



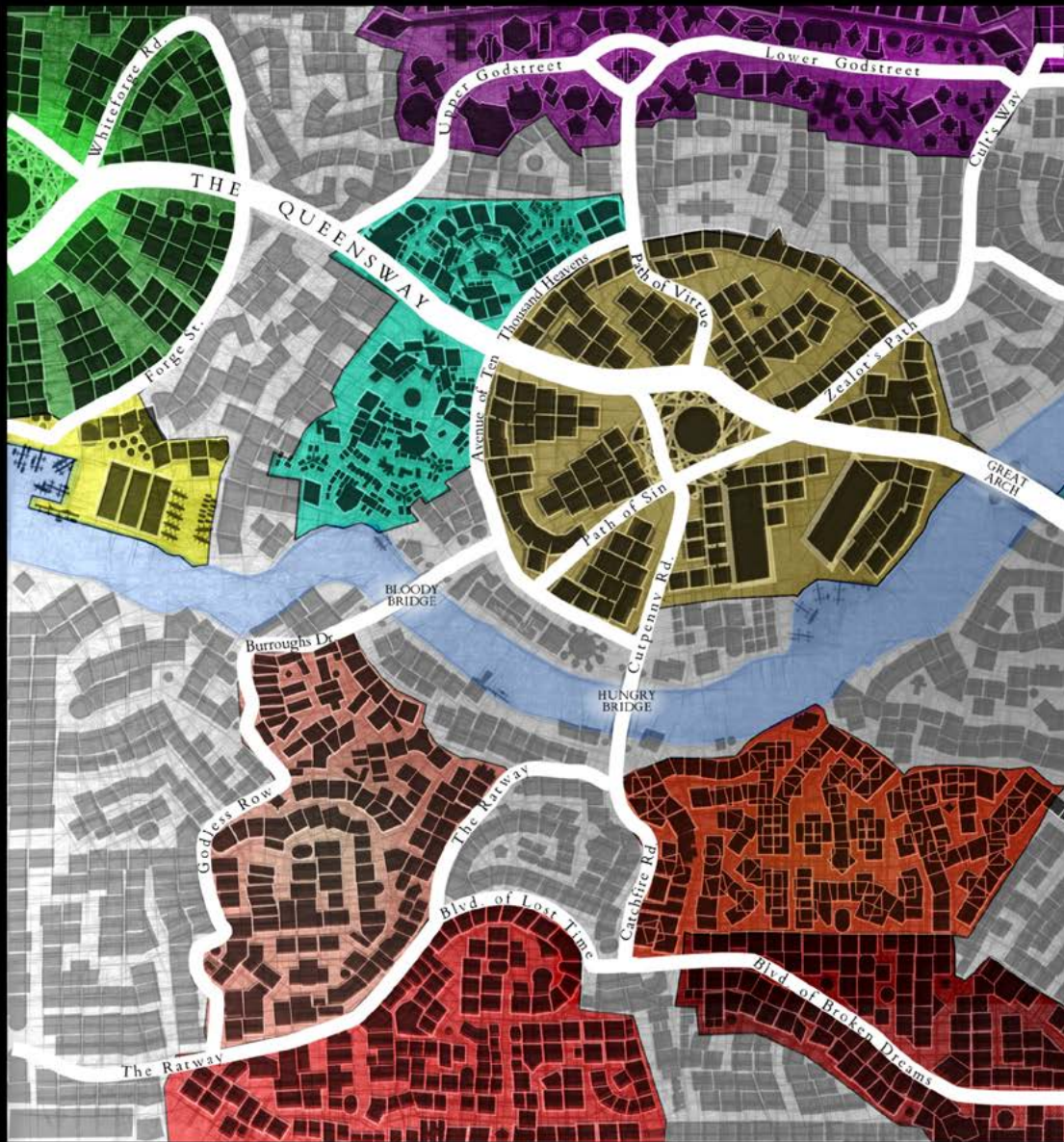
Sig

MANUAL OF THE PRIMES

COSMOPOLITAN
PLANAR FANTASY
ROLEPLAYING GAME

JASON
PITRE


Atlas of Sig



THE HIVE

-  THE RATFARMS
-  THE BREEDING WARRENS
-  THE STACKS
-  SCHOLAR'S FOLLY

TETHERWARD

-  GOLDEN TETHER (IDEOLOGICAL)
-  SILVER TETHER (CONCEPTUAL)
-  BRASS TETHER (ELEMENTAL)
-  THE DOCKS

A FREEBOOTER'S GUIDE TO THE CITY BETWEEN & NEXUS OF THE VERSE



RIVERWARD

-  THE BIZZARE
-  THE ISLE OF SPIRITS
-  THE ORATORY
-  THE CRAFT QUARTER

HIGHSPIRE

-  GODSTREET
-  TSARTHOME
-  THE GOLDEN SPIRES
-  THE GARDEN

WELCOME TO THE CITY



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MANUAL OF THE PRIMES



COSMOPOLITAN PLANAR FANTASY
IN THE CITY BETWEEN

BY JASON PITRE

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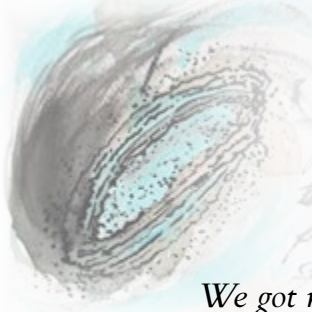
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An earlier version of this text was previously released under the title *Sig: The City Between* in November 2015. This is the expanded and refined version of the same game, fully compatible with that work.

WELCOME TO SIG

*This city is a Möbius strip, floating through the void. It's the nexus of all the 'verse, where eternal planes and infinite primes meet. It's a twisted ribbon of a free city, where monsters come to scheme and gods come to die. We call it **Sig: the City Between**.*



It spins 'round the infinite planes, rubbing elbows and blurring lines. Sig's always bound to three planes at a time, and the competing interests make for a lotta interesting visitors. Our cobblestone streets are flooded with bashers, explorers, venturers, refugees, and just about anybody you can imagine.

We got rules, sure, in this place of planar trade and cultural exchange. Take care not to bend those rules too much, lest you offend the wrong Power. There's plenty of 'em lurking in the shadows, looking to get their hooks into you.

We got Factions of all kinds that run things, from the Herald's Guild to the Dustkeepers. They do important work, when they aren't busy knifing each other in the alleys. The Factions are proxies for the planes that back 'em, which means that ya tend to get three of 'em causing trouble any given day. Word to the wise? Avoid guild politics unless ya want a long stay with the Tranquil God.

While I'm at it, stop staring at those bloody-hooded cultists in the corner. You don't want to attract attention from the servitors of some Planar Power. Tritonous has been flooding the streets with his bloody fishmen since the Plane of Waves got the tether, and they're not the kind you take home to mother. I'm no racist, but I saw one bite someone's head clean-off a couple weeks back. I like my head. Makes it easier to wear my hat.

So yeah, we're stuck in the middle of the the bloody Factions and Powers and their damned turf wars. Welcome to the mythical city of Sig, kid. Now gimme your coin or you ain't livin to see much more of it.

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OVERVIEW OF THE 'VERSE

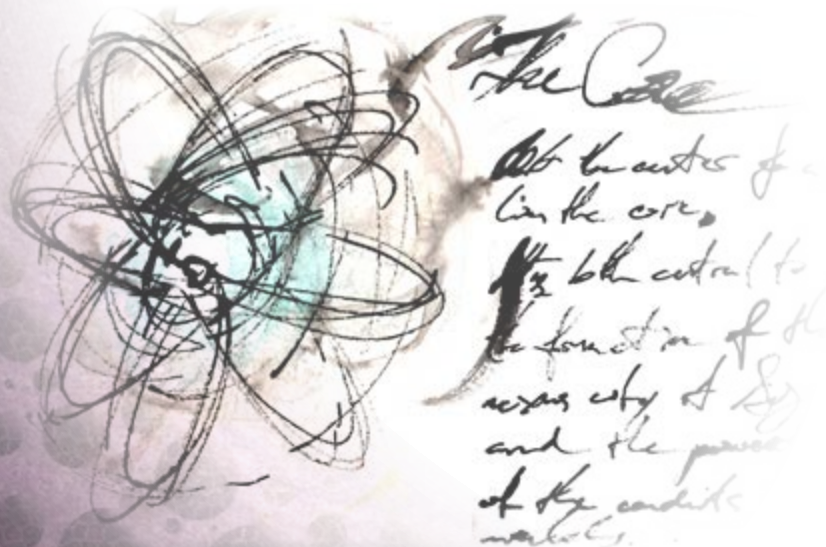
The multiverse consists of an infinite number of prime worlds, floating through an endless ethereal void and orbiting the eternal planes of existence. Let's start with the basics.

THE ETERNAL PLANES

They say that the **PLANES** were built by the Primordials, back before time began. There aren't many Primordials left to take the credit, so that might all be boasting, but regardless, the planes have been around since the beginning. Each of the planes is composed of some pure substance, and it's why those substances can exist elsewhere in the 'verse. You have all of the major planes, small planar shards, and even demiplanes. All of them swirl about in the **PLANAR CORE**, the centre of everything.

Each of the planes is unique, but they've all got a few things in common. Each has a singular Belief that defines it, one which influences the rules of society and physics alike. Each has its own native inhabitants with proud Heritages and unique Talents.

The planes are ruled by the individual Powers: divinities and devils who most primals use to threaten their children. The Powers have their own devoted servitors, who carry out their will and tend to make a mess of things for non-believers. The planes are also the power base for the many Factions that run Sig.



The Planar Core is a series of three interlocking rings.
Each ring holds five major planes.

The **ELEMENTAL** ring, the inner one, holds the planes of
Flame, Waves, Wind, Stone, and Ice.



The outer **IDEOLOGICAL** ring holds the planes of
Justice, Tyranny, Destruction, Order, and Freedom.



The middle ring is **CONCEPTUAL** and holds the planes of
Dreams, Shadow, Lore, Life, and Death.



THE INFINITE PRIMES

It's not all about the planes, though. Most of the 'verse is made of the **PRIME WORLDS**. Most primals (mortals native to the prime worlds) think their own home-worlds are the centre of creation. They ought to be glad they're wrong and don't get that kind of attention.

The primes are places with vibrant cultures and warring kingdoms, and they hold most of the mortals in the 'verse. One prime has a kingdom under siege by exiles of the elemental planes, for example. Another is a brutal world of acid-storms and swarms of tentacles. A third is a massive city-state struggling over issues of language and identity.

There's an infinite supply of primals, each with their own hopes, dreams, and culture. The cumulative faith from the infinite primes shapes the 'verse, feeding the Powers and bolstering the strength of certain planes. Some primals will fall into worshipping the Powers and receive blessings in return. Others strengthen the influence that a particular plane has on their prime world. Mortal faith is a priceless resource, and everyone wants a cut.

Everyone wants to claim the prime worlds. The Powers feed off them, and the Factions seek to harvest their resources. When someone finds gate to a new prime world, they inevitably send their people through and set up a beachhead for a greater invasion. The more primes they seize, the more powerful their home plane becomes. Of course, there are always clueless bashers who get the brilliant idea of going the other way through those lovely gates and come to visit Sig.



THE CITY BETWEEN

No one knows how Sig began. Some say that it was where the Primordials came to rest after building the 'verse. Others say that it's an errant plane—dedicated to the concept of cities—that escaped the Planar Core. Still others claim that The Silent Regent, who ruled the city for centuries, created it for her own mysterious purposes. Either way, it's an ancient place whose alleys hide more bodies than is proper.

The place looks cobbled together, with architectural features from all across the 'verse. The buildings and streets seem to be made of scavenged stone, splintered wood, and a strange gray mortar that's disturbingly warm to the touch. Whenever a new group of primal immigrants move in, they establish their own neighbourhood with its own cultural flavour. It's more cosmopolitan than any prime city, with insults flung and threats uttered in hundreds (if not thousands) of different languages. Every Heritage is represented in the city, from the greatest giant labourers to the smallest gnomish tinkerer.

But it's not the sights and sounds that a primal first notices; it's the smell. The mouth-watering, greasy scent of a roasted rat on a stick. The burning scent of soups so heavily spiced that your eyes water just looking at them. The reek of rotting trash and things best left alone in the alleys. The scent of so many bodies pressed together in the narrow streets can almost overwhelm you.

The 'fragrance' is the least of your worries, though. No matter where you are in Sig, there's conflict between the various Factions and Powers. Bandits try to rob the shipping barges plying the Great River until they are taken down by Riverwatch guards and fed to the dire leeches. A Devahil preacher raises an angry mob to burn down a neighbourhood of primal refugees. Something terrible stalks the Hive's narrow alleys, terrorizing the poor labourers who live there. There's always work for sellswords and professional arbiters.

The Hive has the best rats in the city! More meat on 'em.

PLANAR ALIGNMENT

Sig has many hidden names, known only to the most well-read planar scholars. Some texts refer to the City Bound, the City of Keys, or the Axis of the Verse. Each name reflects a fundamental truth: Sig is the centre of the 'verse.

It's that last one that's interesting. Sig orbits unpredictably around the swirling Planar Core and brushes close to each of the planes. When this happens, metaphysical tethers bind those planes to Sig. Each tether allows that plane's nature to spill onto the city streets. The planar natives move in with startling speed, bringing their culture and kith with them. They build communities and shape the grander society of Sig, often joining the Faction aligned with their planar home. Meanwhile, the Powers of the plane take the opportunity to send their devout servitors to claim their space on Godstreet.

The planar alignment is more than a few new immigrants settling into the city slums, though. The planar conduit allows the very substance of the plane to seep in, spreading the plane's underlying Belief in the process. When the Elemental Plane of Ice was bound, the city streets reshaped themselves in a snowflake pattern. The buildings iced over, and the street lamps glittered like fragile, crystalline stars. The Ideological Plane of Tyranny infected the city with soft whispers of exhilarating dominance and sweet treasons; it was a dark time and the streets ran red with blood. The Conceptual Plane of Life was a refreshing change, though a few folks were disgruntled that their neighbourhood turned into a hungry jungle.

To complicate matters, these tethers come in threes. This means Sig is always bound to three different planes at any point in time, each competing for hearts and minds. Whenever Sig aligns with a new plane, one of the previous tethers rips itself apart. That plane's influence dampens, and certain immigrant communities are cut-off from their native homelands. The city reshapes itself based on the new plane's influence, disrupting the city and bringing an influx of new planar refugees.

When the sky starts to bleed, seek shelter.

WORDS AND WHISPERS

The alignment of the planes also has a strange influence on language. Walking through the city, you'll hear hundreds of different tongues, from the grinding chant of Everstone preachers to the rapid-fire patter of gnomish merchants. Understanding of planar languages seeps through the tethers, influencing everyone in the City Between. When the Plane of Flame got the tether, the incendiary cant and scorched script became clear throughout the city. The Firehearts who came to colonize the city were easily able to communicate and seize their place. The city filled with their cultural treasures, scrolls of lore and ancient hymns. The city began to whisper in smoke and write with charcoal, as a matter of course.

Unfortunately, this gift of understanding persists only so long as the tether remains. When the Plane of Wind lost the tether, the Winged were cut off from society. Entire neighbourhoods lost the ability to work or communicate in their mother tongues. Books and other texts written in that aerial script became difficult to understand, and their cultural influence waned.

Everyone copes in different ways. Some choose to learn new languages the traditional way, so they can communicate freely with the rest of the city. Others work through professional translators, or get help from the Sage scribes. The wealthy pay for obscenely expensive translation talismans, while the destitute resort to drinking foul liquor from distilled blue devil squeezing. There are a handful of holdouts who refuse to assimilate to the new reality of the city, but their stories are largely forgotten.

TRAVELLING THE 'VERSE

There's lots of ways to travel the 'verse, and most bashers love to go wandering the planes and primes. Almost every road goes through Sig, but each has a different cost. Plenty of planar navigators are happy to guide a basher anywhere in the 'verse, for the right price.

TETHERS are etheric conduits that bind Sig to the fifteen major planes of existence. They are planar ports, the easiest method of travel.

- The Brass Tether connects the city to the Elemental Ring.
- The Golden Tether is tied to the Ideological Ring.
- The Silver Tether is bound to the Conceptual Ring.

The guilds often try to control access, but there are plenty of ways to get through that loose net.

GATES are hidden throughout the city and allow individuals or small groups to travel to one of the countless prime worlds. These gates are hidden by default and can only be unlocked at certain times, at the utterance of key words, or by specific kinds of people.

VORTEX is quasi-natural phenomenon, where planar rifts randomly form between Sig and a random plane for a few days. The planar navigators like to claim that the Powers are responsible for creating these, but the Powers deny responsibility. Like tethers, they allow the planar influence to bleed into the City Between, but it's localized to a small region around the vortex.

PORTALS are the most versatile—and most dangerous—method of travelling the 'verse. Any powerful sorcerer, wizard, or Power can create one of these shimmering pools of colour that transport anyone anywhere they desire. The price of this transportation is high, as conjuring one of these portals requires that a relationship be sacrificed. The woman who was your best friend doesn't recognize you. You find your husband has moved out of the home you shared. Your daughter considers you to be a dangerous mercenary. Your own memory of that relationship waxes and wanes, like a particularly cruel phantom.

THE LEXICON



Agenda: An action performed by a Faction or Power.

Bar That: A polite command to shut up.

Basher: A thug, fighter, or other artist of violence.

Blood: A master, expert, or other professional worthy of respect and/or fear.

Bloody Mess: A clash of powerful and dangerous people, with bystanders in the middle. See "Blood".

Coin: All currency that can be spent, be it in the form of gold coins, precious gems, barter, blackmail, or memories.

Cross-Trade: Criminal activity, including theft, smuggling and general thuggery frowned upon by authorities. See "Honest Business".

Dark: A secret or piece of blackmail.

Darmok: A sage specializing in language, history, code, or puzzles.

Devotion: A religious prohibition which restricts the behaviour of a Power's servitors.

Duty: The purpose that a Faction fulfills within Sig.

Garnish: A bribe or payment of protection money.

On the Tether: In control of a situation or having major influence over it.

Heritage: A group of beings native to the planes.

Honest Business: Illegal activity, sanctioned by the authorities after receiving the appropriate garnish.

Key: A way out, commonly referring to the secret way to leave Sig for the planes.

Leverage: The power that a Faction wields within Sig.

Lock: A violent group of bashers, often the reason for a Key.

Lost: Dead, comatose, or otherwise incapable of acting in their own best interests.

Plane: An eternal realm of existence composed of one of the essential substances of the 'verse.

Portfolio: The aspects of reality under the control of a Power.

Power: A god, demon, elemental, spirit, or otherwise powerful figure from the planes.

Prime Worlds: One of the infinite and diverse mortal worlds, home to the Primals.

Primals: A person native to one of the prime worlds.

Primordial: One of the ancient beings that created the 'verse, slain by treacherous gods in The Great War.

Rattle: To talk incessantly, either about one's own greatness or meaningless trivia.

Ritual: A divine rite which grants a benefit, and the cost associated with its use.

Servitors: Avatars, ambassadors, paladins, and zealots wielded by one of the Powers.

Shard: An artificially created realm of existence, created by a Power or an archmagus.

Tame: Territory in the planes under nominal Faction control.

The Silent Regent: The former ruler of Sig who disappeared, or perhaps was slain, a generation ago.

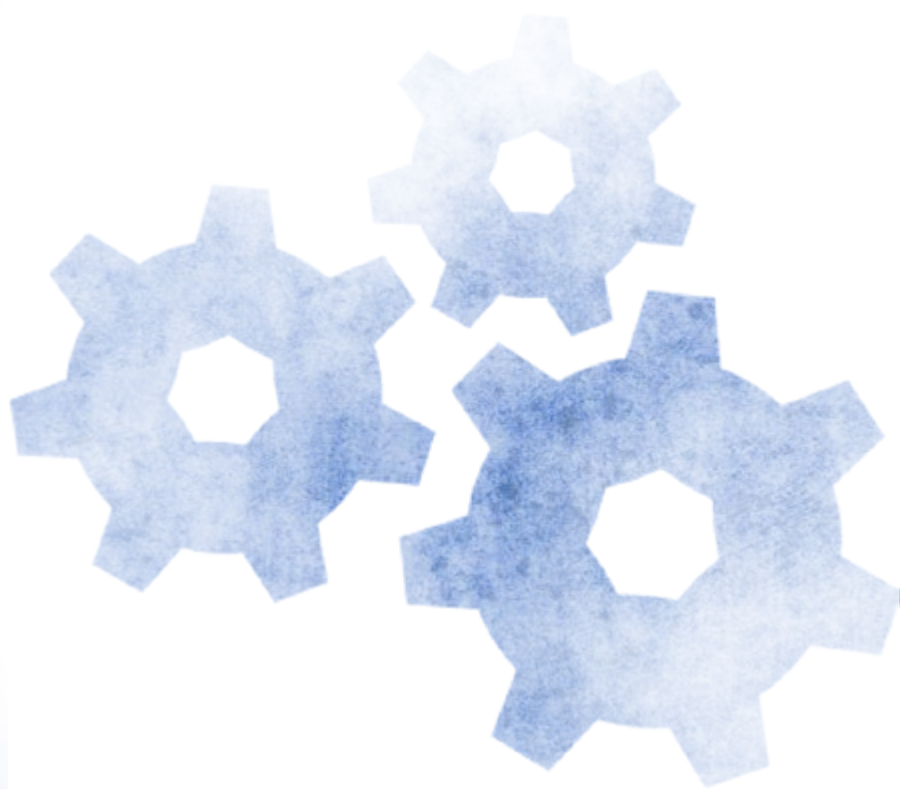
Venturer: A bold and reckless mercenary or freebooter who travels the 'verse.

'verse: All of existence, comprised of the planes, the primes, and the City Between.

Wild: Territory in the planes not controlled by any Faction.

CHAPTER 1

THE RULES OF PLAY



THE RULES OF SIG

Sig is a game about a group of people. People with fierce convictions and deep questions. People bound to their families, communities, and faiths. People driven by professional pride and political ambition. People who will change the world and make a difference when it's needed most. In Sig, you portray important characters whose decisions and dreams matter.

This game uses a system of rules and procedures to support stories about these people. The system presented here originally appeared in the Spark Roleplaying Game (2013), with a focus on building compelling worlds and confronting your Beliefs. This system has been refined to focus on the themes of family, faith, and community in the City Between.

Everyone has Beliefs in this game. Players portray characters with three Beliefs, each representing some subjective and controversial declaration about the world or society. The planes have their own Beliefs, which seep into the City Between. The prime worlds are defined by their own Beliefs, which are loosely held by the primal mortals who dwell within. These rules drive you to confront all of these Beliefs, either by supporting them or acting against them in your actions.

When you confront your Beliefs, you get Influence. You can then spend this Influence to win Conflicts, to avoid the price of victory, or to inspire others to change their Beliefs. By changing yourself, you can change the world. It's a game about self-reflection and personal growth. A game that helps you explore real-life issues and maybe learn a little bit about yourself.

FOR EXAMPLE

There is a full example of play included in Chapter 6. If you want to see how the various rules work, or if you are uncertain how a procedure functions, take a look at “How to Play” on page 231.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The game is a series of discussions between participants coming from different perspectives. When everyone agrees on an outcome, it occurs in the fiction. If you are ever stuck in the game or uncertain what the rule is, just follow these steps.

1. Discuss the problem and explain your intentions.
2. If everyone agrees that something should happen, it does.
3. If people disagree, each participant rolls the relevant die, and the person with the highest number gets their way.

The game orders these discussions with a nested structure of systems that apply at three different scales: Session, Scene, and Conflict. Each Session consists of a number of dramatic Scenes, and each Scene may include one or more Conflicts. Between sessions, the Game Moderator (GM) keeps track of the changing histories and relationships of the setting. Changes to character Beliefs and the tethers to Sig will alter the context of play and lead to long-term evolution of the setting.



Each time you sit down to play Sig for 2-5 hours is known as a **Session**. Each Session begins with an inciting incident of some kind, typically due to the agendas of the Powers and the Factions. You play through a series of dramatic Scenes where you confront your Beliefs. At the end of the Session, one or more of the characters might trigger a Reflection scene where they change their Beliefs. Session mechanics are explained in more detail on page 32

The **Scene** level of play focuses on individual events where characters are forced to make difficult decisions. Each Scene begins with a Platform (where and when the Scene occurs), a Tilt (why the characters need to act), and a Question (what you want to discover in the Scene). Each person rolls their Smoke attribute die, and the three people with the highest results will frame the current Scene. The group roleplays freely until the Question is answered. When the Question is answered, Influence is distributed to participants who confront their Beliefs. While many Scenes are collaborative in nature, they may contain one or more Conflicts. Scenes are explained in more detail on page 26

The **Conflict** level of play only occurs when there are disagreements at the table, where two participants propose different potential outcomes. Both participants roll their die, adding in bonuses if they have Talents which would apply. The participant in the Conflict with the highest score gets the outcome they desire and must pay the price of victory. While some Scenes involve a Conflict, not every Scene will have one. Conflicts are explained in more detail on page 29

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

PEOPLE

You'll need between three and six people interested in the game, yourself included. One person will fill the role of the game moderator, while the others will be players. The game can easily accommodate missing a player or two for any given Session.

TIME

This game requires you to set aside some time to play. Every time your group gets together to play the game, you should try to set aside between two and five hours to play. It will normally take about an hour to create characters and customize the setting by following the process in Chapter 2. The rest of the time, you are playing through a number of Scenes.

STUFF

You'll need a few objects to play.

- Every player will need a Character Sheet and a Reference Sheet.
- The GM will need a GM Sheet, a Belief Sheet, and a Reference Sheet.
- A few spare pieces of paper and some index cards
- Writing implements (pens, pencils, etc.)
- About 50 tokens to represent Influence. Coins, flat marbles, or poker chips work well for this.
- A standard set of polyhedral gaming dice (D4, D6, D8, D10, D12, D20) for each person. You can usually find these at local hobby stores or comic book shops.

Copies of the sheets can be downloaded for free at www.genesisoflegend.com.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE GM

One member of your group needs to take the role of GM. The GM leads the game and controls the setting. Typically, the person who knows the game best takes this role. This text refers to the GM with feminine pronouns (she/her) to make examples clearer, but a GM may be of any gender.

As GM, you guide the players in telling dynamic, character-focused stories. The setting is your avatar, a character with a personality and a history for you to express during play. Think of Sig as a movie: you are the director, producer, and most of the minor characters. Don't worry; the game comes with all the tools you need to moderate the game. As the GM, you will...

- Shape and control the setting directly during play.
- Make judgments and arbitrate when appropriate.
- Interpret and explain the rules of the game.
- Keep the story moving.
- Say yes, or roll the dice.

As the GM, you are responsible for portraying many characters that the players encounter during play. These characters may include...

- The Faces: the friends, lovers, family, and foes connected to the players' characters.
- Native inhabitants of Sig, whose motivations are shaped by the setting Beliefs.
- Primal mortals, either in the City Between or in their homelands.
- The mighty Powers and their zealous devotees.
- The political Factions of the city and their many members.



THE PLAYERS

Everyone else in the game is referred to as just a player. The text refers to these players with masculine pronouns (he/his) to make examples clearer, but players may be of any gender. Each player creates a Protagonist Character (PC) with their own Beliefs, histories, personalities, and capabilities. They interact with other characters and with the setting through their PCs. The players keep the game moving forward and bring drama to the table. If Sig were a movie, each player would be both actor and screenwriter. As a player, you will...

- Create a character and their three driving Beliefs.
- Portray that character, deciding what they say and do.
- Portray certain minor characters, when appropriate.
- Collaborate to build scenes and affect the world.
- Enter into Conflicts to support or refute Beliefs.

As the player, this means that you should...

- **Be decisive.** Hold firm to your Beliefs. Play chicken with the other people at the table and dare them to accept your perspective. It doesn't matter if you make a good decision or a bad one; so long as you confront Beliefs and take risks, you earn your Influence.
- **Be vulnerable.** Let your guard down and push your boundaries. The story will be more personally meaningful that way, and it can help you learn more about yourself.
- **Be transparent.** Share your plots and keep open secrets. While your characters might not know what's going on, you the players certainly should. Secrets are only interesting when you can discover them during play.
- **Be daring.** Every risk you take can earn you Influence, and you are in control of the long-term consequences. Your character can't die unless you want them to. Push the envelope, escalate Conflicts, and go big.

THE GROUND RULES

This is a game about confronting values and convictions; this means its subject matter will take players to vulnerable places and will address potentially sensitive topics. Some content in a game can trigger discomfort or past trauma, so be considerate. Make yourself aware of everyone's boundaries. Respect them.

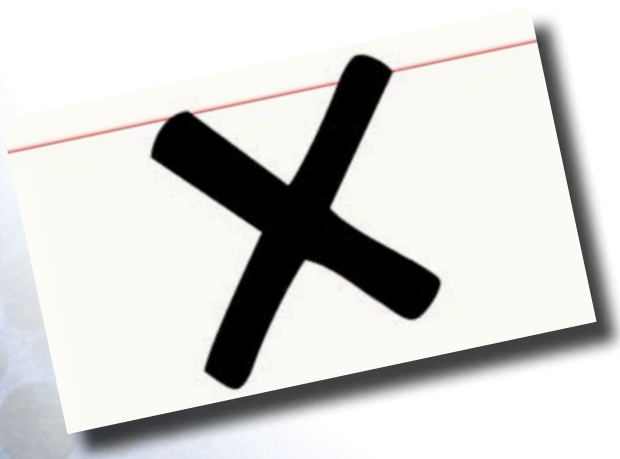
In certain games, groups may choose to explore these subjects in fiction. You should only include these difficult subjects in the game if everyone agrees to do so.

The excellent John Stavropoulos presented a tool known as the X-Card as a way of keeping games comfortable and fun for everyone involved. When you use the X-Card, just read the following text for the group before play:

I'd like your help. Your help to make this game fun for everyone. If anything makes anyone uncomfortable in any way ... [draw X on an index card] ... just lift this card up, or simply tap it [place card at the centre of the table]. You don't have to explain why. It doesn't matter why. When we lift or tap this card, we simply edit out anything X-Carded. And if there is ever an issue, anyone can call for a break and we can talk privately. I know it sounds funny but it will help us play amazing games together and usually I'm the one who uses the X card to protect myself from all of you! Please help make this game fun for everyone. Thank you!"

For more information about the X-Card, check out the full explanation at <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>.

Be excellent to each other.



THE ECONOMY OF PLAY

During play, you will be keeping track of two types of game currency.

The first is **INFLUENCE**. You can spend Influence to direct the story as you wish. Spending points of Influence allows you to win Conflicts, ask questions about other characters, and change character Beliefs.

The second is **HARM**. You can suffer Harm to win Conflicts you would otherwise lose, or to pay the price of victory associated with those Conflicts.

INFLUENCE OVERVIEW

Confronting your Beliefs teaches you and grants you power. Everyone begins with three Influence at the beginning of each Session.

Gain Influence when:

- One of your Beliefs was confronted during a Scene.
- Someone else confronts all three of their Beliefs.

Spend Influence in order to:

- Gain a bonus during a Conflict after you roll your die. Gain +1 per point of Influence spent.
- Trigger an INTERLUDE with someone else. Costs three Influence.
- Trigger a REFLECTION scene with someone. (Costs fifteen Influence and can only be done at the end of the Session.)

INTERLUDES are short, quiet moments that occur between Scenes. Triggering an Interlude during the Closing phase allows you to ask someone else a question about their character or their history. Participating in an Interlude removes one Harm. Interludes are explained in more detail on page 32.

REFLECTIONS are life-changing events, where characters fundamentally alter their world-view. When a player has amassed 15 Influence at the end of the session, they have an intimate discussion with another character and change one of their Beliefs. Both participants grow, either by gaining a new Talent or gaining a point in an attribute. This also changes the tethers bound to Sig. Reflections are explained in more detail on page 32.

HARM OVERVIEW

Sig can be a hard place, and characters often suffer for their Beliefs. This is represented by Harm, which makes characters less effective in future Conflicts. Harm comes in many forms:

- Physical injury, like from a demon's claws or a philosopher's club.
- Emotional distress, like from harsh words or broken promises.
- Mental exhaustion, like from cryptic cyphers or strange enchantments.
- Bad luck, like from bad deeds or angry Powers.

No matter the source of the Harm, it is treated the same way. Each character has a Harm track, allowing them to receive up to six points during play. The amount of Harm your character has received limits the effective size of your attribute die.

- If you don't have any Harm, you roll as normal.
- If you have 1 point of Harm, the largest die you can roll is a D12.
- If you have 2 points of harm, the largest die you can roll is a D10.
- If you have 3 points of harm, the largest die you can roll is a D8.
- If you have 4 points of harm, the largest die you can roll is a D6.
- If you have 5 points of harm, the largest die you can roll is a D4.
- If you suffer your 6th point of Harm, you must choose to be taken out or retire from play.

Gain Harm when:

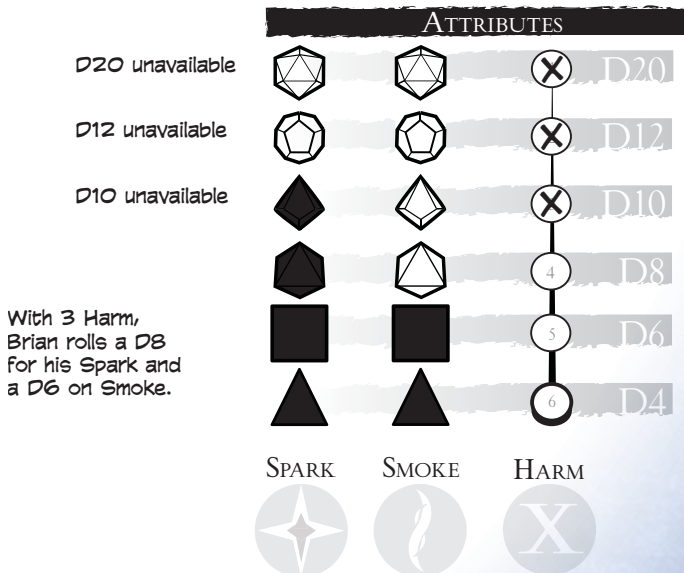
- You win a Conflict, suffering one point of Harm as the price of victory. See page 30
- You win an escalated Conflict, suffering an additional point of harm each time you escalate. See page 30
- During a Conflict, you choose to suffer Harm for a +3 bonus to your score (after you roll).

Remove Harm when:

- You participate in an Interlude. See page 32.
- You choose to sit out of a scene in the Framing Phase. See page 228
- The Session ends.
- Your character leaves play. See page 34

Character sheets have a harm track, numbered from 1-6. When you suffer Harm, mark the circles on your sheet, which will make it clear which dice are unavailable.

For example, Brian is rolling in a conflict, where his character has a Spark attribute of D10. If his character didn't have any Harm, he would be able to roll a D10 in this situation. Unfortunately, he has three Harm, so he can only roll a D8 in the conflict.



PLAYING SCENES



Most of the gameplay consists of a number of Scenes. Each Scene is a distinct unit of play, normally set in a single location where multiple people are interacting.

Each Scene begins with the Framing phase, where you establish where the action will take place and why the Scene is important. Next is Collaboration, where everyone cooperates to tell the story by making bold declarations of what happens next. During the Collaboration phase, anyone may disagree with a given declaration. If that happens, dice are used to resolve their Conflict. After they finish the Conflict, they get to move back to Collaboration. When the underlying question of the Scene has been answered, you begin Closing the Scene. During this phase, characters can heal or retire, and they're rewarded with Influence for addressing their Beliefs.

FRAMING PHASE

At the start of every Scene, you create the initial situation. As a group, you first generate a Platform, describing where and when the Scene is taking place. Next up, you create a Tilt, defining some event or action that will force the characters into action. Third, you determine what Question you wish to answer with the Scene.

THE ROLL

First, everyone roll their Smoke dice and compare each other's results, re-rolling in the case of ties. The highest roll chooses between the Platform, Tilt, or Question. The second highest chooses one of the two remaining options. The third-highest roll gets what remains. Others can give suggestions, but the final say rests with the people with the three highest rolls.

STAGE THE PLATFORM

As the person choosing the Platform, you describe where and when a Scene takes place in two to three sentences. You control the pace of play and how much time passes between Scenes. Cut right to the action, and try to keep Scenes short and snappy.

Ask the group if any of the PCs won't be present in the scene. Those players may claim one of the GM's characters to temporarily control using your Smoke attribute. If you would like to sit out of the Scene entirely, you may choose instead to remove one Harm from your sheet.

Platform Example: *You stand in a filthy alley in the Hive, reeking of spilled beer and infested with green slimes.*

CREATE THE TILT

As the person choosing the Tilt, you use two to three sentences to describe what event or action forces PCs to interact with the Scene. You can guide the types of actions encouraged in the scene. You can promote situations that will challenge multiple Beliefs or make a situation that is appropriate for a specific character's Talents. Regardless, the Tilt must be logical and consistent with the Platform.

Tilt Example: *A small child runs out of a doorway, sobbing loudly and clutching a stuffed dragon toy.*

ASK THE QUESTION

As the person framing the Question, you state what group is trying to determine with the Scene. It determines why this Scene is important to the story, and the best ones challenge many Beliefs. In addition, the Question must be related to the Tilt. When the Question is asked, move on to Collaboration.

Question Example: *Will you bring the girl back to her terrible and cruel family?*

COLLABORATION PHASE

Roleplaying is a conversation. Everyone at the table gets a chance to share their opinions and contribute to the story. Most of the time, everyone cooperates and builds off each other's ideas. Occasionally, someone will disagree and interrupt the conversation. This is referred to as a Conflict, and you resolve it by rolling dice and letting the winner speak next.

At the beginning of each Scene, the GM gets the first opportunity to make a statement or a declaration. During the Scene, each of you gets a chance to speak in the voices of your characters. You will be able to ask questions of other characters to learn more about their perspectives. Sometimes people will make basic statements about their PC's thoughts and actions. The GM can do something similar with her NPC. She may decide to narrate the current situation or explain something about the setting instead. Periodically, you will make bold declarations of events that you want in the fiction.

During Collaboration, you are encouraged to ask questions and build off the answers. When someone declares something in the fiction, elaborate on their ideas. Reincorporate details that you established earlier in the story to encourage a sense of continuity.

The system asks you to confront your Beliefs and the Beliefs held by others. Try to find the two other Beliefs around the table and try arranging for events that support or refute them. Engineer situations involving multiple Beliefs at the same time to make for a richer experience for everyone. The Belief Sheet is an excellent guide on which Beliefs you should concentrate on.

TRIGGERING CONFLICTS

Anything proposed in play is assumed to be true, unless it directly contradicts a previously established fact. If you disagree with a declaration, then you can trigger a Conflict and propose your own alternative.

CLOSING THE SCENE

When the Question of the Scene has been answered, you may move to the Closing the Scene phase.

Say yes, or roll the dice.

CONFLICT PHASE

Each character has attributes, Talents, and their Influence to help them resolve Conflicts in their favour. Everyone picks sides, determines what dice they are rolling, adds their bonus, and compares the totals. The person who rolls the highest wins the Conflict and pays the price of victory.

STEP 1: SIDES

The first step of every Conflict is to figure out what people would like to happen if they win the Conflict. Conflicts always involve two sides, with each person proposing a possible outcome. Each of the participants will roll a die to determine who gets their way.

Others at the table may choose to support one of the two declarations if they like. If they support a side, they need to describe how their assistance helps achieve that side's outcome.

STEP 2: DICE

Whenever there is a Conflict, participants roll dice. If a participant is using their primary character (a PC or a Face), they select their Spark die. If they're using lesser characters or the world itself, they select their Smoke die.

- For every person supporting your declaration, increase the size of your die by one level to a max of D20.
- If you are portraying an NPC and one of their Strengths applies, increase the die size by one level.
- If you are portraying an NPC and their Weakness applies, decrease the die size by one level.

Roll the dice!

HOME PLANE ADVANTAGE

Each plane has a single, overriding Belief that dominates all lesser convictions. Anyone who supports a planar Belief in a Conflict on that plane will always roll a D20. When you are supporting a planar Belief while on that plane, you are not limited by your attribute levels, NPC weaknesses, or the Harm you have suffered. No one gains Influence from refuting the planar Belief while on that plane.

STEP 3: BONUSES

Each participant has a score, consisting of the number they rolled on their die, plus any bonuses they receive. Each participant:

- Adds +1 to their die roll if they have an applicable Broad Talent;
- Adds +2 to their die roll if they have an applicable Common Talent;
- Adds +3 to their die roll if they have an applicable Deep Talent;
- Adds +3 to their die roll for each Harm they choose to suffer; and
- Adds +1 for each point of Influence they choose to spend.

STEP 4: VICTORY

The person with the highest score (dice + bonuses) gets to narrate the outcome to match their declaration. They must then pay the price of victory, suffering one point of Harm.

If there is more than one winner due to a tie, then you escalate. Repeat the entire Conflict phase, but without any external support from others. Whoever wins this second roll gets both of their declarations, but also suffers another point of Harm after the roll. Repeat this process until there is a clear victor.

The participant who wins the Conflict narrates what happens next, based on what they proposed originally. If you lose a Conflict, you can't repeat the same declaration for the remainder of the Session.

CLOSING PHASE

When the Scene's Question has been answered, or if everyone agrees to do so, you may Close the Scene. This involves claiming Influence, refreshing Beliefs, and triggering Interludes.

CLAIM PC INFLUENCE

Each of the players gets to claim Influence when they confront their Beliefs. This Influence can help them in Conflicts, or when they inspire others to change Beliefs.

You will usually challenge your Beliefs by entering into Conflicts that support or refute them. That said, sometimes Beliefs will be examined during Collaboration and this can count for the purpose of claiming Influence if the group agrees.

Examine each of the entries on your Belief Sheet that have Influence markers on them. You declare if you think you have directly confronted (confirmed or refuted) one of your Beliefs. If everyone at the table agrees, you remove that specific Influence token from the sheet and put it in your personal pool of Influence. If anyone is hesitant, leave the token where it is.

CLAIM GM INFLUENCE

The GM claims Influence in the same way as the players. The key difference is that the GM has different Beliefs depending on where the Scene took place.

Planar Scenes: During the Closing phase, the GM gets one Influence each time that someone (player or GM) reinforced the planar Belief in a Conflict.

Primal Scenes: For Scenes that take place on a prime world, the GM uses the three Beliefs associated with that world.

City Scenes: For Scenes that take place in Sig, the GM will use the Beliefs associated with the three planes currently tethered to Sig.

REFRESH BELIEFS

Challenge the Beliefs of other people at the table, and you will be rewarded. Whenever the Influence tokens have been removed from all three of your entries on the Belief Sheet, you refresh that section of the Belief Sheet. Everyone else in the game receives one Influence token from the supply. Once that's done, add one Influence token from the supply beside each of those entries on the Belief Sheet.

TRIGGER INTERLUDES

During the Closing phase, one person may spend 3 Influence to trigger an Interlude between Scenes.

CHARACTER GROWTH

INTERLUDES

During the Closing phase, you may spend 3 Influence to trigger an Interlude. These are small moments of calm and introspection, in contrast to the high stakes of Conflict-driven Scenes.


The person who triggers an Interlude gets to ask a question to someone else at the table. They can ask a player about their character's history, motivations, or dreams. They could instead choose to ask the GM about the setting, exploring the history and politics of Sig.

The question can be made in-character or as an outside observer. The other person needs to answer the question honestly through dialogue, actions, or by narrating a flashback. These questions are great ways of establishing new facts about the story and exploring the characters within. At the end of the Interlude, remove one Harm from the sheet of each person participating in the Interlude.

REFLECTION SCENES

At the end of each Session, characters have time to examine what they have learned about their character and their Beliefs. Whenever a player has 15 Influence at the end of a Session, they trigger a Reflection Scene. They choose another person at the table, either a GM or a player, to have an intimate discussion with. It's a chance for the two characters to talk about the Belief, revealing it to be an incontrovertible truth, or rejecting it as a delusional falsehood.

It could be two characters discussing a great struggle where Beliefs were confronted directly. Or it might be a moment of confession and personal revelation. This is the time for epiphanies that overturn character's worlds. Perhaps a character will fully embrace their Belief, ceasing to examine it critically. Perhaps they will reject their Belief instead, changing their perspective based on their experiences.

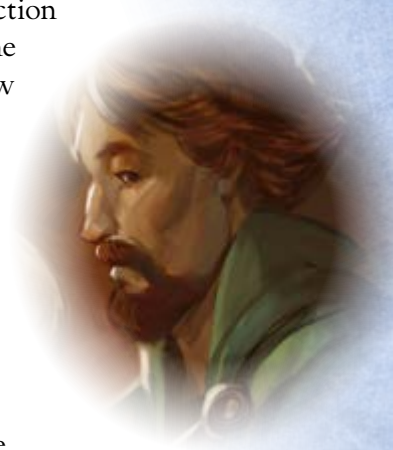


At the end of the Reflection Scene, both people work together to create a replacement Belief for the character. Both people can discuss the exact wording and create a new, mutually acceptable Belief. This replacement Belief still needs to be declarative, subjective, and controversial. Write it on the character sheet and on the Belief sheet.

At this point, both participants in the Reflection Scene will grow, either gaining a level in one of their attributes (to a max of D12) or a new Talent of their choice. The choice should be made based on what lessons they learned by confronting that Belief.

When a PC changes one of their Beliefs, the GM changes one of the tethers to Sig. She picks one plane to lose the tether, replacing it with another plane from that ring. For example, the Ideological Plane of Justice might lose the tether in favour of the Ideological Plane of Destruction.

Countless immigrant communities from those planes will flood into the streets, bringing their distinct languages and cultures along with them. The Factions that are aligned with those planes will strengthen, gaining temporal and political power over municipal affairs. The Powers native to those planes will expand their divine reach into the City Between and recruit new adherents. The GM will work to account for the tethers associated with the plane, describing how this change warps the City Between before ending the Session.



LEAVING PLAY

BEING TAKEN OUT

In some Scenes, characters might be taken out of play, meaning they are temporarily incapacitated. Mechanically, this means you can't make declarations or participate in Conflicts for the remainder of the Scene. Characters can be taken out either by a successful declaration or when they suffer their 6th point of Harm. When you choose to be taken out, you remove one point of Harm at the end of the Scene and are able to play in the next Scene.

RETIRING FROM PLAY

Any player may choose to retire their character from play, most often done when they suffer their 6th point of harm. Within the fiction, the character has gained some significant problem that prevents them from continuing as a protagonist of the story. Exactly what problem removes them from play varies greatly; it could be a shattered body, a broken heart, a mind lost, or a destiny achieved.

Before your character fades into the background, they get a chance to tie up loose ends. Immediately erase all Harm on your Character Sheet. This will be your final Scene, but you can act at full capacity until it ends. Make it dramatic and memorable.

Try to make a replacement character during this Session or before the next one. Promoting named NPCs or even Faces to full playable characters is an excellent approach.



SESSIONS OF PLAY

The game explores the gradual evolution of perspectives, as people learn more about their relationships, loyalties, and faith. The rules of play are designed to support the twin goals of exploration and discovery.

Between Sessions, the GM considers the current opinions and concerns of the various NPCs based on past events. This may include identifying any problems that characters may be dealing with. This will likely also identify the current schemes of the City Factions and Planar Powers. If Sig just changed tethers, the effect of that new planar influence should be a major element when the group plays next.

At the beginning of each Session, the group determines which Factions or Powers are successful in their schemes, which fail, and who is caught in the middle.

Each Scene contributes to the Influence of the characters. With enough Influence, someone may change Beliefs at the end of the Session.

THE FIRST SESSION

Whether it's a one-shot game, or the first session of a campaign, you start the same way.

- Establish the tethers by determining which planes are bound Sig.
- Create the characters.
- Establish the Face characters which connect the PCs together.
- Establish the Focus character, which every PC knows about.
- Declare that the Focus character has died, and spend the first scene exploring why.

Chapter 2 explains the entire process in detail. You can also download a quickstart guide on our website with pre-generated characters and a game tutorial to help speed up your first Session. Everyone begins with three Influence at the beginning of the first Session.

CONTINUING A SERIES

At the beginning of each subsequent Session, each person (including the GM) rolls their Smoke die to determine what schemes are progressing.

- Whoever gets the highest roll declares some terrible agenda that a City Faction or Planar Power completes successfully.
- Whoever gets the second-highest roll explains how a second agenda, from another Faction or Power, was foiled.
- Whoever gets the third-highest roll creates a new Face NPC who is trapped in the middle of the Conflict and is affected by both the successful agenda and the one that failed.

Each Faction and Power has an initial agenda that you may use as inspiration.

ENDING THE SESSION

Once you have finished your final Scene, see if any Reflection Scenes occur. If they do, you may change the planar alignment of Sig. Take a moment to describe how changing the tethers will affect the City Between.

Characters normally have the opportunity to rest and recover between Sessions. Remove any Harm they may have accumulated. Also remove any Influence, as everyone will start with three influence for the next Session. Before you part ways, be sure to tell each other your favourite moment of the Session, and plan your next Session!

GM GUIDANCE

CONSIDER LIFE

Sig is populated by people with complex and often interdependent relationships. The GM manages these characters, paying close attention to the small dramas that fill their lives. Who's comfortable with the status quo, and who agitates for change? Who's supportive of the player's goals, and who offers opposition? How does each of them feel about the agendas which have succeeded or failed? Paying attention to friends, lovers, colleagues, and rivals is essential to enabling a city that feels real at the table.

Give everyone a name.

Sig is designed to emphasize the bonds of kinship, culture, and identity. When you portray Sig, focus on the mundane and the human. The 'verse is weird, but those within are real people with simple needs. Consider sustenance, security, belonging, and self-discovery. Consider the simple things that make life worth living.

As you roleplay the various characters, consider your body language. Keep your back straight for important or arrogant characters. Lower your shoulders and avoid eye contact for shy or submissive ones. These little cues will help you get into character more quickly.

ASK QUESTIONS

Learn by playing, and play to learn. Asking questions in the game helps you establish common expectations and lets you explore more about the story. Whenever a player acts in a way that you don't expect or understand, ask them why they are doing so. Don't block them, but rather ask about their intent, reasoning, and motivation.

Ask leading questions that have heavy implications. These questions let you propose something about the story, and it give the players a chance to interpret or modify it.

Examples of leading questions:

- *Why did you abandon the Cult of Broken Dreams?*
- *Why were you so angry with Kyle?*
- *How did you feel when Rukial joined the Enforcers?*

BE GENEROUS

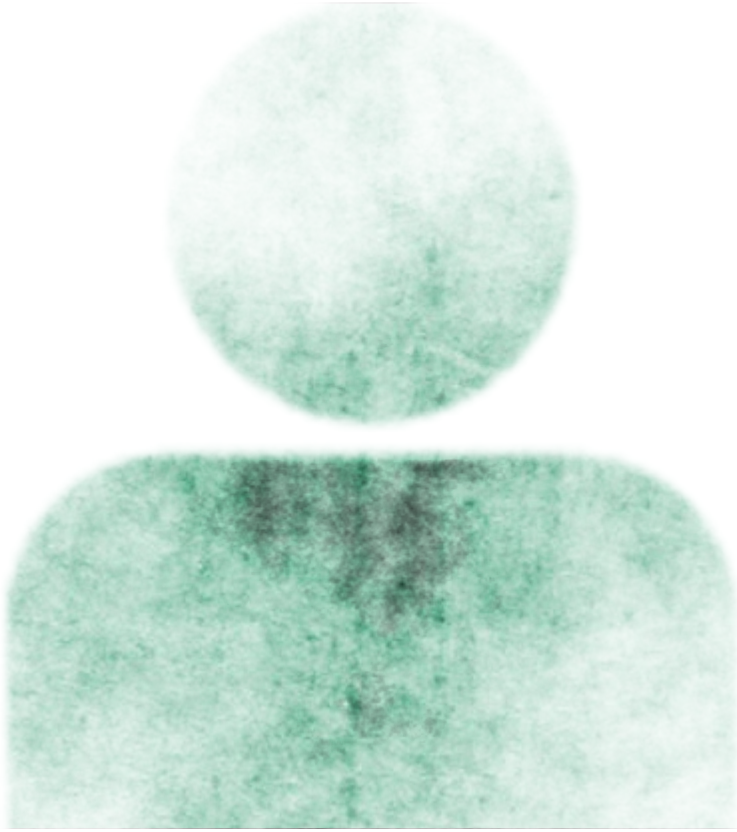
Everyone comes to the table for different reasons. Your job, as a GM, is to listen to them. Learn what they want to get out of the game, and try to make it happen.

Some may be here to explore philosophical ideas or concepts. Help them dig into the subjects that interest them. Others want to build an intricate and detailed story. Throw in dramatic reversals and passionate characters to push the story forward. Still others want to immerse themselves in their character. Try to minimize out-of-character discussions to help them stay in their character's head.

Fundamentally, make sure that everyone in the group is having a good time. You may want to encourage conflicts between the different characters, but make sure that you are making the game rewarding for everyone.

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTER CREATION



STARTING THE STORY



Before you start, read out “Welcome to Sig” for the group to make sure everyone knows the basics about the City Between. Feel free to share the PDF with your players so they get a sense of what the 'verse is like before character creation.

As a group, follow these steps to customize the setting and then start creating the characters that live on Sig's troubled streets.

SETTING AND CHARACTERS

As a group, follow these steps to customize the setting. Then you can create characters who walk Sig's troubled streets.

1. Establish **PLANAR TETHERS** to determine which of the eternal planes are bound to Sig, influencing daily affairs.
2. Give a **NAME AND TITLE** to your character, based on their status and communities.
3. Determine **FAMILY HERITAGE**, relating to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the characters.
4. Determine which **PROFESSION** and associated **TALENTS** your character possesses.
5. Pledge **FACTION LOYALTY** to a City Faction, the influential guilds and associations of the City Between.
6. Devote yourself to a **SPIRITUAL POWER**. There are countless divinities, demons, and creeping things you can serve.
7. Determine the Spark and Smoke **ATTRIBUTES**, representing personal prowess and worldly fortune.
8. Establish **PERSONAL CONNECTIONS** with the families, friends, and foes who fill Sig's streets.

STEP 1: PLANAR TETHERS

Sig is always connected to three different planes: one Elemental, one Ideological, and one Conceptual. The group determines which of the planes are currently bound to Sig, influencing its daily business. Each tether allows that plane's nature to spill onto the city streets, bringing hundreds of new planar immigrants, strengthening the hold of certain Factions, and presenting opportunities for the Powers to act. The planar conduit allows the very substance of the plane to seep into Sig, influencing the geography and society of the City Between. The tethers affect everyone, which is why the first step in the game is to determine which three planes are bound.

The normal process is to determine the planar alignment by rolling 3d6. As a group, allocate one of those dice to each of the rings, using the chart below.

ROLL	ELEMENTAL	IDEOLOGICAL	CONCEPTUAL
1	Flame	Justice	Dreams
2	Waves	Tyranny	Shadow
3	Wind	Destruction	Lore
4	Stone	Order	Life
5	Ice	Freedom	Death
6	Planar Realignment		

If you roll a single 6, it indicates a recent planar realignment. The group decides which plane just lost the tether, and which one is newly connected to the City Between. Both of these planes will have left their mark on the city and will influence the characters.

SHARD REALMS

Shard Realms are minor planes that represent lesser elements (Dust, Steam), ideologies (Compassion, Greed), or concepts (Time, Motherhood). If the group rolls multiple 6's on the planar alignment roll, the City Between has bound one of these lesser planes, with unpredictable results. Determine the nature of the Shard Realm together, or use the Shard Realm of Empire described in Chapter 6.

COMMON COMBINATIONS

Sig has been called many things over the years, as it has changed tethers. These are five different visions of the city to choose from, each bound to a different combination of planes. Rather than rolling the dice, you may pick one of these to begin your story.

THE CITY OF POWER

FLAME | DESTRUCTION | LORE

The city is brilliant and terrible; a burning torch that stands in the hungry void. It is a city of brass and solid flame, where manners and caution keep you safe. The city is infested with demons and cultists, each more dangerous than the last. Sig is a city of forbidden power, fierce and untamed.

THE CITY OF SECRETS

WAVES | ORDER | SHADOW

The city is a gloomy place, filled with cloying mist and concealing shadow. A regular network of canals extend from the Great River, where roads once stood. The city is under tight control, with restrictive laws binding almost every aspect of life. Sig is a city of dangerous secrets and justified paranoia.

THE CITY OF REVELATION

WIND | FREEDOM | DREAMS

The city is never still. The rickety wooden buildings are constantly tossed around under the force of the hurricane winds. The winds bring other treasures: strange gifts and prophecies. City life moves at a dream-like pace, tinged with a sense of unreality. Sig is a surreal city of visionaries and dreamers.

THE CITY OF TRIALS

STONE | JUSTICE | LIFE

The city is a living thing. You can feel the heart-beat, like a granite drum, beneath your feet. You can see the trees burst forth from the hard-packed stone, watched over by ancient spirits. The city is a place of trials, where virtue is tested and teachers are praised. Sig is a city of judgement and growth.

THE CITY OF ENDINGS

ICE | TYRANNY | DEATH

The city is a monument to the past. Sharp blades of ice and cold iron decorate every corner. You constantly see small mementos of better days: statues of a fallen queen or a frozen rose in the Garden. The city is a place of mourning and loss, where memory is held more valuable than a human life. Sig is a city of the lost, the dead, and the broken.

STEP 2: NAME AND TITLE

Names matter, and they always have. A name can tell you a lot about someone, where they are coming from and where they are headed. Each name can be indicative of a character's culture, religion, social status, and wealth. Certain names are more common in particular parts of the city. The rich and powerful scheme in Highspire, while the artisans and merchants prosper in Riverward. The common workers and newcomers tend to congregate in Tetherward, and the most desperate huddle in the Hive.

Each character also has a nickname or title commonly known on the streets of Sig. These secondary names describe your character's reputation and past deeds. Some of these titles are descriptive, others ironic, and all of them telling. Feel free to come up with some evocative nickname, then discover the story behind it later on during play.



Some examples include...

HANDAR THE BLOODLESS is a famous arbiter who stopped more than one street war with a stern glare.

NARIL DARRADOTTIR was the daughter of the Golden Queen.

VALAR THE MIRTHFUL is a humourless moneylender who never smiles if she can help it.

CREATE A NAME AND A TITLE
FOR YOUR CHARACTER.

NAMES OF PRESTIGE AND SCORN

The woken clay earn their names.

HIGHSPIRE	RIVERWARD	TETHERWARD	HIVE
Anarra	Alsara	Bril	Azal
Binsan	Bariel	Chines	Brad
Chubad	Balsara	Dara	Brith
Domang	Calenon	Giffard	Cammeg
Domari	Calora	Gresley	Dolurg
Isha	Cythel	Hella	Doroth
Izrai	Dessa	Hogers	Farag
Kermed	Eloniel	Jard	Glok
Marah	Feriel	Jeston	Grel
Marisha	Getthon	Jetsy	Gruth
Mihai	Glathon	Kateli	Kagra
Mohab	Lauuthel	Kiran	Khagan
Ramid	Lendon	Marley	Kharg
Rasha	Mellora	Milver	Marma
Sachim	Narriell	Namith	Mazis
Sharin	Nelathon	Netta	Prel
Usina	Talan	Nick	Ronk
Vorhaad	Talathel	Oster	Rosin
Zachim	Thoston	Stawart	Shod
Zubad	Vara	Unice	Uzzeg

STEP 3: FAMILY HERITAGE



The 'verse is diverse. The infinite prime worlds are teeming with humanity, with a cultural richness that boggles the mind. The eternal planes also have their own peoples, adapted to the local conditions and gifted with strange Talents. They all come together in Sig's streets, where all the 'verse intersects. In the City Between, they trade coin, kisses, and cudgels in equal measure.

Most everyone on the streets of Sig has at least a bit of outsider blood in 'em. With the right arcane rituals, religious blessings, or technological aids, any couple can have a kid if they want. Each solution has its own cost, of course, but many parents-to-be are willing to pay whatever price is set. You know the saga of the two star-crossed lovers who flee darkness and violence to build a family for their mixed-blooded child? That kind of thing happens more often than you think.

Adoption is also common throughout the 'verse, and the planes help this kind of integration along. A little human girl, once adopted by a family from the Elemental Plane of Stone, will invariably grow up to become a Giant. A prisoner of the Devahil who makes a bargain with them for freedom may sprout horns.



WHO ARE YOUR PARENTS?

Your parents, of birth or circumstance, shape your character.

PLANAR HERITAGE

An outsider native to one of the eternal planes, whose origin grants them planar Talents. Each Heritage is described with their home plane. Pick two of the planar Talents from their Heritage.

PRIMAL BLOOD

A mundane human, born on one of the infinite prime worlds. Consider how, or why, they left their prime world. Were they bold adventurers, frightened refugees, or merely driven by love?

ELEMENTAL	IDEOLOGICAL	CONCEPTUAL
Firehearts (pg. 63)	Ancestral (pg. 83)	Cubi (pg. 103)
Waterborn (pg. 67)	Devahil (pg. 87)	Gnomes (pg. 107)
Winged (pg. 71)	Wyrms (pg. 91)	Elderskein (pg. 111)
Giants (pg. 75)	Aesigilar (pg. 95)	Sylva (pg. 115)
Polari (pg. 79)	Feral (pg. 99)	Revenant (pg. 119)

Everyone has family if they look far enough.

STRANGER NATURES

Spawned in Sig's alleyways, your parent was of mixed origins or stranger blood. Create a weird, magical Talent, which you two alone share.


DESCRIBE EACH OF YOUR PARENTS BY
SELECTING ONE OF THREE ORIGINS.

STEP 4: PROFESSIONAL TALENTS

Everyone works for a living, and Sig is no exception. Whether your character supports one of the guilds or works independently, they have some specialty that sets them apart. The last census of Sig listed the following professions as being common in the city, which could guide you in selecting Talents.

Accountant	Historian
Alchemist	Honest Business
Apothecary	Merchant
Archeologist	Musician
Artisan	Mythender
Automaton	Potter
Beggar	Prisoner
Bloodwatcher	Rat Herder
Bonewright	Rooftop Farmer
Bureaucrat	Scholar
Carpenter	Scribe
City Guard	Seamstress
Cleric	Sister of the Dead
Construction	Smith
Cultist	Spy
Day Labourer	Storyteller
Diplomat	Translator
Freebooter	Waterbrother

DECLARE YOUR CHARACTER'S PROFESSION.



Each character begins the game with a total of 7 Talents; some from their planar heritages and some from their professional training.

BROAD TALENTS represent general understanding of a wide-ranging topic and give you a +1.

COMMON TALENTS represent a focus on a particular subject matter and give you a +2.

DEEP TALENTS represent specialization on a particular sub-discipline and give you a +3.

As a guideline, consider the iconic action that your character would perform. Create one Broad Talent, one Common Talent, and one Deep Talent that would be used for that action. The GM will help you decide if any given Talent is Broad, Common, or Deep in scope. A well-rounded character will tend to have two Broad, three Common, and two Deep Talents.

CREATE 3-7 TALENTS RELATED TO
YOUR CHARACTER'S PROFESSION.

STEP 5: FACTION LOYALTY



Everyone wants a piece of Sig. The city is the impartial and amoral gateway to the 'verse, allowing planar gods and primal crusaders access to each other's realms. More importantly, it's neutral ground where ethnic communities, world-spanning empires, and fanatical cults interact. It's the trading hub of the 'verse, where you can find, buy, or steal any strange treasure your heart may desire. It's the center of power for the 'verse, where all the big decisions are made.

Of course that means that there are disreputable organizations vying for power. Each day, a different **CITY FACTION** tries to advance their agenda and influence Sig in their favour. All the Factions perform some important service for the people of Sig, from priceless artifact creation to garbage disposal. In the process of fulfilling their duty, they gain powerful leverage over the city. The City Factions also help their home planes accrue more influence, and this in turn pulls Sig closer to those planes. Proximity to a plane brings a Faction more resources and personnel. This helps them seize more territory in a vicious cycle of power accretion.

No one works for free.

Faction politics is a knife-dance, beautiful and deadly. The Factions plant spies and traitors in their rivals' ranks. They carry out diversions and ruses to conceal their true purposes. They recruit mercenary sell-swords and primal bashers, just to send them on hopeless runs to raid their foes. They even ally themselves with the Powers and their fanatic servitor-cults, just so long as they are useful.

When you create a character, you may choose to be a member of one of the City Factions. Doing so obliges your character to support the Duty of their City Faction.

LEVERAGE: By virtue of membership, the player can spend one Influence in order to wield their Leverage to their advantage for one Scene.

ELEMENTAL	IDEOLOGICAL	CONCEPTUAL
The Cleaners (pg. 64)	The Teachers' Guild (pg. 84)	The Sig Gazetteer (pg. 104)
The Riverwatch (pg. 68)	Guild of Advocates (pg. 88)	The Artificers' Guild (pg. 108)
The Heralds (pg. 72)	The Enforcers (pg. 92)	The Sage Collegium (pg. 112)
The Guild of Toil (pg. 76)	The Paper Guard (pg. 96)	Farmer's Association (pg. 116)
The Performers Guild (pg. 80)	The League of Exterminators (pg. 100)	Dustkeepers Guild (pg. 120)

DETERMINE IF EACH PC IS A MEMBER OF ONE OF THE CITY FACTIONS OR AN UNTRUSTWORTHY INDEPENDENT.

STEP 6: SPIRITUAL POWER



Faith is the food of the gods. The mighty Powers, otherwise immortal and potent, depend on mortal devotion for their survival. This a fundamental truth of the 'verse that drives the Powers to amass vast bodies of faithful worshippers. Demon-queens raise armies to terrorize mortals into worship. Planarchs release lore and artifacts that hint at their glory, while Primordials sculpt worlds to house their followers. Each Power gathers followers in different ways, but each does so out of hunger.

Power, unchecked by the need for restraint, leads to extremes. When one of the Powers is pleased, they shower their followers with guidance and miraculous boons. Mere moments later, their unchecked wrath may shatter mountains or twist the hearts of the innocent. Upholding their divine portfolios is their moral imperative in all things, which often puts them at odds with mortals. Each of the Powers are described along with the plane to which they are bound.

WHAT CAN THE POWERS DO?

- Each has a divine title, which describes some specific aspect of the 'verse they have absolute control over.
- The Powers dole out potent rituals and the occasional miraculous favour to empower their cultists, clerics, and zealous servitors to spread their reach.
- The Powers are immortal and nigh-indestructible beings who feed on mortal zeal. Their eternal perspective gives them a knack for long-term planning, and they often shape entire bloodlines to serve.
- The Powers are bound to their planes, but they can spread their influence outside of it. They can reshape their planar domain to suit their very whims, and most of these divine residences are clad in terrifying splendor.

When you create a character, you may choose to serve one of the mighty Powers, feeding them with your worship and devotion. While the majority of the faithful are reasonable, there are plenty of zealots and cultists among their ranks. A few of them are self-serving mercenaries, useful enough that the Power overlooks their lack of conviction.

Regardless of whether a servitor's faith is genuine or not, each is obliged to follow certain religious restrictions or obligations as symbols of their Devotion. In exchange for this sacrifice, they gain access to a potent Ritual and the ability to pray for miraculous intervention.

RITUAL: Access to the ritual associated with the Power. Paying one Influence allows your character to avoid the price associated with it.

MIRACLES: Ability to pray to the Power for a miracle that aligns with their Portfolio. The GM will decide whether you receive the miracle as requested, based on how much your actions have pleased (or displeased) the Power. You may bribe the Power with faith, spending as much Influence as desired to gain favour.

ELEMENTAL	IDEOLOGICAL	CONCEPTUAL
Alius the Pure (pg. 65)	Myn the Questioner (pg. 85)	Nyx the Oracle (pg. 105)
Tritonous of the Hungry Seas (pg. 69)	Kalzak the Absolute (pg. 89)	Magdak, Clockwork Page (pg. 109)
Ferrelux, the Whisperer (pg. 73)	Eater of Worlds (pg. 93)	Brossien of Mystic Song (pg. 113)
Morkanah, the Sheltering Stone (pg. 77)	Edana of the Pact (pg. 97)	Kestranna the Harvester (pg. 117)
Aludra of the Frozen Tears (pg. 81)	Calla the Wise (pg. 101)	Omulaub the Tranquil (pg. 121)

DETERMINE IF EACH PC SERVES ONE OF THE GREAT PLANAR POWERS OR AVOIDS THEIR SCHEMES.

STEP 7: CHARACTER BELIEFS

Sig is a game about confronting your Beliefs, either finding evidence that reinforces or contradicts your assumptions. Each character has three Beliefs, each of which is a subjective, controversial declaration. These are statements that the character agrees with and that the player wants to explore during play. Beliefs should be the three most important ideas, questions, or themes that motivate your characters. By creating a Belief, you are telling the GM that you would like to see it challenged during the game.

When you enter into Conflicts that directly confirm or refute a Belief, you might gain Influence. You will be able to spend this to succeed in other Conflicts, to pay the price of victory, or change their Beliefs. During the course of the play these Beliefs will evolve and change.

PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD BELIEFS

A good Belief is **subjective** and philosophical. In Sig, overwhelming evidence is enough to convince someone to change their Beliefs. Things that are obviously true or false don't make for good Beliefs.

A good Belief has meaning and is **controversial** to a significant number of people. Players should be able to influence society on a whole, and Beliefs that others care about helps.

A good Belief is a simple, **declarative** statement. A Belief is the kind of phrase that your character would blurt out in a heated argument.

At this point, you need to create three Beliefs for your character; one related to their Family Heritage (step 3), one related to their Faction Loyalty (step 5), and one related to their Spiritual Power (step 6).

Sample Beliefs

Family is a chain to be broken

Violence is the best teacher

Only sinners need masks.

BELIEF 1: FAMILY HERITAGE

Create a Belief centered on your character's relationship to their family, community, or culture. Consider the following questions when creating your Belief.

- Are they advocates for their cultures in the public sphere?
- Is their ethnic or linguistic background the core of their identity?
- Do they rebel against the backwards, rustic habits of their family?
- Do they seek to assimilate into the greater society of Sig?



BELIEF 2: FACTION LOYALTY

Create a Belief centered on your character's political and economic concerns. Consider the following questions when creating your Belief.

- Do they personally care about their Faction's duty?
- How often do they use the Faction's leverage for personal reasons?
- Is there another Faction they hate, fear, or envy?
- Do they view any Faction as behaving in a moral fashion?



BELIEF 3: SPIRITUAL POWER

Create a Belief centered on your character's spiritual, ideological, or moral outlook. Consider the following questions when creating your Belief.

- Are they zealots who strike out at unbelievers?
- Are they intellectuals, debating issues of dogma and theology?
- Are they missionaries, out to convert the masses?
- Are they angry at any of the above?



STEP 8: ATTRIBUTES

Each participant has two attributes they use to to shape the story. There are two attributes available, each of which is rated in die sizes.



The **SPARK** attribute represent the physical, social, and intellectual actions of characters. It's the ability to change the status quo and to shape the world as you see fit. Use your Spark when you use a major character (PC, Face, or Power) in a conflict (page 29).



The **SMOKE** attribute represents how the world reacts to characters. It sets the context for decisions, used both in long-term play and when framing Scenes. Use your Smoke attribute when you frame scenes (page 26) or begin a new session. (page 35) You will also use your Smoke attribute to control the environment, strange magics, or planar phenomena.

D20 attributes are **extraordinary**, representing some kind of divine gift or planar magics. These are normally beyond the reach of player characters, but they can be reached with teamwork. This is the best die that can be rolled, and only when a player or GM has no Harm.

D12 attributes are **excellent**, and the peak of mortal capabilities. If you have suffered 1 Harm, this is the largest die you can use on any roll.

D10 attributes are **great**, representing significant capability. If you have suffered 2 Harm, this is the largest die you can use on any roll.

D8 attributes are **good**, representing above-average capability. If you have suffered 3 Harm, this is the largest die you can use on any roll.

D6 attributes are **mediocre**, representing below-average capability. If you have suffered 4 Harm, this is the largest die you can use on any roll.

D4 attributes are **poor**, representing minimal capability. If you have suffered 5 Harm, this is the largest die you can use on any roll.

GM ATTRIBUTES

If the greatest danger comes from personal relationships, emotional pressure, and zealous faith, set the GM's Spark at D12 and Smoke at D8. If the greatest danger comes instead from force of arms, political strategy, and arcane secrets, set the GM's Spark at D8 and Smoke at D12.

As the GM, use your Smoke attribute to portray any minor NPCs, be they monstrous or mundane. Use your Spark attribute to portray the Face NPCs or any of the Powers.

PC ATTRIBUTES

Each PC starts with a D6 in each of their two attributes. Players then get two additional attribute levels to distribute between them. One eccentric planar scholar classified all peoples into one of three archetypes, which coincidentally align with the three different attribute combinations.

Players use their Spark attribute when they portray their PCs, while they use their Smoke attribute to portray minor NPCs who share their Heritage, Faction, or Power.

◆ ◆ **THE COMPANION** *Spark D6 / Smoke D10*
◆ The Companion is a person who wants to help others. Companions are considered supportive, generous, and wise souls, blessed by fortune for their kind hearts. They tend to gain friends over fame in life.

◆ ◆ **THE FREEBOOTER** *Spark D8 / Smoke D8*
◆ The Freebooter is a person who wants excitement and adventure. Freebooters are considered ambitious, curious, and brave individuals, who venture out to find their fortunes. They tend to gain experiences more than possessions during their travels.

◆ ◆ **THE CHAMPION** *Spark D10 / Smoke D6*
◆ The Champion is a person who wants to make a difference in the world. Champions are considered passionate, fierce, and resolute, standing tall against any opposition. They tend to gain reputations more often than meaningful relationships.

EACH PLAYER SELECTS AN ARCHETYPE AND ALLOCATES ATTRIBUTES ACCORDINGLY.

STEP 9: PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Sig is the city that ties the 'verse together. It's the place where families unite, strangers connect, and the pieces come together. The interlocking histories and relationships between player characters, Factions, and Powers are complex and compelling. For that reason, you will collaboratively create the important Face characters who bind the group together.

Place a blank index card between each of the players, and one in the middle of the table. You will use these cards to record information about the various NPCs that bind the group together.

CREATING FACES

Each PC will be bound to three different Faces: the one on the index card to their left, the one to their right, and the one in the centre. Players define each Face by describing their relationship based on which Heritage, Faction, or Power they have in common. Start with the player who has the first idea, and go around the table in a clockwise fashion until every player has contributed to their three Faces.

If the two characters share a **Heritage**, describe what kind of familial relationship they hold. Are they your parent, your child, your sister, or your lover? Did they help you when you needed it the most?

If the two characters share a **Faction**, describe what kind of professional relationship they hold. Are they your rival, your colleague, your mentor, or your subordinate? Did you work a difficult job together, years past?

If the two characters share a **Power**, describe what kind of spiritual relationship they hold. Do you consider them meak, misguided, zealous, or righteous? Is one of you living in defiance of the Power's tennets?

Now it's time to flesh them out a bit. Collaboratively give each Face a name with the help of the name list on page 43. Give each Face two strengths, describing their capabilities and competencies. You should also then give each Face a single weakness, representing a character flaw or vulnerability. There are a variety of characters presented in chapter 4 that you can use as a model.



CREATING THE FOCUS

The Focus has the most complicated history and is tied to every PC. Put one more index card in the middle of the table. Ask each player to provide one fact, either truth or rumour, that their character knows about that Focus. Write all of those down on the index card, and along with a name for that NPC.

The first Scene of the game involves the death or disappearance of the Focus. Rip up the card in front of the group, and announce the character's demise. Give everyone three Influence and get started.

Good luck!

CHAPTER 3

THE ETERNAL PLANES



ABOUT THE PLANES

Everything orbits around the Planar Core, and each individual plane represents some essential aspect of the 'verse. These planes are found on three distinct rings: Elemental, Ideological, and Conceptual. Each of the planes has a short, four-page summary of the iconic peoples, places, and powers associated with it.

The first page of each summary includes the planar **BELIEF**, followed by a general description of the realm and a list of three important locations.

The second page describes one cultural and ethnic **HERITAGE** native to that plane of existence, along with four planar **TALENTS** that unite them.

The third page describes one of the **CITY FACTIONS**, or guilds, which are supported by this plane. This includes a description of the **DUTY** and **LEVERAGE** that loyal members of the Faction possess.

The fourth and final page describes one of the **POWERS** who reside on the plane. This includes an explanation of what **DEVOTIONS** and **RITUALS** are available to the faithful servitors.

Each of these planes is far too massive and complex to be bound by so few pages. While the guide speaks to the Giants of the Elemental Plane of Stone, any visit to the Granite Bazaar would show you an equal number of collectivist-Dwarves, enigmatic Crystalkin, and gem-devouring Zoren. Likewise, that plane supports lesser Factions in the City Between such as the Guild of Masons or the Sisterhood of the Forge. We cannot even begin to describe the vast number of goddesses, elemental primarchs, and earthen devils who dwell on that plane. This guide only speaks to the most well-known peoples, the most influential Factions, and most approachable Powers.

There are also countless planar shards and demiplanes that can be discovered, though they are not detailed here. The **Shard of Ooze** and the **Shard of Radiance** are found in the Elemental Ring, while the **Shard of Vengeance** is on the Ideological Ring. The Shard Realms only rarely get the tether, but their inhabitants can occasionally make their way into the city. When you create Shard Realms or their inhabitants, use the Planes as a model.

Overview of the Eternal Planes



The Plane of **Flame**, fueled by passion.



The Plane of **Waves**, with power hidden in the depths.



The Plane of **Wind**, where information flies free.



The Plane of **Stone**, bearing a heavy burden.



The Plane of **Ice**, made of fragile beauty.



The Plane of **Justice**, testing the greatest heroes.



The Plane of **Tyranny**, wielding the scourge of law.



The Plane of **Destruction**, where power is its own reward.



The Plane of **Order**, where law is paramount.



The Plane of **Freedom**, wild and unchained.



The Plane of **Dreams**, where everything is connected.



The Plane of **Shadow**, where your senses cannot be trusted.



The Plane of **Lore**, where knowledge is a weapon.



The Plane of **Life**, where everything grows.



The Plane of **Death**, where suffering ends.

Heritage**Faction****Power**

Firehearts

Cleaners

Alius the Pure

Waterborn

Riverwatch

Tritonous of the Hungry Seas

Winged

Heralds

Ferrelux the Whisperer

Giants

Guild of Toil

Morkanah of Sheltering Stone

Polari

Performers

Aludra of the Frozen Tears

Ancestral

Teachers

Myn, the Questioner

Devahil

Advocates

Kalzak the Absolute

Wyrms

Enforcers

Eater of Worlds, Child of Oblivion

Aesigilar

Paper Guard

Edana of the Pact

Feral

Exterminators

Calla the Wise

Cubi

Sig Gazetteer

Nyx the Oracle

Gnomes

Artificers

Magdak, the Clockwork Page

Elderskein

Sage

Brossien of Mystic Song

Sylva

Farmers

Kestranna the Harvester

Revenant

Dustkeepers

Omulaub the Tranquil

THE PLANE OF FLAME

Passion is incorruptible

Your heart ignites with smoldering rage and burning desire. You stand on embers and tempered flame. In the distance, you see pillars of inferno that extend out into the planar void. Shimmering shapes dance at the edge of your perception, pulling you inexorably through walls of fragrant incense and choking smoke. Walls of flame made solid and rivers of ash block your way. Only the strong and the pure can survive in this place.

THE CRUCIBLE

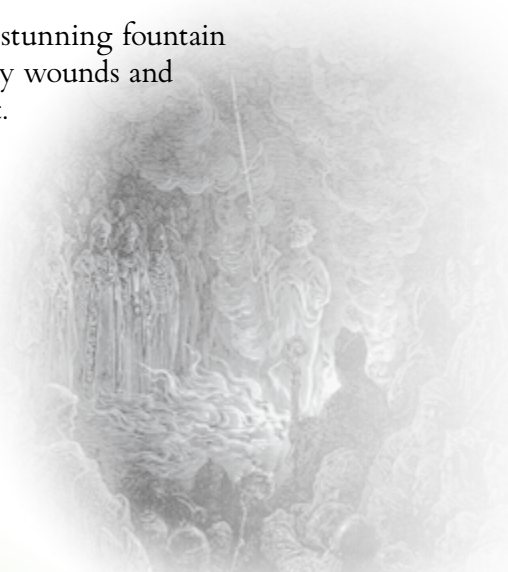
Scorched wastelands full of warring city-states, home to the bravest and fiercest warrior clans of the 'verse.

THE CITY OF SMOKELESS FIRE

This brass metropolis radiates inspiration, gathering countless artisans of light and flame.

LIFEDYRE

The desert is illuminated by a stunning fountain of azure flames, said to heal any wounds and burn away the corrupted heart.

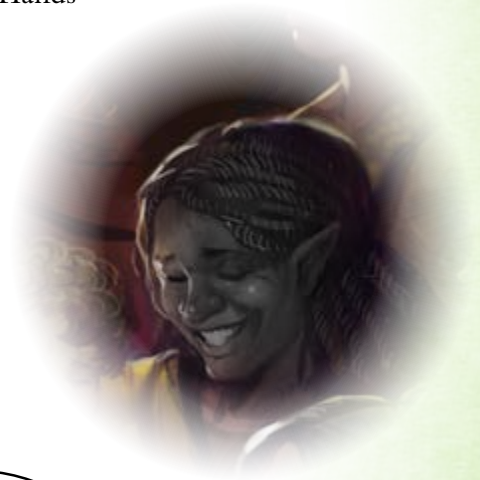


FIREHEARTS

Nothing burns hotter than the passions of a Fireheart. Nothing. Their natures are so intense that these ash-hued peoples have magma coursing through their veins. They are renowned alchemists, terrifying warriors, and nimble dancers. A Fireheart is never satisfied with half-measures or imperfect works.

- BROAD:** Fire
- BROAD:** Passion
- COMMON:** Purification
- DEEP:** Burning Hands

Passion is a precious commodity.



THE CLEANERS

The Leeches and the Sharps

Sig is a brutal, messy place. The Cleaners are half healers, half garbage disposal specialists, who are stuck dealing with the bodies bleeding in the alleys. They pull the poor fools into their infirmaries to cauterize wounds, burn out lingering curses, and patch people up. Other times, they serve to dispose of other refuse they think is litterin' up the city. This faction may be underappreciated and overworked, but the city would fall apart without them.

DUTY:

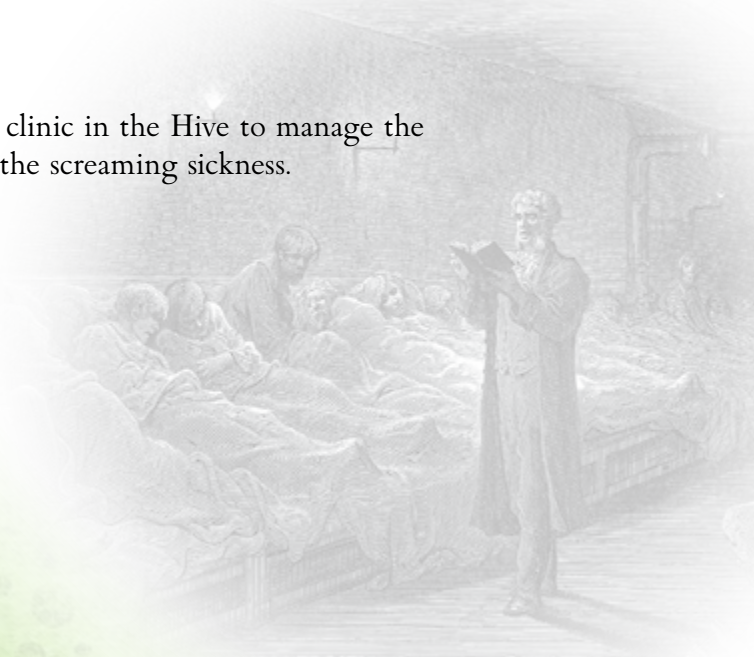
Care for the sick, dispose of the trash.

LEVERAGE:

Nobody pays attention to the rubbish man;
Cleaners can move through Sig's streets and alleys unnoticed.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Build a new clinic in the Hive to manage the epidemic of the screaming sickness.



ALIOUS THE PURE

Power of Health, Judgement, and Transformation

Alius was once thought a mortal man, but that was not her inner nature. When she walked through the Lifepyre, her true being emerged and she ascended to divinity. The passion of the flames rose up in her, filling her slender limbs with white fire and her mind with ravenous ambition. Her worshipers wander the 'verse, burning away sin and weakness. Are you faithful enough to step into her flames?

DEVOTION:

Bathing in water is forbidden.

RITUAL:

The Smoke Rite burns away any wound and purges any toxin. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the Smoke Rite also destroys most of the target's self-control.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Capture the Patriarch of Moran,
God of Eugenics.



THE PLANE OF WAVES

True power is hidden

You are surrounded by endless seas, shimmering cerulean at the surface and inky black in the depths. You taste rich brine and drink sweet waters as you move through the floating forests of seaweed. As the Eternal Seas pull you down, you see the glow of jellyfish, resplendent clouds of herring, and ancient sea turtles with shells inscribed with lore. The primal waters hold lurking behemoths, dire sharks, and benevolent kraken scholars. No one knows all the secrets hidden beneath the waves, but you may discover some of them in time.

THE ABYSS

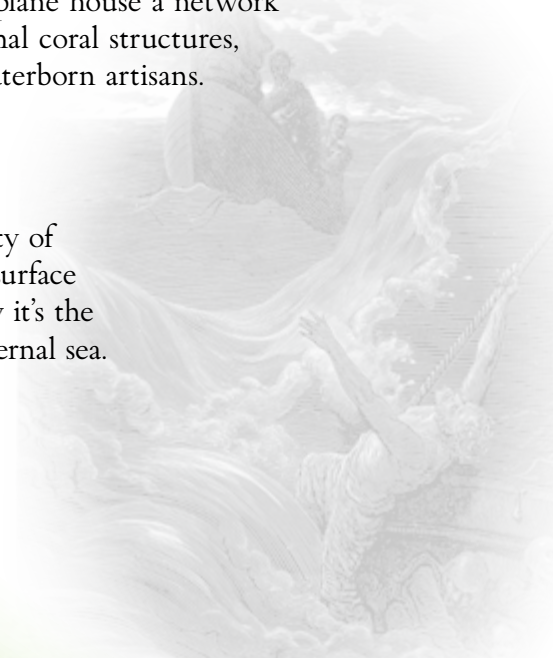
The lowest depths of the plane hold dark weapons, hidden by the Primordials during the war and waiting to be discovered.

THE CORAL MAZES

The upper reaches of the plane house a network of vibrant, three-dimensional coral structures, carefully cultivated by Waterborn artisans.

SUNK

This was once a mighty city of marble and crystal on the surface of some prime world. Now it's the diplomatic centre of the eternal sea.



WATERBORN

The Waterborn are overlooked and scorned at the best of times. They are proud peoples, enslaved by dark powers from the inky depths and remade in their makers' images. Now they are short beings, with webbed feet and gills to better swim through the waters. Some have scales like a fish, while others have stiff shells, strong claws, or flexible tentacles. Their ability to reshape their bodies helps them to adapt to any environment where water is found.

The cruel centuries of captivity have made secrets a precious commodity in Waterborn society. Many of the Waterborn have found freedom from their aquatic masters and travel the 'verse as they see fit.

BROAD: Water

BROAD: Secrets

COMMON: Biology

DEEP: Mutable Form



THE RIVERWATCH

The Salt and the Sail

You see that great river running through Sig, that current rushing to bring clean water to the city? Well, ya have the Riverwatch to thank for that. They're the ones who filter out the crap — figurative and literal — from the Great River. They keep the waters drinkable and free-flowing so the city remains inhabitable. When they aren't dealing with sewage, they manage the limited river traffic and hunt any errant predators that slither through the watercourse.

DUTY:

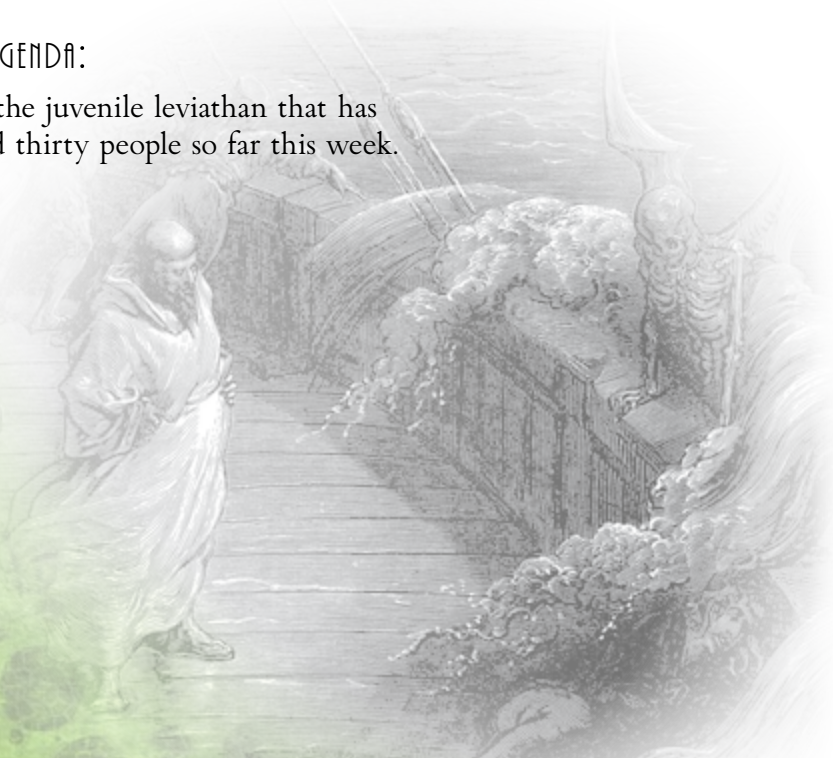
Clean and patrol the Great River of Sig.

LEVERAGE:

Control of river traffic and access to water.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Slay the juvenile leviathan that has killed thirty people so far this week.



TRITONOUS OF THE HUNGRY SEAS

Power of Storms, Fury, and Hunger

Tritonous is the thing that curls beneath the waves, his enormous bulk writhing in the depths. An ancient hunger gnaws at him, to devour those vessels who dare intrude on his waters. He was once a caring and benevolent god, until his precious children were slain by mortal blades. He broke inside, and his divine grief woke something darker than the deepest realms. Now he bides his time, sending his Waterborn slaves to drag hapless mortals to his unstoppable embrace.

DEVOTION:

Never suffer a blond man to live.

RITUAL:

The Deepcall summons one of Tritonous' warriors from the Abyss. If you choose not to spend one Influence, that summoned warrior will serve only to kill and destroy.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Destroy the island of Atlan, on one of the most civilized primes of the 'verse.



THE PLANE OF WIND

Every message is sacred

You feel the sensation of floating, of drifting, of flying. You dance through the clouds, showing blatant disregard for the concept of "gravity". You hear the rushing winds blow past you, the cacophony of avian songs and the rumbling of the distant maelstrom. It's only then that you realize how exposed you are, bereft of shelter. Nothing hides you from hunting beasts, flaming brimstone, razor crystals, and ice shards which fly through this endless sky.

Vault of the Skies

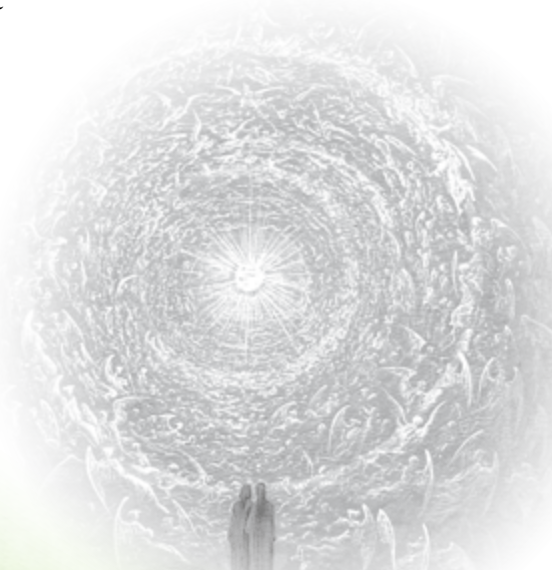
A series of floating islands support the enormous fortresses of the Cloud Giants.

The Aerie

Towering spires of weathered stone reach into the plane from elsewhere, upon which millions of birds and bird-like creatures roost and nest.

The Chorus Vortex

This swirling vortex of light and cloud is the home of the Winged, where they sing and whisper amongst themselves.



WINGED

The Winged are each blessed with a pair of wings; some feathered like a bird, some fleshy like a bat, and some gossamer like an insect. They are a nomadic people who value soft speech as an act of holy devotion. They are relentless, enthusiastic, and notorious rumour-mongers. Most who inhabit the primes consider them divine messengers, and the Winged are happy to encourage this false impression. It's no wonder: they deliver messages throughout the 'verse, visiting planes and primes alike on behalf of their clients.

BROAD:	Air
BROAD:	Communication
COMMON:	Flight
DEEP:	Unstoppable Message



THE HERALDS

The Birds and the Watchers

Everyone has a message, and the Heralds are happy to deliver. No matter if there's rain, snow, or demonic invasion, Heralds will make sure your message reaches its destination. Heralds occasionally have to check the contents of those letters to ensure accurate delivery, but that's just to be expected. The Herald Guild serves as the postal service throughout the 'verse, delivering to locations within Sig, to the planes, and the most distant primes. Next-day delivery is available for a moderate fee!

DUTY:

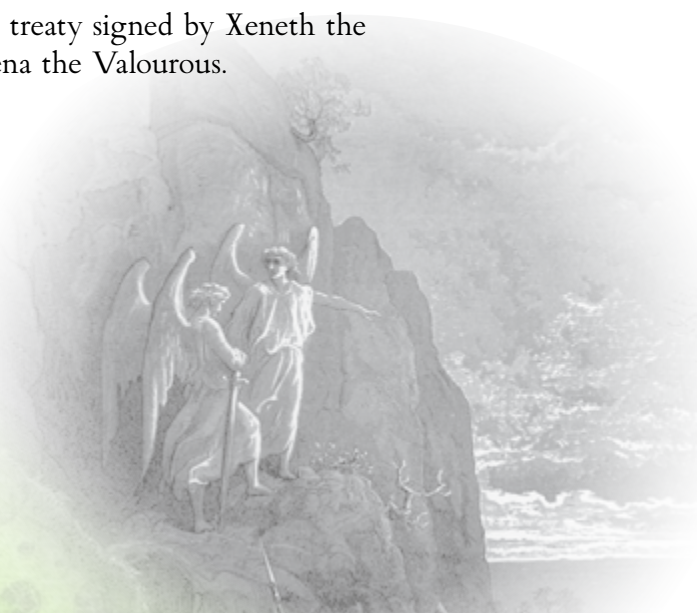
Deliver messages to the planes or the primes.

LEVERAGE:

Reading the mail; the Heralds collectively hold vast knowledge of the schemes in Sig.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Deliver the peace treaty signed by Xeneth the Oppressor to Polena the Valourous.



It is the rare fortune of these days that one may think what one likes and say what one thinks.

FERRELUX THE WHISPERER

Power of Thought, Chaos, and Secrets

Ferrelux is a beautiful Herald whose wings shine as bright as the morning star. He first rose to power as the Voice of the Primordial Empress, whose reign over the Plane of Wind was fierce and total. After the Empress was slain, he took to sharing dangerous and subversive ideas throughout the 'verse. Now he busies himself in fomenting political revolutions and inspiring radical new religions.

DEVOTION:

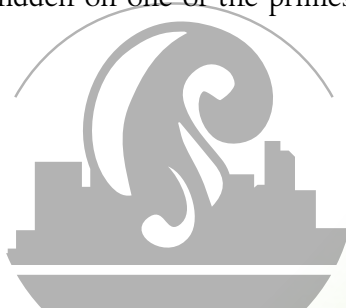
Direct lies are forbidden, though omissions are encouraged.

RITUAL:

The Rite of Rumour allows you to implant an idea in a target, which they will remember as being told to them by "someone" in the indistinct past. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the idea will spread uncontrollably any time the target whispers.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Make it known that The Silent Regent has a divine heir hidden on one of the primes.



THE PLANE OF STONE

Strength is a burden

These dark caverns, buried under an ocean of primordial stone, are said to predate the rest of the 'verse. A faint grinding sound echoes through your feet and sporadic rock falls echo through the claustrophobic tunnels. Tight passages require you to squeeze through before they open into vast gulfs that could devour the largest prime settlements. Cities of living crystal provide faint illumination, just enough to see the shining, hungry eyes that peer at you from hidden passages. Veins of gold, lead, and other metals flow through the walls. Countless builders and excavators — from the smallest dwarven miners to the greater giants — try to exploit these riches. Harvesting the plane's resources is not without risk; frequent cave-ins release toxic gases, magma flows, and flash mudflows.

HALLS OF THE DEEP

This golden metropolis, the nominal home of the Everstone Giants, was built in a cavern larger than any mountain.

THE EARTH-HEART

Pulsing and writhing, this living and breathing clay chamber is the birthplace of all earthen elementals.

THE FORGE PRIMORDIAL

In a cavern where veins of steel, water, and magma meet, the dwarves built a massive city-state dedicated to the art of the forge. It is a sacred place that blends practical smithy-work with religious fervor and significance.

GIANTS

The Giants were born in the depths of the elemental planes. These massive peoples painstakingly carved out a hollow world within the endless plane of stone. They strive to build greater and more elaborate wonders with a relentless drive. To a Giant, strength and skill are tools that demand use. Those who fail to pull their own weight or who get complacent are exiled. Only the Powers or foul magics can stand against the brute force of a committed Giant.

BROAD:	Stone
BROAD:	Huge
COMMON:	Strength
DEEP:	Irresistible Force



Don't get between a Giant and her labours.

THE GUILD OF TOIL

The Stiffs and the Broadbacks

There is always a need for labourers within the city. The rickety tenements would fall to pieces if not for the ceaseless work of the Guild of Toil. They build the roads, maintain the large stone buildings, and carry heavy burdens across the city. The guild manages and cares for the common workers in civic projects for the greater benefit of Sig. In thanks, the citizens “donate” cash payments to the nice, stout guild representatives. The guild keeps the city together for another day, and families keep on eating.

DUTY:

Maintain the roads and buildings.

LEVERAGE:

Demolition of infrastructure, through direct action or subtle neglect.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Dismantle a block of the Hive, and rebuild it as housing for guild members.



MORKANAH, THE SHELTERING STONE

Power of Love, Hearth, and Protection

It is Morkanah. It is the Stone that Shelters. It is the last of the Primordials. It is simple but it keeps worshipers safe. It is shelter from storm, from conflict, from fear, and even from death.

It cares for worshipers of flesh, of stone, and of clay. It is strong and eternal, so worshipers need not be. It wants worshipers happy and together with family.

It misses family.

DEVOTION:

Never harm family.

RITUAL:

Morkanah's Embrace covers someone in an immobile shell of stone to protect them from harm. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the shell will not dissipate when its job is done.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Build a true sanctuary for star-crossed lovers on the Plane of Stone.



THE PLANE OF ICE

Beauty is fragile

You walk in a frozen world of fragile splendor. In the distance, you see a beautiful girl, alone in a waste of ice, who stares into a glowing starlit city. You hear the clash of swords, but the howl of a blizzard swallows it. As you stumble through snowdrifts, the cold seeps into your legs and slow your steps. The cold stars and shimmering aurora above are your only guides. You break past the storm and collapse in the broken remnants of a city of ice, starlight, and shimmering statues.

This plane is well renowned throughout the 'verse, thanks to the fame of the *Polaris Chronicle* by the noted planar scholar, Ben Lehman. Before venturing to the Plane of Ice, a traveler would do well to read of its customs and history within that tome.

REMNANTS OF POLARIS

These four towers — glowing citadels crafted in an ancient age of ice and silver starlight — surround a malevolent vortex to the Plane of Flame.

THE ICY WASTES

An enormous glacier, home to howling blizzard winds and massive crawling caravans.

CRYSTAL CAVERNS

Ancient nations thrive within a massive warren of interlinked tunnels and caves that extend deep under the ice.



POLARI

Once upon a time, there lived the greatest people that the planes will ever know. Clad in starlight and snowflakes, they lived a life of bliss, eating thin delicacies, toasting each other with wine made from the night. These people were tall, slender, and beautiful, with skin so pale that their blue veins showed through. Their eyes were pale ice-blue or red, their hair silver or golden. Their speech, rarely used, was like the sound of water freezing. They excelled in the arts of poetry, of delicate ice-sculpture, and of elaborate dance. They are a people in decline but hope is not yet lost; some still hear the song of the stars.

BROAD:	Ice
BROAD:	Light
COMMON:	Fine Arts
DEEP:	Starlight Sword



THE PERFORMERS GUILD

The Glimmers and the Voice

Sig is a cosmopolitan place with a diverse selection of cultures and faiths. Inevitably two cults will trigger a holy war or Factions will torch their foes' territory. The Performers Guild uses the arts — painting, sculpture, dance, theatre, and music — as a cultural bridge. The guild uses art to soothe tensions, strengthen diplomatic ties, and facilitate ceasefire agreements between the various communities and organizations. As a consequence, their performances are deemed to be neutral ground.

DUTY:

Provide diplomatic services.

LEVERAGE:

Compelling propaganda.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Perform a new play, *The King in Yellow*.

Makeup is another form of warpaint.



ALUDRA OF THE FROZEN TEARS

Power of Time, Memory, and Grief

Aludra was a goddess of joy and life before everything was taken from her. She lost her husband to his mad obsession. She lost her lover to uncontrollable zeal. She lost her home to her mistake. She lost her people to despair and grief. After a passage of time, she gained a melancholic wisdom. She froze her tears and made them into diamond sculptures which would last until the end of times. Now she seeks to preserve all that is beautiful and good in the world.

DEVOTION:

Never forget the names of the dead.

RITUAL:

The Frozen Kiss preserves someone or something by shielding it from the flow of time. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the person or object targeted will remain frozen in time until hope is found.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Freeze the Great River of Sig for a season.



THE PLANE OF JUSTICE

Virtue must be tested

You stand on a mountain path, walking beneath ancient trees which shimmer in the twilight. You hear the gentle thrumming and feel a pleasant warmth radiate from the stone beside you, giving a sense of tranquil peace. As you climb further, you encounter other pilgrims in need, who do their best to ease your burdens for a time. Each fellow traveler teaches you a new lesson and eases the path before you. You reach the mountain peak and behold one of the countless eternal cities of the golden domes. You see umber-hued figures march, dance, and bow in devotion before a thousand temples, each dedicated to a just Power. You hear resonant chants, interspersed with the cracks of thunder. In this place, law shields the weak from the abuse of the strong. In this place, reconciliation is stronger than retribution.

THE FINAL COURT

On the highest peak of the plane, the greatest court of law in the 'verse resides. Mortals and divinities alike may receive a fair hearing from the Seven Magistrates.

VALLEY OF THE THUNDER QUEENS

This verdant valley holds lush gardens and shining palaces, ruled by a council of wise queens and guided by humble sages.

RANGE OF THE DEFENDERS

On this mountain range, the warriors of light train for battle, wielding blades of steel and shooting arrows of solid lightning.

ANCESTRAL

The Ancestral guarded their descendants for four generations. When their benevolent watch ended, beasts of living lightning came to them and brought them to the mountains of justice. They were inducted into the primal order of the wise as regal teachers and warriors. They built wonders and temples throughout the plane, creating epics and songs to preserve their knowledge. The Ancestral vary in appearance from midnight-hued Anata scholars, to the russet whirlwind of the Nakari spear-dancers. Each one has a spirit-form bound together by noble-lightnings with patterns of power pulsing just underneath their skin.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| BROAD: | Justice |
| BROAD: | Spirits |
| COMMON: | Guardianship |
| DEEP: | Lightning-Rider |



THE TEACHERS' GUILD

The Chalks and the Hopefuls

Countless children race through the crooked corridors of Sig, gathering splinters as they scamper up wooden ladders. Elsewhere in the 'verse, they would find themselves dragged into farms or factories by their parents. Some would suffer even worse fates. In the City Between, the Teachers' Guild has other plans. They establish small school houses throughout the city where these youth can learn the basic skills they need to survive and even thrive. Some focus on their letters. Others learn the stories of the past. Still others learn to count coppers. No matter where they come from, despite any hardship in their lives, the Teachers' Guild keeps them safe.

DUTY:

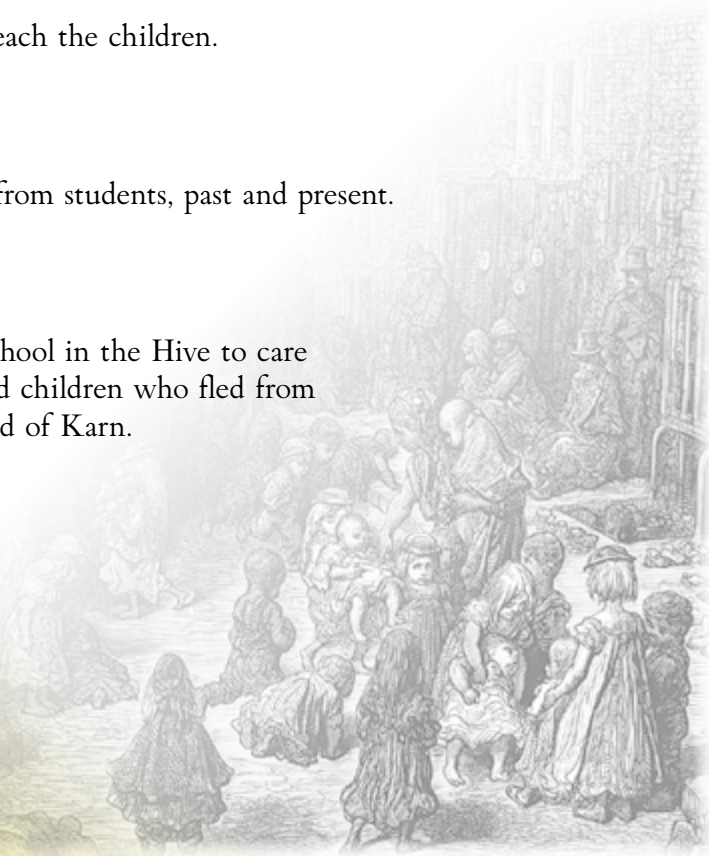
Nurture and teach the children.

LEVERAGE:

Secret reports from students, past and present.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Open a new school in the Hive to care for the hundred children who fled from the prime world of Karn.



MYN, THE QUESTIONER

Power of Travel, Thought, and Guilt

Myn appears as a young girl with burnished copper skin and piercing green eyes. She wanders the planes, finding those who have become complacent or comfortable in their lives. This thin, waif-like girl approaches such a figure and asks a single query. To an infamous warlord, she asked if his husband would have condoned such cruelty. She asked the Queen of the Emerald Rose when she last spoke to one of the common people. Why did Polena the Virtuous punish herself so harshly for her human failings? Myn is a goddess who tests those who need it.

DEVOTION:

Never carry more than you need.

RITUAL:

The Third Eye opens to reveal what issues an individual is currently struggling with. If you choose not to spend one Influence, you will be bound to the individual until that problem is solved.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Convince Moran, the God of Eugenics, to abandon his divine mandate.



THE PLANE OF TYRANNY

Mercy has no place in the law

A hammer falls. A man screams. The stench of roasting flesh fills your nostrils. You taste blood and bile on the air. Everything else is darkness, punctuated by flashes of torchlight. It's been so long since you've known anything else but chains. You're trapped, locked, and damned for eternity. You didn't do anything to deserve this kind of punishment. It matters not; they need no excuse to impose their will in this place. You are but one of many; writhing, screaming masses chained for crimes real and imagined. You heard that you can get out if you join your jailors. You tell yourself that this could be freedom, but you would merely trade one set of shackles for another.

RAZORBURG

This ancient basalt city is full of smoke and screams, where damned prisoners are sent to slay or be slain.

FIVE LIGHTS BELOW

These dark caves house the most dangerous prisoners of the 'verse. Punishments both mundane and imagination-defying are the norm here.

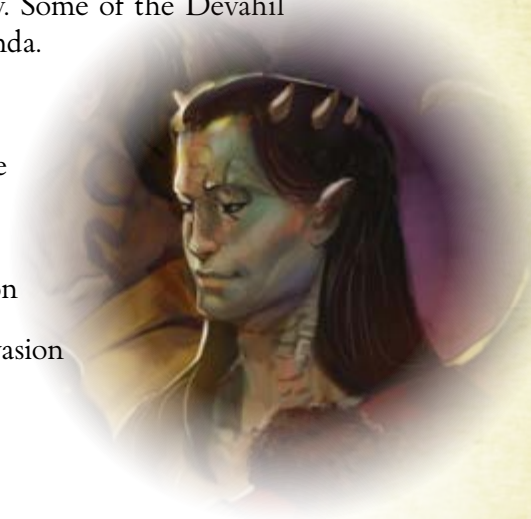
THE MARCHING STONES

Conscript armies, infernal war-constructs, and massive obsidian blocks march with unrelenting violence upon each other in this desert wasteland.

DEVAHIL

Those imprisoned on the Plane of Tyranny have a choice to escape their eternal torture. Those who accept the proffered deal are reshaped as Devahil, the last true servants of law. They share a mission to bring order and harmony to the universe through force of arms and strength of will. They learn that the Plane of Tyranny was designed as a multiversal prison, to chain the dangerous forces of chaos and to offer redemption for those who wish it. The Devahil punish their prisoners, hunt down other law-breakers, and work with the Harmonious Army. Some of the Devahil even believe the lies and propaganda.

BROAD:	Dominance
BROAD:	Pain
COMMON:	Intimidation
DEEP:	Mental Invasion



THE GUILD OF ADVOCATES

The Vultures and the Cutters

Law is a delicate profession in the fair city of Sig, one that needs to be guided by a firm but wise hand. The guild serves every client, offering legal services for a reasonable fee. Your legal representative will be happy to support you in resolving your grievances through both the formal and informal channels. No matter your cause, one of its fine members will be happy to assist you in resolving your issue with professionalism and brutal efficiency.

DUTY:

Offer legal services to the denizens of Sig.

LEVERAGE:

Maneuver the bureaucracy of Sig's many laws and twist them to advantage.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Ensure a law is passed to forbid the giving of alms to the impoverished beggars of Sig.

The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws.

KALZAK THE ABSOLUTE

Power of Law, Judgement, and Hatred

Kalzak earned his infernal title, Demon-god of Moral Absolutes, through toil and bloodshed in the infernal bureaucracy. He rules from a tower of skulls where his scribes engrave new laws on the bones of living victims. He infects the slumbering primes with a single toxic idea, that anyone different is dangerous. His servants fan the flames of racism, of prejudice, and of bigotry in the hope of triggering bloody wars. Once the smoke settles, Kalzak invites the most hateful and harmful souls to join his retinue.

DEVOTION:

Never treat an outsider as your equal.

RITUAL:

The Chant of the Holy Mission amplifies ethnic and religious hatred in a crowd. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the mob will cause direct, brutal violence rather than subtle oppression.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Convince the Dragon-kin to invade the prime world of Karn.



THE PLANE OF DESTRUCTION

Power is its own reward

Howls of rage and panicked screams resonate off the shattered walls of this ruined metropolis. The landscape trembles as a hovel is crushed by the sharp claws of a demonic beast. As you turn to flee, you see a swarm of fleshworms moves toward you. You dash into a gap in their ranks, only to see the six sickly green eyes of a sinhound in the shadows before you. The sky begins to hurl razors of rust and hissing acid at anything that moves. All around you are those too weak to be saved from the streets of this city of the damned. This is but one bloody block of this cruel plane.

BUTCHER'S FIELD

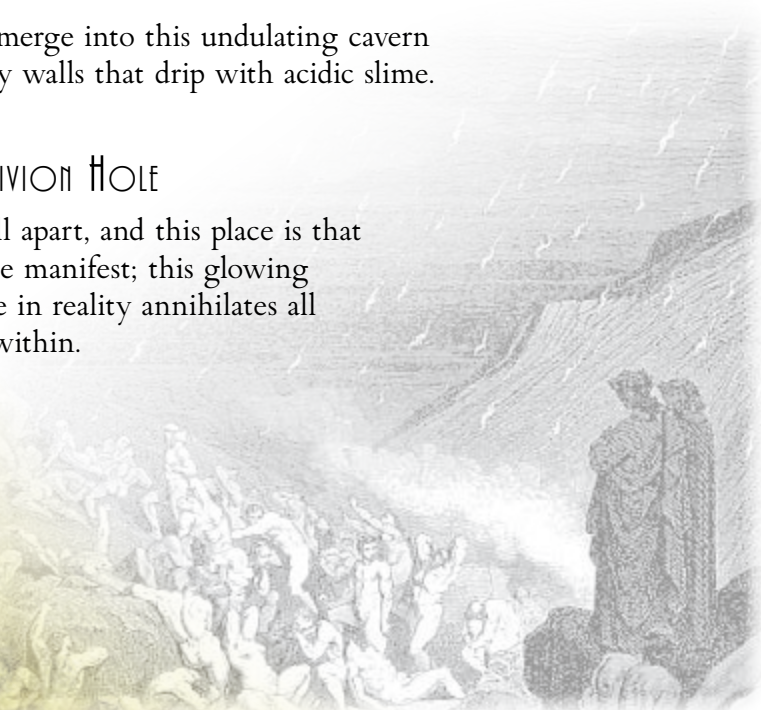
A wasteland of salt, rust, and flame-touched winds where demon armies wage war for eternity.

Maw

Tunnels emerge into this undulating cavern with fleshy walls that drip with acidic slime.

THE OBLIVION HOLE

Things fall apart, and this place is that truth made manifest; this glowing white hole in reality annihilates all that falls within.



WYRMS

Scarlet flesh pierced by spikes and horns. Great jaws that hold back dangerous power. Some primes call them demons, while others call them dragon-kin. They call themselves the Liberated, and they have found their own path to freedom. Their greatest lesson is that power born of freedom is worth any price. They are fiercely independent and territorial beings, each of whom learned that trust is another word for suicide. They view other Wyrms as competitors — with varying levels of hostility — and the “lesser races” as tools or slaves.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| BROAD: | Violence |
| BROAD: | Destruction |
| COMMON: | Bargains |
| DEEP: | Red in Tooth and Claw |

When a Wym is displeased, politesse is your only defense.



THE ENFORCERS

The Clubs and the Muscle

In a city full of miscreants, the strong arm of the law needs a club. The Enforcers are happy to oblige and break up any criminal activity in Sig. They stop domestic disputes and arrest disreputable troublemakers. They hold back angry mobs and imprison criminals, if they are provided with the right garnish.

They are part police and part mob, feared by all rational folks. They once arrested a dragon too far into the drink, and forcibly dragged her to prison. Don't get on their bad side.

DUTY:

Enforce the rough justice of Sig.

LEVERAGE:

Police brutality and general thuggery.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Arrest the Goddess of Tranquil Revolution for treason against Sig.



EATER-OF-WORLDS, CHILD OF OBLIVION

Power of Chaos, Death, and Hunger

It hungers, as it always has. When it is displeased, it births one of its gargantuan children, setting it loose to destroy entire prime worlds.

Soon it will emerge from the Oblivion Hole. Soon it will feed.

DEVOTION:

Never reveal your faith.

RITUAL:

The Famine-Touch curses a target to never gain sustenance until they devour the flesh of a specific person. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the curse is transmitted to anyone bitten.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Release one of its colossal and monstrous children into Sig.



THE PLANE OF ORDER

Laws are absolute

Everything in this place exhibits perfect harmony. Interlocking mechanical cogs turn with a rhythmic clicking. An eerie expanse filled with rows of massive grey cubes, cylinders, and pyramids stands on silent watch. Detailed patterns emerge from an ocean of clay. A fractal city is illuminated by syncopated pulses of light. Studious researchers march ant-like through labyrinthine libraries. In this place, order is imposed on the diversity of the 'verse, and patterns take on a life of their own.

THE GREAT MACHINE

This massive structure composed of interlocking gears is perpetually in motion. Its purpose is unknown, even by the strange geometric constructs that maintain it.

TABLET LANDS

This vast expanse is entirely made of smooth clay, through which massive, fractal patterns emerge.

THE CELESTIAL BUREAUCRACY

The City of Dockets is home to the Celestial Bureaucracy. All the power of the 'verse can be achieved, if you could navigate the complex web of authorities and procedures.

AESIGILAR

The Aesigilar are strange beings, sentient runes symbiotically melded with other humanoid peoples. Aesigilar trace descent from star-patterns, and kinship is based on celestial proximity. Despite the intimacy of their bond with their hosts, Aesigilar display neither comprehension nor concern of ethnicity or gender. For the Aesigilar, complex relationships with a constellation of partners is the norm.

The Aesigilar believe that bonding with a host uplifts their partner to sentience. Strangely, most primals disagree with this assessment and refer to them as “body snatchers”.

BROAD:	Patterns
BROAD:	Time
COMMON:	Prediction
DEEP:	Mental Symbiosis

The pattern is more important than the ink.

-Ancient Aesigilar saying



THE PAPER GUARD

The Cogs and the Faceless

The City Between would collapse without the diligent monitoring and watchful eye of countless paper-pushing bureaucrats and public servants. They manage tariffs for incoming trade goods under the STA program, create a PMF for the many civic initiatives, establish administrative policies based on the PGD, work on strategic planning documents, and ensure that senior officials are aligned with MAF.

They can be terrifyingly effective despite the acronyms. Don't get in their way. These city administrators and tax collectors can bury you in paperwork.

DUTY:

Manage the civic government operations.

LEVERAGE:

Wield the bureaucracy.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Prepare a new official census and tax verification exercise throughout Sig.

EDANA OF THE PACT

Power of Law, Marriage, and Politics

Edana appears as a blue-skinned woman with six arms and a scarlet blindfold over her eyes. She is the avatar of contracts, bargains, and diplomatic treaties. When she gazes upon someone, she sees only the web of duties, obligations, and agreements which bind them to the 'verse. She is diplomat, mediator, and intercessor in all legal matters between the other Powers, and her ink-black blood creates unbreakable treaties. Her home is within the Celestial Bureaucracy, though she can often be found sipping a cup of chai in one of Sig's cafés.

DEVOTION:

Never break a contract.

RITUAL:

The Blind Contract forges a spiritually-binding agreement between any two parties who willingly agree to it. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the Blind Contract lasts for a random duration unknown to you or the parties involved.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Establish a peace treaty between Markan, the Shepherd of Dreams, and the Merchant Council of Sig.



In the end, your word is the only thing that matters.

THE PLANE OF FREEDOM

Law is a prison for the soul

The Plane of Freedom is a place of spontaneity and change. Sages describe it as a grey fog, from which exultant wonders or mind-shattering horrors may emerge. Floating mountains with lava-falls sing as they drift past you. Armies of frogmen try to abduct you, but your imagination erects a protective wall of stone to protect you. The wall turns into flowers that scream with enough volume to scare off the frogmen. Despite the instability, it's a safe haven for outlaws and free spirits, revolutionaries and innovators from throughout the 'verse. The only rule here is that the rules change.

THE MISTS

Raw chaos flows and whirls in this place, spontaneously creating new objects from nothingness.

FREEBOOTER CITIES

A strange landscape of relative normalcy, these free-floating cities are filled with small habitations of independent-minded folk who take on jobs from time to time.

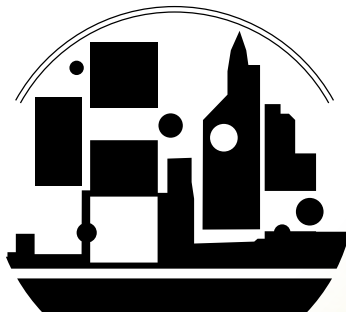
THE WILD

A place of unchecked and ever-changing wilderness; jungles turn to desert, in which mountains rise, then melt into oceans.

FERAL

Those who are bound to the Plane of Freedom are infused with primal chaos, gaining bestial features. These could be as minor as a bit of fur or scale, horn or hooves. More often, they become hybrids known as harpies, goatmen, horsewomen, or lizardfolk. The Feral form small communities based on which animal family they belong to. Each community is united by their instinctual behaviors and their cult-like religious practices. Individuals may change communities when passing Wildstorms warp their bodies and instincts. The Feral are known for their vigilant and unceasing defense of personal liberty at the expense of any coherent civilization.

- BROAD:** Chaos
- BROAD:** Nature
- COMMON:** Bestial Form
- DEEP:** Wild Sorcery



THE LEAGUE OF EXTERMINATORS

The Oozes and the Bugbloods

Lots of things sneak into the City Between to cause trouble. The League of Exterminators has the 'pleasure' of disposing of the most noxious vermin from throughout the 'verse. If you can't eat 'em, burn 'em. Can't burn 'em, then freeze 'em. If that don't work, shunt 'em off to some random prime to deal with. Thanks to the League, the fair people of Sig don't have to worry about impfestations, gelatinous pyramids, or screamspiders. Pest control is an important job in this city.

DUTY:

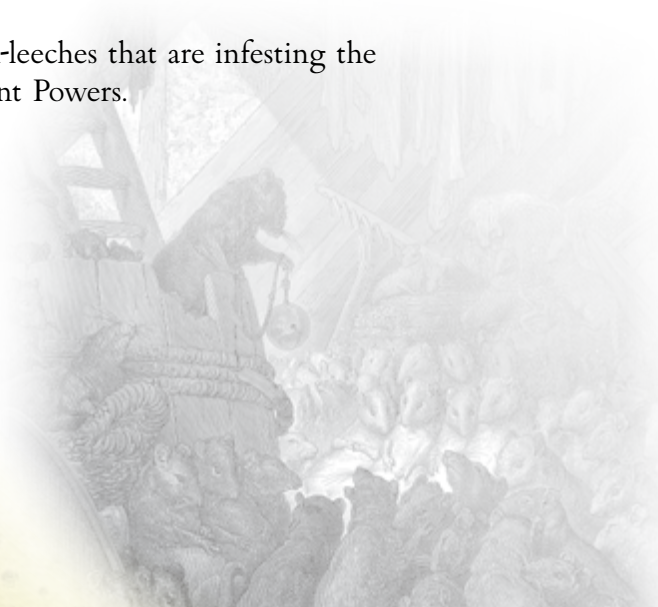
Control the vermin and eliminate the pests.

LEVERAGE:

Transporting vermin and pests to anywhere they choose in the 'verse.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Clean up the faith-leeches that are infesting the Street of Beneficent Powers.



CALLA THE WISE

Power of Chaos, Revelry, Headaches, and Paradoxes

Almost every culture reveres a trickster god or sower of chaos. These figures create disorder and inspire change in stagnating societies. Calla is the Power who teaches these lesser tricksters the chaos-arts. They have countless names, faces, and clever acolytes. They teach that all affirmations are at least partially true, sometimes false, often meaningless, true and false part of the time, true and meaningless maybe, false and meaningless when it's important, and true and false and meaningless whenever you like.

DEVOTION:

Never believe what you read.

RITUAL:

The Paradigm Shift allows you to temporarily negate a law, policy, or procedure within the area. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the GM will temporarily change one of her Beliefs for the duration of the Scene.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Frame another Faction for the explosion in the Port of the Moon.



THE PLANE OF DREAMS

Everyone is connected

You walk through a shadowed veil to emerge in a dark city. The scent of baking bread overwhelms you, and you find yourself in your childhood home. Then you notice the large figure hunched over the oven, a terrible monstrosity that hungers for your flesh. You try to run, but your feet melt into the floor and you sink into a void beneath the kitchen. You blink and realize you now stand in a luminous forest with the love of your life smiling at you.

THE MAD CITY

A dark metropolis, where sleepless mortals spend their crumbling sanity to fend off terrible nightmares.

AMALGAM

All dreaming minds come together in this place, a lair of the dreamwalkers.

PITS OF PLEASURE

The mortal mind unfettered pursues hedonism; this is where you can find all the sensuous dreams (and nightmares) you could ever conceive of, for a price.

CUBI

The Cubi are well known among the primals, though known by different names. The Cubi people are native to the plane of dreams and live vicariously through the emotions and passions of others. For two Cubi to touch, to love, or to live together is forbidden. They are expected to build bonds with other planars and primals instead. They have terrible reputations as tempters, but in truth, they simply crave connection. Their dream-flesh reshapes itself to appear attractive to those they interact with. While they often have fixed gender identities, their physical characteristics can fluctuate wildly depending on who they are with.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| BROAD: | Dreams |
| BROAD: | Connection |
| COMMON: | Obsession |
| DEEP: | Emotional Chains |



THE SIG GAZETTEER

The Journos and the Tabloids

News prowls Sig's putrid alleys and shining streets. Thanks to the fine investigative reporters of the Gazetteer, you can learn all about it from the safety of your kip. The Gazetteer is the one record of note, telling the people of Sig of births, deaths, and other civil matters. Want to know how the War of a Thousand Knives is going, and what effect it will have on the city? Check out the Planar Politics section.

Our editorial staff will provide you with the best analysis of the breaking news stories from throughout the 'verse.

The Sig Gazetteer: News from within, without, and everywhere in-between!

DUTY:

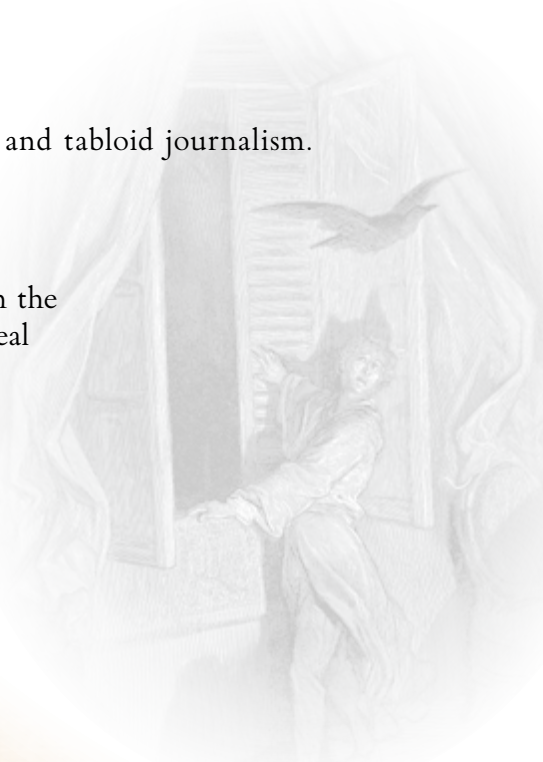
Provide investigative journalism.

LEVERAGE:

Critical media coverage and tabloid journalism.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Publish an interview with the Maw of Eternity and reveal her obsessive goal.



NYX THE ORACLE

Power of Time, Memory, and Dreams

She holds her court in a dream, beneath the dream, beneath the dream. She swims the deep waters of the collective unconscious, plucking glittering prophesies from its cool waters. She lives in distant futures, and only rarely visits the present to share her wisdom with her followers. She takes particular pleasure in supporting ambitious mortals with the potential for great accomplishments. She is fascinated with how mortal emotion shapes their futures in ways unpredictable to even her. Her followers whisper prophesies that can only be heard by those bound in slumber.

DEVOTION:

Never stop someone from following their dreams.

RITUAL:

Anyone struck by the Foretelling Blow will be given a prophetic dream by the GM when they next rest. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the dream will be a prophetic nightmare instead.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Give the Reaper of Regrets a dream that leads her towards apotheosis.



THE PLANE OF SHADOW

Reality is an illusion

Neither your senses nor your memories can be trusted. Footsteps behind you. Eerily familiar perfume to your left. The warmth of a stranger's hand brushing against your arm. You walk through moonlit vales, twilight-veils, and glittering temples of ruby and sapphire. All the riches and splendour of the greatest prime cities can be found here for a fleeting moment before they fade fade fade. The plane of shadow is a living thing, hungry for ideas and memories that it uses to create, to change, to tear down. With enough passion and skill, you can sculpt the shadowstuff for your own purposes.

THE RUBY HALL

This ruddy palace is home to the finest gnomish jewelers, busy cutting gems of phantasmal glory.

EMERALD MARKETS

Perceptions and experiences are traded in this place, and you can purchase any experience, for the right price.

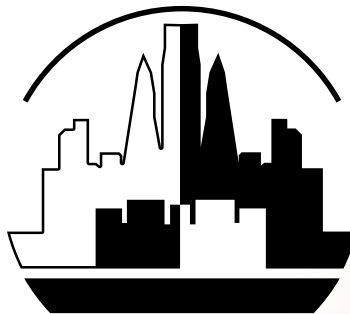
THE UMBRAL DELTA

Dark reflections flow through these channels of murk. Each shade offers information in exchange for temporary freedom from their shadow-prison.

GNOMES

The shadowlands are filled by a small folk with keen intellect and even greater sense of humour. They cut, polish, and set fine gems, imbuing them with living shadow and shimmering light. They craft artifacts of fascinating utility and power. They paint the air with illusory forms, cook with imaginary flavours, and make false sounds spring from nothingness. They are the ladies and lords of twilight, whose passionate pursuit of art and craft set them apart.

BROAD:	Illusion
BROAD:	Crafts
COMMON:	Gems
DEEP:	Phantasmal Forces



THE ARTIFICERS' GUILD

The Crafters and the Tinkers

Sig is home to artificers, smiths, and inventors from throughout the 'verse. The Guild of Artifice represents their interests, supporting their creative efforts while ensuring they are able to perform their craft in peace. The guild is known to rotate apprentices through a variety of different areas, and most prospective craftswomen of Sig have spent a few months working in diverse trades: from gem-cutting and gold-smithing to talisman recharging, illusion-honing and book-binding. Anyone serious about mastering their craft — and willing to pay the dues — is welcome to join the guild.

DUTY:

Create high-quality craft goods for use and trade.

LEVERAGE:

Clockwork and phantasmal servants.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Repair the Eternity Tower, which stopped when The Silent Regent disappeared.

MAGDAK THE CLOCKWORK PAGE

Power of Duty, Civilization, and Animation

Magdak has served since the reign of the Primordial Masters in an earlier age. It never knew its maker, but it remembers being pulled free from the Plane of Order. Over the ages, it has gained worship by the servants and apprentices of Sig. It has ascended to divinity, as the Power of service. Magdak has simple motivations: to advise fearlessly and implement faithfully the plans of its master. Since the disappearance of The Silent Regent, the Clockwork Page has begun to serve the City of Sig itself.

DEVOTION:

Never disobey a lawful order.

RITUAL:

The Oath of Tireless Service allows you to forgo food, drink, or rest while following a superior's commands. If you choose not to spend one Influence, you are unable to eat, drink, or sleep until the command is fulfilled.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Create a massive clockwork statue of brass to defend Sig from attack.



THE PLANE OF LORE

Knowledge is power

This is the home of the wise and a repository of all things known. Ancient tomes of paper hold histories of primal dynasties. Walls of radiance display images of current events on the other planes. Arcane songs echo through the great lore-vaults, where the dire prophecies are stored. Living spells infiltrate the minds of the unwary, using their hosts to escape to the primes. Scents and tastes convey cultural traditions of countless primal worlds. Anything you might seek can be found here, if you can pay the librarian's tithe.

PRIMAL LIBRARY

Whenever a book is published, a scroll scribed, or a tablet chiseled, a copy appears in this gargantuan library.

THE CULTURE ARCHIVES

These resplendent vaults preserve the traditions of food, drink, dress, and religious practice from across the 'verse.

SPOKEN COLLEGE

This academic college passes on the oral traditions of ritual invocation, bardic spellsong, and shamanic lore.



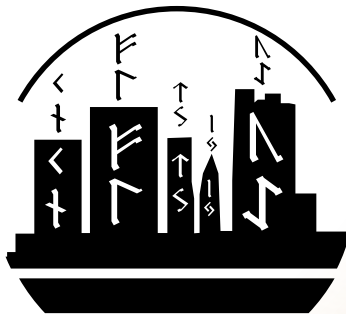
ELDERSKEIN

Elderskein are all that remains of an ancient people spun from the golden thread of fate by the Primordials. Since the First War, their numbers have dwindled. They are only a remnant of their former glory, but their twisted, vulture-like bodies still hold tremendous potential for the Art of Wizardry. On their naming-day, each Elderskein pledges an oath to pursue scholarship of one academic specialty for the remainder of their life. They content themselves in researching, experimenting, and teaching this specialty. They may no longer rule the primes, but their mystic power is still remarkable.

BROAD:	Song
BROAD:	Wizardry
COMMON:	Invocation
DEEP:	The Scholar's Oath ¹



If you want jewelry appraised, ask the two blues!



1. The Scholar's Oath represents some extremely precise and obscure specialty like "Kraken Breeding Habits", "Planar Dysjunctions". Define your obscure specialty at character creation..

THE SAGE COLLEGIUM

The Marked and the Wise

During the Great Purge of Sig, countless great minds and priceless tomes were thrown on the pyres. The Sage Collegium emerged from the ashes of that terrible time. They came together with the common mission to prevent such an event from happening again. They built the Invisible College, a network of hidden library-caches and discrete meeting places for the academic community of Sig. Through a series of apprenticeships, the wisest (or most cunning) of Sig may be invited to join the Guild and further this hidden fraternity of knowledge. Those who serve the guild well are inducted into the deeper secrets of wizardry and alchemy.

DUTY:

Offer information and research services to Sig.

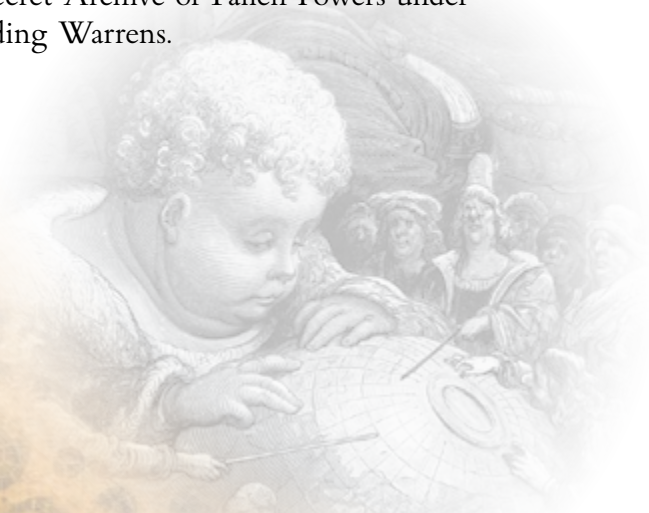
LEVERAGE:

Revolutionary-cells full of well-read wizards and alchemists.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Build a secret Archive of Fallen Powers under the Breeding Warrens.

Knives are the perfect antidote to subtle wizards.



BROSSIEN OF MYSTIC SONG

Power of Song, Lore, and Enchantment

Brossien was once a mortal man, famous for his seductive voice and his revelry. He wandered the planes and the primes, crafting stories so touching that even stones would weep. In his quest for fame and glory, he stumbled upon an emerald lute bound in iron chains. When he seized the lute and played a clear note, his essence melded with the fallen goddess trapped within. Now he is a full-fledged Power, composing songs with the under-harmony and singing the true language of creation. He throws a good party, but has spawned a disturbing number of demigods in his wake.

DEVOTION:

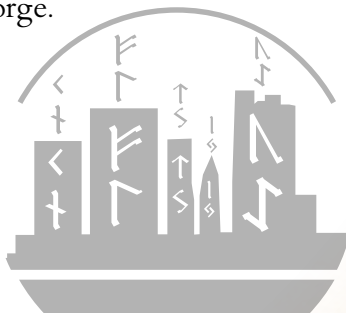
Never allow an evening to pass without a song.

RITUAL:

The Melodic Charm beguiles a target and temporarily convinces them that you are their steadfast friend. If you choose not to spend one Influence, the target will remember being charmed when they next wake.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Capture the heart of Hdir, God of the Adamant Forge.



THE PLANE OF LIFE

Grow or die

If it lives, you may find it here. Immortal trees, clad in silver bark, reach to the sky. Thick vines wrap tree trunks together to form a living web of green. Ferns whisper on the wind, each shrub with a story to tell. The flowers burst with vivid colour, and their fragrant aromas fill your nostrils. When darkness falls, the idyllic scene shifts to one of resolute purpose. Willows try to lure you to a final rest. Towering oaks lash out with hungry branches. Vines grasp and embrace you. Fruit, seed, and nut are no longer safe to eat. This is their world, and you trespass.

STARLIGHT FOREST

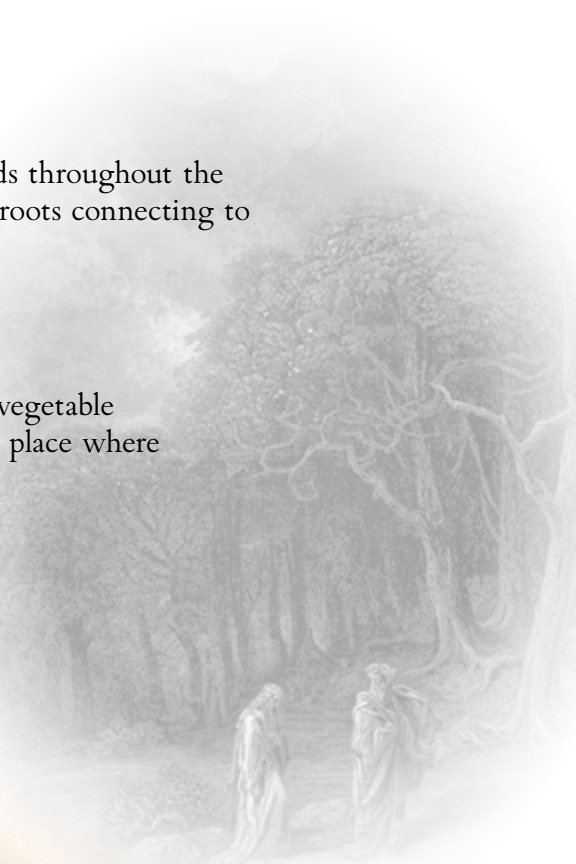
This sacred forest is infused with divine light, with golden, silver, and sapphire trees that hold back the darkness.

THE WORLDTREE

This enormous tree extends throughout the planes, with branches and roots connecting to each of the primes.

THE PLENTIFUL LANDS

Fruit, root, and succulent vegetable grow in abundance in this place where the crops are always ripe.



SYLVA

The Plane of Life is populated by a race of tree-like sentient plants with three distinct genders. The male Sylva look like normal trees and rarely move, content to spout lore and tell stories. Female Sylva are more mobile, moving by night to tend to their forests and gardens. When the males and females reproduce, they create a noble Sylva. The nobles are explorers, diplomats, adventurers who walk as freely as any human. In their wake, nobles leave seeds that produce new forests of male and female Sylva. The only Sylva purebloods who venture into Sig's streets are of the noble gender, leaving forests in their wake.

BROAD:	Plants
BROAD:	Resilience
COMMON:	Tree-speech
DEEP:	Regeneration



THE FARMERS ASSOCIATION

The Dirt and the Greenblood

Sig is a large city with a larger appetite. While the best food in the City Between is imported from elsewhere in the 'verse, the Farmers Association produces the bulk of Sig's sustenance. Most traditional crops are grown on the rooftops, each containing a diverse mix of roots, leaf, and grain. The sewers contain mushroom farms, and the rivers are fished. The odd park or tree-lined street is cultivated to produce fruits and nuts. The Farmers Association guards the locally-sourced food with diligence and polearms. They even manage the rat farms, chicken roosts, and dog kennels. They keep most everyone fed.

DUTY:

Produce food for the city.

LEVERAGE:

Control over the food supply.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Introduce coffee to the residents of Sig.

KESTRANNA, THE HARVESTER

Power of Life, Death, and Agriculture

Kestranna is the harvest goddess with two very different aspects. Kestr is her benevolent face, with skin dark like fertile soil and bearing bountiful harvest in her arms. Ranna is her pale and malevolent face, the scythe-goddess who reaps those whose time has come to an end. Together, this goddess is loved and feared by countless mortals across the planes.

DEVOTION:

Never refuse to offer hospitality to a guest.

RITUAL:

The Hungry Petition bestows you with an abundance of food and drink from Kestr's table. If you choose not to spend one Influence, Ranna will slay an innocent mortal nearby to sate her hunger.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Destroy the rival cult of the Fisher King before they establish themselves in Sig.



THE PLANE OF DEATH

Mortality is a blessing

Most primals are terrified of this place, thinking it a nightmarish wasteland of ghoul kingdoms. It is that, but also so much more. It's a haven and a safe harbor for hurt souls from throughout the 'verse. It's a place where memories last forever, accessible to those in need. The bone-white land of the dead is where mortals can find rest and comfort, so often denied to them in their lives. Whenever a minority group is conquered, assimilated, or destroyed, a new necropolis forms to house them for eternity.

PALACE OF PRIMORDIAL MEMORIES

This massive alabaster complex holds the memory fragments of fallen Primordials.

ASHLANDS

A desert of grey ash, where vengeful spectres wander fruitlessly in search of their loved ones.

THE BONEYARD

This mountain is literally built of the skeletons of every beast on the planes and primes, some of which are still animated.

REVENANT

When primal mortals die before their appointed time, they may be reborn as Revenant on the Plane of Death. Many of these individuals consider this to be a divine blessing and convert to one of countless religious orders. Others satisfy themselves by rejoining their cultural communities, communing with their fallen kin in one of the many necropoli which dot the landscape. A rare few cling to their drive for vengeance and their memories of mortal family. These few are the ones most often found wandering the dank alleys of Sig or prowling the prime worlds.

BROAD:	Death
BROAD:	Memory
COMMON:	Gravespeech
DEEP:	Unliving Endurance



THE DUSTKEEPERS' GUILD

The Morte and Mourners

The Dustkeepers' Guild is the hidden memory of the 'verse, storing bodies and relics alike in their desiccated vaults. They manage the city morgue, where most of the dead bodies are unceremoniously dragged for disposal. Their vaults double as the municipal archives and museum, where city records and historical artifacts are carefully cataloged by diligent guild-members. They are most often called into legal disputes as coroners and municipal historians.

DUTY:

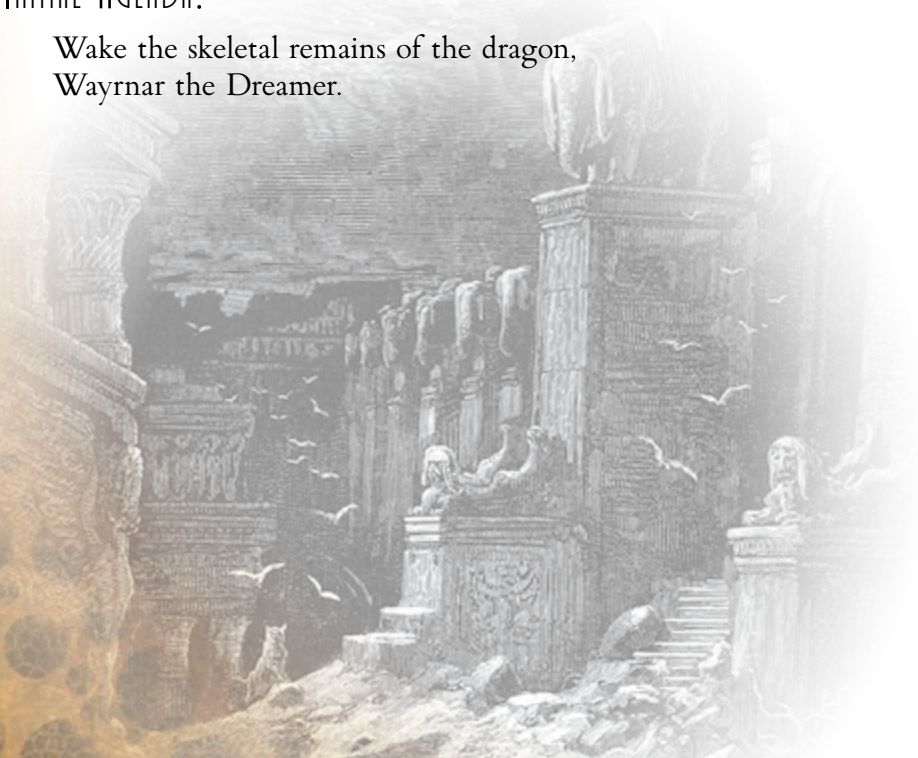
Manage the dead and their artifacts.

LEVERAGE:

Undead servants and agents.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Wake the skeletal remains of the dragon,
Wayrnar the Dreamer.



OMULAUB THE TRANQUIL

Power of Death, Pain, and Succor

The Tranquil God calls those in pain. His followers consist of suffering mortals, those with broken bodies and shattered souls. He calls those who have been abused, victimized, and conquered. He cannot restore to them what has been lost, but his beneficence soothes their pain that they might find their own path to a brighter future. He offers the final sleep to those who wish it, but he is the sole Power of Death who respects mortal right to live for a few more years.

DEVOTION:

Never ignore someone in pain.

RITUAL:

The Numb Blessing removes physical, mental, or emotional pain from a target, removing all Harm from the Spark attribute. If you choose not to spend one Influence, that target will permanently be numbed to that kind of pain.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Smuggle thousands of vials of painkilling potions into Sig's black markets.



THE RARITIES



The Planes are vast and contain multitudes. The tome cannot contain all of the diverse Heritages, political Factions, or minor Powers that fill the City Between. Here are but a few examples of lesser known inhabitants of the City Between.

RARE HERITAGES

Salamanders, reptilian humanoids who build their homes out of solid flame.

Cuttles, large humanoid squid with reputations for brilliant minds and cutting snark.

Dwarves, a communal people who breed at a terrific rate and constantly build new warrens for their young.

Elves, beautiful and fae beings, prone to prophesy and issue binding oaths.

Miche, massive bear-like humanoids, clad in white fur and filled with religious devotion.

Hounds, large and intelligent luminescent canines who hunt down criminals and protect holy sites.

Clayborn, living beings formed of primordial clay, whose thick flesh is inscribed with a holy mission they are bound to pursue.

Frox, colourful frog-like mystics who worship the glory of chaos and creation.

Karrod, insectoid beings whose saliva rusts the strongest metal, rots the freshest wood, and liquefies animal flesh.

Faustians, multisplendored and multi-eyed beings who offer planar power to primal mortals, in exchange for soul-scrap.

Mirrorblood, clever and confused beings who live in reflections, watching mortals and occasionally replacing them when no one is watching.

Tulpa, beings formed through intense concentration and dream-magics, who wander the 'verse in search of their creators.

Weavers, kindly talking spiders who weave enchantments and histories into their arcane silk webs.

Woken, dark-furred minotaurs who toil in silence and have pledged to never speak the names of women.

Deatheaters, carrion-eating humanoid vultures, who collect the souls and memories of the bodies they consume.

LESSER FACTIONS

The Lamplighters Guild, who watch over the nighttime streets with keen eyes.

Order of the Cask, an association of brewmasters, vintners, and distillers who keep Sig well lubricated.

Sisterhood of the Forge, encompassing the blacksmiths, goldsmiths, soulsmiths, weaponsmiths, and other territorial toolmakers.

The Miasmics, who move the putrescent and toxic fumes of the City Between away from noble noses.

The Black Phoenix, a guild of alchemists and perfumers who sell bottled beauty for those with the coin.

The Lillies, a sisterhood and professional union of sex workers, who protect their members with terrifying efficiency.

Calculators, whose math and accounting expertise are eminently profitable.

The Free Printers, a union of anarchist-printers who publish the most provocative and dangerous of ideas.

The Homewreckers, an organization specializing in bankruptcy, liquidation, and dissolution of partnerships, be they professional or domestic.

The Shark Association, always eager to offer banking services or loans with absolutely reasonable interest rates. They occasionally double as leg-beakers.

The Orphan's Union, standing up for those street-children left in the cold.

Glasscleaner's Guild, representing the bartenders, waitresses, and counsellors of the City Between.

Order of Babylon, the tight-knit mercenary band of freebooting translators and guides.

Woodtenders, a small association of skilled labourers who guide the growth of trees to form living towers, often working in the Garden.

The Larders, professional butchers and meatpackers who slaughter and preserve the meat supplies.

MINOR POWERS

Ianaos the Dragon, a venerable wyrm clad with ruby scales and a burning appetite.

Ouronsa, Daughter of the Rains, the goddess whose worshipers preach the nobility of sorrow and empathy.

The Living Forge, once chained and forced to craft weapons of the gods, she now builds only tools of peace.

The Void Stone, was once an ascetic primal monk who abandoned all attachments on the path to enlightenment.

Borealis, the delicate son of the ice-queen, who paints the skies with brilliant colours to entertain mortal souls.

Rarya, Empress of the Seven Thunders, who watches over the infinite primes for oathbreakers to smite with hurled lightning bolts.

Erus, Goddess of Society, whose servants wander the 'verse to bestow the gifts of governance and civilization.

Xrani the Free, breaker of chains and liberator of the oppressed whose worshipers preach the freedom gospel.

Ysilan, The Tempering Devil, of whose followers spread the ordeal, where an organization or nation is stress-tested to reveal hidden weakness.

Ulu, The Satisfied Prince, who teaches that comfort, self-interest and conflict avoidance are the three holy virtues.

The Choir Invisible, a pantheon of minor Powers who watch over the faithful, leaving secret messages and omens in urban graffiti.

Wanua, the Demon of the Silent Chain, who feeds off the terror of children's nightmares.

Dialect. It is a language that pre-dates and predates all other tongues. It consumed the language of the Primordials and ascended to divinity.

Xyttshak, Queen of Crawling Things, the bugspeaker, protector of the swarm, who offers the gift of healing to all life in need.

Qunir Revelson, the god of wakes and funerary celebrations, whose soft chortle bring comfort to those who mourn.

CHAPTER 4

SIG - THE CITY BETWEEN



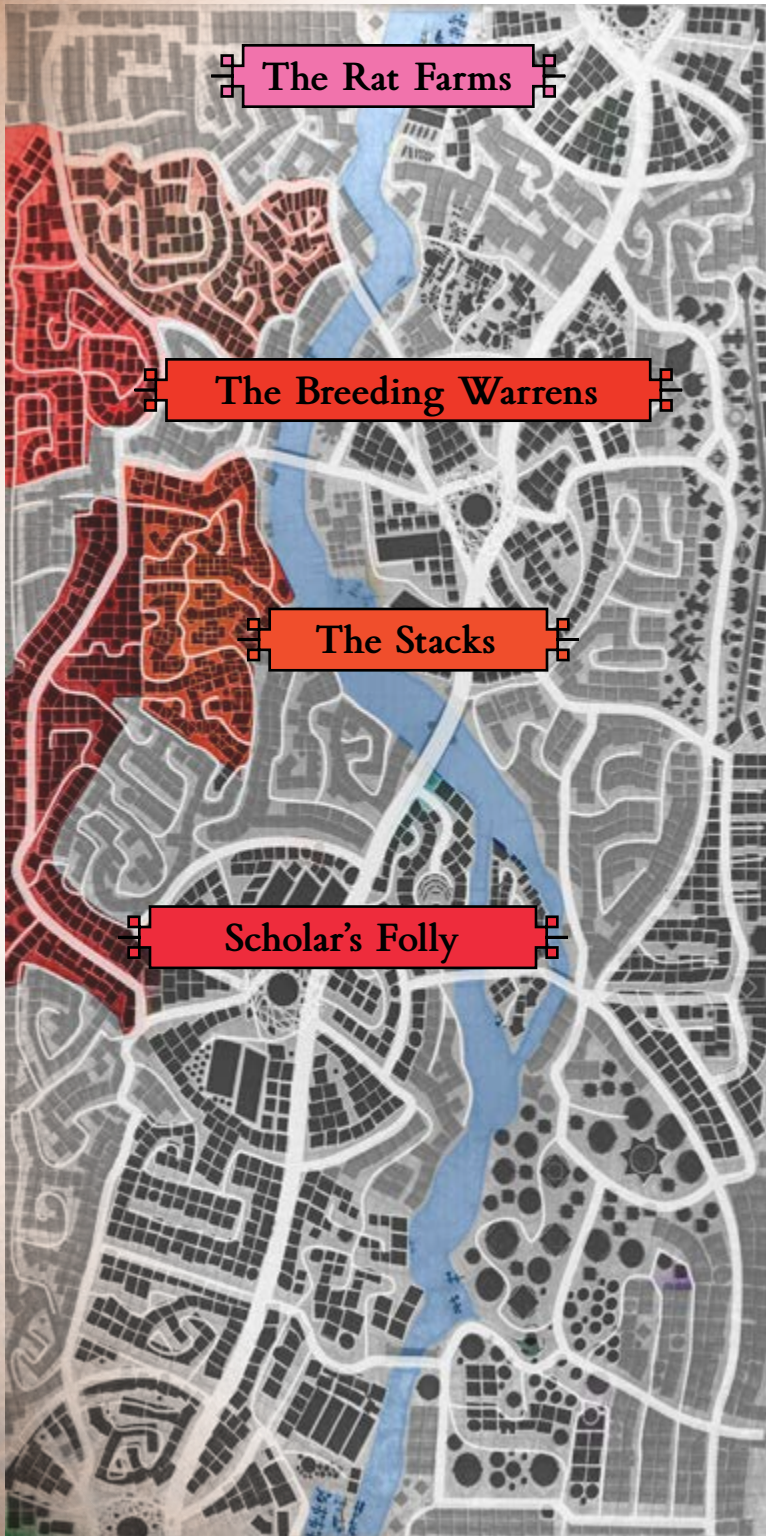
THE CITY FROM AFAR



Sig is the platonic ideal of a city. A multitude of living, breathing souls crammed together in a small patch of land. The city has some residents whose roots run deep, with generations upon generations residing in the same neighbourhoods. Other residents are newcomers, from near or distant lands. Sig thrives based on the industriousness of its inhabitants, creating wonders of art, craft, and ideas that spread throughout the 'verse. Sig is a hungry place that devours obscene amounts of resources from the planes and primes alike. It is a place where religions clash, where ethnic groups mix, and where languages change.

Like all cities, Sig is stratified into zones. The **HIVE** is the largest, and most abused section of the City, where the broken and the outcast are forced to beg for coin. **TETHERWARD** holds the working-class neighbourhoods, where physical labour and industrial work are the norm. **RIVERWARD** is where the artisans and professionals ply their trades. Last, but not least, the mighty **HIGHSPIRE** is where the wealthy and the powerful congregate to discuss their ambitious schemes.





The Rat Farms

The Breeding Warrens

The Stacks

Scholar's Folly

HIVE OVERVIEW

The last resort and final refuge

For all the splendor and glory of the City Between, the majority of the city tries to eke out a living in poverty and squalor. The Hive is a broken-down shanty town within the greater city, a place where the refugees and the outcasts are forced to dwell.

The Hive is a cruel place, where misfortune reigns with an iron fist. It's home to dozens of distinct ethnic and religious communities. Some are new arrivals, while others have been long-abused. It's a home to day-workers, beggars, the plague-ridden, and the traumatized. The place would be bleak if not for the small joys of life: the smile of a soot-covered orphan, or the smell of roasted rat from a nearby hovel.

There are four major neighbourhoods in the Hive.

THE BREEDING WARRENS

A cesspool given over to refugees, orphans, and others traumatized by war.

THE STACKS

An assembly of ramshackle wooden apartments piled upon each other, prone to fire.

THE RAT FARMS

Everyone needs to eat, and the Rat Farms have a never-ending supply.

SCHOLAR'S FOLLY

A resting place for poor travellers, destitute students, itinerant storytellers, and community elders.

THE BREEDING WARRENS

The Breeding Warrens is a place of last resort, for the most desperate of souls. Even compared to the rest of the Hive, this neighbourhood is a depressing cesspool. The buildings are cobbled together from scraps and rubble, scavenged from more prosperous areas of the city. Beneath the pervasive woodsmoke, wary visitors can notice the telltale odors of raw sewage and rotting fruit. A viscous slime seems to coat everything, and it's the only reason why the neighbourhood hasn't been incinerated yet by the Cleaners.

This neighbourhood is primarily a dumping grounds for unwanted visitors to the city. Refugees fleeing genocidal demons or brutal warlords resort to living in squalor here. Those whose minds were shattered by planar horrors or mortal abuse are dumped into the Breeding Warrens unceremoniously. A small community of orphans have established themselves in the ruins of an old guildhouse to keep themselves safe from the criminal element. The inhabitants try to look after each other as best they can, sharing meager scraps or rumours of odd jobs when they can. The inconsistent flow of donations, from benevolent temples or former residents of the neighbourhood, keep many alive to see another day.

There's no freedom quite like the freedom of being constantly underestimated.



THE LOST

I am your last chance.

Child of a **Revenant** and a **Cubi**

Loyal to the **Teachers' Guild**

Devoted to **Edana of the Pact**

+Face of the
Departed

+Sex Worker

-Disturbing

The Lost is a strange being, even by the standards of the City Between. They are a child of two heritages, a Cubi, and their primal lover who was slain before their time. This mixed heritage means that anyone looking upon the Lost sees them as one of their deceased loved ones. The Lost may appear to be a mother, a lover, a brother, or a long-lost child. This disturbing effect offers many opportunities and gives a second chance to those who have lost everything.

The Lost teaches orphans with the voice of their fallen mothers. The Lost offers nighttime comforts to those who lost their lovers. The Lost offers a chance for last words, from apologies to rebukes. The Lost offers something to everyone.

They are angry at **Brok the Damned**, who is drinking himself to death.

They long to comfort **Brunet the Mythender**, who clearly lost much.

They are professional rivals with **Calvyn the Shoulder**, who offers a different sort of comfort.

THE STACKS



The Hive is crowded at the best of times. Space is a precious commodity, and many here cannot afford such a luxury. Instead, the inhabitants build up. The Stacks is renowned for its massive apartment blocks, four or five floors tall. These makeshift, multi-floored shanties are built from scrap metal and splintered wood. The various apartments are bound together by rotting wooden walkways, fraying hemp rope, and frantic prayers. It's only a matter of time before the whole thing burns to the ground.

This neighbourhood is practically a village or a walled city in its own right. The Stacks have their own small market, a surgeon, a small smithy, and even their own pottery currency. Watching over the children of the stacks is a communal responsibility, borne by all of the adults. Rumours ripple through the stacks with alarming speed, as close company prevents all but the most closely guarded secrets. The tight-knit community breeds grudges and diseases equally well, any of which could lead to disaster. Those who live in this neighbourhood depend on the wise council of elders to ward off the dangers that threaten their homes.

The Stacks take care of their own.



SACHI THE AEGIS

Divided we fall.

Member of the **Devahil**

Independent of the City Factions

Devoted to **Morkanah, the Sheltering Stone**

+Intimidation

+Honest Broker

-Overprotective

Sachi grew up in the Stacks after her parents were slain in a faction war. She was raised by the community, working odd jobs to keep her apartment block from falling apart. She put out fires, both metaphorical and literal. She organized crews of children to raid the more prosperous sections of the city on behalf of the Stacks. She kept her block safe from the weeping plague, which had ravaged the neighbourhood and destroyed many lives.

Sachi is now one of the most respected block leaders of the Stacks. She represents the crowded community when dealing with powerful figures from the rest of the city. She may be a tad overzealous in keeping her people safe from faction politics, but that's to be expected.

She is currently looking to hire a group of mercenaries to take down **Ghreeju the Stump**, who brutalized one of the Elders.

She is fast-friends and drinking buddies with **Kinish the Crow**.

She has a bad feeling about **Dzini the Peaceful** and the rumours she is spreading.

THE RAT FARMS



Everyone needs to eat, and the Rat Farms offer decent work for the hungry. The farms provide much of the cheap meat and fur for the city, as a renewable resource in abundant supply. The rat herders breed the little beasts in this neighbourhood, zealously guarding their charges from poachers from the rest of the Hive. It's the best work that a desperate primal refugee can get, if they don't mind the occasional plague.

The livestock is kept in ramshackle houses with leaking roofs and mouldy walls, unfit for habitation and likely to collapse at any moment. The majority of the rodents are raised in a central apartment block known as the Cage, a name the older residents of the Rat Farms tend to find infinitely amusing. The other houses in the neighbourhood are used to house the workers, as well as secondary industries such as abattoirs, leather tanneries, and furriers.

The Rat King had many eyes.





KILKU RATFACE
Appearances matter.

Member of the **Feral**

Loyal to the **Farmers Association**

Devoted to **Calla the Wise**

+Ratwhisperer

+Wererat

-Judgemental

Kilku is likely the best-dressed wererat in all the 'verse. This dapper fellow is in charge of the furriers and leatherworks of the Rat Farms, responsible for clothing most of the city. He's a fashion snob of the highest caliber, with a fondness for broad-brimmed hats. His glossy black fur offers a perfect contrast to the vividly-coloured scarfs that he always wears. Kilku has risen to a position of prominence as one of the foremost authorities in modern fashion and clothing design, despite overwhelming prejudice and mockery.

At the core, Kilku is driven by the idea that fashion can be a path to respectability. No matter where you come-from, a well-fitted and dignified suit or elegant white fur coat can mark you as a person of importance.

He is the personal confidant and fashion consultant for **Ramella, the Golden Heir**.

He cannot stand **Slichk the Slime** and her slovenly habits.

He has a crush on **Aradarai the Sharp**, but his advances have been cruelly rejected at every turn.

SCHOLAR'S FOLLY



Scholar's Folly is the front line of the culture war. The neighbourhood was originally designed by a group of well-meaning cultural anthropologists from the Sage Collegium, and they learned far too much in the process. This section of the city is broken into a dozen small immigrant enclaves, each at odds with their neighbours. Makeshift palisades and constant vigilance keep each individual community safe from the 'foreigners' of the other enclaves. Every other week, there is another skirmish or romantic entanglement that threatens to trigger a war.

Each enclave uses a variety of tools to keep their cultures alive. They speak a private language which is only used among themselves. They tell stories of their homelands, either prime worlds long forgotten or planes which have lost the tether. They cook the meals they have fed their people for generations—varying from sour meats to heavily spiced worms to flavourless tubers. Their music, clothing, and dances express their identity to the world and shield them from outside corruptions. The strong cultural identity expressed in each community invariably attracts wealthy tourists and meddlesome scholars.

We found the Nameless One, and you will never guess where.



CALVYN THE SHOULDER

Memories are shackles.

A Being of **Stranger Nature**

Loyal to the **Cleaners**

Devoted to **Myn the Questioner**

+Counsellor

+Memory Trader

-Tragedy Junkie

Everyone has a story to tell, and Calvyn is there to listen. His small tea house is filled with the scents of jasmine and renowned for discretion. For those who have been through difficult events, from messy beakups to the loss of a loved one, Calvyn is here to listen to your story. He offers his well-padded shoulder to cry on, and he keeps the tea flowing to keep you hydrated. Each week, dozens will make appointments to speak with the Shoulder and leave the tea house feeling much better.

Not all of the recovery process is due to Calvyn's listening skills. Like his mother before him, he has the magical ability to extract memories from willing subjects. He often removes the memories of suffering from his customers and bottles them for sale to collectors, enchanters, and demons.

He hasn't seen **Brok**, one of his best customers, in a long time.

He has sold far too much bottled resentment to **Dzini the Peaceful**.

He extracted **Elakin's** memory of having a family, all slain when Destruction got the tether.



The Docks

The Brass Tether

The Golden Tether

The Silver Tether

The Brass Tether

The Docks

TETHERWARD OVERVIEW

The Gateways to the 'Verse

The Tethers connect Sig to the Eternal Planes of existence. These planar ports are vital conduits of trade and conquest, where goods, people, and influence flow freely. The City is built around the tethers, each bound together by the massive boulevard known as the Queen's Way.

The inhabitants of Tetherward are stout, hard-working and harder-drinking. There is a lot of work to do around the tethers, dealing with the warehouses, barges, and stables. The workers manage the various goods and peoples who flow through the Tethers. Tetherward is home to labourers, explorers, mercenaries, and others who manage to scrape together a living.

There are four major neighbourhoods in Tetherward.

THE GOLDEN TETHER

This tether binds to the Ideological Ring, attracting political and legal professionals.

THE SILVER TETHER

This tether binds to the Conceptual Ring, where academics and artificers meet to discuss theories.

THE BRASS TETHER

The tether binds to the Elemental Ring, where forge-hammers ring and raw materials pile up.

THE DOCKS

The Docks hold the barges and warehouses necessary to transport all the goods down the Great River.

Don't linger near the tether if you can help it.

THE GOLDEN TETHER



The Golden Tether is the first of the three planar ports in the City Between. This is where the ethical and moral planes are closest to Sig, a gateway to ideas that will change the 'verse. This section of the City is the centre of political life, where oil-slick operators and zealous revolutionaries set up shop. It holds the mightiest courts of law, where advocates and judges fight with lies and dueling blades. It's also home to the best café in the 'verse. Countless ideas, bound in clay tablets and vellum scrolls, are created here for trade by ruthless information brokers.

This neighbourhood is a metaphorical battlefield, where ideas clash in the street and often draw blood. A zealous fury seeps out from the Tether, and slowly corrupts even the most moderate of souls. Those infected by this ideological infection slowly abandon compromise and self-reflection in favour of moral absolutism. More than one hierophant rose from these streets, spreading their personal truth with unending passion.



BRUNET THE MYTHENDER

They hunger for our souls.

Primal mortal

Loyal to the **League of Exterminators**

Devoted to **Alius the Pure**

+Paladin

+Godslayer

-Paranoid



Brunet is new to Sig, having recently stumbled through a gate from her prime world. She had been in the midst of fighting a dark cult that sought to summon demonic hordes. In order to give her companions the time they needed to seal the gate, she pressed forward with her stout shield and holy blade. The next thing she knew, she found herself curled up in an alley in Sig. Filled with terror and self-recrimination, she made her way to the closest shrine to seek divine guidance.

Brunet met Alius the Pure who offered the primal paladin a holy mission to slay the false Powers of the City Between. Brunet established herself as a mythender for the League of Exterminators, eliminating pesky gods and demons for the coin she needs to return home.

She has fallen in love, contrary to her holy vows, to **Simus the Balancer**.

She failed to slay **Sachi**, the Devil of the Stacks, as the fiend shielded herself with orphans.

She frequents **Calvyn's** Tea House, seeking some answers and a sympathetic ear.

If you see a Mythender, give pity and deference in equal measure.

THE SILVER TETHER

The Silver Tether is the second of the three planar ports in the City Between. This place is often referred to as the Port of Power because the arcane community gathers around this mystic gateway. It is a place of endless energy that fuels the masterworks of countless arcanists and artificers in the City Between. For that reason, a large community of academics and magisters have established themselves in this neighbourhood.

The Silver Tether imports raw power in many forms. Hungry shadows, eager for physical form, are bottled for use in crafting illusions. Forbidden lore in books and scrolls emerges, carefully gathered by the Sage Collegium. Prophetic dreams seep into the minds of nearby dreamers, warping time and perception. Life energies, bound in fruit and root, are brought in to heal the sick and prolong the lives of the powerful. Spectres, chained and bound, are smuggled into the city for municipal work. The resources from the tether are plentiful, but tightly controlled.



KINISH THE CROW

Every secret is a treasure.

Child of a **Winged** and a **Gnome**

Loyal to the **Heralds**

Devoted to **Ferrelux the Whisperer**

+Dreams

+Illusions

-Flighty

Kinish is one of the finest minds in the City Between. She has her father's slight stature and the beautiful black-feathered wings inherited from her mother's side. Like her father, she treasures secrets and lore. Like her mother, she diligently seeks, gathers, and hordes the things that grab her attention. This has made her one of the most well-informed individuals in the city, always eager to trade in shiny secrets.

By day, Kinish works as a courier for the Heralds, where she specializes in transporting precious gems and ancient artifacts. By night, she acts as a strange mixture of private investigator and professional gossip. You can often see her on the rooftops of the city or close to her nest at the Silver Tether.

She has a professional relationship with **Elakin**, with exclusive rights to transport her relics.

She is fascinated by **The Lost**, often watching them covertly as they work.

She pestered **Cyatheia the Tower** one time too many and has been banished from the Garden accordingly.

THE BRASS TETHER



The Brass Tether is the third great planar port in Sig. This place offers an endless bounty of raw materials: metallic ore, fresh water, clean air, heating fuel, and cooling ice. These goods are stockpiled in massive warehouses that keep the city in good supply of these essential elements. Various heavy industries, from ore smelters to smithies to alchemists, set up their workshops or factories close to this port. Hundreds of laborers work tirelessly to transform the raw elements into what the city needs.

Dedicated miners spend months at a time carving blocks and slate slabs from the Plane of Stone for construction. Massive furnaces channel the heat from the Plane of Flame to refine ore and purify various substances. Specially prepared channels are in place to direct water into the Great River to supply the city. Small wind-mills top the warehouses to harvest the massive energies from the Plane of Wind. One heavily insulated warehouse functions as a dedicated icebox to keep produce fresh for the rich and powerful.



GHREEJU THE STUMP

Might makes right.

Member of the **Wryms**

Loyal to the **Enforcers**

Devoted to **Eater of Worlds**

+Brutality

+Draconic Fury

-Drunkard

Everyone knows that Greeju is a monster. This beast of a man has hot wyrm-blood flowing through his veins, filling him with a ceaseless rage and constant pain. Everything he touches is destroyed by his razor claws. Every smile he offers bares his sharp fangs. Every breath releases a small plume of flame and smoke. His monstrous nature is beyond doubt.

In truth, Ghreeju is a broken and fearful man. Throughout his childhood, he was tormented by his brilliant and beautiful peers. His resentment festered and twisted him into a cruel brute. His insecurities led him to a life of violence and drove him to join the Enforcers. Now he leads a squad, shaking down citizens of the city and abusing his power.

He is drinking buddies with **Brok the Damned**, whose suffering puts his to shame.

He is in desperate love with **Negasi the Planner** and would do anything to win her heart.

He enjoys delivering a beating to that smooth-talking **Kilku Ratface** whenever he gets a chance.

THE DOCKS



Mountains of goods, mundane and exotic, flow into Sig. Whether those goods were brought in from the Planes, one of the countless prime worlds, or crafted in the City Between, they need to be stored somewhere. Those goods need to be transported across the city, by barge, by cart, or by underpaid porter. Bashers need to extort and cross-trading thieves need their take. The Docks make all of this possible.

Hundreds of people, from mighty giants to delicate fey, work the Docks. Some manage the warehouses, organizing the wooden crates and glass barrels as best they can. Some lug the goods to and from the wooden barges that ply the Great River. Others load the carts and wagons. Still others tend to beasts of burden: mules, flightless birds, and draft turtles. Others work for the Riverkeepers to keep piracy at bay. The Docks are a tough place, but at least the ale is cheap in the many dockside bars.

You can stay a week at the Black Dog Inn for a song, if you are desperate.



SLICK THE SLIME

Work is noble.

Member of the **Waterborn**

Loyal to the **Riverwatch**

Devoted to **Tritonous of the Hungry Seas**

+Dock Workers

+Leviathans

-Kind Hearted

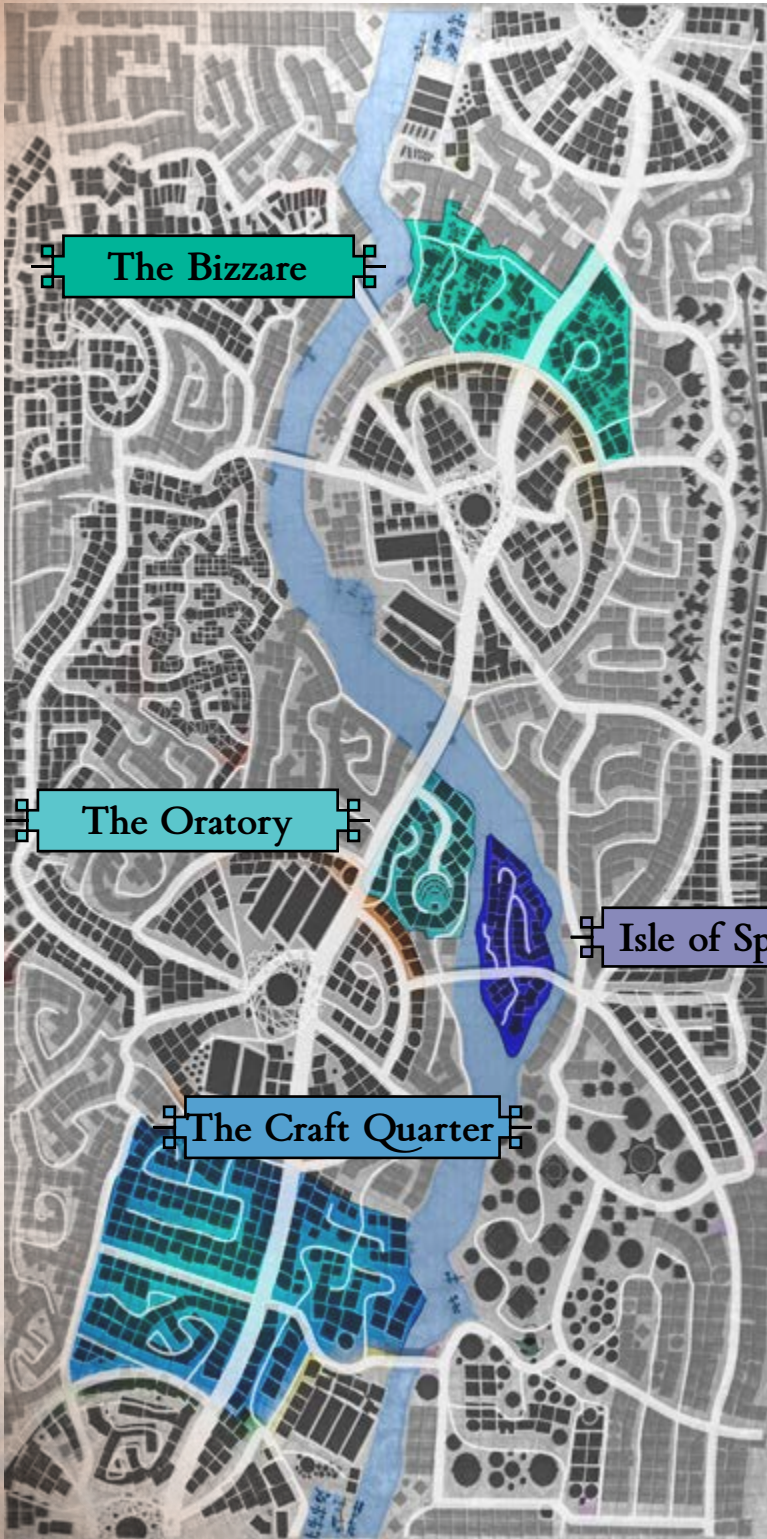
The Waterborn suffered much in their captivity, and none know this more than Slick the Slime. She was spawned and raised as a slave in the depths of the abyss. Her earliest days were spent hunting the demonic whales known as Leviathans, butchering them for their valuable blubber. When her slave master was slain, Slick left the depths as a free woman.

A decade later, she has established herself as the distinguished and respected head of the dockworkers. Her brilliant mind, industrious spirit, and generous heart made her a natural leader. She manages the work-schedules, ensures that all the cargo gets unloaded on schedule, and keeps tempers under control. She may give her workers a bit too much freedom for their own good, but she is forever afraid of becoming yet another cruel master.

She is extremely worried about **Ramella** and her divine power.

She is filled with sympathy for **Brunet the Mythender** and will do anything to help that poor woman.

She looks up to **Sachi the Aegis** as a heroic role-model.



The Bizzare

The Oratory

Isle of Spirits

The Craft Quarter

RIVERWARD OVERVIEW

The Beating Heart of the 'Verse.

Sig is the cosmopolitan heart of the 'verse, where you can find any treasure and hear any story. If you want to trade in treasures, sell your wares, listen to the masters, or speak your mind, head down to Riverward.

The inhabitants of Riverward are fortunate and ambitious souls, from generous merchants to erratic alchemists. Most of the inhabitants tend to live comfortably, with small homes and large meals. Those with the right mixture of luck and skill can carve a small place overlooking the river. Those who fall on hard times better look forward to the Hive.

There are four major neighbourhoods in the Riverward.

THE BIZZARE

The bustling permanent marketplace, serving exotic foods, spices, and useful trinkets.

THE ORATORY

Everyone gathers in the Oratory to hear the words of prophets, politicians, and performers.

ISLE OF SPRITS

Many spirits congregate here, and they seduce many thirsty mortals.

THE CRAFT QUARTER

Only the best smiths, artificers, and alchemists can claim space in this quarter.

THE BIZZARE



The Bizzare is the largest marketplace in Sig, where merchants and traders offer countless wares to those with coin to spend. In the quiet of the early morning, the merchants prepare their wares, share fine tea, and gossip shamelessly. This camaraderie swiftly ends when the first customers trickle in, and the traders look upon their prey. The constant roar of the crowds are punctuated by the sounds of clever banter, outrageous claims, and enthusiastic haggling. It's a collection of dozens of tiny merchant stalls, blankets displaying wares, and traditional enclosed shops. The purveyors of more dubious wares establish themselves on the rickety wooden boardwalks that overlook it all.

Everyone comes to the Bizzare looking for something. A house-husband looks for some root vegetables and sultry spices for a special dinner. A planar explorer seeks silk rope, in preparation for a new venture. An orphan desperately longs for that doll to keep her company on those painfully long nights. Primal wizards haggle for fey tears, while light-fingered spectres lift their spell books. This market has something for almost everyone, albeit at a steep price.

The Bizzare knows the price of every memory, name or vice.



ELAKIN THE RONEBOUND

Art is immortality.

Member of the **Elderskein**

Loyal to the **Sage Collegium**

Devoted to **Omulaub the Tranquil**

+Artifacts and Relics

+Psychometry

-Greedy

Elakin is the Sage who speaks for the living and the dead. His establishment is one of the smallest in the market, behind the squid vendor and beside the loud-mouthed fletcher. He sits at his stall with a dozen small artifacts and holy relics before him. Anyone who needs to buy, sell, identify, or appraise a magical item knows to come here.

Elakin has a deep, personal connection with his products, having learned how to speak to objects. His academic specialization is cultural anthropology, involving the analysis of artifacts to understand the fallen cultures that created them. Whenever Elakin is between customers, he diligently polishes and whispers to the objects in his care. He is always eager for more voices to join his choir.

He meets with **Kilku Ratface** for tea every week, discussing art and fashion.

He regrets bullying and tormenting **Negasi the Planner** when they were young.

He was once a business partner with **Aradarai the Sharp**, but they couldn't work together.

THE ORATORY



Sig is a cramped place, with hundreds of small nooks and crannies for dark conversations. When it comes to public speaking or performances, however, only the Oratory will do. This large amphitheater is surrounded by massive granite walls and is filled with black marble benches that can hold hundreds. A large wooden platform up front acts as a stage, suitable for plays, concerts, political rallies, and executions. The walls isolate the Oratory completely from the city, preventing anyone outside from hearing inspiring songs or blood-curdling screams. More than one cult or political revolution has fomented (or been discreetly massacred) in this isolated space.

The Performers Guild manages the space with ruthless efficiency, offering it as a prize for what they consider good behaviour. Access to the Oratory is a well-coveted thing that can open many doorways. The space is offered freely for emerging artists, firebrand clerics, and passionate rebels. When those upstarts rise to power and prominence, they offer countless small favours to the guild. Speech can be rather expensive in Sig, after all.



DZINI THE PEACEFUL

Ignorance is priceless.

Member of the **Firehearts**

Loyal to the **Performers Guild**

Devoted to **Kalzak the Absolute**

+Demagogue

+Mask of Kindness

-Hatred

Dzini is renowned for her peaceful message and kind heart. Her message of self-improvement and care for the community has earned her a place of honour in the community. She calls the Oratory her home, spreading wisdom to all who care to listen. She guides the people of Sig in doing their part to keep their city safe from untrustworthy outsiders. She preaches about the dangers of foreign imperialist gods, who seek to impose their alien faiths.

Dzini is, in truth, a fierce and zealous follower of Kalzak the Absolute. She builds walls of fear and distrust between communities, fanning the flames of hate with her every sermon. The fact that she hides her poison in soft words only increases the danger.

She is the best of friends with **Cyatheia the Tower**, tending the flower gardens together.

She has revealed her true nature to **Kinish the Crow** and pays tribute to keep her secret hidden.

She has launched a terrible whisper-campaign about **Slichk the Slime**, and the dark forces that she obviously worships.

THE ISLE OF SPIRITS



In the Great River is an island, bound to the city by bridges of gold and silver. This place is where the people of Sig go to mourn their losses, to celebrate their victories, and to just drink themselves into a stupor. The Isle of Spirits is the entertainment district of the City Between, well-stocked with drinking establishments. Trendy clubs attract the young with their prismatic lights and rhythmic drumbeats. Ancient pubs offer respite to the weary regulars, whose names everyone knows. Hidden cellars contain small distilleries and breweries, transforming primal crops into fine refreshments.

The Isle of Spirits is a place for meetings, public or private. The mightiest merchant-princes and sword-lords can visit cutpurses without comment, if they choose carefully. Cultists from rival faiths exchange friendly jibes over a pint at the Chubby Crow tavern. Factions conduct their negotiations in carefully chosen establishments on the Isle, with full confidence of the neutral nature of the territory. Everyone is welcome on the Isle, so long as they keep the peace. Everyone needs a drink from time to time.

You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here.



BROK THE DAMNED

Forgiveness is a lie.

Member of the **Giants**

Loyal to the **Dustkeepers' Guild**

Devoted to **Aludra of the Frozen Tears**

+Strength

+Broken Things

-Alcohol

Everyone knows the damned giant who lives on the Isle of Spirits. He is a shambling mountain of broken slate, razor-sharp. Everything he touches is marked, bloodied, or scarred. No one dares come close, not to share soft words, not to ask him of his troubles. His only role, seemingly, is to terrify other patrons and prevent any brawls before they might occur. Only those bartenders who serve him will hear his story.

Brok lost everything, and it was all his fault. Full of pride, he left his village to seize opportunities in the City Between. Full of greed, he joined a group of 'venturers to plunder an ancient prime world of the Serpent Dynasty. Full of shame, he abandoned his people to a crushing retaliation. Now he only has the bottle to keep him company on the dark nights.

He sought **Brunet the Mythender** to end his suffering and found a sympathetic friend instead.

He spends his rare sober days in theological discussions with **Simus the Balancer**.

He slayed the cruel master who had enslaved **Slichk**, though he doesn't remember doing so.

THE CRAFT QUARTER



Artisans and artificers from around the 'verse work tirelessly to hone their skills, in the hope that it will earn them space in the Craft Quarter. This neighbourhood of Riverward is home to obsessive craftworkers, passionate artists, and eccentric inventors. The cobblestones have been etched with strange symbols that capture your attention if it wanders. The walls present beautiful paintings and bold signatures, claiming the city in the name of the arts. Throughout the quarter, you may find small clockwork pieces, fashioned from burnished brass and clever copper.

The Craft Quarter is home to creative souls from the eternal planes, from thousands of prime worlds, and even a rare few who are native to Sig. With this many artists and tinkerers together in a single place, drama is inevitable. Ideological cliques arise, based on nuanced artistic differences. Rivals try to outdo each other, while students aim to surpass their masters. There are countless cruel insults, romantic entanglements, and angry words exchanged on any given day, with the occasional blood feud to spice things up. It's a lively neighbourhood.



ARADARAI THE SHARP

Failure is a choice.

Child of a **Polari** and a **Crystalian**

Loyal to the **Artificers' Guild**

Devoted to **Magdak the Clockwork Page**

+Artifice

+Crystals

-Perfectionist

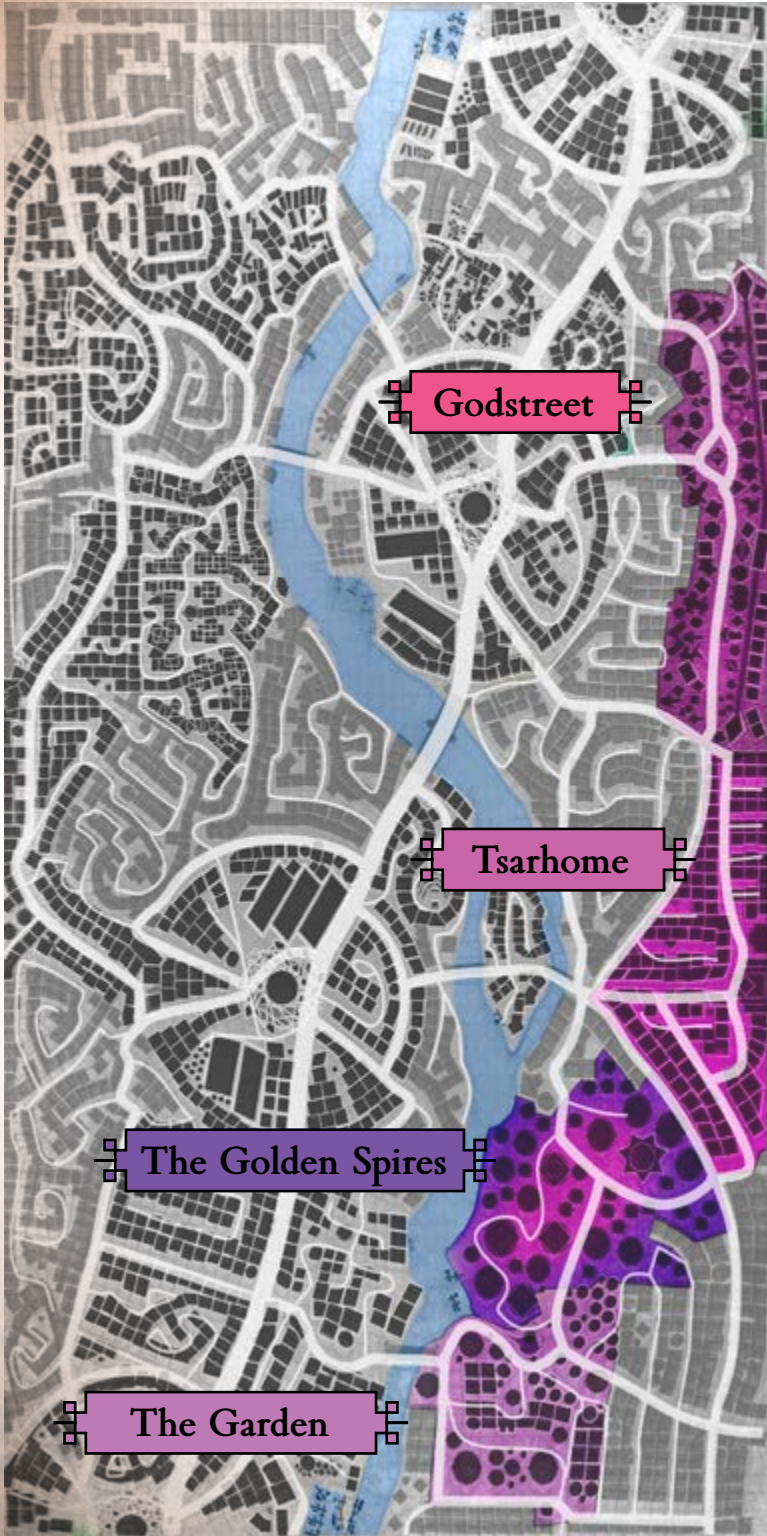
Everything is perfect in Aradarai's life. His shop in the Craft Quarter is austere, with a single featureless room for customers to visit. Each day, he presents a single piece of crystalline clockwork for purchase, closing his shop once it sells. He spends the rest of his time crafting new treasures, shattering any that don't meet his impeccable standards.

Aradarai is unforgiving to himself and others. He's tied all of his self-worth to his creations, and he treats any flaw as a personal betrayal. He treats people in the same way, abandoning relationships at the first sign of imperfection. He fears that even the slightest show of weakness might shatter him. He might even be right.

He trusts **Negasi the Planner** more than anyone else in the city.

He is terrified of **The Lost** and has sought assassins to eliminate the undead thing.

He considers **Ramella, the Golden Heir**, to be perfect in every way.



Godstreet

Tsarhome

The Golden Spires

The Garden

HIGHSPIRE OVERVIEW

Home of the Mighty and the Powers

The mighty have always sought space in the City Between. Powers desired cathedrals in Sig to collect their worshipers. Factions lusted for mighty fortresses to protect their leaders. Communities sought monuments and institutions to promote their cultures. Highspire was what everyone longed for.

The inhabitants of Highspire are the Powers: demons, gods, and crawling things that have their hooks into the city. They are the merchants, politicians, and pompous nobles who demand respect. They are the arcane and the mundane figures who seized a valuable slice of Sig.

There are four major neighbourhoods in Highspire.

THE GOLDEN SPIRES

Mighty golden towers reach to scrape the sky, home to the most noble and powerful.

TSARHOME

The Silent Regent left Sig a generation ago, but her palace remains as a home of government.

THE GARDEN

A living community of wooden towers and verdant growth.

GODSTREET

All the powers struggle for position, building progressively larger shrines, temples, or churches.

THE GOLDEN SPIRES



You can't miss the Golden Spires. These immense towers are pillars of radiance, resplendent in glory. None can question the status or influence of the mighty beings who own the manor-towers. Some of the towers are held by guildleaders as a testament to their grip on the city. Some are home to archmagi, offering space for their arcane workshop and containment for bizarre experiments. Some of the towers are bound by Powers or their scions, not content with Godstreet. The Golden Spires are a prestigious place and a status symbol in their own right.

The Golden Spires don't follow the laws that constrain lesser folk. Each tower is an independent domain, subject only to the authority of the tower owner. Some magisters even alter the very laws of reality to suit their whims, binding their towers to the shard realms or establishing permanent gates. The spires often have treasure vaults, protecting valuable treasures: stashes of coin, ancient relics, mystic artifacts, spirit-flasks, and prized vintages of wine. Needless to say, there are many bashers who get the bright idea of running the shadows and breaking into the towers.



RAMELLA, THE GOLDEN HEIR

Hope sustains.

Demigod

Loyal to the **Sig Gazetteer**

Devoted to **Brossien of Mystic Song**

+Divinity

+Golden Blades

-Daughter of
the Exile

Ramella is a goddess hewn of solid gold. Her dreadlocked hair glows with inner light, falling down on her broad shoulders. Despite appearances, she is weightless and floats above the ground without a care. On her head is a crown of golden blades, glimmering in the sunlight. In her wake, she leaves the scents of sandalwood and rosewater. All around her, the din of the City Between fades, and soothing silence embraces you.

Ramella is the daughter of The Silent Regent, with all of its associated baggage. She is bound to the city as part of an ancient compact, and she alone can hear its words. She alone has access to the mazes and her mother's cryptic servants. It is only a matter of time before someone realizes her secret.

She was raised in the Garden by **Cyathea the Tower**, and she returns often to visit.

She was dumped by **Simus the Balancer**. It didn't end well for anyone.

She secretly subsidizes **Calvyn the Shoulder** in thanks for a favour he did for her.

O garment not golden but gilded, o garden where all men may dwell,
O tower not of ivory, but builded, by hands that reach heaven from hell;

TSARHOME

A generation past, The Silent Regent ruled Sig absolutely. She exiled the Powers and imprisoned anyone who displeased her. Her reign was complete and final, keeping the city under control through sheer force of will. Her ancient palace was crafted from green marble and burnished gold, standing as a monument to her rule. When she was overthrown, her massive palace was seized by the Paper Guard as a central administrative facility.

Tsarhome is now the nominal centre of municipal affairs, a massive facility bustling with bureaucrats and functionaries. The surface levels of the facility house the ambassadors from the city's Factions, constantly caught up in meetings and briefings. The lower levels hold the high functionaries, who control the daily administration of the city. Lower still is the city morgue, under the firm control of the Dustkeepers' Guild. Rumour has it that The Silent Regent's secret prisons remain, deep under her ancient palace.

Fearlessly advise, faithfully obey.



NEGASI THE PLANNER

Peace, order, and good governance.

Member of the **Ancestral**

Loyal to the **Paper Guard**

Devoted to **Nyx the Oracle**

+Prophecy

+Bureaucracy

-Overworked

The city doesn't run itself. Rather, it depends on trained administrators and bureaucrats who work tirelessly under the direction of Negasi the Planner. She is an ancient spirit, bound in service to the city and the countless citizens within. She is a slight woman with ebony skin and a breathtaking smile. Her every movement is followed by the gentle ringing of invisible bells.

Negasi loves her job. She adores feeling useful to others and being important to the daily operations of the city. She admires the elegant sophistication of the tapestry of rules that bind the city together. She has immersed herself in the details, such as the scheduled repair of the roads or the issuing of business licenses. Each act of quiet service, overlooked by others, fills her with pride.

She has been working closely with **Sachi the Aegis** to increase the fire safety procedures in the Stacks.

She is infatuated with **Kilku Ratface** and dreams of running her fingers through his glossy fur.

She has made a project of **Kinish the Crow**, seeking to elevate her to a position of privilege in the city.

THE GARDEN



The City Between is a barren place, a wasteland of rickety shacks and cold cobblestone but there is one section of the city where life has truly taken hold. A park and a refuge for living things, the Garden stands tall as a testament to the resilience of the natural world. It's a forest of massive redwood trees, carved into towers of living wood. It's a tranquil park, where families feed the duckbunnies who float in the pond. It's a carefully tended garden of white roses and black lotus blossoms. It's home to the few birds and beasts native to the City Between.

The Garden is, without a doubt, the most pleasant part of Sig. Those with wealth and privilege spend their time in this verdant place, breathing the fresh air and walking underneath the green tree boughs. The Enforcers only permit the common people to enter the Garden for limited periods of time, unless an appropriate garnish is provided. Secret nighttime incursions into the Garden by clandestine lovers is a common occurrence. Everyone loves the Garden.

The Gardens nurture both romance and revenge.



CYATHEA THE TOWER

Everyone must be tended.

Member of the **Sylva**

Loyal to the **Guild of Toil**

Devoted to **Kestranna the Harvester**

+Gardening

+Infrastructure

-Meddling

Cyathea is a pillar of the community, in so much that they are a walking oak tree. As one of the Sylva, they naturally found themselves attracted to the Garden. They soon became the master arborist, in charge of maintaining the massive redwoods, brash bushes, and delicate flowers that fill the neighbourhood.

Cyathea has many secondary roles in the City. They're a social planner, managing all of the various celebrations that take place in the woods. They are a match-maker, introducing future mates to each other. More importantly, they are a spy who gathers blackmail material from the goings-on of nobles. Cyathea is always there, listening and learning.

They enjoy trading gossip with **Calvyn the Shoulder** over a cup of tea.

They are seeking someone who would be a good match for the terribly lonely wyrm, **Ghreeju the Stump**.

They worry about **Aradarai the Sharp**, and how isolated they are from the rest of the living world.

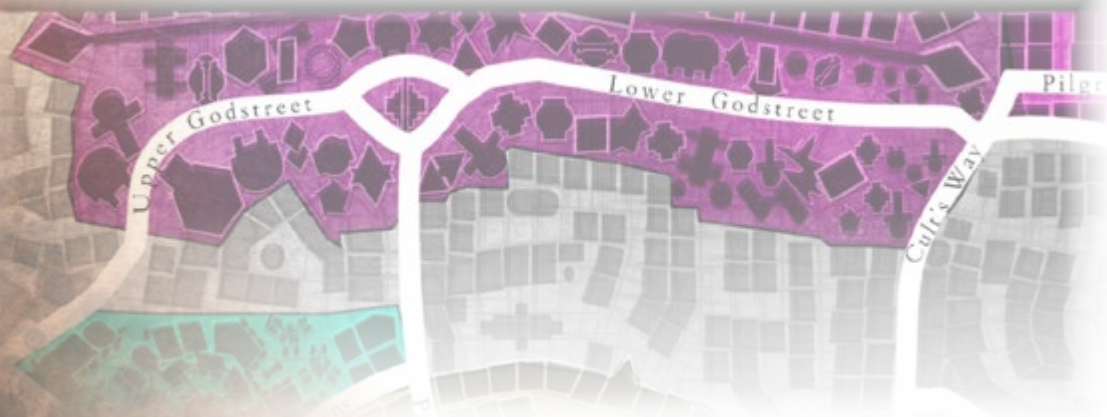
GODSTREET



The Powers are status-conscious, and they each seek to prove their superiority. The primary battlefield in the City Between is Godstreet, where all the holy buildings are found. Along this boulevard are dozens of temples, mosques, shrines, and other holy sites dedicated to the Powers. Those with the most worshipers and greatest prestige are found at the head of upper Godstreet, while the unpopular powers are relegated to the tail end of lower Godstreet. The cults and priesthoods fight amongst each other for dominance, longing to move their places of worship to a location higher on the street.

Godstreet is a place of proud faith and unflinching zeal, where the clerics fight over the very souls of passers-by. The streets are filled with the scent of incense and the scorched offerings of animal flesh. Relentless chants, bronze gongs, and delicate song resonate in the alleys that divide the magnificent temples. Demons and divine servitors wander the path, seeking to spread the word of their eternal masters. The cobblestone street is holy ground, and the desperate masses come here seeking miracles. Sometimes they're even willing to pay the price.

Powers are remarkably status-conscious.



SIMUS THE BALANCER

Faith is a delusion.

Member of the **Aesigilar**

Loyal to the **Guild of Advocates**

Atheist

+Mediator

+Theologian

-Construct

Simus is the only atheist who lives on Godstreet. This man was fashioned of clumsy clay and inscribed with a living sigil. He lumbers along Godstreet every day, mediating the conflicts that invariably arise between irate Powers and fanatic servitors. He has found himself in the unenviable role of mediator and negotiator for the gods and devils. He is the person that an arch-demon will speak to if they wish to negotiate a peace treaty. He is the person who keeps feuding Powers from outright war.

Simus finds the Powers absolutely fascinating, from an intellectual perspective. What traits will lead a small cult to grow in stature? What purpose does a certain marriage ritual fulfill? Why does a mortal worship a demon of suffering over a goddess of health? He hopes to find out.

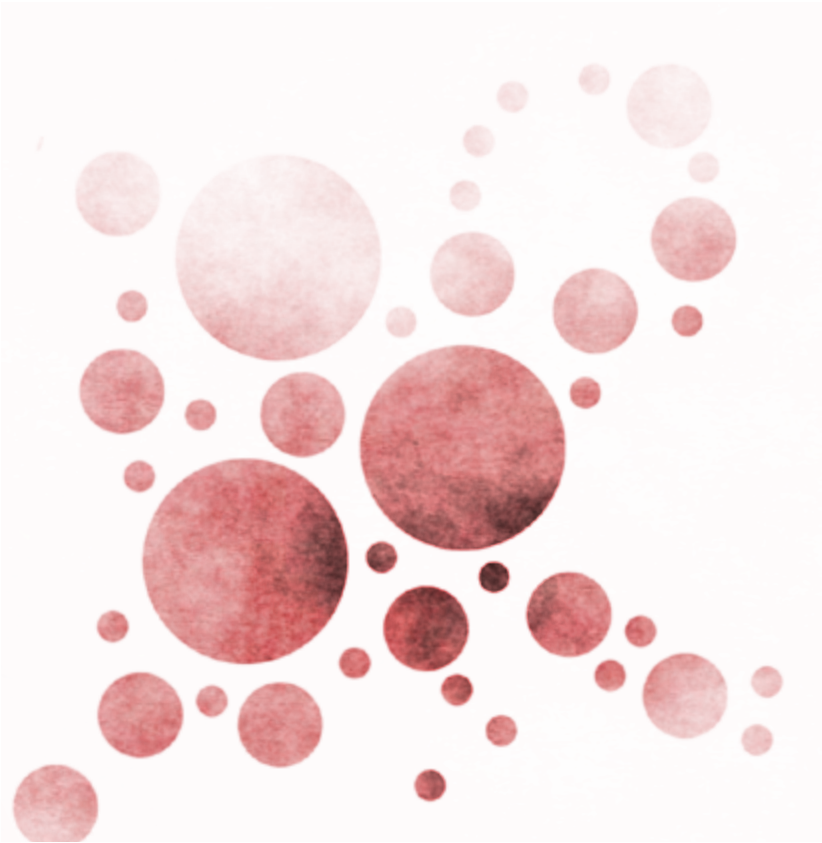
He is worried about his old friend, **Sachi the Aegis**, who hasn't visited in months.

He often confiscates religious relics, selling them to **Elakin the Runebound** for a fine profit.

He is disgusted at **Brok the Damned** and his pitiful state.

CHAPTER 5

THE INFINITE PRIMES



NATURE OF THE PRIMES

Two things you have to know about the primes. First, there are an infinite number of them, holding every potential world in the 'verse. That's not to say that you can get to all of them easily, as each prime drifts through the ethereal sea in a different direction. No, it just means that the potential diversity of any given world has surprised even lesser Powers.

The second thing about the primes is that each of them is of incredible value. The Powers covet the flow of faith, harvesting belief with signs, miracles, and ritual. The Factions view the primes as sources for trade goods, weapons, and the raw materials necessary to maintain and improve the City Between. They send 'venture parties, trade expeditions, and mercenary freebooters to do their bidding. The primal interpreters and ambassadors of the Scholar's Folly do good business in supporting these expeditions.

Research strange new primes and explore them. Gather the devotion and resources that your patrons need. See what the 'verse has in store for you.

RESEARCHING THE PRIMES

There's an infinite number of prime worlds, and very few of them have been explored. Before you venture into the unknown, a smart basher will do some legwork. Ask around the Scholar's Folly, in case you can find a primal who was native to that world. Hire the experts at the Sage Collegium for advice. Ask around Godstreet, to find if any of the Powers have extended their tendrils into that world.

At the table, primal research is a collaborative process. The group works together to create a new world by establishing three fundamental beliefs and an evocative name for the prime. With that information in hand, your characters have enough information to venture into that world.

STEP 1 - CHOOSE MEDIA

As a group, come up with three different pieces of media. These could be books, movies, video games, comics, poems, or other creative works. So long as each piece of media is interesting to several players, it's a good choice.

STEP 2 - ESTABLISH BELIEFS

Each person should look at the media you have chosen, and try to create a Belief based on one of those. Look at your chosen media and try to determine what the biggest themes and conflicts are. Create a subjective, controversial declaration that describes that media.

When everyone has created a Belief, the GM will choose three of them that describe the prime world in question. Some good examples of prime world Beliefs are below:

- Civilization is built on the broken gods.
- Planar conquest is our destiny.
- Slavery is a moral good.
- Magic is blasphemous.
- Nobles have divine blood.
- Without land you are nothing.
- Prestige can only be inherited.
- Magic comes from dying things.
- Religions must behave in symbiosis.
- Faith is a poison.
- Metal is forbidden to men.
- There is always a bigger hammer.
- No one is safe.
- Children are our only hope.
- Magic is an infectious disease.
- The world hates the brave.
- Fear is the mind killer.
- Outsiders are dangerous.
- Our world is a shadow of its former greatness.

STEP 3 - CREATE A TITLE

This is when you get to step back and look at the prime world on a whole. Consider the Beliefs, and establish a few basic facts about the world in an open discussion. Once you have a common understanding, try to describe this world with a short and evocative title that you all agree with. The best titles are one to three words in length. Some good examples of titles are as follows:

AGE OF SCALES: Glistening coils ensnare yet another young world, slowly squeezing the life from it.

ALUCINA: The home of sliding visions and vibrating colors, where songs are valued treasure and ancestors walk beside the living.

ARCHIPELAGO: A world of massive oceans, overcrowded islands, and plentiful seafood harvests.

CRYSTALIA: A sparkling world of austere beauty, where perfection is divine and forgiveness is a forgotten word.

DIMMING TWILIGHT: Where each star comes to die, each behemoth whispering memories and stories till its light finally diminishes.

DRAGON'S DUNGEON: Mortals are forced underground to avoid terrible draconic overlords, unless they are willing to pledge allegiance to the venerable wyrms.

ENLIGHTENED NATIONS: Wild magics wrap themselves around chosen humans, imbuing them with great gifts that they use on behalf of their nation-states.

GLASSPIRES: Natural formations of translucent glass cast long shadows and hold the memories of a fallen people.

HARDSPACE EMPIRE: A tyrannical dystopia, where massive guilds control society and abuse the common people freely.

HEX: A floating landscape of bone and crystal that prides itself on vice, and the local demons who cater to every desire imaginable.

IRON CITIES: A cluster of imperialist city-states where the constant threat of war upholds a rigid social system.

KINGDOM OF EXILES: This realm has strange rifts that connect to the Elemental Planes, through which elemental minorities have invaded.

MIDGARD: A land that was nearly destroyed by a conflict between the humans and newly settled Giants.

MINES OF MORTOTH: Caverns, caves, and mines which hold a large population of dwarven revolutionaries who fled the Plane of Stone.

NEONIHON: A harsh world of enormous mountain ranges, acidic-storms, and devout automatons.

NIGHTGARDENS: A prime world that is cloaked in soft shadows, wherein the rarest flowers and medicinal herbs grow.

ROYAL MOUNTAIN: A massive city of steel and glass, housing millions of humans and protected by the Guardians.

SEA OF GRASS: A massive expanse of grass prairie, home to philosopher-raiders who were born in the saddle.

THE SEEDLANDS: A prime world filled with massive fungal trees that shelter tribes of terrified mortals from giant sloths.

WASTELANDS OF THE MIND: This prime was once verdant and rich with life, until sorcerer-kings learned how to drain vital magics from the land.

WHEATON VALE: An agricultural world, where corn, barley, and oat grow in unrivaled abundance. Best ale in the 'verse is made from Wheaton hops.

WHISPERING SANDS: A lush oasis at the center of a lethal desert. Few seekers ever reach the oasis, and those who do believe it to be a mirage.

PRIMES OF RENOWN

While preparing the list, a friendly sage stumbled upon a fascinating tome known as the Primal Codex. This text presents the personal accounts of various explorers to eight of these worlds. Each entry discussed the fundamental beliefs of those primes and described the world and the society. More importantly, the writers shared the dangers and opportunities presented by them. Wise freebooters will read them closely, before venturing out.

AGE OF SCALES

By Renee Knipe

*Not one world, but a million — once-thriving parts
of the 'verse gone still.*



Motion is life. Movement is freedom.

Not all caresses are tender

The more one struggles, the tighter their embrace.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Peaceful. That was my thought as I set foot upon that first world. The sky vaulted above, blue so bright it dazzled, and fields unfurled below, an endless verdurous expanse. Perfect. I closed my eyes and breathed deeply, its green scent filling my breast. The sun warmed my lids and the breeze tossed my hair. I pivoted to face that friendly breeze.

Opening my eyes, I involuntarily recoiled. Facing me was a titanic hooded serpent, a mile or more high, its head crowned in clouds, its alien eyes locked with mine. Vertiginous panic washed over me and the world wobbled, all sense of scale and perspective lost. It took long moments to realize this was no true snake, but merely an immense monument of one. That did little to calm my racing heart. This was an impossible thing — it would take a billion workers a billion lifetimes to create.

But that was only the beginning. As my mind unclenched, the outline of another great snake-head came into focus. And beyond that another. And another. And so on, stretching to the horizon — the sleek head of the garter, the sharp edges of the saw-scale, the blunt snout of the boa... countless others lost to mere silhouette. Some bared fangs, some tested the sky with their great forked tongues, but that first remained aloof, its hood spread wide, its eyes surveying its world implacably.

THE WORLD

What I've dubbed the Serpent Dynasty isn't one world, but many. How many? I can't say. The Dynasty stretches back a long, long way, and if you follow its length for any time — no simple task, for the Serpents do not allow freedoms like travel — you may find yourself slipping from one world to another without noticing. The distinguishing features are few, for the Serpents have distinct preferences: they like their worlds warm, they like them green, and when finished, one is nearly indistinguishable from another, like a string of wretched pearls stretched across the 'verse.

At first we thought they were just another snake cult, but now their towers are everywhere.

What I've come to call "active" worlds — those actively being colonized — tend to be messy. The work the Serpents demand creates residue; fields are trampled, rock is calved from mountains, and streams run thick with slag from enormous smelting pits. Most upsetting are the bones. When a slave falls, its fellows have little choice but to work atop them. Peer beneath the grass of any older Dynastic world and you are as likely as not to find the calcified silhouette of some poor soul, twisted and broken among the weeds.

THE SOCIETY

There is constant tension between the Serpents' wants and their needs. They desire lasting testament to their greatness, and the sheer scale of their egos demands vast slave labor. Unfortunately for the slaves, the Serpents also need food. It's this perpetual drive for glorification, balanced against their unremitting appetites, that drive the Serpents from one prime world to the next.

The "older" a Dynastic world, the greater its stillness. If one were to trace back the Dynasty far enough, you'd likely find worlds completely abandoned but for their colossal monuments.

By contrast, newer worlds veritably writhe with activity. In the earliest stages, I'm told, there is violence. It comes swiftly and without warning. The serpents are calculated and pitiless — genius-level architects possessed of ancient sorcery which allows them to subdue their enemies quickly. Among their tricks is the ability to wear the skin of their prey, sowing discord from within.

Once victory is achieved, attention is turned to the glorification of the Dynasty. I've only seen one such "work-in-progress" world — it's possible there is only ever one at a time — and it was striking, if terrifying, to observe the assembled millions teeming like ants upon the fields while their Serpentine overseers lazed upon tremendous rostrums, their bellies grossly distended from recent meals.

The Serpents dwell upon these worlds, basking in their own aggrandizement, until they can no longer satiate their hunger. Then they move on and the cycle begins anew. I can only assume that between conquests, Serpent spies are already scouting their next target; given their talent for disguise, doing so would be trivial. I offer this warning to all of you: look to your friends and loved ones for lapses in memory and uncharacteristic coldness, for the Serpents are among us.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The dangers are evident: if you're not a Serpent, you're a slave, and eventually food. They understand mobility is freedom, so they do not allow it. I have only moved among them via great stealth and deceit — the same tactics used against us — but my name is known to them now, and my life is one of constant, anxious vigilance; the next person I brush up against may very well be a viperous assassin sent to end me. I feel their cold scales with every touch, though I know I would be dead already if that were anything more than my fevered imagination. Heed me when I say, you do not want this.

My only hope is that whatever venture slithers within the Night Markets now, that it and the Serpents' paths cross soon. They deserve one another.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

Wherever the Serpents' sourceworld, it must lie near the **PLANE OF TYRANNY**. I've never seen a world so strongly connected to a singular ideal.

By contrast, the **PLANE OF FREEDOM** touches its boundaries in surprising ways. One can not predate upon something without first stalking it — if it's possible for whole prime worlds to be wrenched from one axis and dragged to another, the Serpents have done so.

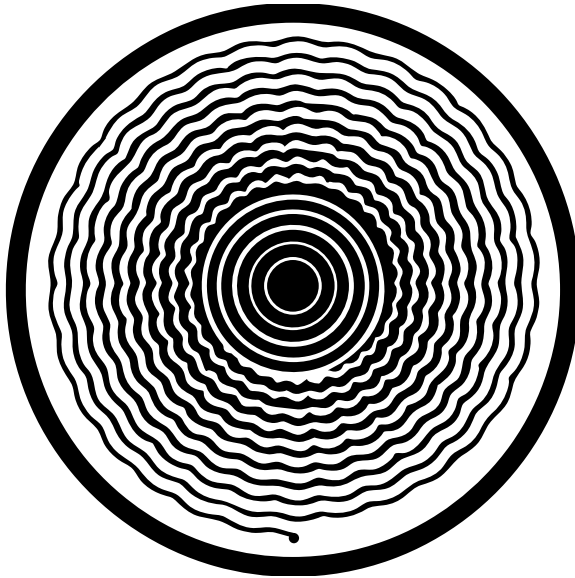
There is an implacable sort of architecture to the Serpents' agenda which suggests to me a link to the **PLANE OF ORDER** as well.

ALUCINA



By Whitney "Strix" Beltrán

The home of sliding visions and vibrating colors, where songs are valued treasure and ancestors walk beside the living.



We are not really here.

We are guided by invisible music.

There are no barriers between the living and the dead.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Riotous. The smells, the sounds, the bright, bright colors. The way the cities swim and undulate under the weight of life's great pattern. It's like being awake, more awake than you've ever been in your life, but somehow it feels like it's not real. The whole world pulsates with color. Greens and desert pinks, swirling visionscapes of mountain sage blue and crackling yellow. It is almost nauseating at times.

The air is pregnant with an electricity you can taste, an oozing of ozone and lurid magic. It is the sweetness of decay and the yolk of birth wrapped in humidity and heat. They tell me it is the presence of the ancestors that makes the air this way. They say these things with voices that are thick and lilting, their bodies gyrating to a cadence only they seem to hear. But eat our food, drink our bitter draughts., they say. Then you can hear it too.

THE WORLD

Alucina is a place for both the living and the dead. When Alucinians die, their souls do not depart their bodies. They simply carry on — a little worse for wear. After their death, a person may disappear for a short amount of time, and when they return they are recognized as an elder. This does not keep their body from decaying, but for whatever reason the decay is slow and dry. The most venerated of the elders are almost fully mummified. It is for this reason that the peoples of Alucina are considered very wise among the planes. Their collective memory and experience stretch back further than most are willing to contemplate.

The world holds a feverish warmth, a perfect home for cunning and vivid ecosystems. Many plants in certain combinations cause visions when ingested, though visions are not particular to the food. One can walk into a vision here like walking into a puddle or a spring mist. This is a significant danger for travelers that are not accustomed to the experience. One can wander too far away from the baseline reality, become lost, vibrate apart.

There is a depth to the world, countless layers of understanding. As you adjust to Alucina, you develop a sense of how deep in the people around you are. It is like they are there with you, but they see and hear different things as well, things that you cannot. Most of those who are indigenous to this place exist in a much deeper place than mere visitors like myself. The deeper one goes, the less touch one has with the mundane parts of this world. It becomes harder to communicate, to connect, if people are on vastly different levels of depth. Conversations with locals can often be extremely puzzling.

The deeper you go, the easier it is to hear the music. It's like a kind of background radiation that gets louder the more you sink into the world, and it is wonderful. Complex, sonorous, hypnotic. It is the voice of all things as they hum together. I'm not sure it's even a sound. When you listen to it, it draws you closer to everything else. It blurs the lines, bestowing upon you a knowing. Knowing how a leaf will twist in the wind as you watch it flutter by. Knowing that a snake sleeps where you are about to place your foot. Knowing the hearts and minds of others, as much as they know yours. I am told that this is why the songs were created and are so cherished. They exist to counter the music and keep this place from collapsing in on itself.

THE SOCIETY

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There is not a single hegemonic culture here. Rather, there are the Yachacs. There is the Drum Yachac and the Stone Yachac. The Feather Yachac and the Patcha Yachac. There are secret Yachacs also, which outsiders are forbidden knowledge of. All of the Yachacs intermingle with each other, but members who openly acknowledge their Yachac wear identifying symbols, tattoos, or colors. It is my understanding that one can belong to more than one Yachac, but it is not clear as to how that works. I. It also appears each individual chooses which Yachac, or Yachacs, to join in their late adolescence.

The impact of that choice is significant. Yachacs largely govern which foods you eat, what kinds of textiles you wear, what kind of rituals you perform and when, and most importantly what songs you are taught. Songs are the backbone of this world. They are intricately crafted pieces of magic, curated over hundreds of generations. The songs are what guide people in and out of the music that lives here. They are a counterpoint and a tool. Songs can lead you one way within the music, and then another. They can lead you in and lead you out. A good song can save your life. A great song can unlock mysteries you never even knew existed.

Of course these songs are heavily guarded. You will often hear drumming, bells, rattles, or snatches of song hummed when you are among other people, but it is considered a grave faux pas to ask to be taught a song without an express offer first. I am told that the most guarded songs of all are personal songs. Like a thumbprint, a personal song, called an ikara, encapsulates the identity of a person. To share that song is a most intimate act. While visitors may not have developed such songs themselves, one can go a long way and gain much esteem by sharing snippets of a favorite childhood lullaby or other personally meaningful tune.

On a final note, many people here wear masks. They are often ghoulish in nature and are usually made of wood. My understanding is that both the living and ancestors wear masks to help the ancestors feel at ease and to blend in. Never assume that someone wearing a mask is an ancestor. Then again, never assume that they're not. Outside of Alucina these masks are thought to have certain powers, and much like the songs of this place they are sometimes stolen and can fetch a heavy price elsewhere.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The dangers to those unfamiliar with Alucina are many. First and foremost is the danger of getting lost in a vision without being properly equipped with a guiding song first, the result of which is incurable madness. It is for this reason that constant drumming is kept up near any stationary waypoints. Second is the serious underestimation of the effects of certain foods and drinks that enable even deeper vision and trance states. Anything bitter or brown should be treated with great respect. Though if you have traveled specifically to Alucina, this is likely what you are after. My advice is to take it slow and do not get in over your head.

There is also the matter of songs. As previously mentioned, one cannot ask to be taught, and yet it is essential to learn at least one basic song in order to survive in Alucina very long. You should be prepared to gift something valuable to you upon arrival. Please note that I sent to you. It is likely that you will be gifted a song in return as a show of welcome. However, if your gift is deemed insincere, you're going to be in a spot of trouble.

There is much to be gained from visiting Alucina. The knowledge of the ancestors is vast, and on the whole, they enjoy being asked for their advice as long as they are approached in the right way. The other reason why visitors come is to unlock the magic within the music here. Inner wisdom and talent can come flooding out. Psychic wounds can be healed — though healing is sometimes violent. Answers to questions that don't have words can be found written the movement of a flower or a bird. If you are deep enough. However, the ancestors often forget the limits of mortal flesh, and it is easy to be trapped in the song.

There are also occasional outsiders. Song thieves from other planes. The locals hate and despise them. Do not get mistaken for one and do not get caught up in one of their schemes. You will be very sorry.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

The **PLANE OF LORE** is very close, brushing with the forbidden knowledge of this word.

The **PLANE OF JUSTICE** is not much further out and is tied with the ancestral spirits.

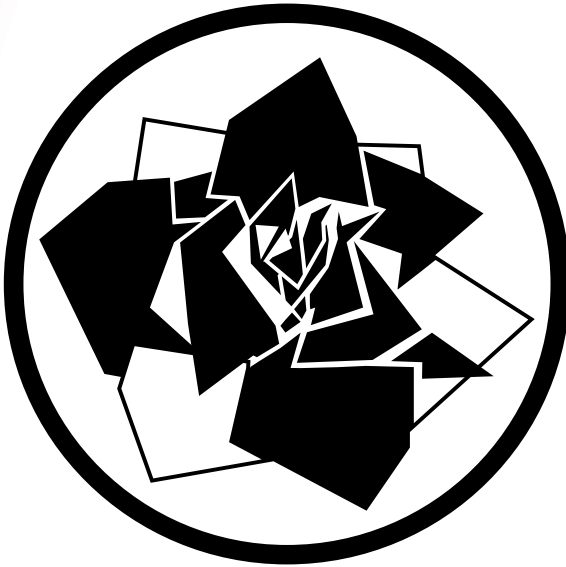
Lastly, Alucina sits somewhere between the **PLANES OF LIFE AND DEATH**, though exactly where is hard to say.

CRYSTALIA



By Alex Roberts

A sparking world of austere beauty, where perfection is divine and forgiveness is a forgotten word.



What is done can never be undone.

Perfection is the only peace.

You can depend only on yourself.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

It was disorienting at first. When I phased into this prime, I couldn't tell ground from sky; everything glows in gentle pastel hues of rose, lavender, periwinkle, and peppermint. Every colour you see is milky soft, but everything you touch is hard and unyielding. Magnificent formations of quartz, amethyst, emerald, and even diamond fill the landscape before you. At night, the starlight reflects below you as brilliantly as it shines above.

Plants and animals are nowhere to be found. The inhabitants of this pristine land are as beautiful and fragile as porcelain dolls; and, like dolls, their hearts do not beat. This is a cold and quiet place, one to be admired — not to be loved.

THE WORLD

Crystalia's glittering cities are hard to distinguish from the landscape. Architecture follows the same precise symmetrical patterns as natural crystal growth, and the artificial lattices are as perfect as anything found in nature. You will know them as cities not by sight but by sound, for they hum with the combined vibrations of all their inhabitants. Every crystal being vibrates at a particular frequency, generating sounds of a unique pitch and volume. Each city is a unique soundscape; some make your heart race with excitement, others drop a terrible feeling of dread right into the pit of your stomach.

Look carefully and you may notice small monasteries carved high into the sides of shimmering cliffs. I am told that many crystal beings live there for a time, or for their whole lifespan. Their sound is unlike the cities: soft, intermittent, and always strangely alluring. I never managed to get close to them.

On the outskirts of the populated mountain ranges, you might see great valleys of crystal fragments, ground fine as dust by the wind and swept into dunes. These deserts are beautiful from a distance, and apparently abandoned.

THE SOCIETY

The language of these people is incredible. Thought, mood, and intention are all expressed by vibrational frequencies. Matters that require precision are considered inappropriate for verbal discourse. Math and science are to be written about — or carved, in their case. Vibrations are apparently involuntary, or at least require a great deal of effort to control. There is awed talk of monks who have willed themselves into silence.

There is one word-sound you'll hear often, and your amulet will probably translate it to "broken" or "shattered." It can be used to describe an object that is no longer functional, but I also heard it applied to a person who passed away, a relationship that ended, and an idea that was disproven. Things "shatter" often in Crystalia, and this is a subject of much fascination for its inhabitants. As far as I can tell, there is no word in their language for "repair."

Objects and people alike, when "shattered," are ground up and swept away to the desert. This is done with great care and according to precise ceremonial custom. Never in all my travels have I seen such a powerful taboo against physical violence. My hosts seemed to have no concept of deliberate harm and had no words like "fight" or "kill." When my persistent questioning revealed an instance of one being ending the life of another, they refused to describe it as anything but "a mistake."

I never saw them express affection physically, either. No nurturing takes place in Crystalia. Beings grow in underground caverns and emerge fully intact, shimmering and perfect. This fear of intimacy is like a mirror to their taboo against violence. Perhaps it has the same root; each person takes hundreds of years to form and can be destroyed in an instant.

Thou may'st break, but shalt not bend me.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Poetry here is unlike anything I've ever experienced. Rhythmic humming blends music and lyric into one; performances are at once reverent and deeply personal. I could not engage in the call-and-response aspect of the performance — poetry must always be performed — but I felt its healing power in body and soul.

Adornment is a foreign concept in this society, and indeed so is clothing of any kind. The most mundane objects will be made of incredibly precious gems. I saw diamond-tipped writing implements, and construction tools of ruby and sapphire. Curiously, the rock salt that forms everywhere is treated as a kind of weed, scraped away and sent to the desert with barely a thought.

Some objects are considered valuable in Crystalia, but they tend to have personal or spiritual significance. These can be hard for outsiders to identify, so be wary of palming whatever small jewels you think won't be missed. The crystal people have no weapons, but the persistent drone of their anger is physically and psychically unbearable. Remember, too, not to eat or excrete within sight of your hosts. They have no need of food and find the entire process revolting. I also recommend shaving — hair amuses them at first, but seeing it fall off seems to trigger a panic response.

Finally: do not request a trip to the desert.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

The perfect formations of the mountains and the tense peace of the crystal cities, mark the influence of the **PLANE OF ORDER** in this prime world.

The land and its people bear the distinctive traits of the **PLANE OF ICE**: both are sharp, fragile, distant, and perfect.

This is a beautiful place, but barren. The **PLANE OF DEATH** is near. The Crystalians are fixated on the absoluteness of loss and seem to value silence as the highest spiritual gift.

DIMMING TWILIGHT

By Liz Chaipraditkul

*Where stars come to die, each behemoth whispering
memories and stories till its light finally diminishes.*



Sleeping giants dream.

Light dims among the stars.

To them we owe all.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I've found the place where stars go to die. They do not disappear when they go supernova, when their light is finally consumed, instead they take a final journey to the Dimming Twilight. Each star lives until the last of its light is seen by the last planet at the end of the universes.

The Dimming Twilight is an endless black expanse. When I first arrived I stood in wonder, my mouth agape, staring at each bright behemoth suspended in air. These heavenly bodies are a fraction of the size they once were. The youngest stars, the ones farthest from death, are roughly the size of a few city blocks. The eldest stars are tiny; one was so small it fit easily in the palm of my hand.

Innumerable flickering lights dot the black landscape, and there is a soft hum in the air. Heading closer to a star's corona was when I first heard what the inhabitants there call 'the song'. Each giant whispers the stories of their worlds till their light finally diminishes. Stars here give off no heat and can be easily interacted with. No longer having to sustain life with their luminosity, they revert back to their natural state and simply shine.

THE WORLD

There is no sky in the Dimming Twilight and no ground. When I first arrived in this place, my body naturally orientated itself to the logic of the twilight.

Aside from the stars, I found that there were three types of beings in the Dimming Twilight. First are the talmorim (pronounced: tal-more-eem), also known as the Keepers; the natural inhabitants of this world. The Keepers are an eternal race of creatures, with light grey skin and clad all in black, who care for the dying stars. Their clothing is as different and varied as all the planes, mimicking the star they are caring for.

Then, there are the travellers like me. The people who hop in and out of the Dimming Twilight if they can find it. Tourists who wish to hear the secrets of dead worlds and lost people.

Finally, there are the thieves. The would-be gods who want to steal eternity from the solar giants on the plane. The talmorim say to take the power of a star within oneself, the gravest of sins, is to shred the grace of all things and drink in darkness.

What I found out is that stars only die of their own volition. They give up their immortality in the 'verse, so that other stars may grow and more prime worlds can be born. The Dimming Twilight is a final grace bestowed upon them, a world created to thank them for sacrificing eternity. The thieves take this essence, swallowing eternity and thus gaining immortality.

THE SOCIETY

I have heard of no laws in the Dimming Twilight, because each Keeper lives a life in the throes of the star they care for. When a talmorim comes of age, they wander the Dimming Twilight in search of the star they will bond to. When the soul of a star calls out to them, the talmorim's skin begins to glow and their mood changes to fit the star to which they are bound. The Keepers care for the star until it is gone and then pass as well.

The talmorim live as a hive mind. Each can close their seyedimn (mind in talmorim) to the others of their kind when needed, but there is always a connection to the others of their kind. And so if one talmorim steals from another, they also steal from themselves.

If there is ever a true crime committed in the Dimming Twilight, it is by an outsider, what the talmorim call a lamort.

If a lamort commits a crime, they are taken to Thaed Rothme, Queen of the realm.

Thaed rules from the centre of the world and can always be found, because she shines more brightly than any star on the plane. Surrounded by a large stretch of utter darkness, only the talmorim, those whose eyes have adjusted to staring at radiance for millennia, can look upon her without becoming blind. To visit her I was lent a pair of shadow shades given to me by a friendly Keeper I met along the way.

While wandering through the songs of this Prime World towards its centre, I was told the queen's story. Thaed was the first talmorim to die, struck down by a greedy god who wanted immortality. The star who she cared for wept at her passing. The tears of a star are not water, but fire. As each drop fell upon her body, the star's radiance poured into her. The queen was revived and her star died, singing its final story so that she may live.

Thaed was a Keeper with no sun to care for and so the world became her ward. She used her new powers to bind the minds of each talmorim together. While one may not have the power to protect themselves, surely the minds of all would.

Nowadays Thaed sleeps, only waking when called to. The years have worn against her; a star is only meant to live for so long, and a talmorim's life is a breath within a long gasp. Yet Thaed will not diminish until her work is done.

DANGERS & OPPORTUNITIES

The songs hummed from each dying giant are undoubtedly the crowning jewel of the Dimming Twilight. One star may sing of seven-tailed squirrels foraging for jaka berries, and another may tell you the story of the fourteen wars of Feideil, but each star sings their story with the fever and conviction that only the brightest thing in a solar system could have. The songs themselves reach deep within you. They pour emotion into your soul, and as you leave a star's corona, looking out at this endlessly dark plane dotted with brilliant lights, you are left empty for a time. Your heart and body worn from hearing the stories of worlds, peoples, and lives that are now only memories.

The largest danger comes from the talmorim who care for a star with a violent past. I first wandered into a corona filled with cannibalistic Keepers only to flee into another corona of the most generous people I have met in my travels. It was a good week before I found an unbound talmorim who could explain what was happening.

Second, there are the followers of Feil, the god who killed Thaed Rothme. When his attempt failed, Thaed trapped Feil on a secret shard realm which he longs to escape. To assist him in this, he has corrupted the hearts of many young talmorim who have not bound themselves to a star yet. He uses these followers to cause chaos on the prime world and kidnap travelers who might be able to get Feil back to his world.

Finally, a new faction has arisen: poachers who have begun to invade the plane looking to steal and bottle the eldest stars and sell them in the Night Market.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

The Dimming Twilight draws power from the **PLANE OF DESTRUCTION** to allow stars to shake loose their immortal bonds.

The **PLANES OF LIFE AND DEATH** can both be accessed through the Dimming Twilight, which hangs delicately between them.

HEX

By Kira Magrann

Hex is a floating city made of the bones of some ancient creature where the local demons cater to every desire.



All deals are negotiable.

All paths lead to ecstasy.

All experiences lead to knowledge.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

At first I thought the giant maw at the entrance of this grand city was a sculpture, something created whimsically to greet visitors to this plane. Those who would welcome me there were quick to tell me, with great pride, that no, this was the mouth of a great dead beast I was about to enter. Nothing could've prepared me for the feeling of awe knowing beings like this once existed, and the disgust that I was about to walk into the skeleton of one. The bones were like gothic architecture, like stone but lighter, its walls billowing lush fabrics and tinkling metal on ribbons of scarlet. Wind blew gently one moment and rushed through hollow places the next. It felt like being very high on a mountain, or at the edge of the sea.

I remember distinctly feeling lighter, a kind of vertigo at first, looking back over the edge of the entrance. I could see an infinite, clouded nothing beneath us. The cushion of clouds was comforting, but I couldn't get past the feeling that at any moment the city could be unmoored from whatever hook it was suspended from. After about ten minutes though, I adjusted, and the feeling of being somewhere else, lighter and a little spinny, was rather delightful.

THE WORLD

It was difficult to place myself geographically as I walked through this vast skeleton city. Different levels ramped up or down, or there were stairs leading into a different section, but I couldn't tell you if I was in the ribs or the tail. There were no maps, I can only assume to encourage visitors to get a little lost. There were visitors everywhere! Every one of my senses was tempted and drawn in each direction. I could smell delicious spicy foods I wanted to try from street vendors. In some corridors there was microfiber in every color that existed billowing around everyone who passed within. The scent of sandalwood and myrrh and sage sometimes floated silently throughout every space. Mint tea poured out of delicate spigots installed into outdoor walls made of flower-patterned stone, and stacked nearby were tiny gold cups for any passerby to drink. Laughter, drum circles, and people dancing in the streets in processions I couldn't understand were constants throughout the city.

Archways nestled into the bone everywhere. I found my way downward to the darkest, most southerly regions, which I imagined to be the feet. Here there were hushed parlors of visitors lying down in comfortable cushions, smoking out of hookahs and having their fortunes read. It was very warm compared to the upper levels. Midway through, people tended to be in cafés, playing various games with tiles, gambling in small casino rooms, selling things in the more open-air spaces. It seemed I could get anything I wanted... there were no objects on display here, just ever-changing holograms of any object I could imagine. The shopkeep would disappear and come back a few minutes later with whatever the person wanted. The only currency I saw exchanged were whispers and signatures.

The topmost part of Hex was amazing. There's a small stairway I could walk up to stand on the very top of the creature, and there were still pools, clouds, and gardens. The purpose of this space seemed to be meditation, but I saw people who seemed delightfully delirious with the drugged tea they gave you before you made your ascent, holding crystals and playing with beads, being guided by the locals. There were piles of pillows and blankets in some of the green areas, and visitors were making love right there, out in the open. Everyone seemed so happy, so at peace.

THE SOCIETY

.....

The inhabitants of Hex are mysterious and terrifying to behold. They have skin colors ranging from blue to spotted orange hues to pitch black, multiple eyes in many body parts, many sets of wings, massive jaws full of tusk-like teeth, clawed hands, and all sorts of body shapes and sizes that are more or less humanoid and carbon-based. There are many artists here who try to capture their likeness in paint, or paper, since memories of them blur together. They're really quite beautiful, in my opinion, although many avoid this place because they can't really comprehend these people. Their name is very difficult to pronounce, and changes depending on who you talk to in Hex, so they often just say "Day-mon" with a smile, for ease of visitors to understand.

These “day-mons” mostly seem concerned with welcoming visitors, making them comfortable, and being perfect hosts. Hex is very much a tourist place and doesn’t have too much embedded culture other than what the day-mons create. Day-mon society itself is very mysterious and hidden. They never talked about where they came from, often on purpose it seemed, as though they were letting you in on some joke that you both knew, but still avoiding the truth. Every single demon I met was like this; their story never changed.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Something I learned very quickly is that there are two universal phrases here. They’re “Too much” and “not enough”. It was your job to communicate these things to everyone, or else they would just continue doing what they made a deal with you to do.

Deals, right! Deals are very important here. Everything is an exchange. Every deal that is made is particular to the person or demon it’s made with. The deal is sealed via a whisper and a blood signature on a piece of paper. Everything is documented, just in case there are any problems in the future, and someone wants to dispute a deal. There’s a court in which to do this somewhere in the middle section of Hex, but I never saw it. I must say though, despite all the secrets and shadows, I couldn’t find a single visitor who admitted they were unhappy with a deal they made.

Every specialty they provided was a deal. If I wanted something more than a simple place to stay, access to food, water, and tea, I would have to make a deal. Deals are secrets, but there are a few visitors are allowed to share with outsiders, obviously to make the place more appealing. I wanted to try the hookah on the lower levels, and so I made a deal with the eight-foot-tall blue demon with eyes on their wings. Turns out that demons all identify as non-binary genders here and use they/their pronouns. They wanted me to tell them a secret from my childhood, something I’d never told anyone before.

I whispered it to this demon, and their wings fluttered a bit and their eyes closed happily. It was the most delicious hookah I'd ever smoked; it was a smooth gentle high, and the conversation with the other patrons I had there was full of depth and hilarity. It took a few hours before I had to say "too much" and walk home through lamp-lit corridors. Somehow, there is a day and night here. I made many other deals during my stay, but if I shared what they were, I wouldn't be allowed to return.

The biggest danger here was not knowing your own boundaries. I saw a few people who seemed to have pushed a bit too far being taken care of in a medical wing of the city. Here demons were administering salves, bandages for wounds from more masochistic encounters, comforting words for tears. All with the same measure of care. It seemed like there was no shame in being here. Everyone left with some kind of gift, a symbol, the demons said, that they learned something new about themselves.

Anyone who tries to take advantage of deals, or who isn't a demon and gets caught making bad deals, is kicked out of Hex with haste. Some people have tried to get away with this and succeeded for a few weeks before being caught. I'd been warned not to make deals with humans that seemed shady.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

The **PLANE OF SHADOW** is very close to this place; secrets and whispers and mysteries abound.

The **PLANE OF LORE** is not far behind... it's unusual for someone not to learn something new about themselves after a trip here.

The **SHARD REALM OF ECSTASY** is of course here. Sensation, experience, and delight are very important to the demons of Hex.

IRON CITIES

By Emily Griggs

A cluster of imperialist city-states, where the constant threat of war upholds a rigid social system.



Society is more important than the individual.

I against my brother, my brother and I against strangers.

War brings honour and glory.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I still count myself as fortunate for having survived my first week in the Iron Cities. Emerging from a planar gate into one of their mines, I was immediately seized by the local guards and passed from interrogator to interrogator, all speaking a language I did not understand. Fortunately, one of them recognized the word “Sig”, and I was passed over to a kind young scholar who helped sort things out. The primals here are familiar enough with the multiverse to understand that an outside visitor can prove both interesting and useful.

If you’d told me then that I would fall in love with this world of iron and blood, I would have called you mad.

THE WORLD

Nestled amid black mountains, the Iron Cities blend into their surroundings with thick walls and rigid towers. Indeed, some of these defenses are built right into the stone, and it’s hard to say where the harsh environment ends and the work of its primals begins.

Past these fortifications, the Cities show their pride with glorious finery. Buildings are made from worked stone and iron, or clay and the woody reeds that seems to grow absolutely everywhere. Gaudy fresco paintings and intricate carvings depict scenes of glory and battle on the side of every home and shop. The local cuisine revolves around tough meat, heavily spiced and simmered for hours until tender, and a nutty black-shelled grain that grows well on the limited patches of mountain soil.

THE SOCIETY

The Iron Cities have been at war for as long as anyone can remember. Peace treaties are brokered and alliances are forged, but every city is always at war with at least one other. Every citizen is expected to be fit and capable of handling a weapon, and every aspect of Cityfolk culture is influenced by battle: art, poetry, fashion, politics. Despite the constant conflict, though, the cities share a more-or-less homogenous culture. There are differences in the minutiae, of course, but from an outsider's perspective, it's difficult to tell one city from the next.

Social roles in the Iron Cities are strictly divided by gender, though for the most part not by those genders most popular in Sig. As children, Cityfolk are divided into boys and girls based on their reproductive anatomy; as much as they like to consider themselves enlightened, the primals here still seem to share that common backwater fascination. As far as I can tell, however, there is no difference in how boys and girls are raised. At fifteen, every child goes through a coming-of-age ritual in which they take their place in society by choosing their adult gender: hon or tae.

Tae are marked by sharp, angular tattoos across their faces, and they are doers, quick-thinkers, warriors, and leaders. Only tae can be soldiers, and all are expected to enlist. A tae earns honour in combat, through which ter name can live on. Officially, only tae are ever appointed to public positions of power, but every successful tae politician I've met has an equally capable hon spouse.

Hon are given soft, swirling facial tattoos, and they are philosophers, long-term planners, artificers, and home-makers. A hon wields power and collects honour through homs family, and both surnames and inheritances pass through them. Only hon can become artificers, and those with an aptitude for magic learn to unlock the power of their world's ores.

After two years of living here, my close friends now address me as if I were hon, a mark of great respect for an outsider. Most locals, though, refer to me as a woman and think of me as a permanently immature barbarian with no proper role in any society worth talking about. Referring to a hon or tae as “he” or “she” can mean one of two things: you are deeply interested in exploring the specifics of their reproductive anatomy (an audacious come-on) or you think they’re acting immature (a hurtful insult.) It’s usually fairly evident which is intended by context, but there’s an entire genre of Iron City comedy that revolves around misunderstandings of that nature.

HOW TO ADDRESS AN IRON CITY NATIVE WITHOUT GETTING SLAPPED

No translation talisman I’ve yet found will correct the gender you choose to use, so take some time to practice.

She/Her/Hers/Herself

Ta/Ter/Ters/Taself

Hy/Hom/Homs/Hyself

If you can’t get it right, use “they” as you would for a noble Sylva. You’ll look like a bit of an idiot, but at least you won’t be offensive.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Two pieces of advice for visiting the Iron Cities: keep your head down, and apologize for everything. Outsiders who know their place are interesting curiosities and perhaps even unusual friends, all other outsiders are dangerous. Don’t think you can use one city’s hatred of another to ingratiate yourself to them, either: I guarantee they will come to hate you far more than the people they’re at war with the second you give them cause.

The magical artifacts of the Iron Cities are like nothing I've ever seen; they really do get better with age. A tool forged from the metals here can absorb some of the skill of its user, passing that down to the next person who wields it: a small child wielding an antique Iron Cities sword will fight like a trained soldier, and a trained soldier will fight like a legend. Giving a well-used artifact to an outsider would be unthinkable, but I believe that the Iron Cities could be persuaded to part with fresh ones for the right price.

The only worship the Iron Cities engage in is of their own heroes and ancestors, but they are such a passionate and devoted people that any god would be lucky to have their faith. I wonder, though, if their native metals might be a part of some secret, nameless god, one that gains power when its substance is forged and exalted in combat. But that is only a theory.

Beyond faith and riches, though, I see the people of the Iron Cities themselves as an opportunity. My close friends here have already expressed their concern at how close-minded their culture can be, and I know they aren't the only ones who'd see change as an opportunity. The multiverse has much to learn from them, and them from us. We share a dream of encouraging further travel to the Iron Cities and a hope that it will result in peace rather than further conflict.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

The tall mountains, rich in ore and secrets, make me suspect the **PLANE OF STONE** is close to the heart of the Iron Cities.

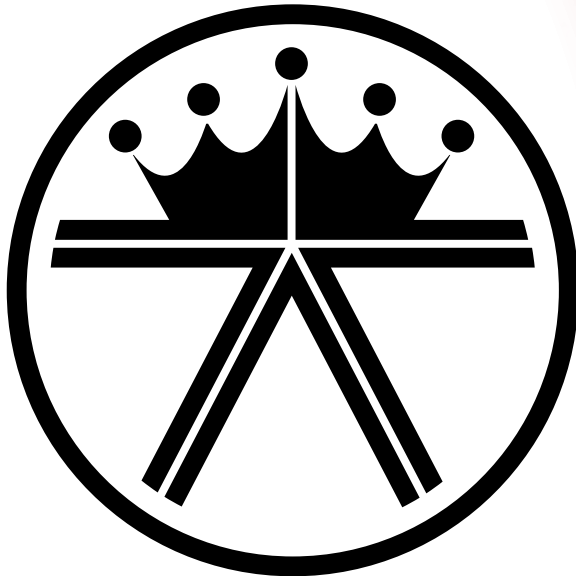
The influence of the **PLANE OF TYRANNY** is perhaps a little too strong, though watching a disciple of Kalzak get treated as a filthy outsider has been amongst the highlights of my stay.

The connection to the **PLANE OF SHADOW** is more subtle, but I sense its presence in the artifice of the Iron Cities.

MOUNTAIN ROYAL

By Jason Pitre

A massive city of steel and glass, housing millions of humans and protected by the Guardians.



Power corrupts.

Those who bend do not break.

You are your culture.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I've been wandering the 'verse since The Silent Regent lost her throne, and this has got to be the strangest prime world I have ever seen. It rivals Sig in many ways, like a twisted reflection of the City Between.

My first thought was that I had stumbled into some kind of living machine. I was in the shadow of massive steel towers, shod in mirror-glass and grey stone. Brilliant white light shone from the gaslamps, never flickering despite the wind. The sounds of strange rumblings, discordant horns, and rhythmic music echoed in the frosty night.

THE WORLD

Taking a closer look around, I got the sense that some nature-god had somehow insulted the people of this city. The primals here have some kind of aversion to plant life it seems, doing their best to keep vegetation from gaining a foothold. They cover every road and trail with some kind of smooth grey or rough black stone. There are a few small birds and rodents that can be seen, but nothing larger than a dog walks the streets. I haven't seen a horse, yak, or other beast of burden in my time here. Only faint traces of snow offered any touch of softness to the harsh, razor-straight streets. This prime world seems to be a hard place, built of sharp lines and unyielding steel.

I suppose you ought to know about the beetles, too. The primals appear to have a symbiotic relationship with giant, metallic, multi-coloured beetles. From what I could tell, they are used chiefly for transportation and status. I saw one primal pull open part of the carapace of a beetle and squeeze herself inside. Suddenly, the beetle made a now familiar rumbling noise and took off down the road like a galloping horse. Strangest thing.

It is a young city with an old soul.

THE SOCIETY

Once I got past the initial shock of the place, I settled down to learn more about the people. The primals seem so similar to each other, with remarkably similar clothing and the same basic physiology. If not for the language issue, I would have thought them to be a single people. It seems, though, that there are two distinct linguistic groups in the city and that bloody artificer set my amulet to the wrong one. I thought one particular shopkeeper would knife me, from the look I got when I opened my mouth. Let's just say that I plan on getting a refund when I get back to Sig.

It was also strange to see so many stone churches, standing empty and ignored. The acolytes of that god must have fallen out of favour, and I saw none of their clerics in my time there. If not for the buildings, scattered throughout this place, I would have thought the city barren of faith.

It soon became evident where that zeal was redirected, when I encountered a mob of irate cultists. These young primals chanted in the middle of a road, many of them wearing smiling white masks with black mustaches. From what I could gather, this ritual was intended to banish some demon known as *Austeritae*, whose portfolio includes poverty, suffering, and corruption. There seemed to be a great deal of anger amongst them, and I could tell that the demon had taken much from them.

It wasn't long before the Guardians arrived. These primals piloted white beetles that flashed red and blue as they approached. They emerged from the beetles, bearing dark armor, glass shields, and obsidian rods. The youth hurled insults at the Guardians, who I could only assume served *Austeritae*. Soon, the masked cultists hurled stones and glass bottles at the Guardians, who retaliated with clouds of burning smoke, chained lightning, and strange projectiles. That was when I chose to depart for my own safety.

I must ask the Sage Collegium for more information about *Austeritae*, because the Guardians who serve him are terrifying.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The city is a stressful place. The fierce beetles race through the streets with reckless abandon, threatening anyone in their path. I honestly have no idea what they eat in this barren wasteland, and I'm not sure I wish to know.

I recommend you do your best to avoid being caught up in the zealous war between the cultists and the Guardians. The passion of the former and strange weapons of the latter scare me, personally.

I also recommend you bring a warm woolen coat, as the air holds the edge of winter. It's not quite the Plane of Ice, but I heard horror stories of snowbanks high enough to bury a Giant.

There are many opportunities worth your attention here. Many Powers would be eager to seize the latent faith in the place. The city is filled to the brim with artists who put the Performers Guild to shame, and their fine works would be popular in Sig. The food and drink are also excellent, with both fine beer and excellent cheeses. I even discovered one of the local delicacies, with melted cheese and hot gravy on diced tubers. The dish is tasty enough to make The Silent Regent speak, as they say.

I think that the most valuable treasures of this prime would be the strange equipment used by the Guardians. I suspect it would fetch a high price in the Night Market, if anyone could acquire it.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

The influence of the **PLANE OF ICE** is evident in the brutal winters and delicate art scene of the Mountain Royal.

Everything in this prime world seems strictly regimented, linear and harsh, indicating a proximity to the unyielding **PLANE OF ORDER**.

The city appears to contain at least a dozen different colleges and universities, along with one of the most beautiful libraries I have gazed upon, making the connection to the **PLANE OF LORE** obvious.

WHISPERING SANDS

By Hannah Shaffer

A lush oasis at the center of a lethal desert. Few seekers ever reach the Oasis, and those who do believe it to be a mirage.



The Oasis hides from prying eyes.

Desire brings absence.

Water is a precious illusion.

I said it was a dream, and he agreed, but said it was the desert's dream not his. - Lord Gaiman, the Sandman

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

If you're reading this, know that I have drunk from the Oasis of Whispering Sands. Since my return, many have tried to follow in my footsteps, and all have perished trying. I write these words of my own free will, as a warning to any who may try to follow my path.

First, know this: the Oasis cannot be found. As you walk circles around the neverending dunes, expect nothing more than blistered skin and a sandy throat. The sun will sear you, and the sand will melt your sandals to the bottom of your feet. But you won't get any closer to the Oasis. Of the considerable distance I traveled in my search, the physical steps went nowhere and meant nothing. Mental strides alone led me to the Oasis of Whispering Sands.

It was only when I'd given up hope that I glimpsed a shimmer of green and blue on the horizon. I ran, mad with lust for riches and delirious from thirst, towards the sparkling shoreline of the Movoda... and suddenly, I was back in the desert again, lost amongst the sun-bleached remains of other foolish explorers, their bones protruding from the sand like forgotten flagpoles.

My advice to you? Pick a direction, clear your mind, and keep walking forward. Don't look back, don't lend a care to what's ahead. When the sun burns away your last remaining bit of hope, you'll find yourself in Whispering Sands.

THE WORLD

Whispering Sands Oasis seems to be a world preserved by mass hallucination. Focus too hard on any one thing, and it disappears from sight. Drift to sleep on the beach, and you may wake up in the middle of a crowded marketplace. But I promise you, the Oasis is real. Its waters are cool, and its inhabitants live and breathe like you and me.

Though surrounded by an endless desert, the Oasis itself is quite small. An unhurried person could brew their morning tea, walk full circle around the lake at the Oasis' center, and return to a pleasantly warm cup.

The lake, which the locals call Movoda, is home to darting silver fishes, a peculiar type of aquatic silver bird, and a dense underlayer of seaweed that serves as a staple in the local diet. Unlike the blistering sands beyond the Oasis, the shoreline of the Movoda is cool to the touch and warming to the soul. The experience of walking barefoot across the Oasis is at once the scent of peppermint oil, a gentle paresthesia, a lover's breath on your neck.

A ring of silver-leafed palms encircles the lake, swaying in a breeze that cannot be felt. I was told that in their lifetime, each palm bears a single, spherical ubami fruit. Protected by a waxy, transparent outer shell, the pink fruit within is said to be fibrous and astringent, but not inedible. Though the fruit is eaten (and occasionally enjoyed), it is the moon-shaped seed at its center that is cause for jubilant celebration. The seed is somehow connected to the continued existence of this world, though I know not how.

Storytellers say that the seeds turn troubles into mere illusions. Because the spoken language here is indirect and obscure, it's hard to say exactly what this means. Do the ubami seeds merely calm the mind, or do they literally possess the power to bend reality to one's will? Could these tiny seeds have transformed a barren desert into a life-giving Oasis? And if so, how many seeds are required to maintain an illusion of this scale?

While the secrets of the seeds are guarded, they are not guarded closely. The illusions of the Oasis protect its fragile existence. Any person who harbors intense desire — be it for water or riches — finds themselves cast from the shores of the Movoda, stranded again in the desert sands.

THE SOCIETY

It is difficult to say how many people inhabit this world. A great number of temporary dwellings can be seen scattered amongst the Oasis palms. As it goes, the dwellings disappear often — sometimes reappearing in an entirely new location.

Because of this phenomenon, the structures in Whispering Sands have been built with a sense of loving impermanence. Pieces of woven linen hang loosely over the trunks of spiny palms, forming a soft canopy above buildings. Walls are constructed from wet shoreline sand, mixed with a gelatinous glue made from the macerated skin and bones of Movoda fish.

Home ownership, land ownership, and territorial disputes are unfamiliar concepts here. Because homes are so often lost in the shifting sands, inhabitants of the Oasis make use of whatever dwelling happens to be near. It's not uncommon for a disappearing structure to reappear on unstable ground — surrounding a palm tree, on top of another house, or partially submerged in the lake. In this case, the structures are quickly dismantled and rebuilt. Without a single word exchanged between them, community members gather together, working with an intuitive sense of unity and rhythm beyond my understanding.

My initial attempts at communication met with failure. When I pressed for answers, the inhabitants were unresponsive, and sometimes disappeared from my sight altogether. Over time, I realized that my strong desires were repulsing them. After lonely weeks of meditation and patience, I learned to unfocus my mind, which allowed me to communicate with the people of Whispering Sands.

While the inhabitants do speak occasionally, complex social interactions like tending to the sick or cooking are coordinated through eye contact alone. There is a language built around eye contact that I never fully grasped in my time at the Oasis. I do know, however, that any time I began to pry, asking questions of the locals, a prolonged gaze could render me disoriented and forgetful of my intention.

The people are as mysterious and changeable as the Oasis. No words exist for concepts like “want,” “hope,” or “desire.” Though there are words that describe the passage of time, I've had trouble deconstructing their meaning. They don't seem to refer to a constant measure, but rather, to the vastness or smallness of a spiritual or emotional experience.

I've only once observed lengthy and animated conversation between the inhabitants. Under the light of a radiant full moon, the people gathered, exchanging fantastic and impossible stories. I could not tell if these stories were recollections of the past, or hopes for the future, or a retelling of dreams. After hours of storytelling, the people joined hands, each holding a crescent ubami seed in their interlocked palms. Here the people began a sort of trancelike meditation, never once breaking body or eye contact. In that moment, the world around me appeared clearer and brighter than it ever had before. If it's true that

these seeds allow the people of Whispering Sands to construct an illusion so powerful that a lethal desert is transformed into a life-sustaining Oasis, who knows what else they might be capable of.

DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

If the dangers described have not already dissuaded you, then heed these words:

To enter the Oasis of Whispering Sands is to descend into madness. Objectively, a morning stroll around the lake takes no time at all. But focus and unfocus your mind and you've lived three lifetimes before the afternoon. Gaze into the azure waters of the Movoda and witness your birth, the birth of a common ancestor, the birth of the world. In the Oasis, a neighbor's home turns to sand before your eyes, a smirking cat disappears on a desert breeze, and you're left wondering if what you saw a moment ago was ever there at all. Keep objects of personal or material value on you at all times. They'll serve as an anchor during your strange stay.

Of course, with great dangers lie great opportunities. The seeds of the ubami fruit possess an unimaginable power, but that power is accessible only to those who hold no desire for them. I see no way to extract riches from the Oasis... unless she who took a seed had no concept of its worth.

PLANAR INFLUENCES

A shifting, swirling hallucination, surrounded by an endless sand that might as well be sea. Like the musky scent of sandalwood, or an ancient name on the tip of your tongue, the influence of the **PLANES OF SHADOW AND FREEDOM** can be felt strongly here.

The **PLANE OF DREAMS** is strongly bound to this place. After a time, I gave up on trying to distinguish between sleeping and waking.

And let us not ignore the influence of the **PLANE OF WAVES**. The waves bury objects of value beneath the sand, wash away evidence without a trace, and disrupt any other attempts to settle these lands. But don't let the desert fool you — there is an ocean of riches here.

CHAPTER 6

WHAT REMAINS



THE NIGHT MARKETS

ADVENTURE

AN EMPIRE RISES

Everything is within reach of the City Between. All of Sig's streets lead inevitably to the tethers, mystical ports connected to the planes beyond. Clean waters, heating fuels, stout stone are imported and stored at the Brass Tether. From the Golden Tether arise new ideas, philosophies, and laws that make the city the intellectual epicentre of the 'verse. Even stranger treasures are brought in from the Silver Tether: ancient shadows, forbidden lore, precious woods, forgotten cultures, and dangerous prophesies. All these treasures and resources find their way to the streets of Sig over time.

The true wealth of the City Between comes not from the planes but from the infinite prime worlds. Gates to the prime worlds lie hidden in the alleys of the Hive and in the shifting shadows of Highspire. Of course, each gate has its own secret key if you wish to open it. I once stumbled through a gate in Riverward, by virtue of the sapphire flower I had pinned to my breast. Fortunately, the Crasher's Guild make a business out of discovering and selling gate keys for those with the coin. Most often, the keys are more than worth the guild's prices.

On the other side of the gates, you can find an endless variety of worlds and the primals who call them home. Each world shelters many societies, each adapted to their own local conditions and driven by their fundamental Beliefs. Each primal society produces art in many forms, from subversive poetry to passionate calligraphy. You can visit the ancient bone monuments they erected to commemorate the deeds of their ancestors. You can taste their rich foods, redolent with spices and sour meats. Discover their artisanal craft-goods, from fire-baskets to fine beer. Learn their history from teachers, lore tenders, and respected elders.

Sig floats at the crossroads between the infinite diversity of the primes and the eternal abundance of the planes. It's the place where roads of silk, spice, steel, and soul cross. It's a home for merchants, explorers, and expansionist warlords. The adventure begins when the Shard of Empire binds to the City Between.

This Shard Realm latches onto Sig like a moral parasite, infecting the city with dreams of expansion and dominion. It whispers of the superiority of Sig, and how it is best placed to rule the 'verse. It tempts with visions of vulnerable prime worlds, laden with untold treasures. It paints the primal inhabitants as savages, worthy only of domination. It speaks with the voice of ambition and avarice. The Empire is eternal.



THE SHARD OF EMPIRE

Everyone has their place.

Glory to the Empire. It has no beginning and shall never end. As it grows, those dwelling within are filled with a patriotic euphoria. The Empire is the nursemaid who tends to the weak. The Empire is the defender who fights off the savage barbarians. The Empire is the lover who knows your heart's desire.

You feel the rhythmic drums of Empire more than your own heart. You smell the mixture of smoke and hot brass, taste the rich spices and metallic blood on your tongue. In the distance, you can see the mighty towers and walls which divide the peoples into their appointed territories. Imperial soldiers march without end, flowing through the gates to the outer savage wilderness.

All glory to the Empire.

THE ETERNAL CAPITAL

A vast, granite city-fortress, where imperial courtiers feast upon all the wealth of the 'verse.

THE DIVINE ORDER

Endless walls, within walls, within walls, patrolled by imperial soldiers to keep everyone in their place.

THE BORDERLANDS KEEP

A fortress resting on the savage edge of the glorious Empire, providing a beachhead for the civilizing imperial forces.

THE SPIKED

The Spiked are those who have pledged their souls in service to the Empire. The Ritual of Submission transforms their bodies and minds at a fundamental level, replacing identity with duty. You know the Spiked by their thick grey hides and by the vicious bone spikes emerging from their flesh. Thanks to the ritual, they do not suffer pain, fear, or grief. They grow supernaturally resilient, unbelievably strong, and they gain exclusive access to positions of imperial power.

The ritual has a more subtle effect, instilling all of the Spiked with an instinctual love of Empire. Ideas of revolution or revolt are impossible; only gradual improvements and slow reforms are acceptable options to these peoples. That is why the Empire shall live forever.

BROAD:	Empire
BROAD:	Resilience
COMMON:	Bone Spikes
DEEP:	Untouchable



THE NIGHT BARONS

The Cross-traders and the Merchant's Guild

Each new prime world offers vast wealth, for those bold enough to capitalize on them. The savage primals are ignorant of the value of their possessions. They don't value their unique languages, cryptic poems, and moving songs as much as the refined citizen of Sig would. They craft fascinating relics and artifacts that are very much prized by the discerning connoisseurs of the City Between. Some of the more intelligent primals have useful skills, worthy to make transporting them from their backwater worlds viable. As representatives of the Merchant's Guild, the Night Barons are looking for new associates to help expansion into new markets. Are you able to find the very best for the Night Market?

DUTY:

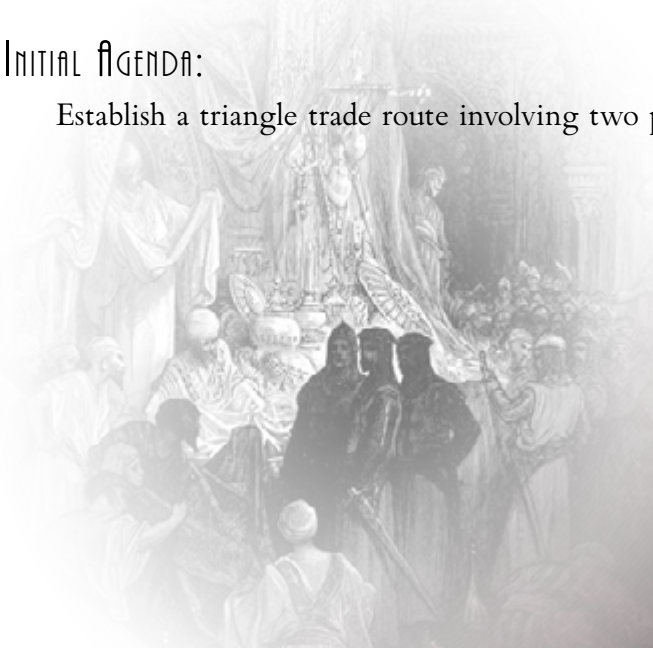
Wheel and deal in goods from across the 'verse.

LEVERAGE:

Acquire goods and services from the prime worlds.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Establish a triangle trade route involving two prime worlds.



PALNAYAS THE CHOSEN

Power of Hierarchy, Colonialism, and Law

There is a Divine Order of things, and Palnayas is at the very top of it. This titanic god of alabaster and radiant splendor is devoted to their Chosen People. Those sinners who offer devotion and service to the Divine Order shall be raised to the Chosen. The Chosen shall rule over the unwashed, as their inherent virtue and divine blessings set them apart as greater souls. Palnayas shall grant their people riches, privilege, and laws that exalt them above all others.

Palnayas preserves the worthy and shall punish sinners for their savagery. Will you join the winning side? Are you prepared to be Chosen?

DEVOTION:

The sinners are inferior to the Chosen and must be treated as such.

RITUAL:

The Chosen's Burden twists the minds of any group of mortals who hear it. The ritual grants you the status and respect of the greatest noble or hierophant. If you choose not to spend one Influence, others will seek your aid with difficult problems they face.

INITIAL AGENDA:

Recruit primal leaders from the eight worlds to join the Chosen.



If you must break the law, do it to seize power: in all other cases observe it.

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

When the Shard of Empire bound itself to Sig, it infected the City Between with its influence. The Merchant's Guild rose in prominence, led by a secret cabal of wealthy traders known only as the Night Barons. These Night Barons entered into a formal alliance with Palnayas the Chosen, although the two groups have different goals.

THE NIGHT BARONS seek to expand their trade networks and use the resulting wealth to buy the loyalty of the other City Factions.

PALNAYAS seeks to colonize and assimilate the populace of the various prime worlds, ruling each of them through the Chosen.

THE SPIKED are a by-product of all of these schemes, arising as loyal foot-soldiers and signs of the imperial infection.

IMPERIAL PHASE 1 - EARLY SIGNS

In the beginning, the signs of the coming Empire are subtle. The Night Barons establish the first Night Market, a place where almost any primal treasure can be acquired if you have the coin. Those who visit the events are treated to marvelous wonders: addictive spices that taste like beauty, glowing snails, and crystals that sing in perfect harmony. There is a sense of celebration throughout, complete with free sweets for the children and a phantasmal light show.

In this first phase, the Night Barons work hard to build a positive reputation. They continue to throw these festivities, and no one thinks to question how the Night Barons are able to afford the extravagance. If it wasn't for the mysterious crates in the alley or their Spiked guards, nothing would seem amiss.

IMPERIAL PHASE 2 - INVASIONS

While the celebrations continue, the Night Barons have been in negotiations with the Crasher's Guild for a series of gate keys, each leading to a different prime world. The price of these keys was steep, but the Barons were confident in their collective value.

They spread out into the worlds like some kind of viral infection. Some primes are visited by the agents of the Night Barons first, offering planar goods in trade for local treasures. Other worlds are investigated instead by the Chosen, offering power for any locals wise enough to convert to Palnayas. Still others are invaded by armies of Spiked soldiers, establishing beachheads. These initial efforts can be resisted by the locals, if they were to be warned by brave planar 'venturers.

These initial efforts are very profitable for the nascent empire. The Night Barons begin to collect various resources from the planes. Many of the Planar mortals are transformed by the imperial influence, either devoting themselves in service to Palnayas, or assimilating to join the ranks of the Spiked. All of these events bolster the Empire and empower them for the days to come.

IMPERIAL PHASE 3 - FALLOUT

The prime worlds have been brought under the Imperial control. Valuable goods, from swords that convey martial prowess to bottled immortality, are now available for sale at the Night Markets. Weapons, religious artifacts, magical drugs, and primal slaves slowly begin to appear for sale, and the damage is evident. The Night Barons spend their profits on encouraging loyalty from Enforcers, who now serve as a private guard of sorts.

The Chosen grow bolder. Their temple has been built near the top of the Godstreet, as befits their glory. Palnayas feeds on the faith of those who worship them on the prime worlds. The Chosen begin to evangelize, spreading their message in the Hive and gathering others to the flock. Divine blessings and holy miracles are common among the Chosen, thanks to the influx of primal faith.

At this point, the GM should identify one of the Faces of the campaign who has been hurt by the growing influence of Empire.

Other characters have certainly been influenced by the imperial efforts, but that Face has suffered significantly because of them.

IMPERIAL PHASE 4 - DOMINION

The Empire has grown strong and is nearly irresistible. Half of the Factions are loyal to the Empire, either beholden to the Barons' coin or devoted to Palnayas. The other half are kept in line by the hundreds of Spiked soldiers whose regular patrols watch for dissidents.

But the Empire isn't entirely cruel. The Chosen are free with their charity, bequeathing many loaves and fishes to the impoverished. The church of Palnayas works tirelessly to ensure that no one is left without the essentials of life. The Chosen do expect a certain level of obedience in exchange for these gifts, but many respond with willing service.

At this point, the GM should identify one more Face that has assimilated to join the Empire. Another has rejected the imperial call and been brutally punished for their disloyalty. At this point, everyone has chosen sides in this fight. The more time passes, the more difficult it is to resist the siren call of imperial ambition.



PRIMAL TREASURES FROM THE NIGHT MARKET

The Night Market offers treasures from countless prime worlds, but eight of these hold the most valuable goods.



AGE OF SCALES

The Serpent Dynasty has devoured many worlds, and hungers for more. It is said that the Serpents are agents of Empire in their own right, and the Spiked defer to them in all things. They trade goods for access to the City Between for their agents.

- Slaves, obedient and terrified.
- Viperous assassins underneath familiar skins.
- Statues of bone-white stone that captivate attention.
- Secret keys to dozens of Dynastic worlds.



ALUCINA

This world is filled with ephemeral riches, blessed by the ancestors and brilliant visions they share. The Merchant's Guild moved in and has liberated many treasures for sale on the Night Market.

- Sacred songs that guide strangers through the world.
- Wooden masks, imbued with ancient blessings.
- Drinks, bitter and brown, that grant vision and trances.
- Forbidden songs that open gates better left sealed.

CRYSTALIA

This world is a glimmering prize, seductive to the forces of Empire. The Chosen have infected this world with their dogma, establishing a brutal class structure where once there was harmony. Those who choose the true faith are named the Strong, while the wretched unbelievers are dubbed the Fragile.



- Healing poems, which shatter after their first recitation.
- Diamond-tipped pens which scribe permanent marks.
- Ruby hammers which shatter anything in their path.
- Sapphire roses which store temperamental magics.

DIMMING TWILIGHT

In the darkness between the stars, there are gateways to the City Between. Through these gateways, the Night Barons send mercenaries to poach the treasures of this place. The high priests of Palnayas enter the plane and seize the cult of Feil to serve.



- Tears of the stars, which burn away weakness.
- The Keeper's Garb, black robes ever-changing.
- Twilight Songs, which will never fade from memory.
- Phials binding elder stars, granting immortality.

HEX

The Night Barons adore this prime, both for the rich treasures that can be extracted and for the hedonistic pleasures it can provide a weary merchant. The guild set up shop and was drowning in trade deals before they knew it.



- Fragrant and luminous incense.
- Hookahs filled with infernal blends.
- Dangerous secrets of uncertain lineage.
- Sensual services by skilled day-mons.



IRON CITIES

The Chosen spread into this harsh prime with subtle disguises and quiet corruption. One of the Cities has been turned by the cult, and the divine hierarchy of the Chosen established. The divine blessings they received from Palnayas made them stronger than their inferior primal rivals.

- Intricate carvings of stone and iron.
- Swords bearing the skill of ancient warriors.
- Iron Standards that inspire armies.
- Metal masks embossed with swirls, which carry the skills of artifice.



MOUNTAIN ROYAL

The Merchant's Guild has infiltrated this prime world, purchasing wagon-loads of goods for a handful of gold coin. The metal beetles may have struck a few of those carts, but many fine trades were completed all the same.

- Compact bolt throwers that can pierce the thickest plate.
- Rods that hurl paralyzing lightning.
- A dish of fried tubers, melted cheese, and gravy.
- Rich and complex-flavoured beer.



WHISPERING SANDS

The Night Barons have sent caravans into the Whispering Sands; all of them wandered the wastes without finding a destination. By the time they had discovered the secret to accessing the Oasis, their physical trading post had been well established.

- Dried Movoda fish, whose meat will sustain anyone.
- The seeds of ubami fruit which calm minds and erase ambitions.
- The seeds of ubami fruit, which shackle reality to serve the bearer.
- Waters of the Oasis, which make all suffering forgotten.

FRAMING CUES

PLATFORMS

- A bustling marketplace, filled with countless merchants plying their primal treasures.
- A secret temple of frosted granite and spiked statuettes, hidden in the Cult's Way, at the foot of Godstreet.
- The docks, each warehouse full of strange goods from the prime worlds.
- A popular bar on the Isle of Spirits which now only serves the Chosen.
- A decaying warren in the Rat Farms, filled with drug-addled paupers.
- The Craft Quarter and the crystalline artisans who have arrived to sell their wares.
- The site of the walls which are currently being created to contain the Breeding Warrens.
- The shadow of the Golden Spires, patrolled by Spiked warriors.

TILTS

- The crates are filled with sentient, acid-secreting tentacles, freshly imported from the primes.
- Something is strange about the woman with sinuous movements and hungry eyes.
- The child puts the crystalline mask on her face, and it merges into her flesh.
- There is an iron sword on the ground. It whispers to you. It wants you. It needs you.
- Your surroundings waver, like a hallucination or a mirage.
- A band of Spiked thugs arrive, armed with clubs and wicked smiles.
- The Chosen emerge from the alleyways, surrounding you.
- You notice a group of enslaved primal mortals, chained and bound to serve their overlord.

QUESTIONS

- Where do the Spiked come from?
- Who do the Spiked serve?
- What dangerous primal goods have the Night Barons imported?
- Why do the Enforcers defend the Night Barons?
- Why has Palnayas and their Chosen come to Sig?
- Who are the three leaders of the Church of the Chosen?
- Who does the Serpent Dynasty actually serve?
- Which of the Powers have pledged themselves to Empire?



FOR EXAMPLE

HOW TO BEGIN

Anna is running a campaign of Sig with Brian, Chris, and Dave.

STEP 1 PLANAR TETHERS

***Anna** decides that the City of Power is a juicy starting situation. Sig will begin with tethers to Flame, Destruction, and Lore.*

She could have gotten the same tethers if she had rolled a 1, 3, 3 and allocated her 1 to the Elemental Ring.

STEP 2 NAME AND TITLE

***Brian** considers playing one of those Giants he saw listed when they established tethers. He names his character **Giffard the Lesser** (as an understatement of his size).*

***Chris**' character is named **Izrai the Destroyer**, and he's eager to hear why his character earned that moniker.*

***Dave** names his character **Talan Starkin**, since he read ahead and was excited about playing someone with Aesigilar heritage. He imagines tattoos on his arms that appear like slowly moving constellations.*

STEP 3 FAMILY HERITAGE

***Brian** decided to play a Giant from two giant parents, born and raised on the Elemental Plane of Stone. His character must take all four of the Giant Talents listed on page 75: Earth (Broad), Huge (Broad), Strength (Common), and Irresistible Force (Deep), leaving him 3 more to choose later.*

***Chris** is playing a half-blooded Fireheart who emigrated from the Plane of Flame when it last got the tether. He has to choose two of the four Fireheart Talents from "Firehearts" on page 63 as his planar Talents, with five other Talents of his choosing. He selects Fire (Broad) and Burning Hands (Deep) for his Fireheart Talents, and he'll choose the other 5 in a minute.*

Dave decides to go for a more complicated family background and describes his character's grandparents. His character is descended from an Aesigilar father, and a mother of stranger origins. He chooses two planar Talents from his Father's side, selecting: Patterns (Broad) and Prediction (Common). His mother taught him how to travel between mirrors, and they share the Talent of Mirrorwalking (Deep). He'll choose 4 more Talents later.

STEP 4 PROFESSION AND TALENTS

Brian looks at the professions list and decides his character is a day labourer. With that in mind, he picks up three new Talents: Demolitions (Common), Intimidation (Common), and Speaker for the Stone (Deep).

Chris is drawn to a cultist lifestyle and picks up five new Talents: Religion (Broad), Persuasion (Broad), Literature (Common), Brawling (Common), Polemics (Deep).

Dave doesn't need the census list, since he already knows his character sells rare art. He gains the Talents of Markets (Common), Contracts (Common), Primal Artwork (Deep), and Familial Guilt (Deep).

STEP 5 FACTION LOYALTY

Brian's character joined the Guild of Toil, like many of his kin.

Chris's character chooses to become an Enforcer.

Dave's character wisely decides to stay Independent, not trusting any of those Factions farther than he could throw them.

STEP 6 SPIRITUAL POWER

Brian's Giant has little faith, serving neither god nor demon willingly.

Chris' character is a devout and zealous servitor of Alius the Pure.

Dave's character is a mercenary servitor of Nyx the Oracle. The goddess is mildly irritated at this mortal's lack of faith..

STEP 7 CHARACTER BELIEFS



Due to a rough childhood and harsh treatment by his parents, Giffard is convinced that **GIANTS CAN NEVER BE TRUSTED**.



When Giffard grew up, he decided that **BUILDING IS BETTER THAN BREAKING**, pledging himself to honest toil.



Despite all of the Giant's efforts, he has seen tragedy after tragedy and is convinced that **THE GODS DELIGHT IN SUFFERING**.



Izrai came from a very different perspective, as the child of an immigrant. He grew up convinced that **WE MUST ADAPT TO THE CITY**, rejecting the idea that the world should change to suit our desires.



Izrai joined up with the Enforcers, committing terrible violence with ease, thanks to his Belief that **PEOPLE ARE WOLVES OR SHEEP**.



The half-blooded fireheart also joined up with the devotees of Alius the Pure, who preach that **CRITICISM IS A HOLY ACT**.



Talan Starkin was always watched closely by his parents and feared displeasing them. He is convinced that **PARENTS MUST BE OBEYED**.



Talan's upbringing did a great deal to shelter him from the messy world of Faction politics. He decided that **POLITICS IS A BLOOD SPORT** at an early age and refused to join any organization.



Talan is an ambitious soul, who found his career through portents. He is convinced that you should **FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS**.

STEP 8 ATTRIBUTES

Anna discusses the GM attributes with her players and chooses to put more emphasis on the setting than on personal relationships. She wants a game of urban conspiracy with servitors infiltrating the various Factions. The various citizens of Sig and planar invaders are the greatest threat to the peace. She sets her Spark attribute at D8 and her Smoke at D12.

Brian decides that his character is personally potent, but does not control the setting very well. He chooses the **Champion** archetype, with a Spark of D10 and a Smoke of D6.

Chris is balanced, wanting to portray his character or NPCs as he would like. He picks the **Freebooter** archetype with a Spark of D8 and Smoke of D8.

Dave wants to portray a character who is more in the background. He'd rather work through NPCs and framing scenes. He chooses the **Companion** archetype with a Spark of D6 and Smoke of D10.

CHARACTER SHEET EXAMPLE: IZRAI THE DESTROYER

SIG

CHARACTER SHEET

“STEP 2: NAME AND TITLE” ON PAGE 42

You are known as...

Izrai the Destroyer

“STEP 4: PROFESSIONAL TALENTS” ON PAGE 46

You work as a...

Freelance Cultist

You are described as...

An ash-hued, robed gentleman with a smouldering beard.

You are played by...

Chris

FAMILY HERITAGE

Imari Hearthkeeper

- Planar Heritage (**Fireheart**)
- Primal Blood
- Stranger Nature

“STEP 3: FAMILY HERITAGE” ON PAGE 44

Helen Nowak

- Planar Heritage ()
- Primal Blood
- Stranger Nature



We must adapt to the city

FAMILY BELIEF

“STEP 5: FACTION LOYALTY” ON PAGE 48

“STEP 4: PROFESSIONAL TALENTS” ON PAGE 46

TALENTS	
Fire	+1 BROAD
Religion	
Persuasion	
Literature	+2 COMMON
Brawling	
Burning Hands	+3 DEEP
Polemics	

“STEP 8: ATTRIBUTES” ON PAGE 54

ATTRIBUTES		
		1 D20
		2 D12
		3 D10
		4 D8
		5 D6
		6 D4
SPARK	SMOKE	HARM

POLITICAL FACTION
You are a member of... The Enforcers
Your Duty is to... Enforce the rough justice of Sig
Your Leverage is... Police brutality and thuggery

SPIRITUAL POWER
You are a worshiper of... Alius the Pure
You show your Devotion by... Never bathing in water
Your Ritual allows you to... Burn away wounds and toxins

People are wolves or sheep
POLITICAL BELIEF

Criticism is a holy act
SPIRITUAL BELIEF

“STEP 7: CHARACTER BELIEFS” ON PAGE 52

“STEP 6: SPIRITUAL POWER” ON PAGE 50

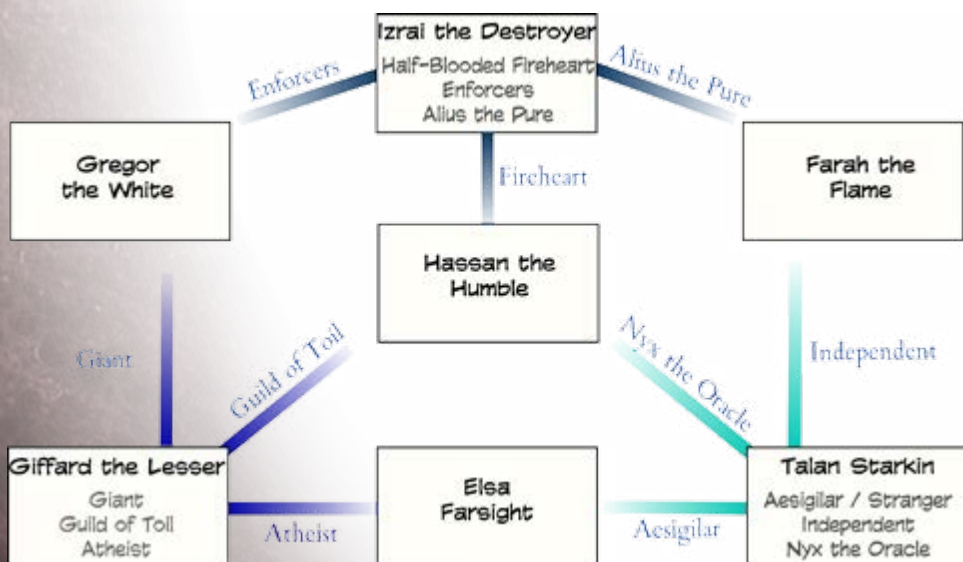
STEP 9 PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

Since Anna has three players in her game, she places one index card between Brian, Chris, and Dave, with an extra card in the middle. These will be the four major NPCs that the PCs will be dealing with.

Brian and Dave discuss their common character first. They write the name **Elsa Farsight** at the top of the card to start things off. Brian decides that his character shares a lack of faith with Elsa, with both of them distrusting the motivations of the planar Powers. Dave declares that Elsa is actually a full Aesigilar, and the two of them relate to each other based on their shared heritage. They describe her as a brilliant merchant who trades in rare commodities from across the 'verse.

Dave and Chris then start talking about **Farah the Flame**, the NPC they have in common. It turns out that Farah is also independent of Faction influence, like Dave's character. She is another servitor of Alius, much like Chris' character, albeit a tad more zealous.

Chris and Brian share relationships with **Gregor the White**, a thug who is fond of harassing the Waterborn refugees. Gregor is a half-Giant and a strong-arm for the Enforcers. They love to direct him at any of the neighbourhoods that start to cause problems, and he deals with them. While the players are discussing the various relationships and histories, Anna grabs a blank piece of paper and sketches out a relationship map.



Looking at all the characters, Anna puts an index card in the center of the table, with the name "Hassan" written on it. Brian declares that his character heard that Hassan is known to be a gentle soul, who protects the Orphanarium. Chris declares that he heard Hassan is sleeping with one of the Enforcers, going by the name of Gregor. Dave declares that Hassan once slew The Black Pearl, archdaemon of the silver crucible. The group chats a bit more about Hassan, and determine that he was one a mighty venturer, who saw one too many nightmarish abominations and wanted to settle down in the safe streets of Sig.

Anna nods, then rips up the index card, declaring that Hassan has been slain. It appears that the streets were not as safe as he had expected.



HOW TO PLAY

Now that Anna, Brian, Chris, and Dave have finished their characters and established the initial situation, they are ready to start their first scene.

FRAMING PHASE

To start the Scene, everyone rolls their Smoke die.

Anna  Brian  Chris  Dave 

Anna clearly has the highest score, but Brian and Chris are tied and need a reroll to break the tie. On that tie, Brian gets  and Chris gets .

Because of these results, the order for framing the scene is Anna, Chris, and then Brian.

As Anna has the highest score, she establishes the Platform. She describes a smoke-shrouded and abandoned construction site, where Hassan's broken body had been found.

Chris has the next highest score, so he establishes the Tilt. He describes that a group of Enforcers, led by Gregor the White, walk out of the shadows with blood-thirsty grins and bloody fists.

Brian has the third highest score, so he gets to ask the Question. He asks "What is Gregor hiding?"

With the Scene established, they move to Collaboration.

COLLABORATION PHASE

Anna describes the stench of stale beer and coppery blood, positively radiating off the Enforcers. In Gregor's deep voice, she says "What do we have here, girls? Looks like some visitors, come to pay their respects."

Chris, speaking as Izrai the Destroyer, says, "You dare threaten us? We know what you did here, and you will never get away with murdering this gentle soul."

Brian describes Giffard the Lesser stepping forward, putting a massive hand on Izrai's shoulder. "Izrai, keep your temper in check. I know your blood runs hot, but we can find answers together."

Anna, as Gregor, says, "Answers? You are the ones who killed Hassan, and we caught you red-handed."


Brian describes Giffard backhanding Gregor with a stone fist, smashing the Enforcer into a wall to take him out. Anna disagrees, and they trigger the Conflict Phase.


CONFLICT PHASE

Step 1 - Sides

First, both sides declare what they want to happen. Brian declares he wants Gregor to be knocked back into the wall and taken out of the Scene. Anna wants Gregor to catch the fist in mid-air, intimidating Talan and Izrai. Chris declares that Izrai is cheering Giffard on and filling his soul with angry fire. Dave declares that Talan is standing back and not getting involved.

Step 2 - Dice

With that accomplished, both Brian and Anna select their dice. Because Giffard is performing a physical action, Brian will select a die that matches his Spark attribute (D10). Thanks to the support from Izrai, the die is increased by one step, so Brian will actually roll a D12 instead. He rolls .

Since Anna is portraying one of the key Faces (Gregor), she uses her Spark attribute (D8) for this conflict. If she were using any other NPCs, such as one of the other Enforcers, she would have rolled her Smoke die instead. Since Gregor is an NPC with a relevant Strength (Street Brawler) she increases her die size by one level. This means that she rolls a D10, with a result of .

Step 3 - Bonuses

Brian looks at Giffard's Talents to see if any of them would increase his result. Giffard has a Broad Talent of "Huge" which gives a +1, a Common Talent of "Strength" which gives +2, and a Deep Talent of "Irresistible Force" for an additional +3. This will increase Giffard's total by six points, to a total of 9. This means that Brian is winning the Conflict.

Anna decides that this Conflict is relatively important, so she spends two points of Influence from her supply. Each influence gives her a +, so her total result increases to 10.

Giffard isn't going to let Gregor get in his way, and he pushes himself physically. Brian decides to suffer a level of Harm, which gives an additional +3 bonus on the roll, increasing his result to 12. Until he recovers and removes that Harm, he will be unable to roll any die larger than D12. .

Step 4 - Victory

Brian narrates the outcome, describing how the half-giant enforcer smashes through a half-constructed wall and collapses unconscious. He describes the giant shaking his bloody hand, hurting from the severe impact. He then pays the price of victory, suffering an additional point of Harm.

COLLABORATION PHASE CONTINUES

Anna describes how the other Enforcers back away from Giffard, hands in the air. In a nasal voice, she speaks for one of them: "Look, we don't mean no trouble here. Gregor found him an hour ago, and it took a lot out of him. The boss had been close with Hassan here, if you know what I mean. He thought that we could find the murderer by staking out the site."

Talan Starkin steps forward, speaking softly. "You are telling the truth, I think. There have been a string of attacks like this over the past few weeks." Dave describes walking over to the body and plucking a blue rose from Hassan's shattered hand. "Each of the victims is left this calling card. Curious. Why would Hassan be targeted?"

Dave just introduced a number of facts about the story. If Anna or any of the other players wished to contest these facts, they could trigger a Conflict. Everyone is fine with this outcome, however, and it answers the Scene's Question. The group moves onto the Closing Phase.

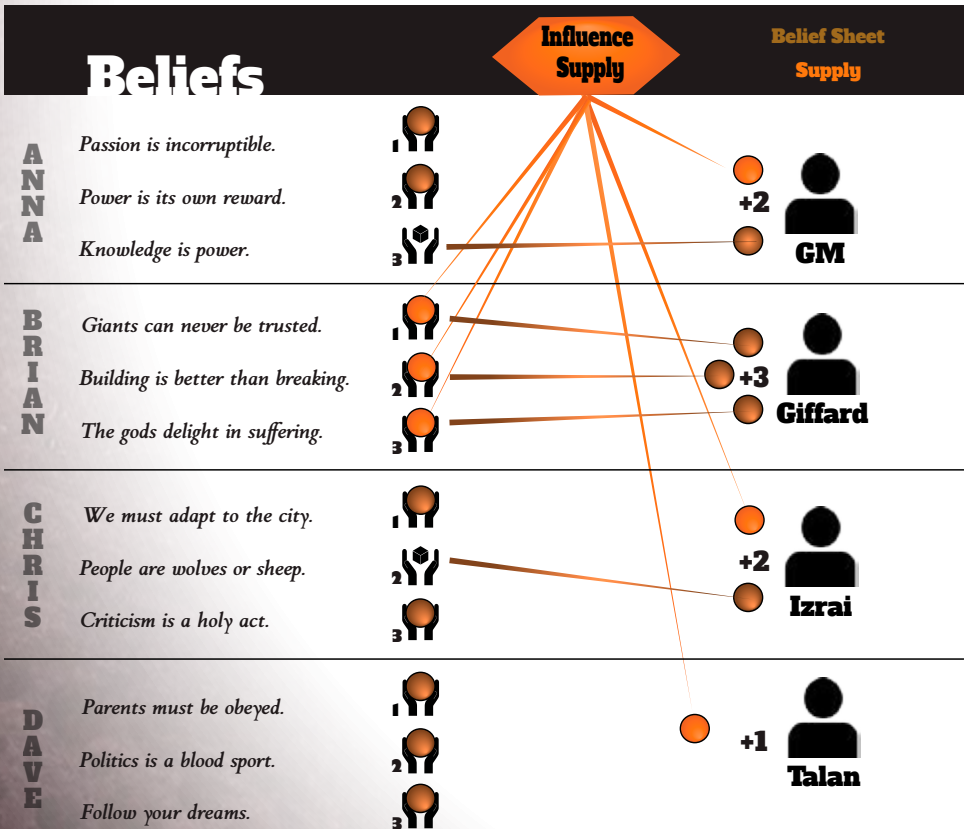
CLOSING PHASE

The group goes through the full list of Beliefs, discussing which ones have been confronted during play.

Anna presented passion as an important element of the Scene, but it wasn't challenged. She did, however, reinforce the Belief that "Knowledge is Power", by presenting valuable information in the Scene. She gets one Influence from that entry on the Belief Sheet.

Brian confirmed that "Giants can Never be Trusted", refuted his Belief that "Building is better than Breaking", and confirmed that "The Gods Delight in Suffering". He gains three Influence for his sheet. Since all of the entries are empty, this triggers a refresh; everyone else gets one Influence, and Brian refills the Influence tokens for those entries on the Belief Sheet.

Neither Chris or Dave confronted their Beliefs in the Scene, so they doesn't collect more Influence. Chris does, however, choose to spend three Influence to trigger an Interlude with Brian.



INTERLUDE

Chris describes a quiet scene, where Giffard and Izrai sit on the broken rubble beside Hassan's fallen body.

Brian describes his Giant, staring at his bloodied fists with an expression of dread. Izrai speaks up, saying, "Giffard, my friend. I know that you have done worse, many times. What is wrong?"

Brian describes Giffard moving his gaze to meet with Izrai's. "I promised never to lash out violently at a defenseless victim. I promised myself to be better than my father." He weeps softly, and ash softly falls on their shoulders.

Having answered the question, both Brian and Chris could remove one Harm from their character sheets. This means that Brian removes the point of Harm he had suffered in the Conflict.

REFLECTION SCENE

Hours later, after a complete Session, Talan has accumulated 15 Influence and triggered a Reflection Scene. Dave asked to have a scene with Izrai, set in Sir Bearington's Meadery on the Isle of Spirits. The cultist and the merchant are drinking heavily.

Dave speaks as Talan. "Izrai, why do we keep get caught up in these kinds of disasters?"

Izrai responds, "Look, you know that you can't ignore politics forever. I know you don't like the political machinations, but you have a brilliant strategic mind. You need to settle down and use your power, rather than hiding from it."

Talan knocks back a wooden mug of mead and slams it on the table. "Bloody hell, Izrai, you think I should become a political hack? That's your solution?"

Izrai nods. "Look, you have power. The question is, how are you going to use it?"

Dave nods, erasing Izrai's second Belief and replacing it with "NO ONE ELSE CAN USE POWER SAFELY."

Dave adds a new Talent in Politics, and Chris decides to add a level to his Smoke attribute.

SOURCES AND SECRETS

The City Between has been informed by many fine pieces of fiction and RPG design, of which these are but a few.

PLANESCAPE

A setting for AD&D 2nd Edition by Zeb Cook and published by TSR

This is the biggest inspiration for Sig, by a wide margin. In some ways, this setting is the reason why I got into game design. It describes a cosmopolitan fantasy city in the middle of the D&D multiverse. Any place that's home to philosophers with clubs is good in my books. Check out this mind-blowing original setting, beautifully illustrated by Tony DiTerlizzi.

SAGA

An Eisner-award winning comic by Brian K. Vaughan, Fiona Staples, and published by Image Comics

A comic set in a space-fantasy setting, focusing on the importance of family, relationships, childhood, and parenthood. It's a wild tale of distinctive (odd) cultures and social commentary, and one that will bring a tear to your eye.

PLANARCH CODEX: DARK HEART OF THE DREAMER

An expansion for Dungeon World by J. Walton

Jonathan did a fantastic job of interpreting Planescape through the lens of cultural diversity in the multiplanar melting-pot city of Dis, which is literally assimilating the rest of the universe. Freebooters, heritage moves, and all sorts of other goodies abound in this fantastic supplement for Dungeon World.

KILL SIX BILLION DEMONS

A webcomic written by Abbadon at <http://killsixbilliondemons.com/> and published by Image Comics

This is a fantastical and mythologically rich comic that reveals the city of Throne, Domain of Kings, Kingdom of God, and center of the Omniverse. Demon-kingdoms and mystic orders fighting on the fossilized bodies of the massive angels. This will captivate you.

THE COMPLETE PRIEST'S HANDBOOK

A Rules Supplement by the late Aaron Allston, published by TSR

None of the divine and infernal powers found in these pages would have been possible if not for the Complete Book of Priests. It's a guide that showed how diverse faiths can be motivated, what gifts their spiritual patrons can provide, and how society can be shaped by belief.

POLARIS: CHIVALRIC TRAGEDY AT UTMOST NORTH

A roleplaying game by Ben Lehman, published by TAO Games

This game features haunting beauty in a world of ice and starlight. The system distributes GM authority amongst the players and uses ritual phrases for great effect. If you love the Plane of Ice, Polaris is your game.

DON'T REST YOUR HEAD

A roleplaying game by Fred Hicks, published by Evil Hat Productions

Those who can't rest eventually find their way to the Mad City, hunted by nightmares. This game explores this terrible realm, nestled in the plane of Dreams. The elegant twin death spirals of Exhaustion and Madness make for an unforgettable experience.

KORAD

A collaborative writing experiment, led by Robin D. Laws

Robin Laws began an experiment in 2010 on his Livejournal where he crowdsourced a world-building experiment. During the process, countless fascinating ideas emerged in this somewhat coherent setting, which was released into the public domain in its entirety. The Aesigiliar were introduced there.

MYTHENDER

A roleplaying game by Ryan Macklin

The gods are cruel monsters, and someone needs to end them. This game features those mighty mortals who rise up to overthrow the terrible Powers and seize their place. If you want to stab Thor (or Kalzak) in the face, check it out at www.mythenderrpg.com

FACE CHARACTERS (SPARK)

NOTABLE PLACES

OTHER MINOR NPCs (SMOKE)

ATTRIBUTES



SPARK

SMOKE

HARM



ELEMENTAL RING

- FLAME: Passion is incorruptible.
Firehearts • Cleaners • Alius
- WAVES: True power is hidden.
Waterborn • Riverwatch • Tritonous
- WIND: Every message is sacred.
Winged • Heralds • Ferrelux
- STONE: Strength is a burden.
Giants • Toil • Morkanah
- ICE: Beauty is fragile.
Polari • Performers • Aludra

IDEOLOGICAL RING

- JUSTICE: Virtue must be tested.
Ancestral • Teachers • Myn
- TYRANNY: Mercy has no place in justice.
Devahil • Advocates • Kalzak
- DESTRUCTION: Power is its own reward.
Wyrms • Enforcers • Eater of Worlds
- ORDER: Laws are absolute.
Acsigil • Paper Guard • Edana
- FREEDOM: Law is a prison for the soul.
Feral • Exterminators • Calla

CONCEPTUAL RING

- DREAMS: Everyone is connected.
Cubi • Gazetteer • Nyx
- SHADOW: Reality is an illusion.
Gnomes • Artificers • Magdak
- LORE: Knowledge is power.
Elderskein • Sage • Brossien
- LIFE: Grow or die.
Sylva • Farmers • Kestranna
- DEATH: Mortality is a blessing.
Revenant • Dustkeepers • Omulaub

You are known as....

You work as a...

You are described as...

You are played by...

FAMILY HERITAGE

- Planar Heritage ()
- Primal Blood
- Stranger Nature

- Planar Heritage ()
- Primal Blood
- Stranger Nature



FAMILY BELIEF

TALENTS

BROAD
+1

COMMON
+2

DEEP
+3

POLITICAL FACTION

You are a member of...

Your Duty is to...

Your Leverage is...



POLITICAL BELIEF

ATTRIBUTES



SPARK



SMOKE



HARM



SPIRITUAL POWER

You are a worshiper of...































You show your Devotion by...

Your Ritual allows you to...



SPIRITUAL BELIEF

Belief Sheet

	Elemental Plane of Flame Passion is Incorruptible	1 	
	Elemental Plane of Stone Strength is a Burden	2 	
	Elemental Plane of Waves True Power is Hidden	3 	
	Elemental Plane of Wind Every Message is Sacred	1 	
	Elemental Plane of Ice Beauty is Fragile	2 	
	Ideological Plane of Justice Virtue must be Tested	3 	
	Ideological Plane of Tyranny Mercy has no Place in the Law	1 	
	Ideological Plane of Destruction Power is its own Reward	2 	
	Ideological Plane of Order Laws are Absolute	3 	
	Ideological Plane of Freedom Law is a Prison for the Soul	1 	
	Conceptual Plane of Dreams Everyone is Connected	2 	
	Conceptual Plane of Shadow Reality is an Illusion	3 	
	Conceptual Plane of Lore Knowledge is Power	1 	
	Conceptual Plane of Life Grow or Die	2 	
	Conceptual Plane of Death Mortality is a Blessing	3 	

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BEYOND THE BOOK

All of the sheets and play-aids are available on our website at www.genesisoflegend.com and on DrivethruRPG.com.

This is a Bits-and-Mortar title, meaning that you get a complementary PDF with every purchase from a friendly local game store. If you want that copy, or if you have any questions, contact us at genesisoflegend@gmail.com.

This book told you the basics, but it's up to you to make the City Between come alive. Go tell stories together, and welcome your friends to Sig.