

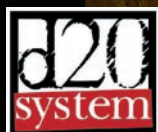


THIEVES' WORLD GAZETTEER



A *THIEVES' WORLD*
SOURCEBOOK FOR THE
D20 SYSTEM

BY LYNN ABBEY,
BRIAN CAMPBELL,
PATRICK O'DUFFY, AND
ROBERT J. SCHWALB



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THIEVES' WORLD GAZETTEER

A CAMPAIGN SETTING SOURCEBOOK FOR THIEVES' WORLD

Design: Lynn Abbey, Brian Campbell, Patrick O'Duffy, and Robert J. Schwalb

Additional Design: C.A. Suleiman (Demonologist)

Editing: V3 Studios Proofreading: Scott Neese Development: Robert J. Schwalb

Art Direction and Graphic Design: Hal Mangold Cover Art: Ozan Art

Interior Art: Toren "Macbin" Atkinson, Kent Burles, Empty Room Studios (Jeff Koch, Ed Herrera, Tim Hibbetts, Jia Wang), Pat Loboyko, Manoel Magalhães, Tony Parker, Mike Vilardi, Joseph Wigfield

Cartography: Rob Lazzaretti

Executive Producer: Chris Pramas

Green Ronin Staff: Steve Kenson, Nicole Lindroos, Hal Mangold, Chris Pramas, Evan Sass, Marc Schmalz, and Robert J. Schwalb

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P.O. Box 1723
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The walls of Sanctuary may be wide, but they are not high. Like so much else in this city, they were either never truly completed or have fallen into disrepair, and consist more of ditches and ramparts than stones and mortar. They are riddled with holes and gaps, which any savvy citizen of Sanctuary knows how to use to come and go as he pleases. On any day you can look out through the Gate of Triumph, over the Seawall reef, or just across an unfinished stretch of rubble, and see the rest of this thieves' world, just waiting to be explored. Beyond the horizon lie strange gods and monsters and empires.

The other books in the *Thieves' World* RPG series have focused on the city of Sanctuary, and with good reason—the city is as much a character as (if not more than) any of the heroes and villains that have graced the pages of the anthologies. But still, it's *Thieves' World*, not *Thieves' City*, and there are opportunities aplenty for adventure, danger, and fortune outside Sanctuary.

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER

The Thieves' World Gazetteer is primarily a guide for GMs. It provides tools for campaigns that move beyond Sanctuary or for those campaigns that never even reach that backwater little city. Players will also find a lot to use here, from information on various cultures and religions to new rules and character options.

CHAPTER ONE: THIEVES' WORLD CAMPAIGNS

This first chapter offers suggestions on how to run games outside Sanctuary. It gives a brief overview of the continent on which Sanctuary is found, introduces ways to connect that continent to other campaign settings, and provides ideas for campaigns and adventures in the various *Thieves' World* eras.

CHAPTER TWO: A WORLD OF THIEVES

The second section of the book looks at each of those eras in much greater detail. As well as giving a timeline of events from the anthologies and stories, it explores the history of the world itself, the backdrop against which those stories took place. In addition, this chapter broadly discusses the lands and places of the continent, the shape and form of the bones of this ancient world. This vast landmass has deserts and swamps, mountains in the center and islands off the coast, and even has a few dungeons and ancient ruins, all waiting to be discovered.

CHAPTER THREE: LANDS AND PEOPLE OF THIEVES' WORLD

Next, **Chapter Three** takes you on a guided tour of the people and cultures of the unnamed continent. You'll find extensive details on the cultures that are briefly described in the *Thieves' World Campaign Setting* and *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*, as well as a few lands you never have heard of. These new traditions and taboos will bring more color, and hopefully more complications, to the lives of the PCs.

CHAPTER FOUR: LANDS BEYOND

Chapter Four ventures beyond the world of mortals and material things and into the otherworldly planes and alien realms of *Thieves' World*. From the home of the gods to far-flung alternate realities and all the places in-between, this is your guide to the most fantastic elements of the series.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE GODS OF THIEVES' WORLD

Chapter Five expands on the material found in the appendix of the *Thieves' World Campaign Setting*. The gods play a major part in the lives of mortals (especially for the superstitious and desperate residents of Sanctuary), and this chapter provides all the material that a GM needs

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to bring the worship of those gods to life or that a player needs to flesh out his own character's religious leanings. Information on the Avatars of the gods, their manifestations on the material plane, are also explored.

CHAPTER SIX: SUPPLEMENTAL RULES

Chapter Six has a grab-bag of new material for GMs and players alike: feats, cultures, backgrounds, and prestige classes.

CHAPTER SEVEN: BESTIARY

Finally, Chapter Seven concludes the book with a look at the monsters of *Thieves' World*, and rules for adapting creatures from other sourcebooks for play in this setting.

GETTING THAT THIEVES' WORLD FEEL

What differentiates *Thieves' World* from other d20 settings isn't the magic system or the classes or the cultures, although they help. It's a tone and feel that sets it apart, that lets you know you're playing in Sanctuary and not just any fantasy city. *Thieves' World* is a sword-and-sorcery setting, not a high-fantasy one; its focus is more personal than epic, and even its world-altering stories have a gritty, realistic flavor.

The following are some key elements of the *Thieves' World* feel.

COMPELLING CHARACTERS

Above all other things, *Thieves' World* is about interesting characters and their fascinating and often tragic lives. Personality is more important in this setting than raw power; everyone has a complex history and a unique cultural outlook, and anyone who doesn't have a story to start with will soon find himself in the midst of one.

GRITTY REALISM

Nothing gets handwaved away in this setting. Wounds fester if not treated, you starve if you spend all your money on armor, and when you cut a villain down, *someone* has to come and take the body away before it rots.

HARSH TREATMENT

Life can be cheap in Sanctuary, and death even cheaper. Murder and rape are all-too common, sexism and racism are rife, and children starve

for lack of care. Most people accept such things as inevitable, and even the noblest of heroes must struggle to overcome prejudices that modern society wouldn't condone.

MORAL AMBIGUITY

There's no objective good or evil here, and few can be called saints or demons. This is a world where a murderous rapist can be the hero of an empire (e.g., Tempus), and where a bloody handed cultist can redeem himself by taking a healer's role (e.g., Pel Garwood). There are no easy answers to moral dilemmas, especially in a world where the gods are often amoral and authority figures are more often than not corrupt. People must make their own choices and live with the consequences.

DARING ADVENTURE

Treasure and fame are powerful incentives, especially for those on the wrong side of the law. Of course, as in other settings, there are dungeons and quests and adventures aplenty in *Thieves' World*, but what adds extra spice is the *danger* of that adventure in this world. There is no magical healing, there are no adventurer's guilds or other safety nets, and anything you gain is likely to be something that someone else wants . . . or wants back.

LIVES OF CRIME

It wouldn't be *Thieves' World* without thieves, would it? Stories of cunning rogues and light-fingered heroes are the meat and drink of this setting, and a campaign without such characters and opportunities for them to use their skills just wouldn't be *Thieves' World*.

RARE MONSTERS

Supernatural creatures rarely appear in *Thieves' World*, and when they do show up, it's always a major event. Monsters tend not to be the major villains of adventures, but may be the servants or protectors of hated foe or villainous mastermind, while demons or gods may be the ultimate opponents of an epic story.

MAGIC AND MYSTERY

Sorcery in all its forms is a strange and unknowable force, and is not something that can be easily harnessed. Most people shun or fear sorcery, while a few are brave enough to make some small use of it. Only the rarest of mortals embrace sorcery completely, and the price of that power is to be forever separated from the rest of society.





CHAPTER ONE: THIEVES' WORLD CAMPAIGNS

The most enduring character of *Thieves' World* isn't Ischade, or Cauvin, or even Shadowspawn. It's Sanctuary, the city itself, which has as much personality and history as any adventurer to walk its streets. But there's more to *Thieves' World* than one city, and it's almost inevitable that your campaign will eventually see the PCs heading out of Sanctuary to explore the world beyond . . . even if they come running back a few days later.

This chapter looks at *Thieves' World* campaign issues—not just the world itself, but how to use that world in your games. While the focus here is on using the world beyond Sanctuary as the backdrop for adventures, a lot of the information presented here can be very useful as background material or for giving some context to characters even if your campaign never leaves the Maze.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD

The tricky thing about discussing the world of *Thieves' World* is that it doesn't have a name other than 'the Known World.' Or rather, it has so many *different* names—one for every culture, subculture, religion and scholar out there—that it's hard to pick just one. Most people just call it 'the world' if they aren't too concerned with day-to-day life to bother calling it anything at all.

This world, though obviously not our own, is a lot like it. It has seasons, air, animals, people, oceans and so on, but the details are different. Even though it has a pre-medieval level of technology, it's not a lost piece of Earth's history. The Rankan Empire may be similar to the Roman Empire, but at the same time it has distinct differences. All of this makes *Thieves' World* both easy and tricky to GM. On the one hand, you can use some familiar aspects from our own world and its history ("he's dressed like a Roman legionnaire") while ignoring others ("...but he's armed with a crossbow and battleaxe").

On the other hand, it can be easy to get stuck on those similarities with our history and forget the differences. Your players may expect well-maintained roads from the Rankans and be surprised when their trail peters out somewhere in the wilderness. Use the similarities to get your players comfortable, then play up the differences—the monsters, magic, gods, politics and other big divergences—so they don't get *too* comfortable.

THE CONTINENT

Like Earth, this world is mostly covered by oceans that are broken up by a handful of large continents. Sanctuary is truly on the edge of the map. It is located on the southern coast of a southern continent, which is in turn attached to a vast equator-straddling mega-continent too large to circumnavigate. Like the world, these continents have either no name or too many names to count, depending on your point of view, and few worry much about what lies beyond the immediate horizon. The *Thieves' World* stories have revealed details only about the southern continent and a few nearby islands, which for all intents and purposes make up the 'full' extent of the setting.

This chapter is concerned with the geography of this southern continent and how its locations relate to Sanctuary: why people from those regions come to the city of thieves, how those places are perceived by the scoundrels of Sanctuary, and what kind of plots and events make appropriate campaign lead-ins to those regions.

THE NORTH

Sanctuary is separated from the rest of continent to the north by the deadly Gray Wastes, the abandoned battlefields of Wizardwall, the brutal



city-states of Mygdonia, and the shattered lands of the Nisibisi, now torn apart by the Black-Toothed Horde.

The north is above all else a region of *danger*. This is a realm of terrible wars and conflicts that dragged on for decades. Wizardwall was the focal point of Nisi black magic unleashed against the Rankan legions. The northern forests and mountains are said to contain even darker magic, monsters and inhuman races lurking in the shadows. The Gray Wastes are home to simpler threats, the sort that punish the ignorant and unskilled with death by starvation, thirst, and madness.

Characters from northern regions are unsettling to the southerners of Sanctuary. After all, anyone from the north must be dangerous if they survived the terrors of their native lands, the thinking goes, and so they unwittingly create a constant air of violence and mysterious powers about themselves. Even the relatively benign Cirdonians are legendarily tough and brutal, while Mygdonians, Nisi and other Northrons can clear a room of Wrigglies just by stepping through the door. Northern characters may come to Sanctuary to escape the dangers of their old homes, but dark powers and old enemies are not so easily eluded. Refugees from the north are more likely to bring threats with them than to escape them.

When setting adventures in the north, you should emphasize it as a region of disaster and imminent danger. The Gray Wastes are hot, arid, and lack landmarks by which to travel. The lands beyond are cooler and more navigable, but the ground is littered with the remains of battle,

including fields of bone, corpses of war machines, and the ruins of dead towns and nameless cities. The natives are suspicious at best and warlike at worst, and many attack first and ask questions later. While monsters are rare in *Thieves' World*, they are more common in the north than they are anywhere else; use encounter tables from the *DMG* and don't be afraid to confront adventurers with dangerous creatures.

THE SOUTH

Sanctuary is on the southern edge of the continent. Beyond is the Seawall reef and the ocean, stretching off to the horizon. Somewhere beyond Inception Island and the Smuggler's Islands is the unknown home of the Beysib, while the Bandaran Isles, Sherranpip, and the Visala Islands are in the Sparkling Sea to the southwest.

The south is a region of *exoticism*. Hundreds of islands and dozens of archipelagos are scattered across the seas, each with its own unique culture and flavor. It isn't just the animals and wildlife, mores and societies, magic and technology that are different in the south, it's the people—the Beysib, while human, certainly had unusual traits, and perhaps other southerners are even more unusual. Stories and tall tales abound in Sanctuary about the folk of the islands and the creatures of the seas, and even if only half are true then it is indeed a world of wonders.

Southern characters in Sanctuary are likely to attract attention, especially from the young or naïve who believe them (perhaps correctly) to have



supernatural powers. With that attention comes suspicion, however, for people don't trust what they don't understand. Even characters of relatively familiar cultures like the half-Beysib and the Sherranpip, who are fully human but with a slightly exotic appearance, are kept at arm's length, and celebrated and curious foreigners make easy scapegoats when trouble rears its head.

Adventures in the south are set at sea and should emphasize the exotic lands and unusual peoples of the world. Explorers may find ruined temples and floating cities, islands of dinosaurs and dragons, civilizations with strange customs and stranger magic. Everything is new, everything is unknown—and just as southerners seem exotic and fascinating to mainlanders, so do mainlanders on the southern sea seem strange, unusual, and possibly dangerous, to the natives.

THE EAST

The Gray Wastes extend to the east of Sanctuary as well, but are not so inclement and deadly as they are to the north. Beyond is the fallen majesty of the shrinking Rankan Empire and the many nations it still controls like Twand, Aurvesh and Sihan.

The eastern lands are lands of *order*, though not always in a positive way. They are places of civilization, learning, and advances in science, but they are also home to one of the most militaristic, rigid and controlling states the continent has ever known. Even in its decline the Rankan Empire looms large over the east, and the region is a frenzy of political wrangling and mercantile intrigue. Easterners may be smart, they say in Sanctuary, but they ain't friendly.

An eastern character in Sanctuary is likely to get a mixed reception. Some see the Rankans (and by extension all easterners) as invaders and overlords, and resent the east for its perceived comforts and advantages.

Others hold up the east as the center of civilization and seek to help or serve eastern visitors, or perhaps to use them for their perceived political and intellectual power.

If your campaign visits the eastern lands, emphasize how much more civilized (yet less welcoming) the cities there are compared to Sanctuary. There are libraries and schools, but only for natives; there are temples to many gods, but you worship the Rankan ones if you know what's good for you. Monsters are almost unknown, but there is still a functioning Mageguild in Ranke and the temples still hold incredible power.

The Empire remains cosmopolitan. Whatever prejudices and discrimination Sanctans suffer while traveling outside Sanctuary are generally due to a widespread disdain towards that backwater haven for rogues and criminals rather than due to race, culture, or religion. To the rest of the world, Sanctuary is a last refuge for those at the end of their ropes.

THE WEST

Finally, the lands west of Sanctuary house some of the oldest and most varied of the continent's cultures. From the old Ilsig Kingdom to the merchants of Caronne to the shipyards of Mrseveda, the west is ancient, wise, and well aware of the lessons learned by Ranke's expansion. It is a place of *age*.

The cultures of the west are as deep-rooted as those of the east, but they are far older and less tumultuous. While the barbarians prowled the Cantal Plains, the Ilsigis already benefited from an established state. The cities of the west therefore have a confident and long-lived feel of *gravitas* and tradition.

The west is also a region of culture and art, and for that reason some rough-and-tumble Wrigglies may resent 'snobbish' westerners. Sanctuary

TABLE 1-1: CULTURAL MIX BY NATION OR LOCATION

| City or Place | Primary Culture (75% of population) | Secondary Cultures (20% of population) | Others (5% of population) |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Aurvesh | Aurveshani | Rankan | Twandan |
| Carrone | Caronnese | Ilsigi | Mrsevadan, Rankan |
| Cirdon | Cirdonian | Rankan | Nisi |
| Firaqa | Firaqan | Cirdonian, Wrigglie | All |
| Ilsig Kingdom | Ilsigi | Caronnese, Mrsevadan | All |
| Mrsevada | Mrsevadan | Caronnese, Ilsigi | Exotics 2 |
| Mygdonia | Mygdonian | Nisi | Rankan, Cirdonian |
| Ranke (city) | Rankan | All | — |
| Rankan Empire | Varies | — | — |
| Sanctuary | Wrigglie | Ilsigi, Rankan, or Irrune | All |
| Sherranpip | Sherran 1 | None | All maritime societies |
| Twand | Twandan | Rankan | Aurveshani |
| Yenized | Aurvesh or Twand | Rankan | All |

1 The Sherranpip are insular, and make up 95% of the population of their cities.

2 Exotics include peoples from distant and strange lands, such as Beysibs, travelers from the Bandaran Isles or from the homeland of the shapeshifters, and so on.

TABLE 1-2: HIGHEST-LEVEL LOCALS

| Class | Character Level |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Aristocrat | 2d4 + community modifier |
| Assassin | 1d6 + community modifier |
| Barbarian | 1d4 + community modifier |
| Commoner | 2d4 + community modifier |
| Expert | 2d4 + community modifier |
| Fighter | 1d8 + community modifier |
| Godsworn | 1d4 + community modifier |
| Initiate | 1d4 + community modifier |
| Mage | 1d4 + community modifier |
| Noble | 1d6 + community modifier |
| Priest | 1d4 + community modifier |
| Ranger | 1d4 + community modifier |
| Thief | 1d8 + community modifier |
| Savant | 1d8 + community modifier |
| Survivor | 1d6 + community modifier |
| Warrior | 2d4 + community modifier |
| Witch | 1d4 + community modifier |

is seen by most westerners as unsophisticated to the point of barbarism, and the Ilsigis regard Sanctans as little more than property. After all, the locals are almost all descendants from slaves, merely the get of a rebellion that has yet to be quashed.

When running sessions in the west, emphasize the sense of history in these lands. Everything has a story, everything had a season of glory—and some people are still lost in that history. This is a region of learning and magic, where civilization peaked long ago and has been slowly (but

proudly) falling ever since. Western nobles may possess relics and magical creatures, but do not always understand the secrets they hold. The location of ruins and treasures of old may be known by the locals, but have lain unclaimed because they are too uncaring or unwilling to brave the traps, magic, and creatures that guard them.

CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The *DMG* includes systems for determining the races, classes and levels of NPCs found in a particular city. Because *Thieves' World* uses different core classes and has cultures instead of races, those systems need a few modifications before they can be used.

CULTURES

Every city or town in *Thieves' World* has a primary culture, like the Wrigglies in Sanctuary or the Rankans in Ranke; this is usually the dominant culture of the area or nation of which the community is a part. Each community is also home to one or more secondary cultures; Sanctuary, for instance, has the Ilsigi as one secondary culture, as well as either the Rankan or the Irrune depending on the era. Finally, almost all cities and towns have a smattering of visitors, outsiders and foreigners, even if they're only passing through.

The GM should use the **Table 1-1** to determine the cultural mix of a community based on its location; if different cultures share a category, divide the population evenly among them. Note that nomads (like the Irrune, S'danzo, and Raggah) have no cities, and rarely allow outsiders to travel with them.

CLASSES

Because *Thieves' World* uses different core classes than the core rules, use **Table 1-2** in place of the one in the *DMG* to determine the highest-level characters in an urban locale.

LINKING THIEVES' WORLD TO OTHER SETTINGS

While a wide world and setting have been developed around Sanctuary, that doesn't mean you have to use that setting in your campaign. The most important thing about *Thieves' World* is Sanctuary itself, and with some work (in some cases a lot of work), that city could be transplanted into another setting, or another setting could be linked to the continent to become a new player in the conflicts of gods and men.

The issues that follow should be addressed when using integrating another game setting with *Thieves' World*.

CONNECTING THE WORLDS

First off, just how will you integrate Sanctuary and its surroundings with this other setting? Here are a few suggestions:

PLANAR INCURSION

Gates and portals between planes aren't an everyday occurrence, but they do happen (see **Chapter Four**), and characters from other worlds have come to Sanctuary in the past (and vice versa). The easiest way to bring another setting over to *Thieves' World* is via such a portal; the new world is simply there, spilling out into the city and the continent. You don't need to worry about integrating the two settings cleanly—in fact, part of the fun in this method is the clash of cultures and concepts between the two worlds.

PARTS UNKNOWN

Only slightly more complicated is making the second setting an undiscovered region of the *Thieves' World* setting (or vice versa). Sanctuary's home continent is attached to an even larger continent that is entirely unknown; maybe that continent is home to nonhumans with different technologies and magic. Or perhaps the other setting is far across the sea, like the Beysib Empire, and now sends emissaries to Sanctuary.

CITY THIEVED

The most difficult way to use Sanctuary in another setting may sound like the easiest—just drop the city into that setting as a location characters can visit. A lot of work may be required to use the setting in this way, however. Sanctuary isn't a 'generic' city; it comes with a complex weave of history, cultures, internal and external tensions. In other words, it is intrinsically tied to its context. Each *Thieves' World* culture, from the Ilsigi to the Rankans, should be replaced by a similar culture from the new setting. New gods must be substituted for Sanctuary's traditional gods, you will have to decide how the locals treat non-humans and how non-humans feel about the Sanctans, and so on.

TROUBLE SPOTS

When integrating *Thieves' World* and another setting, there are a few things you should work out before the campaign begins.

RULES

When the other setting has different rules than *Thieves' World*, such as alignments or its own magic system, which will you use? If you use one set of rules across the board, it makes things much easier, but you lose some flavor. If characters from each part of the setting use their own rules, it makes the differences more prominent, but it's much harder to

maintain balance and game flow. Green Ronin's *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary* provides guidelines for blending the concepts of *Thieves' World* with other settings, adapting the core mechanics of the PHB to those introduced in the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*.

FEEL

Thieves' World is gritty, sword-and-sorcery fantasy, where magic and monsters are rare. How will that gel with the other setting? If it's a high-fantasy world where every second person is a wizard or an elf, the *Thieves' World* flavor may be diluted.

FINE DETAILS

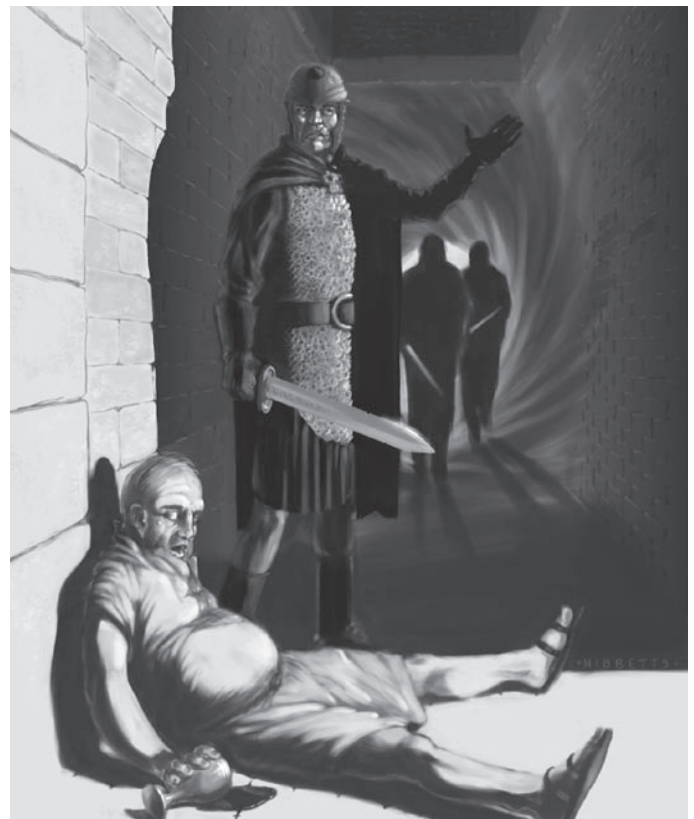
Take some time to consider the minor points. Is there a common language between the two settings? Can characters from Sanctuary take levels in the core or prestige classes of the other setting? How do abilities and spells from one setting affect the monsters and people of the other? Nail questions like this early, so they don't become trouble spots later.

SUGGESTIONS

If you're a fan of Green Ronin's other campaign settings, here are some ideas on using them with *Thieves' World*.

BLACK COMPANY CAMPAIGN SETTING

The infamous Company wanders through a Shadowgate into the reality of *Thieves' World* and are hired by the one of the city's old foes or previous rulers to lay siege to Sanctuary. At the same time, the last remnants of the Nisibis army and their demonic allies may attempt to pass through the



Shadowgate in search of a refuge from the Black-Toothed Horde. The players, whether Sanctans or Company members, have to decide which fight takes precedence, how best to profit from either of them, and how to survive in the midst of it all.

ETERNAL ROME

Replace Ranke with Rome and position Sanctuary somewhere in Spain or maybe even in northern Africa. You can substitute the various cultures of the Roman era for those in *Thieves' World*, introducing Sanctuary to a quasi-historical game.

FREEPART AND THIEVES' QUARTER

Sanctuary is one corner of the Rogue's Triangle, a powerful smuggling and piracy route; the other two corners are the pirate island of Freeport to the south and the city of Liberty on the western edge of the Ilsig Kingdom. The criminals of Freeport have dominated their rivals for years thanks to their advanced technology, while the organized guilds of Liberty have lorded it over the ragtag thieves of Sanctuary. But now that Lord Night is in charge, a thieves' war will soon sweep the Triangle, a war fought with drugs, price fixing and midnight assassination.

MINDSHADOWS

The land of Naranjan is far across the Sparkling Sea, an island of strange creatures and stranger mental disciplines. These sages taught the

Bandaran Adepts their powers and now look to expand their empire onto the mainland. They bring with them their serpent men enemies and a conflict with the seafaring subjects of Weda Krizhtwan, a conflict that is fought on Sanctuary's streets. Magic and psionics are the weapons of choice, and in the shadows the Rakshasa make a terrible alliance with the goddess Dyareela.

TESTAMENT

The people of the mega-continent to the north worship their own strange gods and have had little to do with the people of Sanctuary. Now the Hittites are making an exodus to the south, and their mighty armies are clashing with the Rankan Empire while their gods struggle for dominance over the resurgent Ilsig pantheon.

TROJAN WAR

When gods do battle, mortals suffer for it. Lightning and black steam blankets the Seawall for 10 days, and when the smoke clears, an island holding Troy and its besieging armies is thrown into this reality by the hand of Zeus, replacing the reef.

Now the Ilsig and Rankan gods must join forces to hold back the Greek pantheon, while Tempus and other godsworn are pitted against Achilles and the divine children of the Greeks. Armies clash and blood flows, and it falls to ordinary mortals to find the key to forcing the invaders back to their own world.

CAMPAIGNS FRAMEWORKS

There are no limits to the kinds of campaigns you can run in *Thieves' World*—from urban skullduggery to epic magical warfare, from tense political intrigue to the exploration of lost ruins. The following suggestions are just that, suggestions; use them to get your imagination working and go from there. Each campaign archetype is appropriate for a specific era, and all of them are designed to explore the world around Sanctuary as well as the city itself. Each archetype notes in parenthesis which character levels are most appropriate for the campaign, and the campaign write-ups describe which locations should be visited as it progresses and which NPCs from the anthologies are most likely to get involved in the action.

THE RANKAN ERA— THIEVES AND REVOLUTIONARIES

The time of the original *Thieves' World* anthologies was one of high adventure and deadly intrigue, as the war between Nisibi and the Rankan Empire bled onto the streets of Sanctuary. This campaign showcases that conflict and gets the PCs involved in the epic events of those stories.

LOCAL HEROES (LOW-LEVEL)

Having weathered the coming of the Rankans and Prince Kittykat, the PCs are making their way in the shadowy streets of Sanctuary as best they can: as street-thieves, minor mages, or craftsmen on the make, gaining the respect of their fellows and the wealth of the invaders. When the Hell Hounds crack down on one of Jubal's smuggling operations, the hawk-masks turn to the PCs for help. A full-blown assault on the Rankan forces is out of the question, but blackmail, intelligence, clever magic and surgical violence (plus the help of Shadowspawn and Cappen

Varra) may allow the PCs to protect the operation from the Hell Hounds and keep it operating under their control when the Stepsons destroy Jubal's crime ring.

Things become even more complicated when the Beysib arrive in Sanctuary. The cult of Porta has been thrown into disarray by Samlor hil Sant, who hires the PCs to protect him and his niece Star on the trip back to Cirdon. When they return they find that the cultists are taking new sacrifices from their community; to rescue any survivors, the PCs must fight not only the cultists but also their sympathizers within the Beysib nobility, who send Walegrin and his men to take down the troublemakers.

MEAN STREETS (MID-LEVEL)

In the wake of the Beysib occupation, guerrilla violence and terrorism become the order of the day in Sanctuary. Having established themselves in their community as capable protectors (or at least bearable crime lords), the PCs must protect their territory from aggressors and invaders. With Zip and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Sanctuary (PFLS) PFLS on one side, the Stepsons on another and the walking dead wandering on a third, the heroes must make a secret alliance with Kama and the Rankan 3rd Commando—but the price of that aid is a mission to Wizardwall, delivering gold and Enlibar steel to the forces battling the warlocks of the north.

The Nisi also have a presence in Sanctuary, though, and on their return, the PCs find they have Roxane as a new enemy; demons and evil spirits now haunt their streets along with the vicious guerillas of the Nisi-trained PFLS. Their new enemy also brings new allies in the form of Ischade and the Stepsons, but their friendship may cost more than simply a mutual enmity for their foes. Guided by Nikodimas and Stilcho, the PCs are sent through the planes in an attempt to sever

THE ANTHOLOGY CAMPAIGN

Most fiction-based d20 settings are based on novels or a series of novels that follow a specific character or group of characters through one complex story. *Thieves' World* is unique in that it is based on hundreds of short stories (and one novel) with no specific central characters or storylines. That gives it a very different feel; Sanctuary is a city with many faces and many stories, and any number of heroes or antiheroes might take center stage. You and your group can capture this feel with an *anthology campaign*: one with many different characters, plots, and directions, all seemingly unrelated but often inevitably interwoven. Several aspects of an anthology campaign are described below.

MULTIPLE GMS

Rather than one GM running the campaign from start to finish, group members take turns running different sessions. When one major adventure or story wraps up, the GM swaps places with one of the players, who then GMs the next section of the campaign while the former GM plays. Not every player has to GM, of course, just those whose want to. Players choose different parts of the campaign as their 'GM focus'—for example, Rob may run all the adventures regarding the Bloody Hand, while Lynn handles the adventures about politics and Gary works on Lord Night. Each GM keeps his or her own notes on plots, NPCs and adventures, and the PCs move from plotline to plotline as the campaign progresses.

MULTIPLE PCs AND PARTIES

If you're comfortable with multiple GMs, the next step is to have multiple parties of PCs. Each player makes a set of characters, rather than just one PC, and assigns one to each GM's part of the campaign. So you have one group of PCs investigating Lord Night's crime ring while a second set of PCs are looking for the Heart of Fire. This keeps each storyline focused, and you don't have to explain why the same four characters are doing everything in the city. It also means you can have different PCs at different levels simultaneously, such as a high-level group and a low-level group, which allows the players to explore different types of challenges throughout the campaign.

SEPARATE AND INTERACTING PLOTS

Finally, if you really want to ratchet up the complexity, the various GMs can interweave their plots. Maybe the Bloody Hand are *also* looking for the Heart of Fire, and suddenly two different groups of PCs played by the same players are cooperating—or *competing*. Doing this requires more work on the part of the GMs, who need to integrate the various ideas and NPCs and make sure the campaign remains consistent. It also requires more trust because you're sharing your GM notes with someone who is also playing in your chunk of the campaign, and vice versa. Even when plots connect, you'll probably want to keep some material separate, whether because it's only relevant to one PC or group or because it really should stay secret until the surprise revelation.

Anthology campaigns aren't for everyone, certainly; they're very story-focused, and require more work than a straightforward, one-guy-in-charge campaign. But if you're up to the extra workload and the cooperation, they're a great way to explore all the nooks and crannies of Sanctuary.

Roxane's link to demonic power, and must battle unholy forces in the Underworld and on the edges of the Forgotten Pass if they ever want to see their own reality again.

GODS AND MEN (HIGH-LEVEL)

When a pillar of fire erupts from Lord Tasfalen's house, it signals the end of the factional wars in Sanctuary—but not a return to peace and quiet. Magic has been drained from the city, and in its absence sinister forces look to gain control. The city erupts in a gang war between rival criminal groups, all trying to take their piece of the action and not caring who dies in the crossfire. Strick the Spellmaster will not stand for this; he, Hakiem and Shadowspawn call upon the PCs to do the right thing: to use their influence, powers and skills to settle the gang war one way or another.

Against this human drama the gods keep an eye on Sanctuary and are occasionally moved to act. The mysterious Shepherd, an agent of the IIsig gods, works to restore balance to Sanctuary, encouraging Tempus, Cheyana and other divine champions to leave the city. But a cell of the Rankan church will not stand for this, sending demons and priests to retain control of Sanctuary. When the priests assert magical control over Tempus, godsworn of darker gods like Dyareela and Porta also surface to wreck havoc; it falls to the PCs to do the Shepherd's work and reclaim Sanctuary for its mortal inhabitants one last time.

THE IRRUNE ERA— SORCERY'S SANCTUARY

The stories of the new *Thieves' World* series show a city in turmoil after the two eclipses revitalized the local mana fields, putting magic on the ascendant. This campaign gives PCs a chance to use that magic against the secret forces at work in the city.

THE MAGIC RETURNS (LOW-LEVEL)

The Sharda are a new force for law and order in Sanctuary, and Judge Nevermind has his eye out for local talent to join their ranks. Law-abiding PCs are recruited by his operatives Taran Sayn and Ixma; shadier characters are given a choice between arrest (and possibly execution) or joining his service. The Judge wants the PCs to collect minor and not-so-minor magic items before other forces reach them. Unfortunately, those items are in dangerous places—a Beysib cache somewhere in the Swamp of Night's Secrets, the fortress of the Purple Mage on the island of Shugthee, the ruins of Roxane's hideout, the dark altar built by Tempus for Vashanka and later used by Zip, and Jubal's old demesnes. There's no telling what the explorers may find hidden in Sanctuary or buried beneath the nearby brackish swamp waters, assuming the 'Nighters don't find the items (or the explorers) first.



Once the PCs find those relics, they will realize that their work has only just begun. The race is on among the power groups of Sanctuary to recapture the magic of ages past, and the heroes find themselves the center of much undesirable attention. Some of the other claimants to magic have good intentions, such as Strick and Spyder; others like the mage Kusharlonikas have more selfish claims upon power, and a few minor members of Lord Night's organization are also involved. Things become dangerous when the PCs discover one of Molin Torchholder's caches of relics in an underground temple—one being combed by Bloody Hand cultists seeking the same magic items.

AGAINST THE BLOODY HAND (MID-LEVEL)

The heroes have learned that the Bloody Hand of Dyarela is still active in the city, a scourge that must be stopped before they have the power and magic to reclaim Sanctuary. Pinning down the Hand is no easy task, though; they hide in the tunnels below the city and mask themselves from detection magic with spells and prayers. On the advice of Judge Nevermind, the PCs travel to Cirdon to recruit aid from the cult of Heqt and to Firaqa for arcane tools to overcome the Hand's sorcery. Back in Sanctuary they must survive constant attacks by the Hand while consulting with Kadasah and Kaytin to get details on the location and vulnerabilities of the cult's temple.

With the forces of the city arrayed against them, the Bloody Hand goes on the offensive, seeking the most powerful artifacts in the city. One group of Hand assassins attacks the S'danzo seeress Elemi in hopes of acquiring the cards created by Lalo the Limner, while others attempt to murder Strick and Lone and steal *Janithe's Bracer*. The PCs must defend their allies against these attacks while marshalling their forces; the aid of Cauvin and the Irrune offset the difficulty of pursuing this secret war without alerting and therefore panicking the city. Finally, aid comes from an unexpected quarter: members of Lord Night's organization, led by the mage Marusha, join in the final battle against Tor'dan J'ardin and his followers in the cult's underground lair.

TIME OUT OF JOINT (HIGH-LEVEL)

With the Bloody Hand scattered (hopefully forever), the price of Lord Night's aid becomes clear: Marusha and her allies abscond with many of the magic items gathered by both the Hand and the PCs. Lord Night seeks to cement his control of Sanctuary, and his arsenal of magical power makes him a force to be reckoned with. Now he seeks the Heart of Fire, the ruby artifact from lost Enlibar, and will destroy any who stand in his way. Lord Night's network of corruption lets him control the city and *opah* addiction turns the PCs' supporters into enemies, even as Sanctuary is gripped by wizard weather and supernatural phenomena.

Should the PCs defeat Lord Night, they have little time to celebrate; reality itself is becoming unstable in Sanctuary, the result of the Heart of Fire's influence. The dead are rising, demons possess the innocent, and monsters rampage through the city. To locate and control the Heart, the PCs must uncover lost libraries in Enlibar and Yenized. There, they learn that the key to the Heart is the time-lost wizard Hada Korgun. But Korgun is an amnesiac and hunted by the pirate Jerez Carmagen, and in the meantime the lich-mage Hálott claims the Heart for his own incomprehensible ends. As time and reality begin to crack around the edges, the PCs must work with Carmagen, Korgun, and even Enas Yorl to puzzle out Hálott's plans and save the city.



CHAPTER TWO: A WORLD OF THIEVES

While the events of the *Thieves' World* anthologies center on Sanctuary, the stories are told against the backdrop of a larger world in which empires hungrily devour neighboring lands, terrible sorcery plagues the landscape, power struggles between rival peoples cause pain and death, and entire civilizations are displaced by ambition, greed, and conquest. Each calamity,

war, plague, or plot is like a pebble dropped in a lake, with the ripples of the event spreading outward, touching every land, every people, and changing the course of history. This chapter presents a broad overview of the larger world events that have had some effect on Sanctuary.

ONE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

The history of the Known World is neither exact nor precise, and is no way accurate. Even though the Ilsigi maintained an intricate calendar, time has not been kind to the histories and recorded events. Much of the earliest records deal with maintaining inventories, tracking shipments, marking the passage of their monarchs, and so on, but actually say very little about what this ancient world was like. Furthermore, the Ilsigi were by no means the first people to build a kingdom, as evidenced by the ruins of earlier civilizations. Who can say what transpired in those ancient times, what wonders the world has seen, and what heroes walked the earth?

PREHISTORY TO 1 IR

It is believed that the precursors to modern civilization emerged about 5000 years ago, or roughly 1300 years before IR, in three separate locations, simultaneously and unconnected.

The first civilization was at the head of Ilsig Bay near where Ilsig city currently stands. The people dwelled in a series of upland villages and traveled from their communities to the sea, by which they made their livelihoods. This culture had no written language and only the few stone carvings of larger-than-life seated figures testify that they ever existed at all. The statues show a consistent, albeit abstract, style. It is hard to say

whether the statues are clothed or nude—they do not seem to suggest a focus on fertility, as is common with primitive religions carvings, but rather convey a sense of serenity.

The stone carvings are a point of interest for Ilsigi archeologists. An equal number of the figures are of each gender, though carvings of male and female figures are rarely found near one another. One notable exception, dubbed “Marriage,” portrays a man and woman carved from a single block of red stone. The figures sit next to one another, facing the same direction and with arms crossing, so that the left hand of the man rests on the right thigh of the woman and the right hand of the woman rests on the left thigh of the man. The Marriage statue sits in a stonework niche carved into the lee of a clay bluff about 10 miles east of Ilsig City. The nearest village is called Estrey, and though its folk formally worship the pantheon of Ils and Shipri, they also maintain folk-rites centered around the statue. The most notable of these are the marriages of all village folk (as well as the marriages of some folk from farther afield than the village . . . non-conformist Ilsigi from the city celebrate their marriages here rather than in the more traditional holy places of Eshi and Shipri). In addition, there is a grand “cleaning” of the statue every midsummer eve, accompanied by dancing, reveling and speaking in tongues. Estrey legend claims the statues are named Tundr and Heshmey, who some blasphemously suggest are the divine antecedents to Ils and Shipri.

MEASURING THE YEARS

The first known dating system originated with the Kingdom of Ilsig (noted as IR or the Ilsig Reckoning). The Ilsigi were also responsible, thanks to their study of the movements of the heavenly bodies, for the first recognized calendar, which is still used to this day. A second dating system originated in Ranke, commemorating the start of a new era with the Rankan victory over the ancient Ilsig. The Rankan system (noted as RE or Rankan Era) replaced the Ilsigi system throughout the empire, except in the farthest reaches of their conquered territory. Even though the Rankan Empire has imposed this system for a little over a century, it is still the preferred method record-keeping in most places, including Sanctuary.

A second civilization arose west of the city of Ranke, near what is today the city of Bakt. Like their contemporaries near Ilsig but independent of them, these people left their mark in stone, though they also left behind tombs. The stones are columns between about 12 and 20 feet high. They are not local stones, but appear to have been transported nearly 100 miles, probably by raft, from what are now called the Wizardwall Mountains. They are covered with carvings in two styles of intricate patterns, one style using straight lines and another using spirals. It has been speculated that the patterns reflect literacy of some sort, but there has been no success in translating them.

Some of the stones are isolated, but it is more common to find them in odd-numbered groupings atop oval mounds or barrows, some of which are easily 50 feet high and several hundred feet in circumference. Many of these stones have toppled and broken, but enough of them are intact to give a sense of the shapes of their groupings. The mounds are gravesites; all of those discovered thus far had long since been looted and their interiors for the most part destroyed.

The stones and the mounds are associated with the dead and the modern-day locals avoid them, especially on moonless nights. Mutilated bodies are occasionally found atop the mounds, and necromancers and others with an unhealthy curiosity about the dead are drawn to them. It is said that when the stars are aligned correctly and the night is as dark as ink, the mounds become a gateway from this world to some other. Where exactly they lead, none have been foolish enough or brave enough to discover.

The third civilization stood northwest of today's city of Sihan, in the northeast extremity of the Rankan Empire. The remnants of their dwellings can still be found in the cliffs above both sides of a narrow strait separating Sihan from Darshan Island. To the casual eye, the little "cottages" with their stone-built furniture seem to have been built recently and abandoned yesterday, though local legend maintains that the villages have always been there, in exactly the same condition—it's held to be ill luck of the most dire sort to tamper with or remove any of the mortarless stone.

There are no other known artifacts associated with these sleeping villages, neither graves nor temples nor art of any sort. Those who are sensitive to such things say that the villages were, indeed, abandoned in a hurry and that most of the inhabitants died shortly afterward. They say the spirits of the villagers linger around their ancient homes. Locals claim that if you sleep on one of the stone beds, one of the inhabitants will appear and speak, giving advice and foretelling the future.

Though there is an indigenous people in the forests around Sihan, these people do not claim to be descendants of the sleeping villages and were

not involved in the founding of Sihan. They worship their ancestors with blood rituals and rigidly avoid the sleeping villages, which they say were built by demons.

It is amidst these early civilizations that the city of Ilsig was founded. Whereas these other early communities were generally primitive, or so people believe, Ilsig was different from the rest. Its inhabitants established a written language and calendar, and their elite made inroads into mathematics and the physical sciences. Even their earliest records show an impressive degree of civilization and a surprising understanding of the world around them.

THE GOLDEN ERA OF ILSIG

1 IR TO 600 IR

The founding of the Kingdom of Ilsig ushered in a new era of peace and stability for the Known World. While the exact details of this era are still confused and mysterious, Ilsig made many technological advances during this time, blending tools and magic to near perfection. It is believed that this time saw the enchantment of the first non-artifact magical items, and many of these early advances are still on display in the museums found in Ilsig City. In addition, Ilsig made great advances in alchemy, establishing the fundamental laws still used by alchemists to this day. Accompanying its advances in science and magic, Ilsig thrived on philosophy, codified its religion and law, established a system of justice, and even brought currency to the world. But the peace known by Ilsig for nearly six centuries would be threatened with the founding of a small village named Enlibar.

THE RISE OF ENLIBAR

550 IR TO 900 IR

Sometime around 572 IR, a village in what would become the Grey Wastes grew into a city called Enlibar. The land around this city-state was rich with raw materials, including thick forests, iron ore (hence the region's name at the time of "the Red Hills"), and plenty of arable land. Having learned the essential theories of agriculture and science from the Ilsigi people, Enlibar grew rapidly.

Although formidable, Enlibar didn't come its own until its sorcerers discovered the essence of steel. At first they worked with metal derived from star fall, but within a century they learned the rudiments of smelting the ores found in the Red Hills. This was an important discovery, for at this time only a few city-states and larger nations had even progressed to the use of bronze, and most still relied on wood and stone tools. In rapid order these iron-working sorcerers had created and trained a well-armed military to compliment their magical prowess. When the sorcerers opened the Great Mine of Ghirokitia in the Red Hills, they found the strange ore that set in motion the development of Enlibar steel. To protect the Mine, they shielded it from view, laying dozens of spells to ward away

IMPORTANT EVENT

At some distant point before the rise of Enlibar and Yenized, The mysterious sorcerer Hast-ra-kodi forged twin suits of armor using the fires from a burning diamond.

those who might seek it out, even their own rulers. The sorcerers of Enlibar continued to supply both mundane and magical weaponry to their lords in order to appease them, however.

In 922 IR, a horde of red-haired barbarians swept down from the northeast, bent on burning and sacking everything in their path. The nations west of Enlibar scrambled to assemble their own forces, assuming that Enlibar would be just another conquest on the barbarians' path. However, no one expected what happened next. The city-state revealed its enhanced weaponry and their small army stood fast against the numerically superior force, defeating and repelling them. This one act of military superiority catapulted the city-state into the larger political arena of the ancient world, earning them the respect and fear they desired.

THE MIGHT OF ENLIBAR

950 IR TO 1700 IR

Just a few decades after its defeat of the barbarians, Enlibar looked beyond its walls and began its conquest of the world. Enlibar set forth on a campaign that would last more than three centuries, its goal being to conquer every civilized and wild place on the continent. Of course, the world was a different place then. Barbarians still claimed the wilderness and the pockets of civilization were thinly spread. No united force stood against Enlibar, and the fledgling empire was universally victorious in its expansion. Even those places that were not directly conquered, such as IIsig, were still required to give tribute and pay dearly for their limited freedoms. It seemed that Enlibar was an indomitable force and would remain so for all time. Having seized the world, it settled down to rule it.

Some folk did escape the crushing weight of the Enlibar war machine. Those who were willing to leave their homes outran the powerful but ponderous armies. One such group settled in the marshes of the Pezan River Delta and founded a community in 1172 IR that would one day become Caronne. Another group founded Mrsevada at about the same time, roughly 120 miles west of Caronne on the far side of the delta. Caronne eventually fell to the expanding Enlibrites, while Mrsevada retained its independence thanks to the natural barrier presented by the delta, which proved impassable by the armies.

For approximately 200 years, Enlibar ruled the world in relative peace. They had the might to repel any invaders and the garrisons to maintain control within their empire. But with stability comes idleness, which in turn foments corruption and dissatisfaction among the elite. In 1472 IR, a schism formed in the ranks of the Enlibrite sorcerers that led to the exile of the losing faction, who fled north past the Wizardwall Mountains and beyond the reaches of the empire. These exiled sorcerers formed the nucleus of the Nisibisi witches.

EMERGENCE OF YENIZED AND THE DECLINE OF ENLIBAR

1700 IR TO 3100 IR

On the easternmost peninsula east of Dar, jutting out into the Oread Sea, there emerged a new city, Yeniz, in the shelter of Zsuysa Bay. Enlibar, swollen with its own decadence and inattention, did not oppose its growth, but the Yenizedis were not so foolish as to attempt to expand their holdings on land. Instead, they turned their eyes to the sea and mastered the arts of building and sailing ships. Until Yeniz, what ships existed had



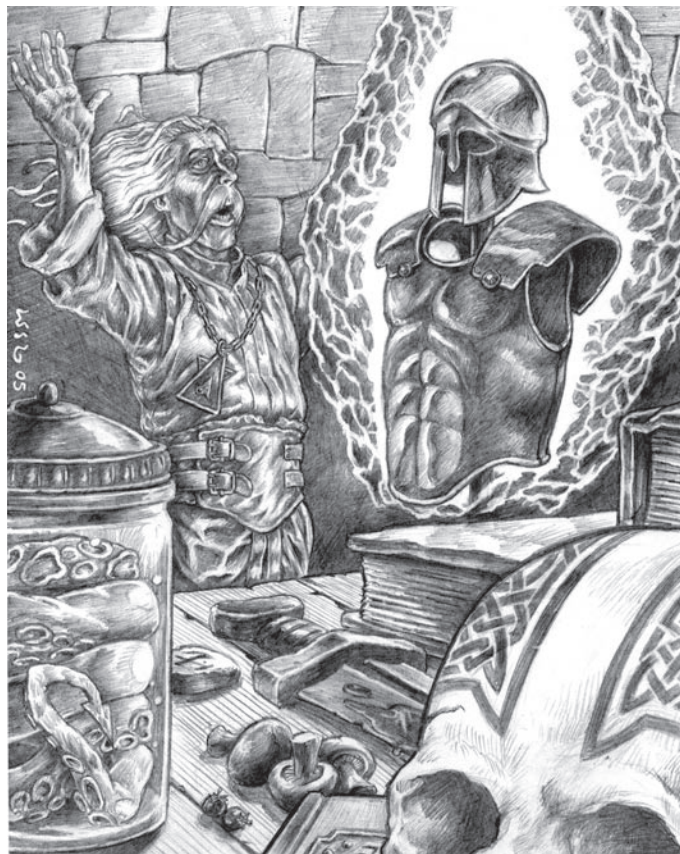
CHAPTER TWO: A WORLD OF THIEVES

never sailed beyond sight of the coastlines; the sailors of Yeniz learned to use the heavens to navigate, though, pinpointing their locations by marking the relative positions of the sun, moons, and the stars. It is from these early voyages that tales of the Beysib, Visalans, and the Sherrani came to the Known World. Yenized shipbuilding, navigation, and sailing techniques allowed the humans of the Known World to expand that world for the first time, letting them face the unknown and uncharted waters beyond their homelands.

In the face of these successes, Enlibar turned hungry eyes on this new city-state and sent a legion forth to demand tribute. The Yenizedis retreated behind their walls and resisted throughout a long siege, surviving and even thriving thanks to their naval superiority and bountiful sea trade. The siege lasted a decade, costing Enlibar thousands of men while Yeniz lost only a few hundred. Yeniz's resistance sent fractures through the empire's web of control, and uprisings boiled up throughout. Enlibar withdrew its forces from Yenized and turned back to dealing with these new problems. Caronne seized this opportunity and attempted to liberate themselves from their harsh masters, but their vulnerable location gave them little chance; their resistance was brutally crushed, culminating in widespread executions.

The freedom fighters of Caronne were not the only ones to see opportunity in the unrest throughout the empire. The sorcerers who had fled to Wizardwall and become the Nisibisi returned in force, assaulting their former empire with powerful magic. A no-man's land formed between Enlibar and Nisi into which refugees from both sides flowed, founding the land that would become Cirdon. They survived because they learned how to pit Enlibar and the Nisibisi against one another, ensuring their own survival and allowing them to maintain a proud and fierce (albeit precarious) independence.

The war seemed to stretch on interminably. In a desperate attempt to claim victory for the enemies of his enemies, a Yenizedi sorcerer opened



a gate at the end of the 29th century to the Archipelago of Aşkelon, ruled by Aşkelon, Entelechy of Dreams. From Aşkelon's keeping he stole the two suits of armor forged by Hast-ra-kodi, giving them to Harad and Hakkad, twin Nisibisi commanders. The twins wore the armor into battle against Sterl, a wizard-prince and commander of the armies of Enlibar. Driven by these ambitious powers, the war spun out of control and both sides began to suffer appalling casualties. In the end, Aşkelon himself intervened and caused Sterl, Harad, Hakkad, and their armies to vanish without a trace. They were presumed destroyed, or at least irretrievably lost.

With the most powerful heroes from both sides removed from the picture, the war finally simmered down to a heated standoff with only occasional outbreaks of violence. While the Nisi in the north chipped away at Enlibar's infrastructure and rebellions continued to plague the empire, Yenized gradually eroded the Enlibarians' control of much of the eastern coast of the Oread Sea. The coastal power "liberated" the land from the Hammer's Tail up past Borniel Bay, where lay the fishing village that would eventually become Ranke.

Frustrated to the point of madness, shamed by their impotence, and fearing the widespread destabilization that rippled throughout their territory, the sorcerers of Enlibar decided on a final solution. They attempted no less than to wipe Yenized from the face of the world, hoping that the example set by such destruction would both cow the unruly masses in their own lands and intimidate the Nisi into backing down.

The first effort, initiated in 2870 IR, was a plague. Not merely a mundane disease, this was the most virulent and contagious of plagues ever to surface in the Known World. The Enlibrite sorcerers spent years perfecting the vile source, including samples of flesh corrupted by every sickness ever known to have stalked the land. They reduced the liquid to a thick sludge that killed with a touch, and dried the noxious paste to a powder. Agents of Enlibar crept into Yenized lands and sprinkled the powder on the bonfires of their enemies, using sorcery to blow great clouds of death among their enemies. The losses were appalling and the plague mutated and spread, carried by air, touch, and humors. What Enlibar did not anticipate was how rapidly the plague spread and changed. The agents who set the fires died before they were halfway home, but birds, travelers and the winds themselves carried the disease back to the empire and killed nearly half of its population, as many as it did in Yenized.

Though Enlibar failed at its ultimate goal, the disease spread along the roads and cities of the Known World, steadily winnowing the human population. Though this reckless creation weakened Enlibar more than a century of constant warfare could have, it did nothing to curb their hate. Seeing the failure of their first effort, the sorcerers created a more direct (and more controllable) weapon: a city-killer, a destructive artifact that would erase an entire city and devastate the land for miles. When detonated, any nearby communities and their people would be erased as if they had never existed, and the land subject to the blast would never again bear life. Carefully, the sorcerers loaded the weapon onto a great wagon pulled by 100 horses. A full legion was set around the device to protect it from harm, and sorcerers flew overhead on flying carpets to watch for approaching enemies. The great train set forth from Enlibar, but, as before, fate intervened. The weapon was accidentally detonated while still within sight of the capital city of Enlibar, exploding in a flare of white energy that could be seen for hundreds of miles in all directions. The Red Hills were turned to ash, the city of Enlibar and its outlying villages were instantly incinerated, and a great cloud of sorcerous energy washed across the land, burning and tainting the landscape. When the dust settled, Enlibar was in ruins and the once lush hills had become a wasteland of gray swirling dust.

The destruction that killed Enlibar's heart eventually spelled its doom as an empire. The entrance to the Great Mine of Ghirokitia had been erased, and over three-quarters of the capital city's population, already decimated by the plague, were killed. Even in its death throes Enlibar fought to destroy Yenized, but it lacked the resources to do anything more than mount an army of scarred and mutated soldiers. With the capital destroyed and unable to develop new weaponry, the vassal states declared their independence and myriad new city-states and nations emerged in the aftermath. Enlibar was powerless and, with the legitimate line of emperors dead, there were no fewer than three pretenders to the increasingly cursed and powerless Enlibrite throne.

In the long run, Yenized fared little better, despite being the unintentional catalyst of so many nation-states' freedom. Without the threat of Enlibar to keep its client states united and its military funded, it gradually slid into decadence and its naval power became little more than an afterthought. Amidst Yenized's laxness a new race of people claimed some of its land, a tribe of tall barbarians with red-gold hair. They tumbled out of the far north, restless and pursued, it is said, by demons. Stymied by the sea at Borniel Bay and being neither fishermen nor traders, they settled inland of the little village of Ranke in approximately 2950 IR.

The remaining imperial legions withdrew to the interior around the start of the third millennium in a vain attempt to restore some semblance of law amidst the growing anarchy. With the empire hemorrhaging, Ilsig and the other Enlibrite-dominated cities along the Western reach of the World Spine Mountains declared their independence. From these liberated states a loose alliance was formed, but Ilsig remained conscious of its lengthy history and took a strong role, paving the way for that ancient city to fill the vacuum left by the dying Enlibar.

By 3100 IR, Enlibar's collapse was complete. The land never recovered from the plague and the disastrous explosion, and sorcerers became pariahs, devils on whom to blame the world's many ills. Children began to be born with strange ailments, particularly those of aristocratic blood, in whom deafness became disturbingly common. This added to the sense that the educated and elite had been cursed for their role in damaging the world. The surviving Enlibrites left their empire's heartland lest they be lynched, and those who did not start new lives in other cities founded ascetic sects in the Grey Wastes. The commoners worked to sustain themselves on exhausted fields, but with each generation they turned more and more to shepherding and gradually adopted a seminomadic lifestyle. Those Enlibrites who left the old cities found that birth defects began to decline, but widespread deafness had already changed the culture, forcing the Enlibrites to develop silent sign languages for communication.

A NEW EMPIRE IS BORN

3100 IR TO 3568 IR

Ilsig used its growing power to establish a hegemony over the coastal city-states of the west. Every population center fell under the kingdom's influence except for Caronne, which had turned its marshes into a colossal maze of waterways and bogs, removing any land route to the city—the only way to reach it was by sea, and even then ships had to pass through a gauntlet of defensive positions. By 3100 IR, the red-haired barbarians at Borniel Bay had proved themselves to be adaptable and creative, and their strongest leaders began to be drawn from the ranks of entrepreneurs and engineers rather than warriors and conquerors. They named their village Ranke and became coastal traders. In time they replaced the declining Yenized as the continent's greatest naval mercantile power, but they lacked the technology of their predecessors: their ships always

stayed in sight of land and voyages rarely lasted longer than three days. The Rankan shipping lanes traveled up and down the coasts of the Oread Sea, and cities (among them Dar and Sihan) were begun anywhere good harbors could be found. Ranke conquered Yenized and absorbed many local populations into their culture.

Like Enlibar before it, the true test of this burgeoning society was its martial strength. In the Spring of 3153 IR barbarians, this time black-haired, swept out of the north and east. They headed directly for the Landerra, the Rankan name for the plains around Ranke. That region had, by then, been converted almost entirely to agricultural use, and as such made an excellent target for pillaging. The Rankan warriors mustered and went out to meet the horde on the battlefield, and like the Enlibrites before them, were resoundingly victorious. With that victory, Ranke established itself as a new force in the Known World.

For the next century, Ranke spread as the Enlibrites had. Their expansion was one not of war but of commerce . . . at least in the beginning. Many predicted that the continent was doomed to be ruled by a distant throne once more, as the powers of old seemed powerless to halt Ranke's expansion. City after city became vassals to the growing power in the east, ushering in a new era: The Rankan Era.

The peaceful expansion suddenly turned bellicose in the summer of 3326. Though Ranke was wealthy and powerful, it was not yet an empire, and many cities resisted the "barbarians." They saw them as little more than inheritors of Enlibrite greed. Among those who rallied against the Rankans were Ilsig and the rest of the city-states along the Shining Coast. To prevent Ranke from crossing the Gunderpah, the central chain of largely impassable mountains sometimes called the Queen's Mountains or the World's Spine, Ilsig forged an alliance with native mountain tribes to guard the only known pass.

In 3329, Ranke marched on Ilsig, sending its legions into the mountains while Ilsig bolstered the mountain folk with Ilsigi cavalry and infantry. With Ilsig's main military power on the front, however, danger erupted from within: slave uprisings spread throughout the kingdom. Ilsig's armies withdrew to crush the revolts, and for the most part they succeeded, except for one band of slaves who fled south along the coast to the mountains. Ilsig's cavalry followed this band with the intent of running them down, but a fortuitously timed assault by a legion of Rankans caught the Ilsigi off guard. The slaves seized their opportunity and continued their flight, escaping through a previously undiscovered pass into a verdant valley. They settled there for a time, but it quickly became clear that they were not farmers. Having depleted the valley's resources after just a few years, the free men drifted southward during 3392 until they came to a small fishing community that accepted them into their fold. The newcomers found in the village a peaceful, if backwater, new home, and they dubbed it Sanctuary.

Meanwhile, back on the front lines of the war, Ilsig's fortified mountain pass prevented its total domination by the Rankans. The two sides continued to fight for several years, though Ranke had no success against the mountain tribes and Ilsig couldn't field enough soldiers to push the larger Rankan force off their slopes. The mountains become a slow but steady killing ground, almost a habit or afterthought for the two cities, and while their soldiers continued to die, life in Ilsig and Ranke began

IMPORTANT EVENT

Many central characters from the *Thieves' World* stories originated around this period. In 3266 IR, Vashanka chose the man who would be known as Tempus to become his mortal servant. Two years later, a cursed magician named Enas Yorl appeared in Yeniz.

IMPORTANT EVENTS ~ 3400 IR

In an act of friendship, Lythande offers to share the gift of agelessness with a childhood friend, Myrtis, thereby granting her an unchanging yet natural-seeming grace and beauty. Lythande's training culminates in a combat with Rabben, another adept, resulting in the larger man losing half his hand to Lythande in a test of strength.

to return to normal.

Word of gold veins around Sanctuary spread to Ilsig in 3457. The village of ex-slaves and fishermen exploded with a new population growth as the desperate and daring moved into the area to mine the hills and pan the streams for the rare metal. For seven years, Sanctuary grew. But Ilsig viewed Sanctuary as a rebellion that still needed quashing and sent ships to conquer the city. With the ships drawing closer, the local fishermen bundled up their families and fled to make a new life for themselves on Scavenger's Island, where they would survive for generations raiding passing ships.

Ilsig took Sanctuary without much resistance and proved to be as brutal with the conquered city as Enlibar once was with its territories. The new overlords forced the population into the equivalent of slavery and passed brutal measures that applied to Sanctans but not to the Ilsigi newcomers. It rapidly became apparent that Ilsig wanted Sanctuary as a trade center and nothing else, and the people there merely served to facilitate Ilsig's demands. But although Ilsig held Sanctuary in a tight grip, more gold prospectors made their way south with each passing year, and with the flow of people, it was inevitable that someone would find the pass that the slaves used to reach Sanctuary all those years ago.

Almost 60 years later, in 3534, a Rankan general and grandson of a prospector discovered a journal written by his grandfather that revealed the location of the forgotten pass. With this information, the general took a legion and rediscovered the pass, moving on to Sanctuary. There, he routed the Ilsigi and conquered the city for Ranke. One of the first laws passed was the ban of the worship of Dyareela, Mother of Chaos, which had been a persistent cult in the area since the city's founding. In the same year, Alar hil Aspar, a Cirdonian mercenary general, razed the Dyareelan temple and erected the Temple of Heqt in what would become the Maze. Though the cult of Heqt seemed to have triumphed over the Mother of Chaos, its significance in the city would not last; its chief priest disappeared six years later.

Ranke used its new seaport to launch ships against Ilsig, bypassing the natural defenses of the mountains completely. After a series of crushing defeats, Ranke won the war and conquered Ilsig. Realizing that the empire could not adequately govern the distant city, they exacted a heavy tribute from the Ilsigis and allowed them to continue ruling themselves, albeit in a limited fashion. With the war's conclusion, Ranke abandoned the Ilsigi calendar and started the new Rankan Calendar.

IMPORTANT EVENTS

In -92 RE Myrtis opens the Aphrodesia House in Sanctuary, and by -2 RE Mizraith gains a reputation for being the most successful commercial mage in the city. In 8 RE Jubal wins his freedom, and in 23 RE he hijacks a slave caravan bound for Sanctuary, allowing him to carve an empire of his own upon his arrival. In 39 RE Master Melilot opens the Scriptorium and the Purple Mage settles on the Isle of Shugthee.

RANKE ETERNAL

1 RE TO 48 RE

Though Ilsig was firmly under Rankan influence, the empire made little headway into the World's Spine Mountains. The mountain tribes, still loyal to the defeated Ilsigi, refused to surrender; while peace blossomed elsewhere, the fighting continued there. Sanctuary became an important center for commerce, as it remained too dangerous for caravans to pass through the mountains. And so, in the first year of Ranke Eternal, caravan routes were established across the Grey Wastes. They brought great trains of goods across the wasteland, which were then shipped out of Sanctuary and transported to distant ports like Ilsig, Caronne and Mrseveda. With the caravans came wealth and prosperity, and work began to remake Sanctuary from an insignificant backwater into an imperial commerce center. First the renovation of the palace was initiated, then the construction of the city walls commenced.

To cement its hold on the continent, Ranke dealt with other trouble spots during this period. Since the time of Enlibar, Cirdon had remained a proud and independent state; it fell to the forces of the Rankan legions in 8 RE. Ranke finally destroyed the mountain tribes of the World's Spine in 29 RE, once more opening the mountain pass to overland trade. As it was dangerous and expensive to transport goods across the Grey Wastes, the new pass offered merchants a means to cross the continent for a fraction of the price. Within two years, the caravans crossing the Grey Wastes had declined . . . and with them declined Sanctuary.

Sanctuary's decline resulted in the departure of many of its more prominent citizens. The wealthiest merchants relocated to Ilsig, moved back to Ranke, or ventured as far away as Caronne, going wherever they could maintain lives of comfort. Filling the void left by the upper class were criminals and exiles, people who wanted to disappear. Mercenaries, pirates, prostitutes, the desperate and the despised all came to Sanctuary with hopes of starting over. Meanwhile, the Raggah tribes, the inheritors of Enlibar, drifted south into the outlying areas around the city. Ranke placed its least competent and most contemptible nobles to rule the city as governors, and with each new overlord the government's corruption grew, shaping the character of the city for the trials that would come.

Ranke grew more prosperous as trade thrived and stability became the norm. Heady from his victories, the Rankan emperor Cadastrin cast a hungry eye to the north. He sent his most experienced and hardened legions to take this territory, crush the warlocks in the mountains, and claim control over the smaller fiefs and kingdoms that dotted the territory north of Wizardwall. What began with arrogant overconfidence ended in shame, however, as the natives of that hard land handed Ranke defeat after defeat. As the costs to sustain the conquest rose, the emperor quietly withdrew his forces and abandoned the north, refocusing his efforts on the softer east.

RANKE'S DECLINE

48 RE TO 63 RE (CLASSIC SERIES)

In 48 RE emperor Cadastrin died and Abakithis was crowned. Firmly established in his position, he made the normal sweeps to eliminate his rivals and potential threats. He sent rivals too powerful or influential, among them Molin Torchholder, to Sanctuary or other remote corners of the world. His stepbrother, Kadakithis, was young, attractive, and idealistic, and he supported actions that threatened the authority of the ruling aristocracy. Abakithis knew it would not do to have his stepbrother murdered, so he instead sentenced him to the same punishment as Molin:

a position of power in Sanctuary. Abakithis assumed that governance over the wretched place would destroy Kadakithis more effectively than any punishment he could devise. Kadakithis took with him a group of personal bodyguards and law enforcers called the Hell Hounds, along with a pack of other notable but undesirable lords.

The transition of power in Sanctuary was not an altogether peaceful one. Kadakithis seemed determined to transform the backwater into a legitimate city; such was only appropriate, he believed, for one of only 38 “Imperial Cities” as well as the capital of a province. Criminals swung from the gallows and the Hell Hounds frequently came into conflict with Jubal’s hawk-masks. Ilsigi temples devoted to problematic gods were emptied, and great sums of money were set aside to construct new temples to the Rankan pantheon. This religious rivalry was not just an earthly one; the friction between the pantheons escalated to the God’s War, a period of terrific conflict as the Rankan god Vashanka faced off against Ils, the head of the Ilsigi pantheon, for dominance of the city. While contained to Sanctuary and its environs, this conflict rippled through the empire and finally culminated in Vashanka’s apparent demise.

The instability in Sanctuary was merely a symptom of the larger problems within the empire. His predecessor having brought the east to heel, Abakithis wanted a legacy of his own. He set his mind on conquering the north, even though a better emperor with better generals had failed to do so. Abakithis sent his legions to the north with simple orders: defeat the barbarians beyond the Wizardwall and annex their lands to the Empire. General Theron, a man with a bloody past, led the vanguard that first marched beyond Wizardwall.

In response to the threat, a warlord of Mygdon named Lacan Ajami organized the various northern tribes and clans under a single banner he called the Mygdonian Alliance. The greatest members of this alliance were the clans of warlocks clustered in the mountains who traced their heritage all the way back to the Enlibrte separatists. These terrifying sorcerers formed the spine of the Mygdonian Alliance’s forces and proved a strong enemy to expansionistic Ranke.

As before, Ranke had little success against the Northrons. General Theron was a brilliant tactician, but he lacked the resources necessary to scale the mountains and crush the Nisibisi, and so was unable to reach the softer lands beyond. The result was a drain on the Rankan economy, but despite the losses and strain, Abakithis would not give up the war. When the Rankan Legionnaires had been bled dry, their losses were replaced by mercenary companies like the 3rd Commando and, later, by Tempus’s Stepsons.

Back in Sanctuary, a large group of the fabled Beysib, exiles from their homelands, landed and seized the city. Sanctuary’s garrison was not equipped to face such numbers and could do little to stop the invaders. The Beysibs were more interested in establishing a safe home than in total conquest, however. Their queen, a Beysib named Shupansea, became Kadakithis’ consort and assumed shared responsibility for governing Sanctuary. If Abakithis minded, it never showed. For as long as tax revenue came from the city, Ranke at large seemed to ignore the developments in the now-unimportant backwater.

Around 59 IR, the Wizardwall War shifted in Ranke’s favor. In a desperate gambit, the Nisi witches spread throughout the empire to sabotage its infrastructure from within. They were largely successful, and chaos spread throughout the empire, even in the capital city. Theron dispatched the 3rd Commando to destroy a particularly dangerous witch named Roxane, also known as Death’s Queen. She was armed with a Nisibisi power globe, and her target was Sanctuary. Tempus led the Stepsons back to Sanctuary to get revenge on Roxane for her part in the Wizardwall war, and Sanctuary descended into anarchy as forces



arrayed against each other. The city was divided into a maze of tightly controlled territories.

In 60 IR, enough of the witches were ferreted out and destroyed that the Mygdonian Alliance collapsed. The accolades for this victory went to General Theron rather than to the emperor, however, and Theron’s popularity waxed while Abakithis’ waned. The already destabilized empire groaned under the weight of shifting allegiances, and its weakening ruler could do nothing to effect repairs. Things came to a bloody conclusion when Tempus and Kama went to the capital to murder the emperor and install Theron in his place in the hopes of restoring order to the empire.

It was too late; the damage had been done, and the new emperor was even less just than the old. Theron’s loyalists were little better than brigands who spread a wave of terror, murdering anyone who proclaimed loyalty to Abakithis. Nobles fled from their estates to the distant parts of the world, and with them went their wealth. Unrest and uprisings spread in even the empire’s central cities, forcing Theron to focus his troops in the empire’s interior and abandon the more distant outlying cities. By 63 RE, Ranke had ceased to collect revenue from any of its remote interests and had completely withdrawn its garrisons from its former vassals.

Three years later, the black-haired barbarians returned and sacked the weakened city of Ranke. For many, this marked the end of the Rankan Era. However, the Black-Tooth barbarians, as the conquering group was called, had no interest in occupying the city. They plundered its stores, took what prisoners and slaves they wished, and departed. The Empire of Ranke continues to exist to this day and is still ruled by its emperor. It has suffered reverses and has contracted, true, and bears the burden of rampant corruption and ineffectual leaders, but still no other power in the Known World remotely equals even its faded strength.

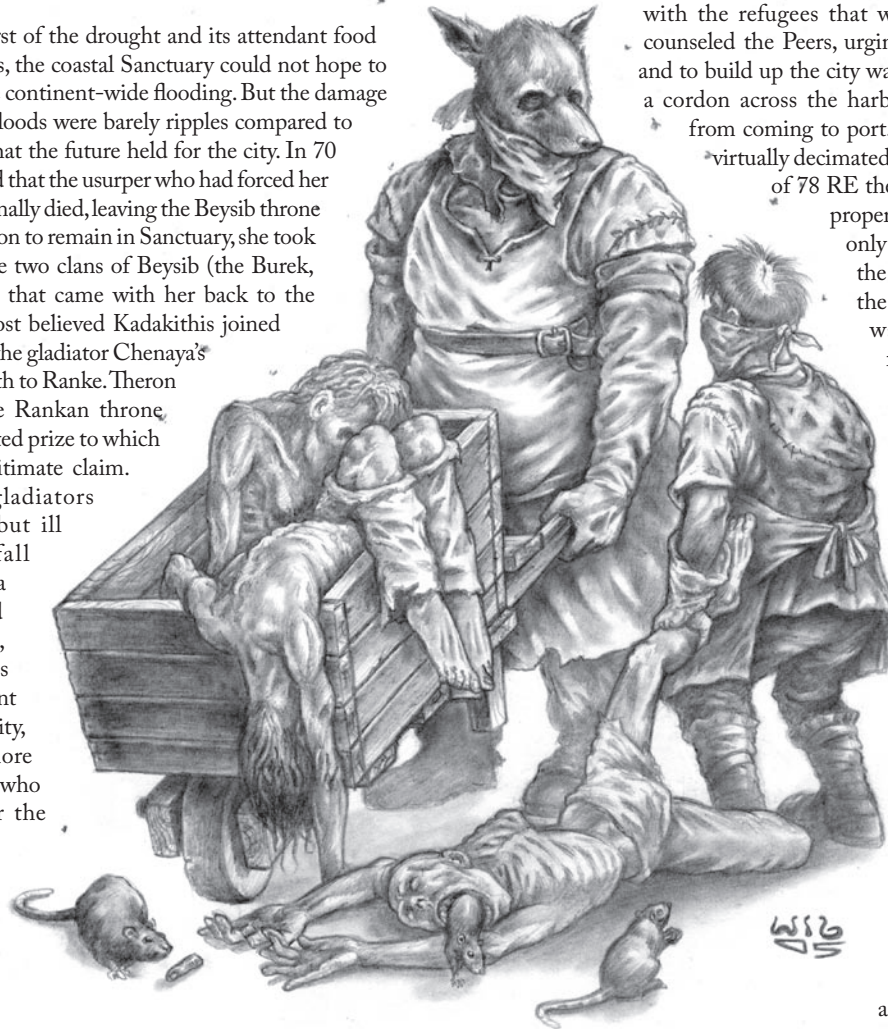
THE TROUBLES

63 RE TO 94 RE

With Ranke in trouble, its satellite cities began to see to their own governance. Ilsig, freed from its crippling tribute, reasserted itself along the Sparkling Coast and renewed its interest in Sanctuary. Sanctuary expanded as well. Having long suffered from kidnappings by the pirates of Scavenger's Isle, Kadakithis assembled 100 marines and sent them against the rogues. The fighting was brutal and intense but Sanctuary's warriors prevailed, burning the pirate ships to the water line and freeing hundreds of slaves. Many returned to Sanctuary, but the rest stayed and renamed their prison-turned-home Inception Isle. It became Sanctuary's first (and to this day, only) colony.

Sanctuary's small success and growing prosperity were not indicative of the state of the rest of the world. The wars with the north and the arrival of the Black-Tooth horde had spread fear and uncertainty throughout the continent, which only worsened when the effects of reckless magic from the Wizardwall War began to be felt. One of those effects was a change in climate that led to a crushing four-year drought. Following the drought were the specters of famine and sickness, and the world cast a worried eye to the past, remembering the dark times of Enlibar's fall. Ironically, when the prayed-for rains finally came, their intensity combined with the land's parched state led to flooding, causing as much suffering in just a few weeks as the drought had caused over a few years.

While spared the worst of the drought and its attendant food shortages and illnesses, the coastal Sanctuary could not hope to avoid the effects of the continent-wide flooding. But the damage and death caused by floods were barely ripples compared to the turbulent waves that the future held for the city. In 70 RE, Shupansea learned that the usurper who had forced her people into exile had finally died, leaving the Beysib throne empty. Having no reason to remain in Sanctuary, she took her daughters, and the two clans of Beysib (the Burek, and most of Setmur) that came with her back to the Beysib homeland. Most believed Kadakithis joined her, but in truth he, at the gladiator Chenaya's insistence, headed north to Ranke. Theron had died, leaving the Rankan throne open as a hotly contested prize to which Kadakithis had a legitimate claim. Chenaya and her gladiators accompanied him, but ill fortune would befall them both. Chenaya apparently drowned en route to Ranke, while Kadakithis was murdered in the violent streets of the capital city, victim of nothing more than a common thug who killed the prince for the price of his clothing. In all likelihood, the killer never even knew the name or station of his victim.



With the Beysib, Rankans, and the Prince all gone, Sanctuary turned to its own for guidance. A group of Wrigglie merchants and nobles formed an oligarchic council called the Peers.

In 71 RE, the heavy rains that had turned to snow in the higher elevations melted and brought a second flood to Sanctuary's two rivers, obliterating the slums known as Downwind. Autumn brought more rain in the form of great hurricanes that flattened whole sections of town. The Peers sent appeals to Ranke for assistance and requested a new governor, but the capital of the empire had problems of its own, most notably the Black-Tooth hordes that still ran rampant through its countryside.

But all hope was not lost for the desperate Sanctans. Word reached the city that the Kingdom of Ilsig had restored itself, and the Peers sent a delegation bearing gifts and a plea for protection and money. Ilsig happily took the gifts and sent priests and promises as aid.

Storms ravaged the southern coastline throughout the next year destroying Sanctuary's fishing fleet at sea. Contact with anything but the closest islands became impossible and trade with the Beysib Empire dwindled to a few occasional ships, and finally to none at all. Eventually the storms became so intense that even trade with the nearby Inception Isle had to stop. Sanctuary continued to suffer as the rest of the continent had in the years before: drought, famine, and the first wave of plague all struck in 73 RE, the latter unintentionally carried by Ilsigi priests on pilgrimages to "clean up" Sanctuary's lax and unorthodox religious practices.

Molin Torchholder recognized that even if the plague could be contained, there would be nothing to stop its resurgence with the refugees that would come in the spring. He counseled the Peers, urging them to sever ties with Ilsig and to build up the city walls over the winter and to make a cordon across the harbor to prevent unwanted ships from coming to port. While they argued, the plague virtually decimated Inception Isle and by the spring of 78 RE the plague had come to Sanctuary proper in full force. At first the plague only had mild effects, killing the old, the weak, and the very young. When the city realized that the new plague was being carried by refugees from Ilsig City and Ranke, they panicked and burned down the hostleries. Unfortunately, the winds spread the fire to other parts of the city, and by the time the flames were extinguished, half the city was destroyed. The culmination of this tragic series of events was the collapse of the Temple of Ils, which killed the hundreds who had taken refuge from the fires and the plague within its sacred walls. The people spoke of divine punishment, and scapegoats to appease the gods even further were eagerly sought.

Sanctuary was not alone in its trials. Erratic weather, plague, and famine continued to be

widespread problems throughout the Known World. With each year that passed, more hurricanes, more droughts, and more disease walked the lands. Many peoples, like the S'danzo, picked up stakes and moved on.

The famine and despair worsened as the rains refused to fall, and in 83 RE a more vile resurgence of the plague struck Sanctuary. Because its victims' corpses turned black and were bloated with bloody water, the people believed that Sanctuary was cursed by the S'danzo, an idea seeded by the Dyareelan cultists who slipped into the city with the Ilsig priests. Gangs prowled the city, butchering anyone they believed to be S'danzo in the name of Dyareela. The Dyareelen priests would eventually lead Sanctuary into its darkest times. (For more information, see *Green Ronin's Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*).

In 86 RE, while the Dyareelans made a truce with the Peers, Ranke's problems in the north and east converged into a single threat. The eastern Black-Tooth hordes flanked the Nisi remnants and conquered them from the rear. The red-haired barbarians from ages past called the Irrune, themselves antecedents of the Rankans, drifted south and camped on the shores of the White Foal River, some twenty miles north of Sanctuary. The Irrune ousted the plague-decimated bandits who had lived in the World Spine Mountains since the height of the Kingdom of Ilsig and claimed that territory for themselves.

While Ranke contended with the horde alone, its people fled south to Sanctuary, bringing with them wealth and culture and seeing the cultist-infested Sanctuary as a welcome respite compared to the troubled empire in the north. But even this slight rebound would not last, for in 89 RE, another year of drought, famine, flood, and fire ravaged the city, giving the cult the means to take over the city completely. The Dyareelans demanded that the city isolate itself from the rest of the world and set about to purge all nonbelievers and enemies of the Dark Mother to purify the city. They claimed that Dyareela's will was the cleansing of the world, and said that from the spilled blood of the tainted would arise a paradise. In response to the growing threat of arbitrary violence, local nobles withdrew from Ranke and settled in Land's End Retreat, beyond the walls of Sanctuary.

Meanwhile, the Irrune had occasionally come to the city to trade, but in 92 RE a Dyareelan mob seized a handful of the Irrune and sacrificed them on their bloody altars. The Irrune were enraged, especially when it was discovered that their leader's youngest brother was among those sacrificed. The Irrune descended from the mountains and pillaged the outlying settlements that supported the city.

The next year, the Peers tried to reassert control over the city, but ultimately failed. Faced with a choice of allying themselves with the Irrune or the cultists, Molin and a few others chose barbarism and left the city to convince the Irrune barbarian lord Arizak to attack the city. The rest of the Peers embraced the Mother of Chaos. The cultists continued to swell with power until they fragmented into several opposing sects, creating further unrest and initiating bloody purges against one another.

It was in the height of this chaos in 94 RE that Molin returned with the Irrune and swept through the city, cleansing it of the Dyareelan stain. The palace was burned and the cultists were executed or driven from the city. The Irrune were installed as Sanctuary's new masters.

The transition from a cultist theocracy to a barbarian protectorate was not easy, and many factions within the Irrune wanted nothing more than to pick up and move on. Arizak proclaimed tolerance for individual worship of both Rankan and Ilsigi gods, but declared that only priests of the barbarian's god Irrunega could hold services within the city. During Arizak's rule the Peers were able to regain some of their power and began to take direct control over the city's day-to-day bureaucracy.


THE WORLD TODAY

95 RE TO THE PRESENT

The present world is one of rebuilding. The Troubles affected everyone; no one was spared. Even cities untouched by the plague felt the effects on their economies. The Black-Tooth horde still prowls in the north and east, a constant and looming threat against Ranke. And though the threat of the Mygdonian Alliance is over and Enlibar and Yenized are long destroyed, the scars of the last century have left their mark on the world.

Ilsig's King Sepheris IV wants Sanctuary for his own and has established a garrison on Inception Isle, ostensibly to support a new era of peaceful trade with the city. A new emperor has emerged in Ranke, one who is neither insane nor incompetent like his predecessors. Arizak's health is failing, and his sons have begun to jockey for position to take over the city. In the shadows, the Dyareelans bide their time, working to reestablish themselves and bring about the paradise promised by their faith. The world is poised on the edge of a change, though for the better or worse cannot be said.





CHAPTER THREE: THE KNOWN WORLD

Walking down Sanctuary's streets, one is sure to encounter people from nearly every known corner of the Known World, plus a few more from places no one's even heard of. A stroll down the Processional will lead a pedestrian past plenty of Wrigglies, but also Rankans, Irrune, sailors from Mrsevada, merchants from Caronne, and more. The air is filled

with the din of dozens of languages and with people from even more cultures, following strange customs and believing in exotic gods. This chapter offers insight into these people and their cultures, presenting all the information you need to take your games beyond the grimy streets of *Thieves' World*.

GEOGRAPHY

The lands called the Known World are but a small corner of a vast equator-straddling mega-continent that stretches across the southern hemisphere of the world. Beyond the mountains of Wizardwall, far from the dusty plains of Azehur, the landscape is unexplored, too wild and too enormous to be crossed. The extent of what most consider the Known World therefore only extends as far west as Mrsevada and as far east as the Cold Lands of the Banmalts. Sanctuary and the Hammer's Tail, a sharp spur of land created by the towering peaks of the Gunderpah, mark the Known World's southern extend; Azehur, home of the cult of Amalur, marks the northern extent of exploration.

Though the lands of the Known World represent the limits of familiarity, people here know that the rest of the world is a much larger place. Tales filter through dockside taverns of sailors who have seen the wonders of these far-flung places; for instance, it's known that some 1,000 miles to the south is the home of the ancient Beysib Empire, a sweep of volcanic islands warmed by unstable geothermic activity. To the west lay numerous islands with strange people, odd sorcery, and odder customs. And beyond them is the Unknown World, a place of even stranger societies. Beyond even the Unknown World is the Land of Myth, where horses fly, men take the forms of beasts, and dragons spit fire from their shadowy caverns—or so go the legends.

Reaching these distant places is difficult, for huge stretches of water bound the sub-continent. The Endless Ocean stretches to the west, dotted

with chains of remote emerald islands. To the south and east extends the Oread ocean, a great expanse of cold waters that extend well beyond the reaches of human exploration.

ROUTES

It's important to note that most maps in the Known World are inaccurate, sometimes missing whole sections of land or ignoring important details such as a body of water or even an entire range of mountains. As such, adventurers exploring the Known World have their work cut out for them. What might seem on a map like an easy route across flat terrain to Firaqa, for instance, is likely to feature all sorts of unexpected obstacles like ravines, steep hills, and dense forest.

Part of the reason maps are so vague or inaccurate is because few people travel more than a dozen miles from their homes. This is not a world of straight and well-maintained roads; rather, what few paths exist between towns and villages tend to follow the lay of the land, curving and twisting back on themselves, alternately following expanded game trails and the path of least resistance. Invading armies have, over the centuries, cleared some few rutted dirt roads between the larger cities, but even these are uncertain at best; most are poorly maintained, often overgrown or with sections completely washed away.

MAJOR CULTURES

The earliest civilizations of the Known World were isolated pockets of people until Ilsig arose, which was the first culture to avoid destruction or absorption by the periodic influxes of nomadic tribes from the north. It's possible that other kingdoms or despotic states pre-existed Ilsig, but if so, there are scant details. Most scholars look to the Kingdom of Ilsig as being the father of modern civilization. But as important as Ilsig is, it was the empires following its birth that determined the course of history.

What follows is a survey of the various polities that make up the civilizations featured in the *Thieves' World* campaign setting. Ranging from city-states to tribal groups not bound to any one land, the people of the Known World are diverse in custom and culture.

CARONNE

Situated on a rise in the heart of the Pezan River delta is Caronne. Though small, its influence spreads far and wide. Vast fortunes are made from Caronne's merchant caravans traveling through Ilsigi and Rankan lands, ventures which allow Caronnese noble houses to hire skilled Mrsevadan mercenaries to defend their lands.

The Caronnese are considered to be open-minded and tolerant—almost dangerously so. As such, a few scoundrels have become infamous for taking advantage of the lax trade laws by selling anything, no matter how bizarre or ill-gotten, for which they can find a buyer. There is one exception to this look-the-other-way policy: The cosmopolitan Caronnese are remarkably intolerant of magic and those who traffic in it. Historians attribute this attitude to ancient times, when Caronne was an unruly and oppressed vassal of the flourishing Empire of Enlibar.

As Enlibar found itself embroiled in a war of attrition with Yenized, the oppressed people at the fringes of the Empire fled, seeking new lands and a new life away from the corrupt sorcerers who enforced the decadent Emperor's whims. Moving north and west, they founded cities on the coastline of the Sparking Sea, among which were Caronne and Mrsevada. But Enlibar would not easily relinquish its control over its people and sent waves of soldiers to claim these places as distant outposts. While the troops could not reach Mrsevada thanks to the intervening delta, they conquered Caronne and subjected the people there to some of the worst atrocities humanity has ever known.

Over the centuries, Caronne tried many times to throw off Enlibar's shackles, but each time, the Empire responded with ruthless reprisals, slaughtering the people, destroying whole sections of the city, and impressing the people into an existence little better than slavery. Yet the Caronnese would not give up, and as Enlibar weakened, the Caronnese finally broke the chains of tyranny and became the small nation it is today.

With its liberation, Caronne recovered and prospered, becoming an important commercial center. To ensure their survival and place in the

post-Enlibar world, they fortified the city, erecting tall walls and laying innumerable traps in the river delta to ensure no army could ever reach them again. Refusing to be ruled by a tyrant ever again, the Caronnese adopted a different style of government, a republic, wherein the people's interests were represented by the wealthy landowners. The prosperity and potential for wealth drew other peoples from old Enlibar holdings, allowing the city to expand into smaller satellite settlements that ultimately fed and clothed the people who lived inside the walls.

In just a few short years, the horrors of the past faded into memory. The new Caronne built its fortunes on trade, learning the necessary nautical skills to navigate the waters of the oceans and set sail for ports all along the coast. The people gained a reputation for being canny traders and dealt with all manner of goods from drugs to dyes.

But Caronne's liberation would not last forever. A new power rose in the east—the Rankan Empire. What began as a peaceful expansion soon turned to outright conquest, with each emperor more hungry than the last for new territory. Caronne relied on Ilsig for protection, but after Sanctuary fell, the Rankan ships landed and conquered their southern allies. Caronne would follow a few years later.

Ranke found the city distasteful and morally repellent. To bring the people in line with Rankan values, they installed an oppressive regime that brutally repressed the local customs, forcing the more decadent elements underground. But the Caronnese did not suffer long; Abakithis' wanton mismanagement and spite for the Mygdonian Alliance drained the empire of resources and soldiers and soon after its conquest, the Rankan garrisons in Caronne returned to the capital to aid in the war effort.

Now Caronne is free once more and has reasserted itself in the Sparking Sea. Fertile valleys in southern Caronne are known for excellent vineyards, and Caronnese wines are renowned throughout the courts across the continent. A highly protected and developed network of merchants allowed Caronnese caravans to traffic in art, fine clothing, fine wines . . . and less reputable cargo. Wealthy merchant princes turn a blind eye to the smuggling of illicit substances to other nations, including *krrf*, a drug that is infamous across the continent. "Pure" bricks of the drug are attributed with almost magical properties. More than ever before, the demand for this drug is increasing as opah takes hold in Sanctuary and other distant cities.

GOVERNMENT

Though it purports to be a city of freedom, in truth the wealthy control Caronne. Almost 2,000 years ago, at the start of Caronne's first, abortive rebellion against Enlibar, the names of the most privileged families were written into the *Jorna* ("the Book" in Caronnese). They continued adding names for the next 300 years until they deemed it time to shut the book, thereby preserving the integrity of the aristocracy.

CLIMATE

The Known World is famous for its inconsistent climate, though for the most part, coastal regions remain temperate regardless of latitude. The interior is somewhat drier and warmer, though at higher elevations the temperature falls and stays cold year round. Much farther north, past Wizardwall, the land becomes warmer and drier with stretches of badlands and deserts. Weather patterns are unpredictable, more so than in other worlds; this is attributed to "wizard weather." The more mana manipulated in an area, the greater the likelihood of accidental backlash to the environment. This can sometimes result in spontaneous cold snaps and heat waves, devastating hurricanes, tornados, and even periods of extensive drought or flooding.



SPARKLING SEA

ENDLESS SEA

GREAT RIVER

PEZAN RIVER

HAZIGAL

AZEHUSAS

AZEHUR

LAKE VAHAN

MRSEVADA

TOCOLLE

VEZIA

CARONNE

LIEAMO

PARUSTRUM PLAINS

SUNRISE MOUNTAINS

VELOS

RAGATE

ILSIG

ILSIG BAY

MAIDENHEAD WOODS

ANHUG

KUBRAG

SANDRINES MOUNTAINS

BANADARAN ISLANDS

ADEM

VISALA ISLANDS

GENISENG RIVER

GREY

WORLD SPINE MOUNTAINS

SANCTUARY

GREAT MORASS

HAMMER'S TAIL



SYR

BANMALTS,
THE COLD
LAND

ADRALE ○ LAKE
ARTASHAR

DEVRITH
PENNINSULA

BRASIDAS RIVER

DELIHUR RIVER

WIZARDWALL MOUNTAINS

GREY WITCH
MOUNTAINS

ARIZBOND
SEA

LIRT ○

TYSE ○

CIRDON ○

PEARL RIVER CIRDONIA

SIHAN ○

BAKT ○

CANTAL
PLAINS

RANKE ○

LEYGAS STRAIT

DARSHAN

SUMA ○

BORNIEL
BAY

TWAND ○

DAR ○

HAZIBAL
HILLS

AURVESH ○

WASTES

AURVESHAN

OREAD
OCEAN

INCEPTION
ISLAND





Within the Jornial class, families are ranked based on aggregate wealth, with the wealthiest commanding the greatest influence and respect. While rigid in their views and who is counted among them, they are not selective about how a family makes its coin and there's no prejudice against those who make their fortunes from drug-trafficking or agriculture—only against those who fail. The most significant families in the current era include the Ermanes, Hiarella, and Jaoletti clans.

The head of each Jornial family, who must be a male of fifty years or more, may cast one vote toward the election of their figurehead, the *Dajornial* (literally, "Man of the Book"). The *Dajornial* must be at least 50 years old when accepted and must have served Caronne's mercantile interests for at least 30 years to be eligible for the post. Membership in the Jornial is hereditary, but a *Dajornial* must be from a different family than his two immediate predecessors.

The *Dajornial* is a lifelong position, meaning that he may make decisions with the freedom of a tyrant and the impunity of a dictator. Though it would seem to be a coveted position, given that the *Dajornial* traditionally wields ultimate power in Caronne, in actuality he has very little say in how the Jorna families conduct their affairs outside of Caronne, where they earn the bulk of their fortunes. He draws no wealth from the position, although he does get to live in the Palanto—the palace that is also the seat of Caronnesse government.

PEOPLE

Caronnesse who can afford to travel extensively or find employment abroad usually come from prosperous households, benefiting from a rich diet, extensive wardrobe, and cultivated manners. Scoundrels aren't afraid to go slumming in the same rough clothes sailors and smugglers wear, but most prefer the respect the wealthy and educated deserve. Gentlemen wear rapiers, soldiers brandish polearms, and women without martial training still defend themselves with elegant daggers, some of which are large enough to be considered short swords.

Caronnesse noblemen are often flamboyant in their dress and proud in their disposition, so much so that flashy duels often settle affairs of honor. Such contests aren't quietly performed at dawn, but rather quickly resolved in a public place. A duel is often a spectacle, full of bluster though lacking in bloodshed. Duelists rarely (if ever) fight to the death, since it is easier to avenge the greatest offenses with stealthy assassinations.

Knowledge is one of the most valuable resources in this nation. As one would expect, the government's bureaucracy includes many people who are quite adept at mathematics, accounting, and legality. Well-educated Caronnesse sometimes travel to act as advisors to distant nobles. Since the merchant princes also depend on disciplined tacticians, Machiavellian masters of intrigue, and swift assassination, an infamous Caronnesse may find employment in any one of these specialties in a country far away from his rivals.

Caronne's aristocrats sample foods and artwork from Rankan and Ilsigi culture alike, cultivating tastes and appreciation for the goods they sell. Lesser cities are ruled by individual noble houses, who are always looking for trade that will allow their ascendancy to more valuable real estate. No nation has more complicated legalities regarding the buying and selling of property, since the acquisition of wealth can be as much a political move as a financial one.

The average Caronnesse is known for his shrewd business sense, but is capable of concealing a calculated nature behind a gregarious façade. Caronnesse women often manage the financial affairs of their household, keeping extensive records of their household expenses. Caronnesse men pride themselves on being well traveled, or at least well acquainted with

foreign goods. It is possible for a commoner to rise to the ranks of the lesser nobility if he can acquire wealth and keep it. Gaining a vote within the Jornial is impossible for families not listed in the ancient city records, but families who cannot find power still manage to console themselves with wealth.

Caronne's distrust of magic is the stuff of legend. The city suffered terribly in its early centuries under the rule of Enlibrite sorcery. Magic is not totally forbidden in the republic, but it is watched closely. Magicians, wizards, witches and the like must register with the Jornial and face severe punishments if they're found guilty of using their craft against any citizen. By contrast, priests (especially those of Donatio) are given fairly free rein to invoke their deities.

Officials within the Caronese bureaucracy expect to be well paid—or at least bribed sufficiently—for the performance of their duties. Many citizens can convert soldats to shaboozh without intermediaries, especially when quick math can avoid a moneychanger's transaction fees. All currency is accepted and scrutinized throughout the kingdom, since money is the lifeblood of this state.

Warfare is a mercantile proposition in the estates surrounding Caronne. Castes of gentleman and lady mercenaries are known for their civility on the battlefield. When two merchant houses are openly in conflict, its mercenaries resolve disputes according to centuries-old doctrines of warfare. Sometimes, the outcome can be determined early in a battle, concluding when one side suffers a predetermined number of casualties. In this way, loss of life and financial expense is minimized. Even mercenaries from nearby Mrsevada have learned to respect the protocols of Caronese guilds. Of course, if a political leader can be eliminated by assassination before such a conflict begins, costly battles are avoided, so the Caronese turn a blind eye to swift and silent transfers of power. The results are tallied, the profits transferred, and outsiders never know that death and turmoil stalked the city.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Caronne is by no means the only city in the republic. Most of the smaller Caronese cities are walled and garrisoned with well-paid, well-drilled soldiers of the Republic. They have high walls surrounded by arable land, which is guarded over by watchtowers atop high hillsides.

CARONNE (METROPOLIS)

Caronne is the capital of the republic. It consists of a well-protected and bustling marketplace surrounded by the estates of lesser merchant princes. Caronne, like Mrsevada to the west, profits from shipbuilding and a strong fleet of ships. The city's harbor is full of cargo ships and warships of varied design, and is well-protected by the city's defenses.

Caronne itself rises on land reclaimed from the Pezan River Delta, where it falls off into the deeper waters of the Sparkling Sea. Many travelers are taken by the canals crisscrossing the city and the fact that most people get about by boats that are poled down the narrow waterways making up many of the city's routes. Caronne is also known for its bridges. These graceful structures cross over the canals and are decorated with historical, somewhat macabre scenes from the Enlibar's cruel oppression of the state.

Unlike its vassal cities, Caronne's main defense is the delta. Both the land and sea routes are treacherous and mazelike, and only Caronese pilots know the ins and outs to successfully navigate a route to the city.

Nearly anything can be bought and sold in the city's marketplace, save for the kinds of loathsome and immoral cargo reserved for cesspools like

Sanctuary and Inception Island. Exotic cargoes change hands frequently, and for an added tariff, can be exchanged without troublesome paperwork or bookkeeping. Each merchant prince subsidizes a portfolio of merchant caravans, but caravan masters are free to trade goods that would sell better for someone else.

In recent years, some merchant princes have begun establishing colonial estates on minor islands along the coast. In fact, some distant mapmakers consider Caronne's greatest estates to actually be off the coast of the northwestern continent, instead of the mainland proper. With Mygdonian city-states to the east and Mrsevadan rivals to the west, cynics profess it is only a matter of time until the nation is forced even further into seclusion. Forces loyal to the nation's ruler answer these theories by readying their polearms and steadfastly denying such fatalistic beliefs.

TOCOLLE (SMALL CITY)

Tocolle is on the bank of the Pezan above the delta. Its major internal shipping points bring goods down to Caronne for shipment across the Sparkling Sea and beyond. Its dukes oversee its bureaucracy. For the last century its ducal family has been the Drichetta, a client of the Ermanes family.

VEZIA (SMALL CITY)

The best wines in Caronne are said to come from the limestone hills near Vezia. Grape vines and qualis plants flourish here. Vezia is run by another ducal clan, the Coppa, clients of the Hiarella.

LIEAMO (SMALL CITY)

Lieamo is the breadbasket of Caronne—not the most glamorous place in the republic, but an important one. The Raffeo, a cadet branch of the Jaoletti, rule there.

RESOURCES

Caronne is infamous for trading in *krrf*, but it's not actually grown or made there. It comes from the Visala Islands, the result of a Caronese monopoly of Visalan raw materials. *Krrf* is made from the sap of mali trees, which grow best and almost exclusively in those islands. Use of *krrf* is strictly forbidden in Caronne, and while it can be shipped through the nation's port, it may not be disembarked there.

Caronne prides itself on its red wines, but it is also known for rarer (and thus more expensive) qualis wines. Notoriously sensitive to variations of soil, light, and rain, the qualis bush is planted wherever it can survive in the hills around Vezia. Each bush is routinely pruned for easy harvesting, and each produces enough berries for about one bottle of qualis wine. As if qualis wine were not rich and rare enough, qualis can also be distilled once and then blended back with cask-aged qualis wine to produce qualis liqueur—renowned not only for its taste, but sought by wizards of all types as a catalyst for many and varied potions.

Far up the Pezan River, the Salt Hills are the location of the Caronese salt mines. Each mine is run like an armed camp, treating its miners as prisoners and slaves. There is no worse fate in Caronne than to be sent here, whether as punishment for a crime or due to a desperate need for money. For various reasons—not the least of which is negligible wages—Caronne has cornered the market for salt throughout the Known World. (Although salt can be evaporated just about anywhere along the coast of the Oread or Sparkling Sea, it is a slow and laborious process.) Caronese salt can only legally be transported in Caronese ships, a marriage of the salt trade to the maritime economy that has

become a mainstay of the city's wealth. The city has subsequently established monopolies in other trades, such as the Jaoletti family's focus on alum and honey.

Caronese warriors are known for their tactics and ingenuity in battle; though they lack the precise and intense training of Mrsevadan mercenaries, their dedication and loyalty is impressive. A wide variety of exotic spears and polearms were first designed in Caronne and have since been incorporated into the tactics of the mercenary units, allowing them to face all manner of enemy units. Some have found their way into other countries by way of caravans and trade ships, but not everyone who buys such a weapon knows how to use it. Save for those in Mrsevada, few weaponmasters have studied the methods of employing them as extensively as the Caronese.

RELIGION

In Caronne, magic is feared and religion is revered. The temple district of the capital city contains a variety of ceremonies and rituals, if only for the benefit of visiting merchants bringing large sums of money. In recent years, an enlightenment movement has started to take hold in this corner of the nation, espousing the value of knowledge over pantheism and superstition. The cult of Amalur, in particular, has made many inroads in the last few decades.

The gods of Caronne bear some similarity to the pantheons of both Ilsig and Enlibar, both of which have had heavy influence on the development of Caronese culture. Liarno closely resembles Il, and Setizia is a mirror for Shipri. The patron deity, though, is Donatia, whom the Caronese say is the youngest son of Liarno and Setizia. He is the patron god of wealth, commerce, and the sea . . . an appropriate figurehead, as so much of their economy and survival as a city relies on ships.

INTERESTING FEATURES

Caronne's origins are steeped in violence and tragedy, much of it at the hands of sorcerer-tyrants. Evidence of Enlibar's crushing hold are reflected all over the city and in its environs. Too many times did the armies of Enlibar march on them, killing indiscriminately to cow the populace with fell sorcery. So destructive were Enlibar's reprisals that the city has had to be rebuilt several times, in some cases directly overtop of the ruins of the old city and the graves of its fallen.

What finally stopped Enlibar and guaranteed Caronne's survival and independence was the conversion of the delta into a lethal maze of dead ends and deathtraps. In the most recent effort to retake Caronne, an entire Enlibrite legion lost their lives to poison darts, disease-covered stakes, deadfalls, and quicksand. The city maintained these defenses for many generations, but eventually allowed them to fall into disrepair and be reclaimed by the swamp. Now, strange creatures prowl the black waters of the delta, and every once in a while a local swamp-dweller claims to have found an intact sword or spearhead, harkening back to the might of Enlibar.

Another interesting location is the Unnamed Temple. More of a shrine than a full-blown temple, it was used as a field hospital for rebels during the various attempts to gain liberation from Enlibar oppressors. Whatever god it once served has long since been forgotten and no symbols remain to tell what kind of deity it was. Old bloodstains still stain the tiles and every attempt to clean them fail. The Caronese see this site as a reminder of their sacrifices, though some suggest a more sinister explanation, claiming the blood comes not from the soldiers who died to defend it, but from blood sacrifices to foul and despicable gods.

FIRAQA

On the western bank of the Pearl River and in the shadow of the Sandrines Mountains stands the city of Firaqa. Farming villages that provide it with the resources it requires speckle the lands around. Magic rules here and practitioners of sorcery find this place a remote haven from prejudice and ostracism. Firaqan commoners show a healthy respect for those who command unseen force; for the sorcerer elders who lead them, the more common fear is replaced with trust and dependence. Sorcerers who are dangerous, rebellious, or infamous, on the other hand, are forced from the wasteland haven when discovered. Exiled sorcerers, ill-fated nobles, desperate refugees, and fleeing criminals all travel along the same road from Firaqa to Sanctuary. Some foolishly attempt to raid Firaqa to seize magical artifacts, amulets, or talismans before they depart, but the price of failure is sometimes worse than death.

Firaqa has more practitioners of "white magic" (see the **Spellmaster** in Green Ronin's *Thieves' World Player's Manual*) than any other region of the continent. Remaining aloof from the conflict of nations, they have chosen instead to maintain and defend their precious oasis. Most mages prefer isolation and peace to conflict, but not all of them are lily-white in their motivations. Some want enough time to overcome a curse or find a way to avoid the "price" of their power; others rely on unnaturally extended life spans to outlive their enemies, gathering power in exile. As long as wizards do not war openly in the city, practitioners of a vast array of magical schools may study in seclusion. Black magic and necromancy are the only techniques entirely forbidden.

GOVERNMENT

Firaqa is a magocracy: a society ruled by mages. Only practitioners of white magic can serve on its ruling council, although there have been bad times in the city when this rule has been ignored, and in its darkest times, tyrants not bound by the Price ruled the city. In every era, the ruling council has had the freedom to use any spellcraft they have seen fit to preserve their kingdom. Rivalries within the Council provide a series of checks and balances, ensuring that no one mage becomes too dangerous or too free with his magic. The Council rules with a heavy hand. Obey the rules, and the place is tolerable, but non-conformists—especially non-conformists without sorcerous talent—quickly learn that Firaqa's protection and isolation carry a heavy price.

Firaqa is small enough that courts of council sorcerers routinely hold audiences with commoners, meddling directly in and overseeing their affairs as they see fit. Not everyone on the ruling council bothers with such diversions, but a few actually enjoy it, either out of a sense of egotism, an opportunity to gain power over others, or because they simply believe that altruism is the right thing to do.

In both the Rankan and Irrunes Era, Firaqa has been ruled by the *primum inter pares* of a council of thaumaturges. The current ruler is believed to be a woman who goes by the name of Ginsoon. Like all the White Mages of Firaqa, Ginsoon has paid a Price for her craft. In her case, it's moles and wens. The woman is extraordinarily ugly, but wise and good-hearted. She attends many of the audiences with commoners, although she prefers not to announce herself as the most powerful woman in the city.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

The city is both small and sprawling—there are rarely more than a few hundred folk in the Cantonne (the inner city), most of them mages. About 1,500 non-spellcasters dwell in the city around the Cantonne, since magic folk like to live well and require many services. Roughly

2,000 obedient workers live in the surrounding regions, as well as those practitioners of magic who come not to rule or serve but merely to be left alone.

Firaqan sorcerers come from all corners of the continent. Native Firaqans have tan or brown skin, dark hair, and dark eyes. Most dress for comfort, preferring sandals and flowing robes. A checked cloth called a *keffiyah* is the most common type of headgear. Many of these display patterns that serve heraldic purposes, showing allegiance to a family, tribe, guild, union, or magical order. Women prefer colorful clothes and elegant makeup, with styles that can range greatly from year to year. In one season, eyes may be highlighted in kohl, while the next stresses a particular hue of rouge. Some Rankan travelers take offense at the allegedly brazen and flirtatious behavior of Firaqan ladies . . . while others face swift punishment for making improper advances on them in a culture they do not understand.

Many mages maintain distinctly non-magical trades here, seeking a balance between scholarship and luxury. Although the government is accepting of magic, the economy is flooded by those who traffic in it. Charms and wards are routinely sold to any who can pay, including tourists and travelers with more money than mistrust. Much of Firaqa's population understandably has no talent in magic at all—leading to a chasm between those who have the authority and power to rule and those who never will.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Firaqa is structured as two concentric cities. The inner city, the Cantonne, is a great school and cloister of White Magic. Those willing to pay the Price receive their instruction and find camaraderie within it. Not all the mages within Firaqa are White Mages, however. Mages, priests and even a witch or two come to study in the Cantonne's many libraries, which are said to contain much of the ancient lore of Enlibar. Firaqa's schools of magic and lore are legendary. The inner walls of the Cantonne are a complex of low stone-built structures and four stone towers, and the finest buildings in the inner city are made of stone.

The outer city is an orderly urban environ, obedient to the rule of the Council. Most of the buildings in the outer city are timber-built. The outer rock walls are quite impressive, having been raised with magic's help.

Walking around the periphery of Firaqa, one may find the dwelling places of all manner of magical practitioners. The city is a magnet for such types seeking to retire from the world, but it is also a place of exile, as the White Mages are generally able to keep a rein on troublesome types.

In all areas of town, visitors remark on Firaqa's orderliness and cleanliness. In the Irrune Era, there do not seem to be very many poor, and beggars are practically non-existent. Granted, this is because the Council has forbidden beggars from practicing their trade, but most outsiders passing through the streets are blissfully unaware of that decree.

RESOURCES

This region is famous for its freshwater pearls, called "Souls of the Oyster." They come in a variety of lustrous colors, mostly pale, though very rare black and deep blue Souls are sometimes found. The oysters are cultivated in man-made structures off the Pearl River. "Wild pearls" are more expensive than cultivated pearls, although in practice, there are almost no wild pearls in existence. The largest Soul is about the size of a man's thumbnail. The Souls have intrinsic value for their beauty, but they are in even greater demand as spellcraft reagents. The color of the pearl reflects its strength and most compatible use (see sidebar for details).



SOULS OF THE OYSTER

While the Souls of the Oyster are valuable in their own right, a few have magical properties coveted by spellcasters of any stripe. It's believed these pearls are actually concentrations of mana, and when incorporated in spellcasting, they can produce heightened effects.

Black Souls provide a +2 bonus to spellcasting and ritualcasting checks. Blue Souls increase the effective mana field level for the spellcaster by one step to a Maximum Mana at the most. Either pearls confers enough energy to augment spellcasting for 1d12 spells before cracking.

Strong universal; CL —; Price 5,000 sh (black) or 10,000 sh (blue).

Firaqa's cuisine is distinctive. Figs, hummus, tahini, and chai are all known to originate from Firaqa. Mild alcoholic beverages and sherbets are sampled by travelers, but many scholars are content to sit in public houses sipping hot spicy tea. This trade has led to an esoteric network of scholars who prefer exotic Firaqan beverages, trading stashes of leaves and powders for recreational purposes. Some are prepared by seemingly alchemical processes involving steam and hot water, while others are smoked in massive hookahs sequestered in comfortable studies.

A few exotic goods, such as intricate carpets and an unusual pattern of cloth called "paisley," originate in this region. While the local sorcerers hoard their knowledge, a few lesser practitioners have developed spells to aid in everyday labor or craftsmanship. With each generation, a few remarkable artifacts are made here. Pilgrims along the dusty road often acquire talismans and charms when passing through the marketplace. More dubious travelers raid the homes of the wealthy, influential, and powerful as they pass through town, hoping to seize more powerful artifacts.

Located between a forest and the Pearl River, Firaqa also has an active lumber trade. In the event that anyone down in Sanctuary wants to build a deep-water ship, they're going to have to get the keel wood from the Maidenhead Forest.

RELIGION

Firaqa is a city of magic, not gods or religion. Religious belief is personal, and the city is evenly divided between Ilsigi believers, Rankan believers, and freethinkers (including devotees of smaller pantheons and individual religions). The hierarchies of Ranke and Ilsig both maintain small establishments outside the Cantonne, and major liturgical festivals are given quiet celebrations. The Council itself favors no religion.

Gods and goddess of magic, of course, must be given their due. The Rankans have no specific "goddess of magic," but in the Ilsigi pantheon Sivini, as goddess of knowledge, takes magic under her aegis. The old Enlibrite goddess of magic was Shava, and there are probably more small shrines acknowledging Shava than any other god or goddess. Shava exists mostly as a concept, however, and has no active hierarchy. Shava's symbol is the Flame, an imprimatur found on all coins minted in Firaqa. The Yenized god of magic was Witezar, who now exists primarily as an alternative to Shava.

INTERESTING FEATURES

In a city like Firaqa, there are more things magical than anywhere else in the Known World. Here, vendors sell magical amulets that actually work, and enchanted swords, armor, scrolls, and more are all available in this city of magic. However, this is also a city of great power, and not all of it is used for good. A visitor who turns down the wrong alley or enters the wrong shop could find herself in a world of discomfort.

One such location is the Black Library. Though only rumored to exist and denied fervently by the council, it sits beneath the Cantonne. Purported

to contain hundreds of volumes on blasphemous magic, blending witchcraft with magic and prayer (to demons rather than to gods), it is protected by bound fiends who vigilantly patrol the underways to this foul repository.

ILSIG

Ilsig is a land of heritage. It is the oldest surviving civilization in the Known World. It has stood against Enlibar and Ranke, never fully conquered by either of them. It established the first calendar, developed mathematics, navigation, philosophy, and religion, all without looking beyond its own borders. The kingdom itself is wealthy Ilsig City, a great center of learning and the arts, with its history displayed in every brick, stone, and shingle. While Ilsig controls some territory beyond its walls, it never saw itself as an empire and never sought to seize more land than was necessary to survive.

Ilsig figures prominently in the Known World's history (see **Chapter Two: History of the Known World**), but in brief, Ilsig predated the empire of Enlibar, though even it could not resist the overwhelming military superiority of their neighbors and eventually succumbed to them, becoming a client state. Its distance and willingness to give over its wealth allowed Ilsig to remain free of direct rule, but the tribute they paid for this privilege was crippling, keeping them heeled until Enlibar collapsed.

Once freed, Ilsig experienced a meteoric rise to power. Now able to keep and reinvest its surplus wealth, the city and its environs rapidly expanded their influence over the smaller communities along the western coastline. But Ilsig grew too quickly, and poorly managed the power it attained. So, when Ranke stirred in the east, Ilsig could only act frantically. What work force it lost to the war was replaced by slave labor, an act that had both political and economic repercussions. As the war dragged on and slaves felt the displeasure of their masters, they revolted throughout the kingdom, forcing Ilsig to withdraw its forces to quell the rebellions. With its forces divided, it proved less than a match for the powerful Rankan legions.

Ilsig spent many lives to remain free from Rankan rule, but in the end, Ranke discovered the unprotected Forgotten Pass through the Gunderpah Mountains and conquered Sanctuary, then a vassal of Ilsig. This allowed the Rankans to mount further invasions into Ilsig's lands by sea, eventually conquering them. As with Enlibar, however, Ranke knew that the distant kingdom was too far away to govern effectively, and offered independence in return for tribute. The lost war and the tumult from the slave revolts seemed to doom the ancient civilization to an ignoble end.

But Ranke had problems of its own. Faced with the Black-Toothed hordes, Ranke could ill-afford to enforce its will on the outlying provinces. Sanctuary, Adrale, Caronne, and Ilsig all re-asserted their independence. In the years since Ranke was sacked by the barbarians, Ilsig has restored itself, climbing out of a decadent quagmire of excess and taking an active role in the modern world once more.

GOVERNMENT

Kings have always ruled Ilsig. Everyone understands that their ruler is a king and the title has never changed; not even when Ilsig expanded to rule other states, nor when Ilsig paid heavy tributes to keep Enlibar's or Ranke's wolves at bay. The position is hereditary, and the royal family is a large sprawling group, with complex relationships and a convoluted lineage. The extended nobility is even larger and more complicated. The king is the supreme ruler and beneath him are various nobles, each with a different rank in accordance with the lands and slaves they own.

The government itself is a despotic monarchy. The king's power is absolute, and there is no recourse for injustices. Though the infrastructure of the Ilsig government has evolved in its long and colorful history, it has remained decidedly Byzantine. Though the king is the most powerful man in name, he is not always the most powerful person at the court.

King Sepheris IV came to power sometime during the Troubles in Sanctuary. A young, competent, far-sighted and ambitious king, he quashed the rivalries among and between the nobles, priests and magi, stabilizing what seemed a dying land. With such a figure on the Ilsig throne, the world watches to see if the still-young king will make a bid for Ranke. But even if he doesn't, it's more than clear he has designs on Sanctuary as evidenced by his control over Inception Isle.

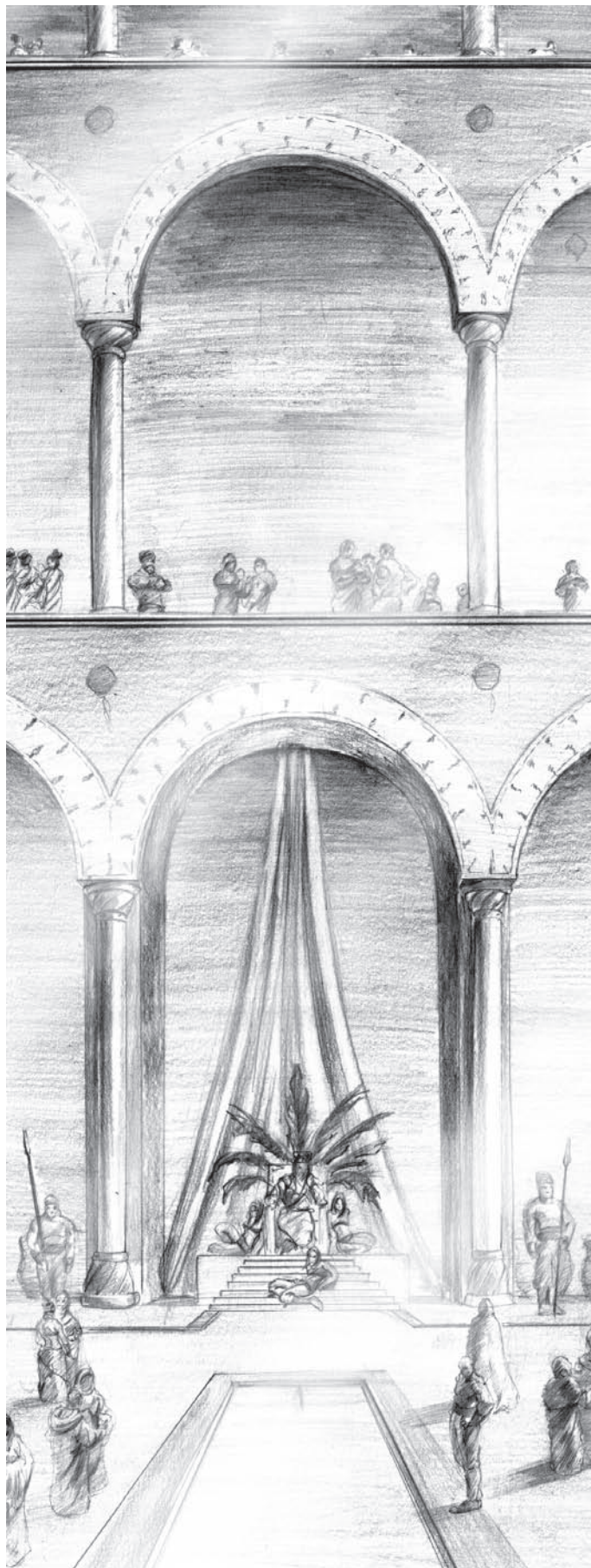
Since Sanctuary was founded in the shadow of the Ilsig defeat by pre-Imperial Ranke, the city has always loomed larger in the Ilsig mind than might seem normal. As a place founded by slaves, Ilsig looks on that city as a place it rightfully owns and desperately wants back. It's not clear whether Ilsig would actually try to seize the city and redistribute the Wrigglies back to their former owners, or if such an effort would even be possible, but the Sanctans are very afraid of this possibility.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

The capital of Ilsig protects about 150,000 citizens, though not as well as it would like—that number has decreased over the last few decades due to outbreaks of plague. The kingdom itself claims almost a million citizens, not counting the slaves that attend to them. Ilsig is incredibly dependent on slaves for its quality of life. Few free families do not own a slave or two, and noble houses may have hundreds at their command. While foreign slaves are common, most are Ilsigi, just like their masters.

Ilsigi are shorter and more nimble than their Mygdonian or Rankan rivals. Most have round faces and dark hair, but as with Ranke, the farther one travels from the capital, the more varied the populace becomes. Many cultures have been assimilated into the Ilsig Kingdom, including a few families that were Rankan or Mygdonian a few generations back. Yet even in these cases, Ilsigi immigrants have learned to be patient, gentle, and well-mannered. Those who cannot be tend to drift towards the more distant cities of the empire, where Ilsigi courtesy and wit must contend with the coarse manners of Rankans.

Modern Ilsigi culture respects craftsmen, businessmen, priests, and honorable warriors—at least in the more prosperous parts of the kingdom. Its courts include women who have kept the higher strata of Ilsigi society civilized for centuries. Ilsigi literature has always celebrated romance and exotic pleasures, including elaborate works of eroticism and romance. Most of these tales feature scoundrels and courtesans who would be considered scandalous in Rankan society. While the boundaries of nations may shift with the turn of centuries, the clever Ilsigi are capable of surviving nearly any adversity. Their history features countless incidents where an Ilsigi hero or heroine was capable of wriggling out of seemingly impossible situations. Ilsigi heroes succeed as much by seduction, surrender, or clever schemes as they do through force of arms.



Ilsig also has a respect for its heritage. It even boasts museums to recount the tales and events since its founding. Ilsig enjoys a strong scientific tradition including those sciences derived from magic. The nation is counted the father of alchemy and its treatises on the subject are considered the best in the world.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Though Ilsig City is one of the largest cities in the Known World, it cannot exist without the support of the other communities in the Kingdom.

ILSIG CITY (METROPOLIS)

Ilsig is particularly proud of its history, but the “modern” city is not that old, having been largely rebuilt (on a monumental scale) about 400 years ago when the Ilsig hegemony was at its height. The city is dominated by its gold-domed, whitewashed temples to the Ilsigi pantheon that stands on the highest hill of the city. The temples sparkle in the sunlight and can be seen from well out across the bay. The king’s palace is only slightly less grand than the temples and is home to about 7,000 people, including everyone from the king and his intimate family down to lowly servants and slaves.

The street plan is radial, with roads emerging from the temple hill (Temple Mount) like spokes, with the main streets being quite wide and the areas between a jumble of narrow passages. It is a city of a hundred markets and a score of bazaars, a trader’s paradise, though the king takes a cut of everything and, as a result, there’s a thriving contraband economy that swirls through the outlying villages.

Wending through the center of the city is the sacred Belasig River, which spills out into the bay. Here, the temple priests wash in the divine waters and perform all manner of water rites and ceremonies to spiritually cleanse sinners and bless new kings. The city’s widest street links the temples with the ritual platforms on the Belasig banks.

CYMEON (SMALL CITY)

East of Ilsig city, near the headwaters of the Belasig River stands Cymeon, with a population of about 8,000. It is a raw materials trade town where timber, stone, and some grain, as well as a few furs and luxuries from beyond the mountains, are gathered and sent to Ilsig City. Cymeon is much like Sanctuary in that it’s a wide-open, largely ungoverned town, especially comfortable for the wild-and-wooly northern types coming down from beyond the map. It’s also a place with a high number of Nisibisi refugees and a fair number of witches. Nearby, in the jumbled terrain where the Queen’s Mountains abut the Sunrise Mountains, are rich mines that produce gold, silver, copper, and gemstones.

KUBRAG (SMALL CITY)

Kubrag is home to over 5,000 people. Though it stands at the headwater of Ilsig Bay, it’s not known for its harbor and it has limited supplies of fresh water, limiting its potential for growth and wealth. A smaller town, Anhag, sits on the northern side of the bay. Kubrag and Anhag are military towns. Kubrag sits at the head of a series of beacons designed for fast warning relays to Ilsig.

RAGATE (SMALL CITY)

Northwest of Ilsig City on the frontier between Ilsig territory and Caronnesse territory stands Ragate, a thriving city of about 10,000. Ragate is the home of a luxury trade in saffron and incense, over which the hierarchy of Ils maintains a monopoly. It’s also a major livestock market,

with large numbers of horses brought down from herds maintained in the Parustrum Plains. Wood is cheap, which allows for a profitable charcoal industry and also a preserved meat (sausage) industry. Ragate is known as a place where you can go to make some money fast, if you don’t mind getting your hands dirty. It’s also a major smuggling center, avoiding the tariffs imposed by both Caronne and Ilsig. Finally, it’s the main terminus of the northern and western slave trades entering the Known World.

RESOURCES

The Kingdom of Ilsig is wealthy, with many resources at its disposal. It owes its existence to no other land, able to provide for itself with food, ores, and timber. While other nations rely on trade to shore up any shortcomings, Ilsig is largely independent and only trades to expand its wealth and influence in the known world. Or at least, this is how it once was. Since the most recent cataclysmic wizard weather that ravaged the continent, it has had to import grain to survive, even trading in ports as far away as Sanctuary.

More than Ranke, Ilsig is a city that enjoys luxury. Its cuisine is fabled. Its workshops produce the finest silks and velvets and have done so for centuries. It has a decent-sized fleet—mostly galleys of varying models, both military and commercial (though its commercial fleet does not compare to the fleets of Caronne or Mrseveda: Ilsig is willing to let those cities risk their capital on commercial seacraft).

RELIGION

Ilsig is home to one of the most powerful and influential religions in the Known World. Most neighboring nations now have at least shrines devoted to the popular Ilsigi gods, if they haven’t just absorbed the pantheon into their own. The Ilsigi pantheon is resplendent with deities reflecting the finer (and baser) aspects of Ilsigi culture. Goddesses of love, motherhood, and faithfulness sit in the same heavenly feast halls as patrons of shadows, trickery, thievery, and intrigue. Scholars, merchants and nobles mutter prayers to some of the same incarnations who watch over whores and scoundrels.

INTERESTING FEATURES

With a history spanning over 3,000 years, Ilsig is a well-established nation and as such it literally bristles with fascinating sites and locations. Unlike other lands, though, much of the wilderness is tamed and there are few remaining mysteries to be explored. Instead, there are amazing displays of human ingenuity, works of art, huge repositories of learning—the fruits of an ancient civilization.

In the past (and not currently, though Sepheris has plans to change this) one of the great marvels of ancient engineering was anchored in Kubrag: a chain of magically charged, wooden links long enough to stretch across the inlet to Anhag, and seal off the bay. This, as well as the relay stations to alert the capital from attacks, and the resplendent architectural feats that are the temples of Ilsig city, are all testaments to Ilsig’s innovation.

The village of Estrey (see page 13) is near some of the oldest relics of the civilization that preceded the founding of Ranke. In addition, there are numerous ruins scattered throughout the countryside. Most of these places are gradually being dismantled as locals plunder them for stone and wood. But a few remote fortresses and towers remain untouched, dating back to the time of Enlibar, forgotten until some ancient horror stirs and butchers an entire hamlet or preys on local wildlife.

The largest range of mountains in the Known World is the World Spine, also called the Gunderpah or Queen’s Mountains. This chain runs almost

the entire length of the sub-continent, originating far to the north, where it serves a natural border for the Kingdom of Ilsig and descends all the way to the south where it forms a cape called the Hammer's Tail. These mountains are old, blanketed by trees and undergrowth except near the peaks where the snow covers them for three of the four seasons.

MRSEVADA

The two words that best describe Mrsevada are exotic and dangerous. Situated along the northern coast of the Sparkling Sea, Mrsevada is a deepwater port and marks the unofficial eastern edge of the Known World. Its closest neighbor is Caronne to the east, but the two cities do relatively little trading with one another, separated as they are by the nearly impassable 120 miles of swampland that is the Pezan River Delta. Instead, Mrsevada deals heavily with the strange lands of the far west, virtually unknown by any in the Rankan Empire and its client states. This is why the strangest of the strange, the bizarre, the unnatural, and the deadly congregate at this exciting city on the edge of the world.

Founded by refugees sometime between 1150 and 1250 IR, the community that would grow into a city-state enjoyed many natural barriers preventing hostile Enlibrite armies from seizing the outpost, something Caronne suffered repeatedly. Enlibar had little luck in navigating the intervening swampland, and so the city grew without interference.

Mrsevada also ensured its survival by extending hands of friendship to its neighbors. The Kingdom of Maghada proved to be their staunchest ally, seeing Mrsevada as a buffer state against Enlibrite expansion in the unlikely event the empire would turn its hungry eyes westward—which it never did. With this friendly alliance in place, Mrsevada quickly expanded and fortified itself against the creatures of the delta at the same time that it developed shipbuilding skills to rival the Yenized. The small city was soon trading in port cities all along the coast of the Sparkling Sea.

After over 1,000 years, Mrsevada has established a reputation for ushering the fantastic and the novel into the Known World. Such is the fame of this tendency that most new food, material, or devices are suspected to have been discovered in Mrsevada; these musings are often correct, with the minor clarification that the city itself is not the source of these novelties, but it is likely the gateway through which they were first funneled to the Known World.

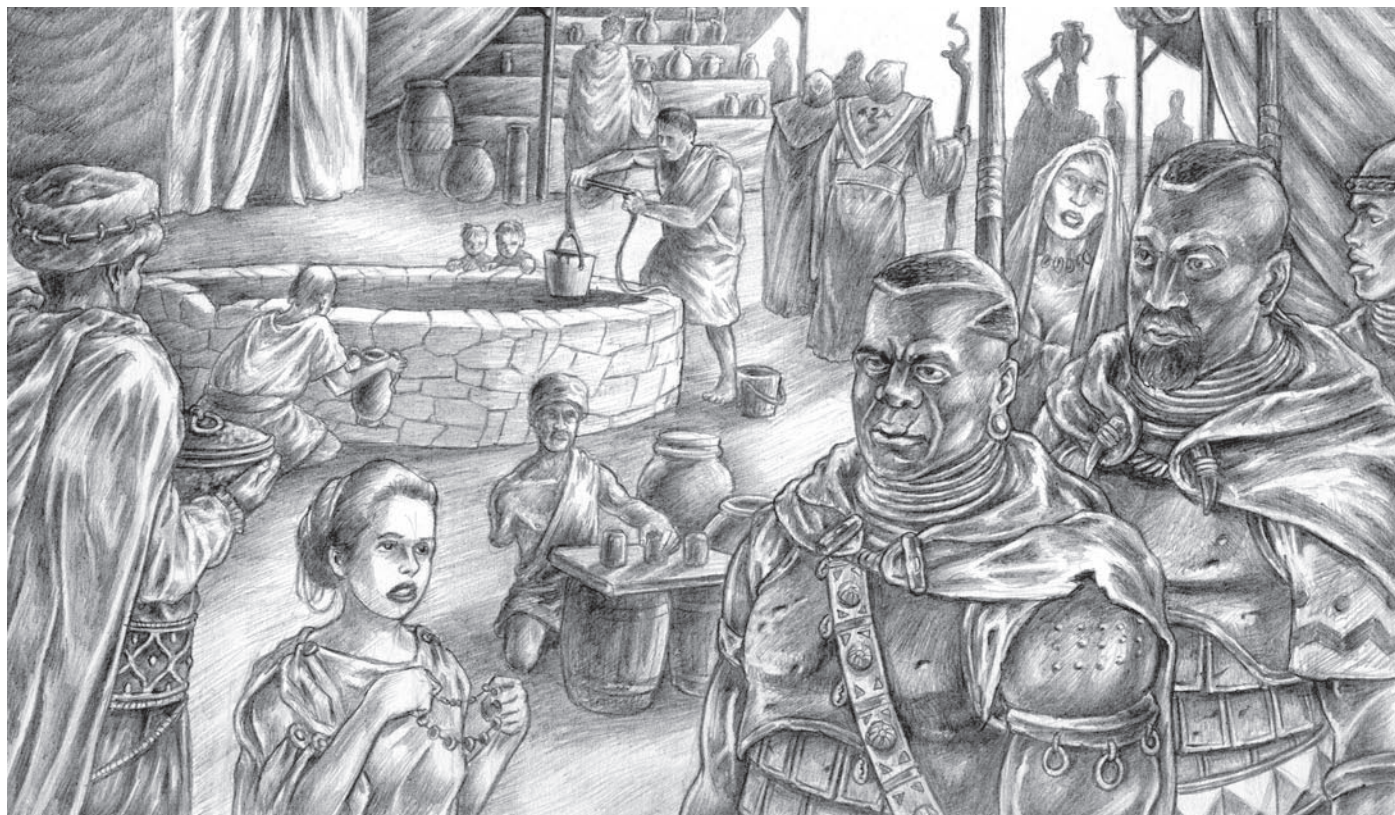
GOVERNMENT

Like its sister city, Caronne, Mrsevada is a city-state and a free port. It is independent and kneels to no crown, trading with anyone it wishes. The city is ruled by a prince, a hereditary title that has passed through several families since its founding and is currently held by Phkses of the Avrises family. He is the direct descendant of Avsaga, who ruled during the Rankan Era.

Though a monarch, the prince is not an autocrat. The Council of Ten tempers his authority and can, at their option, depose a prince and replace him with one of their own. To ensure a continued reign, most princes work closely with the Council, involving them in most economic and social decisions. As a result, dynastic changes have rarely been instigated by the Council and when they do occur, they result from a coup, an assassination, or when a family line dies out.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Mrsevada itself boasts a large population, upwards of 80,000 with 100,000 more scattered throughout the delta, scraping their living from agriculture. While there is a distinct Mrsevadan ethnicity, only around half of the people living here are actually natives. Instead, Mrsevada is something of a melting pot, drawing people from remote and fantastic kingdoms and nations to congregate in this wealthy city. In addition to the light-skinned tall men and women who live here, Mrsevada is also home to the



Maghad, who are virtually indistinguishable from other Mrsevadans aside from their language, and the Andhra, a tall fierce tribal people. The occasional shapeshifter and some of the fabulous Liji also make their homes here.

Mrsevadans are not particular about their views on religion and sorcery. They have a cosmopolitan outlook on religion, co-opting the gods of various peoples and places they visit, and thus have perhaps the largest and most diverse pantheon in the Known World. Sorcerers are common here as well; people don't share the common reservations about mixing mystical techniques, and the region's more powerful spellcasters sometimes employ demons as servants and conduits for their dark arts.

Mrsevadans and the Caronne have a friendly rivalry, even though they rarely interact. Violence is uncommon, but the banter between the crews of their ships can be loud and boisterous, with insults flying back and forth in any of the ports along the sea. Beneath the exchange is a fierce loyalty and shared heritage that unites these people culturally, though none would admit such openly.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Mrsevada does not boast any cities of consequence other than its capital. Most other communities are tiny, being little more than towns of 80 or so—most of which don't even have names. Mrsevada itself, though, is very impressive. Large and surrounded by three concentric walls and straddling the Pezan River, it has watchtowers situated at regular intervals. The city itself is a garish mishmash of styles adopted from the aesthetics of the city's trading partners.

RESOURCES

Mrsevada's boasts an excellent resource in its location on the first and best chunk of high ground west of the Pezan delta. The soil surrounding Mrsevada is fertile, allowing it to feed itself, though that is hardly necessary as grain comes down the river in great quantities. The fishing is good, too, though mostly for local consumption. Wood is scarce, but again, is easily acquired through downriver trade. Like Caronne, Mrsevada maintains a presence in the salt trade, but also dominates the sugar trade—what little sugar is available in the east has come through Mrsevada (Caronne periodically tries to horn in on the sugar trade by going to its source, the Valmiks and their fat sugar beets; however, they have always been stymied in the association due to cultural barriers) Mrsevada's most important resources of course, are its harbor and its fleet. Even if the city had no natural resources of its own, it could survive on just the profit from its services as a trading port and a shipping fleet.

Mrsevada is also well known for manufacturing weapons, armor, and no few mercenaries. Using slaves imported from Caronne, the city mines the nearby mountains for iron ore, which is then brought back to the city to be forged. Mrsevada supplies many polities with mercenary troops, but they are famous for being temperamental and unreliable.

RELIGION

Religiously, Mrsevada adopted the customs of the west where anthropomorphic gods are common. The local pantheon blends eastern "portfolios" with western images. The sun god is Mrsung, usually depicted as a biped with the legs of a bull, the torso of a man, and the head of a crocodile. His consort (a lunar, feminine goddess) is Rhdava, also biped, with the legs of a stork, the torso of a woman and the head of a cow. Their eldest son Shka is a lord of fire who is human except for his head, which is leonine, with a mane usually represented as flames. Their eldest

daughter, Ghkia, is the goddess of beauty and art and invariably depicted as a seated cat. In general, if you can name an animal, it's all or part of some god of the very large Mrsevadan pantheon.

INTERESTING FEATURES

The most significant site in the city is the palace, a sprawling structure that has expanded with little planning and preparation as each prince adds something to the structure as a testament to his reign. What has resulted is a labyrinthine structure that occupies nearly a fifth of the city. In addition to being the abode of the prince and his family, much of the palace is used to manage the government of the city and includes the hall where the Council of Ten convenes, the courts, offices of the tax collectors, barracks for the soldiery, and much more.

Mrsevada's bazaars are the most famous in all the Known World. Home to people of all shapes, sizes, and colors, the bazaars are the heart of Mrsevadan culture. Unlike many open-air markets, though, the oldest and most well established sections feature permanent structures owned and operated by powerful merchant families who deal directly with western trading partners. The farther one moves from the center, the more transitory the structures and the shoddier the goods available.

The city's walls are also impressive. Once fashioned from wood culled from their allies to the west, Mrsevada replaced them with stone over the centuries. Each wall has four gates allowing access deeper inside the city. The inner gates do not line up with the outer, forcing travelers to travel through the city to reach another interior gate. Not only is this defensible, but it is also perfect for doing business, forcing foot traffic through the lesser bazaars to reach the greater ones closer to the palace.

THE RANKAN EMPIRE

The Rankan Empire is the most glorious and powerful nation to emerge in the Known World. Surpassing ancient Enlibar and Yenized in size and military strength, it dominated the lands in just a few short years. Ranke defeated Ilsig, swept through the eastern lands, laid claim to the south, and commanded the peoples through first economic superiority and later by martial might. However, its rapid rise to power also planted the seeds of decadence and corruption, weakening the great empire and making it powerless to resist the Black-Toothed horde that boiled out of the north. Though limping, Ranke is not dead yet, and many suspect that it is on the cusp of returning to its former glory.

Ranke's founders were descendants of the original barbarians that came from the north and sparked the formation of the Enlibar Empire. Repulsed by the superior military of that famed city, the barbarians withdrew to the Cantal Plains where they remained for generations. As Enlibar grew, the tribes of barbarians lost their cohesiveness and broke into separate clans, such as the Rankans and later the Irrune. Towards the end of the Enlibar-Yenized conflict, the Rankan tribe moved east, settling a village near the mouth of the Ysander, an impressive river that grows out of the confluence of the Deliu, draining from the plains north of Wizardwall, and the Brasidas, which drains the Great Lakes of Adrale. This early village was forced to rebuild several times as silt from the Ysander pushed the coast of Borniel Bay out into the Oread.

About 500 years after this insignificant village was born, moved, and reestablished along the edge of the Ysander, a tribe from the Cantal Plains abandoned its nomadic ways and settled in the same village along the great river. These proto-Rankans were unlike any of the other barbarians and showed a surprising skill for agriculture, but even greater were their advances in engineering and governance.

About five generations after the Rankans settled in this area, the village expanded across the Landerra and became the Rankan kingdom. The Landerra expanded to encompass their old kin on the Cantal Plains while stretching up and down the Borniel Bay. Ranke's growth was at first accomplished via peace and commerce, but this would change once a horde emerged from beyond Wizardwall and threatened the growing kingdom. Ranke gathered its armies and marched against the invaders, repelling them and saving the kingdom.

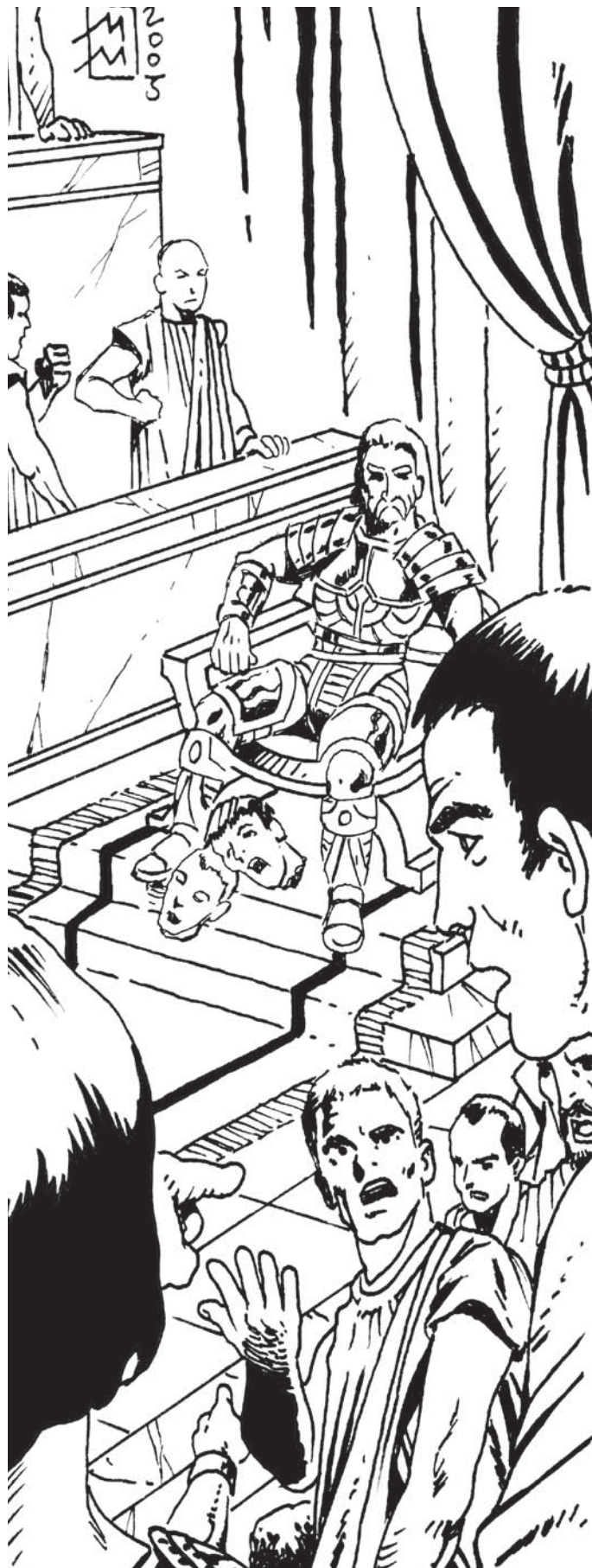
This was the singular event that transformed Ranke and its citizens' perceptions. They began to view the world outside their borders as hostile, jealous, and assumed that outsiders wanted nothing more than to plunder their homes and carry off their families. Like Enlibar before, factions clamored for the Rankan king to better safeguard the people, and Ranke's diplomatic tactics slowly transformed from one of exploration, trade, and community to one of conquest. As the kingdom grew and prospered, the great poet Vesuvian composed an epic wherein he described the great war between Enlibar and Yenized, and how the great minds of Yenized left their land to found Ranke once Enlibar lay defeated. Though entirely fabricated, the Rankan people saw themselves as inheritors of the Yenizedi culture and soon forgot their own barbarian roots.

Two centuries later, the political culture in Ranke would shift again. The noble families, many of whom were direct descendants of the chiefs of the long-forgotten Cantal tribes, reorganized themselves into a more cooperative and less autocratic government that they called a republic. For the first time in the Known World, there was a significant polity that regarded itself as a bastion of equality and law, thus beginning Ranke's golden age.

Ranke's new government was attractive to a world in which the despotism of Enlibar was well remembered. Here, instead of rule by an autocrat who passed laws on a whim, the ruler was subject to the law as set forth by the senate. Ranke was still expansionistic, inviting city-states to join peacefully; those few that refused were later absorbed by military force. What began as a few provinces quickly turned into 10 and then 20. The growing nation considered itself both a bringer of law and a protector, safeguarding its acquired territories from the ever-present barbarian threat from the north.

City after city fell to Ranke, and soon the nation's behavior smacked all too much of Enlibrite greed. In 3326 IR, Ranke had absorbed most of the continent, swallowing all of Aurveshan, holding almost exclusive trade with Cirdonia, Adrale, and others, and it seemed the juggernaut would take all the Known World. Ranke sent diplomats to the kingdom of the west, hoping to negotiate terms of peace and fold the kingdom into the growing nation. Ilsig had appeased one empire in its long history and it wasn't prepared to do so again, and so, foolishly, the Ilsig king had the entire diplomatic assembly executed and sent their heads back to Ranke. To safeguard the western lands, the Ilsig made a bargain with the mountain tribes and bandits to defend the only known pass through the Gunderpah. Though they could not defeat Ranke through force of arms, they could stall the empire and drain its coffers until it lost interest in western conquest.

At this time, the Rankan government was led by both a senate and a king, though this latter was a holdover title from the days when Ranke was much smaller. When word came back to the crown that the diplomats had been murdered, King Hadarax called a meeting of the senate, determined to make the arrogant Ilsigis pay for their crimes. The corrupt and lazy senate was slow to respond, and so Hadarax went directly to the people, gathering the support of the commoners and non-Rankans who lived in the provinces. While the capital was steadfastly opposed to entering yet another war, the people were terrified by barbarians and foreign invaders, whom Hadarax assured them lay just across the mountains to



the west, waiting to swarm over them and rape, pillage and slay. Thus armed with the popular support and that of Vashanka's cult, Hadarax declared a special period of war that would last until the Ilsigi threat was contained. Ranke's king took complete control over the entire empire for the first time in centuries.

The full weight of Ranke's military machine turned and marched west, led by great and powerful heroes, including Tempus himself. Ranke swarmed into the mountains, but as Ilsig anticipated, the terrain was too treacherous and Ranke could not gain ground in the mountain pass. It seemed Ranke would become entrenched in a bloody mountain war. Meanwhile Ilsig sent troops and supplies to aid the bandits and mountain men who had succeeded in making the Rankans' lives miserable. As they emptied their garrisons, the slave population, who was large and generally dissatisfied, chose this opportunity to rise up against their masters. Widespread anarchy swept the Kingdom of Ilsig, forcing the king to withdraw his troops from the mountains to crush the rebellions. Ranke seized this opportunity to put more pressure on the mountains, allowing a band of refugees to flee south and eventually establish the city of Sanctuary.

The war with Ilsig lasted over 60 years, throughout which the "special period" of the Rankan king's authority continued. Hadarax died and was replaced by his eldest son, Naihikaris, who was by then fairly old himself. Naihikaris shared his father's vision but was if anything more ambitious; while Hadarax had created the special period of authority as a temporary state, Naihikaris wished to retain that power. When word reached the capital that a new pass through the mountains had been found and that beyond the pass was an Ilsig-occupied city state that was purportedly near a great cache of gold in the mountains, Naihikaris wasted no time. The grandson of the explorer and prospector who first found the pass was allowed to lead a legion south to take the city and dislodge the Ilsigi-occupiers.



The conquest of Sanctuary was the major turning point in the war against Ilsig. Ranke had had a navy for centuries—it began as a mercantile nation, after all—but there had been no ports in which its ships could resupply or from which they could launch attacks against their Ilsigi foes. However, with Sanctuary under Rankan control, Ranke could dispatch troops, ships, and supplies up to the coast, circumventing the mountains altogether. Ranke swiftly defeated Ilsig, but Naihikaris realized he could not effectively govern the distant land and allowed Ilsig to remain free but saddled with a heavy tribute.

With the defeat of Ilsig, the senate believed Ranke would revert back to a republic, but in a daring act Naihikaris had his key opponents murdered and bribed the other senators to support his bid to transform the nation into an empire. This day of violence and intrigue became known as the Bloody Revel, and it marked the beginning of a new era, the Rankan Era, which also began the Rankan calendar.

Ranke existed in relative stability for several decades, even with Naihikaris's death, the rise of Cadastrin, the ill-conceived war for the north, and the conquest of the east. Ranke adjusted to its status as an empire, but many citizens mourned for the days when Ranke was a place of justice and its citizens were protected by the law. Those days were past, and in their wake corruption bloomed.

The Rankan era of peace would not last. Abakithis, in an arrogant attempt to elevate himself to the likes of Naihikaris and Cadastrin, made a move, once more, against the north, and found himself and his great empire slipping away. As the death toll mounted and legionnaires were replaced with mercenaries, the accolades started falling to Abakithis's bloody general, Theron. And when the general, with the aid of Tempus and the Stepsons, finally defeated the Nisibisi, the people chanted Theron's name and not the emperor's in their streets. Abakithis proved weak and ineffectual, nearly bankrupting the empire to advance his own glory. Theron, Tempus, Kama, and others returned, entered the palace unopposed, and murdered Abakithis while he wept for mercy on his throne.

With Abakithis's death, the old nobility was mortified. For the first time since Ranke's founding, a common man ruled and was supported by the military who worshipped him like a god. The nobles and merchants were not so won over and openly spoke against the usurper, denouncing him. This earned them only reprisals. Bands of Theron's men, little better than brigands, began a reign of terror, murdering anyone who spoke against the new emperor. Those people who opposed Theron were forced to flee their homes or face death, and so outlying provinces swelled with refugees searching for new lives.

Murder begets murder; Theron's empire would not last. A group of disaffected nobles whose lives were shattered by Theron's men crept into the palace and butchered the old war hero, plunging the empire into anarchy. Pretender after pretender, ineffectual despots and madmen all, attempted to claim the throne. The empire went into convulsions and couldn't sustain its control over the provinces. Sanctuary stopped paying taxes, Ilsig and Caronne declared independence once more, and most of the distant lands reverted to self rule. Finally, the Black-tooth barbarians tumbled out the north and sacked Ranke.

It seemed the empire was close to death up until Jamasharem, a former military commander from one of the provinces, seized the throne by marching on the capital and declaring martial law a few years ago. He still rules to this day; he has proven himself a hard leader, who seems to have a good sense of his people and has the ability to engender loyalty in even the least scrupulous men. Jamasharem hopes to return Ranke to its former glory, but to do that he must rebuild the empire from scratch.

Even though the empire is in its bleakest era yet, it still exists and exerts considerable force. True, Ranke let outlying provinces like Sanctuary and Adrale slip free, and is unable to continue the enforced tribute from Ilsig, but the empire's heart remains strong. It still holds control over Ciridon and trades with the Serripines Clan in Sanctuary, which gives the empire control over the Known World's breadbasket. It still holds over 30 separate provinces, all of which still pay tribute. No, Ranke's day is not yet over.

GOVERNMENT

Ranke is an empire, and despite its difficulties, it is still quite powerful and is the principle force in the Known World. Emperor Jamasharem is held in high esteem by both the people and the senate, though this latter institution is a mere shadow of its former self. Most senators are little better than vipers, sending assassins after one another with the slightest provocation. The senate has been largely replaced by a large administrative bureaucracy, positions in which are granted by both aristocratic privilege and merit advancement.

The rest of the empire is a collection of directly ruled provinces plus various client states. At its peak the empire had 38 provinces, though it controls only 30 now, and these are reduced in size and wealth. Within each is an imperial city where an appointed governor rules with varying levels of authority, though his power was once absolute. Client states are left to rule themselves but are forced to pay a heavy tribute to the crown.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

It's hard to pin down what Rankans are like, what they value, and what they uphold—the empire is just too diverse, too big. Essentially, there are two kinds of citizens: true Rankans and provincial Rankans. True Rankans are those descendants of the proto-Rankans that first founded Ranke. Blond hair and hazel eyes are considered to be representative of “imperial beauty,” despite the fact that many emperors are not terribly handsome. In Rankan art and literature, great heroes are usually tall, pale, and arrogant or imperious. Men often have square jaws and aquiline noses, reproduced heroically on marble busts and statues. Rankan women have delicate features, conducting themselves as befits the very model of Rankan propriety. Rankan ladies pride themselves on their courtly manners, often measuring foreigners against their own example. This is the noble ideal—but reality is somewhat different.

True Rankans are actually a small group when compared to the rest of the empire. People from Aurveshan or Twand are very different physically and culturally from those of the capital. Though Rankan citizens, they are decidedly second-class in the eyes of the capital's dwellers. Consciously or unconsciously, Rankans act with barely suppressed disdain when interacting with provincials.

Nobles live cheek-by-jowl with the poorest citizens, in part because they take the prime portions of each *insulae* structure for themselves and are landlords to the rest. The *insulae* are part wood, part brick, part stone; fire is an ever-present danger and it doesn't take a Black-Toothed horde to do considerable damage. Slavery is common in the cities, more common than it is in the rural empire. Most slaves are non-Rankans in ethnicity and include a reasonable sampling of exotic westerners.

Ranke is the capital of the empire. Some citizens who live there claim that only “Rankene” live in the capital, while “Rankans” live outside it. (Few citizens outside the capital use this convention.) Ranke is of course the location of the emperor's palace, a labyrinth filled with sycophants and toadying bureaucrats, and is home to a faithful populace living a never-ending life of bread and circuses. The largest coliseum on the

continent provides spectacles only the truly decadent can appreciate, sacrificing worshipped gladiators and captured heretics alike to stir the cheering of crowds. Rankene nobles speak an elegant dialect of “courtly Rankene,” one that is only barely comprehensible to those beneath them. Many Rankans consider the “Rankene” to be extremely pretentious and egotistical, even by Rankan standards.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

The Rankan Empire once spanned nearly the whole of the Known World, and so in many ways, the cities and states of all civilizations have ties to Ranke. The most significant of such are listed in the text following.

RANKE (METROPOLIS)

One of the first things the new government did after reclaiming Ranke was to rebuild the capital along rational and monumental lines. Constructed to pay homage to the gods while serving as a physical symbol for non-Rankans to behold the glory of the new order, the capital has become a place of legend, of good government, and a bold new future. Compared to most cities of the Known World, metropolitan Ranke is quite large, over a mile square and generally flat except for the three principle temples of Savankala, Sabellia, and Vashanka that overlook the rest of the city, the river, and the concourse.

Ranke is one of the few cities in the Known World large enough to have suburbs. Over 500,000 people live in the metropolitan center with another 500,000 living in the neighboring villages and towns. Most of these towns and villages exist to supply a product. One might supply Ranke with finished leather, while another deals in textiles. Other communities serve as upper class retreats, small estates with a supporting community.

Ranke lacks the means to feed its population and so must bring in grain from Cirdonia, Aurveshan, Twand, and even as far away as Sanctuary. All grains that come into the city by sea enter the capital through its seaport, Decla.

RESOURCES

Given its size, the empire is internally sufficient to feed and clothe itself. It is so because it buys grains from Ciridon and now Sanctuary, where the Serripines Clans have revolutionized farming. Ranke itself is resource light, dealing mostly in trade, some finished goods, and the arts, instead relying on its provinces to supply the capital with needed materials. What can't be bought in Ranke can be contracted.

RELIGION

Ranke demands that all its provinces show proper respect for Rankan pantheon. Originating from the beliefs of the Cantal tribes, the original deities of this civilization have changed, in some ways dramatically. The Rankans tend to adapt other religions they come into contact with into their own. Though the religion has been stable since the middle kingdom era, the result of their fluid religion can be seen in the innumerable cults and factions that owe allegiance to one of the state's three principle gods. However, though Savankala and his divine family represent the state religion, other gods have a presence in the empire. Temples to Ils, Heqt, and others are common; Ranke doesn't care so long as its citizens pay proper respect and tithes to the state gods.

Citizens from Caronne to Ciridon to Twand know the names of Rankan deities, if only because the empire's beliefs have been forced on so many. Wherever the heavy boots of imperial soldiers pound the earth, locals

learn the names invoked by Rankan priests. The most frequently invoked is Vashanka, the Stormbringer, who murdered 10 siblings and raped his own sister to ascend to a place of prominence in the Rankan pantheon, overshadowed by only his father, Savankala, the Light Bringer, the sun god who looks down on all creation. Wise men and old men revere him, considering Vashanka to be little more than a petulant child sent to do his father's "dirty work." Temples to the Rankan pantheon are scattered across the continent, although whether they are well-maintained or laid low in ruin depend entirely on the fortunes of the empire—and the strength of the gods who empower it.

INTERESTING FEATURES

Ranke has taken a great many treasures from foreign lands and brought them back to its capital. Statues of other gods are on display along the streets side-by-side with the images of heroes, religious leaders, and popular or not-so-popular leaders, including the great Tempus, Abarsis, and even Theron.

The capital city is jaw dropping for first time visitors. It is carefully designed and laid out in a grid, with each block filled with apartments, most of which lack cooking or plumbing facilities. Ranke is a city of restaurants and street vendors and public baths. It is a colorful city, its buildings decorated in multiple hues with painted statues. Rankans appreciate the theatre and public diversions and so acting troupes do well here, even in times of political instability. Nothing, however, compares to the appeal of the coliseum. This great arena boasts seating for thousands and stages elaborate gladiatorial combats, chariot races, and more. Creatures are brought from all over the Known World to do battle with Ranke's finest warriors.

Magic is also accepted in Ranke. The capital is home to the exalted Mage Guild, drawing spellcasters from as far away as Firaqa to study under the city's masters. Ranke also caters to other magical organizations including the Adepts of the Blue Star. For those seeking mundane knowledge over occult studies, Ranke has hundreds of private educational institutions covering nearly every art and trade.

RANKAN PROVINCES

Ranke expanded outwards, at first peacefully, but later by force. In its conquest, it absorbed the shattered pieces of old Enlibar's client states and wholly absorbed Yenized. Ranke once claimed 38 provinces, but since the turmoil following the Wizardwall war, its outmost provinces have broken free of the empire forming isolated states. The most important Rankan provinces follow.

ADRALE

A province in name only, Adrale was always at the fringes of Rankan control. Too far removed for Ranke to assert much control, Adrale slipped away politically during the Wizardwall wars, becoming something of a melting pot of Rankans and Mygdonians. And though positioned behind enemy lines, it survived the wars because both the Mygdonians and the Rankans believed in the city's value.

Adrale was a trading outpost before it became an imperial province. A center for trade between the peoples of the Mygdonian territories and adventurous Rankans, it thrived on commerce, drawing a population larger than it could support. After Ranke became an empire, Adrale was one of the places absorbed by the Rankans during their first northward expansion and it grew and expanded even after the Rankans ended their first invasion of Wizardwall.

During the Abakithis's reign, after he foolishly commanded his legions to eradicate the Mygdonians, Adrale slipped away from Ranke, ceasing to pay tribute to its parent state and became a meeting place between Rankan and Mygdonian traders. While it retained many of the imperial trappings including most of the Empire's governmental entities, it was more of an independent city-state, a place where Rankans could acquire raw materials like timber and livestock, and where the Mygdonians could acquire weaponry, textiles, and other finished goods. The trade continued throughout the wars and in many ways the Mygdonian Alliance survived as long as it did because of Adrale.

After the war, the city continued as it ever had. It facilitated trade between the now impotent Mygdonian states and the faltering Rankan Empire. When the Black-Toothed horde came down from the north, Adrale paid the demanded tribute and weathered the storm of invasion. Through it all, Adrale has remained a vital city, surviving despite all odds.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

Adrale is the promise of a better life for those once living among the Mygdonian population. As their nations burned in the flames of war with the barbarians, refugees fled north to settle here. During the Wizardwall war, Adrale was ruled by a succession of lesser men while the real power laid with the Rankan military commanders who occupied the city and skimmed a generous percentage off the officially illegal trade that never ceased. At the war's end Peroz Selucia, a man of dubious heritage though obviously one with Rankan blood, filled the vacuum left by the incompetent rulers, and now controls the city with an iron fist, adroitly playing the ruins of the Mygdonian city-states off against one another. Styling himself as a prince and tacitly acknowledging the sometime existence of a Mygdonian king (and the Rankan Emperor), he is a master of the vague and ill-defined promise. He consults with an informal council of merchants who, like himself, are an amalgam of Rankan and Mygdonian mindsets; Ranke represents laws and order above all, while Mygdonia invokes a sort of cult-of-personality chaos. Now an old man, he grooms his eldest son, Bahar, to succeed him. Bahar is nearly the man his father is and he seems to take some personal and familial pride in being a worthy heir to his father's enterprise.

Adrale is a place of economic extremes. Gold is plentiful, but goods and services are expensive. Mygdonian refugees come to the city seeking their fortunes and to escape the despair of their homelands, only to find poverty instead. In many ways, Adrale is similar to Sanctuary, but has an entrenched and vigorous ruler that keeps the city under his firm control.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

As something of a frontier community, Adrale is surrounded on all sides by wilderness. The great lakes supply the city somewhat with fish, and wildlife in the empty stretches of unexplored wilderness provide some pelts and meats. But in all, there is little of interest in this trackless land.

IMPORTANT SITES

Adrale is isolated, cradled by the inland lakes. There are no other cities close by; none around the lakes or on the north end of the Livon Plains. What Mygdonian city-states survived the war with Ranke were wiped out by the Black-Toothed horde, so few settlements dot the northern slopes of the Wizardwall Mountains.

ADRALE (LARGE CITY)

A surprisingly large city given its isolation, Adrale is home to over 25,000 people, which is about 15,000 more than the city can handle. There is no sanitation to speak of, and the streets are virtually slick with

NISIBISI INFLUENCE ON ADRALE

Though Adrale tolerates all religions, there is a marked Mygdonian influence on the city. At the top of the accepted pantheons are storm gods and figures like Vashanka, and his derivatives are very popular. However, there are no pure priests in this city. There is an obsession with witchcraft that borders on being in the open. In fact, Selucia relies on a cadre of witch-mages little better than Roxane to enforce his will. A pair of small demons serve as his personal protectors and it's rumored that there's a much larger, nastier demon imprisoned beneath his palace.

trash and human wastes. People either starve or live in decadent excess. Most food comes from the Lake itself, but some grains come in from the few farmsteads in the countryside. Still, there is not enough to feed the masses and so Adrale relies on whatever it can get from the ruins of Mygdonia—which is to say not much.

Adrale had its genesis as a trading depot and that's what it remains at heart: *the* place where goods come and go from Mygdonian territory. It has very little in the way of unique resources—other than a decent harbor—though, increasingly, it is developing an artisan class: glassmakers, potters, and more. It's on the cusp of being an enduring city rather than one on the perpetual brink of disaster.

AURVESHAN

While controlled by Ranke nominally, and still paying tribute to the emperor, Aurveshan has greater freedoms now than it had since the days when its capital joined the growing republic of then small and free Ranke. Located between Sanctuary and Twand, Aurveshan lies on the trade route that runs from Ranke to Sanctuary and in the past, it was a burgeoning place, nearly as cosmopolitan as other trade centers. But after the war ended with Ilsig, and the pass through the World Spine Mountain became secure, Aurvesh, the province's namesake and capital, saw much of its trade dry up like its neighboring desert. Over half of the land is swallowed by the Gray Wastes (see page 53 for details). The rest is divided between barren steppes punctuated by the occasional verdant areas fed by rivers and streams from which Aurveshan produces some of the best wines in the world.

Aurveshan traces its history back to the nomadic tribes that were spawned from the Enlibrite commoners fleeing the disaster of their homeland. Having encountered the Red-Haired Barbarians who periodically descended south with their herds from the Cantal Plain, some of the people intermarried and settled at the extreme end of the Aurveshan Peninsula, south of the Synos Peninsula near Dar of Twand.

The first few villages were generally agricultural communities, but thanks to the harbors built by their Yenizedi antecedents, they did some fishing in the early years. A few generations later, Rankan merchants traded throughout the Borniel Bay docking at all the ports along the coast. The Aurveshan, who were mostly farmers, saw the future in the Rankans and embraced the republic style government that Ranke enjoyed. When Ranke offered to include the region in the growing nation, extending the hand of friendship rather than war, Aurveshan readily agreed and became longstanding allies.

As Ranke progressed, Aurveshan society became more complex, mimicking Ranke's culture in every way. Soon social classes emerged as wealthy land owners established themselves and instituted widespread peasant farming. The aristocracy soon became indistinguishable from Rankan lords, adopting their language and culture, while the rest of the province was powerless to resist. Of course, true Rankans saw all Aurveshans as second-class citizens for they were not of Rankan blood, but this remained a hidden perception; the empire makes an effort to show that it values its friends.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

Just as with Sanctuary in the Rankan Era, a prince-governor rules the capital city. Supported by a nominally open and elected elite council, in actuality the ruling body consists of aristocrats elected on the basis of the forebears rather than merit. Still, the prince-governor enjoys nearly absolute control over the province. The current prince-governor is Legund, the fifth of his line to hold his position. He married into an Aurveshani family, as did his father and his grandfather. This was a wise tactic as it shielded him from the purges by the various usurper-emperors in Ranke who slaughtered rival families to consolidate their tenuous hold on the throne. Legund's elite council is not particularly corrupt and favor Legund's tactic, which is to avoid drawing undue attention to their province from the capital (or anywhere else, for that matter).

Aurveshani are mild, reserved and calm. They see the world pragmatically and accept blessing and curses with the same levelheaded nature for which they are famous. Outsiders often think the Aurveshani rude and cold, but once past their placid demeanor, one discovers the warm hospitality that all Aurveshani see as an honored tradition.

Aurveshani aristocrats are another matter. They desperately cling to their status and privileges, readily betraying their lesser countrymen when asked



to by Ranke. As long as they are not threatened, they are uncommonly self-satisfied. They realize they are provincials, and understand that the pureblooded Rankans see them as such, but within the boundaries of their province they are the elite and they make no effort to hide their station. Aurveshani aristocrats rarely leave their province for fear of being seen as lesser people.

Aurveshan does not have much in the way of a strong middle class, but those citizens who are artisans or small-scale merchants are far more stoic than the elite. They are hard workers, calm and stolid in the face of triumph or tragedy. This said they, like all the rest of Aurveshan, embrace the general ethos of avoiding attention.

More due to geography than mindset, the Aurveshani believe themselves to be the heirs of Enlibar. While they appreciate magic, they prefer decorative magic instead of political magic, meaning they have no qualms about mages and their ilk, but work to keep magic out of the state's government.

Many elegant Aurveshani women married into Rankan royal families, providing an air of sophistication and culture as sharp counterpoints to often boorish or brutal Rankan husbands. Polychromatic orchids still bloom in hothouses, even when there's blood on the streets outside. The average Aurveshani man is the hardworking sort of craftsman or merchant who loses himself in his work.

The elite citizens of the nation's upper class pride themselves in their cultural awareness and take pride in being patrons of all conceivable art forms. Ambitious poets, musicians, and artists from other provinces, including Ranke itself, frequently hire themselves out for a season or two in one of the Aurvesh cities.

Aurveshani have rarefied tastes, ranging from simple pleasures the middle class can afford to exotic experiences only nobles would cultivate. The region's weather can be temperamental, shifting from sunny skies to drizzling rainstorms in a matter of hours. The combination of heavy rains and sunshine is ideal for the fields of flowers that bloom each springtime near Aurvesh, the capital of the province. Aurveshani hothouses are even more beautiful, sheltering magnificent species of orchids, including varieties so specialized that they only vaguely resemble the original specimens brought to this continent. Most of the land consists of barren plains and marshes, but wherever rivers flow, brilliant emerald fields of grass offer oases of beauty, a welcome relief from the miles of bleak wasteland that surround them.

Civilized Aurveshani pride themselves on their quiet restraint, dedication to craftsmanship, and finer sensibilities. They are capable of appreciating great beauty for its own sake, but many outsiders consider them to be overly reflective, introspective, or unemotional. They quietly appreciate the finest creations the world has to offer, but do so without excess, extremes, or passion. This penchant for "quiet

beauty" is evident in all aspects of the culture. Although Carronne's impressive red wines are popular among merchants and nobles, Aurveshani wines are incredibly subtle, so much so that only thoughtful connoisseurs can fully appreciate them. Aurveshani nobles prefer to imbibe wine and sample sweatmeats dressed in immaculately tailored finery. Even the merchant class is willing to pay well for catered affairs, where the upwardly mobile somberly sample the best food they can afford, whispering politely of the issues of the day.

While Aurveshan recognizes most of the major festivals and holidays, it is Veltizane and Mandesh that create the most excitement and celebration. During Veltizane, the spring festival, citizens celebrate the emergence of grain after its winter sleep. In addition, priests perform water rituals hoping to restore the Vesh River to its regular flow. Mandesh is a harvest festival that celebrates the exploits of the Enlibrite hero Mandesh. Said to have been the son of the gods, this hero performed many miracles including defeating invulnerable beasts, killing a hydra single handedly, outsmarting giants, and so on. Pula, the supposed birthplace of the ancient hero, hosts the most exuberant festivals, and Aurveshani come from near and far to take part in the exciting celebration.

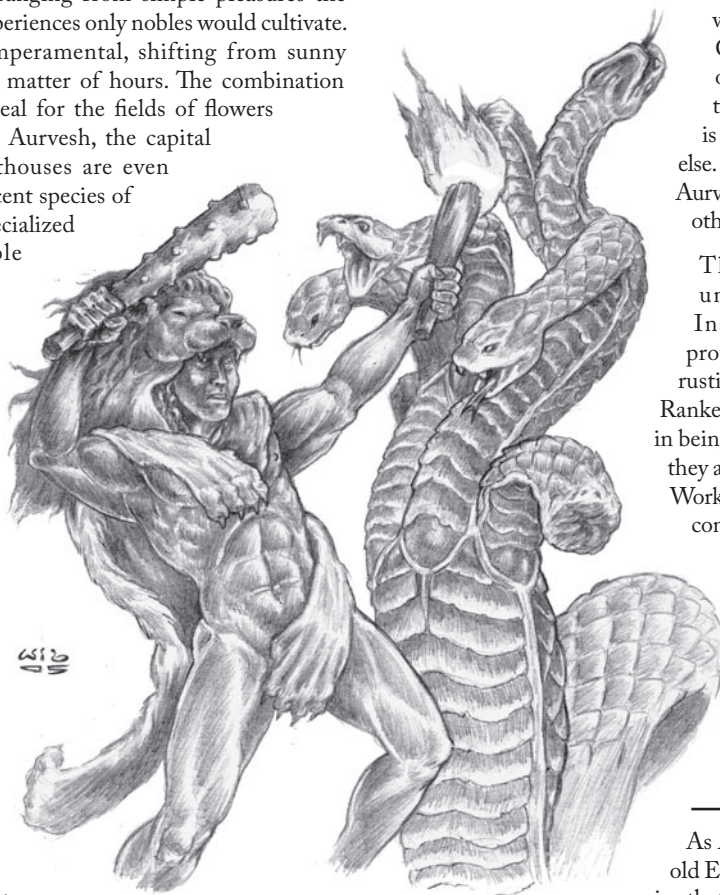
Aurveshani exports include artwork, clothing, and fabric, particularly white Aurveshani silk. Delicacies fetch high prices, and cuisine that can survive long journeys is rushed across country to sate discriminating palates. The famed wines of Aurvesh are grown in the hilly borderland between the Wastes and the fertile fields of the east. Aurvesh wines are strained and aged without grape skins, yielding a rich golden color. They are delicate enough that a morose Aurveshani can contemplate their complexities for hours as he falls deeper and deeper into his cups.

Vast fields of flowers provide a steady trade for apiaries, as beekeepers sell modest amounts of honey and wax in bulk throughout the empire. Gardeners ship their lesser specimens of cultivated plants to distant cities, but the most exotic flora that thrives here is extremely difficult to grow anywhere else. In fact, many rarities that flourish in Aurveshan do not survive the journey to other parts of the Known World.

The elites of Aurveshan are an uncommonly self-satisfied lot. Instinctively, they know they're provincial and would be mocked as rustic if they trotted themselves up to Ranke, so they tend to stay put, reveling in being big fish in a small pond. That said, they are not without industry or ambition. Working through factors and brokers, they control the Aurveshan economy, which consists principally of agricultural raw material. Profits are also possible through mining; the old iron mines of Enlibar are in Aurvesh, along with some lucrative silver mines.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

As Aurveshan encompasses parts of the old Enlibrite Empire, it should come to no surprise that ruins speckle the landscape. Many adventurers and explorers search these sites for



ancient artifacts and relics. Strange wizards from foreign lands occasionally come to one of Aurveshan's towns to hire laborers for some archeological expedition. But as often as not, these ventures meet little success.

The most notable ruin is Quis, an old fortress some five miles east of Aurvesh near the eastern coastline. Locals believe Quis was the home of Sterl, the Enlibrite wizard-prince and commander of Enlibar's armies. The ruins themselves spread out in all directions, suggesting a structure of wondrous size. A few have actually found tunnels beneath the place and legend holds the treasure found in the mine-like passages remain for those with the courage to face the ruin's guardians.

Another fascinating site is Enikhask. This was the place where priests of Enlibar made sacrifices to their gods. Yet it is something more than just an old ruin. The mystics say it's a place where the fabric of the world has worn thin and through the proper movement, words, sacrifices, or focuses, a person could breach the boundaries of reality and step through to another world, perhaps the underworld, or maybe even Hell itself. The site is held sacred by a small community of mystics and seers and they frequently tend the altar stone and do their best to maintain the 20-foot-high statues of headless men and woman that some say are the dead gods of Enlibar.

For those looking for fortunes or power, there is always the Great Mine of Ghirokitia, the fabled birthplace of Enlibar steel. The location is kept secret by a strange sect of monks who protect not only the ore but also a substantial portion of the grimoires of Enlibar. It's said that remaining hidden is not their only defense, and that they are not to be trifled with, but the power to be had in those vaunted volumes could make a person master of the world.

IMPORTANT SITES

Aurveshan is a small province and has few communities. In the lesser cities of Aurvesh, including Akimis, Labadan, and Pula, native citizens are untroubled by the boorish tastes of Rankans who have moved to the farthest regions of the continent.

AURVESH (LARGE CITY)

Its capital, Aurvesh, grew steadily as the Rankan Empire became more powerful. In the heart of the city, the architecture of the Old Quarter has not changed much, but the farther one travels, the less appealing Aurveshani neighborhoods become. Many Rankans who have moved to Aurvesh, either through design or exile, invest to develop it further. While there is no shortage of artists and entertainers in the capital, there haven't nearly been enough architects to meet demand.

Much of the outlying neighborhoods appear as spartan, functional, and utilitarian as buildings in the Rankan capital. Artwork adorns most homes, but the average Rankan cannot tell the difference between mass-produced trash and treasured masterworks. Local bards describe the city as an elegant noblewoman clad in rags.

CIRDON

While bound loosely through similar cultural norms and a deep devotion to Heqt, Cirdon was never a polity; the people believed too deeply in the values of liberty and personal freedom. Rather, Cirdon was a group of people who occupied the same geographical region. To understand how Cirdon reached its current, more united state, one must first learn the circumstances of its birth.

Ages ago, during the peak of Enlibar's might, the sorcerer elites fragmented and battled themselves, though over what none know. Foul magic scorched the skies and the warlocks conjured terrible beasts from Hell to do battle, but in the end, the upstarts failed and were driven

from the Empire, forced to live in the wilds at the edges of civilization. Finding succor in the mountain aeries, the witches, as they were known, compelled the mountain men and demons to erect towers and sprawling fortresses to serve as their homes. And in time, these Nisibisi were strong enough to avenge themselves on their former brethren, sending waves of berserkers and monsters against Enlibar.

But between Enlibar and the Nisibisi enclaves stood this small border region—an area of farmland and forest, held by a loose coalition of strongholds and fortified communities founded by remnants from the hordes of Red-Haired barbarians that spilled out of the north. The Cirdonians, as they were called by the Enlibrites, formed a useful buffer between the hostile mountain warlocks and the unprotected northern border of the empire. Meanwhile, the Nisibisi were dealing with the petty kingdoms that would one day become the Mygdonian Alliance, and though they sent yearly incursions into Cirdonian territory, such forces only succeed in honing the martial skills of the Cirdonian lords.

Throughout the Enlibar-Yenized war, Cirdon managed to avoid the southern conflict entangling them. Though, throughout, it supplied Enlibar with grain. This relationship infuriated Yenized, but there was nothing the kingdom could do. To discipline the Cirdonians, Yenized would have to move through Enlibrite territory, an unlikely prospect at best.

Yenized would have its revenge, though. When Enlibar collapsed after the formation of the Grey Wastes, Cirdon lost its primary grain buyer. They subsisted on trading with Velos and the newly formed Suma, but things were never the same. This continued for nearly seven centuries until a migration of barbarians settled in Ranke.

The Rankan civilization grew quickly and showed a genius for political organization. The city of Ranke expanded and turned to Cirdon to supply its raw materials (especially grain). Had the Cirdonians banded together at this time, they could most likely have wiped the Rankans off the map, but communal action has never been the Cirdonian way. Though individual Cirdonian families stood firm against the lure of Rankan patronage, which was sure to be followed by Rankan domination, other families gave in and within a generation the cause was lost.

Though Ranke never ruled Cirdon, it was a constant and effective threat. The Cirdonians were forced to supply the budding empire with grain at favorable prices lest they face occupation and absorption into the greater state. Worse, the Nisibisi raiders continued their annual incursions, forcing the Cirdonians to test their mettle in fast and brutal skirmishes, distracting them from the fact that Ranke had effectively conquered them with spilling a drop of blood.

There were many chances for Cirdon to break away from their dependence on Ranke, but they squandered every opportunity. And about 75 years ago, Emperor Iraklis decided to reorganize the Empire's relationship with its vassals. The Cirdonian king, who never really had much power, was allowed to retain his position, but all power fell into the hands of the new provincial governor. Cirdon's liberties were finally lost.

For the average Cirdonian peasant and noble, little changed. Imperial Ranke demanded raw materials at favorable rates, tax revenues for its treasuries, soldiers for its armies, and a tacit recognition of its gods. Beyond these things, Ranke doesn't care what happens in Cirdon. As such, most Cirdon nobles have since adapted to Rankan dependency, even though they find themselves slipping further and further into privileged poverty.

GOVERNMENT

During the Irrune Era, Cirdon's king is Rohrige hil-Moreir, a docile client of Ranke who is no more powerful than any other noble. The

Ciridonians respect his monarchy, but the nation's real power lies in the hands of individual noble houses—who rarely work together. The most powerful man in this province is actually its governor, Kovos Norodinites, who has managed to hold on to his post for over 20 years throughout the tumult in Ranke. Norodinites understands his continued survival depends on getting grain and other goods out of Ciridon every year, and he's gotten very good at it.

Ciridian society is feudal and agricultural. Its populace includes at most a thousand noble families, tens of thousands of free peasants, and many, many more serfs working the great estates (called *stenzi* in Ciridian). Free peasants, in theory, have access to Rankan civil law. Although virtually none of them are Rankan citizens, it suits Norodinites to let the nobility handle peasant justice. Norodinites also lets the Ciridian nobility settle its own scores, so long as nothing impedes the grain harvest.

PEOPLE

Despite displays of power and authority from the Rankan Empire, an elite caste of pale-skinned Ciridian have maintained their dignity, remaining isolated from the common populace. They still distinguish themselves from families of rough-skinned commoners darkened by sun and weather. Moving up from one caste of society to a higher stratum in a lifetime is difficult, but falling from a position of esteem to ignominious exile is all too easy. Anyone borne of noble status would consider it shameful to work as a merchant or craftsman, and many would rather starve than accept the iniquities of misfortune. When a noble house falls, enlisting in the military or declaring self-imposed exile is common. Some exiles take to the seas, others to the routes of caravans. As a result, these supposed failures often help the nation the most, spreading its trade routes into the farthest corners of the Known World.

The Ciridian population isn't just sprawling, it's diffuse. The lowest tier is the *stenzi*; these commoners share the same traits as most other Ciridians despite their lower stations, and value things like independence, courage, and self-reliance.

Young men of ambition who wish to become rich or are simply not of a temperament for army life find other venues. A surprising number go into long-distance trade and can be found managing caravans or even on ships, though the latter is quite rare. Women have hard lives in Ciridon. Noble girls are regarded as commodities by their parents and rarely, if ever, have an opportunity to escape a domestic fate. Female serfs are, like their male kin, bound to the land. The best hope for a Ciridian girl lies in the small artisan class. There are a number of women plying trades in Ibagir and, remarkably, there are a few Ciridian women who've managed to make a place for themselves in long-distance trade alongside the males.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Prior to the interference of Ranke several hundred years ago, there were no cities in Ciridon. The nobility lived on estates surrounded by their serfs and renting land to free peasants. Each noble family was apt to have an enclave of artisans near its manor house, but these never evolved into cities. When Ranke first started making itself felt in Ciridon, the empire founded its own cities to facilitate the movement of grain to Ranke.

IBAGIR (LARGE CITY)

The Rankan-Ciridian city of Ibagir lies where three upstream river-canal networks merge into the one main outlet to Ranke. Ibagir has become the seat of the Rankan governors. It's now a city of about 15,000 freemen and nobles, about half of whom are Rankan immigrants.

VERA (SMALL CITY)

The only other city of note is Vera, which stands somewhat precariously on the northern edge of the Ciridian "forest." Actually, the surrounding territory is as much a marshy swamp as it is a forest, a morass formed by runoff from the Wizardwall Mountains. Vera is a frontier city, home to a large garrison of Rankan soldiers. In Sanctuary, it is known as the birthplace of Nadalya, the wife of the city's ruler, Arizak.

RESOURCES

Ciridon is a broad fertile plain that gets just enough rain to act as a breadbasket to the Empire. In a good year, Ciridon's serfs harvest enough grain to feed the province 15 to 20 times over, and what they don't need goes downwater to Ranke for a reasonable price.

In addition to the grain, Ciridon has a limited trade in furs brought out of the northern marsh-swamp called the Dismougi. There are also silver mines in the Wizardwall Mountains; mining is a risky operation, but there are always a few willing to try their luck.

The final great resource of Ciridon is its people. Though never an overcrowded land (and especially not since the plagues came through), it is a land of limited opportunities and ambitious folk tend to go elsewhere. The younger sons of the noble families (and primogeniture is the rule, to keep the estates concentrated in a few hands) are faced with a choice: they can live the slowly declining lifestyle of their parents or they can join the Rankan army. Once in the army, a good many of them wind up in Vera, doing what Ciridians have done for centuries: skirmishing with the Nisibisi. On the other hand, some lesser castes have used advancement in the military as a way to become a respected citizen. Either way, once a young man leaves Ciridon, he rarely comes back home.

RELIGION

Ciridon bends its knee to the Rankan pantheon, but not its heart. Heqt is the beloved goddess of the Ciridians. The nobility, especially the men among the nobility, also have recourse to "hero cults" and warrior societies. Most of the men in a noble family usually belong to the same society, but there are exceptions. These societies fall short of blood brotherhoods and revere no specific gods. They are the only groups, however, which span the Houses and offer any sense of national identity to the noble class.

INTERESTING FEATURES

Ciridon, being an old land, has great rolling plains and grain fields, but it also has deep forests and all of it stands in the shadow of Wizardwall to the north. It has often served as a staging ground for the penetration into Wizardwall, much like Tyse to the east, and so with such soldiers come all manner of strange peoples and objects. In addition, there's no shortage of old fortresses and estates left abandoned since the plague swept through the region, making Ciridon a potential treasure trove for bandits and scavengers.

The Dismougi is a large swamp in the northern ranges of Ciridon. During the final days of the Wizardwall wars, Nisibisi refugees fled down the mountains and lost their pursuers in this swamp. Locals claim a few of the witches still lurk in the swamp, hatching terrible monsters and sending them out to kill serfs and travelers.

Another interesting location is the Deep Mine, an abandoned tunnel near the foot of the Wizardwall Mountains. Miners claim that a prospector named Hanran burrowed in the mountain all through the midst of the Wizardwall wars. He found a few silver nuggets early on, but spent years without finding anything more until one day he returned, unable to speak and with his skin and hair stark white. He left the mining life

and fled to Ranke, where he died a year later. Before he left, he warned (through pantomime) other miners not to go in and to leave it be. A few have dared the cyclopean depths, but none have ever returned. Now, the entrance is boarded up and decorated with skulls to ward away would-be explorers.

LIRT

Nestled in the inner curve of the Gray Witch Mountains, Lirt is the capital of the province with the same name. One of the early conquests of the growing Rankan Empire, it did not fight the Rankan legions and welcomed them with open arms, becoming a big part and ardent supporter of Ranke's later expansion. While ever loyal to the empire, their fidelity was rewarded with near total destruction at the hands of the Black-Toothed barbarians. Those few survivors of this once great province have scattered in all four directions, seeking solace wherever they can.

There had long been a settlement at the lower reach of Reusin's Gullet, and about 400 years ago its population swelled, growing into a city. When Ranke marched east to conquer the lands they found there, Lirt was an attractive stop, not only for its architecture, but as a gateway to the Devrith Peninsula. And the Lirters were peaceful, even welcoming the soldiers into their city. From that moment on, Lirt became an important part of the growing Rankan civilization.

Lirt remained one of the most spectacular cities in the empire until the Black-Toothed horde came from the north. Having sacked Ranke, their armies pushed east to plunder the rich and untouched lands. They encircled the city, demanding tribute and surrender. The governor, a short sighted man named Claneres Dalis, made a profound error of judgment and refused the horde's demands. In response, the barbarians razed the city, butchering everyone they found and tearing down nearly every structure. It is said that not one building stands unbroken in Lirt and that those few Lirters who eke out an existence among the ruins live no better than dogs and rats. This is a far fall for a city once called the Jewel of the East.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

As an Imperial City since the founding of the empire (and well within the Rankan sphere before the empire), Lirt has long been ruled by a provincial governor, usually of Lirter extraction. After the crushing defeat at the hands of the barbarians, Lirt was essentially lawless until Jamasharem, the current emperor in Ranke, dispatched one of his trusted men to reconstitute the imperial presence. His name is Ladisius Zapolya and he's neither a Lirter nor a Rankan aristocrat. As a matter of pride he's living in what's left of the city's governor's palace. He has about 500 legionnaires with him and a mandate to revive the city by whatever means possible and/or necessary. Lirt has been under Rankan influence for a long time. Historically, though, Lirt once had indigenous customs—a royal ruler known as the Satry and a feudal, rather than a bureaucratic, government. Even in the depths of recent anarchy, however, there's been little sentiment to return to anything other than the security of an Imperial style of governance.

Lirt was and will be again a trans-shipping center, an inland port with a massive investment in the mules and carts necessary to bring goods around

the Maw and Gullet. The balance of trade is mostly raw materials downriver and finished goods upriver, though for individual commodities the direction is reversed. There are sufficient forests on the Gray Witch flanks to support a boat-building industry.

Substantial peat marshes in and around Lirt yield up the city's dominant fuel. The sausages of Lirt are an acquired taste, being made largely of mule and horse meat. Lirt's peat fires are also used to distill a malted grain beverage known as *gortar* (also an acquired taste).

The Lirters generally worship the Rankan pantheon, with only a few local idiosyncrasies dating back to the days when they were a unique people. These local customs mostly involve the river. The most notable is an autumn festival, now tied to Sabellia, when the faithful make harvest offerings to the river. It is possible that Brasidas is the name of the supreme deity of ancient Lirter worship.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Lirt's fortunes long derived from the Brasidas River, a curving ribbon of water fed by the Gray Witch Mountains. Though navigable below Lirt and most of the way above it all the way to Adrale, it is not at all navigable just above the city where it carved quite a chasm (about 10 miles long) through a 30-foot high escarpment separating the geological zone of the Gray Witch Mountains from the Livon Plains. The chasm is known as Reusin's Gullet, Teusin being the name of the primary demonic minion of the Gray Witch for whom the nearby mountains are named. The cataract itself is Reusin's Maw.

IMPORTANT SITES

The majority of Lirt's people lived inside of the city's walls, though there were a number of villages that sprang up around the capital as it grew. Of course, the barbarians were thorough in their destruction. Virtually all the intermediate Lirter cities and towns on the Livon Plains were razed by the horde—and, for several, it was not the first time they'd fallen to barbarians. To the extent that the Black-Toothed threat has faded, a few hearty farmers have moved back onto the plains, but, as yet, the settlements are no larger than villages and hamlets.



CHAPTER THREE: THE KNOWN WORLD

LIRT (SMALL TOWN, FORMERLY SMALL CITY)

The city of Lirt is about 400 years old, though there has been a settlement at the lower reach of the chasm since time immemorial. The city was always an attractive place, with the lesser buildings mostly of wood and the civic and religious buildings being stone-and-masonry constructions. The stone was mostly granite from the Gray Witch Mountains which had a high mica component and took a good polish. The great buildings of Lirt, though cast in shades of gray, sparkled in the light.

GREAT LIBRARY AND SCRIPTORIUM

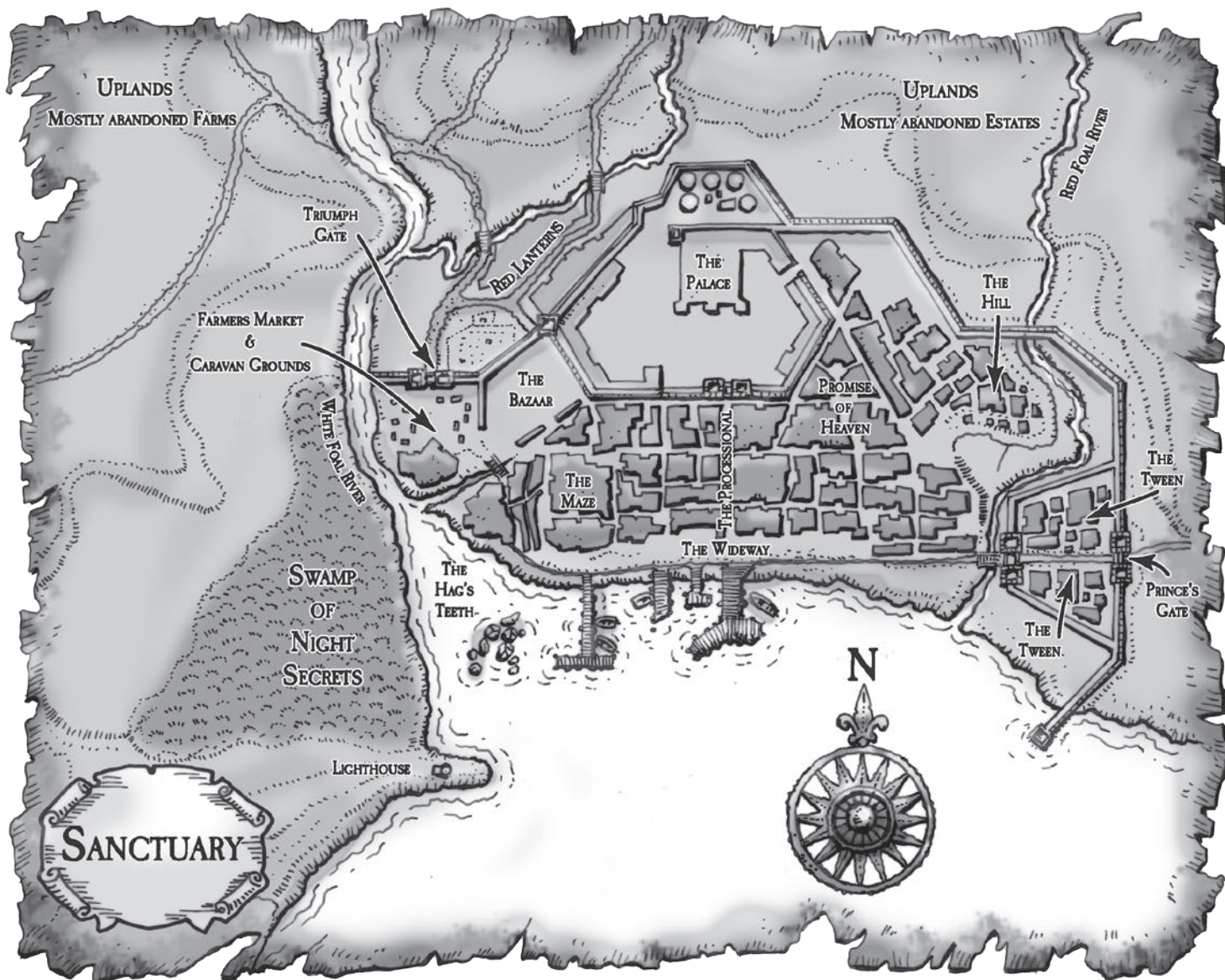
The Great Library and Scriptorium of the Crimson Scholars was located on a bluff overlooking the Gullet. The Crimson Scholars arrived about 80 years ago and raised their buildings with the help of Ur-words. It is said they originated in the Cold Lands, and left due to a falling out with the king of the Banmalts. There was a horrendous explosion at the Scriptorium a few years ago, resulting in the collapse of the main tower and the death of most of the people inside. The community has since reconstituted itself on a smaller scale. Many of the surviving scholars are on quests looking to replace lost volumes of their precious library, though it is rumored that the explosion was caused by rival wizards and that there are a few Crimson Scholars whose mission is revenge.

VAS-LIRT (SMALL TOWN)

Upper Lirt in the local dialect—which is essentially a thick layer of Rankene over a local language which has long since disappeared from conversation—Vas-Lirt is a smaller city on the northern end of Reusin's Maw. All trade goods must be portaged around the Maw and the Gullet and boats either ply the northern or the southern waters of the Brasidas. Vas-Lirt escaped the destruction of its parent city and until the arrival of Zapolya it was the functional capital of the province.

SANCTUARY

Called Thieves' World, Sanctuary was long the ass end of the Rankan Empire. It was conquered not for any virtues of its own but rather for its placement as a port city and its ability to serve in the war against the Kingdom of Ilsig. When the hated Ilsigis surrendered, Sanctuary was counted as one of the 38 and given to Prince Kadakithis to rule. Since the heady days of promise and intrigue, Ranke seems to have relinquished Sanctuary in all but name, no longer claiming tribute, nor having a sanctioned governor as its ruler. Still, there are some in the Empire, Jamasharem included, who would see this city come back under the imperial control once more.



Sanctuary is described in extensive detail in Green Ronin's *Thieves' World Player's Manual* and *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*.

The history of Sanctuary is in some ways the history of the Known World. Since its inception it has had a place in the larger developments of great men, kingdoms and empires, and the gods themselves. Before becoming an imperial province, Sanctuary was an insignificant fishing community just south and east of the Gray Wastes and the Gunderpah. When Ranke and Ilsig engaged in their costly war, a slave revolt in the Kingdom allowed a group of slaves to escape and flee their homeland for freedom in the south. Though nearly captured, they found a hidden pass through the mountains and settled in the foothills just beyond.

Their security would not last. They swiftly exhausted any resources to be found and were forced to move farther south until they came upon a small settlement on the shores of the sea. They made peace with the simple fisherfolk there and together founded the new city of Sanctuary.

Ilsig never acknowledged the slaves' independence, and soon after sent ships to seize the colony. Though a few escaped (these became the pirates of Scavengers Isle), the city fell to the brutal rule of Ilsigi tyrants. The Sanctans suffered for years until a Rankan general rediscovered the Hidden Pass used by his grandfather years ago and marched an army through the World's Edge Mountains, destroying the Ilsigi garrison and claiming the city for the Empire.

Under Rankan control, Sanctuary played an important part in Ilsig's defeat. The Rankans used the city as a trade hub and supply depot for their ships as they maneuvered south of the Hammer's Tail to besiege Ilsig City. Once the war was won, though, the emperors became less interested in this backwater, using it as a place to get rid of political undesirables, such as Kadakithis and Molin Torchholder. But Sanctuary's time was not finished; it would become an important battleground in the Ranke war against the Nisibisi and Mygdonian Alliance.

Now, Sanctuary is largely free from imperial rule. Once Kadakithis vanished, control of the city fell back into the hands of the Sanctan aristocracy, but they were ill prepared for the Troubles that followed. Brutal storms, droughts, plague, and the rise of a bloody cult very nearly destroyed the city, but in the end, it was the efforts of Molin Torchholder that saved the city from obliteration and ushered in a new era.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

Sanctuary has always been a dangerous city; it is the destination of choice for exiles, refugees, and dissidents. Over its long history, people from all over the Known World and beyond have come to settle here, from as far away as Mrsevada to the exotic islands of Beysib. Furthermore, Sanctuary has seen many masters, from Ilsig to Rankan to Beysib. Now a band of nomadic barbarians called the Irrune have taken control of the city and, surprisingly, have proven adept at guiding the people into a new era of prosperity and freedom from the evils of its past.

The typical Sanctan is of mixed Ilsig heritage. They have their own language and customs, being far removed from their Ilsig heritage. Crime has always been a big problem in this city and even at its best, Sanctuary was never a city that could be described as safe. The Irrune have taken a great many steps to improve the city, lighting the streets at night and increasing patrols, but as it ever was, it will always be a Thieves' World.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Sanctuary sits on the coast of the Oread Ocean, between the White and Red Foal Rivers. To the north tower the Gunderpah and the seemingly endless desert of the Gray Wastes. Never a large province, Sanctuary encompasses the city and approximately 40 miles in all landward

directions from the city. In addition to the places described here, there are many old ruins, isolated homesteads, and no shortage of ghost towns.

ISLE OF SHUGTHEE

This island lies out in the bay, and once served as the home of the infamous Purple Mage. Local legend tells that this place was haunted by a race of monsters called the Shugthee, said to be small, hairy, and vicious. Since the Purple Mage's death, no one has explored the old fortress, leaving the place to the ghosts that still haunt it to this day.

1. RUINS

These ruins are all that remain of a temple complex that dates back to Enlibrite times. What separates this ruin from all the others in the area is its scale; the entire sight is huge and imposing. Local theologians suggest this place was once consecrated to Maumarel, the head of the Enlibrite pantheon and the effective equivalent to Savankala (though he had more in common with Vashanka than he did with the sun god). However, others argue that the placement of such a temple makes no sense, for it is far from the Enlibirite centers of power. Some suggest the place is somehow connected to the Charterhouse of Synicris, but such is nothing more than conjecture. Regardless of its origins and purpose, the ruins remain a site of great magical power, especially near the old granite altar.

2. SMUGGLERS' CAVE

This is the largest of the caves along Smugglers' Cove. A shrine to the Beysib demigod Porta is located within, and it seems to still see regular use. Locals claim that there are forgotten passages in the cave system with forgotten loot at the end of them.

3. CALADAN MINE

The promise of gold drew many prospectors to Sanctuary shortly after its founding. Rumors of gold, silver, and precious metals have always filtered through the area, and so many opened exploratory mines to unearth the treasures in the earth. Caladan, an ex-slave with long experience working in the Ilsigi mines, spent years crawling into caves looking for the telltale geological formations, and though he had many failures, he did succeed once in a place now called Caladan's Mine.

There he chipped small nuggets of gold out of the rock, but never enough to become rich. His meager successes have drawn prospectors for years since, and every now and then a group of hopefuls re-open the mine to plumb its depths, hoping for that lucky strike. Even when no one works the mine, one can always find some mountain man panning the nearby streams, occasionally yielding small nuggets and flakes, giving rise to the eternal hope that there is a major lode somewhere nearby.

The mines are only sporadically explored; too many miners have been bankrupted by the unyielding tunnels for there to be a consistent flow of prospectors. They therefore make ideal hideouts and storehouses for bandits, a new group of which claims them every few years.

4. POOL OF BONES

A few miles east of Milda is a ring of hills creating a box canyon that slopes down to a pool of brackish water. The air here is always cold and one's eyes play tricks, catching sight of fleeting shadows, odd faces in rock formations and so on. Shattered statuary and columns seem to guide a traveler down the slope to the still waters at the end. Fragments of statues' faces and features stare up from the ground, seemingly watching passers-by. An odd hand points down, intact after who knows how long. The rocky ground gives way to a shifting carpet of stark white gravel; upon closer inspection, one sees that it is made of bone fragments. Intact skeletal forms can be seen suspended within the cold waters.



Legend holds that centuries ago, dark priests of a darker god used this place as a sacred temple, believing the site actually served as a gate to the Underworld. They brought their sacrifices to this place where they ritualistically drowned them in the waters, feeding the demon god they worshipped. The people who worshipped here are long gone, but the evidence of their perversity still remains and on cold nights of the new moon, it's said the shades of the dead rise and lament their fates.

5. SCYNICRIS

The Scynicris, or more properly, the Charterhouse of the Enlightened Order of the Conclave of Scynicris, is a collection of ruins once held by a schismatic group of Enlibrites who were priests of the winged Enlibrite deity, Scynicris, who was, among other things, their Lord of Night and god of magic. The ruins are majestic, being a huge compound sporting many domes and columns. Clearly there was magic involved in the Charterhouse's creation because the walls rise a good eight feet above the surrounding water and remain intact after all this time. The place is unoccupied and the main gate stands open, making the ruins easily accessible above a short flight of stairs.

The existence of Scynicris is well documented by those who've kept track of ancient Enlibrite ruins. There is a general consensus that the place was founded about 1600 years ago and remained active for about 200 years after the creation of the Gray Wastes, and then suddenly went quiet. The Great Morass existed before the founding, but beyond doubt the Scynicrits did some ecological engineering to expand the swamps and marshes.

Spirits of the long-dead priests and their minions (both created and summoned) haunt the ruins, though this fact hasn't stopped the Pelterans from sending explorers to the ruins for generations, long before even Sanctuary was founded. Most of the smaller items were looted long ago, but no one has opened the tombs, which are believed to be cursed. Of particular interest, however, are the many, many murals which contain not only paintings from Enlibrite history, but wall upon wall of ornate script. Though historians believe that the Scynicrits spoke ordinary Enlibrite, it's clear they wrote in a code which has never been completely or competently deciphered. What is known is that the Scynicrits saw themselves as the masters of all magic; it is conjectured that the whole of Enlibrite magic, from the simplest cantrips to the artifact spells that created the weapon that failed against Yenized, is written on the Scynicris walls.

6. THE OLD FORTRESS

On a forested hill with a view all the way down to the White Foal River stands the Old Fortress. It's not certain who erected the place as the architecture is not Ilsigi, nor Enlibrite, and certainly is not Rankan. Bas-reliefs of dragons decorate the outer walls and dragonet "gargoyles" thrust out of the corners of the high towers. Everyone agrees that the place is very, very old, but it's also in surprisingly good condition, merely abandoned rather than ruined.

Despite its being intact, no one is willing to move in (Lord Serripines had set his household here, but moved out shortly afterward and has

never spoken of it since). By moonlight, the Old Fortress seems to glow with its own eldritch light. Down at the Third General's Inn, the barflies say that the Fortress is home to a "lord of the dead" and that by the light of the moon the dragons on the outer walls come to life and fly. Consequently, no serf, peasant, or thief has had the courage to breach its walls.

7. DYAREELAN CAMP

Though the Dyareelans assuredly remain in Sanctuary's undercity, they cannot sustain such an existence for long. So, several exiled cultists relocated to the hills beyond the Swamp of Night's Secrets to a small encampment holding about 50 or so Dyareelans and their hangers-on. What began as a cluster of tents has given way to a small fortress amidst the tangled overgrowth marking the extreme edge of the Swamp and the Long Road.

Life at the Camp is miserable. The Dyareelans spend their days like the 'NighTERS, prowling the swamps for food and materials. The 'NighTERS hate them nearly as much as they hate the Sanctans (the 'NighTERS suffered terribly in Sanctuary under the rule of the cultists) and so they avoid them at all costs, except for the occasional raid. The Dyareelans don't help matters as they continue on with the ritual sacrifices demanded by the Mother of Chaos, and when they can't snare a 'NighTER for the sacrifice they must make do with the other denizens of the swamp.

Their current leader is a priest who calls himself Wilding. His second is Ocicat, who is also his lover. While Wilding's had little enough success in resurrecting his deity or restoring the Hand's power over Sanctuary, he's not at all interested in ceding his power to the likes of Leorin or Cassata, much less Tord'an (whom he doesn't consider a true Dyareelan, the Mother House having fallen into considerable disrepute among the more fanatical faithful).

8. SUMMER CAMP OF THE IRRUNE

Not all of the Irrune are content to live bounded by the walls and roofs of Sanctuary. About half the tribe remains on the outskirts of the city. During the winter months, they pick up camp and come into the city, but are quick to leave with the new spring. The Irrune encampment is mostly an orderly arrangement of yurt-like tents set around a viable water source. They have a waste ditch in which human waste and trash are deposited, but they actually waste very little. Everything about the Irrune Summer Camp suggests temporary housing, for the Irrune follow the herds and their hearts, moving as they will. The current relationship with Sanctuary has placed a strain on the people, and many wonder if the rift will blossom into an incurable breach, forever after dividing their people. Only time can tell.

9. BROWN BEAR INN

About a day's travel north from Sanctuary along the General's Road is the Brown Bear Inn, a roadside hostel and tavern catering to travelers and local homesteads. Run by Duncaen, it is normally a busy place and popular stopover on the way to Sanctuary. For more details, see Green Ronin's *Murder at the Vulgar Unicorn*.

IMPORTANT SITES

Sanctuary lacks the means to provide for itself and so it depends on the numerous outlying communities to provide food and raw materials.

AMARAT

Located west of Sanctuary in the uplands and more-or-less north of the Long Road to Ilsig (named so because it travels down to the Hammer and then follows the western coast up to Ilsig), Amarat consists of farmers

who prefer independence to lining the Serripines' purses. The community's two primary families, zil-Eshnis and Shandrez (both are linked through strong marriages), have deep ties to Sanctuary. The Shandrez claim to be one of the founding families of Sanctuary; while they control much of the community, they refuse to add the "zil" honorific to their names out of respect for their slave ancestors.

The farmers of Amarat recognize that they lack the wealth and influence held by their rivals, but refuse to bow before the conglomerate might of their neighbors. Instead, they actively work to break the monopoly on grains. They readily listen to any plan that could crush the Serripines, even making resources available to co-conspirators.

As a people of Ilsigi ancestry, they venerate the Ilsigi gods. They managed to liberate many of the religious treasures from Sanctuary prior to the Dyareelan uprising and store the relics in their lavishly stocked village temple. Most local priests divide their time between Amarat and Sanctuary to tend the faithful in the chapels forced outside of the city walls. And given the harsh stance against religion in the city, the priests of the Ilsigi pantheon enjoy a strong cooperative relationship.

Though on the outskirts of Sanctuary, Amarat enjoys regular pilgrimages from the city and is considered the authority on Ilsigi religious matters. And though the village is committed to the Ilsigi way of life, they strive to keep Sanctuary independent, hoping one day to remake Sanctuary in the image of distant Caronne.

THE INN OF AMARAT

At the junction of the Long Road and the Amarat spur road stands the Inn of Amarat. Though it is only a short distance from Sanctuary, it is not on the way to anywhere other than a footpath that winds to the east before disappearing into the marsh. Run by Guyl the Quick, the inn doesn't see much business, which is exactly as he wants it, for the inn is a front for his family's smuggling operation. Goods travel up from Pelteris and are shifted from mule-packs to wagons, then transport into Sanctuary.

For those travelers who actually head south along the Long Road, the Inn of Amarat is an acceptable lodging. The food is decent, the rooms clean, and the games are honest. During times of religious significance to the Ilsigs, business picks up considerably as there are no guest accommodations in Amarat proper. And though the inn welcomes travelers, it's a good idea to keep out of the stables, for that is where Guyl hides his storerooms that hold all sorts of contraband waiting to be picked up for transit to Sanctuary.

BASSINE

Bassine has had a long history, tracing its founding to a time before the Ilsigs conquered Sanctuary. For years the people of this community struggled, trading the meager grains for whatever they could get in the city. Though never wealthy, it was a place with tradition. The Troubles changed this. When the Irrune host settled in the lands around the city, they wreaked havoc on the Bassine's crops, taking what they wanted whenever they wanted. Once the Irrune seized the city, the Serripines moved in and offered to help, placing the zil-Nadrassa, a clan of Wrigglie well-to-dos who fled their homes in the Jeweler's Quarter during the Convulsions. However, they are reviled by both their Serripines overlords and the serfs they try to control.

Though the Serripines' takeover seemed promising at the beginning, the locals have proved resistant to their masters. The Serripines want to drive out the remaining Wrigglie population and replace them with Rankan serfs, but the locals who've lived here for generations have shown implacable resolve and temerity.

Bassine is currently on the edge of a widespread disaster. The native population as well as the Rankan serfs both resent the overseers and there have been a few recent acts of violence. And while they pay lip service to their masters, the Bassine peasants produce *opah* under their masters' noses.

EAGLENEST

Eaglenest is a mansion, part of the seacoast estate of Eaglebeak that was sacked and destroyed by mercenaries. It was later abandoned, and has stood empty for decades. Rumor has it that it's haunted by ghosts.

ELKHOD VILLAGE AND INN

Scattered throughout the countryside are small inns that are supported by a tiny community of homesteaders who supply the inns with fresh fish, eggs, and other supplies. Most of these roadside inns were founded during the time of Enlibar and have remained much as they did then—largely because transportation hasn't changed much in 3,000 years. These inns serve as way stations for caravans and other travelers, providing a warm bed, hot meal, and maybe an evening's entertainment.

The Elkhod Village is very similar to dozens of others, though this particular establishment was founded by Naihikaris, Ranke's first emperor. Yegor, a jovial bear of a man, won the place in a dice game about eight years ago. What began for him as a diversion is now a way to support himself though his golden years.

FINGAL

Though nearly all of the Beysibs withdrew from Sanctuary years ago, several chose to stay behind in the fishing villages that dot the coastline. Fingal, a village of about 400, is self-sufficient and isolated, relying almost exclusively on the sea for its livelihood. Despite its small size, it does have a harbor, big enough for shallow draft fishing boats. The Beysibs in Fingal are respected and appreciated village members, and the racial bigotry of the previous era seems not to have survived here.

HILEAH

Hileah is a small settlement of about 200 households standing at the western extreme of territory controlled by the Serripines Clan. Each household owns a private plot, but they spend most of their time in the community fields, from which the bounty goes to their Rankan overseers. About 50 soldiers help maintain order.

The town takes its name from the Hileahan serfs who lived in Sihan, Lirt and other northeastern provinces. When the Serripines Clan migrated south, they gave the serfs a choice: stay behind and be free, but face the Black-Toothed horde on their own, or join them and continue to be serfs wherever the Serripines bid them settle. Clearly, the serfs opted for protection and migrated.

Hileah closely resembles the villages in Ranke, with neat rows, columns, and stone structures. However, when they selected this spot, there was a ruin on the outskirts of the settlement. Believed to be the summer home of an exiled Ilsi court-mage from the previous century, little remained to confirm or deny the local legends. The early settlers thought to rebuild the structure, but after a series of terrible tragedies and weird occurrences, the Rankans came to the conclusion that the ruin was haunted by the mage's spirit. Hileahan farmers now studiously avoid the ruin, taking the long way around even though it adds an extra hour of travel time.

The Mangeles family rules the town with a firm but just hand. Consisting of two grandfatherly brothers, their adult children and grandchildren, they are Rankan through and through and believe strongly in the supremacy

of law. Hileah therefore lacks the corruption and decadence commonly found in this region. Though a just life, some of the younger Hileahans chafe under the prospects of being farmers and so leave to seek their fortunes in Sanctuary.

Hileah produces wheat, barley, and other grains. Recently, they've been experimenting with grapes, but have had little success thus far.

INDEPENDENT VILLAGES

There are four minor independent villages: Cough, Karsh, Milda, and Ruddy. They supply Sanctuary with cattle, chicken, pork, and fruit and vegetables. The villages do not produce breads because the Serripines clan at Land's End has a stranglehold on grains. Most could be self-sufficient if need be, but enjoy the minor luxuries of finished materials from Sanctuary.

Cough: Cough supplies Sanctuary with the usual assortment of perishable commodities, but because it is owned by Lord Night, it is the primary source of *opah* in the city.

Karsh: In addition to beef and mutton, Karsh is also famous for weaponry. Tullis, its resident blacksmith, once served in the Rankan army and now produces some of the finest weaponry in the area.

Milda: Milda is known for its dairies, producing fine cheeses, butter, and to a lesser extent, beef.

Ruddy: The fruit-growing capital in the region, Ruddy supplies Sanctuary with the bounty from its numerous orchards. It produces apples, pears, cherries, and some nuts (walnuts mostly), but no citrus. Ruddy stands on the banks of the Red Foal River.

PELTERIS

This isolated coastal village lies south and west of Sanctuary. A fishing village, its residents consume nearly everything they catch and give the leftovers to the brine pits to make *garum*, the all-purpose condiment that is both loved and reviled throughout Sanctuary. In fact, the stench of the food additive hangs like a cloud over the village.

At night, though, the town leads another life, with fishermen rowing out to the ships standing offshore. As it costs good money to warehouse goods in Sanctuary, merchants have sought other avenues to cutting price: the locals in Pelteris will stow cargo for half the price, preferring light goods like silks, perfumes, and *krrf*. Pelteris lacks the proper equipment and facilities to store things like Mrsevedan marble or bundles of northern timber.

On top of their smuggling, fishing, and pickling enterprises, some families work as trappers and guides in the surrounding marshes; Pelteris stands at the northernmost reaches of the Great Morass which stretches all the way down to Hammer's Tail. Like the Gray Wastes, it's believed that the Great Morass exists as a result of Enlibrite ecological tampering. Scattered throughout the vast bog are signs of a destroyed civilization. Those people who have an interest in exploring the Great Morass should probably invest in a guide who knows his way around, for it is home to a variety of unusual creatures, all fierce and hard to kill, some immortal and left over from the time of Enlibar.

REGIS

Another Serripines village, Regis is relatively new and small, consisting of no more than 150 households, most of them Rankan serfs and refugees. Vion Larris the Younger, Lord Serripines' son, rules this community, but is more interested in throwing garish parties that last for days than in actually governing. Vion Larris is a drain on the community, and the people suffer for his excesses.

SAMMIR

Sammir is the second largest village under the control of the Serripines clan. Originally an Ilsi estate that Lord Serripines acquired in the absence of another claim, he installed the Kulios clan as the village overseers and provided a cohort of 40 ex-soldiers to maintain the peace. The village contains over 300 households and is nearly self-sufficient. Like many of these newer communities, it is nearly exclusively populated by Rankan exiles. Sammir has recently hit a plateau in growth as the younger generations drift towards the excitement of the larger city.

THIRD GENERAL'S INN

Named after some long forgotten general, this inn has stood on the General's Road along the west bank of the White Foal River since before the founding of Sanctuary, serving as a reminder that Sanctuary wasn't the wilderness many claimed it was when the refugees and slaves arrived. Some speculate that the inn was controlled by the small town and harbor held by the local fisherman population that traces its history back to Enlibirite times. The General's Road has long been an alternative way to transport goods from the east side of the World Spine Mountains to the west.

About a day's travel northwest out of Sanctuary, the inn caters to land traffic between the city and the west coast. It also serves as a landmark, marking where the uplands end and the World Spine foothills begin. The grasslands, often used for pasturage, give way to light and later dense forest with isolated thorpes and hamlets scattered throughout. The people here make their living as shepherds and have little use for the morally bankrupt ways of the south. They typically settle here during good weather, moving on to Amarat and Hileah during the winter months.

In addition to the shepherds, all sorts of loners claim the forests north of the inn. Mostly loggers, furriers, and hunters, they supply Sanctuary with hard-to-gain supplies (mostly lumber), but much of their business comes from the lucrative charcoal industry. Once readied, the charcoal is loaded onto flat-bottomed skiffs and transported down the White Foal where it's sold in the caravan depot.

SIHAN

To the far north and east of the Rankan Empire extends the province of Sihan, with its eponymous capital. Sihan was absorbed into the empire around the same time as Lirt and so, for most Sihanese, they are Rankans first, having fully adopted the customs and lifestyle of their conquerors. Sihan has been a constant ally since Ranke's founding, proving its loyalty time and again. Even before the empire existed, Sihan was within Ranke's sphere of influence, ruled by a client prince. Throughout the tumult of the empire's most recent days, Sihan has remained a constant supporter, despite its isolation from the core of imperial politics.

What would become the province of Sihan began nearly 1,000 years ago when an indigenous tribe founded a city on the coast of the Oread Ocean. The city gradually expanded over the generations and soon began to exert influence over the entire region. Centuries later, Ranke expanded to the east, swallowing nearby Lirt and sweeping over the Gray Witch Mountains to lay claim to Sihan as well. Sihan supplied the empire with a steady supply of grain from its fields, to say nothing of the silk for which the region is famed.

Sihan remained relatively obscure until recently, when the Black-Toothed horde cut through the heart of the empire and razed many of its lands. As the horde moved farther east the Sihanese, unlike the Lirters, made preparations to get away. Their leader, Lord Serripines, emptied the coffers and offered life to any commoner who would serve him. He took a fleet of ships and headed for the capital in the hopes of starting a new life,

but what he found was an arrogant emperor who was unprepared for such large numbers of refugees. Threatening to slaughter anyone who disembarked from the ship, Serripines was forced to find a friendlier port.

Lord Serripines and his people finally settled in Sanctuary, where they remain to this day. They brought with them the farming techniques of their homeland. With these advanced methods, they've dominated the grain market in the south, and now threaten to rival production in Ciridon.

Meanwhile, the Black-Toothed horde destroyed Lirt and moved around the mountains to lay siege against the capital. There's really not much left to steal, though, for Sihan's people plundered the city themselves, leaving those who would not abandon their homes to face the hordes themselves.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

The city of Sihan is as much Rankan as any other province, having the full range of typical interests, occupations, and abiding by the same sorts of laws upheld in the capital of the Empire. Beyond its walls, though, the province of Sihan is far more primitive, lacking the refinement found in other lands. Sihan's outlying regions are home to all manner of strange cults and beliefs, and it is here where Dyareela's hold is the strongest. As a result, Sihan is a place of sharp contrasts, where the academies of the city stand shoulder to shoulder with the willful ignorance of the country folk.

Much like Ciridon, Sihan contributes a major share of the empire's grain stores. As a Rankan province, Sihan has been ruled by a governor since the foundation of the empire, but its loyalty and the reasonable prices at which it offered its grain ensured that it retained a measure of local autonomy. The last governor of Sihan was Carac Corvines, and before him, during the Rankan Era, Embrose Milyutis commanded the province. Both of these



men were leaders in name only, and the quality of the Rankan-appointed governor has never been critical to the well-being of Sihan.

In all, Sihan had thoroughly adapted to an imperial and bureaucratic mode of government, at least in the cities. The countryside was evenly divided between the great estates (*latifundia*) and marginal, undeveloped land. There, the role of the native aristocracy continued to rule in much the way it had when Sihan had been its own kingdom.

Sihan was the empire's pantry, the largest single source of its foodstuffs. Its grain was not the best, but it was reliable: the Sihanese weather is chilly and damp, but remarkably consistent. The rye and barley crops that grow in its fields have not, in the entire history of the empire, failed. Even now, after the departure of the Serripines and their ilk, grain still flows out of Sihan, if not in the impressive quantity as before.

If foodstuffs made up the main course of Sihan's economy, then silk was its dessert. Unfortunately, the silk industry was far more heavily impacted by the horde's attack and the populace's mass exodus. It was a rare family that didn't have its "worm room" where women and children tended the voracious silkworms, feeding them with bushels of leaves stripped from the mulberry bushes that grow on hillsides not suitable for plowing. The silk was processed into filaments before being exported; Sihan was not, by in large, where the silk was dyed or woven. Indeed, garments made from Sihan silk were scarcely less expensive in Sihan than elsewhere. A local cloth, drab in color but quite durable, was made from broken and otherwise inferior silk; that, combined with a local wool industry, kept the inhabitants of Sihan well-clothed.

Those who remain in Sihan officially participate in the imperial cult and worship the Rankan pantheon, and even the Serripine were devout . . . in a traditional imperial way. All Sihanese are traditional, it's merely a question of which traditions they hold most sacred.

Things are a bit different in the countryside, where the peasants tend to observe ancient customs beneath an imperial cult veneer. It's impossible to say if peasant customs are direct descendants of the customs observed by the builders of the "sleeping villages" (see page 14). The Dyareelan cult is endemic to the Devrith interior, but is not original to the area and is definitely not part and parcel of traditional Devrithi beliefs. Even the Dyareelans here are of a more moderate bent, and not inclined to act on the more apocalyptic aspects of their theology.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Sihan is characterized by its great stretches of grain fields and the forests that blanket the eastern face of the Gray Witch Mountains, which form its western boundary. Sihan once included Darshan Island, which lies beyond the notoriously treacherous Levcas Strait, but those people went their own way long before Ranke became a power.

IMPORTANT SITES

There aren't many places of import in Sihan; the small city that is its capital is by far the most developed.

SIHAN (SMALL CITY, FORMERLY LARGE CITY)

Threatened by the Black-Toothed horde, looted and abandoned by its own citizens, Sihan has seen better days (though it's in much better shape than Lirt). It has grown in tight rings, and boasts narrow streets and relatively tall and well-constructed buildings. Three-story structures are common, and composite buildings of four and five floors can be found as well, with the bottom stories being formed of the stone and the upper floors constructed of wood. While the city is walled, the Serripines and other *latifundia* nobles did not maintain large establishments within the walls;

they instead lived primarily on their estates, which were not well-fortified and therefore provided no protection against the advancing horde.

MANDIK (LARGE TOWN)

Mandik stands near the northeast tip of the Devrith peninsula. Its population is somewhat seasonal, increasing in the summer when millions upon millions of salmon run up the mouth of the Arizbond Sea. It is said you can walk from Mandik to the cold lands when the salmon are running; this is almost certainly an exaggeration, but beyond doubt vast quantities of fish are pulled in and salted, smoked, or air dried for transport to just about everywhere else in the Rankan empire, giving the town a widespread if banal fame.

SHEMHAZA (HAMLET)

In the depths of the forests of the Sihanese interior and in the shadows of the Gray Witch Mountains, one finds Shemhaza. It seems no different from a hundred other small villages. It's got about 250 people, most of whom are traditional to the point of being reactionary.

VACLAVA (VILLAGE)

This small port on the Isle of Darshan is reputed to be a pirate lair and slave market; other than that, it's just a hard-scrabble port with little to recommend it except the indisputable skills of its sailors.

SUMA

If Ranke had not arisen to conquer the lands around it, undoubtedly Suma would have. One of the wealthiest and most prosperous of the Rankan provinces, Suma is a place of discontent, of old grudges, and of a deep-seated longing for a return to their former glory. As Ranke struggles to regain its strength, Suma rumbles with rebellion.

Like Aurvedshan, the Kingdom of Suma came into being during Yenized's death throes, though there are those in the province that claim their civilization is far older. While Ranke was growing, so too was Suma, and both were rival powers. However, while Suma developed socially, Ranke developed militarily, and during the early days of its expansionistic period, it turned to Suma first. Unlike Lirt or Sihan, Suma resisted the Rankan legionnaires, and though they fought hard, they ultimately lost the war, becoming one of Ranke's first provinces. Following their capitulation, Ranke founded a new capital, Bakt, and installed a provincial governor to rule these lands.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

To keep control over the population, Ranke demilitarized the province, preventing it from ever building a military, even going so far as to prevent Sumese soldiers from returning to their homeland after they retire from the legions. But though they lack military strength, discontent is widespread and the people wait for their chance to gain their independence once more.

Given Suma's recalcitrance, all provincial governors are of Rankan extraction and never selected from the Sumese nobility. Annas Estades, the current governor, gained his post before Jamasharem seized Ranke. Fearing for his position, he is something of a sycophant, doing whatever he can to stay in the new emperor's good graces lest he lose his post, including concealing the growing unrest that seems to have plagued the province since the barbarians sacked Ranke. The Sumese have made several attempts to assassinate the governor, hoping to install one of their own in his place. But thus far their efforts have failed and the Rankan bureaucracy remains entrenched, taking harsh steps to suppress the increased violence in Suma's cities.

ILBARSİ FIGHTING KNIFE

These days the Ilbarsi forges make all manner of iron and steel weapons, but the traditional weapon is the Ilbarsi knife. Ranke would probably have liked to outlaw this weapon, but as it falls just short of a sword and performs all the expected functions of a utility knife (though it is also a fighting knife par excellence).

Thanks to its exquisite craftsmanship and the quality of steel, the Ilbarsi fighting knife grants a +1 masterwork bonus to attack rolls and a +2 circumstance bonus to rolls made to confirm critical hits. The Ilbarsi fighting knife is a martial weapon.

| Weapon | Cost | Dmg (S) | Dmg (M) | Critical | Range Increment | Weight ¹ | Type |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|---------|----------|-----------------|---------------------|----------|
| <i>Light Melee Weapon</i> | | | | | | | |
| Ilbarsi Fighting Knife | 308 sh | 1d3 | 1d4 | 18–20 | — | 2 lb. | Slashing |

¹ Weight is for Medium weapons. A Small weapon weighs half as much and a Large weapon weighs twice as much.

Though the Sumese speak fluent Rankene and dress in the latest fashions from the capital, they cling to their national identity as well. The Sumese language isn't nearly dead and to the extent that they can manage it, both the nobles and the commonfolk maintain Sumese traditions. This includes the *get*, a sort of informal court for grievances and local justice presided over by hereditary nobility. Traditional Sumese society is fairly inflexible—noble families have held their rank for as long as anyone can remember, and there is very little upward (or downward) mobility. Even though the nobility is many orders of magnitude richer and more privileged than the common folk, this discrepancy seems to breed little social friction. Perhaps this is because, technically, all Sumese commoners are free, even if they do not own the land they work. Nearly all the land in the province is in the hands of the nobility, who, in turn, rent it to the peasants. Some entire lesser cities of Suma are owned outright by some noble family or other. Fortunately, Suma is a fairly well-off land; famine and starvation haven't been problems in generations and, unlike Ranke, neither Suma nor Bakt were sacked by the Black-Tooth horde.

Suma is a successful province. It's largely self-sufficient in food, neither importing nor exporting basic foodstuffs. The Ilbarsi Hills metal output is the crown of the provincial economy, though its other exports including a passable wine (also from the Ilbarsi Hills), pre-industrial pottery (Suma is the main source for the thousands of plain pots that can be found throughout the empire), and a fair linen industry. Suma also has a reputation as being the prime source for poisons, and its people are held to be inherently treacherous. This is probably because, in Sumese eyes, it's not really a crime to kill a Rankan bureaucrat, provided one doesn't get caught.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Suma is mostly rolling hills covered with some light forest, but little remains of the wilderness. Dotted with small villages and crisscrossed with roads, Suma is one of the most developed provinces in the Empire.

ILBARSİ HILLS

Home to the most recalcitrant and traditional of the Sumese and also to a convenient confluence of swift streams, bituminous coal, and iron ore, these hills are one of the premier iron-working areas in the empire. From here, Ranke gains most of its weaponry and armor, as well as other finished metal . . . though the craftsmen are some of the most rebellious of the Sumese population. Ilbarsi society is thoroughly centered on its small ironworks and forges. There are mining villages for both iron and coal (usually done from separate villages, though a family may have men working in both types of mine) and forges everywhere, because the making of iron for the distinctive Ilbarsi weaponry is a cottage industry.

IMPORTANT SITES

Suma is best described as a civilized land, with a propensity of villages and hamlets scattered throughout. The most important communities follow.

BAKT (LARGE CITY)

A Rankan-founded city some 20 miles inland of Suma, it is a river-port city with good access to Borniel Bay. Rankan architects planned the city to both impress and intimidate the locals, giving the impression of being one gigantic fortress on the Rappali River. Bakt has wide streets, open market places and good sewers, but it lacks charm. The Sumese have settled in Bakt out of necessity, slowly eclipsing Suma, rendering the ancient capital to little more than a cultural museum—cherished but no longer really functional.

Many ruins can be found near Bakt, the remnants of the earliest Sumese civilization. Very little is known about them, though the Sumese are



inordinately proud of these mysterious, ancient roots. In fact, Bakt is the Sumese word for “standing stones.” With no direct connection to the ruins, the Sumese have woven a mythology out of whole cloth to explain their relation to the ruins. They are a rallying point for budding Sumese nationality.

SUMA (SMALL CITY)

Suma is a small city nestled on the coast of Borniel Bay. Ancient, founded over a thousand years ago, it has withstood fire, plague, and calamity. Suma was on the Yenized periphery when Yenized was at its height and there is a persistent Yenized influence in the architecture and the customs.

TWAND

Before the Rankan Empire and during the height of the Enlibar Empire, Twan d'Yziz was part of Yenized. A simple people of small farmstead communities, they were victims of Yenized's attempt to break away from the oppressive empire. Enlibar's armies marched through the lands to lay siege to the cities of the breakaway state and it was the common people who ultimately suffered for the pride on both sides. The plagues unleashed by Enlibrite sorcerers carried a devastating toll on the countryside, wiping out entire villages with destructive disease. In the aftermath of the magical mishap that spelled the end of Enlibar, Yenized made a half-hearted attempt to rebuild their society, but the damage was done. Decadence and despair eroded their national resolve, making them ripe targets for the Rankan upstarts.

When Ranke absorbed the remnants of Yenized, it broke apart the territory into Twand and Aurveshan. Rankan authorities settled on the Borniel Coastline, seizing the fertile farmlands to establish agriculture centers to supplement their wealth. The remainder, mostly inhospitable hinterlands, were added to the new province, though they were of little use to anyone. For the most part, Twand's population lives within 20 miles of the coast, on the far side of the Hazibal Hills that form the outer perimeter of the Gray Wastes.

Since the invasion of the Black-Toothed barbarians, there have been steady streams of Rankan nobles from the capital as they frantically try to establish their loved ones in one of the coveted waterfront mansions. To support themselves, they buy up great quantities of farmland, converting them into massive farming enterprises not unlike those of the Serripines Clan outside of Sanctuary.

There's little recourse for the Twandan citizen who feels that he is taken advantage of. Government offices are restricted to Rankan citizens and the government appoints whomever it sees fit from wherever it wishes. This often results in a foreign lord with little experience or understanding of Twand's unique problems. As these nobles can be bought and sold by the interests of the coastal elites, they disenfranchise the middle class and the agricultural communities. A few years back, peasant revolts erupted all over the province, but in the face of the better equipped Rankan legionnaires, they were brutally crushed. As a result, Twand now has a substantial contingent of Imperial troops and even more officers.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

Like all the provinces in the Empire, a provincial governor named Malik rules Twand. Though his family has lived in this province for generations, they are thoroughly Rankan. The direct descendant of Kharise, a contemporary of Kadakithis, Malik comes from a long line of corrupt aristocrats known as the Barmak family. The corruption of the ruling family is indicative of the larger political actions of the entire

province; little happens without bribes. In practice, Twandan Rankans rule Twand, and as a result, the ruling class is closed to those Twandans of lower station.

This is a land where money talks, and talks loudly. The rich get richer, while the poor slide inexorably into serfdom. While certainly one of the wealthiest families in the province, the Barmaks are not the richest. That honor falls to the Idysin family, which has controlled the customs office for nearly as long as the Barmaks have controlled the provincial government. Nothing comes in or out of the capital of Dar without having first gone through customs, and without the Idysin family first taking their cut.

Twand is one of the more densely populated Imperial provinces. Though wealthy and prosperous, Dar is somewhat smaller than it could be, primarily because the nobility keeps a tight control on the population. In the countryside, large farms have replaced the independent farmer, and these places house several thousand tenants. Even the few surviving small villages have a hundred or more residents.

Part of Twand's success comes from its fertile farmland. A great deal of the province is given over to farms both large and small—though, little by little, the small farms are disappearing, replaced by large grain-growing operations owned by the nobility and run, by and large, by absentee landlords. This economic transition has lowered the standard of living for the average rural Twandan and created a steady stream of migration from Twand to other lands, including Sanctuary. Those who cannot or will not emigrate find themselves sinking into serfdom. Between emigration and relocation, whole towns and villages have been abandoned, razed and brought under plow.

Twand is also a source of gemstones and is home to gemcutters, jewelers, and goldsmiths. It exports grain and other foodstuffs, which form the bulk (in tonnage at least) of its economy. Culture is also an export; artists of all stripes come to Dar to service the idle rich. The finest glassware is blown in Dar and the perfume industry is also well established. In general, industry in Dar is labor intensive but with a low environmental impact. There's a considerable colony of portraitists, muralists and other graphic artists, along with musicians, actors and playwrights—there is almost as much cachet in saying that one has learned one's artistic trade in Twand as there would be in saying that one learned it in Ranke. The former has a reputation for the avante-garde, while the latter is known for its conservative artistic leanings.

Twand (and Yenized before it) is fortunate in climate and, therefore, food production. In addition to abundant grain, just about every common fruit and vegetable can be found in a Twandan market. Add to that the usual dairy and meat products derived from domestic livestock and an abundance of seafood, and it's no wonder that Twand, and Dar in particular, is renowned for its cooks and its cuisine—which is more hearty than precious.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Twand offers much to travelers and adventure seekers. Though their cities are soft and cultured, the remaining wilderness houses old ruins, with fantastic treasures from the past just waiting to be unearthed. It's said the Hazibals are home to a fabulous mine where gems of all kinds can be plucked from the walls with little more than fingernail strength. Though skeptics dismiss these tales, the legend persists and it's a fact that a goodly portion of the Known World's gemstones have come from Twand. Outsiders believe there are several mines (or ancient treasure troves) and that the locations of the mines are closely held secrets among those Twandans who count themselves descendants of old Yenized aristocracy.

THE GRAY WASTES

Nearly half of Aurveshan is a bleak landscape of shifting gray sands, fields of blasted rock, canyons, and defiles. Though inhospitable, unusually warm, and devoid of water, for years caravans braved the territory to transport goods along Caravan Way, an established route that traveled through the safest parts of the desert. Since the pass through the World Spine Mountains opened, travel along this route has slowed, but despite the reduced traffic, it is still traveled with some regularity.

During the day, the temperatures climb up to 120 degrees and sometimes even hotter, but at night, the temperatures always drop below freezing. There is not much in the way of shelter aside from a few ridges speckled with caves, though few opt to spend the night in these tunnels for too many men have been lost in the dead of night.

The Waste seems to be without life; there are certainly no plants, and there are few creatures of any sort aside from the hardy desert scorpion, sand lice, and sand fleas. Buzzards cling to the occasional dead tree, watchful for the dead and dying, and legends tell of strange abominations that lurk just beneath the sands, lying in wait for the unwary. The Raggah horsemen (see page 61) survive here by clustering around the scarce oases, which are also home to small monasteries of ascetic monks who spend their days in reflection and contemplation.

Though a dangerous place, the Gray Wastes can be crossed. A would-be traveler has a chance if adequately prepared, and is likely to live through the experience with the services of a native guide. Raggah occasionally sell their services as guides in exchange for weapons, food, water, and other commodities.

IMPORTANT SITES

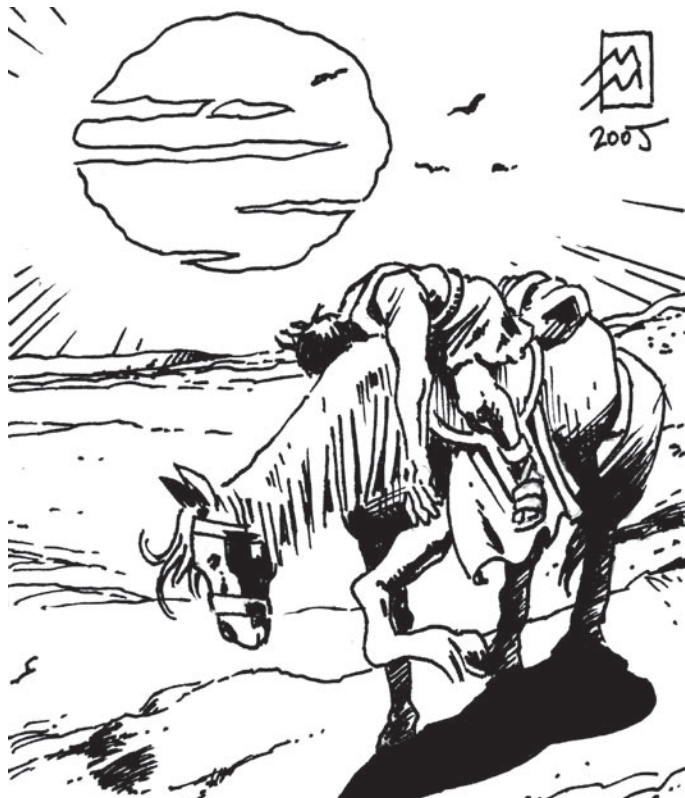
There is more to Twand than its declining rural life. Some of the greatest cities in the Known World are found here.

DAR (LARGE CITY)

Dar is known to the world as the White City. Actually two cities, or really many cities, Dar may be as old as Ilsig. Anytime anyone digs a well or a foundation, he first passes through several archeological eras. In the current times, the old city, known as the *Shiuka*, lies a bit back from the harbor and is a worthy rival to Sanctuary's Maze—though much larger and more stable. The Shiuka is the Twandan part of the city and the point of origin for the caravans that bring Twandan goods and (more often, these days) émigrés to Sanctuary. Caravans also go north and west to the Geniseng and other rivers, and thence into the continental interior. The Shiuka is more rundown and even somewhat seedier than Sanctuary's maze, but its population is more homogenous than that of the Maze.

Shiuka is not all there is to see in Dar. One hundred and thirty five years ago, when Imperial Ranke flexed its might to split old Yenized into the provinces of Aurvesh and Twand, they took the best of Dar's real estate for themselves. They improved the harbor and ringed it with a wall of buildings, each one an architectural masterpiece and faced with pale stone from the nearby hills and doused with white-wash at least once a year. Legend says that Dar shines so bright it has no need of a lighthouse to guide sailors to its wharves.

Dar has become the playground of the Rankan nobility—a distinction enhanced after the capital's ignominious sack. It was always a place of art and culture, but in recent years Dar sets the tone for Ranke, rather than the reverse, though how long this situation will prevail is open to argument now that there's an energetic and capable emperor once more in Ranke.



AYZURAN (SMALL CITY)

About 50 miles north by northwest along the Borniel coast is a second-tier city and harbor known as Ayzuran. It is renowned for its efficient smuggling operations.

BIZTAM (SMALL TOWN)

As noted, many of the old interior towns have been abandoned in the last several generations, but one that hangs on is Biztam, about 40 miles inland from Dar on the northeastern side of the Hazibals. Biztam survives by being the last bit of civilization that caravans encounter on their way in and out of the hospitable side of Twand.

TWARMAZ

There are a few oases in the Twandan Gray Wastes. Best known of these is Twarmaz, six days out of Biztam towards the continent's interior. Twarmaz is known as a slavers' depot and not a good place for honest folk to visit.

VELOS

Every much the backwater that Sanctuary is, Velos is different in one regard: it lacks Sanctuary's appeal. An isolated landlocked province, Velos does not lie on the route to anywhere in particular. There's a saying in Ranke: "Exile someone to Sanctuary and you can expect the city to execute him sooner or later. Exile someone to Velos, and they'll die from boredom."

Another of Ranke's early conquests, Velos was an isolated agrarian community settled by the ancestors of the same people who lived in Cirdon. Peaceful and content, they wanted no war with Ranke and so they surrendered without losing a single life. Velos quickly became a place to remove undesirables and political dissidents. And since the land was famous for its nearly level social hierarchy, there was no chance for these political exiles to do anything about their situation.



LIFE AND SOCIETY

There's not a lot of wealth in Velos, so there isn't much of a privileged class, which also minimizes corruption. Like all provinces, Velos is ruled by a provincial governor—frequently someone who's fallen into disgrace elsewhere. The current governor is Vill Hardouin, who hailed originally from Aurvesh, but got tangled in a scandal regarding the imperial taxes as well as something more villainous, though no one in Velos knows all of the details. Hardouin is a bitter man who wastes his time plotting revenge upon his distant enemies. During the Rankan Era the governor was Gaspar Colignus, a bland governor who seemed likewise obsessed with punishing those who had place him there.

The province is largely self-sufficient in foodstuffs, timber, and some agriculture. Virtually all luxuries have to be imported, but there's little call for them. Velos exports mainly its sons, who enlist in disproportionate numbers in the Rankan legions. The Velosians also grow delicious apples, but as apples don't travel all that well, they mash a good cider and distill an apple brandy

that's easy on the tongue and more potent than *vuksibab*. Called *calvas*, it's not widely known but is considered a sophisticated choice among the cognoscenti, which is ironic considering its unrefined origins.

The Rankan pantheon is widely recognized as the official religion in Velos, though the cult of Heqt has made many inroads among the local populace. Also, there are more than a few people with some talent at witchcraft among the outlying hamlets.

IMPORTANT SITES

Most communities are small, isolated thorpes with little to distinguish one from another, though there are two cities of some interest.

VELOS

Velos proper is a quiet place whose greatest claim to fame is that its temple contains the largest statue of Savankala carved from the wood of a single tree. The world knows that Enas Yorl was one of the three greatest magicians to have ever lived and that he lived in Sanctuary; fewer know Marisgano, who may

well be the single most potent mage ever, has chosen to live in a modest tower just outside of Velos. Most of the Velosians who know Marisgano know him simply as Gano and think he's just a notch or two above a charlatan and a year or two shy of his dotage.

BEYDEN

Beyden is a small town at the foot of the only year-round pass through the Dolor. It is a town of some activity since, all other things being equal, the best route to the Known World interior runs through Velos and Beyden. Needless to say, there's a fair amount of light-weight smuggling that goes on in sleepy little Beyden. Additionally, with the collapse of the Nisibisi covens, there was a small exodus of Nisi survivors through Beyden into the Rankan empire; a small population of them remained here, and now keep a very low profile in and around Beyden. None of them admit to being anything other than dedicated freedom fighters who rebelled against the witch overlords . . . but one never knows.

MINOR CULTURES

The Known World contains many smaller nations and city-states that have a limited impact on the political climate of the sub-continent. Many of these cultures have or are in the process of passing into legend, such as Azehur, or are just becoming known in the larger world.

ANDHRA

In the northern interior, farther north than Azehur and the ancestral hunting grounds of the Black-Haired barbarians, are the tribal forests of the Andhra—a savage warrior people known for their blood rituals and ancestor worship. Pale, tall, and fierce, they have little interest in developments in the Known World and the extent of their contact is the occasional sending of pelts and hides down the Pezan to sell in Mrseveda. However, as of late, a few bold Mrsevadans have thought to risk their lives to harvest the virginal forests for timber.

AZEHUR

North of Ranke and beyond Wizardwall lies a barren land named Azehur. Bordered by rugged mountains and speckled with the ruins of a dying civilization, it is far removed from the affairs of empires and war. What vestiges of its former majesty remain is contained in a pair of crumbling cities, where priests plot to kill rivals in their efforts to rule uncontested over a dying land.

Azehur was founded centuries ago by nomads that drifted into a region of arid plains bounded by rugged mountains. Led to this land by a priest-king, it swiftly advanced, making great strides in the development of agriculture, transforming the countryside into arable farmland. The mountains proved to have veins of iron ore as well as copper, brass, and even silver. These discoveries led to advances in weaponry and armor,

allowing the Azehurans the means to protect themselves against enemies from the north, mostly the Red-Haired barbarians.

With the sudden growth, though, came corruption. The state religion, the faith of Azeh, fragmented into a myriad of different sects and cults, each contesting the might of the priest-king. Sorely beset on all sides, the monarch sent his son and heir, Cletus, to defeat these factions on the battlefield. He succeeded, perhaps too well, for the death wrought at his hands painted him as a monster who none would thereafter follow. Thus he and his sister-love withdrew from Azehur to pursue other adventures in the south, leaving the throne to a younger and less prepared brother; Cletus and his sister would eventually become Tempus and Cime.

Azehur declined as the aforementioned factions continued to assert their influence, seizing the power of the royal family for themselves. Citizens abandoned the cities to return to the pastoral lives of their ancestors, leaving the mighty cities to the decadent and treacherous priests. Meanwhile, the priest-king and his family became prisoners in the palace.

Azehur would have passed into obscurity had it not been for the emergence of a new faith. A high priest of the small Azehurian pantheon claimed to have a revelation regarding Amelur, a peaceful demigod who had been regarded before as the messenger of the patriarchal god Azen. Though instantly ostracized and cast out of the capital, the high priest spread his message throughout the small villages and among the nomadic tribes that had reclaimed the wilderness, and established a new faith: the cult of Amalur. Against all odds, the cult spread into neighboring lands and soon after carried to cities all over the Known World. It seemed the people wanted a message of peace and community rather than invocations to war and death.

Azehur is receiving more interest as pilgrims from all over make the journey to pay their respects to the messenger. Shrines and temples decorate the landscape, though Amalur, oddly, has failed to make many inroads among the hierarchy of local priests. Despite Amelur's growing popularity in other lands, the clergy of Azehur refuse to regard him as anything but a servant of Azen.

Aside from pilgrimages, there's very little reason to visit Azehur. The ruins of dead cities are scattered throughout the countryside. The cities that still stand are unwelcoming to travelers, especially those who have converted to the upstart cult. Still, people do cross great distances to see the birthplace of the new religion and more and more come to this land every year.

AZEHUSAS (LARGE CITY)

The city of god, Azehusas was the first city constructed when the Azehans settled on this land. A city of stone and brick, its walls run four miles long, completely encircling the metropolis. Inside, the city is a veritable maze of cobbled streets and tightly packed buildings, all standing in the shadows of the temple of Azen and the royal palace. The temple honors the Azehan pantheon, but it is more often used to forge alliances between the various religious sects and factions and to plot treachery against their enemies. The royal palace is a walled compound on a hilltop in the center of the city. To reach it, one has to climb 400 steps, one for each year the Azehans wandered, ending at a pair of bronze doors adorned with images of Azen. This portal has not been opened in a century, for the hierarchy passed an edict stating that Azen blessed the royal family; thus they are without sin, and only the most worthy can look upon them. The practical result of this pronouncement was that the royal family became prisoners in their own palace, and may be served only by blind and mute servants.

AZEN

GREATER GOD

Symbol: A pillar of fire.

Domains: Destruction, Fire, War.

Favored Weapon: Longbow.

Since the rise of the cult of Amalur, the Azehurian pantheon has swiftly declined, so much so that the old gods are all but forgotten. Among the hierarchy who still control Azehusas, only Azen himself, the patriarch of the gods, has a wide following. An ancient deity, he is known as an angry, vengeful god, represented by the divine flame and the invocation to battle. His priests are famously treacherous and deadly, seeing their rivals as the enemy and using knife and poison to defeat them.

A number of smaller settlements continue to support this massive city, with neighboring farms producing grains and tending flocks in the nearby hills.

HAZIGAL (SMALL CITY)

This small city would have joined the other dead cities had it not been for the rise of Amalur. Now, pilgrims from all over the world come to pay respects at the tomb of Amalur located in the heart of this ancient settlement. Everything here exists to support the cult and their needs, and more importantly, it serves as an example of the good works upheld by the priests who serve. However, there is not enough to feed its population, so the hierarchy must import grains.

BANDARAN ISLANDS

The Bandaran Islands were always too remote to figure strongly in the affairs of the Known World. Located southwest of Caronne, no shipping lane pass near them and few ship captains who survived the Troubles remember the routes. The islands still encounter Mrsevadan ships and the occasional merchant vessel from Caronne, but the lack of a significant port and lucrative trade goods keeps visitors coming back.

All 18 islands are small, cool, mountainous and very beautiful. They are inhabited by simple people, including fishermen, farmers, and subsistence craftsfolk. The islands are close together, allowing their residents to use small boats to cross the distance for trade or to exchange news. But what makes the Bandaran Islands famous are the exploits of the adepts who study here. The islands are home to rare masters of *maat*, the ultimate expression of the ordered mind, the realization of truth, law, and spiritual balance. It is said to be the fundamental order of the universe and comprehension of it can be gained only through long reflection and self-discovery. Masters, each of whom represents a particular school of thought, take a single student who is expected to remain on the island in perpetuity, only becoming a master when his own dies. Leaving a master's tutelage is tantamount to failure and disgrace, thus there are few adepts in the world. For more information on the Bandaran adept prestige class, see Green Ronin's *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*.

Though the people living here have simple needs and lack any interest whatsoever in the shifting tapestry of alliances and betrayals found on the continent, they have on occasion found themselves thrust into the center of things. Namely, the Bandaran Islands became home for a few years to the now-vanished Arton and Gyskouras, the stormchildren and heirs of Vashanka. Furthermore, the islands have long been shrouded in

rumors of slavery and worse, though such tales are unfounded. Despite their brief emergence into the consciousness of Sanctans and elsewhere, the Bandaran Islands have remained much as they always were.

Finding the islands is difficult as only a few ship captains remember the way. Caronne and Ilsig have traded with the islands at times in the past, but the surest way is through Mrsevada, where ships make regular runs. While beautiful, the communities are small and isolated, the shrines on the mountaintops being remote and hard to reach. Those who come here typically stay in Alem, as it is the largest and most developed community.

ALEM (LARGE TOWN)

Alem is large by Bandaran standards, about the size of Sanctuary. As the island's only port, it is the primary entry point for visitors. With long sandy beaches against the backdrop of a mist-shrouded mountain, it is a pleasant community that sustains itself on trade and fishing. The leader, called the Ular, lives in decadent splendor, surrounded by gold, gems, finery, and women. He's made his riches by taking a portion of everything that comes and goes through his community. Alem has a reputation for being a haven for rich exiles and expatriates, a step up from Sanctuary for those who can afford it.

The Bandaran Islands are home to some of the deadliest toxins in the Known World. Wealthy and skilled assassins sometimes make the journey from Mrsevada to acquire the proper ingredients to craft a lethal and virtually untraceable poison. Also, every decade or so, a Bandaran adept leaves in disgrace under the auspices of failure to seek his fortunes in the larger world. These characters may become great heroes, like Niko, or terrible villains, using their unique powers for evil.

BANMALTS AND THE COLD LANDS

A spur of land from the larger continent runs roughly parallel to the Known World forming the Arizbond Sea, which separates the Cold Lands from the Wendish Coast. A frigid, mountainous land, this is a place of reavers: warriors who sail the seas in keeled, shallow-draft vessels

powered by wind or oar. Equal parts traders, raiders, and pirates, the Banmalt people started showing up in Borneil Bay and along the Oread coast about 100 years ago.

It is said a single Banmalt ship is a trader, a pair of them are pirates, and anything more than three is a raiding party. As raiders they are more a threat to small villages than towns and cities, which can easily defend themselves against such assaults. The recovery in Sihan has been slowed more by persistent Banmalt raids than by the deprivations caused by the Black-Tooth horde.

The Banmalts do not have a tribal leader, per se, but rather each smaller community is a collective group, coming together to speak freely until a consensus emerges or until violence breaks out—the Banmalts are a tempestuous people. Of all the communities, only Kaliz is anything close to what one would find in the Known World, but most suspect it is a place where the clans come together to celebrate the summer solstice.

Given their great numbers of ships, it stands to reason that the Cold Lands have an abundance of timber, and the Banmalts seem to have the skill to shape it into ships that are unlike anything else in Known waters. They also have access to a variety of furs unlike any found elsewhere.

The Cold Lands are sparsely populated, but they can barely support the population they've got. From a "civilized" perspective, however, the only population numbers that matter are the 20 to 25 Banmalt men who form the crew of a typical Banmalt ship. Armed to the teeth and utterly without fear when on the attack, 25 Banmalt are enough to ravage a "civilized" village of two hundred. The Banmalts are under almost constant population pressure: they *need* to send their men out on dangerous missions. While the plunder they bring back is fine, it's actually better if they don't come home at all because there's not a lot of arable land to feed them and almost all of it is already under cultivation.

As for gods, the Banmalt have a small pantheon of heroic gods who welcome the spirits of brave men and women into the eternal afterlife. Although anyone who's lived through a Banmalt raid might not believe it, the Banmalt at home are a people of law and good behavior. Crime is severely punished and indistinguishable from sin, which unfortunately doesn't mean that it's rare, only that it's never socially acceptable.

Women, who are home alone for much of the year, have an equal voice to men in the community well-being, perhaps maybe even a superior voice. It is entirely possible that the women could bring the Banmalt raiding phenomena to an end, but that they see it as being beneficial and necessary to their society.

BEYSIB EMPIRE

Far to the southwest of Sanctuary, where the waters turn to ice, is the volcanic island continent of the Beysib Empire. This ancient civilization predates even Enlibar, for tales brought back from Yenizedi sailors make mention of these unusual people. Though remote for much of the Known World's history and relegated to little more than myth, the Beysibs settled in Sanctuary when their civilization was plunged into turmoil.

The Beysibs are a matriarchic theocracy, meaning that it is a society ruled by priestesses. Males are relegated to the role of soldiers, laborers, providers, and rarely advisors. The principle figure in their government is the empress, called the Beysa. Believed to be the avatar



of the goddess, she is the spokesperson for their deity and commands complete authority over all of her people. During her lifetime, she must pass on the mantle to her eldest daughter, the “Ti-Beysa,” to ensure there is never a vacuum. Bey, the Beysib goddess from whom her people take their name, is a threefold being encompassing triple-part roles: virgin-temptress-hunter, mother-leader-planter, crone-judge-reaper. Within the imperial family, there is a representative of each facet of the goddess, and if there is ever a shortage, the imperial family adopts privileged citizens to fill these roles.

Beneath the empress there are dozens of Beysib clans, each ranked according to their prominence in the eyes of the Beysa. Power shifts considerably and often, changing with the moods and occasionally whimsy of the avatar. Fortunes are made by pleasing the Beysa and so the entire society works to this effect.

For most of the history of the Known World the Beysib Empire was the model of stability, unchanging and steeped in tradition. Exactly what happened to change that is not certain. It is thought that Shupansea, the Beysa, was betrayed by her lover, who moved against her with the support of several clans that were out of favor. The uprising turned the empire upside down, and the Beysib matriarchy (along with two supporting clans) boarded ships and fled north into uncharted waters.

Advance ships kidnapped a pair of Sanctan fishermen and learned the ways of the city. Shupansea and her clan closed the distance and disembarked in the city, taking it over in a bloodless conquest. Kadakithis, in a show of canny wisdom and perhaps realizing the Beysibs' wealth, welcomed the displaced people to Sanctuary and ruled side-by-side with the Beysa.

The Beysib “occupation” was not without conflict. Civil unrest, bigotry, and resentment were common among the city’s natives, and small incidents of violence sparked into widespread anarchy (with a little help from Zip). Constant fighting took its toll, but in the end the Sanctans finally accepted the Beysa and her marriage to Kadakithis. But then word reached the exiled Beysibs that the usurper was dead and the people wanted the Beysa back. As they had come to Sanctuary, suddenly and without explanation, so they left. Shupansea and nearly all the Beysibs set sail for the Beysib Empire, restoring their family line and returning stability to the ancient civilization.

The Beysibs, though human, have many unusual characteristics. They have overlarge eyes replete with a nictitating membrane. All Beysib are born with webbed fingers and toes, though these are cut just after birth; the scars are points of racial pride. Furthermore, all Beysib women have mildly toxic blood and they cannot bear children born from couplings with humans of other ethnicities (though other women can bear Beysib children). Also, Beysib seem to favor warm climes; the fact that the island on which they live is warmed by volcanoes is the only way they can tolerate the otherwise frigid climate.

CLEEA

North of Lirt along the coast of the Arizbond Sea are isolated communities of seafaring raiders. Kin to the Banmalts of the Cold Lands, these people crossed the sea to forge their own society on the continent. Unlike the Banmalts, the Cleceans pay tribute to the imperial crown and sometimes lend aid to Ranke by way of their impressive navy.

Though they resemble the Banmalts and even share the same language, the Cleceans are somewhat more advanced socially thanks to their interactions with Lirt and the larger empire. Organized around the small town of Cleea, they have a number of smaller hamlets that support the larger community. The leader is always the one with the strongest personality

and who shows the most competence to rule, and the culture remains relatively stable. However, resources are as scarce in their chosen lands, and so they often rely on the ties they retain with their neighbors across the sea.

INCEPTION ISLAND

Inception Island (or Scavenger Island depending on the era) is a small rocky isle in the midst of a cluster of similar, slightly less hospitable islands. Bleak and with no sources of fresh water and certainly no land suited for farming, it can only be lived on by receiving regular supplies from the mainland. There have never been more than a few hundred souls on the island.

Sanctan refugees, fleeing Ilsig oppressors when they conquered Sanctuary, settled the island many years ago. Fishermen and peasants mostly, they lacked the means to support themselves and quickly ran through the supplies they brought with them. Faced with starvation, they turned to piracy, at first preying only on Ilsig ships, but after a few generations they attacked any ship that passed by. The pirates of Scavenger Isle were ruthless and despicable. No sin was too profane for them to commit and Newtown, the only real settlement, became a haven for the vilest scum in the Known World.

The pirates were a problem, but not a big enough one for Sanctuary, or Ranke, to do anything about it. This changed once the pirates infiltrated the city and abducted citizens. Kadakithis, prompted by the public outcry of missing loved ones, organized a force of 100 marines and sent them to the island. The Sanctans burned the ships to their waterlines and butchered the pirates to the man and in the end freed hundreds of slaves. Many of these people returned to Sanctuary, but some remained behind to form Sanctuary’s first and only colony.



THE GREAT HAG

The pirates always saw the sea as a great and ravenous beast that swallowed ships and pulled sailors screaming to its cold depths. They referred to the sea as the Great Hag, personifying the waters as some ancient and gluttonous crone that never tired of sucking the air from the pirates who fell into the churning froth of the sea. Though the pirates are long gone, the superstitions about the sea still remain in the décor of Newtown and in the hearts and minds of those who've come to live in this inhospitable place.

The people of the newly renamed Inception Island did not last long. A new plague came down from Ilsig, ironically carried by priests who came by the invitation of the peers to help deal with the famine. As the colony depended on supplies from the mainland, the plague eventually spread to Newtown, wiping out the populace and leaving the place an empty ghost town. Years later, Sepheris IV sent a brigade of soldiers to establish a garrison here. Sanctuary, still reeling from the Troubles, was powerless to do anything about it, and Ranke had problems of its own. Ever since, Ilsig has maintained a force here, but for what purpose none can say.

Inception Isle is a rocky island, long ago deforested by the inhabitants. Lacking resources, the one settlement on this island has always required regular supplies gained from either piracy (during the Rankan era) or from supply ships from Sanctuary or, later, Ilsig City (during the Irrune era).

NEWTOWN (LARGE TOWN/VILLAGE)

When the Wriggles fled Sanctuary in response to the approaching Ilsig army, they settled on the largest island in this small chain, using the thin forests to construct the ramshackle settlement that would be called Newtown. As the island was the largest in the center of a ring of islands formed from the caldera of a submerged volcano, they enjoyed a peaceful bay that could provide shelter from the worst storms and protect their ships from the regular squalls that tumbled up from the south.

But the refugees soon realized that the island was wholly unsuited to farming and had no source of potable water. So the inhabitants turned to piracy for survival, preying on passing Ilsig ships. Though at first their raiding was done out of necessity, after a few generations they had become depraved predators. With each ship they attacked, they gained more supplies, new slaves, and the necessary equipment to turn the sagging village into a larger town.

Newtown gained a reputation for savagery and thievery, surpassing even Sanctuary in its awfulness. The architecture was essentially random, mostly stone and salvaged ship timbers, with each building leaning against another for additional support. Many places were actual ships that they pulled ashore and converted into homes, shops, and warehouses. And though it had an adventurous character, Newtown was also a place where the worst traits of humanity were not only celebrated but cultivated. Newtown became Hell.

In later periods, after Sanctuary wiped out the infestation of pirates, Newtown became less of a haven for the brutal and more of a colony, though it still attracted men and women of low character. The people began work on fortifying the place, but the plague wiped them out before they could finish. When the Ilsigis claimed the island, they completed the work, and now Newtown serves as a port of call and hub of Ilsig's efforts to keep the waters clear of pirates.

GRI-GADOSH

Famous for the impressive ruins scattered throughout its steamy jungles, the principle inhabitants of this peninsular coast are the Kural people. Torn by tribal rivalries, this is a place of frequent fighting and brutal warfare, a situation that has lasted for many centuries. Most of the Kural

clans occupy small coastal cities and villages, and have exotic skin the color of coffee. Within their own communities, they are peaceful and self-sufficient, but lack the sophistication (and decadence) of other lands. The people of the Gri-Gadosh speak with fear of the darker-skinned people who lurk in the interior, who it is said they can assume the form of various beasts. Though these "shapeshifter" claims have not been reliably verified, men and women whose skin tones vary from dark umber to true ebony have been brought out of the jungle, usually as slaves or exiles.

Liji

A rival of the Maghads, this northern kingdom is shrouded in mystery and legend. Though undoubtedly real, people attribute the impossible to the remote Lijans. It's said that there one can find flying horses, talking pigs, people who breathe fire, and others who live their entire lives underwater. Very little from Liji ever descends into the Known World, but those items that do are usually magical in some way (or at least so claim the merchants). There's a brisk trade in supposedly Lijan amulets, though most are worthless imitations.

MAGHADA KINGDOM

Hundreds of miles farther along the western coast is the ancient kingdom of Maghada. Founded around the same time as Enlibar, this nation has remained intact despite innumerable upheavals, mainly through shrewd trade and a friendly and profitable trade relationship with Mrsevada. A big kingdom consisting of a diverse but culturally united people, Maghada is most well known for its capital, Ymitra, said to be the most beautiful city in the Known World. Gardens, temples, waterfalls, and paved streets and wondrous architecture make this place larger than life in the minds of travelers and those with a marked interest in the exotic. Maghada has little presence in the Known World aside from trading in spices, precious woods, and luxury goods with its allies in Mrsevada. The relationship is extremely profitable, for they gain the very best prices for these rare commodities.

Most Maghads are fair skinned and dark haired, though because of the population's diversity just about any variation of skin color, hair color, eye color or build can be found here. The biggest problem facing this land is tomb robbing. The Maghads believe that they take with them into the afterlife that which is buried in their tombs, of which the wealthy are large and ostentatious, filled with gold, gems, and even sacrificed slaves and pets.

Syr

Syr has ever been a place of conflict where competing lords wage war for a narrow strip of land. This constant fighting is tempered by Syr's tradition of honor, and its battles have trained some of the greatest warriors known to the world. Additionally, Syr is the breeding ground for the mighty Trôs horses, peerless warhorses coveted throughout the Known World.

Syr's history is shrouded in confusion and myth, though scholars suspect that its inhabitants migrated south at around the same time as the Azehusans further to the west. What is known is that they were ever a

warlike people, with a savage streak that ensured their relative isolation for as long as they have existed.

Syr is ruled by competing warlords, who vie for resources, wealth, and honor. While there is a king, he has only the power he can wrest from the other nobles through persuasion or force. In times past the king has been nothing more than the most powerful noble. But given the tumultuous character of this place, no king of Syr has ever had renown beyond this loose nation's borders.

Syr is a feudal state; power beyond the family is vested in individuals and in the oaths individuals make one to another. The mechanisms of succession are not stable—there is a sense that property (and oaths) should be passed to a man's eldest son, but it doesn't always work out this way and the more potent a father, the more likely his sons are to be deadly rivals rather than allies. There is no state per se, and so there no state services; *noblesse oblige* and *largesse* are the sole methods of distributing wealth. There are no armies, merely warbands.

Life in Syr is nasty, brutal, and short. Women are chattel and while slavery is rare, commonfolk of necessity seek the protection of the powerful, if only to protect themselves from other men of might.

To the rest of the world, Syr is known almost exclusively as the source of the mighty Trôs horses. In the current era, and in the absence of the Stepsons, not all that many people would have heard of the Trôs breed and most of them would logically assume they're creatures of legend, like Khurasan. Syr does manage to produce some tolerable wines, but they are rare, rarer now that the Black-Tooth horde devastated the land as it made its way south to sack the empire.

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of Syr's culture is its religion. The people are focused heavily on the seasons and the stars. It is also a dualistic religion that extols opposites: good/evil, male/female, essentially upholding that for everything in the universe there is a precise opposite. Virtues tend to cluster: men are seen as strong, good, honorable, and bright while women are seen as weak, evil, dishonorable, and dark (and dangerous). There are only two Syrian deities: the Lord, who embodies the masculine cluster, and the Lady, who embodies such virtues as women can possess only when they submit themselves to a lord's judgment and higher moral character. All manner of lesser spirits complete the Syrian cosmos. They also believe in mischievous spirits like brownies, elves, and the like, though the existence of such beings is suspect.

Syr has no cities. The landscape is instead dominated by the nobles' fortresses; artisanal colonies usually spring up near these castles, but as they are wholly dependant on the nobility, they can't really be called cities. The legendary fortress of Khurasan is said to have once been here, though whether this place ever existed as anything more than an ideal, none can say.

TYSE

While never a province of the Empire, Tyse found ways to pay tribute to the Rankan emperor, keeping it from becoming placed under the authority of the Velosian governor. Like Firaqa, it has always been a place favored by those with sorcerous talents. The city suffered and exhausted itself in the Wizardwall campaigns and a disproportionate number of its citizens perished in the war. Like Sanctuary, it became the target of destabilizing attacks, many of them laced with witchcraft. Before the war ended, sickness and madness engulfed the city and, while the direct causes are gone, the aftereffects linger. To say that someone is Tysean is to say that they have a distracted air, a loss of affect, and a marked tendency toward melancholy.



VALMIKS

A small group of people of which little is known, the Valmiks build and crew the best ships on the Pezan River and cultivate the valuable sugar beet. Most people that know of them—that is the Caronnese and Mrsevadans—consider them superstitious and hot-tempered.

VISALA ISLANDS

The Visala Islands are located in the Sparkling Sea due west of the Hammer's Tail. They are volcanic islands with considerable geothermal activity that, along with their location in the middle of a Gulf-Stream-like current, gives them a milder climate than one might expect from land not all that much south of Sanctuary's latitude. There are about forty inhabited islands and at least 100 more islands that are not inhabited, at least not for any length of time. The largest island is Sherranpip at approximately 100 square miles in extent. It lies in the center of the more-or-less circular island group, and is the only island of the group with several cities; the others have one dominant city with several lesser towns and villages. Tyrisis is the westernmost island of any size and the one with the most fortuitous climate—not that any of the islands are inclement.

The Visala Islands have a common culture and language. They have a nominally common ruler in the Magrai, a monarch with priestly overtones, who dwells on Sherranpip in the city of the same name. Insofar as the Magrai performs certain ritual functions for the good of the entire archipelago, all Visalans would agree it's important to have a Magrai, but beyond keeping on the good side of the gods, the Magrai has very little influence. The current Magrai is Varvati; the Magrai in the Rankan Era was Viasnav.

SHERRANPIP ODDNESS

Several of the island priesthoods are interested in (one might say obsessed with) animal breeding and mutation. Giant crabs, tiny spiders, blue-faced monkeys, tailless cats, and talking birds are only a few of the creatures bred in the Visalan menageries...and these are among the more normal creatures. Magical creatures are said to dwell in the Visalas as well, including unicorns on the lush slopes of quiescent volcanoes, dragons roosting above the high craters, chimeras of various sorts, and even a few that have been crossed with human flesh.

The Magrai has many wives, but usually not more than one from any particular Visalan community. It is through these wives the Magrai exerts his influence and is influenced in return by the communities. Many, if not most, of the Magrai's children enter the various priesthoods and cloisters dotting the islands.

The Visalan government is both primitive and inefficient. Most communities, from Sherranpip to the smallest fishing hamlet, pretty much take care of themselves. The Visalans are not a warlike people. They don't fight amongst themselves and have no neighbors to conquer or fear. Families are organized matrilineally. The speaker of a family or clan is its oldest coherent woman. However, alliances between families, clans, and whole islands are organized by the men, who move around more than the women. Disputes between communities are resolved by a consensus among family and clan elders.

The Visalas are blessed with fertile soil surrounded by fertile seas. No one starves in the Visalas. There are shore fisheries, reef fisheries, and deep-sea fisheries, the outputs of which are largely dedicated to the islanders. Likewise, there are several varieties of fruit available on the island, some of which can be found nowhere else. Syrups made from these exotic fruits (including wuruk-citrusy, persimmons, and passion fruit) are exported from Sherranpip, which are later processed into jellies and liqueurs. Virtually all the Visalan trade with the larger world is conducted from either Sherranpip or Tyrisis, the only places which combine decent harbors with population centers.

The western Visalas are especially noted for their spices and aromatics. Peppers of a hundred varieties are grown along with several varieties of nutmeg. The best cinnamon comes from Tyrisis. The Visalans grow spices that have yet to make their appearance in Ilsig or Ranke (but may be known to the exotic west, as the Visalas are another place, like Mrsevada, where the cultures of east and west may meet). Along with spices, the Visalans produce dyestuffs including henna. The finest henna is known as goldenwash.

The Visalans have much to offer to the rest of the Known World, but they want for little. Perhaps the biggest imports are metal, both of the precious and common varieties, and cloth. The islands are metal-poor and though there is a native silk trade, they lack cotton and linen. Hence, they're more than willing to exchange exotics for what are rapidly becoming necessities.

The islands are densely populated, though steps are taken to limit population growth by means of the celibate priesthood, which siphons off a fair percentage of the available males. Of course, the islands face dangers from the sea in the form of severe storms and generational tsunamis and the occasional volcanic outburst; there are two active volcanoes on Sherranpip itself, though there are none on Tyrisis. There are also a few parasitical diseases that keep the population manageable. The city of Sherranpip has about 8,000 people, not counting priests. Tyrisis has about 4,000 and lesser towns range from a few hundred to about 1,000 souls.

Religion is the main "industry" of Visalan culture. There are temples and cloisters everywhere, with probably as many religious buildings as there are houses on all the islands. Weda Krizhtawn is one of two supreme deities; Sukothai is the other, but there are easily a thousand lesser deities...and *all* ancestors are potentially divine. Within each home, the finest room is dedicated to the ancestors and decorated with as much wealth and ostentation as the family can display.

In practice, there are two distinct religions in the Visalas: the "external" religion of gods and goddesses such as Weda Krizhtawn and Sukothai, and the "internal" religion of the ancestors. They exist fairly independently of each other; the temples are places of priestly activity, not public worship, and in fact there is very little public worship in the Visalas. There are also "dark" deities in the burgeoning Visalan pantheon and to the extent that the islands have negative social issues they can usually be traced to the activities of the acolytes of these deities, most of whom are also associated with the volcanoes.

NOMADS

Although the Known World is home to many civilizations, cities, and nations, it is also home to several groups of nomadic peoples. There are three major types of nomads: invaders, inheritors, and wanderers.

INVADERS: RED-HAIRED BARBARIANS

Millennia ago, while Enlibar was but a city-state, groups of wild and uncivilized people spilled out of the north, from a land beyond Azehur. These barbarians were red-haired, fair of skin, and aggressive. Consisting of dozens of tribes, they moved southward burning and looting everything in their path. While the rest of the world braced itself for the invasion it was Enlibar, armed with magical steel, which defeated and turned back the invaders. This defeat forced the barbarians onto a great grassy plain known as the Cantal Plains, which became the home of countless barbarian

nations. And though the horde broke apart into different clans, they were united by a shared heritage and an almost shared language, though many dialects evolved into almost unique languages unto themselves.

Of these people, some of the Red-Haired barbarians settled in and became more or less civilized like the Cirdonians south of Wizardwall, while others retained their tribal culture, such as the clan from which Jamie the Red hailed. Of these clans, the most important and by far the most famous is the Ranke tribe that eventually founded the city of Ranke, the republic of Ranke, and later, the Rankan Empire.

Many of these tribes still exist much as they did over 2,000 years ago. They still remain on the Cantal Plains, hunting, foraging and occasionally raiding. The Plains themselves are uplands, semi-arid and windswept. The land is not suited for farming but does support large herds of herbivores, and so the tribes spend much of the year following their herds, retreating to the fringes of civilization before the onset of winter to trade with settled neighbors, exchanging furs, wool, and meat for grain, metals, and luxuries.

Since the rise of the Rankan Empire, the Cantal Plains have stabilized and there hasn't been a major population surge in hundreds of years.

The Rankan Empire, especially during the Wizardwall wars but also during the conquest of the east, used the Cantalans as soldiers. While a wild, unruly, and undisciplined lot, they were effective in war, and the empire owes these people a great debt for their current power. Among those tribes most used were the Irrune. They left the Cantal plains to serve the Empire and sometimes the Nisibisi, bringing about 10,000 warriors and their families. But the cost was high, and by the end of their service their population had been nearly halved. When the Black-Toothed horde emerged from the north the Irrune were forced to drift south to Sanctuary, at which point they numbered only about 2,000 warriors along with their wives, children, and other hangers-on.

The Irrune people have a tribal government, with Arizak dominant in worldly affairs and Zarzakhan, his brother, leading in spiritual matters. They herd sheep and horses and subsist on a meat and dairy diet. They have nothing but disdain for artisans, except for women's work including some spinning and weaving, though most Irrune cloth is felted. The Irrune also scorn money, probably as a result of bad experiences during their time of service with the Rankan army.

Now the Irrune are a displaced people, a long way from their homeland on the Cantal Plain. Occupying Sanctuary has led to an assault on their cultural norms, and many want to withdraw to the foothills of the World Spine to escape what they see as the disintegration of their culture, but this is unlikely. They, like others of the Cantal Plains, will likely fall apart within a generation or two of Arizak's death and vanish from history, though a few may persist in Sanctuary's aristocracy.

For more information (including game statistics) on the Irrune, see Green Ronin's *Thieves' World Player's Manual* page 36; for the Cantal Plains Barbarians, see *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary* page 218.

INVADERS: THE BLACK-TOOTH BARBARIANS

While no barbarian horde is healthy to civilization, the Irrune and the rest of the barbarians pale compared to the Black-Tooth horde. Far to the north and east beyond Adrale is a wild and empty land occupied by a wild and barbaric people, who have black hair and golden skin. Every few hundred years their population reaches critical mass, forcing the people to expand their territory to sustain themselves. If such an explosion coincides with an ambitious tribal leader, the Known World suffers for it.

The Black-Tooth barbarians experienced such a population explosion sometime towards the end of the Wizardwall war. The Mygdonian Alliance did some trading with these people, but as often as not they came into conflict and in some ways were able to deter the hordes from spilling down into Ranke, although this is largely coincidental. When Ranke succeeded in defeating the Mygdonians and the Nisibisi, there was no one to stop the horde and no warning of their approach.

When Ranke refused to give up their goods and women to the horde, the barbarians took what they wished by force. First they burned Lirt to the ground and killed everyone in the city. The horde then turned towards Sihan, but the Sihanites had abandoned their city, sailing south to the capital.

The Black-Toothed Beasts, as they were sometimes called, drove everyone before them, pushing the Irrune south and destroying scores of Rankan towns. These barbarians sacked Ranke early and turned to crush the other cities in the empire. In the modern era the Black-Tooth horde has

taken hold of the Cantal Plains and is engaged in heavy fighting with those few clans who still remain there. These barbarians are ruthless, demanding tribute from their enemies and sending it back to their homelands far to the east.

So far, the Black-Tooth horde has resisted the civilizing temptations in and around the Cantal Plains. Though no one knows it, this horde is a large unstable alliance of many tribes held together by the sheer charisma of a single chief. Should he die, the alliance will crumble and their power will be broken.

For more information (including game statistics) on the Black-Tooth barbarians, see page 104.

INHERITORS: THE RAGGAH

Descending from what was once the greatest civilization in the ancient world, the Raggah are all that remains of the mighty Enlibrite Empire. When the survivors of the magical calamity that destroyed their civilization emerged from hiding, they found their land very much changed. What was once a beautiful and verdant land, filled with the trappings of their advanced culture, was now a landscape of gray dust, swirling winds and death. Some remained in the ruins of their cities, but the energies unleashed by the great weapon left a mark on these people, leading to problems such as deafness in their offspring. Furthermore, the Enlibrites learned that they were widely hated, for their leaders had made enemies the world over. Many left their cities and founded ascetic monasteries in the wastes, where they contemplated philosophy, theology, and metaphysics, but more left the ruins when their children were too far affected by the ambient energies to live long. They became nomads of the Gray Wastes: the Raggah.

Organized into small family bands, they survived by raiding, foraging, and trading in Sanctuary and, rarely, Aurveshan. As many early members of these clans were deaf, the Raggah people developed a silent language of hand signals and gestures. Those who could hear used it as well, for the language of Enlibar is distinctive and for generations the sound of it evoked anger and hate from others. Now, though deafness is no more common among the Raggah than any other people, they still rely on hand gestures and refrain from speaking in front of outsiders.

Shortly after the Purple Mage came to the Isle of Shugthee, he replaced his servants with a clan of Raggah horsemen. They served him in all ways, acting as assassins, traders, and guards. Later, the Raggah made a bargain with the pirates of Scavengers Isle to waylay travelers and caravans that passed through the Gray Wastes—their most famous prisoner was Daphne, Kadakithis's wife. While these men were not much better than any other scum, their actions were not indicative of their entire culture. Most of the Raggah are peaceful, wanting to avoid unnecessary contact with people outside of their tribes. They are actually quite secretive, following the teachings of the ascetics who hold the secrets of Enlibar in their enclaves hidden in the wastes. The Raggah tend to believe that they must remain pure, and to achieve this they set themselves apart from infidels, even going so far as to wear heavy robes that conceal their entire bodies except for their eyes.

WANDERERS: THE S'DANZO

Of all the people in the Known World, none are as distinctive, mysterious, or well known as the S'danzo. A people with no roots, with no gods, no homeland, and no written culture, they settle in a place for a time, maybe for a day, maybe for generations, before picking up and moving on to some new land to live among some new people. The S'danzo have a bad reputation for making their living off the gullibility of *suvesh* (non-S'danzo). It's not



that they are lawbreakers or are violent; rather, they survive by giving people what they want and by taking as much from them as they can in return. People want one thing more than anything: they want reassurance. And to get this reassurance, they want to know tomorrow will be better than today. Hence, prophecy is the S'danzo trade.

One can always tell S'danzo by their colorful clothing. They wear bright and often clashing clothes, long full skirts and breezy blouses. The men share the same sense of color, but their clothes are often fitted. In a S'danzo community, there's always a sense of impermanence, a feeling that the S'danzo could leave at any time.

A trait exclusive to S'danzo women, and then only among a few, is the Sight. Some S'danzo have an authentic ability to see the future, to anticipate events before they occur. Though rare, most S'danzo women play up this trait and at least pretend to have visions of the future to lure the gullible into their tents to read their fortunes.

Though the S'danzo are a mobile people, they do have a strong sense of community. They always take care of their own, preventing threats from infiltrating their communities. Of course, this protection doesn't apply to outsiders, and though a Wrigglie sleeping under a S'danzo roof never has to fear from Wrigglie thieves, he must still guard his purse against S'danzo filchers.

The S'danzo's history is tied closely to the Mother of Chaos. They were not always wanderers who lived in tents, taking wagons to settle for a time in a new place. Once, ages ago, the S'danzo had lands of their own, like any other people. But the Ancient One, Dyareela, came to their lands, promising gifts and treasures if they would worship her and her only. The men were tempted, but the women used the Sight to foresee that the Ancient One would deceive them in order to use

them as tools to work horror on innocents. The women, after much argument, convinced the men, and they were not deceived, but at a great price—they had to leave their homes because Dyareela had become their eternal enemy.

The S'danzo have long remained a step ahead of the Ancient One, always moving on when the signs speak of the Mother of Chaos and her imminent arrival. As Dyareela hates the S'danzo and uses her mortal tools to destroy them when they come across each other, the S'danzo are ready to move on and so their camps are always somewhere between packed and settled, allowing them to stow their belongings and vanish quickly should the need arise. Such was the case of the S'danzo in Sanctuary.

Before the S'danzo arrived in the coastal town, there was a strong Dyareelan presence among the ex-slaves, and it's theorized it was the Mother of Chaos's influence that gave them the resolve to throw off the shackles of slavery and revolt against their Ilsigi overseers. Dyareela's influence over the city would last for several generations, even though it was brutally suppressed when Ilsig seized the city during the Ilsig-Ranke War. It would continue, though, up until the Rankans conquered the city. A Cirdonian mercenary general named Alar hil Aspar banned the Dyareelan faith, killed or exiled the cultists and erected the Black Spire, a great temple devoted to Heqt, the Cirdonian fertility goddess and opposing force of the Mother of Chaos.

With Sanctuary relatively safe, the S'danzo settled in the city, some taking residence in the bazaar and others in the Maze, sheltering in the shadow of the Black Spire, and others still on the docks and other parts of the city. The S'danzo were much like all the other newcomers, and their larcenous ways fit in neatly with the temperament of Thieves' World. For years, the S'danzo lived alongside but often apart from the

Wrigglies, and became part of the city's character. Things wouldn't last forever, and the S'danzo saw the first signs of Dyareela's return shortly after the False Plague Riots.

Illyra, a half-S'danzo seer who worked in the bazaar, had already lost one child to the demiurge that transformed her son into a storm child, and so she fiercely protected her daughter. During the worst of Sanctuary's instability, Zip and the PFLS swept through the streets leading a riotous mob on a path of destruction. Illyra and her daughter were caught in the middle along with her half-brother Walegrin and a few members of the city garrison. While the watch did their best to protect the seer and her daughter, Zip slipped past and landed an axe blow, killing the child and nearly killing Illyra.

The fortuneteller would recover, but she lost her cards in the riots. To help the woman overcome her grief, Lalo painted a new set of cards, cards far more powerful than any ever seen before or since. Illyra was despondent and depressed, and in an act of pure hate, she invoked the Mother of Chaos and brought a real plague to the city.

The plague spread quickly, and worship of Dyareela was revitalized. Though Illyra eventually reversed the effects of the plague with Lalo and Gilla's help, the damage was done. The Dyareelans were back.

Almost 20 years later, the S'danzo received visions of dark times ahead and so most of the S'danzo pulled up stakes and left the city. As predicted, the Dyareelans did assert themselves, emerging in response to the plagues and wizard weather that had caused droughts, terrible hurricanes, and strange climate shifts. Those S'danzo who remained (including Illyra) were murdered at the hands of angry mobs incensed by the cultists. With the S'danzo out of the way, the Dyareelans gradually assumed control over the city.

The S'danzo, despite rumors to the contrary, did not go far, though where exactly they are isn't known. They watched Sanctuary through the Troubles, biding their time until they could return to the city. When the Irrune crushed the Dyareelans, the S'danzo sent a few of their numbers (such as Elemi) back into the city to judge if the city was safe for a S'danzo return. Thus far, there are a few S'danzo in the city, but the bulk has remained in hiding.

LOST CIVILIZATIONS

All of the modern lands in the Known World stand on the shoulders of those who came before. While the following cultures no longer exist as political entities, they have each left a mark on the peoples and cultures of those still in existence.

ENLIBAR

Ancient Enlibar, the greatest and worst civilization of the ancient world, was the father of advances in metallurgy, the arts, magic, and more. But for every advance, it also committed sins. Though it perfected the art of making steel, it also perfected weapons of war. Though the source of great magic, it was also the origin of demon summoning. So great was this empire's misdeeds that instead of being remembered as it probably should have been, as a center of learning and human endeavor, it is reviled and hated, the danger of human innovation made manifest in the windswept Gray Wastes.

Relics and artifacts from this ancient empire are priceless, and several modern nations claim that their ancestry can be traced to ancient Enlibar. Yet the lands where the empire's capital once stood are now a wasteland. West of Aurveshan, the Gray Wastes remain as the result of the massive magical catastrophe that obliterated the capital. Despite claims from one side of the continent to the other of families descended from the "heirs of Enlibar," the only true descendents are the Raggah tribes of the Gray Wastes. From stories passed down by Raggah tribesmen and records salvaged from ancient ruins, scholars have uncovered a few salient facts concerning Enlibar.

Enlibar's history is the history of the Known World. For details, see **Chapter Two: History**.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

Enlibar depended on an absolute theocratic monarchy consisting of numerous officials. Some rose to power simply because of their royal blood—even bastard children could ascend to positions of authority. Other officials were recruited to the bureaucracy strictly on their merits. Within the bureaucracies of government, priestly affairs, and magic, a meritocracy allowed even commoners to rise to positions of respect and influence. Through its rise and sudden fall, this government was remarkably efficient.

The Enlibrite word for "ruler" was *Mauretiur*, which can either be translated as "king," "emperor," or "presence of God." The Mauretiur's rule was absolute, uniting the secular government and the empire's religion. Only men could inherit the title, but all children of the royal family were trained as priests. If the old stories can be believed, the Mauretiur's descendants repeatedly wrested miracles from their gods. Unfortunately, obsession with hereditary royalty led to inbreeding in the final days of the empire.

For most of the populace, life in the empire wasn't particularly onerous. As part of an enlightened society, literacy was common among the common populace. Slavery was limited to servants of the royalty, nobility, priesthoods, and magical orders. The city of Enlibar was an exception, and while unprecedented in scope and luxury for the upper classes, the lower classes that lived within were treated quite poorly. Despite these dangers, the capital endured as a cosmopolitan crossroads attracting visitors and immigrants from everywhere.

South of Enlibar, the Red Hills served as a source of clay, providing material for the capital's buildings, pottery and ceramics, and countless

CADIS

Legend holds that Ils, the head of the Ilsigi pantheon, destroyed the ancient city called Cadis to punish the inhabitants for their lewd and immoral behavior. In truth, there was a city named Cadis, far west of Mrsevada, but it was destroyed by an earthquake and not divine judgment. Still, Cadite has become the polite euphemism when one needs to describe the unspeakably immoral. Some scholars believe that this euphemism for deviance stems instead from the ancient Enlibrite city of Cadio, which was destroyed when the Gray Wastes were created. Enlibrite civilization was demonstrably decadent before its demise, and the art of Cadio was said to be able to make even a madam blush. Unfortunately, citizens of neither city remain to defend themselves from ongoing slander.

clay tablets. The great mine of Ghirokitia was located in the Red Hills; its ruins in the Gray Wastes have been thoroughly explored, though the mine has only ever been found by a non-native named Walegrin.

Enlibar seemed to swallow raw materials and luxuries whole. It regularly sent out expeditions looking for supplies and established depot-towns for the collection of these items. Enlibar did not so much conquer the known world as *establish* it in its search for metals, cloth, fragrances, and other exotica.

Although Enlibar was a theocracy, it was also the home of the first recorded communities of magi. Study of sorcery was encouraged. Enlibrite priests and magi were the known world's first (and perhaps greatest) astronomers and alchemists. When it came to exports, Enlibar was *the* source for the stuff of magic, as well as education, the arts, and all other things intellectual.

The pantheon of Enlibar clearly grew from primitive roots. All of its gods had connections to fertility and weather. Maumarel was the chief god and sun god. There were hints of human sacrifice in his rituals, but by the time the city had been founded, the rites had been softened considerably. Animal sacrifice, however, was still practiced. Massive ritual feasts were nearly the only time that the lower classes of the city got to eat meat.

Cauca was Maumarel's wife, and her connections with fertility cults were quite obvious. She was the river goddess who was responsible for the spring floods, and was the goddess of growing things. The first fruits were brought to her. There was a huge temple to Cauca in Enlibar, but there was also Cauca shrines in every village and Cauca statues in every home.

Maumarel's brother Enlib (also known as Enlil) was the god of combat, war, strife, and storms. In peaceful times, it was important to keep

him appeased. When Enlibar went on the warpath, the front doors of his temple were thrown open, and he superseded Maumarel as the dominant god for the duration of the war that resulted. In peaceful times, the gates of the temple were kept locked and shut and peaceful priests prayed they would stay that way.

Scynicris, a winged deity, was the Lord of Night, god of magic, and ruler of the Underworld. He was probably not an original Enlibar god, although he was well integrated into the pantheon and revered as the "second brother" of Maumarel. Ordinary folk dealt with Scynicris only in association with death rites. He was served by both priests and magi and was more feared than worshipped. Despite their reverence and devotion to Scynicris, his priests and magi were also responsible for the magical catastrophe that destroyed the kingdom.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

Enlibar grew in the fertile plain between the Vesh and the Geniseng Rivers. Although the rivers flowed close by one another, they sprang from different sources, so it was unlikely that both would flood in the same year. They allowed for an extensive series of irrigation canals, providing the empire with reliable farmland that could sustain a miraculously large metropolis. (Only Ranke and Ilsig City have rivaled the size of the ancient capital.)

IMPORTANT SITES

Perhaps as precedent to the modern world, the name of the empire and its capital city were the same. Over a quarter of a million citizens lived in the legendary city of Enlibar, and nearly all the resources of the rest of the empire went to sustaining it. In fact, the great city was surrounded for 50 miles in every direction by a host of smaller villages. All roads literally led to the capital, radiating outward into the most extensive civilization in the ancient world. Other cities existed, of course, but they could not possibly equal the grandeur of the capital.

Today, each discovery of Enlibrite ruins is an archeological triumph. Because a magical catastrophe transformed the capital into a wasteland long ago, the few records that have survived are found at sites farther away, such as the ruins near Firaqa and an Enlibrite outpost near the Ghirokitia mines. Few examples of the empire's scholarship have survived. Most written records show systems of cuneiform preserved on baked clay. The largest collection of these tablets can be found in the Cantonne of Firaqa.

MYGDONIAN ALLIANCE

North of Wizardwall and south of Azehur is a small territory that proved problematic for both Enlibar and Ranke. Inhabited by an offshoot of the Black-Haired barbarians, these clans evolved quite similarly to Ranke. The difference was that while Ranke civilized quickly, the clans here never progressed beyond the simple clan structures of numerous petty kingdoms and holdings.

The area that would one day become the Mygdonian Alliance wouldn't have been more than a footnote had it not been for the schism among Enlibar's sorcerers. After a particularly terrible magical war between the sorcerers of the empire, the losers were branded heretics and fled north into the mountains. From there the Enlibar exiles, who called themselves the Nisibisi, sought to expand their influence over the region and create a rival state to Enlibar in the hopes of one day toppling the sprawling empire. However, the witches were a fractious people, prone to infighting and treachery, and so they scattered into smaller family enclaves in the mountains. Their nature prevented them from building a cohesive state and kept them weak.



Still, despite their limitations, they succeeded in enslaving many of the smaller tribes north of the mountains, to say nothing of the various creatures (some intelligent and others not) they forced into their service. The witches sent waves of soldiers down into Cirdon nearly every year to expand their influence over the rich agricultural community to the south. Cirdon served as a buffer which kept Enlibar out of the conflict and allowed the empire to focus its attention on its growing rival Yenized.

Centuries later, Ranke had replaced Enlibar as the principle power in the Known World. Cirdon continued to suffer from regular raiding and the lands north of Wizardwall had yet to be included in the growing empire. Ranke, then, to stabilize Cirdon's northern border and to add Wizardwall and its allies into the empire, sent the first legions against the ancient witches. What resulted was the biggest setback the new empire had ever faced and shortly after it began, Ranke withdrew its forces to conquer the lands in the east.

For the next decade or so there was an uneasy peace in the north until Abakithis was crowned emperor. To have a legacy the young emperor believed he needed to take the north, succeeding where the previous emperor failed. The first Rankan units arrived at Tyse, a small mountain town on the lower slopes of Wizardwall. Lacan Ajami was a warlord and a prominent leader in Mygdo, a small polity north of the mountains. In response to the threat of war, he gathered (through force of arms and the support of Nisibisi witches such as Datan and Roxane) the leaders of the other clans and fortresses and united them under one banner. It was an unstable alliance, and without the warlord it would likely have fallen apart.

Ranke finally attacked, sending its legions into the waiting swords and demons of the newly established Mygdonian Alliance. It had just as little success against the witches as the previous empires had. Had the witches fought without Ajami, they would have collapsed, just as had Ajami gone it alone without the Nisibisi, he too would have failed. The war raged for decades, becoming a drain on Ranke and sending fractures through the empire. But the Mygdonian Alliance suffered as well. When they began to run out of soldiers, the witches animated their corpses as zombies and skeletons to keep fighting in death. This sparked partisan revolts throughout the Mygdonian Alliance as they rebelled at the exploitation of their former comrades. One such group was the Successors, a guerilla force led by Bashir, who helped Tempus and his allies against the witches.

Ranke finally crushed the Nisibisi line of defense, but not before the witches spread throughout the empire to cause even more problems. However, the legions were in no position to move farther north and destroy the remaining holdouts under Ajami's banner. And so, Ranke laid to waste the enclaves that it could before withdrawing back to the empire. For the next decade, the war with the Mygdonian Alliance continued on and off until the Black-Tooth horde emerged from the north. They destroyed the Mygdonian Alliance and then turned on Ranke itself, bringing an end to the second-costliest war in the history of the Known World.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

The Mygdonian Alliance was held together by Lacan Ajami, a clever, charismatic, and ruthless warlord who consolidated great power but, due to defeat at the hands of Ranke, was unable to pass it on to the next generation. The Nisibisi witches had a hierarchic organization that was and probably still is competitive to the point of conspiracy and murder. Their system was one of barely controlled chaos, fear, and intimidation.



Though the alliance was able to halt Ranke's progress into the mountains, the Northrons never had a great population. Most people were nomadic or semi-nomadic, but a few settled into small cities. As for the Nisibisi, there were never more than a few hundred fully initiated Nisibisi witches, perhaps as many as 1,000 subordinate witches, and a few thousand slaves and servants. Mortality rates among those groups was horrific.

The Mygdonian Alliance and the witches raided other lands for food and supplies. What few industries they actually had were the result of herding. Some of the smaller component communities of the Alliance were known for animal husbandry and there are many freshwater lakes that kept the locals supplied with fish.

The witches had no gods; they instead made deals with demons. The northern nomads followed shamanistic and animist religious practices. What gods they followed are largely lost to time, but they were assuredly demanding deities of war, violence, and the more destructive elements of the world.

MAJOR GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The most notable feature of the Alliance was the Wizardwall Mountains themselves. Sometimes called Westwall (it lies west of Ranke), the mountains are tall snow-capped peaks that form a natural border between the Known World and the distant north. Most travelers are forced to go around the nearly impassible mountains, which adds so much time to the journey that few bother. Scattered throughout the mountains are old towers and fortresses, relics from the bygone days of sinister witches that plunged the empire into a crushing war. Few of these strongholds are occupied, but untold treasures and terrors may lurk in their bowels.

YENIZEDI WITCHCRAFT

In old Yenized, witchcraft was most often combined with more traditional forms of magic to produce a dark sorcery in which notions of soul and spirit possession and the creation of artifacts and automata were the dominant focuses (as opposed to the resolutely necromantic strains of Nisi witchcraft). Modern wandcraft and other magical tools can trace their pedigrees back to Yenized.

Rumor holds that the old Yenized sorcerous traditions are still practiced, despite the imperial ban. Folks claim that the practitioners are hidden away in remote self-sufficient villages. Whether true or not, there would be considerable risk associated with learning the Yenizedi ways, and it would be no easy task to gain the confidence of those able to teach it.

YENIZED

Given Enlibar's power, it's hard to imagine that a mere port city could stand against it. And yet, Yenized did. Yenized was the only state that successfully resisted Enlibar's war machine and eventually proved Enlibar's undoing. And though Yenized is no more, it is an inspiration to any who would resist tyranny.

Yenized was an early rival of Enlibar and the two nations fought a series of wars that lasted over 1,000 years. Magical battles, plagues, and devastating weapons decimated both peoples, but eventually Yenized was victorious. The city was unique for its time in that it arose spontaneously, and was not unduly influenced by Enlibar, which probably contributed to the antipathy between the two civilizations. At its height, Yenized controlled all the territory along the Oread Coast from northeast of what is now Ranke down to Sanctuary's harbor.

Five hundred years ago, Ranke managed to do what Enlibar couldn't: it took over the city of Yeniz in a show of force. The city capitulated and was reorganized as a client state. Ranke allowed a native-blood king to "rule" it, but his position was merely for show. During the administrative interregnum that separated the Ranke Republic from the Rankan Empire, the then king of Yenized made an ill-considered attempt to extract himself and his people from the Rankan tribute system. This indiscretion was not forgotten by Naihikaris, Ranke's first emperor. The emperor effectively abolished Yenized as a kingdom and split its territory between the provinces of Twand and Aurvash.

Like Enlibar, Yenized and its history is the history of the Known World. For more detail, see **Chapter Two: History**.

LIFE AND SOCIETY

Yenized was ruled by a king (the *Daizeer* in Old High Yenized). The Daizeers were never known for their particularly enlightened rule. They ran the country as if it were their personal property and relied heavily on the might of court mages to maintain order. The standing army was never of great size and the nobility was actively discouraged from martial pursuits. The navy was a different matter: Yenized always maintained a good-sized fleet of both military and commercial vessels and was the first real sea power of the known world. Priests were the counterbalance to the Daizeer and his mages, but they weren't much more enlightened. Overall, the governance of classic Yenized was despotic and

arbitrary, fostering a reliance on slaves and a stifling of any free classes of farmers or artisans who might have tried to rear their hopeful heads.

Both the Daizeer and his mages and priests relied on fear, torture and intimidation to keep the Yenizedi in line; nonetheless, they were not so cruel or arbitrary as to engender any long-term insurgencies. The relatively small number of citizen Yenizedis (not counting slaves) allowed the Daizeer to reward even lesser folk with some frequency and secure their obedience and loyalty.

Yenized had the distinction of having the only non-human pantheon of its era. Most of its gods were part-human, part beast. Their chief god, Guiz, was depicted as a man with a lion's head and sometimes as an entire lion. Consort to Guiz was Lapué, a woman with a falcon's head (or, in her more fertile aspects, a cow's head). Witezar, god of magic, was a giant raven, sometimes depicted as a man with black wings. There were scores of lesser gods, now all but forgotten. The Yenizedi originally were ancestor worshippers and, as a result, every family tended to have its own gods, every ruin its protectors.

Few people remain who can claim any true association with Yenized. Those who do are clustered at the extreme edge of the Synos peninsula to which they retreated after the rise of the Rankan Empire. Now there are maybe 100,000 ethnic Yenizedi living on the Synos peninsula, with perhaps 10,000 more trying to make their way in Twand and elsewhere. The population is precarious. There are no more than 400 Yenizedis capable of passing along their sorcerous tradition and the whole population labors under a taint of suspicion and are the subjects of frequent attacks both in the form of "official" Rankan repression and in outlaw assaults.

IMPORTANT SITES

Yeniz was once a fortress-city just off the coast, but it has now been reduced to ruins about three miles from the modern town of Canosa, the main role of which is as the staging place for adventurers who want to explore the extensive ruins. Canosa is in the current province of Twand. (Dar, which is about 40 miles northwest of Canosa, has no Yenizedi connection.) The ruins of Yeniz are deeply layered and are not likely to

have yet revealed all their secrets. Another nearby ruined city is Valumbroz, which sits near the tip of the Synos peninsula and is remembered for its temples. Yenized also virtually denuded the Synos peninsula with its shipbuilding; remains of shipyards, as well as of tin and copper mines, might also be found here.





Much of the action in *Thieves' World* centers on Sanctuary, though rumors of events and happenings in other lands reach its residents' ears from the lips of mercenaries and merchants. Fantastic kingdoms and strange peoples fill the imaginations of this otherwise pragmatic and skeptical audience, who in this one case do not care whether or not they are being deceived.

While much of this book deals with the larger world around Sanctuary, there are lands beyond even these places, beyond even this plane. This chapter describes the distant places, the planes, worlds, and times outside the Known World, and offers suggestions on how to use them all in your *Thieves' World* games.

LANDS BEYOND

As mentioned, the Known World is but a part of a much larger continent. Beyond the seas and oceans, beyond the trackless plains north of Azehur, there are other places and other civilizations. For the explorer with wanderlust there is no shortage of adventure and, likewise, no shortage of the bizarre.

FORGOTTEN PASS

Somewhere in the wretched area where the World Spine Mountains become Wizardwall, there's a place that shows evidence of the world's tempestuous geological activity. Mountains have collapsed, the ground is rippled from old earthquakes, and geysers vomit columns of superheated water. Beyond this bleak landscape is another world, a place of fantasy, of magic, and of fantastic creatures. Here lurk giants, faeries, and dragons. Though a few have traveled through the Forgotten Pass that leads there, no one seems to remember how to get there. Legend tells of a magical compass that unerringly leads a traveler to the Pass, helping him navigate the chaotic landscape of the mountain conjunction.

KAIMAS

Kaimas, a land beyond the Forgotten Pass, is the home of winged folk, trolls, salamanders and an abundance of bizarre and strange creatures, and if humans dwell here, they do not share the same predilection for war and expansion as do the other people of the Known World. Tales

say the portal to this place moves, that it can be reached only through rings of mushrooms called fairy circles, or only when the moon is full (or perhaps only when it is new), or when the lands are lit by the light of a passing comet. Adults in the Known World learn to dismiss these fantasies as children's stories, nothing more than harmless tales meant for entertainment. But the winged folk and the peaceful trolls and pigmy elephants, made manifest many years ago when a menagerie passed through Sanctuary, have lent credence to these old myths.

UNKNOWN WORLD

Across the Endless Sea lies the Unknown World, a place purportedly home to shapechangers and dark-skinned men and women, of fantastic mountains that brush the sky with snowy peaks and untouched forests filled with sinister creatures. Thus far, there has been little reason or impetus to trade with the mysterious natives of that land, but every now and then a traveler will come to the Gateway of the West, Mrsevada, to chatter in an odd tongue and exchange curious spices and materials before moving on once more.

MYTHIC WORLD

If anything exists beyond the Unknown World, no one knows for sure. Stories of dragons, sea serpents, unicorns, men with their heads in their abdomens, and weirder creatures are always set in the Mythic World.

THE PLANES

The planes can be described in many ways. They are in part different levels of reality, accessible by mages who cast their senses into these other realms to learn the secrets of magic. They are also different worlds entirely, parallel dimensions with their own realities and histories and peoples. Finally, the planes are pockets of reality, small, finite places connected to the Known World that exist outside its flow of time and space yet also are somehow bound to it. Just when the Known World's scholars and sages think they have pinned down all of the permutations and definitions of the planes, a new one is discovered that defies description and logic, casting every truism back into doubt and mystery.

In truth, the stuff of which the planes are made is amorphous. An entity that beholds that amorphous state, be that entity mortal, immortal, or divine, must impose a conception upon it, giving it an expected shape which then determines how reality and magic work there. Planes are therefore created through an expectation-belief-actualization sequence of which there are an infinite number of permutations, some of which have the support of large collections of worshippers or practitioners and some of which are conceived of and implemented solely in the minds of individuals. In a sense, there is only one plane, and each "different" plane is nothing more than an expression of the expectations of one planar traveler. In another sense, however, there are an infinite number of planes, some of which have been made manifest by the belief of gods or mortals, but all of which are equally real (even if they don't yet exist!). As much as these statements are a logical contradiction, still they are both completely true. Thus is the conundrum of the planes.

Because planes can take whatever shape and form you want, you should feel free to develop your own worlds and realms. You could import outer planes from other sources or even do away with them altogether. What follows are examples of known planes that have appeared or were at least mentioned in the *Thieves' World* anthologies.

THE 12 PLANES OF MAGIC

The Mageguild claims that there are 12 discrete planes of magic. Each plane is a separate reality whose denizens can teach the secrets of magic to the initiated. All mages can cast their senses into these realities; when they advance in level and gain new Known and Familiar spells, they are in fact entreating these planar denizens to instruct them in the workings

of a new spell. Among the standard planes found in the *DMG*, the 12 planes of magic include all four elemental planes, the Ethereal plane, the Positive and Negative Energy Planes, and the Plane of Shadow. The four remaining planes are nameless and undefined, but the Mageguild claims that their members have beheld those realities . . . they are simply so alien that no words in our reality can describe them meaningfully. There could certainly be more planes than just these 12, but these are the planes recognized by the Mageguild.

Though the Mageguild speaks with some authority on this subject, their reasoning is not universally accepted. The Beysib undoubtedly have a different view of metaphysics, as do the mage-priests of Weda Krizhtawn, to say nothing of the Spirit World embraced by the Irrune shamans. There is only one certainty when it comes to magic and the planes: that there is no certainty.

THE MANY PARADISES

Paradise is perfection incarnate; it is the welcome respite from the pain and suffering of mortal existence. The Paradises are home to the gods. There is no one single Paradise, but rather hundreds of planes, called layers, each keyed to a particular pantheon. Thus, there is one Paradise for the Rankan, one for the Ilsigi, and one for every other culture that venerates a pantheon of gods.

Though Paradise is the home of the gods and the gods have a stake in the affairs of mortals (for more mortal worshippers increases the gods' power and influence over their rivals), it is not a place for spiritual reward. Pious mortals who die do not automatically make a spiritual journey to Paradise where they spend eternity enjoying the wisdom and beauty of their creators. No, Paradise is reserved for the gods themselves . . . and as an afterthought, for those mortals they deem worthy enough to share their company and ascend into the Heavens. There is no guarantee of heavenly reward. Some of the most pious and devout priests and godsworn join the rest of the chattel in the Underworld, simply because despite all of their efforts, their gods never took a shine to them.

Why, then, do mortals strive so hard to please the gods? Fear. The gods are a very real presence in *Thieves' World*. They can ravage coastlines with storms, bring draught, cause earthquakes, and start plagues. In short, the

THE GODS AND THE AFTERLIFE

The question of life and death is a subject argued and discussed by nearly every civilization in the Known World. Wars have been justified, murders enacted, societal schisms formed, and worse, all over this question, but still there is no definitive answer to the question of where the souls of the dead, if they exist at all, are destined to go.

As with all things regarding the planes, the truth differs by the individual. If a mortal believes he will be reincarnated, he will. If he believes in a Paradise, and he meets the criteria of his dogma, he may wind up there . . . or he may end up in its opposite. And so, because priests see the reality of their beliefs, they all think that their religion alone has the right story. There is much power to be had in this confidence of their own rightness; because the priests are the custodians of their religions' dogma, they determine what their lay folk believe. And the more worshippers believe in the religion's dogma regarding the afterlife, the more "real" that afterlife, and the more powerful the religion that espouses it, becomes.

The bold or the foolish might ask, since the gods are also dependent on the belief of mortals, if they themselves are not relative in the same way that the planes are, or might even be destroyed (or at least "made not to exist") by the actions of mortals. Such a question is of course heretical and, because the gods pay close attention to the behavior of the mortals of the Known World, likely damning. Regardless, any who saw Vashanka in the sky above of Sanctuary must admit that he exists and certainly has no doubts about his powers. And though gods can be "killed" or weakened in power by lack of worship, such deaths and waning of status are not permanent.

gods can make mortals' lives miserable. But the gods can also improve such lives and ease mortal suffering. Just as their anger can create terrifying results, their mercy allows them to become just as often the saviors of humanity, working to shield them from harm or to give them the tools to better themselves. Without the gods, there would be no fire, science, engineering, medicine, poetry, art . . . all of the things that humanity takes for granted. So, while it may seem the gods are interested only in increasing their power, without them mankind would not exist to take heart in all the good things in the world.

Of course, if all men were simply certain that they deserved to achieve Paradise, perhaps they would actually end up there, with or without the gods' permission. For all we know, that certainty is the only thing separating mortals and gods.

THE UNDERWORLD

Instead of Paradise, most mortals can look forward to the gloomy Underworld, sometimes erroneously confused with Hell. There they spend eternity in a shadowy world that vaguely resembles the world of the living. The Underworld is ruled by the enigmatic Death, who often appears as a skeletal boatman, and his beautiful wife, Sostrie, the former Ilsigi goddess of the Spring. Together they review the lives of the newly dead and judge them, sentencing them to their final destination: eternity in the Underworld, annihilation, or to condemnation to Hell.

The Underworld is a hauntingly familiar place. To reach it (other than by dying, of course), one must open a *gate* that provides access to a steep road that wends down into the bowels of earth. The journey is one of hidden secrets, the chthonic, and the forbidden, each step to the tune of dim, distant screams and the howls of awful beasts. The air is polluted, rank, and stinking of sulfur tinged faintly with death. The farther one travels down the road, sometimes wide, sometimes narrow, the greater the sense of foreboding. Finally, at the bottom stands an enormous iron gate that is watched over by a terrible Hound. This guardian of the Underworld is there both to keep out those who don't belong and to keep in those who must remain.

The Hound is but the first barrier, for on the other side of the gate is a narrow strand of earth against which laps the cyclopean waters of the river that bounds this fell place. Those not buried properly languish here, trapped between worlds, prevented from escaping the Underworld by the Hound yet prevented from moving on by the waters. The damned souls suffer in fear and loneliness, begging coins for passage across the river so that they may escape their fate.

The river itself is a morass of dark fluids that drains memory through the merest touch. Those who com into contact with its waters must succeed on a DC 25 Will save or lose all gained experience points, resetting the character to 1st level. Total immersion in the water increases the DC to 40, and forces the subject to make a save each round. The only way across the river is on the rickety skiff of the boatman, which is an aspect of Death itself.

Beyond the river, the landscape mirrors the territory from which the travelers left to come to the Underworld. Thus, if you left from Sanctuary, the Underworld would look like Sanctuary, albeit gloomier, full of smoke, and haunted by the din created by the anguished souls lamenting for their lost lives. It is not clear exactly how big the Underworld actually is, and though it clearly is bounded by the sluggish waters of the River of Memory, it seems to stretch on forever.

One can reach both the Underworld and any number of Hells with the help of a properly motivated witch. Indeed, the existence and power of death magic is one of the reasons that the topography of the realm



beyond life is so difficult to pin down. The wills of magicians, priests, and witches have shaped it as surely as the wills of the gods and the deeds of men.

THE SEVEN HELLS

Does Hell exist in *Thieves' World*? Most confuse the Underworld with Hell, blurring the lines between the final resting place of all mortals and the pits where the most wicked and evil creatures are bound in chains of their own shame and made to suffer for eternity. Hell is not one place, but rather seven places (though not always; some invoke four hells or whatever number that comes to mind—but generally speaking, most agree upon seven). Each hell is an infinite plane designed for one purpose alone: to contain evil. The home of Dyareela, demons, devils, and untold twisted souls, the Seven Hells are the very worst of nightmares brought to life in a startlingly clear fashion. Each area of the hells is unique, specifically tailored to its prisoner. A mortal who feared spiders might be contained in a small space filled to his chin with spiders. A man afraid of dirt might wallow in excrement. Such punishments might not sound so bad until one considers their potential duration: eternity. What's worse, the fear never dulls. Hell is inventive in its torments, and when one torture grows tired, the plane itself devises a new method to keep the old horrors sharp and fresh.

Mages and witches can conjure up entities found on this plane to serve in the mortal world. While these beings offer great power, they are wickedness personified. The merest contact with these foul entities can destroy the mind and erode the soul. These creatures oppose life and seem to exist merely to destroy the works of the gods. And so, though many mortals are capable of bringing up the fiends from this plane, only the most desperate and reckless would ever do so.

The relationship of the Seven Hells with the Underworld and Paradise is complex. The Seven Hells are the absence of good, and collectively are the author of all evil, the manifestation of the temptation that lures mortals to do wrong. But the Seven Hells are not the absence of the gods, for without the gods, there would be no sin and no damnation. Some theologians speculate that the Hells exists because the gods are capable of base emotion, feeling anger, rage, and hatred just like any mortal. The difference is one of magnitude. When a mortal commits an evil act, the repercussions of that act ripple through the mortal world, but are usually contained to the happiness or misery of other intelligent beings—an evil act does not in itself alter reality. The gods, however, are the creative forces of the universe. And so, when these divine agents commit evil acts, they create the essence of Evil itself. Thus, Hell can be seen as a place to store divine wickedness, a place for the gods to purge their inner darkness, and those mortals whose souls mirror that darkness are drawn there, like to like.

ASTRAL PLANE

Touching the Material Plane but discrete from the Plane of Shadow, the Ethereal Planes, and the Planar Nodules is the Astral Plane. Sometimes called the Road of Gods, the Astral Plane is the surest route for mortals wishing to cross into Paradise or the Underworld. Most people who travel to one of these remote destinations don't even realize they are doing so, such as when Lalo and Gilla entered the card he painted to reach Paradise and halt the plague ravaging the city. Though the voyage was brief, they experienced a brief but intense feeling of vertigo. However, there are other instances in which major *Thieves' World* characters traveled to the Astral, such as when Lalo looked into a mirror to draw a self-portrait; the act of drawing his own soul sent his spirit flailing in the Astral until he reached Paradise.

Unlike the Astral Plane described in the *DMG*, the plane of this cosmology has multiple layers, though how many none can say. Each layer is more fantastic than the last, offering glimpses into the nature of reality and the essential knowledge of magic. In fact, every mage learns from the start how to cast his consciousness (though not his spirit) into the Astral Plane to see and learn what lies beyond. Note that this act is somewhat different from what more experienced mages can do (such as described in the *astral projection* spell). Instead if dispatching their spirits into this plane, with a silver cord trailing behind, they merely send their thoughts into the plane, which is nothing more than an act of basic meditation. When a mage gains a level, he often learns one or more new spells from the entities on these layers as a result of this meditation.

Though conceptually different, the *Thieves' World* Astral Plane is mechanically identical and shares the same unusual appearance as the one described in the *DMG*.

PLANAR NODULES

Planar nodules are minor planes, sometimes called demiplanes, that extend out from the Material and Ethereal like cysts or tumors. Some are created by mages as private retreats to house their laboratories or by gods as havens to protect favored champions. Others appear spontaneously, aberrations formed as a result of a spell or as a byproduct of mana field fluctuations. Finally, some are projections of the mind, triggered by the meditative state of a skilled mystic (such as Niko's *resting place*). The appearances, properties, and mechanics of each nodule vary widely, depending on either the whim of its creator or the nature of its accidental birth.

Though each planar nodule has little in common with its fellows, they do share a few similarities. Planar nodules have a finite size. Unlike other planes, they do not extend in all directions infinitely. They also have finite existences in time. A planar nodule lasts for a comparatively short duration, rarely longer than a few centuries, unless the caster that created it is extremely long-lived or immortal. Planar nodules do not generate their own mana field; instead, they leach mana from the Material and Ethereal. Most planar connections allow casters to draw from multiple mana fields when in proximity to a conduit or *gate*. But because planar nodules are created by spells or as random aberrations in the mana field, they do not provide any spellcasting benefit to spellcasters (see Green Ronin's *Thieves' World Player's Manual*, page 145, for details on how the planes affect spellcasting).

THE PLACE THAT IS NOT

An example of a planar nodule is the Blue Star enclave, The Place That Is Not. This fortress lies beyond the Material Plane, outside space and time. Individuals who live here do not age and for as long as they remain, they are immortal. This fortress is the nerve center for the Adepts of the Blue Star (see Green Ronin's *Thieves' World Player's Manual*, page 82) and it is here that they train new adepts to prepare for the inevitable battle in which the forces of Order will wage war against the forces of Chaos.

MERIDIAN

The source of all dreams, a plane that touches the minds of every living creature, this is a realm much like the real world, but mutable, changing, reflecting the imagination of those who sleep. This plane is ruled by Aškelon, the lord of dream and shadow. Once a mortal wizard, the gods gave him Meridian to command as his own realm. While not truly a god, he is as a god when in his own realm. He rarely has cause to intervene directly in the affairs of mortals, but he deigned to help Tempus in his fight against Roxane.

OTHER WORLDS

Travelers from other worlds crop up throughout the *Thieves' World* anthologies; from the winged folk in the north to Hålott and Tiger in the new series, it seems the World of Sanctuary is a nexus for planar travelers, a crossroads where entities from distant realities can come and go, though often not of their own choice. While such drastic shifts in reality may seem daunting to those who wish to maintain a coherent campaign, they can serve the interests of a *Thieves' World* campaign quite well. If, for example, you currently run a campaign set in Green Ronin's *The Black Company Campaign Setting*, there are precedents that would allow you to shift your game to incorporate Sanctuary and any number of the peoples and places found in the Known World. Likewise, a band of pirates heading out from *Freeport* may be pulled into *Thieves' World* through some planar anomaly or through a powerful spell, cast by Hålott himself perhaps. This section describes how to link *Thieves' World* to other campaigns to maximize your enjoyment of any d20 product with this setting.

ALTERNATE MATERIAL PLANES

In *Turning Points*, Hålott opened a *gate* over the sea to conjure forth a champion from a distant world, hoping that this champion would win him Sanctuary's grand duel. From this *gate* sailed a ship carrying a pair of confused warriors who had set sail for Ibar. The unusual constellations in the sky made it clear to them that they were somewhere else, that they

had crossed the planar boundaries through powerful magical means. And thus, Ariko (Tiger) and Durel came to *Thieves' World* for a time.

Perhaps because of the chaotic nature of its magic or the prevalence of powerful sorcerers, *Thieves' World* has loose planar boundaries. Travelers can cross great distances and enter new worlds by accident as easily as by design. Most such transport is accomplished through the casting of spells, but permanent *gates* exist as well that anyone can use. You can take advantage of this setting feature to bring adventurers from other settings into a *Thieves' World* campaign, allowing players to keep using their characters from a previous campaign. When bringing characters over from other Material Planes, make sure you adapt the characters for play in *Thieves' World*. Racial features are unchanged, but characters who were not raised in the Known World do not gain the benefit of culture or background selections. Though characters retain their alignments, they have no role in *Thieves' World*. Skills, feats, and general equipment are all unchanged.

A couple of things do change. All characters from other worlds have starting Reputation scores of +0. Regardless of class choice, they gain a +1 Reputation bonus for every two levels gained in this world, as word of their origins spread. Though characters retain the feats they selected, certain feats do not function or have changed in this world, so be sure to review Green Ronin's *Thieves' World Player's Manual* for details on modified feats. Characters retain their race, but do not benefit from a background or culture unless the campaign setting from which they originated uses these rules as well.



Of all the modifications, class selection is probably the biggest. The *Thieves' World Player's Manual* introduces several new classes including the godsworn, savant, and witch. Classes like the bard, sorcerer, and wizard are either changed or don't exist at all, and magic-using classes are perhaps the most challenging to adapt. You can handle this in one of two ways. The first and more complex option is to allow the player to exchange levels in a class that does not appear in this setting for one that does. The character retains his feat and skill selections (though you may require that the character give up bonus feats gained by class levels, such as fighter feats or wizard feats), but changes all other class features including extraordinary abilities, base attack bonus, saves, and so on to match the new class. A simple conversion guideline follows.

An easier solution is to leave the character's class features alone. Obviously, some things don't work in *Thieves' World*, but with some adjustment, characters can continue on as they did before. To adapt class features to play in this setting, apply the following adjustments. If a class feature from the PHB is not listed here, it is unchanged.

BARDIC MUSIC

Bardic music is subject to the same chances for spectacular failure as any other spellcasting. Bards must make a Perform check whenever they want to use bardic music. Compare the unmodified die roll to the appropriate mana chart found on **Table 8-3: Mana Levels** in the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*. If the bard has a spectacular success, the duration of his bardic music is doubled.

DETECT EVIL

Paladins lose the ability to cast *detect evil* at will. Instead, they gain a +1 bonus per five class levels to Sense Motive checks.

SMITE EVIL

Paladins replace smite evil with a general smite attack. The same number of times per day that he would be able to smite evil, the paladin may make a smite attack as a normal melee attack, adding his Charisma bonus (if any) to attack rolls and his class level to damage rolls. He may not use this ability on godsworn or priests who share his same deity.

SPELLS

If the character used to cast spells spontaneously (such as a sorcerer), his spells known become Known spells and he begins play with no Familiar spells. If the character prepared his spells in advance but did not use a spellbook (such as a cleric or any other spellcaster that receives spells through a divine or natural power), he gains Known and Familiar spells as a priest of the same level. If the character prepared his spells from a spellbook, all spells in his spellbook are considered Familiar spells. He may convert those spells over to Known spells as a mage of the same level. As any of these characters advance in current spellcasting class, they gain one new Known spell for each level they gain, as well as one new Familiar spell at even levels and two new Familiar spells at odd levels.

Spellcasting characters from other worlds also gain spellcasting bonuses (though not ritualcasting bonuses, unless they multiclass into a class native to *Thieves'*



CLASS CONVERSION

| <i>Thieves' World</i> Class | d20 Class |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Assassin | Assassin Prestige Class or Green Ronin's Assassin |
| Barbarian | Barbarian |
| Fighter | Fighter |
| Godsworn | Paladin or Green Ronin's Holy or Unholy Warrior |
| Initiate | Bard |
| Mage | Wizard |
| Noble | Green Ronin's Noble |
| Priest | Cleric |
| Ranger | Ranger |
| Savant | Bard or Monk |
| Survivor | Fighter, Monk, or Ranger |
| Thief | Rogue |
| Witch | Druid or Green Ronin's Shaman or Witch |

World) as follows: Bard (as a witch), Cleric (as a priest), Druid (as a witch), Rangers/Paladins (as a savant), and Sorcerer/Wizard (as a mage).

Finally, these spellcasters are subject to the same rules governing mana as set forth in the *Thieves' World Player's Manual* and must make spellcasting checks to accumulate enough mana to hit the MT of any given spell. For variant mana rules, be sure to check out Green Ronin's *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*.

SPONTANEOUS CASTING

A cleric who can spontaneously cast *cure* spells now spontaneously casts *convert* spells in the same way.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Paladins who multiclass into the godsworn class immediately become ex-paladins. Rangers who multiclass into the *Thieves' World* ranger lose all previously gained class features and replace them with those appropriate to a ranger of this setting.

OTHER TIMES

Just as characters can come from other worlds, characters can also come from other times. At your GM's discretion, he may allow you to play a character from an earlier era in *Thieves' World*, possibly having been propelled forward through time due to a miscast spell or a planar mishap. While characters could conceivably move backward through time, it's not recommended that you allow characters from the "future" to adventure in the past, lest they attempt to change history. In any case, all time travel should be reserved for special cases, and is only recommended if it serves a larger purpose in your campaign.



CHAPTER FIVE: GODS OF THIEVES' WORLD

No sane person in the Known World could deny that the gods are real. Their power is manifest in every tree and stone, every sword and shield, every prayer that calls fire and vengeance down from heaven. The people of *Thieves' World* revere and worship their gods, not just out of hope and faith, but in the certain knowledge that the gods can intervene in their lives and work their will upon mortals—and it's much better to be on a god's good side when *that* happens.

This chapter examines many of the gods of *Thieves' World* in detail, as well as their sects, followers, relations with other gods, and their designs upon the mortal world. It's not exhaustive—the gods are many and varied, and every culture reveres their own—but the major deities of the *Thieves' World* stories are here, and GMs can use this material as inspiration to flesh out other gods and their sects.

MORTAL AGENTS AND WORSHIPPERS

The gods of *Thieves' World* are powerful, but not omnipotent; even greater gods like Ils and Savankala have limits upon their abilities, while lesser gods are even more constrained. One limit placed upon the gods is that they cannot walk freely through the mortal world; Gods are creatures of Paradise, not of mundane reality. So to work their will upon the mortal world, they must have mortal agents—priests and godsworn—to further their divine plans and administer to their followers.

Make no mistake, mortal followers are *very* important to the gods, for mortal reverence and worship are the keys to the gods' power. It's not that the gods need mortal worship to survive; the gods are eternal, and can only be slain by each other (and even then under very specific conditions). But mortal worship, mortal attention, is the conduit that connects a god to the mortal world, and it is in the mortal world that the rivalries

and wars between gods are fought and won, not in Paradise. Without followers, a god becomes forgotten, and as he is forgotten, so in turn does he forget the mortal world. The forgotten god loses the ability to influence the Material Plane, loses the memory that there *is* a mortal world, and distracts himself with the pleasures of Paradise while his divine enemies go about their plans unopposed. While this could be a blissful existence, it would be an empty one. For this reason, the gods recruit worshippers, build large sects and cults, and amass political and temporal power for those cults as the mechanism through which to work their wills.

AVATARS

While the gods prefer to work through their mortal agents, their priests and godsworn, it is possible (though dangerous) for them to directly intervene in the mortal world. Gods can, if they desire, manifest an avatar on the Material Plane. An avatar is a human or sometimes inhuman seeming, a sliver of a god's immense divine power in the shape of a living mortal being. This happened a number of times during the Ranken era of Sanctuary, a time when conflicts between the gods threatened to rip Heaven apart. Vashanka, Dyareela and Sivini all took on semi-mortal form for a time and all suffered the consequences for it—for to step outside Heaven is to fall under constraints even gods cannot deny.

In game terms, an avatar is an outsider that resembles its parent god, with abilities based on the god's domains and divine portfolio. Avatars are extremely powerful, but that power comes at a great risk, for the fate that befalls an avatar is reflected upon its parent god. When Hanse slew Vashanka's avatar in combat, the storm god was barred from the mortal world for decades; when Sivini's avatar was knocked unconscious by her own alternate personality, she was trapped in a diminished mortal form and later murdered by Molin Torchholder, and afterward her sect became scattered and weakened. Gods are understandably reluctant to manifest avatars, and usually do so only when a situation is so important that it merits their personal attention.

Gods can choose to manifest avatars of their own volition, but they can also be encouraged to do so by their mortal worshippers. Priests and godsworn can call up an avatar of their god using a variation of the *planar ally* spell; any character that knows *planar ally* can perform the variation, but only to summon the god she directly worships and only as a ritual (not as a spell). The variant ritual is difficult and draining; the priest or godsworn takes a -2 penalty to his ritualcasting checks when calling an avatar, and always pays a price in lethal damage at the ritual's completion no matter what his safe casting limit. In addition to the XP cost of the ritual, the performer must also sacrifice materials significant to the god; the default value of this sacrifice is 100 sh × the Hit Dice of the avatar.

Because an avatar is composed of mana shaped into a mortal form, the local mana level has an effect upon an avatar's abilities. An avatar in a low-mana area suffers a negative level, while one in a no-mana area suffers two negative levels; these levels persist until the avatar leaves that area (if such a thing is possible). Low- and no-mana levels also affect the avatar's spell-like abilities, and make it harder for the god's priests to call the avatar in the first place.

Avatars for the more prominent or active gods of *Thieves' World* are included in this chapter; GMs can use these as guidelines for creating avatars of other gods as well.

AVATAR TRAITS

All avatars have the following traits. Those detailed in the following section have these traits already reflected in their stat blocks. Some of these traits are based on the deity's divine rank, as are the avatar's Hit Dice. Unless otherwise noted, these traits are extraordinary abilities.

- The avatar's natural armor bonus increases by an amount equal to its divine rank bonus.
- The avatar is immune to mundane diseases and poisons, but can still be affected by supernatural diseases and poisons. Avatars make massive

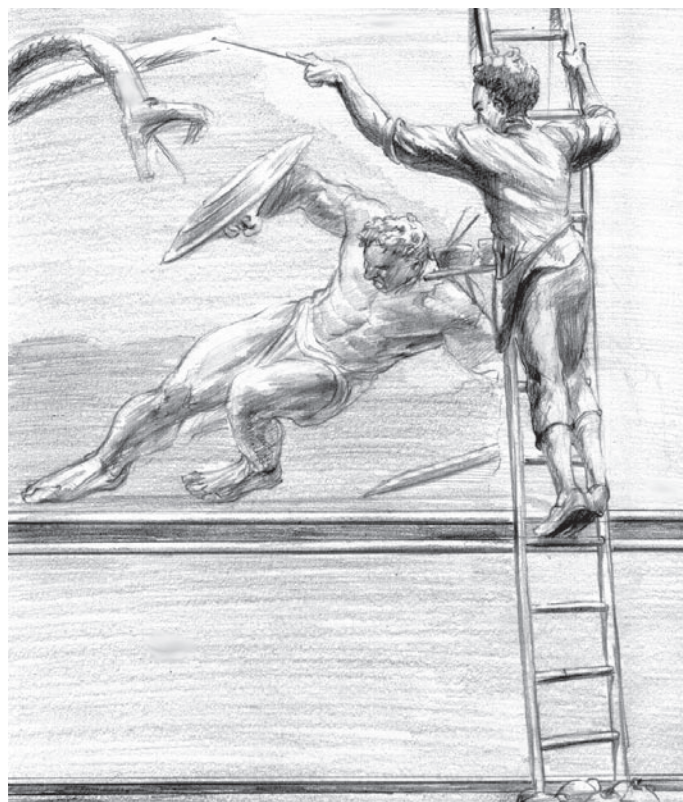


TABLE 5-1: DIVINE RANK BENEFITS

| Divine Rank | Bonus | Hit Dice |
|------------------|-------|----------|
| Demigod | +1 | 9 HD |
| Lesser god | +2 | 10 HD |
| Intermediate god | +3 | 11 HD |
| Greater god | +4 | 12 HD |

damage saves like mortals, but add their Charisma modifiers to their Constitution to determine their massive damage thresholds. Avatars are immune to infection, but can suffer severe injuries.

- Avatars can speak and read all mortal languages.
- Avatars do not need to sleep or eat.
- Darkvision 60 ft.
- **Divine Grace (Su):** An avatar gains a divine bonus to all saving throws equal to its divine rank bonus.
- **Divine Defense (Su):** An avatar gains a deflection bonus to AC equal to its Charisma bonus (minimum +1); avatars retain this bonus under all circumstances, even when helpless or unconscious.
- **Damage Reduction (Su):** Damage reduction 5/epic. An avatar's natural attacks and attacks made with weapons count as epic attacks for the purpose of bypassing the damage reduction of other avatars.
- **Plane Shift (Su):** The avatar can return to its home plane as a move action. Once the avatar returns to its home plane, it cannot come back to the material world unless summoned by the god's priests or until a full lunar cycle has passed.
- **Spellcasting (Sp):** Avatars can cast spells from their gods' domains as spell-like abilities at will. These spell-like abilities have caster levels equal to the avatar's Hit Dice and use Wisdom as the key spellcasting ability. As limited manifestations of gods, avatars can only cast spells of a level equal to or lower than one-half their Hit Dice (round down).
- Some avatars have additional spell-like abilities, which can be used a number of times per day equal to the avatar's divine rank bonus. Such spell-like abilities have caster levels equal to the avatar's Hit Dice and use Charisma as the key spellcasting ability.
- Avatars do not heal naturally. Unless bolstered by healing magic, an avatar cannot regain lethal or nonlethal hit points, whether the damage was inflicted by violence or was suffered as the price of spellcasting.
- Most avatars manifest bearing a magical version of the god's favored weapon. This weapon is a part of the avatar; while it can be dropped or taken away, the avatar can retrieve it at any distance as a move action. If the weapon is destroyed or damaged, the avatar can replace it with a new and undamaged version as a move action. Avatars are immune to attacks made against them with their own weapons. An avatar can choose to leave its weapon behind when it returns to its plane, and its weapon is left behind if the avatar is slain; in either case, the weapon remains indefinitely and can be used by mortals.
- A few avatars manifest wearing armor or bearing shields. Like their weapons, this armor is a part of the avatar; it can only be removed if the avatar wills it. If the armor is damaged or destroyed, the avatar can replace it with an undamaged version as a move action. Just as with its weapons, an avatar can choose to leave its armor behind when it returns to its plane, and its armor is left behind if the avatar is slain; in either case, the armor remains indefinitely and can be used by mortals.

DIETY FORMAT

The following deity descriptions of the deities of Thieves' World use the format below.

Name: The god's name, any associated titles.

Divine Rank: Whether the deity is a demigod, lesser god, intermediate god or greater god.

Symbol: The deity's specific symbol, and how priests incorporate that symbol into their prayers.

Portfolio: The concepts the deity represents, commands or evokes.

Domains: The domains that priests and godsworn of the deity can access.

Favored Weapon: The weapon the deity prefers, usually wielded in turn by priests.

Priests: Information on the deity's typical priests, with notes on multiclassing options and typical divine powers. Players and GMs can use this information to guide the creation of characters.

Godsworn: As with the deity's priests, details on the divine warriors of the god, with notes on multiclassing and typical divine gifts.

Prayers & Rites: The ceremonies, customs and holy days sacred to the deity.

Temples: Whether the god has temples and of what kind, and what kind of activities might occur in them.

Servitors: The entities a priest or godsworn can summon with the *lesser planar ally*, *planar ally* and *greater planar ally* rituals, respectively. Note that in some cases a deity's servitors are not outsiders in the strictest sense; the god's affinity with these creatures overrides the normal limits on creature types that may be summoned via these spells. However, servitors are always considered to come from another plane (and therefore to have the extraplanar subtype). Servitors do not need to have the same alignment as the god, since alignment is not used in *Thieves' World*. This section also describes the sacrifice needed to summon an avatar of the god.

Avatars: This optional section provides the statistics for the deity's avatar.

THE ILSIG PANTHEON

One of the oldest and most influential of pantheons, the Ilsigi gods are practical beings, primarily concerned with protecting the stable, enlightened Ilsigi culture. The Ilsigi pantheon took a major blow during the era of Rankan occupation, its temples destroyed and its followers put to the sword. Now the Rankan Empire is in decline, thanks in no small part to the schemes of Father Ils and the actions of mortal heroes in Sanctuary. The Ilsig Kingdom is on the rise again, and the gods stand ready to shepherd it.

According to Ilsigi doctrine, Ils was the first god, existing before time itself. He pulled the sixth fingers from his hands and used their flesh to create the mortal world; from his sixth toes, he crafted the lesser gods; and from his bodily wastes he created the human race. His first divine creation was the stormgod Gunder, who challenged Ils for control of Heaven; Ils threw Gunder down to earth, banished to the World Spine mountain range where he rages there still, worshipped by the giant Mountain Men of lost Gunderpah. Ils then took Gunder's daughter Shipri as his wife, and their union brought forth children that themselves wed and united to take their rightful places in Heaven. From their celestial home they

watch over their chosen people, the Ilsigi of the Old Kingdom, and wait for the day that the Ilsigi find their way home to Heaven.

The gods of the Ilsigi are, first and foremost, a *family*—loving, closely-knit, and full of rivalries and tensions. Their relationships are almost all unstable and volatile, for they are as quick to anger and jealousy as they are to love and loyalty. Mortal concepts of genealogy do not apply to the gods, of course, and nor do mortal taboos; the Ilsig gods lie with their mothers and fathers, siblings and cousins, and none may judge them for it. While the Ilsigi pantheon is a family, it is not solely one of blood; the Ilsig faith is inclusive, and numerous gods have been welcomed (or co-opted) into the pantheon from outside. Perhaps on some level *all* gods are related—Ils calls Savankala 'brother,' after all—or perhaps the practical Ilsig gods are prepared to waive such matters as long as their new divine cousin works for the benefit of the pantheon. Occasionally, mortals associate gods with the Ilsigi pantheon without divine prompting, usually for political reasons. Death (see page 92), for instance, has been named as an Ilsigi god despite being an independent deity, probably because Sostreia was the Ilsig goddess before being elevated to Queen of the Underworld.

PRIESTS OF THE PANTHEON ENTIRE

Most priests of the Ilsigi religion are sworn to a specific god while revering all members of the pantheon. A few, however, follow the pantheon as a whole, serving all the gods and none. Called *ecclesiasts*, these priests and priestesses play floating roles in their local temples, participating in ceremonies for all the gods. Most focus on the social aspects of their church rather than the religious, participating in community affairs and politics. Some travel the continent, seeking to spread the word of the gods and perform good works, or at least politically useful acts.

Ecclesiast characters select two domains associated with any of the Ilsig gods. GMs may allow characters to select domains not associated with the gods listed in this chapter; the Ilsig pantheon includes a number of minor gods not described here, so almost any domain might be appropriate. However, ecclesiasts may not channel any of the unique divine powers described here.

On the mortal level, the Ilsig religion is primarily concerned with the development of a strong, stable society; it is a religion of politics and education, not crusades and holy wars. That preference for social engineering over direct action was no doubt a factor in the Rankan Empire's invasion of the Old Kingdom; it also explains how the cult of Dyareela could prosper so readily under the blinkered view of the Ilsig authorities. The church is divided along gender lines—Ils and the goddesses in one hierarchy of tradition and worship, Shipri and the goddesses in the other. The divide is not rigid or strict, and the interplay between the halves is a key part of Ilsigi society. Within the religion, individual cults or sects exist to worship each deity, although priests of particularly minor deities may conduct that worship as a subset of duties for a more important god.

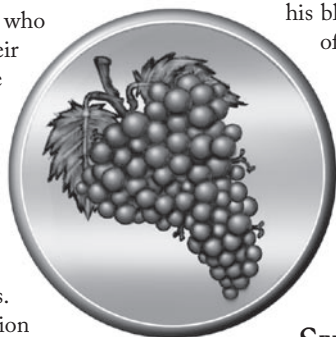
The godsworn, as always, exist outside the boundaries of the church. They are the direct agents of Heaven, appointed by gods rather than by men. They follow their dreams and their instincts, and those priests who even admit that the godsworn exist can do little more than shake their heads at these unruly divine mavericks.

ANEN

GOD OF GRAIN AND BEER, THE FIRSTBORN – LESSER GOD

Anen is the firstborn son of Ils and Shipri—or at least the first *acknowledged* son. (Shipri's first son, Shils the Bastard, was slain by Ils, who suspected his wife of adultery with her own father.) He is the god of agriculture and nature and of the finest products of agriculture—wine, beer, and camaraderie. More than just a god of the fields, Anen is the god of good fortune—not the luck of a gambler or rogue, but the luck of a farmer whose crops narrowly escape the frost or whose wife bears a healthy son. He is the divine brewer and vintner, who encourages his hardworking followers to celebrate their lives with revelry, wine and song. And he is also the eternal cuckold, betrayed again and again by his wife Eshi, so that his pain and tears may water the earth each winter and bring forth new life.

Anen teaches life as a cycle that turns with the seasons, and mortals are the hardworking wardens of that cycle. He is primarily worshipped by farmers, vintners and peasants rather than the folk of the cities. Certainly, the folk of Sanctuary pay homage to his position as god of beer and wine, but his true worshippers are those who make that beer and wine, who work the harvests and till the fields, whose labor is the backbone of Ilsig civilization. He is sometimes venerated by healers, old soldiers, and those who know that an evening of drunken happiness may be the only reward you gain for a day of sacrifice and pain.



Symbol: A bunch of red grapes or spilled wine. Almost all priests of Anen practice the arts of brewing and winemaking, carrying a skin of homemade wine to drink, spill or offer when casting spells.

Portfolio: Agriculture, beer and wine, rebirth, good fortune

Domains: Inspiration, Luck, Plant

Favored Weapon: Light mace

PRIESTS

Anen's priests are plain-speaking men (and occasionally women) who work alongside their congregations in the fields and who lead the revelry during the community's celebrations. Some have levels in expert or even commoner, while a few have savant levels and specialize in the brewing arts. Priests of Anen often channel the *guidance* or *state of grace* powers.

GODSWORN

The godsworn of Anen carry a terrible weight of responsibility; they bleed (and sometimes die) in order for the world to be reborn, risking their lives to defend the faithful and the harvest. Many drink to excess to forget the weight of their duty. Anen's godsworn may also be savants or rangers, and often have the gifts *aura of courage*, *divine health*, *divine protection* or *divine fortitude*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Anen's worshippers break bread with their fellows every Anensday, usually in the tavern after a hard week's work; these gatherings are more cheery drinking sessions than solemn prayer meetings. On the first morning of Drellan (the first month of spring), every adult follower of Anen kneels in the fields or vineyard and cuts his right hand, letting five drops of his blood feed the crops. The first bottle of every new batch of wine or liquor is also poured back into the fields and vines as an offering.

TEMPLES

Anen rarely has his own temples. Instead, his priests maintain subsidiary altars in Ils' temples, usually located to the right of Ils' own altar and tabernacle. In rural areas, small shrines to Anen are commonplace, generally located near or in a field of grain or vineyard.

SERVITORS

Anen's *planar allies* are janni, celestial shambling mounds and Huge earth elementals. A priest of Anen can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Anen (not included); the additional sacrifice is 1000 sh worth of wine, beer and food.

RANDER REHABILITATIS

While those in Sanctuary may venerate him as a minor godling, Rander Rehabilitatis is in truth a servant of Anen, the patron spirit of drunkenness and hangovers. Those priests of Anen given to philosophy hold that city folk respect Rander Rehabilitatis over Anen because it allows them to ignore the solemn, darker aspects of the god, instead excusing their own drunken indulgence as true worship.

A priest of Anen can use the *lesser planar ally* spell to summon an incarnation of Rander Rehabilitatis. This being has the appearance of a fat drunkard, but the traits and abilities of a celestial satyr. Calling upon Rander Rehabilitatis in this fashion requires the sacrifice of 100 sh worth of wine or beer in addition to the sacrifice the spirit demands once called.

Shrines and idols to Rander Rehabilitatis appear in almost every tavern and inn on the continent. Once per week, a priest of Anen can pray for 10 minutes in front of such an idol to create a "drunkard's libation." The priest must then sacrifice 100 sh worth of wine, beer and herbs and make a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check; if the check succeeds, the priest spends 15 XP to magically distill a single *potion of aid* from the alcohol.

ESHI

GODDESS OF EARTHLY LOVE, NIGHT'S TWIN, THE TRICKSTER'S DAUGHTER — LESSER GODDESS

Eshi is the first daughter of Ils and Shipri, twin sister of Shalpa, sister and wife to Anen. She is the goddess of love, sensuality and passion, and of every kind of beauty in this world and all others. Seduction and carnal desire are Eshi's domain too, whether with mortals or gods—she is the eternal adulterer and temptress, who flaunts a thousand affairs under the nose of her divine husband and laughs at his tears. Yet there is no meanness in Eshi, just as there is no forethought; she is what she is, the Trickster's Daughter, and she acts on her desires and emotions without thought for the consequences, like the cats that are her holy animal. She is the patron of young lovers, the muse of artists, and the enemy of those who would control or repress desire. Eshi teaches that life is to be enjoyed, beauty and passion are to be celebrated, and love is more important than responsibility. She is venerated and prayed to by young people, artists and dancers—but yet, these passionate ones rarely *worship* her, for she is too flighty and inconstant to attract devotion and congregations. A few organized cults to Eshi are small, primarily composed of prostitutes, middle-aged women and the emotionally lost—people who have missed out on passion and desire, and would do anything to finally receive it. Of course, her priestesses run the women's bathhouses and brides-to-be usually make offerings to her before their weddings. And so, though she is the goddess of love and beauty, she is also the goddess of hope and passion.

Symbol: Figs. Priests of Eshi grow fig trees near their homes and temples, use figs as ingredients for potions (and mundane dishes), and wear fig-shaped amulets as holy symbols.

Portfolio: Sensuality, beauty, seduction, art and music, manipulation

Domains: Beauty, Charm, Pleasure

Favored Weapon: Dagger

PRIESTS

Eshi's priestesses are almost all women, and tend to fall into two groups—young women glowing with passion and desire, and middle-aged women who use desire and manipulation for political gain. Some take levels in savant or noble, or enter the Mistress of Red Lanterns prestige class (see *Thieves' World Player's Manual*, page 99). Priestesses of Eshi tend to channel the *commanding presence*, *glamour of Eshi* (see sidebar) or *state of grace* powers.

GODSWORN

Eshi's godsworn are passionate, artistic, erratic and deadly, charged with fighting the enemies of love and beauty. Their targets are tyrants who forbid dancing or art, patriarchs who prevent young lovers from eloping, or invaders who despoil a beautiful temple in search of gold and rapine. Some have levels in savant, thief or assassin, and common gifts include *divine health*, *mortal might* (*Charisma*), or *denial of fate*.

PRAYERS & RITES

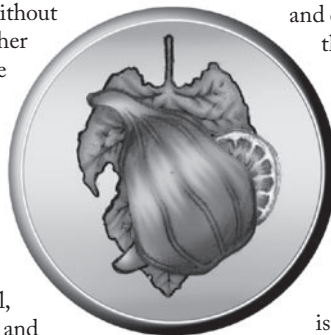
Many people mutter quick prayers to Eshi every day—usually when trying to get the object of their desire into bed. Congregations gather on Eshiday evening for informal prayers and socializing (and occasionally romance). The 12th day of Andaria is especially holy, and on this day, Eshi's followers must bed a new romantic conquest or else be the slave of four other members of the congregation for a month.

TEMPLES

As a lesser goddess, Eshi has few temples, but rather has an altar in each of Shipri's temples. Small shrines to the goddess are quite common, and can be found in most brothels, areas where prostitutes ply their trade, and sometimes in art or dance schools. A statue of Eshi has stood on the Street of Red Lanterns since Sanctuary was founded and it is always decorated with the garlands of the hopeful.

SERVITORS

Eshi's *planar allies* are celestial nymphs, lillend and Huge air elementals. A priest of Eshi can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Eshi (not included); the additional sacrifice is an original and unique work of art worth at least 1000 sh, which the avatar sends back to Paradise as she manifests.



ILS

(LORD OF A THOUSAND EYES, LORD OF LORDS, GOD OF KNOWLEDGE & WISDOM) GREATER GOD

Ils is the chief god of the Ilsigi pantheon, lord of the people and nation that took his name. Legend holds that Ils created the world, the gods and all mortals, although even his most devout priests hold that to be more metaphor than fact. He is worshipped not for his power and strength, great though both are, but for his insight, his intelligence, and his quick wit. Ils defeated enemies like Gunder of the Mountain Men with chicanery and schemes rather than by force of arms. All followers of the Ilsigi pantheon worship and revere Ils, who both dictated the laws of the church and allowed loopholes for the righteous to break them when necessary. Ils is the patron of learning, wisdom, oratory and justice, but also of ingenuity, trickery and questioning authority—all characteristics exalted by Ilsigi culture. His flaw is his jealousy and occasionally rash temper, and perhaps his lack of aggression, which left his people ill-prepared for the onslaught of the warlike Rankans and their imperialistic gods.

Ils teaches that life is a puzzle that should be approached from all angles, a series of questions that can be answered in many different ways, and he proclaims that the greatest victory is not to crush your enemies but to trick them into turning upon each other and then allying with you. He is worshipped and venerated by all Ilsigi, but in particular by scholars, nobles, bureaucrats, conmen, adventurers, merchants and others who live by their wits. His cult is large and extensive, and his priests control both their own congregation and those of the other Ilsigi gods.

DIVINE POWER: GLAMOUR OF ESHI

Priests of Eshi may choose to channel a unique divine power, *glamour of Eshi*. For a short period, the priest can call upon Eshi to further bolster her prayers with manipulative and seductive power. The save DCs of any enchantment or illusion spells cast by the priest are increased by a number equal to her Charisma bonus (minimum +1). The benefits of this power last for a number of rounds equal to the priest's Wisdom bonus (minimum 1 round). During this period, the priest takes a -2 penalty to her spell and ritualcasting checks when casting evocation spells.

Symbol: A jeweled eye. Priests of IIs wear pendants bearing a jeweled eye as their holy symbol, and some go so far as to wear monocles or bear a spyglass in homage to their god.

Portfolio: Wisdom, intelligence, subterfuge, investigation

Domains: Eloquence, Knowledge, Trickery

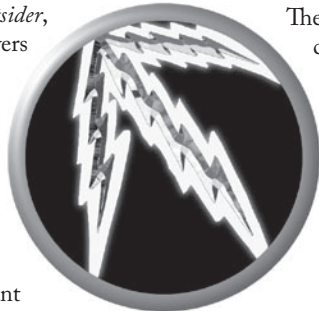
Favored Weapon: Short sword

PRIESTS

IIs' priests are mostly middle-aged men; while some are women, few are young, for it takes many years of study and reading scriptures before one is considered worthy. These priests are primarily administrators of the faith who work to consolidate the church's political stature rather than do good deeds in the community. Some take levels in noble, savant or even loremaster, and tend to channel the *banish outsider*, *commanding presence*, *state of grace* or *tap other domain* powers (see sidebar).

GODSWORN

In contrast to his learned, noble priests, IIs' godsworn are adventurers who wander the continent looking for trouble. Male or female, young or old, their common traits are a healthy skepticism and a willingness to interfere in other peoples' affairs. Many have levels in savant or thief, and common gifts include *channel divine power*, *divine perception*, *divine shield*, *denial of fate* or *divine fortitude*.



NECKLACE OF HARMONY

These golden necklaces of mystical power are among the more powerful relics of the church of IIs. Several exist, draped around the necks of the marble statues of IIs located in his Major Temples or worn by the archpriests of those temples in times of need. There was one in Sanctuary in the Rankan era, but it was stolen by Ischade and later acquired by Molin for forging Enlibar steel. There may be another in the city still and others remain in temples around the continent. A *necklace of harmony* is a +1 *ritual focus* that grants the wearer a +4 enhancement bonus to Wisdom and allows him to use *detect thoughts* at will as a spell-like ability. However, any time the wearer tells a lie, he must make a DC 16 Will save or take 1d8+1 points of fire damage as the necklace grows white-hot.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Focus, Craft Wondrous Item, *detect thoughts*, *owl's wisdom*, *zone of truth*; Price 37,350 sh.

DIVINE POWER: TAP OTHER DOMAIN

Priests of IIs may choose to channel a unique divine power, *tap other domain*. As lord of the entire IIsigi pantheon, IIs may allow his priests to briefly cast spells from a domain other than the two a priest normally knows, as long as it is one granted by a IIsigi god. When the priest channels this power, he chooses an appropriate domain, and may cast any spell from that domain up to one level lower than his normal safe casting level (e.g., if a priest can normally cast 5th-level spells safely, he can cast up to 4th-level spells from the tapped domain) as if the spell was on his Known list. The benefits of this power last for a number of minutes equal to the priest's Wisdom score.

Only a select few priests are granted this privilege by IIs. In order to choose this divine power, a character must have at least 8 ranks in Knowledge (religion) and a Wisdom of 13 or more.

PRAYERS & RITES

For the IIsigi people, barely an hour goes by without a prayer, invocation, oath or aside directed at IIs; some priests say that simply living is itself a prayer to IIs. Every ritual or service made for an IIsigi god includes reverence to IIs, as does every spell cast by an IIsigi priest. Formal services to IIs are held, naturally, every IIsday, as are the New Year's celebrations in the month of Andaria. One common rite is to dedicate the first sale, first page of writing, or first challenge of the day to IIs—although if that challenge goes badly, bad luck is sure to follow.

TEMPLES

IIs has a temple in every city where the IIsigi pantheon is worshipped. These temples are given one of three ranks, based on their size, construction and political clout. The cult's only Great Temple is in IIsig itself, an immense building of marble and granite. Sanctuary and other cities have major temples, which also house altars for lesser IIsigi gods. Larger cities may also have a number of minor temples, small wood-and-brick shrines with an attendant priest or two. A minor temple will also be found in any town or settlement that follows the IIsigi ways; such shrines are usually the first building constructed in a village.

SERVITORS

IIs' *planar allies* are hound archons, sikkintairs (see **Chapter Seven: A Thieves' World Bestiary** on page 136) and celestial young adult copper dragons. A priest of IIs can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of IIs; the additional sacrifice is 1200 sh worth of holy books and writings from other faiths, which IIs claims for his private library.

AVATAR OF IIS

The avatar of IIs appears to be a middle-aged IIsigi man, physically nondescript, but power swells around him like an invisible vortex. His eyes are piercing and intelligent, and he bears a gleaming short sword in his right hand.

An avatar of IIs is rarely summoned, perhaps only to battle a great threat to the IIsigi people by working some legendary deception. He enters combat only when he must, preferring to manipulate enemies against each other from afar if possible. If he must fight he casts *charm person* and *confusion* to sow discord among his enemies, attacks with his short sword, then uses *invisibility* or *disguise self* to slip away from danger.

AVATAR OF IIS

CR 14; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 12d8+36; hp 90; Mdt 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +12; Grap +14; Atk +15 melee (1d6+3 plus 1 Con/17–20, +1 *wounding short sword*); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+3 plus 1 Con/17–20, +1 *wounding short sword*); SA sneak attack +1d6, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision, ever watchful; SV Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +17; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +18, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +18, Forgery +20, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (geography) +20, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Listen +18, Search +18, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +18, Spot +18; Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (short sword), Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*enthrall*).

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*charm monster* (DC 18), *charm person* (DC 16), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *confusion* (DC 19), *detect secret doors*, *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *disguise self* (DC 16), *divination*, *enthrall* (DC 17), *false vision* (5th, price 5hp), *find the path* (6th, price 6hp), *geas/quest* (6th, price 6hp), *good hope* (4th, price 4hp), *invisibility* (2nd, price 2hp), *mislead* (6th, DC 21, price 6hp), *modify memory* (5th, DC 20, price 5hp), *nondetection* (3rd, price 3hp), *true seeing* (5th, price 5hp); 4/day—*prying eyes*. Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Ever Watchful (Ex): An avatar of Ils can see magical auras as if under the effect of a permanent *arcane sight* spell. He also has the improved uncanny dodge ability as if he were a 12th-level thief.

Possessions: +1 wounding short sword.

MESHPRI

GODDESS OF HEALING & MEDICINE, LADY OF PEACE
— LESSER GODDESS

Meshpri is something of an outsider in the Ilsigi pantheon, for she is no relation of great Ils—she is Shipri All-Mother's sister (whether older or younger is unclear), daughter of the storm god Gunder. When Ils threw Gunder down from Heaven, he chose beautiful Shipri over shy Meshpri, breaking her heart; feeling such pain for the first time, she dedicated herself to healing and preventing the pain of mortals and gods alike. She is the goddess of healing, herbalism and the gentle care of the injured, accompanied always by her son Meshnom, patron of apothecaries. She guides and watches over healer and patient alike, lending them the quiet strength of those who have suffered long yet borne the pain. Her wrath is reserved for those who brew poisons and harmful drugs, perversions of her teachings.

Meshpri teaches that forgiveness and compassion can cure life's pains—and if they cannot, then one can use that pain to motivate even greater acts of compassion. She forgives but does not forget sins, and nor do her followers; memory is the spur to redemption, and one can always learn from mistakes. Despite her positive teachings (or perhaps because of them), Meshpri is not widely worshipped; she is relegated to the corners of the pantheon, both in this world and the next. Those who do worship her are healers, midwives, and those sickened by their own sins; they form small cults in the shadow of Shipri, and focus more on good works than politics and prayer.



Symbol: A mortar and pestle. Meshpri's priests are constantly grinding up herbs and plants to use in their salves and potions, and mixing herbs in the holy pestle is a major element of their spells and rituals.

Portfolio: Healing, apothecaries, selflessness, learning, forgiveness

Domains: Healing, Solace, Truth

Favored Weapon: Club

PRIESTS

Almost all of Meshpri's priests are healers and apothecaries; a slight majority are male, simply because it's easier in most places for men to receive training in alchemy and medicine than women. Most have levels in savant, and many enter the Healer of Meshpri prestige class, although some drift sideways into the Acolyte of Lizerene class (see page 80 in Green Ronin's *Thieves' World Player's Manual*). Common divine powers are *guidance*, *resist magic* and *state of grace*.

GODSWORN

Meshpri's few godsworn are all marked by a terrible sorrow, a guilt that drives them to heal others and to defend the innocent against those who arbitrarily inflict pain. Some have levels in savant or survivor, and most become Healers of Meshpri to balance their warrior skills. Common divine gifts are *aura of courage*, *divine health*, *divine protection*, *mortal might* (*Wisdom*) and *divine fortitude*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Followers of Meshpri rarely gather together in formal prayer. They make their offerings as part of Shipri's rites, in which Meshpri receives passing mention. More often, they gather together to confer about patients and problems, to share solutions and strength, and sometimes to say brief prayers to the Lady of Peace. The last day of Moruthus is the last day of winter, and is sacred to Meshpri; on this day her worshippers gather to recall their failures over the last year, and to cast out the burden of guilt and shame over those failures, to melt like the last of the year's snow.

TEMPLES

Like other lesser Ilsig gods, Meshpri shares a corner of a greater god's temple: her altars, often dusty and disused, are found in Shipri's temples. Some say, though, that every apothecary's table is one of Meshpri's altars and that every healer's garden is one of her temples, and they have a fair point.

MESHNOM'S INSIGHT

Although a virgin goddess, Meshpri has a son, the lesser god Meshnom. Like his mother, he is a god of healing and patron of apothecaries. In fact, Meshnom is almost exactly like his mother in every way other than gender. Some scholars question whether Meshnom truly exists, or is simply Meshpri in another guise, one that allows her priests to operate in places where goddess worship is forbidden. One Ilsigi sage held that, through divine alchemy, Meshpri actually created Meshnom from her own spiritual substance as a companion to ease her heartbreak; he is less a son than an identical twin to Meshpri's own soul, memories and thoughts. No one pays such nonsense any heed these days, of course.

Whatever the reason, there is a level of fluidity in Meshpri's relationships with both Meshnom and with mortal notions of gender. Her more educated priests understand this, and can draw upon this esoteric knowledge. Whenever a priest of Meshpri makes a Heal check or casts a spell from the Healing domain on someone of the opposite gender, the priest may make a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. If the check succeeds, the priest's actions are exceptionally successful. If making a Heal check, the priest gains a +2 luck bonus to the check; if casting a spell, the priest gains a +2 luck bonus to the casting check and casts it at +1 caster level.

A priest of Meshpri can even use this knowledge in everyday interactions. When her priests make Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate or Sense Motive checks against someone of the opposite gender, they may make DC 25 Knowledge (religion) checks; if the check succeeds, the priest gains a +2 divine bonus to the skill check.

SERVITORS

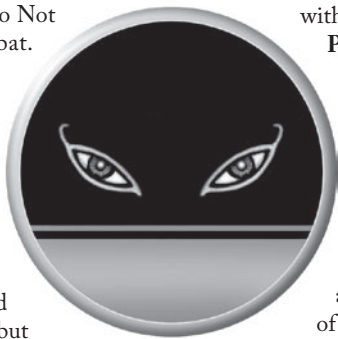
Meshpri's *planar allies* are janni, couatls and planetars. A priest of Meshpri can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Meshpri (not included); the additional sacrifice is 1000 sh worth of drugs and poisons, which are destroyed as the avatar manifests.

SHALPA

GOD OF THIEVES & SECRETS, THE SWIFT, THE SHADOWED ONE,
HIM WHOM WE DO NOT NAME — INTERMEDIATE GOD

Shalpa is the third son of Ils and Shipri, twin to Eshi, youngest of the gods. Swift and exuberant by nature, he is the god of thieves and athletes alike, and of those who chase trouble for the sheer adventure of it. But when Ils slew Shils the Bastard, Shipri's first son, a change came over Shalpa. In secret, he took up sword and shield and trained himself in battle, becoming another god—Him Whom We Do Not Name, the anonymous god of war and single combat. Most Ilsigi recognize that Shalpa and Him Whom We Do Not Name are connected, perhaps even the same god, but they are the same god in different aspects, to be worshipped and approached in different ways, his mysteries best left in the darkness. Did Shalpa embrace battle to defend himself, or to one day take revenge upon his father for the murder of his brother? Is the Nameless One a guise worn by Shalpa, or is Shalpa himself the mask? Only the wisest priests could answer, and they not only remain silent on the matter but also strongly discourage such questions.

Shalpa teaches that life is an adventure, a treasure to be claimed with skill and bravery. While a measure of forethought is useful, dragging your feet while making plans allows another to take your prize. A complex god of



DIVINE GIFT: BLADE OF NIGHT (Ex)

Godsworn of Shalpa may choose a unique lesser gift, *blade of night*. Whenever the godsworn is in a shadowy or dark place (dark enough to grant concealment), he adds his Wisdom bonus (minimum +1) as a divine bonus to Dexterity-based skill checks, Reflex saves, and attacks. Only darkness, whether natural or magical, grants this bonus; other types of concealment, such as foliage or mist, do not. When subject to full and bright daylight, such as when outside at high noon or in the area of effect of a *daylight* spell, the godsworn takes a -1 penalty to his attacks and damage rolls.

DIVINE POWER: SHALPA'S STRIKE

Priests of Shalpa may choose to channel a unique divine power, *Shalpa's strike*. For a short period, the priest can call upon Shalpa to guide his hand in battle. The priest temporarily gains the ability to make sneak attacks, exactly like those of assassins and thieves. The priest gains a number of sneak attack dice equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum +1d6), which stack with any sneak attack dice he may have from other class levels. The benefits of this divine power last for a number of rounds equal to the priest's Charisma bonus (minimum 1 round). During this period, the priest takes a -2 penalty to all his spellcasting and ritualcasting checks. Shalpa grants this power to only his most cunning priests; in order to choose this divine power, a character must have at least 8 ranks in Sense Motive and a Dexterity score of 13 or more.

contradictions and secrets, Shalpa is nonetheless a revered member of the Ilsigi pantheon, especially in lawless places like Sanctuary. He exemplifies the tricky, clever, energetic side of the Ilsigi and their gods, the rebellious legacy of Ils that has been subdued by centuries of order and civilization. As god of adventurers, Shalpa is the patron of freebooters and explorers; as god of thieves he governs burglars and highwaymen; as lord of war he silently watches assassins, mercenaries and heroes. He rarely shows his face or directly intervenes in mortal affairs, but occasionally directs his priests to aid the brave and the foolhardy, while reserving his anger for the brutal, the callous, and the gods of Ranke. His priests are the quietest and least assuming in the temple, and his small cults meet in the shadows and leave through the back door.

Symbol: A pair of eyes on a black field. Traditionally, Shalpa's priests wear a black mask over their upper face to evoke the god's symbol, and their prayers involve donning the mask at the appropriate moment to symbolically change identity. In times and places where masked men draw unfriendly attention, priests instead use a black medallion set with two gemstone 'eyes' as a holy symbol.

Portfolio: Thieves and theft, righteous battle, courage in the face of danger, the night

Domains: Luck, Trickery, War

Favored Weapon: Longsword

PRIESTS

It's a difficult thing to be a priest of Shalpa, to feel the eyes of the other priests of the pantheon on you at all times, to be both the dirty secret and silent defender of the temple. While the priests of Ils play politics, the priests of Shalpa make connections with the shadier elements of their congregation . . . for the good of the temple, of course. Many had levels in thief or assassin before becoming priests. Common divine powers include *commanding presence*, *holy vitality*, *resist magic* or *Shalpa's strike* (see sidebar).

GODSWORN

While Shalpa's priests focus on his role as god of thieves and footpads, his godsworn are more physical and more dangerous. Some are adventurers or athletes, inspiring others with bold exploits, and others are the silent warriors of Him Whom We Do Not Name, charged with defending the Ilsigi people from any threat. Many have levels in thief, assassin or ranger, and common divine gifts include *blade of night* (see sidebar), *divine perception*, *mortal might* (*Dexterity*) and *battle fervor*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Shalpa has little interest in elaborate rites and ceremonies. He prefers prayers that are quick, quiet, and involve but a few men in the shadows. The Winter Solstice is his holy night, the longest night of the year, when his followers do their deeds in the lingering darkness. The fact it is also the Rankan New Year's Day causes him some mirth. Few name him directly in oaths and prayers, but footpads know other ways to revere him; whenever one whispers "May the night-dark cloak cover you" to a comrade, Shalpa smiles in the darkness.

TEMPLES

Although powerful, Shalpa has no temple of his own. His subsidiary altars in Ils' temples are usually hidden at the back, which suits his preference for anonymity. When the need arises, any back alley, secret tunnel, forgotten dungeon or armory serves as his temple, and his symbols are subtly scratched into walls across the continent.

SERVITORS

Shalpa's *planar allies* are celestial cloakers, invisible stalkers and planetars. A priest of Shalpa can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Shalpa; the additional sacrifice is 1100 sh worth of gems, coins and valuables, which are buried in the dead of night and never found again.

AVATAR OF SHALPA

The avatar of Shalpa always appears as a shadowy figure with the build of a warrior and the grace of a cat burglar. His features are hidden in the darkness of his cloak, and he wears leather armor and carries a longsword.

An avatar of Shalpa is summoned either to steal a valuable object or to fight an enemy of the Ilsigi people. He rarely starts a fight, but is utterly fearless once battle is joined. He aids himself with *divine power*, *entropic shield* and *protection from energy*, tumbles around opponents to make sneak attacks, and scatters his opponents with *confusion* and *flame strike*.

AVATAR OF SHALPA

CR 13; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 11d8+33; hp 82; Mdt 24; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +11; Grap +14; Atk +16 melee (1d8+4/17–20, +1 keen longsword); Full Atk +16/+11/+6 melee (1d8+4/17–20, +1 keen longsword); SA sneak attack +3d6, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., lord of thieves; SV Fort +13, Ref +14, Will +12; Str 17, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Balance +15, Climb +15, Concentration +9, Disable Device +13, Hide +15, Jump +15, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +15, Search +13, Sleight of Hand +15, Survival +2 (+4 on other planes or following tracks), Tumble +15; Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*aid*, *break enchantment*, *confusion* (DC 16), *divine power*, *disguise self* (DC 13), *entropic shield*, *false vision*, *flame strike* (DC 17), *freedom of movement*, *invisibility*, *magic vestment*, *magic weapon*, *nondetection*, *protection from energy*, *spiritual weapon*. Caster level 11th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Lord of Thieves (Ex): An avatar of Shalpa possesses the trapfinding, evasion and improved uncanny dodge abilities of an 11th-level thief. The avatar suffers no penalty for using his skills without thieves' tools.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, +1 keen longsword.

SHIPRI

(THE ALL-MOTHER, THRICE-FAIR, GODDESS OF EARTH & MOTHERHOOD) GREATER GODDESS

Mother of the gods and wife of Great Ils, Shipri Thrice-Fair commands half of the Ilsig church. Hers is the world of "secret women's business;" that is, all the practical and immediate concerns of a successful society, rather than the bloody foolishness of wars and taxes. Shipri is the goddess of hearth and home, earth and fertility, mothers and children. She is not the goddess of family and community, though, which is the realm of her daughter Thili; she is mother first and wife second, and her love is never stronger than when a baby first comes screaming into the world. To protect this sacred

bond between mother and child, Shipri encourages public works, charity, peace, and ways of making the world a safer and calmer place.

Shipri teaches that the creation of life is the greatest act of all, but only if one is prepared to love one's creation; she reserves her hate for those who abandon their children and shirk their responsibility. In turn, she teaches that all mortals bear a responsibility to their world, their cities, and their neighbors, for one's actions shape that world, and you bear the burden of both the sins you cause and those you passively allow. As the most powerful goddess of the Ilsigi, her worship subsumes that of the lesser goddesses, and her cult is second only to that of Great Ils. Her temples bear alters to her daughters, and prayers to those goddesses are folded into the ceremonies of the All-Mother.

Symbol: A warm hearth. The main altar of a temple to Shipri is designed to be a hearth and stove, and many rituals involve foodstuffs being mixed and cooked upon the altar and then shared among the congregation. Priestesses of Shipri bear small hearthstones as personal holy symbols.

Portfolio: The home, cooking, childbirth and motherhood, charity

Domains: Earth, Home, Protection

Favored Weapon: Club

PRIESTS

While there is no official doctrine that Shipri's priests are all women, male priests are so rare as to be purely theoretical. The All-Mother's priestesses are almost always trained as midwives, and most have a child of their own, natural or adopted. Many also have levels in savant or noble; common divine powers include *commanding presence*, *guidance*, *mighty prayer* and *state of grace*.

GODSWORN

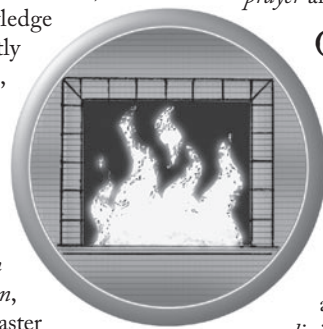
While her priests are many, Shipri's godsworn are rare indeed. Always women, her agents are grieving mothers whose children have died or been lost. Given power and purpose by the All-Mother, they work in secret to make the world a place their children could have loved, had they survived. Shipri's godsworn prefer to work subtly, and resort to violence only when they must. Many multiclass as savants or survivors; common gifts include *aura of courage*, *divine shield*, *smite enemy* and *mother's touch* (see sidebar).

PRAYERS & RITES

Just as the Ilsigi constantly evoke the name of Ils, so too are they forever offering prayers to Shipri. While an Ilsig begs Ils' favor for events to come, he whispers a thanks to Shipri after things have gone his way. All services for the Ilsig goddesses include an invocation to Shipri, as do those for a number of the male gods. Formal services to the All-Mother occur every Shiprisday, and her high holy day is the Festival of Flowers,

DIVINE GIFT: MOTHER'S TOUCH (SU)

Godsworn of Shipri may choose a unique greater gift, *mother's touch*. The godsworn has the power to heal wounds (her own or those of others) by touch. Each day she can cure a total number of hit points of damage equal to her godsworn level + her Charisma modifier (minimum 1 hp). She may choose to divide her healing among multiple recipients, and she doesn't have to use it all at once. Using *mother's touch* is a standard action. The godsworn cannot use this gift to deal damage to undead creatures.



held in mid-Eseris at the height of spring. The first bite of every meal is always dedicated to Shipri, as is the first word a baby speaks.

TEMPLES

Shipri's temples are companions of those to her husband Ils, less opulent but more welcoming, and usually located nearby. Large cities have a single large temple; small towns make do with shrines or even eating-houses built around a hearth-altar. Shipri's temples often have wings that acts as hospice and orphanage.

SERVITORS

Shipri's *planar allies* are janni, trumpet archons and planetars. A priest of Shipri can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Shipri (not included); the additional sacrifice is the deed to a sturdy house, worth at least 1200 sh and large enough to house two families, which Shipri then gives to a mother she deems needy and worthy.

SIVINI

(MAIDEN OF BATTLES, GODDESS OF WISDOM AND WAR,
DAUGHTER OF THE FORGE) LESSER GODDESS

A multifaceted goddess of a multifaceted pantheon, Sivini is a goddess of battle and healing, invention and architecture, anger and intellect. Perhaps her fractured nature comes from her mysterious mother, for Sivini is Ils' daughter but not Shipri's, and not even her own priests truly know her divine genealogy. Sivini's passionate nature makes her quick to anger and quick to forgive; she leads armies into battle, then administers healing to her fallen and repentant enemies. While her nameless half-brother is the god of warriors, Sivini is the goddess of soldiers; she bends her favor to righteous wars well fought, to the study of tactics, the erecting of fortifications, and the crafting of strong weapons.

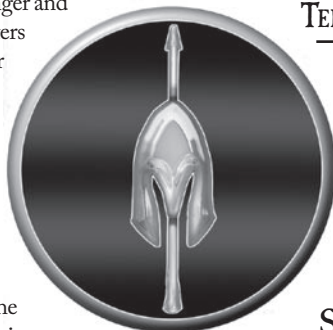
Sivini teaches that life is to be taken seriously and defended vigorously. There is no shame in waiting for the right moment to act, only in waiting too long; one should learn and prepare for the moment of truth, but when the moment comes, one must act. Her sect appeals to both warriors and scholars, healers and craftsmen—or did, back when it prospered. While her sect was repressed during the era of Rankan dominance over the Ilsig, it is slowly reawakening across the continent, drawing young Ilsigis looking for a righteous cause to which they can devote themselves.

Symbol: A spear and helmet. Even in her most intellectual aspects, Sivini is a martial god, and most of her rituals involve the brandishing of spears. Those priests who exalt her healing and creative aspects may carry symbolic bronze spears the size of a man's finger, which are wielded as pens or scalpels.

Portfolio: Architecture, craftsmanship, warfare, healing those injured in battle, arrogance

Domains: Artifice, Knowledge, War. Specific sects devoted to Sivini's healing aspects gain access to the Healing domain but lose access to the War domain.

Favored Weapon: Longspear



PRIESTS

Priests of Sivini are usually younger men, passionate about their people and followers. Most devote that passion to rebuilding the goddess's faded cult rather than striking out at enemies, though they may secretly worry that they favor planning too much over righteous action. Some have levels in savant, noble or ranger; common divine powers include *banish outsider*, *divine protection*, *holy vitality* or *turn undead*.

GODSWORN

While Sivini's priests are usually men, her godsworn are usually women. And while her priests strain at the limits of passion while trying to uphold wisdom, her godsworn act as her fearless warriors and righteous thunderbolts while wondering what they might accomplish if they diluted their fervor with restraint and deliberation. They often multiclass as survivors, rangers or savants; common gifts include *aura of courage*, *divine smith* (see sidebar) *smite enemy* and *battle fervor*.

PRAYERS & RITES

With her sect still diminished since the Rankan suppression, Sivini is a distant goddess little remembered by her people. Few temples hold services in her name or even mention her in their largest rituals. Her own sect leans towards small, fast rites, the kind that can be performed on a battlefield in the moment before charging; warriors and surgeons call her name when blood first flows, and whisper thanks when it is finally staunched.

TEMPLES

Sivini occupies a strange place in the Ilsig religion. Half-sister to the other gods, she upholds both male and female virtues, overlapping the division between Ils' and Shipri's greater sects. One might find an altar to Sivini in either Ils' or Shipri's temples, but more likely in neither; her sects tend to build their own small shrines, incorporated into smithies, hospices or barracks.

SERVITORS

Sivini's *planar allies* are bralani, erinyes and kolyaruts. A priest of Sivini can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Sivini; the additional sacrifice is 1000 sh worth of rare herbs and battlefield relics, such as the severed hands of warriors, mandrake root or the cornerstone of a sacked garrison.

AVATAR OF SIVINI

The avatar of Sivini is a muscular young Ilsig woman with a willful expression, her determination seeming to take on an almost-visible air around her. She wears leather armor and carries a longspear that crackles with electricity.

An avatar of Sivini is usually called to protect her followers or lead them into battle. While Sivini has a healing aspect, her avatar embodies her passionate, warrior side. An avatar of Sivini is a fearless and aggressive

DIVINE GIFT: DIVINE SMITH (EX)

Godsworn of Sivini may choose a unique lesser gift, *divine smith*. The godsworn adds his Wisdom modifier (minimum +1) as a circumstance bonus to all Craft checks, and requires only 75% of the normal raw materials to construct non-magical items. The godsworn also gains a +1 circumstance bonus to appropriate skill checks when using a tool he made himself, and a +1 bonus to damage rolls when using a weapon he made himself.

combatant, and can become so involved in battle that she fails to watch out for her allies. She empowers her followers with *magic vestment* and *magic weapon*, and targets her enemies with *flame strike*, *spiritual weapon* and her *lightning spear*.

AVATAR OF SIVINI

CR 12; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Mdt 20; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +10; Grap +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 electricity/x3, +1 *shocking longspear*); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 electricity/x3, +1 *shocking longspear*); Space/ Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with spear); SA lightning spear, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., mistress of invention, resistance to electricity 5; SV Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +14, Heal +15, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (architecture & engineering) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +15, Search +1 (+3 hidden compartments), Sense Motive +15, Spot +15; Combat Expertise, Empower Spell-like Ability (*lightning spear*), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longspear).

Lightning Spear (Su): Twice per day, an avatar of Sivini can use *lightning bolt* as a spell-like ability (CL 10th, DC 14). She can only use this ability when holding her longspear; the spear transforms into the *lightning bolt*, then reforms in her hands a round later. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*animate rope*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *detect secret doors*, *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *divination*, *divine power*, *fabricate*, *flame strike* (DC 19), *magic vestment*, *magic weapon*, *minor creation*, *spiritual weapon*, *stone shape*, *true seeing*, *wood shape*. Caster level 10th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Mistress of Invention (Ex): An avatar of Sivini may use any Craft skill with a total bonus of +11, and creates items using the Craft skill in one-quarter the normal time.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, +1 *shocking longspear*.

THEBA

(GODDESS OF LOST CAUSES, THE PATIENT ONE, THE DISAPPOINTED, SLAVESISTER) DEMIGODDESS

One of the most minor of Ilsigi goddesses, Theba enjoys a certain notoriety (if not popularity) for two reasons. First, she is the wife or at least the partner of Shalpa, god of thieves and adventurers; second, she is one of the few Ilsigi gods whose worship was encouraged by the Rankans. Goddess of lost causes and weary acceptance, Theba is the patron of slaves and the destitute. Her followers never wish to become her chosen, and none seek out her gift of silent misery and resigned sorrow. But under their browbeaten obedience there is still steel and power, for Theba is the protector of those pushed too far; when an Ilsigi suffers more than one should ever have to bear, it is Theba who breaks his manacles and presses a weapon into his vengeful hand.

Theba teaches that life is uncaring and unfair, a slow tidal wave that breaks those who push against it. It is best to endure the troubles and pain than to rail against

them. Righteousness comes from accepting fate, and the reward for that patience will come in the next life, not this one. Her message is a harsh and unlovely one, ill-suited for a culture that prefers her ever-striving lover Shalpa, but it is an attitude that the Rankans found ideal for their subjects. Thus, they subtly encouraged the worship of Theba during their occupation. Her cult flourishes during times of war and trouble; in these mostly better days, her sect is small and unpopular, comprised mainly of those who have lost everything and need some kind of faith to cling to in the aftermath.

Symbol: Broken manacles. Theba's priests wear their manacles like medals of honor, and prayers often involve the slow turning of these tight manacles against the wrists until blood weeps from beneath.

Portfolio: Lost causes, acceptance of the inevitable, righteousness, liberty and slavery

Domains: Desperation, Healing, Protection

Favored Weapon: Light mace

PRIESTS

Lonely and bitter men and women, Theba's priests lead small cults on the fringes of the Ilsigi church. They are often former slaves who never found the courage to fight back against their masters. Freed by chance or charity, they now preach charity to their flocks, praying for rescue once more. Many have levels in survivor or savant, and channel the powers of *divine protection*, *guidance*, *resist magic* or *solemn curse*.

GODSWORN

Unusual among the Ilsigi, Theba perhaps has more godsworn than priests. For this role, she favors slaves who finally break their own chains. While her priests counsel patience and acceptance, her divine agents draw the line that may not be crossed, and strike down those who defy righteousness one time too many. They are often multiclassed survivors, and favor gifts like *mortal might* (*Constitution*), *smite enemy*, *Theba's sacrifice* (see sidebar) and *divine fortitude*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Most Ilsigi never pray to Theba, for one does so only as a last resort, and her aid is more likely numb acceptance than divine rescue. She is occasionally revered in Shipri's rites, and sometimes in Shalpa's; when her husband's followers finally lose hope, she waits for them in the darkness. She has no festivals or holy days. Her sacrament is the prayer shared between the suicidal loner and the stranger who convinces him to hold on for one more day.

TEMPLES

Theba's tiny altars can be found, neglected and unused, at the far end of Shipri's major temples, gray slabs that are never washed clean of their stains of blood and tears. The Rankans encouraged a number of shrines to be built to her during their occupation, but all have been torn down or neglected to the point of collapse in the years since.

SERVITORS

Theba's *planar allies* are hound archons, lillends and celestial young adult bronze dragons. A priest of Theba can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Theba; the additional sacrifice is 900 sh worth of steel, forged into a pair of manacles and pried apart with the priest's bare and bleeding hands.



DIVINE GIFT: THEBA'S SACRIFICE (EX)

Godsworn of Theba may choose a unique greater gift, *Theba's sacrifice*. The godsworn may sacrifice her own hit points as a swift action to gain a bonus to any d20 roll, including skill checks, ability checks, attacks, and saving throws. Every 2 hp the godsworn gives up grants a +1 bonus to a specific check, with a maximum bonus equal to the character's Wisdom modifier (minimum +1). The godsworn sacrifices the hit points before making the check. Blood trickles from the character's scars and wounds whenever this ability is used.

AVATAR OF THEBA

The avatar of Theba is a slim young Ilsig woman with large, dark eyes showing both sadness and inhuman strength. She wears light robes and iron bands on her wrists. Blood trickles from beneath the bands and onto the iron bar she carries in her left hand.

An avatar of Theba is called only in dire circumstances, when her followers have suffered so much at the hands of their enemies that they cannot possibly endure any more. She only enters combat to protect her followers, and then fights a slow holding battle so they can escape. She uses *circle of protection*, *protection from energy*, *spell immunity* and *sanctuary* to maintain her own safety, and *shield other* to aid her worshippers.

AVATAR OF THEBA

CR 11; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 9d8+18; hp 58; Mdt 17; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +9; Grap +10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+2, +1 *defending light mace*); Full +11/+6 melee (1d6+2, +1 *defending light mace*); SA spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Escape Artist +14, Hide +14, Knowledge (religion) +12, Knowledge (the planes), Listen +15, Move Silently +14, Spot +15, Survival +15 (+17 on other planes), Use Rope +2 (+4 bindings); Ability Focus (*sanctuary*), Dodge, Mobility, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*sanctuary*).

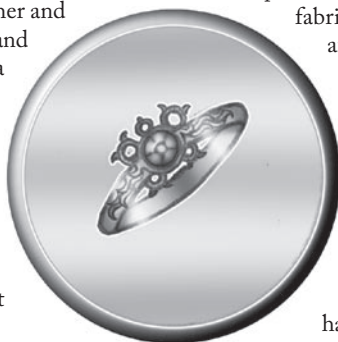
Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*circle of protection*, *convert critical wounds*, *convert light wounds*, *convert moderate wounds*, *convert serious wounds*, *helping hand*, *protection from energy*, *sanctuary* (DC 16), *shield other*, *spell immunity*. Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: +1 mighty cleaving light mace.

THILI

(GODDESS OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY, THE SLIM, THE STORMCAUGHT, CLOUDTOUCHER) LESSER GOD

The Ilsigi recognize three goddesses of love. Eshi governs romantic passion and sweet Shipri watches over the love of mother and child, but most important is Thili, goddess of marriage and family, for she is the patron of everything that makes a society last. Youngest daughter of Shipri and Ils, Thili holds the wisdom and restraint her sister Eshi lacks; perhaps too much restraint, some say, for she will always counsel patience and loyalty over passion and adventure, and the young have little time for such. But when exuberance and lust have run their course, Thili waits by the hearthfire, ready to show newlyweds how to strengthen their bonds and make a family that will last for generations.



Thili teaches that life and love are satisfying experiences that should be savored and explored slowly and deliberately, not rushed through headlong. The family is the bedrock of society, the brick that joins others in the architecture of community. Marriage is the love between equals, far more important than the imbalanced relationship between mother and child or a lover and his desired; it is no accident that the marriage of Thili and Thufir is the only stable and happy pairing of the Ilsig gods. Her teachings are an important truth, if not an exciting one, and her cult has the second-largest following among the goddesses of the Ilsig religion.

Symbol: A silver ring. Most priestesses of Thili do not wear the ring on their finger, but rather on a chain around their necks, symbolizing their marriage to god and community rather than to a man.

Portfolio: Marriage, family, community, love rather than passion, fabrics and dying

Domains: Charm, Community, Home

Favored Weapon: Light mace

PRIESTS

Served almost exclusively by married women, Thili asks her priestesses to focus more on secular than religious duties. They perform rituals and ceremonies, of course, but those ceremonies are more likely to be marriages, dedications or naming rites than sacrifices to Thili's glory. Some take levels in savant or noble, and common gifts include *commanding presence*, *guidance*, *mighty prayer* and *state of grace*.

GODSWORN

Peaceful to a fault, Thili has few godsworn. Those she possesses are usually men who have lost their families and now battle forces that damage communities and families, like drug dealers, crime lords, free thinkers and other destabilizing influences. Godsworn might also have levels in savant or thief, and common gifts include *bonus feat*, *divine protection*, *mortal might* (*Wisdom*) and *animal companion* (*eagle*).

PRAYERS & RITES

Thili's influence is strongest where society and religion overlap, such as during weddings, funerals, birthday celebrations and the swearing of oaths. Her priests act as dignitaries, witnesses and occasionally as judges, and mark these roles with prayers and small, simple services.

As patron of dyers and hairdressers, the first lock of hair or cut of fabric is dedicated to Thili, as are cloudy days and the days after rain.

TEMPLES

While her sisters' altars are usually relegated to corners of Shipri's temples, Thili tends to have her own small temples, or rather, to comfortably share them with her husband Thufir. These joint temples are rarely large (although Sanctuary once boasted a significant shrine), but they are plentiful; even small towns might have shrines to the Divine Marriage, nestled close to the inevitable shrine to Ils.

CEREMONIAL BONDING

Thili is the goddess of community and marriage, but she respects smaller units of love and friendship as well. Her priests and godsworn are encouraged to make friends, true friends of the heart and soul, and to depend upon those friends as the priests of Thili are depended upon by the community. A priest or godsworn of Thili can nominate a number of bonded companions equal to her Wisdom modifier (minimum of one), swearing that bond in an hour-long ceremony. Once a companion is nominated, that bond cannot be changed or revoked; a servant of Thili must choose her companions carefully and live forever with that decision.

Bonded companions can assist a priest or godsworn when she performs ritual prayers (spells), even if they have no ability to cast spells or rituals. Whenever the character leads a ritual, her bonded companions may contribute, no matter whether they are Familiar with that ritual or not. They make casting checks as usual to support the character's own casting check; if the bonded companion has no ritual casting ability, he makes a Wisdom check instead. If the companion is Familiar with the ritual in question, his successful casting check grants twice the usual bonus to the lead character's casting check.

SERVITORS

Thili's *planar allies* are celestial giant eagles, couatls and planetars. A priest of Thili can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Thili (not included); the additional sacrifice is 1000 sh worth of rich fabrics and dyes, or alternatively 1000 sh spent on catering a large but dignified party or ceremony for family and neighbors.

THUFIR

(GOD OF TRAVEL AND PILGRIMS, THE FARSEEING, GUARDIAN OF TRAVELERS, THE LAME) LESSER GOD

Second son of Ils and Shipri, Thufir was born with a clubfoot and a homely face, an imperfection in Heaven, and for this the Ilsig people love him, for his flaws draw him closer to his mortal subjects. Despite his lameness, Thufir is a god of speed and travel, for his ingenuity and fearlessness let him overcome his injury. He rides the sikkintair through the sky, explores the hidden corners of heaven and earth, and shares his discoveries with gods and mortals alike. His wife is Thili, goddess of the family, and together they symbolize the most important facets of Ilsig society: the strong base of community that supports trade and exploration.

Thufir teaches that life is an undiscovered country waiting for exploration, where wit and willpower are of more use than swords and hounds. Obstacles are there to be overcome, not balked at, and in overcoming our own weaknesses we turn them into strengths. While not as universally loved as Ils or Shalpa, Thufir's marriage to Thili is a cornerstone of the Ilsig church, and this elevates his cult in size and status; his followers include traders, professional travelers, and of course those with disabilities.

Symbol: A sandal. Ilsig everywhere nail sandals above the doors of their homes and businesses for good luck. During rituals, Thufir's priests trace out patterns and circles on the floor with a sandaled foot, and may even remove a sandal to brandish it as a holy symbol.

Portfolio: Travel, merchants and trade, surviving adversity, the disabled

Domains: Eloquence, Swiftmess, Travel

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

PRIESTS

Thufir allows both men and women to lead his rites; he cares more about their willingness to teach and aid their followers than their gender. Many are former merchants or travelers, now passing on their experience to a new generation. A few have been forced from that life by disability or injury,

leaving only this outlet for their wanderlust. His priests are often multiclassed survivors, savants or rangers, and channel the powers of *divine protection*, *guidance*, *heaven's liberty* (see sidebar), and *resist magic*.

GODSWORN

Thufir's godsworn are explorers and defenders of the disabled, discovering new trade routes and protecting them from bandits. They are usually disabled or deformed in some way, but their patron's favor lets them overcome their disadvantages. They often have levels in survivor or thief, and common divine gifts include *divine health*, *divine perception*, *mortal might (Constitution)* and *mount*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Thufir's worship is intertwined with Thili's, although the cults are independent. His priests perform many of his rites in Ils' temple, but a few must be performed in the women's temple of Shipri. A number of rites are performed outdoors every Thufirday, including blessings on roads and paths that safeguard travelers. Thufir is invoked at the start and end of every journey. He is also invoked, in a sadder way, when healers admit that a crippling injury is incurable.

TEMPLES

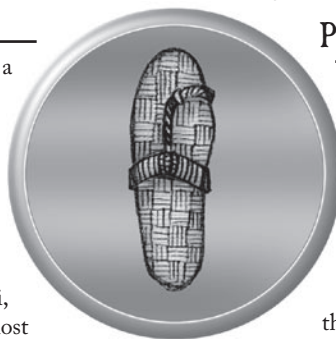
A popular god married to a popular goddess, Thufir is elevated above even Shalpa in the ranks of the Ilsig religion (Shalpa is loved but shuns the attention). Unlike his lesser brothers, Thufir tends to have his own small temples, which he shares with Thili's worshippers. Above the door

THE SACRED LEFT SANDAL OF THE FATHER

This minor artifact, while technically a relic of Ils, is normally associated with Thufir. Crafted by the Lord of Lords for his clubfooted son, the Sandal was stolen from the Temple of Ils in Sanctuary by Dyareelan cultists during the Troubles, and was only recently recovered and returned by Lone and Strick.

When this ancient sandal of rust-colored leather is worn on the left foot and a non-magical sandal is worn on the right, the wearer's base speed increases by +10 feet and he gains the benefits of a permanent *freedom of movement* spell. However, the creaking of the sandal imposes a -2 penalty to Move Silently checks, and its odd shape means that anyone attempting to track the wearer's movements gains a +2 bonus to their Search or Survival checks for tracking.

Strong transmutation; CL 17th



DIVINE POWER: HEAVEN'S LIBERTY

Priests of Thufir may choose to channel a unique divine power, *heaven's liberty*. For a brief period the priest is unaffected by any and all penalties and conditions, whether natural or magical. Existing penalties and conditions are suspended, and no new penalties or conditions can be imposed on him for the duration. He still benefits from any bonuses he has. This power lasts for a number of rounds equal to the priest's Charisma modifier (minimum 1 round).

of these shrines is nailed a sandal, while an eagle's eye looks down from a lintel or balustrade.

SERVITORS

Thufir's *planar allies* are ravid, sikkintairs and Huge air elementals. A priest of Thufir can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Thufir (not included); the additional sacrifice is 1000 sh in coin and jewels, packed into saddlebags on the back of a horse that gallops into the distance and never returns.

THE RANKAN PANTHEON

Like the Ilsig pantheon, the Rankan gods are a family, but that's about as far as the similarities go. The Rankan pantheon is small, insular and conservative, an aggressive trinity of gods (and two associated gods of dubious stature) seeking to expand their mortal empire. Under the guidance of these gods, the Rankan Empire swept through the continent like a tide, overthrowing the centuries-old Ilsig Kingdom and waging terrible wars against those nations that dared to resist. For a time, the Rankan onslaught seemed unstoppable, but the schemes of Ils and the sacrifices of mortals changed the balance of power in a minor city named Sanctuary, and the manifest destiny of the Rankan Empire evaporated like so much storm water. Decades later, the Rankan Empire has shrunk in on itself, and its once-triumphant gods find themselves looking for purpose once again.

Rankan lore holds that Savankala, god of the sun and of passion, was consumed with desire for Sabellia, goddess of the moon and stars. She could not deny his passion, and their union brought forth twelve children, twelve embodiments of the great virtues and passions: lust, greed, anger, treachery and more. Egged on by their sister Azyuna, embodiment of betrayal, ten of these newborn gods turned upon their parents and attempted to consume their power. One sibling stood against them: Vashanka, god of violence and storms, and his rage was impossible to withstand. He slew all ten of his brothers, then raped his sister Azyuna as punishment, acts that are symbolically repeated every year in the Rite of the Ten-Slaying. The bodies of the dead gods became the mortal world and its people, their sins reflected in the dark spirits and demons that haunt that world; Vashanka ascended to the side of his parents to share their glory, while Azyuna covered in shadow, rejecting the sympathy of Allestina Ever-Virgin, handmaiden of the gods.

The Rankan religion is, like its gods, aggressive, expansionistic, and contemptuous of women. While the Rankan Empire is not a theocracy, the ruling noble classes are advised and guided by the priests, and the armies march and die for the glory of both gods and emperor. Savankala is exalted over all, while Vashanka is celebrated as his prophet. Sabellia is revered, but her priestesses hold far less power than the priests of the male gods, while the priestesses of Azyuna and Allestina primarily exist as scapegoats for the sins and lusts of the priests. Things are changing, though, and the church has lost power and influence as the gods withdrew from the Empire; Sabellia's influence has grown as Vashanka's has faded, and the increasing complexity and viciousness of the church's internal politics may imply that Azyuna also grows more powerful.

Massive stone temples are a hallmark of the Rankan church (Savankala is also a god of architecture). Each city and town in the Empire boasts a temple dedicated to Savankala; larger cities have separate temples

for Sabellia and Vashanka, while in smaller towns all three gods share the temple. Each temple is governed by a High Priest, who in turn has three advisors: the Eye of Savankala, the Heart of Sabellia and the Fist of Vashanka.

AZYUNA

(GODDESS OF BETRAYAL AND TREACHERY, MOTHER OF WHORES, THE LOWEST) LESSER GOD

Lowest of the low and most hated bitch of Heaven, Azyuna is the goddess of betrayal, the whore who seduced and cajoled her brothers into attacking their divine parents. For this crime she was violently raped by Vashanka—indeed, on some level she is *always* being raped by Vashanka, her punishment unending, her sins unredeemable. Azyuna whispers treason and lies, and is the matron of adulterers, no matter how little they wish to do with her. Hers is a terrible and wretched role to play: the holy scapegoat of the Rankan faith, embodiment of everything vile and weak and treacherous in women. But she is just as much villain as victim, if not more so; she returns the hate of her people and her divine family tenfold, and seeks always to avenge herself upon the greater trinity.

Azyuna teaches that life is unfair, love is a lie, and that others use you if you let them. The only way to prevent yourself from being betrayed is to betray others first. Lies, theft and murder are the tools of the wronged, and Azyuna teaches that you have been wronged in some way, no matter who you are or what your circumstances, and commands that you take revenge immediately. The few people who actually revere or worship Azyuna do so in secret; they are desperate men (and occasionally women) looking for revenge, and in their hatred and weakness they agree to do the goddess's will, knowing all along that she will betray them for her own ends.

Symbol: A black dagger or rose. Azyuna's priestesses grow roses in their nunneries, and their rites involve plucking the petals away and bleeding on the thorns. Her godsworn, on the other hand, carry daggers, and their sacraments are limited to the stabbing of their enemies.

Portfolio: Treachery, infidelity, revenge, righteous hate

Domains: Betrayal, Subterfuge, Trickery

Favored Weapon: Dagger

PRIESTS

Azyuna is not so much worshipped as blamed, and her priestesses rarely enter her service willingly; their role in the church is to be beaten and raped by more powerful priests. That dynamic is changing, though, and soon these traditional scapegoats of Vashanka may be in a position to



have revenge. Azyuna's priestesses may be minor nobles, and as such take levels in that class, and they channel the powers *commanding presence*, *divine protection*, *hatestrike* (see sidebar) and *solemn curse*.

GODSWORN

Azyuna's godsworn take up her worship in desperation and hate-riddled pain. She cares nothing for them and they know it, but they do her bidding in the hope that they can betray her first. Some have levels in assassin, and common gifts are *divine perception*, *mortal might* (*Charisma*), *smite enemy* and *denial of fate*.

PRAYERS & RITES

No rites exist to praise Azyuna, save the Rite of the Ten-Slaying, and 'praise' is hardly the word. Rankans utter her name as a curse and an insult, and in the darkness she notes every time this occurs, keeping a ledger of hate that will one day be reconciled.

TEMPLES

Azyuna has no temples or even shrines, or at least no shrines created by the church; her few followers worship her at altars that rest atop the secret graves of their enemies.

SERVITORS

Azyuna's *planar allies* are succubi, night hags and ice devils. A priestess of Azyuna can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Azyuna; the additional sacrifice is the tongue of a cuckold, cut from his mouth by the woman he thought was faithful, spitted upon a silver dagger worth 500 sh.

AVATAR OF AZYUNA

The avatar of Azyuna always appears as a bruised Rankan woman whose naked body lies concealed beneath a heavy black cloak. She has a feral expression, one that speaks of depthless hatred. She clutches a long, oil-stained dagger in her left hand.

An avatar of Azyuna is only ever summoned to avenge some slight or wrong against her worshippers. However, once summoned she cannot be controlled, and will always betray those who summoned her in some way. She attempts to manipulate others into fighting for her if possible. If she must fight, she uses *crushing despair* and *confusion* to weaken her enemies, then uses *greater invisibility* to make sneak attacks while unseen.

AVATAR OF AZYUNA

CR 12; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 10d8+10; hp 55; Mdt 17; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grap +11; Atk +14 melee (1d4+2/19–20, *adamantine dagger of venom*); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d4+2/19–20, *adamantine dagger of venom*); SA call of betrayal, sneak attack +3d6, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +16, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +3 (+5 acting), Hide +16, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +15, Move Silently +16, Perform (dance) +16, Sense Motive +15, Spot +15, Survival +2 (+4 on other planes); Ability Focus (*crushing despair*), Debilitating Strike, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*disguise self*), Weapon Finesse.



DIVINE GIFT: HATESTRIKE

Godsworn of Azyuna may choose a unique lesser gift, *hatestrike*. The godsworn gains +1d6 sneak attack damage, just like that of an assassin or thief; it stacks with any sneak attack ability gained from other classes. Furthermore, whenever the godsworn provokes a massive damage save with a sneak attack, her opponent is overwhelmed by the cold rush of her hate and takes 1 point of Wisdom damage; this damage is taken even if the massive damage save succeeds. This gift may be chosen multiple times, each time increasing the sneak attack damage by +1d6 sneak attack damage and the Wisdom damage by +1.

Call of Betrayal (Sp): Twice per day, an avatar of Azyuna can use the *call of betrayal* ability. This is identical to the *charm monster* spell, except rather than making the target see the avatar as a friend, he sees one other person (chosen by the avatar and either named or pointed out when the spell is cast) as his enemy. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell, and allows a DC 17 Will save to resist. Caster level 10th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*alter self*, *confusion* (DC 16), *crushing despair* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 14), *disguise self* (DC 13), *displacement*, *false vision*, *greater invisibility*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *suggestion* (DC 15). Caster level 10th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: *adamantine dagger of venom*.

ALLESTINA

EVER-VIRGIN, GODDESS OF PURITY AND INSPIRATION, THE PRIZED ONE — DEMIGODDESS

Made rather than born, Allestina is the embodiment of Sabellia's virginity, spilt from the greater goddess when Savankala unleashed his passion upon her. She is the virginal prize claimed by Vashanka when he triumphs over his enemies, the uncomplaining recipient of his rage and lust. Allestina subjects herself to his demands, is raped and beaten, but is then miraculously healed, ever virginal, ever pure. Azyuna deserves her punishment, but Allestina does not, yet sacrifices herself nonetheless. Her selflessness and purity is an inspiration to women and an arousing power for men; outsiders point to her existence as a symptom of everything wrong with Rankan society.

Allestina teaches that suffering is necessary, women must obey their masters, and quiet endurance is the highest virtue. For women, she embodies submission and silent acceptance of one's inferiority; for men, she is the prize of the valiant and warlike, the perfect virginal toy awarded to the victorious commander and his lust-hungry soldiers. Her sect is actually a loose arrangement of nuns and young women cloistered across the Empire, sheltered from the demands of the outside world until claimed by a powerful noble or priest. Her worshippers are always female, usually young girls, who accept too easily the rules their patriarchal society lays upon them.

Symbol: A white rose. Allestina's nunneries all feature white rose plantations, and the novitiates strew the flowers before them as they move and dance in their ceremonies.

Portfolio: Purity, inspiration, sacrifice, victimhood

Domains: Inspiration, Nobility, Truth

Favored Weapon: Dagger

DIVINE POWER: BURDEN OF ABSOLUTION

Priestesses of Allestina may choose to channel a unique divine power, *burden of absolution*. The priestess may touch someone who is injured and make a turning check, as if turning undead or outsiders. If the d20 roll is equal or greater than the target's character level, she rolls turning damage; the target heals that much damage, while the priestess suffers that damage instead (even if it kills her). If the target was also affected by negative conditions (e.g. blinded), the priestess also absorbs those conditions, curing the target while suffering herself. The damage and negative conditions remain in effect upon the priestess until healed naturally or by magic.

PRIESTS

Allestina's priestesses are all female virgins. Most are pressed into the role by families that want them to remain pure, a virgin prize for a rich and powerful husband. They often come to love the peace of the nunneries, and pray they may die rather than be married off. Most have levels in noble or savant; common powers are *burden of absolution* (see sidebar), *divine protection*, *resist magic* and *turn undead*.

GODSWORN

Rare and mysterious, Allestina's godsworn embody not innocence but responsibility; not pointless sacrifice but a duty to make that sacrifice meaningful. They target those who despoil innocence and make those sinners see what they have done—by force if necessary. Some have levels in assassin or survivor; common gifts are *channel divine power*, *divine perception*, *mortal might (Wisdom)* and *denial of fate*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Allestina is venerated as an aside in many rites of Vashanka, but more as an object than as a goddess. Her nuns and novitiates speak their own prayers and rites, ceremonies hidden from outsiders and marked by tears. Allestina's nuns participate in the Rite of the Ten-Slaying, sacrifices who intervene if Azyuna's surrogate does not dance well enough to placate Vashanka.

TEMPLES

Allestina has no temples of her own; her nunneries contain small chapels and shrines, but are only for her priests and vestals, not the public. Particularly large temples to Sabellia may include a small altar to Allestina; smaller temples allow prayers to be made to her at Sabellia's altar on specific days of the month.

SERVITORS

Allestina's *planar allies* are celestial nymphs, lillends and planetars. A priest of Allestina can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Allestina (not included); the additional sacrifice is 900 sh worth of rare white roses and flowers, thrown into a fire and utterly wasted.

SABELLIA

(MOTHER OF STARS, GODDESS OF WOMEN AND THE NIGHT)
GREATER GOD

Mother of the stars and the sky, Sabellia is the mother of Vashanka and Azyuna, divine wife of Savankala; Rankan doctrine is unclear on just how willing a wife and mother she was, but that's something of a moot point. She is the goddess of women, a difficult role in the rigidly sexist Rankan religion. It takes in not just protection of women, but also the promotion of "proper" behavior and thought and the reinforcement of social stability. Sabellia is also the most mystical of the Rankan gods, concerned with

the secrets and mysteries of the night and the unknown; she knows the hidden ways through the darkness, speaks with the spirits, and acts as intermediary between mortal and divine.

Sabellia teaches that women are different from men, that they play a different role in society and should not be caught up in the works of men. She also teaches that a successful society requires stability, hard work, and a dedication to appropriate behavior and thought. Hers is a very practical, very *political* doctrine; the mystical aspects of her teachings are separate from the main body of thought and are often confined to splinter cults. The deterioration of the Rankan Empire has increased internal politics in the church, and Sabellia's sect has gained power and a new direction in the process; her priestesses still preach that women should know their place, but that place is no longer one of submission and quiet dignity, but of decision-making and improving society. Her cult is significantly more powerful and popular than it once was, and numerous missionary groups are spreading her word across the continent.

Symbol: A crescent moon. Sabellia's priestesses usually wear silver moon amulets, presenting or displaying them in rituals. Others wear the crescent as a tattoo or body painting, or decorate clothes, tools and even weapons with the symbol.

Portfolio: Women, the night, the moon and stars, appropriate behavior

Domains: Healing, Night, Protection

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

PRIESTS

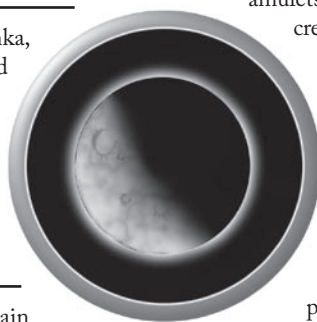
Sabellia is a woman's deity, and only allows women as her priestesses. Most are middle-aged women of noble families, and the highest priestesses are all virgins; they often focus on political and social action over spiritual activities, their first loyalty to the goddess's church rather than to her worshippers. Most have levels in noble or savant; common divine powers include *commanding presence*, *solemn curse*, *state of grace* and *the moon's sympathy* (see sidebar).

GODSWORN

As with her priestesses, Sabellia's godsworn are all women, usually those who have chafed at the limits imposed on them by men and refused to be defined by others. While her priestesses focus on the church and on politics, her godsworn serve her worshippers and share more of her mystical aspect. Levels in savant, survivor or noble are common, as are the gifts *channel divine power*, *divine perception*, *mortal might (Wisdom)* and *animal companion (owl)*.

PRAYERS & RITES

As the primary deity of all Rankan women, Sabellia has many services and rites performed in her name; she is invoked to bless women in childbirth and in death, and is prayed to by healers and homemakers. As her sect gains social power, she is invoked more and more in areas that were traditionally for men alone, such as mercantile transactions or marriage rites.



DIVINE POWER: THE MOON'S SYMPATHY

Priestesses of Sabellia may choose to channel a unique divine power, *the moon's sympathy*, which opens a mystical connection between her and any women nearby. While the power is in effect, the priestess may use any beneficial spell with a range of 'touch' (e.g., *convert light wounds*) as a spell with close range instead, but only if she uses it on a female target. If using a hostile or attack spell on a female target while using this power, the spell's save DC (if any) is increased by +2. The benefits of this power last for a number of rounds equal to the priestess's Charisma modifier (minimum 1 round).

TEMPLES

Larger Rankan cities have separate temples to Sabellia; in smaller towns, she shares her temple with the other gods. In addition to temples, her sect maintains cloisters across the Empire where noblewomen, widows and orphaned daughters may retire to lead lives of peace, contemplation, and of course ruthless political machinations.

SERVITORS

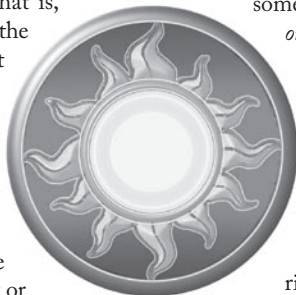
Sabellia's *planar allies* are celestial giant owls, trumpet archons and celestial female cloud giants. A priest of Sabellia can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Sabellia (not included); the additional sacrifice is 1200 sh worth of silver (her sacred metal), presented at night under a full moon.

SAVANKALA

(GOD OF SUN AND SPLENDOR, THE DIVINE ARCHITECT,
TAMER OF DARKNESS) GREATER GOD

Lord of the Empire, father of gods and creator of all that is, Savankala is the head of the Rankan pantheon and one of the most powerful gods in Heaven. When his passion was at its height, his union with Sabellia created the world and the lesser gods and spirits. Now his passion has cooled and he stands apart from his creations, watching from Heaven but rarely intervening in events. He is the patron of architecture, whether physical or social; a temple is sacred in his sight, and so is the ordered society administered by that temple. He is also the god of knowledge and the law, whose wisdom informs the perfect (and *never* corrupt or bribable) judges and nobles of the Empire. He is also the god of fire and light, who despises the darkness and the evil spirits within; this, of course, causes tension with his holy wife Sabellia, goddess of night and mystery.

Savankala teaches that law, order and knowledge are the holiest of things, and that order must be maintained at any cost in order for knowledge to thrive. The Rankan Empire is the perfect manifestation of his perfect will, so it must be elevated above all, including at the expense of its own citizens if needs must. Other societies are flawed, and worship flawed and lesser gods; it is only right and proper that his people expand their Empire, unseat these pretender gods and take the



entire continent into their enlightened control. Savankala is worshipped across the entire Empire by men and women alike, although he is respected and venerated rather than loved. Outside the Empire, few worship Savankala, except when worship might bring them political influence with Ranke—something less important now than it was at the Empire's height a few decades ago.

Symbol: The fiery sun. Savankala's priests wear golden sun medallions and amulets, and many of his rituals involve the burning of sacrifices or must be performed in bright, hot daylight.

Portfolio: Law and order, civilization, the sun, knowledge without emotion

Domains: Fire, Justice, Sun

Favored Weapon: Longsword

PRIESTS

Always men and almost always members of noble families, Savankala's priests are politicians first and holy men second. For them, politics are holy. Their personal power is the church's power and in turn the Empire's power, all for the glory of the sun god. Most have levels in noble, and some are also savants; common divine powers include *banish outsider*, *commanding prayer*, *deny heresy* (see sidebar) and *guidance*.

GODSWORN

Savankala accepts both men and women as his godsworn, who are his fiery crusaders rather than his holy politicians. They are charged with destroying the enemies of the light, whether supernatural creatures or rival religions. Many have levels in noble, fighter or ranger; common gifts include *aura of courage*, *mortal might (any)*, *smite enemy* or *energy resistance*.

PRAYERS & RITES

As the highest power of the Rankan pantheon, Savankala is constantly being prayed to, invoked and revered. Ceremonies to the sun are held daily at his temples, and attending the noon services every Savankhday is almost mandatory for every noble or man of power. As the father of the law, Savankala is invoked at the start and beginning of every hearing of a crime, and his virtue is extolled as the criminal receives his inevitable and harsh punishment.

DIVINE POWER: DENY HERESY

Priests of Savankala may choose to channel a unique divine power, *deny heresy*, which allows them to interfere with the prayers and spells of other priests. Whenever the priest attempts to counter a spell being cast by a priest of a non-Rankan god (not including the use of *dispel magic*), he may channel this power and make a turning check as a free action. If the check result is equal to or greater than the opponent's caster level, the priest rolls for turning damage and adds the result to his casting check to cast the countering spell. When using *dispel magic* as a counterspell, or when *dispelling* magical effects caused by a non-Ranken priest, the priest of Savankala may instead channel this power as a free action to add his Wisdom modifier (minimum +1) to his caster level check to *dispel* those effects. This power only affects the spells of priests and godsworn, not mages, witches, initiates or the spell-like abilities of creatures.

FIRE IN GOD'S EYE

The two most powerful relics of the cult of Savankala are the *Fires in God's Eye*, a matched pair of egg-shaped diamonds. Having these gems is a sign of the god's favor and so they are fiercely guarded. The stones themselves are flawless, reflecting even the dimmest light like fire. When properly installed in a holy symbol, they flare with pure white luminescence.

Originally, these stones were held in the Great Temple of Savankala in the city of Ranke, but Savankala bid Chenaya, his godsworn, to go and take one of the stones and bring it back to Sanctuary to show that while he still favored Ranke, he also favored the 'thieves' world.' Though the priests were dogged in their attempts to locate the missing stone, ultimately Chenaya succeeded in consecrating a temple to Savankala in Sanctuary and installed the stone in the altar.

What happened since this fateful event is unclear. The Rankan legionnaires withdrew from the city and with them went some of the city's aristocracy. Chenaya and Kadakithis both left the city and so the city's leadership fell unto Wrigglie shoulders. The Troubles followed, and though there was a vast migration from Sihan, the Dyareelans destroyed all the temples. At some point during this chaos, the diamond vanished.

The *Fire in God's Eye* has several magical properties available to a servant of Savankala. Three times per day, as a 20th-level caster, the wielder can cast the following spells as spell-like abilities: *flame strike*, *searing light*, *sunbeam*, and *sunburst*. The save DCs for these abilities are 10 + the spell level + the wielder's Charisma modifier.

Overwhelming evocation (light); CL 21st.

TEMPLES

Lord of architecture, Savankala insists on the creation and dedication of a temple in his honor in every town and city of the Empire. Each temple must be sanctified with the sacrifice of a living being, which is then buried under the foundation stone; minor temples may sacrifice horses, bulls or other large animals, while the greatest temples demand human sacrifice, preferably of a noble.

SERVITORS

Savankala's *planar allies* are celestial giant eagles, efreeti and noble salamanders. A priest of Savankala can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Savankala; the additional sacrifice is 1200 sh worth of gold (his sacred metal), melted in a fire under the noonday sun.

AVATAR OF SAVANKALA

Savankala's avatar appears to be a stern and regal Rankan man, nearly seven feet tall. Power radiates from him like raw heat. He is dressed in noble finery and armor, a longsword sheathed at his right side.

An avatar of Savankala is summoned to battle some great danger to the Rankan Empire; his priests rarely call upon him, since he prefers to remain aloof from the mortal world. In combat an avatar of Savankala is precise, intelligent and merciless, burning away any obstacles between himself and his opponent. He harries or immobilizes his enemies with *hold person*, *searing light* and *wall of fire*, and bolsters his allies (if any) with *resist energy* to protect them from his powers.

AVATAR OF SAVANKALA

CR 14; Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 12d8+48; hp 102; Mdt 30; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +12; Grap +14; Atk +15 melee (1d8+3 plus 1d6 fire, *flame tongue*); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d8+3 plus 1d6 fire, *flame tongue*); SA *shield of glory*, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +16, Ref +14, Will +16; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 19, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Diplomacy +19, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (architecture & engineering) +20, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (local) +20, Knowledge (religion) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Listen +15, Perform (oratory) +17, Ride +15, Search +20 (+22 secret compartments), Sense Motive +19, Spot +15, Survival +4 (+6 on other planes or following tracks); Ability Focus (*command*), Empower Spell-Like Ability (*searing light*), Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*hold person*).

Shield of Glory (Sp): An avatar of Savankala may surround himself with a blazing shield of white light four times per day. The avatar gains a +4 sacred bonus to AC, and anyone looking at him must make a DC 17 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. Opponents can avert their gaze or shut their eyes while fighting the avatar, just as if fighting an opponent with a gaze attack. The shield lasts for 12 rounds. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

Domain Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*burning hands* (DC 15), *command* (DC 16), *discern lies* (DC 18), *endure elements*, *fire seeds* (DC 20), *fire shield*, *flame strike* (DC 19), *beat metal* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *mark of justice*, *produce flame*, *resist energy* (fire only), *searing light*, *true seeing*, *wall of fire*. Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: +1 mithral breastplate, *flametongue*.

VASHANKA

(GOD OF STORM AND WAR, THE THUNDERER, TENSLAYER)
GREATER GOD

Vashanka is the Rankan god of destruction, tempests and warfare. He is a god of violence, rape and untamable aggression in a society that sees these qualities as virtues. Vashanka destroyed his renegade divine siblings at the dawn of time to defend Sabellia and Savankala, as well as to share in their power. He is a primal god, the antithesis in many ways of his restrained and intellectual parents; passionate beyond reasoning, his wrath was the power that propelled Ranke's armies and the empire's expansion. But that unthinking rage was also his undoing, for he was too ready to assume semi-mortal form and send his avatars into the material world to destroy his enemies. When his avatar was slain by Shadowspawn, Vashanka was barred from this world and confined to Paradise, unable to work his will or empower his priests. Various attempts to regain that influence were made over the decades, including the creation of the Storm Children and a tentative allegiance with the goddess Mother Bey and Enlil. Only recently has Vashanka somehow found a way to extend his will to the mortal world once again, and time will yet tell whether his decades of disempowered exile have changed him or simply made him more violent and aggressive.

Vashanka teaches that life is to be taken by force and that rage, lust, and violence are holy passions that are meant to be indulged rather than repressed. Moderation, mercy, and compassion are weaknesses, the things of women, and for that reason women are fit only for rape, abuse and as mute repositories of a warrior's passions. He is also the god of storms and cyclones—not the rain that renews the earth, but the tempest that

DIVINE POWER: WARPRIEST'S PRAYER

Priests of Vashanka may choose to channel a unique divine power, *warpriest's prayer*, which allows them to transcend their lack of battle training. When the priest channels this power, he no longer suffers any casting penalties for casting spells in armor or using a shield. He also suffers no attack penalty for using martial weapons with which he is not proficient. The benefits of this power last for a number of rounds equal to the priest's Charisma modifier (minimum 1 round).

DIVINE GIFT: STORM'S WRATH

Godsworn of Vashanka may choose a unique lesser gift, *storm's wrath*. The godsworn may enter a rage once per day, exactly like the rage of a barbarian, except the godsworn is not left fatigued when the rage ends. This gift may be chosen multiple times, each time gaining another daily use of rage.

destroys the old and wipes the slate clean for the new. A war-god first and foremost, Vashanka's primary followers are in the Rankan military; few others feel the need to worship such a terrifying entity, unless they wish to channel his passionate drive into their mundane activities or seek a divine justification for their sins and lusts.

Symbol: Lightning bolt. Vashanka's priests wear lightning bolt amulets, and the best are crafted from iron struck by lightning. Many of his rituals must be performed during a storm, and it's considered a great honor to be struck by lightning during such a rite (so long as you survive the experience).

Portfolio: Storms, destruction, warfare, violence, uncontrolled desire, horses

Domains: Conquest, War, Weather

Favored Weapon: Greatsword

PRIESTS

Vashanka's priests are all men, of course, and almost all serve in the military or did so in the past. These slaughter-priests extol their followers to new atrocities of holy bloodshed, and use their military influence as a political tool when necessary. Most have levels in fighter, noble or even barbarian; common powers include *commanding presence*, *divine protection*, *holy vitality* or *warpriest's prayer* (see sidebar).

GODSWORN

Vashanka's chosen are warriors, killers, and men driven by passion and a love of destruction. His influence drives their passion even higher, and they serve not just by slaughtering the god's enemies but by indulging every appetite and impulse. Some have levels in fighter, ranger or barbarian; common gifts include *divine health*, *mortal might (Strength)*, *storm's wrath* (see sidebar) and *mound*.

PRAYERS & RITES

War is Vashanka's delight, and Rankan soldiers scream his name as they throw themselves in waves against his enemies. His priests offer ceremonies of thanks after battles, with sacrifices of women and meat for his holy appetite. The most sacred rite is the Ritual of the Ten-Slaying, an annual ceremony in which his chosen vessel rapes and beats a priestess or representative of the goddess Azyuna.

TEMPLES

Temples to Vashanka exist in every major city of the Empire, and are considered more important and prestigious than those of Sabellia. In smaller locales, his altar is located within the temple of Savankala. The

Rankan military erect small portable shrines and altars when they make camp, and make sacrifices upon them before going into battle.

SERVITORS

Vashanka's *planar allies* are howlers, glabrezu and Huge air elementals. A priest of Vashanka can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Vashanka; the additional sacrifices are two virginal maidens of noble stock, which the avatar will rape and probably kill when he manifests.

AVATAR OF VASHANKA

Vashanka's avatar appears as a massively built Rankan man wearing only a loincloth and carrying a massive greatsword. His face is contorted in anger, and his desire for violence is like a terrible aura around him.

An avatar of Vashanka is called only to attack the enemies of his priests, who summon him knowing that he will destroy anything around him in the process. He attacks in an unstoppable fury, indiscriminately mowing down anything in his path and uncaring of the consequences. He uses *call lightning*, *flame strike* and *ice storm* to mow down groups of enemies, but also loves to surround himself with a *blade barrier*, cast *rage* on himself and then fight in melee.

AVATAR OF VASHANKA

CR 14; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 12d8+48; hp 102; Mdt 26; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +12; Grap +17; Atk +18 melee (2d6+8 plus 1d6 electricity/17–20, +1 *keen shocking greatsword*); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d6+8 plus 1d6 electricity/17–20, +1 *keen shocking greatsword*); SA spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., immune to electricity; SV Fort +16, Ref +16, Will +13; Str 20, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Climb +20, Intimidate +18, Jump +20, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +16, Ride +19, Search +17, Spot +16, Survival +16; Ability Focus (*command*), Empower Spell-Like Ability (*call lightning*), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*blade barrier* (DC 17), *call lightning* (DC 14), *command* (DC 14), *control winds* (DC 17), *divine power*, *enthrall* (DC 13), *flame strike* (DC 16), *fog cloud*, *geas/quest*, *greater command* (DC 16), *ice storm*, *lesser geas* (DC 15), *magic vestment*, *magic weapon*, *obscuring mist*, *sleet storm*, *spiritual weapon*, *suggestion* (DC 14); 4/day—*rage*. Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possession: +1 *keen shocking greatsword*.



DEATH AND SOSTREIA

Everything ends, everyone dies; even the gods can be diminished and forgotten. Death is a universal truth, not one confined to a particular culture or particular pantheon, and the god of Death stands apart from all others—all but one. Centuries ago, Death fell in love with the daughter of the Ilsig gods, Sostreia, and she in turn fell in love with him. When she took her own life, he refused to send her into the afterlife, but asked her to stay with him as the Queen of the Underworld; in accepting, she ascended to godhood, and now sits eternally by his side, white raven to his black.

Death and Sostreia are the rulers of the Underworld, the plane of Purgatory, where souls await judgment and the passage to some final reward or afterlife. All mortal souls travel through this world after death, no matter their faith, and so all religions recognize the two gods of death and rebirth. Some attempt to co-opt the gods fully into their belief system, incorporating them into their creation myths or pantheons, but most worshippers realize the folly of this, and simply accept that death, hell and judgment exist for all. What matters is living a life of piety that will satisfy your own gods, so that your sojourn in the Underworld is brief; what matters is living life as best you can, and dying only when the time is right.

It's important to note that under the Rankan conception, the goddess of death and sleep, Dene Blackrobe, rules the underworld. Death and Sostreia are seen instead as the rulers of Hell (or rather the rulers of all seven hells).

DEATH

(GOD OF ENDINGS & DARKNESS, LORD OF THE UNDERWORLD,
THE GREY FERRYMAN) INTERMEDIATE GOD

The god of death takes many forms and many names, but there is always one truth behind the labels and the masks. Death is the god of the inevitable ending, the dispassionate judge who assigns souls to their appropriate fate. He was not the first god to exist, but he will certainly be the last. He reserves his love for his wife Sostreia and his anger for those who would disrupt the eternal balance of life and death; his judgment is firm, fair, and above all final.

Death teaches that all things must end, and this is no bad thing, for nothing can be understood or judged until it has ended. Life is to be lived, and mortals should attempt to live as long and worthy a life as possible—but in the end they *will* die and will be judged, and they must accept that inevitability or be condemned to oblivion. Such teachings are rarely welcomed by mortals, and Death's cult is small and unpopular, mostly confined to undertakers, morticians and those who see death every day.



Symbol: A black raven. Death's priests dress in black, often bearing obsidian symbols in the shape of a feather, or binding real feathers to their tools. Some keep ravens as pets, and ravens are commonly sacrificed as part of the cult's rites.

Portfolio: Death as the inevitable end, judgment, eternal darkness

Domains: Darkness, Death, Justice

Favored Weapon: Scythe

PRIESTS

The priests of Death are morticians, gravetenders, and administrators of the last rites for many different cultures and faiths. They are often surprisingly likeable men (rarely women), kindhearted shepherds of the end, but others are as gloomy and morbid as most people expect. Many have levels in savant; common powers include *guidance*, *resist magic*, *state of grace* and *turn undead*.

GODSWORN

Death's soldiers are, without exception, those who have died and then been returned to life. Some seek to settle their unfinished business, while others punish necromancers and those who flood the Underworld with the souls of the innocent. Many have levels in assassin or survivor; common gifts include *channel divine power*, *divine health*, *lifeward* (see sidebar) and *divine fortitude*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Every faith on the continent has its funeral rituals and celebrations of death, and Death (or Dene Blackrobe in Rankan rites) is invoked in all of them in some fashion. His priests perform rites to commemorate the vast numbers, regardless of faith, killed by great disasters. Few pray to Death, except his priests, but many cross their fingers and mutter a plea for him to pass them by in the darkest times.

TEMPLES

Death has no temples, but his priests maintain shrines to him in graveyards and mausoleums, special places where sacrifices and prayers can be made for the souls of the departed. Gravediggers also pray at such altar stones to ward off the ire of the undead and the confused souls of the as-yet unburied.

SERVITORS

Death's *planar allies* are nightmares, spectres and nightwings. A priest of Death can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Death; the additional sacrifice is 1100 sh of funeral oils, unguents and similar mortician's tools, buried in an unmarked grave at midnight.

DEATH AND UNDEATH

Undead are foul in the sight of Death and Sostreia. Those undead who are unwillingly raised are mortal souls being imprisoned and enslaved; those who willingly escape the Underworld are defying the natural order.

Priests and godsworn of Death and Sostreia can gain the ability to turn the undead, but not to rebuke or control them. They can, however, still use spells like *animate dead* and *planar ally* to summon undead that may be commanded, but such creatures are actually spirits of the Underworld—divine creatures that take on solid or immaterial forms in this world for a short period, rather than human souls torn from Hell. They are still treated as undead in many ways (see **Chapter Seven: Bestiary** for details).

AVATAR OF DEATH

When Death appears, he looks like a fierce humanoid, seven feet tall with broken fangs and surrounded by an aura of darkness. He dresses in grey rags and carries a black, dusty scythe that almost resembles a ferry's oar.

An avatar of Death is only summoned to kill, directed against the enemies of the gods and their congregations. Silent, forbidding, and thoroughly frightening to behold, the appearance of Death can empty a crowded marketplace. An avatar of Death does not slaughter indiscriminately, and attacks only those he has been summoned to kill. He fights in self-defense if attacked by others, but prefers to use *blindness*, *cause fear* or *darkness* to neutralize opponents he does not wish to harm, entering melee combat only if he must.

AVATAR OF DEATH

CR 13; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 11d8+44; hp 93; Mdt 24; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +11; Grap +14; Atk +15 melee (2d4+5/19–20/x4, +1 *ghost touch scythe*); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (2d4+5/19–20/x4, +1 *ghost touch scythe*); SA death touch, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., everwarded; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Diplomacy +5, Hide +16, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +16, Move Silently +16, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Survival +2 (+4 on other planes); Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Critical (scythe), Power Attack.

Death Touch (Su): An avatar of Death may use a *death touch* 3 times/day. He makes a melee touch attack (+14 bonus) against a living creature. If the attack succeeds, roll 11d6; if the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies (no save).

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*animate dead*, *armor of darkness*, *blacklight*, *blindness* (DC 15), *cause fear* (DC 13), *consecrate*, *darkness*, *death knell* (DC 14), *death ward*, *deeper darkness*, *detect return*, *hallow*, *slay living* (DC 17), *slay returned* (DC 16). Caster level 11th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Everwarded (Ex): An avatar of Death is immune to all death spells, magical death effects, energy drain, and any negative energy effects.

Possessions: +1 *ghost touch scythe*.

SOSTREIA

(GODDESS OF SACRIFICE AND REBIRTH, LADY OF THE UNDERWORLD, HELL'S QUEEN) INTERMEDIATE GODDESS

Sostreia was originally a minor Ilsigi goddess of the Spring, but one day, while picking flowers in a balmy field in Paradise, she had a vision of Death in a daydream and loved him immediately. That love reverberated into the Underworld to awaken Death's dark heart and so he took her as his bride. She embodies the second face of death—the turning of the seasons, the cycle of change, and the new life that emerges from the ashes of the old. She is also a goddess of love, in her way, but few understand this side of her power, or why she protects the innocent dead and hates those who murder and despoil the love of the living.

Sostreia teaches that one thing must end for another to begin, just as winter's chill must come before spring's new birth. She also teaches love is not stronger than death but is separate from it, and can survive beyond

DIVINE POWER: FINAL BLESSING

Priestesses of Sostreia may choose to channel a unique divine power, *final blessing*, which allows them to end the suffering of a dying person and convey his soul's blessing upon another. The priestess must join hands with both the dying person (who must be a willing participant) and another person (who must be chosen by the dying individual), and then makes a turning check. If the check is equal to or greater than the character level of the first mortal, he instantly dies without pain or suffering. She then rolls the turning damage; this result is passed to the second person as a pool of divine energy that persists indefinitely. The recipient of the blessing can add any or all of this pool as a divine bonus to any d20 roll he makes; each +1 to the roll reduces the pool by one. The recipient must decide to apply the bonus before making the roll. When the pool reaches 0, the recipient may no longer add these bonuses to his d20 rolls. The priestess can be the recipient of the blessing if the dying person wishes.

In game terms, a dying person is anyone who suffers from a disease or infection for which no cure is available and which deals Constitution or hit point damage; anyone who will die within one month due to age or other natural causes; or someone who has just failed a save vs. poison that will lead to his death via Constitution damage. Alternatively, GMs may allow this rite to be performed on any character who has reached –10 hit points (or lower, if he benefits from the cling to life survivor class ability or a similar effect) so long as the priestess can perform the rite before the end of the round during which the character died.

DIVINE GIFT: LIFEWARD

Godsworn of Death may choose a unique lesser gift, *lifeward*, granting them immunity to the energies of the Underworld. The godsworn gains spell resistance equal to his class level plus his Wisdom modifier, but only against Necromancy spells and the spell-like abilities of undead creatures. He also adds his Charisma modifier (minimum +1) as a circumstance bonus to saving throws against those effects and to Fortitude saves made 24 hours after receiving negative levels.

the wall of night. Sostreia is slightly more popular than Death, but only slightly; too many mortals fixate on her status as Hell's Queen, the cold white shadow in the deeper darkness. Her worshippers are few, mostly those who seek solace after having lost their loved ones.

Symbol: A white raven. These rare birds are prized by priestesses of Sostreia as pets and familiars, and never sacrificed or harmed. Priestesses wear white clothes, tie white raven feathers in their hair, and use a single white feather as a symbol or a tool in their rituals.

Portfolio: Death as a necessary end of life, rebirth, natural cycles, sacrifice

Domains: Protection, Repose, Spirit

Favored Weapon: Scythe

PRIESTS

Sostreia is served only by priestesses, who administer comfort to the ill and dying and counsel those whose loved ones have recently died. Some are married to priests of Death, while others symbolically marry a deceased lover. Priestesses often have levels in savant or noble; common powers are *commanding presence*, *final blessing* (see sidebar), *solemn curse* and *turn undead*.

GODSWORN

Men and women whose loved ones were murdered or corrupted by black magic may be chosen to serve Sostreia. Her godsworn hunt the undead and grant them final release, or punish those who have killed or cursed their loved ones. Some have levels in noble, thief or assassin; common gifts include *channel divine power*, *divine protection*, *divine shield* and *denial of fate*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Sostreia's prayers are rites of community and shared pain, where the burden of loss is distributed among many and by which emotional healing and understanding are born. Her priestesses also know darker rites, prayers

of condemnation and rage against those who defy the natural cycle, and their curses are terrible and powerful.

TEMPLES

Like her husband, Sostreia has no temples. She shares Death's shrines, and a few Ilsig temples include a small altar or alcove for her offerings and prayers.

SERVITORS

Sostreia's *planar allies* are janni, erinyes and celestial juvenile silver dragons. A priest of Sostreia can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Sostreia (not included); the additional sacrifice is 1100 sh worth of flowers, precious oils and silver, sacrificed while reciting the lineage of the Ilsigi kings.

INDEPENDANT GODS

There are many divine being that lie outside the boundaries of a defined pantheon. This section covers some of the independant dieties of the Known World.

AMALUR

(THE RIGHTEOUS ONE, HERALD OF AZEN, MESSENGER OF THE RIGHTEOUS LIFE) INTERMEDIATE GOD

Amalur is a little-known god of the Azehan people, natives of the Azehur (see Azehur, page 54). Amelur was originally a messenger, the celestial voice of the great god Azen, head of the small Azehan pantheon. But that changed 20 years ago, in the wake of the Rankan Empire's decline, when a priest of the Azehur faith had a revelation: that the messenger was more worthy of worship than his master. Almost overnight, the Azehan faith reinvented itself as the Cult of Amalur, and set about to spread its influence around the continent.

What sets this story apart from the many other religious crusades the continent has seen is that Amalur preaches neither war nor politics but equality, righteousness, hard work and charity. He is the god of the Righteous Life, a vision of peaceful coexistence and hard-working dignity that guarantees adherents a place in Paradise. His history is vague, but his worshippers prefer to focus on the here and now and on the received wisdom that guides them to perform acts of charity, to aid strangers, and to strive to live the Righteous Life. Two decades after the great change, the Cult of Amalur has taken its message to many parts of the continent, from Sanctuary to Aurveshan to the fringes of the Rankan Empire.

Amalur teaches that all people are equal and worthy in his eyes so long as they strive to meet the tenets of the Righteous Life. Righteousness

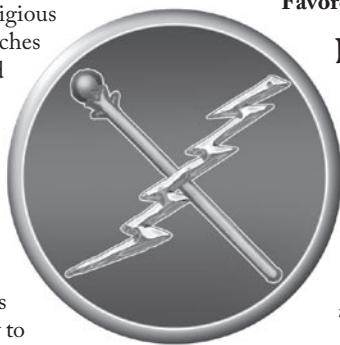
is both internal and external, found by looking inwards to learn what is right and then using that knowledge on the external world. External authority does not make one powerful or right, and wisdom is found from discussion and contemplation, not reliance on dogma or holy writ. The way to Paradise comes from using one's natural gifts to form strong communities and help others, even if they offer no payment for your aid. Many look upon the Amalures with suspicion, thinking that no one could be as altruistic and decent in this thieves' world as the messengers appear, but the truth is that the Amalures are sincere, and every day more and more people convert to the faith and begin striving towards the goals of Amalur and the Righteous Life.

Symbol: A crossed lightning bolt and staff. Some of Amalur's adherents wear this symbol on a copper amulet, while others carry staffs carved with lightning bolt sigils, which they present during prayers.

Portfolio: Independent thought, righteous living, peace, justice, equality

Domains: Community, Desperation, Solace

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff



PRIESTS

Amalur's priests call themselves messengers, and are not appointed or recognized by their superiors; anyone may become a messenger, if they feel that calling and can learn to bring their will to bear on this world. Because any character may become a messenger, they are difficult to pigeonhole, and may have levels in any class; similarly, they might channel any divine power, although *righteous inspiration* (see sidebar) is particularly common.

GODSWORN

The Amalures draw little distinction between priests and godsworn; both are messengers of the faith, they simply use different methods to reach the same righteous goals. These more physical messengers are defenders of the righteous, and like their brethren may come from any walk of life and have levels in any class; similarly, no divine gifts are particularly favored.

PRAYERS & RITES

Amalur does not dictate how he should be revered, and each messenger invents her own prayers and ceremonies. Their rituals are freeform affairs, spoken in plain language and extemporized on the spot. The messenger leading a service wears a shawl to distinguish himself as the speaker,

DIVINE POWER: RIGHTEOUS INSPIRATION

Messengers of Amalur may choose to channel a unique divine power, *righteous inspiration*, which fills the faithful with the righteous will of Amalur. The messenger speaks for one round, then makes a turning check. Compare the check result to the character level of every ally within 30 feet (including the messenger himself); all characters of that level or lower receive a +1 divine bonus to all d20 rolls for a number of rounds equal to the turning damage of the check.

while the other worshippers bow their heads and are free to interject at any point.

TEMPLES

Amalures do not build or need temples; every home of the faithful can be a place of worship, every gathering a celebration of the righteous.

SERVITORS

Amalur's *planar allies* are janni, leonals and planetars. A priest of Amalur can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Amalur; the additional sacrifice is 1100 sh that must be gathered by the messengers and then donated equally to all worthy claimants.

AVATAR OF AMALUR

The avatar of Amalur appears as a handsome man with tanned skin and a neatly trimmed beard. He has a regal bearing but kind features and a humble manner. He wears a flowing white robe and carries a staff of dark wood carved with sigils.

An avatar of Amalur is summoned to protect the righteous against those who would persecute them, or to fight against local injustice and evil. He might also be called to teach the faithful about righteous living, or to mediate in exceptionally important arguments. The avatar of Amalur is a gentle individual, and perhaps the most humane of all the avatars.

An avatar of Amalur prefers to negotiate rather than fight, but will enter combat if no other course seems viable. He fights defensively and attempts to disarm opponents, protects allies with *status* and *shield other*, and uses *calm emotions* to end fights as early as possible.

AVATAR OF AMALUR

CR 13; Medium outsider (Extraplanar); HD 11d8+33; hp 82; Mdt 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +11; Grap +12; Atk +13 melee (1d6+2, +1 *thundering* /+1 *quarterstaff*); Full Atk +9/+4/-1/+9 melee (1d6+2 or 1d6+1 off hand, +1 *thundering* /+1 *quarterstaff*); SA righteous courage, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., resistance to electricity 10; SV Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +14; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Diplomacy +19, Gather Information +19, Handle Animal +14, Heal +18, Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +15, Perform (oratory) +17, Ride +3, Sense Motive +18, Spot +15, Survival +4 (+6 aboveground natural environments); Ability Focus (*calm emotions*), Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Power Attack.

Righteous Courage (Sp): An avatar of Amalur can use *righteous courage* three times per day. This spell-like ability works on a willing creature he touches, giving him fast healing 1, spell resistance 16 and immunity to fear effects for 11 rounds. This ability is the equivalent of a 6th-level spell.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*bless*, *calm animals* (DC 15), *calm emotions* (DC 18), *charm person* (DC 15), *circle of protection*, *freedom of movement*, *good hope*, *helping hand*, *prayer*, *restoration*, *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield other*, *status*, *telepathic bond*. Caster level 11th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: +1 *thundering* /+1 *quarterstaff*.

DYAREELA

(THE DESTROYER, THE LADY OF BLOOD, THE MOTHER OF CHAOS) GREATER GOD

Across the continent, Dyareela is infamous as the enemy of humanity and civilization, as the hermaphrodite Mother of Chaos, goddess of destruction and catastrophe. She is an outcast even in Paradise, where the other gods put aside their rivalries to oppose her. But even the gods must act through mortals in this world, and in this world the Cult of the Bloody Hand continues to work its machinations. Her worship is banned almost everywhere, and yet her cult survives, sometimes even thrives, hidden underground both figuratively and literally (for the Dyareelans love their dungeons and tunnels). Dyareela is also a goddess of rebirth, but only in the most terrible of senses; she represents new life devouring the old, the flower that blooms only amidst blood and ashes.

Dyareela teaches that this life is corrupt, wicked and flawed, a world where the deserving are used by their lessers and the strong are kept down by the crawling masses of the weak. The world must be cleansed, with fire and disease and catastrophe, torn down to bring the new, and if the new cannot be born, then the old must be torn down anyway. There is a strong revolutionary subtext to Dyareela's doctrine, and not everyone who comes to the cult is simply motivated by hate or the desire to inflict harm on their neighbors. Internal schisms in the cult are both common and violent, and since the cult lost control of Sanctuary a number of changes have been wrought. Currently, the re-emergent Council of Priestesses in Devrith governs the far-flung chapters of the Bloody Hand, emphasizing the goddess's message of cleansing and rebirth rather than that of destruction for its own sake. That rebirth will still be bloodsoaked and painful, though, and the cult continues to attract madmen, thieves and killers who lurk underground and wait for a chance to strike.

Symbol: A face twisted so that it both smiles and frowns. Dyareela's priests often wear contorted masks, no two the same, during their rites. Particularly fanatical followers may tattoo or cut their faces into permanent imitations of the goddess's mask.

Portfolio: Destruction, violent rebirth, chaos, retribution, punishment

Domains: Catastrophe, Disease, Madness

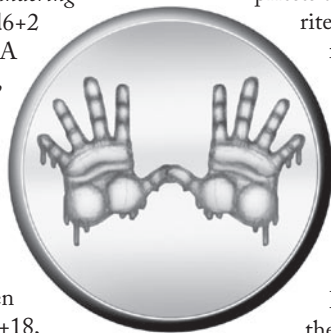
Favored Weapon: Dagger

PRIESTS

While properly referred to as *ircastra'n*, most of Dyareela's chosen think of themselves as murder-priests, the bullies and ceremonial destroyers of the Mother. They rule their flocks through terror, punishment and blood, tattooing themselves as a sign of their devotion and madness. Many have levels in thief, assassin or fighter, and may enter the Dyareelan Disciple prestige class (see *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*); common divine powers include *commanding presence*, *mighty prayer*, *solemn curse* and *rebuke undead*.

GODSWORN

Dyareela's godsworn are born, not made. Children taken by the Hand endure terrible torments and are used as footsoldiers and killers. Those few who survive, thrive and learn to love their terrible Mother come to embody her wrath. Many have levels in assassin, thief or survivor; common gifts include *bonus feat*, *divine protection*, *smite enemy* and *battle fervor*.



CONVERSANTS

The cult of Dyareela is much older and better organized than many would believe. There is a vast body of writings, teachings and history in the cult's current main temple somewhere on the Devrithi peninsula, and those who master this knowledge and their techniques are called Conversants. The elite of the Hand, these cultists are able to draw upon the cult's teachings in a vast number of ways—all aimed at bringing about the fall of civilization that much sooner.

To qualify as a Conversant, a character must be a priest or godsworn of Dyareela with Intelligence 13 and Wisdom 13; she must also have at least 10 ranks in Knowledge (religion). Once per day, a Conversant may substitute her ranks in Knowledge (religion) for her ranks in any other skill when making a skill check, for her base save bonus when making a saving throw, for her base spell- or ritualcasting bonus when making a casting check, or for her base attack bonus when making an attack roll.

PRAYERS & RITES

The prayers of the Dyareelans are terrible to behold—chaotic, writhing mobs of worshippers screaming in ecstasy and pain. Ceremonies always involve blood sacrifice, sometimes of animals but often of people. Outside the temples, cultists live undercover and never invoke their goddess aloud unless somehow tricked or frightened into doing so.

TEMPLES

The Bloody Hand does not build temples; it steals them, laying claim to the temples of other gods and murdering the former inhabitants. When in hiding, the Bloody Hand takes over old dungeons or ruins, protecting these warrens with traps and savage beasts.

SERVITORS

Dyareela's *planar allies* are barghests, chaos beasts and nalfeshnees. A priest of Dyareela can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Dyareela; the additional sacrifices are the still-bleeding hearts of 12 good and righteous mortals.

AVATAR OF DYAREELA

Dyareela takes many forms, from an attractive lusty maiden to an enraged demon beast. Her most common form is that of a woman nearly seven feet tall, her body bulging with inhuman muscles in impossible places. Her face is so contorted and deformed that it is impossible to tell whether her expression is natural or is a mask. She wears a bloodstained robe and keeps a black dagger sheathed at her waist.

An avatar of Dyareela is summoned to wreck destruction and terror against the unworthy, whether a group of invaders or a town full of unbelievers. Indiscriminate slaughter and fear is the mark of Dyareela, and her avatar cares little if her own servants suffer along with her enemies. She uses *rage* and her immense strength for powerful melee attacks, weakening opponents with *confusion*, *eyebite* and *bolts of bedevilment*.



AVATAR OF DYAREELA

CR 12; Medium outsider (extraplanar); HD 12d8+48; hp 102; Mdt 24; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +12; Grap +17; Atk +19 melee (1d4+7/17–20, *assassin's dagger*); Full

Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (1d4+7/17–20, *assassin's dagger*); SA spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +16, Ref +15, Will +15; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +17, Climb +17, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Intimidate +19, Jump +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +18, Spot +18, Survival +18 (+20 on other planes), Swim +17; Ability Focus (*confusion*), Ability Focus (*contagion*), Crippler's Eye, Improved Critical (*dagger*), Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*bolts of bedevilment*).

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*bolts of bedevilment* (DC 18), *confusion* (DC 19), *contagion* (DC 18), *control weather*, *doom* (DC 14), *eyebite* (DC 19), *fit of coughing* (DC 15), *giant vermin*, *insect plague*, *itchy hives* (DC 14), *lesser confusion* (DC 14), *phantasmal killer* (DC 17), *rage*, *regenerate*, *shatter* (DC 15), *stinking cloud* (DC 16), *touch of madness* (DC 15); 4/day—*fear* (DC 17). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: *Assassin's dagger*.

HEQT

(THE TOAD MOTHER, GODDESS OF SOIL AND RAIN, STAYER OF THE HAND) INTERMEDIATE GODDESS

Heqt is a goddess of fertility and the earth, one of the ancient toad-headed deities of the Cirdonian people. She is a god of life, but not a creator of life; she brings life forth from hiding, like the toad that emerges from the desert soil after the rain. She is also a goddess of travel and providence, of those who wander the wastes and the life they bring with them. These are all admirable qualities, and Heqt is exalted among the old toad gods, but she would be unknown outside Cirdonia if not for one thing—her absolute enmity to Dyareela. When the Bloody Hand took power in Cirdonia it was the priests of Heqt who marshaled the Cirdonian people to cast them out, and since then the cult of Heqt has fought a crusade against the Bloody Hand. It is a crusade that has cost them dearly, for the Hand are vicious and murderous—and it has cost the goddess worshippers, for her church dwindles as it focuses on fighting the Hand rather than serving her people.

Heqt teaches that life and vitality can exist unseen, protected from danger but also forgotten if one is not careful. It is the duty of the righteous to nurture that life, to bring it forth and protect it when it is vulnerable, and to spread that life on one's travels. She also teaches that the Bloody Hand of Dyareela is the enemy of life, the plague that kills the soil and the root; in order to build a world where new life may emerge, the Hand must be defeated and the Mother of Blood cast down from Heaven. While her first message has broad appeal, her second is more limited and more aggressive, and it attracts few who have not already suffered at Dyareela's hands. As the worship of Heqt falters, the Cirdonian people are turning to the darker, more alien members of her amphibian pantheon, and the cult's support structure grows unsteady even as it extends itself farther.

Symbol: A toad. Priests often have a toad as a pet or familiar (see sidebar), while a few wear amber amulets in the shapes of toads. Prayers occasionally involve croaking noises and calls.

Portfolio: Life and growth, productivity, discovery, preservation, healing

Domains: Liberation, Plant, Travel

Favored Weapon: Heavy mace

PRIESTS

Heqt's priests may be male or female, and are encouraged to marry and have large families. Most focus on the fertility and community aspects of the cult rather than the crusade against the Hand. Many have levels in survivor or noble; common powers are *divine protection*, *holy vitality*, *mighty prayer* and *turn undead*.

GODSWORN

These divine nomads are the fighting arm of the cult who roam the world looking for the trail of the Mother of Blood. Most have suffered at the hands of Dyareela's cult, and their need for revenge often blinds them to the goddess's other aspects. Levels in ranger or survivor are common, as are the gifts *aura of courage*, *divine health*, *mortal might* (*Constitution*) and *energy resistance*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Priests lead their congregations in planting crops or praying for safe births; many are midwives and give the Toad Mother's blessing to each baby they bring into the world. Godsworn lead the prayers when battle is coming, calling upon the Mother's protection. They also teach weapon skills to the faithful, showing them how to fight with farming implements like sickles and scythes.

TEMPLES

The largest temples to Heqt are in Cirdonia, and many of them lie empty and neglected. Outside that nation, the goddess is worshipped mostly in slums and small villages, and her 'temples' are no more than a slime-brushed stone set in fertile earth, an altar for offerings and prayers.

SERVITORS

Heqt's *planar allies* are hound archons, celestial treants and Huge earth elementals. A priest of Heqt can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Heqt; the additional sacrifices are Dyarelean cultists with a total of 11 or more Hit Dice, executed and buried in sanctified soil.

AVATAR OF HEQT

Heqt's avatar has the body of a middle-aged woman, perhaps of Cirdonian descent, but her head is that of a toad, brown and warty. Despite this, her inhuman eyes are gentle, and she holds her granite-headed mace at rest by her side.

An avatar of Heqt is most often summoned to battle local cultists of Dyareela or to defend her followers from said cultists. An avatar of Heqt approaches combat with care, first protecting herself with *barkskin* and planning attacks with her allies. Once battle is joined she is fearless, using *entangle* and *wall of thorns* to control the movement of enemies and aiding allies with *remove fear*, *remove paralysis* or *touch of life*.

AVATAR OF HEQT

CR 13; Medium outsider (earth, extraplanar); HD 11d8+44; hp 93; Mdt 22; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +11; Grap +14; Atk +15 melee (1d8+4, +1 *thundering heavy mace*); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d8+4, +1 *thundering heavy mace*); SA spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +14; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 12.

CHILDREN OF HEQT: TOAD FAMILIARS

Priests and godsworn of Heqt may, if they choose, gain a toad as a familiar, using the rules for familiars in the *PHB* (substituting class levels in priest or godsworn for those in wizard or sorcerer). Summoning a toad familiar takes 24 hours of uninterrupted prayer performed in the desert and 100 sh worth of special ritual materials.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Diplomacy +13, Heal +18, Hide +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Listen +16, Move Silently +16, Sense Motive +18, Spot +16, Survival +18 (+20 on other planes); Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (*entangle*), Track.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*barkskin*, *break enchantment*, *command plants* (DC 18), *dimension door*, *entangle* (DC 15), *fly*, *freedom of movement*, *locate object*, *longstrider*, *plant growth*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*, *remove paralysis*, *teleport*, *wall of thorns*; 3/day—*convert light wounds*. Caster level 11th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: +1 *thundering heavy mace*.

IRRUNEGA

ANCESTOR OF THE IRRUNE, LORD OF THE SPIRITS, EXALTED TIGER – LESSER GOD

The Irrune tribes do not worship "gods," at least not in the same sense as most other cultures; they recognize that gods exist, but owe them no loyalty and give them little respect. Instead, the Irrune worship their own ancestors, the spirits of all the Irrune that have walked the earth before them. Irrunega is the greatest of all ancestors, the devil-tiger who contains all Irrune spirits within him. Irrunega is an intercessor god, the link between the Irrune and their ancestral wisdom; he does not rule the spirits, but they pay him as much respect as the living. A rarity among the gods of the continent, Irrunega is not a human-seeming being, but appears as a black tiger with two heads. Some shamans say that Irrunega is an individual spirit, the totem animal that has always protected the Irrune; others believe he is an aggregate spirit, a collective being comprised of the minds and wisdom of thousands of ancestors working together. Such theories hold little interest for most Irrune; they care only that Irrunega protects and guides them, granting them his inhuman resolve and skill in battle.

Irrunega teaches that the ancestors of the Irrune are always watching, always ready to aid their children and their tribe, and always ready to punish those who would violate the laws of the Irrune. He cares little if the Irrune worship other gods and spirits, so long as they also show the proper respect for their ancestors. All Irrune should revere the exalted tiger as their guardian; non-Irrune are not welcome in the sect, for they have no Irrune ancestors and no link to the spirits. Irrunega's sect is currently at a crossroads, as the migration to Sanctuary cost the lives of many shamans. The sect has drawn together under the leadership of Zazakhan, who holds great spiritual power that would normally be spread across multiple war-bands and families; the other shamans, whether out of traditionalism or the desire for greater influence, are campaigning to leave Sanctuary, split the lineages and disseminate that power once again.

Symbol: A two-headed black panther. Irrunega's priests often have tattoos of the twin-headed panther, but use various fetishes, charms



NEW FEAT: SHAMANIC SORCERY [GENERAL]

The Irrune are not the only culture with a shamanic tradition. You come from a tribe or society that sees witchcraft and prayer as two sides of the same coin, a personal relationship with your god or with your own soul. As a shaman, you mix your abilities into a single strand of primeval sorcery.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast both 2nd-level priest spells and 2nd-level witch spells, Wisdom 13 or Charisma 13, Ritual Emphasis.

Benefit: Your caster level when casting both witch and priest spells is equal to your combined levels in those classes that grant witch or priest spells. Your key ability for casting both witch and priest spells is the higher of either Charisma or Wisdom; this also determines your bonus spells for both disciplines.

Normal: Characters with multiple spellcasting class levels do not combine their caster levels in each, and maintain different key abilities for each discipline.

and materials as holy symbols in their rites. Every priest has a different relationship with Irrunega and his intermediary spirits, so each uses different symbols and tools.

Portfolio: The open sky, nomads, veneration of spirits and ancestors, ancient wisdom

Domains: Ancestor, Justice, Liberation

Favored Weapon: Scimitar

PRIESTS

Irrunega's shamans are the spiritual leaders and guides of the tribes; they usually stay separate from tribal politics, but work their influence whenever warband leaders look for the wisdom of the spirits. Many have levels in witch, initiate or survivor, and practice shamanic sorcery (see sidebar); common powers are *guidance*, *holy vitality*, *resist magic* and *solemn curse*.

GODSWORN

The godsworn of the Irrune are those touched at an early age by the spirits; they grow up hearing voices and seeing strange beings on the fringes of their vision. A few are driven mad by the experience, but stronger ones become the holy defenders of their tribe. Many have levels in barbarian, ranger or survivor; common gifts are *divine health*, *divine perception*, *mortal might (Strength)* and *mount*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Shamans call upon the spirits to guide them in nearly every activity; other Irrune invoke their ancestors less often, but still multiple times per day. Many develop a strong relationship with one spirit, which they bond to as a personal guide (see the Spirit Guide feat, page 117).

TEMPLES

Nomads and wanderers, the Irrune need no temples to worship their ancestors. They do build sweat lodges and the like, places where a shaman or a faithful warrior can shut out the distractions of the mortal world and listen for an ancestor's voice with the aid of holy mushrooms and medicines.

SERVITORS

Irrunega's planar allies are xills, hellcats and elder arrowhawks. A priest of Irrunega can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Irrunega; the additional sacrifice is the fresh corpse of a predatory creature with 10 or more Hit Dice, killed in single combat by an Irrune warrior.

AVATAR OF IRRUNEGA

Irrunega appears as a massive black tiger standing six feet tall at the shoulder. In this form he has two heads and the light blazing in his eyes

betrays an inhuman intelligence. When Irrunega growls, multiple human voices can be heard speaking in savage harmony.

An avatar of Irrunega is called only to defend the Irrune against major or supernatural enemies, for he expects his people to protect themselves. In combat, his avatar is swift and savage, blending its natural speed and attacks with spells. A favorite tactic is to cast a quickened *true strike*, then pounce upon an opponent while using Power Attack.

IRRUNEGA

CR 12; Large outsider (extraplanar); HD 10d8+50; hp 95; Mdt 30; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +10; Grap +21; Atk +16 melee (1d6+7, claw); Full Atk +16 melee (1d6+7, 2 claws), +14 melee (1d4+3, 2 bites); Space/ Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA improved grab, pounce, rake, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., scent; SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +12; Str 24, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Concentration +9, Hide +10, Intimidate +14, Jump +20, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +15, Move Silently +10, Spot +15, Survival +15 (+17 on other planes); Multiattack, Power Attack, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (*true strike*), Track.

Improved Grab (Ex): If an avatar of Irrunega hits with a claw or bite attack, it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If an avatar of Irrunega charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +16 melee, damage 1d6+3.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*augury*, *break enchantment*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *command* (DC 14), *commune*, *discern lies* (DC 17), *divination*, *freedom of movement*, *bold person* (DC 15), *remove disease*, *remove fear*, *remove paralysis*, *searing light*, *true strike*. Caster level 10th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Skills: An avatar of Irrunega has a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Hide, and Move Silently checks.

LARLEROSH

(GOD OF HOOKS AND NETS, CATCHFINDER, THE FISHERMAN'S FRIEND) DEMIGOD

This minor sea god may be a member of the Ilsigi pantheon, perhaps some cousin of the younger gods via one of Ils' many affairs. Then again, he may be

an independent deity who has allied himself with the Ilsigi or been lumped together with them by his followers. Few care, including Larlerosh himself, who is a practical deity concerned with more important matters: the gathering of the day's catch and the feeding of his worshippers. A god of fishermen and fish alike, Larlerosh is the old man of the sea and shallows, who for centuries has led the fish to the fisherman, and in turn takes some fishermen into the depths to feed the fish.

Larlerosh teaches that high ideals and intellectual teachings don't mean much when there's a mist on the sea and it's time to gather the nets. He has no time for spirituality or foolishness; he is the enforcer of the old bargain between hunter and hunted, and protects both from outsiders and invaders. He is worshipped by fishermen, the occasional sailor, and those who make a living near the sea. His cult is small, found only in coastal cities and islands, and his followers are mostly uncommunicative, grizzled fishermen who aren't looking to recruit many new members.

Symbol: A net and hook.

Portfolio: Fishing, hooks and nets, those who work on the water, honest labor, watchfulness

Domains: Animal, Snares, Water

Favored Weapon: Net

PRIESTS

Larlerosh has few priests. They are the oldest and most experienced fishermen, who have learned the ways of the god of nets and depths through bitter experience. Some have levels in savant or survivor, and common powers are *divine protection*, *guidance*, *solemn curse* and *state of grace*.

GODSWORN

Rarer even than his priests, Larlerosh's godsworn are younger men who have lost their fathers at sea to pirates or war rather than to honest drowning, an appropriate end for an honest fisherman. They protect fishermen from such dangers, receiving little thanks for their efforts. Some have levels in survivor or ranger; common gifts are *divine health*, *divine protection*, *divine shield* and *energy resistance*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Followers of Larlerosh have little time for prayer, which is time better spent throwing out nets. Priests lead by example, holding small prayers before setting out for the day's fishing. The first fish in every catch is thrown back for the god's dinner, and funeral rites are held for those who never come back from the sea.

TEMPLES

Larlerosh has no temples, which are things of the land. His priests make their sacrifices on their boats or on the high places of the reef. Fish markets may bear net and hook symbols scratched into the cobbles or painted on stalls, showing the faithful that they will not be cheated when selling their catch.

SERVITORS

Larlerosh's *planar allies* are water mephits, adult tojanidas and Huge water elementals. A priest of Larlerosh can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Larlerosh (not included); the additional sacrifice is 900 sh worth of gems and precious stones, thrown into the sea and swallowed by hundreds of fish.



MOTHER BEY

(MOTHER OF ALL, THE THREE AND THREE AGAIN, QUEEN OF SERPENTS) GREATER GODDESS

Far across the sea, the powerful Beysib Empire still thrives, and the worship of Mother Bey continues no matter what happens on the continent. Creator of all the world, Mother Bey is the center of the Beysib faith, and she must be worshipped lest she turn from her spiteful children forever. Mother Bey is a triune goddess, and her three aspects (Virgin, Mother and Crone) are the three sacred roles of women. She also embodies three sacred non-human aspects, the Beybit (serpent), Beyosa (flower) and Beyarl (bird), and these are her symbols and repositories of power. Mother Bey bears responsibility for all aspects of creation, but her main focus is the protection and exaltation of the Beysib Empire, the one true society. While other gods exist in the Beysib pantheon, they are Mother Bey's lesser children; none rise above demigod status, and they concern themselves with less important responsibilities.

Mother Bey teaches that the Beysib people are the most beloved children of creation and that the Beysib Empire is the most perfect form of society and government. This social order is holy to her, a perfect ecology where women rule, men serve, and all work for the good of the empire. The Beysib should live in harmony with nature and the earth, as signified by her sacred plants and beasts. They should be fruitful and multiply, and spread the word of the Mother across the world. All Beysib worship Mother Bey, and even though some revere lesser gods, they still devote the bulk of their faith to the Three and Three Again. Outside the Empire, of course, the worship of Mother Bey is confined to the half-Beysib and

FISHERS OF MEN

Larlerosh's priests and godsworn can transcend normal limitations of skill and movement when using their deity's favored weapon, the humble net, gaining the following benefits:

- They treat nets as martial weapons rather than exotic weapons, and priests who lack proficiency take only a -3 penalty when using them.
- A character with base attack bonus of +4 or higher and at least 6 ranks in Knowledge (religion) can fold a net in half the normal time, and takes only a -2 penalty for throwing an unfolded net.
- They add their Wisdom bonus as a circumstance bonus to Strength checks made to control the movements of a entrapped opponent, or to escape from a net if caught themselves.
- A character with a net in one hand and a gaff hook (sickle) in the other gains a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class when fighting defensively.

DIVINE GIFT: MOTHER'S BITE

Godsworn of Mother Bey may choose a unique lesser gift, *mother's bite*. The godsworn gains a natural bite attack that does 1d4 damage plus her Strength bonus. She can use this as a natural attack with her normal attack bonus (the bite counts as a light weapon), or as an additional attack at a -5 penalty along with her normal armed attacks. She can improve her bite attack with any relevant feats, such as Weapon Focus or Improved Natural Attack. In addition, a number of times per day equal to her Wisdom modifier (minimum one), she can inject poison with a successful bite attack; the poison does 1d3 Dex/1d3 Con damage, with a save DC equal to 10 + one-half godsworn class level + Con modifier.

rare Beysib remaining on the continent, who keep their lonely faith in this land of half-eyed heretics.

Symbol: The beynit serpent is the Mother's primary symbol, but the Beyosa and Beyarl are also holy. Her priestesses keep snakes and birds as pets, and burn or devour flowers in their prayers and rites.

Portfolio: The earth and its secrets, snakes, crops and harvests, ruling & serving the Beysib people

Domains: Animal, Earth, Nobility

Favored Weapon: Short sword

PRIESTS

Always women and always of noble birth, Mother Bey's priestesses are both religious and secular authorities, the administrators of the Empire. Politics and intrigue are the obsession of the most powerful priestesses, and only minor priestesses actually bother to cater to their peoples' spiritual lives. Most have levels in noble, and some in savant; common powers are *commanding presence*, *guidance*, *solemn curse* and *state of grace*.

GODSWORN

Mother Bey's godsworn are holy defenders of her people and her church, groomed from birth to take on that responsibility. Many join the Harka Bey and rise to positions of command (and are thus shut out from the political infighting of the Mother's priestesses). Most have levels in noble or assassin; common gifts are *divine health*, *mortal might (Dexterity)*, *mother's bite* (see sidebar) and *energy resistance*.

PRAYERS & RITES

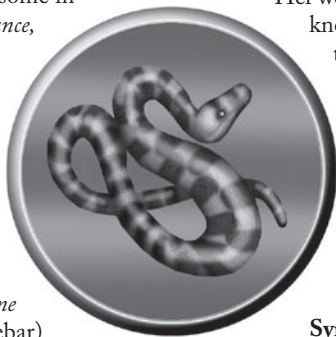
Every aspect of Beysib life is governed by the Mother's cult, and prayers in her name are held daily (hourly in some cases). She is invoked with every new day and dusk, every meal and every pronouncement of the Empress. As an agricultural goddess, she is invoked especially often by farmers, hunters and fishermen.

TEMPLES

Temples to Mother Bey are omnipresent in the Empire and nonexistent elsewhere; the main one is in the imperial capital, while smaller temples are built into the ships of the Empire's fleet. Each has three altars, one for each aspect of the goddess, and different ceremonies use the three in different order and with different combinations of sacrifices.

SERVITORS

Mother Bey's *planar allies* are hound archons, celestial guardian nagas and mariliths. A priest of Mother Bey can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Mother Bey (not included); the additional sacrifice is 1200 sh worth of Beyosa flowers exposed to the sky, which are devoured by flocks of hungry Beyarl.



PORTA

(THE BITCH OF THE SEA, DEMON OF THE DEEP, DAUGHTER OF SHARKS) DEMIGODDESS

One of the children of Mother Bey, Porta and her worshippers came to the continent with the Beysib invaders, and one can only hope that they left with them as well. A demon spawned from the Mother's affairs, Porta is the hungry darkness beneath the waves, a spirit of destruction and bloodlust. She preys on sailors, marines and fishermen, who in turn worship her in order to placate her. She is an avenging power in war, but cares not whether she destroys the enemy or her own followers.

Porta teaches that the sea is hungry and must be fed, and that any who defy the sea will be the first devoured. She does not bring wisdom, only certainty—the certainty of a shrieking, bloody death if she is denied.

Her worshippers are Beysib sailors and naval commanders, who know that she must be obeyed if their ships are to survive; they have no love for her, only fear, and that's how she likes it. The withdrawal of the Beysib may mean the Porta cult is no more on the continent, although it is also possible that the cult spread to the sailors and fishermen of the southern coast. And there is the question of what happened to Star hil Sant, the Cirdonian child named as Porta's chosen decades ago; if she still lives, does she serve the demon goddess as her godsworn, or has she escaped the bloody tide of power and destiny?

Symbol: A crashing wave. Porta's priests carry wave-shaped amulets of crystal or stone, and perform ceremonies while knee-deep in the pounding surf.

Portfolio: The sea's destructive power, hunger, fury, defense against invaders

Domains: Destruction, Strength, and Water

Favored Weapon: Trident

PRIESTS

Porta's priests are mostly haunted and unhappy men who must, in order to ensure the survival of their society, make terrible sacrifices to a goddess they fear and despise. A few, though, revel in their power, and develop a love for destruction and bloodshed to rival that of their mistress. Many have levels in noble or survivor; common powers are *commanding presence*, *crimson tide* (see sidebar), *holy vitality* and *solemn grace*.

GODSWORN

Porta chooses her mortal avatars when they are children, marking them from birth. They are then stolen by the cult and raised to serve her. Always female, these unlucky girls are transformed into sociopathic killers and assassins of the deep unless they can be rescued and redeemed. Many have levels in ranger or assassin; common gifts are *channel divine power*, *mortal might (Strength)*, *smite enemy* and *battle fervor*.

DIVINE POWER: CRIMSON TIDE

Priests of Porta may choose to channel a unique divine power, *crimson tide*, which lets them vomit forth a wave of blood, acid and water. When the priest channels the power, he spews forth a 20 ft. cone of the vile substance, which does acid damage equal to 1d6 times his Wisdom modifier (minimum 1d6). Those in the area of effect may make a Reflex save to take half damage; the save DC is 10 + one-half the priest's class level + Wis modifier.

PRAYERS & RITES

Porta's worshippers do not invoke her to exalt her, but rather to please and placate her, to lull her from her rage back to sleep. Her rites involve sacrifices, preferably human, and sharks thrash the bloody waters in the aftermath.

TEMPLES

The cult rarely builds temples to Porta; even in the Beysib Empire, the Porta cult is kept at arm's length and given little respect. Cultists gather on the shoreline or in sea caves around altars of natural stone or coral that are dedicated with much blood and sacrifice.

SERVITORS

Porta's *planar allies* are barbed devils, fiendish aboleths and horned devils. A priest of Porta can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Porta; the additional sacrifice is of nine Hit Dice of unwilling mortals, stabbed in the thigh and pitched into shark-infested waters.

AVATAR OF PORTA

When summoned, the avatar of Porta manifests as a broad-shouldered being that looks somewhat like a human woman but with eyes that are black as pitch and flesh that is as rough as sharkskin. Bloodstained water slowly streams from her, and she carries a jagged trident.

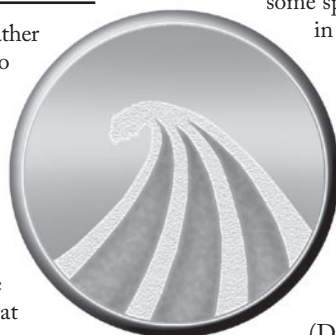
An avatar of Porta might be summoned by her cult to destroy some enemy, but such supplicants must be careful lest she turn upon them instead for disturbing her. She is a brutal and vicious opponent who loves to smash apart buildings and ships as well as her opponents, bolstering her power with *bull's strength*, *spell immunity* and *enlarge person*. She prefers to fight in the water, using her aquatic mobility to her advantage and assuming her demonic form if necessary.

AVATAR OF PORTA

CR 11; Medium outsider (extraplanar, water); HD 9d8+45; hp 85; Mdt 19; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +9; Grap +12; Atk +13 melee (1d8+4/19–20, +1 trident) or +11 ranged (1d8+4/19–20, +1 trident); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+4/19–20, +1 trident) or +11 ranged (1d8+4/19–20, +1 trident); SA demon of the deep, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., resistance to acid 5; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Hide +13, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Spot +13, Survival +1 (+3 on other planes), Swim +20; *Ability Focus* (*inflict critical wounds*), *Cleave*, *Improved Critical* (trident), *Power Attack*.

Demon of the Deep (Su): An avatar of Porta can breathe freely in both water and air, and is unaffected by environmental penalties for being



underwater. She has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard (this bonus is included in her attribute block). She can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered, and can use the run action while swimming. Once per day as a standard action, she can assume the form of a Large fiendish octopus with 9 HD. This is identical to the effects of the *polymorph* spell at CL 9, except that she does not regain hit points for assuming the new form and she gains all of its special qualities. She may remain in this form for nine minutes.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*bull's strength*, *contagion* (DC 14), *control water*, *enlarge person* (DC 12), *fog cloud*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 17), *inflict light wounds* (DC 12), *magic vestment*, *obscuring mist*, *shatter* (DC 13), *spell immunity*, *water breathing*. Caster level 9th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: +1 trident.

WEDA KRIZHTAWN

(GODDESS OF THE SEA AND SORCERY, MOTHER OF SHERRANPIP, THE ANOINTER) INTERMEDIATE GOD

Of all the sea gods worshipped on the continent's southern coast, Weda Krizhtawn is the most powerful and the most mysterious. She is the goddess of the Sherranpip people and the island of the same name, as well as the other islands in that archipelago. Weda Krizhtawn brought the knowledge of boats and fishing, science and magic, love and music and everything else to the people of the island, and in turn, they pay her all devotion, exalting her above all—but not actually admitting that to outsiders. For Weda Krizhtawn is also the laughing dolphin in the blue deep, who prefers to hide below the waterline while her enemies spill their secrets, and while that doesn't mean she considers the folk of the continent her enemies, it doesn't mean that she considers them her friends, either.

Weda Krizhtawn teaches that the world is a glorious place, a jeweled box of joyous pleasures and celebration, and that such treasures must be safeguarded from those who would steal them. It is right and proper for priests and sorcerers to lead their people, for wisdom and learning are great things; in turn, those learned and wise servants have an obligation to serve and defend the faithful. Secrets have power, and it pays to have your enemies underestimate you; the dolphin frolics in the sun as the shark approaches, then turns upon him and butts him to death with her snout. Weda Krizhtawn is worshipped almost fanatically on Sherranpip, the largest island of the Vidala Islands, whose residents love her for the gifts she has given them. She has little interest in being worshipped by others.

Symbol: A dolphin. The holy animal of Weda Krizhtawn, the dolphin is exalted and never eaten. Priests wear dolphin amulets of coral and whalebone, imitate the cries of the dolphin in their prayers, and conduct prayers while swimming with dolphins in lagoons.

Portfolio: Boats and fishing, magic, knowledge and secrets, enjoyment of life

DIVINE POWER: ARCANE EPIPHANY

Priests of Weda Krizhtawn may choose to channel a unique divine power, *arcane epiphany*, thus drawing upon the goddess's power over sorcery and magic. When a priest channels this power as a swift action, she gains the ability to cast a spell from the witch or mage spell lists. The priest chooses the spell to cast when she channels this power; it can be any conjuration, divination, enchantment or illusion spell up to one level lower than her normal safe casting level (e.g., if a priest can normally cast 5th-level spells safely, she can cast up to a 4th-level witch or mage spell). The priest must begin casting the spell immediately, as a spell rather than a ritual, and the priest casts it as if it was on her Known list.

Only a few priests are granted this power by Weda Krizhtawn. In order to choose this divine power, a character must have at least 8 ranks in both Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion).

Domains: Community, Water, Weather

Favored Weapon: Shortspears

PRIESTS

Weda Krizhtawn's priests are the smiling nobles and governors of the Sherranpip people. They hold many roles in Sherranpip society, and while politicking is inevitable, her priesthood band together to keep up the façade of their nation's harmless, sleepy indulgence. Many have levels in noble, savant, witch or mage; common powers are *arcane epiphany* (see sidebar), *banish outsider*, *guidance* and *mighty prayer*.

GODSWORN

While her priests govern Sherranpip Island, Weda Krizhtawn's godsworn venture to the mainland. Charming and friendly, her godsworn are chosen for their loyalty and intelligence. They spy for the goddess as well as hunt down and execute traitors and renegades. Many have levels in thief or savant, and common gifts include *bonus feat*, *divine perception*, *mortal might* (*Intelligence*) or *denial of fate*.

PRAYERS & RITES

Worship of Weda Krizhtawn permeates every level of Sherranpip society, but her children make little fuss about it. Informal, personal invocations are more common than organized ceremonies. Swimming, eating, making love . . . all the pleasures of this life are gifts of Weda Krizhtawn, and the Sherranpip sing her praises as they indulge their passions.

TEMPLES

Numerous temples to the goddess exist on Sherranpip itself, and others can be found hidden on the other islands in the archipelago. Many temples do double duty as libraries, schools, hospices, marketplaces or houses of government, and visitors never realize the additional purpose of the buildings where they meet their local trading contacts.

SERVITORS

Weda Krizhtawn's *planar allies* are tritons, Large water elementals and celestial young adult bronze dragons. A priest of Weda Krizhtawn can use *planar ally* to call an avatar of Weda Krizhtawn; the additional sacrifice is 1100 sh worth of silver, gold and gems, pitched into a boiling spring.

AVATAR OF WEDA KRIZHTAWN

This avatar looks like a pleasantly plump woman, but her skin is grey and moist like that of a dolphin. Her eyes are dark and piercing, and her

undeniable beauty is marred by an odor of rancid butter. She wears ornate robes and bears a shortspear in one hand.

An avatar of Weda Krizhtawn is only called in dire circumstances, generally to combat a major supernatural power (such as another avatar); the goddess prefers to advise from afar and work through her agents. She is a careful, intelligent fighter, who prefers to keep her enemies distant while she remains mobile in the water. She harries opponents with *call lightning* and *ice storm*, hinders them with *fog cloud* and *sleet storm*, and marshals her followers with *prayer*, *status* and *telepathic bond*.

AVATAR OF WEDA KRIZHTAWN

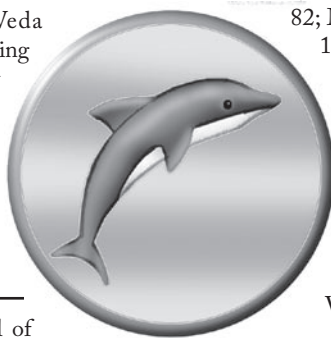
CR 13; Medium outsider (extraplanar, water); HD 11d8+33; hp 82; Mdt 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +11; Grap +13; Atk +15 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d6 cold, +1 *frost shortspear*) or +14 ranged (1d6+3 plus 1d6 cold, +1 *frost shortspear*); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d6 cold, +1 *frost shortspear*) or +14 ranged (1d6+3 plus 1d6 cold, +1 *frost shortspear*); SA queen of dolphins, spell-like abilities; SQ avatar traits, damage reduction 5/epic, darkvision 60 ft., resistance to cold 5; SV Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +14; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Diplomacy +19, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Profession (sailor) +18, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +18, Survival +18 (+20 avoid natural hazards or on other planes), Swim +18; Ability Focus (*call lightning*), Combat Expertise, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*call lightning*), Weapon Focus (shortspear).

Queen of Dolphins (Su): An avatar of Weda Krizhtawn can breathe freely in both water and air, and is unaffected by environmental penalties for being underwater. She has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard (this bonus is included in her attribute block). She can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered, and can use the run action while swimming. Three times per day as a standard action, she can assume the form of a Large celestial porpoise with 11 HD. This is identical to the effects of the *polymorph* spell at CL 11, except that she does not regain hit points for assuming the new form and she gains all of its special qualities. She may remain in this form for 11 minutes.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*bless*, *call lightning* (DC 19), *control water*, *fog cloud*, *ice storm*, *obscuring mist*, *prayer*, *shield other*, *sleet storm*, *status*, *telepathic bond*, *water breathing*. Caster level 11th. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Possessions: +1 *frost shortspear*.





CHAPTER SIX: SUPPLEMENTAL RULES

The Known World is a vast and dangerous place, and provides a wide canvas on which you can paint the details of your *Thieves' World* campaign. The *Thieves' World Gazetteer* is intended to expand the scope of your campaigns,

introducing new peoples and places, new worlds and new opportunities. This chapter provides the mechanical underpinnings to allow players and GMs to make use of that new material.

NEW CULTURES

The cultures of the continent are many and varied, and each has found a niche in the streets of Sanctuary—but an overconfident Wriggle in a far-off land could find that the locals are quite different from their cousins back home. This section expands on the cultural information in **Chapter Three** and in those presented in other *Thieves' World* game books.

ADRALEAN

Adraleans are a treacherous lot, combining the worst traits of Rankans and Mygdonians. Many come to Adrale to find prosperity, but there is only so much to go around, and many therefore fail. Disheartened, desperate, and ambitious, the Adraleans are infamous for being expert negotiators and double-dealing backstabbers. Worse, those who spend any time in this far-flung city report that people consort with demons and spirits openly, adding to the land's already grim reputation.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

There is no one defining characteristic of the residents of Adrale, for the city is a crucible in which a variety of cultures, traits, and races intermix. If anything unites these people, it's their ability to betray and doublecross, a trait that keeps the city thriving despite the political, religious, and climatic fluctuations of the known world.

COMMON CLASSES

Thieves and assassins are the most likely character classes to originate from this "lost" province, though Adrale also has no shortage of witches. Fighters, barbarians, and rangers are also common classes.

ADRALEAN ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, Adraleans have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

Select one of the following: Mixed Ancestry, Persuasive, or Witchblooded.

DUPlicitous

Adraleans are naturally false and are talented at pitting one group against another. Characters hailing from Adrale gain a +1 ethnicity bonus to all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive checks.

LANGUAGES

Rankene. Bonus Languages: Azehuran, Cirdonian, Mygdonian, Nisi, Syran, Trade Tongue, Tysean.

BANDARAN

Scattered among the emerald Bandaran Islands are dozens of isolated communities. Free from the corruption and treachery of the mainland, they have little desire or cause to leave their homes. Only those who have performed terrible misdeeds and fear the retribution of their kin, or perhaps those bent on revenge and chasing such transgressors, would leave for the continent.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The typical Bandaran is short and slender, with tanned or brown skin and straight black hair. They have wide features, with broad noses and wide smiles. Brown eyes are the most common. Clothing matches their climate, and most wear simple clothes.

COMMON CLASSES

Few adventurers come from the Bandaran Islands; these folk do not seek danger and excitement, but focus instead on survival and their families. Those who leave the beauty of their homes are exceptions to the rule, and of these few are likely to have done so willingly.

BANDARAN ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, Bandarans have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

Select one of the following: Agile, Alertness, or Self-Sufficient.

ISLANDER

As the Bandaran communities are scattered among the islands, all Bandarans know how to pilot small boats and swim. Bandaran characters gain a +2 ethnicity bonus to Profession (boating) and Swim checks.

LANGUAGES

Bandaran. Bonus Languages: Caronese, Ilsigi, Mrsevadan, Trade Tongue.

BANMALTS AND CLEANS

The Banmalts of the Cold Lands and the Cleeans of the western shores of the Arizbond Sea derive from the same cultures, but the former are more likely to be freeriders and pirates while the latter tend to be mercenaries for the Rankan Empire. A fierce people, success in battle and plunder are some of their most important values.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The average Banmalt or Cleean is deceptively plain-looking, of average height and build with brown hair and brown eyes. They would blend in anywhere were it not for the longships and their bloodthirsty propensity for violence.

COMMON CLASSES

These cultures produce more barbarians and fighters than other classes, though rangers are found in numbers. Few Banmalts or Cleeans have

the patience to become mages or the subtlety to become assassins and thieves. Their religious figures are nearly all shamans, blending prayer and witchcraft in a way loosely similar to the practice of the Irrune.

BANMALT AND CLEEAN ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, members of these cultures have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

Select one of the following: Improved Damage Threshold, Persuasive, or Toughness.

FIERCE RAIDER

The people of the Cold Lands survive by plundering the coastal settlements of the Borneal Bay and the Devrithi Peninsula. The sight of their dark sails and dragonheaded prows fill peasants with dread. A number of times per day equal to the Banmalt or Cleean's Charisma bonus (if any), the character may make a demoralize opponent attempt (see **Intimidate** in the *PHB*) as a swift action.

LANGUAGES

Banmalt. Bonus Languages: Black-haired dialects, Rankene, Sihanese, Trade Tongue.

BLACK-HAIRED BARBARIAN

Tumbling out of the far north, these barbarians represent a threat to the civilized world like none other. Violent, destructive, and thoroughly uncivilized, they are an unruly mob bent on plunder, rapine, and devastation. Though most believe these barbarians are a new threat, they have existed throughout the history of the continent and are the culture that forced the exodus of the red-haired barbarians during the rise of Enlibar. Perhaps they would have remained beyond the reaches of the Known World had it not been for the emergence of a powerful leader who led the disparate tribes south to do the unthinkable: sack Ranke.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Black-haired barbarians are a large people with bronze to gray skin and black hair. They have slightly canted eyes, which are nearly always black or brown, though green does occur rarely. They favor leathers and hides, often dyed black to create a sinister appearance. Also, their teeth are uniformly black, a feature most attribute to something in their diets.

COMMON CLASSES

Appropriately, the barbarian class is the most prevalent among these people. Most lack the refinement of swordplay to make good fighters, though tribal scouts are often rangers. It's said that these people worship demons, and true or not, there are few priests among them. Their religious leaders, who they call shamans, are nearly all witches.

BLACK-HAIRED BARBARIAN ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, black-haired barbarians have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

Select one of the following: Improved Damage Threshold, Run, or Track.



VICIOUS

Black-haired barbarians are terrifying foes in combat, striking fear into the hearts of their enemies. Whenever a black-haired barbarian enters a rage (or similar ability, such as from the *rage* spell) and successfully deals at least 1 point of damage against a foe, the black-haired barbarian may immediately make an Intimidate check as a swift action to demoralize that foe (see **Intimidate** in the *PHB*). If he wins, the foe is shaken for 1d4 rounds. Multiple shaken effects from this source stack, becoming more severe with each instance. So for instance, a foe that is shaken by the barbarian's first attack and is Intimidated again becomes frightened, while a frightened foe may become panicked.

LANGUAGES

Tribal dialects. Bonus Languages: Any (except secret or ancient languages).

FIRAQAN

The Firaqan are calm and patient, and tolerate differences in both neighbors and outsiders. They enjoy debate and discussion so long as it they are held in a relaxed manner rather than as heated arguments. While not universal, education and literacy are common; even commoners tend to be knowledgeable in at least in stories, proverbs and aphorisms. The people of Firaqa are loyal to their sorcerous governors and glad for the benefits of their arts, although occasionally they resent the thaumaturges' tendency to intervene and meddle in the affairs of others.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Firaqans, perhaps because they live with the benefits that a city steeped in magic can provide, are not particularly strong or rugged, instead being

somewhat short and compact. They have tan or brown skin, dark hair and matching eyes. They dress for comfort and enjoy unusual colors and patterns in their fabrics, but suffer in cooler climates.

COMMON CLASSES

Many Firaqans follow the path of the mage, while a few idiosyncratic spellcasters are initiates. Savants are also very common, whether engaged in scholarship or trading with caravans. While not an aggressive people, the Firaqans have several traditions of combat, so fighters and rangers are not uncommon. Firaqans are rarely priests or godsworn, as they have little interest in religion.

FIRAQAN ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, Firaqans have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

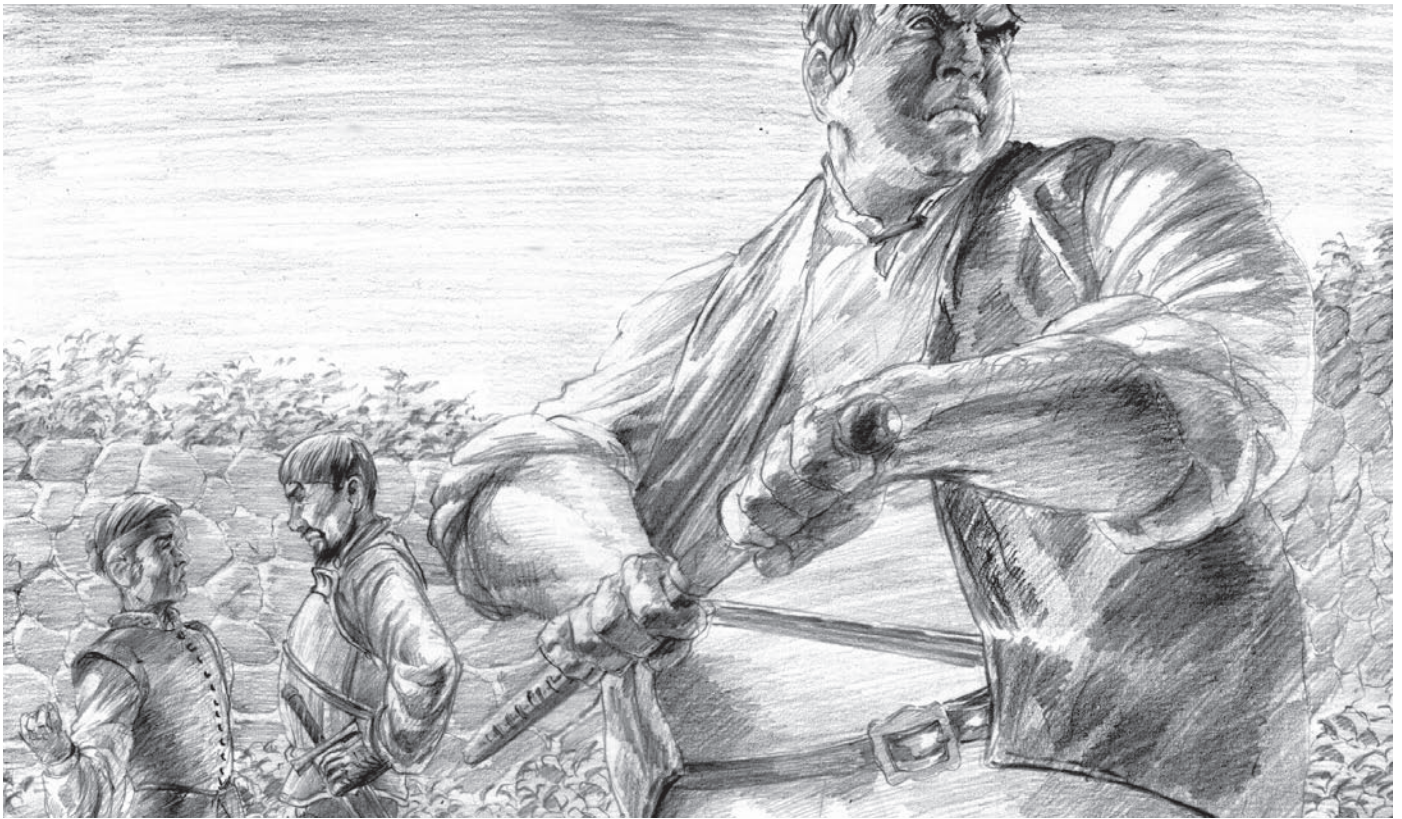
Select one of the following: Magical Aptitude, Skill Focus or Well-Connected.

LEARNED DISCOURSE

Almost every Firaqan knows dozens of tales and traditions that he can use to back up his arguments. Knowledge (history) is always a class skill for Firaqan characters, and they gain a +2 bonus to all Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (local) checks.

LANGUAGES

Trade Tongue. Bonus Languages: Aurveshan, Cirdonian, Ilsi, Trade Tongue, Tysian, Wriggie.



SUMESE

The Sumese are a conquered and discontented people who long for independence. Once a great civilization and the heirs to Yenized, they saw themselves as contenders to become the next great Empire, but were ultimately conquered by their Rankan rivals. Though stripped of their armies, they are certain that their return to power will come.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The people of Suma encompass a broad range of hair and eye colorings, of body shapes and sizes. Though physically diverse, they are ideologically united by an extreme pride in their province.

COMMON CLASSES

According to Rankan law, no Sumese can bear arms within the confines of their province. Most Sumese with skills at fighting, therefore, learned them in Ranke or in another province of the Empire. Of the fighting classes within Suma itself, rangers are the most common, while spellcasters tend to be mages and initiates. Witchcraft is rare, though not unknown, and they have the Sumese produce their fair share of thieves and assassins.

SUMESE ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, Sumese have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

Select one of the following: Improved Unarmed Strike, Magical Aptitude, or Skill Focus.

DEFIANT

Even after 200 years of constant occupation, the people of Suma retain their identity and refuse to see themselves as Rankan. This firm resolve grants them a +2 ethnicity bonus to Will saves against enchantment (compulsion) spells and effects. In addition, they gain a +1 ethnicity bonus to Intimidate checks.

LANGUAGES

Sumese. Bonus Languages: Cirdonian, Firaqan, Ilsigi, Rankene, Trade Tongue, and Tysian.

VELOSIAN

Calm, practical, and with simple needs, the Velosians are the Empire's most mild-mannered people. Removed from the tempestuous politics of the capital and content with their place in Rankan society, Velosians rarely have cause to leave their villages.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Velosians have a lot in common with Cirdonians, coming as they do from the same stock. Slightly larger in build than the typical Rankan, they have broad, open features and light skin, burning easily in the bright sun of the south. They have the dark hair common to people in the north, but have blue or green eyes. Velosians favor homespun clothing, having little need of excess.

COMMON CLASSES

Most characters from Velos are commoners and experts, with a rare few being savants. Those who actually leave this isolated province do so as conscripts, which means that fighters are very common as well.

VELOSIAN ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, Velosians have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

Select one of the following: Low Profile, Skill Focus, or Toughness.

PRACTICAL

Velosians are not prone to imaginative flights of fancy and have little need for the excesses of other lands. They receive a +2 ethnicity bonus to all saving throws against enchantment spells and effects.

LANGUAGES

Rankene. Bonus Languages: Cantal Dialects, Cirdonian, Trade Tongue, Tysian.

VISALAN

Visalan is a general term for anyone who lives on one of the Visalan Islands. This includes the Sherrani of Sherranpip and the Tyrisians of Tyrisis. Religion is the center of most Visalans' lives; theirs is a culture with over a thousand gods, and each deceased ancestor has the potential to join their ranks. Of them all, however, Weda Krizhtawn seems to be the most well known and widely worshipped.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Visalans have a strong cultural tendency to plumpness, but only the wealthiest are actually obese. Their smooth, slightly oily skin tans easily, and their hair tends to curl into ringlets unless plied with oil to straighten it. Their faces are broad but not coarse, with dark laughing eyes and wide smiles. Visalan clothing is comfortable, gaudy, and often rather revealing.

COMMON CLASSES

Priests, given their propensity for inventing gods, are the most common type of characters to originate from the Visalan Islands. These islands also produce mages who tend towards transmutation magic, specializing in the blending and modification of forms. Visalan warriors are mostly rangers (or even assassins) rather than fighters. Savants, thieves and nobles are also popular classes, focusing their talents on the network of trade and sailing that sustains the island nation.

VISALAN ETHNIC TRAITS

In addition to the standard human traits, Visalan have the following traits.

CULTURAL FEATS

Select one of the following: Combat Expertise, Investigator, or Stealthy.

SLEEK SEAFOLK

The Visalan are well suited to the sea, culturally and physically; their world revolves around the water, and they are always at ease in it. Visalan characters only suffer the standard armor check and encumbrance

penalties while swimming, rather than double penalties. They gain a +2 bonus to Swim checks and to Constitution checks made for holding their breath.

LANGUAGES

Visalan. Bonus Languages: Beysin, Mrsevedan, Ilsigi, Rankene, Trade Tongue.

TABLE 6-1: QUICK CULTURES

| Culture | Cultural Feat | Trait |
|----------------|--|-------------------|
| Adrale | Mixed Ancestry, Persuasive, Witchblooded | Duplicitous |
| Bandaran | Agile, Alertness, Self-Sufficient | Islander |
| Banmalt/Cleean | Improved Damage Threshold, Persuasive, Toughness | Fierce Raider |
| Black-haired | Improved Damage Threshold, Run, Track | Vicious |
| Firaqan | Magical Aptitude, Skill Focus, Well-Connected | Learned Discourse |
| Sumese | Improved Unarmed Strike, Magical Aptitude, Skill Focus | Defiant |
| Velosian | Low Profile, Skill Focus, Toughness | Practical |
| Visalan | Combat Expertise, Investigator, Stealthy | Sleek Seafolk |

TABLE 6-2: RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

| Ethnicity | Base Height | Height Modifier | Base Weight | Weight Modifier |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Adrale, male | 4 ft. 8 in. | +2d8 | 115 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Adrale, female | 4 ft. 3 in. | +2d8 | 80 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Bandaran, male | 4 ft. 7 in. | +2d8 | 100 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Bandaran, female | 4 ft. 5 in. | +2d8 | 80 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Banmalt/Cleean, male | 4 ft. 10 in. | +2d10 | 120 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Banmalt/Cleean, female | 4 ft. 5 in. | +2d10 | 85 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Black-haired, male | 4 ft. 10 in. | +2d12 | 135 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Black-haired, female | 4 ft. 5 in. | +2d12 | 95 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Firaqan, male | 4 ft. 10 in. | +2d6 | 120 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Firaqan, female | 4 ft. 5 in. | +2d6 | 85 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Sumese, male | 4 ft. 10 in. | +1d20 | 120 lb. | × (1d8) lb. |
| Sumese, female | 4 ft. 5 in. | +1d20 | 85 lb. | × (1d8) lb. |
| Velosian, male | 4 ft. 10 in. | +2d10 | 120 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Velosian, female | 4 ft. 5 in. | +2d10 | 85 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Visalan, male | 4 ft. 10 in. | +2d8 | 125 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |
| Visalan, female | 4 ft. 5 in. | +2d8 | 90 lb. | × (2d4) lb. |

TABLE 6-3: MORE LANGUAGES

| Language | Culture/Country of Origin | Written? | Alphabet |
|----------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| Bandaran | Bandaran Islands | Yes | Bandaran |
| Banmalt | Cold Lands, Cleea | No | — |
| Black Dialects | Black-haired barbarians | No | — |
| Sumese | Suma | Yes | Yenized |
| Visalan | Visala Islands | Yes | Visalan |

NEW BACKGROUNDS

The wide range of cultures and place in the Known World offer a wide variety of possible origins for adventurers. The following backgrounds can be used in addition to those presented in the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*.

ARMIGER

You are the squire or attendant to a professional soldier, probably noble born. It's a life of hard work and danger, skirting the edges of war to assist your patron, but it's left you fit and unafraid of battle.

Age Modifier: -1.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Climb, Handle Animal, Heal, Jump, Knowledge (nobility and royalty), or Ride

ARMIGER TRAIT

You are gifted at aiding your master in donning or removing his armor. When you help another character don or remove armor, the task is completed in half the normal amount of time. You take the normal time to don or remove your own armor, but can ready or loosen your shield as a swift action rather than a move action.

ATHLETE

Ever since you were a child you've trained to compete in the sports and games of your culture. You might be a chariot racer, wrestler, sprinter,

or play one of the many ball-bat-and-brawling games that are popular across the continent.

Age Modifier: +0.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Balance, Climb, Jump, Perform, Ride, Swim, or Tumble.

ATHLETE TRAIT

No matter what the activity, sport on the continent is a full-contact affair, and a successful athlete needs to shake off his opponents while also concentrating on the game. You gain a +2 bonus to all grapple checks, and you may break a pin and escape a grapple with a single successful opposed grapple check.

DANCER

Your body is your instrument, and you perform before crowds to make a living. You may dance in inns or brothels for drunks and lechers, or in the hallowed halls of the temples for the priests of your gods—or, indeed, in both places.

Age Modifier: +0.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Balance, Diplomacy, Escape Artist, Listen, Perform (dance), Sleight of Hand, or Tumble.

DANCER TRAIT

You keep your body lithe and flexible through diet and exercise, making you graceful and quick. You gain a +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class against ranged attacks or against melee attacks. You must choose which type of attack the dodge bonus counts against during character creation. You lose this dodge bonus any time you are denied your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

MORTICIAN

You dress and prepare bodies in keeping with local customs and religions; depending on your country of origin, you may be familiar with several different burial or disposal traditions. It's a lonely job, though, unless you like chatting with the dead.

Age Modifier: +2.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Appraise, Craft, Heal, Knowledge (religion), Profession, Sense Motive, or Speak Language.

MORTICIAN TRAIT

You have seen (and smelled) the human body in every state of demise and decay possible, and little has the power to shock, frighten or sicken you now. You gain a +2 bonus to Will saves against fear effects and a +2 bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist effects that sicken or nauseate.



TABLE 6-4: EXPANDED BACKGROUNDS*

| Roll | Background | Bonus Skills |
|-------|--------------|--|
| 01 | Academic | Concentration, Decipher Script, Heal, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), or Knowledge (nature) |
| 02-03 | Acolyte | Concentration, Diplomacy, Heal, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Perform, Speak Language, or Spellcraft |
| 04-08 | Adventurer | Climb, Jump, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (geography), Search, Survival, Swim, or Use Rope |
| 09 | Apprentice | Concentration, Craft (alchemy), Knowledge (arcana), Speak Language, Spellcraft, or Use Magical Device |
| 10 | Aristocrat | Diplomacy, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Perform, Ride, Sense Motive, or Speak Language |
| 11 | Armiger | Climb, Handle Animal, Heal, Jump, Knowledge (nobility and royalty), or Ride |
| 12 | Athlete | Balance, Climb, Jump, Perform, Ride, Swim, or Tumble |
| 13-14 | Bandit | Appraise, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Move Silently, Ride, Spot, or Survival |
| 15-19 | Beggar | Bluff, Disguise, Escape Artist, Hide, Knowledge (local), Move Silently, Spot, or Survival |
| 20 | Bureaucrat | Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Sense Motive, or Speak Language |
| 21-22 | Con Artist | Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, or Sense Motive |
| 23 | Constable | Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (local), Profession, Ride, Search, Sense Motive, or Spot |
| 24-25 | Courtier | Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Perform, or Sense Motive |
| 26-34 | Craftsman | Appraise, Concentration, Craft (any one), Diplomacy, Disable Device, Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Profession (any one), or Use Rope |
| 35-44 | Criminal | Appraise, Bluff, Disable Device, Forgery, Gather Information, Intimidate, Open Lock, or Sleight of Hand |
| 45 | Cursed | Any two |
| 46 | Dancer | Balance, Diplomacy, Escape Artist, Listen, Perform (dance), Sleight of Hand, or Tumble |
| 47 | D. Cultist | Bluff, Concentration, Disguise, Hide, Intimidate, or Knowledge (religion) |
| 48-49 | Entertainer | Bluff, Climb, Disguise, Escape Artist, Jump, Perform, Sleight of Hand, or Tumble |
| 50-55 | Farmer | Handle Animal, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Listen, Profession (farmer), Survival, Swim, or Use Rope |
| 56 | Fugitive | Disguise, Knowledge (geography), Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, or Survival |
| 57-58 | Healer | Concentration, Craft (alchemy), Craft (herbalism), Diplomacy, Heal, Knowledge (nature), Sense Motive, or Survival |
| 59-61 | Herder | Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (nature), Listen, Ride, Spot, Survival, or Use Rope |
| 62-63 | Hunter | Climb, Handle Animal, Hide, Knowledge (nature), Listen, Move Silently, Spot, or Survival |
| 64-68 | Laborer | Climb, Craft (any one), Handle Animal, Jump, Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Profession (laborer), or Use Rope |
| 69-70 | Mercenary | Intimidate, Knowledge (geography), Ride, or Sense Motive |
| 71-73 | Merchant | Appraise, Bluff, Craft (any one), Diplomacy, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), Profession (merchant), or Sense Motive |
| 74 | Mortician | Appraise, Craft, Heal, Knowledge (religion), Profession, Sense Motive, or Speak Language |
| 75 | Nomad | Handle Animal, Hide, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (nature), Move Silently, Ride, Spot, or Survival |
| 76 | Outcast | Disguise, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Search, or Survival |
| 77-79 | Peasant | Climb, Craft (any one), Handle Animal, Profession (any one), or Use Rope |
| 80 | Pirate | Balance, Climb, Intimidate, Jump, Spot, Swim, or Use Rope |
| 81 | Prizefighter | Balance, Bluff, Intimidate, Jump, Perform, Ride, Spot, or Tumble |
| 82-84 | Prostitute | Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Knowledge (local), Perform, Sense Motive, or Sleight of Hand |
| 85-86 | Sailor | Balance, Climb, Jump, Knowledge (geography), Spot, Survival, Swim, or Use Rope |
| 87 | Seer | Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Sense Motive, or Sleight of Hand |
| 88-91 | Slave | Bluff, Climb, Craft (any one), Escape Artist, Handle Animal, Knowledge (local), Perform, or Profession (any one) |
| 92 | Smuggler | Disguise, Intimidate, Handle Animal, Hide, Knowledge (local), Move Silently, or Profession (sailor) |
| 93-94 | Soldier | Climb, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Ride, or Survival |
| 95 | Spy | Bluff, Decipher Script, Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, Read/Write Language, Search, or Sense Motive |
| 96 | Terrorist | Bluff, Disguise, Escape Artist, Hide, Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Listen, Move Silently, Spot, or Survival |
| 97-98 | Thug | Climb, Intimidate, Jump, or Knowledge (local) |
| 99 | Tomb Robber | Climb, Escape Artist, Jump, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Swim, or Use Rope |
| 100 | Witch Doctor | Craft (herbalism), Heal, Knowledge (nature), or Survival |

*This table includes all of the backgrounds presented in the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*, *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*, and this book.

OUTCAST

For whatever reason, you have been exiled from your native society—you may be deemed monstrous, said to be cursed, or found guilty of foul crimes. Innocent or guilty, you have been forced to survive by your wits, and have turned your loneliness and pain into a shield against life's injustices.

Age Modifier: +0.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Disguise, Handle Animal, Hide, Intimidate, Listen, Search, or Survival.

OUTCAST TRAIT

Your rejection burns like a thorn in your heart, and you can turn that fiery pain upon those who try to hurt you further. You can add your Charisma or Wisdom bonus (whichever is higher) as a bonus to any curse check you make, so long as that curse is justified. You suffer one less negative level when you successfully curse someone.

SPY

Some call it the world's second oldest profession, but that's just to make it sound more respectable. You secretly gather information for your employer—probably your native government, but you might work for a church, guild, secret society or some other group.

Age Modifier: +1.

BONUS SKILLS

Select two from the following: Bluff, Decipher Script, Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, Read/Write Language, Search, or Sense Motive.

TRAIT

You maintain an intuitive awareness of your surroundings at all times, since your life is on the line if your activities are discovered. You may add your Intelligence modifier as a bonus to Listen and Spot checks made to avoid surprise.

EPIC-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Thieves' World stories tend to focus on the gritty, realistic end of the fantasy genre, the everyday heroes and mysterious mages of Sanctuary. But there's more to the world—and to fantasy—than those kind of stories and adventures, and *Thieves' World* allows for characters to reach the very heights of power. Epic-level play stretches the boundaries of the setting, but it doesn't break them; any world home to Tempus and Enas Yorl has plenty of room for epic characters.

Epic-level campaigns, by necessity, go beyond the more immediate plots and concerns of Sanctuary; robbing the local nobles or interfering in city politics are trivial matters for epic characters. Here are a few suggestions for epic-level campaign models and plots:

WAR IN HEAVEN

The gods have always been happy to interfere in mortal affairs, but how will they like it when mortals decide to interfere in divine affairs? Epic-level characters don't interact with avatars and proxies, but with the gods themselves. Epic heroes might punish (or redeem) the harsh and imperialistic Rankan pantheon, target the cult of Dyareela and destroy the Mother of Chaos once and for all, or even become gods in their own right.

THE GAME OF NATIONS

Epic heroes don't have to be satisfied with city or even national politics; they have the power to lead nations and reshape their world to their desire. They might reunite the Mygdonian city-states to take over the continent, reignite the Rankan empire's expansion, or dedicate themselves to making a new Ilsig empire and protecting it from all enemies. And when this continent's new government has become stable, there's still an entire world left to explore . . .

WORLDS IN COLLISION

And after *this* world is explored, there are still others waiting to be discovered! Epic heroes are not bound to this reality, but can walk the planes and other worlds to discover new wonders and terrors. Perhaps they must defend this world from an invasion from another reality of

high fantasy and powerful magic—or lead the armies that invade that world in the name of the Dark Mother.

EPIC CLASS FEATURES

Thieves' World uses the rules for epic characters presented in the *DMG* and *Epic Level Handbook*, such as the epic progression for attack and save bonuses, with a number of additions as described in the following text.

EPIC CASTING BONUS

A character's base spellcasting or ritualcasting bonus does not increase after her 20th class level. Instead, she receives a cumulative +1 epic bonus to both spellcasting and ritualcasting checks at every even-numbered level after 20th, as shown on **Table 6-5: Epic Bonus Progressions**. Multi-classed spellcasters add together the bonuses from all their classes, and only start gaining epic casting bonuses after they reach 20th level in a spellcasting class.

EPIC REPUTATION BONUS

Similarly, a character's base reputation bonus does not increase once she passes 20th level. Instead, she receives a cumulative +1 epic bonus to reputation checks at 21st level and every odd-numbered level afterwards.

FEATS

Characters continue to gain new feats at every character level divisible by three (21st, 24th, 27th etc). In addition, every class gains bonus feats every few levels, as described in the following text; characters can take any feat (including epic feats) as a bonus feat as long as they meet its prerequisites.

EPIC SPECIAL ABILITIES

A character's epic class levels are added to his normal class levels of the same type for the purposes of determining the powers of abilities that improve by level (saving throw DCs, effective level for channeling divine

power, etc.). In addition, a hero transcends mortal limitations as he reaches epic levels, gaining a supernatural ability at 25th level.

EPIC ASSASSIN

The epic assassin is no longer a mortal; she is Death incarnate, mistress of murder and the end of days. She is the flawless blade that severs life, and even the gods fall before her silent onslaught.

Hit Die: d8.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Sneak Attack: The epic assassin's sneak attack damage increases by +1d6 every three levels higher than 20th (+8d6 at 23rd, +9d6 at 26th etc).

Special Abilities: At 30th level, and every 12 levels after that, the epic assassin again adds her Int bonus (minimum +1) to the DC of any massive damage she causes.

Godslayer (Su): At 25th level, the epic assassin's attacks can force massive damage saves even from targets that are normally immune to massive damage or critical hits, such as undead or elementals. Creatures without Constitution scores are treated as having a massive damage threshold equal to their Charisma scores when damaged by an epic assassin's attacks.

Bonus Feats: The epic assassin gains a bonus feat every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th etc).

EPIC BARBARIAN

The epic barbarian is fury and rage trapped in a human frame, straining to be released. A being of primitive savagery and terror, he cuts bloody swaths through entire armies of enemies.

Hit Die: d12.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Barbarian Rage: The epic barbarian gains another daily use of rage every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th, etc.).

Trap Sense: The epic barbarian's trap sense bonus increases by +1 every three levels higher than 18th.

Damage Reduction: The epic barbarian's damage reduction increases by 1 point every three levels higher than 19th.

Transcendent Rage (Su): At 25th level, the epic barbarian's rage shatters all mortal constraints. Whenever the barbarian rages, he ceases to be affected by any and all negative conditions he was suffering (such as being *confused*, blinded, fatigued or even turned to stone) for the duration of the rage. The conditions return when he ceases raging, and he can still gain new negative conditions while raging.

Bonus Feats: The epic barbarian gains a bonus feat every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th etc).

EPIC FIGHTER

Master of war and weaponry, the epic fighter transcends mortal concepts of skill and ability. He has fought and won every battle in his mind before it even begins, and is more machine than mortal once he enters combat.

Hit Die: d10.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Perfect Strike (Su): At 25th level, the epic fighter's attacks are devastatingly powerful and accurate. The first attack he makes in any round is automatically considered a confirmed critical hit if the attack is successful. Any other attacks he makes that round must be confirmed as critical hits as normal.

Bonus Feats: The epic fighter gains a bonus feat every two levels after 20th (22nd, 24th etc).

EPIC GODSWORN

No longer just a servant of the gods, the epic godsworn stands alongside his patron—or against her as a new rival. More god than man, the epic godsworn is an embodiment of divine power and a demigod in his own right.

Hit Die: d10.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Spells: The epic godsworn does not gain any new Known rituals after 20th level. He learns a new Familiar ritual every other level after 19th.

Divine Gifts: The epic godsworn gains another divine gift (greater or lesser) every three levels after 19th (22nd, 25th, 28th etc). The godsworn can choose to gain a bonus gift instead of a divine gift, as long as he meets all the feat's prerequisites.

Ascension: If the epic godsworn's Wisdom modifier increases, his spell resistance increases by the same amount.

Apotheosis (Su): At 25th level, the epic godsworn no longer needs to eat or breathe, and his divine gifts and abilities can no longer be stripped away by his patron god (the character is now a god in his own right, and all of this powers come from his own divine power). At 30th level, the epic godsworn's damage reduction improves to 15/epic.

Bonus Feats: The epic godsworn gains a bonus feat every five levels after 20th (25th, 30th, and so on).

EPIC INITIATE

Trickster, warrior and master of arcane subtleties, the epic initiate can bend her skills and talents to *any* challenge. Others may possess more raw power, but she always finds new ways to outshine her rivals.

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Spells: The epic initiate does not gain any new Known spells after 20th level. She learns a new Familiar spell every other level after 19th.



TABLE 6-5: EPIC BONUS PROGRESSIONS

| Level | Epic Attack Bonus | Epic Save Bonus | Epic Reputation Bonus | Epic Casting Bonus |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 21st | +1 | +0 | +1 | +0 |
| 22nd | +1 | +1 | +1 | +1 |
| 23rd | +2 | +1 | +2 | +1 |
| 24th | +2 | +2 | +2 | +2 |
| 25th | +3 | +2 | +3 | +2 |
| 26th | +3 | +3 | +3 | +3 |
| 27th | +4 | +3 | +4 | +3 |
| 28th | +4 | +4 | +4 | +4 |
| 29th | +5 | +4 | +5 | +4 |
| 30th | +5 | +5 | +5 | +5 |

Signature Spells: The epic initiate may nominate a new signature spell every six levels after 18th.

Arcane Reinvention (Su): At 25th level the epic initiate can change any and all of her Known and Familiar spells, whether changing a spell from Familiar to Known (and vice versa) or “forgetting” a spell and replacing it with a new spell. She does not need to replace spells of the same level; she can replace a 1st-level Known spell with a 9th-level Known spell if she wishes. The only spells she cannot replace or change are her signature spells.

Bonus Feats: The epic initiate gains a bonus feat every three levels after 20th (23rd, 26th, and so on).

EPIC MAGE

If knowledge is power, then the epic mage has transcended mortal concepts of both. Learned beyond measure, he reshapes mana like it was clay and rewrites reality itself with his magic and his will.

Hit Die: d4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Spells: The epic mage does not gain any new Known spells after 20th level. He learns a new Familiar spell at every new level after 20th.

Techniques: The epic mage learns a new technique every five levels after 20th (25th, 30th, and so on).

Master of Small Magic (Su): At 25th level, the epic mage no longer pays a price for casting spells of 0 through 3rd level.

Bonus Feats: The epic mage gains a bonus feat every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th, and so on).

EPIC NOBLE

Beyond kings, emperors and warlords, the epic noble is the embodiment of the divine right to rule. Whether wise or warlike, his words are law, and armies and nations move at his least command.

Hit Die: d8.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Inspiration: The epic noble gains additional daily uses of his inspiration ability as he gains levels. He may affect one additional target with inspire greatness for every three levels after 20th (23rd, 26th, and so on), and one additional target with inspire heroics for every four levels above 19th (23rd, 27th, and so on).

Organize: The epic noble’s organize bonus increases by +1 every three levels higher than 18th (21st, 24th, 27th, and so on).

Voice of Destiny (Su): At 25th level, the epic noble’s words transcend mortal language and reverberate for great distances. His inspiration

abilities are no longer language-dependant, and have a range of 100 feet rather than 30 feet.

Bonus Feats: The epic noble gains a bonus feat every three levels after 20th (23rd, 26th, 29th, and so on).

EPIC PRIEST

The epic priest is not just a simple servant of the gods, but rather has become her patron deity’s most trusted servant. She is a divine prophet and hierophant, the will of Heaven made manifest in this world.

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Spells: The epic priest does not gain any new Known spells after 20th level. She learns a new Familiar spell at every new level after 20th.

Divine Powers: The epic priest chooses a new divine power to channel every five levels after 20th (25th, 30th, and so on).

Heaven’s Representative (Su): At 25th level, the epic priest embodies all facets of her deity’s power. She gains a third domain of her god, gaining new Known spells and a granted power as usual, and adds her Wisdom modifier (minimum +1) to all caster level checks.

Bonus Feats: The epic priest gains a bonus feat every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th, and so on).

EPIC RANGER

The epic ranger has explored every region of the continent and claimed each as his own. At home in any environment, he hunts monsters and demigods rather than animals and men, and fights them on his own terms every time.

Hit Die: d8.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Favored Environments: The epic ranger selects an additional favored environment, and increases the bonus for one favored environment by an additional +2, every five levels after 20th (25th, 30th, and so on).

Trap Sense: The epic ranger’s trap sense bonus increases by +1 every five levels after 19th (24th, 29th, and so on).

Master of the Wilds (Su): At 25th level, the epic ranger is perfectly suited to survive in his favored environments and suffers no detrimental effects from them. For example, an epic ranger who favors aquatic conditions can breathe underwater, while if he favors the cold tundra he takes no damage from cold environmental conditions in the tundra and automatically succeeds at all balance checks on the tundra’s ice.

Bonus Feats: The epic ranger gains a bonus feat every three levels after 20th (23rd, 26th, 29th, and so on).

EPIC SAVANT

Master of every mundane skill, the epic savant encompasses all mortal notions of intelligence, wisdom and knowledge with his superlative mind. What he does not know is not worth knowing, and the gods themselves envy his gifts and creations.

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Talents: The epic savant gains a new talent every four levels after 18th (22nd, 26th, and so on). The savant may choose to gain a bonus feat instead of a talent, as long as he meets all the feat's prerequisites.

Skill beyond Imagining (Su): At 25th level, the epic savant is so skilled that he *never* makes mistakes. He never suffers any penalties to any Intelligence-based skill check, no matter what the circumstances; he can always take 10 on any Intelligence-, Wisdom- or Charisma-based check, even if that check specifically disallows characters taking 10 (e.g., the lore special ability).

Bonus Feats: The epic savant gains a bonus feat every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th etc).

EPIC SURVIVOR

Nothing can overcome the adamantine will of the epic survivor. She has faced everything this world and any other can throw at her and stood her ground, and her destiny is for her alone to decide.

Hit Die: d10.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Fight or Flight: The epic survivor learns another combat technique every five levels after 20th (25th, 30th, and so on).

Indomitable: The epic survivor gains an additional daily use of this ability every seven levels after 19th (26th, 33rd, and so on).

Never Say Die (Su): At 25th level, the epic survivor gains fast healing 1, and automatically succeeds on any saving throw made to lose a temporary negative level. She never suffers a negative level from being *raised* or *resurrected* from the dead.

Bonus Feats: The epic survivor gains a bonus feat every three levels after 20th (23rd, 26th, and so on).

EPIC THIEF

The world is a prize waiting to be taken, and the epic thief has already stolen it. Master of rogues and lord of the night, nothing can stand between him and what he desires.

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Sneak Attack: The epic rogue's sneak attack damage increases by +1d6 at every odd-numbered level after 20th (+11d6 at 21st, +12d6 at 23rd, and so on).

Special Abilities: The thief does not gain additional thief special abilities after 19th level, but can choose a thief special ability (crippling strike, defensive roll, improved evasion, opportunist, skill mastery, or slippery mind) instead of a bonus feat.

Swift as Thought (Su): At 25th level, the epic thief is so assured in his burglary skills that he can perform them almost instantly. When taking 20 on a skill check, the epic thief takes only *twice* as much time as normal to make the check, rather than 20 times as much.

Bonus Feats: The epic rogue gains a bonus feat every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th, and so on).

EPIC WITCH

The epic witch's heart pumps not blood but raw elemental power, and her soul is a shard of pure eldritch might. Whether dedicated to life or death, her vital energies now dictate reality's limits, rather than vice versa.

Hit Die: d4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Spells: The epic witch does not gain any new Known spells after 20th level. She learns a new Familiar spell at every new level after 20th.

Witchcraft: The epic witch learns a new witchcraft ability every five levels after 20th (25th, 30th, and so on).

Font of Power (Su): At 25th level, the epic witch's internal eldritch power transcends the limitations of the world around her. She casts all spells and rituals as if the local mana level was one level higher than normal.

Bonus Feats: The epic witch gains a bonus feat every four levels after 20th (24th, 28th, and so on).



PLAYER CHARACTERS AND TEMPLATES

One of the most important elements of *Thieves' World* is the collection of memorable and unique characters. While all those characters are defined first by their personalities and histories, some stand out for their unusual abilities. Lalo the Limner, the Shepherd, Hålott—these are beings that exist outside the norm, and for that reason such characters can be hard to define using the standard base and prestige classes. If players want to play particularly unusual characters, GMs may allow them to apply templates to their PCs, lending them a number of unique powers—and, just as importantly, unique problems.

TEMPLATES AS PLOT HOOKS

The thing to bear in mind when applying a template to a character is that power is no substitute for personality, especially in *Thieves' World*. A character with a template is different and unusual—but is he interesting? Do his strange abilities make for more complex and rewarding roleplaying interactions and relationships, or do they just give him some spell-like abilities and a better armor class? The reason a character has a template is more important than what the template can do for the character. Here are some ideas:

CURSED

You did something terrible in the past, and now you're paying the price, for the curse you bear makes you both more and less than human. Worse yet, perhaps you don't deserve your curse, but have to suffer it anyway. Whoever cursed you is still your enemy, and is the only one who can lift the curse. Note this can also be set up with the Cursed background described in Green Ronin's *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*.

MAGIC'S PLAYTHING

Mages love to experiment, and you were one of their subjects. The changes the sorcerer worked upon you have their uses, but they also have a price that you keep on paying. Or perhaps you did this to yourself through a magical accident, and now must search for a cure.

BASTARD OF THE GODS

You have one mortal parent and one divine one, fruit of a union between god and worshipper. You have power, but the priests of your divine parent won't let you escape your duties. Or perhaps your non-human parent is a monster or supernatural creature, who hunts you no matter how far you run.

LAST SCION

You are the last known recipient of an ancient magical legacy. Through teaching, sorcery and strange adventures, you have assumed a power few can comprehend. Now, though, you have a responsibility to use that power, for you are the last—unless you find a worthy successor to your mantle.

DEATH IS NOT THE END

Few return from the Underworld, but it happens—and it changes you forever. You see this world through one eye and Hell through the other, and you suffer the unspeakable torments of the undead. Perhaps you

search for a way to die permanently—or a way to truly return to the living once more.

SUITABLE TEMPLATES

There are many different templates available in numerous d20 sourcebooks. Those most suitable for *Thieves' World* characters provide interesting abilities but also carry some kind of drawback. Even something as simple as an altered appearance is appropriate; it's difficult for a man who looks like a demon or monster to lead any kind of normal life, even in a cosmopolitan city like Sanctuary.

If a template provides special abilities, they may need to be altered to fit the setting. It's worth remembering that, without alignments, no character is innately evil, no matter what their nature; a werewolf, vampire or half-fiend may still be a redeemable PC, struggling with unnatural urges and needs while trying to retain their sanity and humanity.

The following templates from the *MM* might suit *Thieves' World* characters:

Ghost, Half-Celestial, Half-Dragon, Half-Fiend, Lycanthrope, Vampire

Green Ronin's *Advanced Bestiary* has dozens of templates for use in d20 games. Many of these are designed for human characters, and are well suited for *Thieves World*:

Broken Soul, Celestial-Blessed, Demon-Possessed, Devil-Bound, Dream Creature, Element-Infused, Fortune-Blessed, Fortune-Spurned, Genie-Bound, Half-Giant, Inveigler, Lunatic, Monstrous Lycanthrope, Psychic, Ravenous, Seasonal, Solaric, Suzerain, Time Seer

The GM always has the final say on what template a PC might acquire.

TEMPLATES AND CAMPAIGNS

GMs should always think carefully before letting a player create a character with a template, and very carefully if multiple players want to do so. One unusual character is enough for most groups; too many bizarre heroes, and you lose the everyman feel that is so much a part of *Thieves' World*. Like monsters, unusual characters are the spicy side dish, not the main course; use them carefully and get as much plot and story use from them as possible.

Another thing GMs should bear in mind is the increased ECL of characters with templates. This isn't a problem if everyone's at the same effective level, but if a character gains a template in play (due to magic, a curse or other major plot events) she may suddenly leap ahead of the other PCs in power—and leave the other players feeling cheated or neglected. This is self-correcting to an extent, because characters with a higher ECL will gain less XP from an encounter than their lower-level allies, and eventually the group will be roughly equal again. In the short-term, though, GMs should be careful when such imbalances occur, and plan encounters carefully so that the other characters aren't totally outclassed—or that the more powerful character isn't left unchallenged.

BIRTHRIGHT FEATS

Where you come from is important in *Thieves' World*; your culture shapes your outlook, politics, faith and many other parts of your personality. It can also play a major role in defining your abilities, and even provide you with abilities others cannot learn. Whether due to magic, faith, secret traditions or just something in the blood, your culture is your birthright, and exploring that birthright can lead to exciting new adventures.

Birthright feats are a special kind of feat available to *Thieves' World* characters that emphasize the more esoteric or unusual abilities found in the cultures of the continent. In order to qualify for a given birthright feat, a character must belong to a particular culture. It's not enough to just move to that region and start learning the local ways; these feats are the provinces of natives, and only those who chose that culture at character generation can take them. Most characters can thus have only one birthright feat; those characters with the Mixed Ancestry feat can gain two birthright feats if they wish.

ACCURSED SYMPATHY (BIRTHRIGHT)

The S'danzo know well the power of curses; they wander the world as a result of the curses they have suffered and laid upon others. The power of fate is strong in your blood, and you have learned to identify the effects of a curse with a glance.

Prerequisites: S'danzo, Charisma 13, Concentration 9 ranks.

Benefit: You may add your Charisma bonus to any check made to curse another, and to the Will save you make to avoid being cursed.

You also gain the ability to cast *detect curse* as an extraordinary ability. This requires a DC 20 Concentration check; if the check succeeds, you may detect curses exactly as if you had cast *detect curse*, except that you cannot detect curses through any kind of barrier; you must be able to see clearly the subject to detect their curse (if any). If the Concentration check fails, you take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage due to fatigue. You may use this ability multiple times per day, but each attempt after the first (whether successful or not) increases the DC of the Concentration check by +5.

BANE OF INFIDELS (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Raggah are not a xenophobic culture, but still they are surrounded by unbelievers and the unworthy. Studying the ways and weaknesses of those unbelievers is not an act of hate, but simple prudence. You have immersed yourself in the study of another culture, memorizing their habits, customs and schools of combat, so that if you must act against them to defend your people you will be well prepared.

Prerequisites: Raggah, Wisdom 13, Knowledge (geography) 9 ranks.

Benefit: Choose one particular culture other than Raggah (e.g. Rankan, Wriggie, Yenized, etc.). You gain a circumstance bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against members of that culture, as well as to weapon damage rolls against them. The bonus is +1, plus an additional +1 for every five character levels you possess.

BURST OF SPEED (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Mrsevedan navy emphasizes a fast, lightweight combat style, and so do the other fighting forces of your nation. You've taken that a step

further, drawing on an inner strength to move with blinding speed and maneuver around your opponents.

Prerequisites: Mrsevedan, Dexterity 13, Tumble 9 ranks.

Benefit: Your ground movement speed increases by +5 feet. In addition, once per day, you gain a +10 bonus to initiative checks. You may use this ability an additional time for every five character levels you possess.

DEATHTOUCHED (BIRTHRIGHT)

Worshippers of demons and practitioners of black magic, the Nisibisi are surrounded by death and evil powers from the day they leave the womb. At some point in your life—perhaps while still in the womb—those powers reached out and touched you. You bear the mark of death, but that mark protects you even as it sets you aside from other mortals.

Prerequisites: Nisi, Charisma 13, Knowledge (arcana) 9 ranks.

Benefit: *Inflict* spells work on you as if they were *cure* spells, restoring lost hit points instead of inflicting damage. *Convert* spells deal nonlethal damage to you rather than converting lethal damage into nonlethal; you may make a Will saving throw to suffer half the nonlethal damage. You add your Charisma bonus as a circumstance bonus to saving throws

TABLE 6-6: BIRTHRIGHT FEATS

| Feat | Prerequisites |
|-------------------------|---|
| Accursed Sympathy | S'danzo, Charisma 13, Concentration 9 ranks |
| Bane of Infidels | Raggah, Wisdom 13, Knowledge (geography) 9 ranks |
| Burst of Speed | Mrsevedan, Dexterity 13, Tumble 9 ranks |
| Deathtouched | Nisi, Charisma 13, Knowledge (arcana) 9 ranks |
| Dispassionate Foresight | Aurveshani, Intelligence 13, Appraise 9 ranks |
| Dolphin's Leap | Visalan, Strength 13, Jump 9 ranks |
| Killing Surge | Black-haired barbarian, Wisdom 13, base attack bonus +6 |
| Lightbringer | Rankan, Wisdom 13, Knowledge (religion) 9 ranks |
| Magical Tinker | Firaqan, Charisma 13, either Spellcraft 9 ranks or Use Magic Device 9 ranks |
| Powerful Hands | Twandan, Strength 13, Craft 9 ranks |
| Spirit Guide | Irrune, Wisdom 13, Knowledge (religion) 9 ranks |
| Spurn the Arcane | Caronnese, Constitution 13, Survival 9 ranks |
| Steely Gaze | Cirsonian, Charisma 13, Intimidate 9 ranks |
| Stubborn Tenacity | Cantal Plains barbarian, Wisdom 13, Concentration 9 ranks |
| Well-Rounded | Ilsigi, Intelligence 13, 9 ranks in any skill |
| Wild Empathy | Beysib or Half-Beysib, Charisma 13, Handle Animal 9 ranks |

made to resist necromancy and negative energy spells and effects; you also add it to your Fortitude saves to resist massive damage. You take a -2 penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks (except for Intimidate checks) made against other mortals, but gain a +2 circumstance bonus when making those checks against intelligent undead or demons.

DISPASSIONATE FORESIGHT (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Auveshani have never been ones to fret about an uncertain future, but that doesn't mean they lack imagination or the ability to think ahead. You've learned to calmly and steadily assess dangerous situations as they approach, developing a plan of attack to give you and your allies an advantage.

Prerequisites: Aurveshani, Intelligence 13, Appraise 9 ranks.

Benefit: Prior to entering combat or a difficult situation, you may develop a plan of action. This requires at least one minute of preparation and thought; you cannot use this ability when surprised or unprepared. Once you have spent that time in thought, you may make a DC 15 Appraise check as a full-round action (you cannot take 10 or 20 on this check). The result of the check provides you and your allies with a bonus, as per the table below:

| DISPASSIONATE FORESIGHT | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Check Result | Bonus |
| 1-14 | +0 (failure) |
| 15-20 | +1 |
| 21-25 | +2 |
| 26+ | +3 |



You and your allies can apply this bonus to all skill checks and attacks for a number of rounds equal to your Intelligence bonus (minimum 1). After this point, the bonus is reduced by 1 point per round until it reaches zero.

DOLPHIN'S LEAP (BIRTHRIGHT)

The wide-bodied Visalans are deceptively quick, and the demands of their fishing lifestyle and island home make many quite athletic. You are an exceptional example, skilled in making long jumps between ships, standing high jumps into rigging, and diving from cliffs without injury.

Prerequisites: Visalan, Strength 13, Jump 9 ranks.

Benefit: Jump DCs are not increased if you jump from a standing start. Hopping up onto a waist-high surface only counts as 5 feet of movement for you and does not require a jump check. When you jump or dive down, you may make a DC 15 Jump check to take falling damage as if you had dropped 20 fewer feet than you actually did (rather than the normal 10 fewer feet than you actually did).

KILLING SURGE (BIRTHRIGHT)

You embody the virtues of the Black-toothed tribe: strength, fortitude, and a willingness to throw yourself into all-out battle for glory and victory. Through sheer willpower, you can strike with amazing speed and power for a short period.

Prerequisites: Black-haired barbarian, Charisma 13, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: As a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, you will yourself into a surge of anger and battle lust. You gain a +2 morale bonus to attacks, saving throws and damage rolls for a number of rounds equal to your character level. When the surge ends, you are left fatigued for one hour. You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Charisma bonus.

LIGHTBRINGER (BIRTHRIGHT)

Savankala, greatest god of the Rankan Empire, holds a special enmity for supernatural creatures of darkness. As a loyal worshipper of the sun god, you do your best to strike down such creatures, and Savakala himself guides your arm in battle against them.

Prerequisites: Rankan, Wisdom 13, Knowledge (religion) 9 ranks.

Benefit: When fighting a non-human, non-animal opponent, you add your Wisdom bonus to checks to confirm critical hits, and you add your Wisdom bonus to the damage (before multiplying for the critical hit) on a successful critical hit against such opponents.

Additionally, you have a special form of blindsense that detects invisible, incorporeal creatures within 5 feet; within that area, you do not need to make Spot or Listen checks to know such a creature is nearby or to pinpoint its square. The creature still has concealment from you and you must still roll its incorporeal miss chance when attacking with a corporeal weapon. Finally, once per attack when one of your attacks misses due to an incorporeal miss chance, you may re-roll the miss chance.

MAGICAL TINKER (BIRTHRIGHT)

Many of Firaqa's thaumaturges are artificers of the highest order, creating magical devices sold around the continent. Whether or not you know how to make such items, you have studied and worked them to such an extent that you can make them work more effectively through sheer force of will.

Prerequisites: Firaqan, Charisma 13, either Spellcraft 9 ranks or Use Magic Device 9 ranks.

Benefit: Once per round when using a magic item that has a predetermined caster level (such as a scroll or wand), you may make a DC 20 Concentration check as a free action. If you succeed, you may add your Charisma bonus to the item's caster level to determine its effects.

POWERFUL HANDS (BIRTHRIGHT)

Some say the Twandan people are clumsy; others say they don't know their own strength. Well, you *do* know your own strength, and you only break things that you *want* to break—and when you want to break something, it's not difficult.

Prerequisites: Twandan, Strength 13, Craft 9 ranks.

Benefit: You ignore the first 5 points of an object's hardness when dealing damage to it. This includes actions like pounding down a door, sundering an enemy's sword, or attacking an animated object in combat. This ability stacks with the effects of weapons that ignore hardness, such as those made from adamantine or Enlibar steel.

SPIRIT GUIDE (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Irrune worship the spirits of their ancestors, and look to them for guidance. You have built a strong relationship with a particular spirit, who watches over and advises you. The spirit guides you with visions, dreams, and flashes of instinct. You can also present questions to the spirit, who communes with others ancestors in the spirit worlds in the hope of finding an answer.

Prerequisites: Irrune, Wisdom 13, Knowledge (religion) 9 ranks.

Benefit: Whenever you take 20 on a skill check, you only take 10 times the normal amount of time and resources to make the check, rather than 20 times; your spirit guide assists you, drawing on its own experiences to guide you away from dead ends and mistakes. The spirit also assists you in those actions you can perform reliably; you gain a +1 circumstance bonus whenever you take 10 on a skill check.

In addition, you may ask your spirit guide a question once per day about the history, legends and events of the Irrune and the people they have encountered. This works in the same fashion as the bardic lore ability in the *PHB*, substituting your character level for bard levels. However, it requires 1d10 minutes of quiet meditation or rest to use this ability, as you send your mind off to speak with the spirits. You add your Wisdom bonus to the level check rather than your Intelligence bonus, and you gain no bonus for having 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (history). In addition, you are left shaken for 1d4 minutes after using this ability.

SPURN THE ARCANE (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Caronese have suffered under magic's yoke, whether at the hands of the Enlibrites or the Rankans, and they have come to distrust and despise sorcery. In you, that distrust manifests as a determined refusal to allow magic to affect you, so strong that it interferes with the powers of sorcerers.

Prerequisites: Caronese, Constitution 13, Survival 9 ranks.

Benefit: You gain spell resistance equal to your character level plus your Constitution modifier. You can suppress this spell resistance as a standard action in order to benefit from the spells of allies.



Special: You cannot gain this feat if you have any levels in a spellcasting class (godsworn, initiate, mage, priest, or witch). If you take levels in those classes after gaining this feat, the benefit of the feat is lost.

STEELY GAZE (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Cirdonians have a reputation for being tough, proud, fearless and dangerous. While the reputation is exaggerated for some of your countrymen, it fits you perfectly. When you meet the gaze of those around you, they see the promise of defeat in your eyes, and few can stand against the steel in your expression.

Prerequisites: Cirdonian, Charisma 13, Intimidate 9 ranks.

Benefit: Once per round as a move action, you may attempt to stare down all opponents within 10 feet who you can see and who can see you. Only those with fewer hit dice or levels than you may be affected; they must make a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Charisma modifier). An opponent who fails his save is shaken for a number of rounds equal to 1d6 + your Reputation bonus. A successful save indicates that the opponent is immune to your gaze for 24 hours. You and the target must be able to see each other for this ability to work, and opponents may use the same strategies available when facing gaze attacks (averting their eyes or closing them) to prevent themselves from meeting your gaze. This is a mind-affecting ability, and does not affect creatures with Int 3 or lower.

STUBBORN TENACITY (BIRTHRIGHT)

Life on the Cantal Plains is hard, a scramble for survival and a desperate race for lost secrets. You refuse to let anything as minor as life-threatening injuries stand in your way, and make even greater efforts in the face of growing pain.

Prerequisites: Cantal Plains barbarian, Cha 13, Concentration 9 ranks.

Benefit: When reduced to half your normal hit point level, you gain a morale bonus equal to your Charisma bonus to all saving throws. When you are reduced to one quarter of your normal hit point level, you add this bonus to attack and damage rolls as well. You may substitute your Charisma bonus for your Constitution bonus when making Concentration checks if you wish. The Cantal Plains barbarian culture is described in *Shadowspawn's Guide to Sanctuary*.

WELL-ROUNDED (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Ilsigi respect a large number of virtues, from intelligence to treachery, courage to craftsmanship. As an exemplar of your culture, you have tried your hand at almost every discipline at some time, and have a smattering of skill in all walks of life.

Prerequisites: Ilsigi, Intelligence 13, 9 ranks in any skill.

Benefit: You can use any skill untrained, even those that normally require training. You can make an untrained skill test for a task of any DC, not just tasks of DC 10 or less. You still pay double skill points when buying ranks in cross-class skills.

Normal: Characters without ranks in a skill that requires training cannot make checks against that skill, or can only make checks for tasks with DC 10 or less

WILD EMPATHY (BIRTHRIGHT)

The Beysib are the children of Mother Bey, who is also a goddess of nature and animals. You have found a power inside you that evokes that aspect of the goddess, allowing you to communicate with animals (including those warped by magic) and with the elemental spirits of nature.

Prerequisites: Beysib or Half-Beysib, Cha 13, Handle Animal 9 ranks.

Benefit: You can improve the attitude of an animal with body language and the empathic force of your personality. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person. You roll d20 and add your character level and Charisma modifier to determine the wild empathy check result. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly.

You can use this ability to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2 without penalty, or to influence an elemental with an Intelligence score of 6 or less with a -4 penalty.

To use wild empathy, you and the target must be able to study each other, which means that you must be within 30 ft. of each another under normal conditions. Generally, influencing a target in this way takes 1 minute but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time.

PRESTIGE CLASSES

Different cultures enshrine different values and teach different skills; the heroes and adventurers of each culture and region pit themselves against different perils and enemies. The following prestige classes are specific to

particular cultures, allowing players and GMs to create characters that have skills and talents uniquely suited to their backgrounds.

AURVESHANI DILETTANTE

Aurveshani society is spread across two worlds: the aesthetic whirl of the cities, dominated by art and diplomacy, and the stolid, pragmatic mindset of rural towns and commoners. This difference is not a weakness, however, but a strength. They are a people who respect skill above all, and the ability to move between those two worlds at will definitely requires skill. The Aurveshani dilettante is the exemplar of this society, a genius all-rounder who can work wonders no matter what the challenge, and can lend his talents to combat, invention, politics, performance or even magic.

The unique aspects of the Aurveshani dilettante class make it most useful to multiclassed characters, who gain multiple benefits from all their classes as they gain levels. Aurveshani society favors savants, thieves, assassins and nobles in particular, and combinations of these classes gain the most from entering this class. Characters that blend two disparate classes, such as fighter/witches or ranger/survivors, may also find this a useful prestige class.

NPC dilettantes are the celebrities of the Aurveshani, famed among both nobility and commoners alike as marvels in several disciplines. Some sell their abilities as master craftsmen or performers, while others are already wealthy and work for their own ends. An NPC dilettante makes an excellent patron or rival for PCs, or could be a villain with a wide variety of henchmen and plans.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Aurveshani dilettante, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Culture: Aurveshani.

Skills: Craft (any one) 8 ranks, Diplomacy 8 ranks, Perform 8 ranks, 8 ranks in at least one other skill.

TABLE 6-7: THE AURVESHANI DILETTANTE

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Rep Bonus | Special |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +0 | +2 | +2 | +0 | Broad mastery, personal focus |
| 2nd | +1 | +0 | +3 | +3 | +1 | Exceptional talent |
| 3rd | +2 | +1 | +3 | +3 | +1 | Feted |
| 4th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +4 | +1 | Personal focus |
| 5th | +3 | +1 | +4 | +4 | +2 | Exceptional talent |

Feats: At least two feats that provide a bonus to one or more skills, such as Awareness or Skill Focus.

CLASS SKILLS

The Aurveshani dilettante's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Read/Write Language (n/a), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (n/a), Tumble (Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Aurveshani dilettante prestige class.

WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Aurveshani dilettante is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with light armor, but not with shields.

BROAD MASTERY (Ex)

The Aurveshani dilettante's class levels stack with all of his other class levels for determining the level-based aspects of his existing class abilities. This does not allow him to gain new abilities, but only to improve existing abilities as appropriate. If the dilettante gains additional levels in other classes, any new class abilities are based on the levels in both the other class and in dilettante.

For example, a Noble 3 / Mage 4 / Aurveshani Dilettante 1 determines the uses and power of his existing abilities as if he were a Noble 4 / Mage 5. This means that he can use his inspire courage and competence abilities at least 5 times per day (plus Charisma bonus) rather than three times, but he does not gain the new ability of inspire complacency; nor does he gain resources. If he gained another Noble level, he would calculate the

income from his resources as if he were a 5th-level Noble rather than 4th level. His caster level for his spells increases as if he were a 5th-level Mage, but he does not gain any new spells or a new technique.

PERSONAL FOCUS (Ex)

At 1st level, the Aurveshani dilettante chooses one skill, which need not be one of his class skills. This skill is now considered a class skill for the rest of the character's career, no matter what class levels he gains, just as with those bonus skills he gains from his background. The dilettante may choose another permanent class skill at 4th level.

EXCEPTIONAL TALENT (Ex)

At 2nd level, an Aurveshani dilettante gains a new special ability relating to one of his other classes. Add the character's dilettante levels to one of his other classes; the dilettante gains a single ability, bonus feat, or level's worth of Known and Familiar spells available to a character of that level in the base class. Only one ability may be chosen, even if a character of that class level would gain multiple special abilities, the dilettante does not gain any additional casting bonus.

For example, a Noble 3 / Mage 4 / Aurveshani Dilettante 2 can select one specific class ability of either a Noble 5 or a Mage 6. If he chooses a Noble ability, he can gain inspire complacency, resources or a bonus feat, but not all three; if he chooses a Mage ability, he either gains a new technique or the Known and Familiar spells of a 5th-level Mage.

The Aurveshani Dilettante gains this ability again at 5th level.

FETED (Ex)

At 3rd level, the Aurveshani dilettante is famed for his knowledge and skill, and in turn pushes his abilities to live up to that fame. Choose one skill in which the character has at least 10 ranks; he may now use his Reputation bonus instead of his normal ability modifier when making checks for that skill. For example, if the dilettante has a Reputation of +4, a +2 Dexterity modifier, and 10 ranks in Tumble, he could choose to replace the +2 Dexterity modifier with his +4 Reputation, giving him a bonus to Tumble checks of +14 rather than +12. This bonus increases as the dilettante's Reputation bonus increases.

DEMONOLOGIST

Most sane residents of Sanctuary spend their lives trying to avoid unwanted trouble, especially from sources as dark and unknowable as other planes of existence. A rare few, however, actively seek out these beings from beyond—creatures that are most commonly known as demons, but which are in truth as varied as the depths of horror of mankind's imagination. These intrepid or maddened few are known as demonologists, and they can either be an adventurer's best friend or his most dreaded foe, for one who walks the path of the demonologist has willfully chosen to traffic with entities whose eternal purpose is to bring suffering and despair to the world of men.

This is not to say that all demonologists are self-loathing madmen bent on unleashing the foulest of forces upon their brethren. Many simply seek power or wish to delve into mysteries known to but a few. Others view such otherworldly forces as just another means to an end; a way by which they can advance their interests without relying on other mortal men. Regardless of their motivations, most demonologists spend the early part of their careers cloistered in study, perusing long lost tomes or scrolls of forbidden lore, mostly of Enlibrite origin. Their goal is preparation, to arm themselves with knowledge and fortify their souls with expertise.

For when the time comes for them to finally interact with demons directly, there can be no room for error. They simply *must* be ready, for when it comes to demons, the slightest misstep means a demise most unpleasant, as well as eternal torture. For those who prepare adequately, however, the secrets of the demons' worlds are at last laid bare, and those demonologists who study well soon learn the words and rites that allow them great power over that frightful place.

In *Thieves' World*, there is little to distinguish between daemons, devils, and demons. And so, demonologists can conjure any of these beings with equal proficiency.

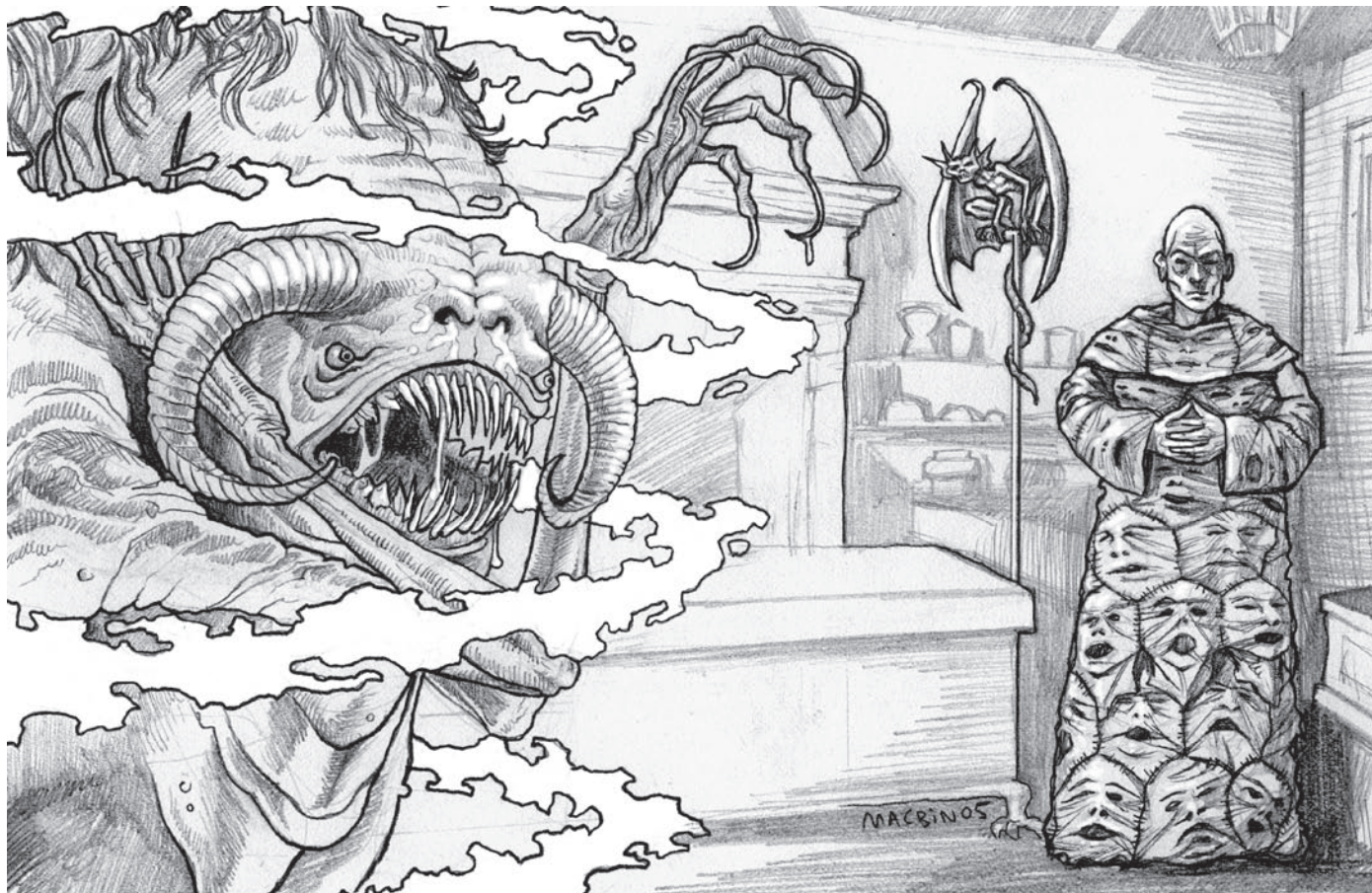
Hit Die: d4.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a demonologist, a character must fulfill all the following requirements.

Base Spellcasting + Base Ritualcasting: +8 total.

Feat: Spell Focus (abjuration).



Skills: Diplomacy 4 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 4 ranks, Sense Motive 4 ranks.

CLASS SKILLS

The demonologist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the demonologist prestige class. For the purposes of this class, the term "demon" refers to any extraplanar outsider with the daemon, demon, or devil subtype.

WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

Demonologists gain no proficiency with weapons or armor.

SPELLS

At each level, the demonologist gains new Known and Familiar rituals or spells and an increase in caster level as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a demonologist, he must decide which class he adds the new level to for the purpose of determining new Known and Familiar rituals or spells.

DEMONOLOGY

As a demonologist advances, he becomes more and more familiar with demons and with how to deal with them. Starting at 1st level he receives a +2 competence bonus to any one of the following skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (the planes), or Sense Motive. Every other level thereafter, he may either increase this bonus by an additional +2 or may apply a +2 bonus to another of the skills listed above.

SELF-MASTERY (EX)

Starting at 2nd level, a demonologist becomes highly resistant to the charms and compulsions of demonic entities. The demonologist receives a bonus equal to his class level on all Will saves against the spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities of demons.

SUMMON DEMON (SU)

A demonologist's expertise enables him to conjure demonic entities into Material Plane far faster than can other spellcasters. Simply by reciting select verses of power from certain eldritch tomes or tablets, the demonologist can open a conduit to a demonic creature's home world, and in the process, bid a resident therein come to his aid. Requesting this aid requires no material or financial expenditure on the part of the summoning demonologist. The simple power of his authority over the realm of demons is enough to compel the creature to step through. When invoked, everyone who can see the character may watch as his eyes gloss over a deep black, like pools of ink within his skull, while a similarly colored, vertical rift begins to tear itself open in the air somewhere nearby.

TABLE 6–8: THE DEMONOLOGIST

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Rep Bonus | Special | Base Spell | Base Ritual | Spells Known & Familiar |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Demonology | +0 | +1 | +1 level of existing class |
| 2nd | +1 | +0 | +0 | +3 | +0 | Self-mastery | +1 | +2 | +1 level of existing class |
| 3rd | +1 | +1 | +1 | +3 | +1 | Demonology | +1 | +3 | +1 level of existing class |
| 4th | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Summon demon | +2 | +4 | +1 level of existing class |
| 5th | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Demonology | +2 | +5 | +1 level of existing class |
| 6th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +5 | +1 | — | +3 | +6 | +1 level of existing class |
| 7th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +5 | +2 | Demonology | +3 | +7 | +1 level of existing class |
| 8th | +4 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +2 | — | +4 | +8 | +1 level of existing class |
| 9th | +4 | +3 | +3 | +6 | +2 | Demonology | +4 | +9 | +1 level of existing class |
| 10th | +5 | +3 | +3 | +7 | +2 | Planar sympathy | +5 | +10 | +1 level of existing class |

At 4th level, the demonologist gains the ability to conjure fiends rapidly. When casting a *summon monster* spell or ritual to summon an extraplanar outsider with the daemon, demon, or devil subtype (or a creature on the summon monster tables that is keyed to evil such as any fiendish creature), the demonologist adds his class level as a bonus to his spell- or ritualcasting checks. The demonologist reduces the casting time for these spells to 1 standard action. Finally, these creatures are harder to dispel, increasing the *dispel magic* check DC by the demonologist’s class level.

PLANAR SYMPATHY (Ex)

When a demonologist reaches 10th level, his power over the realm of demons is superlative. He gains damage reduction 10/magic. In addition, he gains spell resistance equal to 10 + his demonologist level + Cha modifier against the spells and spell-like abilities of demonic creatures.

ENLIBRITE STEELSHAPER

Untold secrets of magic and metalworking lie forgotten and buried in the mines and ruins of Enlibar. But through dedication, study and a gift for the arcane arts, some Enlibrite “scholars” and more than a few crazed witches obsessed with the past have reclaimed fragments of this lost lore. The Enlibrite steelshaper is a rare breed, a barbaric blacksmith who commands sorcerous power, and who bends that power to recreating the marvel of a lost empire.

An Enlibrite steelshaper must be able to cast rituals, but the class has little appeal for learned mages or priests; it’s an immediate, angry discipline, suited far more to witches and godsworn. Many entrants into this class also have some fighter levels, so that they may make full use of the weapons and armor they create and empower.

NPC steelshapers are driven and obsessed, moving back and forth between lab and anvil in the quest to perfect their techniques. They may supply PCs with magical weapons and armor for a price . . . such as in return for lost alchemical texts in haunted Enlibrite ruins.

Hit Die: d6.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Enlibrite steelshaper, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Spell or Ritual Bonus: +4.

Skills: Craft (alchemy) 9 ranks, Craft (blacksmith) 9 ranks, Knowledge (history) 6 ranks.

Feats: Craft Magic Arms and Armor.

Special: Must have spent a year under the tutelage of one of the ascetics that dwell in the Gray Wastes.

CLASS SKILLS

The Enlibrite steelshaper’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (n/a), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Enlibrite steelshaper prestige class.

WEAPON & ARMOR PROFICIENCY

An Enlibrite steelshaper is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all types of armor and with shields (but not tower shields).

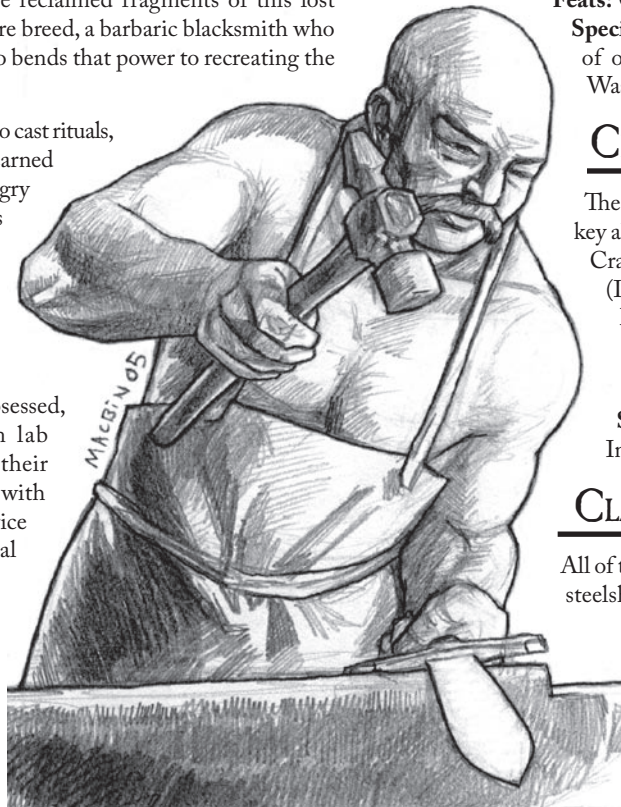


TABLE 6–9: THE ENLIBRITE STEELSHAPER

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Rep Bonus | Special | —Spells— | |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | | | | | | | Base Rituals | Known & Familiar |
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Master of metals | +0 | +1 level of existing class |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +0 | +3 | +1 | Alchemical treatment | +1 | — |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +1 | +3 | +1 | — | +2 | +1 level of existing class |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Eldritch artifice | +3 | — |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +4 | +2 | Armored casting | +3 | +1 level of existing class |

SPELLS

At 1st level and at every other level thereafter, the steelshaper gains new Known and Familiar rituals or spells and an increase in caster level as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a steelshaper, he must decide which class he adds the new level to for the purpose of determining new Known and Familiar rituals or spells.

MASTER OF METALS (Ex)

The Enlibrite steelshaper adds his class level as a circumstance bonus to all Craft checks that involve working with metals. When crafting weapons or armor from mithral, adamantine, Enlibar steel or any other special metal, he needs only 75% the normal amount of raw materials and spends only 90% of the usual XP cost (if crafting magic weapons or armor).

ALCHEMICAL TREATMENT (Ex)

At 2nd level, the Enlibrite steelshaper discovers long-lost alchemical methods for hardening and strengthening metals. He can make tempered versions of metal weapons, shields and armor. Tempered items have +10 hardness and triple their normal hit points.

Much like making a masterwork item, the steelshaper makes the tempered component as if it were a separate object, but does this while crafting the item to be tempered. Crafting the tempered component is a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check; the tempered component costs 3000 sh, requiring 1000 sh worth of raw materials (reduced to 750 sh due to the master of metals ability).

ELDRITCH ARTIFICE (Su)

At 4th level, the Enlibrite steelshaper can transcend his own arcane knowledge when crafting magic arms and armor. He can create weapons and armor that require a spell for manufacture (such as *disintegrate* for a *maec of smiting*) as long as it is a Familiar spell and he meets the required caster level; it does *not* need to be within his safe casting level.

Additionally, the steelshaper can even create magical arms and armor for which he does not know the prerequisite spells. To do so, he must still meet the required caster level, and must pay for double the normal amount of raw materials and expend double the normal XP. Finally, the strain of such a process is overwhelming; when the item is completed, the steelshaper takes Constitution and Wisdom damage equal to the item's required caster level.

ARMORED CASTING (Ex)

At 5th level, an Enlibrite steelshaper takes no penalty to casting checks while wearing any kind of armor, even heavy armor. He still suffers a penalty to casting checks while bearing a shield.

FIRAQAN THAUMATURGE

The city-state of Firaqa is ruled by thaumaturges, white mages who devote themselves both to administering their society and creating the magic items that are its most notable export. The life of a thaumaturge is both luxurious and demanding; they are well rewarded for their efforts, but the ruling council expects them to work hard for those rewards. What little spare time they have is usually devoted to perfecting their already impressive magical abilities, using secret Firaqan arcana to great effect.

The Firaqan rulers only accept mages into their number, so all thaumaturges must be mages; other spellcasters can only enter this class if they also have mage levels. It's more likely that thaumaturges are single-classed mages, but some might have savant or noble levels. The class offers little benefit for mages that want to improve their fighting abilities.

NPC thaumaturges are the backbone of Firaqan government and rarely leave the oasis city, except perhaps to lead a diplomatic mission or hunt

down a renegade. Those renegades, while few, can be terrifying villains for the PCs to face—or desperate souls looking for succor and aid.

Hit Die: d4.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Firaqan thaumaturge, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Culture: Firaqan.

Base Spellcasting Bonus: +7.

Skills: Diplomacy (5 ranks), Knowledge (arcana) 10 ranks.

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, one other item creation or metamagic feat.

Special: Must be invited to become a thaumaturge by the Firaqan ruling council.

TABLE 6-10: THE FIRAQAN THAUMATURGE

| Level | Base Attack | Fort | Ref | Will | Rep | Special | Spells | —Spells— | |
|-------|-------------|------|------|------|-------|------------------------------|--------|--------------|------------------|
| | Bonus | Save | Save | Save | Bonus | | | Base Rituals | Known & Familiar |
| 1st | +0 | +0 | +0 | +2 | +1 | Arcane governance, oathbound | +0 | +0 | +1 level of mage |
| 2nd | +1 | +0 | +0 | +3 | +1 | Mana reserve | +1 | +1 | +1 level of mage |
| 3rd | +1 | +1 | +1 | +3 | +1 | — | +2 | +2 | +1 level of mage |
| 4th | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | +2 | Bonus feat | +3 | +3 | +1 level of mage |
| 5th | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | +2 | — | +3 | +3 | +1 level of mage |
| 6th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +5 | +2 | — | +4 | +4 | +1 level of mage |
| 7th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +5 | +3 | Bonus feat | +5 | +5 | +1 level of mage |
| 8th | +4 | +2 | +2 | +6 | +3 | — | +6 | +6 | +1 level of mage |
| 9th | +4 | +3 | +3 | +6 | +3 | — | +6 | +6 | +1 level of mage |
| 10th | +5 | +3 | +3 | +7 | +4 | Bonus feat | +7 | +7 | +1 level of mage |

CLASS SKILLS

The Firaqan thaumaturge's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Read/Write Language (n/a), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Firaqan thaumaturge prestige class.

WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

A Firaqan thaumaturge gains no new proficiency with weapons or armor.

OATHBOUND

New entrants into the ranks of the thaumaturges must submit to a mystical oath, binding them to the service of the nation. Thaumaturges must serve the good of their nation and government, and are forbidden to practice necromancy or black magic. The power of the oath is such that if the new thaumaturge wishes, she can replace all her Known and Familiar necromancy spells with non-necromantic spells of the same level; alternatively, she may keep some or all of her necromantic knowledge from her peers. If a thaumaturge violates her oath and the violation is discovered, the ruling council will strip away all of her thaumaturge class abilities and banish her from the nation; they may reinstate her power if she makes amends, but they are slow to forgive.

SPELLS

At each level, the Firaqan thaumaturge gains new Known and Familiar spells and an increase in caster level as if she had also gained a level in mage. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. Unlike most other spellcasting prestige classes, if the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a Firaqan thaumaturge, she may not choose a class other than mage to which to add the new level for the purpose of determining new Known and Familiar spells.

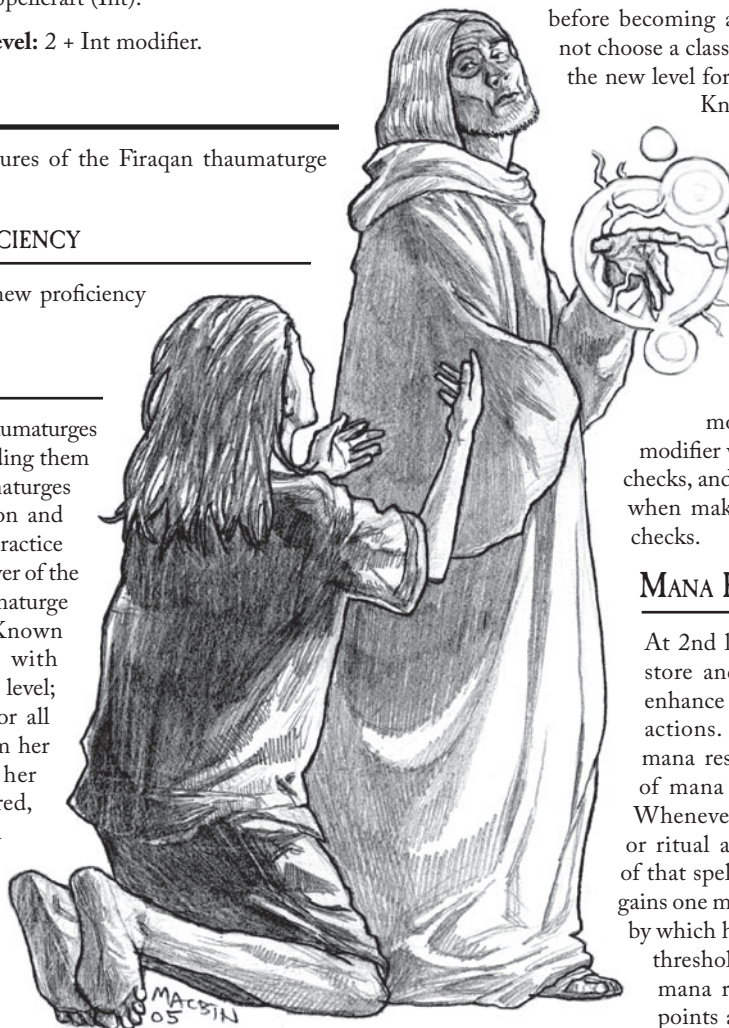
ARCANE GOVERNANCE (SU)

A Firaqan thaumaturge is an experienced bureaucrat and administrator, partially because she enhances her mundane skills with her magical talents.

She may use her Intelligence modifier instead of her Charisma modifier when making Bluff or Diplomacy checks, and instead of her Wisdom modifier when making Profession or Sense Motive checks.

MANA RESERVE (SU)

At 2nd level, a Firaqan thaumaturge can store and manipulate mana, using it to enhance both her mundane and magical actions. The thaumaturge has a special mana reserve, which can hold a number of mana points equal to her class level. Whenever the thaumaturge casts a spell or ritual and exceeds the mana threshold of that spell, she may gain mana points; she gains one mana point for every five full points by which her spellcasting check exceeds the threshold. These points are stored in her mana reserve; if she gains more mana points at any time than she can keep in



her reserve, the excess mana points are lost. Mana points remain in the reserve until used.

As a free action, the thaumaturge may spend any or all mana points in her reserve to enhance her actions. The following benefits can be gained by spending mana points; they are cumulative. Mana points spent to enhance skill checks, saving throws, attack rolls, and so on may be spent after the dice for the action in question are rolled, but before the result is declared by the GM. Mana points spent to affect a spell being cast, whether to increase its DC, speed up its casting time, or reduce the damage it causes to the caster, must be spent *before* the spell is cast; if the spell is disrupted or fizzles, the mana points are still spent.

1 point: gain a +1 bonus to a spell- or ritualcasting check being performed.

1 point: reduce the nonlethal price of a spell or ritual by one point (down to a minimum of 1).

1 point: reduce the XP cost of creating a magic item by up to 100 XP (down to a minimum of 1 XP).

2 points: reduce the lethal price of a spell or ritual by one point (down to a minimum of 1).

2 points: gain a +1 bonus to an Intelligence-, Wisdom- or Charisma-based skill check being made.

2 points: increase the caster level of a spell or ritual being cast by +1.

3 points: gain a +1 bonus to a Strength-, Dexterity- or Concentration-based skill check being made.

3 points: gain a +1 bonus to a saving throw being made.

3 points: increase the save DC of a spell or ritual being cast by +1.

4 points: gain a +1 bonus to an attack being made.

5 points: cast a spell with a casting time of 1 standard action as a swift action instead.

5 points: cast a spell with a casting time of 1 full-round action as a standard action instead.

BONUS FEATS

At 4th level a Firaqan thaumaturge gains any item creation feat as a bonus feat, as long as she meets the prerequisites. She gains further bonus feats at 7th and 10th level.

ILSIGI PARAGON

The Ilsigi gods preach a bewildering (and sometimes contradictory) set of virtues—trickery and courage, pragmatism and love, wisdom and determination. Those Ilsigi who live up to those ideals may be recognized by their church as paragons, receiving the blessings of the gods to aid them in their efforts. Paragons are the folk heroes of the Ilsig, not worshipped but always respected. They often wear traditional Ilsig dress such as the panoply and warbraid, and may bear tattoos symbolizing the gods who have blessed them.

Priests and godsworn are perhaps the most likely heroes to be recognized by their gods, but any Ilsig with a devout soul and a wealth of natural talent may take up the role of paragon. The class offers the most benefit to skill-focused classes like savants, nobles and initiates, and has far less appeal for mages, witches and fighters.

NPC paragons live to serve their society first and their gods a close second, protecting the Ilsig people and fighting invaders like the Rankans. But a paragon is still a normal mortal, fully capable of betraying his people for his own reasons, making him as suitable a villain as he is a mentor, patron or rival.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an Ilsigi paragon, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Culture: Ilsigi.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 7 ranks, 9 ranks in any three other skills.

Feats: Fame and Iron Will.

Special: Must be anointed by a priest of Ils and a priest of Shipri in an hour-long ceremony.

CLASS SKILLS

The Ilsigi paragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide

(Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (n/a), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (n/a), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Ilsigi paragon prestige class.

WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Ilsigi paragon is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armor and with shields (but not with tower shields).

BLESSINGS OF THE ILSIG (Ex)

At each level, the Ilsigi paragon gains the blessing of one of the Ilsigi gods. This blessing grants special abilities, qualities or bonuses relevant to one of the god's domains. Although each god can grant three different blessings, a character can only receive one blessing from any one god. If a particular blessing has multiple benefits, the paragon receives all of those benefits.

Anen's Blessings: Luck (reroll one d20 roll once/day after the roll but before determining the result, taking the second result), Inspiration (+2 bonus to Diplomacy and Perform checks; Ilsigi paragon levels stack with noble levels for determining uses of the noble's inspiration ability) or Plant (+2 bonus to Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks; +2 dodge AC against attacks from plant creatures).

Esbi's Blessings: Beauty (+2 bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks), Charm (+1 inherent bonus to Charisma), or Pleasure (+2 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Sense Motive checks made against anyone attracted to the character's gender).

Ils' Blessings: Eloquence (+2 bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks; +1 bonus to the save DCs of all enchantment spells), Knowledge (gains the bardic lore ability from the *PHB*, based on total character level), or Trickery (+2 bonus to Bluff, Disguise and Intimidate checks).

Meshpri's Blessings: Healing (+2 bonus to Craft (herbalism) and Heal checks; heal one additional hit point each day), Solace (allies within 10ft gain a +1 morale bonus to all saves), or Truth (+2 bonus to Gather Information, Search and Sense Motive checks).

Shalpa's Blessings: Luck (add class level as luck bonus to all saving throws), Trickery (+2 bonus to Hide, Move Silently and Sleight of Hand checks), or War (gain one fighter bonus feat as a bonus feat).

Shipri's Blessings: Earth (+4 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground), Home (+1 inherent bonus to Wisdom), or Protection (+2 natural armor bonus).

Sivini's Blessings: Artifice (add class level as bonus to all Craft checks; +2 bonus to attacks when making or opposing a sunder attempt), Knowledge (+2 bonus to all Knowledge checks; can make unskilled Knowledge checks above DC 10 with Int +2 bonus), or War (+1 bonus to attacks, damage rolls and AC when wielding any spear).

Theba's Blessings: Desperation (can make one additional attack of opportunity each round), Healing (+4 bonus to save against poison and disease), or Protection (gain Improved Damage Threshold as bonus feat).

Thili's Blessings: Charm (+1 Reputation bonus and +2 Reputation benefit), Community (bonus gained from aid another actions by other characters is one point higher than normal), Home (+2 to Handle Animal and Knowledge (local) checks; heal one additional point of nonlethal damage each hour when resting).

Thufir's Blessings: Eloquence (gains one bonus language each level), Swiftiness (base speed increases by +5 ft.), Travel (+2 bonus to Survival and Knowledge (geography) checks; gain Well-Connected as a bonus feat).



PRAYERWORTHY (EX)

The Ilsigi gods favor their paragons. Whenever a priest of the Ilsigi pantheon casts a beneficial spell on an Ilsigi paragon, the priest gains a +2 bonus to his casting checks. If an Ilsigi priest targets an Ilsigi paragon with a spell that has a detrimental effect, the priest takes a -2 penalty to his casting checks. If a paragon can perform prayers from another class, she gains this benefit when casting spells upon herself. Only prayers (priest spells) are affected by this ability; multiclassed Ilsig priests using magic or witchcraft on an Ilsigi paragon do not receive a bonus or penalty.

SPELLS

At 2nd and 4th level, the paragon gains new Known and Familiar rituals or spells and an increase in caster level as if she had also gained a level in a spellcasting class she belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a paragon, she must decide which class she adds the new level to

for the purpose of determining new Known and Familiar rituals or spells. This ability only benefits those characters with spell- or ritualcasting class abilities; if an Ilsigi paragon has no spell- or ritualcasting abilities, she does not gain that ability through this prestige class. If an Ilsigi paragon gains a level in a spell- or ritualcasting later, the benefits of this ability apply retroactively.

BONUS FEAT

At 3rd level, the Ilsigi paragon may choose any feat as a bonus feat, provided that he meets all of its prerequisites.

PLANEWARD (SU)

At 5th level, an Ilsigi paragon is protected from the attacks and powers of outsiders by the will of his gods. He is permanently under the effect of a *circle of protection* (caster level equal to class level), except that the circle does not prevent bodily contact by summoned creatures. If the circle is dispelled, the paragon may reactivate it on his turn as a free action.

TABLE 6-11: THE ILSIGI PARAGON

| Level | Base Attack | | | | | Special | —Spells— | |
|-------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Rep Bonus | | Base Rituals | Known & Familiar |
| 1st | +0 | +1 | +1 | +1 | +1 | Blessing, prayerworthy | +0 | — |
| 2nd | +1 | +2 | +2 | +2 | +1 | Blessing | +1 | +1 level of existing class |
| 3rd | +2 | +2 | +2 | +2 | +1 | Blessing, bonus feat | +1 | — |
| 4th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +2 | +2 | Blessing | +2 | +1 level of existing class |
| 5th | +3 | +3 | +3 | +3 | +2 | Blessing, planewarded | +2 | — |

SHERRANPIP PREDICANT

Behind the frivolous exterior of Sherranpip society, the cult of Weda Kriszhtawn rules the island with a largely benevolent (but very firm) hand. Weda Kriszhtawn is not a warlike or aggressive god, but she has definite ideas about right, wrong, and whether neighboring nations should be permitted to endanger the smooth workings of Sherranpip society. To monitor the activities of other nations and their gods, the cult has its predicants—roaming “undercover” priests and sorcerers who travel around the mainland keeping tabs on current events. A predicant is part spy, part adventurer, part troubleshooter and part missionary; a cheerful, portly vagabond who smells of rancid butter and pokes his nose into other peoples’ problems for the benefit of a far-off island and a grey-skinned deity.

Priests and godsworn of Weda Kriszhtawn are the most obvious candidates to become predicants, but any spellcaster loyal to the dolphin goddess may take up her mantle. Many have additional levels in assassin, savant, thief or ranger; indeed, the goddess prefers predicants with a wide repertoire of skills.

NPC predicants can take all manner of roles in a campaign, and change roles from one session to the next. Their ultimate purpose is to maintain Sherranpip’s status quo, and while that may mean helping the PCs fight the Bloody Hand today, it might also mean assassinating an Ilsigi judge tomorrow.

Hit Die: d6.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Sherranpip predicant, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Culture: Visalan.

Base Spell or Ritual Bonus: +4.

Skills: Bluff 4 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 9 ranks, Profession (sailor) 6 ranks.

Feats: Improved Damage Threshold, Iron Will.

Special: Must be a priest or godsworn of Weda Kriszhtawn or else a devoted worshipper of the goddess and anointed by her priests in an hour-long ceremony.

CLASS SKILLS

The Sherranpip predicant’s class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (n/a), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Sherranpip predicant prestige class.

WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Sherranpip predicant is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with light armor, but not with shields.

SPELLS

At 1st level and at every other level thereafter, the predicant gains new Known and Familiar rituals or spells and an increase in caster level as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a predicant, he must decide which class he adds the new level to for the purpose of determining new Known and Familiar rituals or spells.

ARCANE BLESSINGS (EX)

A Sherranpip predicant is a favored servant of Weda Kriszhtawn, and she grants him several blessings and benefits to aid him in his work. He gains a +2 divine bonus to his Bluff, Gather Information, Profession (sailor), Search, Sense Motive, and Swim checks.

TABLE 6–12: THE SHERRANPIP PREDICANT

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Rep Bonus | Special | Base Spells | Base Rituals | --Spells-- Known & Familiar |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +1 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Arcane blessings | +0 | +0 | +1 level of existing class |
| 2nd | +1 | +2 | +0 | +3 | +1 | Dolphin companion | +1 | +1 | — |
| 3rd | +2 | +2 | +1 | +3 | +1 | Bonus feat | +2 | +2 | +1 level of existing class |
| 4th | +3 | +2 | +1 | +4 | +1 | — | +3 | +3 | — |
| 5th | +3 | +3 | +1 | +4 | +2 | Sneak attack +1d6 | +3 | +3 | +1 level of existing class |
| 6th | +4 | +3 | +2 | +5 | +2 | Bonus feat | +4 | +4 | — |
| 7th | +5 | +4 | +2 | +5 | +2 | — | +5 | +5 | +1 level of existing class |
| 8th | +6 | +4 | +2 | +6 | +3 | Supreme blessings | +6 | +6 | — |
| 9th | +6 | +4 | +3 | +6 | +3 | Bonus feat | +6 | +6 | +1 level of existing class |
| 10th | +7 | +5 | +3 | +7 | +3 | Sneak attack +2d6 | +7 | +7 | — |

Furthermore, as a goddess of sorcery and arcane power, Weda Kriszhtawn grants her predicants the ability to cast almost any spell. Whenever a predicant gains new Known or Familiar spells, he may choose *any* kind of spell—mage, priest or witch—no matter what form of sorcery he practices. The new spell becomes an appropriate spell of its existing level; if multiple levels exist for the spell (e.g. Mage 5, Priest 4) it becomes a spell of the lower level for the predicant's discipline. The spell is added to the predicant's spell list and he can use spell-completion or spell-trigger items based on that spell as normal.

In return for these gifts, Weda Kriszhtawn asks for one small thing (other than absolute loyalty)—that her predicants only bathe in the sacred waters of Sherranpip. If a predicant must clean himself in any other location, he may only do so with butter, despite the fact that the butter quickly goes rancid on the predicant's skin and hair. For this reason, predicants tend to smell (and sometimes *reek*) of rancid butter, which imposes a -2 penalty on all Diplomacy checks made against targets with a sense of smell. If the predicant breaks his vow and bathes, he loses all his predicant class abilities, and must return to Sherranpip to undergo a ritual of *atonement*.

DOLPHIN COMPANION (Ex)

At 2nd level, a Sherranpip predicant gains a dolphin as an animal companion. Use the rules for druidic animal companions in the *PHB* to determine the dolphin's abilities, substituting predicant class levels for druid levels. Predicants tend to stick close to the coastline or major rivers in order to maintain contact with their companions; if they must go inland, the dolphins gambol and wait near a specific stretch of beach until their master's return.

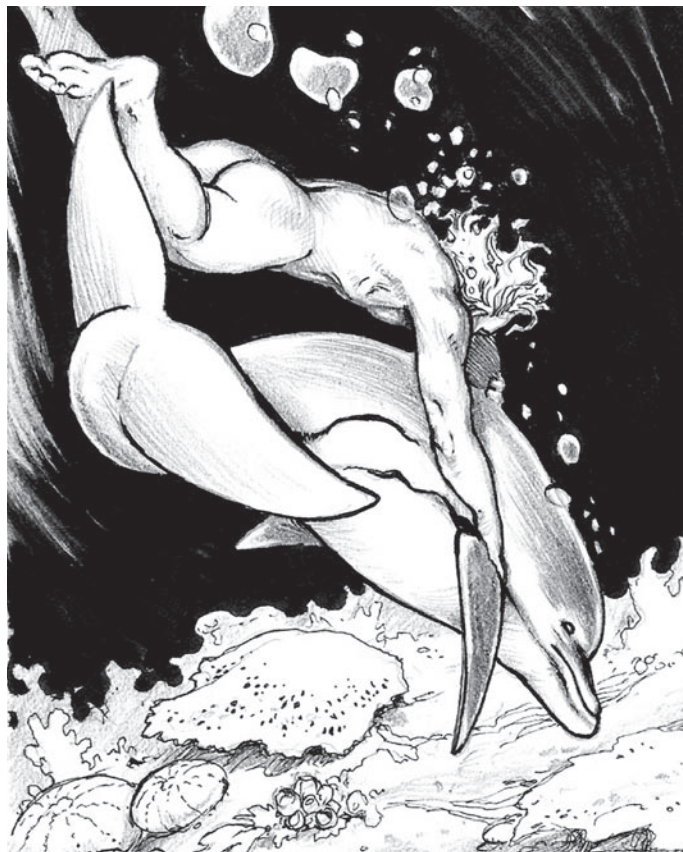
BONUS FEAT

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, a Sherranpip predicant receives a bonus feat. He must meet the prerequisites for any feat taken, and must select this bonus feat from the following list: Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Extra Channeling*, Extra Spells*, Improved Counterspell, Instantaneous Casting*, Manhunter*, Point Blank Shot, Rushed Casting*, Spell Focus, Spell Penetration, Self-Sufficient, Stealthy, Touch the Otherworld*.

* New feat, found in the *Thieves' World Player's Manual*

SNEAK ATTACK (Ex)

At 5th level, the Sherranpip predicant gains the ability to make a sneak attack for +1d6 damage. This functions exactly like the special ability of assassins and thieves, and the bonus stacks with any sneak attack bonus the



predicant may have from other class levels. At 10th level the predicant's sneak attack bonus increases to +2d6.

SUPREME BLESSINGS (Su)

At 8th level, the Sherranpip predicant is favored with additional blessings and protections from Weda Kriszhtawn. He becomes immune to all charm and compulsion effects, and is considered to be permanently protected by an *endure elements* spell (caster level equal to class level). He can always hold his breath for a number of minutes equal to his Constitution score before needing to make Constitution checks, regardless of the activities being performed. Additionally, he gains a swim speed of 10 ft., may always take 10 on Swim checks, and gains a +8 bonus to Swim checks made to avoid underwater hazards. Finally, he gains a +2 divine bonus to casting checks when casting enchantment or abjuration spells.

MYGDONIAN WARLORD

The city-states of the Mygdonian Alliance live in a state of near-constant warfare—whether against the Rankans, the Nisibisi, or at each other's throats. The warlords of Mygdonia are the closest thing the region has to nobles and leaders—they command cities and towns, mercenary bands and bandit gangs with an iron fist. The Mygdonian warlord is a blood-soaked barbaric warrior clad in heavy armor and wielding massive weapons, trailed by a platoon of devoted killers; he rules through right of arms, force of personality, and by hacking apart any who dare question him.

Mygdonian warlords are usually barbarians or fighters (or both), and as such gain the most benefit from the class's bone-snappingly brutal heavy-weapon combat style. A few may have ranks in noble, survivor or (rarely) savant. Godsworn may take up the mantle of war to serve

their enraged gods, but other spellcasters are extremely unlikely to enter this class.

NPC warlords command private armies and wage war against a string of enemies; some are honorable, some are savage, all are dangerous. Fortunately for Sanctuary, no Mygdonian warlord has sought to make the city of thieves his own . . . yet.

Hit Die: d12.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Mygdonian warlord, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

TABLE 6-13: THE MYGDONIAN WARLORD

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Rep Bonus | Special |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +0 | +0 | Armored charge, iron fist |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +0 | +0 | Awesome blow 1/day |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +1 | +1 | Bonus feat |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +1 | +1 | Might makes right |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +1 | +1 | Awesome blow 2/day |
| 6th | +6 | +5 | +2 | +2 | +2 | Bonus feat |
| 7th | +7 | +5 | +2 | +2 | +2 | Blood lust |
| 8th | +8 | +6 | +2 | +2 | +2 | Awesome blow 3/day |
| 9th | +9 | +6 | +3 | +3 | +3 | Bonus feat |
| 10th | +10 | +6 | +3 | +3 | +3 | Weapon master |

Culture: Northron or Black-haired barbarian.

Base Attack Bonus: +8.

Skills: Intimidate 8 ranks.

Feats: Improved Bull Rush, Leadership, Power Attack.

CLASS SKILLS

The Mygdonian warlord's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local), Listen (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis) and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.



CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Mygdonian warlord prestige class.

WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Mygdonian warlord is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all armor and with shields (including tower shields).

ARMORED CHARGE (Ex)

When performing a charge action and wearing medium or heavy armor, the Mygdonian warlord may move up to double his base speed, ignoring the 10-ft.-penalty to base speed imposed by such armor.

IRON FIST (Ex)

The Mygdonian warlord may use his Strength bonus instead of his Charisma modifier when determining the effects of the Leadership feat, possibly granting him more followers and a more powerful cohort.

AWESOME BLOW (Ex)

At 2nd level, the Mygdonian warlord may make a powerful charging attack once per day. As part of a charge, the warlord may take a -4 penalty to his attack roll (after gaining the bonus for charging, for total penalty of -2). If the charge succeeds, the target must make a Reflex save (DC equal to damage dealt) or be knocked backwards 10 feet and fall prone. If an obstacle prevents this knockback, the opponent and the obstacle each take 1d6 damage, and the opponent stops in the space adjacent to the obstacle. The warlord can only use this ability on opponents his own size or smaller.

The warlord can make 2 awesome blows per day at 5th level and 3 per day at 8th level.

BONUS FEATS

At 3rd level, the Mygdonian warlord may select any fighter bonus feat, as long as he meets the prerequisites. He gains another fighter bonus feat at 6th and 9th level.

MIGHT MAKES RIGHT (Ex)

At 4th level, the Mygdonian warlord may use his Strength bonus instead of his Charisma modifier whenever making a Diplomacy or Intimidation check.

MYGDONIAN EXOTIC WEAPONS

Perhaps the most martial culture in the Known World, the Mygdonians have long been prepared to experiment with new and unusual ways to chop their enemies into bloody rags. GMs can easily introduce exotic melee weapons into their campaigns by making them “Mygdonian weapons” (the warlords have little interest in exotic ranged weapons). Relatively well-known weapons thus include the Mygdonian waraxe (dwarven waraxe), Mygdonian double axe (orc double axe), Mygdonian hooked hammer (gnome hooked hammer) and Mygdonian spearaxe (dwarven urgrosh).

It likely won't take long before the players are equally sick of hearing about and fearful of facing anything having to do with the word “Mygdonian,” and should leave combats involving such weapons and their wielders with a healthy amount of respect.

BLOOD LUST (Ex)

The fearsome charisma of a blood-crazed Mygdonian is fearsome to behold. As a standard action, a 7th level Mygdonian warlord can incite fervor in himself and his followers with a savage war cry. The warlord gains damage reduction 3/— for a number of rounds equal to his class level. His cohort and the followers gained from the Leadership feat also gain this damage reduction as long as they are within 60 feet of the warlord. This is a language-dependent, mind-affecting effect, and can

be used a number of times per day equal to the warlord's Con bonus (minimum 1/day).

WEAPON MASTER (Ex)

At 10th level, the Mygdonian warlord has mastered the many exotic and powerful weapons of his culture. He treats all two-handed exotic melee weapons as martial weapons. When wielding any exotic melee weapon for which he has the exotic weapon proficiency feat, he gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

TWANDAN STALWART

Times are hard in Twand, and the young people of this farming nation often leave it to seek their fortunes in the wider world. Unfortunately, opportunities for uneducated foreign commoners are limited, and most become mercenaries and soldiers—and display a surprising gift for that life. A Twandan stalwart is a robust yet easy-going warrior, dependable and skilled, whose endurance in battle is matched only by his endurance in the bars and brothels when the battle is over.

Fighters make up the bulk of Twandan stalwarts, while a significant number are survivors or assassins. Rangers avoid the class due to its emphasis on medium armor, while spellcasters, savants and thieves gain little or nothing from strapping on a breastplate and wading into battle.

NPC stalwarts are often found leading mercenary companies or Rankan military units—as corporals or sergeants, not as high officers. Most are easy-going and friendly off the battlefield... but if you get on a Twandan stalwart's bad side, she's likely to pound you into mush right there and then.

Hit Die: d12.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Twandan stalwart, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Culture: Twandan.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Skills: Knowledge (geography) 4 ranks, Survival 4 ranks, speak at least two languages.

Feats: Diehard and Endurance.

CLASS SKILLS

The Twandan stalwart's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis) and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Twandan stalwart prestige class.

WEAPON AND ARMOR PROFICIENCY

The Twandan stalwart is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armor, and with shields (but not tower shields).

TABLE 6-14: THE TWANDAN STALWART

| Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Rep Bonus | Special |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +1 | +0 | Robust, chain and plates |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Unyielding |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +2 | +1 | Brawler, bonus feat |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +2 | +1 | Shieldbearer |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +3 | +1 | Shrug it off, strap it down |



ROBUST (Ex)

A Twandan stalwart gains a bonus to her massive damage saves equal to her class level.

CHAIN AND PLATES (Ex)

A Twandan stalwart is particularly skilled in the use of medium armor. She suffers only half (round down) the normal armor check penalty when wearing medium armor and her base speed when wearing medium

armor is reduced by 5 ft. instead of by 10. She suffers the normal armor check penalties and movement reduction while wearing light and heavy armor and for shields.

UNYIELDING (Ex)

At 2nd level, the Twandan stalwart is difficult to budge when she wades into combat. She adds her Constitution bonus (minimum +1) to her Strength check when an opponent attempts to bull rush her. She also adds her Constitution bonus (minimum +1) to the initial Strength check made to resist a trip check as well as to the free trip check made against that opponent if the original trip attempt fails.

BRAWLER (Ex)

At 3rd level, a Twandan stalwart gains Improved Unarmed Strike as a bonus feat; if she already had this feat, she gains Improved Damage Threshold instead. The stalwart adds 1-1/2 times her Strength bonus to the damage roll for her unarmed strikes, rather than just her Strength bonus.

BONUS FEAT

At 3rd level, the Twandan stalwart may select any fighter bonus feat, as long as she meets the prerequisites.

SHIELDBEARER (Ex)

At 4th level, the Twandan stalwart suffers no armor check penalty for using a light or heavy shield. She still suffers the full penalty if using a tower shield.

SHRUG IT OFF (Ex)

At 5th level, a Twandan stalwart can ignore the trauma of minor wounds. Once per day as a free action, she may recover a number of hit points equal to her Constitution bonus (minimum 1 hp). The stalwart simply refuses to let a trivial injury inconvenience her.

STRAP IT DOWN (Ex)

A 5th level Twandan stalwart can don or remove light or medium armor in half the normal time (round down).





CHAPTER SEVEN: A THIEVES' WORLD BESTIARY

Thieves' World is a setting where monsters are rare, and most opposition comes from other humans. But rare isn't the same as nonexistent, and several different kinds of creatures have appeared in the anthologies, from the terrifying sikkintair and Roxane's pet demons to the giant crabs of the Swamp of Night Secrets. At other times the existence of monsters has been implied, rather than shown outright; Ischade was compared to a vampire, and Arizak per-Arizak bears 'the Dragon' as a title, so such creatures may be more than just folklore. Even the gods themselves have been known to come down from Heaven and walk the earth as incredibly powerful avatars, and while they are not monsters per se, their servants often are.

Monsters should be used carefully in *Thieves' World* campaigns, and are generally reserved as a way to emphasize unusual or dangerous situations. It's never a *normal* thing to encounter a demon or sorcerous entity; it's the stuff of which stories are told for years to come. On the other hand, GMs may wish to make monsters somewhat more prominent in campaigns set outside Sanctuary, since the stories hint that strange beasts and monsters are more common in untamed places like the World Spine Mountains. The most important thing is to make encounters with monsters memorable and interesting, and to give each strange creature as much personality as you would an NPC.

PLACING CREATURES

The Forgotten Pass, Kaimas, the Unknown World, the Lost Lands, the Lands of Myth, the Cold Lands, and many more regions are all the stuff of stories and ideal areas in which to place creatures. These are the regions that defy the civilizing touch of exploration. They exist outside the boundaries of the Known World, and the closest most city dwellers come to them are in the tales told by poets and madmen, grizzled sailors and storytellers. We know very little of these distant lands except that they exist. If you want to expand your *Thieves' World* campaign to include more

monsters and other traditional fantastic elements from popular fantasy fiction or other d20 settings, these locales are perfect.

CREATURE TYPES FOR THIEVES' WORLD CAMPAIGNS

Not every creature is suitable for *Thieves' World*, while others fit particularly well with the world's sword-and-sorcery style. Use the following suggestions as guidelines for what creatures might suit your campaign and how to use them.

ABERRATIONS

Aberrations, the most bizarre of all monsters, are probably the result of magical tampering with the laws of nature and reality, perhaps by powerful mages or renegade gods. Most aberrations are unique beings rather than representatives of a race; they see their existences as curses, and these singular monstrosities seek revenge on a world cruel enough to give them life.

ANIMALS

Thieves' World contains most if not all of the mundane animals common to our world and others, each species found in whichever climate and terrain of the continent is most appropriate to its kind. Dire animals exist here as well, legendary beasts that menace travelers and hunters in the thickest forests and jungles. Dinosaurs are long extinct, but lingering remnants might exist on an isolated island or in a lost valley.

CONSTRUCTS

Powerful mages and witches have the power to create constructs, golems and homunculi to act as guardians or servitors, just as in other settings.

ADAPTING EXISTING CREATURES TO THIEVES' WORLD

When using a monster from the *MM* or some other source in a *Thieves' World* campaign, a few small changes to their stats will be necessary to ensure that they fit the new and altered rules.

ALIGNMENTS

Because *Thieves' World* does not use alignment, any creature with alignment-based abilities (damage reduction, spell-like abilities, etc.) will need to be modified before it can be used in a campaign. Damage reduction based on alignment either vanishes or changes to a new type; a good option is to make such damage reduction bypassed by Enlibar steel rather than by aligned weapons. Alignment-based spells or spell-like abilities should either be removed or replaced with something similar; for instance, replace *holy word* with *word of ruin*, or *detect evil* with *detect curse*.

MASSIVE DAMAGE THRESHOLD

Any creature that can suffer critical hits can also suffer massive damage, and should have a massive damage threshold equal to its Constitution score + size bonus to grapple checks + natural armor bonus + armor bonus. All creatures that are immune to critical hits and sneak attacks (constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, and undead) are immune to massive damage, severe injuries and infection. Vermin receive a +5 racial bonus to massive damage saves. See **Appendix I** for a mostly comprehensive list of monsters found in the *MM* and their massive damage thresholds.

For example, a kraken has a massive damage threshold of 55 (29 Con, +12 size, +14 natural), while a djinni has a massive damage threshold of 21 (14 Con, +4 size, +3 natural).

SPELL-LIKE ABILITIES

Creatures with spell-like abilities are not subject to the same rules as spellcasting characters; they do not need to make casting checks or accumulate mana, their abilities require only a standard action to use unless otherwise noted, and they do not impose a price. However, spell-like abilities are weakened in low-mana or no-mana environments. The caster level of such abilities suffers a -2 penalty in low-mana areas and a -4 penalty in no-mana areas; if this reduces the caster level to 0 or less, the ability cannot be used. This applies to all creatures and beings regardless of their places of origin, including those detailed in this chapter.

Some ancient constructs might also be found in abandoned ruins and temples, relics of the sorcerous empires of Enlibar and Yenized.

DRAGONS

So rare as to be mythical, dragons should be used very sparingly, if at all. If you decide that the appearance of a dragon is necessary, it should be a major campaign event. Lesser dragons like wyverns are more appropriate, and could act as wild beasts that haunt mountain passes or as the flying steeds of barbarian masters.

ELEMENTALS

Mages, priests and other spellcasters summon earth, air, fire, and water elementals to serve them for whatever purposes they see fit. More bizarre races of the elemental type, like salamanders or xorns, are much rarer. These are closer in purpose and feel to outsiders, and as such they may serve the gods or be may be demonic entities bound by devious thaumaturses.

FEY

The fey are capricious and unpredictable remnants of the time when the gods formed the world. They might hide among the forests, woods and jungles of the continent, or perhaps beneath deep mines and bottomless lakes. In any case, if the fey exist in your campaign, they are likely to resent humanity as invaders and despoilers of nature.

GIANTS

Legends tell of the Mountain Men of Gunderpah, hill giants and ogres that lurk in the World Spine range and hate the Ilsigi gods and their followers. Though trolls in *Thieves' World* are markedly different from those in the *MM*, the regenerating terrors could be used as a mutated

offshoot of the parent race. Other giants may also lurk in even more remote locales, although Huge giants should be exceptionally rare.

HUMANOIDS

Humans are alone in *Thieves' World*, it seems; the gods were content with one humanoid race to people their world. However, the Beysib are not *quite* human, so other near-human or non-human races may conceivably exist elsewhere in the world. They should be used very carefully, if at all; the coming of the Beysib changed Sanctuary forever, and so should the appearance of any other humanoid race.

MAGICAL BEASTS

Many arcane beasts can be suitable creatures for *Thieves' World*. Those with few or subtle magical abilities (e.g., griffins) may be semi-natural, near-extinct species confined to remote locations until they are trapped and brought to civilization. Beasts with particularly unusual or flashy abilities (e.g., chimeras) are more likely to be unique beings created by mages, gods or ancient sorcery.

MONSTROUS HUMANOIDS

These beings are rare, generally confined to places where the boundaries between planes are thin, such as the Forgotten Pass. Some are individuals reshaped by magic, curses or planar energies; others may be small but viable species, perhaps refugees from another world or the remnants of an ancient people. Most care little for mortal concerns like money or political power, but some may seek human slaves or even mates.

OozES

These creatures are rare and unnatural, perhaps the remnants of magical accidents or the appalling creations of cruel-minded mages. They might

be encountered in ancient tombs, or as traps set by mad cultists in the warrens of their temples.

OUTSIDERS

Outsiders are particularly appropriate creatures for *Thieves' World* campaigns, since the gods take such an active, even hands-on role in the setting. Outsiders are generally the servants of the gods, their strange angels and offspring who act as intermediaries between mortals and Heaven. Demons and devils are also present in *Thieves' World*, beings of evil who exist only to destroy mortal reality. Don't feel bound by labels and alignments; a creature described as a demon in the *MM* might be the fearsome servant of a benevolent god, while a planetar or archon could serve a hateful deity.

PLANTS

Animated plants are not unknown in *Thieves' World*; in one early story, Shadowspawn was nearly killed by something that might have been an assassin vine. Such plants are more likely the product of sorcerous

experimentation than purely natural processes—but many forests and jungles on the continent have been the sites of such magic, and may teem with animate or even semi-intelligent plants.

UNDEAD

Ghosts, zombies and the walking dead are not uncommon in *Thieves' World*; a few in Sanctuary still recall the time when the living dead roamed the city at Ischade's command. Mindless undead are normally created by necromancy, while intelligent undead are souls returned (willingly or not) from the Underworld. The undead are not automatically evil, but many prey upon the living due to unnatural hungers; others seek to use the living for their own ends, while a few wish only solitude or redemption.

VERMIN

Mundane spiders, centipedes and similar creatures are as common in *Thieves' World* as in other settings. Giant vermin are not unknown, but rarely so large as to defy belief; a hero is more likely to fight a scorpion the size of a dog than one the size of a house.

NEW MONSTERS

While the anthologies used monsters sparingly, a few entirely new creations appeared in the *Thieves' World* tales. A collection of new monsters culled from the stories are presented in the following pages; despite their direct connection to the *Thieves' World* books, they should still be used as sparingly as any other monsters.

BENGIL CRAB

Small Magical Beast (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 3d10+9 (26 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 20

Initiative: +1

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft.

Armor Class: 21 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+0

Attack: Claw +5 melee (1d4+1)

Full Attack: 2 claws +5 melee (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d4+1, improved grab

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: Hide +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Swim +9

Feats: Stealthy, Toughness

Environment: Aquatic and warm marshes

Organization: Solitary, group (2–6) or school (15–30)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Advancement: 4–6 HD (Small), 7–9 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

GREATER BENGIL CRAB

Medium Magical Beast (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 7d10+24 (62 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 26

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft.

Armor Class: 20 (+9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+10

Attack: Claw +11 melee (1d6+3)

Full Attack: 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d6+3, improved grab

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Spot +3, Swim +12

Feats: Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

Environment: Aquatic and warm marshes

Organization: Solitary, group (2–6) or school (15–30)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Advancement: 8–9 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

This crab is the size of a dog, its shell a dark reddish-brown. It scuttles angrily across the rocks, pincers snapping, homing in on the nearest sounds and vibrations.

Common around the islands near Sherranpip, these large crabs are the result of long-ago magical meddling. Strong and aggressive, they can survive in both saltwater and freshwater. The Purple Mage populated the Isle of Shugthee with bengil crabs, which then spread into the White Foal River and the Swamp of Night Secrets; schools of crabs can be found in many other places in the Known World.

COMBAT

Bengil crabs are territorial, aggressive, and hungry predators that attack much larger creatures without fear. Entire schools may swarm onto a single intruder or swimmer, bringing him down and ripping him to pieces.

Constrict (Ex): A bengil crab deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a bengil crab hits with a claw attack it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

BLACK UNICORN

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 9d10+45 (94 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 32

Initiative: +4

Speed: 60 ft. (12 squares)

Armor Class: 20 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +7 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+18

Attack: Horn +13 melee (2d6+8)

Full Attack: Horn +13 melee (2d6+8) and 2 hooves +8 melee (1d4+2)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Powerful charge, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison and enchantment spells and effects, low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +6

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 18, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 24

Skills: Hide +10, Jump +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Spot +9

Feats: Improved Bull Rush, Improved Natural Attack (horn), Improved Overrun, Power Attack

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Advancement: 10–12 HD (Large), 13–18 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

This creature is like a large horse but is the unnatural color of absolute darkness, its eyes red and literally burning with malice. A black horn sprouts from its forehead like a lance, and it shrieks like a soul damned to suffer for all eternity.



When Lalo the Limner attempted to portray the true face of the Vulgar Unicorn, he conjured up a monstrous black beast that ran wild through the streets of Sanctuary until he, Shadowspawn, and Cappen Varra were able to banish it. None can say if Lalo created the black unicorn or simply summoned it from elsewhere, or whether it has truly been removed from the world forever. Adventurers may encounter the beast elsewhere in the world or on some other plane, and it may be that the creature is not unique . . .

COMBAT

A black unicorn revels in bloodshed and murder, going out of its way to kill or terrify anyone it sees. It charges foes to impale them with its horn, lashing out with its hooves if the victim survives.

The black unicorn's natural attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Powerful Charge (Ex): When a black unicorn charges, it deals 4d6+7 points of damage with its horn.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*detect curse* (as a free action); 3/day—*inflict light wounds* (DC 18); 1/day—*dimension door*, *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 19), *poison* (DC 21). The black unicorn delivers touch spells with its horn. Caster level 9th. Save DCs are Charisma-based.

Skills: A black unicorn has a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

DEMON, BONDED

Medium Outsider (Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 2d8+6 (15 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 19

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 20 ft.

Armor Class: 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+4

Attack: Claw +4 melee (1d4+2)

Full Attack: 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+2) and bite –1 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Sinister urge

Special Qualities: Appetite, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immune to electricity and poison, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, scent, *tongues*

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +4

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +10, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Hide +7, Intimidate +8, Move Silently +7, Profession (any one) +6, Survival +6, Use Magic Device +6

Feats: Power Attack

Environment: The Seven Hells

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +3 (cohort only)

A vaguely man-shaped creature stirs, its dusty gray skin covered in warts and coarse black hair. Its features are ugly, with snaggletooth and a large bulbous nose, over top of which moist brown eyes search about with a hint of something sinister in their depths.

Bond demons are fiends conjured up from the Seven Hells to serve mortal spellcasters, just as Snapper Jo was summoned by Roxane to serve as her manservant and spy. Bond demons are made to serve and above all else they want to please humans . . . and in some cases, to *be* human. They are still demons, however, and so rage, wickedness, and barely checked violence all war with their other desires. A bond demon might be a simpering fool one minute and a raging terror the next.

Bond demons all look similar, having gray skin that ranges from an almost chalky-white to a dark slate gray. Most are black-haired, but a few have white, red, or more fantastically colored hair. They wear rags as clothing when permitted by their mortal masters, but most just go about naked.

A spellcaster can conjure a bond demon with a *lesser planar binding* spell. In exchange for its eternal service, the fiend demands a regular supply of raw meat. If the supply of meat ceases, the bond is broken and the fiend is free to do as he wishes—usually trying to incorporate into human society.

Thanks to their *tongues* ability, bond demons speak all languages. However, they do not speak fluently and must chatter using a pidgin version of the language in question.

COMBAT

A bond demon reveres humans, wanting to become more like them. This fawning subservience does not hamper it when it is ordered to attack or when it is angered, however. In those moments the pathetic sycophant becomes ruthless and vicious, ripping its enemies apart. After the kill it feasts, ignoring everything else around it.

The bond demon's natural attacks count as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Sinister Urge (Ex): Bond demons are barely contained violence made flesh, and as such can snap at any time—though never against their masters. Whenever a bond demon takes damage from a source other than its master, the creature must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or become enraged for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution modifier +3. An enraged bond demon gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution and a +2 bonus to Will saves, but takes a –2 penalty to AC for the duration. The bond demon can do nothing but attack while under the effects of a sinister urge until the source that dealt the damage, or the bond demon's best guess as to that source, is destroyed. It is limited in its feat, skill, and ability use in the same way that a barbarian is limited while raging. For ease, an enraged bond demon uses the following statistics:

ENRAGED BOND DEMON

HD: 2d8+10; hp 19; Mdt 23; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 11; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+4, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4+4, 2 claws), +1 melee (1d6+2, bite); SV Fort +8, Will +6; Str 18, Con 20.

Skills: Climb +12.

Appetite (Ex): Bond demons are always hungry. Whenever the creature kills an opponent, it must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + 1 per hour since it last ate). On a failed save, the bond demon can do nothing but feast on the corpse until the corpse is consumed or the demon is attacked. Likewise, whenever a bond demon scents blood, he must succeed on the same save or follow the scent to the source and begin to eat. In either case, if interrupted, the bond demon automatically gives in to its sinister urge and attacks whomever has come between it and its meal.

Skills: Bond demons gain a +8 bonus to Climb checks and can take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

FROTH DAUGHTER

Medium Outsider (Extraplanar, Water)

Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (65 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 20

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 19 (+4 Dex, +5 armor), touch 14, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+14

Attack: +1 *longsword* +15 melee (1d8+5/19–20) or +1 *longbow* +15 ranged (1d8+1/×3)

Full Attack: +1 *longsword* +15/+10 melee (1d8+5/19–20) or +1 *longbow* +15/+10 ranged (1d8+1/×3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immune to disease, electricity and infection, low-light vision, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, spell resistance 16



Saves: Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +9

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 16

Skills: Climb +12, Concentration +11, Heal +11, Intimidate +12, Jump +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Knowledge (religion) +10, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Listen +13, Ride +13, Spot +13, Swim +11, Survival +11 (+13 aboveground natural environments or on other planes)

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: No coins, standard goods, standard items (including +1 mithral scale mail, +1 longsword, and a +1 longbow)

Advancement: 11–18 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

This beautiful, muscular woman wears scale armor and bears a longsword and bow. She has a strange, opalescent gleam to her eyes, like the sky during a storm, and a sullen aura of power looms around her.

Froth daughters are the servants and offspring of the primordial storm-god Enlil. The god sent Jihan, a particularly powerful froth daughter, to the mortal world as a mate for Tempus, but other froth daughters serve him as agents across the world. Froth daughters can also found in the service of other gods, especially those of weather and war. They are powerful, deadly combatants, and while they appear almost human, their appetites and emotions are savage and sometimes incomprehensible.

Froth daughters speak all mortal languages, but most cannot read.

COMBAT

Froth daughters have no fear of their own death, and enter combat with a bloodthirsty relish. They are skilled in melee and ranged combat,



and use their mastery of wind and storms to hamper their enemies' movements.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*blur*, *gust of wind* (DC 14), *sleet storm*, *wind wall*; 2/day—*call lightning* (DC 15), *convert serious wounds*; 1/day—*restoration*. Caster level 10th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

SIKKINTAIR

Large Outsider (Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 10d8+40 (85 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 29

Initiative: +3

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 60 ft. (good)

Armor Class: 18 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+21

Attack: Bite +16 melee (1d8+7)

Full Attack: Bite +16 melee (1d8+7) and 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+3) and 2 wing buffets +11 melee (1d4+3)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Frightful presence, improved grab

Special Qualities: Blindsight 20 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, resistance to acid 10, electricity 10, and fire 10

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +10

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 17, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +12, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +15, Move Silently +16, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Survival +3 (+5 on other planes)

Feats: Flyby Attack, Hover, Power Attack, Wingover

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or squad (3–6)

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: None

Advancement: 11–18 HD (Large), 19–25 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

This serpentine creature's body is thirty feet long, with two forelegs bearing dagger-like claws. Batlike wings spring from its spine, and its head features terrible fangs and inhuman, intelligent eyes. It gives an ululating cry as it wings through the air.

Sikkintairs are the Flying Knives of Ils, dragon-like beings that serve the will of the lord of the Ilsig pantheon. They are native to some other plane, but come to the mortal world when summoned by priests of Ils or his son Thufir. They exist only to do the bidding of the gods, who use them as hunters and predatory angels.

Sikkintairs do not speak, but understand all mortal languages.

COMBAT

Sikkintairs are vicious, fearless opponents. While not as intelligent as most humans, they have a fierce cunning and a strong grasp of tactics. They attack from the air whenever possible, ripping at their opponents while maintaining the edge in maneuverability.

A sikkintair's natural attacks count as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Frightful Presence (Ex): A sikkintair's unnatural presence unsettles its foes whenever it charges or gives out its ululating cry (a free action). Opponents within 30 ft. and with fewer than 10 Hit Dice or levels who witness the action must make a DC 17 Will save. Those who fail the save are left either panicked (if they have 4 HD or less) or shaken (5

or more HD) for 5d6 rounds. An opponent that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to that sikkintair's frightful presence for 24 hours. Frightful presence is a mind-affecting fear effect, and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a sikkintair hits with a bite or claw attack it can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Blindsight (Ex): A sikkintair can sense things it cannot see. It usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to pinpoint the location of a creature within 20 ft., provided it has line of effect to that creature. Any opponent it cannot see still has total concealment against the sikkintair, and it still has the normal miss chance when attacking foes that have concealment.

SPIDERS OF THE PURPLE MAGE

Medium Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 2d10+4 (15 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 19

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft.

Armor Class: 20 (+4 Dex, +4 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+3

Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d6+1 plus poison)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d6+1 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Poison

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity, *mirror image*, tremorsense 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Skills: Climb +12, Hide +8, Jump +11, Move Silently +9, Spot +9

Feats: Weapon Finesse

Environment: Isle of Shugthee

Organization: Solitary, pair, pack (3–18)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Advancement: 3–4 HD (Medium), 5–6 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

Scuttling up the tunnel is a luminous purple spider. After a moment four more appear, then they all attack!

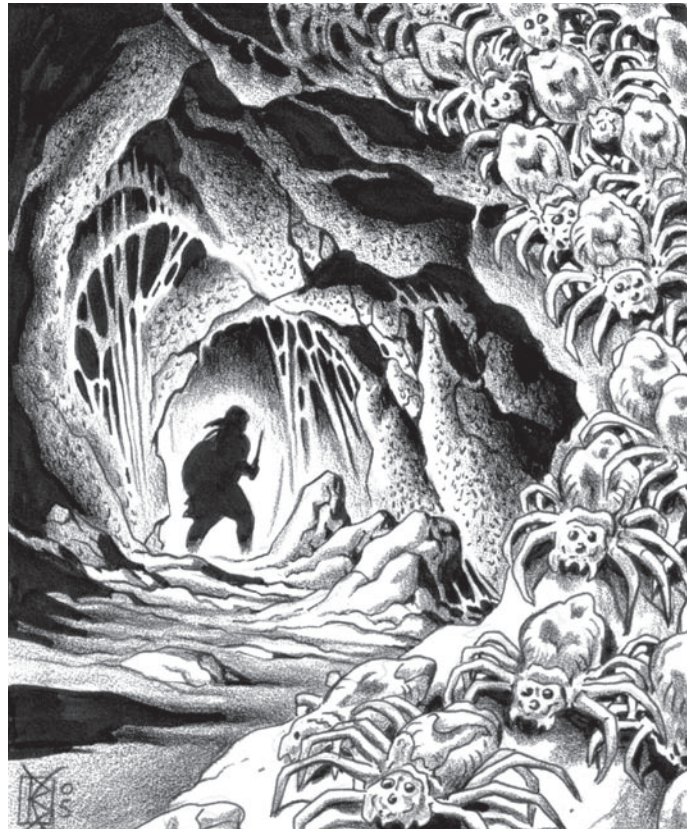
The Purple Mage relied on many servants to protect his stronghold on the Isle of Shugthee, including carnivorous apes and dark Raggah killers. But his most infamous servants were the purple spiders. Some believed these things to be nothing more than figments, apparitions that could make the mind think they were real, but the truth is far stranger.

Kemren, the Purple Mage, bred a special magical spider that could create doubles of themselves that appeared nearly as real as the rest. While Kemren likely augmented the numbers of purple spiders himself through the use of liberal illusion spells, his minions could create such figments and phantasms just as efficiently on their own.

Purple spiders do not speak.

COMBAT

Purple spiders lurk in the shadows, lying in wait until a passerby comes into range and then springing forward. While they spin webs, they are



weak-stranded and haphazard, ineffective at catching anything larger than tiny insects.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude save DC 15, initial and secondary damage 1d8 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Purple spiders are sensitive to light and for as long as they remain in an area of bright light, they take a –1 penalty to attack rolls.

Mirror Image (Sp): Three times per day, a purple spider may project duplicates of itself (as the *mirror image* spell) as a swift action. In addition, light interferes with the apparitions created by their *mirror image* ability. Characters fighting the apparitions in an area of bright light may immediately attempt a DC 13 Will save to disbelieve the apparitions, which makes them appear transparent and therefore offering no defensive benefit. If the spider retreats back to the shadows, the apparitions become substantial again.

Tremorsense (Ex): A purple spider can detect and pinpoint any creature or object within 60 feet in contact with the ground.

Skills: Purple spiders have a +4 racial bonus to Hide, a +8 racial bonus to Spot checks, a +10 racial bonus to Jump checks, and a +8 racial bonus to Climb checks. A purple spider can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Purple spiders use either their Strength or Dexterity modifiers for Climb checks, whichever is higher.

SPIRITS

In *Thieves' World*, there are ghosts and there are spirits. Ghosts are malevolent entities that haunt the area of their deaths until such time that a perceived wrong is righted. Spirits, on the other hand, are the souls of the dead conjured up from the Underworld, as was the case

with Janni, who was unbodied, and Stilcho, whose spirit Ischade bound to his dead flesh.

Spirits crave what they lost and are attracted to the blood and the flesh of the living. Some spirits get loose from their Underworld haunt during the casting of a particularly powerful ritual, and must be appeased by the caster with an offering of blood. Mana surges can sometimes release spirits to walk the streets as they once did in life. These instances are rare occurrences, and as such, the living rarely have cause to encounter the shades of the dead.

Conceivably, a spirit that rejoins its body could eventually overcome death and “recover,” becoming a fully living creature once more. There are tales of the walking dead regaining a semblance of life, including full sensation, a beating heart, and resuming a normal life. How and why this can happen is open to speculation, but some healers claim that death, like any state of the body, can be repaired.

SAMPLE SPIRIT

This example uses a 7th-level human warrior as the base creature.

SPIRIT WARRIOR

Spirit 7th-Level Human Warrior

Medium Humanoid (Augmented Humanoid) (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 7d12+14 (59 hp)

Mass Damage Threshold: —

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect); when materialized or in Underworld, 20 ft. (4 squares) in breastplate, fly 20 ft. (perfect)

Armor Class: 14 (+1 Dex, +3 deflection), touch 14, flat-footed 13; when materialized or in Underworld, 18 (+1 Dex, +5 breastplate, +2 shield), touch 11, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+9

Attack: Corrupting touch +8 melee (1d6); when materialized or in Underworld, masterwork longsword +10 melee (1d8+2/19–20)

Full Attack: Corrupting touch +8/+3 melee (1d6); when materialized or in Underworld, masterwork longsword +10/+5 melee (1d8+2/19–20)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Corrupting touch, manifestation, materialization

Special Qualities: Incorporeal traits, rejuvenation

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 17

Skills: Climb +3, Hide +5, Intimidate +13, Jump +3, Listen +8, Search +7, Spot +8

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Environment: Underworld

Organization: Solitary, Pair, Squad (8), Troop (10–40)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: None

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +5

Possessions: Breastplate, heavy steel shield, longsword

CREATING A SPIRIT

“Spirit” is an acquired template that can be added to any aberration, animal, dragon, giant, humanoid, monstrous humanoid, outsider, or undead (hereafter referred to as the “base creature”) with a Charisma of 8 or higher. A spirit uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Type: The spirit retains its size and type, but gains the incorporeal subtype.

Hit Dice: Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d12s.

Speed: Spirits have a fly speed of 30 feet, unless the base creature has a higher fly speed, with perfect maneuverability.

Armor Class: The base creature retains its natural armor bonus and armor bonus (if any) but it only applies to creatures in the Underworld. When the spirit manifests (see *Manifestation*, on the following page), its natural armor bonus is +0, but it gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier or +1, whichever is higher. When the spirit materializes (see *Materialization*, on the following page), it uses the natural armor bonus of the base creature and any armor that it wore in life.

Attack: A spirit retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact only affect creatures in the Underworld.

Full Attack: A spirit retains all the attacks of the base creature, although those relying on physical contact only affect creatures in the Underworld.

Damage: Against creatures in the Underworld, a spirit uses the base creature’s damage values. Against corporeal creatures, the spirit cannot deal physical damage at all but can use its special attacks, if any, when it manifests (see *Manifestation*, on the following page). A materialized spirit uses the normal damage values of the base creature.

Special Attacks: A spirit retains all the base creature’s special attacks, although those relying on physical contact do not affect creatures that are not in the Underworld. The spirit also gains the manifestation ability plus one other special attack per 3 HD as described below. The save DC against a special attack is equal to 10 + one-half the spirit’s HD + spirit’s Cha modifier unless otherwise noted.

- *Corrupting Gaze (Su):* A spirit can blast living beings with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures that meet the spirit’s gaze (see **Gaze Attacks** in **Chapter Eight: Glossary** in the *DMG*) must succeed on a Fortitude save or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.
- *Corrupting Touch (Su):* A spirit hitting a living target with its incorporeal touch attack deals 1d6 points of damage. Against opponents in the Underworld, it adds its Strength modifier to attack and damage rolls. Against all other opponents, it adds its Dexterity modifier to attack rolls only.
- *Malevolence (Su):* Once per round, a spirit can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th or the spirit’s Hit Dice, whichever is higher), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the spirit must be manifested (but not materialized) and it must move into the target’s space; moving into the target’s space to use the malevolence ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack by succeeding at a Will save (DC 15 + spirit’s Cha modifier). A creature successfully saving is immune to that same spirit’s malevolence for 24 hours, and the spirit cannot enter the target’s space. If the save fails, the spirit vanishes into the target’s body.

A spirit can also use malevolence to enter its own corpse, if it still exists. In this case, the corpse does not gain a saving throw, however the act deeply wounds the spirit’s psyche, dealing 1d6 points of Wisdom damage. A spirit in possession of its corpse gains the zombie template, though it retains its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Also, while it gains undead traits, the spirit is not technically undead, and so it is not subject to turn attempts and similar effects. If the corpse is reduced to 0 hit points, the spirit is cast out of the remains and immediately sent back to the Underworld.

At the GM's discretion, there may be other side effects from possessing one's own body, such as being haunted by images and visions of Hell, being unable to bear to see loved ones, and so on.

- **Manifestation (Su):** Every spirit has this ability. A spirit dwells in the Underworld and so cannot affect or be affected by anything in the material world. When a spirit manifests, it partly enters the Material Plane and becomes visible but incorporeal on the Material Plane. A manifested spirit can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spell effects, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. A manifested spirit can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. A manifested spirit always moves silently. A manifested spirit can strike with its touch attack. A manifested spirit remains partially in the Underworld, where it is not incorporeal. A manifested spirit can be attacked by opponents on either the Material Plane or in the Underworld. The spirit's incorporeality helps protect it from foes on the Material Plane, but not from foes in the Underworld.

When a spellcasting spirit is not manifested and is in the Underworld, its spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but they work normally against ethereal or astral characters. When a spellcasting spirit manifests, its spells continue to affect ethereal or astral characters and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally unless the spells rely on touch. A manifested spirit's touch spells don't work on material targets.

A ghost has two home planes, the Material Plane and the Underworld. It is not considered extraplanar when on either of these planes.

- **Materialization (Su):** Some spirits can materialize, becoming fully solid on the Material Plane while simultaneously existing in the Underworld. The spirit has all of the base creature's normal physical abilities while materialized and retains all of its special abilities. It can interact with both physical and spirit opponents normally, including touching physical opponents (and using touch spells and abilities on them).
- **Spell-like Ability:** The spirit may select one or more spell-like abilities, with each selection counting as one of its special attacks. Each spell-like ability may be used at will. The available spells include: *animate objects*, *bestow curse*, *cause fear*, *confusion*, *contagion*, *dancing lights*, *deathwatch*, *dream*, *emotion*, *faerie fire*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *open/close*, *seeming*, *sleep*, *suggestion*, *telekinesis*, and *tongues*. The caster level for these abilities equals the spirit's Hit Dice. Also, the save DC equals 10 + the spell level + the spirit's Charisma modifier.

A spirit in the Underworld can only use its spells (if it was a spellcaster) and spell-like abilities on other creatures in the Underworld. A manifested spirit can use spells and spell-like abilities on creatures both on the Material Plane and in the Underworld, but it cannot use touch spells on creatures that are on the Material Plane. A materialized spirit can use any of its spells and spell-like abilities, even touch spells, on beings on the Material Plane and in the Underworld.

Special Qualities: A spirit has all the special qualities of the base creature as well as those described as follows.

- **Rejuvenation (Su):** In most cases, it is difficult to destroy a spirit through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself



in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A spirit that would otherwise be destroyed returns to its old haunts with a successful level check (1d20 + spirit's HD) against DC 16, which it cannot attempt once per day after the 2d4 days have elapsed. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a spirit for sure is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The exact means varies with each spirit and may require a good deal of research.

Abilities: Same as the base creature, except its Charisma score increases by +4.

Skills: Spirits have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks. Otherwise same as the base creature.

Environment: Any, often as base creature.

Organization: Solitary, gang (2–4), or horde (7–12).

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Any.

Level Adjustment: Same as the base creature +5.

BINDING SPIRITS

Spellcasters can call forth spirits using spells and rituals. Any spellcaster who has 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion) may call spirits using *planar ally* or *planar binding* spells. Once bound, the spirit becomes the spellcaster's tool, and must abide by her wishes as if under the effects of *suggestion* (with no saving throw). If the spirit's body is available, the spellcaster may force the spirit back into the body (see *Malevolence*, above). If the spirit is "killed" or somehow returned to the Underworld, the spellcaster may call back the spirit by casting a special ritual, making ritualcasting checks each round until she hits or exceeds a mana threshold of 10 × the spirit's HD. She need not expend any other resources after the initial binding to recall a spirit. A spellcaster may release a spirit from her service at any time as a free action.

TROLL, KAIMAN

Small Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 2d8+6 (15 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 14

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/-1

Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d3+1)

Full Attack: Slam +4 melee (1d3+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Invective

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immune to poison, low-light vision, scent, trackless step, wild empathy, woodland stride

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Diplomacy +7, Hide +6, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +7, Spot +7, Survival +7 (+9 aboveground natural environments)

Feats: Ability Focus (invective), Track B

Environment: Kaimen

Organization: Solitary, pair, family (3–6)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: No coins, standard goods, standard items

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4

What at first seemed like a ball of gray-gold fur unfolds to reveal a small humanoid creature with wizened features. Golden eyes look at you with an expression of both curiosity and intelligence.



These trolls are nothing like the giants of the same name. They are intelligent, friendly, and masters of the woodlands. They know a great deal about nature and its creatures and will go to great lengths to share this information with travelers they meet. Recognized by the other denizens of Kaimen to be quite gentle, they are staunch defenders of their world.

People of the Known World rarely encounter these creatures unless they somehow stumble into Kaimen. This has not always been the case, though. Trolls and other creatures from this mythical land are a great prize for menageries and traveling shows; occasionally, one or more trolls are found and abducted, then carried against their will all over the world. Though sad and cruel, this treatment doesn't compare to their terrible enslavement at the hands of the Nisibisi. At the height of the Wizardwall Wars, the witches enslaved hundreds of these creatures, forcing them to fight the Ranke aggressors. It's no wonder that some trolls now have a rather dim view of humans.

Trolls speak something they call "the Language," the tongue of truly sentient creatures. They often know one to three other languages as well.

COMBAT

Trolls would rather talk than fight. Reason and cultured conversation can usually convince an aggressor to see the error in his ways, after which he might be interested in a learned discussion about the attributes of a tree fungus or the particular scent of a flowering plum tree. Should the opponent prove unwilling to talk, the troll unleashes a stream of terrible curses before fleeing.

Invective (Ex): Trolls are witty speakers, and while they prefer to use their oratory talents for peaceful means, they can bring to bear the full strength of their voices to ridicule and condemn their enemies. Once per round, as a standard action, a troll can make an invective check (1d20 + the troll's HD + the troll's Charisma modifier) against one target within hearing range. The subject of the attack must succeed on a Will save (DC equal to the invective check result) or become ashamed, fleeing for 1d4 rounds in a random direction away from the troll. If it can't flee, it cowers for the duration. This ability is a mind-affecting, sonic, language-dependent effect.

Trackless Step (Ex): A troll leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. It may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

Wild Empathy (Ex): A troll can improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person. The troll rolls 1d20 and adds its Hit Dice and its Charisma modifier to determine the wild empathy check result. A typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly.

To use wild empathy, the troll and the animal must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 30 feet of one another under normal conditions. Generally, influencing an animal in this way takes 1 minute but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time.

A troll can also use this ability to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2, but it takes a –4 penalty on the check.

Woodland Stride (Ex): A troll may move through any sort of undergrowth (such as natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain) at normal speed and without taking damage or suffering any other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that have been magically manipulated to impede motion still affect the troll.

WINGED FOLK

Winged Folk, 1st-Level Warrior, Medium Monstrous Humanoids

Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)

Massive Damage Threshold: 11

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Armor Class: 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather), touch 11, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Longsword +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20) or shortbow +2 ranged (1d6/×3)

Full Attack: Longsword +2 melee (1d8+1/19–20) or shortbow +2 ranged (1d6/×3)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Darkvision 120 ft., frail, keen senses, true sight

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +2, Spot +2

Feats: Flyby Attack

Environment: Kaiman

Organization: Solitary, pair, wing (4–16)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +3

Dropping from the clouds is a rapidly descending humanoid. As he plummets, you see him draw a thin-bladed longsword. At the last moment, wings snap out from his back, suddenly changing his fall into flight, and his sword whisks out at you as he passes by.

There have always been legends of men and women who can fly. Some of the Known World's most ancient tales involve these strange stories, and through the generations, they grow more elaborate with each telling. Like anything about Kaiman, most regard these tales as nothing more than entertaining stories. Even faced with incontrovertible proof of their existence, such as when a group of winged folk came to Sanctuary to rescue a missing comrade with the help of Lythande, people find a way to dismiss the creatures as demons, witches, or as illusions created by mages.

Winged folk do in fact exist, but they are content in their own lands and rarely cross Kaiman's border to enter the lands of humanity. Those that do encounter humans are fascinated by their behavior, and nearly all winged folk are naïve about the depth of human corruption. Innocent, sensual, and graced with a powerful animal magnetism, winged folk are almost alien when compared to humans.

Winged folk speak the Language, the tongue of truly sentient creatures. Most winged folk learn human tongues as well before traveling through foreign lands.

COMBAT

Though the winged folk are peaceful and seek pleasure over war, most are trained warriors, capable in a fight. Nearly all winged folk use Flyby Attack to swoop down on their enemies, attempt to land a solid hit, then take to the air again.

Frail (Ex): Because of their fragile bone structures, winged folk are more susceptible to massive damage. All winged folk have a –3 racial penalty to their massive damage threshold.



Keen Senses (Ex): Winged folk see four times as well as a human does in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light.

True Sight (Su): All winged folk have the ability to see through falsehoods and illusions, as if under the effects of a permanent *true seeing* spell.

Skills: Winged folk have a +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks.

The winged folk warrior presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

WINGED FOLK AS CHARACTERS

Winged folk rarely leave Kaiman, content to live their lives in their free society. Only an extreme cause, such as punishment for a grave misdeed or in chase of one who performed such a deed, would motivate a winged folk to emerge from this secret land. Most winged folk are rangers, but a few make good witches and rogues.

Winged folk characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma.
- Medium size.
- A winged folk's base land speed is 30 ft.
- Winged folk all have fly speeds of 60 ft. with perfect maneuverability.
- Frail (as above).
- Darkvision out to 120 ft.
- Keen Senses (as above).
- True Sight (as above).
- +2 racial bonus to Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks.
- Automatic Languages: The Language. Bonus Languages: Any (except for secret languages).
- Favored Class: Ranger.
- Level adjustment: +3.

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