on.



BUSINESS	SIZE	NOTES	BUSINESS	SIZE	NOTES
<i>Armorsmiths</i>	Town	A country tinker might be able to manage leather armor and shields, but finer work requires an armorsmith.	<i>Leatherworkers</i>	Town	Can often make leather and studded leather armor, sometimes of exotic hides.
<i>Bakers</i>	Town		<i>Livestock Merchants</i>	Town	
<i>Blacksmiths</i>	Town	Can fashion small metal weapons.	<i>Magic Schools</i>	City	20 students or fewer, usually.
<i>Booksellers</i>	City	Binds, sells, and commissions books.	<i>Magistrates</i>	Town	Provides government documents.
<i>Brewers</i>	Town	Produces commercial amounts of beer.	<i>Masons</i>	Town	
<i>Butchers</i>	Town		<i>Millers</i>	Village	Grinds wheat, sorts rice.
<i>Carpenters</i>	Town		<i>Physicians</i>	Town	Sometimes magically gifted.
<i>Chandlers</i>	Town	Sells adventuring supplies.	<i>Sages</i>	City	
<i>Farmers</i>	Village		<i>Shipwrights</i>	City	
<i>Fine Artists</i>	City	Sculptors, painters, poets, etc.	<i>Spice Merchants</i>	Town	
<i>Fishmongers</i>	Town		<i>Tailors</i>	Town	
<i>Goldsmiths</i>	City	Also stores wealth, for a fee.	<i>Tanners</i>	Town	
<i>Harlots</i>	Town		<i>Tavernkeepers</i>	Village	Often rents a room in the house.
<i>Herbalists</i>	Village	Usually the village healer, too.	<i>Tinkers</i>	Village	Can mend metal goods.
<i>Innkeepers</i>	Town		<i>Vintners</i>	Village	
<i>Jewelers</i>	City		<i>Weaponsmiths</i>	Town	
<i>Lawyers</i>	Town	Relatively few are required on Ektau.	<i>Weavers</i>	Village	Most village households weave their own cloth.

## Quick NPC Creation

A Labyrinth Lord can expect to require a small army of NPCs for his or her campaign by the time all is said and done, and it can sometimes be a little exhausting generating all the people you need to flesh out a game. The following tables are intended to simplify life for a busy referee. Just roll once on any of the relevant tables, skipping over any that are unsuitable for your purposes. Names can be drawn from the lists provided earlier in this section.

1d4	GENDER
1-2	Male
3-4	Female

1d6	AGE
1-2	Young
3-4	Middle-aged
5-6	Old

1d100	ETHNICITY OR RACE
1-30	Imperial
31-40	Eirengarder
41-50	Gadaal
51-60	Eshkanti
61-70	Skandr
71-80	Kueh
81-85	Half-Shou
86-92	Dwarf
93-96	Halfling
97-100	Elf

1d12	PROBLEMS
1	Has the enmity of local officials
2	Enmity of local criminal figure or thug
3	Afflicted with misfortune due to past error
4	Has a chronic illness
5	Their children or siblings are in trouble with the law
6	Haunted by dreams of the Red Tide
7	Deeply in debt
8	In unrequited love above his or her station
9	Addicted to a recreational drug
10	Spouse or parents are wastrels or abusive
11	Their job is threatened by recent events
12	Secretly half-Shou

1d12	ALIGNMENT
1	Lawful, upright and noble-minded.
2-3	Lawful, essentially decent and reliable
4-5	Neutral, self-interested but prone to kindness
6-9	Neutral, will generally only help their own kindred
10-11	Chaotic, selfish and indifferent to the hurt caused
12	Chaotic, amorally ruthless and devoid of pity

1d12	JOB MOTIVATION
1	Greed, because nothing else they can do pays better
2	Idealistic about the job
3	Sense of social duty
4	Force of habit takes them through the day
5	Seeks to please another
6	Feels inadequate as anything else
7	Family tradition
8	Religious obligation or vow
9	Nothing better to do, and they need the money
10	They're quitting at the first good opportunity
11	It's a stepping stone to better things
12	Spite against an enemy discomfited by the work

1d20	NOTICEABLE QUIRKS
1	Bald
2	Terrible taste in clothing
3	Very thin
4	Powerful build
5	Bad eyesight and perpetually squinting
6	Carries work tools constantly
7	Long hair
8	Bearded, if male. Ankle-length hair if female.
9	Scars all over hands
10	Missing digits or an ear
11	Smells like their work
12	Repeats himself constantly
13	Incorrigible gossip
14	Booming voice
15	Vocal dislike of a random ethnicity
16	Always snuffling
17	Missing teeth
18	Fastidiously neat
19	Wears religious emblems
20	Speaks as little as possible

## Room Dressing

It's occasionally tricky to dress a structure's rooms in an interesting fashion. Each room on the list below provides a few specific possibilities and an idea of what sort of treasures might reasonably be found in such a place. If you're building a site inhabited by intelligent creatures, don't forget to include some place for the to sleep,

cooking facilities, an idea of where they get their drinking water, and some kind of latrine or lavatory. If the ruin has been abandoned for a long while, simply "age" any dressing, turning cold-house beeves into piles of rot, bamboo floors into mushy pulp, and so forth.

ID6	IDIO	ID6	IDIO	ID6	IDIO			
1-2	1	Alchemy Lab	3-4	1	Crypt	5-6	1	Pantry
	2	Armory		2	Dining Room		2	Prison Cell
	3	Audience Chamber		3	Garden		3	Salon
	4	Ballroom		4	Great Hall		4	Shrine
	5	Barracks		5	Kennel		5	Sparring Room
	6	Bath Chamber		6	Kitchen		6	Storeroom
	7	Bedroom		7	Laboratory		7	Torture Chamber
	8	Cellar		8	Library		8	Unfinished Room
	9	Cold Storage		9	Mortuary		9	Vault
	10	Council Chamber		10	Nursery		10	Vestibule

### ALCHEMY LAB

- 1 An unstable experiment that will explode if touched.
- 2 Something small and wretched living in a glass jar.
- 3 An acrid, gritty gray powder that has decomposed into something that will explode if jostled.  
One or more magical potions that have gone off slightly,
- 4 with a 10% chance to do no more than make the imbiber violently sick for a round.
- 5 Large, elaborate glass distillation equipment that collapses with the slightest touch.
- 6 Flasks containing a billowing stench that clings to anyone who opens them.

**Treasures:** Alchemical texts, delicate glassware, small ingots of precious metal, precision laboratory equipment, rare experimental ingredients that may require a magic-user or other arcanelly-educated person to recognize.

### ARMORY

- 1 A pile of armor and weapons worn to little more than scrap.
- 2 Stacks of hard leather breastplates piled one atop the other.
- 3 High-quality harness that bears the markings of a local noble family.
- 4 Jugs full of oil for maintaining gear, along with small hammers and armorer's tools.
- 5 Fragments of strangely-shaped armor taken from some non-human foe.
- 6 Anvil and forge for making new equipment and repairing badly damaged pieces.

**Treasures:** Jeweled or gilded armor and weaponry, ingots of precious metal for adorning weapons, loose gemstones.

### AUDIENCE CHAMBER

- 1 An elevated seat from which to hear petitioners.
- 2 Elaborate wall hangings depicting the past glories of the occupants.
- 3 Discreet nooks in which servants might remain unobtrusively.
- 4 A pierced screen behind which a noble may sit to listen to petitions.
- 5 Cabinets full of scrolls containing records and accounts.
- 6 Censers to sweeten the air of the room.

**Treasures:** A jeweled throne, precious liquors, secret records.

### BALLROOM

- 1 Polished bamboo flooring.
- 2 Drapes of richly-brocaded silk hanging on the walls.
- 3 The musicians' dais with seats and perhaps an instrument propped there.
- 4 The walls are frescoed with garden images.
- 5 Lanterns of colored paper hang from the ceiling.
- 6 Large tables of mahogany hold tasty morsels on one side of the room.

**Treasures:** Jewelry lost in a floor crack, elaborate silk couture folded away in a cabinet, precious musical instrument stored by the musician's dais.

## BARRACKS

- 1 Rows of double-bunked beds and footlockers.
- 2 Vulgar graffiti carved onto a wall.
- 3 Lines of crude cabinets along one wall.
- 4 Storage nets hung from the ceiling that threaten to give way.
- 5 Acrid chamberpots behind a draped curtain run around a corner of the room.
- 6 Brightly-hued wall paintings of martial scenes

**Treasures:** Soldiers' pay in the footlockers, items of hidden plunder, jeweled weaponry or armor.

## BATH CHAMBER

- 1 Great copper tanks for heating water.
- 2 A natural hot spring feeding a steaming pool.
- 3 Intricate tile-work on the floor and walls showing sea-side images.
- 4 Splintery wooden tubs and coarse-bristled brushes.
- 5 Cakes of harsh yellow soap
- 6 Wet clothes hung up from recent laundry.

**Treasures:** Precious garments hung up from washing, valuable perfumes in locked cabinets, beautifully-worked decorative statuette.

## CELLAR

- 1 Wooden bins full of potatoes and turnips.
- 2 Sacks full of onions and dried peppers hanging from the ceiling.
- 3 A dark mat of vermin seething on the floor.
- 4 Casks of rough red wine or beer
- 5 Thick blooms of mold on the walls.
- 6 A dry floor of bare earth.

**Treasures:** Wealth buried in a corner, a cask of a precious vintage of wine, well-preserved seeds of a crop variety lost since the exile

## COLD STORAGE

- 1 Thick walls of earth or masonry to keep in the chill.
- 2 Boxes filled with expensive ice.
- 3 Slabs of beef or pork hanging from the ceiling, blocking the interior view.
- 4 Casks of chilled liquor.
- 5 A corpse being preserved until the funerary rites.
- 6 Sliced meat being cold-cured with salt and spices

**Treasures:** A precious slab of pre-exile jade that has been enchanted to remain icily cold, a trove of valuable cured exotic meat, a rare cask of liquor

## COUNCIL CHAMBER

- 1 A round mahogany table scarred by drinks and vigorous disputes.
- 2 Maps of the surrounding area.
- 3 Portraits of important past leaders hanging on the walls.
- 4 A raised dais for a speaker surrounded by benches.
- 5 Small statues of past leaders inset in wall niches.
- 6 Dice, oracle bones, and other tools of crude divination.

**Treasures:** Jeweled statuettes, remarkably accurate maps, the contents of a well-stocked liquor cabinet.

## CRYPT

- 1 The dead resting in wall niches.
- 2 Prayers for a peaceful afterlife inscribed on the ceiling.
- 3 A prayer wheel meant to be spun by any who enter the crypt.
- 4 Sarcophagi arranged in tight rows.
- 5 Urn burials, with corpses folded into large clay vessels.
- 6 Perfectly preserved corpses standing or seated as if in life.

**Treasures:** Grave goods, offerings left for the spirits of the bereaved, precious adornments of the tomb.

## DINING ROOM

- 1 Elaborate table service of porcelain and silver.
- 2 Lacquered trays and a brightly-glazed teapot.
- 3 Low Kueh-style tables for diners who sit or kneel on the floor.
- 4 Brass braziers set around the room to keep food hot and the air warm.
- 5 Wall screens for hiding servants, each intricately stitched and embroidered.
- 6 Smaller plates and utensils for the use of a food taster.

**Treasures:** Tableware worked in precious metals, exquisite porcelain service, thirty-armed silver epergne.

## GARDEN

- 1 Kueh-style sand garden with raked patterns and a few aesthetic stones.
- 2 Worn stone benches carved with characteristic patterns.
- 3 Flowers grown unwholesomely thick and vigorous in the soil.
- 4 A fountain carved with fanciful beasts.
- 5 A small hut for storing necessary gardening implements.
- 6 Some poisonous or otherwise dangerous plant growing unnoticed.

**Treasures:** Rare and precious flower, exquisite statuette, plants that can be processed into valuable drugs

## GREAT HALL

- 1 A roaring fire at the far end of the hall.
- 2 The ceiling rises to a second floor above the hall, ringed with living quarters.
- 3 Pillars carved with artful designs.
- 4 Side rooms filled with spare furniture and other lumber.
- 5 Long tables served on either sides by benches.
- 6 Trophies and banners hanging down from the pillars and upper floor.

*Treasures:* A valuable old trophy, plunder hidden inside a side room, a lord's jeweled chair.

## KENNEL

- 1 Deeply-driven wooden posts with rope or metal chains attached to them.
- 2 Troughs for slopping and watering the animals.
- 3 Wooden shelters against rain and sun.
- 4 Fenced-in enclosures to let the animals move freely.
- 5 Fighting pit for gambling on the beasts.
- 6 Shed for tack and harness for the animals.

*Treasures:* A beast of exquisite bloodline and appearance, jeweled or golden collars, valuable furs taken from the animals.

## KITCHEN

- 1 Blazing cook-fire with a heavy iron spit.
- 2 Waist-high metal cauldrons filled with boiling liquid.
- 3 Heavy wooden tables scarred with knifemarks and burns.
- 4 Pots and pans dangling from ceiling racks.
- 5 Iron griddles left smoking-hot.
- 6 Great wooden barrels full of rice, flour, and other staples.

*Treasures:* Jeweled serving dishes, treasure bricked into the fireplace, sacks of valuable spices.

## LABORATORY

- 1 Stacks of scrolls and codices on dusty shelves.
- 2 Intricate devices of inexplicable purpose.
- 3 Diagrams carved into the floor and work tables.
- 4 Stuffed animals hanging from the ceiling.
- 5 Vivisection table with straps and clamps.
- 6 Slates covered with obscure chalkings.

*Treasures:* Small ingots of precious metal, rare or richly-bound books, expensive laboratory equipment

## LIBRARY

- 1 Shelves stacked with nonhuman writing on tablets of clay.
- 2 Heavy books chained to mahogany reading stands.
- 3 Mirrored lamps hung in windowless rooms.
- 4 Rules, planes, quills, brushes, and other tools of writing.
- 5 Scrolls sheathed in cloth wrappings.
- 6 Old-fashioned Imperial books made of thin bamboo slats tied with silk.

*Treasures:* Books in precious bindings, Long-lost tomes, Supplies of small jewels and gold leaf for binding.

## MORTUARY

- 1 Stone slabs for preparing the dead.
- 2 Jars full of noxious embalming liquids.
- 3 A shelf of books and religious icons for embalming rites.
- 4 A tub for washing corpses.
- 5 Cabinet full of surgical tools for stitching up mangled bodies.
- 6 A supply of coffins and shrouds stacked on one side of the room.

*Treasures:* Perfume for anointing the dead, Valuable incense cones, Jeweled religious icons.

## NURSERY

- 1 Rows of simple wooden cradles.
- 2 Toys fashioned of wood and bone.
- 3 Bright, simple paintings in fresco or paint on the walls.
- 4 Cloth dolls stuffed with straw or coconut husk.
- 5 Wooden slabs carved with letters and pictures.
- 6 Cabinets with infant swaddling and clothing for small children.

*Treasures:* A noble infant's jeweled baubles, a precious object left behind by a caretaker

## PANTRY

- 1 Sacks of rice and wheat.
- 2 Tight casks filled with preserved meat.
- 3 Large tubs filled with pickled vegetables.
- 4 Small barrels of sea-salt.
- 5 Strings of dried peppers and garlic.
- 6 Jars of honey and cones of sugar.

*Treasures:* A cabinet full of rare spices, Small vials and containers of precious metal, Satchets of after-dinner recreational drugs.

## PRISON CELL

- 1 Iron staples sunk into the floor, walls, or ceiling.
- 2 Filthy straw ticks.
- 3 Noisome buckets.
- 4 Crawling vermin.
- 5 Walls scratched with prayers, curses, and day-hashes.
- 6 Walls with mortar chipped from around the stones.

**Treasures:** Small precious objects 'hidden' by a prisoner and concealed behind loose stones.

## SALON

- 1 Furniture fashioned of assorted tropical woods.
- 2 Cabinets of liquors and wines.
- 3 Tables scarred by knives and tankards.
- 4 Gaming boards marked off for play.
- 5 Braziers to warm the room and toast food.
- 6 Wall hangings or paintings.

**Treasures:** Gambling wagers, fine liquors, exquisite paintings.

## SHRINE

- 1 Gilded idol on an altar.
- 2 Holy book spread open on a lectern.
- 3 Censers hanging from the ceiling.
- 4 Religious icons painted on the walls.
- 5 Padded kneelers placed before the altar.
- 6 Locked cabinets filled with religious paraphernalia.

**Treasures:** Jeweled idols, precious relics, valuable offerings

## SPARRING ROOM

- 1 Sweaty garments piled in a heap.
- 2 Battered training dummies standing against a wall.
- 3 A floor padded with a thickly-woven straw mat.
- 4 Bars and exercise weights scattered about the room.
- 5 Fighting stances and encouraging imprecations painted on the walls.
- 6 Racks full of bamboo weapons and defensive padding.

**Treasures:** Venerable manual of secret combat techniques, precious relic of a mighty warrior of the exile

## STOREROOM

- 1 Sealed crates full of cloth or other dry goods.
- 2 Large glazed jugs full of lamp oil.
- 3 Stacks of unused furniture.
- 4 Clothing folded away with aromatic wood chips.
- 5 Vermin scuttling around, ignoring the wood chips.
- 6 Piles of empty barrels and jugs.

**Treasures:** Exquisite furniture presently out of style, family heirlooms, a cache of wealth hidden beneath a floorboard.

## TORTURE CHAMBER

- 1 A stained but well-oiled rack.
- 2 Braziers that smoke and stink of charred meat.
- 3 Books filled with carefully-recorded confessions.
- 4 Chains welded to staples in the wall.
- 5 Hoists dangling from the ceiling.
- 6 A cabinet containing bandages, sutures, and other medical equipment.

**Treasures:** A written confession with blackmail potential, belongings of the victims

## UNFINISHED ROOM

- 1 Wooden paneling stacked on the floor.
- 2 Floor tiles piled in heaps.
- 3 A half-finished relief or painting on one wall.
- 4 Tubs of mortar or daub.
- 5 Skeletal interior walls with only the bare studs raised.
- 6 A floor grooved with channels for hot air from a central fire.

**Treasures:** Valuable raw building materials such as gold leaf or precious mosaic tiles.

## VAULT

- 1 Chests bolted or chained to the floor.
- 2 Rows of labeled pigeonholes for documents.
- 3 Iron-barred display cases.
- 4 Coffers with interior padding for delicate valuables.
- 5 Armor racks with loops of chain to fasten the display.
- 6 Verdigrised bronze coffers with no visible keyholes.

**Treasures:** Virtually anything.

## VESTIBULE

- 1 Cabinets for outerwear.
- 2 Racks for hanging cloaks and overmantles.
- 3 Boot-scrapers and stained rugs.
- 4 Braziers to warm the outside air.
- 5 Intricate carving over the doorways to frighten evil spirits.
- 6 Trophies and indicia of the status of the occupants.

**Treasures:** Valuable clothing left here, precious trophies.

## Maps and Mapping

The following pages include a selection of generic maps that a referee can use to quickly construct adventure sites. In the PDF version of this supplement, you can use the layer controls in your PDF reading program to selectively blank the upper or lower portion of a map page, or filter the terrain features on overland maps.

At the back of the section, you'll also find a blank form for noting down the details of a diagram dungeon, as explained in the site creation chapter. A sample ruin created as a diagram dungeon is provided as an example of the form.

The scale of the maps and the direction of due north are to the referee's taste. The village map should likely have 1 square = 25 feet, while the building maps may function more perfectly at 10 or 5 feet per square, depending on the grandeur of the structure.

You should be willing to get your maps dirty. The whitespace on them was put there to encourage you to scratch your own notes and modifications on the sheets, and you can always print more as needed. Change interior layouts, draw in furnishings, add or remove doors, and otherwise muck with the defaults. Most of the maps can

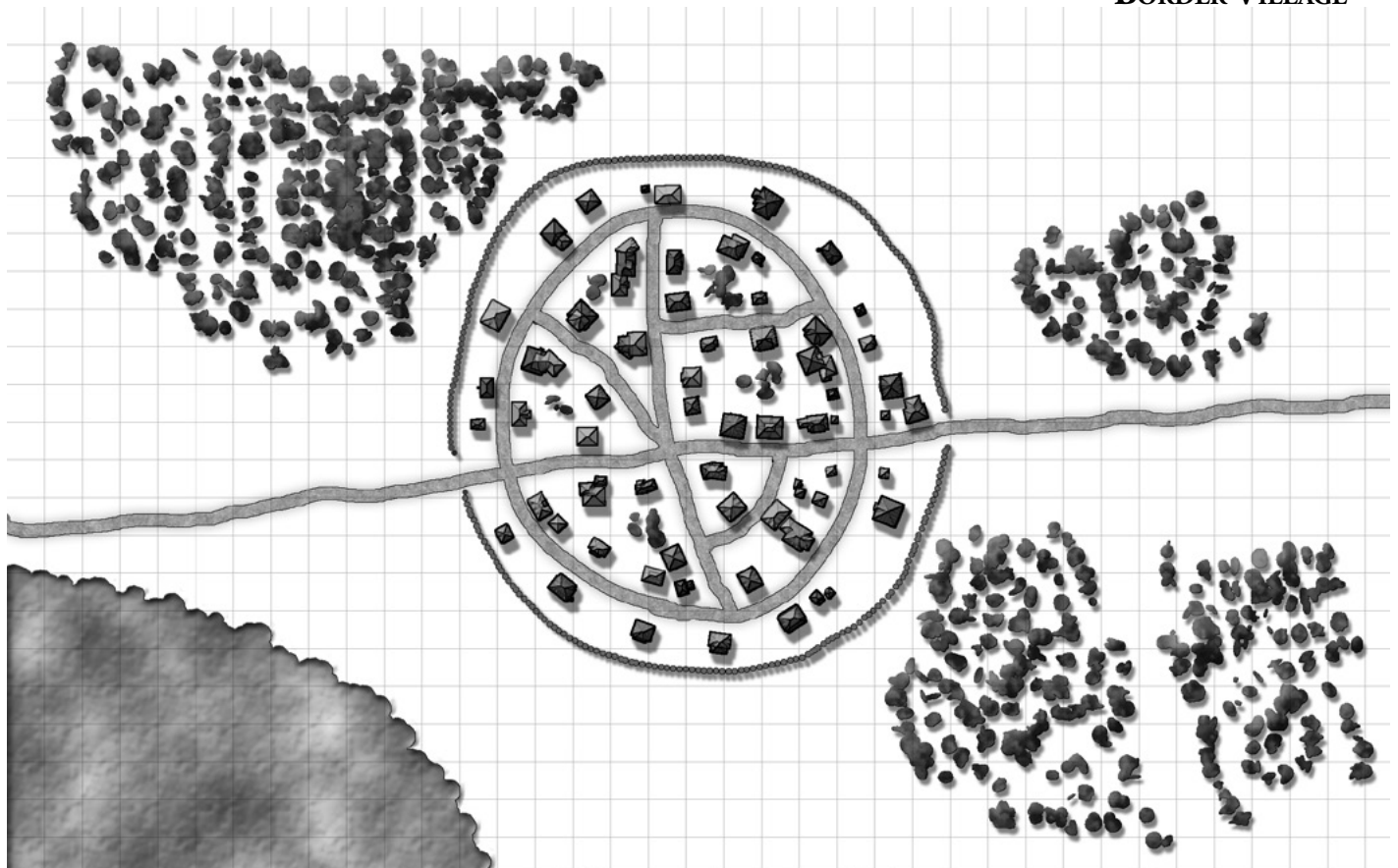
be recycled half a dozen times without players being any the wiser, so long as you change a few details and alter the orientation.

There are some maps in the gaming world that are beautiful and inspiring works, evocative of distant realms and sure to spark the creativity of referees who make use of them. Such creations are wonderful maps, but they are not the sort of thing you necessarily need in your campaign folder.

The maps in your campaign folder should be ruthlessly functional schematics that tell you exactly what you need to know to use them at the table. If it gives you pleasure to draw out beautiful and intricate maps, then by all means, you should do so. But for actual table use, the key necessity is a map that tells you what a Labyrinth Lord needs to know. Don't sweat and groan over an architecturally-perfect drawing unless the creation itself gives you pleasure.

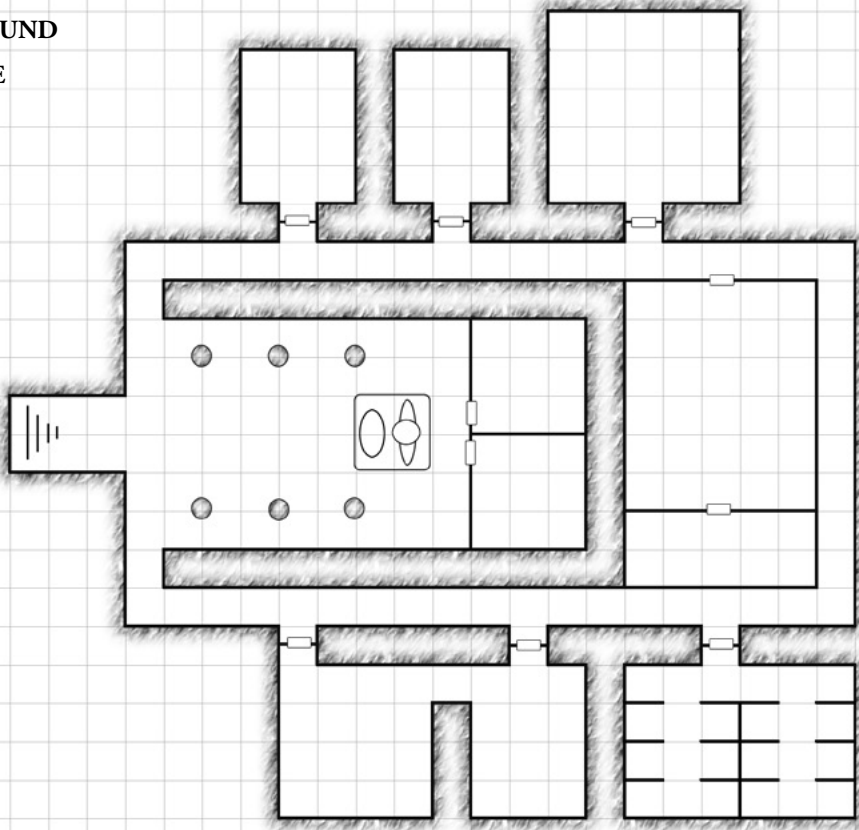
In any case, the odds are that your maps will end up as snack-smearred, beer-stained tissues scrawled with cryptic shorthand and hit point tally scratches. Such relics are splendid trophies of successful gaming sessions, and you should not fear to help them along the way with a few more scribbings when usefulness suggests it.

### BORDER VILLAGE

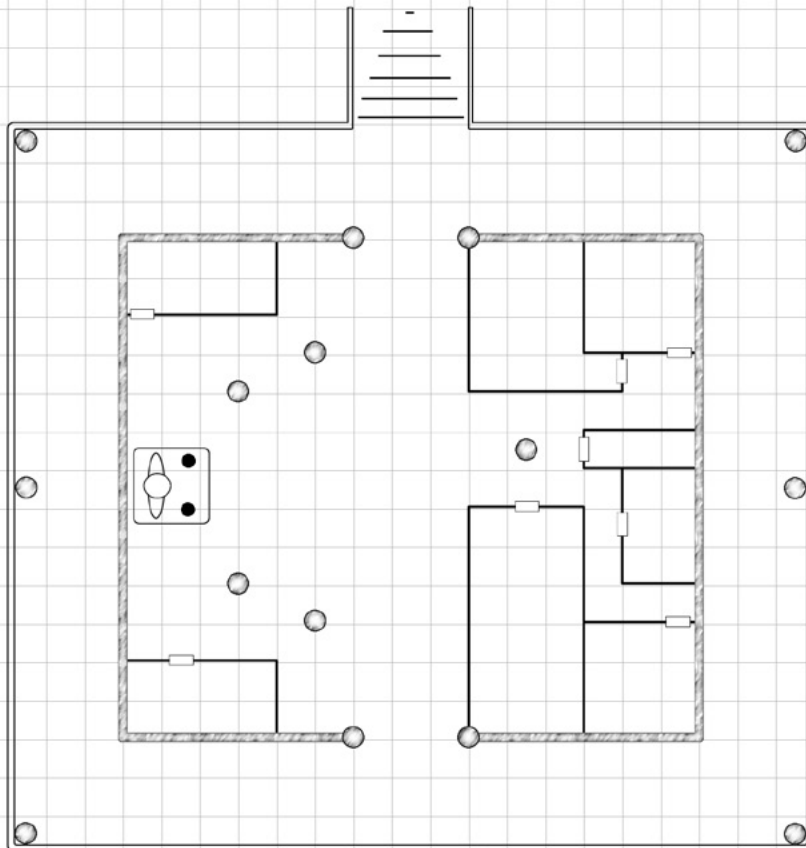




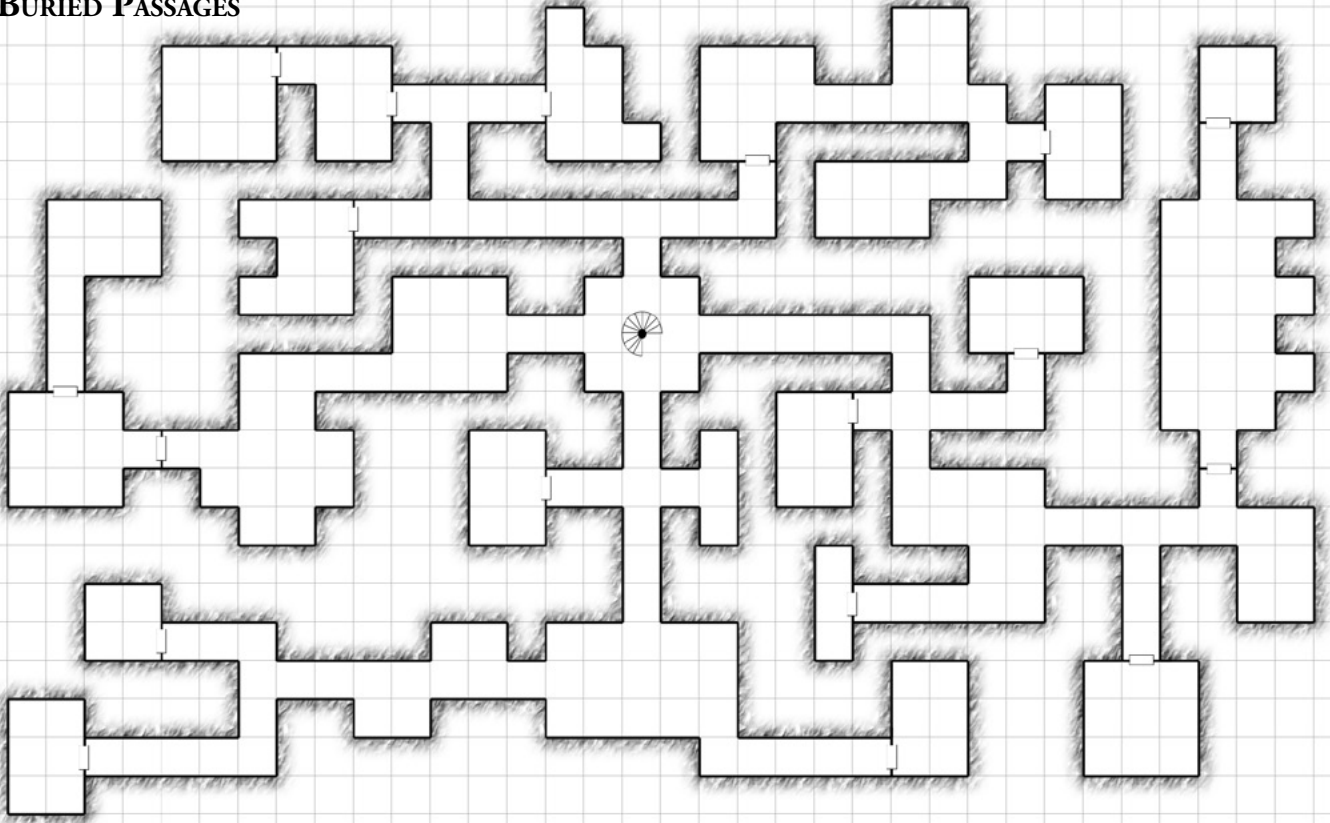
**UNDERGROUND  
TEMPLE**



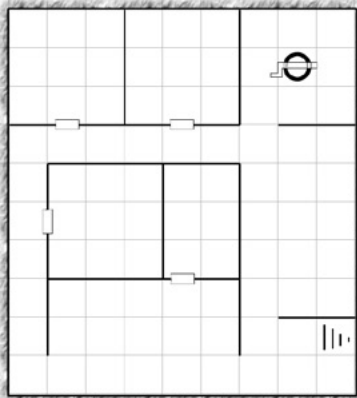
**PAGODA SHRINE**



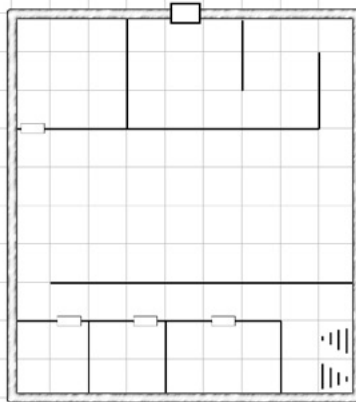
# BURIED PASSAGES



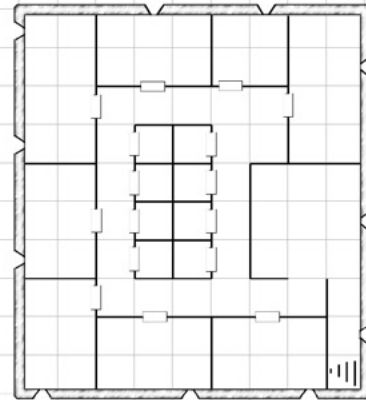
# BORDER OUTPOST



Cellar

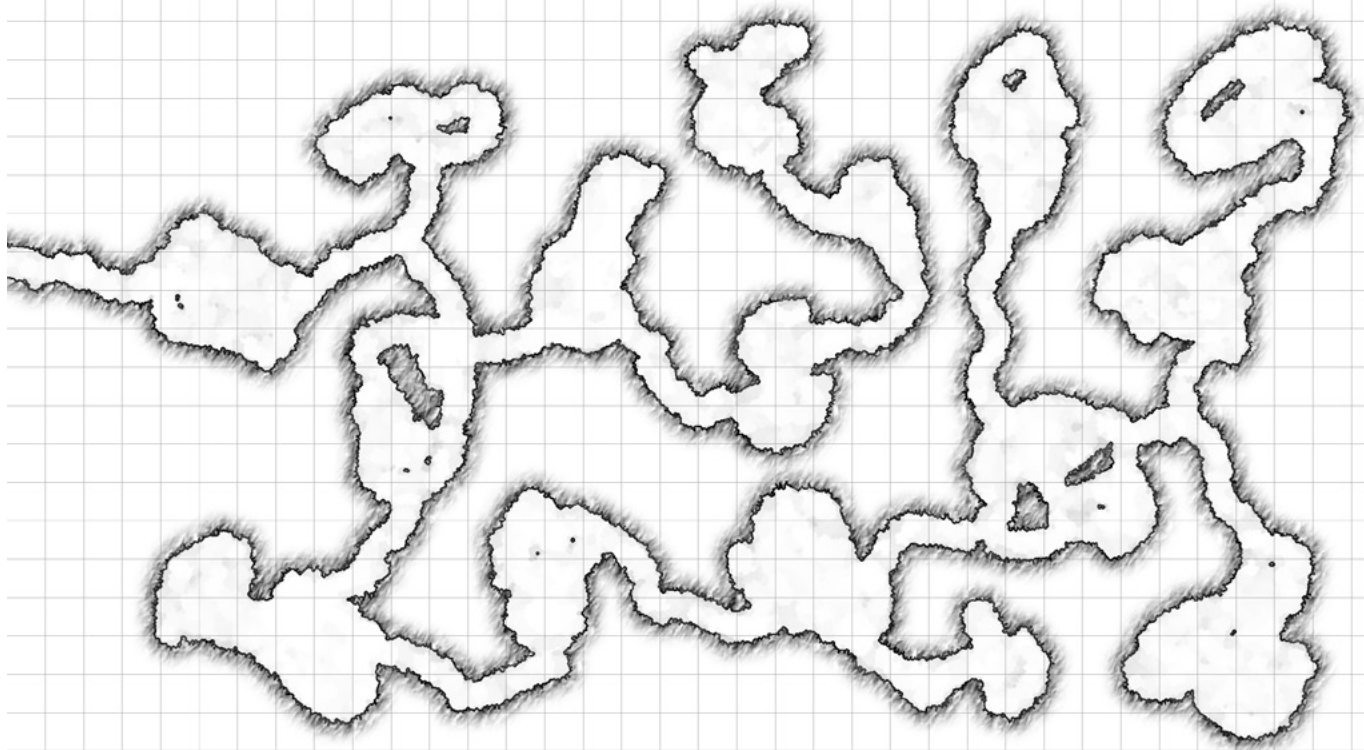


Ground Floor

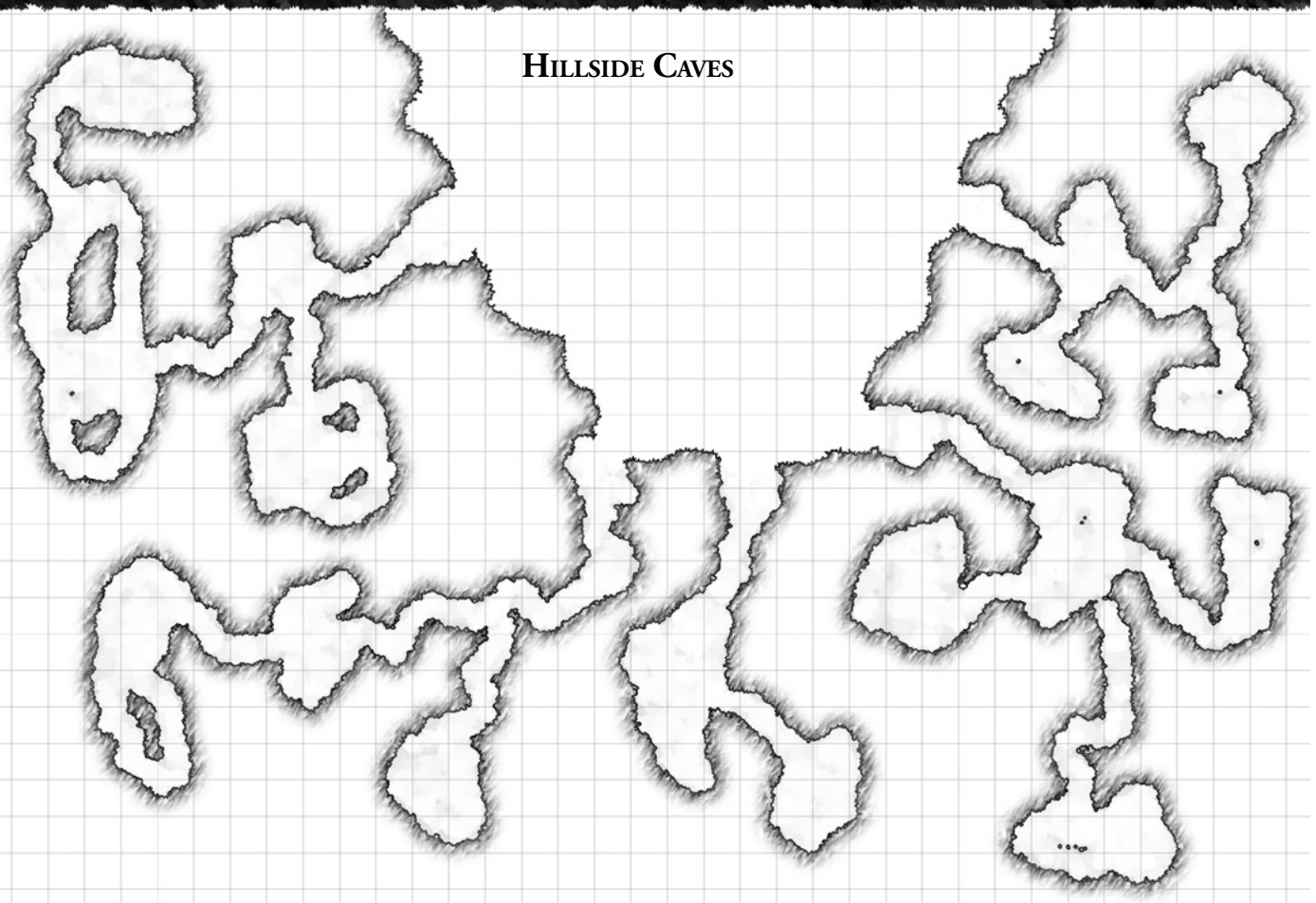


Top Floor

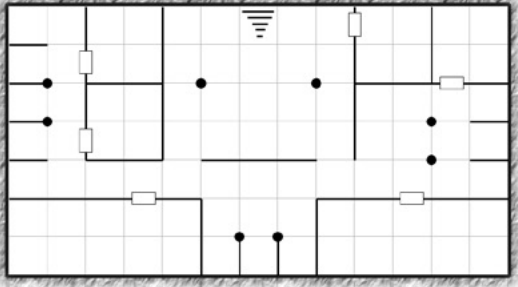
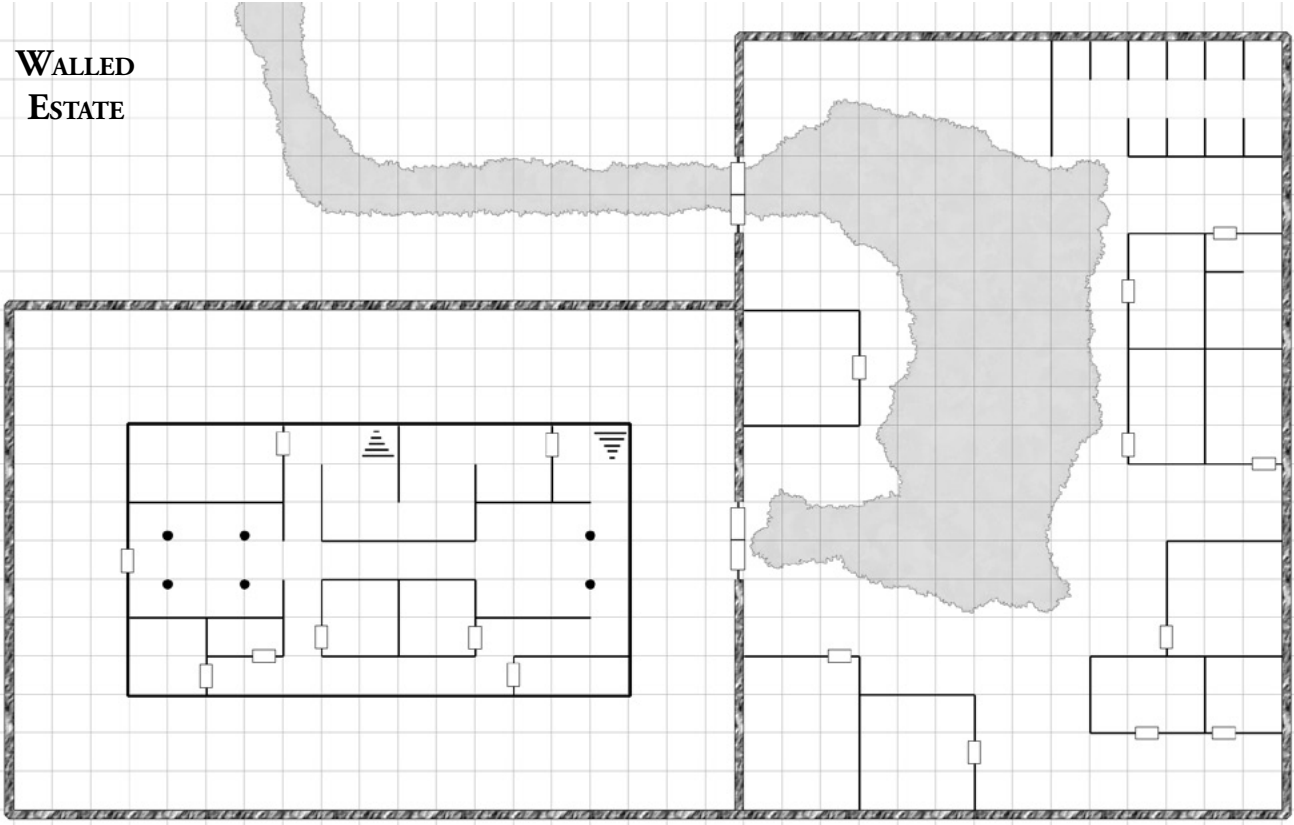
**DEEP BURROW**



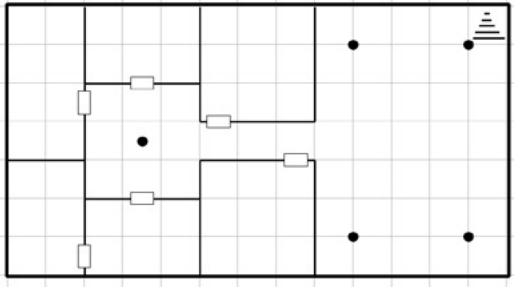
**HILLSIDE CAVES**



**WALLED  
ESTATE**

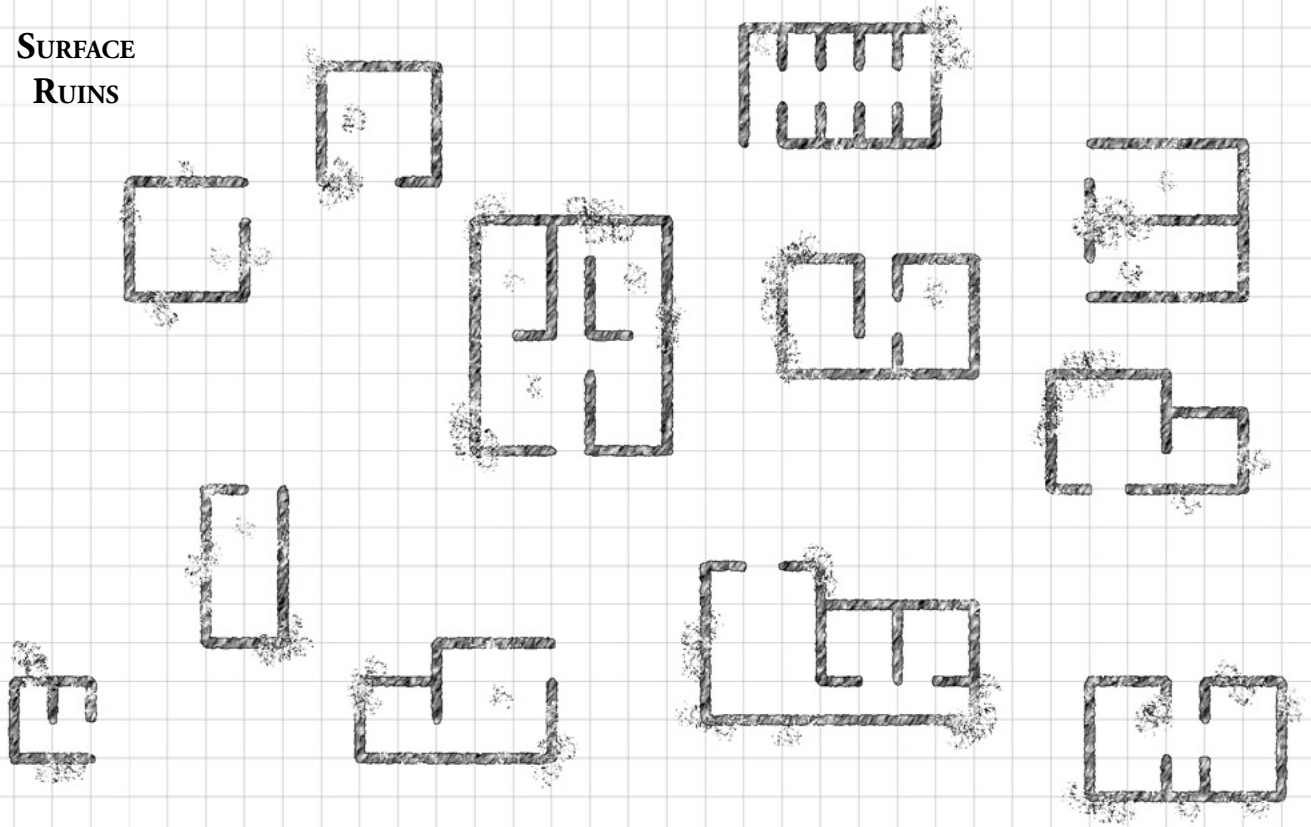


**Cellar**

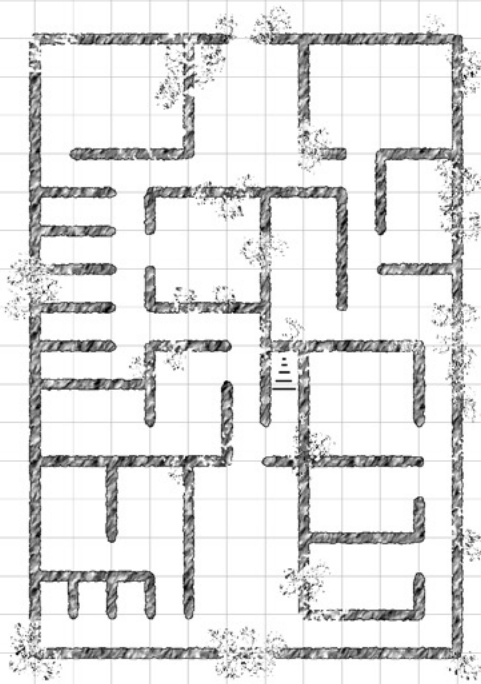


**Upper Floor**

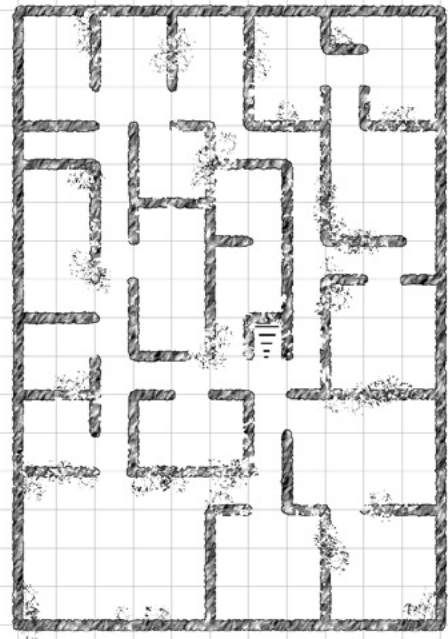
**SURFACE  
RUINS**



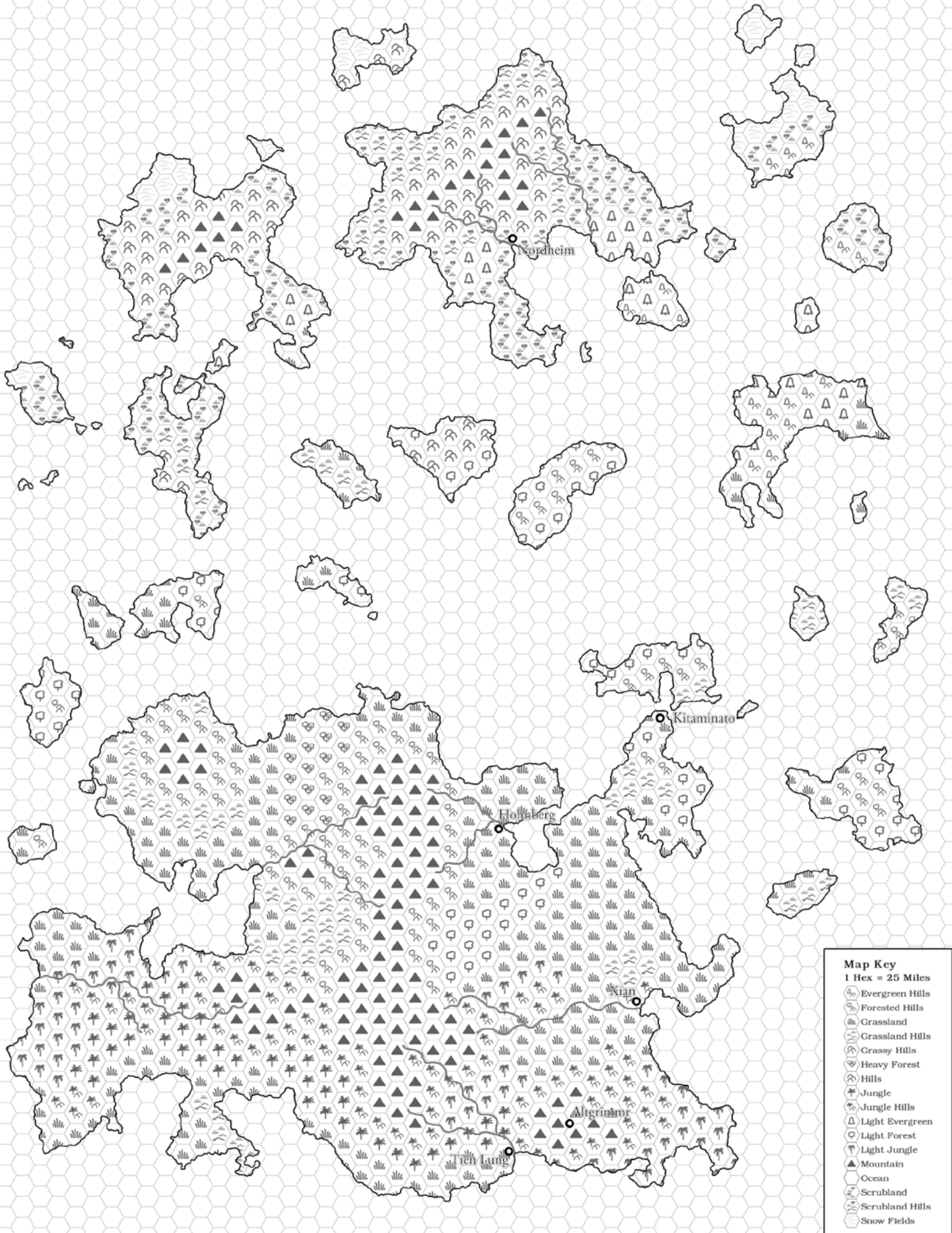
**RUINED  
KEEP**



**Ground Floor**



**Cellar**



**Map Key**  
 1 Hex = 25 Miles

	Evergreen Hills
	Forested Hills
	Grassland
	Grassland Hills
	Grassy Hills
	Heavy Forest
	Hills
	Jungle
	Jungle Hills
	Light Evergreen
	Light Forest
	Light Jungle
	Mountain
	Ocean
	Scrubland
	Scrubland Hills
	Snow Fields

**SITE NAME:**

**LAST USED:**

---

**A**

**B**

**C**

**D**

**E**

**F**

**G**

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

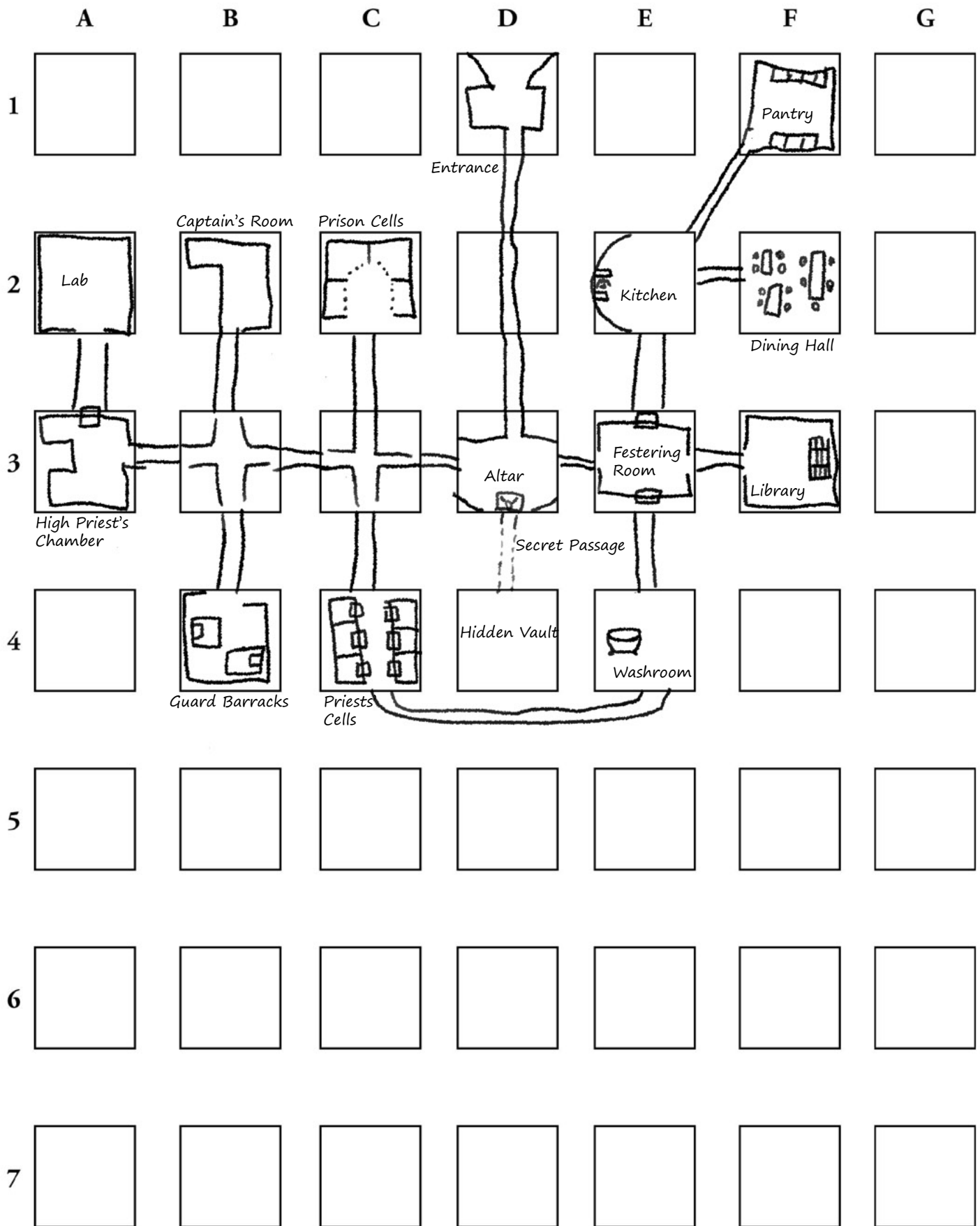
**5**

**6**

**7**

SITE NAME: RUINS OF THE RED FANE

LAST USED:





The cruel priests of Liltu, the Eater of First Breaths, once scourged the village with their savage exactions. They demanded newborn infants to feed the hunger of their goddess, and dark sorceries and hireswords kept them secure in their rule. Decades ago, a band of adventurers led the villagers in a ferocious attack on the fane that slew the priests and their henchmen. The adventurers perished in the fighting, and the peasants left the accursed place with the bodies of their heroes. Who is to say what remains undiscovered?

- 
- D1 Entrance:** The door was smashed from its hinges when the fane was overthrown by the peasants. Inside the doorway is a relatively fresh corpse, a young female Imperial clad in cracked leather armor, an adventurer's cheap cleaver fallen at her side. Her mouth is crusted over with yellowish fungus, a mark of her recent death from the mold of the Festering Room (E3)
- 
- F1 Pantry:** Grain sacks have all gone moldy here, and big earthen jars are full of vinegar and rot. Hidden beneath one sack covered in yellow fungus is a small bronze box containing two vials of still-potent jatji extract. If consumed in food or drink, the victim must save versus Poison or die of heart failure in 1d4 rounds. A thief or magic-user may recognize the viscid, milky substance. A fence might buy the vials for 100 gp apiece, but it is illegal anywhere outside of Tien Lung.
- 
- A2 Laboratory:** Five infant skeletons are curled up on the central table here. The largest is still possessed by the shade of its owner, and will animate 1d4 rounds after the room is entered. The skeleton will rush past the PCs to D3, where it will claw uselessly at the hidden vault door if not destroyed before then. It will continue to paw at the door until it is opened, whereupon the spirits within and the child's shade will both fade away peacefully. The lab contains a half-dozen legible scrolls recording useful medical knowledge from the experiments on the children. A mage or healer with few scruples might pay 500 gold for them.
- 
- B2 Guard Captain's Room:** The captain's dog's corpse has become colonized by the fungus at E3. He waits here by his master's rotting bones, a half-aware pile of fungus and teeth. He attacks intruders instantly. HD 2+2, hp 12, Dmg 1d4, AC 6
- 
- C2 Prison Cells:** Three of the cells were forced open when the temple was overrun. One remains locked, the bones of something huge and misshapen within. The lock is rusted shut, but if pried open the remains can be searched to find the snapped chain of a delicate woman's bracelet. The gold and garnet jewelry is worth 200 gp.
- 
- E2 Kitchen:** The hearth is long cold here. Tendrils of festering rot flow through the southern doorway.
- 
- F2 Dining Hall:** The tables are broken and the benches overturned. The walls are gouged from the fighting here, and six sets of bones lie on the floor, still clad in the rags of priests.
- 
- A3 High Priest's Chamber:** Opulent silks have fallen to dust here. A tarnished copper idol squats atop a small iron box here, resting atop a decaying writing desk. If the idol is touched or manipulated without first kneeling before it in obeisance, the infidel is struck with a Curse that will force them to automatically fail their next saving throw. Within the box is the key to the hidden vault door at D3.
- 
- D3 Altar:** A rotting wooden idol sheathed in verdigrised copper rises up here, the goddess holding an infant in one hand and a knife in the other. Carved on the altar before her are images of priests kneeling in obeisance. The walls are draped in rotting silks, and if the silks behind the idol are investigated, a hidden vault door will be found. The lock can be picked, or the key from A3 used.
- 
- E3 Festering Room:** The floor here is ankle-deep in dry, papery yellow fungus. If disturbed, the spore cloud attacks all adjacent who haven't covered their faces with wet cloth. Those who fail a save versus Poison will initially feel no negative effects, but every two turns thereafter they will lose 3 points of Constitution as the fungus swells in their lungs. At less than 3 Constitution, they choke to death on the fungal growths. A Cure Disease spell can save them, as can the forcible inhalation of a substantial amount of vinegar. Water can damp the fungus and eliminate its ability to throw up the spore cloud. Lost Constitution returns at the rate of 1 point per day of bed rest.
- 
- F3 Library:** Most of the scrolls here are illegible, but a small selection of botanical texts survive. One is bookmarked to a description of Yellow Cough Stalk, the fungus that carpets the festering room. The vinegar cure for inhalation is mentioned.
- 
- B4 Guard Barracks:** Eight yellowed skeletons are heaped at the far end of this room where they died fighting. One wears a shirt of dwarven-made chain mail sized to fit a human; it remains impervious to tarnishing, and the gold fittings make it worth 300 gp.
- 
- C4 Priests' Cells:** These six small, stark cells once housed the temple priests. Each contains a cot and a writing desk beneath the high window of each. A young boy's corpse remains hidden under the sixth cell's bed, his enraged spirit animating it as a ghoul to attack any living creatures who look beneath the bed: HD 2, hp 7, Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d3 plus save vs. Paralysis, AC 6.
- 
- D4 Hidden Vault:** The temple's wealth was stored here. Seventy-eight tiny infant skulls have been gilded with paper-thin gold leaf; an amoral buyer might pay 5 gold apiece for the metal of each. A prehuman ritual knife of chipped black obsidian is decorated with serpent motifs along the wrapped silk of the hilt, and serves as a dagger +1. A locked chest contains 500 gp worth of gold leaf, two dozen small semiprecious gems, each worth 25 gold, and some perfectly-preserved ritual vestments decorated with the knife symbol of the cult. While soft as silk, the vestments serve as leather armor to a wearer. Geomantic dissonances in the weaving prevent magic-users from casting spells while wearing them, but elves can function normally.
- When the vault is first opened, six spectral infants will manifest and begin a furious wailing. They can be Turned as skeletons by a cleric, and if Turned will vanish permanently. Lullabies will also soothe them, as will droplets of milk. If not calmed within 4 rounds, the spirits will animate six of the gilded skulls and attack, vanishing only after the skulls are destroyed: HD 1-1, hp 1, Dmg 1d3, AC 5. If the skeleton from room A2 is present when the vault is opened, the skeleton's spirit will gather up the infants and guide all of them to their final rest.
- 
- E4 Washroom:** A trickle of muddy water from a wall spout steadily fills a large copper washtub. Ancient lavatory seats line the other wall. Drains in the floor carry away the sluggish fountain's spillage.
-

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