

This is a preview
of The Echoes of
Heaven
campaign setting
by veteran game
designer Robert J
Defendi.

Once Man stood
in the full glory
of God. Now he
must strain to
hear even the
echoes of Heaven.

For all levels of play.

The Echoes of Heaven Preview

by Robert J Defendi



Areniel leaped off the parapets of Heaven. The stone battlements of the city fell away beneath him even as rolling lands stretched out on all sides. On his flanks the rest of the Host rose in unison, armor glistening in the reflected light of God. White wings beat almost in unison—the hand of God, propelled by His will. As Areniel flew into the air, the lush fields of Heaven fell into the distance, a yellow-flecked expanse of grass stirring in the wind of a thousand angelic wings. The Fallen Host flew above them, vicious weapons glittering in the light, their armor blackened in the absence of God's glory. Soon they'd glisten with blood. . . .

The Echoes of Heaven is a game world of darkness and danger, where a monolithic church has split into dozens of quarreling factions and holy war looms like a shadow. Here, strength and brutality win the day and only those with the most faith, honor, and courage can stand against the terrible tyranny of those who would enslave everyone of a different belief, a different philosophy, a different race.

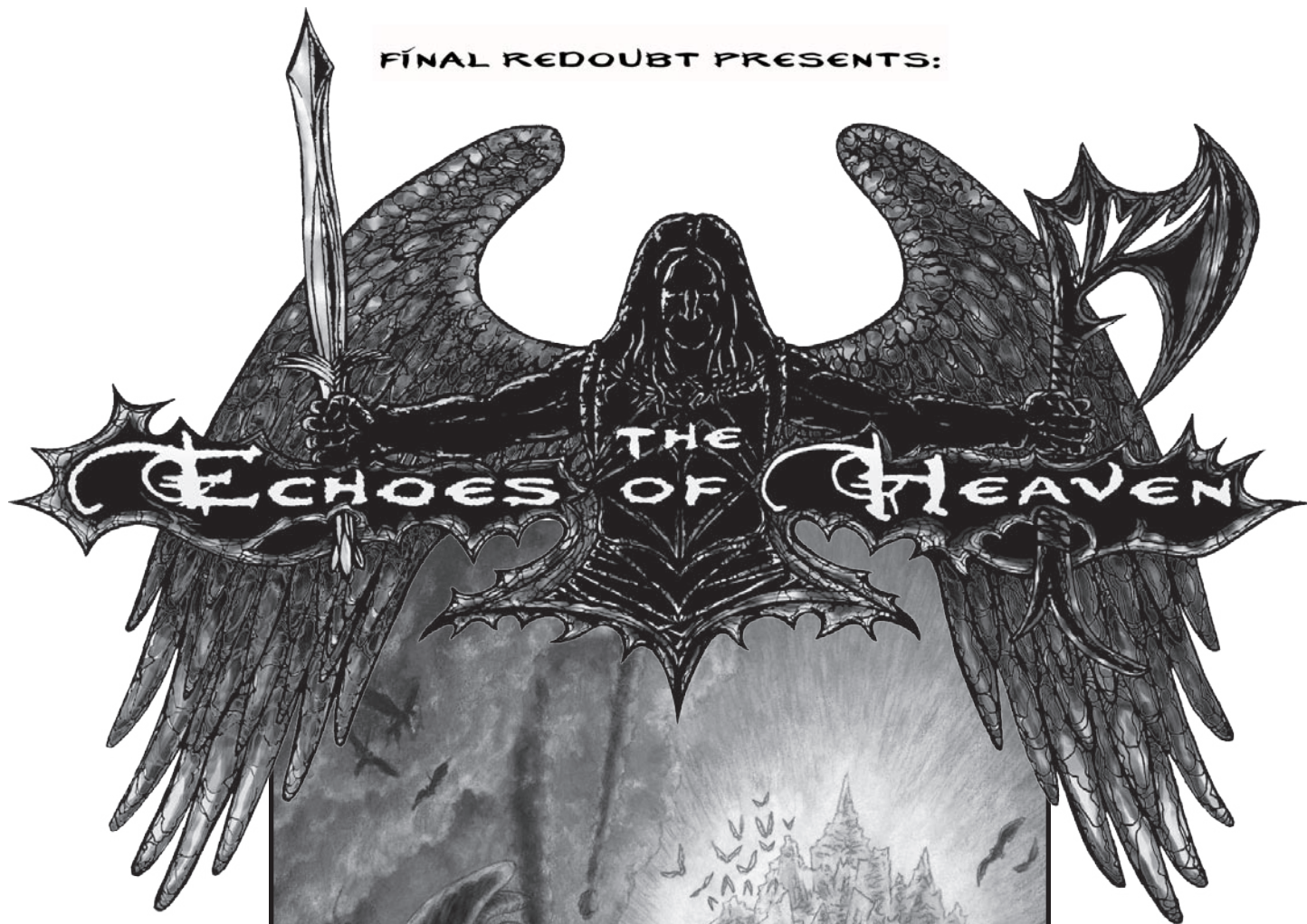
Worse, it is a world infected by the very fabric of Hell itself.

The Echoes of Heaven is designed for use in four different games systems. They are the *d20 System* game (owned by Wizards of the Coast), *Rolemaster* (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), *HARP* (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), and *HERO System* (owned by Hero Games).

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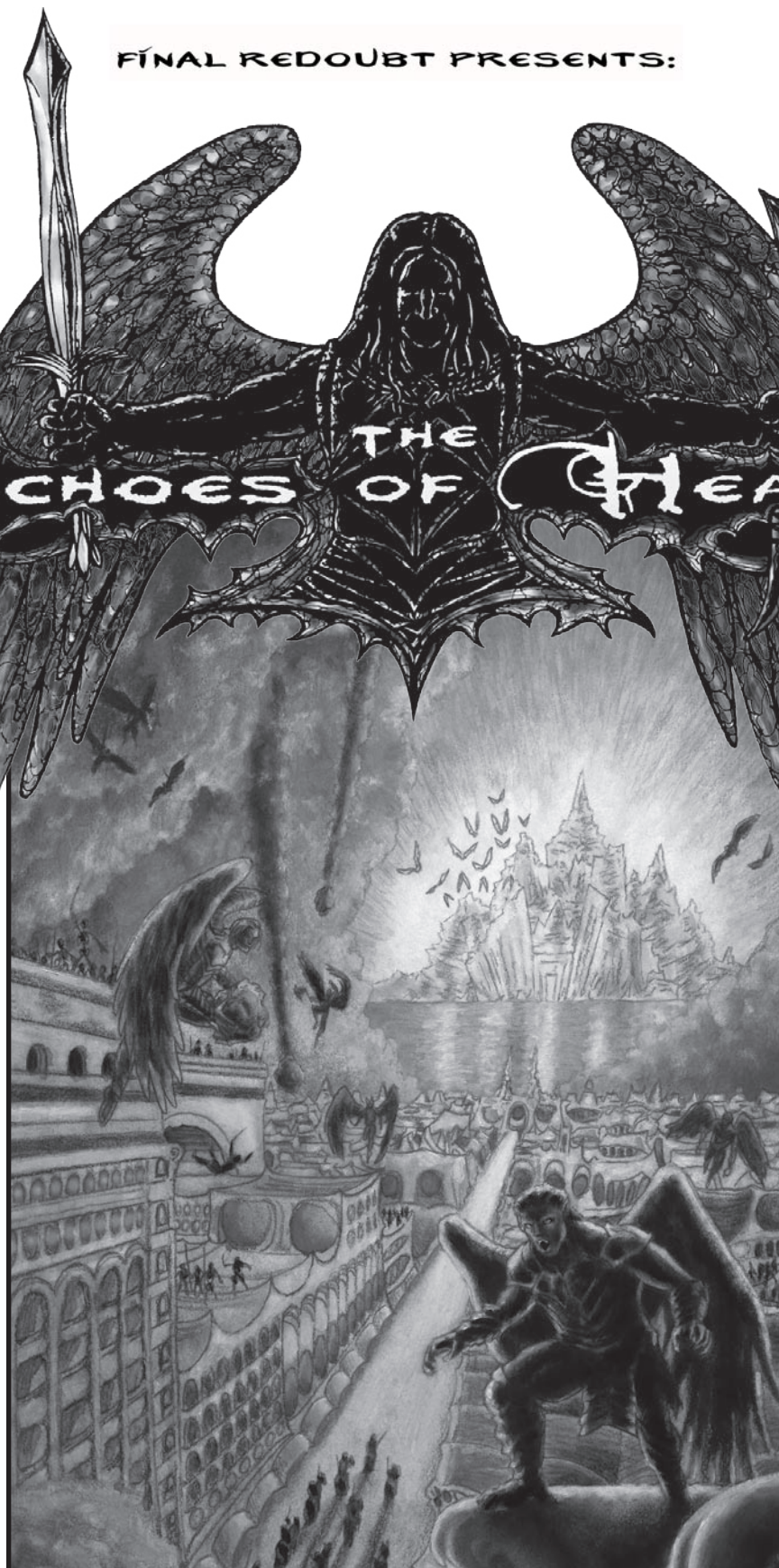
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*And Lo! the battlements of Heaven still lay under the
eyes of Angels bearing fearsome armaments.
- Carsidius 5:19*

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Stock #0001

"It's getting late, sir. Perhaps you should leave. There's nowhere to stay inside the village."

Manthur looked up from his ale, scanning the tavern, past the man speaking, across the unwashed populace of this little lump of a settlement. It wasn't a proper tavern as one might find in the city. No, here, as in all such communities, the tavern moved from house to house as the women brought their kegs of ale to full ferment. Tonight it was in one of the nicer peasant homes.

Light slanted in through the open doorway, the hide door tied back at an angle. The rays streamed around shutters and through slats as well. It seeped through the thousands of tiny holes in the wall, invisible until the sun hit just the right angle, but felt every time the wind blew through this tiny place. The wattle and daub could be very warm if maintained, but there never seemed to be enough time in a peasant's day to slather on the insulating mud.

"Father," Manthur said.

The peasant looked confused. "Sir?"

"I was correcting you," Manthur said. "You are to address me as 'father', not 'sir'."

With that he reached up to his neck and pulled out the heavy golden holy symbol. The one-edged ring surrounding the flame. The peasant blanched visibly. "I'm sorry, Father. I didn't know you were a witch hunter."

Manthur shrugged and dropped the chain to hang loose upon his chest. Now every eye in the room fell on him. His fellow witch hunters, simple warriors though he was a paladin, had stepped outside and Manthur looked at the grimy host of the poor and desperate and tried to make it look like he stared at the central fire pit through the thick smoke of the house interior. "Well, now you do," he said. The threat of the villagers, once something abstract, now hung heavy in the air.

He stood and walked atop moldering rushes, headed to the far side of the room where the lady of the house had tapped a keg. He took in her grimy, tattered dress, her clean scrubbed face, her filthy hands. Age thickly lined her features, probably twenty-five years. Her hair hung down from under a head scarf, just starting to gray. Her eyes were tired and a piercing blue, like light through the walls of a snow cave.

He slapped a coin down on the table she used for a bar, felt a stab of pain. He pulled his hand up and examined the large splinter embedded in his index fingertip. Black and heavy, fading to a brown, then tan discoloration where the skin bulged over it. He began worrying it out with his teeth. "Another ale," he mumbled around the finger.

She pulled a tankard for him and he turned away, still aware of all the eyes on him. They knew now he was a Knight of Lonnuso. If he didn't make them think he was leaving, and soon, he'd never make it out alive. He pulled out a heavy silver coin and tossed it to the woman. "For the tankard," he said.

He felt the eyes boring into his back as he moved for the doorway. He gambled and knew it. They might have killed a stranger without a second thought, nobility or not, but clergy? Clergy made their risk so much greater. Greater risk if he found their secret. Greater risk if they killed him. If they were brave men, he'd upped his chances of dying. He bet on cowardice.

He reached the doorway, the shadows of a half dozen men moving behind him. For a moment, he paused there, silhouetted by a dying sun, waiting for the knife. He didn't know why he paused. A gambler at heart. He'd have to do penance for that.

Then he stepped out into the crowds outside the home.

The men of the village had gathered early, they usually wouldn't have left the fields until the sun set. The sheep milled about in the lord's pen. The children had come in. The beadle had finished his evening patrol. That was what had tipped him off originally.

Three other Knights Lonnuso stood outside, tankards in their hands, bright in their mail and rich, heavy cloaks. They wore their coifs pushed back off their heads, their hair muffed from the day's constriction. They nursed their drinks.

Around them a half dozen men milled, attempting so hard to look casual they perspired from the effort. They chatted amiably, but Manthur could tell that every one of them kept their attention pinned to the knights. One man in brown leggings and an old red tunic edged closer, bald along the side of his head where a wide, wavering of scar tissue tainted the skin. His hand hovered near his knife.

The bastards. They intended to kill clergymen--they were willing to do it, right here in the open. There was no bottom to the depth of these men's sin. Manthur could feel the bile rising in his throat, taste it biting and acrid. It was a world of treachery. A world of sin.

He brushed by the man, hitting him hard with one shoulder, spilling the fellows drink and forcing him to stumble. Then Manthur blew by, his eyes locking with the other knights. They strode off and down the road, found their horses and swung up into the saddles.

Manthur turned and looked back at the villagers. Three men, led by the one with the bald scar, had half followed them. Now they stood in the road, their faces a mask of fear and anger. Desperation. Dangerous men.

The sun kissed the horizon.

Demo Demo

It started as a low keen, a warbling sound off in the distance. At the first, Manthur could have mistaken it for a dog or a wolf, some pack animal lonely for its kin. Now it rose, stronger, fuller, all around them, a rich, ripping sound of grief and woe. A human voice, inhuman with violence and sin, a voice that no living throat could produce. A voice of the dead.

His heart pounded in his chest at the sound. He knew he was hearing the undead, the Nospheratus. His throat constricted and his eyes darted about, looking for the threat. Around him, his mean reached for swords. The ghost, the banshee, whatever it was. He could feel it around him, taste it on the air. The corruption of it kissed his skin, caused it to pucker. This was unnatural. Unnatural.

Manthur looked at the men and smiled.

"Bastards," he spat.

The scarred one threw himself to his knees, his hands clasped in front of him, his face desperate with pleading. "Please!" he wailed, his voice barely audible above the shriek of the formless dead, the unseen pounding of the ghosts. "Please! We're god-fearing folk! We've never done nuthin' wrong. We go to church every Godsdays. Please! We didn't bring this on ourselves!" His voice broke with tears, with pain, with terror.

Manthur looked down coldly from his horse, ignoring the terror in his bones, knowing somehow that the dead had only barely risen, that his faith and his trust in God would keep him safe. "Yes you did," he said. "You brought this on yourselves when you didn't tell us. You should have told us at once."

"We didn't dare!" the man screamed. "We were afraid you'd do something terrible if you knew!"

Manthur shook his head. "You were right." He turned to his men. "Kill every living thing. Burn the houses and the crops." After a moment's thought, "Salt the fields." He turned and met the eyes of the peasant. "This is an Ulcer."

Welcome

By opening these pages, you enter a new world, a world of danger and nobility, a world of shadow and light, a world of sorrow and love. Most of all, it is a world of hope.

The Mortal Realm desperately needs heroes. Will you answer the call?

PREVIEW

This document is a preview of *The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting*. Each of the sections below is an excerpt from the first product release. We hope you enjoy it.

WHAT IS *THE ECHOES OF HEAVEN* CAMPAIGN SETTING?

The Echoes of Heaven is a game world of darkness and danger, where a monolithic church has split into dozens of quarreling factions and holy war looms like a shadow. Here, strength and brutality win the day and only those with the most faith, honor, and courage can stand against the terrible tyranny of those who would enslave everyone of a different belief, a different philosophy, a different race.

Worse, it is a world infected by the very fabric of Hell itself.

It's a world that once knew wonderful, perfect grace, where Mortals and Angels labored side by side and all spent their days basking in the light of God. There was no Mortal Realm. Hell was nothing more than a province of Heaven. All lived in Paradise and they knew what it was like to wander in Grace.

Then came the War.

The Fall of the first third of the Host of Angels nearly destroyed Heaven. The Fall of the second third came as a death knell. Only the foresight and planning of the Five Prophets saved everyone from languishing under the rule of the Fallen . . . but it came at a terrible, terrible price.

Enter Meridrin, the Mortal Realm, a world Sundered from Paradise, a world both familiar and strangely different. A world where *you* can make a difference.

The Echoes of Heaven is designed for use in four different games systems. They are the **d20 System** game (owned by Wizards of the Coast), **Rolemaster** (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), **HARP** (owned by Iron Crown Enterprises), and **Hero System** (owned by Hero Games).

LINE ELEMENTS

The Echoes of Heaven contains two main elements. They are sourcebooks and adventures.

Sourcebooks

Some of the scheduled sourcebooks are as follows:

The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting—The book you currently read. *The Echoes of Heaven Campaign*

Setting details the Mortal Realm and includes a bonus supplement detailing the Kingdom of Ludremon at no extra charge.

The Last Free City—This book details the city of Ferric's Redoubt, known as the City-State to most people. Sheltered in the lands of Ingrast but beyond the grasp of the Elves, this city has remarkable freedom . . . but with freedom comes danger.

The Lost Kingdom of the Dwarves—Centuries ago an Ulcer opened inside the Dwarven kingdom of Uzarâg. Now this land is more Hell than earth and it fills to overflowing with a multitude of dark and evil creatures, most notably the Cambionic Orcs and worse yet, the Great Fiend known as the Warlord.

Adventures

Each sourcebook comes packaged with an adventure. Between these two works, your campaigns can explore an ever-widening world of intrigue and danger.

The Throne of God—The adventure packaged with this sourcebook. A story that spans 10,000 years, here the players learn the lay of the land in the Mortal Realm and fight to find an ancient relic—a diamond splinter said to come from the Throne of God Himself.

The Festering Earth—The characters travel to Felric's Redoubt, the City-State. There they must solve a series of murders before the serial killer brings the entire place to its knees.

On Corrupted Ground—Still reeling from their adventures in Felric's Redoubt, the characters must now delve into the heart of Hell on earth—Uzarâg. Inside the fallen kingdom, it will take all their skill, faith and mettle to survive.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Final Redoubt Press, we wish to bring high-quality products into the hands of gamers who need them. Starting with characters ignorant of the world around them, players can discover the Mortal Realm even as the story unfolds. With each new adventure, player and character alike will discover a world rich in excitement and adventure, a world as intriguing as their GM can make it.

An Ongoing Campaign

We're aware that different games progress at many different rates. Some groups play almost every day and some fight to meet once a month. Therefore, we've tried to devise this world and this series for any rate of play.

Each adventure is designed for characters of a certain level. A GM needs only to adjust the rate of experience gain to meet the needs of his group. If a group can play an entire adventure in one weekend and that leaves three more until the next product releases, then the GM needs only to match the experience gain to move hand in hand with this pace. Meanwhile, he'll find Adventure Seeds in every product that will allow the characters to explore the world around them until they're ready for the next episode of the series.

For more on gauging experience given, see the accompanying adventure.

World Threads and Adventure Seeds

We've all been there. A GM tries to plan out his next adventure, and although he can find many things that seem intriguing inside the game world, he has no idea which will be explored in future sourcebooks. If he answers a mystery now, will he have continuity problems if the answer doesn't match a future work from the publisher?

There are two types of hooks in *The Echoes of Heaven*. World Threads are little intrigues about the world itself. Some of these will be explained to the GM, some will be withheld for future revelation. However, since these are world elements not marked as Adventure Seeds, the GM knows that they might be expanded in the future. He can



Demo Demo

still play with them and even change and reveal them, but he knows the risks of conflict with future supplements if he does.

The second type is Adventure Seeds. These are puzzles, hooks, and problems that we at Final Redoubt Press promise to never explore. If we state in an Adventure Seed that no King of Ludremon has ever lived longer than thirty years, a GM knows he can build adventures, intrigues, even entire campaigns around this puzzle, and we will never do anything to dispute the answers that arise at his table.

That is not to say that a GM can't touch World Threads, just that he should know the risk. Anything he does with a World Thread might invalidate future material.

Quad Statting

The Echoes of Heaven contains stats for four different games. We at Final Redoubt Press purposely chose these games for their compatibility. Each of these games has the same general levels of power and abilities for the major classes or professions. Mages in all four have similar spells and clerics in all four have similar divine powers.

This means that we can weave a story without worrying about whether a mage can cast a fireball in all three systems. We can provide a GM with everything he needs to run his game, and he can do that with his own house rules and his own style of game play. As much as possible, we intend to stay out of the way.

This isn't saying that we won't add optional abilities or even change the way that some things work. That's necessary in all game worlds. It just means that we won't stumble all over ourselves because a *d20 System* game bard can do a bit more with illusions than a *Rolemaster* bard. Each game group should play the game the way *they* like to play it.

Campaign Cartographer

The maps in our products were made using Campaign Cartographer Pro by Profantasy. Viewing and printing software can be found at: www.profantasy.com. There are two types of maps included, one for CC2 and one for CC3. Only CC2 maps can be viewed with the free viewer.

ULCERS (FROM CHAPTER 8)

Ulcers are the greatest threat to the Mortal Realm. The Gray Death is but a plague on Mortality. Ulcers are a plague on the world itself.



The Nature of Ulcers

Ulcers are perhaps the most important element of play in *The Echoes of Heaven*. If the party is a crusading group, Ulcers will likely be their first and primary targets. Many adventures will likely involve one in some way.

When the Savior and the Four Prophets Sundered the world into Heaven, Hell, and the Mortal Realm, it left the universe in a tiered pattern. Heaven, at the highest, is the home of God, and God does not come to Mortals, all Mortals must come first unto God. Only when they invite Him into their hearts can he show them the way up. Always up.

But the depths of Hell strive to move up as well. The Devils, the Archdemons, the Dukes, and the common Demons all conspire against Mortality. They strive and they plot and they tempt, and when one is successful, he manages to open a wound in the fabric of the Mortal Realm. He creates Hell on earth.

An Ulcer.

An Ulcer is an infection in the fabric of Meridrin. It's a blight on the land and the people, a vortex of sin and evil among sinners. In an Ulcer Mortals languish and die. The Nopheratus raises the dead and Demons walk the earth. An Ulcer is a center of hate and evil, a nexus of two planes, where the fabric of reality thins and twists. An Ulcer is the beginning of the end. It is a wound on the face of creation.

And if it isn't healed fast, it becomes a fatal wound.

Inside Ulcers, reality breaks down. The Ulcer takes aspects out of the dreams of the former inhabitants, the

Demon who created it, or even those who enter. An Ulcer can be wild and unpredictable, if that's its nature, but more often the changes are subtle and one doesn't realize where they are until it's too late.

The Formation of Ulcers

No one is positive how a Devil or Demon creates an Ulcer, but it is known they are connected to sin. Ulcers feed on evil and, once formed, tend to flood with Cambions or the dead. They fester and boil with foul life and a normal Mortal turns from domination of the land into prey.

Ulcers begin subtly. Nothing seems untoward about the region at first. Then there is some hint. The dead rise. The animals turn feral. The sun dims.

It is in these early days that it's easiest to cleanse an Ulcer. Conversely, it's also in these early days the inhabitants are least likely to admit something is wrong. Some of this is denial, some superstition about naming evil. Most of it is the understandable fear of what an outsider might do when they're found out. This fear is justified.

As an Ulcer develops and enters its growth stage, the effects become more pronounced. Often there are magical quirks. Sometimes the Ulcer cloaks itself in illusion. Strange formations might grow. The Demon or being who has attached himself to the thing typically takes up residence, though he often uses disguises. The land shapes to the minds of the lord, the inhabitants, or both.

If not stopped when it finishes its initial growth spurt, an Ulcer fully develops. At this point it becomes "permanent." Fully developed Ulcers are only rarely, if ever, destroyed. Entire branches of the Church seek Ulcers, cleansing them before they ever get this far.

One final note. Fully formed Ulcers *do* continue to grow. The growth stage of an Ulcer refers to its increase in power inside a fixed space. Once they fully form, they spread, taking in land, and corrupting the areas around. Entire nations have fallen to Ulcers. It seems inevitable that one of these will eventually devour the Mortal Realm.

There is no set time line for the development of an Ulcer, although a week for its birth and a few months for its growth is typical.

Ulcers in Game Play

An Ulcer is the ultimate adventure site because inside a growing Ulcer there is little that *can't* happen. That's not to say that anything can happen in a single given Ulcer. Ulcers each have a logic and an atmosphere of their own, and once it is set, they do not vary. They aren't bereft of

natural laws. It's just that any law can *become* natural in the early days.

This allows a GM much latitude. Many types of classic RPG adventures are hard to rationalize in a realistic game. However, an Ulcer's reality is the reality of Hell. If a GM wants to build an adventure around magical traps that are too elaborate to build one at a time, he can put a Demon with a love of the things at the center, and let them form from his will and imagination. To build an adventure around an unlikely amount of riddles, make the Ulcer inside the mansion of a man who studied riddles as his life's passion. Any type of adventure is possible inside an Ulcer: typical roleplaying adventures, romances, tragedies, comedies, hack and slay, horror. The sky's the limit.

Destroying an Ulcer

Destroying an Ulcer is known as "cleansing." As long as the Ulcer hasn't fully formed, the method of destroying one is simple: kill everything evil inside.

Unfortunately, this can be trickier than it looks.

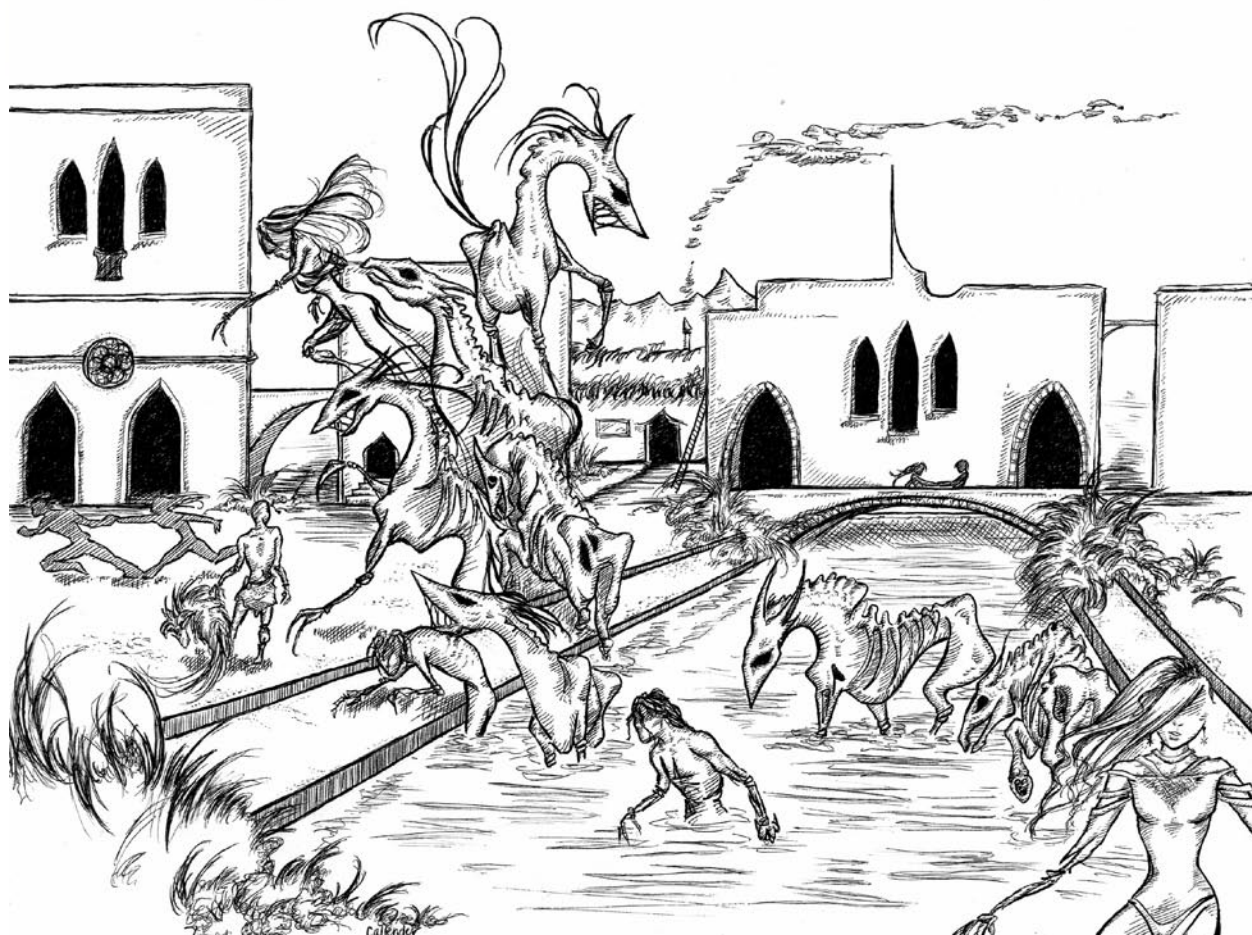
Since there is no simple way to detect evil in *The Echoes of Heaven*, the easiest way to destroy an Ulcer is to simply kill every living thing. Unfortunately, most people choose this path. It's the method the Church condones among the questing Orders. This is not a matter to take lightly, after all. While it's possible to surgically remove the evil from an Ulcer, that evil is tricky and those willing to dedicate their lives to the hunt are relatively few. Those who wipe out entire villages rather than seeking out the core of evil tend to lead much longer lives.

Hopefully, the player characters will be made of nobler stuff than that.

Practically, it takes a great evil to perpetuate an Ulcer. Most of the day-to-day evils of Mortal life won't do it. Evil lords and grasping moneylenders only rarely help anchor an Ulcer, but sometimes there *is* another great evil inside. It's possible to destroy all the Cambions and Undead in a place, only to discover later that a serial killer or a Demon worshipper has lived there undetected for years.

Destroying a fully formed Ulcer is trickier. At this point, killing everything evil inside is only the first part, and the second is always unique to the Ulcer. Perhaps there is an object inside that needs to be destroyed. Perhaps there is ground that needs to be blessed or a grave that needs to be dug up and its contents burned. Every Ulcer is different and tied intimately to its nature and history. If this is a fallen monastery of the Church, the answer might be in the teachings of the monastery's patron Saint. If this is the manor of a lord, it might involve the lord's

Demo Demo



dead brother. If it's a city, it might involve the founder, or the mayor, or the person who was most charitable in the city's history. Every Ulcer is different. Only investigation and empathy can find the answer.

Once they have reached or surpassed the growth stage, destroyed Ulcers disappear violently. Typically, this consists of a rapid decrease of the Ulcer's radius with tremors and occasionally a strange magical effect. People who destroy a growth Ulcer are typically near the heart when this happens. Anyone too deep in the Ulcer during the collapse will stay there. This means they will end up following the Ulcer back to Hell. The amount of distance they must travel to get out depends on the Ulcer, but half-way to two thirds of the way to the original edge is a good rule of thumb. Beyond that, they can successfully dive out if they see the wall of the Ulcer approaching (or just run out if they can't). Destroyed Ulcers collapse quickly and spectacularly. There's rarely time to loot and a dead run is the best pace for escape.

Magic and Ulcers

Again, everything can change from Ulcer to Ulcer, but for the most part, they don't affect magic, except in the fact they are more closely aligned to Hell the further they develop. A fully formed Ulcer is half Hell and half Mortal Realm. Whether this affects a spell has more to do with the nature of the spell and the rules at the GM's table than any hard/fast setting traits. For most GMs, it's probably easiest to ignore this aspect in 90% of all Ulcers.

One thing that *is* consistent, is that all Ulcers are magical. Anyone with the ability to see magic can tell just by looking. At their beginnings, there might be one tiny locus for the Ulcer. When it enters its growth phase, every surface inside the Ulcer will read as magical. Also, Ulcers are corrupt. Any spell that detects corruption (detect evil, for instance) will spot the effect of the Ulcer's magical field if any part of it is in range.

A last note: Ulcers wreak havoc on divination of any kind. The simplest divinations fail where they're involved. Almost nothing can see inside (or through a mag-

ical surface in an Ulcer). Generic divinations sometimes work, but the dampening effects of the Ulcer can even reach outside. If a madman is sabotaging an army because he's been corrupted by the Demon inside an Ulcer, no direct divinations on the madman will likely work, even if the sabotage happened outside.

Ulcers in the Warrens

Ulcers develop in the Warrens as well as on the surface. There are only two things that have kept this from destroying the world. . . .

Continued in The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting.

SETTING OVERVIEW (FROM CHAPTER 1)

The Mortal Realm is a big place and the continent of Belkanâth is only a fraction of it. Still, Belkanâth is the known world, cut off by impassable lands to the north, deserts to the south, seas and barbarians to the west, and the dragons of the Enârôz to the east. Yet in these bounds civilization flourishes.

The Sundering

Twelve thousand years ago there was no Mortal Realm and Hell was nothing more than a province of Heaven. This was the golden age, when Mortal and Angel alike worked side by side to create a society of peace and progress. There was no hardship, no terror, and no war.

Then the angel Bamon, once beloved of God, fell from grace to the Deadly Sin of Pride. He led a third of the Host of Heaven against God. Angel fought Angel. The Mortal races threw in their lots on one side or the other, and for a millennium this war scarred the face of Heaven itself.

In the last days, it looked as if the Faithful had finally triumphed. The final battle seemed a desperate thrust from the Fallen, an attempt to take the Throne of God itself. It seemed doomed to fail.

And then a second third of the Host fell.

The forces of good crumbled. The Faithful died under savage weapons. Only the Five Prophets, one from each of the Mortal Races, saw this coming. Only they had a plan.

With a tremendous magical ritual, using the power of God himself, they Sundered Heaven. The Fallen Angels found themselves carried away to live in a wasteland of pain and horror called Hell. The Faithful Host remained in Heaven, to bask in the light of God. The Mortals end-

ed in the world between, the Mortal Realm of Meridrin. There, the history of history itself was written.

This is the Mortal Realm.

This is the battleground.

The Church

The Church is monolithic, all-powerful. Not even the squabbling of its internal orders can diminish it. It's the source of all good and truth in the world, led by an infallible and prophetic master, the Faerarch.

Or so the Church would have us believe.

There are actually six churches, but the biggest is the Church of Angenus, or simply the Church. This is the Human faith, those who believe the Human Prophet Angenus (of the Five Prophets) was the leader of the Sundering and the Divine Savior of mankind.

Although each of the other Mortal Races believes that their Prophet was the Savior, and they have their own churches dedicated to this faith, the Church is the most powerful.

The Church protects and guides. It is the shepherd to the fold of mankind. The Church cares for mankind and hunts down evil and corruption wherever it is found, especially the corruption of magic. Let the Elves and the Gnomes practice their heathen arts; the Church is there to protect the true followers of Angenus.

And they need protecting.

The Great Fiends

When the last great Empire of man fell, it left behind its mark on the world. There are five Great Fiends, the Chaos, the Warlord, the Lich King, the Demon Queen, and the Siren. Each of these—except the Chaos—controls a permanent Ulcer in the world, and the Chaos is, in itself, an Ulcer.

The Great Fiends are the closest things to gods in the Mortal Realm. Not even a Saint has been able to slay one. Still, they can be stopped. Hacking a Great Fiend to pieces slows it down as much as a Mortal. The effect just isn't permanent.

The Great Fiends are the biggest continual threat to Mortality. When they rage out of their Ulcers, even the greatest enemies ally to stop them.

The Nopheratus

No one knows what the Nopheratus is or from whence it came. All they know is that it appeared sometime during the War in Heaven, and with it came the power of necromancy.

Demo Demo

The Nopheratus is Bamon's greatest ally. It wasn't an Angel, and that's all anyone knows for sure. It might be a force. It might be the essence of evil; it might be as powerful as God himself (though suggesting this is heresy). No one even knows for sure if the Nopheratus is intelligent.

The Nopheratus might well be the instigator of Bamon's fall. It's almost certainly the motive energy behind the formation of Ulcers. Even mortals can access it with fell necromantic magicks.

The Nopheratus is everywhere.

Cambions

When a Demon lies with a Mortal, any progeny is a Cambion. There are five races of Cambions, one for each race of Mortals. Hobgoblins are part Human. Orcs are part Dwarf. Beastmen are part Elf. Goblins are part Halfling. Kobolds are part Gnome.

Cambions carry infernal blood. They rampage, and destroy, and display the Deadly Sin most tempting to their Mortal half. If given their way, they will destroy civilization.

Nephilim

The second third of the Host fell to the Sin of Wantonness. They took wives of the Mortal Races and imitated the husbands of the married. The progeny of these unholy unions were the race of Nephilim.

The Nephilim are the races of giants: five mighty forces of death and destruction in the world. Whereas the Cambions exemplify the Five Deadly Sins, the Nephilim are the sins as an elemental force. There are five races of true giants, but other minor versions such as Ogres exist, corrupted out of the Nephilim by the power of Ulcers.

The Nephilim are the first races born evil, and when they die their souls become Demons. As long as they persist, the ranks of Hell will swell.

THE DIVINE SPARK (FROM CHAPTER 2)

When the original third of the Host fell, the Dwarves stood up and offered to fight. God smiled on this sacrifice and rewarded the Dwarves with the Divine Spark, a flame of Divinity carried within their hearts to aid them in battling evil. All Dwarves, regardless of sex and station, set aside their lives and took up arms whenever the Fallen threatened, and because of this Dwarves, are born with the Divine Spark, to this day. The only exceptions are the Fallen Dwarves, a race so tainted by sin their Divine Spark has vanished.

The Humans and Elves volunteered next, but only the bravest and noblest of these races volunteered. Unlike the Dwarves, Humans and Elves didn't stop their entire society when the Fallen approached, and so only certain members of the races received the Spark. To this day, all High Men and High Elves carry the inner flame.

Bearer of the Divine Spark tend to be larger than other members of their race and their physical attributes are closer to the racial ideal. High Men are stronger than Common Men. High Elves are faster than other Elves. As all Dwarves carry the Divine Spark (or the evil counterpart), there is nothing with which to compare them within their own race, but it is assumed they are more *Dwarven* than Pre-Fall Dwarves.

Any attempt to detect goodness will, in *The Echoes of Heaven*, actually detect the presence of a Divine Spark or another powerful blessing. Though this doesn't actually tell the morals of the person detected. A person *can* lose his Divine Spark by committing enough evil acts.

When a person loses his Divine Spark, the body sinks, the traits wane. The presence of the Divine Spark might not prove anything, but its *loss* tells quite the story of sin.

Only the most heinous offenders, such as serial killers and demon worshipers, lose their Divine Spark.

For the most part, the Divine Spark has no other effect on play. However, there are certain effects, particularly inside Ulcers, which have a greater or lesser impact on those with a Divine Spark.

Of final note is the Infernal Taint. Whereas the Divine Spark is the same spiritual essence carried by an Angel (although toned down), the Infernal Taint is the essence of a Demon. Fallen races and Cambions all have Infernal Taint. Infernal Taint has similar physical effects as the Divine Spark. They detect as evil. They also increase or decrease the impact of some of the effects of Ulcers.

THE FIVE DEADLY SINS (FROM CHAPTER 2)

Because of their close proximity to the evil created when the first Angels fell, every race in the Mortal Realm bears the taint of sin. While this doesn't doom them to Hell from birth, it *does* mean the races have certain inherent weaknesses.

Any time a character confronts his deadly sin, he should roleplay the attraction. If the temptation is great enough (or magical enough) to warrant an RR, then the character receives a -10 penalty.

BASTRIN WAR COLLEGE (FROM CHAPTER 5)

To stand on a wall. To fight the never-ending hordes of Orcs in Uzarâg. For some, these are the heights of warfare.

But defenses fail and armies inevitably take the field. When this happens, only the most talented officers and generals can stand against the Warlord.

The history of the struggles against Uzarâg is one of attacks and feints. No patrols or defenses can hold the Great Fiend inside his Ulcer and eventually someone must put him back in his box.

While bordering cities squat behind their defensive walls, armies range across the land: armies whose sole goal is to destroy the Orcish marauders.

Thus, was Bastrin War College established.

Over the years, the singular purpose has blurred. Now it has become a school of general warfare, with an emphasis on fighting Demons. Still, this is one of the premiere strategy and tactics schools in the world. The cost is enormous (10 GP a term), but many nobles send their sons here to learn the ways of war.

Bastrin War College has a friendly rivalry with the Premane War College. Every few years the two schools conduct a series of war games to increase their enrollment and put the fire of competition under the students.

Most students attend the school only to pick up some tactical, strategic, and logistical skills. Not many students have the wherewithal to dedicate their lives to the school, with its cost and its competitive studies.

Those who do learn the advanced skills and wisdom to lead entire armies in battle. The world's next crop of generals will come from these ranks. And rightly so.

FELRIC'S REDOUBT (FROM CHAPTER 4)

Name: The Free City of Felric's Redoubt.

Ruler: The Lord Mayor Eadic Illéoding.

Government: Felric's Redoubt is essentially an oligarchy. Membership on its Council is automatic for guild masters of major guilds and lords, but the Council has the right to invite new members. Thus, others can buy their

way in with a large bribe. The populace fills ten reserved spots with a general election.

The Council handles most of the wide, sweeping policy for the city, but for more important and time-sensitive tasks there's the High Council. The High Council consists of ten members and the Mayor. The Council elects the High Council and the High Council elects the Mayor. One member of the High Council *has* to be from the general election, but much of the infighting in the Council comes from the swing of High Council seats between lords and the guild masters.

Capital: Felric's Redoubt.

Major Towns: Felric's Redoubt (54,682).

Resources/Trade: Felric's Redoubt is a trade powerhouse. From their position on the Gulf of Orbean, they collect and distribute goods from all over Belkanâth. In fact, it's a mark of prosperity for Maroldan merchant houses to have summer homes in or around Felric's Redoubt. Felric's Redoubt also benefits from its cosmo-



Demo Demo

politan nature. Every race can be found inside its walls. Dwarven crafts, Elven art, Gnomish knowledge, and Halfling cooking are all readily available.

Population: 263,880, mostly Humans but with a healthy sampling of all Mortal races.

Languages: Ludremonian, Maroldo, Ældic, The Divine Tongue, many others.

Overview: Felric's Redoubt is a tightly packed, ancient city. The buildings have long since grown into one another and when one falls someone raises a new one right on top of it. Some houses in Felric's redoubt have five or more sets of foundations and if one were to tear down the rear wall of most buildings in the slums he'd find rotting walls of former buildings packed behind. Termites are a problem.

Felric's Redoubt is one of the few cities in Belkanâth with extensive sewers. Dwarves built these sewers during the time of the Empire by Dwarves. They are palatial, able to hide entire underground organizations (which they do). The Ratcatchers' Guild, for instance, headquarters inside the sewers.

Felric's Redoubt is also the site of a major institute of learning, Leondic University. This ancient school teaches almost every purely academic subject. One used to be to learn magic there as well, but those sections of the University have shut down, though there are rumors that certain criminal magic elements still use them at night.

Felric's Redoubt is known as the last free city by the narcissistic people of central of Belkanâth. Still, if one only considers the feudal lands in the area, Felric's Redoubt does have a remarkable lack of kings pushing its populace around. This is mainly because they live within

the control of the Elven Kingdom of Ingrast, which has no wish to rule a chiefly Human population.

The Sons of Almia (see chapter six) feel closely connected to Felric's Redoubt, which shares the same heritage as Æld. They base themselves secretly in the city (it's an open secret, as the Church doesn't condone the order, but the citizens do).

Church: The city chiefly follows Church of Angenus, but the churches of all the Saviors are represented, as is the Atavistic church (the Atavists have their own section of town.) Only the pagan churches are forbidden inside the city limits, but even they often have small shrines outside the walls.

Allies: Ingrast, Mab, Ludremon, Marnele.

Enemies: Uzarâg.

History: In 521 AI the Empire built the fortress of Kerius on the site of Felric's Redoubt. At the time, the Empire was worried about the Elves of Ingrast, who'd caught rumors of the Killing Accord and seemed likely to revolt. In Kerius the Emperor placed a legion of his finest troops who ranged around Ingrast and took prisoner any Elf who moved farther than a bowshot from the forest's borders.

After the declaration of the Cult of Eurustace as the state religion, these orders progressed to the murder of any Elves that left the borders. A settlement formed to service the legion.

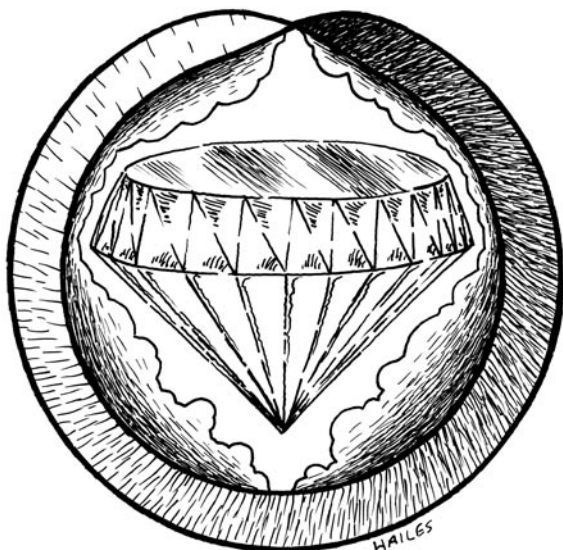
The Elves of Ingrast didn't act at first. They could typically slip by the gauntlet and weren't ready to move against the Emperor, not with most of their brethren withdrawing deeper and deeper into their own woods. The Elves bided their time and waited.

Then the Marshal began his war with the Emperor, and it seemed like the Empire might revolt. Ingrast prepared to launch an attack against Kerius, but they were forced to leave a defensive force on their entrance to the Emperor's Roads. They attacked but the legion beat them back.

Then, when all seemed lost, a body of knights assaulted Kerius from the sea. The knights were Humans dressed as legionnaires and they tricked the legion into believing they were reinforcements.

They seized the fortress and the town through trickery, wiped out the legion, and built a bastion against the Emperor in the west. The name of the leader was Felric, and the knights were the Order of the Knights-Errant from the Sons of Almia.

During the rest of the war, Felric held the city with a contingent of archers from Ingrast. Renamed Felric's Redoubt, from here he launched attack after attack at the Emperor's legions. With the Emperor's Roads, he should



have lost, but the Marshal took most of the Emperor's attention. Felric's Redoubt held.

After the fall of the Empire, Felric's Redoubt allied with Saint Kûlan, drudging the depths of the Sons of Almia to supply troops for battle against the Great Fiends. From here they launched reinforcements that held back the Demon Queen. From here they sent out expeditions that held the Lich King beyond Shieldwall. From here they fought the Warlord, and it was on the walls of Felric's Redoubt, at a shrine now marked as holy by the Dwarves, that Kûlan took his fatal arrow.

Since then Felric's Redoubt has been a monument to Human achievement in the west. It's a financial monolith, a defensive bastion, and the only free city in "civilized" lands.

World Threads: For World Threads and more Adventure Seeds for this settlement, see the upcoming supplement *The Last Free City*.

THE ORDERS OF THE INFERNAL (FROM CHAPTER 8)

Almost all the creatures of the Infernal share a common heritage, owing their origin back to Bamon's first moment of defiance. Here are the orders of Infernal creatures and their relationships.



Fallen Angels

God created the Angels, but Bamon created the Infernal by corrupting the plan of God. He caused the Falls of Angels, claiming two thirds of the Host of Heaven by the end of the War. No one knows if the Nopheratus has any connection to this Fall, but by the end, the deed was done.

Devils

There are a finite number of Devils because there were a finite number of Angels. Every Fallen Angel that survived the War in Heaven ended in Hell after the Sundering. These are now the Devils of Hell and many of them are powerful—the Dukes and Duchesses of Hell. They rule under the brutal tyranny of Bamon, the Dark Prince.

The Nephilim

The Sin of Wantonness caused the second Fall of Angels. These Angels laid with the daughters of Mortality and begot children by them—the races of giants, the Nephilim.

In creating the Nephilim, Bamon accomplished his greatest achievement. The Fallen Angels would only dwindle in numbers from that time forward, because God created no new Demons. But the Nephilim could marry one-another and produce young. It was a race that could perpetuate itself.

The true importance of this achievement wasn't clear until the first Nephilim died. Its soul went to Hell and became the first Demon. Suddenly, not only did a race of evil walk the Mortal Realm, but they swelled the ranks of the Infernal in Hell as well. Within a few generations, Demons outnumbered Devils.

Demons

But not all Demons are the souls of dead Nephilim. Some Demons, the Demons of Damnation, are not necessarily of Infernal birth. These are the souls of dead Mortals or Cambions who achieved such a greatness of evil in their lives that Bamon rewards them in death. They are infused with Infernal energies through some unknown process, becoming full Demons. Some of them become so powerful and are worshipped so widely they become the Infernal equivalent of Saints . . . the Archdemons.

Cambions

When a Demon lies with a Mortal, the resulting child is a Cambion, a creature half Mortal and half Demon. Cambions are the final level of the Infernal. The Cambions can mate with one another and reproduce, creating their own young. This makes them not only the final rank of Infernal, but the one most numerous in the Mortal Realm.

LUDREMONIAN PEOPLE (FROM APPENDIX 1)

Ludremonians are a friendly people who love to talk and laugh and tell stories. They tend toward fierce patriotism

Demo Demo

and they love their Regent almost as much as their prince. Even centuries after the beginning of the Curse, it's still a major matter for discussion in taverns around the country.

Ludremonians are a pious people, loving the Church and defending and honoring their members. Abuse a priest in the streets of Ludremon and one is likely to end fighting a mob. Atavists are not loved, but respected for their beliefs. Ludremonians have a muddled enough past to share a cosmopolitan outlook. A druid might not have a mob save him if he's jumped in the streets, but the attacker will certainly be harried by *Hey now's* and *What's all this then's*. The people won't turn a blind eye and they'll call a guard if that seems safe.

Ludremonians love foreigners (except for the Mab, the Keireenish, and the Marnench). They find Maroldan merchants interesting and exciting and even a pagan would likely be met by more interest than hatred, although he'd have to withstand a barrage of missionary efforts.

Ludremonians are hard to impress but they love people who try. A good story, especially one that seems to be firsthand and true, will likely find many drink offers in a bar. A nice trick will find more. And then competition. If the visitor doesn't buy drinks for other suitable stories or tricks, the offers will dry up after a night or two, but he won't meet hostility or wear out his welcome. He'll just become known as "that damned miser." The Ludremonians will say it with a smile if that's the person's only offense.

Ludremonians have a greater than normal sense of self-entitlement. Old women in villages aren't afraid to tell off a noble. They might even thump him with their canes just a little. They love their aristocracy and they don't have aspirations of class-climbing. Still, they aren't above telling a lord he "doesn't know his arse from a pile of good winter seed." Unless he does, in which case they might start talking down to their "farmer lord."

It can't be stressed enough, though. Ludremonians respect their nobility. A village won't storm a lord's manor just because there's something suspicious going on there, even if it seems wrong. They might even present a united front against outsiders provided the lord isn't sacrificing virgins or some other wicked act.

It's probably this love for the aristocracy that makes their rebellions, when they come, so terrible. They are



peasants and the lord is the lord. If either side violates his duties, the affront to Ludremonian propriety will know no bounds. A lord who acts like some pathetic *merchant*, or worse, like he's a bad Angian, is on borrowed time. A lord that doesn't defend his people or brings them direct harm is done.

Above all, Ludremonians are scrappers. If someone invades a village, they will find harsh resistance. People who try to take candy from Ludremonian children will

receive a savage kicking. An old man who finds his pocket picked is likely to punch the culprit in the throat.

Regent Scolyn is said (possibly apocryphally) to have visited Marnele once while that king preened for war. He showed the Regent his finest royal guard, resplendent in polished breastplates and beautiful uniforms. The King showed the Regent the men at drill and their marvelous skills on horse and in tourney. He turned to the Regent and said, "These are the finest two-hundred knights in the world. Do you think you can find any five hundred of your countrymen who could best them?"

"Maybe not," the Regent said, "but I'd bet any fifty would try."

KETHLEN WEDGWOOD (FROM APPENDIX 1)

The head of the Belm Thieves' Guild, Wedgwood is a friendly, outgoing man. Under his cover as a merchant he is also the titular head of the Alin Trade Alliance. No one in Alin knows about his double life.

Wedgwood is as honest as a thief can be. He's trying to legitimize thievery and turn it into a respectable profession with traditions and honor and respect. He's also trying to hone in on the business of the Assassins' Guild. Mainly, this is just to enforce his own agendas, but he's looking to take on murder as a whole and turn the Guild into some kind of syndicate that handles and controls all crime. Protection is just the beginning.

Wedgwood is a charming fifty-year-old man, horrifically ugly, with a big smile and a bigger generosity. He pays double tithe to the Church, organizes alms, and takes in urchins and reforms them into honest children (so they won't be recruited by his guild). He loves dogs and takes in strays. He occasionally kidnaps vagrants and hunts them for sport.

THE ILLUMINATED (FROM CHAPTER 5)

There are shadows in the world. Some are deep and endless, like the Coalition. Others are more obvious, like the Shadowed Legion. Some are random, more a nuisance than a hindrance, like the Sowers of Seeds. However, all shadows need a light to exist.

For years, conspiracy theorists have denied the existence of the Coalition. Almost no one speaks of the rumors of the Illuminated, yet this ultra powerful organization is one of the most influential on the planet.

The Illuminated are a band of thinkers and strategists, high-minded and noble, who stand behind the world and help keep it whole. They are the primary opposition of

the Coalition, though it's not certain even the Coalition knows they exist.

The Illuminated hold no armies and control few agents. They do not have the strict organization of the Coalition. They act through diplomacy, rarely through direct force.

The only way to join the Illuminated is to be selected by one of its members. That member then presents the applicant to a high-ranking Illuminated (though the applicant probably has no idea anything is going on). The high-ranking member, if they see promise in the applicant, will devise a test for him.

The nature of this test will depend on the applicant. A brilliant cripple won't face combat, whereas a scrappy fighter with a heart of gold will probably not be given mind-bending logic puzzles.

But they *will* be tested, for whatever capacity the Illuminated think they are able to fill. There will always be tests of cleverness, all Illuminated must have sharp minds, but this can be a test of mechanical aptitude or detecting the truth of a person's character. The order does not accept dullards.

The test will also include a powerful moral element. Not all people will always agree on the right thing to do, but the person's character should become readily obvious.

The Illuminated stay behind the scenes. Most of their agents are diplomats, and they reveal themselves to all good kings, the heads of churches, and other powerful good personalities. Typically, these people do the Illuminated's bidding without need for payment.

The Illuminated are a savvy group. They rarely need to reveal themselves directly, preferring to nudge those around them into doing what's right. However, they are not without their defenses, and sometimes they go to war. War with the Coalition.

CAMPAIGN CARTOGRAPHER SYMBOLS (FROM MAP ART)

Final Redoubt needed many new symbols to create the overland maps for *The Echoes of Heaven*. In the upcoming images you will see some of the designs we used for non-human settlements in the Mortal Realm.



