



**THE PATH**





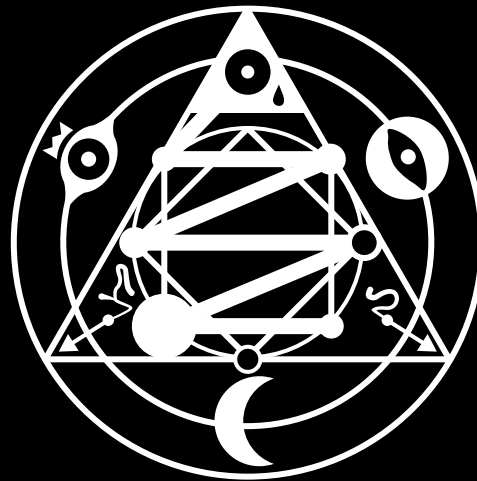
# THE PATH

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A book for game masters.

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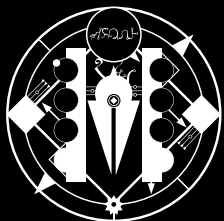
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# PRECEPTS

**B**ut man is a Noble Animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing Nativities and Deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting Ceremonies of Bravery, in the infamy of his nature. Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible Sun within us.

—Thomas Brown, *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial* (1658)

Precepts are the fundamental underpinnings of the world. In this chapter, we'll discuss the way the world really works, and disabuse you of a lot of Shadow notions.

## WHAT INVISIBLE SUN IS

Escapism.

An examination of what it means to be human. Secrets.

A suggestion that the world is bigger and more wonderful than we can understand.

Surreal.

## WHAT INVISIBLE SUN IS NOT

A true look at occultism or a “real world” manual for magic. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Great pains were taken to create a fictional, original occult. Thus, rather than the Tree of Life, we have the *Path of Suns*. Instead of Thelemic Magick, we have Vancian magic. And so on. Certainly, actual occult and religious terms (spells, rituals, witchcraft, goetia, grimoire, athame, and so on) are used from

*References to “the world” refer to the Actuality. Although there are many realms, many facets, and many aspects of the Actuality, there is just the one world. That we know of.*

*Indigo, page 46*

*Satyrine, page 64*

*Shadow, page 52*

*Actuality, page 5*

*Path of Suns, page 34*

time to time, but that's mainly because those are English words with useful meanings and this game is written in English. If something in *Invisible Sun* offends because it appears to have stolen something from your belief system, look again. It's just a few words from the language we share. Any direct similarity to concepts or ideas is coincidental and unintentional.

*Invisible Sun* is also not a treatise or manifesto with a new paradigm on reality. There is no *Indigo*, no *Satyrine*, and the rituals and spells in this game actually accomplish squat.

## OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD AS IT ACTUALLY IS

In *Shadow*, scientists and philosophers struggle to quantify and explain the world.

This isn't *Shadow*.

The *Actuality* is dualistic, with both a material and an ideal nature. (*Shadow* stresses the material, unbalancing the perception of both natures.) A materialist action (light rays hitting the rods and cones in your eyes) can produce an idealistic result (experiencing the color red). This experience is a quale (plural qualia). Your eyes see red, but your mind *experiences* red. Qualia are the essence of magic—the meeting of the otherwise contradictory and opposite materialistic and idealistic natures of reality.

This is not something that happens by design or intention. You cannot see red but experience green, no matter how hard you try. *Qualia are emergent*. They arise from consciousness—they arise from a being having a soul.

Every spell, ritual, and magical act has a quale component. A spell begins and passes through the realm of the ideal to affect the world. A mind (idealism) sets in motion an action in space and time (materialism) that by effect produces a quale (idealism) in the form of a spell that affects the world (materialism).

Magic is not science. One must understand the important third step—the quale—to cast a spell or perform a ritual. Thus, these things are more than the sum of their parts. You can't just make the motions and say the words and expect anything to happen. The vislae uses the motions and words, for example, to allow (not force) the quale to emerge, but it is the quale that affects reality.

This means that magic must “pass through” a mind to exist. But there is magic in the world that arises from no vislae's spell or ritual. This suggests a larger mind—a world mind, an unmoved mover, an uncreated creator—that experiences the quale of all creation. But what if, as some people believe, that world mind is, in fact, the universe itself?

Sometimes called the Absolute, the uncreated creator appears at some point in the middle of the timeline, a time that is still in the future. Without a creation, there is nothing, and thus, no creator. Creator must have creation, but creation must have a creator. The world mind is, in itself, emergent. The world creates itself. At this point of emergence, waves cascade both backward and forward in time, creating spacetime. The emergence is, in effect, a spell that the universe casts (its whole existence and all thought and action is the spell). The world is a spell that casts itself.

*Whether the uncreated creator is or is not God, that there are many gods in the Actuality is essentially undisputed fact.*

*Silent Church, page 81*

*When most people talk about the creator, they refer to it as a “she” because the feminine is the source of life, but no one really knows if that's appropriate.*

The fact that we speak of a creator makes us seem religious. That is also a Shadow notion, for it is possible to justify religion and no religion with this understanding. While the uncreated creator may be God (and many in the Actuality believe so), if the Absolute is the universe itself, then there is no divinity involved. And if the creator is instead a force outside of creation, then she is in no way a God that you can pray to or would even be aware of your worship.

## THE LEGACY

Whatever the truth of the creator, one thing that is universally accepted is that the creator is no longer present in creation. If she is a being outside of creation, that's self-evident, but if the creator is some sort of world mind, after her creation the world ceased to have the singular consciousness she would have needed to cast the spell that created herself.

The **Silent Church** in Satyrine offers a place to pay homage to the creator. There are a small handful of similar temples throughout the various realms, but not many. In truth, what the Silent Church and others like it really revere is the Legacy. The Legacy offers the greatest amount of proof that the universe was created by some sort of intelligent—and what's more, compassionate—entity and not mindless happenstance.

The Legacy consists of intentionally placed beings, objects, tools, spells, secrets, and more, left behind in creation by the creator. It would seem that these things were left to help the creatures in the creation. The common thread is that they provide succor, health, or protection.

**The Emergent Point is the moment at which the creator in her infinite (?) wisdom cast/will cast the spell that is the universe, and it spread/will spread from its point of origin both backward and forward in time. We quickly approach this Emergent Point, the moment from which the Legacy originates, at the center of the timeline. What happens when we reach that point is anyone's guess.**

## GAMEMASTERING THE LEGACY

Angels represent qualities most people think of as noble, altruistic, or good.

Angels might be beings of the Legacy, but if they know anything about the nature of the Absolute, they aren't sharing it with anyone. It's possible that such information isn't just secret, but unknowable.

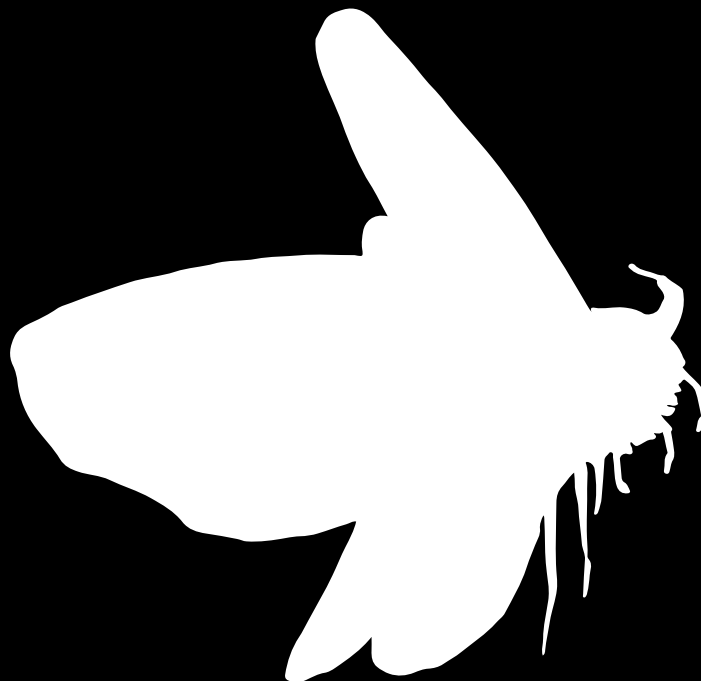
Items of the Legacy cannot be destroyed except under the most extreme circumstances. They always have a bonus of +3 to their normal level. Each often possesses an inherent goal revealed to a being that finds and keeps it.

Any object of power or ephemera object can be a part of the Legacy. It's not a matter of ability, but a matter of context. That is to say, where they were found. Typically, objects of power and ephemera objects of the Legacy have a level of at least 5 (before adding the +3 bonus).

Nonmagical items of the Legacy often, over time, reveal special purposes and powers not evident when originally discovered.

Items of the Legacy are usually discovered in secret caches or hidden places. They are excellent goals for characters looking for a traditional sort of quest. Angels and other beings of the Legacy are more obvious, but still usually keep to themselves. Often angels guard Legacy caches, but only to ensure that, when found, the objects do not fall into the wrong hands.

At some point in the narrative, a GM could introduce a storyline about the location of a Legacy cache having been found, but some sort of elaborate puzzle keeps it hidden or sealed. Vislae that can figure out how to get inside would find great rewards.



Usually, the Legacy in any of its forms is difficult to discover. A Legacy spell may be inscribed on the underside of a rock high atop a mountain or spelled out in the swim patterns of a particular deep-sea fish.

**Angels** are the primary beings that claim to be part of the Legacy. But other creatures, both common and unique, may also be found to be part of it.

Items of the Legacy are always significant, durable, useful, and appropriate. A shield, a magical salve, or a hammer could all be of the Legacy. One item specific to the Legacy is called a vigor shard. When activated, the shard of glowing, golden light fuses with your hand, and energy infuses your body and being. You heal 1 Wound and gain 6 bene that you can place into any pool(s). You can also cast a spell (or use another ability) in the next round with no **Sorcery** cost.

People in the know always celebrate the discovery of a new aspect of the Legacy. It grants a sense of security. It lets them know they're not alone.

## PHYSICS

Physics is a Shadow word. It doesn't have much meaning in the Actuality, because it implies a single set of inflexible rules governing all of reality, and that just doesn't exist in the Actuality.

In the Actuality, we don't use "physics" as a word or a concept. Instead, we speak of the *precepts* of reality. These are the truths of the world(s), and because of the incredible variation that exists, the precepts are very broad—and even then sometimes have exceptions. It's important for all vislae to understand the major precepts, although in their full breadth, the precepts are many and complex, and some of them are secrets. And, as with all secrets, you won't discover them all right away.

You're going to have to disabuse yourself of notions like planets, celestial mechanics, thermodynamics, the speed of light, and all that

*Angels, page 28*

**It's important to realize that "shadow" is, in many ways, a literal description of what it is: a murky, distorted representation of true reality. Thus, many of the things in Shadow are distortions of true things in the Actuality.**



### THE KEY

*Sorcery, page 27*

sort of thing. Of course, you know all about these topics from Shadow, because you're smart and value knowledge, and there they were called the truth of things. But there's no place for such Shadow-thinking here. The Actuality has its own rules.

## MAGIC

Magic is a part of the world, and it is apart from the world. These are the two contradictory views of magic. And like so many dichotomous ideas, both are true.

### MAGIC IS A PART OF THE WORLD

Magic is the fundamental force in the world. It's interwoven into everything. Even to suggest that magic "powers" things is to hold it too much at arm's length, because it suggests that the things it powers are, or could somehow be rendered to be, apart from magic. The way Shadow science teachers talk about physics is how we in the Actuality should think about magic. It doesn't run everything—it *is* everything.

Even the word "magic" probably gives the wrong impression, because it suggests a concept beyond the norm. As do words like "supernatural." Magic isn't supernatural—it's just natural. This means that it's misleading to say that vislae use magic. Everyone and everything uses magic simply by existing. Vislae use spells. They use rituals. They use weaving. And so on.

### MAGIC IS APART FROM THE WORLD

Magic is change. Magic breaks all the rules. It is the counterclockwise action in a clockwise world.

Magic takes the world and makes it better. It is the force that allows us to go upstream rather than simply be carried along, powerless, by the metaphorical river. It allows us to make a mark on the world. It allows mortals to shout to the gods, "We are here!" It shows the gods that they do not have a monopoly on understanding and power.



## MAGIC IS REAL

Magic works. It is always purposeful, but it is sometimes uncontrolled, or poorly controlled.

Magic takes many forms, but they all are primarily matters of technique and understanding. Magic is utilized through secrets—spells, rituals, **Hidden Knowledge**, secret souls, and so on. **Vislae** are those who have mastered those secrets, and vislae are few in number compared to the entirety of the population.

Other people who may not be vislae often possess a little magic, such as a charm, a hex, or a minor cantrip. Then there are the **zilats**, who are born with an affinity for a single magical effect and hone it to perfection. Those who never use any magic are rare and avoid it very intentionally. **Elderbrin** and **lacuna** are, of course, creatures of magic—there are no **forsakers** among them.

## THE CURRENTS OF MAGIC

Magic flows from the **Invisible Sun** through the other eight suns. It flows along the **Path of Suns**, but also along the **Nightside Path**. Each of these is a current of magic.

But there are other currents as well. Those who can tap into them are better able to cope with the waxing and waning of magic, particularly as represented by the cards of the **Sooth Deck**.

These nonstandard currents are known as Zain, Aevyr, Ouzan, and Thray. Some vislae believe there are others—some say *many* others. A vislae who can access one or more of these currents of magic supposedly unlocks new spells and practices unique to each, and for each accessible nonstandard current, a vislae can ignore or double a Sooth card effect once every nine cards played (thus, once every time the Path of Suns is full of cards). Secrets and long-form magic are often needed to open the door to tap into a new current initially.

## SOME OF THE MAJOR CURRENTS OF MAGIC

**THE KEY**  
*Hidden Knowledge*,  
 page 30  
*Vislae*, page 11  
*Forsaker*, page 60

*Zilat*, page 124

*Elderbrin*, page 30

*Lacuna*, page 30

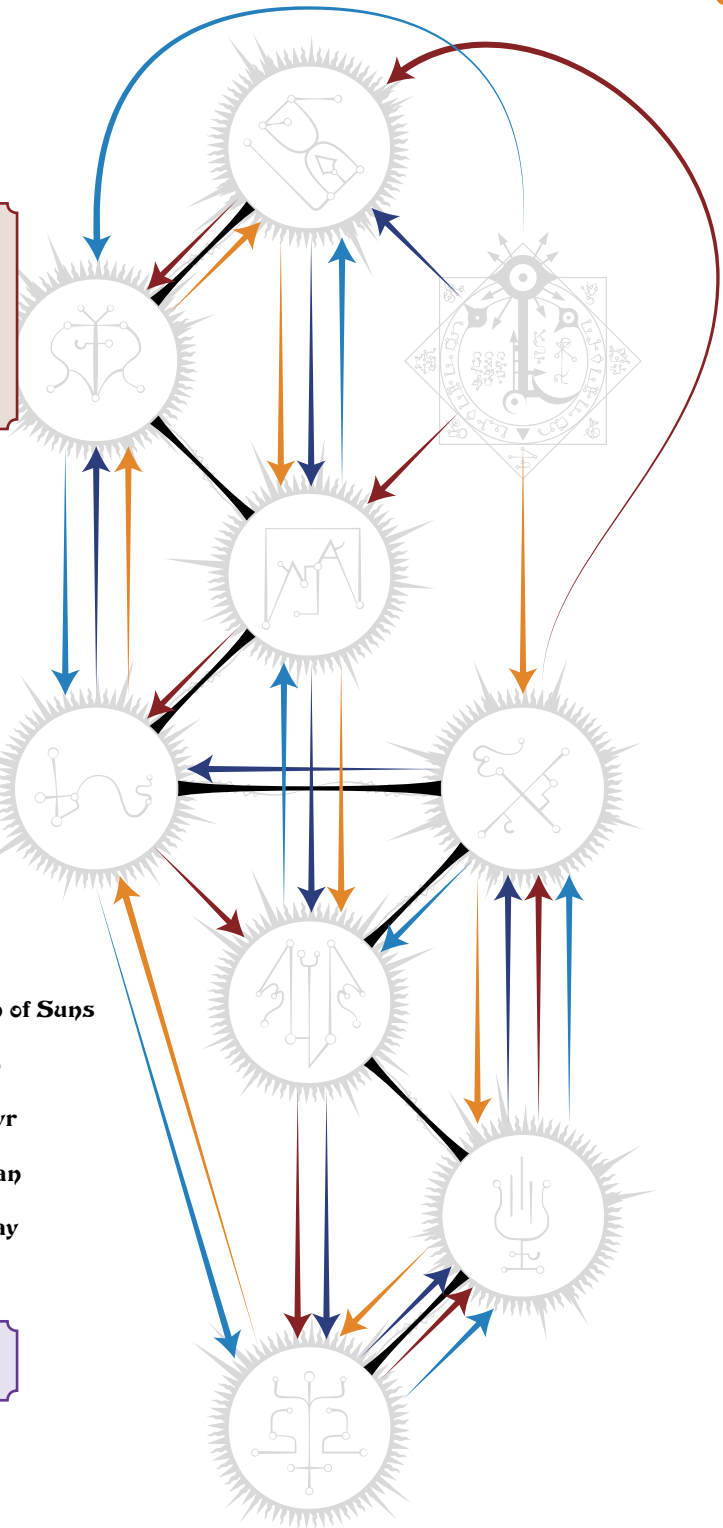
*Invisible Sun*, page 62

*Path of Suns*, page 35

*Nightside Path*, page 36

— **Path of Suns**  
 — **Zain**  
 — **Aevyr**  
 — **Ouzan**  
 — **Thray**

**THE GATE**  
*Sooth Deck*, page 73



## THE REGISTERS OF MAGIC

It's not just what spell you cast, but how you cast it. There are five different registers of magic a vislae can use to cast a spell, if they wish. The registers reflect the vislae's mood, intention, and purpose for casting the spell in a way that only another vislae will understand. It has to do with gestures, words, and very subtle manipulations of the magical currents.

It's possible but difficult to use a register deceptively. The registers are:

- ✦ **Formal:** When casting a spell in the presence of one's superiors, or with an intent to impress, formal is the best choice.
- ✦ **Casual:** The default register, this conveys either a lax attitude or a relaxed familiarity. Healing your best friend's wound is likely done in the casual register, not because you're casual about your hurt friend, but because you are close.
- ✦ **Offensive:** If you are intentionally meaning harm or attempting to intimidate, this is the register to use.
- ✦ **Defensive:** Often to convey attacks made in self-defense, the defensive register's intention is to show no desire to harm.
- ✦ **Romantic:** Used rarely, this register indicates that you are romantically interested in the target of the spell or an observer.

None of these registers has any mechanical effect, but they are ways that vislae can communicate general ideas or intentions without so much as speaking a word.

## THE SOOTH DECK AND THE PATH OF SUNS

Governing our destinies—from the grand schemes of our lives to the minor events we experience daily—the Sooth Deck either predicts the future or guides it, depending on your point of view.

The currents of magic create an ever-changing, complex tapestry of power. The currents move and shift constantly, creating fluctuations that grant a brief facilitation or impediment to certain varieties

*The Book Without Pages is a magical grimoire written on the inside of the eyelids of every person born in a village called Dun.*

of spells and other magical practices. Vislae see these changing patterns. They feel them in their very bones and along their skin. To communicate these difficult concepts quickly and easily, they created a set of sixty icons that play along a specific pattern—the Path of Suns—to show the (seemingly) random changes and their effects.

The Sooth Deck represents these icons of pure magical power. They are simple images, each encoded with volumes of meaning, particularly as they interplay with the Path and with each other. Their effects are both immediate (the ebb and flow of magic) and long term (presaging the future).

The Path of Suns is a representation of the soul. Like the colors that indicate the essence of the various realms, the Path of Suns suggests that each individual is complex and ever-changing.

## COINCIDENCE

It would be impossible to talk about the way things work—the very precepts of reality—without at least mentioning coincidence. Now, the very word in Shadow suggests random happenstance. But in the Actuality, coincidence means so much more. Because coincidence suggests that two seemingly unrelated things are actually related in some way. Two events. Two objects. Two people. This isn't random. It's truth. All sorts of things are connected. Just because mortals don't understand all the connections doesn't mean they don't exist. If a dog barks three times before it rains, that coincidence should not be dismissed as meaningless.

Expecting and understanding coincidence is an important survival trait. Finding someone's wallet on the street isn't just random. Somehow, coming into contact with that person is important, or something in that wallet is important for you to have.

Don't be dismissive of significance just because it's not obvious. Everything means something. You can't keep track of it all, but at least try to notice some of the connections. Wise people do, and the more they can notice and remember, the wiser they may seem.

**FORM**

In the Actuality, we realize that essence is everything and form is meaningless. In Shadow, you might have been caught up in such trivialities, but here, we look for meaning. The idea of a thing is far more important than the thing itself.

This is because we recognize the power and importance of the essence of things. Magic, first and foremost, is about essence, not form. Qualia is all within the mind and the soul. The very definition of qualia indicates that it's not about the form, but about the meaning a perception conveys. We don't care what something looks like—we only care about how it makes us feel. The inner experience of a thing is what's important.

Ideas are potent. They shape the world. Form is, at best, the emergent result of the changes wrought by essence. A crafter's skill isn't in the result of their work, but in their knowledge, understanding, and creativity. The idea is always bigger than the result of the idea.

Form doesn't last. Essence never dies.

**VERSUS****ESSENCE**

Essence is important, obviously. But to say that form is meaningless is simply ridiculous. Form is appearance, and everyone knows that appearance is how people judge you. More important, it is how you express yourself. In Satyrine, for example, we have the ability to visit a changery and take on whatever form we wish (or can afford), and many of us take the opportunity to do just that.

Form is physicality. It is action. Form is the mark one leaves upon the world. You can spend all the time you want in contemplation, but if you don't get up and do something about it, what's the point of all that thought?

Caring about form means putting in the effort to ensure quality. Working toward a pleasing form indicates love and concern. It is craftsmanship and care. Recognizing the importance of form shows determination and respect. It shows that you care about how others see the world.

Even magic respects form. Skilled vislae know that a spell isn't just about what it does, but about the appearance and form it takes. They understand that different spellcasting forms carry different meanings and registers.

**COLOR**

Everything is made of color. Colors are the building blocks of existence—*everything* is made of color.

Color comes from the suns. That is why, as the Path of Suns would suggest, the suns are at the heart of reality. They provide and maintain existence. **The Dark**—the absence of color—is nothingness. To break something down to its base components would be to make it only colors.

This is true of both matter and energy.

But as we all know, color isn't just light. Colors have meaning. Silver is beginnings. Green is life. And so on. Like so many things, it's possible to think that these are just metaphors. But in the Actuality, metaphors are literally truth.

*The Dark, page 62*

*Some say there is a place,  
the Kaleidoscope Void,  
where all colors come  
together. It is a place of  
madness and chaos, where  
everything has all meanings  
and thus no meaning.*

**THE BENDABLE  
RULES OF REALITY**

One of the things that confuses those who've spent too much time in Shadow is that the rules that govern reality aren't inflexible. In fact, change and variation are as much a part of the Actuality as structure or reliability, if not more so.

In other words, gravity pulls you down, unless it doesn't. When it doesn't, typically there's a reason, but sometimes that reason is obvious, or even knowable. Consistency in the Actuality is usually localized. So when there is no gravity to pull you down, whatever rules appear to be in play for you in that environment are also in play for everyone around you. Bendable rules do not mean that the universe is subjective.

**MATH AND GRAMMAR**

"Math and grammar are the only two constants in the Actuality" is one of the accepted truths, and it

## KING NINE

usually holds true. But there's more to parse here than it seems at first.

Math in the Actuality works just like it does in Shadow. Two plus two is four. Nineteen comes after eighteen. In its most basic—most abstract—sense, math remains constant. By basic or abstract, we mean numbers themselves, not measurements. A spell can easily make a 6-foot pole into an 8-foot pole. It can turn one pole into three poles. But eight is still more than six, and one is still less than three. These are the basic concepts of math that do not change.

Except (you probably expected “except” by now, which is good—you’re getting the hang of this) that sometimes math *can* change. But these are big changes. For example, there once was a number between twelve and thirteen. It’s not there anymore, and no one knows precisely why. Somehow its value is utterly missing. The very concept of twelve and thirteen (and all numbers, because it’s an interrelated system) changed without that missing number. But once that change was made, it was made everywhere. Because math is universal.

*It is not a coincidence that the words “spells” and “spelling” are so clearly related.*

When people talk about grammar, they’re talking about what you think they’re talking about, but also magic. Because words *are* magic. Words are the framework in which we—as conscious souls—describe the qualia we experience. Qualia is the real truth and magic is the acceptance and expression of that truth.

Which means that grammar—the ways and rules for how we put words together—is also a description of how magic works. Spells, rituals, and more are different ways of using the grammar to harness magic and produce desired effects. That’s why vislae call the study of magic (and the books you learn magic from) gramarye.

Thus, if you know and cast a spell, it works more or less like it did the last time you cast it. Except when it doesn’t. Because of course it’s more complicated than that. Every vislae knows that the ebb and flow of magical currents cause the particulars of magic to vary in a constant fashion. One moment, divination magic is on the ascendancy, and the next, it’s destructive magic.



That's what the Sooth Deck helps vislae understand and visualize. The turn of a new card represents these ebbs and flows. Moreover, a surge in magical power from one of the currents, a momentary lost connection, or any of a million other things can affect a spell, sometimes leading to **magical flux**.

So grammar can change—is ever-changing, actually—but someone with real mastery over magic can understand, predict, and control the changes. A vislae with the ability to see all the thousands (millions?) of variables in the flow of magic could control the changes and never experience unexpected flux.

In theory.

### ATOMS, PLANETS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

People in Shadow constantly probe the boundaries of the illusion that they live within. This exploration—"science"—is an understandable symptom considering the situation. On some level, those trapped in Shadow know, deep down, that their world is not real. Many of them want to peek behind the curtain, so to speak, to confirm these subconscious thoughts. Some look outward and study planets, stars, and such things. Others look inward and find a quantum world of almost unimaginable smallness. Both extremes, of course, are just part of the illusion.

In the Actuality, if you look outward, you see the Path of Suns. And if you look inward, you see the Path of Suns. As within, so without. Colors are the fundamental forces—colors of the suns. And the suns represent the human heart and the human soul. Accept these truths, and you take a large step toward understanding everything.

### TIME AND SPACE

Astute readers will note that those stalwarts of Shadow science, time and space, are not mentioned as things that remain unchanging. Not at all. Any vislae will tell you that time and space are like any concept—like fire, like music, like love, like



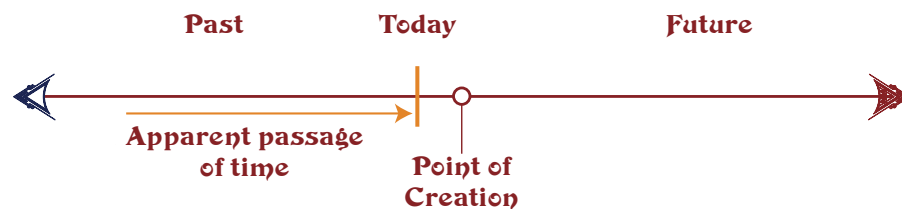
knowledge—in that they can be shaped, changed, and turned utterly inside out.

But we should dwell a bit on time, because believe me, it doesn't work anything like you think it does. As we wrote before, the common belief is that the world is a spell. When it was cast, both space and time began to expand from that epicenter and the world came to be.

When time was created, however, it moved both forward and backward. The origin point of the timeline, then, isn't at the beginning, but in the middle. Just as there's more future ahead of us with each passing moment, there's actually more past behind us as well. The past is being created in real time, and the history books change to fill in what happened. It's not just a delusion. There really is more past now than there used to be, which means more happened in the past now than it did a hundred years ago.

Confused yet?

Well, it gets worse. You see, as time is expanding backward and forward, we are moving only forward. After time and space were created, the present "began" well before the creation point. If everything before the origin (mid)point is past and everything after it is future, the present started in the past. And our present remains in the past so far. Still, while the past stretches out behind us, we are fast approaching the creation point in the middle. What happens when we get there? One guess is as good as another, but many believe it will be something truly momentous.



## MATTER, ENERGY, AND AETHYR

Like time and space, matter and energy are entirely mutable. In fact, that's one of the main things that spells and other magical practices do—manipulate matter and energy.

Beyond conventional (perceptible) matter and energy, though, there exist spiritual elements. The medium that sustains spirits of all types and allows them to move and act in the physical world is called aethyr. Aethyr can be thought of as the spiritual version of air. It permeates and coexists with the material world, but rarely affects or interacts with it. It gives ghosts and spirits sustenance (like air grants to living creatures) and buoys their movement in the same way that air catches beneath the wings of a bird and allows it to fly. Aethyr is composed of memory, which explains why ghosts—in a way, sentient memories—are so closely tied to it. Very rarely, aethyr is called akashic.

Aethyr is tied closely to the fundamentals of magic. It also provides a medium for various devices like radios, telephones, and powered lights. Because they use aethyr to transmit signals, sounds, or light, they don't need wires or circuits found in the shadows of such things in the Grey. These aethyric devices are useful, but they come with risk—using them invites attention, eavesdropping, or outright interference from the spirit world.

Ectoplasm is in a way the very opposite of aethyr. If aethyr is a substance in the spiritual world, ectoplasm is spirit made manifest in the material world.



*Unlike intelligent mortal creatures, ghosts and spirits can choose whether or not to be connected to the Noösphere at any given time.*

## THE NOÖSPHERE

Nedalia's spell seemed to warp the room around her, and even though she knew intellectually that she remained in that room, all her senses told her that she was somewhere else. Everything was a flat grey-blue, but then when she looked closer, thin white clouds swirled. They quickly got closer, and she saw that the clouds were composed of glistening diamonds. Each diamond was a stored bit of information. She touched one and learned how to say "distant" in elderbrin.

Passing through the cloud, with the diamonds that weren't diamonds playing gently off her flesh that wasn't flesh, tickling her mind with miscellaneous but useless facts, she saw still more clouds and more diamonds. But some of these jewels were larger than the others. More complex information. And suddenly, there were diamonds the size of buildings. Of mountains. The memories of all humanity rose around her.

**But how to find what she needed?**

The Noösphere is an emergent result of all the thinking beings in the Actuality. It would be wrong to talk about connecting one's mind to the Noösphere, because all minds are already connected to the Noösphere, all the time (even while asleep). The trick isn't getting connected, but getting access. The Noösphere stores all thought and memory, but some kind of magic is required to access those thoughts and memories later or—even more difficult—to access other people's thoughts and memories.

Aethyr is a large component of the Noösphere. The memories entwined within the fabric of the aethyr are an important part of the Noösphere, but the Noösphere is also a way in which people can communicate and interact mentally. People can send messages through the Noösphere or hold entire conversations across great physical distances.

Because memory is a component of the Noösphere, it can also be used to store information and retrieve it again (even from another location).



Some people transfer their **orbs** to “Noösphere accounts,” since orbs represent ideas, making it easy to interface with the Noösphere. Through it, two people with accounts can exchange currency without ever having to touch a physical object or even be near each other.

It’s even quite common to access the Noösphere with a cantrip called **Telegnosis** to check the current time or get a fairly accurate weather forecast.

Although some vislae can use minor magic, spells, and abilities granting them access to the Noösphere to accomplish the things described above, others can use special devices called **Aethyr Links**.

## INNOVATION

One thing you’ll want to get out of your head right away once you’ve escaped Shadow is the idea of technology and the constant advancement over time due to innovation. This is a Shadow concept. What Shadow calls technology is just another part of the natural world. This doesn’t mean that phones and radios grow on trees (although it’s possible, in some places). It means that the concepts of phones and radios have always existed, just like the concepts of trees and rocks have always existed. It isn’t possible to invent a new machine any more than it’s possible to invent a new kind of tree, rock, or river.

In a way, the realization that things that seem like they must have been invented have always been around might make it easier to grasp that the past is being filled in retroactively behind us. Cause and effect are—at least in the big picture—illusory.

Magic, however, changes everything. Magic *can* make a new kind of tree, rock, or river. Magic is where all innovation lies.

## TECHNOLOGY

When people return from Shadow, one of the first things they ask about the Actuality is, “What is the technology level?” As though the Actuality can be understood by knowing what kind of computers it has or whether it has a certain type of jet engine. It’s a meaningless question, but they can be forgiven



### THE KEY

*Makers, page 42*

*Orbs, page 181*



### THE WAY

*Telegnosis, page 26*

*Aethyr Link, see Objects of Power deck*

*Aethyr, page 14*

for it—Shadow is a diabolical deception, after all.

In many ways, science and technology are simply the distortions of what **Makers** do. Understanding that using a certain material and treating it with a certain ingredient will produce a certain effect is as close to the Shadow concept of “science” as we get.

So a telephone in the Actuality contains parts that make it work, just like you have a heart, lungs, and so on that make you work. But even then, to continue the comparison to a Maker’s craft, a certain amount of will goes into what Makers do. Ingredient X plus ingredient Y produces something for a Maker that they wouldn’t produce for someone who does not have the right aptitudes. It produces something in part because the Maker makes it so.

That’s true of all things. There’s a will behind it. That can be the will of a person, a spirit, or even the creator who cast the original spell that started the world. The Actuality was born of an act of will, and thus will underlies all action.

This means that “logical implications” about technology aren’t logical at all. One might argue that in order for an automobile to work, another gasoline-powered engine must work. But that’s Shadow-thinking.

Here are the truths about various types of technologies common to Shadow.

**Computers:** These are almost entirely illusion. Distorted versions of books, familiars, magically created intelligences as well as other things, and, in the case of the Internet, the Noösphere.

**Telephones:** There are telephones in the Actuality, although they are rare. They are more common in Satyrine than elsewhere but still not ubiquitous, as they are in Shadow, and certainly not something you regularly carry, as that would be foolish—telephones are dangerous. It is easy to eavesdrop on a telephone conversation and almost as easy to make a connection to an unwanted entity. Telephones reach out into the world and the **aethyr** to contact someone, but how do you know what you will be contacting? As any Goetic can tell you, connecting to an unknown force is usually something you don’t want to do. In the Actuality,

either telephones are used by people who know what they're doing or they're used sparingly, and never for anything terribly critical.

**Automobiles, Airplanes, and Trains:** Illusory concepts like technological progress suggest that, for example, a car is better than a carriage, but in the Actuality, that assumption is baseless. The smokehorses of the *Red* or a star-footed oolat from *Indigo* could certainly outrun any train or automobile. And why devise an airliner when a flying barge from the *Unfathomable Archipelago* can carry a hundred times the number of passengers or cargo? That said, motorized vehicles are not unknown in the Actuality, but they are not common, usually because of aesthetics more than anything else. Of automobiles, airplanes, and trains, trains are the most common, mainly because of their practicality. There are places that cars and planes likely cannot go (at least not easily), but a train's tracks always suggest a possible way through. The vehicles that get used in the Actuality are generally larger and less uniform in appearance than in Shadow. But overall, in most people's minds, there are simply more elegant and less expensive ways of getting around, like carriages, dirigibles, and, of course, spells.

**Radio and Television:** Television is mostly unknown, but many people have radios in their homes. They are usually large, wooden affairs with byzantine antennae, and radio stations are few. Almost as common are turntables and other means of playing recorded music, because as with telephones, tuning a radio can be a dangerous proposition if one accidentally finds a signal sent by a malevolent entity.

**Various Machines:** Vacuum cleaners, dishwashers, clothes washers, industrial machines, and other such things certainly exist, but most people are unaware of them—they exist only in the background. In Satyrine, for example, such machines are used mostly by thoughtforms, not people. Also, it would be a mistake to assume their ubiquity, as various places might have other means of accomplishing such tasks.

*Red, page 56*

*Indigo, page 46*

*Unfathomable Archipelago, page 49*

**Clocks:** Analog clocks are quite common throughout the Actuality.

**Biology:** Basic biology, as understood in Shadow, is a fair reflection of the truth. Hearts pump blood, lungs take in air, bodies need food, and so on. The problem arises when one attempts to go further than that—into DNA, biochemistry, and so on. Such things represent an overly complex yet overly simplistic way of looking at something that is both as straightforward and as mysterious as life. We also would be foolish to assume that because beings like humans, horses, and cats work one way that all creatures work that way. Elderbrin don't. Lacuna don't. There are whole categories of beings that aren't creatures at all and don't have recognizable biologies. And of course, the magic of the changeries shows us that humans and other creatures can work in different ways too. Life is so far beyond the Shadow concept of biology that it's really not worth spending much time thinking about.

**Chemistry:** Chemistry is almost wholly a (light) distortion of alchemy, potion making, and other processes that involve admixtures and manipulations of various substances.

## DEATH

"Death comes for everyone. But it doesn't always get what it wants." Or so goes the old vislae saying.

Death is not the end. That's Shadow-thinking. Instead, death is a transition to the *Pale*. For most non-vislae, the transition is fairly swift. A few linger, eventually becoming ghosts. Vislae always have the ability to linger. Some dead vislae can almost immediately try to acclimate themselves to their new, entirely spiritual existence. They very likely retain at least some of their abilities, and they gain certain new ones.

## THE TRANSITION

When the body dies, the spirit or soul remains. However, after death, there is a period of transition for the spirit that can last for ten days or even

*Pale, page 53*

longer, and almost never less than one day. This transition, called Limbo by some, the Empty by others, is a strange state of near non-existence. The spirit hovers around the place of death or—rarely—the spirit’s earthly home, insensate or nearly so. It can be sensed, or even contacted, by those able to do such things, but the spirit is virtually unaware of itself or anything around it.

After this transition, the spirit has two paths before it. It can move on to the Pale, which is by far the most commonly taken path. Less often, the spirit can remain in the realm of the living as a ghost. The factors involved in this are varied and complex. Vislae always have the choice. But for most people, it’s not always a choice—in fact, it rarely is. The choice is thrust upon them, which is probably why so many ghosts are angry and seem trapped in the living world, rather than existing there willingly.

If the dead being doesn’t move on to the Pale, its transitory state comes to an end only when it has the potential of being perceived, at least as an idea. In other words, if a person dies alone in the desert, their spirit may remain in the Empty for decades or centuries before someone comes along. The idea—the *concept*, the *quale*—of the spirit is a ghost.

During the transition, spells, ephemera, and effects such as **Palingenesis**, **Revivification**, and **Lonely Songs the Moon Sings** can return a spirit to its body and back to life.

## INTO THE PALE

Upon arrival on the shores of the Dead Lands, a spirit slowly acclimates to its new existence in the Pale. Spirits linger in the Pale for decades, sometimes centuries, but even the Pale is transitory. Eventually, they pass along to somewhere else—but where that might be, the living do not know. It’s rumored that the living cannot know.

While it’s possible for a resident of the Pale to return to life, the longer one remains there, the harder it becomes. (Ghosts are almost always easier to restore to life than spirits who have taken up residence in the Pale.)

### THE WAY

*Goetic Summoning,*  
page 74

*Return to the Living,*  
page 43

*Those who die and come back to life often forget significant facts or people, have somewhat altered personalities, and maybe even have brand-new talents and abilities.*

*Palingenesis, see Spell Deck*

*Revivification, see Spell Deck*

*Lonely Songs the Moon Sings, see Incantations Deck*

*For more on the Pale, see page 53*

*Wraith, page 143*

As previously mentioned, there are spells and incantations that can return a resident of the Pale to life, but once the spirit has been there for more than a year, they are called a “Dead Resident,” and fewer spells will restore them to the land of the living. Spells like **Stir the Dead** do so very temporarily. Many wishing to restore a Dead Resident to life use **Goetic Summoning** to bring their spirit back as a ghost, and then use **Palingenesis** or a similar bit of magic. Revivification and other equally powerful magic can restore a long-dead person back to life, but after twenty years, the spirit becomes a “Pale Native” and the process can be much more difficult or fail altogether. The only sure-fire option to bring a long-dead Pale Native back to the land of the living is the **Return to the Living** ritual. However, with the exception of **Return to the Living**, a spirit must want to leave the Pale for *any* of these to function.

Sometimes, Dead Residents with special dispensation from the rulers of the Pale can leave that realm to travel elsewhere, but this is only temporary. Such beings are typically referred to simply as “the dead” to distinguish them from the living beings around them. They have corporeal forms, but usually it is easy to distinguish them due to their skeletal bodies, rotting flesh, and so on—although many attempt to use special wrappings, spells, and perfumes to keep from decaying too quickly. Special forms of the dead are called revenants (the dead with a mission) and liches (the dead who use magic to stay out of the Pale, perhaps indefinitely). Very rarely, a rogue spirit escapes the Pale on its own and becomes a unique sort of ghost most often called a **wraith**. Wraiths are usually driven insane by the process of their transition out of the Pale—if they weren’t insane already. Insane or not, wraiths are always extraordinarily dangerous.

## GHOSTS

“Ghost” is a term for any kind of spirit of something that used to exist. Ghosts of long-gone objects are just as possible as ghosts of people or other creatures. Even slain demons or angels can return as ghosts.

In terms of people, though, a ghost is the specific form taken by a dead spirit who remains after the transition period. Regardless of what it was before, a ghost is more than just an idea. In the case of a dead creature (such as a person), it is a sentient idea.

Unless some other force intervenes to change the situation, the following things are always true about the ghosts of creatures:

- ★ Ghosts are essentially pure qualia. They are only conceptual, albeit at least somewhat self-aware and often free-willed. Without someone to perceive them (or conceive of them), they cannot exist for long. Non-existence in this sense, however, can be undone. A lonely ghost isolated in a forgotten locale will return to existence as soon as someone returns to the spot. They have no physical form and cannot interact with the physical world in a traditional manner.
- ★ Ghosts know the direction and distance to their physical remains, if they exist.
- ★ Ghosts have somewhere between 50 percent and 100 percent of the memories they had in life. (This may include things like spells.)
- ★ Ghosts have all the emotional capacity they had in life (in fact, if anything, it is heightened).
- ★ Ghosts retain the sensory capabilities they had in life.
- ★ The presence of a ghost is cold and creates a chilly spot in the air that is perceptible to most anyone.

The following things vary from ghost to ghost:

- ★ Some ghosts know how they died. Some do not.
- ★ Some ghosts have the intellectual capacity they had in life. Some are little more than recordings that repeat something they did in life, over and over.
- ★ Some ghosts are tied to the location where they died, and some are not.
- ★ Some ghosts are tied to where they lived, and some are not.
- ★ Some ghosts—usually those without full intellectual capacity—don't even realize they are dead and continue in a delusional existence mimicking some aspect of their life.

*In Satyrine and elsewhere, while ghosts are not all that uncommon, they are still not particularly welcome or well-liked. There will always be an inexplicable divide between the living and the dead, and it's hard to imagine that it will ever be completely overcome.*

*GMs can rule that circumstances allow NPC ghosts to break any of these rules, but such exceptions should be rare.*

- ★ Some ghosts are highly motivated to complete a task related to their life. Others have no such compulsions.
- ★ Some ghosts can see and hear other ghosts normally, but some cannot.

Ghosts can return to life via spells such as Palingenesis.

## GHOST ABILITIES

Being a ghost has both advantages and disadvantages. Being **invisible** and intangible can be useful, but it is—in the end—more a curse than a blessing. Ghosts can try to overcome this when desired so they can communicate and affect matter, but it is challenging. Some ghosts even attempt to animate their own corpse or haunt an object.

The abilities of ghosts are tied to a series of stages that all ghosts pass through.

**1. Residua.** New ghosts are called residuum and are little more than formless concepts. Further, newly formed ghosts are usually a bit lost and might become aware and active anywhere within a mile of where they died. Once a ghost finds the spot where they died, they can always sense the distance and direction to that spot or to where their body is, if it has been moved.

**2. Apparition.** Ghosts who have been in their state for about a year are called apparitions, because apparitions can be seen, and this is the first stage where that commonly happens. It usually takes a ghost a year or more to reach this stage, and an NPC ghost usually must be at least level 2 to ever reach it.

**3. Poltergeist.** After ten years, a ghost can begin to affect the physical world and is called a poltergeist. An NPC ghost usually must be at least level 3 to ever reach this stage.

**4. Haunting Spirit.** After fifteen years, a ghost is called a haunting spirit and can tie itself to an object and even possess or animate it. Some can possess a living creature. NPCs typically need to be at least level 5 to be a haunting spirit.

**5. Phantom.** Phantoms generally don't evolve until they have been ghosts for thirty years or



more. They can take on the appearance of a living being and can operate in the world as such, at least for short periods. Usually, only NPCs of level 7 and higher can become phantoms.

Vislae can “skip ahead” to higher stages much faster by gaining levels in a special **narrative skill** called ghostly acclimation. Assuming a dead vislae starts at stage 1, they can move to the next higher stage for each level in the skill up to level 4 (like any skill), which makes them a phantom. Ghostly acclimation is a narrative skill and thus costs 2 **Acumen** per level. A character can gain levels in this skill only while dead (and usually no faster than one day per new level), but the skill does not fade if they return to life. So a vislae who dies, gains 2 levels in ghostly acclimation, and then dies again starts out immediately as a poltergeist. There are special spells or secrets that a vislae (living or dead) can learn to work within the stages.

### PASSING THROUGH MATTER

Incorporeality is the natural state of a ghost, as it is only conceptual. The ghost has no material state, so it cannot affect or be affected by the material world.

Thus, all ghosts can pass through solid materials. Moving through matter is the ghost’s action. At first, doing this is slow—it takes about a round to pass through an inch of material. At stage 2 (apparition), a ghost can move through matter as easily as they can move through air.

At stage 2, a ghost can also detach themselves mentally from their previous existence such that they are no longer confined to the ground (assuming they were confined to the ground in life). In other words, a ghost moves along the ground with its “eyes” at about the same height as they were in life. But after a year, it can learn to move as it wishes, and it can fly at about the same walking speed it had in life.

### BEING SEEN AND HEARD

Invisibility is the natural state of a ghost.

Ghosts that want to be seen must be at least stage 2 and must concentrate as their action to do so. A



#### THE KEY

*Narrative skills, page 32*



#### THE KEY

*Acumen, page 22*

*Ghosts move at the same speed as they did in life.*



spirit can attempt this after only one day of being a ghost. However, at stage 3, the ghost's natural state becomes visibility. Thereafter, the ghost must use an action to switch between visibility and invisibility.

At first, a visible ghost is only barely so: a pair of eyes. A floating face. A disembodied hand. A translucent or shadowy apparition. After about a month, the ghost begins to look like a ghostly version of themselves, if that's what they want.

A stage 4 ghost can make themselves look so normal and solid that they can pass for the living. PCs can learn a secret to do the same.

Being heard is different from being seen. A spirit can attempt to be heard almost immediately upon transitioning into a ghostly existence (stage 1), but they must use their action to do so. And at first, it is a barely audible whisper. Usually only one person can hear a ghost at a time until the ghost is much better at making sound. After a few months, their ghostly voice gets louder if they wish it.

Only a ghost at stage 2 or above can intentionally be seen and heard at the same time.

Some people are **sensitive** and can see and hear ghosts whether the ghosts will it or not. Spells that reveal the **invisible** usually reveal ghosts as well. Cameras often capture images of ghosts, regardless of intent on the part of the ghost or photographer.

Sometimes, ghosts are seen when they do not intend it. Thanks to the whims and complexities of magic and qualia, a person might hear a ghostly voice or catch a fleeting glimpse of a ghost intending to be **invisible**. Such an event probably rewards a PC ghost with 1 Despair.

## AFFECTING OBJECTS

Only through intense concentration can a ghost affect the material world. A ghost must be at least stage 3 to attempt this.

It requires an action to move or manipulate matter, and an NPC ghost can affect matter in an amount described in the **Effects by Level table**, as their level would indicate. PC ghosts can learn the **Ghostly Hand** secret to affect matter.

*Haunt Object, see Spell Deck*



### THE KEY

*Aethyric lamp, page 186*

*Shamlight is a fairly inexpensive magically induced glow. Unlike aethyric light, it is not related to the aethyr. See The Key, page 186*



### THE WAY

*Sensitivity secret, page 92*

*Effects by Level table, page 21*

*Ghostly Hand, page 89*

Ghosts can learn to do more than move objects. They can change the temperature of objects, or even disappear an object.

Ghosts at stage 4 can inhabit or possess an object, granting it animation. Vislae typically use the **Haunt Object** spell to do this.

## INTERACTING WITH AETHYRIC DEVICES

Ghosts can interfere and interact with aethyric devices, because such devices are interfering and interacting with the medium in which ghosts exist. Ghosts are visible in an **aethyric lamp** (which is different from **shamlight**). They can listen in on telephone conversations and even interrupt and say what they want. Likewise, they can whisper into someone's radio. They can cause an aethyric device to turn on or off or change the function (radio station, light intensity, and so on) without operating the physical switches.

Aethyric devices always get the attention of ghosts and other spirits just as if they were flashing alarms.

## ECTOPLASM

Ectoplasm is spiritual matter given quasi-physical form. It's aethyr becoming solid or semi-solid. Ectoplasm is most often in the form of viscous liquid—slime, oily residue, or a thick mist that hangs in the air for a few moments. Ghosts can, with extreme effort, extrude ectoplasm into the material world, usually in fairly small quantities. Very rarely, this will happen unintentionally, almost like footprints or the spoor of a ghost.

The uses of ectoplasm, from a ghost's perspective, are few and rarely worth the effort. Sometimes, though, ectoplasm can be used to prove a ghost's existence or used in a more practical way, such as leaving residue on an important object or coating a mirror or window and then writing a brief message in it for the living to read.

## INHABITING BODIES

Most of the time, if a ghost wants to inhabit and control a physical body, their own corpse is the



obvious choice. It's very likely nearby and available. But ghosts can learn to inhabit any body—basically, animating and “riding” a corpse other than their own. Regardless of the host's physical form, the ghost retains their own level. Certain bodies might grant bonuses or penalties to certain actions. A giant brute might be particularly strong, for example.

A ghost must be at least stage 4 to attempt this. PC ghosts can learn a secret to enable this ability.

### MANIPULATING EMOTIONS

Some ghosts can instill irrational fear, feelings of dread, or negativity. A very few can give people positive emotions. Typically, an NPC ghost of stage 3 can manipulate emotions in such a way.

### MANIFESTATION

Ghosts of stage 5 (phantoms) can physically manifest, usually taking on the appearance and material form that they bore in life. Those particularly adept at it can change their appearance, shape, and size when they manifest. Manifested ghosts' bodies are made of pure ectoplasm, but they have *certes* as well as *qualia*, and they can be wounded or slain just like any creature.

### THE NOÖSPHERE

Ghosts of any stage can tap into and interact with the **Noösphere**. That might mean searching for information or spying on others looking for the same. They can observe or overhear communication or monetary exchanges, and in some cases (usually for ghosts of level 7 or higher), they can tamper with such transactions.

### GHOSTLY VULNERABILITIES

Ghosts are immune to physical attacks (except those few ensorcelled to specifically affect ghosts). Spiritual energy and mental attacks can affect them, however. Manifested ghosts can be affected by anything that would affect any other being.

Ghosts lose track of time. Time does not seem to be a constant for them. Without the ghost realizing it, a great deal of time might pass in a blink, or they

*When the dead (not ghosts) are “killed,” they become insubstantial and inert spirits in the Pale for a year and a day. Many of these fade away entirely at this time—passing into the Stillness, perhaps?*

*Being intangible and invisible makes a ghost an incredible spy.*



#### THE KEY

*Despair, page 204*

*Noösphere, page 14*



#### THE GATE

*Character Summary, page 9*

*For PC ghosts, GM shifts—along with Despair rewards—can be used to force them to lose track of time at important moments.*

might become confused and relive things from the past instead of remaining focused on the present.

Ghosts require someone to be aware of them. As intelligent *qualia*, they suffer if no one is perceiving or thinking of them. Each consecutive sunset that occurs without anyone perceiving or thinking about a ghost since the last sunset puts that ghost at a –1 penalty. Thinking about the person the ghost was before they died counts in this regard. Thus, it's always in a ghost's best interest to occasionally rattle a chain, creak a floorboard, or do things to remind others of its previous life.

Ghosts that are “slain” become inert, **invisible**, and intangible spirits for a year and a day. After this time, some transition to the Pale, but some remain—they'll never leave of their own volition and must be exorcised.

### DEATH AND THE VISLAE

When a PC dies, the player does not have to stop playing, although there might be a delay before they can take actions (yet the right secret or spell negates even that).

Vislae who die have the opportunity to continue to act, using their inherent magical power to sustain their spiritual form in the material world.

A PC gains 1 **Despair** immediately upon dying. The player should also reflect on their life's regrets and successes in the **Character Summary** for that session.

Eventually, however, most dead vislae need to make a choice. Their first and most obvious choice is to pass into death, in a transition that renders them no longer a ghost, but a resident of the Pale. One of the dead. In this stage, it is difficult (but not impossible) to leave.

Another choice is to return to life. Although this is difficult, most vislae who wish it can revivify with the help of still-living friends.

A third option is to attain a permanent undead status in the form of a wraith (a rogue, unaligned ghost), a corporeal revenant, a magically animated lich, or something similar. This is the most difficult and perhaps the most dangerous choice.

The following secrets will be of interest to player character ghosts:

- + **Moving Through the Empty** allows vislae to move through the transitory stage instantly to become a stage 1 ghost (and the ghostly acclimation skill can be used immediately to advance to a higher stage). Vislae without the secret can also spend 1 Crux to do this.
- + **Memories of Life** ensures that a vislae can cast spells and retain all memory and functionality while a ghost.
- + **Walking in Two Worlds** allows a ghostly vislae to move freely back and forth between visibility and invisibility, and between audibility and inaudibility.
- + **Ghostly Hand** allows a ghost to manipulate objects and affect the material world more easily.
- + **Walking Dead** allows a ghost to animate and inhabit their own corpse.
- + **Aethyr Tap** allows a ghostly vislae to access the Noösphere and even eavesdrop on communications conducted over a distance, whether that be on a telephone or using magic.
- + **Spiritual Link** sets up a special connection so that when the vislae dies, they can still communicate normally with a close friend or relative.
- + **Semblance of Life** allows a ghostly vislae to manifest a solid form, and to look and sound like whatever they want, including being able to pass for a normal living person.

Likewise, these spells are of interest to ghostly vislae:

- + **Haunt Object** allows a ghost to animate an object that they possess.
- + **Possessing Ghost** allows a vislae ghost to possess and control a living being.
- + **Anabiosis** allows a ghost to return to the living on their own.
- + **Morient Desire** kills the caster and immediately makes them a stage 2 ghost with full memories.



## THE KEY

*Certes, page 26*

*Qualia, page 22*

*Wounds, page 23*

*Anguish, page 23*



## THE WAY

*Moving Through the Empty, page 90*

*Memories of Life, page 90*

*Walking in Two Worlds, page 93*

*Ghostly Hand, page 89*

*Walking Dead, page 93*

*Aethyr Tap, page 85*

*Spiritual Link, page 93*

*Semblance of Life, page 92*

*Haunt Object, see Spell Deck*

*Possessing Ghost, see Spell Deck*

*Anabiosis, see Spell Deck*

*Morient Desire, see Spell Deck*

## RULES FOR VISLAE GHOSTS

While keeping in mind all of the above information (which applies to PCs and NPCs alike), PC ghosts also have the following modifications:

1. Ghosts have no **Certes**, only **Qualia**. Their Certes pools are empty. Likewise, they cannot suffer **Wounds**, only **Anguish**. Should a ghost ever take damage that can affect them and would normally apply to Wounds, it applies to Anguish instead.  
If a ghost dies (because it suffers all the Anguish it can), it becomes an inert spirit, unable to take any actions at all, for a year and a day.
2. As stated, a vislae ghost's natural state is one of incorporeality. They cannot affect things physically, and they cannot be affected by physical things. They can pass through solid barriers and objects. They are also **invisible** and inaudible to non-ghosts.  
This means that vislae ghosts cannot use objects. A ghost might look like it's wearing clothing and carrying items, but this is all just appearance, not reality. If a vislae had a special pair of magical shoes in life, their ghost might appear to be wearing the shoes, but they are not real and confer no special powers. The exception is a vislae's Testament of Suns or vertula kada, which remains with them no matter what and can be used if it has powers. Other specific objects of power can be carried by a ghost as well, as noted in the item's description.
3. Vislae ghosts without the Walking in Two Worlds secret don't truly control whether they are fully visible or audible. A player can state their intention in this regard, but circumstances (like the turning of a new Sooth card) can change things, and ultimately the GM, not the player, decides.
4. Vislae ghosts get only one rest action (one action) each day to restore a stat pool rather than four.

5. A vislae ghost can cast spells and use other magical abilities, but only spells and abilities that do not affect things physically, whether through movement, energy, or matter. Mostly, this means they can use purely mental or spiritual effects. For example, a ghost could use a divination, summon another ghost, change someone's emotional state, or influence someone's mind. They cannot heal wounds, move or harm objects or beings, affect the air or weather, create fire, or craft illusions (except purely mental illusions). They cannot cast spells that require them to touch something. Stage 5 vislae ghosts can potentially manifest, giving them the ability to cast any spell, use all their abilities, and use ephemera and objects of power.

### RETURNING FROM THE DEAD

Creatures can be returned from the dead through a number of different spells, incantations, and rituals. Those who have died and come back—particularly those who went to the Pale—are always said to come back changed somehow. Some have abilities or memories they didn't have before. Some have lost abilities or memories.

For PCs, a character who returns from the dead should probably gain at least 2 Acumen from the experience. GMs can require that they spend that Acumen immediately (perhaps in conjunction with Acumen they already have) on a new secret, spell, skill, or other appropriate character aspect that reflects their character being “changed.”

The GM can also take away a single magical practice that the PC knows, but reward them with 1 Despair. The character might also lose one or more conventional memories (at the GM's discretion).

Such characters also lose their **quirk** and gain a new one.

Rumors speak of vislae who have returned from the dead with a different heart or secret soul (and secret soul name). This is very rare and likely happens only under special circumstances.

Characters who return might also have scars, a different hair color, or another physical manifestation of their experience.

*Certain magical effects will destroy a ghost more permanently and utterly than simply inflicting Anguish upon it.*



#### THE KEY

*Quirks, page 154*

## SOULS

Everything with a consciousness has a soul. With very few exceptions, all living beings are conscious and intelligent. In Shadow, people think of animals as not being truly conscious, not being as intelligent as humans, or both. That is Shadow-thinking. All creatures have their own languages, cultures, and unique perspectives.

Although animal intelligence (and thus souls) is not in question, what philosophers in the Actuality debate is: do plants have a soul? Do inanimate objects? Many people have strong feelings about this, but there is no one universally accepted answer.

Sometimes, nonliving things gain souls. This is often because of prolonged exposure to a living being with a soul, but other events—momentous, traumatic, or spiritually significant—can give rise to this as well. The house where a murderer slew children might gain a soul, as might the ring of a powerful vislae. A road trod upon by a god might gain a soul, as might the silver cup used in a very potent invocation.

Although it's essentially impossible to be conscious and not have a soul, it is possible to have a soul and not be conscious. But it's rare.

### SOULS AND MAGIC

Without a soul, one cannot understand qualia, and without qualia, one cannot cast spells. A soulless being might have magical powers, but those are not spells.

### DEMONS AND SOULS

Demons do not have souls. This makes them more like thoughtforms than like people. Is a demon conscious? That is likely up for debate, but many people liken demons to viruses rather than creatures. They resemble life, but they don't fit its definition.

### IS MEAT MURDER?

Technically, yes, but this concern is mostly Shadow-thinking yet again. Most human food in the

Actuality is not produced using the ways of Shadow. Meat rarely comes from dead animals. There are few conventional farms or ranches. In Satyrine, what someone calls chicken, for example, is more likely to be harvested by people sifting through the ground along the Qtel River in Indigo with grated pans. Under the Gold Sun, an animal called the threx willingly and gladly trades its beef-like flesh for money or magic. In the Blue, ideas and dreams of food are nutritious and sustaining. Spells in Silver are far more likely to create pork than slaughtering a pig. Often, finished meals are created out of whole cloth (rather than by combining ingredients) through the use of ephemera or long-form magic. And so on.

In short, your rack of barbecue ribs probably didn't come from a dead animal. It likely came from a source far stranger. Just enjoy it. There are far more dire things to spend your time worrying about.

## THE PATH OF SOULS

The **Path of Suns** is not just a map of the Actuality; it is a map of the human soul. As within, so without. Each sun reflects a vital part of human nature. The Silver Sun represents creativity and inspiration. Green is growth and health (and sexual drive). Blue is the soul's dreams, hopes, and deep concepts. Indigo and Grey are, of course, truth and lies, respectively—sometimes the truth and lies people tell themselves. Pale is decay and degeneration—the soul turning inward. Red is change and sometimes the desire for violence. Gold is regeneration and new beginnings (sometimes even one person changing their mind is a monumental event).

If you dwell on this concept too long (and many have), you may begin to wonder if perhaps existence itself is a living, conscious thing with a soul. Alternatively, perhaps each human is a universe unto themselves. Or perhaps both are true, in a recursive structure delving infinitely inward as well as out.

*On the topic of food, it's worth mentioning that many people use magic to refrain from eating altogether. Prosodies in Satyrine use poetry to nourish and sustain people. The alternatives to conventional food are as numerous as the types of food available.*

*Deeps of Sleep, page 45*

*Some of the handouts in the Black Cube include restaurant menus from Satyrine.*

*Path of Suns, page 35*

*Elderbrin, page 30*

*It's worth noting that dead spirits in the Pale are always material.*

## SLEEP AND DREAMS

We all understand sleep. But like so many things in the Actuality, there's more to it than one might think. It would be too easy to say that there is a land of dreams that we all visit when we go to bed. No, sleep and dreams are—at least on the surface—what Shadow thinkers believe. That is to say, sleep is a restful state of unconsciousness, and dreams are a by-product of the subconscious mind.

But because there is still a thinking mind involved, a sleeping person remains a part of the Noösphere, and thus connected to other minds. Unconscious, dreaming minds help to create a special part of the Noösphere called the **Deeps of Sleep**. In this mental realm, memories of dreams and strange, subconscious thoughts form a dark and surreal landscape inaccessible to non-sleepers. Adept sleepers, or those using special spells or other magic, can access the Deeps of Sleep while they dream, but rather than passively experiencing their own subconscious thoughts, they are lucidly aware amid a mélange of all people's subconscious thoughts.

## DEMONS, ANGELS, AND SPIRITS

Humans, **elderbrin**, and other living creatures are material, obviously. But many beings in the Actuality exist in a very different state. To them, physicality is foreign and strange. It is distant and unrelatable. These spiritual entities look upon emotions and concepts as fundamental aspects of their reality far more than matter or even energy. They are, in a way, pure qualia.

This likely makes them seem very much like ghosts, and that's not entirely wrong. In fact, it's mostly right. Like ghosts, spiritual beings exist in the medium of aethyr, not matter, and can pass through solid objects. The main difference is that unlike ghosts, they were never physical creatures. They never experienced the touch of a lover or the smell of fresh baked bread. Nor have they suffered a bleeding wound or a cancerous tumor.



Most of the time, spirits are put into one of four categories: **angels**, demons, **dead spirits**, and conceptual spirits. For the most part, dead spirits were covered earlier. The other three categories can be a bit misleading, because in truth all spirits are conceptual. Spirits that embody concepts considered noble are simply called angels, and those more nefarious are classified as demons.

## SPIRITUAL CREATURES AND PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION

No spirits can affect the physical world or be affected by it. Some beings, however, have the ability to become entirely spiritual or entirely physical, depending on their needs. Most angels and demons, for example, can take physical form. This is a risky enterprise because if destroyed while in physical form, the entity can truly die.

Neither manifesting in physical form nor returning to spiritual form can happen very quickly or under pressure. This is almost never something that a being does in the middle of a crisis situation, like a battle.

Most demons, angels, and other beings have **different statistics** when they are spiritual than when they are physical.

## POSSESSION

Possession is when a spirit enters and takes control of a physical creature. It is sometimes called “riding” and sometimes “inhabiting.” In this case, the physical creature is called the host.

Unless specified otherwise, only spirits can possess physical creatures, and only physical creatures can be possessed. A demon possessing an angel, a ghost, or another demon, for example, would require very special circumstances.

A PC possessing an NPC host requires an Intellect-based roll. An NPC possessing a PC host requires a Resist roll. An NPC possessing an NPC host must simply be higher level.

Most of the time, the possessing spirit is in complete control of the host, controlling all its actions, with full command of its abilities, skills,

*Angels, page 28*

*Dead spirits, page 16*

*Physical and Spiritual Stat Differences, page 122*

*A sadist enjoys inflicting pain. A demon enjoys someone experiencing pain. The demon doesn't need to be the one inflicting it.*

and knowledge (including spells). Sometimes, it takes a spirit a few rounds to fully understand the capabilities of a newly possessed host.

Physical harm that befalls the host does not affect the possessing spirit. A spirit possessing a creature that dies is in a state of shock and unable to act for a round, but after that, it can operate as a spirit once again.

If a possessed host suffers a mental attack, the mental damage or effect is suffered by the possessing spirit if it is in control.

Sometimes, a possessing spirit can inhabit a host but remain submerged and hidden within them. In this case, the spirit is along for the ride but can take no actions other than attempt to reestablish control, which is like possessing the host all over again.

If a being that can possess a host is manifested in physical form, it must first become spiritual before it can attempt possession.

A possessing spirit can use an action to release control of the host but remain within the body, or it can use an action to vacate entirely. Vacated spirits become spiritual entities next to the host.

## DEMONKIND

**“All right,” the commander said. “Let’s talk demons. You know what demons are, right? They’re evil and nasty and they can possess you.”**

**A few of us nodded.**

**“Well, yes. All of that is true. But for those of you just out of Shadow, let’s also talk about what they aren’t. They aren’t made from the souls of evil people, and they aren’t God’s torturers meting out justice upon the damned. And they’re not fallen angels.” Seemingly as an afterthought, he added, “There are ‘fallen’ angels, but that’s another topic.”**

Demons are, by definition, the worst things in the world. Vile, hateful, spiteful things, they revel in pain and corruption. They bathe in the blood of the innocent and achieve orgasm when they hear screams of torment. There is no act too hideous and vile for them—no atrocity they will not enjoy.

Although not living creatures, demons think and feel. They have goals. They experience pain. But demons do not experience qualia. They are to mortals what viruses are to life—they are empty of the defining spark. Sentient, but not sapient.

The virus analogy is apt. In fact, perhaps demons actually *are* some form of virus. Who knows? Regardless of terminology, demons are not truly alive, and they exist to feed on living creatures and to replicate.

And this is where it gets complicated.

Demons spawn **invisible**, insubstantial beings best thought of as larval forms of themselves. If these things are perceived in some way, most people describe them as coiling, roiling worms covered in the slimy spew of the most hideous thing imaginable. These larval demons are called *urgeborn*.

*Urgeborn* can mature and grow only within a mortal host. They must possess a creature in order to live. Those that manage to do so grow within their victim until they fully mature, which can take years. The mature demon eventually bursts forth in a material form, killing its host and feeding on its pain.

Demons feed on emotion. Many people believe that they feed only on negative emotions, but that's not the case. A demon can feed on love as easily as on hate or fear. But hate and fear are often easier emotions to create, particularly for demons. Perhaps even more true is that negative fires are not just easier to stoke, but easier to sustain as well, which is important because when a demon feeds on an emotion, it is consumed.

Consider this: two young lovers find that when they rendezvous, their passion for each other is strong, then fades. Their conversations trip over a wrong word here or an ill-conceived phrase there. The strong emotion that normally overcomes such inevitable shortfalls just isn't there. Because their trysts are haunted by a lurking third party: a demon feasting on their love.

And this: the Agony Woods in the Red are filled with thorny trees upon which demons impale their victims. The victims are kept alive, fed and tended to just enough so they never die. The demons

*Whenever you make a permanent change to a stat pool, also increase the stat associated with it. This includes increases when you improve your forte, or from forte abilities like Hosts a Legion.*

*The fact that urgeborn are possessors doesn't mean that a mature demon can't possess someone, but it does mean that, most of the time, an inhabiting evil spirit is a very young demon.*

Zero's, page 102

*Demons also consume physical food, in particular meat. However, this is for pleasure, not survival or nourishment.*

#### THE WAY

*Sacrificial Rite, page 44*

*The Scream Into the Void invocation allows a being to offer their soul willingly. See The Way, page 37.*

harvest this pain like a farmer would harvest a field of grain, storing it away and feasting on it at their whim.

Or this: Margerith felt the loss of her twin sister so profoundly that she used magic to force a demon into the shape of a pendant she could wear, and then compelled the demon to consume her grief.

### DEMON FORMS

Demons are spiritual creatures, but many can create a physical form, not unlike a thoughtform. However, there is risk involved, for when a demon takes physical form to interact with the material world, they can be hurt and even killed by physical force.

Like *elderbrin*, demons have fluid forms. Unlike *elderbrin*, it takes a demon a great deal of time to change forms—sometimes months—but demons have a far wider set of forms to choose from.

Demons can take the forms of knives, clothing, jewelry, tools, furnishings, music, the air, or all the wine in a barrel. Given enough time and power, a demon can take a very large form, such as that of a vehicle or a building. There is at least one demon that has taken the form of an entire bar—the powerful entity known as **Zero**.

### GAINING A SOUL (OR PARTIAL SOUL)

We all want what we do not have. Some demons are no different. The Empty Ones are demons that recognize their lack of sapience, qualia, and souls, and desire them. Such things, for the Empty Ones, are always stolen, borrowed, or bought. Always temporary.

These demons willingly serve mortal conjurers if they can somehow be granted even the brief experience of qualia, but what they truly wish are souls. Someone using magic like the **Sacrificial Rite** can offer an Empty One a soul, and this is a prize like no other.

A demon with a stolen or offered soul experiences the world like a mortal. It understands and has a conscious awareness that it normally does not possess. It can even cast spells if it knows how. Souls gained this way are eventually consumed.



They're temporary. Thus, demons are always on the lookout for new souls.

### ORGANIZING THE MULTITUDE

There are demons of the Red and demons of the Dark. This is a distinction lost on most people, and for most it is at best an academic differentiation. But they exemplify their realm at least a bit, so demons of the Red spend their energy on violent change while those of the Dark are more interested in the corruption of mortals and the mortal world (including the suns themselves).

Organization and hierarchy usually do not come naturally to either, particularly not those of the Red, which are focused so clearly on destruction and change. However, powerful demons enslave and conscript lessers into serving them as soldiers, servants, and lackeys.

Some of the Red multitudes have organized themselves like military legions, each led by a commander who has absolute authority and a hierarchy of subcommanders. The actual titles change like fashion and fad, but currently the commanders are called "marquis" or "marchioness," and those below them are "counts" or "countesses." Gender is in fashion for demons currently, but this is not always the case.

The various marquis and marchionesses refer to a singular "Duke" that they all serve, but no one ever names him. If there actually is a "Duke of Demons," his existence is an extremely well-kept secret.

Demons of the Dark do not organize themselves into these legions. Instead, their demonic lords claim a title referring to something they hate or war against, such as "The Enemy of Sleep," or "The Enemy of Reason." Definition by what one opposes, rather than what one supports, is very appropriate for the Dark. Each such genderless lord has a number of servants, and each looks precisely like their lord. So, to all appearances, there is not one Enemy of Sleep, but a multitude. However, in practice, one lord—the original claimant of the title—rules over the rest, wielding power far beyond that of the others.

*For a demon to practice sorcery, they must consume a soul. This is a temporary resource for a demon to have, however, so demonic vislae need a constant source of souls.*

*If the reader can indulge a gross oversimplification, demons are an infection in reality, and angels are antibodies.*

*A demon's appearance is fluid, like that of elderbrin. Unlike elderbrin, however, the change takes a long time—usually months, at least.*

*The so-called Duke of Demons is sometimes called the Duke of Hell. Although this name is inappropriate and inaccurate, some demons perpetuate it for effect.*

The known demon lords include the following:

The Enemy of Sleep  
The Enemy of Reason  
The Enemy of Peace  
The Enemy of Choice  
The Enemy of Time  
The Enemy of Space  
The Enemy of Prudence  
The Enemy of Compassion  
The Enemy of Forgiveness  
The Enemy of Strength  
The Enemy of Health  
The Enemy of Youth  
The Enemy of Truth

As with demons of the Red, there are demons of the Dark that are independent and do not conform to these hierarchies.

Red demons have a sort of code of ethics. If a vislae makes a deal with a Red demon and holds up their part, the demon will do the same. A vislae under the protection or guidance of a demon of the Red has a powerful and true ally. They are cruel and merciless, to be sure—veritable engines of destruction, by definition—that delight in pain and suffering. But they are cruel to and inflict pain upon their enemies. And though they might consider most beings to be their enemies, a Goetic, for example, could make a pact with a demon of the Red and not be treated as one.

Demons of the Dark, however, ultimately want nothing that is good or true. Allies are betrayed as soon as possible. Agreements are broken (if possible). Devouring the entrails of an innocent or one who believed they were a friend is more pleasurable to a Dark demon than doing so to a foe. They are corrupt, hateful, and malicious for their own sake.

## ANGELS

**“All the luminaries of heaven stand wingtip to wingtip, wondering how long they must endure the bonds of space and the tortures of time.”**

—Tolfit Nulth, *The Sullen Angel*

Angels are far less numerous than demons. They're also, generally speaking, less complicated. The angelic hosts live in greatest numbers under the Silver Sun, but they are not native to Silver. They're not native to anywhere—they're aspects of the **Legacy**, left in the universe by the Absolute to watch over creation.

Although they can be in spiritual or material form, angels do not have fluid forms like demons. They always look the same (although a few are good at disguise). However, there are many types of angels, and thus they come in many forms. Many have the appearance of beautiful humans, while others take on the aspects of animals like bears, lions, stags, eagles, and so on, usually retaining a mostly humanoid shape. One common feature is wings, but there are angels without wings.

Angels often place great value on honor, benevolence, and justice. But these philosophies take many forms. Some angels pledge to protect humanity from darkness and injustice. Others wish to change and redeem humanity. Still others steer well clear of humanity altogether.

Angels are not perfect. They fall victim to temptation and sometimes let their emotions get the best of them. Unfortunately for them, while angels can be judgmental in any case, they judge their own kind most harshly of all.

Most angels avoid gods and other spirits, sticking with their own kind. There are nations of angels and hierarchies within them. A few dwell among humanity, but they are exceptions.

It's possible for an angel to possess a living mortal, but it's very rare.

## CONCEPTUAL SPIRITS

Is it true that everything is alive and has intelligence? We can talk all day about rocks and trees and glasses of beer, but what about concepts?

*Legacy, page 6 (the path)*

*Spirits can access the Noösphere fairly easily, just like ghosts. However, unlike intelligent mortals, spirits can disengage from the Noösphere and remain disconnected from it. They are able to enter it freely, but they are visitors there, not residents.*

*Monday, page 95*

*“The faithless, undeserving of creation, are given scriptures of wisdom. They must be made worthy of our aid and protection.”*  
—Shilimedes, angelic prince

What about love, life, want, or laziness? What about winter, sleep, or the idea of cities? These things could be alive as well, with the very concepts invested in spiritual form. Unlike demons and angels, conceptual spirits rarely have material forms. Like demons, they can and do possess living creatures from time to time, usually to exemplify their nature briefly and then vacating.

Their varieties are numberless. Conceptual spirits include the “nature spirits” of the Green, the living dreams of Blue, and the spirits of destruction and decay of the Red. They are far more likely to be lone individuals than part of any hierarchy, and they almost never associate for long with mortals.

Goetics often say that these miscellaneous spirits are far harder to deal with, communicate with, and relate to than angels or even demons. Their motivations and outlook are as alien as can be imagined (more, actually).

There are exceptions, of course, to all these rules. Some conceptual spirits aren't spirits at all—not only do they have material form, but that might be the only form they have. For example, there's what looks to be a man wandering around Satyrine who is **Monday**. He's not a spirit. He might be a spirit possessing a man, but that's not what he claims to be. And he seems like a decent, down-to-earth fellow to boot.

## GODS

“God” is an ill-defined term with many possible meanings that are not necessarily contradictory. Gods are powerful spirits. Gods are mortals who have achieved immortality. Gods are mighty beings for which we have no other name.

Thus, “god” has no strict definition. A god might be a potent conceptual spirit with no physical form, a powerful and muscular human specimen, or a hideous monstrosity the size of a house with tentacles and a dozen one-eyed heads. Gods are always at least level 14, since 13 represents the very end of mortality.

The distinction between God and gods is a glistening gem of a concept. Interesting to examine,

but perhaps fruitless in a practical sense. The latter—lowercase g—are beings of incredible power. The former—capital G—set all things, including the gods, in motion. Perhaps God is to a god as that god is to a mortal.

But most likely, the distance between God and god is far greater than that.

A few gods that are well known throughout the Actuality include the following.

**Derrahe, the Great Observer:** “He who sits upon the Mountain of Creation and keeps it from flying apart with his eight-angled gaze.” Resides mainly in the realm of the Silver Sun.

**Ishtoblin:** “The blessing of the unblessed.” Wanders throughout various markets appearing as an innocuous, plump woman of advanced years. Randomly curses and steals from wealthy merchants and customers, and bestows blessings on those less fortunate.

**Lopish’s Sword:** When the great goddess Lopish was slain at the Battle of Terrington Tower, a portion of her essence entered her 9-foot (3 m) long sword. Today Lopish’s Sword is a goddess of just vengeance.

**Nyvren:** Genderless being of utter madness and chaos. Said to dwell within the heart of the Kaleidoscope Void, where the colors of all suns mingle.

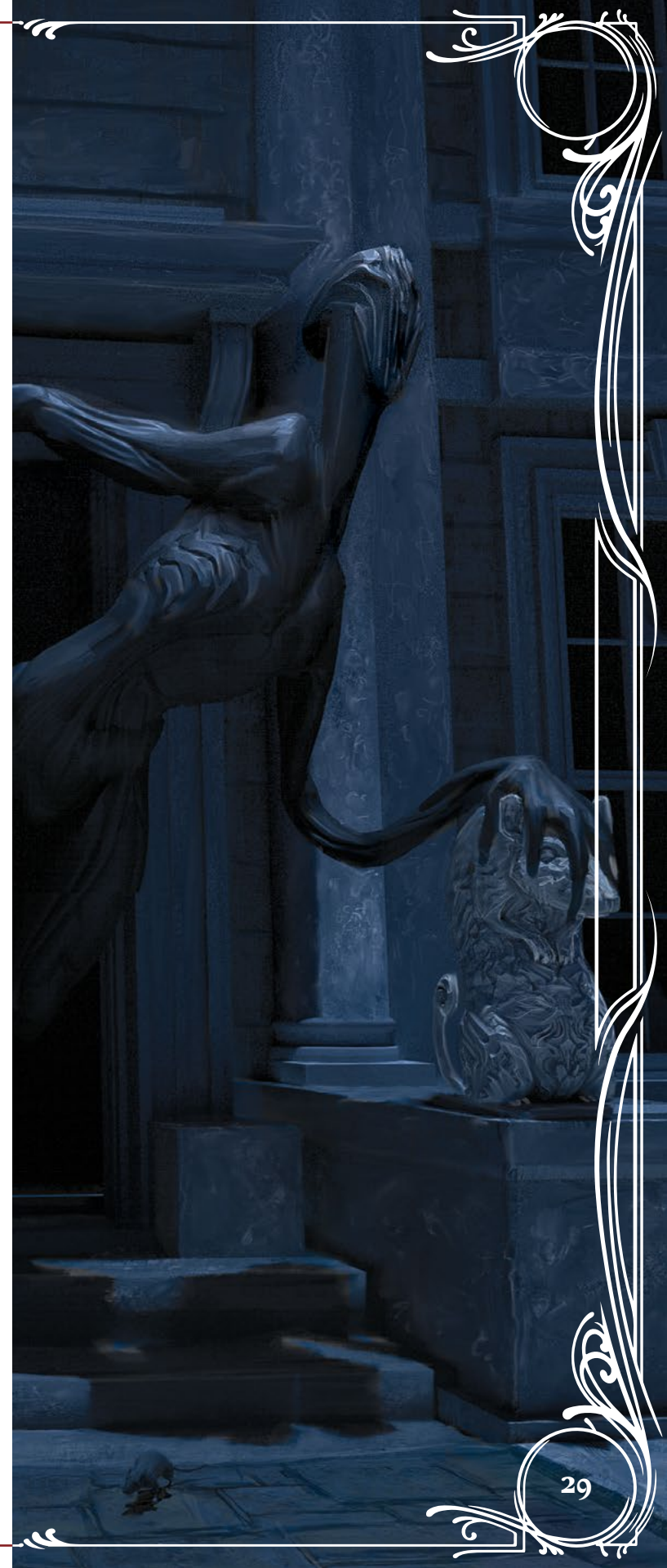
**Rhol, the Left-Handed God:** A Dark god of knowledge and secrets. His followers deny that he is evil. They praise him for his selfish hoarding of knowledge and justify his cruelty.

**Sister Death:** A personification of death to be revered. Get in her good graces and death will go easier on you. She’s not related to the Pale, because she’s the personification of death (the transition), not the dead.

**Ul-errlk[rest of name unpronounceable]:** An incomprehensibly vast being of amorphous shape and unknowable intelligence that dwells in the Dark.

**Viniatha:** “Keeper of the Vast Lens of Expansive Comprehension.” Goddess of understanding, learning, and prophecy. Dwells in the Blue.

*God, with a capital G, is a term used most often by nons. Vislae refer to her as the uncreated creator, the prime mover, or the Absolute.*





## PEOPLE

We don't use the term "race" much, and "species" is all wrong. So let's just say that there are many peoples in the Actuality, and humans are one of them. Humans are prevalent and dominant, but that's likely because no one else cares to be.

## HUMANS

Humans don't need much explanation. Unless something very strange has happened, everyone reading this paragraph is a human and understands what a human is.

Humans are the one thing that Shadow doesn't alter much in its illusion. In appearance (unless altered by magic) and by outlook, personality, and deed, humans are exactly what you already understand them to be.

For good or ill.

## ELDERBRIN

Living amid humanity are the elderbrin. The capricious elderbrin treat shape like fashion, changing it to suit their mood. They possess many other capabilities, but most involve how they relate to each other. Sometimes referred to as "feylike," the real truth is that their exact nature is mysterious. That's because the elderbrin form is fluid—they have no true appearance. Or rather, their ever-changing form is their true appearance. Although they can speak any language that humans speak, elderbrin also communicate through form. Different facial and body types carry different meanings to the elderbrin and to the handful of humans who can understand them.

Compared to humans, elderbrin are sometimes considered a bit scattered in their thoughts and fickle in their choices. These are examples of how elderbrin thought processes are a bit different—or more than a bit different.

The essence of that difference can be summed up as this: humans seek to alter the world around them. They're smart enough to figure out how to accomplish such things, and how to make tools to help. Elderbrin don't lack that intelligence, but they

*Elderbrin are slowly changing, and some are becoming downright humanlike in their desire to own things, build things, or change things. Most older elderbrin do not see this change as a good thing.*

*Human lifespans in Satyrine vary greatly. Some people live to be 75, and others live to be 500.*

*More and more skilled elderbrin can even take forms that include inorganic materials, like skin made of stone or a lower body made of water. Likewise, some can take on forms that are immense in size.*

lack the drive. They don't usually seek to interfere with anything that doesn't involve their own well-being. An elderbrin group would defend themselves against a predator, but they wouldn't chop down a grove of trees to build a wall to keep predators out.

Elderbrin are attuned to a bloodline-centric, mystical communication web that allows them to exchange information at a distance with their families (and elderbrin families are large). Most call these feyelines. Feylines seem, at first blush, to be similar to the Noösphere, but in truth they are more immediate and more personal.

Despite their natural magical abilities, elderbrin do not excel at traditional spellcasting. Elderbrin vislae are vanishingly rare.

Elderbrin organize themselves by clan or family, though "organization" by human standards is not much of a priority to them. The highest-ranking elderbrin is the Exalt, who is not unlike the grandparent of all elderbrin from every family.

## LACUNA

The lacuna are an absence, not a presence. They appear to be vaguely human-shaped holes in reality. And the holes lead to somewhere else—always of the lacuna's choosing.

Lacuna are physical, mortal beings, not spirits. They speak, they eat, they use tools. They feel emotion, they feel pain, they sleep. They do anything that other people do. But at any time, they can use the absence within them to send something far away or bring something far away to themselves. The lacuna are living doorways leading to whatever place they desire. With a single action, a lacuna can lead to any location it knows of. Objects can pass through the lacuna to the new location, and can pass through from that location as well, although the lacuna cannot reach into itself to draw them out. Instead, careful positioning can allow something to fall out of the lacuna.

Lacuna have other tricks as well, such as having the doorway lead to the middle of a raging fire so that the flames burst out. Of course, the lacuna has to make sure it doesn't injure itself when it does this kind of thing.



It should go without saying, but a lacuna cannot travel through itself. Perhaps less intuitive but just as true, no lacuna can travel through another.

It's difficult for humans to relate to lacuna because they have no facial expressions to read. They seem unbelievably other. And yet, their personalities, outlooks, and goals are actually very human even though most people refuse to believe this. Still, lacuna have no aptitude for conventional magical practices. They are never vislae.

Most lacuna live in their own communities, far from anyone else, but a few live among humans and elderbrin, particularly in (but not limited to) Satyrine.

Some people believe that the lacuna were once human, but they were blessed, cursed, or otherwise transformed by a spell or fundamentally profound act, depending on which version of the story you hear and what your opinion of lacuna are.

## OTHERS

Rarely, when referring to “people,” one might include the dead that dwell in the Pale or elsewhere, the various ranks of demonkind, or even stranger folk. Many of these beings come from the **half-worlds** or the **Feyward Lands** beyond Satyrine. These include four-armed drune; the flaming, avian kellidos; tall, graceful and telepathic secramal dancers; the universally abhorrent cavarani; insect-like skalopedes; bestial vugs; and more.

## VIRUSES

**“You can understand so much about a place by looking at the diseases and afflictions that plague it.”**

—Rajimal, 6th-degree Vance

In addition to various **diseases** and **maladies** that most people in Shadow are familiar with, there are stranger (and possibly worse) diseases and viruses in the Actuality that can cause all sorts of woe.

*The people of Indigo's far lands or half-worlds are more analogous to aliens on other planets than to the people of distant “exotic” lands on Earth. They aren't just other cultures—they are completely different beings.*

*Half-worlds, page 51*

*Feyward Lands, page 49*



### THE GATE

*Unwanted Conditions, page 32*

## MIRRORS

Mirrors are a virus that has infected reality.

Reflective surfaces are one thing, but true mirrors seek to replicate and spread so that they can reflect more and more. Once they have reflected everything that exists, they will invert reality and theirs will become the true universe, and we will be naught but a reflection.

People think that they buy mirrors and hang them on their walls, and sometimes that's true. Other times, though, a mirror will just suddenly worm its way into a house. It matches the decor, but no one remembers putting it up.

Smart people—those in the know—smash every mirror that they see. It's a service to reality. This is not a virus that a person or anything else can contract. Our entire reality already has it, and there's little we can do to cure it.

The mirrors have begun fighting back, though. Sometimes those in the know about the mirror virus disappear mysteriously when alone in a room with a mirror.



## SPIDERING

Spidering can happen to anything. A book. A cat. A table. A house. Suddenly, and without warning, it sprouts eight spidery legs that match its size and begins to move around like a spider. It retains its level, but it now is interested in hunting like a wolf spider. It develops an arachnid mouth and a venomous bite. Spidering can be terrifying and dangerous.

Spidering is very contagious. Once one object in a house is infected, another will be. And another. And then the inhabitants. And then the whole house itself.

No one knows what causes spidering.

## SPELLBINDING

When a vislae casts a spell (not some other kind of magical practice or a forte ability), the energy unleashed does not create the desired effect.

**Spidering:** level 8. Cured only by magic.

**Architectural virus:** level 12. Cured only by magic.

**Spellbinding:** level 7. Cured only by magic.

Instead, it becomes a visible, tangible set of almost tentacular bonds that wrap around the caster and constrict, inflicting damage equal to the original spell's level. This virus is highly contagious, although only vislae can manifest any symptoms. Nons are only carriers.

## ARCHITECTURAL VIRUS

Houses and buildings sicken and rot. They form bleeding lesions and cancerous sores as if they were made of flesh.

It's commonly called house cancer, but formally it's been deemed the architectural virus. Over the course of a few weeks, even a huge stone structure can be brought crashing down as its very foundation rots away.

People cannot be infected in any way with this virus, but it still can cause all manner of woe. Laws in Satyrine demand that any building thought to

have house cancer be burned immediately so it does not spread to the surrounding structures.

## VIRAL THOUGHTFORMS

Those in the know can create a thoughtform that looks like a dog, a bird, or a person, just to name a few things. Some, however, can create tiny thoughtforms that function exactly like viruses. These artificial diseases and infections seem very much like standard maladies, but they are usually far more virulent and immune to standard medicines and treatments.

## THOUGHTFORM VIRUSES

Confused with viral thoughtforms, thoughtform viruses are diseases that a thoughtform can catch. Similar to the architectural virus, this disease manifests by rotting the flesh of something that has no flesh at all.

An infected thoughtform often reacts as would a living creature who is ill. They weaken, become thin and jaundiced, and eventually die. In this case, a “dead” thoughtform simply disappears forever.

## THE XYLOID PLAGUE

No one knows when it started. But for as long as anyone can remember, trees have maintained a defense against lumbering and fires. Those who cause widespread harm to trees develop the xyloid plague.

This affliction causes wooden tumors to sprout from the offender like thick branches. A victim will appear to have a tree growing out of their shoulder, their neck, their back, or the back of their head. At first, this will just seem like odd skin blemishes, and then twigs. Maybe a leaf. Eventually, the woody tumors take such hold that the victim's limbs become useless. Roots spread down into the ground. The victim becomes a tree.

The branches and roots can be cut away, but doing so inflicts 1 point of damage on the victim for each tumor. And the woody growths always sprout back again.

Perhaps worst of all, the xyloid plague is highly contagious. If an infected woodsman returns

**Viral thoughtform:** level 9.  
*Cured only by magic.*

**The Forgetting:** level 11.  
*Cured only by magic.*

**Thoughtform virus:** level 7.  
*Cured only by magic.*

**Xyloid plague:** level 6.  
*Cured only by magic.*



### THE KEY

*Wicked keys, page 207*

*Key of Elasticity, see  
Objects of Power deck*

*Key of Faces, see  
Objects of Power deck*

from the forest, soon his whole family is afflicted. Eventually, his whole village might become a grove of new trees.

## THE FORGETTING

We are our memories. The Forgetting destroys who we are. This virus makes people forget names, directions, appointments, and so on. At first. As the disease progresses, a victim forgets their mother's face. Their own name. Eventually, they forget fundamental things like that they can't fly, that fire burns, or that they need to breathe. The Forgetting is always eventually fatal, sometimes dramatically so.

## KEYFALLS

Keyfalls aren't really a virus. They're more a very strange kind of weather (and there are many kinds of strange weather). We can't catalog every strange thing that has happened or might happen in the Actuality, but it's worth talking about keyfalls at least a bit.

Every once in a while, a storm will blow across Indigo (keyfalls have been known to happen elsewhere, but they're fifty times more common in Indigo). The storm will bring rain and wind and even hail. And the rarest of these storms will bring a rain of keys that lasts for a minute or two.

The keys clatter down onto the ground, but they are rarely damaged despite supposedly falling such a long way. Every key is different, and sometimes they work in locks they really shouldn't. A bank vault or a gerent's back door might open with a key that just fell from the sky. No one knows how.

Far more significant, however, are the **wicked keys** that fall among the other keys. Vislae can spot a wicked key from a fair distance, easily distinguishing it from mundane keys. Keyfalls are rare, and a typical keyfall has only a handful of wicked keys, if that. Even more rare, other magical keys like the **Key of Faces** or the **Key of Elasticity** might appear in a keyfall as well.







# THE PATH OF SUNS

**T**here are eight suns. You probably thought there was just one, but there are eight.

Except, of course, there are really nine. But even many learned people don't know that, for the ninth is a secret. **Invisible**. And now you know that secret as well.

Except that there's really just one sun. It simply has nine different forms, faces, phases, or whatever other metaphor you choose to convey that it is both nine and one at the same time.

The Path of Suns is a representation of the way magic works, the known levels of existence, the stages of a life, and the makeup of the mortal soul, all in one. It is a symbol. A metaphor. A diagram. A map. Each sun represents a different concept, a different "place," and a different fundamental aspect of the universe. These concepts are signified by the color of each sun, so that color ends up representing the sun and its attendant ideals. The Path of Suns is a diagram of the Actuality in broad strokes. It's also a diagram of the human **soul**.

The Path of Suns connects all eight suns, from Silver, to Green, to Blue, to Indigo, then Grey, next Pale, and Red, and finally Gold. The **Invisible** Sun is not part of the Path, but rather outside, above, and around it. The suns are planes of existence—distinct vibrational frequencies of one place: the Actuality. They are, so to speak, eight (nine) different slices of the same pie. Each sun defines a world upon which it shines. But a sun is far more than that. Each governs aspects of reality, and entities within each realm are patrons of even more finely refined granules of that aspect. Each sun is an idea or a group of ideas. Life, death, truth, falsehood—these are the fundamental building

*The sun colors aren't just metaphorical (or at least, not entirely metaphorical). It really is the color of the sun in the sky when you are in that realm.*

*Sodality of Vryn, page 57*

*Souls, page 23*

blocks of reality, and each is presided over by a different sun. In a smaller but no less significant fashion, however, each sun is also a fundamental portion of the soul of a thinking creature. The Path of Suns, then, is a map of reality as surely as it is a map of the human heart.

Each of the nine suns shines down upon a different version of the world. These nine aspects are sometimes referred to as realms, but there are other realms as well (the Leech Worlds clinging to the Nightside of Green, the half-worlds in Indigo, and so on). More often than not, the world is described by its sun. So one might say that they are traveling to the Red Sun to speak to the **Sodality of Vryn**. Or they might just say they're traveling to Red. Either way, they mean that they're going to the version of the world that the Red Sun illuminates.

## GATES AND GUARDIANS

Magical power and potential flows like water rushing in a river from the **Invisible** Sun through the other suns, with different currents of magic following different paths. (Although the main current follows the Path of Suns, not all do.) Each sun has a pair of gateways through which the magical energy flows no matter what path it follows. Because of the nature of the path, the first time one travels to a sun, they must pass through the gate. The truly advanced vislae learn to master these currents to better hone their spells, but to do so, they must parley with the guardians of these gates, which are called wardens.

Each sun has a warden, and since each sun occupies a position on two different paths, most

actually possess two wardens: one that monitors the traditional path and another that oversees the Nightside Path aspect of the realm. Wardens are guardians, gatekeepers, protectors, and in some cases rulers. Their presence within the realm varies greatly. Although there are exceptions, in most cases the warden is not a godlike monarch of their realm. Most have a subtler existence—more a distant, hidden, disembodied caretaker than a prominent corporeal figure.

Passing through a gate always involves a confrontation with the warden that guards it, if they are present. This is often perfunctory, but sometimes it involves a substantive conversation, or even a demand of payment from the guardian in the form of goods, magic, or performance of a task.

## THE NIGHTSIDE PATH

All vislae understand the basic concepts of the Path of Suns and its importance to magic. There are some, however, who follow the Nightside Path, which is the Path of Suns in reverse. In the Nightside Path, each sun has an altered, often darker, aspect. It would be far too simple—and in fact quite erroneous—to call the Path of Suns “good” and the Nightside Path “evil,” but some do.

Further, it would be a tremendous mistake to believe that the Nightside of a sun is the opposite of that sun. That’s never true. The Nightside of Red certainly isn’t about creation. Instead, the Nightside version of each sun is a somewhat darker version of that sun. But “darkness” can take many forms.

Likewise, it would be a mistake to think too much about the different suns as dichotomies. Thinking that Red and Green are opposites is to greatly oversimplify both. The Actuality’s foundation is built of nuance, not opposing forces. Shadow philosophy and religion might be based around “equal but opposite forces,” but the truth is much more complex.

*Passing through some gateways, like those in the Pale, don't involve an encounter with the warden, but instead one of its functionaries. Other gates, like those in Indigo and Grey, are untended.*

## TRAVELING THE PATH

Emelia finished the spell and stepped into the blue light. A high-ceilinged chamber around her stretched in all directions, presenting a dizzying array of exits, each leading into what appeared to be a maze of corridors. She knew that this chamber was the Blue Gate. She’d prepared for this moment.

Not far away, a woman reclined on a large couch, her blue tresses cascading down onto the floor. Her stillness and pale skin made her appear dead, but Emelia knew better. She took a few tentative steps toward her.

**Do not disturb her,** a voice said in Emelia’s mind. A voice not her own, but almost as familiar.

**“I wish to pass into the Blue,”** Emelia said aloud. **I said,** the mental voice repeated, **do not disturb her.**

**“Please,”** Emelia whispered.

Out of the corner of her eye, Emelia saw movement through one of the exits. The incorporeal form of a sleeping man floated down the passage, as if adrift on an invisible sea. Then she saw another, and through another exit, still another—an old sleeping woman that time.

**Then pass,** the voice stated flatly in her mind, **but when you do, find the man named Taraquin. He has dreamed too long. Wake him and send him on his way. That task is your toll. Ignore it, and Marra, the warden, will exact her revenge.**

Emelia knew that to cross a warden was as foolish a choice as a vislae could make.

**“I will do it,”** she said quietly.

**Then pass into the fading but never-changing Blue,** she heard in her mind. **Find yourself at the heart of nothing.**

With that, the chamber with all its exits and its reclining inhabitant disappeared like the closing of a sleepy eye. She found herself floating in the blue sky. There was no ground, only sky, forever. In the distance, a blue sun shined upon the infinite nothing.

## GAMEMASTERING A WARDEN ENCOUNTER

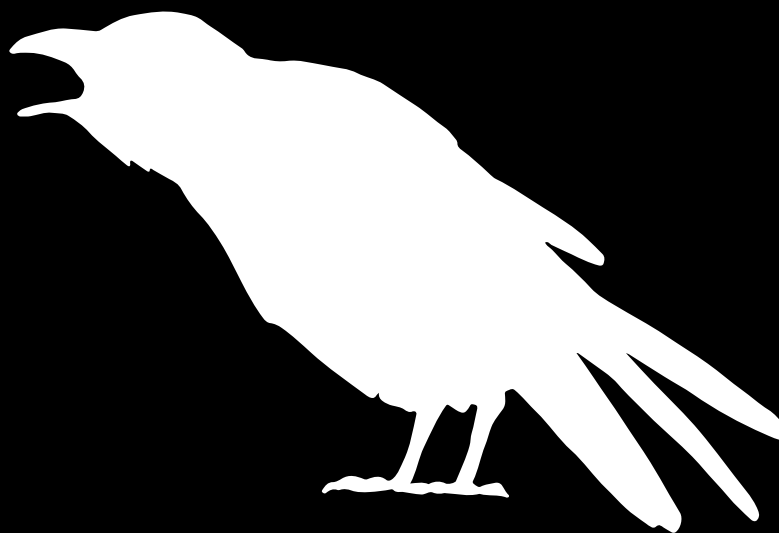
Traveling the Path of Suns is far more metaphysical than, say, traveling to another planet in a science fiction story. It's even more mystical than traveling to another dimension or plane in most fantasy settings. Entering the realm of another sun is passing into an altered state of consciousness. You change your existence—your being—when you travel to another sun. It's not much like “travel” at all.

Wardens and gateways reinforce this concept. It doesn't matter how a vislae gets to a sun they've never visited before—when they first arrive, they appear before the gate and the warden, if any. The warden (or, in some cases, their representative) considers the traveler carefully. They talk to the traveler. Ask questions. There's no doubt that the warden holds all the cards in this particular game, but the warden probably wants something as well. In exchange for access to their realm, the warden might ask for a magical object or gift of some kind, or for the traveler to perform a task—almost always a task in the realm they guard. If satisfied, they grant passage to the vislae, but if the vislae agrees to do something for the warden once through the gate and then reneges, the warden's power to punish or exact a toll is great. Banishing a vislae and prohibiting them from ever returning is only a start.

A warden encounter should be strange and unnerving. In effect, a weird nonhuman being is assessing whether the characters are worthy of passing into the realm they watch over. Wardens are usually intent, but also a bit bored and probably distracted.

Wardens aren't given stats, but if need be, treat them as level 17 beings. Frankly, however, their power—while standing at their gate—should be all but absolute.

It's quite possible the whole encounter occurs within the traveler's mind, not in any sort of physical space.



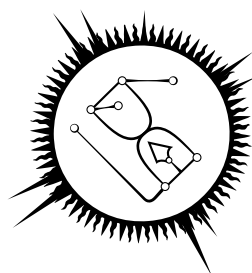
The very word “path” suggests traveling from one place to another, and that’s entirely appropriate. People—mostly vislae—travel from sun to sun following the Path of Suns to gain knowledge and wisdom, to find secret treasures, and to explore.

The first time traveling to a particular sun, the traveler must pass through the sun’s gate and confront its guardian. This is less a physical exercise and more a metaphorical one. (In the Actuality, the differences between the two are negligible.)

There are two common ways to traverse the Path of Suns. The first is a spell, **Pathwalker**. It allows a vislae (and possibly their companions) to travel along the Path of Suns or the Nightside Path. Other spells and effects allow vislae to travel from one sun to another, often without even following the Path. However, some believe that moving to a new sun without following the Path causes a slow process of soul corruption.

For non-vislae or those who don’t want to travel under their own power—so to speak—there are the sunships. Sunships are old, sentient, and very wise. They are also far too arrogant to speak to humans, so we don’t know much about them, except for the following:

- ✦ They resemble a strange cross between a whale and an airship, with a humanlike face at the front.
- ✦ They are almost entirely immune to the effects of mortal magic.
- ✦ They follow a very strict schedule, departing at sunrise, moving across a portion of their current realm, and then fading into the next sun on the Path.
- ✦ Every nine days, they rest for one day (however, they are not all on the same schedule, so they don’t all rest on the same day).
- ✦ Their daily journey takes about five hours.
- ✦ Sunships always stop at the gate of the destination sun, where they disgorge those who are new to the sun so the travelers can speak to the warden. Then the sunship and any remaining passengers continue on into the realm itself.



*Pathwalker, see Spell Deck*

*“My bones grew thin as the hour,” said the man who lived his whole life in a day.*

- ✦ They can carry up to a hundred passengers or a similar amount of cargo.
- ✦ When near other sunships, they talk to each other in a language no scholar or spell has yet deciphered.
- ✦ Most are farsighted and wear enormous spectacles.

## THE SILVER SUN

**Silver leaves bloom on rounded trees**  
**Silver seas with regal whales**  
**Silver guides display every pride**  
**Silver brides with hidden veils**  
**Spark of creation**  
**First step of nine**  
**Spark of creation**  
**First step, mine.**

We begin our voyage along the Path of Suns with the first of the eight (no, nine) suns: the Silver Sun. The Silver Sun represents birth, beginnings, and potential. It also exemplifies the past. It is the first step on the Path of Suns. Thus, its number is 1. To some, this is the crown sun, the sun of the true north. First Sun. Genesis. The origin of all things. Other people do not bathe it in quite so grand a light. Instead, they maintain, this sun is the first step of many—a more humble look at beginnings. The true act of creation, in this latter view, lies beyond the scope of the Silver Sun. In other words, it is the primary step on the Path, but not the creation of the Path or the one making the journey.

## THE SILVER WARDEN

The warden of Silver is Therim, and he is a tall, regal figure of sparkling light. His manner is solemn, and his words few. Therim can be called upon to aid in creation. Visitors likely only come to him having passed through the **Invisible Sun**, and thus are starting the Path at the beginning. His gateway is often quiet.



## SILVER SUN INHABITANTS

The creatures of the Legacy are common in the realm beneath the Silver Sun. The angelic legion under **Queen Frageliva** dwells in The City on the Hill surrounding the Temple-Tower of Al Ru Stam.

Queen Frageliva stands nearly 40 feet (12 m) tall and wears gowns made of wind and light. Her skin is luminescent turquoise and each 20-foot (6 m) strand of hair on her head holds the bliss-immersed soul of a mortal who loved her. She dwells in a palace made of music filled with angelic servitors of every conceivable shape and size that love their queen with such intensity and sincerity that a harsh glance from her will slay them, and a kindly nod will send them into ecstasy.

Mortal makers and crafters dwell in this land as well, believing that its nature will bless their endeavors. Cities beneath the Silver Sun often hum, roar, and clank with crafting wheels, kilns, and printing presses. The tools of creation never rest here. Artists work in studios, in open courtyards, and on rooftops.

The **Vardeskaal** are muscled, eyeless crafters with skin like oiled yellow leather. Their clans and guilds keep to themselves in small villages often hidden beneath or within glistening lakes of cool liquid silver.

## LOCATIONS BENEATH THE SILVER SUN

Sparkling rivers of crisp, clear water flow amid rugged, snow-capped mountains and mirrored cities of arched bridges and jeweled columns. White stone towers hold libraries of lore about all the various suns and the people who dwell beneath them, as those who study such broad topics desire a high perspective.

**The Silver Mountain:** The lands beneath the Silver Sun are mountainous and cold, to be sure, but at the center of the realm lies Lu Ac Toor, the Silver Mountain. Known as the highest vantage, Lu Ac Toor's peak is infinitely high and colder than the coldest cold. Some of the most powerful rituals of creation must be performed on the slopes of the Silver Mountain.

**Queen Frageliva:** level 15; +2 defenses; can sustain 8 Injuries per Wound and 8 Wounds; +4 Armor; vast array of powers including healing, teleportation, and destruction on a massive scale

**Vardeskaal:** level 6; +2 Withstand, +2 Resist; +3 crafting



THE SILVER MOUNTAIN

**The Columned Archive:** This grand library is built amid and within a complex of waterfalls, each one larger and taller than the one before it. Inside, philosophers and scholars engage in whispered debate about the meaning of life and death, and the truth of the Absolute and her Legacy.

**The City on the Hill:** The central abode of the angels of Queen Frageliva, this city glistens with metal and glass, although silvery lilacs are always in bloom, spreading scented petals across the buildings and streets like carpet. The air teems with butterflies and—for reasons that pass understanding—artificial silver butterflies. The current theory is that each real insect has a silver simulacrum, but no one knows who makes them or why.

The city hosts a number of interesting locations, including the Font of Creativity, whose waters are literally never-before-conceived ideas. The Font is guarded by a phalanx of angels to keep it from being abused. The most significant structure, however, is the infamous Temple-Tower of Al Ru Stam.

**Temple-Tower of Al Ru Stam:** If this tower has a top, it's not been seen by mortal eyes. The spire rises many hundreds of miles into the sky, disappearing into an ever-present blanket of clouds. Those who deny the tower is infinitely high have no proof in their belief.

Somewhere within the tower lies the Al Ru Stam itself, a shining figure that is both orb and heptadecagon at once. It is called the Heart of Creation, the Eye of the Creator, the Progenitor, and the Silver Soul (suggesting a link with the secret soul known as the **Silver Star**).

Al Ru Stam is a centerpiece of the Legacy. So much so that many worship it as a god, despite the fact that it is not (as far as anyone knows) sapient. It was the first Legacy object to be recovered, and it birthed many angels. Study of its 17 facets has led explorers to find other Legacy items. The tower houses the Al Ru Stam, protects it, and serves as a central gathering point for veneration.

The tower, like the city around it, teems with angels.

*Nem, page 62*

*The followers of the teaching of Tog believe that only children born beneath the Silver Sun should be considered true people. All others are false.*



THE KEY

*Silver Star, page 141*

## NIGHTSIDE OF THE SILVER SUN

The Nightside of Silver is the very end of the path. This does not equate to death, but to true endings—utter finality. For most, this means forgetting, fading, and loss. As the last step of the Nightside Path, its number is 17, a numerological signifier of completion and extremities. 17 represents the ultimate.

The Nightside master of Silver is Ravenol, a vast and insatiable beast of a thousand limbs, always grasping, attempting to ensure that nothing escapes its hold. Ravenol tries to halt those who would pass through its domain. Those who see it as a monster think this is because it devours whatever it catches. Others, however, see Ravenol as a dark savior who prevents utter dissolution. Ravenol and **Nem**, guardian of the Dark, are siblings—motherless entities who nonetheless share a spark of creation. Both of them are guardians of gateways that might lead to annihilation.

The Nightside of Silver is scarred with deep valleys and chasms, all lit by candles that never seem to burn down or go out. The landscape is filled with trees that exactly resemble massive, muscular arms that grasp and threaten. Some believe that the grasping trees seek to keep anyone from progressing past the end of the Nightside Path and into nothingness, and thus are, in their own way, altruistic and possibly intelligent.

**The Chapel of the Unremembered:** Deep within a candlelit chasm, well hidden and well tended, the Chapel of the Unremembered commemorates the nameless, faceless souls who have passed into oblivion.

Each of the candles in the Nightside of Silver, the keepers of the chapel believe, represents someone who has faded utterly from memory as well as existence.

A contingent of fanatical warrior monks and a few mercenary vislae defend the chapel and the surrounding lands. What, you might ask, would a simple chapel deep in the wilds of this Nightside Realm need defending from?

The Dead.

The Dead from the Pale find the chapel to be an affront to their nature. Theirs is the true path for all mortals, and it is not final. It's a progression. Thus, agents of the Dead search the Nightside of Silver in secret, looking for the chapel, with the hopes of destroying it.

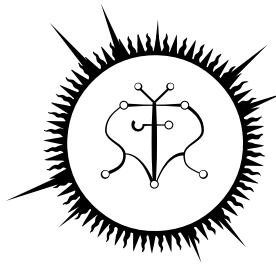
### SILVER SUN ENCOUNTERS

The following are encounters a vislae might have while traveling beneath the Silver Sun.

☀ **Lady Terralicus** has three bodies, and all of them coexist. They are not all the same age—each is a few years apart from the others. So each Terralicus looks very similar, but not identical, to the others. All three stare into the sky as the characters approach, gazing directly into the sun with silvery eyes. One says that she hates the Silver Sun and all it represents, for everything she has ever created, including her children, has made things worse. The next seems ambivalent and merely describes the sun and its meanings matter-of-factly. The last professes an undying love for Silver, saying that it is the most important of the suns, for it gives birth to everything.

☀ A tall **man** stands by a tree. He will not (or cannot) speak, but if approached, he offers a drink from a bottle. If accepted, the drink refreshes all the imbibers' Certes pools. If the bottle is refused, his head cleanly splits in half vertically and a small figure that looks like the same man, only 3 inches (8 cm) tall, peers out. "Bless all you create, curse all you destroy," he says, and then the head closes up again. The man walks off.

☀ A **panther-like cat** approaches, its eyes black, lightless holes. When it gets close, newly created moths emerge from the holes and fly out, some landing on two different PCs. These two sets of moths then wage a brutal war against each other until one side is victorious or someone intervenes.



**Lady Terralicus:** level 6;  
+4 Resist

**Man by a tree:** level 9

**Moth-spawning panther:**  
level 7; +3 defenses; +3  
stealth and movement  
actions

*Nature spirits, page 129*

### THE GREEN SUN

Our passage along the Path of Suns takes us next to the Green Sun. Life, growth, flourishing, health, vigor, and prosperity are the purview of the Green Sun. Many people see it as presiding over success and victory as well. The Green Sun represents the present, and its number is 2, representing union and biological pairing and parenting—the fusion of two bloodlines to continue the cycle of life.

And speaking of life, the ever-verdant Green bursts with it. Plants and animals are everywhere. The plants grow fast enough that you can watch them expand. It's easy to imagine that any one plant could take over the realm, but just as quickly as it grows, it is devoured by some creature or other. Such is the way of life.

### WARDEN OF THE GREEN SUN

Cherulis wards the Green Sun. Genderless (or perhaps all-gendered), Cherulis is an androgynous figure of expansive beauty. At the same time, Cherulis claims to be a multitude given singular form, speaking with many voices at once. Cherulis has no permanent home and no fortress. The Green's gateway has no physical manifestation to guard (although it still exists metaphorically and metaphysically wherever Cherulis goes). Instead, Cherulis wanders the realm of the Green Sun, preaching whispered sermons about the purity and sanctity of life.

### GREEN SUN INHABITANTS

The Green seethes with life. Every inch of it holds a living creature or plant, each in turn gaining sustenance from the remains of dead creatures or plants that came before them. The so-called cycle of life is writ large upon the Green. Living, growing, moving, eating, spawning, dying, living, growing . . .

**Nature spirits** are almost as common as living creatures here. Some are sparks of life no bigger than gnats, and others are vast, ancient beings, embodying whole forests or seas. Most lie somewhere in between. In the Green, such spirits



## THE GREEN SUN

can easily manifest as a tree, an animal, or some other physical aspect of life. Most are wise beyond the ken of humans, but few will interact with short-lived, short-sighted mortals.

### LOCATIONS ILLUMINATED BY THE LIGHT OF A GREEN SUN

The Green is a realm of forests, fields, and wilderness verdant to the point of danger. Stand still too long and you might be engulfed by the growth spurt of a copse of trees or a snaking vine. Animals and even humans spontaneously erupt from hidden seed pods within the burgeoning ground. The Green bursts with life, and life is not gentle. The people of the Green Sun are nomads—there are no cities or towns here. No artificial structures at all, in fact.

**The Lake of Lost Tongues:** A massive lake of crystalline waters, this locale hosts a number of small, nomadic tribes along its shores. For reasons known perhaps only to them, each nomad has lost the power of speech.

**The Fiddler's Garden:** The Fiddler is a thin, angular figure, with a body made of ancient wood

*Spirits from the Green  
abhor the Dead even more  
than they abhor demonkind.*

**The Fiddler:** level 11; +3  
defenses; +3 searching

and leather cord. He plays a fiddle of verdigris-covered copper as he wanders through his cultivated garden of flowering plants. The Fiddler's Garden contains herbs that enable one to transform into a flock of birds, breathe underwater, and age backward for a time. However, he won't let anyone have them unless they tell him their secret name. The secret names he knows are woven into the music he plays, and if one listens closely, a few might be learned.

**The Gallows Forest:** Trees in the shape of upright gallows, complete with hangman's nooses, fill a forest miles across. Each tree grows from the burst chest of a dead giant. Roots worm their way from the giants' flesh into the soil. Angry nature spirits sometimes kidnap those that wrong them and execute them here. Those that die hanging from these trees do not pass into the Pale, but instead remain trapped in the woods forever, their vengeful ghosts making the forest dangerous to wander through, night or day.



## NIGHTSIDE OF THE GREEN SUN

On the Nightside Path, Green still represents life and the present. But life and growth can be ravenous and expansive—dangerous even in its verdancy and health. Almost at the end of the path, the Nightside of the Green Sun's number is 16. Its guardian is Demogan, a demonic entity with goatlike horns, a dark beard, and flowing robes tangled with plants and creatures of an unsavory or unclean nature. Demogan is a patron of poisons, disease, corruption, cancer, viruses, and the dangers inherent within life. Quiet, brooding, and secretive, Demogan rules from a living palace of poisonous nettles and carnivorous plants. It is attended by a multitude of rats, worms, spiders, and creatures far less savory.

## THE LEECH WORLDS

The Green is the source of such life and power that small, parasitic universes cling to it, invisibly, hoping to draw energy from it. Demogan attempts to cleanse the Green of these vampiric worlds, but some manage to escape his notice for centuries, filling up with life in their tiny confines, enough to birth whole new species of strange, secretive creatures. Vislae sometimes explore these new universes looking for secrets, but also sometimes to steal them away and make them their own.

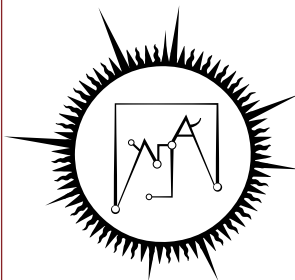
A few examples of the Leech Worlds include the following.

**The Moth Cities:** A rocky wasteland where cities of people flutter constantly on vast moth wings, always circling a mysterious source of light at the center of the realm. Sometimes the people war with nameless creatures that look like enormous hands with mouths in their palms.

**Xibiek of the Cubes:** An endless, empty plain inhabited by intelligent metal cubes. They have no concept of distance, size, or movement, but they understand time better than any. They know many secrets regarding love, loss, and belief.

**Chesnor's Transparent Realm:** This tiny world, the creation of a long-missing vislae, is populated with hollow humanoid **sculptures** made of glass, which dwell in a castle likewise made of glass.

*Durrantix, page 128*





**Xibiekian cube:** level 7; +5 Withstand, +5 Resist; can sustain 7 Injuries per Wound and 5 Wounds; +5 Armor

**Glass sculpture:** level 5; +3 Dodge, +3 Resist; can sustain 2 Injuries per Wound and 2 Wounds

These animate sculptures know secret words and will teach them to visitors who prove worthy.

## GREEN SUN ENCOUNTERS

 Mule-like creatures with vulture heads and gravestones mounted on their backs populate the Nomadic Graveyard. Within their bodies, each holds the corpse of someone who died in the Green.

 A **durrantix** storms out of the thick brush, pincers covered in blood. Surprisingly, it speaks in a language that can be understood. It begs for help, saying that it has been ensorcelled with a lust for violence. It can't control itself much longer and hopes that perhaps some kind of magic can remove the compulsion.

## THE BLUE SUN

"Pass into the fading but never-changing Blue," the saying goes. "It is the very center of nowhere at all."

Our next step along the Path of Suns is the Blue Sun. Blue is passive and resigned. Blue is just there. And thus Blue is everywhere. And nowhere in particular. When people say things come "out of the blue," they mean from nothingness, or at least nowhere observed, expected, or understood. The Blue Sun governs not so much the unseen, but the unnoticed. It is the future that constantly approaches, but never reaches us. It is a not-yet-experienced effect of an almost-forgotten cause.

Far more than the suns before it on the Path, as well as those that lie ahead (save perhaps the **Invisible Sun**), Blue is a place of spirit and soul, not matter or flesh. This is a realm of thought—but idle musings more than concrete plans. It is daydreams and hopes, and sleeping dreams as well.

The realm of the Blue Sun represents the future of just rewards, relaxation, and sleep. Its number is 3. As far as colors go, it is more cyan than deep blue. It is light and airy—never heavy or ominous. When you think of that future time when things

will be better, your goals met, and your existence fulfilled with meaning, you are thinking of the Blue Sun.

## THE BLUE WARDEN

Marra, warden of the Blue Sun, is known as the reclining god. She dwells within an always-shifting maze of involuted corridors, each the manifestation of a dreaming soul sleeping beneath another sun. She is capricious and enigmatic, but insightful and knowledgeable. She is said to spend much of her time in slumber, dreaming unimaginable dreams.

## INHABITANTS OF THE BLUE

Without much in the way of solid ground to build upon, cities and communities in the Blue are quite rare. More common are solitary entities or small groups dwelling well apart from each other. The Blue is an introvert's dream.

Those who dwell here often harvest wild ideas and thoughts from the substance of the Blue itself. Traders who pass through buy these mental artifacts in bulk and ship them to the Emotion Mills in Indigo.

**Dream Spirits:** Dream spirits are fragments and images from dreams that gain an independent existence and can move out of the *Deeps of Sleep*. Because they are dream images, they might appear to be someone's mother or a nonsense figment like a bird made of hands. Or a combination of the two—someone's mother with wings made of hands.

**The Court of Nous:** Each member of the Court of Nous was a mortal who—through some means, always different—transcended a material existence and became pure thought. They are not ghosts or spirits in the truest sense, but intelligent holograms of people. The Court claims sovereignty over all thought and ownership of all ideas. Although few people beyond the Court recognize their authority, most still show the members of the Court of Nous, with their vast mental and psychic powers, a healthy dose of respect.

The Court has minions throughout the Blue and the entirety of the Actuality. Their many

*The internal reflects the external. Your soul is the universe, and the universe is a soul.*

*Deeps of Sleep, page 45*

*Abstraction, page 48*

machinations serve to solidify what they believe to be their rightful control of all thoughts.

## LOCATIONS UNDER THE BLUE SUN

The Blue Sun offers no real solid ground, but instead wispy clouds that take almost recognizable shapes. From time to time someone or something captures a bit of dream and uses it to create a solid place within the realm: a floating palace, a tree-lined lake, a single city street (or perhaps a bit of nightmare—a prison, a burning building, or a never-ending tornado). These never last more than a century or so, but they offer comprehensible purchase for the time they exist.

As the realm that governs sleep, the Blue Sun takes on an entirely different and distinct aspect. For sleep is an aspect of consciousness, and thus it is within the Blue Sun that a vislae can explore the various levels of consciousness and access realms beyond even those on the Path of Suns.

**The Seer's Glass:** Long ago, a group of vislae crafted a disc of glass almost half a mile wide, ringed with floating homes of wood and stone. These vislae were interested in viewing the future, and the glass was their tool to scry the times yet to be. It is still very much in use today by their successors, each wielding various secrets of prognostication and prophecy.

**The Library of Afflatus:** This library resembles a vast structure where the walls, doors, and bookshelves are made of books, none of which were penned by mortal hand. Instead, each tome in this collection is self-created, coalescing from the thoughts and ideas in the Blue. Guardian spirits serve as both wardens and librarians here.

**The Sea of Nothing:** An expanse of the realm of the Blue Sun is filled with salt water, with ships sailing on its irregular surface, and fish and other sea creatures living within it. This body of water connects to the *Abstraction* in Indigo, in that something flying through that region will suddenly find itself upon the waves here.

## NIGHTSIDE OF THE BLUE SUN

The Nightside of the Blue Sun is sometimes known as the beginning of the end. As such, its number is 15. It is a darker blue, oppressive, but nothing like Indigo. Vision is limited on the Nightside, not because of darkness, but because of an alteration of distance. A short distance is much longer than it should be in the domain of Nimragul, master of the Nightside Arch of the Blue Sun.

Nimragul, King of Languor, is a male figure with midnight-blue armor and massive weapons of all types that he rarely hefts. Gluttonous, lazy, and lustful to his detractors, Nimragul represents sex (without procreation) to his admirers. He is also the guardian of dreams and nightmares. As such, at one time or another, all vislae must deal with Nimragul.

**The Dreamery:** *The Dreamery* is a location in Satyrine (and the name of the organization that runs it), but it has direct links to the deep dream essence of the Nightside of Blue. The Dreamery has

*Noösphere, page 14*

*The Dreamery in Satyrine, page 88*

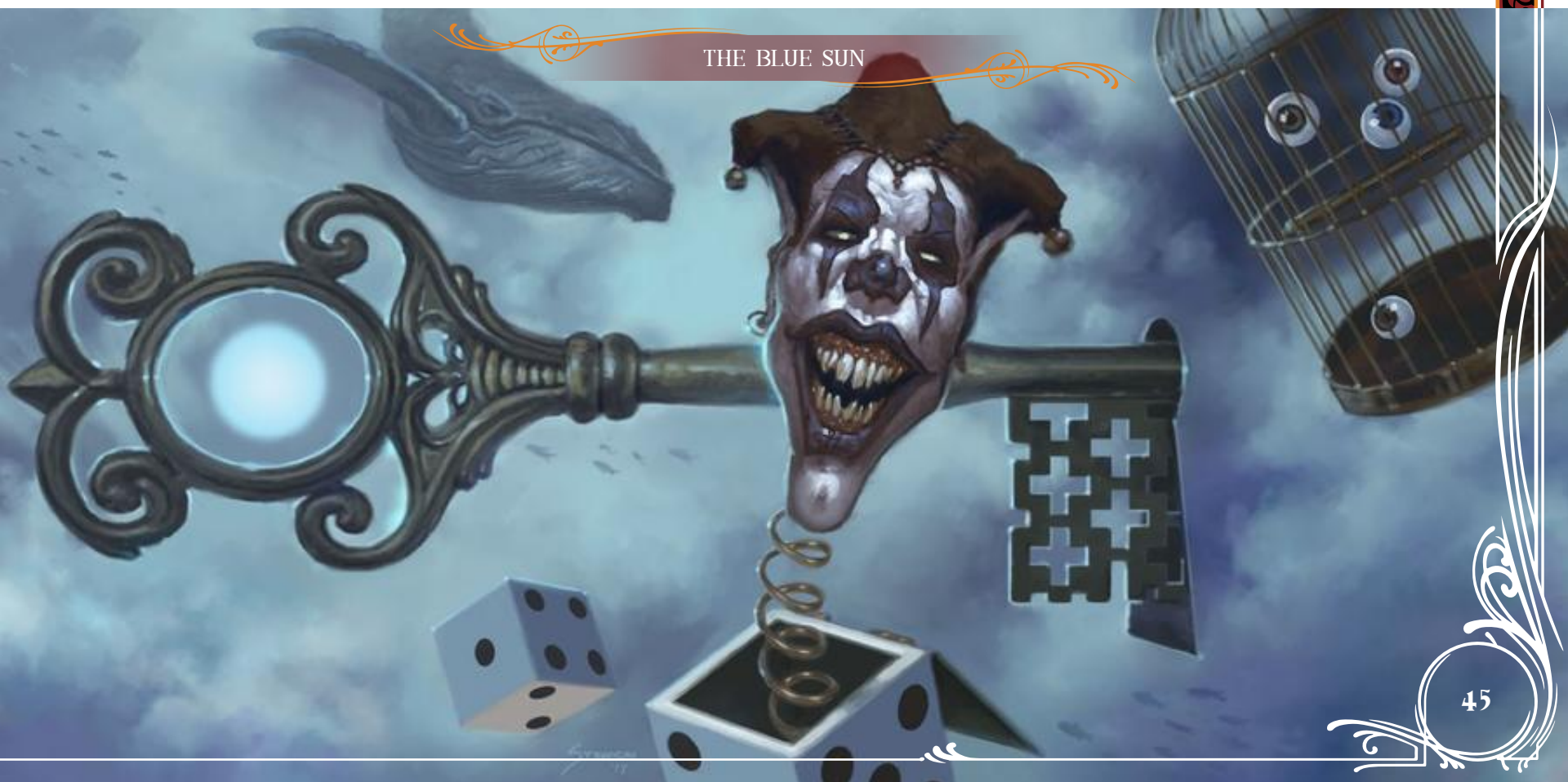
special agreements with Nimragul, but the terms are known only to them.

## THE NOÖSPHERE CONNECTION AND THE DEEPS OF SLEEP

The Blue connects directly to the *Noösphere*, and thus to every thinking mind. The Blue Sun, in effect, is the power source that sustains the *Noösphere*. You cannot enter one without at least brushing against the other—and it's easier to pass from one to the other than to travel between other realms. There are even those who say a traveler can sneak past Marra or Nimragul by entering the Blue via the *Noösphere*, or perhaps the Deeps of Sleep.

Many people—even learned vislae—think the Deeps of Sleep are within the *Noösphere*, but in truth they are merely accessed through a special unconscious part of the *Noösphere*. As a metaphysical “space,” the Deeps are in the Blue, crossing between the standard realm of the Blue and the Nightside.

## THE BLUE SUN





The Deeps of Sleep are not, as some contend, where dreamers go when they dream. Dreams are not a place, but instead—as Shadow scholars suggest—just a way for your subconscious mind to run through memories. However, if dreamers have the right knowledge or the right spells, they can enter the Deeps of Sleep while dreaming.

Composed of cast-off dream images that take root and become “real,” the Deeps of Sleep are an actual place. Dreams—the ghosts of dreams, really—live there in a quasi-sentient state. One can find almost any object or place in the Deeps that someone has dreamt about at some point, particularly if that thing no longer exists in the physical world. Explorers go there to find lost objects or explore locations that time or destruction has erased. These things are just replicas and usually lose all substance if removed from the Deeps. But, say, the dream ghost of a long-lost book can be read. The dream ghost of an artifact can be studied.

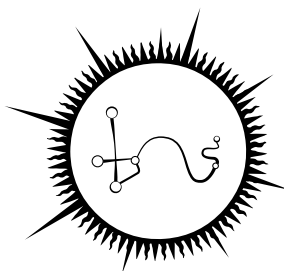
## ENCOUNTERS OUT OF THE BLUE

☀ The **ideophage** looks like a woman with a large hole that passes all the way through her midsection. With a touch, she steals an Intellect bene, and with it, one idea, thought, or memory. When she does so, a visual image relating to the idea (the face of an old friend, the name of a pet, or something similar) appears briefly in the emptiness in her guts. She’s always hungry.

☀ **Mireane** is a vislae who seeks a better understanding of dreams. She uses her skills and spells to examine every corner of the Blue, relying on the kindness of strangers for food and other necessities. She offers anyone she comes upon some of her knowledge in exchange for a few supplies. However, some of the secrets she has to share are dangerous and turn the dreams of those who hear them into horrific nightmares (Resist level 7) that inflict 3 points of mental damage every night.

*The Deeps of Sleep are the home of a near-godlike entity called the Prince of Nightmares.*

*Some encounters don't involve game stats.*



**Ideophage:** level 8; +2 Dodge, +4 Resist

**Mireane:** level 5; +1 Withstand, +1 Dodge, +3 Resist; +2 knowledge; vislae with some spells, including spells that grant movement and aid perception, +2 spellcasting

☀ Two dark blue hounds with empty holes for faces race through the nothingness of the Blue, chasing a terrified young man. Should anyone intervene, the hounds disappear, the man expresses his gratitude, and then he transforms into a hundred photographs of close friends and family members of those who saved him. Careful examination of the photos shows that they depict moments that have not yet occurred. Each can be used by the subjects to gain +1 to the action being attempted in the photo, if any, due to the small insight the image provides. (Since most of the photos show inconsequential activities, or no actions at all, only about one photo per subject is of any use.)

## THE INDIGO SUN

Next we reach Indigo. When people think about the Actuality, they often think of the realm of the Indigo Sun.

Indigo is not past, present, or future, but rather truth. The number of truth is 4, dichotomy both doubled and squared. This is the Real World. Capital R. Capital W. But the Real World is one of thoughts and ideas. Truth is not a solid bit of rock—it is an immovable, unchangeable concept. (It is also relative, which gives Indigo its life and motion.)

Newcomers to Indigo from Shadow comment on the sharpness, brightness, and clarity of even the most mundane objects, sounds, and smells. There is no mistaking that you’ve entered a new—and far more substantial—realm altogether upon that first arrival. Beauty is more beautiful here. But ugliness is more hideous as well.

Although flat, the realm stretches out (perhaps) boundlessly with seas of cloudy musings and conceptual landmasses, many as yet not fully explored. And at the center of it all, the Glistening City, the City of Notions, Satyrine.



# UNDER THE INDIGO SUN





## INDIGO'S WARDEN

Indigo's warden is an ancient being known only as Quiss. If Quiss still exists, such is a mystery. Did genderfluid Quiss die in the War? Is Quiss in hiding? Many hope Quiss will return in full glory one day. Regardless of any physical existence, Quiss is still guardian of the Indigo gateway on the Path of Suns, and as such, vislae find a way to establish some form of communion when needed.

## INHABITANTS OF INDIGO

Perhaps the most populated of realms, Indigo is home to hundreds of millions of people. Clans of **elderbrin** live in great numbers throughout the realm, and the highest population of **lacuna** live in Indigo as well. And of course, the half-worlds are home to a great many strange and wondrous peoples.

Long ago, a people called the arabast were Indigo's indigenous natives, but they have all disappeared, as far as anyone knows.

**King Nine:** Once a Goetic in Satyrine, the self-proclaimed "**King**" **Nine** is a gangster at best and an ontological terrorist at worst. King Nine dwells in a palace of his own creation within a candle flame burning in a quiet monastery 20 miles (32 km) south of Satyrine, along with many guards and servants, his daughter, Avelia, and his kavail, **Patral**.

King Nine controls most of the illegal (untaxed, unmonitored) emotion trade going into and out of the City of Notions. Some say that he gets his power by threatening to ask people one of the Seven Whispered Questions, which—if answered incorrectly or insincerely—destroys your soul utterly.

**The Sahira:** Physically indistinguishable from other people, the sahira contain the nature of Indigo within them, and are utterly incapable of telling a significant lie. That is to say, they're not foolishly literal, but they never attempt to deceive. If you ask a sahiran at a dairy how they are doing, they might answer "Fine," even if today's not as good as yesterday. But they won't knowingly sell you spoiled milk or moldy cheese by telling you it's fresh. The sahira are an insular folk, and although many live

among non-sahira in Indigo, they're most often found in their own small communities. There are very few sahira in Satyrine.

## LOCATIONS ILLUMINATED BY AN INDIGO SUN

Rolling hills, small copses of trees, rows of hedges, and narrow brooks compose much of Indigo, at least in what most people accept to be the center of the realm, surrounding Satyrine. Beyond that, it gets wilder and the terrain becomes far more dramatic.

**The Alone:** Satyrine is a port city with two ports. One lies upon the vast and still sea known as the Alone, and the other on a void called the Abstraction. The Alone is almost always calm and is filled with islands inhabited by unique cultures and creatures.

**The Abstraction:** Matter breaks down in the Abstraction, but it does so slowly. In a borderland unlike anything in the Actuality, the Blue and Indigo influence each other. In the Abstraction, truth becomes thought and thoughts turn to truth.

Matter disintegrates, but over centuries. Which means that the very edge of the land (upon which Satyrine rests) slowly calves off island-like masses that float in the Abstraction. These islands eventually join the Unfathomable Archipelago. The discorporation of matter (which proves its false nature) and the preservation of truth—ideals, concepts, and so forth—figure prominently into the outlook of those who spend time in the Abstraction.

The Green holds nothing for dreams, so when a dream escapes from the Blue, it makes its way to Indigo instead. Leaked and errant dreams make up the clouds that stretch for miles in certain parts of the Abstraction. Ships can sail upon these dream clouds, but because the clouds are not flat like a typical ocean, only a careful and experienced sailor (or a potent magical craft) can navigate their peaks and valleys. The creatures that call the cloud seas home are dreams themselves, and often don't look like anything you'd ever find in the water.

Even gravity has broken down in the Abstraction, so if you leap from the edge of the land into the void, you don't fall, you drift. But slowly. And

*Elderbrin, page 30*

*Lacuna, page 30*

*Kavail means "lieutenant."  
It implies the greatest level  
of trust one can have in  
a follower or servant.*

**King Nine:** level 13; +3 defenses; +2 intimidation; +3 Armor; vislae with many spells, including effects such as enhanced defenses, devastating physical attacks, and teleportation

**Patral:** level 8; +4 defenses; +2 movement actions; +1 Armor; vislae with many spells, including effects such as enhanced movement and perception, immobilization of foes, mental attacks, and telekinesis; wields the object of power called *Time's Thief* (see *Objects of Power* deck)

eventually you stop. Because momentum breaks down too. The only place this isn't true is the place where the Abstraction and the Alone meet. Called Forever Falls, this is a waterfall that pours down into infinity.

**The Unfathomable Archipelago:** Located in the Abstraction, this archipelago of floating "islands" begins as a series of earthen masses covered in rocks, trees, and so on, but as one proceeds farther from the heart of Indigo and heads Blueward, the islands become entire worlds unto themselves, suspended in and surrounded by dream-filled clouds. These are the **half-worlds**, and from the outside, they look mostly like bubbles holding realms that are far larger on the inside, or lensed holes in the fabric of space that look in on completely different realms altogether.

Within the islands of the Archipelago, mystic mills use raw thoughts and feelings to create emotions and ideas that can be handled, bought, and sold. The vast majority are shipped to Satyrine in flying craft of all kinds for just such purposes.

**Satyrine:** **Satyrine** is the largest city in Indigo, founded many thousands of years ago as a trading hub for merchants selling thoughts, ideas, sensations, and feelings created in the Emotion Mills of the Unfathomable Archipelago. Eventually, some of those milling operations were brought to Satyrine itself. Before Satyrine was established, the site was home to another city, built by pre-human beings known as the arabast.

**The Distraction:** Also known as the Distraction Tree, this site is small and seemingly innocuous, but nevertheless significant. It came into existence sometime after vislae began escaping Shadow and looks like a prodigious willow tree with a television screen at the end of each branch.

When a visitor comes to the Distraction, they see one or more of the screens showing a scene from life in the Grey. If they lived in the Grey, it is a scene from their own life. The images are presented in such a way that makes it clear they are false. The Distraction, it would seem, exists to show the truth in the lie of Shadow. However, to someone who

*Some say that the matter that disintegrates in the Abstraction is somehow funneled into the Grey, where it is reconstituted as part of Shadow.*

*The Unfathomable Archipelago is referred to in some older texts as "the Feyward Lands." This may be from a time when some or all of the hovering islands were still attached to the mainland.*

*Half-worlds, page 51*

*Satyrine, page 64*

*The Distraction Tree and its influence is level 9.*

*Errix hound, page 129*

lived there and was caught in Shadow's elaborate traps, even these demonstrations of falsehood captivate. They end up serving only to distract, sometimes for hours or even days.

**Tev Abbias:** A city much smaller and newer than Satyrine, Tev Abbias nevertheless holds a place of importance in Indigo. This is where the migrating towers spend their winters, before fluttering off to their respective homes elsewhere in Indigo. In the winter, then, Tev Abbias grows to almost twice its size.

The towers that come here fly on giant wings no one knew they had until they unfurl them. Tall minarets, squat round towers, campaniles, clock towers—many varied types of flying buildings come to Tev Abbias in the winter. Sometimes, the towers bring their occupants with them, but other times they wait until they are empty before taking wing.

**The Whispering Temple of Cail-Ummon:** A spherical structure towers over a small town like a gigantic eye, always watching. Those who come near it hear whispers. Sometimes the words are meaningless or impossible to decipher. Other times, they convey general information or simple platitudes. And rarely, the whispered utterances speak on topics known to the specific listener, and no one else.

The structure is both temple and home to a god named Cail-Ummon, the result of the fusion of two other gods long ago. The people of the town service the temple and its sole occupant, but in truth, they rarely gain entrance or see Cail-Ummon at all.

**Mollune:** A small city atop a hill surrounded by fertile fields of wheat and vegetables. Easily dismissed as a farm town, Mollune is built around a powerful magical site called the Cradle, sought for rituals and summonings by a variety of vislae. A council of elders attempts to regulate who can use the site and when, but sometimes unsanctioned rogues sneak in to perform rites under cover of night.

**The Ticking Forest:** A deep, wet forest where all the trees bear clockfaces and keep perfect time. Home to many **errix hounds**.

**Path of 17 Towers:** Arranged in a pattern resembling the Path of Suns and the Nightside Path end to end, this set of towers represents the Actuality

## SATYRINE

in microcosm. Each tower is ruled by a human who attempts to embody and portray the nature of their sun. Each has a staff of followers that maintain the tower and assist their ruler.

Some of the rulers claim to have a relationship with the warden of their respective sun, but this seems unlikely. Certain powerful rituals and other long-form practices can be performed at the towers or by walking from one tower to another, on a metaphorical Path of Suns or Nightside Path journey. But some people visit the 17 towers just for the curiosity of it.

**The Silent City:** In this mysterious and difficult-to-reach locale, nestled between massive stone monoliths, lies a secluded city of beauty and majestic splendor. True to its name, however, there are no sounds in the Silent City. They are forbidden and exiled by both law and spell.

The city is known for its libraries, its monasteries, and its temples to all-but-forgotten deities.

**Indigo Rail:** There is a train that runs throughout much of Indigo. It connects to the local train service

in Satyrine, linking most of its districts. This is called, simply, the Indigo Rail, and its stops include Satyrine, Tev Abbias, Mollune, and more.

**NIGHTSIDE OF THE INDIGO SUN**

Nightside Indigo holds the number 14, placing it a level higher than 13, the number of mortality. Gulanon is the warden of its gate, a being that exists in the sound of rumbling and rolling underground, inhabiting the deep recesses beneath the surface. Gulanon is most often called the Undergod, and his symbol is a buried eye. Those who look favorably upon him call him the Lord of Secrets, but in truth there are many throughout Indigo and all of the Actuality who claim that moniker.

Since Indigo is truth, Nightside Indigo is the dark side of truth—the uncomfortable and disturbing parts of reality that we don't want to admit are real. At least not in front of everyone. Thus, it is a realm of dark secrets. Appropriate for a place that looms beneath the city of Satyrine at the heart of Indigo.

*The Indigo Rail does not travel to the Silent City.*



**Cemetery of Dead Roads:** When a place ceases to exist, the road to it usually dies. When this happens, the spirit of the road comes here. The spirit erects a monument and inhabits it. Sometimes historians or other scholars come here to learn about the roads now gone and the places they led to.

## THE HALF-WORLDS

Unlike the Leech Worlds clinging to the Nightside of Green, the half-worlds are small, individual worlds or dimensions that have existed for a very long time, like islands in the Abstraction. No one questions their right to exist. And no one has ever mapped or cataloged each one.

A few sample half-worlds include the following.

**Nabravil:** In this world of swirling skies and hungry stones, every thinking being has the ability to create visualizations of their thoughts. Essentially, everyone in Nabravil can create illusions of whatever they are thinking about. This requires no action or concentration—in fact, it requires concentration to prevent every thought being on display for all to see.

**The Amber City:** The city at the center of this half-world is not so much a city as a prison. Each building traps an entity within it, like a fly in amber. At the center of the city are the twelve most notorious captives, the infamous Twelve Prisoners of the Amber City.

**Quisquilian:** This stormy realm is filled with trash endlessly blowing about. Skeletal towers are ragged with torn bits of cloth, paper, and other trash blown against them. The inhabitants wear many layers of shredded rags and keep ancient lore in torn, unbound books. Rumbling worms of terrible size and appetite burrow through the heaps of refuse.

**The Sempiternal Lenity:** Sought by weary travelers and beleaguered folk of all kinds, this is a hidden realm of gentle respite and safety. Mild weather, lush forests and flower-covered knolls, and trees bearing delicious fruit all exemplify the Sempiternal Lenity. Violence is impossible, and those who even contemplate overlong any harmful or unwanted actions upon another in this half-world are ejected from it. There are no native inhabitants here, only visitors.

*One thing that players will have to realize is that there is no “great beyond” or mysterious “netherworld” where all the immortals and spirits dwell. In the Actuality, it’s all “great beyond.”*

**Edalion:** level 7; +4 defenses; +2 searching; +1 attacks


**The Maze Man:** level 13; +4 Withstand, +2 Dodge, +2 Resist; can sustain 7 Injuries per Wound and 6 Wounds


**Avalia:** level 5; +2 Resist


**Bodyguard:** level 5; +2 defenses; +1 attacks; +1 Armor

**Thoughtform assailant:** level 6

## ENCOUNTERS IN INDIGO

 A small team of prospectors travels overland with pack mules and a large cage of carrier pigeons. In a friendly conversation, they will reveal that they search for a rare mineral called recondite, found only in Indigo. Its uses are unknown to them, but its value is high. One of the prospectors, a woman named **Edalion**, soon becomes convinced that the player characters either have some recondite or are also covertly looking for a vein. If she can convince her companions that she’s right, things could turn ugly.

 **The Maze Man** is a huge figure that wanders Indigo. This giant has no features, and his chalky flesh is covered in black lines that form an intricate maze. Despondent and withdrawn, if forced into conversation, the Maze Man gives the answer to a riddle unasked. If someone presents him with a riddle that matches his answer, he reaches into his own maze as if it were real and pulls out a number of ephemera objects as a reward. The Maze Man’s maze is indeed real, and should anyone explore it, they might find a great many magical treasures, but also traps and guardians of a decidedly deadly nature.

 A formal carriage with dozens of human legs rather than wheels trundles down the road, until it is suddenly beset by brigands that look like gelatinous orbs that form vaguely humanoid shapes. Anyone who gets involved in this altercation soon discovers that the carriage contains **Avalia**, King Nine’s daughter, and a pair of servants who are also capable **bodyguards**. The strange **assailants** are thoughtforms created by the King’s enemies who hope to kidnap the daughter. Obviously, he would be grateful to any who keep his daughter safe, but also quite suspicious of anyone who just happened to come along as his daughter was in peril.

## THE GREY SUN

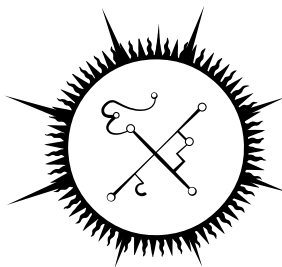
Socrates described a few unlucky souls, chained to the wall of a cave for the entirety of their lives, facing a blank wall. These captives watched shadows cast on the wall from creatures and objects passing in front of a fire located behind the watchers. The people in the cave gave names to the shadows. They formed the prisoners' reality. Socrates explained that a philosopher is like one of these people, freed from the cave. Looking around, seeing true reality rather than the shadows on the wall cast by reality, the philosopher eventually understands the truth. But the people chained in the cave don't want freedom. They don't want to leave their prison. They know nothing else. They don't see their chains and are content with the shadows on the wall.

—The Allegory of the Cave

The next step in the Path is the Grey Sun. You know this one. You're in the realm of the Grey Sun right now. It's also called Shadow, because it is the shadow of the Actuality (to be more precise, it is mostly the shadow of Indigo). In the same way that a shadow can be an elongated, shortened, or otherwise distorted version of that which casts it, so too is Shadow an imperfect, twisted reflection of what's real. It's like looking into a funhouse mirror, except for your whole life you've mixed up which side is real and which side is the distortion.

Time in the Grey is mainly an illusion, just like everything else there. The idea that the world portrayed in this illusion has a long history with various civilizations rising and falling, wars, kings, presidents—it's all just backstory. Shadow has always been precisely as you know it to be, right now. It never truly changes.

At the same time, Shadow as you know it to be isn't very old in the grand scheme of things. Very old books imply that Shadow—while always an illusory reflection—used to be quite different. Some contend that there have been many previous Shadows, in fact, all quite different.



*Scholars frequently debate whether Shadow is inadvertently cast—just part of the nature of the Actuality and the Path of Suns—or an intentionally crafted illusion meant to deceive. A few argue, can't it be both?*

*It seems interesting that shadows are cast, but so are spells.*

*Hendassah, page 111*

The number of the Grey Sun is 5, a number associated with mortality and humans.

## SHADOW WARDEN

If there is a warden of the Grey Sun, no one knows them. However, it is worth taking a moment to discuss the being known as the Demiurge, an entity infused within Shadow that may or may not exist. The doubt comes from Shadow's illusory and false nature. Is the Demiurge a ruse or a myth? For a very long time, learned sages and vislae everywhere believed so. But now a growing body of evidence suggests that there is a singular being that is both god and devil at the heart of the realm of the Grey Sun.

Could it be that the lie inherent within the Grey—including the lie of the Demiurge—became so singular and so powerful that it became truth? That would not seem to be the nature of lies. Lies simply beget bigger lies, not truth. But Shadow has become such an intricate falsehood, with so many beings of truth believing in it . . . well, as they say in Shadow itself, all bets are off.

Or has the Demiurge been alive from the beginning, the very perpetrator of Shadow? The Prime Liar, as it were? Under the auspices of the Demiurge, the Grey has taken on the role of prison more than anything else. Shadow seemingly does not want the vislae there to leave and learn the truth. A few groups and individuals from the Actuality, such as the **Hendassa**, have taken it upon themselves to try to free such vislae, but their motives are not always pure.

## INHABITANTS OF THE GREY

Most of the inhabitants of this realm aren't real—they're shadows themselves. Either they are distortions of people in the Actuality (or just the concept of people in the Actuality) or they are intentionally created figments designed to go through whatever motions are necessary to perpetuate the illusion, depending on your view of Shadow.

A few, however, are vislae who exiled themselves to Shadow to escape the horrors of the War. Now that the War is over, many have returned, but many

more have lost their way, having lived within the lie of Shadow for so long that they have forgotten the truth, forgotten the Actuality. Stranger still, a few rare shadows from the Grey Sun have left it and discovered how to live in the real world, bringing into question what it means to be “real.”

## VISLAE IN SHADOW

It’s not easy to bring vislae out of Shadow. Having lived there for years (what seems like their entire life, although that’s just part of the lie), an exile can become quite attached to their life in the Grey. Shadow has an insidious, tempting pull to it. Sometimes, a vislae slips and is drawn back into their Shadow life. Usually these occurrences are brief—a few weeks, perhaps—and a vislae who has escaped before can come to their senses and return to the Actuality without much trouble.

These instances, however, make it very easy to explain why a player misses a game session and their character “disappears” from the action and then returns when the player can next attend. Their character is simply drawn back into Shadow for a time, and later returns. This is not a terribly surprising thing to occur in Satyrine or elsewhere. It happens to the best of us.

Willingly traveling to Shadow is dangerous for the same reason. Its strange, tempting pull can quickly trap unprepared or weak-willed vislae.

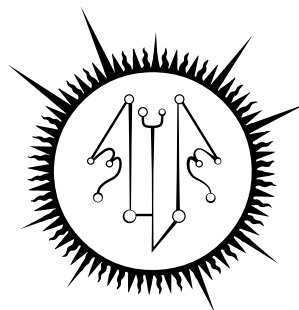
Most vislae, when traveling the Path of Suns, pass through the Grey quickly to reach the next gateway.

## LOCATIONS WITHIN SHADOW

The Grey Sun casts its light only upon falsehood.

## NIGHTSIDE OF THE GREY SUN

Because the nature of the Grey is false, it is perhaps not so difficult to imagine that its obverse is basically emptiness. It is the flat surface upon which the shadow falls, so to speak. An endless realm of plain grey. It represents hollowness, emptiness, and lack. It also embodies the limits of mortality. Its number is 13.




*Ghost, page 17*

The underside of Shadow is strangely difficult to reach from Shadow itself. It’s easier to move from the Pale along the Nightside Path. There are rumors, however, of those living in Shadow who have somehow found themselves on the Nightside of the Grey, lost in an endless sea of nothing. A few, reportedly, even made it back.

There is no warden of this emptiness.

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE GREY

 Vislae who return to Shadow (willingly or unwillingly) always reappear in the context in which they dwelled there previously. Their friends and family are there. Their home, their television, their couch, their refrigerator full of food—it’s all just as they remember it. It is as if they never left.

## THE PALE SUN

On our journey down the Path, we next reach the Pale Sun.

Death. The Pale Sun is death. Death.

In Shadow, we think of it as a state—the opposite of life. But in the Actuality, we know the truth: death is a place, as surely as any other. We travel there to stand beneath the Pale Sun when our life ends, but we can come back as well.

**Ghosts** are spirits of the dead on their way to the Pale. Once in the kingdoms of death, they take on a more substantive state. They take on—dare we say it?—a life of their own. Before they get there, however, or should they ever return, they can sometimes animate their former corpse. Or they can exert other influences in the material world. They can haunt. They can possess. In some ways, someone who is smart and willful gains more power in death than they had in life.

The Pale is not just the realm of dead people, but everything that dies. Any living thing with a soul that dies transitions to the Pale.

The most surprising thing we learn from the Pale, however, is that even things we don’t normally

think of as living can have ghosts. A ghost is merely something that once existed physically and had at least a spark of a soul. But many things that were never truly alive—works of art, books, songs, homes, and more—can have souls. We all know that to be true deep down. A ghost can fade into memory, but a memory can also transition into being a ghost. It's complex.

The Pale Sun embodies the future rather than the present or past (for death waits for us all). Its number is 6. The warden of death, known as the Monarch of the Dead, is named Xjallad. Empress Xjallad takes a very active role in her realm, ruling over a complex feudal system of vassals. She may be the most powerful of all guardians on the Path of Suns. Still, she fights a continual war with her Nightside counterpart, Queen Fazromir.

## INHABITANTS OF THE PALE

Obviously, this is the realm of the dead. They are most often called Dead Residents, or simply residents. Here, the dead have solid form. Beings that would be ghosts and spirits anywhere else have material bodies that look like pale versions of normal, living people. This is true of other types of ghosts as well—the ghosts of past objects are quite solid and real here. A resident might very well be adorned in the (material) ghosts of their previous jewelry, wearing the ghosts of their former clothing, and living in the ghost of the house they had while alive. Or they might have abandoned all that and taken on a completely new existence in the Pale.

Once they arrive and are assimilated, a resident lives the life—no, a resident carries on the existence they choose in the Pale. This might be nothing more than an endless wistful reflection of their life before, or it might be an entirely new career. Residents carry on in a society not terribly unlike that of the living, so they have roles to play, duties to carry out, and needs to fulfill. A city of the dead ends up being not all that unfamiliar to those traveling here from the lands of the living.

A surprisingly byzantine bureaucracy holds sway in the Pale, thanks to its rulers. Everything

*Some say that there is a land beyond the Pale where the dead go when they eventually pass on. If this is true, it is likely a truth that the living cannot know. Whether such a place exists or not, it is called the Stillness by those who dare give it a name.*

*Pale Embassy, page 76*

*Often, dead that escape the Pale immediately go insane as they become spiritual entities again. In this form, they are called wraiths and are quite dangerous.*

*The Dead call the living "breathers." It's not meant to be complimentary.*

*Dead Residents cannot die again. If slain by violence or misfortune, they disincorporate and reform weeks, months, or even years later, often as if they are new to the Pale with no memories of their existence as a Dead Resident.*

from construction to marriage is strictly regulated. Travel, in particular, is quite restricted. This is done, ostensibly, because many of the dead want to escape. Only those with close ties to Empress Xjallad are allowed to leave. When dead residents leave, they occupy and animate their corpse bodies, usually wrapped in preserving bandages or coated in preserving fluids. Some let the flesh rot away and exist as skeletons, but even then, clothing or armor usually holds the bones together. Outside the Pale, they are just called "the Dead."

Living travelers must have visas to visit the Pale. These are obtained in Satyrine in the [Pale Embassy](#).

The living stand out in the Pale. Only magic or a very considerable disguise conceals them.

## LOCATIONS BENEATH THE PALE SUN

Known as the Deathlands, the Underworld, or the Court of the Dead, the Pale Sun is divided into dozens of independent kingdoms, principalities, and republics of those who have passed. The terrain is varied, and everything is dead, but alive. Trees and plants are dead, yet they thrive. Animals are dead, but birds still fly, insects crawl, and dogs bark.

**Catafalque:** The largest city in the Pale (and perhaps the Actuality), Catafalque is home to ten million dead residents. The Empress keeps a sweeping palace of tall spires and high walls made of white stone and glass on a high cliff above the city.

When it comes to building materials, bone and hide are almost as common as stone and wood in Catafalque, but usually in an intricate and elegant fashion—never anything crude or primitive. The dead use materials of death and adorn themselves and their structures with symbols of death (skulls, bones, and so on), but this is done always out of respect.

**The Pallid Sea:** Grey waters give this vast sea its name. It is filled with dead fish and other aquatic creatures. A large portion is a very still, very shallow expanse, where dead residents wade in the waist-deep waters, sifting through the silty



bottom for something (they won't reveal what to the living).

The armies of Empress Xjallad patrol the Pallid Sea in so-called "watchboats," made from the eyelids of the dead.

**The Dirge Fields:** Barren tor after barren tor, punctuated with brackish streams filling the lowlands in between, this wasteland holds nothing that grows, not even the dead plant life of the Pale. It's the site of multitudinous battles between the forces of Empress Xjallad and her rival, Queen Fazromir. Battles that lay waste to the land but leave no corpses, for there are no corpses in the Pale (or rather, it's only corpses).

**The Eternal Party:** At the fringes of the Pale, gathered near the gateway from the Grey, visitors can inexplicably find a vast party. Portions of it include wild dancing with exhausted-looking participants. In other parts, crowds of minglers jostle for space. Other places are more quiet, with shadowy corners where small groups whisper. The Eternal Party has existed for far longer than anyone can remember and shows no signs of stopping. It drifts slowly from place to place, but always on the edge of the Pale.

Immortal spirits and powerful people (like vislae) attend the party willingly to mingle or simply enjoy themselves, but for reasons that pass common understanding, dreaming mortals are sometimes yanked from the Deeps of Sleep to find themselves lost in the crowded soiree. Mortals cursed to attend against their will normally do so in particular dreams where time passes at ten times the normal rate, so one night's dream lasts for ten nights or so. When they awaken, they have very strange tales to tell.

**The Posthumous Market:** Located outside of Catafalque, this large market specializes in selling the ghosts of items, or goods that belonged to people now dead that have somehow made their way into the Pale. Objects made in the Pale can be acquired elsewhere—this market is for things that originated in the lands of the living. Merchants here sell everything from simple tools

*Skeletons bathed in Pale water resist the temptation of rot.*

*Dead Residents do not age, so those that die as children remain children. Dead Residents do not procreate, either. This means that after twenty years in the Pale, Dead Residents are called Pale Natives, although there are no true natives of the Pale. Only immigrants.*

to mementos with only sentimental value, but a few offer more valuable items, including objects of power and the like. More than once, a long-lost artifact has turned up in the hands of a merchant in the Posthumous Market.

## NIGHTSIDE OF THE PALE SUN

On the opposite side of death lies the fortress of Fazromir, Nightside warden of the Pale Sun. Rumors say that the Nightside of the Pale borders a land so distant that it is known only as the Stillness, and it is the place into which the dead themselves eventually pass, never to be heard from again. The Nightside of death is quiet and desolate, with regions that have names like the Lonely Reaches and the Maddening Quiet. It is a place of fear, but more a place of dread. Its number is 12.

The Queens Fazromir and Xjallad each command vast armies of the dead and wage terrible wars. Fazromir's legions are characterized by their sorrow and loss. A multitude weeping and gnashing its teeth. Fazromir herself is known as the Queen of Regrets and is but a pale shade. Those who have seen her say that her face never bears the same visage twice, as if she is slowly cycling through the countenances of all her subjects, one at a time. She is the patron of suicide and despair, grieving and loss, as well as the desperation of avoiding such things.

**Silt Fortress:** This crumbling structure is home to the Vilified Sorcerers, dead vislae that guard an island called Ettruma. Ettruma is, by all accounts, a paradise, so of course—this being the Nightside of the Pale—no one is allowed to visit. A few travelers have had success in sneaking to the infamous Shores of Ettruma, and even fewer have convinced or bribed the Vilified Sorcerers to let them go there. What the island holds is a matter of wide speculation, but the rumors suggest all manner of relics, ancient beings of great wisdom, or simply a lovely and safe haven protected from the rest of the world(s).

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE DEATHLANDS

☀ An **officer** in Xjallad's army demands to see identification papers. He's got a real prejudice against the living, and no matter what, he finds fault with what he's given and attempts to arrest and detain those he encounters. Although there are (likely) no meaningful charges that can be brought against those he detains, the bureaucracy involved still might take up to two days of time.

☀ A dead acquaintance makes an appearance. They approach the person they knew in life and reveal a surprising secret that cuts to the very quick. "Your husband was not faithful to you." "Your parents are not your actual parents." "Your missing friend was kidnapped by roachgoblins." And so on.

☀ A **woman made of ash** approaches with a dead cat. When she encounters someone, she demands to know what they have brought with them to the Pale. She wants to know everything. Those who refuse her request are attacked with a storm of choking hot ash and smoke.

## THE RED SUN

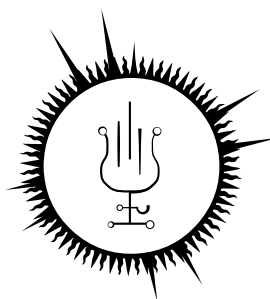
We thought that the Pale Sun was unnerving, but the next stage in our journey is arguably worse—for now we reach the Red Sun. Destruction and annihilation are the twin children of the Red Sun. But for many, this sun is simply change. In many ways, the realm of the Red Sun is the most dangerous and the most alien. In fact, the Red Sun also embodies the strange, the alien, and the other (but not the unknown—that is the domain of the Dark). It is a sun of the present moment, focusing on the now, the absolute instant of which pain and destruction make us so aware. Its number is 7.

**Army officer:** level 6; +2 defenses; +2 social interaction and searching; +2 Armor

*Demons, page 25*

*Most of the time, "demon" is a term used for a lesser, unsophisticated being, and a "devil" is a more powerful, intelligent, and sophisticated one.*

**Woman of ash:** level 7; +2 defenses. Her storm attack affects up to a large area, inflicting 4 damage per round to all within (she is immune). Those damaged also lose their next turn.



## RED GUARDIAN

The warden of the Red Sun is Daumi, a creature with an ever-changing form. Daumi is revered by warriors for her ability to wield and control the forces of annihilation. But that's mainly because she is utterly mad. She revels in destruction and gives little pause to murder and death.

## RED SUN INHABITANTS

First and foremost, and then some, the inhabitants of the Red are the **demons**, called Red shadows by many. This is because, like the shadows of the Grey, they lack qualia. They are not mindless, but spiritless. They can understand a thing and interact with a thing, but they can't experience a thing. That's what qualia is. It's the subjective component of sense perceptions.

Demons won't get a feeling or emotion from a thing (although like shadows, they can lie believably and claim that they do). Because qualia is central to using magic, this means that demons of the Red who want to cast spells need to obtain souls from outside themselves.

The demons of the Red are one of two things.

- + Unaffiliated loners who hate other demons as much as (or more than) they hate everything else. Whether predatory engines of destruction or sniveling scavengers, they learn to be self-sufficient and hate organization or affiliation.
- + Conscripted vassals serving more powerful demonic lords in a military-like hierarchy. Resentful and bitter, these demons hate their masters but fear them more, and thus work in groups at the behest of greater devils.

There are people who live in the Red as well. These mortals live harsh, dangerous, and sometimes very strange lives. They harvest diseases and cancers from the ground to trade with demonkind for extortion payments or, occasionally, favors or goods from other realms. They craft weapons—usually potent explosives—or destructive tools to sell to traders that move along the Path of Suns.

Most people in the Red live as nomads in small groups that are prepared for constant threats from all around, all the time.



## THE RED SUN

**Sodality of Vryn:** The Sodality of Vryn is a cabal of **sorcerers** that dwells in a series of towers beneath the dangerous rays of the Red Sun. The geometry of the placement of the towers creates symbols that are sacred to dead gods and lost belief systems. The Vryn seek utter dissolution, not just death or destruction, but as yet have not proven that such is possible.

The Vryn occasionally make alliances with one demonic prince or another, often bartering the souls of others for favors.

**The Damaged:** The Damaged are people who bear grievous wounds. Whole portions of their bodies are sometimes missing. And yet somehow—perhaps through sheer force of will—they refuse to die. They persist. Their ability to survive (or, if you'd rather, their inability to die) is their defining trait, and it shapes their society and their psychology.

Like other mortals in the Red, the Damaged live in small nomadic groups and are ready to fight off whatever threat comes their way.

**The Broken:** The Red doesn't just alter and destroy the physical world—it changes and twists

**Vryn sorcerer:** *level 8; +3 defenses; vislae with many spells, including effects like enhanced defenses, physical attacks, and telekinesis*

minds as well. The mad and deranged in the Red are called the Broken, and though they sometimes wander as lone maniacs and ravers, more often they bond together in their own tribes. Sane people find it nigh impossible to understand the Broken and the way in which they organize, prioritize, or live. Sometimes the Broken in a group act with such disharmony that they seem to be at odds with each other. Other times, their manias unite and they all sing the same nonsense song for a whole day.

One might assume that the Damaged and the Broken, being fairly similar, would be allies. One would be mistaken. They constantly fight in skirmishes in the shattered wastelands of the Red.

### LOCATIONS BENEATH THE RED SUN

The landscape beneath the Red Sun is jagged, like shattered glass. Most everything is brittle and covered in a fine layer of dust—the remnants of annihilated matter from earlier times. Volcanoes roar, the ground quakes, and storms rage, all destroying and reshaping the landscape over and over again.

In some ways, the world of the Red Sun might seem akin to the common conception of Hell, at least in the Christian sense. Fire, brimstone, jagged rocks, and toxic vapors. Of course, there are no souls being punished here in the fashion of Hieronymus Bosch (or any other). No hideous tortures being conducted. But it is the realm of demons.

**The Rage:** A place of dangerous storms, powerful emotions, and limitless energy. Screams and thunderous explosions make it almost impossible to be heard in the Rage, and spending much time here can be psychologically overwhelming. Those visiting the area become part of the Rage very quickly. Still, vislae and sometimes devils set up devices to siphon off power from the constant storms and use that energy to fuel magical processes, objects of power, or potent magical workings.

**Phthisis:** There are few cities in the Red, because the Red is not kind to edifice. It abhors permanence. But the very existence of Phthisis relies on degradation and decay, so it works with the Red, not against it. The buildings of Phthisis are living organic constructs grown and shaped by the inhabitants, and then infected with disease and corruption by the Red. But the builders designed Phthisis with decomposition in mind, so the buildings heal and grow at a rate that more or less matches the decay. The result is a city that is permanent, but not at all pretty. The buildings end up looking like huge cancerous cysts or collections of tumors, rot, and pustulant sores.

**The Laughter of Stones:** Not everything in the Red is about destruction. Atop a broad, fairly inaccessible mesa, one can find that the rocks and stones embrace the changing nature of the Red, existing in a constant state of flux. They move, change color, change shape, and twist and distort themselves like rubber or even taffy. And they laugh all the while. This place, called the Laughter of Stones, is home to a few miscellaneous residents, all of whom act protectively over the fluctuating stones.

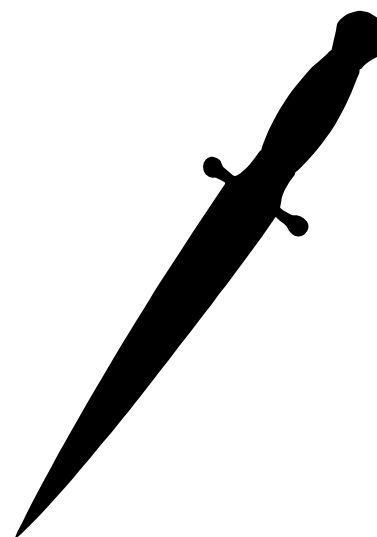
*Can you find the City of  
Lost Moments before it is  
gone forever?*

## NIGHTSIDE OF THE RED SUN

On the Nightside of the Red Sun we find that the sun is little different from its regular state. Unlearned eyes cannot recognize the difference. Chaos, destruction, and constant upheaval are its defining factors. Its number is 11.


The Red shadows mentioned before are overseen by the Nightside warden, Balregon, a warrior demon of strength and spikes and hammers. This, however, may be a misconception. To say that one oversees the demons of annihilation is like saying that one oversees a cyclone or an earthquake. Balregon normally appears to be a muscular man with a face whose features seem to be crudely smudged or rubbed away. Vague, hazy dark spots indicate where his eyes might have been. He wears heavy armor and carries enormous medieval-style weapons clearly intended to crush and smash. Only the bravest (or maddest) of vislae would ever seek his patronage.

**The Nine Punishments of the Innocent:** In the Nightside, a few demonic commanders took it upon themselves to create the Hell-like setting that so many seem to expect from the Red. Here, captives stolen from the Pale are subjected to terrible physical and psychological tortures in nine different venues.






## ENCOUNTERS IN THE LIGHT OF A RED SUN

 A **demon** that looks like a squat child playing a flute produces strange, fishlike spirits, which swim around its head as it plays. It offers to trade the flute for some magical object, assuring that the instrument conjures the spirits and the spirits can perform tasks and defend the flute player. This is a lie, of course—the spirits are real but the conjuration is a power inherent in the demon, not the flute.

 A localized **tornado** sweeps in briefly. Its winds change stone to glass and metal to stone.

 A pair of enlarged, floating brains hover in midair. The confluence of the linked consciousnesses creates a mental field that sustains a unique form of life. This being looks a little like a large **starfish** with a singular eye, undulating in midair. It asks questions of those it comes upon, hungry for knowledge, but eventually tires of communication and tries to siphon off the mental energy of anyone close by.

## THE GOLD SUN

There are no endings. Only transitions.

Finally, we reach the Gold Sun. The Gold Sun is the sun of new beginnings. Its number is 8. It is redemption, mercy, and forgiveness. Like the Red Sun, the Gold Sun is about change, but rather than just a change of state, the Gold Sun is about rehabilitation and improvement. Second chances.

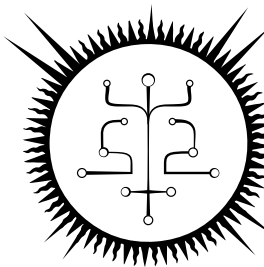
The realm basking in the light of the Gold Sun is quiet. A great many of the hypermagical people called the elderbrin dwell here in nomadic villages built on sapient, self-directed rivers and isolated castles made of discarded moth chrysalises. The nights are extremely cold, but the daytime rays of the sun are warm. Everywhere dichotomies are in transition.

**Deception demon:** level 4; +4 Resist; +4 deception; can conjure a spirit that adds +1 to all actions or defenses as an action

**Transmutation tornado:** level 8

**Her Elegance:** level 14; can sustain 6 Injuries per Wound and 6 Wounds

**Mental starfish:** level 6; +3 Resist; inflicts 3 mental damage on all close beings, and heals 3 damage on itself each time it does so



Here, they say, shattered porcelain vases reassemble on their own, if given enough time. Locks open on their own. Scars fade. Creatures once dead rise.

## WARDEN OF THE GOLD SUN

The guardian of the Gold Sun's gate is Shima, a powerful and wise being of beauty and grandeur. She is difficult to find and more difficult to impress. Or even gain the notice of.

## INHABITANTS OF THE GOLD SUN

Humans and elderbrin populate the realm of the Gold Sun, along with a variety of immortal spirits. It is also a favorite dwelling place of various gods.

**Her Elegance:** The entity known as **Her Elegance** may be a god, or she may be something else. It's not really in her nature to discuss such things with those beneath her, and everyone is beneath her. Her Elegance stands 12 feet (4 m) tall, dressed in a massive headdress and a long, flowing gown that is constantly adjusted, fluffed, and readjusted by one of the attendants that surround her.

She travels back and forth between her luxurious palatial estate in Gold and the finest of accommodations in Satyrine, where she often has business. Her interests usually include trade in certain types of ideas, magical materials of high quality, and—for reasons all her own—taxidermied spiders.

**The Order of Yash:** Yashites believe that all things—energy, matter, souls, thoughts, and even magic—are products of a single *something*. This, which they call yash, is neither force nor object nor any other one thing, but it is all things. All existence is made of yash, and all yash are one.

Yash is always in flux, and thus we finally come to why the order holds the Gold Sun above all others. Yash is fluid. It is transition. Some might even say that the easiest way to define yash is to call it the embodiment of change. (True Yashites would scoff at the oversimplification, even as they spend years in study and meditation to truly comprehend yash.)

The order has a hundred thousand adherents or more, scattered throughout the Actuality, but ten thousand of them dwell in a place called aba-Yash, where they work and study.

## LOCATIONS BENEATH THE GOLD SUN

Gentle rivers flow through lush valleys, though many of them flow the opposite direction one might expect, even uphill. The terrain here, particularly compared to the Red, is both easier and quieter. People tend fields of wheat and flocks of sheep and goats.

Waves of a milky wind rush over the realm from time to time and turn back the last few minutes as if they never occurred.

**Aba-Yash:** Part city, part campus, aba-Yash is the center of the Order of Yash. All Yashites living here swallow a capsule as part of their initiation; the capsule contains a barravil, a tiny creature that lodges in each person's brain. But all barravil are part of the same creature, which is not only a metaphor for the order but a way for all those in aba-Yash to exist in a sort of hive mind, connecting through the barravil.

Not everyone in aba-Yash is a Yashite, but at least three quarters are, and as time goes on, each individual has greater and greater difficulty interacting with creatures that are not part of their communal mind (in fact, they can do so only by drawing on the experiences and mindset of those who joined more recently and remember individuality better).

Not surprisingly, then, aba-Yash has no leaders and no law enforcement, as all Yashites are one.

**The Resurrection Mound:** Rising from a mound of corpses, each one the dead body of a creature the size of a mountain, gigantic flowers called aaris sprout from deep contusions in the dead flesh. Insect-like **nobrins** flitter about the flowers and guard the mound.

Rumors across the Actuality say that if a body lies buried in the mound of corpses for at least a week, a new, identical body—fully restored and in full

health—will emerge from an aaris bloom, and the dead creature's spirit will automatically return.

Other tales, however, say that while that used to be the case, recently a small group of nobrins called the Kraclath has plotted to change things. Now, a resurrected creature sometimes returns with the spirit of a nobrin instead. The resurrected being returns to its home, its position, and so on, but works toward a likely sinister end in the name of the Kraclath nobrins.

**The House of Secrets:** Built entirely of secrets, this house and everything in it is **invisible**. As you learn the secrets of the house, more and more of it becomes visible to you. Its current owner is a creature called the Russaz, a humanoid being constantly sprouting new eyeballs and living insects. Ownership of the House of Secrets never lasts long, however. Many owners have disappeared within the house, their whereabouts and dispositions unknown.

**Canossa:** The place of humiliation. Canossa is a circle of standing stones, each 50 feet (15 m) high and covered with glowing runes and inset crystals. Within the circle, a ritual can be performed that casts aspersions upon the name of a being held captive at its center, and those humiliating words flow through the Actuality on any of a number of magical currents. Thereg the Fallen was a god held within Canossa for a year and a day, his darkest and most humiliating secrets sent down the Path of Suns. He was then executed there by his enemies.

**The Spiral Road:** True to its name, this highway extends across a huge stretch of Gold without any other solid ground. The corkscrew-like path offers a way to cross this expanse and reach the Unshattered Tower, a castle in the process of slowly rebuilding itself.

*Duvier's Symphony of New Voices was composed to utilize only crying and laughing children, played live.*

**Nobrin:** level 5; +2 defenses; +1 searching

## NIGHTSIDE OF THE GOLD SUN

We begin again, but the journey is all new.

Returning to the Gold Sun on the Nightside Path back up through the suns, we pass through the gate of Korazon, known as the Master of the First Step. Korazon appears as a mass of utter darkness, seething and roiling with each thunderous whisper it utters. Rumors say that the warden has ties to the Dark itself. Korazon is a favorite patron of Nightside Goetics in particular, said to possess many secrets and powers unknown anywhere else on the Path.

The Nightside of the Gold Sun's number is 10, representing new beginnings and new rules. A new order on the very edge of darkness. Is Korazon the one that keeps the Dark at bay as the Path begins, or is it the one about to let it all in?

The Nightside of the Gold Sun focuses largely on order and control, but not—obviously—on the stagnation that often comes with such things. Instead, it represents control through altered perceptions and readjustment of values. Changing minds and changing hearts. Out with the old order, and in with the new.

Some devils and similar creatures call the Nightside of Gold their home, as well as mortals invested not just in change, but in controlling change. Change for their own ends.

The landscape here is fluid and amorphous. Crossing Gold's Nightside is like wading through not-quite-hardened meringue—if that meringue were heaving and seething, seemingly of its own volition. The dim landscape is cool but not freezing, and windstorms are common, punctuated by periods of absolute stillness.

**The Cadallish:** A creature not unlike a ten-legged snapping turtle a mile long moves slowly across the ever-changing terrain. Built upon its back is a small city of gold and black towers and minarets.

The Cadallish offers a home to Nightside Goetics and the occasional Apostate, as well as disaffected souls who find themselves not just at the end of the Path, but perhaps ready to move along the next. True to the change in outlook embodied by the Nightside, the Cadallish is a place of grey rather

than black or white. Of nuance, of circumstance. Of learning to look at things in a new way or accepting new means. Thus, it has a reputation for being the abode of untrustworthy, compromised souls. But sometimes, one needs to find exactly that sort of person. Other times, one finds that they have become that sort of person. The Cadallish is for both.

Baroness Unalasis rules the Cadallish, although she must constantly negotiate with the Driver's Guild, which controls the beast upon which the city rests.

## ENCOUNTERS BENEATH THE GOLD SUN



**Prince Baddock's throne creature:** level 10; +4 Withstand, +2 Resist; can sustain 10 Injuries per Wound and 10 Wounds; +3 Armor

A **humanoid creature** 200 feet (60 m) tall has a head like a throne, upon which sits an angel with wings of gold and jewels. **Prince Baddock**, the angel, seeks mercenaries to help him find the demons that stole his books. Baddock won't leave his perch, but the demons have scurried into hiding places that he cannot reach from where he sits.



**Prince Baddock:** level 10; +3 defenses; +1 social interaction, +1 searching; +2 Armor; various abilities, including sensing the invisible and healing

A jewel-encrusted beetle named **Clarrisa Almost-Two-Feet-Long**—who is, in fact, almost 2 feet (60 cm) long—offers directions and advice to those in Gold, but only those who share a moving tale or significant secret about one of the other suns.



**Clarrisa Almost-Two-Feet-Long:** level 5; +3 Armor  
**Flower-headed man:** level 3

A **man** with a head like a blooming bouquet of flowers (protected by a glass helmet) seeks to be reborn thanks to the power of the Gold Sun. Although he will not reveal his name, he is eager for suggestions on what his new name should be.

## THE INVISIBLE SUN

“Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us.”

—Sir Thomas Browne, 1658

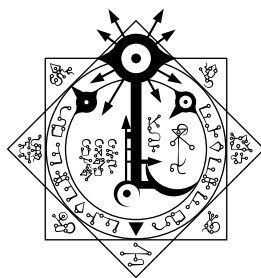
Our journey is not complete. Not by a long shot. For now we achieve the **Invisible** Sun itself. Source of magic, mystery, and wonder, the **Invisible** Sun exists outside the Path of Suns, yet the path pivots upon the sun’s power and presence. The **Invisible** Sun is magical power. It is the Source.

Remember that the Path of Suns is not only a map of the Actuality, but a map of the soul as well. The inner world as well as the outer. Which means that all the suns—including the **Invisible** Sun—are also within us already, even if we are unaware. Our journey is one that is both spiritual and physical. In fact, when we reach this point, we begin to ask: is there even a difference?

The **Invisible** Sun is the end of the Path of Suns and the beginning of the Nightside Path, and its number is 9. Truthfully, though, the **Invisible** Sun is part of neither path. It is its own rogue fixture within the universe without a dual nature. It is the source of magical power and energy in all worlds. The currents of magic that flow, create, destroy, preserve, and change all originate from the **Invisible** Sun. As such, the warden of the **Invisible** Sun is only Visla. Or, to put it another way, Visla is warden of both of the gateways of this sun. Visla is an enigmatic figure, as mysterious as her realm.

Unlike all the other suns, the **Invisible** Sun has no attendant world. Its unseen light illuminates nothing. However, the **Invisible** Sun is the source of all magical energy, in the form of six (or, according to some, perhaps more) currents of power. These currents flow through the various suns and their gateways, but all originate with Visla and the **Invisible** Sun. Thus, the light of the **Invisible** Sun shines upon every world and everyone. Its light and its heat are magic.

Because of its role in providing magical power, vislae favor this sun—and, most of the time, Visla—above all others.



*Floating in the Void, extraordinarily difficult to find, is the enigmatic Black Cube. It's said to hold a multitude of treasures, although you can usually get only one or two at a time. It may even hold other secrets. Deeper secrets.*



### THE GATE

Gamemastering chapter, page 46

## THE DARK

Known just as often as the Void, the Dark is existence without a sun. Lightless and cold, it is not just unknown, it is incapable of being known. It is the concept of nonbeing, the absence of everything found amid the Path of Suns.

Demons and devils dwell in the darkness, seething with hate and contempt. Demons of the Dark are far more sinister and vile than even their Red brethren (they do not see themselves as brethren, by the way, nor even as allies). While the demons of the Red destroy, those of the Dark corrupt. They seek not just to kill mortals, but to corrupt and debase them. Crush their spirits and steal the shriveled remnants of their souls. It is sometimes difficult to fully comprehend these beings, but they are always dangerous in the extreme.

In the Void, there are many varied hierarchies of demonkind. For example, some are mastered by demonic lords that claim a title referring to something they hate or war against, such as The Enemy of Sleep or The Enemy of Reason. Being defined by what they are against, rather than what they are for, is very appropriate for demonkind. Each such genderless lord has a number of servants, and each looks precisely like their lord. So, to all appearances, there is not one Enemy of Sleep, but a multitude—the Enemies of Sleep. However, in practice, one lord—the original claimant of the title—rules over the rest and wields power far beyond the others.

Like most of the various suns, the Dark has a warden. His name is Nem, but unlike the other wardens, he truly is just a gatekeeper, for it is difficult to oversee that which cannot be known. Nem’s role as a guardian, however, is vital. Although his presence could be described as demonic, Nem is what keeps the Dark from swarming into the realms of the suns in great multitudes.

But that does not mean it does not seep in anyway. In dreams, through mirrors, and through the miscast conjurations of foolish mortals who don’t truly understand the great pacts, demons of the dark and diabolical devils find their way to wherever mortals dwell. Always to the mortals’ eventual peril.



## GAMEMASTERING THE PATH OF SUNS

Once the narrative has moved out of Satyrine and into the Path of Suns, things should get even more surreal. Or, perhaps to look at it a different way, the footing of the familiar offered by Satyrine—streets and restaurants and houses and shops—goes away. Oh, there are streets and restaurants and whatnot elsewhere, but even those mundane things should be weird outside of Satyrine.

In the Path of Suns, the metaphorical becomes literal. In Silver, a giant eye peers out of a cliffside, the source of a waterfall. The people of a Gold village are all animate drawings on paper. Dream creatures of the Blue travel across the empty void in ships with sails made of anger. Demons live within a continual explosion at the bottom of a crater in the Red.

Worry less about logistics and the implications of things. Don't think in terms of strict ecology or worry about the laws of thermodynamics. This is literally not the time or place for such things.

The meanings of each sun are important, but not so much that you can't have a crafter in the Red, a liar in Indigo, or a destructive act in Silver. The meanings should come through as an overall theme to use, not a barrier forbidding your cool ideas.

And don't forget to incorporate the numerical significance of each sun.

Whimsy is okay, but dark whimsy is better. Absurdity for comedy's sake will seriously break the mood, so parody like a fast-food restaurant staffed by demons in the Red is probably not a good idea. Instead, have the PCs come upon a band of demons casting lots to see who gets to extract the final scream from a poor victim they have captured.

The Gamemastering chapter in the Gate offers more detail on surreality in general.



—Matthew Mercer



# THE CITY OF SATYRINE

**A**h, glistening jewel of Indigo,  
Ah, city of notions,  
Oh, city of secrets, visions, and  
mysteries,  
What have you become?

Satyrine is the largest city in Indigo, founded many thousands of years ago as a trading hub for merchants selling thoughts, ideas, sensations, and feelings created in the Emotion Mills of the Unfathomable Archipelago. Eventually, some of those milling operations were brought to Satyrine itself. Before Satyrine, the site was home to another city, built by pre-human beings known as the arabast.

Satyrine is located between the vast, calm sea called **the Alone** and the equally vast (and equally calm) void called **the Abstraction**. This makes the city not just a port, but two: one for ships of all kinds sailing the Alone, and one for floating and flying craft that cross the void of the Abstraction.

The most significant thing to know about Satyrine today is that it was reduced to ruin and rubble in the War. The inhabitants are restoring and rebuilding the city, but that is more difficult than it would seem because the weapons used in the War left behind extraordinarily dangerous hate-powered, cancerous objects called Hate Cysts. This has led to focusing on districts that were not utterly devastated and building out from each of these, like oases of safety and sanctuary in a desert of ruins. Citizens call the desolate, wrecked stretches the Ruined Expanses and generally avoid them.

Satyrine is vast, stretching for miles, although much of it is abandoned. Perhaps once, long ago,

*Satyrine is not just the largest city in Indigo, but in fact one of the largest cities in the Actuality. Before the War, it was the largest, but war favors the Pale, and now that is certainly the city of Catafalque.*

*The Alone, page 48*

*The Abstraction, page 48*

its population numbered in the tens of millions. But today? No one could even make an educated guess. This is made more difficult still as many of the apparent inhabitants are thoughtforms rather than actual people. These magical constructs carry out many of the mundane tasks that make the city work.

Still, despite the ruin, the reclaimed and rebuilt sections of the city have returned somewhat to normal. Nobles strut and preen, artisans create and perform, merchants trade, criminals steal, and vislæ tinker with magic. Probably much like it always has been.

## THE WAR

The War is over, and we won. It was long, it was terrible, and it wrought death and destruction across the realms, particularly Indigo. But it is over now, and we won. That's about all you'll ever get out of anyone, including—and especially—the War's veterans. We don't speak of the details and we most certainly do not speak of the Enemy.

## THE DEATHLESS TRIUMVIRATE

Ruling over Satyrine, the three immortal, godlike beings known as the Deathless Triumvirate dwell both within and beyond the city itself. Each has a dual nature: one physical and in the city, usually within a massive citadel floating above Satyrine's center in the Marquis Quarter, and one far more ephemeral. It is possible—likely, even—that the Triumvirate is a manifestation of Satyrine's own



life force and will. If this secret proves to be true, then it would not be incorrect to think of them as the mind and the city as the body. The cysts, then, are tumorous, and the Triumvirate—that is, the city itself—wants them removed.

Before the Triumvirate came along, another, far older entity called the Angular Serpentine was the ruler and the spirit of the city that existed here previously. And still the Angular Serpentine remains. If the Triumvirate are Satyrine's mind or soul, the Angular Serpentine today could be considered a demon possessing the city. It was a force given life in the far-off half-world of Narvago, a realm that probably no longer exists, and brought to the city for reasons unknown.

The details of the transition between the Angular Serpentine and the Triumvirate are not fully understood. Most people assume some sort of struggle, but others contend that with the disappearance of the arabast—to which it had some kind of connection—the Serpentine faded away or left of its own accord. In this version of the story, the Serpentine may have remained in its subtle, hidden way, but the Triumvirate came along later, a consciousness evolving out of the city's continued existence, utterly independent of the prior spirit.

## SATYRINE LIFE

Satyrine has a distinct character. Post-War, it's still a fairly empty city. While many districts are busy throughout the day, in others it's not at all uncommon to find oneself alone on a silent city street. (And, of course, the Ruined Expanses are more barren and desolate still.) At night, those streets are lit by shamlight lamps, surrounded by a surprising number of moths, and are often far lonelier.

Satyrine's not like Shadow. It doesn't have the same level of automation, organization, or cohesion, and it's certainly not as regular—every building is distinct, every vehicle different from all the others, and every person unique. Although there is a Satyrine fashion (some returning vislae have noted that it's similar to what they would have thought of

*Satyrine (and all of Indigo) experiences four distinct seasons, just like much of Shadow. Summers are hot and humid, winters are cold with a bit of snow, and spring and autumn are relatively pleasant.*

*Buildings in Satyrine often twist or turn back upon themselves as though the architect was M.C. Escher himself.*

*Elderbrin, page 30*

as a 1920s American sort of style), the true Satyrine “look” is one of utter individuality.

Satyrine is unlike a Shadow city in other ways as well. The streets can sometimes move or shift. A whole district might be larger or smaller than the actual space it occupies. Architecture does not conform to expectations or anything resembling physical laws or engineering needs. Satyrine boasts origami structures, buildings of smoke, and floating fortresses held aloft by fluttering butterflies. And that's just for starters.

## THE PEOPLE

The people of the city go about their business, but many of them—in particular the laborers, the maintenance workers, the delivery people, the bodyguards, and others—are actually thoughtforms. In other words, they're not real, but magical creations without consciousness, free will, or needs. They look and act like people, but that's because they've been created that way by skilled vislae. The thoughtforms perform all manner of vital tasks and provide important services. You can engage them in small talk, but sometimes they perform strangely or not at all. Still, for the most part, without really studying them, you can't tell whether someone is real or thoughtform.

Actual people typically hold occupations requiring training, talent, or adaptability. The street sweeper might be a thoughtform, but the accountant, the jazz singer, and the successful salesperson are almost certainly flesh-and-blood humans.

Not everyone real is human, of course. **Elderbrin** make up about a fifth of the city's population (again, not counting thoughtforms). Though they often live predominantly in certain neighborhoods rather than others, every district boasts an elderbrin population. Those in the city generally conform to the standards of human society, but fewer than half are employed. Many elderbrin live on (or beneath) the streets and have little money, but because they have such different values and needs, they don't mind. A fair number, on the other hand, have adopted human values entirely (or the pretense







of them, anyway) and hold jobs, value money and possessions, and seek self-aggrandizement.

In much smaller numbers, **lacuna** dwell in small, isolated communities on the fringes of human society. They rarely mingle and almost never have standard occupations or understandable motivations. Few humans know why the lacuna are in Satyrine at all.

And there are even less common peoples as well, most hailing originally from the various half-worlds so close to and yet so far from the city: the four-armed drune; pinioned kellidos, forbidden to fly within the city for fear of rooftop fires; Jasterine idolaters parading about with their huge golden medallions that allow them to transform into massive apes, singing chants to their secret god; glistening, towering secramal dancers, telepathically whispering to each other secrets no one else could understand; the cavarani, whose appearance always causes disgust and fear; the skittering scalopedes of the Undersling, and more.

Satyrine population figures don't count ghosts, spirits, demons, angels, or other such beings, but that doesn't mean they aren't present. Even discounting those summoned to serve Goetics or other vislae and thus operating (or bound) within the city, many such entities call Satyrine home. Ghost hauntings are not rare (and in certain districts, like Fartown, are quite commonplace). Demons and angels dwell in the city in not insignificant numbers, and for the most part they tamp down their tendency to kill each other in order to keep from being ejected from the city (or worse, such as the fate of certain angels in the **Pinion Court** in the Undersling). Of course, some—like, say, the demon who may very well now be a bar called **Zero's**—seem to have turned from their original ways altogether.

Other creatures, from spiders (and **truespiders**) to dogs to **ratgoblins** to **grigs** live in the city too, sometimes on their own, sometimes as the companion of a human. Some are tolerated or even embraced, but others are thought to be at best pests, and at worst threats.

And then there are the Dead. Not ghosts, the Dead are corporeal enough, although they must

*The Dead, page 54*

*Lacuna, page 30*

*Her Elegance, page 59*

*The Half God, page 79*

*Monday, page 95*

*Frequently seen graffiti  
in Satyrine: Time is  
expanding in all directions.*



THE KEY

*Aethyric device, page 185*

*Pinion Court, page 91*

*Zero's, page 102*

*Truespider, page 145*

*Ratgoblin, page 131*

*Grig, page 129*

take steps to deal with the decomposition of their bodies. **The Dead** are those who have been to the Pale but have gained permission to leave. Many now live in Satyrine, but most have only short-term visas from their Empress (although to the endless Dead, "short-term" may still be decades).

Last, there are singular nonhuman entities like **Her Elegance**, **the Half God**, **Monday**, and others, but they have their own specific stories.

## THE CULTURE

Everything in the Actuality might seem strange and surreal to returning vislae (or to those reading this in Shadow), but in truth, people are still people. The residents of Satyrine are motivated by the same things they were in Shadow. They do many of the activities you might expect.

Most people have jobs. They earn a wage and use that money to pay for food, shelter, and the other things of life. Children go to school, eventually leaving at about age 12 to go to work (lower classes), about age 15 to apprentice with a crafter or tradesperson (lower and middle classes), or about age 16 to get a higher education in the universities (middle and upper classes).

Although vislae most often own houses, the average Satyrine resident rents a small house or, more likely, an apartment. They probably live fairly near their work, and in fact only occasionally leave their neighborhood, let alone their district.

Newspapers come out daily or weekly, and there are many to choose from. Magazines cover many different topics, but gossip and scandal seem to be most popular.

A fun evening might include dancing in a nightclub to the sounds of a big band, meeting new people via flirt tubes, or listening to poetry in a prosody where the words spoken sustain like food and stimulate like coffee.

Although many people distrust **aethyric devices** due to their connection with the spirit world, more than a few residents own radios or phonographs to listen to music or other audio at home.

## CONVERSATION TUBES AND PROSODIES

Unique to Satyrine, entertainments like conversation tubes and prosodies showcase the city's nature as one of ideas and emotions. The "City of Notions," as it's known.

Conversation tubes, or "flirt tubes," as they're usually called, are found in large bars and nightclubs, and in fact many times the club is built around the presence of the tubes. Interested participants go into one of two rooms with brass and silver tubes jutting from the wall, and sometimes running up the wall and across the ceiling in an arcane maze, like an insane pipe organ. Some of the tubes are labeled with genders for those that have them or have a preference. Either way, participants start talking into a tube and strike up a conversation with a stranger in the other room. You can even put little notes or gifts into the tube and they are transferred to someone on the other side. As the name suggests, this is a lighthearted way for even the shyest person to flirt and meet people.

Prosodies are set up like restaurants and cafes with a prominent performance stage. However, no food is served (occasionally, but not always, beverages are). Instead, the poetry read by a performer on stage is so stirring, so moving, so mind expanding, it literally sustains, nourishes, and invigorates those present. People leave feeling satisfied and energized.

## THE SOCIAL CLASSES

Satyrine society expresses itself through fairly strict strata. The distinctions between upper, middle, and lower classes are significant, and mobility is limited.

The upper classes are mostly wealthy aristocrats. Their interests generally lie in social events, appearances, and creature comforts. When they look beyond such trivialities, it's usually to patronize the arts or occasionally focus on business dealings—investments, mainly. Rarely, gerents may be members of the upper class. Some vislae who have attained higher degrees in their orders associate with the upper class, but only those born into the aristocracy are ever likely to belong, regardless of money or position.

Middle-class people in Satyrine work for their money. Most have professional or skilled jobs, ranging from lawyer or physician to woodworker or plumber. Some of the middle class are quite wealthy, but don't have the connections or family to be considered members of the upper class. Gerents are usually middle class, as are vislae. Most people in Satyrine are middle class.

There are fewer in the lower class than one might normally expect in a city of Satyrine's size. The lower classes here have it hard because they tend to lack the skills or education to get good jobs, but

thoughtforms occupy most positions of unskilled labor. It's easier and cheaper to obtain the services of a thoughtform housekeeper or laborer than to hire a real person. Most of those in the lower classes are unemployed, and many are forced into illegal activities to survive.

## THE FOOD

As described in the Precepts chapter, most food eaten in the Actuality has a magical rather than organic origin. Satyrine food is no different. Beef, pork, chicken, vegetables, fruit, bread—well more than half of such staples in the city were likely conjured rather than obtained in more conventional ways. Inexperienced vislae and zilats make a fine living doing nothing but conjuring foodstuffs.

Often, magic creates a basic food in a complete form. In other words, a vislae doesn't conjure meat, vegetables, and broth—they just conjure a big pot of stew. Thus, actually preparing food has special meaning. People consider real bakers and chefs to be artists, and culinary schools hold a great deal of prestige in the city. Dining out can be like attending a performance.

As with clothing and physical appearance, when it comes to food, form is as important as function. An expensive restaurant is likely to spend more time

*Zilat, page 124*

*Frequently seen graffiti in Satyrine: Time is the enemy.*



on the presentation than on mere flavors. For the upper classes, if the food is not dancing, singing, expelling gouts of green flame, or arranged like a scene out of history, it's not worth eating.

And sometimes, because it's Satyrine, food is mixed with emotions, lacing them with feelings as well as flavors. Or ideas. Community organizers who want to evoke change might bake an idea into cookies they pass out to everyone at a rally.

It's also worth mentioning that a number of foods have unique qualities beyond being nutritious and delicious. A few of these include the following.

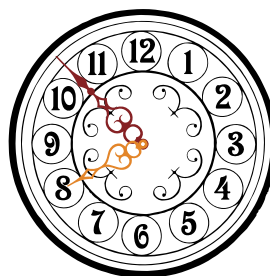
**Corun:** Small tubers, coruns eventually turn into tiny mole-like creatures. They are tastiest just moments before the transformation.

**Erralis:** These pear-like fruits sing songs once picked and continue to do so until damaged.

**Mlatzaberries:** Naturally euphoric, these berries intoxicate those who eat them.

**Nilderow seeds:** A few of these seeds change the flavor of anything else one eats for about an hour

*In Satyrine, there also exist numerous replacements for food. Magical pills, poetry at a prosody, or potent drinks can sustain like a heavy meal.*



afterward in strange and random ways.

**Quaron leaves:** These leafy greens are succulent but turn the flesh of anyone eating them green, yellow, or purple, depending on their freshness.

**Secumoral powder:** This seasoning forces one eating it to recall memories of their mother that they had forgotten.

**Strooli:** These long noodles are animate, moving as predetermined by the chef who cooked them.

**Tuan:** Each of these long, thin fruits has words written on the inside of their skin. When peeled, one can read short quotes from those who died and were buried near the tuan tree.

## THE RULE OF LAW

There are 17 districts in Satyrine. (Of course.) On average, each is home to about fifty thousand people. Some are more populous, but some have far fewer residents than that. It seems unlikely, for example, that Quiet Lake could have more than a thousand people.

## GERENTS

Districts serve meaningful distinctions in regard to proximity and local flavor, but they are not political. Governance comes from on high (the Triumvirate) and then the very local, on the neighborhood level. Sometimes what designates a neighborhood and where the boundaries lie has no set definition, but it's certainly understood by the people who live there. Just ask—the people of a neighborhood know precisely where the current boundaries are (they can and do change) and who's in charge. Neighborhoods each have a gerent, a person in charge. There are probably ten gerents in the average district, so in theory, a single gerent might see to the needs of about five thousand citizens. They manage law enforcement, regulation, safety, and resolution of disputes. As they pertain to their specific neighborhood, they make laws, and as they pertain to the whole city, they enforce the will of the Deathless Triumvirate. They're also responsible for taxation and fees, and they make sure to take their share. Most gerents are quite wealthy.

A small group of influential people in each neighborhood usually selects a new gerent when a position needs filling. It's common, however, that family dynasties hold sway, so a retired or dead gerent is often replaced by a daughter or son.

Gerents usually employ their own judges, local police forces, fire brigades, tax collectors, clerks, and so on.

## THE THAH ENFORCERS

The Thah work as self-appointed official public enforcers. They have gold skin and white hair, and they wear red coats, tall black boots, and nothing else. They inflict pain or pleasure with a touch, and many ride inanimate but floating stone horses.

Not human, not thoughtform, no one knows precisely what the Thah are. Some people believe them to be the last remaining arabast. Others think they are physical manifestations of the will of the Deathless Triumvirate (or perhaps the Angular Serpentine). Perhaps they're just created or conjured entities brought here for a purpose.

*It's tempting to compare Satyrine's gerents to the political bosses of the nineteenth century in the U.S. Although there are similarities, the biggest difference is that there are no political parties in Satyrine. It is not a democracy. It might be better to compare the gerents to organized crime bosses, albeit with a slightly stronger whiff of the official.*

*Are the Thah linked to the Angular Serpentine somehow?*

One thing is for certain: you cannot reason with them or ask them questions. As such, they do not investigate crimes (that's for the gerent's people) but instead apprehend criminals in the act and stop those who seek death, destruction, or mayhem.

The Thah appear almost as if from nowhere when trouble makes itself known, but then again, they don't show up every time.

These enforcers are enigmatic to say the least, but the powers that be either tolerate or value them, for their self-appointed authority is nonetheless respected by all quarters. Gerents and their police forces tend to stay out of their way.

## LAWS

Laws are poorly codified in Satyrine. In part, this is because the local gerents make most of the rules, but it's also because throughout the city, laws and crimes are subjective rather than objective. This means that even the worst of crimes can be justified, given the right context. If it sounds like Satyrine is a haven for lawlessness, it's not. Judges and gerents can make rulings capriciously. In fact, if anything, the subjectivity of the law works against criminals more than for them, because if any crime can be justified, any normal act can be vilified. It's difficult for the accused in any crime to prove their innocence, and for every terrible crime justified by circumstance, there is a simple crime given a surprisingly harsh sentence.

Still, most crimes are straightforward. Murder, assault, theft, destruction of property—these are obvious crimes, and laws against them are citywide. Not coincidentally, these are the kinds of crimes that attract the attention of the Thah.

The criminality of other activities, like lying to the authorities, fraud, libel, violating traffic rules, and so on vary from gerent to gerent and thus from neighborhood to neighborhood. And again, since the law is subjective, a judge or gerent might very well sentence or fine an activity for which there are no laws just because it seems appropriate or prudent.

Satyrine doesn't control substances or items, so there are no illegal drugs, and there are no laws

against firearms or other weapons. (Certain gerents might operate differently, but they would be by far the exception, not the rule.) Likewise, activities like gambling or prostitution, illegal in so many places in Shadow, are perfectly legal here. However, conducting any money-making activity or selling goods or services without giving the local gerent their cut is almost certainly illegal. Gambling isn't illegal, then, but running a secret gambling den that's not paying tax to the authorities is.

Although local gerents are both administrator and judge for their neighborhood, Satyrine also has the **Pinnacle Courts**, which oversee important legal proceedings, contested cases, and civil and criminal matters involving the most influential people.

## GETTING AROUND TOWN

Most of the time, traveling from one Satyrine location to another is simple. Most of the districts are small enough for people to easily walk from one place to another. Walking to another district is much more difficult, because in many cases it means traveling through one of the Ruined Expanses, which can be dangerous. Still, most of the paths through the destruction are well used and relatively safe. The longest and most important of Satyrine's streets, known as the Spine, runs the length of the city from southwest to northeast.

Taxicabs are fairly common, and they take many forms. Many are traditional carriages drawn by horses or other such creatures. Some are self-propelled aethyric carriages. Since the return of exiled vislae from Shadow, a fair number of them are, for all appearances, motorized taxicabs, often distinctly from large cities in Shadow from various points in the twentieth century—for example, black London cabs or yellow New York cabs. In most cases, these are **Shadow mementos** brought to Satyrine, but sometimes they are the ghosts of cars seen in Shadow and restored by magical effects. (Private automobiles from such sources are also used, but not quite as commonly.)

*Some rituals can be performed only on the Satyrine Rail, taking a full circuit around the city as an integral part of the ritual itself.*

*Riverriver District, page 85*

*Pinnacle Courts, page 76*



### THE KEY

*Shadow mementos, page 154*

The Satyrine Rail runs through the city, with a station in most districts. The train's track is often elevated, and in places it travels around impossible curves, does spirals and loops, and runs on its side or even upside down. Regardless, passengers within the train experience only a relatively smooth and flat ride. The Satyrine Rail connects with the Indigo Rail system in the **Riverriver District**.

And then, because it's Satyrine, one finds elderbrin that can fly, vislae with levitation spells, and trained or conjured mounts of all kinds, as well as objects of power that provide transport. Some of the law enforcers known as the Thah, for example, regularly ride floating (but not animate) stone statues of horses.

Despite all of this, most inhabitants of the city just walk.

## THE RUINED EXPANSES

Almost half of Satyrine still lies in ruin. Buildings damaged or pulverized by powerful weapons, fire, or rampaging warbeasts sit next to mostly intact structures abandoned when that section of the city was evacuated during the worst portions of the War.

These regions of desolation and neighborhoods of destruction are like stretches of apocalyptic wilderness dividing many of the intact districts. Traveling from one district to another often involves passing through one of the expanses, and doing so can be dangerous.

Explosion craters, empty buildings, partially collapsed structures, soaring mounds of rubble, debris-choked streets that create dead ends, and more kinds of wreckage fill the expanses. In some areas, plants have overgrown the ruins. Others are lifeless without a hint of green. Some areas are flooded while others are as dry as a desert.

In some expanses, paths have been cleared through the rubble, or simply blazed through and over the wreckage, to facilitate travel across the ruin. But make no mistake—these locales are not yet reclaimed. They are dangerous and unpredictable for many reasons. The architecture is unstable,



brigands and thieves make their lairs there, and creatures like ratgoblins and **roachgoblins** lurk around every corner. Ghosts of those killed in **the War** roam the streets. But more than that, the Hate Cysts are still quite active.

One strange effect of the cysts is the oppressive gloom that hangs over the ruins. No matter the weather or season elsewhere in the city, entering one of the Ruined Expanses brings on an almost cave-like atmosphere. Many people think of the ruins as being underground and even describe the grey ceiling overhead, though there is no literal truth to it.

Walking through the ruins, one finds the rubble-choked streets and empty piazzas unsettlingly quiet, even in a city as sedate as Satyrine.

## HATE CYSTS

Hate Cysts are the remnants of the terrible weapons unleashed in the War. Like malignant tumors, they spread if left unchecked. They hide in the ruins of their own making, so that they can spread their influence secretly.

Every cyst is different. Some have a sentience all their own, while others seem to be raw emotion and pure power fused together in the worst of ways. Reports of those who have encountered them directly vary, but accounts include diseased, organic masses as large as a small building, swirling holes of darkness, or fluctuating nodes of destructive energies. They're often buried in rubble, but sometimes they lie within the empty shells of ruined buildings or underground, beneath the wreckage above.

Most often, Hate Cysts aren't seen at all—only their effects. Some of the crimes against nature that the cysts perpetrate include:

- + inducing terrifying hallucinations or nightmares
- + spawning horrific **monstrosities**
- + influencing or even controlling minds to commit heinous acts
- + mutating creatures into deformed beings
- + unleashing diseases and curses

*Roachgoblins, page 132*

*The War, page 65*

*Cyst spawn, page 128*



THE SATYRINE RAIL

The **Deathless Triumvirate** offers a standing bounty of 100 gem **orbs** for proof of the destruction of a Hate Cyst, with the idea that once a cyst is removed, that portion of the Ruined Expanse can be reclaimed and rebuilt. (Attempting to do so with a cyst still present and active leads only to death and dismay.)

## THE 17 DISTRICTS

Each district has its own flavor and feel, sometimes startlingly different from each other. Some, like the Marquis Quarter or the Strangeglass District, are not very different than they were before the War. Others, like the Reinvention, are basically new from top to bottom.

The 17 districts of Satyrine are as follows:

**The Marquis Quarter:** Center of the city, where all the government buildings are located and the very richest of the rich live.

**The Strangeglass District:** A commercial district home to all manner of businesses and shops, offering both goods and services.

**Rivenhome:** A mostly lower-class residential district.

**Lower Taverswood:** A mostly middle-class residential district.

**The Brickhouse District:** A mostly upper-class residential district.

**The Palindrome:** A district of parks, libraries, and museums.

**Zardim:** A mostly residential district known for its origami buildings.

**The Topiary District:** A mostly residential district known for its topiary sculpture and buildings.

**The Reinvention:** A district known for theaters and organizational headquarters.

**Riveriver:** A mostly residential district running along the banks of a large river.

**Confederacy of Cloisters:** A district filled with temples, shrines, monasteries, and other religious sites.

**The Fade:** A lonely, quiet district located on floating “islands” in the Abstraction.

*Deathless Triumvirate,*  
page 65



### THE KEY

*Orbs, page 181*

*Quiet Lake, page 89*

*The Undersling, page 90*

*Fartown, page 92*

*The Celestial Bazaar,*  
page 92

*The Hollows, page 94*

*The Strangeglass District,*  
page 77

*Rivenhome, page 78*

*Lower Taverswood, page 79*

*The Brickhouse District,*  
page 80

*Ubara, page 103*

*The Palindrome, page 81*

*Zardim, page 82*

*The Topiary District,*  
page 84

*The Reinvention, page 84*

*Riveriver, page 85*

*Confederacy of Cloisters,*  
page 86

*The Fade, page 88*

**Quiet Lake:** A mostly residential district built on islands in a lake.

**The Undersling:** An underground district of warriors, criminals, and others dedicated to violence.

**Fartown:** A district catering almost exclusively to vislae.

**The Celestial Bazaar:** A commercial district that is essentially one large market.

**The Hollows:** A barely reclaimed district, home to the lowest and poorest of the city, as well as a substantial criminal element.

It's worth noting that Fartown and the Celestial Bazaar aren't technically in the same physical space as the rest of the city. Each is their own discrete half-world.

## THE MARQUIS QUARTER

Large and centrally located, the Marquis Quarter is the seat of power in Satyrine. If the city were a palace, the Marquis Quarter would be the throne. If it were a body, this quarter would be the head.

Here, the buildings rise high above the wide streets. Marble steps and columns are everywhere. Well-cared-for parks and plazas stretch out throughout the district, many filled with enormous statues or other monuments. Thoughtforms keep the streets free of trash and keep the shamlights lit.

But it's not just government buildings and official offices here. The Marquis Quarter is where the city's wealthiest and most influential residents live. It's where you'll find the very finest (and most expensive) shops and restaurants.

Unlike every other district, the Marquis Quarter is not divided into neighborhoods run by gerents. Instead, the Deathless Triumvirate and their representatives control the entire district directly. This includes large numbers of their personal troops, called Defenders, who wear golden armor and faceless, mirrored helmets.

The Emotion Mills Consortium has its main office here.

## GAMEMASTERING SATYRINE

The PCs are very likely to spend a great deal of time in Satyrine, particularly at the beginning of the narrative. It's where their homes (most likely) are, and initial arcs and plots probably involve the goings-on there. Satyrine is where new players can learn what it means to be a vislae by seeing other NPC vislae, and they can do so in relatively safe and somewhat understandable surroundings. (I hesitate to say "normal," because Satyrine is not normal.) Thus, use that "starting point" nature to your advantage. Portray NPC vislae doing vislae things. Have the PCs discover Zero's. You can let them in on a lot of information about the city, but it's far better to show than tell. Show them a criminal running afoul of the Thah. Show them a somewhat dangerous pathway between two districts leading through the Ruined Expanses. Let them find their way to the Celestial Bazaar if they need goods. Have them get invited to a high-society party in the Marquis Quarter after witnessing the darker regions of the Hollows or Rivenhome.

Below are the basics you need to portray Satyrine in mood and feeling rather than in specific detail.

- + If you're coming from running or playing other roleplaying games, Satyrine is filled with magic, but it isn't a fantasy city. People don't talk in Elizabethan English. They're as likely to gather at a restaurant or a train station as a tavern. Only rarely would you see someone carrying a sword, and a gun is far more common than a crossbow.
- + Satyrine isn't modern-day Earth, either. There are no smartphones, big box stores, or fast food restaurants.
- + If you must start with a real-world analog to get your footing, choose New York City in the early 1920s. There are animal-drawn vehicles as well as motorized ones, but most people walk to get where they need to go. They go to plays and dance halls for fun. A few listen to the radio. People shop in open markets for their groceries. Common items are a mixture of handmade goods and those produced in small factories. At the same time, don't worry about the 1920s. It isn't the 1920s, but something totally different. The analog is just a starting point.
- + Skin color, gender, and sexuality are not reasons to judge anyone else. That said, while racism and sexism aren't worth thinking about here, there is an "ism" from Shadow that is prevalent, and that's classism. High-class aristocrats who probably inherited their wealth look down on the working classes. Vislae are interesting because, due to their talents, they exist almost outside the standard class hierarchies (this is also true of artists of various kinds).
- + Magic isn't weird to the people of Satyrine. Not everyone is a vislae, but if you are bewildered by the very idea of magic, you're the odd one, not the spellcaster. That means magic is not unexpected. People know the ubara they're drinking was made via magic, and don't find that surprising or shocking.
- + Emotions and ideas are currency in Satyrine. If you want to be happy, inspired, or just relaxed, you can buy those emotions or ideas. For some, it can be addicting. Which is unfortunate because they're expensive. Poetry can sustain you like food. People argue over philosophy. Thoughts matter in Satyrine in very literal ways.
- + The War hangs over the city like a dark cloud that won't ever fully clear. You're never far from an utterly ruined part of town, and that means danger. There just aren't that many people left. The city's population must be around an eighth of what it once was. Streets are empty. There's a feeling of aloneness that intensifies when you realize that even the people around you might not be real, but thoughtforms.
- + Things can get quite surreal, particularly in Fartown. A god might drop by. Turn the wrong corner and you could end up in a temporary half-world. Suddenly everyone in a three-block section of town can talk only in rhyme for an hour. There are keyfalls. Houses suddenly sprout spider legs. It's an odd place to spend time. But unlike the realms of the other suns, the bouts of surreality are contrasted with mostly "normal" things.



## LOCATIONS IN THE MARQUIS QUARTER

**The Pinnacle Courts:** Tall glass spires rise above even the large buildings of the Marquis Quarter, representing the highest and most powerful court in the city. The judges here report directly to the Deathless Triumvirate and hear only the cases involving people and issues of the greatest import.

**The Pale Embassy:** Known just as often as the Dead Embassy, this is where those working directly for **Empress Xjallad** regulate travel to and from the Pale and monitor the activities of the Dead in the city. It's important to understand that the embassy claims no jurisdiction over ghosts, who have never moved on to the Pale.

People wishing to visit the Pale must come to the embassy and obtain a visa first. This is a byzantine process of filling out forms and talking to administrators. Everyone working in the embassy is dead. The head of the embassy is the **Ambassador** (no other name), although she is rarely present. Instead, **Minister Horan** oversees most of the day-to-day operations, including administering the hunt for escaped wraiths.

**The Skytower:** Hanging above the Marquis Quarter like a needle (or, more ominously, like a dangling knife), the Skytower is a massive structure 3,000 feet (900 m) tall that floats another 1,000 feet (300 m) above the ground. Most of it holds incredibly expensive apartments, but it is also used as offices for some of the particularly large and affluent businesses in the city. It's also where the Deathless Triumvirate live.

**The Magniloquent Moth:** An expensive and elegant dining experience with unique dishes. Culinary artiste and gourmet conjurer **Salinday** is well known throughout the district for his incredible creations.

**The Obscure Palace:** A gorgeous palace of marble and bronze rises above the ruins, as if the weapons used in the War could not affect it in any way. More legend than anything else, this place is said to be the home of mysterious beings that only grant audience to those that intrigue them. Those that call this place home involve themselves in all sorts of Satyrine matters, but attempt to do so quietly.

**Minister Aug Fullan:** level 5; -1 Dodge, +3 Resist; +3 social interaction

*Empress Xjallad, page 54*

**Therrest YiGanna:** level 6; +4 Dodge, +2 Resist; +3 knowledge

**The Spirit Gaoler:** level 9; +1 Withstand, +2 Dodge, +4 Resist; vislae with many spells, including those involving capturing and restraining physical and spiritual entities, +4 spellcasting

**The Ambassador:** level 9; +4 Resist; +3 social interaction

**Minister Horan:** level 7; +2 Resist; +1 social interaction

*Rumor has it that the Ambassador loves to partake in the pleasures of the living world perhaps a bit too much.*

**Salinday:** level 8; +3 Withstand, +3 Resist; +4 cooking; zilat food conjurer

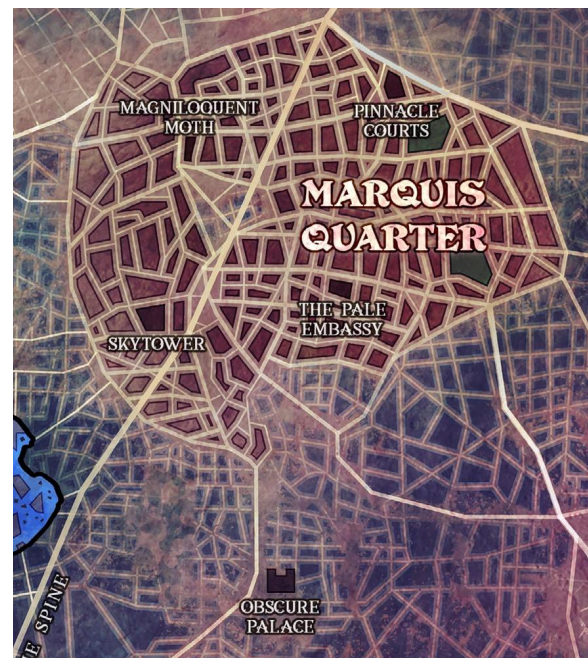
*A menu for the Magniloquent Moth can be found in the handouts envelope.*

## PEOPLE IN THE MARQUIS QUARTER

**Minister Aug Fullan:** Ancient and unable to walk on her own, the Minister of Public Works rides in a circular sedan chair carried by huge, brutish thoughtforms wherever she goes. Minister Fullan's responsibilities include the reclamation of the Ruined Expanses in the city. She and her staff recruit people who are willing and able to deal with the Hate Cysts and the dangers they spawn to root out and cleanse the city of that corruption.

**Therrest YiGanna:** Claiming to be a native of some other world, Therrest says that his people can smell the future, determining what is yet to come by the odors around them. He does seem uncannily informed. Strangely, Therrest works as head librarian in the Temple of the Past, the city's greatest historical and legal library.

**The Spirit Gaoler:** Rumors abound regarding this vislae, but the only thing that anyone knows for certain relates to his striking appearance—energy tendrils extend from his eyes, each holding a struggling, captive spirit. He speaks in riddles, making abrupt appearances in high-class establishments and then disappearing soon after.



## THE MAGISTERIUM'S COURT AND THE LABYRINTH

Hidden by both clever placement and crafty spells, the Magisterium's Court—the meeting place of all thirteen keepers of the secret soul allegiances—lies within the Marquis Quarter. These people are not the secret Soul Guardians, all of whom are mystic, quasi-godlike beings. No, the keepers are mortals, each the head of the organization that represents the agents of that soul. Confusingly, each keeper is addressed by the secret soul title—the Silver Star, the Old Man, the Child, and so on—which makes it seem even more like they are the actual Soul Guardian. Some play up that confusion, while others downplay it. A few—the current Old Man, Hammer, and Abyss—all outright claim to either be the actual guardian or be possessed human hosts for the guardian of their soul. (And maybe one or more of them is telling the truth. Stranger things have happened.)

Each member of the Magisterium has a retinue of agents and assistants, all, of course, with the same soul. And each soul's allegiance organization has its own secret base of operations in Satyrine, many of which lie hidden within the Ruined Expanses. They are spread throughout the city. This means that to talk directly, the Magisterium must gather in their hidden court.

Its appearance on the outside is obfuscated, but within the court is a vast circular structure with columns and thirteen throne-like seats. No agents or servants are allowed in—only the Magisterium members themselves. A small group of thoughtforms, each of which has the appearance of a human with a massive pyramid for a head, maintains and guards the court.

Meetings are very rare. They occur in one of two situations. First is when a threat arises that gains the attention of all thirteen souls, which happens perhaps only once or twice in a lifetime. The more common—but still quite rare—event is that a vislae wishes to enter the Labyrinth. Entrance can be gained only through action of all thirteen members of the Magisterium.

The Labyrinth represents the pinnacle of magical power, skill, and knowledge. Successfully passing through the Labyrinth allows a vislae to reach a new understanding of reality in ways that are not fully understood. What the Labyrinth actually is—a literal maze, a magical crucible, some sort of mystical transcendence, or something incomprehensible to most people—is not known. Everyone who enters the Labyrinth disappears forever. It's assumed that most die. Or worse. (Considering that the Magisterium is involved, complete and utter soul destruction is a possibility.)

Getting the Magisterium to gather to grant access to the Labyrinth is extraordinarily difficult. Figuring out how to do so and accomplishing it is what keeps out all but those truly worthy of an attempt at the Labyrinth. Whatever the method, it involves knowledge, understanding, diplomacy, extremely rare rituals, secrets, and a very high level of magical might. But all that merely gains one the opportunity to enter the Labyrinth. Conceivably, the trials faced within are far greater.

## THE STRANGEGLOSS DISTRICT

Crowded streets. Sometimes such a thing is rare in Satyrine, but not in Strangeglass.

Strangeglass serves primarily as a commercial district. In particular, the emotion and thought trade for which Satyrine is so known is conducted primarily in Strangeglass.

Hundreds of businesses and services are based here, and many of the people who work here live in the district as well. It's also the location of many factories and light industrial work (refineries, smelting, and so on). Whether you're looking for a lawyer, an assayer, an accountant, a metal lattice, or

just a nice new pair of shoes, Strangeglass likely has what you're looking for.

## LOCATIONS IN THE STRANGEGLOSS DISTRICT

**Office of the Emotion Mills Consortium:** This massive building looks more like a palace than an office building. It serves as the headquarters of all businesses having to do with the creation, transportation, and sales distribution of emotions. All Consortium business is conducted within these walls. The Consortium employs a private security staff that is like their own small army, and they are based here.

*Strangeglass, Rivenhome, Riveriver, and the Confederacy of Cloisters all form what is colloquially called "the Lower Third," meaning (erroneously) that these four districts make up about a third of the city.*



**Kallie's:** One of the best-known prosodies, Kallie's caters to the businesspeople of Strangeglass as well as to poetry fans who come from other districts to enjoy the verbal treats offered here.

**Tomasa Services:** Located in a large office building, Tomasa Services offers thoughtform creation and assignment to businesses and individuals. Tomasa keeps accurate records of all their transactions, so they probably have a more complete accounting of the thoughtforms in Satyrine than anyone else.

**Hall of Honed Thought:** Headquarters of the **Order of Honed Thought**. This long, low building with an elaborate entrance is marked by an acheiropoietia said to have seeped from the dream of a sleeping god. Members are to recite the mantra of honed thought before entering. True to its current nature as a social club, the hall is mostly just a firelit, members-only bar. Some offices and the like remain in the back.

**Venures:** A dance hall playing big band tunes six nights a week. The band leader **Edmund Sayers** plays the piano here. Every time his fingers touch the keys, magical lights, sparks, and streams flare from the piano.

**Kudash:** level 7; +2 defenses; +3 social interaction

*The neighborhood of the Hall of Honed Thought is called Calamera because so many of the buildings are dark brown and calamera is a popular type of coffee in Satyrine.*

**Varan:** level 6; +3 defenses; -2 social interaction, +4 to find and identify spirits; banishes spirits

**Niabo Curtan:** level 6; +2 Resist; +3 law, +1 social interaction

*Order of Honed Thought, page 118*

**Edmund Sayers:** level 5; +2 Resist; +4 music, +1 social interaction

## PEOPLE IN THE STRANGEGLOSS DISTRICT

**Kudash:** This wealthy businessman was once gerent of his neighborhood. He's retired from that role and lives in a mansion with his wife and two children. Now he specializes in procuring extraordinarily rare substances from other suns and bringing them to the city.

**Varan:** Varan is a young zilat prodigy specializing in exorcism. What he lacks in social skills he makes up for in knowledge and intelligence. Varan's gum-chewing elderbrin assistant, Mourm, carries all his gear and does the menial labor portion of each job.

**Niabo Curtan:** A lawyer working from a high office in a glistening building in Strangeglass, Niabo specializes in vislae law.

## RIVENHOME

Oppressive grey buildings loom. Staircases lead to nowhere. Archways give way to empty courtyards. Windows face blank walls. Most people would describe Rivenhome with the word "grim." Its role is primarily residential. Its entirety has been reclaimed from the Ruined Expanses. As a district, it did not exist before the War. Thus, all the buildings are new or extensively refurbished. But you almost couldn't tell.

Mostly the working lower class dwells in Rivenhome, and it's not generally regarded as a happy place. The new buildings are somber, and—particularly strange for Satyrine—show little variance from each other. Grey stone slabs make up tall tenements, and wide, straight roads are grim, decorated only with the occasional War monument dedicated to the fallen and the lost in angular, violent, and surreal representations.

Crime is commonplace in Rivenhome, which is ironic, as the gerents have extensive police forces, but understandable because these forces are the epitome of corruption and graft.





## LOCATIONS IN RIVENHOME

**The Bone Pit:** Although there are cemeteries in Rivenhome, the Bone Pit is a more common place to inter the dead. Corpses are lowered with ceremony into this extremely deep pit, its sides lined with ledges and niches filled with bones and skulls. Rumors abound that there are *things* living in the pit that feed on the corpses placed there. While one would expect perhaps ratgoblins or roachgoblins, many people believe them to be something far worse. No one knows how deep the pit goes.

**Trypa:** This huge structure is a large tenement building with thousands of hole-like windows in its almost organic-looking exterior walls. Those who live here, speaking with dark cynicism, call their homes pods or eggs and refer to themselves and the other residents as worms or insects.

**The Oracle Stairs:** A staircase consisting of 444 steps doubles back on itself multiple times, providing access to a higher portion of the district. A ritualized means of climbing the stairs involving the exact speed one takes to reach the top and the movements made and words spoken while doing so is said to provide the climber with some truth about the near future.

**The Ash Gardens:** Young children toil in these expansive enclosures, forming *glass orbs* to be used for currency. The children roll the orbs from ash in a secretive process, and fill them with minor thoughts and ideas.

## PEOPLE IN RIVENHOME

**Zdekis Slowinsk:** One of the gerents in Rivenhome, Zdekis is notable because he is not human but a spirit of oppression. Most people don't know this—they believe him to be a reclusive male human. It would seem that in addition to his goals as a gerent, he seeks to engender a feeling of grim oppression in others.

**Maralli the Finch:** A self-appointed defender of the downtrodden, Maralli is an Apostate operating in secret throughout Rivenhome. She attempts to bring food and other assistance to the poorest



### THE KEY

Glass orbs, page 181

**The Half God:** level 16; can sustain 8 Injuries per Wound and 8 Wounds; various powers, all subtle

**Zdekis Slowinsk:** level 14; +2 defenses; +3 social interaction; magically crushes wills, forcing victims to do his bidding

**Maralli:** level 8; +3 defenses; +3 stealth; vislae with many spells, including effects such as telepathy, invisibility, counterspelling, walking through walls, inducing sleep and forgetfulness, +4 spellcasting

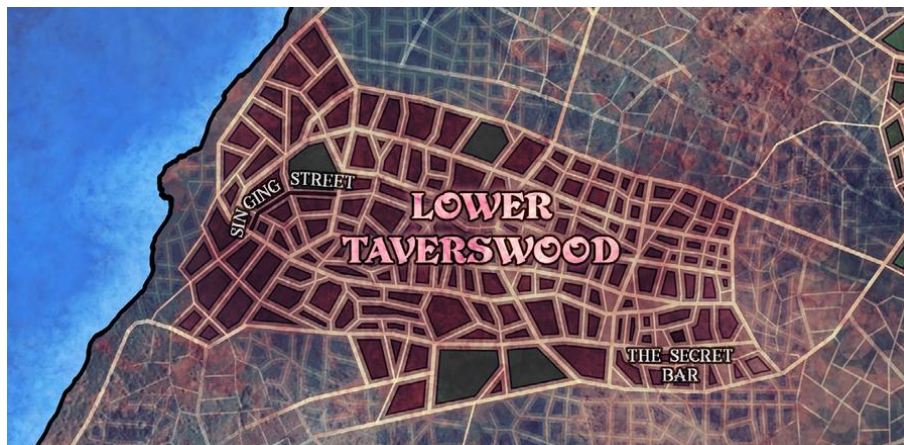
families in the district and works against the forces of both the criminals and the corrupt officials there.

**The Half God:** The Half God is not a demigod but a god that was torn in half in battle. Some say this happened during the War, but that might be apocryphal. It's likely that it happened much longer ago. Now the Half God wanders the streets of Rivenhome or stands in the shadows, watching silently. Most people consider an encounter with him to be a bad omen.

## LOWER TAVERSWOOD

Everyone always forgets about Lower Taverswood. Most people can name sixteen of the 17 districts in the city, but no one seems to remember this one. Not because it's secret, but because it's generally unremarkable.

No one knows how this district originally got its name. There is no "Upper Taverswood." A local joke is that there used to be, but it got bored and left.



Lower Taverswood is green with trees and lovely little paved stone paths.

## LOCATIONS IN LOWER TAVERSWOOD

**The Secret Bar:** Like a secret society, the patrons of the Secret Bar swear in a mysterious ceremony to keep the place's location and nature to themselves. The owner is **Chirasda**, a stooped woman with feathers and the head of a parrot.

**The Singing Street:** Each cobblestone in one street in the district produces a musical note when touched, so that as one walks along, music plays. It's not always pleasant.

## PEOPLE IN LOWER TAVERSWOOD

**Lieutenant Fisk:** A veteran of the War, **Fisk** is an older man with a haunted look. Bringing up the War is likely to trigger strange effects in him, and he begins to babble about battles and death, but none of it makes any sense. Weirdly, those listening to Fisk see vivid images in their mind's eye of what he's saying, but no two listeners seem to see anything close to the same thing.

## THE BRICKHOUSE DISTRICT

A stable, sturdy neighborhood of large, expensive homes, most quite old but usually well maintained, the Brickhouse District lives up to its name in the most obvious way possible. The streets of this

*Frequently seen Satyrine graffiti: I exist! Validate me!*

### THE WAY

*Eggor, page 42*

**Chirasda:** level 6; +2 defenses; +3 stealth

**Jason Wells:** level 3

**Fisk:** level 7; +3 Withstand, +2 Dodge, +3 Resist

*Common wisdom says that no one speaks of the War because doing so attracts unwanted attention from the Hate Cysts.*

*Xan Weir, page 115*

**The Cuckoo:** level 11; +3 defenses; +1 attacks

affluent residential district are brick as well.

The typical Brickhouse home has an equally expansive yard and is girded by a brick wall. The district also has a number of large brick apartment buildings and complexes, mainly for housing university students.

## LOCATIONS IN THE BRICKHOUSE DISTRICT

**Empiternal University:** The campus of this large university spreads out in the Brickhouse District, its many buildings fitting the aesthetic nicely. Here, students study literature, mathematics, history, philosophy, sociology, and the natural world. More than three thousand students are enrolled in a typical term.

An ancient campus **egregor** watches over and helps maintain the university in various ways. The students refer to it as "the Misty Mind" or sometimes "the Misty Man."

**Heart's Hearth:** An expensive but lovely restaurant, Heart's Hearth serves comforting food that is well prepared. The interior is dimly lit by flickering flames, and the place generally smells of rosemary and sage. People are often surprised to realize that it is owned and operated by **Jason Wells**, a sapient shadow who escaped Shadow a few years ago and has adapted to Satyrine quite well.

**The Flowing Road:** This road is paved with bricks like the others in the district. However, its bricks seem to possess some kind of intelligence, and they tend to rearrange themselves so that the road leads to different locations, moves altogether, or becomes a staircase rather than a street.

**The Masked House:** This large, slightly dilapidated house serves as headquarters for the **Xan Weir**. Here, members craft masks and interact in social events where anyone is welcome, assuming they wear a mask.

## PEOPLE OF THE BRICKHOUSE DISTRICT

**The Cuckoo:** An angel that has lived among humans for so long that it has taken on many





human characteristics, the Cuckoo is a recluse. Its real name is unknown, but most suspect that its secret activities are clandestine at best.

**Marti Black and Edward Zane:** This married couple works as writers of history and fiction. Their successful joint career has resulted in well over a hundred titles.

**Llaural:** Gerent of the Brickhouse neighborhood known as Wandering Corners, Llaural is a wealthy investor who is known for her striking wardrobe and her integrity.

## PALINDROME

It's the same going out as it was going in, they say, and it's true. Thanks to huge walls and other structures, you can enter this district without difficulty only from the southeast or the northwest. When you walk from one end to the other and reach the halfway point traveling in either direction, you end up passing by everything you've already passed, but in reverse order. So from one perspective, a certain museum might be east of a particular theater but also west of it.

Parks, libraries, museums, and theaters fill the Palindrome. Well-maintained streets and bright,

shamlight-illuminated plazas make it one of the quieter, safer, and more serene of the districts. It's not uncommon to see wealthy and upper-class citizens strolling down its tree-lined avenues.

Very few people live in the Palindrome, but it is usually busy with people coming and going from other districts.

## LOCATIONS IN THE PALINDROME

**The Silent Church:** An imposing, cold, and somewhat lonely structure of glass and stone, this church rarely has many people in or around it. On the lintel above the door, an engraving reads, "She is Gone. But Her Legacy remains." The Silent Church is the one temple of the Legacy (or rather, of the creator who left the Legacy) in the city, and one of the few in the Actuality.

The forces of the Legacy do not seek worship—they value understanding. Thus, no prayers or hymns break the silence of the church here. Instead, this is a place of contemplation and deep thinking.

Sometimes angels stand outside the church and weep, but they never enter.

**Garden of Ofilm:** A walled garden said to hold plants from every sun's realm, the Garden of Ofilm also contains the Forty Apodictic Faces of Wisdom. These are large, carved stone monoliths, each bearing a humanlike face in the center. Each one possesses its own intelligence, but it is difficult to rouse them. People come to the garden to beseech the faces for advice, but only rarely do they get what they came for.

**The Winding Gallery:** This art museum looks a bit like a corkscrew from the outside. Inside, the entire structure is a curving, seemingly never-ending hall filled with artwork. Every painting in this gallery holds a secret. Some of the paintings are haunted, some cursed. Others are intelligent or enchanted, or they show important locations of power or treasure, if only someone could find them.

**Pyramids of Glass:** Rows of dozens of these pyramids fill a large park near the center of the district. Each pyramid contains a tree from a

**Marti Black and Edward Zane:** level 4; +1 Dodge, +1 Resist; +2 knowledge

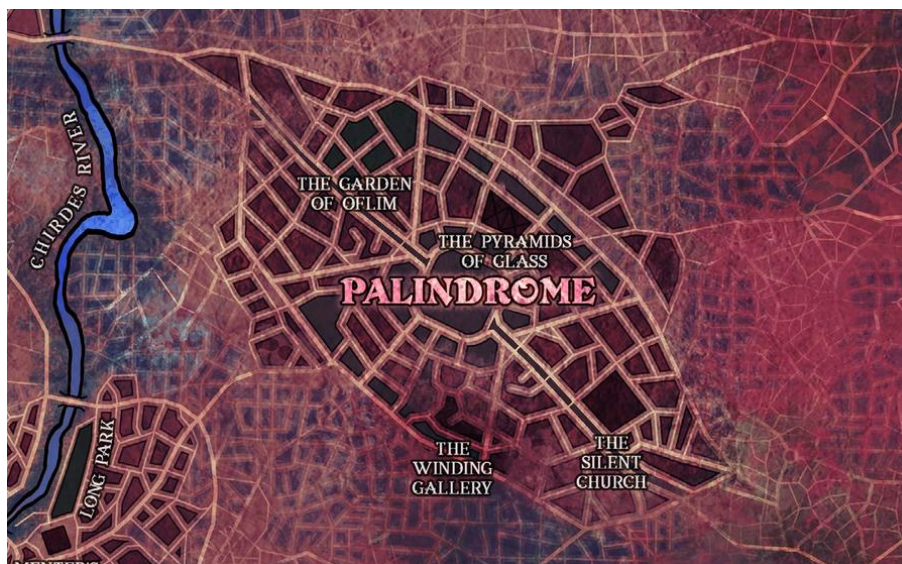
**Llaural:** level 6; +1 defenses; +2 social interaction

*Frequently seen Satyrine graffiti: We are everywhere.*



*It's dangerous to slip souvenirs out of the Secret Bar.*





different dead half-world, preserved within the last remnants of the atmosphere of its home. Each bears a bronze plate commemorating the original home of the tree and providing some basic facts about it.

### PEOPLE OF THE PALINDROME

**Tinata and Corian:** Using magic, Tinata arrested the physical development of her child before it was born. As such, Corian, her daughter, has been within Tinata for eighteen years. The two can communicate in a telepathic fashion, and Corian serves as an advisor for her vislae mother. The child is a zilat seer, able to predict the future. However, because Tinata is a very large woman, no one has ever known that she was “with child.” Tinata lives in a set of hidden underground chambers below one of the Pyramids of Glass.

**Chalamadan:** This elderbrin serves as head curator at the Museum of Natural Beauty. Like most of their people, Chalamadan takes a different form nearly every day, but each one always incorporates a cube—a cube-shaped head, a cube-shaped chest, a cube-shaped hand, and so on. Chalamadan seeks rare natural finds from throughout the Actuality to display in the museum.

**Tinata/Corian:** level 10; +2 defenses; +2 knowledge and stealth; vislae with many spells, with effects such as telepathy, divination, improving defenses, and charming others, +5 spellcasting

*Urgalic steel is a deep blue metal mined in Indigo.*

**Chalamadan:** level 6; +1 defenses; +2 searching

## ZARDIM

Zardim is known for its origami buildings, many of which have no foundation and are simply tethered so that the wind does not move them too far. Still, most of the structures here are more conventional.

Sometimes called the Crafter’s District, Zardim is where many people ply their trade by making things. Artisans craft goods from glass, gold, silver, leather, paper, stone, water, fire, and other materials.

Zardim has also attracted a fair number of poets and musicians.

### LOCATIONS IN ZARDIM

**The Kite Tower:** Although the lightweight nature of the origami buildings means that the wind can move or topple them easily (and thus they are secured to the ground with cables), this is never more apparent than with the Kite Tower. This origami structure is designed to catch the wind in massive sails. It frequently rises 30 feet (9 m) or more in the air, and then comes back down. Within the Kite Tower, a visitor will find a popular restaurant, a variety of shops, and a few private offices.

**The Gheyal:** Not so much a location as an encounter, the Gheyal is a 100-foot (30 m) statue of stone and urgalic steel thought to date back to the arabast. It depicts a huge being, vaguely humanoid, with six arms and crossed legs. Most notably, however, the Gheyal moves around Zardim, floating a few feet off the ground, occasionally pausing for three or four minutes before moving again. It always takes the same winding, convoluted path, and since it’s older than any portion of the district, no one’s ever built anything to block its movements (attempts to do so have always failed). Instead of fighting it, the people of Zardim have embraced it. They climb aboard and ride it like a form of reliable public transportation. There are always a dozen or more passengers wherever the Gheyal goes, some riding on an arm or its lap, while others perch on wooden platforms people have affixed to its sides.

**Imyasis:** The only erotic prosody in the city, Imyasis does not sate appetites for food, but for sex.





Those who leave after enjoying the sexually charged poetry recited nightly feel gratified, their needs (whatever they may be) met.

**The Paper Piers:** Akin to many of the buildings here, a wharf of paper piers and docks provides strange purchase for incoming ships. Most ship captains prefer the **Seagate Docks** in Riveriver, but the more whimsical come here, as do those bringing goods bound for the businesses located in Zardim, the Hollows, or Lower Taverswood (which is not all that many).

### PEOPLE IN ZARDIM

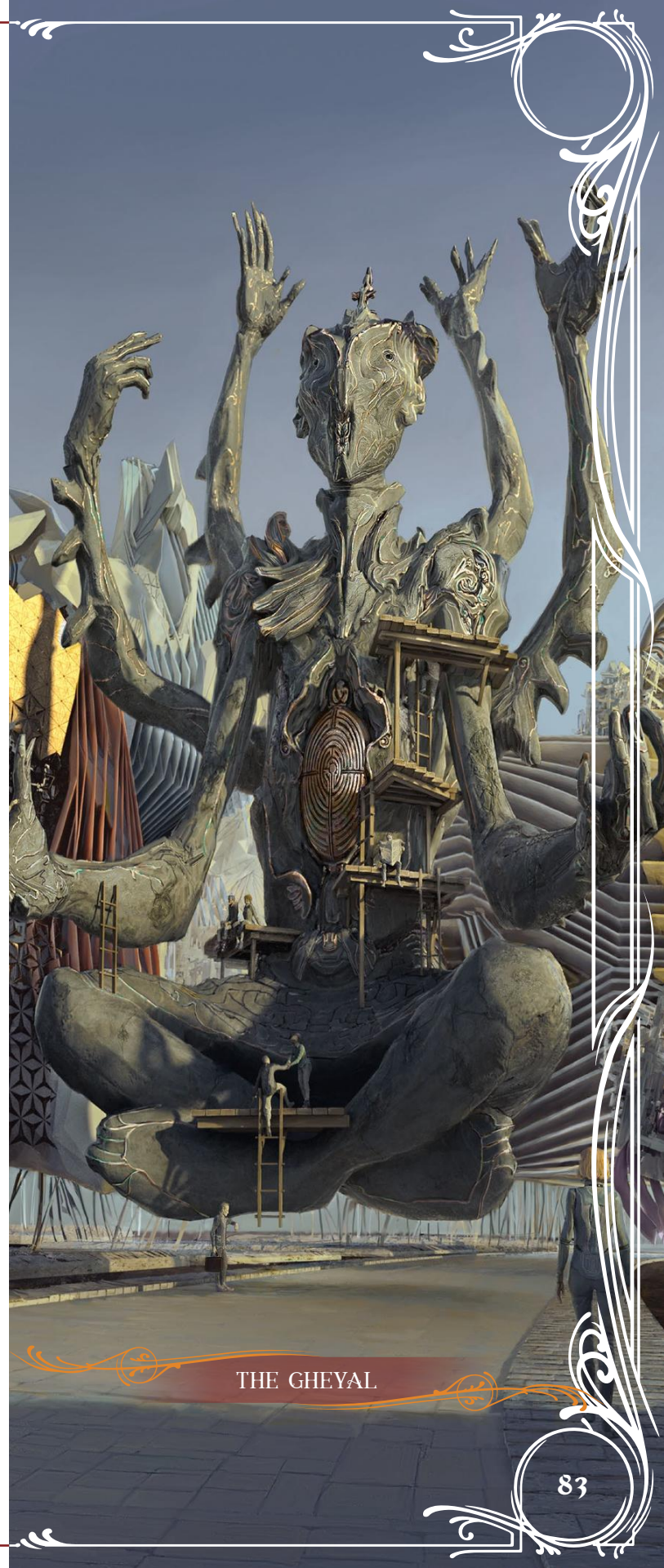
**Cadge the Seer:** A zilat seer of great skill, Cadge uses the Sooth Deck to tell fortunes and prewise the future. People of influence and power throughout the city visit Cadge to gain her oracles, but she is just as happy plying her craft on behalf of the common folk as well. She dresses provocatively but has absolutely no interest in sex or romance.

**Lavender:** A crafter of glass, crystal, and the ghosts of melted ice, Lavender is a composite entity of two fused sisters. She refers to herself as a single individual and looks like a typical woman, except that she has two faces about 45 degrees apart. Both personalities shine through Lavender, and they are quite different, giving her a manic-depressive reputation.

*Seagate Docks, page 86*

**Cadge the Seer:** level 7; +3  
*Resist; sees the future*

**Lavender:** level 5; +1  
*defenses; +2 crafting*



THE GHEYAL



## THE TOPIARY DISTRICT

Also known as the Verdant Quarter or the Virescent District, the Topiary District is filled with bushes and trees. As the name suggests, though, they've all been trimmed to take on various shapes. Entire houses, buildings, and complexes of buildings are carved from hedges, with functioning (but living) swinging doors, staircases, furnishings, and more.

### LOCATIONS IN THE TOPIARY DISTRICT

**Carver's Street:** The locals call this road Spiderhaunt Street. Here, the fabric of space wears thin, and you can see through to some unknowable elsewhere, where titanic spiders spin colossal webs. They can see you as well and lunge down, hoping to trap you in their silken mesh, but they can no more touch you than you could them. Specters of spiders, then, forever hunt pedestrian prey, unable to ever catch them. Scryers and diviners have attempted to locate the mysterious otherworld where the monstrous spiders dwell, but no one has yet succeeded.

**Tollisberry Park:** With its fluttering, steam-powered birds and skittering, jewel-eyed squirrels, this is, by most estimations, the "park of parks." Literally thousands of topiary sculptures decorate a hundred acres of parkland with animals, monsters, heroes, villains, and entire historical and literary scenes displayed.

**Garver's Cafe:** Garver is a self-aware tree that owns and runs this cafe, and physically makes up

*Garver may or may not be an elderbrin in the shape of a tree.*

**Slipping Jack:** level 7; +3 defenses; +4 stealth and social interaction

**Kwamil:** level 4; +2 Dodge, +2 Resist; +4 knowledge; can sustain 2 Injuries per Wound and 2 Wounds; vislae with some spells, +2 spellcasting

**Therai Capthine:** level 4; +3 knowledge

*A menu for Garver's Cafe can be found in the handouts envelope.*

at least half of it. Garver identifies as female and is chatty, welcoming, and pleasant. With animate branches, she cooks and serves at the same time.

### PEOPLE OF THE TOPIARY DISTRICT

**Slipping Jack:** A grifter, thief, and con man, Jack is not a human at all, but a human shell filled with spiders who control his every move, word, and gesture with near flawlessness. It's only if Jack's ever injured that anyone might discover his true nature. Slipping Jack (as he's known among grifter friends) very likely has motives beyond that of just lying and stealing, but if so, he has never revealed them.

**Kwamil:** Kwamil is just nine years old, and he's already a skilled vislae and 1st-degree Vance. He lives in the Topiary with his parents but travels to Fartown at least once a week. He is a genius, with the ability to remember everything he reads, hears, or otherwise experiences, seemingly forever.

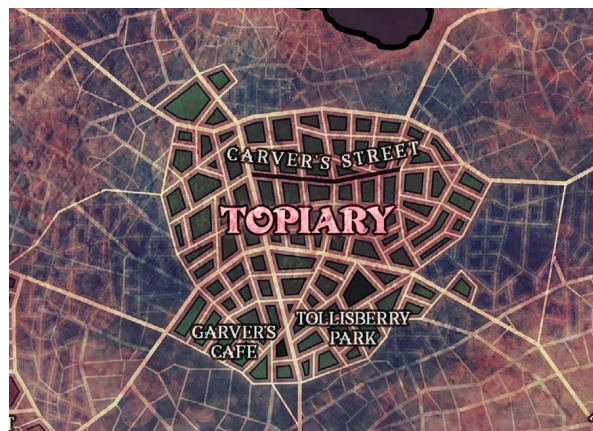
Kwamil collects people's names (by memorizing them) and associates them with their mother's name, forming a portmanteau of his own creation that combines both. He claims that he has about nine thousand of these.

**Therai Capthine:** Therai helps supervise the legion of thoughtform workers that trim and shape some of the topiary in the district. As such, no one likely knows the area as well as she does, both in terms of layout and in terms of past and current events. For the price of a bottle of apple whiskey or lunch at Garver's Cafe, Therai often will share what she knows.

## THE REINVENTION

When this area was reclaimed after the War, it was nothing but ruin. The Hate Cysts had been found and cleared, but nothing remained to salvage. Those in power decided that this was an opportunity, not a tragedy, and called it a new beginning. They dubbed the area the Reinvention, for reinventing the district is exactly what they were doing.

Someone involved had access to vast amounts of money, because the Reinvention is a dramatic







display of limitless imagination. Sweeping spiral roads, huge structures, colossal statues that loom over the streets below, ziggurats, and other dramatic edifices make the district unique.

Those in the know claim that there's a strong channel of power from the Gold Sun into this district, and its effects have unexpected consequences. Every great once in a while, objects change into other objects or repair themselves if broken.

### LOCATIONS IN THE REINVENTION

**Gamrose Tower:** Known as the Bleeding Building for obvious reasons, Gamrose Tower has many businesses in the lower floors and apartments above. Its name comes from the waterfall of red liquid that pours out of the exterior of the building, near the top. The building also appears to float about 40 feet (12 m) off the ground, but this is due to the fact that the lowest portions of the building are **invisible**. This unseen area only holds stairs up to the rest of the building, but many people talk about how unsettling it is to climb so many stairs without seeing them. Particularly as a waterfall of blood descends from above. The pouring liquid ends in a fountain at street level and drains away—

*Chalmara Sodality,  
page 117*

*Torquan: level 6; +1  
defenses*

*Locals can always  
identify newcomers if they  
pronounce the district's  
name "River-iver" rather  
than "Rive-river."*

somewhere. The liquid is indeed blood, but not human or even animal blood. Although it's not common knowledge, the truth is that it's the blood of Jilamanthica, the Ever-Dying, a goddess who is always on the brink of death and yet never dies. She "lives" in the penthouse of the building.

**Starsbirth Arena:** Larger than many small towns, the Starsbirth Arena is big enough for any ten concurrent sporting events, reenactments of historical events involving thousands of actors, or concerts, plays, or other entertainments. The arena seats two hundred thousand people, but reportedly it's never been more than a fifth full. Once every year, the arena is filled with water, and hundreds of ships sail about within it in a dramatic spectacle. Tickets are usually about 8 crystal.

**Far Pyramid Theater:** A huge, lavish theater of metal and glass in the shape of a pyramid. It shows plays and musical performances four times each week. Tickets are usually about 10 crystal.

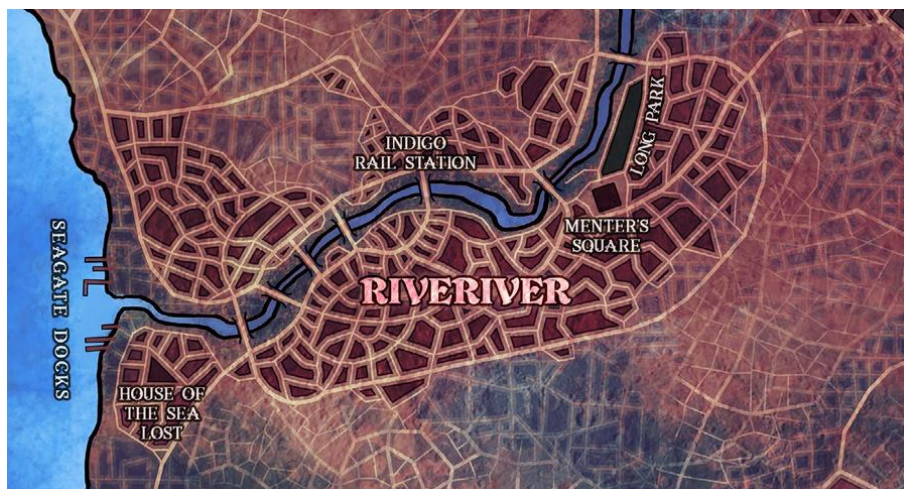
**Chalmara House:** Headquarters of the **Chalmara Sodality**, this structure is essentially an art gallery filled with all manner of paintings, sculpture, and artwork. Because the group is so hated, they employ a private staff of guards to protect the building.

### PEOPLE OF THE REINVENTION

**Torquan the Reflection:** So named because they change their shape and appearance to match whomever they are talking to at the time, Torquan is one of the very few elderbrin who will take human form. What people do not realize is that this is the result of a rare disease among elderbrin. They cannot control it.

### RIVERIVER

The Chirdes River is one of two rivers that runs through Satyrine, and the district best known for its banks is Riveriver. A residential district, Riveriver hosts mainly middle-class people, with the upper middle class living in larger homes along the river. Unlike the Sannyasa, the Chirdes flows rather quickly and is clean. Riverside properties are



desirable, and the district's main market sits above the river itself, built upon a wide bridge of white stone.

### LOCATIONS IN RIVERRIVER

**The House of the Sea Lost:** This tower is just a large column of water suspended in air. To enter, one must be able to breathe water. Most people use spells, but there are a few devices that amount to hoses that connect to the outside of the tower. Visitors can breathe through them, although they stink of the breath of all the others who have used them before. Within the House of the Sea Lost, a number of businesses keep their offices. Foremost among them is the Bureau of Salvage, which records every ship and sailor lost at sea and any and all salvage recovered.

**Seagate Docks:** Ships from the Alone come into this port, bringing all manner of strange goods: talking fruit from Durrentam, rope made of stone from the Floating Isles, and bricks made of smoke from the Ju-nui-Pron, just to name a few. Ships of sail, those of steam, and those pulled by trained jellyfish are all present here.

**Indigo Rail Station:** This large station is where trains come in from outside the city, bearing passengers and goods of all kinds. It also serves as a Satyrine Rail station, so it's convenient for almost anyone in the city to transfer here and travel throughout Indigo.

**Alamathi:** level 11; +4 defenses; +4 sailing; can sustain 5 Injuries per Wound and 5 Wounds

**Sara Dathaford:** level 4; +2 Dodge, +2 Resist; +2 social interaction

**Long Park:** This wooded park is notable for intelligent plants and animals made of living glass. It also hosts a variety of homeless people who camp here in makeshift tents. The people of Long Park are cared for by some mysterious creatures made of sentient music.

**Menter's Square:** This square has a clocktower in each corner, each showing a different time. The locals all have their favorites, and conflicts over various clocks can become physical.

What you might not realize when walking past is that the square also offers entrance to the largest library in the city. It's ostensibly located underground, although some argue that the miles of shelf-filled tunnels are actually an extradimensional realm all their own. The library, just called Menter's, employs at least 500 librarians and is so vast that rumors tell of people who have become lost within it, formed bands, and now live out their lives (or their descendants live out their lives) amid the books with no intention of leaving. The librarians do what they can to stay on friendly relations with the so-called "people of the stacks."

### PEOPLE IN RIVERRIVER

**Captain Alamathi:** Unnaturally tall and thin, Alamathi is the captain of *the Turn of the Page*, a magical ship made entirely out of books about the sea, its creatures, and its gods. She knows the Alone as well as (or better than) anyone alive.

**Sara Dathaford:** Poet and actress, Sara recently moved to Riverriver and seeks to raise funding to start her own theater/bar. While she would like legitimate investors, she's not opposed to getting involved with shadier elements.

### CONFEDERACY OF CLOISTERS

Once just a nickname, "Confederacy of Cloisters" became the official name of this district before the War. Most people call it "the Confederacy" or just "the CC." Although it has residential neighborhoods and commercial areas like all the rest, this large



district is notable for its churches and temples, its monasteries, and its cemeteries. Not surprisingly, it's a quiet district, known for gentle winds blowing through whispering willows and robed figures silently walking across cobblestones.

## LOCATIONS IN THE CONFEDERACY OF CLOISTERS

**Mandala Gate:** Although Satyrine has no walls, it does have a gate. Positioned at the end of a wide street cutting through the Ruined Expanses, the Mandala Gate sits between two large stone buildings. It is currently the main entrance to the city and, as such, sees a lot of traffic of all sorts. The gate is just a large arch with thousands of tiny symbols and charms hanging from it, each representing a belief, idea, emotion, or concept. Most of these were added by passersby, and more are added each day.

At any given time, the gate is surrounded by loitering elderbrin, vendors selling cheap goods, and sapient shadow panhandlers begging for some way to acclimate, or at least understand.

The Mandala Gate's not technically in the Confederacy of Cloisters, but it is closest to that district.

**Temple of Onanthes:** Overseer of the Forsaken Sea, Onanthes was once a water goddess and is now transitioning to be a male wind god. In his new form, Onanthes is the God of the Awakening Sky. A few of his worshippers have found it difficult to transition along with their deity, but most have adapted. In addition, Onanthes has found new followers, not the least of which are the fiery winged kellidos, who hail from a half-world beyond the *Unfathomable Archipelago*.

Onanthes's temple is under major renovation, currently covered in scaffolding. Thoughtform workers remove blue-green wave imagery and other marine symbology. Signs indicate that it will eventually be a beautiful structure of reds and yellows, with a sunrise motif.



*Some people have compared the Mandala Gate to the gateways guarded by the warden of each sun.*

*Unfathomable Archipelago, page 49*

*Orbs, page 131*

**Library of Rhol, the Left-Handed God:** The library is a gothic structure of black stone with green-tinted windows. An almost serpent-like coil of mist winds around the spire, obscuring the path leading up to the top. The mist itself is a living, intelligent spell, allowing only those with the proper key to pass.

Inside, the library has the Actuality's largest collection of books relating to the Nightside Path.

**Orchard of Mausoleums:** In this, the largest of the city's cemeteries, graves dig themselves and tombs grow like plants, sprouting from the ground. The graveyard expands as needed, and produces all the necessary structures.

Of course, you'd be a fool to think that the orchard doesn't have more than its share of ghosts. Most of the ghosts here are *orbs*, too dull to do anything but wander the vicinity of their own graves.

It's also the site of a cafe called Merrian's that caters to the Dead. They don't serve food but the memories of food and the sensations of eating.



## PEOPLE OF THE CONFEDERACY OF CLOISTERS

**Nils Sorson:** Nils Sorson is a priest of the entity known as the Captive Beloved. Part of the disturbing philosophy of Nils's religion is that if you love something, you need to secure it so it can never be taken from you (or leave of its own volition). It's rumored that the temple of the Captive Beloved teems with kidnapped people loved by the worshippers, but held against their will. Nils is a breatherian and doesn't eat or drink, meeting all of his needs by simply breathing air.

**Treya Fethalma:** Caught in a keyfall, Treya was struck by a wicked key, which left a permanent key-shaped mark on her face. She and others have tried to use the mark as a guide to duplicating their own wicked key, but the resultant keys either have been useless or have cursed those who make them. Treya lives in the CC and works as a florist.

**The Sisters of the Lost Moment:** Believing that interest and focused thoughts keep us from finding truth, which can come only from an utterly distracted and bored mind, this small group tries to teach people to turn away from anything that is thought-provoking or compelling. They have a small meeting hall in the district.

**Aberidus:** One of the Dead, Aberidus is a tall, imposing figure in skull-adorned armor of steel and bone. He spends his time in graveyards and cemeteries, rousting ghosts and looking for wraiths that have escaped the Pale. He claims to be an official agent of the Pale Embassy, but he is lying. In truth, he is looking for a specific wraith—his lover, Cornelius.

## THE FADE

As portions of the ground upon which Satyrine rests break away and drift into the **Abstraction**, a district more or less devoted to the process (or perhaps simply a captive of it) has formed. It's called the Fade. Surprisingly, this is a populated section of the city, and despite the fact that it will inevitably disintegrate one day, city officials did not hesitate to rebuild it after the War.

**Nils Sorson:** level 10; +3 defenses; ephemera and objects of power grant various abilities

*Sunships, page 38*

**Treya Fethalma:** level 3; +1 defenses

**Aberidus:** level 9; +2 Dodge, +2 Resist; +3 searching; can sustain 6 Injuries per Wound and 6 Wounds; +3 Armor; immune to poison and disease, can affect spirits with his physical attacks

*The Abstraction, page 48*

**Secramin:** level 4; +4 Dodge, +2 Resist; +2 any movement action

In many ways, the Fade is the “other” port in the city, offering berths to flying craft and creatures carrying goods and people to and from the islands of the Unfathomable Archipelago and the half-worlds beyond. This is also where the **sunships** dock when they come to Indigo.

## LOCATIONS IN THE FADE

**The Dreamery:** A monastery-like complex, the Dreamery is where you can find some of the foremost experts on dreams and the Deeps of Sleep. The people here regularly practice lucid dreaming and psychic travel into the Deeps and teach classes on these techniques as well.

**The Autonomic Academy:** Students enrolled in this university don't attend conventional classes. Instead, they spend about 90 percent of each day asleep, and their unconscious mind taps into the Noösphere to learn from it. Not all of the classes offered are purely academic. Some are physical in nature (climbing, dance, crafting, and so on). Visitors might find it unsettling to see sleeping students up and moving around, practicing fighting, sports, or pottery (for example) while dreaming.

**Tower of Lost Sleep:** Rivals of those working in the Dreamery, the people working out of this tower call themselves the Woken. They despise sleep and call it “stolen life.” In the tower, they magically collect sleep from across Satyrine and use its energies to keep themselves awake. This causes insomnia in other people across the city, some of whom try to gain access to the tower to get their lost sleep back.

**Sunship Berths:** Tall, secured towers provide a stopping point for sunships here, with gantries and accessways for people and goods to move to the ships as well as off and away from them.

## PEOPLE OF THE FADE

**Secramins:** Not an individual but a whole people, secramins are tall and lithe, their golden skin glistening in even the palest light. Hailing from the half-world of Ux, these beings speak in telepathic



whispers and spend most of their time gracefully dancing in the streets of the Fade.

**Cryter Miniss:** A Weaver suspected to be involved in a variety of nefarious enterprises, Cryter Miniss wears a blank bronze mask at all times. He carries a sack filled with dozens of extra hands, each of which he can control even as they fly about (but no more than four at a time). Cryter is an assassin and a spy for hire, but he also manages his own coterie of underlings and agents. He specializes in dream assassinations and crimes and thus operates out of the Fade most of the time, although he has safehouses and bases throughout the city.

**Memom:** level 4; +2 defenses; +2 social interaction

*Months (January, February, etc.) and days (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) are the same in Satyrine as they are in Shadow.*

**Cryter Miniss:** level 13; +4 defenses; +1 Armor; vislae with many spells, including effects like invisibility, improving defenses, mental and physical attacks at long range, and teleportation, +5 spellcasting

**Memom:** Memom is an elderbrin who manages a very large association of sex workers, both elderbrin and human. They operate out of a beautiful hotel in the Fade, charging high prices for extreme discretion and a wide variety of services offered and needs met. Thanks to this business, Memom is extremely wealthy and is in line to become gerent of the neighborhood.

## QUIET LAKE

A portion of Satyrine surrounds and overlaps a placid lake more than a mile across. The water is deceptively deep. Small, often perfectly square islands cover its surface, reached mainly by boat (although there are bridges between a few). Most of the islands are surprisingly flat and covered in extremely thick, tall trees, giving the whole lake the appearance of a labyrinth of waterways (and, in fact, a portion of it is an actual maze).

The dark, still waters are said to conceal all manner of secrets, including entire submerged structures and complexes accessed by submersible, spell, or sometimes transparent cylinders called dive tubes.

Wealthy individuals, including some reclusive vislae, own homes on these islands, each just large enough for a house and a small yard. Many of the islands, however, are long abandoned, with strange, sometimes sinister-looking brooding houses amid overgrown trees and other vegetation.

Along the sides of Quiet Lake stand more homes, a few businesses—eateries and boutiques, mainly—and boats for hire, both piloted and unpiloted.

## LOCATIONS IN QUIET LAKE

**The Crowded Garden:** This square island is about 150 feet (45 m) to a side, with a perimeter of tall spruce trees obscuring the interior from sight. That interior is filled with all manner of statues.

The locals say that the statues come to the Crowded Garden of their own volition. Left alone in courtyards and galleries abandoned in the War, the statues silently and stealthily made their way here





for protection and companionship. Thus, all types of media, styles, and sizes of statues are crowded here together. No one's ever seen a statue traveling to the garden, but a new one seems to appear every few months—a significant slowdown from the days during the War, most likely, but no one was paying much attention then.

**The Maze:** The islands of the eastern portion of the lake are girded by high stone walls so that the watery channels between them become passages in a maze. Large sections of the maze are also covered, making the passages dark and claustrophobic. There are many hidden places within the maze, difficult to reach even with patience and a boat.

**The Font:** The water in the lake is fed from a bubbling spring, itself fed—rather impossibly—from the Wide Sannyasa River well outside of Satyrine. The Wide Sannyasa disappears somewhere in the *Ticking Forest* and comes out here—at a point deep below the surface of the lake. The water from the lake then flows out into the Chirdes River as well as the Narrow Sannyasa River. Both flow into the sea.

## PEOPLE OF QUIET LAKE

**Willard Moore:** A renowned but retired archeologist, Willard is perhaps one of the foremost experts on the *arabast*. He lives with his family in an elegant manor in Quiet Lake, reportedly with a hoard of

**Ranette Pinoch:** level 6; +2 Dodge, +4 Resist

**Morath:** level 9; +3 defenses; +3 stealth; +1 Armor; ever-changing spirit-granted abilities

*The Ticking Forest, page 49*

**Willard Moore:** level 6; +3 defenses

*Arabast, page 48*

valuable (and in some cases dangerous) artifacts of the past.

**Ranette Pinoch:** Ranette has worked as an orator, a priest, and a writer. She has taught her ideas and philosophies throughout the city, imparting wisdom on motivation, productivity, and transforming belief into reality. Ranette's ex-husband, however, was a powerful criminal boss who is now serving a long sentence in prison. She worries sometimes because her house still contains hidden caches of ill-gotten goods and funds, but, perhaps fortunately, it also has all of his magical safeguards and wards.

**Morath:** A killer stalks Quiet Lake, and though no one knows it, his name is Morath. Possessed by spirits of murder and at least one powerful demon, he is kept in check by one thing: the entities possessing him rarely agree. The demon wants to go on a killing spree, while the spirits of murder are interested in preying on Morath's dark world slowly and carefully so he will never be caught and his reign of blood can continue for years. Morath's victims are sometimes killed in subtle ways, via poisons or similar means. Their bodies are arranged artfully and with symbolic importance. The rest of the time—at the demon's urgings—his victims are savagely dismembered by acts of pure violence. Thus, most people believe that (at least two) different serial murderers operate in the district, when it is in fact just one.

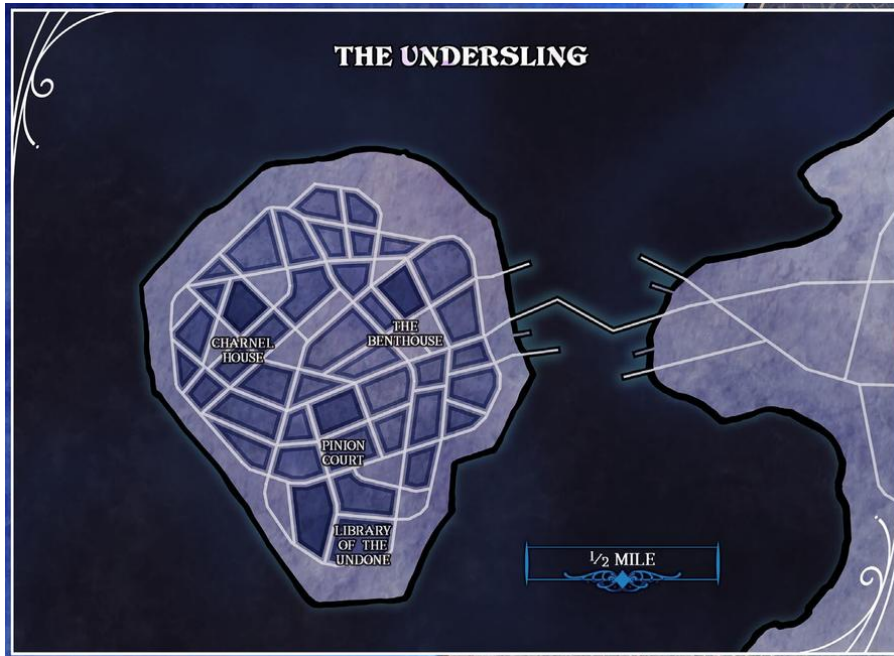
## THE UNDERSLING

Known primarily for its physical training facilities, fighting arenas, and weapons dealers, the Undersling is a place of prowess tested by violence.

You'll find the Undersling beneath the streets of Satyrine, specifically beneath the Confederacy of Cloisters and part of the Palindrome. After descending one of two major broad staircase entrances, you come to a huge cavern stretching more than a mile into darkness.

Illuminated in the center of this cave, the Undersling hangs from the ceiling, suspended from hundreds—if not thousands—of ropes, chains, and





cables of all sorts. The district is small compared to the others but huge when you look at it, a solid mass of stone, supplemented by wood and metal platforms and scaffolding, upon which hundreds of buildings rest. The whole thing hangs from the ceiling of the cave over a drop into darkness (and certain death). You have to be brave or insane to even visit, let alone live there. And that's the point.

A narrow and not particularly safe bridge extends from the ledge to the Undersling itself. The clear remains of prior bridges suggest that it is not the first and probably won't be the last such bridge. For those unwilling to brave the bridge, a few enterprising souls have skiffs that ferry people through the air and across the gap, for a fee of 3 crystal.

The Undersling long ago fell under a curse, although no one knows the source of it. The curse brings a subtle but constant aura of decay and destruction. Thus, the remains of broken support ropes and chains hanging down from the sides of the Undersling far outnumber those currently holding it. A team of workers toil daily affixing new supports to replace those that snap. Likewise, the remnants of past bridges from the entrance to the

**Oja Kilendaris:** level 10; +2 Withstand, +4 Dodge, +2 Resist; +2 attacks and any physical movement action

**Torre:** level 4; +4 Resist; +4 knowledge

*From time to time, the Undersling sways uncomfortably.*

*People say the Undersling has a "touch of the Red" to it.*

sling are many. And one day—perhaps soon—the current bridge will collapse as well. And, most likely, it will be quickly replaced with another.

Living in the Undersling is an act of confidence and a show of fearlessness. "Tough enough for the Undersling" is a phrase used throughout the city to mean someone brave and hardy.

### LOCATIONS IN THE UNDERSLING

**The Benthouse:** This training facility and exercise gym specializes in combat instruction. Not just self-defense, but real fighting techniques for those interested in being sport fighters or soldiers, or chasing even more violent pursuits. The Benthouse boasts many trainers, but chief among them is **Oja Kilendaris**, a woman of advanced years with an eyepatch and a second pair of arms that she never uses in combat unless she's fighting at least three opponents.

**Pinion Court:** The cobblestone surface of this square is always covered in feathers, for this is where angels are tried and punished, their wings torn from them. Angel feathers never decay and those torn in humiliation are not subject to wind, so the feathers forever mar the piazza.

**Library of the Undone:** When books are begun but never finished, a man named **Torre** collects their ghosts and secrets them away into his collection, which he calls the Library of the Undone.

Torre keeps the entirety of his collection in a series of magical bags, each containing five hundred times more than they should hold. He knows his books completely, but there's no browsing—you have to ask for a book or a topic.

The location of the library changes frequently to foil would-be thieves. It's in the Undersling now, but if Torre gets nervous (and he's a very nervous fellow), he will grab his bags and move in short order.

**The Charnel House:** Headquarters of the dark assassins' guild known as the Charnel Heart, this place is in a basement in what appears to be an abandoned building in the Undersling. It's a sort of temple where a growing glass shard, 12 feet (4 m)

tall, rises up from the basement floor. The shard is certainly mystical and—according to **agents** of the group—intelligent and aware. It's practically their god.

## PEOPLE OF THE UNDERSLING

**Nabrous Welt:** Twisted, scarred, and ugly by conventional standards, the man named Nabrous Welt has a reputation for being one of the greatest warriors in Satyrine, skilled with blade, pistol, and his own massive, misshapen hands. Despite the fact that Nabrous lives a life of violence, working as a mercenary, guard, or enforcer, he maintains a strict code of integrity and honesty. In private matters, he's kind and generous. But if he's paid to do so and you're not helpless or a child, he'll wring your neck.

**Ambassador of the Red:** Obviously, there is no official position of ambassador of the Red, but if there were, **Narthalam Kur** would certainly hold it. A native of the Red, Narthalam is a scarred, hulking beast of a man whose very touch ages and crumbles inanimate objects should he will it. His knowledge of the realm of the Red Sun—including demonkind—is extensive, and many people come to him for information. However, to gain it, one must pay homage to the Red and destroy something of value before Narthalam. His smile upon witnessing such an act is enough to give a sane person nightmares.

**The Scalopedes:** Everyone knows that the areas beneath the city teem with unsavory creatures like ratgoblins and roachgoblins. However, in the Undersling, people called scalopedes dwell (and, in fact, hunt and eat ratgoblins and roachgoblins). Scalopedes are not human, but rather some kind of intelligent, multilegged insect things with heads not unlike that of a wasp and a body a bit like an enormous mantis. But all the scalopedes' limbs end in six-fingered hands, and they use tools and weapons similar to how a human would. Scalopedes keep to themselves but get along well enough with humans. Humans find that they have a horrible acrid odor, however.

*Charnel Heart agents,  
page 143*

**Nabrous Welt:** *level 11; +3 defenses; +3 attacks and any physical movement action; can sustain 6 Injuries per Wound and 5 Wounds; +1 Armor*

**Narthalam Kur:** *level 8; +3 defenses; +4 intimidation; can sustain 5 Injuries per Wound and 5 Wounds*

**Scalopede:** *level 4; +3 defenses; +4 climbing; +2 Armor*

*Kaladiasi Fuur, page 94*

## FARTOWN

Fartown is a district devoted mainly to the vislae. Originally, the leaders of the city created it—as its own separate half-world—because they feared that the vislae, in their experimentation, would cause harm to the city. Although Fartown has never completely imploded, there have been a few times in the city's history when it was probably for the best that it was not physically connected.

Fartown is reached through a large archway located beside the Narrow Sannyasa River, opposite the Hollows. It's never locked or guarded, but many people believe that it's impossible to pass through without it being noted and recorded by the Angular Serpentine. There is no feeling of transition when you pass through this arch.

Fartown is vital enough to the narrative that it's been given its own chapter in this book.

## THE CELESTIAL BAZAAR

Like Fartown, the Celestial Bazaar occupies its own unique space. Unlike Fartown, this is not by design, but happenstance. The story goes that a pocket dimension now called the Celestial Bazaar fell, whole cloth, from the sky one day. It crashed into Satyrine, where it was adopted as part of the city. What does that actually mean? Accounts vary.

Whatever the story, today the Celestial Bazaar can be reached from locations in every district other than Fartown, the Hollows, and the Undersling. Each of these gates is referred to as a memory gate, meaning that each has a toll. When someone passes through a gate, they lose a single brief memory. The vast majority of the time, it's an inconsequential memory—how much they paid for a loaf of bread last week or the color of a dress a woman on the street was wearing. (The memories are used to make orbs.) Most people don't think twice about using the gates, but some avoid it if they can. Each wide gateway has a posted watcher appointed by the Bazaar's one gerent, **Kaladiasi Fuur**. The guards mostly look for thieves or troublemakers. They each possess the ability to shut down their gate, so it is

possible for the district to cut itself off from Satyrine if needed (this hasn't happened since the War).

The Bazaar is almost certainly the largest, greatest, and most extensive marketplace in the Actuality. Vendors bring in fresh food, tools, clothing, books, jewelry, and the like for personal customers as well as textiles, paper, lumber, and other goods for commercial buyers. And of course, it being Satyrine, people can also shop for ideas, emotions, magical ingredients and materials, ephemera, and objects of power. It's difficult to think of anything not available in the Bazaar.

**I stood near a man at a ramshackle booth selling bellimberries in syrup. Across the way, two women beckoned me over to a table where they were selling sweaters made of the wool of a massive bumari lamb somewhere under the Gold Sun. I smiled but shook my head and then walked down the path between two wagons filled with multiheaded fish. A juggler tossing glowing crystals and live chickens into the air gathered a crowd away from a pair of young puppeteers who probably should have incorporated more real magic into their performance. I browsed for a moment at a stall where a woman had buckets of keys gathered in keyfalls (no wicked keys, of course) and finally ended up buying some conjured beef kabobs from the back of a truck before heading home.**

Throughout the marketplace, performers of all stripes entertain for a few coins. Seers open booths and offer to look into one's future, makeup artists sit at tables and offer to paint faces, and balladeers offer personalized love poems or jokes. And that's just the beginning.

The Celestial Bazaar is about a mile and a half (2.5 km) across. The **Indigo Sun** appears to shine in the sky during the day, but this is not truly Indigo. The weather is always like a comfortable late spring day.

Some people—particularly the merchants and those supporting them—live in the Celestial Bazaar

*Many seers and similar diviners are zilats, which is to say they truly do have prognosticating powers.*

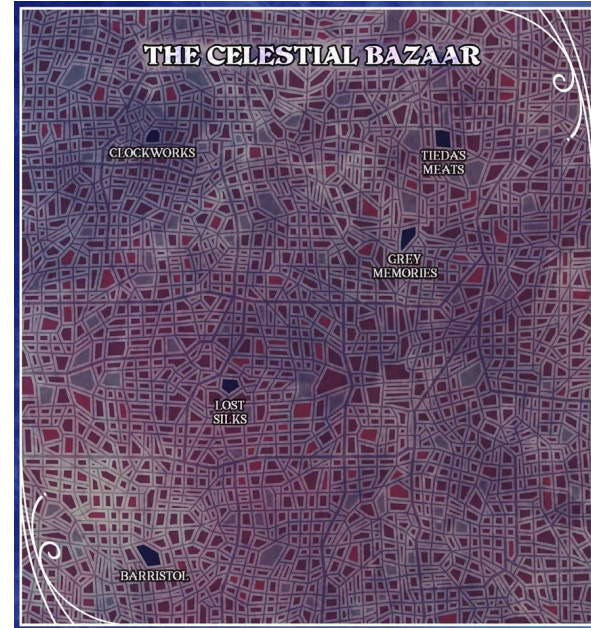
*An artist in the Celestial Bazaar uses ink made of emptiness for tattoos that create infinite voids within flesh.*

**Tieda:** level 4; +1 defenses

**Markus Taul:** level 5; +2 defenses; +1 social interaction

*Indigo Sun, page 46*

**Nicolas Garret:** level 6; +1 defenses; +2 social interaction; conjures ghosts up to level 4



itself. They live over the permanent shops or in small apartment buildings scattered across the district.

## LOCATIONS IN THE CELESTIAL BAZAAR

There are hundreds of vendors—perhaps well over a thousand—in the Celestial Bazaar. Here are just a few:

**Tieda's Meats:** **Tieda** sells her wares from a large pavilion of purple and gold silks. She is a zilat with the ability to magically create meat of various kinds, already seasoned and spiced (but not yet cooked).

**Grey Memories:** A relatively new vendor, **Markus Taul** sells objects taken from Shadow from a wagon filled with various compartments and storage bins. He buys Shadow mementos from escaped vislae, but he must have another source beyond that (one that no one knows) to obtain the volume that he has. Many of his wares don't function or don't function properly, but the smartphones, laptops, and microwave ovens are still interesting curiosities. And many of the things he sells work just fine: toys, clothing, candy and soda, toiletries, and other odds and ends.

**Lost Silks:** **Nicolas Garret** believes that a finely crafted, well-loved garment has a soul all its own.



And he can prove it. When a beautiful garment is lost forever, destroyed, or otherwise ruined, Nicolas conjures its ghost and offers it for sale here. (Despite the name, not everything he sells is silk.)

**Clockworks:** Ama Halloran crafts some of the finest clocks in the Actuality. All of them are self-aware, but most are easy to get along with.

**Barristol:** A Maker of great ability, the non-gendered Barristol specializes in weaponry, particularly weapons for use against opponents that would normally not fear them. So they make blades and bullets that will harm insubstantial spirits, incendiary devices that can burn fire spirits, and so on. Barristol sells a variety of items in a nicely appointed booth in the bazaar and takes special orders there as well.

## PEOPLE OF THE CELESTIAL BAZAAR

**Kaladiasi Fuur:** Overseeing the entire Celestial Bazaar is a daunting task, but Kaladiasi Fuur would never admit such a thing. She's extremely capable, but just as extremely arrogant.

Kaladiasi is almost never seen without a retinue of assistants, guards, and lackeys. An elderbrin follows her and writes down everything she says. She dresses practically but impeccably. She's also very old, sustained by magic and granted youth by the changeries.

**Uramulpur:** One of the most influential elderbrin in the city, Uramulpur seemingly knows everything occurring with his kind, and he is even connected with those that have broken from their families' ranks. He also wields powers that most people do not associate with elderbrin, leading some to believe he is actually a vislae.

## THE HOLLOWS

Long ago, history books will tell you, Satyrine was far more populated—even overcrowded. This was long before the War. In those days, the lower classes were relegated to certain districts, and primary among them was the Hollows. The name comes

**Ama Halloran:** level 3; +1 defenses; +4 clockmaking

**Barristol:** level 9; +2 defenses; +3 crafting, +1 social interaction; vislae with some spells, +3 spellcasting; many ephemera and objects of power that inflict harm, even to spirits

**Kaladiasi Fuur:** level 8; +2 Resist; +3 social interaction

**Uramulpur:** level 11; +2 defenses; +3 social interaction; various special powers, including mind control, telepathy, and teleportation

**Hiram and Nadine Errae:** level 6; +2 Withstand, +2 Dodge, +4 Resist; +2 social interaction and stealth

not from any geographical feature, but from an old, derogatory term that people had for the poor in the city. Since then, the hardy people of the Hollows have claimed the term as their own and sometimes refer to themselves as hollows.

The Narrow Sannyasa River, despite its name, seems fairly wide. (Outside the city lies the Wide Sannyasa River, and it is indeed wider.) It runs through Satyrine, and in particular the Hollows. Along its banks, the houses are typically small and overcrowded. Living by the river holds no prestige or pleasure—just the opposite. Its waters are very polluted with trash and human waste, although a few times a year, thoughtform workers and zilats with appropriate abilities do much to clean the river. Still, in the Hollows, the river is known mainly for its smell.

Life is rough in the Hollows, but unlike the slums of other cities, at least it's not terribly overcrowded. On the contrary, this is a frighteningly lonely place, and a walk through the Hollows is likened by some to a walk through a haunted waste. And as in such a waste, a lone traveler might be beset by thieves—or by things more shadowy and sinister.

## LOCATIONS IN THE HOLLOWS

**The Pennyfair:** The Pennyfair is a very inexpensive market, like a low-class version of the Celestial Bazaar. Still, there are likely things that can be found only here, like Noral Fincher's cinnamon cakes and the paintings of surreal artist Yalli, who paints scenes from Shadow. Mostly, however, the Pennyfair offers food and mundane necessities of modest quality.

Because it's in the Hollows, the Pennyfair is known as a haunt for gangs and criminals, and a not-insignificant portion of the goods sold there might be stolen.

**The Theater of Scripture:** This low-cost, low-class theater shows bawdy plays and ribald comics, as well as excellent burlesque. However, it's all a front for Hiram and Nadine Errae, brother and sister, and their twisted enterprise. The Errae siblings believe that the secret to life is written in God's book of



scripture, but the pages of that “book” are human souls. Their goal is to kidnap as many people as they can and coax their souls out of them through all manner of torture, coercion, and magic so they can read the words of God.

## PEOPLE OF THE HOLLOWS

**Jeren the Devoured:** Those who know of Jeren know him as the most (in)famous *idea thief* in Satyrine, a prominent figure in the occult underground of magic-using thieves and spell-slinging criminals that thrive in the Hollows. Jeren steals rare and remarkable ideas and sells them to the highest bidder. Long ago, he ran afoul of a terrible creature that ate large portions of him while he tried to fight the beast off. Today he has extensive prosthetics and artificial replacement parts made of silver.

Jeren has a young teenage son, **Udarian**, who already has a reputation for getting into trouble with the authorities. Both frequent a small casino called the Silverjack.

**Unelind:** Despite the district’s reputation, not every hollow in the Hollows is a criminal. Far from it, actually. Unelind works to help organize her community, encouraging people to stand up for themselves and better themselves. She has personally started schools for young children in

**Monday:** level 12

**Ordul:** level 8; +3 defenses; +2 attacks; +3 Armor

*The Murderqueens make up a mortal military organization in the Red that is sanctioned and supported by some demonic forces (and opposed by others).*

### THE WAY

*Idea theft secret, page 89*

**Jeren the Devoured:** level 9; +2 defenses; +4 stealth; steals ideas

**Udarian:** level 5; +2 defenses; +2 stealth

**Old Suun:** level 5; +4 Resist; +4 knowledge, +2 social interaction

*Some people say that Unelind is a zilat with persuasive powers, but if that’s true, it’s a secret she’s keeping to herself.*

**Unelind:** level 7; +2 Withstand, +2 Dodge, +4 Resist; +3 social interaction; magical persuasion

multiple neighborhoods, created food banks for the needy, and more. She is an older woman but still very active and strong. Exceedingly well spoken, clever, and charismatic, she can charm anyone, the story goes—and that might be the case.

## ENCOUNTERS IN SATYRINE

The following are additional encounters that can occur anywhere in the city.

**Monday:** Monday isn’t a man, but neither is he a god. He is, just as his name would imply, a day of the week. He is rather nondescript, with a receding hairline and glasses. He doesn’t explain himself or his nature unless really pressed, but he does welcome a bit of chitchat and will start up conversations with people waiting in line or on the train. Most people think “Monday” is just his name, rather than his very being. And if someone’s looking for a larger context, he can’t give it to them. “I think I saw Thursday on a train, once,” he’ll admit, but that’s about it.

**Ordul the Murderqueen:** Not a Satyrine native, Ordul hails from the Red, where her talents and predilections are better appreciated. She is short and stocky, and like all of the Red’s Murderqueens, she bears the weapons, armor, and scars to suggest that she is no stranger to violence. A bronze helmet has been permanently welded on her head, allowing only a single eye to peer out. Ordul is in the city on business, hoping to purchase a large quantity of emotions for use by her organization to help better motivate and organize the troops.

**Old Suun:** An old woman covered in beautiful silver and black moths beckons. She’s dressed in rags and seems distraught. Her name is “Old Suun,” and she says that Vigo is missing. Vigo, it turns out, is one of her moths. It has fluttered off into one of the Ruined Expanses. Should anyone be able to return Vigo to her, she will give them a wicked key she found. But she won’t tell them that ahead of time.

☀ **Nedril:** A man whose head is a large squid has dropped his briefcase, papers have fallen out, and they're about to be caught by the wind. Nedril is a wealthy financier. A hands-on investor, he is always traveling around the city (usually with a small retinue of assistants and thoughtform guards) checking in on his businesses. Today, though, he's in a hurry, and the loss of his papers has flummoxed him. Some of them reveal rather shady business dealings.

**Nedril:** level 6; +2 Resist; +2 social interaction

**Starry Thia:** level 7; +2 defenses; +3 stealth and physical actions, +1 social interaction

????: level ??

Frequently seen Satyrine graffiti: Who is that?

**The Eldest:** level 14; +2 defenses; can sustain 6 Injuries per Wound and 7 Wounds; immune to poison and disease; wields a large number of special, storm-related abilities like lightning bolts, teleportation, and so on

**Marvus and Penolo:** level 7; +3 defenses; vislae with many spells, including effects such as devastating physical ranged attacks, improving defenses, and dispelling magic, +3 spellcasting

☀ **Starry Thia:** Comedian and street performer, Thia is short and round faced, dressed in bright colors, and always accompanied by a trio of magically animated marionettes. She tries to entertain people she meets, hoping for a few orbs in return. For a much higher fee, she'll use her skills to pick the right pocket or even break into the right building, but she'll never physically harm anyone.

☀ **????:** You see a man walking toward you on the street. You've never seen him before. His appearance is not at all striking. You know nothing about him. But you are instantly convinced that he is the worst thing you've ever seen, and he will utterly destroy you and everything and everyone you love. If you confront him, he says nothing and attempts to get away. Perhaps, if you're quite clever and resourceful, you can somehow learn his name. It sounds a lot like your own name, but garbled.

☀ **The Eldest:** There are three personified storms in Satyrine, and all of them are brothers. Collectively, they are called the Whelm. The eldest is known as, well, the Eldest. This ancient entity dwells among mortals, appearing like a tall, well-dressed man with the head of a stormcloud. As with so many nonhuman entities, a byzantine set of rules and pacts governs his existence. One of them, for example, is that if he is invited to a party on a particular night of the year (it always rains on that night), he will entertain a relatively simple request from the host, assuming he is treated well.

The Eldest identifies as male and has been known to take up romantic relationships with very special mortal women for short periods of time.


☀ **The Witchcaptains:** Two veterans of the War, **Marvus and Penolo**, walk down the street quite drunk. Both are vislae and know a great deal of destructive combat magic, having served in an infamous unit called the Witchcaptains. The slightest provocation might end up with a sudden casting of a dangerous spell or two.


## ARE YOU A SPIDER OR AN ANT?


Spiders are solitary hunters. They drink the fluid from your eyes to concoct their venom. They prey on the weak and the foolish with their webs, and on those who sleep when they leave their webs to hunt. And yet, they are master artisans, weaving works of art in their webs the equal of which—in beauty, precision, and strength—have never been matched.

Ants work in industrious groups. They make their own food, storing away excess for the future. They are orderly, well mannered, and efficient. And destructive. So destructive. To build their nests, an army of their workers might tear away—bit by bit—the mortar of a brick wall, causing it to collapse. To produce their food, they might steal away—bit by bit—the entire contents of one's cupboard. They claimed the world long ago and believe everything in it is theirs for the taking.



 **Bvamina:** The people of Satyrine have all heard stories of the goddess Bvamina, who occasionally floats over one district or another, looking down on the people and observing their activities. Sometimes she drops something—such as a handkerchief or a silver chain—on an individual. The object is sacred and the individual is blessed, thus gaining a lot of (usually short-lived) attention. Other than these capricious acts, no one knows much about Bvamina at all.

 **Allix:** Allix is a Weaver who seems to use his magic for what some people might think are frivolous things—adding ice to drinks, styling his hair, little “bar tricks,” and so on. He’s currently sitting alone at the bar, but he approaches anyone who looks interesting. He doesn’t talk about magic, research, or studying much at all, despite his use of magic very casually. He likes music and poetry, although he’s neither a musician nor a poet. Allix refers to himself as a “people person” and refers to friends throughout the city. He rarely mentions anything that he’s actually done. Most of the information he freely shares starts with “People say . . .” or “Everyone knows that . . .” or “So-and-so says . . .” That said, he is a veritable font of information on a wide variety of topics.

 **The Yellow School:** Even though it appears to be a swirling mass of yellow fish swimming in concert through the air, the Yellow School is best thought of as a singular entity. A number of street urchins stand around it, calling it names and taunting it, but the adults nearby try to shush them, claiming that “The Yellow School shouldn’t be trifled with,” and “The Yellow School deserves your respect.”

No one knows much about its nature, other than it is many individuals operating as one being. It’s known for its contributions to charitable causes and for protecting the districts grouped together as the Lower Third. However, not everyone seems to feel that the Yellow School is entirely altruistic. They

**Bvamina:** level 17

*Satyrine is obsessed with celebrity culture. The exploits of famous performers, powerful vislae, members of the upper class, and various immortal beings are cataloged ad absurdum in trashy gossip magazines and discussed in bars, cafes, and social clubs by all manner of people.*

**Allix:** level 4; +1 Resist; +4 knowledge, +2 social interaction; vislae with a few spells, +1 spellcasting

**The Yellow School:** level 15

say it protects its own interests, which—according to rumor—mainly involve the sale of kindled items and ephemera objects in its territory. Its actions seem to benefit Makers, vendors, and those who transport such (high-ticket) items in the Lower Third. It may be a Maker itself, or it might be an entity too inhuman to be fully characterized as such, but either way it is a being of considerable power.

### ARE YOU AN ANT OR A SPIDER?

Ants are near-mindless drones, with a single consciousness and a single soul spread out among their entire colony. They march like an army across their domain, destroying and devouring anything in their path. Ants steal earwax and make nests in your ear canal. A single ant is the picture of physical perfection. One individual can lift fifty times its own weight above its head and can survive horrifically crushing pressures. And yet, they are builders. They construct vast fortresses for their queen, build bridges that span rivers, and find paths to get to wherever they wish to reach.

Spiders are incredibly intelligent and wise. They gather in hidden congresses and discuss matters to which no human is privy, although some share a few morsels with the right person. And yet, they are devious and cunning. They skulk about at night, weaving their webs in mystic patterns that make subtle changes to the nearby area until they are removed by wind, time, or the sweep of a broom. Breaking a spider’s web, however, comes with some risk. Spiders remember every slight against them.





# FARTOWN

**Y**ou wake up in the (late) morning, have breakfast, read one of the local papers, and get dressed for the day. Leaving your peculiar house, you walk down your peculiar street. A tiny, one-person dirigible flies overhead, narrowly avoiding a woman carried aloft by birds. Another woman walks gracefully from the roof of one building to another on a thin red ribbon.

A large man with a broad smile of tattooed teeth sells you a paper bag filled with hot roasted almonds. Each says your name when you pick it up and pop it into your mouth. A giant octopus aids in the construction of a new building, the previous one having been lost in a sudden violet tornado resulting from some carelessly conducted magical experiment. The other workers appreciate the eight muscular arms of help.

An automobile races by you, leaving tracks of frost and ice behind it. You feel the cold on your toes as you cross the street to the little bookseller's you frequent. This side of the street is filled with music coming down from a glass-faced woman playing the bagpipes on the fire escape. The musician is a friend of yours, and you know each pipe she plays is also a telescope allowing her to view into another world. Her music serves as her attempt to describe what she sees.

You duck as a pair of eyeballs—the visual representations of someone's information-gathering spells—zip by, but you spill your bag of nuts, and they scatter across the sidewalk, silently. A thoughtform in the shape of a man

*The last patron that attempted to start a fight in the Fartown bar known as Zero's disappeared with a single scream, amid chewing sounds.*

*Deathless Triumvirate, page 65*

with a broom scowls as he approaches to clean up the mess. You mumble an apology and dart into the shop.

The elderbrin bookseller is in. Today he's taken the form of a squat, grey-faced fellow with a bright plaid shell like a turtle. He's got that book you wanted on spells that work best in the evening, but as you pay you're interrupted by a quarrel just outside between what appears to be a hulking demon and a woman with three faces and four arms, each arm drawing a dangerous-looking weapon.

You grab the book, lay your orbs on the counter, and hustle back toward home.

You're a vislae, and this is Fartown. It's just another Tuesday.

In Fartown, every building is a story, and every story is surreal. Sprawling mansions sit next to tiny, crooked houses. Twisting towers reach to a sky filled with living hot-air balloons, giant moths, and inexplicably floating people. A 1960s New York Yellow Cab drives down the street past a fish-headed man selling newspapers. This is the most surreal part of a surreal city.

It is autumn.

Fartown gains its name from the fact that it does not lie in the same physical dimension as the rest of the city. This is by design. To have it otherwise would have been much too dangerous. Long before the War, long before the return of the exiles, the people of Satyrine placed the district that would become Fartown in its own half-world, one that was created by the **Deathless Triumvirate** as a place where the city's so-called "on-the-cusp" sorcerers,



witch-touched, and houngan (or whatever vislae were calling themselves back then) could practice their arts without endangering everyone else. Even today, Fartown is home to many experimenters, concoctors, and summoners, any of whom could bring the reality of Satyrine crashing down around them with their half-finished spells, experimental concoctions, or barely controlled otherworldly menaces.

In other words, Fartown is the vislae district. And it suits them well.

Fartown is reached through a large archway located beside the **Narrow Sannyasa River**, opposite the **Hollows**. It's never locked or guarded, but many people believe that it's impossible to pass through without it being noted and recorded by the **Angular Serpentine**. There is no feeling of transition when you pass through this arch.

Fartown exists as a 5-mile (8 km) long mass of solid ground with trees and grass as well as streets and buildings. However, at the edges of its perimeter, beyond sections of Ruined Expanses, space and time become blurry and seep slowly into an unknown elsewhere. This border is called the Bleed, and it's not safe to go there. Fortunately, the weird runoffs and emissions from the experiments, summonings, and creations in Fartown that eventually flow into the Bleed at least have a place to go where they can (presumably) do no harm. Although most of Fartown has been reclaimed, there are still ruins on the outskirts, before one gets to the Bleed. These are similar to the **Ruined Expanses** in the rest of the city.

People in other districts sometimes call Fartown "Far Down." (Kids tend to call it "Fart Town," but that's often because of the strange smells.) It's not a place of the respectable, the wealthy, or the beautiful. It's dangerous and transitory. Even today, homes, buildings, or entire blocks sometimes explode, fade away, or transform into sentient motes that fly off into the aethyr to find meaning in their own lives.

That said, Fartown has become the domain of artists as much as vislae, although there are no galleries. It's the home of theater folk, but no

*Narrow Sannyasa River,*  
page 94

*Hollows, page 94*

*Angular Serpentine,*  
page 66

*Ruined Expanses, page 72*

theaters. Fartown has little in the way of commerce or culture, other than the activities vislae conduct among themselves. (And seeing as vislae have their own currencies, that is, perhaps, a fair bit.)

There are two stories to explain why Fartown lies forever in the sway of autumn. The first is that a curse from a vengeful warlock grips the district forever in a time of dying, yet never allowing it to reach death. The second says that it was a blessing from a satisfied god seeking to end an oppressively long and terrible summer's heat with cool breezes and shorter days.

Not all vislae live in Fartown, of course, but virtually all of them are familiar with its streets, its sights, and its smells.

## LOCATIONS IN FARTOWN

### GATE TO THE HOLLOWES

The gateway is a gathering place in the district, a site for merchants to set up food carts and for other vendors to peddle vislae-oriented wares. It's the busiest part of the district. The gate itself is a massive stone arch in the middle of an open square.

### FALSE ARCH

A large, empty arch stands in an abandoned piazza. It looks identical to the arch that serves as the gateway back to the Hollows (and thus, Satyrine). People speculate that it once went somewhere too, but there's not even a speck of residual magic about it now. If it did lead somewhere once, no one today seems to know where.

### GRYNN'S GRAMARYE

This chained library contains the books required to learn most general spells, at least up to level 8. Grynn was a wealthy vislae from before the War. Today, Tiora, the cousin of his granddaughter's husband, owns and runs the establishment. She has a staff of six assistants.

As stated, this is a chained library. All the tomes are chained to the shelves to prevent theft. You

must study your spells here at the tables provided. Tiora charges 1 crystal per day of study. This has made the place a bit of a vislae hub, and a number of small coffee shops and cafes have opened around it in the last few years to cater to those who use the general location to meet up and spend time.

## THE VANCIAN CAMPUS

Vances simply call it “the Campus.” 17 buildings provide the large and bustling order with administrative offices, records offices, lecture halls, laboratories, and more—much more than the headquarters of the other vislae orders. Almost all members spend a great deal of time here. If a Vance isn’t taking a class, they’re probably teaching one.

Classes offered range from introductory courses to very advanced workshops. They include the following:

- + Introduction to Intonation
- + Using Matter
- + Psychology of the Living Spell
- + Opening Doors to Elsewhere
- + Words of Power
- + Spellbook Upkeep
- + Advanced Energy Wielding
- + Advanced Spell Mechanics

And that’s only a sampling. There are hundreds of classes, and almost as many instructors. Classes are scheduled in eight-week blocks with a single week in between (9 is the **Invisible** Sun’s number), and most classes are not offered each time. Only members of the order can attend a class, and—as one might expect—registration is a very formal process. Advanced classes have degree requirements. Some charge fees, which often cover the cost of texts or laboratory materials, if any.

Sometimes the topics discussed in Vancian classes are interesting and applicable enough that members of other orders attempt to infiltrate them. They use disguises (magical and otherwise), forged documents (magical and otherwise), spells of invisibility, remote viewing, and other means. These attempts almost always fail, as the Vances have put up various wards to keep such intrusions out.

*The Order of Goetica’s hierarchy is so complex that sometimes an office is empty because that office holder doesn’t understand their role in the organization’s structure. Someone might discover that they are Master of Pact Records a year or more after they were awarded or assigned the position.*

The Campus also offers two different libraries—one just for spells, the other for more general esoteric studies. Not surprisingly, all of the spells recorded here are Vancian spells, not general spells.

The Vancian Campus keeps a high standard of lawn and facilities maintenance, and it employs a rather large security force.

## THE GOETIC HALL OF RECORDS

The foreboding appearance of the Goetic Hall of Records befits an order that spends more time talking to immortal beings than to mortals. The large gothic structure has five towers (one of them is a clock tower), each decorated with carvings and statuary of leering demons, noble angels, and other spiritual beings.

All the high-ranking members of the Goetic hierarchy maintain offices here, which includes (but is not limited to) every 6th-degree member. Some of these offices are empty all the time because the office holder is elsewhere, but if the member is alive, their office is maintained. Each office is tied to a position rather than a specific individual. Thus, there is an Office of Demonic Names, an Office of Ceremonies, an Office of Initiations, and so on.

Mostly, though, the vast edifice is a library of records. They keep not only an extensive catalog of members, prospective members, and their activities, but also (perhaps more important) a record of all known summoned entities, pacts, and more. The order stores thousands of names of demons, angels, and other beings, as well as their appearance, demeanor, powers, and other details. Some of this information is incomplete, however, and in some cases, it’s entirely wrong. This can create potentially dangerous problems, to say the least. Further, getting access to these records can be difficult, and it is restricted based on degree (non-Goetics are, of course, forbidden).

## KRYVEN’S BOOKS

A general bookshop offering the latest in fiction, a smattering of general interest nonfiction, and a large selection of gossip magazines, Kryven’s Books

lies between a coffeehouse and a bakery. It serves the (nonmagical) literary needs of many vislae. It's also notable in that **Kryven**, the owner, is a vislae himself, and he lives inside one of the books in the shop. That book, *Guidon's Guide to Mapmaking*, isn't for sale, of course, but for reasons unknown, people keep coming into the shop to try to buy it. The bookstore is run most days by Kryven's aging and cantankerous father, Leonard.

## TARAQAL ARTIST COMMUNE

Fartown isn't just the domain of vislae. A great many artisans, writers, and actors live there as well—many of them in Taraqal, a large communal apartment complex and workspace. This is a place where artists of all stripes can live and work for free. But it's not all it's cracked up to be, at least for some. A few people who have lived there and left describe the place as a totalitarian regime under a charismatic, aging actor named Venna Allaman. Through nothing more than the authority she's claimed, she decides who can enter the commune and who can't, who lives and works where, and what duties residents are given (such as cleaning, maintenance, and so on).

## CASTLE OF THE LIE

An homage to Shadow, the Castle of the Lie is a huge museum that holds all sorts of objects, books, photographs, and films of what happens in Shadow. For the price of a single crystal, one can find all manner of mementos and nostalgic remembrances of that world. Television shows, music, toys, computers, clothing, kitchen appliances . . . it's all here.

The owners of the castle, a group of former vislae who like to keep a low profile, have a connection with Markus Taul of **Grey Memories** in the Celestial Bazaar, and they get first pick of some of the Shadow wares he procures.

Of course, incidents of vislae being drawn back into Shadow in and around the Castle of the Lie are many.

**Kryven:** level 7; +3 defenses; vislae with many varied spells, +3 spellcasting

*People changed in the changeries are called the Perfected.*

**Venna Allaman:** level 4; +3 Resist; +2 social interaction

**Zero:** level 17

*Sometimes people call it Bar Zero. Zero calls it Zero's, but the neon sign that shines over the door is always just "Zero."*

*Grey Memories, page 93*

## CHANGERIES

There are many changeries, but they are all clustered together in one part of the district. Each is a large building filled with strange devices. Fat smokestacks belch foul-smelling smoke, and thin chimneys release colored mists. Pipes exude strange residues and wastewater that sometimes makes the oddest sounds—the crying of a baby, the screeching of an owl, or the babbling of a madman.

Usually, a front office offers menus of possible changes or consultations with an employee wherein a customer can describe exactly what they want done. These offices are welcoming, quiet, and clean. No one—other than employees and the customer undergoing the procedures—is allowed into the much larger back rooms where the work is actually done.

Most changeries have spells of forgetfulness so that those undergoing alterations don't remember the horrors required to accomplish the desired changes.

## ZERO'S

Fartown has more than its share of bars, restaurants, and cafes. (Vislae, it seems, don't like to eat or drink at home too often.) None are more popular among vislae than Zero's.

You get a different version of the story depending on who you ask, but it seems that **Zero** was a powerful, ancient demon who eventually transformed himself into a bar.

Some people say that Zero gained a soul. Others say he just had a change of outlook (a pretty fundamental occurrence, if true). But Zero seems to have no interest in the destructive or corrupting activities that other demons have. At least, not anymore. It's not possible to summon Zero, and most magic that applies specifically to demons has no effect on him.

Zero's does not have a standard location. Its entrance appears somewhere different every time, and only at night. It's impossible to find the place during the day. It very likely doesn't exist in the daylight. But in the darkness, it's always easy to find if you're looking for it, and sometimes even when you're not. The entrance appears in the back



## DRINKS IN ZERO'S

Although Zero serves all the expected wines, beers, and alcohols, the bar offers far less standard drinks as well.

**High Water:** “It’s a better choice than Hell,” the label proclaims, playing off the name’s reference to “Come hell or high water.” This is a cheap drink, just 18 orbs a shot, but you get what you pay for. It’s standard custom, after taking a shot, to say, “I made the wrong choice.”

**Ubara:** Ubara is an effervescent drink brewed in the Feyward Lands (another name for the Unfathomable Archipelago). Using cold that is colder than cold, vulture-faced, blue-eyed karids freeze the recitations of epic poems and dissolve them in liquid, bottled before a single stanza or couplet can escape. Once poured into glasses, each bubble carries with it a single syllable. Very rarely, one might whisper an entire word, or—if you’re very lucky or very patient—you might hear an entire line or perhaps a name that suggests which poem had been frozen, and thus you can know the vintage of the brew. It’s a bar game

to be the first to name the source of a particular batch. This expensive drink is 2 crystal a glass.

**White Noise:** Distilled by monks in the Ticking Forest by means of a ritual kept secret from the outside world, White Noise comes in small, glistening white bottles. This drink makes you essentially deaf for about a half hour, but for White Noise aficionados, the euphoria that comes with it is completely worth it.

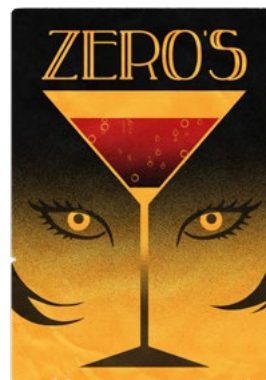
**Red Wine:** Everyone’s heard of red wine, but this is Red wine. It is bottled in the Red and carries the essence of that sun. It’s delicious, but it burns. Drink a little and the endorphin rush that accompanies the slight intoxication is an interesting experience. Drink too much, and you’ll literally feel the lining of your esophagus disintegrating, and you’ll suffer 1 point of damage with each glass beyond the first. Drinking contests with Red wine can be deadly.

of an alley, or in the side of some other structure. It’s always somewhere different, but the entrance is always the same: a heavy, windowless black door in need of paint with a flickering, buzzing neon sign above it that says “Zero.”

And it gets weirder. Zero’s isn’t just a Fartown establishment. Although it doesn’t appear elsewhere in Satyrine, it does show up throughout the Actuality. It’s possible to stumble into Zero’s in many different spots (very likely many different locations at the same time), but when you leave through the door, you always emerge where you entered. And the patrons are mostly—but not always—from the same general location as you. So if you enter in Fartown, most if not all of the people inside are vislae, but if you enter from the City of Orphans under the Gold Sun, most of the customers are from that location.

Zero’s isn’t always the same. (Demons are, of course, shape-changers—it’s perhaps naive to think that a demon who becomes a bar always remains as the same bar.) One night the inside is that of

*It’s very likely that other buildings in Satyrine are actually demons as well, but only Zero makes that fact so overt.*



a dingy, dimly lit, smoke-filled dive with peanut shells on the floor, sticky with spilled drinks. The next night, it’s a brightly lit, well-kept place with comfortable seating, music, and a dance floor. The night after that, it’s a refined, wood-paneled hall with patrons quietly sipping port. And so on.

Two things are always the same, however. First, the restrooms in Zero’s are always filled with graffiti. Spending an hour or more reading it all earns a character 2 points of Hidden Knowledge, but this can occur only once per PC. Second, there’s always an electronic “love tester” machine in the corner. It works—apparently normally—but some people speculate there’s more to the machine than it appears.

The bartender is as much a part of Zero’s as the stools or the light fixtures, although he changes along with the bar from night to night, in both appearance and demeanor, to something appropriate for the scene. It would be wrong to say that the bartender is Zero himself. The whole bar is Zero. The bartender is just a part of him.

## PEOPLE OF FARTOWN

**Thae Nitaris:** Tall, dark-skinned, and bald, Thae has violet eyes, with a raven on one shoulder and a dove on the other. She's an Apostate and seems to spend most days in or around Gynn's Gramarye, studying spells or just talking to other vislae. She's very gregarious and introduces herself to everyone there. She's friendly, if a bit brash and loud. Her interests seem . . . random and scattered. It's clear that she spends a lot of time studying magic, but often switches to a new spell or secret before finishing what she started.

Her dove's name is Real and the raven's name is Imaginary.

**Charles Abernathy:** A 3rd-degree Goetic, Charles is tall, handsome, and charismatic, with salt and pepper hair and just enough scruff to be appealing. However, appearance isn't that important to him (no one values what they have, do they?). He's also grown bored of the Order of Goetics. Instead, he enjoys meeting vislae who've recently left Shadow and asking them about their Shadow lives. Those he finds particularly interesting, he befriends. This isn't a ruse or a ploy. Charles is helpful and kind, and he finds tales from Shadow a welcome diversion to Satyrine life, which he finds inexplicably boring.

**Enridima:** A self-proclaimed expert on ghosts, the Dead, and "necromancy," Enridima plays the part well. She is tall, her natural paleness is enhanced by cosmetics, and her long black hair hangs about her shoulders like serpents. Her house is covered in gargoyles (some of which are animate beings that help watch over the place) and filled with ornate, spooky decor. It's also very likely the most haunted locale in Satyrine, as she encourages ghosts to cohabitate with her.

Despite the theatrics, Enridima truly is one of the foremost experts among the living regarding ghosts, wraiths, and dealing with either using magic. She often has relevant ephemera—and even occasionally objects of power—to sell or trade.

Enridima has a thoughtform butler who takes the form of a tall, pale giant and responds to her calls simply with, "You rang?"

**Wystrin:** level 8; +2 Withstand, +4 Dodge, +4 Resist; +2 knowledge; vislae with many spells, including such effects as improving defenses, dispelling magic, physical attacks, summoning needed items, and enhanced movement, +4 spellcasting

**Thae Nitaris:** level 6; +3 defenses; +3 knowledge and social interaction; vislae with some spells, +3 spellcasting

**Somin:** level 3; +1 Resist; +2 crafting

**Charles Abernathy:** level 9; +2 defenses; +3 knowledge and social interaction; vislae with some spells, +4 spellcasting, Goetic summoning

**William Ballond:** level 11; +4 Resist; vislae with a few spells, +4 spellcasting; many ephemera and objects of power

**Nathan Nevrimol:** level 7; +3 Resist; +4 knowledge; vislae with some spells, +3 spellcasting

*Fartown should be strange, but lovably strange. This should be the place the PCs feel the most at home.*

**Enridima:** level 7; +3 defenses; +2 knowledge and social interaction; vislae with many spells, including effects such as seeing the invisible, relating to spirits, defending against spirits, harming spirits, and invisibility, +4 spellcasting; many ephemera and objects of power; special relationship with spirits

**Wystrin:** A 4th-degree Vance, Wystrin is well known and well respected. She teaches Advanced Spell Mechanics on the Vancian Campus and keeps a permanent office there. Businesslike to the point of being considered severe, she lets her (proverbial and literal) hair down once a week to find a dance hall with excellent music. Rumor has it that she lost her true love when she was young and has no interest in romance or even real friendship today.

**Somin:** Somin is a zilat whose magical talent lies in sculpture. She likes to hide secrets within her creations. She once made a sculpture that was a replica of the Black Cube, and she hid a secret within the cube itself, written on a small piece of paper.

**William Ballond:** A 5th-degree Maker, William has a wide variety of objects of power, particularly weapons. He is getting on in years, too old and too feeble to really use what he's made. He is slowly divesting himself of various objects, either as gifts or through sales or barter. Thieves thinking the old man an easy mark, however, find that Makers can also make elaborate traps and defenses that don't require the strength or even the presence of their creator.

**Nathan Nevrimol:** A very intelligent and knowledgeable vislae, Nathan nevertheless has few friends. This is due to his habit of eavesdropping on other people's conversations in public places (such as Zero's) and then breaking in when someone says something he thinks is mistaken. He starts most of his sentences with "Well, actually . . ." In truth, he's often right, and he really just wants someone to acknowledge that.

**"Necromancy" is not a term most vislae use any more than they use "wizard" or other fantasy fiction terms. Some call such words "Tolkien" or "Gygax" words, but not everyone gets those references.**



# FARTOWN







# ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout the Actuality, people band together for many reasons, and primary among them is belief. The most obvious among these organizations are likely the various orders of vislae, although only three—the orders of say the Vance, Goetica, and Makers—have anything resembling a cohesive structure.

The organizations presented in this chapter are just a few—very few, in fact—examples of those found throughout all the realms. You’ll find many more in the Path of Suns and Satyrine chapters. The difference is, most of the organizations here are larger concerns than those of just one locale. Still, the Actuality is a very big place, and there are more large and small organizations than those described here.

## THE ORDER OF THE VANCE

One of the four major orders of vislae, the Order of the Vance focuses on the mathematical nature of spells and spellcasting, and looks upon spells as living, aware entities unto themselves.

The order is led by a group of Vances called the Telemeric Court. Members of the court are chosen from the ranks of the 6th degree of the order, based on seniority, reputation, skill, and desire. The Telemeric Court convenes at a three-week event each summer called the Conclave of Iov, although special sessions can be called at other times of the year in extraordinary circumstances.

In the Conclave of Iov, new spell discoveries are reviewed and catalogued, theory papers are read and critiqued, and various seminars and symposiums are held on topics related to the mechanics of spellcasting.

*Beware the upside-down words of the Mother of Senseless Things. Even hearing such crimes against logic can render you permanently insane.*

People in Satyrine (and elsewhere) consider Vances to be the archetypal vislae: studious individuals with their minds on matters of little interest to anyone else. They are looked at in a positive light, if for no other reason than the actions of the Paresaad, a small branch of the order that deals with magical calamities. “At least they clean up after themselves,” people say.

## MEMBERSHIP

Vances spend most of their time studying spells and magical theory. Many focus their studies on developing new spells of their own. The prestige of creating a new spell that other Vances will use fuels their efforts. Recognition of this kind propels a Vance in advancement through the six degrees of the order, and thus most members become fairly obsessed with such acclaim.

It is an honor to be able to learn from an advanced member of the order, and as one rises in degree, it becomes more and more likely that they will offer their services as a teacher. Some instruct in a one-on-one capacity, while others lecture in a classroom environment.

This creates a very academic presence for the Vancian Order. Vances are usually friends with other Vances, but social activities are outside the purview of official functions. As a whole, they are a serious, studious group, and they present themselves as such to their membership and to outsiders.

## HEADQUARTERS

Most often referred to as “the Campus,” the headquarters of the Order of the Vance can be found in Fartown. As the name would suggest, it



is a large group of buildings located on a single tract of land. 17 buildings make up the campus, including administrative offices, records offices, lecture halls, laboratories, and two different libraries—one just for spells, the other for more general esoteric studies.

## HISTORY

The Order of the Vance is likely one of the oldest orders. Perhaps only the Order of Weavers is older. Although its precise origins are up for debate (and Vances love to debate), certainly two of the most renowned Vances from the order's history were Zamrah and Orrod. These two rivals discovered a great many original spells and together founded the Telemeric Court, ostensibly to keep each other's power in check and place regulations and controls on new spell development by others in the name of safety. Eventually, Zamrah created a spell that allowed her to grow to more than 100 feet tall. Unfortunately, it drove her mad. Orrod used his magic to stop her insane rampage across Fartown, but it cost him his life. The subdued Zamrah regained her senses and afterward created the Paresaad in Orrod's honor. She also created a spell that turned the raindrops in the next storm into flower petals, each bearing the name of her late rival.

## THE PARESAAD

The Order of the Vance trains and sponsors a group of members that operates as an emergency response team in times of magical crisis in Satyrine. While the Paresaad has no official authority in the city, their involvement in times of need is almost always appreciated. Their reputation is one of speed, efficiency, and self-sacrifice.

## THE ORDER OF MAKERS

Makers are one of the four major orders of vislae. They direct their magical skills toward making things, and as an organization their main focus is sharing those skills and techniques.

Probably.

*The Key provides much more detail on the four major orders of vislae and their degrees, abilities, and structures.*

*The Paresaad are more like firefighters than police officers. They deal with emergencies and attempt to save people from calamities that ensue from the use or misuse of magic. They don't arrest people, pursue criminals, or conduct investigations.*

## MAKERS' TRUTHS AND LIES

One of the strangest things about the Makers is their need for internal secrecy. So great is this need that they have developed a comprehensive disinformation campaign about themselves. They don't hide their secrets—they obfuscate them amid so many deceptions that no one can tell where the truth really lies.

The layers of lies and truth change depending on your association with the order and their ascending degrees.

## THE PUBLIC AND JOURNEYMAN MAKERS

The following bits of information are known by people outside the order and those just starting their path as a Journeyman Maker. Some of these "facts" are contradictory.

- ✦ The Order of Makers is secretly allied with the Deathless Triumvirate and is responsible for maintaining the very existence of Satyrine.
- ✦ The Makers made the world.
- ✦ The Makers made Shadow, and the Demiurge (its presumed warden) is actually the head of the order.
- ✦ The Makers are very loosely knit as a group. It's more of a professional organization than an order.

## 1ST-DEGREE MAKERS

Makers of the 1st degree know the following to be true: the Makers are more like a guild. They set the standards for crafting objects of power and regulate the buying and selling of such items (as well as the materials, ingredients, and so forth that are involved).

## 2ND-DEGREE MAKERS

Those becoming 2nd-degree Makers are told the following: while there is some truth to the guild comparison, the order is more formally organized than the comparison would suggest in matters beyond simply crafting or selling.



### 3RD-DEGREE MAKERS

Makers seem like a loosely organized group with little structure until a member is inducted into the 3rd degree. These Makers learn that there is a strict hierarchy in the order, even if the lower degrees don't know it. In fact, the degrees above 3rd are more like military ranks, with the 6th-degree Imperators serving a role akin to generals.

### 4TH-DEGREE MAKERS

If one ascends to the 4th degree in the Order of Makers, one learns that the group is tied directly to powerful entities called the Architects. The order is silently directed by these beings.

### 5TH-DEGREE MAKERS

Makers of this degree learn that the order's headquarters is a secret extradimensional tower that lies within the ghostly shadow of a long-collapsed tower in Fartown. This is called the Architect's Tower, and only 6th-degree Makers can enter.

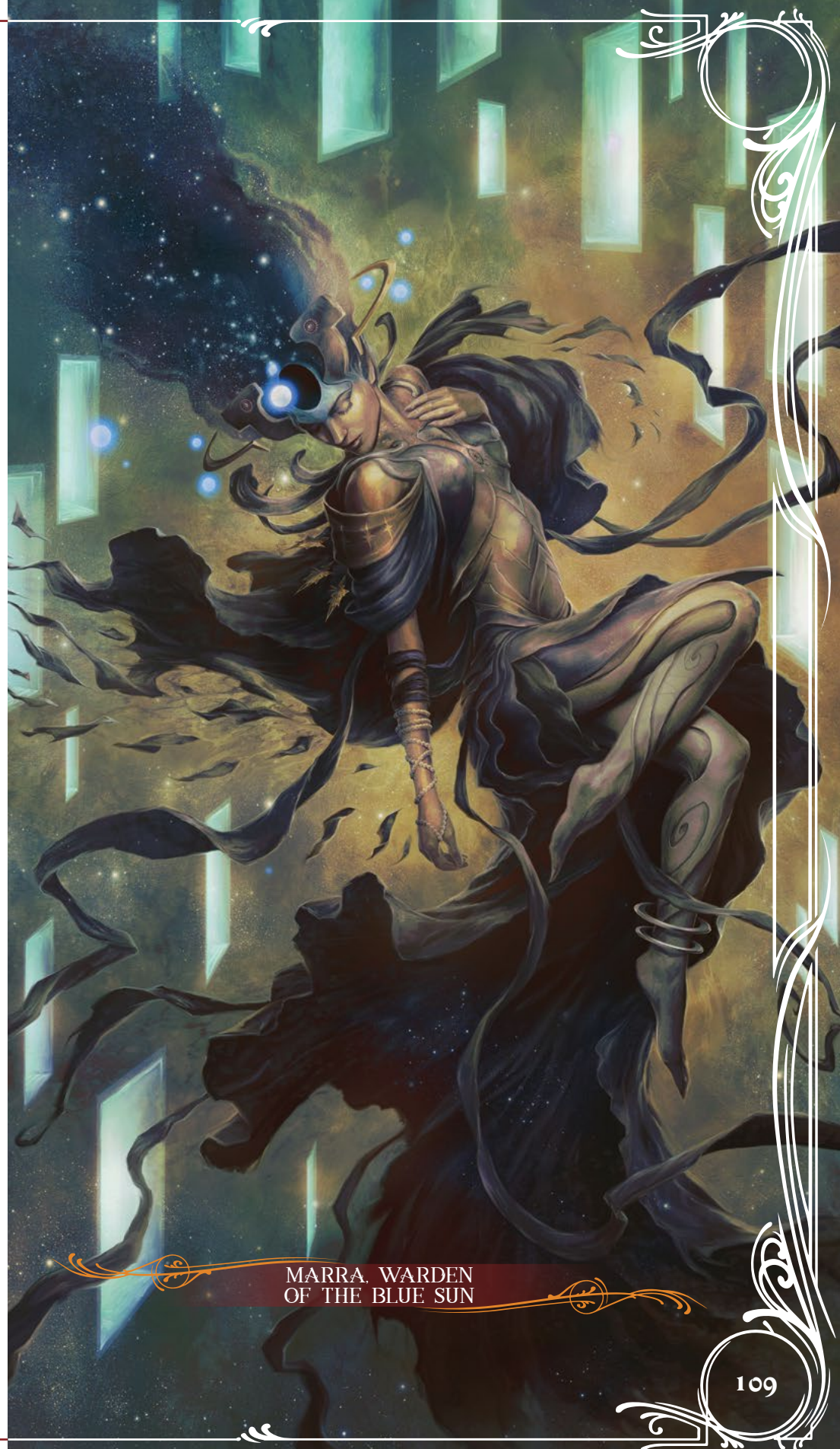
Among all the 6th-degree Makers, one is chosen as Ultimate Maker by the Architects, and that person serves until they die or relinquish the position.

### 6TH-DEGREE MAKERS

One assumes that what the 6th-degree Makers know is the complete and utter truth. What they learn is that everything everyone thinks they know about the Makers is a sham. The hierarchy of the upper degrees is fake. There are no Architects, no Ultimate Maker, and no secret headquarters within a ghostly shadow of a tower. In fact, there is no structure to the order at all. It would be simpler to think that there is no order at all except for what the lies and disinformation, in effect, create.

Which suggests the question: if everyone thinks there is an order with a structure, including more than 90 percent of those within that structure, doesn't the order and its structure actually exist? If the answer is yes, then it is the 6th-degree Makers who are fooled by the whole assemblage of untruths and half-truths, not everyone else.

Unless that's just what they want you to think.



MARRA, WARDEN  
OF THE BLUE SUN

## THE ORDER OF GOETICA

Byzantine and complex, the Order of Goetica wraps itself in cloaks of ritual, minutiae, and meticulous record-keeping. The collected bylaws and guidelines of the order fill six large books. The requirements for joining and advancing are intricate, involving all manner of rites and proper acts of obeisance to various entities and so forth.

It is likely that no one Goetic truly understands the hierarchy of the order, let alone all the bylaws.

The leaders of the order are known as **Ultima Mysterions** (6th-degree Goetics), with each overseeing a specific area. Those ascending to the 6th degree gain a secondary title to match their purview, such as Master of the Initiations, Master of Namekeeping, Master of Pact Records, Master of the Ceremonies, and Master of the Libraries, to name just a few.

## MEMBERSHIP

For all their convoluted organization, most Goetics are loners and introverts, spending their time poring over old, dusty tomes to find some aspect of an ancient pact they can exploit in their next colloquy with a conjured entity. “I’d rather spend my time with the dark powers than in a room full of other vislae,” is a common Goetic sentiment.

More than members of other orders, Goetics often see their fellow Goetics as rivals. They don’t share their knowledge unless they have to or they think they’re getting something better in exchange.

To the rest of the world, the Order of Goetica is off-putting and strange, even by vislae standards. An individual member might be okay, but even to the most open-minded non, a group of people who potentially spend their time shut up in dark rooms talking with demons is best held at arm’s length.

## HEADQUARTERS

The Goetic Hall of Records is a large, gothic structure dripping with leering demons, noble angels, and other spiritual beings immortalized in stone. Inside, in addition to the offices of all the high-ranking members of the hierarchy, the



### THE KEY

*Ultima Mysterions,  
page 58*

*Some people say that the Goetics have to use magic to understand their own order’s hierarchy and rules, and thus they get only brief glimpses of their own organization.*

building has a huge catalog of members, member activities, summoned entities, pacts, and more. There are billions of spiritual beings in the Actuality (unless their number is infinite, of course), and a great many of them are detailed here.

## THE ORDER OF WEAVERS

The Weavers are less an organization and more a group of hundreds of tiny organizations. There’s not much to say about them because each is very different. One Weaver cell might be a close-knit familial group, while another might be almost like a cult, with a single leader and their followers. Still others might be more akin to a book club than anything else.

A cell typically has anywhere from six to thirty members, but there are exceptions that are both smaller and far larger.

There are likely forty to fifty Weaver cells in Satyrine, most—but not all—based in Fartown.

## SAMPLE WEAVER CELLS

Here are three sample Weaver cells, each of which is found in Satyrine—all in Fartown, specifically.

**The Society of Brynn:** Followers of a philosopher named Brynn, members of this cell value beauty, nature, and growing things, despite the fact that they live in a very urban area. They talk gardening, cooking, and flowers as much as magic.

**An unnamed cell led by Terrence Voord:** A very casual, loosely organized cell “led” by a wealthy Weaver named Terrence Voord—mostly because his large mansion is a great place to meet and hang out. About half the members seem to belong so they can mooch off of Voord, but the other half are doing interesting work on experimenting with weaving techniques.

**The Challom Street Weavers:** A spirited group of young Weavers who see magic as an art and art as a positive way to change the world. They like to come off as brash and edgy, but they spend most of their time reading artsy novels and talking about big concepts in cafes over coffee and cigarettes.



## THE HENDASSA

The Hendassa is an ever-changing group. One minute, it seems as though they are an altruistic society that helps get exiled vislae back from Shadow. The next, they appear to be a sinister group with dire ulterior motives.

The truth is not one of duplicity, but actual change. The Handasa, as a group, is in constant flux. On a daily basis (or so), the leadership, the intentions, the very membership changes. Even the spelling of the name changes.

This means that the Handassa is everything that everyone says it is. Some people believe it to be a group devoted to rescuing vislae and returning them to the Actuality. Some believe it to be an organization that holds influence over those rescued vislae long after they are returned, getting them to reveal secrets. Both are correct, as are a dozen other theories.

Where the directives to change come from, and precisely how those changes are enacted and communicated to the membership, are mysteries. What is known is that process isn't perfect. Sometimes Handasah agents unknowingly work against the group's current purpose or even work directly in opposition to other agents.

### HENDASA BASES

The Hindasa maintain a few bases, three of which are in Satyrine—in Fartown, the Marquis Quarter, and the Fade—and one particularly secretive base in the Nightside of Grey. All these bases are staffed and important, and any of them could be the group's main headquarters, since that designation changes too. The base in Fartown is an acclimation center for rescued vislae, the one in the Marquis Quarter is an indoctrination center for returned vislae, the base in the Fade serves as a training center for the Grey Reapers, and the secret base in the Nightside of Grey might just be a place where kidnapped vislae are used as “soul batteries” to power an immense and sinister device.

*Grey Reaper: level 7; +3 defenses; +2 stealth and social interaction; many are vislae with some spells, +3 spellcasting*

*There might be even more Hindasah bases. Many people suspect that a secret one lies on an island in the Unfathomable Archipelago.*

## THE GREY REAPERS

The “field agents” of the Hendasah, **Grey Reapers** are people who willingly enter Shadow, take on roles within its illusions, and find vislae trapped within the coils of the Grey Sun. They typically work in teams so that if one of them is drawn into the lies of Shadow, the others can free them, reminding them that nothing there is real, however deceiving and compelling the magic of the realm might be.

When Grey Reapers find a trapped vislae, they assess the situation and determine the best way to get the target out. This is usually a slow transition, but sometimes (particularly when the outlook of the organization changes) it can be little more than an abrupt abduction.

Among vislae, Grey Reapers are known either as saviors or as nightmares, depending on the Hindassa's goals at the time.

## THE CHURCH OF MIDNIGHT

The cults and sects of demon worshippers and dark god faithful are many, but most are understandably secretive and elusive. The Church of Midnight is singular in its rather overt nature. They operate in the open and welcome those who might oppose them into their temples so they can share their truths.

Rather than having one patron, one faith, or one dogma, the Church of Midnight has many. They revere many dark gods, many demons, and many void entities. This ecumenical, latitudinarian nature makes it difficult for outsiders to fully understand them.

In addition, the Church embraces the needs of the depressed, the anxious, and the suicidal. They offer counseling and outreach for such people, and even have magical assistance or drugs that can help them cope. Truly, they are an enigmatic group of demon worshippers.



## THE MIDNIGHT CATHEDRAL

The Church's heart lies in Satyrine, in the Confederacy of Cloisters. Although this cathedral is a place where church members conduct rites in the name of various demonic entities and dark gods, it's also a shelter and treatment center for the depressed. A staff of therapists and counselors works there every day.

High Priestess Adored **Ynfallosa**, in charge of the Midnight Cathedral, is a powerful vislae who uses glammers to hide her advanced age. A public figure, she all but dares angels or mortals who fear or hate the darkness to confront her or her organization. Sometimes they do, and sometimes there is conflict. Sometimes that conflict turns violent. But the Church of Midnight always survives and often emerges victorious. Either way, the conflict itself is a paean to at least some of their patrons.

**Ynfallosa:** level 10; +3 Resist; +2 social interaction; vislae with many spells, +5 spellcasting

## THE DEAD IN SATYRINE

Not truly an organization, but close, the Dead are tight-knit in Satyrine, for they will forever be seen as apart and other. It would seem that there is no greater dichotomy in the minds of most people than that created by the thin line between the living and the dead.

The Dead all have special dispensation from their Empress to walk among the living, though they must check in from time to time at the Pale Embassy. However, if one looks at the Dead as an organization, the embassy is not their "headquarters." That would be a restaurant in the Orchard of Mausoleums called Merrian's. And their "leader" would be Lady **Valachri Sudenmal**, who claims to be a relative of Empress Xjallad (but that's likely not true, as the Empress is not and has never been mortal, whereas Lady Valachri is a long-dead aristocrat from Satyrine).

The Dead conduct business with the living and perform duties (some of which might be espionage) on behalf of their leaders. Most, however, do whatever it takes to remain in Satyrine so they can enjoy its pleasures.

**Valachri Sudenmal:** level 7; +3 defenses; +3 social interaction

The Dead are always on the lookout for new ways to keep their bodies from further deteriorating or smelling. They wrap themselves in constricting strips of cloth and douse themselves with perfumes and oils. "You bribe the Dead with cologne," the old saying goes, and there's truth to it.

Most of the Dead "live lives" not terribly unlike those of the living. They don't eat or sleep, but they do keep homes, shop, and attend social functions. Many are employed among the living. A few particularly diabolical or insane individuals carry out vile deeds—murder, torture, or worse. These Dead hate the living and want to take out the frustration of their own existence on others. They are the exception, however, as the Pale Embassy attempts to screen out such potential liabilities from gaining a visa to enter the city.

There are likely about two thousand of the Dead in Satyrine at any given time.

## THE CAHDREDON

**The sky must change with every breath we add to it.**

The Cahdedron seek the ultimate truths. Each member knows that even as we stand on the shore, looking at the sea, we stand on many different shores at once. Many shores, but many versions of ourselves as well. Each of us is a multitude.

Reality is complex.

Is there a true self? A true world? We tell vislae escaping Shadow that the Actuality is the real world, and while that's true, it's true only in comparison to Shadow. Is the Actuality all there is, or just another layer?

The members of the Cahdedron strongly suspect that there's far more beyond the walls we know, and they want to prove it, at least to themselves. They are explorers, physically and mentally.

Many members are vislae, but some are not. Vislae do not have a monopoly on the higher truths, the Cahdedron say. Of those who are vislae, the organization makes no bones about the orders. All



### CAPTAIN ALAMATHI AND HER SHIP. THE TURN OF THE PAGE

are welcome. And there's no reason one cannot belong both to a vislae order and to the Cahdedron.

With a head like a blue-burning bush, **Cheilith** is not a person you'd soon forget. She's the leader of the Cahdedron and is very hands-on. She spends most of her time exploring the farthest reaches of the Actuality, but her lieutenants have the ability to contact her no matter where she roams, if she is needed.

The organization has many strongholds throughout the Actuality, but Cheilith's home—a castle of ice under the Gold Sun—could be thought to be their headquarters.

## THE THIRD HAND

The Third Hand is a fellowship of vislae who seek to use their powers and knowledge together for personal gain. While this could be said to be true of the various orders of vislae as well, the Third Hand is more overt and direct. Its leadership votes on an overall goal for the entire membership, the

**Cheilith:** *level 11; +3 defenses; +2 deception and social interaction; +1 Armor; vislae with a great many spells, spellcasting +5*

members all work toward that goal, and when it is achieved, they reap the benefits, if any.

In the past, members have sought to find a way to conjure a sunship (that effort failed); they sought to learn a long-forgotten pact with Green nature spirits (that goal was reached); and perhaps most impressively, they found a cache of objects of power and artifacts of the Legacy.

Currently, they seek the lost Book M, thought to be one of the greatest treatises on magic ever written.

Membership requirements include a pledge of fidelity (backed by magic) and a demonstration of a valuable (and preferably unique) skill, talent, or magical ability.

The Third Hand is based out of an abandoned doll factory in Fartown (not surprising that business failed, since it's no place for a factory). Their council of leaders currently has only three members: Oleald, an older 4th-degree Vance; Kiraric, a 5th-degree Goetic; and Paredthe, a 4th-degree Weaver.



## TROUBADOURS OF THE ANCIENT PATH

**Never fail to help a fellow traveler.**

Traveling musicians, actors, and performers live by a code. The keepers of that code are the Troubadours of the Ancient Path. They know that deep in our very souls, we need joy, we need entertainment, we need a momentary escape.

**Never fail to repay an owed debt.**

There is no leadership structure and certainly no base of operations. Most of the members live nomadic lives. They are their own leaders, and their headquarters is the road. Membership and the meaning of the Troubadours are passed from an established member to a potential member. Induction is simple and quick.

**Never fail to cheat a cheater.**

*It is easy to paint the various organizations as villainous or heroic, but in reality, almost any of them can take on either role, given the right circumstances.*

Many members wear a ring or other item bearing the group's symbol, an eye bounded by a hexagonal shape. Some get tattoos. Revealing the symbol is an act of trust, but members who find each other on the road always have a bond and an understanding. The "ancient path" carries with it deep meaning. It's the idea that before there were cities, and before there was civilization, there were wandering singers, storytellers, and performers. The Troubadours carry that torch still today. They remember the importance of their role to humanity, and what that means.

**Never fail to entertain the audience.**

## THE VESPERTINE

The Vespertine is a group of insidious, sinister infiltrators that ultimately serve the Dark and hate the suns. Dark gods and demons act as patrons and advisors to the organization.

BALREGON, NIGHTSIDE  
WARDEN OF THE RED SUN



At first blush, it might seem that the Vespertine and the **Church of Midnight** are related. And to be sure, the Vespertine have infiltrated the Church. But their goals are quite different. The Vespertine are destructive nihilists who seek no less than the extinguishing of all the suns and destruction of all the realms. The Church of Midnight can be quite dark, but the destruction of everything would not even remotely serve their goals. (Even demons of the Red, if pressed, would admit that they don't want to destroy everything, if for no other reason than there would be nothing left to destroy.)

Only the worst among the demons of the Dark work alongside the Vespertine. Only those who seek the ultimate annihilation of everything. The Vespertine aren't interested in corrupting souls or compromising morals. In other words, this group of mortals is too extreme and too dark even for some demons.

**Vespertine agents** work in secret. Skilled in disguise and deception, they infiltrate influential positions in societies and cultures. They learn magical secrets and gather objects of power. All the while, they focus on their ultimate goal of eradicating the light of the suns. Vespertine agents take the long view, because their sights are set on such a monumental prize. Some might spend their whole (double) life working to learn a particular spell or secret or to undermine the work of an enemy. They understand that every small victory—no matter how subtle—advances their overall agenda. Sometimes, an agent will take drastic action for the cause, murdering someone or destroying something in dramatic fashion. Even if it means that they are caught or killed, they give themselves willingly. Once exposed, they have no qualms about revealing their allegiance to the Vespertine, but they will not betray their fellows.

Members meet from time to time in secret. They exchange information, gain new instructions, and take time to revere the darkness together. The organization does not have a single leader, but instead it has many, too fanatical to vie for power among themselves. For the leaders and those who follow them, the group itself and even their own lives are inconsequential. Only the goal is important.

*Church of Midnight,  
page 111*

*Masked House, page 80*

**Vespertine agent:** level 7;  
+3 defenses; +4 stealth and  
social interaction; +1 Armor

*Vespertine agents are  
motivated by sheer hatred  
for existence in a way  
that most people can't  
even comprehend.*

## XAN WEIR

Existence, to the Xan Weir, is a sin. Walking around alive is a crime against God. So they wear masks their entire life, keeping their shame from the sight of the almighty. They conceal their identity from each other and from people in general, but most important, from God.

The Xan Weir is based in religious belief, but it is not a religion unto itself. "Hide from mortal and God" is their only rule. "Existence and life are the worst of all crimes (perhaps the only crimes)" is their only dogma.

If a Xan Weir member is exposed, they cry out in shame, apologize to God for their sin (of living), and attempt to kill themselves as expediently as possible.

Their headquarters is the **Masked House** in Satyrine. There, they manufacture and decorate masks, discuss their emotional states, and socialize.

Xan Weir typically fall into two groups. The first is filled with constant shame because their very existence is an affront to God. Their every action and deed is a sin. The second feel no shame at all. They believe in the power of their mask, and if neither God nor man knows who they are, they can do anything without repercussion.

Different societies and communities are more accommodating to the Xan Weir than others. Some people—in particular, authorities—have no patience for those who refuse to give their real identities. Group members are forcibly unmasked, which is of course a death sentence. In Satyrine, however, they are mostly tolerated. Even if a masked Xan Weir member does not give their real name or show their real face, the masks themselves are typically quite different from each other. The members develop "mask identities," which may be fiction but do not change. This means they can be held accountable for crimes and pay their taxes, and beyond that, the authorities don't seem to care.

## THE OV: THE ABANDONED

Those who feel the loss of the creator of the universe the most call themselves the Ov. They feel not only loss and abandonment, but resentment, depression, and anger. So they seek to bring the creator back into her creation—even if it is by force.

Bringing up the *Legacy* only angers them further. They feel that the *Legacy* is at best inadequate and at worst condescending. To distinguish themselves from devotees of the *Legacy*, they refer to the creator of the universe as the “original spirit.”

The Ov congregate in small groups to express their anger and to plot and scheme to achieve their goal. Some—but not all—go a step further and lash out against aspects of the *Legacy*. First and foremost, they target the angels, whom they have been known to kidnap or even murder.

Mostly, though, they seek secrets or magical practices that can help them achieve their goal. One current ritual the Ov are experimenting with involves bathing their own newborns in the blood of those freshly murdered, in order to infuse the original spirit into one or more of them.

Abandonment leads to anger and resentment, which in turn lead to heinous acts, seemingly justified.

## THE UNSEEN CHILDREN

**Children unseen, yet still in the corner of your eye.**

**They speak and they spy,  
they steal and they pry.**

**Ask them what. Ask them where. But never  
ask of them why.**

Children in Satyrine disappeared in great numbers during the War. Stories say that some of them were transformed into hideous things like roachgoblins. Other tales are even stranger.

Satyrine is haunted by furtive movements creeping at the edge of sight, but never quite entering it—tiny thieving hands, prying eyes, empty candy wrappers on the ground, and occasional

*Legacy*, page 6

*The monks of the Monastery of O-ula, in the Confederacy of Cloisters, practice self-flagellation to ward off bad luck. For a donation, they will do so on your behalf.*

high-pitched whispers. All of these are signs of the Unseen Children.

Never maturing, these children aren't quite ghosts, but they're not quite alive, either. They watch, and they listen, which means they know many secrets. But they're fearful, more likely to hide than to interact. And they're oh so good at hiding.

The Unseen Children know all the shortcuts. All the secret paths. All the bolt-holes. All the tiny spaces just big enough to squeeze through to get somewhere. And sometimes, because it's Satyrine, those spaces lead to quite surprising places.

It's said that the Unseen Children have their own agenda, but no adult knows what it is—perhaps no adult can. Maybe it can be understood only in the mind of a child. But don't think for a moment that such a thing would be less true or less important. In fact, it's probably just the opposite.

All that is known for certain is that the Unseen Children exist, and that “they sneak and they spy, they steal and they pry.” And two more things as well. First, sometimes they find a child unhappy or abandoned, and they offer a welcoming hand—and that child is never seen again. Second, very rarely, an adult becomes known to the Unseen Children and forms a very tentative sort of special relationship that allows them to occasionally ask questions or learn of a secret way into or out of a place in the city. Developing a relationship with the Unseen Children is difficult. Candy is a good start.

## THE KNIGHTS OF THE NAME

**My greatest weapon is my integrity. Earned respect and adherence to principle are my armor and my shield. If I cannot look every person in the eye, I am nothing. If I cannot abide my own soul, how will any fight alongside me?**

Fighting against injustice, struggling against tyranny, and generally righting wrongs seem like the stuff of fairy tales. Surely no one is so altruistic or selfless in the real world.

Oh, you are so wrong.

The Knights of the Name dedicate themselves to such ideals. This includes charity and aid, but first and foremost, it means standing in the way of wrongdoing—often dangerous wrongdoing. More than anything, the Knights of the Name stand by their convictions and their principles and let nothing compromise their integrity. The “Name” that such a knight upholds is their own.

These knights don’t wear shining armor or ride white chargers. They look just like everyone else. Some might be warriors, but others are shopkeepers, factory workers, or entertainers. And of course, some are vislae.

It’s not easy to be a Knight of the Name. They hold themselves to an almost impossibly high standard. People hold them in high regard, but most members eschew public recognition. Standing up for a principle just for praise or admiration is no principle at all.

This order of knighthood has chapters throughout the Actuality. Each one has its own headquarters and its own leader. Knights of the Name are generally self-directed in their duties (and of course, almost all have other occupations or concerns as well), but sometimes a chapter leader will assign a member a task or gather a group of knights to accomplish a single objective.

## THE ABNORMOUS

The Abnormous believe that a mortal can serve no greater purpose than to host an immortal spirit, like that of a demon.

As their name would suggest, the Abnormous are (intentionally) misshapen and hideous. They use the changeries to give themselves particular forms, each supposedly suited to host a possessing spirit.

The demons of the Red that serve a demonic noble named Princess Kadaathis have forged a pact with the Abnormous. In exchange for supernatural aid, the Abnormous host a sort of larval demon called an **urgeborn** that exists only as a spirit until it has possessed a human host for at least a decade, at which point it matures into a physical form.

**Gigarent:** level 8; +4  
Withstand, +2 Dodge, +4  
Resist; +3 Armor; telepathy

**Releven:** level 6; +2  
defenses; +1 social  
interaction

**Lancess Barrican:** level 7;  
+2 defenses; +4 perception,  
+2 social interaction

*Urgeborn, page 26*

The Abnormous meet in a place they call the Chapel of the Inverse, so named because they honor the concept of “as within, so without.” The universe—in the form of an immortal spirit—inhabits them, not the other way around. The Chapel lies within a Ruined Expanse near the Zardim district.

Within the Chapel, you’ll always find **Gigarent**, a monstrous figure of twisted flesh. Gigarent is, in fact, four different people fused into a single, asymmetrical quadruped with four faces in various places around their massive form. Their minds are separate but linked, so when they speak, they do so in unison. The Abnormous called Gigarent their leader, but the fused being is more of a figurehead. Real decisions and day-to-day administration are handled by a woman named **Releven**.

## THE CHALMARA SODALITY

The Chalmara believe that the Actuality is a work of art, and that there is a single creator, an artist. The Legacy is the artist signing their work. They maintain a fantastic gallery of artwork in Satyrine exemplifying this ideal and glorifying the beauty of creation. The gallery is called Chalmara House, and its head is **Lancess Barrican**, a very little man with spectacles and a starburst birthmark on one side of his face.

Although the Chalmara’s philosophy might suggest that they are a relatively benign force in the city, nothing could be further from the truth. As art critics, they are ruthless. And as they see the universe as a work of art, anything they deem to mar or give offense to the universe must be identified, isolated, and eliminated. This makes them both critic and editor. Or, perhaps more accurately, censor.

Secretly, then, under the guise of simple gallery owners and art lovers, these people commit acts of destruction and murder to cleanse the art of the world from imperfections. They wield extremely powerful magic and have created scissor-handed automatons of metal and glass called Decorticators that do their bidding, particularly when blood must be shed.



## EMOTION MILLS CONSORTIUM

Representing the business interests of the purveyors of some of the most significant goods bought and sold in Satyrine, the Emotion Mills Consortium is extraordinarily wealthy and influential in the city.

Members of the Consortium don't work in the mills (which are located mainly in the Unfathomable Archipelago) but work for the mills as agents. They handle transactions and work out deals with buyers, vendors, and those who can help transport goods.

Based in the Marquis Quarter, they have a second office in the Strangeglass District, where most of their patrons' business occurs. The Consortium is in the process of buying or building their own merchant fleet of flying and floating craft (the main way of reaching the mills). Once they do, their power will be even greater, as will, most likely, their wealth.

## THE VATIC ORDER

There are many who foretell the future. Or attempt to. Or claim to. Most belong to the Vatican Order. In some ways, the Vatican Order is a professional organization of seers, prognosticators, soothsayers, diviners, prophets, oracles, and augurs.

The Vatican Order attempts to lend some credibility to the prophecies and foretellings of its membership. They test applicants to the order to weed out charlatans and cranks. A seer who wears the order's badge or places its sign in their window does so because it legitimizes their prognostication and means that people are (hopefully) more likely to believe in them. It's about trust.

The order also attempts to manage their membership in other ways. They regulate the prices of those who charge for their services. They help organize members to ensure that one does not encroach on the territory or modus operandi of

*Rumors say that the Vatican Order is just a puppet of the Court of Nous.*

another (if either is important to the members in question). Perhaps most of all, they settle disputes between members who have conflicting auguries of the future.

The order is led by a governing assembly selected from the membership—or, more accurately, preselected. Each assembly member gains their position because it has been foretold by multiple other members.

The Vatican Order's influence is mainly in Satyrine and doesn't extend beyond Indigo for certain. They have an office and a meeting hall in Fartown.

## ORDER OF HONED THOUGHT

In many ways, this relatively small organization is little more than a social club, but in the past, the Order of Honed Thought was a potent force in the city and apparently figured prominently in the War effort.

The order has existed for well over two hundred years, and throughout that time it has had only three leaders. The first, one of the founders, was Gerrim Anarral. Gerrim believed, as did the other founders, that an understanding of the mind and its workings is the highest aspiration a conscious creature may possess. She served as the order's leader for only a few years. Back in those days, it was simply called the Order of Thought. Soon thereafter, however, General Cherevon Kol was elected leader. An honored hero of Satyrine, leading troops in the Master War as well as the Near Realms Invasion, the retired General Kol believed that it wasn't enough simply to understand one's own mind, but that it must be focused into a smoothly operating machine. Under Kol, the

organization became the Order of Honed Thought. Their mantra was developed by the general himself.

The current leader is **Natanal Vig**, a middle-aged man with scars on his neck and silver-grey eyes. One of Kol's proteges, Natanal—Nat to his friends—took on the mantle of leadership after Kol

**Satyrine is all about the juxtaposition of the mundane and the surreal, and making both equally real.**

**Natanal Vig:** level 7; +2 Withstand, +2 Dodge, +5 Resist; +2 social interaction

disappeared during the War. The loss of Kol caused the order to devolve into its current, far more casual status.

The **Hall of Honed Thought** is in the **Strangeglass District**, in a neighborhood known as Calamera.

## SPEARHEAD OF THE UNKNOWABLE

A “rival” organization of the Order of Honed Thought, the Spearhead of the Unknowable takes itself more seriously. In fact, almost half its ranks is made up of disaffected Order of Honed Thought members who left that group when General Kol disappeared.

The Spearhead is interested in focusing their psychic abilities to accomplish tasks in the physical world. They have little concern for subtlety or philosophy. They are people of action and—at least in some cases—talent. Most members are **zilats**, primarily grabbers, leapers, eradicators, tormentors, runners, and protectors. A few are vislae, mainly Apostates or Vances.

The Spearhead has created a powerful **egregor** and wants to increase their power yet again to serve their needs and reach their goals.

**Jaslin Farrokal** serves as leader of the Spearhead. She is young, with long black hair and the tattoo of a red spearhead on one cheek. She works out of the group’s headquarters in the Reinvention. There, they keep offices and a small library, as well as secured practice rooms where they train and wield their skills.



*Hall of Honed Thought,  
page 78*

*Strangeglass District,  
page 77*

*Zilats, page 124*

### THE WAY

*Egregor, page 42*

**Jaslin Farrokal:** level 8; +3  
Withstand, +4 Dodge, +4  
Resist; +2 physical actions;  
telekinesis



HER ELEGANCE







# INHABITANTS OF THE ACTUALITY

**M**ortals. Immortals.  
Demons. Angels. Spirits. People.  
Creatures. Animals.

The various populations of the Actuality are represented as nonplayer characters in the game. All NPCs, from gods to insects and everything in between, use the same basic rules and presentation.

Most of the time, an NPC is just a single number: their level. Level tells you everything you need to know about an NPC. It represents the challenge of persuading them, fooling them, attacking them, or affecting them with a spell. It's also the challenge for avoiding their attacks, whether physical or magical. It's even how much damage their attack inflicts.

Unless stated otherwise, use an NPC's level for the following:

- + Challenge of interacting with them
- + Challenge of sneaking by them, tricking them, outrunning them, and so on
- + Challenge of striking them with an attack
- + Challenge of affecting them with magic
- + Challenge of dodging their physical attacks
- + Challenge of resisting or withstanding their magical attacks or effects
- + Amount of damage their attacks (of any kind) inflict

*The moths know all the secrets except the one that lets them share.*

Generally speaking, all NPCs have health similar to a PC. If they suffer 3 Injuries, they have a Wound, and with 3 Wounds they're dead. Level can suggest a modification to the hardness of an NPC, however. Level 1 and 2 NPCs generally can sustain only 1 or 2 Injuries before having a Wound, and those of level 6 and above typically suffer 4 to 6 Injuries per Wound.

Sometimes, however, a bit more information is desirable. To make an NPC really interesting—and, perhaps just as important, to reflect their nature in their stats—a few modifications of these generalities are in order. This is true of all the creatures and beings in this chapter.

**Level:** A representation of the overall strength of the NPC. Generally speaking, mortal creatures are levels 1-10, although extraordinary examples go up to level 13. Immortals can go as high as 17.

**Injuries, Wounds, and Anguish:** Just like with a PC, boxes represent damage sustained as Injuries, and when Injuries are all checked, they become a Wound or Anguish, as appropriate (and then reset).

**Defenses:** Most of the time, these are modifications to the general categories of Withstand, Dodge, and Resist defenses. Add these to the level to determine the NPC's level for that specific kind of defense. Thus, for a level 5 creature with +1 Withstand, they are treated as level 5 when affected by a physical attack or spell, but treated as level 6 when affected by disease or poison (for instance).

This entry also indicates if the NPC has magic defenses (thus requiring two or more successes on any attack) or special immunities.

**Armor:** Some NPCs have Armor that reduces the damage sustained by any attack (physical, unless

otherwise mentioned). Damage not reduced by Armor becomes an Injury.

**Modifications:** These are modifications to actions the NPC might take. Add them to the level to determine the NPC's level for that specific action. Thus, a level 4 creature that has +2 climbing is level 4 for everything except climbing actions, for which they are level 6.

**Special Abilities:** Unless otherwise described, each separate entry (attacks, special abilities, and so on) is a distinct action the NPC can take. Each is unique and provides the details needed. If it includes something that gives an unwanted condition (such as poison) that does not end unless the character uses a rest action, the entry notes how many rest actions are needed.

**Traits:** A few suggestions for roleplaying the NPC.

## PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL STAT DIFFERENCES

Creatures that can take either physical or spiritual form have two different defense lines in their game stats. However, unless specifically mentioned otherwise, spiritual creatures cannot affect physical matter or make physical attacks. Such things are only for material creatures.

## CREATURES

Creatures may be defined as material, living, breathing things with a biology—they eat, they procreate, and so on. You know what creatures are. Animals and people are creatures. Creatures possess a soul. Spirits, demons, angels, ghosts, gods—these are not creatures, but rather entities.

*Movement speeds and precise maneuvering are not important parts of the game. Creatures and beings move as logic dictates. Birds and other things with wings can fly. Most animals are faster than people, but otherwise most beings move like people do. And so on.*

*It's good to remember that everything is self-aware. People do not hold an exclusivity over intelligence or souls.*

## ANIMALS

The term “animal” does not convey anything other than that the creature is fairly conventional—it eats food, breathes air, procreates naturally, and so on. This term loosely distinguishes an animal from a creature that still has a biology but eats rocks, breathes justice, or procreates by implanting a seed in a ghost.

### TYPICAL SMALL ANIMAL

Small animals include spiders, cats, snakes, and pigeons.

**Level:** 1

**Injuries:** ☐

**Wounds:** ☐

**Anguish:** ☐

**Defenses:** +2 Dodge

**Modifications:** +1 climbing, jumping, and balance (+1 attack if a predator)

**Claws or bite:** 1 damage (2 if a predator)

**Traits:** Hungry. Needs safe shelter.

### TYPICAL MEDIUM ANIMAL

Medium animals include dogs, deer, cows, and eagles.

**Level:** 2

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** +2 Dodge, +1 Resist

**Modifications:** +1 climbing, jumping, and balance (–2 attack if a predator)

**Claws or bite:** 2 damage (3 if a predator)

**Traits:** Hungry. Needs safe shelter.

### TYPICAL LARGE ANIMAL

Large animals include horses, elephants, crocodiles, and orcas.

**Level:** 4

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** +1 Withstand, +1 Dodge, +1 Resist

**Modifications:** +2 attack if a predator

**Claws or bite:** 4 damage (5 if a predator)

**Traits:** Hungry. Needs safe shelter.

**Don't tailor NPC levels to the PCs. Tailor them to the story the PCs are involved in.**

## PEOPLE

The term “people” suggests humans and things like humans. It doesn’t have a hard and fast definition. Rather, the distinction is intuitive.

### TYPICAL HUMAN

Level: 3

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defenses: +1 Dodge, +1 Resist

Modifications: +1 interactions

Punch: 2 damage

Traits: Self-interested. Adaptable yet resistant to change.

### TYPICAL ELDERBRIN

Shapeshifting feylike creatures. Although nowhere near as numerous as humans, they populate the Actuality. Very family-based.

Level: 4

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defense: +3 Withstand, +2 Dodge, +3 Resist

Modifications: +3 Disguise, –1 Knowledge

Feyline: Can communicate at any distance with members of their family, but not instantaneously (messages are passed along)

Shapeshift: Can take on any form—usually not a form of an existing creature, but a truly original one. Never human. Action to change.

Shaped Weapon Attack: Shape body to form weapon for 4 points of damage

Traits: Flighty. Capricious. Playful. Amused. Unmotivated.

### TYPICAL LACUNA

Intelligent, human-shaped holes in reality.

Level: 5

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defense: +2 Withstand, +1 Dodge, +3 Resist

#### THE GATE

NPC Actions, page 25

NPCs and Damage,  
page 30

*Sapient shadows are NPC versions of Shadow characters as described in The Gate, page 44*

*Some—but not all—elderbrin can take inorganic forms. But they never try to appear to be inanimate objects. Instead, they mix it into their appearance, so one that looks something like a large bear might have a head of fire and hands of glass.*

**Portal In:** As an action, can bring something that can fit through from other side of portal, including flame, water, mist, etc., as appropriate (can cause up to 5 damage).

**Portal Out:** As an action, can send something that can fit through to the other side of the portal.

**Traits:** Varies (like humans). Often inscrutable.

## SAPIENT SHADOWS

Beings of the illusion of Shadow who somehow make it out of the Grey and into the Actuality, sapient shadows are each their own anomaly. They probably don’t fully understand where they are or even what they are (although some do). Many ended up in their situation completely by accident.

Typically, sapient shadow NPCs are nothing more than a level.





## ZILATS

Not everyone who wields magic is a vislae. Those who are born with an affinity for a single magical talent are called zilats. Rather than learn spells or rituals, zilats take their one ability and hone it to perfection. This makes them very focused and very specialized, but within their one arena, very powerful. Most zilats use their affinity for financial gain—it's their profession.

No full catalog exists of all the different zilat abilities, but some are much more common than others. In Satyrine, people use slang names for zilat varieties. These include:

**Beguilers:** Illusion magic

**Creators:** Creation magic

**Eradicators:** Destruction magic

**Grabbers:** Apportation magic

**Infiltrators:** Invisibility magic

**Leapers:** Teleportation magic

**Runners:** Speed magic

**Seers:** Divination magic

**Speakers:** Telepathy magic

**Spirit hunters:** Exorcism magic

**Tormentors:** Pain magic

**Protectors:** Protective magic

A zilat can use their ability to the limit of their level + 1. So a 6th-level leaper can teleport as a 7th-level effect at most. Consulting the [Effects by Level table](#), that means they can teleport up to 1,000 miles (1,600 km).

Zilats are very, *very* focused. A creator is likely to specialize in one type of material or good—a wood creator. A cement creator. A pastry creator. A typical eradicator specializes in destroying (presumably old) buildings, bad odors, or unwanted noise. A beguiler probably creates images only of their own devising, perhaps to act out a play they've written. In each case, in regard to the thing a zilat does, that's the *only* thing they do.

## NPC VISLAE

Player characters will interact with a lot of NPC vislae. Although NPC vislae are not much different than other NPCs, here are a few guidelines.



### THE GATE

*Special NPC Actions,*  
page 25

*Unwanted Conditions,*  
page 32



### THE WAY

*Effects by Level table,*  
page 21

Obviously, NPC vislae—by definition—know some spells and likely other magical practices.

While the GM might enjoy seeing a spell from *The Way* used by an NPC from time to time, NPC vislae effects can also just be defined by their effects. Use the [Effects by Level table](#) to find effects of the NPC's level and below, and select a few for the vislae. Typically, an NPC vislae can cast a number of spells equal to their level (regardless of spell level) before needing to use a recovery action.

Keep the following in mind:

- + NPC **vislae spells** don't deplete like those of PCs. They end either when logical or—if affecting a character—when the character uses a recovery action to get rid of it.
- + If you don't want to keep track of the level of an NPC's spells (for purposes of how difficult they are to resist), just give the NPC a flat modifier for all spellcasting, usually equal to about half their level.
- + Give NPC vislae whatever minor magic they need for the situation.
- + NPC vislae can know long-form magic as needed.
- + An NPC vislae should have an ephemera object or an object of power that is 1 level lower than themselves.
- + Modify these guidelines according to what order the NPC belongs to:

**NPC Vance:** This character should have more spells than other NPC vislae. Use the Vancian method of casting spells as flavor, but don't worry about the mechanics.

**NPC Weaver:** Simply have this character produce whatever effect (lower than their level) is needed.

**NPC Maker:** This character should have an object of power of their level.

**NPC Goetic:** This character should be accompanied by a demon, angel, or other entity that is 2 levels lower than themselves.

**NPC Apostate:** This character usually has an additional +2 bonus to their Resist defense.

## GAMEMASTERING NPCs

Nonplayer character rules are intended to be “soft.” Their flexibility and ambiguity allow you to shape them to fit whatever sort of NPC you want to create. Break any of these rules as needed to portray the NPC well.

No method exists to equate an NPC with a PC. No math equates a character with a certain amount of experience to an NPC of a given level. That’s because there is no reason to do so. Don’t tailor NPC levels to the PCs. Tailor them to the story the PCs are involved in.

That said, you should have some idea of what might happen in a given encounter. Toward that end, a starting character has a chance to successfully deal with an opponent (in combat, in conversation, or otherwise) of level 10 or less—although the upper end of that range will be *very* challenging. Only advanced characters can handle a situation involving NPCs of level 11 or higher. But PCs shouldn’t always win. And good or poor decisions (not to mention lucky or unlucky die rolls) can tip the scales one way or another, every time.

Don’t let NPCs be pushovers unless you want them to be. Adapt and change to fit the situation. For example, you can use Resist defense modifications for resisting trickery or persuasion as well as magical effects. Use NPC recovery actions to give the NPC an advantage. Use GM shifts to grant the NPC a narratively interesting capability or end a PC spell prematurely.

Keep in mind the NPC’s intelligence. Smart NPCs don’t fight to the death if they can help it. They gain substantial bonuses to see through poorly constructed deceptions. They use their surroundings and their circumstances to their advantage. Basically, they act just like PCs.

Most of the time, the only notes you’ll need to keep for NPCs will be in dangerous situations in *Action Mode*. This can get tricky if there are many NPCs involved. Here are a few guidelines.

Mark off damage as tick marks on a piece of paper. When you’ve ticked off a number equal to how many Injuries the NPC can sustain, circle that group of ticks. Now it’s a Wound. Keep going until the NPC sustains enough Wounds to indicate that they’re dead.

If three to five NPCs act in concert, treat them as a single NPC of the level of the highest member of the group, with a +2 bonus on everything (including damage). Use the highest Armor rating and defense bonuses of any individual in the group. If the group (acting as a single higher-level being) suffers damage equal to its level, the weakest member of the group dies or is otherwise incapacitated.

Do the same if six to ten NPCs act in concert, but treat them as a single NPC of the level of the highest member of the group, with a +5 bonus on everything (including damage).

Groups of more than ten should be broken into smaller groups.



### THE GATE

*Action Mode, page 5*

*Game Preparation,  
page 62*

### SPECIAL ABILITIES OR ATTACKS

While an NPC can be represented by a level, it's often interesting and appropriate to give them a special ability that they can use that goes beyond a single number. Use the following as potential special abilities to quickly make an NPC more interesting. They can be weird powers, spells (particularly handy for NPC vislae), weapons or items, or something even stranger, like the result of a possession. GM should decide if these abilities are one-use, or something that can be used over and over (or something in between). The challenge for each, if needed, is of course the NPC's level.

**Absorb Knowledge:** Replicates memories and thoughts from being touched (two successes to resist).

**Assume Identity:** NPC takes on appearance, voice, and mannerisms of the being touched (two successes to resist).

**Compulsion:** Next round, target takes the action the NPC wants them to (two successes to resist).

**Conceal Lie:** Adds +3 to NPC's ability to conceal the truth and requires two successes to sense the lie.

**Displacement:** NPC appears to be a few feet to one side or the other, making them hard to target. +2 to Dodge defense.

**Energy Shaping:** Creates an object out of energy up to the same size as the NPC.

**Fiery Hands:** Inflicts damage equal to NPC level with a touch (two successes to dodge).

**Healing:** Heal 1 Wound or Anguish with a touch.

**Invisibility:** NPC disappears from sight. Attacking or finding them requires two successes.

**Mental Screen:** Magical shield repels magical attacks. Add +3 to Resist defense.

**Mind Control:** Controls the actions of a close being (two successes to resist).

**Mystic Shield:** Magical shield of force repels physical attacks. Add +3 to Dodge defense.

**Object Animation:** Grants object touched mobility and ability to act as a creature 2 levels lower than the NPC level.

**Petrification:** Touched being is turned to stone. They are alive and aware, but cannot take any actions (4 rests) (two successes to resist).

**Poison:** Inflicts 1 vex to Movement.

**Possession:** Summons a spirit 2 levels lower than NPC level to possess nearby target (3 rests).

**Psychic Stab:** Inflicts mental damage equal to NPC level upon a faraway being (two successes to resist).

**Psychokinesis:** Moves object up to 1 ton a long distance in one round.

**Pyrokinesis:** Faraway target bursts into flames, suffering damage equal to NPC level.

**Really Awful Poison:** Inflicts 1 scourge to Movement (2 rests).

**Sleep Poison:** Affected creature falls unconscious (2 rests).

**Sorcerous Venom:** Inflicts 1 scourge to Sorcery and Sortilege (2 rests) (two successes to withstand).

**Spear of Ice:** Inflicts damage equal to NPC level.

**Spell-eating Armor:** Immune to spells of lower level than NPC level. In fact, armor absorbs such spells and heals either all Injuries or 1 Wound.

**Telepathy:** NPC can communicate with any creature within sight or can send one-way psychic message to a single target anywhere.

**Teleportation:** Move to a spot up to very far away.

**Thoughtform Creation:** Creates a thoughtform 2 levels lower than NPC level that serves NPC.

**Wind Gust:** Powerful winds knock down chosen targets in a medium area within very long range.



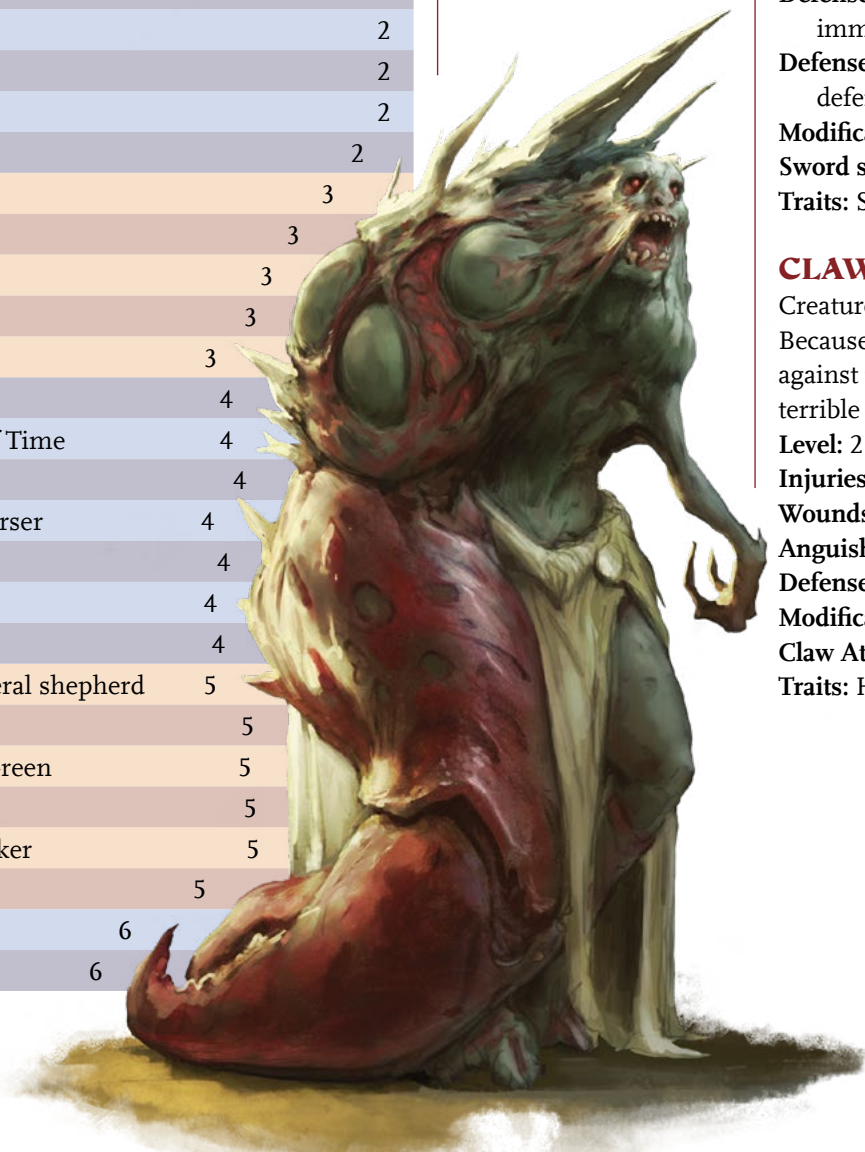
## SIMPLE CREATURES AND ENTITIES

These beings don't need much text or description. Most of the time, they are level 1 to 6. GMs should use them as models for similar beings.

### Simple Creatures and Entities by Level

Moon fox	1
Orb	1
Claw sinister	2
Grig	2
Liquid dream	2
Psychopomp	2
Ratgoblin	2
Roachgoblin	2
Jerymal	3
Lucent one	3
Pithican	3
Skerrick	3
Swarmwolf	3
Acer	4
The Enemy of Time	4
Errix hound	4
Feathered courser	4
Serpopard	4
Silver yak	4
Wrongcat	4
Cyst spawn: feral shepherd	5
Durrantix	5
Hand of the Green	5
Kithra	5
Threshold lurker	5
Vug	5
Impuissant	6
Tiberian	6

*The largest cache of the Legacy is sometimes called the Dig, and it is located at the base of a mountain under the Gold Sun named Remnanos.*



## ACER

Angelic sword spirit with feathered wings and an impossibly large sword. Often assigned to guard people, places, or things. Native to Silver, but found everywhere thanks to conjurations. If slain, the body transforms into a silver sword of great power but short lifespan.

**Level:** 4

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses (Spiritual):** Magic (two successes);

immune to physical attacks; +2 to all defenses

**Defenses (Physical):** Magic (two successes); +2 to all defenses

**Modifications:** +1 attack

**Sword slice:** 5 points of damage

**Traits:** Serene. Stoic. Noble.

## CLAW SINISTER

Creature that attacks only the left side of victims. Because of this preference, it's easy to defend against them, but should they strike, they inflict terrible wounds. Native to Indigo.

**Level:** 2

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** +3 Dodge, +1 Resist

**Modifications:** +2 climbing, -1 attack

**Claw Attack:** 5 points of damage

**Traits:** Hungry for flesh. Savage. Nervous.

### CYST SPAWN: FERAL SHEPHERD

Spawned by a Hate Cyst in Satyrine. Looks like an 8-foot-tall (2 m) albino woman with long, tattered skirts, under which live dozens of feral cats. Hands are bone white, curved knives. Feeds on the act of dying.

Level: 5

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defenses: Magic (two successes); +3 Dodge, +1 Resist

Modifications: +1 searching, +2 stealth

Mimicry: Can imitate any sound.

Release Cat Servitors: Each is level 1. Acting together, they can add +2 to shepherd's Dodge defense, attacks, and damage.

Claw Attack: 5 points of damage

Traits: Hungry for death. Sadistic.

### DURRANTIX

A human-sized insect in the Green. Omnivorous, but prefers meat.

Level: 5

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defenses: +3 Withstand, +1 Resist

Armor: +3

Modifications: +2 climbing

Pincer Attack: 5 points of damage and the foe cannot move unless they break the grip.

Stinger Attack: 4 points of damage, plus poison that inflicts 2 points of damage each hour (2 rests).

Traits: Patient. Confident. Hungry for flesh.

*Cyst spawn come in many varieties, of which the feral shepherd is just one.*

### THE ENEMY OF TIME

This demon from the Dark is a floating mass of clocks that dangle spiked weights and bladed pendulums. Randomly alters clocks (both mechanical and internal biological clocks) wherever it goes.

Level: 4

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defenses (Spiritual): Magic (two successes);

immune to physical attacks; +3 Dodge, +2 Resist

Defenses (Physical): Magic (two successes);

immune to poison and disease; +3 Dodge, +2 Resist

Freeze Time: Up to three nearby targets are frozen in time and lose next action.

Pendulum Slice: 4 points of damage

Traits: Evil.



## ERRIX HOUND

Almost always found in packs. Bite causes victim to become ghostly so the hound can absorb its spiritual essence. Native to Indigo. Leaves behind runic symbols (which fade over time) on whatever surface it touches.

**Level:** 4

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐

**Defenses:** +3 to all

**Armor:** +1

**Transitive Touch:** Can touch and harm incorporeal creatures and objects.

**Bite:** 4 points of damage and victim becomes incorporeal for a round. During that round, they cannot affect or be affected by physical matter, but the hound can automatically inflict 4 mental damage.

**Traits:** Suspicious. Otherworldly.

*The blood of an errix hound can be made into an ephemera object called Burn Blood.*



i ety i e

## FEATHERED COURSER

Large animal used as a flying mount by many throughout the Actuality.

**Level:** 4

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐

**Defenses:** +2 Withstand

**Armor:** +2

**Bite:** 4 points of damage

**Traits:** Aloof. Loyal. Fierce.

## GRIG

Spirit of mischief. Cat-sized, winged, grasshopper-thing with a fiddle. Infests houses (particularly vislae houses), hiding in impossibly small places and then exiting to break or steal things. Some say that you see your future when you hear them play their instruments, but if that's true, why is it always one of the future's worst, darkest moments?

**Level:** 2

**Injuries:** ☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); immune to poison and disease; +4 Dodge, +1 Resist

**Modifications:** +5 stealth

**Bite:** 1 point of damage plus poison that compels victim to do nothing but dance (1 rest)

**Traits:** Mischievous. Tenacious. Spiteful.

## HAND OF THE GREEN

Nature spirit. Scours the Green of unwanted trespassers. Repulsed by the color orange.

**Level:** 5

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐

**Defenses (Spiritual):** Magic (two successes); immune to physical attacks; +2 Dodge, +3 Resist

**Defenses (Physical):** Magic (two successes); immune to poison and disease; +2 Dodge, +3 Resist

**Aura of Life:** Nearby living creatures gain a +1 bonus or suffer a -1 penalty on all actions.

**Staff Strike:** 5 points of damage, plus victim is blinded.

**Traits:** Thorough. Passionate. Merciful.



## IMPUISSANT

Native of the Blue, this entity looks like a transparent woman filled with roses. Feeds on both mental and physical energies. Attracted to beautiful music.

Level: 6

Injuries: ☐☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐☐

Defenses: Magic (two successes); energy (magical or otherwise) does not harm but instead heals injuries; +3 Resist

**Drain Energy:** Touched victims suffer 6 damage, either physical or mental.

**Render Useless:** Nearby object of power or ephemera object will not work until the sun next rises.

Traits: Hungry. Curious.

## JERYMAL

Sleek, six-legged hound whose feet don't touch the ground. Native of the Gold Sun. Always looking for a worthy master; always finding them wanting.

Level: 3

Injuries: ☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

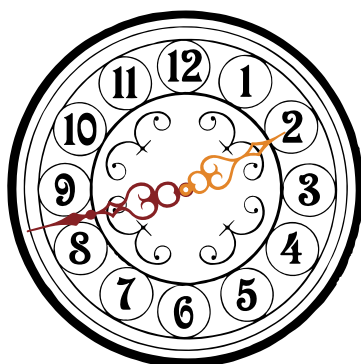
Anguish: ☐☐☐

Defenses: +5 Dodge, +1 Resist

**Incredible Speed:** Can move a long distance and take an action.

**Bite:** 3 points of damage

Traits: Rash. Confident. Merciless.



*The heart of a kithra can be used as an ephemera object called a Heart's Cage.*

*Gold Sun, page 59*

*Deeps of Sleep, page 24*

## KITHRA

Native of the Red that can control its own blood for various and shocking purposes. People tend to put the word "slavering" before "kithra" more often than not. Which isn't wrong. This three-headed lizard-thing does tend to slaver.

Level: 5

Injuries: ☐☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐

Defenses: +1 Withstand, +3 Resist

Armor: +2

**Spray Blood:** Blind a nearby target until they spend a round wiping away the blood.

**Animate Blood:** After spraying blood or suffering a Wound, can shape and harden blood to make it impossible for target to move until they break free.

**Three Bite Attacks:** 4 points of damage each

Traits: Savage. Starving. Clever.

## LIQUID DREAM

Native of the Blue that flows like water but is made of liquid congealed from leftover dreams in the Deeps of Sleep. Found in large numbers.

Level: 2

Injuries: ☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐☐

Defenses: Magic (two successes); +3 Dodge

**Brain Seep:** Touch inflicts 2 points of mental damage.

**Replicate:** Takes the form of a small creature or object of private, personal importance to a nearby victim. Working together, four liquid dreams can form something as large as a person, and ten can form something as large as a house. Victim cannot take actions unless removed from the scene or the dream form ends.

Traits: Mischievous. Capricious. Short attention span.

## LUCENT ONE

This flying man of pure light is rare but seen equally throughout the Actuality. Claims to live in the sun.

Level: 3

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defenses: Magic (two successes); +3 all defenses

**Blinding Flash:** Blind all nearby foes (level 5)

**Focused Light:** 3 damage to very faraway target

**Traits:** Self-centered. Flighty. Arrogant.

## MOON FOX

A small predatory mammal made of glass that glistens with blue-white light. Shatters when it bites, sending shards flying, but immediately reforms.

Level: 1

Injuries: ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐

Defenses: +3 Dodge, +1 Resist

**Shattering bite:** 2 points of damage

**Traits:** Timid. Scavenger.

## ORB

A minor ghost, unable to fully take any form other than that of a small, glowing orb.

Level: 1

Injuries: ☐

Wounds: ☐

Anguish: ☐

Defenses: Magic (two successes); immune to physical attacks; +3 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Cold Touch:** 1 point of damage

**Traits:** Barely aware. Barely conscious.

*The hairs of a moon fox can be woven into a pair of gloves to create an ephemera object called Moonlight's Caress.*

*Noösphere, page 14*

*Rumors say that ratgoblins and roachgoblins were born during the War, when children hid in the sewers or other underground places for too long and were transformed by their own fears into something horrid.*

## PITHICAN

Eternally angry, ape-like thing. Originally born on a Leech World, pithicans have spread to the Green and elsewhere via summonings.

Level: 3

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defenses: +2 Withstand, +2 Dodge

**Modifications:** +1 attack

**Pummel:** 4 damage

**Throttle:** 2 damage. Foe loses next turn.

**Traits:** Angry. Savage. Hungry for raw flesh.

## PSYCHOPOMP

Magically created spirit that dwells within the Noösphere. Guides newcomers through the Noösphere and searches it for people, but must be paid.

Level: 2

Injuries: ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐

Defenses: Immune to all physical attacks; +2 Resist

**Modifications:** +3 searching

**Attacks:** None.

**Traits:** Subservient. Obsequious.

## RATGOBLIN

Doberman-sized rat with long limbs. Despite having hands at the ends of its front feet, it keeps to all fours most of the time. Dwells beneath Satyrine, eating insects, regular rats, and other ratgoblins. Occasionally surfaces to the streets above in a swarm, stealing things and attacking people.

Level: 2

Injuries: ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐

Defenses: +1 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Modifications:** +3 stealth

**Bite:** 2 points of damage

**Knife:** 2 points of damage

**Traits:** Vile. Selfish. Sadistic.

## RATGOBLIN &amp; ROACHGOBLIN

**ROACHGOBLIN**

Nuisance when alone, dangerous in swarms. If a sickly child knelt on the ground and leaned forward, and an oily, disgusting insect-thing burst halfway out of their chest, that's more or less a roachgoblin. Terrified of the light, they live beneath Satyrine in sewers and burrows.

**Level:** 2

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** +1 Dodge, +1 Resist

**Armor:** +2

**Modifications:** +2 stealth

**Bite:** 2 points of damage, plus poison that inflicts 1 scourge to Movement (2 rests)

**Traits:** Disgusting. Fearful. Hungry.

*Ratgoblins and roachgoblins often dwell among each other, and most people don't talk about one without talking about the other. Despite that, these creatures don't work together well, at best ignoring each other—and at worst, tearing each other apart.*

**SERPOPARD**

Animal with the body of a leopard and the long neck and head of a serpent. Native to Silver.

**Level:** 4

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** +1 Withstand

**Modifications:** +2 attacks, +1 jumping

**Bite:** 4 points of damage, plus venom that paralyzes (1 rest)

**Claw Attack:** 3 points of damage, and victim is knocked down

**Traits:** Cunning. Careful.



## SILVER YAK

Native, ironically, of the Gold Sun, with hair of real silver.

Level: 4

Injuries: ☐☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐

Defenses: +2 Withstand

Armor: +2

**Rapid Healing:** Recover 1 damage (not Wounds) per round (no action needed)

**Horns:** 4 points of damage

**Traits:** Peaceful. Unperturbed. Unimpressed.

## SKERRICK

Vicious, bloodthirsty little predator from the Green.

Level: 3

Injuries: ☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐

Defenses: +2 to all

Armor: +2

**Bite:** 3 points of damage, plus skerrick holds on and inflicts 3 damage each round thereafter, healing its own injuries, until killed or removed by force.

**Traits:** Ravenous. Sometimes operates in packs or swarms.

## SWARMWOLF

Canine with a swarm of wasps for a head. Native to the Red. Smells of copper.

Level: 3

Injuries: ☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐

Defenses: +2 to all

**Modifications:** +3 searching

**Stinging Bite:** 4 points of damage

**Traits:** Vicious. Belligerent.

*Nothing else is known about the threshold lurker because no one's ever learned more and lived to tell about it.*

*Skerricks seem to incorporate all the worst qualities of a lizard, a badger, and perhaps a viperfish.*

## THRESHOLD LURKER

**"Someone's knocking at the door."**

**"Don't answer it!"**

**"I just looked out the window. There's no one there. But there's the knock again!"**

**"Don't answer it!"**

**[Sound of a door opening.]**

**"Yes? Who's there?"**

**[Silence. Far too much silence.]**

Level: 5

Injuries: ☐☐☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐

Defenses: Magic (two successes); +2 Resist

**Modifications:** +5 stealth

**Door Habitation:** Exists only in doorways, but cannot open doors. Can move instantly to any threshold anywhere or to any interior doorway it can see. Can take grabbed victims with it.

**Invisible:** Always **invisible**. Has no visible form. (No action.)

**Claw Attack:** 5 points of damage and the foe is pulled into the doorway until they break free.

**Traits:** Savage. Persistent. Enigmatic.

## TIBERIAN

Floating sphere of gold about 8 inches (20 cm) across. Often serves as a guardian. Native of the realm of the Gold Sun.

Level: 6

Injuries: ☐☐☐

Wounds: ☐☐☐

Anguish: ☐☐☐

Defense: +5 Dodge, +2 Resist

Armor: 2

**Transform:** Can cause a golden arm to grow from a nearby corporeal being

**Control:** Controls golden arm—can grab items and perhaps use items, attack, cover eyes, and so on. No matter how many arms it creates, it can control them all within very long range.

**Golden Arm Strangulation:** Arm can attack "host" or any close target for 5 points of damage.

**Traits:** Steadfast. Mischievous. Clever. Creative.

## VUG

Multiarmed humanoid with far too many eyes and mouths from a mysterious half-world.

Level: 5

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐

Defenses: +2 Withstand, +2 Dodge

Modifications: +3 climbing

Thrashing Arms: 4 points of damage, and foe is knocked down and loses next turn.

Too Many Bites: 7 points of damage

Traits: Maniacally, violently insane. Cannibalistic.

## WRONGCAT

Cat with a spider affinity. Mass of spiders that lives on its flesh imbues it with an immunity to venom and a poisonous bite.

Level: 4

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

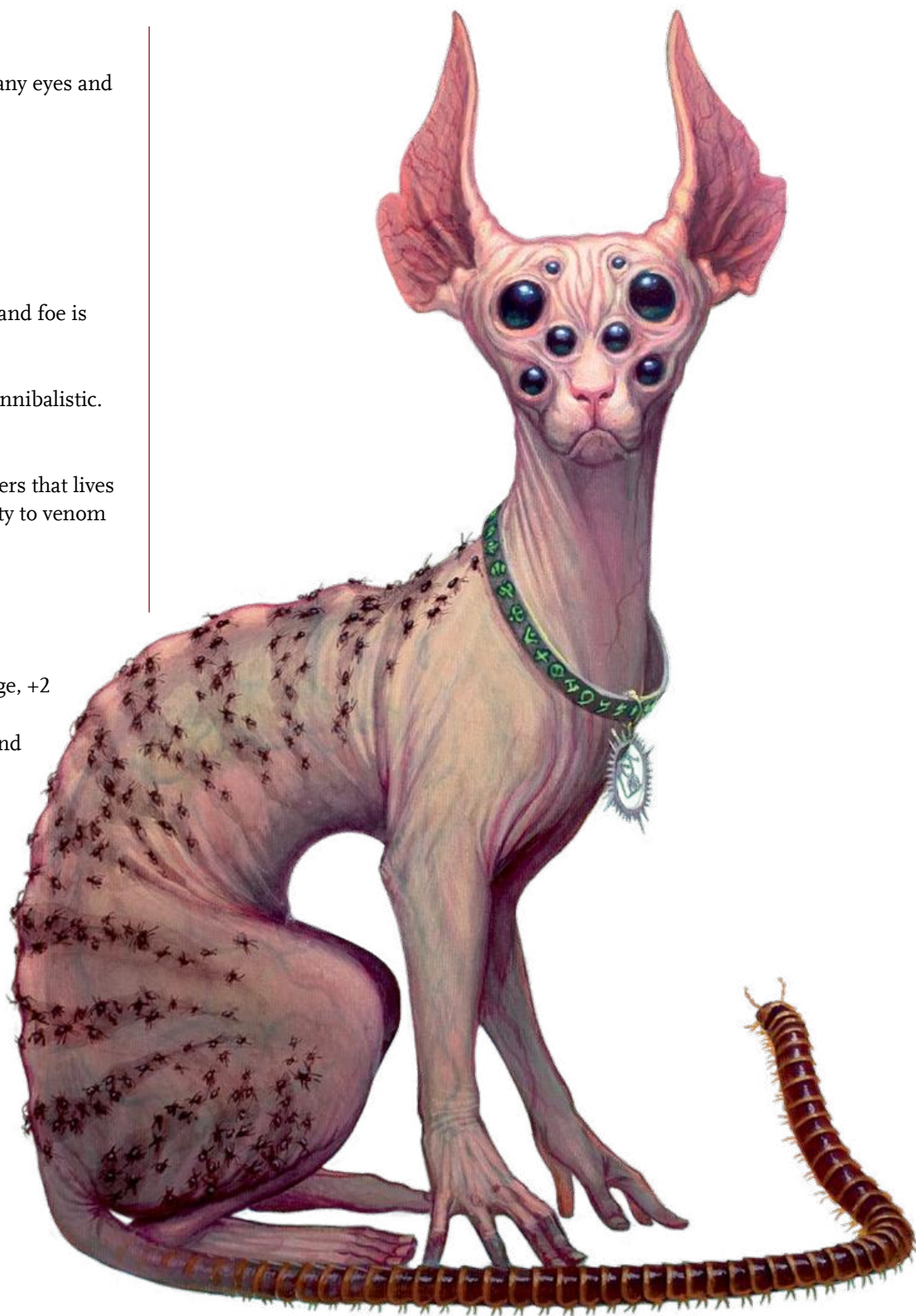
Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

Defenses: Immune to poison; +2 Dodge, +2 Resist

Modifications: +3 balance, climbing, and jumping; +2 searching and stealth

Bite: 4 points of damage, plus poison that inflicts 2 points of damage each hour (2 rests).

Traits: Enigmatic



## MAJOR CREATURES AND ENTITIES

The beings in this section are typically levels 5 to 17. They are powerful and influential, and may have stories that intersect with the PCs multiple times.

That said, most narratives don't call for multiple individuals of a similar kind. Most PC groups won't encounter multiple wraiths over time, for example. They'll encounter one (although perhaps multiple times). Thus, the NPCs presented here are specific rather than general to make them as useful as possible.

This means you won't find an entry for "vampire." Instead, you'll find a specific vampire (a trio, actually) that can be used as is or as an example to create other unique vampires if that's necessary.

These descriptions include a possible **GM shift** idea to use in an encounter involving the NPC.

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*There is a small box factory in Rivenhome where most, but not all, of the workers are secretly demons. They use it as a hidden hideaway in the city.*



THE GATE

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MOLICH THE WRAITH



## ABRON THE MAKER

You didn't flee to Shadow, but sometimes you wish you had. Instead, you stayed and fought in the War. The less said of that, the better.

After the War, life was hard. Dealing with the loss of so many friends, rebuilding all that was brought down . . . and the nightmares. Mostly it was the nightmares.

Terrifying powerlessness was the common theme. And you weren't always asleep when they came along. A word, a sound, or even a smell could trigger the fear that would rip you right out of your situation—right out of yourself. It was debilitating.

You just wanted some security. You imagined a fortress you could retreat into that would repel all dangers. But you couldn't spend your days locked up behind stone walls. You had things to do. Materials to gather. So if you couldn't be in a fortress, you decided to become a fortress yourself.

Many, many visits to the changeriers later, you are the fortress you envisioned—towers, battlements, and all. And it helped. The episodes, at least during the waking hours, are rare.

Your main focus now is procuring ever rarer and ever stranger substances from throughout the Actuality. Sadly, that's an expensive endeavor for someone who spent all their savings in the changeriers, and you're horribly in debt. Some of those you owe are not good people.

And they don't care that you're a veteran.

**Level:** 7

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); +2 Withstand, +2 Resist

**Armor:** +4

**Modifications:** +2 crafting, +1 attacks with cane

**Cane:** 7 damage, and foe ceases to exist for one round.

**Object of Power:** Always has an object of power of level 7 or lower.

**Ephemera:** Always has two ephemera of level 7 or lower.

**Defensive Towers:** Damage absorbed by Armor is reflected back at attacker via tiny soldiers and tiny flaming ballistae.

**Spell, Finding:** Locate a specific known person or object that is within the same realm.

**Spell, Forget:** Touched target forgets the last ten minutes.

**Traits:** Careful. Quiet. Studious. Industrious.

**GM Shift:** Produce a hidden ephemera that is exactly what's needed in the current situation.

*Abron does not have a house of his own, but he has many people willing to let him stay with them for a few weeks at a time, so he moves around a great deal.*



## AVANESTIS AT THE RIVER, THE RIMOSE

Your glory is long past. Once, your majesty served as a landmark within the Silent City. Your beauty garnered the envy of other art objects throughout lands near and far. You were not just a sculpture, but the very idea of a sculpture. The representation of a concept in priceless marble quarried in worlds long since gone. Your creator was a genius among geniuses.

Today, however, that is gone. Your creator is long dead. No one cared about your beauty, and thus time ravaged it. The War damaged it. You are marred, cracked, and broken. That which once was beautiful—and the embodiment of a grand concept like the contentment Avanestis found at the riverbank in the well-known myth—is now the opposite of all it was. Everything you loved and respected earns only apathy from you now, if not outright loathing. The city, its people, and even its structures are the embodiment of your resentment. You seek only their destruction. You gain joy only from their pain, sorrow, and ultimate demise.

You are one of the rimose, and the wise residents of the city watch look over their shoulders, lest you grab

*Many rimose wander the islands of Quiet Lake.*

them unawares and drag them back to the hidden, rubble-filled holes that your kind now calls home. Your movements are stiff and without grace, but your strength is still prodigious. You may not have all the parts and limbs your sculptor originally gave you, but you make do with the physical form you still have left. Your cracked and pitted flesh breaks away, leaving a trail of bits and dust wherever you go, but that's hardly of any concern to you. Such things are merely your calling card—a statement of your dissolution and the destruction you will bring to everything else in the city, one person, one building, or one object at a time.

**Level:** 7

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐

**Defenses:** Immune to poisons, diseases, and the like

**Armor:** +3

**Modifications:** +2 stealth

**Strangling Attack:** 7 damage, and foe can't move unless they break free.

**Traits:** Hateful, murderous, vengeful.

**GM Shift:** Sneak up from behind and successfully attack with surprise.





## BEO THE ANGEL

You believe you understand the Legacy and have committed yourself to upholding its truth. This is a world of lies, decadence, corruption, and dishonor, but the Legacy is a bastion against all such things. It's your duty to protect the world from itself.

You live in Satyrine, which is difficult. You are not like most of the others around you. Mortals are weak, careless, and easily fooled. They trend toward selfishness, insecurity, and falsehood. You don't know why—and you don't care. You're not here to understand or investigate. The larger truths of life can be discovered by others. You focus only on the truths of the Legacy: creation, life, compassion, benevolence, mercy, and honesty.

Thus, you spend your days defending the weak and giving aid to those in need.

With your wings, you fly twice as fast as you run. At any time, you can move in front of someone next to you in order to suffer an attack for them.

*There are many different kinds of angels, and many different hierarchies.*

Level: 6

Injuries: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wounds: ☐ ☐ ☐

Anguish: ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses (Spiritual):** Magic (two successes);

immune to physical attacks; +3 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Defenses (Physical):** Magic (two successes); immune to

poisons, diseases, and the like; +3 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Armor:** +2

**Modifications:** +2 searching

**Flaming Blast of Justice:** 6 damage on a faraway target or 3 damage on all in a small area within long range.

**Healing Touch:** Heal all Injuries or 1 Wound.

Cannot heal the same creature again until after the next sunrise.

**Invigorate:** Touched creature gains +1 on their next action.

**Traits:** Honest. Noble. Stern. Humorless.

**GM Shift:** All Injuries and Wounds are repaired in a flash of flame.





## THE CORDAV SIBLINGS (VAMPIRES)

The three of you work as a team because you have to, not because you want to. It's difficult to admit that sometimes, and in fact you'd probably never actually give the sentiment voice. But it's true. As vampires, you have to look out for each other. As much as you see yourselves as predators dwelling amid the sheep, you still face serious threats.

You were all killed together one night by a vampire you've never seen again. Why she turned all of you when she could have just left you to die after feasting upon your blood, you'll never know.

Katta reawakened first. Juron was next, and finally Hallis. Hallis, the youngest, was always the weakest, but he's also the smartest (although Katta is likely the cleverest). Hallis's condition as an albino hemophiliac is likely what drew the vampire to you in the first place. Different blood has different flavor, and his was probably a delicacy.

The three of you bicker, each resentful of the others. But when hunting, you try to put that aside so you can bring down prey quickly and quietly. You've likely slain and fed upon your victim and left before anyone even knows you were there. Hallis chooses the prey, and he usually singles out the weak from the herd—the homeless and alone, the old and feeble, or the young and inexperienced. Katta is the stealthy one. She knows how to get in and out. Juron is the strongest and typically brings down the prey initially.

*Every vampire's precise abilities and vulnerabilities are different, but those of the Cordav siblings are virtually identical.*

You all watch each other's backs. Because who else will do so? Your limitations are few but poignant. You can't cross running water or enter a home you're not invited into. If caught in the daylight, you're paralyzed. An enchanted stake made from a young tree will "kill" you immediately if stabbed in your heart and left there. Death to a vampire, of course, is like permanent sleep. You'll never know the shores of the Pale.

What you're really interested in, however, are the rumors of a ritual that will make a vampire invulnerable to these weaknesses. If you can find that, you'll be safe to hunt indiscriminately.

**Level:** 11

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); immune to diseases and poisons; +2 Withstand, +2 Resist, +1 Dodge

**Modifications:** +4 stealth, +3 climbing and jumping

**Rapid Healing:** Recover 1 damage (not Wounds) per round (no action needed).

**Captivation:** Victim loses next action.

**Change Shape:** Take on the form of a bat or a wolf.

**Powerful Blow:** 10 points of damage with a fist.

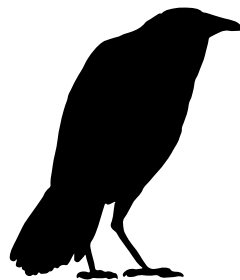
**Bite:** 6 damage (three bites over three nights kills a victim and turns them into a vampire).

**Traits:** Hungry for blood. Contemptuous of living humans.

**GM Shift:** Suddenly in the most advantageous place and position, ready to act.



*Manfred prefers spells that kill or incapacitate quickly. He insists that the best way to survive a fight is to end it quickly.*



## DARK-EYED MANFRED THE APOSTATE

You did everything you were supposed to do, and somehow you still came up short. You studied, you excelled, and you delved into deep, dark places to learn all sorts of secrets, but still the orders ignored you.

So you abandoned them. You gave up on all the things a vislae was “supposed” to do, and took your life into your own hands. Because more important than magic, more significant than acceptance, you had to take care of Father.

The illness took hold slowly. It ate away at his mind. It took bits and pieces away from him. And thus away from you. You had to take care of him, and every spell, ritual, and incantation you tried failed to stop the relentless advance of the dementia. Today, he needs you to take care of his every need, and how can you not? He’s your *father*.

Even if he doesn’t always remember you.

That’s when you realized you needed to stop being Manfred Glasser and simply become Dark-Eyed Manfred.

A quick trip to a changery gave you a look that people wouldn’t soon forget and wouldn’t ever mistake for someone who gives a fuck. (You can’t ever let them know that you give a fuck.)

Your spells, your knowledge—it’s all for sale now. You enact revenge, find and protect people or things, and even perform assassinations. But your specialization is intimidation.

Mercy? You can’t spare mercy. Nor kindness or generosity. What little you still have is all for your father. But you have no time for needless violence or cruelty, either. You do what you’re paid to do, and no more than that. And you do it as quickly and efficiently as possible—which is why you are in such demand.

You’ve developed quite a reputation in Fartown and throughout Satyrine. And maybe even beyond.

**Level:** 10

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); +2 Withstand, +4 Resist, +3 Dodge

**Armor:** +1

**Modifications:** +1 stealth, +2 intimidation

**Intimidation:** Anyone looking at you suffers -1 to all actions.

**Pistol:** 6 damage at very long range.

**Slashing Knife:** 10 points of damage.

**Spell, Compel:** Close target must take stated action next round.

**Spell, Freeze:** Nearby target suffers 3 damage and is covered in ice and cannot move.

**Spell, Invisibility:** Touched target becomes **invisible** until they take an action other than moving.

**Spell, Shift:** Move a very long distance instantly.

**Traits:** Ruthless. Mercenary. Secretive.

**GM Shift:** Immediately cast another spell, out of turn.

### ERROX THE ANGEL OF ANARCHY

Your fellow angels—oh, how they love to throw the term “fallen” around in regard to you. But fuck them. The self-righteous drones, wings fluttering in precision as they walk in lockstep formation.

The Legacy is about many things, and one of them is freedom. That’s what you understand that they don’t. Things always go wrong when someone tries to control the wills of others. Always. Even if they start out with good intentions, power—as they say—corrupts. And if it doesn’t corrupt one leader, it will corrupt the next one, and these mortals have such brief little lives, the next one always comes so quickly.

You’ve got to convince these mortals to embrace their own free will while they can. Help them break their chains. Throw off their shackles, both literal and metaphorical. Among the vislae, Apostates see you as a sort of patron or symbol. Whatever. Patrons and symbols can get corrupted too. They’ve got to learn to just be individuals. Why is that so hard?

You’ve tattooed your body with shifting symbols of individuality, anarchy, and disorder. You’ve dyed each feather of your wings a different color. A haze of dissonant energy flutters around you and lingers on everything you touch.

*ErroX recently vandalized the home of one of Satyrine’s gerents, covering it with graffiti. They (ErroX denies gender) were helped by a small cadre of vislae.*

**Level:** 8

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses (Spiritual):** Magic (two successes);

immune to physical attacks; +3 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Defenses (Physical):** Magic (two successes); +2

Withstand, +2 Resist

**Armor:** +1

**Modifications:** +1 searching

**Mind Assault:** 5 mental damage to a faraway being, and the foe loses their next action.

**Chaotic Strike:** 8 damage from a physical chop, accompanied by a burst of color.

**Traits:** Belligerent. Indignant. Insulting. Maybe even slightly deranged. But true to the principles of freedom and anarchy.

**GM Shift:** Resist any one spell.





**MISTER AGON**

Since seeping out of the Dark, you've found much to enjoy in the light. There are pleasures here that surprised you. Food. Flesh. Despair. They're all so sweet.

What you really want, however, is a soul. With a soul, you'd be able to cast spells, and then you can make this sunlit world yours.

You'll do anything to get a soul.

Of course, you would never reveal what you want to those who currently possess it. You've learned to be charming over the centuries. To the mortals you meet, you are nothing but genteel and pleasant. You bring them gifts and grant them favors.

All you ask in return is a similar small gift or favor from them. Perhaps to be named later. Eventually, you'll call in these various debts to allow you to get what you want in a complex web of trades and deals. At least, that's the plan.

Meanwhile, though, as you put this together, you also enjoy tempting people to evil. It is so delicious when a mortal does something immoral. It tastes like . . . home.

**Level:** 7

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); +4 to all

**Armor:** +1

**Modifications:** +4 deception, +3 interactions, +2 stealth

**Sense Sin:** Sense very faraway creature thinking about committing an act of treachery, dishonesty, theft, or violence.

**Guilty Revelation:** Reveals a random, shameful act from the past of a nearby creature.

**Telepathy:** Mentally speak with anyone very far away.

**Hellfire:** 7 damage to faraway foe.

**Disappear:** Turn *invisible*.

**Creation:** Create any mundane object up to 20 pounds (9 kg).

**Traits:** Intellectual. Refined. Focused.

**GM Shift:** A demon of lower level appears to provide protection or aid.



## **NERA AND SIEGAN OF THE CHARNEL HEART**

You are slaves to the glass. It is your master. It is your drug. It is your god.

The glass rises like a spike, emerging from aethyr to take on material form within the hidden temple-cave-sanctum. It commands you. It compels you.

Your life before has no significance now. You and the others of your secret order—following the commands of the glass—steal, spy, and murder for others. The order gets paid and the order maintains the glass, so you do as you are told. There is no morality or justice. These are illusions. There is only the glass.

The order trained you in their secrets and techniques. From them you learned the ways of shadow, subtlety, and dealing death. Weapons. Poisons. Spider jars.

Low on energy? Hurt? Another inhalation of the powdered glass is all you need. It was painful to snort the first time, but you've grown accustomed to it. Now the pain is pleasure. The glass is everything.

If you're ever incapacitated or killed, the glass will bring you back to the main shard's location hidden beneath Satyrine. The order of the Charnel Heart will never allow one of its own to be captured or a body left behind. You rest easier knowing that. Leap into the fray with even greater gusto.

Steal. Pry. Maim. Kill. Without regret—it doesn't matter. Just look to the glass. Look for it in every mirror, every window. It's there, and it's watching over you, approving of your actions, and accepting who you are.

**Level:** 6

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐

**Defenses:** +2 to all

**Armor:** +1

**Modifications:** +3 stealth

**Poisoned Blade:** 6 points of damage.

**Poisoned Star:** 3 points of damage to a nearby foe.

**Traits:** Fanatical. Amoral. Remorseless. Fearless.

**GM Shift:** Disappear, with all foes losing track of your location.

*Assassins for the Charnel Heart often use jars of the most venomous spiders known, simply sneaking into the target's home and letting the spiders loose. The spiders are level 1, but the venom is level 10. Those affected suffer 1 Wound every minute for five minutes, with a new Withstand roll each minute.*

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*Possession, page 25*

### **Hiding Within Memory**

*Wraiths terrified of being sent back to the Pale sometimes hide within the memories of a living being, which is different from possession. The being doesn't even know the wraith is there unless the wraith is careless and allows itself to be seen (thus changing the memory). To extricate it, a third party must trick the wraith into bringing their soul into the memory too, and then the wraith must be subdued within the memory, hopefully without altering the memory too significantly. Someone who has their memories altered by a wraith likely suffers long-term mental damage.*

## **MOLICH THE WRAITH**

They won't send you back. You won't let them. Dead? Impossible. There's too much to live for.

You have no corporeal body, but that's a temporary setback at most. For now, you're a near-transparent caricature of yourself, or at least your upper torso, wearing your tattered bowler hat and your long black coat. Your eyes are bulging and red, your face appears haggard and grizzled—but why shouldn't it? You've been through hell. Anyone can see that.

Damn these people and their empty lives. If they won't give you what you want, you'll take it. Even their lives. You'll usurp them and live out their days for them. You deserve it more than they do. What have they ever done? How have they suffered? Not like you.

Xjallad and her minions are searching for you. They could be anywhere. You did what no one thought possible—you escaped the Dead Lands. Because you're the cleverest. The toughest. Nothing can stop you. Not even all the forces of the Pale.

They won't send you back.

**Level:** 6

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐

**Defenses (Spiritual):** Magic (two successes);

immune to physical attacks; +2 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Defenses (Physical):** Magic (two successes);

immune to all physical attacks; +2 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Modifications:** +3 stealth

**Mind Assault:** 6 mental damage to a faraway being or 3 mental damage to all foes in a small area within long range.

**Telekinesis:** Move up to 30 pounds (14 kg) within short range.

**Possession:** Not only can a wraith possess a living being, but it can, if it wishes, attempt to pull in other souls or spirits with it.

**Traits:** Selfish. Full of self-denial. Utterly mad.

**GM Shift:** Disappear and reappear up to very far away out of turn.

*Nalachander hails from the Dark, but prefers to dwell on the edges of the light, where lies are easiest to tell.*

## NALACHANDER, DEMON OF LIES

You'd normally say that you love mortals and think quite highly of them. Except you don't lie to yourself. Only to them.

Simpletons. That's what mortals are. So very easy to deceive. Thankfully. Because you hunger for their belief. Getting them to believe one of your lies sustains you. You feel that belief sink into your essence through your flesh.

The only thing better is getting them to lie themselves. Delicious! When they lie in your presence—whether they know you're near or not—it is a dessert finer than anything else you can imagine.

Your plots and schemes are elaborate, because that makes them all the more enjoyable. Simple lies are just that—simple. And you are a gourmand. You approach someone in disguise with a well-thought-out tale. You get them to trust you. Earn their friendship. Then, and only then, do you start to suggest lies for them to tell to others—out of necessity, ill-conceived righteousness, or simply personal gain. You use whatever rationale works on them and fits into your cover story best. If they get caught in their lie, that's not bad. In fact, their humiliation makes it even better.

No need to stay more than a few days at most. There are other mortals to fool. That's the only really good thing about them—they are as plentiful as they are gullible.

**Level:** 5

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses (Spiritual):** Magic (two successes);

immune to physical attacks; +2 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Defenses (Physical):** Magic (two successes);

immune to diseases and poisons; +2 Withstand, +1 Dodge, +2 Resist

**Modifications:** +3 deception (including disguise)

and seeing through deception, +2 stealth

**Mental Illusions:** Completely control the perceptions of one nearby being.

**Claw Attack:** 5 points of damage.

**Traits:** Disdainful. Cynical. Conniving.

**GM Shift:** Trickery and subterfuge allow a successful surprise attack.



**RAAJATHAMOS, A TRUESPIDER**

Spiders are special, and you are special among spiders. Your relation to them could be compared to a god's relation to humans. But you'd never make that comparison, for it implies worship to most ears, and spiders do not worship you. They love you and all your sisters like grandmothers.

You've got to protect your grandchildren. Not just from harm, but from corruption. You'd never tell anyone this, but your grandchildren have a propensity toward the Dark.

Demons and their kind like to tempt them—demons make spiders their spies, or get them to weave magical webs that capture souls one tiny speck at a time. Demons possess spiders. They form horrible hybrids with them. This is the fate you hope to shield them from.

You have built your web in Satyrine, by the river. You keep an eye out for creatures that would corrupt your grandchildren, and you watch over the lives of those you care about. You see much, and sense more through the vibrations in your web. Although you can take great size—the size of a house!—you spend most of your time the same size as your grandchildren.

You know a great deal about a great deal, and if someone pledges to help your grandchildren in a specific way, you're more than willing to repay them in secrets or knowledge.

**Level:** 14

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐☐☐

**Defenses:** Magic (three successes); +2 Withstand, +2 Resist

**Modifications:** +3 interactions, +3 knowledge, +2 stealth

**Woven Magic:** Produce any effect of level 10 or lower as needed.

**Bite:** 15 points of damage, plus poison that reduces victim to just their own knowledge hovering in the air—no physical form at all (12 rests).

**Traits:** Wise. Protective. Scheming.

**GM Shift:** Know something that could not possibly be known.

*Even a short conversation with a truespider adds 2 or more points to a character's Hidden Knowledge pool.*

*The stone mounts of the Thah are statues of horses that float as directed by the rider. They are not animate creatures and take no actions of their own.*

**SQUAD 57B OF THE THAH**

Order. Structure. Stability. These are the things that matter. You serve these concepts dutifully. Religiously.

The people in this city think that you're one of them. They'll never really understand what you are, or why you do what you do. They have no idea where you come from when trouble arises in Satyrine, or where you go after you've dealt with it. But you don't care. Their understanding is irrelevant.

Some people think you're interested in investigating crimes or punishing the guilty. These are their concepts, not yours. You stop chaos. Chaos takes many forms: disorderly conduct, theft, destruction, murder, and riots. All of these can be combatted with an expedient intervention and a swift stroke of the proverbial blade (you don't actually use blades).

You cannot be bribed. You cannot be threatened or charmed. Their words mean nothing to you.

When your squad of eight appears, you move as a well-oiled machine. Not in lockstep—for everyone has their own role to play in any operation—but as one. You have no commander. You don't need one. Leaders are to keep order in the ranks. You are order. Four of you ride stone mounts while the others operate on foot. Your touch brings pain or pleasure, and you wield them both as weapons.

**Level:** 6

**Injuries:** ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

**Wounds:** ☐☐☐

**Anguish:** ☐☐☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); +3 to all

**Armor:** +3

**Modifications:** +2 searching

**Pain Touch:** 6 points of damage.

**Pleasure Touch:** 6 points of mental damage.

**Traits:** Disciplined. Organized. Ruthless.

**GM Shift:** Suddenly appearing exactly where it would be worst for a foe, even if it should be impossible to be there.

## TALYACTRIS OF THE VANCIAN ORDER

Some days, you can't even make yourself get out of bed. Most of the time, you can function, despite the crushing despair. It's like the sky itself is a weight on your shoulders. Every task is that much more difficult. Every one.

You've struggled with the dark cloud of depression since you got back from Shadow. You don't know why. Certain spells help, but magic fades eventually. When you're able, you look for more.

The order doesn't look favorably on the idea of depression, so you hide it. It's really not that hard. But it does mean there are few people you can confide in. Your cat, Zilla, is a comfort, but you've never been able to find the time to learn her language. You have no idea if she can understand you when you bare your heart to her, but it helps.

You've reached the 3rd degree of the order. Advancement is important to you, but it's hard to muster all it takes to handle the many details involved.

Plus, you've made an enemy of the **Abnormous** after you physically tried to stop a friend from joining their ranks. You failed, but now you're pretty sure they're out for revenge anyway.

Luckily, you've got your Green Armor—an object of power infused with life—to help protect you.

**Level:** 8

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); +2 to all

**Armor:** +3

**Modifications:** +2 searching

**Vine Entanglement:** 6 points of damage, and the foe cannot move until they break free.

**Spell, Control:** You control the actions of a nearby victim each round.

**Spell, Electrical Burst:** 4 points of damage to all in a small area within long range.

**Spell, Freeze Time:** Gain two additional actions immediately.

**Spell, Silence:** No noise is possible in a medium area.

**Spell, Telepathy:** You can mentally speak with one person anywhere.

**Traits:** Sullen. Struggling. Defiant.

**GM Shift:** An ephemera secreted away produces exactly the effect needed for the current situation.

*Abnormous, page 117*



**Y-H-M OF THE BORNLESS**

You have a special plan for this world.

You walk among them, but they do not know. You chat about vapid little nothings at their dinner parties. You praise their petty accomplishments and reward their insipid attempts at humor with the appropriate amount of laughter.

One by one you isolate them. Abduct them. Take them where they could not go by themselves. A place they could not have comprehended without your touch.

Oh, the things you show them. There are no words to describe the sights and wonders. Words would change them, and who would want to do that? Most don't survive, but when you return those that do, they are forever altered, made far more beautiful. Beautiful just like you.

Your true form is difficult for some to take in. Your transparent membrane maintains only the shape that the ghostly hands make as they push from within. You leave transient but visible fingerprints wherever you go—but they're never the same.

Most of the time, you use your original human form. No one needs to see your beauty. Not yet. And when those that transformed you are finished—coupled, of course, with the beauties that you have created—this world can be transformed into something akin to the wondrous otherness that you give people short glimpses into as you initiate their transformation.

Then, and only then, can you execute your special plan for this world.

**Level:** 9

**Injuries:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Wounds:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Anguish:** ☐ ☐ ☐

**Defenses:** Magic (two successes); +3 Withstand, +2 Resist

**Modifications:** +3 deception

**Touch of Disruption and Madness:** Foe is shifted into an incomprehensible level of reality until they successfully resist, which they can attempt once per round. Each round they suffer 1 Wound and 1 Anguish.

*Pronounce Y-H-M however you wish. It won't save you.*

**Reality Shift:** Can disappear and reappear up to 1 mile (1.5 km) away.

**Traits:** Patient. Calculating. Methodical. Condescending.

**GM Shift:** Cannot be found by magic.





