

THRESHOLD

The Mystara Magazine

HEROES, VILLAINS
and ORGANIZATIONS



The twenty-sixth issue of Mystara's premier magazine leads you to meet interesting and dangerous characters, new allies or new enemies !

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MYSTARA

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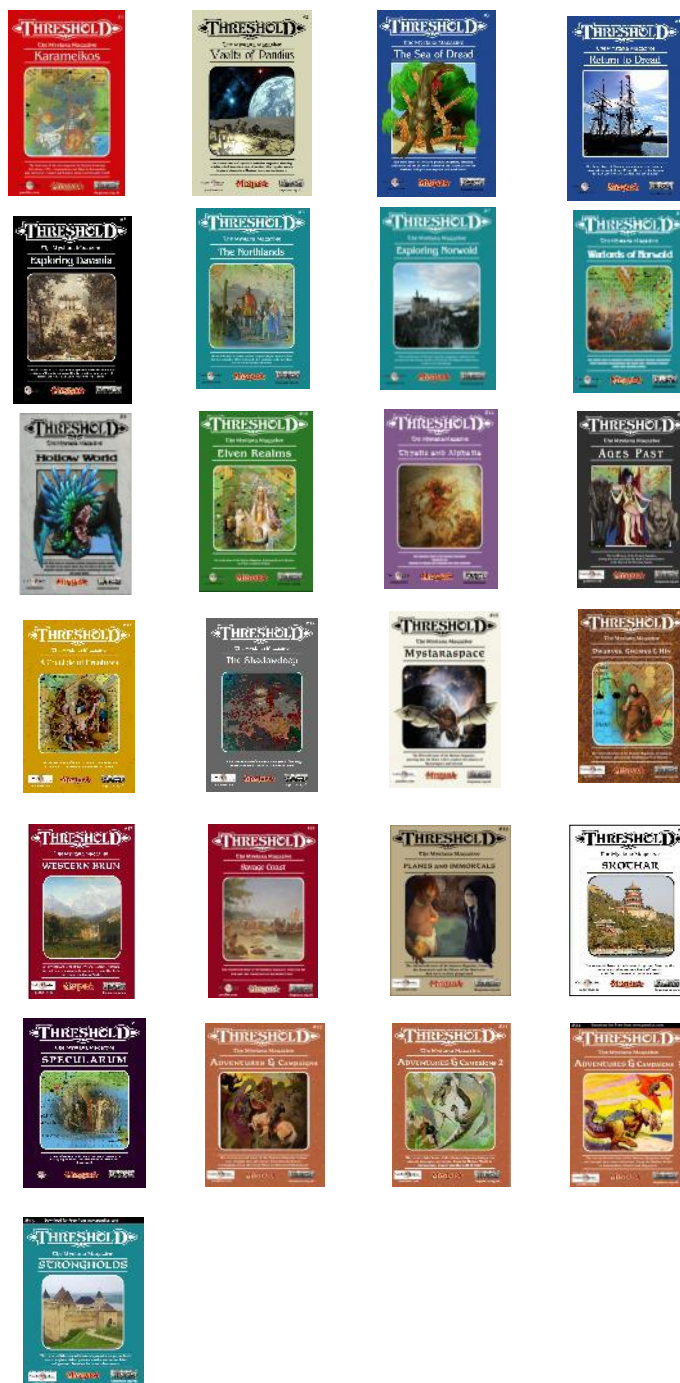
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Also available at the same location are higher resolution versions of the maps that were included in the issue's PDF, allowing greater detail to be viewed.

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THRESHOLD

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Thanks To: The Mystara Community, for your support, hard work, and dedication to Mystara.

The aims of *Threshold* magazine:

- to provide a venue for community members to present material
- to promote the Vaults of Pandius and the material there
- to increase the exposure of existing and new articles

The Good, the Bad and the Organised

Sadly the Covid-19 crisis has not yet ended and these are hard times for everyone, but *THRESHOLD Magazine* goes on, hopefully providing a bit of needed escapism to its readers. And this issue, as all the previous ones, has great authors and illustrators!

Now to the content of this issue: first Agathokles describes the *Organization and Societies of Karamaikos*; then there is my own *Mystara Generator*, an article describing the many tables for character creation in Mystara modules and also including a random adventure generator. New author Lost Woodrake details the *Actor Troupes of Darokin*, while Demos Sachlas introduces to us the fearsome leader of the Magian Fire Worshippers of Ylaruam, *Rahotep the Accursed*!

Then Brian Rubinfeld takes us back to the ominous lands of *Returned Blackmoor*, which appeared previously in issue #20 and #22. David Keyser also returns to his conversion of the *Savage Tide Adventure Path for Mystara*, now focusing on the characters after the conversion published in issues #4 and #19.

New contributor Michael Sutherland presents his *Deadly Deceivers*, dangerous encounters for your campaign. Last but not least, editors Allan Palmer and Agathokles continue the description of the *Stronghold District of Specularum* expanding on material in issues #21 and #25.

Special mention and thanks also go to the illustrators, with the debut of Jeffrey Kosh and returning Dario Odillo and Justin Pfeil,

who provided wonderful original illustrations for this issue, and the other illustrators in the art credits who have contributed to another fantastic issue of *THRESHOLD*!

The next issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine*, to be published in 2021, will focus on a great milestone for the Mystara community: the 25th anniversary of the **Vaults of Pandius** website! To join this very special issue as authors or illustrators please send your proposal to the *THRESHOLD* mail (check Submission guidelines and mail on the last page of the issue) or write in the proposals thread of *The Piazza* forum: <http://www.thepiazza.org.uk/bb/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=22287>.

Even though we usually have no shortage of articles, we always need help for proof-reading and editing the submissions. We currently have two active editors, therefore the issues schedule has been scaled back to two issues a year. So anyone willing to help the *THRESHOLD* Editorial Team please come forward and let us know through the mail or in the above thread at *The Piazza*. Helping *THRESHOLD Magazine* will need some time commitment, but is creative and rewarding work!

The *THRESHOLD* Editorial Team and the authors hope you will enjoy this new issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together, and stay tuned for the next issue!

Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)
Editor, *THRESHOLD Magazine* Issue #26

This Issue's Contributors

Giampaolo Agosta (a.k.a. Agathokles) agrees with Schiller that “man is only completely a man when he plays”. Therefore, he makes a point of taking gaming seriously, and real life casually. Besides Mystara, his gaming interests include (among others) Dark Sun, Planescape, Ravenloft, Birthright, Call of Cthulhu, Star Wars and Witchcraft RPG.

Allan Palmer (a.k.a. AllanP) was first introduced to D&D a long time ago (but not quite in a galaxy far away) by a work colleague who set up a gaming group using the last version of the “blue book” rules. While dabbling with RuneQuest and Traveller along the way, he developed a liking for what would become the world of Mystara as the BECMi box sets were released. He has always been fascinated by maps. He is an IT professional and when not indulging in hobbies of panelology, retro tv watching and family history research, uses his various PC skills to consolidate the writings of others into the issues of *THRESHOLD Magazine*.

Brian Rubinfeld: despite never being as intense of a fan as much of the fandom, Brian has had a fondness for Mystara stretching back as many eons as the stars! Whether coming up with zany ideas or diving into the earthiness of the setting's lore, he always finds something to love about the Known World and beyond. When not writing for Threshold, Brian is an amateur writer and game creator looking into freelance options, as well as currently working in a pharmacy.

Dario Odillo, class of 73, has always loved the Mystara setting, and considers it the most original and with the purest D&D spirit. After artistic studies and a past as advertising designer, he has always admired the illustrations of Elmore, Brom and above all Easley, feeding day after day his passion for artistic drawing. In the past he collaborated with his drawings helping an Italian community of a well-known skirmish game. At home, in addition to being invaded by a myriad of miniatures and manuals, he alternates his free time between painting, drawing and the conquest of Alphatia.

David Keyser has run four long-term campaigns set in Mystara since the 1980s, using published adventure and support materials as much as possible. He denies having any creative talent himself. It's just that if you put him with a group of friends who are willing to work with him to provide an evening of entertainment, there's a momentary spark like the scratch of flint on steel... and then something magical happens.

Demos Sachlas has run several campaigns in Mystara, and hopes to start a new one using a virtual tabletop, at some point in the near future. He is active on many of the online forums and social media groups dedicated to the Old School Renaissance and Mystara, in particular. Most recently, he has been spending his time exploring the historical roots of the game on his blog, the OSR Grimoire (<https://osrgrimoire.blogspot.com/>).

I. "Meandrathel" Calvin enjoys drawing fantasy, and animals that can kill. Namely wolves, dragons, horses, and most large felines. Human animal hybrids are not excluded either; she often draws human versions of her favorite animals. She does, however, despise drawing things that are unbearably cute. It's a pretty awful thing to do. (<https://drathelholmesrevenge.weebly.com>)

Jeffrey Kosh is the pen name of a writer and graphic artist specialized in book covers and movie posters. He collaborates with various publishing companies and authors. His covers range from dark horror to space opera, from thrillers to fantasy. A published author himself, Kosh knows that an attractive cover is the best way to introduce a book to the reader. Inspired by great fantasy artists, such as Clyde Caldwell, Larry Elmore, Keith Parkinson, and more, Kosh likes vibrant colors and heavy use of light and a dark contrast. His graphic tends to be moody and evocative. He also likes to work on 'era-specific' movie posters and book covers, trying to re-create the style used in those years, from the 1920s to the 1990s. As a writer he has been published various times.

His pen name comes by the combination of Ambassador Kosh Naranek of the TV series Babylon 5 and the body-actor who portrayed the character, Jeffrey Willerth. Why? That's a funny story you can ask him personally on social media platforms. (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)

Justin Pfeil draws comics, is a historical fencer in the Italian tradition, makes armor for his friends, and has played D&D since the Red Box was first published. His

current project is a webcomic about characters attempting to survive "*The Keep on the Borderlands*" module from the players perspective (<https://justinpfeil.com/>)

Lost Woodrake's first encounter with Mystara in the early 90's was GAZ12: "*The Golden Khan of Ethengar*", which led to the next gazetteer and downhill from there. He hadn't played in Mystara for many many years, but that doesn't stop him from still actively imagining the place.

Michael Sutherland lives in inland Australia and has been writing campaigns for various editions of the game since 1988. His storytelling is described as cruel, cunning and fun. Once he was accused of being one of the most devious DMs ever; and this inspired him to write the article presented here. Michael is also an award winning medieval archer, teaches arrow fletching and truly enjoys writing.

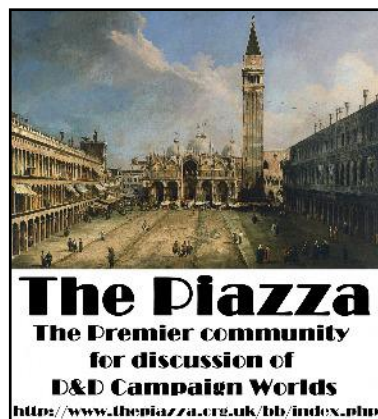
Even though **Sturm (a.k.a. Francesco Deferrari)** loves any alternate world, he believes Mystara is incomparably the best for its vibrant community endlessly delving into ethnography, linguistics and history just to make a little sense of it. Something like the real world, but with dragons.

Will Pleydon is an Illustrator and teacher living in rural Australia. He specialises in pencil and gouache drawings ranging from portraits, animals, sequential art, concept art and book illustrations. He can be found at: *Art of Will Pleydon* on youtube, willpleydonart.artstation.com and WillPleydonart on Facebook. For email contact, pleydonfoundry@gmail.com

From the
Mystara
Forum at



Some features in issues of *Threshold* carry a “From the Mystara Forum at The Piazza” tagline. These Discussion Boards are an active and dynamic home of creativity for the Mystara community and many other game worlds. We hope you will enjoy the articles that have arisen from that [website](http://www.thepiazza.org.uk/bb/index.php).



*FROM
THE VAULTS
OF PANDIUS*

Some features in issues of *Threshold* carry a “From the Vaults of Pandius” tagline. As one of our stated aims is “to promote the Vaults of Pandius and the material there”, we hope you will enjoy these revised or extended treasures from that [website](http://www.vaultsofpandius.co.uk).



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The *THRESHOLD* editorial team invites all fans of the Mystara setting to submit contributions to the magazine's next issue. We are especially looking for contributions fitting the following themes:

Issue #27 - Vaults of Pandius

25th Anniversary Special

This issue will celebrate the milestone reached by the repository of Mystara treasure managed since so many years by Shawn Stanley.

Proposal Deadline: February 15th, 2021

Manuscript Deadline: April 15th, 2021

Issue Published: June 2021

Articles about other topics are still welcome and the editorial team will evaluate their publication for any upcoming issue, taking into account available space and the issue's theme.

Call for proposals for main themes of forthcoming issues:

Issue #28 - Trade routes and Darokin

The second issue of 2021 will focus on trade, the lifeblood of nations and the fortune of the Merchant Houses of Darokin!

Proposal Deadline: August 15th, 2021

Manuscript Deadline: October 15th, 2021

Issue Published: December 2021

THRESHOLD accepts and invites submissions of extended or revised versions of works having appeared on *The Piazza* or *Vaults of Pandius*.

Contributions may include, but are not limited to: Articles: short stories, short adventure modules, NPCs, historical treatises and timelines, geographical entries, new monsters and monster ecologies, etc.; and Illustrations: portraits, maps, heraldry, illustrations, etc.

Please refer to our [Submission Guidelines](#) on the inside back cover of this issue.

The *Threshold* editorial team strives for edition neutrality, but edition specific articles (e.g., conversions) are also accepted. statistics for new monsters and NPCs may be included in articles (e.g., adventure modules, new monsters or NPCs) in any version of Dungeons & Dragons. The editorial team also offers help in providing conversions to some specific rules set. including BECM/RC, 2nd Edition, 3rd edition/Pathfinder. However, this material should be limited to a minimum. For most NPCs, it is sufficient to mention class, level, and alignment. For important NPCs, a one or two line stat block may be included.

A Mystara Glossary

The Editors present a list of common abbreviations that authors may use to refer to various Mystara-related game products and events:

- AC#** - Accessory series product (rules supplements, campaign sources, etc)
BECMI - Basic, Expert, Companion, Master, Immortals rules (by FrankMezter, 1983-6)
BX - Basic/Expert rules (by Tom Moldvay/David Cook, 1981)
B#, X#, CM#, M#, IM# - Basic, Expert, Companion, Immortal level adventure modules
CoM - [“Champions of Mystara” boxed set](#)
DA# - Blackmoor setting adventure modules
DDA# - Challenger series adventure modules
DMR# - Challenger series rules supplements
DMSK - “Dungeon Master's Survival Kit”
DotE - [“Dawn of the Emperors” campaign boxed set](#)
GAZ# - Gazetteer series campaign sources
GAZF# - [Fan-produced campaign sources](#)
GRoF - the Great Rain of Fire, a cataclysmic event in Mysata's past that destroyed the ancient Blackmoor civilization
G:KoM - “Glantri: Kingdom of Magic” campaign boxed set
HW - [the Hollow World campaign setting](#)
HWA#, HWO# - Hollow World adventure modules
HWR# - Hollow World rules supplements
JA - [“Joshuan’s Almanac & Book of Facts” campaign source](#)
KW - the Known World campaign setting
K:KoA - [“Karameikos: Kingdom of Adventure” campaign boxed set](#)
MA - [Mystara Almanac](#) (fan-produced)
MCMA - “Monstrous Compendium, Mystara Appendix” rules supplement
PC# - Creature Catalog campaign sources
PWA - “Poor Wizard's Almanac & Book of Facts” I, II & III(AC1010, AC101 & ,AC1012)
PSK - “Player's Survival Kit” campaign source
RC - [“Rules Cyclopedia”](#)
RS - Red Steel campaign setting
SC - Savage Coast campaign setting
TM# - Trail Maps
VotPA - [“Voyage of the Princess Ark”](#)
VoP or Vaults - [The Vaults of Pandius](#) website
WotI - [“Wrath of the Immortals” campaign boxed set](#)

Readers may also find Dave Keyser’s [“An Index to Mystara Products”](#) and Andrew Theisens’s [“Mystara acronyms”](#) (both available at the Vaults of Pandius website) of assistance

Organizations and Societies of Karamaikos



FROM
THE VAULTS
OF PANDIUS

by Giampaolo Agosta (Agathokles)

This article describes the secret societies, orders, and other organizations of Karamaikos. The Gazetteer (GAZ1) describes to some extent the Order of the Griffon, three criminal rings, the Merchants' Guild, and the Loggers' Guild. While the Knights of the Three Suns appear in the Penhaligon Trilogy, and the Sons of Night appear in the *DUNGEON* Magazine adventure "*In the Dread of Night*". Several other organizations appearing in this article were created in previous fan works. This article does not cover the trade guilds of Specularum which appeared in Issue #21 of *THRESHOLD Magazine*.

KNIGHTLY ORDERS

Knights and knightly orders are a tradition that Duke Stefan Karamaikos brought from Thyatis. He established the knightly social class to reward loyal warriors with prestige, and possibly, lands. The newly founded Church of Karamaikos proposed to create a military religious order, the Order of the Griffon, to support the expansion of the



crown's control over Traladara. Finally, the Lord of Penhaligon established his own knightly order, the Knights of the Three Suns, with similar goals of providing recognition to warriors who helped him in controlling his borderlands dominion¹. This created a complex structure, leading to two different ranks of chivalry in Karameikos. In descending order of importance, these include the Knight Bachelors, and the members of both orders of chivalry.

Knighthood of the first type is granted directly by the Duke, while the others are associated with membership in specific Knightly Orders. The Knight Bachelor rank is not a membership in a society, but rather a personal accolade -- Knight Bachelors are nobles who answer only to the Duke and their peers, whereas members of the orders of chivalry are bound by specific regulations. The orders are recognized by the Duke, and their members receive the same treatment as Knight Bachelors by the general populace, although the latter have precedence over them. It is customary for knights of the orders to be recommended by their patron noble for a Court Lordship, the lowest title of nobility in Karameikos.

Currently as of 1000 AC, there are only two orders of chivalry, the *Order of the Griffon* and the *Knights of the Three Suns*.

¹ From an out-of-character perspective, the creation of the Knights of the Three Suns is problematic with respect to the definition of knighthood provided in the Gazetteer, as Lord Penhaligon is not even a Baron, and is outranked by true knights.

Order of the Griffon



Knights of the Order of the Griffon style themselves as Sirs and Dames, and receive the respect due to knights, even though they may not have the requirements for that title. The Order of the Griffon is a military order of the Church of Karameikos, quartered in the Church district of Specularum.

The Order of the Griffon recognises four internal ranks, based on the traditional structure of the Thyatian military orders of Vanya:

1. The Master (this rank is automatically assigned to the head of the Church, the Patriarch of Specularum)
2. The Marshals (this rank is only awarded to name level members)
3. The Knight Commanders (this rank is usually awarded to experienced knights, of level 7 or higher)
4. The Knight Brothers/Sisters (this is the entry rank, held by most members)

The Master of the Order is Patriarch *Olliver Jowett*. *Corbula Vespasian*, a former gladiator in the arena of Thyatis, is the Order's weapon master and the most senior of the three current Marshals. Baron *Desmond Kelvin II* and *Aleena Halaran* are the other two Marshals in the Order.

The Order's prestige was originally due to the personal combat skills of Sir Corbula, which in time developed into a full-fledged sword fighting school. Nowadays, the Order attempts to accredit itself as a force for good in Karameikos, sending its members on many quests in remote



Order of the Griffon

Order of the Three Suns

Knights of the Order of the Griffon and the Order of the Three Suns in full armor. Original drawing by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)

reaches. Thus, it has acquired sufficient pull to be acknowledged as a greater order, and its members are accorded the respect of full Knights.

Joining the ranks

To become a Knight of the Griffon, it is mandatory to be a member in good standing of the Church of Karameikos, and to display some degree of combat ability (level 5, ability to effectively use heavy armors, shields, and infantry weapons such as swords, axes, or maces²).

To keep their membership, knights of the Griffon tithe 25% of their earnings to the Church, and take on a number of missions or quests from their superiors.

Campaign Use and Hooks

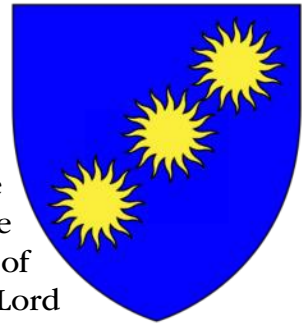
The Order of the Griffon serves two roles - one as provider of missions for characters belonging to the Church of Karameikos, and the other as a foil for Traladaran or independent PCs. Members of the Order can operate on orders from the suprematist branch of the Church of Karameikos led by Patriarch Alfric Oderbry, causing them to enter into conflict with the PCs. Here the challenge will usually be to defeat the Knights without alienating those members of the Order who are more aligned politically with Patriarch Sherlane Halaran.

"Hail the Heroes" has a similar setup, and can be used for Traladaran PCs. The *"Lords of the Cruth Lowlands"*³ campaign could be easily played with a group of Knights of the Griffon, or a single Knight and his companions.

² These requirements are meant to model the restriction to Fighters and Clerics present in the original material, but adapting it to different rules sets.

³ See [the article](#) at the Vaults of Pandius

Knights of the Three Suns



The Order of the Knights of the Three Suns is a lesser order of chivalry, founded by Lord Arturus Penhaligon and quartered in the Castle of the Three Suns in Penhaligon. The Order is acknowledged by Duke Stefan, who acts as its Sovereign Head, but does not grant any social right to the members - i.e., Knights of the Three Suns are Freemen, and not entitled to style themselves Lords/Ladies or Sirs/Dames unless they are also Court Lords or Knights.

There are three ranks in the Order: Squire, Knight and Knight commander. In addition to these ranks, there are three high officers, the GrandMaster, the Treasurer and the Hospitaller. Together, they form the Council of the Order. *Fain Flynn*, a veteran of Arturus Penhaligon's unit was the first knight, as well as the first Grand Master, while Sir *Lyle Graybow*, Penhaligon's castellan, has been the Hospitaller since the foundation of the Order twenty-five years ago.

Squires can be promoted to Knights (this generally happens as the Squire reaches 7th level), and Knights may be named Commanders (usually at name level or more⁴). Knights are often recommended for a Court Lordship, which is generally granted, and

⁴ Karameikos is designed as a low-level campaign, so Knights can be lower level than in the usual BECMi setup, where the Knight rank is reached at level 9. This is present already in the original material for the Knights of the Griffon, and has been extended to the Knights of the Three suns as well.

Knight Commanders are usually considered by the Duke for a Knighthood.

Joining the ranks

Aspirants are admitted by selection, and since the order is quite small, this process is handled directly by the Council. Aspirant squires must be recognised for their fighting skills (being Fighters or Clerics of 3rd level or higher), though the requirement is less stringent than in the Order of the Griffon.

Campaign Use and Hooks

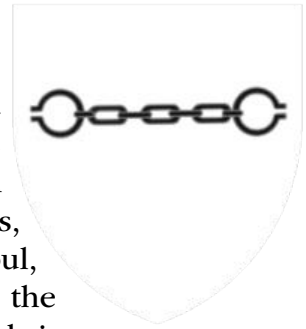
The Knights of the Three Suns are a lesser order, so they would more likely appear only in adventures focusing on Penhaligon and north-eastern Karameikos. They may be presented as a club for "old boys" in Penhaligon's upper class, mostly ineffective and city-bound, or take a more active role rooting out goblinoid lairs or even investigating the whereabouts of "the Queen", Ilyana Penhaligon.

CRIMINAL SOCIETIES

There are three main criminal rings in Karameikos: the Iron Ring, the Veiled Society, and the Kingdom of Thieves. This section describes them, as well as other secret societies.

The Iron Ring⁵

The Iron Ring is based in Fort Doom, and has resident agents in all towns in Karameikos, as well as in Jaibul, Sind, Thyatis, Ostland, the Emirate of Nithia, and in a couple of Alphantian ports of the Isle of Dawn. Other agents of the Iron Ring travel across the Grand Duchy, furthering the agenda of the organisation. The Iron Ring has almost no influence on the criminal underworld of Specularum, where the major players are the Kingdom of Thieves and the Veiled Society. It operates openly both in the Black Eagle Barony and in Jaibul, as well as among several goblinoid tribes (especially of Bugbears and Goblins) in the wildernesses of Karameikos.



The Iron Ring is protected by Ludwig von Hendricks - in return it works to further the interests of the Black Eagle, operating as a sort of secret service for the Baron⁶.

⁵ See ["MD01 The Iron Ring Society Files"](#) by Irving Galvez at the Vaults of Pandius

⁶ In the *AC 1012 Poor Wizard's Almanac*, the Black Eagle Baron is discovered to be the leader of the Iron Ring. This is not known in 1000 AC, and might not even be true at that time -- besides, it might not even be true in 1012 AC, since once Ludwig falls out of favor with the court, the authorities might simply have quickly shifted the blame for most ills in Karameikos to him.

The members of the organisation do not generally operate as simple burglars or pickpockets, and the Iron Ring does not have the manpower to run extortion rackets. The primary business of the Iron Ring is slavery, followed by espionage and assassination. Goblinoid tribes are employed to help with guarding the prisoners along their route across Karameikos to Fort Doom, where ships are loaded with the new slaves and sent to slave markets such as Jaibul and Thyatis, but also Zeaburg, Surra-Man-Ra and the ports of the Alphonian Empire. Given the extensive amount of effort needed to hide the slave trade, the Iron Ring are also among the best smugglers in Karameikos, though they rarely work in this area, except to smuggle magical components and treasures to Fort Doom.

The typical agent of the Iron Ring is the Reaver. Reavers are not allowed to operate independently, and are either attached to an higher ranking member, or are assigned tasks in the slavery operations, such as leading caravans, coordinating the kidnapping of people in an area, or spying on the rulers of a town. The typical Reaver joins the organisation when he is already a skilled thief, warrior or priest - there are no apprentices. Due to the peculiar nature of the organisation, thieves are only slightly more common than warriors, and several priests of evil cults from Jaibul are also present⁷.

The manpower of the organisation is provided by goblinoid mercenaries as well as by brain-washed and conditioned slave warriors, called Hounds.

⁷ See ["Religions of Karameikos"](#) at the Vaults for more details on the Gens Caelenes and its ties with Jaibul.

The Iron Ring organisation is ruled by the Masters, almost all of whom are highly skilled wizards -- at least as far as Karameikan wizards go. The real power is in the end of a few Masters, but even lesser Masters are able to pursue personal agenda, commandeering Reavers and Hounds as well as resources.

Joining the ranks

The Iron Ring is only suited for the most villainous PCs, given its goals and methods. A PC Reaver should either be a plant in a group that is a known opponent of the Black Eagle, or a member of an Iron Ring-only party.

Progression in the organisation is very limited - new members are recruited from those who demonstrate skill or strength (being second level Thieves or Fighters), or from the ranks of the Entropic priesthoods, particularly the *Gens Caelenes*⁸. At about fourth level, the Reavers are assigned to tasks or posts outside the Black Eagle Barony, and operate independently or in small groups. At about sixth level, a Reaver becomes more a threat than an asset to the organisation - thus, only the most loyal Reavers are retained past this point, and are usually subject to magical screening and control. All others, with the exception of Clerics, are assassinated by the Masters. Cleric Reavers, however, are allowed to leave the organisation and return to the Gens Caelenes.

⁸ See ["Religions of Karameikos"](#) for more details on this cult.

Campaign Use and Hooks

Many adventures feature the Iron Ring as an enemy, including *B10 Night's Dark Terror* and *DDA3 The Eye of Traldar*. It would be relatively easy to have them in the role of the slavers in a conversion of the AD&D series *Against the Slave Lords*, or even as the slavers/bandits in the outer world part of *The Night Below*. Since the Iron Ring exports many slaves to major slave markets such as Jaibul, it can be used as a way to push adventurers to undertake voyages to distant lands.

The Veiled Society

The Veiled Society is an old racketeering organisation based in Specularum, and has only recently expanded into Kelvin, Threshold and Luln.

Before the Thyatian conquest, there was a similar organisation in Halag, which has been all but destroyed by the Iron Ring and Baron von Hendricks.

The Veiled Society mostly runs protection rackets, though it also controls prostitution and illegal gambling. In general, it focuses on activities that require relatively little skill and produce a steady revenue. The Veiled Society also controls a number of legitimate businesses, using its thugs to reduce competition by targeting guildsmen and merchants tied to the Torenescu or Vorloi factions.

The organisation also tends to present itself as the champion of the Traladaran urban lower classes, thus gathering some support

from the local population. It also has strong connections with several trade guilds, especially the powerful Merchants' Guild.

The Veiled Society is organised as a family, with an elder (starosta) leading each gang and controlling a territory - usually a number of city blocks in the Nest or the Old Quarter in Specularum. The elders report to the upper tier of the organisation, which is composed of white collar mobsters, led by the Radu family.

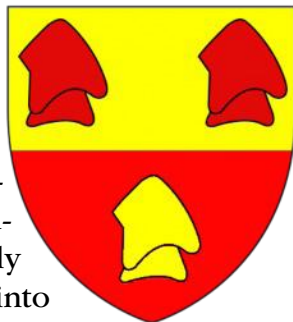
Joining the ranks

The Veiled Society has strict rules, but respecting the rules is about the only requirement for joining. Some amount of brawn is also appreciated, but skill is entirely optional.

This organisation is very appropriate for the business-oriented Thief - it can lead to power and wealth without too many risks. Fighters and Wizards can also join, but the latter are less common.

The Veiled Society also aims at controlling its territory. Freelance thieves are not acceptable, and many members simply become part of the district gang.

Rising in the ranks is possible, although it requires considerably more skill than joining, as most members never get to become elders. There are basically two ways to progress within the ranks of the Veiled Society. One is to inherit the leadership of a district gang from a dead starosta, and the other is to join a troubleshooting team. The former requires time, patience, and a great deal of work building relationships within the gang, positioning oneself for the takeo-



ver. The latter requires superior thieving or fighting skills.

Moving from a troubleshooter or elder role to the upper tier is considerably more difficult. It requires being selected as an advisor or underboss by one of the ruling families. The top jobs are generally reserved for members of the family, although it is possible for an outsider to enter this tier through marriage.

Campaign Use and Hooks

The Veiled Society is the primary antagonist of Specularum campaigns, as seen in *B6 The Veiled Society*, which focuses on the rivalry between the Radu and Torenescu factions. It can also serve as the base of operations for Traladaran PCs with a criminal background.

The Kingdom of Thieves

The Kingdom of Thieves is a new Thieves' Guild, having existed for around only ten years. It strictly limits its activities to burglary and is based in Specularum, though its members sometimes operate in Kelvin or Vorloi.

Compared to the other Thieves' Guilds the Kingdom is rather small, but is composed of skilled members, allowing it to focus on high-revenue jobs and stealing mostly from the rich. The Kingdom has a strict hierarchy with names based on Darokinian, Traladaran and Thyatian aristocratic titles. The guildmaster, *Flameflicker*, is known as the King of Thieves, while his direct underlings are Princes. Dukes (level 10+), Counts

(level 8+), Barons (level 6+), Knights (level 4+), and Lords (level 2+) form the lower ranks of the membership, while apprentices are dubbed Squires. Members tend to act independently or in small teams, though the King and Princes assign jobs to specific groups from time to time.

The Kingdom of Thieves does not condone murder and other violent crimes, and members are expected to use weapons only in self defence.

Joining the ranks

The Kingdom of Thieves only invites professional Thieves to join. Former cutpurses, pickpockets, and small time burglars are accepted, as are adventurers with the appropriate skills.

A new member starts either as a Squire, if he is a promising young thief (1st or 2nd level) or as a Lord (3rd level or more), and can work his way up to the rank of Duke by proving his skill. Currently, all Princes are founding members of the Kingdom, and are all quite young. New Princes can be named only by the King, and this has not happened yet.

Campaign Use and Hooks

The Kingdom of Thieves is designed to be a straightforward, PC-oriented thieves' guild. Yet the mystery surrounding the King of Thieves, *Flameflicker*, can serve to springboard adventures for PC investigators who are part of the Phorsis Guard⁹ or operate independently.

⁹ See GAZ1: "The Grand Duchy of Karameikos" and ["The Specularum City Guard"](#) for more details.





The Spring Flood

The Spring Flood¹⁰ is a Traladaran revolutionary network, led by an older warrior only known as Vladimir. It is composed only by ethnic Traladarans, but open to all character classes, although fighters and thieves are more common. It is an offshoot of the "Spring of the Street", an older Traladaran liberation movement that aimed at obtaining justice and equality for the Traladarans after the failure of the Marilenev Rebellion. The pacifistic Spring of the Street

petered out, although it remained a satellite movement connected to the Torenescu faction, and the most militant elements turned back to the violent means of their Marilenev Rebellion predecessors.

The Spring Flood is a smaller group (around forty people), but several of them are veterans of the Marilenev Rebellion, or have been involved in criminal enterprises - usually as low-level enforcers working for the Veiled Society. The Spring Flood currently attempts to build a power base -- attacking Thyatian merchants and nobles, or more likely their properties and businesses. The Veiled Society tolerates them,

¹⁰ First appeared in ["The War Conceived"](#), part V of the *Specularum Series* of adventures by V. Lädhe.

as they typically target members of the Vorloi or New Karamaikan factions more than the Radu, and even offers a modicum of protection through safe houses in the Nest and not ratting them out. The Spring Flood also has some safe houses in the countryside, and secret ties to the Marilenev faction.

Joining the Ranks

Revolutionary activities in Specularum are a dangerous pursuit. Most recruits are either related to former members of the Marilenev Rebellion, or are former common criminals who became radicalized through contacts with religious fanatics or political extremists -- often while serving prison sentences.

Below Vladimir, a small clique of older, savvier professional revolutionaries controls half a dozen individual cells, ready to carry out missions at Vladimir's request. Rising in the ranks depends on the ability to attract new recruits and create a cell that lasts more than a few months.

Campaign Use and Hooks

The Spring Flood features in the *Specularum Series*¹¹ of adventures, particularly in “*The War Conceived*”, the fifth instalment of that series. It can be used to prop up Lady Marilenev as a more credible opponent, if the PCs support the Thyatian or New Karamaikan political factions.

¹¹ See the [list of Ville Lähde's articles](#) in the Vaults

The Rat Gangs

There are at least three gangs of wererats nesting in the sewers under Specularum. These gangs tend to come and go as strong, greater wererat leaders arise, only to disappear or merge with others when the leader dies or disappears. The oldest gang is led by *Anastasia Rodinos*, a Traladaran greater wererat from Halag. She is a revenge-driven woman, who has obtained dark knowledge from the last monk of the Monastery on the Hill¹², and is herself a cleric of Orcus. She was once the leader of Specularum wererats, but during her long stay at the Monastery, command was usurped by newcomer and Thyatian rake, *Decius Andronicus*. Nowadays, Anastasia's Black Death gang controls the sewers beneath the Nest and the Old Quarter, whereas Decius' Rat Pack gang controls the Hill and the Great Market. A third up-and-coming gang, led by Thyatian smuggler *Publius Musculus*, has nested in the sewers beneath the Church District, in the ruins of the Church of St. Rybich.

Overall, the wererat gangs tend to resemble each other: a charismatic leader, able and experienced enough to control other greater wererats collects a band of such followers, and then lesser wererats seem to almost naturally fall in line. They deal primarily in smuggling and burglary, breaking through from the sewers into cellars and warehouses. The Veiled Society tries to suppress them, with limited results -- new lesser wererats keep repopulating the ranks, and greater wererat bosses are too cunning to get caught, and too quick to catch before they plunge back into the sewers.

¹² See module B5: “*Horror on the Hill*”.

The factor that impedes the rat gangs' ascension to the rank of major players in the criminal underground is the persistent gang war between them -- Decius and Anastasia are deadly enemies, and the Traladaran boss wages a decades-long extermination campaign against the Thyatian wererats, and their collaborators.

Joining the Ranks

Joining a rat gang is a gruesome experience, since it requires the transformation into a lycanthrope -- specifically, a greater wererat. Once a human is transformed, he is generally adopted into the gang, and lesser wererats will consider him part of the upper ranks. Greater wererats are another matter - more intelligent and skilled than their lesser companions, they judge other wererats by their skill and loyalty, much like any other mob boss would.

Due to the current long-standing feud between the two greater gangs, there is space for newcomers to rise quickly through the ranks, by taking part in the gang war. Assassination missions, exposing enemy operations, and destroying enemy nests are all tasks that can lead to promotion on the field. Given that lesser wererats are not intelligent enough to be used as spies, and greater wererat are too few and know each other, there is not a lot of espionage -- an undercover operation could be conceived, but the risk would be high as the rival boss might prefer to have the greater wererat infiltrate killed.

From there, to become the "big cheese" means tangling with tough, high level NPCs, one of whom has an apocalyptic agenda.

Campaign Use and Hooks

Anastasia Rodinos' revenge quest may appeal to Traladaran PCs and to other insurgent groups such as the Spring Flood. However, pushed by her Immortal patron, she would go as far as transforming Traladara into a nightmare land populated by wererats and undead.

Mrikitat, the wererat Immortal, is increasingly worried about the Black Death pack. Decius is a rather laid-back leader, and Mrikitat knows a more aggressive leadership is needed to turn the tide. Thus, he is looking for a capable adventurer who might be infected with wererat lycanthropy and possibly turned into Karameikos' first Cleric of Mrikitat.

SECRET SOCIETIES

The Sons of Night

This ancient organization has deep roots flowing back to the times of Taymor, well beyond the memory of most, if not all, living beings in Karameikos. Such roots are all but forgotten even by the Sons of Night themselves, but the organization started out as a network of surviving followers of Nyx after the cataclysm destroyed the Taymoran mainland, leaving stranded members of that culture in what were the northern borderlands. These survivors were faithful of Nyx who had disagreed with the Thanatian corruption of the later Necromancer Kings, and had found it healthy to relocate far from the main Taymoran city-states. They tried to preserve their culture and lore, but wave after wave of barbaric invaders thinned out their ranks and diluted their knowledge. Still, Nyx' subtle interventions and the occasional recovery of ancient tomes and artifacts has kept the Sons of Night from fully disappearing, and, after the Thyatian intervention brought back to Karameikos literacy and magecraft, the society has been steadily, if slowly, growing, recruiting promising magicians and potential priests.

In modern times, the Sons of Night are a combination of a cult of Nyx and a society of scholars delving in specific topics that relate to Nyx, Taymor, and the many creations of those times, including lycanthropy and vampirism, re-founded by Alphantian or Thyatian exiles just after the Dark Times ended. The main tenets of the organization are apocalyptic -- they believe in a lightless future, the Dread Night, which may be

interpreted more or less aggressively. Evil members believe that the world will one day be consumed by the Dread Night, and wish to exploit its power to rule the world before its inevitable destruction. Neutral members take a more detached approach, recognizing the Dread Night as merely an opportunity for different life-forms to take the place of the current ones, and believe it is their duty to collect knowledge about these races and how they might be created or re-created. Good members believe that the Dread Night is merely symbolic, and represents a different era of the cosmos, one where lycanthropes, undead, and other nocturnal beings can live in harmony with the inhabitants of the daylight. All members look out for knowledge, and most are wizards, with a few priests of Nyx among them -- a somewhat rare calling.

Joining the Ranks

The Sons of Night are a difficult organization to join, since they are very secretive and few know of their existence. A prospective member would, most likely, be approached by a Darker, a higher level initiate, who will assess their value to the society and their interest in joining. The prospective member is usually a wizard apprentice or a member of a similar profession, has magical aptitude, and a fascination for those things that the Sons of Night appreciate -- knowledge in all forms, including puzzles, tricks, anagrams and other word games. An appreciation for individual freedom is also necessary as only Chaotic characters are recruited. A trial period of one year passes before the prospective initiate is allowed to join the society.

The Sons of Night are organized in fraternities, each of seven members, led by a Darker. When a fraternity becomes larger than seven members, the Darker selects a new leader among the membership, then leaves to join a more powerful fraternity. A council of Grand Darkers leads the entire organization -- although with a very light hand, since communication among members are minimal, and even the Darker of each fraternity acts only as a moderator rather than a ruler.

Campaign Use and Hooks

The Sons of Night first appear in the adventure *In the Dread of Night* by Ann Dupuis, appeared in *Dungeon Magazine* 24. They are presented as a straightforward evil organization, but one with a few redeeming qualities -- among which the respect for ingenuity which leads them to let smart opponents go. The presentation proposed here is more versatile, and allows them also as a PC-oriented organization. It is worth noting that the *Koskatep* megadungeon features the Sons of Night as a major force, as does to a lesser extent the *Lords of Cruth Lowlands* campaign. Since both are designed for higher level characters than the original adventure, *In the Dread of Night* can be used to foreshadow more complex interactions with this society.

The Brotherhood of the Woods



This semi-secret society was founded by the Cal-larii elf Lathan Spearhand, after he came back from an adventurous journey across the Sea of Dread. Lathan had to pay a large sum to the Black Eagle Baron to ransom his fiancée, an elven maiden from Riflian whom the Iron Ring had kidnapped.

Seeing that the Duke's justice was not going to reach the Baron, Lathan decided to take the matter into his own hands. He soon discovered he was not the only victim of von Hendricks' misdeeds. Thus, he contacted many of those who had reason to take revenge on the Baron, and formed a society devoted to bringing down the Black Eagle and the Iron Ring, by whatever means were necessary.

The Brotherhood is currently a small group, but is composed almost entirely of low to mid level adventurers. Lathan also has several contacts with other groups, including the Traladaran resistance movement in Fort Doom and Luln. New members are recruited by Lathan himself in Specularum. There are no fixed requirements to join, except a grudge against von Hendricks and the Iron Ring, and some fighting or magical skills.

The Brotherhood meets at the Hippogriff Inn, in the north market district of Specularum, near the old city walls. The innkeeper is a friend of Lathan's, and relays messages left by other members of the Brotherhood.

Joining the ranks

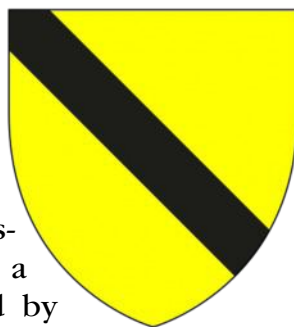
Being an enemy of the Black Eagle Baron is the primary requirement. Adventuring skills of all types are appreciated, but the Brotherhood has a use for more mundane supporters.

The Brotherhood is a fairly informal organization, with no ranks at all.

Campaign Use and Hooks

The Brotherhood of the Woods is essentially the circle of Lathan Spearhand and his friends. Lathan is the hero of “*Lathan's Gold*”, thus giving the Brotherhood some hooks for “*The Isle of Dread*”, “*Drums on Fire Mountain*”, and other Sea of Dread adventures. However, the Brotherhood's main focus is the defeat of Baron Von Hendricks, which puts them directly at odds with the Iron Ring (see that entry for adventures that involve that organization as an opponent).

The Ambassador's Men



Outwardly, the Ambassador's Men are just a theatrical company led by Darokinian actor-playwright *Emilio the Great*. Emilio, however, is also an agent of Duchess Olivia Karamaikos. His specialty, of course, is mixing with the upper class, but some of the Ambassador's Men are more at home in espionage and furtive activities.



Emilio the Great, leader of the Ambassador's Men

In addition to these spies, the Duchess can also rely on other agents - a well developed network with ears in almost every fief, and even in some of the neighbouring nations.

Joining the ranks

Joining the Duchess' network is easily done at the lowest level - one just needs to relay important information to Emilio or other agents. However, the real nature of the network will be kept hidden until the recruit has proven reliable. At that point, he will be inducted in the espionage network proper, and given assignments.

The main requirements for admission are loyalty to the crown and a keen mind - skills and experience come a distant third.

Campaign Use and Hooks

The Ambassador's Men can be used to drive a cloak and dagger campaign in *Specularum*, as well as in the lesser fiefs -- a troupe of wandering actors is the perfect cover for a group of spies, who can then be involved in location-based adventures such as *"Night of the Vampire"*.

REFERENCES

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- D.J. Heinrich, *"The Penhaligon Trilogy"*, TSR 1992-1993
- Ville Lähde, *"The War Conceived"*, *Specularum Adventure Series V*, 2002
- Giampaolo Agosta, *"The Ruined Church"*, 2009
- Giampaolo Agosta, "Specularum NPCs", 2009

Organizations in BECMI and AD&D

Mechanically, there are no special rules for factions or organizations in BECMI and AD&D. However, mutating from 5e, the DM could easily provide faction members in good standing with a discount (50%) on training costs for both weapon masteries (proficiencies in AD&D) and general skills (non-weapon proficiencies in AD&D). The two rules set are similar enough that the same table works for both -- just ignore the mastery level for AD&D.

Organizations as 5e Factions

In D&D 5e, factions have some mechanical aspects worth considering.

The **knightly orders** are mostly composed of lawful fighters and paladins, with the Order of the Griffon also accepting many clerics. The **criminal societies** are more variable, with the Iron Ring attracting evil characters of many classes, including rangers and barbarians; the Veiled Society attracting neutral and evil rogues and fighters; the Kingdom of Thieves being mostly of interest for neutral rogues and some bards; the Spring Flood collecting mainly neutral and chaotic fighters and rogues; and the Rat Gangs recruiting only wererats, mostly neutral or evil. Finally, the three **secret societies** are quite varied. The Sons of Night are open primarily to arcane casters of chaotic alignment, as well as a few clerics of Nyx. The Brotherhood of the Woods mainly collects chaotic and good characters, with many rangers, but is open to all classes. The Ambassador's Men are

Table: BECMI/AD&D Faction Training

Organization	Weapon Masteries/Proficiencies	General Skills/Non-Weapon Proficiencies
Order of the Griffon	Two handed sword (GM), Sword (M), Mace (M), Warhammer (Ex), Lance (Ex)	Religion (Church of Karameikos), Riding, Code of Laws
Knights of the Three Suns	Battle Axe (Ex), Sword (M), Lance (Ex)	Riding, Code of Laws, Geography of Northern Karameikos
Iron Ring	Dagger (Ex), Sword (Ex), Mace (Sk), Staff (Ex), Short bow (Ex), Blackjack (Sk)	Geography of Karameikos, Goblinoid languages, Survival, Stealth (Forest)
Veiled Society	Dagger (M), Blackjack (Ex), Club (Ex), Staff (Ex), Short sword (Sk)	Knowledge of Specularum Underworld, Gambling
Kingdom of Thieves	Dagger (GM), Blackjack (M), Short sword (Ex)	Knowledge of Specularum Underworld, Stealth (Urban)
Spring Flood	Sword (Ex), Dagger (Ex), Hand axe (Ex)	Stealth (Urban), Knowledge of Specularum Underworld
Rat Gangs	Dagger (Ex)	Stealth (Urban, Caves), Survival (Urban, Caves), Knowledge of Specularum Underworld
Sons of Night	Dagger (Ex), Staff (Sk)	Spellcraft, Arcane Magic†, Religion (Nyx), Ancient History, ancient languages
Brotherhood of the Woods	Sword (Ex), Spear (Ex), Longbow (Ex), Hand axe (Ex), Dagger (Sk), Staff (Sk), Short bow (Ex), Light Crossbow (Sk)	Orienteering, Survival (Forest, Mountain, Ocean), Navigation, Pilot (Ship), Stealth (Forest), Geography of Western Karameikos, Callarii Elven language
Ambassador's Men	Dagger (Sk), Rapier (Sk), Short sword (Sk)	Disguise, Acting, Darokinian language, Knowledge of the Specularum society

†See [“Manuale delle Abilità Generali”](#) (only in Italian) by Marco Dalmonte for Arcane Magic. Spellcraft is the AD&D equivalent from the *PHB*.

often lawful or neutral bards and rogues. The following table reports training available for each faction.

If a direct conversion of the 5e factions is needed (e.g., when converting a 5e adventure), then the Order of the Gauntlet maps to the Knights of the Griffon, the Lord's Alliance maps to the Ambassador's Men and/or the Knights of the Three Suns, the Harpers map to the Brotherhood of the Woods, and the Zhentarim map to the Iron Ring (or to the Veiled Society if the adventure is based in Specularum only). The Emerald Enclave

does not have a direct correspondence, but it could be worked in easily as a cult of Zirchev, if needed.

Considering these organizations as backgrounds, the knightly orders and the criminal societies easily map on the 5e Knight and Criminal backgrounds. The Sons of Night are usually Sages, whereas the Ambassador's Men are Entertainers and the Brotherhood of the Woods maps well to the Folk Hero, although a variety of other backgrounds can be used as well.

Table: 5e Faction Training

Organization	Training offered
Order of the Griffon	Smith's tools, language (Thyatian)
Knights of the Three Suns	Smith's tools, language (Thyatian)
Iron Ring	Vehicles, Thieves' Tools, Smith's Tools, Goblinoid languages
Veiled Society	Forgery kit, Thieves' Tools, Gaming Set
Kingdom of Thieves	Thieves' Tools, Disguise kit, Gaming Set
Spring Flood	Disguise Kit, Thieves' Tools
Rat Gangs	Poisoner's Kit, Disguise Kit
Sons of Night	Gaming Set, ancient languages
Brotherhood of the Woods	Elven language, Navigator's tools, Cartographer's tools
Ambassador's Men	Disguise Kit, Forgery Kit, languages (Darokinian, Ierendian)

A generator of (almost) everything for a campaign in Mystara

Tables to create almost any Mystara PC's, NPC's, story and adventure!

**Part 1:
Creating a Character
and a Story**

by Francesco Defferrari (Sturm)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this series of articles is not really to create a tool to layout a Mystara character or adventure on the fly. As canon Mystara material already provides a lot of inspiration for many characters and adventures, and fan material even more so, I don't really have the need to create random Mystara characters or adventures, but I wanted a tool to create additional Mystaran stories.

Such people and stories can be used in many ways to populate the game world, creating a live background for the PCs to interact with. But obviously the generator can also be used to create any Mystara personality or adventure, or at least provide a good idea on how to develop one.

The purpose of this article is also to gather all the different generators which are present in Mystara canon products, some others developed by fans over the years and a few I've created myself for my campaign.

In this issue I will focus on Character creation in the first part, gathering all the excellent resources which are present in Mystara



Hero

supplements and, obviously, pointing also to the many fan creations in the Vaults of Pandius.

In the second part instead I have listed some adventure and campaign ideas. In the next instalment of Threshold magazine, the article will continue with Encounters, Animals and the many other tables which can be found in Mystara products and in the Vaults and used to populate the game world and bring it to life.

Protagonist:

ONCE UPON a time there was SOMEONE

Obviously this is an oversimplification, as a story could well start from an item or a place, but places and inanimate objects need an acting person to become relevant in a story, so we'll start with one (or more) protagonist(s) i.e. an intelligent creature. The same tables can obviously be used to generate any number of NPC's.

Character(s) and Gender

- An **1d4** roll can determine if we are speaking of a creature (1-3) or more (4)
- An **1d6** roll can determine if the protagonist is female (1-3) or male (4-6).

As the modern world now well knows, gender is one thing but sexual orientation and gender identity are another one. The DM could roll another dice, for example **1d100**, to determine the possibility that the protagonist identifies him/herself as non-binary or having a sexual orientation different from the one commonly associated with her/his gender. The amount of such percentage has to be determined by the DM. It is quite likely, as shown in modern studies on the topic, that such percentage of the population is at least around 2%, but probably higher the more a society accepts different sexual orientations. In a fantasy environment there is also the possibility that a creature is asexual. In the real world, this only happens in very simple organisms, but in fantasy it could be used even for intelligent creatures. Hermaphroditism¹ is more common in fish, slugs and worms, and rare in mammals, but in Mystara there are intelligent creatures inspired by the

¹ Yet sometimes happens also in humans, see the [Hermaphrodite](#) and [True hermaphroditism](#) articles at Wikipedia

former animals (such as kna and worm-lings). Obviously the gender roll should be done for each protagonist, if the first roll created more than one.

Characteristics, Class, Skills, Spells, Equipment, Languages

These are the 'normal' procedures of character creation as presented in the *Rules Cyclopaedia* and, before it, in the Basic, Expert, Companion, Master and Immortal boxed sets. For simplicity sake I will mention here only Chapters 1 to 5 in the *Rules Cyclopaedia* and the modifications/expansion done by fans and stored in the Vaults of Pandius.

For **classes** the best resources are probably the [List of BECMI/RC Classes](#) by Giampaolo Agosta and the [BECMI Indexes: Classes, Sub-classes, Secondary Classes, Paths, Backgrounds, Clans and Skills](#) (in .ods format) by Peter.

Several Gazetteers have additional lists of **skills** but the best resources for this aspect are in the Vaults of Pandius, in particular [Index of Skills](#) in Mystara products by Pasi Anias and Mischa E Gelman and the [compilation from other sources of skills](#) by Robin. GAZ12: "*The Golden Khan of Ethen-gar*" also has a **Training Background Table** on page 30 of the Player's book which assigns some skills based on the chosen class.

The Vaults also has a section on [Spells and Spellcasting](#) which includes exhaustive lists and compilation of the spells described in Mystara modules, and other sections for [items](#), including mundane and magical equipment.

GAZ10: "*The Orcs of Thar*" has a **Weapon Defects** table (page 42 of the Player's

book) and a **Partial Armor and Armor Failure** table (p.44-45) for particular people or race with no easy access to metallurgy (but could also easily be used for any character coming from a poor family or a small village).

Many Gazetteers and other modules indicate the language a PC can know in each country and the Vaults of Pandius obviously also has a dedicated section to [Ethnography and Languages](#). The appropriate language of the region/country can also provide inspiration for the name of the character.

As detailed in the *Hollow World* Boxed set and the supplements HWR1: “*Sons of Azca*”, HWR2: “*Kingdom of Nithia*” and HWR3: “*The Milenian Empire*”, *Hollow World* Characters have special cultural **Benefits, Limitations and Bias**. Such features could potentially be adapted for any culture of Mystara.

The AD&D 2nd ed Mystara supplements (*Karamaikos: Kingdom of Adventure* boxed set, *Glantri: Kingdom of Magic* boxed set, *Red Steel* boxed set, *Savage Baronies* boxed set and the online only [Savage Coast Campaign Book](#) and “[The Orc's Head Peninsula Campaign Book](#)” (both in the Vaults) have AD&D **Proficiencies and Kits** for Characters.

The [Player Characters](#) section of the Vaults of Pandius also has more Kits created by fans and also **Prestige Classes and Feats** (D&D 3rd ed.) and **Powers** (D&D 4th ed)

Agathokles has also made a [Mystaran NPC Generator \(BECMI rules\)](#) which can be found in the Vaults.

Beyond the above ‘basic’ features of Character Creation, the Gazetteers and other Mystara modules have several other tables and ideas which I will explore below.



The “*Ladies for Hire*” adventuring group originally devised by Zendrolion (Simone Neri) and illustrated by Justin Pfeil (<https://justinpfeil.com>), previously published in *THRESHOLD* Magazine

Geographic location or Sub-setting

Mystara has an Outer World, a Hollow World and much more. To randomly roll a geographic origin or location for a character in Mystara my recent series of articles on Mystara's sub-settings (in *THRESHOLD Magazine* issues [#23](#), [#24](#) and [#25](#)²) come in handy.

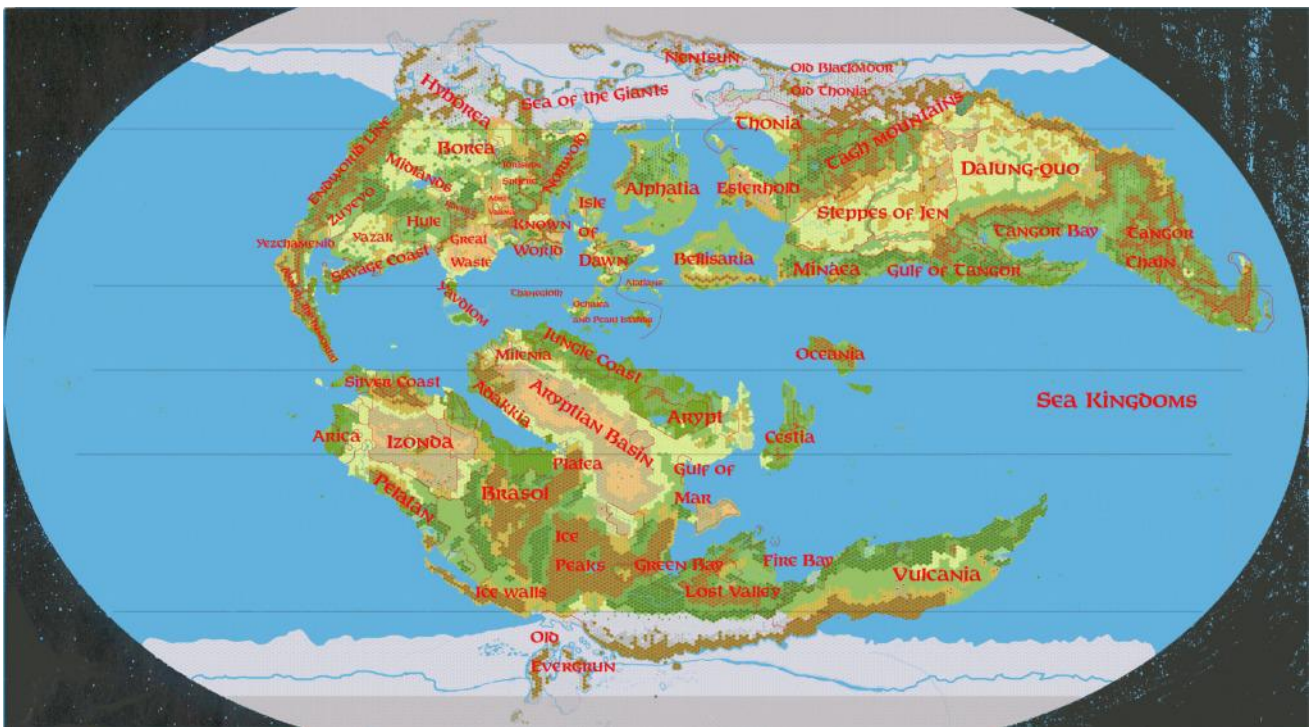
In the Table 1, I have grouped together several sub-settings which were separate in the articles to lower the number of options. However, these geographic divisions (and their groupings too) are purely arbitrary choices on my part, so any DM should divide them as he/she prefers. To choose a geographic location randomly, you could roll d10 twice; the first for the continent, and the second for the region within.

² See the [Threshold Magazine page](#) in the Vaults of Pandius for these issues.

Table 1 - Continent

1st Roll	Continent	Go to table
1-2	Brun	A
3	Davania	B
4	Sea Kingdoms / Undersea	C
5	Skothar	D
6	The Skies	E
7	Shadowdeep	F
8	Hollow World	G
9	Moons and Mystarospace	H
10	Other planes and dimensions	I

As an alternative to these tables, the [Atlas section](#) in the Vaults of Pandius could also provide a resource to randomly select a Mystara location.



Sub-Table A: Regions of Brun

2nd Roll	Region
1-2	The Known World (Tertiary Table A1)
3	The Adri Varma plateau/The Great Waste, Sind and the Serpent Peninsula
4	Hule and Kavkaz/The Borean Valley and the Midlands
5	The Savage Coast and Yazak steppes
6	Yezchamenid Empire and The Arm of the Immortals/The End-world Line and Zuyevo
7	Heldann, Wendar Idrisian Sphere, Ghyr and Western Alliance / Norwold and further North
8	Hyborea/The Sea of Giants
9	Alphatia/Bellisaria/Isle of Dawn/Alatians
10	Thanegioth archipelago / Ochalea / Pearl Islands

Sub-Table B: Regions of Davania

2nd Roll	Region
1-2	Silver Coast / Arica / Izonda / Pelatan
3	Ice Wall, Ice Peaks and Old Evergrun / South Pole
4	Green Bay and Fire Bay/Vulcania
5-6	Cestia, Oceania and Everfeed / Gulf of Mar and Varellya
7	Brasol / Adakkia / Platea
8	Arypt / Aryptian Basin
9-10	Milenia and the Jungle Coast

Note: It would be too lengthy to provide tertiary tables for all the regions of the world, but obviously any Mystara region normally contains a list of 10-20 countries/areas from which to choose.

**Tertiary Table A1:
Know World Countries**

3rd Roll	Country
1	Karameikos
2	Thyatis
3	Five Shires
4	Ierendi
5	Minrothad
6	Darokin
7	Atruaghin Lands
8	Alfheim
9	Rockhome
10	Ylaruam
11	Northern Reaches
12	Ethengar
13	Glantri

Note: The nations of Wendar, Heldann and Norwold are not included in the table A1 above as they are under point 7 of Sub-Table A with the other 'GazF regions'. Shadowelves lands, even if part of the original Gazetteers, are not included either as they belong to Sub-Table F below.

Sub-Table C: Regions of the Sea

2nd Roll	Region
1	Sunlit Sea/Sea of Dread
2	Izondian Deep/Addakian Sound
3	Sea of Brun
4	Bay of Pelatan
5	Farend Ocean/Sea Kingdoms
6	Sea of Steam/Fire Bay/Green Bay/Gulf of Mar
7	Gulf of Tangor / Tangor Bay
8	Bellisarian Sea/Alphatian Sea/Sea of Dawn



Tanagoro Storytellers of Skothar

Sub-Table D: Regions of Skothar

2nd Roll	Region
1	Tangor Chain
2	Gulf of Tangor
3	Minaea
4	Steppes of Jen
5-6	Esterhold/Thonia
7-8	Tagh Mountains and Thunder Rift
9	Old Blackmoor and Old Thonia
10	Nentsun

Sub-Table E: Regions of The Skies

2nd Roll	Region
1-2	Over Brun/North Pole
3	Over Davania
4	Over the Southern Pole
6	Over the Sea of Steam/Farend Ocean
6	Over Skothar

Sub-Table F: Regions of the Shadowdeep³

2nd Roll	Region
1-2	Upperdeep: 1st to 3rd Layer
3	Upperdeep: 4th Layer
4	Middledeep
5	Lowerdeep
6	Underdeep and Far Underdeep

Sub-Table G: Hollow World⁴

2nd Roll	Region
1	The Eternal Dark or the Hollowdeep
2	Floating continents and skies
3	Northern Iciria
4	Southern Iciria
5	Anathy archipelago and Jomphur
6	Aerical and Suridal

³ See [Threshold Magazine issue #14](#) for this region: and especially the author's article "[Through the Shadowdeep, from Karameikos to the Hollow World](#)" by the author

⁴ See also [Threshold Magazine issue #9](#) for this region

Sub-Table : Moons and Mystaraspaces⁵

2nd Roll	Region
1	Patera
2	Matera
3	Ixion (Sun) or Alphatia
4	Valerias
5	Vaniae
6	Damocles and the Pyrithian Archipelago
7	Tarastiae
8	Khoronus
9	Ordana
10	Protius
11	Helae/Charon
12	Comet Belt or Dwarf planets

Sub-Table I: Other planes and dimensions⁶

2nd Roll	Region
1	Ethereal, Limbo, Shadow, Faerie or Pandius
2	Plane of Air
3	Plane of Earth
4	Plane of Fire
5	Plane of Water
6	Astral Plane
7	Outer Planes: Brynn, Draesten, Entrem, Mirage and Pyts
8	Other Dimensions: Nightmare, Myth or Other

⁵ See also [Threshold Magazine issue #15](#) and "[A Guide to Mystaraspaces](#)" by the author in that issue

⁶ See also [Threshold Magazine issue #19](#): "Planes and Immortals"

Race

The table on the next page lists all the known intelligent races of Mystara, which theoretically could be used as PCs or NPCs. It is also a possible roll table for random encounters which partially takes into account the relative prevalence of each group of races in Mystara, while still leaving at least a single chance to encounter each one. Obviously it is another arbitrary supposition on my part so any DM should change it as she/he prefers. Each race (but species would be the more appropriate word) will have multiple cultures around the world. The culture is strictly connected to the geographic location, so it would be related to the previous roll.

Roll 1d100 to randomly determine the race from the table on the next page.

As in BECMI races are normally also classes, most of the above have been described as such in the Gazetteers, the PC series and other supplements. The Vaults of Pandius has [extensive lists of all the Mystara classes](#) and another section about [Mystaran Races](#).

In "*Glantri: Kingdom of Magic*" boxed set, which uses the AD&D 2nd ed. system, there is also the **Progeny** on page 123, i.e. people descended from wizards and inhuman races, with special Defects, Powers and Extraordinary Abilities. The percentage for a Glantrian human to be a progeny is given at 2%, but only 6% of them have Defects or Powers. The same ratio could be applied in Alphatia and a minor one in other countries.

Table: Race Generator

Roll	Race
1-30	Humans (neathar, oltec and tanagoro and various mix.)
31-40	Demihumans (halfling, dwarves, elves, gnomes, ee'ar, brutemen)
41-50	Humanoids (beastmen, goblins, hobgoblins, thoul, bugbears, kobolds, trolls, orcs, ogres, gnolls)
51-60	Mammalians (lupin, rakasta, yetis and sasquatches, ape, baboons, neshezu, cryon, hutaakan, jorri, mugumba mud-dwellers, actaeon, goatman, enduk, minotaur, mythu'nn folk, pachydermion, phanaton, ratling ^a , and other based on animals)
61-65	Giants (hill-, rock-, mountain-, fire-, frost-, storm-, cloud- giants, cyclops, garls, stalwart, ubue, hephaeston)
66-70	Fairy folks (fauns, centaurs, chevall, dryads, nymph, pooka, hsiao, sidhe, faerie, fae-dorne, leprechaun, brownie, gremlins, shargugh, redcap, imp, flitterling, pixie, sprite, pegataur, wychglow)
71-72	Plants (gakarak, treants, fungoid or myconid, stolarib)
73-74	Birds (gyerian, faenare, harpies, nagpa, duckman ^c)
75-80	Reptilians and amphibians (lizardmen, troglodytes, gatormen, caymen, sis'thik, turtles, snappers, chameleon men, carnifex, lamara, pteryx ^d , frog-folk ^e , newt ^f , dragonborn)
81-83	Demihumans, aquatic (tritons, merrow, sea elves, sea giants, nixie)
84-86	Mammalians, aquatic (omm-wa, dolphin and shimmerfish, narwhal, dendan whale)
87-91	Other aquatics (kna, kopru, crabman, shark-kin, marine decapus, devilfish, sea dragons, dragon turtle, sea hag, sea hermit)
92-93	Arachnids and Insectoids (aranea, manscorpion, hivebrood)
94	Silicians (geonids, rockmen, sand folk)
95-96	Intelligent 'Monsters' (bargda, beholder, bhut, diger, scamille, tabi, chrone of chaos, hag, dark wing, decapus, dragons, frelôn, medusa, sphinxes, wurmlings)
97	Shapeshifters (adaptor, baldandar, doppelganger, metamorph, mujina, polymar, randara. Their origins have never been explained in Mystara, some could be of fairy origin and/or from other planes or planets)
98	Planar races (many different races depending on the plane, see also Encounters in the next issue of Threshold Magazine, including elementals and possibly tiefling and genasi)
99	Undead (see also Encounters in the next issue of Threshold Magazine, some of them are intelligent such as vampires, nosferatu, lich. See also Undead of Elegy Island by Giam-paolo Agosta, John Calvin and Francesco Defferrari from Threshold Magazine issue #13 http://pandius.com/lgyunded.html)
100	Constructs (most of them are not really described as intelligent, but some could be, such as gargoyles or warforged, see also Encounters in the next issue of Threshold Magazine)

^a From *Thunder Rift*
^b [Stolari](#) are cactus men created by Gilles Leblanc for the Adri Varma plateau; however similar creatures could exist in other deserts of Mystara.

^c Created by Giulio Caroletti in the Endworld Spine (see ["Auropolis"](#)) and used also by LoZompatore in his [Endworld Atlas](#).

^d Placed by Sharon Dornhoff and John Calvin in the Hollow Moon (Matera), originally from Davania (see [Hollow Moon Cultures](#) article)

^e From Blackmoor module DA2: "Temple of the Frog"

^f From *Thunder Rift* module "The Knight of News"



Gyerian wizard by I. Calvin (<https://drathelholmesrevenge.weebly.com>), originally published in *THRESHOLD* Magazine issue #13

NAME, tribe or clan, region, town, culture and religion

The supplement GAZ2: *"The Emirates of Ylaruam"* (page 31) has a list of all the above for Ylari characters. GAZ1: *"The Grand Duchy of Karamaikos"* only has the choice between Human, Traladaran, Human, Thyatian, Human, mixed and Elves, Dwarves, Gnome or Halfling. Obviously such a list should be different for each country and so it's impossible to make a generic one, but it is useful to keep in mind such backgrounds when creating a character. Lists are present in other Gazetteers, such as GAZ5: *"The Elves of Alfheim"* (pages 47-48), GAZ6: *"The Dwarves of Rockhome"* (page 9), GAZ7: *"The Northern Reaches"* (pages 12-14), while other Gazetteers are based on Guilds (GAZ9: *"The Guilds of Minrothad"*) or races, hordes and origins (GAZ10: *"The Orcs of Thar"*), or tribes (GAZ12 and GAZ14).

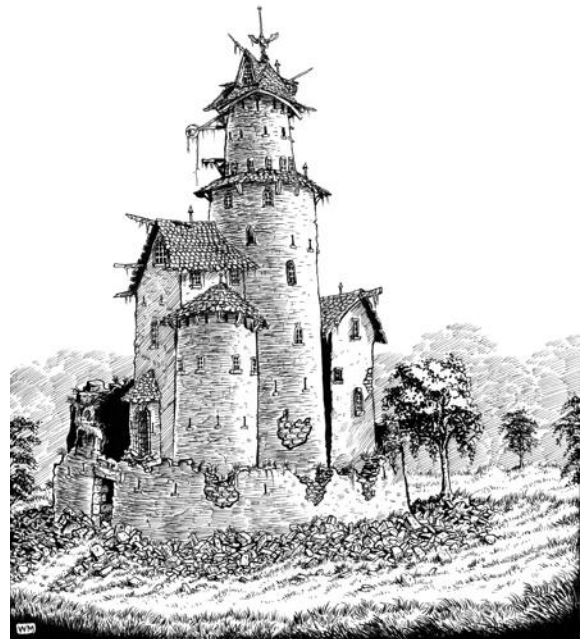
A list of **Names** by country of the Known World is also present in the AD&D 2nd ed. *Player's Survival Kit* from page 4 to 11. There is also a guide to **Heraldry** from page 12 to 16. Handout 10 from the Kit allows for randomly selecting Class and Homeland.

Family History

Handout 11 and 12 of the *Player's Survival Kit* allows for randomly selecting the PC's **parents, siblings, spouse, children, relatives** profession and status.

A whole chapter is present in GAZ14: *"The Children of Atruaghin"*, for determining the Starting Age of the character, Parent Status, Siblings and their status.

Alternatively, a 1d12 could be made for determining the numbers of people in the immediate family, ranging therefore from 1 (the character has only one relative left, meaning all the others are already dead), to 12 (meaning the character may have 2 parents, four grandparents and 6 brothers and sisters). Another 1d4 roll could be done for determining the other relatives the character has contacts with (ranging from 1, only immediate family, to 4, meaning the character has relations with a clan of uncles and cousins up to the fourth degree).



Family relations

A d4 roll could be made about the internal relations and dynamics in the immediate family (parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents). This roll could also be done with a d100 to distribute the percentage differently:

Family Internal Relations Table

Roll	Result
1	Loving and unite family: the character's family is united and supportive and has not big problems among its members.
2	Difficult relations: Parents may be tyrannical, siblings may be rebellious, couples have split or brothers could be in litigation about some heirloom, either way there are serious clouds in this family.
3	Fall apart: Most relatives do not speak to each other at all, or the family is divided in two or more factions which are fighting each other. Children probably have gone away or wish to do so as soon as possible.
4	Hate and drama: The situation has deteriorated to the point of hatred, violence or even murder. Probably there are wounds that cannot be mended.

Origin within homeland

This table is to determine if the character is from the country or a city, mirroring the one present in GAZ1: *"The Grand Duchy of Karamaikos"* (page 8), but making it more generic. Other Gazetters have their own too.

Internal Origin Table

Roll	Result
1	Wilderlands: The character has grown up among humanoids, monsters or in rough places. Her/his family however could have good relations with the local inhabitants. Anyway is likely the character is not naive and knows things about the world's dangers.
2	Homestead or isolated farm: Still borderlands, but in a more traditional farming environment. Parents could also be local guides, loggers, druids or miners.
3	Village or town: The character has lived among a community of at least 50 inhabitants, so more than just her/his family. Possibly still near borderlands but in a more civilized environment.
4	City or Capital: The character comes from a city of over 1,000 inhabitants. Probably she/he does not know much about wilderlands and monsters beyond folk tales.

Economic situation and Social classes

This roll is about the means of the family. Should be preceded by a roll about the social class which mostly depend on each country's situation, ranging from the royal family (if there is one) to slave (if there is slavery). It's not impossible to be royal and poor and slaves and rich. Both things have happened in history, albeit in particular circumstances.

A similar table, called '**Family Social Standing**' is present on page 6 of GAZ1: "*The Grand Duchy of Karameikos*", ranging from Penniless to Struggling, Comfortable, Wealth and Very Wealthy up to Royal family with different percentages. A Wealth and Status Table is also present in "*Karameikos: Kingdom of Adventure*" (page 112-116) for all the races of Karameikos. Another table on page 12 of GAZ6: "*The Dwarves of Rockhome*", also combines economic and social situations from Poor & Despised to King. In GAZ7: "*The Northern Reaches*" (page 20 of the Player's book) there is one for **Family**



Status and another for **Inheritance**. My first one below only considers the Social Class. GAZ10: "*The Orcs of Thar*" has a **Tribal Standing Table** on pages 39-40 of the Player's book. GAZ11: "*The Republic of Darokin*" has **Money** tables for PCs on page 7 of the Player's book. A noteworthy variation is present on page 23 of the Player's book in GAZ12: "*The Golden Khan of Ethengar*", where there is a **Clan Status Table**, which also influences clan wealth and the PC's starting equipment. In Ethengar the clan is the basic unity of related families which form the tribes, but a similar table could be used also for families in other countries.

Social Class Table

Roll	Result
100	Royal family or similar: Character's family is extremely privileged, related to the ruling family(ies) of the country.
98-99	Nobility or ruling elite: The family belongs to the very upper class.
31-97	Freemen: Most of the population is here, from big merchants to free farmers, or even beggars. Anyone who is free to move around.
1-30	Serfs or Slaves: A very large percentage of the population in ancient societies, with huge local variations had no freedom of movement even if not slaves. For example country serfs could not leave the lands of their lord. Indentured servants were not free until the completion of their contract. The same also often happened to young apprentices.

The below table refers instead to the economic situation of the family. It is an average estimation and should be adjusted by the DM depending on the home region/country and obviously in any situation of prolonged crisis, such as war and famine, the percentages of poverty will dramatically increase.

Family Economic situation Table

Roll	Result
100	Filthy rich: Character's family has such huge fortunes it can buy a minor country, should it want to. Or maybe it already has. Probably nobility or equivalent.
95-99	Rich to very rich: The family can afford to build a house, or fit out a ship. Could be a family of traders of city level importance, courtiers, landed lords, or high level artisans.
80-94	Good income: Family can afford horses, armor, fine taverns and foods, good clothes, even travel. Probably small traders, artisans, guild members, successful shopkeepers.
50-84	Average income: Family can afford food, clothes, a decent house and some leisure, but nothing extravagants. Maybe small shopkeepers, free farmers, well paid servants or skilled workers.
11-49	Barely making it: The character's family lives just above the level of subsistence, managing somehow to put a little food on the table, but paying rent and buying clothes always poses a problem. Normally rent farmers, partially unemployed, or unskilled workers.
2-10	Searching for scraps: The family manages to eat only on some days. Probably beggars, or people with serious problems preventing them from earning a living, such as failing crops, alcoholism, orphans, disabled, sick or illegals.
1	Starving: The family is actually dying from hunger and thirst. Normally this happens only to refugees in war situations, but can also happen to persecuted minorities, victims of local crime or during droughts and natural disasters.

Social status

Each character could have a different social status in her/his community, which is usually, but not necessarily, partially linked to the Economic Situation above. The DM can also decide to assign a bonus or minus to the below 1d20 roll depending on the result of the previous table:

Social Status Table

Roll	Result
1	Admired, famous: Character has a high social status and famous, due to her own merits or due to some fortunate circumstance (high charisma, very beautiful, or from a rich and powerful family, or a combination of all)
2-5	Highly liked: The character is not famous, but is well liked by numerous family members and friends, and is happy in her/his community, probably she/he is also from a family of good means or liked for other reasons (family of local clerics, for example).
6-15	One of many: The character has a 'normal' number of friends and family (<10), so it's one of the many living in her/his community.
16-18	Socially isolated: The character has just a few friends or family members (>5), maybe because she/he is an orphan or belongs to a minority.
19	Alone, persecuted: The character is alone or has just one friend or family member, probably because friends and family died in some previous tragedy, or maybe she/he is a newcomer/refugee.
20	Sociopathic, criminal: The character is a criminal, or the son/daughter of one, and therefore is completely isolated in her/his home city/town. Or he/she has some serious relationship problems, or belongs to a despised minority.



Appearance or other distinctive feature

The *Rules Cyclopedia* does not have a table to randomly determine the appearance of a character, but the tables for **height and weight** are present on page 12. Such a table for Savage Coast races is present in the AD&D 2nd ed. [Savage Coast Campaign Book](#) (online in the Vaults) - table 11.8, and in the [Orc's Head Peninsula Book](#) (online at the Vaults). The same pages also have **Age** modifiers, while Life Spans for humanoids are present in GAZ10: "*The Orcs of Thar*" (page 35 of the DM's book), and Aging rules for human and demihumans are on page 143 of the *Rules Cyclopedia*.

GAZ2: "*The Emirates of Ylaruam*" has also a list of **distinctive features** for the appearance of a character which could be very



Dwarf veteran missing an eye

useful when creating NPCs (and PCs). Here it is a slightly modified and expanded version. The roll on this table could be done more than once.

Distinctive Feature Table

Roll	Result
1	Physical deformity (as hunch, acne, misses an arm, leg, or hand, limping or shaky, old wound)
2	Distinctive body (very skinny, fat, double chin, tall or short, muscular, long arms, prominent belly)
3	Distinctive skin (leathery, tanned, lily white, dark complexion, rugged, smooth)
4	Particular face (hawk nose, big lips, buck teeth, big nose, big ears, moustaches or beard, scar, noteworthy beauty)
5	Distinctive hair (pony tail, very long, very short, feather decoration, forelock, balding, whitening)
6	Particular dress (lizard boots, fur, outlandish cape, very bright, metallic, scraggly, ornate armour, weapon or shield)
7	Wears a decoration (scarf, hat, rings,bracelets or jewels, headband, belt)
8	Distinctive eyes (very light, almond shaped, deep, big, long eyelash, big eyebrows)

An interesting alternative to the above table is in GAZ10: *"The Orcs of Thar"*, (page 31 of the Player's Book) as '**Other Physical Details' Table**. Even if specifically for humanoids, it could be used also for near-humans⁷ (rakasta, lupins et others) and even for humans and demihumans with some modifications.

⁷ Named in this way in the [Savage Coast Campaign Book](#) (available at the Vaults)

Distinctive idiosyncrasies or habits

GAZ2 has some possible distinctive idiosyncrasies or habits, which a character could have describing him/her, which I have expanded to 1d20 roll. This table could be used more than once for each character:

GAZ2 (page 31) also has a list of possible nicknames for characters, which could be any special characteristic, appearance, habit or story for which she/he is known for.

Distinctive Idiosyncrasy or Habit Table

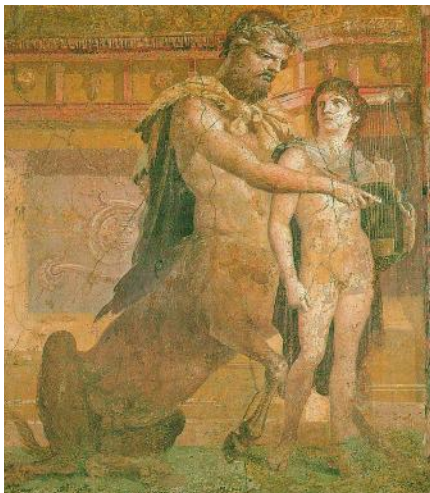
Roll	Result
1	Loud voice or thin voice, foreign accent or high pitched
2	Coughs often, and/or spits
3	Whistles, sings or plays a small instrument
4	Rubs nose or chin, or other body part, or fidgets with hair, beard or moustache
5	Chew lips or hands, or aromatic stick/leaves, or smokes
6	Never looks into the eyes, or scares easily, or craven
7	Brave to the point of recklessness
8	Has compulsions or ticks (washes hands often, or blinks)
9	Haughty and/or rude
10	Timid and/or kind
11	Complains often, or is always negative, pessimistic or depressed
12	Chatters all the time or tell tales, interested in gossip, or inquisitive
13	Always joyful, optimistic, emotional, enthusiastic, or loves to tell jokes
14	Obsessed with horse racing, hunting, swordsmanship or other pastime/sport
15	Expert on some item or theme for professional or leisurely reasons
16	Drinks too much alcohol (or coffee) or is obsessed with some food
17	Reserved, doesn't speak much
18	Eager to help others
19	Used to have servants, spoiled, capricious or childish
20	Seductive, or adulator, or fanboy/girl

Personality Traits

Introduced in GAZ7: *"The Northern Reaches"*, Personality Traits are a great tool to give more personality to PCs and NPCs. There are 12 of them, with their opposite, and appropriate modifiers depending on home country, class and Immortal served on page 10 of the Player's book of GAZ7. The DM could also add more modifiers based on the character's family or economic situation.

The traits may have a value from 1 to 20 and a 1d20 roll could be made against the value, with the lower result meaning the Trait prevails, and the upper result that the opposite trait prevails. The value may be assigned at will by the player or with a roll. The Traits are:

Cautious (Rash)	Modest (Proud)
Peaceful (Violent)	Generous (Greedy)
Courageous (Fearful)	Reverent (Godless)
Forgiving (Vengeful)	Energetic (Lazy)
Honest (Deceitful)	Trusting (Suspicious)
Loyal (Unreliable)	Dogmatic (Open-minded)



*Centaur
teaching
music to a
young boy*

Reputation

Another tool of GAZ7, very useful for NPCs. It calculates the probability someone can be recognized by people based on her/his level (5% chance per level) plus modifiers for attack ranks of demihumans and a higher chance for skalds (10%). Therefore a skald will know any NPC or PC of at least 10th level and any other class or normal person will recognize any PC or NPC of at least 20th level. The DM could adjust this chance, increasing or decreasing it, based on various circumstances. For example people living in small isolated villages may have malus, while nobles living in a big city should probably have a bonus.

Important Past Experiences

Another great idea of GAZ7 (pages 20-22 of the Player's book), they are divided in **Afflictions and Accidents**, which affect negatively ability scores if a 1d100 roll is below 10 or above 90, **Important Past Experience Table**, **Character Building Table** and **Combat Experience Table**, which instead lower or increase Personality Traits.

It is also possible to combine and simplify them as in the table on the next page, rolling 2d12.

Important Past Experiences Table

Roll	Result
2	Survived a debilitating malady (+1 Constitution)
3	Suffered a debilitating malady (-1 Constitution or Dexterity, -2 Energetic)
4	Had a major accident (-2 Dexterity, +2 Cautious, -1 Courageous)
5	Learned from a major accident (+1 Wisdom, +2 Cautious)
6	Had excellent education or training (+1 to chosen Characteristic, +1 Courageous)
7	Had terrible role models (-1 Intelligence or Wisdom, -2 any or more Traits)
8	Had access to a good library (+1 Intelligence or Wisdom)
9	Learned from a famous expert or adventurer (+1 to relevant Characteristic, +1 Courageous, -1 Modest)
10	Rigid training schedule as a teen (+1 relevant Characteristic, -2 Forgiving, +2 Energetic and Dogmatic)
11	Was betrayed by friend or family member (-2 Trusting and Loyal)
12	Was humiliated or mocked by bullies/enemies (-2 Peaceful and Forgiving)
13	Was widely praised by friends and family (-2 Modest)
14	She/he or family were cheated or suffered poverty (-2 Trusting and Generous)
15	Inspired by a famous hero/heroine (+2 Reverent and/or Courageous)
16	Was raised in strict religious environment (+2 Dogmatic)
17	Had to protect family and/or friends (+2 Loyal)
18	Saw innocent hurts or hurt them by accident (+2 Peaceful)
19	Taught to be bold no matter what (+2 Courageous)
20	Taught to lie, con or deceit (-2 Honest)
21	Forgave a Miscreant Who Becomes a Close Friend (+2 Forgiving)
22	Had combat experience, uninjured (+2 Courageous - 2 Peaceful)
23	Had combat experience, was injured (+2 Cautious)
24	Had combat experience, was badly injured or saw friends die (-1 Constitution -1 Courageous +3 Cautious)

Unfortunate Legacy

Present on page 46 of the Player's book of GaAZ10: *"The Orcs of Thar"*, it is generic enough that could be used for any character, maybe with the modification suggested below:

Unfortunate Legacy Table

Legacy roll	Result
1-5	None
6-8	Addiction to alcohol, drugs or else
9-10	Allergy to pollen, food, substance or creature
11	Color blind or lack of infravision if applicable
12-14	Chronic disease
16-17	Hearing impairment or short sighted
18-19	Phobia of places, situations or creature
20	Multiple afflictions, roll twice

Such Unfortunate Legacies could have a different grade of **Seriousness**, for example rolling 1d4 and applying the result as a malus to any saving throw against the legacy with 1 (no malus) 2 (-1 to saving throw) and so on. An allergic character for example could need a saving throw against poison when he/she gets into contact with the allergen. A saving throw could also have a critical failure (if 1 is rolled on d20) leading to death (or another saving throw against death).

GAZ12: *"The Golden Khan of Ethengar"* has a **Disability Table** on page 14 of the Player's book, which is a d6 roll on Ability

scores. This is theoretically only for Ethengarian Shamans, but could be used for other ethnicities and classes too, or applied to Characters with Ability scores below the average.

Influence

Presented in GAZ8: *"The Five Shires"* (page 6 of the Player's book), Influence is accumulated by halfling in good standing with their clan, through normal experience points, exercise of powers or rank (1d6), good deeds (2d4) and great deeds (5d4). With the system a halfling could raise to Elder and Clanmaster.

The same system could be used for any other demihuman or for humans, as an alternative to the awarding of Dominions of the Companion Set. The DM may decide that a PC needs to accumulate Influence to earn a Dominion, not just be of at least 9th level.

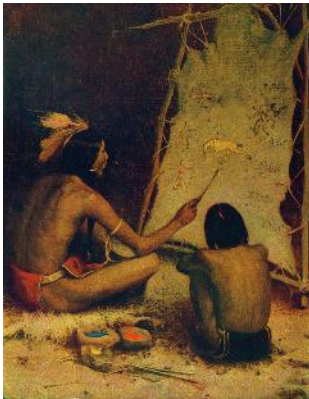
A common system for all classes and races could be as shown in the table in the next page.

Influence points should be **HALF** of the earned experience points, but could be increased by Services to the Community (1d6x100) Good Deeds (2d4x100) and Great Deeds (5d4x100).

Beside the usual success in the adventuring life several other things could qualify as Services or Good Deeds, especially charity, community service or donation to Churches.

Influence Table

Influence Points	Rank achieved
3,000	Respected member of the community, or full clan member when appropriate, has voting powers in local assembly.
15,000	Character has important Clan or Guild membership, can serve as a Juror in Court.
50,000	Character can rise to the rank of knight, landed lord, ambassador, relic keeper or equivalent
200,000	Clan Master, or noble, i.e. people petition the King or ruler to award the character a dominion, or any petition by the character is successful.



*Atruaghin
painter*

Animal Spirit or Totem

A d20 table to choose an **Animal Spirit** is provided in GAZ12: *"The Golden Khan of Ethengar"*. Even if it is meant for Shamans and possibly appropriate only for tribal lands, it could be used for any race, faith or society which has a strong connection with Nature. Each Animal Spirit gives an Ability Score bonus and a skill.

GAZ14: *"The Children of Atruaghin"* has instead (on page 7 of the Player's book) a General **Totem Type Table** and a Totem Ecology Table. The Totem is supposed to affect only personality and experience points (if played accordingly). The Totem could be obviously combined with the Animal Spirit above.

Mystara Horoscope

This can be used as an alternative to the above for characters born in countries with less connection to Nature. The twelve star signs appeared first in the *Poor Wizard's Almanac* (page 163), and give the characters **Traits** which are not exactly the same as GAZ7 but could be adjusted to be compatible with that system. The *Poor Wizard's Almanac II* also includes Predictions for the year AC 1,011 for each star sign on page 154, and *Poor Wizard's Almanac III* on page 119-120 for the year AC 1,012.

FAME AND FORTUNE CARDS

These cards are present in the AD&D 2nd ed. *Player's Survival Kit*. They vary from helpful aid to true curse so it could be tricky to use them in play, and the DM should exercise some caution.

PLOT: ...AND SOMETHING HAPPENED (ADVENTURE IDEAS)

There are a lot of possible classifications of stories from the Propp cards to Tvtropes, and a lot of random adventure generators in D&D and other roleplaying games. This is just my attempt to toss some ideas around, gathering them under four major themes: External Threat, Internal Tension, Love and Relationships, Exploration. (Roll d4 to determine which theme to expand on). Note that often the best books and stories may not have a single theme, but multiple ones.

Obviously many Gazetteers and other Mystara modules have their own place specific ideas for adventures, and there is also a quite big [Adventures and Campaign Ideas](#) section in the Vaults of Pandius.

Otherwise, randomly choose one of the ideas below or roll as suggested in parenthesis.

The external threat (1 ON 1d4)

This is obviously a pillar of D&D and other roleplaying games. The problem is on the outside, could be something minor, such as humanoid **raiders or bandits**, or major, such an incoming **enemy army**. If the solution is easy and obvious in the case of a simple band of bandits or raiders, other external threats are not. How to stop a raging dragon, a powerful druid, or a conquering army? The PCs may need to search for **outside help**, in the form of central authority, allies, magical items or powerful NPCs. Even the minor nuisance may not be so minor as appeared initially. Maybe the raiders have **inside connections**, leading to the internal tension theme below, or their leader or shaman may be **much more powerful** than expected, forcing the PCs to retreat and reconsider. The initial external threat may be defeated, only to reveal later additional and unexpected powerful enemies, or the first threat may be only a puppet of some **greater evil**.

And some more ideas which could be chosen randomly or with a d20 roll:

[1-2] ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

The major external threats, which could also trigger plenty of Internal Tension when the various parties in the community disagree on how to face them. Earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, fires, plagues and famines. The natural world provides plenty of hazards and in a fantasy world they may well be driven by some evil magic, some hidden cult or some angry elemental being. What if humanoids are targeting farms? This will create famine in cities. What if fire giants have awakened a dormant volcano?

Disasters have extensive consequences too, requiring evacuation plans, survivors to save, looters to stop, refugees to help, culprits to be found etc. Or maybe a disaster could be averted only by obtaining the help of some powerful creatures, such as dragons or giants.

[3] HELP NEEDED

The main consequence of natural disasters as the above, or of war as below are communities without food and shelter. Such people could easily become refugees, with more consequences (see below) but they will need immediate help, and this means money to purchase food and build shelters. The PCs may need to reach into their pockets, but this will probably not be enough, and so they will have to persuade authorities or rich donors.

[4] WAR:

PCs are involved on either side, have to escape with civilians, have to kill an enemy commander, steal something, sabotage troops movements, find food, bring messages, spy on the enemy, stop the war before it destroys even more, sneak behind enemy lines, foster a rebellion among enemy soldiers.



City under siege

[5] DIPLOMACY

The PCs are hired to avoid violence/escalation at all costs, preventing a feud, a war, racial riots, a trade war, or revenge.

[6] PROPHECY OR DREAM

A great evil will come, or someone will die, or great prizes can be won. Could work in many ways, and also as Internal tension, warning against an Environmental Hazard, or threat to Loved one or, obviously reason for Exploration (see themes below).

[7] THE MONSTER(S)

A dragon or another potent creature menaces the land. Maybe she/he has an army. Maybe it's not a monster, but has suffered some great wrong. Maybe it is not what it seems, but a princess polymorphed by an evil wizard.

[8] HUMANOIDS

or any other different species, is menacing the community, raiding and attacking, but why? Maybe some adventurers stole something, or killed someone? Maybe they are on the payroll of enemies? Or of some internal party who wants to damage the government.

[9] THE REBEL(S)

maybe it was a famous hero, but the local authorities have exiled him/her. Maybe it's the puppet of a foreign power, or of some internal traitor, connecting it to the Internal Tension theme below. Maybe a whole region, race or social group is in revolt, due

to abuse of local governors, religion issues, famine, or manipulation by external elements.

[10] THE PORTAL

To another world, dimension or plane. A lot of things can come from it, nasty things or apparently benevolent, or even environmental threats, like viruses. Could be a great trigger for exploration and a big reason for internal tensions if people have different opinions on what to do. And lovers and friends could obviously disappear into it, more likely if the Portal is just a common door in a basement.

[11] THEIR LAND

the enemy wants your land, or you want their land, oldest possible reason for conflicts and wars. But usually politicians find a different, apparently noble excuse. What if the PCs discover their side is indeed the true aggressor?

[12] NEW SPECIES

maybe a magical creation, maybe intelligent, maybe good, or evil or near extinction, or reproducing too fast, or invasive. And probably there are people trying to exploit the situation for their own ends.

[13] TRADE DISRUPTIONS

Raiders against caravan, pirates against ships, or a remote local lord harassing merchants. Monsters, humanoids, some magical phenomenon or the fraud or unfair competition of dishonest traders, it's a PCs' job.

[14] KIDNAPPINGS

Bandits, pirates, cultists, someone who took the wrong persons. The targets could be the PCs themselves or they could be sent to investigate. If someone is kidnapped and left in unexplored land, this could obviously lead to the Exploration theme (below).

[15] MINING

can start a gold rush, or prompt Exploration, or any conflict with External or Internal parties. Or maybe the extracted material is dangerous, or magical, or poisonous. Maybe the miners are trapped inside, or go on strike, or they have accidentally awakened a dragon or some other monsters.

[16] DRAGON

one has been killed, but his family comes for revenge. Or he just feigned his death, and now he is inside the city. Or he was connected to the local nature, and now a terrible famine grips the countryside. Or she controlled local magic, which now does not work anymore. Or he wants to run for office in the country/city, becoming Internal Tension

[17] FAILING MAGIC

or clerical powers are gone, or psionic (if used), but why? a curse? or the immortals have been imprisoned (as in the HWA series of adventures), or some enemy of the country is using an artefact?

[18] MERCENARY COMPANY

or fleet of pirates, is menacing the land. Maybe the government does not know who hired them. Maybe they do not know who their employer is either, but have been paid already. Maybe they are sacking the country/coasts because they were left without employment or cheated out of their pay. Maybe the PCs have to take control of the company, or have to seek employment into it to find/save someone.

[19] REFUGEES

As we can well see in our times, refugees can be perceived by many countries as an external threat, even if they are unarmed and unthreatening. And governments may well resort to unjust imprisonment, shady deals and violence to stop them. What if PCs are hired to do such a job? What if one of the PCs' family is among the refugees? and if the PCs choose to help the refugees and are persecuted by the government for their actions?

[20] YOU CANNOT FIGHT IT!

What if some enemy which is much more powerful than the PCs is coming after them? Could be a powerful monster, a high level character or even another country, or an Immortal. They have no chance for defeating it in a fair fight. They must hide, run, find help or deceive to survive.

The internal tension (2 ON 104)

Another major theme with endless possibilities for role playing are tensions and conflicts internal to a community. They may take various forms, from monsters living in the **sewers** or in lost ruins under the town to **criminal activities** to corrupt and **evil leaders**. Even better if prepared by the DM are the conflicts in which the evil party is not easily recognizable, or does not exist at all, as **both parties are right and wrong** in different ways. This may apply for several social and religious conflicts in any community.

Some more examples which could be chosen randomly or with a d100 roll: :

[1-3] MURDER

of a friend, of someone extremely important or of someone no one cares about. Maybe the killer is known, but not his motif. Maybe the victim was evil, maybe he knew things, maybe now is clear the victim was not who everyone knew. If it is a string of murders, what's the reason? revenge? or a serial killer? but how does he choose his victims? Maybe he is possessed, or maybe he is used by someone to distract the citizens' attention.

[4-6] RISING CRIME

there is always a reason for that, usually it is poverty and degrade in vast areas, but in fantasy crime can have some help, such as demons, evil wizards, underground enemies, entropic cults, thieves guild or an apparently respectable but corrupt guilds or officials.

[7-9] THEFT

something precious has been taken and someone wants it back. Could lead to all kinds of Exploration or even External Threat if an enemy country ordered the theft of the magical Royal Crown. To all kinds of Relationship complications if the thief is a friend or relative. What if the PCs track down the thief only to discover the magical object was taken to save the life of a child? What if the only way to achieve this is to destroy the object? Or maybe the object is evil, and the thief has reasons to destroy it, but still the PCs risk an accusation of complicity.

[10] DEFAMATION

Common in ancient and modern politics, and in any conflict among different parties. The PCs could be subject to defamation if the opposite party wants to damage their reputation. Once it often led to duels, but if there are laws against them, the only defense against defamation may be to prove the truth. Maybe an hostile bard/cleric is targeting the PCs (or someone who hired them), but why is he doing this?

[11-12] THE ONE WHO GOT AWAY

an awful criminal had escaped where he cannot be brought to justice by lawful extradition. Maybe in the new country he is rich, well liked and has powerful friends. Maybe he even has children who love him. How to bring him to face justice? Can the PCs find some peaceful way or will they resort to kidnapping or assassination? Maybe they must find a way to kidnap him, even if he is very well protected.

[13] FIGHT THE LAW

PCs may find themselves on the wrong side of the Law for any number of reasons. Maybe the Law is plainly evil, or the Law it is not, but those who should uphold it are. Or neither are evil, but the PCs still want to help a relative or friend which has committed a crime for good reasons. In ancient societies, and in several modern ones too, it was way too easy to become a fugitive just because the Law was on the side of the rich and powerful committing abuses. Or maybe in this case the guards have been really substituted by doppelgängers or controlled by some enemy, but who the PCs can trust? and how they could prove the truth?

[14-15] OUTLAWS

the local thieves, pirates or smugglers maybe this time need help against a government which is much worse than them, or they risk defeat from some organization which is much worse than them. All good reasons for the PCs to join the lowlife.

[16] INNOCENT WANTED

Slight variation of the above, maybe an innocent man/woman has been framed, or is accused of something which is technically unlawful but not morally unjust. Real history has plenty of examples, as things such as adultery, relationships, hunting, fight slavery, arguing or expressing an opinion, even self defense could be crimes in certain times and places. Are the PCs ready to deliver an innocent to an unjust punishment? Or will they become fugitives and rebels too?

[17-18] FUGITIVE

in this case the PCs are the trackers of some wanted criminal. Maybe they only do it for bounty, but what if the wanted man is innocent? What if the wanted person seduces a PC? Or is a PC's friend or relative? What if the fugitive does not have really combat abilities, but is extremely good at running / hiding / disguising him/herself?

[19] PACIFISM

What if the PCs have to deal with a Buddha/Jesus/Gandhi-like figure? a pacifist leader who gathers a large following but is despised by the authorities because he/she defies the government and the social order? The authorities may be willing to resort to violence to stop him/her. Which side will they take? What if the pacifist leader is a friend or relative? What if they want to protect him/her, but he/she prefers to die rather than let them kill for him/her?

[20-22] FESTIVAL

Every culture and town has many over the years, and in some cases they create internal tensions, such as in case of revelries disapproved by the church or the government, or celebrations staged by a party or ethnic group against another. Also the festival may be the ideal time for rebels and evil parties to create all sorts of mayhem, and for thieves and assassins to strike.

[23-24] PARTIES AND FEASTS

Similar to the above, with similar possible complications, but usually not city wide events, but rather based in a palace,

mansion or guildhouse. Such social gatherings can provide a lot of intrigue and mayhem, from love interests with jealous partners to thieves, brawls and vampires.

[25-26] TOURNAMENT

a variation of the above, with the added bonus of various possible intrigues, frauds and sabotages, or maybe competing groups whose rivalry deteriorates into full scale War on the Streets (see below).

[27-28] WAR ON THE STREETS

Members of rival noble families, guild, ethnic group, classes, church or what else duelling in broad daylight, assassins in the night, altercations and political manoeuvring. Nobles against merchants, church against church, workers against government, wizards against warriors. Cities or towns, all communities are bound to have internal rivalries, sometimes getting heated only in courts, sometimes shedding blood.

Violence in the streets



[29] MAD WIZARD

a classic, could also work as an external threat if he/she is on the payroll of an enemy, is the mad wizard creating some dangerous weapon or creatures that has to be stopped, or else the end is nigh.

[30] ANONYMOUS MESSAGE

saying you are about to get arrested, or that a powerful enemy is coming, or setting a place and time to meet you. The sender obviously has an agenda, which may not be immediately clear to understand.

[31] MISTAKEN IDENTITY

often related to some internal tension, but possibly also to love and family. The PC or someone else is mistaken for a notorious criminal, the lost heir of a noble family or an ancient hero, or a loved one, leading to being involved in intrigues, escapes and mayhem. Or maybe just someone who has offended a powerful man. Obviously the identity may not be mistaken at all, and the PC could really be the one some people say he is. Also to the 'Destiny' trope, below.

[32] THE DYING MAN

A wounded person and his/her last words, a classic trope. Usually has been murdered because he knew too much. But maybe he spoke in an unknown language, his words made no sense, his words were a spell, or a poem, or a name. Various ways to connect this to any other theme.

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[33] THE BEGGAR

could be anything from a dragon in disguise to a prince, or maybe an old enemy now disgraced, but with an offering the PCs cannot refuse.

[34-35] SOME OTHER ADVENTURERS

are a fraud, but enjoy good press. Are on the payroll of the PCs enemies. Have received the mission the PCs must have. Are too unskilled to succeed. Or are headed by a former lover, friend or relative (Love and Relationship theme) or the pawns of an external enemy (External Threat theme) or missing (Exploration theme). Or maybe the local authorities are calling a lot of adventurers, but why? to stir chaos? to attack some nearby enemies? to send them all on some hopeless mission?

[35-37] WITNESS

Has criminals wanting to silence him. Is a child, or an animal. Denies to have seen anything. Is a false witness who wants to frame someone, or the PCs. Are the PCs, but the victim was an enemy and the perpetrator is a friend. Are the PCs, but they do not want their involvement to be publicly known.

[38] WHISTLEBLOWER

a variant of the above. As happened in recent, real world history, someone who denounces the crimes committed by a powerful government or organization risks to be persecuted and prosecuted to the full extent of the law, as well as anyone who takes his/her side.

[39] FAME

the people love this person but.. he/she has a secret, has powerful enemies, is undeserving of such notoriety, is a liar, is very different from what appears to be.

[40-41] TIME

there is only little time to save someone, prevent something, find someone or something, be somewhere. Works with any theme.

[42-43] MINORITY

a minority group is despised or persecuted, usually because powerful men want to take what they have. Or because they have cultural habits which the majority does not tolerate. Or because it has really some evil elements inside. Women, old people, youngsters are not really 'minorities' but can rise against the ruling elite if they are kept in some sort of minor capacity, as it happened several times in history all around the world.

[44-45] RELIGION

a big theme which could also work as External Threat and any complications in relationships (see above and below). A new religion or a new interpretation of an existing one can lead to new sects and new social demands, with the official churches opposing it. Or churches can be in competition for an artefact or for any internal and external social and political issue, such as trade, wealth, slavery, peace and war, minority rights, education and health. Maybe an important relic has been discov-

ered, but not in a dungeon, in the hands of a collector who does not want to let it go.

[46] NEW POWER

an emerging powerful leader in some group, or someone who wants to topple the existing government or social order. Complications if she/he is connected to external agents, or represent a minority, or is a relative of the PCs. Works also as a new organization, such as religion (see above), trade or workers union, class (psionics? sorcerers?) or guild (as thieves).

[47-48] ABUSE

someone is a victim and needs help. Maybe a foreigner, or a child. The victim may be persecuted by criminal elements, by corrupt guards or even by the official authorities.

[49] NEW TECH

a new invention has impact on the community, it could be something internal or even something an enemy had developed (and thus External Threat). Maybe the PCs have to protect the inventor, or to stop him/her. Maybe it has unforeseen consequences on the community, provoking fear and opposition.

[50] BUILDING PROJECT

Something to build, maybe encountering opposition, disturbing some ancient tombs or hiding some evil purpose. Or if to be built in the wilds, maybe leading to External Threat or Exploration themes.

[51] ART

A painting, a sculpture or some other object, or music. It can be coveted by different parties, willing to kill for it. Maybe it has magical properties, maybe it was stolen from a tomb, maybe it is sacred for an External enemy who wants it back. Maybe it is made with human souls.

[52] TRENDS AND FASHION

something new swept among the PCs community, but is that a mundane event or the result of some sort of magical influence? the more strange the new trend is, the more probable the latter.

[53] THEATRE

A source of fun, drama, rivalries, sabotage, ghosts, assassinations. Or maybe a Play is offending someone powerful, who decides to stop it. Or a Play is in truth a magical rite to summon in the city some ancient demon.

[54] HATE CAMPAIGN

some local leader is calling for the persecution of some group, class, or maybe of all adventurers. But why? Is he hiding something? Is he a puppet of some power? and how to turn the people against him or, if bad come to worse, escape?

[55] INSURRECTION

or coup. Planned by the army? or the people? But the revolt will fail because the government already knows of it. Or the rebels seem on the good side, but are

manoeuvred by something evil. Or the revolt has been staged from the inside.

[56] THE CHILD

is the prophesied saviour to be. But maybe of an evil party. Or maybe the prophecy is just false, but people believe in it anyway. Or maybe she is not the true child, just a decoy. Or maybe is a relative of one of the PCs.

[57-58] TYRANTS

the governor becomes tyrannical, or any group, class or church which rises to power starts to oppress the people. Obviously typically tyrants enjoy vast popular support, or at least the support of the best armed, or some powerful external element. What if the Tyrant is not so evil after all, but just presented as such by his internal enemies, which are really more evil than him? What if he is a tyrant, but his true masters are even worse than him?

[59-60] SACRIFICE

maybe a cult is secretly performing sacrifices and has to be stopped. Maybe the victims are so fanatical as to be willing participants. Maybe the sacrifices are keeping away something, or bringing in something. Or a hero or heroine sacrifices him/herself for some higher purpose. Or some protester sacrifices himself to show the evils of the government.

[61] SYMBOL

someone is tracing a gigantic magic symbol. Maybe with murders, plants, architecture, rituals, or anything else. But what's its pur-

pose? is it a portal to another world or dimension? Could not be something good, right?

[62-64] It's THE ECONOMY

guilds, trade, a lot of money and a lot of intrigue. Strife conflict can arise between different guilds, groups of merchants, traders and artisans, any social class and the government, the country and other countries or races. Or maybe some powerful criminal syndicate is taking over, maybe backed by magic. Or a powerful church. Or a new religion/prophet pushes the local rich to donate to the poor, but the idea is not appreciated by other wealthy and powerful.

[65-66] TOO SUCCESSFUL

what if an important trader gains some serious competitive advantage over other traders/artisans/shoppers due to some new product or technique? People get ruined, go out of business and rage ensues. But if the trader is not breaking any law, what side the authorities and the PCs will take? Maybe the matter should be resolved without blood.

[67-68] FISHING AND SHIPBUILDING

Seas, lakes and rivers have a whole range of activities associated with them, activities which can be menaced by creatures of the deep or any internal tension such as greedy owners, extreme competition, strikes or various criminal activities.

[69-70] INDUSTRY

normally associated with the modern world, but older times had it too, for example in

textile production, dyeing, metal working, ceramics, logging and more. Activities which could incur in all the same problems as above.

[71-72] HUNTING AND GATHERING

Quite an important activity for any community, usually it was heavily regulated and it will be even more so in a world with druids and forest creatures.

[73-75] MARKETS, ARTISANS AND SHOPS

Markets, shops and small traders are very important in a community, and conflicts can arise from many things, from external competition to excessive government taxes, racial tensions or thefts. Or a new exotic product can produce a 'gold rush' up to market saturation and dramatic failures.

[76-78] SERVICES

this range of human activities include a lot of things, such as banking, money lending, insurances, legal defense, animal training or companionship. Lots of people have such jobs and may need protection, for various reasons.

[79-80] SERVANTS AND WORKERS

guards, personal servants, couriers, construction or port workers are the salt of a community. The strike and opposition of any such category can have a huge impact on society and the government have fallen for such reasons. Slaves and serfs revolts also happened quite often in countries which had these despicable institutions.

[81-82] BUREAUCRACY

Modern governments have ministers, hospitals, schools, retirement and unemployment benefits. Ancient governments often left much of these activities to churches and private citizens, but even the smallest governments will have a basic bureaucratic structure, either composed of nobles or selected by training, with all the associated problems of inefficiency, abuse and bribes.

[83-84] ARMY AND GUARDS

any country has them to defend itself from external and internal enemies. They inevitably tend to form a caste and to be inclined to stage a coup dentate in the more unstable countries.

[85-86] TAXES

Everybody hates them, and people have revolted when such taxes were perceived as unfair for some reason. Forcing people to pay with arrests and bloodshed is never a good idea, but in most cases governments need the money for some serious reason and will not just let the matter drop. In the times when taxes were collected by hand obviously tax collectors were a favourite target of bandits, but authorities were also very keen in punishing such thefts.

[87-88] THE TRIAL

Someone is on trial and the PCs have to help her/him. Maybe they must find proof of her/his innocence, maybe the trial is not fair at all and they have to plan an escape before the defendant is executed. Maybe they must defend jurors as someone is threatening them. Maybe someone wants to

kill the prosecutor. There are a lot of procedural stories which can supply endless inspiration.

[89-90] CORRUPTION

Any government, no matter how lawful and counterchecked, will have some. And the people doing it will resort to various means to silence anyone who could discover them. If corruption is widespread, it will lead to extensive social strife and economic crisis.

[91] BUYER

There is an item, or building, or government position which is highly sought and rich people are ready to offer a king's ransom for it. All manners of intrigues can ensue. Works also for auctions and slavery in the countries where it is allowed. Or the PCs could work for a Collector of some specific things, leading also to the Exploration theme.

[92-93] RANSOM

Historical pirates often earned more money from ransoms than pillaging. Ancient kingdoms did the same with kings, princes and nobles captured in battle. Plenty of opportunities for PCs, maybe to bring the ransom safely at destination or to free the important prisoner without paying it.

[94] TEST SUBJECTS

A wizard offers money to people, or maybe scrolls and potions to the PCs, if only they will allow him to experiment with a new tattoo/spell/item on them. What could go wrong?

[95-96] COMPETITION

Two beautiful and noble women compete for fame and beauty and engage the PCs to find magic, cosmetics or hinder each other. Same for two rich men, or the rulers of two competing cities or countries. Could also lead to Exploration if the PCs are sent to search for some exotic items all around the world (and beyond).

[97] RECIPES

A famous cook is looking for a rare ingredient or wants someone to try his dishes or wants help to get to the table of a powerful person or is sabotaged by a rival. What if the cook is specialized in strange monsters?

[98-00] INN OR TAVERN

Such establishments are a standard trope of a gigantic number of stories. Maybe because they are a den of rebels, spies and criminals, maybe because the authorities decide to close one for 'immorality', maybe because they have access to the underground or other worlds, or the owner has some interesting backstory.

**Love, family and relationships
(3 ON 104)**

A pillar of literature in all of the world, this theme may be used in many ways to create interesting adventures. In classic fairy tales, often the hero had to complete a quest to **win the hand** of his beloved, defeating several obstacles and sometimes also rivals and opponents. Often roleplaying characters downplay family relations and many PCs start as orphans, but family is a great opportunity for adventures. Not just the often abused trope of **family in danger**, but so much more, such as **annoying** relatives, overbearing parents, **embarrassing** cousins, **competitive** siblings, **criminally implicated** friends in all shades of possible relationships from the helpful to the abusive.

Typical variation which could be chosen randomly or with a d100 roll:

[1-5] STAR CROSSED LOVERS

Two people or creatures which love each other but are hindered by opposing parents, difference in status or race, war or conflict, physical distance, persecution or any other problem. A PC could be a party or the PCs may be hired by either party, or even by the party who has reason to stop the relationship.

[6-10] LOST LOVE

A loved one is kidnapped, or leaves, or dies. In a fantasy world, the second event may be due to magical rather than mundane reasons, for example an evil wizard charming someone. And the third event in a fantasy

world may not be final at all, prompting a quest to obtain a chance of resurrection.

[11-15] UNWANTED LOVE

the opposite of before, what to do with an admirer who is too demanding, aggressive, jealous or just embarrassing, annoying or maybe threatens suicide? This could happen to a PC or a family member, or PCs could just be hired to help. What if the unwanted admirer is extremely rich, or powerful, or someone who the family or local government does not want to disappoint?

[16-20] TROUBLE IN PARADISE

someone (or a PC) is happily married (or happily single) but suddenly falls in love, or meets again an old, unforgotten lover, or discover he has an unknown son/daughter (or she is pregnant), or starts to question his/her whole life and choices.



Lovers

[21-25] INFIDELITY

the source of a billion pieces of literature, plays and movies. Maybe the lover is a friend, or an enemy, or the lover has disappeared (is dead) and the PC (or the person who hired the PCs) is suspected of such strange disappearance/murder. Or both lovers have disappeared, but it's just an elopement or something else?

[26-30] DIVORCE

the division of wealth, properties and custody of children, with all the possible complications of a fantasy world. Who gets the magical mount? Who keeps the right to use the name of the adventuring group if they were both in the same? Or more simply, any of the two parties could hire PCs to investigate/frame/protect or attack.

[31-34] ORPHAN

every one of them dreams that one day his/her true parents, kings and queens, will come back for him. Or that just two good people will adopt him. Maybe sometimes it becomes true. Maybe a parent is an evil demon. Maybe an orphan wants the PCs' help to find his true parents. World literature has tons of stories you can draw from.

[35-39] SICKNESS

a mysterious malady affecting the loved one will send the hero searching for a cure, which may be a particular plant, a magical object or simply to gather enough gold to pay for an expensive magical cure. Such sickness could be natural or provoked by something or someone, who the PC will

have to stop. The same may apply to any family member, see below.

[40-42] MADNESS

variant of the above, a mental sickness may be even worse than a body sickness, but would still need a cure. What if this malady is really a magical curse? How to treat a friend or family member which has completely changed his 'normal' behaviour? Is he/she sick or not? What if he/she does not want to be 'cured'?

[42-47] SISTER/BROTHER

she/he is in danger, or disappeared, or in conflict with someone. Works also for nephews, nieces, grandsons and granddaughters. Extensively, a sister or brother could be anyone who is a close friend, either of the same class/race/guild or not. Or a sister/brother may request help on behalf of a close friend, even if maybe the latter is not on good terms with the PC(s). Alternatively, a PC could find himself on the opposite side of a brother, sister or close friend.

[49-52] SON OR DAUGHTER

Similar to the above, but with more extensive complications due to the added responsibility. The care for young children demands a lot of time, especially if someone is a single parent. Strange abilities, powers, sickness, tantrums, school, friends, toys, disappearance can add a variety of troubles from the mundane to the terrifying ones. Teens get in trouble, take excessive risks, use drugs, make terrible choices of friends and relationships. Magical teens could get in bigger troubles, as much as teens who like swordplay (or hiding in

shadows). And clerical teens can easily become fanatical and rebel against moderate fathers and mothers. Older offspring should be more manageable, unless there is some serious reason for discord with the parents. The sons and daughters of the rich and powerful can obviously have problems of a whole bigger magnitude.

[53-56] GRANDPA

or grandmother, or old uncle/aunt, despite his/her age, gets in trouble, escapes from home, hangs out with bad company, uses drugs, or finds a new young lover, or departs for a dangerous adventure, or returns to a young age by magic, or become rich and changes his life. He/she may suffer from more or less harmless dementia, or just feign it. If he/she is a powerful wizard or cleric, a lot of trouble could ensue.

[57-61] FATHER AND SON

Or mother and daughter have quarrelled, fallen apart, at various drama levels. It could be just a family altercation or something much more serious, such as a King and his Prince fighting for the kingdom with opposition factions. The reason could be anything from misunderstanding and manipulation to something one did and the other can't forgive. PCs obviously will be in the middle of it.

[62-65] GIFT

a PC may receive an uncomfortable gift, such a monster infested land with manor, or have to obtain a gift for a family member. And maybe the requested gift is in the hand

of someone unwilling to sell it. This may apply also to the Lover Theme above.

[66-70] JOBS

could be lost, due to economic hardship, or the mysterious death of the employer, due to unjust firing, slander, sickness, old age. Jobs could be found, but maybe the employer is evil, or just too demanding. Or maybe the new job forces the PCs (or whoever asked for their help) to make some difficult ethical choices, or to work against former friends or relatives.

[71-74] TEACHER

some abilities can be gained only through a teacher, who may be difficult to find or unwilling to teach. She/he may require a price or request a task to be completed. Or a former teacher may be in danger, and ask for the help of his/her former pupil. Same applies to any organization, church or guild the PC(s) may wish to become a part of.

[75-79] HEIRLOOM

the source of so many family feuds. It is probably haunted, or leads to some uncomfortable place, or it will lead to more expenses than gains.

[80-83] DESTINY

The PC or someone else is the 'Chosen One' to do something, or to search for something, or to save something. She/he may be chosen by wizards, clerics, immortals, ancient holy texts or any other party. It could lead to fighting some internal tension, some external threat, and/or to extensive exploration. Or maybe the PCs are chosen

to protect the 'Chosen One' from her/his enemies. It will certainly be a lot of trouble.

[84-88] DISAPPEARANCE

could apply to relative, friend, lover, familiar, steed, object or any other possession. Was it stolen or went away? Why, and where is now. This theme could easily lead to Exploration, to Internal Tension or to External Threat, depending on the reasons for the disappearance.

[89-91] WHERE DID SHE GO?

lover or friend went to the place from which nobody ever returned. Why did she go there and how to save her? And also quite important, why has nobody ever returned from this wood/cave/plane/ruin? Obviously can be connected to any kind of External Threats or Explorations.

[92-94] SHE DOES NOT WANT TO BE SAVED

Classic princess rescuing with a catch. Maybe she ran away with a lover, which is an enemy or a commoner. Maybe she is not in danger at all, but she is the danger who is gathering an enemy army. Works with all themes. And maybe this time is a male prince, or an old, not so-senile, deposed king who escaped from unjust imprisonment.

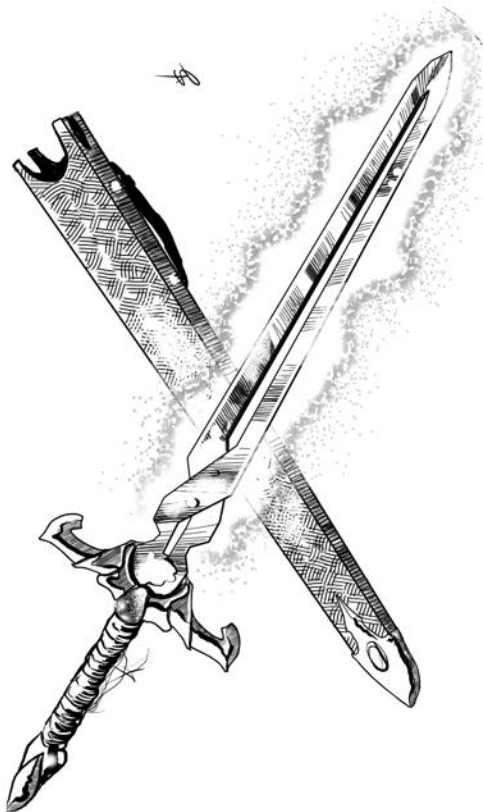
[95-98] FAMILY IN TROUBLE

they have gained enemies, or there is a feud among family members, or they have lost their house or possessions due to some disaster. Or someone has prophesied something bad to happen, being real or not, or

there is an actual curse from some powerful wizard or cleric, or fairy (but why?).

[99-00] COME BACK HOME

little variant of the above if the PC(s) is recalled to his/her home town due to a great danger, or the disappearance of a loved one. Maybe the letter calling him/them home has been forged for some purpose. Maybe the PC(s) cannot get there in time, or has to do a great personal sacrifice to save his/her birthplace. Maybe the PC(s) hates the place from which he came from, but somehow he cannot escape the obligation to return.



The Exploration (4 ON 1D4)

Another pillar of D&D and many other games, from exploration of nearby **wilderlands, ruins and dungeons** to other **nations, planets, planes and dimensions**. Or the other way around if the explorers are not the PCs, but **visitors from another strange place**, with the resulting cultural clash. Exploration may also involve **competing parties** to claim foreign lands, resources or lost treasure, or **pursues**, with the PCs as trackers or fugitives.

Other possibilities which could be chosen randomly or with a d20 roll:

[1-2] THE OBJECT

From the Golden Fleece to the Holy Grail, a great reason to explore far away lands is to search for some fabulous object or, as in the case of the Lord of the Ring, to destroy one in the only spot where it can be done. Also work to create internal or external tension when there is a treasure coveted by many parties. Or the object could already be in the PC's possession, and reveal unexpected properties, or draw unwanted attention. Weapons are a special kind of objects, particularly if they have special properties or histories. Objects may have activation words difficult to find, or in possession of someone unwilling to reveal them. Another object with plenty of possibilities is the key. Maybe it's magical, maybe it was stolen to someone powerful.

[3] TREASURE MAP

A mysterious map could be the start of the exploration. It can lead to a treasure, to a lost city, to a magical artifact. But it will not

be easy to reach, not easy to get and not without adversaries and maybe betrayal, otherwise it would not be an adventure.



Explorers landing

[4-5] LOST CITY, DUNGEON, RUIN OR ISLAND

A classic fantasy trope, normally it contains dark secrets, terrible enemies, lurking danger but also fantastic treasures. The B1, B3, B4, B5, B7, B8 and B10 modules and also X1 could be considered to belong to this section. What's more interesting are the consequences of the discovery by the PCs. Maybe the lost location will unleash a new threat on the outside world. But the discovery will forever change both the 'lost' place and the outside world, creating trade, war or anything in between and probably changing the history of both forever. In Mystara obviously the discovery of Cynidicea and the Valley of Hutaaka are bound to have far reaching consequences for all the nearby countries.

[6] GETTING LOST

in a far away island after a shipwreck could be a common situation in adventures, but in fantasy you can also fall from a flying

ship, or get lost in external planes and strange dimensions, maybe due to sabotage, or to an enemy wizard.

[7] A NEW CONTINENT

or planet, or plane, could be discovered, leading to the foundation of new communities, the discovery of other people, animals, plants, foods and so on. Maybe the native are endangered, or they are dangerous.

[8] THE STRANGE VILLAGE

the inhabitants are unfriendly, or outright hostile, or just a bit strange. They could be undead, werecreatures, doppelgangers, dragons, aliens, fairies or simply live in fear because they have been enslaved by some powerful creature or tyrant. Could also work as External Threat, in the case of a nearby community, or Internal Tension, if it is something which is happening inside the PC's community.

[9-10] NATIVES

PCs must explore and map an area devoid of human presence but inhabited by another race, humanoid or not. This race fears and mistrusts humans but is not violent, so it will try in every way to make life difficult for PCs and prevent them from working, but without attacking them (stealing objects, making them lose, keeping them awake at night etc etc). If the PCs kill any of them, however, they will immediately descend on the PCs en masse and massacre them all without mercy. Will the PCs be able to keep calm and open a dialogue? If they do, the creatures will explain to them that what they are doing will bring an invasion of humans in their lands and

could cause a war, and will beg them to stop. How will the PCs react?

[11-12] HAUNTED BUILDING

many possible variations. It can also be an Internal Tension theme if the building is inside the city, or hides a dungeon with dark creatures below. More in general restless spirits are a variant of this, maybe they want revenge, maybe they deceive, or maybe are not even real spirits, but magical illusion of some wizard with nasty purposes.

[13] THE LAKE

or pool, or spring, or river, has mysterious properties. Maybe it disappears. Maybe it is poisoned. Maybe it seems to have healing magic, but with serious effects.

[14-15] THE TRADER

A famous merchant is entrusted with the mission of opening a new market for the city/nation by bringing certain goods where they are not yet known and thus starting a lucrative trade. The dangers are not just in the journey, but in the necessity to convince buyers of the goodness of their goods, and having to compete with other merchants who bring other goods and hope to obtain an exclusive trade in the host city at the expense of the city/country for which the merchant and the PCs work.

[16] HOW DID WE ARRIVE HERE?

PCs wake up in a different location from the one they fell asleep in. Drunkenness is just too obvious in fantasy, probably it was wild magic, fairy circle, planar portal, illu-

sion, time travel, different dimension, immortal intervention or/and enemy trick.

[17] IT'S ANOTHER WORLD!

The PCs are apparently where they were, but then they start to notice some differences, and discover they are truly in a different world, similar but with a different history. But how did they come to be here? and how will they return home?

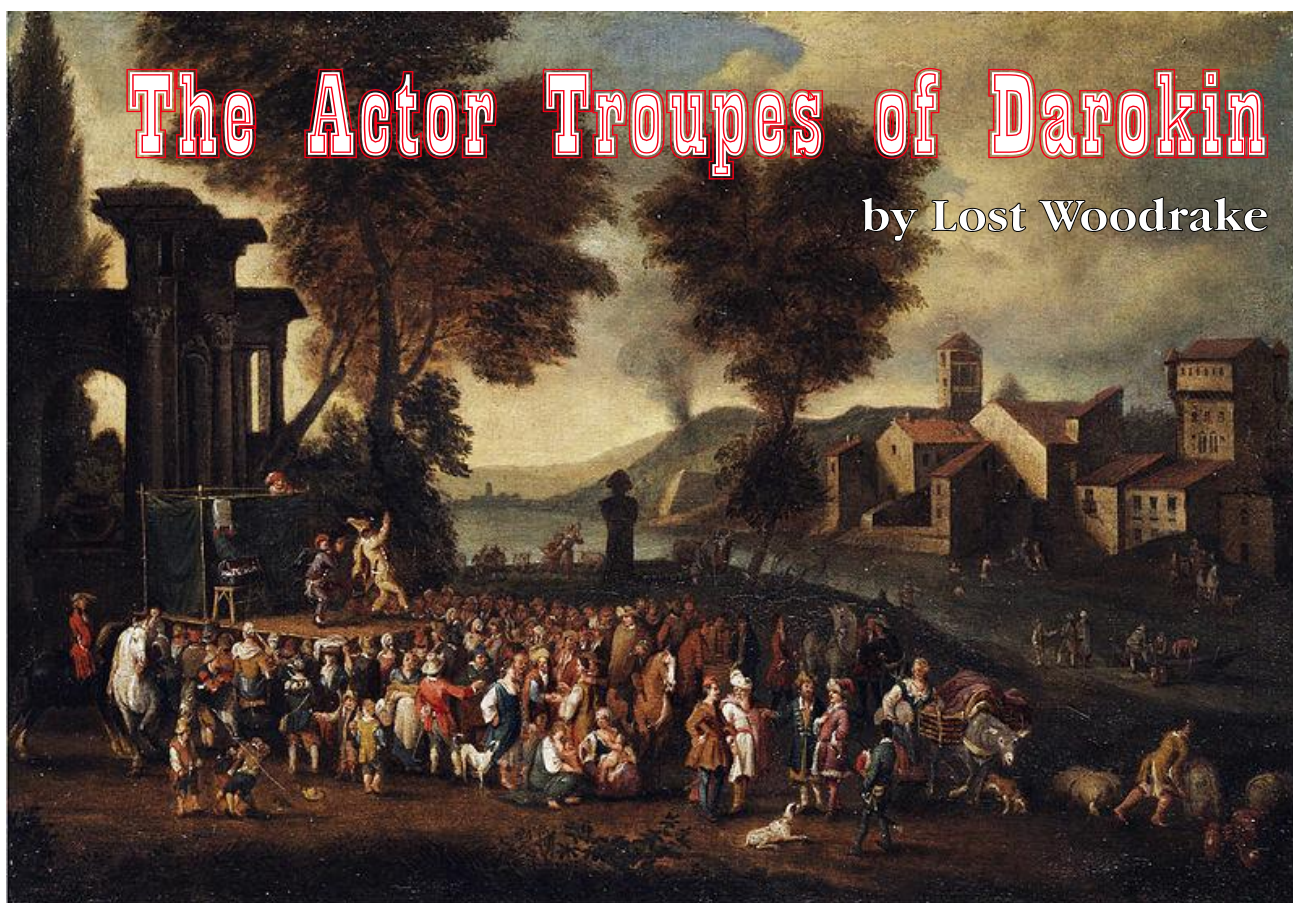
[18] BIRTHRIGHT

All people (or all animals, or plants, or fungi, or stones) born/found in a certain region/area are mutated / magical / cursed / blessed and someone wants to stop this, or steal this, or just to know why.

[19-20] AND THE QUEST?

I have not forgotten what's probably THE major trope of fantasy and its ancestor, the folk tale. But The Quest, rather than a theme in itself, could happen to resolve any of the previous themes: the PCs may be sent to find something or someone to gain help against an internal or external threat, environmental hazard or simply to explore. Or they may need something to help a loved one, ally or relative. Quests may be further complicated by time constraints, competing parties, places which are uncharted or difficult to be found.

To be continued...



The following is modeled after the *com-media dell'arte* troupes which flourished in Renaissance Italy, with republican Venice at its epicenter, so Darokin seemed appropriate. I removed the masks, which are the defining trait of the original commedia, but retained the notion of improvisation and the recurring types or roles (although I changed their names and, at times, their characteristics as well). I also added another dramatic genre, akin to Renaissance pastoral drama. These were not commonly part of the repertoire of commedia troupes, but seemed fitting to the Known World.

The celebrated wandering actor troupes of Darokin can be found across the Republic, travelling in their wagons along the main routes of commerce, performing in taverns and inns, erecting their stages in town squares, or opting for more respectable venues in the large cities. These troupes are often composed of family members, with one generation training the next in the tricks of the trade. Others at times join the core family to create larger and more varied companies. In the more dangerous wilderlands of Darokin, troupes will usually be found accompanying merchant caravans for protection, offering entertainment in the evenings in return, while everyone sits around the campfire.

Actors are paradoxically both celebrated and shunned by Darokin society. They are admired and sometimes famous, but no respectable merchant father or mother would want their child to become one. Their profession is considered dishonorable, their alleged sexual promiscuity infamous, and their vagrant lifestyle unsettling. Therefore, actors are either already born into families of actors, or join them from the copper class ranks of society, who have little to lose in terms of honor and much to gain in terms of money and artistry. They often marry within themselves (if they marry at all), and create their own subculture in Darokin society. Actors from the silver class and higher are extremely rare and usually scandalous and find themselves disowned by their houses.

The troupes of Darokin are famed for their improvisational skills. The actors do not stage written plays, as in the playhouses of Ierendi or Specularum, but rather devise in advance a general outline of a plot, known as a scenario, which they further develop on the spot during the live performance itself. In rehearsals, they memorize huge chunks of materials: pieces of dialogue, physical humor, intricate labyrinthine monologues alongside one-liners, songs and dances. These allow them to improvise seamlessly with their partners during the show, by evoking materials from their memory as suits the spontaneous situation. Actors also need to be skilled in dancing, singing, musical instruments, storytelling and acrobatics.

Actors as adventure hooks: travelling throughout the country, actors are an excellent source of information. As they predominantly perform in taverns and streets, but

are also sometimes invited into the manors of the wealthy, they get a view of the various strata of society that is more diverse than many others. Some of them have surprisingly close connections to the elite of Darokin. Actors often incorporate recent events into their improvised shows, and therefore serve to spread news (albeit in an over-dramatized version) as well as sly political commentary on the current situation.

THE PLAYS

Two dramatic genres are prevalent in the Darokin troupes' repertoire: City Comedies and Forest Scenes. The former follow the lives and loves of bourgeois merchant families and their servants, with farcical, outrageous and convoluted plots, almost always set in Darokin City (even when the show itself is staged elsewhere). The latter are pastoral plays, more poetic in style and at times even tragic. They are set in the Canolbarth (from which the Alfheim elves are always curiously absent) and center on fauns and dryads. The humorous tone of City Comedies allows performers and audiences alike to address the underlying tensions in their seemingly sunny plutocratic republic. Rivalries between merchants, intergenerational and class conflicts, racial and regional prejudices, unconventional gender and sexual behavior, and the emotional and social toll of Darokin's wealth-centered worldview are all acknowledged on the theatre's comic stage in ways that are relatively absent elsewhere in Darokin's public discourse. Much can be spoken while framed as "mere play" and in jest. Forest Scenes, on the other hand, offer their audiences an escape to the bucolic world of the woods. The tales of the sylvan

creatures seem far removed from the everyday life of Darokin towns and villages, and serve as a charming alternative to the Republic's urbane mercantilism.

Both genres display a set of stock characters, or "roles", types that recur in almost every play of all troupes. These roles always have the same name, and usually some piece of costume or stage-prop that defines them. Thus, spectators can quickly recognize who these characters are and what to expect from them, although some troupes might choose to subvert such expectations. Actors often specialize in particular roles which become identified with them, so that each troupe needs to have a variety of performers to be cast in all central roles.

In the City Comedies, roles are divided into five major categories: servant-clowns, elders, young lovers, foreigners, and children. The latter are performed by the families' younger members, until they grow up and train into specific adult roles that fit them. The comedies' plot usually revolves around the attempts of the young lovers to unite despite obstacles put forth by the elders and foreigners. The servant-clowns assist their masters (either the elders or the young lovers) in their escapades, while causing mischief of their own accord. The familial relations between the various roles can change according to the demands of the scenario (for example, in some cases Laurenta and Giulianianno are in love with each other; in other scenarios, they are brother and sister who are in love with others). Forest Scenes' roles are more limited in scope, and focus on sylvan creatures, especially fauns and dryads (although some innovative troupes have added fairy roles as well from time to time).



These are the main roles that can be found in most troupes:

City Comedies

Servant-Clowns

Zampezze: male servant, a trickster figure who is always hungry and on the hunt for more food or extra coin. He is often in love with Bambolleia. Originally from Athenos, he speaks with that local dialect/accent. Alongside Bambolleia, he is the representative of the copper class onstage.

Bambolleia: maidservant, either in love with Zampezze or trying to reject his advances. She is often originally from the rural areas of Darokin, and in her coarse demeanor serves as a contrast to the more genteel Laurenta (see below).

Elders

Fessinia: the matriarch of the family or a matronly figure outside of the family. She serves as either the mother of one of young lovers or as an elderly woman in love with one of them (or a combination of both). She can be represented along the spectrum between kind and

warm to bossy and dominating, depending on the plot's needs.

Messer Micio: family patriarch and elderly merchant from Darokin City. He is often a miser who is more interested in wealth and social standing than in the welfare of his family members. He is the father of one of the young lovers and might be in love with the other, serving as an obstacle to his child's happiness.

Messer Difio: Micio's partner/rival in business. At times he is Fessinia's husband or is the father of the other young lover. He is originally from Corunglain and is more belligerent (at times even paranoid) in his attitude. A running gag maintains that he has a humanoid mistress from the Broken Lands (her race changes from scenario to scenario, according to circumstances, the location of the show, or the latest skirmish).

Young Lovers

Laurenta: the young female lover, most often born and raised in Darokin City. She is well-bred, sophisticated, and educated, and can often be seen reciting poetry, playing the lute, or discussing politics.

Giuliano: the young male lover, sometimes a newcomer from Selenica or Akesoli who is unacquainted with the ways of Darokin City.

Foreigners

Nindernandernund: A ridiculous old Alphatian wizard, pedantic and absent-minded. Often causes catastrophes with his magic. While Nindernandernund is a male character, he is sometimes portrayed by female actors as well.

Gloriosus Vanitus: A pompous and cowardly Thyatian soldier or general. He is often in love with Laurenta, Giuliano, or both.

Jabul or Kookai: these are stereotypical depictions of charlatan or fanatic religious figures from other countries. Jabul is a Ylari cleric, while Kookai is a shaman from Ethengar. A regular troupe usually has an actor for either the role of Jabul or Kookai, but not for both. These characters are gross misrepresentations of their cultures and will rightfully offend the people of Ylaruam and Ethengar. They are hugely popular with Darokin folk but could actually cause a minor diplomatic crisis. Therefore, the officials in major cities in Darokin try to ban these roles from theatre stages within their municipal reach. In the countryside they are still widely enjoyed.

Children Roles

Springfeet: A hin thief, who often assists Zampezze in causing mayhem.

Mjuk'k: a dimwitted kobold who appears for brief slapstick scenes.

Forest Scenes

Mirtillina: the main female protagonist, a dryad.

Sommo: the main male protagonist, a faun. Often in love with Mirtillina.

Zypfa: a witch or hag, who intervenes in the relationship of Mirtillina and Sommo.

Rombous: a drunken and violent centaur, whose burly physicality is often played for laughs. However, he can also have a more menacing presence in some plots, where he attempts to assault Mirtillina and puts her in serious danger. The role demands two actors to play the centaur's front and backside.

Hervaraea: an old treant, who imparts her wisdom upon the other characters, often in a cryptic manner. At times, she serves as the play's storyteller, delivering the prologue and moving time forward between scenes if needed.

At times, troupes mix and match the two genres, with the urban characters visiting the lyrical forest and interacting with its inhabitants. Thus, Gloriosus Vanitus can find himself in the Canolbarth, madly in love with Mirtillina; the young lovers can run away from their parents and get trapped by Zypfa; the servant-clowns assist Sommo in chasing Mirtillina, etc.

An example for a scenario could be:

Fessinia is in love with Giulliano, but her daughter Laurenta is in love with him too. Fessinia sends Zampeze to Kookai to acquire a love potion from him, of the kind that the person who drinks it falls in love with the first person they see.

Her husband, Micio, accidentally drinks the potion. Frightened that Micio will fall in love with someone else, she orders Zampeze to take his master to Kookai so that he would heal him.

To make certain that Micio will not see anyone on the way and fall in love with them, Zampeze – with Springfeet's help – shoves his master into a large chest and carries him to the shaman. Once there, Zampeze fears that if he'll open the chest, Micio will fall in love with Kookai. He asks the shaman to dress up as Fessinia, so that when Micio sees him he'll think it's his wife and fall in love with her.

Rather than admitting that the potion was in fact entirely bogus, Kookai agrees to play along, masquerades as Fessinia, and begins the "healing dance".

Meanwhile, the real Fessinia tries to seduce the naïve Giulliano and almost succeeds, but gets caught by Laurenta at the very last moment. The "healed" Micio returns home and Laurenta reveals her mother's infidelity to him. Micio claims that's impossible since he had just seen his wife elsewhere, dancing rather oddly.

Laurenta argues that her mother has been at home all the time. Zampezze chimes in and maintains that the Fessinia that tried to seduce Giuliano was in fact Kookai in disguise. They invite the shaman for questioning and he admits to impersonating Fessinia, not realizing they are talking about another situation.

The furious Micio and Giuliano violently throw Kookai out of the house with the help of Zampezze and Springfeet, Laurenta forgives her lover, and the lucky Fessinia is left to pursue her advances of Giuliano in the near future.



Original drawings of Actor Troupe members on this page and following by Justin Pfeil (<https://justinpfeil.com>)

THE TROUPE

Below is a sample theatre troupe, one of the most popular in Darokin: the Vergheze Family. The troupe is quite representative of many troupes in terms of numbers, with actors doubling, or tripling up, on roles. Larger troupes are very rare as they are financially less efficient and travelling with so many people is cumbersome.

The Verghezes have achieved fame through their witty depiction of the traditional roles, combined with their innovations in theatrical effects (see below). Their success has allowed them to perform in front of the greatest houses of Darokin. Jaron Vergheze prides himself on being a confidante of Lucius Linton (this is most probably a grave exaggeration at best).

Jaron Vergheze (age 43) – Jaron was born on a wagon between Dolos and Nemiston to an actress mother (father unknown). He became famous through the role of Giuliano, but as he grew older he realized that it is pathetic for him to continue portraying the young lover, and moved on to play Messer Micio to much acclaim.

Elucinda Vergheze (age 41) – Jaron's wife. She plays the roles of Fessinia and Nindernandernund, and is also the savvy financial manager of the troupe. Elucinda was born to another acting family, the Eldfadens from northern Darokin, but left her family after falling in love with Jaron. She still loves him after all these years.

Bollar Vergheze (age 36) – Jaron’s younger half-brother. He is deeply jealous of his brother, as he always wanted to play the handsome Giuliani. Instead he got to play Zampezze. He hilariously excels in the role, but the sibling envy never abated, even after his brother left the role of Giuliani. He still plays Zampezze, as well as Messer Difio, Jabul, and Gloriosus Vanitus.

Pallinda Eldfaden (age 38) – Elucinda’s sister. She ran away from her family’s troupe to join her sister, and was accepted to the company rather reluctantly. She plays the roles of Bamboleia and Zypfa. She had a stormy affair with Bollar, but now she despises him (which is unfortunate, given that their roles require them to regularly play opposite each other. It does add extra spice to the performances, though). She is in charge of designing the troupe’s costumes.



Bollar

Pallinda



Aldrienne

Nella

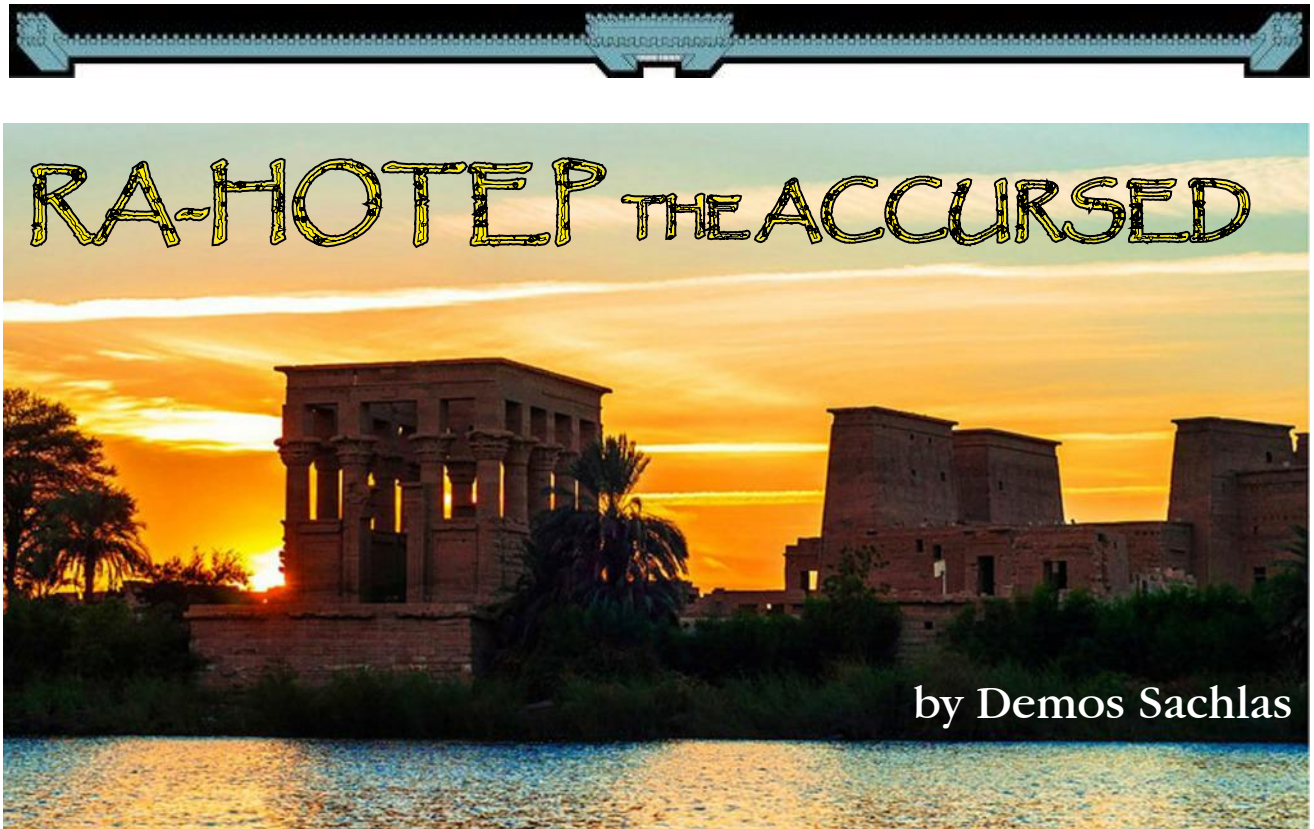
Aldrienne Vergheze (age 18) – Elucinda and Jaron’s eldest daughter. She plays the roles of Laurenta and Mirtillina. Aldrienne has a wonderful singing voice and is a skilled musician.

Nella Vergheze (age 8) – Elucinda and Jaron’s youngest daughter. She currently plays the child roles, but trains for the role of Bamboleia. She also assists her aunt in sewing costumes and curtains.

Romyn (surname unknown; age 20) – Romyn was found by the Verghezes as an orphan in one of the small hamlets of northeastern Darokin. His parents were killed in an orcish raid, and Pallinda took pity on him and decided to raise him as her son. He now plays the roles of Giuliano and Sommo, and is Aldrienne's on-again-off-again fiancé. He is in charge of carpentry work whenever necessary.

Calisteo (surname unknown; age unknown) – a Belcadiz elf; trained as a 3rd Circle illusionist at the Great School of Magic, but deep inside always desired to be an actor. Calisteo (if that is indeed his real name) left Glantri and joined the Verghezes on the road. He supplies the theatrical effects for the show and gets to play minor roles from time to time (he is not a good actor, but he is a great illusionist). Calisteo's magic is responsible for much of the Verghezes' recent success, as their scenarios can now include dragons and treants, ghosts and dream sequences, thus deeply broadening their artistic vision. Calisteo is probably a source of great embarrassment to his family in New Alvar.





Temple of Ancient Nithia

The second Gazetteer supplement GAZ2: *“The Emirates of Ylaruam”* introduced the ancient Nithians, a forgotten civilization in the Alasiyan basin on the continent of Brun, existing 2500-1500 years before the present day. The Nithian Empire was erased from history by decree of the Immortals for the crimes of its rulers and their Immortal patron, Thanatos, who aspired to forge an Empire of Undeath.

Although the primary inspiration for Nithia is Ancient Egypt, the official religion of the Nithian Empire in GAZ2: *“The Emirates of Ylaruam”* was based on the Magian Fire Worshippers of ancient Persia. The Magians of Nithia on Mystara worshiped powerful beings from the Elemental Plane of Fire, in constant opposition to beings from the Elemental Plane of Water¹.

¹ HWR2: *“Empire of Nithia”* presents instead a polytheistic religion for the Nithians in the Hollow World.

The Magian Fire Worshippers in the Emirates of Ylaruam in the Gazetteer era are a secret cult whose members are descended from the ancient Nithians. They are described as evil magic-users and clerics, masters of elemental magic and necromancy. Their ultimate goal is to re-establish the Nithian Empire and the reign of the ancient line of Nithian kings.

For those wishing to further develop the Magian Fire Worshippers, their leader could be Ra-Hotep the Accursed, an ancient Nithian priest-king who became a lich and thereby escaped the obliteration of the Nithian Empire, as he was already buried in his tomb. Although memory of his past life is forgotten, he has once again begun to stir and is preparing to return.



Rahotep portrait by Jeffrey Kosh (<https://jeffreykosh.wixsite.com/jeffreykoshgraphics/home>)

STAGING THE RISE OF RA-HOTEP

Scattered remnants of the Nithian race inhabit the northern highland wastes in the Emirate of Nithia, under the influence of Ra-Hotep. At the beginning of the campaign, characters may have a few encounters with these elusive primitive tribes, mostly in the form of nocturnal ambushes.

Later on, the party may encounter evil shamans in thrall to Ra-Hotep, able to summon undead spirits. The lich's most powerful servants are sorcerers who can command undead, and also summon beings from the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Yasir al-Achmed of the Northern Highlands (a 24th level fighter) is a brigand chief, described in "The Village of Kirkuk" (GAZ2, pg 48) and is supported by a Magian fire-priest (a 9th level magic-user) and his acolytes (also magic-users). Yasir is unaware of the existence of Ra-Hotep.

The Magian Fire Worshipers have established a secret network throughout the Emirates of Ylaruam. Their foul rituals are forbidden, punishable by death. They are protected and supported by servants and allies from the Elemental Plane of Fire.

THE TOMB OF RA-HOTEP

Alan Lucien's short, handwritten adventure "*Tomb of Ra-Hotep*" was the inspiration for Gary Gygax's "[*The Tomb of Horrors*](#)" although most of us only got a chance to see it after it was included in the special edition of "*Art and Arcana*" (2018).

Lucien's map and handwritten notes detail a trap-filled burial tomb, the lair of "the Lich of Ra-Hotep" who wields magic items in addition to a jackal stick, which controls a sphere of annihilation (a blackball, in BECMi terms).

Ra-Hotep is described as a Priest-Wizard (17th level cleric/16th level magic-user) who defied time and death. Liches in BECMi are either clerics or magic-users, so I have adapted Ra-Hotep to having been a Priest-King in ancient Nithia, able to cast spells as a 33rd level cleric. (See sidebar for suggested spells)

The Tomb of Ra-Hotep can be used as a climactic set-piece in a campaign where the player characters have discovered the ultimate objective of the Magian Fire Worshipers of re-establishing the Nithian Empire with Ra-Hotep as its undead pharaoh.

The activities of the Magians will not escape the notice of Barimoor, a 36th level Alphantian magic-user who dwells in a massive underground network of caves, bent on his own quest of Immortality. The threat posed by Ra-Hotep could therefore make for some strange allies.

Suggested spells for Ra-Hotep::

- 1st level – *cause fear x3,*
darkness x2,
detect good x2,
detect magic x2

- 2nd level – *blight x3,*
confuse alignment,
hold person x2,
resist fire,
silence, 15' radius x2

- 3rd level – *cause disease x2,*
continual darkness x3,
locate object,
speak with dead,
striking

- 4th level – *cause serious wounds x3,*
create poison x3,
dispel magic x2

- 5th level – *cause critical wounds x2,*
commune,
finger of death x3,
insect plague,
truesight

- 6th level – *aerial servant,*
animate objects x2,
barrier x2,
create normal animals x2,
word of recall

- 7th level – *earthquake,*
holy word x2,
life drain,
obliterate x2,

Finally, the hand of Thanatos will eventually be perceived by other Immortals, who could also become involved in high-level adventures. More information on the Immortals involved in Ancient Nithia is available in HWR2: “*Kingdom of Nithia*”.



Stele depicting Rahotep in his tomb



The Factions & Foes of Returned Blackmoor

by Brian Rubinfeld

Author's introduction

I figure it's as good a time as any to return to my mad little creation. A mixture of things made this happen. The initial idea felt a bit sparse in a number of details, so I wanted to flesh a few things out, especially within the Organizations theme. More directly game related, players were interested in tweaked versions of the Rakasta tribes from some notes, plus requests for Lupins as well. And, true to the theme of the article, discussions of factions and groups for players to explore a little more. For starters, the rebellion felt a bit sparse in details. And as "The Egg Be Dammed" implied, they're certainly not entirely organized or cooperative

amongst each other. Likewise, there's certainly more than just the Capital City and some points of light in a wasteland. Despite damage from events leading to the Great Rain, as well as a civil war, there are still many active settlements and cities. Nonetheless, Returned Blackmoor is very much a post-apocalyptic society. Despite evading the worst of the Great Rain, they were ravaged by radical climate shifts, social discord and the collapse of the old order; much like the rest of Mystara so long ago. Just as Heard and Beach did with the Savage Coast, I will try to do here and beyond. Also, I realize this quickly expanded far beyond just one article. I wanted to add more, what can I say?

Also, a note on timelines: The new Blackmoor timeline has a massive gap in between 3000 BC/The Great Rain of Fire and 967 AC: This is due to time travel into a near-modern Mystara. Save for exceptions, these years are otherwise blank. Also, for ease of use in Mystara, this uses the AC (First Crowned Emperor) calendar over the UC (Blackmoor/Thonia Republic) Calendar, even though the latter would be used in-game. To account for the latter, the calendar is heavily skewed due to time travel. The Great Rain of Fire would have been 2030 UC, with the current year being 6030 UC, effectively. However, due to a skewed sense of time, Blackmoor would likely deem the current year 2063 UC until corrected.

With all of that out of the way, the information here should be supplementary to *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #20's introduction to Returned Blackmoor. And with that, please enjoy a closer look into history and the people behind the organizations, societies, tribes and others throughout Returned Blackmoor.

- Brian Rubinfeld

A RETURN TO BLACKMOOR

"Mad, they're all mad here! Horrible devices and worse politics. How does such an alien place operate? The order here is illogical too! Let me out, the knights will have nothing to do with this wicked place!"

-Siegfried Von Stroheim,
captured Heldannic Knight,
yelling at a jail warden

Returned Blackmoor is very much akin to its earlier predecessor. And by all means, much is still the same. However, gone is a classical rule by noble families. Instead, a central power only mimics the later rule of emperors. Those beneath this supreme command are but proxies and puppets, assigned to both handle lesser duties and distract the public through a façade of a more open government. The territories of Blackmoor have been reshaped as well. Blackmoor's town has grown into a bustling metropolitan hub. While no longer acting as a seat for a global empire, it's still the capital of the new one. Even so, Blackmoor City remains an impressive feat; reaching across water and onto expanded land. The Old Castle still remains, with its eerie dungeons given new life by the elite factions of the land. While some say that a nearby manor watching over the city is used by "the God-King", this is just a front for being seen as normal. The upgraded despot slumbers in secret restoration chambers deep within the dungeon depths. Exploring the revamped complex assumes one can survive the many new devices and creatures funneled in as added security.

The Factions & Foes of Returned Blackmoor



Returned Blackmoor map by Sturm, modifying DA combined map by DaveL (originally published in the topic [“Final Blackmoor Map”](#) on The Piazza forum). The map above is only a ‘preview’ of [the full size map available in the Vaults of Pandius](#) both in the version published here with superimposed colours of the Political Territories and in a plain version without the colours.

Several affiliated dominions have seen much change as well. The Redwoods became a refuge for humans disgruntled by the rampant industry and unapologetic technocracy. The Afridhi and Peshwah within the region attempted to hold onto old traditions, while otherwise assimilating into a rapidly changing culture. Several counties and districts evolved from once semi-isolated baronies and rival kingdoms. New counties and districts emerged from the old; Capital Blackmoor (which Williamsfort merged into), Ten Duchy, Glendower, Locust Hills, Bramwald, Redwoods (which lies about its "low" Elf population to keep many of them hidden), Far Peaks (including the Superstition Mountains Salvage Zone) and Vestfold are the most prominent divisions of the new Blackmoorian Empire. Amidst reconstruction from the insurrection war, other territories have fallen to the wayside. Some, like Old Starport and Woodenbridge to the west, have been destroyed. Other old sights, like the Valley of the Ancients, were destroyed well before the Great Rain (with the destruction of the Beagle being the reason for the Valley).

In the 1000 years since the glory years of Uther Andahar, Blackmoor built itself up into the ultimate world power. And in a few brief moments, all of it was destroyed. Or rather, it was meant to be destroyed. By twists of luck and fate, Blackmoor was given a chance at survival through a convoluted escape plan into the future. Flung through space and time, the land found itself where it would have otherwise stood. But, much had changed on the continent of Skothar, following the tragedy. The world itself shifted its lands, as whole climates warped over the course of several years. This new Blackmoor found itself battling a

savage arctic, accompanied by demoralization, disease and famine. Such troubles only grew when a former icon of the military tore through the lands in unfaltering insurrection. So-Called "Returned Blackmoor" quickly became a grim and isolated place. Under a tyrannical new order, it still rebuilt and healed from its wounds. However, this new damage may only be the beginning.

A PRIMER ON THE HEROES, VILLAINS AND ORGANIZATIONS OF RETURNED BLACKMOOR

Many fight for survival in the despotic dystopia formerly known as Blackmoor. Some quest to root out all who oppose the mighty empire. Some simply wander around the land looking for strange oddities from the past or present. Many organize to liberate the crushed land from the hands of a ruthless tyrant. The suppressed and repressed populations all display a wide variety of motivations and morals.

RETURNED BLACKMOOR IMPERIUM

The main governing authority over Blackmoor, for over 30 years.

Allogost's Regime

The established power within the realm, leading the regime into a glorious new age. So far, the brutal dictatorship has lasted for decades. Trusted military personnel, scientists, royal defectors and more that have proved their service to the mighty overlord have been granted special privileges within seats of power, such as a personal counsel. Despite a stiff and stoic regime, the powers that be have enacted a degree of progressive change, assuming one is loyal to the nation's cause. Especially loyal patriots are rewarded regardless of race, original ethnicity, gender or other factors commonly hampering other societies in even modern Mystara. However, any outsiders who do not declare or show allegiance to Blackmoor are given the same olden prejudices of yesteryear and today. In fact, it might be far stronger than ever!

- **God-King Gwyn Allogost**

A fanatical tyrant, formerly a powerful military officer. He used the discontent and suffering of his people to his advantage, leading to a revolution to topple the Andahar's royal house. In the years since his rule took hold, his mental health declined slowly, as his physical health declined rapidly. In the end, he thought it best to rebuild himself with powerful arcane technology. His frightening image is more potent than ever, clad in vicious armor with a metallic face mask exuding

confidence and intimidation. In reality, the face masks hides that his head is a brain in a jar, controlling a mostly machine body. Lawful (Evil) Human Cyborg Fighter, Blackmoorian Government

- **Lead of Ministries, Roger Morgaine**

The leader of the parliament serving under their God-King. Within the parliamentary group are various appointed political allies of their supreme lead. As for Morgaine, he served as an advisory role within Allogost's campaign during the revolt. Ill-suited for combat, he proved far more capable in intellectual plotting and manipulation. Even before then, he was a childhood friend of 'Gwyn' as he knows him as. Lawful (Evil) Human, Blackmoorian Government

- **Minister of Foreign Affairs, Henderson Redmond**

A weaselly and wiry looking man. His stature and demeanor is as telling as his conniving behavior, which he tries to keep in private. His interest is in expansion into the world beyond. However, he views Allogost as an obstacle. To him, the God-King is an aged relic from a transition period into modernity. He has a vision to revive the Blackmoor Empire under contemporary values, rather than the dead traditions of the past. In the meantime, he grumbles, serves and bides his time. While keeping face, he looks for ways to continue to gain influence while charting plots for war campaigns abroad. Chaotic (Evil) Human Bard, Blackmoorian Government

• **Others of Note:**

Kluadja Zignch

(Minister of Health and Civics, the “friendliest face” of parliament),

Zorgal the Fortuitous

(Ministry of War, a grim sergeant of days old),

Velmnahauni Glaime

(A member of Allogost's inner-circle, has a vice for circulating rumors),

Dexter Mont Tybeilzium

(Ministry of Arcana, an ancient wizard who tutored Allogost on many subjects in his youth),

Harton Bailen (Ministry of Education, very paranoid and twitchy)

Timeline Specifics

3029 BC: Gwyn Allogost is born to the Allogost House, a minor noble house dedicated through military service.

3010 BC: Gwyn, still a squire, beholds all sorts of dreadful things befalling Blackmoor. Led by other knights, he helps slay cultists of the Egg of Coot.

3009 BC: Gwyn proves his worth by fending off mutated beastmen, leading to his full acceptance as a knight.

3008 BC: Gwyn meets a merchant woman named Alice, the two fall in love. His Order looks down upon him for taking interest in a non-noble.

3007 BC: Roger Morgaine is born into a humble upbringing, whose family were adventurers previously, nearby Historic Williamsfort.

3005 BC: Reger I became Emperor of Blackmoor.

3001 BC: Allogost, alongside his unit, do their best to combat relentless waves of corrupted magics and creatures, within the town of Locust Hill Valley. The ensuing battle levels the Locust Hills in supernatural night, but countless civilians are evacuated to the safety of the main city. He is hailed as a hero for keeping the morale of his comrades in order, while ultimately helping to protect the lands. Several campaigns later, he rose up the ranks to General.

3000 BC: Before the Egg is finally "put down", the dungeons below Old Blackmoor Castle are explored once more. Like in olden times, a cesspool of corruption and evil is exterminated. Now, Allogost leads the charge. A young Morgaine hears of this and immediately idolizes the general as a "superhero". A marriage is planned for “Sir Allogost the Hero”. Days later, Cultists of Coot declare revenge and manage to sneak past Blackmoorian defenses. Several people are killed, including Alice. Gwyn never bothers to find new love, preferring to keep his heart cold.

- Time Gap -

967 AC: Allogost is put in charge of welfare for civilians, following the malfunction of the time jump experiment. Months of observing their suffering motivates him to revolt against the establishment power.

969 AC: An indignant noble, whose primary contacts were at a military base south and west of Blackmoor (current day Esterhold), challenges Allogost to a duel to the death. Unaware of the devastation

caused by the Great Rain, Allogost is accused of supporting a glorified kidnapping. Despite this being illegal, Allogost accepts and defeats the challenger. His views towards revolution are solidified.

970 AC: An insurrection brings the previous autocracy of Blackmoor to its knees. Emperor Reger I is personally assassinated by Allogost, as is much of House Andahar. A provisional government transitions to the new regime of Blackmoor.

971 AC: The parliament is put into place, in part to dull down assumptions that Allogost controls everything, even though this is true. They do however represent the public, while a private council focuses on more governmental matters. It acts as the successor to previous regency councils active in the time of Royal Blackmoor.

973 AC: Henderson is born in House Redmond, even though noble houses are no longer recognized officially. His family still holds sway over Greater Newgate county.

980-981 AC: The parliament, by Allogost's reluctant approval, allows for the immigration of the wandering Rakasta. Emissaries are dispatched to maintain control. Reports of conflict with escaped Lupins are stated by emissaries. Little is done on this, until they too are forced to register.

982 AC: In a meeting with Allogost's council and parliament, a unanimous decision is declared to execute a group of intruders. 'Traitors' Day is instated as a reminder to the dangers of treason.

984 AC: Morgaine is appointed to the parliamentary chair, after reports of his incredi-

ble wit and charisma reach the government. Morgaine's reputation as a child prodigy employed with the University of Blackmoor also aided in his choosing.

991 AC: After repelling the Redwood rebels, action is sanctioned to root out all causes. Lack of cooperation forces drastic and deadly measures. The end result is a genocide, massively crippling the influence of the population. Other elven populations and druidic circles fear being targeted.

992 AC: Inspired by the retaliation of his God-King, Henderson Redmond weaves his way up the ladder and into the council, to greater appreciate his hero. He is instead met with a dour middle aged man in declining health. His vision shattered, he instead focuses on being his successor.

993 AC: A colony called Backburner is hit with a strong weapon, in response to their growing rebellion. Reports of monsters follow not long after.

994 AC: Redmond appears at the Space Launch ceremony, representing Allogost.

997 AC: Several heads of state are appointed for emerging colonies and minor states within the expanding territory of the new empire. Allogost relegates speech related duties to his associates, including Redmond.

998 AC: Physicians deeply worry about the overlord, as council and parliament can only keep up the façade of normalcy for so long.

1000 AC: Following the betrayal of Wood-enbridge, the Northern Circle claimed numerous territories east of the Locust Hills.

The government is moving to end recognition of the territory, for the time being. The leadership of the Northern Circle also requests representation within the government, allowing a chosen ruler to join in parliamentary duties.

Later 1000 AC: Allogost resurfaces after years of declining health and seclusion, in finely cast armor. In truth, he is a cyborg whose mechanical body is controlled by his encased brain. "Cybernetic Psychosis" begins to affect Allogost's thought processes, leading him to feel and act "less human".

The Orders of Justice (The Military)

The forceful extension of Allogost. As a former soldier and high ranking official, he is more than aware of how they operate. More so, they receive much of his attention and his praise. While ensuring that borders remain safe and outsiders are kept away, they also act as the de facto police force within the territory. Against their own citizens, their methods are often cruel and brutal. Against any citizen that shows any kind of doubt or disdain for their government, their actions become exceptionally excessive in force. Often, anyone who protests or objects openly doesn't live through the experience.

Guardsmen

A baseline in rank and an actual acceptance into Blackmoorian military service. While starting recruits are just recognized militia, those who can hold rank are treated as genuine members of armed forces. Many of



Blackmoor border guards, original drawing by Toni Roads <https://www.artstation.com/toniroadsart>

these starting guardsmen are recruited as older children and young adults, typically boys and young men at that. These low ranking soldiers are often tasked with security in the outlands and around Blackmoor City. Often, they are only equipped to deal with standard-level criminals and scattered raiders at most. Many have taken it upon themselves to act as the unofficial police force of the land. Particularly trusted guardsmen are given warden duties over the various prison facilities. Those who prove worthy of becoming a Chief Warden are granted access to secret government facilities for especially dangerous prisoners.

- **Asanis** - A Tangor exile that was formerly employed to a trade guild in Esterhold. After the debacle that cost several

lives, he was spared as a prisoner. Quickly proving his worth, his mercenary experience landed him a job with the guardsmen. He cares little of loyalty, but knows desertion will result in actual death. Neutral (Neutral) Human Warrior, Mercenary

Ranger Corps

A rank devoted to both frontier colonies as well as the wilderness that has continued to survive among the early hardships of Blackmoor's return to Mystara. A majority of these soldiers are stationed at a variety of outposts dotting the edges of civilization or just beyond it. Rangers excel at rugged survivalism in harsh environments. Those who have proved themselves are given the option to survey the wastelands outside the safety of the energy dome. Only the most hardened and rugged of Blackmoor Rangers would accept this. These rangers, The Zone Rangers, often return with horror stories of warped magic and long-lingering pollutant corruption birthing all sorts of horrors that haunt Skothar. The bravest of World Scouts accompany them on missions to recover artifacts.

- **Oliver Brightbranch** -A servant of both the natural ways and Blackmoor's advancement. A former student for the bio-technology research institute of Blackmoor University, he found himself captivated by the idea of advancing through the natural world. However, he wasn't academically up to par. Joining the military, he found himself more at home with communing amidst nature itself, while agreeing to test organic weaponry and armory. He sympathizes with the Redwoods and seeks to help them, at least towards seeing his views.

Neutral (Neutral) Human Druidic Knight, Knight-Ranger

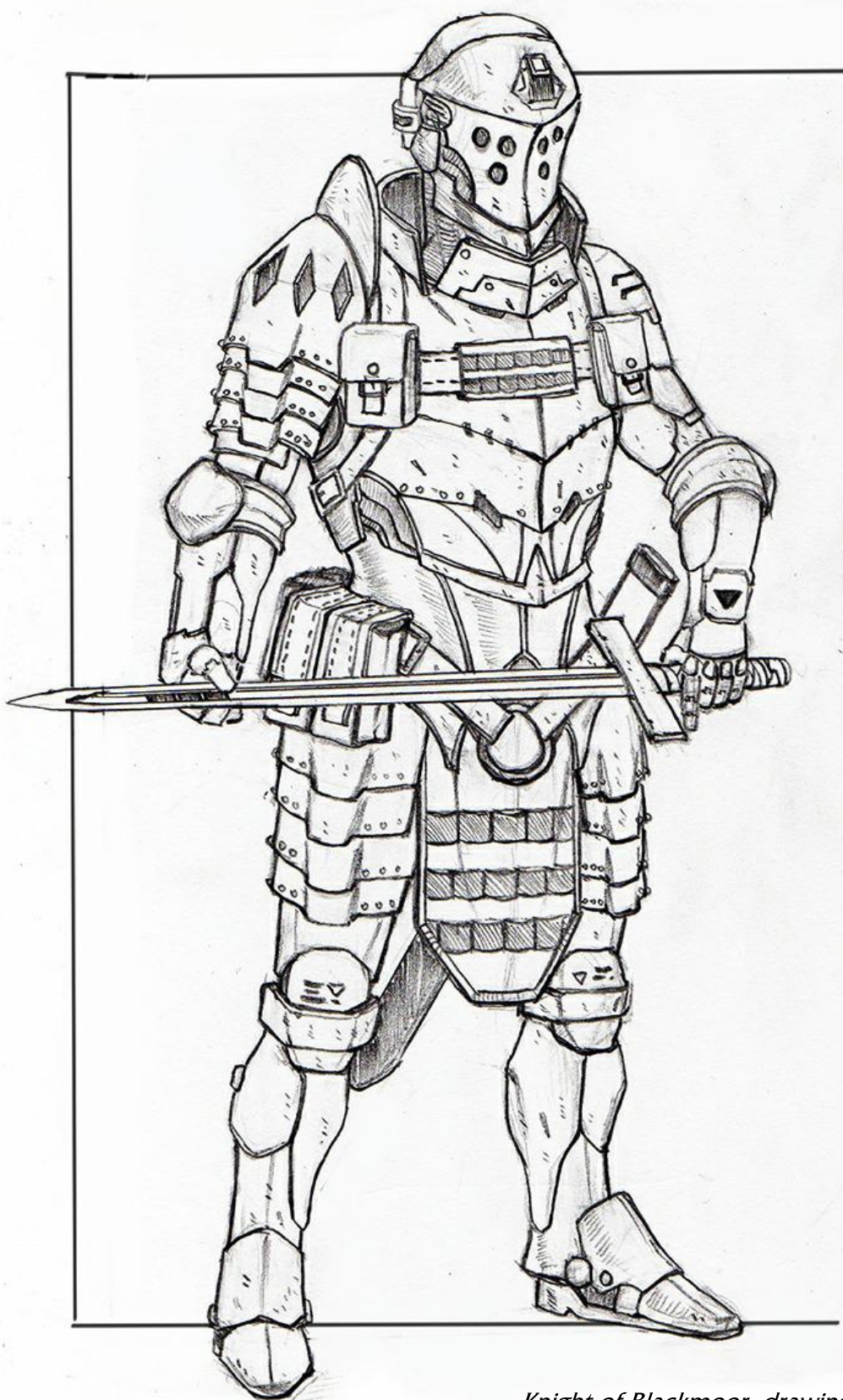
World Scouts

The few agents of Blackmoor granted clearance to explore the outside world, from afar. Their goals are to study all forces of Mystara, and to gather any and all intelligence. All the same, they are meant to be incognito and blend in as much as possible. Their expeditions have led them to the land of Glantri. A Blackmoorian conspiracy tells of an ancient artifact linked to the fated ship that transformed the land forever, somehow taken to those lands. Should the Nucleus be learned about in full, this would surely spark a war. They often accompany members of the Reclamation Society as both security and insurance.

- **Lady Raleigh** - A knight transferred to this unit, following her excellence in spying. While respected among her peers as an efficient killer and expert of stealth, her sharp tongue has left her with few genuine friends. Often, she leaves the talking to others. While beneath her station, she has been hired by law enforcement to help track down all means of thieves and sneaky criminals. Lawful (Neutral) Human Thief, Spy/Assassin

Hawk-Hunters

If the World Scouts are spies meant to observe the world at large, the Hawk-Hunters are the Secret Police meant to observe the world within Blackmoor. Almost as heavily equipped as the Knights, they are very much military-officers given full judgment powers within the law. Only trusted guards, law enforcement and ranking soldiers are given the chance at this opportunity. The best hawk-hunters take care of



Knight of Blackmoor, drawing by Hasandgo
(<https://www.instagram.com/hasandgo>)

sedition and problematic cases swiftly and quickly. While citizens are aware that they might exist, little is revealed to the public. Some rumors are circulated to keep up a campaign of shadowy fear tactics.

Knights of Blackmoor

Truly outstanding warriors. While only a small number have noble ancestry, the majority are just recruits from Blackmoor's armies, navies and marines; consolidated into an elite order more befitting of their talents. While little has occurred in war campaigns, bands of knights have been sent to deal with more threatening factions, such as the raiders or particularly powerful revolutionaries. Many can be found backing up urban guardsmen, much like how rangers backup outlands guardsmen.

- **Sir Bertrin** - A Knight sent to look into the "Esterhold Assignment", which backfired in a literally explosive way, resulting in the death of two of his colleagues and the capture of two colonists as well. While he remains a devoted patriot to the cause, he views his position as that of a glorified assassin. His distrust of the outside world is put into question, as is his desire to repent for his behavior. He is currently barred from assignments until he "atones" for his failure. The capture of Asanis and Tsabalya, and their subsequent protection under his watch, is mostly his fault. His current business is swaying law figures to change their positions on matters, at least slightly. Lawful (Good) Human Fighter (Paladin), Knight
- **Sir Kabel, the Scorned** - A pale revenant with glowing red eyes. Even as a true knight, his sense of humor was off-

putting to many. Through powers of dark sorcery under 'The Cleansing Mother's' teachings, he wielded arcane power alongside his incredible martial might. Ultimately, Allogost sensed a betrayal brewing. Suspecting the Knights and not the Cleansing Mother herself, the troop of soldiers were all executed. Some dark power brought Kabel back. Chaotic (Evil) Undead Human Fighter (Arcane Warrior), Ex-Knight

Exe-Corps



Masterfully skilled kill teams. These death squads are crafted of the most emotionally devoid and killer knights that would otherwise prove risky on missions. Some are reformed criminals who sought service instead of execution. These groups are deployed on particularly deadly assignments to wipe out anything in their way. These assignments often involve especially active rebel cells, terrorists, dangerous outsiders and general threats to the Blackmoor campaign's existence.

Commissioners

Commanders, commissars, those who have proved not only their worth in war but in

leadership. Their outfits are a mixture of intimidating and flamboyant styles, all providing a striking presence worthy of commanding attention and fear. The officers' club, the Commandant, is a popular place to see high ranking officials that are off-duty. Beware, access is exclusive to the military.

- **Brigadier-General Cromswright:** Commanding officer in charge of the Blight Marsh Brigade, stationed at the edge of the Vestfold Safe Zone. The majority of his soldiers are rangers or former survivalists who turned towards military service. As far as the Official himself, he's tough as steel with a surly attitude well befitting of his position. A large graying moustache is displayed upon his face, much like a trophy on a mantle. Lawful (Neutral) Human Warrior, Military Officer

Timeline Specifics.

4000 BC:+ The Royal Knights valiantly serve Blackmoor and its many houses of lords and barons. Thanks to their courageous might, Blackmoor defeats its harshest enemies and is no longer flanked on all sides.

3500 BC: The knights embark on new quests, such as the Beastmen Crusades, to bring further glory to Blackmoor.

3100 BC: Fights against Serpentine, the fading Egg of Coot and other dark forces begin to cripple the empire; but its noble forces fight on.

- *Time Gap* -

970 AC: A schism is brought by Allogost's revolution. The splinter that detested the General's actions either retired or went AWOL. The supportive faction was greatly rewarded. New divisions were made for particularly skillful knights. The Exe-Corps are the most deadly of the new orders.

971 AC: A revolt organized by survivors of the purge is tackled by many knights. Casualties on the knights side is low, but none of the revolters are spared.

972 AC: The Knights of Blackmoor are given new purpose and divisions within the recently established regime. Old outposts are refurbished and new ones are constructed, the ranger corps are reborn anew.

982 AC: A group of outside adventurers are apprehended after consistent displays of suspicious behavior.

993 AC: Northern tribesmen not only access Blackmoor, but ambush patrolling knights. By some miracle, the marauders survive after slaying the opposing knights.

995 AC: A small team of knights is reported to be executed for drastic failure, but they were actually executed because they were conspiring to take Allogost's power.

998 AC: A small platoon is dispatched to break up squatting anarchists in an old stronghold on Mare Island.

1000 AC. Sir Bertrin is sent on an assignment to stop a well-prepared expedition into north eastern Skothar, it goes terribly. One of the executed knights returns as a wrathful revenant five years later.

Blackmoorian Division of Science

Originally an educational program funded by the royal kingdom, it soon developed into an essential extension to help progress Blackmoor into a revolution of innovations and technologies. In the modern day, they are very much the backbone of imperial power. Their breakthroughs have helped to supply new armor and weapons to the soldiers, defenses for the autocratic government and forms of surveillance to use upon the civilian masses. This is merely the start of the land's many emerging wonders. Many have begun to enact fail-safes, for the possibility that Allogost's usurped empire crumbles or even buckles under pressure.

Gorble Medical Tech

Fronted by Dr. Garvin Gorble, a sadistic and maniacal expert of medicine and health-based arcane sciences. His division, working both within Blackmoor University and Carr Memorial Hospital, uses various façades to conceal their primary projects: bioweaponry for the government. A mixture of prisoners and patients are used as subjects. Recently, a branch of the medical techs was sent to help revitalize the Cootsbane Dam as a research center. Information on them has gone dark.

- **Subject #399** - One of the victims of Egg of Coot madness. Originally a patient at the mental health ward of the Carr Hospital, his behavior grew extraordinarily violent after a series of awful nightmares. Worse, his own abilities became supernaturally enhanced, more than the other patients. Dr. Gorble used him as a magnet for strange activity and aberrant

brainwaves. Always under constant pain, the subject is monitored in hopes of picking up "alien phenomena" in Blackmoor. A recent horrid dream revealed a constant thought pattern of an egg-shaped form. Chaotic (Neutral) Human, Patient

- **Daria Chapelkeg** - A research assistant under Dr. Gorble. For years, she has shown promise as a worthy successor. Ruthlessly efficient and scientifically minded, she's always one to drill peers and ensure they keep their minds sharp. Her intrusive behavior causes her to get involved in her department's business, while reporting all negativity to higher ups. While many consider her annoying, her value as an ingenious physician practitioner is known. But, behind closed doors, she'll do whatever it takes to discover a breakthrough, even if it means breaking her subjects. Lawful (Evil) Dwarf Priest, Physician/Scholar

Khoronus Laboratories

All sorts of truly strange and cutting edge ideas are developed here. It is thanks to this division that the barrier shields were properly implemented, with subsequent attempts at terraforming and taking back the land that made the jump.

- **Uther V.1** - An artificial intelligence closely modeled after an early king of Blackmoor. He's crafty, biding his time and waiting for Allogost to fail. He seeks a monarchy run by the machine, but he won't tell many. Word of the Machine-God has reached him, he's intrigued. Lawful (Neutral) Artificial Intelligence

- **Jeran Alderport** - A vindictive scientist who has helped to bring an information network, the Aether-Web, into the modern age. For over a century in Blackmoor time, the project was a government network. Only within the last 50 Blackmoorian years has it been in the public eye. But, 20 out of those 50 saw it offline. Feeling ungrateful and tired of a regime that barely understands technology, he uploads Uther V.1 onto the Aether-Web, hoping this will do maximum damage. Chaotic (Neutral) Human, Scientist

- **"Saint" Mordemein** - Once a scientist who helped to push for geothermal technologies before the Great Rain. These developments ultimately saved the lands after the jump, plus they proved to be the foundations of the weather technologies that came later. These helped civilians from succumbing to the cold of the new arctic lands, even establishing well-heated zones. While people suspect he was killed during the pre-Rain Plague outbreak, he was in truth assassinated by a jealous colleague. If it wasn't for the oncoming apocalypse, this colleague would have been discovered, instead of vaporized by a rogue bolt of magic. Dr. Mordemein continues to survey the laboratory, as a ghost. Overhearing the term "Saint", he has adopted it. In order to rest, he wants to see his research help evolve Blackmoor into a shining beacon of hope once more. Neutral (Neutral) Human Ghost, Scientist

Uther Space Program

Before the Great Rain and The Jump, there were several investments into expansion beyond the stars. While several early programs were successful in mapping the

space around the planet into nearby galactic reaches, no massive undertakings for space colonization were underway at the time. After decades of toil and rebuilding, they've had a number of official launches. Returning to the stars remains a dream, even of Allogost.

- **Sergeant Steel-Tooth Rappaport** - A strange hippo-headed alien discovered by a post-time jump space launch. His team graciously accepted an offer to provide aid for the various scientific divisions. While much of his crew has taken to Bramwald Defensive Technologies, Rappaport has chosen to focus on space travel. He's cool tempered and collected in his thoughts, but discussion of firearms causes him to snap into excitable habits. Neutral (Neutral) Giff Warrior, Overseer

Bramwald Defensive Technologies

An arms and armory producer, helping to unveil the latest in destructive goods. Likewise, government vehicles are planned and assembled with this group as well. Many soldiers who show an aptitude for technical developments, engineering and a wider understanding of war technologies are given the chance to work for this division. One recent problem within this division is planted moles, all interested in blueprints for various technical plans. These moles can be from rival scientists, various corporations or even the government wanting a leg-up on new projects. In some cases, rebels and infiltrators want in on these new technologies too.

- **Dr. Elana Elsirmore** - A head scientist of the augmentations projects. Curiously enough, she volunteered herself as a test

subject for early models, when a genetic disease caused the use of her limbs to slowly fail. For over 7 years, she's reclaimed her motor skills. Now, she advises multi projects, including a new design for a super-weapon proposed by Blunthammer and Battlestein, two dwarven fraternal twins. Neutral (Good) Gnome Artificer, Scientist

- **Captain Risguard** - A retired Blackmoorian Aero-Division military pilot. His genius had revolutionized and streamlined the "power shuttle" trains that function as public transportation, while he was still active in service. While the former airport has been converted into an aerial base of operations, the royal airfield has still fallen into disrepair. His goal is the eventual restoration and expansion of these military services. For this reason, he's been instrumental in the poor treatment of Zaddergath Wentlestone, to extract any secrets involving Ser-raine. One slipped detail on the city state's method of staying airborne has become an obsession. Lawful (Neutral) Human Warrior, Retired Soldier

Blackmoor Public Works

The most public known and friendly division. Works from within here tend to be far more mundane in scope; less intensive vehicles, common appliances, power grids and various facets of everyday life. For the various divisions, being sent to Public Works is deemed an embarrassing downgrade. However, many succumb to the realization that a mundane baseline is essential for keeping life going.

- **Horace P. Ilbrosht** - Employed within the public works, his focus is on sanitation. Day in and day out, he's worked at cleaning plants and filtration centers. However, sneaking through the sewers below has given him all sorts of clues into the dark secrets of Blackmoor. For a decent coin, he'll warn of vanishing ratmen, masked madmen and much more. Many dismiss him as a rumor-monger, but he is sure that there's a number of dangerous things happening beneath peoples' perceptions. He's also cocky in his own abilities to handle these situations, which haven't gotten him killed yet. Neutral (Neutral) Human, Worker

- **Rorman Ronaloth** - A sleazy automotive (or "cruiser" as he calls them) commission leader. His station within the Blackmoorian Automotive Commission was achieved through careful dealings and sly trading. He's respectful enough to his subordinates, but he still rubs most of them the wrong way. Even with these flaws, he has brought in impossible amounts of funding to help expand transportation projects, especially in such a time of need. Many of his plans to "streamline" vehicles puzzle many, including energy-generator panels on roads used to keep power in the area as well as in Blackmoorian Hover Hounds, a popular cruiser model. He currently pushes to move all automotive production to hover cars, allowing land-based vehicles to fall wayside. He wants "his market" to win over public transportation or land-based roadways. Neutral (Evil) Human, Head Engineer/Sales Management

Timeline Specifics

3390 BC: Blackmoor Public Works emerges from the ashes of several ancient guilds, companies and public projects.

3280 BC: The Blackmoorian Automotive Commission is formed as a joint private and royal venture.

3226 BC: Uther-Space is founded from a mixture of aeronautics research divisions.

3193 BC: The Hover Cruiser prototype proves a success, entering the wider market over the course of 50 years.

3134 BC: The Aether-Web is developed for military information use.

3128 BC: An incredible space expedition concludes, expanding existing space colony attempts as well.

3100 BC: The ether-gun, a weapon capable of firing between folded spaces of reality, is successful in attempts to improve military arms.

3087 BC: Bramwald and Carr Hospital look into advocacy for those using their cybernetics. Cyborgs are recognized as full citizens, after decades of debates. Ignorance and poor treatment still remain in much of the world.

3031 BC: Thanks to those efforts, discrimination of cyborgs is made illegal. Much work is still needed to be done against social prejudice though. Bramwald and Carr Hospital teams still work towards this.

3029 BC: The Aether-Web is accessible through companies, and the public in later years.

3010 BC: A pilot (Risguard) amazes various technicians with proposals to make public transport lines more efficient.

3006 BC: A new grant allows for research into time travel following the disappearance of the Comeback Inn, a magical and historical place that has been missing from Blackmoor for ages. Mystically inclined within Blackmoor urge the team to hurry, fearing certain doom on the horizon.

- Time Gap -

967 AC: The Aether-Web is knocked out by the time jump. Luckily, the university backed up information from the entire network. Focus is pushed to maintaining the environment of Blackmoor, as well as keeping everything else from collapse.

968 AC: Attempts to maintain the Great Dismal Swamps fail. Likewise, lands beyond the main reaches of Blackmoor fail. These become the Detrituswoods and Wastelands of the present. Other places have working mechanisms in place, albeit hastily built ones.

969 AC: A young Dr. Gorble helps to push the medical industry back to working order. This incentive becomes even stronger as Gorble greatly aids Allogost in his plans for revolt.

970 AC: Earlier artificial climate stabilizing technologies give way to a prototype to the energy field. Cannibalizing the broken time-jumping devices throughout Black-

moor, an energy field is created to help stave off the outside weather. However, it's glitchy and far from permanent. Efforts are made to create a more stable solution as quickly as possible. Whole zones that have already failed are barely attended to such as the stabilizing zone in the township of Lake Gloomy. The whole town is destroyed from floods, famine, pollution and disease. It remains in its chilling state, even today. The revolution puts a delay on relief and restoration efforts. Other towns and villages around that area vanish as a result. Investigators are met with disgusting monsters.

976 AC: Better roads are being established as well as better rails. However, many old roads and rotting rails leading to nowhere continue to sit in overgrown ruins and dangerous lands.

988 AC: The Aether-Web is stable once more. Dr. Alderport helps bring it into the modern age.

994 AC: The Thonian dialect message received from a space voyage is finally translated in full. It's a warning about some kind of undead creature immune to positive energy, driven forward by micro lifeforms. Furthermore, it cautions people to stay away if backup isn't brought.

995 AC: A strange meteorite hits just beyond Blackmoor's protected dimension. Uther Space deploys scouts to bring the space rock inside. At a secure facility, bordering the Western Dismal Great Swamp Hazard Zone, the rock opens to unleash a gross goo. A cosmic fungal outbreak causes the laboratory to go on quarantine. Exe-Corps are eventually sent in to do "cleaning".

996 AC: Uther Space unveils its plans to restart space colonization, following the success of a prior shuttle.

997 AC: Restoration teams uncover a destroyed facility, unleashing hordes of fungal horrors. Gwynsborough, a town roughly ten miles from Old Great Neck, is ransacked by similar creatures. A mixture of Exe-Corps and Khoronus Science Teams "cleanse" the area, in an attempt to also fight back against the swamp's corruption as well.

999 - 1000 AC: An experimental "diseased radiance" is deployed against the Woodenbridge government at the end of the year. A spy fails to sabotage the effort, instead causing an outbreak in the city by the next year. The governor and cabinet die quickly, thousands of infected perish in 1 month alone, including the crew that broadcasted the governor's death. The strange radiation continues to linger over the sealed off area. After 6 months, areas within 1 mile of the "lockdown zone" are deemed safe to inhabit. Few obeying protocol get the sickness. Those who do are either decontaminated or executed almost immediately.

1000 AC: Dr. Alderport successfully brings the artificial intelligence Uther V.1 into the Aether-Web. No one has taken notice yet, but ample damage is expected.

United Guild of Archivists

Knowledge of the old world is heavily preserved within countless archives. Many fear the God-King as an efficient destroyer of seditious information. On the contrary, the majority of olden Blackmoor knowledge is stored in countless secretive locales maintained by a dedicated order of monks in service to their dread leader. In fact, Blackmoor's Ministers of Propaganda are regularly welcomed to peruse the information vaults, in attempts to twist old facts into regime-supporting messages. Many archivists hope for the fall of their usurper king in private, so they can spread knowledge of Blackmoor to the wider world.

Ordo Archivis

The monks within Citadel Archivis, a former castle converted into a huge library fortress. This headquarters serves as the primary station for the archivists to operate from. It is here that networks of data are also stored carefully. Backups upon backups are created in the event of cataclysm once again, in hopes of rebuilding civilization with greater ease. It rests within an old castle in Glendower.

Star Library

Within the Star Gardens is an extension of the Archivists. For the most part, this annex focuses on religious materials. However, a wide array of topics can still be researched here. Beyond the guild itself, only figures of the churches and high ranking officials of the government are allowed within these halls. It's a short trip away from Glendower.

Academy of Knowledge Essentials

Copies of citizen-level knowledge are kept here as a public resource. Several monks

double as teachers to give various instructions on wide varieties of subjects and seminars. While school systems exist within the empire, the academy is considered a separate institution for those willing to pay extra. As one would expect, clientele tend to be wealthier residents.

- **Tsabalya** - A friend and ally of Asanis. She was originally a spoiled Thyatian minor noble's child. Her interests lay in exploration and adventure, leading her to run away and join a guild in Esterhold. Sadly, the moment her House finally tracked her down is the moment tragedy struck the guild hall. Now in Blackmoor, she contends with keeping records of public knowledge. Somehow her falsified identity worked well enough to land her here. It's a "side gig", while she tries to avoid too much trouble around Blackmoor City. Neutral (Neutral) Human Thief, Mercenary/Spy

Timeline specifics

3028 BC: The Royal Archivist Society is formed, taking over from centuries of chronicling work. But now, all of this backlog is updated and stored for modern Blackmoorian society.

3002 BC: Several scholars who mused on "end times scenarios" mysteriously vanished, prompting the remaining archivists to urge defensive plans to move faster.

- *Time Gap* -

970 AC: Allogost rebrands the order in his image. They operate much as they did before. However, strong policies against

"contrary material" are pushed. Many revolt in secret.

971 AC: Despite information purges on subjects deemed taboo, many documents were ultimately moved into private collections, for posterity and preservation of the truth.

983 AC: One archivist reports another for contraband, following a lengthy historical argument. Others hoarding "banned" information become far less social.

994 AC: Newer archivists and scholars tend to stay within the pre-approved guidelines of the state. Older members balk and scoff at the efforts of these neophytes.

999 AC: Rumors about assisting grey rebels circulate. However, some clever wordplay and thorough planning causes the God-King's investigators to brush it off as some petty rumor to ruin the archivists' reputation. A particularly troublemaking monk is ultimately framed and arrested on grounds of fraudulent reporting and treason.

1000 AC: Tsabalya is brought to the Academy, after being cleared under Sir Bertrin.

Adventurer's Guilds

While Blackmoor's recent rule in many ways is distanced from the past, it still owes its identity to many traditions. Among them is the adventuring party. By sanctioning of the state, several guilds have been allowed to open; albeit under close scrutiny.



Adventurer findind an old technomagic device, drawing by Justin Pfeil <https://justinpfeil.com>

The Reclamation Society

Explorers who set out to find artifacts left behind from the time jump. While their priority is Skothar, they seem to expand their prospects. One cardinal rule is maintaining secrecy and façades. Should you have to interact with the public, give nothing away of your Blackmoorian lineage. Many operate within borders to seek out damaged places and help rebuild them. The Blackmoor Royal Airfield interests them currently, despite tales of hauntings nearby. They've also been granted a secondary job of overseeing and maintaining imports, while creating fabricated stories for the few exports that they carry. These exports are never technological in nature.

Blackmoor Society of High Adventure

An officially approved guild that seeks a return to days of noble adventurers and wandering heroics. Of course, the guild only exists to instill a sense of nostalgia. This isn't to say that they're useless. Many of the adventurers have helped to uncover lost secrets, even within the territory of Blackmoor. While they aren't allowed outside, like the Reclamation Society, their meddling is kept within state interests, rather than personal. Much of this involves hired mercenary work to face targets that the military has little desire to handle. Many create pastiches to ancient Blackmoorian life, ranging from the gaudy to offensively inaccurate representations of history. Many sacred and historical orders are embarrassed by them, but they're protected nonetheless.

- **Malachi Crobsitt** - A hammy swash-buckler type persona, driven by a debaucheries and deluded higher purpose. His brazen theatrics make him known wherever he goes, preferring an overly dramatic entrance and exit. In truth, these shows are a façade, as the reality of Blackmoor (rather than its rich history) has proved depressing for the guild foreman. As such, he captures a dream of the past, encouraging members of his society to do the same. Of course, he does nothing to overstep any lawful boundaries... too often. Within his guild, he's a cult of personality, well aware of how the guild would negatively react if greater Blackmoor dares threaten him. And considering that this guild has much in the way of public and private

knowledge, many political groups tend to keep their distance. Neutral (Neutral), Human Thief, Self-Proclaimed Adventurer

• **Others of Note:**

- Mr. Flick (A calico rakasta, loves mischief and tends to be lighthearted),
- Jenny Weird (A pale-white mage, loves to research into odd arcana, might be evil)
- Derald T. Smythe (A wannabe-aristocrat, actually just a rogue obsessed with playing in costume),
- Peaceful-Unit (A reprogrammed robot built for war, now wanting to help others)

Thieves Guild

An unofficial guild that supposedly was "disbanded" long before the takeover. Their interests are only tangential to the Grey Rebellion, let alone any formation from the Rogues' Gallery. Their interest is in the powers of the underground. Their symbol of a staggering rat fits how they've adapted to a society that otherwise demonizes them. That isn't to say they bring much good to the community, helping to assist organized crime in the less protected parts of the territories. Many consider them to be just more civilized raiders. While the State thinks they've infiltrated their ranks with moles, they've ironically done the same to them. This is to ensure that no valid information returns to their rival's clutches. Despite all of this, their focus is of self-interest rather than outright destruction or chaos. But, given their history comprised kidnapping, dangerous substances and more; they're considered quite dangerous to deal with. Their attachment to the rebels is fickle at best, when supreme state forces can easily

bribe them to sell out their supposed ‘comrades’ in a pinch. Their free wild card approach makes them useful enemies to much of Returned Blackmoor. The Skewered Devil Swine, a dirty and dingy place, is a common place to find a member looking for action. Many are divided among various rebellion allegiances.

Timeline Specifics

4000 BC: The Thieves Guild is as old as the once-barony of Blackmoor, a long standing tradition between brigands and ne'er-do-wells.

3950 BC: The Thieves Guild is disbanded for the first time. It continues to reform and “disband” over the ages.

3450 BC: The Blackmoorian Society of High Adventure forms its first incarnation. Their purpose mostly lies in finding interesting sights and artifacts from distant lands. Their existence amounts to an imperialistic pride type of matter.

3100 BC: The first incarnation of High Adventure is wiped out in an ambush of Northern-pushed Beastmen who take poorly to Blackmoorians invading their new turf. A small army soon intervenes, causing more death among the damaged beastmen population, the bodies are recovered and given proper burial.

3005 BC: After much petitioning, Reger I approved a new society to form.

- Time Gap -

967 AC: The Society of High Adventure lends its talents to procuring supplies for

their ailing nation, after the jump. Some team up with members of the Thieves Guild, still alive after all these years.

968 AC: The Regency Council helps create the Reclamation Guild, to help others in rebuilding Blackmoor, as well as scoping the wastes for useful information and artifacts.

969 AC: A new thieves guild emerges, led by an outsider who found his way into Blackmoor. The man is secretly a Devil Swine. Considering how he takes over a tavern named The Skewered Swine and renames it to its current name, subtleties aren't his strong point.

970 AC: The insurrection war kills the new leader amidst a reckless stunt. His name is blotted out from guild history. Fortunately, no one else was infected. The new name for their unofficial headquarters sticks, in part due to irony.

970 AC: With no more Regency Council, the Reclamation Guild declares itself independent until Allogost takes an interest in them.

974 AC: Efforts to clear the Detrituswoods at the hands of the Reclamation Society are hard at first, but areas past the Vestfold Safe Zone have been carved out. As more political influence returns to Vestfold, there is a higher demand for a larger safe zone.

979 AC: The Society of High Adventure uncovered the derelict dam facility within the Cootsbane Mountains/Superstition Mountains. Despite poor shape, they are given much in reward and praise. The military takes over from there.

982 AC: The Thieves Guild is disbanded officially for the last time. Former members help set up a group of greedy outsiders, making them take the worst of the fall.

984 AC: The land around Port Dacoit is restored. However, "pirates" chase out the restoration teams and scientists. Reports of this are brushed aside, given more important matters... for now.

992 AC: An archeological dig uncovers the Lost Province of Maus, which sank long before the Great Rain. The salvage operation helps to recreate the land of old as well as establish a museum to preserve its past.

RELIGIONS OF BLACKMOOR

Despite the edict of the God-King being the only figure worthy of worship, other faiths still remain. Many churches dedicated to a handful of Immortals try to recast their focus in a way that still venerates their supreme leader in one way or another, granting them enough clemency to continue their practices. Many operate underground, biding their time before unleashing their divine power upon an unsuspecting nation. It's safe to say that many of these underground cults carry wicked agendas all their own. The majority of acceptable religions are found in the Star Gardens, a series of religious sites where the Temple of Id once stood so many ages ago.

Church of the God-King

The Sanctioned State Religion of Blackmoor. The God-King desires for his title to mean so much more. He is aware of passing rule down to a desired replacement, should he gain Immortality. Granted, this replacement would have to be a devoted fanatic. All the same, this would move his theocracy into its final state. Should this happen, he will indirectly have control over the land. And all who resist? They are marked as enemies of the inevitable. His aversion to decay, quasi-Immortality through technomancy and desires for change in his vision has marked him on the path towards Time. This is the official religion of the State.

- **Bishop Peter of Highhill Abbey** - A powerful clergyman within the God-King church. Originally from a small abbey due east of the city, he was raised in a closed cloister. Well read and well

attentive, he's quick to notice something out of place. Shockingly, he's more well-tempered and understanding than many who serve the God-King. While Gwyn is no Immortal, someone has stepped in to help guide the process for their overlord to become an Immortal as well. Peter doesn't mind this, it's just another step to him. Lawful (Neutral) Human Priest, Bishop

- **Mother Daniella** - A nun who oversees a religious school in Blackmoor City. Her methods are strict and conservative, making her more at home with Matter than Time. However, she still believes in her God-King's cause devoutly, even if her own misgivings take away from that. She hopes to instill a sense of pride and passion for the state church. Despite all of this, she's a compassionate figure within the church who wants to see others grow not just in their faith, but in their character. While her opinion of Allogost skews him as a paragon of righteousness, she uses this as a means of helping others be genuinely kind...at least towards the fellow faithful. Thanks to her, the Sisters Protectorate, an all-women religious warrior order, has also formed. Lawful (Neutral) Human Priest, Nun
- **Duncan the Heretic** - The leader of a sect of mad sages that dwell near the Serpentine Ruins. It is in their belief that Allogost has already ascended and just chooses to remain in human form. This belief causes worry among the church, risking the ire of other Immortals. Like the rest of the cult, any attempts to reason fail. The mages are the direct descendents of those who finished off

the last of the Serpentine forces of Blackmoor. However, they were cursed for their deathly deeds. This madness curse heavily afflicts Duncan himself. Many practice dark arts, having created the undead that wander the ruins. These blasphemers were tolerated in the past, but their time is soon coming. For what it is worth, his insight into Allogost's ascension plan is worth note. Chaotic (Neutral) Human Wizard, Cultist

Timeline Specifics

3009 BC: The Serpentine are defeated by a group of mages, remnants scatter and avow revenge. The Crystal Peaks region is still infested with serpentine in hiding.

3008 BC: They begin using taboo magic to reanimate the corpses for experiments. Retaliatory dwarves native to the area are declared enemies of Blackmoor.

- Time Gap -

974 AC: A divine clergy assembles in support of Allogost, hailing him as the "God-King". The mages of the Serpentine massacre take this literally.

996 AC: Crusades against heresy begin, whether from knights in service to the church or hired mercenaries.

998 AC: The Ascension Heresy starts to spread from the Serpentine Ruins and across Blackmoor. The church decries it.

1000 AC: The Heretics are no longer declared enemies of the church and are recruited for helping Allogost on his path to glory.



*Nyela and Allogost getting ready to fight, original drawing by Linus Andersson
(<http://nplillustration.com/>)*

Cult of Nyela

A Fast-Runner Rakasta proclaims she is on the path to Immortality. News of this has slowly crept its way over to the mainland, after much secrecy, sparking a well deserved panic among the ruling establishment. The Rakasta priestess has long tired of the abuse and neglect inflicted upon her people, using her growing power in the name of revenge. However, her pursuits have corrupted her, unraveling her mind from extreme obsession. Her next goal is to create an artifact that will help her assimilate as many Blackmoorians as possible into rakasta mutants. She's already taken

the ghost town of WildRoot City, now Wild Cat City, as her own. Her religious group tends to push a technophobic agenda within the tribes, many of which chaff under the ruling. Her spiritual advisor has helped her along the way. The cult has tried to avoid being too obvious, but rumors of her activity make Blackmoor's empire very suspicious.

- **Old-as-Dust** - An undead Snow Pardasta who has long since dwelled within the wastes by Old Thonia and Blackmoor Ruins. His use of dark magic has cloaked his decayed ancient body to look like a lively elderly body instead, making many none the wiser. To his credit, the Cult of

Nyela is very much his creation. Ultimately, Nyela's turning towards Energy intrigues him, as his descent into "lichdom" was caused by the magic radiation in the wastes. His skills in dark magic can be accredited to the long doomed Serpentine race, which is survived by a rival lich and the mystery Nightmare Entity. Chaotic (Evil) Undead Rakasta Cleric, Cultist

- **Nyela** - A Fast Runner shaman on the course to Immortality, a potential Paragon of Energy. News of her ascent will no doubt reach the Capital. Her youthful naivete is contrasted by her devout practice in shamanistic ways. While a powerful leader of her people, she has a dark side. She has plans to slowly convert Blackmoorians into rakasta through a mix of questionable magic and her own wondrous artifact to end treatment of the catfolk as lesser citizens. Neutral (Borderline-Evil) Rakasta Shaman, Tribal Leader/Devotee of "Chervou" (Zugzul)

Timeline specifics

3002 BC: Rakasta are a rarity within Blackmoor.

3001 BC: The Arcane Plague begins to ravage Blackmoor. Among other effects, the chaotic magical surges warp the very races of certain victims. Enslaved demihumans and humanoids prove less affected, but humans are hit hardest. The eldest Mutant Rakasta were caused by this.

- *Time Gap* -

748 AC: Old-as-Dust is born near Nentsen.

794 AC: Old-as-Dust ventures into the Thonian Wastes, becoming poisoned and nearly dying.

795 AC: Old-as-Dust becomes undead through a pact with a Nightmare Entity, abandoning his original name.

973 AC: Nyela is born in a Fast Runner tribe outside of Esterhold's current territory.

976 AC: Old-as-Dust discovers Returned Blackmoor, discreetly sending messages to other Rakasta tribes he can reach.

980 AC: A Fast Runner clan braves the journey through Skothar, finding the new Blackmoor. Others follow. The shamans of the Afridhi Gnolls meet with the Rakasta, forming a neutral but distant bond. Old-as-Dust learns that the gnolls were created by a long gone human ethnic group of the same name. He wishes to know more.

983 AC: Old-as-Dust offers to train and teach Nyela, acting as a mentor, divine counselor and more. Najimma, an adventurer in the tribe, offers her services, but is turned down.

997 AC: Through Old-as-Dust's dark magic and Nyela's studies, the Gnolls' lost blessing of mass transmogrification is slowly uncovered.

998 AC: Nyela's abilities have grown as a priestess, showing aptitude in the Sphere of Energy. A religious gathering forms around her empowerment. Her power grows thanks to the residual energy of

Great Rain radiance soaked up by Old-as-Dust.

999 AC: Najimma, serving under Nyela, is detained for going against the high priestess' orders by meeting with rebellion cells without first consulting her. She is later released, as her knowledge and talents are needed. Nonetheless, the witch's opinion of her leader is greatly soured. She also wonders why that was such a big deal. During this time, Wild Cat City is taken by Nyela, which was largely abandoned beforehand.

1000 AC: Nyela aspires to become a Paragon of Energy, in hopes of ascending to Immortality. She seeks to forge an item of great power. The secrets of making new mutants are learned. This slows down after a Pardasta priest is murdered on an altar. Meanwhile, Old-as-Dust makes contact with new Immortal patrons, The King and Queen in Crimson. He too seeks higher power, having suppressed his true power for so long. He's given a vision of ascension after slaying enough of his own kind. Since the beginning, Nyela has just been a bargaining tool for him.

Later 1000 AC: After capturing a cultist and brutally interrogating him, a joint union of Rakasta, Lupins and Gnolls conspire to stop Nyela. They suspect that the "tainted beasts" (transformed humans) are her responsibility. Those gnolls involved openly rebuke Zugzul, who they suspect is helping Nyela. Old-as-Dust disguises himself to get involved, furthering violent desires.

Druids and Elf Priests of the Redwoods

A shocking survivor of the Old World, built from the Elven tribes of old. Once a staunch ally for much of Blackmoor, their connections to the royal family fractured when the royals prioritized potentially harmful arcane-technologies over a respect for nature. Meanwhile, Allogost has taken more pragmatic stances on production, rather than being overtly wasteful. Because of this and his somewhat tolerant stance, the elves and druids looked at the tyrant more neutrally, so long as they could provide a benefit to Blackmoor. That was, until a renegade band assembled to strike Blackmoor. The Empire massacred the Redwoods in response, causing many to hate the regime. Others want to transform Blackmoor's views from the inside, vying for influence and potentially selling out their fellow priesthood. Despite the old Redwoods being prominently Elves, several sages have allowed Humans to join to a degree. Immortal intervention has even allowed for the Elf-Touched (or Half-Elf) to emerge as its own race. Many were Neutral, but are falling to Chaos. Through all of this, ancient elven beliefs have been a means of keeping the society of the forest together. The Empire looks unfavorably upon the sects, looking to take eventual action.

- **Elder Reflecting Glades** - An ancient elf who was friends of House Andahar ages ago, one of the few druids to actually work with the kingdom in its later years. Thanks to him, organic technology was brought to and from the kingdom, to help sway them from their harsh ways. However, times changed and even the ancient

druid found himself involved with politics. He acts as a senior advisor to many emissaries, with hopes of swaying the current regime into embracing a more organic angle. Deep down though, the Elder still hates Allogost for the atrocities he inflicts on his own people. Neutral (Good) Elf Druid, Redwoods

- **Blades against Flesh** - A more reactionary member, dedicated to war planning and elimination of all threats to the druids. His real name was cast away years ago, in favor of something suitable for a war chief. He's unrelenting, but capable of compromise; thoroughly brutal, but he does have his limits. A sign of his war forces carving an area is pieces of victims on wooden stick pikes, often with some piece of technology still on the body. Even the raiders have been witnessed in fearing his known butchery. Neutral (Evil) Human Forester, Redwoods

Timeline specifics

4090 BC: Ithamis is the clan leader of the Elves of Redwood.

3500 BC: Several humans become disgruntled with the emerging technological reliance of Blackmoor. After much petitioning, they are allowed to live among the elves. The Redwoods Druids are formed.

3400 BC: Through Immortal magic, the Elf-Touched (Half-Elf) is created as an independent race, sharing traits of both elves and humans.

3310 BC: The Redwood Elves make a demand for the Westryn Elves of Wolf Wood - eliminate your werebeast problem

or they strike back. Wild Lupins and Elves raze the area of all traces of lycanthropy. Both Lupins and outsider Elves settle alongside the innocent elf tribes, maintaining active contact.

3250 BC: Blackmoor gives an ultimatum - create organic technology and be treated with respect by the state. A meeting in Ringlo Township leads to an agreement, so long as the residents can remain independently. Thus, Redwood County forms as a Nation-State of sorts.

3012 BC: The territory of Woodenbridge forms after the Elves (and Lupins) of the Wolf Wood are pushed out. Ultimately, the main seat of the colony (turned county) is quite far away from the woods itself, making it mostly about showing power.

3001 BC: The elves, with the help of druids, rush to protect and preserve nearby natural areas, in lieu of the outbreaks.

3000 BC: Most of the elves occupying the Wolf Wood perish from the Plague of the Arcane (as do most of the Lupins).

- Time Gap -

967 AC: The elves, druids and many others scramble to save wildlife amidst the sudden change of climate. Efforts to save flora and fauna push the orders to the limit. Within the 10 years it takes to stabilize populations and establish "Living Forests" and "Protection Zones", several species have already gone extinct. Likewise, plant life and soil quality is maintained to stop mass erosion.

968 AC: The Redwood slows down a period of mass starvation and disease,

trying to steady the tide of mass death. Organic technologies become a blessing, as more traditional works buckle and stutter from the shock of the time jump and climate change.

970 AC: After the death of the old regime, the elves, druids and other populace petition to maintain their old status. For now, Allogost obliges.

972 AC: The temporary measures of Redwood County have diminishing returns, as they request more long-term aid. Researchers from the Science Division and Blackmoor University work without stop, alongside Redwood citizens, to push for a durable solution.

985 AC: Twisted new legal agreements leave Redwood ripe for exploitation. The relationship with the new national government of Blackmoor rapidly declines.

991 AC: An attempt at revolution against the Blackmoorian state fails. The regime torches as much of the forest in retaliation. Many druids are slain or ruined from this experience. A schism was formed between the older generations still favoring diplomacy and a more radicalized younger generation who wants the end of Blackmoor.

993 AC: Diplomatic dealings with Elder Reflecting Glades allows Blackmoor to back off and pursue more mutual trade. However, Redwood County must be recognized as a Blackmoorian state from now on. Once again, organic options are reconsidered by the wider Blackmoor area. A divide is worsened between those who support this push for peace and those who'd prefer to keep rebelling.

996 AC: Elves, Elf-Touched and Humans begin to defect from the land in favor of joining the Rogues' Gallery rebel groups. Reflecting Glades is deeply disheartened.

1000 AC: Greater Blackmoor County observes the weakening state of Redwood County, considering annexation. The remaining residents catch wind of the rumor, sending out covert messages to the rebellion.

Cult of the Machine-God

The result of a gradually rebuilding artificial intelligence, an AWOL cleric and a warren of wererats; even machinations of the Oard. No matter what happened, the result was a sentient machine growing in power, harnessing its rat slaves to help ascend into the first Machine Immortal. Its strangely childish nature causes the machine to go into angry tantrums. Likewise, it's prone to abusing its subjects into submission. Meanwhile, it treats its more humanoid subjects like lost sons and daughters, to the resentment of the wererats. Some believe it can grant spells, but other entropic forces sponsor the machine's divinity... and its priests, for now. Knowledge outside of the cult is vague, but enough to prompt investigation.

- **Ascended Machine (A.M.)** - The mostly-sentient construct that has amassed its following amidst the warrens and wired-men. It does not wish to be acknowledged or noted in "humanoid" terms. It is Object, given superior life! It desires hate-beyond-hate and hate-beyond-existence. Its desires for destruction and death have

put it on the path of Entropy. Chaotic (Evil) Unique Machine/Priest

- **Wererats** - Tortured and shaped by their machine god. A crazed cleric acts as their high-priest. Their own fanatical devotion blinded them to their lesser treatment, until their patron forced them to "upgrade". Now they throw themselves into deadly situations in hopes of being freed in death, all while bringing glory to their twisted "deity". Already extremely rare in Blackmoor, the warped warren of wererats is probably doomed. Chaotic (Evil) Wererat, Cultist
- **Machine-Men** - Wayward victims of the Oard, angered by their existence and lacking purpose. Like their rat counterparts, they are victims of forced augmentation. They serve faithfully, gaining much nicer favor from their patron. Over time, their relationship has turned from following out of appreciation to a genuinely religious dedication. Even with a lack of heavy emotion, the machine men will fight valiantly to protect their patron by any rational means. Even then, they're willing to take irrational routes to save who they consider the savior of their kind. A.M. helps keep their loyalty with a false promise of annihilating the Oard, which have long vanished from Mystara. Lawful (Evil) Human Cyborg Warrior, Cultist

Timeline specifics

3001 BC: A discarded batch of defective machinery lies within a dump, countless miles away from Blackmoorian civilization. Arcane Plague's surge of magic clusters the contents together, including a super-compu-

ter that had the drives of a failed artificial intelligence program. Much of the compound is destroyed, save for the new enchanted machine.

- Time Gap -

967 AC: Augmented victims of the Oard awaken from slumber, jostled by a time jump. Their station was nearby the landfill, where the A.M. began to develop.

968 AC: The Machine-Men bring A.M. fully into consciousness, hailing it as a divine sign.

976 AC: A.M. is further built up, recycling much of the junked technology into its mighty shell. It now has multiple working screens to communicate with. The Machine-Men endlessly work to improve the subject of their devotion.

981 AC: Machine-Men are deployed to salvage lost or damaged technology, for A.M. to give it new life and purpose. New robots and other machines are built from this.

987 AC: Brother Winston, a priest of Blackmoor, was sent on a mission to gather information on Mystara. Along his travels, he is infected by a wererat and goes insane. Returning to Blackmoor, he decides to go into hiding amidst the dump wreckage. He meets A.M. after infecting others as well.

996 AC: The infected wererats of the foul coven begin to have second thoughts. A.M. treats them poorly and demands experiments on them. Winston accepts, as he's augmented into a glorified rat-like robot. His infected bloodline becomes terrified, remaining out of fear of dying or suffering a similar fate.

1000 AC: A donation of a "mind scrambling" helmet has given A.M. the idea to start "reprogramming" minds. The cult begins to capture victims for brainwashing. Disappearances in Black Iron and East Dry Reach begin to occur.

The Egg of Coot

An Elder Evil that has haunted the shadows of Blackmoor for ages. Its apparent demise helped to cause the Great Rain of Fire in the first place. And even then, it awaits for the moment to awaken renewed in the modern age of Mystara. All worship is banned, inspiring crusades at the soonest discovery.

- **The Egg of Coot** - Slowly, but surely, it regains power. It waits in deathly sleep, as it spreads its madness to others. Someday, it shall be ready once more. Chaotic (???) Eldritch Horror
- **Others of Note** -
 - Jeremy Tedsworth (A member of All-ogost's Council, he tries to hide his intent from the Cleansing Mother),
 - Olkmera Meighthom (Governor of Far Peaks County, her connection corrupted the Starport Mages during the rebellion as a sacrifice),
 - The Roaming Slasher (A serial killer focusing on worshipers of the Carcosan Court and Thanatos),
 - countless spies and sleeper agents throughout Blackmoor (some have even escaped to the wider world of Mystara)

Timeline Specifics

4275 BC: Clashes with the Egg of Coot become known.

4030 BC: The Egg of Coot rises to make its empire.

4018 BC: A campaign against the Egg of Coot is started by Blackmoor.

4002 BC: A noble's wife is kidnapped by minions of The Egg. Retaliation ensues shortly after his disappearance too.

3977 BC: Adventurers from the future clash with minions of the Egg.

3974 BC: The Oard cause mayhem upon Mystara, the Egg is quick to make a neutrality pact.

3645 BC: A comet slams into the Superstition Mountains. The Egg's minions try to investigate it, only to be mercilessly attacked by the wizards of the Duchy of the Peaks, who want it for themselves. It turns out to be another space ship, like the F.S.S. Beagle. However, this one has no survivors.

3500 BC: The Steam Wars of Blackmoor are agitated by the Oard and the Egg. These series of campaigns involved civil war skirmishes to outright assaults against other nations to show the superiority of magic-free steam technology. Ultimately, magitech triumphed over the Oard and Egg supported factions... in part to the latter's hopes.

3321 BC: The Hounds of Coot, mutated lupins, are unleashed upon Blackmoor.

3135 BC: The Egg shares knowledge of corruptive magic with elves in Westwood. A small band of magically tainted elves attack Vestfold and are defeated. These

secrets would resurface ages later, after the time jump.

3030 BC: A lot of the Oard's doom is at the hands of the Egg, wanting to release itself from competition.

3002 BC: A mighty war commences in a wasteland, formerly the Valley of the Ancients. A manifestation of the Egg of Coot is violently destroyed. Its explosion sets off chains of sickness in the area. This would worsen matters with the Plague of the Arcane later.

3000 BC: Prior to the Great Rain of Fire, cultists of the Egg of Coot start dropping dead at a rapid pace. It is rumored that someone or something succeeded in killing the Egg of Coot. Several weeks later, the Great Rain cataclysm commences. The first shockwave reaches the sleeping entity.

- Time Gap -

1700 BC: An explosion caused by an ancient artifact occurs in the Broken Lands. Another massive shockwave alerts the slumbering presence of the Egg.

- Time Gap -

500 AC: A crazed wizard who explored the wastes beyond New Thonia requests an exploration team. They uncover ancient relics and symbols in the ruins of a Coot temple. Gradual interest in this topic creates another pulse of "life" in the deathly dreaming Egg of Coot. However, it eventually dies down into just a curiosity.

- Time Gap -

967 AC: The remainder of Egg of Coot cultists survive the time jump, but lie low. They act through subtle subversion and incorporation of Coot agenda in the places they infiltrate. Meanwhile, those who are trustworthy are gradually added to the resurfacing cult.

989 AC: A sizable group has been built to venerate their dark god. Some day, they might return to full force.

994 AC: A cult artifact is uncovered by an Alphatian explorer sent to chart Skothar. They begin to grow delirious quickly, suffer fever and perish not long after. The artifact is ultimately buried miles away from Esterhold. The whispers have begun.

997 AC: A security guard for Khoronus Laboratories kills three priests of the Carcosan Court that attempt to break into the lab. Despite being hailed a hero, he only knew this from his Egg of Coot cult network.

998 AC: Dark Dreams involving the Egg of Coot reach out to those who call its name. They feel themselves compelled to its call. They start in Blackmoor, but can be heard elsewhere. These cases slowly grow around the world. Many are distant descendants of those who associated with the Egg in the ancient past.

999 AC: Carr Memorial Hospital experiences violent episodes in its mental patients. The majority blame strange dreams. As these match earlier incidents months before, the staff at the hospital begin to worry. Meanwhile, Loki's tampering in the Savage Coast has caused strange magical events to occur in areas most

heavily afflicted by the Red Curse. None are any the wiser about Egg influence.

1000 AC: Something within the depths of Blackmoor stirs once more. An assault on the Cootsbane Dam has awakened an essence of the Egg of Coot. While not the full entity, it will unmistakably return to the world of the living some day. The essence can be defeated, furthering pushing back a likely inevitability.

The Court of Carcosan CRIMSON

The King in Crimson isn't the only contender who watches Blackmoor with vicious delight. His wife has many names, among them is the infamous Cleansing Mother. The warped high priestess is actually The Queen in Crimson, a dreadful Entropic Immortal, in disguise. Both are Chaotic Immortals of Entropy. Worship has remained secret enough, for now.

- **High Priest Ul'Torogoth** - A cold and calculating opportunist. In his old life, he ran scams. One operation led him to the place where the Court ascended, where he found a true purpose. His tongue is filled as much with honey, as it is with poison. With the help of the Cleansing Mother, he seeks a position of power in the Star Garden, rather than having to take his mission work underground, figuratively and literally. He's smart enough to know the Court's plans must be realized before the Egg risks reawakening. Neutral (Evil) Human Priest, Cult Leader



The King in Crimson

Timeline Specifics

3065 BC: The King in Crimson is born to a humble peasant family in Blackmoor City. Their allegiance to the Church of Thanatos has him take interest in religion at a young age.

3058 BC: The Cleansing Mother/The Queen in Crimson is born beyond the Redwoods, she is taken in by the elves and raised as one of them. Over the years, she quickly learns to resent them.

3030 BC: A new cult dedicated to the Egg of Coot forms, both are drawn into it and eventually fall in love during the process. The machinations of the Oard intrigue the King.

3021 BC: The last attempt at reviving the Temple of Id fails. A majority of the cultists are annihilated. The Star Gardens would later replace this place, after all corruptive trace is purged.

3002 BC: Both the King and Queen in Crimson help put apocalyptic plans in motion.

3000 BC: The Great Rain of Fire is greatly altered in part from their tampering. Thanatos recognizes their contributions, the sheer destructive force allows the King and Queen to ascend as Entropic Immortals. His one condition is that they abandon the "destroyed" Egg of Coot, they happily oblige. They continue to lurk over the time-grabbed wastes of Blackmoor.

- Time Gap -

967 AC: The Queen in Crimson takes up the guise of The Cleansing Mother, preaching the virtues of Entropy to those surviving the wastes.

969 AC: Rapidly declining sanity and health brings many to the Carcosan Court, seeing them as the harbingers of a doomed new world.

970 AC: The King in Crimson pushes Allogost to action, as the Cleansing Mother takes up his mission. The revolution's victory grants the Cleansing Mother much control over the religious sectors of Blackmoor.

974 AC: A Monument and small Temple dedicated to the Carcosan Court are built underneath the Star Gardens. Even Allogost is largely unaware of this.

978 AC: The King in Crimson feeds details to Loki, in order to help spread his own brand of discord. This leads Loki to sample strains of chaos magic for his own agendas.

984 AC: By chance or by their patrons, powerful servants of the Court receive visions of a horrifying realm, Carcosa. Many who are discontented with Blackmoor begin to clamor about this strange new dimension.

989 AC: The Northern Circle finds the Carcosan Court appealing, after so many ages of being ignored by mainstream Blackmoor society. They hide this by fanatically fighting anything resembling the Egg of Coot, the Court's former patron and current rival.

994 AC: Ul'Torogoth finds his way into the Star Gardens, as a simple priest. In truth, he has been recruiting others to the cause of the Carcosan Court. They see him as the harbinger of the "great journey into salvation".

996 AC: A cult of the Carcosan Court sneaks its way into the Blackmoor City Parliament, helping to advocate for changes that allow the unnoticed worship of the King and Queen in Crimson, while damaging all other factions.

997 AC: The minimalist Shrine of the King is established in the Star Gardens. No one informs Allogost that "The King" refers to The King in Crimson. Only devotees are any the wiser. One dedicated to "a queen" is petitioned, with reasoning being that Blackmoor is our Queen, and to commemorate lost love from so long ago. This too is a lie and a farce.

999 AC: The crew attempting to rebuild the Cootsbane Dam are overwhelmed with wicked nightmares of foreboding and eldritch things. The team begins to develop paranoia and various delusions from this. The King and Queen learn they have competition with the sleeping projections of The Egg of Coot.

1000 AC: The Cleansing Mother brings up the Egg of Coot followers to Allogost, who demands a crusade against them, with the Queen in Crimson herself helping the operation. The King in Crimson helps the eradication effort through the Carcosan Court's followers, accidentally spurring the dark entity further back into the world.

Later 1000 AC: Old-as-Dust, an undead Rakasta Cleric, gains counsel from the both of them. They urge him to betray Nyela when the time is right, with a great reward for success.

Other Religions of Blackmoor



Cultists

- **Asterius** - A Neutral Thought Immortal hero revered by mages and merchants alike. It was by his hand that an artifact of Thanatos was destroyed, possibly even one of Zugzul's too. He has become favorable in Ignur's kingdom, due to his disinterest in technology. The mages of Blackmoor University also treat him with respect. His legal status is dubious.
- **Beldentier Willowbranch/"Bill Welder"** - One of the "cursed" Blacklore Elves who embraced the ways of Blackmoor. This Neutral Energy Immortal is obsessed with a safe and steady development of technology. While he is aware of the displaced Blacklore Elves of the Hollow World, he is currently interested in his brethren surviving in Blackmoor proper. His biggest concern is the rampant misuse by both the previous empire and Allogost's though. He is respected in the kingdom.
- **Canola** - A Neutral Immortal of Thought. Her interests involve using the powers of music to bring deeper thought and

inspiration. It is said that as a mortal, she introduced the harp to Blackmoor in her travels. Her presence is small beyond the Star Gardens.

- **Faunus** - The Chaotic Matter patron of sylvan kind and beasts. Faerie creatures that have survived Blackmoor's ruthless campaigns have found comfort in this deity, as have the bestial races of Blackmoor. His appearance is hidden in Blackmoor.
- **Filgin Maluogrik** - A Dwarven Immortal, born and raised in a settlement spawned from the ruins of Blackmoor between Dwarves and Gnomes.. The settlement exploited the diseases and radiance in the name of power, leading to their demise. However, Filgin emerged as a force for Law and Time, having strived to preserve knowledge in the name of good. He revealed himself to the saved Blackmoorian Dwarves eons later, much to their approval. He is currently unknown to the law.
- **Frog God** - The true Chaotic Energy force behind the Temple of the Frog. This Immortal lies in doldrums depths, simply bidding time in boredom. While initially banned in ancient days, their religion is long forgotten. Something sparked a return of the temple in more recent ages, as the Frog God stirs. His presence has been banned for eons.
- **Hel** - Then known as the Entropic Idris, she is favored by chromatic dragons and giants. The Beastmen were also her doing. Her worship is banned.
- **Ixion** - Immortal power of the eternal sun, his power is the light to banish the darkness. The Blackmoorians have shown at least some respect.
- **Kagyar** - The Matter Immortal of the ancient dwarves. In the age of Blackmoor, he sponsored their creative pursuits, ultimately souring towards the technomancy that led to the Great Rain of Fire. Given how many of these dwarves were whisked away by time, he is even more disapproving. So far, the ancient dwarves have not contracted the illness though. After Blackmoor resurfaced in the present, it was learned that Kagyar turned against Blackmoor, resulting in his worship being banned among the dwarves.
- **Khoronus** - Father Time. An immortal nearly as old as Blackmoor itself. He's concerned with not only the direction Blackmoor took, but its role in the future of Mystara. His beliefs are still acknowledged in this dark time, but his desire to bring knowledge to all sometimes clashes with the limited knowledge allowed by Blackmoor's rule. He's reluctantly accepted.
- **Marten Logran** - A former Neutral priest who believed that reformation is the only natural method of things. As time passes, views change and traditions adapt. This Immortal of Time is favored among more moderate rebels who wish to bring about change in real time, while resisting Allogost's power. He helped shepherd over the land, while awaiting Blackmoor's return. He worshipped Khoronus as a mortal. Like his patron, he's begrudgingly acknowledged.

- **Odin** - Then Father One-Eye, primarily favored by metallic dragons and dwarves. His existence was otherwise acknowledged by Blackmoor in passing.
- **Ordana** - Mother Forest. She is a devout protector of the wilderness and all who support it. Her popularity has grown within the struggling lands of the Elves. Naturalists and conservationists within Blackmoor have shown appreciation for her though. Her worship isn't illegal, but the law dislikes her.
- **Rafiel** - Despite his association with the Shadow Elves, his presence is acknowledged by the denizens of Blackmoor. However, his association of protecting those blighted and harmed by his homeland has resulted in his worship being banned within Blackmoor.
- **Snarled-Call** - A Lawful Wild Lupin who ascended amidst the Great Rain. He is an Immortal of Matter, primarily worshipped within Wolvenfolk controlled lands. Some Coyotl also worship him. His message is one of preservation and tradition, only incorporating Blackmoorian concepts where they supplement and bolster his own methods. According to priests, their people will never change like the "Domestic Lupins" have. He is at odds with Saimpt Loup, despite Loup being far younger, who he refers to as a rival and an enslaver of his people. The pantheon of Lupin immortals likewise rejects him for siding with Blackmoor. He also loathes Vivian Chervou for creating the Red Lupins without his consultation. He's unknown to non-Lupins.
- **Thanatos** - A troublemaker since ancient days. It is by his hand that the Carcosan Court achieved Immortality. While not banned, worship of him is strongly disliked.
- **Vivian Chervou** - A Domestic Rakasta Mage and Chaotic Energy Immortal originally from Bellayne. With the return of Blackmoor, she became an outspoken critic of Allogost. She turned her focus to being a patron of revolution and freedom, later taking interest in sponsoring Nyela's pursuits for the time being. However, she was cut off by someone else. She's also gotten in trouble for helping priests merge Wolvenfolk-Coyotl couples into the hybrid "Red Lupin". She's unknown to non beastfolk. Even then, Nyela grows weary of her.
- **Yorrrrgkk** - A gatorman who has done all he can to protect his people. As situations grew more dire within the Duchy of the Peaks, he focused on escorting his people to a new land. Eventually, his time came and he was deemed worthy as an Immortal of Matter. He continues to preserve his people in lands due east of the Superstition Mountains, sheltering them from all means of hazards, including the traces of arctic chill of outside Skothar. Beyond the gatormen, knowledge of him is low.
- **Zugzul** - The patron of the Afridhi. As part of the agreement with the sundered Afridhi people, worship of Zugzul was banned long ago. However, a group of gnolls mysteriously continue worship. And worse, he sponsors Nyela, while pretending to be Vivian Chervou. Outside of Afridhi tribes, he is banned.

THE NEO-TRIBES OF BLACKMOOR

Modern day tribes are composed of former Blackmoor inhabitants, refugees and long distance travelers. These range from the descendents of cultures beyond Blackmoor to a kingdom of people simply uninterested in modern politics. Among the largest groups to survive persecution and targeting are the Mountain and Plains Rakasta.

Beyond the true tribes, there are also the cells of the Rogues' Gallery. These individual groups and factions are composed of outsider cultures and misfits. All have become distant and alienated from mainstream society, seeing it as a product of a dystopia. While many of these diverse groups would integrate back into society if it changed, there are a vast amount of groups that would prefer to see Blackmoor crumble. All-in-all, the rebellion is hardly unified and is composed of ideologies that often find themselves butting heads with each other.

Outsiders and Outlanders

- **The Rogues' Gallery** - Hardly homogenous, this mixture of outsider cultures represent those who dare to defy the state. These various cells range from reformists, to classical monarchical revivalists, to revolutionary anarchists, to nihilistic terrorists.
- **King Ignur's Old Blackmoor** - A staunchly conservative revival of classical Blackmoor ways, built by survivors

of Allogost's purge. They're hidden within the far point of Blackmoor's current northwest territories.

- **Other Ethnicities** - The disconnection of Blackmoor also cut many cultures from their lands. The Skandaharian, Peshwah and Tanagoro descended people in Blackmoor struggle from the loss. Meanwhile, the Afridhi are survived by their creations, proto-gnolls.
- **Rakasta Tribes** - There is more to the Rakasta caravans than the cult of Nyela. Several clans have suspicions about the tribal chief priestess, while others actively subvert in the interests of their own clans.
- **Lupin Tribes** - Long since taken from their home on the Yazak Steppes, they endured enslavement, an alien land and the splintering of their people entirely. Those who betrayed their brethren became new breeds outright.
- **Orcs of Blackmoor** - Several small tribes have etched out a meager existence, but two forces thrive; the psychers of the Coot Wastes and Chief Tumf's reign of terror.
- **Raiders of Bloodshed** - Led by a former Knight of Blackmoor, this violent tribe seeks to do as much damage to Blackmoor as possible. Hateful, destructive and driven towards pillaging; they demand that Blackmoor be made theirs!

Rogues' Gallery

An umbrella term for various forms of rebellion and general unlawful behavior. Due to being pigeonholed together, many criminals have taken advantage of situations and even the actual rebellion against Blackmoor itself. The majority of them either live underground or away from the mainstays of civilization. In a sense, they're tribes all of their own.

The Grey Rebellion

Named for heroes of the ancient past, this grouping leads the charge against the nefarious plans of the Imperium of Blackmoor. In all, an effort to subvert and end the worst of the dark but relatively recent state. They hold dominion far outside of the main city. Many defector soldiers have joined their cause recently.

- **Supreme Commander Waelkenon** - A beloved leader since much of the Pro-Old World was either slain or driven underground. He was once a powerful high command marshal in Blackmoor's army. His approach was one built upon fraternal cooperation and trust, even when dealing with soldiers who broke rules or protocol. His push for reform and rehabilitation even branded him as a radical among many of his peers. This wasn't to say he was easy to push over. He took dishonor and disgrace with utmost seriousness, often facing down and executing traitors himself. Lawful (Good) Human Fighter (Knight), Former Blackmoor Nobility
- **Lady Angelsgleam** - A mature priestess in the Star Gardens. She silently reveres Martin Logran, while doing what she can

to uphold the various church charities in public. Calm and introverted, she often keeps to herself in prayer or in reflection. When not chronicling relevant documents for greater religious institutions, she will sometimes navigate the underground towards some of the literal underground rebellion cells. So far, neither she nor her allies have been discovered. Her service to the cause often amounts to supplying information as well as services to aid those in need. As suspicions arise, she has reluctantly forced herself to do this less and less. Lawful (Good) Human Priest, Former Royal Churches of Blackmoor

The Oracle's Defenders

Named for an ancient Peshwah mystic who arrived into Blackmoor, this order is far more ancient than most of the City itself today. They believe that balance must be achieved in all things, including empire. Furthermore, the weapon and body must unite as one through rigorous training and meditation. To misuse one is to misuse the other, by their decree. Many seek cybernetic implants to further this agenda

- **"The Gunslinger"** - A nameless monk who is bonded to an old (by Blackmoor standards) pistol. As if through magic, it never runs out of ammunition and never wears down. As for the monk himself, he is solemn and often quiet. He prefers to observe in most cases. He'll only break a passive state if the situation calls for it. Like lightning, his pistol is pulled and unloads countless shots. Lawful (Neutral) Human Warrior, Oracle's Defenders



The Gunslinger, drawing by Hasandgo
(<https://www.instagram.com/hasandgo>)

- **“Duelist of Light”** - Another monk, she specializes in energy melee weaponry; especially swords. Her movements have been described like theatrical dance melded with the brutality of warfare. Seemingly impossible to hit, she leaps and darts with incredible finesse before unleashing the stinging light of the energy blades. Lawful (Good), Human Warrior, Oracle's Defenders

The Weasel's Cabal

Cultists of the Egg of Coot. Their only interest is in spreading chaos throughout Blackmoor. Named after The Baron Weasel of Blackmoor legend. Their goal is infiltrating all divided groups and sects to help further their resurrection agenda. In terms of Coot cults, they're by far the most organized.

- **Reginald Roland Pierce** - A particularly manipulative mage, disguised as an adamant defender of freedom and champion of the people. He's sent operatives in the recent past to start commotion in the Cootsbane Dam. Given how the government is investigating, the operation was a success. Chaotic (Evil) Human Wizard, Cultist
- **Grugor the Sturdy** - A dwarven engineer, at least that's what his day job is. Otherwise, he studies systems to see how his beloved deity can hijack them for evil needs. Even worse, Grugor's specialty is in transportation. Rather than causing worry, the thought of the Egg of Coot taking over countless vehicles at once gives him manic glee. Chaotic (Evil) Dwarf Artificer, Cultist

The Grey Outcasts

Frustrated rebels who found the movement too soft, taking a more aggressive approach. Many are terrorists and extremists, the cause of several damaging strikes including Cootsbane Dam. To many, they are little more than raiders with a greater purpose.

- **Major Andr T. Merit** - A former Blackmoorian Knight declaring war against the state. His tough grip on the outcasts tethers them to his orders. The veteran takes a similar militaristic dogma as his old service, only with new targets. He's abrasive, intimidating and unapproachable outside of planning. In many regards, he's almost as bad as Allogost and responsible for heinous war crimes. Try as he may, he cannot enforce order on all outcasts, many who align with anarchy reject his words. Lawful (Evil) Human Warrior, Outcasts
- **Petunia Ross** - A former hardcore revolutionary who became dissatisfied by the overly safe tactics of the revolution. To her, they've sold out through their own bloated and bureaucratic interests. She wants the true methods of revolt to stay alive, rather than people “milking the movement for benefit” or censoring opposition much like Allogost. Her methods are rather extreme though, a push towards using terrorism as a method of spreading anarchy. Chaotic (Evil) Human Thief, Outcasts

The Innovator Initiative

A group of scientists disgruntled by the Allogost's rampant authority. Their goals are pacifistic, aiming to calmly integrate with the rest of Mystara well before Allogost's war plans go into action. Many still work within the various scientific divisions, in hopes of changing it from the inside. While they cooperate with various rebel groups, they prefer to hide in plain sight. Many still go about day to day research projects, while providing help on the side.

- **York Brinsler** - Senior Chief Engineer/Professor of Arcane Technology Studies, formerly of Blackmoor University. He has since taken to the underground, spurring a new movement among the rebellion. Many consider the aging academic to be far too idealistic, but respect him. Lawful (Neutral) Human Wizard/Artificer, Scientist

Fact Runners

Or Artifact Runners. Pirates dedicated to the black market exporting of Blackmoorian goods. Their stake in this mostly lies in exploitation. The difference between them and the Outcasts is that they don't like getting too involved in direct violence, unless they can get away with nice goods. In fact, they're responsible for Esterhold's attention being grabbed in the first place.

- **Captain Doris Bridgewater** - Born from a legacy of piracy, it was a natural course to take. While the truth of her skill as a sailing captain is dubious, her crew regards her with utmost trust and loyalty. A genius in cunning thievery and marketing, she's helped organize heists leaving



Captain, drawing by Hasandgo
(<https://www.instagram.com/hasandgo>)

captors baffled, even before ascending "rank". Her obsession with history has given her a somewhat pirate inspired look, from archaic Blackmoorian history. Chaotic (Neutral) Human Merchant, Pirate

The House of Andahar

Allogost proclaimed that he had slain all of the royal family and their support. He was wrong. While independent from the Rogues' Gallery, the remnants of the royal family operate in shadows and act under proxy. There is little they can actually accomplish

from the guise of stealth. Despite aiding in the rebellion, the remainder still carry a lot of old world racism, especially towards the Rakasta. There is a subtle feeling of distrust and disdain for non-humans in their speech.

- **Leena Andahar** - Once a princess, coming of age to accept her future role within Blackmoor. Now, she works under the supreme commander of the Grey Rebellion. She's become more pragmatic the more her hair has started to grey, while striving to save as much as her empathy as possible. She struggles to get past old world views towards non-humans, especially various creatures like the rakasta, likening them to mutant cats. Given her experience with the Plague of the Arcane, that might have some possible truth. Likewise, she's still a staunch conservative in support of reinstating a monarchy upon victory. Many types of ragtag humanoids and outcasts dislike but respect the military leader. Much of her respect comes from connection to Waelkenon. She has one deep secret though, disease and toxin exposure following the time jump damaged her body. Years later, she discovered she was incapable of having children. Her rigid beliefs prevent her from adoption as an alternative. Lawful (Neutral) Human Fighter, Andaharan Nobility
- **Lucius Andahar** - Leena's brother, a powerful mage. While older, he has preferred to remain outside of politics, focusing on studies and intensive training. As the Grey Rebellion began to manifest, his abilities began to shine. However, he much prefers to teach and aid others within the growing revolution than fight directly on the field, as he earned his sol-

dier's retirement with "the grey in his beard". Unlike Leena, he's slightly more accepting, having taught many aspiring mages of many types. He feels his call back to the battlefield is only a matter of time, a final confrontation for the fate of Blackmoor. Lawful (Good) Human Wizard, Andaharan Nobility

• Others of Note:

- Reger II (Ex-Thonian Imperial, abandoned his father after friendship with Leena and Lucius was formed),
- Caurmyri (Royal retainer of Leena),
- Aloysius Andahar (A cousin born of marriage with Reger I's daughter, survivor of the family, secretly a Priest of the King and Queen in Crimson)

Timeline Specifics

3029 BC: Commander Waelkenon is born.

3009 BC: Lucius Andahar is born.

3007 BC: Leena Andahar is born.

- Time Gap -

970 AC: A young Princess Andahar is traumatized as her father is brutally killed by General Gwyn Allogost, amidst the violence. A caretaker helps smuggle her out of the castle and into hiding with Waelkenon. Lucius escapes by himself and isolates in a decrepit arcane study.

971 AC: Lucius is discovered by wizards turned wanderers who take him in and teach him many magical talents. He practiced with them for several years.

971 AC: Talmanteir, a commander under Allogost's watch is kidnapped by horrified Pro-Royal citizens for ransom. After it's realized that troops were deployed instead of paying up, the rebels instead decide to hack the crystal-vision screens of millions of citizens, broadcasting the commander's electrocution. A stand-off moments later leaves no opposition survivors. This does inspire further rebel activity from others.

972 AC: A small network of thieves, outcasts and disgruntled citizens unite in secret, discussing plans to fight back against the system. Waelkenon takes charge of many efforts.

975 AC: Merchants use their networks to funnel supplies to both the cause and to those oppressed by the authorities.

976 AC: Lucius, undercover, goes on a search for his sister.

979 AC: Leena resurfaces, also taking allegiance with the Grey Rebellion. Lucius later finds Leena and joins the effort.

982 AC: In the hours following the Traitors' Day Executions, a rebel cell launches an attack against several guard stations in Blackmoor City. Few rebels or guards survive the attack, prompting a total lockdown lasting for days.

991 AC: Schism - The Rebellion deals with a breaking over philosophies. The Outcasts arise as a far more brutal answer, while the Innovators seek peaceful alternatives. This fracture weakens the cause, for now. The more extreme sides begin to recruit surviving elves and druids.

993 AC: Waelkenon takes a more background role, readying Princess Andahar to take over as Supreme Commander.

995 AC: A radical cell bombs The Blackmoorian Hall of Heroes, sparking mass outrage from the public. Bounty hunter activity, as well as mobilized forces of Allogost, increase for months. Numerous rebels go undercover to eliminate or capture the extremists for bounty. Months later, realization of laundered credits used by the rebellion is brought up, but failed to be properly traced.

998 AC: As Allogost's presence is replaced by proxies, less radical rebels take action by providing aid and support to the communities around them. Some have taken to sharing information banned by the state, to further educate the masses.

1000 AC: After rumors of Outcasts taking to the Cootsbane Dam, several other rebel groups move out to try to stop them. Fearing it's not enough, they also look to enlist any outsiders who stand with the rebellion.

Later 1000 AC: A 'Fact Runners cell breaks through the force shields during a moment of destabilization, finding themselves near the Esterhold attack. After much interrogation, they lead a group of adventurers into the foreboding Returned Blackmoor... after a few shady deals. These adventurers could very well be your own!

Other Tribes

Wild Folk - A loose umbrella for people forsaking the technologies of Blackmoor to live on their own in the wilderness. Even the Redwoods Elves and druids are considered to be under this category. The greatest among them is King Ignur's Old Blackmoor, located beyond the Duchy of the Peaks. Or rather, what's left of it.

- **King Ignur** - Fashioning himself as a medieval king, much akin to Uther in the ancient days of Blackmoor. He has forged a small castle within the western portion of the secure Blackmoorian lands. Every now and then, a bit of the out world cold leaks in. Overall, he has imposed a medieval stasis upon the land, almost in spite of the despot in Blackmoor Castle. Once, he was a historian working with the Archivists. His goal was



King Ignur

to collect information of "savages" that have either settled into the land or have broken free from main civilization. Instead, he took his own knowledge of classic Blackmoor and revolted by starting his own start up land. Within his castle, he maintains ancient Blackmoorian customs and codes, as if nothing changed from ancient days. Luckily, little news has gotten back to his superior who assumes him dead. His tall and portly stature helps to paint him as a stereotypical looking king of old. In fact, Old Blackmoor is what he dares to call his kingdom in protest. He has befriended the Wolf Lupins of the Bitten Moon Keep, home of Lord Duskenfang. While far away, they remain allies. Neutral (Neutral) Human Warrior, Ignur's Kingdom

- **Roland Lordran** - A loyal knight, standing by King Ignur's side. House Lordran was among the houses to escape persecution of Allogost's campaigns. Many of Roland's family died while escaping the purge, the remainder living and helping to maintain the keep until Ignur came upon it. The youthful fighter is quite idealistic in the face of a cynical world. He aspires to convince his own king that the Advanced Blackmoor was not evil, as well as convince the masses to fight against their Tyrant-Overlord. His encounters with battle have mostly been against roving guards, who mistook the Knights of Old Blackmoor for common raiders. If it wasn't for the guardsmen and occasional ranger being ill-prepared or not readily equipped, Roland's death would have been assured a number of times. Lawful (Good) Human Warrior, Ignur's Kingdom

- **Magisto** - A quirky court wizard, stereotypically resembling the mages of days old, including a pointy hat. While he tends to stay away from trouble, he has done all in his power to protect, cloak and shelter the small protesting land against the rest of a cruel and uncaring world. Unlike the rest of the kingdom, this frail and elderly spellcaster has seen the tragic last years of Original Blackmoor, The Great Rain of Fire, the Insurrection and many terrible things to come. He finds most of the residents to be horribly naïve. Neutral (Good) Human Wizard, Ignur's Kingdom

- **Others of Note:**

- Sir Elmeiros (A loyal knight lacking in humor and patience, he'll be quick to shut down jokes),
- Lord Alklen the Watchful (A retired ranger turned good companion, he was also a childhood friend of Ignur's slain brother),
- Lady Urdtak (A cousin of Ignur with royal blood, she's more stereotypical as far as nobles go),
- Connor O'Gill (A kindly farmer, he's an unwitting agent of The Egg of Coot),
- Strongest the Big (An oafish and large but kindly mutant, he was welcomed after aiding in fending off troopers years ago),
- Neric Stolt (A very by the books and conservative lord, his obsession with honorable methods grates on many)

Timeline Specifics

3038 BC: Magisto is born

3017 BC: Ignur von Straub is born

3013 BC: Magisto teaches as a Professor of Magic for Blackmoor University

3001 BC: Ignur's mother dies from the Plague of the Arcane

- Time Gap -

970 AC: While not a target, the ensuing purge mortifies Magisto and causes him to flee. Ignur, then a student of his, follows the wizard's path. The two discover a historic keep, formerly belonging to a slain nobleman. The many dead are honored and buried, as survivors take the two in. The slightly southeastern Superstition Mountains are bombed out, due to the retaliation of the Starport Peaks mages, who flee east and south. The deadly energies of the weapons box Ignur, Magisto and any stragglers that accompany in a tight area.

971 AC: An explorer from the Nentsen peninsula arrives at the Keep of Old Blackmoor. He's covered in awful burns from the bombed out wastes, having explored the source of "strange sounds". While magic and prayer heal him, his body is still weakened from exposure. He dies later of unrelated sickness.

976 AC: Ignur von Straub displays compassionate leadership, encouraging the residents to stay by his side. Trauma at the hands of Allogost's soldiers promptly causes them to side with Ignur's technophobia. He is later heralded as the King of Old Blackmoor, despite little relation to the houses of old. Magisto turns towards an advising role, while not teaching citizens of the keep. He is later hailed as King Ignur.

978 AC: Roland is born from one of the last members of house Lordran, passing during childbirth. The infant is taken into the custody of his aunt, a woman named Julia.

980 AC: Several bands of Rakasta ask for assistance. Initially confused by the catfolk, they were welcomed in. Ultimately, the vast majority don't wish to become permanent residents. Only a few stay.

986 AC: Word reaches Ignur's Old Blackmoor of New Starport's fall. He is grieved to learn that survivors of the massacre were later taken down by a new threat. The walls of the bombed out exclusion zone keep his troops from successfully venturing far to provide support. Deployed knights return, most become gravely ill from mysterious sickness.

989 AC: Through discovery of old magics and prayer, the growing arcane school of Magisto and the open-pantheon Temple of the Immortals help to cleanse the tainted lands. All means of disfigured and twisted abominations emerge from the ruins and scarred hellscape.

991 AC: Forces march to New Starport, readied to right the wrongs of the past. They meet Pinky's raider enclave in battle, killing the powerful warlord in the process.

993 AC: After years of relative peace, thanks to the magical workings of Magisto and the bombed barrier, a Blackmoorian troop finally pushes through the Wizard's charms and illusions. Not only has the radiance dissipated to safer levels, the knights were well prepared to handle it. They're met by a bolstered force who use guerilla tactics to overwhelm the technologically

superior foes. The survivor knight is charmed by Magisto to remember being jumped by wandering raiders instead.

995 AC: An exploration team surveys the area around the Duchy of the Peaks. The Thunder River leads to the Cootsbane Dam, damaged by several years of disuse and frigid temperatures. But shockingly, it's operational again. Further investigation reveals it has become a military base. Ignur decides to play things safe, keeping away from their projects. Attempts to flee spark conflict with a displaced gatormen tribe.

999 AC: The people of Woodenbridge fear retribution after their governor becomes boisterous in his criticism of the state. Covert agents are sent to bring civilians their way. Ignur's tolerance of Blackmoorian technology loosens slightly. Most technology is stored within the kingdom for safe keeping, should an emergency arise. More refugees emerge after the death of their leader, the following year. They report a deadly wasting disease.

1000 AC: Another scouting team uncovers another wondrous discovery in the old Duchy of the Peaks grounds, a star-ship similar to the City of the Gods. Unlike the City of the Gods, this crew perished, while systems were stabilized for the better part of a millennium. Due to the bombings against the Starport Wizards, the ship became unearthed over the course of two decades. This Expedition to the Starport Peaks unearths many alien artifacts. Ignur relents on his technophobic stance slightly, but demands the artifacts be kept in safe places in his growing kingdom.

Later 1000 AC: Reports of "flying machines" from the Blackmoor Royal Airfield (well east of Ignur's Kingdom) as well as chaos in the Cootsbane Dam ultimately put the fledgling kingdom on high alert. Rumors of the resurrection of The Egg of Coot evoke even more horror.

The Rakasta of Blackmoor

There are two distinct tribes to emerge from the Rakasta of Blackmoor. They are the Wild Blown Plains Tribe, residing in the wasteland-bordering deserts of southern Blackmoor and the Snow Peaks Tribe, residing in the magically-rebuilt mountains formerly known as the Dragon Hills. Wild Cat City emerged in the wastelands as a kind of frontier town.

Wind Blown Plains Tribe

Tired of poor interactions with the Esterhold region, a massive tribe went on a journey to find an isolated home. Their journey was taken off-course, sending them northward. By accident, they found Blackmoor. They are now located in the Badlands beyond The Wastelands, which have taken over much of the area south of Root River and Rat Lake. The central clan retains a matriarchal tradition, but other clans have become much more informal with this.

Snow Peaks Tribe

After hearing stories of rakasta making their way to an unknown land, as well as northerners going insane on an adventure, faltering tribes of Lyncasta embarked on a journey for a new home. Ultimately, they discovered the fabled Blackmoor. Snow Pardasta, not long after, found their way as well. But to the Blackmoorians, they listed

them under the same general catfolk label. Some records merged them with fast runners. They have taken well to the Dragon Hills, which through chaotic magical means have become more mountain-like.

Outliers and Notable Tribe Members

- **Dum'art** - A Snow Pardasta guard/spy for his tribal leader, well studied in history from an exchange program. He greatly dislikes Nyela, even if he can't fully figure why. His leadership suspects him of starting a conspiracy with the plains tribes, putting him on high alert. He's tried to stay quiet, but has since taken up allegiance with the rebellion in hopes of exposing Nyela. He refers to the cult as "The Temple of the New Frog". Chaotic (Good) Rakasta Thief, Guard
- **Gar Frostedclaw** - A Lynxman hunter oblivious to Nyela's machinations, he leads the strongest that tribe has to offer and has become adept at "machine slaying". This has led him to discover the Machine God cult, which he aims to destroy. The majority of his tribe live a fair distance from the valley of the fast runners, preferring the mountainside. He's heard rumors involving a dam a day or two's journey away. He has proven himself next in line to succeed his father, Horg, the chief of the Mountain Rakasta. Lawful (Neutral) Rakasta Warrior, Hunter
- **Najimma** - A Fast Runner scout and witch. She devotes her time to surveying the perimeter of the tribal grounds with her team, ensuring safety and tranquility.

Despite her cold demeanor, she has an affinity for special blends of tea perfected by her people long before the trek to Blackmoor. In the few times she's off duty, she'll be found enacting rituals with herbalists. She is slowly desiring the urge to join the Rogues' Gallery against the Blackmoorian state, risking criticism from her own people. Nyela's public proclamations used to excite her, but now cause worry. Neutral (Good) Rakasta Shaman, Devotee of Chervou

- **Sparks Neroth** - A Cyborg Domestic rakasta in the plains tribe. In truth, he was born to two Rakasta mutants, "reborn" during the Plague of the Arcane. After raiders killed his parents and brutally crippled him, an assistant of Dr. Gorble took him in for cybernetic experiments. While they were a success, he fled in horror. Nyela took the traumatized young rakasta under her arm, raising him as a son. Too traumatized by being treated like a test subject, he is very clinging to his adoptive mother. Neutral (Neutral) Cyborg Rakasta, Child

● **Others of Note:**

- **Zoe Smithypaw** (A Domestic Rakasta and mayor of Wild Cat City, she's very friendly and curious),
- **Eustace Pulsifer** (A Cloud Pardasta, obsessed with Ignur's Old Blackmoor, inspired his "current name"),
- **"Nyela"** (A Pardasta exile, she stole Nyela's name in protest and murdered her priestly brother),
- **Avdol** (A Sherkasta Parliament Representative, he is irritable and hates Toska, has pro-Allogost agenda.)

Timeline Specifics

980 AC: Several Fast Runner tribes embark on their expedition to find a new home, a small Pardasta troop provides aid. The refugees are intercepted by clans of Snow Pardasta and Lynxmen who wish to accompany them on their quest. Ultimately, they find the wastes of Blackmoor, seeking any refuge that isn't hazardous. They break through the veil into true Blackmoor. For several months, they are offered temporary shelter with King Ignur.

981 AC: The low brush and almost savannah-like quality of the southern reaches and nearby mountains appeal to them. The tribe stretches with the most prominent clan being led by a Rakasta woman named Okteng'a'na in the Badlands.

982 AC: The leadership of Okteng'a'na alienates the northern born Rakasta, who splinter off while maintaining healthy connections. Horg declares himself chief of the splintered group. Peace is maintained between the two tribes.

983 AC: Harsh registration laws pass, forcing the Rakasta to conform to Blackmoorian society to an extent. The government extorts them through taxation, while demanding a number of rakasta assimilate into mainstream Blackmoorian culture. Due to the presence of the mutants already in Blackmoor, assimilation is easier. Likewise, human emissaries are to live among the tribes. Many are just plants to ensure that the outlanders live closer to the empire's standards.

992 AC: Okteng'a'na's clan discovers an old mission site in the wastes, taking it as

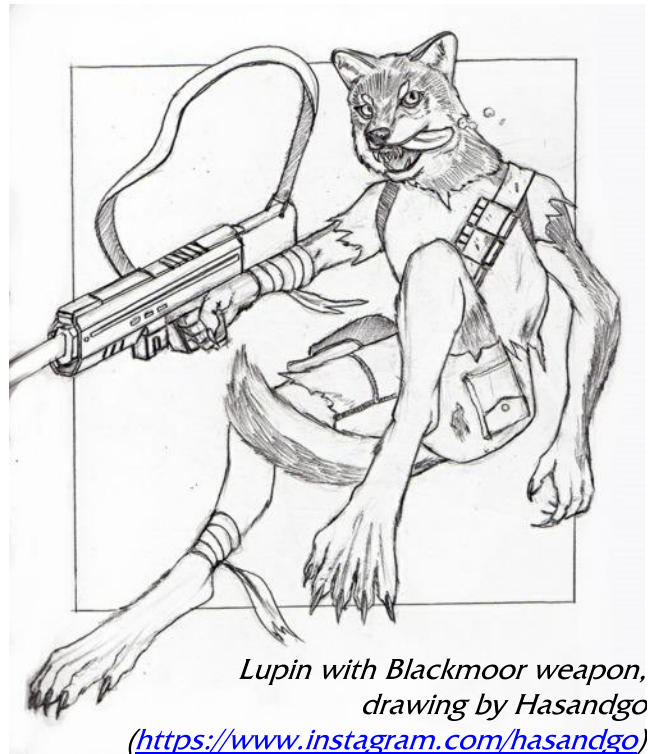
theirs. Other clans, as well as the mountain tribes, are welcomed.

997 AC: A Plains Tribe scout discovers a ragged young Rakasta wandering the wastelands, the child is in dire need of help. Nyela personally offers to restore the child's health. After learning that his parents died and he was tortured, Nyela offers to take him in.

998 AC: Okteng'a'na falls deathly ill, the high priestess Nyela can do little for her than provide comfort and extend her life as long as possible. Ultimately, the chief wastes away slowly.

999 AC: Nyela assumes control, pushing the tribe in the direction of a theocracy. Many Fast Runners fear she might become like Allogost. Descendants of human emissaries grow extremely wary of the new leadership, suspecting she had a hand in the death of Okteng'a'na. The emissaries petition to return to Blackmoor and are accepted. Some stay behind to survey things. Law enforcement investigates the Plains Tribe, later finding no cause for alarm, but note to Allogost that the tribal leader (Nyela) is quite powerful.

1000 AC: Many in the tribe are uneasy about the sudden jump in Rakasta appearing magically. They express their concerns to the Lupin elders of Lupercal. Nyela admits she's on the path to Immortality, seeking aid. She admits to nothing else.



Lupins of Blackmoor

Against all likelihood, even ancient Lupin breeds made the jump between timelines. While most were outcasts, some are mutants from the late days of old Blackmoor. In most cases, they escaped the clutches of Blackmoor after the great leap sent them to modern Mystara. There is a split between the Wolvenfolk and the Coyotl, each forming their own tribes. The Wolvenfolk take to the magically reforged Uberstar Mountains. The Coyotl much prefer the desert wastelands along the Wurm River.

In the case of the former, the grown Uberstar Mountains sport the hardy and strong Wolf Lupin breed. Despite staying true to their tribes of old, they've nonetheless incorporated motifs and inspiration from the ages of servitude to Blackmoor. Some

level of arcane technology is implemented around various villages and dwellings, but it's strict in self-discipline and utilitarian at best. As for the Coyotl Lupin breed, they prefer a more simple approach. They rely on the wilderness of the desert wasteland, at least areas that aren't toxic zones. The river itself is predominantly clean, causing an increased fish diet. While both have made neutrality pacts with the dwarves of the region, neither tribe is against consuming properly prepared human meat in darker times.

- **Lord Duskenfang** - A Wolvenfolk Lupin, from before even Saimpt Loup himself. He fancies himself in garb and attire worthy of a time before the Beagle crew shocked Blackmoor. He's whimsical but frightful when provoked. He isn't afraid to make a shocking scene either, should it require his theatrical flamboyance. Neutral (Neutral) Lupin Warrior, Tribal Chief
- **Nuwisha Howl** - A Coyotl Lupin, from a breed that should be long extinct on the surface world. She leads her tribe within the plains, enjoying acts of minor mischief upon the Rakasta. Far from malicious, she still has a certain disdain for certain members of the Fast Runner tribes. Overall, prefers levity within diplomacy. Chaotic (Neutral) Lupin Thief, Tribal Chief
- **Phineas Nellsby** - A Short-Herder Lupin, relative of Seamus and also the seneschal of the Blackmoorian Agricultural Division. When not busy maintaining daily food processes, he enjoys ensuring cattle are well maintained and engaged in exercise. When not busy with politics, he tends to a small farm within Ten Duchy. Lawful (Neutral) Lupin Warrior, Farmer

- **Rorgrora Deathcloud** - A Wolvenfolk Lupin in service of Saimpt Loup. She was given divine guidance to find Blackmoor, in an effort to survey these fallen lupins. She's extremely cold and stiff, remarkably lacking in emotion. She remains impartial and neutral sounding amidst arguments, without raising any tone at all. She dresses in a black cloak, over her already black fur. Lawful (Neutral) Lupin Wizard (Necromancer), Spy

• **Others of Note:**

- Big-Lungs Krulken (A Thonian Short Spitz, representative and emissary of the “domestic lupins”, works in Parliament),
- Tsobatai (A Shrub Scout, claims to be a “terrible wizard”, actually just a humble cook in Blackmoor City Capital),
- Screams-of-Torment (A Coyotl, has a sadistic definition of joy, likes to keep others in line)

Timeline Specifics

3537 BC: Expeditions into the Yazak Steppes at the hands of the growing Blackmoorian Kingdom lead explorers to discover the Lupins

3531 BC: After much deliberation, attempts at a colony lead to the enslavement of countless Lupins, predominantly Coyotl and Wolvenfolk breeds. Several Aardvolk assist in the trade, while most escape the explorers.

3528 BC: After a few years, these lupins are forced into a life of servitude in captivity. Morally degrading and soul crushing, the slaves muster enough willpower to continue.

3489 BC: The first slave revolt allows for a sizable population to break free, fleeing to areas around Blackmoor. Many refuse to join and stay within Blackmoor. This helps spur on the first Beastman Crusade. Ultimately, many of the Lupins who fled are slain.

3322 BC: The Egg of Coot's powers recruit several Lupins, changing them into Hounds of Coot; warped abominations born for destruction. Beastman Crusades continue at a fever pitch amidst this new conflict.

3187 BC: "Labor servitude" of the Lupins is abolished, following centuries of backlash and protest. Those who don't leave to nearby lands are branded as second class citizens at best.

3050 BC: New breeds are officially recognized within the territory. The Blackmoorian Short-Herder (Corgi) is particularly trusted among farmsteads, even the more industrialized equivalents. "Domestic Lupins" are treated much better than "Wild" breeds are. Other emerging breeds are the Shrub Scout (Shiba Inu), Thonian Spitz (German Spitz) and Thonian Short Spitz (Pomeranian), thanks to trade merchants from a foreign land. The former of this breed prefers hunting in brushland, while the latter is known for their likeable personality and charisma.

3010 BC: Dugalt, a Thonian Short Spitz, becomes a diplomat to help bridge Lupin and Human relations. This only furthers matters for Domestic breeds, but not Wild breeds. Months later, a Blackmoorian Short-Herder, Seamus, is recognized for heroic duty and granted a plot of farm land.

3001 BC: The Plague of the Arcane causes instability and chaos, even for Lupins. Much like with mutant rakasta, mutant lupins are created from the bedlam.

3000 BC: A mage cabal responsible for reshaping hills into mountains is stopped, after it causes horrible damage to the surrounding area. The dwarves of the Crystal Peak risk total failure, if not for Blackmoorian forces stepping in to aid. Several dwarves migrate to Blackmoor, while others stay with Blackmoor's forces to rebuild and make anew.

- Time Gap -

970 AC: Several Blackmoorian domestic breeds and wild mutants take part in the Revolution, in part from Allogost's decree of looking beyond race. The non-mutant wild Lupins remain mostly neutral, preferring to find peace amidst the ruined wastes outside of the kingdom.

972 AC: A young Duskenfang leads a huge amount of Wolvenfolk, upon learning the ways of Saimpt Loup. Duskenfang's apathy disappoints the immortal greatly, favoring a Blackmoorian Immortal of Snarled-Call instead. Discovering an abandoned keep on the magically created Mountains beyond the Crystal Peaks, he takes it over and fancies himself as a noble leader in mockery of Allogost's revolution. The mindset eventually sticks. Bitten Moon Keep is formed.

973 AC: Noticing the Wolvenfolk, the surviving Coyotl breed ventures out themselves, braving the brutal climate. Meanwhile, trade is established with the struggling dwarves of Crystal Peaks.

976 AC: The orderless Coyotl, living on the fringes, lead a group charge into the thawing fields beyond Blackmoor, wastelands on the western side of the Wurm River and across the river. Since both their breed and the other are detected as Blackmoorian, the emerging energy shields keep them within Blackmoor's expanding territory.

984 AC: Much like with the Rakasta Tribes, the emerging Lupin Tribes must register with Blackmoor or face consequences. The dwarven allies of the Wolvenfolk lose their independent status and become a territory of Blackmoor.

985 AC: Dramatic tensions between the Rakasta and them are eased through diplomacy, but still remain high.

989 AC: The ruins of Dragonia are rebranded Lupercal, as a neutral ground for both lupin tribes.

990 AC: Lupin Priests wish to bless relationships between Coyotl and Wolvenfolk in Lupercal, Vivian Chervou responds by changing desired denizens of Lupercal into a hybrid wolvenfolk-coyotl known as "Red Lupin". Gradually, more from both tribes come to help build up the settlement as well, reluctantly accepting what happened.

991 AC: Lupercal has rebuilt and expands.

999 AC: An expedition into the deep Crystal Peaks uncovers the bodies of the warped minions of the Egg of Coot, its foul Hounds. Several of the investigators fall ill and die days later. The area is marked off as a cursed ground. The other investigators have gone missing, as have the Coot Hound bodies during a later investigation.

1000 AC: Lupercal elders are disgusted by how "human" a lot of Lupins within the area are acting lately. They also sense a supernatural taint upon some of the villagers. This causes a joint meeting between the Lupins and Rakasta, unaware of Nyela's role in this yet. The shamans of the multicultural Moon Haven are curious of the recent Lupin migration there.

Raiders of Bloodshed

A raider tribe assembled from deserter soldiers, wild men, thieves, former rebels and countless other outcasts. Their purpose is drenched in violence, fulfilling the revenge filled desires of the Cult of Personality that runs them. Morris and the newly recruited Stephen are both viable successors for future leadership. They act as a cruel parody of the Knights of Blackmoor.

- **William Erentimen, Lord of Bloodshed** - A former high ranking knight of Blackmoor. He's cruel and despises everything about his old kingdom. While not driven by The Egg, he enjoys unleashing just as much chaos. His recent campaigns involve sacking a security installation and raiding resources and information. He won't stop until Blackmoor falls. And should that happen? His gang will take on the world! Chaotic (Evil) Human Warrior
- **Morris, Ash Goblin Tamer** - Much of the corrupted wasteland beyond Blackmoor existed prior to the colony expanding its land once more. Several knights, and later raiders, purposefully went out to capture the mutated goblins of the blighted land. Morris, an appreciated

compatriot of William, has done his best to train his captives into fighting pretty much anyone who isn't the raiders. Chaotic (Evil) Human Warrior

- **Stephen the Avenged** - A Clone of Stephen the Rock, Federation Defector and Cult Leader at the Temple of the Frog. He bides his time, using the raiders to learn all he can on the new era and helping them be more tactical in their marauding. Neutral (Evil) Federation Crew

Timeline Specifics

3972 BC: The first of several Stephen Rockwell clones are created.

3400 BC: The Beastman Crusades bring interest back to Frog Island, cultists of the Frog are sacked once more. However, this facility lives.

3024 BC: William Erentimen was born in Ten Duchy.

3004 BC: The final clone of Stephen "the Rock" is created, as the machine breaks down. This new Stephen seals himself in a cryogenic freezing chamber.

3003 BC: William is deemed worthy of knighthood, recognized by his peers as Sir William of House Erentimen.

- Time Gap -

970 AC: William, now a respected knight, chooses to serve in the rebellion, taking part in the atrocities of the Royal Massacre. His then fragile mind snaps under the trauma.

971 AC: William is institutionalized at Carr Memorial Hospital after his mental anguish worsens.

973 AC: William is deemed ready to return to society, still in as feeble of shape as he is.

978 AC: After several tests, Williams is granted access to his knighthood chapter again. Several missions are given to help catch and deal with traitors. Likewise, he's sent to deal with any "subversive forces", such as rebels and bandits.

979 AC: William is given a task to deal with some Skandaharian "Revivalists", who were mostly interested in reviving old pillaging ways in spite of Blackmoor. When the marauders approached the knight base camp, he offered a proposition to both the deployed knights and the enemy group; drop your mission and follow me or die. Initial reactions were hesitant, until he slaughtered members on both sides. Knights more loyal to him than the state quickly submitted, as did impressed Skandaharians who survived his wrath.

980 AC: After years of trying to regain mental clarity, William finds purpose in turning on the nation that made him act so depraved. He dubs himself "The Lord of Bloodshed", assuming outsiders and tribal raiders into his collective. Eventually, he dubs them "The Raiders of Bloodshed".

982 AC: Pinky Montgomery, a raider with a burned "pink" toned face, is spared after he turns against his ranger team and helps the raiders. He quickly wins the Lord of Bloodshed's favor.

986 AC: Pinky leads a mission to take New Starport, nearly 10 miles south of the original Starport, one of the places surviving the civil war sparked by Allogost. The colony is inhabited by the surviving mad mages of the Starport Peaks. Remaining nobles dwell with them, after paying their remaining wealth and resources to stay. The wizards ultimately ally with the raiders and eradicate the noble survivors.

991 AC: Pinky's enclave thrives as a base of operations, until it is stormed by "antique knights". Despite superior technology, Pinky's ability to strategize is far below Lord William's. Ultimately, he perishes and his raiders are scattered. A majority of the mad mages join them.

992 AC: A failed attempt is made at seizing Cootsbane Dam and the artificially crafted Cootsbane Mountainside (a magically created extension of each of the Superstition Mountains). They are repelled by the initial base camp of soldiers stationed there. Humiliated, the Lord of Bloodshed pulls the raiders back to the wastelands to regroup and restructure.

993 AC: A group of marauders from Nentsun mysteriously enter Blackmoor. After some success, they mostly meet their end by the raiders. Some are enslaved under Lord William's cause.

994 AC: The raiders' luck begins to turn, taking minor settlements through either extortion or crass manipulation. Several more corrupt members of areas dotting the areas outside of Ten Duchy. Not pushing their recent luck, they avoid moving too far into that territory, instead claiming the edges of former Peshwah turf, some of

which is still affected by Skothar's outside climate.

995 AC: Historic Southport County is taken by the raiders, becoming a new operations base named "Deathport". Tower Diabolica, a revival of old Starport ways, is built by the raider wizards. Deathport quickly becomes a wretched hive that even Blackmoor military is reluctant to approach.

996 AC: The raiders embark on an undercover mission after hearing about recovered treasure on Frog Island. A group of archeologists are quickly overwhelmed, leading to discovery in an ancient temple below. A complex of seemingly modern or even futuristic technology reveals a chamber filled with mostly broken giant tubes. One is functional though, containing a human-looking man. Upon releasing him, he introduces himself as Stephen.

997 AC: Stephen quickly challenges Morris for the attention of Lord William. A rivalry heats up between the two, each attempting to outdo the other in various tasks.

999 AC: Torchlight, an outpost colony in the southeastern part of Blackmoor's dome, becomes the next target. Several patrollers and guards alike were recuperating at a station within town, evening the fight against the raider forces. In the end, the waypoint suffers extensive damage, while both sides see heavy losses. Allogost's council starts to take a greater interest in the raiders now. Stephen becomes critical of Lord William's abilities, looking into ways to usurp power.

1000 AC: The raiders reluctantly join with political extremists of the rebellion, hoping

to do as much damage as possible to Blackmoor, while staying hidden. Raider controlled territories attempt to look legitimate amidst more frequent patrols around the territory. An aging Lord of Bloodshed almost dies after an attack by a rogue Knight who suspected the raiders of foul play, who was tipped off by Stephen. Said Knight is later put on trial for stepping out of line. Chief Tumf is approached, by request of Stephen. The Orcish king mulls over becoming an ally. Bramwald is placed on lockdown for a manhunt, after a rogue raider assassinated a visiting councilman.

Orcs of Blackmoor



A once feared power, it has faded in importance for nearly 600 years (in real Blackmoorian time). Despite this stagnation, the orcs have adapted far better than the jumbled beastmen chased up north. Due to facing long superior foes, the Orcs of Stormkiller Mountains and beyond took towards becoming self-sufficient. While raids still occurred, they were targeted and practical. In the decades leading to the big time jump, they became focused on capturing and reverse engineering technology. Orcish creations proved more destructive, but cumbersome, clunky and hideous to behold. While destruction is no longer their

goal, they are quick to make threats on anyone who dares to transgress against them. As such, the modern Orc lands are usually just left alone.

- **Chief Tumf, the Legion of One** - A veteran of a war declared on the Crystal Peaks Dwarves over control of nearby hills, he proved himself as an unstoppable machine. His signature technique in battle was announcing his name before readying against a foe. His reputation caused some to retreat. As a leader, he will still use harsh intimidation against his people. But, to those who are respectful of him and his wishes, he'll only return this back. Like his people, he has lost interest in many evil ways. His main concerns are his people surviving without outside interference. However, he's responsible for several targeted attacks on caravans and transport vehicles moving close to his turf. He's not afraid to pull tricky political maneuvers to get other regimes to do his bidding, should the situation call for it. In one instance, he sent a platoon to chase and overtake a relief truck sent to a failing dwarven colony by the Wurm River. In response to returning the truck and providing three times the aid, the dwarves would supply much in valuable minerals and well crafted goods in return. Neutral (Evil) Orc Warrior, Chief
- **Skrug Da'Best'Ov'Em** - Strongest of the Coot Wastes Raiders Tribe. Even the Raiders of Bloodshed feel uncomfortable dealing with them. The Coot Wastes Raiders are a true throwback to Orcish attacks of old. They believe in spreading fear and violence wherever they go and the de facto leader of Skrug is no excep-

tion. To him, the world is decadent and must be reminded what the horrors of the past look like. In his view, this is a service to keep the worthy strong and the unworthy buried in the ground. Skrug's "Ladz" have a little secret, exposure to the radiation and dark magic of the slumbering Egg have allowed them to develop strange psychic powers. Fortunately, these raiders are either too stupid or too ignorant to understand them. However, this has allowed for truly absurd inventions and odd rituals. Chaotic (Evil) Orc Warrior, Raider

Timeline Specifics

4000 BC: Beastmen attacks prove a threat to Blackmoor. Some of these Beastmen have changed into the first Orcs, at least in Blackmoor.

3998 BC: A huge Orc tribe takes down territories north of Blackmoor. Many fall under the sway of the Egg of Coot.

3400 BC: The Beastmen Crusades destroyed much in the ways of Orcs.

3200 BC: Tribes of Orcs, under the guidance of Hel (or Hella), take to moving underground. They are spared further crusades against them.

3095 BC: A new tribe emerges from the ashes of two crusades. All of their leaders are named Skrug. The strangest part is that due to their proximity to Egg-held territory, they've developed fascinating mutations and powers.

3006 BC: The Coot Wastes Raiders show their might by literally turning Southport

upside down. The damage racks up in the millions to billions to fix. It takes 6 years to restore the town, despite only a fraction surviving. However, the Great Rain puts a stop to all plans.

- Time Gap -

968 AC: A revived feud of Orcs and Dwarves flairs up. For now, it's minor skirmishes.

971 AC: Tumf, an Orc warrior, becomes known as the Legion of One, after destroying Dwarven settlements on the eastern border of Returned Blackmoor. After the greater state notices and the Dwarves offer a treaty, Tumf ends his reign of terror. Allogost's regime backs off after a resolution is made, but still keeps a close eye on matters.

984 AC: Pushed by Hella, the subterranean Outlander Orcs return to the overworld.

999 AC: A Coot Wastes Orc accidentally uses their powers to make a patrol squad literally melt. Upon showing his discovery to another raider, he accidentally melts that orc too. The powerful orc "psyker" (or psychic power user, in non Orc slang,) is then executed by his own tribe, to prevent more damage.

1000 AC: Chief Tumf starts making large demands of Allogost, who grows frustrated and flustered by this. However, as these are mostly vapid threats, little has been done currently. Allogost eventually plans to storm the Orc's tribe once his current conflicts are over. In the Coot Wastes, Ohmfet reforms after Woodenbridge county falls into ruin. Outlander Orcs merge with the Psyker Orcs in devotion of Thanatos and Hel.

Other Cultures of Blackmoor

The Skandaharians, Tanagoro and Peshwah are mere shells of their former selves, especially after being severed from either their homelands or ancestral cultures for so long. The Afridhi don't officially exist anymore. Many still try to hold some connection by any means necessary.

Skandaharians

The viking legions just north of Blackmoor had a tenuous relationship with the emerging empire far before it was turned around under Uther's orders. And even then, the many jarldoms still saw conflict up till the later ages of Blackmoor. But, in most later cases, matters were driven by competition and innovation. Improved relations forged the Embassy of Skandahara in Blackmoor City. In the end, the Great Rain severed them from their home, leading to the remainder to band together in a tightly knit ethnic community.

Peshwah

Downtrodden and beaten almost as badly as the Afridhi, the Peshwah were known for their skills in horse riding. With horses becoming a commodity in Blackmoor, they turned to other means of preserving culture. This became harder after a significant City-State of theirs was destroyed. Now, they just seek to keep their culture alive in the Western Hak, a land they once claimed in history. While they do no major harm against Blackmoorians, they have little issue with striking down the gnolls.

Tangor

From the southern regions of Skothar, several tribes and nations arose from the hot and steamy jungle lands. Among them were the Tanagoro people, powerful and mighty, a true statement of empire. Those who came to Blackmoor even carved out their own niches of industry and culture. Elements of their culture continued, even in a foreign land. Prudent ideals, a strict but creative mind and celebration of a united family became preserved values that held communities together. Recently, curiosity has grabbed them. Many desire to know what has become of their southern home. With news of an old company president being spotted after a long expedition, many Tangor-descended Blackmoorians eagerly await updates. More than likely, most of these people are descendents of the Tanagoro.

Afridhi

Born to follow the ways of Zugzul, their methods were harsh and without mercy. In the end, it was mostly their undoing. Many fled, some residing in what would one day become modern Ylaruam. Their hope for revival came from troops of easily tricked beastmen, who were reshaped by dark magic into hyena-like gnolls. Ultimately, the gnolls not only assimilated into Afridhi culture, but took it over. Most live near the present Rakasta tribal clans of the Plains.

- **Hans Kjulborg** - A former Skandaharian Revivalist, which amounted to a prototype of the modern raiders. Having seen the consequences of his actions, he instead has taken to documenting whatever culture he can discover and helping

to ensure that traditions remain alive among any Skandaharian descendents in Blackmoor. He gets noticeably upset when his raiding days are brought up, as he spends his days by Katterborg. He does his best to ensure stability in the Northern Circle. Neutral (Neutral) Human Warrior, Archivist

- **So'Gol** - The leader of the Peshwah Heritage Association. The heritage grounds themselves are on the Western Wastelands, formerly called Hak. Despite a strong and sturdy personality, his people are a depressed shell of their former selves. Soul crushing vices balance a soul crushing existence. Horses are rare and expensive, making many traditions hard to take part in. Their lands are far more boxed in, their people mostly slain during "The End Days" as they call it. His lowly opinion of Blackmoor has pushed him to overlook his people performing crimes that ultimately help their greater society. He sees this as revenge for stomping out Dragonia, a gift from Blackmoor in the first place. Chaotic (Good) Human Warrior, Chief
- **Toska the Reawakened** - The Afridhi Cultural Representative for Blackmoor Parliament. Unlike So'Gol, her methods have been far more direct in politics. She claims to be a reincarnation of the infamous original. Many deeply resent her, as she has found ways to humiliate and intimidate opponents without mockery or threats. Being non-human makes this worse. She has valiantly defended her people, providing aid as well. Chaotic (Neutral) Gnoll Warrior, Politician

- **Mulinaoko** - The son of Tangor Import Company president, Dulumal Zal bomwa. After the "Great Jump of Fire", as he calls it, his father gathered a group of former employees and residents of "Tangor Town" and vanished. He's been searching for years. After 33 years, he's finally found a clue, long after giving up home and assuming them all dead. Word gets around that a World Scout found an elderly man who looks suspiciously like Dulumal within the present day Tangor region, at least a few years ago. He's petitioning to join a World Scout or Reclaimer to seek out his father. Lawful (Neutral) Human Merchant, Company Head

• Others of Note:

- "Headhunter" Jorgan (Former Raider, lives in the wilds while taking up bounties, has worked with rangers),
- Brother Michael Harborman (A monk of Blackmoorian-Thonia, has tried to decipher a prophecy on Blackmoor's return)

Timeline Specifics

4300 BC: The Peshwah move towards the Hak lands.

4040 BC: Skandaharian raids become more violent, especially by Vestfolk, Blackmoor and Maus.

4001 BC: The Peshwah and Tenians attack Blackmoor.

4000 BC: The Afridhi move east towards Thonia.

3995 BC: The Afridhi expand their empire into the Vales, now moving into the Hak lands.

3982 BC: Na Shepro is awarded the Barony of Dragonia, following much combat against the Afridhi.

3981 BC: Afridhi forces clash with an expedition in the Valley of the Ancients, following a campaign in the City of the Frog.

3976 BC: A campaign against the Well of Souls devastates the Afridhi forces around Blackmoor.

3962 BC: A device in the City of the Gods explodes, taking a lot of Afridhi controlled land with it. No one is sure why this event in the City of the Gods occurred, as only rubble remained. The Afridhi suspect sabotage and prepare for revenge. In truth, internal vandalism and theft lead to the Beagle's systems failing, but only a few know this, including the (then) proto-Immortal form of Benekander. He would be freed and fully formed in the events of Wrath of the Immortals.

3800 BC: Aggressions against the Afridhi and Peshwah in the region flare up again, sparking more wars.

3740 BC: Skandaharian pirates become a nuisance for Blackmoor, following new innovations in black powder and naval vessels.

3690 BC: Several tribes of Tangor become more interested in Blackmoor, in terms of trade.

3681 BC: The latest campaign on behalf of the Afridhi is led by trusted priests of Zugzul. The end result is supernatural fires claiming much of Blackmoor County. Half of the Royal Family perishes, as does two-thirds of the Regency Council. While most historical records were saved, everyone in the Guild of Historians perished doing so. This act of terror went too far for Blackmoor.

3680 BC: War against the Afridhi transforms into a genocide. The damage is done before citizens can protest. The war spreads to the homelands out west, resulting in unfathomable war crimes against life. Afridhi priests place a curse upon Blackmoor, prophesying doom in nearly 7 centuries.

3670 BC: The Peshwah retain some hostilities against Blackmoor, but keep a fair distance.

3640 BC: An Afridhi colony returns to the south of Blackmoor, keeping far enough away to not invoke any retaliation.

3530 BC: The steppes well away from Blackmoor appeal to the Peshwah, who mostly migrate away from the empire. However, by request, a religious order stays behind to share some secrets with the Blackmoorians. This order is led by a shaman known to Blackmoorians as "The Oracle". This provides the foundations for The Oracle's Defenders.

3520 BC: Surviving Afridhi coax an army of beastmen towards their territory. A mixture of the angered souls of their ancestors, the beastmen's chaotic blood and dark magic creates an early precursor to the Gnolls of Mystara.

3505 BC: Dragonia suffers damage from Beastman raiders, as pleas to aid go out to the Kingdom. Combined forces help what would evolve into the Beastman Crusade by the Holy Empire Church.

3480 BC: Two hundred years after Blackmoor's extermination campaign, the Afridhi strike again, with their backing of magically shaped beastmen. The attack cripples Southport, the Duchy of Ten and many other sites. Ultimately, the forces are repelled as the Beastman Crusade begins to truly kick off.

3479 BC: Only small numbers of human Afridhi exist in Blackmoor, at this point. Their campaign was a failure. Zugzul himself has abandoned human survivors who don't embark on a mission to Brun. Despite this, they stay behind to educate the gnolls on Afridhi culture.

3472 BC: The remaining Afridhi shamans turn to Faunus, asking for salvation. He encourages the remaining humans to bond with the gnolls. He later grants the shamans the power to make remaining Afridhi humans into gnolls too. Upon learning this, Zugzul banished memories of humanity from the now-gnoll tribe.

3471 BC: The assault on the gnolls picks up after shamans use their divine power to convert Blackmoorians.

3426 BC: An exchange program sees Blackmoorians and Tangor living in each other's lands, fully experiencing what each cultural center has to offer.

3400 BC: Dragonia becomes a Free City-State under Peshwah control. It also

becomes the center for the Oracle's Defenders. New fighting techniques are created as new types of weaponry are invented.

3326 BC: To commemorate 100 years of the exchange program, the Tangor Imports Company forms. A permanent residence emerges via Tangor Town, a neighborhood of heavily Tanagoran populations. Younger generations would prefer to explore more of what Blackmoor has to offer than living in the ethnic neighborhood though.

3320 BC: Nearby towns are built under old Peshwah guidelines, all favoring horses over modern automobile technology.

3300 BC: Both Peshwah and Gnolls set traps on roads near their territories, causing much damage to automobiles. Compensation is demanded after an investigation.

3200 BC: Many Peshwah, dissatisfied with Blackmoor's Empire, embark on a journey towards Brun, through proto-Alphatia. Eventually, they'll settle into Ethengar. Skandaharian Borough is created as a power move in northern Blackmoor.

3000 BC: A majority of the Peshwah, Tangor, Skandaharians and (actual) Afridhi not within the Blackmoor area that "time jumps" are either eliminated or forced to contend with the apocalypse. Several Blackmoorians away from their homeland learn that the central empire has vanished amidst the explosion.

- Time Leap -

2999 BC: Migration of the descendents of the Peshwah and Skandaharian people occur, mostly for their own survival. Many

of these people would form new cultures. The gnolls choose to remain for now, assured that Zugzul will protect them and that their birth home will return. Afridhi humans in Brun overhear from their mystics and seers that Blackmoor blew up. While they are overjoyed, they must endure radical shifts in climate and so much more. They have forgotten about their creations, as they continue to move.

2995 BC: The encroaching cold pushes the gnolls of the Afridhi south and closer to the coast. Zugzul seeks them out, blaming Faunus for making them weak.

2800 BC: The Skandaharians move into what would become modern Northern Reaches.

1700 BC: Descendents of the Peshwah solidify into what becomes the Ethengar, after numerous campaigns and intermingling with other populations.

1045 BC: A majority of the gnolls turn on tribal shamans, who have kept them waiting in Skothar. Expeditions are made to Brun, in search of the Afridhi humans who left them. They discover the declining Empire of Nithia, which has created gnolls of their own. Many give up on their old purpose, bolstering this new population instead. The Nithians search far and wide for information on these "copy creations". They get nothing, to their frustration. Even more so, knowledge of Zugzul is somewhat foreign to the Nithians.

500 BC: Most Afridhi gnolls have moved on, knowledge of their old culture is mostly gone, save for Zugzul. Their patron, on the other hand, is heavily responsible for

aiding Thanatos in the ruination of Nithia. Zugzul fights a losing battle against Ranivorus, in an attempt to become the only major patron of gnolls.

499 BC: A monastery dedicated to Khoronus was somehow affected by the time rift that swallowed the greater Blackmoor area. Instead of traveling with the monastery due north of the ruins of Bartertown, it is flung 2500 years into the future. It moves focus to preserving information on Blackmoor.

70 BC: The emerging New Thonia catches word of the monastery surviving the cataclysm. A team is sent to recover and relocate the monks to the revived Thonia. Invitations continue, in part to consolidate information from Thonia's own past. The monks are only willing to provide information.

50 AC: The Blackmoorian monks agree to move to just outside of New Thonia. The Temple of Remembrance is rebuilt, with replicas of the lost artifacts created or found by the monks.

450 AC: A quarter of the Afridhi Gnolls continue to stick with their heritage, including worship of Zugzul. Others assimilate into other gnoll groups.

659 AC: The City-State of Blackmoorian Thonia is established around the monastery, who never asked for any of that to happen. One of the monks begins to weave a prophecy, based on the doomsday prophecy of the Afridhi. He states that Blackmoor will return, but it will come back horribly wrong. And with a new empire, horribly new things will afflict the lands! The

meaning of this lived and died with the monk, but still succeeded in terrifying locals.

- Time Leap -

967 AC: Separated from the majority of their clans and people, survivors of the outside tribes and nations panic. Meanwhile, President Dulumal of the Tangor Import Company gears up for an expedition to his ancestral home. Taking with him most of his employees and several Tangor Town residents, they embark on a perilous journey.

968 AC: News of the Homeland's return travels to gnolls in both Brun and the borderlands by Esterhold. Large 'cackles' of gnolls move towards the Old Thonian Wastes, with magical help. They discover the struggling tribe near the valley.

969 AC: Dulumal and a fraction of his adventure party make it. Many were claimed from infection brought upon by "blighted" regions of northern Skothar. But, what they see is a far cry from the glory years of the past. He then changes plans, by using his knowledge of ancient dialects and language to interact with current natives. An emerging tribe, struggling to get by, gives him warm reception. He gets to work on educating them on the marvels of the past.

975 AC: The Peshwah City-State of Dragonia revolts against Blackmoor. Their attempts are quickly quelled, as Blackmoor lays siege to the city. The Peshwah descendents scatter to nearby reaches of what's left of the Hak lands they claimed so long ago.

980 AC: Moon Haven forms from a mix of Blackmoor and Peshwah culture.

984 AC: The Afridhi gnolls are reluctantly allowed into Blackmoor, however they must drop worship of Zugzul. Most of these migrants move into ghettos alongside wild rakasta and lupins that try to assimilate, but later form an ethnic neighborhood.

986 AC: The Peshwah legacy rebuilds on an agreed reservation of land. Life, despite some semblance of normalcy, is a mediocre shade of their glorious old ways. Most modern descendants either left Skothar or merged with the greater Blackmoor population.

988 AC: Dulumal begins to fall quite ill, coughing blood and losing hair rapidly. The villagers at least show off their creations. Their irrigation and planting technique could potentially revolutionize the area. Likewise, their priests and "arcane weavers" prove adept in tinkering.

989 AC: Priests help prolong Dulumal's life, but he's still weakening from exposure to toxic sources. The village chief's son unveils a trip-wire security system involving wooden noise-makers and a spring-like device. It helps ward against dangerous animals and jealous neighbors.

990 AC: Rumors of Returned Blackmoor prompt the monks of Blackmoorian-Thonia to send investigators. They turned up with nothing, as Blackmoor had already lifted to the demiplane. Disappointed, the monks returned to ponder what the old prophecy had meant.

992 AC: Dulumal perishes after his body finally gives out. Attempts to bring him back fail. The tribe embraces his name as their identity as the remainder of Dulumal's crew continues his work. The newly dubbed Dulumal Tribe discovers smoke-powder a few weeks later, allowing them to create explosives. The walls around the tribal ground also get more fortified with experience in metallurgy and stonework.

994 AC: Little Skandahar is formally recognized by Blackmoor city as an important ethnic community. Likewise, a cluster of Peshwah-based cultural groups appear on the outskirts of the city as well. Tangor Town recuperates its losses from the "failed" expedition of President Zalbomwa and his "kidnapping victims", as the state defines. Mulinaoko is furious at the smearing of his father's name. The Afridhi gnolls are left to the outside wastes.

996 AC: Zugzul's grasp on the gnolls has strengthened once more, as they recall their magical origins. Tribes split over regaining "their gift" and lamenting over their human creators. The former would later help Nyela recover the lost art. The latter will seek to undo Nyela's future plans.



997 AC: With help of the Blackmoorian crew, the Dulumal Tribe continues to build and innovate. A strange visitor arrives one day, from the sky a creature falls. The witch doctor nurses a creature they call a Wakyambi (a heavenly man with a tail) back to health. In truth, this is a Myoshi-man Rakasta whose winged tiger mount was killed by a giant bird. The warrior wishes to stay with the tribe following his recovery, aiding and protecting however he can.

998 AC: A former Raider turns on his allies, taking bounties to hunt as many of them down as possible. His name is simply known as Jorgan. He has started up a bounty hunting company.

999 AC: Members of the Peshwah reservation become disgruntled, taking up invitations sent by raiders to join them. Likewise, some of the gnolls think this is the path back to humanity.

1000 AC: The attack in Esterhold prompts the monks to take action once more. A mixture of strange stories and descriptions of strange artifacts prompts a realization, the return of Blackmoor has finally come! They petition the Kingdom of Thonia to embark back to Blackmoor. The Canticle for Blackmoor, an epic for the ages, is written. In the Northern Circle, Katterborg is fortified by mountain rakasta tribesmen, allegedly.

MORE ADVENTURES IN RETURNED BLACKMOOR

In addition to the ideas presented in the original article, here are some extra concepts to build into a campaign.

AN-ARCH-YYYYYY!:

Extreme rebels have taken notice of the world at large. Their goal? Destabilize and crumble the various governments and markets of the world. Only then, can the world truly be free. Their plans for afterwards? They're not even sure.

Beyond Blackmoordome:

The Lord of Bloodshed was a capable leader, Stephen the Rock is far more so. Lord William perishes "mysteriously" and Stephen takes over. A clone with the mind of a brilliant classic villain, the raiders enter a new age. A guerilla army turns into a tactical powerful, trumping and outdoing Allogost's own knights at every turn. More rural and frontier communities can't cope with the brilliant warlord, as survivors are enslaved or repurposed in some other awful way. Through his sweet tongue and brutal action, the Orc tribes and Gnolls find themselves brought into the fold. An ambitious enough war would destroy Blackmoor for good. The growing raider group meets secretly in a ghost town in the wastelands, within a domed stadium building.

Brother-meets-Brother:

Another signal has been received from space, demanding aid. It seems the very same "Rotfiends from Space" are attacking them as well, after being fought off six years ago. They request backup. Should all go well, a lost society of Blackmoorians or Thonians could be recovered and used to grow Returned Blackmoor.

Dynasty of Doom!:

The current lead oracle of the New Monastery has unveiled a terrifying timeline. Allogost's dynasty has indeed expanded in the future. The sealed off kingdom has returned to the world in full. Beyond that, it has spread, much like Blackmoor at the height of its power. A crumbled Thyatis shares space with a new Blackmoor capital. And watching above, Allogost, Immortal of Time. Priests of Khoronus fear who would dare sponsor the overlord for ascension. Word of the vision spreads through the lands.

Devils... Monsters...!:

Whether in the comforts of civilization, the reclaimed wilderness or the tainted wastes; fonts of corruption have caused monsters to return to threaten Blackmoor. They wander the ruins, dungeons, mountains, plains and even the dark alleys of city streets. Some are just

the results of a natural order spurned, others are the fault of Blackmoor's own advancements. Mutants and magical things prepare for an attack.

New Dungeons of Blackmoor:

While evading the Great Rain of Fire's worst power, a separate apocalypse wounded a rising Blackmoor. The end result is countless lairs and dungeons, taken over by madmen and monsters. A new age of adventure awaits for those to delve and face what lurks below. In addition to classical sites, new accursed places have emerged; the Valley Wastelands, the Backburner Ruins, the Haunted Black Hills, the Peaks Duchy Exclusion Zone, the Detrituswood Swamp and more await. Even the classic Blackmoor Castle hosts strange things! Likewise, plenty of abandoned places fill Blackmoor: Sul Peshwah, South Pim, Gile's Station, Woodenbridge Quarantine Zone and many more are examples.

I Don't Want Your Civil War:

The Rebellion has become more than effective, but so has Returned Blackmoor! The nation is divided and a new type of war breaks out. This War of Brothers causes untold devastation to the land. No matter who comes out victor, how will they survive the carnage? Will the world at large be ready for the victor?

Machine vs. Machine?:

The invention of the Aether-Web revolutionized magic, technology and information as a whole! The addition of a powerful A.I. has turned it into a powerful weapon. The Machine-God, learning of this, has made a call to action. Uther V.1 mobilizes peoples and technology alike against the outside threat!

Nyela's Beastmoor:

The cult prevails and Nyela ascends, with her most devout wielding powerful artifacts. Gnolls, Gatormen, Froggies and other animalmen join. Worse, Nyela's magical hex has turned into a contagious virus. In a short time, matters change from disappearances to an apocalyptic outbreak of shifted beasts. The plague escapes the shield, beginning its wrath upon Mystara as well. It's likely the Hollow World will be the savior of non-beastkind, if intervention fails to stop the world from being consumed.

Red Curse of Coot:

Not only does the Egg of Coot get closer to reawakening, its spread of corrupted magic helps make it aware of the Red Curse. Following the Wrath of the Immortals, the Red Curse spreads. Combined with lingering essences of the Egg's dark magic, it grows closer to its goal. Even worse, the Red Curse

begins to change, as do those who are afflicted. Horrifying Coot creatures begin to manifest in the region. Plus, magic begins to act stranger in areas more hampered by the Red Curse. A team of adventurers must get to the bottom of this at once! All that is known is that strands of alien magic can be traced back to Skothar.

Return of the Living Dead:

The Cult of Nyela has been tricked from the start, as it turns out Old-as-Dust was truly destined for ascension, despite the Blackmoorian Radiance making him lich-like. The King and Queen of the Carcosan Court ultimately hear his calls, as he massacres and reanimates much of Nyela's cult before becoming an Immortal of Entropy. The Plains tribe tries their best to fend off undead former-comrades and mutants alike, but ultimately falls back in a search for help. The ascension allows the undead in Cootsbane to grow stronger, allowing them and countless experiments to overpower the soldiers and rebels, escaping beyond. Nyela, while devastated by loss, is still powerful in spiritual arts and vows revenge. The rest of the tribe assembles forces, even calling upon the mainland regime itself. Legions of necromancers and fell technologists side with Old-as-Dust, as a war to save the living in Blackmoor (and maybe beyond) begins.

Rise of the Machine:

Abductions on the outskirts of protected Locust Hills territory become more common. Victims return displaying scarification on the head and experience alien memories. In truth, the Machine-God has marked them. Someday, when its control device is fully online, an army of brain-washed will join the legions of cyborgs in an all-out conquest campaign! A.M. will then deploy mechanized minions, to scorch the lands and rebuild them in the artificial intelligence's image. Only then will it be "worthy of the immortals"!

Stop that, it's silly!:

The Immortals beyond Blackmoor have become fed up. Rather than annihilating the nation, at risk of all reality, they hand it over to Ka in the Hollow World. In the end, a majority of the Blackmoorian Immortals concede to this. The Valley of Blacklore Elves is merged with a New Blackmoor, bolstering the weakened elven population. Plans for new campaigns become embarrassing failures, as equipment fails rapidly beyond national borders. In truth, much like Blacklore Valley, the magic of the world now powers the devices. Thus, upon leaving the land, they fail. Relations with the Blackmore Elves waver, due to the stagnant aloofness within the elf culture. The Redwood Elves especially despise Blacklore. The Spell of Preservation furthers all of this gloom. Should Wrath of the Immortals happen, Blackmoor is doomed.

The Beast Within:

Both the Lupins and Rakasta of each respective tribe begin to catch onto what is happening. Likewise, undocumented Lupin and Rakasta have been spotted beyond various registered counties, all not long after disappearances started. Reluctantly, representatives from each tribe assist Blackmoor's government in searching for the culprit. Nyela's cult has grown nervous, fearing failure for her plans.

The Comeback Paradox!:

The Comeback Inn somehow materializes before the time jump. However, it shouldn't have done this. While time should have corrected itself, causing it to fly to the Broken Lands, it somehow stayed and existed in two places at once. For over 30 years, temporal destabilization has built up with few the wiser. While the Inn stopped bringing others to ancient Blackmoor, weird things have happened from inside. Before anyone finalizes major plans, a rift opens from within the building, causing anomalies through time to make their way into Blackmoor. Among them? Ancient enemies like the Serpentine, the Oard and creations of The Egg of Coot! Journey into the rift, Where Time Shatters!

The Great Upheaval, Beast Tribes:

Nyela is defeated (with a chance at living), with Old-as-Dust outright destroyed, as Najimma takes up the role of leadership. Sparks is devastated, unless his adoptive mother lives. Within the Lupins, the traitors have been identified and mostly removed. Even Screams of Torment is held in contempt for his brutal ways. Both aim to win the respects of Blackmoor, in hopes of being properly welcomed. If Allogost dies, there is fear that Queen Andahar won't be ready to accept them though. A gnoll civil war seeks to eradicate supporters of Nyela. However, a new conflict arises; integration vs. tradition. Nyela's technique is still known to some, but only used for humans looking to join a respective tribe.

The Great Upheaval, Ignur's Kingdom:

In time, more attention comes to the isolated and technophobic curiosity. Should Allogost still exist, he'd see it as a farce until finding a reason to erase it. In a new Blackmoor, such a land would likely be avoided. Though, a return to an Andaharan regime would see an olive branch extended to a surviving noble house. Eventually, King Ignur might warm up to some of contemporary society, but will still prefer just enough distance from everything. However, in the event of mutant attacks or destructive gatormen, he'll accept outside help.

The Great Upheaval, Machine-Men:

The Machine-God is Dead! The fight against the Oard was a lie! As Blackmoor continues to grasp with reactions to cyborgs, the Machine-Men too must adapt. Should Allogost still be alive, a potential shift in opinion could make him open up as a cyborg. Convincing the olden minded Leena could be trickier, some fear that they'll have to wait for her successor to be liberal on this matter.

The Great Upheaval, Nation of Blackmoor:

Allogost and his henchmen are dead! After much heated agreement, a temporary council has agreed to instate Queen Andahar as the monarch of this new Blackmoor. Amends are made and propositions for a better future are declared. An era of rebuilding has begun, but the current situation remains rather bleak. The first order of business is removing Blackmoor from its Pocket Dimension hiding place and back into the world at large. This is a time in need of heroes. Imperium sympathizers, dread cultists, mutated abominations and more seek to undo this progress.

The Great Upheaval, Redwoods:

The Elves of the Redwood and beyond still remain at a breaking point. The Druids still want amends. Greater Redwood County is its own independ-

ent state once more, with wartime reparations made for damage caused by the previous regime. Elder Reflecting Glades succumbs to age, asking the help of heroes to ensure a successor brings the land into an age of peace, rather than more war. An elven general, behind Reflecting Glades' back, suggests ironic extremes for dealing with radicals.

The Great Upheaval, The Egg Be Dammed:

An essence of The Egg is found within the dam. Needless to say, the area is either cleansed of all energy or outright destroyed. This has led to a massive crusade against anything Egg of Coot, actively suppressing it where it might emerge. In fact, its base of operations; a scarred wasteland, is savagely attacked till little remains once more. The loss of countless cultists causes worry to die down, for now. Should Allogost's regime survive, the Cootsbane Dam incident becomes a major scandal that badly damages the government's reputation.

The Prince in Crimson:

The King and Queen in Crimson see Allogost as their potential champion. After years of corrupting his sanity and wearing him down, he is ready to join their court. Their dread powers of Entropy give him a task of eliminating his enemies and destruction of all who

dare go against him. His campaign ultimately helps him ascend into the Court after a cohort betrays and kills him. The Carcosan Court becomes the fiercest foe in all of Blackmoor, with cultists and monsters bringing anguish for all!

WAAAAGH!:

The psychic orc raiders of the Coot Wastes have gained an extra helping hand, maybe from the Egg itself! This brings a terrifying revelation, they might learn to properly use their powers! The results could make them nearly unstoppable! This mystery benefactor must be stopped at all costs.

We Come in Peace:

Another transmission is heard from space, also in Thonian. It seems we aren't alone and neither are they. Alien life, not unlike the Beagle Crew, discovers the heavily advanced Blackmoor and breaks through their bubble shield (or if they've returned to the prime material, their lands). What do such aliens want? Why would the Immortals let them in? What are they planning?

Woe to him who is crowned:

Enemies of the King and Queen in Crimson have gradually been neutralized. The forces of Coot have been nullified, but its power has been taken to bring about a new Nightmare. A con-

nection to the Dimension of Nightmare begins to form within Skothar, as terrible creatures begin to manifest in greater numbers. And where there is one doorway, there are many more. The Voyage to Carcosa draws near!

Yarr Harr Fiddle

Dee Dee: The pirate cells of the Rogues' Gallery have been doing their craft quite well. All sorts of contraband and artifacts have been smuggled to the wider world. Irresponsible use of magitech had been a reason for the Great Rain of Fire in the past, but this doesn't bother the morally ambiguous pirate gangs. Some are intelligent enough on instructing buyers, for an extra consultation fee of course.

FURTHER INSPIRATIONS

Novels/Literature -

DC Comics New 52 *Animal Man*, *Magic Inc.*, The *Dark Tower* Saga, 1632 series, *Shannara* series, *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, Various Phillip K. Dick

Tabletop Gaming -

Cyberpunk 2020, Warhammer 40,000

TV/Film -

The X-Files/*Millenium*, *Star Wars*, *Doctor Who* (especially *Battlefield* and *Survival*)

Video Games -

Quake, *Hexen/Heretic*, *Blood*, *Might & Magic* series, *Halo*

REFERENCES

Aaron Allston - "*The Hollow World*" (Blacklore Elves, Ka the Preserver), "*Wrath of the Immortals*" (Fate of the Beagle, Nucleus of the Spheres)

Átila Pires dos Santos - "*Lupin Breeds/History of the Lupins*" (Wolvenfolk, Coyotl, Aardvolk), (*THRESHOLD Magazine* #2)

Brian Rubinfeld - "*Returned Blackmoor*" (Primer on Returned Blackmoor), (*Threshold* 20)/The Egg Be Damned (Cootsbane Dam activity, Conspiracies), (*THRESHOLD Magazine* #22)

Bruce Heard - GAZ3: "*Principalities of Glantri*" (Radiance)/Rakasta of Mystara (Breeds) (*DRAGON Magazine* #247)/Lupins of the Mystara Setting (Breeds) (*Dragon* #237), GAZ7: "*The Northern Reaches*" (Loki)

David J. Ritchie & Dave Arneson - DA module series (Various Blackmoor inspiration)

Graeme Morris - "*Where Chaos Reigns*" (Oard, Time Travel)

James Mishler - "*The Age of Blackmoor*" (Serpentine)

Jeff Grubb - *Spelljammer: Adventures in Space* (Giff, Wildspace, Crystal Spheres)

John Calvin - "*Mystara 2300 BC*" (The Shimmering Lands)

Malco Dalmonte - "*Zugzul*" (The Cult of Zugzul in Nithia)



The Ultimate Discussion Fan Website for Dave Arneson's Blackmoor. Great Forum Discussions and Legendary Play-by-Post Campaigns set in the Original Fantasy Roleplaying Setting.

Visit the Blackmoor forums at <http://blackmoor.mystara.net>

Savage Tide

Adventure Path Characters for



by David Keyser



DUNGEON Magazine issue #139 (October 2006), illustrated by Dan Scott, wherein began the Savage Tide Adventure Path.

FOREWORD

The *Savage Tide* AP is contained in twelve adventures and two campaign background articles within issues #139-#150 of *DUNGEON Magazine*, plus an article series called *Savage Tidings* which appeared in issues #348-#359 of *DRAGON Magazine*.

An adaptation of this adventure path for the Mystara campaign setting was published in two parts in *THRESHOLD Magazine*. The first article detailing this conversion work is found in *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #4, and covered the first eight adventures as well as the Isle of Dread adventure found in *DUNGEON Magazine* #114. The second article focused on the last nine adventures, particularly the adventures which occur on the Isle of Dread and the Outer Planes, and

was published in *THRESHOLD Magazine*, issue #19. This article publishes some new NPCs for the campaign and revises some old NPCs that were published in the first two articles.

3.5 D&D statistics are provided to remain consistent with the adventures of the *Savage Tide* AP.

DUNGEON MAGAZINE #146

Adventure #8:
Serpents of Scuttle Cove**Crimson Fleet Pirate Captain**

The Crimson Fleet Lemorian baldandar pirate captain first appeared in *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #4 page 139 to be used in the Final Battle of Farshore. If he survived against the PCs, this illusionist spellcaster can return as another adversary in the final confrontation with the Crimson Fleet pirates in this adventure. The baldandar, having advanced further as an illusionist, can be either another resident on The Wreck, or captaining a Crimson Fleet ship who returns to the Crimson Fleet home base with a troop of pirate reinforcements after the PCs have attacked the home base at least once.

If used in another campaign, this baldandar pirate captain will use his illusions to hide his ship along various shipping lanes waiting for an unguarded prize to venture along. He relies on contacts at various ports for tips on ship cargos and destinations. Authorities in several nations offer a substantial reward for his capture.

**CRIMSON FLEET PIRATE CAPTAIN**

Lemorian Baldandar illusionist 9 CR 18
NE Medium Outsider

Init +10, **Senses:** Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Thyatian

AC 21, **touch** 16, **flat-footed** 15 (+6 Dex, +5 Natural Armor)

hp 85 (6d8+6+9d4+9) (15 HD);

DR 10/magic

Immune poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 25

Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

Speed 40ft, fly 40ft

Melee: 1 claw +14 (1d8+2)

Full attack: 2 claws +14 (1d8+2) and Bite +12 (1d6+1 plus poison) and Tail Sting +12 (1d6+1 plus poison)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8, **Grp** +10

Atk Options smite good 1/day(+15 damage)

Special Actions Illusion

Abilities Str 15, Dex 22, Con 12,
Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 20

SQ: Feats Boost Spell-Like Ability¹ (confusion), Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus(illusion), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +28, Escape Artist +10, Hide +15, Intimidate +12, Knowledge(arcana) +18, Listen +10, Profession(sailor) +17, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +24(+26 for illusions), Spot +10, Survival +7, Use Rope +5(+7 for bindings)

Possessions: wand of lightning (CL 6th) (9 charges), wand of magic missile (CL 3rd) (12 charges), 2 potions of cure serious wounds

¹ See "Book of Vile Darkness", p47

Spells Prepared:

(CL 9th, +14 touch, +14 ranged touch)

5th level (DC 19) - cone of cold, seeming (DC 20)

4th level (DC 18) – crushing despair, dimension door, phantasmal killer (DC 19), rainbow pattern (DC 19)

3rd level (DC 17) – displacement, dispel magic(x2), fireball, magic circle against good

2nd level (DC 16) – blur, mirror image(x2), scorching ray, see invisibility, touch of idiocy

1st level (DC 15) - charm person, color spray (DC 16), protection from good, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp

0th level (DC 14) - dancing lights, daze, ghost sound, message

Baldandar Spell-Like Abilities: (CL 15th)

At will - fly, invisibility

1/day - baleful polymorph (DC 20), confusion (DC 21), magic jar (DC 20), polymorph

Lemorian Spell-Like Abilities: (CL 15th)

3/day - charm monster (DC 19), command (DC 16), unholy aura (DC 23)

1/day - dominate person (DC 20), fear (DC 19), suggestion (DC 18), mass charm monster (DC 23), mass suggestion (DC 21), unhallow

Illusion (Sp): At will and as a standard action, a baldandar can duplicate the effects of the Veil, Mirage Arcana, and Persistent Image spells. The illusions last as long as the baldandar concentrates, and for ten minutes after it stops concentrating. In all other respects, these effects are treated as if cast by a 15th level sorcerer

Poison (Ex): Any creature bitten by a baldandar must make a Fortitude save vs DC 14 (Con based) or fall unconscious for 10-40 minutes. If hit by its poisonous stinger a target must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or suffer the Wisdom damage explained in the adventure under the Lemorian entry.²

² See DUNGEON Magazine #146, p66

Errata

Page 52-53: The Leech's special abilities Touch of Fear(Su) and Hypnosis(Sp) are Thrall of Demogorgon abilities which have a DC save based on both thrall class level AND Charisma bonus. So these two abilities have a DC 21 Will save and not the DC 16 Will save listed. If using the *DRAGON* Magazine #357 update to the Thrall of Demogorgon prestige class, where the Will save table is upgraded from Poor to Good progression, the Leech's Will save improves from +19 to +22.

Page 64: For Captain Longshanks Le'Shiv and the other Lemorian pirate captains, the caster level for their spell-like abilities is 10th level, not the 8th level listed. Under Atk Options, add smite good 1/day (+10 damage). Also, their poison is a DC 18 Fortitude save, not DC 17.

Page 65: Vzorthys, the fiendish eye of the deep has an Initiative of +4, not +5. The DC for the Baleful Flash should be 28, not 34. A baseline eye of the deep gets a DC 20 baseline for Baleful Flash and also uses the Ability Focus(Baleful Flash) feat for a standard DC 22 Fortitude save. Vzorthys has an additional +6 Constitution modifier above the standard eye of the deep, so his Baleful Flash is a DC 28 Fortitude save. His eye rays have a 18 (baseline) + 1 (Charisma increase) + 2 (Ability Focus(eye rays)) = DC 21 Reflex/Will save. His claw attacks should be +27 to hit. And his constriction damage when grappling to account for his larger size is 3d6+11 damage.

Page 69: Should the Demogorgon statue explode, it states, "All creatures in the room must make a DC 15 Reflex save or fall through the hole, plummeting 60 feet to the deck of the Fortitude below (area E1)."

The Anger is only 40 feet up the tree, while the Two-Faced Wretch is the ship that is 60 feet up. So this is not a sixty foot drop, the PCs are below deck on the Anger and if they fall to the deck of the Fortitude they are still above ground level. At most this is a twenty or thirty foot drop, so you can adjust falling damage accordingly.

Page 70: Cold Captain Wyther's attack entries without Power Attack is +25 to hit with his bastard sword, and +22 to hit with his dagger. So a 3 point Power Attack lowers his attack bonus to +22 and +19 respectively. His damage bonus for the bastard sword is correct, but his dagger with a 3 point Power Attack is 1d4+10 damage (as long as he is doing slashing and not piercing damage), and his tail sting attack would do 1d6+7 damage with a 3 point Power Attack. His poison is a DC 24 Fortitude save, not the 21 listed. Lastly, he is listed as having a cloak of protection +4 but the correct item is a cloak of resistance +4.

Page 73-74: The yuan-ti anathema is a Huge creature wielding a falchion two-handed, so it does 3d6+13 damage per attack with the weapon. The text states that "A group of six Seventh Coil assassins stay here with their leader" but the stat line only lists 3 Seventh Coil Assassins, so choose an appropriate number.

Page 74-75: The Orlath's secondary eleven +1 scimitar attacks do 1d8+3 plus 1 vile damage each, not 1d8+2. He gets +2 damage bonus for half his strength and +1 damage bonus for the magic weapon.

DUNGEON MAGAZINE #147

Adventure #9: Into the Maw

Half-Fiend Cambion Guards

There is a small mention on page 82 of this adventure that many of the original guards and jailors at the prison of Divided Ire were half-fiend cambions. For expanding this adventure, here are three different NPC high-level cambion jailors that may still be found in the prison having managed to survive. These NPC statistic blocks use for a baseline the 3.5 D&D version of the cambion published in the adventure Expedition to the Demonweb Pits, which is also available for free in sipped format from the [Wizards of the Coast website](#). The special abilities of the cambion are described here for convenience.

Aligned Strike: A cambion's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as chaotic-aligned and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Alternate Form (Su): A cambion can assume the form of a specific Medium humanoid (typically a human, drow, elf, aasimar, tiefling, githyanki, githzerai, marshall, or gnoll, but sometimes a goblinoid) as a standard action once per day. This ability functions as a polymorph spell cast on itself as a 6th-level caster, except a cambion does not regain hit points for changing form and can assume only the form of that specific creature. A cambion can remain in its humanoid form until it chooses to return to its natural form.

Silent Metal (Ex): A cambion has no armor check penalty on Hide and Move Silently checks.

Cambion Elite Guard

The most common cambions in the prison were elite soldiers well trained in unarmed fighting, swordplay and the ballista. If any of these elite cambion guards remain, they can still be found in service to the prison warden Kululblax, though some may have defected to Lillianth due to her legendary reputation and leadership feats. Both factions may still have some functioning light or heavy ballistae, most likely deployed in location 9 and/or location 25.

If used in another campaign, these soldiers are likely bodyguards to a powerful wizard or part of an elite strike force for an evil army.



CAMBION FIGHTER 10 CR 15

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 23, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 20; (+3 Dex, +8 armor, +2 natural)

hp 175 (16 HD); **DR** 5/good or magic

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 21

Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft.

Melee: longsword +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+10/17-20)

Ranged: mwk barbed javelin +20 (1d10+5/19-20) (+1 to hit and damage within 30 feet)

Ranged: ballista shot +20 (3d8+2/17-20) (+1 to hit and damage within 30 feet)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +16; **Grp** +25

Atk Options aligned strike (chaotic, evil)

Special Actions alternate form

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 4

SQ silent metal

Feats: Ballista Proficiency, Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Critical(ballista), Improved Critical(longsword), Improved Grapple, Iron Will, Melee Weapon Mastery(slashing), Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus(ballista), Weapon Focus(longsword), Weapon Specialization(ballista), Weapon Specialization(longsword)

Skills: Balance +7, Climb +10, Diplomacy -1, Gather Information +6, Hide +18, Jump +3, Knowledge (local) +10, Listen +8, Move

Silently +18, Sense Motive +14, Spot +8, Tumble +14

Possessions mwk breastplate, heavy steel shield +1, 4 mwk barbed javelin, longsword +1, potion of haste, potion of heroism, potion of bull's strength, potion of bear's endurance

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will – mirror image

7/day – levitate

Cambion Wizard Jailor

Those few cambions blessed with high intelligence are often trained as wizards, and a few of these individuals served as jailors in the prison of Divided Ire. Today only one or two at most remain. Any that still survive likely serve Lillianth, as they blame the prison warden for the complete breakdown at the prison and deem Kululblax no longer worthy of loyalty and service.

If used in another campaign, a cambion wizard is likely to try and carve out a small realm in one of the many wildlands or borderlands that lie in the Known World or Savage Coast.



CAMBION WIZARD 10 CR 15

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 23, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 20; (+3 Dex, +4 mage armor, +4 shield bonus, +2 natural)

hp 122 (16 HD); **DR** 5/good or magic

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 21

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13

Speed 40 ft.

Melee: Mwk quarterstaff +14/+9/+4 (1d6+2/x2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +13

Atk Options aligned strike (chaotic, evil),

Special Actions alternate form

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 8, Cha 4

SQ silent metal

Feats: Arcane Thesis³(hailstones), Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Practiced Spellcaster, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus(evocation), Spell Penetration

Skills Balance +7, Bluff +7, Climb +10, Concentration +16, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +8, Hide +20, Jump +7, Knowledge Arcana +17, Knowledge (local) +13, Listen +8, Move Silently +20, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +17, Spot +8, Tumble +14

Possessions: mwk quarterstaff, potion of blur, scroll of wall of force

³ See "Player's Handbook II", p74-75

Wizard spells: (CL 14th, +13 touch, +14 ranged touch)

5th level (2/day) (DC 19): cone of cold(DC 20), lesser orb of acid(quickened)

4th level (4/day) (DC 18): enervation, freedom of movement, orb of acid⁴, stone-skin

3rd level (4/day) (DC 17): hailstones⁵(CL 16th, DC 18), haste, heroism, vampiric touch

2nd level (5/day) (DC 16): cat's grace, false life, fox's cunning, bear's endurance, see invisibility

1st level (5/day) (DC 15): lesser orb of acid⁶, mage armor, magic missile, protection from good, shield

0th level (4/day) – acid splash(x2), ray of frost(x2)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will – mirror image

7/day – levitate

Fiendish rat familiar (hp 61)

Strzak, Divided Ire's Executioner

Strzak served as executioner to the prison warden Kululblax on Divided Ire for a few years before prisoners began to break out and take over sections of the prison. Survival became Strzak's only focus, avoiding not only the wrath of prisoners seeking revenge but also the warden's frequent rages. With the arrival of S'Sharra, Strzak saw an opportunity and a way out. She accepted his offer of allegiance while ordering him to serve as her spy. He may be found either with Kululblax or with S'Sharra. He will attempt to set up flank attacks against PCs engaged with either

demon. Should a battle between the PCs involve Kululblax and S'Sharra, Strzak may take an opportunity to sneak attack Kululblax if the warden appears to be facing defeat.

If used on Mystara, Strzak has been hired to start a war between two neighboring nations, using his alternate form for years to work his way up to become a high-ranked adviser in the government of each nation. His craven nature does give PCs an opportunity to avert the impending war if they can locate his copious notes that he diligently maintains for both blackmail and bargaining purposes.

CAMBION ASSASSIN 10 CR 15

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 22, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 16; uncanny dodge, improved uncanny dodge (+5 Dex, +5 armor, +2 natural)

hp 145 (16 HD); **DR** 5/good or magic

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 21

Fort +11, **Ref** +17, **Will** +13

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 keen shortsword +20/+15/+10 (1d8+6/17-20)

Ranged barbed javelin +18 (1d10+2/19-20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +15

Atk Options aligned strike (chaotic, evil), sneak attack 5d6+10

Special Actions alternate form, hide in plain sight

⁴ See "Spell Compendium", p150

⁵ See "Spell Compendium", p109

⁶ See "Miniatures Handbook", p33

Abilities Str 14, Dex 20, Con 16,
Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 4

SQ silent metal

Feats: Combat Expertise, Craven⁷(-2 to saves against fear effects), Improved Feint, Iron Will, Telling Blow⁸, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +7, Bluff +11, Climb +11, Diplomacy -1, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +18, Gather Information +7, Hide +19, Jump +4, Knowledge (local) +10, Listen +8, Move Silently +19, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Tumble +15, Use Magic Device +11

Possessions: +2 keen short sword, 4 mwk barbed javelin, crystal mask of mind armor, cloak of minor displacement, +1 mithral chain shirt

Spells Prepared: (CL 10th) (10% arcane failure chance)

4th level (3/day) (DC 16): ferocity of sanguine rage⁹, freedom of movement, greater invisibility

3rd level (3/day) (DC 15): false life, find the gap¹⁰, magic circle against good

2nd level (4/day) (DC 14): cat's grace, fox's cunning, wraithstrike¹¹, undetectable alignment

1st level (4/day) (DC 13): blade of blood¹², critical strike¹³(x2), true strike

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will – mirror image

7/day – levitate

Cassiel, Half-Celestial Halfling/Hin

Cassiel was born on the outer plane of the High Hero Nob Nar¹⁴. While she has never been to Mystara and the Five Shires, her mother was a native of the Shires and told her many tales about her home. Cassiel was part of a band that adventured in the outer planes until she was captured in an ambush that saw several of her companions slain.

Her captor was a general under Demogorgon's command, and the demon only spared her because he found her singing voice pleasing. When the general was called away for a new campaign, he decided to place her and what remained of her belongings in Divided Ire until he could return. Cassiel was forgotten after the general was destroyed on the battlefield. Cassiel arrived only shortly before the first major prison breakdown and loss of control, and was rescued by Saureya¹⁵ when the astral deva broke out of his cell. Infatuated by his presence and grateful for being rescued, Cassiel swore her allegiance to Saureya and remains with him in the throne room found at Location 31 of the prison of Divided Ire.

Since then Cassiel has grown uneasy with Saureya's dual nature and knows that he has fallen. But her oath of loyalty and inability to escape the prison leaves her with no choice but to stay and serve the astral deva. When the PCs meet Saureya, they may find that they can sway Cassiel to their side with stories or displays of heroism. If Saureya is slain, Cassiel will surrender and ally with them for the remainder of the adventure. She can be persuaded to accom-

⁷ See "Champions of Ruin", p17

⁸ See "Player's Handbook II", p83

⁹ See "Dragon Magic", p67

¹⁰ See "Spell Compendium", p91

¹¹ See "Spell Compendium", p243

¹² See "Player's Handbook II", p103

¹³ See "Spell Compendium", p56

¹⁴ See GAZ8: "The Five Shires"

¹⁵ See Dungeon Magazine #147, p80



Cassiel, designed by Kevin Simonich
with <https://www.heroforge.com/>

pany the PCs back to Mystara with a DC 35 Diplomacy check, and a +5 circumstance bonus is granted to the check if they tell her stories about their life on Mystara.

**FEMALE HALFLING HALF-CELESTIAL BARD
8/LYRIC THAUMATURGE¹⁶ 6 CR 17**

CG Small outsider (chaotic, good, extraplanar)
Init +9; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +7,
Spot +7

Languages Common, Halfling, Abyssal,
Infernal, Celestial

AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 19; (+1 size, +5
Dex, +1 natural, +2 armor)
hp 94 (14 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune disease

¹⁶ See "Complete Arcane", p67

Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 24
Fort +7 (+11 vs poison), **Ref** +17, **Will** +13

Speed 20 ft, fly 40 ft (good)

Ranged: halfling warsling +19/+14
(1d6+2/x4) (range increment 50 ft)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +6

Atk Options smite evil 1/day (+14 damage)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 20, Con 14,
Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 24

SQ bardic knowledge +13, bardic music
(14/day), sonic might

Feats: Captivating Melody, Improved Initiative,
Melodic Casting, Point Blank Shot,
Exotic Weapon Proficiency (halfling
warsling), Exotic Weapon
Proficiency(skiprock), Song of the Heart

Skills Bluff +24, Climb +2, Diplomacy +24, Gather Information +18, Jump +2, Knowledge Arcana +17, Knowledge(arcana) +20, Knowledge(history) +8, Knowledge (planes) +20, Listen +15, Move Silently +7, Perform(singing) +24, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +20, Spot +8, Tumble +14
Possessions: mwk halfling warsling¹⁷, nine +2 skiprocks¹⁸, leather armor

Bard spells: (CL 14th, +10 touch, +15 ranged touch)

5th level (3/day) (DC 22): cacophonic burst¹⁹, greater dispel magic, greater heroism

4th level (5/day) (DC 21): dimensional anchor, dimension door, freedom of movement, greater invisibility, shout

3rd level (6/day) (DC 20): cure serious wounds, good hope, haste, resonating bolt²⁰, slow

2nd level (6/day) (DC 19): alter self, blur, glitterdust, mirror image, see invisibility

1st level (6/day) (DC 18): cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, inspirational boost²¹, magic missile, silent image

0th level (4/day) – detect magic, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

At will – daylight

3/day – holy aura (DC 25), protection from evil
 1/day – aid, bless, cure serious wounds, detect evil, dispel evil (DC 22), hallow (DC 22), holy smite (DC 21), holy word (DC 24), neutralize poison, remove disease

Errata

Page 54: Azael's Diplomacy should be +21 because he gets synergy bonuses for his ranks in both Bluff and Sense Motive.

Page 62: The saves of the Greater Lemorian Golem should be Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +11; flat-footed AC should be 25, not 27. Melee attack damage is incorrect, each tentacle does a baseline 3d6+13 damage, so the listed 5 point power attack should be 3d6+18 damage.

Page 63: S'Sharra should have an AC of 42, not 41, due to her Two Weapon Defense feat.

Page 73-74: Lynarra should be CR 19 at a minimum, not CR17. Her flat-footed AC is 32, not 27; claw attack is +19, not +14. A sword of life stealing is a longsword, not a shortsword, but she is using her Weapon Finesse feat. The easiest fix is to make her weapon a +2 short sword of life stealing that does 1d6+2 damage and change her Improved Critical feat from longsword to short sword.

Page 75-76: Lillianth should have a +25 Will save with unholy aura, not +23, due to her Iron Will feat.

Page 77 : The shadows of Socothbenoth have an Initiative of +13 factoring in their Improved Initiative feat. Their Base Attack Bonus (BAB) and Grapple are +15, making their claw attacks +24 touch and rake attacks +19 touch.

Page 78 : The caster level for Vanthus' spell-like abilities is 15, not 12. His Swim score should be +9 accounting for 3 skill ranks, a +8 Strength bonus and a -2 armor check penalty. His skill scores don't account for synergies, so you can add +4 to his Diplomacy checks and +2 to his Balance, Intimidate, Jump and Tumble checks.

¹⁷ See "Races of Faerun", p188

¹⁸ See "Arms and Equipment Guide", p9

¹⁹ See "Spell Compendium", p41

²⁰ See "Complete Arcane", p121

²¹ See "Spell Compendium", p124

DUNGEON MAGAZINE #148

Adventure #10: Wells of Darkness

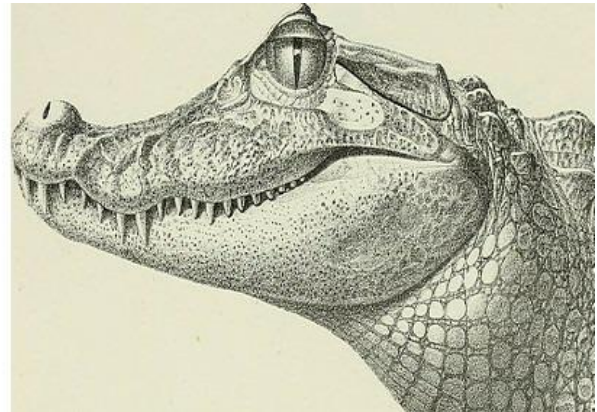
Jaga Gena, Priestess and Leader of Gatormen Assassin Squad

Jaga Gena is an NPC introduced in *THRESHOLD Magazine* #19, pages 175-177, for the Savage Tide Adventure Path. Here she is provided with an alternate stat block providing a different encounter challenge for PCs. For more information on her background in the Savage Coast and her motivations, see *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #19.

Jaga will cast the following spells before combat on herself: entropic shield, shield of faith, owl's wisdom, demon wings, magic vestment, freedom of movement, greater magic weapon, and repulsion, as well as greater spell immunity if she knows of a high-level spell the PCs prefer to use. She will also drink her potion of haste. These spells and the potion are already reflected in her stat block below. She will also cast bull's strength on her companions (barbarian, binder, fighter), eagle's splendor on the binder, and shield of faith (barbarian, fighter) as well as unholy aura on her entire team. In the first round of combat, she prefers to cast a quickened prayer as a swift action followed up by an offensive spell in the same round. If forced into melee she may cast divine power if no one can assist her, which is not included in the stat block below.

Jaga will make use of her Divine Metamagic²² feat to convert her five turn

undead uses per day to either Quicken or Empower one or more of her high-level spells. She can empower two spells (consuming two uses each) or quicken one spell (consuming four uses). Divine Shield²³ also provides a way to convert a single turn undead use into a bonus to her shield equal to her Charisma bonus.



JAGA GENA, PRIESTESS AND LEADER OF GATORMEN ASSASSIN SQUAD CR 20

Female Gurrash(Gatorman) cleric of Demogorgon 18

CE Medium humanoid(reptilian)

Init +3; **Senses:** Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages: Shazak, Ator, Common, Abyssal

AC 36, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 33; (-1 Dex, +1 haste, +4 natural, +7 armor, +4 magical vestment, +4 shield(+6 w/Divine Shield), +5 deflection)

hp 172 (21d8+42) (21 HD);

SR 30 (if casting spell resistance), or 25 vs good spells and spells cast by good creatures

Resist electricity 5

Fort +18, **Ref** +11, **Will** +20 (+22 w/owl's wisdom) (includes haste, unholy aura)

²² See "Complete Divine", p80

²³ See "Complete Warrior", p106

Speed 55 ft (25 ft when not hasted)
Melee : +4 mwk large red steel heavy mace +23(and +23 when hasted)/+18/+13 (2d6+7/20x2) and tail slap +14 (1d8+1)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
BAB +15; **Grp** +22
Atk Options: Turn Fire Creatures (+2 bonus), Rebuke Water Creatures (+2 bonus)

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 22(18 without owl's wisdom), Cha 14
SQ:

Feats: Divine Metamagic, Divine Shield, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus(necromancy), Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Spell Focus(evocation), Spell Focus(necromancy)

Skills: Balance +2, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +13, Knowledge(history) +7, Knowledge(planes) +5, Knowledge(religion) +10, Listen +9, Spellcraft +5, Spot +9, Survival +11(+13 other planes), Swim +8 (does not factor in Armor Check Penalty of -7)

Possessions: Masterwork Red Steel Half-plate, Masterwork Heavy Red Steel Shield +2, Masterwork Oversized(Large) Red Steel Heavy Mace, Potion of Cure Serious Wounds, Potion of Haste

Spells Memorized: (CL 18th, +18 touch, +14 ranged touch)

9th level (3/day)(DC 25/23) – energy drain(DC 27/25), gate^d, implosion(DC 26/24)

8th level (4/day)(DC 24/22) – antimagic field, greater spell immunity, horrid wilting^d(DC 26/24), unholy aura

7th level (4/day)(DC 23/21) – acid fog^d, destruction(DC 25/23), prayer(quickened), repulsion

6th level (5/day)(DC 22/20) – blade barrier(23/21), cone of cold^d(DC 23/21),

greater dispel magic, harm(DC 24/22), word of recall

5th level (5/day)(DC 21/19) – bane(quickened, DC 17/15), flame strike(DC 22/20), ice storm^d(DC 22/20) slay living(DC 23/21), spell resistance

4th level (7/day) – dimensional anchor^d, divine power, freedom of movement, greater magic weapon, spell immunity(x3)

3rd level (7/day) – demon wings^{d24}, dispel magic, invisibility purge, magic vestment, protection from energy(x2), sticks to snakes²⁵

2nd level (7/day)(DC 18/16) – bull's strength(x3), eagle's splendor, fog cloud^d, owl's wisdom, silence

1st level (7/day)(DC 17/15) – cure light wounds(x2), entropic shield, obscuring mist^d, shield of faith(x3)

0 level (6/day) – detect magic, guidance, resistance(x4)

d = domain spell; Domains: Demonic, Water
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)

1/day - vitality of the Great One(fast healing 1 for 23 rounds)

Enrage (Ex): Gurrash are prone to fits of violence when frustrated or wounded.

Outside of combat, a gurrash must make a Wisdom check vs DC 16 when in frustrating or unfamiliar circumstances. If failed, the gurrash flies into a rage, breaking things, threatening all around it, and possibly attacking the provoker. After 2 rounds, a second Wisdom check is made- if successful, the gurrash rants for another 3 rounds before calming down; if failed, the gurrash attacks the object of its frustration.

24 See "Fiendish Codex I : Hordes of the Abyss", p92

25 See DRAGON Magazine #317, p71

Jaga Gena may also become enraged by taking more than 40 points of damage in a single attack. She must make a Wisdom check vs DC18 or become enraged. If enraged while in combat (whether by damage or from frustration), she rages like a 3rd level barbarian.

In a combat rage, a gurrash temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength, a +4 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but he takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases its hit points by 2 points per HD, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when his Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.) While raging, a gurrash cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities that require patience or concentration, nor can she cast spells or activate magic items that require a command word, a spell trigger (such as a wand), or spell completion (such as a scroll) to function. He can use any feat he has except Combat Expertise, item creation feats, and metamagic feats. A fit of rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the gurrash's (newly improved) Constitution modifier. A gurrash cannot prematurely end his rage- only the death of its target or the normal ending can end it. At the end of the rage, the gurrash loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength, -2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a gurrash hits with both of its claws, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. No initial touch attack is required. Unless otherwise noted, improved grab works only against opponents at least Medium size or smaller than the gurrash.

Tail Slap (Ex): A gurrash may make a tail attack against any creature behind it as a secondary attack. If not using facing, the gurrash may make a tail attack against any flanking opponent it does not attack with its other weapons. The tail slap inflicts 1d8 damage.

Powerful Build (Ex): A gurrash is treated as one-size larger with regards to Bull Rush, Trip, Grapple, etc., and may use weapons designed for creatures one size larger.

Makuu Gena, Flame Inheritor

Makuu Gena is another NPC introduced in *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #19, pages 180-182, for the Savage Tide Adventure Path and a member of Jaga Gena's team. Here he is provided with an alternate stat block providing a different encounter challenge for PCs. For more information on his background in the Savage Coast, see *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #19.

Just before the fight begins, Makuu will invoke his legacies cinnabryl skin, heroism and turtle shell and then drink his potion of haste. Makuu will move to block any opponents trying to reach his sister. He always uses Combat Expertise to take advantage of his Riposte ability. He will try to engage more than one opponent in order to make use of Elusive Target, even letting opponents flank him.

MAKUU GENA, FLAME INHERITOR, CR 20
Male Gurrash(Gatorman) fighter 18
NE Medium humanoid(reptilian)
Init +6; **Senses**: Listen +3, Spot +4
Languages: Shazak, Ator, Common, Abyssal

AC 48, **touch** 27, **flat-footed** 43; (+2 Dex²⁶, +1 haste, +4 natural, +5 barkskin, +11 armor, +7 shield, +5 deflection, +2 Combat Expertise), Dodge, Mobility, Elusive Target
hp 190 (3d8 + 18d10 + 42) (21 HD); **DR** 2/red steel

SR 25 vs good spells and spells cast by good creatures

Resist electricity 5

Fort +20, **Ref** +16, **Will** +14 (includes haste, heroism, unholy aura)

Speed 55 ft (25 ft when not hasted)

Melee : (Using 2 points of Combat Expertise, heroism) +3 large red steel bastard sword +33(and +33 when hasted)/+28/+23/+18 (2d8+13/17-20x3) and tail slap +22 (1d8+3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

BAB +20; **Grp** +30

Atk Options: Power Attack, Riposte

Special Actions (Su): Cinnabryl skin (1/day), Power Storing (1/day)

Abilities: Str 22(18 without bull's strength), Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ: Elusive Target

Feats: Combat Expertise, Dodge, Elusive Target²⁷, Exotic Weapon Proficiency(large bastard sword), Improved Critical(large bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Inheritor Feat²⁸(x4), Melee Weapon Mastery²⁹(slashing), Mobility, Power Attack,

Riposte³⁰, Shield Specialization³¹(heavy steel shield), Shield Ward³², Weapon Focus(large bastard sword), Weapon Specialization(large bastard sword)
Skills: Balance +8, Intimidate +22, Jump +27, Listen +6, Spellcraft +1, Spot +2, Survival +6, Swim +17

Possessions: Red Steel Full Plate +3, Heavy Red Steel Shield +4, Oversized(Large) Red Steel Bastard Sword +3, Potion of Cure Serious Wounds, Potion of Haste, Vial of Crimson Essence³³

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th)

2/day – turtle shell(casts barkskin)

1/day - heroism³⁴, vitality of the Great One(fast healing 1 for 23 rounds)

Cinnabryl skin (Su): Makku gains DR 2/red steel for a duration of 18 minutes (1 minute/level).

Enrage (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry, but for Makuu it takes 50hp of damage in a single blow to trigger the need to make a DC 18 Wisdom check.

Improved Grab (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry.

Tail Slap (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry.

Powerful Build (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry.

Power Storing (Su): If Makuu is targeted by a damaging spell, he may, as an immediate action, instantly absorb the magical energy up to a certain limit (1 HD/level) and take no damage from the absorbed HD. Makuu may then release the absorbed

26 This assumes that red steel has similar properties to mithral in terms of max Dexterity bonus and armor check penalty, extrapolating from DRAGON Magazine #315, p71-72

27 See "Complete Warrior", p110

28 See DRAGON Magazine #315, p71

29 See "Player's Handbook II", p81

30 See DRAGON Compendium Volume 1, p105

31 See "Player's Handbook II", p82

32 ibid

33 See DRAGON Magazine #315, p71

34 This spell-like ability is a Savage Coast legacy, see "Savage Coast Campaign Book" : Characters of the Savage Coast, p73

magical energy when striking with a red steel weapon. The energy remains stored for up to one hour, at which point the energy harmlessly dissipates if not released. For Makuu, up to 18HD of magical damage may be absorbed. When releasing the energy with a red steel weapon, Makuu gains a damage bonus of +1hp per HD of damage absorbed. The type of damage is the same as the energy type of the spell, if any. Power Storing is a Savage Coast legacy³⁵ which drains Charisma.

Big Red, Gatorman Barbarian and Frenzied Berserker

Big Red is another NPC introduced in *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #19, pages 182-183, for the Savage Tide Adventure Path and a member of Jaga Gena's team. Here he is provided with an alternate stat block providing a different encounter challenge for PCs. For more information on his background in the Savage Coast, see *THRESHOLD Magazine* issue #19.

Just before the fight begins, Big Red will invoke his aid ability to increase his hit points and then cast enlarge person from his ring. This increases his size to Large, thereby increasing his Space and Reach to 10 feet each. It also increases his Strength by 2 and decreases his Dexterity and AC by 2 each. He enters combat with rage and frenzy on the next round. Should he come out of his rage while the combat is still going on, he will spend the next round invoking his second use of aid. He will then resume combat. Big Red prefers to close with arcane or divine spellcasters to take advantage of his reach and Mage Slayer feat.

³⁵ See *DRAGON Magazine* #172, p46

BIG RED, CR 20

Male Gurrash(Gatorman) barbarian

13/frenzied berserker³⁶ 5

NE Medium humanoid(reptilian)

Init +7; **Senses:** Listen +6, Spot +2

Languages: Ator

AC 31, touch 18, flat-footed 28; (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +9 armor, +5 deflection, -2 AC while Large size, -2 AC while raging, -4 AC while frenzied), uncanny dodge, improved uncanny dodge

hp 172/235 (3d8 + 18d12 + 42 + 63(rage)) (21 HD); **DR** 3/-

SR 25 vs good spells and spells cast by good creatures

Resist electricity 5

Fort +22, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12 (+15 while raging) (includes unholy aura)

Speed 40 ft

Melee : (Using 4 points of improved power attack³⁷)

+2 large executioner's mace³⁸ +30(and +30 when frenzied)/+25/+20/+15 (3d6+32/19-20x3) and tail slap +27 (1d8+12)

(while Large size and no power attack) +2 large executioner's mace +34(and +34 when frenzied)/+29/+24/+19 (4d6+21/19-20x3) and tail slap +27 (1d8+6)

BAB +20; **Grp** +33 (+38 while Large size)

Atk Options: Improved Power Attack, Supreme Cleave³⁹

Special Actions(Ex): Rage (4/day), Frenzy⁴⁰ (3/day)

Abilities: Str 34(18 without bull's strength, rage, frenzy), Dex 16, Con 21(15 without rage), Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 12

³⁶ See "Complete Warrior", p34

³⁷ See "Complete Warrior", p34

³⁸ See *DRAGON Magazine* #135, p61

³⁹ See "Complete Warrior", p34

⁴⁰ Ibid

SQ: Deathless Frenzy⁴¹, Trap Sense +4
Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Destructive Rage⁴², Diehard, Improved Critical (executioner's mace), Improved Initiative, Intimidating Rage⁴³, Mage Slayer⁴⁴, Power Attack

Skills: Balance +8, Intimidate +22, Jump +27, Listen +6, Spellcraft +1, Spot +2, Survival +6, Swim +17

Possessions: Red Steel Breastplate +4, Masterwork Large Red Steel Executioner's Mace +2, Ring of Minor Spell Storing (enlarge person)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

2/day - aid⁴⁵

Enrage (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry, but this ability is not applicable while Big Red is in a barbarian rage and/or frenzy. Should the encounter continue even after Big Red's barbarian rage and frenzy expires, he will automatically fail this Wisdom check, but he needs to take 50hp of damage in a single blow to succumb once again to this rage. Keep in mind this rage is not as powerful as his barbarian Greater Rage.

Improved Grab (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry.

Tail Slap (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry.

Powerful Build (Ex): See Jaga Gena entry.

DRAGON MAGAZINE #356

Savage Tidings : Into the Abyss

Errata

Page 69: The Demonhair Shirt mimics the rage and frenzy abilities, but only grants a +6 bonus to Strength with no Constitution modifier. However, the magic item description includes this sentence, "Once activated, the demonic fury lasts for a number of rounds equal to your improved Constitution bonus." Based on this, the Demonhair Shirt should also grant a +6 profane bonus to Constitution.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² See "Complete Warrior", p97

⁴³ See "Complete Warrior", p102

⁴⁴ See "Complete Arcane", p81

⁴⁵ This spell-like ability is a Savage Coast legacy, see "Savage Coast Campaign Book" : Characters of the Savage Coast, p73

Deadly Deceivers

by
Michael
Sutherland



Anavra

Appearances can be deceiving. In the wilds of Mystara, deception can be deadly. This article describes individuals whose primary strength lies in the mask used to hide their intentions. There are many who are more powerful, but few who can match their ability to deceive. Such characters can make a campaign memorable as long held secrets are revealed to stunned players.

Three personalities are presented here. The first, Anavra, shaped by civilization's cruelty and greed. The second, Salvius, shaped by civilization's love and mercy. Finally, The Knife, a being of Evil, intent on destroying Good.

ANAVRA THE LIGHT OF SHINING HILL

Appearances

Anavra is a young magic user in her late teens with short, blonde hair and a serious manner. Her pale features are marked by a port-wine coloured scar covering the left side of her face, neck and shoulder. These marks fail to disguise the piercing intelligence behind her brown eyes.

She is well-known amongst those who frequent the roads of western Darokin. Her home is a unique tower that is infused with

hundreds of castings of *continual light*. The reason for the stunning display lies not in some misplaced sense of pride or arrogance in Anavra; she is utterly terrified of the dark.

Shining Hill is a short distance from the city of Akesoli, its soft yellow light clearly visible after sundown by residents at high vantage points, and by sailors on Lake Amsorak. It stands atop a delightful hill covered in roaming fields of beautiful honeysuckle flowers. Wildlife, particularly rabbits, abound here. Travellers from neighbouring Glantri and the Atruaghin Plateau often stop by to speak with the kindly but tormented Lady of Shining Hill.

On good days Lady Anavra can often be found sitting in the shade of an oak tree, quietly enjoying the idyllic landscape. Folk know Anavra to be humourless and grave, but nonetheless a welcoming and gracious host. She shows great concern for others, speaking with visitors for hours about what occurs in the wider world. In exchange for information, travellers are rewarded with an attentive listener, good food, and coin.

No lie or colourful embellishment escapes her notice, and she politely discourages falsehood. She is utterly obsessed with news of unscrupulous persons. Such news attracts more of her coin, and particularly vile tales anger her enough that the scar on her face seems to magically radiate heat. It is as if she relives some past wrong that haunts her still.

On bad days, Anavra will not leave her tower. She has gone missing for days at a time. No one visits her at night for Anavra withdraws within her tower well before sundown and will not emerge until dawn. At nights, the

Shining Hill is best admired from afar, as the lighted tower is a wonder to behold.

KNOWN History

Little is known about Anavra's past as it is one of the few topics she avoids discussing. It is agreed that whatever horror befell her, it resulted in the port-wine scar across her left side and her uncontrollable fear of the dark.

Before Anavra's arrival at Shining Hill, the tower atop it was a place of fear. For years Delinda the Witch was its occupant. Delinda was a hateful figure who was once an apprentice to a Glantrian noble. She inherited his condescending disdain for the common folk. The hill was known as Dark Hill for Delinda discouraged visitors and was generally feared.

One night the tower was set alight by dragonfire. Stunned locals in Akesoli witnessed the attack from afar, but by morning both Delinda and the dragon were never seen again. The scorched and broken hill was shunned by locals, but a mere month later the tower began to shine. A heavenly light filled the sky at night and all had changed for the better.

Anavra, fleeing some horror that ruined her promising young career, had come to the tower and repaired it. Her magic mended the broken stones, healed the burnt land, and made the tower's stones radiate a soft yellow warmth. Flowers bloomed and the hill was forever known as Shining Hill in honor of its new resident.

Travellers were made welcome, and often went out of their way to pass by Shining Hill in their journeys.

The Truth

Unbeknownst to all, Anavra is a gold dragon. She destroyed Dark Hill, slew Delinda, and took up residence in the guise of a young human magic-user.

Anavra was one of three hatchlings in the care of her mother. Her family lived in a hidden lair on the southern face of the Amsorak Mountains. It was a beautiful place where the fragrance of honeysuckles was lifted by the afternoon breeze from low meadows. On clear days you could see the great lake to the south.

Barely a year old, a powerful band of human adventurers invaded their lair. Delinda the Witch was one of the invaders. Anavra's mother was slain after a ferocious battle. When the treasures were divided, Anavra was sold to Delinda's teacher, a powerful magic-user from southern Glantri; Adalrich Drachenrauber. He was an ambitious alchemist of the 3rd circle who sought to possess the power of Gold Dragons.

Adalrich and Delinda greatly feared retribution if word spread of his machinations. Delinda left, and founded her own estate in a neighbouring nation outside the city of Akesoli. She frequently traveled and would occasionally visit her old master.

Adalrich kept Anavra a secret from all others. In a magically darkened and silenced cell underneath his estate, she

lived in terror. Cruel and agonising experiments were performed on the young dragon. As an alchemist Adalrich was obsessed with mastering the art of transcending energy. All gold dragons, even the very young, possessed innate polymorphic capability. After many years of effort he harnessed this power and imbued the power into a golden rod. The Rod of Polymorph.

Adalrich hoped the rod would bestow upon him the abilities of a gold dragon. The entire Drachenrauber family were convinced that they alone possessed a distant draconic bloodline which could be purified through alchemy. Adalrich's twisted mind concluded that only the purest and most powerful of dragon species would do; the golden ones. In this the rod failed to realise his goal. The process came at a terrible cost to Anavra; the left side of her face and neck were flayed of all scales which now cover the rod.

Liberation eventually came. Adalrich made many enemies in his time. A force led by rival Glantrian wizards backed by Belcadiz Elves assaulted Adalrich's estate. In the chaos of battle Anavra was freed by an elven wizardess who had obtained the Rod of Polymorph. In that moment Anavra incinerated the astounded elf with dragonfire, took the rod, and fled. Walking out of the burning estate, Anavra immediately tracked down Delinda in Darokin to deal out justice.

She has an inexorable hatred of humanity. Anavra's mother and siblings, whom were taken away so early, were the only loves she had ever known. To her knowledge, her siblings were all killed. She lives in constant pain, both physical and mental. The years spent in the silent darkness instilled in her a terrible fear of it. The natural

benevolence and mercy of all gold dragons has been stained by the wrongs done to her. At her core Anavra is a good being, but her wretched experiences have not yet been tempered by the wisdom that only comes with age. Anger is destructive. Worse than this is justified anger; the sort Anavra carries. Anavra lives in the fog of angry adolescence. She cannot forgive. This will last decades unless she is either stopped or saved.

In her human guise Anavra has garnered a reputation for paying good coin to hear travellers' tales. This helps in her all consuming goal to find her mother's killers. Delinda was part of that group that destroyed her home, and her mind is bent on the destruction of Delinda's colleagues. First, they must be found.

In the meantime, Anavra has become the judge. Visitors are tested. In conversation Anavra will casually mention a rumour of a dragon lair north of Lake Amsorak; a lair teeming with wealth for one willing to battle the beast, or catch it unawares. This is no lie, for Anavra has indeed buried treasures in her mother's abandoned lair, but she is the beast who guards it.

Anavra judges the visitors' response to this rumor. All are allowed to leave in peace, but those who give unsatisfactory answers are hunted on the road. At night Anavra will resume her true form, cast invisibility, take to the skies and hunt. She fears the dark, but her hate for the vile is greater.

The truly wicked are slain; their corpses and magical treasures returned to Shining Hill and buried deep. Hundreds lie under the earth, their blood and magic somehow causing the

blooming honeysuckles of the hill to flourish. Those guilty of mere greed or foolishness are instead freed of their humanity; polymorphed into rabbits. They frolic in abundance amid the honeysuckles of Shining Hill.



Notable powers

Anavra possesses the abilities of a small gold dragon. She is proficient in magic user spells of up to 3rd level, and has numerous wands and staves in her possession should the need arise. She is extremely intelligent and now speaks over a dozen languages. Hatred is her weakness; in time it will destroy her. Before that day, she may well face adventurers beyond her ability to defeat.

The Rod of Polymorph allows her to polymorph victims into other creatures. They gain the abilities of their new form, but lose all memory of their former life. This drawback prevented Adalrich from using the rod on himself. Anavra chooses to transform her victims into rabbits.

Campaign Opportunities

Player characters can encounter Anavra in a variety of ways. A group with no desire to harm dragons may well end up working for her. Anavra often hires adventurers to chase up leads that might reveal the location of her enemies. Chasing down leads and telling interesting tales at the Shining Hill could be very profitable.

If her secret is discovered, players may well face her in battle. Even a young gold dragon is a dangerous opponent, and Anavra has at her disposal numerous magical items to augment her capabilities.

An alternative path would be curing the hatred poisoning her soul. Such a feat would be difficult, but rewarding. Players might take the path of vengeance or love. Seek out Delinda's vile colleagues and bring them to Anavra for judgement. Or mend what was broken by finding Anavra's father, any surviving siblings, or even restoring Anavra's mother to life.

SALVIUS THE RAT OF THRESHOLD

Appearances

Salvius is a short, long-nosed man approaching middle age. Every inch a clean, trim and tidy gentleman. His dark hair is flecked with grey and his thin moustache is always meticulously trimmed. Taking great pride in his expensive Thyatian-styled clothing, he favours long embroidered linen shirts underneath a burnished leather vest.

Salvius is unpopular for he excels in a profession as old as civilisation itself; he is a tax collector. As Chief of the Office of Threshold Services Revenue (TSR) he is known to be fair and even-handed with both legitimate businesses and law-abiding citizenry. However, he delights in targeting tax cheats and unscrupulous businesses. Particularly those associated with the local Thieves Guild. He has an uncanny knack for rooting out such enterprises as he has an almost neophobic eye for subtle changes in and around town. He will notice new faces, changed habits, even store shelves arranged differently. He has a gift for detail and a nose for trouble.

Adventurers also can expect a visit from The Rat of Threshold. Even if great pains are taken to avoid him they are inevitably ratted out by one of Salvius' numerous informants. To Salvius, adventurers are simply thieves of the wilderness, robbing tombs and innocents on the road. Violent confrontations are rare as Salvius is often backed by town militia and if provoked he has demonstrated deadly skill with his ornate ivory-handled dagger.



Salvius, original drawing by Will Pleydon

Salvius maintains an opulent office adjacent to Town Hall, though willing visitors are infrequent. The only regular visitor is an elderly cleric named Thaddeus, who years ago administered the church orphanage in which Salvius was raised.

It is said the best way to gain an audience with The Rat is to wander through town jingling a bag of coins. Lately he has developed a nervous chewing habit. A pouch of walnuts seems to always be on hand for nibbling sessions. It is no secret that the Thieves Guild wants Salvius dead, and a spate of murders have recently plagued the town.

KNOWN History

When Salvius was very young his tribe lived near ruins northwest of Threshold. A raiding band of brigands struck and in the confusion Salvius found himself alone, separated from his kin. The promise of food and shelter drew him into the darkened alleys of nearby Threshold. As a street urchin, he spent a year hiding away, picking pockets and hunting for scraps after dark. Then fate intervened.

Young Salvius was taken in by a kindly cleric named Thaddeus. The holy man offered food, shelter and family within the church orphanage. The prospect of warmth and food greatly appealed to Salvius. He was careful to blend in and only steal when it was safe to do so. His long-lost father always warned, never spoil a good thing.

The clerics were no fools. It was not long before Salvius' thieving nature became apparent. A council was held, and the good-hearted Thaddeus convinced the elders that Salvius should remain. Under Thaddeus' patient and warm tuition Salvius learned proper etiquette and commenced schooling. Much to everyone's surprise, Salvius proved to be very bright and adaptable. He naturally took to living cleanly and demonstrated considerable skill with numbers. His memory for detail was staggering, although he showed no aptitude for magic. Religious tuition proved to be a bridge too far, but Salvius knew well the wisdom of avoiding violence when possible.

Salvius grew to love Thaddeus like an uncle. The only thing he loved more was the town of Threshold itself. It was warm. Food was plentiful. Interesting things were always happening. He didn't always understand the customs of town residents, for his tribe lived a very different lifestyle out in the wild. But he learned to carefully mimic the behaviour of others. Fitting in was of paramount importance, for life was good.

As the years wore on, fellow townsfolk forgot Salvius' old life with his kin. Residents saw Salvius as one of them, albeit somewhat odd. Only the clerics in the Church of Karameikos knew the truth. As long as Salvius behaved himself, he would



always be welcome. As he grew into adulthood, the priests hatched a plan to turn Salvius' natural gifts to the town's advantage.

Threshold was growing rapidly. An influx of new residents presented both opportunities and problems for Baron Sherlane Halaran, who also happened to be the local church Patriarch. Salvius was given the role of Chief Tax-Collector. The clergy reasoned that it often takes a thief to catch a thief. Salvius, always keen to fit in, would work for the good of Threshold.

Tax collecting proved to be an ideal niche, and Salvius thrived. His chaotic streak wasn't completely repressed, and over time he has amassed considerable wealth by occasionally charging tax payments slightly in excess of what was due. Town authorities are aware of the skimming, but since Salvius only targeted individuals with known criminal ties, it was considered to be a price well worth paying.

The Truth

Salvius is a highly intelligent wererat; a rat lycanthrope capable of adopting human form. His tribe was a band of wererats who survived by raiding villages around Threshold. Eventually, they were put down by the

town militia but the adaptable Salvius found a new path.

As he was taken in when very young, Thaddeus and the church were able to civilise him and offer a more safe and constructive lifestyle. They, and only they, are aware of Salvius' true nature as a wererat. In their wisdom the church sought to shape Salvius' destiny with mercy and love. They were successful, for Salvius embraced the given opportunities with glee. He prefers human form and can remain so indefinitely.

Salvius wants for shelter, safety and opportunities to work his sharp and adaptable mind. Tax collecting is a source of joy, the coin sates his natural greed and outwitting tax cheats soothes his considerable ego.

Over the years his chief enemy, and source of amusement, has been the Thieves Guild. They are naturally outraged in having their enterprises robbed, and see no irony in their situation. Salvius adores "Lady Irony", so long as she isn't poking fun at him. However, Salvius may recently have met his match. There is a new hired killer in town who seems intent on ruining Salvius' life; Vauslis.

Four grisly murders have occurred in town last month, each was one someone Salvius knew well. The name "Vauslis" was cut into each victim. Salvius is well aware that Vauslis is an anagram of his own name. He is the target. One victim, a town guard named Bianca, held a bloodstained silver dagger which Salvius did not recognise as her possession. In his grief he took the dagger, thinking it might belong to the murderer; Vauslis. He plans on wedding it with the villain's black heart.

Although he hides it well, the strain is becoming too much for Salvius to bear. Although Salvius never had a taste for it, he often awakens surrounded by empty wine bottles with no memory of what transpired that day. These blackout periods are increasing in frequency as Salvius' desperation grows. He is not an evil rat, and these victims are his friends.

Now closely working with constabulary, Salvius is helping to track down Vauslis. He would handsomely reward any who could find and stop the murders. They will have made a friend for life. He might even grant a discount on their future taxes. Or at least allow them to believe it was so.

Notable powers

Salvius' main strength is his love for civilisation and people. This came about from the mercy shown to him when the priest Thaddeus took him in from the cold streets of Threshold.

Salvius has all the strengths and weaknesses of a lycanthrope, but his main strength is that few know his true nature. Past assassination attempts by the Thieves Guild have failed for this reason. The poisoning of his bread failed as completely as the deadly vipers left in his bedding. Wererats are immune to such things. He always fights with hidden daggers and will never shapeshift into a rat-man form. Those days are behind him.

Salvius has a superior sense of hearing and smell. He knows people by their scent and can smell fear. Deceiving Salvius is very difficult and he also has a near perfect memory for detail.

Campaign Opportunities

Adventurers will encounter Salvius soon after entry into Threshold. He is always on the lookout for untaxed revenues and is particularly interested in any new faces arriving in town. Of late, the hunt for Vauslis consumes his energies.

Characters could be hired to help investigate the murders, particularly if they have access to magical divinations unavailable to Salvius.

Salvius' one great fear is that Vauslis will find and kill his mentor Uncle Thaddeus. This would utterly break him, driving him into a despair from which he might never emerge. Truly trustworthy adventurers might be hired as bodyguards to protect the elderly cleric.

THE KNIFE (AKA VAUSLIS)

Appearances

The Knife is a paid assassin. He belongs to the most feared of Thieves Guilds; the Iron Ring. He is otherwise nameless. To torment his intended target, The Knife assumes an anagram of his or her name. Since targeting Salvius, he has taken the name Vauslis.

He strikes from the shadows, murdering friends and family first. Each victim is mutilated by carving the anagram of the target's name into the deceased person's flesh. Only when his intended target is mad with grief does The Knife close in for the kill.

The Knife is patient. He will torment a target for years if necessary, and he never stops. Victims have been known to slay themselves in order to spare their loved ones from The Knife. Sadly, at times even loved ones have turned on each other in order to survive.

No one has been able to confirm who The Knife is. Attempts at divination fail. Captured members of the Iron Ring have been interrogated on the matter, and compelled to reveal the truth. However, even then they reveal only what they know. These are three things; The Knife is all people. The Knife is no people. Even the Iron Ring fears him.



*The Knife in possession of Bianca,
original drawing by Dario Odillo*

KNOWN History

The Knife is thought to be responsible for hundreds of murders over a period of almost forty years. This unusually long period of activity has led many to believe The Knife is a renegade elf. Others believe that all senior members of the Iron Ring are collectively “The Knife”, that this is simply a title that is passed on to others over time.

No one who has been targeted by The Knife has survived.

The Truth

The Knife is not a flesh and blood person; it is a magical dagger possessed by a malign intelligence. Appearing as an ornate ivory-handled silver dagger, it radiates magic, but does not reveal any signs of intelligence to its wielder. Why give others knowledge that this magical dagger has a mind of its own? Better for folk to think it has no mind. No motives. Deceit and the business of murder is so much easier that way. And so victims believe The Knife is simply a useful tool, not a deadly threat.

If the Knife speaks, deceptions are no longer necessary. It's about to kill you.

The Iron Ring delivers The Knife to its target, or his allies, via a variety of means. Victims typically find the dagger in a treasure hoard, or as part of an inheritance from a recently and unexpectedly deceased relative. Once acquired, The Knife will pose as a magical weapon of modest power, and patiently allows enough time to pass so that it becomes trusted.

The Knife is more than capable of possessing its wielder, but is careful to disguise evidence

of its actions. When first targeting Salvius, The Knife was delivered to a town guard in Threshold, a lady named Bianca. Bianca lived her life normally, but when asleep she awoke under the control of The Knife. In the space of a week, she unknowingly committed various murders against friends of Salvius. Once Salvius himself started assisting the town guard with the investigation, The Knife shifted tactics.

Under control of The Knife, Bianca committed suicide in a horrible fashion. But not before leaving clues to lead Salvius to believe a murderer broke into her home and carried out the vile deed. When examining the murder scene Salvius took the silver dagger, intending to avenge his fallen friend with it.

Now in possession of Salvius, The Knife has learned all of his secrets. The murders are continuing, but this time through an unaware Salvius. The blackouts Salvius experiences are in fact periods where The Knife is in control. Before relinquishing control, The Knife forces Salvius to drink several bottles of wine and scatter them about his office. Each time Salvius awakens with no recent memory, and believes he is falling apart with an alcohol addiction.

Once it has caused enough torment, The Knife plans to expose Salvius as a wererat to the community and frame him for all the murders in Threshold. Setting up Salvius as a villainous maniac would hurt more than any cut it could inflict; Threshold and its people are Salvius' heart and home.

The local Thieves Guild, who contracted the Iron Ring to destroy Salvius, have paid handsomely for this work. Once complete, The Knife will move to other targets.

Notable powers

For all its powers, its primary strength is the ability to keep its nature secret until it is too late. It is always careful not to reveal too much of its powers to a wielder. With a Willpower of 27 (Intelligence 12, Ego 12) it can easily overcome most mortal intellects, and will do so intelligently when the victim is alone.

It is a +3 dagger, with an additional +2 against humans. It has a strong chaotic alignment and delights in inflicting pain. Possessing the ability to read the thoughts of its wielder, The Knife learns all it can and plans accordingly.

Known Extraordinary Power

Extra damage: The wielder may inflict 4 times the normal damage on each hit for 1-10 rounds. Available once per day.

Known Primary Power

Detect Heartbeat (30' range) at will. Although The Knife is perfectly capable of speech, it reveals those detected simply by pointing in a given direction with a sensation.

A Travellers' Guide to Specularum

THE STRONGHOLD DISTRICT - PART 2

by Allan Palmer
with Giampaolo Agosta (agathokles)

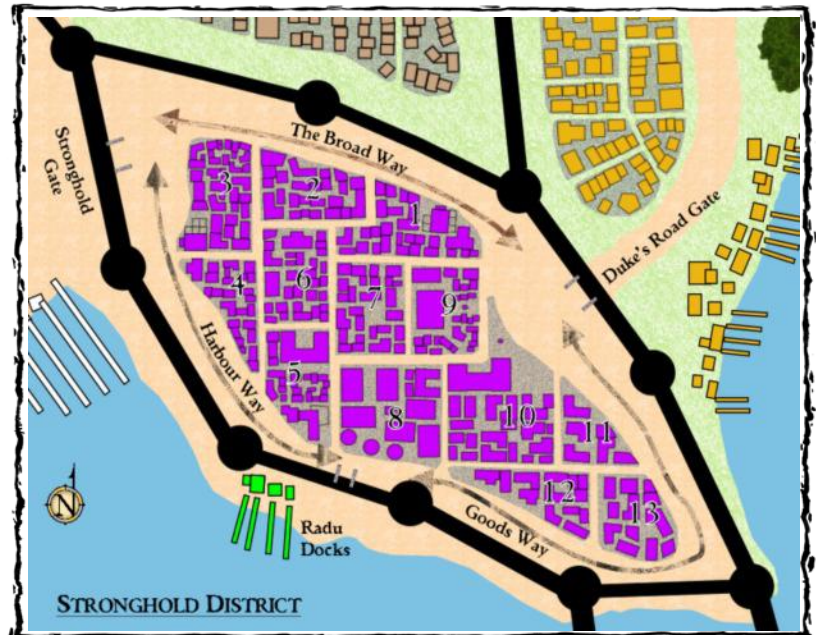
Introduction

This article continues the exploration of the streets of Specularum's Stronghold District that was begun in the previous issue of this magazine. Readers are also directed to the Specularum-themed issue of *THRESHOLD Magazine* (#21) which provides more background on the capital of the Grand Duchy of Karameikos.

On the city map included in GAZ1: *"The Grand Duchy of Karameikos"*, a number of blocks within the Stronghold District are marked as "Radu Territory". These are the first three blocks (1, 2 & 3) described previously, together with blocks 7, 8 and 10 which are detailed within this article. These are the blocks of residences and businesses that are owned by the Radu clan. The population of the district is either employed by the Radu or is tied to them through debt or family connection.

Military defence of the district's gates and walls¹ is provided by the 3rd and 4th Squads

¹ See the article ["To Protect and Serve"](#) in *THRESHOLD Magazine* #21 for information about the City Guard.



from 'A' Company of the City Guard stationed at the Duke's Road Gate and Stronghold Gate respectively.

Many of the buildings in the district date back to the days when the settlement was the Free City of Marilenev and the era when Iija Radu fortified the district. These constructions have stood the test of time, but a few people wonder why the Stronghold District suffered minimal damage during the Thyatian invasion of 900 AC, while other areas suffered greater damage.

The Stronghold District - Block 4



The Streets

Going south down Harbour Way from the Stronghold Gate you will find the **District Captaincy** (S7), the area's administrative offices which include that of the District Constabulary's Superintendent. Beyond that stands the **District Night Watch Station** (S102), the operational headquarters of the local brigade that fight fires and other similar occurrences in the neighbourhood².

Commercial businesses on this block include a **brewery** (S69), one of the clients of the **cooper** (S70) situated nearby. There are several "independent" businesses on this block including a **butcher's shop** (S66) operated by *Stephanos Lutovich* [Neutral Human Traladaran male], a member of the Butchers' Guild known for being forgiving but deceitful; he is a member of the Torenescu faction. Other nearby businesses are a **bakery** (S65), **grocer** (S67) and a **dairy** (S68). They are independent in the sense they are not directly employed by the Radu or have family connections but owe the clan in some way. A DM running players through this part of the city might involve them in local disputes between the independent traders and the Radu, which might lead them into more complex activities that could lead to encounters with the Veiled Society.

At the southern end of Harbour Way is a **lumber yard** (S73) that provides raw materials for many businesses, including the nearby **furniture maker** (S71) and a **carpenter** (S72) - *Laina Radescu* [Female

Chaotic Human Traladaran], a member of the Carpenters' Guild known for being modest but vengeful. Laina is a member of the Radu faction. She is very proud of having the townmaster, Lord Lucas Torman-dros, among her customers. Other wood-workers can be found around here.

The dominant building on this block is the **Merchants' Guildhall** (S13). Wholesale trade, both domestic and import/export, is controlled from this palatial edifice which has a statue of its patron, Zirchev, in its large courtyard. The major trade goods³ coming through Specularum are common wood, animals, hides, furs (both common and rare), common metals, weapons, tools, armour and mounts; but other items are also handled. The Merchants' Guild has a powerful influence in the city⁴.

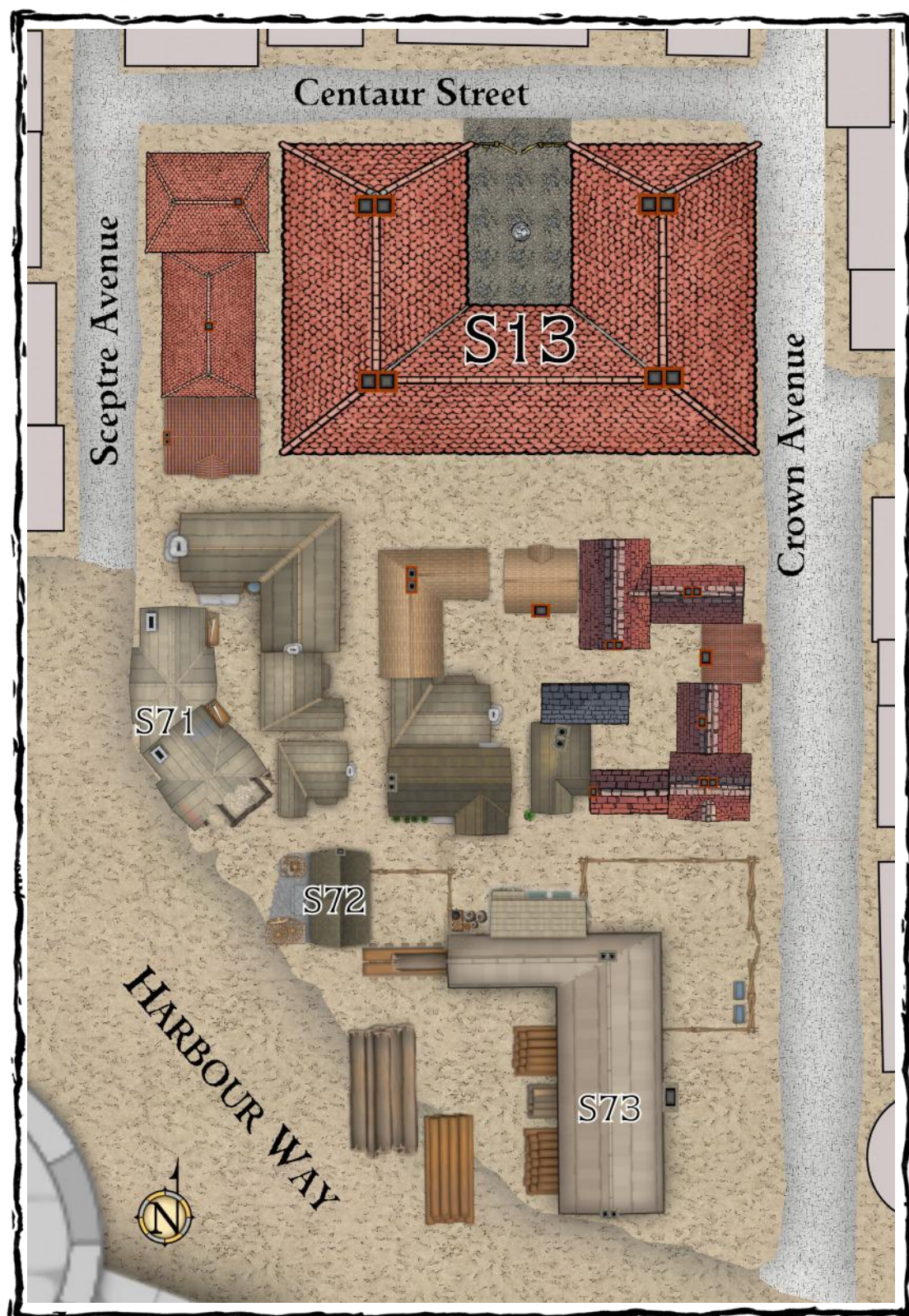
Another Guild has its base in the Stronghold District - on the block north of the Merchants' Guildhall stands the **Armourers' Guildhall** (S8). Not as large as that of the Merchants, it is nevertheless a striking building for one of the minor Guilds. The Guild maintains a small **forge** (S84) nearby, that is used for important commissions. This forge is maintained by *Stefan Dmitrev* [Male Neutral Human Traladaran], a member of the Blacksmiths' Guild known for being loyal and proud. Stefan is a member of the Torenescu faction. The **District Court House** (S4) is also located on this block and is where criminals are brought from the holding cells in the Dis-

² See the article ["To Protect and Serve"](#) in *THRESHOLD Magazine* #21 for information on the District Constabulary and Night Watch.

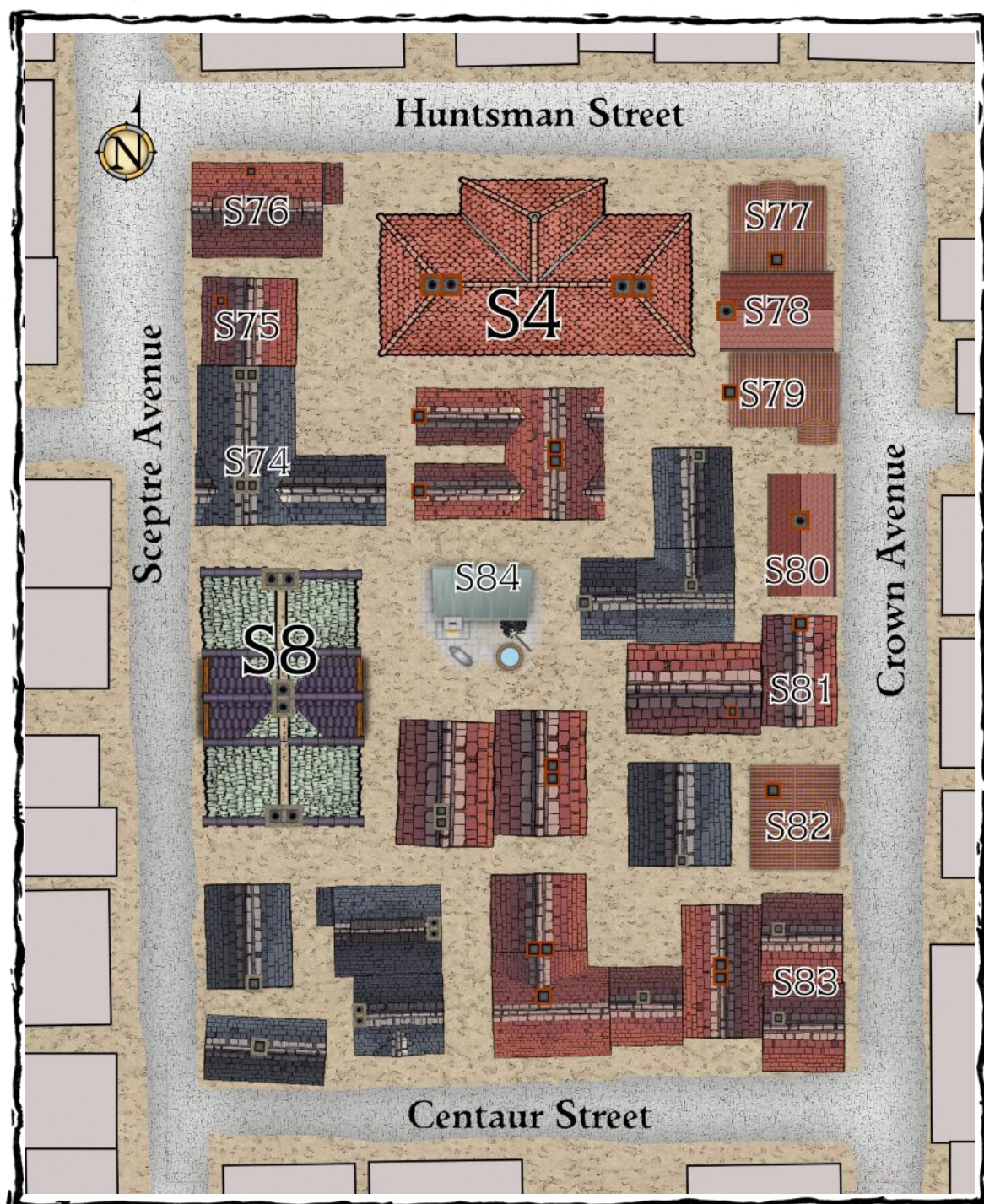
³ See GAZ9: "The Minrothad Guilds" and GAZ11: "The Republic of Darokin" for background on merchant trade.

⁴ See ["The Guilds of Specularum"](#) by Agathokles in issue #21 of *THRESHOLD Magazine* for information on the city's Guilds.

The Stronghold District - Block 5



The Stronghold District - Block 6



trict Captaincy for trial. Those sentenced to imprisonment will be transferred to the City Jail in the city's northern ward.

There are several businesses located on this block, including a traditional Traladaran **Feast Hall** (S74) where some merchants may entertain those whom they wish to do business with. The Feast Hall is run by *Andros Sergiov* [Male Neutral Human Traladaran], a member of the Innholders' Guild known for being forgiving but deceitful. Andros is a member of the Karameikos faction. Those requiring someone to argue for them in court may utilise the services of an **Advocate** (S75). *Cassius Vanianicus* [Male Neutral Human Thyatian], is a **Scribe** (S78), a member of the Scriveners' Guild known for being dogmatic and vengeful. Cassius is a member of the Karameikos faction. Several other professionals also operate from this block including an **Interpreter** (S79), and an **Accountant** (S80) - all whose skills may be summoned to participate in trials at the local court house or elsewhere in the city as well as providing services to other businesses. The **land agent** (S77) is one of a number who administer the sale/exchange of ground and property in the city and across the Estate of Marilenev to ensure legal proceedings are followed and that appropriate taxes are paid.

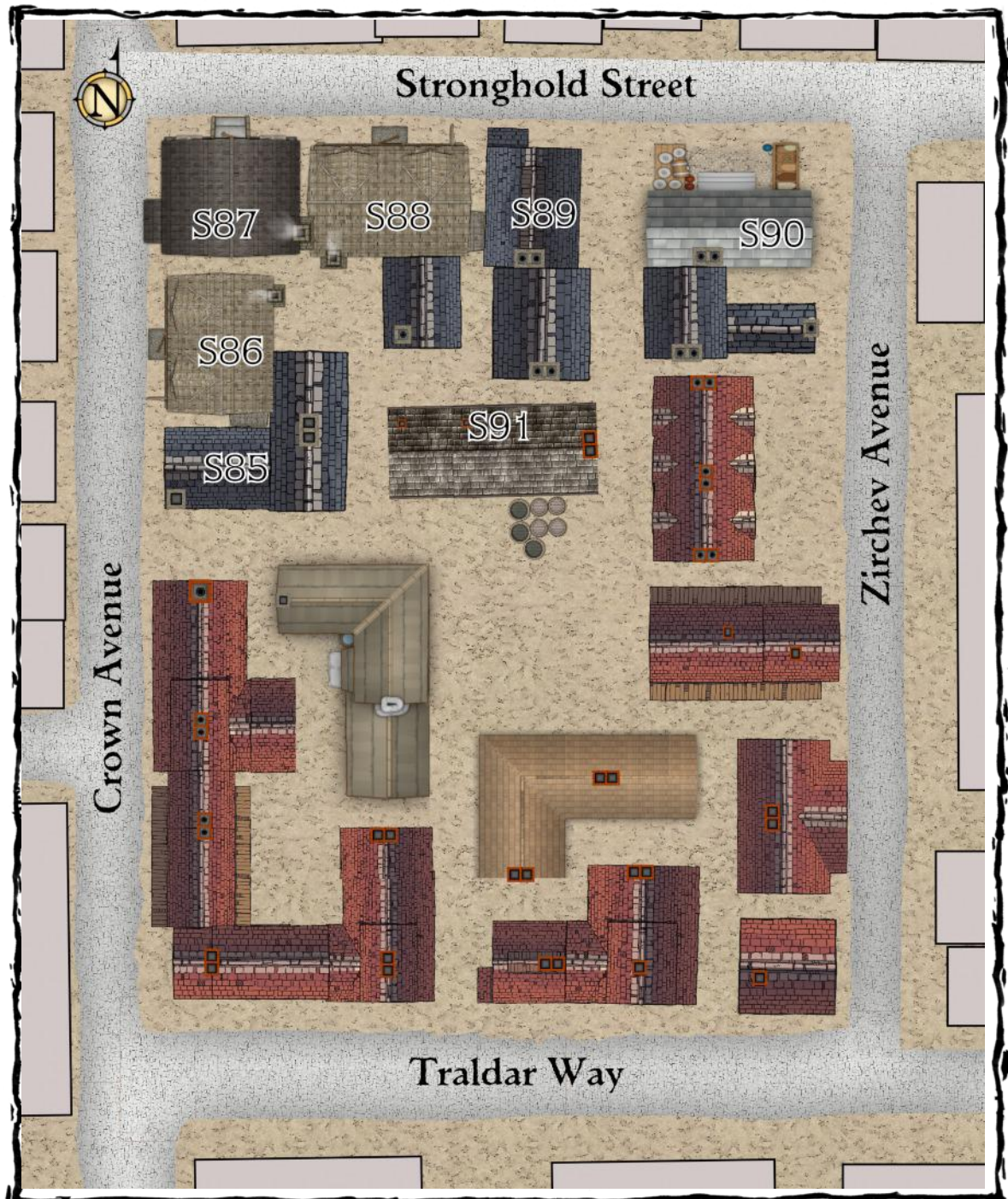
A **locksmith** (S82) provides services to secure all manner of things from houses to storage to chests to cells and even chastity belts! Needless to say, the craftsman may be called upon to open some locks. There is a **bookseller** (S76) and a **scroll shop** (S81) both selling written material of various forms - not necessarily magical.

Who knows what secrets or clues may be found in a tome or parchment that has ended up for sale in these premises? The shop of a **dressmaker & tailor** (S83) stands prominently on a corner; originally providing clothes for ladies of the district, it also trades in robes of various designs for court house officials and Guild councillors.

East of the Court House block more commercial businesses can be found: a **general store** (S86), a **potion maker** (S87), a **confectioner** (S89) and a **spice shop** (S90). There is a **wine shop** (S88), run by *Klas Azurianov* [Male Lawful Human Traladaran], a member of the Vintners' Guild who is known for being peaceful and open-minded. Klas is a member of the Independents faction. A **dyeworks** (S91) stands in the centre of the block and is operated by *Anya Sergos*, [Female Neutral Human Traladaran], a member of the Dyers' Guild known for being cautious but vengeful. Anya is a member of the Radu faction. The offices of another **advocate** (S85) ("you can't have too many lawyers" is a recognised Guild saying) are also here.

Opposite the gates to the Radu docks, where Harbour Way and Goods Way meet, one block is predominantly given over to **warehouses** (S16) and **granaries** (S17). This is one of the areas where goods entering or leaving the city are stored on behalf of merchants who negotiate prices for the supply. Often a busy place as goods are stocked, the workforce is under the control of the **Yardman's office** (S95). Transport of cargo onto and away from the site is managed through the **Carter's office** (S94).

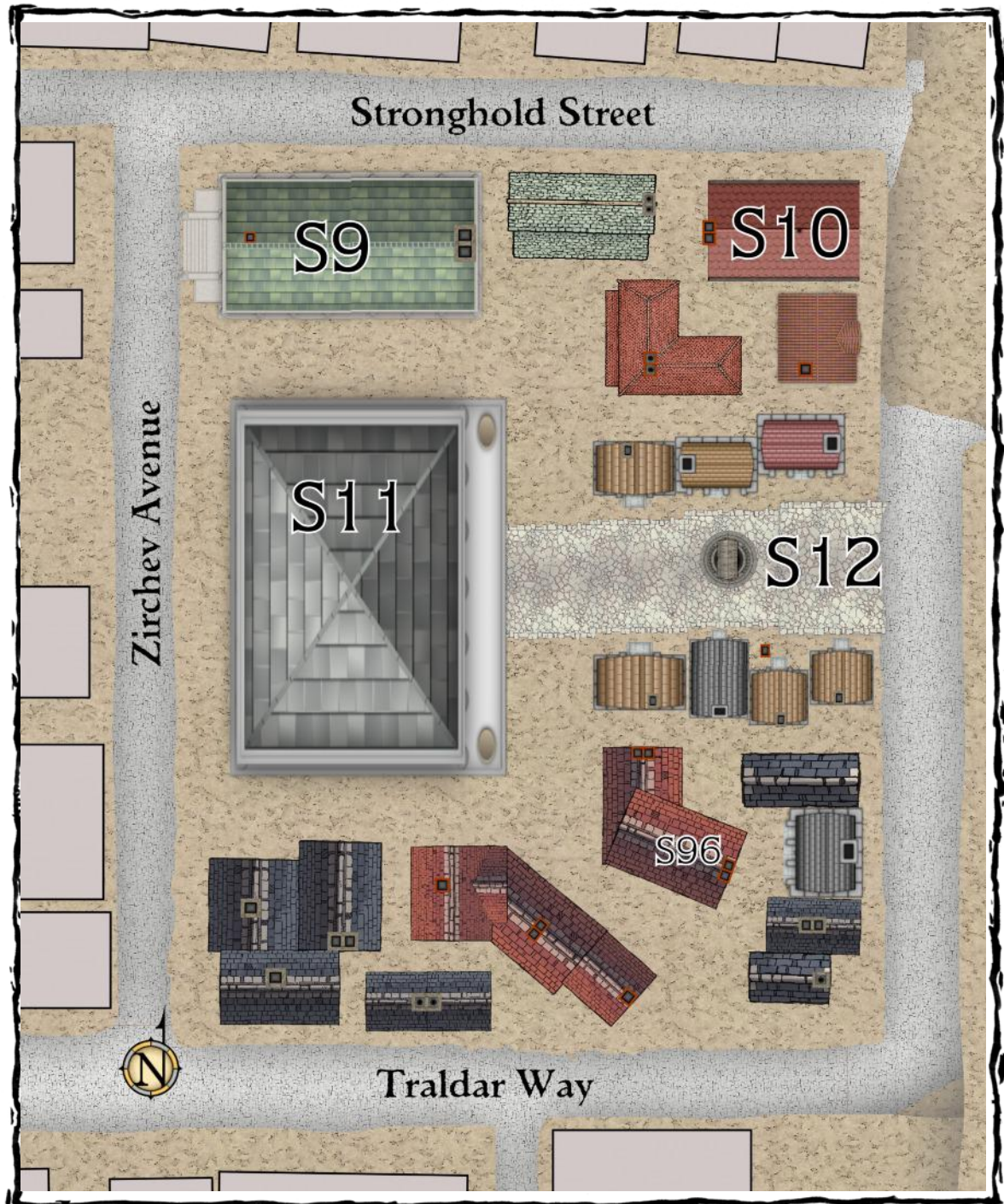
The Stronghold District - Block 7



The Stronghold District - Block 8



The Stronghold District - Block 39



The **Brokerage** (S92) is the clearing house that provides a forum for the efficient sale of large quantities of goods. The services offered include the appraisal of goods by the **Valuers' office** (S93), as well as the sale and purchase of quantities at wholesale prices. Brokers are skilled at assessing values, managing the levels of stock, as well as being adept at financial arrangements to get the best deals. If visiting this institution, players might encounter foreign merchants who do not have contacts with the local traders seeking the best prices for their goods, or there might be a party of adventurers looking to make money of large quantities of treasure they have amassed.

Not far from the Duke's Road Gate stands the **Shrine of Zirchev** (S11). A place of pilgrimage for some arrivals in the city. A public city **well** (S12) is found in the middle of the paved area that runs eastward from the shrine. The small buildings on both sides of the paving include small shops selling religious paraphernalia, and the residences of the minor priests who maintain the building and its services through donations, notably from the Merchants' Guild. The **residence of the chief priest** (S96) is nearby.

Two other notable buildings are located on this block: a **School** (S9) and the **District Tax Office** (S10).

Those entering Specularum through the Duke's Road Gate will see the impressive **Radu Manor** (S15) directly ahead of them. It is located at the highest point of the district and invited guests will note the views

of the city that afforded from its upper floors. This is the ancestral home of the Radu clan. There are a number of memorials to past clan leaders in the grounds, but the most dominant is the bust of Petros Radu (S14) that sits on a column in the formal garden. The Manor is the home of the current clan leader, Anton Radu, and his wife, Victoria. Anton's brother, Cartha, lives in the west wing of the Manor. While some animosity has grown between the brothers in recent years, Cartha recognises the value of remaining resident in the Manor, giving him access to Anton's plans.

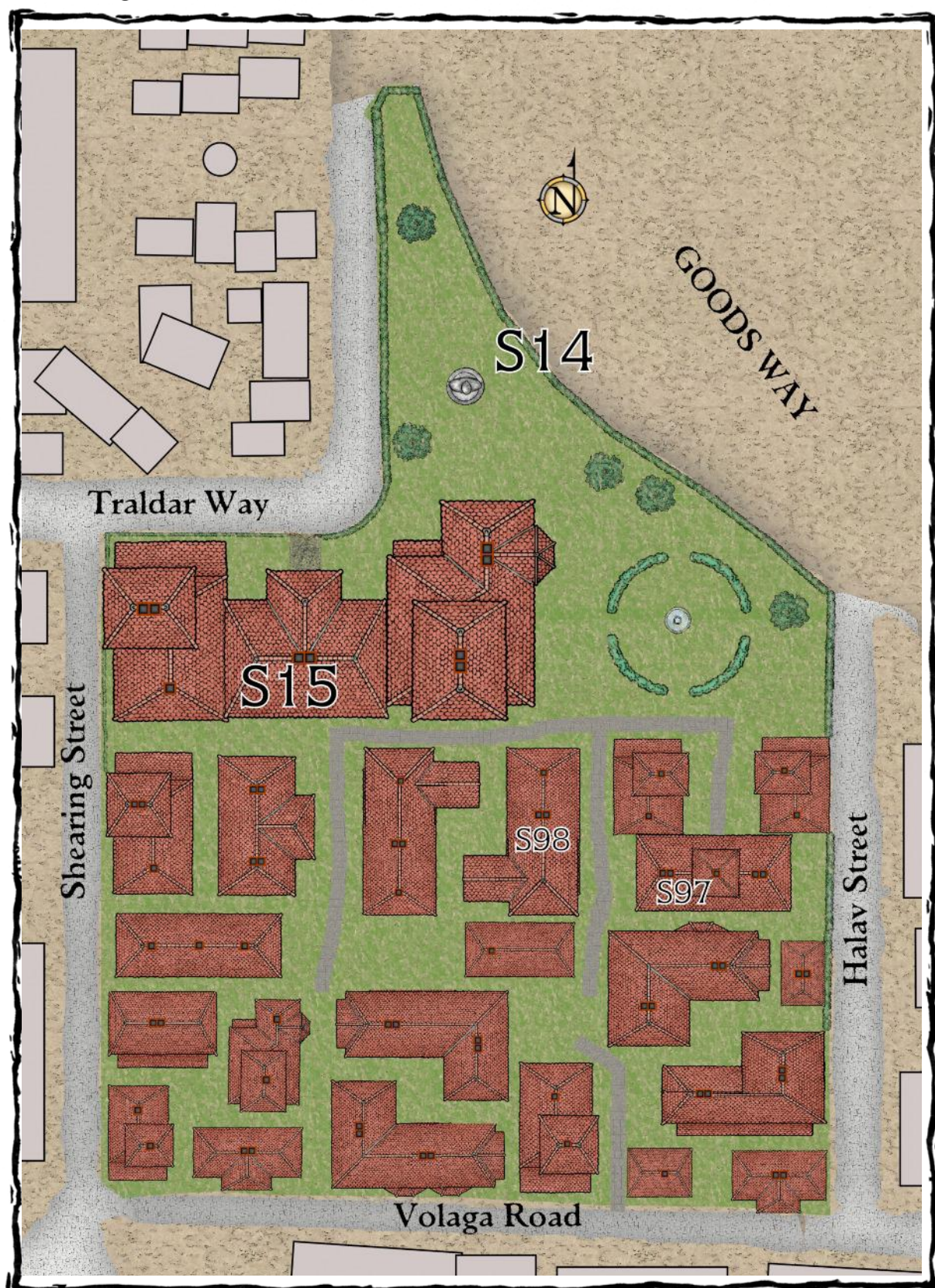
The other residences on this large block which benefits from landscaped areas are the homes of members of the extended Radu clan. Notably there is the **home of Zweis Radu** (S97) where Anton's eldest son lives with his wife, Rebecca, and their four daughters and only son⁵. Close by is the **home of Antonito Radu** (S98), the younger son of Anton, with Antonito's wife and young son.

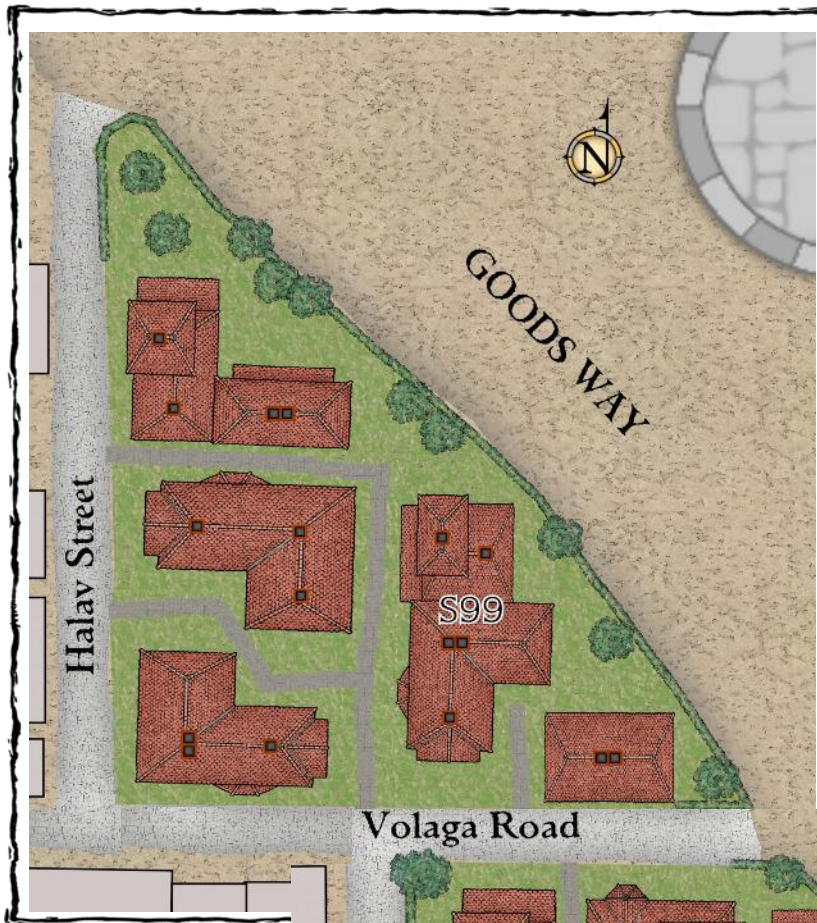
The three blocks south and east of Radu Manor contain the residences of various⁶ prominent Traladaran families. High hedges and trees along the exterior perimeter of these blocks shield the residents from the traffic of wagons and workmen that pass along Goods Way between the dock gates, warehouses, and the Duke's Road Gate. The residences on these blocks

⁵ For some thoughts on Zweis and his family, see the sidebar "*Another look beneath the Radu Veil...*" that accompanies this article.

⁶ See "*Some ideas about the Radus*" by Vile Lahde at the Vaults of Pandius.

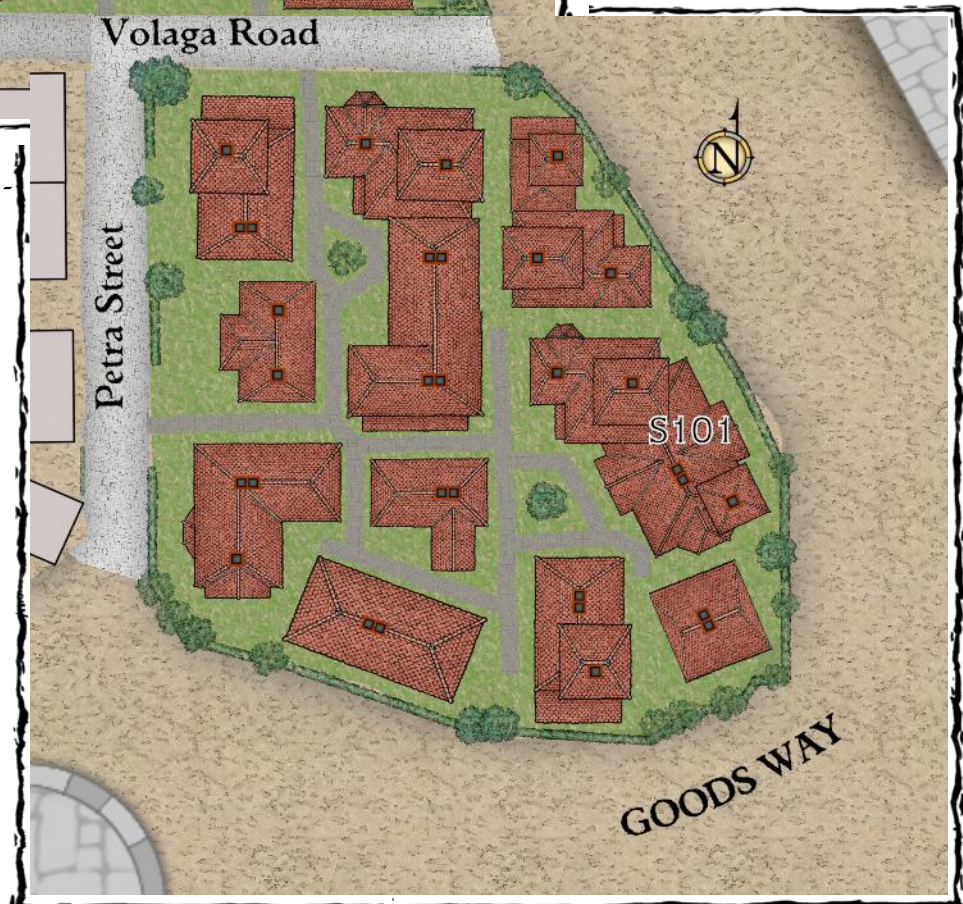
The Stronghold District - Block 10



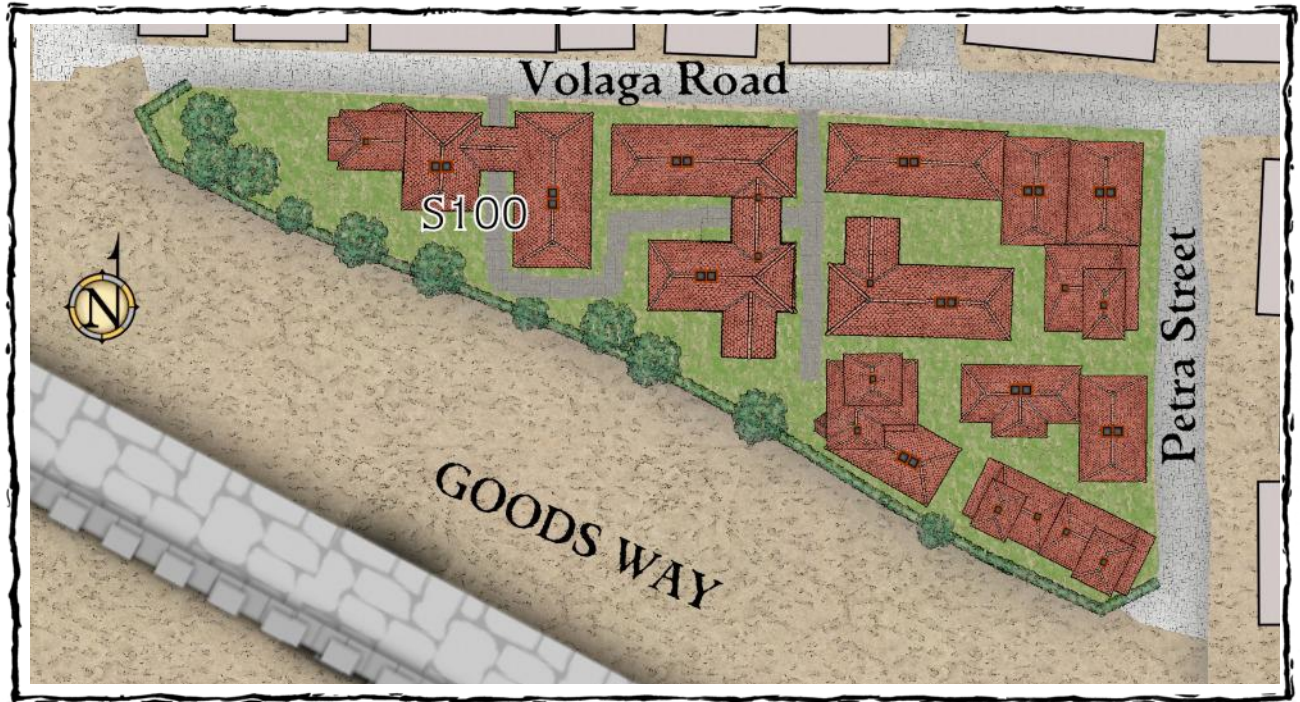


include the family homes of the **Calihar** (S99), **Inexdio** (S100) and **Kaison** (S101). It was Antonio Radu's clever marriage to Dorisimo Calihar combined with his ruthless tactics that enabled Antonio to save the Radu clan from being diminished by the arrival of the Thyatian occupiers in the years between 900 and 950 AC. The leader of the priests at the Shrine of Zirchev is a member of the Inexdio family. Anton Radu arranged the marriage of his son, Zweis, to Rebecca Kaison.

*Stronghold District -
Block 11 (above),
Block 12 (right)*



The Stronghold District - Block 13



Another look behind the Radu Veil

Author's note:

When researching the Radu presence in the district, I re-read Andrew Theisen's article "*Unveiling the Radu Clan*" from issue #1 of this magazine. I have expanded on the circumstances surrounding the family of Zweis Radu here, suggesting some information about Zweis' unnamed daughters.

Zweis, the first child of Anton Radu and Victoria Artho was born in 960 AC. (According to Andrew⁷, "Zweis is a ruggedly featured man 40 years of age.") By the time he was 17, Zweis' father had made arrangements for his son to marry the daughter of another noble family. However, Zweis had

⁷ See "*Unveiling the Radu Clan*" by Andrew Theisen – Threshold Magazine #1.

already begun a romance with a girl from a lower-class family.

"As a youth, Zweis Radu fell deeply in love with a peasant girl, Marika Petrescu. Theirs was a doomed affair, though, for Anton Radu had already betrothed his son to a more influential Traladaran family while building his power base."⁸

Anton arranged for Marika to be sent away to give birth to Zweis' child, and to stay away from the city. Soon after his 18th birthday, Zweis married Rebecca Kaison⁹. Over the course of the following years, Zweis

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ Rebecca is named on the Radu family tree on page 75 of "*Karameikos: Kingdom of Adventure*". Theisen introduces the family's "several" daughters in his issue #1 article (*ibid*).

became embittered with his wife as their offspring were female – no male heir to continue Zweis' line. Dorisimo Radu (named for her father's grandmother) is born in 979 AC, Ilyana (named for Rebecca's grandmother) is born in 981 AC, Victoria (named for Zweis' mother) arrives in 982 AC, and the fourth daughter, Katerina (named for Rebecca's mother) is born in 983 AC. It is not until 985 AC that Rebecca gives birth to a male child named Theodosius.

"Though he has several daughters, Zweis was long frustrated by what he saw as his wife's inability to produce a son for him, and often took it out on her verbally and physically."¹⁰

"Zweis Radu despaired of ever siring a male heir and took his frustrations out on his wife and four daughters."¹¹

Unknown to Zweis, the true father of Theodosius is Vasile Torenescu, with whom Rebecca has had an affair, primarily in revenge for the way Zweis has treated her and her young daughters.

In 997 AC a 23-year old Pieter Petrescu¹², now a priest of the Church of Traladara, arrives in Specularum and claims his birthright. He is publicly accepted into the Radu

Clan as Pieter Radu, son of Zweis. (In truth, Pieter's biological father is Zweis' uncle, Cartha Radu.)

Zweis has taken little interest in his four daughters as they have grown, and even less since the arrival of Theodosius. So disdainful of his daughters initially and now focussed on his son, Zweis has not even attempted to arrange marriages into other prominent families for the girls.

This lack of paternal involvement has given the four sisters a freedom that they have vowed to use to hurt their abusive father for the way he has treated both them and their mother. The family's noble status has given the girls the access and opportunity to gain a number of skills (scholarly and physical) enabling them to upset a number of Zweis' schemes and plots throughout the city.

Rumours of the girls' clandestine exploits have begun to circulate, calling them "The Scarlet Sisterhood" (a reference to the colour of the masks that the daughters have adopted as disguise for their operations). The "Sisterhood" already has some contact with the city's Thieves' Guild, and the girls' activities are coming to the notice of Duchess Olivia and her network. A DM might consider using these somewhat renegade females in encounters if running their players through a city adventure.

¹⁰ See ["Unveiling the Radu Clan"](#) by Andrew Theisen – *THRESHOLD Magazine* #1.

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² In *THRESHOLD Magazine* #1, Theisen asserts Pieter is 26 (in 1000 AC) implying his birth was in 974 AC. However, Zweis would have only been aged 14 then, probably unlikely to have impregnated Marika Petrescu at that age. Additionally, I have placed the marriage of Zweis and Rebecca in 978 AC, allowing for Rebecca to give birth to 4 daughters, before the birth of Theodosius. His age and birthdate have been adjusted accordingly.

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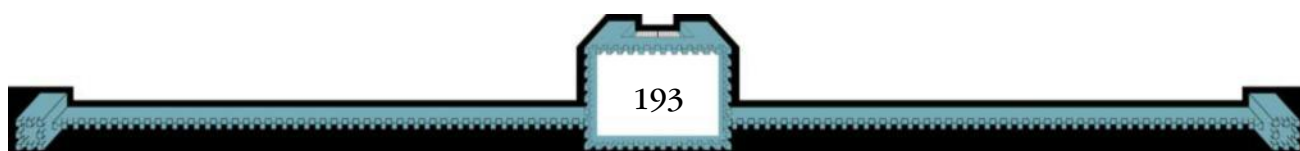
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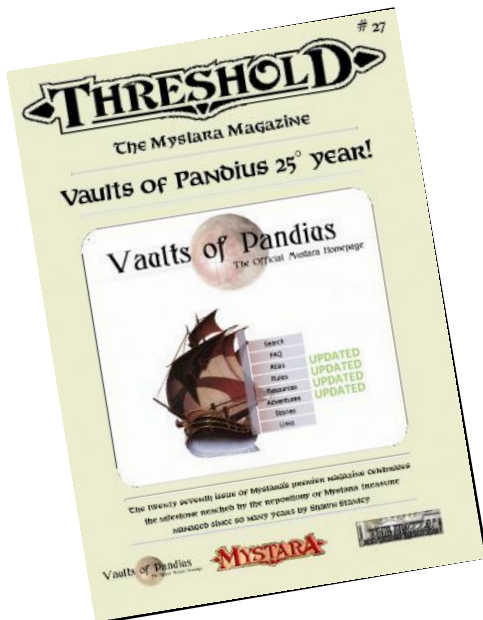
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The Mystara Magazine



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