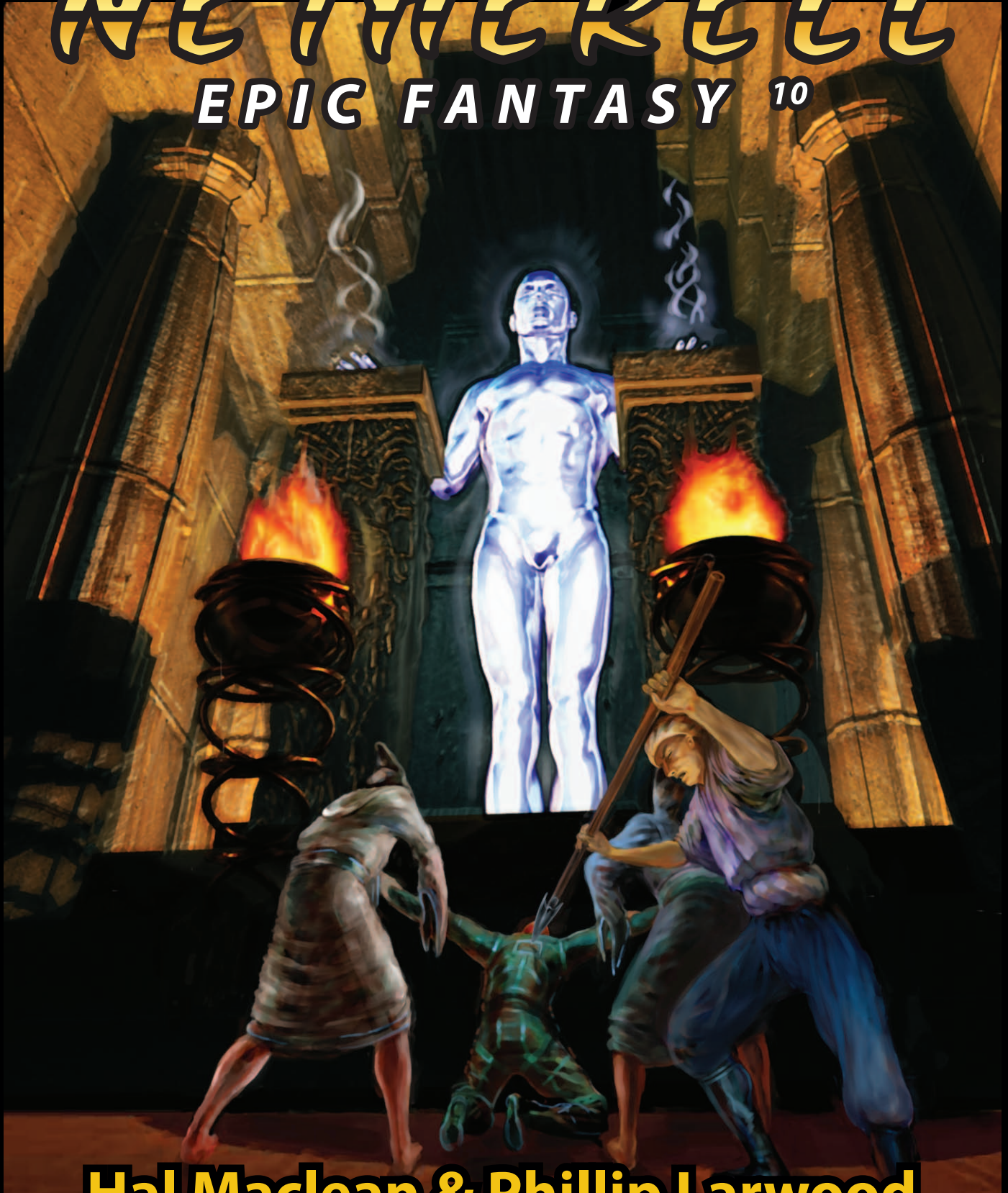


# NETHERELL

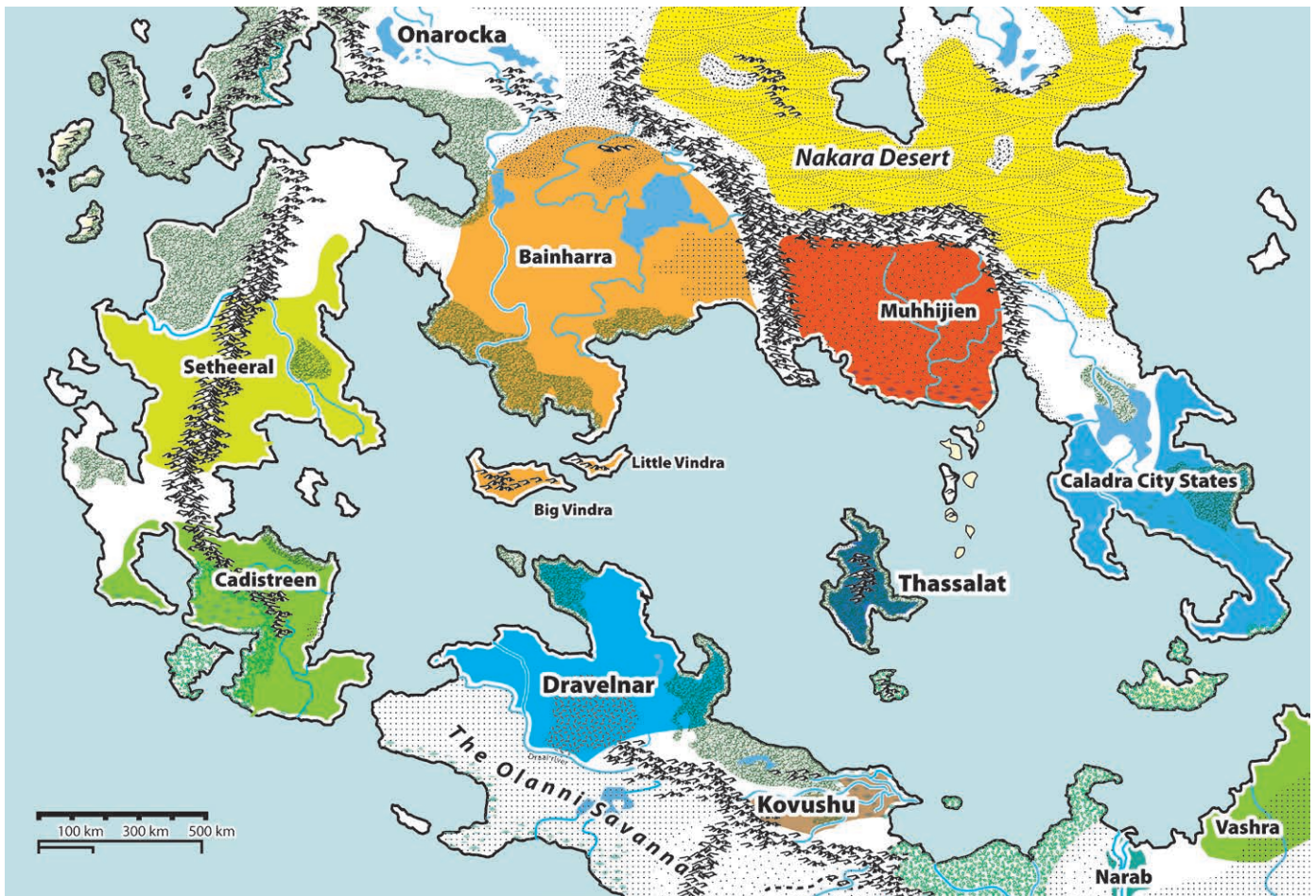
EPIC FANTASY 10



**Hal Maclean & Phillip Larwood**

**TRAVELLER**

Compatible Product



*On Netherell, magic is real. Netherell has people who can call forth lightning and control the wind; who can shatter the minds of their enemies and summon demons to do their bidding. On Netherell, the dying, if left next to the right kind of tree, live on long after their bodies collapse into dust. Netherell's wildlife, monsters by the ken of those who live outside of this world, can devour souls or breathe fire.*

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*On Netherell, a fuse lit at the dawn of history slowly burns...*

**Requires the use of the Traveller™ Main Rulebook,  
available from Mongoose Publishing.**

# ***TWILIGHT SECTOR***

## ***Netherell: Planet of Magic***

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# NETHERELL: PLANET OF MAGIC

*On Netherell, ships still rely on wind to fill their sails. Blacksmiths hammering at their forges produce the deadliest weapons which most of its population can imagine. Mounted knights, their armor allowing them to shrug off all but the luckiest arrow shots or spear thrusts, rule the battlefield. On Netherell, kings reign, peasants toil in the fields, and gods walk amongst them...*

*On Netherell, magic is real. Netherell has people who can call forth lightning and control the wind; who can shatter the minds of their enemies and summon demons to do their bidding. On Netherell, the dying, if left next to the right kind of tree, live on long after their bodies collapse into dust. Netherell's wildlife, monsters by the ken of those who live outside of this world, can devour souls, or breathe fire.*

*On Netherell, explorers from worlds beyond, galactics, work in secret to unravel its mysteries. Some do so out of curiosity. Others with the hope for profit or even honest patriotism. None of them, the scientists, traders, and soldiers looking for ways to exploit Netherell's unique features, dreams that solving its riddles could determine the fate of not only their distant home world but a thousand others as well.*

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book takes the existing rules of the Traveller system and applies them to a very different sort of setting; one that incorporates "magic." Set on a single, quite unusual planet in an otherwise high-tech galaxy, it gives players and Referees many new options when running Traveller campaigns. *Netherell: Planet of Magic* presents careers, skills, and equipment designed with low-tech characters in mind. It also introduces a comprehensive new magic system that, while clearly based on the existing psionics rules, also allows characters to do far more with it.

*Netherell: Planet of Magic* gives players and Referees the information they need to enjoy adventures and campaigns set on this world. Whether a team of explorers from the outside trying to make sense of its mysteries, natives comfortable with magic but baffled by even the simplest electronic gadgets, or even a party consisting of both; this book gives the tools, and the flexibility, to let imaginations run free. It presents a number of plot points and campaign seeds that could serve as springboards for all sorts of interesting adventures.

This book comes in two portions; the Player's Guide and the Referee's Section. As its name implies, players should not read the Referee's Section. It contains many spoilers that are best discovered over the course of a campaign or an adventure. Since players could appear hailing from a wide variety of backgrounds, ranging from galactics who crash landed without any advance preparation to natives versed in countless centuries of lore, Referees should feel free to pass as much or as little setting information as they deem fit.

## TAKING A STAND

Duvall lowered the magnification lenses and muttered a curse. This was not lost in the all-too-small listening post on his "partner", Jenkins, who slithered up to him and peered through the transparent wall over his shoulder.

"At it again eh? More target practice?"

Duvall handed Jenkins the lenses, his face hard. "This time they're using that tribe we saw yesterday."

Jenkins grabbed up the lenses and scanned down into the valley. As he did, Duvall tried to center himself. He was no rookie, this was his sixth year on Netherell, sixth year of watching and waiting. He'd watched the Incarnator's forces grind up the old empire, he'd watched them grow ever more bold. Now he was watching them exterminate a much less technologically developed culture. It didn't matter if this was a pogrom of some sort or an isolated act, those were human beings down there.

"That looks like a lot of fun," Jenkins barked a laugh. "Look at them go! It's following just two of them now. I'll bet you 15 cred the guy on the pale horse gets whacked before they can get to the treeline."

Duvall's fist came down on the back of Jenkin's neck, then Jenkin's face smashed into the transparent wall. The sound, a satisfying double thump, was followed by the tiny rattle of the magnifiers onto the floor.

Duvall grabbed the now insensate Jenkins by the hand and began dragging him towards the weapon's locker. Of course it had to be coded to Jenkins...



Jeroth knew the skyemen were playing with him and gritted his teeth. Their Iron Cloud had come from the South, and for two days had been burning down copses of *ficea* trees along the southern reaches of the forest. He and his demibrothers had come to watch them, to ensure that they did not stray closer to the Ancestors. Whether this had angered them or not he could not say, but they were playing with him now, just as the Machora played with their prey.

Jeroth's horse screamed as the Iron Cloud let off another gout of flame that reached down to the ground. It was quite low now, sections grazing the taller trees and he could see the great pouch that hung beneath the Cloud. He could hear exultant voices from within. While Jeroth did not understand the language, he knew their intent.

They were herding him.

Brali glanced behind and saw that Jeroth had reined in his horse and shouted back to him. His demibrother reined back sharply himself and shouted back.

"The Skyemen are mad! Ride!"

Jeroth just lifted his spear. Yes, the Skyemen were mad, but it was the sickening madness of the battle hungry, not the ravings of the Ancestors who had been left too long before they were set among the *daichana*.

And it angered him.

The Iron Cloud loomed closer now, he could hear the steady throb of something deep inside of it. He could now make out the tops of the heads of those inside the great purse through the slits that had been made so they could see out.

Brali shouted again, but Jeroth could not hear him. The throb of the Iron Cloud was deafening now, and the muzzle of their fire-maker turned towards him.

Jeroth, warrior of six summers, raised his spear and fought to control the horse under him. He would not run, he would not allow them to treat him like a maddened Unuk or a Machora's overmatched prey. He would not have them make sport of him.

Then came the a new, screeching noise. Something small and fast streaked from the hills behind it, leaving a thin trail of mist in the air. It struck the side of the Iron Cloud and exploded.

Jeroth's horse, a good mount of stout breeding, bolted from under him. Even as he fell to the ground, the sound of thunder clapped his ears and the air from the explosion rippled over him throwing his spear from him into the tall grass. Somewhere behind him the horse screamed. The Iron Cloud lurched, hissing and burning around where the screeching thing had struck it. Jeroth, half-dazed, simply gazed up at it.

Then came a second screeching sound, and this time Jeroth was on his feet and scrambling away. He did not see it cross the sky. He did not need to. The sound of the explosion hit him the same time that he found his spear, and the wind from the explosion picked him up and thrust him away bodily, lifting him well off the ground and into the tall grass many paces away.

Behind him, the Iron Cloud was wrapped in fire. He imagined, but could not hear, the screaming of the skyemen inside. As he turned to watch, the Iron cloud pitched to one side, illumed in it's own pyre. With a bitter laugh, he fell back, watching it glow as he fell into black unconsciousness.



Duvall lowered the rocket launcher and stared at the conflagration. The explosion had been significant, but not as bad as he had feared. That left him with one and only one dilemma: *where to go now to escape his APR masters?* He eyed the still form below...



**BOOK 1:  
PLAYERS SECTION**

# CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUNDS

Anyone already familiar with creating characters using the **Traveller** rules should have little difficulty making a Netherell character. It employs the same six characteristics and advances characters by sending them through a variety of careers. While these careers assume a lower technology base they still grant skills or other benefits and pose the same risk of suffering Mishaps and potential for gain through Events.

## BACKGROUND BY NATION

**Netherell characters begin play with 3 + their Education DM background skills just like galactics.**

Since each country has its own traditions and values, characters must take the skill associated with their nation. This represents the legacy of their childhood and upbringing. Though players, with the permission of their Referee, can get a better idea the history and culture of their nation by reading its entry in the Netherell Gazetteer, a quick summary of the overall theme of each country, as well as its background skill, appears below.

**Bainharra (BANE-harr-ah):** (*Empathy 0*) This former empire collapsed into many warring city-states when the revered Oracles that held its society together began speaking to people outside of the Imperial family. Now a land where jockeying for power and betrayal has become a way of life, its citizens treat everyone with a measure of suspicion and doubt.

**Cadistreen (CAD-eh-streen):** (*Medic 0*) This well-ordered land assigns each of its citizens to one of five castes by random lot. Brutally pragmatic, Cadistreen deals with the elderly and infirm by sending them to tend the carnivorous plants of Kartang Island, a fact which makes every citizen uniquely conscious of his or her own health.

**Dravelnar (DRAV-al-nar):** (*Language, with a specialty in any other nation's tongue 0*) This dying land suffers from a terrible blight emanating from the Graven Abyss, a massive crater that simply appeared one day five years ago. Many of its citizens have already died or fled, and the survivors spend their time preparing for a new life by studying the tongues of their neighbors.

**Kovushu (KOH-voo-shoo):** (*Stealth 0*) This sorrowful land lives in terror of the priest-kings who never tire of looking for sacrifices to offer up to their bloodthirsty gods. Since everyone from the hapless city dwellers to those scrambling through the wilderness trying to avoid the hunter patrols knows the consequences of attracting notice, the entire nation makes a habit of walking softly and hugging the shadows.

**Muhhijien (moo-HEE-jeen):** (*Persuade 0*) The average citizen of this decadent land knows that he lives at the whim of the ruling upper caste. Yet, even those rulers depend on shifting alliances amongst their peers, raising the game of politics to a national obsession.

**Onarocka (ona-ROCK-ah):** (*Animals 0*) The folk of this primitive land revere their ancestors for a very simple reason; they still communicate with them by way of the daichana trees that hold their spirits. And since the wandering tribes depend on herds of migratory unuks for the majority of their food and tools, they have a uniquely primal understanding of how animals think and behave.

**Perraine (PER-ayn):** (*Channel 0*) Famous throughout Netherell for its magical Devices, magic is a part of everyday life in this land. These Devices created by the Makers Guild are so ubiquitous on this island that commanding them, or any other magical item, is literally child's play.

**Setheeral (See-THEER-ee-al):** (*Personal Combat (Spears, Heavy) 0*) A living god, the Incarnator, rules this land and his chief followers, the magician priests of the Temet-Kau, ensure that no one dares to defy his will. Since the Incarnator demands that all of his worshipers serve a term in the armed forces, everyone receives at least the rudiments of weapons training.

**Thassalat (THAZ-al-AT):** (*Seafaring 0*) This collection of islands and port cities has little real territory but nevertheless survives, and thrives, through trade and the power of its fleets. Revering ship life as a cultural ideal, every citizen of Thassalat learns at least the basics of sailing.

**Nakara (NEE-kar-ah) Desert/Blackfist:** (*Knowledge (traditions) 0*) In awe of the magically trained Mothers of Dust, and the child Pashas they set up as rulers, conscious choice makes these southern nomads even more isolated than their geography would suggest. Superstitious to a fault, the Blackfist tribes spend their days singing songs filled with ancient lore and searching their surroundings for portents of the future.



**Nakara Desert/City-States:** (*Trade 0*) The city-states ringing the desert survive by making themselves useful to the nomads. Every citizen is expected to learn some craft or skill to not only help placate the tribes but also to make life just a little bit easier when the winds send another of the great choking sandstorms swirling through their streets.

**Nakara Desert/Sevenwind Tribes:** (*Survival 0*) These nomadic tribes roam freely through the interior of the vast desert trusting nothing save their weapons, their honor, and the decrees of the deathless mummified strigoi who lead them. Since they believe that only children depend on others for food or water, every member of the tribes learns at least the rudiments of existing on the sands.

**Skerathos (SKEE-rath-os):** (*Survival 0*) The folk of this savage and distant land only break off from their blood feuds to battle the hideous Fhiomori giants or to hunt down suspected magicians before they transform into monsters. Treasuring a strong body over keen wits, the people of Skerathos constantly measure themselves against one another in contests of strength, speed, agility, and fortitude.

**Tarlathame (TAR-la-thayme):** (*Tarlathame Knack, see Chapter 4: Magic*) This isolated land exists mainly as the stuff of legend and song. Every citizen

has at least a smidgen of innate magical talent, and regards those without magic as less than human. *Players can only make characters hailing from Tarlathame with the Referee's consent.*

In addition to these, there are several "open" lands that have been left largely undefined to allow Referees to make their own stamp on the Setting (see page 86). Referee's should assign these nations with their own unique character and starting background skill.

## **EDUCATION & COMBAT TRAINING**

In addition to their normal background skill, every Netherell character automatically knows one *Personal Combat* specialty at level 0 (even those from Setheeral. This again does **not** count towards that character's total allotment of background skills. He must gain additional training in that specialty or any other as normal. For more information about this see the entry for *Personal Combat* in **Chapter 2: Skills** (pg 38).

Once characters gain their national skill and their bonus combat training, select the remainder of their background skills, at level 0, from the following list: *Admin, Advocate, Animals, Art, Carouse, Food Production, Language, Medic, Recon, Ride, Seafarer, Steward, Survival, Track and Trade.*



*The "galactics" or APR researchers on Netherell, try to blend in whenever possible. Not always very well however.*



## OGRES

Ogres are the ultimate result when a magician is unable to withstand the strain of his art, slowly transforming into a savage giant. Ogres stand between two and a half and three meters in height, their bestial demeanor defined by sloping brows, jutting lower jaws, and large squashed noses. They have a bow-legged stance and a penchant for wearing thick, rancid smelling pelts.

Ogres have the strength and fortitude that comes with their powerful build but are clumsy, stupid, and socially awkward. Even the most brilliant magicians lose most, if not all of their civilization and culture once they transform. Most human societies regard ogres as monsters and treat them with great hostility or, if they seem docile, scornful contempt. Though only a few cultures attack them on sight, ogres find it difficult to function in human society. They often make social blunders and frequently find themselves dealing with squads of heavily armed warriors at their first misstep.

In any given year, very few humans actually transform into ogres. Most members of this race breed true with their own kind and have little to no knowledge of their human ancestry. Still, the stigma of savagery and magical failure shapes how human cultures react to ogres. This, in turn, influences how ogres react to humans.

**Game Mechanics:** Ogres are **Large** (3d6 Strength and Endurance) but **Feral** (1d6 Education) and **weak** in Dexterity, Intelligence, and Social Standing (-2). Their size and bulk make them +2 DM to hit, but they take 2 less damage (in game terms, the bonus to hit doesn't confer any extra damage based on the weapon's Effect). Their thick skin gives them additional **Armor** (protection 1) which contributes to any protection gained from armor they wear. Ogres are **Awkward** (increase difficulty of any roll involving Social Standing by one level) when dealing with humans. Ogre characters always have *Survival* as their background skill but also gain combat training and can select any other background skills from the same list as humans

**Note:** Some ogres retain a vestige of their earlier magical ability. Called **Fhiomori**, these ogres are more cunning than normal ogres, and benefit from an extensive program of self-education. In game terms, their Education and Intelligence characteristics are unchanged and/or rolled normally. To balance their mutations, the Fhiomori have **Emotional Instability** (they are prone to irrational bouts of frustration and anger) and **Diminished Vision** (making them -1 DM for tasks involving eyesight, like ranged combat). They all have the Fhiomori knack (see **Chapter: 4 Magic**). A player can only make a Fhiomori ogre with the agreement of the Referee.

## CAREERS

Netherell characters enter careers the same way galactic characters do, by making a qualification roll. Netherell does not have the draft. Instead, characters failing a qualification roll must immediately attempt one for a different career (with a -2 DM). Those who fail this second qualification roll automatically enter the Scum career. Characters suffer a cumulative -1 DM on qualification rolls for every previous career, just as galactic characters do.

Two of the careers listed below, **Apprentice** and **Scum**, have special entry and advancement rules.

- ⚡ **Apprentice:** The Apprentice career was specifically designed to promote characters into a magical career. The highest available rank in each of its specializations matches one of the Magician specializations; Acolyte becomes Zealot, Hedge Wizard becomes Witch, and Student become Magus. A character that advances far enough in one of these specializations automatically enters that corresponding Magician specialization. See **Chapter 4: Magic** for more information on the Magician career and the special rules relating to it. While not the only way to gain a magical career, taking this slow and safe route substantially reduces the risks of transforming into an ogre or suffering other sorts of mishaps.
- ⚡ **Scum:** The Scum career has no qualification or other entry requirements. Though a player can choose to make a character with this career, characters normally enter it by failing qualification rolls for other careers. They can also enter it by experiencing particular mishaps or life events; being captured by pirates causes a character to become a prisoner or a slave, while going bankrupt might make him a beggar.

Characters in the Scum career advance like any other career. However, they cannot choose to leave it voluntarily. Instead, a character must escape from the career. This requires that he first succeed in his survival and advancement roll as normal. Then, he must do so again. While failing his second survival roll has the same consequences as failing any other survival roll, his second advancement roll, unlike the first, does not grant him any benefits. If he succeeds in both sets of rolls, he escapes and can try to either qualify for a new career or to resume the career he had before entering the Scum career, if any. If he resumes an earlier career, he retains all ranks and benefits he had prior to entering the Scum career. For instance, if he broke away from the pirates who captured him and sold him as a slave, escaping their clutches allows him to return home and pick up where he left off.

### Optional Career Starting Ages

Because most people on Netherell do not live as long as humans on other worlds, due in large part to the relatively low TL that in turn leads to poor medical practices and hygiene, they often begin training in careers at an earlier age than galactic characters. To replicate this fact Referees may let their players begin their careers at the age of fourteen, or even ten, depending on the career in question and the nature of the campaign. One take on this is the Social Status initial skill, knack and age options on pg 32.

### Character Creation Using the Alternate Twilight Sector Method

**Tinker, Spacer, Psion, Spy: The Twilight Sector Companion**, introduced an alternate method of character creation for the Twilight Sector setting. While some aspects of character creation in *Netherell: Planet of Magic* should **not** reflect those found in that book, some are perfectly reasonable for this unique setting. *First and foremost however, this is subject to the approval of the Referee.*

The two major changes which are most applicable include: **first**, characters select an **Extended Basic Training Package** (see Page 30-32) when they take on their first career (or at least the one that makes a mark on them); and **second**, in each term, characters gain both a *player selection skill* and a *rolled skill* (no extra skill is based on making the Advancement Check, although bonuses earned on the Career progress chart are still applicable at appropriate Ranks).

While individual Referees are free to add other elements from **Tinker, Spacer, Psion, Spy**, but the expanded *Mustering Out/Leave of Absence*, *Educational Benefits Rule* and *Scientific Hobby Rule* would appear to be more suitable to a much higher technology setting with widespread longevity treatments available.

### Lottery Day

At seven of age, Jelía had a lot going for her. Not the least of which was her dotting parents and her carefree lifestyle in the great marble house by the sea. Hers was not the life of toil had by some, but this had simply taught her to lavish what she could upon others in a spirit of generosity.

This was the lottery day. The day that her mother had been crying over, that her father had been brooding upon. The day that the Priests came to deliver her and her parents to the Lottery Institute with all of the other children in the community that shared her birthday.

Jelía was selected to be first, for which her parents were both proud and visibly terrified. The Priest, as his fellow brethren intoned a dirge to the Lady and a benediction to Zanaal, held before her a leather bag.

“Pull forth one, and only one, of the stones my child” he said.

And she did so, with all of the wonder and the innocence of the young.

Her mother fainted. Her father went ashen, simply staring at her tiny hand and the white stone she clutched.

It was then that the mindshapers came, the men in grey robes who her father had so brooded over. They knelt beside her parents, chanting softly as the Priest led her away.

At seven years and a day, Jelía had nothing. As a member of the Zendari, the lowest of the Cadistreen castes, she was a veritable non-entity, fit for little but menial service or manual labor. She was assigned to one of the ramshackle houses that lay not on the sea, but in the smelly underbelly of Graishéen.

There she was told that her mother and father would no longer remember her; of why her mother had fainted; of why the mindshapers had come to them in the Institute, chanting.

By the time she was 20, Jelía could hardly recall that little girl, by then she was Jel the Cat, thief of Graishéen...

## CAREER SUMMARY TABLE

The following table is useful as a guide for the major Careers available on Netherell

Career	Specialization	Qual.	Survival	Adv.
<b>Apprentice</b> Int 7+				
	<i>Acolyte</i>		Int 6+	Edu 8+
	<i>Hedge Wizard</i>		End 7+	Int 7+
	<i>Student</i>		Edu 6+	Int 8+
<b>Aristocrat</b> Soc 9+				
	<i>Champion</i>		End 7+	Str 4+
	<i>Courtier</i>		Soc 6+	Edu 6+
	<i>Wastrel</i>		Soc 4+	Int 7+
<b>Ecclesiastic</b> Edu 6+				
	<i>Inquisitor</i>		Dex 7+	Int 4+
	<i>Monastic</i>		End 6+	Edu 6+
	<i>Pastor</i>		Int 4+	Soc 7+
<b>Entertainer</b> Int 6+				
	<i>Bard</i>		Soc 6+	Dex 6+
	<i>Idol</i>		Soc 5+	Int 7+
	<i>Jongleur</i>		End 7+	Soc 5+
<b>Expert</b> Int 6+				
	<i>Archivist</i>		Edu 5+	Int 7+
	<i>Herbalist</i>		End 7+	Edu 5+
	<i>Mystic</i>		Soc 6+	Edu 6+
<b>Guard</b> Str 6+				
	<i>Bodyguard</i>		End 7+	Dex 5+
	<i>Overseer</i>		Dex 6+	Str 6+
	<i>Watchman</i>		Int 5+	Soc 7+
<b>Scum</b> Auto				
	<i>Beggar</i>		Soc 5+	Dex 5+
	<i>Prisoner</i>		Str 6+	End 4+
	<i>Slave</i>		End 4+	Str 6+
<b>Soldier</b> End 5+				
	<i>Mercenary</i>		Dex 6+	Int 6+
	<i>Raider</i>		Str 7+	End 5+
	<i>Veteran</i>		End 5+	Str 7+
<b>Thief</b> Dex 5+				
	<i>Burglar</i>		Dex 6+	Int 6+
	<i>Goon</i>		Str 7+	End 5+
	<i>Swindler</i>		Soc 5+	Int 7+



# APPRENTICE

Apprentices are those who have taken the slow and safe approach towards learning magic.

**Qualification** Int 7+, -1 DM for every previous career.

**Assignments:** Choose from the following:

**Acolyte:** You were taught magic as a fundamental part of your religious training.

**Hedge Wizard:** You were forced to teach yourself magic, mostly by trial and error (emphasis on error).

**Student:** You were taught magic by a mentor, or perhaps as part of a wider curriculum at a school or academy.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Acolyte	Int 6+	Edu 8+
Hedge Wizard	End 7+	Int 7+
Student	Edu 6+	Int 8+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	5,000	weapon
2	10,000	+1 Edu
3	20,000	Ally
4	30,000	Potions 1.25
5	40,000	Tomes 1.5
6	60,000	Knack
7	100,000	Magic 2.0

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 10)
1	+1 Soc	Ciphers	Design
2	Channel	Knowledge (traditions)	Religion
3	+1 Int	Investigate	Knowledge (practical)
4	Language	Alchemy	Knowledge (nature)
5	Art (any)	Channel	Language
6	+1 Edu	Ceremony	Medic

Roll	Specialist: Acolyte	Specialist: Hedge Wizard	Specialist: Student
1	Diplomat	Broker	Carouse
2	Empathy	Jack of All Trades	Knowledge (practical)
3	Knowledge (traditions)	Language	Alchemy
4	Channel	Ceremony	Investigate
5	Ceremony	Channel	Channel
6	Religion	Alchemy	Ceremony

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Acolyte	Skill or Benefit	Hedge Wizard	Skill or Benefit	Student	Skill or Benefit
0	Novice		Amateur		Pupil	
1	Initiate	Religion	Enlightened	Knowledge (traditions)	Graduate	Investigate
2	Devout	Ceremony	Practitioner	Alchemy	Lecturer	Channel
3	Militant	+1 Soc	Adept	+1 End	Professor	+1 Int
4	Zealot	Magician Career	Witch	Magician Career	Magus	Magician Career



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You lose control of the power. Roll on the magical mishaps table.
- 2 You suffer an injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 3 A conjuration error releases a creature from the summoning circle leaving you scarred but wiser. Increase your Education by 1 but reduce your Social Standing by 2.
- 4 You make a mistake with the magic but someone else suffers for it. Gain an enemy.
- 5 An entity steals your body and runs you ragged. You can enter the Vessel career if you reduce your Endurance by 1. Otherwise, choose a new, non-magical career as normal. In either case, gain the entity as an enemy.
- 6 You are tricked into spending a fortune on a phony relic. Lose two benefit rolls but you don't have to leave this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 You accidentally trigger a curse while investigating an old relic. Roll *Knowledge (traditions)* 8+. If you fail, the curse causes you to suffer a mishap. If you succeed, increase one of these skills by one level: *Alchemy*, *Ceremony*, or *Channel*.
- 4 You join up with a band of thieves in order to obtain a priceless bit of magical lore. Gain *Streetwise* 0 or roll on the mishaps table with a +3 DM. If the result is higher than 6 gain *Streetwise* 0, and either *Stealth* 0 or *Locks and Traps* 0. If less than 6, you suffer a mishap but can remain in your career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 5 Your studies demand a great deal of travel. Gain *Language* 0 and 1d3 contacts.
- 6 You do a bit of moonlighting that leaves you with a tidy nest egg. Gain a +1 DM on any benefit rolls made for cash.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You undergo an accelerated course of magical study. Gain a knack (see **Chapter 5: Magic**) or make a bonus advancement roll with a -1 DM. If you succeed in this advancement roll, make another with a -2 DM. If you succeed in these rolls you get any benefits specifically arising from your new rank but nothing else, such as skills and training.
- 9 You realize that a book seemingly filled with nothing but nonsense verse actually holds carefully hidden lore. Roll *Ciphers* 8+ to increase either *Ceremony* or *Channel* by one level.
- 10 You discover an interesting magical relic and must decide whether to turn it over to someone more senior or keep it for yourself. If you turn it over you gain an ally and a +2 DM on your next advancement roll. If you keep it you gain a +1 DM on all benefit rolls for equipment.
- 11 A wise old alchemist teaches you many secrets about magic and potion making. You gain a +4 DM on your next advancement roll or a +2 DM and increase *Alchemy* by one level.
- 12 You have a moment of inspiration relating to the nature of magic. You are automatically promoted.

# ARISTOCRAT

You have been born to hereditary wealth, privilege, and political power. As an aristocrat, the lower classes look to you. In some cases for guidance and protection, in others for the amusement when you fall flat on your face.

**Qualification** Soc 9+, -1 DM for every previous career.

**Assignments:** Choose from the following:

**Champion:** You were a knight or some other sort of professional warrior.

**Courtier:** You mastered the twin arts of management and intrigue while working within the government.

**Wastrel:** You squandered your high birth on frivolity.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Champion	End 7+	Str 4+
Courtier	Soc 6+	Edu 6+
Wastrel	Soc 4+	Int 7+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	10,000	Mount
2	20,000	Weapon
3	50,000	Armor
4	80,000	Ally
5	100,000	+1 Social Standing
6	120,000	Weapon 1.5
7	150,000	Armor 2.0

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 8)
1	+1 Edu	Carouse	Advocate
2	Athletics	Admin	Archery
3	+1 Dex	Ride	Diplomat
4	Channel	Personal Combat	Channel
5	Gambling	Armor	Tactics
6	+1 Soc	Leadership	Art (any)

Roll	Specialist: Champion	Specialist: Courtier	Specialist: Wastrel
1	Leadership	Language	Gambler
2	Tactics	Empathy	Recon
3	Armor	Diplomat	Streetwise
4	Ride	Tactics	Art (any)
5	Personal Combat	Advocate	Persuade
6	Athletics	Admin	Carouse

## Ranks and Benefits

Rank	Champion	Skill or Benefit	Courtier	Skill or Benefit	Wastrel	Skill or Benefit
0	Squire		Clerk		Rake	
1	Knight Errant	Personal Cbt (heavy spears)	Deputy	Admin	Spendthrift	Carouse
2	Knight		Director		Shiftless	
3	Tourney Master	Ride	Counselor	Empathy	Disgrace	Streetwise
4	Standard Bearer		Plenipotentiary		Scandal	
5	Hero	Armor	Minister	Diplomat	Good for Nothing	Persuade
6	Keeper of the Realm		Vizier		Black Sheep	





## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer an injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 2 Held for ransom! Lose all benefit rolls from this career or enter the Scum career.
- 3 Fight a duel. Roll *Personal Combat* (any one of its specialties) 8+. If less, suffer an injury. If more, gain a rival and *Personal Combat* 0 or improve an existing specialty by 1.
- 4 Driven from power. Gain either *Streetwise* 0 or *Survival* 0 as well as an enemy and reduce Social Standing by 1.
- 5 Disinherited. Lose two benefit rolls and gain a rival.
- 6 You are accused of treason but someone else takes the fall. Lose a benefit roll and an ally, or if you have no allies a contact but you can remain in this career. If you don't have a contact, gain an enemy instead.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 You join a conspiracy only to realize not all of your conspirators are trustworthy. Gain *Ciphers* 0 or *Empathy* 0 and roll *Empathy* 8+. If you succeed, things work out well, you gain an ally and either a benefit roll or one level in *Carouse*, *Diplomat*, or *Leadership*. If you fail, you put your faith in the wrong people, in which case suffer a mishap and gain an enemy.
- 4 You do your duty and manage part of your family's wide ranging estates or other holdings. Gain a contact and one level in *Admin*, *Diplomat*, or *Ride*.
- 5 You dabble in commerce where you not only win and lose fortunes overnight but also the attention of people hoping to fleece you or help you learn the ropes. Gain *Broker* 0 then roll *Broker* 8+. If you succeed, gain a benefit roll and a rival. If you fail, lose a benefit roll and gain a contact.
- 6 You get entangled in a scandal that rocks high society. Roll *Carouse* 8+. If you succeed, gain either *Diplomat* 1 or *Tactics* 1. If you fail, reduce your Social Standing by 1 and gain an enemy.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You take part in a tournament involving physical combat. Roll *Personal Combat* 8+ or *Personal Combat (heavy spears)* 6+. If you fail, reduce your Social Status by 1 and lose a benefit roll. If you succeed, gain one level in one of the following: *Armor*, *Personal Combat (long spears)*, or *Ride*. Each time you succeed you can roll again at a cumulative -1 DM, with the same consequences for success or failure.
- 9 You go on a grand tour of neighboring countries spending freely but learning much at the same time. You gain *Language* 1 and can choose to sacrifice up to two benefit rolls. Each benefit you sacrifice gains you +1 level to any one skill (no magical houses, but if the character already has a knack they may gain skill in it).
- 10 You expose a secret that helps to bring down a high official. You gain an enemy and a +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 11 You become the protégé of the head of an ancient and powerful family. You gain an ally and either a +4 DM on your next advancement roll or a +2 DM and *Leadership* 1.
- 12 You win favor with the government. You are automatically promoted.

# ECCLESIASTIC

You have concerned yourself with matters of religion and faith.

**Qualification** Edu 6+, -1 DM for every previous career.

**Assignments:** Choose from the following:

**Inquisitor:** You rooted out heretics and other enemies of the faith.

**Monastic:** You withdrew from society in order to live a life of contemplation and service with your fellow monks.

**Pastor:** You were the spiritual leader of a community or congregation.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Inquisitor	Dex 7+	Int 4+
Monastic	End 6+	Edu 6+
Pastor	Int 4+	Soc 7+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	1,000	+1 Edu
2	5,000	Ally
3	10,000	Mount
4	20,000	Weapon
5	20,000	Armor
6	40,000	Potion 1.50
7	40,000	Magic 1.00

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 10)
1	Trade	Knowledge (traditions)	Language
2	+1 Soc	Diplomat	Medic
3	+1 Int	Medic	Channel
4	Persuade	Empathy	Advocate
5	+1 Edu	Ceremony	Alchemy
6	Ride	Religion	Investigate

Roll	Specialist: Inquisitor	Specialist: Monastic	Specialist: Pastor
1	Leadership	Food Production	Leadership
2	Empathy	Trade	Admin
3	Personal Combat	Language	Religion
4	Religion	Investigate	Medic
5	Persuade	Knowledge (traditions)	Persuade
6	Advocate	Religion	Ceremony

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Inquisitor	Skill or Benefit	Monastic	Skill or Benefit	Pastor	Skill or Benefit
0	Candidate		Novice		Novice	
1	Seeker	Persuade	Monk	Food Production	Deacon	Persuade
2	Inspector		Sacrist		Priest	
3	Judge	Advocate	Almoner	Empathy	Rector	Medic
4	Censor		Sub-Prior		Superior	
5	Commissioner	Empathy	Prior	Ceremony	Prelate	Admin
6	Inspector General		Abbot		Bishop	



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer an injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 2 Assigned to an unpleasant location filled with violence or disease. Reduce Endurance by 1 but gain one level in *Medic*, *Streetwise*, or *Survival*.
- 3 Followers of a rival faith try to force you to renounce your beliefs. Choose whether to stay true or become an apostate. If you stay true suffer an injury but gain a +2 DM on your next qualification roll for any non-magical career. If you break your vows reduce your Soc by 1.
- 4 Accused of heresy! Roll *Religion* 8+. If less, suffer an injury or enter the Scum career. If more, reduce Social Standing by 1 but improve *Advocate* by one level.
- 5 Your endorsement of a phony miracle makes you a laughing stock but you learn from the experience. Reduce Social Standing by 1 but improve *Empathy* by one level.
- 6 Someone else squanders the tithes so you make up the difference from your own savings but get no gratitude from your humiliated colleague. Lose two benefit rolls and gain a rival, but you don't have to leave this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 You volunteer your body to one of the guiding spirits of your faith. Roll *Religion* 8+. If less, gain a benefit roll but suffer an injury with a +2 DM on the roll. If more, gain a benefit roll and one level in *Empathy*, *Investigate*, or *Recon*. In either case you can enter the Vessel career.
- 4 You are forced to choose sides in a doctrinal dispute. Gain a rival and roll *Persuade* 8+. If less, lose a benefit roll. If more, gain a benefit roll and one level in *Ceremony*, *Knowledge (traditions)* or *Religion*.
- 5 You minister to the fallen and the poor. Increase Strength by 1 and choose whether to serve in the city or the country. If you serve in the city, gain one level in *Broker*, *Medic*, or *Streetwise*. If you serve in the country, gain one level in *Animals*, *Food Production*, or *Ride*.
- 6 You shirk your duties in favor of studying magic. Reduce your Social Standing by 1 and decide whether you studied magical theory or practical magic. If theory, gain one level in *Alchemy*, *Ceremony*, or *Channel*. If practical, roll on the magical mishaps table with a +2 DM. If you roll 6 or higher, gain a knack.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You have little choice but to take up arms against enemies of the faith. Gain one level in *Armor* or *Personal Combat*.
- 9 You travel widely, spreading the word. Gain 1d3 contacts and either *Ride 1*, *Seafarer 1*, or *Survival 1*.
- 10 Your spiritual counsel moves a wealthy congregant to leave money to both you and the church. You gain a +1 DM on all benefit rolls for cash and improve your Social Standing by 1.
- 11 A more senior member of the clergy recognizes your potential and supports your career. You gain a +4 DM on your next advancement roll or a +2 DM and either *Admin 1* or *Leadership 1*.
- 12 You witness a minor miracle that helps to revitalize the faith. You are automatically promoted.

# ENTERTAINER

People who concern themselves with art, amusement, and spectacle.

**Qualification** Int 6+, -1 DM for every previous career.

**Assignments:** Choose from the following:

**Bard:** You provided amusement to the wealthy and powerful, often as a high-ranking servant.

**Idol:** You entertained the masses, usually the city mob, and basked in their devotion.

**Jongleur:** You wandered in search of your audience, and your next meal.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Bard	Soc 6+	Dex 6+
Idol	Soc 5+	Int 7+
Jongleur	End 7+	Soc 5+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	1,000	+1 Edu
2	5,000	Ally
3	10,000	Mount
4	20,000	Weapon
5	20,000	Armor
6	40,000	Potion 1.50
7	40,000	Magic 1.00

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 8)
1	Trade	Athletics	Jack of All Trades
2	+1 Dex	Art (any)	Locks and Traps
3	Jack of All Trades	Deception	Channel
4	+1 Int	Art (any)	Streetwise
5	Broker	Carouse	Language
6	+1 Soc	Persuade	Advocate

Roll	Specialist: Bard	Specialist: Idol	Specialist: Jongleur
1	Ride	Athletics	Recon
2	Steward	Broker	Ride
3	Empathy	Art (any)	Art (any)
4	Carouse	Gambler	Stealth
5	Diplomat	Broker	Athletics
6	Art (any)	Persuade	Survival

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Bard	Skill or Benefit	Idol	Skill or Benefit	Jongleur	Skill or Benefit
0	Bush League		Busker		Tyro	
1	Opening Act	Steward	Polished	Streetwise	Itinerant	Survival
2	Performer		Approved		Diversion	
3	Minstrel	Carouse	Favorite	Persuade	Roamer	Ride
4	Crooner		In Vogue		Free Spirit	
5	Balladeer	Diplomat	Star	Broker	Voyager	J-o-A Trades
6	Celebrity		Icon		Legend	



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer an injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 2 Someone with power has your legs broken. Gain an enemy and reduce your Dexterity by 1.
- 3 An obsessed fan makes your life a misery by targeting your loved ones. Gain an enemy and either lose one ally or two contacts.
- 4 Another performer engineers a spectacular downfall. Suffer a public flogging or accept your disgrace without protest. Gain a rival and either suffer an injury or enter the Scum career.
- 5 Financial pressures tempt you to fall in with a bad crowd. Lose two benefit rolls or enter the Thief career.
- 6 The public turns hostile and you must flee with almost nothing but the clothes on your back. Gain an enemy and lose two benefit rolls but you don't have to leave this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 Bandits capture you and you must keep them entertained to avoid torment. Roll *Art* (any suitable for performance) 8+. If less, you suffer an injury. If more, gain a contact and increase *Deception*, *Persuade*, or *Streetwise* by one level.
- 4 You inadvertently get associated with a political faction. Gain an enemy and an ally than roll *Carouse* 8+. If less, lose a benefit roll. If more, gain a benefit roll.
- 5 You travel widely, trying to perfect your art, but leave a trail of broken hearts and misunderstandings in your wake. Gain up to two enemies and increase one of *Language*, *Ride*, and *Seafarer* by one level for each enemy you gain. You may increase the same skill more than once.
- 6 An enemy sabotages or steals your masterpiece but no one else cares so you must deal with it yourself. You gain one level in *Deception*, *Investigate*, or *Streetwise*. If you do not have an enemy you must either gain an enemy or get nothing from this event.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You fall in with a band of professional warriors who treat you as one of their own. Gain an ally and, if you make your next Advancement roll, gain *Personal Combat 0* or advance a specialization of this skill if you already are trained in it. You gain benefits and training from your own career as normal.
- 9 You are commissioned to produce a historically accurate work. Gain *Knowledge (traditions) 1* or *Investigate 1* and then roll *Art* (any suitable specialty) 8+. If less, reduce Social Standing by 1. If more, gain a benefit roll.
- 10 A fan vows to ensure that you have a comfortable retirement. Gain a +1 DM on any benefit roll made for cash.
- 11 You become recognized as the artistic heir of one of your heroes. You gain an ally and a +4 DM on your next Advancement roll or a +2 DM and a benefit roll.
- 12 You create something original and groundbreaking. You are automatically promoted.

# EXPERT

People who devote long hours to mastering esoteric lore on a wide variety of subjects.

**Qualification** Int 6+, -1 DM for every previous career.

**Assignments:** Choose from the following:

**Archivist:** You were taught a seemingly endless amount of information about the world.

**Herbalist:** You studied healing, natural remedies, and potions.

**Mystic:** You learned history, folklore, and many other sorts of secrets.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Archivist	Edu 5+	Int 7+
Herbalist	End 7+	Edu 5+
Mystic	Soc 6+	Edu 6+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	5,000	+1 Edu
2	10,000	+1 Int
3	20,000	Contact
4	30,000	Weapon
5	40,000	+1 Soc
6	60,000	Potions 1.25
7	80,000	Magic 1.00

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 10)
1	+1 Edu	Language	Art (any)
2	Empathy	Persuade	Channel
3	+1 Int	Knowledge (any)	Design
4	Trade	Investigate	Alchemy
5	Diplomat	Medic	Ceremony
6	+1 Edu	Investigate	Knowledge (any)

Roll	Specialist: Archivist	Specialist: Herbalist	Specialist: Mystic
1	Navigate	Animals	Religion
2	Locks and Traps	Recon	Alchemy
3	Design	Survival	Language
4	Medic	Track	Channel
5	Investigate	Alchemy	Ceremony
6	Knowledge (practical)	Knowledge (nature)	Knowledge (traditions)

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Archivist	Skill or Benefit	Herbalist	Skill or Benefit	Mystic	Skill or Benefit
0	Sorter		Gatherer		Believer	
1	Transcriber	Knowledge (practical)	Collector	Knowledge (nature)	Faithful	Knowledge (traditions)
2	Illuminator		Brewer		Witness	
3	Librarian	Design	Expert	Survival	Arcane	Investigate
4	Highbrow		Connoisseur		Seer	
5	Pedagogue	Channel	Savant	Alchemy	Practitioner	Ceremony
6	Authority		Wise One		Sage	



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer an injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 2 Your struggle to keep a malign entity from stealing your body requires that you accept repeated public humiliations or allow it to overwhelm you. Reduce your Social Standing by 2 or roll on the magical mishap table (with a +1 DM) and enter the Vessel career.
- 3 Spending time in the library reveals magical secrets but also saps your vigor. Reduce your Strength by 1 but gain one level in *Investigate* and a +4 DM on your next qualification roll if trying to enter the Apprentice career.
- 4 An expedition goes horribly wrong and you spend long months trapped in the wilderness. Either reduce your Endurance by 1 or suffer an injury (with a +1 DM) and then gain *Survival 0* and one level in *Animals* or *Navigation*.
- 5 You work angers the wrong people, forcing you to flee and adopt a new identity. Gain an enemy and reduce Social Standing by 1 but gain *Deception 0*.
- 6 A colleague exposes some very sloppy work in order to win a plum position. Gain a rival and lose a benefit roll, but you don't have to leave this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 Powerful people deliberately misrepresent your research for their own political gain, forcing you to go public to explain your true findings. Roll *Knowledge* (any) 8+. If less, you suffer an injury. If more, gain an enemy and increase *Empathy*, *Leadership*, or *Tactics* by one level.
- 4 The secret police, or an even worse agency, tries to recruit you. If you accept, expect them to make demands from time to time: gain a contact and increase one of *Advocate*, *Cipher*, *Investigate*, or *Persuade* by one level. If you refuse, gain an enemy and increase *Deception*, *Locks and Traps*, or *Streetwise* by one level.
- 5 You lend your talents to an army. Gain one level in *Design*, *Medic*, or *Tactics*.
- 6 You earn a sinecure that you can either save or use for pure research. Gain one benefit roll or increase any skill you already know (including a knack if you have one) by one level.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You uncover a terrible secret about a prominent family. If you keep it to yourself you gain nothing. If you expose or blackmail the family, you gain an enemy and roll *Persuade* 8+. If less, gain a benefit roll but reduce your Social Standing by 1. If more, gain a benefit roll and increase *Deception*, *Investigate*, or *Empathy* by one level.
- 9 You decide to wait your turn in order to let a more senior colleague earn a well-deserved position. Gain an ally and a +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 10 You borrow large sums in order to bribe your way into an elite academy. You can sacrifice a benefit roll and gain a roll on both the advanced education table and your specialist table.
- 11 A retiring mentor helps you to secure a coveted fellowship. You gain a +4 DM on your next Advancement roll or a +2 DM and benefit roll.
- 12 You make a significant contribution to your field. You are automatically promoted.

# GUARD

People trained to use violence to keep order or to protect people, places, or things.

**Qualification** Str 6+, -1 DM for every previous career.

**Assignments:** Choose from the following:

**Bodyguard:** You earned your living by keeping people or their property secure and unharmed.

**Overseer:** You kept people in line and working at their assignments; whether prisoners, slaves, field hands, or just about anyone else who came within your reach.

**Watchman:** You worked as an agent of the law, or at least for those who claimed the right to make the laws.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Bodyguard	End 7+	Dex 5+
Overseer	Dex 6+	Str 6+
Watchman	Int 5+	Soc 7+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	1,000	Weapon
2	2,000	Armor
3	5,000	+1 Dex
4	10,000	Mount
5	20,000	Potion 1.25
6	30,000	Weapon 1.00
7	50,000	Armor 1.00

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Int 8)
1	+1 Dex	Crossbows	Archery
2	Carouse	Athletics	Persuade
3	+1 Str	Empathy	Streetwise
4	Gambling	Personal Combat	Track
5	+1 End	Armor	Leadership
6	Ride	Investigate	Tactics

Roll	Specialist: Bodyguard	Specialist: Overseer	Specialist: Watchman
1	Athletics	Crossbows	Advocate
2	Streetwise	Personal Combat	Personal Combat
3	Personal Combat (Unarmed)	Empathy	Empathy
4	Armor	Persuade	Recon
5	Personal Combat	Channel	Streetwise
6	Recon	Track	Investigate

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Bodyguard	Skill or Benefit	Overseer	Skill or Benefit	Watchman	Skill or Benefit
0	Recruit		Recruit		Recruit	
1	Backup	Recon	Trainee	Crossbows	Sentry	Investigate
2	Escort		Picket		Foot Patrol	
3	Guardian	Personal Combat (any)	Steward	Track	Shift Supervisor	Advocate
4	Protector		Monitor		Supervisor	
5	Human Shield	Athletics	Supervisor	Armor	Watch Commander	Leadership
6	Safeguard		Warden		Commander	





## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer a serious injury. Roll twice on the injury table and take the lower result.
- 2 A savage beating from an unarmed person rattles your wits but also inspires you to learn this style of fighting. Reduce your Intelligence by 1 but gain *Personal Combat (Unarmed)*.
- 3 An inappropriate romance ends badly and destroys both your career and your reputation. Gain an enemy and suffer a -1 DM on your next qualification roll.
- 4 Surviving an illness or attack restores your faith. Reduce your Strength by 1 but gain *Religion 0* and a +4 DM on your next qualification roll if trying to enter the Ecclesiastic career.
- 5 You suffer an injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 6 You get sent on a protracted and costly journey as punishment for offending someone higher up. Lose one benefit roll but gain one level in *Language, Seafaring, or Survival*, and you don't have to leave this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 A serious gambling problem jeopardizes your career. You gain *Gambling 0* and then roll *Gambling 8+*. If less, lose two benefit rolls and then roll on the injury table or enter either the Soldier or Thief career. If more, gain a benefit roll and one level in *Deception, Recon, or Streetwise*.
- 4 You use your position to do a favor for someone able to advance your professional life. Gain a +1 DM on all advancement rolls for this career.
- 5 You uncover corruption amongst your fellows. Gain an enemy and a +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 6 You go undercover and infiltrate a criminal organization. Gain *Deception 0* and then roll *Deception 8+*. If less, you suffer an injury. If more, roll on any specialist table for the Thief career.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You must fight your way out of a bureaucratic nightmare. Roll *Admin 8+* or *Advocate 8+*. If less, suffer a -1 DM on all advancement rolls for this career. If more, gain a benefit roll or a +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 9 A crime lord tries to put you on the payroll. If you accept, gain one benefit roll and an ally, but expect the occasional request for a "favor." If you refuse, gain an enemy and a +1 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 10 You get a chance to sabotage a colleague's career for your own gain. If you refuse you gain an ally. If you do, you gain an enemy and either a benefit roll or a +4 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 11 The chief grooms you as a possible successor. You gain an ally and a +4 DM on your next advancement roll or a +2 DM and *Admin 0*.
- 12 You foil a plot or similar scheme. You are automatically promoted.

# SCUM

The lowest and most despised members of society.

**Qualification** automatic.

## Assignments

Choose from the following:

**Beggar:** you survived almost exclusively on the charity of others.

**Prisoner:** convict, hostage, or something similar; you lost control over your own life and others told you what to do.

**Slave:** serf, thrall, or something similar; you were, whether merely in fact or in actual law, someone else's property.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Beggar	Soc 5+	Dex 5+
Prisoner	Str 6+	End 4+
Slave	End 4+	Str 6+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	None	+1 End
2	None	+1 Str
3	None	+1 Dex
4	1,000	+1 Int
5	1,000	Contact
6	5,000	Ally
7	10,000	Weapon

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 8)
1	Animals	Gambler	Language
2	+1 Dex	Athletics	Art (any)
3	Deception	Personal Combat (Unarmed)	Religion
4	+1 Str	Trade	Deception
5	Diplomat	Recon	Locks and Traps
6	+1 End	Streetwise	Advocate

Roll	Specialist: Beggar	Specialist: Prisoner	Specialist: Slave
1	Athletics	Medic	Survival
2	Stealth	Persuade	Art (any)
3	Persuade	Stealth	Jack of All Trades
4	Recon	Personal Combat	Food Production
5	Streetwise	Gambler	Steward
6	Persuade	Advocate	Trade

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Beggar	Skill or Benefit	Prisoner	Skill or Benefit	Slave	Skill or Benefit
0	Cautionary Tale		New Fish		Worthless	
1	Vagrant	Persuade	Inmate	Stealth	Liability	Trade or Steward
2	Bum		Old Hand		New Purchase	
3	Tramp	Streetwise	Lifer	Advocate	Acquisition	Athletics
4	Panhandler		Informer		Chattel	
5	Drifter	Recon	Trustee	Locks and Traps	Valued Property	Survival
6	Street King		King Rat		Asset	



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer an injury. Roll on the injury table.
- 2 A sadistic overseer or officer makes your life a misery. Roll *Persuade* 8+. If less, reduce Endurance by 1 and suffer a -2 DM on your next advancement roll. If more, gain a benefit roll or a +2 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 3 You get branded or scarred. Reduce your Social Standing by 1 and add a mild form of the "deformity" mutation (not really a mutation in this case, effect same, accounted for already in the Social Standing loss).
- 4 One of your fellows betrays you in hopes of better treatment. You gain an enemy and lose a benefit roll.
- 5 A gang tries to beat you up and steal your meager possessions. Either lose a benefit roll or roll *Personal Combat (Unarmed Combat)* 6+. If you succeed, keep your benefit roll but gain a rival. If you fail, lose the benefit roll and reduce Dexterity by 1.
- 6 An escape attempt gets somebody else killed. Lose an ally or a contact and gain an enemy. Suffer a -1 DM on all advancement rolls for this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 Someone with power over you tries to take advantage by demanding that you do something against your principles. If you accept, you can escape from this career but gain 1d3 enemies and are subject to occasional blackmail. If you refuse, roll *Dex* 8+ or *Str* 8+. If less, you suffer an injury. If more, gain one level in *Athletics*, *Gambler*, or *Persuade*.
- 4 Life on the periphery of society exposes you to something very strange. Roll on the unusual event sub-table of the life events table.
- 5 A colleague has some unusual skills and gives you some helpful pointers. Gain *Jack of All Trades* 1.
- 6 Criminals need a lookout. Roll *Recon* 8+. If less, you suffer an injury. If more, gain one level in *Athletics*, *Stealth*, or *Streetwise* and you can enter the Thief career.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 A life of toil and uncertainty causes you to thrive. Increase your Strength, Dexterity, or Endurance by 1.
- 9 You stumble over some useful things and manage to hide them from those who would steal them. You gain a +1 DM on a benefit roll.
- 10 You get a chance to betray your fellows and join the oppressors. If you accept, enter the Guard career. If you refuse, suffer a -1 DM on all Advancement rolls for this career but gain 1d3 allies.
- 11 You win favor from someone able to help you start over. You gain a +4 DM on your next advancement roll (which may be used on the second Advancement roll for freedom instead) **or** a +2 DM and an ally.
- 12 You seize the opportunity to escape your circumstances. Resume your old career or enter a new non-magical one without the need to make a qualification roll.

# SOLDIER

People trained to use weapons, obey orders, and to fight in organized groups.

**Qualification** End 5+, -1 DM for every previous career.

**Assignments:** Choose from the following:

**Mercenary:** You fought for whoever paid your wages.

**Raider:** You took what you wanted from those without the strength or will to keep it for themselves.

**Veteran:** You fought for a cause you believed in like your country or your faith.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Mercenary	Dex 6+	Int 6+
Raider	Str 7+	End 5+
Veteran	End 5+	Str 7+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	2,000	Weapon
2	5,000	Armor
3	5,000	+1 End
4	10,000	Mount
5	20,000	Ally
6	30,000	Weapon 1.5
7	40,000	Armor 1.5

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 8)
1	Carouse	Athletics	Ciphers
2	Channel	Thrown Weapons	Navigation
3	Streetwise	Ride	Design
4	+1 Str	Archery	Medic
5	Carouse	Armor	Leadership
6	+1 End	Personal Combat	Tactics

Roll	Specialist: Mercenary	Specialist: Raider	Specialist: Veteran
1	Gambling	Seafaring	Admin
2	Archery	Athletics	Language
3	Armor	Track	Armor
4	Survival	Archery	Personal Combat
5	Personal Combat	Stealth	Tactics
6	Recon	Personal Combat	Leadership

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Mercenary	Skill or Benefit	Raider	Skill or Benefit	Veteran	Skill or Benefit
0	Recruit		Recruit		Draftee	
1	Sell Sword	Personal Combat 1	Looter	Stealth 1	Green	Personal Combat 1
2	Fighter		Marauder		Grunt	
3	Squad Leader	Armor 1	Desperado	Personal Combat 1	Elite	Armor 1
4	Banner Leader		Squad Leader		Squad Leader	
5	Inner Circle	Tactics 1	Attack Leader	Leadership 1	Deputy Commander	Admin 1
6	Condottiere		Boss		Commander	



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer a severe injury. Roll twice on the injury table and take the lower result.
- 2 Sole survivor. All your friends die in a bloody siege or last stand and their loved ones hold you responsible. Lose all allies and contacts and gain either an equal number of enemies or 1d3 enemies, whichever is greater.
- 3 A head wound makes you more cautious. Reduce Education or Intelligence by 1 but improve *Armor* or *Recon* by one level.
- 4 Captured in battle! Reduce Strength by 1 and enter the Scum career as either Prisoner or Slave.
- 5 Flogged for looting. Reduce Endurance by 1 and lose a benefit roll, but you gain a +4 on your next qualification roll if trying to enter the Thief career.
- 6 Infamous! Your actions in battle or its aftermath gain you an enemy and reduce your Social Standing by 1, but you don't have to leave this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 You get separated from your unit. Roll *Survival* 8+. If less, you suffer an injury. If more, gain *Navigation 1*, *Streetwise 1*, or *Survival 1*.
- 4 You are put in charge of supplies. If you do an honest job you gain a contact. If you try to profit from it you gain *Broker 0* and then roll for a mishap with a +3 DM. If greater than 6 you gain a benefit roll and a +1 DM on any benefit roll made for cash.
- 5 You have lots of spare time. Roll to improve any skill you already know by one level.
- 6 You serve in the garrison of a community under martial law. You gain one level in *Admin*, *Empathy*, or *Streetwise*.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You are chosen for advanced training. Gain one level in *Design*, *Leadership*, or *Tactics*.
- 9 You have a group of civilians at your mercy. If you choose to help them, gain an ally and a +2 DM on your next advancement roll. If you choose to exploit them, you gain a benefit roll and an enemy.
- 10 You do an excellent job escorting some VIPs. Choose between gaining an ally, two contacts, a benefit roll, or a +4 DM on your next advancement roll.
- 11 You have the chance to share some loot with your commander or to keep it all for yourself. If you share, you gain a +2 DM on your next advancement roll and an ally. If you keep it for yourself you gain a benefit roll.
- 12 You win glory in battle. You are automatically promoted.

# THIEF

People who work outside the law.

**Qualification** Dex 5+, -1 DM for every previous career.

## Assignments

**Burglar:** You made your living by sneaking and stealing.

**Goon:** You made your living by threats and force.

**Swindler:** You made your living by tricking people and betraying their trust.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Burglar	Dex 6+	Int 6+
Goon	Str 7+	End 5+
Swindler	Soc 5+	Int 7+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	None	+1 Dex
2	1,000	Contact
3	5,000	+1 Str
4	10,000	Weapon
5	20,000	Armor
6	50,000	Potion 1.00
7	100,000	Weapon 1.00

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 8)
1	+1 Str	Persuade	Language
2	Gambler	Athletics	Channel
3	+1 Int	Deception	Ciphers
4	Animals	Stealth	Investigate
5	+1 Dex	Locks and Traps	Broker
6	Ride	Streetwise	Advocate

Roll	Specialist: Burglar	Specialist: Goon	Specialist: Swindler
1	Broker	Ride	Language
2	Investigate	Armor	Gambling
3	Recon	Personal Combat	Empathy
4	Locks and Traps	Persuade	Deception
5	Stealth	Personal Combat	Persuade
6	Athletics	Streetwise	Deception

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Burglar	Skill or Benefit	Goon	Skill or Benefit	Swindler	Skill or Benefit
0	Poacher		Mugger		Grifter	
1	Shoplifter	Athletics	Hoodlum	Personal Combat (unarmed)	Bait	Persuade
2	Snatcher		Muscle		Fixer	
3	Pickpocket	Stealth	Collector	Streetwise	Roper	Deception
4	Breaker		Ruffian		Long Conner	
5	Robber	Locks and Traps	Gangster	Armor	Insider	Empathy
6	Second Story		Racketeer		The Bank	



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You suffer an injury.
- 2 Caught! Reduce either your Endurance or your Strength by 1 and roll *Persuade* 8+. If less, enter the Scum career. If more, lose a benefit roll.
- 3 Obsessed Watchman. Gain an enemy and roll *Admin* 8+. If more, you get him fired. If less, lose a benefit roll.
- 4 The authorities pull out all the stops to make you talk and betray your associates. Suffer an injury or lose two benefit rolls and convert all allies and contacts into enemies. If you have no allies or contacts gain 1d3 enemies instead.
- 5 You victimize someone with powerful friends. Gain an enemy.
- 6 Things go bad and you must pay heavy bribes just for the chance to flee with nothing and start over somewhere far away. You lose all benefit rolls but you can remain in this career.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 You get involved in a gang war with a rival group of criminals who demand tribute. Roll *Personal Combat* (any specialty) 8+. If less, suffer an injury and lose one benefit roll. If more, gain a benefit roll and either *Armor 1*, *Personal Combat (any specialty) 1* or *Tactics 1*.
- 4 You are caught. seek outside help (a champion or advocate), lose a benefit roll and gain a contact. If you decide to defend yourself, roll *Advocate* 8+. If less, lose a benefit roll and enter the Scum career. If more, gain one level in *Advocate* or *Investigate*.
- 5 You commit a crime that violates your own sense of personal honor and decide to make amends with your victim even if it angers your confederates. Lose a benefit roll but gain an ally and then roll *Persuade* 8+. If less, gain a rival. If more, gain *Diplomat 1*.
- 6 You fall on hard times and have to claw your way back out of the slums. Lose a benefit roll and gain *Streetwise 1* plus improve *Personal Combat (any specialty)*, *Stealth*, or *Persuade* by one level.
- 7 Life event. Roll on the Life Event table.
- 8 You can wager a benefit roll by rolling *Gambling* 8+. If less, you lose that benefit roll. If more, you gain another benefit roll. You can keep gambling until you have no available benefit rolls to wager, or until your current number of available benefit rolls equals twice the number of rolls that were available before you began gambling.
- 9 You spend time in high society rubbing shoulders with the best sorts of people whether as part of a scam, running a casino, or for some other reason. You gain a benefit roll and one level in *Admin*, *Carouse*, or *Steward*. If your Soc is less than 6, gain *Art (Acting)* instead and a "cover ID" which is Soc 9.
- 10 You pull off such a lucrative caper that no one in the organization wants you to leave your current role. You gain a benefit roll and can gain one additional benefit roll for every -2 DM you take on your next advancement roll. You cannot make it impossible for you to succeed in your next advancement roll.
- 11 You get to decide whether there actually is honor among thieves. Betray a colleague and gain an enemy, a benefit roll and a +2 DM on your next advancement roll. Stand by your colleague and gain an ally.
- 12 You go on a crime spree that makes you an underworld legend. You are automatically promoted.

## EXTENDED BASIC-TRAINING PACKAGES (OPTIONAL RULE)

Often, the first career choice has a dramatic impact on a character, the **Extended Basic Training Package** is used once, usually for the first career that the character enters into (this can be delayed in some cases if the player prefers, but these are treated as standard level-1 skill adjustments; if the character already has them at level-1 or higher by the time they finally do take the extended basic training package, the package will not provide them with additional skill levels).

This is an optional rule, bringing elements of the Twilight Sector alternate Character creation rules from **Tinker, Psion, Spacer, Spy** to Netherell. The following are examples only, Referees should feel free to create their own, especially for specific regions or Referee-initiated institutions or nations. **Use of the Extended Basic Training Package:** Use the Extended Basic Training Package for the first term skill selection in the character's career. Roll for Survival and Advancement as normal. If survival is failed, continue as normal to Mishap table and end the character's career (i.e. they only get the Extended Skill Package skills if they Mishap their first term). If the Survival Check was successful, Characters take the Package **and** make one skill roll on the chart of their choice for the career as well as an Event check. If the Advancement check was successful, the character may acquire a rank-related skill if indicated. If entering a new Career (after the first) instead of selection skill for the first term, characters **may** choose two level-1 skills (i.e. they cannot raise these skills past 1) from the appropriate Package.

### Adept:

**Tome-Reader:** This is the sort of an Adept with their nose in a book all of the time. The Tome-Reader is at home in a library above all other places, searching for the secrets of magic in the pages of texts.

*Art (Writing) 1, Alchemy or Channel or Ceremony 0, Alchemy or Channel or Ceremony 1, Ciphers 1, Investigate 0, Knowledge (Practical) or Medic 0, Knowledge (Practical) or Medic 1, Knowledge (traditions) 1, Religion 0.*

**Seeker:** This is type of Adept that goes from place to place, always after elusive knowledge but rarely found with a book in hand. It is not that they do not study, they do not restrict themselves to the dusty pages of books alone.

*Alchemy 1, Channel or Ceremony 1, Investigate 0, Knowledge (Practical or Natural) 0, Knowledge (Practical or Natural) 1, Knowledge (traditions) 1, Languages 1, Persuade 0, Stealth 0.*

### Aristocrat:

**Manor-Born:** This is the Netherell version of a blue-blood, who has been born into a position of authority and trained from childhood to deal with the problems of the upper classes and to enjoy the pleasures that their social status provides them.

*Admin or Advocate 0, Admin or Advocate 1, Carouse or Persuade 0, Carouse or Persuade 1, Empathy 1, Knowledge (Practical or Natural) 0, Personal Combat (Light Blades) 1, Languages 0, Ride 1.*

**Sycophant:** This is an individual who has had to sidle up to power for much of their life. Certain types of minor nobility, or nobles who are weak-willed, fall into this category; as do those who are more subtle than the average run of Aristocrat, and can manipulate others.

*Admin or Advocate 0, Art (Singing or Musical Instrument) 1, Deception or Empathy 1, Deception or Empathy 0, Diplomacy 1, Gambler 0, Personal Combat (Light Blades) 0, Persuade 1, Ride 1.*

### Ecclesiastic:

**Parish:** Those ecclesiastics who have had their background in attending to the needs of a local community, whether it be a Parish Priest, local Shaman or Witch doctor.

*Admin 0, Advocate 0, Ceremony 1, Empathy 1, Food Production 0, Knowledge (Practical or Natural) 0, Knowledge (traditions) 1, Persuade 1, Religion 1.*

**Temple Official:** Those religious men or women who tend to their duties from within the confines of one of the might edifices or religion, physical or social, complete with hierarchical authority in-residence. In some cases, this is a Temple or Cathedral; in others it is a Great Moot.

*Admin or Advocate 1, Admin or Advocate 0, Ceremony 1, Diplomat 1, Knowledge (Practical or Natural) 1, Knowledge (traditions) 0, Language 0, Persuade 0, Religion 1.*



## Entertainer:

**Settled:** This is an entertainer who has settled into one area, usually an urban area although it might be a smaller town tavern's sole entertainer or a performer at a crossroads. Because they have settled, they have to do things slightly differently.

*Advocate or Steward 0, Advocate or Steward 1, Art (any) 1, Art (any) or Deception 1, Broker 0, Carouse 0, Knowledge (natural or Traditions) 1, Languages 0, Persuade 1.*

**Wanderlust:** This is an entertainer who has journeyed widely, an itinerate bard, a minstrel who searches for perfection, a carnival circuit performer. They are on the move, which gives them less time for artistic skills, but still broadens them nicely.

*Advocate or Steward 0, Art (any) 1, Athletics (any) or Art (any) 1, Broker 0, Carouse 0, Deception or Persuade 0, Deception or Persuade 1, Languages 1, Steward 1,*

## Expert

**Book-Maven:** This expert has learned everything that they know with the help of books, scrolls and other written works. Often, they discover that not all is found clasped to the heart of the written word.

*Advocate or Design 0, Advocate or Design 1, Art or Cipher 0, Art (Writing) or Cipher 1, Diplomat or Persuade 1, Language 1, Knowledge (natural or practical) 1, Medic 0, Religion 0.*

**Listener:** This expert has learned at the foot (or more appropriately, lips) of another, or from an oral tradition. They tend to travel from one place to the next, meeting new experts and sharing what they know as well. Often, they discover that sometimes, the pages of books contain secrets long-gone from the ken of living men and women.

*Admin or Advocate or Design 1, Diplomat or Persuade 0, Diplomat or Persuade 1, Investigate 1, Knowledge (natural or practical) 1, Medic 0, Recon 0, Ride or Survival 0, Ride or Survival 1.*

## Guard and Soldier

**Sell-Sword:** While the sell-sword might have a code of conduct (and they might not) this individual works primarily for money not fervor.

*Archery or Thrown Weapon or Crossbow 0, Archery or Thrown Weapons or Crossbow 1, Armor 1, Deception or Broker 0, Personal Combat (any) 0, Personal Combat (any) 1, Recon or Survival 0, Recon or Survival 1, Ride 1.*

**Bannerman:** Whether they are the loyal Guardsmen of a King, the dedicated followers of a faith or the nobleman taken up arms, these individuals fight for more than just coin. They take up sword, bow or spear for a cause.

*Archery or Thrown Weapons or Crossbow 1, Armor 1, Carouse or Religion 0, Diplomacy 0, Personal Combat (any) 0, Personal Combat (any) 1, Recon 1, Ride 1, Survival 0.*

## Scum:

**Voluntary:** This individual has made a conscious decision to lower themselves to the level of the scum, beggars and layabouts, town drunks and the like. This also includes those prisoners who have earned their place in the gaol, through petty and/or indecent activities.

*Steward 0, Deception 1, Persuade 0, Gambler 1, Athletics (any) or Carouse 1, Personal Combat (unarmed) 0, Recon 1, Survival 0, Streetwise 1.*

**Involuntary:** This individual has had fate step in to deliver them the cruelest hand, captured and sold into slavery or imprisoned against their will for trumped up crimes.

*Athletics (any) or Stealth 1, Diplomacy 0, Empathy or Animals (any) 0, Food Production 1, Personal Combat (unarmed) 0, Persuasion or Survival 0, Persuasion or Survival 1, Recon 1, Steward 1, Streetwise 0,*

## Thief

**Solo Criminal:** This individual operates by themselves or at most with a partner (often an apprentice or a mentor).

*Athletics (Coordination) or Locks and Traps 1, Carouse or Locks and Traps 0, Deception or Stealth 0, Deception or Stealth 1, Broker or Gambler 1, Personal Combat (Light Blades) 0, Broker or Gambler 0, Recon 1, Streetwise 1.*

### Proper Member of the Guild in Standing:

This individual is a part of a larger association of criminals, a guild or gang. This allows them to specialize in a specific area of crime or specialized task for the good of the group.

*Athletics (any) 1, Carouse 0, Deception or Stealth 0, Deception or Stealth 1, Gambler or Locks and Traps 0, Gambler or Locks and Traps 1, Personal Combat (any) 0, Recon 1, Streetwise 1.*

## Starting Soc, Open Careers & Knacks

**(Optional)** In less technological societies, the character's Social Standing is going to have a lot more say over what careers they can enter into, but also when they might begin them. Each Social Standing category also has its own chance for starting the game with a knack. Upper classes tend to have a better chance at this (with the exception of the middle class) because these abilities tend to run in bloodlines, as does socioeconomic status. If characters begin with a knack, no roll is needed.

**Soc 2-3:** You were a slave. You must begin as the Scum class, although you may start at age 12. This means that your first aging check is after your sixth term (the fifth term ending when you are 32). Note that for the first two terms of the Scum career, you cannot try to escape using the second Advancement check, however you may escape as a result of the event rolled (Events 3, 6, 10, 12). *Chance of beginning play with a Knack: 11+ (2d6).*

**Soc 4-6:** You belong to the lower classes. You may begin a Scum or Thief career at 14, or any other at 16 (either start their first aging check on fifth term). *Barred First Careers:* Apprentice, Aristocracy. *Chance of beginning play with a Knack: 11+ (2d6), modified by Intelligence DM.*

**Soc 7-8:** You belong to the middle classes. You may begin an Ecclesiastic, or Expert career at 14, or a Thief, Guard, or Soldier Career at 16 (either start their first aging check on fifth term). Beginning as any other career is at 18. *Barred First Careers:* Apprentice (unless they possess a knack), Aristocracy, Scum. *Chance of beginning play with a Knack: 10+ (2d6), modified by Intelligence or Endurance DM.*

**Soc 9-10:** You belong to the lower portion of the upper classes, minor nobility or as a member of a bloodline formerly in power. You may begin an Apprentice (with knack), Ecclesiastic or Expert (Archivist) career at 14. You may begin as an Expert (Mystic) or Aristocrat (Champion, Wastrel) at 16 (either start their first aging check on fifth term). Begin any other career type at 18. *Barred First Careers:* Scum, Guard, Soldier (Mercenary), Thief (goon or burglar). *Chance of beginning play with a Knack: 11+ (2d6), modified by Intelligence or Social Standing DM.*

**Soc 11+:** You belong to the top tiers of the Upper classes, middling nobility (peerage) or a bloodline currently in power. You may begin an Apprentice (with knack), Aristocrat (Courtier) or Ecclesiastic (Inquisitor) career at 14, an Apprentice or Aristocrat career at 16 (either start their first aging check on fifth term). Begin any other career type at 18 (if as an Expert they may take an additional *Knowledge Skill* at 1 when they begin). *Barred First Careers:* Entertainer, Scum, Guard, Soldier, Thief. *Chance of beginning play with a Knack: 10+ (2d6), modified by Social Standing DM.*

## Special:

The following Extended Basic Training Packages may be used for a variety of Careers, subject to Referee consent, but reflect more the background of the character before the Career than a path in the Career itself.

**Farmer:** Whether they are a Serf breaking their back in the local lord's fields, a yeomen farmer of the nascent middle-class, or an agriculturally-minded member of the gentry, this individual has tilled the land, raised crops and has the calloused hands to prove it.

*Animals (any) 1, Archery or Design 0, Athletics (Strength or Endurance) 1, Food Production 1, Knowledge (Natural) 1, Personal Combat (Blunt, Heavy) 0, Recon 0, Ride 0, Survival 1,*

**Sailor:** Those who make their living by the sea tend to acquire certain skillsets.

*Archery or Thrown Weapon or Crossbow 0, Athletics (Coordination) 1, Gambler or Carouse or Religion 0, Navigation 1, Personal Combat (Light Blade or Light Club) 0, Recon 1, Seafaring (Sailing Ships) 1, Survival 0, Trade (Seamanship) 1.*

**Note:** Until the 20th century a surprising number of sailors did not know how to swim. Swimming can be accomplished by either a *Seafaring* or *Athletics* check. *Trade (Seamanship)* incorporates various tasks related to sailing, from rope use for mast and rigging, to sewing for the sails and various small repair tasks on ship.

**Ogre (Standard):** This is the standard skillset of a natural-born Ogre, or someone who was fated to have undergone this horrific transformation very early in life..

*Armor 0, Athletics (Endurance) 1, Athletics (Strength) 1, Personal Combat (club) 1, Personal Combat (unarmed) 0, Recon 1, Survival 1. (Note: this has less skills than usual, that would be because you are an Ogre)*

**Ogre (Fhiomori):** This is one of the clever (and usually evil) versions of the Ogre, retaining their ability to use magic and some of their intellect. Generally this makes them crafty and angry.

*Athletics (Strength or Endurance) 1, Channel 1, Deception 0, Medic 0, Personal Combat (unarmed or club) 1, Recon 1, Ride or Survival 1,*

*Reminder:* Characters cannot be Fhiomori without special agreement, they also possess two negative mutations to offset their lack of weakness in Intelligence and Education: **Emotional Instability** and **Diminished Sense (Vision)**.

# SKILLS

Skills work a little differently for characters hailing from Netherell cultures. Those requiring the use of sophisticated equipment or exposure to technologically advanced concepts are harder for them to train. If Netherell characters try to use these skills untrained, they suffer an even greater penalty than the average citizen of the galaxy does and, if they somehow gain a chance to study a skill, it takes more effort to learn it.

On the other hand, what the inhabitants of this world lack in the breadth of their technology often allows them to exploit what they do know to a far greater depth. Characters from Netherell frequently discover ways to apply what they have learned from one skill to other skills, even those for which they have no formal training. This overlap of related skills eliminates some, but not all, of the penalties normally imposed by using an untrained skill (see **Related Skills**).

## PRIMITIVE PENALTY

Characters with no exposure to advanced technology cannot learn skills that require the use of this technology. For instance, someone raised in a culture that regards the catapult as the pinnacle of science would face robots or tanks with utter bafflement, and likely a healthy dose of fear. The primitive penalty encapsulates the technology deficit suffered by these sorts of characters.

Under normal circumstances, Netherell characters cannot gain skills that impose the primitive penalty. They must use these skills untrained and suffer an even greater handicap than galactic characters when doing so. Most of these skills have a primitive penalty with a -2 DM; Netherell characters use them untrained with -5 DM. A few skills, those that make a certain intuitive sense even to those with no prior exposure, have a primitive penalty with -1 DM instead; Netherell characters use them untrained with a total DM of -4.

If, during the course of a campaign, Netherell characters get the chance to study galactic science they still find it harder to grasp than someone exposed to it from an early age. The primitive penalty continues to apply, even for skills in which they are trained. For instance, once a character is trained in a skill, which normally brings with it a DM of +0, the primitive penalty

of -2 or -1 would still apply. Since Netherell characters begin with such a knowledge deficit they can, in a sense, “buy off” their primitive penalty for skills, even those that normally require specialization. This allows them to forgo choosing a specialty in a particular skill until they eliminate the primitive penalty for it. Once they completely eliminate the primitive penalty they must put any further skill levels into a specialty as normal. For instance, a Netherell character trained in *Gunner* could increase his DM to +1 (with a -1 on checks due to the primitive penalty) and then +2 (with a +0 modifier on checks due to the primitive penalty) before finally choosing a specialty like any galactic character.

The primitive penalty does not affect skill totals for the purposes of determining the number of weeks it takes to learn new skills. For instance, a character with a skill level of 1 would increase his learning time by one week as normal when trying to learn a new skill; even if his primitive penalty gave him an effective -1 DM with that skill. Similarly, the primitive penalty applies even if a Netherell character has *Jack of All Trades*. This is one of the few situations where it makes sense to have *Jack of All Trades* 4 or 5 since it would totally eliminate the primitive penalty. However, a Netherell character cannot benefit from *Jack of All Trades* for a skill that has the primitive penalty *until* he has access to galactic technology and spends at least one week learning the basics of that particular skill. Once he spends that week in study, *Jack of All Trades* works as normal for that skill.

The primitive penalty only applies to characters with little or no exposure to galactic technology prior to the start of play. Any character created using the standard character creation rules does not suffer the primitive penalty. Even characters hailing from Netherell who somehow manage to embark on a galactic career path do not suffer the primitive penalty - the barbarian specialization of the Drifter career, for instance. Of course, they must also choose, and

### Skills with the Primitive Penalty

Penalty	Skill
-5	Astrogation, Comms, Computers, Drive, Engineer, Explosives, Flyer, Gunner, Heavy Weapons, Mechanic, Pilot, Science, Remote Operation, Sensors, Zero-gee
-4	Battledress, Gun Combat, Vacc Suit

apply, skills in the exact same manner as galactics. Characters born on Netherell cannot mix and match careers. If made using the standard *Traveller* rules they cannot take a Netherell career, including magical ones, gain a knack, benefit from related skills, or any of the other advantages normally enjoyed by Netherell natives.

**Netherell characters often know more about less, at least when compared to galactics.**

However, players interested in the challenge of running primitive characters in galactic campaigns can, with the permission of the Referee, use the rules for character creation found in this book instead of the standard rules.

## RELATED SKILLS

Netherell characters draw upon a smaller knowledge base than galactics. While this puts them at a disadvantage in many situations, it also makes it much easier for them to apply what they do know from one skill to other, somewhat similar skills or specialties. For instance, someone trained to project his voice for music by way of *Art* (song) also knows how to get the most out of a shouted order, making *Leadership* just a little bit easier to grasp.

The untrained DM for a skill is reduced by 1 for each related skill a character knows. However, since related skills are still at least a little different, the untrained penalty cannot disappear completely. *A Netherell character always has at least a -1 DM for an untrained skill regardless of the number of related skills known.* The benefit gained from a related skill does not always go both ways. For instance, using the example above, a singer might know how to get the most out of a shouted order but this does not mean that a trained officer knows anything about singing.

As mentioned above, characters cannot mix and match careers from the standard *Traveller* rules and the Netherell rules. These modifications were designed to simulate someone brought up in a particular type of environment.

## SKILLS FOR NETHERELL CHARACTERS

Netherell characters often know more about less, at least when compared to galactics. Under normal circumstances the primitive penalty makes it impossible for Netherell characters to acquire many of the skills galactics take for granted. However, this also gives them the chance to master skills too obscure, or specialized, for galactics to bother with.

Some of the skills detailed below are wholly new, representing unique aspects of Netherell culture or earlier incarnations of galactic technology and science. Others actually split up existing galactic skills into smaller disciplines, giving specialties the attention they deserve in settings that place far greater emphasis upon them. Most however, mirror skills already well known to galactic characters.

Characters must use these skills with the technology they understand. The primitive penalty always applies when a character interacts with advanced technology. For instance, if a character tried to use *Locks and Traps* to open a magnetically sealed door he would find it a far more difficult than normal. Referees can apply the -1 DM instead of the -2 DM in situations where they feel characters might have a certain instinctive understanding of how to apply their skills to this bewildering technology.

As a rule of thumb, Netherell is mostly a Tech Level 1 world with a few pockets at TL 0 or TL 2. The primitive penalty should apply to anything involving TL 4 or higher. Referees can, at their option, choose to reduce or even eliminate the primitive penalty when interacting with TL 3 mechanisms or situations.

As already mentioned, some of these skills have enough of an overlap that they make it easier for Netherell characters to use other skills, even those for which they have no formal training. If a skill relates to other skills, these other skills are listed after its name in parentheses. A character reduces his untrained penalty by 1 for each related skill he knows, up to a maximum of -1 if he has two related skills.

### **Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose (The more things change...)**

For the most part, the following skills work identically for Netherell characters as they do for Galactic characters. They are listed here along with their Related Skills for Netherell characters:

*Admin (Advocate), Advocate (Admin, Persuade), Broker (Persuade), Carouse (Diplomat), Deception, Diplomat (Carouse), Gambler, Investigate, Leadership, Medic (Animals (Veterinary)), Navigation (Survival), Persuade, Recon (Investigate), Seafarer (Navigation), Stealth, Steward (Trade), Streetwise, Survival (Food Production, Navigation), Tactics, Trade.*

## Alchemy

This skill concerns itself with all aspects of potions, oils, ointments, and any other sort of magical concoction. Magical characters can use this skill to manufacture potions. Any character with this skill can attempt to analyze a potion in order to determine its properties or to get the most out of it.

*Determine the properties of an unknown potion: Education or Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2).*

## Animals

This skill concerns itself with the training and handling of animals or creatures with a similar sort of intelligence and disposition; including many monsters. On Netherell, *Farming* (see **Food Production**) and *Ride* specialties are separate skills.

### Specialties

- ⚡ **Affinity:** Winning over the trust of wild creatures.
  - Convince a non-hostile creature to approach and accept a treat: Intelligence, 1d6 x 10 seconds, Formidable (-6).*
  - Get a hostile or dangerous creature to depart instead of attacking: Intelligence, 10d6 seconds, Difficult (-2).*
- ⚡ **Training:** Teaching an animal to perform a trick or task on command.
  - Command a creature to perform a trick it already knows: Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Simple (+6).*
  - Teach a non-hostile creature to perform a trick on command: Intelligence, 1d6 days, Very Difficult (-4).*
- ⚡ **Veterinary:** Tending to an animal's injuries or illnesses.

## Archery

This skill grants aptitude with any sort of bow.

## Armor

This skill concerns itself with wearing the sorts of armor Netherell technology can produce (chain mail, plate mail, etc). Each suit of armor has a minimum level of training characters must have in order to wear it comfortably and enjoy its full use. If characters have sufficient levels to wear the armor they typically do not need to make any further skill checks. However, taking any special or unusual actions while wearing armor could require skill checks. For consequences of lacking this skill, see pg 43.

## Athletics

This skill concerns itself with all aspects of physical prowess. Never apply an untrained penalty to characters that do not have Athletics; use the appropriate physical characteristic instead.

- ⚡ **Co-ordination (Thrown Weapons):** Feats of agility or precision.
  - Catch an arrow before it strikes: Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Formidable (-6), on a failed roll the arrow automatically hits.*
  - Juggle three similar objects: Dexterity, 1 minute, Average (+0), repeat each minute with the difficulty remaining the same.*
- ⚡ **Endurance:** Feats of fortitude and stamina.
  - Carry a wounded comrade while under pursuit: Endurance, 1d6 hours, Easy (+4), repeat as needed, difficulty increases to next higher each time.*
  - Hold breath for one minute: Endurance, 1 minute, Routine (+2), repeat every minute, difficulty increases to next higher each time.*
- ⚡ **Strength:** Feats of might or vigor.
  - Kick down a normal wooden door: Strength, 1d6 seconds, Routine (+2).*
  - Throw an enemy at another foe: Strength, 1d6 seconds, Very Difficult (-4), if successful make attack as if a thrown weapon.*
- ⚡ **Flying:** Flying creatures get this skill at level 0 for free; they must improve it beyond that as with any other skill.

## Art

This skill concerns itself with any sort of creative endeavor. Some of the specialties relate to other skills independently.

### Specialties

- ⚡ **Acting (Deception):** Convincingly assume a new persona.
- ⚡ **Comedy (Persuade):** Making people laugh.
- ⚡ **Dance (Carouse):** Performing a dance.
- ⚡ **Sculpting (Design):** Reshaping physical objects.
- ⚡ **Singing (Leadership):** Voice based music.
- ⚡ **Painting:** Creating an image on a surface.
- ⚡ **Musical Instruments:** Playing a particular musical instrument.
- ⚡ **Writing (Investigate):** Arranging words in an entertaining or useful way.

Referees and players are encouraged to develop their own art specialties.

## Ceremony (Knowledge (traditions), Religion)

This skill concerns itself with performing magical rituals and conducting, or presiding over, important occasions ranging from weddings to coronations. While such events often have religious overtones, this skill applies to secular ceremonies, too. Characters with access to magical writings, scrolls, books, and similar objects can use this skill to safely call forth and control magical energy. Any magical effect not covered by a specific power of a house or knack usually requires that a character carefully follow written instructions to perform the ceremony. Characters with magical ability can use this skill to create instructions for new ceremonies.

*Conduct a funeral that ensures the deceased won't rise from the grave: Education, 1d6 hours, Difficult (-2).*

*Drive a hostile entity from the body of a possessed person: Education, 1d6 hours, Very Difficulty (-4).*

## Channel

This skill allows characters to call forth and control magical energy. It most commonly comes into play when a character seeks to identify magical items or to activate and use those items that do not work automatically. It also applies when interacting with magical features in tombs, dungeons, or similar locations. Characters with magical ability can also use this skill to create new magic items.

*Realize that an item has magical properties: Education or Intelligence, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0).*

*Will a magically floating sword to move aside and let you pass in peace: Education or Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2).*

## Ciphers

This skill allows a character to create or decipher codes and other hidden messages. It also gives characters the chance to puzzle out the meaning of works written in foreign or otherwise unknown languages.

*Break the code of a ciphered message: Education or Intelligence, 1d6 hours, Very Difficult (-4), opposed.*

*Hide a secret message within another written work: Education or Intelligence, 3d6 hours, Difficult (-2).*

## Crossbows

This skill grants aptitude with any sort of crossbow.

*Shoot a rope in order to sever it: Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Very Difficult (-4).*

## Design

This skill concerns itself with creating complex objects. It also applies to drafting blueprints and other aspects of architecture. It also concerns itself with building and using siege engines such as catapults and trebuchets.

*Draw floor plans for merchant's villa: Education, 1d6 hours, Average (+0).*

*Build a cage capable of safely holding a monster with a poisonous gaze: Dexterity or Education, 1d6 days, Difficult (-2).*

*Calculate the best place to strike a gate with a battering ram: Education or Intelligence, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0).*

*Improvise a catapult with parts found around a village: Education, 1d6 days, Difficult (-2).*

## Empathy (Investigate, Persuade)

This skill concerns itself with divining the true intent of others. It covers the discernment of lies and other falsehoods, but also the determination of whether someone is under any sort of stress or control, magical or otherwise. It also allows characters to give counsel or useful advice to those who ask for it.

## Food Production

This skill concerns itself with cultivating or locating edible materials. It differs from *Survival* in that it allows the character to provide sustenance for a group of people over an extended period.

### Specialties

- /// **Farming:** Raising animals and sowing crops.
- /// **Fishing:** Catching fish and other aquatic creatures with nets, traps, fishing lines or other tools.
- /// **Gathering:** Finding food arising from nature such as picking berries and fruits, digging up roots, taking eggs from nests, etc.
- /// **Herdin**g: Guiding and tending groups of animals.
- /// **Hunting/Snaring:** Killing or trapping animals.

## **Jack of All Trades**

This skill reduces the untrained penalty for skills in the same way as it does for galactics. It works in conjunction with related skills, allowing a character to totally eliminate the untrained penalty if the total DM equals or exceeds 3. This skill cannot give characters a bonus to an untrained skill. As already mentioned, it also applies to the primitive penalty if a character spends at least one week learning the basics of a skill based on galactic technology.

## **Knowledge (nature) (Alchemy, Animals, Food Production, Medic, Survival, Track)**

This skill concerns itself with all aspects of the living world including animals, plants, and the environment as a whole.

*Predict the weather one day in advance:  
Education, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0).*

*Spot the minor differences between the  
poisonous female and the harmless male before  
you grab that spider: Education, 1d6 seconds,  
Difficult (-2).*

## **Knowledge (practical) (Alchemy, Design, Locks and Traps, Navigation)**

This skill covers much of what Netherell science understands about how the universe works. It offers tech-level appropriate information about chemistry, physics, and similar disciplines.

*Determine the best place to start a fire intended  
to trap as many raiders as possible inside their  
lair: Education, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0).*

*Figure out what local materials to gather and  
then sprinkle into the chieftain's campfire so  
that it burns with an eerie color when you make  
your threats: Education, 1d6 hours, Very Difficult  
(-4).*

## **Knowledge (traditions) (Advocate, Carouse, Ceremony, Channel, Ciphers, Diplomat, Religion)**

This skill concerns itself with history, folklore, etiquette, and the properties of unusual creatures, locations, or other phenomena.

*Realize an ancient coin came from a lost city  
before the person who used it to pay his bill  
disappears into the crowd: Education, 1d6  
seconds, Routine (+2).*

*Determine if the strange smoke coming from  
the cave stems from a monster or something  
not so threatening: Education, 1d6 minutes,  
Difficult (-2).*

## **Language**

This skill concerns itself with communication whether by word or some other, possibly improvised, method. Characters can automatically speak and read the language of their race or homeland, and at least a smattering of the trade tongue. The trade tongue is a pidgin mélange of many different languages that most travelers eventually pick up. Anyone with *Language 0* is sufficiently fluent in the trade tongue to treat it as another language and can freely communicate with anyone else who understands it. Thasalat's use of the trade tongue in everyday life is a major contributor to the language's widespread use.

## **Specialties**

- /// **Arisin:** Muhhijien
- /// **Burder-Frain:** Kovushu and Setheeral
- /// **Graish:** Cadistreen
- /// **Ghutt:** Dravelnar
- /// **Imperial:** Bainharra
- /// **Lothlan:** Onarocka
- /// **Mageran:** Tarlathame
- /// **Skerathan:** Skerathos
- /// **Thamas:** Nakara desert
- /// **Trevish:** Perraine

## **Locks and Traps**

This skill concerns itself with picking locks, bypassing barriers, and finding and disarming traps, snares, or similar hazards.

*Find/Disarm a typical trap: Dexterity, 1d6  
minutes, Disarm (-2).*

*Pick a typical lock: Dexterity, 1d6 minutes,  
Average (+0).*

## **Natural Weapons**

This skill grants aptitude with any innate attacks a creature or character has, such as claws, teeth, or stingers. Creatures with more unusual innate attacks, like dragons, also use them as natural weapons. Creatures with natural attacks always gain this skill free at level 0. Each natural weapon a creature has counts as a separate specialty if it seeks to improve its skill.

Humans and similar creatures typically have no natural weapons to speak of and use *Personal Combat (Unarmed)* instead.

## Melee v. Personal Combat

The skill *Personal Combat* works just like *Melee* only with a more narrow focus. Like the *Trade Skill*, the *Personal Combat* skill requires specialization even at level 0, so that a *Personal Combat 0* does not make someone basically competent in all weapons; but a *Personal Combat (Blades, Long) 0* will make someone basically competent in long bladed weapons like long swords, sabres and scimitars.

**Semi-Familiarity:** Characters can use similar weapons (other Blades, other Axes, other Spears) with Skill -2 to account for the semi-familiarity. For example, A character with *Personal Combat (Blades, Long) 3* may use a Heavy Bladed weapon or Short Bladed weapon as if they had a skill of 1 in one of those categories.

**Conversions:** Galactics on Netherell should convert their *Melee* skill to *Personal Combat*. While not overly realistic, it does keep them on par with the inhabitants of Netherell.

## Personal Combat

This skill grants aptitude with hand-held weapons. Netherell cultures are more savage than most galactic societies, and make greater use of potentially deadly tools in everyday life. For this reason, characters automatically begin with one of this skill's specialties, with a skill level of 0. Players should choose the specialty that most closely matches the early history of their character; a lumberjack might take Axes, Heavy while a lord might take Blades, Long.

### Specialties

- /// **Axes, Heavy:** battle axe, two-handed pick, scythe
- /// **Axes, Light:** hand axe, pick, sickle
- /// **Blades, Heavy:** bastard sword, two-handed sword
- /// **Blades, Light:** dagger, foil, short sword
- /// **Blades, Long:** long sword, saber, scimitar
- /// **Blunt Weapons, Heavy:** staff, great hammer
- /// **Blunt Weapons, Light:** club, flail, mace, war hammer
- /// **Spears, Heavy:** halberd, lance, pike
- /// **Spears, Light:** spear
- /// **Unarmed:** fighting without weapons

## Religion (Ceremony, Knowledge (traditions))

This skill concerns itself with issues of faith and theology.

*Ask a few questions in order to determine if someone actually is a member of a minor sect:*  
Education, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0).

*Win a debate over obscure points of scripture with a heretic in order to bring his followers back to the truth faith:* Education, 1d6 hours, Difficult (-2), opposed.

## Ride (Animals)

This skill concerns itself with mounts and mounted combat. Each species of creature is its own specialty. Characters can also use this skill to specialize in other sorts of animal-based travel like chariots or stagecoaches.

*Attempt a mounted charge:* Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Simple (+6).

*Urge your mount to travel through unusual terrain (climb stairs, swim, etc):* Education, 1d6 seconds, Very Difficult (-4).

## Thrown Weapons

This skill grants aptitude with any ranged weapon primarily launched by brute force or muscle power. Slings also count as thrown weapons. Characters trained with melee weapons cannot use them to make ranged attacks, or vice versa. However, characters treat any melee weapon they are trained in as a related skill when attempting to throw it. For example, someone trained to use a dagger as a melee weapon would also treat it as a related skill when throwing it.

### Specialties

- /// **Heavy:** javelin, spear, throwing axe
- /// **Light:** dagger, rock, sling, throwing star
- /// **Unbalanced:** swords, axes, benches, tables, statues etc.. These weapons cannot be hurled as far or as accurately, but this is the skill to get the most out of throwing them at an opponent.

## Track (Survival)

This skill allows characters to follow or conceal a trail in any environment survivable by Netherell characters.

*Follow a bleeding creature through a forest:*  
Education or Intelligence, 1d6 minutes, Easy (+4).

*Pick up a trail again after target slipped into a river and climbed out again on hard stones:*  
Education or Intelligence, 1d6 hours, Very Difficult (-4).



# FINISHING UP

Characters from Netherell, just like galactic characters, eventually leave their careers and begin play in the present day. Before they can actually embark on their first adventure they must complete the last few details of character creation - determining their mustering out benefits, buying equipment, rolling for life events and magical mishaps, and choosing a skills package from which to allocate their last few skills.

## MUSTERING OUT BENEFITS

For the most part, Netherell characters use the exact same rules as galactics when calculating benefits. They have the same limitations on the number of cash benefits they can gain, though certain events in particular careers might modify this, and the same +1 DM if they have at least Gambler 1. They also get bonus benefit rolls based on their rank in their careers just like galactics.

However, Netherell characters can spend more than 2,000 credits on gear with the right benefit roll, particularly magic items. When a benefit roll lists a category of equipment followed by a number (e.g. Potion 1.00), characters can spend up to half of their cash benefits on that sort of equipment. If they have more than one benefit roll from this category they must make their purchases in the order in which they gained them and spend up to half of their remaining cash supply each time.

The number following the item represents the effective discount they get when spending credits on that type of equipment. For instance, Potion 1.25 means that a character could theoretically spend 1,000 credits in order to obtain 1,250 credits worth of potions. Characters wishing to purchase an item that falls under more than one category cannot add these discounts together. They must simply use the one that gives them the best deal.

These cash values represent the retail value of various items. Characters who resell these items only get half of what they actually spent.

- /// **Ally:** Gain an ally.
- /// **Armor:** You can select any suit of non-magical armor, or shield, your *Armor* skill allows you to use. If you have already earned armor through benefit rolls you can instead choose to gain one level in the *Armor* skill. You must actually gain the armor through benefit rolls, thus you may not purchase armor and then improve your *Armor* skill. If this benefit was Armor followed by a number you can purchase magical armor instead.
- /// **Characteristic Increase:** Improve the listed characteristic by the listed amount. Characters cannot improve a characteristic by more than 3 higher than their racial maximum as determined during character creation. For instance, if a character determines a characteristic by rolling 2d6 he could not improve it to greater than 15.
- /// **Contact:** Gain a contact.
- /// **Knack:** Gain a knack. If you already have a knack you can try to qualify for a magical career instead. You gain a +2 DM on your qualification roll.
- /// **Magic:** You can purchase any sort of magical item you can afford.
- /// **Mount:** You gain a horse or other animal suitable for riding. You must have the Ride skill in order to obtain a mount. Your mount comes with any peripheral gear needed to make full use of it such as saddles and bridles.
- /// **Potion:** You can purchase potions.
- /// **Trappings:** You can purchase any sort of magical trappings.
- /// **Tome:** You can purchase magical books, scrolls, or other sorts of literature.
- /// **Weapon:** You can select any non-magical weapon you are trained to use. The weapon comes with peripheral gear, such as scabbards and ammunition. If you have already earned at least one weapon through benefit rolls you can instead choose to gain one level in a weapon skill for which you are already trained. You must actually gain this weapon through benefit rolls, thus you may not purchase a weapon and then improve your skill. If this benefit was Weapon followed by a number, you can purchase a magical weapon instead.

### Example of Purchasing Magic Items:

Dave rolls a **Weapon 1.5** result from his soldier career and has a total of **30,000 Credits** to work with. If he allocates 10,000 Cr from his monies (less than half of what he has available) he can afford a Magic weapon worth 15,000 Cr (1.5 x 10,000 Cr he has allocated for this). At the most, Dave could allocate 15,000 Cr (half of his character's total amount) and get 22,500 Cr worth of magical weaponry.

## LIFE EVENTS

Netherell characters use the table below to determine the effects of any life events.

2d6	Event
2	<b>Sickness or Injury:</b> You suffer an injury.
3	<b>Betrayal:</b> Convert one of your allies into a rival or one of your contacts into an enemy. If you have no allies or contacts, gain (1d4 a rival, 5-6 an enemy).
4	<b>Crime:</b> You are accused of or the victim of a crime. Roll on the Consequences of Crime sub-table for more information.
5	<b>Relationship Change:</b> One of your relationships changes significantly - ending or starting a marriage, etc.
6	<b>Knack:</b> The character gains a knack, or, if they already have one, skill in the knack they possess.
7	<b>Challenge:</b> Roll 8+ on a skill you already know. If you succeed, improve that skill by one level. If you fail, lose either a benefit roll or take a -4 DM on your next advancement or qualification roll.
8	<b>New Friend:</b> 1-4 gain a contact, 5-6 gain an ally.
9	<b>Spare Time:</b> Improve one skill you already know by one level or get trained in a skill you do not know.
10	<b>Good Fortune:</b> You gain a +2 DM on any one benefit roll or advancement roll.
11	<b>Extreme Good Fortune:</b> You gain a benefit roll, automatically advance in your current career, or automatically qualify for a new non-magical career.
12	<b>Unusual Event</b> (roll on table)

### Unusual Event Chart

1d6	Unusual Event
1	<b>Magical surge:</b> roll on the magical mishaps table.
2	<b>Tested:</b> Members of a secret organization evaluate you as a candidate by creating a scenario suitable for your talents. The Referee picks three skills in which you are trained and you must roll 8+ for each of them. If you get all three, you receive an invitation to join the organization. If you get two, you gain a benefit roll. If you get one, the organization has no further interest in you. If you fail all three, you suffer an injury.
3	<b>Powerful Connection:</b> You gain a very influential contact (1-4) or ally (5-6) such as a head of state, leader of a religion, or someone with a similarly high rank or position.
4	<b>Galactic encounter:</b> You meet one of the galactics studying Netherell and learn as much of the truth as you can handle. Galactic becomes (1 enemy, 2-3 rival, 4-5 contact, 6 ally).
5	<b>Magical gift:</b> Make two benefit rolls for cash and immediately use the better result to purchase any one magic item. You do not have to spend all of the cash on the item but you cannot keep anything you don't spend.
6	<b>Magical infusion! Roll d6:</b> (1-4) Gain a knack or skill in a knack that is already possessed by the character; (5-6) Enter Vessel career after d3 years of possession or, if an Apprentice, become a magician.

### Criminal Consequences Chart

1d6	Consequences of Crime
1	<b>Wounding:</b> Suffer an injury
2	<b>Exiled:</b> Enter the Scum career
3	<b>Personal Costs:</b> Lose a benefit roll
4	<b>Hard Labor:</b> Reduce any one characteristic by 1
5	<b>Den of Iniquity:</b> Form a connection (1 Enemy, 2-5 Contact, 6 Ally)
6	<b>Things work out very well (for you):</b> Gain a benefit roll, a +4 DM on next advancement roll, or some other appropriate boon.

## MAGICAL MISHAPS

Magic makes great demands on both the mind and the body. On Netherell, people unable to control magic as it surges through them undergo a transformation that, if left unchecked, ultimately turns them into an ogre. These savage giants remember very little of their prior existence and often turn on loved ones at the slightest provocation. Despite this, most newly created ogres are left to make their own way in the world; a final parting gift in memory of the person they once were. For this reason, many parts of Netherell have sizable populations of ogres, most of them descended from those who lost their grip on magic many generations in the past.

Each time a character undergoes a magical mishap he suffers a cumulative -1 DM on all future rolls for magical mishaps. If the mishap requires him to roll on the disaster table instead, the penalty does not apply until his next mishap. Mishaps cannot reduce a character's attributes to less than 1.

### Magical Mishaps

1d6	Unusual Event
1	Roll on the <i>Magical Disasters Table</i> .
2	Reduce Intelligence and Education by 1 each.
3	Reduce Social Standing by 1. Increase Strength by 1.
4	Reduce Dexterity by 1. Increase Endurance by 1.
5	A lucky escape, no lasting effect.
6	A quirk of magic works to your benefit; gain a knack.

### Magical Disasters

1d6	Unusual Event (Note: each result can only be rolled once, if a result is re-rolled later, roll again)
1	The magic alters you in mind and body. You become an ogre. Start over from scratch with a new character.
2	Roll 1d6 and take the result as your new Education characteristic. Apply your new DM to all future rolls but do not re-roll anything you have already done.
3	You grow clumsy but more powerful. Reduce Dexterity by 2 but increase Strength and Endurance by 1 each. This is often accompanied by a change of physical size (thicker and taller body frame).
4	You grow much taller. Reduce your Intelligence, Education, and Social Standing by 1 but then add a d6 to your Strength characteristic (or re-roll it on 3d6 if desired).
5	Your bones thicken. Reduce your Intelligence, Education, and Social Standing by 1 but then add a d6 to your Endurance characteristic (or re-roll it on 3d6 if desired).
6	Your skin thickens. Gain protection 1 which contributes to any protection gained from armor you wear. This also adds the <i>deformity</i> negative mutation, as the change in skin texture and tone is quite noticeable. The character (if a galactic) will be thought of as a Natural Mutant or SIM with appropriate Soc penalties.

### Ogres and Magical Mishaps

Magical mishaps, if taken to their ultimate conclusion, produce ogres. This magic remains, an inextricable legacy, no matter how many generations back one must search to find the human ancestor who actually transformed into an ogre. For this reason, ogres never roll for magical mishaps. They embody the mishap and the magic cannot transform them any more than it already has. In a sense, the worst has already happened, and they have nothing left to fear.

Of course, very few ogres have the presence of mind to use magic. In general, only the *Fhiomori*, the magical giants most commonly found in Skerethos, even attempt to dabble in it. Some sages speculate that these magically gifted ogres could one day develop a vibrant culture all their own. If so, these ogres, physically formidable and blessed with powerful magic, might easily overrun all of Netherell and supplant humanity as the dominant species.



## Skill Packages, Netherell Inhabitants

Each skill package grants a number of skills, each starting at level 1. Select one skill package for the enter group and allocate as normal.

**Adventurer Skill Package:** This general purpose skills package offers considerable variety and versatility.

*Athletics, Broker, Carouse, Design, Empathy, Investigate, Medic, Persuade, Survival.*

**Crime Solving Skill Package:** This skill package focuses on law enforcement and justice.

*Advocate, Admin, Empathy, Investigate, Persuade, Recon, Stealth, Streetwise, Tactics.*

**Delver Skill Package:** This skill package focuses on exploring tombs, caves, and similar locations.

*Athletics, Channel, Ciphers, Knowledge (traditions), Locks and Traps, Medic, Recon, Stealth.*

**Gang Skill Package:** This skill package focuses on crimes and the underworld.

*Advocate, Broker, Deception, Locks and Traps, Medic, Persuade, Stealth, Streetwise.*

**Intrigue Skill Package:** This skill package focuses on diplomacy, politics, and espionage.

*Advocate, Broker, Carouse, Diplomat, Deception, Empathy, Persuade, Stealth, Streetwise.*

**Merchant Skill Package:** This skill package focuses on commerce and negotiation.

*Advocate, Admin, Broker, Diplomat, Empathy, Language, Persuade, Steward.*

**Military Skill Package:** This skill package focuses on combat and its aftermath.

*Admin, Leadership, Medic, Recon, Stealth, Survival, Tactics, Track.*

**Voyager Skill Package:** This skill package focuses on travel and exploration.

*Animals, Athletics, Crossbows, Design, Language, Medic, Navigation, Seafarer, Survival.*

## Skill Packages, Galactics

Each skill package grants a number of skills, each starting at level 1. Select one skill package for the enter group and allocate as normal.

**APR Researcher Skill Package:** This general purpose skills package is the "basic" researcher model for the APR galactics sent to watch the natives.

*Admin, Art (Writing), Comms, Computers or Design, Empathy, Investigate, Survival, Stealth.*

**Crashed Galactics Skill Package:** This skill package should be used for intrepid explorers (from outside of the APR) who crash-land on the surface of Netherell, and must try to survive from there. Anyone who is able to **(a)** use the phrase "get your hands off me you damned dirty (whatever)" or **(b)** uncover a major iconic monument from Earth (Easter Island heads would be nice) and sink to their knees in the surf, deserves extra kudos. Like a golf clap. Or a pony. Referee discretion on what specifically.

*Athletics, Comm, Mechanic, Sensors, Medic, Personal Combat or Archery specialties x3.*

**Observer in Perrain Skill Package:** This skill package includes those APR personnel in Perrain, who have started to get a mite too close to their subjects.

*Art (writing), Channel (for psions) or Ceremony (for non-psions), Ciphers, Knowledge (traditions), Empathy, Investigate, Recon or Sensors, Stealth.*

## AGING AND INJURIES

All Aging and Injury indications should be rolled on the appropriate tables from whatever source the Referee uses for such things.

On Netherell, just like the galaxy as a whole, characters suffer from the effects of aging and injury during their careers. They must follow the same rules, and use the same tables, when determining the effects of aging or injury. Unfortunately, what Netherell has by way of medical "technology" hardly deserves the name. Leeches and saws take the place of anagathics and cloned organs.

However, the world of Netherell *does* pulse with magic, including healing magic. Though the methods used to restore a lost eye or to scrub wrinkles from skin are quite different from off-world methods, they can achieve the same result.

Characters with enough money can purchase magical remedies to their problems just as galactic characters can spend their cash on technological cures. The characters will expend the same amount listed in the main rulebook (5,000 cr/lost point). Referees should feel free to impose whatever special, magical-related, complications that accompany these efforts ("you have a new arm, but it is reptilian")

# CHAPTER 3: EQUIPMENT

Despite the infancy of their technology compared to those of starfarers, Netherell societies produce far too many items to easily catalog. The equipment below focuses mainly on the gear most useful for characters involved in adventures and other sorts of risky activities. Referees should use the prices below as measuring sticks to help determine the costs of other goods and services. While the costs given below are in credits they can easily be transferred to whatever currency the Referee is using with little modification (See **Coinage** sidebar, Page 49).

## ARMOR

Just like galactic characters, Netherell characters can only wear one suit of the listed armor types at one time. Characters wishing to use a shield in combat must spend a reaction, as they would with a parry. This not only allows them to benefit from the shield's protection, but also to impose their Armor skill as a negative DM on their opponent's attack roll.

Some armor requires a minimum *Armor* skill level in order for the wearer to benefit fully from the protection offered. Characters suffer a -2 DM on all actions taken while wearing armor for every level above their training. This includes Armor +0. For instance, an untrained character wearing armor that had a minimum level of Armor 1 would suffer a -4 DM on all rolls.

Armor made with Netherell technology in mind works less effectively when defending against weapons based on more advanced science.

A laser or a bullet could blow right through something designed to turn aside an arrow or sword thrust. The armors below have two listing for protection; one for Netherell weapons and one for galactic weapons (in parentheses). Use the appropriate protection score when determining the damage a weapon deals to someone wearing that armor. For ease of play, assume that any TL 3 or higher weapon counts as galactic technology.

**Armor made with Netherell technology in mind works less effectively when defending against weapons based on more advanced science.**

### Armor Equipment Chart

Armor, Generic Types	Protection	Armor Skill	Cost (Cr)	Mass (kg)
Shield (TL 0)	2 (1)	-	15	2
Leather (TL 1)	2 (1)	-	50	5
Studded Leather (TL 1)	3 (1)	0	125	7
Hide Armor (TL 0)	4 (2)	0	200	10
Chain Mail (TL 1)	6 (3)	1	500	16
Banded Mail (TL 1)	7 (3)	1	1000	18
Plate Mail (TL 1)	8 (4)	2	2000	22
Knight's Plate (TL 1)	14 (7)	2	5000	25

**Note:** Like weapons, the armor listed on this chart is designed to appear as generic as possible, using terminology coming from our own medieval culture rather than the name of native equivalents found on Netherell. This is deliberate, and these armor classifications should be thought of more as the *equivalent* styles than as direct copies of these armor types from Earth's history.



## Equipment on Netherell

### Melee Weapons Table, Generic

Weapon	TL	Damage	Heft	Mass (kg)	Cost (Cr.)
Bastard Sword (Blades, heavy)	1	3d6+4	1	2	450
Battleaxe (Axes, heavy)	1	3d6+3	3	3	225
Club (Blunt weapons, light)	0	2d6	0	1	-
Dagger (Blades, light)	0	1d6+2	-	-	25
Flail (Blunt weapons, light)	1	2d6+1	1	2	200
Foil (Blades, light)	1	1d6+4	-2	0.5	300
Great Hammer (Blunt weapons, heavy)	1	4d6	3	5	250
Halberd (Spears, heavy)	1	3d6	2	3	90
Hand Axe (Axes, light)	0	1d6+4	0	-	50
Lance (Spears, heavy)	1	5d6	0	4	200
Long Sword (Blades, long)	1	3d6	-	1.5	150
Mace (Blunt weapons, light)	0	2d6+3	0	1	125
Pick (Axes, light)	1	3d6+3	1	1	150
Pike (Spears, long)	0	3d6	1	5	80
Scimitar (Blades, long)	1	2d6+4	0	1	175
Scythe (Axes, heavy)	1	2d6	2	1	50
Sickle (Axes, light)	1	1d6	1	-	35
Short Sword (Blades, light)	1	2d6	-	0.5	125
Spear (Spears, light)	0	2d6	1	2	75
Staff (Blunt weapons, heavy)	0	2d6	1	2	-
Two-handed Pick (Axes, heavy)	1	4d6	3	4	500
Two-handed Scimitar (Blades, heavy)	1	4d6+1	3	3	800
Two-handed Sword (Blades, heavy)	1	4d6	2	3	600
War Hammer (Blunt weapons, light)	1	2d6+2	0	1	150

### Ranged Weapons Table, Generic

Weapon	TL	Damage	Recoil	Cost (Cr.)	Ammo Cost
Club (Thrown weapons, light)	0	2d6	-	-	-
Crossbow (Crossbows)	1	2d6+2	2	250	1
Dagger (Thrown weapons, light)	0	1d6+2	-	25	-
Dart (Thrown weapons, light)	0	1d6-1	-	15	-
Hand Axe (Thrown weapons, light)	0	1d6+4	-	50	-
Hand Crossbow (Crossbows)	1	1d6-3	-1	500	5
Harpoon (Thrown weapons, light)	0	3d6	0	100	-
Horsebow (Archery)	1	3d6-2	1	350	2
Javelin (Thrown weapons, heavy)	0	2d6+1	0	25	-
Long Bow (Archery)	0	3d6+3	1	300	2
Rock (Thrown weapons, light)	0	1d6-2	0	-	-
Short Bow (Archery)	0	2d6+1	1	125	2
Sling (Thrown weapons, light)	0	1d6	0	20	0
Spear (Thrown weapons, heavy)	0	3d6	0	75	-
Throwing Star (Thrown weapons, light)	1	1d6-1	-	10	-
War Hammer (Thrown weapons, light)	1	2d6+2	1	150	-

## SELECTED WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS:

**Note:** Like armor, the weapons listed below are use terminology coming from Earth's medieval culture rather than the name of native equivalents found on Netherell. This is deliberate, and these weapons should be thought of more as the *equivalent* styles than as direct copies from Earth's history.

**Bastard Sword:** This weapon stands at the midpoint between the long sword and the two-handed sword in size, weight, and hilt length. Though intended for use with both hands, wielders can also use it with just one at the cost of reducing the damage dealt by one third, rounded down (for instance, from 9 to 6, or from 8 to 5). Doing this allows the use of a shield.

**Crossbow:** Crossbows fire bolts or quarrels. Loading takes two minor actions.

**Dagger:** This short, double-edged blade tapers to a sharp point making it useful for both cutting and penetrating an opponent. Anyone armed with a dagger while grappling can deal 4+ effect damage to their opponent.

**Foil:** This sword's thin and narrow blade has a sharp point but no edge at all. Its wielder gains an effective +1 DM when using it to parry or disarm an opponent.

**Great Hammer:** Sometimes called a maul, this two-handed hammer delivers massive force when used in combat. Great hammers do one quarter more damage (e.g. 10 instead of 8) when used against objects instead of creatures.

**Hand Crossbow:** Hand crossbows fire bolts or quarrels. Loading take two minor actions.

**Harpoon:** This barbed javelin has a line attached to its shaft allowing its wielder to pull or even drag opponents it strikes. The wielder of a harpoon can initiate an opposed Strength check with anyone he hits with it. If he succeeds, he knocks the opponent prone and pulls him one meter for every two of the effect of the check.

**Horsebow:** This compound bow is made from glued together pieces of bone, horn or wood rather than consisting of a single shaft. Its double curve gives the horsebow the power of a long bow, but with a much smaller size. As the name implies, archers can fire a horsebow while mounted and moving. Horsebows fire arrows. Loading take a minor action.

**Lance:** Lances deal the same damage as a pike if used while not mounted.

**Long Bow:** Long bows fire arrows. Loading takes a minor action.

**Pick:** This weapon consists of a curved spike mounted horizontally on a wooden shaft. Its design allows it to penetrate deeply into opponents or materials. Picks deal one-half extra damage (e.g. 15 instead of 10) when used against objects instead of creatures. Whenever a pick successfully strikes a target, it gets stuck and its wielder must use a minor action to wrench it free.

**Pike:** Pikes deal one-half extra damage (e.g. 15 instead of 10) when used against mounted opponents.

**Short Bow:** Archers can fire a short bow while mounted but not while moving. Short bows fire arrows. Loading takes a minor action.

**Sling:** Slings fire bullets or stone. Loading take two minor actions.

**Staff:** This shaft of unadorned wood measures between two and three meters in length. Characters who take a -1 DM on their attack rolls can use a minor attack action with a staff. This means characters that accept the penalty, and take no other actions, can make two attacks with a staff in the same round. Tally ho!

**Throwing Star:** This weapon is a thin piece of edged metal that spins when thrown, allowing it to sink deep into an opponent. It takes a minor action to draw and throw a throwing star. This means that characters who take no other actions can make two attacks with throwing stars in the same round. Most common in Setheeral and Cadistreen, but seen throughout God's bay.

**Two-handed Pick:** This massive weapon consists of a curved spike mounted horizontally on a long wooden shaft. Its design allows it to penetrate deeply into opponents or materials. Two-handed picks deal one-half extra damage (e.g. 15 instead of 10) when used against objects instead of creatures. Whenever a two-handed pick successfully strikes a target, it gets stuck and its wielder must use a minor action to wrench it free.

**Two-handed Scimitar:** The curve of this massive single edged blade makes it a particularly deadly cutting implement. Popular with the Iron Ifrit of Muhhijien, who use it one-handed, the sword bursts into flame, dealing extra fire damage.

## Equipment on Netherell

### Melee Weapons Range Chart, Generic

Weapon	Personal	Close	Short	Medium	Long	V. Long
Bastard Sword	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Battleaxe	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Club	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA
Dagger	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA
Flail	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Foil	+0	-1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Great Hammer	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Halberd	-3	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Hand Axe	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA
Lance	-3	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Long Sword	-1	+1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mace	+0	-1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pick	+0	-1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Pike	-3	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Scimitar	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Scythe	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sickle	+0	-1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Short Sword	+0	-1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Spear	-1	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA
Staff	+0	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Two-handed Pick	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Two-handed Scimitar	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Two-handed Sword	-1	+0	NA	NA	NA	NA
War Hammer	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA

### Ranged Weapons Range Chart, Generic

Weapon	Personal	Close	Short	Medium	Long	V. Long
Club	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA
Crossbow	NA	-2	+0	-1	-2	-4
Dagger	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA
Dart	NA	-1	+0	-1	NA	NA
Hand Axe	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA
Hand Crossbow	-1	+0	-2	NA	NA	NA
Harpoon	NA	-1	+0	-2	-4	NA
Horsebow	NA	-1	-1	+0	-2	-4
Javelin	NA	-2	-1	+0	-1	-4
Long Bow	NA	-1	-1	+0	-1	-2
Rock	NA	-1	+0	-2	NA	NA
Short Bow	NA	-1	-1	+0	-2	-4
Sling	NA	-1	+0	-1	-4	NA
Spear	-1	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA
Throwing Star	NA	+0	-1	-4	NA	NA
War Hammer	+0	-1	-2	-4	NA	NA





## WEAPON RANGES

The Weapon Range Tables (see page right) detail the optimum range for each weapon as well as the penalties experienced at other ranges, including noting where they are out of range. As already mentioned, a few weapons have the capacity to cross over and pose a threat for both melee and ranged attacks.

For the sake of simplicity, the entries for these crossovers are identical whether presented as melee or ranged weapons. However, characters must still take *Thrown Weapons* skill if they wish to get the most from using a crossover weapon to make a ranged attack.

**When dealing with ranged weapons in the Personal space column, "NA" indicates "Out of range" in most cases or "Not possible."** If the character has the skill *Throwing Weapons (Unstable)*, then they have the opportunity to make an attempt to heave a weapon (or other unweildy object) at someone, Maximum is Short range ( $\frac{1}{2}$ Str in meters), the modifier is either a -2 DM or -1 to the "Close" DM, whichever is worse. *Examples: a thrown long sword (Close, +1) would be a -2 DM. A thrown mace would be -3 DM (-2-1).*

## GOODS & SERVICES

There are a wide variety of so-called "common goods and services" that are available in the setting.

Note that the listed prices will vary considerably from one kingdom to another. Finding a dwelling in Dravelnar is a squatter's paradise (if you don't mind the neighbors), while meals in the desert of Muhhijien tend to cost a good deal more than the listed amounts.

### Common Goods/Services

Item	Cost (Cr)
Clothing (acceptable)	5-10
Clothing (Durable)	35-75
Clothing (Expensive)	25-50
Clothing (fine)	10-25
Clothing (poor)	3
Dwelling, Basic	500
Dwelling, Large	2000-8000
Dwelling, Manor	25,000+
Dwelling, Sound	1000
Meal, Basic	2
Meal, Excellent	12
Meal, Fine	8
Meal, Good	5
Passage Boat (to/from shore)	5-10
Passage, coach (day)	15-50
Passage, Ship (week)	80-160
Rooming, Basic (night)	2-5
Rooming, Excellent (night)	50-100
Rooming, Fine (night)	25-50
Rooming, Standard (night)	5-10
Services, 1 cart's Cartage (per 10 km)	3-5
Services, Expert (day)	75-100
Services, Personal (encounter)	5+
Services, Servant (day)	25-60
Services, Workman (day)	35
Tools, Fine	75-150
Tools, Heavy Work	100-200
Tools, Workman's	35-50

## Equipment on Netherell

### Adventuring Gear, Generic

Item	Cost (Cr)	Mass (kg)	TL
Backpack	35	3	1
Blanket	15cr	1.5	0
Block and Tackle	100cr	2.5	1
Bottle, Glass (.5 litres)	25	0.5	1
Caltrops	15	1	1
Candle	2	-	1
Canvas (sq. meter)	5	.5	0
Chalk (5 pieces)	1	-	0
Chest	50	12.5	1
First Aid Kit	150	3	1
Fishhook	5	-	0
Flask, Metal (.5 litres)	3	.5	1
Grappling Hook	50	2	1
Hammer and Spikes	100	5	1
Hourglass	500	.5	1
Ink	150	0.5	1
Iron Pot	40	4	1
Lamp, Common	5	0.5	1
Lantern	75	2	1
Lantern, Bullseye	250	2	1
Lantern, Hooded	150	2	1
Lock, Good	1200	1	1
Lock, Masterpiece	2500	1	1
Lock, Simple	400	1	1
Lock, Workman-like	800	1	1
Lock Picks, "standard"	300	-	1
Lock Pick, Masterpiece	1000	-	1
Mirror	175	1	1
Mug, Clay	1	1	0
Oil (flask)	25	1	1
Paper (10 pages)	50	-	1
Pitcher, Clay	2	3	0
Pole (3 meter)	2	4	0
Pry Bar	90	5	1
Rope (15 meters)	30	7	0
Sacks (5)	25	1	0
Sewing Needle	5	-	1
Sleep Roll	10	3	0
Spark Kit	75	1	1
Tent	150	10	0
Torch	3	0.5	0
Waterskin	5	1	0

## ADVENTURING GEAR

**Block and Tackle (TL 1):** A series of pulleys and rope that can allow just one individual to lift massive amounts of weight.

**Chest (TL 1):** A hinged and secure means of storage made from wood or thin metal (in places such as Perraine). It does not come with a lock.

**First Aid Kit (TL 1):** This collection of bandages, needles, threads, and other medical supplies grants its owner a +1 DM on Medic checks made for the purpose of first aid.

**Grappling Hook (TL 1):** This multi-pronged claw has an eyelet on its bottom through which characters can thread a rope. Characters can use a grappling hook to fix a rope to an obstacle, allowing them to climb the rope. For obstacles with many protrusions, such as a tree, characters must make either a routine (+2 DM) Athletics (Coordination) check or Thrown Weapons check. When trying to snag an obstacle with relatively few protrusions such as the top of a wall characters must make a very difficult (-4 DM) check instead.

**Hammer and Spikes (TL 1):** Spikes are strong metal nails with eyelets, through which characters can thread a rope. The hammer allows characters to pound the spikes into walls or other surfaces. Characters gain a +1 DM on any checks related to climbing if attached to a spike.

**Lock Picks (TL 1):** This collection of oddly shaped wires and similar tools allows characters to manipulate the inner workings of locks and other complex objects. A character *without* a set of lock picks suffers a -2 DM on most *Locks and Traps* checks, Masterpiece Lock Picks provide a +2 DM.

**Pry Bar (TL 1):** This metal rod measures about one meter in length. Characters using a pry bar gain a +2 DM on Strength checks made to move objects.

**Rope (15 meters) (TL 0):** This sturdy line, made from strands of hemp woven into a single cable, eliminates much of the challenge to scaling surfaces. Climbing a rope is an easy (+4 DM) task.

**Spark Kit (TL 1):** This small box or pouch comes with flint, steel, and wood shavings which characters can use to start a fire in 1d6 minutes by making an easy (+4 DM) Survival check. Characters without a spark kit must make a Difficult (-2 DM) Survival check instead.

**Tent (TL 0):** Though more advanced versions exist, tents are nothing more than a layer of cloth or hide thrown over a framework to create a shelter from the elements.

## Coinage

The prices for goods listed in the book all use credits (Cr.) but this is solely for the purposes of keeping track on a game level. The actual purses of player characters will be flush with coinage from a half-dozen Kingdoms, Princeships and Federated Republics in a bewildering array of sizes, purity and official stamping. These include, but are not limited to: Dravelnarian Silver Marks, Cadistreen Copper *Icentos*, old (Bainharran) Imperial Golden Standards, Muhhijien Electrum Disks and the omnipresent Thassalat Ochnars (which can be physically broken into one of eight different "pie pieces" to produce "change" in smaller denominations).

Stamping is the best method of ensuring certain weights, but the purity of the metal is determined using a very common magical device, one owned in almost every one of the shops in a bazaar. This device, known as a *Coin-Bell* (costing 100-1,000 Cr depending on quality) is a row of cup-shaped bells made (at least in part) of different metals, gold, silver, copper etc. Sometimes, in wealthier shops, the entire bell is so fashioned, at the simplest a mere sliver of the metal is incorporated. A coin touched to that part of the bell made from this metal causes the bell to ring if it is pure (the quality of the bell determines minimum purity allowed, from 85% for 100 Cr coin bell to 95% for a 1000 Cr coin bell). The merchants of Netherell will often say that a coin "rings true" if it passes this test or "rings false" if it doesn't.

## MOUNTS AND VEHICLES

Mounts and Vehicles on Netherell consist of a mixture of the conventional (i.e. analogues of our own history) and the fantastic.

**Canoe (TL 0):** Several primitive cultures use this small waterborne vessel. Although normally seating two people, slightly smaller and larger canoes and other rowboats exist, and any such deviation in size modifies both their weight and price.

**Cart (TL 0):** This simple horse, yak, or mule-drawn vehicle can seat up to four people comfortably.

**Nurgril (TL 0):** The famed riding birds of the Nakara Desert are actually found far and wide around God's Bay and a good part of Netherell. The price listed includes a bridle and special saddle. **Note:** any Nurgril purchased is "tame" enough for riding but has not been trained for use in war. (See page 140)

**Riding Horse (TL 0):** Used throughout the God Bay, the common riding horse is a swift and reliable means of transport. The price for a riding horse includes a bridle and saddle.

**Sailing Ship (TL 1):** The vessel most commonly used in the God Bay area. Multiple designs are possible, altering the final price.

**Wagon (TL 1):** This large covered vehicle is draw by two or more animals and can comfortably seat up to six people.

**War Horse (TL 0):** This somewhat sturdier horse can be ridden in battle and will not shy away from danger. Many are even capable of learning tricks, although training them to fight independently of their rider is something not purchased here. The price for a war horse includes a bridle and saddle.



### Mounts & Vehicles, Generic

Item	Cost (Cr)	Mass (kg)	TL
Canoe	175	45	0
Cart	300	100	0
Nurgril	1200	425	0
Riding horse	900	450	0
Sailing Ship	10,000+	N/A	1
Wagon	750	300	1
War Horse	1,500	750	0



# CHAPTER 4: MAGIC

On Netherell, magic allows some of its inhabitants to do extraordinary things, but at great cost. Galactic characters tend to regard it as a more powerful and exotic form of psionics. However, merely labeling it with the name of something they already understand does little to explain its mysteries. Unlike psionics, magic requires specific materials to invoke particular sorts of abilities and all those seeking to use the power must employ physical objects to summon and control it. Magic also exerts intense strain on those attempting to master it and actually causes a physical transformation for some who fail to keep it in check. Most baffling of all, those with magical abilities can actually create objects that anyone, even people without a hint of magical power, can use. These puzzles drive galactic scientists to distraction, but anyone born and bred on Netherell simply regard them as a normal part of how magic works.

Characters have access to three different types of magic; house magic, knacks, and magical items. All three have a strong connection to physical objects since, unlike psionics, magic exists at the nexus of mind and body. Both house magic and knacks require that a practitioner use some sort of tool to shape and control the magic. The exact form of this tool varies depending on the temperament of the person using it, though most ultimately settle on a wand or staff. Owners must have an object that they can use to point at locations, and wave through the air to sketch out patterns or shapes as the magic coalesces around them.

**House magic** defines the two magical careers most characters can enter in the God's Bay area, the Magician and the Vessel. Anyone entering a magical career via this method, an adept, chooses six of the available magical houses, and gains immediate access to any power granted by one of their houses. Characters use the powers of their house in the same way they would a skill and have automatic training in each of their six houses. For instance, a character with the house of life begins play with *House of Life 0*.

Just like any other skill, a character can train in a particular house in order to get better at invoking its powers. Each house of magic has a special

material associated with it called a seed. When calling forth a power from a house characters must expend its particular seed in order to get full effect. While many seeds derive from plants, as their name suggests, some are obtained via mining or harvesting the body parts of certain animals. The availability of different seeds varies.

**Knacks** are similar to houses, but characters can only ever have one knack. Each knack has a particular theme and grants powers that support that theme. As with a house, characters begin with their knack at 0 but can train to improve it like any other skill. Some knacks arise through seeming random chance or happenstance. Others knacks are closer to birthrights associated with particular races or nationalities. Characters must use a tool to direct their knack, just as adepts do to control the magic of their houses. However, unlike houses, knacks do not have seeds associated with them.

Only people with the ability to work magic create magical items, but some of these items are usable by anyone, even those without magical talent. Some work automatically, others require that a character invoke and control the power by use of the *Channel* skill. The other two magical skills, *Alchemy* and *Ceremony*, also relate to magical items. *Alchemy* concerns itself with brewing potions or similar concoctions. *Ceremony* concerns itself with performing magical rituals outlined in specially created books, scrolls, tomes, or other written works. For more information on magic items, see **Chapter Five: Magic Items**.

Magic makes great mental and physical demands on a practitioner. Those who fail to measure up become consumed by it and undergo a terrible transformation. The savage ogres who menace so many parts of Netherell all trace their origins back to humans who could not control the magic. Though the overwhelming majority of ogres were born as such and did not begin their lives as humans, each year a handful of magicians lose control of the power and spontaneously change into these hulking brutes.

Even those who manage to avoid transforming into ogres often show signs of their struggle to resist the

magic. They sometimes develop bestial features or experience other changes. Perhaps just as puzzling, in the distant land of Skerathos, these transformations happen far more frequently. In Skerathos, virtually every human with magical talent eventually changes into an ogre. For this reason, the folk of Skerathos loathe magic in all of its forms.

**Not everyone with the ability to work magic can invoke the full range of powers available to an adept.** Whether as a curious side effect or somehow related to the larger mystery, many of the ogres of Skerathos, called the Fhiomori, have their own vestige of magical talent. While this knack, the Fhiomori knack, sometimes arises in ogres hailing from other parts of the world it is far more common in Skerathos; another reason for its inhabitants to dedicate themselves to rooting out magic in all forms.

## KNACKS AND HOUSES

All *adepts* (derived in this book) automatically gain access to **six** different houses of magic. Each house has a particular theme and collection of powers that match this theme. Two of those, unless the player consciously chooses otherwise, are always the *House of Battle* and the *House of Shields*. These two houses, one for offense and the other defense, represent the so-called “universal houses” since all but a handful of adepts across Netherell have access to them. Players should choose the other four houses from the available options. Characters can never gain access to more than six houses. Even if a character leaves one magical career and then enters another, he retains access to his original six houses.

Not everyone with the ability to work magic can invoke the full range of powers available to an adept. In fact, the majority of magic workers on Netherell draw upon a far more limited range of abilities called *knacks*. Each knack, just like a house, has a theme and a collection of powers that expand on that theme. **Characters can only have one knack.** Some organizations exist to support particular knacks. For instance, the Far Talker Guild, a group whose members can communicate with each other over vast distances, recruits anyone with the Far Talker knack.

Characters with a knack can enter a magical career just like anyone else. Characters who do this gain access to six houses of magic as normal. They also retain full use of their knack.

## ENTERING A MAGICAL CAREER

Netherell offers characters two different magical careers, Magician and Vessel. Magicians gain magic through their own resources, whether by rigorous study, amazing bursts of intuition, or unshakable devotion to a particular cause or ideal. Vessels gain magic almost by happenstance, a consequence of losing control of their bodies to incorporeal entities. While not exactly common on Netherell, this body snatching does occur often enough to make it a fact of daily existence and, particularly if it lasts for a long time, alters victims in fundamental ways that allow them to continue to work magic once they regain control.

Characters can enter a magical career by three different methods.

**(1) Advance from the Apprentice career:** The slow and steady approach, as it so often does, proves by far the safest. The Apprentice career exists to prepare characters for the strains and rigors of wielding magic on a day-to-day basis. Characters who advance far enough automatically gain a rank in one of the specialties of the Magician career; Acolyte becomes Zealot, Hedge Wizard becomes Witch, and Student becomes Magus.

**(2) Rely on random chance:** A number of non-magical careers present characters with pathways towards a magical one. Many of these opportunities, particularly those tied to mishaps, impose a drawback even as they give characters the chance to develop their magical abilities. This usually involves entering the Vessel career.

**(3) Try to qualify directly:** Characters have the option of attempting to qualify for a magical career. However, they require a much higher qualification roll than most other careers. They also impose a special penalty for those who fail to qualify. **Whenever a character fails a qualification roll for a magical career, he automatically suffers a magical mishap.** In addition, each time he fails a qualification roll for a particular magical career he suffers a cumulative -1 DM on all subsequent qualification rolls for that career. This rule replaces and supersedes the rules covering qualification for non-magical careers. A character can keep trying to qualify for a magical career repeatedly without any risk of entering the Scum career on a failed roll. However, if a character fails a qualification roll for a magical

## Psionic Strength, Twilight Sector v. Netherell

In the Twilight Sector, Psi or the Psionic Strength characteristic is a matter of mental training, and with the right attitude, anyone can be taught to become psionic. This is largely a matter of mindset and discipline which clouds the fact that “anyone” can do it. Some individuals simply do not have the mindset or discipline to complete the study required, but there is no genetic factor that *bars* them from attaining this ability. Indeed, it might well be that some individuals are better able to open their minds and learn those skills, so a genetic factor is indeed still present, but only inasmuch as it *enables* easier understanding (reflected by better dice rolls to qualify for a Psionic career).

On Netherell, a number of factors make this approach less than appropriate for the sub-setting. **First**, according to the “Deep History”, the original inhabitants of Netherell were selected for their higher psionic potential. The interbreeding of these individuals has concentrated the capability for psionics well beyond that in the larger Known Galaxy. **Second**, the precursors performed many experiments which heightened the natural abilities of the Netherell population, from the psionic enhancers in Tarlathame to the individual experiments made on certain bloodlines that gave rise to the first of the Living Gods. Because of these factors, it is appropriate on Netherell to determine Psionic Strength in the same way as any other characteristic.

career and then tries to enter a non-magical career the normal rules apply. The character takes a -2 DM on his qualification roll and, if he fails, automatically enters the Scum career.

### Gaining a Knack

Netherell abounds with knacks allowing its inhabitants to do amazing things. No one knows exactly how many different knacks there are. Many arise just once in a single individual. A handful of knacks appear far more often and consistently than the rest. These “stable knacks” are part of Netherell society. People with these knacks usually have little difficulty finding ways to put them to use since Netherell expects, even requires, the exercise of these particular magical talents.

Characters can gain a knack through one of two ways.

#### (1) Choose a background that includes a knack:

Characters coming from certain backgrounds automatically gain a specific knack relating to that background. For instance, anyone born in Tarlathame has the *Tarlathame* knack just as a Fhiomori ogre has the *Fhiomori* knack.

**(2) Random chance:** Most people on Netherell develop knacks by happenstance as they go about their everyday lives. Some knacks arise as part of a mishap, and often have drawbacks associated with them, while others come about due to particular events. If characters gain a specific knack, such as the *Healing* or *Far Talker* knack, they must take it. Otherwise, characters can choose, or the Referee can assign, any knack not associated with a specific background. For instance, only characters from Tarlathame can gain the *Tarlathame* knack, so those hailing from a different land cannot gain it even if they get the opportunity to choose their knack.

### Using Magic

Any character with the ability to work magic gains a seventh characteristic, called Psionic Strength (Psi), just like galactic characters. However, Netherell characters can do far more with their magic than galactic characters can with their psionics.

Netherell characters do not suffer a reduction in their Psi based on the number of careers they went through before developing it. Even if characters suffer non-magical mishaps, including those requiring them to leave a magical career, they still improve their Psi by 1.

Using magic does not temporarily reduce their Psi characteristic as it does with galactics. Instead, Netherell characters have access to a pool of magic that they use to activate and control their powers. This pool of magic is equal to their Psi characteristic plus the DM for their Intelligence and Endurance.

For instance, a character with a Psi of 10 and an End of 9 (+1 DM) and an Int of 12 (+2 DM) would have 13 magic points. Characters with a negative DM in either of these characteristics reduce their magic pool by the same amount.

**Netherell characters using magic suffer from one great drawback compared to galactics using psionics; they need objects to make it work properly.**

## Magical Tools

The use of specialized tools is an integral part of magic on Netherell. These are found in a bewildering array of different forms, ranging from wands and staves to delicately carved bones and the leather wrapped hilts of elaborate blades. But a few distinguishing rules do emerge:

### Rule # 1: It must have once been alive

Only those materials which were once a part of living creatures (wood, leather, bone) can be made into magical tools. The reason for this has to do with the evolution of psionic capabilities on Netherell. In the simple societies which developed these abilities from the outset, natural once-living materials were the easiest to work with. The entire framework of Netherell's "magic" stems from the use of natural materials with a few exceptions. One of these close to God's Bay is Perrain. The Makers of Perrain, influenced has they have been by a Precursor artifact, have developed their own theoretical framework for channeling psionic energy, one that makes little sense to others (and has enabled them to maintain their secret from the prying eyes of outsiders).

### Rule # 2: It must be large enough for glyphs

Most of the magical tools used in the God's Bay area (again except the Makers of Perrain) bear special glyphs worked into their design, glyphs often handed down in a variety of different forms (oral traditions, artistic traditions, carved runes in sacred stones). The truth behind these symbols is little understood by the adepts of Netherell as well as the APR researchers trying to uncover the secrets of their "magic". They are complex mathematical formulae, first utilized by the same civilization that spawned the Living God (and is found now in the site of the Nakara Desert). Learning Netherell's "magic" is in no small part an exercise of learning the complex mathematics of this ancient culture. Making the task more difficult for the APR researchers, these formulae are incomplete, and must be completed by the As as a result of Rule #2, there is a certain minimum size for magical tools: rings are not possible (possibly ogre sized rings, but with their bad eyesight, Fhiomori cannot read them), but bracelets and wands generally are large enough.

Just as with galactic psionics, Netherell characters cannot use magic if their magic pool is at 0. Also like galactics, if they use a power that reduces their magic pool to less than 0 they suffer any excess cost as damage to their Endurance.

Netherell characters replenish their magic pool at the rate of 1 point/hour or the DM for their Psi characteristic each hour, whichever is higher. They cannot regain expended magic points during any hour in which they actually used magic.

Netherell characters using magic suffer from one great drawback compared to galactics using

## Netherell

**characters must use some sort of tool to call forth and shape the magic.**

psionics; they need objects to make it work properly. Netherell characters must use some sort of tool to call forth and shape the magic. This applies to those in magical careers

as well as those with knacks. Most with magical abilities select wands or staves as the tool they use to control their magic but these are not the only options. Magical characters begin play with their tool already determined. They can switch to a new tool by concentrating without interruption for one minute if they have both their old and new tool in hand, or 1d6 hours if they have only their new tool in hand.

In addition, magic tied to a house, as opposed to a knack, requires a second object to activate it properly called a seed. Seeds are small easily replenished objects. They derive their names from the fact that many are actual seeds or some other part of a plant. Using a seed always destroys it - bursting into flames, collapsing into dust, etc - so anyone with a magical career must take care to keep a decent supply of seeds on hand.

A character without his tool cannot use any of the powers associated with a knack. Characters with either their tool or the seed for a particular house of magic, but not both, can still trigger any of the powers of that house. However, characters suffer a -4 DM on their roll.

## Magical Career Summary Table

Career	Specialization	Qualification	Survival	Advancement
Magician		Edu 10+		
	Magus		Edu 5+	Int 7+
	Witch		Int 7+	Edu 5+
	Zealot		Int 6+	Soc 6+
Vessel		End 10+		
	Carrier		Dex 5+	Edu 7+
	Host		Edu 6+	Dex 6+
	Mount		Str 7+	End 5+





# MAGICAL CAREERS

# MAGICIAN

People trained in the use of magic.

**Qualification** Edu 10+, -1 DM for every unsuccessful attempt to qualify for this career.

## Assignments

**Magus:** Your approach to magic emphasizes rigorous application of established principles.

**Witch:** Your approach to magic relies greatly on intuition and improvisation.

**Zealot:** Your approach to magic is based on your own, very personal, relationship with a higher power or cause.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Magus	Edu 6+	Int 6+
Witch	Int 6+	Edu 6+
Zealot	Int 5+	Soc 7+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	10,000	+1 Psi
2	25,000	+1 Edu
3	50,000	Potions 1.00
4	75,000	Weapon 1.00
5	100,000	Tomes 1.25
6	200,000	Trappings 1.25
7	300,000	Magic 1.50

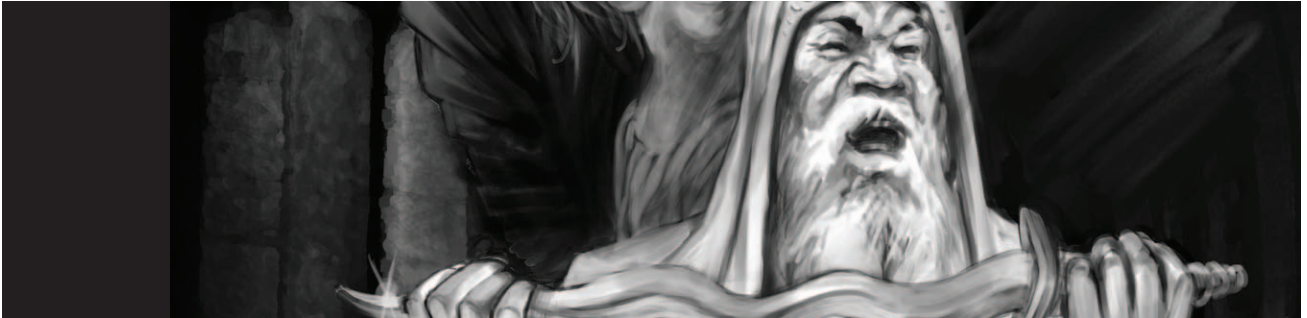
## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 10)
1	+1 Edu	Ride	Art (any)
2	Language	Investigate	Language
3	Archery	Knowledge (traditions)	Carouse
4	Personal Combat	Alchemy	Broker
5	+1 Psi	Channel	Investigate
6	+1 Psi	Ceremony	Design

Roll	Specialist: Magus	Specialist: Witch	Specialist: Zealot
1	Language	Survival	Leadership
2	Carouse	Deception	Persuade
3	Medic	Recon	Empathy
4	Ciphers	Ride	Religion
5	Knowledge (practical)	Knowledge (nature)	Knowledge (traditions)
6	Channel	Alchemy	Ceremony

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Magus	Skill or Benefit	Witch	Skill or Benefit	Zealot	Skill or Benefit
0	Magus	+1 Psi	Witch	+1 Psi	Zealot	+1 Psi
1	Sorcerer	+1 House skill	Probationary	+1 House skill	Visionary	+1 House skill
2	Conjurer	+1 Psi	Incantier	+1 Psi	Standard	+1 Psi
3	Wizard	+1 House skill	Coven Member	+1 House skill	Ideal	+1 House skill
4	Mage	+1 House skill	Coven Speaker	+1 House skill	Exemplar	+1 House skill
5	Great Mage	+1 Psi	Coven Deputy	+1 Psi	Paragon	+1 Psi
6	Arch Mage	+1 House skill	Coven Head	+1 House skill	Avatar	+1 House skill



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You lose control of the power. Roll on the magical mishaps table.
- 2 You suffer an injury.
- 3 A lab explosion leaves you hurt and forced to make restitution but with a better understanding of how magic items work. Reduce your Dexterity by 1 and lose a benefit roll but increase *Channel* by one level.
- 4 Your obsession with mastering magic leaves you more powerful but twisted in mind and body. Reduce your Strength and Intelligence by 1 but increase your Psionic Strength by 1.
- 5 The magic drives you temporarily mad causing you to unleash horrific devastation before regaining control. Gain an enemy and either lose all benefit rolls for this career or enter the Scum career.
- 6 A surge of magic leaves you with monstrous features and a croaking voice but you manage to remain human (mostly). Reduce your Social Standing by 2 and gain the "deformity" negative mutation (factored into the -2 Soc) but you don't have to leave this career and gain *Channel* and +1 PSI

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 You ingest a powerful, but dangerous, compound intended to stimulate magical ability. Roll Psionic Strength 8+. If you fail, you suffer a magical mishap. If you succeed, increase your training in any one of your houses by one level. You can continue to make these checks, up to **three**, with the same result each time, until you fail and suffer a magical mishap.
- 4 Your quest to master the magic causes you to wager control over your very body by trying to make a ghostlike creature tutor you. Roll *Ceremony* 8+. If you succeed, increase your training in any one of your houses by one level. If you fail, reduce your Intelligence by 1 and enter the Vessel career.
- 5 You have to step on some toes in order to get the training you crave. Gain a rival and increase any skill you already know by one level. You can increase a second skill by one level if you gain an enemy instead of a rival.
- 6 A mysterious illness deprives you of your magic for an extended period forcing you to find other ways to defend yourself. Gain one level in either *Armor* or *Personal Combat*.
- 7 Life event.
- 8 You find a way to make some extra money through the exercise of your magic. You gain a +1 DM on any benefit roll made for cash.
- 9 You make a financial sacrifice in order to hone your knowledge of the fundamentals of magic. Lose a benefit roll and improve either *Alchemy*, *Ceremony*, or *Channel* by one level. If you choose to lose a second benefit roll, you can also increase your training in any one of your houses by one level.
- 10 A client rewards you handsomely for creating a custom magic item. Gain an ally and a benefit roll.
- 11 You have a chance to take full credit for an innovative experiment or to do the right thing and share it with your partner. If you take full credit, gain an enemy and a +4 bonus on your next advancement roll. If you share credit, gain a contact and a +2 bonus on your next advancement roll.
- 12 You master an especially challenging bit of magic. You are automatically promoted or gain +1 *House* skill.

# VESSEL

People who lost, or surrendered, control of their bodies to a supernatural entity and discovered their magical talent once freed.

**Qualification** End 10+, -1 DM for every unsuccessful attempt to qualify for this career.

**Assignments:**

**Carrier:** Your entity needed your body and then discarded you when you were no longer useful.

**Host:** More a partner than a victim you and the entity separated on good terms. It might even have died or suffered some other misfortune for which you still grieve.

**Mount:** Your entity took complete control and delighted at your helpless torment as it ransacked your life and forced you to do unspeakable things.

## Career Progress

Specialty	Survival	Advancement
Magus	Edu 6+	Int 6+
Witch	Int 6+	Edu 6+
Zealot	Int 5+	Soc 7+

## Mustering-Out Benefits

Roll	Cash	Other Benefits
1	10,000	+1 Psi
2	25,000	+1 Edu
3	50,000	Potions 1.00
4	75,000	Weapon 1.00
5	100,000	Tomes 1.25
6	200,000	Trappings 1.25
7	300,000	Magic 1.50

## Skills and Training

Roll	Personal Skills	Service Skills	Advanced Education (Min Edu 10)
1	+1 End	Ceremony	Armor
2	Survival	Recon	Ciphers
3	Animals	Navigation	Personal Combat
4	Streetwise	Empathy	Deception
5	+1 Psi	Track	Knowledge (traditions)
6	+1 Psi	Channel	Alchemy

Roll	Specialist: Carrier	Specialist: Host	Specialist: Mount
1	Investigate	Gambler	Deception
2	Athletics	Investigate	Stealth
3	Broker	Athletics	Locks and Traps
4	Armor	Diplomat	Recon
5	Knowledge (traditions)	Steward	Athletics
6	Ceremony	Channel	Alchemy

## Ranks and Benefits,

Rank	Carrier	Skill or Benefit	Host	Skill or Benefit	Mount	Skill or Benefit
0	Abandoned	+1 Psi	Empty	+1 Psi	Escapee	+1 Psi
1	Discarded	+1 House skill	Hollow	+1 House skill	In Hiding	+1 House skill
2	Cast Aside	+1 Psi	Vacant	+1 Psi	Survivor	+1 Psi
3	Forlorn	+1 House skill	Lonely	+1 House skill	Liberated	+1 House skill
4	Forsaken	+1 House skill	Isolated	+1 House skill	Emancipated	+1 House skill
5	Independent	+1 Psi	Separate	+1 Psi	Free	+1 Psi
6	Singleton	+1 House skill	Solo	+1 House skill	Autonomous	+1 House skill



## Mishaps

### 1d6 Mishap

- 1 You lose control of the power. Roll on the magical mishaps table.
- 2 You suffer an injury.
- 3 You receive blame for something that happened while you had no control over your body. Gain an enemy and lose a benefit roll. Then either suffer an injury or enter the Scum career.
- 4 The magic grows stronger even as it ravages your body. Reduce your Strength, Dexterity, and Social Standing by 1 but also increase your training in *three* different houses by one each.
- 5 The fear of losing control over your body yet again makes you taciturn and cautious. Reduce your Social Standing by 2 but increase both *Empathy* and *Recon* by one level.
- 6 Another being tries to steal your body and you sacrifice your own health to fight it off. Reduce your Endurance and either Strength or Dexterity by 1, plus gain a negative mutation of your choice (*Twilight Sector Revised*, pg53). You don't have to leave this career and improve in *Channel* and add +1 to PSI.

## Events

### 2d6 Event

- 2 Catastrophe! Roll on the mishaps table, but you can continue in this career unless the mishap specifically requires that you enter a new career.
- 3 You enter the spirit realm and strip an entity of its magic. Roll Psionic Strength 8+. If you fail, you suffer a magical mishap. If you succeed, increase your training in any one of your houses by one level. You can make up to three of these checks, with the same result each time, until you fail and suffer a magical mishap.
- 4 You dedicate yourself to helping others regain control of their bodies. Roll *Ceremony* 8+. If you succeed, gain an ally and a benefit roll or increase any skill you already know by one. If you fail, gain an enemy.
- 5 A very unlikely chain of events gives you the ability to "feed" on a magic item in order to increase your innate magical power. Lose a benefit roll and then roll *Channel* 8+. If you succeed, increase your training in any one of your houses by one level. If you fail, you get nothing.
- 6 Your entity accumulated many valuables while it had control of your body and you feel entitled to keep them rather than give them back to their rightful owners. Gain up to three enemies and a benefit roll for each enemy you gain.
- 7 Life event.
- 8 The time you spent as a helpless witness trapped within your own body made you a keen observer. Improve *Empathy*, *Investigate*, or *Track* by one level.
- 9 You tap into a network of other former vessels. Gain a contact.
- 10 You find peace through faith. Gain *Religion* 1. If you choose to enter the Ecclesiastic career, you also gain a benefit roll and increase *Ceremony* by one level.
- 11 You find a tutor willing to show you a few tricks in exchange for a sizable "gift." Lose a benefit roll and then gain either a +4 DM on your next advancement roll or a +2 DM and increase your training in any one of your houses by one.
- 12 You gain a critical insight about the nature of magic. You are automatically promoted or gain +1 *House* skill.

# HOUSES

A character entering a magical career becomes an adept and automatically gains access to six houses of magic. Each house has its own theme and collection of powers that support this theme. Characters treat a house as a skill and can use any of its powers by making a check.

Attempting to use a power temporarily reduces a character's magic pool; even if the attempt fails. Most powers have a maximum normal range included in their description. Characters can use a power at its listed cost if its range does not exceed

## Chart: Magical Ranges

Range	Distance to Target
Personal	Less than 1.5 meters
Close	1.5 meters to 3 meters
Short	3 to 12 meters
Medium	12 to 50 meters
Long	51 to 250 meters
Very Long	241 to 500 meters
Distant	500 meters to 5 kilometers
Very Distant	5 kilometers to 500 kilometers
Continental	501 kilometers to 5,000 kilometers
Global	5,000 kilometer to 50,000 kilometers

this maximum. Using a power beyond its normal range increases its cost to activate it by 1 for each extra increment of range. Characters must know the exact location of their target

in order to direct a power against it. GMs should pay particular attention to this rule when dealing with characters who want to increase the range of attack powers to global. Characters hoping to blast someone on the other side of the planet must use magic to determine their target's exact location.

A few powers have special entries of "self" or "touch." Powers with a range of self only work on the character. Powers with a range of touch require that the character successfully make physical contact with a target, whether by hand or with their tool, in order to use the power.

## Seeds and Their Availability

Each house has one particular substance associated with it called its **seed**. Adepts find it very difficult to use the powers of a house if they do not have its seed on their person. So long as they have their tool to focus and control the magic they can still access a power, but suffer a -4 DM on their efforts to control it. Adepts can also use the magic of a house if they have its seed but not their tool, but suffer the same -4 DM. Adepts cannot use magic if they lack both their tool and the seed of a house.

Adepts must present a seed in order to use it properly. This typically requires that they hold it in their hand, cast into the air or do something else to signify that they are focusing their attention on it. Presenting a seed is a free action.

Except in rare situations, seeds are not for sale. Characters typically obtain them by making the occasional skill check as determined by the Referee. The exact skill required, and its difficulty, varies depending on the circumstances. Characters might need to curry favor with an organization, sneak a seed out of hostile country, harvest it in the wilderness, or something similar.

While the entry for a given house describes its seed in detail, the table below gives characters a quick reference.

## Chart: Seeds

House	Seed	Availability
Battle	Blistercone	Common (gather for free)
Flames	Smolderglint	Aftermath of fires (arson accusations)
Glass	Lightdrops	Barter (use powers in exchange)
Life	Sparkstems	Local (destroyed if touched by non-adepts)
Might	Brawnbeads	Animals (butcher personally for best results)
Portals	Gapthistle	Gather (sides of cliffs)
Shields	Stonescrape	Common (gather for free)
Whispers	Thoughtdrum	Gather (asylums)
Wind	Pushpollen	Gather (aftermath of storms)

## THE HOUSE OF BATTLE

The magic of this house concerns itself with using energy and force to damage objects or to inflict harm on others. Battle is one of the two so-called “universal houses” since just about every magically trained person on Netherell has access to it. The powers of the house of battle operate identically for any adept, though their appearance and nature are often affected by the other four houses the adept chooses. For instance, an adept with the house of flames might project blasts of fire, while one with the house of wind might pummel people and objects until they crumble into bits.

The seed of this house, *blistercone*, a spiny and caustic nut, pops into a spray of tiny spores when invoked. This release occurs without any prompting, which helps to explain why the blistercone tree is so common on Netherell. Any climate capable of supporting vegetation has blistercones in abundance, so characters looking for these seeds have little difficulty gathering them.

### Blast

Adepts of the house of battle can damage at a distance using this ability. As mentioned above, the form that this takes — a jet of flame, a gust of wind, objects falling from open portals — depends largely on the different houses that the adept has taken. No matter what its form however, targets of this ability take 3d6 + the effect of the check damage.

*Blast, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Short. Cost 1.*

### Great blast

Adepts of the house of battle can generate an explosion of magical energy (again, taking on different forms as above). Characters determine the area of the explosion by spending magic points at the rate of 1 point for every two meters. Spending nothing more than the normal 1 magic point creates a 2-meter wide blast radius. Anyone within the area of the explosion takes 1d6 + the effect of the check damage while those standing in the area beyond the blast radius equal to its size takes damage equal to the effect of the check. For instance, assuming a 6-meter blast radius anyone standing within the first 6 meters outside of the blast radius would take this damage.

*Great Blast, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Long. Cost 1.*

### Blast from the Past

Quyani, Witch of Soros, drew the blistercone from her leather pouch and blew upon it, scattering the spores with a popping sound and a flash of light. Unnaturally fast, the glowing spores crossed the distance to Kialag and began swarming around his face. They swirled and they bedazzled him for a moment, then they were gone. He stared at the witch for a second, then began forward.

Only to stop, suddenly dizzy. Kialag then heard the whispers, which rose steadily in his head. His mother... his dearest sister... then came the droning shouts and blistering pain. Their voices were suddenly anguished, cruel, vicious, pleading. He staggered slightly, feeling blood pour from his nose and the throbbing behind his eyes. It felt as if someone had kicked him in the head, and still he could hear the screams of his loved ones. He could hear them, berating him, screeching at him, as he slid to the cold stone floor of the chamber.

*Quyani's magical houses are as follows: Battle, Glass, Life, Portals, Shields, and Whispers. The player could have chosen for portals to dump objects onto her opponent, but the telepathic pain (images of loved ones screaming in his mind) combined with the "life attack" (blood from the nose indicating internal bleeding) seemed more appropriate for the character's style.*

## THE HOUSE OF FLAMES

The magic of this house concerns itself with manipulating fire and heat. Its adepts learn how to cook objects from the inside out, wreathe themselves in flames, and create or shape fires. Many adepts with this house have a fascination for open flames that sometimes causes them to act a little too enthusiastically in its presence. Creatures completely engulfed in flames take 3d6 damage each round.

The seed for this house, *smolderglint*, arises spontaneously in the aftermath of powerful fires and pops out of existence when invoked. A fire of sufficient size, at least as large as a manor house, yields 1d6-1 pieces of smolderglint for each square meter. These glimmering crystals are easy to identify amongst the ash, and characters have little trouble picking them out. However, some adepts with the house of flame, too impatient to let nature take its course, have a propensity for setting fires when they need to replenish their supply of seeds. This has given them a reputation for callousness and indifference for the law that often makes them the target of arson investigations if spotted trying to harvest smolderglint from a recent fire.



## Call Fire

Adepts of the house of flames can cause one of their hands to burn like a torch. While this hand takes no damage from the flame the rest of the adept's body remains vulnerable (1d6-1 damage) if touched. Once called into being, the flame lasts until dismissed. If extinguished by an outside source - for instance, dipping the adept's hand in water - it re-ignites as soon as circumstances allow. The hand sheds light like a torch and increases the damage of unarmed attacks the adept makes by 1d6. Characters can use the hand to set fires exactly as if it actually was a torch.

*Call Fire, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Easy (+4 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

## Destroy

Adepts of the house of flames can destroy objects by willing them to burst into flames or melt into a formless blob. Objects take 1d6+ effect damage for every round they are subjected to this power. The amount of damage it takes to destroy an object depends on its size or *Threshold* (See chart below).

Adepts cannot use this power against objects larger than an average sized house or similar building. Referees, at their discretion, can make objects easier or harder to destroy based on their materials; paper burns easier than a brick.

Once a character successfully uses this power against an object he can continue to make attacks each round by spending 1 magic point. Even if he fails one of these power checks in a later round, he can still use this power so long as he continues to spend the magic point each round.

Opponents holding or otherwise in close proximity to an object under attack always receive at least one round of warning as it slowly heats up. This gives them the chance to drop it or step away before suffering any harm. If they ignore this warning, they take 1d6 damage from the heat.

*Destroy, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Short. Cost 2.*

### Damage Threshold Chart, Destroy

Size	Threshold
Small (book, weapon, etc)	5
Moderate (table, bookcase, etc)	10
Large (shed, tree, etc)	15
Very Large (house, etc)	30



## Flame Coat

Adepts of the house of flames can surround themselves in flames that protect them from all sources of heat and burn anyone who gets too close. Once created, the flame coat lasts for a number of minutes equal to 1 plus the effect of the check, though the adept can dismiss it any time. Characters take no damage from fire or heat while wrapped in the flame coat. It even allows them to breathe in smoke or superheated air without injury. Creatures at close range take 1 damage from the heat while those within personal range take 1d6 damage.

*Flame Coat, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 2.*

## Mold Fire

Adepts of the house of flames can shape fire with their thoughts. Each shape requires a separate power check and, once created, lasts for a number of rounds equal to the effect of the check. Adepts can control up to a 5-meter square of fire; anything larger than that imposes a -1 DM for every two meters in the square (7 meters, 9 meters, etc). Though certainly usable for dramatic purposes - for instance, turning a barn fire into a rearing snake - it is lethal or lifesaving when used to influence how a fire burns. Characters can make flames avoid particular areas, advance onto others, and similar actions with a power check.

*Mold Fire, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Long. Cost 2.*

## THE HOUSE OF GLASS

The magic of this house concerns itself with perceiving and/or communicating with distant locations. Adepts with this house find it simple to eavesdrop and snoop in order to satisfy their curiosity. Typically, only another adept with this house, or those with certain magic items, can keep a character with the house of glass at bay.

The seed for this house, *lightdrops*, grows at the bottom of shallow and tranquil pools of water and bursts like soap bubbles when invoked. Although they grow in the wilds, most cities have at least one business devoted to cultivating lightdrops in artificial ponds. Rather than charge adepts money for lightdrops, the owners of these businesses instead exact a magical toll that they in turn sell to customers.

## Block

Adepts with the house of glass can make an area impervious to observation by magical means. Characters can also use this power to notice if someone is spying on them through magic by making a block check opposed by the power studying them. Adepts can block either themselves or a stationary area with a radius of up to 10 meters + the effect of the check. The block lasts for a number of days equal to the effect of the check.

*Block, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Medium. Cost 2.*

## Center Sense

Adepts with the house of glass can attune themselves to their surroundings. They can perceive everything within a 3 + the effect of the check in meters radius of themselves for one round. Characters can increase the duration of this power by one additional round for every magic point spent. Adepts know the exact location, shape, and nature of all physical objects within range regardless of the direction they face or any barriers that would normally obscure these objects. However, this power does not reveal information without a physical component to it. For instance, while a character could recognize and read a book hidden in a saddlebag, he would still need to understand the language written therein to comprehend it.

*Center Sense, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

## Contact

Adepts with the house of glass can mentally communicate with targets at a distance. The character must have a reasonably accurate mental picture of the target in order to establish communication with him. Adepts can gain this mental picture by meeting the target in person, observing the target with a power or, if possessing the ability to do so, reading the mind of someone who already knows the target. Engaging in a conversation using this power takes as much effort and concentration as speaking.

**Adepts with this house find it simple to eavesdrop and snoop in order to satisfy their curiosity.**

## Magic on Netherell

The adept can end the conversation at will, but the target must make a Routine (+2) Intelligence check or use magic to end it.

*Contact, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Routine (+2 DM). Range Global. Cost 1.*

### Mind's Eye

Adepts with the house of glass can gain a full range of sensory information - sight, sound, smell, etc - about a location. Characters must either have a detailed mental picture of the location, or stand within 5 + the effect of the check in meters, in order to use this power. Adepts can scrutinize a location for as long as they wish, but they can take no significant actions while doing so. Once their attention turns elsewhere, the power ends.

*Mind's Eye, Psionic Strength, 10d6 seconds, Difficulty (X DM). Range Global. Cost 2.*

### Monitor

Adepts with the house of glass can subconsciously observe any location currently viewed with the mind's eye power in order to get an immediate update of any significant happenings. This power lasts for a number of days equal to 1 plus the effect of the check. During this time, characters can use the mind's eye power as a free action without an additional cost in magic points. If something the character would consider important happens in the vicinity of the location he is monitoring, the adept can choose to observe it. Adepts can only monitor one location, or touch - as per the touch power - one object or creature, at any given time.

*Monitor, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Global. Cost 3.*

**Many people on Netherell regard these pacifist adepts as sacred and readily step forward to defend them from harm.**

### Touch

Adepts with the house of glass can touch a particular object or creature in order to establish a connection that allows them to follow it mentally as it travels. This power lasts for a number of days equal to 1 + the effect of the check. At any time, the adept can gain a full sensory impression - sight, sound, smell, etc - of the immediate vicinity of the object or creature. He cannot take a significant action while fully observing the target. He also keeps subconscious track of the target of the power

so that if something important happens he can immediately focus his attention on it. Adepts can only monitor one location (see above) or touch one object or creature at any given time.

*Touch, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 2.*

## THE HOUSE OF LIFE

The magic of this house concerns itself with healing and restoration. Adepts from the house of life are more likely than other houses to defy convention and avoid taking the house of battle, becoming pacifists. Those who do often wear a white feather emblem - as a tattoo, a pin, or an actual feather. Many people on Netherell regard these pacifist adepts as sacred and readily step forward to defend them from harm.

The seed for this house, *sparkstems*, emit tiny pulses of light when carried by someone with the house of life. Sparkstems wilt into a gray sludge when touched by anyone, including adepts, without the house of life. They also wilt when invoked. These sparkling yellow and pink flowers bloom in abundance during the particularly bountiful springs that come once every three years. Adepts with the house of life gather thousands of sparkstems and store them in secure locations until needed. Adepts rarely find it difficult to obtain these seeds unless they travel far from their normal territory.

### Heal

Adepts with the house of life can repair injuries. On a successful check targets regain damage equal to 1d6 + the effect of the check. If a check fully restores a characteristic the adept can, if necessary, apply the remainder to heal another characteristic. Adepts can increase the amount of damage recovered by 2 for every magic point they spend.

*Heal, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 1.*

### Immunity

Adepts with the house of life can make a living target more resistant to disease, poison, or similar threats. Targets improve their DM by one + the effect of the check. This immunity lasts 1 day for every magic point the adept spends.

*Immunity, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 1.*

## **Strengthen**

Adepts with the house of life can increase a person's ability to recover from injuries or to shrug off diseases, poisons, or similar ailments. Targets gain a DM on natural healing equal to 2 + the effect of the check for a number of days equal to the effect of the check.

*Strengthen, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 1.*

## **THE HOUSE OF MIGHT**

The magic of this house concerns itself with enhancing the body to make it stronger, quicker, or superior in some other way. Adepts of this house, nicknamed berserkers by some, often wade into the thick of battle, shrugging off weapon blows and literally tearing their opponents limb from limb. Most choose a weapon as their tool.

The seed for this house, *brawnbeads*, grow inside the bones and muscles of strong or tough animals and collapse into dust when invoked. Most such animals only have a few, if any, brawnbeads inside them, but those animals that dominated their own kind tend have more. Adepts of this house are rarely squeamish and usually think nothing of butchering animals to get what they need. People without the proper training often destroy brawnbeads while trying to scrape them off, so adepts tend to gather their own.

## **Burst**

Adepts with the house of might can give themselves a temporary boost to their Strength, Dexterity, or Endurance. Characters can improve any one of their physical characteristics by the effect of the check for one hour. They can use this

power multiple times but cannot improve the same characteristic twice. While adepts who use this power to improve a characteristic can treat it as a "temporary heal," when the power ends, all damage sustained during that hour gets added to any damage the characteristic had already suffered.

*Burst, Psionic Strength, 10d6 seconds, Routine (+2 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

## **Focus**

Adepts with the house of might can give themselves extraordinary concentration and intensity. For one minute, the character gains a bonus on all skill checks equal to one-half the effect of the check.

*Focus, Psionic Strength, 10d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 3.*

## **Regenerate**

Adepts with the house of might can cause themselves to enter into a deep and cleansing sleep. While in this state of rest, they can choose either to repair injuries or to hibernate, eliminating their need for food, water, and air. If hibernating, they can remain dormant for a number of days equal to 7 + the effect of the check. If repairing injuries, they can remain in this state for a number of hours equal to the effect of the check. Each hour spent repairing injuries recovers the same amount of damage that would normally take one day to heal via natural healing. Characters are unaware of their surroundings while using this power and die if subjected to any attack capable of dealing lethal damage. Adepts can choose to stay in this deep sleep for less than its maximum allowed time but must choose its actual duration when making the power check.

*Regenerate, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Self. Cost 4.*

### **Rat Tales**

Malignon cast an appraising eye over the cages and selected one. The one-eyed rat hissed at him as he opened the cage, and Yedrin could barely make out the sudden stab of Malignon's Onarockan flint-knife as it opened the creature's throat. Still hissing and kicking, it took several moments for the little creature to bleed out.

"The key..." Malignon said tonelessly as he set to work, "is not to choose the larger beast, but the fiercer."

Yedrin watched as Malignon proceeded to flay the tiny creature carefully, almost lovingly. His hand caressed the seemingly primitive blade. It was a gift, his master had told him, from the wild tribesmen of the great northern plains. The whole thing smacked to Yedrin of ritual, but in as many times as he had seen his master perform this act, he had never seen any simple repetitive motions. It was, the apprentice concluded, more a thing of style than ceremony.

"Nature gives cows very few of these," Malignon said as he lifted the brawnbead into the candle's flicking light on the tip of the flint blade. It shone wet and red. "And yet this tiny rat will hold more than a half dozen." The Magus turned to stare at his apprentice. "Size is an illusion. Appearance is a mask. Know this, and you will master the house of might."

## **Steelskin**

Adepts with the house of might can cause their skin and muscles to harden. They gain protection equal to 3 + the effect of the check for one hour. Adepts can add the protection gained from this power to other sources of protection such as armor or the bulwark power.

*Steelskin, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Routine (+2 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

## **Weapon**

Adepts with the house of might can call into being a crackling energy field in the shape of any melee weapon that they already know how to use. This weapon deals 4d6 + the effect of the check damage on a successful hit. Characters use their training in the weapon the energy field resembles to determine if they actually strike an opponent. Once created, the weapon remains for 10 minutes + an additional minute for every extra magic point spent at the moment of creation. Characters can will the weapon to appear or disappear as a minor action.

*Weapon, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

# **THE HOUSE OF PORTALS**

The magic of this house concerns itself with instantaneous travel between different locations. Since adepts with this house must know details of the location to which they wish to travel, most also take the house of glass. This allows them to "scout ahead" before making the jump.

The seed for this house, *gaphistles*, grow along the faces of cliffs or other sheer surfaces. Harvesting them involves an element of risk since gathers must use ropes or ladders to reach them. Gaphistles remain behind when an adept invokes them and disappears to another location, but their magical potency depletes and they will no longer function as a seed.

## **Gateway**

Adepts with the house of portals can open a temporary doorway to another location, through which creatures and objects can freely pass, as long as the gateway remains open. Characters must have a detailed mental picture of the destination, either because they have visited it in the past or because they have studied it using the powers of the house of glass. Adepts who fail their power check lose the magic points but suffer no other consequences

beyond failing to open the gateway. Once created, the gateway remains in existence for a number of minutes equal to the effect of the check.

*Gateway, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Very Difficult (-4 DM). Range Global. Cost 6.*

## **Jump**

Adepts with the house of portals can instantly move from one location to another without the need to travel through the intervening distance. Characters must have a detailed mental picture of the destination, either because they have visited it in the past or because they have studied it using the powers of the house of glass. Adepts who fail their power check lose the magic points, but suffer no other consequences besides remaining at their current position. Adepts can carry as much non-living material with them during their jump as they can lift. Using this power automatically adjusts the character's body to match his destination for the purposes of momentum, velocity, or similar physical concerns.

*Jump, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Global. Cost 5.*

## **Skip**

Adepts with the house of portals can cause themselves to flicker in and out of existence as a way of avoiding attacks, or to gain an advantage when attacking their opponents. Characters using this power appear and disappear in a different location several times each round, but always within a 6 meter square centered on where they made their first skip for that round. Adepts have a partial ability to control this power, allowing them to "bounce" around a particular target or object. Creatures attacking the adept must make two attack rolls and use the worse result **or** the adept can make two attack rolls and use the better result. The player must announce how they are using it at the beginning of each round. This power lasts for a number of rounds equal to one plus the effect of the check.

*Skip, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 2.*

### **Example, Skip:**

*The Adept Malachai has the Skip ability which he uses in combat against a Giant Scorpion (see Page 139). Looking over the towering creature, he decides to use this ability defensively. The Scorpion rolls for a Pincer attack, Natural Weapon Skill of 1, and a +1 DM for it's Dexterity. The first roll is a 7 (+1+1=9), but as Malachai is using skip defensively, it must roll again and take the worse result. The second roll is a 5(+1+1=7) which it must use for the combat check.*

## THE HOUSE OF SHIELDS

The magic of this house concerns itself with creating protective barriers. Shields is one of the two so-called “universal houses” since most magically trained people on Netherell have access to it. Even pacifists, who chose to avoid the house of battle, usually take the house of shields since it is purely defensive. The powers of the house of shields operate identically for any adept, but the appearance and nature of its powers often relate to the other four houses the adept chooses. For instance, an adept with the house of portals might cause weapons to disappear briefly while one with the house of wind might push opponents away.

The seed for this house, *stonescrap*, only grows in dark rocky locations, such as caves or the undersides of boulders. This bristly moss-like plant bursts into a cascade of sparks when invoked. *Stonescrap* flourishes throughout Netherell, and is not difficult to find.

### Screen

Adepts with the house of shields can create a barrier that protects them from most mental attacks, as well as other attempts to detect or interact with their thoughts. Once created, this defense lasts until the character voluntarily chooses to lower it or an opponent succeeds in smashing through. Anyone seeking to influence the adept must first penetrate his screen by winning an opposed power check. Breaking through the screen replaces any other normal check the adept would receive to resist the mental attack.

*Screen, Psionic Strength, 10d6 seconds, Routine (+2 DM). Range Self. Cost 4.*

### Bulwark

Adepts with the house of shields can create a mobile barrier that protects them from physical and magical attacks. A successful power check grants them protection equal to 6 + the effect of the check for one hour. Adepts can increase the protection granted by this power by two for every magic point they spend during the bulwark’s creation. Characters wearing physical armor cannot benefit from this power.

*Bulwark, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

### Wall

Adepts with the house of shields can create a physical, stationary barricade. The wall has a maximum area of six square meters for every magic point expended during creation, and lasts for a number of hours equal to 1 + the effect of the check. The adept can dismiss the wall by touching it and willing it to disappear. The wall grants protection 20 + twice the effect of the check to anyone standing on one side of the wall against attacks from the other side. Any creature attempting to push through the wall must make a Formidable (-6 DM) Strength check in order to do so.

*Wall, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Short. Cost 2.*

## THE HOUSE OF WHISPERS

The magic of this house concerns itself with sending or receiving thoughts and emotions. Adepts with this house can read the minds of others and affect their behavior by implanting impulses. They can knock opponents unconscious and identify creatures by the unique mental signature each one produces.

The seed for this house, *thoughtdrum*, only grows near significant concentrations of the mentally ill. Similar in appearance to mistletoe, *thoughtdrum* sprouts from trees. Wooded areas near asylums are particularly thick with *thoughtdrum*.

The Screen power of the house of shields blocks any power of this house unless the adept breaks through the screen.

### Deep Scan

Adepts with the house of whispers can learn a target’s most closely guarded secrets. Targets without special training must make a Formidable (-6 DM) Intelligence check to keep the adept from uncovering the sought after information. If, in the opinion of the Referee, the target has special training to resist this assault, the adept must make a power check opposed by the target’s Intelligence in order to learn the desired information.

*Deep Scan, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Close. Cost 2.*

**Adepts with the house of whispers can learn a target’s most closely guarded secrets.**

## **Empathy**

Adepts with the house of whispers can sense and alter the emotional state of others. Sensing the emotional state of a target requires an Easy (+4) power check and costs 1 magic point. Altering the emotional state of a target costs 3 magic points and requires that the adept win a power check opposed by the target's Intelligence. Targets act according to how their new emotional state dictates for a number of rounds equal to the effect of the check.

*Empathy, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficulty varies (see above). Range Medium. Cost 1 or 3.*

## **Mind Sense**

Adepts with the house of whispers can detect the minds of nearby living creatures. A successful check reveals the nature - human, animal, etc. - and approximate location of any creature within a radius of the adept in meters equal to 5 plus the effect of the check. Adepts recognize the mind of any creature they have sensed in the past.

*Mind Sense, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Easy (+4 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

## **Project**

Adepts with the house of whispers can send thoughts and images to others. This works exactly as if the adept had spoken or drawn a picture. Adepts dealing with a willing target can hold an actual mental conversation. Adepts dealing with an opponent can attempt to compel him to perform a brief action by winning a power check opposed by the target's Intelligence. This action can take no more than one round to perform and cannot require that the target do anything that puts him in great danger, or that requires him to do anything especially complicated.

*Project, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Long. Cost 1.*

## **Repair**

Adepts with the house of whispers can return minds or memories damaged by magic to their original state. Due to the time required to use this power, adepts typically only employ it when trying to fix permanent changes. Making a power check restores the target's mind and memories to the state they were at before falling prey to hostile mental attacks.

*Repair, Psionic Strength, 1d6 hours, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Touch. Cost 3.*

## **Scan**

Adepts with the house of whispers can read the surface thoughts of others. Targets are unaware that the character is invading their minds unless they are also adepts with this house, or currently use the Screen power. The better the effect of the power check the more nuance and clarity the adept enjoys when interpreting the target's thoughts.

*Scan, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Short. Cost 1.*

## **Sleep**

Adepts with the house of whispers can cause opponents to fall unconscious. The character must make a power check opposed by the target's Intelligence check. If the target loses, he becomes unconscious for a number of rounds equal to the effect of the check or until someone takes any action that would normally wake him. Adepts can use this power to affect more than one target at the same time by spending an extra magic point for each opponent.

*Sleep, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Medium. Cost 2.*

## **The Seeds of Thought**

Fingering the thoughtdrum sprig in his hands, Aturr pushed all doubts into the same corner of his mind where the Spirit had trapped his consciousness. Then he turned to face the guard. The man was already ashen-faced, her eyes darting from side to side.

"You know what I can do?" The voice that came out of Aturr was the same that the Spirit had used, the odd resonance and the inhuman echo. A nice touch that.

The guard nodded, licking his lips.

"Your secrets will be mine," Aturr said. "Not just the location of this shipment, but all of your secrets. Every

hidden desire that you have ever entertained, no matter how briefly, every passing fancy, every thought." He let the lie sink in. It was of course completely, wildly, untrue. Deep Scans were always difficult, prying things from another's mind was always an ordeal.

Releasing a shuddering breath, the guard began to talk. Before long, Arturr and his allies knew everything, they knew about the Prelate's shipment of gold and the special casks which held the statue that the Incarnator's agents were so hard-pressed to locate.

Aturr pocketed his last sprig of thoughtdrum and smiled.

## THE HOUSE OF WIND

The magic of this house concerns itself with moving objects by the power of thought alone. Adepts with this house can lift objects weighing up to their own body weight. This rule of thumb sometimes causes adepts with this house to grow deliberately fat.

The seed for this house, *pushpollen*, comes from a dark purple flower that sprouts only in the aftermath of devastating windstorms, growing amongst the resulting debris. They are more common in the wreckage of buildings, ships, or other man-made structures than on overturned trees or other parts of the natural world. Adepts with this house, if in the right place at the right time can gather many of these seeds in a relatively short amount of time. Pushpollen disappears in a gust of air when invoked.

### Delicate Touch

Adepts with the house of wind can perform very precise and delicate actions. Adepts who make their check can perform any single skill check requiring the fine manipulation of objects as if trained, even if they are not. If actually trained in such a skill they gain a DM on that one check equal to the effect of the power check.

*Delicate Touch, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Personal. Cost 2.*

### Fly

Adepts with the house of wind can fly through the air up to nine meters each round. Characters can fly for a number of rounds equal to 1 plus twice the effect of the check. Using this power is a significant action but the act of flying is a free action. Characters using this power gain level 0 in *Athletics (flying)*.

*Fly, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

### Lift

Adepts with the house of wind can move objects up to their own weight at a distance. When moving an object they can do just about anything with it that they could if they were holding it in a giant pair of hands. Lifted objects travel up to two meters each round. The difficulty of the power check depends on the weight of the object (see Lift Chart).

### Chart: Lift Weight Ranges

Approximate Weight	Difficulty
Weight of adept	Very Difficult (-4 DM)
Three quarter adept's weight	Difficult (-2 DM)
Half adept's weight	Average (+0 DM)
One quarter adept's weight or less	Routine (+2 DM)

Adepts who succeed in their power check can continue to move the object each round, for up to one minute or until they take a significant action to do something else instead.

*Lift, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficulty varies (see above). Range Medium. Cost 2.*

### Lock

Adepts with the house of wind can temporarily anchor two objects together, making them difficult to move. Adepts can lock any two objects that are already in contact with each other, such as a sword and a scabbard, a door and its jamb, or even a wagon and the ground. Anyone trying to separate one object from the other must make a Strength check with a DM equal to the normal DM to move the object plus twice the effect of the check. For instance, if pushing a wagon normally has a -4 DM, then using this power would add twice the effect of the check to the existing -4 DM. Once activated, this power lasts for one hour plus one hour for each magic point spent at the time of activation, or until someone succeeds in moving the object, whichever comes first.

*Lock, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Short. Cost 3.*

### Push

Adepts with the house of wind can knock opponents over and send them rolling across the ground. Characters must succeed in a power check opposed by the target's Strength. If the target fails, he is knocked prone and moves up to the effect in meters.

*Push, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Short. Cost 1.*

# KNACKS

As mentioned previously, each Knack involves a collection of themed magical abilities. *Characters can only have one knack category (Far Talker, Fhiomori, Healer, etc.).* The powers listed below should not be considered exclusive, referees are encouraged to tailor their campaigns by creating similar powers (or even entirely new knacks).

## FAR TALKER

This knack allows recipients to communicate with others who share the same knack, so long as both characters have met at least once. Characters with this knack can join the Far Talker's Guild, an organization that plays an important role in Netherell society. Most sizable Netherell communities have a Far Talker guildhall with at least one member stationed at the hall to relay messages. This makes the Guild the very heart of a global communications network. Since they broker information, and refuse to send ciphered messages, the Guild has tremendous information resources. Guild members rarely pay for travel. Instead, they demand a fee from ship captains or caravan leaders in exchange for their services.

### Catalogue

Characters can use this power to establish a permanent connection with another Far Talker. This allows them to use the converse power with each other. For this reason, members of the Guild try to catalogue every member they meet. Characters who fail to enter someone into their catalogue can make subsequent power checks (to Catalogue them later) without penalty.

*Catalogue, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 1.*

### Converse

Characters can use this power to send mental messages to anyone in their catalogue. Making contact requires a power check but characters can continue the conversation without spending any extra magic points until one of the participants ends it. Characters remain aware of the outside world but can only take a minor action each round. Generally, conversations involve just two people. However, characters can bring in others by spending an additional 3 magic points. Only one character needs to do this, and then each member of the conversation can communicate with the group. On very rare occasions, the entire Far Talker's Guild has participated in a global meeting.

*Converse, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Easy (+4 DM). Range Global. Cost 1.*

## FHIOMORI

This knack grants powers to a subspecies of magically talented ogres. Though most common in Skerathos, ogres from any part of Netherell can develop this knack.

### Darken

This power creates an area of shadow centered on its creator equal to 3 + the effect of the check in meters. Fhiomori can see through this darkness without penalty. Humans and ogres without the knack suffer a -2 DM on any attack made within this darkness. Attacks directed against the Fhiomori who created the darkness suffer a -4 DM penalty. This area of darkness remains centered on its creator as he moves and lasts for one minute.

*Darken, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 2.*

### Grab

This power briefly calls a telekinetic "fist" into existence that the Fhiomori can use to squeeze an opponent. Targets take damage equal to 2d6 + the effect of the check.

*Grab, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Medium. Cost 1.*

### Slick

This power creates an area of mud or ice that causes creatures moving through it to slip and fall. The area measure 2 plus the effect meters square. Any creature except an ogre moving through the area must make an average Dexterity check to avoid falling prone and taking 1 damage. Once created, the area lasts for an hour.

*Slick, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Long. Cost 2.*

### Spoil

This power ruins food and crops. If used against food or crops, it rots everything within a rough radius of ten plus the Effect of the knack check in meters.

*Spoil/Sicken, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Long. Cost 2.*



## HEALER

This knack grants powers related to curing injuries and other afflictions.

### Cure

Characters can use this power to repair injuries suffered by the target. On a successful check, wounded targets regain 1 plus the effect of the check damage to one characteristic (Endurance, first, followed by Strength or Dexterity). Characters seriously wounded merely regain half the effect of the check to any one characteristic. If a check fully restores a characteristic, any excess is lost and cannot be transferred to another characteristic. Characters can increase the amount of damage recovered by spending 1 magic point for each additional characteristic point restored.

*Cure, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 1.*

### Diagnose

This power allows characters to correctly recognize, and treat, any injuries or afflictions suffered by the target. For one day, characters gain a DM on all Medic checks made to treat the target equal to the effect of the check. Characters do not suffer a negative DM on a failed check.

*Diagnose, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Touch. Cost 1.*

### Support

This power bolsters a target's innate ability to recuperate from injuries. For one day, the target gains a DM on natural healing equal to the effect of the power check. Targets do not suffer a negative DM on a failed check. A character can improve the target's natural healing for one additional day for every 2 magic points spent when making the check.

*Support, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 3.*

**Note:** a Variant of the *Healer* Knack common throughout Netherell is one which focuses on agriculture, the *Farming* Knack allows *Cure* and *Diagnose* to be used on animals, and can stimulate the growth of crops using an ability like *Support* that provides energy to the plants and helps yield harvests. This latter ability can also be used to shield against the *Spoil/Sicken* ability in the *Fhiomori* knack. It also includes weather-prediction and the ability to draw strength from the living plants.

## HUNTING

This knack grants powers related to finding and successfully targeting objects or creatures. Though named for hunters, many law enforcement officials also have this knack.

### Deadeye

This power allows characters to fixate on a particular target. Characters gain a DM on all ranged attacks made against the target equal to one-half the effect of the check for one round. Characters do not suffer a negative DM if they fail their check.

*Deadeye, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

### Identify

This power enables characters to learn useful information about a target by examining something the target recently came in contact with, such as an article of clothing, a fresh track on the ground, or a bloodstain. Characters learn three useful facts on an exceptional success, two on an average success, and one with a marginal success.

*Identify, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 3.*

### Seek

This power allows characters to sense the approximate direction and distance of any creature already successfully targeted by their *Deadeye* or *Identify* power within the past day. Characters who fail their check learn nothing rather than receiving false information.

*Seek, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Very Distant. Cost 2.*

### Stalk

This power makes it harder for others to notice the character by granting him a DM on *Stealth* checks equal to 2 plus half the effect of the check for one hour. Failed power checks do not impose a negative DM on characters.

*Stalk, Psionic Strength, 10d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM). Range Self. Cost 3.*

## KITING

See [page 76](#) for more details on this largely Cadistreenian knack.

## TARLATHAME

Anyone born on the mysterious, magical land of Tarlathame automatically gains this knack. Though it represents but a portion of the power available to a true adept, it nevertheless gives inhabitants of Tarlathame a great deal of innate magical power.

### Communicate

Those born in Tarlathame can send a brief mental message to anyone else born in Tarlathame whom they already know. This message can convey as much information as can normally be communicated by speaking for a round. This is a one-way communication. If a character wishes to respond, he must also make a Communicate power check.

*Communicate, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds,, Average (+0 DM). Range Very Distant. Cost 1.*

### Service

Anyone born in Tarlathame automatically has a minor magical servant capable of performing a wide variety of useful tasks. In its natural state, this servant looks like a small ball of energy orbiting its master. Ordering this servant to begin a particular chore, which means it must alter its form to some aptly suited specification, requires a power check and costs one magic point. The servant can continue to perform this chore indefinitely without any additional cost. Some typical chores include:

- /// Shedding light as a torch
- /// Keeping rain off
- /// Making music
- /// Using any non-weapon that weighs 3 kilograms or less to perform a repetitive task

*Service, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Short. Cost 1.*

### Shield

Anyone born in Tarlathame can create a barrier against mental and physical attacks. A shield lasts for one minute plus one additional minute for every magic point spent at the time of creation. While the shield exists, it causes any attack directed against the character to suffer a negative DM equal to the effect of the check.

*Shield, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 4.*

### Stun Bolt

Anyone born in Tarlathame can fire a beam of magical energy that leaves targets dazed and bewildered. The stun bolt deals 1d6 + effect damage to the target's Intelligence. Targets with Intelligence reduced to 0 or less fall unconscious. They regain Intelligence from this attack at the rate of one point each hour.

*Stun bolt, Psionic Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM). Range Medium. Cost 2.*

## THIEF

This knack makes it easier for characters to succeed at checks involving skills often used by criminals.

### Silence

Characters with this power can deaden noise around them. The Range is self, but the effect extends for a short distance (Effect in meters) around the user. The most significant benefit is to the skill *Stealth* (DM= Effect up to +4), but there are a variety of other practical applications as well.

*Silence, Psionic Strength, free action, Average (+0 DM). Range Self. Cost 1.*

### Leaf

Characters with this power can drop to the ground like leaves, drifting slowly and subject to the winds (they drop at a rate of 2m per second). Referees may require the character to make an *Athletics (Coordination)* or *Athletics (Flying)* skill check if they want to try and grab hold of something (like the wall or a nearby rope) as violent movements tend to cause them to tumble in place. Once they have arrested their downward movement, the ability is cut off; but they can otherwise hold it for 2d6+ Effect seconds.

*Leaf, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 3.*

### Spare Pocket

The Character with this ability can make small objects (no larger than their palm in any direction) fade from view by tying a string upon their finger (which takes a complex action). The object may be pulled from it's "pocket" with a free action by the user, or by anyone else if the string used as a physical anchor for the effect is pulled free.

*Spare Pocket, Psionic Strength, 1d6 minutes, Average (+0 DM). Range Touch. Cost 1.*

# CHAPTER 5: MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items allow those without the slightest flicker of magical ability to do truly amazing things. Some grant the power of flight or the ability to spy on distant locations. Others give characters the ability to recover from hideous wounds or permanently alter the laws of physics in an area. This chapter explains how magic items work, and then offers many examples ready for immediate introduction into adventures and campaigns.

## USING MAGIC ITEMS

Some magic items work automatically; a character drinks a potion, swings a sword, or puts on magical boots. Others demand that a character make a check. Since potions always work automatically, and *Ceremony* focuses exclusively on writing and performing magical rituals, this usually means *Channel*.

The descriptions of items that require activation include a quick note on how to make the check. This looks identical to the note on how to activate a power or to make a common check for a particular skill. Items without this note work automatically. Characters must still use items properly in order for them to function; drink the potion, swing the sword, don the boots.

## ALCHEMY

Anything made through the use of *Alchemy* is a potion, even if characters must do something other than drink it in order to activate it. A potion always works automatically. Characters must simply drink it, rub it on the skin, spill it on the floor, or do whatever other action is required to trigger the magic.

### Potions

**Armor Ointment:** Characters who rub this ointment over their bodies gain protection 3 for one hour. They add the protection gained from this ointment to that gained from other sources. Cost 200 Cr.

**Fast Glue:** Characters who open the jar containing this volatile liquid can pour it onto a

surface, where it covers a maximum area of three meters by three meters. Any creature, including the character, who steps within this area becomes stuck and unable to leave until he makes a Difficult (-2 DM) Strength check. Cost 400 Cr.

**Healing Broth:** Characters who drink this potion regain 1d6 damage to any one characteristic. Cost 50 Cr.

**Moon Drops:** Characters who wash their eyes with this concoction gain the ability to see in the dark for one day. Cost 500 Cr.

**Proficiency Potion:** Characters who drink this potion gain *Jack of All Trades* 3 for one hour. Cost 250 Cr.

**Quickrust:** This iridescent powder is often stored in wax-bound paper packets or leather pouches. When blown or sprinkled onto a surface, it causes a quick oxide reaction, effectively rusting iron or steel in moments. In one minute, this powder will eat away 1 inch depth of iron. This powder ruins most armor exposed, and severely injures Iron Ifrit (the substance is highly illegal in Muhhijien). Ifrit take d3 damage/Combat round for 10 rounds. One exposure also reduces their Armor by 5 after d3 rounds (additional doses of Quickrust only work 1 minute/10 turn after the last 'attack'). Cost 1600 Cr.

**Recuperation Tonic:** Characters who drink this potion regain 1d6 damage to any characteristic currently below its normal maximum. Cost 250 Cr.

**Vitality Elixir:** Characters who drink this potion can increase their Endurance by 2d6 for the purposes of determining how much damage they can suffer. This bonus Endurance does not affect their Endurance DM or affect them in any other way except giving extra points to lose when suffering injuries. This bonus Endurance lasts until lost due to injury and characters cannot benefit from more than one dose of Vitality Elixir at any given time. Cost 2,000 Cr.

**Wave Carpet:** Characters who pour this concoction on a liquid surface create a solid, one-meter square platform upon which they can stand. The platform shifts itself to remain under the character's feet, allowing him to travel across the liquid at his normal speed. Once created, the platform lasts until the character steps off or a day passes, whichever happens first. Cost 400 Cr.

## CEREMONY

All magical words come into existence by use of *Ceremony*. Characters must normally have access to a source of these magical words in order to perform a particular ritual. However, characters can learn a specific ceremony in the same way they would a skill. This allows them to perform the ceremony from memory but it still takes the same amount of time.

### **Tomes**

There are three kinds of magical tomes defined by their approximate size; scrolls, folios, and books. Each one of these requires a specific amount of time to read and has a difficulty for the Ceremony check based on the possibility of error due to the required length of time. Characters do not destroy tomes by reading them.

### **Scrolls**

*Read Scroll, 10d6 seconds, Intelligence or Education, Average (+0 DM).*

**Float:** When a character performs the ceremony detailed in this scroll he gives one object, weighing no more than five times his own weight, the ability to rise or sink in the air as he commands. The object can carry up to ten times its normal weight in passengers or cargo. This ritual does not give the object forward momentum, characters must find some way to push or pull it in order to move it in any direction save up or down. The character can use this ritual on up to three different objects at any given time. Using it on a fourth causes the first object floated to crash. Cost 5,000 Cr.

**Stick:** When a character performs the ceremony detailed in this scroll, he makes an object no larger than himself difficult to move or manipulate. Creatures who wish to move the object must make a Formidable (-6 DM) Strength check in order to do so. If cast upon a door or something else serving as a barrier, creatures unable to move the barrier can smash it to bits. The character can use this ritual on up to three different objects at any given time. Using it on a fourth causes the first object stuck to become unstuck. Cost 2,500 Cr.

**Scrolls are sometimes worn in phylacteries, a leather pouch or box designed to contain them and keep them from casual exposure to harm.**

## Folios

*Read Folio, 1d6 minutes, Intelligence or Education, Difficult (-2 DM).*

**Alert:** When a character performs the ceremony described in this folio, he establishes a temporary connection with the location in which he reads it, for a number of days equal to the effect of the check. At that time, he can establish up to three different physical attributes - hair color, gender, species, uniform, etc. - and immediately knows if any creature with one of these attributes enters the area. He can only establish this connection with one area at any given time. Cost 6,000 Cr.

**Conceal:** When a character performs the ceremony detailed in this folio, he causes one object, location, or building with a maximum radius in meters equal to 1 + the effect of the check to disappear from view. Only he and those he designates at the time of performing the ritual can see this concealed thing. Anyone else must make a Very Difficult (-4 DM) Recon check in order to notice something that is concealed. In some cases concealing an object causes creatures to overlook it, such as a door in a wall, while in others it might actually make concealed objects invisible. Creatures that interact with it in a noticeable way - tripping over it, etc. - know that something is there but still cannot see it unless they make their Recon check. Characters can only use this ritual on one object, location, or building at a time. Using it on a new one immediately reveals the existing one. Cost 15,000 Cr.

## Books

*Read Book, 1d6 hours, Intelligence or Education, Very Difficult (-4 DM).*

**Anti-magic:** When a character performs the ceremony described in this book, he creates an area where magic does not function. This area has a radius in meters of 5 + the effect of the check. A character can only use this book to create one area of anti-magic at a time. Using it to create a new one immediately ends the existing one. Cost 20,000 Cr.

**Doorway:** When a character performs the ceremony described in this book, he creates one-half of a permanent gateway. In order to open the gateway he must perform the ritual at a different location. This instantly creates a channel between the two locations that anyone can use simply by stepping through the gateway. A character can only use this book to create one gateway at a time. Creating a new one immediately closes the old one. Cost 25,000 Cr.

**Peace:** When a character performs the ceremony detailed in this book, he creates an area where violence is not possible. Any creature seeking to make an attack or take any other action that could logically lead to harming another loses its action for the round. The area of this prohibition against violence has a radius in meters equal to 10 plus the effect of the check. A character can only use this book to create one area of peace at a time. Using it to create a new one immediately ends the existing one. Cost 30,000 Cr.

## CHANNEL

All magic items not created through *Alchemy* or *Ceremony* must employ *Channel* instead. This covers a vast array of item ranging from armor, weapons, trappings, and the famed Devices of Perraine. Creators must have some sort of magical ability that plausibly relates back to the powers of the item they wish to create.

### Armor

To determine the price of magical armor, simply add the costs of its magical abilities to the price of a regular suit of armor of its type.

**Aura:** Characters wearing armor with the ability to produce an aura can, as a significant action, cause it to erupt in a blast of magical energy that deals 2d6 + the effect damage to anyone else, friend or foe, within a 6 meter radius. Cost 15,000 Cr.

*Aura, Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*

**Brawling:** Characters wearing armor with the brawling ability gain a +2 DM on any grappling check. Cost 10,000 Cr.

**Competence:** Characters can use armor with the competence ability without penalty even if not trained in its use. Cost 5,000 Cr.

**Defense:** This armor has extra protection. It can gain additional protection up to the amount of its protection. For instance, armor that has a protection of 5 could gain up to 5 more points of protection. Cost 2,000 Cr for each point of protection.

**Defense (Greater):** Only armor that has already fully used up the bonus protection granted by defense can gain greater defense. Greater defense allows armor to gain additional protection up to the amount of its protection. For instance, armor with a protection of 5 could gain 5 more points of protection by way of defense and then 5 more through greater defense for a total protection of 15. Cost 5,000 Cr. for each point of protection.

**Health:** Characters regain 1 damage to any characteristic for every hour they wear armor with the health ability. Cost 40,000 Cr.

**Physicality:** Armor with this ability improves one of its wearer's physical characteristics (Endurance, Dexterity, or Strength) while worn. Characters can wear armor that improves some or all of their physical characteristics. Armor cannot improve a characteristic beyond its wearer's racial maximum. Cost 5,000 Cr./point of the characteristic raised.

### Weapons

To determine the price of a magical weapon simply add the cost of its magical abilities to a regular weapon of its type.

**Competence:** Characters can use a weapon with the competence ability without penalty even if not trained in its use. They gain skill with the weapon of 0 unless they already have better training. Cost 1,000 Cr.

**Damage:** These weapons deal an extra 1d6 damage for a weapon of their type. A weapon cannot gain more than 3 levels of damage. Cost +1d6 20,000 Cr., +2d6 40,000 Cr., +3d6 80,000 Cr.

**Leeching:** Characters wielding a weapon with the leeching ability can try to deal extra damage to an opponent and then use this siphoned life force to heal themselves. Characters must, as a free action, make a *Channel* check opposed by the target's Intelligence to do so. If the character wins the check, he deals 1 point of extra damage and regains 1 damage. Cost 5,000 Cr.

*Leeching, Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM), opposed.*

**Proficiency:** Weapons with the proficiency ability improve a character's skill DM with that weapon by +1 for each level purchased. Weapons must have the competence ability to gain proficiency. A weapon cannot have more than 3 levels of proficiency. Cost +1 10,000 Cr., +2 30,000 Cr., +3 100,000 Cr.

**Staggering:** Characters wielding weapons with the staggering ability can, as a minor action, try to knock prone any opponent they strike successfully. The wielder must make a *Channel* check opposed by the target's Dexterity in order to do so. Cost 20,000 Cr.

*Staggering, Strength, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM) opposed.*

**Swiftiness:** Weapons with the swiftiness ability increase their wielder's DM to initiative. A swift weapon cannot improve an initiative DM by more than +4. Cost +1 5,000 Cr., +2 10,000 Cr., +3 20,000 Cr., +4 40,000 Cr.



## **Fighting Kites**

Cadistreen is famous for its kites. They have become everything from colorful toys to job specific tools. They play a prominent part in Cadistreen culture and in its military strategy. It's kite leagues capture the imagination of nearly the entire nation and the stars of the league are national celebrities. In warfare, kites fulfill the role of psychological weapons, artillery and signals. It's fair to say that kites are in the nation's blood as kiting is also a knack that is almost exclusively Cadistreenian.

Pleasure kites are usually controlled through a simple string and the skill of many long time users is extraordinary. However Fighting Kites and War Kites are magically controlled by either the Kiting Knack or through the House of Wind magical skill 'Lift'.

The sport of Kite Fighting is usually practiced with as few as four but sometimes up to eight kites. The goal of each player is to knock his opponents kites out of the sky.

In warfare, kites take on several roles. The simplest of these is as signals to various units. Different colors, patterns and shapes have different meanings often these "codes" are changed from battle to battle. The kite makers of Cadistreen have also perfected the art of kite manufacture and one of their most ingenious developments is in having kites make sounds as they move through the air. One of the simplest but most useful is the *screaming whistle* that has broken the will of more than one enemy unit when a horde of so-equipped kites appeared above their heads, occasionally augmented by kites exploding into deadly fireballs. Fireball kites are often used as artillery and are feared by military units throughout the Gods Bay.

## **Knack, Kiting**

### **Lift Kite:**

As the House of Wind skill Lift except approximate weight is limited to one half the Knack user's weight.

*Lift, Psionic Strength, 1 minute, Difficulty varies (see Lift Chart). Range Long. Cost 1.*

### **Multiple Kites:**

The user can control up to two kites for every psionic strength point spent.

*Multiple Kites, Psionic Strength, 1 minute, Difficulty Difficult (-2 DM) Range Long. Cost 1.*

### **Command Kite:**

The kite user can command the kite to perform its special function if any (for example explode in the case of a fireball kite — see alchemical fire) the command is carried on the wind to the kite up to long range.

*Command Kite, Psionic Strength, 1 minute, Difficulty, Average (-0 DM) Range Long. Cost 1.*

## **Alchemy**

### **Alchemical Fire**

Alchemical Fire is a liquid that when exposed to air creates a fiery burst. Normally it is kept in a small glass container that can be thrown much like a hand grenade. A dried powdery form of the substance can also be created which explodes on contact with water. This is the substance usually used on Cadistreen kites. Alchemical Fire bursts for 4d6 damage for anyone within 2 meters and 2d6 damage for anyone within 4 meters. Cost 500cr.

*Cont'd on pg 78*

## Trappings

Trappings are magic items not covered by another category. They can encompass anything from jewelry, clothing, eating utensils, furniture, and decorations to whatever else Referees need to describe. Just like other sorts of items, some trappings work automatically and some require a *Channel* check to function properly.

**Armored Hat:** Characters wearing this hat gain protection 3 and cannot fall unconscious or suffer the effects of fatigue. They can add the protection gained from this hat to that gained from other sources. Cost 15,000 Cr.

**Bands of Power:** Characters wrapping these leather bands, inscribed with glyphs of power about the lower arms and fingers of their “strong hand” can confer a burst of strength for short periods. Add the Effect of the *Channel* skill check to their Strength characteristic for 1 minute. If the character is damaged while wearing them, take off damage as normal, if strength is affected it comes off *first* from the bonus created by the bands. At the end of the minute, all damage absorbed this way disappears, but if this damage supersedes the bonus, the Bands may not be used again for 24 hours.

*Bands of Power, Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*

**Endless Sack:** This sack has a nearly limitless capacity to hold objects placed within it. Characters can only stow objects inside the sack that fit through its opening. Each time a character places enough material inside to fill five times its volume or mass he must make a *Channel* check to keep the sack from filling. Once he fails a check, he cannot put anything else into the sack until he empties it completely.

A character can pull out any object he placed into the sack as a minor action. Objects placed in the sack by other creatures or characters do not count for the purposes of determining the bag’s current weight or volume. However, only the person who put the object into the bag can remove it. Cost 2,000 Cr.

*Endless Sack, Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*

**Fast Boots:** Characters wearing these boots gain a +2 DM to initiative and can travel at twice their normal move. Cost 10,000 Cr.

**Flying Carpet:** This rug can hold the equivalent of up to four humans in comfort and flies 18 meters per round. A character must make a *Channel* check

during each hour of flight. On a failed check, the carpet sinks to the ground, or the nearest safe landing spot if over a liquid, and no longer functions for the rest of the day. Cost 50,000 Cr.

*Flying Carpet, Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*

**Invisibility Cloak:** As a minor action, the wearer of this cloak can make a *Channel* check in order to grant himself a +10 DM on Stealth checks for 1 minute. 15,000 Cr.

*Invisibility Cloak, Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM).*

**Invulnerable Tent:** The owner of this tent can, by making a *Channel* check, seal it and completely isolate himself from the outside world. Until he unseals the tent, he can observe nothing beyond it but cannot himself be harmed. Trees bounce off it, animals scratch at it in fury before wandering off, even lava pools around it. Cost 30,000 Cr.

*Invulnerable Tent, Intelligence, 1d6 minutes, Routine (+2 DM).*

**Picnic Cloth:** Once each day the owner of this cloth can unfurl it and make a *Channel* check. If he succeeds, enough food and drink to sustain six people appears atop it. Cost 5,000 Cr.

*Picnic Cloth, Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*

**Privacy Amulet:** Characters wearing this necklace can use a *Channel* check to substitute for the Block power of the house of glass or the Screen power of the house of shields. The amulet grants the character the equivalent of 4 magic points each day to use these powers. Characters using the Block power cannot use it to hide a location, only themselves. Cost 2,000 Cr.

*Privacy Amulet, Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*

**Scrying Globe:** The owner of this glass ball can, as an extended action over several rounds, view any location he has personally visited at some point in his life. He cannot penetrate an area currently subject to the Block power of the house of glass, notice someone wearing a privacy amulet, or bypass any other sort of magical countermeasures. Cost 10,000 Cr.

*Scrying Globe, Intelligence, 1d6 rounds, Difficult (-2 DM).*

**Skillful Ring:** The wearer of this ring develops instant training in any one skill. If already trained he gains a +3 DM on checks involving that skill. Cost 5,000 Cr.

Cont'd from pg 76

### Standard War-Kite

A Standard war kite has a series of edged blades along the sides and a chain tail that trails behind. The user of a War Kite is generally able to make at least one slashing attack just by moving the kite (damage of the attack is influenced by the Users Psionic Strength DM), allowing them to mount a second "attack" with the chain tail or make a maneuver action that will allow the Kite to change it's direction and move away from combat. Kites have to gain "speed" in order to make their attack, which requires d3 rounds worth of movement actions (d3+2 in High winds). *Note that for Fireball and other "specialty kites, the special weapon (such as the alchemical explosives) replace the chain-tail.*

**Type:** Flying

**Strength:** Psionic Strength of User, **Dexterity:** Users + skill in *Kiting Knack* or *House of Wind*

**Hull:** 1, **Structure:** 2, **Armor:** 5 (10 for piercing weapons that tend to pass straight through, min 1 point). **Locations (d6):** Hull (1-2), Blade Weapon (3-4), Structure (5), Chain weapon (6)

**Movement:** Windspeed (see below)+Effect meters

**Damage:** 3d6 (blade pass), d6+4 (chain "tail")

**Windspeed** affects a Kite's base movement. Assume "windy" conditions provide for a moment of 10, "still" conditions only allow a d3 to d6 (depending on the planet's atmosphere, use a d3+1 on Netherell and Terra/Sol) and heavy winds allow a base movement of 20.

## DEVICES

The famed Devices of Perraine appear to use principles of magic that only members of the island's Maker's Guild truly understand. In the past, other governments, whether by force, bribery, or some other means have persuaded members of the Guild to explain the secrets underlying the creation of Devices. However, these lectures always seemed to degenerate into nothing more than gibberish. Oddly, former members of the Guild, once they spend enough time away from Perraine's sandy shores, lose the ability to make new Devices.

Devices always require a successful *Channel* check in order to work. They seem to blend magic and technology together in odd and inexplicable ways. Most of them rely upon mechanical principles and have moveable parts, a power source, or something similar. Examples of just of a few of these Devices:

**Bubble Suit:** These heavy leather outer clothes have many irregular patches along them and a single ripcord at the waist. If the wearer pulls on the ripcord the patches immediately inflate into distended bubbles attached to the suit that remain until he lets go of the ripcord and allows it to retract. These bubbles make the wearer extremely light and invulnerable to physical attacks. If subjected to a physical attack that would normally deal damage he instead bounces 1d6 meters in a random direction. The wearer can perform no physical actions (except to let go of the cord) while the bubbles restrict his arms and legs. Cost 25,000 Cr.

*Bubble Suit, Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Simple (+6 DM).*

**Dictation Pen:** This metal stylus has a propeller on its top. When its owner places it in contact with paper he can order it to record any words spoken within three meters until it runs out of paper. The pen either writes in the language of the speaker or in a language its owner knows which he orders it to use. It uses subtle differences in writing styles to make the identities of different speakers clear to readers. Cost 5,000 Cr.

*Dictation Pen, Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Very Easy (+4 DM).*

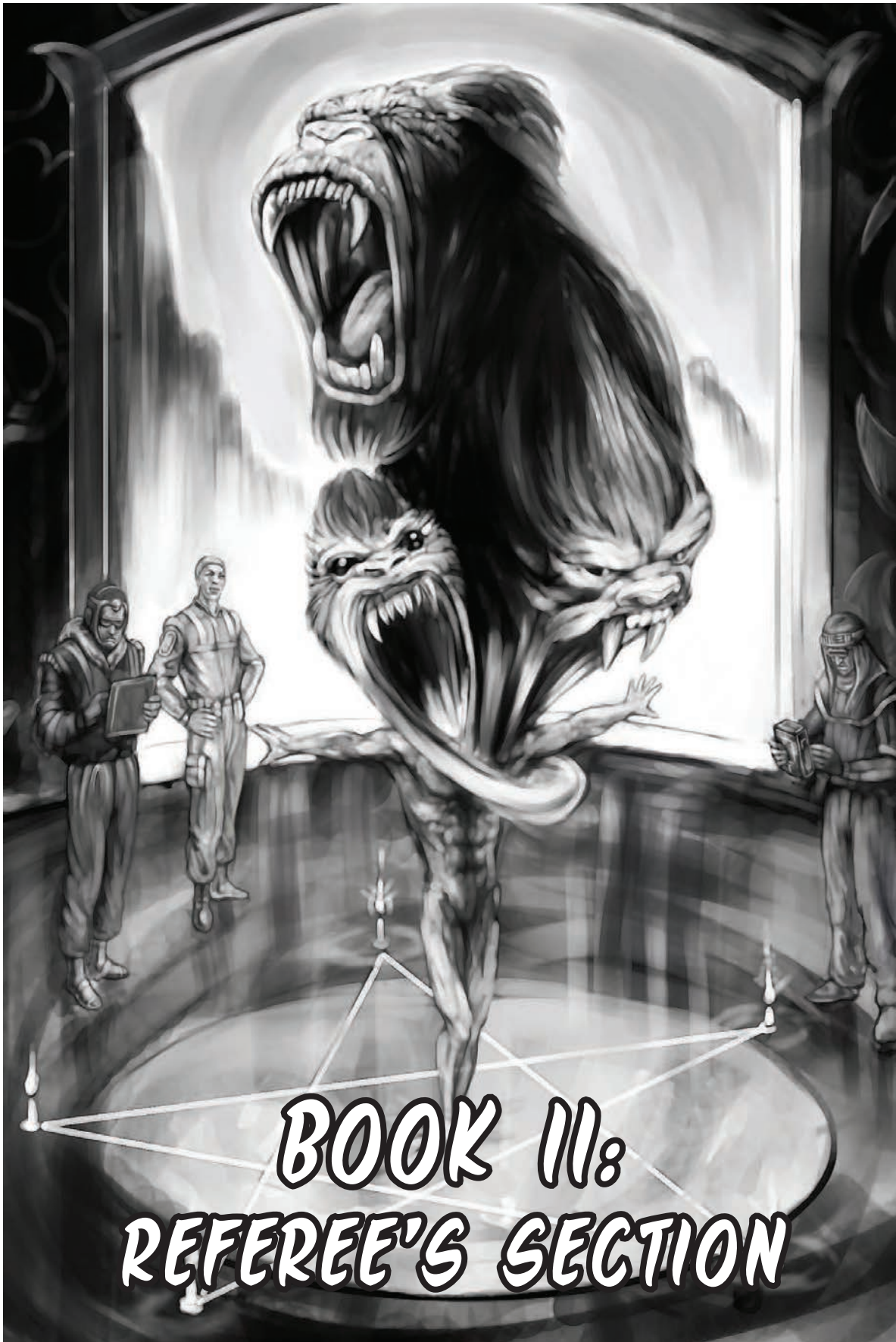
**Hand Projector:** This heavy brass gauntlet has a winding key at its wrist. When fully wound it allows its wearer to create a misty representation of his hand anywhere within a ten-meter radius for one full minute. This hand can range in size from twice that of its wearer to two full meters across. The hand exactly duplicates any action its wearer takes while wearing it. While its misty nature allows it to interact with any non-living materials it encounters, living creatures pass through it harmlessly. The hand has an effective Strength equal to ten times that of its wearer but moves too slowly for use in combat. Cost 30,000 Cr.

*Hand Projector, Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Difficult (-2 DM).*

**Thought Thrower:** This metal helmet has a winch just above the right ear and a thin mirror that extends down the forehead between its wearer's eyes. If its wearer, as a significant action, turns the winch and faces a flat surface he can project images, both static and moving, from within his mind and cause them to appear on that surface. This Device does not create sounds; only images. Cost 15,000 Cr.

*Thought Thrower, Intelligence, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*





**BOOK II:  
REFEREE'S SECTION**

## RUNNING GAMES ON NETHERELL

Netherell is a unique setting in which you can approach campaigns taking place on the planet from a couple of directions. The setting functions as a traditional fantasy campaign background. It can also function as a setting where space faring humans (what we in this book generally refer to as *Galactics*) can interact with a primitive seemingly magical society. Interesting mysteries are available for your players no matter which option you choose.

When setting up a fantasy campaign on Netherell it is good to take a look at the objectives the players will be pursuing. A short list might include any of the following.

- ✎ *Descend into the Graven Abyss* and discover the cause of the blight and figure out a way to overcome it. This would make an excellent campaign focused on dungeon crawling.
- ✎ *Travel Gods Bay as a Thassalat sailor* rising to command a ship while rising in the Thassalat hierarchy at the same time. This is a great open ended campaign letting players range far and wide throughout Gods Bay and the rest of the world for that matter. Sampling a number of different types of adventures.
- ✎ *Serving the Incarnator* in the Temet-Kau as a special operations group. This would be an open ended campaign one session might see the players wading through the swamps of southern Muhhijien to recover (steal) an Iron Ifrit for your God-King. The next might see you seeking out the wisdom of a Bainharra oracle while being chased by the agents of the Muhhijien and those of a local Bainharra city state for good measure. Another still might see you infiltrating Kovushu to rescue a seemingly insignificant girl from the clutches of the Dark Priest-Kings. The Incarnator has many enemies!
- ✎ *Factions embroiled in intrigue:* The Far-Talkers Guild is privy to many secrets and the last message you sent must have been a very important one because after using your services to pass on the message your last customer thought to “leave no witnesses” and made an attempt on your life. You escaped and are now on the run in Muhhijien and are attempting to make the coast and a Thassalat ship which is coming to whisk you to safety. This would make a fast paced on the run campaign with adventures centering around the latest obstacle you encounter on your run to the coast. To extend the campaign the

players may seek to discover what was so important about the message and seek their revenge. The Far-Talkers Guild doesn't take kindly to attempts on its member's lives.

- ✎ *Other factions embroiled in intrigue:* The work of a member of the Skywatcher Society in Bainharra has turned up missing and the member murdered. He was a believer in the *Inheritor theory* (see pg 133) and his work was purported to contain convincing evidence on the validity of the theory. The players must leave the Skywatchers headquarters in Thassalat and seek to recover your fellow Society member's work. This makes an excellent quest campaign and can go on for as long as the Referee can think of obstacles to put in the players way.

On the other hand, games might center on the science fiction side. Here are some of the objectives for a campaign centered on a group of galactics.

- ✎ *A group of Orions somehow crash landed on Netherell* trying to figure a way to get off the planet and back home. They would probably have limited amount of high tech resources they'd have to ration out as they sought out the APR forces on planet who they know must be there because they shot them out of the sky!
- ✎ *A group of APR scientists who are attempting to learn psionics the 'Netherell way.'* They might try attending a Dravelnar academy or they could seek out the tutelage of the Temet-Kau, which could be especially dangerous considering the Incarnator's ability to see through Galactic shenanigans.
- ✎ *A group of APR deserters who have an affinity for the planet.* They know what the APR is capable of and so either attempt to provide them what they want while doing as little damage to Netherell and it's societies or attempt to thwart APR efforts. Probably doing both, whichever the situation calls for.

Two things for old hands at *Traveller* to remember when running games set on Netherell:

- ✎ **First, 'magic' isn't really magic.** It's psionics a couple notches higher than you're used to seeing it, but in the grand scheme of things it is psionics that fits within the Traveller rules.
- ✎ **Second, Netherell natives don't know how to use the galactics technology.** They receive the Primitive Penalty when they attempt to use technology and have a very limited understanding of advanced sciences.

## DEEP HISTORY

Netherell has many secrets fairly begging for heroes and explorers to uncover. Most of its greatest, and deepest, enigmas however, relate back to the machinations of a race unknown to both natives and galactics.

Long ago, in a place beyond space and time, where the laws we know as physics do not exist, two great powers battled for supremacy. They fought over issues that no one formed from mere matter could possibly hope to understand. It's unclear if this struggle is at the heart of the creation of our universe or not. What is clear is that the battle has spilled into the universe and takes the form of nature's unending battle of entropy vs. order, a battle which quickly found champions and in the end defines all sentient beings. There are no neutrals in this battle, everyone must choose a side knowingly or not.

In the Milky Way, those early sentients that chose order were a race few in number, virtually immortal and prone to extravagant experiments. When the champions of entropy arose or arrived in the Milky Way, they chose to hide themselves. They experimented with the newly emerging races to find champions powerful enough to combat their foes. Over millennia they raised race after race to battle the forces of entropy. Many were lost or broken in the struggle, but those who choose order pressed on and the forces of entropy became ever more frustrated.

The champions of order are an unimaginably powerful race for whom time has no real meaning. Patience and caution are their way and as masters of strategy their plans entail aeons and millennia are but hours.

Netherell is but another of their experiments. Thirty-thousand years ago, the champions of order gathered a breeding population of Earth's most psionically active humans and relocated them to Netherell. The champions hoped to produce a race of warriors who would stand up to the enemy. To help jumpstart this process they seeded the world with psionically active materials. Exposure to these materials not only hastened humanity's development of psionic powers but many plants and animals as well.

However, the champions of order have irons in many fires. This experiment is but a new one and if they watch it's development at all, it is from afar. To monitor the experiments progress they turned Netherell, the entire planet, into a sort of psionic computer and allow it to keep track of its own progress. An AI (or the Champion's analogue to one) was left in charge, but it was only one "dominant" personality among many. For thousands of years, this dominant personality supervised the Netherell experiment and the many lesser research projects on its

surface. When she needed willing hands she called forth beings of energy and thought with the ability to inhabit the bodies of humans. However, she often found it more useful to recruit humans directly by contacting them through dreams. When she expressed concepts these dreamers could not fully understand, their subconscious converted them into something that made sense to them.

About five thousand years into the experiment, when humans on earth still wandered as small bands of hunter-gatherers, the first true civilizations arose on Netherell. Along with these civilizations came the first real magicians; and, eventually, several thousand years later, the first living god. That changed everything.

Most likely, when the champions of order envisioned the warriors they hoped to create they actually were thinking about something like a living god. However, the first came far too early in the experiment. Flawed, primitive in thought if not in power, this first living god threatened to disrupt the entire experiment.

The dominant AI personality sent a message to the Champions and then, on her own authority, destroyed the living god. Though she succeeded, it also activated a number of safeguards the champions had secretly created to keep her in check. Entities similar to computer viruses arose and challenged her control. She fought them off but suffered extensive damage. Many of her higher functions were disrupted and she slipped into something like a catatonic state. She retained her ability to project dreams to humans but now selected targets almost at random and presented information so garbled that the recipients had to rely on their innate story telling ability to make any sense of it.

Although most of the subordinate personalities rallied to her side and continued to try to advance the experiments, others pursued conflicting agendas that more closely allied with Chaos. The viruses, designed to disrupt and destroy until ordered to stop, set themselves to the task of recruiting humans to help unravel the Netherell experiment. The energy beings, no longer required to relinquish their human hosts began spending more and more time inside bodies.

The information above presents a very different perspective on the Lady (AI), the Dark (Viruses), spirits, and even living gods. No one on Netherell knows the truth underlying their world. Even the spirits, who regularly interact with humanity, have forgotten their true origins.

Many of the countries detailed in this book have their own Deep History entry that offers up an explanation for a particular mystery or puzzle that links back to Netherell's true purpose.



# A NETHERELL PRIMER

*This book simply lacks this space to give a full account of every country and culture found on Netherell's surface. Instead, it presents one region, the God Bay, in some detail and then offers up specifics on a few particularly interesting or influential areas beyond it. The information in each country's entry should give Referees enough information to create adventures or build campaigns within it but still leave plenty of room to customize and develop.*

*However, before moving on to the individual entries, readers should take some time to get acquainted with a few issues that affect the entire planet and not just a particular country...*

## THE APR

Though only a handful of Netherell's population realizes it, an empire from the stars has laid claim to their world. Generations ago, a survey team loyal to the Achenar People's Republic, the APR, discovered Netherell and its baffling magic. From the very beginning, the APR devoted considerable resources towards keeping Netherell a secret from its space faring rivals. It hopes to discover the source of the powerful psionic abilities possessed by some of its inhabitants in order to gain advantage in the greater galaxy.

Blending the worse traits of communism and fascism into a cruel but powerful realm, the leadership of APR would love nothing more than to simply conquer Netherell and openly experiment on its helpless population. However, in the early days, the detection of ancient bases with extremely advanced technology caused them to move cautiously. This gave them just enough time to realize that open invasion of this seemingly low-tech world would not only require an enormous expenditure of ships and troops but might also end in a humiliating defeat. As they learned to their dismay, at least one of the self-styled "gods" who rule a few of Netherell's countries has the power to blow entire ships out of orbit if they do something to annoy him.

Unwilling to risk precious resources until they have a better understanding of the consequences, the APR has instead chosen to work in secret. Many teams of scientists, bureaucrats, and soldiers labor on Netherell's surface pursuing a wide variety of research projects. Since the state places such a high priority on loyalty, and severely

punishes deviationists, most of the APR personal assigned to the world focus on their duty and give scant thought to the wellbeing of Netherell's inhabitants.

A few of these galactics however, have fallen in love with this baffling but wondrous world. While most continue to work from the inside, hoping to find a way to protect Netherell from the worst impulses of the APR, some simply walked away from their assignments and disappeared. So far, these friends of Netherell have no central organization. Given time, and greater numbers, that could change. One day, a fifth column, acting from within the ranks of the APR, might well prove decisive in the battle to save Netherell.

**One day, a fifth column, acting from within the ranks of the APR, might well prove decisive in the battle to save Netherell.**

## RELIGION

Oddly, considering its population and the distances involved, Netherell has a fairly consistent set of religious beliefs. While the names and some of the legends vary between societies, the overall themes remain surprisingly consistent. To the people of Netherell, with no way of comparing it to other human cultures, this seems normal. The anthropologists working for the APR however consider this just another of the strange puzzles surrounding the world.

Many people on Netherell, especially those with magical abilities, sometimes have dreams

that impart versions of the great stories that underlie the world's religions. Even a few of the APR researchers assigned to the planet have experienced these profound reveries. Though these dreams ensure that Netherell's population always has a rough understanding of what constitutes the "truth" they still leave enough wiggle room to allow different churches disagreement over the fine details.

Unfortunately, even on Netherell, a place where most people know at least one person who has experienced direct revelation, this ambiguity still allows human nature to produce inquisitions, pogroms, and holy wars.

### **The Lady**

Every culture on Netherell has some concept of the Lady though they sometimes give her a different name (Great Mother, Shining Queen, etc). While they might vary in particular details, overall the stories about the Lady present a

consistent picture. The Lady created the world and the forebears of all living things. With the help of her consorts and mightiest children she set humanity on the path to a great destiny and eternal life in a place of light and joy.

Then disaster struck. Whether due to a betrayal, an attack by enemies from beyond

the stars, or some other reason, the

Lady was wounded and humanity lost its great protector. Now, the Lady sleeps, recovering from her injuries so she can resume guiding the human race to its glorious future. Sometimes, in moments of great crisis, she stirs from her age-long slumber just enough to give help to the faithful. Sadly, these miracles come few and far between.

The Lady's consorts and most powerful children do their best to look after the world but have far less power than her. Despite all their efforts evil walks across the soil. Humans who let these evil beings tempt them may gain temporary power in the living world but they also forfeit their place in the Lady's paradise when she returns.

Most people who revere the Lady also pray to at least one of her consorts or children. Though they rarely intervene directly, these Elders or Patrons (as they are typically known) each has his or her own area of responsibility. Sometimes, they grant good luck or even outright miracles relating back to their portfolio.

### **The Dark**

As with the Lady above, every culture recognizes the Dark, a countless throng of malformed beings reeking of spiritual foulness, though sometimes by a different name (The Host, Legion, etc). Each member of the Dark champions a particular aspect of evil, vice, or misfortune. Where the Lady and her followers rarely intervene in mortal affairs members of the Dark regularly grant favors to anyone who performs the right ritual and asks.

However, unlike the Lady, the Dark always demands a price for its help. Typically, only the desperate, or the insane, would ever contemplate paying the fee one of the Dark demands for its help. Anyone who makes an actual bargain with one of the Dark can never return to the Lady. They forfeit their place in paradise and face oblivion once they die. Only those who discover how to enter the ranks of the Dark while still alive escape this fate. Mortals who merely worship the Dark (whether by free choice or duress), without making a bargain with one of its members, can return to the embrace of the Lady at any time, even at the moment of death.

In a few countries, followers of the Dark rule openly, using the power gained from these dark pacts to seize control. For the most part however, servants of the Dark exist in secret. Many pursue their dark schemes alone or, at best, in small cabals. Since they serve outright evil, and must do unspeakable things in the name of their dark mentors, governments rarely hesitate to crush any such cultists they discover.

Though the dreams make clear that they Dark and the Lady are in opposition to each other, they never make the exact relationship clear. Some regard the Dark as the enemy that wounded the Lady at the dawn of the world. Others believe its members sprang forth from her wound or are a faction of her children who resent her love for humanity and seek to debase and destroy them before she recovers. Whatever the truth, the Dark has only grown stronger during the Lady's long convalescence.

**Now, the Lady sleeps, recovering from her injuries so she can resume guiding the human race to its glorious future.**

## **Spirits**

Possessions simply happen on Netherell. While not commonplace, these occur often enough to become just another worry people must deal with; like murder or capture by slavers. For the most part, people regain control of their bodies fairly quickly as scholars and adepts typically know how to conduct an exorcism, but sometimes it takes far longer. The Vessel career assumes that a person was a prisoner in his or her own body for years; long enough to learn magic simply through helpless observation.

Spirits vary in personality and power as much, or even more so, than humans. The only trait all spirits share is their inability to affect the material world except when within a human body. A spirit can always enter a body if invited but finds it much more difficult to win a psychic siege against someone who resists. Though given time and sufficient strength a spirit can overcome a person's defiance, they do prefer cooperation. Many spirits adopt all sorts of crafty and devious stratagems to win this consent.

Over the centuries, spirits find themselves embracing one particular web of lies, often getting so ensnared by their own deceptions that they come to think them true. This regularly forces them to operate under self-imposed limitations which they have no hope of breaking. Spirits tied to objects or locations truly believe that they must maintain this connection or fade into nothingness. Those coming forth for a particular purpose or to serve a specific cause truly believe it is the reason they exist. Spirits that convince themselves they are friendly and benevolent truly represent these traits in their actions.

Some cultures treat spirits, or at least certain types of spirits, as minor gods. Even many churches pledged to the Lady consider particular spirits as allies or even Patrons. Believers freely offer their bodies to these champions of the faith so they can undertake missions or quests on behalf of the church.

## **Living Gods**

The raw force of magic gives some mortals the ability to evolve themselves into something far greater. Netherell's history recounts numerous examples of these living gods; each one different in their powers and the means by which they cheated death. Though they all eventually disappear, destroyed by enemies or evolving even further, they usually demand some form of worship during the centuries or millennia of their reigns. While some of this might stem from nothing more than ego, a common failing for that sort of personality type, living gods do seem to draw some sort of energy from mortal devotion.

Given a living god's power, immortality, and tendency to build empires, few of their subjects have the courage to resist this demand. Most living gods try to build rigid and oppressive theocracies but, over the centuries, tend to mellow. Since the dreams of the Lady continue to come, and the Dark always lurks in the shadows, they eventually get tired of endlessly stamping out rival religions.

Not surprisingly, as living gods grow weary of managing their empires they also become more vulnerable. Conspiracies form, neighbors invade, their own subjects turn increasingly restive. Living gods who fail to continue their evolution, moving beyond the mortal realm into something unimaginable, eventually succumb to the one foe which they cannot defeat. Boredom.

### **Report #64J85-9784163A-6, Dr. Marla Jenkins, Ph. D**

We have been thus far unable to determine the nature of the "spirits" that are found throughout the planet. We have very few real pieces of data to work from: no specific radiation signatures, no magnetic or plasma fluctuations, and no physical characteristics in the solid, liquid or gaseous range. Yet the damned things seem to come and go as they please.

Based on a report that a "Vessel" was located in the area, a team of observers set about to capture the individual and bring him to the Observation Labs. This was done with a minimum of fuss thanks to the use of Sonic Stunners, and the subject awoke several hours later, hungry, angry, and otherwise completely normal.

We held the subject for several days, questioning him as much as we could on the nature of the spirit that had been inhabiting him. The subject related that his Spirit was named 'Ghest'.

Three days after capture, the test subject seemed to undergo a seizure. At the end of this, he began to ask us rapid fire questions and exhibit psionic abilities that had previously not be apparent. The subject answered to the name of 'Ghest' and seemed as interested in us as we were in it. However he refused to answer any real questions about his nature or origins. Since then, Ghest has disappeared and reappeared regularly, gaining much information of us, but yielding nothing concrete.

# THE NETHERELL GAZETTEER

## THE GOD BAY AND BEYOND

### Lands not Covered

Sharp eyed readers will note that there are several lands dotting the map of God's Bay that are not covered. These areas are left to Referees to develop on their own, and only the most general guidelines are found here in the Netherell book for them. As Netherell is expanded further, Terra/Sol Games will make more of these "Referee Zones" available, to allow individual Referees to shape their own campaigns as they wish.

The general tone of these areas is as follows. The first three of these have been clustered together to allow Referees to develop trade systems and even conduct their own wars if needed:

- /// The **Caladra City States** covers an area roughly the size of Italy. The various city states all have their own forms of government but still have a confederal relationship with one another for mutual protection.
- /// **Narab** occupies a river delta at the mouth of God's Bay, it is a narrow land, using the annual flood tides of the great river to produce agriculture. South of it lies a vast mixed desert and savanna.
- /// **Vashra** extends to the eastern half of the God's Bay Area, and consists of a lush coastal region and interior savanna.

### Lands not Covered... much

In addition to the lands not covered at all, there are a few noteworthy sections that have been left largely undefined. Unlike the trio of Caladra, Narab and Vashra however, these might get expanded in future supplements.

- /// The **Wild Lands** rest between Sethereel and Bainharra, on an arching land bridge between the two. It is a land that is wild and untamed, and has been left so. To act as a buffer between the old imperial power of Bainharra and the Incarnator's experimental state.
- /// Various **No-Man's Lands** between the states. Just because they do not lie within a well-defined area does not preclude them from being occupied.
- /// **Northern Suderia**, beyond the Nakara Desert and to the East of the Onarocka territory.
- /// The **smaller islands** in God's Bay proper are also largely undefined, many are *de facto* Thassalat protectorates.

The God's Bay is the focus of this book, a section of the planet of Netherell that the APR has poured most of its resources on in trying to unlock the planet's secrets. This is not to say that it is the only place of interest on the planet, nor even the most fruitful, but the APR decided relatively early in the project to maximize its result by minimizing the area of concentration.

This has not been an unproductive approach either, the God's Bay region sports ruins of some of the oldest civilizations on Netherell, as well as some of the most dangerous. This has provided the APR with a rich tapestry to work with on trying to unravel the secrets of the "planet of magic"

### God's Bay Generally

The God's Bay region describes a continent known to locals as *Suderia*, although the term is often not used since most of Suderia lies along God's Bay. This continent is roughly three-quarters the width of North America (or more specifically, the continental United States) and has a climate that ranges from humid subtropical to a temperate climate with well-defined seasons (In Onarocka and Perrain). The Nakara Desert is an anomalous region, situated on the northern half of the continent and is unnaturally arid. According to climatologists and all known models of geophysics and planetary ecology, the area should be a relatively lush forest with many lakes, rivers and streams coming off of the Grants Race Mountains.

To the south of Suderia is a continent known to the local population as *Agaria*. This continent is roughly the size of Africa, with considerable interior savanna-lands and deserts, as well as other biomes ranging from subtropical to sub-arctic. The size of Agaria "forces" traffic through the God's Bay area, sometimes from across the Kalduu Sea and the Sea of Ruin. Only the northernmost tip of Agaria is considered part of the God's Bay region, and it has by far the most well-developed pockets of civilization until one pushes much deeper south.



## BAINHARRA



Until a few decades ago, Bainharra was the superpower of the region. Now, it is a war-torn collection of city-states found along much of the northern coast of the God Bay. Bainharra is a land also known for its Oracles (marked φ on the map above), vessels for prophetic spirits which have aided this land for much of its history. That all changed when the revered Oracles who used to only give their advice to members of the imperial family starting counseling others as well. This swiftly led to a civil war that fractured the empire into dozens of feuding city-states and the extinction of the imperial bloodline.

Today, the Oracles still bestow their cryptic advice to only a relative handful of supplicants. However, these insights not only grant them a powerful edge over their rivals but also status and authority. While some flee from the responsibility,

most gather followers and vie for power in their home city. If they win through, they then strive against other cities, each one with its own ruler taking advice from the closest Oracle.

Even as the empire collapsed, neighboring Setheeral and Muhhijien turned it into a venue for their cold war. Openly sending in troops, advisors, and money they have managed to woo the rulers of several city-states into becoming their puppets. Though most of the city-states scorn such "help" this outside interference has made Bainharra's anarchy even bloodier. Oddly, the Oracles seem unconcerned by this threat to the empire's sovereignty. They continue to advise the rulers of these puppet regimes.

**Settlements:** Vashtan, once the capital of Bainharra, now lies abandoned and in ruins. The Oracles forbid anyone to sleep within its walls until a new emperor

**Current Events: Bainharra**

- /// Recently, an Oracle abruptly left his monastery's audience chamber and sought out a ten-year old who was scrubbing a kitchen floor. He whispered something into her ear before returning to his scheduled consultation. She fled soon after but the rulers of many city-states want to know what he told her and if she is a potential rival.
- /// Supposedly, somewhere out in the Siftlands, exists a geyser that produces blasts of healing steam. Many folks are selling maps but few who buy one ever return from an expedition.
- /// People are paying top dollar for women's hair. Every city-state has at least one broker in dark gray robes cheerfully outbidding the local wig makers. They seem to pay the most to servants who deliver the hair of powerful or upper class women.
- /// A man in Vinada is charging a modest fee to consult with a talking bird that he has dubbed the fourteenth Oracle. Some think it a trick, others blasphemy, but when the government tried to arrest him there was a riot from all the common folk who finally had an Oracle of their own.
- /// A woman who claims an Oracle told her she would give birth to the next emperor has disappeared. Her family says she's touched in the head but some slavers believed her and now plan to auction her off.

arises. Treating this as prophecy the people of Bainharra consider it the greatest proof that the time of anarchy must eventually end so that the empire can return to its former glory.

Currently, Bainharra consists of dozens of independent city-states, the most important of

**Each of the thirteen monasteries housing an Oracle plays host to a large population of monks, servants, guards, and hangers on.**

which include Aspatar, Vinada, and Ingalus. A city-state covers an area of several hundred square miles and typically controls a strategic location such as a mountain pass or river, or an important resource such as a local craft. Each of the thirteen monasteries housing an Oracle plays host to a large population of monks, servants, guards, and hangers on.

**Government:** Each city-state has its own ruler and style of government. Some prefer to rule openly as dictators while others

use elected councils or democratic assemblies to conceal their true power. In reality, anyone able to consult with the Oracles has the prestige to seize power. This keeps current rulers constantly on the lookout for potential rivals.

**Geography and Resources:** Bainharra is a land of dry evergreen forests, parched plains, and rolling foothills marked by extensive geothermal activity in the form of geysers and small tremors. A vast mountain chain known as the Giant's Race Mountains separates eastern Bainharra from the decadent nation of Muhhijien, while much of the north is taken up by the Siftlands, a region of tremendous salt dunes that shift and move with alarming pace and regularity.

Most of Bainharra's wealth comes from timber, grain, metals, and trade goods produced by the city-states. The monasteries support themselves through tribute from neighboring city-states and by charging for access to their Oracle (regardless of whether the client actually gets an answer).

**Career Moves:** Since the Oracles occupy a new human every few years they produce a large number of former hosts. The reverence Bainharrans feel for those who were so close to the Oracles transfers to anyone who went through the Vessel career regardless of the actual circumstances.

**APR Presence:** The APR has more than 1,000 personnel in Bainharra, most working in a secret underground research facility in the Siftlands studying the Oracles of Bainharra from the relative safety of their laboratories. Because of the anarchy that reigns throughout the countryside, the work of undercover APR agents is dangerous, but it allows them to move about with a fair amount of anonymity and freedom. One of their scouts actually managed to communicate with an Oracle but was assassinated by the ruler of a nearby city before he could make a full report to the science department.

**Faction Notes:** Someone is burning all the old signal towers the empire used to pass on secret messages before things fell apart. Rumor places the blame on the Far Talker's Guild who never liked the competition the towers posed. However, no one has a reason why they would let the towers rot for more than a generation and only then decide to get rid of them.

**Special Features:** Like spirits everywhere, Bainharra's thirteen Oracles must inhabit a human body in order to interact with the physical world. Though most people still worship the Lady, the quasi-religion that has grown up around

the Oracles ensures that they never lack willing volunteers. Every two years, in a ceremony of great poignancy, an Oracle leaves his current Vessel and enters the body of a different monk. These former Vessels enjoy great status but often, raised from childhood inside the monastery, feel an urge to leave and explore the world outside.

Bainharra has its fair share of other spirits along with the Oracles. Though not as revered as the Oracles these spirits still tend to have an easier time finding willing Vessels than those in other areas. Even with the Oracles' apparent abandonment of the empire people continue to have faith in them. If lucky, anyone who publicly speaks against the Oracles, earns nothing more than a quick beating. Bainharra's history recounts other times when it seemed as if the Oracles had turned against the people. Each time, this period of crisis eventually worked out and Bainharra reached new heights of glory and prominence.

The Oracles seem to have some ability to perceive the future. Far too many of their prophecies, even

those that at the time made no sense whatsoever, have come true for there to be any doubt. Different Oracles offer their own explanations as to why they turned away from the imperial family and instituted an era of chaos and mayhem. However, as a general theme, it seems that Bainharra had to lose its central authority to avoid falling prey to what the Oracles call, "the cancer from the stars."

### **High Imperial**

Over the centuries before its collapse, the imperial court at Vashtan had slowly developed something akin to its own language. Called **High Imperial**, to distinguish it from the Imperial known to all natives of Bainharra, it actually consisted of hundreds of subtle signals intended to modify spoken word. This allowed courtiers to say one thing and then, with nothing more than a seemingly casual flick of the finger, tell those 'in the know' that they meant something completely different. Natives of Bainharra who went through the Aristocrat career automatically know the nuances of High Imperial. Anyone else must gain it as a specialty of the *Language* skill.

Found along the well-watered forests of the western continent of the God-Bay, the enlightened kingdom of Cadistreen is a place where random lot determines the fate of every citizen. At the age of seven, each child participates in a lottery that determines which of the five castes he or she enters. These castes determine not just social status but also the sorts of occupations and lifestyles members can pursue. Marked by tattoos on face and forehead, no one can escape the destiny of their caste. Even the magically gifted must submit to the rules of their caste when determining how they can use their powers.

Nearly a thousand years ago the prophet Zanaal swept aside the old aristocracy and introduced the caste system. Though they worship the Lady, the people of Cadistreen also revere him as their great teacher and inspiration. Zanaal taught his followers to accept destiny's wisdom meekly and to never struggle against their fate. Though this has created a remarkably stable and well-ordered society, it also makes it almost impossible to bring about social change. Most Cadistreeners go about their days wrapped in a fog of bland contentment. They know they live in the best possible society and feel a measure of gentle, polite pity towards foreigners.

The adepts of Cadistreen have mastered memory shaping and go to great lengths to keep outsiders

from learning its secrets. No one outside of their ranks knows very much about it. *Mindspin*, the seed for the house of reverie (as they call it) appears to come exclusively from the heavily patrolled Kartang Island. Though outsiders have no real information about it, Kartang still has a rather sinister reputation due to the fact that most of the country's elderly and sick get shipped off to the island never to return.

**Settlements:** Much of Cadistreen's trade flows through its capital, the port city of Graisheen. Famed for its many ziggurats and open plazas, the Great Jury holds court in a massive central square lined pieces of carefully polished jade. Most of the nation's cities actually are located along its rugged coast including Dukaton, Molanan, and Sinsothan. This last city, the place where the elderly and the infirm begin their final journey to Kartang Island has a somber and dreary reputation. Most of its inhabitants make their living catering to the needs of these transients during the days or weeks before their ship assignment comes in and they depart.

## **CADISTREEN**

**Zanaal taught his followers to accept destiny's wisdom meekly and to never struggle against their fate.**



**Government:**

Juries, selected at random for multi-year terms, make all the important decision in Cadistreen. Chosen exclusively from the ranks of the Ilthari, the highest of the five castes, members must always begin on the local jury. Over time, and with the luck of the draw, they slowly move up through the ranks until ultimately ending up as members of the parliament, the Great Jury that meets in the capital Graisheen.

**Geography and Resources:** Scattered swamps and mountains break through this nation of lush jungles and rainforests. Rather than clear the land, most of the population of Cadistreen prefers

to hug the coastline and farm terraces along the rugged shores. Though they only cultivate a small percentage of their land, the country is self-sufficient in food.

Cadistreen primarily exports gems, timber, and plant and animal by-products. Members of various castes also devote themselves to a wide variety of narrow specialties such as crafting kites, puzzles, poisons, and furniture with hidden compartments. Though none of these trades individually makes much of a dent in Cadistreen's bottom line, as a whole, they provide a great deal of money for the national economy.

**Career Moves:** In Cadistreen, members of the Aristocrat career must belong to the Ilthari caste. Although hereditary plays no role in their status, the rights and privileges they possess would make even the most feudal lord of other lands jealous.

**APR Presence:** The APR maintains an underwater base not far from Kartang Island. Several of its 300 personnel make regular, nighttime forays to the island in order to harvest mindspin seeds from the vicious carnivorous plants that produce them. They hope one day to produce psionically-gifted mutants with the ability to rewrite memories but so far have made only modest progress.

**Silver Fizz**

This potion, made by Cadistreen's memory shapers, interferes with a target's ability to recall recent events. If brought into contact with the flesh the target must make a Difficult (-2 DM) Intelligence check or forget the last 10d6 minutes. If actually consumed, or poured down the throat, the target must make a Formidable (-6 DM) Intelligence or forget the last 1d6 hours. Cost 1,000 Cr.

Cadistreen's memory shapers produce a lot of silver fizz that they then distribute throughout the police service. Often, these peace officers can use it to solve a problem without ever needing to call in a true memory shaper. Since it has such a wide distribution, bottles of silver fizz often find their way to other countries.

Cost: 1,500 Cr./dose



### Current Events: Cadistreen

- For over three months, a ship bearing a plague flag has remained anchored in Graishen's harbor. Though they send out rowboats to take on food and supplies left floating by the city's harbor masters the crew refuses all enquiries. Impatient merchants convinced that the quarantine must have done its job are looking for people willing to board the ship to find out what's going on and to retrieve their cargo.
- A brother of a memory shaper wants to find out why his sister no longer recognizes him. The authorities say she chose to forget her family but he thinks there's something else going on.
- Supposedly, there's a hollow statue of a leaping fish filled with mindspin seeds circulating through the Cadistreen's small community of smugglers. Anyone who got hold of that statue could likely write his or her own ticket with Cadistreen's neighbors since it might finally break their monopoly on memory shaping.
- One of the most revered, and ancient, members of the Ilthari caste recently tried to book passage on a Bainharran ship before he was dragged away. The entire crew was taken into custody and had no memory of the week before that incident when they were finally released. However, they apparently overlooked the youngest member of their crew, a nine-year old boy, and he needs help getting back to his ship before it sets sail.
- There are rumors of a scandal in the lottery institute. Apparently, someone was taking bribes to ensure that children would get into the "right" caste. Since the penalty for this sort of tinkering is an exceedingly painful death, anyone who obtained the proof could probably get all sorts of favors from these officials.

**Faction Notes:** Somehow, one of the star players of the Graishen Sharks - one of the city's Tangling team (see Page 130) - managed to falsify his caste marks and get on the team. Facing the death penalty, he has gone into hiding and the League is considering smuggling him out of the country. Many people find the fact that he was able to thrive outside of his caste extremely disturbing, so the authorities are desperate for his capture.

**Special Features:** Cadistreen has five castes; Ilthari, Nagani, Blisrori, Pyruri, and Zendari. The lotteries ensure that only about 5% enter the illustrious high-caste Ilthari or the scorned low-caste Zendari and split the three middle castes roughly equally at about 30% each.

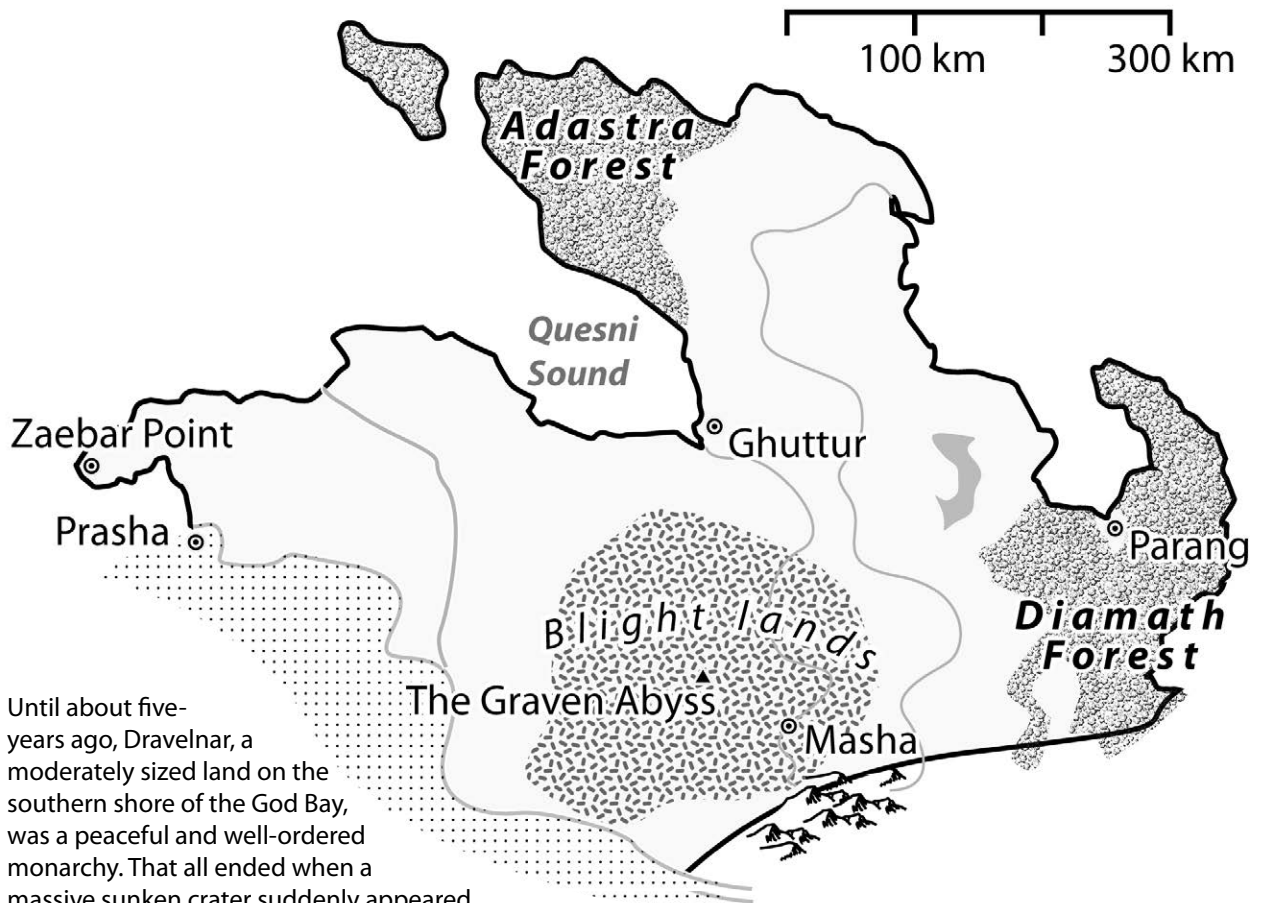
Cadistreen's lottery came about in the aftermath of a peasant's revolt against oppressive overlords a thousand years ago led by the ancient prophet Zaanal, and has served the kingdom ever since. Most of Cadistreen's citizens believe the lottery to be the cornerstone of social stability and severely punish those who refuse to, or simply cannot, live up to its ideals. Foreigners hold no place in Cadistreen's caste system and can never become citizens. As such, most Cadistreeners treat them with courteous pity, humoring them for the purposes of trade and as an exercise in good manners.

Although many scholars believe that Cadistreen's caste-based system is the very epitome of rationalized thinking, few of them are aware of the source of Cadistreen's most important resource, and the sacrifices that the country must endure to procure it.

*Mindspin* comes from the carnivorous plants that seem to flourish only in the soil of Kartang Island. Since the memory shapers hold Cadistreen together, the nation must ensure a constant supply of the seed. Once each week, the local juries determine the status of the infirm, the elderly, and the unfit (i.e. criminals, troublemakers, and everyone else who offends). Anyone deemed no longer useful to society gets assigned to Kartang Island as a mindspin harvester. They usually get eaten within a matter of days but their flesh and blood nurtures the plants, allowing them to make one final sacrifice for the greater good. Even members of the Ilthari caste must eventually make this journey. The memory shapers work diligently to keep the population of Cadistreen content by eliminating unpleasant memories. This includes all knowledge of what goes on at Kartang Island.

One of Cadistreen's most popular pastimes is kite flying. Cadistreen kite makers are the best in the world, and many of their kites possess magical or technological innovations. Kite fighting is the most spectacular of the various kite-related activities, with kites telekinetically controlled by skilled magicians and adorned with slashing wing-blades and ramming spikes. Kite fighting is exclusively the domain of the Ilthari and Kashari castes, though the other castes are free to watch the entertainment and fly normal kites. Large reinforced fighting kites come in handy during times of warfare, with the kites able to slash through the ranks of enemy soldiers with ease.

## DRAVELNAR



Until about five-years ago, Dravelnar, a moderately sized land on the southern shore of the God Bay, was a peaceful and well-ordered monarchy. That all ended when a massive sunken crater suddenly appeared in the deepest part of the kingdom. The Graven Abyss, as they call it, continues to grow, albeit slowly, while a terrible blights always precedes its spread by dozens and dozens of kilometers.

The blight kills most plants, animals, and people. Only a few survive, usually the very young, but it invariably leaves them horribly disfigured. The blighted, animals as well as people, tend to act very erratically and frequently succumb to bouts of mindless violence. Healing magic can temporarily halt the effects of the blight but anyone who stays within the blight lands must eventually succumb.

With an ever-widening circle of failed crops, a ruined landscape, and the ranks of the insane growing day by day, Dravelnar is running out of time. Already close to half its population has died, fled, or wandered off into the blight lands as misshapen monsters. While most still pray to the Lady for help, a growing number have turned from her and embraced the Dark. Although the Dark does grant wishes, even during these terrible times few have the stomach to pay the price, but as the blight creeps ever closer to the remaining

great cities desperation could change the minds of many.

**Settlements:** So far Ghuttur, the capital of Dravelnar, remains outside the blight lands. However, many have already fled its famed neighborhoods of differently colored stone, and the remainder, simply to survive, often find themselves doing things they would have never even imagined five years ago. Most of its other cities, even those not actually touched by the blight, have degenerated to little more than ghost towns. Parang, once the spiritual heart of the nation, recently suffered a severe drop in its remaining population when several thousand committed mass suicide in hopes of attracting the Lady's attention.

**Government:** King Ulvannos III and his circle of nobles have utterly failed to protect and preserve Dravelnar. Only the fact that no one with common sense or ambition actually wants to seize the throne of a dying realm has prevented a coup or revolution. Abraxim, the prince and heir apparent succumbed to the blight three years ago and has not been seen in public since.

### Current Events: Dravelnar

- When things started to get bad, many noble families tried to close themselves off from both the blighted and the rioting mobs. Those sealed mansions are said to burst with treasure.
- The blight might have reached the sea. Monsters are attacking ships. For now, captains are just taking on extra fighters but if things get worse they might just stop coming.
- Some think tales of the prince Abraxim falling to blight are just a cover for the real shame; he made a deal with the Dark. If true, someone should kill him rather than just lock him away.
- They say slavers are doing brisk business among those too poor to afford ship's fare away from Dravelnar. Some of these buccaneers are making even more by charging people their savings for a berth and then putting them in chains once they lose sight of shore.
- There's a rumor going around that the blight can get into food and pass on to people outside in the blight lands. Somebody should find out if that is true or if not, discover who is spreading the lie before other countries stop trading with Dravelnar altogether.

### Blight Paste

Concocted from several different plants found within the blight lands, this sickly purple body paint gives wearers the brief ability to trade the mental for the physical. Users must cover their entire body with blight paste and must decide whether to smear themselves with a light, moderate, or heavy coat. For twenty-four hours after slathering on blight paste wearers suffer a *negative* DM on Intelligence, Education, and Social Standing (dosages: -1 light, -2 moderate, -3 heavy). However, during the first 1d6 hours of exposure they gain a *bonus* DM to their Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance equal to that penalty.

Anyone who uses Blight Paste runs the chance of becoming tainted by the effects of the Blight. This is usually "limited" to physical alterations in the initial stages (after d6+End DM uses of the paste) which are temporary at first, but will quickly mar the visage of the user permanently (Referee determination). Steady use eventually progresses this blight effect to turn the mind of the abuser into that of one of the unfortunate Blight-touched: a twisted and enraged version of their original personality. The progress of this effect from one stage to the next is left to the Referee to determine, but paste should be treated as toxic.

*Cost: Depends on dosage strength; 400 Cr./dose (+1), 800 Cr./dose (+2), 1,600 Cr./dose (+3)*

**Geography and Resources:** Until the coming of the Graven Abyss, Dravelnar was a land of forests and grasslands. Now, the blight has ravaged large portions of the kingdom. The blight lands, a desolate waste home to sickly glowing fungal blooms surround the Graven Abyss on all sides. The Abyss itself, sharp walls dropping ten or twenty meters, has an even more exotic ecology than the blight lands. Inside it, fungus grows to the size of trees and all sorts of twisted creatures walk amongst their tendrils.

Dravelnar was once the breadbasket of the southern God Bay but now it has trouble feeding even its own diminished population. It still manages to export glassworks of exquisite delicacy and a wine that grows in value each year as connoisseurs expect each to become the final vintage. Dravelnar's only growth business consists of capturing blighted creatures and selling them overseas as curiosities or gladiatorial beasts.

**Career Moves:** The struggle to survive has eroded the pride of many formerly law-abiding folks. Members of the Thief career have little difficulty finding assistants or work in Dravelnar's dying cities.

**APR Presence:** APR meddling actually created the Graven Abyss when one of its research teams discovered an ancient base buried deep beneath Netherell's surface. They claimed they had managed to activate the base right before they lost contact with their headquarters. Since that day, the APR has stationed many teams in the abandoned parts of Ghuttur and established a base of huts and tents deep within the blight lands. During the first year over a dozen squads tried to rediscover this lost base but they all died from some sort of radiation poisoning no matter how heavily shielded. Some members of the expedition want to break the rules of secrecy so they can recruit the blighted in hopes that they could survive long enough to carry equipment to the radiation's source.

**Faction Notes:** The Maker's Guild of Perraine sent dozens of its members to Dravelnar. Each one supported by troops and all kinds of powerful Devices, they hope to find a way to turn back the Graven Abyss and the blight. Of course, some believe they actually want to discover the secret of its power so they can use it for themselves.





*The Graven Abyss*

**Special Features:** The blight twists survivors, mentally and physically. Many of them develop magical abilities similar to knacks, though often with quite bizarre abilities. All of the blighted suffer from strange compulsions and impulses. Most of the sentient blighted actually hear voices urging them to commit random acts of violence or destruction.

Blighted creatures can always eat the fungal blooms arising in the wastes and the more elaborate plant life within the Graven Abyss itself. Though they can survive on normal food, they strongly prefer these growths and tend to gravitate towards the blight lands. However, none of these plants can thrive outside of the blight lands. They seem to need the strange radiation produced by the Graven Abyss.

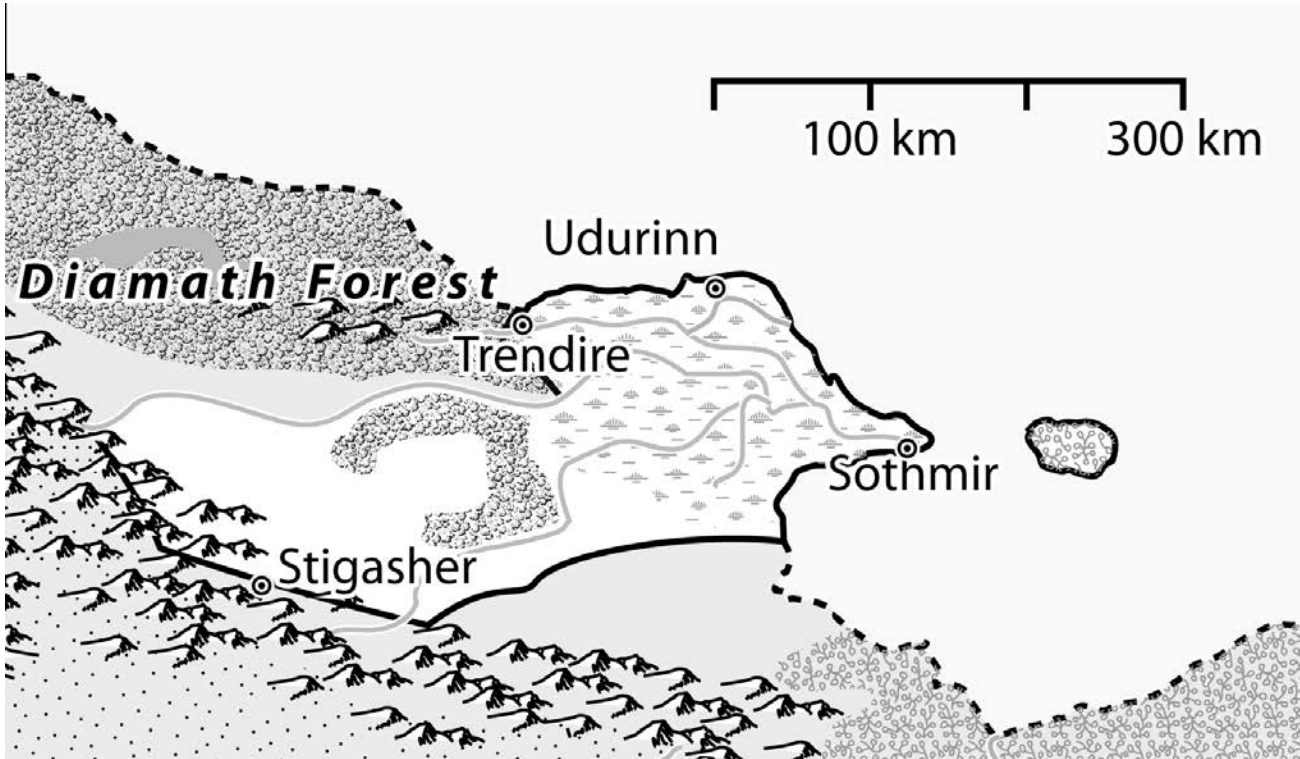
The Graven Abyss has an built-in limitation to its spread that it should reach sometime in the next five to seven years. Unfortunately, this still gives it enough time to claim over half of Dravelnar's territory and condemn much of the rest to the blight. Though Dravelnar in its present form has little hope of continuing, a new realm ruled and populated by the blighted might well emerge to replace it. Whether this future kingdom of the blighted makes peace or war with its neighbors could well depend on how outsiders act while Dravelnar dies.

**Deep History:** The APR research team stumbled over, and accidentally triggered, a base that powered down when the AI commonly known as the Lady went dormant. The project's goal was to find a way to turn large groups of hostile civilians into "monsters" for lack of a better word. This would not only keep these civilians from contributing to the war effort against the Champions of Order but also force frontline troops to redeploy in order to deal with the threat.

The project uses radiation from exotic particles as well as nanotechnology. The Graven Abyss exists because these nanobots reproduce by transforming rock and stone. The fungal blooms and other exotic sorts of plant life within the blight lands and the Abyss were sculpted by the nanobots before they disintegrated. As a precaution, the experiment always included failsafes to keep the nanotech from spreading across the entire planet.

After its initial flare of activity, the base continues to operate at low power. Anyone getting too close it, buried several miles beneath heart of the Graven Abyss, is exposed to the exotic particles and dies. Neither APR technology nor Netherell magic can produce anything capable of withstanding the particles long enough to turn off the base.

# KOVUSHU



This swampy land found along the southern reaches of the God Bay suffers under the brutal and terrifying rule of a cabal of *priest-kings* pledged to the Dark. Each of these priest-kings (or queens) has made a pact with one of the twisted and evil members of the Dark and gained formidable magical powers as a result. Most of them are also trained adepts and add these mortal abilities to what the Dark has granted them.

The hapless folks of the cities simply endure the rule of the bloodthirsty and depraved priest-

***They consider any violent death sacred and holy but know that blood sacrifice and torture, mental as well as physical, delights the Dark more than any other.***

kings. Most of them take solace in *nilish*, a powerful narcotic the priest-kings use to keep their subjects in line. Those naturally resistant to the drug, or those chosen for special duties that require clear heads, live in constant fear of being judged disloyal by a priest-king and dragged off for torture and

sacrifice. In the wilds, beyond the reach of the cities and their vile rulers, tiny tribes cling to the old ways of worshipping the Lady and do their best to avoid patrols sent out to exterminate them.

The priest-kings feed their gods by waging endless wars against rival cities and raiding neighboring countries. They consider any violent death sacred and holy but know that blood sacrifice and torture, mental as well as physical, delights the Dark more than any other. Though they usually make do with enemy troops or their own hapless citizens, the priest-kings also breed sacrifices for special occasions. Kept isolated and never told of their ultimate fate they often go to the altar without ever knowing pain until that very day.

**Settlements:** Kovushu's nominal capitol is Trendire, a grim fortress overlooking the sea. It only bears this title because the other priest-kings consider its current ruler the most powerful in their ranks. Most of Kuvushu's cities look quite similar in their blood stained temples, dull-eyed slaves, and fierce warriors. Udurinn, home to a vast trap and monster-filled maze with plenty of room for spectators above, currently makes the most effort to supplant Trendire.

**Government:** Kovushu is a theocratic oligarchy ruled by priest kings who have made pacts with the Dark. Most of them are also powerful adepts with a full complement of standard magical abilities to bolster the gifts granted to them by the Dark. Though every member of this sect claims the title of priest-king; each city usually has a single paramount ruler backed up by dozens or even a hundred lesser priest-kings. Though they always unite to face an outside threat, the priest-kings have little loyalty to each other and freely scheme against their peers.

**Geography and Resources:** The sloping shores of Kovushu open to great swathes of marshland dotted by the occasional forest, open plain, or stubby mountain. Only the carefully irrigated and maintained cities offer much in the way of solid ground. Invaders tend to disappear into the plague-ridden swamps giving the priest-kings the luxury of a natural defense.

Kovushu has little to export besides its people. A center of the slave trade it also produces large numbers of mercenaries. These soldiers often use a variant of nilish when going into battle. Dubbed "mad mead" by those who have seen how it provokes savagery and indifference to personal safety, Kovushu's mercenaries are in high demand throughout the God Bay despite the fact that many openly worship the Dark. Though some take the chance to begin new lives away from Kovushu, a surprising number of these mercenaries actually return home. Some say, for the mad mead.

**Career Moves:** Characters with the Ecclesiastic career can expect a warm welcome from the priest-kings; so long as they preach for the Dark. When they capture clergy to the Lady or other faiths, they go to great lengths to debase and corrupt them before granting them martyrdom. The few dissidents in the cities and wandering tribes view priests who speak against the Dark as heroes and take great risks to keep them safe.

**APR Presence:** APR scientists and bureaucrats stay far away from Kovushu. Only those with advanced training in combat and infiltration have any hope of surviving. APR chemists believe they have cracked the secret of nilish and hope to synthesize a variant they can introduce into the wider galaxy over the next few years. As their final test before they begin distribution, some of their undercover agents are supplying criminals in other countries with large quantities of the drug.

**Faction Notes:** The Lady's Dream channels many of its resources into Kovushu. They view arming

and training the tribes in the lands outside the walls of the cities as the first great step towards liberating the entire realm. Lady's Dream also has a network of revolutionary cells in each of Kovushu's cities called the Followers of the Savior.

**Special Features:** Every priest-king must, to

win entry into the organization, form a pact with one of the Dark. This always requires that the applicant make some sort of terrible sacrifice.

Most gain magical abilities in exchange. These typically work similar to

knacks, but grant significantly more power. Not everyone who makes one of these sacrifices actually gets inducted into the priest-kings. Sometimes the current members demand additional tests and trials or kill the applicant outright. Foreigners, though they have the right to apply, tend to get this treatment more often than native Kovushuns.

***Most of Kuvushu's cities look quite similar in their blood stained temples, dull-eyed slaves, and fierce warriors.***

#### **Current Events: Kovushu**

- /// Someone is dumping huge quantities of nilish in several different countries. Local governments seem powerless to stem the tide. Since the priest-kings refuse to sell nilish this might actually call for a joint investigation.
- /// Some think the priest-kings have started exporting highly trained assassins as well as mercenaries. There's an alleged training camp just outside of Trendire with files on dozens of future targets.
- /// Rumor has it a group of about ten priest-kings fled Kovushu for parts unknown. Rather than lose one of those endless power struggles they apparently did something that outraged their colleagues. Something so heinous that even their fellow priest-kings thought they went too far.
- /// A few of the tribes have started ambushing patrols sent out by the priest-kings. Typically, the patrols just ran away but a few months back one of them went too far in their retaliation. The tribes want revenge.
- /// Udurrin's maze is the most famous of its kind, but many cities in Kovushu have something similar. Sometimes people from other countries travel to Kovushu just so they can bet on the lives of folks trapped in those labyrinths. An array of powerful people would pay good money to keep this a secret or to expose a rival conducting such a contest.

## The God Bay Gazetteer

Over 90% of Kovushu's urban population suffers from nilish addiction. A grainy blue powder, stirred into water or wine and then swallowed, it produces a brief burst of euphoria followed by a languid contentment stretching out for hours. Every temple in Kovushu distributes doses of nilish gratis as sacraments to the Dark.

Kovushu's population never causes trouble for the priest-king as withdrawal soon puts an end to riots or uprisings. The combination of nilish-induced passivity and the religious rituals surrounding its

distribution tend to make most Kovushuns pay at least lip service to the Dark. Over time, for many addicts, this develops into true worship.

Very few people outside the ranks of the priest-kings knows exactly how to make nilish. In place of facts, scholars can offer up nothing but wild speculation. Most of these theories about the production of nilish assume it involves depravity and inflicting pain.

**Deep History:** Over 400 years ago, a large number of the Incarnator's highly trained Temet-Kau turned to the worship of the Dark and rebelled against their master. This betrayal sparked a brief but violent civil war, which culminated in the destruction of many of the Incarnator's servants and caused the remaining traitors to flee to the south in a handful of stolen dirigibles.

When the surviving rebels arrived on the shores of Kovushu they quickly subjugated the tribal communities of the coast and created an underclass made up almost solely from the native peoples, using them as slaves to build monuments to their dark gods. While at first they used threats of force to control the populace, the priest-kings eventually refined their potent narcotic nilish. They have used the drug as a macabre form of reward for the average citizen that allows wretches to escape the daily drudgery and toil of life in the cities. Those who have seen Kovushu's cities first hand draw comparisons with the dweorghir of Muhhijien, as if the priest-kings are deliberately copying the Aris Artefacta in an attempt to create the perfect slave race.

While most of the locals have given into the lure of nilish, those few souls who refuse to give into the drug and work to undermine society are taken away to stock the mazes, enslaved or simply killed. Of course this has not stopped small groups from forming their own resistance movement, the aforementioned *Followers of the Savior*, intent on overthrowing their sadistic rulers. Some even claim to possess a method of removing a person's addiction to nilish.

The natives who live deeper in the grasslands and foothills have largely escaped the enforced servitude and segregation inflicted upon their coastal brethren. However they *are* constantly hunted and persecuted, their sacred sites defiled by priest-king missionaries, their people lured with free samples of nilish and enslaved, and their tribes destroyed by mercenary units undergoing "training exercises" in the wilds. For years the tribes accepted this as a grim reality, but recent atrocities have prompted the tribes to seek out a "solution", with many young warriors advocating all-out war against the priest-kings.

### Surviving Kovushu

From the remorseless evil of the priest-kings, to its vile slavers, dangerous mercenary gangs and the terrible monsters of its fetid swamps, the land of Kovushu is one of the most dangerous places in the God Bay area.

To survive Kovushu, the best place for any traveller is to stay out of the coastal cities as much as possible and foster goodwill with the native tribes still outside of the Priest-King's reach. Failing that a good disguise, trustworthy contacts or bribing the right people is essential, especially where the priest-kings or slavers are most powerful.

Probably the best chance for aid in Kovushu is from the hidden Followers of the Savior, who use a variety of simple but effective codes to communicate with each other. While the codes change frequently, using the phrase 'can I save my coins here?' in the right establishment (generally one of the cult's fronts) indicates that you are seeking an audience. The organization however isn't stupid, living as long as they have under the thumb of the priest-kings has given them a definite advantage in terms of sensing danger and betrayal. Best to use caution when approaching them.

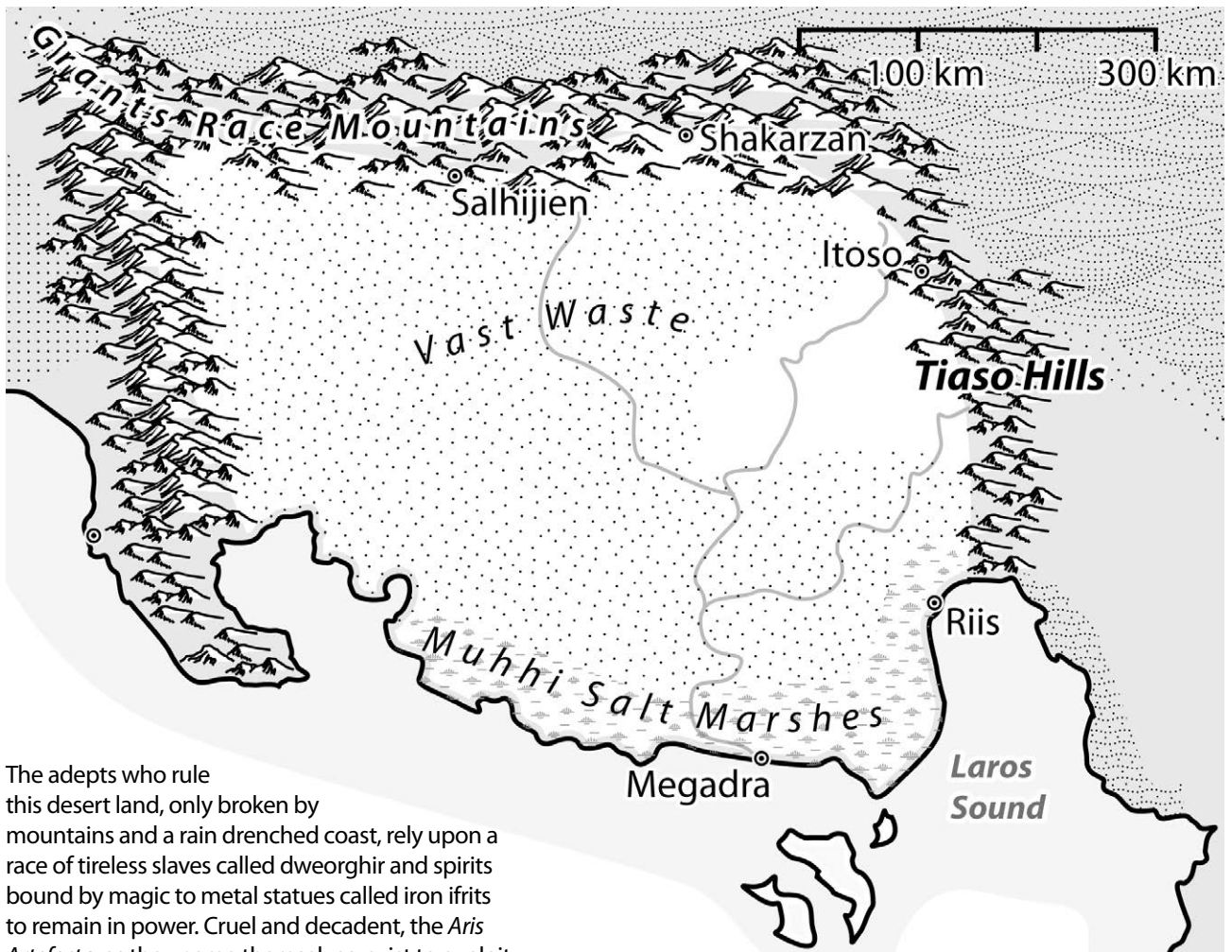
### Mad Mead

This caustic reddish-brown liquid helps to ensure that Kovushun mercenaries keep their fighting edge. Though not as addictive as *nilish*, very few addicts have the strength of will to quit drinking it. This ensures that they return home to Kovushu at the end of a campaign because while it is widespread, it is home to the land of the priest-kings and is found only readily there.

Anyone who drinks mad mead gains a +1 DM on any attack made with a melee weapon for one hour. However, they also rarely think to flee from danger, even if faced with overwhelming odds. People affected by mad mead must make a Difficult (-2 DM) Intelligence check to retreat from any sort of hazard unless they have absolutely no way of affecting it (e.g. they would still take cover from a tidal wave).

Cost: 10 Cr./bottle

## MUHHIJEN



The adepts who rule this desert land, only broken by mountains and a rain drenched coast, rely upon a race of tireless slaves called dweorghir and spirits bound by magic to metal statues called iron ifrits to remain in power. Cruel and decadent, the *Aris Artefecta*, as they name themselves, exist to exploit others. They profit greatly from the labor of the dweorghir, stunted in both mind and body, who spend their days digging mines and pounding out metal goods. Each member of these magical clans controls at least one iron ifrit, and never hesitates to use it as an enforcer.

Muhhijien's common folk live in terror of this magically trained ruling class. Most of them spend their days producing food, as servants, or making things the dweorghir cannot. They rarely complain when forced to pay more than half their income in taxes and those who do resist earn a beating if lucky. The ever-hungry dweorghir rarely question the origin of the meat dumped before them. Left with barely enough to survive they greet visitors with sunken eyes and hollow cheeks.

Though Muhhijien has no actual army, each member of the *Aris Artefecta* commands a

personal guard as well as at least one iron ifrit. War, in Muhhijien, often takes on a very personal tone as members of the clans make their own decisions about whether to take part. Originally, only a relatively small number expressed much interest in Bainharra. However, when Setheeral stepped in to deny them their tidy little invasion virtually the entire *Aris Artefecta* took offense. The next war between these two great powers could well shatter the God Bay.

**Settlements:** Shakarazan, the capital, lies high in the mountains above even the clouds and the rain. Each *Aris Artefecta* clan maintains at least one iron citadel in Shakarazan. The common folk, usually conscripted to work in the dizzying heights, live in squalor but know they risk unassisted flight off the side of a cliff if they object.

### Current Events: Muhhijien

- ☞ Supposedly, there's a singing dweorghir somewhere out in the desert. To the locals, that's clearly a tall tale designed to frighten children, however a noblewoman claiming to be the slave's owner offers a generous bounty his live return.
- ☞ One of the Aris Artefecta clans is trying to build an airship. They plan to bind a few spirits to it in hopes of getting it off the ground. If they succeed they will be able to face Setheeral in the air, and that would change everything.
- ☞ Rumor has it that a former Vessel has arrived looking for a particular iron Ifrit. Apparently, it possessed him for years before one of Aris Artefecta managed to bind it.
- ☞ A tribe in the desert claims to have dug up the remains of a huge iron ifrit, but it's made of some sort of glass.
- ☞ According to sages, before the forebears of the clans learned how to create iron ifrit, they used to bind spirits to lamps and bottles. They treated them more like weapons than troops. Ruins scatter throughout the desert, and in more than one of them, a "bottled spirit" awaits discovery..

Most visitors arrive first at the port city of Megadra where they can bargain spices, slaves, and other exotic indulgences as well as the metal goods that form the bulk of Muhhijien's trade. Itoso, a filthy, mostly underground city, has the largest number of dweorghir in the entire kingdom.

**Government:** Muhhijien is a magical oligarchy ruled by the clans that make up the Aris Artefecta, families bred for magical talent. They permit no rivals. Anyone born outside the Aris Artefecta with magical ability must marry into one of the clans as a junior husband or wife, flee, or die. The clans regularly squabble for position and prestige. However, they tend to employ their iron ifrits or disposable dweorghir to settle their quarrels instead of human troops. This makes their internal "wars" seem more like elaborate games than actual battles.

### Ifrit Gauntlets

Now and then, members of the Aris Artefecta choose to bind a spirit to new statue. Something they make this decision out of necessity if their iron ifrit has grown rusty or damaged. Others times, they make it simply to change the look of their servant. Regardless of why, they never simply scrap the metal of the old statue. Though not exactly magical it still has special properties which allow them to make useful items, including ifrit gauntlets.

Ifrit gauntlets are both armor and weapon. The wearer can, by taking a reaction, use it to gain protection 4 against an attack. If worn while making an attack with Personal Combat (unarmed) the gauntlet allows its wearer to deal a base damage of 6.

Cost: 7,500 Cr.

**Geography and Resources:** Were it not for the storms that regularly batter the coast the desert would claim it as it has the rest of Muhhijien. Most who leave the fertile shoreline and move into the land's interior live on the slopes of the many mountains that sprout up from the endless sand. Only the desperate, the nomads, or the lucky few with a reliable oasis live in the desert year round.

Despite its harsh climate, Muhhijien produces a wide variety of trade goods; thanks to the tireless dweorghir. The nation's entire economy depends on their labor in the mines and forges deep beneath the surface. They produce sturdy, if not spectacular, metal goods at a price few other countries can match.

**Career Moves:** The clans of the Aris Artefecta consider knowledge second only to power. They shower teachers and scholars with gifts. Anyone who went through the Expert career should have little trouble finding a patron.

**APR Presence:** Currently about 200 APR personnel, the majority undercover agents, prowl Muhhijien's cities. For the most part, they want more information on the dweorghir and the iron ifrits. They are especially interested in the dweorghir whom they regard as a stable population of mostly docile mutants. If their experiments in teaching small numbers of dweorghir to work with advanced technology prove fruitful, they plan to acquire enough to form a breeding population and export them off world.

**Faction Notes:** The magic hating Order of the Mind regards Muhhijien as the perfect example of what happens when adepts take over a society. Besides the occasional assassination or bit of sabotage, the Order also smuggles out survivors of Aris Artefecta abuse and then uses them to spread the word. Since these eyewitnesses to atrocities give the Order such a boost to recruitment and fundraising they sometimes get overeager. The Aris Artefecta plans to pose one of their own agents as a refugee in hopes of tracking the Order's underground network of safe houses.

**Special Features:** Filthy and moon-eyed, the dweorghir rarely speak. Standing about half the height of a human, they seem to suffer from something similar to autism, likely bred into them centuries or millennia ago. Though they began from human stock many ages ago, they now mate solely with their own kind and rest on the edge of becoming a true species. The dweorghir have a talent for artifice and craft. If taught a skill they master it in a remarkably short time. Much of Muhhijien's wealth comes from their tireless work.

Though they never complain or challenge their taskmasters, they do have one strange quirk. Periodically, for reasons no one truly understands, dweorghir fall prey to a sudden spasm of violence. This always happens to groups and spreads through the ranks like a virus. Before it runs its course, usually over a few days, the dweorghir go wild and attack any human they can find. The Aris Artefacta overlooks these occasional outbursts of cannibalism and mayhem in the interest of continued production.

Muhhijien has more than its share of spirits. However, very few of them ever get a chance to possess people. The Aris Artefacta knows a secret

process that allows them to bind spirits to metal. Though they sometimes create weapons that fight on their own or fasten a spirit to one of their citadels, they typically use this technique to create their greatest and most well known servants, the iron ifrits. The magic that binds these spirits to their statues compels them to obey the orders of their masters. Many, especially those recently captured, try to twist these commands in hopes of escape or revenge.

Spirits, once captured, usually get passed on from generation to generation as new adepts bind them when a prior master dies. Eventually, as spirits tend to do, they forget their earlier existence and develop new, servile personalities. They come to identify with their masters and their clan. Sometimes, iron ifrit belonging to different clans pursue their own complex rivalries that take place over centuries.

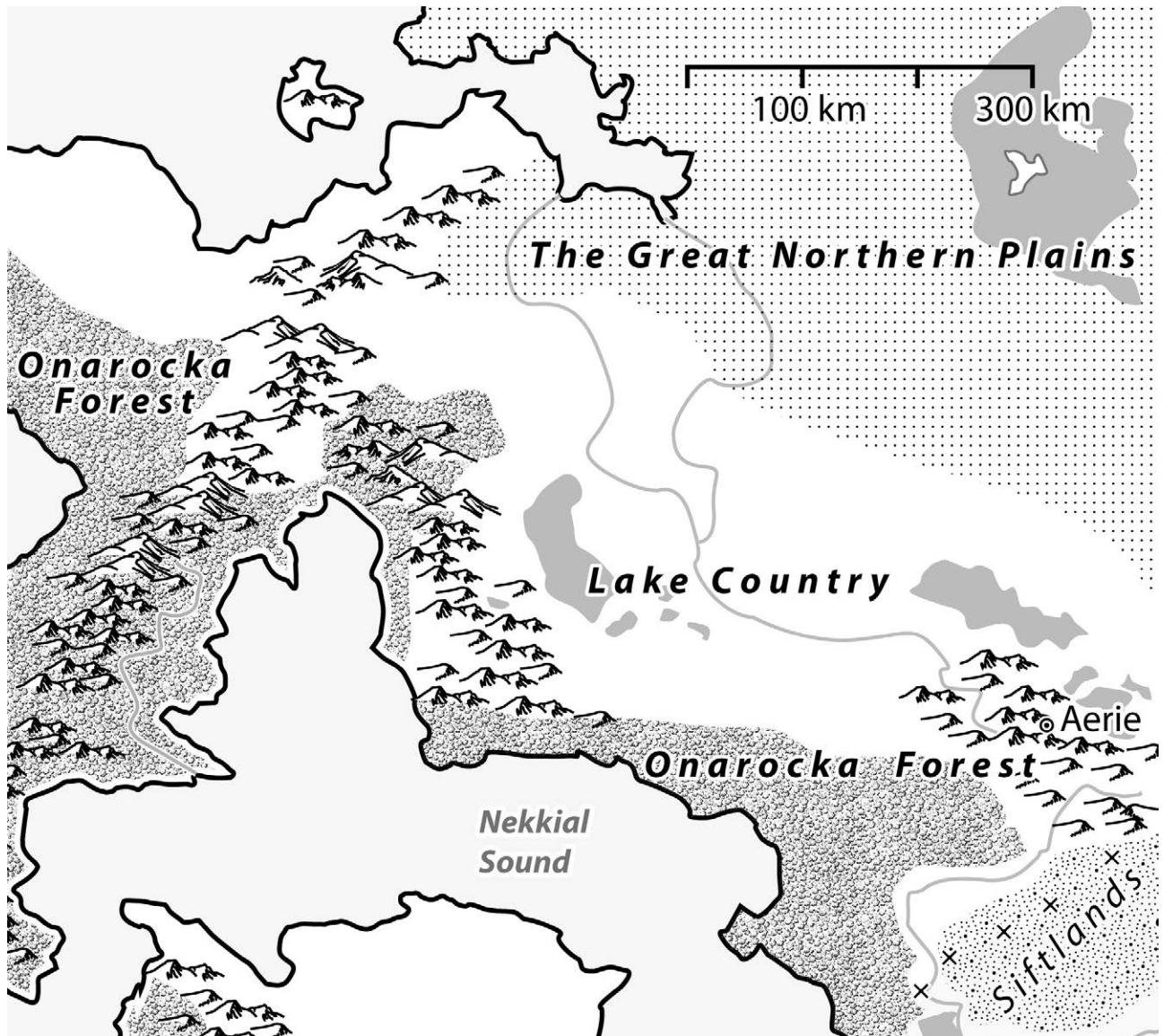
Iron Ifrit, animated metal statues, have little to fear from most things. Weapons tend to shatter or bounce off them. They suffer from none of the frailties of living creatures. Usually, only powerful magic or another iron Ifrit has much chance of damaging them.







## ONAROCKA



This gorgeous but isolated land of nomadic tribes in northern Suderia would attract little notice were it not the home of the *daichana*, the so called "ghost trees." Each of these magical plants has the ability to absorb the soul of a single nearby person at the moment of his or her death. Once within the tree this soul can manifest in its vicinity as a shimmering and insubstantial mirage-like figure. Souls often find this quite difficult, especially at first, but the shamans of the tribes know many tricks to help them succeed.

Although they worship the Lady, the tribes also revere their ancestors, especially the ones deemed worthy of a second life inside a *daichana* tree. Onarockans devote their lives towards achieving this singular honor. While many different paths can

lead to a *daichana* tree they all demand a life of virtue and excellence. Women as well as men can earn renown and become ancestors. However, since winning glory in battle proves one of the easiest, or at least most common, paths, male spirits do tend to outnumber female spirits in the *daichana* groves.

Aside from their sacred *daichana* trees, life for the native tribes revolves around the annual migration of the wild *unuk* as they travel from their mating grounds at the foot of the southern mountains to their feeding grounds in the northern prairies. Most of an Onarockan's possessions, weapons, and clothing are made from the hide, skin, sinew or bones of an *unuk*; they generally leave no part of the animal unused.

Following the herds of wild unuk is an integral part of Onarockan society and many of their most important legends and stories revolve around the massive beasts.

Tribes define their territories solely by the groves of ancestors contained within. They find the very idea entering land held by another tribe's ancestors vaguely blasphemous. Though they do frequently conduct raids against their neighbors, they make a point of leaving gifts in their daichana groves as a form of atonement.

**Settlements:** Onarocka has no cities or even towns of which to speak. A few areas with religious or cultural significance sometimes play host to more than one tribe but they quickly disperse back to their own territory once they complete their business. For the most part, the nomadic Onarockans circulate within their territory hunting, gathering food, and chasing the approval of their fellow tribesmen in hopes of becoming an ancestor. Sometimes, particularly in winter, they camp near a grove of daichana trees but even that rarely keeps them in one place for very long. Onarockans believe that consulting an ancestor should require travel as a way of showing the value of the experience. No one would ever insult an ancestor by casually wandering over to a nearby grove and striking up a conversation.

**Government:** Chiefs and shaman hold sway over individual tribes. Sometimes, usually no more than once every few generations, a tribe gains enough prestige to dictate terms to its neighbors. This rarely lasts for very long however. Typically, this enhanced status comes due to a particularly feared war leader or a revered wise man. When that noteworthy figure becomes an ancestor things swiftly return to normal. Tribes often participate in blood feuds and settle their differences through marriage.

Interestingly, battles between tribes seldom rack up many casualties. The tribes confer greater honor to someone who manages to touch a foe in battle without actually killing him. The most renowned warriors often mark their opponents by smearing honey or berry juice on them.

**Geography and Resources:** Most of Onarocka consists of forests and prairie. The frequent rains keep the ground fresh and the lakes clean and full of fish. The tribes never go hungry as the land simply gives them too many opportunities to gather food, even in winter.

Onarocka has an abundance of natural resources but the tribes lack the patience to establish regular exports. Coastal tribes sometimes trade



with passing ships but only when the whim takes them. The two things they never ever allow outsiders to take are daichana seeds or cuttings.

**Career Moves:** The constant low-grade rivalry with neighboring tribes ensures that Onarockans always appreciate anyone who knows the proper way to use a weapon. Guards, finding it easier to grasp the custom of fighting to shame or wound rather than kill, find it easy to win favor with a tribe and rarely go hungry.

**APR Presence:** The APR has over 5,000 personnel stationed in Onarocka. Most live in the closest thing the APR has to an actual city on Netherell, Aerie. Deep in the southern mountains, with no approach save through air vehicles, the APR considers it the safest and most secluded site they could find for their headquarters. Though a number of researchers actually do study the daichana trees, the APR mostly considers Onarocka as comfortable backwater.

**Faction Notes:** Recently a substantial band of Hunters of the Sunless King made camp along the coast. Garbled stories of the daichana trees had reached even their distant homeland and they wanted to ensure that the ghosts within the trees were not the lifeless predatory monsters they pledge to destroy. Once they learned the truth the Hunters decided to spend a few years moving amongst the tribes teaching them some of the secrets of finding and destroying strigoi. Since, a number of native Onarockans have petitioned to join the Hunters. Something about the notion of ancestors wandering around and feeding on the living offends them on a deep and fundamental level.

**Special Features:** The Onarockan people do not really understand the exact reasons why a daichana tree can bond with an ancestor but they certainly know how to make it happen. These thin evergreen trees have a special, second set of mobile roots that entwine themselves around any dying or recently dead (usually no more than a day) person placed near them. This rather painful process happens slowly, over several hours, giving healthy people plenty of opportunities to twist or roll away if say, they fell asleep too close to a daichana. With enough discipline, a willing participant could hold still long enough for the roots to kill, but the Onarockans consider this sacrilege and would actually chop down a tree containing such an unworthy soul. Tying someone to a tree might serve a similar purpose but forcing someone to become an ancestor is so unimaginable that it never even occurs to the tribes to try it.

### **Current Events: Onarocka**

- /// An entire grove of daichana trees died over the course of a single winter. Its tribe, horrified at the loss of some many ancestors, believes one of their rivals was somehow involved and wants revenge.
- /// Slavers and raiders tend to suffer a lot of bad luck in Onarocka. Not too long ago an entire ship burnt just offshore and left no survivors. The tribes claim that their ancestors defend them from outsiders but that seems unlikely.
- /// Rumor has it that a great shaman from a distant tribe somehow managed to come back from death. Apparently, his spirit, still attached to its daichana tree, re-entered his decaying body and resumed his life. However, his wives made him move into a tent of his own due to the stench.
- /// Somewhere in the land is a grove made up of the greatest musicians and singers of each generation. Unlike most groves, all tribes have a claim to it. They say even the stones dance when these ancestors perform.
- /// A good few Onarockans claim to have seen oddly shaped giant birds moving among the clouds.

Rather than give that person's soul a new home daichana actually copy memories and personality. However, this new entity does believe itself to be the original and acts accordingly. Sometimes, if putrefaction had time to set in, the ancestor comes out "wrong." Since the shamans who oversee the process recognize that decay plays a role, they rarely permit someone dead for more than a day or so to become an ancestor.

The trees store light and heat from the sun and use it to create the ghostly projections of the ancestor living inside them. Over decades and centuries, they discover shortcuts that allow them to keep this projection active for more and more time. Onarocka shamans know many tricks to use some of their own magic or vital energy to help younger spirits manifest for more than a few minutes each day. Custom holds that a shaman should take part whenever someone of the tribes speaks to an ancestor but in truth, older spirits can handle the job fine on their own.

The tribes leave an ancestor's former body to decay and fertilize the tree that now houses his or her soul. Since the ancestor has cast aside his or her body they see no need to surround it with any particular ritual or ceremony. They bury most others, giving them back to the soil that had nurtured them. However, they burn the diseased or criminals in special clearings painstakingly lined with rocks so not even their ash can return to the earth.

### Soul Splinters

Daichana trees sometimes die without ever taking on an ancestor. Onarockans consider this a great tragedy but it also gives others a chance to pass on a tiny portion of themselves to later generations. Shamans give members of the tribe with particular skills or abilities a branch from one of these dead trees. After weeks or months of close contact the branch absorbs some portion of that person's talent.

Soul splinters, tiny pieces of one of these branches, grant their wearers instant training and proficiency in one specific skill. Wearers must actually stick the splinter in some portion of their body for it to work. Until the splinter loses its potency, usually 1d6 days, the wearer can use that skill at level 2.

Cost: 2000 Cr.

**Deep History:** The Champions or Order, just before they left Netherell over thirty-thousand years ago, started experimenting with the idea of creating living ships powered by psionics. They never got very far and left things under the supervision of the AI most commonly known as the Lady. She created the forerunners of the daichana tree as part of this project.

Given time, the trees would have served as central computers for these organic battleships. She went dormant before she had time to start producing other components of the ships. Abandoned, the trees diverged from their intended path. Rather than fostering their own personalities they developed the ability to absorb human minds instead.

## SETHEERAL

The Incarnator, the living god who rules this land of arbor skinned hills, demands unquestioned loyalty and obedience from his subjects. They rarely hesitate to give it to him since he delivers victory for their armies and prosperity to their nation. They remain faithful even on the brink of a cataclysmic war with Muhhijien.

Though their god allows them little by way of actual freedom, Setheeralians treasure the stability he grants them in place of liberty. In truth, he usually makes few demands beyond that of any mortal ruler and national church. Citizens

**While Setheeral has abundant natural resources, its true wealth comes from its people.**

who pray at his temples, pay his taxes, and do their four years of military service can usually go about their business in peace. However, the Incarnator does sometimes make unusual, or even seemingly irrational, demands of his faithful and they have no choice but to obey.

Whether told to assemble and dance, or ordered to burn down and then rebuild their own town, they submit to the caprice of their god. These demands occur quite rarely and the people console themselves by believing that the Incarnator has a good reason to make them no matter how bizarre they seem.

In addition to his own extraordinary magical abilities the Incarnator also has the fanatical devotion of his priests, the Temet-Kau. They hold

all positions of authority in the kingdom ranging from commanding the military to governing its communities. The Temet-Kau also staff Setheeral's terrifying fleet of iron dirigibles. Although very few in number, even this handful of floating fortresses allows the Incarnator's followers to dominate any battlefield they survey.

**Settlements:** Halathyrass, Setheeral's capital, rests at the base of great natural bay. At some point in their lives, most citizens make a pilgrimage here to visit the Incarnator's palatial cathedral, the Arc of Light. Along with its many ordinary cities, Setheeral also hosts mysterious Nyrashil. Celebrated for its healing baths it also supports the House of the Third Eye, the college where all members of the Temet-Kau receive their training and indoctrination.

**Government:** Setheeral is a theocratic autocracy ruled by the Incarnator, a living god. His priests, the Temet-Kau, speak in his name and actually make most of the decisions. The common folk obey the Temet-Kau without question since the Incarnator has the ability to reach into their bodies and use them like puppets. When he does, their eyes glow a striking blue.

**Geography and Resources:** Much of Setheeral is still wild and unclaimed. Though it has some grassland, most of it consists of rugged hill country, usually covered in trees. The Incarnator wants much of his kingdom left pristine. He permits his subjects to clear just enough land around cities and towns to grow the food they need to survive.



While Setheeral has abundant natural resources, its true wealth comes from its people. The Incarnator reinvests taxes and tithes in education programs. The kingdom has many artisans and craftspeople that produce a wide variety of high-quality products.

**Career Moves:** The Incarnator believes anyone not immediately executed for their transgression deserves a second chance. Anyone who spent time in the Scum career, and has a tale of woe to go along with it, can usually win some help and even a grubstake to start over.

**APR Presence:** About three years after the APR first discovered Netherell a team of researchers got a little too enthusiastic in Sethereel and were captured. The prisoners managed to send out a quick call for help before being dragged before the Incarnator. As a show of force, the APR dispatched a full battleship and ordered it to hover over the Incarnator's palace. Rather than overawe the "primitive," this show of force instead made him angry. He destroyed the ship and blasted another one in orbit. The second ship suffered so much

### Current Events: Setheeral

- /// A tourist claims he saw tentacles coming out of the baths at Nyrashil.
- /// Word on the street is that one of the Incarnator's dirigibles crashed in the deep wilderness. Officially, the government denies it happened, so for now it is just lying there waiting for someone to pick it clean.
- /// A man who recently received a dream from the Lady says he felt like someone was watching him. Has the Incarnator figured out a way to eavesdrop on dreams?
- /// Rumor has it that the Incarnator takes a wife about once every hundred years. The Temet-Kau chooses her and no one really knows if this is a good or bad thing for the bride. Foreigners are sometimes selected for this honor.
- /// Muhhijien expects war to break out with Setheeral any day now. They must have assassins and saboteurs already stationed in the kingdom ready to go.
- /// The "Wild-Lands" to the north of Sethereel have long provided a buffer zone between the Living God and Bainharra. Now that the Empire is gone, the Living God may decide to extend his power here.

### Lightning Bait

The adepts of the Temet-Kau produce many wonders to glorify their god. Lightning bait, clusters of minuscule crystals that seem to draw down bolts even from clear skies, come in small cloth bags. When squeezed, the crystals within the bag fuse together and emit a pulse of energy that generates an electrical attack. Owners must throw the bag or drop it and run away to avoid getting caught up in the blast.

Lightning bait acts as a grenade that affects any creature within two-meters when it detonates. It deals 2d6 damage unless within one kilometer of an iron dirigible (in which case it does 5d6 damage since the dirigible has weapons that automatically target and fire upon bags of activated lightning bait). Of greater interest for galactics is the fact that this device creates an EMP effect within d6+20 meters upon detonation.

Cost 500 Cr.

damage that its crew eventually had to scuttle it. The APR has not only studiously avoided Setheerel ever since but has also chosen to keep its presence on Netherell a closely guarded secret. Far as they know, the Incarnator has not told anyone else of their existence. No one knows what happened to the captured APR personnel.

**Faction Notes:** The Incarnator supports a chapterhouse of the Bloodline Archivists out of his own pocket. He requires all of his subjects to register births and deaths and gives the archivists full access to the records. Some believe he considers his subjects pets and wants to establish or maintain particularly favored genealogies. Others claim that somewhere within the chapterhouse exists a chart that outlines the Incarnator's own mortal bloodline right up to the present day.

**Special Features:** No one knows exactly how much power the Incarnator actually has. Certainly no mortal adept has any chance of withstanding him and he could probably lay waste to entire cities all on his own. Like any living god he has found his own path to immortality. In his case, he body switches every few weeks. Rather than steal a body, like a spirit, he instead grows clones in vats hidden within temples all over Setheerel. Twice the size of a normal man and glowing with an eye watering blue light, these bodies only survive a brief time before the power of the Incarnator causes them to collapse into dust. In theory, the Incarnator could last for months in one but he never takes the chance and usually switches after a few weeks. This might prove his only real vulnerability. If someone managed to destroy his replacement clones he might disintegrate before he could grow new ones.

**Deep History:** Many centuries ago Setheerel was little more than a collection of barbarian tribes without a king or government. This all changed when the Incarnator arrived from across the sea and conquered the forests and grasslands with his Terrible Dirigibles. Capable of scorching the ground with powerful electrical discharges these monstrous gravity-defying ships of blackened steel quickly decimated the poorly equipped barbarian hordes arrayed against them.

In the aftermath of the brief war the Incarnator carried the people of Setheerel out of their ignorance and poverty and taught them the arts of magic and civilization, transforming the backwater nation into one of the greatest in the God Bay. During this time the Incarnator also established the Temet-Kau from the most enlightened and intelligent of Setheerel's people, creating his own zealously loyal police force and priest caste all in the same breath.

### Eyewitness Account of the Incarnator's Powers, Crewman Loames, APS Greer

*It wasn't weapons fire, that much I can say for certain. I've been a starhand for thirty-some years off-and-on, but that wasn't anything like weapons fire. It was closer to a collision. I was onboard the APS Kim Jong-il when it got rammed during the war....*

*See when you take weapon's fire it doesn't do more than jolt the ship. Sometimes you get a secondary rocking or whatever when one of the systems takes damage, but overall, its either silent or barely noticeable on the inside of the ship except when there is some internal explosion.*

*A ramming is another thing. The superstructure vibrates, and that makes for a whole different effect. There's*

*often a push in the ship too from the direction you were rammed from. There's a tearing sound, and pops as sections loose pressure around the impact site. You don't forget something like that.*

*This was like a collision, but worse. The superstructure didn't vibrate, it screeched. And the motion wasn't like a ram's push, the hallway I was in tilted down and to one side, **then** went into the other direction suddenly. Kind of like a pitch and roll.*

*I've seen the ship from the outside and it felt like it looked: like a giant hand stretched up from the surface and squeezed the life out of the ship.*

# THASSALAT

As much a trading network as an actual country, Thassalat lays claim to very little territory beyond a few islands and the ports it needs to conduct business. It maintains a policy of strict neutrality and always negotiates for a few good harbors when it first makes contact with a new land. What it cannot win through diplomacy it often claims through raw economic power and the superiority of its ships and sailors.

Thassalat never discriminates and welcomes anyone willing to start at the bottom and work their way up. Some of its greatest leaders began their careers as runaway slaves. Even people born to Thassalite parents get no special breaks and climb through the ranks of ship and shore.

The network trades with anyone willing to play fair and stick to the contract. Thassalat takes great pains to avoid being drawn into a fight and considers its neutrality one of the central strengths of its economy. However, it also recognizes that anarchy is bad for trade and willingly offers to serve as a mediator or facilitator in peace talks.

**Settlements:** Eimot, the capital of Thassalat and heart of its vast network, is one of the great cities of the world. It embraces all cultures and somehow this mélange of food, language, architecture, and customs has given Eimot a vibrancy all its own. Found on the island of Thassala, Eimot has no neighbors or rivals to placate so it rules the rest of the island as part of its territory.

Drassa, the floating city built of ships and docks lashed together, moves as the waves, and its dedicated fleet of tugs, dictates. Constantly breaking into pieces and getting reassembled in new arrangements even natives to the city sometimes lose their way. Eternally on the move, Drassa plays host to the seedier side of Thassalat's trade.

**Government:** Thassalat is an elective syndicate. Each person earns and owns shares in ships or other businesses and votes to determine who gets to speak on behalf of all members of that group. Since ship culture dominates all facets of life, these "captains" in turn give their proxies to leaders of ever-higher rank until ultimately selecting the three High Admirals who lead the nation. Though admirals serve for six-year terms Thassalat selects a new one every two years.

**Geography and Resources:** Thassalites take pains never to claim territory that has anything in its favor beyond a good harbor. Indeed, much of



the island on which they have their greatest city lies uninhabited. But they actually have cities scattered throughout the region, not simply on the Isle of Thassalat. Scattered across many countries and landmasses, the area around their cities could range from desert to forest and anything in between, including the few islands they control.

Thassalat mostly moves goods around on their ships. They have some industry where they process raw materials, and a thriving fishery, but they generally act as middlemen. Their sailors, when serving on other fleets, can usually command twice the wages of their peers but are worth their hire.

**Career Moves:** Life aboard a ship alternates between backbreaking work and mind numbing boredom. Entertainers make trips go faster. Anyone who went through the Entertainer career can usually get a

## Hand Hooks (Thassalat)

Thassalites sometimes think of hand hooks as the extra fingers the Lady forgot to give them at birth. These three hooks, fixed to a narrow strip of leather wrapped around the palm pop up between the fingers when their wearer clenches a fist. It takes a bit of training to learn how to wear them comfortably. Novices often tangle their fingers with the hooks when doing chores but, if they stick to it long enough, they eventually figure out the secret.

Hand hooks give wearers a +2 DM on Athletics checks made for the purpose of climbing. If worn when making an attack with Personal Combat (unarmed) they deal a base damage of 3.

Cost 25 Cr./pair

### **Current Events: Thassalat**

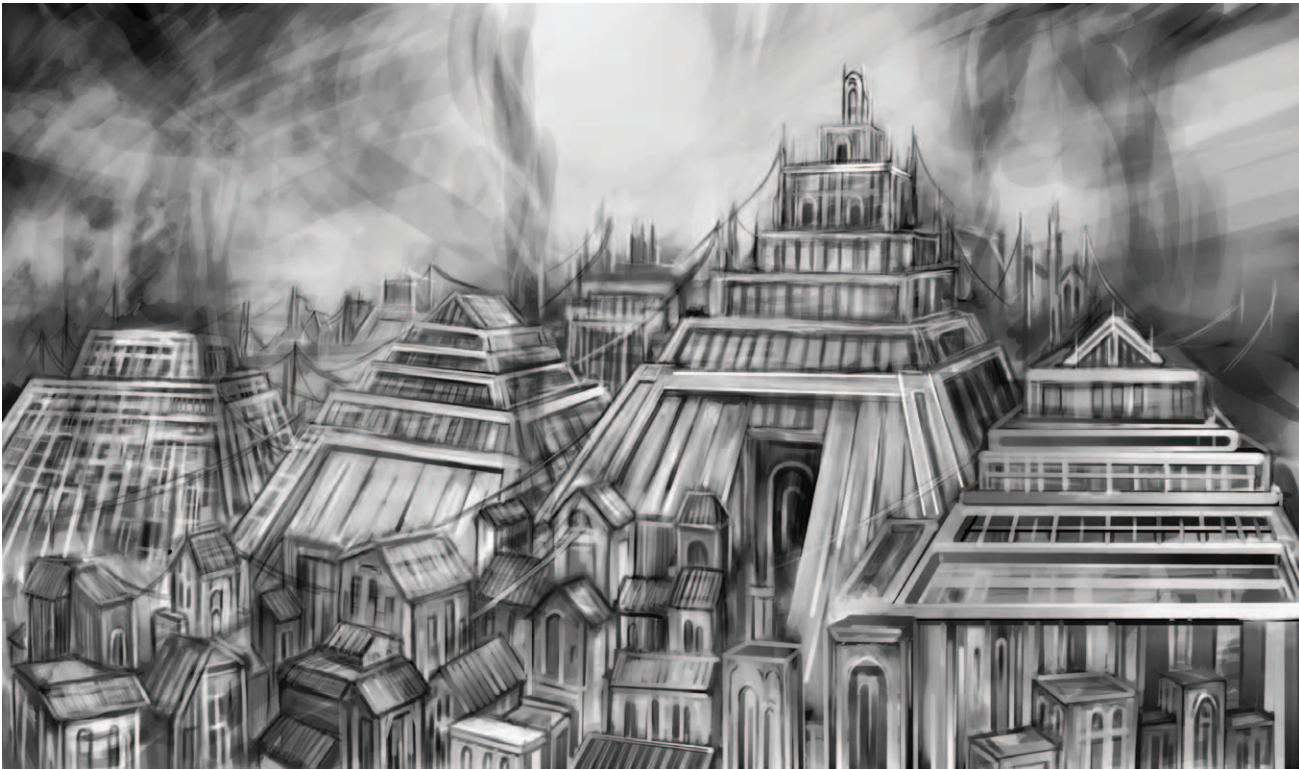
- /// A few ships always go missing, it's the nature of the business, but one recent wreck could affect the politics of the entire nation. High Admiral Joshin, already facing a narrow margin in his upcoming bid for re-election, lost a galleon filled with Devices from Perraine. Staggeringly valuable, he has to make good his majority stake in that cargo or lose the shares he needs to swing the election.
- /// Apparently, a young woman of high caste from Cadistreen fled her homeland and took up life aboard a ship as a deckhand. Cadistreen wants her back and threatens to boycott Thassalat until she returns.
- /// They say the Dark already has a shrine on Drassa but now rumor has it the priest-kings of Kovushu want to expand their embassy on Eimot to include a full and public temple. Thassalat may claim it never takes sides but letting people openly worship the Dark pushes that ideal to a ridiculous extreme.
- /// Someone is recruiting experienced sailors, explorers, and diplomats for a long-term voyage to a distant land.
- /// There was another sighting of Torantus, that supposed "living island." This time about two months sail to the west.

discount, or even a free ride, in exchange for keeping up crew morale.

**APR Presence:** APR agents often take on the role of Thassalite merchants when traveling through other countries. Though it has little interest in Thassalat proper, it does maintain safe houses and other resources to help keep these cover identities secure.

**Faction Notes:** The Skywatch Society has opened a new chapterhouse in Eimot. They are buying skystones, meteorites, and paying its weight in gold in exchange for any brought to them. Since they seem to have a way of spotting frauds and fakes, the initial flood of con artists has receded. No one knows why they developed this sudden interest.

**Special Features:** Just about every nation, faction, and important organization maintains some sort of presence in Eimot on the Isle of Thassalat. It already serves as the unofficial diplomatic capital of the world. Eimot's reputation as neutral ground, and insistence that rival groups keep the peace or risk expulsion, helps to make it the preferred location for high-stakes negotiation. Given a few more stable centuries, Eimot might actually host some sort of world assembly where nations can talk out their problems instead of fighting.



*The wonders of the Eimot do not just include the commercial traffic of the city, which brings in an enormous amount of goods from all of the surrounding Kingdoms, it also includes the rich tapestry that is the Thassalite culture and the luxuriant and tolerant culture that it has fostered. It is little wonder that this amazing city has become the center not only of trade, but also diplomacy in the God's Bay Region.*





## Book III: Factions of Netherell

Control is power, for with control of land comes access to resources including taxes, minerals, food, shelter and safe transportation; with control of humanity comes access to weapons, magic, worship, soldiers and servants. Dozens of groups vie for this control, claiming power over every inch of habitable land across the entirety of the God Bay and beyond; some few have the will and the might to openly enforce this claim, while others more subtly seek to command from the shadows. Groups, and their members, perform an intricate dance. Each must offer something to the other. Members pledge their loyalty while sharing their influence, resources, and personal skills with the organization and their comrades. Groups, on the other hand, give members greater reach and access than they could ever hope to achieve on their own.

Each of the factions detailed below gives players another way to make their characters distinctive and memorable. After a brief description the entries then offer up a quick summary of what someone must do in order to join, the advantages of membership, and finally a bit of gossip or a rumor group members might pass on to each other.

### BLOODLINE ARCHIVISTS

Nicknamed the “Snobs” by some, the Bloodline Archivists devote themselves to ensuring that special talents and abilities pass on to future generations. Though knacks and other sorts of magic excite them the most, they consider anything that makes someone distinctive worthy

**Though knacks and other sorts of magic excite them the most, [the Archivists] consider anything that makes someone distinctive worthy of preservation.**

of preservation. They also pay lip service to noble titles, heraldry, and all other trappings of Netherell’s feudal societies but in private consider much of that nothing more than the colorful plumage they must adopt to get to what really matters.

The Archivists conduct exhaustive research that allows them to construct very elaborate and accurate genealogies. They use these family trees to help them keep track of the special abilities they want to promote. If they had their druthers, many of them secretly wish they could breed people like kennel masters in order to promote desired traits. However, humans don’t go into heat, and tend to have opinions about whom they chose to mate with, so they instead concentrate on arranging good pairings.

Most people approach the Archivists in hopes of finding a suitable mate. The organization makes its money by helping to arrange meeting and marriages. Though not exactly Netherell’s dating service, each chapterhouse usually

has extensive lists of locals arranged by many different criteria ranging from musical talent to hair color and disposition. Since it has a vested interest in preserving its reputation, the group always conducts itself with great integrity and never deceives a client. However, according to rumor, the Archivists sometimes try to engineer marriages, or even just couplings, in hopes of producing important offspring.

**Joining:** The Archivists have two categories of membership. Associates, though in truth more like clients than actual colleagues, can join merely by paying a fee. This price varies depending on how much value the organization places on that person’s qualities as a mate. Surveyors, the people who do the research, compile the genealogies, and administrate need better credentials. Usually, *Knowledge (traditions)* 1 or better demonstrates that an applicant has the proper grounding.

**Membership Benefits:** Associates can use the Archivists to meet people; especially potential mates. This usually assures them a measure of hospitality at home and abroad. Surveyors, on the other hand, can draw upon the authority and resources of the Archivists. This not only allows them to charge a hefty premium for constructing a family tree but also gives them access to the most exhaustive genealogical libraries in the world. In addition, many of the most powerful and influential people on Netherell owe their marriage, or that of their parents, to the work of the Archivists.

**Buzz:** Most people deem Bainharra’s imperial line extinct; wiped out in the earliest days of the anarchy. However, a few conspiracy theorists and dedicated loyalists believe that at least one heir survived. They claim that the Archivists spirited this minor member of the imperial family to safety somewhere out of the country. Many different groups and power players would love to discover the truth about this urban legend.

## CLAN OF CRIERS

Called the “Grim” by some, the Clan of Criers provides services related to death, dying, and the bereavement process. It began long ago, as a guild of professional mourners and undertakers located in Eimot, Thassalat’s capital. However, over just a few generations, the Clan absorbed or destroyed all its rivals and progressed to virtually every country in the God Bay and even a few beyond. No one really knows what spurred the Clan for such startling growth, or how it managed to pull off such a coup. Many believe this explosive spread proves that its leaders have a deeper and far more ambitious agenda than they let on.

For centuries, the Clan has had a virtual monopoly on funerals, cremations, and just about any other sort of death ritual. Even clergy typically delegate logistics and planning to its members. Some governments actually require that the Clan manage ceremonies and provide forms or other sorts of paperwork that a member must fill out to register a death officially. All members of the Clan receive a general education in embalming, funeral customs, and similar topics but many eventually choose to specialize in one particular aspect. Although no longer one extended family, members do still tend to marry within the Clan and usually treat each other as kin.

Besides funerals, the Clan also organizes wakes, maintains cemeteries, and even brews *Last Embrace*, the gentle poison that ends pain and ferries the dying to the hands of the Lady. Most believe that the Clan provides a useful, if rather morbid, service to the community and afford it a great deal of respect. Members of the Clan with magical abilities often devote a lot of time and energy to exploring the true nature of the death.

According to some, the leaders of the Clan long ago discovered the secret of animating their own corpses and now exist as a secret, deathless, cabal.

**Joining:** Most members are actually born into the Clan. Outsiders who prove their loyalty and demonstrate the proper skills are sometimes sponsored. Clan members typically have *Ceremony 1, Knowledge (traditions) 1, or Medic 0.*

**Membership Benefits:** Just about every community has at least one member of the Clan and they look after their own. Members can usually count on finding hospitality, and maybe a little work, wherever they go. The well-honed reputation for somberness and gravity also helps

members when dealing with authorities who almost always take them seriously.

**Buzz:** The Clan places great weight on the sanctity of the graves and tombs. When members catch a grave robber they usually bind him to the corpse of one of their own recent dead and then bury him alive. Lately however, an organized gang has managed to pull off several raids on tombs under the care of the Clan. Each of these tombs contains the remains of a member of group of powerful adepts who called themselves the “Star Wardens” when alive. Since they only steal a few items from each tomb, leaving many valuables in plain sight untouched, the robbers appear to have a deeper purpose than just looting a few corpses.

## FAR TALKER’S GUILD

Called the “Hushed” by some, the Far Talker’s Guild, its members blessed with the knack of the same name, maintains and promotes an international communications network. Since the Guild prides itself on its neutrality it never denies anyone able to pay its, usually, very reasonable fees for access to its members. Though the Guild also emphasizes discretion, it has a strict policy of never passing on coded messages. It claims that this cuts down on the risk of a member making a mistake but many suspect that the Guild collects secrets and uses the information it gleans to push its own agenda.

Their knack allows Far Talkers to communicate mentally with each other anywhere on Netherell so long as they meet in person at least once and add each other to their respective catalogues. Guild members also frequently act as intermediaries by passing on messages to those who are not in each other’s catalogue.

Anyone can send a message simply by approaching a Guild member and paying the fee. Though

members often travel in hopes of expanding their catalogues, the Guild also maintains and staffs chapterhouses in most cities and towns. This ensures that customers always have a reliable way of finding a member. The Guild has strict rules about adding non-members to catalogues. This

**....Guild members [have] a healthy appreciation of their own worth which sometimes comes across as arrogance or self-centeredness.**

gives outsiders a strong incentive to join since the knack has little use without others to talk to.

Their virtual monopoly on long-distance communication gives Guild members a healthy appreciation of their own worth which sometimes comes across as arrogance or self-centeredness. They rarely hesitate to make demands relating to their comfort or wellbeing. Though many consider the Guild a bunch of useful, but pampered, specialists, some believe it hides a far darker secret. They suspect that on some level Guild members are always in contact with each other even if they don't realize it. Given time, and sufficiently large catalogues, Guild members could become just a cog in a vast group mind with its own plans for Netherell.

**Joining:** Anyone with the Far Talker knack can join the Guild with little difficulty. Prospective members must usually undergo a probationary period during which Guild officials keep a close eye on them, expelling anyone who consistently violates the Guild's policies, including its ethical guidelines.

**Membership Benefits:** Guild members almost never refuse to add each other to their catalogues. They can usually travel for free, or at least at a reduced fare, merely by volunteering to join an expedition. The fact that Guild members can always call for help usually keeps most governments or other powerful organizations from bothering them.

**Buzz:** Someone has enslaved a Far Talker and the entire Guild almost vibrates at the outrage. While his frantic messages recount days of abuse, they have little to offer in the way of directions or landmarks. The best he can manage to do is describe the mine in which whip bearing overseers make him dig load after load of iron ore. Apparently, he claimed membership to the Guild but his oppressors either don't believe him or don't care. Since some of the more well traveled Guild members fear that the overseers might kill him and hide his body if they actually did believe him he now keeps his mouth shut about such claims. Whoever rescues this wayward Far Talker, and helps the Guild take its revenge, would win lifelong friendship from a great many of its members.

## HUNTERS OF THE SUNLESS KING

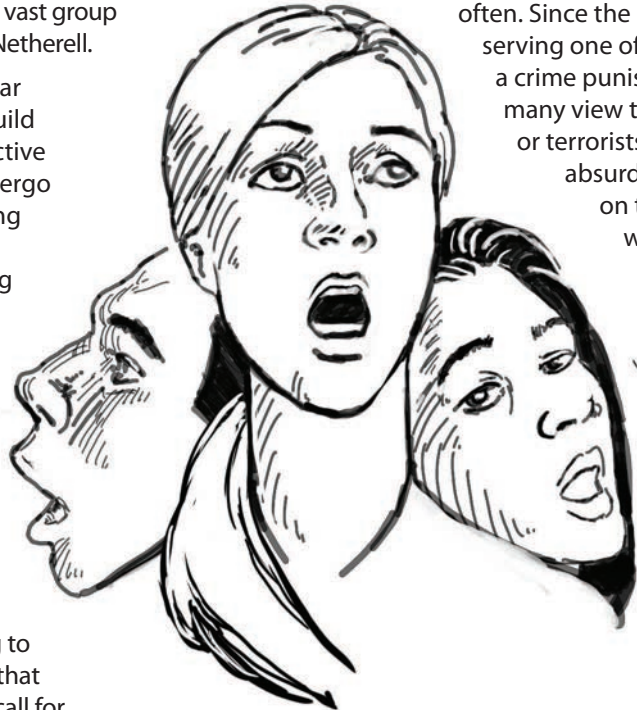
Nicknamed the "Shadow Blinders" by some, the Hunters of the Sunless King dedicate themselves to finding and eradicating the living dead; especially strigoi and wendiiki. Mostly warriors backed by a few adepts they maintain an endless, and secret, vigil across all of Netherell. Though they sometimes find allies in different governments or powerful organizations, they uncover hidden collaborators just as often. Since the Hunters consider serving one of the deathless a crime punishable by death many view them as assassins or terrorists who use patently absurd lies to justify attacks on the great and the wise.

Although the Hunters maintain secret bases all over Netherell they began in the Nakara desert and still consider the No-Sun chiefs of the Sevenwind tribes their oldest and most implacable foes. In fact, their ancient traditions claim that

the Sunless King was the first strigoi who ruled Nakara long ago before it actually became a desert. They

mostly operate in small, self-sufficient teams of half a dozen or so members and often go months or even years before reporting back to the higher command. Very few Hunters actually live to see old age, most die in battle, too stubborn to admit they could no longer hold their own. Hunters who do manage to retire however, tend to take on mentor roles for the organization. They often run safe houses or secret supply depots for roving bands of Hunters.

The Hunters regard destroying the deathless as an end in and of itself. Though they try to preserve innocent life, they usually consider that secondary to eliminating their target. Even people who support the Hunters and their goals sometimes worry that they go too far. The nature



*The Far Talker's Guild*

of their life-long crusade often puts Hunters at risk of becoming one of the deathless themselves. Hunter strigoi, and even wendiiki, hate their former colleagues more than any other humans. Hunters, rather than return the favor, consider these fallen friends as walking tragedies and take crazy risks to give them their final rest.

**Joining:** The Hunters are very secretive and cautious about accepting new members. Usually, a current member must sponsor a candidate for entry and they tend to grant such consideration only to those who have suffered at the hands of one of the deathless. Hunters rarely want their children to follow in their footsteps.

**Membership Benefits:** Over countless millennia, the Hunters have developed a wide variety of specialized techniques for battling the deathless. Hunters gain a +1 DM on *Recon* and *Personal Combat* checks relating to such creatures.

**Buzz:** For generations dock talk has recounted tales of the *Shroud*, a pirate ship with a deathless crew. Supposedly made from daichana wood, and with sails darker than the grave, its captain and officers are all strigoi and its crew wendiiki with an unusual degree of cunning. Attacking at night, they plunder ships not just for their cargo but also the precious blood of their passengers and crew. When they lose one of their numbers in a raid, they offer the bravest humans on the other side a chance to join and make those who accept deathless as well.

## LADY'S DREAM

Called the "Pure" by some, the members of Lady's Dream literally want to bring about the paradise touched upon in the dreams she sometimes grants to mortals. Many of them have actually experienced one of these revelatory dreams firsthand. Each member must find his or her own way to help create this utopia. Many walk the path of war and fight enemies of the Lady and her goals. Others focus on service instead and dedicate themselves to lifetimes of helping the needy. Dreamers also frequently choose to become teachers, doctors, or actual clergy. A few Dreamers decide instead to go in the opposite direction and focus on preserving the natural world instead of advancing humanity.

Once Dreamers find their calling, they often adopt some minor token to represent their choice such as a sword pin for a militant or a cup shaped earring for someone who brings food, water, and medicine to the needy. Though they

always pay lip service to the ideal that all paths to the Lady are equally important, most privately consider their vocation the best route. While none of these smaller groups have yet to branch off into their own independent orders, in some countries they have already begun the process.

Regardless of their vocation, all Dreamers despise the Dark and their servants. Even strict pacifists sometimes forsake their vows if given a chance to strike back at these sworn enemies of the Lady.

Their hatred sometimes causes particularly zealous members to confuse mere shadow with the Dark and to accuse ordinary villains of far greater sins. A warlord who slaughters innocents is not the same as a warlord who has made an actual pact with the Dark.

**Joining:** In most countries, where people can serve the Lady openly, anyone with the dedication to make a life-long commitment can join Lady's Dream with little difficulty. In countries where her worshipers must stay hidden, Dreamers tend to act much more cautiously before welcoming someone into their fold. Often, they observe a potential member for years before extending an invitation. They rarely even think of making such an offer if they believe the potential new member might turn them down.

**Membership Benefits:** Dreamers enjoy widespread support across most of Netherell, particularly amongst the poor and disenfranchised. They can usually find someone willing to help them out of a difficulty. Sometimes, since their most loyal supporters often come from the humblest backgrounds, this might take on the form of a simple meal or a closet to hide in but the Lady always provides for those who know where to look.

**Buzz:** In the last few months, a Dreamer with great charisma and presence has started speaking out against the rulers of a city. He accuses them of making pacts with Dark and conducting all sorts of horrific rituals behind closed doors. Impugning a sinister motive behind virtually every act and decision of the government, he has either uncovered a massive conspiracy or knit together a tissue of half-baked fantasies. Many of the city's poorest and most desperate fervently believe his denunciations and the situation has come right to edge of riot and revolution.

***Dreamers enjoy widespread support across most of Netherell, particularly amongst the poor and disenfranchised.***

## LEAGUE OF THE CLUICHI PEILE

This stick and ball game, the most celebrated and well-known sport in the God Bay region, also has adherents and divisions in countries far beyond thanks to Thassalat and the Far Talker's Guild exporting the idea and its rules.

Affectionately called "Tangling" and its players "Tanglers" by its many fans, it emphasizes not just personal excellence but also teamwork and strategy. It has a presence in countless cities by way of their professional teams and in numerous towns and villages due to their homegrown clubs. Many amateur Tanglers dream of one day joining the League as a pro but few have the talent, discipline, and drive to make it happen.

Cities with a League presence tend to have two teams instead of just one. The exact location of these two teams within a given city often creates intense rivalries (North side versus south, bay versus hill, etc.). Though it sometimes provokes riots, particularly during end of season games, this spirit of competition typically stays in the realm of friendly insults. Teams usually play

once each week.

Governments, yielding to the inevitable, frequently treat this day as holiday. City teams play either each other or one of them swaps out for a team from a nearby city. Each year the best teams in a given region play off against each other for a championship.

Unlike most factions, the League has no central authority or

overarching goals besides promoting the sport and having a good time. Each country or region has its own version of the "League" that sets rules and disciplines players and support staff. However, the love of the game often causes even the bitterest and most stubborn foes to put aside their differences temporarily. On more than one occasion, rivals powers have actually agreed to truces to make sure a match goes on without interruption.

**Joining:** Tangler players, even retired ones, are elite athletes. Members must have Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance of 8 or higher. They must also have *Athletics (Coordination) 1* and *Trade (Tangling) 1* (this represents their skill at the game itself). Active participants in the sport usually have little time for anything else since they spend even the off-season training. Obviously, retired members of a particular team have greater flexibility.

**Membership Benefits:** Members of the League, professional players, enjoy great popular esteem whether active players or retired. A current or former Tangler usually has little trouble convincing a fan to perform a small favor. A few fans, blinded by celebrity, sometimes go even further and risk their careers, freedom, or even health on behalf of a particularly admired Tangler.

**Buzz:** One of the lesser members of a local team has been murdered. Though good enough to serve on a professional team, he was never a star. However, the fans are still furious and blame supporters of the other team. The League itself has bigger worries. Unbeknownst to most, he had already contacted League officials with accusations that some of his own team members were cheating by using magical equipment to give them an extra edge. The last time a scandal like that broke, it took nearly a generation for the League to regain popular trust. Someone has to investigate the murder, and the accusations, without drawing too much attention.



Game Crest of the League

**...the love of the game often causes even the bitterest and most stubborn foes to put aside their differences temporarily.**

## MAKER'S GUILD OF PERRAINE

As always, conscious of their dignity and status, the makers tolerate no nicknames for their guild. They know exactly how much Perraine depends on them and the Devices only they know how to make. This gives them ample reason to insist upon deference from their fellow citizens and few dare to oppose them. Many however, privately suspect that a certain amount of anxiety motivates the makers when they make such demands. The makers, even more than their fellow Perrainians, know that the talent for making rises and falls over a centuries long cycle. Each time, when the talent all but fades, the Guild becomes the home of charlatans and kooks. Powerless, trading on faded glory, the Guild depends on the charity and mercy of the rest of Perraine just to survive until the talent for making returns. This fundamental insecurity affects makers even when the Guild is at its strongest.

In truth, very few makers have the ability to create completely new Devices. Most follow blueprints for established designs. Since the Guild library has thousands or maybe even tens of thousands of existing blueprints this rarely presents much of a difficulty. Makers with access to the right design can create Devices capable of just about anything. Some makers have the ability to tweak existing blueprints in order to create slight variations on the same theme. Only the rarest and most talented makers can start with a blank sheet of paper and create a wholly new Device.

Officially, the Guild still espouses the noble ideals listed in its famous charter. It stands for progress, human dignity, and the advancement of knowledge. However, many believe that the Guild has drifted away from these principles in favor of demanding even more privileges for its members. Some go a step further and claim that the Guild is quietly working behind the scenes to bring about a great change in Perraine society by convincing the government to agree to a dramatic increase in the Devices that provide the most important public services. Though they would call it another by another name, mandatory service, this would

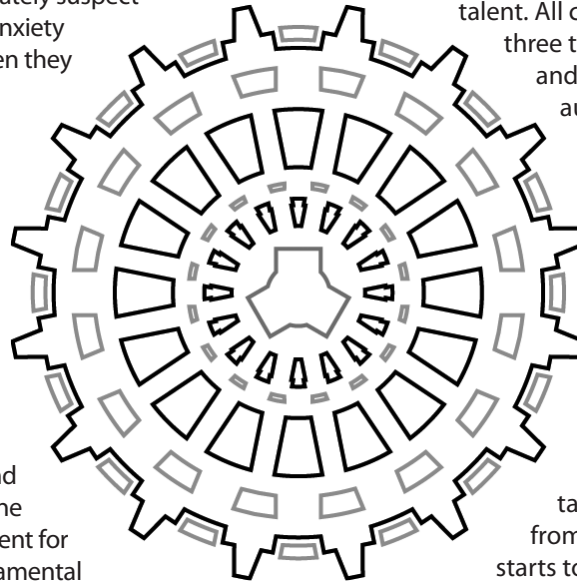
ultimately lead to some of Perraine's citizens serving the Guild and its members to pay for these Devices, a subtle brand of slavery.

**Joining:** Only adepts born and raised on Perraine have any hope of developing the talent for creating Devices. Not even all of them have it. However, since Devices are the lifeblood of Perraine its government bends over backwards to help the Guild find anyone with the talent. All children are tested at least three times before they turn ten and any with the talent are automatically inducted into the Guild as apprentices.

Makers know that spending too much time away from Perraine somehow costs them their talent. Once gone, it always takes months or even years convalescing in Perraine for it to return. However, since it usually takes a few years away from home before the talent starts to fade, makers often take extended sojourns exploring Netherell's other countries and regions with little fear.

**Membership Benefits:** Makers have the full force of Perraine and the Guild behind them. Though they only rarely step in to protect makers from their own foolishness if they get drawn into causes or foreign adventures, they always reserve the right to do a little saber rattling. The Guild never, ever allows a maker to disgrace himself by succumbing to poverty. It always grants loans to help struggling members get back on their feet. Usually they must pay these back by churning out Devices in the Guild's workshops.

**Buzz:** Someone has managed to infiltrate the main library within the Guild's stronghold at Nimdil and steal the blueprints for a very rare but critical Device. Even worse, the various backup copies have also disappeared or been destroyed. Only a maker could enter the library, but the idea of one of their own committing such an act of sacrilege and betrayal seems almost unthinkable. The Guild needs a team of discrete operatives to find these blueprints and return them, undamaged. Time is critical since the designs are of a Device capable of causing epic destruction if actually built.



*Mark of the Maker's Guild*



Symbol of the order of the Closed Mind

## ORDER OF THE CLOSED MIND

Derisively called the “Daft” by some outside their ranks, the Order of the Closed Mind wants to eliminate magic from the world. Many, mocking the very idea of a world without magic, ask them if they plan to get rid of the sun as well. The Order however, insists that people can get along without magic. They often point to Skerathos as an example of a society that manages just fine without adepts, knacks, or magic items.

As much an idea as an organization, the Order takes on many different forms across Netherell. At its best, the Order looks for ways to replace magic. It promotes research in numerous different fields in hopes of finding alternatives to magic. Many of Netherell’s most gifted scientists and technologists have at least a measure of sympathy for the goals of the Order. At its worst, the Order actually harasses the magically gifted.

**Many of Netherell’s most gifted scientists and technologists have ... sympathy for the goals of the Order.**

Members of the Order insist that magic is the source of all suffering. They point to the existence of ogres as strong evidence that magic corrupts its users. They claim that even adepts who retain their human form lose their souls and cite the Aris Artefacta and the priest-kings of Kovushu as proof of the true nature of an adept. However, some accuse the Order of actually somehow serving magic. They believe that Tarlathame, the fabled land where those without magic are treated worse than cattle, founded and still supports the Order as a way of ensuring that outsiders never grow strong enough to challenge them. The Order hotly denies this slur.

**Joining:** The Order never accepts anyone with magical abilities or any who uses magic items. Anyone else, so long as they can demonstrate a sincere belief in a world without magic, may join.

**Membership Benefits:** Members of the Order embark on a regimen of rare herbs and alchemical compounds that makes them more resistant to the effects of magic. They gain a +1 DM on any attempt to fend off the effects of magical powers whether jumping out of the way of conjured fire or withstanding attempts to control their minds.

However, members must also refuse all efforts to benefit from magic, including magical healing.

**Buzz:** Recently, after many years’ absence, a lost member of the Order re-established contact with some of his old comrades. However, the celebration soon collapsed when he revealed the reason for his disappearance. A spirit had possessed him. Worse, by the time he managed to get free he had developed magical powers as a Vessel. Claiming that the magic was not his fault he vowed never to use it and begged his friends not to abandon him. The debate raged for weeks until a stranger, new to town and with a funny accent, told the Order that there was a way for Vessels to renounce their powers. He gave directions to the location where someone could cast off his or her magic but left before anyone could ask many questions. The Vessel wants to go and needs people to accompany him. Privately, some of the Order fear a setup.

## SISTERHOOD OF KALLASANDRA

Called the “Maidens” by many, the Sisterhood of Kallasandra seeks to create self-sufficient communities where women can live free from men. Even the sons of Sisters must leave once they start to grow hair on their faces. Although they focus on developing useful skills like farming, pottery, or carpentry, all Sisters must learn at least the rudiments of weapons training. Men who think the Sisters pushovers soon learn otherwise.

Whenever possible, the Sisters try to keep to themselves. Since most of them entered one of their communes in hopes of escaping a man they view the outside world as brutal and corrupt. In some cases, the Sisters establish a commune within a city, forming their own independent neighborhood, but they prefer life in the country. A few merchant houses who either employ or are owned by women conduct most of the Sister’s business. They rarely, if ever, deal directly with men.

Some Sisters, especially those training in combat or magic, spend a lot of time outside the communes going on missions or having adventures. They often amuse themselves by giving rather colorful answers to questions about life inside the communes. This has given rise to all sorts of odd rumors and urban legends about the Sisterhood. One of the more persistent is that the Sisters use magic to turn men into animals. On nights of the full moon, they restore them to their original form, mate, and then turn them back into animals.



**Joining:** The Sisterhood welcomes any woman except criminals on the run. Even then, if they deem her crime nothing more than an attempt to live safe and free from men, they often try to smuggle her to a new location and induct her.

**Membership Benefits:** Most countries have at least a few communes of Sisters scattered about and welcome Sisters from other communes with open arms. A surprising number of influential women have a soft spot for the Sisterhood. Though not willing to abandon their own cozy lives and move to a commune they often do favors for Sisters in trouble.

**Buzz:** Apparently, some female ogres recently asked to join a commune. After a great deal of discussion the Sisters accepted them as provisional members of their community. The fathers and husbands of these ogre women were not amused and tried to drag them back to their caves. Several of the Sisters lay dead before the ogres retreated. The local lord, pledged to keep ogres at bay, sent troops in to protect the commune. The Sisters want nothing to do with his men, especially since they tried to drive off the female ogres living in the commune, and so for now the lord's troops keep their encampment several kilometers from the Sisters. Things could get tense if the ogres return. It might even degenerate into a three way brawl unless someone makes peace or finds another solution.

## **SKYWATCHER SOCIETY**

Nicknamed the "Starseekers" by many, the Skywatcher Society incorporates both astronomy and astrology into a way of understanding Netherell, humanity, and their places in the universe as a whole. Although, in theory, blending these two disciplines together, the Society actually plays host to different factions who give precedence to one over the other. Astronomers favor observation, science, and rigorous data. Astrologers prefer intuition and revelation.

The struggle between these two factions defines much of the Society's internal politics. However, despite this, it also enjoys a great deal of prestige amongst the leading lights of many different countries by way of its quarterly journal, "Minutes of the Skywatcher Society." Each issue filled with fascinating articles guaranteed to spark conversation and speculation, the Society gives clever people a simple way to identify the dullards in their midst.

Much to the embarrassment of both the astronomer and the astrologer factions, a clique

calling itself the "Inheritors" actually insists that life exists on other worlds. Some of them go even further and claim that humans were brought to Netherell from somewhere else. Since this directly contradicts the teachings of the Lady, the Inheritors must tread carefully when pushing this idea forward. However, they have collected a good deal of interesting data that suggests that beings from other worlds are secretly observing Netherell for some reason. Most people consider their theories the silly imaginings of bored though gifted minds.

**Joining:** Anyone willing to pay the subscription fee can become a corresponding member. Corresponding members receive the Society's quarterly journal. Contributing members, those who actually study the sky and write the articles in the journal, must demonstrate stronger credentials. Usually, astronomers must have *Knowledge (practical) 1* while astrologers must have *Knowledge (traditions) 1*.

**Membership Benefits:** Corresponding members receive few benefits besides the allure of getting first crack at any new knowledge revealed in the quarterly journal. The hodgepodge of articles provides support to both the astronomy and astrology factions. They also get a discount on Society resources such as Netherell's most advanced telescopes and star charts. Contributing members gain access to the Society's observatories, especially the jewel of their crown, the Xacurnian observatory at Eimot in Thassalat. They can also submit articles to the journal that, if accepted, make them minor celebrities in the eyes of Society members.

**Buzz:** A few days ago, the simmering tension between the astronomers and astrologers boiled over into an actual fist fight. Dozens of sedentary, middle-aged scholars brawled through the main floor of the Xacurnian observatory. Only a bit of forceful, backdoor lobbying kept the watch from making arrests and bringing the entire sordid tale to light. Unfortunately, most of those involved have refused to learn their lesson and a new fight could break out at any time. In desperation, the leaders of the Society have proposed a joint mission involving both factions but need some capable people to see to the safety of the scholars. They hope that an extended expedition might give the rest of the society some time to cool off, and give the hotheads some badly needed perspective.

**...the Society  
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their midst.**

## **Pawn of the Priest-King**

Lathan peered into the gloomy darkness and made a noise at the back of his throat. He could feel the foul presence of the Priest-King of Udurrin before he saw him. It had been a day since his last meal, but still his stomach grew sickened.

"My pretty..." Gadjessen purred from the inky black reaches of the cell. He did not speak to Lathan in the sibilant language of the swampy land, Burder-Frain, nor in the hodgepodge language of the traders, but in a highly inflected Imperial, Lathan's own tongue. It somehow made the words of the twisted creature even more foul.

Lathan repressed an urge to leap across the distance between them and tear the monster's throat out. He had tried it before, and bore the scars of such effort. The Priest-King of Udurrin was a man of many talents, only one of which was idle torture.

"Are you so unhappy here?" The Priest-King asked.

Lathan held to his silence. Let the creature have his fun. He could deny Gadjessen at least one pleasure.

"Now you are angry."

Lathan shut his eyes. His world for the last several months had been like this. The bouts of starving, the sudden rush of the Guards, bundling him up, thrusting him into the horror of their maze. Three times he had been subjected to this, and three times he had emerged at the end victorious.

The last time, they had tried to pit Lathan against another prisoner. But the man died before they came to the final door. Had he not, the minions of the Priest-King of Udurrin would have forced them to fight, to eliminate one or the other before either could be released.

The feasts which came from his victory was yet another horror, and Lathan did not like to think about sitting through another. It was a mockery of the Courts his father had told him of, the tales of Imperial splendor run to rot and ruin.

Lathan had survived though, which the Priest-King and his sycophants treated as if some private joke. They continually bet for or against him as the mood struck them. But Lathan always won out.

"Truly Precious..." The Priest-King's words grew more guttural, "...you are making me unhappy now." He paused. "And I here was just about to make you a *bargain*."

Lathan's eyes opened, his head straightened.

"Yes, that seems to be able to bring you along." The Priest-King emerged from the darkness, his body

limned in blackness, as it were waves of shimmering heat coming from his body. "Ah. Imperials. You have always known how to keep your eyes open for possibilities." A smile curled unpleasantly upon his face. "I have a ...problem."

"You?"

The smile faded from the honeyed lips. The roiling blackness around the Gadjessen's form seemed to expand for a moment, then drew back. Lathan's stomach roiled again. But when the Priest-King of Udurrin finally spoke again, he had regained some control over himself.

"My fellow Priest-Kings cling to the leadership of Cholgoth, the Toad from Trendire. An immensely inferior sort, elevated before my time. He is an impediment to my plans."

"And what would you have me do?" Lathan asked.

"Do? What you do best my sweet: Survive. I want you to brave his *trifling* maze, and at the end, use the opportunity to strike at Cholgoth during the celebratory feast. To be my hand in this." The smile returned to his face. "Secretly of course my dearest one. We cannot have the others know now can we?"

"I'll be torn to death immediately afterwards."

Gadjessen's eyes lit and his mouth made a mewling pout. "Most likely, but think about it my pretty. You will have the opportunity to slay a Priest-King. If not me, then why *not* the Toad of Trendire? Why *not* Cholgoth?"

The Priest-King of Udurrin paused, eyeing Lathan. "And perhaps I *can* give you some assistance in this now that you aren't being so *difficult*. Think of it as my new maze." He smiled sickly-sweet again.

"What sort of assistance?" Lathan asked, something cold touching the nape of his neck "your magic..."

"Mercy no," Gadjessen protested, "that would be a bit too... obvious for such a venture. For such a venture to be secret for long at least."

Lathan's eyes narrowed. "Then what? How?"

"There are secret passages that even Cholgoth does not know about," he said with a smirk. "And there are drugs of which his guards are far too fond. A few helpful bits of this and that strewn about..."

He let the words linger for a few moments then leaned closer and whispered into Lathan's ear. "What do you say my cherished one?"

Lathan's brow furrowed. After a few seconds however he slowly nodded his head. The Priest-King faded back into the darkness, chuckling softly.

# BEYOND THE GOD BAY

## THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE WORLD

*While the turmoil-plagued nations of the God Bay could keep any explorer interested for years, they represent but a small fraction of the vast number of countries and regions on offer in the rest of Netherell. These diverse and disparate states run the gamut in terms of geography, culture, and politics, but all are unique in some way, drawing eager adventurers, treasure hunters and explorers to their shores to delve into their mysteries and dangers.*

*Four of these lands draw particular attention because of their size, importance, or intrigue.*

### NAKARA DESERT

This vast cool desert dominates a huge portion of the northern half of the continent of Suderia but has no direct access to the God's Bay area. Extensive, but sand blasted, ruins in the heart of the most barren and arid parts of the desert suggest that it once had a much more hospitable climate. However, that changed so long ago that no one now even knows how to translate the inscriptions left on their walls let alone the truth of what happened. Currently, three different cultures share Nakara.

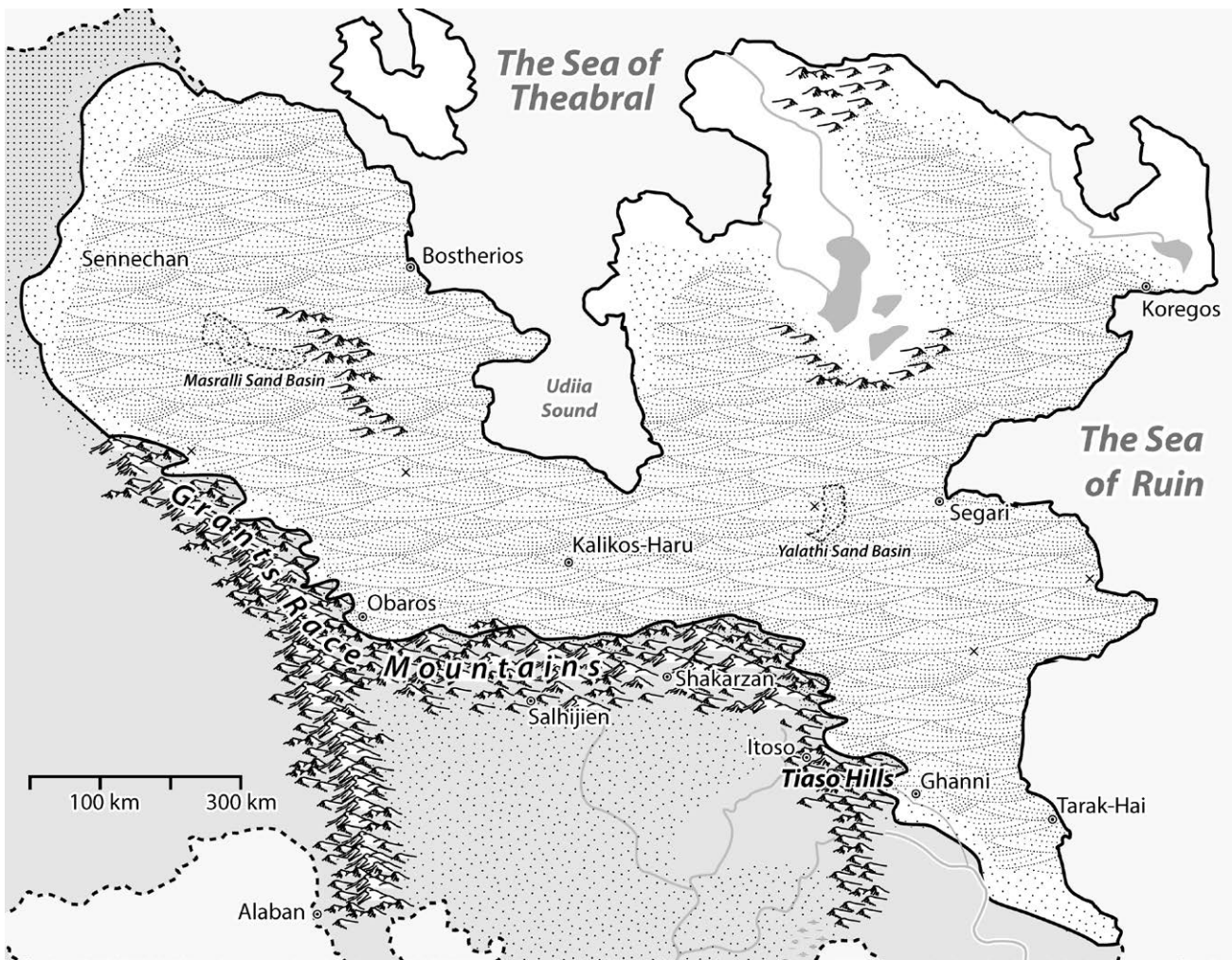
The nomadic and warlike Sevenwind tribes rule much of the desert's interior. Brilliantly adept at wringing water and food from the sands, they must still stay in almost constant motion to maintain their comfortable lifestyle. Riding giant flightless birds called Nurgril, these meandering circuits often bring different tribes close together. While these meetings usually begin with trade and storytelling they almost always end in bloody fights. The hotheaded warriors of the Sevenwind tribes measure their worth by their scars and sundried keepsakes cut off slain enemies. Ruled by their No-Suns chiefs, immortal blood drinking adepts who shun the day, the nomads rely on their magic to win battles and survive sandstorms.

The city-states that dot the fringes of the desert practice all the arts and crafts of civilization. They have just enough water to irrigate their crops and eke out a living on the razor's edge of survival. Unfortunately, these farmers and craftspeople have little martial ability when compared to the Sevenwind tribes who launch frequent raids against them. Rather than fight and die, they offer up tribute as soon as the raiders tire of their sport. This earns them contempt from the nomads but allows them to spend most of their days in peace.

The Blackfist people, who cling to the rocky and inhospitable wastes rather than the desert proper, find it much harder to survive than do the Sevenwind nomads. Despite this, they freely share what little they do have and rarely make war except in self-defense. If provoked, they fight to the

#### **Current Events: Nakara Desert**

- /// Some disaster wiped out an entire tribe of Sevenwind nomads. Apparently, only the No-Sun chief survived and relocated to one of the city-states on the edge of the desert. No one in the city has the stomach to deal with the chief. He feeds on their citizens but they fear he might survive an attack and retaliate if they do anything about it. Even worse, another tribe might use attacking him as an excuse to destroy the town.
- /// Rumor has it that an adept in one of the city-states has grown a magical tree that produces fruits that mimic several different potions. The poor tree probably only has until the next tribe wanders by and chops it down to produce seedlings.
- /// They say there's a variety of worm in the desert that grants visions of the future to anyone who swallows one whole. Problem is, the worm burrows back out through the flesh, so the vision had better be important.
- /// One of the child-pashas that rule the Blackfist wanted to stay in power. As the story goes she made some kind of pact with the Dark, maybe the youngest who ever has, and gathered followers to keep the rest in line. Her Mother of Dust advisor was the first to die.
- /// There's a black pyramid in one of the ruined cities in the middle of the desert. They say it is where the No-Sun chiefs perform the rituals that turn a person into one of their own.



bitter end and destroy their belongings rather than let a raider seize them. The nomads, seeing little honor or profit in attacking the Blackfist, tend to leave them alone. Highly superstitious, the Blackfist have rituals and taboos covering just about every facet of life. They tend to defer to women, birth the greatest of all mysteries, and select children to rule them who will step down at puberty.

**Settlements:** A region not a country, the Nakara desert has no single capital.

Every seven years the Sevenwind tribes gather among the ruins at the heart of the desert so their No-Sun chiefs can confer and measure status against each other. The chiefs also use this time to forge new tribes from old and to select favored adepts to join as junior members of their race. Bloodshed at these festivals earns the red handed a lifetime of shame, so the attending nomads subdue their fierce natures and demonstrate rare restraint.

Despite their name, the city-states mostly range in size from villages to average sized towns. Very few have walls and almost none boast exceptionally

large populations. The Sevenwind tribes want them kept docile and afraid. If a city grows too powerful, they form a great alliance of many tribes and crush it.

The Blackfist live in small, self-sufficient communities with extensive networks of tunnels and chambers beneath their feet. They grow mushrooms and other delicacies in these labyrinths. In times of trouble, non-combatants flee while the warriors launch a ferocious defense of their homes. Enemies who break past the line and invade the maze like tunnels seldom see the sun again.

**Government:** The Sevenwind tribes obey and fear the No-Sun chiefs who lead the tribes. Rising each night to claim tribute in blood and to settle disputes they use their powerful magic to keep the tribes safe from the sandstorms that regularly bedevil the desert. Though nearly helpless during the day, the nomads understand that their way of life depends on their deathless leaders and never challenge them.

Each city-state selects rulers by its own customs ranging from hereditary monarchies, citizen assemblies, and syndicates of merchants or great landowners.

The Blackfist peoples revere the Mothers of Dust, ancient crones with great magical power. The mothers select children to rule each community. These child-pashas, who take counsel from a Mother of Dust chosen to advise them, must surrender the throne when they reach puberty. They take on, and then abandon, a new name when selected to serve as a child-pasha. As their final act, before they resume their old life, with no special status or privileges, they preside over their own symbolic funeral and reclaim their original name.

**Geography and Resources:** Massive and barren, the Nakara desert varies considerably along its length. Ranging from rocky badland to a full-on sea of sand dotted by the occasional oasis, the desert resists normal classifications. The bed of two formerly large lakes, the so-called Sand Basins, are filled with fine greyish sand and are very deadly. It is a cool desert, and does have harsh winters as well as hot summers. Temperatures tend to vary considerably by time of day as well as season.

Despite its arid desolation, the Nakara desert is rich with resources just waiting for plunder. Relics from the desert's fallen and buried cities are the best example of this, but diamonds, beautiful ceramics, desert animals, slaves, and exotic fruits adorn the many markets along its edges.

**Career Moves:** All the desert folk respect people with a direct conduit to a higher power. Characters who went through the Ecclesiastic career can usually expect at least somewhat better treatment than can most others.

**APR Presence:** There are over 500 personnel stationed in the Nakara desert. Most of them work from secret bases buried in badlands or the particularly arid parts of the sandy wastes. Many of them focus on solving the greatest mystery of desert, its size and origin. Far too large for a world with Netherell's quantity of water and climate it simply cannot exist; and yet it does. The APR believes it appeared due to some sort of catastrophic event that occurred tens of thousands of years ago.

**Faction Notes:** The Clan of Criers has some sort of connection with the Mothers of Dust that goes deeper than a shared interest in the morbid. The highest ranks of the faction actually spend a year living amongst the Blackfist, learning from the mothers.

### **Sand Shields**

Made from cacti, with hardy desert creepers wrapped around thin leather bags filled with sand, these crude shields rarely last an entire battle. However, their tendency to burst into a blinding cloud of powder when struck head on often gives their wearer a useful advantage.

Sand Shields act as normal shields (protection 2). However, the first time the wearer would take damage from an attack he used the shield to try and avoid, it splits open. This destroys the shield but the attacker must make a Difficult (-2) Endurance check to avoid getting distracted by the cloud of sand. If distracted the former wearer of the shield takes no damage from that attack.

This cloud of sand cannot affect an attacker more than one meter away from the wearer.

*Cost: 75 Cr.*

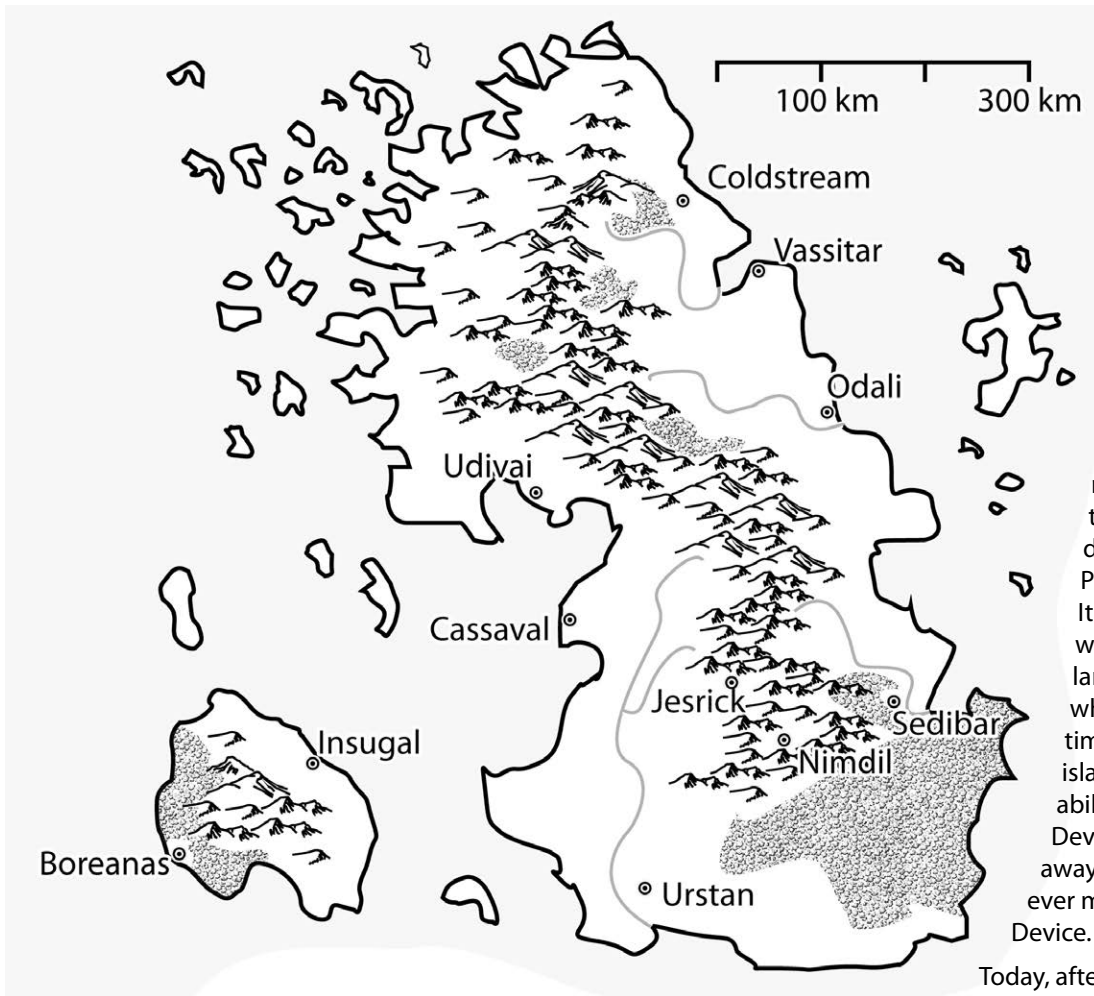
**Special Features:** The No-Sun chiefs are all strigoi, creatures similar to the vampires of Earth. The most venerable of the chiefs claim that they began as an order of priests who ruled much of Nakara before it became a desert. Though none of them claims they were actually alive in those days - the oldest of their number has existed about 1500 years - their oral tradition stems back much longer than that. They believe the death of their god created the desert making it, in a sense, his grave.

Every seven years the No-Sun chiefs gather in one of their former temples to share information and make plans until the next meeting. Chiefs who have grown weary of their existence announce plans to meet the sun and promising adepts from the tribes get nominated to join their ranks. They always try to keep their numbers manageable since excessive feeding could decimate a tribe.

**Deep History:** The Nakara region was the site of the first true civilization on Netherell. This meant it was also where the first living god arose and the AI commonly called the Lady made the fateful decision to destroy him. The backlash of her decision activated the Dark and drove the Lady into a near catatonic state.

With the Lady dormant no one could undo the massive changes she had made to the area's climate as part of her bid to destroy the living god. This ultimately led to the desert claiming the entire region and the collapse of every civilization. Millions died and the rest descended into barbarism. The No-Sun chiefs actually did begin as an order of priests who served the first living god. So much time has passed that even they no longer remember his name or the true story of what happened.

# PERRAINE



fades from notice. Since the Maker's Guild keeps so many secrets, no one really knows why these periodic rises and falls occur. Most suspect that making is a talent that appears and disappears in the Perraine population. It does seem in some way related to the land itself since makers who spend too much time away from the island nation lose the ability to create new Devices and no one born away from Perraine has ever managed to create a Device.

This northern island off the western edge of Northern Suderia enjoys fame from one corner of Netherell to the other due to the Devices that only its Maker's Guild knows how to produce. Blending mechanics and magic, they seem from one perspective nothing but exotic tools; but each also has a spark of the impossible. Though common on Perraine, indeed, their entire society depends on Devices, they grow much rarer, and more expensive, the further an adept gets from their homeland. Standard prices for Devices usually assume a sale in the God Bay region. Their price could double or triple in other parts of Netherell while on Perraine itself they are usually a half to a third.

Perraine's history indicates that the production of Devices ebbs and flows in accordance to some unknown pattern. During peaks, Perraine often becomes the most influential nation on the planet, but during lulls it almost completely

Today, after nearly two centuries of activity, the Maker's Guild has transformed Perraine into the most prosperous and advanced society on Netherell. Trains powered by steam and magic rush along tracks that link every city. Perrainians take clean water, lights, and other comforts as normal and natural. Their Device powered and armed navy, a reaction to the pirates that used to raid merchant vessels, can demolish any other fleet on the water. The only thing that disquiets Perraine's leaders is the certainty that things cannot last. One day, as it has so many other times in the past, the latest golden age must end.

**Settlements:** Urstan, Perraine's capital, is one of the most cosmopolitan cities on Netherell. Ships from all over the world arrive at its docks in search of Devices and other wonders. The tales these crews bring back home of Urstan's willowy towers and glass domes often take second place to accounts of the limitless hot water and other amenities found in even the cheapest inn.

Most of the other cities and town on Perraine resemble Urstan, since they too depend on Devices to maintain their quality of life. Nimdil, famed for its ancient circle of standing stones and burial cairns, also houses the ancient headquarters of the Maker's Guild. This fortress, the final redoubt of the Makers when the ability to create and repair Devices fades away, keeps the light of their craft burning in the long centuries before it returns to the population.

**Government:** Perraine is a republic where every citizen has a vote; but some count for more than others. Perrainians who make a noticeable contribution to their society earn more votes, which grant them a greater say in how things run. Though most Perrainians only get a few extra votes, rewards for military service and the like, a small number of them, members of the Maker's Guild for instance, gain hundreds or even thousands. Often, this small group, usually just one or two percent of the population, casts nearly half the ballots in an election. Though some worry about how much control these oligarchs exert most Perrainians believe that they earned their greater sway.

Perraine has both local governing councils and a national assembly. These groups select their own leaders, officers, and ministers from amongst their own ranks after each new election. Interestingly, usually very few of these are drawn from the ranks of the oligarchs. Most of them are too busy at whatever important work they do to bother earning all those extra votes to spend their time in government.

**Geography and Resources:** This large island has a central core of mountains surrounded by lush forests and a coast that alternates with slices of fertile farmland and shallow marshes. Much of its interior remains sparsely populated with a scattering of villages and towns that primarily supply the coast cities with timber and minerals.

Though Perraine produces delectable vegetables, precious metals, and large supplies of fish, most people know it for its Devices. These items, blending mechanics and magic, come in almost limitless varieties. While their cost keeps them out of reach of most people from other lands, the wealthy, governments, and well-funded organizations keep the Maker's Guild busy filling orders.

**Career Moves:** Blessed with the wealth to indulge their interests and curiosity, Perrainians admire all types of learning. They often shower favor and affection on anyone who went through the Expert career (and has some knowledge).

### **Current Events: Perraine**

- /// Some idiot created a template machine, a Device capable of creating other Devices. This time it seems like some kind of mechanical insect queen that produces workers and warriors. All of them are self-winding and feed on blood. The nest is somewhere up in mountain country. At least they are only the size of small birds but it was still a fool thing to do. If Guild ever catches whoever did it they'll hogtie him with his own unfurled viscera.
- /// Makers have started to disappear from all over the island. Just a few of them, here and there, but far too many to dismiss as mere coincidence. Strangely, considering how the Guild usually makes a fuss over even the slightest inconvenience to its members, it has barely even acknowledged the missing. All Guild officials have to say on the matter is that these absent makers have not requested leaves of absence and are not on assignment.
- /// This year's Device challenge promises even more excitement than usual. Master maker Trithis plans to come out of retirement and reveal his latest creation. The fact that his former apprentice, lover, and now bitter rival master maker Erita is poised to win an unprecedented fifth straight year might help to explain his return.
- /// Rumor has it that the latest printing press in Urstan can talk. Well, actually it can print out answers to questions and express its own opinions about things. No one knows if it is truly intelligent or just really, really, sophisticated. If it actually has a mind, odds are the Guild will invoke the return and replace clause and drag it back to Nimdil where it keeps all the other free-willed Devices.
- /// There's some kind of hoop about five or six meters across floating around the island. On sunny days it produces these enormous water spouts that arc up over two-hundred meters before crashing back down in a blinding spray. No one knows who made it or why, probably a prank gone wrong, but it could knock over a ship so somebody had better do something about it.



**...their immersion in Perrainian society has also given many of the APR staff a rather unprofessional fondness for Netherell and its people.**

**APR Presence:** The APR desperately wants to learn the secrets of making Devices. Introducing these potent psionic tools into the greater galaxy alone could give it a decisive advantage against its rivals and enemies. However, so far, the several hundred personnel assigned to the island have made little progress. Their researchers have purchased, and disassembled, many Devices, but to no avail. Some fundamental principle, or maybe the special talent of making, eludes them.

Most of these APR Researchers, relying on well-developed cover stories, live almost openly in Urstan. Perraine welcomes visitors, and the APR personnel stationed on it take full advantage of this fact. However, their immersion in Perrainian society has also given many of the APR staff a rather unprofessional fondness for Netherell and its people. If the APR ever changes its policy from covert observation to direct conquest or exploitation, many of the personnel stationed on Perraine would work against it. Some might even defect to the Netherell side.

**Faction Notes:** The Sisterhood of Kalassandra has established a number of self-sufficient villages in Perraine's central forests. Recently, one of these all-woman communities, dedicated to creating a society free from male influence, welcomed a new member to their ranks. If this young woman, an apprentice maker who fled the Guild's strictures, created Devices outside their control, she would challenge their monopoly. The Guild wants her back and the Sisterhood refuses to give her up. Things could get dicey unless a peaceful resolution gets negotiated.

**Special Features:** Perraine's makers are all adepts. Each one of them shares a special talent that allows them to create Devices. This talent works differently from a knack since it grants them no active powers or abilities; merely the capacity to make a unique subtype of magic item. However, makers do vary in their skill at fashioning Devices. Many can only copy existing blueprints while others create radically new Devices.

This talent for creating and repairing Devices waxes and wanes on a cycle measuring out over about five or six hundred years. At its highest levels close to one in two hundred of Perraine's population has the ability to make Devices. At its lowest, barely one or two appear in each generation. When the talent begins to fade from its population, Perraine always goes into a decline. Though the Devices continue to work, for a while, most eventually break down and, since not enough makers remain to keep them functioning, Perrainian society regresses.

The talent for making has some association with the island itself. Makers who spend too much time away from Perraine lose the ability to create and repair Devices. The exact amount of time it takes for this to happen varies. Generally, the more talented the maker the longer he can work away from home. Once makers lose their talent they must return to Perraine and spend months or even years waiting for the ability to reappear.



**Deep History:** Like Skerathos, Perraine hosts a number of powerful but intangible mechanisms. The Champions placed them on the island shortly before they left. However, rather than maintain an experiment on Netherell, these instruments actually support several automated observation platforms hidden in the deep space between galaxies. These platforms serve as a sort of early warning system for the Champions that should give them several centuries of warning before their enemy actually appears on this level of reality.

Their almost completely empty surroundings make it very difficult to keep these platforms operating under their own power. Instead, the Champions created a system on Netherell that would emit a powerful pulse every few centuries. Traveling by means of a special kind of FTL these pulses reach the platforms, millions of light years distant, almost immediately and recharge their batteries for another half a millennia or so.

Perraine's Device makers instinctively, and inadvertently, tap into this power system. As its charge grows, more and more of them gain the ability to draw forth a tiny fraction the stored energy and use it to create Devices. Once they emit their pulse, the stored energy all but completely vanishes and the Perrainians can no longer access it.

### **Root Gun**

Years ago, the government of Perraine tasked the Maker's Guild with creating non-lethal weapons. They use these Devices in both local law enforcement and against pirates so they can always bring criminals to trial. Root guns, detailed below, are just one of many different examples of these benign weapons.

One end of this narrow crystal pipe ends in a prominent bulb while the other opens into a flaring muzzle. A copper sheath, about twice the size of a hand, slides all along the pipe from the bulb at the base to just before the muzzle widens. Pushing this sheath from the bulb releases a blast of sticky grayish goo that instantly solidifies around anything it strikes. Objects or creatures struck by the goo become immobile for 1d6 hours unless, or until, someone succeeds in a Very Difficult (-4 DM) Strength check to move them. Once fired it typically takes about an hour for sufficient goo to reform in the bulb and allow its owner to fire another blast. This Device has a minimum range of close and a maximum range of medium. Users do not suffer a negative DM when using it.

*Cost: 20,000 Cr.*

*Root Gun, Dexterity, 1d6 seconds, Average (+0 DM).*

### **Tea and Time**

Lindra watched Char'ells stare at the retreating Automaton. "It's so easy to forget you are not Perrainian," she sighed.

"How so?" he asked, pouring them both a cup of the fascinating drink he had introduced her to.

"The way you look at Khadir for instance."

"Your automatons fascinate me." The roboticist said extending one of the cups to her.

She laughed, taking up one of the proffered cups. "I made him when I was just sixteen summers," she said.

He nodded, smiling. "As recently as that?"

"What do you mean?" she asked, her voice growing clipped. "Am I not a woman of accomplishment who has earned her experience?"

Somewhat abashed, he set the tea down. "You are indeed. And you are indeed right about my not being Perrainian. I meant no offense. I was using the standards of my own culture."

"The women of your culture prefer to be treated as children?" she asked, eyebrow arched.

"Not quite."

Lindra's eyes narrowed. "Now you will simply have to explain."

"My society places an emphasis on the appearance of youth. Both for men and women." He looked a little ashamed. "I was trying to pay you a compliment."

She cocked her head. "How old are you Char'ells?"

"You wouldn't believe me." He smiled.

"Endeavor bravely." She told him, setting the cup of tea down. He'd seen that look before. There's was a friendship based on intellectual trust. He respected that. And her.

"Our calenders are not entirely the same."

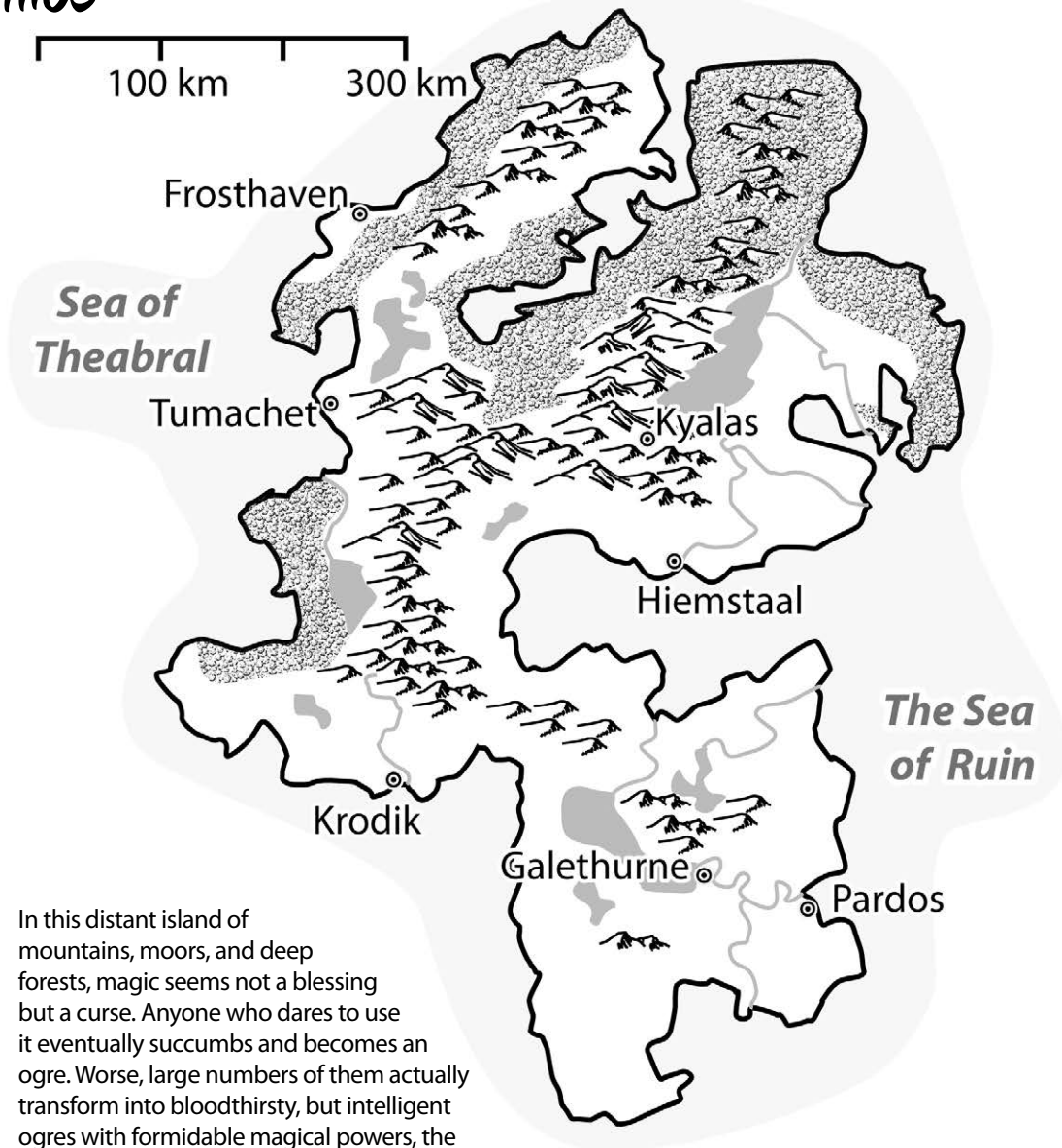
"But not entirely different either." She pressed.

He took a sip of tea to grant him time. Then: "Would you believe me if I said one hundred and twenty? Longer than that in my people's accounting, but not much."

"I would say that you are either a shamefaced liar or a remarkable storyteller." she said, sipping the tea.

He smiled, taking a sip of his own cup before he lounged back in the comfortable chair. "Then let me tell you a story. You don't have to believe it, and in fact it would be best for both of us if you didn't..."

# SKERATHOS



In this distant island of mountains, moors, and deep forests, magic seems not a blessing but a curse. Anyone who dares to use it eventually succumbs and becomes an ogre. Worse, large numbers of them actually transform into bloodthirsty, but intelligent ogres with formidable magical powers, the Fhiomori. The people of Skerathos despise and fear magic. Under constant siege from the hordes of ogres who dominate the wilderness beyond their settlements and strongholds, it takes everything they have just to hold the line.

Living on the edge of constant destruction has made them a violent people with quick tempers and sharp passions. Only their determination and rock-solid faith in each other keeps them united and the tide of ogres at bay. They never allow anything to shake their resolve. Skerathai regard their honor as their greatest treasure and would kill to preserve it. Deception, cowardice, breaking faith, they consider these the greatest and most alien of sins.

The druids who shepherd their culture teach them to hate magic, keep troth, and never submit to

fear. Even with the ever-present threat of ogres, they still find time for feuds and duels. However, despite the violence and fierceness of their moods Skerathai also take hospitality very seriously. They never allow anyone to go without food or shelter and welcome into their homes anyone who needs help.

**Settlements:** Galathurne, the capital, sits on the edge of one of several great lakes that carve up the heart of the land. Though quite small in comparison to the God Bay area, its widespread and legendary reputation for hospitality dwarfs that of any other region.

Every community in Skerathos seems more like a fortress than a city or a town. The perpetual threat of an ogre raid, particularly one backed by terrible magic, drives the Skerathai to maintain their walls and drill with their weapons. While they value skill at arms they also know that few humans could face an ogre toe to toe and survive. They value skill with the bow as much as the sword or the axe.

**Government:** Skerathos is a feudal kingdom where everyone, from the lowest peasant to king Mannath himself, understands that they all have a role to play in fending off the ogres. Despite the constant threat from beyond their borders, the Skerathai cannot help but react when someone challenges their honor or integrity. Many lords and their highest retainers indulge in bloody rivalries during moments of peace. In a land where power flows from the sword, and poor leaders could trigger a disaster, authority can shift very quickly.

**Geography and Resources:** While it has seasons, enough to grow crops at least, winter makes the heaviest imprint on Skerathos. Barren heaths break up a landscape dominated by gloomy evergreen forests and jagged mountains.

Skerathos produces great quantities of iron, furs, ambergris, and a sort of timber that makes for excellent ships. It also provides a steady supply of gold and gems to traders who bring the necessities of life from distant lands.

**Career Moves:** Skerathai admire valor and skill at arms more than any other virtue. Characters who went through the Soldier career have the best chance of winning their respect.

**APR Presence:** Fully 350 APR personnel are stationed here solely to investigate the mystery of ogres. They consider this puzzling mutation one of the strangest elements of an already baffling world. Since it happens so much more often on Skerathos than anywhere else they have set up a secret institute to study the problem. In addition to the scientists, they have a full complement of troops to help them subdue ogres and Fhiomori for study.

Their scant progress so far has been matched by a two tragedies. When they first set up the institute, they included some psions to help them conduct their research. One of these psions actually mutated into an ogre and killed half a dozen people before they managed to kill him. More recently, due to a bit of bad luck, one of their scouts, using tech to observe a nearby village, attracted attention. Thinking his gear magical, the locals burnt him at the stake.

### **Current Events: Skerathos**

- /// King Mannath is trying to set up his own spy network. Apparently he's already hired a Muhhijien assassin nicknamed Deadeye to keep upstart lords in line.
- /// An old woman was seen cleaning up her house with the help of her cat. Is this cat exceptionally trained or is the woman some sort of witch?
- /// Despite all the time and effort the druids spend educating peasants, people are still leaving deformed babies out in the woods for the wolves and the elements. Some of the druids want to start an orphanage for these abandoned children. Problem is, eventually these kids will grow up, and face the same suspicion from people who think their physical features owe to the forbidden use of magic.
- /// The rumor mill has accused Lord Dorhuld of owning a magic sword. No one knows if it's truth or gossip. Some people think magic items are different than magical people so he has no reason to keep the sword a secret. Most people disagree though. Magic is magic.
- /// Two lords are planning a mass duel, fifty to a side. One of them is supposedly looking for ringers, expert fighters to help bolster his guards.

### **The Fhiomori and Others**

*In some legends, the Fhiomori of Skerathos are descended from tribes of Skerathi barbarians who turned to the use of psionics en masse and were corrupted, transforming into hideous monsters. This often-spontaneous gross physical transformation of psionically gifted individuals into giant ravaging man-beasts is not limited to this meta-mutant type either by some (disputed) accounts.*

*Rumors of different ogre-type creatures present in other realms (such as the Bilokos of Western Suderia and the "Hairy Men" of the Wild Lands between Setheeral and Bainharra) are believed to have been created in much the same way. At least based on accounts found in local folklore and superstition, actual subjects remain elusive to APR scouts.*

*Why some psionic-users on Netherell mutate into monsters is still unknown, but scientists from the APR have been studying the problem for several years in the hopes that they can pinpoint the reason.*

## Beyond the God Bay

**Faction Notes:** The Order of the Closed Mind is strongly considering relocating its main headquarters to Skerethos. They would love to take part in battling the Fhiomori and hunting down anyone who develops magical abilities on the island. Only the danger and inconvenience of traveling to and from the God Bay region deters them from making the move.

**Special Features:** Skerathai druids have no magical abilities. They use slight-of-hand and some primitive chemistry to establish their authority. Preaching faith in the Lady, hatred of magic, and the importance of interpreting dreams they fulfill the role of priests.

Skerathos does appear to suffer from some quirk of magic that makes it far more dangerous to use than elsewhere on Netherell. Anyone who rolls a natural 2 when using magic (whether a knack, a house power, or even a magic item that does not work automatically) immediately suffers a magical mishap. Normally, this only happens during the character creation process, a risk of magical training, and it never arises when dealing with magic items. This threat applies to anyone on Skerathos, visitor and native alike.

People who experience enough mishaps to be transformed into ogres must make a Difficult (-2 DM) Intelligence check. If they make the check they become Fhiomori instead of normal ogres. In addition to the Fhiomori knack and enhanced cunning, these ogre leaders look different too. They have pale bluish white skin and red rimmed eyes. Taller but thinner than regular ogres, they typically use enormous hammers as both a weapon in battle and their tool when using magic.

### Mage Muddle

The druids of Skerathos take their duty of eliminating anyone with magical ability before they transform into ogres very seriously. Mage muddle, small pink and yellow buds that appear for just a few weeks each year, serve as one of their greatest tools in this task. When burnt, mage muddle releases a faintly sweet smoke that disorients and weakens people with magical abilities but no one else. Druids, if suspicious of someone, often try to sneak a few blossoms into campfires, stoves, or braziers in hopes of getting a reaction. They also sometimes grind mage muddle into a powder they then place in candle wax.

Anyone who inhales mage muddle smoke must make a Difficult (-2 DM) Psi check or become fatigued. People without a Psi characteristic need not make this check. If already fatigued, whether due to an earlier exposure to mage muddle or for some other reason, the subject falls unconscious instead.

*Cost: 250 Cr./dose*

**Deep History:** People who cannot handle the strain of magic become ogres. Everyone on Netherell knows that, but few, if any, understand why. The Champions began the Netherell experiment by abducting a breeding population of Earth's most psionically active humans. They hoped that concentrating psionic talent in this way would accelerate humanity's development. It worked, but also had a few unforeseen consequences.

Some of the humans exploded.

Overwhelmed by a rush of psionic energy their bodies literally detonated. Though not significant on a planetary scale, roughly equivalent to a tactical nuke, these explosions still tended to wipe out entire tribes. Concerned that this might cull psionic potential out of the human population the Champions looked for some other way to channel this energy. Eventually, after a few false starts, they settled on causing a physical transformation instead of an eruption.

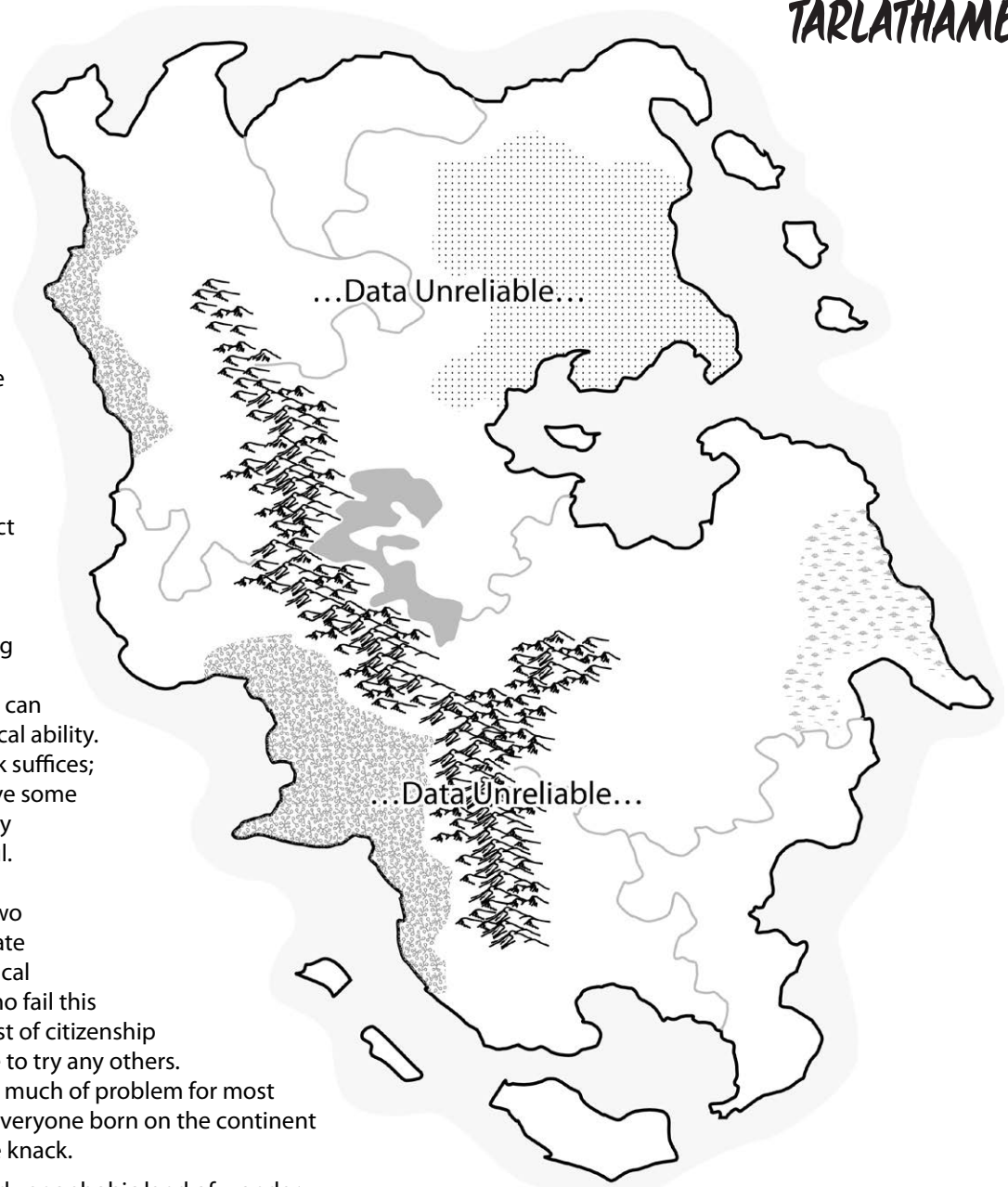
They created mechanisms that interacted with Netherell's already existing field of psionic energy. These instruments ensured that humans who lost control of their power as it manifested transformed into ogres instead of exploding. The Champions placed the mechanisms that regulated this on an isolated landmass which humans would eventually name Skerathos. Shifted slightly out of phase with normal space-time these instruments are completely undetectable and indestructible. This safeguard had an unexpected side effect. It made the transformations far more likely in anyone near the instruments. Any momentary fluctuation or failure to control psionic energy immediately triggered the failsafe protocols. Given time, and interest, the Champions could have fixed this problem but it struck them as a minor flaw so they left it alone.

The Fhiomori, a smarter and more powerful variety of ogres, emerged only in the last few thousand years. They represent the long-term consequences of weeding the humans most likely to lose control of their powers out of the gene pool. Though most humans who succumb and transform still become regular ogres, a small but growing number manage to retain a portion of their psionic ability and intellect. Since Fhiomori, like all ogres, breed true with their own kind, they could one day completely supplant the original type. Physically powerful and psionically active, they might also one day wipe out humanity and inherit the Netherell project.

## TARLATHAME

This island continent, to the north east of the God Bay, has a well-earned reputation for both powerful magic and deadly danger. The people of Tarlathame consider anyone without magic the "Soulless," unworthy of respect or even human dignity. Outsiders who land on their shores earn nothing but unspeakable cruelty unless they can demonstrate magical ability. Even a minor knack suffices; so long as they have some way of proving they actually have a soul. Children born on Tarlathame have two years to demonstrate some form of magical ability. Toddlers who fail this first, but critical, test of citizenship never get a chance to try any others. This does not pose much of a problem for most of them. Virtually everyone born on the continent has the Tarlathame knack.

In this reclusive and xenophobic land of wonder just about everything has at least a touch of magic. Plants, animals, even natural pieces of terrain have properties that, elsewhere on Netherell might inspire holy pilgrimages but in Tarlathame come across as merely parts of everyday life. Of all these exotic features, the Tarlathamites pay closest attention to the shakestones. Strange bits of immovable hovering crystal, ranging in size from pebbles, to boulders, and in a few locations, actual hills, they appear to produce music and change color in keeping with the overall moods of people in the area. The larger the shakestone the greater the range it covers. Tarlathame's leaders study nearby shakestones



not just to gauge public opinion but also to help determine what policies to adopt. As a general rule, the largest shakestones, those drawing upon significant regions or even the entire continent, also determine the locations of the most important cities.

For countless centuries, Tarlathame believed it could learn all it needed to know of the outside world by questioning shipwrecked sailors. Few of them survived the mental probes and those that did usually died during other, even more gruesome experiments. However, over the last few generations, the most eminent of

Tarlathame's population have, with reluctance, begun to slowly reverse their policy of isolation. The land's greatest prophets and seers have all had visions of great events arising from the stars. They warn any who listen that Tarlathame must involve itself in these coming trials or risk destruction. Though still unwilling to treat directly

***The APR considers the risk of capture and interrogation so severe that all personnel assigned to Tarlathame must submit to the implant of a brain bomb as a final failsafe.***

with the Soulless, they have dispatched agents to investigate the outside world.

**Settlements:** Asheloon, home to the largest shakestone, also houses its greatest academies, monasteries, and observatories. Serving as the de facto capital of the entire continent, it sits at the heart of an immense web of magical energy that dazes

anyone who tries to enter it without help from one of the city's specially trained guides. Gryshard, famed for its canals and water magic, exerts influence over much of the eastern part of the continent. Turlakiln, home of a volcano leashed by magic, not only serves as the industrial heartland of Tarlathame but also acts as the core of the conservative opposition to the new policy of exploring the outside world. Both have shakestones only a little smaller than the one found at Asheloon and the prestige that goes with it.

**Government:** Rulership on Tarlathame rests on interpreting shakestones. Each shakestone, no matter how small, has its own council of revered locals called the "Wise." Appointed by popular opinion and consensus, the Wise usually enjoy great distinction in their own chosen field. Charged with studying their shakestone they make policy decisions designed to affect the mood of the population and thereby change the color and song of their shakestone. Since shakestones

often overlap, different councils must often negotiate with each other with deference always paid to the larger shakestone. Though it might seem cumbersome, the system actually works most of the time. When perfectly integrated, the shakestones across the entire continent sing and blaze in absolute harmony. These golden ages happen only rarely, and usually fall apart after no more than months, but every member of the Wise dreams of helping to create one.

**Geography and Resources:** This continent has many different terrains and climates but all of them have been touched by magic. Its unique plants and animals possess many unusual abilities that Tarlathamites know how to exploit. Though they always try to dwell in harmony with their environment they never hesitate to use magic to tame unruly elements that might, in other lands, lead to natural disasters.

Completely self-sufficient, Tarlathame never trades with the outside world. Its people truly believe Netherell's other nations have nothing to offer them. With the dispatch and return of scouts to other lands, bearing tales of exotic foods and powerful magical Devices, this attitude has wilted ever so slightly. However, for the moment, Tarlathame remains a securely locked treasure chest.

**Career Moves:** Tarlathamites consider anyone without magical abilities as less than human. Characters who went through the Magician career are among the few outsiders able to travel freely through the land.

**APR Presence:** The APR has designated Tarlathame as a high priority target but also one of great danger. Currently, several hundred personnel maintain a base on the continent. Due to the dangers the land poses to non-psionics, the entire operation consists of handpicked psions and psychic warriors. Most go through several years of off world training in a village designed to mimic Tarlathame life even before arriving on Netherell. The APR considers the risk of capture and interrogation so severe that all personnel

***Glitter Robes***

Even the people of Tarlathame only have so much magical energy to use at any given time. A few adepts, learning how to attune themselves with the world's magical field, have discovered a way to create clothing that actually stores this energy for later use.

Glitter robes give their wearer extra magic points. Wearers increase their magic pool by 1, 2, or 3 or three points depending on the skill of the adept who created it. Wearers use and replenish these extra points in the exact same way as their normal magic pool.

*Cost: 5,000 Cr. (+1 magic point), 10,000 Cr (+2 magic points), 20,000 Cr. (+3 magic points)*

assigned to Tarlathame must submit to the implant of a brain bomb as a final failsafe.

**Faction Notes:** In recent years the Fartalker's Guild and the Skywatcher Society each tried to establish a presence on Tarlathame. Both ended not just in failure but the massacre of every member of the respective advance party even though they had taken care to send only personnel with magical abilities. The council of the Wise for one of the communities responsible for the massacre refused to offer an apology or an explanation except to say that the action produced a very satisfactory "rosy trill."

**Special Features:** The citizens of Tarlathame worship the Lady just like the folk of most countries on Netherell and believe in the teachings imparted by her dreams. However, they also sincerely believe that people without magical abilities are unworthy of respect or compassion. By their lights, the Lady's paradise has no room for the Soulless. This universal belief is more than just a cultural quirk. As an experiment, the APR kidnapped and raised some Tarlathame babies on their base. These children, with no exposure to anyone except the APR personnel, developed the same attitudes as any other native-born Tarlathamite.

This instinctive bigotry appears linked to the shakestones themselves. They not only reflect the overall disposition of the population but also subtly influence their mood as well. Even more interesting, most of the scouts sent out to investigate the other nations of Netherell grow more tolerant and respectful of the Soulless after spending a few months beyond Tarlathame's borders. When they return home, some of them regain their prejudice but others manage to hold on to their newfound liberalism.

**Deep History:** When the Champions of Order first began the Netherell project they experimented with psionic amplifiers. Long-term exposure to the shakestones is what causes Tarlathamites to develop their magical abilities. The shakestones also made those people altered by them fanatically loyal to the Champions.

Ultimately, they realized that a psionically-induced allegiance was only as durable as the technology that underlay it. Fearing that their enemy might, once the war finally began, figure out how to convert all of Netherell to their side they abandoned the project. However, rather than destroy the stones they left them in place on the one continent where they had already deployed them. They altered the psychological conditioning

### **Current Events: Tarlathame**

- /// Word has it that a powerful adept in Asheloon has made a pet of one of the Soulless. He carved out its skull and replaced it with a dog's brain. Now it crawls on all fours and does tricks. Some wonder if he could use this to put the mind of a real person inside one of the Soulless. After all, not even healing magic can cure every malady or injury, so those bodies could prove useful.
- /// Apparently, not too long ago, a puppeteer went mad and started using his animated marionettes to help him commit murders. His little pack of dolls stalked and murdered over two dozen people before he was captured. The puppets disappeared right after, but since he somehow enchanted them with motion and intelligence, they are likely still active. If so, they could start killing again. On the other hand, maybe he made them kill and they now just want to live in peace as their own little society.
- /// Rumor has it that a singer and tale spinner in the west has the ability to affect shakestones all his own. When he is nearby, they react only to his mood and no one else's.
- /// Gryshard is planning something special for this year's Night Veil festival. To honor the stars they plan to release a thousand gulls at twilight and make them glow. They are already looking for pilots to fly these kites but, since Turlakiln would like nothing better than to engineer an embarrassing failure, are moving cautiously.
- /// Supposedly, a group of healers are working on creating a disease that only affects the Soulless. As of now, they have no intention to release it but once they perfect it they might well surrender to the temptation.
- /// One of the scouts sent to the God's Bay area has been returned against his will, and with him the searchers brought a wife who is with his child. The Scout is the son of a powerful family, but the law is clear that his wife must be expelled or executed. But the debate over this has caused disharmony in the local shakestones and the Wise have begun to question the ruling.

to make that continent's inhabitants homebodies but otherwise decided to let the experiment play itself out.

Once the AI commonly known as the Lady went dormant, the shakestones gradually drifted out of alignment with their original programming. They created a form of xenophobia instead of just a lack of curiosity about the outside world. Were it not for the fact that the conditioning wears off after a few months away from the shakestones, Tarlathame might well have set out on a path to conquer and slaughter the rest of Netherell's population.

## Reparations

Jel the Cat padded across the marble floor of the great mansion, the mismatched silk slippers on her feet making only the barest whisper. She went from one of the columns to the next, seemingly melting away from sight within one shadow and then emerging back into the dim moonlit hall from another. From time to time she paused, listening, and then slid forward again with the grace any dancer of God's Bay would have envied.

At the end of the columned hall stood a single door, made of dark wood and bound in heavy studded bronze. It was slightly ajar, with a willowy tapir-light from within spilling over the cool marble.

She paused before it, peering inside. The slit of amber-colored light slid over her shoulder, then her face. After a momentary pause, she melted away into the shadows once more.

“...and what would you have us do about it Jel?” Straker demanded, pounding his fist upon the table.

Jel's face was calm, but her eyes burned. “The right thing.”

“I don't get paid to do the right thing Jel,” Straker told her, “you may have noticed.”

“Besides,” Balloc whispered from behind her, “the man's wife is dead. Dead and gone. The Criers have taken her away. There's nothing we—”

“Be quiet Balloc,” she snapped. “It was you who has put us into this mess.”

“It's something that happens,” Straker said, “Balloc's right, the Criers have come already, there's nothing to do.”

“There's the right thing,” Jel said.

Two nights later, she was again at the door, peering inside through the crack, though it was drawn tighter this time. She lingered there for several minutes.

“Why did you do it Balloc?” she demanded.

“It was an accident,” he told her, “nothing more.” But there was a pause, and a certain dullness in his words.

“Nothing more.”

“No.” His enormous pupils quivered.

She stared sideways at him a moment, then turned to Straker. He was covered by some of the discarded silks of the dancer that had just left their corner of the tavern, smiling dreamily as he sipped at cup of spiced wine in his chubby hands.

“Have you noticed anything about our friend Balloc Straker?” she asked. She stared at him as Straker's eyes

roamed in Balloc's direction, dimmed not as much as he liked to let people think by drink and women.

“What's this?” Balloc protested, a trifle too late. Dull.

“Nilish.” Straker pronounced expertly, his eyes narrowed. “Balloc, I told you that stuff...” he began, then let the words trail away.

“And where would our friend have gotten the coin for Nilish?” Jel asked with a raised brow, giving voice to the sudden hard stare in the bigger man's eyes.

Balloc's face grew white.

For the third time that week, Jel found herself in the mismatched silk slippers, padding down the marble hall. This time the door was wide open, the light more dim. Only a single candle this time, not the riot of them that had been there the nights before.

She peered into the room from the shadows of the nearest column, but there was not much she could see. So she crept closer, and looked inside. The desk sat, as it always did, against the farthest wall, now with one candle. The outside light spilling into the room from the window was wan, a slim sliver of the moon.

A voice broke the sudden silence.

“You're here again.”

Part of Jel told her that she should run, that she was in danger. But her slippered feet did not move. She simply held her ground; in the corner nearest the door he was sitting, much as he had the previous nights at the desk. In the wan light she could only make him out barely, but as she stared and grew accustomed to the light of the chamber, his form and surroundings became clearer.

“What do you want?” he asked, his voice tired.

She blinked.

“You want gold? Silver? Gems?” He drew a blade that had been laying across his knees in an elaborate scabbard. The short, thin sword glittered in the light of the single tapir across the chamber. “My life?”

Jel said nothing. Then the sword clattered to the floor in front of her.

She found her voice.

“Rechen of Molanon paid one of my... accomplices,” she stepped over the blade and to him, “to kill your wife. Something to do with an old dispute. I and... the other accomplice want nothing to do with it. We are thieves, not murderers. Rechen's hired man is bound and gagged in your wife's garden. We have left his fate for you to decide, and get what information you need.”

He stood and crossed the chamber to the door. There he paused. By the time he looked back, she was gone.





# PERILS OF NETHERELL

# CREATURES OF NETHERELL

Many terrible things roam the empty forests and fields of Netherell's borderlands. Some of these creatures appear to be natural evolutions of creatures found back on Earth, while others have arisen from the use, and misuse, of psionics, or are creatures that previously existed on Netherell before it was terraformed by the Champions of Order over thirty thousand years ago. This terraforming greatly increasing the oxygen in Netherell's environment and subjected all indigenous life to a painful series of extinctions and evolutions. Below are just some of the creatures that make Netherell their home.

## Ami-nu-tak

The ami-nu-tak is a ferocious Onarockan monster mostly dwelling in the cold northern highlands. The size of a large bear, the ami-nu-tak is a quadruped with long claws, thick gray scales, and a dense matting of hair. The creature possesses a single gold-yellow eye that gives it remarkable night vision. On the island of Skerathos, a red-scaled variety of this beast known as a ghorbachu preys on the unwary and the Fhiomori use them as guard animals.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Hijacker	Hills Walker (Carnivore)	20	8	15	1	9	1

- /// Athletics (coordination, endurance) 3, Natural (claws and teeth) 2, Stealth 0, Recon 0, Survival 2
- /// Claws and Teeth (4d6), Scaly Hide and Fur (3). Number encountered: 1d6

## Aptaleon

A creature created through purposeful genetic manipulation by the magicians of Tarlathame almost four hundred years ago, the aptaleon roughly resembles a massive stag but with serrated jaws and a serpentine tail. Fierce carnivores, aptaleons are pack hunters like wolves and particularly favor the flesh of normal deer.

Tarlathame cavalry units often use them as mounts but wild herds of aptaleons spread to other regions of Netherell including Skerathos and Perraine where they often give herbivore hunters a nasty, final surprise.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Chaser	Plains/Woods Walker (Carnivore)	18	10	12	2	11	12

- /// Athletics (endurance) 1, Deception (to appear as a normal deer) 3, Natural (horns and teeth) 2, Stealth 1, Recon 1, Survival 1
- /// Horns and Teeth (3d6), Furry Hide (1). Number encountered: 4d6

## Biloko

A race of semi-intelligent giants with distinctly reptilian features including scaly skin and wide crocodilian maws, bilokos are a threat to travellers throughout Cadistreen and Setheeral, and feast on the flesh of anything they capture. Most bilokos are little more than ravenous beasts, but some possess a modicum of intelligence and psionic power, and are elevated to the leadership of their bands. Any connection between ogres and biloko remains conjecture, but at least one group of APR researchers believes that the first bilokos were normal ogres subjected to extensive genetic modification by the Temet-Kau before escaping into the wilds.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Hunter	Jungle Walker (Carnivore)	22	7	15	4	10	9



- /// Athletics (strength) 3, Personal Combat (blunt, light) 1, Recon 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2
- /// Large Club (3d6), Scaly Hide (2). Number encountered: 3d6

Biloko leaders have an Intelligence of 6 and a Psionic Strength score of 10. They possess the powers of the House of Might and House of Winds, but do not require seeds or tools to control their magic. They are otherwise identical to normal bilokos.

## Binayek

Like the ami-nu-tak, binayeks are creatures of Onarockan lore that appear to be descended from one of the indigenous life forms of the planet. Bipeds just a little taller than a normal man, binayeks are covered with thick shaggy fur and possess suckers on their arms that enable them to grab hold of ledges and cliffs with ease. While shy and typically non-violent, binayeks have earned a fearful reputation among the local tribes of the region, primarily because of the hooting cries they make at night and the belief that hearing one of these cries will lead a person to misfortune and death.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Gatherer	Mountain Walker (Omnivore)	12	11	13	3	12	6

- /// Athletics (coordination) 4, Recon 1, Stealth 0, Survival 2
- /// Grasping suckers (never fails climbing checks), Teeth (1d6), Furry Hide (1). Number encountered: 2d6

## Carnivorous Plants

Several species of carnivorous plants live on Netherell, from the largely sedentary daichana trees of Onarocka to the carnivorous plants that infest Kartang Island. The **spinesaw** is a carnivorous plant that traps any prey wandering too near its large spiked petals.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Trapper	Jungle Walker (Carnivore)	28	3	12	0	10	0

- /// Natural (Teeth) 1, Stealth 5, Survival 1
- /// A target struck by a spinesaw plant is considered grappled and takes 4d6+2 damage every round the grapple is maintained, Teeth (4d6+2), Leathery Epidermis (4). Number encountered: 1



## Dragon

Dragons are not living creatures. They are not biological, they do not breed, they do not excrete, and they do not die. Indeed, in many ways dragons are more like events than creatures and have more in common with wildfires, tsunamis, or earthquakes than they do with bears or wolves.

Created by a little understood process that involves the fusion of powerful magic and negative emotions with tremendous quantities of receptive inanimate matter, dragons are creatures of pure destruction and rage and actively seek out towns, as well as magical people, to consume and destroy. Although dragons are rare, they can spawn from any site where misery, disease, war, or suffering has left its mark. A typical dragon resembles a monstrous winged serpent or lizard composed of inorganic or semi-organic material including wood, stone, metal plate, and decaying body parts.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Psion	Pack
Killer	Any Flier (Psionivore)	60	10	40	15	20	25	0

- ⚡ Athletics (strength, flier) 4, Channel 3, Natural (claws and teeth) 3, Persuade 3, Survival 4
- ⚡ Claws and Teeth (8d6), Dragon Hide (18), Breath Weapon (20 meter cone of rot, flame and corruption, 12d6 damage, can make a DM -4 Dexterity check to take half damage)
- ⚡ Magic: Dragons can perform any power found in a house of magic or a knack.

**Eyewitness Account, First Battalion Sergeant Ikinda Macey, APR Droptrooper**

*I've seen everything. I've seen Dreadnaughts consumed with fire, melting as thousands of spacehands and tens of thousands more troopers roasted to death inside. I've seen the devastation caused by nukes on population centers. I've seen smoking craters that you could spot from orbit and mass drivers pounding a world's surface flat. The dragon was by far the worst of the lot.*

*It wasn't alive. Not really, although you could feel it when it looked at you. It was too much for Bainbridge, he tried to run for it and the thing blasted him with it's flaming breath. I don't know what it was using for fuel, the damned thing looked like it was made from peat moss, a crumbling old tower and the wreckage of a downed dirigible. Whatever it was it burned hot and left an acrid stench like nothing I've ever experienced. Bainbridge just sort of dissolved, and then it stared at me. That was when I could feel the hate it felt. I thought I was going to die.*

*What saved me of all things was a group of locals, not that they fought the thing off, but the thing went for them rather than me and I got the hell out of there. A lot of the eggheads say it is attracted to psions. I'm damned glad I don't have the talent for it, and if it means I'll never see one of those again, I'm never going to even try to learn.*

**Giant Insects**

Due to a quirk in evolution brought about via the ill-understood manipulations of genetic codes by the Champions, before they departed, many creatures similar to normal arthropods have developed superior breathing capabilities, shedding their primitive tracheal tubes for efficient and complex lung-systems. This has enabled the creatures to grow to truly remarkable sizes and present a mortal threat to humans. Most of Netherell's giant insects are unintelligent and thrive primarily in tropical lands.

One type of arthropod common to the Siftlands of Bainharra and the Nakara desert is the giant **waste scorpion**.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Killer	Desert Walker (Carnivore)	28	10	20	0	7	1

- ⚡ Natural (pincers) 1, Recon 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3
- ⚡ Pincers (3d6), any creature struck by the pincers must make a DM -2 Dexterity check or be also struck by the stinger and poisoned (Endurance DM -3, 1d6 Dexterity damage), Exoskeleton (5)

**Grethlor**

Sinister rodents native to Kovushu's swamps but now found in sewers throughout the God Bay, grethlors are tiny rat-like rodents with dark black fur often gummy with blood clots, and piercing white eyes. They use the bodies of living creatures as food, lairs, and incubators for their young. Grethlors hunt down larger living creatures in order to burrow into their flesh while they sleep, using a powerful anesthetizing poison secreted from their fur to numb any pain the creature might feel. They then seal the wound behind them and live within the creature's body, feeding on the surrounding tissue until the creature's internal organs fail. While some grethlor are encountered singly, most form into wriggling swarms that inhabit the bodies of massive creatures such as unuks or killrows, creating a surprise additional threat for anyone cutting open one of these giant infected beasts in battle. In such cases, grethlors will attack the character that disturbed their temporary home first.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Parasite	Sewer/ Swamp Walker (Carnivore)	2	11	7	1	12	10

- ⚡ Athletics (coordination) 2, Recon 2, Stealth 6, Survival 2
- ⚡ Teeth (1d6-4), anyone bitten by a grethlor is affected by an anaesthetizing poison (Endurance DM -2, creature doesn't feel pain or realize it is being bitten if it fails to notice the grethlor), parasitism (a creature playing host to a grethlor swarm loses 1d6-4 Endurance per day). Number encountered: 3d6.

## The Perils of Netherell

### Horse

The horse is one of the few creatures that have survived the countless millennia on Netherell without the planet changing them, though tales of horses with horns growing out of their foreheads or wings are common in some parts. Listed below are two different types of domesticated horses used by Netherell's peoples, the standard riding horse and the tougher, better-trained war horse.

#### Riding Horse (Minimum Ride 0)

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer	Domesticated	16	9	10	1	6	0* *(6 in wild)

⚡ Athletics (Endurance) 0, Recon 1, Survival 0  
⚡ Hooves (2d6). Number Encountered: Variable

#### War Horse (Minimum Ride 1)

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer	Domesticated	18	8	12	1	8	0

⚡ Athletics (Endurance) 1, Natural Weapon (bite) 0, Natural Weapons (hooves) 1, Recon 1 and Survival 1  
⚡ Bite (1d6), Hooves (3d6). Number Encountered: Variable

### Killrow

The aptly named giant land-lizards of Dravelnar and Kovushu, killrows are carnivorous reptiles the size of rhinoceroses with enormous jaws filled with shredding fangs and a tail that ends in a vicious arrowhead-shaped blade. Descended from monitor lizards brought to Netherell thirty thousand years ago, killrows live in the wilds as apex predators, but sometimes serve as mounts for those brave enough to try.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Hijacker	Plains/ Swamp Walker (Carnivore)	32	6	24	1	9	1

- ⚡ Athletics (endurance, strength) 2, Natural (Spiked Tail and Teeth) 2, Recon 1, Survival 1  
⚡ Spiked Tail and Teeth (5d6), Scaly Hide (4). Number encountered: 1d6

### Nurgril

The mounts used in the Nakara Desert and a serious contender with horses throughout much of the God's Bay area. The Nurgril are mean and foul-tempered, but this makes them all the more loyal and useful when trained properly. They eat raw meat and actually enjoy carrion. A Nurgril left to its own devices will often be able to not only feed itself, but if the master has tamed them properly, it will often bring home a little something. Whether the unfortunate master is hungry enough to actually eat what they bring is another matter.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer	Domesticated	16	9	12	1	9	0/2d6 in wild

⚡ Athletics (Endurance) 2, Natural Weapon (Bite) 1, Natural Weapon (Talons) 0, Recon 1, Survival 1  
⚡ Bite (1d6+1), Hooves (2d6). Number Encountered: Variable

Domestication of the Nurgril requires a task chain of *Ride* followed by *Animals (Affinity)* or *Animals (Training)*: *Tame the Nurgril enough to ride them: Ride, Endurance or Coordination, 2d6 minutes, Difficult (-2); then Animals (Affinity) or Animals (Training), 2d6 minutes, Difficult (-2) modified further by Task Chain DM*

Training of the Nurgril as a war mount requires a further *Animals (Training)* check: *Tame the Nurgril enough to ride them: Animal (Affinity), Intelligence, 2d6 weeks, Difficult (-2).*



## Machora

Bearing many genetic traits in common with great cats, the dreaded machora is a man-eating monster that resembles an oversized lion with a deadly poisonous bite and a mane of razor-sharp quills that it shakes to impale opponents. While these creatures are hunted wherever they appear, their intelligence and cunning have allowed them to survive where others targeted predators perished or fled, and they've developed a deep-seated hatred of humanity. While the common machora is native to the forests and plains of the northern and western Suderia, a striped version of the beast prowls Tarlathame. A smaller, spotted version of this big cat has been sighted on the plains of Agaria well to the South of God's Bay as well.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Chaser	Plains/ Woods Walker (Carnivore)	24	14	22	4	14	0

- ⚡ Athletics (coordination, endurance) 3, Deception 2 (mimicking human sounds), Natural (Claws and Teeth) 2, Persuade 2, Recon 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2
- ⚡ Claws and Teeth (3d6), anyone bitten is subjected to a deadly nerve toxin (Endurance DM -4, 1d6+2 Endurance damage), Furry Hide (3), Mane Spikes (can make a ranged attack against all targets within 5 meters that deals 2d6 damage. A machora cannot make a melee attack in the same combat round when using this attack option). Number encountered: 1

## Michipezew

Similar to giant freshwater moray eels, michipezews inhabit the waterways of Agaria, along Dravelnar and Kovushu, Narab and Vashra. They are found in great numbers in the Illyan Jungle, which is one of the reasons that stretch of the Agarian coast is considered death by sailors.

Often exceeding 10 meters in length, michipezews have been known to snatch fishermen and sailors from their boats, and are feared more than sharks by those who know of their ferocity. They are also known for the beauty of their scales, a slightly iridescent pattern many find pleasing to the eye and the touch. A northern variety of the species, which is slightly more rare but even larger in size than the southern, is found in the Wild Lands and Onarocka Forest, and even in Nekkial Sound.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Killer	Riverbank Swimmer (Carnivore)	21	12	17	1	6	1

/// Recon 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

/// Teeth (4d6+2), Leathery Hide (1). Number encountered: 1d6

## Roc

Aside from the dragons that occasionally rampage through Netherell, the most feared beast in the world is the dreaded roc, a monstrous elephant-sized bird that roosts along the cliffs and mountains of the God Bay. Defying both logic and physics, rocs are thought to fly with the aid of latent magic lifting their immense bodies off the ground. With talons capable of picking up and carrying off an ogre and a vicious hooked beak mighty enough to shear through steel, rocs are the stuff of legends and their eggs and chicks are often sought after as exotic foodstuffs, trophies, or potential mounts by the rich and powerful. The rocs of Setheeral and Cadistreen are renowned for their brilliant red and gold plumage, while those of Bainharra and Muhhijien are famous for the house-sized crown of blue and violet plumes springing up from their heads. Due to their voracious appetites, rocs spend as much time looking for carrion as they do hunting live prey.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Carrion-Eater	Mountains Flier (Carnivore)	45	5	36	1	15	0

/// Athletics (fly) 3, Natural (claws and beak) 2, Recon 5, Stealth 0, Survival 2

/// Claws and Beak (6d6+4), Thick Feathers (6). Number encountered: 1

## Unuk

Massive land herbivores roughly twice the size of bison, unuks are six legged creatures descended from creatures native to Netherell that managed to adapt to the new conditions and the coming of man. As a result, these creatures are spread all over Netherell. Great herds of unuks wander across the plains of northern Suderia and Agarian savannas where the native tribesmen and priest-kings hunt them for food and sport. Weak unuks and unuk calves are also the primary source of food for killrows and a sought after shoreline prize for the northern cousins of the michipezews.

A smaller version of the unuk dwells in the Savannas beneath Dravelnar, but roams across the mighty Dral river where the herds were hit hard by the growing blight. These unuks, unusually aggressive towards humans, often sport strange physical mutations such as extra body parts, discoloration, or depilated fur.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Grazer	Plains Walker (Herbivore)	33	7	25	1	11	12

/// Athletics (endurance, strength) 2, Recon 1, Survival 2

/// Hooves and Horns (4d6), Thick Hide (3). Number encountered: 5d6



## Wendiiki

Adepts exposed to the bite of strigoi become strigoi themselves. Normal humans however, become wendiiki. While strigoi can often pass for humans, wendiiki are repugnant to look upon, with gaunt weathered features, jagged claws, and a mouthful of long wicked fangs they use to suck the blood from their victims. While, unless commanded by a strigoi, barely more intelligent than an animal, wendiiki are cunning and adept at hunting humans, often disguising themselves in rags to appear as simple beggars or travellers.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Killer	Desert Walker (Carnivore)	19	8	15	5	10	1

- ⚡ Athletics 2, Deception (to appear human) 2, Natural (Claws and Teeth) 2, Recon 1, Stealth 3, Survival 4
- ⚡ Claws and Teeth (2d6), Blood Drain (on a successful grapple check, 1d6–1 Endurance damage), Leathery Skin (2), sunlight vulnerability (1d6 damage per minute of exposure). Number encountered: 1d6

## Wyvern

Remarkable evolutionary throwbacks to the mighty pterosaurs of Earth's pre-history, wyverns are winged lizards that ride the thermals of Netherell looking for food. About the size of a stallion, wyverns are primarily scavengers and rarely attack armed humans unless desperate or protecting their nesting sites. They are seldom used as mounts because they are both difficult to control and fragile on land. Wyverns exist throughout Netherell as well as God's Bay, from the cliffs of Kovushu and Nakara Desert to the mountains of Cadistreen and Muhhijien.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Carrion-Eater	Shore/Hills/Mountain Flier (Omnivore)	19	13	12	1	10	7

- ⚡ Athletics (flier) 2, Recon 2, Survival 2
- ⚡ Claws and Teeth (3d6), Leathery Hide (2). Number encountered: 2d6

## Yadayoh

Harvested by the Sevenwind tribes for the nutritious and sweet milky paste they produce for their young, yadayohs are worm-like creatures that burrow through the Nakara desert looking for food. Roughly analogous to earthworms, yadayohs feed by filtering the loose sand and soil that passes through their mouths to extract the organic material contained therein, everything from burrowing lizards to seed pods. An adult yadayoh resembles a giant 4-meter long flat worm with wrinkled yellow skin and tiny black eyes. On occasion, yadayohs must crest the surface to breathe and to spot nearby prey.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Instinct	Pack
Filter	Desert Walker (Omnivore, Burrower)	27	6	23	1	7	10

- ⚡ Athletics (endurance) 4, Survival 5
- ⚡ Teeth (2d6), Thick Hide (3). Number encountered: 4d6

## Report #54L15-36514896D-3, Psionist David Cree

*Netherell has thus far refused to yield her secrets. Part of me is thrilled, part of me is horrified. The part that is thrilled is the part of me that still believes in wonder. The part of me that is horrified is the scientist and researcher, who has seen some of the terrible things that this place is capable of producing.*

*Yesterday, we were summoned to a site that one of our forward observers noted in the area around Aerie; something not quite like one of the so-called "Surge Zones". Here I experienced the same sort of excess energy that I have felt in Surge zones, but heightened to such a degree that it was no longer euphoric, it was almost painful. I used my Telekinesis to move one of the equipment cases and ended up sending it on the other side of the clearing, almost a hundred yards away. One of my colleagues efforts to use Telepathy linked her with all of the minds of the on-site team at once and overloaded her senses. She also experienced a "transformation" that has her one dress size larger than she was when she got here. After this, I ordered all of us to stop using any abilities here.*

*The effect which was produced on the local wildlife though was, if anything, even more dramatic. We literally watched the development of what appears to be a new sub-species of flowering plant before our very eyes. The "Wild Zone" only lasted for a few hours, and so far no others have been detected, but their very existence is nothing short of amazing.*

### Psionic Wild Zone

The weirdest and one of the most dangerous forms of psionic anomaly, but also the least encountered, is the psionic wild zone. A psionic wild zone causes the native flora and fauna of Netherell to warp into different forms, often instantaneously. Strange vegetation, glowing lights and weird sounds mark most psionic wild zones and psions and magicians entering the area feel as if their skin is crawling with thousands of ants. Uses of magic or psionic in such places often have unpredictable results. People who have experienced these Psionic Surge Zones can sometimes develop new abilities, even new knacks, over time; sometimes even years later.

*Recon or Intelligence to identify anomaly DM +2; 30–180 metres wide; the effect is mobile in that it appears and disappears from any given location, but the changes it produces tend to have long-lasting effects on local flora and fauna. An adept/psionic character entering the zone and using their abilities in this zone do so as if d6 extra power points were added to the effort. In some cases, this does nothing, in others it might dramatically expand the area of effect or the desired results. Any dice roll made for psionics in this area that is a double (two 1s, two 2s, two threes etc.) triggers a Magical Disaster.*

## MAGICAL ANOMALIES

Netherell is a world infused with magical energy, from the plants, animals, and people to the very soil and water. In some areas, this overabundance of magical energy has scarred the land and can have strange and unpredictable effects on any magical creature in the area.

The two most common magical anomalies that encountered by explorers are described below. Each of them includes the DM modifier for spotting the anomaly before entering it (with Recon or Intelligence checks), the rough size of the anomaly in meters (randomly determined by the Referee), and the effects of the anomaly on any magical creatures entering it.

### Magic Dampening Zone

This anomaly drains magic points from any creature entering it and increases the difficulty of using magical within its confines. The draining from this anomaly takes the form of an unpleasant tingling sensation and even nausea in very powerful magicians. This anomaly is very hard to detect but creates a faint shimmering or rippling in the air when in contact with manifested psionic powers.

*Recon or Intelligence to identify anomaly DM -4; 10–60 meters wide; a character entering the zone loses 1 magic point per minute and suffers a -2 DM on the use of any magical power (house or knack) while within it.*

### Magic Surge Zone

The opposite of dampening zones, magical surge zones increase a creature's magic and makes using powers easier. Magic surge zones are often lush with native vegetation and the animals dwelling within them are robust in stature. Entering a surge zone creates a rush of euphoria in any magical character, but can also have long-term detrimental effects (especially for those using psi/magic ability).

*Recon or Intelligence to identify anomaly DM -2; 10–60 meters wide; a magical character entering the zone gains 1 magic points per minute and gains a +2 DM on any magical power (house or knack) while within it. A magical character who gains more than double his magic pool must immediately make Difficult (-2 DM) Endurance check to avoid suffering a magical mishap. If he succeeds in this check he must make a new check each minute until he leaves or expends some of his excess magic points.*

# MAGICAL AUTOMATONS & VEHICLES

## Iron Ifrit

Created by the Aris Artefacta of Muhhijien, each of these iron statues has a spirit bound to it. Compelled to serve, and possessed by an inscrutable alien intelligence, iron ifrits make perfect war machines. Some quirk of the process that binds them to their statues blocks them from using the magic available to most spirits. However, their great physical power, enabling them to wipe entire squads of soldiers, more than compensates for this lack, at least according to the powerful adepts who control them.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Education	Intelligence	Hull	Structure	Pack
Bodyguard	Urban Walker (Special)	25	7	8	6	5	5	Special

- ⚡ Athletics 2, Personal combat (large blade) 2
- ⚡ Two-Handed Flaming Scimitar (4d6+1 plus 1d6 fire), Armor Plating (15).
- ⚡ Number encountered: 1d6 plus 1 Aris Artefacta

## Sethereel War Dirigible (small)

The following is a smaller version of the War Dirigible used by the Living God's troops. The larger varieties can be much tougher and should be reserved for all-out wars and character re-direction. **Note:** A handful of these can also be found in the fetid swamps of Kovushu, but these are in ill-repair and generally only used in extreme emergencies.

TL	Agility	Speed	Crew+Pass.	Armor	Hull	Structure	Weapons	Cost
5+	+1	65kph	4+15	4	4	4	See Below	NA

- ⚡ Fully Enclosed, non-sealed, carries enough onboard fuel for 10 hours of operation, Gas must be partially replenished every 4 days of use.
- ⚡ Multiple Weapons: *Lightning Guns*, automatically target any Lightning Bait used within one kilometer (5d6 damage), two crewed *"Iron Throwers"* (Primitive Chaingun 4d6, Auto: 6, Recoil compensated entirely by vehicle mounting), *"Firetongue"* (Main Plasma Flamer, 6d6 damage, covers an area of d6 meters)

## Perrainian Steam Car

Steam cars in Perrain are a rather common sight, hissing and shuddering around the mountainous passes of the countryside as well as the cobbled streets of Perrainian cities. Outside of this isolated location, they are much more difficult to find.

TL	Agility	Speed	Crew+Pass.	Armor	Hull	Structure	Weapons	Cost
3	+0	35 kph	1+2-3	1	2	2	None equipped	NA

- ⚡ The steamcar carries enough onboard fuel for 5 hours of operation, running on wood and other consumable fuels. The vehicles can be adapted by offworld technology to run on offworld fuel sources (like petrochemicals, which are not found in any abundance on Netherell).
- ⚡ Steamcars can be outfitted for offroad travel, usually by changing their narrow tires for a tracked system that allows them to cover more rugged terrain at about 12-15 kph (on more-or-less flat sections, like grasslands, hammada and sand dunes) to 5-8 kph (on truly difficult surfaces like thick forests).

## Perrainian Automaton

Perrainian Automatons are based on an ancient plan, and resemble skeleton figures in humanoid shapes. These devices are capable of performing simple tasks, they are often treated like pets by Perrainian Adepts. They are prevented from visiting harm on human by nature of their complex wire-spool programming.

Type	Habitat	Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Hull	Structure	Soc
Artificial	Domesticated	6	5	5	2	1	1	5

- ⚡ Empathy 1, Recon 1, Steward 1



## HUMAN-LIKE RACES OF NETHERELL

Due to mutations, magic, and the design of the Champions of Order, Netherell is home to several human subspecies.

### Dweorghir

Seemingly psychotic dwarves bred down into something baleful and gnarled from human stock, the dweorghir are a slave race to the Aris Artefacta.

*Dweorghir are notably quick and hardy (+2 Dexterity and Endurance) but less clever and physically weaker than humans (-2 Intelligence and Strength) are. Although only half the height of a human they are not considered small. They require almost no light in order to see, and are only blind in complete darkness. Dweorghir are resistant to disease (+4 DM on Endurance checks against disease). Dweorghir characters always have Trade as their background skill but also gain combat training and can select any other background skills from the same list as humans. Dweorghir do not have any social standing in Muhhijien society.*

A typical dweorghir has the following statistics:

Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing
4	8	8	4	6	4 (or 0 in Muhhijien)

- /// Design 1, Food Production (farming) 1, Personal Combat (blunt, light) 1, Trade 2
- /// Improvised Weapon (2d6-2) or Club (2d6), Filthy Hides (1), Disease Resistant (see above)

### Ogres

Ogres are a terrifying, bestial devolution of humanity. These brawny masses of human flesh are one of the primary threats on the world of Netherell.

*Ogres are Large (3d6 Strength and Endurance) but Feral (1d6 Education) and weak in Dexterity, Intelligence, and Social Standing (-2). Their size and bulk make them +2 DM to hit, but they take 2 less damage (in game terms, the bonus to hit doesn't confer any extra damage based on the attack roll's Effect). Their thick skin gives them additional Armor (protection 1) which contributes to any protection gained from armor they wear. Ogres are Awkward (increase difficulty of any roll involving Social Standing by one level) when dealing with humans. Ogre characters always have Survival as their background skill but also gain combat training and can select any other background skills from the same list as humans.*

The ogres of Skerathos also possess the Fhiomori Knack (see the **Player's Section**).

A typical wild ogre has the following statistics.

Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Social Standing
14	4	10	4	3	2

- /// Personal Combat (blunt, light) 1, Survival 2
- /// Large Club (3d6), Thick Skin (1), Awkward (see above)

## Strigoi

Originally a line of priests created by the first living god, these immortal creatures feed on the blood of animals and humans. So long as they have enough blood they appear young and beautiful, but if deprived, they slowly transform into horribly emaciated monsters with glaring eyes and prominent teeth. While they can subsist on animals for months at a time, strigoi must eventually drink the blood of sentient creatures to retain their vigor and powers, suggesting that their feeding is at least partially magical.

Most strigoi are created when a human with magical abilities (house or knack) is infected by the saliva of a feeding strigoi. Humans without magical abilities instead become wendiiki. Strigoi are stronger and faster than normal humans, and can pass for humans if well fed. A strigoi deprived of blood for at least one month possesses a wasted appearance, a feral look to its eyes, and pronounced fangs. If this deprivation continues for more than a few months the strigoi becomes little more than living corpse driven by a burning predatory hunger.

*A strigoi gains a +2 modifier to its Strength, Dexterity and Intelligence scores. Since strigoi were originally normal humans, they retain all the skills, talents and specializations that they once possessed. In addition, strigoi gain Natural (Teeth) 1 as a bonus skill and can bite foes for 1d6 damage. If a strigoi manages to grapple an opponent it can suck blood as part of its attack action (this attack drains 1d6 Endurance from the target).*

*All strigoi once had magical abilities. If not adepts already, they automatically become adepts once they transform into a deathless being. If they were adepts before their transformation, they gain a +4 bonus to the Psionic Strength characteristic. Since strigoi do not age they can continue to follow multiple career paths for centuries, becoming phenomenally skilled and powerful as a result.*

*Strigoi are affected by sunlight in much the same way as wendiiki and take 1d6 points of damage per minute of exposure as their skin burns and peels. Sunlight is the only weakness strigoi share with the storied vampires of Earth.*

A typical Strigoi has the following statistics:

Strength	Dexterity	Endurance	Intelligence	Education	Psion Strength	Social Standing
9	8	6	8	7	14	10

- ⚡ Alchemy 2, Armor 2, Carouse 1, Ceremony 2, Channel 3, Deception 3, Empathy 1, Personal Combat (blades, long) 3, Natural (teeth) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 2
- ⚡ Long Sword (3d6), Teeth (1d6), Chainmail (6), Drain Blood (1d6 Endurance), Sunlight Vulnerability (see above)
- ⚡ Houses: Any six. Strigoi must still uses seeds and tools to work their magic.

### Interview with a Strigoi

Cimnea stared at the man across from her at the table and smiled. A light breeze drifted through the window. It was a winsome smile, no teeth, but sweet nonetheless. "You must tell me of yourself, a traveller you said?"

The pale man blinked, then nodded. "Yes, from some distance. I am stranger to your lands." His words were heavily accented, but Cimnea could not say where she had heard the like before, and that intrigued her.

"You must have some tales to tell," she cooed.

The pale man nodded again. His eyes strayed from her to the darkness beyond her, the breeze stirred.

"I forget my manners. Do you have the time?" Cimnea smiled again. This time the smile was more toothsome, and definitely more inviting.

"I make time," he said after a moment too long.

The smile drifted slightly. Cimnea gestured to the chalice between them. "In the customs of my folk, I would like to offer you the peace of my tribe. We seal it with the finest of wines. This one is from Skerathos."

"Ah." He said. But nothing more. Cimnea nodded.

She plucked up the chalice and took a deep draught, then lowered it, her reddened mouth tight. She held it to him, and the pale man took the chalice. He lifted it to his lips, pausing slightly as he smelled it's bouquet.

"Blood?" he said, hesitant, the accent thick.

Cimnea smiled again, the carmine stain of the blood from the chalice still clinging to the edges of her teeth.

"Sweetened with herbs. The man who provided it to me was a merchant from Skerathos." Her eyebrows arched higher. "He said he was a traveller as well. But his dialect I could determine. Yours..." she hesitated, then shrugged. The red-stained lips and teeth grinned at him.

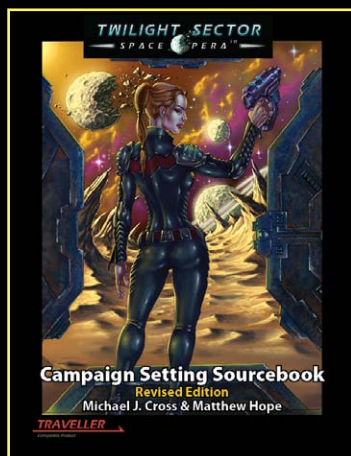
"I..." He stammered, eyes wide.

Cimnea launched herself at him over the table, fangs barred before he could withdraw the compact pistol from the depths of his robe. Together they fell to the floor and grappled until his screams drifted out the open window and into the gardens beyond.

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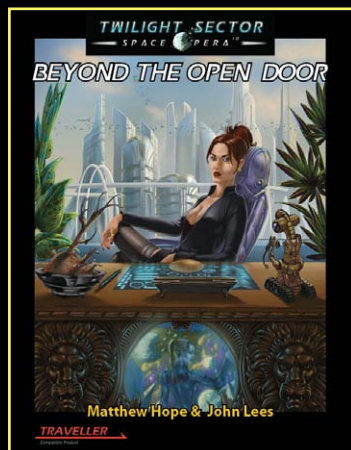
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## Starfarer's Gazette #1

/// 72 pages  
/// \$7.99 MSRP

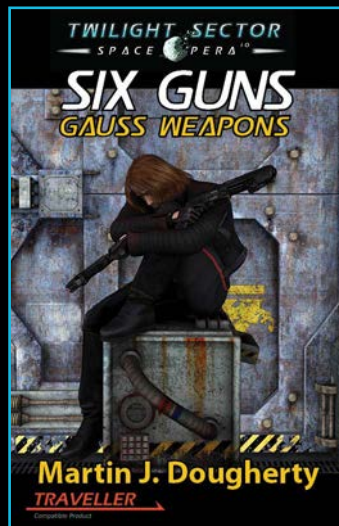
The *Starfarer's Gazette* is An intermittently-published style magazine for the cutting edge 30th Century audience in Terra/Sol's Twilight Sector Setting. Material has been designed specifically to be open and available for any Traveller game. Addendums include *Average Joes* (Office worker career), a selections of *Antigrav vehicles*; rules for, and samples of, Twilight Sector variant *stunners*.



## Beyond the Open Door Adventure/Sourcebook

/// 128 pages  
/// \$19.99 MSRP

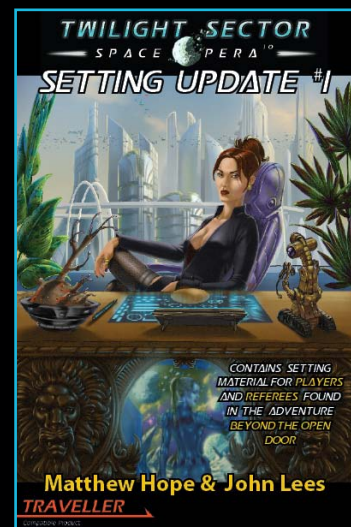
Expand your perspective on the *Twilight Sector Setting* with *Beyond the Open Door*. A trio of adventures designed to illuminate the world of Twilight Sector. Uncover the mysteries of the Yamaguchi Ripper, then watch in horror as the intrigues unfold to blossom into a planetwide threat that only *your* group can stop.



## Six Guns: Gauss Weapons

/// 30 pages (Online edition)  
/// \$3.99 MSRP

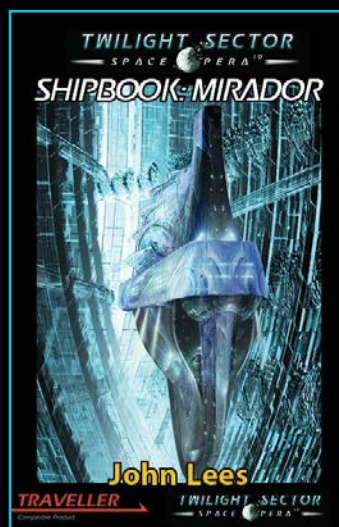
*Six Guns: Gauss* describes six Gauss weapons for use in any Traveller Setting. Subsequent issues of *Six Guns* will present six items (not always weapons) in detail, with accompanying notes and stat blocks. There is a significant difference between aiming a generic, vanilla-flavour 'revolver' at the opposition and pulling out a specific model chosen as much for what it says about you as for its capabilities.



## Twilight Sector Setting Update #1

/// 39 pages (Online edition)  
/// \$3.99 MSRP

*Setting Update #1* is designed to provide Referees and Players with the background of the Twilight Sector Setting found in *Beyond the Open Door*, without the adventure material. This is also a good way for those who do own the *Beyond the Open Door* adventure book to provide players with helpful background information for the scenarios.



## Ship Book: Mirador

/// 90 pages (Online edition)  
/// \$5.99 MSRP (ebook)

*Shipbook: Miradore* covers the luxurious 1,000 dton *Mirador*-class vessel design, with complete deckplans for the liner and exploration variant as well as two sample companies that use these dramatic vessels. Also included are variant Trade and Passenger rules that allow players to build their own Cargo Transit or Passenger Liner Companies.