World of Alessia™

Campaign Primer

By Jere Manninen & Jaye Sonia

Storm Bunny Studios

5E Compatible

The World of Alessia is a different kind of fantasy setting.

SciFantasy

ALESSIA™

CAMPAIGN PRIMER

Based on the world created by Jere Manninen.
The World of Alessia Campaign Primer
was written and developed by Jaye Sonia.

CREDITS

Additional Writing
Zachary Bauer, Jere Manninen, Ben McFarland, and Brian Suskind.

Friends in Low Places
by Erik Scott De Bie

Graphic Design
by Jaye Sonia

Layout
by Jaye Sonia

Cartography
by Jaye Sonia

Proofing Team
by James Allen, Zachary Bauer, Kurt Blanco, Zachary Brown, Rob C., Shane Cordes, Dadalos, Daniel, Dan Davenport, Kodyax Derschrecken, Troy Ellis, Robert Fairbanks, Emmanual Farrar, Wesley W. Green III, David Headquist, Jesse Heaton, Karl Kreutzer, Jere Manninen, David Marion, Charles Rice, Matteo Signorini, and Aric Wieder.

Cover Art
by Angel Huerta and Le Minh Hoai Quoc

Editing
by Nerine Dorman

Interior Art
by Annadel Cinco, Julie Dillon, Domeano, Graey Erb, Septimus Ferdian, Alessio Fiorasi, Cecilia Gina, Angel Huerta, Iñaki, Ayelet Keshet, Dio Mahesa, Terry Maranda, Ekatrina M., Kaeti McNeil, Dionisis Milonas, Nikolai Ostertag, Hugh Pindar, Tai Tran, Striking Tulip, Shy, Le Minh Hoai Quoc, Alexandra Vardanian, Daniel Wearing, and Liu Zishan

Requires:
The World of Alessia Campaign Primer is not a stand-alone game; GMs and players still need to use the 5e core books.

5E COMPATIBLE

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SCIFANTASY

Compatible with the 5th edition of the World's most popular role-playing game.

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Digital Kobolds

Joshua Archer, Andrew Balenko, Frank Carr, Ben Fowler, Simon Jennings, Peter Petrovich, Red Umbral Mist, and Daniel Townsend.

DRAGONSWORN SORCERERS

Andrew, Keith Apperson, Scott Avick, Tracy Barkley, Ben, Kurt Blanco, Brian, Bugmaster, Chad, Steven D Cole, Esq., Reagan Coleman Iii, Shawn Cotton, Clayton Culwell, Oliver D. Dickerson Iii, Aaron Dubreuil, Michael Dunning, Andrew F, David E Ferrell, Ben Hall, Jennifer, Julia, Josh Jackson, Karl Kreutzer, Maurice Leblanc, Lo, Andreas Loeckher, Jaakob Maunula, David Marion, Minmon, Numbertenox, Orko, Donovan Ranney, Deadly Reed, Jeremiah Reynolds, Jerrod Rose Jr., The Rosenthal Family, Paul Ryan, Saajan 9000, Charles Schindler, Sean, Secespitus, Matteo Signorini, Jonathan Smith, Sominex, Boyd Stephenson, Christopher Sulat, Erin Sullivan, Andrew Swartz, TJ, Liam Vermazen, Vijay, Claude Weaver Iii, Aric Wieder, Sandra Wilkinson, Marcus Winger, and Cameron Youngs.

ALESSIAN ARCHIVISTS

Mikael Sandgren Bock, Roman Draughon, Joseph Evenson, Jack, Jesse, Lunar, Multaekappae, Paprockiw, and Jeff Robinson.

SKYSHIP CAPTAINS

Kisa A, Taiga Brenerman, Joshua C Kitchens, and Jason Ott.

HAND OF THE CELESTIAL EMPEROR

Kurt Jensen.

THE VOICE OF LIGHT

Emmanuel Farrar.

THE COURT OF THE FIRST

Shane Cordes, David Headquist, and Rob 2.0.

THANK YOU BACKERS!

~ Alessia exists because of you ~

While I cannot speak for other content creators, I know that if it wasn't for Kickstarter (and all of the wonderful backers willing to support our projects), Storm Bunny Studios wouldn't be able to bring you great content from campaign settings like the **World of Alessia**, ***Bloodlines & Black Magic***, **Rhune: Dawn of Twilight**, **Mists of Akuma**, or any of our other projects.

So, thank you.

While we've certainly taken longer putting this book together than we originally anticipated, I think readers will be happy with the extra time we invested – this primer is much bigger than the one we originally promised backers (260 pages), by about 80 pages!

While we likely could have stuffed more into the book, the entire team agreed that presenting Alessia in a fluid, visually satisfying layout was far more important than trying to stuff in more words, especially with the additional content we have planned! So, we discussed it and found a happy medium – at the end of the day. Jere and I both agreed that more is better.

There's a lot in this book that, with more pages, we could have explored in much greater depth. I know Jere and I discussed, several times during the project, on precisely how much was worth adding, and if that added content balanced well against the time we'd need to add it. We weighed our decision carefully, even bringing it to our backers to see what everyone thought. The backers' collective comments and support always echoed the kind, thoughtful approach we'd expect from fans of Alessia. On more than one occasion, a backer would come forward and say, "Hey, if you need more time, take it."

And we did.

But, like so many of you knew then, some things are worth the wait! In fact, as I'm writing this (one of the very last things I'll add to the book), Jere and I are discussing the artistic journey we've taken on this project, from start to finish. Because while this is very much a game book, it is also a piece of art; a reflection of Jere's hopes for the world hand-crafted into a sandbox in which anyone might play. That's a pretty interesting gift, when you think about it. But none of this would be possible if it hadn't been for the wonderful backers on this (and the opposite) page; had it not been for these faithful few, you might not be reading this.

We hope you enjoy the World of Alessia.

So, thanks.

Cheers,
Jaye

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Asparra uncoiled and worked her way around the trunk of the tree, stopping just short of the last branch. She looked around, taking a quick mental note of the Scale-Poisoned Kronos that surrounded her. She flicked her forked tongue and smiled disarmingly, presenting her arms and open hands as a sign of her submission.

They were clueless.

The world of Alessia is a world of high fantasy that combines Wuxia, science fiction, and magic-driven technology – called magitech. It is a massive world where magic and technology coexist, impacting every aspect of life, from the Healing Houses of Sillias to the great Towers of Xin. It is a land where Fyrean Genies meet with Asrian Wardens, and The Gangs of Khatu push their Drifters across the desert sands, seeking resources and victims of every kind.

Alessia is a world where the Sovereigns, in an act of unification, merged into a singular pantheon – forming The Path of Light. It is a land where medical advancements, evolution, and ki energy form not only a methodology to achieve progress, but instead form a way of life. For the people of Alessia, the path to success is girded with honor, hard work, bravery, and a need to do good.

Alessia is a land at the height of its glory, held aloft by the Four Pillars of Light – Mercy, Truth, Hope, and Courage. Its churches unified and its clergy working in unison, the people of Alessia enjoy what others think is only an illusion – a slowly blossoming utopia. But Alessia is not a land without its challenges. Having suffered an ecological disaster that would have ended smaller planets, the people of Alessia have spent the past millennium pulling themselves up from the viscera of the War of the Sovereigns; from the decaying Great Beast Galgaræ and the Shadows of Venn to the Orgothii, the once-vanquished forces of darkness creep again, slowly pushing against the Ring of Heaven, hoping to find purchase in Alessia once more.

Today, the Empire of Xian and its Imperial Peacekeepers stand watch, fulfilling their ancient compact with the citizens of Alessia. Working in unison with most of the Path of Light, these two forces have set out to keep Alessia safe, sound, and a bastion of hope for another millennia – no matter what.

What to Expect

Alessia is hyper advanced and long ago integrated with its refugees, creating a society whose traditions, beliefs, and culture saved it when Alessia's enemies nearly destroyed it. Today, Alessia stands vigilant against the darkness, and that informs a great deal of its social behavior, especially in the Empire of Xian, where Peacekeepers openly roam the streets. This is common in the larger cities and settlements that dot the empire, where visitors and citizens commingle, inviting a variety of impressions and ideas about the Empire of Xian (and to some extent, the larger world as well).

This strong military presence works well, with the majority of the peace-keeping force focusing on its core mission – keeping the peace. Outsiders expecting fascism and tyranny are pleasantly surprised to find compassion, order, and mindfulness – hallmark values of the society that created them. This is further reinforced by the various monastic orders that populate the various lands, most of which have strong martial traditions.

This need for order and cooperation extends throughout Alessia's various societies, and most of its citizens have come to expect it. Those who stand vigilant against the darkness know it is often chaos and disorder that herald its return.

Technology – specifically magitech – also plays a big role in Alessian society. Having long been exposed to the Ish'ra and their technology, the Empire of Xian has been slowly and safely developing a network of socially responsible technology. While the empire previously explored this technology in secret, it has been openly championing its advancement since Galgaræ's fall; most citizens know how to use multiple magitech devices or services.

While there are organizations and ideas that still divide some of Alessia's people, many of the older social fetters – things like sexism and racism – have long since become historical markers for Alessia's people to remember; they are the times of darkness that forever inform the Light.

Setting the Right Expectations

Setting the right tone is essential to any role-playing game. When I set out to develop Alessia from Jere's translated notes, we had already spoken several times. I had a rough idea of what he was trying to develop and, to some extent, why. A family man with a love of gaming, Jere wanted a simple – but seemingly impossible task. He wanted a world where the great gods of good won a decisive battle against evil and darkness; he wanted a world where the Light won.

Furthermore, he wanted a world where, over the successive generations, the Light manifested as a new social standard for civic responsibility and behavior. We discussed the net effects of such a supernatural force for good and how, over millennia, it could eradicate things like sexism and racism. Then, we imagined what the Sovereigns of Light might accomplish, in the wink of an eye, before departing for

realms unknown. After discussing the impact, we claimed some territory slightly between the two extremes.

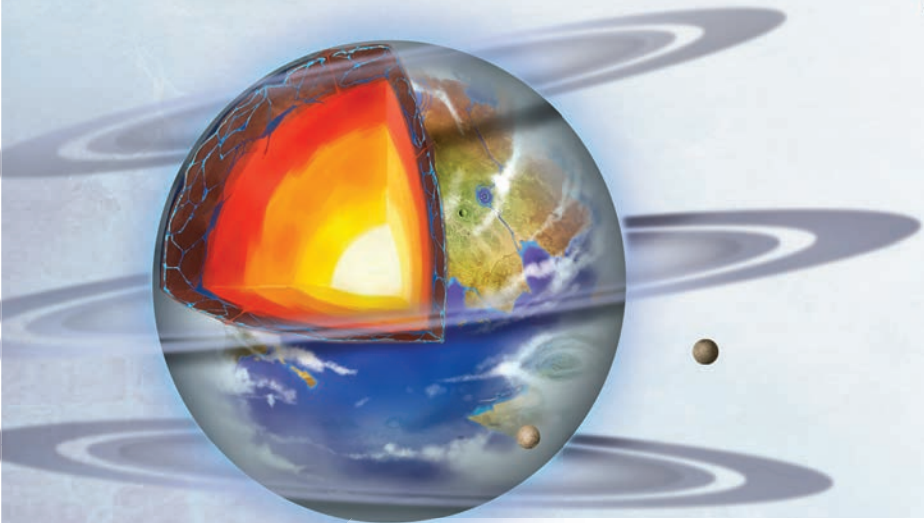
When you look at just about every fantasy-inspired role-playing game (if it has orcs in it – your game probably qualifies), you see the same formulas and narratives, dressed in slightly new clothes. The elves hate the dwarves, who hate the orcs, and so on. There are, of course, variations on these themes – sometimes we get sea elves – but for the most part, the story remains the same – racial betrayal, distrust, and fear of the other. We learn this is the acceptable standard from the opening stages of play. Distrust and racism often reign because they're low hanging fruit; we understand our world through the filters we're constrained by, coupled with the media we choose to actively consume.

Worse, we understand the world (as humans) through the narratives we're raised with, so often these concepts are easy "entry points" for players seeking immersion in the world.

But what about the future?

What about a world where hate isn't the default?

Alessia is a world that survived that particular challenge and, some 7,000 years later, stands as a shining example of what a unified planet could look like. It's not perfect and there are plenty of contested domains, ideas, and more – but it isn't a world built on racial divide. But becoming a beacon of hope for millions of lives doesn't come without a cost; acting as a refuge for others, Alessia has woven several alien cultures into its own, and over time, has cultivated a culture of unity that is important – especially as outside forces look at Alessia with lust in their eyes.



Forces like the Shadows of Venn and the Orgothii gather outside the Ring of Heaven, looking for ways to breach the planet's outer defenses and harvest her bountiful resources within. Likewise, the forces once loyal to Galgaræ continue to stir, carving out strongholds in the southeast where the Spawn of Galgaræ carefully reclaim territory for their fallen dragon-god.

This fact, alongside several other threats, has further encouraged various groups to cohabit and work together. *And just like that*, we shift the baseline from hatred to cooperation. Instead rewarding hate with a "bonus to hit," we opted to instead develop species synergies – bonuses that bring peoples together (described below).

GMs should consider this when outlining campaigns or adventures, especially when seeking out objectives or agendas for their foes. While individuals will have unreasonable, unrealistic, and just plain crazy ideas for creating havoc (hint, it's often about money), few of these should be based on hate of a particular group.

For the yökai, this is all but self-evident; most tribes have fluid family positions, with parents satisfying tribal responsibilities in a number of unique (often communal) ways. Moreover, as the oldest peoples of an actively evolving world, they've established a number of traditions proven to disrupt those traits from forming; the tribe knows that isolation breeds darkness, and in that darkness, even the best among them might surrender to the beast.

All of these elements are threads – woven into the greater tapestry that is Alessia's living, breathing, and evolving culture. Will there be content where hate, sexism, or, racism are a driving factor? Sure, but they're no longer the driving factors for the majority of Alessia's problems.

JERE'S THOUGHTS: FROM FINLAND, WITH LOVE.

Alessia was born in early 2014.

I have always loved both science fiction and fantasy, but I've historically focused most of my passion in the realms of fantasy, enjoying games such as D&D, Pathfinder, and *Exalted*. When I've wanted to indulge science fiction, I played games like *Fading Suns* and *Eclipse Phase*.

I knew in early 2016 that I wanted to build a world that included all of my favorite elements. I began by taking three words – fantasy, science-fiction, and Wuxia – using the trio as a guide for the world filled with magitech I imagined. I explored these words, plucking my favorite elements from each.

I knew, for instance, that I wanted Alessia to have ley lines that crisscrossed her surface, forming a magical network that connected everything and everyone – I wanted everything to play a role. I also knew I wanted to include science-fiction early into the setting, giving the whole planet ample time to evolve into the ideal society I imagined.

I also knew, early on, that I wanted Alessia to be a culturally rich and diverse place, with a host of 20+ species living together in relative harmony. I wanted to do it without relying on age-old tropes that promoted racism and similar prejudices.

I wanted a world where the forces of Light reigned triumphantly over the darkness; I wanted to build a world worth protecting, not one that the PCs needed to save, conquer, or change to make it ready for a much larger universe.

I wanted a world worth protecting.

I wanted to create a rich culture that shared roots with Wuxia, a trope I had long loved growing up. This inspired me to create the Eastern-themed Empire of Xian, which became the gold standard for cooperation and collaboration; I envisioned and designed the Empire to step outside of the traditional tropes, becoming a champion for social progress and a mindful, thinking society. I turned the police into Peacekeepers, doing away with the idea of militant feudalism and traditional power structures.

To my mind, Alessia is a world where heroes – capable of superhuman feats – fight to protect an ideal society that they have all come to love. While others will chase alternate motivations, fighting for honor, wealth, and even
to maintain older power structures, many will reach for the stars – seeing the bigger picture and helping Alessia's species evolve.

I knew that if I was going to share my vision of the world with others, I'd need to have it illustrated. So, I started looking for artists. I found Angel Huerta, whose work spoke to me like no others did. Eventually, I reached out and hired him. He's been working on Alessia ever since. Art in hand, I knew I was going to need help writing this book; I couldn't do this alone. So, in 2015, I started looking for companies to help me produce my world. I reached out to several, but I kept hitting roadblocks. No one was interested in the World of Alessia.

During the summer of 2016, I reached out to game designer Jaye Sonia, who had built his world, Rhune, through his company Storm Bunny Studios, and I pitched my world to him.

He said yes.

The book you're holding is the result of that collaborative effort. I've spent the past two, nearly three years, working beside Jaye Sonia and his team. I couldn't be happier with the world we've built.

I hope you feel the same way.

Sincerely,
Jere Manninen.

Jaye's Thoughts: Writing from Wisconsin

Alessia is different.

It is different in ways I'm still unfolding, even now as I write the introduction to a book I'm putting the final touches on, the third of many 'campaign primers' I've written and likely not the last. So, trying to catch and describe – even for just a moment – the full potential of what something might become is often hard to do, and in the long term, sometimes impossible to fully understand. In a number of ways, the knowledge of that potential, to be unlocked and unveiled across the plane of time, perfectly encapsulates what Alessia is – a celebration of life, of becoming, of joy, and of the hope that comes with rebirth.

That's important.

Alessia is different because its goals, aims, and hopes are different. It is world whose elders gambled on hope and cooperation instead of fear and hate.

Moreover, for the people of Alessia, knowledge of a larger outside world has never been a thing of mystery; their gods, their Light, and knowledge of their interstellar neighbors has always been certain. That certainty became the fertile soil in which the people would plant more seeds of hope, and with them, the cycle of cooperation that brought everyone to that point.

Longstanding champions of cooperation and collaboration, the people responsible for modern-day Alessia are not without enemies – cults dedicated to the Old Sovereigns, inter dimensional alien raiders, and the powers of Darkness all gather, each threatening to destroy what the people of Alessia have built. Whether at the edges of civilization or in the heart of Alessia's great cities, these fringe groups with their radical ideologies only serve to remind everyone that some people – no matter their species – will never be happy with peace.

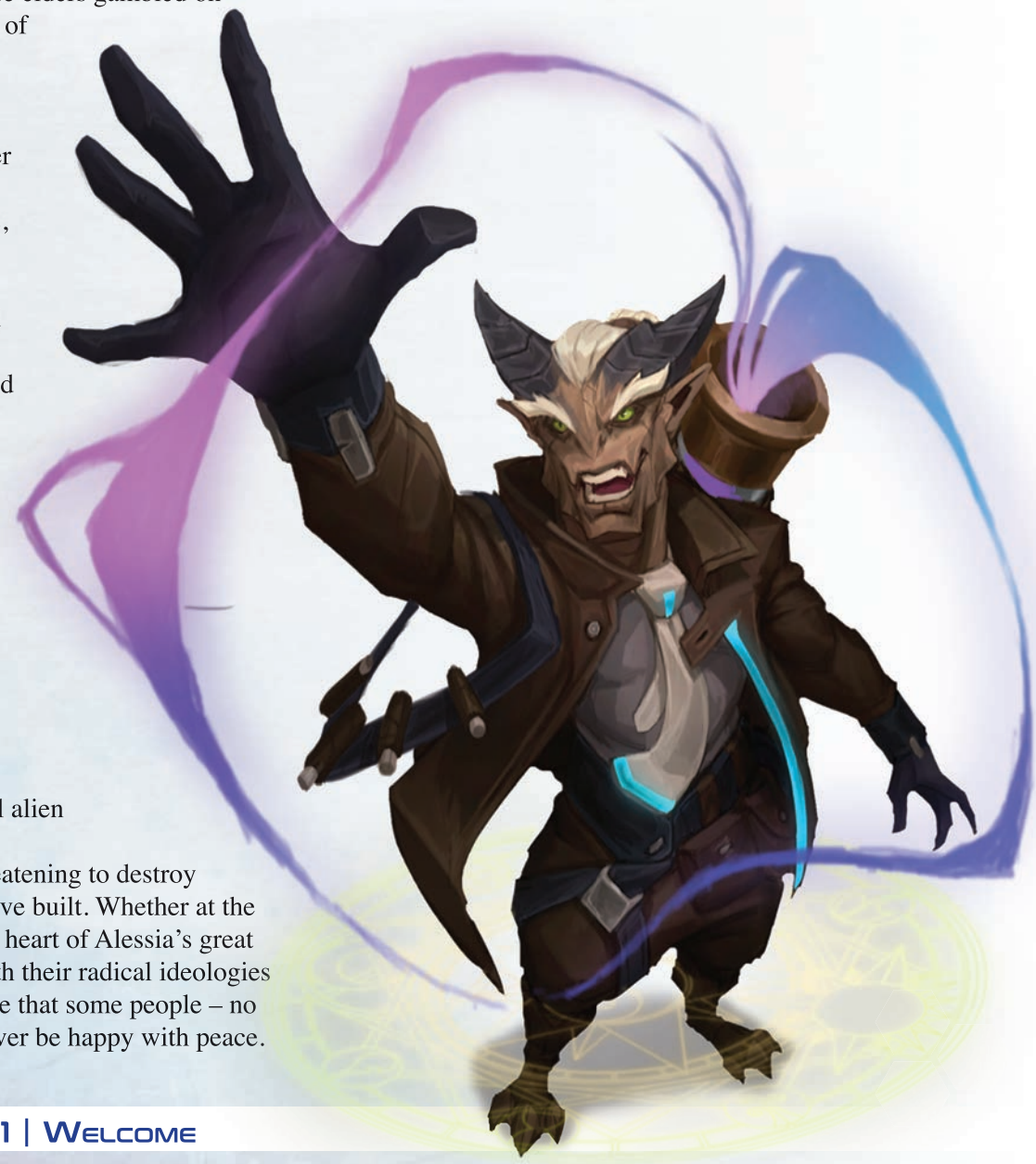
While we discuss Alessia's many threats throughout this primer, we have made a decision not to highlight any given one more than another – we feel that's something a GM and their players should decide when they sit down to make characters for the first time.

Alessia departs from many assumptions, and in doing so, I hope it is a setting that welcomes a diversity of stories, ideas, and adventures – we want Alessia to be the type of place heroes feel the need to fight for, not because they desire violence, but rather because the society they've built is worth it.

I'm proud of the world we've created.

I hope you enjoy it.

~Jaye Sonia, March 9th, 2020



Adding a Session Zero

Before you begin playing Alessia (or any tabletop role playing game), consider sitting down with your group to discuss your expectations for the campaign. Commonly known as a Session Zero, this event can be (and often is) one of the more important events that take place in a role playing game.

At its core, the concept is simple: your Session Zero is the first time everyone gets together, makes characters, discusses what they want from the gaming experience, and establish any boundaries for play. Does your group want to play villains instead of heroes? Does your group have special considerations, challenges, or needs that impact the game space? Is there a behavioral pattern you want to leave at the door before game begins? Do you need to establish a plan for getting food during game? All of these ideas (and more) can be discussed in this initial session.

So, what kinds of things should you address during your Session Zero?

- Use this session to make characters and define relationships between those characters.
- Use this session to discuss why you created those characters, what goals you have for them, and describe any potential confrontations that might arise because of these choices.
- Use this session to examine and align potential species synergies your characters might have.
- Use this session to discuss any topics that should be excluded from the table. Each group that sits down at the table will have unique needs when it comes to their characters. Likewise, players will have topics they don't want to cover in game.
- Use this session to set verbal boundaries and establish any particular language needs at the table; if your group is bilingual, make sure you've selected a language you're all comfortable with and that terms are clear to everyone involved. Additionally, take this time to share pronouns, name preferences, and similar social requirements.
- GMs should use this session to describe any special considerations for play; list and describe any special rules or requirements to play and give each player a clear path to achieve their goals within those parameters.
- GMs should use this session to have an open and frank discussion with their players about any areas of concern they have.
- Finally, GMs and players should outline their goals for the story.

With all of this on the table for discussion, the players and the GM should have a crystal-clear image of what their games are going to look like, how they should play, and what sorts of steps you'll take to resolve any issues that come up during play.

Wuxia: Martial Heroes

In English, the word Wuxia means "martial heroes." It defines a specific genre of fantasy literature with a matching trope in television and film. When you look at the genre's long history – one that spans 2,000 years – it's hard not to tread lightly. Because while our approach to Wuxia has been both researched and respectful, even the best-read designers miss elements their audiences expect. Please be mindful that while your personal expectations may not match our vision for Alessia, we've done our best to leave both GMs and players plenty of space to adapt the setting as needed.

I hope you discover the Alessia we've tried hard to present – an alternate, multi-cultural world set in a distant, dangerous universe, where cooperation and collaboration rule the day. We also hope that our stories ring true to the best parts of the trope; we want heroes to be heroes, not stereotypes. While we can't plan for everything, we spent a great deal of time evaluating how best to present this material in a culture-positive manner. We hope GMs and players follow our lead and present the World of Alessia in the best possible light.

In fact, the Light commands it.

Of course, that also means encouraging a risk-taking, high-flying approach to your game! GMs should make a point to reward players for investing in the story, especially when their brave and defiant acts leave lasting marks on Alessia and its people.

Alessia is a massive world, encircled by the Rings of Heaven and populated with no less than three different alien species, alongside a population of over twenty billion evolved beings, crossing dozens of species and covering half a planet.

14 Things Everyone Knows About Alessia

1 Alessia is massive

The Empire of Xian dominates Alessia's settled continents, stretching from the western deserts of Fyrea on its east to supporting colonies in the shadow of the Great Wall in Galgaræ. In the north, the empire has large, resourceful embassies in Y'rim, Shiran, and Yerwin. The empire occupies Elysia completely. While the two are on excellent terms, the Emerald Collective has only opened parts of Velestria to the Empire of Xian – its duties to protect the Great Trees of Life paramount to diplomacy.

While some outsiders continue to resist the empire, Emperor Zhin Zhu continues to welcome newcomers to his table.

2 Everyone knows Emperor Zhin Zhu

The Emperor of Xian occupies an important, symbolic seat at the head of the Empire of Xian; although he relies heavily on regional governors and their supporting clans, the emperor also wields divine power, accessing the Rings of Heaven through the spiritual connection the emperor has to the Light through its holiest of holies – *Fúsche Guang, the Spear of Light*.

When Emperor Xian "Xin" the First used *Fúsche Guang* to bring Galgaræ crashing to the surface of Alessia, he created a magical bond with this divine relic and the sacred position of his office. If a single leader would have the might to access the full power of the Rings of Heaven, then the Ring and its heralds would ensure that individual be worthy of that power. This has become a tradition that has encouraged Alessia's clans, houses, and families to aspire to their best, with every family knowing that they might, someday, ascend to lead the people of Alessia deeper into their glorious future.

Unlike traditional monarchies, the Rings of Heaven – through both *Fúsche Guang* and its many heralds – selects the new Emperor when the previous one dies (or elects to step down, becoming the Shadow Emperor).

The Historic Emperors & Empresses of Xian

- **Emperor Xian "Xin" the First**, Who Slew Galgaræ and Founded the Empire.
- **Emperor Xi Khan**, Who Slew the Seven Emerald Oni with the *Spear of Light*.
- **Emperor Li Hui of Xi,** Who Became as the Light.
- **Empress Chen of Wu**, Who Stole the Crimson Fire from Giants.
- **Emperor Xian the Second**, Who Discovered the *Lost Spear.*
- **Emperor Mu of Xi**, Who Slew the Black Phoenix with the *Spear of Light*.
- **Empress Tia Ze of Zhou**, Who Wielded the Spear Against the Shades of Abraxia.
- **Emperor Yu Diya of Xi**, Who Struck Peace with the *Spear of Light*.
- **Empress Lea Han of Xin**, Who Lost Her Shadow.
- **Emperor Xian the Third**, Who Restored the Spear.
- **Emperor Ji Han Lu of Zanna**, Who Brought Peace.
- **Empress Yusha Han of Wu**, The Queen Who Led Lions.
- **Emperor Liu of Han**, Who Stole the Spear from the Shadows.
- **Empress Zi Zanna of Xi**, Who Painted the Sky.
- **Emperor Ling of Han**, Who Slew the Herald of Shadows.
- **Emperor Zhu Zin**, the Herald of Light

The Rings of Heaven selects the new emperor from among its imperial citizenry, spending a decade training the new leader and ensuring their choice is truly wise.

Although today's imperial citizens have a voice and a vote when it comes to who leads them, the process was far less democratic in previous millennia.

The Secret Emperor

While the vast majority of the Empire of Xian and its allies believe Emperor Zhu Zin, the Herald of Light, runs the empire, a rare few trusted agents of the empire know the truth; the Secret Emperor – a spiritual being that is the harmonized will of the previous emperors – sits in the Asaræl Throne Room.

When he's not debating Lu Yan's Eleven Great Virtues with Tianlong and Zhulong, the Asaræl dragon and its counterpart, the Torch Dragon, the Secret Emperor works hand in hand with the sitting emperor to guide him to their harmonized vision. When the emperor speaks, as the divine will of the collective empire, he does so without a hint of irony.

The Imperial Seal

The Imperial Seal (featured on the right) appears on most imperial assets, including vehicles and on Peacekeeper's armor. Some assets or units may feature this seal in addition to other military or organizational markings appropriate to the unit.

The Peacekeeper's Last Watch

Peacekeeping comes with a cost.

Sometimes, that cost is paid on the field of battle. Other times, that price is paid later, in the shadows when someone is at their worst.

In Alessia, Peacekeepers take a vow to watch over one another, both while they serve, and long after they retire to more peaceful environments. When a Peacekeeper falls in Alessia, their brother and sister Peacekeepers gather to observe their Last Watch, a sober evening spent remembering their deeds, actions, and legacy.

3 Peacekeeper Traditions

Everyone knows that the Peacekeepers keep a number of strange, ancient traditions to celebrate both their victories and their losses.

The Hierarchy of the Light

Students of the Light have come to accept that among those who survived the War of the Sovereigns, a power structure arose that is infused with and through the emanations of the Light.

While many assume this radiance is gentle and "good," heroes throughout Alessia's past have learned that the brilliance of the Light can sometimes be too much for their terrestrial bodies and minds.

Masters of the Light know that, like all things on Alessia, accessing the brilliance of the Light takes time, practice, and patience.

THE LIGHT

THE SOVEREIGNS

THE ASARÆL DRAGONS

THE ANCIENT DRAGONS

THE HIDDEN EMPEROR

THE ASCENDED PROPHETS

THE PROPHET OF LIGHT

THE LIVING EMPEROR

THE ASCENDED HEROES

THE PEACEKEEPERS

4 The Empire of Xian is a Diverse Empire

Knowing its dark past and the millennia of division, strife, and war that Alessia endured, multiculturalism is no surprise to anyone (or at least to most of the learned people who call it home). While it has pockets of intolerance and regression, once most people have gazed upon the glory of the empire, they accept its political philosophy as a simple truth.

And why?

It's because the system works.

This is especially evident in the Empire of Xian, where the Emperor has openly invited all of Alessia to join in his vision. He's decreed that Alessia could, under his wise guidance, enjoy the 'thousand years of light.' Whether this comes to pass, the Emperor has taken great pains to turn his lands into examples of what all of Alessia could become, if only it would submit to the Empire's care. Although the Emperor swears that his intentions are pure, others have accused him of playing a political game, claiming that his actions are little short of an imperial takeover; from his creation of the Imperial Peacekeepers to his excessively long life, the Emperor's actions have drawn the ire of a select few citizens, most of whom have moved to the edge of the Empire. There, these citizens have formed a resistance that continues to plague the outskirts of the great Empire but does little in the way of real violence.

Of course, the Empire of Xian is only one of many; there are other places on Alessia where tensions exist, although these are thankfully rare. Such conflicts normally have their own sparks: everything from strained resources to old grudges often lie at the heart of such conflicts. And once diplomacy fails, anything is possible. Still, that has been the general consensus for centuries now, and most individuals accept it as the conventional wisdom of the day.

With all of its talk of tolerance, some might think the people of Alessia soft. Nothing could be further from the truth. If a thousand years of warfare taught them anything, it is this – a thousand years of peace would be much better. Of course, that peace does not come free, and it is only through the constant vigilance, the measured justice, and the ability to act that keeps everything running as smoothly as it does. While much of this does fall to the Empire of Xian, the people of Velestra, as well as those in the Holy Kingdom of Asrai seem to manage equally well without Xian' tutelage.

Of course, the further out one goes, the rougher things get – regardless of whether you have scales. The Empire of Xian is outlined in greater detail in Chapter 5.

5 The Kaima Rule the Unseen Realms

The kaima are as much a part of Alessia's cosmology as they are Alessia's stones, rivers, storms, or fields. Bound to nature, art, song, and a million concepts that most species still struggle with, the kaima are a species of spirits that act in the realms beyond the physical, creating mysteries for mortals to unlock, weaving stories as they do.

Operating entirely on the Ethereal Plane, Alessia's kaima perform a slow, steady walk around the world, methodically seeding all of the lands around them wit great mysteries. When they come to a place that suits them, many of these spirits will take on mystical forms or shapes; otherwise, the kaima will take over a physical location that causes great emotion. This fact remains the basis for many of the theories that surround the kaima, including some theories that link the kaima to both haunts and genius loci. While several of these theories could be true, only a few capable seers readily access their realms, and if they're privy to any special knowledge, they're not speaking.

Before one can fully understand the kaima, one must understand their needs. These are told best in the story of their Great Walk. This story is told below.

6 The Story of the Great Walk

Long before the first of the djinnkinn nobles stepped into the light of day or the first yōkai stood on two paws, the kaima were. A species of spirits born in the shadow of the life energies emanating from Alessia's Crystal Lattice and eternally powered by its ley lines, the kaima were and are the very first beings. Born of light and divine knowledge, these creatures developed a unique niche within the world's evolving ecology – they create and feed on mystery.

All kaima know a single truth – most species cannot abide mystery, not for long. Ask any seer or shaman and they'll tell you the same thing – the kaima are a mysterious people. Those who know and understand the kaima know this is only a layer of the truth; the kaima need mystery to survive.

Since the dawn of time, Alessia's kaima have watched species arrive, evolve, and grow wise under the rich life aura of the Crystal Lattice – they have become wise to their ways and know all too well the pain of their darkness, when it shadows their hearts. This knowledge has, for millennia, informed the kaima's path in Alessia and has given rise to a tradition known simply as 'The Great Walk.'

The Great Walk is a cultural and social rite of passage designed to create constructive mysteries throughout Alessia, which they hope will enrich and encourage all of Alessia's mortal species. When kaima step onto this path, they do so with the knowledge that they may never see the results of their work, with kaima creating mysteries that might last generations. Kaima on this path are free to create any kinds of mysteries, leaving them relatively free to create and destroy in the mortal realm as they see fit, provided the fruit of their labor leaves a mystery to be uncovered.

Kaima who undergo this walk spend years on the path, creating important mysteries throughout the course of their journeys. As with all peoples, some kaima will deviate and specialize along the way, but most follow the Old Ways and embrace the First Great Tradition, creating one of each of The Nine Great Mysteries. These are offered as a song or recited as poetry by the kaima, who say,

> ***"We sing the mystery of body, the mystery of mind,***
> ***We seek the mystery of family, over the mystery of time.***
> ***We sing the mystery of place, embrace the mystery of rhyme,***
> ***We delve the mystery of chaos, through the mystery of death.***
> ***That we might know the greatest of mysteries, the mystery of I."***

Different traditions among the kaima assign differing meanings to these words and mysteries, although the majority accept the following definitions:

• ***The Mystery of Body***. This mystery tests an individual's ability to master their body. This is often achieved through one of the many martial arts practiced throughout the Empire of Xian.

• ***The Mystery of Mind***. This mystery tests an individual's ability to master their mind. This is a broadly tackled challenge, with individuals seeking it through everything from extreme sports to simple meditation.

• ***The Mystery of Family***. This mystery tests a family's bonds. Every house and tradition that survives this challenge and learns this secret gains great power in the world.

• ***The Mystery of Time***. This mystery comes later in many lives, but sometimes comes early, as well. Those who tackle this mystery learn to shape how they move through and use their time 'wisely.'

• ***The Mystery of Place***. A favorite mystery of the kaima, this mystery tests an individual's knowledge of a place, often by revealing secrets or truths. Individuals who master this challenge learn to create special abodes for themselves deep in the magical heart of Alessia.

• ***The Mystery of Rhyme***. Often confused with music, the mystery of rhyme is one that challenges an individual's understanding of ordering and cycles. Individuals who master this mystery learn to influence their social lives in powerful ways.

• ***The Mystery of Chaos***. This is one of the more challenging mysteries. Individuals who seek to master it are challenged by removing all order from their lives. Very few individuals seek out or ever master this mystery.

• ***The Mystery of Death***. Seers who study the kaima commonly link this mystery to its predecessor, suggesting the two are sung in the same line to support their casual relationship. Everyone tackles this challenge at the end of their lives. Kaima who create death mysteries are rarely good creatures.

• ***The Mystery of I***. This mystery is seen as the final mystery, achieved only after all others. Some argue it can be achieved by the living, but only those of great wisdom and grace can do so. Those who master this mystery gain a mental fortitude that defies arcane and scientific understanding.

The kaima's need for mystery is both biological (a thing of sustenance) and cultural – many kaima define themselves socially through their "art," more specifically their ability to weave important stories into the mysteries they create. They believe, through this process, they can shape mortal life and influence its development; these kaima work hand in hand with seers of all kinds, bringing mysteries back to the world and retarding progress in creative, species-enhancing ways.

• ***The Day of All-Knowledge***. While nearly all of Alessia's species would welcome this day, which many believe will come through a full expression of the Light in the world, others know a darker truth. When Alessia has unlocked all of its secrets, the last of the kaima will

die. Alessia's kaima and seers work hand in hand to create mysteries they hope will hold this day at bay – for all long as possible.

Others, of course, understand its inevitability and make a powerful counterpoint – when the last of the kaima die, they, too, will return to the Crystal Lattice and be reborn into something even greater. Those who hold back mortals do so only out of fear. They need only trust in the Light and embrace that new dawn.

7 The Ancient Yökai

Although much of Alessia is at peace today, many of the species who cohabit on her continents did not always get along. This is doubly true of the yökai, whose ancient lineages and tribal lines fl ow back to the beginning of Alessia's first stories. Most regard the yökai as The First Born, pointing toward elaborate cultural myths as the source of all of creation. These same scholars also point to the cave paintings of Northern Shiran, as well as those they've located in the Salt Flats of Southern Fyrean, as proof that the long age of the yökai starting with the very dawn of time.

These same scholars agree that the rise of terrible violence was manifesting naturally; the yökai were still in their earliest stages of their collective evolution. Although brutal, these wars further defined the lessons the yökai would eventually come to teach themselves, forging early alliances and forming some of the very first intra-species bonds. Although a turbulent time for most of Alessia, the fi rst two millennia of the yökai's reign also established some of its earliest trade routes, borders, tribal outposts, war-bands, and eventually, tribes willing to band together under a single warlord.

The wars that followed were cruel.

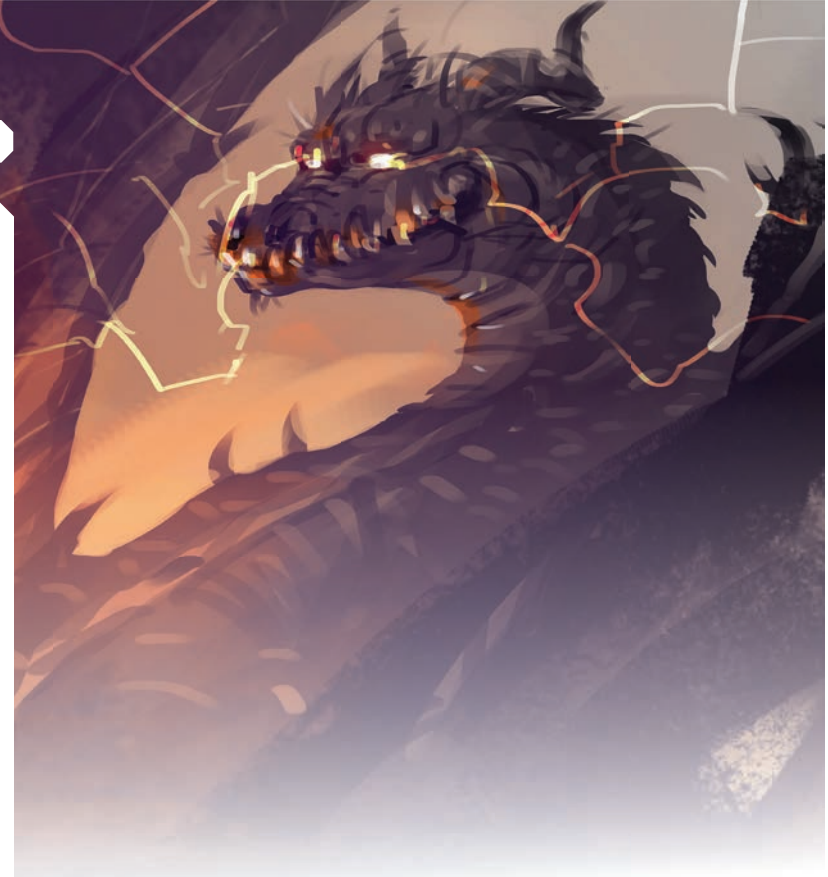
These wars raged throughout the Alessia's First Age. At the end of the first millennium, several empires arose, challenging these warlords and giving hope to those done fighting.

Although these borders continued to shift throughout the first half of the second millennium, they stabilized before the end of the age, concluding around the Council Fires of Yerwin. Ending over two millennia of growth, discovery, evolution, and brutal conflict, this new peace is exactly what the yökai needed to cement their place in Alessia – especially in light of what would soon follow.

Although yökai shamans foretold the event, no one was prepared for *The Enduring Dream*, a powerful, alien Voidship escaping cruelties from beyond the stars.

The Enduring Dream crashed in south-eastern Elysia, forever changing both its culture and the various evolutionary paths of the species living there. This was especially notable among the yökai there, although in ways few initially understood. For the early evolved peoples, the influence of the Voidship was both frightening and powerful, subtly changing them in ways they didn't fully realize.

When the Seven Asaræl Dragons (a family of ancient dragons honored by the ancient humans of the steppes of Elysia) rose to investigate and monitor the Ish'ra, these dragons created the first Dragonsworn, hatching noble and obedient clutches by the hundreds, and then, by the thousands. These new species slowly and peacefully integrated with the yökai, gently shaping new communities throughout the jungles that surrounded them.



8 The Rotting God Galgaræ

Galgaræ is a lesion from history's weeping memories, a blot that continues to pollute the waters west of Velestra. Displayed as a fallen beast with nine heads, each crowned in fire, the Great Beast Galgaræ was destined to destroy the Sovereigns, rising '*beyond the Silk Sea, where the first stars fell…*' in the early stages of Alessia's final, divine war.

It did not.

Instead, the Dreadlords of Venn summoned Galgaræ – The Great Beast of Destruction – early in the War of Sovereigns, long before the Great Beast was ready. When Galgaræ rose to face the gathered hosts that stood in defiance, the Soon-to-be-Emperor struck, launching *Fúsche Guang* ("Radiant Light") into the sky like a spear made purely from the Light. His aim, guided by the gods themselves, was true; the hero struck the great beast and brought it low, saving the Sovereigns and ending the threat Galgaræ posed to all of Alessia.

Or so everyone thought.

When the dust finally cleared, Galgaræ lay 'dead' in the center of what was once the homeland of the Fengu. Its corpse quickly polluted the local ecosystems, forcing the local Fengu populations to either adapt or flee their lands. Most choose the latter, fearing the beast might rise once more and wanting nothing to do with it if that happened.

For centuries, cleanup efforts met with every resistance, from strange storms to cursed outposts; eventually, the Empire of Xian adjusted their efforts and built a wall around the rotting corpse, thereby attempting to contain its foul spread. While their efforts were successful for a time, evidence suggests that Galgaræ's rot continues unabated, soaking into the sweet earth below and slowly poisoning everything around it.

9 The Evolution of Alessia: Mega-Fauna

Several factors – including both the fabled Trees of Life and the Crystal Lattice – have impacted Alessia's overall global development. This is readily evident in the flora and fauna of the world, which when subjected to ideal situations (environments without natural predators, or in proximity to a Tree of Life), can grow far beyond the normal ranges for a species.

While mega-fauna any kind are possible on Alessia, they are thankfully rare; only a handful of organizations, across the globe, boast tame (and employed) mega-fauna. Adventurers exploring Alessia will find most mega-fauna in remote places like the vast deserts of Fyrea, the frozen tundra of northern Shiran, the open plains of Yerwin, and the deep, dark jungles of Velestra.

10 The Floating Cities: Realms of the Silver Light

Although the Empire of Xian dominates a better part of the settled lands of Alessia, it remains earthbound, using skyships to patrol its skies. Those skyship captains know the truth of the vast empire of air, however – there are others hidden between the clouds.

Living in massive, floating cities that dot the horizon, tribes of Noble Gnomes see to ancient, arcane tasks that keep the cities afloat. Working from ancient plans written by Alessia's giants, these Noble Gnomes work tirelessly to ensure their empire remains in its rightful domain – thousands of feet above the earth.

Although most of this empire remains hidden to outsiders, the most social of these gnomes move to Axisa, the largest and most trusted floating city between Alessia and the Ring itself. A city under its own command, Axisa is one of the few places capable of docking several skyships at once.

Although the city is managed officially by gnomes, its population has swelled to include outsiders of all stripes, with large concentrations of djinnkin moving into the city. While no one knows how or why this would be to anyone's advantage, outsiders who have walked Axisa's Streets long enough know a simple truth: it's a long way down.

Unlike the terrestrial kingdoms below, each floating city has its own rules, its own leaders, and its own customs. Some of these cities are exceedingly open and festive, holding grand parties and festivals, while others are studious and quiet.

Indeed, some of these cities are capable of docking in terrestrial locations around Alessia, magically merging with the land as they do. Although these events are rare (happening no more than once a century), when they do occur, people come from hundreds of kilometers around to witness the important events.

11 The Path of Light: A Universal Faith

The Path of Light is a universal faith with more identities, cultural references, little gods, family spirits, kaima, and tribal practices than most people care to count. A unifying, central tenet of modern society, everyone has an opinion when it comes to the Light and the gods it once represented.

Although particular faiths and clergies have individualized (and specialized) pantheons for their regional gods, most of the people who follow the Light accept the following, general hierarchy as being true (see the table on page 12):

How and where people honor the Light is left entirely up to them, although a number of monastic traditions have specific restrictions, practices, and rules that must be followed by their members. These restrictions, taboos, and practices are often designed to reinforce specific value systems, with some monks embracing martial traditions while others become scholars, healers, and even teckers. Likewise, many clerics and holy men take up the call of the Light, with most of them becoming Universalists; others select specific traditions or personalities from among the Sovereigns, who they treat in all ways as living, breathing gods.

Although few people have time for theology, it is a respected concentration of study in Alessia. Those capable of collecting, recording, and comparing these stories, myths, and legends can make names for themselves, especially in larger cities.

There are countless ways to worship the Light, doing so (and channeling) is always considered a good act (running the spectrum from chaos to law).

In Southern Fyrea, Wonder Workers continue to tease ancient powers from beneath the sands, while far to the north, the Rune Masters of Yrim carve secrets from the first languages into the stones, staves, and hearts of all species. While the Jötunians sometimes take credit for these ancient symbols of power, the people of central and southern Elysia are quick to remind you otherwise. Each ancient culture has tapped into this universal power in unique ways, giving rise to powerful connections that persist today.

Not all honor the Light equally, however.

In places like central Fyrea, where the descendants of the ancient Gnole Priest-Kings still honor their ancestral gods, things are much different. In remote regions like these, ancient temples still dominate the land and their priests, trained to preserve their gods' traditions, wander the deserts seeking converts and establishing shrines. While most of these holy men are peaceful, some are not. Clerics traveling unknown lands are expected to keep watch for extremists with violent tendencies toward their faith and practice(s).

In most of the settled lands, and in all of The Empire of Xian, there is only a single faith. This faith is universal and empowers all it touches, furthering the Sovereigns' progress and expansion into the darkness beyond.

Although there are cults, denominations, and differences among the faithful, the majority of Alessia's peoples believe the same general things – worshiping the Light and holding up its Four Pillars: **mercy, truth, hope,** and **courage.**

12 The Magic Behind Society

Alessia has always known magic: it is at the source of all of its traditions, from the ancient gnolish priesthoods of Fyrea to the roaming shamans of Yerwin. It has always been and today, continues to be the source of most of the world's wonders. Today, magic fuels everything – from skyships and city shields to hand-held HoloPads.

Alessia boasts an extensive array of options that citizens – both rich and poor – can use to enrich their lives. For many, this is seen in the simple, but practical application of magic as part of civic enrichment. Most cities enjoy clean water, heating, lighting, and even trash removal – all of it automated, both by magic and technology. Magic has given Alessia the Houses of Healing, drifters, dimensional storage, and the ability to step next to the stars …and sometimes beyond.

Of all things, nothing displays this mastery of perfect harmony more than the Rings of Heaven – an orbital ring built and powered by the departing Sovereigns to protect their children.

13 The Houses of Healing

While the concept and technology has spread to other locations around Alessia, the Empire of Xian was the first to introduce the Houses of Healing to the world.

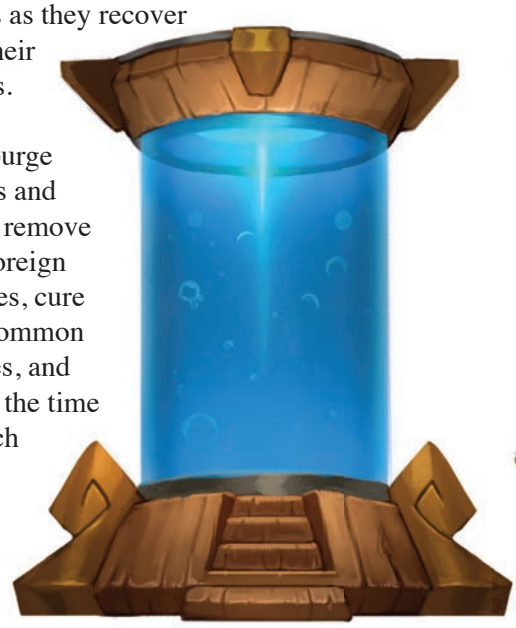
These houses have improved everyone's quality of life. Where archaic and outdated philosophies demand fealty in exchange for healing, the people of Alessia know that, in most places, healing is only a few doors down – at a cost that is marginal at best. Continually maintained by agents of the Path of Light, working in tandem with The Qi-Ji and its Wonder Workers, the Houses of Healing that populate the land do so at more than just the grace of the Empire; the Houses of Healing are proof that the Path of Life is the highest of ideals.

The Kaima and The Light

Although many faiths have evolved into the Path of Light, the spirits of the land that the ancients once honored have not departed. Instead, they have taken steps to combine their efforts with that of the rest of the people, seeking health, happiness, and light. Working as allies to the Light, many of these native spirits continue to make requests of the living.

Magitech: Automated Healing

Throughout the Empire of Xian, most Houses of Healing contain one (or more) **Healing Chambers** - advanced magitech tanks that assist the various species as they recover from their injuries. These tanks purge poisons and toxins, remove most foreign parasites, cure most common diseases, and double the time in which most beings heal.



Magitech: Healing Tank

The Healing Houses in Qingshan

14 The War of Sovereigns

Had you embraced the doom of Alessia's pre-war prophets, you would have thought the War of Sovereigns the war to end them all.

It was not.

The war opened slowly, affecting each of the continents differently:

In Elysia, discord broke the ancient peace between Alessia's humans and their ish'ra guests; ninja clans, in service to some of the land's oldest families, moved to execute powerful opposition agents, leading to open warfare in the streets. While bands of heroes worked to keep the peace, the chaos continued to build. When Galgaræ appeared overhead, violence and fire were already ripping through the streets.

In Fyrea and Yerwin, meteors appeared, painting the skies in fire and darkness. While Fyrea's powerful arcanists were able to shield their cities, their actions drained much of the lands below – siphoning great swathes of life and land from the planet itself, the rituals above magnified unknowingly by the Crystal Lattice below. Yerwin, for its part, survived the attacks – its peoples had long been nomads and only a few meteors struck their great tribal chains.

In Shiran, and all along the northern crown of the known world, the winter pushed south with a vengeance, calling forth the ancient dead. In Yrim, berserkers battled their fallen kin, setting fire to entire holds in hope of stopping the dead.

In Velestra and the Fengu Islands, doom was on the lips of every prophet and cleric, with nearly all echoing the same dooms, over and over – "flee, before the shadow that is death descends." Among the elves and the nagai, both of whom still nurtured old wounds, this erupted in a series of violent exchanges, each over the right to stand guard over particular Trees of Life. The fengu handled their prophets wisely, emptying entire port cities and building flotillas that carried thousands to safety in Velestra to the east. In Velestra, these tensions only grew as the elves, fearing an 'invasion' from the fengu in the west, prepared to meet them violently on the beaches, threatening to turn old allies away in their time of need.

When the Heralds of Shadow arrived, no one expected they'd sow such death and destruction. Unleashing infernal weapons powered by the stuff of dead stars, these Heralds of Shadow destroyed a third of Alessia's population, obliterating entire cities with this liquid shadow.

Soon after, the battle was joined.

When Galgaræ ripped through the skies beyond Alessia's horizons, it entered her atmosphere cloaked in chaos and darkness, bringing with the great dragon all the parts of a much older universe. It bore into the universe a world of void-dust, living shadow, and temporal regret. When Galgaræ spread its great wings to challenge the gathered hosts, it failed to do what so many prophecies promised.

Instead of destroying a third of the gathered hosts, Galgaræ fell to a single hero, who stepped out of line and launched a great spear – shrouded in divine light – at the heart of the terrible beast.

His spear struck true.

When Galgaræ crashed to the surface, it sterilized an entire continent, killing millions in the process. The gathered forces, following the Dread Lords of Venn, pushed the attack, hoping to marshal their troops around their fallen champion. Their gamble worked, but only in part – the Dread Lords of Venn succeeded in pushing their troops deeper into the conflict, but their tactics quickly fell apart, leading them to a loss that would echo through the millennia.

The gathered hosts – the divine servants of the Sovereigns – made quick work of those who stood defiantly, cutting them down in only a few days. Within weeks, the Sovereigns pushed to counter the Dread Lords, driving them back to their Voidships and out into space, scattering them to the hidden shadows between the stars.

Character Creation

Building a character for the World of Alessia isn't much different than building a character for any other 5e-compatible game, and like most games, the choices you make will determine who you play in the World of Alessia. Will you select an oracle and channel the Will of the Light? Will you become a fengu ninja working to right an ancient wrong? Or do you see yourself piloting a skyship, with a strong minotaur sidekick? Maybe you want to play an evolved being, one of the yökai or even one of the ish'ra – refugees from a far-off realm.

Once you have a vision for the character you want to play firmly in your mind, you need only start making some of those choices, defining and "building" the character as you go along. Oh, and if you don't have a firm character concept in mind when you begin, that's okay, too: your GM and fellow players can help you figure that out, too.

Once you've settled on a character concept, you need to make a few decisions.

First, pick your species. In Alessia, every character comes from one or more species (which replace 'races' in the game): this primer includes 26 unique species from which you can select. Once you know your species, you can start to look at the kind of role you want to play in the group (something you may have discussed during **Session Zero**) and whether your species shares a species synergy with another in the party. You'll want to note any species-related ability score adjustments you'll be making, too, as you'll need to make these adjustments later.

Next, you're going to select your background. I recommend selecting this before selecting your class for a simple reason: knowing your background can make selecting your class much easier, especially when you designed the character so that one influences the other (or has direct ties to it). When you select your background, you'll gain a number of skills and a related benefit. Once you know what these are, it makes selecting your class skills a lot easier.

Next, you're going to select your class. Like the species you selected, your class will grant you a small adjustment to one or more of your ability scores, while granting you a number of unique class-based abilities, a selection of skills from which to choose, and any starting equipment or wealth your character has coming their way.

Next, you're going to roll some dice (unless you use a point-buy system) ***to determine your character's six main attributes*** – Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. These six common attributes describe the character's core mechanical strengths and weaknesses: the higher a score, the better the character naturally performs in that area.

Once you've assigned and adjusted these attributes (accounting for class and species adjustments), you're going to start filling in the rest of your character's specific details. You'll list any gear or equipment you have, select class-based spells or powers you've selected, and write down any of the fine details not previously covered.

Once you have a clear picture of who you want this character to be, you need to start looking at the next big question in any character's development – what do you want this character to do? No character is complete without discussing their character goals.

Character Goals

Character goals are an important part of any game but are especially important in Alessia. The World of Alessia Campaign Primer presents character goals as cornerstones of that development, treating them as invisible prerequisites for a given character's resolve. GMs and players who want to create a direct, measurable link between a character's goals and their daily resolve might consider using the Daily Resolve Optional Rule described below:

Optional Rule: Daily Resolve:

Each day, when a character completes a long rest, they gain a pool of resolve equal to their proficiency bonus, provided they met one of three prerequisites during the previous day: the character must have:

1) actively pursued a personal character goal,

2) actively cooperated with the party on a group goal, or

3) been granted a leave of absence by the group to rest or recuperate. If the character met at least one of these three tests, then they replenish their pool of resolve for that day.

Characters who do none of these do not replenish any resolve that day. The incentive for this rule is simple: this rule gives player characters a mechanical incentive to focus on not only their group's collective story, but also each character's personal story. We wanted groups of players who were invested in specific pieces of Alessia's lore, as well as the larger story playing out. We also wanted to pay homage to a classic trope common in Wuxia: we wanted to personalize the classic teacher-student relationship, giving GMs a way to teach stunts ad hoc throughout their stories. To this end, we created a pool of stunts – special abilities that anyone who meets the prerequisites can learn – for all characters to spend their resolve.

While some character goals may include violence, we encourage GMs and players to work together to develop alternate character goals that better suit their story – especially if that story includes paladins, peacekeepers, or especially lawful characters. While a character's alignment will (and probably should, on occasion) come into conflict with their goals, GMs and players should look at these events as opportunities to refine the story – not as irreversible events.

Jaye's GM Tip:
Let the PCs Tell the Story!

In my personal games, player agency is paramount. That said, I will sometimes question player actions to ensure both I and the player understand precisely what is taking place. I often go to painstaking lengths to ensure players understand the impact of their actions before unveiling the results of their heroics.

When I was first learning to GM, I often saw these as game-teaching moments. As I grew in skill as a GM, I learned to step back and take what I call a more "open-handed approach" to the whole process: I learned to riff off the players' conspiracies, their personal goals, and their characters' goals.

I learned to let the players tell part of the story.

When you let the players tell the story, you let them teach other how they prefer to have fun; let your tacticians lead battles, give your actors roles for their characters to play, and give your optimizers challenges they can overcome with smart mechanics. Learn to do this, and your players will love you.

Imperial Peacekeepers

Imperial Peacekeepers are as much a tradition as they are a silent, standing army that could mobilize in moments. Created in the wake of the War of Sovereigns by the common people responsible for putting things back together, the Peacekeepers were originally a regional effort. The original Peacekeepers were a collection of local heroes willing to pick up a shield to defend their neighbors' homes, lives, and liberties.

Today's Peacekeepers train constantly for war, running simulations and exercises, both as a show of strength and as a reminder: were the sleeping dragon to awake, its wrath would be wide and far-reaching.

LORE: Galgaræ's Impact

Galgaræ's impact did more than just displace the Alessia's Fengu – it did generational damage to the lands and people of Alessia. Galgaræ's corpse became a new touch of darkness, spawning monsters and evil, sentient beings alike. Today, Galgaræ spawns dozens of new tribes of monsters each year, creating everything from mutated Scale-Poisoned Kronos to Death Drakes.

USING LORE CALLOUTS

This primer includes dozens of lore callouts creative GMs and players can use to drive their stories forward, and we encourage you to look for these callouts. Most lore and development callouts will include three pieces of relevant information: the lore, how the GM can use it, and how the player can use it. Some lore callouts will include suggested stunts, as well.

These lore callouts look like this:

LORE: THE DARKFALL PROPHECY

Long before Galgaræ crashed to Alessia and corrupted the lands there, Alessia's shamans foretold the time of the Great Destroyer and the waves of ash, death, and loss it would bring to everyone's shores. Although the Dreadlords of Venn accelerated that timetable, the Darkfall Prophecy still came to pass. In 5,796, Galgaræ destroyed the fengu's island kingdom to the west of Velestra.

- **For GMs**. GMs can use the prophecy to drive the campaign by involving one or more of the characters' families in the original quest to recover Fúsche Guang; today, only their descendants can sense the great spear.
- **For Players**. As a student of the Darkfall Prophecy, you know that the Galgaræ's crash landing on Alessia was foretold, and it heralds something much darker. Evil is spreading into the world, and you must stop it. When you make this your personal character goal, you regain a bonus point of resolve whenever you learn a new piece of lore about the Darkfall Prophecy. You may gain a number of bonus resolve points equal to your Intelligence modifier in this fashion.
- **Stunt**. Characters who unlock three or more pieces of the Darkfall Prophecy learn the stunt Aspect of Anja's Heart.

Although this *World of Alessia Campaign Primer* contains a host of these lore callouts, players should note that these lore callouts also exist in the individual adventures and source books, as well. We invite player characters to seek them out.

FEATS

Alessia introduces a number of new feats to your game. These feats are designed specifically for the World of Alessia and are intended to compliment feats from other sources. While thorough, this list of feats is far from exhaustive. A shortlist of the feats contained in this section is provided in the table below.

Feat	Prerequisite	Description
Advanced Armor Training	Light Armor Training	You've trained with some of the best armors in the Empire of Xian.
Auto Rifle Training	—	You know how to fire, clean, clear, maintain, and identify kinetic weapons of all kinds.
Basic Energy Rifle Training	—	You know how to operate most energy weapons.
Basic Melee Weapon Training	—	You know how to use one or more melee weapons.
Combat Training	Wisdom 13	You've been trained to exploit opportunities in combat.
Dead Eye	Wisdom 13	You know and when to place your shots.
Demolitions Training	Intelligence 13	You know how to handle explosives, especially in crystal mining.
Dervish	—	You have trained with the Fyrean Scythis Blades.
Dodge	—	You know how to avoid physical attacks.
Drifter	—	You've spent thousands of hours working on drifters and dashers.
Exo-Skeleton Armor Training	—	You've trained to wear exoskeletons and similar body-enhancing frames.
Expert Knowledge	Intelligence 15	You know a great deal about one thing in particular
Fighting Style: Asaræ's Aerial Wrath	Ability to fly	You know how to fly and fight well.
Fighting Style: Emperor's Way	—	You know the Imperial House of Xian's Fighting Style.
Fighting Style: Jötunfolk's Fury	—	You know the fighting style of the Jötunfolk of Northern Shiran.
Fighting Style: Nekomata's Claw Fighting	—	You know the Way of the Nekomata.
Fighting Style: Pandren's Path	—	You have trained with the Pandrens and know their ways.
Fighting Style: Path of War	—	You've trained with Elven Warriors. A lot.
Hacker	Proficiency in the Computers Skill	You know how to operate a Halo Terminal much more than most.
Heavy Armor Training	Medium Armor Training	You can wear heavy armor.
Magitech Initiate	—	You've got a little magic up your sleeve.
Medium Armor Training	Light Armor Training	You can wear Medium Armor.
Investigator's Eye	—	You've got an eye for the details.
Kaima Sight	—	You have learned to look into Yù Xing, the Realm of the Jade Stars.
Light Armor Training	—	You can wear and use light armor.
Lucky	—	You're luckier than most.
Media Personality	—	You're kind of a big deal.
One Hand on the Wheel	Proficiency in the Drive Skill	Your look at traffic laws with the same disdain you do gravity.
Parkour	Dexterity 17	You see walls not as barriers, but as challenges.
Pilot	Intelligence 13	You know how to pilot a specific vehicle.
Rifle Expert	Proficiency in any rifle	You know how to shoot a rifle.
Stunt Driver	Proficiency in the Drive or Pilot Skills	You've been trained to perform stunts in vehicles.
Skyship Gunner	—	You know how to operate the shipboard weapon systems on most skyships.
Surgeon	Intelligence 17	You can use the Medicine skill to perform surgery.

ADVANCED ARMOR TRAINING [REQ: LIGHT ARMOR TRAINING]

You've trained with some of the best armors in the Empire of Xian. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- When you spend a point of resolve as a bonus action, you can quickly don your advanced armor, reducing the time it takes to don in half.
- When you spend a point of resolve as a bonus action, you may eliminate the disadvantage your armor imparts to your Dexterity (Stealth) checks until the beginning of your next turn.

BASIC AUTO-RIFLE TRAINING

You've trained with the Peacekeepers, a police force, or similar professionals to learn the basics about semi-automatic, automatic, and single-fire rifles of all kinds. You know how to fire, clean, clear, maintain, and identify basic kinetic weapons of all kinds. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You are proficient with simple and martial kinetic rifles.

BASIC ENERGY RIFLE TRAINING

You've trained with the Peacekeepers, a police force, or similar professionals to learn the basics about firearms. You know how to fire, clean, clear, maintain, and identify basic energy firearms of all kinds. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You are proficient with simple and martial energy rifles.

BASIC MELEE WEAPONS TRAINING

You've trained with any number of monasteries, battle halls, or military units, exploring a number of traditional and non-traditional melee weapons. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You are proficient with martial (melee) weapons.

COMBAT TRAINING [REQ: WISDOM 13]

You've been trained to look for opportunities to exploit in combat. When an enemy combatant provokes an opportunity attack from you by moving from a threatened square or otherwise performing a risky action, you can immediately attack them as a reaction, using either a weapon in hand or an unarmed strike.

DEAD EYE [REQ: WISDOM 13]

You've got an eye for deadly rhythm of combat and know how to place your shots to avoid hitting your allies. You gain the following benefits:

- You do not suffer disadvantage for shooting into melee combat.
- You may 'aim' as a bonus action to gain a bonus d4 on your d20 roll to hit with that weapon.

DEMOLITIONS TRAINING (INTELLIGENCE 13)

You were trained to use and handle explosives properly, and you know how to set charges, remove explosives, and to prepare most demolitions to ensure their destructive force is correctly (and safely) focused. You gain the following benefits:

- You do not suffer disadvantage when using the Technology skill to disarm, handle, or set explosive charges.
- You are proficient with the Demolition Tool Kit.

DERVISH

Your training with Fyrean Scythis Blades grants you the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- While wielding two Fyrean Scythis Blades (or similar, GM-approved finesse weapons), you gain a +1 to all Attack rolls with those blades.
- While wielding two Fyrean Scythis Blades, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

DODGE

You know how to avoid physical attacks. You gain the following benefits:

- You can spend a reaction in melee combat to dodge an incoming attack. When you do, you gain a +2 bonus to your Armor Class until the beginning of your next turn. This bonus applies to the attack that triggered it.
- You learn the stunt Side Step (see page 36).

DRIFTER

You've spent hundreds of hours racing, repairing, and modifying drifters and dashers of all kinds. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain a +2 bonus to all Dexterity (Drive) checks while operating drifters and dashers.
- Your resolve increases by 1.
- You learn the stunt Hard Stop, Go (see page 34).

EXOSKELETON ARMOR TRAINING

You've trained to wear exoskeletons and similar body-enhancing frames. You know how to inspect, don, operate, and move in exoskeletons of all kinds. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You are proficient with exoskeletons.

EXPERT KNOWLEDGE [REQ: INTELLIGENCE 15]

You know a great deal about one thing in particular. Choose two of your skill proficiencies. Your Proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of the chosen proficiencies.

FIGHTING STYLE: ASARÆ'S AERIAL WRATH

Originating in the Asaræ Monasteries of Southern Shiran, this fighting style incorporates maneuvers, attacks, and stunts that rely on altitude, height, and using one's ability to fly to best an opponent in combat. You gain the following benefits:

- While flying, you gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class.
- While flying, you gain advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) proficiency checks to avoid hazards or being pulled to the ground by an enemy.
- You learn the stunt Asaræ's Assault (see page 33).

FIGHTING STYLE: EMPEROR'S WAY

Developed by the Imperial House of Xian, this fighting style focuses on submissive holds, grabs, and moves to redirect the target's attacks without using direct force. You gain the following benefits:

- Your physical strikes deal 1d8 points of damage + your Strength modifier, but you can never kill a character using this style; you must always choose to deal non-lethal damage and knock out the target instead.
- Your unarmed attacks deal an additional 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage. This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.

FIGHTING STYLE: JÖTUNFOLK'S FURY

Developed in the northern tundras of Shiran among the jötunfolk tribes there, this brutal, violent style of fighting capitalizes on brute force and sudden strikes to quickly render an opponent immobile. You gain the following benefits:

- Your unarmed attacks deal an additional 1d4 points of cold damage. This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.
- You know the cantrip *ray of frost*. Charisma is your casting modifier for it.
- When you make an unarmed attack against a target and critically hit, you can spend a point of resolve to immediately target them with the cantrip *ray of frost* spell, dealing 2d8 points of additional cold damage when you do.

FIGHTING STYLE: NEKOMATA CLAW FIGHTING

Developed on the hunting plains of Yerwin, long before the peace between the yōkai was struck, the nekomata were mastering their evolutionary advances, matching them with fighting styles that maximized their strengths. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- Your unarmed attacks deal an additional 1d4 points of slashing damage. This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.
- You gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) proficiency checks while in the Plains of Yerwin or similar terrain (GM's discretion).

FIGHTING STYLE: PANDREN'S PATH

Originally exclusive to the Pyrrin Isles, this style and tradition has been taught by pandren monks to any willing to uphold its tenets. Today, this style is taught throughout the Empire of Xian. You gain the following benefits:

- Your unarmed attacks deal an additional 1d4 points of piercing damage. This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.
- You know the spell *hideous laughter*. Charisma is your casting modifier for it.
- When you make an unarmed attack against a target and critically succeed, you can spend a point of resolve to immediately target them with the spell *hideous laughter*, increasing the DC by 1 when you do.

FIGHTING STYLE: ELVEN PATH OF WAR

Taught throughout Velestra long before the War of Sovereigns rocked their shores, the elven Path of War is a brutal and vicious combat style designed to destroy Galgaræ's servants before they can close the gap. You gain the following benefits:

- Your unarmed attacks deal an additional 1d4 points of radiant damage. This damage is not multiplied on a critical hit.
- While on Velestran soil (or while defending an elven outpost in another land), you gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Dexterity (Stealth) proficiency checks.
- You learn the stunt Elven Deflection (see page 34).

HACKER [REQ: COMPUTERS PROFICIENCY]

You know how to examine, defend, attack, and navigate computer networks; you can use a specialized suit of tools to test and penetrate these networks, recovering vital information or delivering viral payloads (sometimes both). You gain the following benefits:

- You gain advantage on Intelligence (Computers) proficiency checks to navigate computer networks.
- You gain proficiency with Hacker Tools.

HEAVY ARMOR TRAINING [REQ: MEDIUM ARMOR TRAINING]

You've trained with the Peacekeepers or a similar group, learning to wear most of the heavy armors on the market. You know how to wear, care for, don, and inspect heavy body armor of all kinds. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You are proficient with heavy body armor.

MAGITECH INITIATE

You've got a little magic up your sleeve. You gain the following benefits:

- You know two cantrips from the Arcanist spell list, and Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for both of them.
- You gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence (Technology) proficiency checks to identify, operate, repair, or modify magitech devices of all kinds.

MEDIUM ARMOR TRAINING [REQ: LIGHT ARMOR TRAINING]

You've trained with the Peacekeepers or another group of military professionals, learning to wear a wide assortment of medium armors. You know how to wear, care for, don, and inspect medium body armor of all kinds. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You are proficient with medium body armor.

THE RISE OF MAGITECH

One of the many hallmarks of the 6th Age, magitech officially came into being during 6217 in the heart of the Empire of Xian. Originating in part through a collaborative effort between the empire, the Order of Astrænna, and Dao Dynamics, the first magitech devices were built in secret – very few people know precisely when the work began.

- **For GMs**. Early magitech devices weren't complex, and many contained the core algorithms used to connect the devices to the Crystal Lattice. Those core algorithms have since been encoded into larger, more complex core files. Today, teckers looking to hack into the Lattice seek out these earlier models, hoping to modify those core algorithms in ways security teams have yet to consider.

- **For Players**. Magitech is everywhere, and smart teckers know that even a household appliance, properly hacked, can become a weapon. Characters often search for these early devices, hoping to learn as much as they can about the Lattice from the engineers and arcanists who designed around it.

A Tecker considers a problem.

INVESTIGATOR'S EYE

You've got an eye for the details everyone else misses. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma or Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) proficiency checks while searching the scene of a crime.
- You gain advantage on Intelligence (Insight) proficiency checks while searching the scene of a crime.

KAIMA SIGHT

You've learned, through a combination of training, magical attunement, or through the gifts of the kaima who live there, to Pierce the Veil between Alessia's prime material plane and Yù Xing, the Realm of the Jade Stars. You gain the following benefits:

- You can spend a Bonus action to activate your kaima sight, gaining the ability to see the realm of Yù Xing and its visible inhabitants within 30 feet of you. This sight lasts for 1d4 minutes. You must complete a short rest before activating this ability again.
- You gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks while observing the realm of Yù Xing.
- You gain advantage on Intelligence (Insight) skill checks when interacting with the kaima who live in the realm.

LIGHT ARMOR TRAINING

You've trained with the Peacekeepers or another group of military professionals, learning the basics about most light armors. You know how to wear, care for, don, and inspect light body armor of all kinds. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- You are proficient with light body armor.

LUCKY

You're luckier than most. You gain the following benefits:

- Choose one of your skill proficiencies. You gain a +1 bonus to proficiency checks with that skill. Whenever you make a proficiency or ability score check with that skill, you can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to gain advantage on that roll.
- Increase your Resolve by 1.

MEDIA PERSONALITY

You're kind of a big deal. When you make an announcement online, post something to your Smiles or Holo Account, or blast someone in under 256 characters, thousands of people across Alessia listen. You have one, maybe more corporate sponsors. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain advantage on Intelligence (Culture) checks when using social media (your Smiles or Holo accounts) as public figure.
- You gain advantage on Charisma (Perform) skill checks to entertain people using social media.

ONE HAND ON THE WHEEL [REQ: PROFICIENCY IN THE DRIVE SKILL]

Your look at traffic laws with the same disdain you do gravity – with a devil-may-care grin and a little too much coffee in your veins. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain advantage on Dexterity (Drive) skill checks while performing special maneuvers in a vehicle you are proficient operating.
- Each round, you can elect to operate your vehicle as a move. When you do, you suffer disadvantage on any Drive skill checks the GM calls for during the following round. This resets at the beginning of your next turn.

PARKOUR [REQ: DEXTERITY 17]

You see walls not as barriers, but as challenges. You've run the walls of Capital City, leaped through the Floating Markets of Qingshan, and thrown your body into places most people would consider insane. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) skill checks in urban environments.
- You gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) skill checks in urban environments.
- Provided you aren't wearing armor, aren't encumbered, and aren't otherwise restricted (you can't be tied up), your Armor Class is naturally 12 + your Dexterity modifier while in an urban environment.

PILOT [REQ: INTELLIGENCE 13]

You know how to pilot a specific type of vehicle. When you select this feat, select a vehicle from the following list:

- Commercial Skyship, Aeris Class Transport.
- Commercial Skyship, Dragonfire Assault Class
- Commercial Skyship, Executive Class Transport
- Commercial Skyship, Provision Class Survey
- Commercial Skyship, Ronin Class Transport

- Commercial Skyship, Shadow Class Assault
- Commercial Skyship, Victor Class Assault
- Commercial Skyship, Xian Class Survey
- Dashers (all)
- Dreadnaughts (all)
- Drifters (all)
- Imperial Skyship, Cruiser
- Imperial Skyship, Destroyer
- Imperial Skyship, Dreadnaught
- Imperial Skyship, Fast Attack Cruiser
- Imperial Skyship, Junker Transport
- Imperial War Skiff

You gain the following benefits while operating this vehicle:

- You gain advantage on Intelligence (Spacefaring) skill checks.
- You gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) skill checks while you are operating, searching, or working on this vehicle.

RIFLE EXPERT

You know how to use a rifle. You've spent a lot of time practicing with a wide variety of rifles in close combat situations, allowing you to enjoy the following benefits:

- You ignore the loading quality with rifles with which you are proficient.
- Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on ranged attacks you make with that rifle.
- When you use the Attack action with a rifle with which you are proficient, you can spend 1 point of resolve to gain a +2 bonus on that roll.

STUNT DRIVER

You've been trained to handle vehicles in ways others can't hope to comprehend. You can use the Drive skill to perform acts of daring, stunts, and tricky maneuvers. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Resolve by 2.
- When executing, attempting, or otherwise performing special maneuvers in a vehicle with which you are proficient, apply double your proficiency modifier.

STREET DANCERS, IMPERIAL ACROBATS, AND THE MONKS OF TI LU KAWASTA

Known more commonly as Capital City Monks, individuals who follow Ti Lu Kawasta's teaching believe that the city is nothing more than an evolving jungle; these individuals see the walls, bridges, railings, doors, and statues not as objects of art or utility, but as challenges to be woven into a larger dance. These individuals entertain the general public, running and dancing through the streets wearing bright blue-and-yellow outfits, each trailing ribbon as they race through the city.

- For GMs. The Monks of Ti Lu Kawasta secretly answer to the Imperial Court; Ki Zhoua-Wan, one of the Imperial Court's many handlers, ensures that the Capital City Monks are both entertaining and useful.
- For Players. Characters loyal to the Empire of Xian might begin play secretly working with a handler, using the Capital City Monks as a cover. Other players might enter races against the monks, testing their skills in city-wide races and other acrobatic challenges where a character's resolve or ki might let them shine!

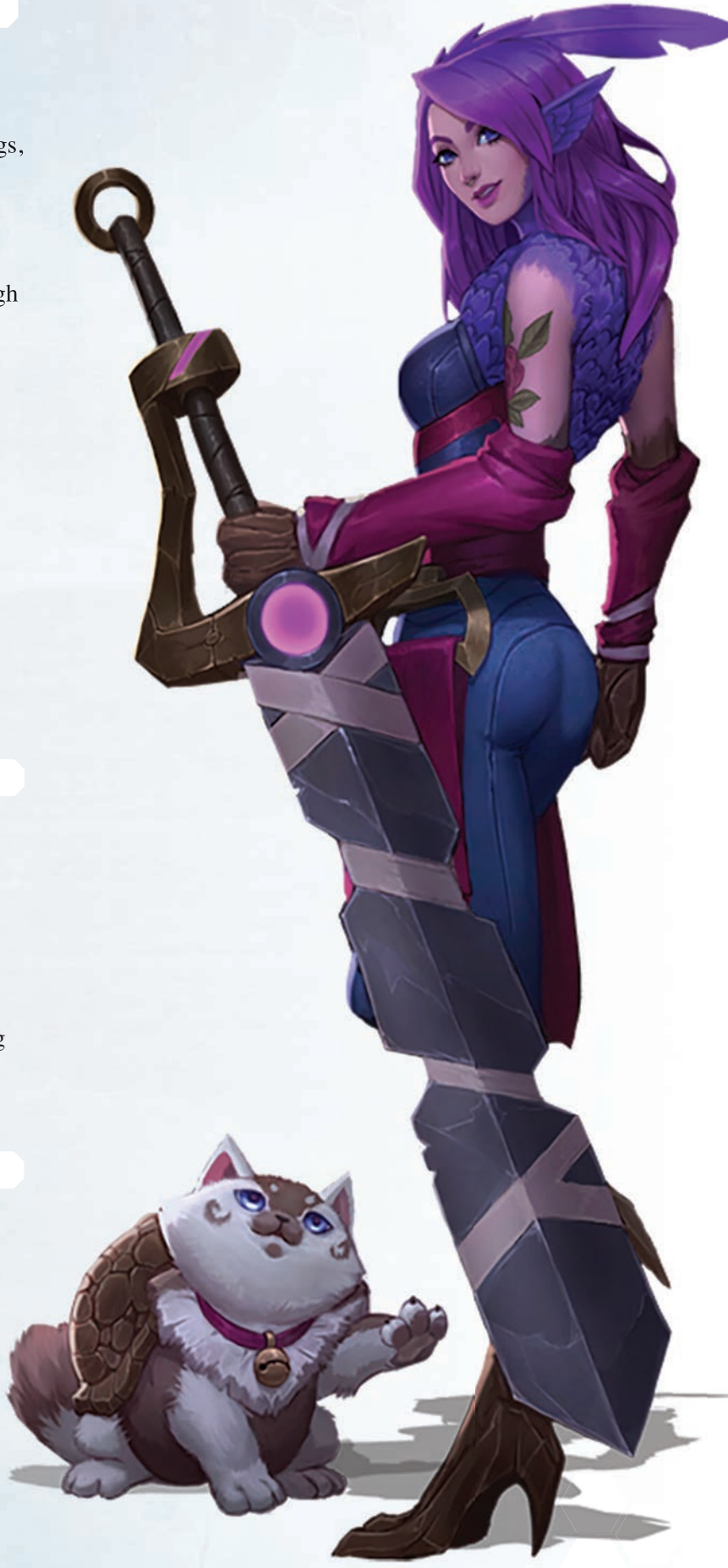
SKYSHIP GUNNER

You've trained on skyships, skiffs, and dreadnaughts – you not only know how to operate the shipboard weapon systems on most skyships, you have a knack for them. You gain the follow benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on attacks against enemy vessels who are charging, ramming, or attempting to board your skyship.
- You gain proficiency with the gunsmithing kit.

SURGEON

Provided you have the tools, supplies, and staff, you can use the Medicine skill to perform surgery, including removing bullets, repairing and replacing damaged organs, and making physical alterations to the creature's body. When you select this feat for the first time, select 3 species you've previously encountered or studied; you can perform surgery on these species. Each time you select this feat, you can add 3 additional species to your list.



GAINING STUNTS, USING RESOLVE

Groups who elect to use the Daily Resolve Optional Rule should take note: although some feats or class abilities may grant player characters bonus resolve, most characters begin play with a pool of resolve equal to their proficiency bonus. While most classes can spend resolve to activate unique class abilities, all characters can spend it to activate stunts, described below.

So, what are stunts?

Stunts are special – often cinematic or heroic – actions that characters can take during their turn. Unless otherwise described, characters spend a point of resolve as a Bonus Action (or Reaction) to activate the associated stunt, gaining any listed benefits or creating the new effect listed. Many of these stunts are martial in nature, allowing characters to jump, float, slide, or move about the field of battle in supernatural ways; unless otherwise described, none of the stunts listed in this primer provoke Opportunity Attacks.

The stunts listed in this primer are heavily inspired hybrids designed to mirror the wonderful stunts of the Wuxia tradition. Characters who learn these wondrous abilities do so primarily ad hoc, discovering them at forgotten shrines or learning them from hidden masters. Characters who learn these new stunts activate them by spending resolve, which they earn by actively pursuing personal or group goals – completing a cycle that allows the player to further personalize their experience of their character.

In the World of Alessia, some characters (like monks and ninjas) gain ki pools, from which they can spend ki points. These character classes can spend ki in place of resolve to activate stunts, making them slightly more versatile in Alessia as a result.

LEARNING STUNTS

How and where player characters learn stunts is entirely up to the Game Master, but we recommend including the opportunity to learn new stunts as part of a character's overall growth. For characters operating as part of a larger organization like the Peacekeepers or the Order of Astrænna, the ability to train with countless professionals almost guarantees access. Characters might also learn their stunts from any of the following places:

- At the foot of an ancient shrine in a forgotten jungle in Elysia.
- At the edge of the Silk Sea; you discovered it spontaneously, the magic floating on the air.
- As a series of instructions across a series of letters or journal entries.
- As a gift from a trusted Gnole historian in Fyrea.
- As a reward for saving a caravan on an adventure on the Silk Sea.
- As a reward for honoring the Empire of Xian with your service.
- As an incentive to join a group, school, or tradition.
- As part of some treasure. The stunt could be discovered inside a mundane or magical item.
- As a reward for helping a wounded kaima.
- As a reward for serving a Lord of Brass.
- As a gift from a powerful tecker with many connections.
- As a gift from an ancient shaman who fears it will be lost if he doesn't teach everyone the stunt. Player character must meet all prerequisites to select and activate a stunt. A short example of a stunt is presented below:

EXAMPLE [STUNT] [REQ. ATTRIBUTE 15 (OR CLASS)]

When you meet a condition (sometimes triggered by an enemy, but not always), you can spend a point of resolve (or ki) and an Action/Reaction/Dash to do a thing. This thing shouldn't restrict a player but should serve to illustrate and liven combat. Stunts are meant to behave like 'signature moves' and shouldn't be confused with feats – which represent broader-based, longer-term learning in many cases.

Some stunts have prerequisites (which are listed inside brackets behind the stunt's name); unless your GM says otherwise, characters must meet all prerequisites to access and activate a stunt.

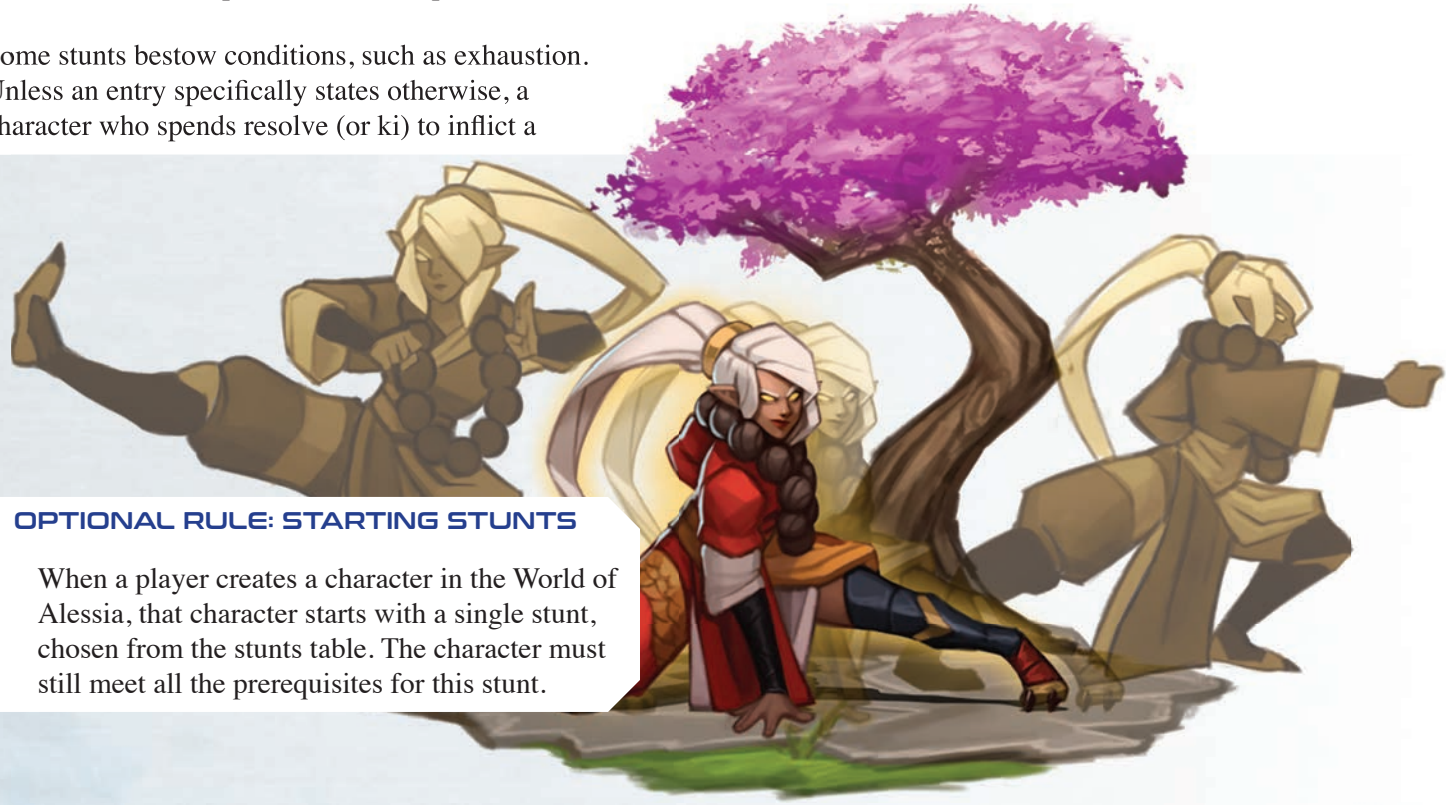
DEV LORE: STUNTS

From the onset, Jere and I both agreed that keeping things exciting was essential to making Alessia shine for players. In order to really drive that high-fantasy heroic approach we loved in our favorite Wuxia films, we needed a simple, streamlined system that could work inside 5e's already streamlined combat system without slowing… things… way… down.

We feel stunts accomplish that. They remain optional, look a little like feats (from older editions), and are designed to rely on the current economy of actions, using Bonus actions and Reactions (in addition to resolve or ki) to perform extraordinary or supernatural acts whose effects last a few seconds (at most). Some stunts grant resistance, while others allow player characters to make special attacks or special moves.

Some stunts bestow conditions, such as exhaustion. Unless an entry specifically states otherwise, a character who spends resolve (or ki) to inflict a condition must spend twice the amount of resolve (or ki) of the previous successful attempt.

For example, if a character spends 1 point of resolve to activate Painful Strike to inflict 1 level of exhaustion on the target, they must spend 2 points of resolve to add a second level and 4 additional points to add a third level. Please note: multiple individuals inflicting a single level of a condition (such as 1 level of exhaustion) apply them to the target as normal (stacking them). A group of four monks using Painful Strike, for instance, would only spend 4 points of resolve (1 each) to force their target to exhaustion level 4, while an individual spending only their resolve would need to spend 15 points to achieve the same effect.



OPTIONAL RULE: STARTING STUNTS

When a player creates a character in the World of Alessia, that character starts with a single stunt, chosen from the stunts table. The character must still meet all the prerequisites for this stunt.

If a stunt, for instance, requires a Dexterity of 13 and that player character's Dexterity drops to 11, they lose temporary access to that stunt. If a stunt lists "or a Class" as a prerequisite (often in parenthesis), then access to those class features satisfy those requirements. If a player character loses access to their class features for any reason, they also lose access to any accompanying stunts with that class as a prerequisite. Regaining access to those class abilities restores access to their stunts, as well.

Some stunts may require the target to succeed on a saving throw or suffer a condition or effect. If a stunt requires your target to make a saving throw to resist its effects, the saving throw DC is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + the listed Ability score modifier (see the stunt).

STUNTS

A complete list of the starting stunts for the world of Alessia are listed below:

AMBUSHING COUNTER [STUNT] [REQ. INTELLIGENCE 15 (OR NINJA)]

When you take damage from a melee attack in melee

combat, you can spend a point of resolve and a Reaction to surprise an enemy with a sudden counter attack that deals your weapon damage plus an additional 1d6 points from this stunt.

ASARÆ'S ASSAULT [STUNT] [REQ. SPECIES: ASARÆ]

You can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) and double your Dash action, moving up to 60 feet into the air and increasing your Armor Class by +4 for this movement. You fall the following round if you do not land on a solid object when completing this movement. This stunt does not grant you the ability to fly.

ASPECT OF ANJA'S HEART [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 13]

As a Bonus action, you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain a +1 bonus to Wisdom and Charisma saving throws until the beginning of your next turn.

ASPECT OF BRÆLON'S MANTLE [STUNT] [REQ. CHARISMA 19]

As a Bonus action, you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain advantage on Dexterity and Intelligence saving throws until the beginning of your next turn.

ASPECT OF FEN LINAG [STUNT] [REQ. CHARISMA 17]

As a Bonus action, you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain a +1 bonus to Wisdom and Charisma saving throws until the beginning of your next turn.

ASPECT OF KWAI-CHIANG [STUNT] [REQ. STRENGTH 19]

As a Bonus action, provided you are alone (and none of your allies can aid you), you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks until the beginning of your next turn.

ASPECT OF LIN LU'S HEART [STUNT] [REQ. CONSTITUTION 17]

As a Bonus action, you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain a +1 bonus to Charisma and Constitution saving throws until the beginning of your next turn.

ASPECT OF ONI [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 17]

As a Bonus action, you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to Dash. At the end of that move, if you are adjacent to an enemy, you can make a single melee attack against them with whatever weapon you have in hand. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

ASPECT OF THE ASARÆL SERPENT [STUNT] [REQ. CHARISMA 17]

As a Bonus action, you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain a +1 bonus to Charisma and Dexterity saving throws until the beginning of your next turn.

AURA OF FAITH [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 13 AND GOOD-ALIGNED]

While in combat, you can call on the Light to boost your spiritual defenses. When you spend a point of resolve (or ki), you gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class until the end of your next turn.

AURA OF DARKNESS [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 13 AND EVIL-ALIGNED]

While in combat, you can call on the Darkness to boost your spiritual defenses. When you spend a point of resolve (or ki, if you're a monk or ninja), you gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class and any Dexterity (Stealth) checks you make until the end of your next turn.

COBRA'S CUNNING [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 13]

You can spend a point of resolve (or ki) to create a phantom of yourself for a brief moment, making it appear to attack (and likely provoke) your enemy. When you activate this ability, make a Charisma (Deception) skill check with advantage. If you succeed, you trigger your target (possibly breaking their concentration or worse, forcing them to attack you).

DEAD MAN'S DASH [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13]

While hovering on death's door (you must have less than 10 Hit Points remaining), you can spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to immediately move up to 15 feet and make a weapon attack against a foe with a +1 bonus. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

DEADEYE [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 11]

Whenever you spend a point of ki to make a ranged attack as a reaction, you do so with advantage.

ELVEN DEFLECTION [STUNT] [REQ. SPECIES: ELVEN]

You know an ancient elven word of power that lets you work the Light like the arcanists of old. You can spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to increase your Armor Class by +1 against a single, incoming attack. If the attack still hits, this stunt reduces the damage it deals by 2d4 points. You must complete a short rest before using this
stunt again.

FLESH WEAVER'S CALL [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 13]

When you spend a point of resolve (or ki), you can heal an ally within 30 feet for 1d6 points of damage, but they immediately gain the poisoned condition until the beginning of your next turn.

FLOAT [STUNT] [REQ. ABILITY TO ACTIVATE ARCANE OR PSYCHIC ABILITIES]

You can float. At any point while you are moving your normal speed over stable, solid land, you can float a few inches above the ground (to the full height of 1 ft., maximum). You can float for up to eight hours, at which point you must complete a long rest before you can activate this power again.

HARD STOP, GO [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13 (OR TECKER)]

You can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to critically maneuver the vehicle you're currently driving (or piloting), forcing it to make a hard stop, spinning it in the opposite direction and instantly taking the Dash action in the opposite direction.

HUNTER'S MARK [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 15 (OR SHAMAN)]

You can spend a point of resolve to mark a nearby target in your mind, keeping careful track of its movement and actions. You gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class and Perception checks against that target until the beginning of your next turn.

JAB [STUNT] [REQ. STRENGTH 12]

You can spend a point of resolve (or ki) and a Bonus action to make a quick, light jab that deals 1d4 (plus your Strength modifier) points of bludgeoning damage, forcing the target to succeed on a DC 12 Constitution save or gain a level of exhaustion. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

LEAP, FLYING [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13]

You can spend your Dash action to leap up to 15 feet in any direction (including up). Any environmental factor or condition that would restrict you from taking the Dash action also restricts you from using this stunt.

KNEE, FLYING [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13 (OR MONK)]

You can spend a point of resolve (or ki) and a Bonus action to leap up to 10 feet in any direction (including up) to strike your target with your knee. This attack deals 1d4 (plus your Strength modifier) points of bludgeoning damage. Any environmental factor or condition that would restrict you from taking your Bonus action also restricts you from using this stunt. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

LEAP, FLYING IMPROVED [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 17]

You can spend your Dash action and a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to leap up to 30 feet in any direction. Any environmental factor or condition that would restrict you from taking the Dash action also restricts you from using this stunt.

MONK'S DEFENSE [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 15 (OR MONK)]

You can spend your Reaction and a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to adopt a practiced defensive stance that grants you a +1 bonus to your Armor Class until the beginning of your next turn.

MONK'S FLIP [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 15 (OR MONK)]

You can spend your Reaction and a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to flip laterally in your combat space, dodging a few of the attacks that triggered the flip. When you do, roll 2d4 and reduce any damage you took from the triggering attack by the same amount.

MONK'S MOVE [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 17 (OR MONK)]

When you take the Dash action, you gain a bonus to your Armor Class equal to your Proficiency bonus while you move. You must complete a short rest before you can use the Dash action to use Monk's Move again.

PANDA PUSH [STUNT] [REQ. STRENGTH 17]

When you spend a point of resolve (or ki) in conjunction with a melee Attack using natural weapons, you gain advantage on your Strength (Athletics) check to shove back your target. If you succeed on the opposed roll, push back that target an additional 10 feet. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

PARRY [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 17 (OR NINJA)]

When you spend a point of Resolve (or ki) as a Reaction to an attack that just dealt damage to you, roll 2d4 and reduce any damage you took from the triggering attack by the same amount.

PSI-SHIELD [STUNT] [REQ. ABILITY TO ACTIVATE PSYCHIC ABILITIES]

You can spend your reaction to summon a minor shield to deflect an incoming attack. When you activate your Psi-Shield, your AC increases by +2 until the beginning of your next turn. This bonus to Armor Class applies to the attack that triggered it, as well.

PSI-STRIKE [STUNT] [REQ. ABILITY TO ACTIVATE PSYCHIC ABILITIES]

You can send your reaction to extend your psychic aura into a weapon you are currently wielding, empowering it and treating the weapon as if it were magical. When you spend a point of resolve (or ki), you may wash this weapon in your essence; this lasts until the beginning of your next turn. This weapon deals an additional point of psychic damage when you successfully strike a target with it.

QUICK STUDY [STUNT] [REQ. INTELLIGENCE 13]

You can spend your bonus action to quickly assess a situation, location, or similar target. When you spend your bonus action in this way, select one of your skills. You gain advantage on rolls with that skill against the target until the beginning of your next turn.

QUICK STAND [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13]

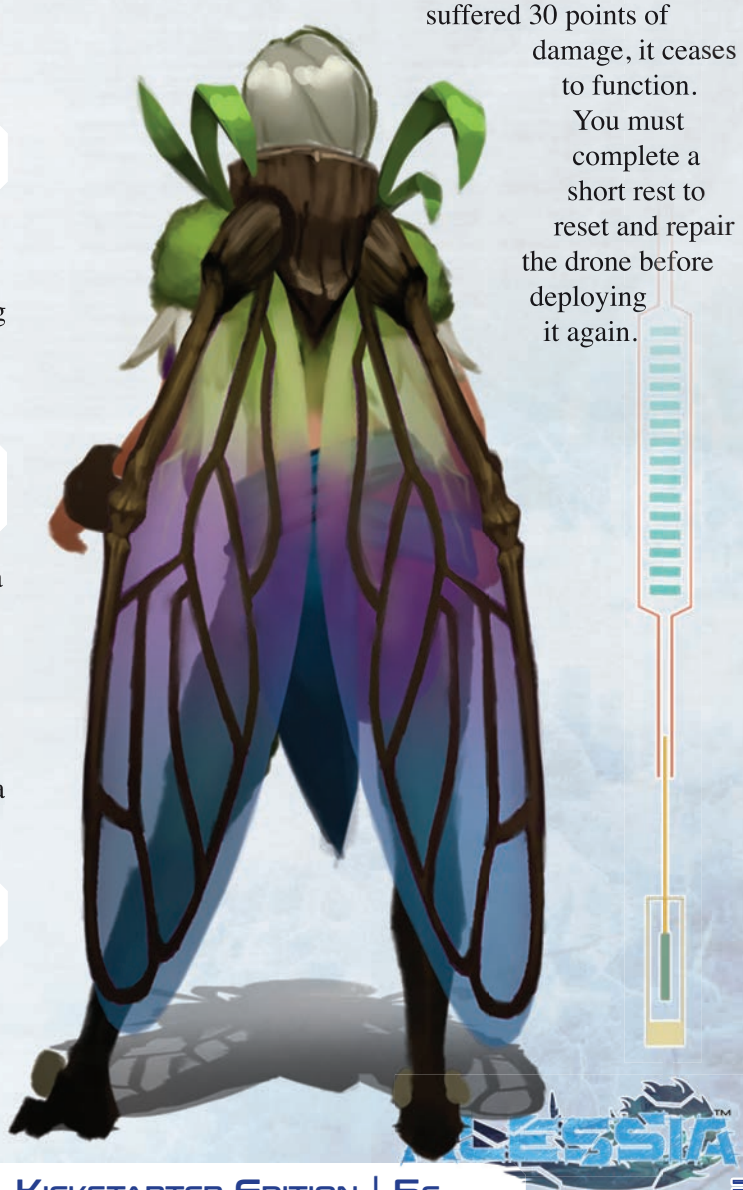
You can spend a point of resolve (or ki) to stand up from the prone position without provoking an opportunity attack or otherwise using your movement.

SAFE SPRINT [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 15]

When you take the Dash action, you gain a +2 to your Armor Class until the beginning of your next turn.

SHIELD & DRONE [STUNT] [REQ. ATTUNED DRONE]

You can quickly deploy an automated ally. You can spend your Reaction to deploy your 3xDS. Once deployed, this drone grants you damage resistance thunder (it absorbs all the damage it reduces) and increases your total AC by 1. Once the drone has intercepted, absorbed, or suffered 30 points of damage, it ceases to function. You must complete a short rest to reset and repair the drone before deploying it again.



SIDE STEP [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13 (OR MONK)]

You can, in response to a melee attack that targets you, spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) and use your reaction to immediately move up to 5 feet. When you complete this move, reduce any damage taken by the triggering attack by 1d6 Hit Points. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

STUNNING STEP [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 17 (OR MONK)]

While in combat, you can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) and your Dash action to move up to 15 feet. If you travel through an enemy space during this move, you may spend an additional point of resolve (or ki) to touch one (and only one) target, forcing them to make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or gain the stunned condition until the beginning of your next turn. You must complete a short rest before using it again.

SWORDMASTER'S ADVANCE [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13 (OR NINJA)]

You can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) and use your Dash action to move up to 30 feet, treating difficult (and possibly dangerous) terrain as if it were stable, safe ground. This stunt does not allow you to walk on air, however; you must maintain contact with the ground while using this stunt.

SWORDMASTER'S SLIDE [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 15 (OR NINJA)]

You can, in response to a melee attack that targets you, spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) and use your reaction to immediately move up to 15 feet. When you complete this move, reduce any damage taken by the triggering attack by 2d4 Hit Points. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

SWORDMASTER'S STEP [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 13 (OR NINJA)]

You can, in response to a melee attack that targets you, spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) and use your reaction to immediately move into an adjacent square. When you complete this move, reduce any damage taken by the triggering attack by 2d4 Hit Points. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

TAELA'S TRICK [STUNT] [REQ. ABILITY TO ACTIVATE PSYCHIC ABILITIES]

You can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to manifest a small figment of your aura, causing an adjacent enemy to roll their next melee or ranged attack with disadvantage.

TAI'S PATIENCE [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 17 (OR MONK)]

You can spend a point of resolve (or ki) and a bonus action to enter a stance that grants you resistance to bludgeoning and thunder damage until the beginning of your next turn.

TAI'S RESOLVE [STUNT] [REQ. CONSTITUTION 15 (OR MONK)]

You can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to instantly remove 1 level of exhaustion. You may perform stunt in conjunction with a long rest, restoring 2 levels (instead of 1). You must complete a long rest before you can activate this ability again.

TAKEDOWN [STUNT] [REQ. STRENGTH 15 (OR MARUADER)]

You rush your target and gain advantage on the first Strength (Athletics) check you make to grapple them. You must move 10 or more feet before using this stunt but may move up to double your normal movement in order to complete this stunt in a single action. You must complete a short rest before using it again.

UPPERCUT [STUNT] [REQ. STRENGTH 17]

You can spend your bonus action and a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to make a decisive, violent strike against an adjacent foe. You resolve this attack using your strength. On a critical hit, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution save or gain the unconscious condition. Larger creatures (any creature at least one size category larger than you) are immune to your uppercut.

VANISH [STUNT] [REQ. WISDOM 17 (OR NINJA)]

You can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) and a reaction to become invisible until the beginning of your next turn. You must complete a short rest before using this stunt again.

VIPER'S STRIKE [STUNT] [REQ. DEXTERITY 17]

You can spend a bonus action and a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to make a quick, focused strike against an adjacent foe. You resolve this attack using your

Strength. On a critical hit, the target must succeed on a Constitution save or gain the exhausted condition. Creatures with any kind of natural armor are immune to your viper's strike.

ZENDHU'S STANCE [STUNT] [REQ. CONSTITUTION 17 (OR MONK)]

You can spend a bonus action and a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain resistance to slashing and thunder attacks until the beginning of your next turn.

ZHOU'S TOUCH [STUNT] [REQ. CHARISMA 15]

You can spend a point of resolve (or a point of ki) to gain a +1 bonus to Charisma saving throws until the beginning of your next turn.

NEW SKILLS

When we first started designing Alessia, we knew we were going to need to expand the list of skills to accommodate the full scope of what the future holds. When creating new characters in Alessia, including the following skills:

COMPUTERS [INTELLIGENCE]

You make an Intelligence (Computers) check to operate a holo-terminal, search a computer database, to write some custom code, or to execute an exploit against someone's network. You might also make a Computers proficiency check to install a program, alter data, or to add a new user to a system you have permission to be on. The Game Master might call on you to make Intelligence (Computers) checks to do any of the following:

- To search a computer network for a device, user, or other important piece of information.
- To safely install a new smart device, to exchange a data crystal, or to attune a new feature or item to your personal HoloKit.
- To log on, navigate, and safely log off of a network.
- To use a wide variety of computer programs and applications.

CULTURE [INTELLIGENCE]

You make Intelligence (Culture) checks when you want to draw on your extensive knowledge of social or cultural norms, when you want to impress someone with your knowledge, or when you want to accurately deduct the nature of a situation based cultural standards. The Game Master might call on you to make Intelligence (Culture) checks to do any of the following:

- To counter a Deception with your knowledge of the culture, kingdom, group, or region.
- To deduct the truth of a situation based solely on observing regional norms.
- To emulate behaviors of other species (to activate some kinds of magitech).
- To pay the proper respects in a new or foreign land.

DRIVE [DEXTERITY]

Your Dexterity (Drive) check covers operating a number of common vehicles in Alessia, allowing characters to operate common favorites like dashers and drifters. The Game Master might call for a Drive check to cover any of the following (or similar) situations:

- You need to abruptly maneuver around an obstacle, such as a pothole, person, or other object.
- You need to jump the vehicle between over a gap, fence, or similar obstacle.
- You need to maintain control of the vehicle after taking damage.
- You need to activate a special function, power, or control while operating the vehicle.

Characters proficient in Drive can operate most vehicles but may still need special training to use or otherwise operate special or custom vehicles. Likewise, characters who are proficient in Drive will still need to meet any prerequisites that vehicle has to operate it.

PSYCHIC (CHARISMA)

You make Charisma (Psychic) checks to navigate psychic contests with others, to attune with psychic objects (like crystals), and to determine the qualities of psychic tools. If you can also manifest psychic powers, you can make Charisma (Psychic) checks to attune with the Crystal-Lattice, as well. The Game Master might call on you to make Psychic checks for any of the following situations:

- You need to navigate Alessia's Crystal Lattice or attune with one of its nodes.
- You need to rapidly attune with a crystal, object, or entity.
- You need to isolate or quarantine a psychic entity.
- You need to meditate and regain your psychic focus.

Game Masters may also call on you to make a Charisma (Psychic) check to shape or alter how you manifest one of your powers, as well.

SPACEFARING (INTELLIGENCE)

Characters trained in spacefaring can operate a number of vessels, including airships, dreadnaughts, and sky ships. Provided their vessels are adequately crewed and in good working order, you can make spacefaring checks to perform any of the following activities:

- You need to abruptly maneuver your ship around another vessel or object.
- You need to operate the vessel defensively, actively dodging enemy fire.
- You need to maintain control of a heavily damaged vessel.
- You need to make a controlled descent to the surface of Alessia.
- You need to ram another vehicle.

Additionally, GMs might call for an Intelligence (Spacefaring) check to resolve competitions between pilots, or to see how well a given ship performs in a dangerous environment or situation.

STREET (WISDOM)

Your understanding of the streets transcends individual cities. You make Wisdom (Street) checks to navigate the treacherous, dark, and dangerous parts of the city – no matter where you are. The Game Master might call of you to make a Street check to navigate any of the following situations (or similar ones):

- You need to find a place where Peacekeepers don't go.
- You need to identify a dangerous situation, detect an ambush, or avoid a situation that might compromise your honor.
- You need to locate resources off the grid.
- You need to move slowly and quietly through a city.

Unlike the lore of a particular place or region, players can use Street to gain a general sense of when and how to react to situations, as well as how to local behaviors might influence a situation. Some GMs may let players use Street in place of Insight for some situations.

TECHNOLOGY (INTELLIGENCE)

With this being a common skill, the Game Master may call on you to make Intelligence (Technology) checks to operate a variety of common magitech tools and items, including both public and private devices. Additionally, you may be called on to make Technology checks to do any of the following:

- Repair or jury-rig a tool, object, or device.
- Determine a strange or alien object's purpose.
- Program or operate special equipment.
- Operate some industrial equipment, such as loaders, lifts, cranes, and similar stationary tools.
- Create simple-to-complex magitech devices.

ADJUSTING DCs

In a standard fantasy 5e game, the typical range for task difficulty runs from 5 (very easy) to 30 (nearly impossible); Alessia works within this range, but GMs should consider two important factors. First, Alessia makes regular use of Resolve, a mechanic that allows player characters use cinematic-style stunts. Some of these stunts grant these PCs additional dice they can add to d20 rolls, essentially increasing their chances to succeed more often.

GMs wishing to maintain that level of difficulty should consider adjusting all DCs up by 3, using the following ranges instead.

Table: SciFantasy DC Adjustments

Task Difficulty	DC
Very Easy	8
Easy	13
Medium	18
Hard	23
Very Hard	28
Nearly Impossible	33

GMs using the SciFantasy DC adjustments above should allow players to spend their resolve during a session to gain an additional die on a single d20 roll. Player characters can spend resolve to earn the following dice:

Resolve (cost)	Die
1	1d4
2	1d6
3	2d4
4	1d8
5	2d6
6	2d8

Players and GMs should take note: a player can only spend a number of resolve points equal to their proficiency modifier (and no more) during an encounter.

Dev Lore: Building Bigger

When you consider the size and scope of Alessia, it is fairly easy to understand how life not only flourishes, but does so in ways that work in harmony with both nature and magitech.

Teckers and Arcanists in Elysia and Shiran often exploit this fact, building bigger and stranger helpers from the planet's bones. Because of this, many places in the world must accommodate these mega-creatures, sometimes requiring special gates and docks to support their travel.

Lords of the Long Walk

Magitech has brought many changes to Alessia. While many of those changes have been subtle or small, just as many have been impressive, large-scale changes. One of the biggest changes that has taken place has been the treatment of the giant fauna who once served the Great Yökai shamans – pulling massive land trains across the great fields that dominate the whole of that glorious continent.

Magitech has changed that. Working with oracles and arcanists from around the continent, the shamans have since replaced these beasts of burden with sentient constructs they call the Lords of the Long Walk.

Constructed using the same process the Order of Astrænna uses to create sentients, these great constructs contain the souls of beloved elder animals who – as a reward for their decades of work – have been granted immortality in a completely new form.

The Size of Things

Although they are far fewer in number today, the mega-fauna that once dominated most of Alessia's known world still play important social roles in some places; this is especially true of the north, both to the east in Shiran and to Y'rim in the west.

Today's mega fauna still evolves much in the same way its ancestors did, but often growing smaller and faster than older generations grew; this has proven to be beneficial for some of the creatures who have evolved in areas hit hardest by the Shard Storms.

While some animals have gradually shrunk, most of Alessia's plant life has not followed suit. Large sections of undeveloped lands continue to offer thousands of smaller species places to play, mate, and with their frolicking, pollinate the surrounding lands.

This process, over generations, has created pockets of mega-flora and fauna that might span miles upon miles of unsettled territory.

NEW BACKGROUNDS

GMs and players looking for backgrounds with strong ties to Alessia (in place of the more generic backgrounds) should consider the following:

AWAKENED

Like so many of the Ish'ra who woke from the voidship The Enduring Dream when it crashed on Alessia, you have just woken from one of the ship's thousands of sleeping pods. Living in a dream-like slumber for the past decade (or more), you have been guided back to remembering your mission, binding your psyche to your body through a series of challenges that eventually woke you to this world.

Skill Proficiencies History, Technology.
Tool Proficiencies None.
Equipment You begin play with an explorer's kit.

Feature: ***Improved Resistance***

Your time in the voidship The Enduring Dream gave you ample opportunities to understand yourself; you have internalized and learned to control your desires, focus your motivations, and suppress your fears. You gain resistance to psychic damage.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Characters who have recently awoken to the larger world of Alessia sometimes display naïve, confused, and disassociated ideas about the world. Although they only share this trait with children for a year or so at most, newly awakened characters face a number of challenges many adults take for granted. Awakened characters tend to have childlike qualities, as well.

PERSONALITY TRAITS [ROLL 1D8]

1. **Adventurous.** You've been dreaming of exploring Alessia your entire life and want to see what's over the next horizon.
2. **Brittle.** While other dreamt around you, your last years before waking were filled with nightmares. You hate sleeping and avoid it.
3. **Curious.** While the pull to discover frequently brings you to new lands, your curiosity is a weight of equal measure – when you're curious about something, you'll plant yourself in a place until you understand it.
4. **Despondent.** A doom hangs over you that you find hard to hide. You're not entirely sure what happened to you before you woke, but you've been sad since.
5. **Friendly.** Although others sometimes suggest you're a little naïve, your better nature drives you to form bonds with others.
6. **Observant.** You are keen to take in as much as possible. You stop to smell the flowers while still noticing the events happening just beyond them.
7. **Quiet Confidence.** While others boast and brag, you let your quiet smile speak on your behalf.
8. **Talkative.** You love to talk and look for opportunities to practice the art of verbally communicating with others.

IDEAL [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Community Service.** Every moment you remain awake is spent in service to those who still sleep your need to serve other Ish'ra creates a sense of duty that can border on dogma.
2. **Doom Prophet.** Your experience while asleep was wildly different from those around you. When you woke, your no-nonsense approach to surviving 'the coming darkness' motivates your every action.
3. **Fidelity.** You understand that Ish'ra must endure, no matter what. That knowledge demands a fidelity to your kin others don't fully grasp. That connection warms and strengthens you.
4. **Freedom.** You spent enough time asleep. You're not going to spend the rest of your waking life as someone else's slave or servant. Nope.
5. **Honor.** You understand what drives the people of the Empire of Xian; your sense of honor matches

AWAKENED

Although the Ish'ra make up the majority of The Enduring Dream's population, others sleep soundly in its pods. When the Whispering Darkness ripped through Alessia in 5425, the legacy crew of the voidship offered up every available pod to those willing to weather the darkness in dream, sleeping through the epidemic that killed nearly half of the planet's population.

Player characters who select the awakened background need not be Ish'ra.

perfectly to theirs, and you seek to strengthen the connection between their traditions and yours.

6. **Power.** You want it. You spent decades dreaming of how you'd get it. Now, it's your chance.

BOND [ROLL 1D6]

1. **My Family is My Bond**. Your family is the center of your world. You'd do anything to protect them. While your loyalties to other Ish'ra are strong, your family always comes first.
2. **A Lost Cause**. You've been carrying a torch for a particular cause for several years now, and you're not about to stop.
3. **A Special Person**. You formed a bond with another individual that today remains as strong and potent as any you've since encountered. Whether traveling together or worlds apart, your bond with this person remains ironclad.
4. **A Lucky Crystal**. You have a small, 'lucky' sliver of crystal you found days after you first woke. Today, you keep it close by, embedded in a magitech locket you keep close to your heart. Most people try to understand this bond.
5. **The Soldier's Life**. You won your nobility through service. Try as you might, you can't shake the bond you formed with your troops.
6. **Your Father's Relic**. You possess an item of great personal meaning that, although completely mundane, offers you a connection to your father. Although this is weird, most people try to understand this bond.

FLAW [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Arrogant.** You may (or may not) mean it, but you think highly of yourself and less of others. It is all but impossible to hide, but you're working on it.
2. **Combative**. You like to argue and fight, especially when you know you're right. Staying quiet and complacent is for the meek.
3. **Creepy.** Maybe it's your oiled facial hair. Maybe it's your obsession with death. Whatever it is, people don't like it.
4. **Misanthrope.** None of it will ever go right, no matter how much you do or how hard you work. Also, make them go away. All of them.
5. **Opportunist.** You're always looking out for you.
6. **Pushy.** You use your money to push people around.

BORN IN THE BADLANDS

Alessia is a massive, wild world where only a small part of the planet has been explored or settled. While the Empire of Xian's Peacekeepers easily keep the Empire and her citizens safe, there are parts of the world where Imperial troops have never set foot and where the laws are as wild as the nature that supports them. These lands are dangerous, brutal, and a proving ground many don't survive.

You call 'em home.

Skill Proficiencies. Street, Survival.
Tool Proficiencies. Camping Gear.
Equipment. Camping Gear.

Equipment You gain a specialized collection of camping gear that you've been building up for years. Decked out with modified magitech of all kinds, your camping rig can support up to three other people (instead of two).

Feature: ***Trench Friend***.

You have a loyal friend from your childhood that never left your part of the badlands. Whenever you return home, your trench friend is there… waiting with warm tea or cold beer. This contact can provide you with simple gear, lodging, and food while you are at home (or at least nearby).

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Individuals born in the badlands tend to take their time trusting outsiders, avoid navigating complicated social systems whenever possible, and openly avoid 'adopting pointless cultural masks' when asked to observe most traditions and laws.

IDEAL [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Avoid the Law.** Although you're no criminal, you know being an outsider is often a social crime and that means being harassed. You find just avoiding Peacekeepers altogether is sound advice.
2. **Champion the Weak.** You hate bullies of all kinds – always have, always will. When you catch someone picking on another being smaller than them, you need to step in.
3. **Freedom Guides** You. You hate captivity of all

kinds. You don't want others to shackle you, and you actively fight against those who enslave others.

4. **Power Guides You.** You follow those who display strength, intelligence, and foresight. Sure – you respect honor, honesty, and other qualities, but at the end of the day, it's power that really excites.
5. **Survivalist.** You know that surviving is paramount and the wondrous empire will eventually fall. When it does, you'll be ready to pick up the pierces and help others survive, too.
6. **Traditionalist.** You hold tightly to one or more traditions that you brought from the badlands.

BOND [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Animal Companion**. You have a connection with an animal friend that brings you joy. You actively go out of your way to help your animal friend. It returns the favor.
2. **Foes Aplenty**. You know your foes are out there, planning your ruin. You have pledged to find them and undo them.
3. **Friends till the End**. You have a childhood friend who, no matter how long you part, always treats you like they just saw you.
4. **Kaima's Own**. You have formed a special bond with a minor kaima who sometimes requests you perform strange rites. It treats you as if you were one of its own.
5. **Outlander's Luck**. You have a saying or practice you perform daily that you believe strengthens your luck in the world. You practice this quietly and to yourself, protecting your luck from those who might steal it.
6. **Swordsworn.** You have sworn an oath to another, which you will fulfill, if it takes you the full length of your life. You are one of the swordsworn.

FLAW [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Angry.** You've been angry since you were very young. You don't recall exactly why, or when it happened. You just remember always being angry.
2. **Authoritarian**. You place a disproportionate amount of respect and faith in authority figures, especially the Empire of Xian and its Peacekeepers.
3. **Devious.** You have a devious side and constantly make suggestions that, were they followed, would cause any number of adults or shame, pain (or both). You probably shouldn't be around children.
4. **Dishonest.** You have a hard time telling the truth.
5. **Superstitious.** You don't trust something about modern society. Be creative. Have fun with it.
6. **Vainglorious**. You like to take credit when things work out. You play a very minor role in many unsuccessful projects. In most cases, your influence makes things better.

Ask anyone.

Common Care

Alessia's Houses of Healings commonly cure the following with ailments without question:

1. **All diseases.** Peacekeepers do not get involved unless there is a very specific threat to the public wellbeing.
2. **All poisons and venoms.** Peacekeepers do not get involved unless there is a very specific threat to the public wellbeing.
3. **All maternal care and training for expecting mothers.** Without question unless the mother requests aid.
4. **Resuscitation.** These are rare and require specific permissions within the Empire.
5. **Health exams.** Provided without question.
6. **Mental Health Care.** Provided without question.
7. **Cure Wounds.** Peacekeepers do not get involved unless there is a very specific threat to the public wellbeing.

DEV LORE: THE BADLANDS

In Alessia, the 'badlands' are not a single location but are instead a collection of abandoned, forgotten, or rotting places often in proximity to a major city. When the War of Sovereigns finally came to its bitter close, every continent in the known world had a version of 'the badlands.' These include: Al'abaduun (Fyrea), Avaræssi (Shiran), Bash'anu (Fyrea), Charricus (Elysia), Gunther's Run (Galgaræ), Horvis Ruins (Yerwin), Iwakakii Falls (Elysia), Jin'nu Crater (Elysia), Kilheim (Yrim), the Murvis Coast (Velestra).

- **For GMs**. All of these regions suffer from regular incursion and a fair degree of celestial impacts. These objects tend to be smaller, ranging from Small to Large (but never larger) in size. Alessia's Ring of Heaven commonly destroys dangerous, incoming objects, especially those that weigh more than 500 kilograms.

- **For Players**. Characters born in any of these badlands could come to the game with a very different understanding of the alien worlds beyond Alessia, the Empire of Xian, the Peacekeepers, or any number of widely held beliefs. These badland characters often become champions for their cities or neighborhoods, taking pride in providing for their charges.

DEVOTEE OF THE LIGHT

Whether you were raised from the cradle in service to the Light or dedicated your life, suddenly, later on – the only truth you need now embrace is the eternal radiance of the Light. Your devotion to the Light guides each step on your path, often challenging you to consider mysteries where others see only dumbfound luck, or brilliance where others see foolishness.

Skill Proficiencies Insight, Religion
Tool Proficiencies Meditation Kit.
Equipment You gain a copy of *The Tablets of Light and Fire*, a set of ceremonial robes, and a holy symbol worth 25 Yuan.

Feature: ***Radiance***

Your devotion to the Light doesn't go unnoticed. Each morning, after completing a short morning devotion with the first rays of the sun's light, you gain a single point of radiance. Provided you remain bathed in light or otherwise connected to the source of your power, you can spend that point of radiance to gain a bonus d6 to a single d20 roll you make. You must complete a long rest again before you can perform your morning devotion again.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

You have sought the Light for as long as you can remember. You've heard it in song, seen it play on the faces of your loved ones, and watched it weave broken bones in the Houses of Healing – you know its secret song, and have devoted your life to understanding it.

PERSONALITY TRAITS [ROLL 1D8]

1. **Quiet Devotee.** Your silence would be alarming were it not also calming to most people. Although you appear to be in constant reflection, you're also known to keenly observe your surroundings.
2. **Prideful.** Your connection to the Light fills your aura… and your ego. Although you don't rub it anyone's face, you don't hide the fact that you're one of the chosen.
3. **Guru.** The Light is a mystery that flows through everyone – we are a prism of our choices, the reflection of our true selves in the glow of radiant love.
4. **Zealot.** The War of Sovereigns still rages in your imagination; you eat up every tale of the past, looking for ways to find a stronger connection to the Light, that you might be its sword.
5. **Traditionalist.** You honor a specific set of traditions within the greater context of the Light. Although you can translate them into other practices, you don't see the need.
6. **Inquisitor.** You ask a lot of questions. Maybe you don't believe people, or maybe you're looking for something… or someone. You can come off as brooding, or worse, boorish.
7. **Firebrand.** You'd scream the Light's Lessons from the top of one of the Towers of Xin if you could. And when you don't like how something is handled? You'll call down the Light.
8. **Teacher.** You can't help but show others the way. Sometimes that's boiling water, other times it's reciting algebraic formulas.

IDEAL [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Be the Light.** You must be the example. If you're going to be the perfect devotee, you need to be the perfect example.
2. **Beware the Darkness.** It lurks around every corner, looking for easy wins. Chaotic, dark, and powerful, it must be pushed out. You believe in lighting a fire, no matter what.
3. **The Champion.** Your ideal manifests as the bond you share with another being. You will trade your life for that being, if need be.
4. **Honor Reigns.** While others chase treasure, you look to a single guiding principle – what brings you and your family the highest honor?
5. **The Light Guides.** You know that your power and privilege mean nothing if you can't help those in need. Your faith in the Light guides you and you consider it before making major decisions.
6. **Truth.** You hold truth above all else.

BOND [ROLL 1D6]

1. **The Church.** You have dedicated yourself to the Church of Light; your bond with it is a constant reminder to you both.
2. **A Holy Relic.** You have a religious item or blessed statue that you always keep on you, no matter what.
3. **A Lost Cause.** You've been carrying a torch for a particular cause for several years now, and you're not about to stop.
4. **The Monk's Robe.** You inherited a religious garment from a relative you've since re-purposed; your bond to the Light is cemented in this item.
5. **Vengeance.** Someone has wronged you, and you mean to make them pay. You've sworn an oath, and that bond now guides your every step. They will pay.
6. **The Work.** Your bond is to the work you do in service to the Light. You have a small token of this service that serves as the material anchor for this bond.

FLAW [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Argumentative.** You like to argue with others and enjoy causing discomfort among the pretentious people you meet. Especially when you're right – which you normally are.
2. **Divinely Disconnected**. You spend the majority of your days focused on celestial events and divine signs, paying little attention
3. **Misanthrope**. None of it will ever go right, no matter what. You pray the Light will reach these people, but even with all your work… it may never happen.
4. **Myopic.** You tend to view things in only black and white, light and dark.
5. **Opportunist.** You're always looking for a way to display why more people need more of the Light in their lives, even when they're already devout.
6. **Pushy.** You use the Light to remove the barriers people place around them.

FYREAN DESERT RAIDER

You were born in Fyrea, among the reapers and raiders of the sunbaked deserts that dominate your homeland. Tested by the elements at every turn, you've learned to read the winds like a scroll and play with the Light as if it were a sister, using both as you robbed the rich merchants who slowly cut through your tribe's lands.

Skill Proficiencies. Drive, Technology.
Tool Proficiencies. Drifter Kit.
Equipment. You begin play with a Drifter's Kit and 100 Yuan.

Feature: ***It's Not Much, but it's Mine***

You begin play with an old TFDX-01 drifter (see page 199), but it doesn't always run. At the beginning of each session, roll a 1d6. On a 1 or a 2, your drifter won't start; roll on the malfunction table (on page 203) to see what actions, steps, or items you need to get it going. Once you spend enough time (once you reach 6th level) and money (4k Yuan) customizing, modifying, or otherwise repairing the drifter, this malfunction is repaired.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Fyrean desert raiders are incredibly territorial, adhering to strange customs and tribal ideologies they can trace back for generations. Champions of self-reliance and ingenuity, desert raiders frequently build and maintain their own drifters and dashers, which they decorate in tribal colors and regalia. Although the Fyreans are not xenophobes, they are less trusting of outsiders.

TRIBE [ROLL 1D8]

1. **Az-Mulhara Tribe.** The Az-Mulhara Tribe dominates Fyrea's southern deserts. Its members favor muddy-red colors, high-lighted with silver and black. They are notorious thieves.
2. **Bazeeb Tribe.** The Bazeeb Tribe claims no territory, instead roaming the open deserts throughout central Fyrea. The Bazeeb Tribe favors dashers to drifters, riding low and close to the desert sands.
3. **Dornnu Tribe.** The Dornnu Tribe roams the northwestern deserts of Fyrea, raiding coastal villages and fat merchants with equal glee. The Dornuu Tribe favors energy weapons of all kinds.
4. **Ghoulra Tribe.** The Ghoulra Tribes operates in the dark, high deserts of Western Fyrea. Rumored to traffic in illicit powders and worse, the Ghoulra's only real crime is being different.
5. **Hajazza Tribe.** The Hajazza Tribe roams the northern and central deserts of Fyrea, a space they reluctantly (but peacefully) share with the Bazeeb Tribe. The tribe trades in spices, for which it is famous.
6. **Jinn-all Tribe.** The Jinn-all Tribe is precisely that – a growing tribe of djinnkin who have cast off their former alliances and embraced the tribe. The Jinn-all Tribe welcomes all.
7. **Numena Tribe.** The Numena Tribe dominates a single city – or rather the ruins of one – in Northeastern Fyrea. This tribe favors magitech in all its forms, which it wears as a sign of status.
8. **Shaitenn' Tribe**. Shaitenn's Tribe operates on the open waters of the Silk Sea, such as they are. Driving modified drifters across the sandy waves of the silk sea, these raiders have earned their name.

IDEAL [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Conservationist.** You know the desert's resources are limited and you hate to waste them.
2. **Divinely Inspired.** Your bond is with the Light. It reminds you of what is right.
3. **Laws Are for Boot-Lickers.** You don't have time for laws, imperial decrees, or anyone dumb enough to try and enforce them. Raiders run free!
4. **Loyalty.** You believe in loyalty, no matter what. You expect the same.
5. **Secretive.** You don't like others knowing your business. Illicit or innocent, it doesn't matter. You know that at the end of the day, protecting information keeps you and your allies safe.
6. **Traditionalist.** You honor the Old Gods the people of Fyrean worshipped in the distant past. You still seek their truths.

BOND [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Desert Token.** You have a special token that reminds you of home. You keep it close to your heart, so you won't forget where you came from.
2. **Dreams of the Drift Princess.** You have vowed to become one of Fyrea's greatest raiders, no matter what it takes.
3. **Fate of Fyrea.** You have vowed to stop the Empire of Xian's spread into your tribe's lands.
4. **Mark of the Masters.** You were branded early on, but you bore your pain out, surviving and thriving while other raiders failed and faded. When

it came time to choose, you choose the tribe and took the brand a second time.

5. **Mistakes Were Made.** Your inattention and lackadaisical approach to life cost one of your tribe their life. You vowed to never let that happen again.
6. **Tribal Ally.** You have formed a bond with another member of your tribe that is so strong, you sometimes question your allegiance to the tribe. Who would you choose? Your tribe? Or your ally?

Dev Lore: Organic Materials and Magitech

Alessia's magitech comes in a wide range of materials – it is often much more than just steel, plastic, and glass.

In places like Elysia, Shiran, and Velestra, where wood and similar organic materials grow in abundance, teckers make a point to harvest those living materials for their magitech, adding them to everything from the Sentients they build to the drifters they drive. Where and when possible, teckers will reinforce these materials with additional magic, strengthening them and adding spells to repair the damage these endure through use.

Dev Lore: The Vastness

The deserts of Fyrea stretch throughout most of the continent, their shifting sands replacing the verdant gardens and lush jungles that once connected them far more closely to Elysia and Velestra beyond. Today, this vastness serves as a reminder – both of the size of Alessia and the damage done by careless beings. Many who travel the Vastness do so seeking treasures but there are those who do not; these individuals come seeking far more important treasures.

- **For GMs.** The Vastness is both a place and an idea; countless individuals seeking to escape economic burdens, oppressive leaders, criminal sentences, and any number of other reasons might seek shelter in the Vastness – very few individuals who live in the Vastness trust their companions.

- **For Players.** The Vastness kills most people. You survived it. Or crossed it. Work with your GM to tie the Vastness into one of your character's many goals. Perhaps something hidden lies within?

HERETIC

Everyone knows that, were it not for the great heroes who fought side-by-side with the Heralds of the Light, all of Alessia would have fallen long ago. History is filled with stories, and you've studied them carefully, finding lies and inconsistencies where others find hope and unity. You have rejected the Light as a single entity. Instead, you seek an alternative faith.

Skill Proficiencies. History, Religion.
Tool Proficiencies. None.
Equipment. You begin play with 300 extra Yuan.

Feature: ***Radiant Decay.***

Although the Light's influence is widespread and potent throughout the Empire of Xian (and surrounding lands), it has a far smaller impact on you. You gain resistance to radiant damage. Once per day, when you spend a point of resolve, you gain immunity to radiant damage for 1 minute. You must complete a short rest before you can activate this ability again.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Heretics come in all stripes and colors. Many heretics deviate from their faiths in small ways, changing the fundamental message and often shifting it to suit their own agendas, for good or ill. Some heretics are honest in their disbelief, choosing instead simply "not to believe."

PERSONALITY TRAITS [ROLL 1D8]

1. **Brutish.** You throw your weight around when you want something done.
2. **Charming Lil' Devil.** You erode well-worded arguments with a wink and undo years of discipline with a kiss.
3. **Clown.** You make jokes about everything.
4. **Daring.** You're a risk-taker and it shows. You quickly volunteer for missions and similar dangerous tasks, because you know you'll make it through.
5. **Demanding.** You demand the best from yourself and others. How you demand that level of excellence is entirely up to you.
6. **Frightened.** You are easily frightened by something.
7. **Honorable.** You may not talk about honor as much as others, but it never leaves your mind. You live and work, and plan to die with honor.
8. **Stingy.** It's not that your cheap, you just don't like being taken advantage of.

IDEAL [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Aspiration.** You aspire to be great and you won't have the Light, or any religion, holding you back.
2. **Freedom.** You think faith and religion exist to shackle and control otherwise good people. Where others see security and faith, you see dependence and slavery.
3. **Justice.** You believe being just and fair trumps faith, regardless of the power you follow.
4. **Tradition.** You adhere to a tradition that was long ago declared heretical. You hold to those traditions because, for you, they are the truth.
5. **Truth.** Others will sweeten or alter it to suit, but you won't. You want the truth, front and center.
6. **Wealth.** You want the kind of wealth that allows you to change lives. You'll get there.

BOND [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Child.** You have a child who another parent or partner cares for. You do your best to send support when you're able and plan to see them soon.
2. **Cult.** You joined a cult in your youth that still holds sway over you to a degree.
3. **Pilgrimage.** You have sworn to visit a specific holy site.
4. **Priest's Friend.** You have formed a bond with a member of the clergy.
5. **Weapon.** Through a series of strange coincidences, you came into custody of a minor religious relic that, while not magical or particularly valuable, attracts attention.
6. **Word.** Your word is your bond. When you tell someone that you're going to do something, you do it. You gave your word to a friend and you plan to keep that promise.

FLAW [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Apologetic.** You apologize for everything, even when it's clearly not your fault.
2. **Crude.** You make crude remarks about situations you can't control.
3. **Demeaning.** You talk down to people all the time. You know it's wrong and you try not to, but you have a hard time with it. It's a flaw you've vowed to fix.
4. **Descriptive.** You go into details that most people don't need.
5. **Liar.** You have a hard time with the truth.
6. **Talkative.** You love… nay… need to talk.

MASTER OF MAGITECH

You come from a distinguished line of teckers, arcanists, or other technophiles – tinkering with magitech is in your blood. Although you may not be any kind of expert, you frequently find features and functions for gear that were never intended. While others caution against experimentation, you dive head first into it.

Skill Proficiencies. Culture, Technology.
Tool Proficiencies. Magitech Tool Kit.
Equipment You gain a magitech tool kit and enough spare parts to repair twice the kit's normal capacity. You can repair up to two dozen objects or devices before you need to replenish the parts in your kit.

Feature: *Technical Expert*

You have a knack for pulling out the right tool, program, or application at just the right time. Each day, at the beginning of the day, roll a 2d4. You gain a pool of technical expertise that you can spend to aid others during the day. You may, as a bonus action that does not provoke an opportunity attack, spend up to 2 points from this pool to improve an ally's Technology or Spacefaring rolls. You must be adjacent to your ally to spend the points. This pool of points replenishes when you complete a long rest.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Although you may not have mastered magitech yet, your family, Order, tribe, or some other organization has – you come from a long line of accomplished casters, and that knowledge fuels your drive, desires, and personality.

AREA OF SPECIALTY [ROLL 1D8]

1. **Magitech Augmentation.** You focus on gear that augments the physical form.
2. **Magitech Armor.** You focus on magitech armors of all kinds.
3. **Magitech Dashers.** You focus on dashers and similarly wheeled vehicles.
4. **Magitech Devices.** You focus your studies on hand-held devices that connect to the Crystal Lattice.
5. **Magitech Drifters.** Your love of drifters and hover vehicles dominates your field of study.
6. **Magitech Engines.** You focus on the magitech engines that run everything from shield generators to dashers and larger vehicles.
7. **Magitech Shields.** Your interest in technology is vast, but your interest in shields and shield-tech dominates your day.
8. **Magitech Weapons.** Your first love is combat and the magitech weapons created for that purpose.

IDEAL [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Adaptability.** You believe people, technology, and society should be adaptable. It's really the only way forward.
2. **Art.** Life without art is painful. While function is important, you know form plays an equally important role.
3. **Compassion.** You believe in caring for and helping others. It guides your every action.
4. **Ingenuity.** You live by the mantra "improvise and overcome," valuing resourcefulness in the face of adversity.

5. **Intelligence.** You prize intelligence, and seek out those who identify as being smarter than you.
6. **Memory.** You know the importance of getting things right, and make a point to memorize all sorts of things, which you proudly recite when called upon.

BOND [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Crystal Lattice.** You have a connection to the Crystal Lattice you cannot explain. You feel a pull toward it and the magical crystals it produces.
2. **Drifter's Bond.** You have a bond with your vehicle others don't get. You treat your [dasher drifter] like a child, pampering and lovingly caring for it.
3. **Imperial Mage.** You have a mixed history with the Empire of Xian. You may have served the Empire of Xian or they may be looking for you. Or, maybe, both.
4. **Ley Line Walker.** Long ago, you formed a bond with the land. You understand that bond through the ley lines that crisscross Alessia.
5. **Magical Order.** You are a member of one of Alessia's many magical orders.
6. **Mind's Eye.** You are fascinated by your abilities and have vowed to unlock them completely, becoming the best version of yourself possible.

FLAW [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Arrogant.** You know quite a bit about magitech and you feel that sets you apart from your fellow citizens.
2. **Devious Dealer.** You're constantly looking for an angle or a better deal, no matter what. Most people avoid the low-hanging fruit that you gleefully pluck.
3. **Disrespectful.** You don't try to respect others and often just say what comes to mind, regardless of the outcome.
4. **Hoarder.** You loathe to throw old tech away and lug it around with you wherever you go.
5. **Vulgar.** You swear far too much.
6. **Worrier.** You worry about everything. If something might go wrong, you agonize over it.

NOBLE OF HOUSE AYOSHI

You grew up of the member of House Ayoshi in Qingshan. As a result, you enjoyed a life of privilege and advantage, gaining access to social circles most of the city's lesser denizens will only dream of meeting. Although your relationship with your family is entirely private, you are expected to tailor how you present yourself in society – you do represent the family, after all.

Skill Proficiencies Intimidation, Persuasion
Tool Proficiencies Imperial Tea Set [tools]
Equipment You gain access to a minor, private apartment, imperial papers that mark your privileges, and an allowance of 25 Yuan per month (for food and traveling expenses).

Feature: ***Friends in High Places***

You have one or more contacts who are indebted to you or your family. Once a month, while you're in Qingshan or a nearby village, you can use your contacts to secure lodging or a similar service of a value less than 50 Yuan. You may work with your GM to customize these relationships and services as needed.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

As a noble of any house with ties to the throne, you know your behavior not only reflects on your house, but on the emperor as well. While other nobility might abuse their power, you go out of your way to represent your house and empire in the best possible light. You go out of your way to cross social and economic boundaries, help the needy, and use your power for good.

PERSONALITY TRAITS [ROLL 1D8]

1. **Blue Collar Appeal.** You wear a mantle of determination that charms the lower classes with ease. You enjoy convincing your employees you care about them. Whether you actually do remains to be seen.
2. **Brazen.** You've always been a bit of a fireball, and everyone knows it. You've cut a path through Qingshan's social circles.
3. **Loyalist.** You love the Empire of Xian, and while it occasionally takes steps you find repulsive, you trust its decisions to make all of Alessia better for everyone.
4. **Maestro.** You understand wealth as a path to perfection and go out of your way to help others ascend from the depths of poverty. While others give to charities and soup kitchens, you create opportunities, start businesses, and look for ways to empower others.
5. **Pampered.** You've been pampered, and everyone knows it. Between your demands, your sense of entitlement, and your overall demeanor, most people do not like you. And you don't care.
6. **Promising.** You've been working hard your whole life to make changes in Qingshan, and everyone knows it. When people think about you, they associate you with potential and growth, which is exactly what you want.
7. **Shrewd.** You wear your distrust on your sleeve and make no bones about questioning everyone's' intent, especially when it comes to business of any sort. You haggle a lot and don't think twice about cherry-picking blemishes to get the best deal possible.
8. **Socialite.** The social classes exist for a reason, and you've become adept at making them your preferred game of chance. You love the excitement that comes with rubbing shoulders with the rich, powerful, and influential.

IDEAL [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Be the Resistance.** You know the world isn't fair and you do your best to combat that through small acts of resistance. While others sing the praises of the Empire of Xian, you know the truth. The empire cares only for itself.
2. **Family Feud.** Your family has been struggling against another family for as long as you can remember. That feud drives you, and you'll do nearly anything to draw it to a conclusion that favors your family.
3. **Honor Reigns.** While others chase treasure and navigate trade deals, you look to a single guiding principle – what brings you and your family the greatest honor.
4. **The Light Guides.** You know that your power and privilege mean nothing if you can't help those in need. Your faith in the Light guides you; you consider it before making major decisions.
5. **Pragmatist.** You know that most people's options are limited, so you look for the best possible outcome whenever possible, but you're also smart enough to back out of the fight when it's clear you're not going to win.
6. **Success Means Everything.** While honor, tradition, and family are all important, you know

the truth. If you want others to respect you, you must prove you deserve it.

BOND [ROLL 1D6]

1. **My Family is My Bond.** It's pretty simple to work out where your loyalties lie.
2. **A Lost Cause.** You've been carrying a torch for a particular cause for several years now, and you're not about to stop.
3. **A Special Person.** Your bond is with someone you've known for years, but who connects with you in a way your family never can.
4. **A Special Object.** You have an item or lucky charm that you always keep on you, no matter what.
5. **The Soldier's Life.** You won your nobility through service. Try as you might, you can't shake the bond you formed with your troops. You secretly admire the bond of brotherhood these individuals have nurtured.
6. **Your Father's Relic.** You possess an item of great personal meaning that, although completely mundane, offers you a connection to your father. Although this is weird, most people try to understand this bond.

FLAW [ROLL 1D6]

1. **Arrogant.** You may (or may not) mean it, but you're arrogant, and people can tell.
2. **Combative.** You like to argue with others and enjoy causing discomfort among your 'lessers.'
3. **Creepy.** Maybe it's your oiled facial hair. Maybe it's your obsession with death. Whatever it is, people don't like it.
4. **Misanthrope.** None of it will ever go right, no matter how much you do or how hard you work. Also, make them go away. All of them.
5. **Opportunist.** You're always looking out for you.
6. **Pushy.** You use your money to push people around.

THIEF'S HEART

You've got a rebel's swagger and a thief's heart. Whether you're stealing from the rich to feed the unfortunate or tucking away something for your retirement, you have a passion for removing what others are confident cannot be touched. You rise to the challenge of openly displayed wealth, daring the dawn to beat you to the prize.

Skill Proficiencies. Deception, Street.
Tool Proficiencies. Thieves' Tools.
Equipment. You begin play with 50 Yuan, a set of thieves' tools, a set of black clothes, soft boots, and 100 meters of black silk rope.

Feature: Stealthy

You spent most of your youth practicing moving about silently and it shows. You aren't naturally quiet, but you have practiced for a very long time. You gain a +1 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks. Once per day you may spend a point of resolve to gain advantage on a Dexterity (Stealth) check.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Criminals come in all shapes and sizes, but true thieves treat their craft as an art. Able to do what most use magic for, thieves like you see the whole process as a challenge or a test; they adore and live by the challenge, accepting failure with the same grudging respect they would their ill-gotten goods.

Personality Traits [Roll 1d8]

1. **Brash.** While you know your craft is an art, not every task needs to be measured in hours when you can do it in seconds.
2. **Charming.** You realize that long before you take what you want, you should probably case the joint. That means putting on a smile and getting the poor saps to invite you in.
3. **Determined.** You don't take no for answer, whether that's coming from a lock or a Peacekeeper.
4. **Energetic.** You display a level of energy normally reserved for children and the haste spell. No one is sure how you do it.
5. **Fabulous.** You are. They know it.
6. **Honorable.** People assume thieves have no honor. You are proof that is simply not true.
7. **Silent.** You don't speak much. You prefer actions to words, drawing steel to drawing treaties.
8. **Smug.** You're good, and you have a hard time hiding it, especially when others are around.

Yökai's Chosen

Yökai dominate the World of Alessia on every continent save Elysia, where the Empire of Xian reigns. Like most of your kind, you understand your special place in the evolutionary cycle and endeavor to evolve further, seeking to grow in spirit, heart, and mind.

Skill Proficiencies. Athletics, Culture.
Tool Proficiencies. Meditation Kit.
Equipment. You begin play with a backpack, 300 Yuan, and a hunting knife.

Feature: Tribal Pride.

You understand that a lot of tribal responsibilities rest on your shoulders. With those responsibilities, however, comes a great deal of pride. Each day, you draw on this pride to gain a +1 bonus to Wisdom saving throws. You may spend a point of resolve to make this save with advantage.

Suggested Characteristics

Yökai's chosen are the alphas of their tribes and packs, choosing to push both physical and evolutionary boundaries. Knowing this fills you with pride, but you know you must temper this with wisdom, kindness, and fairness.

Evolutionary Trait [Roll 1d10]

1. **Claws.** Your claws, fins, nails, teeth, or blades are incredibly hard and sharp. When you deal damage with natural attacks, you deal 1 additional point.
2. **Crystal-Marked.** You have a small piece of crystal that grows with you. It glows ever so slightly when you are within 1 kilometer of a ley line or the Crystal Lattice.
3. **Danger Sense.** You have a heightened sense of danger that helps you avoid traps and pitfalls. You gain a +1 bonus on saving throws against traps and ambushes of any kind.
4. **Endurance.** You only need 3 hours of sleep or rest each day. You can operate up to 15 hours without any ill effects (instead of the normal 12).
5. **Eyes of Magic.** Your eyes glow slightly. They grow brighter in the presence of magic (within 1 meter).
6. **Evolution's Ears.** You have a keen sense of hearing that allows you pick up the details others normally would not. You gain a +1 bonus to Wisdom (Perception) skill checks.
7. **Faster, Stronger.** Raise your Strength or Dexterity score by 1 point, to a maximum of 19. If both scores are 19 or higher, roll again.
8. **Hardened.** Your hide is tougher than normal. You gain resistance to non-magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing weapons.
9. **Quicker.** You gain a +1 to Initiative checks.
10. **Speedy.** Increase your land movement rate by 10 feet.

Ideal [Roll 1d6]

1. **Charity Matters.** You know that to serve others is to serve yourself. You go out of your way to make sure Alessia is a better place for others.
2. **Evolve or Die.** You believe in becoming the peak version of your species.
3. **Honesty.** While others speak in circles, you prefer the honest – often blunt – facts.
4. **Strength.** To be yökai is to be strong. You live that life.
5. **Tribe First.** You put your tribe first in all things, living by your elders' laws and dictates.
6. **Trust.** You believe it's sacred and without it, the tribe comes apart. You place a lot of importance on it.

Bond [Roll 1d6]

1. **Clan's Honor.** You are bound to the clan's honor. You act accordingly.

2. **Pack Sister.** You have a strong bond with female member of your tribe, pack, or family.
3. **Pack Brother.** You have a strong bond with a male member of your tribe, pack, or family.
4. **Pack Ether.** You have a strong bond with an ether of your tribe, pack, or family.
5. **Religious Law.** You keep a short but steadfast list of laws you hold as sacred. This is your bond with the Light, and should you break it, so should your heart.
6. **Tribal Obedience.** Each day, when you complete a long rest, you perform a special obedience, prayer, or ritual that aligns you with your tribe.

Flaw [Roll 1d6]

1. **Challenging.** You challenge people's ideas and assumptions constantly, even when you don't need to.
2. **Cranky.** You are incredibly easy to annoy, and everyone knows it.
3. **Dominant.** You should be in charge. There's no logical reason to put the human in charge. Nope, it should definitely be you.
4. **Ethereal.** Your head is in the proverbial clouds and everyone comments to that fact. People find it hard to communicate with you.
5. **Greedy.** You crave material and social power, no matter the cost.
6. **Temper, Temper.** You have a short fuse.

Yökai, Gender, and the Ether

Alessia's history differs from that of our own in many ways, including how its various species treat gender. This is largely due to the planet itself, which radiates magical energies that agitate and expedite evolutionary processes, sometimes within as little as a single generation.

The first Ether were born toward the end of the Second Millennium, as violence and competition between many of the species abated. The more the yökai tribes shifted their lifestyles toward the symbiotic and agrarian, the more the planet responded to their needs to expand and settle. The first Ether were often misunderstood but were thankfully met with kindness and respect.

Over the next three millennium, as Alessia evolved, so did the Ether in each of their respective societies. As society progressed and evolution took its course, the Ether became a third gender, capable of adapting and changing to match preferred partners. Although less statistically common than males or females, Ether account for about 12% of their respective species' total gender, with females representing 46% and males representing 42% of their respective populations.

In Alessia, Ether are born across all populations at roughly the same rates, accounting for 10% to 15% of the population. While some families or areas may celebrate these births, most of Alessia treats them no differently than any other birth.

Chapter 2 | Species of Alessia

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On Alessia, the first races to evolve were collectively the yökai – The People of Fang or Fur. Awakening from their previous lives as simple animals, these beings evolved and over time proudly stood as bipedal, sentient beings. And they were the first to fight. For generations, powerful yökai warlords drove their tribes across the various lands – dominating Yerwin first before migrating south to Velestra, and further south to the islands that have since become Galgaræ.

Powerful and proud, it was the Gnoles, and later the arrival of the Ish'ra, that brought most of the yökai from the battlefields and to the Council Fires in Yerwin. With peace established, the Ish'ra started to build, salvaging what they could of their great Voidship and weaving that technology into their cities. They shared this with their new yökai allies, too, and made pacts with the Gnoles, whose desert kingdom rivaled that of the Lords of Brass.

As the rest of the young races continued to wake and evolve, the yökai eventually stepped down as the yökai warlords of their world, instead becoming the tribal lords their people needed.

Eventually, the yökai spread throughout the south Elysia, and especially the Empire of Xian.

A YÖKAI - CENTRIC WORLD

Alessia's traditions, its ideas, and its various peoples have developed into a global culture that constantly surprises outsiders; many of Alessia's central assumptions differ from those of 'traditional' fantasy in a number of ways.

Central to these these traditions is the Song of Light, an ancient practice among the yökai that dates back to Alessia's First Age. The practice has perpetuated throughout Alessia, often appearing as part of the various tribes' creation myths. Although the particulars differ by people and region, the central theme always involves a yökai shaman reaching out to their hidden ancestors, calling to them by singing to the light of the moon. Wildly popular among the kitsune and gnoles, the practice spread to non-yökai (especially among the stoic Velestrians). After the War of the Sovereigns, the Church of Light established doctrine sanctifying the practice, and eventually this practice rooted itself in the early traditions of the Empire of Xian.
While many Alessians overlook the historical significance of the Song of Light, its practice is an established beacon among all of the yökai tribes – it signifies their bond to the Light, and through it, one another. Established at the Council Fires of Yerwin at the fore of the Second Age, this practice is the longest-running tradition on the planet.

But it isn't alone.

The Song of Light is but one of many examples of how the yökai have, across the ages, shaped the foundation of the society. Their approach to culture has informed their architecture, their transportation, their laws, and in some places, their faiths, as well. While the Song of Light is a prominent example, countless other yökai tribal traditions are woven into the rich tapestry of Alessia's history. These include:

THE WINTER FIRES
This annual event remembers the Council Fires of Yerwin, the monumental event that brought the original yökai tribes together. The Winter Fires are a yökai tradition that enshrines community and collaboration, and celebrates civic sacrifice. Originally dedicated to the pack leaders, scouts, and shamans that brought the peoples together, the Winter Fires have come to represent family, unity, and tribal strength.

Other cultures, including the Empire of Xian and the Ish'ra, have embraced these traditions, discovering analogs in their tribal histories that better tie them to their larger communities. Most people see the Winter Fires as just that, too – they are celebrations that bring communities together and enshrine the Light during the darkest parts of the year.

THE SUNSONG

Practiced widely among both the Fengu and the Velestrians, the Sunsong is a particular version of the Song of Light that these cultures use to test for the divine gifts that manifest
in oracles, monks, and those able to work magic in the Light's name.

Velestrians who learn this song often do so through their larger, national history; they all learn the same, measured, perfectly balanced sonnet. The fengu, on the other hand, understand the Sunsong as an evolving story that is hatched like a cosmic egg, each morning, when the world renews itself. These fengu sing their tribal histories into this song, creating a tapestry of songs that, when sung in unison, creates a truly unique Sunsong.

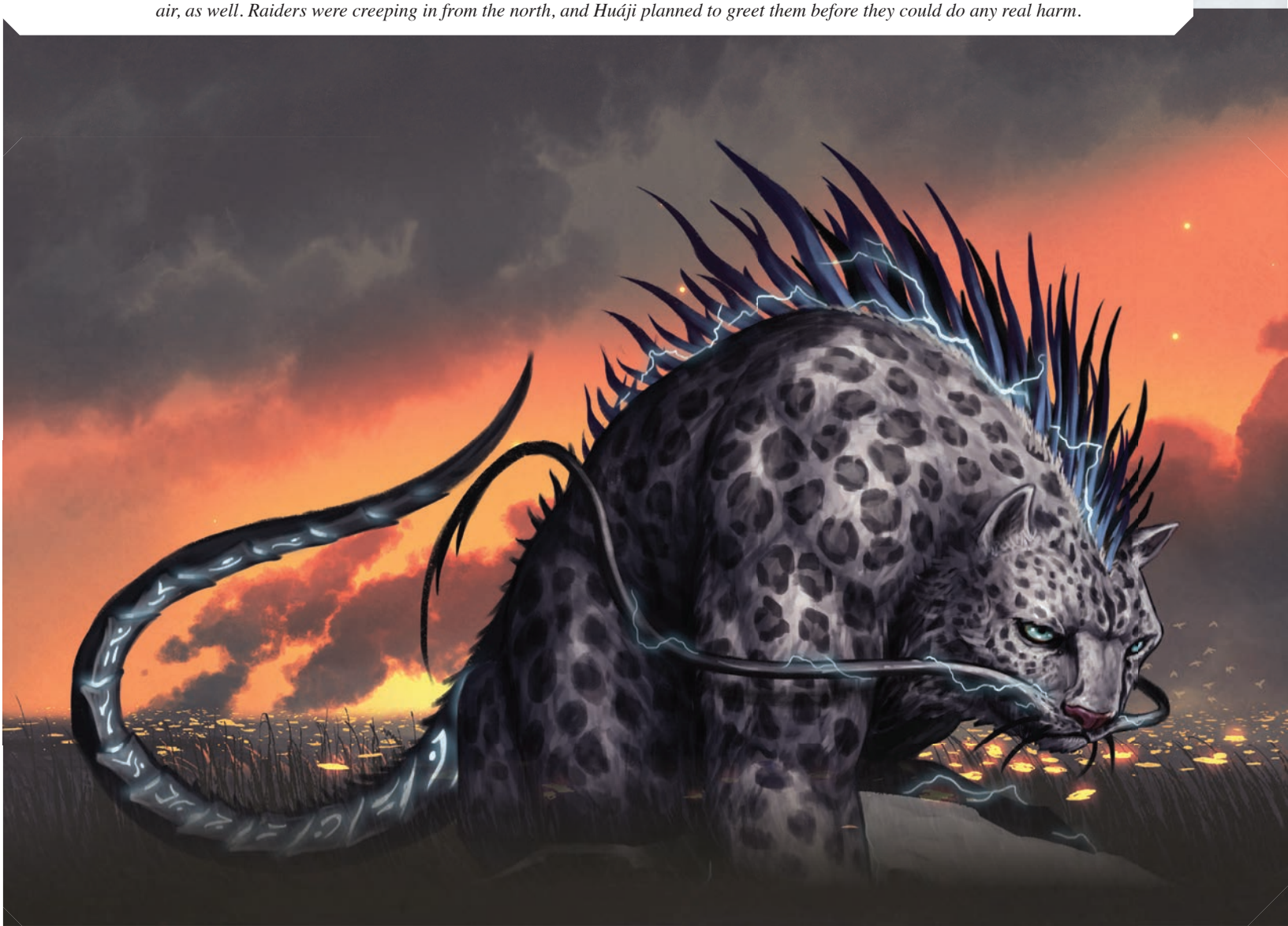
LORE: THE STORY OF THE WORLD FIRE

Although few tell the tale today, two of Alessia's longest-running mystery schools still teach the Story of the World Fire, an ancient yökai-centric creation myth, although both do so for different reasons. The ancient Tawaka Tribe of southern Yerwin teach this lesson through their funerary rites, which include the Rite of Return; these tribal members refuse the Light, choosing instead to return to Alessia's heart through her destructive fires. The Order of the Masked Pharaoh, on the other hand, teaches its Initiates that all mysteries arise from the same source and that the kaimi aren't to be trusted; they are harbingers of illusion, deception, and seek the hide the World Fire from those who would use it to terraform Alessian society.

- **For GMs.** The Light dominates Alessian society at all levels; those looking to stamp out older, competing ideas might be secretly seeking out and destroying those competing ideas and stories. Do the PCs seek out and destroy texts about the Story of the World Fire or do they work to preserve them?

- **For Players.** On Alessia, some species slowly evolve, unlocking powers and abilities from within their genetic material with the help of Alessia's ley lines and its Crystal Lattice. Some might use the Story of the World Fire to explain this alchemical process, using the First Flame as the prime mover for this important process.
- **Stunt.** Characters who unlock 3 or more pieces of the Story of the World Fire learn the stunt *Aspect of Fen Linag*.

Huáji crept across the field in the early morning, letting the cool, mist-filled air push the sleep from his body. Light was creeping in with the morning, and already Huáji could smell the smoke from the early morning cooking fires. But he could smell fear, sweat, and the electricity in the air, as well. Raiders were creeping in from the north, and Huáji planned to greet them before they could do any real harm.



THE PATH OF DEEDS

The earliest yökai tribes practiced tribal rites and rituals that encouraged self-sufficiency, inventiveness, and heroic actions in the world. Although these acts are often small and regional, the path of deeds is as much a rite of passage for young yökai as it is a way to encourage civic duty and positive action.

THE PATH OF MEDITATION

Although the early tribal leaders of Yerwin didn't keep as many written records as their cousins in Fyrea, both species developed early cultures that enshrined reflection and self-analysis. For the yökai in Yerwin, this manifested in a number of shamanistic rites that symbolically and systematically transformed predatory relationships into cooperative ones; tribes previously locked in brutal warfare ended hostilities within a generation. For the yökai in Fyrea – specifically the gnoles – this path manifested in a darker, more solemn form.

Known as the Deathless, these early gnole arcanists journeyed deep into Fyrean deserts, seeking out mysteries and following strange Asaræl omens. Although their initial wanderings appeared chaotic and haphazard, these strange arcanists developed a series of self-reflective routes they codified into a tome called *The Wanderings of Hehb Sehd* – named after their founder, Hehb Sehd.

Countless other examples of the path manifested across Alessia, all of them teaching the same, primary lesson – one must look within to grow and evolve. For modern yökai, many of whom rely on legends and stories as their only proofs of their wondrous past, accepting some of these traditions as "truths" can be exhausting, especially when so much still remains to be done.

The Path of Meditation owes its genesis, in Yerwin, to the Great Scribe Tallis Ursa, who watched the stars each night for seven years, studying their movement and their effects on the waters, his people, the weather, and even his mind. This extreme dedication to the natural world led him to meditate on the opposite, birthing the Path of Meditation from the dark spaces between the stars.

THE RITE OF ATTUNEMENT

Although Alessia's outer crust resemble those of smaller, earth-like planets, its intermediate layers contain one of its most important features – the Crystal Lattice, which amplifies the planet's ambient life aura in ways the rest of the universe can't conceive. The planet and its inhabitants evolved early, and furthermore, these evolutionary trends took place in smaller, regional pockets – often in proximity to nexus points (locations where two or more ley lines crossed).

Alessia's earliest psychics discovered they could attune to the lattice and, through it, directly (albeit in only small ways) effect the matter around them. Of course, this required each of these psychics to surrender a bit of themselves in the process – an often violent or painful experience for early psychics.

Today, the process of attunement is almost painless, especially for psychics brought up in relatively modern cities (and their surrounding regions); senior psychics use a series of challenges, matched with timed exposure to the Lattice, to test young psychics' tolerance and ability to work around the Lattice. These tasks are performed in public schools, at religious institutions, in nearly all monasteries, and as a charitable service by wandering psychics (many in the employ of larger, more powerful organizations). Still, a few psychics slip through the cracks and attune, in broken and jaded engagements, on their own.

Psychic characters who perform the Rite of Attunement can connect with the Crystal Lattice easily, requiring they only use one of their attunement slots in order to do so. Characters who attune to the Crystal Lattice using non-traditional (often called a 'wild') methods must use two of their attunement slots to do so; these individuals frequently manifest additional psychic powers, as well.

Attunement is an important concept in Alessia. When a player character with a free slot attunes to (or bonds with) a target object, person, entity, or location, that individual invests a number of hours (a minimum of 18 continuous hours is required to initially attune to something), forming a magical, divine, or psychic bond with the target that bestows benefits on one, the other, or both. This is most commonly experienced as the bond between an individual and their familiar, although many citizens form bonds with surrogate devices, instead.

Starting at 1st level, a player character learns to attune with (or bond to) a number of items, people, or places (hereafter known as the target) equal to their proficiency bonus.

Attuenement is explained in greater detail in Chapter 4: Magic & Magitech (see page 204).

THE PATH OF THE OLD SIGHT

While few will deny the grace and glory of the Light's many gifts (especially in light of the Ring of Heaven), there are some yökai who yearn for simpler times – the days before Dashers and Drifters, when the fabled Tribes of One proudly marched across Yerwin's golden savannahs. While a great deal of their nostalgia is myopic, the traditionalists who promote it aren't without cause – the spirits of the Old World were a lot more vocal in those days, walking hand in hand with all who openly embraced them.

While they haven't shunned modern Alessia entirely, many of the kaima have retreated to the wild and primitive places to create new mysteries, seeking locations untouched by the evolved ones, where their powers to form reality still have the most potential (an observation the powerful gnole arcanist, Hehb Sehd, made during his wanderings).

Although some of the kaima have adapted to magitech and those who embrace it, the majority still reject and distrust it, especially those devices that allow others to look on the kaimas' otherwise invisible world. Their secret lives laid bare, the kaima who have remained have become, in places, minor celebrities and entertainers.

While this fusion of the two worlds entertains the citizens of the Empire of Xian, those who still seek to establish older, sacred relationships with these spirits are often left out in the cold – or forced to embrace the lives of hermits, that they might still speak with those who walked before.

THE BRUTAL PATH TO PEACE

Although most of Alessia's evolved species actively work towards peaceful resolutions to social challenges, it is the yökai and the fabled descendants of the Tribes of One, who actively champion its call throughout Alessia. Working as educators, historians, archeologists, and explorers, yökai all over Alessia continue to uncover the dangerous truths of the past – learning just how brutal and ruthless their ancestors had become, in those red days of war.

Today, only a rare few yökai still advocate for action (and with it, violence). The vast majority prefer instead to let the Ring of Heaven and the Light's many servants be their watchmen. While many find this degree of faith and trust admirable, there are others who know better – the persistence of peace is only guaranteed through the active readiness to do violence.

Still, many yökai still shoulder their ancestral desires for the hunt – these individuals often become Marauders, Peacekeepers, and Ninjas, redirecting their genetic drives into their chosen paths.

Deed	D12
Recover the bleached skull of a desert auroch.	1
Attune with a Velestrian Feathered Serpent.	2
Recover one of Galgaræ's scales.	3
Climb one Yerwin's tribal totems.	4
Attune with a Velestrian Tree of Life.	5
Recover a leaf from the Great Ash of Ghost Isle.	6
Attune with a winter crystal in Yrim.	7
Convince a Velestrian to perform the Sunsong with you. In Velestra.	8
Run with the wild aurochs of northern Yerwin.	9
Walk the Silk Sea with the kaima.	10
Perform Galgaræ's Night Walk.	11
Attune with an Elysian Nine Tail.	12

THE IMPACT OF AN EVOLVING WORLD

Alessia's unique environmental conditions have given rise to dozens of sentient species, each rapidly evolving over a few generations and often in proximity to one of three things – the massive Trees of Life (located in abundance in Velestra), a handful of unique Nexus Points (located on various continents), and around the incredibly rare crystal fields (Qingshan's own Vareon Crystal Fields being a good example). These factors alone often warrant these sites protection, while telling another, sobering tale.

In the wake of the War of the Sovereigns, much of Alessia learned the truth – that the Crystal Lattice played a large role in the course of events. Its discovery during the war changed the entire face of Fyrean, terraforming societies and coastal cities in the blink of an eye.

That destruction impacted Alessia's evolution, as well, shifting some species away from their natural courses while entangling others directly in the war. Such was the case with the shadelings, a species whose involvement in the conflict permanently altered many of their physiological traits, shifting them off their natural course and thrusting them into entirely new social roles in Alessia. Others saw their natural processes speed up, while others stabilized and slowed considerably; every people and tribe that calls Alessia home has such a tale.

Today, evolution is carefully tended and coached by small, often independent groups with ties to their local governments or churches. In Velestra, the elves, treah, and nagai all watch over the Trees of Life and those seeking to evolve in their shadows. In the lower temples of ancient Fyrea, Light-blessed priests of the Old Gods walk with gnoles, djinnkin, terrans, and humans through the mysterious process of unlocking their inner potential. Far to the north, in Yrim, the rune masters of the Ancient Raven whisper dark secrets that, when fully understood, are said to magnify the Light's many stoic gifts. Regardless, each location will have representative groups who initiate, curate, and when needed – gatekeep – this process.

ALIEN INCURSIONS

Without doubt, the Ish'ra have left their eternal mark on the full face of Alessia. Its first refugees, the Ish'ra, crashed deep in the south eastern jungles of Elysia at the end of its first millennia. After making peaceful contact with the humans and yökai there, they pledged their fealty. The three groups worked to slowly, and smartly, build an empire.

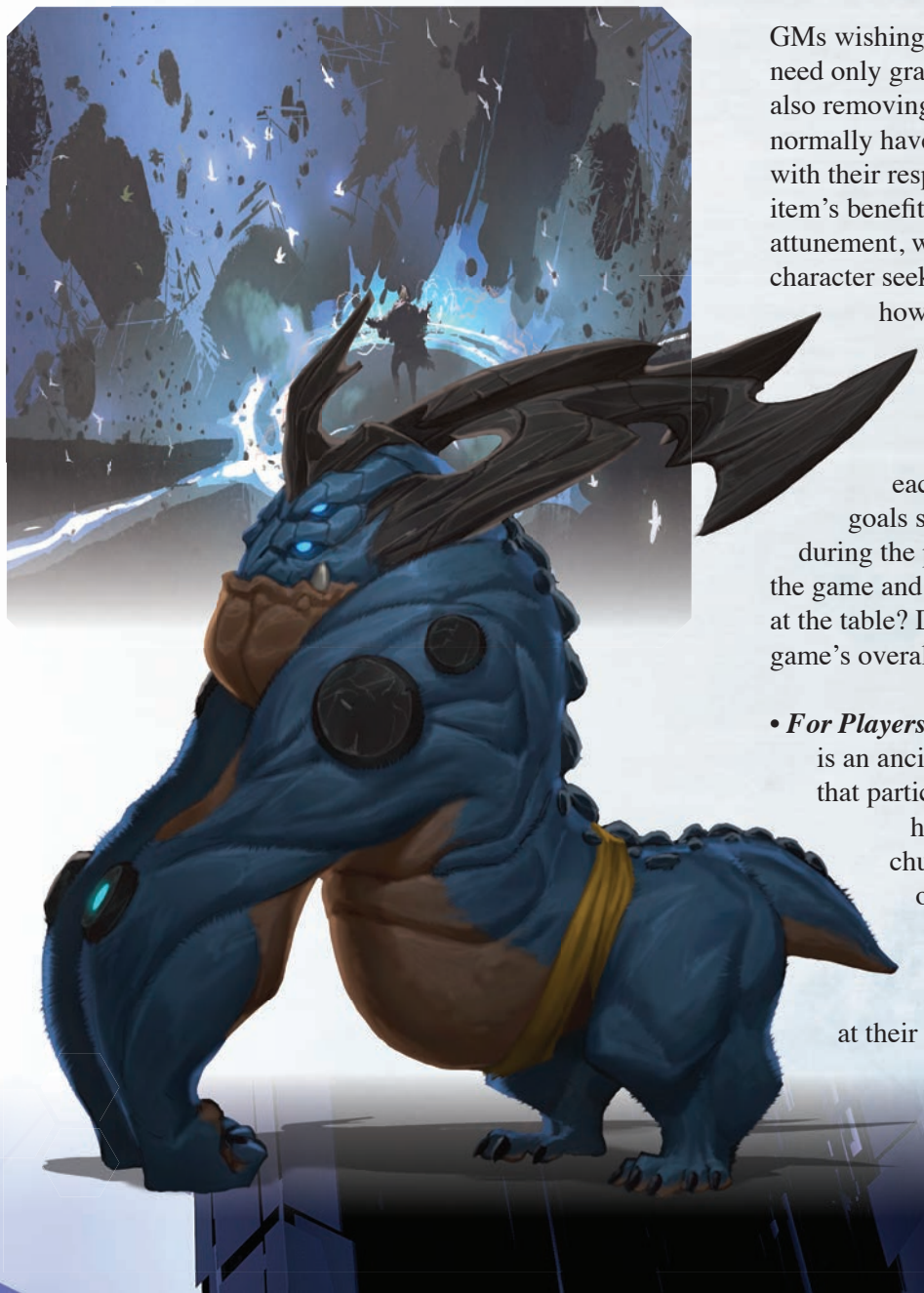
Since those legendary days, there have been several other, smaller incursions – events that have increased rapidly since the close of the War of Sovereigns. Although the Ring of Heaven intercepts most incoming objects today, smaller objects still get through. To this end, the Empire of Xian, working in tandem with local or regional heroes, will frequently deploy special teams to locate, isolate, and evaluate Alessia's newest arrivals. Although some of these encounters end in violence, the Empire of Xian prides itself on relocation and integration efforts, which it channels into several programs that result in full citizenship for its newest neighbors.

Although some imperial citizens have made cases against these programs, the Empire of Xian has a long history of supporting them, seeing such openness as a sign of strength and health. Historians often cite the examples of Emperor.

Dev Lore: Monsters from Beyond the Stars

While the World of Alessia has its own, complex system of ecologies, GMs should not feel limited by the vastness of that system when selecting monsters with which to challenge player characters; the Shadows of Venn often seek to penetrate defenses and frequently test its Ring of Heaven, launching special pods that – when they successfully enter Alessia's atmosphere – crash to the world below, unleashing strange new foes upon the world.

GMs seeking to test their players with foes that fall outside of Alessia's normal ecology can easily do so by having said monster enter in a pod.



UNLOCKING YOUR INNER POTENTIAL & EVOLUTION

Fantasy and science fiction are filled with stories of the hero's journey; it is one of tabletop's cornerstone concepts. When we first started working on Alessia, Jere and I discussed developing complex rules to represent the immediate and complex nature of interfering with your character's evolution. In the end, we decided to instead place those options directly in the storyteller's hands by tying them to the world directly; characters seeking to unlock their evolutionary process must actively seek that process in game.

So, how should GMs represent this evolutionary process in the larger world?

GMs wishing to represent this evolutionary process need only grant access to a magical item while also removing any attunement restrictions it might normally have. Instead of requiring PCs to attune with their respective items, simply give them the item's benefits without any of the costs (normally attunement, weight, and cost) or restrictions. Player character seeking to actively engage the process, however, might be expected to spend feats to unlock additional powers.

• ***For GMs***. GMs looking to play to each character's evolutionary character goals should constantly reflect on two things during the process: do these evolutions enhance the game and make it more enjoyable for everyone at the table? Do these evolutionary steps retard the game's overall progress in some way?

• ***For Players***. Unlocking your inner power is an ancient tale, and players seeking that particular story will find an easy home here, both among the yökai tribes, great churches, and the citizens of the Empire of Xian. Special shrines, hidden courts, and secret kaima elders populate the lands, sharing their secrets and teaching individuals willing to learn at their feet.

A NOTE ON FREQUENCY & IMPACT

How often these incursions happen is entirely up to the GM.

A number of factors including Alessia's atmosphere and the Ring of Heaven. The Empire of Xian's policing efforts impact how often celestial objects crash to the surface, and when they do, what they ultimately contain. In most instances, Alessia's meteorites should contain the building blocks to their universe, giving them greater insights to their past and illuminating their place in the larger universe. In some cases, these objects contain alien minerals, lifeforms (like bacteria), and even coded messages from beyond the stars.

- ***For GMs***. If your game relies heavily on combat to keep things exciting, the idea of fighting violent invaders in a cascading wave of increasingly more risky encounters could appeal to your group. Consider having the PCs race to sites, hoping to intercept the enemy before the innocents in the region are harmed. For other groups, a single event – the arrival of a sacred artifact, for instance – could signal something much larger, setting into motion events that ripple slowly across the globe.

- ***For Players***. Players looking to explore and expand campaigns or stories revolving around an alien invasion should have no problem building out backstory related to one or more celestial events, which are commonly called incursions in Alessia.

THE PEOPLES OF ALESSIA

Knowing its dark past and the millennium of division, strife, and war that Alessia endured, multiculturalism is no surprise to anyone (or at least to most of the people who call it home). While it has pockets of intolerance and regression, once most people have gazed upon the glory of the Empire, they accept its political philosophy as a
simple truth.

And why?

It's because the system works.

This is especially evident in the Empire of Xian, where the Emperor Zin Zhu has openly invited all of Alessia to join in his vision. He's decreed that Alessia could, under his wise guidance, enjoy the 'thousand years of light.' Whether this comes to pass, the Emperor has taken great strides to turn all his lands into examples of what all of Alessia could become, if only it would submit to the Empire's care. Although Zin Zhu swears that his intentions are pure, others have accused him of playing a political game, claiming that his empire is nothing short of a imperial takeover. These few form a resistance that continues to plague the outskirts of the great Empire.

Of course, the Empire of Xian is only one of many; there are other places on Alessia where tensions exist, although these are thankfully rare. Such conflicts normally have other components that can be identified beyond race or ethnicity: everything from strained resources to old grudges often lie at the heart of such conflicts. And once diplomacy fails, anything is possible. Still, that has been the general consensus for centuries now, and most individuals accept it as the conventional wisdom of the day.

With all of its talk of tolerance, some might think the people of Alessia soft. Nothing could be further from the truth. If a thousand years of warfare taught them anything, it is this – a thousand years of peace would be much better. Of course, that peace does not come free, and it is only through the constant vigilance, the measured justice, and the ability to act that keeps everything running as smoothly as it does. While much of this does fall to the Empire of Xian, the people of Velestra, as well as those in the Holy Kingdom of Asrai seem to manage equally well without Xian tutelage. Of course, the further out one goes, the rougher things get – regardless of whether you have scales.

Alessia is a massive planet that would easily dwarf our Earth by a number of factors; it is important to keep this fact clearly in mind when you consider its peoples, their resources, and the conditions under which they evolved. This is compounded by the fact that we only show you a small part of the world – seven of its continents occupying less than a tenth of its total surface area, yielding the rest to the deep, black oceans that dominate much of the planet.

These seven continents – Elysia, Fyrea, Galgaræ, Shiran, Velestra, Yerwin, and Yrim – mark a small part of its total surface area, dominating about 18% of its total surface – leaving GMs plenty of room to introduce new species, and where need be, entirely new civilizations.

The various species listed further in this chapter – both the evolved yökai and the dimensional refugees who now call Alessia home – are playable character species.

GENETIC CONNECTIONS

The world of Alessia is filled with evolving species, many of which have yet to fully understand their potential as beings and what they may yet become. Some of these species share genetic bonds that allow them to reproduce, birthing young that favor their respective parents and any dominant genetic patterns. Species who lack a genetic connection cannot reproduce and birth young. As a result, there are no "half-species" on Alessia – every species is the byproduct of millennia of evolution, culture, and socialization.

Generally speaking, our reasoning for removing this concept from Alessia is simple – this is a special world where the perfect storm of conditions spurred the rapid evolution of dozens of lines, whose genetic bonds crystallized long before they discovered one another. Some of these bonds are so close these species can marry and birth offspring, and relationships between these species is common as a result.

Other species, once predator and prey, lack these genetic connections and never birth young as a result. Finally, there are lines completely alien to the very world they have come to call home. This is true of the elves, the dwarves, and the jötunfolk – all of whom call Alessia home but are as alien as the Tir'ians or Tru'atha when it comes to their ancestry.

While Alessia's scientists continue to explore the implications of these genetic connections (some even braving the shadows seeking ways to manipulate them), most of the attempts to marry and produce young between incompatible species have failed; the few attempts that showed promise died within weeks of their birth, leaving teams of talented engineers frustrated and hoping for a true universal bridge – a missing link in the genetic code that might unlock all of their potential.

GMs wishing to pursue this storyline can certainly do so, although all of the material we have planned for these individual species remains on the cards for later dates in the project. So, we encourage you to make any changes carefully, considering not only the mechanical implications, but also the social and cultural ones, both for Alessia and the players sitting at the game table.

For now, only the species who share these genetic bonds can birth young. They are listed as part of those respective species' entries.

As we reveal more about Alessia, we will include greater details on the individual species, as well as their particular lines of ancestry, giving player characters even more options for their individual characters.

What are Species Synergies?

The World of Alessia introduces the idea of **species synergies** – the idea that long-term collaboration between two or more cultures, societies, or species manifests in the world as evolving traits that benefits both.

Because of how species have evolved on Alessia, most of the species who sought to alienate others died out long ago; those who sought to evolve naturally did so, discovering countless new benefits through those evolving relationships.

From a development standpoint, the **species synergy** is a narrative tool expressed as a mechanical value. My intention here has been to replace the oft overlooked (and certainly over-used) "racial hatred" of other fantasy games with something that redirects the character (and player's) energy and focus.

So, instead of giving player characters a boon or benefit for perpetuating a hatred and division (you know, the +x to hit orcs – *yawn* – every other game relies on), player characters instead gain the mathematical equivalent in Alessia when they work together.

Throughout the *World of Alessia Campaign Primer* (and this chapter), these **species synergies** are called out, often granting the favored pairing a small mechanical bonus. Often, this relationship will offer player characters unique benefits – sometimes mimicking magical spells or supernatural abilities – that only function while they are actively allied (and, where applicable, in range).

All of the species within this book have at least a single **species synergy**, although many have more – Alessia's long history has given its various peoples ample opportunities to work together, forging new (even when unknown) relationships and cooperations.

GMs should not feel pressured to honor only these traditional relationships, however.

Instead, we encourage you to break with the very concept and instead populate the world with your ideas and visions, honoring relationships in new, exciting ways. Have fun with this concept, and share it outside of your Alessia game, too.

Cheers,
~Jaye

THE ASARÆ

THE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

Yusra moved slowly across the broken pavement, carefully picking her steps like a practiced dancer might. She wanted to skirt danger and, tonight, that meant silence. If she was going to do the Light's work in this broken, backwater little village, she'd need to act swiftly and with perfect resolve – she was the Light's only hope here.

THE ASARÆ

Beings infused with the Light, the very first asaræ rose from the ashes of the War of Sovereigns like saints among men, taking on the holy charge of the Light and helping to carve out what would later become the Holy Kingdom of Asrai. Naturally biased toward the Light, asaræ resemble humans, often with soft and symmetrical features. Naturally beautiful, these beings have no problem attuning to the Light. Some asaræ (although not all) are born with large, angel-like wings.

Of course, the asaræ are born of more than just beauty and grace, and many credit the circumstances of their birth (as well as the alignment of the various heavenly bodies) with the qualities they develop; few asaræ are exactly the same. In this generality, all asaræ share a common link: every single asaræ was born under specific circumstances, each of which involved the manifestation of the Light.

LORE: CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

While all of Alessia's peoples enjoy the bounty of the Light, the asaræ have a special relationship with it; they regard the Light as a child would their parent. Connecting with the Light through multiple channels, the asaræ have long understood their small but meaningful place in the larger world. They embrace this simplicity with a joy that allows them to touch and shape Light like no others.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Path of Light – Natural conduits for the Light, the asaræ naturally embolden and encourage those aligned to it. While many species have learned to attune through shared struggles or focused cooperation, the asaræ's natural aptitude for channeling the Light allows them to select a single, good-aligned ally with whom they have formed a bond (and attuned) as their charge.

Provided the two attuned and allied heroes are within 30 feet of each other, the asaræ can spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to heal their ally 1d4 Hit Points. The asaræ can spend up to three points of resolve in this fashion.

LORE: HOPE OF SHIRAN

The very first asaræ were born in Shiran, high in the mountains in temples dedicated to the Light. Although there is no official record of their births, historians agree that these near-miracle births likely overwhelmed the local clerks and clerics alike, ensuring confusion would rule the day. To this day, the asaræ can trace their roots back to the first of their kind, but none know for sure who – exactly – was the first of their kind.

Today, the Church of Light in Shiran continues to map out and identify this "first generation," working in tandem with the Kingdom of Asrai on several fronts.

LORE: THE GIFT OF FLIGHT

While some asaræ are born with wings, even those who are born with wings may never gain the strength to fly. Those who do, take to the skies often use arcane, divine, or even psionic means to do so, using their wings instead to guide and aid them while maneuvering difficult or dangerous skies. The rare few asaræ who learn to fly without magic are celebrated as the A'ketta, "honored ones," a prestigious title suggesting direct, divine influence at the time of their birth.

Asaræ Names Asaræ names are often picked from the regional cultures and peoples, but might include: Asa, Bæve, Callina, Dræna, Faussa, Jerawu, Mhama, Natica, or Sera.

Choirs Asaræ do not form normal families, but instead form choirs. These choirs are larger, extended groups that function like families, but operate more like peaceful clans training for war. Choirs range in size, but generally fall between 21 and 212 members. Choir names often match that choir's founder and include: the Seraxi Choir, the Ketta Ka Choir, the A'Róng Choir, the Geeara Ku Choir, and the Xing Xia Choir.
In Alessia, it only takes the planet 244 days to complete a rotation around the sun (compared to Earth's 365 days), meaning that the people of Alessia, while technically 'older,' may not be operating the same way someone on Earth would at the same age. For instance, on Alessia, a lot of human and variant-human species may appear to be younger than they initially sounded.

On Earth, most individuals reach adulthood at 18. On Alessia, and because of the time difference, those numbers skew toward 27, 28. We've reflected that in each species entry, as well.

ASARÆ TRAITS

Your asaræ character has wild, almost supernatural beauty that is clearly touched by the Light. You may also have wings. When you select an asaræ you gain the following benefits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Charisma score by 2 and your Strength score by 1.
Age. Asaræ age similar to humans, reaching adulthood in their late twenties. Asaræ retire when they gain their first grey feather (or hair), typically around a century. A typical asaræ lives to 160.
Alignment. Asaræ enjoy a connection to the Light that naturally aligns them to goodness. Most avoid chaos, but none are completely restricted from embracing it, either. Most asaræ are lawful or neutral, leaning toward law.
Size. A typical asaræ stands 5 to six feet in height and weighs about 180 lbs. Your size is Medium.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
Graceful. Asaræ have a natural grace that enhances their natural charisma. You gain a +1 bonus on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Diplomacy) ability checks.
Halo of Fire and Light. Asaræ can activate a powerful nimbus of light that heals nearby allies or damages nearby enemies. You can activate your halo as an Action that affects everyone within 30 feet of you. Allies are healed 3d8 hit points. Enemies are bathed in fire, suffering 3d8 points of fire damage instead. You must complete a long rest before activating this ability again.
Light-Touched. All asaræ gain the ability to manifest light. You know the cantrip *light*; Charisma is your casting ability.
Winged. You possess wings but cannot fly naturally. You can use your wings to guide you while you descend from a fall. As long as your wings function, you can use them to glide nearly any distance downward. While descending in this fashion, you may spend a point of resolve to target yourself with the *safe fall* spell.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Celestia and Shiranese.

THE DJINNKIN
BORN FROM BRASS

Nuu-Nuu reclined on her silky couch, touching a crystal and adjusting the temperature in the cabin. Her new Dao Duster had all the bells and whistles, plus extra shields in case the local bandits got brave, stupid, or both. As the cabin quickly cooled, Nuu-Nuu brought up her screen and scanned the area around her. All was quiet.

Then, Nuu-Nuu's mind exploded with information and she prioritized. A skilled 'speeder, Nuu-Nuu learned to ride her older brother's dasher as soon as she could; she knew vehicles better than anyone she knew. She moved through her checklist with accuracy and speed, powering her shields and returning fire.

She spun her skiff and exploded into action.

THE DJINNKIN

The creation of the great Djinn Lords and the Efreeti Masters, the djinnkin are also known as geniekin or simply 'Kin (and informal, casual greeting shared between aligned houses). Born with all the heat, sun, and motivation someone traveling the deserts of Fyrea could want, the djinnkin are a resourceful people whose magical gifts and love of transforming cultures and places guides their slow expansion throughout Alessia.

To forward this end, the Lords in Brass created the djinnkin, engineering their flesh so that the long shadow of death was a distant foe. Blessed with unnaturally long lives, the djinnkin spent their first few millennia on Alessia in service to their creators, acting as their mortal agents. This service ended during the Second Age, when a conflict between the effreti and Djinn Lords forced the children to flee or face annihilation in a brief but violent conflict.

LORE: HUMANITY'S TRINITY

The djinnkin weren't the only species the Djinn Lords and their effreti counterparts created. Today's djinnkin can easily trace their lines of ancestry back to the lower deserts, with some able to follow their lines to the original gardens into which each was born.

These djinnkin maintain a number of similarities to both the humans and the terrans, with whom they share a surprising number of genetic markers.

These three species have been reproducing and marrying for millennia and continue to do so today. This fact further defines them, as this is something many of the yökai species simply cannot do.

LORE: MASTERS OF THE DESERTS

While the gnoles have long ruled over the southern deserts of Alessia, their domination has long been restricted to their ancient cities. Today, Alessia's djinnkin enjoy that enduring and important title. This title, of course, was hard won – today's djinnkin can tell you secrets about the deserts that even the most learned gnolish scholars might miss.

LORE: THE FOREVER CHILDREN

Known affectionately as Forever's Children, Alessia's djinnkin are one of Alessia's older species. Born in the southern deserts of Fyrea, the djinnkin are the mortal descendants of great djinn and effreti lords – commonly called the Lords in Brass – who from their hidden cities of crystal and brass, set out to recreate the universe in their image.

Merchants, nobles, treasure-hunters, and thieves all seek the djinnkin solely for this reason, hoping to make the best possible use of the endless deserts that dominate Fyrea. And when the price is right, most djinnkin are happy to oblige earnest efforts, provided those efforts don't awaken ancient evils or perpetuate modern ones.

Personal Djinnkin Names Djinnkin name their young the same way humans and terrans do, although they often wait until the child's third year before selecting its official name. These names might include: Abad, Abdull, Amina, Aphelion, Daviini, Dazavva, Felliah, Hellah, Helios, Jaiden, Kallini, Mariah, Mariam, Nabid, Noora, Nunu, Seti, Tallib, Yusra, or Zavin.

Tribe Names Djinnkin frequently form desert tribes based on the regions or gardens from which they originate. Some tribes will also follow a strong lineage from within their ranks, adopting a name that reflects that choice. These tribes have names like the Black Sand Tribe, the Longsun Tribe, the Redsands, the Thistlefoot Tribe, and the Tribe of Zahanna.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Nexus-Bound – Nearly as old and widespread as the gnoles with whom they have long competed with, the djinnkin's relationship with their old enemies changed quickly during the War of Sovereigns. Facing waves of the dead from the forgotten corners of the desert, the djinnkin and the gnoles performed a powerful arcane ritual that forever bound their two peoples in a magical contract that joins them to this day. Whenever a djinnkin is within 30 feet of a gnole ally with whom they've formed a bond, that ally gains a +1 bonus on all spell attacks.

DJINNKINN TRAITS

Blessed with Bright, colorful skin running a wide spectrum of colors, the djinnkin are both observant and determined, two qualities that make surviving in the desert a lot easier.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Charisma score by 2 and your Constitution by 1.

Age. Djinnkin age like their human and terran cousins, reaching maturity in their late 20s and working until retirement calls in their early 80s. Today's djinnkin, while shorter lived than their ancestors, still boast lifespans of up to 260 years.

Alignment. Djinnkin are naturally good, although many of them prefer nature's laws to those of the yōkai around them; they tend towards neutrality and chaos, but still seek good actions when they can.

Size. Djinnkin stand 5-6 feet and weigh between 110 and 220 lbs. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Adaptive Attunement. Djinnkin have a long history with magic and can easily attune to arcane items. You begin play with a bonus attunement slot. This slot must be spent on an arcane or magic item.

Fate's Favor. While djinnkin lack the ability to work with the reality-shaping magic of their ancestors, djinnkin do have a knack for hedging reality in their favor when the need arises. Select one character with whom you are attuned; while within 60 feet of that character, that character can make a "wish" while making a d20 roll. You can choose to "grant that wish" (as a reaction), giving that character advantage on that roll up to three times. You must complete a long rest before using this ability again.

Lore of the Desert. Djinnkin have a natural aptitude for surviving in the desert. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Survival) ability checks while in the desert.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Djinn and Xian.

DRAGONSWORN

BORN OF THE ASARÆL COURT

Asssr'iana crept forward, her claws finding purchase on the rock face where lesser climbers would have needed tools. She was close but licked the air to be positive. She didn't want any surprises when she slid into their camp under the cover of darkness. Her midnight colored scales easily blending with the night, Asssr'iana continued her ascent unobserved...

THE DRAGONSWORN

A people torn between two times, the dragonsworn of ancient Alessia have a developed and evolved culture that betrays all of the outside stereotypes with glee. From their colorful festivals to their colorful scales, Truescales can trace their clutches back to the very first Asaræl dragons. Their lesser brethren, whom shallow individuals call Dullscales, bear no patterns of lineage, nor "any true history of scale or struggle." Instead, these persons have been transformed by alchemy, magic, or science; sometimes all three.

PEOPLE OF THE FORKED PATH

First, they are one of the few species that can lay claim to a single, divine event as their genesis. While ancient history to most, this event – which corresponds with the departure of the last Asaræl Dragons – has unified the dragonsworn as a single people, allowing them to create a complex, detailed culture that rivals some nations. These individuals openly display the exotic patterns that mark them as generational, or true, dragonsworn.

Secondly, the dragonsworn are the only species that others can, through alchemy, rituals, and complex magical rites, become. The process can take decades, but that's a risk many are willing to take, especially when they start to see their first gray hairs or whiskers. These dragonsworn enjoy bright, scaled armor, although they never display patterns of any sort. Most of these dragonsworn are infertile, although there are exceptions.

THE OATH OF SCALES

Cursed to reproduce slowly (some dragonsworn are infertile), dragonsworn mate for life, often taking partners toward the end of their second cycle of adulthood. After taking the Oath of Scales, these dragonsworn retire from "journeying," learn trades, and start to nest. Years later, these couples produce hatches of 2-3 dragonsworn.

The Oath of Scales is but one of many rituals and rites the dragonsworn have created, and as a people, they tend to understand the importance of ceremonies, habits, and patterns better than others.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Sentry's Support – Although the dragonsworn dwell throughout Alessia, they evolved on Elysia and bonded with the humans living there early on, becoming early adopters of a society that would eventually evolve into the Empire of Xian. Whenever a Truescale dragonsworn is adjacent to a human ally with whom they've formed a bond (you are attuned), the dragonsworn can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to heal that ally 1d8 hit points. The dragonsworn must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

WISDOM KEEPERS

Regardless of their origins, the dragonsworn are a fierce, proud species that have defined themselves as people of true wisdom and heightened intelligence, both of which are openly welcomed in most civil societies. As a result of this focus, as well as their natural patience, many dragonsworn hoard knowledge and understanding, collecting it and preserving it against the ravages of time and ignorance. Many dragonsworn have focused this compulsion into civil service, becoming champions of knowledge for entire cities!

When forced to violent ends, however, they are not to be trifled with; dragonsworn fight with all the ferocity and passion of their forebears.

Dragonsworn Names vary less in their spellings than they do in their sayings, often including invisible subtleties that outsiders miss. In the common tongues, dragonsworn names include strings of s's and h's, which are often drawn out in the saying. These include names such as: Asssr'iana, Bass'buara, Cessthanæ, Hysssfa, Shessserin, Ssss'terynn, or Zizzhhhanna.

Warband Names Dragonsworn who muster around a single banner form warbands. They often take names honoring their leaders but might also include titles of allegiance. These include names and titles such as Ashbearers of Asrai, Brothers of the Seventh Silence, Champions of Velestra, Furies, or Shadows of Night.

DRAGONSWORN CALLOUT

A people torn between two times, the Dragonsworn of ancient Alessia have a developed and evolved culture that betrays all of the outside stereotypes with glee. From their colorful festivals to their colorful scales, Truescales can trace their clutches back to the very first Asaræl dragons. Their lesser brethren, who shallow individuals call Dullscales, bear no patterns of lineage, nor "any true history of scale or struggle." Instead, these persons have been transformed by alchemy, magic, or science; sometimes all three.

TABLE: DRAGONSWORN ABILITIES

Dragon	Associated Element	Special Ability
Amber	acid	Veil of Light. You know the dancing lights cantrip. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for it.
Azure	lightning	Bladeward. You may spend an action to draw a ward into your scales, magically granting you resistance against piercing and slashing damage dealt by weapon attacks. This resistance lasts until the end of your next turn.
Crimson	fire	Voice of Thunder. You know the thaumaturgy cantrip. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for it.
Cyan	psychic	Mind's Eye. You gain a single point of ki. You may spend this point of ki to regain the use of a bonus action once per day, even if you just used it. If you are a monk or can otherwise have a ki pool, you may add this point to that pool.
Emerald	thunder	Dragonstrike. When you successfully strike a target with a melee weapon on your turn, you may add an additional 3d8 of thunder damage. You must take a short rest before you can use this ability again.
Gold	Radiant	Asaræl Blessing. Select up to three creatures of your choice within range; as a bonus action, you may grant each target an additional d4 hit points. If these bonus hit points exceed the target's maximum total, they disappear after 1 minute. You must take a short rest before you can use this ability again.
Onyx	necrotic	Grave Breath. You can use your action to exhale a blast of necrotic energy that saps the life of your targets, dealing 2d8 damage on a failed save, or half as much if they succeed on a saving throw. The DC for the saving throw equals 8 + your Constitution modifier + your proficiency bonus. You must complete a short or long rest before you can use this ability again.
Pearl	cold	Calculating Mind. You gain a bonus on Initiative checks equal to your proficiency bonus.
Silver	force	Shield of Will. As a reaction, you gain a bonus equal to your proficiency bonus on Wisdom saving throws. This bonus applies to the spell or effect that triggered it and lasts until the end of the next round. You can use this ability three times before you must complete a long rest.

DRAGONSWORN TRAITS

Your dragonsworn character has inherited a number of magical abilities, as well as insights that others are often denied. They have keen minds. When you select the dragonsworn, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence score by 2 and your Wisdom score by 1.
Age. Dragonsworn enjoy several cycles of their lives, molting after nearly three decades and entering their "second cycle" as adults. The eldest dragonsworn have lived five of these cycles. On average, a healthy dragonsworn journeys for 20-30 years before mating. Dragonsworn can live up to 450 years, nearly twice the lifespan of humans.
Alignment. Dragonsworn tend to embrace their Asaræl origins, nurturing good thoughts and honorable actions. Many dragonsworn are lawful.
Size. Born of the Asaræl dragon light, the powerful Dragonsworn are tall and sleek, often standing as tall as 8 feet. Healthy adult dragonsworn weigh between 120 and 180 pounds. Your size is Medium.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
Climb. You have a climb speed of 15 feet. You must have at least one of your hands free in order to climb.
Clawed Ferocity. If you are fighting without manufactured weapons, you may make a claw attack as a bonus action. This attack deals 1d6 points of slashing damage, and you may apply either your Dexterity or your Strength modifier as a bonus to damage, whichever is higher.
Draconic Tenacity. You gain advantage on any saves made to resist exhaustion. Additionally, you gain advantage on all Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws against draconic magic.
Hard to Armor. You cannot wear regular armor. Any armor you buy must be custom made or heavily tailored, increasing its cost by 50%.
Spawn of the Asaræl Serpent. Your patterns tell a specific tale, granting you a portion of the powers your ancestors once wielded. You gain resistance to your associated element. Additionally, you gain the listed special ability.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Draconic.

THE DWARVES
THE STONE-TOUCHED ONES

Vorrich and Gargath gathered their gear and tidied their camp, stomping out their fire pit and covering the embers with nearby snow. Although they were in safe terrain, both dwarves knew the danger of rogue campfire smoke and what it might bring, once lost to the wind. Working in silence, the two dwarves packed the rest of their camp, exchanging silent nods and conservative grunts before setting out.

DWARVES

Created to serve the Great Chieftains of the Northern Empire, Alessia's dwarves were born in the Earthforge Citadels in Northern Yrim. Raised by the Lords of Fire and Thunder, these dwarves toiled under the harshest conditions, learning to master the arts of alchemy at the edge of the hearth fire while their siblings learned to sing the runes in snow-choked ravines. Toughened like no others, the earliest dwarves were conditioned to excel, to the point of competing for their masters' attention.

Over the millennia, this energy was directed and channeled.

Working in concert with their allies – the jötunfolk and noble gnomes – the dwarves carved large sections from northern Yrim, building and eventually lifting great citadels of stone into the lofty skies above. Their masters' vision achieved, these dwarves continued the process for millennia, following strange patterns and always leaving outposts in the shadows of their new cities. Over time, a single city multiplied into a dozen; by the time the War of the Sovereigns descended upon the dwarves, they had no choice but to protect their cities.

LORE: WARDENS OF CRYSTAL AND ICE

While early elven explorers claim responsibility for much of what has become of the island paradise that is Velestra, they were not Alessia's sole explorers – an honor that goes equally to the dwarves. These dwarves settled early Shiran and Yrim, taking to their illustrious mountain ranges with an excitement that permeates throughout their culture to this day.

In Alessia, the dwarves stand watch over the north's mountains and subterranean entrances of all kinds – as the wardens of crystal and ice, they stand guard against any who would enter the realms under Alessia to cause trouble. Characters seeking entrance to the Crystal Lattice generally do so at the pleasure of the dwarves.

LORE: CHILDREN OF STONE

Although the Velestrian elves discount such talk as foolishness, there are some historians who theorize that Alessia's early dwarves originated from the distant lands of Rhune, citing the fact that both lines suffer

SPECIES SYNERGIES

It's no secret that, were it not for the brave actions of a handful of dwarven heroes led by Brælon Minos, the minotaurs would have been wiped from the face of Alessia in the wake of the War of Sovereigns. Facing annihilation at the hands of an overwhelming force of Un'Seeliah, these dwarven warriors broke the dark siege holding them and freed the minotaurs.

Spirit Warden – Today, it is considered an honor for a dwarf to bond with a minotaur ally, and they frequently seek these relationships. When a dwarf is within 30 feet of their bonded minotaur ally (you are attuned), they can spend a point of resolve to grant them their proficiency modifier as a bonus to their Wisdom and Charisma saving throws.

This bonus lasts 1d4 rounds.

from the Stone-Touch, a dwarven illness unknown outside of those lands. Regardless of their true origin, Alessia's dwarves have several unique traditions that suggest the dwarves' very DNA may hold this secret, and through their changes on this world, they will finally discover the strengths they'll need to rise from Ragnarök victorious!

Still, the dwarves do not let this fact define them. Instead, they embrace their love of crafting and stonework, seizing every opportunity to further define those domains in their image. This fact alone leads to countless projects among the dwarves, whose homes are always a flurry of activity and industry.

LORE: THE STONE-TOUCH

The Stone-Touch is a horrible disease to some dwarves, an honor to others. Starting as early as dwarf's first century, the Stone-Touch is a disease that slows dwarves while hardening their skin, turning it from its bright, lively colors to a dull grey, spotted with stones. Dwarves live three to four additional decades before finally succumbing to the full effects of the Stone-Touch, which leaves them paralyzed and a decade later, completely petrified.

To this day, the dwarves remain divided on how to best respond to this affliction. In response, two factions have risen inside dwarven society. The first faction, borrowing largely from pre-war traditions, believe the Stone-Touch is a blessing, and that, after centuries in these forms, the dwarves will awaken as new beings entirely. Other dwarves refute this, suggesting it is a heretical trap designed to trap their fellows in the shadows forever.

Dwarven Names. Alessian dwarves favor bold, short, guttural names they can scream. They favor names such as Bharv, Dahrn, Darra, Erik, Erika, Erdik, Fran, Garn, Ingvild, Jhorrv, Justuv, Mann, Nessa, Nordiv, Rond, and Tara.

Clan Names. Dwarven clan names follow the dwarven jarl's line and is distinguished as such. Common dwarven clans include: Ardwyn's Clan, Asha's Clan, Brella's Clan, Dag's Clan, Harvastar's Clan, Ingvild's Clan, Jarrik's Clan, Yrim's Clan, and so on.

DWARVEN TRAITS

Your dwarven character has a number of inborn abilities that, under the tutelage of your clan, you have learned to shape and control. When you select a dwarf, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 2.
Age. Dwarves reach adulthood at the age of 60. On average, most dwarves live for 200 years before Stone-Touch begins to set in. The average dwarven lifespan is 350 years.
Alignment. Nearly all dwarves are lawful, embracing discipline, tradition, and order as a way of life. They also tend to be good (a rare few strive toward objectivity, thus embracing neutrality), dutifully trying to understand the Will of the Light.
Size. Dwarves stand between 4 and 5 feet tall, averaging 150 pounds. Their weight doubles once Stone-Touch sets in fully. Your size is Medium.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet. Your speed is not reduced while wearing heavy armor.
Darkvision. Accustomed to life underground, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.
Dwarven Resilience. You have advantage on saving throws against poison, and you have resistance against poison damage.
Dwarven Combat Training. You have proficiency with weapons and firearms that contain the word "Dwarven" in their title.
Tool Proficiency. You gain proficiency with the artisan's tools of your choice: brewer's supplies, mason's tools, miner's tools, or smith's tools.
Dwarven Toughness. Your Hit Point maximum increases by 1, and it increases by 1 every time you gain a level.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write both Dwarven and Xian.
Clans. Select a clan below. You gain the abilities of that clan.

DWARVEN CLANS

Asha's Clan. Warriors who trained and fought in the War of the Sovereigns, these dwarves were all but wiped out. Those who remain live cursed lives, rarely meeting others of their clan. Increase your resolve to by 1.

Dag's Clan. Tricksters, rogues, performers, and explorers – this clan of dwarves has a reputation for brewing excellent beers, drinking to excess, and accepting foolish wagers. You have advantage on Charisma (Performance) ability checks that involve beer.

Ymir's Clan. Hunters from the western wastes, Ymir's Clan claim to trace their bloodline back to the first dwarven settlers to discover Alessia. They hunt the large, primal beasts (megafauna) of the dark north. Although they can be warm to outsiders, this clan is slow to trust. You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) ability checks that when dealing with everyone (except dwarves).

THE BROTHERHOOD OF STONE

A rare and reclusive people, the dwarves remain an utter rarity to most of modern Alessia. Active soldiers during the War of the Sovereigns, during its second and third campaigns, the dwarves were all but destroyed in that conflict (dying in waves at the hands of the Un'Seeliah). Although the dwarves survived, their numbers struggle to return.

Today, only two lines of dwarves remain: The Hall of Fyre and House of Stone. Both of these lines enjoy the prestigious Mark of Minos – denoting their eternal alliance to the Brotherhood of Stone. Although their numbers have stabilized, the dwarves of northern Fyrea remain a minority on Alessia.

LORE: DWARVEN MAGITECH

Regardless of the truth by the historic claims of their origins, some dwarves display an intuitive understanding of magitech that suggests they evolved on Alessia – not on Rhune, as some might claim. Characters who choose this heritage can drop their Dwarven Combat Training (see page 73) racial trait and gain Dwarven Magitech Training (see below):

Dwarven Magitech Training. While operating magitech of any kind, you automatically add your proficiency bonus to any skill checks you make with those devices; your natural aptitude with these devices allows you to attune with a bonus magic item, as well, provided that item is magitech of some kind.

DEV LORE: SPECIES

The *World of Alessia Campaign Primer* shifts away from the 'race' portion of an individual character, instead using the term species from the taxonomy (classification system) common to biology.

Using this approach, each species is considered the end-point of its evolutionary tract, with additional divisions broken down by culture, clan, or some other logical point of division. In cases where biology is a driving factor, these additional divisions could be easily considered ring species or species aggregates, although we've chosen to simplify such divisions as branch species. In some instances, we use terms like heritage or ancestry, depending on the context.

Our hope in adopting this model is two-fold: First, we hope it becomes the starting point for these discussions, leading gamers to a life of science and learning. Secondly, we hope this further establishes Alessia as a unique, positive campaign setting where the older fantasy assumptions about race no longer dominate the discussion.

THE ELATHI
THE EVOLVED ONES

A people whose features mark them as the kin of elves, the elathi are a thoughtful, inquisitive, and progressive people who prize their freedom nearly as much as they do their ability to form special bonds with others.

ELATHI

One of Alessia's evolved peoples, the elathi is a group of elves who, over millennia, evolved into the beings they are today – creatures of crystal, mind, and spirit. Having long ago merged with the crystals – which they call Ascendant Stones – of their local environment, the elathi of today might resemble their elven ancestors in many ways, but they are not elves.

Today, the elathi divide themselves primarily between two ancestral lines: the Telathians regard themselves as the natural evolution of elves, and have crystalized horns through which they focus their psionic powers, while the Illathi lack crystalized horns, but instead enjoy a natural aptitude for light-shaping and similar Asaræl skills.

LORE: ELVEN ANCESTRY

The elathi have a long, proud history that most historians accept started in the Fourth Age, only a short time before the War of Sovereigns started. The children of a sudden, evolutionary leap forward, the first generation of elathi were born in the jungles of Velestra, in the quiet hours after the annual Heartsong. Born with distinctive, crystal horns, the first elathi frightened their elven parents as they reached out – with their minds – to connect and bond with them. Although some reacted in fear, most accepted this and modified their society to embrace their new cousins.

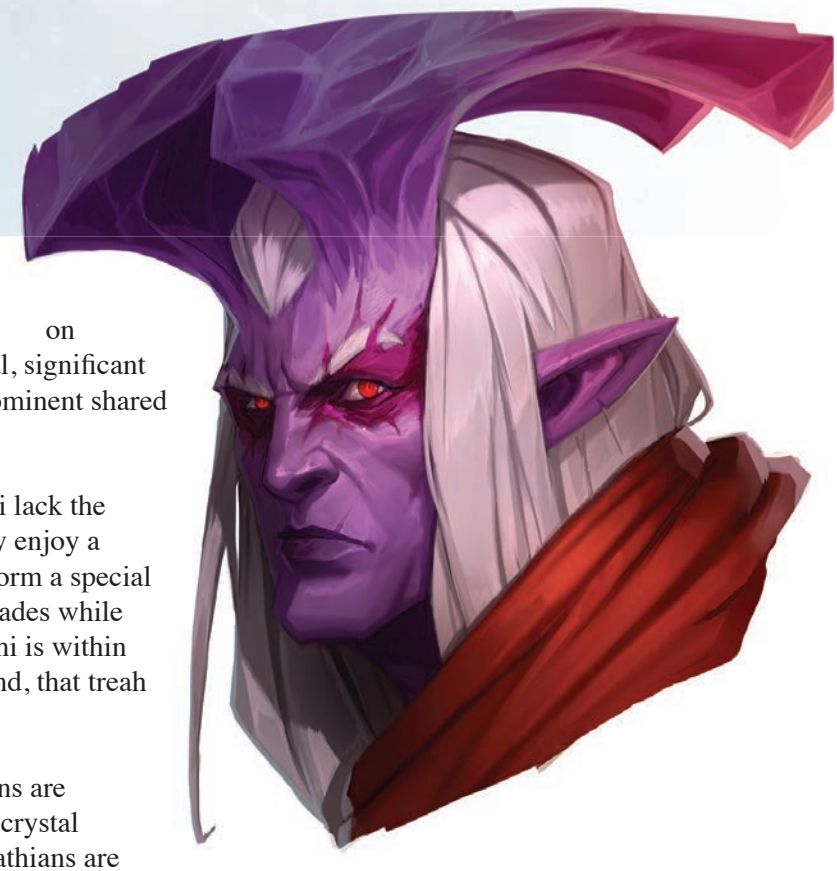
LORE: THE CRYSTAL LATTICE

Although several species predate the elathi by millennia, their pronounced evolution revealed a great secret to the people of Alessia – their evolution revealed the Crystal Lattice, a network of interconnected magical crystals that acts as Alessia's nervous system. Although it took them several generations and cost several elathi lives, the original elathi were some of the first psychic pioneers to explore and map out the Crystal Lattice.

LORE: THE ASCENDANT STONES

As a people, the elathi display an almost unnatural, collective need to seek out and study Ascendant Stones. Uncommon outside of the Jungles of Velestra, Ascendant Stones are slivers of the Crystal Lattice infused with the life energy of the Great Trees of Light. Although arcanists all over Alessia are still in the process of trying to understand how the Crystal Lattice impacts everyone's evolution, several elathi teams – composed of arcanists, oracles, and psions – have set out to discover (and hopefully unlock) the full potential of these strange, rare gems.

Species Names Atellia, Branenn, Fentyn, Illanna, Lollathia, Lardach, Sianna, Tren, Xennev.
Group Names Elathi tend to integrate well with their host culture, but their genetic bonds to elves pay them dividends; most elathi integrate with elves in their communities, taking their house names.



SPECIES SYNERGIES

Like the elves before them, the elathi have existed on Alessia for a long time and have developed several, significant relationships with other species. The two most prominent shared bonds are:

Light's Cascading Blessing – Although the Illathi lack the physical horns of their Telathian counterparts, they enjoy a connection to the Light that has allowed them to form a special bond with the treah, with whom they've spent decades while studying the Ascendant Stones. Whenever an Illathi is within 30 feet to a treah with whom they've formed a bond, that treah gains a +1 bonus on all saving throws.

Crystal Conduit – Among the elathi, the Telathians are known for their psychic abilities and their elegant crystal crowns. While all elathi possess telepathy, the Telathians are unique in their ability to bond with nearly any species. When a Telathian forms a bond with another individual, they can elect to gift their bonded-ally a hornshard, extending the Telathains telepathic range up to 1 mile (with their bonded ally).

ELATH TRAITS

Charming and smart, your species enjoys its elven heritage, and that often comes through in the most radiant ways. You possess a host of abilities, which are listed below:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Charisma score by 2 and your Intelligence score by 1.
Age. Elathi age at the same rate as elves until they reach their first century, at which point they begin to age more rapidly, aging twice as fast as their elven ancestors. Elathi are considered adults when they reach 80, but rarely live beyond 425 years.
Alignment. Elathi favor peaceful, quiet, and ordered societies, betraying their natural tendency toward both law (primarily) and 'the good' (secondly).
Size. Elathi stand between 5 and 6 feet, typically weighing between 110 and 160 lbs. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a base walking speed of 30 feet.
Crystal Mind. Your connection to the Crystal Lattice has strengthened your mind in ways no one could originally foresee. You gain resistance to psychic damage.
Mind Whisper. You are telepathic and can communicate with any intelligent, willing creature within 60 ft. Connections with unwilling creatures automatically fail.
Heartsong. All elathi share the same birthright in Velestra. That birthright grants every elathi a single expression of the Heartsong. Select a single talent from the Psion's list of psychic powers; you know that talent. Charisma is your casting ability.
Psychic Recovery. Each day, while quietly meditating, you can recapture a little of the psychic energy you've spent during the day. After completing a short rest, you regain a number of spell slots equal to your proficiency modifier.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Elven and Xian.

THE ELVES

MASTERS OF LIFE'S MAGIC

A quiet grace hides the fierce intelligence of the elves. In the south, along the coasts of Galgaræ, this grace is woven behind beautiful, ebon skin and bless-marked by the Light itself. In the far east, Fyrean elves stalk the deserts aside djinnkin allies, their entire lives packed neatly in a few select bags. Each year, these two lines return to Velestra, to meet with their kin there.

ELVES

The dominant people of Velestra, elves have a complex, sometimes confusing social hierarchy that many outsiders find off-putting. Although elves see themselves as a single people, much of Alessia classifies them according to their homeland: Fyrean Elves (widely known as desert elves) roam much of Alessia's eastern lands, while the Velestrian Elves (also known as green or wood elves) stand sentry for the fabled Trees of Life. The Un'Seeliaha (commonly known as dark elves) are the final group of elves. Rejected by the Trees of Life for reasons known only to the elves, this group of outcasts – their skins marked with arcane sigils to protect them against the darkness – wanders the southern coasts of Galgaræ, living along the coastlines.

One of Alessia's eldest species, the Elves of Velestra have lived on Alessia since its First Age, although some historians suggest the elves have another origin entirely. These historians suggest that these elves were travelers seeking their gods, finding instead an evolving, living planet they mistook for the heavens. Over time, these elves met peacefully with the evolved yökai, eventually settling in far-off Fyrea and migrating south to Galgaræ.

Today, these three groups meet peacefully in Velestra, discussing social issues and seeking common ground among those species they've come to honor as brothers and sisters.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Alessia's elves have developed significant relationships with two species, with whom they share powerful bonds. Select one of the following species synergies:

Life's Secret Magic – The elves have long understood the potential power the Trees of Life draw on and what it might mean for them; like many of your kind, you have developed an intimate understanding of this ebb and flow of the green energy of life. Select an elf, elathi, or treah with whom you have attuned. When you are within 60 feet of that ally, you may manifest a "mote of life" as a reaction that appears in their location, healing them for 2d8 Hit Points. You must complete a long rest before using this ability again.

Gardener's Grace – You have worked closely with the treah all of your life, learning their ways, their ideas, and their physiology. Select a single treah with whom you have attuned. You may use Intelligence (Nature) ability checks to heal that treah ally in place of a Medicine check, doubling your proficiency modifier when you do. Finally, you may spend a single point of resolve as a bonus action to automatically succeed on this check, healing your attuned ally 1d4 Hit Points when you do. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

LORE: THE PERFECT STORM

Although no mortals recall a time when the elves weren't living in the deepest parts of Alessia's southern jungles, there was such a time, early during the First Age. During this time, the rapid evolution of so many of Alessia's yōkai terraformed the psychic landscape of the planet, setting parts of the Astral Plane ablaze. Washed in the light of a million newly formed souls, Alessia became a beacon of light, attracting travelers from distant realms.

The elves who arrived carried with them runes, seeds, and lessons learned traveling the planes. When they finally encountered the first yōkai decades later, they did so as natives; they have operated as such since.

LORE: THE PERFECT STORM

The elves who arrived on Alessia during its First Age did not come empty-handed; they brought ancient runes, heirloom seeds from their greatest trees, and a thousand lessons learned traveling the planes in search of their distant heavens. When these elves arrived on Alessia, they quickly attuned to the planet and its fauna; within a few decades, they learned to speak with its flora as well.

Once these elves learned the lands, they sought their permission to plant – which the flora did. Planting their heirloom seeds, they quickly learned the true magic of Alessia – within several decades, these great trees blossomed into the Great Trees of Life that dominate the lands to this day.

LORE: GUARDIANS OF THE GREEN

Although their intimate understanding of the living planet is legendary, Alessia's elves – those in Velestra in particular – experience a militant compulsion to protect the flora and fauna of the lands they shepherd. Some of these elves learn to whisper to the world itself, letting their voices slip out like weapons in the night. While respective of the Light and all life, they stand the watch. And when they bring their anger or will to bear, even the heavens stand aside to watch.

THE ELVES OF VELESTRA

Born in the fierce deserts of Fyrea, you have a natural aptitude for wide-open spaces and the tenacity to handle most of what nature throws your way.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.
Favored Terrain: Jungles. Whenever you are in the jungles, your AC increases by 1.
Cantrip. You know one cantrip of your choice from the arcanist spell list. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for it.

THE ELVES OF FYREA

Born in the fierce deserts of Fyrea, you have a natural aptitude for wide-open spaces and the tenacity to handle most of what nature throws your way.

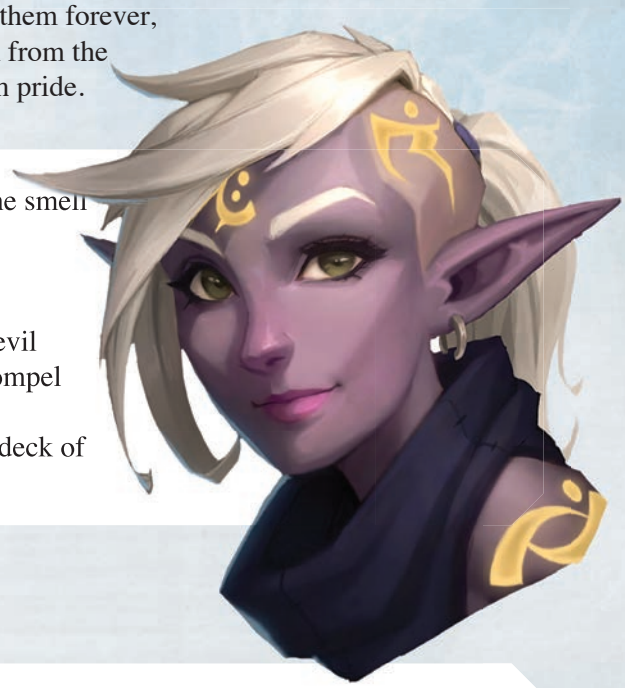
Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.
Favored Terrain: Deserts. Whenever you are in the desert, your AC increases by 1.
Cantrip. You know one cantrip of your choice from the Oracle spell list. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it.

THE LIGHT-MARKED

Although the great Trees of Life remain silent on the topic, they banished the elves who would later become the Un'Seeliah during Alessia's Second Age. Forced to expand into the islands that would later become Galgaræ's graveyard, these early elves darkened on the beaches, growing powerful and deadly and, for a time, nearly giving in to the darkness that plagued them.

This changed during the War of Sovereigns. Their fates engineered against them, the Un'Seeliah came close to truly falling, with a handful of them verging on betraying their entire species during the very war that would eventually free them from this dark bondage.

But they did not fall, and as a reward for their loyalty, the Light marked them forever, bestowing upon them a series of beautiful, floating sigils to protect them from the darkness that lurks. Today's Un'Seeliah display these glowing sigils with pride.



THE UN'SEELIAH ELVES

You were born on the wind-washed coasts of Galgaræ and know the smell of evil from experience.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.
Sigils of Light. You were born with sigils that protect you against evil magic. You gain a +1 bonus on saving throws against spells that compel you to commit evil acts.
***Favored Terrain*:** Coastlines. Whenever you are on the beach, the deck of a ship, or close to the ocean, your AC increases by 1.

ELVEN TRAITS

Elven characters are slight of build, with wiry frames and a graceful demeanor. Although elven skin tones run a wide range of colors, they tend to have rich, earthy skin tones and dark, frequently dyed hair. Many elves adopt jewelry, tattoos, and other personal markings.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2.
Age. Elves mature like terrans and djinnkin, reaching maturity by the end of their twenties. Although long-lived, few elves live past 800.
Alignment. Alessia's elves tend to be wild, freedom-loving beings who embrace adventure and mystery. They tend to favor goodness and chaos, although many elves also favor neutrality. Few elves have the stomach for evil; only the most desperate elf would go down such a dark path.
Size. Elves stand between 5 and 7 feet and generally weigh between 110 lbs and 170 lbs. Your size is Medium.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 35.
Darkvision. You are accustomed to dimly lit forests and the open, starry night. You can see in dim light up to 60 feet, treating it as if it were bright light. You can see in darkness, instead treating it as if it were dim light. You cannot discern colors in darkness, only shades of gray.
Green-finger. You have a natural proficiency in the Nature skill.
Rugged. You have a natural proficiency in the Survival skill.
Trance. Velestrian elves have long learned to make the most of Alessia's shorter days and can easily operate on only a few hours of rest each night. Unless awoken or disturbed by an outsider, Velestran elves can meditate for 2d4 hours each day, gaining the same benefits as if they had slept for a full evening.
Heritage. Select either Fyrean, Un'Seeliah, or Velestrian (see below).
Languages. You begin play speaking Elven and Xian.

THE FENGU

THE WINGLESS ONES

Powerful, tribal wanderers whose evolution took them out of the skies, Alessia's fengu have completely transformed their culture to accommodate their displacement. Traveling the face of Alessia in caravans that make them ideal explorers, the fengu's need to travel is legendary – supplanting that of their closest allies, the noble gnomes.

FENGU

Denied flight by evolution, Alessia's fengu evolved into a species of industrious seafarers who lasted until the War of Sovereigns plunged Alessia into darkness. A people with strong tribal customs deeply rooted in their unique island culture, the fengu were hit hardest at the end of the conflict, when The Great Beast Galgaræ crashed deep into the cold, dark waters that surrounded their island homes. Although Velestrian shamans helped direct the fallen god away from major population centers, the damage was still impressive – when the dust settled, what was left of their island homes was little more than flotsam, debris, and an army of new diseases to fight.

Several millennia have passed since that terrible event, and the fengu, as a people, have since evolved. While many fengu tribes still sail Alessia's choppy, dangerous oceans, just as many have started longer, landbound journeys, spreading deep into the jungles of Velestra and Elysia, or sailing north for the cold mountains of Yrim or Eastern Shiran.

In places such as Fyrea, the fengu are rare, with an almost misplaced sense of entitlement. Descended from hawks and originally capable of flight, these smaller, isolated desert groups continue to teach their hatchlings the older, pre-war traditions in which they, unlike the gnoles, were destined to rule.

LORE: A THOUSAND NESTS

Long before the War of Sovereigns took their homes, Alessia's fengu dominated the island chains that dotted the Velestra's southern coasts. Having lost the ability to fly in the first millennium, these fengu adapted by taking to the water, and over the centuries that followed, becoming some of Alessia's notable pirates, privateers, and when called to duty – imperial sailors and marines.

Throughout the course of Alessia's history, the fengu have distinguished themselves and, today, it's considered good sense to have a fengu sailor in the crow's nest.

LORE: A THOUSAND STEPS

Not all of the fengu took to the water, however. There are fengu who, in the wake of Galgaræ's destruction, headed north and over decades of exploring, finally settled along the windswept cliffs of the northern highlands, establishing northern strongholds in lands most of their kind would readily flee. Using re-purposed settlements, recycled technology, and generations of arcane lore has allowed the Whispering Fengu to carve out new homes, from which their hatchlings plan and dream of recovering their homeland.

LORE: THE CARAVAN CALL

As a species, the fengu have come to call the road their home and, as a result, have established some of the longest and most-trusted caravans. Although many people expect to find djinnkinn-run or even gnole-lead caravans, the norm along the Silk Seas, it is an honor that often falls to the fengu, whose long-trailing caravans dominate the sea of sand in the same particular patterns their seafaring brothers and sisters boast.

Although not all fengu answer the call to wander, most do, and it is odd to discover fengu who haven't left the nest.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Overwhelmed by the scope of the devastation, many fengu picked up and left. Those who could, sailed east, taking up residence along the western coasts of Velestra; many sailed north, as well. Over the centuries, this wandering offered the fengu an opportunity to form not one, but two meaningful bonds with other species. These two species synergies are listed below (select one when you create your character).

Skyheart – Although centuries of evolution have left the fengu physically incapable of flight, they adapted in other ways, developing psychic abilities that allowed them to return to the skies.

The Skyheart Fengu took a different path, instead forming a powerful bond with their Velestrian allies, which they crystalized through a particular bond called The Windsoul Rite. Whenever a Skyheart Fengu is adjacent to a Velestrian ally with whom they've formed a bond (see Chapter 4), that ally is treated as if they were the target of the spell *safe fall*; this ability is persistent while the two are adjacent, but only lasts for a 1 minute if the two move more than 5 feet apart from one another.

Whispering Wind – For the vast majority of fengu, leavintg their homeland was the only logical conclusion to the sweeping devastation Galgaræ's final descent visited upon it. These fengu departed, often as extended tribes, for the lands of the Whispering Winds (essentially everywhere else) and learned, along the way, they were not alone. While exploring the northern lands of Yrim, the Whispering fengu bonded with the noble gnomes, learning from them how to "Listen to the Wind." Whenever a Whispering fengu is within 30 feet of a noble gnome ally with whom they've formed a bond, the fengu can spend a point of resolve to gain blindsight for 1 minute. The Whispering fengu must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

FENGU TRAITS

Whether you were born in the distant north, in one of the great caravans, or in the shadows that now crisscross Alessia, you were born to a resilient and charming people. You possess the following abilities.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Charisma score by 2 and your Wisdom score by 1.
Age. Fengu mature faster than humans, reaching adulthood in their early teens, although only for the purpose of coupling and raising families (fengu elders tend to be several decades older). Fengu live between 120 and 140 years without magical assistance.
Alignment. Given to wanderlust and an understandable need for freedom, Alessia's fengu favor the lawless frontier, but rarely embrace the darkness that ruined their home. Fengu tend to be chaotic, but good or neutral.
Size. Fengu stand between 4 and 5 feet and average 110 lbs. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a walking speed of 30 feet.
Climb. You have a climb speed of 20 feet. You must have one or more of your powerful legs free to do so.
Avian Eye. Your keen eyes allow you to pick up details about things others miss. You gain advantage when making Wisdom (Perception) checks to pick up visual details at a distance (beyond 120 ft.).
Light's Luck. Before the Sovereigns departed Alessia, they blessed your species with a minor magical ability. You know the *safe fall* cantrip. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it.
Seafarer's Alacrity. Generations of seamanship has imbued your species with a natural aptitude for shipboard work. While aboard any kind of sea-going vessel (including airships, skyships, and similar vehicles), you gain advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) and Strength (Athletics) checks.
Voice of the Wind. You know the fengu's mockery cantrip. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Avian and Xian.

Fengu Names. Adacca, Analyn, Belic, Harnic, Munnin, Talastra, Telwyn, Tunnin, and Zenna.
Fengu Caravans. The Crimson Wings, the Tribe of Telwyn, The Sisterhood of Silk, and Windward Caravans are some of the more popular Fengu Caravans on Alessia.

THE GNOLES

THE FIRST YÖKAI

Their yellow and green eyes filled with the ancient lore of millennia of Alessia's history, the gnoles are a reminder of the ancient world's influence on the modern one; very few gnoles shy away from the past or what that suggests – that they might be Philosopher-Kings and Prophets again one day.

GNOLES

Alessia's gnoles claim an ancient lineage, one that predates most of their kin. While these yökai have long made this claim, they are also one of the few species with records and architecture to support it. Skilled masons and arcanists, Alessia's elder yökai laid the groundwork for what would later become the sprawling pyramid cities of southern and central Fyrea.

Of course, Alessia's gnoles did not stop there. Originally a pack-minded society, these mindful and intelligent yökai evolved their society into a larger, class-based culture that focused on finding one's greatest strengths through challenges of faith, combat, and as their society evolved, debate and discussion. Eventually, they refined these challenges into traditions that further refined their understanding of their larger world, and their place in it.

Their efforts weren't in vain, taking root in most of central and southern Fyrea. Eventually, these cultures evolved further, taking on spiritual and religious tones, further refining their cultures to include priestly castes responsible for shepherding their people's progress.

Today, these traditions still haunt the gnoles, most of whom have a hard time letting go of the past. While most of the gnoles have embraced the Light as a single divine source, many gnoles still worship their ancestral gods in secret.

LORE: ANCIENT TRADITIONS

Although some yökai have started to challenge gnole creation myths, no other species has stepped forward with evidence worthy of such a contest; most species on Alessia grudgingly acknowledge that the gnoles are one of Alessia's first species.

Over the millennia, the gnoles have developed an incredibly ordered society. While some gnoles claim their social traditions reinforce older social standards, the traditionalists enjoy a simple truth – their society has withstood the test of time.

HERALDS OF THE FORGOTTEN GODS

As adherents of one of Alessia's oldest faiths, many gnoles have refused a universalist approach to religion and have embraced the faiths of their ancestors. While many of the people of Alessia openly embrace the Light as a single, universal divine source – many gnoles continue to pray to (and receive spells from) their ancestral gods.

While religious scholars debate this divine inconsistency, most scholars accept the Church of Light's official Asaræl Charge – the Light honors the gnoles and their ancient gods by fulfilling that role in their absence.

MIND TOUCHED

Gnoles are naturally predisposed toward psionics and make good use of these powers at all levels of society. While not every gnole is born with the ability to use psionics, many are. This is especially evident when one travels through their ancient kingdoms, where they've used these powers to create oases, to lift pyramids into the air, and to turn the desert's harshness into a tool to protect them. Although not all gnoles embrace these abilities, all master one or two simple powers by the time they're adults.

Gnole society reflects their mastery of these powers, as well. In fact, many outsiders have a hard time reconciling the fact that many gnoles speak only with their minds, while other gnoles use a complex combination of pheromones, howls, and thoughts to convey detailed stories and similar pierces of interconnected data.

Gnole Names. Gnoles earn their names and titles by performing heroic deeds, by winning contests, and by performing exemplary acts; many use one or more titles like this, although tradition frowns on using more than four.

Gnole Packs. Gnole packs make up the basic structure of their society. In many ways, gnole packs serve the same social roles human families or dwarven clans do – they establish the basis for social trust. These packs often adopt descriptive names that tie them to particular places, events, or even heroes.

GNOLE TRAITS

You remember the hot sands of the desert, with its icy winter nights and its inhospitable summers. The desert taught your species much. Your gnole character has the following abilities:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence score by 2 and your Constitution score by 1.
Age. Gnoles, like many yökai, mature quickly. Reaching adulthood in their late teens, most gnoles can live to see 200 years or more, depending on resources.
Alignment. Disciplined and patient, most gnoles favor the law and neutrality.
Size. Gnoles stand only slightly taller than Valestrians, reaching heights between 5 and 7 feet, and weighing between 160 and 300 lbs. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a walking speed of 30.
Mind's Eye. You know the *mage hand* cantrip. When you reach 3rd level, you learn the *detect thoughts* spell, which you can once per day. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.
History's Herald. Whenever you make an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) skill check directly involving your species or its culture, you add twice your proficiency bonus instead of any normal proficiency bonus you would normally apply.
Noble Pursuits. You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice.
Weathered. You have advantage on saving throws against extreme environments (temperatures exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit, for instance); this protection does not extend to fire or cold damage dealt by magic.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Yökai.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Nexus Pact-Magic – The gnoles insist they've spent more time than any other species attempting to understand the limits of the physical universe (and some whisper, what lies behind it), and given their age, it's entirely possible. Gnoles possess the ability to enhance the magical abilities of other Nexus-aligned species (specifically the djinnkin).

Select any combination of two or more Nexus-bound (djinnkin or gnole) characters you know; whenever the three of you take a short rest, you create a small pool of arcane energy from which each participant can pull from. When you create the arcane pool, roll 1d4; the pool can recharge that number of spell slots before collapsing. If you regain any spell slots using this ability, you must complete a long rest before you can use it again.

THE GNOLES OF FYREA

While the two species playfully debate their ancient histories, there is little debate by outsiders that Alessia's gnoles are easily as old as its elves – no matter their claims.

Having mastered the desert early in their evolution, the accomplishments of the gnoles and their magic dot the desert: remnants of their pre-Galgaræ empire still dominate Fyrean culture today.

This influence is clear throughout modern Fyrean society, from its floating pyramids to the modern oases that offer travelers, explorers, and other thrill-seekers a little refuge when the harsh reality of the desert sweeps over them.

Which it always does.

FEAT: FYREAN SCYTHIS ADEPT

Your training with Fyrean Scythis Blades grants you the following benefits:

- Increase your Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- While wielding two Fyrean Scythis Blades (or similar, GM-approved finesse weapons), you gain a +1 to all Attack rolls with those blades.
- While wielding two Fyrean Scythis Blades, you have advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks.

THE GNOMES
MASTERS OF AIR & STONE

Darria let the magic of the new font flow through her, activating the centers of power buried deep within. She knew the ancient masters had a plan for her, her clan, and all those with whom they had formed these bonds. By her magic, by air and stone, she would weave this ley line back into the nexus it once flowed and, by doing so, heal the city's broken heart.

She inspected each of her glyphs twice, gently tracing the lines of power that connected them to make sure all was developed as intended; satisfied a second time, she activated the pattern, her heart leaping with delight as the city's lights flared in response, lighting the dark.

GNOMES

Short, smart, and to the point – that's the gnomish way. While their larger cousins, the dwarves, have earned a reputation for being direct and occasionally brash, it is the masters of air and stone who deserve such titles. Created to serve the giants of old on their flying cities, Alessia's first gnomes were created long before many of the current species evolved. Today's gnomes descend from one of three powerful clans. Originating out of the eastern deserts of Fyrea, the Apsis Clan boasts a knowledge of the floating pyramids that unnerves the gnoles, who have long claimed that knowledge for themselves. The largest and widest-spread of the gnomes, the Stonefire Clan, boasts a connection to Alessia's dwarves that gives them access to not only the deepest sanctuaries, but also the Crystal Lattice. The second-largest and most mysterious of the gnomes, the Zephyr Clan, lives among the ruins of the last of the Floating Cities, working their mysterious controls and running those arcane engines in isolation, pursuing their eternal quest to discover their lost masters – the giants.

Although Alessia's gnomes carry no genetic connection to the dwarves, their proximity to them has, over the millennia, manifested in a strange connection between the two peoples – the masters of stone can use their magic to aid their dwarven allies as if the two peoples were one, even though they lack a true genetic connection.

Alessia's masters of the air, the Zephyr Clan, enjoys similar abilities, although with broader implications. Their clan can awaken some species' ability to fly, transforming lesser abilities into greater ones, granting some species the ability to fly. While valuable to mercenaries and adventurers, these inquisitive and quiet gnomes rarely chase down such folly, preferring instead to remain in their floating cities where they can study the universe's many mysteries.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Nuit's Magic – You grew up in the shadows of the floating pyramids, your eyes locked skyward beside the gnoles with whom you've long known kinship. Your legacy in the desert spans three millennia and has manifested as a bond with your gnole allies neither can deny. Whenever you are within 30 feet of a gnole ally with whom you've bonded (you are attuned), you can spend a point of resolve to grant that gnole advantage on Wisdom and Intelligence saving throws for 1 minute. That ally must complete a short rest before benefiting from this species synergy again.

Stone's Eternal Strength – Your clan has a long history with the dwarves as old as the stones you both work and that connection has evolved into something truly special. Whenever you are within 30 feet of a dwarven ally with whom you've bonded (you are attuned), you can spend a point of resolve to grant that dwarf the effects of the enhance ability (Bear's Endurance) spell for one minute. That ally must complete a short rest before benefiting from this species synergy again.

Zephyr's Noble Connection – You grew up studying your clan's history, its floating cities, and the few writings your giant masters left. Armed with this knowledge, you've learned to unlock some of magic hidden in others' hearts. Whenever you are within 90 feet of a Whispering fengu or asaræ ally with whom you've formed a bond (you are attuned), you can spend a point of resolve to grant that ally the ability to fly (as if they were under the effects of the fly spell) for 1 minute. That ally must complete a short rest before benefiting from this species synergy again.

SMALL PEOPLE, BIG CITY

A people of small stature but large minds, the gnomes of Alessia were created in the earliest days to serve the giants who built the ancient world. As servants of both the mountain and cloud giants, the gnomes have since divided themselves into two distinct groups. Noble gnomes take their names from the noble gases and consider honor, goodness, and mercy virtues. Their cousins, the rock gnomes are far more pragmatic and, at times, downright criminal. Raised under the cruel gaze of their stone giant masters, the gnomes of the earth and air learned very different lessons.

LORE: FORGOTTEN SERVANTS

Although their society is far older, most of what today's gnomes know of their past lies buried in rumors, tales, stories, and legends. Most gnomes discount these tall tales accordingly, always hoping some discovered secret will reveal their greatness to the larger world, or better, help them discover their missing masters. While such stories remain in short supply, all three gnomish clans grudgingly accept that they may never know – or discover – where their giant masters went or why they placed the gnomes into their magical sleep.

In many ways, this sentiment is one the gnomes of all of the clans share with djinnkin, who once served powerful Djinn Lords in a very similar fashion. This connection, however, hasn't really brought the two peoples together; instead, several millennia of regional cooperation has manifested between three powerful gnome clans and their peers.

LORE: THE MAGIC OF THE AETHYR

Although the Zephyr Clan is composed entirely of noble gnomes, the opposite remains untrue; not every gnome who awakens the ability to work the æthyr belongs to the Zephyr Clan. In fact, several smaller clans – each of which is connected to a particular Floating City – have demonstrated other applications for their magic, using it to modify and adapt to ley lines, or even to repair magitech item. Some of these clans have even learned to modify their genetic abilities, using this strange magic to make permanent changes to themselves and their allies.

LORE: GNOMISH CITIES

Cities dominated by gnomes are easy to spot, as most of them float lazily on the horizon, alight with arcane energy and buzzing gently as they follow ancient patterns and programs, keeping to routes long ago programmed and maintained by well-meaning but ignorant gnomes. While some species might take offense at the implications, Alessia's gnomes have embraced their ignorance and made it their life's work to undo; their homes are their sanctuaries, their laboratories, and their lives'
collective work.

People visiting gnomish cities for the first time often remark in wonder (and some horror) at their level of industry; gnomish cities are a patchwork of half-finished projects, ad-hoc networks, and technological gardens that push the boundaries of what magitech can and cannot do.

CLAN APSIS

You were raised in the high places of the southern deserts, working among the floating pyramids and studying their ancient secrets.
Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.
Rugged. You have a natural proficiency in the Survival skill.
Scale Speaker. You know how to use space, sounds, and gestures to communicate with the desert's smaller snakes and lizards, with whom with you share a bond. Although you cannot control these smaller animals, you can use your Charisma to influence them; you gain advantage on Charisma (Diplomacy) rolls when interacting with those that live in the desert.

CLAN ZEPHYR

You grew up among the high towers of the floating cities, adrift in the clouds. Although you once served giant masters, they have long since departed, leaving you alone to navigate their serpentine, floating labyrinths.
Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.
Giant's Lore. You have spent years learning the giants' history and make all Intelligence (History) proficiency checks with advantage. When studying alchemical or magical items the giants created, you may add double your proficiency bonus.
Skilled. You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice.

CLAN STONEFIRE

You were raised with Alessia's dwarves. You know their ways, traditions, and secrets, all of which continue to influence how you interact with the larger world.
Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.
Stonecunning. You have learned from the dwarves and developed a knack for understanding their craft. When investigating stonework, you gain advantage on all Intelligence (History) proficiency checks to identify who carved the stone, why, and to identify any additional, relevant information.
Tools. You are proficient with a stone mason's tools.

GNOME TRAITS

Gnomish characters are short of build and slight of stature; they are unmistakable, both for their ambition and for their energy. Most gnomes work, speak, and celebrate in bursts of sudden, determined action. You gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 2.
Age. Gnomes age similarly to dwarves, reaching adulthood in their late 50s and living for nearly two centuries before retiring. The eldest gnomes boast lifespans of nearly three centuries.
Alignment. Alessia's gnomes tend to be good, although their inquisitive and highly-subjective natures can lead some highly involved gnomes into the gray domain of neutrality. While all gnomes take their civic responsibilities seriously, each clan's approach varies. Of the three clans, the Stonefire Clan is the most lawful, with the Apsis and Zephyr Clans tending towards chaos.
Size. Gnomes stand between 2 and 3 feet and generally weigh between 40 lbs and 60 lbs. Your size is Small.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 25.
Darkvision. You are used to the dark shadows, the tall towers and the deep places. You can see in darkness, treating natural shadows and darkness within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light. You cannot discern colors in darkness, only shades of gray.
Gnome Cunning. You have advantage on all Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom saving throws against magic.
Heritage. Select either Apsis, Stonefire, or Zephyr clan (see above).
Languages. You begin play speaking Giant and Xian.

THE HARPYANS

THE CHILDREN OF SONG

Halhanna reached into her bag of tools and pulled the spanner from it, adjusting it unconsciously as she fiddled with the spacers she needed to add to the unit to bring its actuators back into tolerance. The extenders were on their way out, but without the right funds, she couldn't replace them. So, she'd just have to use the washers she had. She gently placed them, added the nut, and brought the spanner up to finish the job. She'd have Mallaica up and running in no time – this time with an ultimatum the sentient couldn't refuse.

HARPYANS

Created to fight for the Light during the War of the Sovereigns, the harpyans are one of the youngest species on Alessia. Created and bred among the western mountains of Shiran, the first harpyans sailed into battle – answering their shamans' prophecies midway through the War of Sovereigns. Coming to the aid of the jötunfolk first, these beings descended from the mountains, their voices alight with the majesty of the Light, and liberated the Dalu Tribe moments before Un'Seeliah raiders would have finished them off. Such became the harpyans legacy, the stories of their bravery and action paced only by those they saved.

Their talons drenched in the crimson ichor of those who serve the darkness of the world, the harpyan ferocity and brutality was quickly realized (and feared) by their enemies. They quickly became targets on the battlefield, and over time, their numbers started to decline.
Rather than face extinction, the Light commanded the last of the harpyans to retire early in the sunset of the war, that they might replenish their nests and grow their flights.

These generations, freed from their violent destinies, focused on their song and how it connected them to the Light that, in its need, created them. Dedicated to discovering its source, these new generations took up a new mantle, embracing their destiny as the '… children of song.' These new generations have spread throughout Alessia, using their natural gifts to brighten paths and lighten loads.

LORE: HEAVENLY VOICES

The Sovereigns of Light didn't create the harpyans to sing, they created them to destroy their enemies. To this end, there is a special quality to their song. An unintended boon of divine origin, nearly every harpyan who learns to speak also learns to sing, and together, their voices can weave songs of pure, unforgettable beauty.

While this fact makes most harpyans natural

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Flight Song – Your heavenly voice uplifts with the same grace of the Old Gods, and the yökai of Alessia remember it well. Whenever you are within 90 feet of a Whispering fengu or asaræ ally with whom you've formed a bond (you are attuned), you can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to grant that ally the ability to fly (as if they were under the effects of the fly spell) for 1 minute. That ally must complete a short rest before benefitting from this species synergy again.

Light's Stalwart Defense – Your voice carries the full authority of the Light. That fact awakens and inspires your allies, especially those with whom you've formed close ties.

Select a single ally with whom you've formed a bond (you are attuned); whenever you are within 90 feet of that ally, you can spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to grant that ally an aura of defensive light, granting them a +1 bonus to their Armor Class for one minute.

performers, only a small number of them pursue the performing arts as a profession, instead preferring the technical precision of the world of magitech, where they can earn achievements based solely on the merit of their work without having to defend their heritage.

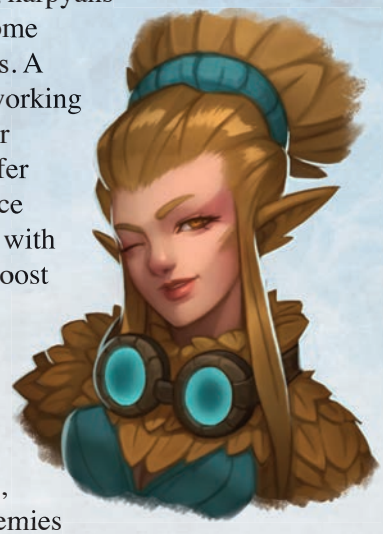
LORE: WAR TALONS

While today's harpyans have largely abandoned their warrior pasts, a small number continues to uphold that legacy, training with the same vigor and ferocity of their ancestors.

Known as the War Talons, this collective of harpyans has chapters throughout Alessia. Some of these operate in secret, revealing themselves to only those harpyans they deem worthy. Others operate in the open, often attaching themselves to larger, militant-minded arms of the Holy Church of Light.

Becoming a War Talon is a long process, one that requires years of service and dedication. Eearning full membership in this elite collective is a true achievement and serves as a reminder to those who take up this path. Those who achieve this lofty status often find employ within the Holy Church of the Light, acting as elite soldiers and guards for the most influential priests.

LORE: HARPYAN ROOSTS



Lacking greater goals, harpyans roosts have since become the center of their lives. A collective of parents working in tandem to raise their young, these roosts offer each community a place of safety and security, with every member of the roost working to keep their young and elderly protected. In larger cities, these roosts are guarded but accessible. In the wild, where predators or enemies roam, these roosts evolve into deadly mazes, with only the bravest of warriors making it to the center.

HARPYAN TRAITS

Harpyan characters are slim and wiry, with feathered arms and legs, the latter of which ends in two sets of wicked talons. Ranging in colors from red to gold, harpyans are all but impossible to miss. When you select the harpyan, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma and Strength scores both increase by 1.
Age. Harpyans mature quickly, reaching full adulthood in just under 20 years. Although many species consider them young, most harpyans become elders in their community by the time they celebrate their 100th year on Alessia. Harpyans live, on average, to 180.
Alignment. Harpyans are, universally, good. Although most consider it an honor to operate within the constraints and laws the Light has established, a rare few still yearn for the days of war, when they operated autonomously without the same level of oversight they now receive. These harpyans tends to be neutral, although a few do embrace the utter freedom chaos encourages.
Size. Harpyans stand between 4 and 5 feet, weighing between 80 and 110 lbs. Although you are slight of frame, your size is Medium.
Speed. Harpyan talons make sustained walking possible, but awkward. Your base walking speed is 20.
Darkvision. Harpyans have excellent darkvision and can see with near-total clarity, in black and white, up to 120 feet. Although they are not able to read at this distance, they can generally make out details others would miss.
Harpyan Clarity. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) proficiency checks.
Heaven's Voice. You have advantage on all Charisma (Performance) proficiency checks and, while singing, apply double your proficiency bonus when making these checks.
Talons. You possess two powerful legs that end in wicked claws. If you attack with them, they deal 3 [1d6] points of piercing damage (plus your Strength modifier). Harpyans often employ these in combat, decorating and enhancing their talons.
Languages. You begin play speaking Avia and Xian.

THE HUMANS
THE YOUNG ONES

Xin reached down to touch Casi's hair and then stopped himself – while he meant to show her affection, she had been clear to him that was not how she wanted his attention. She had told him, in no certain terms, not to touch her hair. Xin grimaced at the thought of the misstep and quickly slipped it down to her shoulder instead, smiling to her as she looked up. He spoke, "Good job, lieutenant Cassamdra. You can take your team back to the station. I'll finish up here." He smiled again, bowing slightly as a sign of respect. She smiled, too, pushing her hair back from her shoulder and giving him a small wink.

He blushed a little and quickly nodded, pulling up a new image on his holo to distract himself.

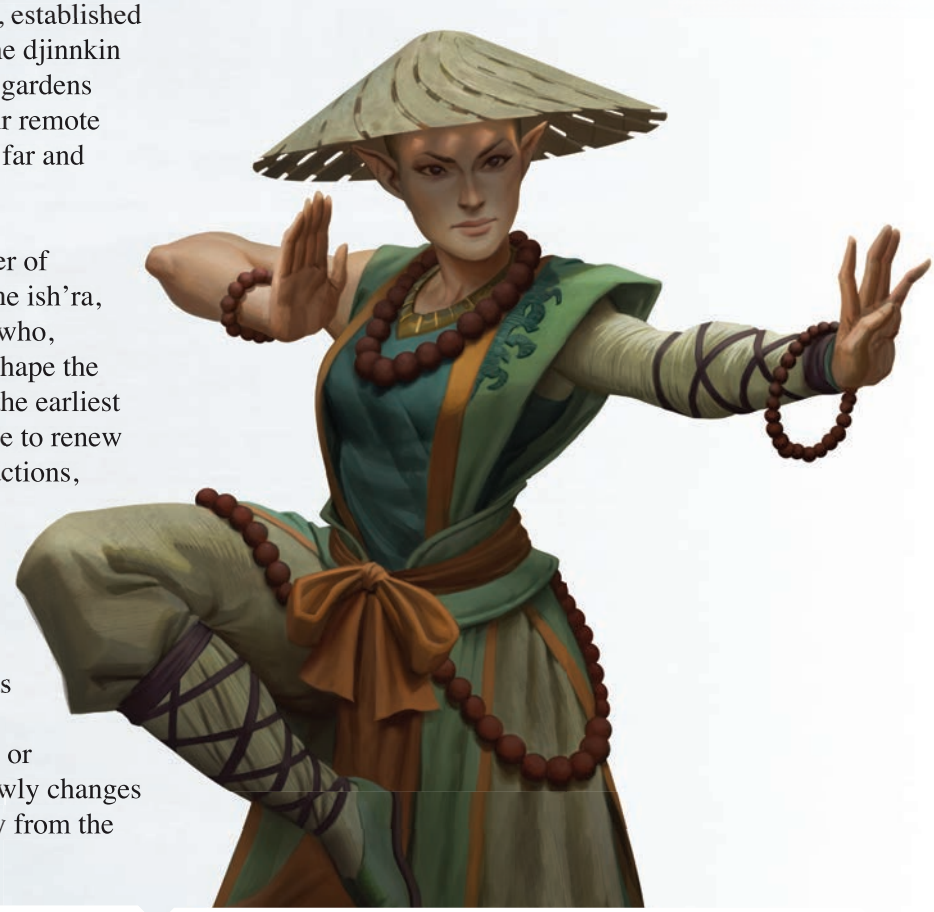
HUMANS

The brothers and sisters of the djinnkin and the terrans, Alessia's humans are one of the younger peoples – a created species that has, over the millennia, established itself as one of the most powerful. While the djinnkin have kept themselves largely in the hidden gardens of Fyrea's lost oases, and the terrans in their remote northern homes, the humans have spread – far and wide.

Evidence of this dispersal starts at the center of Elysia, a land long under the influence of the ish'ra, as well as several powerful tribes of yökai who, through concentrated efforts, have helped shape the humans there. These efforts manifested in the earliest stages of the Empire of Xian. They continue to renew its potency and efforts through their daily actions, seeking ways to enshrine their ideas as towers, monuments, and altars to their achievements.

In many ways, Alessia's humans are its children. While most are honorable idealists seeking good actions, there are some who stray into the dark and, lacking supervision or a stern hand, embrace the darkness that slowly changes them, turning them (and all creatures) away from the Light.

Over the millennia, these humans have sharpened their focus and hardened their resolve, forming the Empire of Xian and solidifying their grasp on this part of the world. To this end, humans go out of their way



LORE: HONOR'S BANNER

Alessia's humans learned early on from their terran brothers and sisters the danger of treading too closely to the darkness; they have come to honor their traditions and, in some ways, their superstitions, as well. To this end, the humans of Alessia have adopted a universal system of honor that guides their social economy. These humans often seek honorable ends to their endeavors, looking for beneficial ways to close agreements, form partnerships, and invent new technologies.

SPECIES SYNERGY

Adaptive Allies – An adaptive and curious species, the humans of Alessia evolved to aid those around them. Select a single ally of a different species with whom you grew up, traveled with, or otherwise cemented a strong bond. Whenever you and this ally are adjacent to one another, you grant your ally a +1 bonus to attacks against any enemy that threatens you both.

to conduct themselves with honor, making sure they follow their personal codes (or those of their family) and keep
their word.

LORE: SHADOW'S SECRET HEART

While Alessia's humans maintain their honor with a sense of great import, in that shadow a hubris grows that brings many of them to heel, revealing their secret ambitions and their corruption in mind. While most are able to work within the Light's mantle, there are always a few who cannot help but accept the darker deals whispered into their hearts, seeking personal greatness at the expense of others in their tribes.

LORE: A THOUSAND TRIBES

For more than three thousand years, Alessia's humans have been marrying into the djinnkin and terran lines, creating a tapestry of tribes and peoples that spans the imagination (and the rainbow). Known to the yökai of Alessia as the 'People of a Thousand Tribes,' Alessia's humans have come to enshrine the phrase in nearly every step of their growth and expansion.

In places such as Elysia and western Fyrea, where the Empire of Xian holds sway, these humans hold considerable power and influence, their numbers continuing to swell each generation, forever expanding and conquering in the process. Although their progress has been careful and gently guided by their elders, the humans have grown brash and decisive with their growth, too. Some fear, one day, the thousand tribes will lead them, once again, into war.

ALESSIA – A YÖKAI-CENTRIC SETTING

On Alessia, while humans make up the large parts of the populations in Xian, Fyrean, Shiran, and Yerwin, they do not dominate the world. In fact, Alessia's humans make up only a small percentage of the sentient species, occupying similar ranges in the population as the djinnkin and terrans with whom they were created. So, while the human empires to draw upon impressive legacies that span millennia, even these pale when compared to the lines the yökai have established in places like Yerwin or the desert dynasties of the gnolish priest-kings of the Third Age.

HUMAN TRAITS

The children of a thousand tribes spanning seven continents, Alessia's humans have forever left their mark on the land, scarring it with their failed ambitions and painting over the rest with their successes, all of it coming home to rest in the treasure rooms of their empire's palaces. As a human, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Select three different ability scores; increases each of these by 2 once.
Age. Alessia's humans reach adulthood in their late 20s, with most working until they retire in their early 80s. Although they have been known to live longer through arcane methods, most humans live to 160.
Alignment. Human ambitions and emotions run the gamut, and so do their moral responses to most situations. Although most humans are helpful and seek the good, others embrace evil.
Size. Human characters stand between 4 and 7 feet tall, weighing between 80 and 200 lbs., depending on gender, build, and background. Your size is Medium.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 30.
Adaptive. Humans take well to a multiplicity of tasks and skills, adapting easily and quickly. You gain proficiency in two skills of your choice.
Resolved. Increase your resolve by 2.
Languages. You begin play speaking Xian and another language of your choice.

THE ISH'RA

THE DREAMING ONES

Alliya shifted her weight, dropping a hip with a playful smile. Invariably, when the sailor's gaze lowered from her smile to her partially exposed leg, she struck; she jumped upward, connecting her knee to his jaw and knocking him cleanly out. Alliya caught him before he hit the deck. Gently she laid him down before silently finishing her ascent to the captain's quarters.

ISH'RA

One of Alessia's oldest species, the ish'ra were refugees when the yökai were still young.

Fleeing from their dark masters beyond the Void, the ish'ra voidship The Enduring Dream breached Alessia's atmosphere during the sunset years of the First Age, their ship crashing before the ink binding the various yökai Tribale Warlords in peaceful accord had even dried. Crashing in southeastern Elysia, in the area now known as the Dreamfall Vale, the ish'ra struggled to repair the damage they did not only to their ship, but also the veil in which they had crashed. Using all of their resources to contain the crash, hundreds of thousands of ish'ra voluntarily entered their hibernation pods, each group promising to wake the others in time as they worked to restore both their ship and their path to space.

That was six millennia ago.

Having naturalized to Alessia during their long stay, the ish'ra now proudly identify as natives. Natural psychics, they have refined their abilities here on Alessia, tapping into the Crystal Lattice and excelling as pilots. This is especially true of those who attune with and form bonds with a particular sky ship – these pilots are said to be among the best.

Although today's ish'ra share no genetic connection with the humans or elves of Alessia, several families have married and some continue to hold hope that, one day, science will give them a path to realizing their families, regardless of their genetic origins or the constraints imposed by the natural order. For these ish'ra, the dream to be one lies idle on the horizon, waiting for the future to help manifest their hopes.

For centuries the ish'ra struggled under the weight of the Orgothii tyranny, resisting their wicked traditions internally each time their "sins" were forgiven. Over time, this continued resistance gained strength, developing into a natural defense against not only orgothii mental controls – but against all psychic energy. By the time those same ish'ra scouts reached Alessia, they knew what they had to do.

The small band of ish'ra resistance fighters who brought The Enduring Dream down into the heart of Elysia knew they

had only one opportunity, and they took it. It killed thousands, but it also saved thousands more. And because the Sovereigns of Light smiled upon them, by the time the orgothii discovered their departure, the ish'ra were completely shielded from their old masters' notice. On Alessia, under the wise guidance of the old Sovereigns, the ish'ra were free.

Having regained their agency and knowing the power that ebbed and flowed through Alessia, the ish'ra made excellent use of their time. They slowly recycled The Enduring Dream, giving it a fitting, final mission and slowly, over millennia, healing.

When the War of the Sovereigns came, they knew things would change forever. Although now the distant relatives of the very first refugees, the ish'ra all know the stories; when the Light fails, the darkness comes. It came to no one's surprise that, when the War of Sovereigns finally happened, the orgothii would also discover Alessia. The war was too loud, or the Sovereigns simply couldn't shield the world any longer. And so, they warned their followers, empowering prophets among the people to whisper the words of light, and over time, to prepare them for their distant enemies.

Today, those same orgothii lie locked out of Alessia, held at bay by a fleet of tru'atha warships and Alessia's orbital structure, The Rings of Heaven.

THE LOST

Most people have a creation myth. The ish'ra do not. Their minds wiped clean after every invasion they staged for their merciless overlords, the ish'ra of today are people born out of cognitive dissonance. They are a mentally scarred people – a species of evolved beings as hardened as any steel blade. When coupled with the strict military hierarchy under which the ish'ra were raised, it comes to no surprise why most of them have hard times establishing emotional bonds with kith or kin. It isn't so much that they lack trust, as much as it is a hardening caused by centuries of mental and physical torture. So, while many ish'ra mean well enough, all of them share a common emotional trait – all of them feel 'lost.'

THE WAR CASTES

Although they always sought diplomatic solutions to their conflicts, the ish'ra were also bred to fight. These castes were divided by color; pæurra (purple-skinned) ish'ra trained in the warcaster colleges, while the væurru (red-skinned) mastered spear, spike, and axe in the War Houses of Bhallem.

DEADLY SMILES

Bred for beauty and compliance, most ish'ra suffer from a strange, genetic curse – they smile and flirt a lot. While most people find this pleasant enough, it is a bane to diplomatic relations, where being physically able to display a range of emotions is necessary. Ish'ra have an incredibly hard time developing trust. In some ways, their beauty is a bane to them.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Adaptive Combat – Although many of them cannot recall the information secretly written between the strings of their DNA, the ish'ra were conditioned for combat, and their bodies remember their cooperative war dances, even when they do not. Whenever two ish'ra are adjacent to one another in combat, they grant one another a +1 bonus to their Armor Class. This bonus lasts as long as they remain adjacent and in melee combat. A single ish'ra may only benefit from this ability once at a time.

SLAVES OF THE BEYOND

For millennia, the Ish'ra knew little more than servitude. Designed, grown, and trained by the Orgothii (a species of aliens who enslaved whole planets), the ish'ra are now a free people. Of course, that freedom came at a cost, one the ish'ra will never forget.

ESCAPED SLAVES

Before discovering Alessia and winning their freedom, the ish'ra served their masters as scouts, warriors, and heralds. Their mission was a simple: the masters arrived, while the compliant ish'ra watched in subservient horror while their masters enslaved, and in some instances, devoured whole civilizations. Then, with but a thought, their orgothii masters wiped their minds clean (absolving them of their "sins" in the process) and sent them to seek the next world and to repeat the same process.

For millennia, the ish'ra repeated this horrid cycle, acting as the unwilling agents of death and destruction. But with each world they destroyed, they evolved. Slowly, their scarred minds rebelled.

Then, ish'ran scouts discovered Alessia.

ISH'RA TRAITS

Because your species was enslaved early in its history, your character has inherited a number of extraordinary and supernatural abilities. Although beautiful, many ish'ra have scarred minds as a result. When you select an ish'ra, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Dexterity score by 2.
Age. Ish'ra age similar to humans, with most reaching adulthood in 16 years. Mated pairs produce offspring in their late 20s. Ish'ra live a little over a century, with most retiring in their late 40s, although those who retire often serve their communities for another decade or more.
Alignment. Because of their millennia of servitude, and the short centuries of freedom that have since followed, many ish'ra embrace chaos and chance. Traditionally, they embraced a lawful life of evil. Today, less so.
Size. Ish'ra are the size and weight of most humans, standing between 5 and 7 ft., and weighing between 130 lbs. and 220 lbs.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
Pained Smile. People find it hard to trust you. You have disadvantage on all Charisma-based skill checks.
Curse of Scarred Mind. The orgothii scarred and flayed your people's minds, but that did not end you. Your people have spent a millennium strengthening themselves against the psychic powers of oppressors and their servants. As a result, you gain advantage on Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom saving throws to resist spells or magic that charm you. Conversely, whenever you are under the effects of a power, spells, or magic that charms or dominates, you suffer disadvantage to break free from that control.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Ish'ran and Xian (common).
Castes. Two castes of ish'ra exist among the ish'ra: pæurra and væurru. Choose one of these castes.

PÆURRU

These ish'ra are bred to lead troops of væurru, using both tactics and their fine-tuned magic to solve their problems, be they through diplomatic efforts or violent force. Quick to go on the offensive, this caste is one of the most determined, especially now that its aims are cultural instead of imperial. Having stepped from the shadows of their oppressors, these ish'ra are a whole new people.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Intelligence score by 1 and your Wisdom score by 1.
Psi Armor. As a Reaction, you can spend a point of resolve to summon a protective field of psionic armor that lasts up to five minutes. Your AC becomes 13 + your Dexterity modifier. You must finish a short or long rest before you can activate this power again.
Elemental Connection. When you cast spells or activate powers from the schools of evocation that are elemental in nature (fire, air, water, and lightning), you can spend a point of resolve to make each die of damage deal 2 more points. Spells that don't deal damage instead last 2 additional rounds per spell level.

VÆURRU

These strong, towering ish'ra are weapon masters of all sorts, although a great number of them favor war axes, great swords, and glaives – any weapon that requires two hands is likely to be popular with the væurru! Conditioned to be strong and tenacious, ish'ra warriors from this caste are among the best, bowing only in battle to the legendary jæunnu – although that caste has long been seen or heard from. Their absence, however, leaves the væurru the apex of their castes.

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength score by 1 and your Constitution score by 1.
Stance of Silence. All væurru learn the stance of silence early in life. As a reaction to an attack of any sort, you can activate this power. When you do, any creature that tries to attack you with an attack or harmful spell or effect must first succeed on a Wisdom saving throw. The DC of this stance is 8 + your Intelligence score modifier + your proficiency bonus. You must finish a short or long rest before using this power again.
Weapons of War. As an action, you can summon a magical blade into your empty hand. You can determine how the weapon looks and the type of damage it deals (bludgeoning, slashing, or piercing), but it always does 1d8 points of damage plus your strength modifier. Once summoned, this weapon lasts for 5 minutes, although you may dismiss it as a reaction on your turn. You must finish a short or long rest before using this power again.

THE ENDURING DREAM

One of Alessia's oldest species, the ish'ra were refugees when the yökai were still young. Fleeing from the dark spaces beyond the Void, the ish'ra voidship *The Enduring Dream* breached Alessia's atmosphere when the Yökai Warlords were still in power, crashing into central Elysia and depositing her survivors all along Elysia coasts. Having naturalized to Alessia over their millennium-long stay, the ish'ra now proudly identify as natives to their new home. Natural psychics with several technical aptitudes, the ish'ra have contributed much to Alessia's progress.

THE JÖTUNFOLK

CHILDREN OF THE GREAT GIANTS

Ingvild quietly stalked the woodlands, mindful of any of the aggressive fauna in the area. Things on her farm hadn't been right since the strangers stepped through the old Clockwork Gate and she was worried – for the goats, the geese, and for all the creatures under her protection. Today, she'd investigate.

JÖTUNFOLK

Although it remains in open debate, there are some who see an undeniable link between the Alessia's jötunfolk and the giants they claim bore them. Standing at height with most terrans, the jötunfolk are towering beings bred for war. Their skin dyed the color of new ice and blue skies, these children of the giants are pained by a loss they still don't fully understand.

Finding some kinship with the dwarves and the gnomes, Alessia's jötunfolk have formed tribes that have, over the millennia, come to dominate most of the cold north. In fact, these tribes dominate the ranges north of the mountains in Shiran, expanding deep into the northern expanse. Although they have clashed with the lionel explorers to the south, the majority of the jötunfolk have learned to live in harmony with the lands around them.

For these clans, the warmth of the campfire is a symbolic necessity, and jötunfolk from all over take great pains to show others the respect they feel they deserve. This can sometimes lead to comical ends, especially when two jötunfolk seek to upstage another, although in most instances, it simply makes life a little more bearable for those who live and work around the big folk.

CONVERTS TO THE LIGHT

The distant children of the Great Chieftains of Ymir, the jötunfolk are a strong and proud people whose giant's blood gives them all the advantages one would need to thrive in such harsh, remote conditions. A people concerned with honor, hard work, and the occasional raid, the jötunfolk excel in the martial professions, excelling as mercenaries, raiders, reavers, and soldiers of all kinds. Although initially forlorn over the loss of their Sovereigns during the War of Sovereigns, the jötunfolk have since embraced the Path of Light.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

While the jötunfolk's origins may remain in some debate, the fact that they share no genetic connections with other species does not – the jötunfolk cannot sire children with other species, and probably for good reason. Still, millennia of cooperation have paid dividends and the jötunfolk's relationships with the following species is proof of that:

Giant's Bond – Created to serve as warriors for their giant overlords, Alessia's first jötunfolk were born into and lived in servitude long before the first yökai tribes organized. This servitude has manifested as the shared bond the jötunfolk enjoy with the gnomes of the Stonefire Clan. Whenever you are within 30 feet of a Stonefire Clan gnome ally with whom you've bonded (you are attuned), you can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to grant them advantage on Constitution saving throws and resistance to bludgeoning weapons for 1 minute. Your ally must take a short rest or long rest before gaining the benefits of this ability again.

Icewarden's Heart – Although few realize it, Alessia's jötunfolk have a longstanding, healthy relationship with the elves of Velestra, with whom they have traded along their northern borders for millennia. This relationship has manifested in a powerful bond that lets the two read each other's intents with ease.

Whenever you are within 30 feet of an elf with whom you've bonded (you are attuned), you can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to grant that ally advantage on Intelligence (Insight) and Wisdom (Perception) proficiency checks to decipher your true intent and to uncover secret messages you are trying to convey. This lasts for 1 minute.

THE THRALL LORDS IN ALESSIA

Although the Thrall Lords make no official appearance in the World of Alessia, the dwarves, the gnomes, and the jötunfolk all have stories about foul, ill-tempered masters who, when the world was young and filled with ice, taught their species to survive. These tales involve stories of horrid practices, including survival games, and in some instances, worse.

GMs looking to connect ***Rhune: Dawn of Twilight*** officially to Alessia could easily do so through this connection, making all of these species an extended family of survivors. The ish'ra would likely find common ground with the ælves, who suffered greatly at the hands of the Thrall Lords, in the same ways the ish'ra did at the hands of the orgothii.

GMs wishing to include the Thrall Lords in Alessia need look only so far as the powerful Oni Lords, who serve a similar cosmological role; they continue to plague the people of the Empire of Xian, summoning shadow's eternal chill to aid them in their slow, deliberate corruption of all that they deem good or true.

Jötunfolk Traits

As a jötunfolk, you are naturally bigger and stronger than those around you. Only a handful of terrans or pandrens could hope to match you in contests of strength. When you select jötunfolk as your species, you get the following:

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.
Age. Jötunfolk mature slower than a lot of species, reaching adulthood in their late 40s and working (or raiding) another century before settling down to sire a family and retire. Most jötunfolk live another 40 to 60 years, living nearly two centuries in the process.
Alignment. Although they have chaotic tendencies, most jötunfolk live relatively ordered lives, embracing local laws and customs with a sense of civic responsibility that suggests a cosmopolitan tendency buried deep within. Jötunfolk are rarely evil.
Giant's Appetite. The jötunfolks' prodigious size and demanding metabolism makes them extremely hungry and thirsty, forcing them to consume twice as much food and water as smaller species. Only the pandren eat as much.
Intimidating Prowess. You have proficiency in the Intimidation skill.
Natural Strength. You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks to climb and grapple.
Size. Jötunfolk are big, easily standing as tall as 8 feet, sometimes taller. Likewise, jötunfolk can weigh as much as 300 pounds. Your size is Medium.
Towering Build. Jötunfolk do not suffer any disadvantage when using oversized weapons or tools sized for large humanoids. They cannot wear armor sized for small humanoids. They can wear armor sized for medium or large creatures, but this armor must be modified. The cost to modify said armor is 25% of its total cost.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet. Your speed is not reduced while wearing heavy armor.
Languages. Jötunfolk begin play speaking Giant and Xian.

THE KITSUNE

CHILDREN OF THE NINE-TAILED ONE

Amari Noko doubled down on her bet, trusting that this time her luck would come through. Pushing the stack of chips across the table, Amari gave her companion Niasaki a wink before tossing the dealer's dice one more time. She needed a pair of nines, unlikely in this game, and so the stakes were not in her favor...

Amari smiled as the dealer called out, "Double nines..."

KITSUNE

A people whose luck is legendary among the yōkai, the kitsune are forever tied to the Nine-Tailed One, a powerful Sovereign of Nature who, some say, played a direct role in awakening his kin from their animal forms, whispering secrets others would never hear. Regardless of this truth, the yōkai who bore this connection did so with a strange pride, and for many, separating the huli jing from their ancestral bonds became difficult.

While this presented tensions between the original, sometimes still-evolving yōkai during the First Age, the kitsune eventually brought their natures to heel. Meditating daily on the Light and their connection to it, these first yōkai learned to quiet the beast inside, and at the same time, the mischievous thoughts it stirred within. Over the generations, they grew more adept at this process, learning to channel and refine it.

Today's kitsune have mastered the process, selecting a symbol (often a number) early in their lives on which to focus. Over time, this becomes a symbol of their luck and gives them special insights into how the larger world around them works.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Heart's Hidden Luck – The kitsune are known for their luck, or infamous for it, depending on who you ask. While their luck seems undeniably elegant in its simplicity, Alessia's kitsune possess the ability to pull that luck from others, granting their bonded allies a little of their luck. Select a single ally with whom you've formed a bond (you are attuned). Whenever you are within 30 feet of that ally, you can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to grant that ally advantage on their next d20 roll.

LORE: THE LUCKY ONES

Alessia's kitsune have a strange relationship with the rest of the yōkai, many of whom still embrace ancient ideas about how they stole their luck from the heavens, how they tricked the other evolving species, or how they came to lord over the domain of luck, stealing the domain from its inheritor and blessing the species for all of time.

There are some yōkai who feel the kitsune's connection

to their luck is undeserved, but these individuals are quickly reminded that each species under the Yökai Lords' Banners exists without the blemish of their ancestry, forgiven for their nature, and encouraged to work as equal members in smaller, tribal cooperatives. While they don't always end up "working" as is intended, they always manage to contribute – in one way or another.

LORE: FOX'S CUNNING

Alessia's kitsune are undeniably competitive and perceptive, applying their sharp minds to a number of problems and challenges in ways few can understand, much less compete with. While their kinds are legendary, so are their tricks and contests – which kitsune prize like gems.

While other species will show their affection in a number of ways, acting as guardians or providers, the kitsune operate differently. For them, the sharing and teaching of secrets, many of which can be employed to defend oneself from someone (or something) is considered the most advantageous. Few kitsune will openly engage in combat if other, subtler, methods of overcoming a challenge or problem present themselves.

LORE: THE GREAT HUNT

The kitsune of Alessia have a number of iconic, special rituals which they teach one another. While most of these rituals and ceremonies are regionally based, there is a single, universal practice upon which all kitsune look upon with awe – this is the Great Hunt.

While most assume this hunt is organized by outsiders, it has long been a secret tradition of 'the lucky ones,' a celebration and a sacrifice to the Lord of Nine-Tails, that their secret pact might hold, and each year, their luck with it. This fact, of course, is widely known, and this motivates kitsune all over to be the best they can, so that when their time comes, they can survive the hunt.

Some kitsune may participate on multiple occasions, but that is never required. Once a kitsune commits to the Great Hunt, they must compete. Those who finish the hunt can never be called a second time.

Kitsune Names. An, Ayia, Bai, Chan, Chen, Diu, Fang, Feng, Gho, Hua, Huian, Jin, Li, Lia, Mei, Meili, Te, Ting, Ushi, Wan, Eei, Wen, Xia, and Ya all work.

Clan Names. Kitsune clans tend to organize around a single, charismatic and tested leader. These clans often take on identifying monikers they use to identify one another. These clans use titles like, "of Sho's House," "of Xifeng's Clan," "under House Zhu's Banner," and "of Mingzhu's Stories" in place of real names.

KITSUNE TRAITS

The kitsune are a swift, energetic, and engaged species. Inquisitive and intelligent, they have long carried themselves with a degree of self-reliance others learn to appreciate, and with time, learn to honor. When you select the kitsune as a species, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Dexterity score by 2 and your Wisdom score by 1.
Age. Kitsune age rapidly, reaching adulthood in their late teens and venturing out a few years later. These kitsune wander for nearly two decades, becoming adults after returning home and participating in the Great Hunt. Kitsune who survive the hunt are considered adults. Most kitsune live between 140 and 180 years, but rarely longer.
Alignment. Wildly independent and resourceful, kitsune avoid binding themselves any more than they have to. These yökai prefer chaos to law, good to evil, and fun to boring – in that order.
Size. Kitsune stand between 3 and 5 feet, weiging between 60 and 120 lbs. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a walking speed of 30.
Superior Darkvision. Your darkvision has a radius of 120 feet.
Fox's Cunning. You gain advantage on Intelligence (Insight) proficiency checks. Additionally, you can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to gain a small boon on this roll, gaining an additional 1d4. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.
Luck's Nine-Tailed Blessing. Select a number between 2 and 19. This is your lucky number. Whenever you roll this number on a d20 while attempting to perform an action, perform a skill, or complete a specific task, you can instantly spend a point of resolve to make sure you are successful, no matter the numerical result. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Yökai.

THE HULI JING

Although the kitsune draw on distinctly Japanese culture and myth, their Chinese counterpart – the huli jing – is another viable option for naming the fox-spirit people in Alessia. While we opted for the familiarity of the kitsune, GMs and players are encouraged to research other cultures and myths for appropriate names, as well. If you are running Alessia as a distinctly Chinese-themed game, consider including the kitsune as the huli jing instead.

CONNECTING ALESSIA TO RHUNE

When Jere and I planned the background cosmology behind the larger universe in which this campaign setting "lived," we frequently discussed whether we should present Alessia and Rhune parallel to one another, or if we should connect the two settings. After much discussion, we decided it added to the mystery we were both seeking to evoke.

Throughout this primer, we'll point out those connections with development comments (see the Dev Sidebars for more info) or with lore that details, from a cosmological standpoint, how the two settings align on a given topic (see the Lore Sidebars throughout for more info).

With that said, it is important to note that Alessia does not exist as a result of Rhune; the two settings align in the same universe and share connections through Yggdrasil, the Great Tree of Life. These connections have been realized by several organizations but have been kept secret on both ends to ensure safety and the cosmological events occurring in one don't – accidentally – spill over into the other.

For species such as the jötunfolk, who exist in different roles (with different histories) in the two worlds, this can be confusing when one encounters the other for the first time, but rarely hinders relations for long, at least on Alessia's end (whose jötunfolk see their counterparts on Rhune as broken, wounded, and in dire need of healing).

Bridging Cosmologies: The Rainbow Bridge

Player characters who discover the Rainbow Bridge in Rhune can use it to readily step into Alessia, although doing so without special directions or magical (or magitech) aid can be tricky, if not dangerous; seasoned Tree Walkers know the dangers of "The Trickster's Curse" and compare traveling the Rainbow Bridge without assistance no different than jumping in a rushing river without a boat.

While opinions differ on the matter, one thing is certain: individuals who travel between the two lands frequently find themselves disorientated by the vast differences between the two places, both by the cultures and the sheer size of Alessia.

CAMPAIGN SETTING	THE WORLD OF ALESSIA	RHUNE: DAWN OF TWILIGHT
PLANET SHAPE AND SIZE	Spherical; Alessia is about the size of Saturn and measures 71,000 kilometers in diameter. Alessia's settled continents occupy less than 20% of the surface area and measure nearly 16,000 kilometers from southwestern Galgaræ to northeastern Shiran.	Midgard is a semi-spherical world, contained with a border wall of light. It is roughly 4,200 kilometers across Midgard.
DISTANCE FROM CENTRAL STAR	146 million kilometers from the Helia.	156 million kilometers from Myhr.
SATELLITES	7: 3 moons, 1 orbital ring, and 3 orbiting satellites	4
LENGTH OF A DAY	18 hours	24 hours
LENGTH OF A MONTH	40 days	30 days
LENGTH OF A SEASON	244 days	92 days
SEASONS	4 seasons; winter, spring, summer, and fall.	4 seasons; winter, spring, summer, and fall.
LENGTH OF A YEAR	976 days	366 days

THE MINOTAUR

THE SONS OF MINOS

Impressive, if gentle, the minotaur were originally a placid people. When the waves of war finally arrived, they rose to the occasion and made the transition as a single herd. In Alessia, today's minotaur are as calm as they are violent – which is often a question of environment.

THE MINOTAUR

A people as old as any other yōkai, the minotaur – the People of Minos – are a tribe of wandering, nocturnal beings who resemble humans save their large, ox-like heads and adjoining horns. Known as minotaur in the common tongue, these people long ago formed bonds of kinship with the dwarves at the very end of the War of the Sovereigns, when the last of the dwarven forces – all but annihilated – came to the minotaurs' aid, ending their enslavement in Fyrean and earning their eternal trust and honor.

LORE: WAR-BOUND

The relationship between the minotaur of Alessia and the dwarves they adore is a complex one, and for visitors, strange until the long, layered story is finally told. Although the story is far too complex to share here, it is important to note that most minotaur feel a genetic and cultural drive toward their shorter charges that dates back to the War of Sovereigns.

Forged in the dying of the Light as the last battles were waged, the minotaur suffered a horrible defeat that, as a people, meant their end. Imprisoned and destined for a fate worse than the Void, the minotaur feared the worst when the knocks finally came. And were equally surprised to meet their liberator, Brælon Minos, whom they honor to this day.

LORE: CHILDREN OF MINOS

Although their affection for the dwarves is legendary (and brotherly at best), the Children of Minos took this title to honor their liberator and savior, Brælon Minos, the dwarven hero who sacrificed part of his essence in order to free the minotaur during the War of the Sovereigns.

LORE: CHILDREN OF THE EARTH

Minotaur feel a natural connection to the subterranean spaces they share with their dwarven allies, making

their presence underground as natural as any others. This connection affords them excellent darkvision, rivaling the vision of only a few dwarven elders. This comfort brings the minotaur an almost unnatural patience, from which they extract calm and focus in long, dream-like ribbons (both of which are convenient when stalking prey in a maze).

Minotaur Names. Andrik, Anton, Chesa, Danica, Janis, Jaromir, Lazlo, or Rorik.

Clan Names. Dreggus, Drulev, Immana, Kurvoch, Prauthar, Rovenach, and Vayatis.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Stone Wardens – It's no secret that, were it not for the dwarves, the minotaur would have been wiped from the face of Alessia in the wake of the War of Sovereigns. The brave actions of a handful of dwarven heroes, led by Brælon Minos, resulted in the release of the minotaur from their enslavement in Fyræn. Today, every minotaur goes out of their way to accommodate dwarves and often seek friendships with them. When a Stone Warden Minotaur is adjacent to a dwarven ally, that ally gains a +1 bonus to their Armor Class.

MINOTAUR TRAITS

Originally a gentle people, the Sons of Minos now stand unified with their dwarven allies, forming a new community that the people of Alessia still don't fully grasp. When you select a minotaur as your species, you get the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Constitution score by 2 and your Strength score by 1.
Age. Minotaur grow and mature like humans, reaching maturity around 20. Minotaur are not considered adults until they reach their 30s, where they remain for the majority of their lives. Minotaur age rapidly once they reach 180, often living no longer than two centuries.
Alignment. Loyal and disciplined, minotaur tend toward lawful and good.
Size. Minotaur stand between 6 and 8 feet and average 300 pounds. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a walking speed of 25. Your speed is not reduced while wearing armor.
Superior Darkvision. Your darkvision has a radius of 120 feet.
Bull's Strength. Although you are a Medium creature, you count as a large creature when calculating your carrying capacity, as well as how much you can push, pull, or drag. Additionally, when you spend a point of resolve, you can increase your Strength by 1d4 for one minute. Once you do this, you must complete a short rest.
Pathfinder. Minotaur have a natural ability to discover hidden paths, doors, and navigate mazes with an unnatural logic that baffles even their dwarven allies. Whenever you make a Wisdom (Perception) skill check while underground, or while in a maze, you are considered proficient in the Perception skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check.
Stone Warden Combat Training. Because of your long relationship with the dwarves, you are proficient with many of their weapons, including: battleaxe, handaxe, throwing hammer, and Warhammer.
Horns. You have horns. If you attack with them, they deal 7 [2d6] points of piercing damage (plus your Strength modifier). Most minotaur refuse to use their horns in combat, considering such actions primitive and brutal.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Dwarven.

THE NAGAI
THE SCALED ONES

Asparra readied herself in the tree, letting her tail uncoil a little to lower her the few inches she needed to see her target. When she had it in sight, she wound up and tightened her body again, using all of her being to let her blade go. When it struck the small rabbit, Asparra smiled. She'd have a delicious meal tonight.

NAGAI

Alessia's nagai are trace their legacy to the deep green jungles of Velestra, a land that has – for the past several thousand years – existed under elven control and guidance. While today's nagai have learned to make peace with this fact, this wasn't always so. For generations – long before the War of Sovereigns forced them to cooperate – the two species fought a brutal war over the territory that would eventually come to become the fertile grounds of the Great Trees of Life.

These battles raged across three generations, costing both sides incalculable lives. For the native nagai, who had evolved in the branches of the great jungles of Velestra, this was a battle for their homeland against invaders who had, through some dimensional exploit, entered their homeland. So, while Alessia's elves were among its eldest peoples – the nagai's collective experience was constructed entirely from that event. Believing all of the elves of Velestra to be hostile, dimensional invaders posing as natives, these early nagai acted to protect themselves, the Great Trees of Life, and their homeland.

Although elders on both sides sued for peace, reminding their peoples of their shared luck, their efforts ultimately failed.

That conflict escalated across central Velestra and ended only at the behest of the Herald Mingxia, whose halo illuminated the last of these battles, turning both sides to the western coasts to prepare. The herald promised that soon, a star would fall and enemies, small and fierce, would stream in from the islands and the oceans between them.

LORE: NAGA'S KIN

Alessia's nagai resemble naga for a reason – the two share a common ancestor. Although their history is a little blurry, both species share common genetic markers that allow them to reproduce. Although such couplings are uncommon, the evil naga who live below Alessia's oceans and in remote mountain passes have a soft spot for their lesser cousins, who they refuse to take as slaves.

Although no one really knows why the naga observe this special rule, the Empire of Xian and its Peacekeepers have made good use of this fact, training nagai as peacekeepers and diplomats. When conflicts with the naga require the Empire's delicate touch, they send these nagai to handle the situation.

LORE: THE LORDS OF BRASS

Although the Lords of Brass – a small collection of Djinn Lords and Efferti Masters – swore they created only the djinnkin, humans, and terrans, there are some who believe they experimented first on the nagai in secret. While the djinnkin and their allies dismiss such notions as foolish, there are countless, unexplained cases that have led both sides to believe this connection is, in fact, true.

LORE: EVOLUTION'S BOUNTY

While most of the yökai have evolved into stable, slowly changing forms, this isn't yet

true of the nagai, whose forms still shift every few clutches. In places where a lot of magic has pooled (in places where ley lines cross, for instance) or where the Crystal Lattice climbs closely to the surface of Alessia, this is doubly true. Some of these nagain might display variations as often as every clutch. Moreover, these clutches often display the ability to fuse these crystals with their living tissue, becoming true conduits between themselves, Alessia, and its ongoing evolution.

Nagai Names. Ayavatis, Ayiah, Brua'a, Ceshii, Daraparr, Gamma, Gemna, Jamal, Jariah, Kali, Kallam, Naja, Najib, Niasha, Raja, Rakim, Talla, Talib, Vaisha, Vella, Yanna, Yula, and Zallen.

Clutch Names. Clutches normally carry their queen's title, with titles like "of Lady Akima," "of the Queen of the Qingshan," or "in Naja's Name."

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Wardens of the Green – While their relationship with the elves has improved considerably during the past few thousand years, the nagai have long since formed a much stronger bond with the treah with whom they now work.

Select a treah with whom you have attuned and formed a bond. Provided that treah is within 30 feet, you can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to wrap that treah in a magical shell that grants them 2d8 temporary Hit Points, which last until depleted or for 1 minute, whichever happens first.

NAGAI TRAITS

The nagai continue to grow and evolve, taking on magical mantles and adorning themselves with rainbow-hued psychic crystals. When you select a nagai as a species, you get the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength score by 2 and your Charisma score by 1.
Age. Nagai mature quickly, reaching adulthood in their first decade and becoming full-embraced members of their cluth in their late 20s. Although they are constantly shedding their skin and being reborn in some fashion or the other, the naga never live more than a few hundred years.
Alignment. Nagai favor order and law, although how they elect to enforce that law often dictates just how good or evil a nagai really is. While most favor the good, some understand their naga cousins far too well.
Size. Nagai can grow to be between 6 and 10 feet long, but coiled, rarely stand taller than 5 feet. Most nagai weigh between 180 and 300 lbs.
Speed. You have a crawling speed of 30.
Coiled Strength. You can, by compressing your muscles for roughly one minute, explode into a single direction as if you had a running start. You gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks to jump or leap a short distance (less than 30 feet).
Sariputta's Sign. You know how to turn away enemies with a word. When you spend a point of resolve, you can hiss out a simple magical word as a reaction that targets a single enemy within 30 feet. If that enemy attacks you in the next minute (which they may do freely), they suffer a 1d4 penalty to that roll.
Snake's Friend. You know the spell *animal friendship*. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Elven and Xian.

THE NEKOMATA

THE LION-HEARTED ONES

Brau had walked this path many times, often on patrol, but for a number of ceremonial reaspons, as well. While sad, today would fall into the latter category, a fact that was weighing heavily on the chieftain's heart. Soon, he would need to do more than just walk. Soon, he would need to speak.

NEKOMATA

The nekomata are both a family and a collection of species – each with a distinctive understanding of Alessia and the lands they have long hunted. Born alongside the gnoles, Alessia's nekomata evolved from thousands of subspecies into a singular culture, each converging in a number of different ways. This fusion, in fact, has led to countless marriages and, through them, thousands of individual bloodlines.

While the nekomata's wide distribution of genetic material has blessed them with ample diversity, their overall cultural growth has been limited. The nekomata are a prideful people, and that pride often gets in the way of creating good solutions to social problems. So, while the nekomata remain one of the longer-lived species on Alessia, their overall cultural development has been staggered, often placing them behind other, better-socialized groups.

That pride, however, has also served the nekomata. When faced with waves of foes during the War of Sovereigns, the nekomata, following the Liowen Tribes, blazed a path of stunning victories across northern Fyrea, ultimately helping the dwarven hero Brælon Minos reach and liberate the minotaurs of the Nishka valley during the final days of the War of Sovereigns.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Nine Lives – The nekomata's luck is legendary, especially when it comes to matters of life and death. While this is true of individual nekomata, it is doubly so between those nekomata who have formed intimate bonds. Select another nekomata with whom you have attuned and formed a bond. Provided they are within 60 feet, you can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to grant that individual a single success on their next death saving throw. You may spend up to three points of resolve this way before you must complete a Short or Long Rest.

THE LION-HEARTED ONES

One of the earliest yökai species to walk Alessia, the nekomata evolved alongside the gnoles and worked diligently beside them to help build the Empire of Anu. By the time the yökai made peace around the Yerwin's Council Fires, the Nekomata had already evolved into several powerful and agile species.

LORE: LEO'S PRIDE

Alessia's nekomata have evolved from countless feline species, each with their own vision of how the world should treat them. For some nekomata, these expectations manifest as entitlements that can make it incredibly hard for them to refuse compliments, gifts, and similar attempts to influence them by appealing to their vanity. While the nekomata are painfully aware of this weakness, they still succumb to its dangerous lure daily.

Over the years, veteran nekomata have trained themselves to be wary of those with silver tongues, offsetting this weakness with insightful, direct questions designed to disarm enchanters, bards, and con artists alike.

LORE: THE HUNTERS

The hunt – as a concept and as a practice – has long remained central to the nekomata's sense of identity. So, while the nekomata no longer practice the hunt in its more tribal, violent forms (there are some exceptions to this cultural shift), most still seek experiences, professions, and hobbies that allow them to practice these (or similar) skills. Nekomata, for this very reason, frequently gravitate to the armed services, embarking on military careers where their mastery of skills such stealth, reconnaissance, and combat remain in high demand.

LORE: DIVINE ORIGINS

While all the yökai understand and embrace their evolution, both the gnoles and the nekomata continue to perpetuate the idea that their origins are, among their kind, divine. When heard, these stories all share striking similarities and common themes, with the nekomata wisely choosing to follow a powerful nekomata oracle named Ba'asa, a woman some whispered could speak to the Light directly and who, others said, could work miracles herself.

NEKOMATA TRAITS

Nekomata range dramatically in color, size, and build. Some nekomata mirror their bigger cat cousins, towering over the others, while most stand shoulder to shoulder with their humanoid counterparts. When you select a nekomata as your species, you get the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Dexterity score by 2.
Age. Nekomata mature quickly, reaching full size in their late teens. Most are considered youths until they complete their hunt in their 20s. Once matured, the nekomata work, train, and travel until retirement, which normally comes in their early 80s. Nekomata rarely live past 200.
Alignment. Although they are selfish, the nekomata are inherently good beings. Most favor spontaneity, embracing the ebb and flow of chaos while doing their best to work within society's constraints. Few are evil.
Size. Nekomata stand between 4 and 6 feet, weighing between 90 and 160 lbs., depending on their build. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a walking speed of 40.
Darkvision. Your darkvision has a radius of 60 feet.
Apex Defense. The nekomata have a lineage of violence upon which they can draw, and that knowledge is as much a part of their genetic material as their eye or fur color. Nekomata naturally dodge many attacks. Provided you are not wearing armor or encumbered, your Armor Class is equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Dexterity modifier.
Ba'asa's Blessing. Nekomata are quick to respond to sudden changes in their environments. Whenever a nekomata makes a Dexterity saving throw in response to a surprise attack, a trap, or similar trigger (at the GM's discretion), they can spend a point of resolve to gain advantage on that roll.
Claws. You have small claws you can deploy in the wink of an eye. With your claws deployed, your physical strikes deal 2 (1d4) + your Strength modifier points of slashing damage.
Pride's Curse. Your very nature makes you susceptible to charms, enchantments, and similar spells. Select a single mental attribute (Charisma, Intelligence, or Wisdom). Whenever you make saving throws against spells or abilities that target this ability, you suffer disadvantage on those rolls. You may, at the GM's discretion, spend a point of resolve (as a bonus action) to negate this penalty.
Pride. You belong to a pride. Select one of the prides described on pages 108-109.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Yökai and Xian.

And, while these stories do change with each new telling, the tribes understand the importance of the central themes – the nekomata think incredibly highly of themselves, and that's unlikely to change soon.

Nekomata Names. Alyssa, Anja, Asynia, Aziz, Ba'asa, Callisa, Calic, Dev, Drale, Faja, Goia, Hazzi, Imbrim, Jaiden, Jarsa, Jeric, Jestia, Launna, Maat, Mazib, Nailla, Naja, Nassa, Raji, Sera, Sienna, Thoma, Temnah, Vassa, Velliah.

Pride Names. Pride names are unique to the pride's leader and their collective vision. For prides who still hunt and trade in Shiran and Yerwin, these names are often regionally relevant and tell outsiders what they need to know about them. In the largest cities, rural nekomata may identify with prides who focus on a particular skill, idea, or concept instead of one designed solely for survival. As a result, pride names vary wildly. Examples of these prides include the High River Pride, the Janna Desert Pride, the Ma'assau Pride, the Sera-Sera Pride, and each of the following prides:

CONCO PRIDE

Your pride regularly hunts the rugged foothills and lower ranges of Velestra and Yerwin's mountain ranges, roaming for vast periods before finally descending to trade, meet, and marry.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Ambusher. You know how to set a trap and have the patience to execute it. Whenever you are setting a trap that requires you to hide for 5 or more minutes, you gain advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) proficiency checks you make. Additionally, you can opt to spend a single point of resolve (as a bonus action) to gain a bonus to this roll equal to your proficiency modifier.

Mountaineer. You are naturally attuned to mountains and similar, rugged terrain. While traveling through terrain such as this, you gain advantage on all Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks to navigate this terrain.

ONCA PRIDE

Your coat is as dark as your arts: the Onca Pride has haunted the jungles of southern Elysia for millennia. They were there when the ish'ra crashed and promise them they'll remain long after they've left.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Sun's Bane. You are resistant to fire damage.

Jungle's Heart. You are naturally attuned to jungles and similar, heavily forested terrain. While traveling through terrain such as this, you gain an advantage on all Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks to navigate this terrain.

TIGRIS PRIDE

Your pride has long roamed Yerwin's savannas and you those that terrain well. The Tigris Pride has a long, distinguished history of service to the Empire of Xian, whom they serve as the "Tiger Army."

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Scout. You have a natural proficiency in the Nature skill.

Stalker. You are naturally attuned to plains, fields, and savannas. While traveling through terrain such as this, you gain an advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) proficiency checks.

UNCIA PRIDE

Your pride has stalked the winterly chasms and snow-swept cliffs of Yrim and northern Shiran for millennia. Although you no longer dine on the flesh of sentient creatures, your pride still remembers the taste.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Winter Coat. You are resistant to cold damage.

Mountaineer. You are naturally attuned to mountains and similar, rugged terrain. While traveling through terrain such as this, you gain advantage on all Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks on navigation.

THE PANDRENS
THE LAUGHING ONES

Tuck towered over everyone in his adventuring party, and he couldn't help but love it. While the jötunfolk came close, none of them could reach the heights Tuck could. He was the strongest of the bunch, and they knew it, which only made Niki's recent attempts to open this door all the funnier...

PANDRENS

Alessia's yökai have long included powerful bears and similar mammals among them, although it is clearly the pandrens who have integrated the best with modern Alessia. One of the few species that might consider being called onikuma a compliment, pandrens are large, muscular warriors evolved from Alessia's native pandas. Prominent members of the Council of Yerwin, the pandrens sought sanctuary in Pyrrin Isles and remained there until embracing the Empire of Xian.

Although Alessia's pandrens evolved from their native pandas, as a species, the pandrens have long ago embraced their brother and sister bears, all of whom come from smaller, recessive lines of bears who still isolate themselves. The pandrens, on the other hand, have long ago embraced the society and have made gregarious social inroads throughout the Empire of Xian.

Their efforts haven't gone unnoticed.

The pandrens, as a people, welcomed the Empire of Xian's gentle dominance of their region, offering up all of the Pyrrin Isles to the Empire as a sign of peace and goodwill. While many pandrens disliked this move and suggested the pandrens resist the foreign empire, those voices were distant, quiet, or otherwise faded over time.

LORE: THE LAUGHING ONE

While others frequently describe the pandrens as kind, jolly, and easily moved to laughter, this is a cultivated image, one the pandrens have spent centuries working on while their brother and sister bears removed themselves, further, from Alessia's evolving and expanding society. This image, although carefree, is one that all pandrens take seriously – they understand that their beloved icon represents the choice to embrace joy, community, and happiness in a world that is often filled with sadness.

This can confuse outsiders, especially those who have met pandrens within the Empire of Xian, who tend to be very open, forthcoming, and above all, approachable.

LORE: BIG BEAR, LIL' RABBIT

While both the pandrens and the rabbitfolk might hail from anywhere on Alessia, both species claim the Pyrrin Isles as their home. Anyone observing the two species will likely agree, as both display mannerisms and habits that clearly link them to the crystal-filled isles. Moreover, both species show an uncanny connection to the Crystal Lattice, allowing both to create powerful psychic bonds normally seen only in species that share a genetic connection.

While most assume there is something special about these yökai, both correctly identify the Pyrria Crystal Fields as the source of this connection – one of the few aboveground fields of its size. Alessia's arcanists have long ago observed and accepted its influence on their evolution, noting specific markers only developed in other species at much later periods.

This connection has served the two species well, who have developed martial traditions, philosophical schools, and community outreach programs together throughout the Empire of Xian.

Pandren Names. Aya, Bai, Biya, Buji, Chen, Chi'en, Chinya, Dim, Feng, Ge, Goi, Han, Hoya, Hu, Jaidi, Kim, Li, Liam, Lû, Miya, Niao, Paji, Pi, Qi, Ren, Sai, Sensii, Shi, Su, Tang, Wan, Wang, Wei, Xi, Yana, Yi, Yu, Zeia.

Pandren Dens. Pandrens do not form families, but instead form dens. These dens serve the same essential role but carry the name of the den's founder, combined with a colorful adjective, like: Ali's Den, Ansa's Den of Wonder, Charma's Den, Dim's Den, Fi's Den of Flowers, Hela's Den, Hija's Den, Mari's Den, Sera's Den, Shiri's Den, or even Xin's Magitech Den.

Some sample dens follow:

ALI'S DEN

Ali's Den evolved in Western Elysia and the Eastern Pyrrin Islands, and having since spread beyond, has enclaves throughout Alessia.
Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.
Forest's Heart. You are naturally attuned to thick woodlands and similar, heavily forested terrain. While traveling through terrain such as this, you gain advantage on all Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks to navigate this terrain.
Lucky. Ali's Den has long counted luck as an ally. You can, as a bonus action, spend a point of resolve to gain advantage on your next d20 roll. You may spend three points of resolve in this fashion before you must take a long rest.

HELA'S DEN

Hela's Den evolved in Eastern Elysia, not far from where the ish'ra officially 'touched down' on Alessia. A relatively quiet but industrious clan, Hela's Pandrens have been righting wrongs since the Second Age, when the den took it upon themselves to serve Alessia for all time.
Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.
Hero's Resolve. Hela's tribe evolved in the shadow of the Empire of Xian, and its early ish'ran and human allies, developing a sense of adventure and resolve that both species understand well. Increase your pool of resolve by 2.
Jungle's Heart. You are naturally attuned to jungles and similar, heavily forested terrain. While traveling through terrain such as this, you gain advantage on all Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks to navigate this terrain.

MARI'S DEN

Mari's Den originated far in the north. They are a people who long ago evolved and adapted to life in the great cold plains of northern Shiran and Yrim, where they hunted as apex predators. Today, some of their ancestors still roam the plains, although as evolved megafauna, not today's wise ancestors.
Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.
Polar Coat. You have resistance to cold damage.
Tundra Born. You are naturally attuned to the frozen tundra of the icy north and the rugged hills that surround them. While traveling through terrain such as this, you gain advantage on all Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks to navigate this terrain.

SHIRI'S DEN

Your den hails from the western edges of the Pyrrin Isles, where your widespread clan hunts wild game and fishes from the hill's streams. A largely solitary clan, your people only gather twice a year; once in the spring and once in the fall.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.
Naturalist. You have a natural proficiency in the Nature skill.

Hibernate. When you take a long rest, you can opt to sleep deeply for a full week (or more). While hibernating, you double your Constitution modifier when making saving throws against poison and disease. Additionally, while hibernating, you can spend a point of resolve each day to regain 2d8 Hit Points. When you chose to hibernate, you must sleep for at least a week, but cannot sleep more weeks than you have character levels.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Big Bear, Lil' Rabbit – Over their long history, the pandrens have formed a notable bond with the rabbitfolk, a people with whom they have shared parts of the Pyrrin Isles with for nearly five millennia. And, while both species are relatively peaceful, both know how to fight when cornered. Select a single rabbitfolk character with whom you have formed a bond (you are attuned). Whenever you and your rabbitfolk ally are within 30 feet of each other, you can spend a point of resolve to give them a +1 bonus to all of their saving throws for 1 minute.

PANDREN'S TRAITS

You stand shoulders over most species, although you carry yourself with far less aggression than others your size might. Like all pandrens, you stand out in a room. When you select this species, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Charisma score by 2.

Age. Pandrens age similar to humans and terrans, reaching adulthood in their late 20s. Most pandrens spend their adulthood exploring, training, and seeking a mate, settling down in their late 40s. Most pandrens retire in their early 80s but can live as long as 180 years.

Alignment. Pandrens are good natured and generally civil, gravitating toward lawful good as an alignment. They make excellent paladins, Peacekeepers, and police officers.

Size. Pandrens stand between 5 and 7 feet, weighing between 180 and 280 lbs. on average. Although you tower over others, your size is Medium.

Speed. Pandrens are a little slower than many species. Your walking speed is 20. Wearing armor does not slow you further.

Bite. You have a powerful jaw filled with sharp teeth, which you can use to make powerful bite attack. If you hit when making this bite attack, you deal 1d6 plus your Strength modifier as piercing damage. You are considered proficient in this attack.

Healthy. Your Hit Point maximum increases by 1. Every time you gain a new level after 1st, you gain another bonus Hit Point (in addition to those you'd normally gain at this level).

Laughter's Liberation. You know the spell *hideous laughter*. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for it.

Member of the Den. You are a member of a den. Select a den from above (and add its benefits).

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Yökai and Xian.

THE RABBITFOLK

CHILDREN OF THE STORM

Rahla lived for this kind of work. There was something about the intricacy of the locking mechanisms she found hypnotic and, in a way, reassuring. She knew the sounds of tumblers, crankshafts, solenoids, and more magitech counter-syncs than she could ever hope to open.

RABBITFOLK

Playful, smart, and oh-so-very snarky – the rabbitfolk are one of Alessia's younger species. Originally, the rabbitfolk kept to themselves, they were among the last yökai to attend the Yerwin's Council Fires, and only came in small numbers when they did. Although they've since integrated well in places such as the Empire of Xian, they still remain the fun, playful, and sometimes reclusive yökai they're known for.

For most of their history, the rabbitfolk lived in Yerwin and Shiran, and once the dust of the War of Sovereigns settled, they quickly expanded to help repair and rebuild. Their work done, many rabbitfolk settled into these new regions. This has brought the rabbitfolk to Elysia, Yrim, Velestra, Galgaræ, and all points in between.

A species that understands Alessia's technological progress incredibly well, the rabbitfolk were early adopters of Alessia's many innovations. Working closely with others of their kind, the rabbitfolk quickly mastered several simple professions and, over the millennium, became experts in those same fields. In some instances, this is obvious. One need only look to the Order of Astrænna to see the impact of "bunny logic" and how it has simplified a number of devices the order produces.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

The Quickness. The rabbitfolk have, over the millennia, formed a complex but beneficial bond with the pandrens, with whom they share similar views and lifestyles. Peaceful but prone to extreme violence when cornered, the two species have developed a fighting style that compliments that sudden violence.

When a rabbitfolk and a pandren are fighting the same target within 30 feet of one another, you can spend a point of Resolve to gain a 10-foot bonus to your speed for 1 minute.

LORE: STORM BUNNIES

The rabbitfolk have a legacy of action they trace back to the very first of their kind, a small family of heroic yökai who venerated a powerful kaima named Nethisen – a spirit of action and determination – who, through a wild storm it summoned, destroyed and recreated itself each season. These original rabbitfolk yökai didn't worship Nethisen, but instead honored the spirit by reliving its legends on Alessia, or by replicating its deeds in song, story, or poem.

Although worship of this archaic and distant spirit is uncommon today, many rabbitfolk still pay homage to the kaima in small ways, either through acts of heroism, self-sacrifice, or by creating great works of art.

LORE: RIDERS ON THE STORM

Rabbitfolk have a long history of evading the worst parts of a storm. Historians have started to suggest that, over time, these yökai have developed a kind of resonance with electricity that gives them a natural understanding of its ebb and flow. This benefits them in numerous ways, allowing to diagnose and troubleshoot magitech devices with exceptional ease. When combined with the rabbitfolk's appetite for knowledge and progress, their natural resonance with this force makes selecting professions that involve technology a hop step for them.

LORE: LIVE DELICIOUSLY

Rabbitfolk have spent millennia disabusing others of the notion that all they consume are rustic, wild, and minimalistic meals of grasses, flowers, and root vegetables.

While it is true that rabbitfolk place a high degree of value on pragmatic meals that ensure everyone in the burrow is fed, rabbitfolk who can afford to prepare or purchase elaborate meals frequently do so: they prefer to indulge in all that life's wide garden has to offer. This sentiment fuels a large part of rabbitfolk society, which places a high value on not just community, but the communion between all of the peoples who share that burrow.

Rabbitfolk Names. Ami, Bellia, Broann, Cally, Cessu, Deryn, Donna, Fiverra, Galla, Gaylon, Hanna, Hanse, Jaine, Jolly, Joy, Kimmi, Korsa, Lliam, Maven, Molli, Moxi, Norna, Reven, Stormy, Ulla, Vincent, and Zeb.

Rabbitfolk Burrows. Rabbitfolk burrows function more like small villages, with a council of elder rabbitfolk working together to solve problems. These burrows are named after the regions in which they are built. They have names like: the Alicee River Burrow, the Broken Coast Burrow, Changing Sands Burrow, Silk Sea Burrow, and Yrim Forest Burrow.

RABBITFOLK TRAITS

Rabbitfolk tend to be smaller and slight of build, but quick to act when necessary and capable of sustained sprints when tenacity is of the essence. When you select a rabbitfolk, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Dexterity score by 2 and your Intelligence score by 1.
Age. Rabbitfolk age rapidly, attaining adulthood by the time they reach their teens. Rabbitfolk can live up to a century, but generally retire to their burrows as elders when they reach their late 50s. Most rabbitfolk live shorter lives, passing not long after their first century on Alessia, however, some rabbitfolk have lived as long as 140 years.
Alignment. Although they seem easily excited, the rabbitfolk draw strength from their warrens; the rabbitfolk tend toward order and good.
Size. Rabbitfolk stand between 2 and 3 feet. Your size is Small.
Speed. Rabbitfolk are quick. You have a walking speed of 40 feet.
Burst of Speed. When needed, a rabbitfolk can move very fast. Your rabbitfolk character can, as a bonus action, spend a point of resolve to double your movement speed. This bonus lasts 1d4 rounds. You may spend up to three points of resolve in this way before you must complete a short or long rest.
Deft. You have proficiency in the Acrobatics skill.
Jumpy. When needed, a rabbitfolk can use their speed to avoid the worst of a spell, trap, accident, or similar hazard. Your rabbitfolk character can, as a bonus action, spend a point of resolve to gain advantage on Dexterity saving throws. This advantage lasts 1d4 rounds. You may spend up to three points of resolve in this way before you must complete a short or long rest.
Rabbit's Secret Luck. When you roll a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, you can reroll the die but must do so at disadvantage; if you roll another 1 on either die, you automatically succeed. Otherwise, take the lower of the two results.
Storm Surge. Although peaceful, when a rabbitfolk is moved to violence, they do so without hesitation. You can, as a bonus action, spent a point of resolve when you roll Initiative to add a 1d4 to that roll.
Lnguages. You can speak, read, and write Yökai and Xian.

THE SENTIENTS
THE SECOND-BORN

Alessia's sentients are unique in their state of being. Stripped of the flesh and blood that once made them real, most of the souls who come to occupy their new bodies report a strangeness some never fully come to terms with.

SENTIENTS

Sentients represent an interesting step in Alessia's evolution. Each time someone activates a sentient, they divert the soul and life energy of a single being into a mechanical construct, instantly and immediately granting that soul a "second chance" on Alessia. Instead of departing for heavenly realms (or waiting in darkness) while a family rushes a lifeless corpse to a local House of Healing, individuals can instead deploy and activate a sentient – creating a vessel for that soul and, for many, a hope for a second chance.

Their purpose defined from the onset, people have differing opinions about the individuals some call the "second-born." Stripped of their original mortal shells, these souls must learn to cope with an existence that is, in some ways, buffered and distorted from those around them.

Although they were originally promoted as life-saving devices by their manufacturers, Alessia's sentients have come to define themselves as more than just a collection of souls in fabricated shells. Generations of sentients have formed workers' unions, established academies, and terra-formed how the people of Alessia understand not only the body and mind, but also the soul.

SENTIENTS – A SECOND CHANCE

Sentient support kits are available in the equipment lists in Chapter 7: Equipment. This is intentional and speaks to the original purpose of sentients – they were created to give wealthy, important, and endangered beings a second chance to complete their life's work, carrying with it, all of the karma they've earned as one of these beings.

These kits are deployed adjacent to a dying or dead character (the character must have died in the previous minute). When a kit is deployed, the dying or dead character must make three (of five) Wisdom saving throws (against DC 11).

LORE: MACHINES OF LOVE AND GRACE

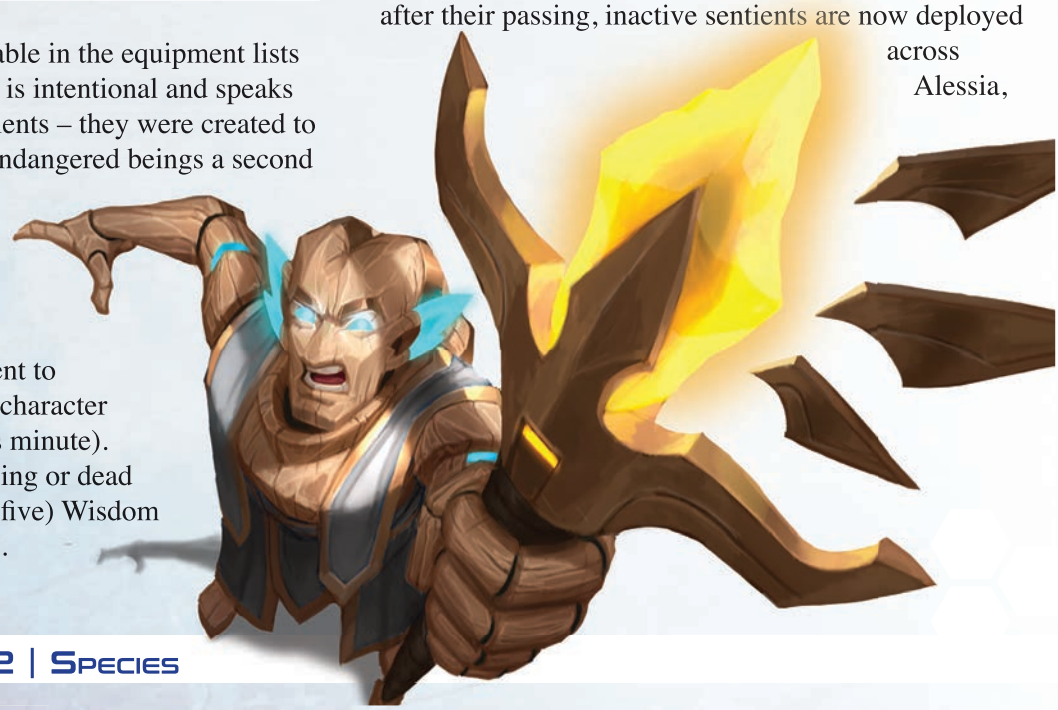
The sentients were originally designed to save the souls of important leaders, thinkers, and social influencers. If every other option on site was exhausted, responders could always deploy a sentient and let the departing soul choose – brave the unknown or resuscitate. As various consortia working with the Order of Astrænna perfected this technology, the units became available in increasing numbers, and over time, sentients became a part of most modern homes.

It was only a matter of time before someone used one.

WHO AND WHAT ARE THE SENTIENTS?

Beings of stone and wood, sentients are mechanical organisms that possess living souls. Common throughout Alessia, sentients play an important role in Alessia's cycle of life, death, and karma. Popular throughout the Holy Kingdom of Asrai, where the Holy Church of Asrai rewards sentient bodies to missionaries upon their passing, the sentients have come to represent Alessia's shared hope and dispair – change is inevitable.

Designed to provide the faithful with physical shells after their passing, inactive sentients are now deployed across Alessia,



where they are used as safeguards against death for important, powerful, and influential individuals.

LORE: HISTORY'S HERALDS

Today's sentients occupy a strange new role in society. They are, as long as they are maintained, effectively immortal. As such, they gain the advantage (and pain) of watching generations around them perish. Were sentients emotional beings, this would be far more painful for most. Given their changes and direction, most sentients accept this as part of their new world – one in which life, death, and evolution crawl by like stars slowly dying.

LORE: MODEL CITIZENS

Once a soul chooses a new sentient body, it is forever bound to that body. If that body is destroyed, the soul is destroyed with it. This makes the sheer act of choosing a null sentient (a term indicating the sentient is a new receptacle) incredibly important. It also drives innovation, which over time, drives costs down based solely on the simple fact that each generation produces a better model, and with it, the potential for a better life if you become one of the "second-born."

Sentient Names. While some cultures and species have naming conventions, sentients do not. Most continue with their old identities, although the chance to separate oneself from hardship and frustration can be enough to make someone take on a new identity and with it, a new name.

Sentient Shops. Although only a precious few arcanists step over into null-sentients and most engineers build their own, there are shops of enthusiasts who gather to discuss, design, and build prototypes of variant models. Over time, these gatherings evolve into communities and, when the inevitable finally happens, these new sentients return to live out their days with their new families – the people who built them.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Sentients do not gain species synergies.

SENTIENT TRAITS

You are a construct with special traits entirely dependent on your mode, your build, and any customization accompanying both. When you select sentient as your species, you get the following:

Ability Score Increase. Set your physical ability scores to match your new body. You retain your mental attributes. See the sentient models below.
Age. Sentients do not age. Sentients can be destroyed, and when they are, the soul that once inhabited them is destroyed alongside them.
Alignment. Sentients can be of any alignment.
Magitech Body. You are a sentient, living creature. You are immune to disease and poison. You also gain bonus hit points according to the model you choose (see below). You do not need to eat or breathe.
Repair Dependent. Unlike other living creatures, you do not regain hit points when you take a short or long rest. Instead, you must be repaired, either by mundane or magical methods. If you have proficiency with engineering or magitech tools, you can spend 1 hour and 100 Yuan worth of materials to repair yourself for 1d6 hit points.
Speed. Sentients' physical model determines their walking speed.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write any languages you did in your former life.

THE MODELS

JIĀNDĀN (SIMPLE MODEL)

Appearance. You appear to be a wooden-and-bronze version of another species of your choice.
Ability Score Increase. Set one of your physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to 13. Set the other two scores to 11.
Magitech Armor (light). Iron and steel plates cover your wooden frame. Your Armor Class is 11 + your Dexterity modifier.
Lightly Fortified Frame. You begin play with 2 bonus hit points in addition to any of those gained from your class.

JĪBĚN (BASIC MODEL)

Appearance. You appear to be a wood-and-steel version of another species of your choice.
Ability Score Increase. Set one of your physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to 14. Set the other two scores to 12.
Magitech Armor (light). Iron and steel plates cover your wooden frame. Your Armor Class is 12 + your Dexterity modifier.
Fortified Frame. You begin play with 8 bonus hit points in addition to any of those gained from your class.

FÙZÁ (COMPLEX MODEL)

Appearance. You appear to be a wood-, bronze-, steel- and crystal-infused version of another species of your choice.
Ability Score Increase. Set one of your physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to 15. Set the other two scores to 13.
Magitech Armor (medium). Steel plates, reinforced with runes, cover your wooden frame. Your Armor Class is 13 + your Dexterity modifier.
Fortified Frame. You begin play with 8 bonus hit points in addition to any of those gained from your class.

GĀOJÍ (ADVANCED MODEL)

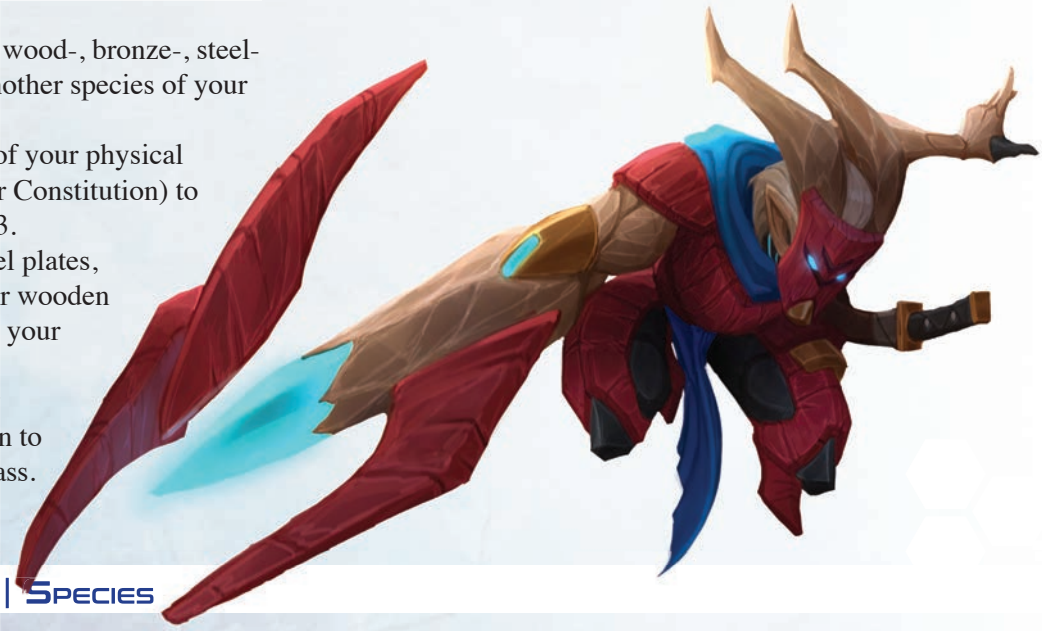
Appearance. Runes and advanced options detail your finely worked frame. Steel plates, stamped and polished, ensure your soul's survival.
Ability Score Increase. Set one of your physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to 16. Set the other two scores to 14.
Magitech Armor (medium). Steel plates, reinforced with runes, cover your wooden frame. Your Armor Class is 14 + your Dexterity modifier (maximum 4).
Fortified Frame. You begin play with 8 bonus hit points in addition to any of those gained from your class.

YÍN (SILVER MODEL)

Appearance. Runes and advanced options detail your finely worked frame. Silver and steel plates wrap your frame in a careful carapace of protection.
Ability Score Increase. Set one of your physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to 16. Set the other two scores to 14.
Magitech Armor (medium). Silver, polished plates cover a steel-and-iron frame. Your Armor Class is 15 + your Dexterity modifier (maximum 3).
Fortified Frame. You begin play with 8 bonus hit points in addition to any of those gained from your class.

YÙ (JADE MODEL)

Appearance. Silver and steel plates, worked to include bits of crystal and jade, create a mosaic of colors that give new life to your artificial frame.



Ability Score Increase. Set one of your physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to 16. Set the other two scores to 14.
Magitech Armor (medium). Silver, polished plates cover a steel-and-iron frame. Your Armor Class is 16 + your Dexterity modifier (maximum 2).
Fortified Frame. You begin play with 8 bonus hit points in addition to any of those gained from your class.

JIN (GOLD MODEL)

Appearance. Steel plates, worked with silver and gold, your artificial frame a regal appearance.
Ability Score Increase. Set one of your physical attributes (Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution) to 16. Set the other two scores to 14.
Magitech Armor (medium). Silver, polished plates cover a steel-and-iron frame. Your Armor Class is 17 + your Dexterity modifier (maximum 2).
Fortified Frame. You begin play with 8 bonus hit points in addition to any of those gained from your class.

DEV NOTE – CONSTRUCTS OF A DIFFERENT DESIGN

In many campaign settings (including my first setting, *Rhune: Dawn of Twilight*), constructs exist to serve the sentient species. While constructs often fill a variety of service roles in the worlds in which they are featured, they are also frequently displayed in combat roles – doing the hard job of fighting battles no one else wants to. While constructs can certainly serve combat roles in Alessia, it's important to point out they were not created for these roles. In Alessia, sentients and the technology surrounding them arose from a need to save lives, not destroy them.

Socially speaking, sentients don't gain their status as living beings until a soul willingly steps into one. Once a soul enters a sentient, it remains bound there until the sentient is destroyed. This makes choosing a sentient model incredibly important, especially for PCs who might need to use a model as a backup.

So why is presenting the sentients true to their nature important in Alessia? First, it establishes a basic change of play at the table. Secondly, it frees players to create sentient characters with important social issues or challenges that do not rely solely on combat or a previous conflict. Can players create these kinds of characters or develop these stories? Sure, just discuss this with your players and your GM.

THE SHADELINGS

THE SHADOW-TOUCHED

These lithe beings look like little oni (or giants), their swathy skin ranging in tones from gray to purple. Although some individuals mistake them for humans, shadelings universally have one feature that is all but impossible to confuse – shadelings have only a single eye where others have two.

SHADELINGS

Sometimes misidentifi ed as tiefl ings, shadelings are not the asaræl's infernal opposite, but rather a species infused with darkness itself. Although the fi rst generations were overwhelmed by this darkness (the shadow's infl uence being far too strong for any mortal to withstand), today's shadelings enjoy use of their former bonds to that darkness to avoid its terrible touch. Able to sniff the infernal connections with ease, shadelings can sometimes share this ability with their beloved brothers in darkness, the un'seeliah.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Shadow Struggle – Long freed from the bonds of Darkness that once chained them in service to the unknowable powers between the stars, today's shadelings use their evolutionary shadesight ability to detect the Darkness's unwanted influence. Shadelings can, by briefly concentrating, activate this ability in others once bound in service to the darkness. Whenever an un'seeliah is within 30 ft. of a shadeling ally who activates this ability, that un'seeliah character doubles their proficiency bonus when making Wisdom (Perception) skill checks.

LORE: THE DARK WHISPER

Although these stories manifest in a multitude of variations, all of them maintain a single truth – th people who settled ancient Shiran gave darkness that, far in the north, few fully understood. That darkness overwhelmed them and, in three generations, drew most of the al'alza to acts so monstrous, they willingly cast off their humanity and embraced every kind of imaginable horror.

The Church of Light was quick to act, but not without calling on its servants to mount the Great Struggle against those who willingly embraced this darkness. Skirmishes marched across the decades, and in early 5799, the Church of Light – with the aid of the Empire of Xian – brought those who survived the Darkness home to be monitored, and when trusted, returned to society.

LORE: GIFT OF LIGHT

The Light's gift to the shadelings for their faith is not one that many outsiders understand. This is for good reason – few people have struggled like the shadelings. Cursed with the ability to sense the Darkness whispering to them, the shadelings spent millennia under its yoke. This curse bore its fruit during the War of the Sovereigns, too, when Galgaræ's lieutenants used this weakness to build an army from the shadelings, deploying them in northern Fyrea against the dwarves in the region.

Unwilling to commit genocide at the end of that terrible war, the Church of Light worked its magic again. Calling on the Light in a miraculous ceremony in southern Shiran, the leaders of the church warded the surviving shadelings against the Darkness's influence, creating a viral network of tattoos blessed by the Light itself.

By design, the Light's magic sped across the face of Alessia, warding every shadeling on the planet in under a month. When the next generation bore its youth, the shadelings finally realized their freedom – the Light's blessing carrying forward to successive generations.

LORE: THE PATH WITHIN

Some shadelings claim that through a series of discovered practices, they can learn to mold the Darkness instead of being molded by it. Although rare, these shadelings walk a fine line between nobility and Darkness in hopes of unlocking the true nature of what lies at Shadow's Heart – in the Void Realms between time and space.

Shadeling Names. Shadeling names vary greatly, with shadelings often adopting names from their host culture. Shadelings avoid names with connections to Shiran.

Shadeling Families. Shadelings form family units that are nearly identical to both humans and Terrans, coupling for love, not reproduction.

SHADELINGS TRAITS

A people as dedicated to Alessia as any other, shadelings proudly use their inborn abilities to detect the Darkness to keep the people of Alessia safe. When you select the shadeling species, you get the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength score by 2 and your Intelligence score by 1.
Age. You grow and mature like a human, reaching maturity in your late teens. Shadelings rarely live beyond a century.
Alignment. Shadelings tend to trust the Church of Light, and by extension, authority in general. Shadelings tend to be both lawful and good but may favor neutrality as well.
Size. Shadelings stand between 4 and 6 feet and average 120 pounds. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a walking speed of 30. Your speed is reduced while wearing armor.
Superior Darkvision. Your darkvision has a radius of 120 feet.
Cloak of Shadows. When you call on the Darkness to protect you, it does – regardless of the foe. As an action, you can summon a suit of shadowy armor that grants you a temporary AC equal to 13 plus your Dexterity modifier. While employing this cloak, you gain advantage on all Dexterity (Stealth) ability checks. Once activated, this cloak lasts ten minutes. You must complete a short rest before activating the cloak of shadows again.
Harmonious Shadows. You find a soothing assurance in the stillness and shadow that others cannot. As a result, this understanding grants you a special strength. You begin play each day with a pool of bonus Resolve equal to your Charisma modifier; you may spend that throughout the day to gain a bonus d4, which you may apply to any d20 roll you make throughout the day. You must complete a long rest before replenishing this pool.
Shadows' Needs. The shadows always call to you, and when you choose, you can answer that call and rapidly move toward a nearby shadow, shade, or area that lacks light. When you activate this ability, you can move up to half your speed as a bonus action in any direction. When you do, you make roll all Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics) ability checks with advantage. You must end this movement touching a shadow or other form of darkness. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common.

THE TERRANS
CHILDREN OF THE PILLARS

Standing a foot, often more, over their human and djinnkin cousins, the terrans remain one of the hardier species, one that was bred with purpose and determination: many terrans become Peacekeepers.

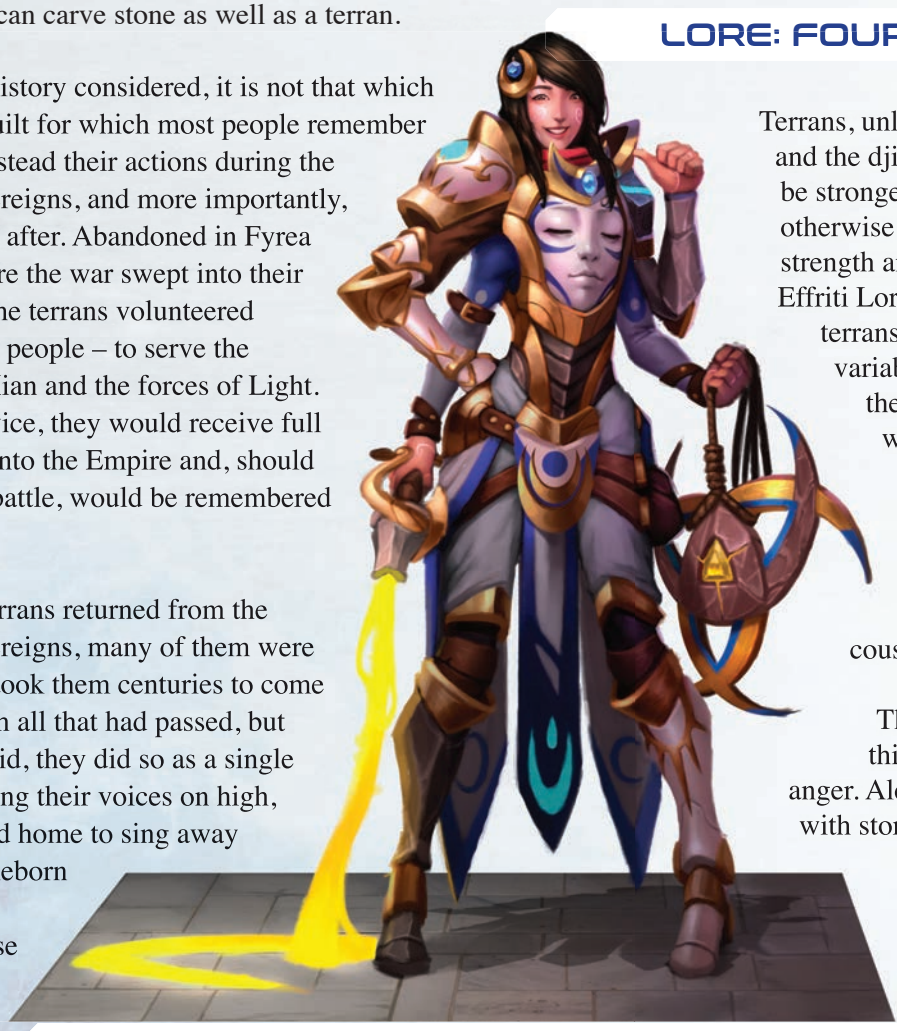
THE TERRANS

The terrans, like their cousins the humans and the djinnkin, are one of Alessia's created peoples. Engineered to serve the Effriti Masters and Djinn Lords of ancient Fyrea, these resilient mortals were bred over millennia to provide a labor force capable of lifting the heaviest columns without complaint.

Their efforts carved a path through the ancient southern deserts that resulted in countless wonders hidden among the dunes. The terrans carved everything from gardens, mausoleums, palaces and prisons, to the private crypts of powerful arcanists seeking immortality. The terrans work in Fyrea is above reproach and, when held up against dwarven craft, impresses with equal pleasure. Few who walk Alessia's streets who can carve stone as well as a terran.

Their long history considered, it is not that which they have built for which most people remember them, but instead their actions during the War of Sovereigns, and more importantly, their actions after. Abandoned in Fyrea shortly before the war swept into their homeland, the terrans volunteered – as a single people – to serve the Empire of Xian and the forces of Light. For this service, they would receive full citizenship into the Empire and, should they fall in battle, would be remembered as heroes.

When the terrans returned from the War of Sovereigns, many of them were changed. It took them centuries to come to terms with all that had passed, but when they did, they did so as a single people. Lifting their voices on high, they returned home to sing away their pain. Reborn through the process, these terrans awakened the first of their psychic natures, becoming pillars of a completely new world.



SPECIES SYNERGIES

Mindstar – Terrans enjoy strong genetic connections with their two cousins, the djinnkin and the humans. While these genetic connections produce few physiological similarities between the three species, their general social proximity produces far more potent connections. Select a human or djinnkin ally with whom you have formed a bond (you are attuned). Whenever you and your ally are within 90 feet of another and have line of sight, you can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to grant that ally advantage on their Intelligence, Charisma, and Wisdom saving throws against enchantments, charms, spells, and powers that wrest away an individual's free will.

LORE: FOUR-ARMED FURY

Terrans, unlike their cousins the humans and the djinnkin, were engineered to be stronger and better able to handle otherwise exhausting tasks – with strength and endurance in mind. The Effriti Lords who awoke the very first terrans were ready for a number of variables but hadn't considered the larger impact of their work; even if they could get the evolutionary changes to crystallize within the new species, the very first terrans would need to evolve beside their cousins and change with them.

The very first terrans to survive this initial change were quick to anger. Alessia's early history is filled with stories about roaming tribes of terrans, their souls merged with the darkness between the stars, tearing down entire cities and putting the survivors to the

sword. In fact, some historians theorize such atrocities became central to their early identity. While this may be true, the terrans were able to walk back from that darkness.

After millennia of service to the Light, the terrans were finally able to put aside this curse, although a few remain silent as to why.

LORE: TATTOOS

Early terran lineages sported elaborate epidermal patterns and skin colorations that, when combined with the elaborate code written into their genetic material, could easily be used to identify individual terran lines. When the Lords of Brass responsible for their creation finally departed Alessia for other dimensional shores, those previously controlled lineages crashed like waves on the other shore, their family lines quickly flowing together as hundreds of new peoples found one another.

Today, terrans use a combination of inks, dyes, pigments, and other decorations to highlight their physical forms, often illustrating in tandem with their natural marks to produce elaborate scenes, patterns, or signs. Terrans who feel strongly enough about something will often make these marks permanent reminders.

FOUR ARMS, NO PROBLEM

Standing slightly taller than your average human, terrans evolved beside side by side with their human and djinnkin cousins in the heart of Fyrea. Expanding rapidly beside their human cousins and enjoying a slight evolutionary advantage, the terrans of Alessia now occupy every corner of the planet. Slightly stronger than humans on average, Terrans are also adept climbers, as well as wrestlers – easy tasks for individuals with an extra set of arms!

While having an extra set of arms gives them a number of evolutionary advantages, the terrans – as a species – have suffered under the heavy burden of having more limbs than they can focus on. So, while terrans technically have four arms they can potentially

TERRAN TRAITS

You are tall, intimidating, and well-muscled; you tower over your human and djinnkin cousins. Your body is covered in elaborate patterns of coloration that may be further high-lighted by cosmetics. When you select the terran species, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength score by 2.
Age. Terrans age similar to humans, reaching adulthood in their late 20s. Most terrans spend their youth seeking mates, with whom they work or explore before settling, generally in their 40s, to start a family. Terrans tend to retire in their late 70s, but easily live a century, sometimes as many as 140 years.
Alignment. Although evil terrans exist, most are good or neutral. Terrans abhor disorder and chaos, favoring lawful alignments and behaviors.
Size. Terrans stand between 5 and 7 feet, weighing between 180 and 260 lbs. on average. Although you tower over others, your size is Medium.
Speed. Your walking speed is 30.
Arcane Defense. Your connection to Alessia's ley lines gives you a moderate control over your physical and magical defenses. When you take damage from a physical or magical attack, you can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to roll 2d6 and add your proficiency modifier. Subtract this amount of damage from the triggering attack's damage. If this blocks all of the damage, the entire attack is negated. You must complete a short or long rest before using this ability again.
Grappler. You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) proficiency checks that involve wrestling, climbing, and similar acts of strength.
Ley Line Walker. Millennia of evolution in Fyrea have given the terrans the ability to sense (and manipulate) the arcane energy around them. You know the spell *detect magic,* and Intelligence is your spellcasting modifier for it. Provided you are aware of it, you can spend two points of resolve as a bonus action to replenish one (or more, see below) spell slots you previously expended that day. When you spend resolve in this fashion, you can only spend a number of points equal to your proficiency modifier before you must complete a long rest. You can replenish a single slot for every two points spent in this manner.
Powerful Build. You count as one size larger when calculating your carrying capacity or how much you can lift, pull, push, or drag.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Trade Tongue and Xian.

use, they must be focused on a singular task. Otherwise, terrans cannot use their additional limbs, as concentrating on the second set is exhausting and requires a special focus most can't maintain.

LORE: THE PEACEMAKERS

Although their species served with distinction and honor throughout the War of Sovereigns, some of their kind returned home changed by their acts. Most of these terrans were Peacemakers, a special group of terran snipers and scouts capable of living in the bush for days or weeks, as needed, to pursue and eventually eliminate these targets. These terrans worked in pairs, often climbing massive pillars of rock and stone to find the best firing positions and staying long after they were needed.

In that sense, Alessia's terrans helped bring about peace, although only by striking hard and often against the Darkness that promised to devour them all.

Terran Names. Adalainn, Arias, Chalia, Czunni, Demaria, Dulleich, Geryl, Harsa, Hespiv, Ivan, Jern, Jsi, Laine, Levræn, Madelaine, Mika, Maro, Navin, Nethrius, Oriu, Pietre, Reven, Skiven, Svorn, Talia, Tia, Theva, or Yarl.

Terran Families. Terran family names mirror those of the humans they often live near to. Family names include Ardwar, Brünn, Darn, Duth, Evola, Freith, Gustivege, Harru, Henhe, Illustan, Kharv, Marsh, Nellis, Orphræ, Ozric, Roann, Ruiner, Sern, Tarvic, Telward, Ustiv, Varl, Varthorn, and Zaine.

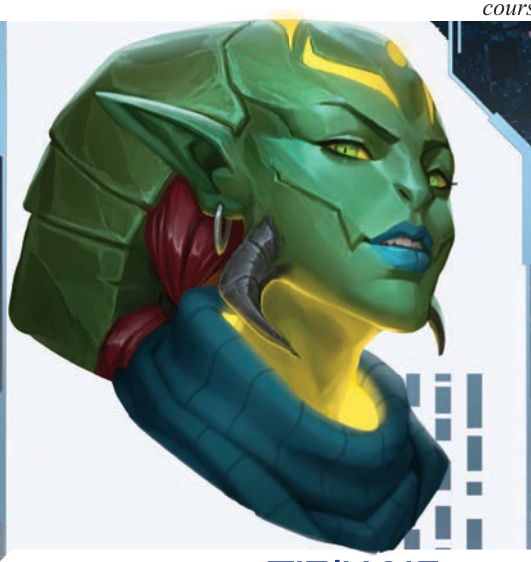
DEV NOTE:

GMs may, at their discretion, allow terran player characters to use their grappler species trait where it makes the most sense, especially when it comes to behaviors that would be largely unconscious or which require little precision. The terran should be able to manipulate with one set of limbs while the others perform unconscious activities (like holding up an engine door while working on the engine underneath).

THE TIR'IANS

CHILDREN OF THE JUNGLE

When we first dropped into orbit around Alessia, we knew we had discovered a truly special place – possibly **the** *place. Our stories had long told of a land where the planet's very heart shone like a diamond, its core a place of life and mind that could only bring hope. We also knew, of course, that such a world would be very valuable.*



TIR'IANS

Tir'ians evolved to include complex, bony plates along the ridges of their jaws, cheeks, nose, and along the ridges above their eyes. These elaborate plates are painted, decorated, and sometimes even modified to include jewelry. As tir'ians age, these bony plates thicken and extend, sometimes even covering the tops of their thin, fleshy tails.

Tir'ian are a species of muscular, sentient beings who evolved from the reptiles of the planet Teradil. Born in the humid jungles of their home world, they spent millennia locked in tribal conflict before a single individual, Bhalla the Conqueror, forged an empire and united thousands of tribes into a single, deadly force. In under two decades, Bhalla terraformed the political landscape of Teradil, completely destroying the tir'ian's enemies, the Gollons and reshaping their national and ethnic borders. In under a century, the tir'ian people turned to mining, conquest, and empire.

When the tir'ian discovered the Tundral Stones, everything changed. Infused with primal, transformative energies, these stones accelerated the tir'ian's natural evolution by a factor of thousands. Within fifty years, the tir'ians were planning to conquer the stars.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

The tir'ian have not been on Alessia long enough to form a meaningful bond with another species. They have established good relations with the elathi and the elves.

TIR'IAN ENVIRONMENTALISTS

The tir'ian have a particular and interesting – even if evil – philosophical lens through which they view the world. Having achieved the technology to completely mine, and later reshape a planet through terraforming, the tir'ian empire has set out for the stars to do just that. Seeing most species as unworthy of continuation, the tir'ian have been slowly expanding their empire into the black, changing world after world (when conditions are right, of course) to suit their personal needs.

Today, dozens of jungle worlds serve their needs and when they require additional resources that can't be found on one of their many changed worlds? They go back out into the black, select another world, mine it, and terraform it when they're done. And what if a few, evolving species are destroyed in the process?

A sad but inevitable side effect of evolution.

TIR'IAN TREES OF LIFE?

Since discovering Alessia, the tir'ian have been intense discussions on how to proceed. Although cruel by many standards, even the tir'ian would never consider mining and terraforming such an advanced, cooperative planet. After scanning Alessia and its surrounding moons, however, the tir'ian discovered something strange and of even greater value – the Life Trees of Velestra. These trees have since become a point of debate, as the tir'ian have been trying to secure a Life Seed since discovering Alessia. Should they succeed, the tir'ians plan to plant it on one of their many jungle worlds, hoping it will extend their lives in the same way it has for the elves.

THE TUNDRAL STONES

The tir'ians have an interesting approach to mining, which has largely been informed by their discovery of the Tundral Stones. Forced to evolve their mining techniques, Vesik Tundral – the tir'ian who discovered this strange, glowing ore, also pioneered the innovation that eventually enabled the tir'ians to jump off world and into the deep black of space.

Although the stones' properties are still a national secret known only to the Tir'ians' scientific community, Tundral Stones are used heavily in the production and manufacturing of heavy space mining equipment, scavenger ships, and military hardware of all kinds.

Tir'ian Names. Tir'ian names don't deviate much, as tri'ian culture is ordered and places a degree of value on your social role, not your individuality. Most tir'ians choose their names from their ship's historical records, choosing names such as An'anst, Bes'waut, Durfu, Evconna, Mar'aka, Par'sura, Starr'ana, and Zathis.

Tir'ian Ships. Tir'ians do not have traditional families, instead rallying around the very ships they live and work on. These ships become their tribes, with the ship's captain serving as the ruling elder for each. These ship names commonly have aggressive, war-like names such as Apocalypse, Death's Knell, Firestorm, Harbinger, Tempest, and similar names.

TUNDRAL STONES AND ASCENDANT STONES

Since entering Alessia's orbit, the tir'ians have discovered another strange phenomenon, that of Ascendant Stones. Tir'ians were able to get their hands on few, allowing them to experiment with them. Their discoveries were astonishing, as the Ascendant Stones shared many qualities with the Tundral Stones of the tir'ian home world. While Tundral Stones accelerated the physical evolution of individuals, the Ascendant Stones allowed one to develop gifts of the mind and served other mystical purposes. Both stones probably have elements not yet unlocked.

TIR'IAN TRAITS

Tir'ians are not native to Alessia but have since adapted to its environment with relative ease. Tir'ians favor Alessia's hot, southern jungles. A number of tir'ian enclaves can be found throughout Elysia. When you select a tir'ian as your species, you get the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Strength score by 2 and your Intelligence score by 1.
Age. You grow and mature you develop additional, bony plates on your forehead and in other common areas. Generally speaking, most tir'ian do not live past a century.
Alignment. Tir'ians are selfish and strong, often taking what they need by force. They favor law and strength, preferring neutrality to lawfulness to chaos of any kind.
Size. Tir'ians stand between 4 and 6 feet and average 160 pounds. Your size is Medium.
Speed. You have a walking speed of 30. Your speed is reduced while wearing armor.
Skilled. You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice.
Spacefarer. You gain proficiency in the spacefaring skill.
War Forged. You gain a +1 to hit when making melee attacks of any kind.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Tir'ian.

THE TREAH

GUARDIANS OF THE GREAT TREE

Stoic beings of ancient splendor, the treah are easily recognized, their wooden carapaces decorated in ancient carvings. Green, orange, yellow, and red foliage mantles mark their ancestral lines.

THE TREAH

A people born from the seeds of the Great Tree of Life, the treah are a proud, stoic species who enjoy both a biological and a larger ecological connection to Alessia few can fathom, the yökai and elves included. Born from the same flesh as these great trees, the treah possess an inner fire and passion that animates them, allowing them to manifest powerful psychic abilities and, when needed, to adapt to entirely new environments.

Physiologically adaptive to a point, the treah follow the genetic lines of their ancestors, with some flowering while others do not. A treah's foliage frequently marks that ancestry, coloring whites, reds, greens, or oranges according to the season, the treah's age, and magical attunements that might otherwise command a portion of its soul.

The treah take the concept of attunement very seriously, knowing that, in a larger ecological sense, each of them shares the same soil. To this end, each treah must guard against addictions, sickness, and disease – anything that might, through them, make its way back to the Great Trees of Life.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Vision of the One – Treah can align and attune with nearly any living, natural creature that calls Alessia home. Once attuned, the treah can slowly direct healing energy to this ally, provided the two bonded allies (you must be attuned) are within 30 feet of one another and touching the ground. When both conditions are met, the treah can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to heal that ally 1d4 Hit Points; the treah can spend up to 3 points of resolve in this fashion (using one point per round) before they must complete a short of long rest. If the treah heals another treah in this fashion, they heal 1d6 Hit Points instead.

LORE: NATURE'S EMPATHY

The treah's connection to the larger world around them does more than allow them to heal their wounded allies; that connection offers them insights into local environments, allowing them to connect on a level few beings can. Skilled treah can use this connection to learn a great deal about their surroundings, holding conversations with a hidden network of flora whose chemical voices float on the air, woven into a thousand seed-bearing blessings.

In larger, natural environments, treah with the time to listen can learn a great deal. Treah can often glean information in urban areas as well, although doing so takes a lot more focus and time, especially in densely populated cities.

LORE: THE VOICE OF LIFE

Although they do not claim any official authority, many people consider the treah the collective voice of the Great Trees of Life, deferring to them as if they maintained a personal line to these powerful beings directly – which, in a way, they do. Treah wishing to explore this connection often take up the Path of Life, looking for places and times of power that will strengthen their connection to the Great Trees. Treah with psychic abilities sometimes connect with the Crystal Lattice in much the same way.

THE TREAH'S PATHS

Creatures born to defend the Trees of Life, the treah are a species of bipedal, humanoids with bark-like skin and fibrous frames. Born to experience all of the world tree and its surrounding realms, these beings frequently become shamans and rangers – both of which involve their natural environments. The treah have traditions, as well, some of which originate with the Asaræl Tree itself. These traditions encourage the treah to take up several Sacred Paths, eventually turning these seedlings into Dream Wardens and Envoys of the Green.

LORE: THE WORLD TREE'S CALL

Alessia's treah have long heard the World Tree whisper through the Great Trees of Life, its terrible call to Ragnarök forever haunting what would otherwise be a beautiful song. The treah can hear this call in the darker places, where the shadows are long or where light has given ground to stagnation, sickness, and disease. In these moments, the clarion call to violence is as self-destructive as it is stupid, lovingly pulling heroic and well-meaning treah to their idealistic dooms.

Treah Names. Treah prefer simple, short first names. Common names include Ab, Az, Bark, Bran, Cors, Dath, Erl, Gu, Hart, Janus, Lad, Lux, Marv, Nev, Nort, Otho, Red, Sven, Tuth, Uru, Weld, Yan, and Zeth.

Treah Groves. Treah gather in groves, a family unit that included extended family and in-laws. These groves carry names like: Ashenwode, Bonzaizi, Ceda, Evergreen, Foxwood, Firr, Heartwood, Konnifer, Pine, or Timberwood.

TREAH TRAITS

A walking tree awash in the energy of life, your form betrays your nature at every corner; you are a vibrant reflection of the passion of life, a sentient tree able to act as its master's eyes and ears. When you select a treah as your species, you gain the following:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Wisdom score by 2 and your Strength score by 1.
Age. Treah are slow-moving beings who age rapidly at first, but who slow after reaching adulthood in their late teens. Treah adults can live for centuries, but generally retreat into the longer sleep by the time they're 800.
Alignment. Treah prefer order, and lawful alignments and behaviors are their preference, although some treah will act chaotically when the demand arises.
Size. Treah stand between 7 and 9 feet, weighing between 280 and 460 lbs. on average. Although you tower over others, your size is Medium.
Speed. Your walking speed is 30.
Ironwood Skin. Your skin is bark, thick and knotted. When you're not wearing any armor and you're not encumbered, your Armor Class is 12 + your Dexterity modifier. You may still use a shield.
Nature's Wrath. Treah can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to stomp down, unleashing a wave of destructive, natural force that deals 1d6 points of damage to everyone in a 10-foot radius who fails a Strength saving throw against the attack (8 + your proficiency bonus + Strength modifier). You may spend up to three points of resolve in this fashion before you must complete a short or long rest.
Psychic Connection. You have a natural connection to the Crystal Lattice via the Great Trees of Life that gives you an organic understanding of the world immediately around you. You can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to gain tremorsense, out to 60 feet, for one minute. You must complete a short or long rest before using this ability again.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Treah.

A GAME FOR ALL AGES

Jere is a family man.

When we initially discussed building Alessia and the mechanics that would support it, Jere made it clear that he wanted to build a world his "children could play in." That became a mantra for us, for a number of reasons we list below, and has remained our vision throughout.

A focus on non-violence and deescalation. While bravery is critical to acting heroic journeys of all kinds, ***knowing how to peacefully resolve encounters is a vital skill for modern citizens***. Both Jere and I are old school gamers who are accustomed to a culture that defaults to hate and violence; Alessia isn't that world. Jere and I approached Alessia as an ideal potential future, one that should encourage engagement from everyone at the table. To get there, we needed a culture of respect and that meant developing a world where that culture wasn't just possible, it was already in practice and as part of a larger, longer tradition.

The Peacekeeper. Conflicts will always arise, and Peacekeepers are the brave beings willing to confront them so that the citizens in their care don't. As a class, Peacekeeprs police and protect the people of the Empire of Xian, although many choose to do so beyond those borders, as well. In many ways, the Peacekeepers are the guardians of this culture of respect, doing their part to ensure justice and peace are at the fore of daily life in the empire. Mechanically, Peacekeepers deal more dice when dealing non-lethal damage. Powerful Peacekeepers can end violence with a word.

A Bigger View of the Universe. While ***many fantasy roleplaying games*** continue to recycle the same, tired "racial hatred" themes they learned "in a previous edition," we stepped away from such nonsense and embraced the fantasy we wanted to build. As a futuristic fantasy setting, we can afford to see a different future, where the various species not only tolerate one another, they actively cooperate with one another - we express these as "species synergies."

Species Synergies. Instead of promoting older designs that relied on "racial hatred" to provide mechanical bonuses in combat, Alessia focuses on teamwork, evolution, and centuries of cultural cooperation to gain benefits in combat. We call these species synergies and they are described throughout this chapter. So, what is a species synergy?

When two (or more) cooperative species are aligned (allies) performing a task together (like a skill or combat), the aligned species trigger benefits that effect one another, although some benefits may allow them to benefit other members of their party, as well.

EXPORTING SPECIES SYNERGIES

While species synergies are native to the World of Alessia, you can easily import them into any game - fantasy, modern, or scifi - with a just a little bit of work. Simply strike the wording (the rules language) that triggers mechanical bonuses based on "racial hatreds." So, when an entry reads, "a burning hatred of X drives Y," rethink and re-contextualize that relationship. When that relationship also drives some mechanical benefit (a +X to hit all members of this race), consider providing a general bonus (applied against that or other enemies) that is triggered by cooperation between party the differing races at the table;

GMs willing to work with players can further define these benefits in their individual campaigns, or they can copy the ones we've developed here as a model for benefits unique to their games.

THE TRU'ATHA
ENVOYS FROM BEYOND

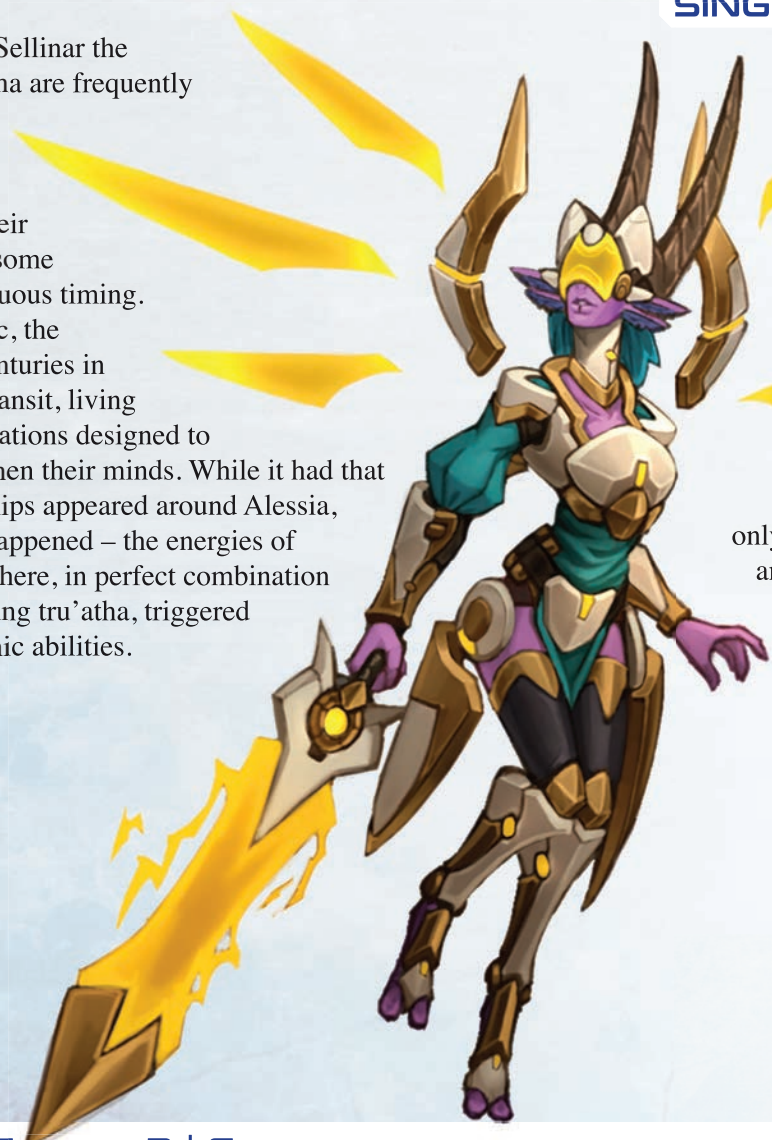
Sella stepped down from her platform and surveyed the wilderness. Her sensors clearly indicated that dozens of life forms were all around her – she couldn't see them, however. Reaching out with her mind, the tru'atha pinged the area around her, hoping to get a better idea of who... or what... was hiding in the thick jungles beyond.

THE TRU'ATHA

Envoys from beyond Voidspace, the tru'atha arrived on Alessia eighty-eight years ago, drawn by cosmic debris like a trail of tragedy across space and time. Following communication signals that originated during the War of Sovereigns, the tru'atha peacefully entered Alessia's atmosphere, bringing with them an array of scientific wonders, cultures, and views.

Although they did not initially share these wonders with Alessia, when the tru'atha revealed themselves and their fleet, this quickly changed. Today's tru'atha openly trade with Alessia, continuing to act as envoys and benefactors to the people of the massive world.

Originally from Sellinar the Green, the tru'atha are frequently called the 'Envoys from Beyond,' accounting on their late arrival and, some whisper, conspicuous timing. Naturally psychic, the tru'atha spent centuries in hibernation, in transit, living in massive simulations designed to train and strengthen their minds. While it had that effect, as their ships appeared around Alessia, a strange thing happened – the energies of Alessia's atmosphere, in perfect combination with the awakening tru'atha, triggered their latent psychic abilities.



SPECIES SYNERGIES

Dreams from the Future – Although the tru'atha have been awake for just under a century, many of them still recall – vividly – the elaborate hibernation-simulations their Voidships ran during the journey. These simulations allowed the tru'atha to form strong emotional bonds with other members of their species, often with great ease. Select another tru'atha with whom you are allied. Whenever you are adjacent to that individual, they gain a +1 bonus to Wisdom and Charisma saving throws.

LORE: DISTANT TRAVELERS, A SINGLE MISSION

The tru'atha come from a place where the rationale ideal – a scientific devotion that borders on perfection is the only way of life. Both passionate and smart, the tru'atha have spent several millennia perfecting Void travel, the same slow but steady space travel that brought the ish'ra.

LORE: MASTERS OF THE MIND

The tru'atha have been cultivating a culture of the mind for aeons, and their subsequent lessons have crystallized into something truly brilliant – a singular culture whose focus on self-development borders on religious devotion, although every single tru'atha would scoff at such a simplified comparison, quickly pointing out their abilities are proof of the excellence of their ideals. The proof, they'll quickly point out, is in the manifestation!

LORE: A SINGLE CULTURE

The tru'atha long ago developed a singular culture that reflects their values. As a culture of inclusion, the tru'atha go out of their ways to identify where and how they might be useful. While some individuals find this tendency to be annoying, individuals from highly ordered societies often find this approach refreshing, allowing them to communicate better with fellow minds – as many tru'atha are fond of saying, "Logic is a language."

TRU'ATHA TRAITS

The tru'atha are tall, sleek looking beings with bright purple skin, massive horns, and cloven, fleshy feet. Able to wield powerful psychic abilities, many tru'atha float a little off the ground. When you select the tru'atha, you gain the following benefits:

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increase by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.
Size. Taller than most humans, you stand between 6 and 7 feet, your horns adding an additional foot in some instances. Your size is Medium.
Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.
Age. Tru'atha evolved earlier in Selinar's history, extending their lifespans over success generations through the application of science. Most Tru'atha live between 200 and 300 years, with a rare few 'old goats' reaching 500.
Alignment. With aeons of science and travel behind them, the tru'atha long ago evolved their social cultures to reflect the height of their singular philosophy – the rational ideal. Lawful but playful, the tru'atha have little use for extremes of any sort, preferring flowing, calm discussions to heated debates.
Child of the Long Sleep. As a child of Selinar, you were educated in transit to Alessia, awakening with a full knowledge of not only the history of your species, but also that of another important topic. Select a single skill with which you are proficient. Your proficiency is doubled for any ability checks you make with this skill.
Psy-Centric. When you awoke in orbit around Alessia, your mind erupted with psychic power. You know two cantrips of your choice. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for these spells.
Tower of Will. You have resistance to psychic damage.
A Single People. The tru'atha have, over aeons, evolved into a singular people whose social norms, racial features, and overall cultural are uniform, although still highly individualistic. A society of idealists, the tru'atha rarely make decisions without first considering how that decision might unfold for their fellows, first.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Tru'atha and one other common tongue of your choice.

BACKGROUND: ORIGINS FROM BEYOND

Unaware of how long they would need to remain in their hibernation-simulations, the tru'atha built in a series of safeguards designed to keep each member of the species safe as they slowly began to awake, especially for those "under" the longest. As a result, thousands of tru'atha still sleep in their great ships, the simulation actively navigating them toward a wakeful state with each passing day. Although a silent debate among the waking tru'atha about "acceleration" has begun, a lot of tru'atha distrust this course of action, some going so far as to actively resist those tampering with the system.

You just woke up. Maybe it was a few hours ago, or maybe you're a little luckier and woke a week ago. In either case, you're as green as they come and looking to get up to speed as quickly as possible, especially now that you've had some time to train in orbit.

Skill Proficiencies. Technology, plus your faction skill (see the previous page).
Tool Proficiencies. Your choice of one from the Engineer's Kit, Explorer's Kit, or Survival Kit.
Languages. None.
Equipment. You begin play with 500 Yuan, a set of all-weather explorer's gear, and a small, personal magitech item or device.

Feature. ***A Clean Getaway***

Your faction knows getting started isn't always easy, and they've got a little bit of a safety net in place around you. Once a year, you can call in a favor that translates directly into some form of assistance that guarantees you and your allies make a clean getaway. How this getaway manifests is entirely up to the GM, but both of you should work in tandem to weave this getaway into the larger story

Select one of the following assignments: Agent of Light, Agent of the Asaræl Dragons, Agent of the Orgothii (non-good), or Agent of Venn (non-good). Each is described on the right.

AGENT OF THE LIGHT

You connected with something from Alessia before awaking, and it left you with a seed of its light, manifesting as an understanding of the divine others lack. When you first woke, the Light that bathed you did so in a warm, life-affirming manner. You gain the Religion skill.
Task – You must learn as much about Alessia's various religions as possible, creating detailed records as you go along.

AGENT OF THE ASARÆL DRAGONS.

Fierce and proud, the great dragon who touched your mind assured you it would provide you with an honorable path forward, and so far, it has. You step onto Alessia with a Asaræl mission. You gain the Persuasion skill.
Task – You must complete a specific task (GM's discretion) in a reasonable amount of time.

AGENT OF THE ORGOTHII

You made a practical decision and, you feel, a personal sacrifice by intercepting and distracting the orgothii the way you did. Although you suspect others wouldn't understand, you know that by working with them, you'll be better positioned to resist them when they arrive. You gain the Survival skill.
Task – In order to minimize casualties, you need tactical data (and lots of it). Work with your GM to establish your first of several missions on world.

AGENT OF VENN

They can all burn. You never signed up for this mission, and you're sure as hell not going to set foot on the world without some real strength at your back. As an agent of Venn, the mission comes first, but never without consideration for you or your team. Plus, everyone gets paid. You gain the Investigation skill.
Task – You step on Alessia with a specific mission (GM's discretion). Once that's accomplished, you'll have more time to think.

A PEOPLE WAKING UP

Envoys from beyond Voidspace, the tru'atha arrived on Alessia a century ago, following cosmic debris-like a trail of tragedy across space and time. Guided by ripples that originated during the War of Sovereigns, the tru'atha peacefully entered Alessia's atmosphere, bringing with them an array of scientific wonders, cultures, and views. Waking from hibernation after a millennium, the tru'atha are both an old, as well as young people.

THE WEASELINGS
SMALL, FAST, & FURIOUS

Dres zipped across the desert on his modified dasher, its frame using a single wheel instead of the more traditional two- and three-wheeled vehicles. Of course his was modified. He couldn't leave anything alone!

WEASLINGS

The weaseling are a species of hyper-intelligent polecats who originally evolved on the eastern plains of Yerwin, but who quickly spread throughout all of Alessia. Shortly after joining the other yökai at the Council Fires of Yerwin, this smaller species spread rapidly throughout the southern continents of Alessia, creating enclaves in Eysia, Fyrea, and throughout the mountains of Shiran.

Naturally agile and charming, these polecats gravitate to positions and jobs where their natural talents serve them best. When you place their agility and charm beside their unnatural affinity for technology, it's easy to understand how (and why) so many weaseling become pilots, entertainers, acrobats, operatives, and envoys to powerful yökai lords still looking to flex their muscled in places like the Empire of Xian.

Alessia's weaseling are a small but serious species whose collective need for speed drives every aspect of their culture. When it comes to living fast and dangerously, or to finding some of the only pilots quick enough to keep up, most mercenary companies keep at least one weaseling in their employ as a backup driver, knowing all too well what happens when things go south. It's always smart to have a good driver on hand to make sure retreat is an option.

SPECIES SYNERGIES

Encouraging Words – Weaselings have a knack for often saying the wrong thing, but also for cutting to the heart of most matters with ease. Although they frequently share this 'encouragement' without solicitation, when a weaseling wants to, they can be downright frighteningly encouraging. Select a single ally with whom you have formed a special bond (you are attuned). When you spend a point of resolve as a bonus action and that ally is within 30 feet, you can offer them a quick, encouraging word that grants them a d4 bonus on their next d20 roll.

You can spend up to 3 points of resolve in this fashion before you must complete a short or long rest.

LORE: NATURE'S NAVIGATORS

While their love of speed (and similar risk-seeking behaviors) is legendary, weaseling make excellent pilots for a number of other reasons, including their natural sense of direction. Even without a map, weaseling have an uncanny ability to find their destination, even when the whole of the world is set against them. Or, more frequently, chasing them.

Endless troublemakers, Alessia's weaseling are a people apart. They continue to enrich the lives of those around them by providing life's little unwanted stage directions, even when they're wholly unqualified to do so.

LORE: TOO FAST AND FURIOUS

The weaseling need for speed frequently gets them in trouble, especially when it comes to the Empire of Xian and their roadways. In fact, the weaseling and their need for speed makes them targets for overzealous Peacekeepers, even when they're not red-lining their dashers on the Imperial Highway. Of course, the Peacekeepers' collective experience has taught them that, even when weaseling are badly behaved, they still generally gravitate to doing the right thing.

LORE: CHARMING LIL' YÖKAI

Weaselings have a natural charm other yökai have a hard time resisting, especially when it comes to pranks and jokes of all kinds. While these activities get them in trouble all the time, they also get them excused with near equal frequency. Shrouded in a mantle of ridiculousness and absurdity, weaselings capable of really capitalizing on this charm become entertainers, creating shows that showcase their agility by pairing it with acts of physical comedy.

Weaseling Names. Weaselings prefer longer, formal names that are annoyingly hard to pronounce. They often name their offspring as follows: Adadelbertha, Barbadonna, Charlhester, Erlithindinburg, Fredrenhosserhoff, Gustivonnivich, Hathingtonvisk, Innatario, Miammbron, Pillizamth, or Tczopothine.

Weaseling Families. By contrast, weaseling families prefer simple and silly names, which include the Blackfurs, the Charons, the Dorcas, the Fanniwinds, the Jajas, the Redbacks, and similar.

WEASELING TRAITS

Weaselings are short, wiry, and charming, with bright, colorful coats and matching language. When you select the weasling, you gain the following benefits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase your Dexterity score by 2 and your Intelligence score by 1.
Age. Weaselings mature quickly, reaching adulthood in their late teens. Traditionally, they work and travel over the next several decades, often marrying and starting families in their late 40s. Weaselings have a lifespan of 120 years.
Alignment. Weaselings rarely respect the rules, especially the dumb ones. Even with this common disregard for order, weaselings tend to be good people who want peace and security.
Size. Weaselings stand between 2 and three feet, commonly weighing between 40 and 60 lbs. Your size is Small.
Speed. Your walking speed is 30.
Bikers. Weaselings have an intuitive understanding of drifters, dashers, and similar vehicles. You are proficient in the Drive skill. Weaselings can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to take the Dash action while on a drifter, dasher, or similar vehicle. You can spend up to three points of resolve in this fashion before you must take a short or long rest.
Takes Initiative. Weaseling characters are balls of carefully tended energy, constantly waiting to explode into action. Any time you roll Initiative, you can spend a point of resolve as a reaction to add a d4 to that roll.
Techie. Weaselings have a natural aptitude for technology that amazes most. You are proficient in the Technology skill.
Languages. You can speak, read, and write Yökai and Xian.

In the World of Alessia, species synergies represent a natural, evolving, symbiotic relationship between cooperative species that when nurtured, enhances their natural abilities and often allows them to grant their allies boons during play.

These species synergies represent peoples who, through struggle, service, opportunity, or thanks have bonded on an evolutionary level that allows them to empower each other, sometimes using magic, other times using their psychic abilities or some other, evolutionary trait.

While some of these bonds do have dark histories, none of them are designed to discriminate or exclude others at the table – ***none of the species in this book have "hate" or "hatred" as a prerequisite for a species-based ability***. Moreover, we've looked for places to enhance or expand those synergies outward to a more diverse group of species, although we hope to accomplish this through discovery and, afterwards, bond-building. For most PCs, this will be unlocked throughout play. It will be defined (in part) by backgrounds and informed or better defined through Feat selection. However, we will also include suggested options in future adventures, as well; players who survive struggles together on adventures will earn extra opportunities to unlock additional abilities that strengthen not only them, but also the bonds with their allies.

Species	Synergy	Species
Asaræ	Path of Light	Any
Djinnkin	Nexus-Bound	Gnoles
Dragonsworn (Truescale)	Sentry's Support	Humans
Dwarves	Spirit Warden	Minotaurs
Elathi	Light's Cascading Blessing	Treah
Elathi	Crystal Conduit	Any
Elves	Life's Secret Magic	Elves, Elathi, or Treah
Elves	Gardener's Grace	Treah
Fengu	Skyheart	Elves (Velestrian)
Fengu	Whispering Wind	Gnomes (Noble)
Gnoles	Nexus Pact Magic	Djinnkin, Gnoles
Gnomes	Nuit's Magic	Gnoles
Gnomes	Stone's Eternal Strength	Dwarves
Gnomes	Zephyr's Noble Connection	Asaræ, Fengu (Whispering)
Harpyans	Flight Song	Asaræ, Fengu (Whispering)
Harpyans	Light's Stalwart Defense	Any
Humans	Adaptive Ally	Any
Ish'ra	Adaptive Combat	Ish'ra
Jötunfolk	Giant's Bond	Gnomes (Stonefire)
Jötunfolk	Icewarden's Heart	Elves (Velestrian)
Kitsune	Heart's Hidden Luck	Any
Minotaurs	Stone Wardens	Dwarves (all)
Nagai	Wardens of the Green	Treah
Nekomata	Nine Lives	Nekomata
Pandrens	Big Bear, Lil' Rabbit	Rabbitfolk
Rabbitfolk	The Quickness	Pandrens
Shadelings	Shadow Struggle	Elves (Un'Seeliah)
Terrans	Mindstar	Djinnkin, Humans
Treah	Vision of the One	Any (living)
Tru'atha	Dreams of the Future	Tru'atha
Weaselings	Encouraging Words	Any

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE WORLD

Many fantasy settings rely on hate, 'racial tensions', and age-old cultural grievances to drive stories. While these tropes work for a lot of settings, Alessia's history is not one inspired by Tolkien's works alone but is instead an expression of a shared struggle between a multiplicity of species, peoples, and ideas. And while Alessia isn't without those challenges, the majority of its struggles and tensions lie in the past, remembered by generations and shared as a lesson to the future: we are not alone and must work together.

The peoples of Alessia learned this during their very first age, when the ish'ra Voidship *The Enduring Dream* crashed into Elysia from the long black of the Beyond. They have embraced that wisdom, enshrining it throughout their temples and weaving that knowledge into their various philosophies and faiths. Thusly armed, the various species set out to build what they hoped would eventually become a beacon of light and hope for the rest of the universe. If the ish'ra could seek refuge here and find a home, couldn't others, as well?

It was this cooperative spirit that saved countless lives when the Shadows of Venn summoned the terrible Galgaræ, and it has been this cooperative spirit that has, since, helped the peoples of Alessia continue to stand the watch against the darkness

INVESTING IN HOPE

Great stories frequently include great need, heroic action, and hope in the face of terrible danger, and in that regard, Alessia is no different. This, however, is the point of departure for Alessia when compared to many other fantasy campaign settings, especially where that hope is dependent on one good culture overthrowing a racially "evil" culture (like dark elves, orcs, ogres, and similar subterranean species) that can't be reasoned with.

These stories are frequently laced with these scapegoat species performing the same, unthinking acts over and over, living their lives in ignorance and barbarism until being organized by a far more powerful (and somewhat predictable) evil. Given new teeth and weapons, these newly organized species unite, forcing older "good" alliances to be redrawn while the heroes break with traditions and find hope in each other.

Alessia abandons these tropes.

While it places a great deal of importance on the heroic, especially where it means safeguarding those who cannot, it does so in a far more cooperative light. Alessia is a complex world where personal and philosophical visions dominate social horizons and only those individuals who have embraced isolation or xenophobia really display any kind of overt racism.

Native to Qingshan and the surrounding areas, the tiswai bird is both colorful and smart. Able to detect coming Shard Storms, these birds make invaluable companions and familiars.

A Backer Dedication

To my Emma,

My friend Jaye has worked on this campaign with the skill, grace, passion, and determination for which I respect him.

Even at the tender age of 3, I see these traits developing in you; these aspects I see in your character, as well.

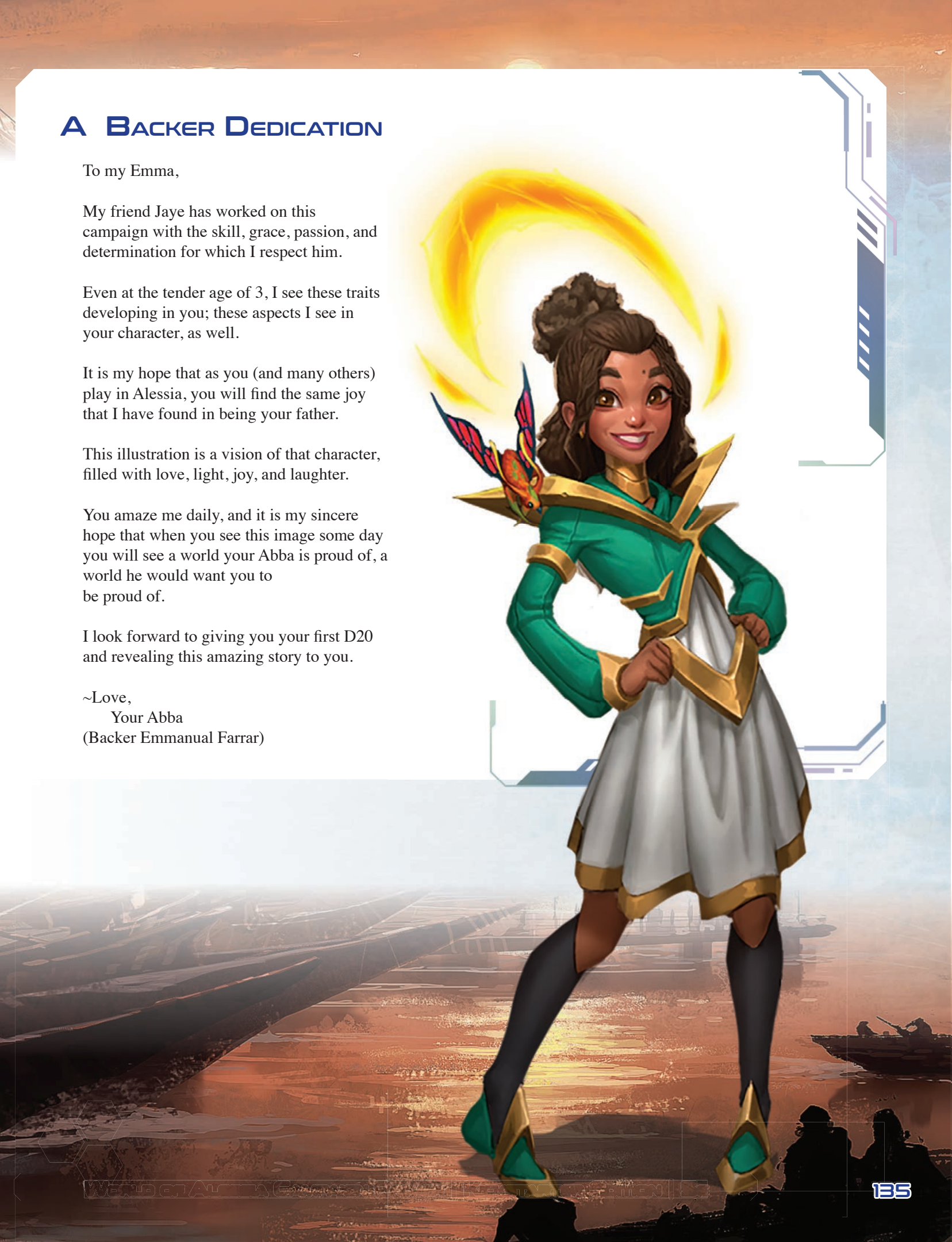
It is my hope that as you (and many others) play in Alessia, you will find the same joy that I have found in being your father.

This illustration is a vision of that character, filled with love, light, joy, and laughter.

You amaze me daily, and it is my sincere hope that when you see this image some day you will see a world your Abba is proud of, a world he would want you to be proud of.

I look forward to giving you your first D20 and revealing this amazing story to you.

~Love,
Your Abba
(Backer Emmanual Farrar)



Chapter 3 | Classes of Alessia

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FANTASY COMPATIBLE

Although players have a surplus of species and classes to choose from in this primer, all of the content herein is designed to be completely 5e compatible. With your GM's approval, importing and exporting content from this book should be painless.

When importing, remember that many classes outside of Alessia to do not start with access to skills such as Drive, Psychic, Spacefaring, or Technology. Your GM may need to make some adjustments if she wants those classes to gain access to those skills. Likewise, GMs importing species from other campaign settings will need to assign any species synergies they feel are appropriate for those species. Conversely, some GMs may not allow players to bring forward species from beyond Alessia's domain.

Given Alessia's size and its connection to the larger universe in which it exists, GMs should find introducing new content relatively easy.

BRINGING THE BEST FORWARD

The world of Alessia draws on a multiplicity of ideas, cultural influences, dreams, movies, and books that span over thirty years! While we could dedicate pages to that content, referencing iconic cartoon characters and explaining how those influences impacted Alessia's development, we thought it wiser to instead discuss what we've left behind, and what Alessia is today as a result.

Throughout this primer, there will be GM and Designer Sidebars explaining why we created, changed, or removed several dated, fantasy tropes and how those changes are woven into Alessia's story. For instance, where possible, we've removed reference to racial hatreds altogether and replaced them with species synergies instead. While we hope GMs and players will maturely address topics like hate and racism at their tables, we don't want to bake it into the game. We certainly don't want players to point to their character sheets and say, "Nope. It says right here I have the hatred trait" and use that as a justification to harass or disrupt play because "that's what my character would do."

We've built Alessia on a different set of bones, letting the various species learn over seven millennia to get along and stop killing one another, allowing a complex and thriving society to grow. We haven't erased hate from the setting, and we realize, despite society's best efforts, there will always be a few people who embrace this sort of senseless outlook. In fact, players seeking to take up heroic journeys to serve their communities, to gain power, or just to establish themselves as masters of their arts will invariably face off against foes whose motivations are myopic, racist, and evil.

Most of the changes we've brought forward have been silently incorporated into the background or are otherwise tied directly to mechanical elements players can choose. When we need to point out something important to the story or just want to give you some tips – we'll leave it in a GM Sidebar. If we need to share something critical (that often has a mechanical component), it'll go into the Designer sidebar.

NEW CLASSES

The world of Alessia presents the following classes for use with the world's most popular roleplaying game. These classes are designed specifically for this setting and in instances (such as with the monk), GMs should feel free to replace base classes with the named classes herein.

This primer introduces the following classes:

ARCANIST

Masters of the arcane, these individuals focus their efforts on understanding how magic works on Alessia, studying everything from ley lines to magitech. Trained by the Order of Astrænna, these masters of the arcane can weave magic from the ley lines that crisscross Alessia, channeling it into all manner of wonders.

ORACLE

Keepers of the divine Light, these individuals study the Light's many mysteries, seeking to understand its eternal will for the people it stands watch over. Beings with a natural connection to the Light, oracles channel their power into powerful divinatory practices, performing miracles and uncovering truths.

MARAUDER

Brutal and dangerous, these individuals surrender themselves to their rage, using it to power their private, violent wars against a company of enemies. Marauders fill many of the same roles that barbarians traditionally fill. Trained by any number of factions, these stout warriors operate in all environments and often under the worst conditions, bringing the heaviest guns to bear.

MONK

Similar in many ways to the traditional monk, Alessia's variant combines their knowledge of ki with their resolve, gaining a few bonus stunts in the process. Alessia's monks otherwise perform identically to their fantasy variants. The monks of Alessia represent a wide array of martial disciplines, many of which are dedicated to their Asaræl Dragons and the virtues they teach.

NINJA

Master assassins who walk at the edge of the shadows, Alessia's ninjas carry forward several private traditions and fighting styles. Alessia's ninja fill many of the same roles that rogues fill in more traditional fantasy games.

PEACEKEEPER

Common in the Empire of Xian and throughout the lands it controls, these individuals work to police the growing Empire, focusing on non-violent fighting styles and crowd control. Peacekeepers fill many of the same roles paladins traditionally fill.

PSION

Masters of the mind, these individuals reach out and through Alessia's Crystal Lattice, communing with the planet and activating the full scope of their mental powers in the process. Alessia's psions have access to many of the same powers Arcanists do but access them differently. Trained to weaponize their minds, psions are psychic casters who can manifest powerful effects with little more than a thought. Many psions learn to attune to Alessia's crystals.

SEER

Souls able to pierce the thin veil that separates Alessia's kaima from the mundane realms, seers are a rare group

CLASSES, ROLES, & SOCIETY IN ALESSIA

In Alessia, the class you select strongly influences your abilities, and to some extent, your social role, as well. That said, those roles are often loosely defined by regional culture, ideas, and values. Class and social roles in Alessia are rarely static or predetermined. Instead, most of the developed nations and city-states see these social roles as dynamic, evolving positions.

As such, most organizations seek candidates who best fit their values and ideas, regardless of their species, gender, or origin. While this strikes some outsiders as strange, this has been the norm in Alessia for centuries. Few Alessians can imagine a world where one's species or gender might dictate a dedication to a skill, principle, or social role.

That said, Alessia boasts plenty of private organizations and groups who have developed strong, cooperative bonds between several tightly knit groups. These groups and their generational cooperation are the basis for the species synergies found in the previous chapter.

of individuals who align themselves with these spirits, seeking and creating mysteries across the face of Alessia. Naturally attuned to the kaima, seers use a variety of techniques – both ancient and modern – to gaze into the kaima's realm, summoning them to Alessia to aid them

TECKER

Masters of Alessia's evolving technologies, teckers do it all – from hacking Alessia's HoloNet and breaching voidships to racing souped-up drifters across the Fyrean deserts. If it involves tech, it probably involves a tecker. Ad-hoc engineers, teckers follow a variety of tech-paths, often becoming breachers, devs, or speeders.

HIT DICE | THE SHORT REST

Throughout this chapter we introduce new classes who use 2dx die to represent hit die that, in more traditional games, are represented by a single die. For instance, in Alessia, the arcanist gains 2d4 hit points per level instead of 1d8, granting it an average hit point gain of 5 per level instead of 4. While small, we feel the increased bonus to those rolls accurately displays the vibrant nature of life and evolution on Alessia. Beyond this bonus, however, the two dice should be treated as a single die in all other respects. They cannot be split, for instance, while a character takes a short rest (to presumably gain a smaller amount of hit points, extending the healing process).

When a character does choose to take a short rest on Alessia, the process occurs just like it would anywhere else, with companions making meals, casting spells, and bandaging one another's wounds.

GMs who wish to let player characters split these dice pools up to increase the number of times a player can heal are welcome to do so, but should always halve such dice pools when calculating for other abilities that rely on a smaller, more traditional pool of dice (where 1 class level = 1 die).

For instance, a character who chooses to 'spend' a hit die (normally a 1d8) to do something in another setting will instead spend 2d4 dice from their pool of hit dice to do the same thing.

THE ARCANIST

The founders of the Order of Astrænna, these masters of the arcane weave and pull magic from the ley lines that crisscross Alessia, channeling it into all manner of wonders. Capable of tapping, harnessing, and routing that arcane power as if it were a living battery, arcanists use this energy to create portals to that power, both for themselves, as well as their allies.

Given their ties to the ancient and royal lines that founded the Order of Astrænna, many arcanists embrace one or more magical paths within the greater order. These paths include:

The Path of Light. Arcanists who follow this path approach magic with a religious devotion, focusing all of their study on working with the Light as an intelligent entity. Although devout, these arcanists still maintain the standards of their arcane brethren. Arcanists who follow the Path of Light are healers, abjurers, and diviners whose sole focus is understanding the Light. They are commonly called Lightbringers.

The Path of Nature. Arcanists who follow the path of nature study magic as a byproduct of life. Arcanists following the Path of Nature proudly study Alessia's ley lines, and when the Velestrians grant them access, the fabled Alessian Trees of Life. Concerned with how magic arises in the presence of life, a small group of these arcanists also studies the impact of the lifeless places on Alessia, seeking unlife and doing their best to understand its larger impact on Alessia.

The Path of Technology. Arcanists who follow the Path of Technology approach magic as a tool for progress. While many of these arcanists focus their magic on advancing technology, a vast number of these arcanists – who are called Techs – focus their efforts on social progress and advancement. These techs use their magical knowledge to complete public works projects, maintain the defenses of various outposts, and forward social programs throughout the Empire of Xian.

CLASS ABILITIES

Attunement – You gain a bonus attunement slot (see Using Attunement in Chapter 4 for more information) at 1st level, and again at 10th and 15th levels.

Spellcasting – You are a student of Alessia's arcane mysteries first and foremost, which you dutifully record into your spellbook. You record both spells and cantrips into this tome, but may also include notes, important secrets, or powerful formulas.

You begin play knowing 2 cantrips of your choice from the arcanist spell list. You learn additional cantrips at levels 4, 9, and 14. Unlike spells, which you must record into your spellbook you always know cantrips. These are prepared directly from your mind.

You begin play at 1st level with a spellbook (or holo tablet, your choice) containing six 1st-level arcanist spells of your choice. You spellbook (or holo tablet) can contain a maximum of 100 levels of spells before you must expand or modify it.

THE ORDER OF ASTRÆNNA

The Order of Astrænna trains the majority of Alessia's arcanists. It maintains universities dedicated to magic, magitech, and the study of crystals all over Alessia. Many arcanists also deploy with Imperial Peacekeepers, too.

CLASS FEATURES

As an arcanist, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d4 per arcanist level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 2d4 (or 5) plus your Constitution modifier per arcanist level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: None.
Weapons: Batons, daggers, darts, slings, and light energy pistol.
Tools: Arcanist tools.
Saving Throws: Charisma, Intelligence
Skills: Choose three from Arcana, History, Insight, Investigation, Medicine, Religion, and Technology.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any equipment granted by your background.

- (a) a quarterstaff, or (b) any simple weapon of your choice.
- (a) an traveler's pack or (b) an explorer's pack.
- Your spellbook and spell component pouch.

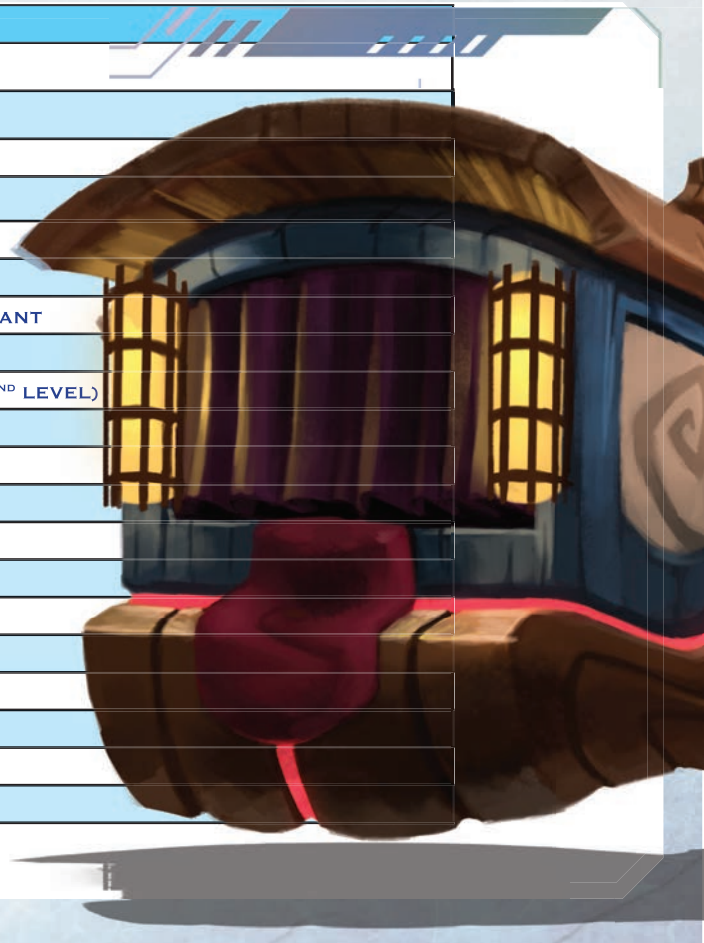
ARCANIST SPELL LIST

In Alessia, arcanists use the wizard's spell list. They add the following spells to this list, as well:

Cantrips (0 Level): Add *sacred flame* and *spare the dying*.
1st Level: Add *sanctuary*.
2nd Level: Add *augury* and *heroism*.
3rd Level: Add *spirit guardians*.
4th Level: Add *death ward*.
5th Level: Add *antilife shell*.
6th Level: Add *heroes' feast* and *planar ally*.
7th Level: Add *fire storm*.
8th Level: Add *earthquake*.
9th Level: Add *storm of vengeance*.

TABLE: THE ARCANIST

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features
1	+2	Attunement, Spellcasting
2	+2	Ley Line Access
3	+2	Arcane Path
4	+2	Ability Score Improvement
5	+2	Arcane Well (1st level)
6	+3	Arcane Secret
7	+3	Arcane Recovery, Arcane Servant
8	+3	Ability Score Improvement
9	+3	Arcane Secret, Arcane Well (2nd level)
10	+3	Attunement
11	+4	Improved Servant
12	+4	Ability Score Improvement
13	+4	Arcane Well (3rd level)
14	+4	Arcane Secret
15	+4	Attunement
16	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17	+5	Arcane Well (4th level)
18	+5	Arcane Secret
19	+5	Ability Score Improvement
20	+5	Arcane Assault



ARCANIST TABLE: SPELLS BY LEVEL

LEVEL	CANTRIPS	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH	7TH	8TH	9TH
1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	2	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	3	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	3	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	3	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	4	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
9	4	4	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
10	4	4	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
11	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
12	4	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
13	4	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
14	5	5	5	4	4	2	1	1	—	—
15	5	5	5	4	4	3	1	1	—	—
16	5	5	5	5	4	3	2	1	1	—
17	5	6	5	5	4	3	2	1	1	—
18	5	6	5	5	5	4	2	2	1	1
19	5	6	5	5	5	4	2	2	1	1
20	5	6	6	6	5	4	3	2	1	1

Preparing and Casting Spells. Each arcanist can prepare a number of spells each day, as indicated in the **Arcanist Table: Spells By Level** above. This table shows you how many spell slots you have each day in which to cast your spells. You must always expend an available spell slot in order to cast a spell at that level. If you cannot expend a spell slot at that level, you cannot cast that spell. You regain all of your expended spell slots when you complete a long rest (and some when you complete a short rest, as well – see Arcane Recovery, below).

You prepare your arcane spells from those available to you to cast. If you do not have access to a source of spells (like your spellbook), you cannot prepare spells. When you prepare spells, you can prepare a number of spells equal to your Arcanist level + your Intelligence modifier. You must cast these using spell slots available to you.

You can change your list of prepared spells when you complete a long rest. Preparing a new list of arcanist spells requires time (about 3 minutes per spell level) and your concentration. You cannot focus on other activities while you study your spellbook in this manner.

Spellcasting Ability. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your spells, which require a deep understanding of both logic and, when dealing with magitech, engineering as well.

You access most of your magic through devoted study (of the Crystal Lattice) and applied logic.

You use your Intelligence whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for an arcanist spell you cast, and when making an attack roll with a spell.

Spell Save. The DC of any of your spells is equal to 8 plus your proficiency bonus plus your Intelligence modifier.

Spell Attack Modifier. Your spell attack modifier equals your proficiency bonus plus your Intelligence modifier.

The number of spells you can cast is included on **Table: The Arcanist: Spells By Level.**

Learning New Spells. Each time you gain a new arcanist level, you can add two new arcanist spells of your choice to your spellbook for free. You cannot add spells that you could not normally cast. Every new spell you add must be one you can normally cast. You may add additional spells (from other sources) over the course of your adventures.

Ley Line Access. While traditional wizards spend years learning to translate spells into ceremonies and rituals, arcanists instead spend that time learning to access the various ley lines that crisscross Alessia's Crystal Lattice.

Arcane Path. At 3rd level, each arcanist selects a path of arcane study. Once selected, this path shapes the discoveries the arcanist will make later in their career. Once you select a path, you gain Arcane Secrets from that path. In Alessia, arcanists commonly select from the following paths:

The Path of Light. Arcanists who follow this path approach magic with an almost religious devotion, focusing all of their study on working with the Light as an intelligent entity. Although devout, these arcanists still maintain the standards of their arcane brethren.

The Path of Nature. Arcanists who follow the path of nature study magic as a byproduct of life, and in some instances, unlife. These arcanists study all aspects of the natural world, with some beginning to look toward the stars.

The Path of Technology. Arcanists who follow this modern path approach magic with a logical, often scientific approach. They record their spells as formulas, adjusting them accordingly.

Ability Score Improvement. When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, and 16th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Arcane Well. At 5th level, you gain the ability to tap ambient ley line energy, which you can channel into a well of energy that up to 4 allies you designate can access to temporarily power their arcane spells (you count as one of these allies if you draw on the well).

When you activate your Arcane Well ability, designate a single square within 20 feet you can see. That location becomes the well and once selected, is fixed in place until the well is drained or the duration ends.
While the arcane well is active, any of the arcanist's designated allies who are within 30 feet of the well can use it to power a single spell of the well's level (or lower). Once an ally uses your arcane well, they must complete a long rest before they can benefit from one of your arcane wells again. You must complete a short rest before activating your arcane well ability. You cannot activate your arcane well ability in any area or environment you cannot also access a ley line.

Arcane Recovery. You have learned to regain your arcane energy from the ambient energies that surround you. Once per day, whenever you complete a short rest, you regain a number of spell slots equal to half your Arcanist level (to a maximum of 10 slots at 20th level). When you regain spell slots in this manner, you must replenish your slots starting at 4th level slots and moving downward. You can never replenish 5th (or higher level) spell slots with this ability.

Arcane Servant. Starting at 7th level, you gain the knowledge and resources you need to build an arcane servant appropriate to the path you follow. You gain a magitech skitter bot or magitech hover bot (see page 211). Unlike the standard version of these bots, the bot you build uses your hit points instead of the listed, starting hit points.

Improved Servant. At 11th level, you improve your magitech bot, improving its Armor Class by 2, adding 3d10 hit points, and increasing its attack bonus by 2.

Arcane Assault. When you reach 20th level, you gain the ability to overcharge the ambient magical energy around you, turning that energy against one or more enemies in the area of effect. When you activate this ability, you unleash a wicked storm of arcane energy that focuses on up to three targets you select (minimum, one), dealing 14d8 points of arcane damage to each (characters who succeed on a Dexterity saving throw take half damage). Targets able to cast arcane spells can make Intelligence saving throws, instead.

THE PATHS

Each arcanist, when they reach 3rd level, selects a path of arcane study. Once selected, this path shapes their career and determines many of the powers and secrets to which they have access. Arcanists in Alessia commonly select from the following paths:

PATH OF LIGHT

Arcanists on the Path of Light may unlock any one of the following arcane secrets at 3rd level. You unlock another secret at levels 6, 9, and 14:

- ***Guardian's Mantle.*** You can spend a point of resolve, as a Reaction, to grant yourself a bonus d4 to the next saving throw you make. This die increases to a d6 at 6th level, a d8 at 14th level, and a d10 at 18th level.

- ***Hope of Aeons.*** You can create an arcane beacon that holds a small amount of healing energy in reserve (presumably for a nearby ally). You can spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to heal a nearby ally (within 30 feet) for 1d4 Hit Points. This die increases to a d6 at 6th level, a d8 at 14th level, and a d10 at 18th level.

- ***Light's Grace.*** Whenever you successfully cast an arcane spell, you can spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to heal a single ally within 30 feet a number of Hit Points equal to three times the level of the spell you just cast.

- ***Light's Fury.*** You can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to add a bonus d8 points of divine damage to a spell you're casting. This damage doubles if the target is undead.

- ***Light's Shield.*** You can spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to create and deploy a small shield against an incoming attack (treat as the spell *shield*).

PATH OF NATURE

Arcanists on the Path of Nature may unlock any one of the following arcane secrets at 3rd level. You unlock another secret at levels 6, 9, and 14:

- ***Air's Elemental Grace.*** You gain the ability to *levitate* (as per the spell), but only up to a foot off the ground; you must maintain concentration to continue to use this ability. Additionally, you can spend a point of resolve (as an Action) to remove the 1-foot limitation. When you do, this ability mimics the spell *levitate* but upon ending use of this ability in this fashion, you must complete a long rest before activating this ability again.

- ***Elemental Fury of Earth's Angry Stomp.*** When you deal damage to a target with a spell you just cast, you may elect to spend a point of resolve as a reaction and modify that damage, dealing an additional 2d6 points of sonic damage as the earth below the target erupts into violent waves of rippling chaos. Targets who succeed on a Strength saving throw (again, equal to the previous DC) halve that damage.

- ***Elemental Fury of Fire.*** When you deal damage with any spell you cast, you may spend a point of resolve as a reaction to activate this ability, forcing the target to make a second saving throw (using the same DC and saving throw) or suffer an additional 2d6 points of fire damage. Targets who succeed on the save take half damage and gain resistance against fire for 1 minute.

- ***Elemental Fury of Iron's Reign.*** When you deal damage with a spell you cast, you may spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to activate this ability, forcing the target to make a Strength saving throw (at the same DC) or also be knocked prone. Targets who succeed on the saving throw remain standing.

- ***Fey Field.*** When you spend a point of resolve to activate this ability as an Action, you tap into Alessia's ambient ley lines to create a field of soft grass and flowers in a 30-foot radius. This field persists for 30 minutes, and effects up to 1d4 targets, which the arcanist targets when activating this ability. Targets who complete a short rest in this area double the Hit Points healed and gain a +1 bonus to all of their saving throws for the next hour. You must complete a long rest before activating this ability again.

- ***Gauntlet's of Stone's Wrath.*** You may spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to activate this ability. When you do, you summon a pair of enormous, magical stone gauntlets that deal massive damage against targets. Until the end of your next turn, any physical attacks you make with

your hands are treated as magical and deal 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage. You must complete a short rest before you can activate this ability again.

• ***Night Mist.*** When you spend a point of resolve as an Action to summon a heavy, obscuring mist. When you activate this ability, a 30-foot radius fills with heavy smoke, and visibility is reduced to only the squares adjacent to you. This mist persists for 10 minutes, although a strong wind will dissipate it in approximately a minute. You must complete a short rest before activating this ability again.

• ***Water's Wicked Wrath.*** When you deal damage to a target with a spell you just cast, you may spend a point of resolve as a reaction to activate this ability, forcing the target to make an additional Charisma saving throw (equal to the original DC) or gain the poisoned condition for 1 minute.

PATH OF TECHNOLOGY

Arcanists on the Path of Technology may unlock any one of the following arcane secrets at 3rd level. You unlock another secret at levels 6, 9, and 14:

• ***Arcanist's Basic Shield.*** You spend a point of resolve as a reaction to create and deploy a small shield against an incoming attack (treat as the spell *shield*). You may activate this ability up to three times before you must complete a long rest.

• ***Arcanist's Pattern.*** You spend a point of resolve as an Action to create an arcane loop in your mind that makes it easy for you to record important facts, information, and data, even at speeds no sane creature could normally comprehend. For the next minute, you gain a perfect recollection of everything that happened (as you perceived it). You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

• ***Arcanist's Revenge.*** You can spend a point of resolve as an Action to create a small magitech device that deploys a programmed spell (magic missile is common) against one of your enemies. You create these magitech devices when you prepare spells for the day and may only create a number of devices equal to your proficiency bonus. You must spend a point of resolve for each device you create. You must complete a long rest before creating more of these devices.

• ***Break.*** You may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to create a sudden telekinetic force that breaks an object you can see within 30 feet. That object must weigh less than 5 lbs. You may use this ability up to 3 times before you must complete a short rest.

• ***Crafter's Advantage.*** You may draw upon the magic around you to sharpen your focus while you work. You may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to give yourself a small boost while making a crafting skill check. Whenever you make a skill check to craft something, you double your proficiency bonus. You must complete a short rest before you can activate this ability again.

• ***Deadeye.*** When you spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to activate this arcane secret, you gain advantage on the next three attack rolls you make with spells. This ability lasts for up to a minute, or until you make three spell attack rolls. You must complete a long rest before using this ability again.

• ***Technician's Touch.*** Whenever you make an Intelligence (Technology) check, you may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to add a bonus d4 to that check as a bonus action. This die increases to a d6 at 6th level, a d8 at 14th level, and a d10 at 18th level.

• ***Workman's Luck.*** You learn to channel excessive arcane energy into keeping your balance and avoiding injuries while in the workplace. Whenever you make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) ability check to maintain your balance (or to avoid falling), you may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus reaction to add your Charisma modifier (in addition to your Dexterity modifier) to that check.

• ***Wreck It Wrench!*** You learn how to create a powerful (and dangerous) wrench that magically picks apart its target. When you spend a point of resolve as an Action, you create a Wreck It Wrench (see the *wreck it wrench* spell in Chapter 4). You must complete a long rest before you can activate this ability again.

THE MARAUDER

A modern mercenary with a penchant for heavy energy weapons, rice wine, and rough language – Alessia's marauders are violent, brutal, and proud of getting the job done, no matter the cost. Operating in the dusk that separates the Night from the Light, marauders embrace Alessia's chaos and ancient brutality, purposefully evolving themselves into apex predators.

Although others clearly refute their claims to greatness, it's hard to deny the marauders' effectiveness. Trained to command the battlefield at all costs, marauders think nothing of breaching the hulls to sky ships, blowing up dreadnoughts, or kicking in doors if that's what it takes to get the job done. And it's that level of determination that makes a marauder an asset for most teams, even if it means keeping them separated from the good dinnerware.

Marauders come from all species, easily identified by their bold recklessness and chaotic natures.

CLASS ABILITIES

The marauder's class abilities are:

• ***Brutal Onslaught.*** You gain a pool of onslaught dice equal to your proficiency modifier at 1st level. You can spend these onslaught dice in combat, adding them to Attack rolls, on Strength (Athletics) checks to grapple with a foe, or on similar physical skills employed in combat. Every time your proficiency modifier increases, so does the number of dice in your pool. You should have 3 dice in your pool at 5th level, 4 dice at 9th level, 5 dice at 13th level, and so on.

Likewise, these onslaught dice should increase in size at the indicated levels. At 7th level, your onslaught dice increase to d6s, at 13th level they increase to d8s, at 19th level d10s, and finally into d12s at 20th level. This pool resets when you complete a long rest.

• ***Favored Weapon.*** You begin play at 1st level with a single weapon that you favor in combat. Whenever you use this weapon (or a similar weapon approved by the GM) in combat, you roll an additional 1d4 to hit with this weapon. This bonus to hit increases to 2d4 at 11th level.

• ***Improvised Weapon.*** You can use just about anything as a weapon. Starting at 2nd level, you can deal damage with an object you can wield that also has a hardness. The GM may overrule specific items at their discretion.

• ***Second Wind.*** You are trained in pacing yourself in combat. Starting at 2nd level, you can easily draw on energy reserves others cannot. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain a number of Hit Points equal to 2d6 plus your Marauder level. You may use this ability twice before you must complete a short rest. You may use this ability a third time per combat at 11th level.

• ***War Path.*** When you reach 3rd level, you select from the following War Paths: Path of Brutality, Path of Deception, or Path of the Overlord. Each of these paths is described later in the chapter.

• ***Ability Score Improvement.*** When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, and 16th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

CLASS FEATURES

As a marauder, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d6 per marauder level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 12 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 2d6 (or 7) plus your Constitution modifier per marauder level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: All armor, shields (including powered variants).
Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons.
Tools: None.
Saving Throws: Constitution, Strength
Skills: Choose three from Athletics, Acrobatics, Drive, History, Medicine, Perception, Technology, and Survival.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any equipment granted by your background.

- Marauder Skirmisher's Armor
- Light Combat Shield
- An energy or ballistic rifle (your choice).
- A melee weapon of choice.

ONSLAUGHT DICE

1st 2d4
5th 3d4
7th 3d6
9th 4d6
13th 5d8
19th 6d10
20th 6d12

TABLE: MARAUDER

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS	FEATURES
1	+2	BRUTAL ONSLAUGHT (2D4), FAVORED WEAPON
2	+2	IMPROVISED WEAPON, SECOND WIND
3	+2	WAR PATH
4	+2	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
5	+3	EXTRA ATTACK
6	+3	WAR PATH ABILITY
7	+3	BRUTAL ONSLAUGHT (3D6)
8	+3	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
9	+4	WAR LEADER (4D4)
10	+4	WAR PATH ABILITY
11	+4	EXTRA ATTACK, FAVORED WEAPON, SECOND WIND
12	+4	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
13	+5	BRUTAL ONSLAUGHT (5D8)
14	+5	WAR PATH ABILITY
15	+5	WAR LEADER (5D6)
16	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
17	+6	TIRELESS ONSLAUGHT
18	+6	WAR PATH ABILITY
19	+6	BRUTAL ONSLAUGHT (6D10)
20	+6	FINISHING ASSAULT (6D12), SIGNATURE MOVE

Extra Attack. Beginning at 5th level, you may attack twice (instead of once) whenever you take the Attack action on your turn. The number of attacks you can take on your turn increases to three at 11th level. When you reach 20th level in this class, you may attack up to four times when you take the Attack action on your turn.

- ***War Path Ability.*** When you reach 6th level, and again at 10th, 14th, and 18th levels, you gain a war path ability. These abilities are listed under the path you select at 3rd level. They are listed below.

- ***War Leader.*** When you reach 9th level, you gain a small dice pool (4d4). You can, as a Bonus Action, grant up to four allies you can see a bonus d4 they can use on any of their d20 rolls in the next minute. This pool of dice increases to 5d6 at 15th level. This dice pool refills when you complete a Short Rest.

- ***Tireless Onslaught.*** Starting at 17th level, any round in which you begin play with zero onslaught dice in your onslaught pool, you immediately regenerate a single die (and place it into play on the following round).

- ***Finishing Assault.*** At 20th level, you reach the pinnacle of your skill, you have learned to unlock the full power behind the marauder's speed, strength, and brutality. You can spend a single onslaught die to make a single attack against all targets in the area. This roll deals 6d12 points of magical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage to every foe within 30 feet of the marauder. You must complete a long rest before using this ability again.

WAR PATHS

PATH OF BRUTALITY

Marauders who follow the brutal path prefer sudden, violent attacks that press an enemy on every front. These marauders are contentious, tenacious, and ruthless when it comes to executing their will. Known colloquially as the 'The Brutal Ones,' marauders who follow this path favor violence to diplomacy every time there is a choice.

- ***Knuckles & Knees.*** While every fighting style is different, one concept runs central to them all – an overwhelming onslaught of pain can frequently finish a foe before the fight really begins. Whenever you make unarmed strikes with your hands, feet, elbows, and knees, you deal a d4 points of damage plus your Strength modifier.

- ***Violent Intimidation.*** Starting at 6th level, the very nature of your violence takes on an almost palpable mantle of fear and intimidation – it really comes through in combat. Whenever you enter melee combat with a foe, you gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) and Strength (Athletics) checks, and on all saving throws to resist charms and enchantments.

- ***Path to Bloody Freedom.*** Starting at 10th level, you can spend a single onslaught dice as a bonus action to ignore the effects of difficult terrain for 1 minute, as if you were under the effect of the freedom of movement spell.

- ***Signature Move.*** Starting at 14th level, you develop a signature move that represents your complex understanding of war, pain, suffering, and violence. Whenever you roll a critical hit against a foe you're currently fighting, you can opt to ignore it and perform your signature move (when and where practical). Roll a second attack against the target with advantage; if you hit, you perform your signature move. Choose a single signature move from pages 149-150.

PATH OF DECEPTION

Marauders who follow the Path of Deception focus on out-maneuvering, out-smarting, and out-classing enemy combatants with intelligent tactics and well-refined tricks. As deadly as they are clever, these marauders focus on using their smarts and mobility to deal the most damage to their enemies.

- ***Deceptive Stance.*** You focus on remaining mobile in combat, often practicing moves and maneuvers that take you gracefully into and out of combat. While you are engaged in melee combat with at least two enemies (both of whom must remain within 30 feet of you), increase your Armor Class by +1. You lose this bonus if your movement drops to zero, you are grappled, or otherwise restricted from moving around.

- ***Warmonger's Dance.*** Starting at 6th level, you unlock the grace hidden in chaos, refining your dance from being deceptive to something truly destructive. While you are engaged in melee combat with at least two enemies (both of whom must be within 30 feet of you), your attacks deal an extra d4 points of damage (this damage stacks with your Brutal Onslaught dice normally). This damage improves to d6 at 11th level and 2d4 at 18th level.

- ***Path of Chaos's Blessing.*** Starting at 10th level, you can spend a single onslaught dice as a bonus action to

gain the effects of the *stoneskin* spell for one minute; while under the effects of this spell, you gain resistance to all nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing weapons. You may spend a second onslaught die on the following round to gain advantage on attacks against lawful creatures for the next 2d4+1 rounds. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Signature Move.*** Starting at 14th level, you develop a signature move that represents your intimate comprehension of deception, violence, war, and combat. Whenever you roll a critical hit against a foe you're currently fighting, you can opt to ignore it and perform your signature move (when and where practical). Roll a second attack against the target with advantage; if you hit, you perform your signature move. Choose a single signature move.

PATH OF THE OVERLORD

Marauders who follow the Path of the Overlord focus their efforts directly into commanding their allies on the battlefield, where they deploy their intimate understanding of chaos, war, and fear to lead those under their savage command to resolute victory.

• ***Overlord's Call.*** You know the thrust, pivot, and swing of combat is eternally locked in the cruel embrace of chaos; you know how to coax from it the secret magic necessary to lead your allies to victory. You can spend a single onslaught die to grant all of your allies within 30 feet of you a +1 on melee attacks for 1d4 rounds. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Warmonger's Challenge.*** Starting at 6th level, you learn to exploit your foe's emotional weaknesses, challenging them to attack you exclusively. Select a single foe within 60 feet that can see you. You may issue a challenge to that creature, using a combination of physical gestures and words to threaten them. If that target fails a Wisdom saving throw (DC = 8 + Proficiency Bonus + Charisma modifier), it must attack you on its turn. This is a mind-effecting affect.

• ***Warlord's Call.*** Starting at 10th level, you can spend a single onslaught dice as a bonus action to bless 3d4 of your warriors, granting each a bonus d4 they may spend on any d20 roll they make in the next minute. Each warrior also receives 2d4 temporary Hit Points, which last no more
than an hour.

• ***Signature Move.*** Starting at 14th level, you develop a signature move this clearly displays your command of the battlefield and everyone on it. Whenever you roll a critical hit against a foe you're currently fighting, you can opt to ignore it and perform your signature move (when and where practical). Roll a second attack against the target with advantage; if you hit, you perform your signature move. Choose a single signature move from the list below:

SIGNATURE MOVES

• ***Helm Smash.*** You violently strike your opponent's helmet (or helm), blinding them in the process. If you succeed on this attack, your target becomes blind while their helmet or helm remains on. The target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw to remove this helmet.

• ***Heroic Charge.*** You charge a nearby opponent, immediately moving up to 30 feet and dealing 3d8 points of bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. You gain immunity to slashing and piercing damage during this charge.

• ***Immobilize.*** You quickly move on your target,

disabling one or more of their legs and halving their movement for the next minute. You may spend an onslaught die to deal critical damage to this target as normal (instead of ignoring it). You must complete a short rest before using this signature move again.

• ***Shout of Defiance.*** You challenge a nearby enemy to watch as you destroy their ally. You immediately move up to 30 feet, dealing 2d4 points of bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage to the target you're facing. You may spend an onslaught die to deal 2d6 points of psychic damage to a nearby onlooker (within 30 feet).

• ***Thunderstruck.*** You smash a two-handed weapon you are proficient with into an adjacent ally, knocking them prone and dealing an additional 1d8 points of bludgeoning damage. You may spend a point of resolve to add 2d8 additional points of bludgeoning damage.

• ***War Sweep.*** You swing into your enemies, clearing a swatch of lesser creatures from your path. You target and knock back up to three medium-sized (or smaller) creatures, all of which must be adjacent to you. Each of these creatures is knocked prone in a nearby square.

BANE TO MAGITECH (FEAT)

You have practiced techniques useful in melee combat against arcanists, oracles, psions, and similar spellcasters, gaining the following benefits:

• When a creature within 5 feet of you activates a piece of magitech, you can make an Attack against that tech. If you hit, the creature who activated it must make a Dexterity saving throw or drop the item.

• You have advantage on saving throws against spells or magitech activated within 5 feet of you.

RIFLE EXPERT (FEAT)

You've spent a lot of time practicing with a wide variety of rifles in close combat situations, allowing you to enjoy the following benefits:

• You ignore the loading quality with rifles with which you are proficient.

• Being within 5 feet of a hostile creature doesn't impose disadvantage on ranged attacks you make with that rifle.

• When you use the Attack action with a rifle with which you are proficient, you can spend 1 point of resolve to gain a +2 bonus on that roll.

LORE: THE ORGOTHII

While *all* of Alessia lies safe under the protection of The Ring of Heaven, there are others who wish the peace-loving people of Alessia harm.

The orgothii are a terrible alien species who have long sought to break through Alessia's defenses so they can 'reclaim' their 'property' – the ish'ra. While the Light has already taken steps to ensure that the orgothii never breach the god-fueled artifact, they have dedicated all of their terrible resource to doing precisely that.

Comfortable unleashing terrible plagues, genetically rebuilding species, and tearing entire planets apart to prove their strength to those foolish enough to challenge them, the orgothii have spent generations aboard their great Voidships, conquering the known universe and enslaving all those who dare resist.

While the orgothii lack the power the Light has leveraged against them in the form of the Ring of Heaven, they have already began exploiting its weaknesses, routinely sending down terrible monsters, diseases, and poisons all aimed at destroying the planet from within. Although the orgothii have managed to cause a great deal of pain and death with these attacks, they have yet to gain a significant foothold on the planet below.

The few orgothii who have braved Alessia's surface have all fallen to the heroes who guard the planet below, although never without leaving deep, memorable scars that have generations wondering as to what could create something so dark, chaotic, and violent as the orgothii.

Thankfully, each generation seeks out and trains heroes willing to fight these monsters, both in the endless corridors of the Ring of Heaven and on the surface of the planet below. With each passing year seeing increased attacks on both, the Empire of Xian has began to bring the fight to these monsters, setting up remote military posts on the Ring of Heaven. These posts serve as staging areas for attacks against the forward operating stations the orgothii continue to establish in the dark corners of the Ring.

The orgothii are relentless.

DEV LORE: USING THE ORGOTHII

The Orgothii – as a culture and species – is dangerously militant and violent, following a simple philosophy of ego-gratification and civilization through strength. As a whole, they are intended to be villains for the PCs to face. They are not intended to be allies to the PCs, although select members of the species might think nothing of deceiving the PCs to achieve their goals on Alessia. Others might simply manipulate the PCs for their amusement.

THE MONK

Masters of the mysterious energy called ki, the monks of Alessia are a proud group of warriors whose martial traditions are as old as Alessia itself. Trained to be the warrior-servants of the Asaræl Dragons, Alessian monks spend the majority of their focus on understanding the Dragons' Secret Prophecy, a collection of divinely inspired poems said to unlock the song of the spheres and grant these monks direct communion with these powerful beings.

The monks of Alessia have several monastic orders that carry these martial traditions forward. These monastic orders include:

- ***The Order of the Claw.*** Focusing on the fury of the fight, the Order of the Claw is an aggressive order that trains its monks to channel their anger, fear, and hate to power their ki and, at the end of their service, find tranquility. Known in the Empire of Xia as Claw Monks, these monks often work as imperial agents, accepting special missions that take them all over Alessia.

- ***The Order of the Heart.*** The most reflective of the orders, monks of the Order of the Heart spend decades trying to calm their emotions, becoming "like stone, like steel." Order of the Heart monks follow a philosophy of logical self-reflection, which manifests through their training and work with the energy known as ki.

- ***The Order of the Scales.*** Dedicated to defense and resilience, the fabled Order of the Scales is one of Alessia's oldest monastic orders.

Originating in the jungles of Southern Elysia, this order was the first to accept the burden of the Asaræl Dragons' vision for Alessia.

This vision has focused the monks for millennia, guiding every aspect of their lives. Today, Monks of the Scale stand watch over an array of hidden relics and holy sites.

CLASS ABILITIES

In Alessia, monks follow a specific progression – learning first a fighting style and secondly (at 3rd level), discovering and finding a master. The monk then studies under that master until they are ready to dedicate themselves to a monastic order, which most do by the time they reach 6th level.

- ***Defensive Stance.*** Starting at 1st level, while you are unarmored (you cannot wear a shield) and carrying no more than a light load, you may enter a defensive stance as an Action or, if you can perceive an incoming attack, as a Reaction. While in this defensive stance, you gain a bonus to your Armor Class equal to 10 plus your Wisdom and Dexterity modifiers, combined.

- ***Fighting Style.*** Starting at 1st level, you learn a fighting style. Select one of the following styles. You gain its benefits. You may select a 2nd style when you reach 14th level.
- ***Crimson Monkey Style.*** Your Armor Class increases by 1. You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks while wrestling, grappling an opponent, and while trying to break free from a grapple. Additionally, you may spend a point of ki to gain a bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier on your next Strength (Athletics) check.
At 5th level you learn the spell *jump*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.
At 14th level. You learn the Crimson Sal Kata, a powerful kata that lets you spend a point of ki to make a ranged spell attack against an enemy as a Bonus action. If you succeed, the target takes 5d8 points of psychic damage. A target that succeeds on a Constitution save takes half.
- ***Gold Crane Style.*** Your unarmed strikes deal a d6 points of damage. This damage increases to 2d4 when you reach 8th level as normal. You use your Dexterity modifier instead of Strength for attack and damage rolls when using your unarmed strike or a monk weapon.

When you spend a point of resolve as a bonus action, you may cover your hands in a golden mantle of flame. Your unarmed strikes deal an additional 1d6 points of radiant damage until the beginning of your next turn.

At 5th level you learn the spell *bless* and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

CLASS FEATURES

As a monk, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d4 per monk level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 2d4 (or 5) plus your Constitution modifier per monk level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: None.
Weapons: Simple weapons, special monk weapons.
Tools: Choose one type of tool or kit associated with your monastery.
Saving Throws: Dexterity, Wisdom
Skills: Choose three from Acrobatics, Athletics, History, Insight, Perception, Religion, and Stealth.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any equipment granted by your background.

- (a) magitech energy staff, or (b) any simple weapon of your choice.
- (a) an traveler's pack or (b) an explorer's pack.
- 10 darts.

TABLE: THE MONK

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS	MELEE STRIKE DAMAGE	KI POINTS	UNARMORED MOVEMENT	FEATURES
1	+2	1D4	–	+5 FT.	DEFENSIVE STANCE, FIGHTING STYLE
2	+2	1D4	3	+5 FT.	KI ADEPT
3	+2	1D4	4	+5 FT.	DEFLECT MISSILES, REVEALED MASTER
4	+2	1D6	5	+5 FT.	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
5	+3	1D6	6	+10 FT.	EXTRA ATTACK, KI STRIKE I
6	+3	1D6	7	+10 FT.	MONASTIC ORDER
7	+3	1D6	8	+10 FT.	EVASION, SPIRIT SIGHT
8	+3	2D4	9	+10 FT.	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
9	+4	2D4	10	+15 FT.	KI STRIKE II
10	+4	2D4	11	+15 FT.	KI MASTER
11	+4	2D4	12	+15 FT.	SECRET OF THE ORDER
12	+4	2D6	13	+15 FT.	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
13	+5	2D6	14	+20 FT.	KI STRIKE III
14	+5	2D6	15	+20 FT.	SECOND STYLE
15	+5	2D6	16	+20 FT.	SECRET OF THE ORDER
16	+5	2D8	17	+20 FT.	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
17	+6	2D8	18	+25 FT.	KI STRIKE IV
18	+6	2D8	19	+25 FT.	SECRET OF THE ORDER
19	+6	2D8	20	+25 FT.	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
20	+6	2D0	21	+25 FT.	SECECRET OF THE ORDER

At 14th level. You learn the Golden Kata, a revered kata that allows you spend a point of ki to make a ranged spell attack against an enemy as a bonus action. If you succeed, the target takes 5d8 points of radiant damage. You may spend a second point of ki to stun the target unless they succeed on a Constitution saving throw.

• ***Jade Star Style.*** Your speed increases by 10 feet while you are not wearing armor or wielding a shield. This bonus increases to 15 feet when you reach 9th level (as normal). You have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks.

When you spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action, you may increase your speed further, gaining an additional 10 feet of movement for each point of resolve you spend, up to a total of 4 points of resolve. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

At 5th level. You learn the spell *heroism,* and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

At 14th level. You learn the Dance of Jade Daggers, a wicked kata that allows you spend a point of ki to make a ranged spell attack against an enemy as a Bonus action. If you succeed, the target takes 5d8 points of psychic damage. If you spend a second point of ki, you may double this damage.

• ***Silver Jaguar Style.*** You can add your Wisdom modifier to the damage rolls of your unarmed strikes and monk weapons.

When you spend a point of ki as bonus action, you may treat your unarmed strikes as both silver and magical until the beginning of your next turn.

At 5th level. You learn the spell *longstrider* and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

At 14th level. You learn the Silver Strike of the First Monk, a fantastic maneuver that allows you spend a point of ki to make an Attack against an adjacent enemy as a bonus action. If you succeed, the target takes 5d8 points of bludgeoning damage + your Strength modifier. If you spend a second point of ki, you may opt to remove a single spell from the target unless they succeed on a Dexterity saving throw.

• ***Ki Adept.*** Starting at 2nd level, you learn to unlock the ambient magical energies around you, attuning them to your chakras and imprinting them into your aura. You gain a pool of 3 ki Points, which slowly increases as you grow in power (see Table: The Monk on page 153).

You can spend these ki points in a number of ways, including to activate all of your abilities, as well as those of your order.

Whenever you spend a point of ki to activate one of your monk abilities or features, that point is spent from the pool and remains unavailable until you've completed either a short or long rest. You regain all of your ki when you complete a long rest with no effort. Drawing all of your ki back into you during a short rest, however, is taxing. You regain only half of your ki pool each time you take a short rest.

Some of your monk abilities require the targets to make saving throws to resist their effects. Whenever a monk ability calls for such a save, the saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Ki Save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier.

• ***Deflect Missiles.*** Starting at 3rd level, you can use your Reaction to deflect or catch an incoming missile attack. When you do, roll 2d6 and add your Wisdom score modifier (2d6 + x). If you reduce the total damage taken to zero (or greater) and the missile weighs less than 10 lbs., you can instead choose to catch it. If you spend 1 point of ki after successfully catching a missile, you can immediately throw the caught item as part of the same Reaction. This thrown weapon deals 1d6 plus your Strength score modifier points of damage.

Starting at 5th level, you may deflect energy weapons and redirect their blasts as if they were regular missiles, provided you have an item, shield, or weapon in hand capable of withstanding the initial damage.

• ***Revealed Master.*** Monks often spend years learning the basics of civil responsibility before discovering a teacher. You gain a teacher whose alignment matches your own. This individual represents one of the dozens of hidden monastic schools that train monks around Alessia. If you reject your master, you must wait a month before another (again, matching your alignment) approaches you. Once you embrace a monastic path,

that master teaches you one of the following lessons:

• ***The Art of Listening.*** You learn the spell *zone of truth* and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

• ***Fire's Teacher.*** You learn the spell *flame blade*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

• ***The Lesson of Silence.*** You learn the spell *silence*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

• ***The Moon's Lesson.*** You learn the spell *darkvision*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

• ***Wood's Secret.*** You learn the spell *barkskin*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of ki to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again.

• ***Ability Score Improvement.*** When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, and 16th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

• ***Extra Attack.*** Beginning at 5th level, you may attack twice (instead of once) whenever you take the Attack action on your turn. The number of attacks you can take on your turn increases to three at 11th level. When you reach 20th level in this class, you may attack up to four times when you take the Attack action on your turn.

• ***Ki Strike.*** You gain the ability to channel your ki through your melee strikes. When you do, your strikes are considered to be magical (the equivalent of a +1 weapon); these strikes improve to +2 at level 9, and finally to +3 at level 13. When you reach 17th level, you can add an additional effect to your Ki Strikes.

• ***Monastic Order.*** After proving yourself to your master, the path to your school is opened. You gain a monastic order, and with it, gain an important secret. Your order teaches you additional secrets at levels 11, 15, and 18. The following orders are described below.

• ***Evasion.*** Starting at 7th level, you learn to dodge certain spells, effects, and hazards (such as an exploding sky ship or the *fireball* spell) with ease. When you are subjected to an effect that requires you to make a Dexterity saving throw to halve the damage, you instead take no damage when you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

• ***Spirit Sight.*** Starting at 7th level, you gain the ability to look beyond the mundane and into the invisible realm of the kaima. You can, as a bonus action, spend 1 point of ki to activate your spirit sight, granting you the ability to see all kaima within 60 feet. This ability lasts for 10 minutes. You must complete a short rest before you activate this ability again.

• ***Ki Master.*** Starting at 10th level, your work with ki energy attunes you with the Crystal Lattice, evolving your physical and psychic bodies. You have resistance to psychic and thunder damage.

• ***Finishing Move.*** Starting at 14th level, you learn your fighting school's finishing move.

• ***School's Final Secret.*** You learn the final secret of your monastic school. You become a master of that school.

MONASTIC ORDERS

The world of Alessia has thousands of hidden orders, many of which teach a single philosophical approach to living in Alessia. Many of these orders align themselves with the elements and objects (or sites) of significance, although some focus on abstract concepts as well. Alessia's three biggest orders are described below:

THE ORDER OF THE CLAW

Monks of the order focus the majority of their effort refining and mastering their understanding of martial combat, with most monks focusing on speed and agility. Claw monks train with a small selection of special bladed weapons they call their 'claws,' although the order itself has no official weapon it champions.

• ***Order Secret: Wounding Strikes.*** When you join the order, you undergo a secret ritual that grants you magical claws. Your unarmed strikes deal bludgeoning or slashing damage (your choice) when make an unarmed strike. Additionally, you know how to make

your unarmed strikes hurt. You may spend a point of ki while making the Attack action to add an additional 1d6 points of bleeding damage to the total damage dealt during the round.

• ***Order Secret: Poison Strike.*** Starting at 11th level, you learn to focus your ki into a strong poison with which you can coat your claws. You may, as a bonus action, spend a point of ki to coat your claws in a potent poison that deals 5d8 points of poison damage. Targets who fail their Constitution saving throw are poisoned for 2d4 hours. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Order Secret: Blade Ward.*** Starting at 15th level, you gain immunity to slashing damage.

• **Order Secret: Flurry of Claws.** Starting at 18th level, you learn to let your fury guide your strikes. Immediately after you take the Attack action on your turn, you can spend a point of ki to make four additional strikes as a bonus action. Your Armor Class improves by 2 points until the beginning of your next turn. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• **Order Secret: Gift of the Dragon**. Starting at 20th level, you gain immunity to slashing damage. Your unarmed attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

THE ORDER OF THE HEART

Monks of the Order of the Heart spend decades studying a process they call 'spiritual alchemy.' Through this process, these monks slowly work through each of their emotions, slowly mastering each in turn.

• ***Order Secret: Heart's Secret Defense.*** Shortly after joining the Order of the Heart, you learn to suppress your fear. Starting at 6th level, you gain advantage on saving throws against fear or any effects that would result in you gaining the frightened condition. You may spend a point of ki as a reaction to immediately end one effect on yourself that is causing you to be frightened.

• ***Order Secret: Courage of the Ancients.*** Starting at 11th level, you gain immunity to fear and fear-based effects. You cannot gain the frightened condition.

• ***Order Secret: Heart's First Law.*** Starting at 15th level, you double your proficiency bonus on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws. Whenever you fail one of these saving throws, you can spend one point of ki to reroll and take the second result.

• ***Order Secret: Heart's Second Law.*** Starting at 18th level, you learn to expand the emotional strength to those around you. You can spend 4 points of ki as a bonus action to grant up to four of your allies advantage on their Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom saving throws for up to 1 minute. These allies must touch you to gain the benefits of this ability. Your allies must complete a short rest before they can gain any benefits from this ability again.

• ***Order Secret: Heart's Final Law.*** Starting at 20th level, you can spend 4 points of ki to channel an aura out a distance of 60 feet that protects your allies from fear and mental influences of all kinds. For 1 minute (or until you lose concentration), each of your allies within 60 feet that starts its turn in your aura gains resistance to psychic damage and advantage on their Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom saving throws.

THE ORDER OF THE SCALE

The Order of the Scale is one of Alessia's oldest monastic traditions, and its monks some of Alessia's toughest warriors. These monk-warriors hold tightly to a vision of Alessia that the Asaræl Dragons described in the Dragon's Secret Prophecy, an ancient tome penned during Alessia's first millennia, long before Galgaræ crashed into the world.

• ***Order Secret: Steel Scales.*** Monks who join the Order of the Scales learn a secret martial technique that allows them to withstand unbelievable amounts of damage. You can, as a reaction to an attack, spend a point of ki to gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage for up to 1 minute.

• ***Order Secret: Dragon Monk's Mantle.*** Starting at 11th level, when you spend 1 point of ki as a Reaction, you gain immunity to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage for up to 1 minute. You must complete a long rest before you can activate this ability again.

• ***Order Secret: Dragon Shield Stance.*** Starting at 15th level, you can spend 2 points of ki to enter the Dragon Shield Stance. While in this stance, you have a +8 bonus to your Armor Class and resistance to fire and cold damage. This stance lasts until the beginning of your next turn. You can use this stance up to three times before you must complete a short rest.

• ***Order Secret: Scales of Judgement.*** Starting at 18th level, you learn a powerful kata that punishes your enemies when they strike you. You can spend 2 points of ki to enter the Stance of Scales. While in this stance, you have advantage on Constitution, Dexterity, and Intelligence saving throws. Additionally, whenever an enemy physically strikes you in combat, you may spend 3 points of ki as a reaction to retaliate, dealing 10d10 points of psychic damage. When you activate this ability, your target may make a Wisdom saving throw to reduce this damage by half. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

Order Secret: Asaræl's Secret. Starting at 20th level, you can spend 4 points of ki to channel a draconic aura out a distance of 60 feet that protects your allies from physical damage. For 1 minute (or until you lose concentration), each of your allies within 60 feet that starts its turn in your aura gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

THE NINJA

Warriors who have embraced the shadow, Alessia's ninjas use a combination of dirty fighting, stealth, and ki to defeat their master's enemies. Like the ninjas of other worlds, Alessia's ninja belong to a number of clans, houses, and orders, each embracing a different style and technique. Most of the ninja operating in and around the Empire of Xian belong to Clan Ajannanaki, Clan Ishiwanna, or Clan Taganako.

CLASS ABILITIES

Ninjas gain the following:

• ***Sneak Attack.*** Beginning at 1st level, you know how to subtly strike your enemies with precision and grace, exploiting their weakness to deliver crippling blows. Once per turn, you can add a number of d4s (see the Ninja Table_ to the damage you deal on a melee or ranged attack you just successfully made against an enemy who wasn't aware of you (you must have advantage on an attack to apply your sneak attack damage).

You can omit the need for advantage on this attack if your enemy is sleeping, bound, incapacitated, or otherwise helpless in some way that restricts them from defending themselves. Likewise, if one or more of your allies is adjacent to and attacking your foe, you are considered to have advantage for the purpose of making sneak attacks.

Your sneak attack damage increases every other level, to a maximum of 10d4 at 20th level.

• ***Optimized Armor.*** You learn to construct a set of specialized armor you can optimize around your physical strengths, allowing you special advantages in combat. This optimized armor grants you an Armor Class equal to 8 plus your proficiency bonus plus your Dexterity modifier. It takes at least 50 Yuan in materials and 15 minutes to create a set of optimized armor. You can only make a single set of armor at a time.

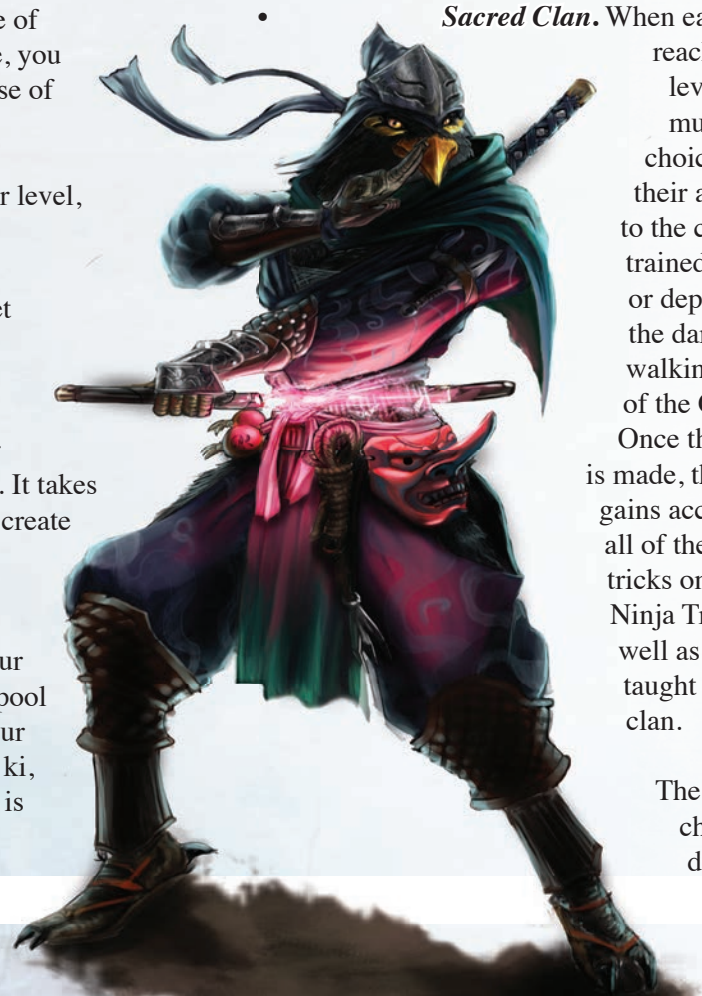
• ***Ki Adept.*** Starting at 2nd level, you unlock your first mystical secret as a ninja, gaining a small pool of ki with which you can perform that trick. Your access to this mystical energy is represented as ki, and the number of ki points you have access to is determined by your level, which you can find in the ki points column on Table: The Ninja (next page).

You can spend these ki points in a number of ways, including to activate all of your clan's secret abilities and a number of additional tricks, some of which are listed below. You gain a single ninja trick at 2nd level and another at levels 7, 11, 15, and 17.

Whenever you spend a point of ki to activate one of your tricks, that point is spent from the pool and remains unavailable until you've completed either a short or long rest. Regain all of your ki when you complete a long rest with no effort. Drawing all of your ki back into you during a short rest, however, is taxing, and you regain only half of your ki pool each time you take a short rest.

Some of your ninja tricks require the targets to make saving throws to resist their effects. When a ninja trick calls for such a save, the saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

Ki Save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.



• ***Sacred Clan.*** When each ninja reaches 3rd level, they must make a choice: swear their allegiance to the clan that trained them or depart into the darkness, walking the Path of the Genin. Once this choice is made, the ninja gains access to the all of the general tricks on Table: Ninja Tricks, as well as those taught by their clan.

The clan you choose directly

shapes the bonus tricks and techniques your character can learn later on.

CLASS FEATURES

As a ninja, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d4 per ninja level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 2d4 (or 5) plus your Constitution modifier per ninja level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: Light armor, optimized armor.
Weapons: Simple weapons, ninja special weapons.
Tools: None
Saving Throws: Dexterity, Intelligence
Skills: Choose four from Acrobatics, Athletics, Deception, Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, Persuasion, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, and Street.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any equipment granted by your background.

- (a) a shortsword or (b) a simple weapon of your choice.
- (a) a set of studded leather armor or (b) an optimized armor kit.
- 10 ceramic throwing blades.

- ***Ability Score Improvement.*** When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, and 16th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

TABLE: THE NINJA

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Sneak Attack Damage	Ki Points	Shadow Leap	Features
1	+2	1d4	–	–	Sneak Attack, Optimized Armor
2	+2	1d4	2	–	Ki Adept, Ninja Trick
3	+2	2d4	3	+10 ft.	Sacred Clan
4	+2	2d4	4	+10 ft.	Ability Score Improvement
5	+3	3d4	5	+10 ft.	Extra Attack
6	+3	3d4	6	+20 ft.	Clan Secret
7	+3	4d4	7	+20 ft.	Ninja Trick
8	+3	4d4	8	+20 ft.	Ability Score Improvement
9	+4	5d4	9	+30 ft.	Vanish
10	+4	5d4	10	+30 ft.	Clan Secret
11	+4	6d4	11	+30 ft.	Ninja Trick
12	+4	6d4	12	+40 ft.	Ability Score Improvement
13	+5	7d4	13	+40 ft.	Extra Attack
14	+5	7d4	14	+40 ft.	Clan Secret
15	+5	8d4	15	+50 ft.	Ninja Trick
16	+5	8d4	16	+50 ft.	Ability Score Improvement
17	+6	9d4	17	+50 ft.	Ninja Trick
18	+6	9d4	18	+60 ft.	Shadow's Gift
19	+6	10d4	19	+60 ft.	Ability Score Improvement
20	+6	10d4	20	+60 ft.	Clan's Final Secret

• ***Extra Attack.*** When you reach 5th level, you can attack twice whenever you take the Attack action on your turn. You make take three attacks when you reach 13th level.

• ***Vanish.*** When you reach 9th level, you learn to step out of sight completely. You may, as a Reaction, spend a point of ki to disappear from sight (as if you had cast the spell *invisibility*) for up to a full minute. If you attack anyone (or perform an activity that would clearly disrupt
your environment), you immediately become visible. You may use this ability twice before you need to complete a short rest.

• ***Clan Secret.*** The slow, steady domination of southern Alessia by the Empire of Xian has left its former ruling clans with a host of secrets and agendas. The clans that still teach the lost art of political, social, and physical assassination have their reasons for doing so. Each clan comes with a secret its adherents must safeguard against outsiders.

Each time you unlock a clan secret, you gain a minor ability to aid you in keeping that secret where it rightly belongs – hidden from all but your beloved clan. You unlock your clan's secrets at levels 6, 10, 14, and 20.

• ***Ninja Trick.*** Beginning at 7th level, you gain a bonus ninja trick every other level until you reach 17th level, at which point you should have 9 ninja tricks in any combination of those learned from the general pool or those taught by your clan. You may trade out tricks whenever you would normally gain a new trick with your GM's approval.

• ***Shadow's Gift.*** Beginning at 18th level, you no longer need to take a short rest before re-activating your *vanish* ability. Every time you use your vanish ability, roll a d4; this is the number of rounds it takes to recharge your vanish ability.

• ***Clan's Final Secret.*** Starting at 20th level, you learn your clan's final secret.

THE CLANS

Although the clans that dominated Elysia before the Empire of Xian brought them to heel have long been extinguished, a collection of lesser clans and families remain behind, each maneuvering to fill their respective voids.

Player characters may select from the following clans or can, with their GM's permission, make their own.

The following clans still train ninjas:

THE AJANNANAKI CLAN

Freelance assassins who work for the highest bidder. Some clans whisper that the Ajannanaki remain subservient to the Empire of Xian, though they claim complete independence and willingly take work targeting imperial agents.

• ***Clan Secret: Imperial Patterns.*** Years of studying imperial tactics have taught you a great deal about how security forces work in urban environments and when needed, how to avoid them. Whenever you are in an urban environment and attempting to escape or evade pursuers, you may spend a point of ki to add a bonus d4 to all the Dexterity (Stealth) and Wisdom (Street) ability check you make until the beginning of your next turn.

• ***Clan Secret: State Sponsored.*** Starting at 6th level, your clan teaches you how to unlock the magic of the state's bureaucracy, using obscure rules, hidden codes, social engineering, and civic ignorance to present yourself as an imperial agent, even when it would otherwise be clear to onlookers that you are not. You may spend a point of ki to cast the spell *disguise self*. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Clan Secret: Passguard.*** Starting at 10th level, you gain the ability to easily talk your way past imperial guardsmen, patrols, and similar groups of authority figures. You may spend a point of ki to cast the spell *charm person* (as a 3rd-level spell), targeting up to three humanoids within range. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Clan Secret: Official Business.*** Starting at 14th level, you gain the ability to step into a completely manufactured social role, becoming a completely new person for the time being. You gain the ability to cast the spell *polymorph* on yourself, which lasts for up to an hour. You may extend this duration by an hour for each ki you spend. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Clan's Final Secret: The Perfect Disguise.*** Starting at 20th level, you learn your clan's final secret –

unlocking the ability to take the form of another being. You can spend a 1 ki point to cast the spell *shapechange*. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

AJANNANAKI CLAN NINJA TRICKS

Ninjas from Clan Ajannanaki focus their studies on the art of deception and social engineering, concentrating their efforts to target bigger governments and security firms. They teach their ninjas the following tricks:

- ***The Forgotten Door Trick.*** You can spend 1 ki point to cast to create a shadowy door that lets you (and no one else) appear up to 10 feet away. When you activate this ability, you appear to become translucent to onlookers for a brief time.

- ***The Harmless Merchant Trick.*** When you spend ki to cast the spell *disguise self,* you can double the ki you spend to create an incredibly convincing disguise. You improve your spell DC for this effect by 2.

- ***The Sword's Singing Sting Trick.*** You can spend a point to grant a weapon you hold that has the finesse property a +1 to hit. All damage it deals until the beginning of your next turn is considered magical.

THE GENIN

Not all ninjas embrace the popular clans. Known more commonly as "the Clanless," Alessia's genin (sometimes called the 'low-folk') are a collective of independent assassins, mercenaries, ex-soldiers, and defectors from other clans. Some of these ninja train independently or in private groups, but all genin share a curse they cannot shake – the singular need to attune to and serve a single city or location.

- ***Clan Secret: City's Hidden Heart.*** Years of operating in your host city have granted you intimate understanding of its underbelly. When you reach 3rd level, instead of forming a bond with a particular clan, you attune with a specific city or location instead. You are always attuned to this location and gain all of the listed benefits below while operating in your beloved city.

Genin may attune to more than a single location, provided they have the slots to do so. Genin who attune with more than one location gain the full use of all their abilities in each city they've selected.

- ***Clan Secret: Molded by the City.*** Starting at 6th level, you double your proficiency bonus on Perception, Stealth, and Street ability checks in your city. You may spend a point of ki to gain advantage on these skills until the beginning of your next turn.

- ***Clan Secret: Back Alley Medicine.*** Starting at 10th level, you gain the ability to cure minor ailments, diseases, and poisons. You can spend a point of ki to cast the spell *lesser restoration*, but you must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

- ***Clan Secret: City Champion.*** Starting at 14th level, you gain an insight into the city around you that few can understand, much less mimic. While operating in a city with which you've attuned, you may spend a point of ki to cast the spell *freedom of movement*, which lasts for 1 minute. You must complete a short rest before you can activate this ability again.

• ***Clan Secret: Path of the Secret King***. Starting at 20th level, you can spend a point of ki to cast the spell *mind blank*, but you may also target yourself and only for half the duration. You must complete a long rest before you can use this ability again.

GENIN NINJA TRICKS

Genin draw their strength not from a clan, but instead from their idea of a place. Although they are primarily solitary, some groups do work interact and teach each other tricks. You may learn the following tricks:

• ***The Lost Door Trick***. Some genin know how to access to spaces between the angles, using these to step into and out of trouble with greater ease. You can spend 1 ki point to cast the spell *dimension door*. You must complete a long rest before using this ability again.

• ***The Maven's Hand Trick***. You can spend 1 ki point to gain advantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks until the beginning of your next turn.

• ***The Smug Bastard's Trick***. You can spend 1 ki point to provoke an enemy, bestowing disadvantage on their Charisma saving throws until the beginning of your next turn unless they succeed on a Charisma saving throw.

THE ISHIWANNA CLAN

This clan of freedom fighters has resisted the Empire of Xian for generations in places such as Qinghshan, where they fill a number of roles as agents provocateurs in and around the border cities. Although their tactics are often wild and unpredictable, they continue to act on legitimate grievances and champion causes others would overlook.

• ***Clan Secret: Connected to the People***. Your clan's connection to the many families displaced by the Empire of Xian is legendary. You easily exploit these connections, gaining boons and connections in places few have heard of, much less been to. Each time you enter a new city, roll a d6. On a roll of 5-6, you recall a single, friendly contact rumored to operate in the area who may be amenable to you and your allies.

• ***Clan Secret: Ishiwanna's Sword***. Starting at 6th level, you learn why all Ishiwanna carry short swords and how to unlock their magic. You may spend a point of ki as a bonus action to cast the spell *magic weapon*. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

• ***Clan Secret: Snake's Second Strike***. Starting at 10th level, you may spend a point of ki to take an additional melee attack on your turn as a bonus action.

• ***Clan Secret: Ishiwanna Sword Dance***. Starting at 14th level, you learn your clan's secret dance, a technique designed to complement warriors who fight with shortswords, long daggers, and blades of similar lengths. Whenever you make an attack with a weapon with the finesse property, you score a critical hit on a natural roll of 18-20.

• ***Clan Secret: Ishiwanna's Perfect Death***. Starting at 20th level, you learn a central piece of the technique your master was refining before he died. At the beginning of your turn, when you roll Initiative, roll a d6. On a roll of 1-2, you recall a bit of this technique, gaining a +1 bonus on all d20 rolls you make over the next minute. On a roll of 3-5, you recall more of your master's dance, gaining a +2 bonus on all d20 rolls you make over the next minute. On a roll of 6, you recall his technique in unnatural clarity, gaining a +4 bonus on all d20 rolls you make over the next minute and 4 points of ki.

CLAN ISHIWANNA'S NINJA TRICKS

Clan Ishiwanna employs an ancient, intense hate for the Empire of Xian that makes targeting authority figures fairly easy. You may learn the following tricks:

• ***The Faithful Corner Trick***. Clan Ishiwanna teaches its ninjas an ancient Alessian technique that allows them to spend a point of ki to cast the spell *dimension door* spell, but only under very specific conditions. These ninjas must be touching the corner of a building and making an escape to cast this spell. Once cast, you must complete a short rest before using this trick again.

• ***The Monkey's Grip Trick***. You can spend 1 ki point to gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks until the beginning of your next turn. This bonus doubles while you're climbing.

THE TAGANAKO CLAN

This clan of ninjas maintains close connections to the black market, as well as to several shadowy cults rumored to maintain connections to Galgaræ. Rumored to traffic in illicit drugs and toxins, this clan trains the

most ruthless ninjas of all of Alessia.

• ***Clan Secret: Poison's Sweet Revenge***. Years of working with poisons and toxins has given you a natural resistance to them. You gain advantage on saving throws against poison and resistance to poison damage.

• ***Clan Secret: Taganako's Black Wrath***. Starting at 6th level, you learn to craft your clan's signature toxin. Brewing a single dose of this toxin is a process that takes 1 hour and costs approximately 20 Yuan to complete. A single dose deals 3d8 points of poison damage. Additionally, you learn to spend a point of ki to quickly (and silently) coat your weapon with your clan's signature toxin. This toxin persists for 1 minute, or until you successfully struck a target with it.

• ***Clan Secret: Taganako's Wrathful Strike***. Starting at 10th level, you may spend a point of ki to take two additional ranged attacks on your turn as a bonus action.

• ***Clan Secret: Taganako's Final Revenge***. Starting at 14th level, you learn your clan's last secret – a magical glyph that can possess and poison an enemy a number of days later. You can spend a point of ki to cast the spell *geas*. This spell behaves in all ways like as described, except that it deals poison damage instead of psychic damage. You must complete a long rest before you can use this ability again.

CLAN TAGANAKO'S NINJA TRICKS

Clan Taganako has a wide array of tricks, powers, and black arts that it routinely calls on to execute its will in the larger world. Its agents and ninjas regularly learn the following tricks:

• ***The Poisoner's Blessing***. Clan Taganako knows poisons better than just about anyone else. You can spend a point of ki to perform a short, 5-minute ceremony that temporarily render another individual immune to poison for 10 minutes. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***The Poisoner's Curse***. You can spend 1 point of ki to temporarily strengthen the potency of a toxin or poison with a touch (as a bonus action). When you do, you increase its DC by +3 until the beginning of your next turn. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***The Withering Strike***. Whenever you critically strike an opponent with a melee attack in combat, you can spend a point of ki to add an additional 3d8 points of poison damage to that attack. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

GENERAL NINJA TRICKS

• ***Assassin's Focus***. You can spend 1 ki point to gain a bonus d4 when you make your next ranged attack.

• ***Assassin's Obsessive Strike***. You can spend 1 ki point to add d6 points of damage to a ranged attack you just made.

• ***Bladeturn***. You can spend 1 ki point to gain resistance to piercing and slashing damage until the beginning of your next turn.

• ***Bladebreaker's Curse.*** You can spend 1 ki point to gain an acidic taint to your blood that deals damage to weapons that strike you. When you spend a single point of ki, you gain this ability for 1 minute. Weapons that strike you must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or suffer 1d4 points of acid damage.

• ***Deceptive Defense.*** You can spend 1 ki point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on your turn.

• ***Deflect Missiles.*** You can spend 1 ki point to reduce the damage you take from a ranged attack by 1d10 + your Dexterity modifier + your ninja level.

• ***Display of Prowess.*** You can spend 1 ki point to add your ninja level to your next Charisma (Intimidation) ability check.

• ***Flurry of Blows.*** You can spend 1 ki point to make two unarmed strikes as a Bonus action on your turn.

• ***Flurry of Stars.*** You can spend 1 ki point to make two ranged attacks as a bonus action on your turn. You may only throw light weapons that have the throw and finesse weapon properties.

• ***Step of the Wind.*** You can spend 1 ki point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on your turn. You jump distance is doubled for that turn.

• ***Studied Target.*** You can spend 1 ki point to ignore a target's cover, provided it does not have total cover relative to you when you activate this ability.

• ***Thief's Secret.*** You can spend 1 ki point to gain a bonus d4 on all Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) ability checks you make until the beginning of your next turn.

• ***Tumble Away.*** You can spend 1 ki point to take the Disengage action as a bonus action while you are prone.

DEV LORE: NINJA DRESS

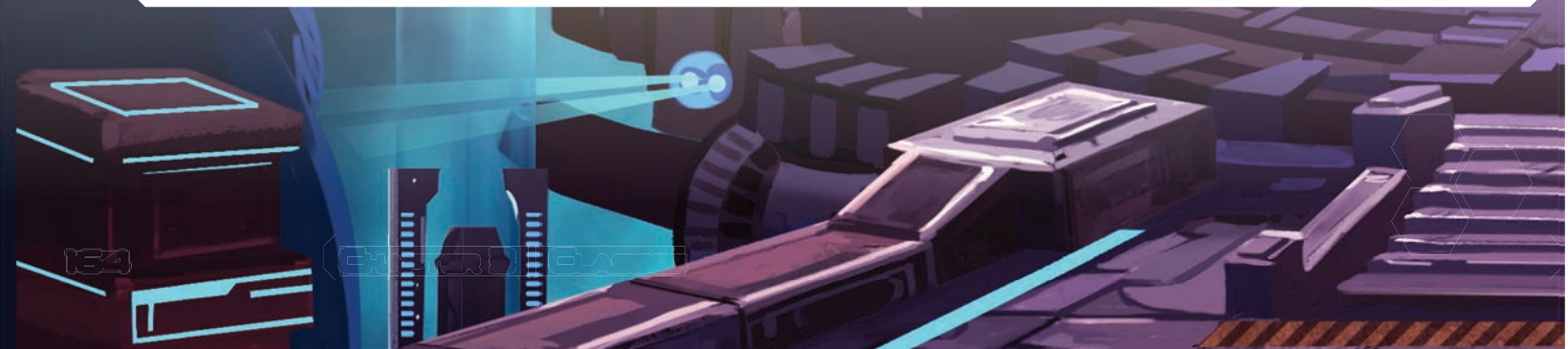
While ninja operate throughout Alessia, they populate the southern parts of the known world in far greater numbers. As a result, ninja commonly dress in thin, lightly armored in ninja-yoroi that range in color from browns and greens to traditional blacks.

~Jaye

DEV LORE: NINJA WEAPONS

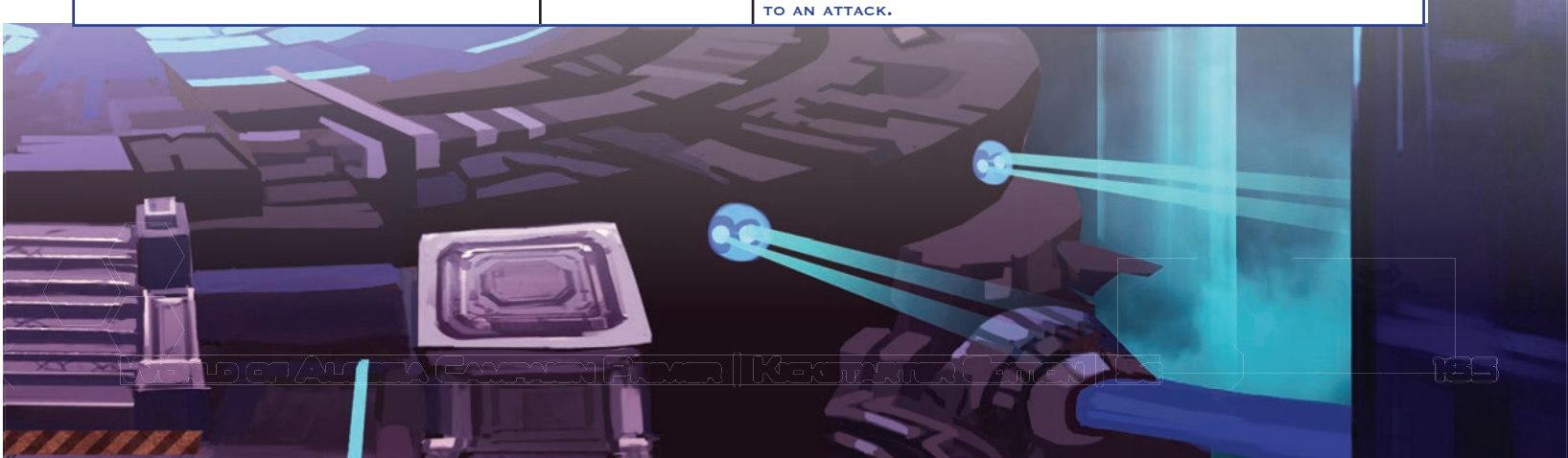
In Alessia, each clan teaches ninjas an array of weapons (and weapon groups) designed to help that clan achieve its ultimate goals – whether those goals are supremacy in combat or the mimicry of another clan's style. The following weapons are all considered 'ninja weapons' in the World of Alessia. Although the traditional, melee versions of these weapons are presented here, magitech (energy-based) versions exist for all. In the case of all energy-based weapons, change the damage type to force.

NINJA WEAPONS	COST	DAMAGE	RANGE	WEIGHT	PROPERTIES
BUTTERFLY SWORD	12 YUAN	1D6 SLASHING	MELEE	3 LBS.	FINESSE
CHAIN	25 YUAN	1D4 BLUDGEONING	MELEE, REACH	3 LBS.	FINESSE
KATANA	180 YUAN	1D10 SLASHING	MELEE	4 LBS.	–
KAWANAGA	120 YUAN	1D4 SLASHING	MELEE, REACH	3 LBS.	FINESSE
NAGAMAKI	80 YUAN	1D10 SLASHING	MELEE, REACH	4 LBS.	–
NINJA-TO	20 YUAN	1D8 SLASHING	MELEE	3 LBS.	FINESSE
SHURIKEN	1 YUAN (EA)	1D4 PIERCING	25/50	½ LBS.	FINESSE, LIGHT, THROWN
WAKIZASCHI	220 YUAN	1D6 SLASHING	MELEE	2 LBS.	FINESSE, LIGHT



Ninja Tricks

Ninja Trick	Prerequisite	Description
Assassin's Focus	General	You spend a point of ki to gain a bonus d4 on your next ranged attack roll.
The Assassin's Obsessive Strike Trick	General	You spend a point of ki to gain a bonus d6 die of damage on your next ranged attack.
The Blade Breaker's Curse	General	You spend a point of ki to deal additional acid damage with a weapon.
The Blade Turn Trick	General	You spend a point of ki to gain resistance to piercing and slashing damage until the beginning of your next turn.
The Deceptive Defense Trick	General	You can spend a point of ki to take the Dodge action as a Bonus action this round.
The Deflect Missiles Trick	General	You spend a point of ki to ignore some damage.
The Display of Prowess Trick	General	You spend a point of ki to gain advantage on Intimidate checks.
The Flurry of Blows	General	You spend a point of ki to make two unarmed attacks as a bonus action.
The Flurry of Stars	General	You spend a point of ki to make two additional ranged attacks on your turn as a bonus action.
The Faithful Corner Trick	Clan Ishiwanna	You spend a point of ki to leave a corner via the spell *dimension door*.
The Forgotten Door Trick	Clan Ajannanaki	You appear up to 10 feet away.
The Harmless Merchant Trick	Clan Ajannanaki	You spend ki to cast *disguise self*.
The Lost Door Trick	The Genin	You spend a point of ki to cast the spell *dimension door*.
The Maven's Hand Trick	The Genin	You spend a point of ki to gain advantage on Sleight of Hand checks.
The Monkey's Grip Trick	Clan Ishiwanna	You spend a point of ki to gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks.
The Poisoner's Blessing	Clan Taganako	You spend a point of ki to render someone immune to poison for 10 minutes.
The Poisoner's Curse	Clan Taganako	You spend a point of ki to increase the potency of a poison by +3.
The Smug Bastard's Trick	The Genin	You spend a point of ki to grant a foe disadvantage on Charisma checks.
The Step of the Wind Trick	General	You spend a point of ki to take the Disengage or Dash action on your turn as a Bonus action.
The Studied Target Trick	General	You spend a point of ki to ignore everything but total cover relative to a target.
The Sword's Singing Sting Trick	Clan Ajannanaki	You spend a point of ki to gain a +1 to hit with a finesse weapon.
Thief's Secret	General	You spend a point of ki to gain a bonus d4 on a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks.
Tumble Away	General	You spend a point of ki to take the disengage action as a bonus action, doing so from the prone positiion.
The Withering Strike	Clan Taganako	You can spend a point of ki to add 3d8 points of poison damage to an attack.



THE ORACLE

Although the War of Sovereigns has long since passed, remnants of both the Light and Dark remain, and those able to pluck those sweet tunes from the Song of the Spheres are a rare breed indeed. Alessia's oracles are special beings – individuals whose genetic material is naturally receptive to the Light and its eternal echo throughout the Celestial Spheres.

Although they have heard the celestial echoes, Alessia's oracles discover the truth of the Light through a series of successive revelations, many of which come with their own conditions attached.

CLASS ABILITIES

Oracles gain the following class abilities:

• ***Spellcasting.*** Like many who plumb the divine realms in search of the Sovereigns of Light, you learn a number of sacred mantras, prayers, and rituals to aid you along the way. Your passionate search for these lost Sovereigns powers these spells.

• ***Spell Slots.*** The Oracle Table (page 168) shows you how many spell slots you have of 1st level or higher. To cast an oracle spell, you must know the spell and have an available spell slot (or higher) into which you can cast the spell. Each time you cast a spell you expend a spell slot. You regain all of your expended spell slots when you complete a long rest.

• ***Spellcasting Ability.*** Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for your spells, which require a gentle dedication and reflection to unlock. While others use logic to access Alessia's magic, you pull it gently from the Light that permeates throughout all. You use your Wisdom whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability.

In addition, you use your Wisdom modifier when setting the saving throw DC for an oracle spell you cast, and when making an attack roll with a spell.

• ***Spell Save.*** The DC of any of your spells is equal to 8 plus your proficiency bonus plus your Wisdom modifier.

• ***Spell Attack Modifier Your spell attack modifier.*** equals your proficiency bonus plus your Wisdom modifier.

You begin play knowing three 1st-level spells from the oracle spell list.

• ***Learning New Spells.*** Each time you gain a new oracle level, add 2 new spells to the list of oracle spells you can cast. Each spell you learn must be of a level you can cast.

• ***Oracle's Luck.*** Oracles possess a strange connection to the Light that allows them to magically transform their failures into successes. Whenever you fail a d20 roll by 10 or more, you may elect to reroll with advantage. Once you've used this ability, you must complete a short rest before you can use it again.

• ***Mystery School.*** When you reach 3rd level, you may select a Mystery School in which to study. This school will shape your faith, as well as your understanding of Alessia and its many peoples. Each of the sacred lessons you learn later will come from this school, as well.

CLASS FEATURES

As an oracle, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d4 per oracle level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 2d4 (or 5) plus your Constitution modifier per oracle level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: None.
Weapons: Simple weapons.
Tools: Meditation kit.
Saving Throws: Wisdom, Charisma
Skills: Choose two from Drive, History, Insight, Piloting, Persuasion, Perception, Religion, and Technology.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any equipment granted by your background.

- (a) baton or (b) a simple weapon of your choice.
- A ceremonial kit

TABLE: THE ORACLE

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features
1	+2	Spells
2	+2	Oracle's Luck
3	+2	Mystery School
4	+2	Ability Score Improvement
5	+2	Light's Grace
6	+3	Sacred Lesson
7	+3	Attunement
8	+3	Ability Score Improvement
9	+3	Sacred Vow
10	+3	Sacred Lesson
11	+4	Attunement
12	+4	Ability Score Improvement
13	+4	Sacred Vow
14	+4	Sacred Lesson
15	+4	Attunement
16	+5	Ability Score Improvement
17	+5	Sacred Vow
18	+5	Sacred Lesson
19	+5	Ability Score Improvement
20	+5	Oracle's Revelation

Table: Oracle Spells By Level

Level	Cantrips	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	2	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	3	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	3	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	3	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	3	4	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	4	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
9	4	4	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
10	4	4	4	3	3	1	—	—	—	—
11	4	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
12	4	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
13	4	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
14	5	5	5	4	4	2	1	1	—	—
15	5	5	5	4	4	3	1	1	—	—
16	5	5	5	5	4	3	2	1	1	—
17	5	6	5	5	4	3	2	1	1	—
18	5	6	5	5	5	4	2	2	1	1
19	5	6	5	5	5	4	2	2	1	1
20	5	6	6	6	5	4	3	2	1	1

• ***The Mysteries.*** When an oracle selects a mystery school at 3rd level, the oraacle selects one focused on one (or more) of the following mysteries:

The Mysteries of Sovereign Athica, The Divine Smith. Oracles of Sovereign Athica understand the miracles of the Light through the great divine artifacts that populate Alessia. These oracles seek to understand the Great Ring that surrounds Alessia and its divine connection to the Light.

The Mysteries of Sovereign Heimithar, The Divine Guardian. Oracles of Sovereign Heimithar study the Light through a narrow lens, focusing on defending society and ensuring the safety of those who still honor the Sovereigns. These oracles become mighty warriors, using the Light to shape the battlefield.

The Mysteries of Sovereign Sillian, The Great Healer. Oracles who seek to understand Sillian's mysteries study the healing arts, focusing on the various species who walk Alessia and how best to treat them. Oracles of the Great Healer often work in the Healing Houses that populate the Empire of Xian.

• ***Ability Score Improvement.*** When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, and 16th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

• ***Light's Grace.*** When you reach 5th level, you learn to unlock the full bounty of the Light. You may spend a point of resolve to activate this ability. When you do, you and three of your nearby allies (within 10 feet) gain advantage on all saving throws for the next minute. You must complete a long short before using this ability again.

• ***Sacred Lesson.*** Each mystery school has its lessons and yours is no different. When you reach 6th level, and again at levels 10 and 14, you unlock one of your school's sacred lessons.

• ***Vow of the Heart.*** When you select the Vow of the Heart, you pledge yourself to treating the injured and wounded. You must heal those who request it, provided such healing does not bring harm to others (you need not heal those would use their restored vitality to harm others). Provided you keep this vow, you gain access to the spell *cure wounds*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 1 point of resolve to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again using resolve.

• ***Vow of Knowledge.*** You vow never to destroy knowledge or information of any kind. You go out of

your way to copy, preserve, hide, secure, and keep safe any and all information you can, even if it doesn't belong to you. You break this vow when you allow information to be destroyed. Provided you keep this vow, you gain access to the spell *identify*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 1 point of resolve to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again using resolve.

• ***Vow of Poverty.*** You vow to transfer your personal wealth to those in need whenever you can, keeping only the barest necessities for yourself. You vow to give to the poor, feed the starving, and embrace all those who call out in need. Provided you keep this vow, you increase your pool of ki by 5. You must be 11th level before selecting this vow. Provided you keep this vow, you gain access to the spell *detect thoughts*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 1 point of resolve to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again using resolve.

• ***Vow of Service.*** You pledge yourself to a nation, king, emperor, warlord, or other authority figure. You pledge to keep their dictates, gather their resources, protect their lines, and serve their citizens. You must be 11th level before selecting this vow.

Provided you keep this vow, you gain access to the spell *dispel magic*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 3 points of resolve to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again using resolve.

• ***Vow of the Shield.*** When you select this vow, you pledge yourself to seek and defend those who serve the Light. You actively seek the followers of the Light, its priesthood, and all those who might bear its seed. You protect them with equal fidelity.

Provided you keep this vow, you gain access to the spell *shield*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 1 point of resolve to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again using resolve.

• ***Vow of Silence.*** When you select this vow, you pledge not to speak. Provided you keep this vow, you gain access to the spell *silence*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 2 points of resolve to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again using resolve.

• ***Vow of the Truth.*** You pledge yourself to the truth that exists beyond nations, emperors, kingdoms, and families. You vow to never speak a falsehood and to reveal all those who do, regardless of position, family, or renown. You break this vow when you use the Deception skill. You must be 11th level before selecting this vow.

Provided you keep this vow, you gain access to the spell *tongues*, and Wisdom is your casting ability score for it. You spend 3 points of resolve to cast this spell. You must complete a short rest before you can cast it again using resolve.

• ***Order's Revelation.*** When you reach 20th level, you learn your order's revelation.

Oracles can choose from the following mysteries:

THE MYSTERIES OF SOVEREIGN ATHICA, THE DIVINE SMITH

Oracles of Sovereign Athica learn the following sacred lessons as they level up:

• ***Master Smith.*** Starting at 3rd level, your focus on the Divine Smith yields technical insights normally reserved for engineers and teckers.

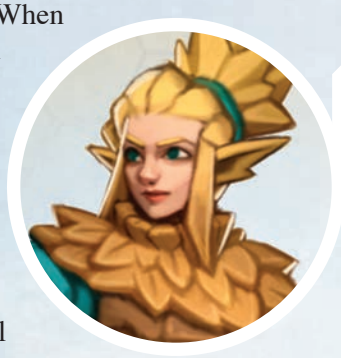
You double your proficiency bonus when making Intelligence (Technology) skill checks to uncover problems, innovate solutions, or just to repair damaged equipment or systems.

• ***Smith's Healing Hand.*** Starting at 6th level, you learn to use the Light to repair constructs, sentients, intelligent systems, and similar hardware. Whenever you cast a healing spell such as *cure wounds*, you may target (and effect) constructs.

• ***Disruptive Hand.*** Starting at 10th level, you learn to use the Light to shut down magitech. You learn the arcane spell *disrupt magitech*, which you may cast as a divine spell. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability score for this spell. You may spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to cast this spell. You must complete a long rest before you can use this ability to cast this spell again (using resolve).

• ***Ring's Blessing.*** Starting at 14th level, you learn the spell *teleport*, which you can cast as a divine spell. You may prepare this spell as normal. You may, as a Bonus action, spend 2 points of resolve to cast this spell as an Action, even if you haven't prepared it. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Sovereign Athica's Secret.*** When you reach 20th level, you learn Sovereign Athica's Secret. Each morning, when you prepare your spells, you may invest 3 points of resolve to create a special contingency that *teleports* you from danger while applying a second, lower-level spell.



THE MYSTERIES OF SOVEREIGN HEIMITHAR, THE DIVINE GUARDIAN

Oracles of Sovereign Heimithar learn the following sacred lessons as they level up:

• ***Tactician.*** Starting at 3rd level, your focus on combat and defensive tactics grants you a slight advantage in combat. You gain a +1 bonus to your Armor Class.

• ***Harbinger's Bane.*** Starting at 6th level, you learn to let the Light shield you from harm. Whenever you or one of your allies within 10 feet of you must make a saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to the saving throw equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum bonus of +1). You must be conscious to grant this bonus.

• ***Shield of Light.*** Starting at 10th level, you learn to use the Light to strengthen your nearby allies' defenses. You may spend up to three points of resolve to target up to three of your allies (1 point per ally) within 10 feet of you. Those allies gain a +2 bonus to their Armor Class and saving throws for up to one minute. You must complete a short rest before you can activate this ability again.

• ***Light's Purge.*** Starting at 14th level, you learn to use the Light to purge foul magic in a small area. When you spend a point of resolve as an Action, you may cast the spell *dispel magic*, targeting 1d4 spells, spell-like effects, or magical items within 30 feet. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Sovereign Heimithar's Secret.*** When you reach 20th level, you learn to create a powerful barrier of blades made solely from the Light. You learn the spell *light blade barrier*. Whenever you cast the spell, you may spend a point of resolve to force anyone passing through the wall of light blades to roll their Wisdom saving throw with disadvantage.

THE MYSTERIES OF SOVEREIGN SILLIAN, THE GREAT HEALER

Oracles of Sovereign Sillian learn the following sacred lessons as they level up:

• ***Healer's Insightful Caress.*** Starting at 3rd level, you may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to power your healing magic. When you do, you add your Charisma and Wisdom modifier to the total Hit Points healed on any cure spell you cast before the end of your next turn. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.

• ***Healing Hands.*** Starting at 6th level, you learn to heal with a touch. You have a pool of healing power that replenishes at the beginning of each day, immediately after you complete a long rest. This pool has a number of Hit Points equal to 5 x your level plus your Wisdom modifier. You may draw from this pool as you desire. To heal someone, you must be able to safely touch them for a round while you channel the divine light into them. You may spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to draw healing energy from your Hit Points, which you channel into the target you're currently healing. You must complete a long rest before you can use this ability again.

Alternately, you may expend 5 Hit Points from your pool to neutralize one poison (or cure one disease) affecting the target.

• ***Ley Line Channel.*** Starting at 10th level, you learn to use the Light to access the local Ley Lines, and through them, the full glory of the Light's healing magic. You may spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to treat any individual you can see as if they were adjacent to you for the purpose of delivering touch-based healing spells (but not other touch spells). You may spend up to three points of resolve in this manner before you must complete a short rest.

• **Rite of the Healer's Return.** When you reach 14th level, you learn to access the Light to heal the very worst wounds. You may spend a point of resolve as a reaction to unlock an advanced evolutionary trait hidden deep inside your DNA – you instantly heal 15 Hit Points, re-growing small limbs (fingers and ties) in under a minute.

• **Sillian's Final Secret.** When you reach 20th level, you learn Sillian's Final Secret – you learn to access the Crystal Lattice to resurrect the dead. When you spend 3 points of resolve as a bonus action, you touch a nearby slain creature (who didn't die of old age and who hasn't been dead for longer than a century), allowing their willing soul to use the Crystal Lattice to return to its body.

To resurrect someone using this ability, you must place them in either an attuned healer's cage (found in most of the Houses of Healing throughout the Empire of Xian) or a crystal cave for no less than 24 hours. At the end of the period, the willing soul animates its former body, purging all diseases and poisons. Unlike the spell of the same name, the target awakens with only half its Hit Points. This ability closes all fatal wounds and restores any missing body parts as it resurrects you.

ORACLE SPELL LIST

In Alessia, oracles use the cleric's spell list. They had the following spells to this list, as well:

Cantrips (0 Level): Add *message* and *minor illusion*.

1st Level: Add *color spray* and *silent image*.

2nd Level: Add *detect thoughts* and *see invisibility*

3rd Level: Add *hypnotic patterns* and *major image*.

4th Level: Add *hallucinatory terrain*.

5th Level: Add *dream* and *legend lore*.

6th Level: Add *sunbeam*.

7th Level: Add *mirage arcane*.

8th Level: Add *sunburst*.

9th Level: Add *foresight*.

THE PEACEKEEPER

Alessia's Peacekeepers began their journey as servants of the Empire of Xian, where they served as guardians, police, and when needed, as the Emperor's personal guard. Although the majority of Peacekeepers still officially serve the Empire under Héping's Banner, a number of smaller companies, founded and run by retired peacekeepers, now teach and train those same values.

While marauders employ force, violence, and chaos to create change in the world around them, peacekeepers have an older, more ordered approach they endorse. Moreover, peacekeepers train daily in a variety of methods and fighting styles designed to take down targets without inflicting much physical violence. Peacekeepers almost always seek to subdue first, shoot second.

Peacekeepers train for every environment and variable, working hard to ensure they employ the latest technology or magic to safely subdue their targets. As keepers of the peace, they are expected to bring in enemies of the state in good health, so they can be judged and given the appropriate punishments. When those options aren't available to them, Peacekeepers move with ruthless efficiency and deadly precision – eliminating threats without a second thought.

CLASS ABILITIES

Peacekeepers begin play with the following class abilities, which they acquire at the given level:

- ***Streetwise.*** You begin play with Streetwise feat (see the sidebar).

- ***Suppress.*** Whenever you attack a target with a firearm and miss, you can spend a point of resolve to treat any near miss (a miss by 2 or less) as suppressing fire. While a target is being suppressed, it reduces its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class by 1

- ***Share Shield.*** When an ally is adjacent, you can use a Reaction to grant them a +2

shield bonus to their Armor Class until the beginning of your next turn. You may spend a point of resolve to double this bonus.

• ***Focus.*** You gain a pool of focus equal to your proficiency bonus plus your Charisma modifier. As a reaction, you can spend a point of that focus to gain a 1d4, which you can add to an attack. This focus improves to a d6 at 7th level (Improved Focus), d8 at 12th level (Heightened Focus), and finally to a d10 at 17th level (Heroic Focus)

• ***Armored Movement.*** You do not reduce your speed when wearing heavy armor.

• ***Peacekeeper's Path.*** When you reach 3rd level, you select path. This path represents how you understand the Peacekeepers and guides your decision-making process. You may select from the Path of Law, Path of Light, or the Path of the Sentry. Each is described below.

PATH OF LAW

Peacekeepers who follow the Path of Law focus on maintaining law and order throughout the regions they serve. These Peacekeepers follow a strict list of obligations that honor the Emperor, his family, and the Empire of Xian. The largest group of Peacekeepers, these heroes can often speak on behalf of the cities they patrol. Serving in several public roles, these Peacekeepers gain the following abilities:

• ***Bonus Cantrip.*** When you choose the Path of Law, you gain the *blade ward* cantrip if you don't already know it.

STREETWISE

Either through a diligent study of crime or through a life lived in its dark embrace, you have learned to read the streets and the tough people who call them home:
• While in a city or urban environment, you gain a +5 to Initiative.
• While in a city or urban environment, you cannot be surprised while you are awake and conscience.
• While in a city or urban environment, you have advantage on attack rolls against a creature you are grappling.

CLASS FEATURES

As a peacekeeper, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d6 per Peacekeeper level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 12 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 7 (or 2d6) plus your Constitution modifier per peacekeeper level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: All armor, shields (including powered variants).
Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons.
Tools: None
Saving Throws: Strength, Charisma
Skills: Choose two from Culture, Drive, Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, Persuasion, Street, or Technology.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any equipment granted by your background.
- Peacekeeper Armor (depending on assignment).
- An Imperial SRX1 or Imperial SRX17 (dependin on assignment).
- An energy melee weapon of your choice (billhook, club, or stave being the most common).

• ***City's Authority.*** Starting at 3rd level, when you speak in any official capacity (such as when chasing a criminal or boarding a stolen skyship), you double your proficiency when you apply it to Wisdom (Street), Charisma (Intimidation), and Charisma (Persuasion) ability checks. Additionally, you may, as a Bonus action that does not provoke an opportunity attack, spend two points of resolve to cast the spell *command*. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

• ***City Stride.*** Starting at 6th level, provided you are in a city or an urban environment, moving through nonmagical difficult terrain (including crowds, construction, and similar obstructions) costs you no extra movement. Additionally, while in a city or urban environment, you have advantage on saving throws against spells that impede your movement.

• ***City's Ward.*** Starting at 10th level, you gain immunity to poison and disease. Additionally, while in the city or an urban environment, you have advantage on saving throws against spells designed to frighten, charm, or manipulate you.

• ***Emperor's Hand.*** Starting at 14th level, you are always under the effect of the *armor of faith* spell (see Chapter 4), even while sleeping.

PATH OF LIGHT

Peacekeepers who follow the Path of Light focus on applying the Light's many lessons among the citizens of the Empire of Xian. Working as first responders, medics, and special agents dedicated to preserving life, Peacekeepers on the Path of Light focus doing good within the laws of the land, and when those laws are broken, changing them.

Serving in a smaller number of roles than their brothers and sisters on the Path of Law, Peacekeepers on the Path of Light gain the following abilities:

• ***Bonus Cantrip.*** When you choose the Path of Light, you gain the *light* cantrip if you don't already know it.

• ***Responder Training.*** Starting at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with the Response Tools (see Chapter 7).

• ***Light's First Lesson.*** Starting at 6th level, you gain the ability to channel the Light directly through your hands, healing wounds you touch. You have a pool of healing power that replenishes daily, immediately upon waking after a long rest. With this pool of healing power, you can heal a number of Hit Points equal to 5 x your peacekeeper level.

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS	FEATURES
1	+2	SHARE SHIELD, SUPPRESS, STREETWISE
2	+2	ARMORED MOVEMENT, FOCUS (D4)
3	+2	PEACEKEEPER'S PATH
4	+2	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
5	+3	EXTRA ATTACK
6	+3	PEACEKEEPER'S PRIDE
7	+3	IMPROVED FOCUS (D6)
8	+3	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
9	+4	TEAM LEADER (D4)
10	+4	PEACEKEEPER'S PATH
11	+4	PEACEKEEPER'S AUTHORITY
12	+4	HEIGHTENED FOCUS (D8)
13	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
14	+5	PEACEKEEPER'S PATH
15	+5	TEAM LEADER (D6)
16	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
17	+6	HEROIC FOCUS (D10)
18	+6	EMPEROR'S PRIDE
19	+6	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
20	+6	PEACEFUL FINALE

As an action, you can draw on this pool and touch an adjacent ally, healing up the remainder of your current pool, or any smaller amount as you see fit. Unlike a paladin, you cannot use this pool of healing energy to cure diseases or neutralize poison.

- ***Light's Second Lesson.*** Starting at 10th level, you learn to channel the divine energy of the Light. You can spend an action to bathe everyone in a 30-foot radius in beneficial healing light. When you do, all of your allies regain 5d8 Hit Points. Additionally, this light refreshes your allies, removing one level of exhaustion as well.

- ***Light's Last Lesson.*** Starting at 14th level, you learn to focus the Light's healing powers in ways previously shrouded in darkness. Once per week, you can cast the spell *raise dead* as if you were a cleric of the same level. You must still collect and employ all of the material components, expending no less than 500 Yuan on supplies, components, and materials.

PATH OF THE SENTRY

Peacekeepers who follow the Path of the Sentry train daily, forming small, elite teams who specialize in taking down the toughest targets. The sharp edge of the Peacekeeping sword, these Peacekeepers respond to truly difficult challenges, deploying to contain alien incursions, fight shadow agents, and when needed, to remove imperial traitors on behalf of the emperor.

Their skills focused on swift, tactical precision, peacekeepers on the Path of Sentry gain the following abilities:

- ***Bonus Cantrip.*** When you choose the Path of the Sentry, you gain the *true strike* cantrip if you don't already know it.
- ***Combat Training.*** Starting at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with heavy armor.

• ***Smart Response.*** Starting at 6th level, you learn to focus all of your training into a precise, tactical response to a situation. When you roll Initiative, add your Intelligence modifier as a bonus to that roll.

• ***Evasion.*** Starting at 10th level, you learn to dodge certain spells, effects, and hazards (such as an exploding sky ship or a fireball spell) with ease. When you are subjected to an effect that requires you to make a Dexterity saving throw to halve the damage, you instead take no damage when you succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if you fail.

• ***Impervious Defense.*** Starting at 14th level, you can spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to create a magical shield in a 20-foot radius that increases everyone's Armor Class by +3 and grants everyone within resistance to bludgeoning, cold, fire, piercing, and slashing damage until the beginning of your next turn. You may use this ability up to three times before you must complete a long rest.

• ***Ability Score Improvement.*** When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 13th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

• ***Extra Attack.*** Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn. You may attack a third time (instead of once) when you reach 10th level. You may attack a fourth time when you reach 15th level.

• ***Team Leader.*** You gain the ability to inspire (or intimidate) your allies, granting a single ally a d4 (and later, a d6) they can apply to a single d20 roll of their choosing during an encounter.

• ***Improved Focus.*** When you spend a point of focus, you roll a d6 instead of a d4.

• ***Peacekeeper's Pride.*** Starting at 6th level, you gain a bonus equal to half your Proficiency Bonus on your Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom saving throws.

• ***Peacekeeper's Authority.*** Starting at 11th level, when you command a citizen of the Empire, you do so with the full authority of the state at your disposal. You gain advantage on Charisma-related ability and skill checks that challenge the empire or your place within its social hierarchy.

• ***Emperor's Pride.*** Starting at 18th level, you gain the ability to cast the spell *blade barrier* as if you were a cleric of equal level. You may cast this spell up to three times each day, but must complete a short rest between each casting. Casting this spell does not otherwise impact spells or spell slots gained from other classes.

• ***Peaceful Finale.*** You bring combat to a sudden, peaceful end. You learn *The Golden Sign*, a special, magical sigil that causes enemies within 90 feet to suffer 20d8 points of non-lethal damage unless they succeed on a Strength saving throw. Foes who make their saves instead take half damage.

You may activate this ability up to three times per day but must complete a short rest in between each activation.

DEV LORE: THE PEACEKEEPER CONCEPT

Very early in our discussions about Alessia, Jere and I established that the Peacekeepers would serve as imperial icons of the Light – individuals dedicated to the Light, Order, and a Justice. While they operate with some autonomy throughout the Empire of Xian, all Peacekeepers answer ultimately to the Emperor of Xian – an embodiment of the Light in the Empire.

In Alessia, Peacekeepers are the good cops, working within the system, but willing to adjust or alter the rules to ensure that justice is served. Trained to respond to tense situations with skills and abilities others lack, these peace-focused warriors balance the safety of Xian's citizens against justice and honor, often making choices lesser individuals could not.

While some groups have accused the Peacekeepers of being 'soulless soldiers of the Empire,' the truth is quite the opposite – the Peacekeepers train constantly in hopes of serving its citizens in all things.

DEV LORE: PEACEKEEPER RANK

In the Empire of Xian, Peacekeepers use a six-step rank structure for those who choose to enlist (like PCs). Peacekeepers displaying gold-colored ranks are armed (Police), while those wearing red are responders (EMTs), and those wearing blue ranks work aboard sailing vessels (naval forces) – this includes skyships.

DEV LORE: PEACEKEEPER'S CODE

The Peacekeeper's Code takes the form of a 7-pointed star, each point representing one of the 7 virtues Peacekeepers live by. These virtues are:

Just Actions. *Peacekeepers must seek justice and act with courage, knowing they have the full support of the Light on their side.*

Respectful Compassion. *Peacekeepers are commanded to respect and aid the citizens of the Empire of Xian, no matter the place or situation.*

Honorable Pride. *Peacekeepers are known by their deeds, actions, and words – they should take honor in all they do. No actions should bring shame on them or the empire.*

Sincere Loyalty. *Peacekeepers are expected to act with sincerity, dedication, and loyalty – to the Empire of Xian and the Light it champions.*

Hopeful Trust. *Peacekeepers should spread law, hope, and faith in the Light and the Empire. Even when lost or confused by their orders, the Peacekeepers must trust in the Light.*

A Dedication to Self. *The Empire of Xian expects Peacekeepers to dedicate themselves to self-improvement on all fronts; to be a service to others, they must become as the cities they serve – cornerstones of strength.*

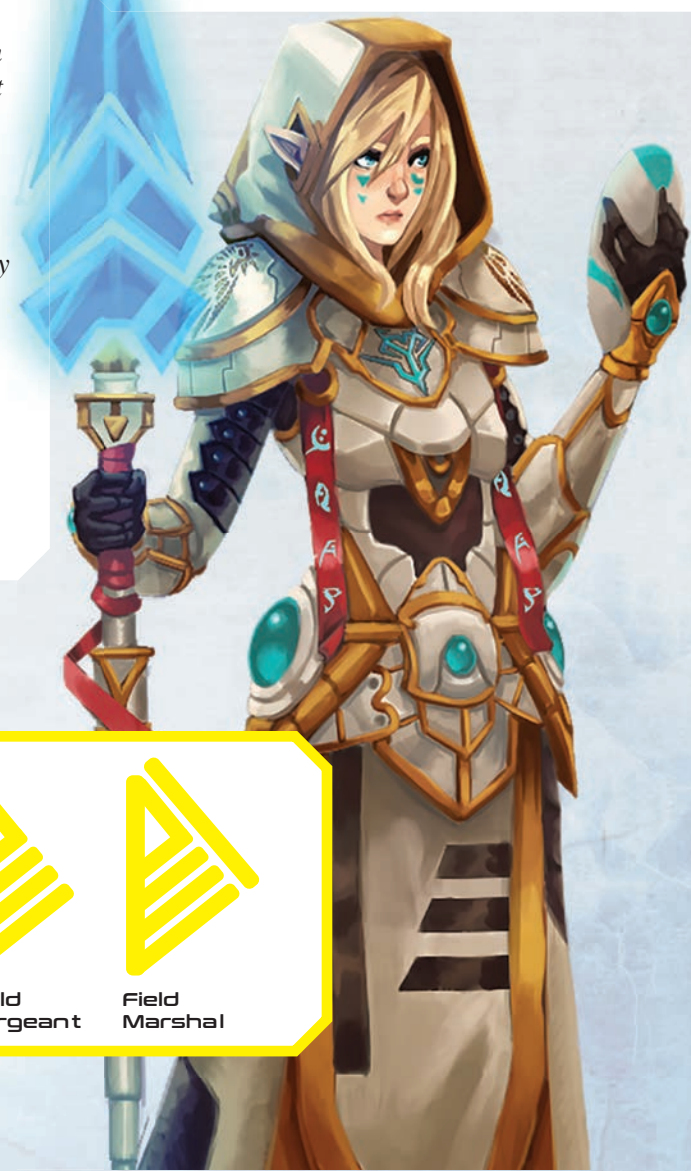
Compassionate Control. *While others look for the easiest paths to victory, Peacekeepers are expected to seek the best path forward for all, seeking to preserve their enemies' lives whenever possible.*

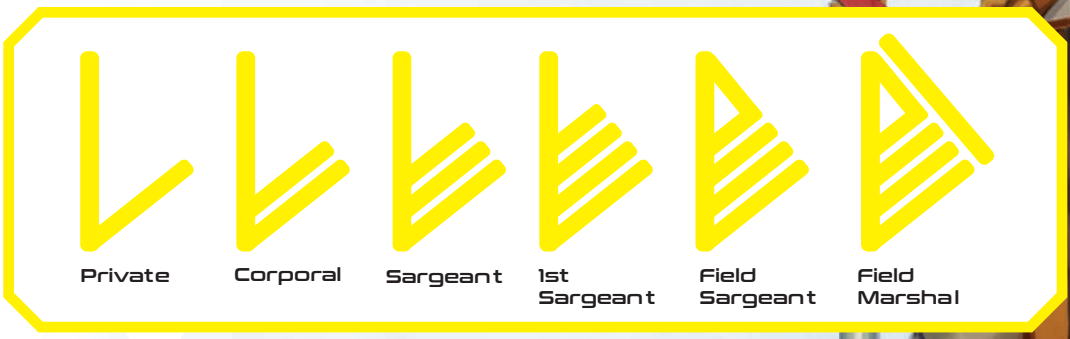
DEV LORE: PEACEKEEPER WEAPONS

By default, Imperial Peacekeepers who are actively patrolling (or are otherwise 'on duty' in some capacity) will have their energy weapons set to a painful but otherwise subduing state. These weapons deal non-lethal bludgeoning or force damage as needed, with the flick of a switch (or for some mentally-enhanced peacekeepers – a thought).

Unless a Peacekeeper declares they are intentionally doing lethal damage (an oddly 'out of character' behavior for a Peacekeeper), they are assumed to be doing non-lethal damage at all times.

While Peacekeepers are aware and trained to make these calls (and to override the default settings on their weapons), other characters may not realize this – especially when 'borrowing' a Peacekeeper's weapon, which by default, is designed to deal non-lethal damage.





THE PSION

Alessia's psions are more than just explorers of the mental realms and masters of the mind. They spend their lives discovering the intimate connection they enjoy between Alessia's Crystal Lattice and their evolving minds, learning to access and harness that power in ways others can only fathom.

Capable of impressive mental feats that alter the world around them, psions are common among the elathi and the ish'ra – two of the first species to actively display such powers on Alessia. In places such as the Empire of Xian, where the ish'ra live in large numbers, psions often gather into smaller, open communities that focus on making the most of their connection to the world.

CLASS ABILITIES

As you level in this class, you gain the following abilities upon reaching the appropriate level.

- ***Lattice Attunement.*** One of the first things a psion learns to do is connect with the Alessia's Crystal Lattice. You gain the ability to attune with the Crystal Lattice anywhere in Alessia, without accessing a magitech node, provided you can physically touch the lattice (normally a natural crystal node). This attunement allows you to access the lattice from up to 100 meters away.

- ***Psychic Talents.*** At 1st level, you may select and cast two psion-specific spells, known as "talents," which act as cantrips, but are defined in the list below. You learn additional talents of your choice at higher levels, as shown in the Talents Known column of the Psion Table.

- ***Psychic Spellcasting.*** You cast spells, but when you do, you use only your mind and mental focus. These spells are drawn from your known spells list.

- ***Mindlock.*** Starting at 2nd level, you gain a +2 bonus on all saving throws to resist spells or effects which probe or attempt to affect your mind.

- ***Spell Slots.*** The Psion table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these psion spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

CLASS FEATURES

As a psion, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d4 per psion level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 5 (or 2d4) plus your Constitution modifier per psion level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: Light armor.
Weapons: Simple weapons.
Tools: Meditation kit.
Saving Throws: Intelligence, Charisma
Skills: Choose two from Deception, History, Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, Persuasion, or Psychic.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to any equipment granted by your background:

A staff, club, or similar defensive melee weapon or a small energy pistol. You begin play with a meditation kit.

PSION SPELL LIST

In Alessia, psions use the sorcerer spell list. They had the following spells to this list, as well:

Cantrips (0 Level): Add *message* and *minor illusion*.

1st Level: Add *detect evil and good* and *detect poison and disease*.

2nd Level: Add *augury*, *find traps*, *lesser restoration*, and *locate object*.

3rd Level: Add *nondetection* and *sending*.

4th Level: Add *freedom of movement* and *locate creature*.

5th Level: Add *awaken, greater restoration,* and *legend lore*.

6th Level: Add *heal*.

7th Level: Add *etherealness, project image*, and *regenerate*.

8th Level: Add *antipathy* and *mind blank*.

9th Level: Add *astral projection, foresight, shapechange,* and *true polymorph*.

TABLE: PSION

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS	FEATURES
1	+2	LATTICE ATTUNEMENT, PSYCHIC SPELLCASTING, PSYCHIC TALENTS
2	+2	MINDLOCK
3	+2	PSYCHIC DISCIPLINE
4	+2	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
5	+2	IMPROVED MINDLOCK
6	+3	DISCIPLINE POWER
7	+3	MIND BODY BRIDGE
8	+3	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
9	+3	DISCIPLINE POWER
10	+3	MIND SHIELD
11	+4	IMPROVED ATTUNEMENT
12	+4	DISCIPLINE POWER
13	+4	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
14	+4	IMPROVED MIND SHIELD
15	+4	DISCIPLINE POWER
16	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
17	+5	TOWER OF IRON WILL
18	+5	DISCIPLINE POWER
19	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT
20	+5	A BEAUTIFUL MIND

The Crystal Lattice

"Alessia's earliest psions discovered they could attune to the Crystal Lattice and, through it, directly (albeit in only small ways) affect the matter around them. Of course, this required each of these psions to surrender a bit of themselves in the process – an often violent or painful experience for early psions."

Spells Known of 1st Level and Higher

You know two 1st-level psion spells of your choice from the psion spell list.

The Spells Known column of the Psion table shows when you learn more psion spells of your choice. Each of these spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the psion spells you know and replace it with another spell from the psion spell list, which must also be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Spellcasting Ability

Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for your psion spells, since your magic comes from the depths of your mind and your ability to give thoughts form and shape. You use your Intelligence whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. Additionally, you use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a psion talent, power, or spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Level	Psychic Talents	Spell Slots per Spell Level								
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2	2	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
3	2	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
4	3	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5	3	3	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
6	3	3	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
7	3	4	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
8	3	4	3	3	2	–	–	–	–	–
9	4	4	4	3	3	–	–	–	–	–
10	4	4	4	3	3	2	–	–	–	–
11	4	4	4	4	3	3	–	–	–	–
12	4	5	4	4	3	3	2	–	–	–
13	4	5	4	4	3	3	2	–	–	–
14	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	2	–	–
15	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	–	–
16	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	–
17	5	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	1	–
18	5	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	2	1
19	5	6	6	5	5	4	4	3	2	1
20	5	6	6	5	5	4	4	4	2	2

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

• ***Spellcasting Focus.*** You do not require a physical focus item, but may have one, if you desire.

• ***Psychic Discipline.*** When you reach 3rd level, you select a psychic discipline and an associated power as your powers begin to blossom and focus.

Additional discipline powers are selected every three levels thereafter. Powers may be used once per long rest, unless otherwise noted. If a discipline grants the use of a spell without use of a spell slot, that spell is added to the psion's spell list. When using a discipline which mimics an effect permitting spell slot sacrifice, it is also possible to sacrifice a spell slot. The level of the sacrificed spell slot is considered to be added to the power, as if the discipline had been cast at its level plus the sacrificed slot level.

• ***Ability Score Improvement.*** When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 13th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

• ***Improved Mindlock.*** Starting at 5th level, you gain advantage on saving throws to resist spells or effects probing or attempting to affect your mind. You have resistance against psychic damage.

• ***Discipline Power.*** At 6th level you gain the Psychic Power associated with your Psychic Discipline.

• ***Mind-Body Bridge***. Starting at 7th level, you learn to sacrifice psychic spell slots to heal yourself as a Reaction or bonus action which does not provoke opportunity attacks. You may sacrifice a number of spell slots equal to your Intelligence modifier until your next long rest, but the slots may be of any level you have. Each sacrificed spell-slot provides you 1d6 hit points of magical healing per level and removes one condition. For example, if wounded, blinded, and bleeding, a 3rd-level slot would heal 3d6 hp, remove either the blindness or bleeding condition, and would require a 3 level spell-slot.

• ***Mind Shield.*** Starting at 10th level you can use your mindlock ability to extend your benefits to your allies within 30 feet. You can activate this ability as a reaction and may affect a number of creatures up to your Intelligence modifier. This benefit remains until you take a long rest. Affected creatures gain the benefit while within 30 feet of you, but may enter or exit the area freely and regain the benefit after remaining within the affected area for 1 minute.

• ***Improved Attunement.*** When you reach 11th level, you learn to connect with Alessia's Crystal Lattice in a strong, meaningful way that extends beyond many of the spacial boundaries that bar others. You gain the ability to attune with the Crystal Lattice anywhere in Alessia, without accessing a magitech node, provided you can physically co-locate to within 100 feet of the lattice (normally a natural crystal node).

• ***Improved Mind Shield.*** When you reach 14th level, you learn to extend your mindlock ability your benefits to your allies within 30 feet.

• ***Tower of Iron Will.*** Starting at 17th level, as a full-round action, you can create a psychic defensive structure which blocks up to 10 levels of psychic attacks, spells, and powers within 20 feet. The psion can sacrifice spell slots to reinforce this barrier on a 1-to-1 conversion basis, as a Reaction or Bonus action. They may also sacrifice 5 levels' worth of spell slots to seal it from physical entry. When they do, it gains an AC 15 and 20 hp versus any attack made by an individual not inside when sealed. Sacrificing further spell slots increases its hit points at a value of 2hp per 1 spell level, which can be done as a Reaction, Bonus action, or an Action. The primary caster can restrict or permit which creatures can pass through the sealed Tower of Iron Will as a reaction or action. The new state persists until the creator of the tower falls unconscious or uses an action or reaction to renew the tower's integrity. The Tower lasts until its protection is exhausted, or until the creator dies or dismisses it as a full round action.

• ***A Beautiful Mind.*** When you reach 20th level, select a discipline power you know available at 3rd level. This discipline power may now be used as a talent. Select different discipline you know. This discipline may be used an additional time per day. Gain a universal discipline power.

PSYCHIC DISCIPLINES

Psions choose from the following pool of disciplines and their associated abilities and powers below:

CLAIRSENTIENCE

This is the psychic discipline associated with sensing emotions, auras, and limited divination.

Psychic Talents: Clairsentience

- ***Aura Sense***

Divination Cantrip (bard, psion, wizard)
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

For the duration, you can sense the presence of living or undead creatures within 30 feet of you. You cannot see invisible creatures, only know they are within range, and their general location, such as "in front of you, on your right side."

At 5th level, you can spend an action to see the creature, even if invisible. At 8th level, the distance visible extends to 45 feet. At 11th level, you can see the actual forms of shapeshifted, polymorphed, or creatures altered by spell effects. At 15th level, you no longer need to spend an action to see creatures.

- ***Empathetic Communication***

Divination Cantrip (bard, psion, sorcerer, wizard, warlock)
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: instantaneous

You sense the aura and emotional state of a creature, and have advantage on the next Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, Performance, or Persuasion) check you make before the end of your next turn.

- ***Object Read***

Divination Cantrip (bard, psion, sorcerer, wizard, warlock)
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: instantaneous

You pick up and handle an object, reading its aura and sensing up to five facts about the object, at the GM's discretion. It is possible not all answers may be sensed from an object; sometimes only one or two facts may be available. These facts include:

- Who created the object?
- The object's age – is the object relatively new, contemporary (within the last 30 years), or old (more than 30 years)?
- Who used the object most in the last year and how; this may indicate multiple creatures in the process?
- Who was the last person attuned to the object, if anyone?
- Was the object stolen, gifted, purchased by the last owner, or if it had no owner?
- If the object was used to kill a sentient creature, or if it was used to kill multiple creatures.
- If anyone else has "read" the object in the last day. If so, who?
- Other questions might be answered at the GM's discretion.

Objects may have personalities or a demeanor, depending on their age. Older objects are more likely to gain such aspects, but this doesn't affect the transmitted information, just the "tone" of how information is conveyed. A favorite toy might be joyous, a regular crafting tool might be business-like.

Discipline Powers: Clairsentience

- ***Butterfly Effect*** (3rd level required)

You may use the spell *butterfly effect* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Emotion Shift*** (3rd level required)

You may use the spell *emotion shift* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Clairvoyance/Clairaudience*** (6th level required)

You may use the spell *clairvoyance* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Divination*** (6th level required)

You may use the spell *divination* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Scrying*** (9th level required)

You may use the spell *scrying* without expending a spell slot.

PSYCHOKINESIS

This discipline incorporates powers involving force, either through its application or redirection.

Psychic Talents: Psychokinesis

- ***Ablative Shield***
You may use the *shield* spell as a cantrip.

- ***Telekinetic Strike***
You may use the *magic missile* spell as a cantrip, but you only create a single dart when using this talent. At 8th level, you create two darts, and at 16th level, you create three darts. At 20th level, you may use this talent as a bonus or regular action.

- ***Massive Impact***
As a reaction, you may impart added force to a successful attack.

At 1st level, you may add 1d6 (3) hp of additional force damage. At 4th level, you may add 2d4 (5) hp additional damage. At 6th level, you may stomp your foot on the ground as a move action, or at the end of a move action as a bonus action, which does not provoke opportunity attacks, causing a force wave to strike those adjacent to you. They take 1d6 (3) hp of force damage and must make a Strength saving throw against this 0 level effect, or be knocked prone.

At 8th level, you may add 2d6 (7) hp additional damage to a successful attack as a Reaction. At 12th level, the damage associated with your stomp increases to 2d6 (7) hp. At 16th level, you may add 3d6 (10) hp additional damage to a successful attack as a reaction. At 20th level, the damage associated with your stomp increases to 3d6 (10) hp and it affects a 10-foot radius surrounding you.

Discipline Powers: Psychokinesis

- ***Ablative Armor*** (3rd level required)
You may use the spell *mage armor* three times per long rest, without expending a spell slot. At 9th level, you may use two uses of this power to instead use the spell *stoneskin* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Psychic Weapon*** (3rd level required)
You may use the spell *psychic weapon* three times per long rest without expending a spell slot.

- ***Psychic Lance*** (6th level required)
You may use the spell *scorching ray* without expending a spell slot, except the damage is force and psychic.

- ***Unravel Psionics*** (6th level required)
You may use the spell *coat of translucent flame* once per long rest, without expending a spell slot.

- ***Mental Grasp*** (9th level required)
You may use the spell *telekinesis* without expending a spell slot.

PSYCHOMETABOLISM

Granting the proverbial abilities of "mind over matter," these allow the psion to knit flesh and eliminate conditional effects.

Psychic Talents: Psychometabolism

- ***Biofeedback***
As an action which provokes opportunity attacks, you may heal yourself as if you had taken a short rest but may only spend a number of hit dice equal to or less than to your proficiency bonus. When you take a short rest, you may spend it in meditation, recovering hit dice spent this way equal to your proficiency bonus and up to your maximum. You may recover hit dice through this meditation method a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus before you must take a long rest. After a long rest, the number of times you many meditate to recover hit dice resets.

- ***Psychic Surgery***
As an action which provokes opportunity attacks, you may touch another creature and allow it to heal as if they had taken a short rest but may only spend a number of hit dice equal to or less than to your proficiency bonus. For example, if your proficiency bonus is +2, a 3rd-level character you touch using this talent could spend two of their three hit dice available during a short rest to heal immediately. This reduces the number of hit dice which would normally be available during a short rest by the number spent. If the creature has no hit dice remaining, you may spend your own hit dice in the same manner. You may meditate in the same way as the Biofeedback talent, and with the same limitations, to recover hit dice you spend this way. After a long rest, the number of times you many meditate to recover hit dice resets.

- ***Psychic Feedback***
As an action which does not provoke opportunity attacks, you may increase your Strength by reducing your Charisma, or your Dexterity by reducing your Wisdom, or your Constitution by reducing your Intelligence, and vice versa. For every 2 points you reduce one ability score,

the corresponding ability is increased by one point, to a maximum of 22. No ability score may be reduced to less than 6 by this talent. All adjustments of hit points, armor class, etc based on this shift immediately apply. This effect lasts for 10 minutes, at which point your ability scores revert to their normal values. You can choose to maintain the effect by concentrating. You may only shift one pair of ability scores at a time.

Discipline Powers: Psychometabolism

- ***Purge Imperfection***
(3rd level required)
You may use the spell *lesser restoration* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Sustenance*** (3rd level required)
You can sustain your body through the strength of will. You do not require food or water, or suffer exhaustion from not eating or drinking, although you can still consume it. At 6th level, you may cast water breathing upon yourself only, once per long rest without expending a spell slot. At 12th level, your water breathing effect can also provide you air in the case of a vacuum or poisonous gas. At 15th level, you cannot die from drowning, suffocation, or starvation.

- ***Psychic Reflection*** (6th level required)
Whenever a creature deals psychic damage to you, that creature takes the amount of damage you would take before taking your resistance, if any, into account. This discipline is always active.

- ***Mental Regeneration*** (6th level required)
You stimulate your natural healing ability as an action, regaining 3d8 + 12 hit points. For the next 10 minutes, you regain 1 hit point at the start of each your turns (10 hit points each minute). When you reach 15th level, the regeneration increases to 4d8+15, and severed limbs can be reattached, by holding the severed body part to the point of injury for 2 minutes.

- ***Psychic Metamorphosis*** (9th level required)
You may use the spell *polymorph* without expending a spell slot.

PSYCHOPORTATION

These powers augment the movement of creatures and objects through space and time.

Psychic Talents: Psychoportation

- ***Psion's Grasp***
You can use the *mage hand* spell as a cantrip. At 10th level, the weight limit which can be moved doubles. At 16th and 20th levels, the weight limit doubles each time, to a total of 8 times the initial weight limit. Items being manipulated by Psion's Grasp cannot be used to make a physical attack. They could manipulate keys, switches, levers, or other such mechanical triggers which might activate automated weapons.

- ***Psion's Sidestep***
You can teleport short distances. Starting at 1st level, this talent allows you to teleport 10 feet to a space you can see or know exists as an action which does not provoke opportunity attacks. At 4th level, this distance becomes 20 feet. At 8th level, you may use this talent as a move action. At 12th level, you may do this as a bonus action. At 16th level, the distance becomes 30 feet. At 20th level, you may use this talent as a reaction, bonus action, or move action, as you desire.

- ***Speed of Thought***
As you move, any part of your movement may be along adjacent walls and ceilings, so long as you end your movement in a place where you could normally stand. At 8th level, you may end your turn in a place you could not normally stand as long as your first action in the next round is to move more than 10 feet, or to a place where you could normally stand. All movement made as a part of this talent is treated as if it was on normal, flat terrain, regardless of the actual condition of area traversed. This talent is always active.

Discipline Powers: Psychoportation

- ***Mental Leap*** (3rd level required)
You may use the spell *misty step* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Leaf on the Wind*** (3rd level required)
You may use the spell *fly* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Blink of an Eye*** (6th level required)
You may use the spell *haste* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Doorway to Nowhere*** (6th level required)
You may use the spell *dimension door* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Fold Space*** (9th level required)
You may use the spell *teleport* without expending a spell slot.

TELEPATHY

Sensing thoughts, communicating directly between minds, and affecting a creature's sensory input all embody the powers of this discipline. Elathi are natural telepaths, and they, or any other creatures with natural telepathy, who select this discipline double the range of all their Telepathy talents and discipline powers where appropriate. If an ability does not have a range, increase its duration by 50%.

Psychic Talents: Telepathy

- ***Detect Thoughts***

You may use the spell *detect thoughts* as a cantrip, however all attacks made against you have advantage while you are using the power. Additionally, any target has advantage on saving throws and ability checks to resist the effects. At 6th level, targets no longer have advantage on saving throws and ability checks to resist the effects of this talent. At 8th level, you may activate this talent as a move action. At 10th level, you gain a +2 bonus to the DC to resist this talent, which stacks with other talents or feats which might enhance this effect. At 12th level, using this talent no longer provokes attacks of opportunity. At 14th level, you may use this talent as a bonus action, a move action, or a normal action.

- ***Mental Communication***

You may use the *message* cantrip.

- ***Obfuscate Senses***

Enchantment Cantrip (bard, psion, sorcerer, wizard, warlock)
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
As an action, you may choose a target and force it to make a spell saving throw. Failure indicates it suffers disadvantage on Perception or Investigation checks to notice you, another individual, or an object of your choice within 30 feet. The chosen individual or object is not invisible, the target simply does not notice its presence. This talent does not affect mindless creatures, surveillance equipment, and creatures with Intelligence 2 or less.

At 11th level, you gain a +2 bonus to the DC to resist this talent, which stacks with other talents or feats which might enhance this effect.

Discipline Powers: Telepathy

- ***Mental Invisibility*** (3rd level required)

You may use the spell *invisibility* once per long rest, without expending a spell slot. However, mindless creatures, surveillance equipment, and creatures with Intelligence 2 or less are unaffected by this spell.

- ***Aversion*** (3rd level required)

You may use the spell *aversion* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Mental Disruption*** (6th level required)

You may use the spell *confusion* without expending a spell slot.

- ***Psionic Blast*** (6th level required)

You may use the spell *shout* without expending a spell slot. However, this damage is psychic, and has no audible element. The effect is only "heard" in the minds of those targeted.

THE MIND'S DRIVE

Psions and others like them are celebrated in most of Alessia's developed world. This is especially true in the Empire of Xian, where psions dedicate their skills and powers to ensuring the safety and security of the empire and its royal family.

Most kingdoms, from Fyrea to the haunted shores of Galgaræ, employ psions in some capacity, and Alessia's citizens have come to expect this element in everyday life. Overall, Alessia has become a more honest and polite place as a result.

- ***Mental Network*** (9th level required)
You may use the spell *telepathic bond* without expending a spell slot.

UNIVERSAL DISCIPLINE POWERS

- ***Diverse Power Palette*** (6rd level required)
You gain an additional power from a Discipline different than the Discipline you selected at 3rd level. The newly gained power must require a level less than or equal to your current psion level.

- ***Focused Discipline*** (3rd level required)
You may add +2 to the DC of an existing discipline power or a talent which belongs to your Discipline. If this power does not have a DC which may be increased, you may choose to either increase its duration by 50% each time it is used, or increase its numerical effect by 50% (rounded up to the next most mechanically correct value) or 1, whichever is greater or more appropriate (GM's discretion).

- ***Honed Power*** (6rd level required)
You may use one of your Discipline powers two additional times before requiring a long rest to use it again.

- ***Nimble Mind*** (3rd level required)
You gain an additional talent, which may be from a different Discipline than the Discipline you selected at 3rd level. This talent increases the maximum total number of talents you can have by one. This talent works the same as any other talent you possess and is treated as if it were a part of your chosen Discipline.

THE MANY PATHS OF THE MIND

The Empire of Xian is only one of many major groups who embrace psions and others like them. Other groups, such as those listed below, also actively seek and recruit psions. The following list provides GMs with a small pool of groups, their tactics, and any boons they might offer to PCs who align with them.

The Arradarra recruits elathi from Elysia almost exclusively, although it has been known to wander east into the great deserts of Fyrea as well. The Arradarra is a secretive group that prefers seclusion to social action of any kind. Officially, the Arradarra have a single goal – to expand and evolve elathi minds.

The Chaldroni are guild of powerful, traveling 'mind mages' whose very presence dominates nearly all of southern Shiran. Born in great numbers among the human and terran families of the coast, traveling Chaldroni discover their recruits young – seeking those who display power to work the raw elements (with a focus on water and air) or its potential early on.

The Ithcadulla are a collective of minotaur psions whose connection to (and command of) the very stone and earth around them makes them incredibly valuable members of the larger community. A lawful and good collective, the Ithcadulla actively look for ways to support their brothers and sisters in the region, and when possible, any in need them come across.

The Circle of Thardich is an academic organization that celebrates the pioneering work of the famed Elysian scholar Frizna Thardich, whose work in Velestra (studying the great Trees of Life) led to breakthroughs in understanding the intimate (and essential) connection between psions and the Crystal Lattice. Psions with a strong interest in creating stronger connections with the Crystal Lattice often seek out the circle.

THE SEER

Seers occupy a special place in Alessia's ecology, serving as bridges between the visible and invisible realms. Born with the ability to sense and see the kaima around them, seers who develop their abilities learn to form powerful bonds with the kaima – aiding them on their mysterious missions.

Alessia's seers fall largely into three distinctive groups. These are the Children of the Iron Eye, Neo-Seers, and Seekers. Each of these groups is described below:

Regardless of the path a seer takes, all of them meet on common ground when it comes to the kaima, with seers protecting and serving them to the best of their abilities.

Children of the Iron Eye. These traditionalists have long approached the kaima as subservient students, binding themselves to these etheric beings and the larger world they live in by choice. Children of the Iron Eye believe the kaima should be left in peace to do the divine work of creating the eternal mystery that feeds Alessia's World Fire. These seers serve the kaima.

Neo-Seers. Neo-Seers envision their role with the kaima differently, seeing themselves as caretakers, custodians, and to a large extent, zoologists. Working with the best gear magitech has to offer, these individuals look for ways to reveal more of the invisible world so that they might bring more allies to the cause. These seers see themselves apart from the kaima.

Seekers. The last, and arguably largest group are the Seekers. These individuals seek kaima on an individual basis, learning everything they can about them and carefully selecting their allies, forming stronger connections with a much smaller group of kaima. These seers develop unique relationships with their kaima on a case-by-case basis.

CLASS FEATURES

As a seer, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 2d4 per seer level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 5 (or 2d4) plus your Constitution modifier per seer level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: Light armor.
Weapons: Simple weapons.
Tools: None.
Saving Throws: Charisma, Wisdom
Skills: Choose three from Culture, Deception, History, Insight, Investigation, Nature, Perception, Persuasion, or Religion.

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment: An energy pistol or melee weapon of your choice and a meditation kit.

TABLE: SEER

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS	FEATURES	LINKED FAMILIARS
1	+2	KAIMA FAMILIAR, MYSTIC SENSES, SPELLS	1
2	+2	MYSTIC SIGHT	1
3	+2	PATH OF THE KAIMA	1
4	+2	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	1
5	+2	EXTRA ATTUNEMENT	2
6	+3	KAIMA PATH ABILITY	2
7	+3	IMPROVED MYSTIC SENSES	2
8	+3	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	2
9	+3	EXTRA ATTUNEMENT	3
10	+3	KAIMA PATH ABILITY	3
11	+4	IMPROVED MYSTIC SIGHT	3
12	+4	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	3
13	+4	EXTRA ATTUNEMENT	4
14	+4	KAIMA PATH ABILITY	4
15	+4	LIFE BOND	4
16	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	4
17	+5	EXTRA ATTUNEMENT	5
18	+5	KAIMA PATH ABILITY	5
19	+5	SIGHT OF TWO WORLDS	5
20	+5	MASTER OF THE TWO WORLDS	5

TABLE: SEER'S SPELLS

LEVEL	SPELLS KNOWN	SPELL SLOTS PER SPELL LEVEL								
		1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH	7TH	8TH	9TH
1	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
3	4	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
4	5	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5	6	3	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
6	7	3	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
7	8	4	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
8	9	4	3	3	1	–	–	–	–	–
9	10	4	4	3	2	–	–	–	–	–
10	11	4	4	3	3	1	–	–	–	–
11	12	4	4	3	3	2	–	–	–	–
12	13	4	4	4	3	2	1	–	–	–
13	14	5	4	4	3	2	1	–	–	–
14	15	5	5	4	4	2	1	1	–	–
15	16	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	–	–
16	17	5	5	5	4	3	2	1	–	–
17	18	5	5	5	4	3	2	1	–	–
18	19	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	1	–
19	20	6	6	5	5	4	2	2	1	1
20	21	6	6	6	5	4	3	2	1	1

SEER SPELL LIST

In Alessia, seers draw their spells from the bard, cleric, or druid list as needed.

When a spell appears on 1 or more of these lists, the seer always gains the spell at the optimal (or lower) level.

CLASS ABILITIES

Seers have a number of class abilities that let them see into a completely different part of Alessia. These class abilities include:

Starting at 1st level, you learn the spell *find familiar* and can cast it as a ritual. This spell doesn't count against your spells known.

When you cast this spell and obtain a familiar, you may select one of the following as your familiar: badger, bat, cat, crab, eagle, flying Velestrian snake (page 213), frog, giant centipede, goat, jackal, lizard, magitech bot (page 211), owl, poisonous snake, quipper, rat, scorpion, sea horse, smiling cat (page 212), spider, Stormhorn bunny (page 213), weasel, or a winged cat (page 213).

Additionally, when you take the Attack action, you can forgo one of your attacks to allow your familiar to make one attack by spending its Reaction.

You can link to additional familiars as your levels increase by gaining the Extra Attunement feature.

MYSTIC SENSES

Starting at 1st level, you gain the ability to sense kaima within 60 feet of you by concentrating for a full round. You can sense the general location of each, the number of kaima present, their general disposition, and similar facts. You may only learn one new fact each round. These senses improve at 7th level, extending out to a range of 120 feet and requiring the seer to spend an Action to activate the ability.

SPELLCASTING

You access your spells through the dynamic connection you share with the kaima and their mysterious homeland. Your connection to them powers your spells.

SPELL SLOTS

The Seer's Spells table shows how many spell slots you have to cast your spells of 1st level and higher. To cast one of these spells, you must expend a slot of the spell's level or higher. You regain all expended spell slots when you finish a long rest.

For example, if you know the 1st-level spell *magic*

missile and have a 1st- and 3rd-level spell slot available, you could cast the spell in either slot, gaining the effect listed at that slot.

SPELLS KNOWN OF 1ST LEVEL AND HIGHER

You begin play knowing two 1st-level spells of your choice from the Seer's Spells list.

The Spell Slots per Spell Level column of the Seer table shows when you learn more seer spells of your choice. Each of these spells must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the Seer spells you know and replace it with another spell from the Seer spell list, which must also be of a level for which you have spell slots.

SPELLCASTING ABILITY

Seers weave their magic from the ambient magical energies of the world around them. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your Seer spells. You use your Charisma score whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. Additionally, you use your Charisma modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a power, a spell you cast, and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

SPELLCASTING FOCUS

Seers focus their spells through their connection to the mysterious kaima. Any spell that requires a focus uses any of the seer's kaima instead.

MYSTIC SIGHT

Starting at 2nd level, you gain the ability to see between the worlds, peeling back layers of illusion to reveal the real, spiritual world beneath. You perceive the kaima (as if you had cast the spell *see invisible*), even when they are invisible to others around you. You may activate and deactivate this ability as an Action that provokes an opportunity attack. When you reach 11th level, you gain the ability to cast the spell *true seeing* instead.

PATH OF THE KAIMA

When you reach 3rd level, select a path to follow. Most seers become Children of the Iron Eye, Neo-Seers, or Seekers. You gain path abilities at 3rd, 6th, 10th, and 14th level. Each path and the abilities its students might learn is described in greater detail below:

CHILDREN OF THE IRON EYE

As old as the seers themselves, the Children of the Iron Eye are a multicultural collective of seers who have merged their traditions to focus on the purity of one's own understanding of Alessia. Looking on the spirit world only when invited, these traditionalists wear special scarves that restrict their mystic sight, allowing them to give the kaima the privacy they require.

Unlike the Neo-Seers, the Children of the Iron Eye maintain a wide and established collection of traditions, ideas, and concepts that keep them in demand not only as mediums, but also has sages and historians.

- ***Ironthread Scarf.*** At 3rd level, you gain a special scarf made from iron-threaded cloth. As a Bonus action, you can see through your kaima's eyes. You are still aware of your own surroundings and can dismiss the sight at will.

- ***Shield of Iron.*** Starting at 6th level, you can spend a point of resolve to grant your kaima a +2 to AC as a Reaction. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

- ***Steel Eye-Binding.*** Starting at 10th level, you gain a scarf made of a flexible steel to wind around your eyes. You can still see through this cloth normally. You may also choose a new kaima bond from the list below.

- ***Silken Shroud.*** Starting at 14th level, your high rank in the Children of the Iron Eye is marked by a silk scarf, usually in a primary color. Your vision is unimpaired by this covering. You may also choose a new kaima bond from the list below.

DEV LORE: INVISIBLE KAIMA

Alessia's kaima are naturally invisible, requiring either magic or magitech to perceive. Only Alessia's seers perceive the kaima without such aid. kaima become visible only when it helps them create a mystery.

THE NEO-SEERS

Differing from the Children of the Iron Eye in every conceivable way, the Neo-Seers are a collective of modern seers who have who have embraced technology and use it to both focus their gaze into the invisible, but also to hunt its denizens. The Neo-Seers do not believe the kaima are the beings they claim to be, treating them less like divine agents and more like individual beings – bargaining and dealing with them as they would any other species.

• ***Verdant Badge.*** At 3rd level, you gain the green signum of the Neo-Seers. When you hit a kaima with a weapon attack, the kaima takes an extra 1d8 damage if its below its hit point maximum. You can only deal this extra damage once per turn.

• ***Claws of Truth.*** Starting at 6th level, you can spend a point of resolve to grant your kaima a +2 to their attack rolls as a Reaction. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

• ***Crimson Signum.*** Starting at 10th level, you may wear the red badge of your rank. In addition, you may select one kaima bond from the list below.

• ***Sign of Omega.*** Starting at 14th level, you gain the highest rank of the Neo-Seers, the black omega badge. You may select one kaima bond from the list below.

SEEKERS

Seekers are, by and far, the largest group of seers. Bound to no tradition, these individuals seek new mysteries with the same dedication that the kaima do. Although seekers do not sustain themselves on mysteries in the same way the kaima do, their need to seek them makes them popular among the kaima, many of whom see seekers as natural allies and companions.

• ***Initiate's Bond.*** At 3rd level, you may cast one of your known spells without using a spell slot. You must take a long rest before using this ability again.

• ***Defensive Premonition.*** Starting at 6th level, you can spend a point of resolve to grant your kaima a +2 to their next saving throw as a Reaction. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

• ***Journeyman's Bond.*** Starting at 10th level, you may select one kaima bond from the list below.

• ***Master's Bond.*** Starting at 14th level, you may select one kaima bond from the list below.

The links between seer and kaima depend greatly on the individuals involved. The bonds described below are intended to reflect this wide variety.

• ***Bond of Battle.*** A seer who selects this path talent applies their proficiency bonus to all of the attacks made by kaima with whom they've bonded.
• ***Bond of Defense.*** A seer who selects this path talent applies their proficiency bonus to the Armor Class of each of the kaima with whom they've bonded.
• ***Bond of Life.*** A seer who selects this path talent treats all of their bonded kaima as 'familiar' for the purpose of healing. Any time the seer receives magical healing of any kind, all bonded kaima within 30 feet of the seer heal by half that amount.
• ***Bond of Magic.*** A seer who selects this path talent treats all their bonded kaima as 'familiar' for the purpose of delivering touch spells and concentration.
• ***Bond of Mind.*** A seer who selects this path talent treats all their bonded kaima as 'familiar' for the purpose of delivering or holding psychic powers and talents.
• ***Bond of Power.*** A seer who selects this path talent grants one of their bonded kaima exceptional strength. Select a single kaima with whom you've bonded and increase their Strength score by a number equal to your proficiency bonus.
• ***Bond of Resilience.*** A seer who selects this path talent treats all their bonded kaima as 'familiar' for the purpose of bolstering their magical defenses: any time any bonded kaima within 30 feet of the seer make a saving throw, they may add the seer's proficiency bonus to that roll.
• ***Bond of Violence.*** A seer who selects this path talent learns to manifest an aura of excitement and tension with a 30-foot range that causes kaima within range to bite deeper and hit harder. Kaima deal 1d4 additional points of damage on one attack each round they make within range. This effects all kaima, regardless of alignment.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 13th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

EXTRA ATTUNEMENT

Starting at 5th level, the number of active familiars you can deploy in combat increases by 1, allowing you to deploy 2 familiars at once. You can deploy a 3rd familiar at level 9, a 4th familiar at level 13, and a 5th familiar at level 17.

SIGHT OF TWO WORLDS

At 19th level, you can cast *true seeing* without expending a spell slot. You can cast this spell up to three times each day before you need to complete a long rest.

MASTER OF TWO WORLDS

As an action, you gain the ability to freely step between the invisible realm of the kaima and the prime material plane. You must complete a short rest before using this ability again.

THE TECKER

Hacker. Tinkerer. Tester. Inventor.

The tecker fills all these roles and more.

In Alessia, teckers run things. Operating at every level of society and in more roles than most would care to count, these individuals master magitech at an alarming rate, learning to interface with it, modify it, and even change it when needed. Capable arcanists, these individuals help keep the world's many arcane systems running – often maintaining them with a few simple adjustments or a carefully woven spell.

For most teckers, that's as exciting as things will ever get. Many teckers dedicate themselves to a single guild, system, or area of specialty – developing deeply rooted systems knowledge that others struggle to discover, much less master.

Concerned almost entirely with magitech in its many forms, teckers represent the inquisitive mind turned outward, specifically toward some of Alessia's most challenging elements – its merger of magic and technology into a seamless whole. For most teckers, this inquisitive nature often follows one of three paths: most teckers choose a specialty, becoming either breachers, devs, or speeders.

- ***Breachers.*** These teckers focus on getting into places others cannot, defeating physical security through a number of methods. Breachers are good at detecting traps and breaking into networks designed to keep others out.

- ***Devs.*** These teckers focus on magitech devices of all kinds, learning to crack and hack them as needed. Devs excel at modifying weapons, armor, and magitech gear of all kinds.

- ***Speeders.*** These teckers are Alessia's vehicle experts. Pilots with a penchant for enhancing their rides, teckers who take up this path generally like to go fast. If you can pilot it, a speeder can mod it.

Regardless of the path a seer takes, all of them meet on common ground when it comes to the kaima, with seers protecting and serving them to the best of their abilities.

CLASS ABILITIES

Teckers gain the following class abilities over the course of play.

BONUS RESOLVE

Starting at 1st level, you gain a number of bonus resolve points equal to your proficiency bonus. These bonus points stack with other resolve point bonuses.

EXPLOITS

Starting at 1st level, you gain a small number of exploits you can execute against computers, sentients, smart systems, and similar networks throughout Alessia. Each time you gain a new level, you also gain a new exploit.

When selecting an exploit, you must meet all its prerequisites. Unless an individual exploit says otherwise, most exploits refresh when you complete a short rest.

CLASS FEATURES

As a tecker, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 1d10 per seer level.
Hit Points at 1st Level: 10 plus your Constitution modifier.
Hit Points at Higher Levels: 6 (or 1d10) plus your Constitution modifier per seer level after 1st.

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: Light and Medium armor, shields.
Weapons: Simple and martial weapons.
Tools: Tecker Tools
Saving Throws: Dexterity. Intelligence.
Skills: Choose four from Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Culture, Insight, Investigation, Perception, and Technology.

EQUIPMENT

You start with a simple melee weapon (like a dagger or club), a simple energy pistol (or similar firearm), a Tecker Tool kit, and 100 Yuan in extra parts and consumables.

TABLE: THE TECKER

LEVEL	PROFICIENCY BONUS	FEATURES	EXPLOITS
1	+2	BONUS RESOLVE, EXPLOITS, TECKER TOOLS	2
2	+2	TECHNICAL INSIGHT	3
3	+2	TECKER'S PATH	4
4	+2	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	5
5	+2	ARCANE ASSAULT I	6
6	+3	TECKER PATH ABILITY	7
7	+3	TECKER'S TOUCH 1D6	8
8	+3	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	9
9	+3	ARCANE ASSAULT II	10
10	+3	TECKER PATH ABILITY	11
11	+4	TECKER'S TOUCH 2D6	12
12	+4	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	13
13	+4	ARCANE ASSAULT III	14
14	+4	TECKER PATH ABILITY	15
15	+4	TECKER'S TOUCH 3D6	16
16	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	17
17	+5	ARCANE ASSAULT IV	18
18	+5	TECKER PATH ABILITY	19
19	+5	ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT	20
20	+5	FULL ACCESS	21

TECKER TOOLS

You begin play at 1st level with a customized, personalized set of tecker tools that allows you to perform a wide array of activities, including repairing broken magitech, customizing vehicles, or hacking Alessia's various information systems.

TECHNICAL INSIGHTS

Starting at 2nd level, you double your proficiency bonus when making Intelligence (Technology) skill checks to uncover problems, innovate solutions, or just to repair damaged equipment or systems.

TECKER'S PATH

Starting at 3rd level, you select an area of technical focus, becoming a breacher, dev, or speeder. Once you select a path, you gain the abilities listed on that path at 6th, 10th, 14th, and 18th levels. A brief description of each of these paths follows:

Breachers. These teckers focus on getting into places others cannot, defeating physical security through a number of methods. Breachers are good at detecting traps and breaking into networks designed to keep others out.

Teckers who follow this path spend endless hours each day learning to test and penetrate information systems and networks of all kinds. These teckers breach security systems, defeat traps, and socially engineer their way around Alessia.

Devs. These teckers focus on magitech devices of all kinds, learning to crack and hack them as needed. Devs excel at modifying weapons, armor, and magitech gear of all kinds. Teckers who take this path focus on developing magitech devices of all kinds. Developers at heart, these teckers excel when developing new hardware, software, or magitech systems.

Speeders. These teckers are Alessia's vehicle experts. Pilots with a penchant for enhancing their rides, teckers who take up this path generally like to go fast. If you can pilot it, a speeder can mod it. Adrenaline junkies of the first order, teckers who take this path focus the body of their energy into modifying drifters, dashers, and similar vehicles – embracing the danger that comes with personalizing their risk-seeking behavior to a variety of extremes.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

ARCANE ASSAULT

Starting at 5th level, whenever you make an Attack with a weapon you've crafted, attuned to, or enchanted, you may attack twice with that weapon. You may make a third attack on your turn with that weapon when you reach 9th level. This number increases to a final, fourth attack when you reach 13th level.

TECKER'S TOUCH

Starting at 7th level, you gain the ability to touch a sentient, construct, magitech device, or smart system and repair it as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you immediately restore a number of hit points equal to 1d6 plus your Intelligence modifier. You may elect to spend a point of resolve when you do, increasing the damage healed by an additional 1d6. You may use this ability up to 3 times before you must complete a long rest.

The amount of damage you repair automatically increases to 2d6 when you reach 11th level and to 3d6 when you reach 15th level.

FULL ACCESS

When you reach 20th level, you gain full and complete access to a single system of your choice. This access is specific to the path the tecker takes. These paths are explained in detail.

Unless it is otherwise listed, tecker's calculate the DC of their class abilities as follows:

Special Ability save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier.

THE BREACHER'S PATH

Their path filled with shadowy backdoors, hidden exploits, savvy workarounds, and plenty of technical expertise, teckers who choose the breacher's path are concerned with only one thing – getting in. Breachers focus on defeating physical security, detecting traps, and breaking into networks designed to keep others out.

SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Starting at 3rd level, you learn to quickly and quietly assess a situation or environment for threats. You may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to gain advantage on Intelligence (Computers), Wisdom (Insight) and Wisdom (Perception) checks while evaluating a smart system, network, or system's technician.

BREACHER'S CHARM

When you reach 6th level, you learn a number of tricks and techniques to quickly navigate social environments. You double your proficiency bonus when making Charisma (Deception) ability checks. Additionally, whenever someone openly counters or attempts to detect your deception, you may spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to increase the deception's DC by 1d4. You must complete a short rest before using this ability like this again.

TRAP SPRINGER'S LUCK

When you reach 10th level, you learn to quickly shrug off the damage dealt by physical security and common traps. Whenever you take damage from a trap or security system, you may spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to reduce the damage dealt by a number of hit points equal to 1d8 plus your Dexterity modifier. You may spend up to 3 points of resolve in this manner before you must complete a short rest.

TRAP SPRINGER'S SPEED

When you reach 14th level, you learn to quickly defeat security systems of all kinds.

Whenever you attempt to disable a trap, you may make a DC 10 Intelligence (Technology) to immediately determine the number of rounds it will take you to breach the object, portal, or system in question. Armed with this knowledge, you may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack to reduce the time by 1d6 rounds. You may spend up to 3 points of resolve in this manner, but you may never reduce the time it takes to less than 1 round.

FOCUSED DESTRUCTION

When you reach 18th level, you learn breach walls, doors, vaults, and ship hulls with ease. You may use your tzecker Tools to set a particularly powerful, destructive charge that deals 14d8 points of piercing, slashing, and fire damage to everything in a 5-foot by 5-foot area. You may set up to 2 of these charges with this ability before you must complete a long rest.

THE DEV'S PATH

Teckers who take the Dev's Path focus their study on developing, hacking, modifying, and enhancing Alessia's magitech. Curious and willing to learn, these individuals delve head first into Alessia's complex, layered networks, unearthing secrets and modifying the world to suit their vision. For some teckers, this means specializing in magitech devices, while for others it means learning the complex networks that eventually lead to the Crystal Lattice.

DEV'S VISION

Starting at 3rd level, you learn to focus on the task at hand while under pressure. You may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to gain advantage on Intelligence (Computers) or Intelligence (Technology) ability checks until the beginning of your next turn.

HACK ATTUNEMENT

When you reach 6th level, you halve the time it takes to attune with magitech armor, weapons, magitech devices, and similar items. You gain a bonus attunement slot, which you must use for a magitech device.

DEV'S DISRUPTIVE STRIKE

When you reach 10th level, you learn to unleash your magic in a cone of disruptive, chaotic energy that wreaks havoc on constructs, magitech devices, sentients, and similar kinds of technology. You may, as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack, spend a point of resolve to channel this disruptive magic, dealing 23 (5d8) points of force damage and 23 (5d8) points of slashing damage in a 30-foot cone. The force damage only effects inorganic beings, such as sentients and constructs, while the slashing damage effects both.

Targets who succeed on a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence modifier) halve this damage.

You must complete a long or short rest before you can use this ability again.

ENHANCE MAGITECH

When you reach 14th level, you learn to tap into the ambient magical currents that emanate from Alessia's Crystal Lattice and the ley lines, using this energy to power nearby devices for a short time.

You may perform a short procedure that lets you collect all of the ambient magical energy in a 1-mile radius, redirecting it to power every medium-sized (or smaller) magitech device in a 100-foot radius for 1 hour. You can spend a point of resolve to add an hour to the duration, but you may only spend 3 points of resolve in this fashion before you need to complete a long rest.

For the duration, items function without draining their batteries, and otherwise lifeless devices slowly start to function. Damaged items spark and pop, dealing 1d4 points of lightning damage to anyone (or anything) that touches them, unless the target succeeds on a Dexterity saving throw DC (DC = 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Intelligence modifier).

The spell *dispel magic* and similar supernatural abilities disrupt this enhanced field as normal.

THE PERFECT EXAMPLE

When you reach 18th level, you learn to unlock an item's full potential, weaving powerful patterns into its aura that temporarily transform it into its ideal. You may, as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack, touch a nearby sentient, construct, or item and enhance it, temporarily bestowing the following benefits upon it:

- ***Magitech Armor.*** The armor provides an additional +2 bonus and accommodates up to a +5 Dexterity bonus. The armor's weight is also halved. These qualities last for an hour.

- ***Magitech Devices.*** Any damage to the device is instantly repaired and 2d4 missing charges are immediately restored (the device safely bleeds away excess charges). For the duration, the device is immune to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

- ***Magitech Weapons.*** For the duration, the magitech weapon gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and when it hits, it deals an additional 9 (2d8) points of force damage. This enhancement lasts for 10 minutes.

- ***Sentients.*** You repair 23 (5d8) hit points and remove any 1 condition effecting the sentient. For the duration, the sentient's AC is increased by +2 and it gains resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. This lasts for an hour.

THE SPEEDER'S PATH

Although speeders get a bad rep from the gangs that roam the Silk Sea, these teckers are far more than adrenaline junkies with risk-management issues – they are master technicians and pilots who can attune with their rides, pushing these vehicles far past their normal limits.

SPEEDER'S REFLEXES

Starting at 3rd level, you learn to keep your eyes on the road while distracted, or when you take damage. You may spend a point of resolve as a Bonus action to gain advantage on Dexterity (Drive) or Intelligence (Spacefaring) ability checks until the beginning of your next turn.

YOUR FIRST RIG.

When you reach 6th level, you gain a starter dasher or drifter. Select from the packages below:

TFDX-01

Built by three different firms, the TFDx-01s are Alessia's gold standard for easily personalized and customized hardware.

SPECS

Cost 8,500 Yuan
Size Large; Modifications 4 slots.
Speed 50 mph (fly); 10 mph minimum;
Range 200 kilometers
Crew 1; ***Passengers*** 0
Cargo The TFDx-01 is a common air vehicle (AV) designed to give the rider the most enjoyment for the lowest price point. The standard chassis can hold 10 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 1.5 feet in any direction.

COMBAT

Weapons – none
AC 11 [14 vs energy]; ***DT*** 5
HP 70; ***Broken*** at 35 or less hit points.

TFDSX-02

Built by three different firms, the TFDsx-02 is the model for dashers, incorporating responsive learning technologies and ish'ra Intuition Sensors.

SPECS

Cost 9,900 Yuan
Size Large; Modifications 4 slots.
Speed 80 mph (land); 5 mph minimum;
Range 300 kilometers
Crew 1; ***Passengers*** 1
Cargo The TFDsx-02 is a common two-wheeled GV (ground vehicle) that sandwiches the driver between the two larger wheels. Capable of traversing difficult terrain, these GVs provide decent armor and can sustain significant punishment. The standard chassis can hold 20 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 2 feet in any direction.

COMBAT

Weapons – none.
AC 13 [11 vs energy]; ***DT*** none
HP 100; Broken at 50 or less hit points.
Special: The TFDsx-02 series comes with a built-in sensor package that grants attuned teckers a +1 bonus to Dexterity (Drive) ability checks. This is added as a package in later models.

MACHINE HEAD

When you reach 10th level, you learn to extend your magical will outward, using it to shield your vehicle and by extension, yourself as well. You can, as a Reaction that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack, spend a point of resolve to instantly empower your connection to your vehicle, gaining the following benefits (which double if you are currently operating a vehicle with which you have already attuned):

HARD LIGHT RECOVERY

When you reach 14th level, you learn to push your vehicle's defenses to the max, tapping into resources manufacturers normally reserve for maintenance and performance testing. You can, as a Reaction that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack, redirect all of your vehicle's available resources for a single minute, increasing the vehicle's AC by +2 and granting the vehicle 23 (5d8) temporary hit points. Any damage sustained by the vehicle or the pilot is instead subtracted from these temporary hit points instead. If at any point the pilot is separated from their vehicle, they are immediately targeted by the spell *feather fall*.

You must complete a long rest before using this ability again. You may use this ability two times each day when you reach 18th level.

A SECOND CHANCE

When you reach 18th level, you gain a custom Sentient Support Kit that automatically activates if you are killed while inside your vehicle.

EXPLOITS

In Alessia, the exploits a tecker chooses says a lot about their direction, as well as their personalities. When a tecker selects an exploit, they must meet all its prerequisites. Generally speaking, a tecker can activate an exploit as an Action that provokes an Attack Opportunity. Unless otherwise listed, exploits have a duration of 1 minute.

Some exploits require a tecker to be connected to a network (see Chapter 7 for more details) before they can execute that exploit. Unlike other abilities, some exploits can be combined to perform specific functions or to strengthen a previously established routine. Each exploit lists its requirements and any special conditions that effect it directly in the entry.

Exploit entries appear like this:

• ***Exploit Name.*** This short description tells you what the exploit does, how quickly you can activate it, and any special conditions the exploit sets.
Requires – This section lists any of the special requirements needed to activate the exploit. Special – This portion lists additional, important factors or conditions.

Teckers have access to the following list of exploits:

• ***Advanced InstaShield.*** You can activate this exploit as a Reaction that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack. Doing so, you create a temporary shield that protects 1d6 magitech device on your person, shielding each in a thin layer of magical energy that grants each device 8 temporary hit points. These hit points last 1 minute.
Requires – 3rd-level tecker, tecker tools.

• ***AntiTox Implant.*** When you select this exploit, you gain a magitech implant that allows you to spend a point of resolve to gain resistance to poison damage and advantage on Constitution saving throws against the Poisoned condition. You may spend this point of resolve as a Reaction that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack.
Requires – 1st-level tecker.
Special – You require tecker tools to install this device, but not to operate it.

• ***Bot Backup***. You back up a copy of your magitech bot familiar into an info crystal. If your bot is destroyed, you may use this info crystal to program a fresh bot. The new bot will be a restored version of the backup with all its memories.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.

• ***Bot Support.*** You gain a bonus attunement slot that may only be used to attune to a magitech bot.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.

• ***Cloak Device.*** You can activate this exploit as a Reaction that does not provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you immediately shield a single, small-sized (or smaller) magitech device on your person, hiding it from basic and advanced scans for 1 minute. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.
Requires – 3rd-level tecker, tecker tools.

• ***ConBoost Implant.*** When you select this exploit, you gain a magitech implant that allows you to spend a point of resolve to gain advantage on Constitution saving throws versus disease. You may spend this point of resolve as a Reaction that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack.
Requires – 1st-level tecker.
Special – You require tecker tools to install this device, but not to operate it.

• ***Crystal Copy.*** You can activate this exploit as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you activate this ability, you deploy a small device that physically connects to a single InfoCrystal within 30 feet, copying all of its data (up to 1 Tac) in 1 minute.
Requires – 3rd-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – You must have physical access to the crystal.

• ***Database Copy.*** You can activate this exploit as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you deploy a specialized application that immediately locates and copies all of the data available that matches a given set of parameters. These

parameters are normally easily defined, such as "copy all files containing the words "Xian" or "thieves." This whole process takes 1 minute. You must complete a short rest before you can use this ability again.
Requires – 7th-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – You must have access to the system whose information you want to copy.

• ***InstaShield.*** You can activate this exploit as a Reaction that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you create a temporary shield that protects 1d4 magitech device on your person, shielding each in a thin layer of magical energy that grants each device 5 temporary hit points. These hit points last 1 minute.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.

• ***LineWire.*** You can activate this exploit as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you deploy a tiny magitech bot that starts to collect the ambient magical energy in an area, powering nearby devices (doubling their durations, up to 10 minutes). This device hovers within 30 feet of you for the duration.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 13 and 4 hit points. If a ley line is present, the LineWire bot will moved to the edge of its perimeter in its direction.

• ***PingShield.*** You can activate this exploit as a Bonus action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you deploy a tiny magitech device that hacks a nearby terminal (within 30 feet), hiding any connections you make at the terminal for the next 10 minutes.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 11 and 4 hit points.

• ***Port Friendly.*** You can activate this exploit as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. While you have physical access to a single smart system, you can deploy this easily-modified exploit against an information system terminal or computer network connection (such as a Holo terminal), gaining advantage on Intelligence (Computer) rolls to gain access to the system. This exploit functions for 2d4 rounds before basic computer security systems quarantine it.
Requires – 3rd-level tecker, tecker tools.

• ***Quick Connect.*** You can activate this exploit as a Bonus action that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack, quickly deploying a specialized bot that will physically connect you to a network up to 30 feet away. This drone will maintain the connection and credentials for 1d4 minutes.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 15 and 2 hit points. It instantly returns to you when fired upon.

• ***Sky Kit.*** When you select this exploit, you gain a magitech implant that allows you to wirelessly connect to a nearby HoloNet terminal, provided there is one within
1 mile.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – You are considered securely attuned to this device. This device has 4 hit points. It loses its secure connection if it takes 2 or more points of damage.

• ***Sky Connect.*** You can activate this exploit as a Bonus action that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you immediately deploy a tiny magitech device that creates a wireless connection between a nearby physical port (within 30 feet) and you, broadcasting a single, secure channel on which you can work. This drone will maintain the connection and credentials for 1 minute.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 15 and 2 hit points. It instantly returns to you when fired upon.

• ***SysScan Advanced.*** You can activate this exploit as a Bonus action that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack, quickly deploying a highly customized magitech drone that scans all magitech devices in a 20-foot radius, providing you with a count of those devices and which devices are attuned, secured, and dangerous. The SysScan checks for invisible, shielded, and similarly protected devices, requiring those devices to succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw to remain omitted from the scan results. The full scan takes approximately 1 minute. This drone will operate up to 100 feet away.
Requires – 5th-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 15 and 4 hit points. It instantly returns to you when fired upon.

• ***SysScan Basic.*** You can activate this exploit as a Bonus action that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack, quickly deploying a customized magitech drone that scans all magitech devices in a 20-foot radius, providing you with a count of those devices and which devices are attuned, secured, and dangerous. The SysScan ignores invisible, shielded, and similarly protected devices.

The scan takes approximately 1 minute. This drone will operate up to 100 feet away.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 15 and 2 hit points. It instantly returns to you when fired upon.

- ***SpyBot.*** You can activate this exploit as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you carefully deploy a shielded magitech drone that records all of the audio and video in a target area of 10 feet in diameter, up to 30 feet away. The device records everything it can perceive for a full 24 hours, then shuts down and waits to be retrieved. SysScan and similar security sweeps miss this bug. This drone will operate up to 1 mile away.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 13 and 4 hit points. It attempts to take the Hide action when fired upon.

- ***Tecker's Best Friend.*** You can activate this exploit as a Reaction that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack. When you activate this exploit, you instantly deploy a miniaturized bot to a nearby network terminal within 100 feet, which it immediately attempts to access. Every round, this bot makes an Intelligence (Computers) check with advantage on your turn as a Bonus action, using your skill bonus and adding an additional +2 bonus to the roll. This bot will work up to 100 feet away. The bot immediately connects you if you are within 30 feet of the terminal. This bot will work for up to 10 minutes. Once it connects you, it will shield the connection for the remainder of the duration.
Requires – 7th-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 17 and 8 hit points. It instantly returns to you when fired upon.

- ***Tecker's Better Lil Helper.*** You can activate this exploit as a Bonus action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you activate this exploit, you deftly deploy a bot to a nearby network terminal, which it immediately attempts to access. Every round, this bot makes an Intelligence (Computers) check on your turn as a Bonus action, using your skill bonus and adding an additional +1 bonus. This bot will work up to 100 feet away. It runs for 1 minute before returning to you.
Requires – 5th-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 16 and 4 hit points. It instantly returns to you when fired upon.

- ***Tecker's Lil Helper.*** You can activate this exploit as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you activate this exploit, you carefully deploy a bot to a nearby network terminal, which it immediately attempts to access. Every round, this bot makes an Intelligence (Computers) check on your turn as a Bonus action, using your skill bonus. This bot will work up to 30 feet away. It runs for 1 minute before returning to you.
Requires – 1st-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – This tiny bot has an AC of 15 and 2 hit points. It instantly returns to you when fired upon.

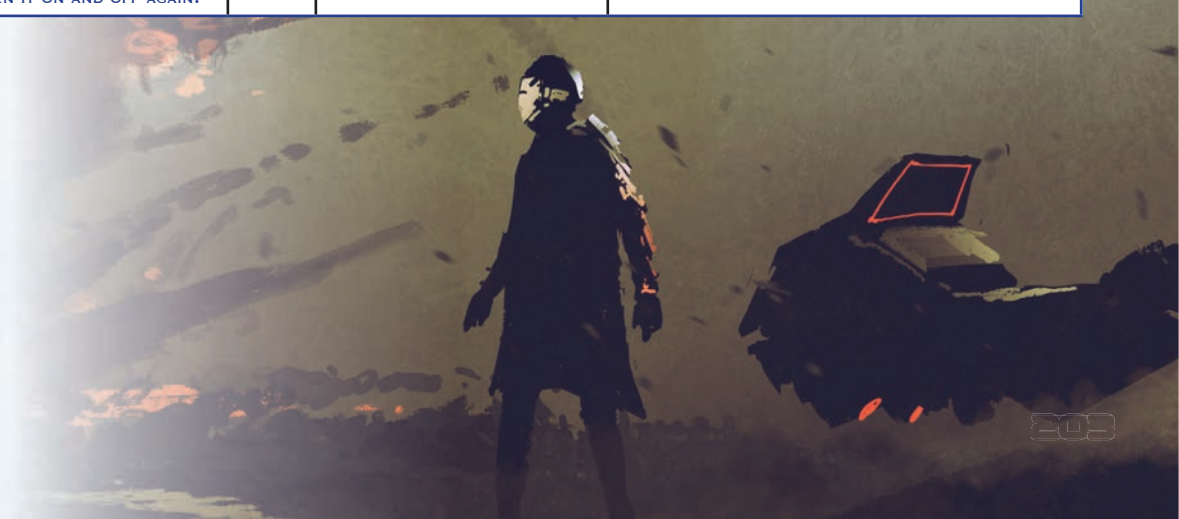
- ***TelNet Implant.*** When you select this exploit, you gain a magitech implant that allows you to spend a point of resolve to create a simple, telepathic network between you and up to 2 more of your allies within 30 feet. Each participant must remain within 30 feet of one another to participate in the network, which lasts for 1 minute. While it is active, individual participants can send messages between one another as a Bonus action on their turn. These messages are private and function like the *message* cantrip.
Requires – 1st-level tecker.
Special – You require tecker tools to install this device, but not to operate it. Attuned ish'ra allies may access this network from up to 60 feet away.

- ***WyrmZ.*** You can activate this exploit as an Action that provokes an Opportunity Attack. When you do, you carefully deploy an advanced worm that propagates on the system to which you are connected to. This worm activates 1d4 minutes later, at which point the target system suffers disadvantage on its Intelligence saving throws for 1 minute.
Requires – 3rd-level tecker, tecker tools.
Special – You must be connected to the network with which you want to target this exploit.

Table: Drifter, Dasher, & Vehicle Malfunctions

Alessia's environment can be very difficult on both equipment, as well as vehicles. Sometimes, excessive wear, damage, or other conditions cause a vehicle to malfunction or fail. When it does, GMs looking for a root cause of the problem should consider rolling on this table:

2d12	Problem	Solution	2d12	Problem	Solution
2	Air Turbine Failure	A successful DC 15 Technology check and 1d6 of labor hours fixes this problem.	14	Kill-switch Engaged	A successful DC 11 Technology check and 1d4 hours of troubleshooting fix this problem.
3	Balancing Gyro Alignment Failure	A successful DC 11 Technology check and 1d4 hours of labor remedies this issue.	15	Landing Controller Failure	A successful DC 11 Computer check and 2d4 hours of work fix this issue.
4	Computer Failure	A successful DC 11 Computers check and 1d4 hours of labor fix this.	16	Latitude Computer Heat Failure	A successful DC 15 Computer check and 1 hour of work fix this simple issue.
5	Crystal Sequencing Failure	A successful DC 15, a small magitech crystal (worth 100 Yuan), and 1d4 hours of labor fix this.	17	Magitech Engine Overheat	A successful DC 20 Technology check and 1d4 hours of troubleshooting fix this problem.
6	Crystal Burnout	A successful DC 15 Technology check, 1d4 magitech crystals (worth 100 Yuan each), and 2d4 hours fix this problem.	18	Magitech Engine Vapor Leak	A successful DC 15 Technology check, 1d4 hermetic seals (each worth 50 Yuan), and 1d6 hours of troubleshooting fix this problem.
7	Drive Engine Failure	A successful DC 15 Technology check, 200 Yuan in parts, and 2d4 hours of work solve this issue.	19	Magitech Sequencer Alignment Failure	A successful DC 15 Computers check and 1d3 hours of troubleshooting fix this problem.
8	Engine Lock	A successful DC 20 Technology check, 50 Yuan in oil, and 1d3 hours fix this issue.	20	Over Pressure Warning	A successful DC 11 Computers check and 1d6 hours of troubleshooting fix this problem.
9	Flight Computer Reset	A successful DC 20 Computers check and 1 hour of work fix this problem.	21	Piping Failure	A successful DC 15 Technology check and 1d4 hours of troubleshooting fix this problem.
10	Glide Scope Gyro Destabilizes on startup.	A successful DC 15 Technology check and 1d4 hours of work fix this issue.	22	Radar Alignment Failure	A successful DC 11 Computers check and 1d6 hours of troubleshooting fix this problem.
11	Heat Exchanger failure	A successful DC 15 Technology check, a new exchanger (worth 100 Yuan_ and 1d6 hours of labor fix this issue.	23	Radar Coolant Leak	A successful DC 20 Technology check, 50 Yuan in sealant, and 1d4 hours fix this issue.
12	Initializer Failure	A successful DC 11 Technology check, a 10 Yuan seal, and 1 hour of work fix this issue.	24	Turbine Spin Alignment Failure	A successful DC 15 Technology check and 1d3 hours of work fix this issue.
13	Nothing! It was a glitch!	You turn it on and off again.			



Chapter 4 | Magic of Alessia

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Written in Qin Jia, the eldest of tongues, the phrase '*tir magica esana vinine*" translates into the far more common tongue, and means, "the magic fire in our veins." Although it has other translations, that phrase is particularly popular in the Empire of Xian. It is often spoken in solidarity between the people of the Empire, suggesting the strength of the greater whole is the heart of their social heart.

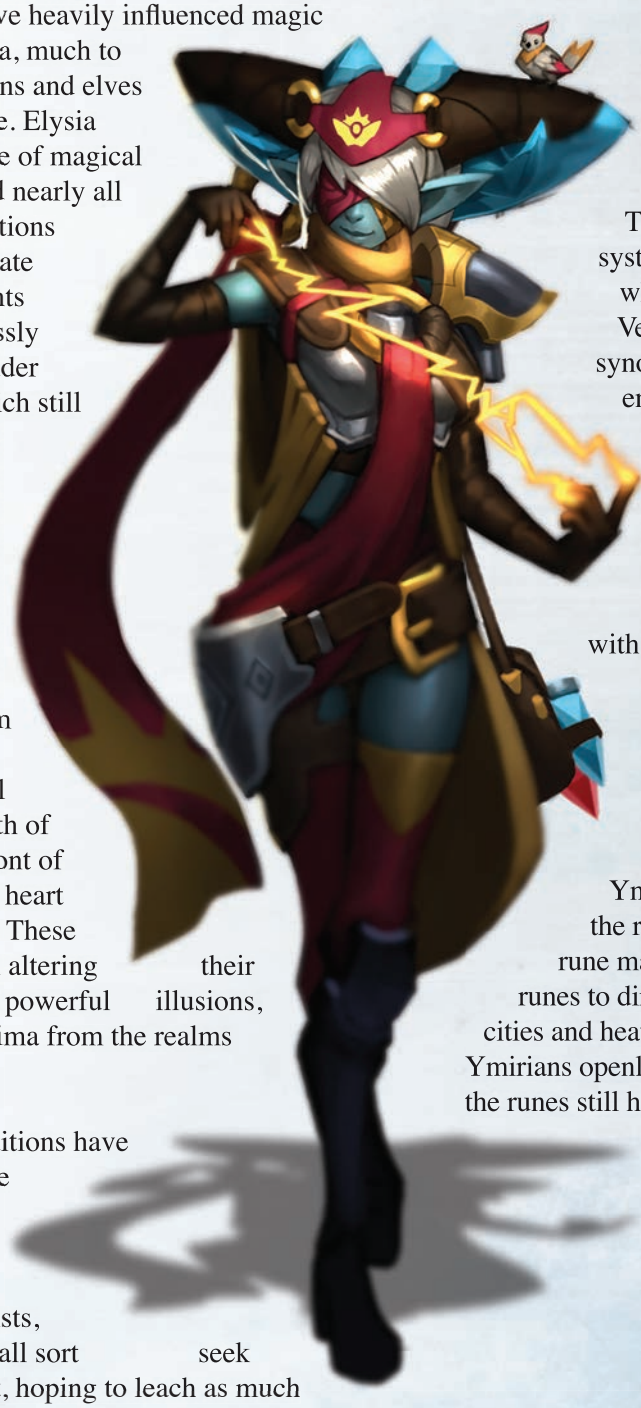
More importantly, this phrase stands as a reminder of the great sacrifices Alessia's earliest inventors, alchemists, wonder workers, and other arcanists made (and meticulously recorded) as part of their search for '*tira arcana perfecta*' – "the perfect magic." Although most honor these individuals as heroes of progress, a few still quietly complain, seeking emotional recompense from any who will listen. For most in Alessia, magic is a thing of art, science, and beauty, the perfect combination of mind, heart, and spirit – what ancient Xian monks call *The Mindful Hearts*.

Regardless of its cultural frame, all of this embraces something very important: in Alessia, the people prize magic, and as a result, they also honor the mind. Because of this, Alessia has grown as a society. They prize the psyche, sentience, and seek moments of true mindfulness.

A Brief History of Magic

Alessia's history with magic is long and detailed, woven from the stories of hundreds of cultures and ideas. It is a rainbow of viewpoints stretched over a river of time. How magic has been viewed differs between these cultures, and each region approaches magic a little differently. In places where cultures have merged over time, like in the Empire of Xian or in the larger desert cities of Fyrea, many of these ideas have become traditions, giving rise to unique and specific methodologies by which different arcanists access the warp and weave of magic.

In Elysia, the ish'ra have heavily influenced magic since arriving in Alessia, much to the benefit of the humans and elves who have evolved there. Elysia has remained at the fore of magical development since, and nearly all of the magitech innovations being developed originate in Elysia. These thoughts and ideas align seamlessly with the hundreds of older traditions, many of which still teach today.



In Fyrea, where the desert traditions have stood since the beginning of time, the ancient gnolish magicians have banded together to form dozens of orders, each honoring the traditional schools through the Path of Heka, seeing the true font of all magic in the hidden heart of the Alessian deserts. These magicians specialize in altering their environments, creating powerful illusions, and summoning the kaima from the realms beyond.

Galgaræ's magical traditions have changed much since the great beast crashed into the continent. Today, necromancers, demonologists, anarchists, and Void magicians of all sort seek the corrupted continent, hoping to leach as much magic from the dying god has possible. The fengu who used to practice elemental magic on the shores of their homeland no longer can, the land having long been poisoned against them.

Shiran's magical thinkers openly mix traditionalist ideas from both Elysia and Fyrea, as well as from those alien cultures they deem worthy. Tolerant and open-minded, the magical traditions of this continent appear piecemeal to many, but often include more than just universalist ideals – they incorporate working and practical methodologies designed to build and defend the realm. Shiran's magicians often display strong connections to their cities and domains.

In Velestra, magic is understood in the larger context of life on the planet. The Velestrians have long viewed Alessia's ley lines (which commonly intersect with the fabled Trees of Life) as Alessia's circulatory system, carrying the magic of the world to where it is needed most. As such, most Velestrians view magic and life as being synonymous – to be denied magic is to endure an existence devoid of the truest stuff of life.

In Yerwin, where magic has long been practiced as a form of cultural and religious expression, shamanism reigns supreme. Skilled at interacting with the magical crystals that litter their homeland and often gaining access to the Crystal Lattice where others cannot, Yerwin's shamans have long been powerful and their lessons remains popular in all lands.

Ymir's magical traditions revolve around the runes and those who carve them. These rune masters carve throughout the north, using runes to direct powerful ley lines that power their cities and heat their homes. While many modern Ymirians openly embrace magitech, those who carve the runes still hold a great deal of power, with several runological traditions claiming unbroken connections to their founders – something of which the jotünfolk sorcerers are proud.

The Order of Astrænna

While thousands of magical ideas, traditions, and methodologies populate the whole face of Alessia, all those ideas find a single home in the sacred halls of the Order of Astrænna – Alessia's single-most powerful magical order.

The Order of Astrænna, which the uninitiated frequently simplify as 'the Order,' is one of Alessia's oldest mystical orders. The Order boasts centuries of history, with extensive knowledge on numerous topics, from the War of Sovereigns to the evolution of individual species. While its academic departments are well developed and well staffed, the order focuses the majority of its efforts into the arcane connections it observes around Alessia daily. Its libraries contain several wings dedicated to Alessia's magical manifestations, from its ley lines to how its magical energies traverse the dark depths of the Crystal Lattice.

Headquartered in the Empire of Xian, the arcanists who founded the Order of Astrænna originated from three principle locations, traveling from the distant, icy holds of Yrim, the mountaintop monesteries of Shiran and the remote, desert-bound oases that still hide in Fyrea today. The traditions these arcanists brought forth still impact the Order of Astrænna today.

A mystery to most outsiders, the Order of Astrænna has established itself as a trusted ally to both the Empire of Xian, as well as to the Great Northern Holds of Yrim and to Lords of Brass throughout Fyrea. This later alliance occasionally places the continent-spanning order at odds with the more powerful lords currently rulling parts of Fyrea's southern and central deserts. In the areas where the order is aligned with regional governments, it contributes to the social wellbeing of the surrounding lands – extending many of the benefits that magitech has to offer. In these places, the order maps out ley lines, builds defensive generators (to fend off shard storms), and helps mine crystals, all while augmenting local law enforcement in all things arcane.

Generally speaking, the Order of Astrænna serves the people of Alessia in three primary ways:

- ***Arcane Expertise***. Drawing on centuries of lore and research, the Order of Astrænna boasts some of the largest libraries in all of Alessia. The Order can, when needed, deploy experts on any number of topics, providing needed advice to regional rulers and their other allies.

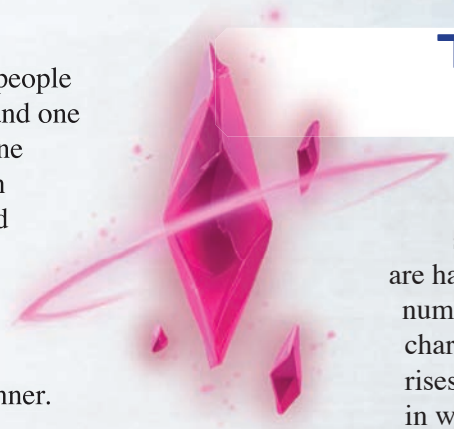
- ***Community Building***. The Order of Astrænna has a long-standing history of helping those in need by building the magical infrastructure it needs to survive the harsh times Alessia sometimes offers. From building security domes (to protect allies from shard storms) to helping with civil projects of all kinds, the Order of Astrænna is happy to assist.

- ***Magical Defense***. Alessia is a massive planet with only a small portion of its vastness mapped out. The Order of Astrænna has dedicated itself to mapping out and identifying as much of the world as it can, hoping to preserve the multitudes against harm. Its agents are trained to respond to magical and mundane foes of all kinds, sealing wayward portals and containing incursions as they occur.

Crystal Magic

In Alessia, anyone capable of attuning with a magical item can attune with a crystal, making those impressive tools – especially for individuals capable of casting or storing spells. For these people, using these crystals is part of their daily life, and powers a great deal of what they can do in Alessia. While most of these casters are also crafters of all kinds, many people study crystal magic for the joy of its intricate patterns and precise arrangements. Generally speaking, individuals using crystals to practice crystal magic in Alessia do so in one of three ways:

• ***As batteries***. Most of the crystals the people of Alessia mine are good for one thing and one thing only – channeling or storing ley line energies. Although not every battery can be used to store spells in their completed forms (as the magical glyphs that make up the base language that crystal magic uses), all of them can store power. Arcanists, teckers, and most adventurers use crystals in only this manner.



• ***As foci***. Some talented arcanists (and far more psions) can attune crystals to serve as foci for their spells and powers. In this capacity, these crystals don't store or channel energy of the associated spells and powers. Instead, these foci refine and refocus the patterns, making sure those patterns are recognized sooner and manifest more quickly.

• ***As storage***. Alessia's various crystals come in a rainbow of colors, all which attune to slightly different frequencies. Individuals who choose to attune these crystals to their colors can, as a result, use those crystals to store information about the topics or items with which they are aligned. These crystals are harder to find and align, however, as even the smallest imperfections can render these crystals ineffective storage devices.

When described in an official World of Alessia product, a typical entry for a crystal looks like this:

Shirran-Weslyn Crystal

This small, bruise-colored crystal fits in the palm of your hand.
Requires – 1 attunement slot.
Special – While attuned, an individual holding this crystal gains a +1 bonus to Technology rolls. An arcanist who attunes with this crystal can store three levels of spells or powers in it.

Of course, arcanists and teckers can readily make use of these crystals in other ways, destroying them through a number of arcane and alchemical rites, stripping them of their power and forever imbuing them into natural shells for the souls of the dead – creating sentients for their loved ones.

Some crystals will have additional abilities that can only be unlocked through attunement, while others will require a PC to align or even find harmony with them. Other crystals won't require any attunement at all.

The Dangers of Crystal Magic

The widespread use of crystals in Alessia does not change the simple fact that, individually, most are harmless. But when you multiply those numbers by billions of users, chaining and charging them, the potential for hazards rises quickly. In densely populated areas in well-maintained lands such as the Empire of Xian or central Velestra, the loads the governments place on their networks are heavily balanced against the available ley lines and the citizens' needs. Even when the best inputs to a network are possible, problems still arise, and when you start looking at the larger areas with mobile populations, those risks increase.

When systems fail, or individuals attempting to use those systems fail, a number of cascading calamities can occur. When they do, these failures disrupt service, but do no more harm. On occasion, the ramifications of those failures will do more than disrupt, with individuals dying at the site of the disruption and while containing it. There are worst-case scenarios, but the Empire of Xian and its current leadership have no desire to test them out, insteading choosing to follow the Shadow Emperor's harmonious path forward.

In regions where civil service is still a luxury, individuals choosing to live independently often deal with different issues related to crystal magic – mostly, these are storage issues. This is especially true of the remote settlements, where a single arcanist might maintain an entire outpost, deploying

banks of batteries to power the settlement's shields. Likewise, some arcanists will settle remote lands entirely on their own, turning these regions into personal paradises of all kinds. In some of these locations, the crystals deployed are used in strange and alien ways, exploding when exposed to Alessia's arcane energies.

The Anatomy of Magic

In Alessia, arcane, divine, and psychic magic all manifest in unique ways. Every spell, power, and ritual has specific requirements it must meet before it will function as intended – if it will function at all. To understand this, most students of magic spends decades studying under existing teachers – with many of them joining the Order of Astrænna to learn magic – who, in the years following, employ those students while they master their crafts. These individual relationships are beyond the scope of this discussion, and it is enough to say that, in Alessia, learning how to harness magic and make it work for you is no small task.

Those who have the acumen to explore Alessia's magical world understand that as individuals, they are little more than conduits between greater forces. These willing individuals spend their nights and days learning the precise patterns, meditations, or prayers needed to invoke (or evoke) these forces at will. When they grow in power, so does their access, and with it, their abilities.

How Alessia's heroes access and manifest this magical world is described on the next page.

Galder's Story

While story behind Galder the Retired is a sad reminder of the horrors of cancer, the character itself – Galder Rendt, is far from it. This powerful 14th-level wizard travels the paths between the worlds, appearing in Midgard (on Rhune), throughout the Empire of Xian (in Alessia), and often in realms beyond, as well. While Galder's missions in these worlds are always different, his ***ultimate goal*** is always the same – the complete and total eradication of some terrible sickness or disease. Given his noble goal, Alessia's peoples have dedicated themselves to aiding him in his cause. You can, too. Consider supporting the Cancer Research Institute, Mayo Clinic's Fight Against Cancer, and the ASCO Foundation's "Conquer Cancer" Campaign. #CreatorsCanCure

ARCANE MAGIC

In Alessia, arcane energies enhance the color patterns around them, brightening them into vivid, supernatural auras that glow. Along ley lines, these magical energies enhance the blues and purples of Alessia's skies, mirroring them as bright blues lines of energy that criss-cross parts of the surface. These lines fade with the sun, darkening to silvers, greys, and blacks, depending on which of Alessia's many moons hang in the sky. In places where Alessia's ley lines have faded from view, most citizens see (and understand) arcane magic to radiate blue, as teckers commonly use Zerrian-Fyrean Crystals when building magitech of all sorts.

When an arcanis or other arcane practioner casts a spell in Alessia, they are calling on arcane energies from the world around them.

DIVINE MAGIC

Alessia's divine energies radiate bright whites, yellows, and golds, shifting in hue and radiance depending on how the Light elects to manifest. When manifesting as part of a divine guardian's aura (which the Rings occasionally deploy to deal with an incursion), these energies visibly radiate a golden aura. Unlike arcane magic, divine magic's aura never changes, even when modified by Alessia's many colored crystals.

When an oracle or other divine celebrant casts a spell in Alessia, they are calling on divine energies from The Rings, the Trees of Life, or the Light that manifests throughout Alessia.

PSYCHIC MAGIC

Throughout Alessia's known lands, psychic power manifests in soft, barely visible auras that radiate a spectrum of color spanning orange to purple, with crimson and amethyst auras being the most common. Much like with Alessia's arcane energies, skilled psions can harness some of these energies, storing them in Alessia's crystals, both as tools, and when needed, as weapons.

When a psion or other individua casts a spell in Alessia, they are channeling their inner psychic powers.

USING ATTUNEMENT

Attunement is an important concept in Alessia. When a player character with a free slot attunes to (or bonds with) a target object, person, entity, or location, that individual invests a number of hours (a minimum of 18 continuous hours is required to initially attune to something), forming a magical, divine, or psychic bond with the target that bestows benefits on one, the other, or both. This is most commonly experienced as the bond between an individual and their familiar, although many citizens form bonds with surrogate devices, instead.

Starting at 1st level, a player character learns to attune with (or bond to) a number of items, people, or places (hereafter known as the target) equal to their proficiency bonus.

Player characters who gain bonus attunements from Feats, class features, or other sources may exceed this number. Regardless of the source, no character can attune with more than nine targets.

In Alessia, player characters can form bonds with the following targets: animal companions, familiars, magical items, magitech items, people, and places of power.

ATTUNING TO MAGITECH AND MAGICAL ITEMS

As the most common form of attunement, just about everyone in Alessia is attuned to a magitech device at some point in their lives. Few people have a difficult time attuning to smaller magitech items.

Magitech is designed to be wearable tech and is intended to operate in one of several common areas on the body. Magitech devices are frequently attached to boots, armor, bracers, helmets, and on belts. Some teckers custom build devices that can operate in uncommon areas, or which work in tandem with another slotted item.

To attune with a piece of magitech, a character need only spend 18 hours focusing on just that item (individuals can only attune to one thing at a time), and assuming they have a free slot that is appropriate for the item in question (you can't attune a magical boot with your head, for instance), they can attune with it.

ATTUNING TO PEOPLE: CREATING BONDS

Were it not for the widespread use of magitech throughout the Empire of Xian, this form of attunement would still dominate the face of Alessia. Celebrated a thousand different ways over the bridge of time, the concept of collaboration has crystallized itself as dozens of species synergies – special bonds between two allied species whose histories, genetic connections, or through some other shared experience has evolved into magical, psychic, or other special power the two attuned allies can enjoy.

To attune, two sentient beings need to willingly create the special bond between them, often doing so through a ceremony, pact, or ritual. The two individuals must then spend the next 36 hours within 100 feet of one another. At the end of this period, if both individuals agree (and both have a free slot with which to attune), the two are bonded (you are attuned).

Attuned individuals have the following benefits:

- If you are within 100 feet of your bonded ally, you know their general direction and can locate them within a minute.

- If they are within 100 feet of you, can spend a point of resolve as a bonus action to grant that ally a bonus d4 on their next d20 roll.

- You can activate your species synergies, gaining and bestowing the listed benefits.

ATTUNING TO PLACES: UNLOCKING THE MAGIC OF A LAIR

When Alessia was still young, only the greatest of beings could weave their magic into the permanent pools that would, over time, feed the ley lines that crisscross Alessia. The great beings lifted the cities to the skies, burned their images into the heavens, and created domains over which to rule that gave them permanent, evolving homes. For some beings, this has meant immortality.

For most people, however, this magic manifests in a much simpler way by allowing them to attune with an important location, shrine, natural scene, or other notable location and activate any of the magic that place can manifest.

Attuning to each location varies, but generally takes 18 to 36 hours and requires an individual spend that time in undisturbed meditation, study, work, or whatever that location requires of them. At the end of the attunement period, the individual is thereafter bonded to the location and can activate any of its lair abilities.

Attuned individuals have the following benefits:

- If you are within 100 feet of your location, you can spend resolve to activate its lair abilities.

- You gain advantage on saving throws you make within 100 feet of your bonded location.

- You gain advantage on Initiative checks within 100 feet of your bonded location.

ATTUNING TO ANIMAL COMPANIONS, FAMILIARS, AND OTHER ENTITIES

Arguably the rarest form of attunement on Alessia, only a handful of the population (by percentage) can attune with animals, familiars, or incorporeal entities. Arcanists, psions, seers, and teckers all enjoy these rare bonds, although each class accesses this feature in different ways. Moreover, this is still new territory for many people – only a rare few druidic traditions held these secrets previously.

Because of Alessia's ley lines and its massive Crystal Lattice, those characters able to form these special bonds often do so rapidly, forming them in 12 to 18 hours, sometimes sooner. Once a character bonds with a familiar, entity, or animal companion, they can begin the long process of learning and sharing with it, unlocking stunts or abilities between the two that serve them in mutually beneficial ways.

In some relationships, such as the one between an arcanist and their familiar, this bond benefits the less powerful familiar greatly, granting it extra intelligence, bonus Hit Points, and a number of unique abilities that sets it apart from its mundane peers.

Attuned companions have the following benefits:

- If you are within 100 feet of this companion, you can spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to grant it advantage on its next d20 roll.

- If you are within 100 feet of this companion, you can spend a point of resolve as a Reaction to grant it advantage on one of its ability saving throws until the beginning of your next turn.

- If you are within 100 feet of this companion, it gains advantage on Initiative checks.

FAMILIARS

On Alessia, the various playable species represent only a portion of the evolving beings. In the wild and remote places, megafauna dominate the land. In the smaller, urban areas (especially those closest to ley lines), small, smart species – many the former pets of their human and ish'ra neighbors – have developed communities, lifestyles, and a degree of sentience that mark them as more than just animals.

Characters who befriend these beings can approach them and, if both parties find the bond beneficial, may even attune to one another. The following creatures will generally accept bonds with player characters:

BOT, MAGITECH, HOVER

Small construct, unaligned
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 3
Speed fly 30 feet.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2	13	12	12	12	8

Senses blindsight 60 feet, Passive Perception 17
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Skills Perception +7
Languages Hexa and Xian.
Challenge 1/4 (50 xp)

Heightened Sensor Array. This bot possesses an advanced sensor array that grants it blindsight and a +4 bonus to Wisdom (Perception) ability checks. The array also grants the bot immunity to the charmed and frightened conditions.

HoloNet Access. This bot can access local HoloNets wirelessly within a kilometer of a broadcast station. While connected, the bot can make use of all public information systems and services.

ACTIONS

Shock. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet., one target. Hit: 5 (2d4) thunder damage. On a critical, the target must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

BOT, MAGITECH, SKITTER

Small construct, unaligned
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 4
Speed 30 feet.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12	14	12	11	11	8

Senses darkvision 30 feet., Passive Perception 11
Skills Perception +2, Stealth +5
Languages Hexa and Xian.
Challenge 1/4 (50 xp)

Armored Shell. This bot possesses an armored shell that increases its Armor Class by 2.

Soft Spring System. This bot runs an advanced navigation package combined with softened, rubber padding and springs designed to reduce its acoustic signature to zero. While active, this bot gains a +2 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) ability checks.

ACTIONS

Shock. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 5 (2d4) thunder damage. On a critical, the target must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Slice. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 5 (2d4) slashing damage. On a critical, the target suffers an additional 1d6 points of bleed damage.

BUNNY, STORMHORN

Small beast, unaligned
Armor Class 14
Hit Points 4
Speed 60 feet.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2	14	10	12	12	10

Senses darkvision 30 feet., Passive Perception 15
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +8
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 xp)

Nature's Nose. Stormhorn bunnies double their proficiency bonus when making Wisdom (Perception) ability checks in the wild to discover enemies and threats.

Standing Leap. Stormhorn bunnies can leap up to 10 feet from a standstill. They may also jump straight up a full 5 feet. The stormhorn bunny doesn't require a running start to attain either of these distances.

ACTIONS

Shock. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 5 (2d4) thunder damage. On a critical hit, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for 1 round.

CAT, SMILING

Small beast, unaligned
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 4
Speed 40 feet, climb 30 feet.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3	15	10	5	12	14

Senses darkvision 30 feet, Passive Perception 15
Skills Deception +8, Perception +5, Stealth +4
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 xp)

Nature's Nose. Smiling cats double their proficiency bonus when making Wisdom (Perception) ability checks in the wild to discover enemies and threats.

Disarming Disguise. Smiling cats are disarmingly adorable and fluffy, making them lovable companions to citizens of all kind. Smiling cats gain advantage on any Charisma (Deception) ability checks they make.

ACTIONS

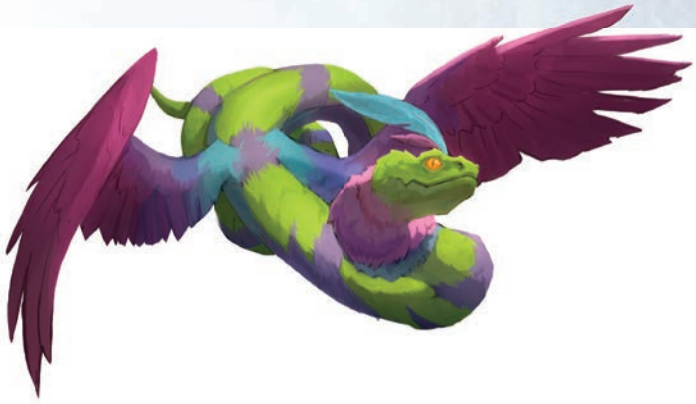
Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) slashing damage.

Friends, Not Pets

Although they are not officially recognized as citizens in the Empire of Xian, many smaller mammals in Alessia display far more than just object permanence, with many using tools and some even attaining levels of cognition that demands others recognize these smaller creatures for precisely who they are – smaller, thinking beings with needs, dreams, and desires as driving as any of those of the larger species.

So, while these smaller beings are not officially citizens, Alessia's magical community has long considered these creatures sentient and sovereign, officially barring arcanists (and other spellcasters) from forcing these smaller beings into bonds under duress or intimidation of *any* kinds.

Instead, spellcasters look to these beings as friends and companions with whom they share important bonds. Only the darkest, most depraved spellcasters in Alessia would dare bind a creature against its will.



SNAKE, FLYING VELESTRIAN

Small beast (snakes), unaligned
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 3
Speed flying 30 feet, climb 20 feet.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7	16	10	12	12	12

Senses blindsight 20 meters, Passive Perception 14
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5.
Languages Xian.
Challenge 1/4 (50 xp)

Flyby A flying snake does not provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Poisonous Bite The flying snake can deliver a poisonous bite. This damage is included below.

ACTIONS

Bite Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 1 meter, one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage plus 7 (3d4) poison damage.

CAT, WINGED

Small beast, unaligned
Armor Class 12
Hit Points 3
Speed 30 feet, fly 40 feet.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3	15	10	5	12	14

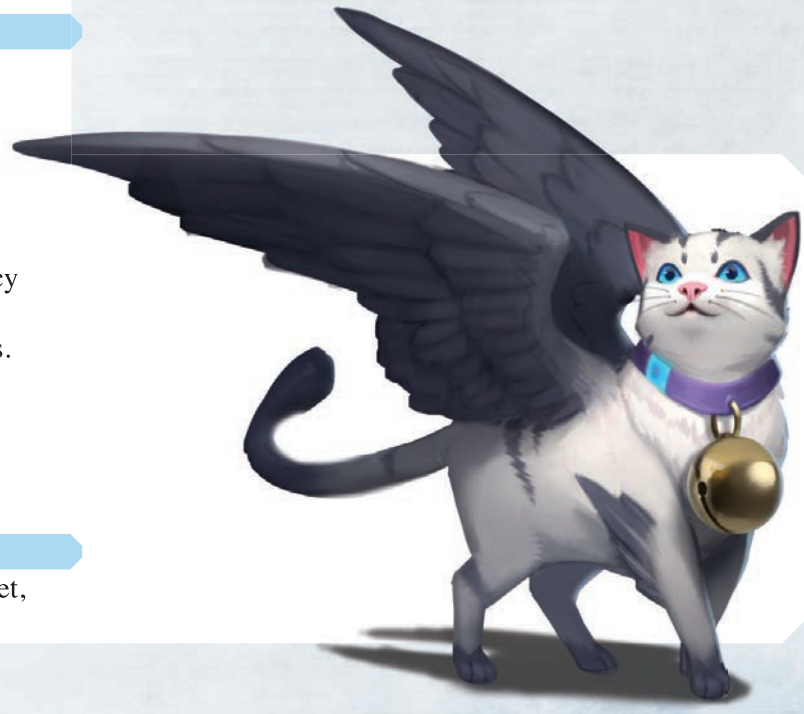
Senses darkvision 60 feet., Passive Perception 15
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 xp)

Nature's Nose. Flying cats double their proficiency bonus when making Wisdom (Perception) ability checks in the wild to discover enemies and threats.

Diving Pounce. Flying cats d. Flying cats gain advantage on any Dexterity (Acrobatics) ability checks they make while attack foes from the air.

ACTIONS

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) slashing damage.



Bonds & Benefits

When a spellcaster attunes (and forms a bond) with a familiar, that creature often bestows some small special advantage to the spellcaster. The benefits the familiars presented herein provide are listed below:

- ***Bot, Floating***. You gain a +1 bonus to Technology (Intelligence) ability checks and 2 bonus Hit Points.
- ***Bot, Skitter***. You gain a +1 bonus to Drive (Dexterity) ability checks and 2 bonus Hit Points.
- ***Bunny, Stormhorn***. You gain a +1 bonus to Psychic (Charisma) ability checks and 2 bonus Hit Points.
- ***Cat, Smiling***. You gain a +1 bonus to Culture (Intelligence) ability checks and 2 bonus Hit Points.
- ***Cat, Winged***. You gain a +1 bonus to Spacefaring (Intelligence) ability checks and 2 bonus Hit Points.
- ***Snake, Flying***. You gain a +1 bonus to Street (Wisdom) ability checks and 2 bonus Hit Points.

ATTUNEMENT, ALIGNMENT, AND HARMONY

When a character attunes with a target (forming a magical bond that uses up at least one attunement slot), that individual unlocks the basic benefits provided through attunement. For most, this is all they need to operate specialized magitech, enhanced security systems, and a number of weapons. Some (notably teckers and arcanists) learn to manipulate these items, unlocking hidden potentials and creating stronger bonds with these targets.

When an individual or creature wants to unlock a magitech devices more advanced features, they must first attune with it. Attuning with an item is a simple, reflective process that takes anywhere from a number of hours to a number of days to perform. When complete, the individual who has attuned with the new target gains the listed benefits of their level of attunement for that target.

- ***Attuned.*** An individual who attunes with a target (an individual, a piece of gear, a place, or a familiar) invests a single attunement slot, gaining access to all the abilities that level of access offers. This is the most common state of attunement in Alessia.

- ***Aligned.*** An individual who elects to invest a second attunement slot with a target, who meets all the requirements for such an alignment, is said to be aligned with the target. This form of magical bond is common in organizations, especially where individuals are charged with maintaining a tradition or protecting a place.

- ***Harmonized.*** An individual in Alessia who invests a third attunement slot with a target (often doing so after maintaining their aligned states for a minimum period of time) is harmonized to that target. This is the strongest form of magical bond, unlocking hidden, powerful abilities in the target that can only be evoked as part of that relationship. This is the hardest bond to break.

BREAKTING ATTUNEMENT

The bonds formed with someone attunes with a target are strong; this is doubly true for those who activate their species synergies, as these individuals often form powerful emotional bonds that strengthen those attunements. When one of these attunements breaks, how the break effects the individual depends largely on how long the bond existed and how strong it was when it broke. Breaking an attunement and the subsequent effects it has on the individual depends on the state of the attunement. These are described below:

- ***Attuned.*** A character who chooses to break an attunement does so naturally, removing the old target over a course of a day. Characters with longstanding attunements (that have persisted for more than one year or one level of play) take a full week to clear.

- ***Aligned.*** A character who breaks a strong, aligned magical bond does so, normally, in one of two ways. A character who chooses to break an alignment does so naturally, removing the old target over a course of a week. Characters who suddenly break this connection (often because of a sudden loss of access by the individual to the target), this break can be damaging. These characters need to succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain the exhausted condition for a day.

- ***Harmonized.*** The strongest of bonds are the most difficult to break. A character who wants to naturally break a magical bond this strong must do so over the course of two full weeks. At the end of those two weeks, the character must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw to complete the separation. A character must wait at least a week before using the attunement slots to form a magical bond with a new target.

Characters who suddenly break this connection, either because the individual loses access to the target or because a spell or power forced the separation, this break can be incredibly damaging, both to the character and in some cases, the target as well. When this bond is broken, the character must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or immediately suffer 22 (4d10) points of psychic damage and gain the exhausted condition. Characters who make this save instead suffer 6 (2d6) points of psychic damage.

ARCANE ADDICTIONS

Alessia has a long history with arcane magic that dates back to its First Age. Since those gloried days, cults, schools, and magical orders of all kinds have supported its spread, building towers and floating cities to honor its power.

A millennium of magical development doesn't pass without taking its toll, and this is no different for the people of Alessia. For every city made safer through magitech, there are those who have failed to unplug. These arcane junkies rely on magic like a drug, swimming through its crystalline webs like fish through the sea.

We describe several of these magical drugs and their corresponding addictions below:

• ***Dustman's Embrace.*** An addiction first developed among the crystal miners of southern Shiran and northern Fyrea, Dustman's Embrace gives its user a series of prophetic powers, heightening arcanists' divinatory powers by several degrees, and pushing them, for moments at a time, into the kaima's realms. How a character interacts with Dustman's Embrace determines which saving throws it makes. If a character willingly takes Dustman's Embrace, they willingly fail saves and suffer both its boon, as well as its penalties. Generally speaking, a single dose of Dustman's Embrace lasts 1d4 hours.

Boon. While under the effect of Dustman's Embrace, you can burn your hit points to enhance your divination spells. Once while under the effect of the drug, you can burn 1d8 hit points to increase a single spell by one level. While this drug is in effect, you can easily see the kaimi.

Penalty. A character willingly taking Dustman's Embrace has a strong desire to continue doing so, if when doing so would be bad for them. If Dustman's Embrace is available, the PC must seek it. If the PCs cannot obtain it, they must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or immediately try to source it. While seeking Dustman's Embrace, the PC makes all Intelligence saving throws at a disadvantage. When a character passes this save, they suppress the desire for 1d4 hours. Once a PC has successfully resisted the drug, they are no longer affected by this penalty.

• ***Ling's Legacy.*** Heavily used by the royal houses of the early Empire of Xian, Ling's Tea (as it was originally known) was a pleasant, sweet-smelling syrup that when added to water and heated, produced a vapor that unlocked mental vigor and strength in great reserves, while also suppressing the need for sleep. Characters under the effects of Ling's Legacy enjoy them for shorter times, with each dose lasting 1d3 hours at most. A character who fails 3 saving throws against Ling's Legacy become dependent.

Boon. Characters under the effects of Ling's Legacy gain advantage on Deception, Insight, Perception, and Performance checks. Additionally, each character under the effect of Ling's Legacy gains a +1 bonus to their Wisdom and Charisma scores for the duration the drug affects thems

Penalty. While under the effects of Ling's Legacy, your system is far more susceptible to other foreign agents, toxins, and diseases. While under the effect of this drug, you suffer disadvantage on Constitution saving throws of all kinds (including saves against this drug).

• ***Qingshan Shivers.*** More commonly known as Seaside Shivers (or just shivers), peddlers selling this drug target young arcanists – who get the most out of the drug when they use it. An alchemical paste developed in basements in the worst parts of the city, arcanists apply this substance to their eyelids, giving themselves the ability to more easily see ley lines and magical auras of all kinds. Characters who accidentally come in contact with shivers need to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. Characters who succeed suffer no ill effects. Characters who fail this saving throw are affected by the dose normally. Arcanists who use shivers every day often develop dependencies on it, 'shivering' when they don't have access to the drug. A single dose of Qingshan Shivers lasts 1d4 hours. It takes three days of use to develop a dependency.

Boon. While under the effect of shivers, you can see magical auras and energy as if you had cast the spell *detect magic*. This is a constant effect, although characters who spend a reaction and succeed on a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw can suppress magical sight for 10 minutes. The drug's effects are strong, and you must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw each round to remain focused on important tasks. Characters who fail are stunned on the following round, while they try to refocus on their task.

Penalty. While under the effects of this drug, you gain disadvantage on death saving throws. Additionally, any time you take damage from a slashing weapon, you take an additional point of damage.

The Crystal Lattice and Alessia's History with Crystals

Crystals play an important role in Alessia's history, as well as its daily life. Before describing their uses (Alessia's crystals, their respective colors, and uses are listed in Chapter 7), it is important to describe their origin and value, as well as how those two factors have impacted Alessia's history.

All crystals on Alessia originate in one of two places: the synthetic, holo-infused crystals produced on the Ring and in the heart of the Empire of Xian are technology's attempt to replicate what nature has, through evolution, all but perfected. Rare and expensive, these crystals power the living networks on The Ring and in the ish'ran Voidship The Enduring Dream.

Far more common, however, are Alessia's natural crystals – the broken shards torn (and mined) from the Crystal Lattice. So, what is the Crystal Lattice (or, if you prefer its shorter title, simply the Lattice).

The Crystal Lattice is a global, subsurface region sandwiched between the Alessia's lithosphere (the outer crust of the planet) and its much hotter asthenosphere. Buried at a depth of more than 830 kilometers (515 miles), this region expands and evolves into the planet's upper crust. How this happens remains a mystery to Alessian geologists, although many have theorized the crystals don't evolve, but rather form naturally in the cooling subduction zones formed between the two layers.

Some arcanists theorize that the Crystal Lattice once covered the surface of a smaller Alessia, and that several early formation impacts changed its surface, covering the massive planet in iron- and silicate-rich material and, over time, giving rise to life.

Alessia's arcanists and teckers are continually expanding their understanding of how the Crystal Lattice actually works and how to enhance society with it. In the Empire of Xian, arcanists and teckers have successfully connected their respective cities through the Lattice, creating magical terminals that allow two-way conversations (and data transfers) over incredibly long distances. How these terminals function is something of an open secret. Although the information is readily available to the public, only arcanists and teckers interested in using these terminals actually spend the time learning. Most citizens happily bury their faces in their magitech devices and go about their days.

While all these crystals come from the same place, Alessia's various peoples have a number of different names for them. Among the Velestrians, for instance, these crystals are known as *Ascendant Stones*. The tir'ians, on the other hand, travel the known universe looking for these very same crystals, which they call *Tundral Stones*. In the north, Yrim's jötunfolk call these crystal shards *The Bright Tears of Alvsadir,* while in the deep, hot deserts of Fyrea, the gnoles call these shards *Arah's Gifts*. The yökai of Yerwin call them *Yarra's Tears*.

Regardless of what they're called, they are all the same stones. See Chapter 7 for more details on how they function.

THE SOCIAL IMPACT

The larger social impact of this proliferation of magitech is largely what one would expect from a society the size of the Empire of Xian (and for Alessia as a whole, as well).

For most of the public, the majority of magitech devices are tools to be used and nothing more. For a small section of the population, engineers and arcanists tinker with the magitech, responding over a spectrum of extremes, from obsessive to nonchalant. As there are with all tribes and societies, differing social and regional views still impact the general public, creating pockets of strange adherents – these technological zealots see most of magitech as nothing more than an extension of the planet itself, itself waiting to be mastered (they'd never use words like 'abused' or 'exploited').

While extreme examples will always rise from the shadows of the social fabric, magitech has made hiding such social parasites harder, thanks to the diligent efforts of the Empire of Xian and its allies, who – through their alliance with the ish'ra – learned to develop and deploy magitech early on. As a result, there are pockets of people throughout Elysia whose traditions incorporate magitech, and in some instances, even enshrine it. In regions where religious views can strongly shape how magitech is developed, that tech often also bears the marks of that influence – this can give outsiders strange technological views of differing parts of Alessia.

OPTIONAL RULE: EVERYONE KNOWS A LITTLE MAGIC

Alessia is a world infused with magic. That simple fact has a wide reach and impacts the various regions in a number of profound ways. This impact is felt primarily in early academia, as many nations teach simple (and life-saving) cantrips to those with the capacity to tap the currents of magic. In the Empire of Xian, local schools and universities both teach arcane magic, and the Order of Astrænna frequently recruits promising arcanists directly from these programs. Fyrea, whose magical traditions are as old as Alessia itself, has similar programs that ensure each generation adds to the arcane lore of Alessia. The same is true in Shiran, Velestra, Yerwin, and Yrim.

This widespread acceptance of magic allows each player character to begin play with a single cantrip that they know. The player may choose their highest mental attribute [Charisma, Intelligence, or Wisdom] as the primary spellcasting ability score.

NEW SPELLS

The Order of Astrænna has, since its inception in 4,233, done a wonderful job of preserving the expansive body of knowledge thus far collected. Working hand in hand with the Church of Light, both organizations have done an excellent job of preserving the world's current understanding of divine, arcane, and psychic magic.

The following spells are common in and around Alessia.

ACCELERATED HEALING

2nd-level transmutation (ritual)
Casting Time 1 minute
Range Touch
Components V, S
Duration 24 hours

You speed up the natural healing of a creature you touch. When the affected creature expends Hit Dice to recover hit points, it gains the maximum possible amount on each die. In addition, the creature regains all expended Hit Dice after a long rest.

ARMOR OF FAITH

1st-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range Self
Components V, S, M (a sigil of The Light).
Duration Concentration, up to 10 minutes.

This spell forms a shimmering, radiant field around you like a suit of armor. As long as you maintain this spell, each time a weapon attack would hit you, as a Reaction you can expend a 1st-level spell slot to either gain resistance against the triggering attack or increase your AC by +1. If the increased AC would cause the attack to miss, then the attack misses instead. You must declare your choice before the GM announces the damage from this attack. Damage Reduction. For each level of the spell slot you expend, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage you take from nonmagical weapons is reduced by 3 points.

At higher levels. For each level of the spell slot you expend, your AC increases by +1 against that attack.

AVERSION

2nd level enchantment
Casting Time 1 action
Range 30 feet
Components V, S
Duration 1 hour

DEV NOTE: SPELL DURATIONS & DISTANCES

To minimize confusion, all spells, species abilities, and similar mechanics are listed in feet and miles. This is done to keep these abilities compatible with similar products and to minimize preparation times. When measuring longer distances (especially for skyship and voidship travel), these distances are measured instead in metric. Handy reminders throughout the book should make converting between both systems easy and intuitive.

Likewise, all of the spells presented in this section use a 24-hour day model to maximize compatibility with other products and settings. In Alessia, however, these spells last up to 24 hours, or until the target completes a long rest, whichever comes first.

You target a single creature within range, attempting to force it to avoid a particular topic, location, or person. It must make a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails the saving throw, it cannot talk about a specific subject, or it cannot affect or come within 30 feet of a particular creature or location. It does anything in its power to avoid the subject of its aversion and actively moves away from the chosen element until the effect ends. When the spell ends, the creature knows it was affected by you.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can either increase the duration by an hour, or increase the number of creatures affected by one for each slot level above 2nd. These increases may be in any combination of duration and targets.

AVULSING RAY

2nd-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration instantaneous

You create a ray and hurl it at a target in range: make a ranged spell attack. On a successful hit you inflict 2d6 + (your casting ability modifier) psychic damage and the target loses one random attunement, to either an item, species, place, or a familiar, if any. Any attunement lost in this way may not be reattuned for 24 hours.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you create one additional ray.

BALEFUL GLARE

Enchantment Cantrip
Casting Time 1 action
Range Self
Components S
Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute.

Your gaze unnerves those around you. Your voice undergoes a slight but noticeable change, and your facial features take on subtle hints of your choice of a fiendish, undead, or Asaræl features. As long as you maintain concentration with this spell, you gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks. While this spell remains active, however, you suffer disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

BANISH KAIMA

2nd-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range 90 feet
Components V, S, M (a piece of broken magitech, which is destroyed in the casting)
Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute.

When you cast this spell, you attempt to send a single kaima you can see back to its native domain. The kaima must succeed on an Intelligence saving throw or be banished, after which time the target creature is free to return (under their own power, of course). Targets who succeed on this saving throw are instead stunned for 1d4 rounds. Targets currently on their native plane automatically succeed on this saving throw.

When a creature is banished in this manner, a brief moment of light illuminates the target as it is pulled back into its native dimension or plane. Nearby creatures can see through this space for the brief moment it appears but cannot otherwise interact with it.

Kaima banished in this manner always appear in safe, unoccupied spaces on their native planes.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you can target an additional target within range. You may target a 3rd kaima at 6th level, and a 4th at 8th level.

BANISHMENT

4th-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range 60 feet.
Components V, S, M (an object the target finds repulsive)
Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute.

When you cast this spell, you attempt to send a single creature you can see back to its native plane of existence. The target must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or be banished, after which time the target creature is free to return (under their own power, of course). Targets who succeed on this saving throw are instead stunned for 1d4 rounds. Targets currently on their native plane automatically succeed on this saving throw.

When a creature is banished in this manner, a brief moment of light illuminates the target as it is pulled back into its native dimension or plane; nearby creatures can see through this space for the brief moment it appears but cannot otherwise interact with it.

Targets banished in this manner always appear in safe, unoccupied spaces on their native planes.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can target an additional target within range. You may select an additional target for each slot you select above 4th.

BONE SPURS

2nd-level Necromancy
Casting Time 1 action
Range 30 feet.
Components V, S, M (a shard of broken bone)
Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute.

Large, jagged bone spurs erupt from the feet and ankles of a creature you can see within range. The creature must make a Constitution saving throw or suffer 2d10 necrotic damage. In addition, the creature's speed is halved, and it suffers 1d8 piercing damage each round it moves more than five feet.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage inflicted when the target creature moves increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 2nd.

BUTTERFLY EFFECT

2nd-level divination
Casting Time 1 reaction or bonus action
Range Self
Components V, S
Duration Instantaneous

You gain insight into the immediate future, and may make the next ability or skill check at +5, or force the next attack made against you to be made with disadvantage. Insight benefits only last until the end of the next round.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you increase the duration by one round for each slot level above 2nd, and may use your Reaction or Bonus action each round to gain insight.

COAT OF TRANSLUCENT FLAME

4th-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range Self or 120 feet (see text)
Components V, S
Duration 1 hour (see text)

You are enveloped with a coat of colorless flame for the duration of the spell. You can discharge the spell in one of two ways:

As an Action, you can expend the spell as a *dispel magic* against an effect within range. This can be done as part of the initial casting, requiring no further actions beyond the initial action required to cast.

As a Reaction, you can expend it attempt to dispel an effect targeting or including you in the area of effect, as per *dispel magic*.

When using either option against a psionic effect or a spell cast by a psion, or other psionic caster, you may make your ability check with an advantage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you extend the duration for one hour, or increase the level of the spell automatically dispelled by one for each slot level above 3rd; e.g., if a psion casts this with a 6th-level slot, they could expend it to automatically dispel a 6th-level spell or less.

CIRCLE OF SERPENTS

2nd-level conjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range 90 feet
Components V, S, M (a scale from a serpent)
Duration 1 minute

Snakes crawl from the ground, writhing and slithering in a circle around a creature you can see within range. The snakes do not attack or otherwise harm the creature unless the creature steps outside the circle, at which time the snakes attack using your reaction. They use your spell attack bonus. If they hit, the target takes 5d6 poison damage, after which the spell ends. The snakes do not attack other creatures, even if they enter or leave the target creature's space.

CLUTCH THE HEART

6th-level necromancy
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 60 feet
Components V, S
Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute

You stretch forth your hand toward an enemy creature you can see in range and motion to rip its heart free from its chest. The target must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 8d6 necrotic damage, or half as much damage on a successful save. If the creature fails this save, each round as a bonus action you can inflict an additional 4d6 necrotic damage against it. Each round at the end of its turn, the creature can attempt another saving throw to end the effect. If the target reaches 0 hit points, its heart bursts free from its chest and flies into your waiting palm, still beating, at which time the creature dies.

CRYSTALLINE DEFENSE

2nd-level Abjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range Self
Components T*
Duration 8 hours

You manifest a reactive shell of psychic energy that is reinforced by magical crystals. This shell protects you and your gear. While the shell is active, your AC becomes 13 + your Dexterity modifier. The first time you take damage in a round, you can spend a reaction to immediately have your armor attack that target. This response manifests as a crystal dagger that deals 1d4 piercing or slashing damage.

DANCING LIGHTS

Evocation cantrip
Casting Time 1 action
Range 120 feet
Components M, S
Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create up to four torch-sized lights within range, making them appear as phantom lights, torches, lanterns, or glowing magitech that hover within range for the full duration of the spell. You can move these lights as a bonus action. You can move these lights independent of one another, or as a group. When you move them, you can move them up to 60 feet, but all of the lights must remain within 20 feet of one another. Lights moved beyond this range wink out of existence forever.

Each light illuminates a 10-foot radius.

Finally, you can use the lights to create a distracting, flashing pattern that effects everyone looking at them within a 20-foot radius. Characters who fail a Wisdom saving throw are dazzled by the show and suffer a -1 to Attacks until the beginning of your next turn. This ends the spell.

DEATH FOG

5th-level necromancy
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 120 feet
Components V, S
Duration Concentration, up to 1 minute

When you cast this spell, a pale fog rises from the ground to fill a 20-foot-radius sphere at a point you can see within range. Each round a living creature begins its turn inside this fog, they must roll a Constitution saving throw or suffer 5d6 necrotic damage.

The fog changes color to become increasingly dark red the more damage it inflicts.

As an Action, you can move the fog cloud up to 60 feet, but if it moves out of range, the spell ends immediately. Any round you or any of your chosen allies start their turn within the cloud, you each gain 3 temporary hit points, but only if the cloud inflicted damage on enemies in a previous round.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 points, to a maximum of 9d6 at 9th level.

DETECT CRYSTALS

1st-level Divination
Casting Time 1 action
Range 60 feet
Components S, M (a miniature crystal of identical type)
Duration Concentration, up to 10 minutes

For the duration, you sense the presence of natural crystals of all kinds within 60 feet of you. When you sense crystals using this spell, you can spend your action to visualize the magical links that connect you to the crystals. Although these links are visible to you, others cannot see them.

The spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 10 feet of worked stone or 5 feet of common metal.

DETECT LEY LINES

1st-level Divination
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 1 mile
Components S, M (a mirror trapped in amber)
Duration Concentration, up to 10 minutes
For the duration, you see any ley lines within 1 mile and can sense the presence of ley lines within 5 miles of you. When you sense a ley line you cannot see, you may spend a full round to visualize a faint orb that only you can see that slowly leads you toward the ley line.

The spell can penetrate most barriers, but it is blocked by 1 foot of stone, 1 inch of common metal or 10 feet of wood or dirt.

DISRUPT MAGITECH

3rd-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 90 feet
Components V, S
Duration Instantaneous

Select a single object, item, or magitech device within range. Any spell or effect of 3rd level (or lower) on that device ends. For each spell or effect 4th level or higher, you may make an ability check using your spellcasting ability score against the DC of that effect (11 + the spell or effect's level). If you succeed, that spell or effect ends.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 4th-level spell slot, you may target an additional device for each level you add.

FENGU'S MOCKERY

Enchantment cantrip
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 60 feet
Components V
Duration Instantaneous

Drawing on millennia of pain and loss, you unleash a caustic barrage of insults at a creature you can see within range. If the target can hear and understand you, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw. Targets who fail this save suffer 1d4 points of psychic damage and gain disadvantage on the next d20 roll they make before the end of its next turn. This spell's damage increases by d4 when you reach 5th (2d4), 11th (3d4), and 17th (4d4) levels, respectively.

EMOTION SHIFT

2nd-level enchantment
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 30 feet
Components V, S
Duration Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You attempt to adjust the emotional state of a single targeted creature within range, amplifying a current feeling, altering the emotional state to something completely different, or suppressing the current sensation. It must make a Wisdom saving throw, and does so with an advantage if you or your companions are currently acting in a hostile manner. If it fails the saving throw, its emotions are shifted as you intend for the duration, or until you or your companions harm it. The shifted creature may treat you as a friendly acquaintance, as per *charm person*, or it may attack everyone in sight until restrained, using lethal force against people it doesn't know or who attack it with lethal force, and non-lethal force against people it knows. Creatures who have emotions suppressed no longer suffer from charm effects while the spell is active. If not currently charmed, and their emotions are suppressed, the creature cannot be brought to care about anything, except its own survival. The charmed creature treats you like an old acquaintance if friendly, ignores you if suppressed, and attacks you last if driven to rage. When the spell ends, the creature knows it was affected by you.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can either increase the duration by an hour, or increase the number of creatures affected by one for each slot level above 2nd. These increases may be in any combination of duration and targets.

EYE OF THE STORM

5th-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 Reaction
Range 30 feet
Components V, S
Duration Concentration, up to 1 hour.

For a brief moment, this spell causes incoming destructive energies to flow around the affected creature, protecting them from one of the elements. When the target creature is subjected to an effect that inflicts acid, cold, fire, or lightning damage, they gain resistance against that type of damage. For example, if you are caught in a cone of cold, you gain resistance to cold damage.

FORETOLD DOOM

2nd-level enchantment
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 30 feet

Components V, S
Duration Instantaneous

You inform a creature that can hear your voice the circumstances of its impending demise. If the creature fails a Wisdom saving throw, it believes your prognostication and lives in fear of this unavoidable doom. As part of this spell, you name a type of creature (such as a scorpion, snake, horse, orc, etc.), object (for example, a sword or a suit of armor), or hazard (such as fire, a thunderstorm, or ice). As long as the spell remains in effect, whenever the target creatures see the source of its supposed doom, it becomes frightened. Once the creature encounters the source of its fear, it can attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of its turns to break the spell's effect.

GLASSTEEL

8th-level transmutation
Casting Time 1 Action
Range Touch
Components V, S, M (a piece of glass, a piece of steel)
Duration Permanent

You transform a piece of crystal or glass to have the toughness and resilience of steel. You can affect one window-sized piece of transparent material no larger than 3 feet tall by 2 feet wide and an inch thick.

Glassteel has an AC of 20 with 28 (8d6) hit points, as well as resistance to piercing and slashing attacks made by nonmagical weapons that aren't adamantine.

GRACEFUL REDIRECT

1st-level Abjuration
Casting Time Reaction
Range Self
Components V

You create, as a reaction to taking any kind of physical damage, a thin barrier of energy that redirects 3d4 points of damage from the triggering attack. Additionally, your Armor Class increases by 1 until the beginning of your next turn.

LAUNCH CRYSTAL

Conjuration Cantrip
Casting Time 1 action
Range 30 feet
Components T*
Duration Instantaneous

You create and launch a razor-sharp crystal at a single target within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 points of piercing damage. On a miss, the crystal shatters and immediately dissipates.

LEY LINE BLAST

3rd-level evocation
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 30 feet
Components S, V, Special (can only be cast near ley lines)
Duration Instantaneous

You draw on the energies from a nearby ley line, using them to create a powerful blast of energy to blast your foes. Each creature in a 40-foot cone must make a Dexterity saving throw. All creatures in the zone take 8d6 force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a higher-level spell slot, you it deals 2d6 points of additional damage for each level.

LIGHT BLADE BARRIER

5th-level evocation
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 30 feet
Components V, S, M
Duration Concentration, up to 10 minutes.

When you cast this spell, you create a tight circle of whirling blades made from hardened light. These razor-sharp blades encircle you completely, creating a 10-foot tall wall of magical blades in a 30-foot diameter. This wall is 5 feet thick and deals 6d8 points of radiant damage to every target that passes through the wall. Targets who succeed on a Dexterity saving throw halve this damage instead.

You may spend two points of resolve as a bonus action when you cast this spell to extend its duration another 5 minutes, and you may spend a total of four resolve points in this manner before you need to take a short rest.

LULLABY

Enchantment Cantrip
Casting Time 1 action
Range 60 feet
Components V
Duration 1 minute

You sing a magical song that makes your target sleepy. If the target can hear you, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or treat its total hit points as if they were halved for the purpose of determining

their susceptibility to the *sleep* spell (and similar magical effects). Targets who fail this save are at a disadvantage on saving throws against spells that cause the unconscious condition until the beginning of its next turn.

PSYCHIC WEAPON

2nd-level conjuration
Casting Time 1 reaction or bonus action
Range Self
Components S
Duration 1 hour

You create a simple or martial weapon of your choice which does (1d6 + Ability score modifier) hit points of force damage on a successful attack. You are proficient with this weapon. It is crafted from your mind, but maintains a form as strong as steel. It uses your attack bonus on attacks, and you may choose to use your Dexterity, Intelligence, or Strength modifier to adjust your attack Rolls, but must use that ability until the spell ends. The weapon is considered magical for the purposes of resistance or weakness. You may throw the weapon as a ranged attack against a target within 30 feet, but summoning it back to your hand requires a move action. No one else may wield this weapon – it simply falls through the fingers of those who try. You may dismiss the weapon as a reaction or bonus action.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the weapon gains one of the following options for each slot level above 2nd.

- +1 to damage (maximum +4)
- +1 to hit (per two level slots beyond 2nd, e.g., a 4th-level slot would provide a bonus of +1 to hit, maximum +3)
- Increase the damage as follows: 1d6 becomes 1d8, 1d8 becomes 2d6, 2d6 becomes 2d8, and 2d8 becomes 3d6.

RITUAL OF ATTUNEMENT (RITUAL)

1st-level transmutation
Casting Time 30 minutes
Range self
Components V
Duration Instantaneous

You conduct a short ritual that halves the time you need to spend with an object, person, place, or entity before you can attune with it. This spell reduces the common minimum from 24 hours to 12, allowing an individual to form an important bond with someone or something earlier than normal.

SAFE FALL

Transmutation cantrip
Casting Time 1 reaction, which you take when you fall.
Range self
Components V
Duration 1 minute

With a word, you slow your falling rate of descent to 60 feet per round. You maintain this rate of descent until you either safely reach the ground (landing on your feet) or the spell ends (and you begin falling anew at your previous rate of descent).

SILLIAN'S PRAYER OF PURIFICATION

Transmutation Cantrip
Casting time 1 minute
Range touch
Components S, V

After completing a short prayer, you touch a single plate of food (and the accompanying drink), removing all dirt, rot, disease, poison, or other impurities from the food or drink within.

SHIELD ATTUNEMENT

2nd-level abjuration
Casting Time 1 action
Range Self
Components V, S, M (a piece of amber carved to resemble the attuned item or person, wrapped in wax).
Duration 24 hours.

You weave a series of protective glyphs and sigils into your aura, reinforcing the magical bonds you've formed with others or important items. This spell protects your connection with a single attuned object, person, place, or entity for 24 hours. All attempts to magically break this bond fail. This spell counters *avulsing ray*.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you protect one additional attunement.

SILLIAN'S PRAYER OF LIGHT

Conjuration Cantrip
Casting Time 1 minute
Range touch
Component V
Duration 1d4 minutes
You utter a small prayer to the Light, allowing you to heal a minor cut, break, or other wound. After completing this prayer, you slowly heal the target 1 point per minute for 1d4 minutes. The target must complete a long rest before you can cast this spell on them a second time.

TAI'S TRUE TEMPERATURE

Transmutation Cantrip
Casting Time 1 Action
Range 10 Feet
Components S
Duration 1d4 hours

You normalize the temperature in a 10-foot square, raising or lowering it by 10 degrees.

TARGETING MARK

Divination Cantrip
Casting Time 1 action
Range 30 feet
Components S
Duration Concentration, up to I round

You launch a pulsing, magical dart at a single target within range. If the target fails its Dexterity saving throw, it is briefly outlined in a soft, silvery light. Until the beginning of your next turn (or until the target takes damage), creatures attacking the target have advantage on their attack rolls.

TRANSFER KI

Transmutation Cantrip
Casting time 1 full round
Range Touch
Component S
Duration 1 hour

With a touch, you create a temporary bond between you and another willing target that allows you to transfer 1d4 points of ki between you and the target. This transfer lasts for one hour, or until you complete a short rest (at which point any bonus ki fade away).

WRECK IT WRENCH

2nd-level conjuration
Casting time 1 bonus action
Range 30 feet
Component V, S, M (at least 1 lbs. of scrap materials)
Duration 1 minute

You summon a minor kaima of chaos, who immediately takes the form of a floating, angry wrench that despises technology of all kinds. For the duration (or until you cast this spell a second time), this kaima of chaos (disguised as a floating wrench) smashes nearby technology (anything within 30 feet), targeting everything within range for destruction (including sentients and allied bots) and selecting at random. When you complete this spell, select a single target within 30 feet and make an attack. On a hit, that target takes bludgeoning damage equal to 1d10 + your spellcasting modifier. This floating wrench has an AC of 20, 18 Hit Points, and is resistant to nonmagical piercing and slashing damage.

Each following round, the wrench attacks the nearest potential target, regardless of who it previously attacked (or who may have subsequently hit it – it acts at random every single round). If the weapon has more than one potential target, it selects the next target at random.

This weapon persists until the spell's duration expires or the shell protecting the spirit is shattered. The 4th-level spells *banishment* and *banish kaima* work normally against this spell, which uses the caster's Charisma saving throw to resist such attempts.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a 3rd-level spell slot (or higher), the damage increases by 1d10 for every spell slots above 2nd.

Chapter 5 | World of Alessia

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A MASSIVE WORLD

Given its size and the full scope of diversity we hope to explore in Alessia, trying to describe the entirety of the world in a few pages seems futile. We're cursed to omit something that someone is looking for and we'll never know it. Working with these constraints, however, is both challenging and important. While we can never hope to include every detail about the world we've built in the primer, we've spent that energy elsewhere – reinforcing the themes and ideas that make Alessia truly unique.

We've designed this primer to teach you about the world that exists, today, for the majority of the player characters. Where we could, we've painted things with a broad stroke, leaving the finer details to inspired GMs. We want GMs to fixate on parts of the known world and tell stories there, filling in the finer details to tell better stories for their players.

We also understand that given its size, it's difficult for most of us to conceptualize the sheer space presented to us. That makes mapping out adventures that 'span the globe' more important, especially when introducing a new world.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALESSIA

Although Alessia's cosmological history predates its written history by millennia, understanding Alessia's past is important for both scientists and scholars. Even the Free Mercs of Vel could stand to learn a few things. More importantly, many historians remind the people that understanding the past ensures that future generations cannot be forced into social norms that support hateful traditions, or worse, be crushed under an authoritarian heel.

Alessia's history can be divided into seven major ages, ranging from as short as the War of the Sovereigns, to the centuries of peace that have since followed. These periods are discussed in greater detail below.

1-2023
THE FIRST AGE:
RISE OF THE GREAT YÖKAI WARLORDS

Sometimes known as The First Age, Alessia's earliest recorded history was a time of evolution, competition, and saw rise to the first Yökai Warlords – tribal leaders who unified their peoples and started waves of tribal warfare that dominated their age. Savage and brutal, these tribes washed over the lands, establishing traditions that enshrined a violent life of fang and fur.

These yökai tribes were the first to evolve, and they were the first to fight. For generations, powerful chieftains drove their tribes across Yerwin – developing war trains and tribal tactics that allowed them to dominate their weaker neighbors, before migrating south to Velestra, and further south to the islands that have since become Galgaræ.

Dominating Yerwin and southern Fyrea early on, tribes of yökai started to explore Elysia, establishing themselves in the heart of the continent. Then, the ish'ra crashed The Enduring Dream into central Elysia.

When the ish'ra crashed their Voidship in eastern Elysia, the native species (of both Elysia and Velestra) were already trading with the yökai, djinnkinn explorers, and gnolish pack leaders. Powerful and proud, it was the gnoles, and later the arrival of the ish'ra, that finally brought most of the yökai from the battlefields and to the Yerwin's Council Fires.

2024-3998
THE SECOND AGE:
RISE OF THE SCALED ONES

While historians debate the actual start of the Second Age, today the people of Alessia accept that when The Enduring Dream crashed into Elysia, it woke the Seven Asaræl Serpents, a family of ancient dragons who the ancient yökai of the steppes of Elysia honored. Rising to investigate and monitor the ish'ra, these dragons created the first dragonsworn, hatching noble and obedient clutches in the hundreds, and then, in the thousands – within a few generations, the dragonsworn had naturalized on Alessia. When the Great Asaræl Dragons finally departed for the heavens, their cherished children remained behind. A small contingent, alongside their beloved cats, left for Alessia's moons.

3,999-5,423
THE THIRD AGE:
THE THOUSAND EMPIRES

After codifying their power, the various peoples of Alessia – namely the djinnkin, dragonsworn, ish'ra, and the yökai – each carved out kingdoms that, over hundreds of years, grew into empires. Generally accepted as the beginning of the Third Age, the Time of the Thousand Empires marks the official start of the Xian family's influence in the region of southern Elysia.

The Yökai Lords and their tribes begin to lay the foundation for the future of Alessia, establishing traditions, ideologies, and structures that still dot the land today. Consolidating their power in their favorite hunting grounds, they dominated Yerwin first – creating a roaming empire of transient tribal chieftains, spirit-talkers, and shamans of all sort. From there, the Yökai Lords settled parts of western Shiran, northern Velestra, and throughout the southern islands.

Meanwhile, powerful Lords of Brass set out to explore the planes between and beyond Alessia, discovering connections to other worlds and, eventually, bringing natives from those realms to Alessia. Over the course of a millennia, these powerful Djinn Lords populated outposts in Elysia, Shiran, and throughout Fyrea, adding to the human population already evolving in the region.

A people apart, the gnoles dominated the deserts of Fyrea, even as the humans begin to arrive, eventually establishing the Empire of Anu – a place of pyramids, ziggurats, and holy temples that dotted the deserts of southern Fyrea. Contained primarily to their kingdoms in the east, the gnoles built some of the greatest monuments to the Old Sovereigns of Alessia. Reigning as priest-kings and wise magician-philosophers, these ancient gnoles became living legends.

In northern Fyrea and stretching westward in the Silk Sea, the Lords of Brass established the Shining Empire, a series of brass, bronze, and steel towers reaching into the sky. Using their powerful magic, the Lords of Brass slowly began to reshape the northern and central deserts, eventually bringing green to the otherwise barren lands. By the end the third millennium, green would dominate the north. The Lords of Brass establish several oases, which they called gardens, into which they placed their wards.

After containing the damage in central Elysia, the ish'ra quickly integrated with their host cultures, disassembling their great Voidship and weaving that technology into their cities. They share this technology with their new yökai allies too, and made pacts with the gnoles, whose desert kingdom rivaled that of the Lords of Brass. As the rest of the races continued to wake and evolve, the yökai eventually stepped down as the tribal leaders of their world, instead accepting roles as equals to their fellow citizens of every kind.

Working side by side with their djinnkin children, the Lords of Brass helped expand the influence of Fyrea and develop early trade with Elysia. The humans, still relatively new, begin to evolve, following their yökai cousins. The elves, the wild men and women of the green, stepped out of the shadows. In Western Velestra, a small group of elves was driven out for some unspeakable crime against the Trees of Life.

5,424-5,431
THE FIRST PLAGUE: SEVEN YEARS OF DARKNESS

A worldwide epidemic ripped through Alessia's populations, decimating them in the first year. The epidemic lasted seven years, killing half of Alessia's population by the time it was done. Although some of the yökai whispered the ish'ra were to blame, it was the ish'ra who helped secure Alessia from the darkness. Using the last of their fuel, the ish'ra used their Voidship to save countless lives, encasing them in failing shields while fighting off bands of shadowy invaders – eventually identified as the shadelings.

Although the first great plague continued to present researchers, historians, and scholars with a ready set of curiosities, most people came to at least understand the shadelings, often (wrongly) comparing them to humans and terrans.

5,432-5,779
THE FOURTH AGE: THE DAWNING YEARS

Known as The Fourth Age, this period marked Alessia's rise from the ashes of the previous years of darkness. Lacking the ish'ra technology or power, the people pulling themselves from the shadows of the past reached skyward again, creating wonders of all sorts.

In the distant north, ancient cities – built long ago by mysterious giants known only as The Lords of Yrim and dutifully manned by noble and rock gnomes – suddenly took magical flight, their gnomish crews awakening to serve, while desperately doing all they could to decipher the mysterious disappearance of their ancient masters. The noble gnomes pledged themselves to the Yrim, studying with the jötunfolk and their human allies.

Far to the south, the people of Elysia, Fyrea and Yerwin rebuilt, eventually crossing the Silk Sea and discovering the Pyyrre Isles in the process. By the end of the era, human explorers from the young Empire of Xian contacted the pandrens, forming a bond that endures to the present.

In westerm Alessia, elves from the green formed the Emerald Collective, a kingdom spanning all of Velestra. Faced with diminishing resources, the elves went to war against the nagai, the natives of the island. Both species waged terrible battles. Although both sides have legitimate claims to the Trees of Life, neither would give ground.

5,780-5,797
THE FIFTH AGE:
THE WAR OF THE SOVEREIGNS

The War of the Sovereigns started slowly and built, exploding into a hot war during the early winter months of 5,780. It impacted Alessia in a number of ways.

In Elysia, pressure between a legacy of human families gave rise to division on every front. Even with a council of Xian elders and the ish'ra calling for tolerance and peace, clans of ninja – working with and against a number of legacies – stalked the lands. Along the coast, towns and cities organized peace-keeping forces in an attempt to de-escalate tensions.

In a final act of pride, and thinking the Sovereigns defeated, the last, elite champions of darkness – the Dreadlords of Venn, rallied and summoned Galgaræ – The Great Beast of Destruction. A thing from the Shadow of Creation, Galgaræ emerged from the Western Seas, rising to meet the Sovereigns high above the war-torn lands.

The ensuing battle rained fire on the lands below, but not before the future Emperor of Xian – after a yearlong quest to recover *Fúsche Guang ("Radiant Light")* – launched the artifact into the sky, felling the great beast and instantly ending the war. In the very early months of 5,796, the corpse of the beast crashed into the islands west of Velestra, destroying most of the Fengu there and causing a second ecological disaster.

Although dozens of events led to the War of Sovereigns, the historians accept that the War of Sovereigns lasted seventeen years – from 5,780 until 5,797 – and ended with the Light standing triumphantly atop the corpse of a fallen, broken dragon-god.

In Shiran, the first asaræls appeared, building a series of monasteries high in the mountains. Claiming to serve the Light, these strange individuals began to prepare.

Important Dates

The following dates are all important on Alessia:

Event	*Date*
Founding the Order of Astrænna.	5,555
Founding of the Empire of Xian.	5,796
The Rings of Heaven come online.	5,799
The tru'atha arrive in orbit.	6,710

The Time of War of the Sovereigns

During the War of the Sovereigns, several strange phenomena occurred across the planet that made recording specific events, both magically and with technology, nearly impossible. While arcanists struggled with identifying the ripple that displaced so much, it was the ish'ra who finally solved the mystery.

When the forces aligned with Galgaræ's attack, they released several powerful weapons that distorted time and space in several areas. Some nations reported events lasting seconds, while others reported events happening over the course of days, or even weeks.

Having evaluated the data, the Empire of Xian has officially recorded the War of Sovereigns as having a duration of roughly seventeen years.

When the last of the Sovereigns of Light departed Alessia, they left a single artifact as a gift to the planet. In the blink of an eye, during the winter months before the Grey Years began, a series of rings appeared around Alessia and its three moons.

The Rings of Heaven came into being during 5,799.

5,798-5,807
THE SECOND PLAGUE:
THE GREY YEARS

For more than a decade, Alessia weathered devastation, disease, and loss in the wake of the War of Sovereigns. Although the Light won, it took it nearly a full generation to begin to shine. Once it did, the Emerald Collective – with its master shamans leading – headed west to cleanse, or at least contain, what remained of the great beast.

Eventually, working together, the people of Alessia ended their plight.

5,808-6558
THE SIXTH AGE:
THE SACRED PEACE

For seven and a half centuries, Alessia, under the careful guidance of the Light, rebuilt and expanded. Both inside and out, the Empire of Xian has continued to evolve, all while continuing to honor its storied traditions. It has been quiet, industrious, and peaceful.

The people of Alessia have seen much, and they've watched on as species from beyond the known universe settled Alessia, observed the Empire quietly encircle the globe, and most importantly, witnessed the birth of magitech. Although far from the perfect utopia, Alessia today is a place of true wonder. Whether one is zipping across the desert sands on a hover-skiff or just walking among the towers of Shen Su, the power and presence of the Empire is ever present.

And with it, peace.

6,559-6,709
THE SEVENTH AGE:
THE AGE OF ARRIVAL

By the time the tru'atha found Alessia, it was already a beacon of art and culture – a fabled world of light slowly spinning lazily under her moons. With all of Alessia marching forward in unison, the arrival of the tru'atha couldn't have been better. Following dimensional probability fluctuations from their home space, the tru'atha entered orbit in the year 6,710. For the past 88 years, the tru'atha have been working with ish'ra scientists and the Empire of Xian to prepare for what will inevitably come to Alessia – the orgothii.

6,720-
TODAY

Today...

FLOATING CITIES, BIG AND SMALL

Alessia's troposphere extends nearly 17 kilometers from its surface, offering skyship captains a field of play that would be endless, were it not for the Realms of the Silver Light and the floating fortresses that dominate its otherwise empty space. Peopled by noble gnomes bound in ancient service to their long-departed Masters of Stone and Air, this loose confederation of floating city-states answers to a high captain seated in Axisa, the former capital of this ancient, hidden kingdom.

While the "kingdom in the clouds" operates several mobile, floating port-cities that enable skyships to dock and repair as they journey through the settled lands, those who live in the "high and dry" all aim for the city that dominates them all – Axisa, The High City. Ruled by the Noble Council on the surface, every sky captain knows the truth –the high captain only tolerates the council and would, in a blink, crush its members to maintain control of the greatest city of the silver skies.

Axisa is a city built atop wonders. Capable of tracking skyships throughout the realm, Axisa frequently deploys its small fleet of loyal privateers to ensure the high captain's will is carried out. Capable of outgunning all but Xian Imperial vessels (and much larger Voidships), the Silver Fleet remains the terror of the clouds for everyone else.

Most skyship captains take the easier path and join the confederation, paying their dues in exchange for peaceful flightpaths and the security those paths provide – even if it means the noble gnomes grow fat on the power they continue to expand.

This is, perhaps, the single open secret that keeps the floating cities united – the small tribes rely on the Silver Fleet to enforce their will (with the high captain's approval, of course) and rebellious city-states who lose it quickly fall to outsiders. When these cities fall, the high captain always offers a choice to the new victors, regardless of who they are: pledge loyalty to Axisa or abandon the floating city. To date, only a single city refused her, and the Silver Fleet burned the Free City of the Wester Rim to the ground, forcing it to land on the southern shores of Yrim – where it remains today.

Although Axisa dominates the skies over the unconquered lands below, the Imperial skyships of the Empire of Xian do their part to maintain safety for their citizens, providing safe shipping lanes, escorting damaged vessels, and clearing the skies above imperial cities of threats. These brave Peacekeepers work night and day to keep the skies above the empire safe. Those Peacekeepers who take on these vaulted positions in the skies often become Imperial Dragoons – elite marines dedicated to enforcing imperial will where and whenever is needed.

IMPERIAL SKIES

Inside imperial airspace, skyship captains need to note two things.

The first, and best known to the people of Alessia are the Floating Towers of Xin. Encircling the Empire and maintaining her borders, these magitech fortresses can target and take down the largest skyships long before they've closed the gap. Packing the most advanced magitech the Empire can afford, these bastions in the clouds are the home of the Imperial Dragoons who stand the watch. Skyship captains with no official business in the Empire are smart to avoid these, especially as one penetrates deeper into imperial airspace.

The second structure is a single, floating city called Shangdu. Floating 5 kilometers above the Imperial capital, this city remains an exclusive, private place open to only the Emperor's family, friends, and trusted allies. This keeps the city's population small, but nothing near inconsequential – the empire has many friends.

Immediately after its capture following the War of the Sovereigns (and long before the high captain could deploy the Silver Fleet), Imperial Peacekeepers quickly cleared the city for imperial teckers and arcanists, who worked hand in hand with the Order of Astrænna to transform Shangdu into a modern magitech marvel.

Today, Shangdu remains an example of what might be accomplished through the union of wills. The high captain in Axisa, however, disagrees. Knowing she'll never receive a royal invite, the high captain views Shangdu through a different lens – it remains the final piece needed to unify her aerial empire.

AIR VEHICLES EVERYWHERE!

Because of its size, Alessia has developed numerous, safe and affordable skyships (in hundreds of variety) to connect it. While these fleets are almost exclusive to the Empire of Xian itself, several newer nations have embraced them as well. Of course, with an investment into this new technology, it was only a matter of time before personal air travel became the norm. In Alessia, larger companies such as Dao Dynamics and Ijakami Enterprises produce dashers, boards, drifters, skiffs, and even skyships for private purchase, as well.

THE UNKNOWN DEPTHS

Alessia is big – about twice the size of Neptune – and much of the planet remains beneath the waves, with its deep, turbulent oceans making up about 70% of the surface.

Although the people of Alessia have explored some of the depths, the majority of these deep, dark, and certainly dangerous realms remain unexplored, both preserving their rare biomes while safeguarding the surface from any horrors that might lie, sleeping, in their darker depths.

PLANETARY STATISTICS

Alessia is officially a massive planet. Boasting an equatorial diameter of 96,000km, Alessia is a habitable gas giant with a smaller core structure and crystalline lattice, both of which contribute to its larger, stable atmosphere. Alessia's planetary statistics follow:

Class: Habitable Jovian.

Satellites: Aegle, The Rings of Heaven (elevation of 127km), Teleia, and Vesta. With the arrival of the tru'atha, Alessia added Nou and Za'vin to its list of satellites.

Atmosphere: Troposphere 17km, Stratosphere 32km, Mesosphere 88km, Thermosphere 140km, Exosphere 710km. Alessia's gravity and outer thermosphere result in an oxygen-rich troposphere (about 25%), with large amounts of nitrogen (74%) and smaller amounts of carbon dioxide (about .8%) and other gases making up the difference. Its upper atmosphere contains helium and hydrogen, as well as trace amounts of argon, which arcanists link directly with Alessia's Crystal Lattice.

Size: Huge (96km equatorial diameter).

Land Mass: 32% surface coverage.

Oceanic Coverage: 67.5% surface coverage; .5% variable for seasonal shifts.

Surface Gravity: standard gravity (g0); Alessia's Order of Astrænna links this to the abnormal gravity to the planet's ley lines and Crystal Lattice, although some have suggested the planet may lack some of the core materials needed to increase the overall gravity for a Jovian-scale planet.

Orbital Period: 976 days. Alessia rotates on a slanted axis around Helia, its sun, giving the planet four seasons of roughly 244 days each.

1 The Rings of Heaven

Sometimes called the Ring or Ring of Heaven, this giant celestial ring was built be the departing gods.

2 Za'vin

This smaller planet orbits Alessia, influencing its tides. This is especially true of Alessia's southern hemisphere.

3 Nou

This larger planet is smaller than Alessia, but could easily support life. Some scientists worry the orgothii will settle there.

4 Aegle

This is one of Alessia's smaller moons. It appears a bright orange in the summer, blue in the winter.

5 Vesta

The largest of Alessia's moons, Vesta is home to some of Alessia's long-lost dragons.

6 Teleia

This tiny moon is home to dragons, the Tel'gra.

7 The Wisp

This band of light emits strange, life-altering energies.

Alessia is Earth-like in many ways, while retaining some unique (and alien) qualities that clearly separate it from other gas giants. Its terrestrial body is massive, but with a smaller, central core and several additional layers of crystalline material embedded between its larger asthenosphere and its dense, thick lithosphere. This thick, mantle material contains a larger, interconnected oceanic body of brine this is crucial to the planet, as its minerals are later superheated, compressed, and pushed up into the Crystal Lattice's foundational layer.

Alessia's upper crust varies greatly, measuring a very thin 2 kilometers at some points, while increasing to as much as 150km in depth at others. Although some breaks in the upper crust result in volcanoes and similar geological processes, much of the liquid material pushed up from the asthenosphere follow lighter-weight materials, burning channels (later becoming massive lava tubes) through the crust. The weight of the channels below the lattice, however, play an important role – Alessia's gravity is stronger below the Crystal Lattice and the weight of the lower mantle material often collapses the tunnels soon after they've formed, making volcanic surface activity rare, but violently dangerous when it occurs.

Alessia's three moons also play important roles. Its tidally locked moons Aegle and Vesta heat the planet some, helping to maintain its atmosphere and the life that lives beneath it. Its third and furthest moon Teleia, however, is commonly known as The Disruptor. Orbiting the large planet in an eccentric pattern, it rotates closest to the planet twice during its 976-day year, creating violent storms and seasonal flooding in the demarcation between spring and summer, fall and winter.

GEOLOGICAL EVENTS

Alessia has many of the geological features of a much smaller planet, although all these features are magnified in proportion. This is especially true in the northern and south-eastern continents Zhalabra (to the Southeast of Fyrea) and Olenth (the great northern plains of Yrim), where Alessia's megafauna still dominates the surface. Adventurers exploring Alessia might find any of the following geological features, and it is only a matter of time before personal air travel becomes the norm. In Alessia, larger such as like Dao Dynamics and Ijakami Enterprises produce dashers, boards, drifters, skiffs, and even skyships for private purchase, as well.

BRINE GEYSER

These geological processes are common in the Silk Sea region that separates Elysia from Fyrea, along the southern coasts of Shiran, and throughout Galgaræ. Marking regions of heightened volcanic activity deeper in Alessia's core, these geysers capture and push up pockets of brine from below the crust, creating dangerous plumes of superheated water laced with crystalline fragments, many of which are razor sharp.

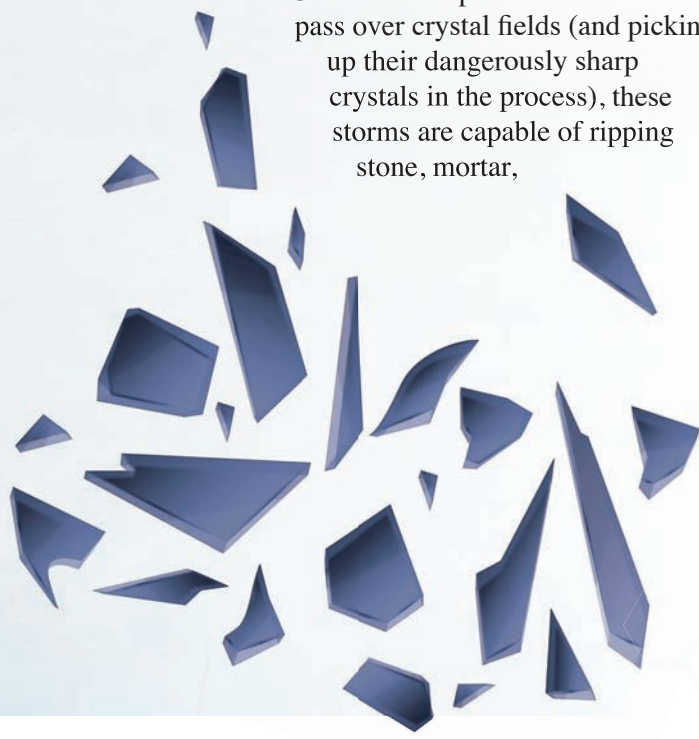
These geysers range from a few meters in diameter to geysers like the Atta Akima Geyser in eastern Elysia, which measures 240m across and hits heights of 2km during its eruption stage. These geysers are frequently found supporting smaller communities of scavengers, who comb the nearby areas post eruption, seeking out valuable crystal deposits.

Brine geysers can be deadly, dealing 5d12 points of fire and 5d12 points of slashing damage to anyone foolish enough to stand in the path of the eruption.

SHARD STORM

Although Alessia's weather patterns have been mapped and conquered in the far more civilized parts of Alessia, the season shifts between spring and summer still bring wild, city-destroying storms that continue to threaten primitive outposts, rural communities, and those undeveloped parts of Alessia the Empire of Xian still hasn't reached.

Created when powerful windstorms pass over crystal fields (and picking up their dangerously sharp crystals in the process), these storms are capable of ripping stone, mortar,



and brick with ease. To combat their dangerous natures, most of Alessia's larger cities employ powerful magitech shields that both buffer the storms' projectiles (slowing them to safer speeds) while also launching sonic-based countermeasures to disrupt the storms themselves.

When left unchecked and unchallenged, shard storms can tear through villages, jungles, and cities with little effort.

On Alessia, the damage caused by a shard storm varies by its speed and composition. Most storms do an average of 12d10 points of magical and piercing each round, although slower storms may deal as little as 8d10 points of damage per round, while incredibly powerful storms have been known to do as much as 20d10 points of magical and piercing damage a round. Thankfully, these dangerous storms rapidly deteriorate, rarely sustaining themselves for more than 8 hours.

THRUST FAULTS

Over the course of its long life, Alessia has slowly begun to shrink. While its crystal lattice supports most of that contraction, it occasionally fails. The failing material often creates thrust faults. When these events occur, an ancient wave of stone and earth breaks the surface of the planet, covering the surrounding area for kilometers in all directions.

THE MAJOR CONTINENTS

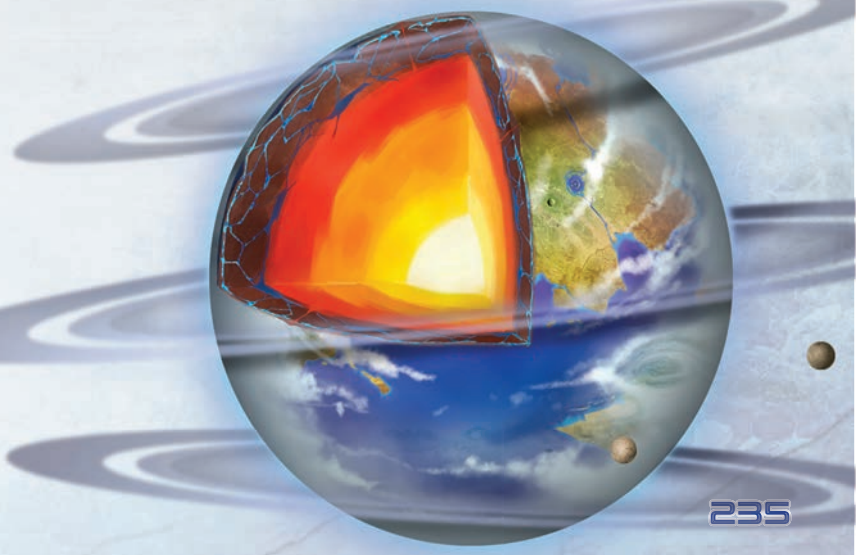
Alessia has dozens of major continents, although explorers have only mapped out a small part of the planet. The known world and major continents are explained below.

ELYSIA

Occupying the same temperate band of land that dominates a good portion of Velestra and even parts of northeastern Galgaræ, Elysia is the green heart at the center of the Empire of Xian. A lush, humid continent covered in shadowy jungles, green mountain ranges, and tiered cities, Elysia is a southern paradise that has all but solidified the slow but steady march of the Empire.

THE EMPIRE OF XIAN

The Empire of Xian is the largest, most powerful player on the world stage, but there are those who can still harry and challenge it. The proud heart of Elysia, the Empire of Xian dominates eastern Elysia, its banners flying in the western deserts of Fyrea and as far north as hill forts of southern Shiran. The Great Emperor of Xian, Emperor Zin Zhu has established what he claims will be the *'thousand years of light'* in the empire, welcoming all those to sit at his table, so far that they do so as allies and friends. While outsiders whisper that the emperor is less noble than he lets on, so far, his will seems to be manifesting; each year his empire's peaceful expansion continues unabated, slowly welcoming in wave after wave of new peoples. Only the people of eastern Velestra openly oppose the Empire, and even that resistance is soft, almost accidental.



THE PYYRRA ISLES

Sandwiched between Shiran and Elysia, the Pyyrra Isles are a lush wilderness filled with massive lizards, some whose ancestry still lingers in the prehistoric. The newest edition to the growing empire, the Pyyrra Isles are home to the Panderen – a gentle, but robust community of peaceful onikuma who evolved from panda bears. Contemplative and jovial, they are frequently found wandering their new empire, learning as much as they can about the new world.

THE SILK SEA

Separating Elysia on its eastern shore from Fyrea on its west, the Silk Sea forms a large part of the Empire's economy, offering slow, but safe shipping lanes between its two major continents. Sometimes called *'the jade mirror'*, most people know the Silk Sea as a pale, shallow body of calm, warm water that extends far, far beyond most sailors' horizons. Although it offers a long, often boring journey for most sailors, the trip is one few men make.

THE TOWERS OF XIN

Called *'Coiled Towers'* in the common vernacular of the Xianese peoples, the Towers of Xin are a ring of towering giant stone pillars, each capped with bright red temples and monasteries. Responsible for the safety of the Empire, these stone pillars frequently support citadels, large war camps, airship ports, and even royal towers. Named after the Empire's very first emperor, Xin Cha'a, the Towers of Xin are both works of art and the most vulgar display of power the Empire can manifest, as garrisons of Imperial Peacekeepers, as well as the Empire's finest Imperial Heralds protect each tower. These special agents wield great magical powers in the name of their province.

THE HEALING HOUSES

Known more properly as *The Healing Houses of Sillas*, the healing houses are important social and religious sites and are named after an early prophet of the Light. One of its original masters, St. Sillas, dedicated the entirety of his life binding wounds, treating the ill, creating unguents and poultices, while actively working to heal those who needed it.

To this end, he founded the Houses of Healing as a way to spread the Light throughout Alessia, not by words or even whispers, but instead through his actions. Today, a sizeable amount of the tithes made to the Light are dedicated to these healing houses, allowing them to operate freely for all, regardless of where they stand in the city. As per his final wishes, the healing houses will always keep their doors open, no matter the calamity – it is part of their sacred charge.

Today, the healing houses are built in the safest parts of every city, and in the largest parts of the Empire of Xian, Peacekeepers dutifully guard these well-tended, well-lit clinics. In more remote regions, where the Peacekeepers have smaller garrisons, others stand the watch.

Professional mercenaries and even local militias often stand watch over local healing houses as a matter of pride, knowing full well the doctors, technicians, and clerics working them might potentially step in to save one of them.

In fact, in some peoples' minds, this makes the Houses of Healing a safe place to meet and even discuss business, knowing full well no one in their right mind

Peacekeepers

Imperial Peacekeepers are as much a tradition as they are a silent, standing army that could mobilize in moments. Created to keep the peace inside the Empire of Xian, the Peacekeepers train constantly for war, running simulations and exercises, both as a show of strength and as a reminder: were the sleeping dragon to awake, its wrath would be wide and far-reaching.

The Secret Emperor

While the vast majority of the Empire of Xian and its allies know only Xian's current sitting emperor, a rare few trusted agents of the empire know the truth; the Secret Emperor – a spiritual being that is the harmonized will of the previous emperors – sits in the Asaræl Throne Room. When he's not debating Lu Yan's Eleven Great Virtues with Tianlong and Zhulong, the Asaræl dragon and its counterpart, the Torch Dragon, the Secret Emperor works hand in hand with the sitting emperor to guide him to their harmonized vision. When the emperor speaks, it is as the divine will of the collective empire.

would dare any violence in their vicinity. In fact, the Houses of Healing are so important to the people of Alessia that even the thieves' guilds watch over them, ensuring no one trespasses on their holy ground. Of course, most citizens would point to the fact that so many different groups willing to put aside their differences to watch over these healing houses would be a miracle, were that not their job!

ASCENSION DAY

Ascension Day is celebrated primarily in the Empire of Xian, where it marks the official ascension of the Emperor to this throne. The day is celebrated with stories, plays, songs, parades, and feasts – all of them provided as gifts to the people by the emperor.

Although it is a largely secular holiday, followers of the Light take Ascension Day seriously. They remind their followers of the sacrifices their ancestors made fighting beside the Sovereigns of Light to win Alessia back from the brink of darkness.

Ascension Day is an official holiday marked with three days of celebration at the beginning of each summer. Officials in the capital city announce the dates each spring.

FYREA

Fyrea, Land of the Burning Sands, dominates all of southeastern Alessia. Located south of Shiran and east of Elysia, the continent – which many assume is little more than a vast desert on account of its borders – is a vast eco-system that supports layers of society that many never see.

The Empire of Xian controls much of western Fyrea, but they make no point to press their claims – they've been slow to expand further into Fyrea. Instead, the Empire has been happy to maintain its borders and process visitors at the regular pace. While the Empire of Xian is important, much of Fyrea lies outside of its borders. In fact, the Empire assumes much of the lower desert is just as it appears – a sea of sand hiding forgotten kingdoms, peopled by little more than djinnkin enclaves, Fyrean elves and gnole truth-seekers.

Central Fyrea holds the one of Alessia's oldest kingdoms – the Empire of Anu. Dating itself to the very first yökai, the kingdom still holds a great deal of power in the region, which it exercises through its merchant houses and souks. Although its religious leaders have since embraced the Light as a universal faith, much of the old empire persists – if not in tradition, at least in spirit.

Central and Eastern Fyrea are also home to the Seven City States, enormous walled cities that offer safe haven against the deadly sand storms that make life almost impossible in these parts. While the efforts of the Fyrean people have lessened the effects these sand storms have, it will take many millennia before the land is fully restored.

THE GREAT DESERT

Initially, most assumed Fyrea was destroyed during the War of the Sovereigns. This is not the case. Although they sacrificed great swathes of the Fyrea during the war, a cabal of elven, ish'ran, and gnole arcanists managed to shield a great deal of the continent from the ravages of the War of Sovereigns. What should have been a carefully structured and planned magical working was, instead, impacted by the Crystal-Lattice – an array of magical crystals that focused, channeled, and ultimately amplified the ritual far beyond what any had intended.

The powerful abjuration worked, but it did as much damage as it did good. The powerful ritual energized each of the Seven Cities, empowering the floating citadels for the foreseeable future, but draining the very life from the desert in the process.

Since that day, the druids of Fyrea have actively worked to rebuild their broken lands. They are active throughout the desert kingdom, each circle working from one of hundreds of oases they've since created in an attempt to reclaim their ruined home.

THE LORDS OF BRASS

Alessia's Lords of Brass are powerful Sovereigns who, if their followers are to be believed, created the djinnkin, humans, and terrans early in Alessia's past. While scholars throughout Fyrea debate the truth of this claim, archaeologists from around the continent have discovered ample evidence to support the length of this claim, if not its legitimacy.

Even among those who do debate the past, there are certain truths both sides accept. All three species, for instance, share creation myths that describe beings of "golden fire and burning light" – a common description for the Lords of Brass. Moreover, archaeologists throughout Alessia have discovered ruins predating the War of Sovereigns with cultural artifacts confirming these stories.

Science in Alessia has added evidence to the suggestion, with the Houses of Healing spending years to map out and confirm their genetic connection. This fact alone has radically changed how the Houses of Healing handle their patients – all three species remain potential donors for one another, should such archaic practices ever be necessary.

More common, however, is the shared gift of love between these three species.

Much like Alessia's yökai, all three of these species may freely produce offspring, should they marry and start families. When these wondrous events happen (and they do, often), their offspring normally follow the dominant genetic pattern, with many children following their maternal lines.

Although rare, some parents produce offspring of both species, although this often happens later in the lives of mothers, further suggesting their genetic material controls the evolutionary path of their offspring.

Alsahll
Hajabbi
Mehkra
Div
Arkhanna Cit
Adæva
Zaliffa
Antepp
Drassa
Fyrea
City
Hazic
Fyria
The Old Desert
Tothus
Calliphana
Newahla
Bai City
Yepei City
Tothus
Zain
Xi'an City
Dhendu
Newain
Nangxi
Yunnan
Zhang Mai
New Ish City
Hubei
Jallin

SILIAN HEALING CHAMBER

The earliest Silian Healing Chambers were built over 700 years ago, making them some of the oldest magitech in existence. Designed and dedicated to the former Sovereign of Medicine, these chambers gather and purify ambient magical energy, infusing it with healing light. When an individual is placed within the chamber, they immediately begin healing, regaining 1 hit point per minute immersed. Because the chamber automatically stabilizes the dying, individuals immersed within can breathe its fluids as if they were breathable air. Silian Healing Chambers are built exclusively for the Houses of Healing and are not sold to the general public.

FYREAN SHARDSTORMS

When the Fryreans rapidly drained the life from their lands to defend their cities during the War of Sovereigns, they devastated entire regions. This process was terrible and, most scholars agree, unknowingly magnified by the Crystal Lattice. When the dust cleared and the survivors descended, they found whole forests wiped clean from the map. In some areas, Galgaræ's storm turned the dunes to glass, forming razor-sharp waves in otherwise peaceful deserts. In other areas, the magic pulled the life from the forests, deforesting and crystallizing once-lush vegetation in the blink of an eye. Along the coasts, great storms ripped open the coastline, depositing entire beds of razor-sharp crystals along the beaches.

Through countless angles, Alessia's lifeblood – the shards of the Crystal Lattice – welled up and came to rest peacefully on its surface. Many of these areas were quickly mined, the crystals transformed into works of art or used in public works designed to aid all.

Then, the winds came.

Fyrean scholars recorded the first shard storm in 5,799, early on into what is now known as The Grey Years. Shard storms resemble tornadoes in a number of ways but differ in one regard; the body of shard storms is composed entirely of impossibly sharp magical crystals, some of which can tear through lesser (or weakened) energy shields – making them dangerous to everyone on Alessia's surface. Fortunately, the Empire of Ashnu, the Empire of Xian, and the Kingdom of Asrai have all built structures in their larger cities capable of surviving these terrible storms, should they come.

The Book of the Grey Sage

For nearly two centuries, the sages of Astranna sent explorers out into the lifeless desert in order to uncover it secrets. Every year, these parties either return in tatters, or fail to return at all. That was, until the Grey Sage set out to discover the desert's secrets. It took the Grey Sage nearly five years to delve the northern Fyrean deserts, but when he returned, he brought back stories that his audiences could scarcely believe – he spoke of wild effreti warlords, deadly shardstorms, and hidden cities below the sands.

Returning to the Capital City, the Grey Sage entered the High Academy of Astranna and told his tale. There, the sages recorded his trials in the desert, his time among the dwarves and their minotaur allies, and his long ascent from the depths of the northern deserts.

GALGARÆ

A broken, bitter land cloaked in soot and ash, Galgaræ is a haphazard land of give and take, a slowly expanding continent that still rolls under the angry growl of two-dozen active volcanoes. Although these volcanoes populate its eastern coast, there are several inland volcanoes that have made building inland cities all but impossible. The final resting place of one of Alessia's last dragons (the others having left for its three moons millennia before), much of Galgaræ is a toxic wasteland, especially closest to the Grave of Galgaræ. Here, the green fires of dragon's death spontaneously erupt as bits of the great beast decompose, the last of its magic staining the land and air.

While Galgaræ is the newest, and arguably the most dangerous of the continents, it also one of the most promising. With the slow decay of the last great dragon powering its commerce, the people who have claimed and hope to conquer Galgaræ come from all over Alessia. They brave its shores, build outposts, temples, and hope to collect Galgaræ Scales. In the hands of promising alchemists, these scales allow many of the races to align to the various dragons and, with work and effort, become Dragonsworn.

In the southwest, members of the once-proud fengu eke out a scavenger's existence, surviving in an otherwise inhospitable land. They act as guides for those wanting to venture deeper into Galgarae, however not just anyone can enter the deepest parts of Galgarae. As one of his most important decrees, the Emperor of Xian ordered a Great Wall constructed, to imprison the site of Galgarae's Heart.

GALGARÆ'S HEART

Located weeks from the eastern shores of the slowly expanding continent, Galgaræ's Heart is the decaying, poison-filled region that surrounds Galgaræ's Grave. A region nearly half a kilometer deep, Galgaræ's Heart is a wasteland filled with darkness and its foul offspring. Birthed in pits of divine ichor, these beasts pull themselves from death and into light, feeding on Alessia's exposed bones. Leaving paths of pure devastation lined with weeping sorrows, these creatures have created a hidden kingdom of this nightmarish realm.

While some havens exist within the walls, most of Alessia's citizens avoid the deadly region, preferring to remain on the safer side of the Great Wall.

THE GREAT WALL

The Great Wall that surrounds Galgaræ's Heart has been standing, proudly, for nearly a millennium. Standing over 400 meters, the Great Wall was constructed over a decade and completely surrounds the Galgaræ's Heart; the wall measures nearly 1,900 kilometers in circumference and contains an area close to 300 thousand kilometers.

Life inside the wall is deadly, although Peacekeepers do patrol several kilometers inside the wall closest to the gates (and the cities that connect them on the other side). Considered a punishment by most who pull duty, work within the wall is dangerous and often violent; Peacekeepers do their best, but even that is often not enough.

SHIRAN

The grass plains of southern Shiran gently give way to hilly, lush forests filled with conifers for as far as the eye can see. As one travels north, these ice-tipped emerald forests give way to steeper hills, eventually turning to snowy plains and then mountains in the north.

The northern kingdoms that populate Shiran's southern coastline have long sought their own council, respecting the Empire of Xian as distant allies and no more. Some of these relationships are, of course, stronger than others. Diplomats from royal houses, noble families, and political or mercantile interests on both sides meet regularly to discuss the benefits of expanding northward, where dangerous crystal mines promise rich rewards to those willing to work them.

The Empire of Xian keeps this fact in mind, its skyships regularly patrolling the shipping routes below while keeping note of pirates and privateers alike. The Empire has no intention of letting its northern border shrink under the combined weight of those same interests.

Unlike Fyrea, where the War of the Sovereigns caused terrible damage to the ley lines of the island, Shiran's ley lines are strong and pure – conduits of vibrant arcane energy. This allows countless smaller kingdoms to draw on their power, allowing for more northern innovation to flow south. In southern Shiran, the noble and proud Lionwen have aligned with the Empire of Xian, acting as Imperial Peacekeepers and regional mercenaries. In both cases, the Liowen have given ground to the Empire of Xian, much to the dismay of those frontiersmen living outside of the reach of Alessia's largest power.

The Vastness

The Vastness is, from what explorers have seen so far, a wintry expanse that continues for months weeks before disappearing below the northern oceans. In some areas, remote tribes of humans hunt the mega-fauna that still dominate the fierce, cold north. Few who seek the north stay there – the further you go, the weirder things get. The Vastness drives people south.

THE V'LALIHT EXPANSE

The V'laliht Expanse dominates most of eastern Shiran. Largely open fields broken by forests or small towns, the plains have become a destination for adventurers, explorers, and individuals seeking to disappear – which is easy to do in the ancient northern lands. Of course, this expanse is known not for its vastness, but rather for its color – the entire region is covered in a soft, pink, flowing plant called Manisia Flower (named for the famous explorer Bai Manisia).

Unlike the southern lands, this region still contains many species of megafauna, from the larger V'laliht Grey Bear to the Box-Tailed Bobcat, which stands a little over
21 feet at the shoulder (a height of nearly four elves)!

Of course, the V'laliht Expanse is also known for the vibrant fields of Ascendant stones that break the surface closest to the mountains in the north. Here, these crystals climb up the sides of the mountains, where the play of the northern lights and the crystals causes some men to go mad, the beauty and utter isolation of the place driving them to wander off and never return.

The ish'ra who have visited the expanse all report the same thing – the phenomenon exists but they are immune to its effects.

THE SKY STEPPES

As one travels north, the rose-colored V'laliht Expanse gives way to the Sky Steppes, a series of icy plains that contain the remnants of the horrors that the Dread Lords unleashed on Alessia during the War of the Sovereigns. Here, in this new north, leowen fight beside jötunfolk warriors to put down anything that makes it past Vondr's Gates (a series of rune-covered obelisks that mark the border between Shiran and the northern mountain range).

Although the leowen are natives of the south, they long ago adapted to the colder, northern lands and excel at hunting with their jötunfolk neighbors.

THE COASTAL KINGDOMS

Although the Empire of Xian continues to patrol well into Shiran's territory, the smaller, scattered coastal kingdoms have too few skyships to put up any real resistance and currently suffer in silence while their arcanists try to keep pace with their southern neighbors.

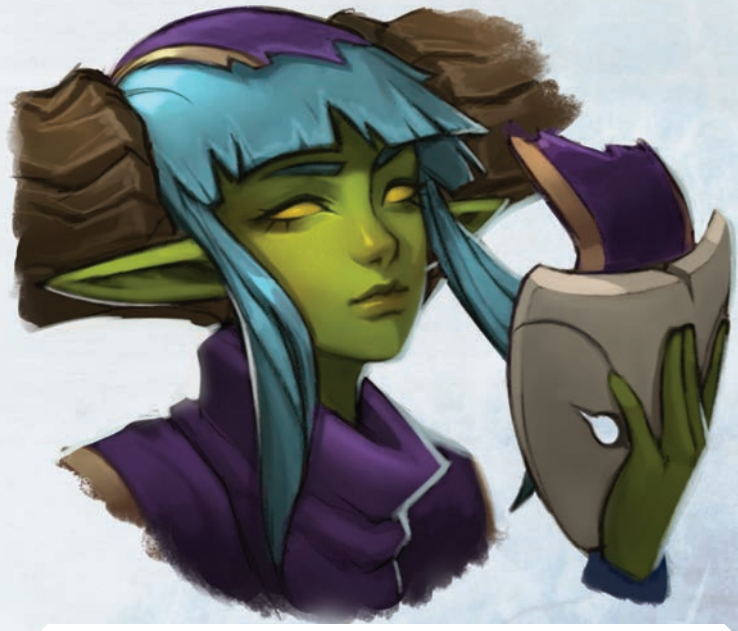
This expansion is burdened on two fronts, as the coastal kingdoms are often petty and frequently engage in short but damaging territorial battles that keep any hope of unification on a distant horizon.

Still, there are a few powerful voices who look to Shiran's continued independence who, lacking a better option, continue to actively campaign toward unification, which they believe is the only way Shiran can survive the Empire of Xian's continued expansion.

VELESTRA

Lush, wild, and deadly, the chain of islands that makes up *The Emerald Collective* is as dangerous as it is exotic, populated by industrious, but fiercely independent city-states dominated be elves and elathi in the south and treah and nagai in the north. Regardless of the region, the people of Velestra are as at home in the wilds as they are lounging leisurely on exotic couches.

Covered in a mantle of verdant green, Velestra is a land of plenty – as evidenced by their plethora of *Shenns'ænn* (elven for 'Great Trees'). From its fertile, terraced farming lands to its massive, healthy jungles, these trees dominate the island continent, growing on both sides of the mountains that split the islands. In the south are the polished ebon spires – each marking one of the few, but highly-influential Velestrian Nobles.



Some Treah fashion masks and jewelry from the fallen timber the Trees of Life. When attuned to such pieces, they gain access to their ancestral knowledges.

THE ELATHI OF VELESTRA

Velestra's elathi are the descendants of the elves to the south, from whom they clearly evolved. Known for their crystalline horns and striking beauty, the elathi have impressive mental abilities, allowing them to connect with the Crystal Lattice better than any others. Of course, the elathi have expanded far beyond their original home in Velestra. Today's Elathi populate all of Alessia.

THE ELVES OF VELESTRA

Raised with exotic birds, warm beaches, and stories of tribal heroes facing impossible hordes of dragon-spawned horrors, the elves of Velestra see themselves as more than the eternal guardians of the Great Trees – they see themselves as the proud, wise warrior kings Alessia demands of them.

THE NAGAI OF VELESTRA

Native to the dark, northern jungles that climb into the mountains, Velestra's nagai have long lived among the Trees of Life – a fact that has brought them into conflict with the elves on more than one occasion. It might, still, were it not for the elathi, who evolved into the region that now separates the two species.

THE TREAH OF VELESTRA

Born directly fro the Velestrian Trees of Life, the treah are sentient trees who, for a time, experience life through the filter of a unique consciousness – learning, growing, and returning all of this valuable wisdom back to the trees that originally spawned them.

THE IRON BARQUES OF BIN YAI

Although it has almost no army, The Emerald Collective boasts more than two-dozen independent fleets of seagoing warships. None dare challenge the Iron Barques of Bin Yai, a fleet of magically enhanced war barges that can engage enemies at sea, as well as those in the air. Proud and brave, Admiral Ya'han Yai pushes the Iron Barques out past the Jinindra Isles, going so far as to raid the western coast of Shiran on occasion.

The Iron Barques are not the only major player in the region, however, and ambitious captains are always making plays to please their customers, be it behind the helm raining fiery death on an enemy vessel or while creeping deep into violent jungles to recover Ascendant Stones – rare crystals that empower the minds of those who wield them.

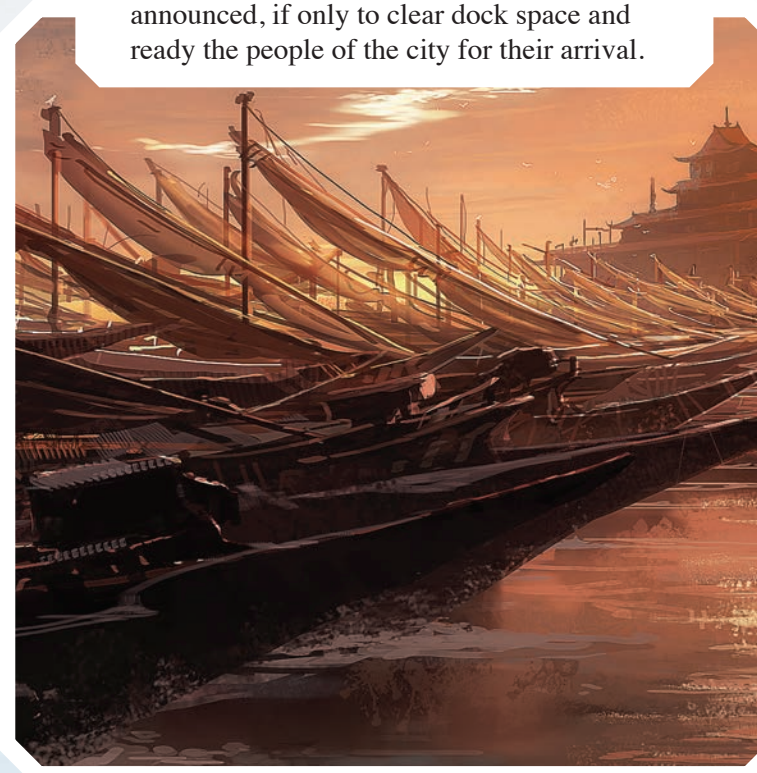
THE BROKEN ISLES OF BHZENN

Located between the Emerald Chain and the eastern coast of Galgaræ, the Broken Isleas of Bhzenn represent the worst part of the island kingdom, with most of those who dwell here engaging in the worst sorts of tribal behavior, enacting ancient, dark rites under the pale-yellow flames of hate. Embroiled in a primitive form of shamanic practice they call Ghun-Ghun, the Bhzenn'an are a collection of elathi tribes, all of whom have embraced The Crimson Oni – a demon lord from Galgaræ.

GRAND TEMPLE TO ZTHA' USTRA

Although ever explorer claims to have found and every skyship captain has stolen a glimpse from high overhead, none have returned with physical evidence proving the existence of the Grand Temple to Ztha' Ustra, which legends claim lies hidden somewhere deep in her ancient jungles. Believed to hold the treasures of a sleeping herald (or dragon – the stories change), the Temple has weathered time, space, and discovery for all but a select few.

The Iron Barques of Bin Yai have been seen in numbers as far south as Qingshan, although such trips are infrequent and normally announced, if only to clear dock space and ready the people of the city for their arrival.



The Velestrian Peacekeepers

In a show of support, strength, and good will, the Empire of Xian dedicated a whole division of specially trained Peacekeepers to serve as guards in a number of critical locations; these Peacekeepers claim no local authority and defer to the elves in all things, especially when related to the Trees of Life and other important ancestral sites.

While some of the Velestrians initially took offense at the offer of additional security, many of the elves – remembering the waves of death that followed Galgaræ – welcomed the additional aid.

Today, the support readied on Velestrian shores waits at strength, ready to respond to any call for help from the people of Velestra.

More active Peacekeeper divisions – like *Helia's Sword* and the *Shalyn's Strikers* – bring the fight to the shores of Galgaræ, raiding the fledgling villages and outposts the kobolds build in the ruins along the eastern coasts.

The pink and purples that dominate the region lighten the mountainside in the long spring, turning the Pærtha Mountains into a glorious visage for all to see.

YERWIN

Populated by massive, magical land trains that crisscross the continent in search of ancient, magical runes called Yarra's Tears, the people of Yerwin are as industrious as any other, although they are given to a sort of flamboyant, casual extravagance that enshrines personal richness over the collective good of the many.

And while slavery is illegal in almost every corner of the continent, some of Yerwin's Merchant Princes push the boundaries by using cheap labor as a method to secure membership in their tribes (a fact the Empire of Xian uses in its propaganda against these powerful merchant lords).

HORSE LORDS OF VANNDEANE

As one moves eastward across the continent (and toward distant Shiran), the slowest of these massive land trains frequently circled, forming shining, mobile cities. Lacking the natural resources to build permanent structures, these mobile cities often filled with thousands of tents, all of which could be packed up before the sun crests the horizon. Although any sort of unified social progress boggles the mind of those who call Yerwin home, the tradeoff is a fierceness that most beings will never know. These cities keep their own schedules, which can make navigating trade routes fairly difficult, although the wisest of the Horse Lords of Vanndeane know that every 'city' has its own, secret pattern it follows.

THE IRON TOWERS OF THE ONYX BROTHERHOOD

Unbeknown to most of Yerwin's people, a series of broken, bleak towers dots the western coast, warding the coast from all – including the dead – who would approach it. These tilting shafts of charred iron and broken stone appear to most as like gargantuan iron nails, each twisted or bent by broken hammer of the Sovereigns. Although it was unlikely their intent, this line of magically warded towers is one of the few things that keeps many of Galgaræ's monsters at bay.

Radiating fel energy, these iron towers are home to the Onyx Brotherhood – a school of powerful, but evil adepts who seek isolation so they can better understand solitude, and through it, the hungering darkness they know will eventually claim them.

A BIGGER WORLD

Although I feel we do a good job showing you the larger world, Alessia's mega-fauna and flora grow in abundance in Yerwin, an island continent rich with a diversity of species.

The harpyans who dwell in Yerwin are known to flock to the Ashcai Tree (featured on the opposite page), its colors and perfumes that produce a light but euphoric sensation in harpyans. In some instances, harpyans build nests (in the wild) in these trees, hoping to raise their young in them.

YERWINIAN LAND TRAINS

Magical technology is often at the core of Alessian cultures, and the people of Yerwin are no different. Given the vastness of wild-but-dangerous golden savannahs that dominate their lands, it seemed only natural that they would eventually merge their three passions – travel, magic, and community – into a singular experience.

Yerwinian Land Trains are massive, mobile structures that slowly snake across the great continent, transforming into great city-states when they stop for more than a few days. When they do, the land trains circle, deploy their perimeter defenses, and then set out to collect resources from the surrounding lands – hunting wildlife, harvesting exotic fruits, trading with locals, and of course – mining the Yarra's Tears.

The logistics of these mobile cities is no small matter, but the Yerwinian City Masters have spent centuries mastering their art, and most of them have established, over generations, routes and patterns that are uniquely their own.

Y'RIM

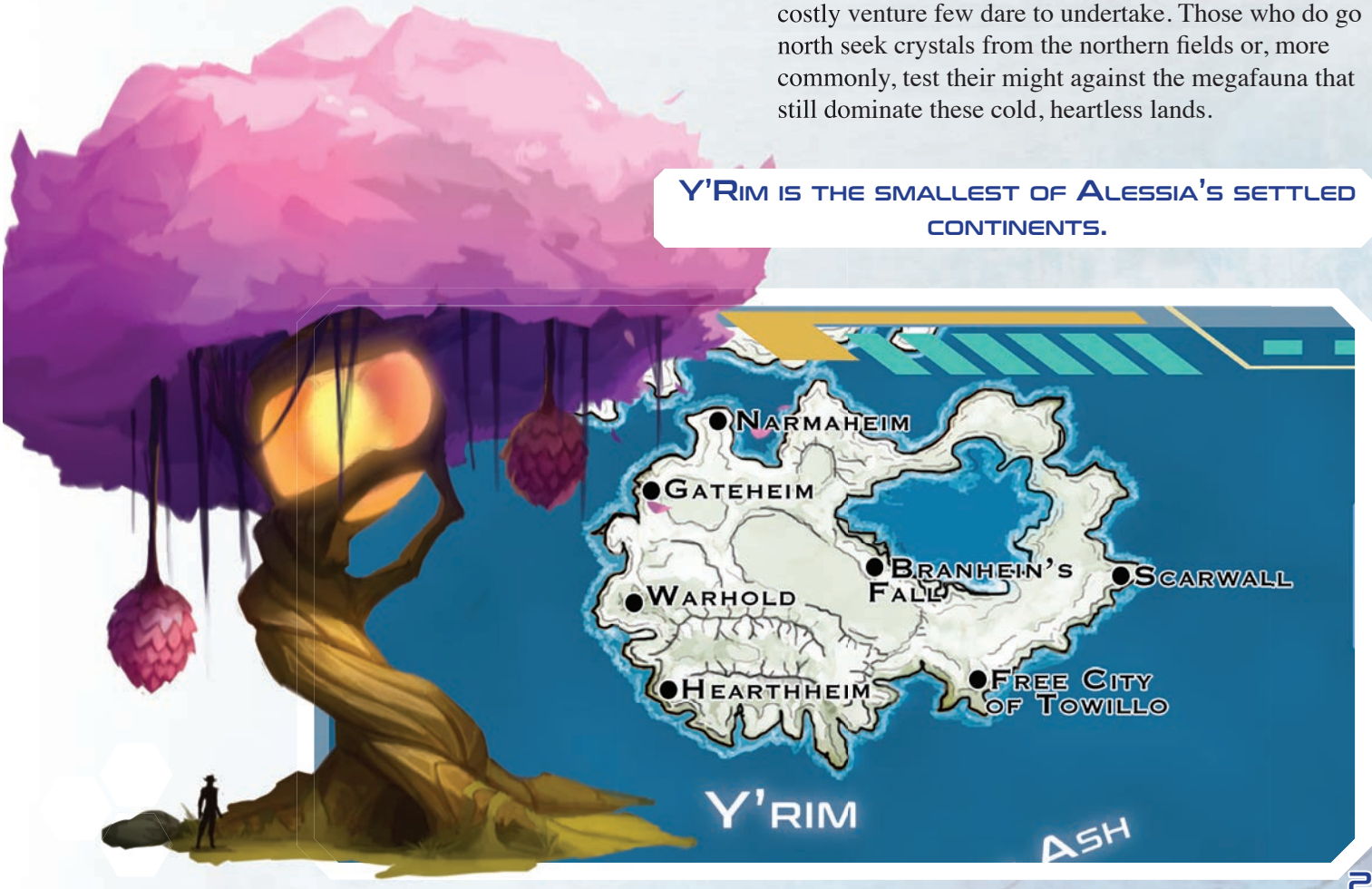
The icy home of both the cloud giants and their earth-bound cousins the stone giants, Yrim is a place of wonder, mystery, and contradiction. One of Alessia's larger northern continents, Yrim is a land of ice, snow, and for those brave enough to dare its wintery wrath, a source of ancient knowledge. Although the giants who once ruled these lands have long since departed for other realms, their influence – both in the wicked stone keeps and in their graceful flying cities, persists today.

In their absence, those who once served the giants have rebuilt much of the southern tip of the continent, establishing Great Halls like Warhold, Scarwall, and Narmaheim. In some of these places, the Great Halls continue noble and good traditions.

In others, a rougher, brutal pragmatism persists – places like Scarwall remain an example of the enduring legacy of the stone giants and their hard, wicked lessons.

Beyond the settled lands at its southern tip, the continent known as Yrim expands northward into uninhabitable, deadly lands. Plains of ice, broken by hidden icy floes and fields of razor-sharp crystals, make traveling north into these unsettled lands a costly venture few dare to undertake. Those who do go north seek crystals from the northern fields or, more commonly, test their might against the megafauna that still dominate these cold, heartless lands.

Y'Rim is the smallest of Alessia's settled continents.



THE GREAT HALLS

Long before the great chieftains of Yrim tore their keeps from Alessia's soft earth and sent them into the clouds, they built and maintained a series of border forts called the Great Halls. These massive keeps were designed to offer the giants room to celebrate, sleep, and feast at their leisure.

Maintained by their loyal allies the jötunfolk, these Great Halls continued to grow long after the giants left them, becoming sprawling complexes extending above and below the icy earth they dominated.

THE FLOATING CITIES

Fabled diviners, shamans, and vitkarr, Alessia's cloud giants foresaw the shadow of Galgaræ's fall long before it came to pass. While their poems and stories had no name for the War of Sovereigns, they knew a great darkness was coming, and they took every step they could to preserve themselves, eventually abandoning the surface for the endless blue of Alessia's skies.

Powered by ancient runes and long-forgotten magic, the cloud giants and their noble gnome allies maintained these flying keeps and castles for centuries, abandoning them only after their cloud giant allies departed for other realms.

Many of these flying castles remain in their sky-bound orbits to this day.

THE NOBLE GNOMES

Known for their interest in magic, the air, the technology used to keep these cities aloft, the noble gnomes uphold a special place in Yrim's social hierarchy. Although they no longer serve their cloud giant masters, these gnomes continue to maintain their histories and, in some cases, their secrets. How much of these secrets they collectively know remains a mystery to outsiders but remains cause enough for Alessia's arcanists to continue to court these affable but direct gnomes, seeking them in their great flying cities.

A CLOCKWORK GATE

GMs looking for dimensional routes off of Alessia have a number of options at their disposal, including a number of locations programmed into The Rings that gently orbits Alessia. Although only a few arcanists have discovered the connection, the Clockwork Gate located under the Great Hall of Ymir deep inside the Western Wastes leads to an identical gate buried beneath Garryshard's Pass. Planar travelers should note that the gate's arrival point aligns to two keys, not one. These are listed below:

Activation Key – Like all gates on Alessia, the Clockwork Gate can only be activated by a spellcaster capable of casting the 7th-level spell *plane shift*. Unlike other gates, this gate provides part of the magical energy required to power up. When a spellcaster who meets the above prerequisites activates the gate, they may cast *plane shift* using a 6th-level spell slot instead of a 7th slot (required for normal gates).

Destination Key – Like many planar gates, this gate has a destination key. Unlike the vast majority of gates, this key is aligned to the time of activation. If the gate is activated in Alessia at night, it leads travelers to Garryshard's Pass in Nachtland. If the travelers activate the gate during the day, the gate delivers them to their desired location in Midgard. Travelers departing from Garryshard's Pass in Nachtland or Midgard arrive in Alessia instantly and with no deviation.

The people of the Great Hall of Ymir know the particulars of the gate and keep watch over it; while the current residents of the Great Hall realize the power beneath their feet, they also realize the forces responsible for their creation were beings of great power. Benevolent or not, they dare not presume, in their arrogance, control over the gate. Instead, they act as stewards and caretakers, keeping watch over the gate and recording the infrequent passing of planar travelers.

The Trained Ear Feat

In places such as the Capital City or Qingshan, being able to secretly learn someone's origin from just the sound of their speech is an invaluable skill, and sadly lacking among the larger population. Only a few people in Alessia have it, and the feat is listed below.

TRAINED EAR

You were born with a perceptive ear that, over years of training, grants you almost supernatural insight into others' histories, gaining the following benefits:

- Your Intelligence increases by 1, to a maximum of 21.
- If you share a common, spoken language, you may make an Intelligence (Insight) check to determine the individual's place of origin based solely on their dialect or accent.
- You gain advantage on proficiency skill checks to counter bluffs, feints, misdirection, and similar deceptive combat techniques that rely on sound or a verbal trigger.

ALESSIAN LANGUAGES

The world of Alessia is filled with life, both from beyond the stars and from the countless species who evolved on Alessia's shores. With each of these species, unique languages have developed that, over the millennia, have evolved into a collection of mono-languages, each with countless dialects and regional inflections. While most of this is subtle, characters with the feat Trained Ear might note additional details by making a few quick checks.

In Alessia, most characters begin play with at least a single language, but likely a second or even a third. Again, this is intentional. Alessia's development has encouraged much cross-cultural growth, allowing for several species to form closer bonds that have, over the millennia (see above) evolved into a collection of mono-languages. The most common languages are listed below:

LANGUAGE	RARITY	TYPICAL SPEAKERS	ALIGNMENT	SCRIPT
Aqu	Uncommon	Djinnkin, elementals	Aligns to water	Runic
Avia	Uncommon	Djinnkin, elementals	Aligns to air	Runic
Celestia	Uncommon	Asaræ	Aligns to good	Celestia
Djinn	Uncommon	Djinnkin		Celestia
Draconic	Uncommon	Dragonsworn, Kobolds		Draconic
Druidic	Rare	Druids	Aligns to nature	Runic
Dwarven	Uncommon	Dwarves, Gnomes		Runic
Elathi	Uncommon	Elathi		Elathi
E'ari	Rare	E'ari	Aligns to life	Elathi
Elven	Uncommon	Elves		Elven
Fyrean	Common	Anyone		Xian
Giant	Uncommon	Gnomes, Jötunfolk		Runic
Gnolish	Common	Gnoles		Yökai
Hexa	Common	Gnomes, Teckers	Aligns to technology	Hexa
Inferna	Uncommon	Cultists	Aligns to evil	Celestia
Ish'ran	Common	Ish'ra		Ish'ran
Orgothii	Rare	Orgothii spies, cults		Orgothii
Qin Jia	Uncommon	Anyone		Xian
Runic	Uncommon	Dwarves, Gnomes, Jötunfolk		Runic
Terra	Uncommon	Djinnkin, elementals	Aligns to earth	Runic
Thieves' Cant	Common; special (allows thievery)	Anyone		Xian
Tir'ian	Uncommon	Tir'ian		Tir'ian
Tru'atha	Uncommon	Ish'ra, Tru'atha		Tru'atha
Shiranese	Common	Anyone		Runic
Trade Talk	Common; special (allows bartering)	Anyone		Xian
Velestrian	Common	Elves		Elven
Xian	Common	Anyone		Xian
Yökai	Common; special (allows Scent)	Anyone		Yökai
Val	Uncommon	Asaræ	Aligns to death	Runic

Chapter 6 | The Spirit of Belief

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When the War of the Sovereigns ended, it left Alessia without many of its Sovereigns and large swathes of the population unsure as to what that meant. Although many of them were shaken to the core, the Light united their faiths, commanding them to seek peace. Most of Alessia's various clergies eventually adopted their new faith, although not before going through a series of spiritual and social challenges that defined the Church of the Light, and all of the various denominations it spawned. While the Path of Light is the most prominent faith of Alessia today, it is not the only belief system.

In fact, many individuals choose to channel the Light using methods, rituals, and rites drawn directly from their traditions. The dragonsworn, for instance, follow the Light, but do so by strictly adhering to the guidance of their dragon emissaries. The ish'ra, on the other hand, have their philosophies, which they use to filter and better understand the Light's lessons. So, while the Path of Light frequently co-exists peacefully with adjacent beliefs, there are some who embrace very strict interpretations.

A LOOK AT THE LIGHT

While any given individual's views may vary wildly, shifting to match their socio-economic status or their regional influences, there are only four primary approaches to "the Light" and what it ultimately means for the people of Alessia. Once most people accept the inevitability of the Light's slow but steady march, the primary questions shift from why to how, although both those factors remain important components in understanding each approach. These four approaches are as the Pillars of Light. Each supports a tradition of rites, rituals, and approaches to everything from personal law to civil responsibilities. These four pillars are described below:

THE QIN JIA: HANDS OF MERCY

A small but dedicated following of miracle workers who developed their small but complex belief system into a major faith, Qin Jia monks dedicate their lives to bringing about mercy wherever they can. Many of these dedicated monks answer this call on the battlefield, serving as medics and chaplains in their respective nations' armed forces. Others establish shrines, found healing houses, or seek out the open road, letting the Light lead them where it may.

Although they are often eclectic in their application of their faith, the people who take this particular path hold specific tenets as immutable, enshrining these and focusing on them as their central point to access the Light. For the people who follow the *Scrolls of Qin Jia,* this might vary wildly. For some, the command to "show mercy" might mean never killing, while others may become caregivers, social workers, or even nurses. Followers do their best to live to the maxim, "a moment of mercy might end a thousand lifetimes of pain."

THE ASTRÆNNA: THE SEEKERS AFTER TRUTH

The Order of Astrænna is at its heart a magical order dedicated to the pursuit of truth. For most, this "truth" might take any number of forms, but almost always accompanies the acquisition of a massive domain of knowledge orbiting whatever the arcanist was seeking. At the end of the day, that remains a central tenet that followers of the Light universally embrace: *"Let the Light work through you"* rolls of the tongue of followers as a social greeting, but also as a phrase of encouragement, and in times of need, a spontaneous blessing.

For the Order of Astrænna, this means seeking the truth no matter what. Some take this in the literal sense, monitoring public organizations and governments, where they seek to illuminate and eliminate corruption, cults, and greed – burning the shadows from every conceivable angle long before any innocent wanderer might stumble upon them.

At their core, however, the Order understands a single truth – Alessia is a living, breathing manifestations of their natural universe, and through that relationship, both are preserved against the eternal chaos of Darkness. For these magi, there can be no more noble a pursuit than to seek the truth in the Light, even if it means going blind in the process.

THE HOLY CHURCH OF LIGHT: HAND OF HOPE

The Holy Church of the Light has a longstanding relationship with the Empire of Xian, the two organizations working hand in hand on numerous occasions to achieve local and even global goals. Recognizing a need to organize both the spiritual and the material lives of its citizens, the Holy Church of Light approached the empire and offered the emperor a path to dynasty, blessed by the Light and organized under its banner.

The emperor agreed.

For generations since, these two organizations have collaborated, maneuvering past conflicts that would have plunged weaker allies into war. The Church of Light, for its part, works from the bottom up, lifting society's weakest and most-vulnerable, giving each a path to participate in the greater vision of the Empire. Together, they promote the Empire's dream of *"a thousand years of light,"* using emotion and diplomacy to carve paths into domains where violence would be ineffective, crude, or a needless waste of perfectly good resources.

Decked in the regalia of that dream, the Holy Church of Light has worked its way into every sector of government and society, its priests weighing in on all manner of social issues and doing their best – at every step – to help guide everyone to the Light.

For many of these priests, this means small acts of charity, mercy, and kindness at all walks of life, whenever the Light presents such opportunities. For others, this need can manifest as social controls that demand compliance. Enforced by Peacekeepers, these dictates are often temporary and brief, as neither the Holy Church of Light nor the Empire of Xian seek to become the tyrants of their accusers.

THE PEACEKEEPERS: TOMORROW'S COURAGE

A common sight in the Empire of Xian, the Peacekeepers are far more than just an organization of dedicated citizens willing to fight to defend their ideals. The Peacekeepers understand their roles as more than just police, but as dragoon, knights, and as templars of the Light's perpetual holy crusade. While this is often invisible to outsiders, it is reinforced perpetually within the larger force of Peacekeepers, at every level of involvement.

This indoctrination begins on day one of their training and extends throughout, updated annually until each Peacekeeper retires, dies, or otherwise leaves service. Carefully wrapped in recruitment posters, annual bonuses, and special privileges, Peacekeepers are constantly reinforced by the Empire, their actions given heroic frames when conflicts are near, their traditions and shows of strength taking precedence during times of peace. Regardless of peace or war, the traditions of service and courage are constantly interwoven, with each generation connecting through a sense of communal sacrifice.

The formula works, too.

Having transformed themselves from a collection of mercenaries willing to do the Empire's bidding without question into a group of idealists aligned around a central vision, Alessia's Peacekeepers are a force to behold. In many ways, the majesty of their appearance is deceptive. The quality of each individual is forever marred, blurred into the collective will of the whole and crystallized as a weapon wielded by a select few.

For most, they will spend their time peacefully in this domain, never tasting combat or truly experiencing the evil that always comes with war, no matter the cause. For those who do, all comes into question. For most, this moment comes as a bittersweet clarity, a bucket of cold water on a hot summer day. Facing these brief but intense moments together often transforms the Peacekeepers, cementing relationships and ideas that might not otherwise take root: units become families, partners become lovers, and legacies of service are slowly transformed into nepotism.

Even at the height of their criticism, the Peacekeepers continue to serve the Empire of Xian with distinction and honor, acting as its agents and, over time, extending the emperor's each to every corner of Alessia.

A GLOBAL RELIGION

The Holy Church of Light is a thing to behold, its heart gilded in jade, silver, and gold. A faith built on the very fundamental values that enable all civil societies (and irony often lost on its celebrants), the Church of Light works at all levels of society to organize, educate, and illuminate citizens. Working from a singular text that is freely available to anyone in the Empire via an extensive network of missionaries, the Holy

Church of Light focuses on a single goal – the complete amalgamation of native beliefs into a singular, universal narrative.

While some citizens and most adherents applaud the Holy Church of Light's efforts on this front, they have also produced new actors on the global board. This became readily apparent among the people of Alessia during the War of Sovereigns, when – after decades of contention – the Holy Kingdom of Asrai cast off the Holy Church and chose to follow **Nashandra Asrai**, the Holy Prophetess of the Light. Although some clashes between the two churches occurred, both weathered the schism relatively well. With both sides prepared for conflict – the Empire of Xian and the Holy Church of the Light on one side and Nashandra Asrai's followers on the other – it nearly took a miracle to convince the two sides to settle their disputes peacefully, but they did.

Today, although rivalries exist, both factions have learned to work together, operating societies that align to their values. In fact, they have become destinations for many, offering those who want to live within the mantle of the Light, but who don't have a universal set of absolute rules for every imaginable situation, options on where best to pursue their values. Of course, there are individuals who reject both options, quietly observing the basics in either, while secretly adhering to or promoting a competing set of values. Others seek the Light outside the borders of their respective empires or kingdoms, traveling to distant shrines to learn forgotten secrets from kaima spirit-callers or by aligning themselves with the manifestations of specific gods or spirits.

FORGOTTEN GODS, OLD AND NEW

When the War of Sovereigns ended, many of Alessia's ancient powers, Sovereigns who ruled entire domains or regions, vacated their positions, departing with their hosts and leaving a vacuum answered by those who remained. In some instances, the former servants of these gods stepped into their old positions, adopting their mantles and using their knowledge to answer their prayers in their absence. Over time, these spirits learned to tap directly into the Light and, via the Rings of Heaven, the larger planet. Their omnipotence automated through ritual, these new gods have allowed many of the older religions to continue to operate, their prayers answered and their followers dubious of the common story – that their gods no longer walk among them.

While greedy and selfish individuals continue to prey on the naïve and easily influenced, the Empire of Xian has done an excellent job of providing safe harbor to those who demand to worship the Light through a particular cultural lens. They understand the Light isn't a single color but is instead a spectrum spanning the entirety of all of Alessia's species.

PERSISTENT BELIEFS

The following paths are the most common philosophical approaches to the world and life in Alessia:

THE DRAGON EMISSARIES

These individuals seek the Light through a specific lens, honoring each of the Light's Seven Asaræl Dragons – powerful beings able to bestow a fraction of their essence into creatures with whom they're able to (and have) attuned. These powerful spirits often seek out truescale dragonsworn, whose distinctive patterns and traditionalist attitudes they tend to enjoy. These dragonsworn, in turn, spend hours each day preparing themselves to be vessels, never truly knowing if, or how, they might be chosen. Worse, so few know what might come after, and many prepare for the best, spending countless Yuan to make sure that when the mantle descends, they are the perfect vessels.

Those who do become vessels quickly learn their true task, becoming Alessia's demon hunters in short order. These agents spend their nights traversing Alessia's cities, seeking and destroying those spirits who do naught but harm. Offering protection and grace through the Light, each of these agents swears a set of vows that aligns them to these spirits, drawing on their divine power in the same way a priest does their god.

Dragon emissaries function as clerics of their level but must select their patron from the list below once they reach 3rd level. Once a patron is chosen, it cannot be changed. The patrons and the domains they command are:

Fuzanglong, The Earth Breaker. This terrible dragon snakes through Alessia's hidden places, its scales shaving away at the earth and uncovering every kind of treasure. Said to know the location of every secret thing that someone has buried in Alessia, Fuzanglong is

a powerful spirit who is rarely moved to speak against his will; he is, of all the spirits, one of the most stoic.

In some instances, those who seek him do not for the gift of his physical gems, but instead for the gems of wisdom he willingly shares with those whose hearts he can measure in kind.

Jiaolong, Great Serpent of the Seas. This powerful spirit takes on the form of a powerful sea serpent, sometimes appearing in the form of a crocodile, while at other times, it takes on the form of a great, coiled serpent that lives at the bottom of the sea. In this form, it rises covered in seaweed and broken reefs, the sea's bounty peeling off its ancient form as it lays waste to kilometers of coastline.

Shenlong, The Great Emperor of the Sky. This powerful dragon is the manifestation of the Light's divine strength, its scales shimmering like lightning and its powerful steps shaking the thunder from the heavens. If called upon for its ancient wisdom, Shenlong ensures its followers discover his favor and anger soon enough, adjusting their weather at his pleasure.

Tianlong, The Great Serpent of Heaven. This powerful spirit commands those who travel the heavens, those who pilot skyships, and those who seek to serve the Light swiftly. Those who invoke this great spirit do so by looking to the heavens at night, their gaze affixed on the great serpent's stars.

Yinglong, The Vengeful Storm. This powerful dragon manifests as the full force of an angry storm, and in many ways, is a spirit better appeased than worshipped. The holy king of floods and storms, this celestial dragon creates the sheets of rain, gray mists, and bright bolts of angry electricity that his brother Shenlong pulls from the sky.

Zhulong, the Fiery Torch of Light's Brilliance. This powerful spirit is the draconic manifestation of the Light's aggressive expansion and the conflict that it naturally creates. A spirit of fire and light, this powerful dragon encourages brave and daring actions that "illuminate the darkness."

PANLONG, GALGARÆ, AND THE BLACK LAKE

Although all modern wisdom and convention discounts this wild theory, there are some who believe that Galgaræ wasn't an alien manifestation of darkness at all, but rather a perfect example of corruption given a divine bed in which to sleep. Those who tend to embrace these theories, even while wildly discounted by modern society, universally point to several facts, including the reference to a single dragon who never left the planet when called, and as punishment, was cursed to remain sleeping under the sea until the end of all time.

This spirit, Panlong, was a powerful dragon said to live below one of Alessia's largest lakes and who could sleep through nearly anything. This belief remained so widespread none one believed the two entities might be the same until the War of Sovereigns descended on Alessia's peoples. By then, any advantage that knowing this spirit might be Panlong had long been lost.

While most scholars today look on such tales as historical allegories designed to teach Alessia's elders, there are others who believe these to be directions. These individuals seek out the fabled Black Lake, a deep place said to hold the ancient, wise dragon.

THE EMERALD PATH

DOMAINS Knowledge, Nature
ALIGNMENT Lawful Good
FAVORED WEAPON Yari
SYMBOL The Emerald Dragon

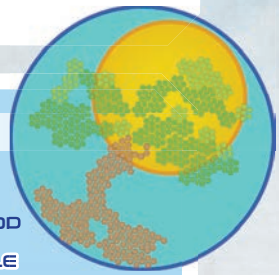
The Emerald Path is part ideology, part faith,and part necessity. Those who follow this mystery tradition spend their lives trying to understand the Light through its manifestations on Alessia itself. These devoted students of the divine look beyond the kaima and to nature itself, seeking to understand the complexity and beauty of the fullness of life, and in that, the cold embrace of death, as well. It is a faith with strong ties to the green, and those who seek the Emerald Path do so in hopes of understanding how the Light manifests in matter, using this knowledge to shift and adjust life a little more. For some, this is innocent enough, allowing them to become amazing (and thoughtful) gardeners. For others, this knowledge might manifest in darker ways. This is always true when one deals with the magic of life and death.

Those who walk in the shadows of the greatest trees are bound to discover the horrors others pass, but also, at times, the most potent of beauties, as well. It is in these deepest shadows, and in their symbolic manifestations, that those who walk the Emerald Path also discover the gems that lead them to truly understand the full majesty of life.

At the highest levels of involvement, those who walk the Emerald Path eventually come to learn the full bounty of their journey, learning how to 'walk between the green,' traveling secret pathways attended only by lonely kaima guardians or fellow travelers.

THE KAIMA'S PATH

DOMAINS Nature, Trickery
ALIGNMENT Neutral Good
FAVORED WEAPON Sickle
SYMBOL image of one of the Trees of Life



Although only a small portion of society can see and interact with them, the kaima are everywhere and few people know why. The first kaima were discovered early during the First Age in western Yerwin by yökai shamans divining for water. It took these shamans several seasons to learn the spirits' language (a universal tongue of the dead called Val), but when they did, they learned to call on them for guidance.

Over the millennia, these shamans codified their understanding of these spirits, creating a tradition of songs, rites, and rituals that honor both the living and the dead. Using a collection of sacred paths to places where only honest, rigorous self-examination can take place, these early shamans learned to carve away the modern and embrace the ancient.

Over the millennia, this path diverged thousands of times, branching off into the shadows with a dozen timelines for every star its students could see. Then, the War of Sovereigns came. The kaima, thinking themselves immune and safe in the realm of the spirits, were taken by complete surprise when the conflict that descended upon them burned not only homes and businesses on the prime material plane, but on their mirrors in the realms beyond, as well.

The Path of Light

Domains Life, Light
Alignment Any Good
Favored Weapon Spear
Symbol The Torch of Ever Flame

Established at the end of the War of the Sovereigns by the Masters of Light, the Path of Light is a broad, tolerant approach to incorporating the Light's lessons into daily life on Alessia.

Its practitioners are often referred to as Universalists.

Adopted and practiced officially throughout the Empire of Xian, this path focuses on the Light's Four Pillars, which followers are reminded to follow in their daily lives, regardless of who witnesses such acts.

To this end, the Path of Light focuses on developing a complex, detailed understanding of its core concepts. Students who begin this path spend years studying the different ways in which Mercy, Truth, Hope, and Courage daily change society for the better.

While some accuse followers of the Path of Light of disenfranchising the individual while promoting communal, tribal lifestyles, there are others who welcome this approach to life. By placing all their trust in the Light, these Universalists surrender themselves to the Good, letting the Light guide their path for a set period of time (often under additional conditions, as well) and learning all they can about the Light's Four Pillars along the way.

Although they adopt countless rituals, Universalists have a cultural fixation of the Asaræ – a people who Universalists consider the apex of Alessia's collective evolution, a people whose very essence shines forth like the day and reminds all that the Light remains defiant against the Darkness.

The Path of Shadows

Domains Tempest, War
Alignment Any Non-Good
Favored Weapon Dagger
Symbol The Eye in Shadows

Hidden from most, the Path of Shadows seeks to understand the Light through its absence, learning its truths by witnessing horrors that could only exist in complete Darkness. These special adherents seek, through the mantle of the Light, to best understand this ancient Darkness on its terms so that they can manipulate and confuse it.

A looming temptation for those versed in Alessia's secret lore, the Path of Shadows begins in morally neutral territory and reveals to the user, through each subsequent betrayal by the Darkness, just how myopic it truly is. Laid bare for the individual, each makes a choice: follow the Light or embrace the Darkness and, through it, heal themselves and return (presumably to the Light). Although its lessons are predicated on a firm understanding of this ancient lore, most modern scholars lack this degree of specialty, and as a result, many important details end up in places none dare recover.

While having its secrets laid bare to those who hear, but don't yield to, dark whispers are a bane – it is one the ancient Darkness is willing to bear. For every scholar who discovers its alignment, two fall to its whisper, pray to it in place of the Light and pursue distractions. It understands that with every step the Light takes forward, it forces it back three.

Of course, there are those who secretly seek out the Path of Shadows, willingly abandoning their connection to the Light to step into the Darkness, and with it, power. Few of those who seek out these shadows survive the experience.

Domains & Dragons

The Light's Seven Asaræl Dragons can bestow spells on clerics as if they were deities. Each of the Seven and the domains to which they grant access are listed below:

Fuzanglong, The Earth Breaker grants access to the Nature and War domains.
Jiaolong, Great Serpent of the Seas grants access to the Nature and Tempest domains.
Shenlong, The Great Emperor of the Sky grants access to the Life and Trickery domains.
Tianlong, The Great Serpent of Heaven grants access to the Light and Nature domains.
Yinglong, The Vengeful Storm grants access to the Tempest and War domains.
Zhulong, the Fiery Torch of Light's Brilliance grants access to the Knowledge and Light domains.

THE TECKERS PATH

Domains Arcana, Knowledge
Alignment Any
Favored Weapon hammers
Symbol The Circuit

Justifiably modern in all the right ways, the Tecker's Path is a progressive approach to living on Alessia. Concerned primarily with using technology to connect with the Light, this path has since become home to a whole host of teckers, thrill-seekers, and data priests. While most of its members would blatantly deny it, it has become an amalgamation of these things, and the definition has clearly shifted for others.

While this path is clearly a religious one for a great number of individuals, an underlying bedrock of respect irrespective of personal beliefs permeates the entire organization, making it safe for secular practitioners as it is for its religious ones.

In some places around Alessia (and this is especially true in Shiran), practitioners of this path wear an emblem with three interlocking cogs instead of the circuit emblem popular throughout the Empire of Xian.

THE WAY OF THE OUTSIDER

Domains Life, Tempest
Alignment Any
Favored Weapon Quarterstaff
Symbol The Skull of Nergu

A wholly ish'ran practice, the Way of the Outsider is a path that draws its lessons from before the first Voidships crashed on Alessia.

This ancient philosophy teaches the ish'ra to cast off the chains of those who oppress them, and not to fear death. All returns to energy. Every ish'ra eventually returns to the Source.

Many, many more faiths.

While a great many more faiths exist in Alessia, most of the smaller faiths and philosophies are adaptations of older faiths, appropriated and modified to suit the region or culture practicing such beliefs and ideas. These individual faiths and the areas of social impact will be addressed in future products.

DIVIDING THE LIGHT

The people of Alessia have had nearly a millennium to rebuild their world. Throughout those nine long centuries, the people have discussed and debated how peace became their reality, and if they can ever really know the cost. In places where the Church of Light and its adherents hold sway (especially in allied lands such as the Empire of Xian), people see very little of this division. The people of these areas have spent centuries incorporating their tales, myths, and legends into the reality with which their Sovereigns left them.

There are places where this division is still felt, both at the borders of older kingdoms and between previously violent peoples. While a great deal of this tension has lessened with the long pass of the years, aggravating events happen all the time, further deepening old divides by crystallizing current ideologies.

While this division doesn't impact oracles or other divine spellcasters, it does present citizens of Alessia with two, competing visions of how the Light might manifest among them.

THE CHURCH OF LIGHT'S ROLE

The Church of Light has long supported the Emperor of Xian, recognizing them as both the divine and the civic leader of their followers, creating a nearly perfect union between these forces. Backed by the Rings of Heaven and an army of oracles, the Church of Light remains confident in their vision and current opinions. They do not fear the divide.

Instead, they place the blame on the Holy Kingdom of Asrai and their heretical views. So, while they maintain no campaign designed to pursecute their Asaeæli counterparts, their long, persistent opinions on the past have made unification between the two all but impossible.

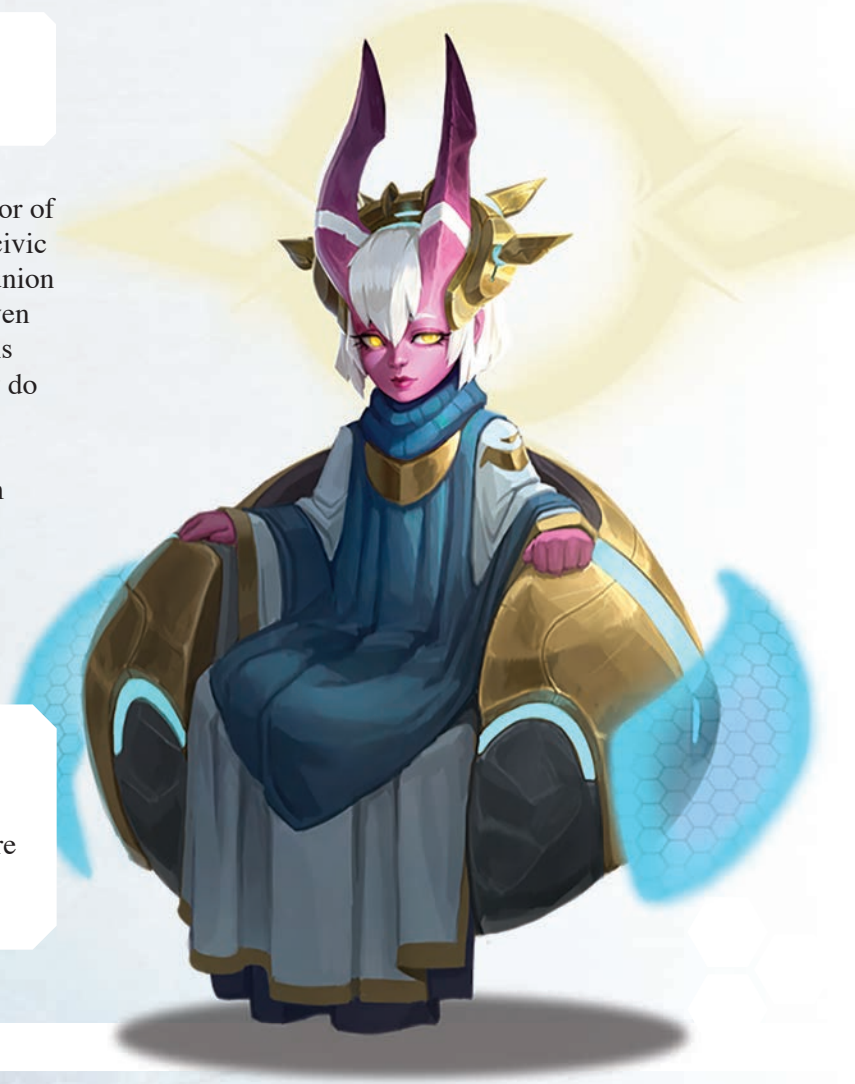
The Light & Alignment

Clerics and oracles of The Light may be of any non-evil alignment, with the majority of the more civil-minded among them adopting a lawful, cooperative approach to life.

THE PROPHET'S ROLE

When the Light left, or so the Holy Church of Light teaches, the last of the Sovereigns – those too weak to travel offworld or too committed to its peoples – imbued their dying, divine essence into the miracle the people now know as the Rings of Heaven. Empowered and driven by divine design, these three rings immediately synchronized with the planet and its moons, becoming a stabilizing force overnight. This fact, coupled with the Church of Light's control of the Rings, led all of Alessia to believe the lie – all the Sovereigns had departed them.

The Holy Prophet of Asrai knows the truth. She has worked countless miracles, speaking official heresies while offering some of Alessia another version of the story. By her account, not all of the Sovereigns departed Alessia at the end of the War of the Sovereigns. Instead, she posits, several of these powerful beings remained behind, inhabiting hidden vessels all over the lands. The prophet teaches she is but one of many to come, an oracle whose power comes not from the Light, but those Sovereigns who remain behind.



THE HOLY KINGDOM OF ASRAI

The Holy Kingdom of Asrai is a place of protection for people who bear the mark of the Light. Although it now maintains its own borders, it does so by the grace and will of the Empire of Xian. For most, the Holy Kingdom is a place you visit if you can manage, and Alessia's wealthiest members of the faithful can been seen walking the streets of the kingdom, if only to catch a glimpse of the holy living Prophet of the Light.

Operating from New Ish City on the coasts of the Tuli Sea, the holy kingdom has incorporated a small part of the lands to itself, claiming only three cities – Nanghxi, New Ish City, and Zhang Mai.

THE ASARÆ AND THE SONG OF LIGHT

When it came time to repair the damage the War of Sovereigns left in its wake, the people of Alessia were lucky on several fronts. Before departing, the Sovereigns of Light commanded their servants to teach them how to access the Ring of Light, and with it, all of the miracles it might produce.

To illustrate its power, these servants accessed the Ring of Light, directing its power into the heart of the Empire of Xian and, through an elaborate song, repaired a great deal of that damage in days, instead of months. Awed by the incredible magnificence of the shower of light, fire, and radiance that washed over the land through the song, nearly all of the terrestrial participants vowed – upon completion – to unlock its full potential.

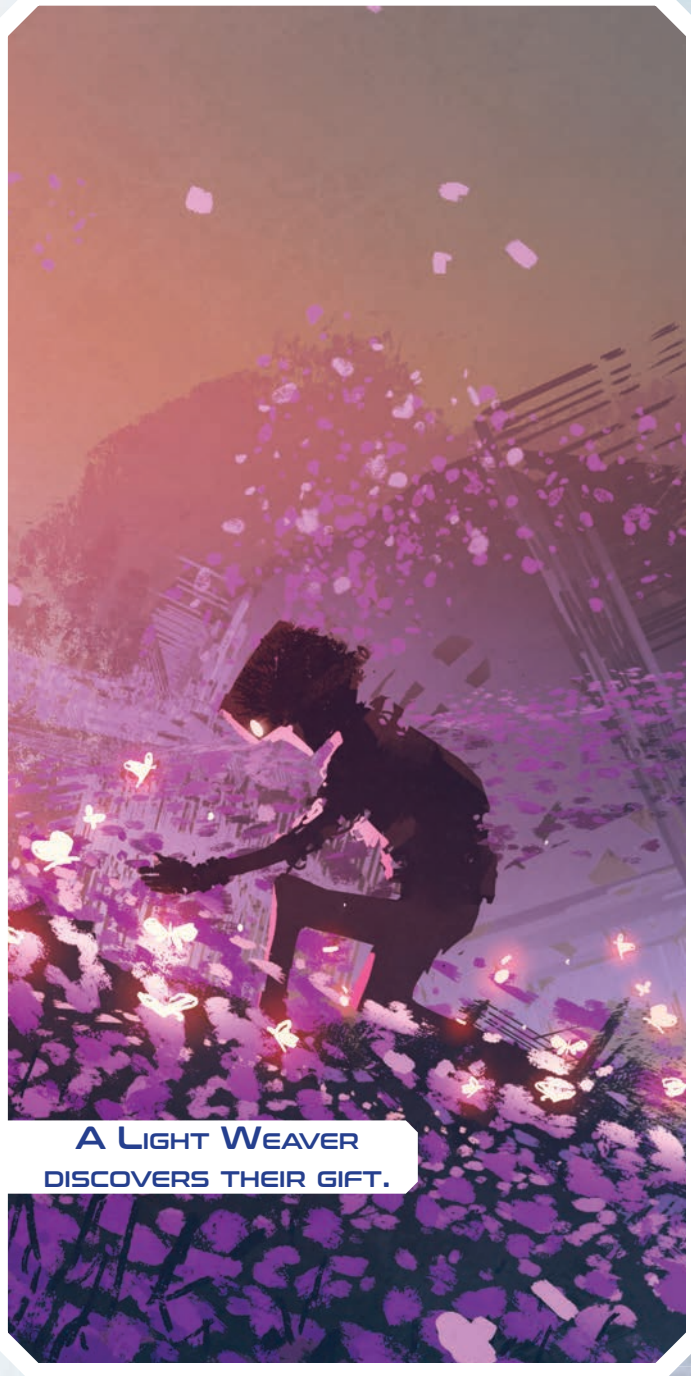
Several millennia later, the **Holy Kingdom of Asrai** champions this cause through a series of educational and religious organizations. The holy kingdom supports these efforts directly, as well, sponsoring several bardic colleges that, through several partnerships around the smaller nation, teach the incredible power of **Light Weaving.**

THE RINGS OF HEAVEN

The Rings of Heaven are a relic built by a departing god.

A fantastical relic of unimaginable power, the Rings of Heaven were constructed in the wake of the War of Sovereigns by the Light, built over the course of a single day. Encircling Alessia and her three moons, the Rings of Heaven dominate all skylines, reminding Alessia's citizens of the Light and its power.

Weaving the entire structure from the bodies of two, nearby dying stars, the Light used the stars' material to bridge them, creating a superstructure at the edge of Alessia's upper atmosphere. Many scholars believe the structure is tidally locked with the planet.



A Light Weaver discovers their gift.

Given the sheer size of The Rings, most of Alessia has long ago given up hope of trying to claim any real territory. The few who have, represent the true strength of the planet below. These organizations comprise nations, churches, and powerful conglomerates with vested interests in the stars beyond. Each of these powerful groups operates one or more outposts, located alongside The Ring's inner face. These outposts are often decorated with colorful flags and surrounded by skyships of all kinds.

The Empire of Xian boasts control of four outposts, all in the Bànyuè Region that faces the Empire's Capital City. The Empire makes no effort to hide the fact that it has weaponized three (Béi, Kongqi, and Yù) of the four outposts, leaving the last a public outpost the Empire claims can service over a hundred skyships.

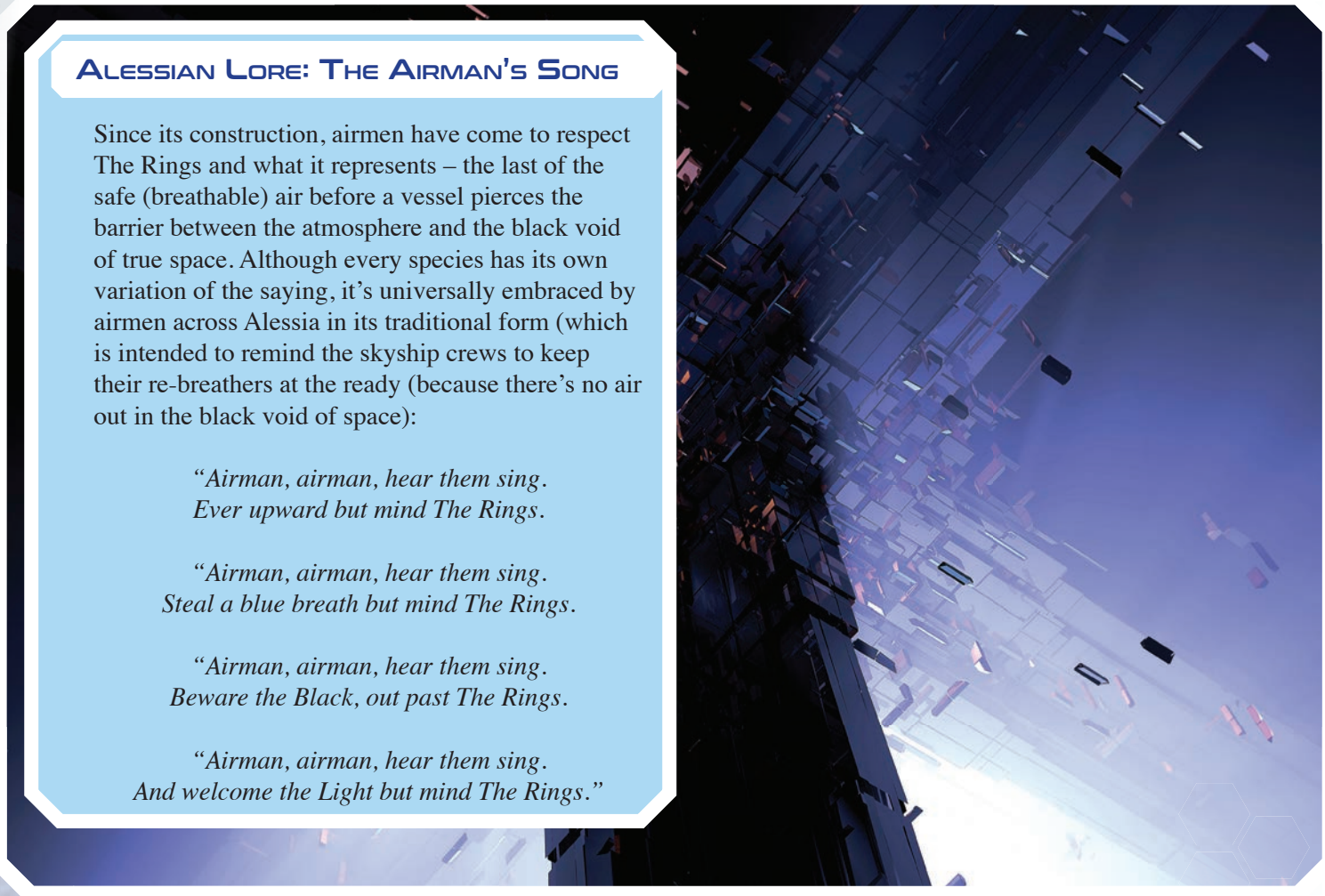
Dao Dynamics keeps two public outposts (Barak Zhàn and Ramal Zhàn) on The Ring, and a third, semi-private location called Port Grey that serves as a hub for the black market, as well as a resting spot for adventurers, mercenaries, and airmen willing to dive into the unknown innards of the massive Asaræl relic.

Factions Among the Stars

Many of Alessia's species have visited the dark black beyond the Rings Using heavily modified skyships, these explorers have traveled the stars, exploring the lands beyond Alessia and discovering a number of wondrous societies and places. These explorers started with Alessia's three moons (Asara, Dragonhome, and Telgravia), moving on to discover and explore its two, smaller neighboring planets (Alorna and Shamar).

Explorers such as Eshna Orsdec pushed beyond Alessia's immediate system, discovering tir'ian jungle planets, the Eternal and Holy Consortium of Sovereigns, and even the very distant Asaræl Dragon Empire.

Other explorers have discovered smaller, growing powers very similar to Alessia – planets just trying to survive. Many of these explorers point out that it is only Alessia's Rings of Heavens that keep the planet safe from the darker corners of the cosmos. All of these empires have influenced and saved Alessia, keeping the warlike Orgothii Dominion from moving deeper into their territory.



Alessian Lore: The Airman's Song

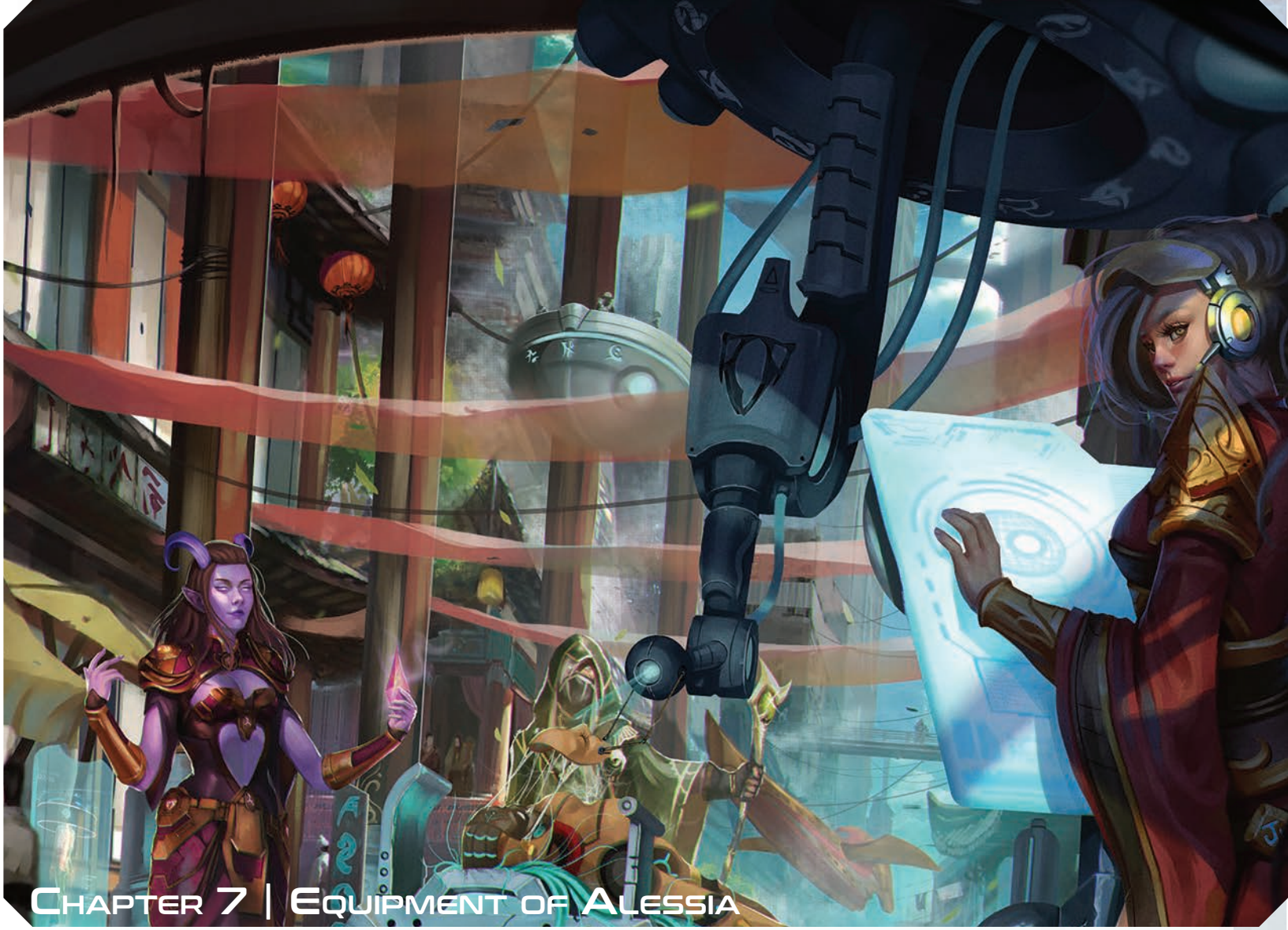
Since its construction, airmen have come to respect The Rings and what it represents – the last of the safe (breathable) air before a vessel pierces the barrier between the atmosphere and the black void of true space. Although every species has its own variation of the saying, it's universally embraced by airmen across Alessia in its traditional form (which is intended to remind the skyship crews to keep their re-breathers at the ready (because there's no air out in the black void of space):

"Airman, airman, hear them sing.
Ever upward but mind The Rings.

"Airman, airman, hear them sing.
Steal a blue breath but mind The Rings.

"Airman, airman, hear them sing.
Beware the Black, out past The Rings.

"Airman, airman, hear them sing.
And welcome the Light but mind The Rings."



Chapter 7 | Equipment of Alessia

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Alessia has an interesting, robust history with its technology that dates back to the end of the War of the Sovereigns, which ended in the destruction of countless temples, holy sites, and for a long time, removed divine magic from the world. Lacking a way to heal the sick and working to align with the Light as quickly as possible, many clerics and healers turned to Alessian craftsmen, mages, and alchemists to solve the problem.

Within a decade of the end of the war, the first Houses of Healing were under construction. Followers of Sillias, the Sovereign of Medicine, rededicated themselves to the helping and healing and established the very first Healer's Union, a group dedicated to healing the sick, tending to the wounded, and bringing health and wellness to the people of Alessia.

Alessians needed more than just healing in the wake of the War of Sovereigns. Alessian war mages, their war finished, focused their efforts on rebuilding the damaged planet. These arcanists dived wholly into the task of rebuilding, innovating, and fusing the full scope of their magic understanding with the technology they were developing.

DIFFERENT ASSUMPTIONS

While Alessia presents players with a wide array of equipment, options, modifications, magical items, alchemical items, and gear with which to outfit a character, players need to consider a few assumptions before gearing up.

Much like our modern world, the people of Alessia prepare for most days by carrying the things they need to accomplish their tasks for the day. Unless you're operating in a very remote part of the world, most characters will carry only the basics. Most characters are expected to carry their IDs, personal hygiene and grooming materials, a small computer or smart tablet, a small journal (and pen), and their keys.

Most individuals keep all of these items in a small satchel, purse, or bag.

In general, players start out with less initial equipment and more cash, allowing them to customize their characters to match their particular vision (and character goals).

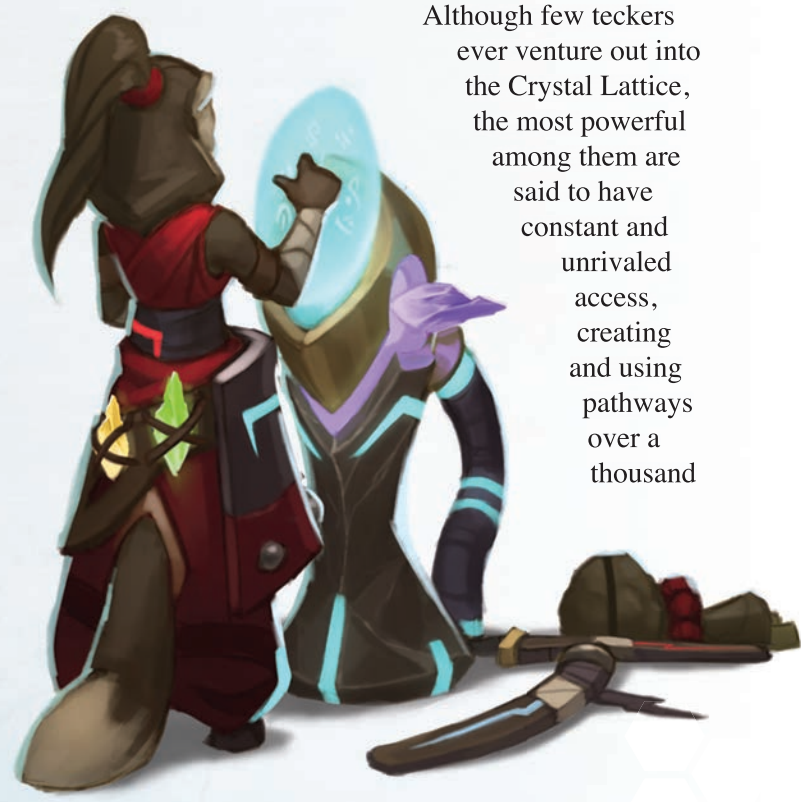
THE IMPACT OF UTILITIES

Utilities, likewise, have a major social impact on the settled, civilized parts of Alessia. This fact is readily apparent in places such as the Empire of Xian, where millennia of blended societies and advanced technology have transformed how modern citizens behave.

For most species, this impact is universal and is expressed via layers of technological comfort, security, and convenience. Even in the smallest Imperial outposts, for instance, citizens have ready access to free medical services, law enforcement, sanitation, and access to the Crystal Lattice. This fact informs how those citizens behave, with most becoming dependent on the security those resources provide. Most citizens don't go about armed and armored, for instance.

CONNECTING TO A NETWORK

Alessia, much like our modern world, has a complex, growing network of interconnected computers and other magitech devices that allow player characters to store, find, hide, recover, destroy, and otherwise manipulate data and information of all kinds. Although this data is often safely and securely stored in crystal fields connected to the Crystal Lattice, skilled teckers can often find ways to recover it, often through a number of unconventional (and frequently illegal) means.



Although few teckers ever venture out into the Crystal Lattice, the most powerful among them are said to have constant and unrivaled access, creating and using pathways over a thousand

different ley lines and trailing the tecker, like an invisible mantle, out into the night.

Unless special conditions have been set, player characters can access most active Holo Terminals (see below) as an Action, although the time required to completely login can vary, depending on the level of security, the player character's authorization, and any environmental factors not previously considered. Generally speaking, a player character can power on and login into a public Holo Terminal in about 1 minute.

Once a player character logs in, that terminal records their credentials and adjusts its user interface to match their preferences (although some exploits will allow characters to bypass this step in the process). Unless the player is operating anonymously on the network, the system will continue to ping the user and offer assistance until they have completed their tasks on that network.

Although most exploits allow teckers to perform these actions as bonus actions or reactions, nearly all of these tasks can be performed by the general public, only at a much slower pace.

COMMON CURRENCIES

Three major currencies dominate Alessia, followed by six lesser currencies. The three primary currencies are Yuan (minted in the Empire of Xian), MagiCash (controlled by the Order of Astrænna), and CrysCreds (illegal in the Empire of Xian).

In Velestra, for instance, citizens trade in a variety of royal gems called Saps. Along the western borders of Fyrea, locals trade in magically hardened (and stamped) disks called Zhavs. Throughout Yerwin, many of the tribes that wander the trade routes continue to trade in Sunstones, a rare gem found in the surrounding hills. In Shiran, most of the human cities trade in silver coins or bars. In Y'rim and the Flying Cities, the gnomes buy and sell everything using Cogs – small, glyph-marked recorders that hold preset values. For those willing to brave darker alleyways and the Night Markets, there is only one real currency – Shades. Shades are iron-black coins with gray, silver, or red stones embedded in the center; each shade is marked and sealed with a glyph.

Alessia's popular three currencies are described as follows:

YUAN

The first, and by far dominant currency, is the Yuan. Minted, distributed, and controlled by the Empire of Xian, the Yuan is its official currency and represents a great deal of its power. Visitors trying to use other currencies in the Empire quickly discover doing so is illegal. Merchants operating officially within the Empire's borders must accept, process, and pay taxes via only the Yuan. All of these official transactions are recorded with the state. Only money-changers, banks, and similar financial institutions can accept other currencies inside the Empire and can only do so to facilitate an exchange.

These professionals operate in the financial districts of their respective cities and always display the Imperial Seal granting them permission to conduct such business.

In Alessia, the Yuan is the standard. All prices in this book are set in Yuan.

MAGICASH

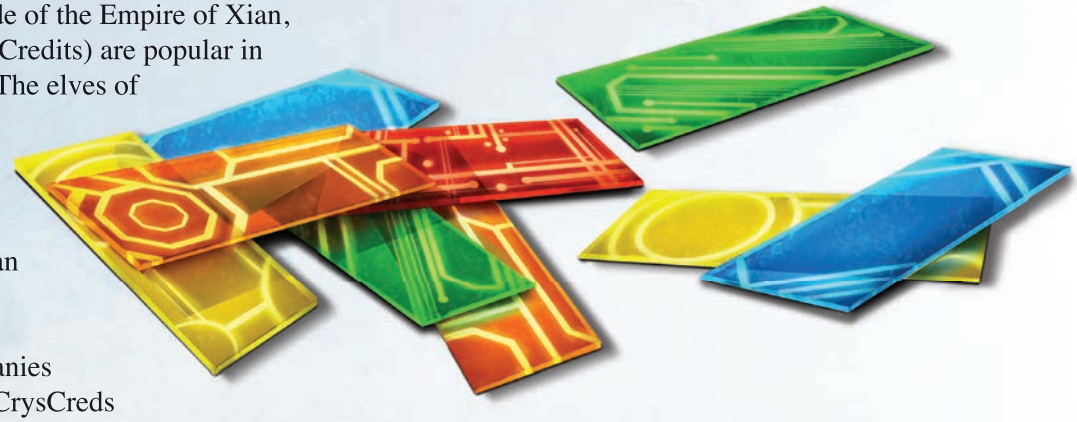
The second currency, which trails only in popularity by a slight margin, is MagiCash. An advanced credit system magically controlled and monitored by the Order of Astrænna, this currency is the lifeblood of the magical economy of Alessia. Arcanists across the seven continents use MagiCash to purchase materials, tools, and training.

The Order of Astrænna maintains several hundred locations in the free cities out of the Empire where they buy, sell, and exchange items all of kinds for MagiCash. These locations are designed specifically to allow people to set up accounts with the Order, granting them access to not only the services of its members, but also an opportunity to purchase locally designed and produced magitech weapons, items, armor, and gear.

Yuan (below).

CrysCreds

Minted and distributed outside of the Empire of Xian, CrysCreds (short for Crystal Credits) are popular in Fyrea, Shiran, and Galgaræ. The elves of Velestra trade primarily in Yuan, as do the yökai of Yerwin. Although they are illegal, most of the illicit dealings in the Empire of Xian are conducted in CrysCreds.



Although independent companies and organizations can make CrysCreds (mining these credits independent of regional governments), most find mining the crystals profitable enough, especially when one considers the margins involved. In most cases, the cost in time to make these special coins outweighs the benefits of doing so.

MagiCash (above) and CrysCreds (below).

CrysCreds value regionally but rarely fluctuate to any great degree; CrysCreds tend to be both reliable and stable, backed by the very material from which they are made.

Starting Equipment

Player characters receive their starting equipment, or alternately, their starting wealth, during character creation. In most instances, player characters receive their starting equipment from two places – their class and background selection. Each class's starting wealth is listed individually under that class's entry. Equipment gained from a background is listed under that background's entry.

Salvaging & Selling

The people of Alessia have long recycled, an early lesson learned from the ish'ra during their first millennium on Alessia. As a result, most cities have extensive programs in place that let citizens earn Yuan for recycling their old equipment, refuse, and other garbage. These programs produce little in the way of profit, but most individuals can expect to earn back between 5% and 10% of the retail cost of an item when they recycle it.

Salvaging gear is harder (and often requires special permits from local governments), but frequently yields better returns for those willing to do the work. Salvaging gear is often dangerous, as well – especially when dealing with advanced energy weapons. Still, those willing to risk the dangers of salvaging gear can earn 30% to 50% of the value of an item, especially when items have modular construction or are relatively current technology. Salvaging older equipment can still yield decent returns (among collectors or when some items are in demand), but frequently only yields between 20% and 40% of the value of an item.

Selling older, but well-kept equipment is often the best way to earn back the money spent on armor, gear, and weapons. Reselling weapons, equipment, and gear commonly yields between 40% and 65% of the value of a given item.

GMs are welcome to adjust these ranges as needed to represent more detailed economic variables, including factors such as scarcity, value, demand, legality, and locality. In general, these adjustments shouldn't affect ranges by more than 20% in either direction.

Note: Attentive readers will notice we have excluded a chart for exchange rates. We think it far wiser to let GMs manage their campaigns' economy, and that means letting them set the exchange rates. Throughout this primer, all prices are listed in Yuan.

Table: Currency Use by Area

Currency	Controller	Legality	Regional Use	Popularity
Cogs	Gnome Flying Cities	Legal in Yrim and the Flying Cities.	Flying Cities.	9th
CrysCreds	Capital Cities of Fyrea	Legal; illegal in Empire of Xian.	All	3rd
MagiCash	Order of Astrænna	Legal everywhere.	All	2nd
Saps	Velestrian Nobility	Legal in Velestra	Velestra	4th
Shades	The Night Markets	Illegal everywhere but the Night Markets.	All	5th
Silver	City States of Shiran	Legal in Shiran.	Shiran	6th
Sunstones	Yerwin Merchant Lords	Legal in Yerwin.	Yerwin	8th
Yuans	Empire of Xian	Legal in Elysia, Galgaræ, and Velestria.	All	1st
Zhavs	City States of Fyrea	Legal in Fyrea.	Fyrea	7th

Table: Wealth by Class

Class	Roll your starting wealth	...or take these average
The Arcanist	2d4 x 100 Yuan and 6d4 x 100 MagiCash	500 Yuan and 1,500 MagiCash
The Marauder	8d4 x 100 Yuan	2,000 Yuan
The Monk	4d4 x 100 Yuan and 4d4 x 100 MagiCash or 4d4 x 100 CrysCredits	1,000 Yuan and 1,000 MagiCash or CrysCredits
The Ninja	6d4 x 100 Yuan and 2d4 x 100 MagiCash	1,500 Yuan and 500 MagiCash
The Oracle	4d4 x 100 Yuan and 4d4 x 100 CrysCredits	1,000 Yuan and 1,000 CrysCredits
The Psion	2d4 x 100 Yuan and 6d4 x 100 CrysCredits	500 Yuan and 1,500 CrysCredits
The Seer	4d4 x 100 Yuan and 4d4 x 100 MagiCas	1,000 Yuan and 1,000 MagiCash
The Tecker	2d4 x 100 Yuan and 6d4 x 100 MagiCash.	500 Yuan and 1,500 MagiCash

Note: Players who elect to generate their starting wealth must pay their first month's lifestyle costs as part of character creation. For more information, see Chapter 1.

While most salvage efforts in Alessia are conducted peacefully in remote regions or areas, local scavengers can sometimes make legitimate claims troublesome, especially when the locals don't recognize the claims presented.

Sometimes, violence happens.

THE RULES OF ESCALATION

When it comes to the laws of combat and war, the rules of engagement vary greatly in Alessia. In the settled and civilized places such as the Velestrian Isles, the Fyrean City States, and the Empire of Xian, these rules are taught to citizens at an early age. Training on conflict resolution continues through adulthood and sets the stage for what most of Alessia considers civilized behavior.

Once individuals leave the safety of the cities, things change rapidly. Lacking the security living in the city provides, adventures quickly learn that outside the city, things can escalate quickly. Beyond the Empire of Xian (and similar nation-states), most citizens go about armed, and law enforcement falls to the locals to handle. In rural and frontier cities, mercenary companies serve as security forces and patrol the nearby regions, ensuring Alessia's evolving predators don't grow too powerful.

Even in these rural regions, most individuals resort to diplomacy before violence when dealing with sentient beings and species. When dealing with monsters, predators, and known threats, diplomacy is still attempted but never to a point of endangering the individual attempting diplomacy.

In rural regions closest to the Trees of Life and the Crystal Lattice, this is doubly important, as predators and monsters frequently evolve over a number of generations.

Monsters or predators who previously had done little more than kill may have evolved beyond those instincts, learning to live peaceful lives besides those they once attacked out of fear or ignorance.

In short, in Alessia, heroes ask questions before diving directly into the violence.

In civilized lands such as the Empire of Xian, organized and lawful individuals (like Peacekeepers) will conduct what is commonly known on Alessia as the Test of Three. While the individual challenges vary (several are listed below), the precept remains the same: when faced with a potential threat, individuals should challenge them three times (giving them three times to retreat or avoid combat) before resorting to violence. Heroes and NPCs might issue any of the following challenges:

- ***An automated challenge***. Similar to a social challenge, automated challenges are made by on-board monitoring and control systems throughout Alessia. In places like Fyrean, these challenges are a 'first step' to correcting behavior and de-escalation.

- ***A magical challenge***. When possible, a magical attempt is made to subdue or hold the target. Magical and psychic challenges are considered 'second steps' in the path to correcting behavior and de-escalation. These always follow social challenges.

- ***A physical challenge***. When social, magical, and psychic methods fail, a physical attempt (generally using an energy net, restraining cube, or similar magitech device) is made to restrict or restrain the target. This is always considered a 'third' or 'last step' to correcting anti-social and violent behavior.

- ***A psychic challenge***. When possible, a psychic attempt is made to subdue the target. Psychic and magical challenges are considered 'second steps' in the path to correcting behavior and de-escalation. These always follow social challenges.

- ***A social challenge***. When communication is possible, attempts should be made to talk to the target first. Social challenges can include threats but should generally be directed at de-escalating violence. Social challenges are considered 'first steps' in de-escalation, and while some threats are effective, they are considered 'second step' behaviors.

While each place has its own graduated path of escalation, most nations follow the common, three-steps methodology for conflict resolution. Peacekeepers and security professionals are expected to proceed through each of the steps, resorting to violence only as a last resort.

SO HOW DOES IT WORK?

In the civilized parts of Alessia, most encounters begin with a set of automated or social challenges – a first step designed to determine someone's intent or agenda. In play, these are always issued at the beginning of an encounter (provided the offending characters' presence is known). If these are ignored or resisted, the second step in the process is to use psychic or magical means to hold or otherwise restrict the target. The final step in the process generally begins with the parties resisting previous efforts, and in most situations, if the offending characters haven't ceased their offensive activities, combat begins.

A FOCUS ON SAFETY

Throughout Alessia, public spaces are designed with beauty and safety in mind. This is especially true in the Floating Cities, in the Empire of Xian, and among the tree-cities of Velestra. Fusing a need to appreciate Alessia's wild places and natural beauty with seven millennia of technological advancement has become a passion for many, and the effects of this passion is visible throughout the lands.

In Velestra and Fyrea, translucent nets of energy keep bridges and towers safe for visitors, while massive generators produce energy fields that hold entire pyramids aloft. In the Empire of Xian, these advancements can be seen everywhere; fields of force crisscross cities and towns, protecting citizens from extreme weather shifts, meteorites, and monsters with equal efficiency.

Although countless safety devices exist throughout Alessia, some of the more common ones are listed below:

- ***EnTrap***. A security device designed to slow and stop criminals attempting to escape from the scene of a crime, an EnTrap device is a small, throw-able device with a range of 20 feet. When thrown at a given square as an Attack, EnTrap targets up to three enemies with the spell *slow*, immediately followed by a web of magical energy (identical to the spell ***web***). Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw avoid the slow effect. Characters who succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw avoid the web effect, provided they move out of the area of effect. An EnTrap device targets either a 10' or a 20' square.

- ***DomeMe*** (personal). Produced throughout the north, these small, magitech devices produce an emergency dome of energy (AC 22, 20 Hit Points) that protects a single individual for up to 5 minutes. Activating this device is a Bonus action that does not provoke an Opportunity Attack.

- ***DomeUs*** (group). Common throughout Yerwin and in northern Shiran, these small magitech devices produce an emergency dome of energy (AC 20, 40 Hit Points) that protects everyone within a 10-foot radius. When activated as a Bonus action, this stationary dome remains in place for 30 minutes.

- ***Dao Dynamics Safe Shield*** (personal). A common personal safety device developed by Dao Dynamics, the Dao Safe Shield is incredibly popular in the eastern Empire of Xian and through Fyrea. This device produces an emergency dome of protective energy that protects a single, medium-sized creature from incoming debris, energy attacks, and the like. When activated as a Bonus action, this dome (AC 16, 20 Hit Points) protects the individual for 2 minutes.

- ***Dao Dynamics Safe Shield*** (group). A common group safety device developed by Dao Dynamics, the Dao Safe Shield produces an emergency dome of protective energy that protects everyone within a 10-foot radius from incoming debris, energy attacks, and the like. When activated as a Bonus action, this dome (AC 18, 30 Hit Points remains in place for 10 minutes.

- ***Asrenna SkyVest***. Alessia's answer to the dangers of skyship travel, a SkyVest is custom-fitting vest that activates when someone falls off an airship, but only when they're within 100 feet of a solid surface or the surface of the planet. An Asrenna SkyVest activates immediately (its wearer need not be awake or conscious) when within 100 feet, targeting the wearer with the spell *safe fall*. This vest only functions once.

NEW ARMOR

On Alessia, the armor you wear says a great deal about you long before you start to speak. The make, the model, and even the place it was manufactured can add additional details, giving opposing warriors an opportunity to size up one another before wading into battle. While the particulars of these contests lie elsewhere, the armor these (and any) warriors might wear are described below:

LIGHT ARMOR

In Alessia, most engineers, teckers, and smiths design their light armor to offer the most mobility and speed possible without sacrificing protection. Light armors in Alessia tend to have a small number of enhancements slots and often lack some of the special properties of heavier armors. Very few light armors offer any kind of environmental protection.

- ***Arcanist's Fiber Robes***. These lightweight, expertly woven robes incorporate special threads designed to channel the energy of ley lines, crystals, and arcane wells of all kinds. This light armor has two slots and possesses the Arcane Adaptive special quality (see below).

- ***Ava-X Magitech Armor***. This lightweight armor is standard throughout Shiran, Elysia, and Yerwin. This lightweight armor has a single slot for enhancements.

• ***Fyrean Tempweave***. This lightweight armor is common throughout Fyrea. Vendors who specialize in cleaning, repairing, and buying (or selling) this armor are a common sight along the Silk Road that winds through the Fyrean deserts. This light armor has a single slot and possesses the Endurance special quality (see below).

• ***Night Armor***. Commonly called 'Housebreaker's Hide,' night armor is composite lightweight armor designed to keep its owner quiet. Using a web of patches, leather straps, and cloth bands, this armor is incredibly versatile, granting its owner advantage +1 Stealth bonus while wearing it.

• ***Peacekeeper: CSLX***. This lightweight armor is a common sight throughout the Empire of Xian and its colonies. Well designed (and commonly custom-fitted for career Peacekeepers), this armor grants a lot of protection for its weight and cost. This armor has only 1 slot for enhancements, but also has the Resistance special quality (see below).

• ***Skynteck Shield Frame***. This lightweight frame covers its owner well while still focusing on delivering the best distribution of weight and available slots to the user. This armor is expensive.

MEDIUM ARMOR

The engineers and smiths responsible for most medium armors design them with both balance and harmony in mind. Most sets of medium armor are customized for a specific individual. Medium armors in Alessia tend to have a small number of enhancements slots but commonly have more enhancements than their lighter variants. Some medium armors offer environmental protection.

• ***Arcanist's Arcweave***. This thicker armor has dark, crimson breastplates woven into the front and rear torso, with thousands of channels running throughout, each possessing a special conduit inside that carries the subtle pulse of arcane energy with ease. This armor has the Arcane Adaptive quality (described below).

• ***Fyrean Raider's Armor***. Raider's Armor, as it is commonly called among the bandit gangs of Fyrea, is a patchwork of tempweave patterns, Fyrean cottons, and ceramic plates, all strapped to a steel frame. This armor has two slots for enhancements.

• ***Gavicc-X Magitech Armor***. This medium armor is standard throughout southern Alessia. It is especially popular in Galgaræ, where its interchangeable parts and two-slot enhancement system cycles faster than the competitors. Lacking the bells and whistles of more expensive models, this armor boasts no special qualities.

• ***Ghostwalker's Armor***. Built for professional assassins, government agents, and professionals of a similar nature, ghostwalker armor is often a clear indicator one should be left alone. Designed around a single enhancement slot (which is commonly hardwired to grant invisibility or similar effects), this armor provides its wearer with a small Stealth Bonus. This armor has one slot for enhancements.

• ***Marauder Skirmisher's Armor***. Designed for use in terrestrial environments, marauder skirmisher's armor (often abbreviated as MSA) is often a patchwork of styles and modifications, customized to suit the individual marauder. This armor offers its wearer an endurance bonus. This armor has two slots for enhancements.

• ***Peacekeeper: CSMX***. This medium-grade armor is designed exclusively for the Empire of Xian's Peacekeepers, who wear it in most environments. Although this armor isn't designed to operate outside of atmosphere, so skyship crews wear specialized suits that allow them to do just that. Individuals who wear

this armor enjoy resistance against one damage type. This armor has two slots for enhancements.

• ***Warcaster's Armor***. Designed for arcanists and wizards exclusively, this armor offers arcane protection, converting certain damage types to energy that their caster can use to power their spells. Incredibly expensive, warcaster armor has the arcane defensive properties. This armor has two slots for enhancements.

HEAVY ARMOR

In Alessia, heavy armors are designed for a handful of missions, many of which demand stronger environmental protections, as well as secondary atmospheric systems and personalized shields that allow them to operate in the vacuum of space. Most heavy armors in Alessia have a number of enhancements that offset their bulk and lack of mobility.

• ***Ava-X Magitech Heavy Armor***. Designed by Ava-X in Shiran, this heavy-duty magitech armor was originally created to explore hazardous or dangerous environments (like Galgaræ's Crater or The Ring), this armor has since become a favorite of mercenaries who make excellent use of the endurance bonus it offers. This armor has three slots for enhancements.

• ***Bjornvolk Ceremonial Armor***. Worn throughout Yrim, this armor is a favorite of the jötunfolk, whose traditions demand they create the armor themselves, with each warrior including trophies from successful encounters with their enemies. This armor has no special qualities, cannot be used outside of the atmosphere, and has only a single slot for enhancements.

• ***Fyrean Guardsmen***. Designed millennia ago by the ancient priesthood of Seti-Hebti, the Grey Sovereign of Fyrea, this armor has been the traditional armor of Fyrean guardsmen for nearly seven millennia. Today's variants grant the royal soldiers who wear them a bonus to endurance. This armor has two slots for enhancements.

• ***Imperial Armor***. The royal armor of the Empire of Xian, only the Empire's best-trusted agents are fitted for this specialized armor, which is designed to absorb and channel arcane energies. Imperial agents who wear this armor also gain a significant bonus to their endurance. This armor has two slots for enhancements.

• ***Jotün-Breaker Armor***. This heavy armor is designed to withstand the brutal assault of larger creatures, such as jötun, ogres, and trolls. Designed primarily to operate on land, this armor trades away atmospheric protection for extra armor and an endurance bonus. This armor has one slot for enhancements.

• ***Marauder's War Armor***. Advertised as "Armor for the End Game," marauder's war armor spends all of its spare space on a power unit that enhances the wearer's strength and endurance. This heavy armor offers extensive protection to the wearer and operates with ease outside of the atmosphere. This armor lacks slots for enhancements. Instead, it has the heavy and powered qualities.

• ***Peacekeeper: CSHX***. The Empire of Xian's standard assault armor for all environments, this heavy armor is customizable and offers its wearer two standard slots for enhancements. Designed to operate in areas such as The Ring (with unreliable atmospheres), this armor offers Peacekeepers an endurance bonus.

• ***Warcaster's Arcplate***. Sought after by war mages and warriors alike, this highly customizable armor is designed to channel arcane power that its wearer can access with greater ease. This armor has three slots for enhancements.

SHIELDS

On Alessia, shields fall into one of three categories – light, heavy, and war. Most shields are constructed of physical materials such as reinforced polymers, steel, and iron. Others use a shield frame and generate a localized energy field. These shields are lighter, but far more expensive.

• ***Light Combat Shield***. Worn on the defensive-arm (sometimes called the "off-arm"), light combat shields range in size from 18 to nearly 40 inches in length. These shields are commonly made from clear, reinforced polymers. Some energy variants exist.

• ***Heavy Combat Shield***. Worn on the defensive arm, heavy combat shields range in size from 36 to 56 inches in length. Like their smaller cousins, these shields are made from clear, reinforced polymers. Some shields are made from reinforced steel and iron, as well. A number of energy variants exist. These shields are commonly paired to heavy armors.

• ***Marauder's War Shield***. Commonly deployed from an enhanced service pack, these shields are heavy and require an active power source. When deployed, these shields create a powerful energy shield that all but encases its target. Stationary versions of these shields are used in conjunction with some gun placements, as well.

EXOSKELETONS

Exoskeletons in Alessia are special suits of powered armor that allow the wearer to attach a number of powered accessories, including special generators, shields, and weapons. Offering about the same protection as a suit of light armor, exoskeletons require special maintenance and are always expensive.

- ***Ava-X13X.*** The best suit for its value, this exoskeleton has three slots for enhancements and a reliable power plant that can operate in all environments for 12 hours. Additional power packs can extend this operational span, and many suits are configured to do just that.

- ***Imperial Exo-1.*** Issued to the Imperial Dragoons of the Empire of Xian, these exoskeletons are designed to withstand extensive punishment, including longer drops and falls. This armor has two slots for enhancements and includes a power pack that lets it operate up to sixteen hours.

- ***Gavicc-X5.*** An expensive but popular exoskeleton, the X5 is a powered suit that uses Alessia's suns to recharge, allowing for regular use over time. This armor has two slots for enhancements and a single battery that lets it operate in sunless conditions for up to 6 hours. In conditions where one or more suns are present, this unit can operate up to 16 hours per day.

- ***Skynteck Exo-2.*** The spiritual son of the X5, the Exo-2 exoskeleton has four slots for enhancements and a geo-adaptive battery that will power the suit for up to 16 hours each day. Drawing energy directly from the Crystal Lattice by induction, this suit can operate around the clock in the direct presence of these crystals.

TABLE: COMMON ALESSIAN ARMOR TYPES

Name	Type	AC	Strength	Stealth	Slots	Special Qualities
Arcanist's Fiber Robes	Light	11 + Dex	–	–	2	Arcane Adaptive
Ava-X Magitech Armor	Light	12 + Dex	–	–	1	None
Fyrean Tempweave	Light	13 + Dex	–	–	1	Endurance
Night Armor	Light	12 + Dex	–	–	1	Stealthy
Peacekeeper: CSLX	Light	13 + Dex	–	–	2	Resistance
Skynteck Shield Frame	Light	12 + Dex	–	Disadvantage	3	None
Arcanist's Arcweave	Medium	13 + Dex (max +2)	–	–	3	Arcane Adaptive
Fyrean Raider's Armor	Medium	14 + Dex (max +2)	–	Disadvantage	2	Endurance
Gavicc-X Magitech Armor	Medium	14 + Dex (max +2)	–	–	2	None
Ghostwalker's Armor	Medium	15 + Dex (max +2)	–	–	1	Stealthy
Marauder Skirmisher's Armor	Medium	14 + Dex (max +2)	–	–	1	Endurance
Peacekeeper: CSMX	Medium	14 + Dex (max +2)	–	Disadvantage	2	Resistance
Warcaster's Armor	Medium	15 + Dex (max +2)	–	Disadvantage	2	Arcane Defensive
Ava-X Magitech Heavy Armor	Heavy	15	Str 11	Disadvantage	3	Endurance
Bjornvolk Ceremonial Armor	Heavy	16	Str 13	Disadvantage	1	None
Fyrean Guardsmen	Heavy	16	Str 13	Disadvantage	2	Endurance
Imperial Armor	Heavy	17	Str 12	Disadvantage	2	Arcane Defensive, Endurance
Jotün-Breaker Armor	Heavy	17	Str 15	Disadvantage	1	Endurance
Marauder's War Armor	Heavy	16	Str 14	Disadvantage	0	Heavy, Powered
Peacekeeper: CSHX	Heavy	18	Str 15	Disadvantage	2	Endurance
Warcaster's Arcplate	Heavy	17	Str 15	Disadvantage	3	Arcane Adaptive
Light Combat Shield	Shield	+2	–	–	0	None
Heavy Combat Shield	Shield	+3	–	–	0	Heavy
Marauder's War Shield	Shield	+4	Str 16	Disadvantage	1	Heavy, Powered

ARMOR SPECIAL QUALITIES

Most armors on Alessia possesses a number of special qualities in addition to the basic protections or enhancements they normally provide. These special qualities are described below:

• ***Arcane Adaptive.*** Arcane adaptive armor absorbs raw magical energy, using it to power the armor and provide arcanists, teckers, and other arcane casters with a small pool of arcane energy they can use to cast additional spells. Arcane adaptive armor grants you a number of bonus spell slots equal to half your proficiency bonus. You must be attuned with your armor to gain this bonus.

• ***Arcane Defensive.*** Arcane defensive armor absorbs raw magical energy and converts it to harmless energy, protecting its wearer from basic magical attacks. While wearing arcane defensive armor, you may spend a point of resolve to activate the spell *shield* as a reaction. You must be attuned with your armor to use this spell.

• ***Endurance.*** Armor designed with the endurance quality is designed to withstand void environments and harsh conditions equally, sealing the wearer in a thin, protective shield of energy. This special quality automatically activates as a reaction when it encounters its triggering conditions (a lack of a breathable environment, extreme pressure or extreme temperature changes), protecting the wearer for up to 8 hours. You must be attuned with your armor to gain this protection.

• ***Flight.*** Flight armor is designed to grant its wearer the ability to fly. While worn, stealthy flight grants its wearer a fly speed of 60 ft. (good). Flight armor may have wings. You must be attuned with your armor to gain this advantage.

• ***Geo-Crys.*** Geo-crys armor is designed to absorb the ambient energies found throughout Alessia, through both her Ley Lines and the various crystals mined from the Crystal Lattice. Geo-crys armor extends the life of armor by 8 hours, allowing most suits to operate up to 16 hours a day.

• ***Heavy.*** Heavy armor trades agility for protection, giving the wearer additional slots or armor to keep them in the fight. Heavy armor reduces your movement by half.

• ***Powered.*** Powered armor provides the wearer with several small boosts to their physical attributes by assisting them with simple tasks. Powered armor operates for 8 hours before it needs to be recharged. While active, powered armor removes the disadvantage penalty normally imposed on Strength and Dexterity-based ability checks. This penalty is immediately imposed whenever the armor is powered down.

• ***Resistance.*** Armor with the resistance special quality can be attuned to a specific energy type once per day, granting its wearer that resistance while worn. Resetting the armor's energy type is a slow process that takes 10 minutes. You must be attuned with your armor to gain this protection.

TABLE: ARMOR COSTS

Name	Type	Cost in Yuan
Arcanist's Fiber Robes	Light	400
Ava-X Magitech Armor	Light	500
Fyrean Tempweave	Light	800
Night Armor	Light	400
Peacekeeper: CSLX	Light	1200
Skynteck Shield Frame	Light	800
Arcanist's Arcweave	Medium	800
Fyrean Raider's Armor	Medium	900
Gavicc-X Magitech Armor	Medium	800
Ghostwalker's Armor	Medium	900
Marauder Skirmisher's Armor	Medium	700
Peacekeeper: CSMX	Medium	1600
Warcaster's Armor	Medium	1800
Ava-X Magitech Heavy Armor	Heavy	1500
Bjornvolk Ceremonial Armor	Heavy	1800
Fyrean Guardsmen	Heavy	1200
Imperial Armor	Heavy	2500
Jotün-Breaker Armor	Heavy	2000
Marauder's War Armor	Heavy	2700
Peacekeeper: CSHX	Heavy	2200
Warcaster's Arcplate	Heavy	3300
Light Combat Shield	Shield	100
Heavy Combat Shield	Shield	150
Marauder's War Shield	Shield	200

• ***Solar.*** Solar armor is designed to convert solar energy into power for the armor you're currently wearing. Armor with this special quality operates for an additional 4 hours.

• ***Stealthy.*** Stealthy armor is designed to aid its wearer with specific tasks related to their agility. While worn, stealthy armor grants its wearer advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) skill checks. You must be attuned with your armor to gain this advantage.

ARMOR ENHANCEMENTS

On Alessia, most advanced equipment and armors come fitted with slots that allow them to add new enhancements to that armor. These enhancements are always designed as individual, independent devices that can be removed and replaced as needed. Owners can move beloved enhancements between suits as needed. Each time an enhancement is added to a suit, the wearer must take a short rest and reset the suit, a process that takes no less than five minutes.

The following are examples of some of the enhancements that can be added to armor in Alessia:

AVA-8 SYSTEMS

Headquartered in Shiran, the asaræ-dominated firm designs and manufactures armor enhancements for a variety of tasks and environments. Specializing in countermeasures, magical abjurations, and psychic wards, Ava-8 creates enhancements designed to keep you sound in body and mind.

Ava-8 produces a wide array of tools, attachments, and devices designed to protect their customer. Three of their most popular attachments are described below:

AVA-8 MINDCASE

Cost. 2,200 Yuan
Size. Small. This enhancement only requires one slot.

The Ava-8 Mindcase is an advanced psionic filter that hides your thoughts from those around you. While this enhancement is active, you cannot be detected by the spell *detect thoughts* (or by magical abilities that mimic this spell).

AVA-8 PSI-SHIELD

Cost. 8,800 Yuan
Size. Small. This enhancement only requires one slot.
The Ava-8 PsiShield is an advanced psionic filter designed to reduce the damage you take from psionic attacks. While this enhancement is active, you have resistance to psychic damage.

AVA-8 REAVER COUNTERMEASURES

Cost. 32,000 Yuan
Size. Small. This enhancement only requires one slot.

The Ava-8 Reaver Countermeasures are a highly advanced network of wards designed to block magical attacks from the spell *magic missile*, as well as from sources that deal arcane damage. A full set of countermeasures blocks a total of 12 magical attack. Each countermeasure activates as a Reaction. The spell *magic missile* is always redirected to its caster if possible.

SKYNTECK SHIELD SYSTEMS

Built with personal safety in mind, the Skynteck Shield System makes use of cutting-edge technology to manage and regulate the flow of ambient magical energies, collecting and harnessing those energies into a protective device that, in a moment's notice, summons the shield to defend the wearer as needed.

Each Skynteck Shield System offers a unique type of protection that gains power as you learn to channel more of the ambient energies around you. Advanced (and better) models and systems each do a bit more on the back end, as well. The three basic (and popular) systems are described below.

SIMPLE SKYNTECK SHIELD SYSTEM

Cost. 25,000 Yuan
Size. Small. This enhancement only requires one slot.

The Simple Skynteck Shield System costs 25k Yuan and offers basic protection. The shield automatically detects visible, incoming energy, kinetic, and magical attacks, raising the shield as a reaction in response to any attack. Once active, a visible (popular colors include blues, purples, and greens) barrier of magical force appears and protects you. Until the start of your next turn, you have a +3 bonus to your AC, including against the triggering attack. While the shield is active, you take no damage from a single source of energy (select either acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, psychic, or thunder). This shield will activate up to three times before requiring a long rest to recharge.

ADVANCED SKYNTECK SHIELD SYSTEM

Cost. 50,000 Yuan
Size. Medium. This enhancement only requires two slots.

The Advanced Skynteck Shield System costs 50k

Yuan and offers you a much wider array of personal protection options. Like the basic models, the shield automatically detects visible incoming energy, kinetic, and magical attacks, raising a force of protective energy as a reaction in response to any attack. Once it is active, a visible (and customizable) barrier of magical force appears and protects you. Until the start of your next turn, you have a +5 bonus to your AC, including against the triggering attack. Additionally, you take no damage from two sources of energy (select two from acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, psychic, or thunder). At the beginning of your next turn, when this shield deactivates, you heal 1d4 hit points. This shield will activate up to five times before requiring a long rest to recharge.

ELITE PERSONAL DEFENSE SYSTEM

Cost. 125,000 Yuan
Size. Large. This enhancement requires 3 slots.

The Elite Personal Defense System costs 125k Yuan (and more) and offers you the best personal protection money can buy. Like the advanced models, this personal defense system automatically detects nearly all incoming energy, kinetic, and magical attacks, raising a force of protective energy as a reaction in response to any attack. Once active, a visible (and customizable) barrier of magical force appears and protects you. Until the start of your next turn, you have a +6 bonus to your AC, including against the triggering attack. While the shield is active, you take no damage from three sources of energy (select three from acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, psychic, or thunder). At the beginning of your next turn, when this shield deactivates, you heal 2d4 hit points. This shield will activate up to seven times before requiring a long rest to recharge.

Additional models, types, and styles of these shields exist all over the face of Alessia.

TABLE: WEAPON COSTS

Name	Type	Cost in Yuan
Arstran Caster Blade	Martial	200
Arstran Energy Pistol	Simple	550
Arstran Energy Rifle	Martial	800
Arstran Energy Stave	Simple	300
Arstran War Glaive	Martial	400
Asaræ Battle Glove	Exotic	600
Asaræ Battle Gloves, Powered	Exotic	1200
Asprene Arc Bow	Martial	250
Asprene Energy Bow	Martial	550
Combat Baton	Simple	50
Crystal Blade	Simple	150
Crystal Dagger	Simple	50
Dasan D-90	Martial	350
Dao	Martial	120
Emperor's Edge	Exotic	240
Fyrean Bandit Blade	Simple	80
Fyrean Desert Axe	Simple	50
Fyrean Energy Scythe	Martial	175
Fyrean Lightning Pistol	Martial	440
Ghost Blade	Exotic	180
Gún	Martial	90
House Shen Night Blade	Exotic	150
Imperial Axe	Martial	50
Imperial SRX1	Martial	150
Imperial SRX17	Martial	200
Imperial Sun Spear	Martial	120
Imperial War Blade	Martial	130
Imperial War Trident	Martial	80
Jian	Martial	90
Qlang	Martial	60
Shiran Bolter	Exotic	120
Shiran Throwing Blade	Martial	30
Shiran War Club	Martial	40
Werai War Nunchaku	Exotic	100
Zhanmadao	Martial	120

NEW EQUIPMENT

Alessia is a world predisposed to exploration, adaptation, and invention. Whether you are walking the progressive, imperial streets of the Empire of Xian or braving the icefields of northern Yrim, Alessian technology permeates every region, culture, and walk of life.

The following kits are commonly available to the people of Alessia:

ARCANIST'S TOOLS

Commonly customized by individual arcanists to better serve their magical needs, arcanist's tools include all of the basic tools an arcanist needs to perform magic on Alessia. This kit comprises the basic tools, including a blade, a bell, candles, string, chalks, inks, parchment, and crystals of a variety of kinds – everything most arcanists require to create glyphs, tap ley lines, and to work their magic.

ASCENDANT'S SNUFF

This potent chemical is created from the ash of Yu'el amethysts of southern Shiran. When inhaled, this snuff heightens the user's sensitivity to magic and ley lines, mimicking the spell *detect ley line* for 2 hours. Each time a user takes a new dose, roll 1d6. On a roll of 6, the user also regains a 1st-level spell slot. A user can only benefit from this once a day.

Although it is popular throughout Alessia, Ascendant's Snuff is illegal in the Empire of Xian, where it has been officially declared the cause of several arcane-linked disabilities.

CAMPING GEAR

Camping gear consists of enough equipment to comfortably sleep two people overnight in the temperate wilderness. This includes a basic first aid kit, two sleeping bags, a dozen alchemical lights, a solar magitech charger, a lightweight tent, a pack, a shovel, bags, a reading light, a lighter, and a water purification kit. If you are proficient with camping gear, you may grant you and a companion 1d4 bonus hit point when you wake from a long rest.

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS KIT

This kit is designed to let alchemists, arcanists, and teckers collect and analyze important chemicals. It can be used to analyze a wide array of chemicals from a diverse group of sources, both above ground and below it.

CLIMBING GEAR

This kit is designed to let climbers safely ascend (and descend) dangerous surfaces and areas, like cave systems, cliffsides, and buildings. Individuals proficient with a climbing kit can safely move up to their speed while climbing.

CRYSTAL MINING GEAR, ADVANCED

This special kit is designed to be worn in conjunction with the base gear, adding a reinforced, gravity-assisted frame (halving its weight) and a magitech crystal-cutter, and associated blades. Miners use these kits to cut small and medium-sized crystals deep within the Crystal Lattice.

CRYSTAL MINING GEAR

This special gear is designed to let an individual safely move into, examine, and mine Alessian crystal fields. This suit covers most beings from head to toe and comprises all the safety equipment one would need to safely work a field, including all of the correct filters, the backup breathers, and all of the handling tools.

DEMOLITIONS KIT

You may use this kit to arm or disarm explosives of all kinds. This kit provides all the common magitech tools needed to work on common explosive arrangements but lacks sufficient safety equipment. It contains only a single blast detector and reactive shield. Once this reactive shield is used, it must be replaced.

DISGUISE KIT

This kit contains one or more wigs, makeup, and the prosthetics needed to adopt a simple disguise. It contains forgeries of two generic badge types (a Peacekeeper's emblem, a city inspector's badge), fake credentials, and a single token designed to add authenticity to the disguise.

DIVING EQUIPMENT

This kit contains everything you need to go diving, including a wet (or dry) suit, flippers, a mask, tank, harness, and breathing assembly. Characters who use

this equipment who aren't proficient with the kit risk drowning. You may dive up to an hour with this kit before you need to change air.

DRIFTER'S KIT

This kit contains everything you need to modify or repair most drifters, including a wide array of seals, lubricants, and all the common consumables that drifters burn through as they race across Alessia. This kit contains a miniature first aid kit (good for a single use), two flares, and a tarp to cover your drifter with when it's parked.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL KIT

These specialized kits are designed exclusively for Imperial Combat Medics, Imperial First Responders, Peacekeepers, and rescue personnel throughout the Empire of Xian. This kit can handle most medical emergencies: anyone trained with the kit can quickly analyze a fallen comrade and heal them on the following round. You may stabilize a dying ally, remove one disease, remove the poisoned condition, and restore up to 3d4 hit points before destroying this kit.

FIRST AID KIT

This generic kit is designed for civilian use and is common in most Peacekeeper outposts, Imperial schools, hospitals, factories, warehouses, supermarkets, and similar buildings. A first aid kit can be used to help with light injuries. You may stabilize a dying ally and restore up to 1d4 hit points with this kit, but doing so destroys the kit.

FORENSICS KIT

This kit is designed to collect biological, magical and physical evidence from the scene of a crime. You may preserve up to 1 lbs. of evidence using this kit for up to a month, but no longer. This kit commonly includes spectral gloves, Peacekeeper beacons, special evidence bags, tongs, glass vials, and a Holo Pad.

FORGERY KIT

This kit is designed to let you create fake letters, passports, ID cards, and similar documents, defeating basic (humanoid) security checkpoints. This kit contains a number of special papers, laments, seals, and inks, all of which are used to create realistic fakes.

FREE-CLIMBER'S KIT

This lightweight kit contains a set of spiked shoes, a helmet, gloves, and a climbing spike.

GUNSMITHING KIT

This kit is designed to let gunsmiths, Marauders, and Peacekeepers clean, repair, and service their weapons. This kit contains a small selection of cleaning cloths, lubricants, a universal bit driver, a punch set, a hammer, and some Dao Industries Super Seal.

HACKER'S RIG

This small kit contains a HoloNet Access Point, a HoloNet Headset, a personal data pad, dozens of spare data crystals, and all the cables and tools a tecker needs to carefully navigate the HoloNet and any connected networks, both legal and those operating in the dark.

MAGITECH TOOL KIT

This basic tool kit contains everything you'd need to repair most magitech devices, dashers, drifters, and similar vehicles. This kit comprises an assortment of wrenches, screw drivers, a hammer, bolt cutters, gloves, lubricants, extra seals, extra screws, bolts, and washers. You can repair up to a dozen objects, items, or devices before you need to replenish this kit.

MEDITATION KIT

This simple kit contains incense, a meditation/yoga mat, and a single focus item (like a crystal).

MERCHANT'S TOOLS

Common on the street, this kit contains small cloth bags, a magitech scale, a magnifying glass, cloth gloves, and a 2-foot cloth mat.

MINER'S RIG

This specialized rig incorporates a lightweight, hyper-mesh environmental suit and advanced magitech thermal imaging system. Originally designed by House Shen's safety-focused engineering team, these suits include full filtration systems, a chemical analysis kit, and emergency breathing air for up to 36 hours.

SENTIENT SUPPORT KIT

These kits are available in a number of types and models, ranging from generic kits designed for public use to highly personalized, attuned kits that activate only under specific conditions. The following kits are the most common:

- ***The Jiāndān*** (simple model). You appear to be a wooden-and-bronze version of another species of your choice. When you activate this model, you must bond with it. This model costs between 1k and 3k Yuan.

- ***The Jībên*** (basic model). You appear to be a wooden-and-steel version of another species of your choice. When you activate this model, you must bond with it. This model costs between 2k and 4k Yuan, depending on features.

- ***The Fùzá*** (complex model). You appear to be a wooden, bronze, steel and crystal-infused version of another species of your choice. When you activate this model, you may operate it for up to 36 hours without attuning to it. This model costs between 4k and 10k Yuan.

- ***The Gāojí*** (advanced model). Runes and advanced options detail your finely worked frame. Steel plates, stamped and polished, ensure your soul's survival. When you activate this model, you may operate it for up to 36 hours without attuning to it. This model costs between 6k and 13k Yuan.

- ***The Yin*** (silver model). Runes and advanced options detail your finely worked frame. Silver and steel plates wrap your frame in a careful carapace of protection. When you activate this model, you may operate it for up to 72 hours without attuning to it. This model costs between 9k and 18k Yuan.

- ***The Yù*** (jade model). Silver and steel plates, worked to include bits of crystal and jade, create a mosaic of colors that give new life to your artificial frame. When you activate this model, you may operate it for up to 72 hours without attuning to it. This model costs between 12k and 22k Yuan.

- ***The Jin*** (gold model). Steel plates, worked with silver and gold, give your artificial frame a regal appearance. When you activate this model, you may operate it for up to 144 hours without attuning to it. This model costs between 34k and 72k Yuan, depending on features and needs.

SURVIVAL KIT

This kit is designed is designed to keep you alive for up to a week, providing you with rations, water purification tablets, a basic first aid kit, an emergency survival field, a dozen alchemical lights, a signaling mirror, a whistle, a knife, and a weatherproof fire starting kit.

THIEVES' TOOLS

This kit contains lock picks, a lock pick gun, glass cutters, a red light, a black-out cloth, side cutters, bolt cutters, extra cloth bags, caltrops, a dozen chemical lights, animal repellent, and dog treats.

HOLO-TECH

Drawing the Crystal-Lattice and using the ley lines that power it, holo-tech is a unique type of info hardware that can read the various types of crystals throughout Alessia. Holo-tech interfaces with most magitech devices.

INFO CRYSTALS

Designed to store tacs of information, these crystals have come into wide use during the past century. Today, info crystals are used to store everything from arcana and CrysCredits to memories themselves. Perfectly blank slates, they are able to absorb more tacs than anyone can count. Info crystals change color and patterns depending on the information they hold. An info crystal holding dreams might appear as a soft, blue crystal with clouds floating over the surface, while a crystal filled with necromantic spells might appear black, with decay filling the inner angles of the focus itself.

Common colors include:

- ***Black.*** Black crystals easily attune with the dead, death kaima, Void energy, and the spaces beyond the Ring. Incredibly rare, these crystals are sometimes used to construct magitech weapons with the bane quality.

- ***Blue.*** Arcane and scientific applications universally use blue crystals, with lighter-colored crystals skewing toward science and deeper blues skewing toward magic. Many wizards on Alessia use blue crystals to augment their abilities.

- ***Clear.*** Incredibly rare and valuable, clear crystals are the pinnacle for any project that incorporates crystalline technology of any sorts. Even the smallest slivers of these crystals can cost thousands of Yuan.

- ***Green.*** Life information, medical applications, and wealth (credits) are all stored on green crystals. Green crystals are common throughout Alessia, but their possession can also be problematic. This color crystal tends to be the most commonly fabricated open currency on Alessia (often in the form of CrysCreds, which are illegal in the Empire of Xian, for instance).

- ***Purple.*** Purple crystals commonly store the energy of the mind. Although purple crystals can be openly attuned, they are frequently used by psions and other mentalists to augment their abilities.

- ***Red.*** Commercial medical applications and information are stored nearly exclusively on red crystals, which are nearly as common on Alessia as their green counterparts.

- ***Yellow.*** Used almost exclusively to reinforce physical matter, yellow crystals are commonly used as part of vehicles, armor, buildings, and even in homes. The extensive use of yellow crystals on the Rings of Heavens is one of its most distinct features.

Info crystals are also used as foci in several types of technology found commonly throughout Alessia. Common in the largest cities, many crystals are used in info terminals – singular locations that accept and access info crystals in public, granting users access to a wide database of information. Smaller slivers of these info crystals are used in smaller magitech RADs (Remote Access Devices) and many K.I.T.s, which are universal devices (like magitech glasses, wrist K.I.T.s, and several styles of K.I.T. jewelry) that can be accessed to store, identify, record, copy, and even encrypt information of all sorts, whether stored on an info crystal or a similar device.

Because of the proliferation of devices and people's dependence on magic, some info crystals are woven into simple scrolls, allowing talented mages to include simple spells (like cantrips) that help everyone from the poor to those brave enough to proclaim themselves heroes.

Finally, info crystals are incorporated into all sorts of additional items, including many weapons and countless types of armor, where they are used to help maintain specific auras, or to strengthen specific connections to the ley lines crisscrossing the surface of Alessia.

K.I.T. (KINETIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY)

Designed to look like jewelry of all kinds, most K.I.T.s are universal devices that can be accessed to store, identify, record, copy, and even encrypt information of all sorts, whether stored on an Xian Info Crystal or a similar device.

Cost varies
Size 1 slot

K.I.T.s come in all shapes and sizes. These include:

K. Watch. Worn on a non-dominant appendage, this device provides the wearer with real-time data while connected to their national network, providing the user with their time, location, elevation, air quality, translation services, and a limited-A.I assistant able to query local, regional networks for detailed information. Weighing only a few ounces, this common K.I.T. can be found almost anywhere. ***Cost.*** 5000 Yuan

K. Earrings. Worn in pairs on the ears, these K.I.T.s are designed to transmit information and translation services for the wearer in real time, using their ambient kinetic energy to power the services. When attuned, these earrings translate all known languages. ***Cost.*** 1000 Yuan

K. Torq. Fashionable in the north of Alessia, these K.I.T.s contain an older, larger version of the smaller watch. Attuned to the wearer's specific vibrational patterns, once attuned, this device can be used to alter the user's voice, as well as translate all of their spoken words into any language. ***Cost.*** 500 Yuan

K. Shades. Worn over the eyes, kinetic shades provide the user with real-time visual data while connected to their regional network. Temperature, air quality, real-time directions (mapping), and similar services can be added to the glasses as needed. ***Cost.*** 2500 Yuan.

WEAPONS

Although the majority of Alessia enjoys peace on a widespread level, Alessia has a history of violence, and the weapons needed to return to that state, should monsters, invaders, or threats presents themselves. To this end, most of the civilized regions of Alessia continue to train daily with new weapons, techniques, and ideas.

Your class, as well as your species and background, determine which weapon proficiencies your character begins play with.

The next few pages) show you an assortment of Alessia's most common weapons, their price and weight, the damage they commonly deal when they hit, the type of damage they deal, and any special properties they possess. These weapons are classified as either melee or ranged weapons. Melee weapons are used to attack foes you can physically reach, while ranged weapons allow you to hit targets at a distance.

In Alessia, there are three categories of weapons: simple, martial, and exotic. These are described below:

SIMPLE WEAPONS

Most people in Alessia can use simple weapons. These include clubs, knives, and simple ranged weapons.

MARTIAL WEAPONS

These weapons are designed for war. Heroes, Peacekeepers, and soldiers all use these weapons. Most energy weapons fall into this category.

EXOTIC WEAPONS

Exotic weapons include alien weapons, ancient weapons, custom-built weapons, species-specific weapons, and unique weapons.

When you have proficiency with a weapon, you know how to clean, load, and use it. When you're proficient with a weapon, you automatically add your proficiency bonus to the Attack roll you make with that weapon. Some weapons include special properties that only activate when you score a critical hit.

The following weapons are common to Alessia:

ARSTRAN CASTER'S BLADE

Damage: 1d4+1 | **Critical:** On a critical hit the target takes 2d4 points of force damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 1 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane, focus, light, thrown, and finesse properties.

ARSTRAN ENERGY PISTOL

Damage: 2d4 fire | **Critical:** On a critical hit the target takes 3d4 points of fire damage and is knocked prone unless they succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw.
Range: 30/60 | **Ammunition:** 30 shots per energy mag.
Weight: 4 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane property.

ARSTRAN ENERGY RIFLE

Damage: 3d4 fire | **Critical:** Target takes x2 damage and is knocked prone unless they succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw.
Range: 90/300 | **Ammunition:** 30 shots per energy mag.
Weight: 8 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane property.

ARSTRAN ENERGY STAVE

Damage: 1d6 bludgeoning | **Critical:** Target takes 1d8 force damage and is knocked prone unless they succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 2 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane property.

ARSTRAN WAR GLAIVE

Damage: 1d8 slashing | **Critical:** Target takes 2d8 points of force damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 5 lbs.
Properties: When set to receive a charge, this weapon instead deals 2d10 points of slashing damage. This weapon has the channel arcane property.

ASARÆ BATTLE GLOVES

Damage: 1d4 bludgeoning | **Critical:** Target takes 3d4 points of force damage and is knocked prone unless they succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 2 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse property.

ASARÆ BATTLE GLOVES, POWERED

Damage: 1d6 bludgeoning | **Critical:** Target takes 2d8 points of force damage and is knocked prone unless they succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 3 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse property.

ASPRENE ARC BOW

Damage: 1d8 lightning | **Critical:** Target takes 2d8 points of force damage.
Range: 80/400
Weight: 3 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane property.

ASPRENE ENERGY BOW

Damage: 1d6 force | **Critical:** Target takes 2d6 points of force damage and is knocked prone unless they succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw.
Range: 80/400 | **Ammunition:** 60 shots per energy mag.
Weight: 3 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane property.

COMBAT BATON

Damage: 1d6 bludgeoning | **Critical:** Target takes 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage and is stunned until the

beginning of your next turn unless they succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 1 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse and light properties.

CRYSTAL BLADE: 1d8 slashing | **Critical:** On a critical hit this weapon deals an additional 1d6 points of bleed damage. A successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw ends the bleed effect.
Range: melee
Weight: 3 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane, finesse, light, and thrown properties.

CRYSTAL DAGGER: 1d4 piercing | **Critical:** On a critical hit this weapon deals an additional 1d4 points of bleed damage. A successful DC 13 Constitution saving throw ends the bleed effect.
Range: melee
Weight: 1 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane, finesse, light, and thrown properties.

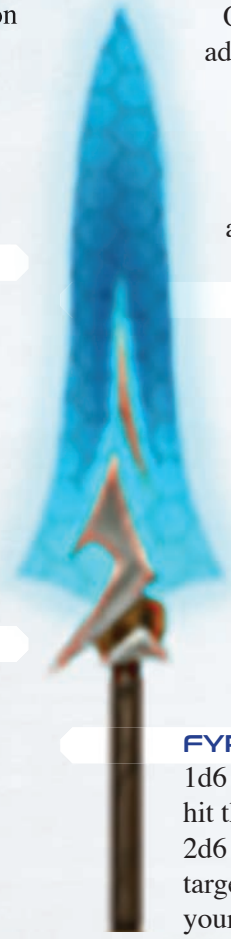
DASAN B-90: 1d8 fire | **Critical:** On a critical hit the target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn unless it succeeds on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: 30/90 | **Ammunition:** 40 shots per energy mag.
Weight: 3 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse and light properties.

DAO: 1d8 slashing | **Critical:** On a critical hit the target also takes 1d4 points of bleed damage; the bleed effect ends when the target succeeds on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 4 lb.
Properties: This monk weapon has the finesse and light properties.

EMPEROR'S EDGE: 2d4+1 slashing | **Critical:** On a critical hit the target also takes 1d4 points of bleed damage; the bleed effect ends when the target succeeds on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 4 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse and light properties.

FYREAN BANDIT BLADE: 1d6 slashing | **Critical:** On a critical hit this weapon deals an additional 2d6 points of fire damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 3 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse and light properties.

FYREAN DESERT AXE: 1d8 slashing | **Critical:** On a critical hit this weapon deals an additional 2d8 points of slashing damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 7 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane property.



FYREAN ENERGY SCYTHE: 1d10 slashing | **Critical:** On a critical hit this weapon deals an additional 2d4 points of force damage and knocks the target prone unless they succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 8 lb.
Properties: This weapon's blade can be magically extended as a Reaction, granting the attacker reach 10 ft. for that attack.

FYREAN LIGHTNING PISTOL: 1d6 lightning | **Critical:** On a critical hit this weapon deals an additional 2d6 points of lightning damage and the target is stunned until the beginning of your next turn unless they succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: 40/200
Weight: 2 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse property.

GHOST BLADE: 1d4 slashing | **Critical:** On a critical hit this weapon deals an additional 2d4 points of damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 3 lb.
Properties: This is a monk weapon with the finesse property.

GÚN: 1d10 bludgeoning | **Critical:** On a critical hit the target also takes 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage and is stunned until the beginning of your next turn unless they succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee

Weight: 5 lb.
Properties: This is a monk weapon.

HOUSE SHEN NIGHT BLADE: 1d6 piercing
Critical: On a critical hit the target also takes 1d6 points of bleed damage until they succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 1 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane, finesse, light and thrown properties.

IMPERIAL AXE: 1d6 slashing |
Critical: On a critical hit the target also takes 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage and is stunned until the beginning of your next turn unless they succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 1 lb.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane, finesse, and light properties.

IMPERIAL SRX1: 1d6 force | **Critical:**
On a critical hit the target also takes 2d6 points of force damage and is stunned until the beginning of your next turn unless they succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw.
Range: 30/120
Weight: 2 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse and light properties.

IMPERIAL SRX17: 1d8 piercing | **Critical:**
On a critical hit the target also takes 1d6 points of bleed damage each round or until they succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 9 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the channel arcane weapon property. This weapon is used to control powerful enemies.

IMPERIAL SUN SPEAR: 1d12 piercing | **Critical:**
On a critical hit the target also takes 3d4 points of radiant damage unless they succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 8 lbs.
Properties: This weapon can be set to receive a charge. When receiving a charge, it instead deals 3d6 points of slashing damage.

IMPERIAL WAR BLADE: 1d8 slashing | **Critical:**
Target takes 1d8 points of force damage and is knocked prone unless they also succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 4 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the finesse property.

IMPERIAL WAR TRIDENT: 1d10 piercing | **Critical:** Target takes 2d6 points of piercing damage and is knocked prone unless they also succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw.
Range: melee
Weight: 7 lbs.
Properties: This weapon can be set to receive a charge; when receiving a charge, it instead deals 3d6 points of slashing damage.

JIAN: 1d10 slashing | **Critical:** Target takes 2d10 points of slashing damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 5 lbs.
Properties: This is a monk weapon.

QLANG: 1d6 slashing | **Critical:** Target takes 2d6 points of slashing damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 2 lbs.
Properties: This is a monk weapon.

SHIRAN BOLTER
Damage: 1d8 piercing | **Critical:** Target takes 1d4 points of bleed damage for 1d6 rounds.
Succeeding on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw halves the duration.
Range: melee
Weight: 8 lbs.
Properties: This weapon can be set to receive a charge.
When receiving a charge, it instead deals 2d8 points of slashing damage.

SHIRAN THROWING BLADE
Damage: 1d4+1 piercing | **Critical:** Target takes 2d points of piercing damage. If the blade is poisoned, the target suffers disadvantage on Constitution saving throws against poison.
Range: 20/40
Weight: 1 lbs.

Properties: This weapon has the finesse, light and thrown properties.

SHIRAN WAR CLUB

Damage: 1d8 bludgeoning | **Critical:** Target takes 1d8 points of bludgeoning damage. Target is knocked prone unless they succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw..
Range: melee
Weight: 9 lbs.
Properties: This weapon can be set to receive a charge. When receiving a charge, it instead deals 2d8 points of slashing damage.

WERAI WAR NUNCHAKU

Damage: 1d4 slashing | **Critical:** Target takes 1d4 points of bleed damage each round. A DC 13 Constitution
saving throw stops this bleeding.
Range: melee
Weight: 2 lbs.
Properties: This weapon has the light and finesse weapon properties.

ZHANMADAO

Damage: 2d6 slashing | **Critical:** Target takes 2d6 points of force damage.
Range: melee
Weight: 9 lbs.
Properties: This weapon can be set to receive a charge. When receiving a charge, it instead deals 2d8 points of slashing damage.

1. Imperial Sun Spear
2. Werai War Nunchaku
3. Imperial Axe
4. Shiran War Club
5. Fyrean Energy Scythe
6. Arstran Energy Staff
7. Magitech Energy Magazine
8. Astran War Glaive
9. Fyrean Desert Axe
10. Zhanmadao
11. Imperial SRX17
12. Imperial War Trident

VEHICLES IN ALESSIA

Whether it's the roar of the magitech drive engines as your drifter pushes breakneck speeds across the desert sands, or the sudden rush of adrenaline as your dasher slides past the finish line, vehicles play a big part in Alessia. In the skies overhead, skyship captains pilot their vessels, while in the city streets below, private citizens drive all manner of private vehicles. In places such as Capital City, where the concentration of Imperial wealth has created expanded public services, magitech trams and buses ferry citizens around town, removing the requirement for private ownership.

Likewise, individuals exploring and building in remote, rural parts of Alessia also employ large numbers of vehicles, both to scout out new territories, as well as to mine those areas where entirely new veins of crystals surface.

While a fully developed list of all the vehicles available in Alessia is beyond the scope of this primer, GMs should note that the companies of Alessia produce vehicles primarily for five reasons: for defense, emergency services, entertainment, transportation, and private ownership.

VEHICLE COMBAT AND OPERATION

In Alessia, player characters use the Drive (Dexterity) skill to operate drifters, dashers, and similar vehicles (that only require a single pilot). Characters use the Spacefaring (Intelligence) skill to operate airships, dreadnaughts, and skyships. (See Chapter 1 for more information). Generally speaking, if the vehicle has a cabin and crew, you need to be making Spacefaring skill checks. If you're driving, it's a Drive check.

Unless characters choose to engage in combat (see below), a race/chase, or are otherwise performing risky actions while operating the vehicle, characters do not need to make Drive or Spacefaring checks for normal behavior. When things get dicey, however, only the best vehicles and pilots see the other side of a conflict.

In Alessia, vehicular combat is divided into two types: small- and large-scale combat. Small-scale combat involves personal vehicles such as drifters, dashers, and similarly sized vehicles. Large-scale combat involves all skyships and Voidships, although this document only describes skyship combat.

SMALL-SCALE COMBAT

In Alessia, small-scale combat involving vehicles follows the same rules as normal combat, although players should note the following: characters who begin the combat round operating (using the Drive skill) a drifter, dasher, or similar vehicle must spend their Move action each round to safely travel the vehicle's minimum distance for that round. Characters who wish to perform other actions while operating a vehicle (attacks, for instance) may do so, provided they spend the appropriate action and succeed on any corresponding Drive checks. Some actions and maneuvers may require additional actions or checks, as well. Likewise, characters who choose to focus on operating their vehicle can elect to spend all of their actions doing so, gaining advantage on Drive rolls for the duration.

Heroes may attempt to perform any of the following actions while driving a vehicle:

- ***Attack.*** You use a melee or ranged weapon to attack a target in range.

- ***Chicken!*** You face a foe head on, attempting to run them down. Both characters willingly spend a Reaction each round, making an opposed Drive check to determine who safely pulls out of the collision path last. Cruel GMs may wish to have each player secretly declare which direction they plan to take last minute to calculate potential collisions. Although an opposed check, both characters must still succeed on a DC 11 Drive check to do so safely.

- ***Drive By!*** You target and attack a stationary target within range. Player characters who make attacks do not need to make Drive checks, although characters who fumble need to succeed on a DC 13 Drive check to avoid losing the weapon.

- ***Duck N' Cover.*** You attempt to use your vehicle's frame as cover. Once per round, as a Reaction, you redirect damage you would normally take from an attack to your vehicle instead. In order to perform this action, make a Drive check as a Reaction to an attack that just hit you. If your Drive check matches or exceeds the attack roll, your vehicle instead takes the damage.

- ***Evasive Maneuvers.*** You attempt to make your vehicle harder to hit with a ranged attack. You spend your Reaction to increase your vehicle's AC by 2 for the

duration of the round. You must succeed on a DC 15 Drive check to succeed.

• ***Focus Fire.*** You target and attack another mobile target within range, gaining a +2 bonus on your Attack when you spend a Reaction as part of your attack.

• ***Go! Go! Go!*** Sometimes, you need to get there fast. You may spend all your actions for the round to either increase your vehicle's speed by 50% (if you are currently moving) or to shorten the time it takes to reach top speed by 1 round.

• ***Hard Brake.*** You bring your vehicle to a sudden stop. PCs who succeed on a DC 13 Drive check immediately bring their vehicle's current movement rate to 0. Depending on environmental conditions, the vehicle may continue to move.

• ***Hard Turn.*** You suddenly change direction, moving left or right in a tight turn that forces you to bank hard. Player characters who succeed on a DC 13 Drive check do so without issue.

• ***Jump the Gap.*** You rapidly accelerate, attempting to jump your vehicle over or across an obstacle. The GM determines the DC, replacing the normal Athletics (or Acrobatics) ability check for a Drive check. Vehicles attempting to jump the gap must be moving at top speed.

• ***Run 'Em Down.*** You use your vehicle as a weapon, attempting to run over a foe. When you run a foe down, you must succeed on a DC 11 Drive check to align the vehicle, followed by a Drive check as an Attack. If you successfully hit the target's AC with the second Drive check, the target takes bludgeoning damage equal to 1d6 points of damage for each 10 mph the vehicle was traveling at the time of impact. Depending on the situation, the vehicle may also take half the damage dealt.

• ***Slide In.*** You spend a Reaction to end your vehicle's movement in a pointless display of showmanship. You must succeed on a DC 11 Drive check to perform this maneuver, and when you do, gain advantage on any Deception, Intimidate, or Perform skill checks you make immediately following.

• ***Quick Swerve.*** You suddenly swerve to avoid an obstacle. You may spend a Reaction to shift your vehicle over 5 ft to avoid an obstacle in your path.

• ***Failing a check.*** When a player character fails a Drive check, the GM determines the results of that failure. GMs seeking guidance should refer to the following chart.

Actual Roll Results

• ***Missed by less than 5.*** You fail to accomplish your task but fail safely (if possible). You suffer no additional ill effects.

• ***Missed by less than 10.*** You fail to accomplish your task, suffering a minor mishap that bestows a -1 penalty on associated skill checks until the beginning of your next turn.

• ***Missed by more than 10.*** You fail spectacularly. You suffer a major mishap, potentially damaging the vehicle and yourself. Depending on the skill or maneuver attempted, that failure could also result in additional conditions or damage.

• ***When's My Turn?*** Because smaller-scale combat requires a much larger area to conduct, GMs should consider running combat with all foes mounted when possible, allowing the various individuals to fall out of combat as they are eliminated from these dynamic chase/race scenes. Otherwise, GMs should consider splitting combat into two phases, a movement phase and a stationary phase. Mounted combatants should act in the movement phase. Everyone else acts in the stationary phase. Which phase goes first depends on the situation. Once this is determined, both phases proceed to combat as normal, rolling initiative and taking turns between the phases.

SKYSHIP COMBAT

In Alessia, when combat involves crew-served vehicles (airships, dreadnaughts, and skyships), players should use the skyship combat rules. Just like other types of combat, skyship combat takes place over a number of rounds (each divided into a series of phases), with players and the GM taking turns in combat until a single victor emerges.

TURNS, ROUNDS, AND ROLES

In Alessia, skyship combat is broken down into a series of turns which continue until a winner emerges. These turns are further broken down into a number of rounds and roles. When combat begins, everyone involved rolls initiative, determining the order in which all participants can choose to act. Using these skyship rules, a single turn of combat (which lets all

participants act at least once) is further broken down into six rounds, each round representing a group of crew members acting in an important role somewhere on the ship, be it manning its weapons, putting out fires, or performing some other essential duty to keep the vessel in the fight. When each of these groups act is determined by the ship's initiative (see below). Broken down into an outline, skyship combat looks like this:

Turn One. Each captain (or another officer, if the captain isn't available) rolls a d20, determining the ship's initiative. Each round (proceeding from 6 to 1), this number determines when the crew acts.

Round 6. All PCs and ships act, according to their initiative. On a ship's initiative, all crew members in Group 6 act.

Round 5. All PCs and ships act, according to their initiative. On a ship's initiative, all crew members in Group 5 act. The ship moves 1/3 of its movement rate.

Round 4. All PCs and ships act, according to their initiative. On a ship's initiative, all crew members in Group 4 act.

Round 3. All PCs and ships act, according to their initiative. On a ship's initiative, all crew members in Group 3 act. The ship moves 1/3 of its movement rate.

Round 2. All PCs and ships act, according to their initiative. On a ship's initiative, all crew members in Group 2 act.

Round 1. All PCs and ships act, according to their initiative. On a ship's initiative, all crew members in Group 1 act. The ship moves 1/3 of its movement rate.

When each group acts, it does so in one of its assigned roles, explained below.

At the end of the first turn of combat, each vessel will have moved its full movement rate, fired some (or all) of its available weapons, and had an opportunity to repair some damages.

ROLLING INITIATIVE

It is important to note that when rolling initiative for large scale combat, each vessel rolls two sets of dice:

The d20 pool. When combat begins, each of the ship's officers rolls a single d20 to determine when they act on the ship. When the captain rolls, she establishes the ship's initiative, the point in the order when part of the crew can act (on its respective turn).

The d6 pool. When the captain sets the ship's initiative, she also assigns all of the crew to their respective roles (see above), which she does through the dice pools. When assigning these dice pools, each crew member is represented by a single d6, with the exception of ship's four officers (captain, first mate, engineer, helmsman), each of whom are represented by 2d6.

ASSIGNING ROLES

Once the captain has determined the ship's initiative, she then assigns all the crew (represented by those d6s from their pool) to the ship's various roles. Generally speaking, crew serve in one of the three following roles:

- ***Role: Battle Stations.*** When assigned to a battle station, all assigned members of the crew load and fire the weapon there. The crew must meet minimum personnel requirements to operate those weapons or weapon systems.

- ***Role: Command & Control.*** When assigned to command and control, all assigned members of the team operate essential systems and controls, keeping the ship's course, speed, and orientation correct. The crew must meet minimum personnel requirements to operate those systems.

- ***Role: Damage Control.*** When assigned to damage control, a single crew member restores 1d6 points of damage to the hull, shields, or other essential systems.

Each weapon or crew-dependent item on the ship that requires a crew member to operate will have those minimum requirements in the entry, as well as any penalties you might suffer firing the weapon or using the item if you have assigned less than the optimal number of crew members for that object.

Likewise, the captain can assign more crew to a battle station than necessary, increasing that weapon's rate of fire or, when needed, repairing it if it takes significant damage. When adding extra of additional crew to a specific weapon, simply follow these three rules:

• The captain cannot assign more than half the weapon's optimal crew as extra crew. Shipboard weapons are designed to operate in tight or otherwise confined spaces, and as a result, can only safely accommodate a few extra sailors in each location. Once the captain has assigned the optimal crew to a weapon, she can choose to add more to increase its rate of fire (the extra sailors help clear and load the weapon), but only so much.

Example. Captain Reia's ship, The Crimson Sky, takes significant damage from an exchange with another vessel on its starboard side, rendering most of its cannons there useless. Knowing a handful of sailors survive at those cannons, Captain Reia re-assigns them to her forward ballista, hoping to fire a few more choice shots at her enemy. The ballista already has a full crew of 3 sailors operating it, so she can only add 2 more sailors there, increasing its overall rate of fire by 1. The captain sends the remaining 4 sailors to the other cannons on her port side, where she hopes to make their extra shots count.

• The captain can only re-assign crew when she rolls the ship's initiative (on the following round). While the captain can verbally reassign them at any point, the player controlling the ship cannot add those dice to their new location until the following round (the sailors are assumed to be moving between locations in the meantime).

• The captain can reassign crew to damage control at any time. This is the exception to the rule above, as damage control efforts often take place at multiple locations around a ship.

This movement of crew in the form of reassigning dice to different locations on the ship is intended to show a concentrated effort on their part to move about the ship, making it (and themselves) ready for their next tasks.

STATE OF THE SHIP

While each vessel tracks its own damage and conditions through the course of combat, the state of the ship at the beginning of combat can often determine the victor, even before the first die is rolled. When beginning combat, the GM determines the state of each vessel involved.

• ***Complete Disarray.*** The ship's command structure has failed, and the ship's officers cannot act: roll a d6. On a roll of 1-4, the ship's crew repeats its previous actions. On a roll of 5, the ship doubles its movement in an attempt to escape. On a roll of 6, the crew elects a new captain and the ship becomes unprepared.

• ***Lying in Wait.*** The ship has readied itself for combat, moving into a position that makes it hard to detect. The captain has advantage on initiative rolls for the ship and, while undetected by enemies, the ship gains concealment against them. Once a ship has been detected, it instead becomes prepared (see below).

• ***Prepared.*** The ship is ready for combat.

• ***Unprepared.*** The ship is not ready for combat. The captain makes initiative rolls for the ship at disadvantage.

THE SHIP'S MISSION

A ship's mission generally determines its posture and preparedness. As is to be expected, military, commercial, and public ships, as well as privately owned vessels, all have different levels of readiness. The following list presents players and GMs with some of the common missions on which a ship might be.

• ***Mission: Discovery.*** Vehicles working on a discovery mission move slowly through a territory or area, halving their speed and actively making Wisdom (Perception) checks each round to locate one or more targets in range. A ship on a discovery mission is considered to be unprepared.

• ***Mission: Military.*** Vehicles working military missions have standing and specific orders. These vessels move their normal speed and make all Wisdom (Perception) checks at advantage. A ship on a military mission is considered to be prepared or lying in wait, depending on its specific mission.

• ***Mission: Private.*** Private vehicles are often operating as transport vehicles, although their level of preparedness may range from a complete mess to lying in wait, depending on the ship's needs, crew, experience, and build.

• ***Mission: Science.*** Vehicles working science missions move their normal speed. A ship on a science mission is considered to be unprepared.

• ***Mission: Transport.*** Vehicles working on a transport mission are concerned with delivering their cargo quickly and safely, sentient or otherwise. These vehicles move their full speed every round, doubling it when safe to do so. These vessels use their passive sensors while traveling. A ship on a transport mission is considered to be unprepared.

DETERMINE CREW SIZE

Before the captain can assign crew to the various roles around the ship, she must have a solid approximation of all her available crew, subtracting the appropriate number of dice for those wounded or otherwise incapacitated. When the captain calls for "all hands on deck," the available crew are all those who muster up. When assigning these dice pools, the captain assigns each crew member a single d6, with the exception of the ship's four officers (captain, first mate, engineer, helmsman), each of whom she assigns 2d6. Once the available crew is determined, the captain determines the total d6 pool based on the formula above.

Example. Captain Reia Zhou commands The Crimson Sky, a fast frigate out of Qingshan. Her current crew includes 26 sailors, 3 officers, and an arcanist traveling with the ship. While underway, 3 of her sailors are badly hurt fighting a fire and are moved to the medical bay. That evening, at dusk, two smaller ships pull aside The Crimson Sky and send up flags: they mean to board her. Fearing they might be pirates, Captain Reia sounds the alarm, calls all hands to deck. Because the arcanist is a passenger and three of her sailors are restricted to limited duty, only a total of 26 sailors (23 sailors plus her 3 officers) muster. Reia's player quickly calculates the total crew compliment of 31(d6) based on the 23(d6) sailors onboard, plus another 8(d6) for the captain and her 3 officers (each which rate 2d6).

CREW ROLES

As mentioned above (in Turns, Rounds, & Roles), large-scale battles often involve multiple, crew-served ships, with crews serving in one of three primary roles. Crew members assigned to a role work together. They act on the same initiative. These roles are described in greater detail below:

- ***Role: Battle Stations.*** When it comes to aerial and naval combat, crew assigned to this role operate, load, and fire the ship's various weapon systems. During combat, these crews fire on the nearest enemy targets unless directed to fire elsewhere by the captain. Every weapon system or platform on a given ship has an optimal and a minimum crew requirement. Crews who do not meet the optimal crew requirement fire the weapon at disadvantage. Crews who do not meet the minimum crew requirements for a listed weapon cannot fire that weapon at all. Each weapon's attack bonus, damage, and range is listed with the weapon under the ship's weapons entry. Crew working battle stations report to the ship's captain and first mate.

- ***Role: Command & Control.*** Crew members assigned to command and control operate the ship's flight control systems, directing its various power-plants to move the ship along a tactically smart, safe course and speed. Crew assigned to command and control enable the ship to move on rounds 2, 4, and 6, as well as to operate its shields, its communication channels, its sensors, and any automated weapon systems they might have at their disposal. In keeping the ship's course, speed, and orientation correct, the crew working in command and control work for both the captain and the helmsman. In larger-scale battles, crew assigned to command and control help set security conditions throughout the ship, closing down non-essential systems and controlling access points to reduce the effectiveness of boarding parties.

- ***Role: Damage Control.*** Crew members assigned to damage control respond to damage all over the ship, patching holes, putting out fires, repairing essential systems, and doing their absolute best to keep their vessel in the air (or above the waves) as best they can. When assigned to damage control, a single crew member restores 1d6 points of damage to the hull, shields, or other essential systems each round. Damage control crew who are assigned to specific points around the ship (like a specific weapon) may be used to repair individual objects in their areas instead of repairing the hull or shields. Crew working in damage control report to the ship's captain and engineer.

RESOLVING ATTACKS

In order to fire a specific weapon in combat, that weapon must have its minimum crew (listed as part of each weapon's entry) and any associated ammunition available. When both these conditions are met, the weapon can be fired at any targets its crew can see in range.

To make an attack, the crew rolls a d20, adding the weapon's attack bonus (a static bonus listed under the weapon's attacks) and any conditional modifiers (determined by the GM) that might apply. When the total is calculated, it is tested against two numbers – the target's Shield Armor Class (normally a lower number) and the target's Hull Armor Class (normally a higher number). When resolving attacks, players and GMs should follow these simple rules.

- ***A Critical Hit.*** When a ship scores a critical hit against a target, the ship doubles the damage it deals

to both the hull, with the ship's shields taking damage normally. Roll a 1d8 on the A Critical Hit Table.

- ***A Hull Hit.*** When an attack roll total is equal to or greater than the ship's Hull Armor Class, that attack hits and damages the hull. The ship's shields also take half this damage, as well.

- ***A Missed Attack.*** When an attack's total is less than the target's shield AC, that attack completely misses the target.

- ***A Shield Hit.*** When an attack's total is equal to or greater than the target's Shield Armor Class, but less than its Hull Armor Class, that attack hits and damages the shield exclusively.

TABLE: A CRITICAL HIT

Roll a 1d8 and refer to the following table to determine what happens when you score a critical hit on an enemy ship:

1. Arcane Shot. Your attack hits one of your enemy's magitech power reserves, causing everything around the original target to explode, dealing 5d8 additional points of force and piercing damage to everything in a 10 ft. radius.
2. Crew Crusher. Your attack instantly kills 1d6 crew members, reducing the enemy ship's available crew by a like amount.
3. Explosion! Your attack hits something volatile, causing a violent explosion that deals 10d8 points of damage to the hull and instantly kill 1d4 of the enemy crew. The enemy ship lowers its available crew by a like amount.
4. Fire! Fire! Fire! Your attack starts 1d4 fires aboard the enemy vessel. Each round, these fires deal 1d6 points of fire damage to the hull.
5. Hampering Shot. Your attack peels through the ship's hull, tripling its normal damage and reducing the enemy ship's speed by half for its next two movements.
6. Killing Shot. Your attack kills one of the enemy officers. Roll 1d4: on a 1 you kill the helmsman, on a 2 you the engineer, on a 3 you kill the first mate, and on a 4 you kill the captain.
7. Listing Shot. Your attack slams the side of the enemy ship, causing it to violently list to one side and dump 1d8 of its sailors off the side. The enemy ship reduces its available crew by a like amount.
8. Storm Shot. Your attack disrupts a power coupling, dealing 8d6 additional points of lightning damage to the target and everything in a 10 ft. radius of the original target.

PICKING TARGETS

Unless directed to pick specific targets by the captain, each attack you make against an enemy vessel targets its hull (or its shields, if you fail to hit the hull). When a captain elects to target something else on the enemy ship (a weapon, a sail, its cargo, or some other item it has), the attacking crew must defeat the weapon's listed Armor Class, especially if that number is greater than the Hull Armor Class. Attacks that miss specific weapons instead hit the enemy ship's shields (if possible).

KILLING THE CREW

While a malicious, cruel captain might order their guns to fire directly at opposing crew, the practice in combat is otherwise rare. Most crew die in ship-to-ship combat when the weapon station or platform is damaged by incoming attacks, either as part of the attack or a resulting explosion. When a weapon is destroyed, its crew takes a like amount of damage.

DAMAGING THE ENEMY

When using these skyship combat rules, every vehicle has a unique damage track that describes what happens to it as the vehicle takes damage in combat, starting with its shields and ending with its utter destruction. Although each vehicle's damage track is unique, all vehicles in Alessia uses the same general formatting. These damage tracks are described below:

Starting Hull Points: 400
A darkwood hull with reinforced magitech plating.
Damaged: 399-201 hull points.
The ship operates normally while damaged.
Disabled: 200-101 hull points.
The ship suffers a -2 penalty on all Spacefaring skill checks and reduces movement by half.
Breached: 100-001 hull points.
The ship reduces its movement to 0 and engages all safety protocols when it reaches 100 hull points. When reduced to zero movement, The ship's Hull Armor Class worsens by 4.
Destroyed: 0 hull points.
The ship is destroyed when it reaches 0 hull points. When destroyed, the ship explodes, dealing 10d12 points of piercing, bludgeoning, and slashing damage from flying debris to all creatures and objects within 100-ft.

CONDITIONAL MODIFIERS

Piloting a skyship, especially in combat, can be stressful (and dangerous). The same can be said for excessive speeds, dangerous storms, and similar conditions. When making Spacefaring checks to pilot a skyship (or Voidship), GMs and players should include the following adjustments when applicable.

- ***Engulfed (in flames).*** Unchecked fires are quickly destroying your vehicle. You make all Drive and Spacefaring skill checks at disadvantage. The crew suffers a -2 penalty on ability checks that rely on their vision.

- ***Hampered.*** While hampered, you halve your vehicle's movement. You make Drive and Spacefaring skill checks at a -2 penalty.

- ***Listing.*** Excessive damage has caused your vehicle to list. Crew members make Acrobatics and Athletics skill checks at disadvantage. The captain suffers a -4 penalty on all Spacefaring skill checks.

- ***Minimum Crew.*** While operating with the minimum crew, all crew members (including the captain) make all skill checks at a -1 penalty. While operating with a minimal crew, the captain cannot perform special maneuvers with the ship.

- ***Raining.*** Excessive weather batters the deck, forcing the crew to make all weather-related skill checks (thanks to exposure) at a -2 penalty.

- ***Windy.*** Excessive winds batter the sails and crew, making sailing dangerous. The crew makes all weather-related skill checks at a -1 penalty.

THE SKYSHIP'S ANATOMY

Although airships, skyships, and dreadnaughts each have thousands of important, moving parts, during combat, attacks are rarely made against specific items aboard the enemy ship. Instead, crews make general attacks against the enemy ship's shields, hull, or specific weapons stations. As noted in the example above, a ship's shields and hull are both tracked on that vessel's damage track. Individual weapons, on the contrary, have their own stats. They look something like this:

SHIP'S WEAPONS

Every airship, dreadnaught, and skyship that graces Alessia's endless skies boasts a number of complex systems keeping it afloat and defending it in combat. Weapon systems on most vessels use the following format:

- ***Minimum Crew.*** This is minimum number of crew members required to load and fire this weapon in combat. When firing a weapon with its minimum crew, that weapon suffers disadvantage on all of its attacks.

- ***Optimal Crew.*** This is the number of crew members required to fire this weapon without penalties in combat.

- ***Attack.*** This is the bonus the weapon's crew adds when making an attack roll with this weapon.

- ***Damage.*** This is the amount and type of damage the weapon deals in combat when it successfully strikes a target.

- ***Range.*** This is the distance the weapon can fire. The first number represents the weapons short range. It makes all attacks within this range normally. The second number represents the weapons longer range. It can fire at targets up to a total distance of this second number but makes such attacks at disadvantage.

- ***Rate of Fire (RoF).*** This is the number of times an optimal crew can fire the weapon. A captain who assigns extra crew to a weapon can increase its rate of fire slightly.

- ***Armor Class.*** This is the weapon's armor class, the number an attacker must meet (or exceed) on a d20 roll when attacking the ship. A ship with shields blocks direct attacks against weapon systems unless those attacks also defeat the shield's armor class. Note: When a weapon lists its AC relative to its ship's hull (expressed as "Hull Armor Class +x"), it is often placed slightly inside the much larger vehicle. The weapon's size and placement determine the bonus it grants, which is often a +1, +2 or +3.

- ***Hit Points.*** This is the amount of damage an individual weapon can take before becoming completely destroyed. When a weapon reaches half of its normal hit points, it gains the damaged condition and 1d4 crew members (working on the weapon) immediately die. All further attacks made by this damaged weapon are made at a disadvantage. When a weapon or system reaches 0 hit points, it is destroyed. Any remaining ammunition adjacent to the weapon explodes, dealing its damage to everything in a 10-foot radius.

A Note About Shields: In Alessia, most skyships use their shields to protect the crew from airborne debris, bird strikes, and similar aerial hazards. Because of their size, shields provide a lower AC to the ships they surround. Most skyships rely on their armored hulls for defense.

Example.
The Crimson Sky has the following weapon systems.

AFT CARRONADE (SHORT RANGE)
Minimum Crew: 1; **Optimal Crew:** 2
Damage: 6d6 piercing per shot; **Range:** 400/800;
Attack: +6; **Rate of Fire:** 2;
Armor Class:16; **Hit Points:** 50

FORWARD BALLISTA (MEDIUM RANGE)
Minimum Crew: 2; **Optimal Crew:** 4
Damage: 8d8 piercing per shot; **Range:** 800/1800;
Attack: +5; **Rate of Fire:** 2;
Armor Class:14; **Hit Points:** 35

PORT CANNONS (MEDIUM RANGE)
Minimum Crew: 1; **Optimal Crew:** 3
Damage: 6d8 piercing per shot; **Range:** 800/1800;
Attack: +5; **Rate of Fire:** 1;
Armor Class: Hull Armor Class + 2; **Hit Points:** 25

STARBOARD CANNONS (MEDIUM RANGE)
Minimum Crew: 1; **Optimal Crew:** 3
Damage: 6d8 piercing per shot; **Range:** 800/1800;
Attack: +5; **Rate of Fire:** 1;
Armor Class: Hull Armor Class + 2; **Hit Points:** 25

Likewise, a ship's shields and hull are each individually addressed. The ship's shields are represented by Shield Points, and its overall structural integrity is measured as Hull Points. Beside their respective armor class listing and any applicable (or special) traits, a ship's defensive stat block looks something like this.

SHIP'S INTEGRITY | Saves +3
Shield Armor Class: 14; **Shield Points:** 120
Hull Armor Class: 18; **Starting Hull Points:** 600
Special Qualities: The ship's hull is reinforced with magitech sensors that extend its passive Perception by 200 ft. These are incorporated into the ship's statistics.
Resistances: The ship's darkwood hull grants it resistance to fire.
Damage Track
Starting Hull Points: 600
A darkwood hull with reinforced magitech plating.
Damaged: 599-301 hull points.
The ship operates normally while damaged.
Disabled: 300-101 hull points.
The ship suffers a -2 penalty on all Spacefaring skill checks and reduces movement by half.
Breached: 100-001 hull points.
The ship reduces its movement to 0 and engages all safety protocols when it reaches 100 hull points. When reduced to zero movement, The ship's Hull Armor Class worsens by 4.
Destroyed: 0 hull points. The ship is destroyed when it reaches 0 hull points. When destroyed, the ship explodes, dealing 10d12 points of piercing, bludgeoning, and slashing damage from flying debris to all creatures and objects within 100-ft.

ACCELERATION, SHIP'S MOVEMENT, AND CREW REQUIREMENTS

• ***Crew Requirements.*** In order to move about the field of battle, a ship must have at least a minimum crew, including at least 1 officer and about a dozen crew (sometimes less) to operate the ship's essential systems. Provided it meets these requirements, a ship may move about the field of battle normally.

• When a ship doesn't meet these requirements, its movement is often reduced until such conditions are met. This movement is addressed earlier in this chapter (see State of the Ship, above).

• ***Maximum Capacity.*** This is the maximum number of crew members and passengers the vessel can comfortably keep in the berthing. In emergency situations, these numbers can be doubled.

• ***Acceleration.*** When starting from movement 0, the ship's acceleration tracks its increased movement over time. When starting at 0, the first time a ship moves, it moves its acceleration distance. The second time it moves, it can opt to double this speed, accelerating naturally. The third time the ship moves, it may double this speed again. Unless otherwise noted, a ship can continue to accelerate in this fashion until it reaches its Top Speed, at which point it can no longer increase its speed.

• ***Ship's Movement.*** When measuring a ship's movement, distances are calculated from the first square (or hex) a ship occupies in any direction (relative to its movement). Most airships, seagoing vessels, and most skyships generate part of their life through their forward movement. As a result, players measure all such movement from the ship's bow (the forward most part of the vessel), counting any lateral or elevation movement. Likewise, players should also note any lateral of elevation movement the stern (the rear most portion of the vessel) makes as it changes course.
• ***Players Note.*** When counting elevation, do not count it twice. If you measure elevation changes as part of a ship's forward movement (measured from the bow), you need only note lateral movements the stern makes.

• ***Crew-Assisted Search.*** When making Perception checks to locate other ships, this is the bonus the captain adds when meeting the crew requirements.

• ***Decks.*** The number of decks a ship has is listed here. Most external weapons (like a ballista) are positioned on the top deck, while the ship's various cannons and carronades might be mounted internally, on a second or lower deck.

• ***Passive Systems Search.*** This is the ship's passive Perception (its range is listed in parenthesis).

• ***Propulsion.*** This describes the ship's propulsion system and its relative combat statistics, if the system can be targeted for attack. Most propulsion systems are external to skyships.

• ***Shields.*** This entry details the ship's primary shields. Although shields work in combat, they are designed primarily to help maintain a ship's environment while deflecting small, dangerous debris.

• ***Ship's Systems.*** This entry lists a ship's basic and extended systems.

• ***Size.*** This is a ship's size category. In Alessia, we use the colossal category to represent airships, skyships, and terribly big monsters.

• ***Special Abilities.*** A ship's special abilities (often granted by a special item, system, or upgrade) are listed in this entry.

• ***Weapons.*** This entry lists the ship's weapons and their placement. Unless otherwise described, all weapon systems (or weapons) have a 180-degree firing arc relative to their placement on the ship.

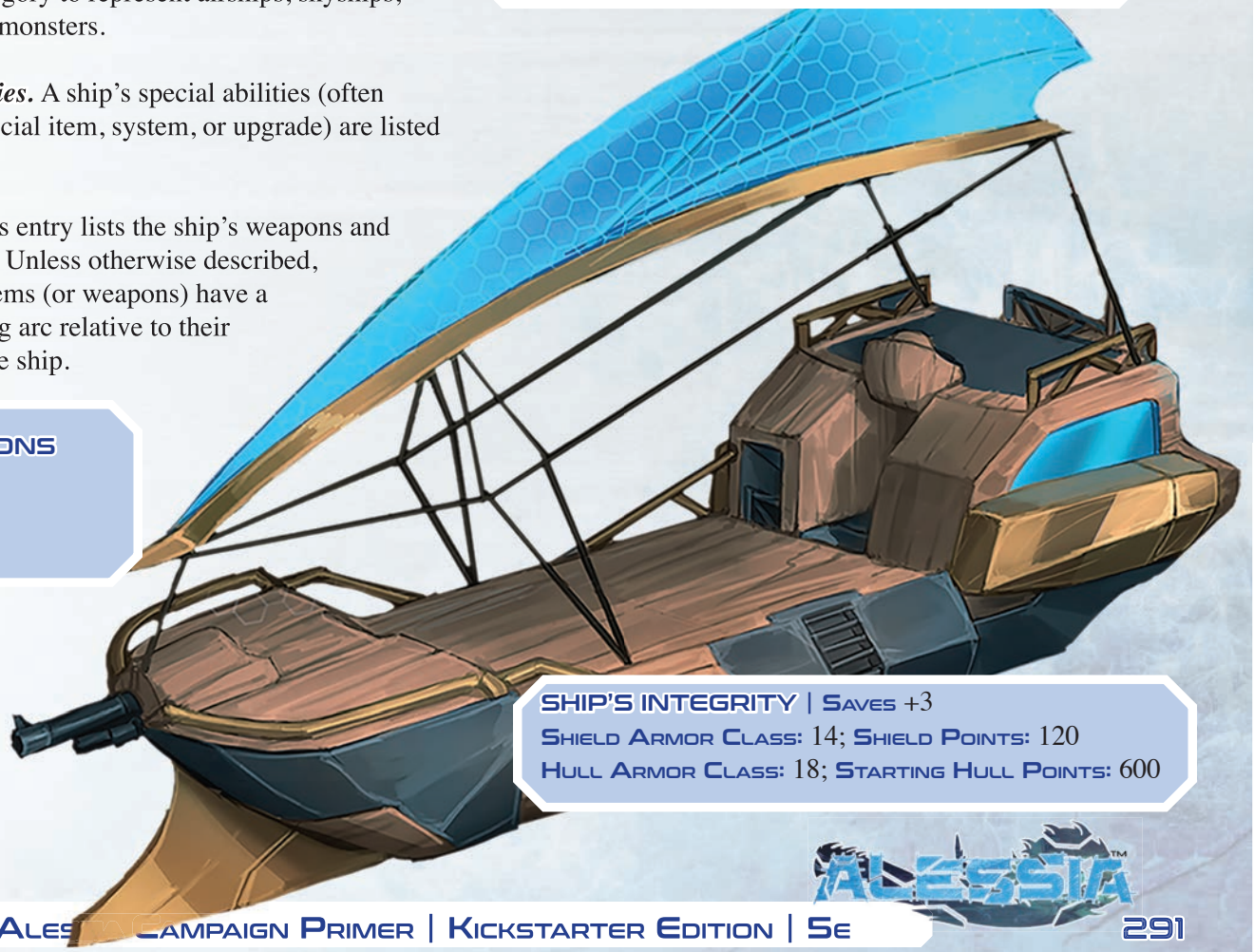
SHIP'S WEAPONS
1 AFT
1 FORWARD
6 PORT
6 STARBOARD

COMMAND AND CONTROL
Min. Crew Requirement: 6 | **Maximum Capacity:** 50
Acceleration: 30 ft.; **Top Speed:** 120 ft.
Decks 2 | **Size** Colossal
Crew-Assisted Search: +8;
Passive Systems Search: 14 (1,000')
Propulsion: Astral-Attuned Sails (if targeted separately, they are AC 22 with 75 hit points).
Weapons: 1 small carronade, 12 cannons, 1 ballista
Ship Systems: Basic Environmental, Basic Sensors, Enhanced Spacefaring (+3)
Special Abilities: The Crimson Sky has the following special abilities:

• ***A Little Overclocked.*** The Crimson Sky's systems grant her captain and first mate a +3 bonus to all Spacefaring skill checks, as well as improved movement. These bonuses are calculated into the statistics above.

Condensed and simplified, a typical ship's entry will look like the vehicle below.

Crew: 36 | **Maximum Capacity:** 50
Acceleration: 30 ft.; **Top Speed:** 120 ft.
Decks 2 | **Size** Colossal (60' beam, 130' length)
Crew-Assisted Search: +8
Passive Systems Search: 14 (1,000')



SHIP'S INTEGRITY | **Saves** +3
Shield Armor Class: 14; **Shield Points:** 120
Hull Armor Class: 18; **Starting Hull Points:** 600

NEW VEHICLES

The World of Alessia Campaign Primer introduces player characters to a number of different vehicles they can pilot. While there are hundreds of different models, makes, and builds of individual vehicles, we have elected to cover the more common vehicles, namely the dasher, the dreadnaught, and the drifter.

These common vehicles are described below:

DASHER

One of the many innovations born from the War of Sovereigns, dashers are two- and three-wheeled vehicles designed to navigate a variety of terrains.

Most dashers being produced in Alessia today are two-wheeled, cortex-controlled land vehicles that require little training. Most companies pride themselves on building models easily accessed by a wide range of bipedal species. As a technology, dashers have been in production for roughly 190 years and continue to see steady interest from communities in both rural and urban areas. Even with the addition of drifters (hover vehicles), dashers remain popular options for people looking for an affordable personal vehicle.

DREADNAUGHT

Sometimes described as a 'battle skiff,' dreadnaughts are large, low-altitude skyships that roam the deserts and coastlines of Fyrea. Used by the Marauders, Peacekeepers, and adventurers of all kinds, these dreadnaughts are frequently seen in rural areas, where they offer low-altitude air support and transportation services.

DRIFTER

One of the first things the tru'atha brought to Alessia when they arrived was their technology, which they immediately began to merge with the abundant magic of Alessia. Within three generations, this enterprising species partnered up with Dao Dynamics to step beyond the slow, floating wagons that made them popular, encouraging them to instead dedicate time and energy to producing drifters. Combining tru'atha technology with djinnish magic, the partners – in less than a century no less – changed the face of Alessia.

Today, the demand for drifters of all sorts dominates the east, revitalizing areas of industry previously forgotten. Today, Dao Dynamics dominates the drifter market, building everything from their prestigious 'elite models' to their powerfully fast (and inexpensive) 'speeder models.'

We include several sample models on the following pages.

DAO T20-AV [DRIFTER]

Cost. 18,500 Yuan
Size. Large | ***Modifications***. Up to 3 slots.
Speed. 80 mph (fly); 12 mph minimum; ***range*** 600 miles.
Crew. 1; ***passengers*** 0; ***cargo:*** The standard chassis can hold 20 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 1.5 feet in any direction.

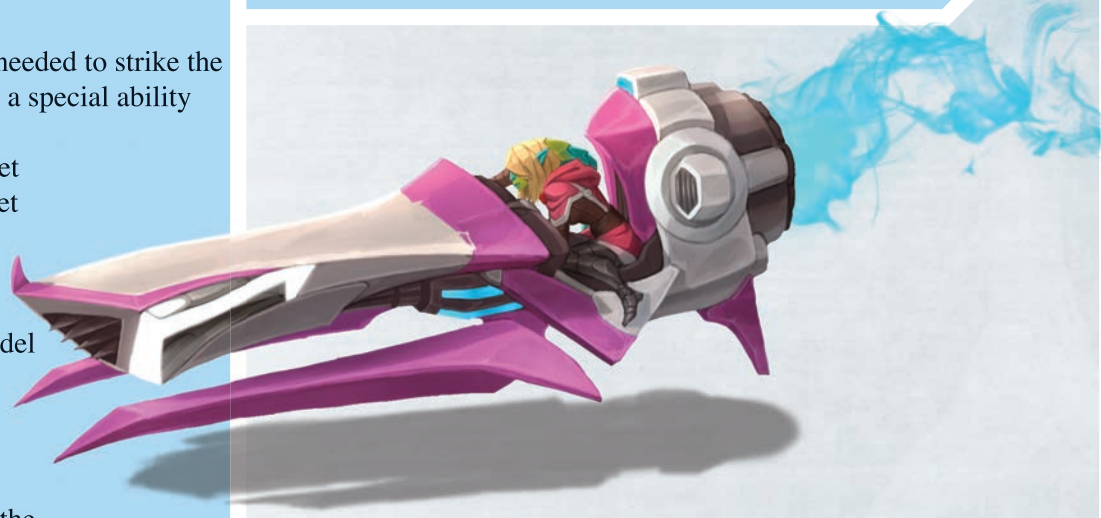
READING THE BLOCKS

While many of the terms used will be familiar to readers, a quick definition follows for anyone unsure about how we used a term.

Armor Class. This is the number needed to strike the vehicle while it is moving. Unless a special ability allows a character to do so otherwise, individuals cannot target a rider on a drifter; they must target the vehicle.
Cargo. This is how much the vehicle can carry.
Cost. This is how much a new model of the vehicle costs.
Crew. This is the number of creatures required to operate the vehicle.
Damage Threshold (DT). This is the amount of damage subtracted from each attack that hits the vehicle.
Hit Points. This is how many points of damage the vehicle can take before becoming completely inoperable.
Modifications. This is the number of modifications the vehicle will accept.
Range. This is how far you can travel on the vehicle before you would need to stop and charge the battery. Vehicles operating on ley lines frequently extend these ranges by notable distances.
Size. This describes the dimensions of the vehicle. Vehicles are generally large, huge, or bigger sizes.
Speed. This is how fast your vehicle moves.

COMBAT

Weapons. None
Armor Class. 12 [13 vs. energy weapons] | ***DT:*** 5
Hit Points 90.
Damaged [less than 90 hit points]. This vehicle suffers a -1 penalty on all ability and skill checks.
Battered [less than 45 hit points]. This vehicle suffers disadvantage on all ability and skill checks.
Broken [less than 30 hit points]. This vehicle halves its movement. Each round, roll 1d6. On a 1, the vehicle does not move.
Destroyed [less than 0 hit points]. This vehicle explodes, dealing 10d6 points of damage to everyone in a 10 ft. radius.



TAKING A FALL

Taking a fall while operating any kind of vehicle can be dangerous for anyone. It is especially dangerous for individuals operating drifters and dashers at higher speeds (anything beyond 30 mph). Anyone taking a fall from a vehicle operating at higher speeds (above 60 mph) may not survive the fall, even with special protective equipment.

When calculating the damage a character takes from a vehicle at different speeds, use the following ranges:

- ***1-20 mph.*** You suffer 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage. A successful Dexterity saving throw (DC 11) halves this damage.
- ***21-30 mph.*** You suffer 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage. A successful Dexterity saving throw (DC 13) halves this damage.
- ***31-40 mph.*** You suffer 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage. A successful Dexterity saving throw (DC 15) halves this damage.
- ***41-50 mph.*** You suffer 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage. A successful Dexterity saving throw (DC 17) halves this damage.
- ***51-70 mph.*** You suffer 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage. A successful Dexterity saving throw (DC 19) halves this damage.
- ***71+ mph.*** You suffer 9d6 points of bludgeoning damage. A successful Dexterity saving throw (DC 21) halves this damage.

DAO X101-GV [DASHER]

Cost. 16,500 Yuan
Size. Large | ***Modifications***. Up to 2 slots.
Speed. 60 mph; 2 mph minimum; ***range*** 500 miles.
Crew. 1; ***passengers*** 0; ***cargo:*** The standard chassis can hold 15 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 1.5 feet in any direction.

COMBAT

Weapons. None
Armor Class. 13 [12 vs. energy weapons] | ***DT:*** 5
Hit Points 110.
Damaged [less than 100 hit points]. This vehicle suffers a -1 penalty on all ability and skill checks.
Battered [less than 65 hit points]. This vehicle suffers disadvantage on all ability and skill checks.
Broken [less than 35 hit points]. This vehicle halves its movement. Each round, roll 1d6. On a 1, the vehicle does not move.
Destroyed [less than 0 hit points]. This vehicle explodes, dealing 10d6 points of damage to everyone in a 10 ft. radius.

DASHER PERFORMANCE PACKAGE

Designed to optimize all kinds of ground vehicles, this secondary, precision gyroscope feeds ambient environmental conditions back to the vehicle and its pilot in real time, granting the pilot a small bonus (either +1, +2, or +3) to Dexterity (Pilot) checks. The cost of the package is linked directly to the applicable bonus it applies. The package costs a number of slots equal to its bonus. ***Cost*** 750 Yuan (+1), 1500 Yuan (+2), or 2,250 Yuan (+3).

ASTRANA DEV-1AV "CRIMSON" [DRIFTER]

Cost. 36,500 Yuan
Size. Huge | ***Modifications.*** Up to 3 slots.
Speed. 70 mph; 11 mph minimum; ***range*** 900 miles.
Crew. 1; ***passengers*** 1; ***cargo:*** The standard chassis can hold 35 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 1.5 feet in any direction.
Special. This vehicle has a width of 10 ft. but a total length of 15 ft. due to its ground guide – a special, wheeled sensor array designed to track ley lines all across Alessia. This model can sense and track ley lines up to 1 mile away.

COMBAT

Weapons. None.
Armor Class. 14 [15 vs. energy weapons] | ***DT:*** 5
Hit Points 100.
Damaged [less than 100 hit points]. This vehicle suffers a -1 penalty on all ability and skill checks.
Battered [less than 50 hit points]. This vehicle suffers disadvantage on all ability and skill checks.
Broken [less than 25 hit points]. This vehicle halves its movement. Each round, roll 1d6. On a 1, the vehicle does not move.
Destroyed [less than 0 hit points]. This vehicle explodes, dealing 10d6 points of damage to everyone in a 10 ft. radius.

DRIFTER AIR SHIELDS PACKAGE

Designed as a compact but efficient shield generator, this equipment package requires a single slot and can be installed into any vehicle, producing directional shield (above the vehicle for ground vehicles, below it for air vehicles) that increase its AC by +2 and provide it 30 temporary hit points, which remove the bonus once depleted. The shields can be reactivated after a short rest. ***Cost*** 1,000 Yuan.

DAO "DART" AVX-2 [DRIFTER]

Cost. 23,500 Yuan
Size. Large | ***Modifications.*** Up to 2 slots.
Speed. 90 mph; 6 mph minimum; ***range*** 350 miles.
Crew. 1; ***passengers*** 0; ***cargo:*** The standard chassis can hold 20 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 1.5 feet in any direction.

COMBAT

Weapons. None
Armor Class. 15 [13 vs. energy weapons] | ***DT:*** —
Hit Points 60.

Damaged [less than 60 hit points]. This vehicle suffers a -1 penalty on all ability and skill checks.
Battered [less than 45 hit points]. This vehicle suffers disadvantage on all ability and skill checks.
Broken [less than 30 hit points]. This vehicle halves its movement. Each round, roll 1d6. On a 1, the vehicle does not move.
Destroyed [less than 0 hit points]. This vehicle explodes, dealing 8d6 points of damage to everyone in a 10 ft. radius.

DASHER TARGETING PACKAGE

An advanced, symmetrical targeting system designed to extend the range of energy weapons on most Dao Air Vehicles, this package uses a single slot and grants the pilot a +1 on attack rolls made with the vehicle's weapon system. ***Cost*** 1,500 Yuan

FYREAN SILT RUNNER [DRIFTER]

Cost. 60,000 Yuan
Size. Large | ***Modifications.*** Up to 1 slots.
Speed. 90 mph; 5 mph minimum; ***range*** 700 miles.
Crew. 1; ***passengers*** 0; ***cargo:*** The standard chassis can hold 10 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 1 foot in any direction.

COMBAT

Weapons. None
Armor Class. 16 [14 vs. energy weapons] | ***DT:*** —
Hit Points 70.

Damaged [less than 70 hit points]. This vehicle suffers a -1 penalty on all ability and skill checks.
Battered [less than 35 hit points]. This vehicle suffers disadvantage on all ability and skill checks.
Broken [less than 18 hit points]. This vehicle halves its movement. Each round, roll 1d6. On a 1, the vehicle does not move.
Destroyed [less than 0 hit points]. This vehicle explodes, dealing 8d6 points of damage to everyone in a 10 ft. radius.

ENERGY WEAPONS PACKAGE

This package requires a single slot. When installed, this package gives the vehicle a single, forward or aft-facing weapon that can hit targets within 120 ft., dealing 1d8 points of fire damage with each successful attack. ***Cost*** 2,000 Yuan.

DAO DARE X [DRIFTER]

Cost. 22,500 Yuan
Size. Large | ***Modifications.*** Up to 2 slots.
Speed. 60 mph; 11 mph minimum; ***range*** 550 miles.
Crew. 1; ***passengers*** 0; ***cargo:*** The standard chassis can hold 20 lbs. of gear measuring no more than 1 foot in any direction.

COMBAT

Weapons. None
Armor Class. 13 [13 vs. energy weapons] | ***DT:*** 5
Hit Points 50.
Damaged [less than 50 hit points]. This vehicle suffers a -1 penalty on all ability and skill checks.
Battered [less than 35 hit points]. This vehicle suffers disadvantage on all ability and skill checks.
Broken [less than 25 hit points]. This vehicle halves its movement. Each round, roll 1d6. On a 1 or 2, the vehicle does not move.
Destroyed [less than 0 hit points]. This vehicle explodes, dealing 9d6 points of damage to everyone in a 10 ft. radius.

METRIC VS. STANDARD

The World of Alessia Campaign Primer uses both metric and standard, as follows:

Metric. When measuring vast distances, such as those used to calculate the distance between planets or when determining a skyship's route, metric is used.

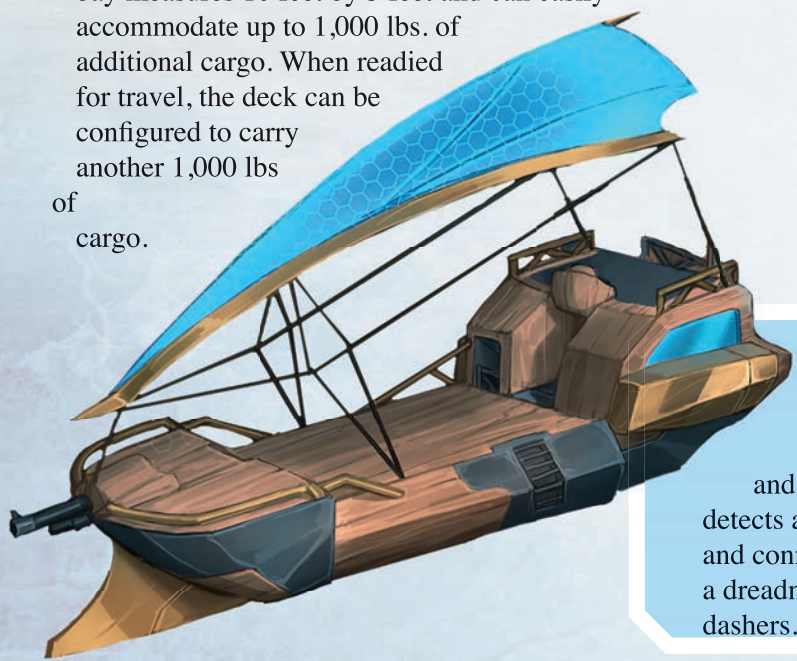
Standard. While we had originally planned to convert the entire game to metric, doing so would have required work far beyond the scope of this primer. So, whenever combat distances are calculated (for movement, ranges for spells or weapons), the game uses standard to ensure compatibility.

KINETIC WEAPONS PACKAGE

This weapon package requires two slots and arms the vehicle with a front-facing autocannon that can target within 160 ft., dealing 3d4 points of piercing damage with each successful attack.
Cost 3,000 Yuan.

FYREAN COAST RUNNER [DREADNAUGHT]

Cost. 320,000 Yuan
Size. Colossal | ***Modifications.*** Up to 4 slots.
Speed. 40 mph; 5 mph minimum; ***range*** 3000 miles.
Crew. 3; ***passengers*** 20; ***cargo:*** The coast runner's cargo bay measures 10 feet by 5 feet and can easily accommodate up to 1,000 lbs. of additional cargo. When readied for travel, the deck can be configured to carry another 1,000 lbs of cargo.



COMBAT

Weapons. Asprene Energy Cannon. ***Hit.*** +5
Damage. 3d8 points of fire damage per shot.
Armor Class. 16 [14 vs. energy weapons] | ***DT:*** 10
Hit Points 210.
Damaged [less than 210 hit points]. This vehicle suffers a -1 penalty on all ability and skill checks.
Battered [less than 75 hit points]. This vehicle suffers disadvantage on all ability and skill checks.
Broken [less than 35 hit points]. This vehicle halves its movement. Each round, roll 1d6. On a 1, the vehicle does not move.
Destroyed [less than 0 hit points]. This vehicle explodes, dealing 10d12 points of damage to everyone in a 15 ft. radius.

LEY LINE GUIDANCE PACKAGE

Designed for combat, several smaller versions of this package have been designed for both dashers and drifters. When installed, this package automatically detects and aligns to ley lines within 5 miles, powering from and connecting the vessel to them. ***Cost*** 25,000 Yuan for a dreadnaught; 5,000 Yuan for drifters and 3,000 Yuan for dashers.

THE ARGENT WARD [SKYSHIP]

Cost: 4 million Yuan
Size: Colossal | **Modifications:** Up to 16 slots.
Speed: 140 mph; 20 mph minimum; **range:** 15,000 miles.
Crew: 13; **passengers** 96; **cargo:** Several cargo bays let the Argent Ward carry up to four tons of cargo in addition to the space provided for up to 100 guests and their luggage.

SHIP'S INTEGRITY | Saves +5

Shield Armor Class: 15; **Shield Points:** 100
Hull Armor Class: 17; **Starting Hull Points:** 500
Special Qualities: The ship's hull is reinforced with magitech sensors that extend its passive Perception by 300 ft. These are incorporated into the ship's statistics.
Resistances: The ship's mirrored hull grants it resistance to lightning damage.

DAMAGE TRACK

Starting Hull Points: 500
A mirrored hull with reinforced plates.

Damaged: 499-251 hull points.
The ship operates normally while damaged.

Disabled: 250-101 hull points.
The ship suffers a -2 penalty on all Spacefaring skill checks and reduces movement by half.

Breached: 100-001 hull points.
The ship reduces its movement to 0 and engages all safety protocols when it reaches 100 hull points. When reduced to zero movement, the ship's Hull Armor Class worsens by 4 (to 13).

Destroyed: 0 hull points. The ship is destroyed when it reaches 0 hull points. When destroyed, the ship explodes, dealing 8d12 points of piercing, bludgeoning, and slashing damage from flying debris to all creatures and objects within 100 ft.

AFT/FORWARD CARRONADES [2] (SHORT RANGE)

Minimum Crew: 1; **Optimal Crew:** 2
Damage: 6d6 piercing per shot; **Range:** 400/800;
Attack: +10; **Rate of Fire:** 2;
Armor Class:16; **Hit Points:** 50

STARBOARD/PORT CANNONS [4 each] (MEDIUM RANGE)

Minimum Crew: 1; **Optimal Crew:** 3
Damage: 6d8 piercing per shot; **Range:** 800/1800;
Attack: +8; **Rate of Fire:** 1;
Armor Class: Hull Armor Class + 2; **Hit Points:** 25

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Min. Crew Requirement: 13
Maximum Capacity: 110
Acceleration: 40 ft.; **Top Speed:** 140 ft.
Decks 2 | **Size** Colossal
Crew-Assisted Search: +10;
Passive Systems Search: 15 (800')
Propulsion: Magitech layered sails
(if targeted separately, they are AC 18 with 50 hit points).
Weapons: 2 small carronades, 8 cannons
Ship Systems: Basic Environmental, Basic Sensors, Enhanced Spacefaring (+5)
Special Abilities: The Argent Ward has the following special abilities:

Emergency Shields. The Argent Ward can opt to redirect some of its systems to power a series of emergency generators. Once per day, when its shields have been depleted, the Argent Ward can deploy temporary shields (Shield Points: 60) that last for 1 minute.

SKYSHIPS

Called airships by oblivious outsiders, skyships are one of the most common forms of transportation on Alessia. Employing a variety of power-plants on a growing number of platforms or frames (lovingly simplified to 'the ship' by those who crew them), Alessia's skyships fill the skies in most cities, with the smallest darting between the Towers of Xin, or more commonly, around their much larger kin.

The largest skyships dwarf their seagoing cousins, sometimes requiring crews that number up into the hundreds. While those vessels exist in Alessia, they are beyond the scope of this book.

VEHICLES

By default, smaller vehicles (like drifters and dashers) use standard in all combat situations. When calculating for traveling longer distances, simply convert the vehicle's current speed from mph to kph (kph = mph x 1.609344) and calculate for the time traveled.

Before discussing ship combat, it is important to understand how ships are used in Alessia and the dangers of combat, which can leave civilians on the ground in grave danger if the ships' captains are careless fools.

The Argent Ward is provided as an example skyship (see the stats above). Skyships and their anatomy are found earlier in this chapter (see pages 283-291).

THE SKYSHIP'S ROLE

The people of Alessia rely heavily on skyships to fill a number of important roles, from transportation to defense. In the Empire of Xian, this is visible both along the Empire's borders, as well as over her larger cities. Massive, brightly painted skyships dot the Empire's skies, reminding everyone below of the power of their collective social will.

From an economic and organizational standpoint, skyships are a vital asset to the Empire, openly displaying not only their ability to project power where and when needed with relative ease, but also showing its neighbors the value of embracing the Empire and the strength that comes with such an alliance. Beyond a projection of imperial power, airships remains a vital asset for countless competing businesses and families.

From a storytelling perspective, skyships serve as both objects the player characters can focus on, as well as environments they can explore. Moreover, when a group of heroes is lucky enough to secure their very own skyship, it can serve in both these roles. GMs looking to create additional adventure hooks can easily do so with a skyship, treating it like a normal member of the PCs' group in many respects. PCs will have a lot more to do in keeping their new vessel air-worthy!

While GMs will have plenty of reasons to restrict a group's access to a skyship, GMs should actively look for ways to incorporate them into their games when and where they can – they are an important part of Alessia.

Beyond their natural roles in Alessian society, skyships also hold another potential – the potential to do massive damage to the innocent when turned into weapons by evil minds and hearts.

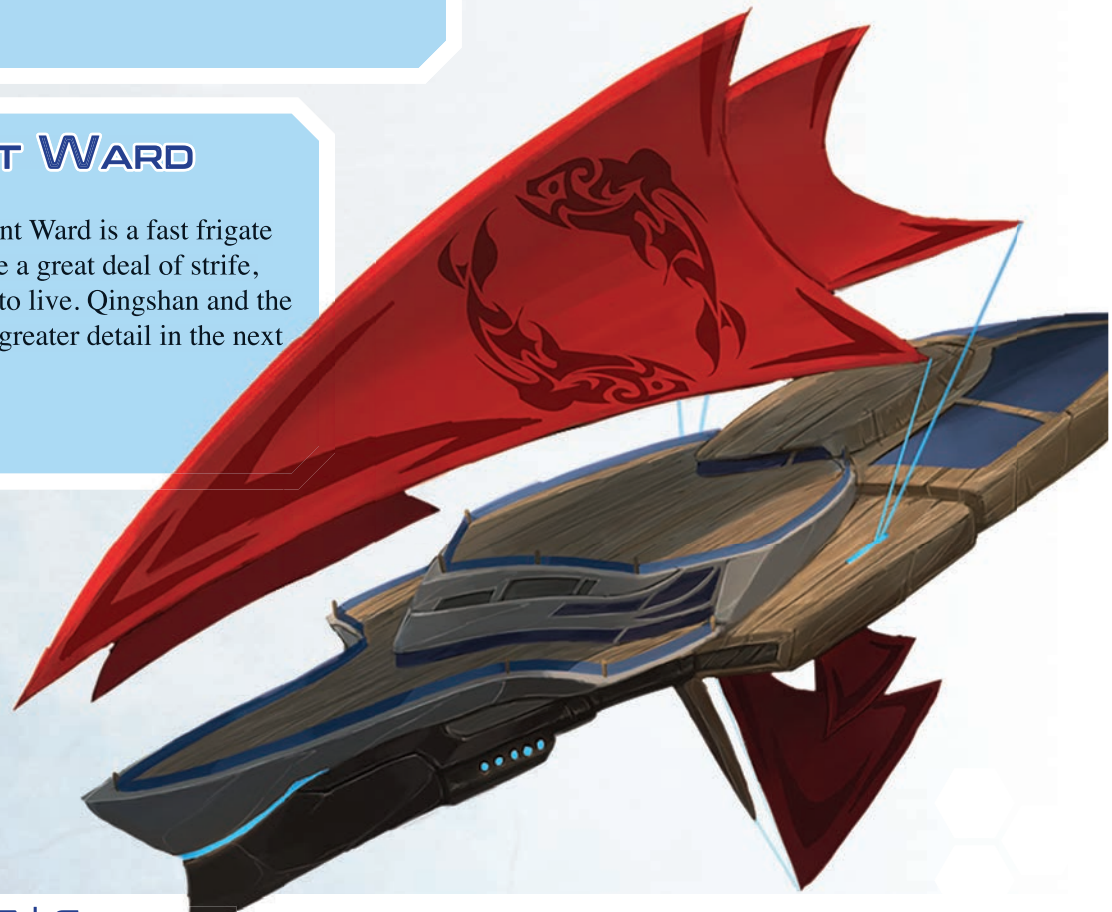
The Colossal Size

In the current edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game (at least at the time of this writing), gargantuan is the largest listed size. In older editions of the game, a larger category existed: colossal.

In Alessia, colossal creatures or objects have a height or length greater than 64 feet, occupying spaces equal to 30 feet by 30 feet (or more). Without exception, all skyships fall in the colossal category. When calculating Attacks or contesting physical ability tests, a colossal creature or object gains a +16 size bonus on those checks.

The Argent Ward

Captained by Seirye, the Argent Ward is a fast frigate out of Qingshan – a city where a great deal of strife, trouble, and rebellion happen to live. Qingshan and the Argent Ward are described in greater detail in the next chapter.



Chapter 8 | The Background World

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A NOTE FOR NEW GMS

Hey! First, let me congratulate you on your new position – you're about to step into a very special role as a GM! This role is going to teach you a number of things, all of which will require a special degree of maturity and responsibility. Over time, you'll learn not only how to tell a story, but also how to set the pace for that story, and with it, how to better manage people, their real (and imagined) environments, and help them unlock a better understanding of themselves through their characters. In short, you're going to be telling a story that, if you're successful, will evoke strong emotions and will have a lasting impact in the minds of your players.

When you tell a story in an RPG, especially in an ongoing campaign, you form a relationship with your players. Cherish and safeguard that relationship, and over time, your story will take on something truly special.

Over time, most GMs learn to listen to their players; really good GMs learn to take their players' feedback and turn it into even better stories. GMs also, with each story, get to watch how players develop particular characters, both through their stories and their identities. Responsible GMs safeguard this process, looking for ways to make each player's story truly unique.

For some players, the characters they will embrace will give them permission to explore new identities – this is fairly common, and you should let that player maintain agency at every step of the process. While some GMs may feel the temptation to restrict this agency as a challenge to the player(s), this should be done carefully and only you've had a discussion with the player.

Unlike many traditional fantasy worlds, the World of Alessia exists in a socially advanced state, and things such as racism and sexism have long since been purged from the collective social consciousness. This social standard is best exemplified in Alessia's space program, which projects harmony and unity at a global level. While that unity isn't as universal as the Empire of Xian would have its citizens believe, their advancements have been stable.

This is important to note for GMs, as that added level of suggested corruption or dishonesty – coupled with the very idea that sometimes things get too big to operate efficiently – becomes adventure fuel that most players are all to happy to set ablaze.

A NOTE FOR CURIOUS PLAYERS

Alessia takes an "open book" approach to presenting the world. There is no "GM" section in this book, but instead an area that discusses storytelling, the background world, and gives potential GMs the tools they need to step up to the screen. Alessia takes a fully collaborative approach to story-telling that encourages player participation.

So, instead of hiding the special notes, tricks, and secrets in the back – hoarding over them like a jealous dragon god determined to possess the world – we're throwing open the temple doors. We're encouraging you, the player, to learn everything the GM normally does. When you're confident that you can step into their shoes, you should consider giving it a go yourself!

ALESSIA IS A PERSISTENT WORLD

The World of Alessia is a living, persistent world we've been actively developing since the summer of 2017. Designed to give us a much larger world in which to play, large sections of Alessia remain unexplored – this campaign primer gives you a big look at this world, just not all of it.

Why did we choose to do this? We did this for two reasons – first, we wanted to give GMs space to tell stories that lived outside of our play space. We want GMs to have the room to plug Alessia into their larger gaming universe. Secondly, we wanted room to grow Alessia in new directions…

With the release of this primer, Alessia enters a larger universe, entering the same persistent timeline as Rhune: Dawn of Twilight. As such, the two worlds may (and will) feature content from one another. Over time, actions in one world may impact the other, but much of that will fall to events that Ragnarök still promises to unleash – when the long winter comes.

APPROACHES TO PLAY

Although GMs can tell any number of stories in Alessia, it is well suited for several tropes that GMs should consider. Some of these include:

An Exploratory Approach

Treating the world as a large sandbox, the players slowly explore the world, one area at a time, as they follow clues or answer the call of duty. With this

approach, the PCs lead the exploratory process, with the GM adjusting and unveiling the story in response to this exploration. Planned encounters still happen in this approach but are adjusted to fit the player's place in the story (and to confirm encounters logically to the environment).

A Neo-Western Approach

Popular in many space fantasy where the empire spans most of the known world, a neo-western approach pits the vastness of the system (or space) against the world. The PCs rely on their smallness and mobility to hop between outposts, towns, and small cities, righting the wrongs others cannot. PCs on drifters might form biker gangs, with Peacekeepers playing the traditional role of the 'lawman.'

A Noir Approach

While the Empire of Xian and the forces of the Light dominate most of the world, many of the Empire's cities have their traditional problems – poverty, greed, lust, and several darker sins draw heroes into places where the Light has been forgotten. Playing hardened heroes who feel overwhelmed by the sheer vastness of their work, player characters can easily set noir adventures in Alessia!

A Spacefarer's Approach

Skyships are a large part of the World of Alessia, which itself is massive. Between the sheer size of the planet and The Ring that surrounds it, groups who secure skyships capable of leaving the atmosphere could easily play a pirate campaign that bridges sea, sky, and space with relative ease.

A Tactical Approach

The Empire of Xian is massive, and its Peacekeepers operate in all of its provinces. Frequently, the security of the Empire demands their attention beyond its borders, as well. Whether responding to crashed satellites, destroying cults loyal to Galgaræ, or eliminating high-value targets in the name of the Light, GMs can tell a number of high-tech, high-tension games with strong, military tones in Alessia with only few shifts in tone.

A Wuxia Approach

Best described as "the wandering swordsman," this approach celebrates the martial heroes who, by following a code or by seeking to right some wrong, challenge great evils or the forces of chaos in an attempt to restore the world to its proper alignment (and with it, harmony). Great Wuxia stories can start with heroes chasing down small problems, only to realize too late they've discovered a much larger one!

Culture Matters

Although many of the people living in Alessia understand their world through the larger meta-culture that the Empire of Xian promotes, there are countless locations where older traditions and ideas still hold sway. This is evident in places such as Southern Fyrea, where gnolish pyramids remind onlookers of the Old Gods the gnoles still honor or in distant Yrim, where the fallen kingdoms still whisper of older, darker faiths.

Given the size of Alessia and the distribution of its various species throughout the explored world, the meta-culture the Empire promotes still remains small by comparison. Entire tribes remain hidden in the jungles of Elysia, promoting values and ideas much older than the empire that rules over them. To the west of these tribes, Velestrian elves persist in their traditions, teaching the Light's lessons through their fabled songs and tales.

Where these tribes and clans dominate a specific region in Alessia, so do their ideas. The majority of the conflict that takes place today does so at these tension points, where strong ideological or economic tensions breed anger, darkness, and violence. When the Empire of Xian can, it preserves the peace through the use of its fabled Peacekeepers, safeguarding the sick, the elderly, and the young. When tensions do boil over, these Peacekeepers respond immediately, evacuating those in their care and setting up safe zones while the violence plays out.

Fortunately for the people of Alessia, history has paved a path of unity over the long millennia, preparing them for these challenging moments. While there are those unwilling or incapable of seeing the larger picture, most of these tribes keep traditions with similar themes. In many ways, the traditions established among the yökai at the very first Council Fires still echo outward, informing and unifying various peoples around the world.

Daily Life

Daily life in Alessia differs between the various regions and cultures. In places such as Fyrea, where only the shadows of the pyramids offer any real respite from the burning heat, people tend to socialize and shop at night. In places like Yrim, where light can be in short supply during some seasons, individuals spend those precious hours of light on only the most important social functions – saving them for weddings, funerals, and other important events.

We briefly describe daily life for various regions below:

Elysia

With few exceptions, Elysia's rich, warm jungles have encouraged daily life that flows around the heat of the day. During the late spring, summer, and early fall, individuals rise early in the morning, working for four to five hours before retiring in the early afternoon. Exceptionally dedicated individuals work several more hours after sundown, retiring in the early to late evening.

In the Empire of Xian

The Empire long ago stopped fighting these traditions, instead adapting to them and using that time to better serve the citizens. In heavily populated cities or outposts, daily life often revolves around the government's working hours, with employees remaining on site to give them more leisure time. No one is expected to travel during the hottest parts of the day.

Fyrea

Lacking the vast swathes of forest that previously cooled it, Fyrea bakes under the hot rays of the desert sun. Daily life in Fyrea has adapted as a result, with the hottest parts of the day closing everything outside of the climate-controlled gardens of the Lords of Brass or in the streets of the great floating cities that support the pyramids. Below those pyramids, the day's lazy shadows impact daily life, as well.

In Fyrea, most individuals begin their days during the late afternoon, rising with the diminishing heat and working into the late evening. Most people then relax through midnight and into the early morning, going to bed as the sun rises.

Galgaræ

In Galgaræ, daily life revolves around survival, with the wandering tribes keeping the hours that best suit their lifestyles. In the rugged south, where the heat is the worst, most species avoid the day altogether, taking to the caves and craters that dot the land for relief, rising again in the evening to hunt cooler lands.

In the north, and closest to where the Great Beast fell, people rise earlier during the day. These individuals hunt in the dawn light, avoiding Galgaræ's spawn while the light still favors them. Most then go to ground through the hottest parts of the day, rising again at dusk to hunt and work while the light favors them.

Imperial Outposts

The Empire of Xian has played a key role in maintaining the safety and security of Galgaræ's corpse, as well as the surrounding lands. While they cannot patrol every square inch of the surrounding terrain, imperial skyships do an excellent job of ensuring most of the land and sky remain clear of Galgaræ's spawn. These skyships maintain local garrisons, each of which defends the outpost and the lands around it.

Shiran

In the southern parts of Shiran, where the temperatures are more welcoming, most people rise before the sun and often go to bed after it sets. Individuals who acclimatise to the lands south of the mountains, where the air is clean and clear, keep these schedules year-round, adjusting only for the decline of light during the winter – spending more time indoors or below ground.

In the regions north of the mountains, where most cities and outposts live at much higher elevations, daily life moves a lot slower. While it isn't sluggish by an stretch, it comes with more preparations, much of which orientates around a culture of reflection – in northern Shiran, people make time to watch Alessia mature.

Velestra

Life in the Velestrian jungles demands much of the people strong enough to master them, and this is reflected at every step of their daily journey. In the northern jungles, the yökai who hunt the lands do so from the earliest parts of the day until the last light of dusk. In the jungles in the south, and all along the coasts, Velestrian elves keep similar schedules, save one – they retreat from the heat of midday.

In many ways, Velestra is similar to Elysia, with most of the elves there serving in the same roles the Empire of Xian's Peacekeepers would. The major difference, of course, is the sheer number of Trees of Life that populate Velestra. While they certainly exist in Elysia, they outnumber them considerably in Velestra. In places where the focus is on one of these great trees, one can expect daily life to shift accordingly.

Yerwin

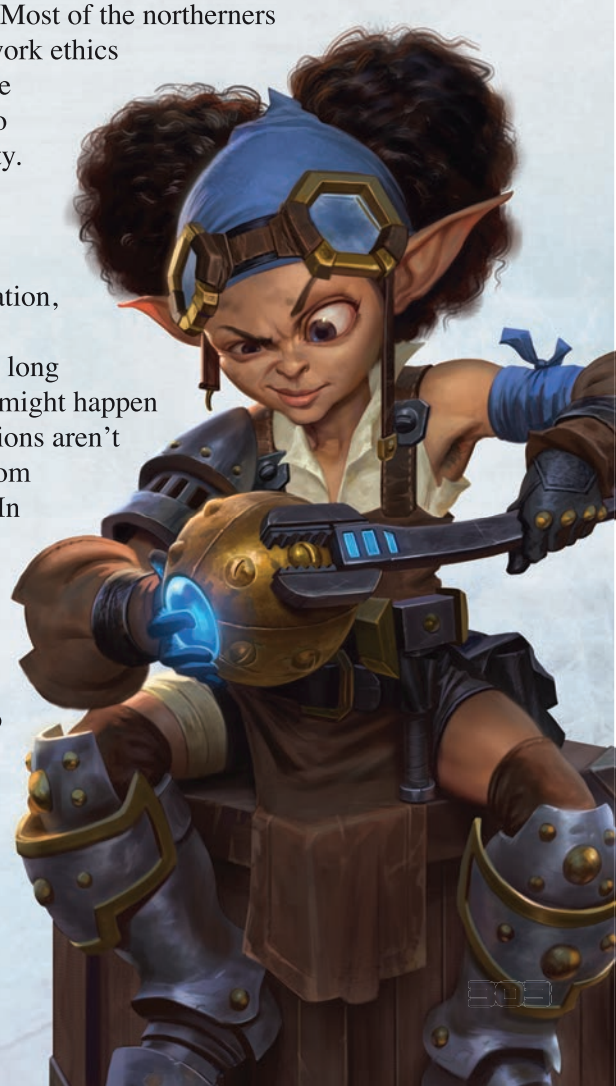
Yerwin shares the same weather and terrain as much of southern Shiran, producing a similar workday and social impact. Large swathes of lands are dedicated to farming, but only closest to the coast. In these areas, daily life starts with the sun and ends with the last rays of the light going into the shadows. When these shadows finally fall, the trains slow across the land, making camp and setting the watch.

While there are fewer dangers in Yerwin than in the jungles to the south (especially in the wild islands north of Velestra), the sky citadels that regularly cross overhead bring their own threats and dangers. From the heart of the continent to its outermost isles, the people know that a daily vigilance pays off.

Yrim

In Yrim, much of daily life revolves on the weather and environment. During the summer, when light is far more abundant, individuals work from the first rays until the last. Whether mining the ancient cliffs along Yrim's southern coast or exploring the endless north, the people know the importance of making every second count – that informs every part of their daily lives.

In the harshest parts of Yrim, this need to make the most of the light (and good weather) shapes many of its traditions. Most of the northerners have strong work ethics that encourage giving back to the community. Those same traditions sometimes punish innovation, which local dwarves have long warned what might happen if those traditions aren't challenged from time to time. In the settled, popular cities of the south, more individuals work late into the evenings, making good use of the safety that city life provides.



HONOR AND RESPECT

To say that the people of Alessia conduct themselves honorably at all times would be foolish. They, like any other people in any other place, have their fair share of dark-hearted villains, corrupt politicians, and vile opportunists. While those people certainly exist, they remain the minority among – thankfully – a much kinder global population.

This larger, wider culture of respect and honor plays a big role in ensuring the general peace between the various species who call Alessia home – everyone knows that their actions have consequences that could span generations, adding layers of risk every individual must access before preceding. The resulting "culture of reflection" encourages a slow, spreading analysis of personal responsibility and its place in the larger world.

This need for understanding and through it, respect, became a bedrock for the growing Empire of Xian. So, while the Empire could never hope to institutionalize mindfulness or respect, it did make sweeping social changes that naturally encouraged these behaviors between citizens. Over time, the Empire continued to adjust their approach, ebbing and flowing forward until, several millennia later, that culture became a reality.

Throughout the Empire of Xian, this need for civil exchange has produced a mindfulness in people that has changed how they respond to threats of all kinds.

Of course, this doesn't mean that violence isn't used to solve problems. Throughout central Elysia, where the heart of the Empire of Xian is closest to the people, some families have weaponized entire traditions of diplomacy and spycraft, creating warriors whose silence has shielded their honor. Over the millennia, these families have replaced many of the Empire's laws with their own, demanding strict adherence to codes that keep these operatives secret to those around them.

When the diligent imperial operatives regularly root out these troublesome ninjas, their influence in the world spans generations and borders with equal ease – they remain credible threats throughout Alessia.

In the end, most of Alessia's citizens find it much easier to be mindful and observant of others than predictably violent.

Honor's Stance

While striking first is important in a number of martial traditions, the monks of Zuun teach a tradition of honorable actions, and through them, an honorable defense for every Attack. These monks teach others this stance, knowing its practice will bring others to their path.

Each morning, a character who spends at least thirty minutes quietly preparing themselves for the day's challenges, gains the benefit of Honor's Stance, which must be used during the first combat challenge of the day.

While Honor's Stance is in effect, you add your character's honor score bonus to your armor class. This bonus remains in effect until you act in combat, which you must do on your Initiative. If you choose not to attack on your Initiative, you may spend two points of resolve to maintain this honor bonus for another round. You must act on your turn after extending in this manner.

You must complete a long rest and practice the Rites of Zuun before you gain the use of Honor's Stance again.

Honor at the Table

While I feel I shouldn't have to say it, I want it in print – ***respect the people at your table.*** The GM is a storyteller sacrificing countless hours customizing a story for you and your friends – respect that. Likewise, GMs need to respect and remember the players' roles at the table, as well. If they aren't having fun, they'll go elsewhere (and should).

OLD KUNG FU MOVIES

Mine them for the right things.

Invariably, as you look to build campaigns in and around the World of Alessia, you're going to look back to the modern media for inspiration and influence. When you do, make sure you keep your approach as critical as possible, but without being adversarial. Look at the individuals and the roles they play. Does the film perpetuate a hateful response to an entire people? Does it suggest sexism will 'fix the world' in some way? If, while exploring these old movies, you find these behaviors or assumptions, we beg you – leave them in the past, where they belong.

Once you've done this, dive in and mine these movies for all their worth. There are countless stories GMs can mine for their games, crafting those exciting scenes into memorable encounters that PCs will talk about for years to come. That's really what you're aiming for when you're running a game set in Alessia, too. The entirety of Wuxia embraces the heroic, and that's never accomplished in stasis. Heroes must adventure, right wrongs, and fulfill prophecies – that's just how things are.

In Alessia, those expectations translate well, especially as longstanding traditions that entire continents have embraced. However, we're also purposefully painted with broad strokes. We want GMs to tell their stories in the territory we've created. It's a bit of a dance, so we've chosen our steps wisely, making sure GMs can pivot where they need to tell the stories they need to.

That brings us full circle to mining old kung fu movies (or movies of any kind, really) for the right things. While racism and sexism are easy to recognize, poor storytelling can be much harder to recognize, especially if we're receptive to the themes or tropes it's using to convey its message. So, we need to pay special attention to those themes and look at their assumptions. With those in hand, it then becomes a chore of cherry-picking the best parts of these films for the fun and exciting moments they best convey. As you do this, keep a notebook at hand, and make sure to credit the movies and directors that inspired you. And if your players recognize the subtle references now and again? Celebrate and share that moment, then get back to the action!

PUSHING THE LIMITS

GMs looking to run cinematic games need to provide the PCs with those heroic moments and risky situations. Alessia is, by definition, a fairly safe world with many magitech systems designed to save people from everything from wicked storms to alien incursions. That means that "pushing the limits" can be a lot harder, especially for PCs who want to play in that heroic space.

In Alessia, this can be accomplished by giving PCs levels of agency that normal citizens don't have. PCs should be able to spend resolve to hack a drifter's governor, bypassing its security settings and letting a PC dangerously speed away. GMs shouldn't present player with risks they aren't willing to enforce. Alessia has enough safeguards in place that character death shouldn't end the character's story (especially when groups are deploying sentients and similar tech). Encourage characters to lean into those heroic moments, making them count when they do.

Restricting how long a character can push their limits is one way to ensure those moments count, too. Eventually, a character is going to run out of resolve. When they do, they're going to fail. How that character fails is as much a job of the GM as it is the player. If the two elect to work together, they can easily craft these portions of the stories into larger parts of the plot, both to recognize the PCs, as well as to continue to push the story forward.

HARMONY, ATTUNEMENT, & ALIGNMENT

In the World of Alessia, harmony and alignment are important cultural concepts. This is doubly true in the Empire of Xian, where social training begins early in a citizen's life. For people outside of the Empire of Xian, these concepts are taught first through an army of temples and traditions, all of them promoting their particular understanding of the Light. Several martial traditions also teach these concepts, commanding warriors, monks, and even ninja to evaluate their strengths, their weaknesses, and to create a harmony between them. While abstract bordering on the mystical, many of these traditions also teach concrete lessons and continue, several millennia later, the post-war traditions that unified Alessia in the wake of the War of Sovereigns.

GMs looking to promote these concepts in Alessia should consider the following:

Attunement

Attunement is discussed throughout this book, and especially in Chapter 4. Attunement is a central concept in Alessia, and through it, player characters can gain insights and special powers in a variety of ways. Some players will focus this on their party, unlocking species synergies or refining their connections with their familiars, while other characters will learn to unlock the very environments around them.

Alignment

Most gamers inherently understand this concept, and in the World of Alessia, it occupies much the same roles. Designed to represent a character's moral compass, alignment shifts between several poles, leaning toward law or chaos on one plane, and toward good or evil on another. Once a character crystallizes their alignment, they can begin to attune to items, places, and people who share their alignment.

Harmony

Harmony is rarely witnessed directly but is instead observed in its absence. When a fighting company, school, temple, or clan experiences great disharmony, that lack of resonance often ripples outward, causing problems and creating distrust. Likewise, when harmony exists, many groups operate more efficiently, gaining species synergies and other special bonuses while this harmony exists.

Attunement, alignment, and harmony are explained in detail in Chapter 4.

Qingshan – City at the Edge of the Empire

Qingshan is one of the many port cities that dot the western coast of the Xinizzi Sea. Located on the western edge of the Qingshan Province, the port city has long been a bustling port and trade town – an important asset that ensures the Empire of Xian continues to dominate the southern lands of Alessia. An older city, Qingshan remains a refuge to the Wūyā Tribe – the fengu native to the surrounding jungles. As a major port city, Qingshan also attracts large numbers of humans, terrans, ish'ra, and other traveling species – all of whom use the city's docks, arcane portals, and air-docks to travel to Velestra, Galgaræ, and beyond.

Qingshan is divided into several, independently walled districts that occupy terraces that ascend the beachside hills from which the jungle city was carved. These districts each have their own security and support services, although visitors and expatriates of the city often report greater difficulties navigating its bureaucracy, which caters exclusively for its citizens.

These districts include:

Dockside District

The largest district in Qingshan, Dockside spans most of Duòluò Bay – running from Golden Bridge in the south to the High Docks in the north. Since it is the heart of trade in the city, many of the goods here are shipped south to the Floating Markets of the Wàiguó District.

Fēixíng District

Inaccessible to all save the richest and most powerful arcanists, the floating district dominates the city's northern skyline, its purple-, green-, and yellow-tiled roofs a regional attraction for those with the power or money to gain access. Home to the city's Order of Astrænna, this district is composed of two magically fused structures, both of which branch up and out into the skies.

Gāoguì District

Known for both its pretense and its influence, the Gāoguì District overlooks the Dockside district to its south from the first of the many terraces upon which this city sits. Home to powerful merchants, the newly rich, displaced nobles, and experts of all kinds, this district sports its own airship dock.

High Docks District

Home to the majority of Qingshan's fengu, the High Docks district occupies the northern shore of the city's Duòluò Bay, separating it from the Zhuzou Beach, and the wild jungles beyond. Its towers rising high into the sky, High Docks boasts some of the city's best restaurants, shopping, and services.

Shāngrén District

Occupying the top of The Terrace of Qingshan, the Shāngrén District is home to some of the oldest clans and families in the province. The district is known for its power and money, amd its nobles often enjoy close ties to the capital, as well as to the ruling families of the city. Getting access to this part of the city is often costly. The Sons of
An Su guard this district.

Wàiguó District

Alternatively known as the Dark District, the Wàiguó District is home to foreigners, refugees, and outsiders of all sorts. The home of most of the city's transient population, large neighborhoods of elves keep this district (and the Floating Markets in its north) as safe and as clean as one could home. Located adjacent to the coast and bay, much of this district is on stilts to avoid seasonal flooding.

Xīn District

Located high above the southern shore of the Duòluò Bay, the Xīn District is the official heart of the city. Filled with embassies and minor, supporting families. This district is heavily patrolled by veteran Peacekeepers, ensuring the Empire of Xian is able to project its powers out into the west, where its truest ambitions lie.

Qingshan, like many of its sister cities, enjoys the strength and security being a member of the Empire of Xian provides. Although some of the provinces have their own, private security, the Empire still provides. Several imperial airships dominate the skies, ensuring external threats don't enter their airspace. Additionally, several barracks and Peacekeeper outposts ring the city, hidden in the jungles and supported by some of the Empire's most resilient Peacekeepers.

A Skyship City

As one of the Empire's oldest cities, Qingshan proudly carries on the imperial traditions of building, repairing, and servicing the Imperial skyships. While most repairs are made inside the heart of the Empire at the Imperial Docks, Qingshan is one of a dozen secondary cities inside the western and southern imperial provinces that regularly services these vehicles. Waves of transient workers cause the city to bloat to an impressive 60,000 people (compared to its 48,000), many of whom will rent shops, homes, and apartments on the southern end of the city.

While a select few citizens will complain of the sight of so many floating warships, most of the sensible citizens agree that show of power is what keeps lesser, far more dangerous elements at bay. The proud display of power by the imperial Peacekeepers, coupled with a city of skyships, is a truly impressive sight.

The Peoples of Qingshan

Qingshan is a smaller, cosmopolitan city of roughly 30,000 souls, although its population swells in the winter, when cooler weather makes expeditions out into the jungle ideal. Although any number of peoples, cultures, or species might be found walking the city streets, the following groups dominate the port city of Qingshan.

Elves

Many of the natives of Velestra make their way east, eventually arriving and settling in the city as permanent citizens. As a result, many elves tirelessly work Dockside, positioning themselves favorably in hopes of earning citizenship sooner.

Skyship Lore

Common Knowledge. Alessia's skyships are wondrous vehicles capable of safe long-distance flight between the floating cities, or in bigger cities, to the high docks or airship towers that connect sky to earth. Everyone knows that skyships are the safest way to travel.

DC 10. Alessia's skyship captains train for four to six years before getting their own skyships. Many skyship captains serve as imperial officers before striking out on their own. Most airships have secondary systems designed to rescue people who fall overboard. The Empire of Xian records roughly three hundred airship deaths each year.

DC 15. Skyships that deploy sails use a special arcane pattern designed to mimic heavy canvas. While deployed, these sails use magic to generate both lift and propulsion, pulling the ship through the air. These sails, like the rest of the ship, are naturally flame retardant.

DC 20+ Most skyships are built deep in the heart of the Empire of Xian. Velestra has her own airships, as do the gnoles of Fyrea. Although both these fleets are significantly smaller than the imperial fleet, both deploy technologies the Empire has yet to achieve.

Humans

The power behind the imperial throne, humans make up the majority of Qingshan's population. Although several indigenous tribes fished the Duòluò Bay long before Xian imperial scouts arrived, they were quickly integrated into the new empire when it expanded there. Today, humans occupy every district of the city, from the highest to the lowest.

Ish'ra

This former slave species has found a welcoming community in Qingshan. Alongside their terran neighbors, the ish'ra make up a big part of the Wàiguó District. Travelers seeking ish'ra companions, goods, or services need only look to the Floating Market to the north. For the right coin, one might even secure the services of one of the Du'shra.

Fengu

Native to the terraces and jungles from which Qingshan was carved, the fengu currently dominate the skies of the High Docks district, where they own entire towers. Able to glide between the towers with ease, fengu are employed throughout the city as messengers, spies, soldiers, and more.

Terrans

Terrans, alongside the ish'ra, make up the majority of the Wàiguó District far to the south of the city. The second-largest population of terran is located in Dockside, where many of the strongest terran can replace two, sometimes three men.

As the citizens of a proud port city, the people of Qingshan are quite accustomed to the scents, sights, and sounds of foreign influence, whether it crosses the longest desert roads or the wild, western seas. With that in mind, most of the people of Qingshan also embrace the diversity of that blending of cultures. Only the most archaic of radicals still scream for exclusion in the city, and their voices are thankfully weak.

FACTIONS IN QINGSHAN

Although Qingshan is a happy member of the Empire of Xian, not all within embrace that alliance. Additionally, there are those with entirely different, often regional, motives that require looser allegiances. The following factions actively pursue their goals inside of Qingshan:

Order of Astrænna

The Order of Astrænna and the Empire of Xian have long enjoyed a positive, peaceful relationship. Things are no different between them here in Qingshan. Working under the careful guidance of the Order of Astrænna, mages, sorcerers, alchemists, and arcanists of all sorts have come together, bringing their talents, lessons, and knowledge under a single banner. In Qingshan, the order operates the Qing Strænna.

The Brotherhood of Eyes

Dedicated to overthrowing the Qingshan family (who rules this province at the behest of the Emperor), this group of warlocks draws on the power of the ancient ruins inside the jungles outside of the city. Dedicated to the night and the hungry beasts who stalk it, these warlocks rarely appear in the city. When they do, the Peacekeepers are quick to respond. Accompanied by powerful shadow servants, these warlocks are able to do much damage in a short period of time.

The Cult of the Silver Mask

This small but violent group of fengu extremists have openly accused the Empire of Xian of imperialism and have, as a result, set out to overthrow them – at least in this city. Far more vocal than practical, this group has only managed a few successful attacks against Peacekeepers since announcing their presence in the city. Their graffiti dominates the Dockside district and the lower portions of the High Docks but is relatively rare elsewhere in the city.

The Wūyā Tribe

This large clan of fengu shares common ancestry, and as one of the oldest lines in the region, the Wūyā predate the humans who settled here by nearly three centuries. Although the tribe embraced these humans, their continued loss of territory has given rise to smaller, sometimes violent factions within the larger tribe.

The 113th Imperial Legion

Answering to Imperial Field Marshal Jet Zhou Xin, the Peacekeepers who stand the watch in Qingshan all operate under the Sea Wolves' banner. Whether deploying from the city's two Imperial Airships or stationed throughout its hills, members of the 113th pride themselves on their strength, honor, and resilience.

In addition to these factions, the people of Qingshan continue to organize around social, economic, and religious concerns, as well. As one traverses the city, one encounters the Shipwrights' Guild, the Coasters' Guild, the Dockers' Party, and the Free Traders Union as readily as one might pass an imperial Peacekeeper or terran gunslinger. Of course, as one moves outside of city and into the surrounding farmlands, which follow the terraced hillsides for a day in both directions, one discovers most of the farmers prefer their isolated, sometimes unnamed villages to the brighter lights of the city.

Dev Lore: Legion Outposts

We adopted the idea of legion outposts from the ancient Roman concept of *colonia* – commonly called colonies today.

The Empire of Xian establishes outposts as an act of faith and good will, donating their resources and protection to those they serve while slowly expanding their influence throughout Alessia.

Story Seeds: Ten Troubles

As a city at the edge of the Empire of Xian, there is no end of troubles and challenges. GMs should consider using (or adapting) the following story seeds to get their stories going!

1. Alisinn's Avarice. Alisinn Hovell, an elderly spinster living just north of the Low Docks, is seeking adventurers to help her complete a collection of *Shadow Stained China*. She needs the PCs to recover an important tea cup.
2. Broken Promises. Xin Fi Arana has been waiting for a nearby merchant to deliver some important alchemical solutions. Xin is seeking PCs willing to go seek out this wayward alchemist and put some pressure on her.
3. Cargo Shorts. Local Peacekeepers with the 113th are seeking information about several missing shipments of imperial weapons.
4. Fengu Fortune. The Murder Company, a satirical performance company staffed entirely with fengu, is seeking a group of non-fengu for a special performance.
5. Galgaræa's Cult. While the Peacekeepers remain diligent in their pursuit of Galgaræ's various cults, they can't track them all. When the PCs discover a local cult, what do they do?
6. Magitech Monster. While exploring the Low Docks, a monstrosity – clearly out of control – corners the PCs and attempts to kill one of them.
7. Market Run. While traveling through the Floating Market, a fengu rogue lifts 2d6 coins (or something else of equal or better value) and gives them a run through the market.
9. Sina's Sample. Sina Wui, a well-known merchant who lives on the Terrace is seeking adventurers to delve into the nearby jungles to retrieve some special ingredients she needs for an alchemical experiment she is conducting.
9. Xin's Parade. Shou Xin, a wandering monk, seeks allies to help him reach Galgaræ – the final leg in a divine quest for the Light he has taken over three years to complete.
10. Yan's Rose. Bavera and Yan Shawa opened Yan's Rose three years ago and now that they're finally turning a profit, local rogues have started to press them for protection money. They've considered the Peacekeepers, but the wait for support is long. Do they turn to the PCs?

RELIGION IN QINGSHAN

Like many of the coastal cities that dot the western edge of the Empire, Qingshan is filled with the devout and the pious alike, although most of those same citizens prefer the privacy of their homes when it comes to events as personal and intimate as religious practice. Still, the city manages at least two Houses of Healing, one in the High Docks District and one at the northern end of the Golden Bridge, a few feet from the royal family's home. Several smaller, regional shrines dot the perimeter of the Wàiguó District. Most citizens, at least when they elect to be public with their devotions, attend the Temple of the Asaræl Light, located on the northern border of the Gāoguì District (and just slightly behind the Dockside District). Qingshan's largest and most celebrated temple, this structure and the nearby blocks are sacred ground, some going so far as to consider the temple an extension of the emperor's will.

The following faiths, groups, and cults openly meet in Qingshan:

CHILDREN OF DIVINE KING

Dedicated wholly and completely to Emperor Zin Zhu, this sect propagates the simple idea that the emperor is blessed by the former Asaræl spirits, infused with the Light and perfect in all ways. They live to serve.

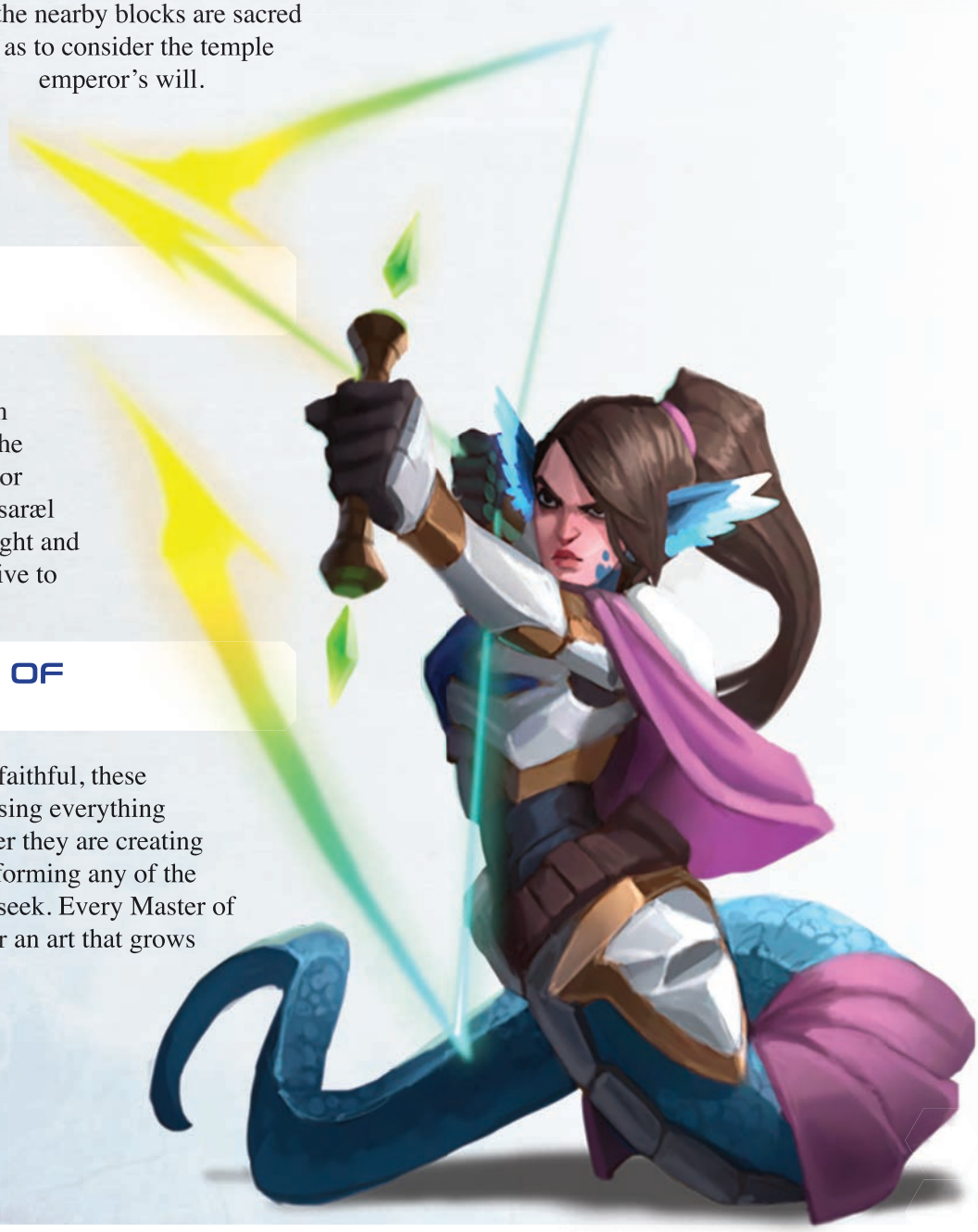
THE MASTERS OF LIGHT

A popular sect among the faithful, these individuals believe in infusing everything they do with Light, whether they are creating art, preparing food, or performing any of the various crafts the masters seek. Every Master of Light is expected to master an art that grows one of the Four Pillars.

THE MIND SEEKERS

Touched in ways others cannot see, the Mind Seekers are a small cult of mentalists who seek The Mind Star – a psyche-centric concept that alchemically merges the mind and spirit into a singular entity, capable of surviving death. With a strong following among the ish'ra, the Mind Seekers are expanding their reach beyond Qingshan daily.

Of course, any number of additional shrines, cults, sects, or other faiths could also exist in Qingshan, should the GM wish it.



Qingshan
Imperial City by the Sea
Locations
1. The High Docks
2. The Low Docks
3. Qing Strænna
4. Northbay Market
5. Sin Yi Beach
6. The Floating Market
7. The Terrace
8. Zhuzou Beach
9. San Fishing Co-Op
1
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GLOSSARY

The *World of Alessia Campaign Primer* uses many specialized terms that have specific meanings within the larger context of the campaign setting. To keep things easy for you, we've reproduced all these terms, phrases, and references into this handy glossary.

ASCENDANT STONES
The elathi name for the crystals which grow out of the Crystal Lattice.

ASRIAN THIEVE PRINCES
Holdouts from an earlier age, the Asrian Thief Princes led large, roaming tribes of yökai (kitsune and weaslings) and Fyrean elves (more commonly known as desert elves). Raiding caravans all along the Silk Road, these pirates employ a combination of tactics and hardware, using dashers, drifters, and skiffs to rapidly remove their victims' wealth, as well as their dignity.

BHZENN'AN
The Bhzenn'an are a collection of elathi tribes, all of whom have embraced The Crimson Oni – a demon lord from Galgaræ.

BROKEN ISLES OF BHZENN, THE
These isles where the Bhzenn'an rule.

COILED TOWERS, THE
An alternative name for the Floating Towers of Xin.

CRIMSON ONI, THE
A powerful oni with powers stolen directly from Galgaræ.

DJINN, THE
Beings as old as Alessia, the djinn of today's age are modern, accommodating, and mindful of their manners. Several powerful families of djinn formed mutually beneficial pacts, aligning some of their descendants and strengthening those bonds through lines of offspring that evolved into the djinnkin.

EMPIRE OF XIAN
Founded in Elysia after the first emperor slew Galgaræ, the Empire of Xian dominates much of Alessia.

FIRST AGE, THE
Alessia's earliest age, the First Age was 1-2023.

FREE MERCS OF VEL
Inter-dimensional raiders who frequently try to penetrate Alessia's Rings of Heaven to raid the surface.

GALGARÆ
Known by as many titles and names across as many cultures, Galgaræ the Dread (and countless additional variants on that name), is a great beast that sought to ruin the Sovereigns of Light, but instead fell to the Lance of the Heavens, wielded by the great hero Xian, who later went on to establish the Church of Light and the Empire of Xian.

GALGARÆ SCALES
These valuable scales often contain the residual necromantic energy Galgaræ's rotting corpse still produces.

GHUN-GHUN
This early shamanic practice dominated the Broken Islaes before The Crimson One arrive.

GREY YEARS
The Grey Years were a plague from 5,798-5,807.

HEALING HOUSES (OF SILLIAS)
Named after Sovereign Sillias, who fell during the War of the Sovereigns, the Healing Houses of Sillias serve to remind all – visitor and citizen alike – about the importance of lending a helping hand when needed.

HERALDS, IMPERIAL
Imperial Heralds are the emperor of Xian's finest warriors. They often travel alone, or in pairs.

HORSE LORDS OF VANNDEANE
While their title is archaic and suggestive of a time when they still road horses, these "lords" govern the mobile cities that dominate eastern Shiran.

INFO CRYSTALS
These crystals are crafted from the shards mined from the Crystal Lattice.

IRON BARQUES OF BIN YAI
A collective of warships in service to the Emerald Collective.

JADE MIRROR
Another name for the Silk Sea.

JININDRA ISLES
A place of terror and freedom through strength, where the yökai banished their forsaken for years. Their actions made monsters.

KAIMA
The formal (and respectful) title for Alessia's collective of nature spirits, the kaima live just slightly out of phase with everyone else, occupying a mirror realm to

Alessia only its seers truly understand.

MAGITECH
The common term for all arcane-science hybrids, magitech is commonly referred to as the equipment that arose after the tru'atha arrived. Although magitech actually refers to a specific brand popular in the Empire of Xian, magitech is not limited a specific brand or corporate culture. Like all technology, need and greed impact it equally.

MAGITECH RUNES
The modern, standard set of runes used to enchant magitech.

MASTERS OF LIGHT
These individuals believe they should infuse everything they touch with the Light.

MINDFUL HEARTS, THE
Alessian monks believed someone who achieved harmony in body, mind, and spirit had discovered their "mindful heart."

OATH OF SCALES
Dragonsworn take this oath when they select a partner with whom they would like to reproduce. Once taken, this oath is often for life.

ORDER OF ASTRANNA
This collection of arcanists pursues truth on Alessia.

PEACEKEEPERS
The official soldiers of the Empire of Xian, these well-armored, better-trained warriors all pass through the Storm Citadel, a war college designed to produce elite but responsible warriors. Peacekeepers value deterrence and de-escalation but will deploy violence as needed.

PATH OF LIGHT
A term widely embraced around Alessia, the Path of Light refers to the challenging, self-critical adherence to those seeking union with the Light. Although some of their adherents are devout and extremely strict, others (like the Children of Babel) express the Light's power through laughter, joy, and harmony.

QIN JIA
Alessia's "miracle workers," this order of monks travels the world healing others.

SACRED PEACE
Officially ending Alessia's first age, the Sacred Peace represents a new approach to society.

SHENNS'ÆNN
This is the elven term for "Great Trees."

SKYSHIPS
Known elsewhere as airships, skyships enjoy a special place in Alessia's history, especially considering these vehicles can reach the Rings of Heaven and can operate in the upper atmosphere, some even making distant trips to Alessia's moon, Telgravia.

TACS
A measurement of data in Alessia.

THOUSAND EMPIRES
Known as the Time of a Thousand Empires, this period dominated Alessia's earliest history and represents the global attempt to carve up the world.

'THOUSAND YEARS OF LIGHT, THE'
Emperor Zhu Zin's promise to bring peace to his empire for 1,000 years.

TOWERS OF XIN
Designed to protect the perimeter of the Empire of Xian, these floating towers dot the slowly expanding Empire. Representing beacons of hope and security to some, these towers are often the first thing outsiders see upon entering the Empire for the very first time. Upon close inspection, most towers have dozens of smaller batteries (depending on their configurations and deployment mission), at at least a single, full battery of energy and ballistic weapons at its disposal.

WAR OF THE SOVEREIGNS
The last great war on Alessia, the War of the Sovereigns, was fought between 5,780 and 5,797.

YARRA'S TEARS
These gems are sought across the plains of Yerwin.

YERWINIAN CITY MASTERS
These land trains dominate western Yerwin, meeting the Horse Lords of Vanndeane.

Friends in Low Places

A Tale of Alessia

By Erik Scott de Bie

"Look, I'm sure we can talk this out," came a slurred voice as a leathern pack came hurtling out the window of the tavern to land with a whump in the dusty street. "Oi, come now—"

The pack moved slightly in the street, and something the size of a melon poked up through the leather flap. It took note of the commotion on the other side of the open window and made a soft, vaguely concerned sound. The crunch of wood made it wince, then it ducked back into the pack as a rectangular device about the width of a dinner plate and twice as long came spinning out into the street. It clattered onto the walk beside the pack, where it spun lazily in diminishing circles, shimmering with faint blue light. The pack moved slightly, but the creature didn't emerge again.

"I was just a few Yuan short!" she was saying, her voice rising higher in alarm. "You know I'm good for— Oi! Oi, watch it!"

In short order, the speaker herself came flying out the window, hurled with rather impressive force on the part of the bouncer. The ish'ra tucked and tried to roll with the landing, but too much rice wine sloshing around in her belly had other plans. As it passed, she hit the sidewalk flat on her backside, bounced painfully, and half-rolled, half-fell partway into the street. Her face ended up within a narrow span of a humming tru'atha psi-engine, and she jerked back onto the sidewalk before the heavy vehicle could flatten her. The driver cursed at her and swerved down the road, shaking his fist. There she lay, staring up at the clouds over Qingshan and the Rings of Heaven over Alessia, and let out a long sigh.

"Well," said Seirye Qin, scratching at her eye-patch. "That could have gone worse."

There came a faint interrogative sound, and the buccaneer murmured an incoherent reply. The pack moved again, and a tiny metallic creature emerged, about the size of a toddler. Its head was one big metal sphere with a single eye, and it looked her over critically. The Dasan Watch Bot IIV shrugged its tiny hands and tweeted a concise counter opinion in short, buzzing syllables.

The ish'ra rolled her eye. "Oh, what do you know?"

Then she tried to sit up, and it got worse.

Seirye's midsection was a mess of aches and developing bruises from the more than several brawls she'd fought in as many Low Docks taverns and flophouses over the past dozen or so days, and even her high degree of inebriation didn't entirely keep the pain at bay. It was like folk around here didn't like pirates. How forward thinking of them.

Her one eye was starting to puff up, and she thanked the Light she didn't have a nose to be broken. Plenty of humans she'd left with a smashed mound over their faces the past few days. It just seemed like bad design to make such a sensitive organ so weak and central on the face. She supposed the closest an ish'ra came was having someone tweak one of the olfactory tentacles draped over their shoulder, or possibly smash one of their big, fan-like ears. Seirye had always been pretty good at dodging blows, but too much drinking had a dampening effect on her style of brawling.

"Better to stick to what I'm good at," she said as she managed to stand. "Erm."

She patted herself, searching to no avail, and loosed a groan.

"Oi!" she shouted back through the open window. "Can I at least have my—"

Her Asprene Energy bow came flying out through the window and smashed into her belly, making her collapse around it with a whoosh of breath. She almost tottered back into the road, but her Watch Bot got around behind her and pushed on her leg. Not that its minuscule strength made any difference, but she appreciated the support. And couldn't help grinning.

"Thanks, Ivy."

The bot buzzed contentedly.

Blearily, with people giving her a nice wide berth, Seirye slung her pack over her shoulder and took account of her bearings. It was toward the end of the day, though she couldn't be certain which day. This wasn't the first tavern she'd been kicked out, but she was relieved to see she was still in the Lower Dock neighborhood. It'd be just her luck to sober up and wake to find herself in Xin, say, or even more likely in Wàiguó, with the rest of the foreigners,

drifters, and disreputable scoundrels. She'd spent her fair share of time on a pirate ship or passed out in a prison cell—probably more the later, honestly—so she certainly qualified.

"Ivy," she said, and the little Dasan bot climbed up onto her shoulder. "What day is it?"

IIV chirped a reply and Seirye winced. That long?

"Hrm." Seirye picked up her sword and spun it with a practiced flick of her wrist. The weapon unfolded with a mechanical sizzle and whine. She spun the sword back into its folded state and holstered it at the small of her back. "Well, guess we just go to the next tavern. Someone's gotta have some work for us. If we're to get the Mist back."

IIV made a sound that was its equivalent of an exasperated sigh.

"Overdid it again, did I?" Seirye asked, weighing the bow in her hand.

The bot was probably right. Of the bar fights she'd been in—most of them she'd started—half had been about credit, half because someone couldn't tolerate yet another story about the Emerald Mist. Even IIV had mentioned it once or twice, this tendency of hers to tell three too many stories, but she just couldn't help it. It was hardly Seirye's fault she loved her ship, or spent all her time talking about it, particularly after a few too many cups of rice wine.

The insufferable toady at the Capital City watch had given her a year to get together the funds to reclaim her airship from impound, and the months were marching on. By the rules they had explained to her, she had to have the full amount when she entered the city too, rather than paying in installments or collecting it from someone there. Which left her scrambling for Yuan in the towns farther out from the capital, always looking for a big score. Qingsham didn't look to be delivering, but hope sprang eternal.

Of a sudden, Ivy perked up on Seirye's shoulder and loosed a string of excited Hexa. "What do you see?" she asked. "A very rich man in need of a… a…"

Ahead, up the street, was the most beautiful woman she had ever seen. At first, Seirye thought her an elf, with her delicate features and graceful ears, but between her deep purple skin and the horns she had originally taken for tassels on her hood, her identity was clear. She was an elathi, one of the Jínhuá of Xian, a hyper-evolved sort of elf bonded with crystals and psionic power. Seirye had seen such folk on her travels, and their fantastic beauty and great power never failed to draw her attention. This particular elathi, with her perfect face, and draped in a fine purple cloak, was, without a doubt, the finest specimen of the people she had ever seen.

Her tentacles twitched. She also smelled really good. Like fresh-cut jasmine on a spring day.

"Good day, good lady," Seirye said with a bow. She hadn't even meant to speak, but now that she had, she added an ingratiating smile. "Consider this sailor at your service."

It shouldn't have worked. She knew what she looked like: a scruffy drunk who'd just been tossed out of a tavern, and an ish'ra besides. Most folk of Alessia gave folk of her species a bit of a skeptical look, considering their alien origin and long, less-than-bright history. There was no reason such a fine personage would even glance in her direction. And yet, the elathi paused and looked toward her, red eyes gleaming.

Seirye stiffened to her full height. "I, er, that is," she said.

The elathi reached forward, parting her cloak and revealing an undergarment of deep crimson leather plated with gold, and extended one purple hand toward Seirye's face. Her fingers brushed her cheek, and the ish'ra felt a tingling rush of energy that started in her head and spread down through her body. Whatever she'd meant to say, Seirye forgot it in that tiny touch. The tentacles draped over her shoulders went taut, then relaxed. The elathi smiled with her dark lips and walked on her way, leaving the buccaneer standing in the street, blinking after her.

IIV squeaked something less than positive.

"Oh, stuff it." Seirye shouldered her pack. "It's been a hard day."

Her stomach gurgled, and she realized she hadn't managed to eat at the tavern before they'd thrown her out, and unlike IIV, she'd have to find some sustenance eventually. Which entailed finding some credit, a resource of which she'd run rather low.

"How much do you think you'd fetch, Ivy?"

The bot returned a rude sound.

"Of course I'm not serious," she said, hefting her bag. "I need you for all sorts of reasons, I'm sure. Too hungry to name any just at the moment."

As they started off down the cobbled street, the watch bot started listing off vital functions in rapid Hexa, and Seirye sighed. IIV was right: she'd sooner part with her sword or her bow than her watch bot. And that meant she had to find some work. That, or mug someone. Maybe some burglary. Seirye didn't much like stooping to crime, but necessity was necessity. Maybe blunder into another tavern, try to convince a likely patron to spring for a bowl of rice, maybe some wine…

Abruptly, IIV's lecture cut off in a fit of frenzied warbling. Seirye might have chastised the little bot for startling her, but her tentacles shifted slightly toward a nearby alley, drawn to the salty smell of sweat. She pricked her ears in that direction and heard raised voices and the scuffle of boot on stone.

"That doesn't sound like wine," she said, grumbling somewhat.

She moved to go when a high voice said something in language she didn't recognize but a tone she did: pleading. Someone was in distress, and Seirye could hardly call herself a noble swashbuckler, champion of the downtrodden and erstwhile hero of the hopeless, if she ignored such a fate.

Her empty stomach protested, but before she could think better of it, her heart won out, and she sped lightly into the alley, pausing only long enough for her eye to adjust to the relative gloom. Awnings and strung laundry blocked out much of the midday sun, leaving the alley in a patchwork of obscuring shadows, but the ish'ra possessed a visual acuity that had little trouble in such conditions. She easily gauged the forms of two poorly dressed individuals harassing a smaller third, who lay on the muddy cobblestones between them. The target of their abuse looked like a young human, though Seirye sometimes found it difficult to tell with that particular species. The high-pitched mewling coming from the downed creature also suggested youth, though, so Seriye went with her first impression.

"Oi!" she said to the two brigands. "Cease this foolishness immediately."

They looked up, one face surprised, the other annoyed. She thought them a man and a woman, but she couldn't say for certain. Humankin all looked about the same to Seirye, except for their strange and entirely unnecessary noses, which was how she told them apart. One of these had a big, bulbous growth on the front of his face, its nostrils flaring every heartbeat or two, as though its owner was constantly scenting the air. That one stared at her with flat, angry eyes, his mind all but visibly working to process the interruption. Seirye found it fascinating and an obvious weakness to limit one of the senses—especially one as powerful as smell—to a single, easily tweaked perceptive organ, but oh well, she hadn't shaped humans from primordial clay and instilled them with the energy of eternity.

The other—who had a smaller, much more efficient nose that quirked up at the end in a fashion Seirye had once heard described as "pert"—turned her nose up at the ish'ra in a dismissive gesture their kind often practiced. "Step off, noseless," Pert said. "This is no business of yours."

"What an appropriate insult!" Seirye slipped off her pack and let it drop to the cobbles, then clapped her hands together in mock applause. "Just what I was thinking about."

"What?" asked Bulbous. The youth on the ground moaned, earning a kick from the big human.

"Pay this fool no mind," said Pert. "It don't know when it's overmatched."

"Oi." Seirye glowered. "What's this rudeness? Here I was extending you a professional courtesy, and suddenly I'm not a person? That's not nice at all."

"Courtesy?" A wicked grin creased Pert's unpleasant face, making it worse. "What's that, then?"

Seirye spread her hands, coincidentally putting one near the handle of the folded sword holstered at her lower back. "Practicality," she said. "Pardon, 'haps you're new at brigandry, but preying upon the small and young doesn't usually get you what you want. Sure, they might have a bit of scratch from a job, but odds are, they're running it back to their organizer. Pick up the little fish, and you make their boss angry at you. Better to follow 'em, take a look, see what you're dealing with…"

Two more figures stepped out of the shadows, one small cloaked form deeper in the alleyway, who wielded a loaded crossbow pointed in her direction, the other—a bird-like fengu, no less—behind her to cut off her escape. That one she might not have noticed, were it not for IIV abruptly whirring in warning. She saw the glint of cheap but well-maintained steel as the fengu drew a curved blade.

Suddenly the odds against her had doubled, and they hadn't been good to start with.

Not just humankin, but yökai as well? What had she stumbled into?

"My thanks for the lesson," said Pert. "But 'haps you're the one who should take a look, see what you're dealing with." She crossed her arms. "Or is that hard, with only the one—?"

Her words cut off abruptly when Seirye's fist crashed into her jaw from below, sending her staggering up and back. So suddenly and fiercely did the ish'ra strike that Pert never saw it coming, even if she had realized Seirye started moving at all. The buccaneer wasted no time in drawing her sword, which she whirled and unfolded before Pert had even landed on her back.

"Oi," she said, the word slurred a bit from the drink.

"Didn't I warn—"

Foolish mistake. Shouldn't have talked. Should have just struck. She blamed it on the rice wine.

Too late, Seirye slashed at Bulbous, but something slammed into her from behind, and she tried to roll to the side. The fengu had rushed her in a bid to tackle her from behind, and she felt the hard edge of their cutlass snag the edge of her leather jerkin. It absorbed the cut, which would have opened up her belly had she not dodged—or picked the wrong way to twist. They ended up facing each other across two paces, her sword against the fengu's short, heavy blade.

He had attacked on her blind side—the left. Smart.

IIV squeaked and Seirye abruptly threw herself to the side just in time for a crossbow bolt to shatter into the bricks behind where her head had been. The fengu chose that moment of distraction to rush forward—again on the left—and it more luck than skill that let Seirye block his attack with her much larger sword. Steel screeched, and she twisted away from him, right into the arms of Bulbous, who wrapped around her arms and chest from behind and hoisted her off her feet. Her sword fell from a suddenly nerveless hand. Breath cut off, she gasped for air.

The fengu came stalking forward, cutlass raised and murder in their black crow eyes, but Seirye was ready. She let the big man lift her, and used his momentum to slam both feet into the fengu's chest, making the yökai stagger back, startled. She'd hoped Bulbous would overbalance, but he held fast and squeezed. Vision narrowing, Seirye thrashed and fought, twisting them this way and that, but Bulbous's grip wouldn't slacken. Worse—a second pair of arms pushed out from his long coat and wrapped around her waist, pinning her to his chest. She struggled to turn her head, and caught a glimpse of bright glowing blue lines crossing his face. Chi lines.

Celestial Dragons, she'd mistaken a terran for a human? An unfortunate—and deadly—oversight!

She perceived dimly that the crossbow wielder was moving closer, no doubt lining up a better shot, and it was all Seirye could do to keep the terran between that deadly weapon and herself. If not for the Asprene Bow folded and strapped to her back, Bulbous would have crushed her already. Seirye groped for her belt, desperately seeking a weapon of some sort. She gasped for air, red cracks spreading across her sight. Her body felt so weak—so numb and sleepy.

Then pink-tinged light erupted around the crossbow wielder, limning her slight body as though she were shedding the radiance herself. The creature flinched—Seirye could make out the wedge snout and distinctive fox head of a kitsune—and looked for the source of the light. Somewhere underfoot, IIV must be projecting it: not an attack, but enough to distract them. And she knew what was coming…

The crossbow wielder uttered a guttural curse in a language Seirye did not know.

"What?" Bulbous asked, the second time she'd heard him use the same word. Was it the only word he knew? Mayhap.

Abruptly IIV issued a chirp of challenge and projected a ray of crimson light that took the kitsune in one arm, making her cloak burst into flame. She screamed and staggered back, and Bulbous's grip loosened just a little. It was enough: Seirye's hand found what she sought and grasped it tight. Activated by her touch, it started to whine with building energy. This wouldn't feel great.

Bulbous looked over at the kitsune and started to ask a question, which was when Seirye plunged one of her energy bow's arrows right into his side, between his right arms, into the pit of the upper one where his thick leathers couldn't cover. The sharp point sank in with little resistance, making him grunt in pain, but that wasn't why Seirye gritted her teeth. Abruptly, the arrow burst with

yellow light, delivering a shock of power right into his body—and running into hers as well. They were touching, after all, and might as well have been conjoined.

What happened next, she couldn't say for certain—she must have lost awareness for half a heartbeat as her limbs froze up, her teeth chattered and her eyes felt as if they would pop—but when Seirye came back to herself, she sat atop the quivering terran as he jerked and groaned in the grip of the shock. Faint wisps of smoke rose from them, and Seirye suspected her hair stood up in a most unfashionable way. Hardly a romantic, graceful fight, but what had to be done, had to be done.

At least she could breathe again—hauling air through short, ragged gasps into quivering lungs.

She reclaimed her sword and staggered to her feet, the world shifting slightly from side to side but mostly intact. The terran was down next to the still unconscious human woman, and the kitsune had fled, batting at the flames on her robe. That left the fengu, who had recovered from her kick and approached, his eyes gleaming like those of a raptor descending on an unsuspecting fish.

This time, she was ready.

Mostly.

The fengu lunged at her, slashing high to low, and she brought up Emperor's Edge to catch it. The blades smashed together in a ringing declamation of sound that swept through the alley. She danced back, flowing through defensive elusion, and he pressed the attack. Right and left, back and forth. A flick of his wrist locked their blades wide, and he brought up a powerful knee toward her midsection. Seirye knew all about the power of fengu legs and wasn't about to let that blow connect. She twisted back and around, only to find the wall of the nearest building at her back.

Nothing for it but to go up and over.

She dug deep with her foot and leaped, took two light steps on the wall and—using their locked blades as leverage, leaped up and over the fengu. Their eyes—his two and her one—remained trapped just as their swords, even as Seirye turned a flip over her attacker's head. With his free hand, he reached into his silk shirt—another weapon, mayhap—and her body acted of its own accord.

Emperor's Edge abruptly fell from her hand as she dropped it, and the surprised fengu lost just a touch of his balance. Thus, when the ish'ra landed behind him and delivered a short, sharp kick to his backside, he staggered forward as she rolled away. He whirled, cutlass in one hand and a small magitech blaster in the other, but Seirye was faster. She came up in a crouch, unfolding her bow in the same motion, and an energy arrow burst into light on the notch. They froze like that, the blaster pointed wide, the arrow locked dead straight at the fengu's bird-like face.

"Well," Seirye said. "Let's see who's faster."

The terran and the human had fled—Seirye could see them limping off, supporting each other. The kitsune was gone, leaving little burned scraps of cloth in her wake. IIV stood near her, oculus set on the fengu and glowing bright red for an identified threat. The ish'ra felt the tension growing in her arm but ignored it. All her focus she poured into the fengu.

"Go on," she said. "Decide."

He did.

The fengu's feet beat a hasty retreat from the alley, racing away from her into the gloom. Apparently, whatever had brought him to this enterprise—Yuan, she suspected—had not been enough to risk an arrow through the eye. And Seirye had managed to keep her hand from shaking long enough to assure him that would come to pass. A rousing success!

IIV let out a relieved whistle of Hexa, and Seirye loosed a sigh and slumped to a sitting position. She shouldn't have walked into that fight, let alone walked out of it. Not that she was walking now. Her whole body was sore from that explosive episode, and her ribs creaked a little in remembered pain from the terran crushing her. IIV expressed a line of concern.

"I'm well." Seirye folded her bow and attached it to her back, and winced at the effort to bend her arm that way. She wiped sweat from her brow. "Nothing a good meal won't fix."

There was a reason she got in this scrap. If she could only remember… right.

IIV had wheeled over to the young human on the ground, who lay unmoving. He—Seirye was pretty sure it was a male human, though sometimes she found it hard to tell—had taken a serious beating, and developing bruises covered most of his exposed skin. With a wince as she made her protesting knees work, Seirye bent low over the lad and listened at his mouth and nose. If he was breathing, it was too faint for her to detect.

"Ivy?" she asked. "Can you—?"

The watch bot chirped an affirmative, shifted its oculus to a soothing blue color, and sprayed light upon the battered human. He inhaled sharply, jolted back into awareness, and his eyes fluttered up at her. "You…" he said. "Why?"

"Don't ask me," Seirye said. "I just got here. I—"

He might have expressed a little gratitude, but instead he flailed his hands at her in something like an attack. She fended them off without too much trouble, recognizing panic when she saw it. Had their places been reversed, she likely wouldn't have reacted well to a sudden awakening either. Celestial Dragons, those wounds looked like they hurt. Weary and bruised as she was, she wouldn't trade places with this youth for all the necessary credit to buy back her ship.

Well, mayhap…

Then a strange pressure locked around her head and squeezed, and her thoughts cut off. She toppled backward, confused, and her backside thumped unceremoniously to the cobblestones. There she lay, clutching at her head. The human was saying something to her, his face confused. IIV trilled an alarm and shifted its oculus into red for the heat beam to guard Seirye, but to no avail.

A shadow appeared over her, and she could make out only gracefully curving horns and shimmering purple energy against the blazing sun. Psionic energy, she realized.

"Wait," she said. "This isn't how it—"

Then another blast struck her, and she knew only darkness.

When next Seirye became aware of the world, she sat in a chair, hands secured behind her, shrouded in darkness. It didn't feel like a blindfold, nor did she see the faint outline of objects around her. Magical darkness, perhaps, or—more unsettlingly—mayhap her sight was just gone. Whoever had taken her down had been a psion, after all: who knew what sort of power they wielded?

Her tentacles quirked. The air smelled dank—mildew and rich dark earth. She'd known her share of prison cells, and this didn't seem like one. Entirely too comfortable, and without the lingering malaise of bitter, unfulfilled hope. Also, she distinctly smelled root vegetables, sour wine, and the slight tang of fish. A cellar, mayhap?

Seirye tested her bonds, which had a little give. Whoever had tied her up obviously wasn't much of a practiced hand, because she believed she could escape without too much trouble.

"Ivy?" she asked.

No reply. Wherever her watch bot was, it couldn't reach her.

She heard her own voice, though, which meant the only sense missing was her sight.

Somewhere, not too far away, she heard the creak of wood on stone. She strained and picked up hushed voices just beyond that sound. More than one captor, obviously. They sounded excited.

She heard the sound again, and realized it must be a door to the chamber in which she was secured, and this second sounding must be the door closing. She knew this in part because of her keen intuition—"second in keenness only to Emperor's Edge!" she would boast to any rival buccaneer who would listen, which was of course a lie—but mostly because she could tell she was no longer alone in the chamber.

She couldn't easily name the sensation that told her someone had joined her within. The air felt different on her skin—closer, fuller. As the other stood, Seirye's tentacles picked up a familiar scent.

"Mistress elath?" she asked. "You took my offer of assistance after all, I sense!"

Her companion in the darkness spoke no words, but a startled intake of breath was more than sufficient to confirm Seirye's guess. She never forgot the scent of a beautiful lady or lad.

The elathi spoke an arcane word, and abruptly the darkness dissolved around them and light bled back into the chamber. The woman stood behind her and to the left, so Seirye couldn't see her. She had guessed aright, and she sat bound in a small cellar stacked with boxes and smelled of sweet root and potato. Now that she could see, by the purple flame that floated in her host's hand, she could also make out baskets of rice and see

pots studded with utensils. She was in a cellar beneath an eatery, she reasoned—perhaps even the very same wayside tavern that had propelled her unceremoniously into the street. She thought she recognized the runes on some of the clothes draped over the baskets.

Then the elathi came around to Seirye's good side, looking every bit as appealing as she had when they first met. Her expression was far less blissful, perhaps, but that only piqued Seirye's interest. The purple ball of flame burning in the middle of the room flowed toward her hand, and she held it before her, casting deep shadows across her face. It made her look more than a little frightening.

Seirye should have known this woman would be her captor. The coincidence was simply too great that they should meet shortly before the attack. But what did she want?

"Where's my watch bot?" Seirye asked.

The woman made no reaction to the question and proceeded as though Seirye had not spoken.

"So." Her voice caressed the ish'ra's ears like well-loved silk, freshly cleaned and dyed that morn. Deeper than Seirye would have expected, but every bit as lovely. "Why attack my folk?"

"Me?" Seirye, who had been distracted by the heart-shaped stretch of smooth belly at her eye-level, abruptly fixed her singular gaze up at the elathi's face. "Oh, my good lady, you must hire better brigands! They hardly know the tricks of the trade. If you and I were to strike a deal… I…" Her head swam. The after effects of the psionics, mayhap, or else the elathi's proximity.

"You mean your companions, I think," the elathi said.

"You mean Ivy, my watch bot?" Seirye asked. "Yes, I'll be wanting that back."

The elathi went on as though she hadn't spoken at all. "There is no honor to be had among such scoundrels. They botched their raid and left you for dead, it seems." She brought the flame closer to Seirye's face, where it shivered and snapped. "Use your tongue, ish'ra! Tell me of your scheme!"

"My scheme!" The ish'ra recoiled from the elathi, playing the chastened captive. To draw her in. "Have pity, mistress! I seek only to rescue she who is most precious to me in all the world!"

"Yes?" The elathi leaned even closer. "And who is this woman?"

"The Amethyst Myst!" Seirye said, as though confessing to a great scandal. "Fastest skyship in all Alessia, my heart to the Celestial Dragons!"

"And—" The elathi pulled up short and blinked.

"Hold. What?"

Seirye, who had been about to seize her with her freed hands, was also caught off guard. "You've—you've not heard of the Amethyst Myst? Tragically held captive in the capital, temporarily?"

"No," the elathi said. "I meant, why are you in Qingshan, attacking psions?"

"What?" Seirye sputtered. "That's a fool's errand! No credit in that—unless…" She furrowed her brow. "You aren't the one employing those brigands?"

Now it was the elathi's turn to be surprised again. "Hardly," she said. "I came upon young Jocori in the alley, fighting with you. I assumed the others left in panic."

"No!" Seirye cleared her throat. "Well, yes, but that's not exactly how it happened! You see..."

The elathi was looking at her very directly, as though her violet-pink eyes could see right through Seirye's flesh and skull and into her mind. And indeed, the ish'ra felt a little prickle at the front of her skull, like gentle hands massaging her brow. It was psionic magic, she thought, though she'd never experienced something quite like this.

"Let's begin again," the elathi said. "I am Taela Liu, protector of Qingshan and its psions. And you are?"

"Honored and charmed." Seirye smiled wanly, but the elathi showed no sign of appreciating the humor. "Seirye Qin, captain of the Amethyst Myst of Pascct, sailor and privateer and buccaneer, and certainly no enemy of yours. I'm in Qingshan on business."

"Gathering credit to get your ship out of impound," Taela filled in, as though she'd lifted the thoughts directly from Seirye's mind.

"That," the ish'ra said. "Is rather accurate, my fine and alluring lady. You've heard of me?"

Taela put a finger to her forehead, then touched the

same spot on Seirye's brow. Magic. Of course. "Mayhap it was too much to hope," she said, or perhaps thought.

Either way, the elathi smiled in reply. "I'd like to peer deeper, if you will allow it."

"You're asking my permission."

"I am." Taela inclined her head.

"Why should I?" Seirye asked. "Not that I have anything to hide, you understand."

"There is a threat to those I have sworn to protect," Taela said. "Perhaps our interests are not opposed. I wish to look for the truth in your mind, that we might cooperate."

Some deep, primal part of her rebelled at the very idea of someone in her mind. It was in her blood, passed down by ancestors enslaved long ago to the orgothii, who used psionic magic to rend apart minds and discover buried rebellions. Seirye shivered, uneasy at the very idea of such an intrusion. But the elathi was so lovely, her eyes so full of compassion and kindness. And she had asked her permission. She had respected her, a stranger.

Also, considering Seirye had freed her hands as part of her plan to seize and incapacitate the elathi when the moment was right, perhaps a more peaceful resolution was worth a try.

"Very well," she said. "But then you free me and give me back my bot."

"If you are servant of the threat to Qingshan's psions, I cannot release you."

That got a crooked smile. "I think you'll find, beauteous lady," Seirye said, "that I'm not good at being anyone's servant."

"We'll see."

Her psionic magic felt like a caress, but not a physical one. Seirye shivered all over: tingles that started at her forehead, spread over her head and down her face, and down through her torso and limbs. It touched her again, resounding like a stone dropped into water. She felt porous and flexible in a way that her body never had been. The way Taela touched her… Her face felt the way a blood pudding must: soft beneath a thin, slightly hardened layer like a skin.

Then the elathi's fingers pressed through Seirye's face and into her mind, and she sat bolt upright. Or, at least, her mental image of herself did. Their bodies hadn't moved, and Taela wasn't even touching her. But in Seirye's mind, the elathi's fingers reached into and through her skull: she could feel them tickling inside her mind. Their mental selves leaned toward one another, like nearly translucent apparitions of energy: Taela's purple, Seirye's own blue. Their touch felt strange and oddly intimate, in a way that she'd never known with another. Her heart pounded as her stomach roiled.

She remembered things, then. Her arrival in Qingshan. Getting kicked out of more than one tavern, and actually being thrown through the window of another. Arguing with IIV. Those images connected with memories less recent: time spent on the Amethyst Myst. Scraps she'd been in, daring escapes. The time they'd fought those raiders mounted on the giant eagles. The last time she'd seen the Myst, when she'd left it behind at the capitol, longing for enough Yuan to reclaim it once more.

What happened today? Taela asked in her mind. Remember today.

Today…

Seirye pictured the events of that day. The misunderstanding in the tavern that had seen her pack and gear hurled into the street, followed by herself. She remembered distinctly the reassuring feel of spinning her sword to unfold it, then fold it again. The powerful but light weight of Emperor's Edge, the faint sizzling sound when it locked into place. The smooth click of the folded blade into the holster at the small of her back. And her bow: the smooth contours and cold metal, the sleek design and trustworthy pull. The way the arrows crackled and whined, ready for loosing.

Taela's brow furrowed slightly and she drew her fingers back, not quite as deep. And—

Seirye saw, very vividly, Taela's face in her imagination. Their physical bodies were close enough that the image settled over the elathi's face. Her curious brow that was so intelligent, the luminous purple eyes, the heart-shaped lips slightly turned up at the corners in an enigmatic smile. Her slightly-upturned nose didn't even seem strange to Seirye, as such protrusions frequently did. It seemed to suit her face, to balance it, to make her one of the most beautiful creatures Seirye had ever seen…

You're getting distracted. Taela's physical face spread

in that same faint smile. Their mental selves were almost embracing. The alley, she said mentally. What do you remember?

Seirye remembered. The particular sound and smell that had drawn her attention, the predatory figures looming over the beaten youth. She thought of the fight, vividly remembered the pain of her creaking ribs, felt again the wave of fatigue that came with victory. She thought of the terran, the fengu, the burning kitsune—the smell of her seared fur. She thought of the human woman with the pert nose…

Wait, Taela thought to her. That one. I know her.

Seirye couldn't help it: a little lance of jealousy swept through her, and the image that flashed across their joined minds was enough to make Taela recoil in surprise. The connection faltered and ended, and the elathi withdrew her hand from Seirye's forehead. They came back to the world of the physical, their bodies much closer than Seirye remembered. They sighed in unison, as though their bodies had only just now remembered to breathe separately.

The elathi's violet eyes fluttered open and fixed upon the ish'ra, whose hands were pressed lightly to the sides of her face as though drawing her in for a kiss. "Would you let go?" she asked.

"Of course."

They drew apart, each a bit self-conscious of the other. For Seirye, who had never seen a single crack in Taela's unflappable façade, it was rather a wonderful experience.

"My apologies," the elathi said. "It seems you were not our enemy after all. I should have believed your protestations."

"No reason for that, oh gracious lady," Seirye said.

"You were being wary. For all you knew, I was an enemy to you, and I should hate to think myself so obviously good hearted you could tell at a glance. I have a reputation to maintain, after all." She stood, stretching out the aches of her extended stay in the chair. Her wrists hurt a bit from the ropes, but nothing some rubbing wouldn't fix. "My watch bot?"

Taela looked curiously at her. "I saw no such…"

A cry came from outside the cellar door, and the elathi and ish'ra both looked up to track the sound. A scuffle ensued, with loud, startled voices. Then the door shuddered under an impact, and Taela visibly shivered. Seirye put a hand on her wrist, in part to calm her, in part to steady her. The elathi didn't even react, much less pull away. It all seemed so natural.

The door shivered and swung inward with a soft groan of its hinges. Taela took a sharp breath, and Seirye's pulse was racing. Surprisingly, the elathi clenched her hand hard and they waited.

A small oculus, gleaming with crimson light, peered around the door at the level of most people's knees, and a string of booming Hexa filled the chamber. It made Seirye's ears ring, but she recognized the voice.

"Ivy?" she asked.

Instantly, the bot's eye turned blue once more, and it gave a chirp of delight. IIV scampered into the room and embraced Seirye's leg. She reached down to stroke the bot's oculus.

"There you are!" the ish'ra said. "I was a fool to worry. You didn't hurt the others too badly?"

IIV gave an uncertain warble and looked suspiciously up at Taela. Its oculus changed to orange.

"No, no, it's fine," Seirye said. "Just a misunderstanding. She's a friend."

The elathi raised her brow at the appellation but did not argue. "Apologies, Master Ivy," she said, and gave them both a graceful bow.

IIV looked to her face, then her hand in Seirye's, then up at its master. The watch bot intoned a sly question.

"Isn't she, though?" the ish'ra asked. "But that's not important. She needs our help."

"I do?" Taela asked.

"You do," Seirye said with a smile. "And we'd best get started."

A low-flying airship sailed past overhead, its psi-engine uttering a cyclical groan as it puffed its way through the sky. Even at a distance, Seirye could tell it needed engineering work, and she winced in empathy for the

captain of such a crudely maintained vessel. It left the air a bit hazy, blurring the circling lights of the dragons in the sky.

"I'd be embarrassed to fly the Myst in such a state," she said to IIV.

The little bot agreed with a single blip of sound.

Seirye settled her position a little better, perched as she was on the curving corner of a building across the street from a run-down flophouse down at the Qingshan docks.

The House of Ivy and Stone looked much like any of dozens of such buildings in this stretch: a watering hole where sailors could drown themselves in cheap swill, pleasurable company, and shady business dealings. Seirye had been in many such buildings over her career in quite a few cities, and they carried little to differentiate themselves.

Except that this one housed a criminal enterprise bent on assaulting psions.

Taela had explained matters to Seirye in the aftermath, once things were sorted and wounds bandaged. She had quite a fine operation going, complete with a practitioner of the healing arts and a spellcaster who could wash away minor hurts at a touch. Between the two of them, they fixed up IIV's trail of destruction, and also soothed the abrasions on Seirye's wrists and her cracked ribs. The little watch bot had chipped in as well, with its limited suite of healing magic. Seirye knew from long, painful experience that the effects it produced were minor, but the bot's desire to help was what had won over the elathi and her crew.

And help they needed. Their run-ins with the Peacekeepers hadn't yielded great results, and they largely treated Taela's gang just as poorly as any other band of street toughs. No matter how compassionate or noble their leader, the psions were on their own as far as any magistrate was concerned. Fortunately for them, Seirye had about as much contempt for the law as it had for her.

IIV trilled an observation and Seirye shook herself. Her mind had wandered, as it often did, and she felt the first droplets of oncoming rain. Time to get inside. She slid down the low-hanging roof, easily tumbled to a smooth landing after the short drop and hurried across the cobbled street.

"Of course this will work," Seirye said to the bot. "I have a plan, you know."

IIV sounded unconvinced.

"You'll see."

Seirye clutched the small magitech device Taela had pressed upon her. The elathi had agreed to trust her—to a point. She slipped the device back into a belt pouch, trying not to think about how sweaty her fingers felt around it, and pushed into the tavern.

The dockside tavern was equally unimpressive inside: low-ceilinged, the rafters covered in the greasy leavings of years of pipesmoke. The interior smelled strongly of lotus, the clouds mostly coming from private booths set off the main hall where listless folk hunched around herbs of dubious legality burning sourly in incense bowls. The place boasted some fifteen or twenty patrons, Seirye thought, most of them big and poorly washed types who worked long hours at the dock. They didn't look up at her entrance. Laborers and fishers, all of them sitting on one side of the sailor or pirate scales. But did the hands of that scale balance in the House of Ivy and Stone? She would have to see.

IIV whirred anxiously in her ear. The little watch bot had taken to riding in her hood, and since she had it up, the space was a bit crowded. "Do you see her?" Seirye asked quietly.

The watch bot returned a negative in quiet Hexa.

"Keep looking," she said. "I'll have a rice wine."

IIV murmured something negative.

"I know we don't have the Yuan," she said. "I didn't say I'd buy it, did I?"

Apparently, Qingsham had experienced a rash of attacks of late, wherein psions—particularly those of low to middling power—had come under assault by shifty criminals in the streets and alleys. At first, the reports had seemed like coincidences—muggings were common enough, after all—but then folk started disappearing. An apprentice wouldn't arrive to an appointed meeting, or the home of a low-powered psion would stand empty, ostensibly the target of burglary. From the first attack, Taela had suspected a concerted campaign against the city's psions, but these disappearances—and the botched attack Seirye had stumbled into and foiled—had confirmed her suspicions. And now they had a lead: Taela had recognized the pert-nosed human who had led the attack, whose name was…

"Shae-Ver!" Seirye said as the human at the bar turned to look upon her. "Fancy! It is you!"

The woman blinked at her from over a massive bandaged bruise on her face. "What?" she asked. "I know you, sailor? You—" Her eyes widened. "Fallen dragon, it's you."

Her hand went for an inner pocket of her coat, but Seirye moved faster. She reached across, seized the woman's wrist, and carried the movement up and right into a punch to her wounded face. Shae-Ver yelped in pain, and her entire body froze. No one reacted to the sudden, sharp violence immediately, and Seirye breathed a small sigh. So far, so good.

IIV hopped down onto the bar to keep watch. The bot would alert her of any undue attention.

"My nose," the human said, her voice nasally slurred. "You sack of—"

"Now, now." Seirye drew the small magitech blaster from the woman's vest and laid it on the bar, pointed right back at its owner. "We didn't get a chance to acquaint ourselves proper last time. Shae-Ver is your name, right? I punched the right person?" From the bar, IIV trilled. "This time, yes."

"Aye, that's my name." The woman winced and made a mewling sound. "Most call me Shiver."

"Ooh, what a fine name! You must be a buccaneer, name like that. What's your ship?"

"I've left my ship behind," Shiver said. "Found sweeter business in town."

"What sort of sweet business?" Seirye asked.

"The sort that don't belong to some noseless sh—ah ah ahh!"

Seirye had reached up and grasped Shiver by the broken nose. The bandages were soaking through with fresh blood. "You see," the ish'ra said, in a tone that she meant to sound quite reasonable. "I understand business. We all have expenses. We all need Yuan. I myself am sorely in need at the moment. But attacking children? No, Shivers, that's not sweet. Not acceptable at all—"

IIV abruptly squeaked, interrupting her.

Seirye glared at the bot. "I was just getting to the threatening," she said. "I love threatening."

But IIV's oculus had turned to warning orange and was swiveling around the room. A good six of seven of those patrons Seirye had dismissed upon her entrance had risen and now fixed her with deadly stares. Among them, she recognized the terran with the bulbous nose, as well as the fengu. Mayhap the kitsune's burns had been sufficient to dissuade her from further involvement with Shiver and her gang. Mayhap Seirye should have made that choice as well. It seemed quite practical just at the moment.

"You were supposed to warn me," Seirye said under her breath.

IIV made a sound of protest.

"Yeah, fine, this was the warning," Seirye said. "Dammit. Again?"

A hand grasped hers over the magitech blaster, and Seirye looked back to Shiver.

Just as before, the woman stared smugly at her, fully convinced of her complete control of the situation. This time, however, her eyes gleamed with purplish energy. Psionics. Not good.

"Wait a breath," Seirye said. "Let's make a deal—"

"No deals." Shiver brought her other hand up and touched Seirye on the forehead.

This probing was not at all like Taela's use of the magic. Shiver's psychic fingers felt like insects burrowing into the skin and bones of Seirye's face. She would have screamed if she could control her physical body, but all she could manage was a sharp intake of breath. The woman's hands grasped her mind and squeezed, making her mind buck and kick. Thoughts were difficult and slipped between Shiver's fingers like sludge through a sieve.

"You'll show me where the others are," Shiver said. "But first, I'm going to make you mine."

It felt as though Shiver had bodily grasped her by the wrists and ankles, as though she might move her that way. She must have had half a dozen hands, for how many times she grasped the ish'ra's body. The hands inside her head exerted the tightest grip, squeezing out Seirye's own thoughts and replacing them with something else. Purpose?

No…

Shiver's face slipped slightly. "Stop fighting me," she said. "This will happen."

Seirye squirmed and slid around her grasp, trying to find some way free, but there was nothing. The psion was simply too strong. It felt as though Shiver was hollowing her out, the better to fill her up with her own desires. And when she was done, Seirye would be hers.

No.

She couldn't just give up. She had to fight. Push back. This was her mind, not—

Again, the ish'ra rebellion flared in her, and this time Seirye didn't try to stop it. She had never experienced this sort of intrusion—so powerful and grotesque—but thousands of her ancestors had endured this, day after day, many for all of their lives. She was heiress to their power and their purpose. She would not forget. She would not fail.

No!

Shiver pushed into her, and she pushed right back. Harder.

She saw it then: Shiver, the terran, and a few other cloaked figures conducting a ritual in a dark chamber, as incense burned in pots all around them. A cult of some sort? A small person was bound on an altar before them as they while they were occupied…

"You are a fool, little ish'ra," Shiver said, "if you thought you alone could fight the dragon."

Which was when the door burst off its hinges, toppling into the common room with a resounding crash, and everything disintegrated in a mad scramble of shouting, wrestling bodies. The connection between Shiver and Seirye abruptly broke, and the ish'ra toppled back onto the grimy floor of the tavern. She lay there, the world rolling dizzily around her, as an arrow flew overhead, followed by a jet of crimson flame that painted a searing black scar along the wall. What was happening?

Then Shiver appeared, looming over her like a specter out of a children's story, and brandished a knife of pulsing green crystal. The look in her eyes, reflected on either side of that ugly broken nose, was one of profound hatred, and Seirye saw her imminent death gleaming on the sharp end of that blade.

Then a rapid trill of Hexa interrupted whatever vile curse she had begun to utter, and a beam of crimson light lanced forth from atop the bar and flashed up her shoulder and across the right side of her face. Her hair burst instantly into flame, and her skin blackened where the beam cut across it, and her right eye sizzled and popped. Shiver screamed in agony and terror and reeled back, grasping at her burning head. She narrowly avoided gouging her now useless eye out with the crystal knife.

Seirye hadn't earned her reputation as a fearsome and skilled buccaneer by hesitating when it mattered. She surged up to deliver a rising uppercut that caught Shiver in the nose exactly as it had earlier that day, sending her staggering backward with the force. This time, however, her fist delivered the force but skipped off a shimmering shield of purple energy—a psionic barrier! She must have erected it instinctively when the beam struck her, hoping it would shield her, and mayhap it had stopped the worst of the heat.

Seirye drew her sword and unfolded it with a flick of her wrist, but Shiver retreated among the press of bodies, shrieking at her burning face. IIV popped up on the bar and warbled a question.

"Fine, Ivy," Seirye said. "Thanks. Time for some dashing heroics, yes?"

The watch bot gave an affirmative beep.

Which was good, because the bulbous-nosed terran and a shabbily dressed human with a shortsword in hand were creeping toward her, angling their approach to take her from both sides. Beyond them, a number of folk struggled with phase staves, cudgels, and small energy blades, or declaimed powerful words that sent streaks of magic to smite their foes to the floor. The place had descended into a chaotic brawl, but these two had a dead ish'ra on the mind, and Seirye meant to disappoint them.

"Ivy." She nodded to the terran. "Light him up."

Just as they arrived, as the terran began to swing two meaty fists at Seirye, the watch bot switched its oculus to orange and sprayed him with a wave of sparking motes of light that clung to him like cherry blossoms. It was the same function IIV had used on the kitsune earlier, but the terran must not have got a good look at the effect, because it took him by surprise. He faltered, his fists sailing harmlessly wide of Seirye, who stepped toward the thrusting shortsword, locked her free arm around the thug's arm, and pulled just enough to plunge the blade past her and into the terran's side. The four-armed man howled and

lashed out with a slap that Seirye was already low enough to duck. His fist smashed the sword wielder heavily against the bar, where IIV jumped aside, screeching insults in Hexa. Unfortunately, one of his other arms locked around Emperor's Edge, his momentum wrenched it from Seirye's hand, and the blade clattered across the floor.

Unarmed, Seirye turned to the startled terran, around whom the lights were starting to dissipate. He wound up for another swing at her, but IIV hit him with a cloud of illumination, making him sputter and curse. Seirye ducked and snaked around him as he lunged so that she could smash one foot into his backside. The sword wielder managed to recover in time for the terran to stagger into her, slamming them both to the floor in a groaning heap. The light dissipated, and the terran didn't get back up.

Half a dozen of Taela's allies had descended upon the House of Ivy and Stone—some of them warriors, some of them psions using their powers to strengthen themselves—and they'd obeyed Seirye's pleas not to intervene at least until everything went wrong. She'd inquired about a signal—what to do if and when she needed aid—but there was no need. They were, after all, psychics.

As she looked around, something prompted Seirye to reach not for her energy bow—too close in here for a proper bowshot—but instead into her belt pouch.

It was to her good fortune, because Shiver chose that moment to hurl a bolt of yellow power at the unarmed ish'ra from across the hall. She wrenched forth the tiny device Taela had given her and activated it with the press of a button, projecting a shell of blue light that caught the magic assault, which shattered the forcefield and dissipated around it. The sudden rush of pressure and heat knocked her back against the bar, and she momentarily lost her senses.

Seirye leaned back against the bar, her hands shivering from the jarring impact of her spell, and looked up. Drawing closer, Shiver glared at her out of a face that was a hideous mask of blood and bruised, blackened flesh. She held her crystal knife in one hand and a ball of roiling flame in the other. Seirye froze, certain that the wrong move would mean death. All around them, folk were fighting and screaming, but they had their own small bubble of calm amongst the chaos.

"Why?" Shiver asked, her eyes wild. "Why did you interfere? This is none of your concern!"

"You're just awful," Seirye said. "Or mayhap it's your face. What's left of it."

Shiver bristled like a wild animal and pulled her lips back to bare her teeth. "Why get involved?" she asked. "You think you can stop us resurrecting the dragon?"

"Is that what you're trying to do?" Seirye said. "Also—what dragon?"

"The great dragon Galgarae! He who shall destroy the world and reshape it in—"

"Oh that dragon. Of course."

The woman's head nearly exploded. "You—you!"

Shiver screamed and drew back her hand to throw the ball of flame at Seirye, but at that moment, a shard of purple crystal lodged itself in her arm, spoiling her aim. The ish'ra flinched aside, and the flames smashed into the back wall of the bar, shattering one of the ceramic pots and spraying a rain of sizzling rice wine across the wall and floor.

"Shae Var Talosos!"

Taela Liu swept through the chaos of the common room, seeming to float on the swell of her psionic power. Her eyes burned with righteous fury, and her vital auburn hair flowed around her horned head like a living mantle of agitated serpents. Crystals of translucent pink-purple power floated around her, her own personal protective shell.

"You will prey upon my people," she said, her voice resonant through the hall, "no longer!"

The elathi struck such a potent figure in the common room that the violence all but ceased. No one wanted to oppose Taela—not in the face of that wrath. Seirye breathed a bit easier, since Shiver's attention had left her. In fact, the woman seemed to be trembling, mayhap in fear.

Shiver shivered. If her head hadn't felt like she'd just escaped from a vice, Seirye might have snickered. IIV pattered over to her on the bar and tweeted a query, and Seirye nodded.

"You're right about that," she said. "Beautiful."

Not everyone was as spellbound, however: the terran had regained his feet, and he lunged toward Taela. With a roar, he smashed a fist like a club into the shell of crystalline energy. His massive strength cracked the shell slightly, with a sound like an egg smashed against the edge of a bowl. Taela hardly noticed, but the shell certainly

responded: the broken crystals twisted away from hole the terran had left in the shell, and a rain of shards exploded forth into his two arms on that side of his body. The massive, four-armed bruiser looked at his arms with wide, disbelieving eyes.

Taela walked on, her cracked shell still floating around her. "Stand and face me, Shae Var Talosos!" She raised one hand overhead, ready to hurl a psionic dagger. "You will pay for your crimes!"

"Should've made a deal," Seirye said under her breath.

"Get back!" Shiver conjured psionic fire between her hands, and Seirye sucked in a sharp breath. This would have been a perfect opportunity to stab Shiver, when her attention had waned, but Seirye hadn't reclaimed her sword. She reached for her bow—maybe she could strike Shiver with that, and throw off her aim.

She needn't have bothered.

The ball of flame smashed into Taela's psionic barrier and burst apart into a wash of liquid flame that dissolved before it touched the floor. The elathi strode undeterred through the conflagration, fire flowing around her like a corona. Shiver slumped back against the bar, terrified.

Seirye loosed a relieved breath. It was over.

"Yield," Taela said to Shiver. "You've no means of escaping me."

Not how Seirye herself would have handled it, but Taela was a far better person than she.

IIV warbled, and Seirye saw the terran pluck a chunk of crystal from his arm, then rise up behind Taela once more. This time he held a table leg in his hands like a club, which Seirye suspected would be far more effective than just a punch, particularly if he aimed it at the spot he had already weakened with that initial punch. Taela didn't seem to notice, and she and her crystalline barrier were between Seirye and the terran. If she tried to attack him, though, she would have to leave Shiver unattended. If the woman planned some treachery…

"Ivy!" Seirye pulled her bow from her back and unfolded it in the same fluid motion.

The watch bot didn't even need instruction—it acted. A ray of light burst from its oculus, arcing around Taela to strike and illumine the terran. The hulking menace didn't hesitate this time, but Seirye didn't need him to. She nocked one of her energy arrows and dove to the side to get a clean shot.

Even as she leaped, Shiver snarled like a wolf and declaimed words of magic.

They struck at the same time, Taela and Seirye: the elathi hurling her psionic crystal, the ish'ra loosing her crackling arrow. Seirye landed in a graceful crouch and watched her arrow blow into the terran's chest, knocking him back with a blast of lightning. She'd lost sight of Taela in the blindspot on her left side, so she had to turn her head to see what had happened. She did so, hoping she'd chosen rightly to trust Taela.

Sure enough, the elathi had struck true. The flames in Shiver's hands faded and went out, as a pink crystal burned in her belly. Her eyes rolled in her head and slumped to the floor.

Seirye and Taela stood together, the ish'ra breathing hard, the elathi loosing a relieved sigh. The battle had ended, and the common room was surprisingly empty. Seirye did not quite understand why everyone was making their way out of the place, leaving only groaning wounded and a few regulars who had gone back to their drinks as though nothing had happened. She still felt a little blurry.

"The Peacekeepers will be here soon," Taela said, as though in response to Seirye's thoughts. "Right is on our side, but we can't trust the magistrate to see it that way."

"Taking care of your own, not trusting the law," Seirye said. "I love you more every hour." It was only when IIV made an incredulous noise that Seirye realized what she'd said. "I mean—"

"I know what you meant." Taela knelt next to Shiver, who lay gasping and cursing and struggling to glare, as though she might keep herself awake by spite alone. "You're wondering why I left her alive."

"Not that I would have put it so bluntly," Seirye said. "But aye, yes. The woman has killed at least one of your psions. She tried to kill you. And me, let's not forget."

"I see. You think I spared her out of mercy."

Taela's eyes flared with purple light, and Shiver's face went deathly pale. Her features slackened, and she fainted. Whether through pain or fear, Seirye could not rightly say.

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"You will prey upon my people," she said, her voice resonant through the hall, "no longer!"

The elathi struck such a potent figure in the common room that the violence all but ceased. No one wanted to oppose Taela—not in the face of that wrath. Seirye breathed a bit easier, since Shiver's attention had left her. In fact, the woman seemed to be trembling, mayhap in fear.

Shiver shivered. If her head hadn't felt like she'd just escaped from a vice, Seirye might have snickered. IIV pattered over to her on the bar and tweeted a query, and Seirye nodded.

"You're right about that," she said. "Beautiful."

Not everyone was as spellbound, however: the terran had regained his feet, and he lunged toward Taela. With a roar, he smashed a fist like a club into the shell of crystalline energy. His massive strength cracked the shell slightly, with a sound like an egg smashed against the edge of a bowl. Taela hardly noticed, but the shell certainly

responded: the broken crystals twisted away from hole the terran had left in the shell, and a rain of shards exploded forth into his two arms on that side of his body. The massive, four-armed bruiser looked at his arms with wide, disbelieving eyes.

Taela walked on, her cracked shell still floating around her. "Stand and face me, Shae Var Talosos!" She raised one hand overhead, ready to hurl a psionic dagger. "You will pay for your crimes!"

"Should've made a deal," Seirye said under her breath.

"Get back!" Shiver conjured psionic fire between her hands, and Seirye sucked in a sharp breath. This would have been a perfect opportunity to stab Shiver, when her attention had waned, but Seirye hadn't reclaimed her sword. She reached for her bow—maybe she could strike Shiver with that, and throw off her aim.

She needn't have bothered.

The ball of flame smashed into Taela's psionic barrier and burst apart into a wash of liquid flame that dissolved before it touched the floor. The elathi strode undeterred through the conflagration, fire flowing around her like a corona. Shiver slumped back against the bar, terrified.

Seirye loosed a relieved breath. It was over.

"Yield," Taela said to Shiver. "You've no means of escaping me."

Not how Seirye herself would have handled it, but Taela was a far better person than she.

IIV warbled, and Seirye saw the terran pluck a chunk of crystal from his arm, then rise up behind Taela once more. This time he held a table leg in his hands like a club, which Seirye suspected would be far more effective than just a punch, particularly if he aimed it at the spot he had already weakened with that initial punch. Taela didn't seem to notice, and she and her crystalline barrier were between Seirye and the terran. If she tried to attack him, though, she would have to leave Shiver unattended. If the woman planned some treachery…

"Ivy!" Seirye pulled her bow from her back and unfolded it in the same fluid motion.

The watch bot didn't even need instruction—it acted. A ray of light burst from its oculus, arcing around Taela to strike and illumine the terran. The hulking menace didn't hesitate this time, but Seirye didn't need him to. She nocked one of her energy arrows and dove to the side to get a clean shot.

Even as she leaped, Shiver snarled like a wolf and declaimed words of magic.

They struck at the same time, Taela and Seirye: the elathi hurling her psionic crystal, the ish'ra loosing her crackling arrow. Seirye landed in a graceful crouch and watched her arrow blow into the terran's chest, knocking him back with a blast of lightning. She'd lost sight of Taela in the blindspot on her left side, so she had to turn her head to see what had happened. She did so, hoping she'd chosen rightly to trust Taela.

Sure enough, the elathi had struck true. The flames in Shiver's hands faded and went out, as a pink crystal burned in her belly. Her eyes rolled in her head and slumped to the floor.

Seirye and Taela stood together, the ish'ra breathing hard, the elathi loosing a relieved sigh. The battle had ended, and the common room was surprisingly empty. Seirye did not quite understand why everyone was making their way out of the place, leaving only groaning wounded and a few regulars who had gone back to their drinks as though nothing had happened. She still felt a little blurry.

"The Peacekeepers will be here soon," Taela said, as though in response to Seirye's thoughts. "Right is on our side, but we can't trust the magistrate to see it that way."

"Taking care of your own, not trusting the law," Seirye said. "I love you more every hour." It was only when IIV made an incredulous noise that Seirye realized what she'd said. "I mean—"

"I know what you meant." Taela knelt next to Shiver, who lay gasping and cursing and struggling to glare, as though she might keep herself awake by spite alone. "You're wondering why I left her alive."

"Not that I would have put it so bluntly," Seirye said. "But aye, yes. The woman has killed at least one of your psions. She tried to kill you. And me, let's not forget."

"I see. You think I spared her out of mercy."

Taela's eyes flared with purple light, and Shiver's face went deathly pale. Her features slackened, and she fainted. Whether through pain or fear, Seirye could not rightly say.

"I will find the truth of this," Taela said. "And you have given me just the tool I need."

Shiver's slumber was anything but peaceful. She murmured and moaned as though caught up in a nightmare. Seirye shuddered in sympathetic unease, but she had to confess it seemed fitting.

"I saw cultists," she said. "A ritual. To awaken the great dragon Galgarae. You know the one."

"Everyone knows of the dragon Galgarae. But to awaken it from its slumber?" The elathi furrowed her perfect brow, looking more than a little troubled. "That seems… unlikely. Surely you misunderstood…" She shook her head. "But no, I see it in your mind. This bears further investigation."

At that, IIV gave an unsettled warble. The watch bot had detected the sounds of approaching psi-engines. The Peacekeepers would burst through that door at any moment.

"Just wait." Seirye smoothed her hair back from her eyepatch and hoped she didn't look too ridiculous. "So you can see my mind, eh, Tali? Whatever I'm imagining. You can see it."

"Indeed." The elathi gave her a sly look, then stepped up to Seirye, sliding her hands around the ish'ra's waist. She whispered in Seirye's ear, lips warm against her skin. "I look forward to working with you again."

Then she kissed Seirye on the cheek and walked away without a word. The ish'ra watched her go, unsure what to say or exactly how to feel. Perhaps she hadn't made any credit today, but that there was an excellent friend. If friend she was…

It all seemed like such a bad idea, to have friends in such places.

IIV made a rude sound, and Seirye shrugged it off with a grin. "Ah, what do you know?"

HONOR

CHARACTER NAME

Alignment

ALESSIA™

SPECIES | CLASS | LEVEL

Languages

Spell Attack Bonus

Spell DC

Spells | Slots per level

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th

Arcana
Computers
Culture
History
Investigation
Nature
Religion
Spacefaring
Technology
Lore:
Lore:
Lore:

INT

SAVE

Animal Handling
Insight
Medicine
Streetwise
Survival

WIS

SAVE

Perception
Senses

Passive Perception

Deception
Intimidation
Performance
Persuasion
Psychic

CHA

SAVE

Exhaustion

L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6

Shields

Armor Class

Armor

Proficiency Bonus

Appearance

Background

Melee

SAVE

Attack Damage
Attack Damage
Attack Damage
Attack Damage
Attack Damage
Attack Damage

STR

SAVE

Athletics
Push | Drag | Lift (STR x 2)

Carrying Capacity (Str x 15)
Personal Gear

AC Bonus

DEX

Initiative

Acrobatics
Drive
Sleight of Hand
Stealth

SAVE

CON

SAVE

Pass Fail
Pass Fail
Pass Fail

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Resolve
Current
Max

Hit Points
Current
Max

MagiCash

Money

Crys Creds

Yuan

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