

MURA

Intro

The World At Large

The planet (Mura) has a life force. At the core of the planet is a great 'sphere' of untapped energy. It occupies a kind of co-located position on the Ethereal Plane and the Astral Plane. It isn't conscious, per se, but it is linked to expressions of consciousness - genius loci, spirits, that kind of thing.

The deeper into the planet you get the more apparent it is. While nobody occupies the very deepest parts of the world, there are abysses that sometimes spew forth powerfully charged fumes or fog. (Think the mists from Barovia)

At places in the world this fog emerges naturally - a high concentration of magic that appears on both the Ethereal and the Material planes. Strange effects occur here.

This magical essence, or "aessence," is called aether. Aether manifests in a number of physical forms: solid, liquid, and gaseous. The gas is too diffuse for most people to collect, and is atmospheric or environmental, primarily. Solid aether is mithril when it's infused into stone, adamantine when it's pure. Liquid it's often called simply aether.

Tainted aether, which has been warped by the influences of Outsiders, is called nether. Nether appears much the same as aether, but is less stable. It isn't inherently evil, simply chaotic and dangerous, and it can exert negative influence over frequent users.

The world's energy also appears as Essence Storms when the fields of raw potential are too far out of balance: the planet has a powerful 'positive' charge, the emptiness of space a 'negative' charge (in the void there is no life force, no anima), and on the border where the two meet there's a lot of friction. Essence storms start high, high in the atmosphere, then often come down in bolts like lightning, or in sheets that look like an aurora borealis.

The planet's animate core has been punctured a number of times by the debris that rockets through space every 30,000 years. Other impacts have simply left craters, or nothing at all.

The ages of the planet that are recognized at the moment are:

1. The lost ages. It's probable that there were creatures or something on the planet millions of years ago, but all record of them is lost. No structures remain, no writings, no artifacts. Sometimes artifacts that can't be identified are said to be from the lost ages - and it's possible - but there's no evidence of a civilization to link them to and they may just be associated detritus from the various impacts and events in this terminal epoch.

2. The age of monsters. Some time more than 120,000 years ago a variety of megaf flora and megafauna came to Mura. These included the dinosaurs, dire animals, purple worms, and maybe krakens and dragons. It's hard to say, as there are no records, and even the eldest dragons weren't there. The most dangerous of these creatures, though, were the tarrasques. Once there were many of these beasts, which strode through frigid jungles and preyed on absolutely everything else. The jungle once covered most of the planet, though its last remnants are in the Cold Jungle.
3. The age of the ancients. Around 90,000 years ago some cataclysm obliterated most life on Mura. The tarrasques died out, or were exterminated. The jungles were cleared. Animal life was pared down, and some kind of civilization arose. This is the era of the earliest recognized artifacts and constructs. The scales were strange, and the materials unrecognizable. Little survives from this era, and what does is often incomprehensible. Some scholars call this the age of aberrations and claim that this age brought the Far Realm close to ours and unleashed aboleths, grells, mind flayers, and neogi. These claims are difficult to support, but whatever the truth it was an age of mass extinctions on a global scale.
4. The age of the titans. 60,000 years ago the titans arrived from somewhere else, or else an event occurred that allowed them to rise to prominence. They immediately set about exterminating the other inhabitants of the age of the ancients and all their relics. Was this warfare? Distaste? Throwing off the shackles of masters? Hard to say. What we do know is that the titans fought among themselves and fought others, and this was an age of war. Their wars, either against each other or against their unknown enemies, shattered parts of the planet as they split the North and South apart. It was also an age where the titans formed close bonds with certain races that they created or that they brought with them from elsewhere, and with spirits. This is the age from which the 'first races*' come.
5. The age of the gods. The most recent cycle, 25-30,000 years ago, brought the gods. They slammed into the planet at Faith Hearth and straight through, emerging at Manifest in a pillar of glass. While less destructive to the planet overall than the work of the titans, it still leveled cities and vaporized whole nations. Thereafter followed a war for 10,000 years between the gods and the titans that was an even more gruesome period. Whole species were more or less exterminated, gods and titans both died, and at the end of it came the age of the gods - uncontested victors of the fight. The gods brought with them, also, the new races*.

*The first races and new races are divided by whether they were brought by or created by the titans or the gods. There are also a few other races whose origins are either newer (warforged) or unknown.

First Races	New Races	Other
Dragonborn	Dwarf	Half-elf (a blend, old race and new)
Elf	Gnome	Halfling (a blend, fae (old race) and humans)
Orc	Human	Half-orc (a blend, first and new races)
Leonin	Kenku	Tiefling (newer than the new races; fiends + mortals)
Satyr		Aasimar (newer than the new races; angels + mortals)
Aarakocra		Genasi (mostly first races; spirits + mortals)
Lizardfolk		Goliath (pre-titanic)

Tabaxi		Firbolg (mostly first races; spirits + mortals, like genasi)
Tortle		Goblins, bugbears, hobgoblins (unknown)
Shifters		Kobold (pre-titanic)
Centaur		Yuan-ti (created race during titanic epoch)
Minotaur		Tritons (unknown, probably first race)
		Changeling (unknown)
		Warforged (created race during godly epoch)
		Gith (pre-titanic, extraplanar)
		Loxodon, Giff, Vedalken, Simic (extraplanar)

Manifest lies atop the Veil of Souls, where the dead go to receive their rest. The Veil exists at the metaphysical polar opposite of the Well of Souls (the source of each soul - or at least the Ba and Ka). The Well and Veil exist in almost the same physical space, but vastly different metaphysical space; there is a certain kind of astral friction and expansion. These energies spill over onto the Material plane and cause Essence storms.

The Essence storms cause vast changes in the Material plane, turning plains into deserts, mountains into frozen wastes, and seas into treacherous and tumultuous oceans. These changes have slowed since the arrival of the gods and the establishment of the Veil, but Essence storms still cross the landscape causing strange changes on a regular basis.

The land is ravaged regularly by vast elemental storms that bring patches of temporary unreality and raw magic, warping the nature of things nearby. The constant storms leave landscapes barren or brutal, and certain territories are either devoid of magic entirely or hyper-saturated.

Mild storm: 5 mile radius, 0-15 mph winds, 20 minutes - 1 hour, one minor effect, DC 8

Minor storm: 10 mile radius, 10-25 mph winds, 30-90 minutes, 3 minor effects, DC 9

Moderate: 20 mile radius, 20-35 mph winds, 1d6 hours, 1 moderate and 1d4+1 minor effects, DC 10

Severe: 50 mile radius, 30-45 mph winds, 2d6 hours, 1 severe effect, 2 moderate effects, and 1d6+1 minor effects, DC 11

Apocalyptic: 100 mile radius, 50-65 mph winds, 3d6 hours, 1 horrific effect, 1d6 moderate effects, 1d6+1 minor effects, DC 12

Minor Effects -

1. The rainstorm brings strangely colored or glowing rain, thunder claps and lightning both manifest unusually as well.
2. All creatures in the area gain a +1 bonus to saves.

3. All creatures in the area suffer a -1 penalty to saves.
4. Objects touched by the rain begin to glow (creating an area of bright illumination over the storm's entire area).
5. The storm's cloud cover casts a supernatural shadow, causing a darkness like midnight without stars or a moon. All light sources cast only a quarter of their normal illumination.
6. The rain makes objects slightly rubbery or frail, reducing all hardnesses (and even damage reduction for creatures) by 1.
7. The rain hardens skin and stone, increasing hardness of objects by 1, and granting DR 1 to all creatures.
8. Creatures under the cloud's cover have their movement speed(s) increased by 10 ft.
9. Creatures under the cloud's cover have their movement speed(s) decreased by 10 ft.
10. Spells and spell-like effects leave mystical tracers in the air: users glow gently for 1 round after casting; spells cast light for 1 round per spell level at their target destination as candles; paths taken by spells or enchanted creatures glow in strange colors (this grants all characters a +2 to Spellcraft when attempting to identify an active spell).
11. The thunder bangs on continuously and inflicts nausea in all creatures.
12. Creatures in the area with hair or fur experience a foot of hair growth throughout the course of the storm.
13. Creatures in the area with hair or fur begin going bald and patchy, losing all their hair over the course of the storm.
14. Stone in the area turns translucent (like frosted glass).
15. Glass in the area turns opaque, with a gritty texture and white marble color.
16. Fabric touched by the rain stiffens to wooden hardness and texture.
17. Everything in the area, not just food, takes on an appealing and delicious odor.
18. Objects under 5 pounds begin to vibrate or rattle - those who touch them are sickened.
19. Creatures touched by the rain become mildly intoxicated, as though drunk or tipsy.
20. The thunder panics animals and individuals, imposing a -4 on all saves versus fear.

Moderate Effects

1. Wood softens to 'noodly' consistency, bending and bowing under the rain.
2. The rain is highly toxic, poisoning anyone touched for 1d4 Dex/1d4 Str and Con.
3. Those who see lightning strike are considered charmed by the next person they interact with.
4. Creatures touched by the rain gain the ability to walk on walls, as per the *spider climb* spell.
5. Those in hearing of thunder become agitated, going into a rage, as a barbarian.
6. Each time lightning strikes, it illuminates a memory of each viewer, spontaneously creating an insubstantial and colorless image that plays out their memory.
7. Ghosts and other intangible undead gain form in the rain.
8. Oddly colored rain permanently stains objects, causes them to glow, etc.
9. All those who see lightning are blinded, those who hear thunder are deafened.
10. Those caught in the rain are transformed as though they had lycanthropy (pick animal randomly).
11. Vegetation in the area grows uncontrollably.
12. Animals (and people) grow in size by 100%.
13. All those who see the lightning gain x-ray vision (blocked by materials as *detect magic*).
14. Intermingled with the rain are tiny, flaming coals that start small fires (mostly put out by the rain, but gunpowder or similar alchemical materials are at serious risk).

15. Individuals and objects experience unpredictable, safe, short-range teleportation (5 to 40 feet, once every lightning strike, in a random direction).

Severe Effects

1. Individuals and objects experience unpredictable, dangerous, short-range teleportation (10 to 80 feet, once every lightning strike, in a random direction. If the teleport would end in a solid object, the target is displaced to the edge of the solid object and takes 1d6 damage for every 10 feet of displacement).
2. The rain is not water, but frogs and tadpoles, or bugs, or chunks of meat, etc.
3. Random gates open up to nearby planes (ethereal, astral, shadow and elemental planes (roll 1d8, if 8 roll twice again). These gates let through 1d100 creatures (total) CR 1 to 3.
4. Metal begins to corrode under a rusting rain - all ferrous metals rust, copper is covered in verdigris, silver tarnishes, etc.
5. Stone, glass and other crystalline objects have a 5% chance to shatter at every thunderclap.
6. Memories appear, as the #6 result of Moderate Effects table, except they are fully tangible.
7. Thunderclaps inspire full-blown terror and panic, as the spell *fear*.
8. Lasting love erupts spontaneously, as the #3 result of Moderate Effects table, except it is a deep mutual attraction and lasts 2d6 months.
9. Objects struck by lightning awaken as elementals and awakened trees and animals (as per the druid spell *awaken*, the wiz/sor spell *animate object* or, if a stone/pond is struck, or fire is started, as a small sized elemental).
10. Lycanthropy runs rampant, as result #10 on the Moderate Effects table, except the lycanthropy is permanent.
11. Those who hear the thunder are deafened permanently, those who see lightning are blinded permanently. This can be cured by *remove curse* or *remove blindness/deafness*.
12. Those touched by the rain are cursed, as *bestow curse*.
13. Those touched by the rain are blessed: a +1 to all skills, or a +2 to one attribute, or a feat. This effect lasts 2d6 months.
14. A single person in the midst of the storm gains a single *wish*.
15. Approximately 10% of the animals in the storm gain intelligence, as though *awakened*.
16. Approximately 10% of the vegetation in the storm gains intelligence, as though *awakened*.

Apocalyptic Effects

1. The dead rise as undead (skeletons, zombies and specters).
2. The fears of those in the storm are made suddenly tangible. This is similar to the #6 result of Severe Effects, except rather than memories, the things made manifest are nightmares and phobias.
3. Desires are suddenly realized in the wake of lightning strikes. This is similar to the previous entry, but rather than deepest fears, deepest desires are made tangible.
4. Gates to other planes open spontaneously, spilling out potentially deadly creatures. This is similar to the #3 result of Severe Effects, except that the creatures summoned are between CR 4 and CR 9, and the gates to other planes can be to anywhere: negative energy, positive energy, hell or heaven, Mechanus, etc.
5. Gravity becomes suddenly unstable. 12d10 areas are affected, each appx. 300 feet across. Determine orientation with a d10: 1-2: east, 3-4: west, 5-6: north, 7-8: south, 9-0: straight up.
6. Objects are disintegrated by the rain: rain deals 1 point of acid damage every minute, ignoring hardness and damage reduction. Entire forests are brought down to their roots, mountains slough layers of rock, homes are completely evaporated, and the ground is

left empty and barren (total damage is 3d6 x 60, or an average of 650 points over 10 hours).

7. Objects are awakened on a grand scale. As #9 from Severe Effects table, except it applies to 10% objects within hearing range of thunder claps, not just those struck by lightning.
8. The landscape is blasted by one of the following: torrential rain and floods; fire; earthquakes; freezing winds that leave the landscape iced; a strange magical radiation that sickens and kills; negative energy withers everything in the territory.
9. Those who see lightning strikes suffer permanent amnesia; those who hear the thunder are dizzy and disoriented.
10. Souls and memories of 5% of the population are switched - complete body-swap.
11. Caliban appears at the center of the storm's vortex.

There are also Essence fogs, mists, and fumes. These are often stationary or persist longer than storms, and have milder effects. However, these effects may be ongoing, such as: disorientation, floating, dreams turning real, speaking animals, teleportation from one part of the fog to another, or physical changes to people & things.

There are twelve planets in the solar system.

The two closest to the sun are in an erratic shared orbit, destined to smash into each other in a few million or billion years.

The third has a ring of detritus around it and takes the brunt of the meteor storms every 5,000 years. It has no life, and the frequent meteor strikes - uninhibited by any atmosphere or magnetic field or magical protection - leave the surface ravaged and pocked by asteroid strikes every cycle. This results in dozens of tiny mini-moons, many of them jagged or partially formed.

The fourth is Mura. It has one moon, which carves a narrow channel through the ring around the planet. The ring is primarily ice, but includes frozen monsters (courtesy of the Wefan Ancients), dust, and rock. The moon is called

The fifth and sixth planets are close in orbits and may, from time to time, cross each others orbits. They both also have rings around their planetary bodies and a collection of small moons. Like the third planet they have frequent meteor impacts.

The seventh and eighth planets are unremarkable.

The ninth is the largest planet in the system, followed closely by the tenth. These planets are starting to cross the boundary to the 'dark planets' that receive little sunlight and are completely dark and cold.

The eleventh and twelfth planets are so far away they are impossible to see, even with the primitive telescopes Mura has developed. The eleventh is so far from the eighth that it almost doubles the size of the system, and the twelfth similarly outdistances the eleventh.

The tenth, eleventh, and twelfth planets are not yet common knowledge. The tenth has only recently been spotted by the telescopes of Weej and Talmussin, and the eleventh and twelfth are only theorized. Mathematics proves - or strongly suggests - the eleventh, and some argue that a twelfth is necessary to balance the structure of the system while opponents say the meteors and rings account for any errors in predicted ellipses.

Metaphysics, Titans, Deities

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Nirvana

Heavens

Faerie

Mirrorlands

Prime, or Material

Echo

Shade

Hells

The Pit

???

The Titans

In the war between the gods and the titans, the gods are the undisputed winners. They arrived an eternity ago borne on a comet that went straight through the planet, leaving the Bay of Horrors behind and exiting at Manifest.

The gods and titans then battle directly, through proxies, and with monstrosities like Ziz and Leviathan. When the dust settled the titans were either slain, banished, or imprisoned. Those that were imprisoned now slowly go mad, raging impotently against the gods. The banished ones sometimes circle back around to rain horrors on the plane they lost. The dead ones curse and mumble from beyond the grave, though they remain trapped in a kind of twilight sleep forever.

The Ekletheon Deities

Avaleya

Winged Walker, Avaleya, the Perfect Messenger: Goddess of roads, travel and exploration, Avaleya is also the creator of the written word - which she invented to deliver messages. Avaleya blesses anyone that explores or seeks to broaden themselves through new experiences, as well as travelers and messengers of course.

Depicted, typically, in worn and well-traveled clothing. She carries a bindle or pack, often, and always has beaten-up boots.

She, along with Obeccai, is a patron of the sciences - exploration in a metaphorical sense is no less exploration. She has been shown often to have books, scrolls, and writing equipment close to hand, and more modern depictions may show her as well with clockwork or small steam mechanisms.

Ceremar

Harvest's Hands, Ceremar: Ceremar asks the smallest of sacrifices: the burned husks of corn, the chaff of the last season and the like, and the seed of men to fertilize her fields. Brings rain, good harvests and so forth.

Depicted with plants nearby or growing on her, always. Changes shape throughout the year, growing pregnant near harvest-time, and then 'bearing child' at harvest and slimming back down until spring (sowing time) the next year. This depiction is often used to indicate season when illustrating something: a small image of a thin/glowing/pregnant/round woman in the corner of a tapestry shows what season it is.

Always shown as strong, like a farmer, well able to do work. Often depicted alongside domesticated animals: sheep, mules, oxen, chickens.

Jagus

Jagus, The Jackal, Lord of Death: After death, weighs the hearts of the dead against his own heart to decide punishment - only those more pure than he earn paradise. Also commands the jackal lords, servants of the veil and deathlights. Maintains the boundaries of life and death, and the Well of Souls. Despises the undead (with the exception of vampires, who are not undead in the strictest sense and therefore are just not his problem).

Has a connection with canines of all kinds: dogs, coyotes, jackals, dingoes, wolves, whatever. Sometimes called 'mortals' best friend' as a joke - like a faithful dog, he is always by his "master's" side. Also tracks mortals to the inevitable end, etc.

When Xvim goes on the wild hunt, he often has several of Jagus' hunting dogs with him, indicating the bloody end of the hunt.

Mithron

God of the Grape, Mithron, Reveler: The dictate of Mithron is 'party,' who encourages his followers to drink, dine, dance, sing and entertain. The goal is not to subsume life in revelry, but rather to celebrate the joy of a fleeting existence.

Almost always depicted with curly, loose hair & a blush or red nose to indicate drunkenness. Also often shown with one or more physical disabilities, such as a withered hand, missing foot, or similar.

Venerated by those who enjoy or profit from revelry, but also by those seeking protection while drunk or disabled. Those who are drunk might touch a small figure of Mithron on the way out of a bar to pray for safety on the walk home at night, e.g.

Also the patron of crossing lines, especially while in altered states. Those who partake and then transgress - sexually, legally, socially - are doing service to Mithron. This means that there are cults of criminals (like hashashin) that seek altered states before robbery or murder to reach a religious-chemical ecstasy. He's also the patron, thus, of protestors: anyone who's gotten drunk for courage before throwing a brick at a cop was serving Mithron as well.

Truly esoteric mysteries are those that seek a religious ecstasy in private, often in the woods, ala Dinoysian ritual.

Obeccai

Obeccai, the Learned One, Messiah of the Mind: Legendarily, the only living being to ascend to the pantheon of ten. Obeccai is the patron of all mages, educated people, teachers, craftsmen, etc. Anyone that places a high value on hard work, learning and practice pays homage to Obeccai.

Shown, unlike the other gods, consistently: because he was an actual person at one time his appearance is remarkably stable. Always depicted as a man moving from middle age to old age, with thinning hair and a beard. He is also accompanied, often, by a staff that curls like a grape vine and with a book or scroll. Has a characteristic ring with three rubies and a necklace amulet shaped like a tiny abacus.

Protiorius

Timekeeper, Protiorius, the Keeper of the Cosmic Almanacs: Protiorius changes the seasons, dictates when lives end, arranges natural disasters, ensures that the sun rises and the moon changes - the whole shebang. She's a kind of godly accountant and book-keeper, and has a vast (infinite) tome of the past, present and future.

Protiorius' age varies wildly, depending on their aspect. Sometimes appears young and charming, sometimes old and bent. Most often depicted as a middle-aged man with thinning hair & a knowing smile.

Chains, locks, bonds, clocks, and histories are all associated with Protiorius. They are often depicted as wearing heavy chains or manacles, indicative of the weight of history and the bindings of fate.

Senya

Seducer, Senya, Reaper of Debts: The arbiter of vengeance, debts and love. Oh, and also lust. Senya commands hearts, presides over marriages (which are a kind of debt), gamblers and particularly romantic vengeance (preferably way out of proportion to the original slight - part of the rule of threes, vengeance should outweigh the offense by three times).

Fanged. Goddess of vampires, was the one to originally curse the bloodlines due to a shirked debt (a killing in a bad marriage). In all of her aspects appears with fangs. Has a connection to blood, and thus blood magic.

Umain

Plaguelord, Umain the Healer: The god of doctors, medics, healers, sanitation workers and the plague. Can heal or harm and does so with seeming whimsy. Sometimes seen as moody or having sudden swings of behavior in a startling way.

Depicted as half healthy, and half wracked by the worst diseases imaginable. Shown with a knife, or two knives: one scalpel, and one wretched bone ritual blade.

Xvim

The Great Hunter, Xvim the Spear: God of the bloody hunt. Blood for the blood god! Demands the hearts of prey (eaten raw in a religious ecstasy by his worshippers, tossed to the dogs on the first hunt of the year by those less devout). Occasionally takes an avatar, the horned hunter, and leads bloody and violent hunts under the full moon. Travels with a pack of Jagus' hunting dogs when he intends to kill.

Married to, or related to, Senya in many of his appearances.

Has a thing for hearts (and harts - many puns exist even in official liturgy).

Typically appears with exaggerated canine teeth and/or antlers or horns.

Zhako

The Shield and the Blade, Zhako, Warmaster: The great general of the sky that oversees all war. He leads the armies of the gods, and is a meticulous planner. Known as much for his mercy as his rage, Zhako is mercurial and harbors grudges and debts over decades (mainly so that they do not interrupt his carefully laid plans).

Called the 'wide-eyed,' always has his eyes open. Cannot be put to sleep, distracted, and is always aware of surroundings. Some diviners pray to him. Most appearances feature extra eyes, extra-large eyes, or eye motifs - such as on his armor.

The Great Pantheon

Asmushneth, Serpent Mother: One of the few remaining titans, Asmushneth is the origin and progenitor of all serpents (not, technically, the yuan-ti, though they do revere her as a mother figure). Her children are called, collectively, 'scaly-kind.'

Angenona, Unbidden Smile: Goddess of relieving pain and easing sorrow, both emotional and physical.

Anti, the Hawk-father: God of birds, with a special love of birds of prey.

Anuket, Horned Woman: A gazelle-headed goddess of rivers, streams and the like.

Aset, Shadow-Weaver: The spider goddess of shadow magic and secrets hidden by darkness. Consort of Du, the god of the moon. Had an affair with Hushet, which somehow resulted in the birth of grimalkins.

Ash, Jewel in the Desert: God of oases and mirages.

Aurae: Goddesses of the winds (one each for north, south, east and west - all sisters).

Avernuncus, Foresight's Friend: God of foretellings, predictions and auguries.

Banebdjet, the Bedroom God: God of fertility and sex, has the head of a ram.

Djehuty, Geomancer: God of mathematics and physics, and the study thereof. Also the god of ritual magic. Another of the remaining titans, he has the head of an ibis.

Du, the Moon: Works with Khnum to maintain the tides. Controls night and the moon. Half-brother of Foyes, the sun.

Foyes, the Sun: God of the sun, he warms the clay and also blesses fire - from candles to infernos.

Hanhet, Endless: Goddess of infinite things and endless concepts, along with her other half, Huh.

Hatmehit, Scaled Protector: Goddess of guards, knights and fish.

Haptha: Goddess of music and singing, she also has some control over flight and the sky. Typically accepts only white animals as sacrifice.

Hushet, Cat-Eyed Woman: Goddess of cats and mother of grimalkins. Also a goddess of disguise, shapechanging and illusions.

Khnum: The ram-headed titan of the sea, now holds power over the waves, the tides and floods.

Maahes, the Lion: God of war and weather. Specializes in naval battles.

Never: God of oats and grains.

Nu-Het, Deep Lord: The god of the abyss, Nu-Het watches over caves, caverns, fissures and undersea trenches. Many dungeoneers offer prayers to him.

Rem: God of beer and liquor, specifically of brewing and distilling.

Serket, the Scorpion: Goddess of stings, bites and poisons - as well as the healing thereof.

Tefnut, Dew-Sparkling Lady: Goddess of the dew, the rain and the fog.

Tolianna, Midwife: A goddess of childbirth and infant care, she takes care of pregnant women and ensures safe births. She's also known to protect children traveling over water (be it by bridges or ships).

Vecna, Secret-Keeper: Once a human lich, Vecna became powerful enough to evade Jagus forever, thus earning himself a place in the roster of gods. He is a god of death (mainly by default of having beaten Jagus) and of secrets. He lost his hand and eye to Jagus' avatar in combat, but escaped. He is also a god of truenaming and presides over the most secret of names and spells.

Vreik, Lash-brother: God of torture and breaking prisoners.

Werethekau: God of binders and entrapment, with power over cages and exiles.

Ashmuneth

The Goddess of Scalykind, Scaled Mother. She births monsters and is the direct progenitor of dragons, snakes, and damn near anything with scales. She didn't birth the yuan-ti, but they were created through arcane experiments and a divine blessing by Ashmuneth. Her last remaining direct child is the Leviathan that occupies the Bay of Horrors, still ready to fight the gods.

Ashmuneth is one of a few titans that survived the war between the gods.

Her symbols are snakes and eggs. She is associated with motherhood, survival, the food chain, poisons, drugs, and serpentkind.

Avenuncus

Patron of seers, prophets, palmists, and all manner of predictors and prognosticators. He is worshipped most commonly by market fortune-tellers, financial speculators, and advisors to leaders of nations. His temples are exceedingly rare - even in Talmussin it's just a few shrines. As much as people would like to know the future, there are few that are willing to wrestle with Avernuncus' riddles and rituals.

His symbol is a hand dropping a small pebble, often styled as a rune-stone or crystal bead. He is associated with fortune, luck, foretelling, foresight, forethought, and the future.

Djehuty

The god of maths, physics, and rituals. The common folk revere Djehuty for bringing magic to the masses in an accessible form. The god granted sophisticated math to mortals, and brought rituals, incantations, and ceremonies to those ungifted with magic.

His symbol is a plain circle, quartered - the most basic magic circle. He can also be propitiated at any more complex arrangement of symbols. He is associated with engineering, mathematics, and functional magics.

Hethert

The goddess of music is among the most beloved of the small gods. Hethert is the patron of every art, though she loves music the best. She is the queen of the muses, who each have their own domains and attitudes as well. She is also a hopeless romantic.

Her symbol is that of a beautiful white cow's head with lyre strings strung between her horns, sometimes styled with a golden halo. She is associated with music, poetry, romantic love, visual arts and sculpture, and cattle.

Benebdjet

The Bedroom God, patron of the fucking arts. He is the god of fertility, children, and sex. Has the head of a ram with great big horns. He's a sometimes-consort of Senya, and sometimes-consort of Mithron as well. Benebdjet gets around. He's often invokes as protection against pregnancy, or in prayers for pregnancy. His most common prayers are against diseases of the junk.

His symbol is a ram with a huge erection, or in polite company a ram's head in profile. He is associated with sex, kink, children, pregnancy and childbirth, and fertility.

Foyes

Foyes works to warm the day and bless the fires from candle to inferno. He's often accompanied by other gods as he crosses the sky, and leads a court of gods of the sky (or birds, or etc.). He is the literal sun, and brother to Du, the moon.

He is depicted as a rower on a golden barge with a long punting pole, and is almost always shown with a golden halo. His symbol is a golden circle, sometimes with radiant lines. He is associated with the day, fire, warmth, growth, and action.

Du

The god of the moon, brother of Foyes. He is more 'bookish' than his brother, working with Khnum to manage the tides and seas. He leads the court of the night and associates with gods of darkness, stars, mystery, rest, and healing.

He's usually depicted as a man bearing a silver ewer, but as often represented by his symbol: an albino bat, sometimes curled up into a circle. His symbol can also be represented as a silver circle or crescent. He is associated with water, change, mystery, and rest.

Urgathoa

The goddess of plague, fungus, infection, and parasites. Her skin is spongy and pale, her frame emaciated. Her cultists are fanatics that infect themselves with fungal spores and symbiotes, and carry plagues around from which their goddess protects them, making them terrible carriers.

Juiblex

The demon god of oozes and filth. Also has strong ties to certain drugs.

Divine Offerings

Offerings can also grant stuff. Want *guidance*? Leave a fire of fine oils and mint at the altar and roll %, friendo. Etc.

These may be part of the rituals described elsewhere (incantations from Unearthed Arcana 3.5), related to the taboos described elsewhere (granting blessings, charms, and boons as listed in the DMG), or totally different. Some are formulaic, some are fantastic, and sometimes it's without rhyme or reason.

These are tied, closely, to the rituals of the gods (and thus, the Church), but also to folkways and rituals propitiating the animistic spirits.

Divine Rituals

Rituals are commonly known and used. PCs might have a few that they take advantage of, but many are terribly situational. Some are not commonly known, or are developed for a particular purpose. For example, a great stone circle might be constructed for use at the lunar solstice, and need the sacrifice of a dozen white oxen, but allow a magician to open a temporary portal to Faerie or something.

Borrow em from Arcana Evolved. In addition there are greater rituals that are most akin to the incantations from Unearthed Arcana 3.5. The *ceremony* spell accessible by paladins and clerics also covers several of the commonest ritual and puts a bit of divine weight behind them - many rituals have no rules bonus, while those blessed by a divine spellcaster might very well.

Common rituals include:

Brotherhood Ceremony: A platonic kind of joining ceremony, stating a strong but non-romantic bond between two or more individuals. This can be a binding ceremony or a

Disavowal Ceremony:

Farewell Ceremony:

Funeral Ceremony:

Healing Ceremony:

Joining Ceremony: A marriage, typically. The joining of two or more people into a committed bond to be kept until death, or until all parties agree to separate. Can be performed in many ways, but almost always includes the exchange of gifts, making vows, and the oversight of one or more religious or spiritual officials. Commonly includes family, friends, or members of the community for a party before, during, or afterward.

A notable take on this celebration in the upper classes of Hein includes a days-long party prior to the actual marriage, with friends or community members trying to argue or tempt the participants out of the joining each night to symbolically test their bond. They might be tempted by sex or wealth, might be threatened or shamed, or might have a friend simply sit down and make a reasoned argument against the joining.

Lifquest Ceremony:

Luck Ceremony:

Mourning Ceremony:

Oath Ceremony:

Resurrection Ceremony:

Thanksgiving Ceremony:

Victory Ceremony:

Welcoming Ceremony:

Divine Taboos

The gods all have a rule or two that you don't break unless you're horny for curses. Just like ancient Greece, you don't have to be a follower of the god, or in their temple, or whatever. You sin, you get cursed.

Taboos include: cannibalism, betraying a guest or a host, fratricide (any familicide, really). Desecration, necrophilia, anything to do with weird sex or weird death stuff usually. Then a few weird ones that may be local or whatever, faeries: don't pour milk into running water, don't walk widdershins around a campfire, don't say your love's name while underground, that kinda shit.

Each major god gets one taboo. These are universal across cultures. Some are specific to a god's portfolio, some are just unique and have a story behind them.

1. Avaleya - respect your hosts, and your guests, and do not betray their trust
2. Ceremar - don't steal, adulterate, or deprive another of the necessities of life: food, water, and shelter
3. Jagus - don't profane the dead
4. Mithron - don't violate the sanctity or autonomy of another's body
5. Obeccai - don't aid or allow the Outsiders
6. Protorius - don't violate the hierarchy of divinity or the order of the natural world
7. Senya - don't betray your kin, your companions, or your community
8. Umain - don't commit incest
9. Xvim - don't commit bestiality
10. Zhako - care for the young and the vulnerable

You can also take on taboos that grant boons. Some people willingly give up, for example, eating meat, or give up liquor, or walk with their hands bound for a year, or etc. For these small offers the gods might grant small gifts. Roll on a table for minor boons, moderate boons, major boons, etc. A minor boon might be, like, advantage vs. enchantments or something. Moderate might be a cantrip effect once a day. Major might be darkvision.

SEE ALSO: Blessings & Charms in the DMG. These provide some great examples of rewards for small taboos.

Religions of Mura

There are, broadly speaking, four major 'strains' of religion present on Mura:

1. The Ekletheon Orthodox Church.
2. Animism or spiritual traditions, and titanic 'cults.'
3. Ancestor worship.
4. Atheism.

The Ekletheon Orthodox Church, or The Church, is far and away the most powerful single religion and has the best logistics and strictest organization. It is also the youngest of the major strains of religion. It is a polytheistic religion that promotes worship of a group of powerful gods, the Ekletheon, and veneration of a larger group of gods called the Greater Pantheon.

The Church is a catholic venture in the truest sense in that they are open to all worshippers and are willing to embrace a variety of beliefs. This has resulted in many schisms in the Church in the past that have split off smaller churches, regional beliefs, all kinds of things. The strength of the approach is that if the Church is courting a village that venerates their ancestors those ancestors can be made saints of the Church and their worship can continue *under* the Church's auspices. If a particularly powerful spirit or elemental has become a figure of local worship the Church can court the spirit and its believers and encourage the spirit to pursue deification with the Church becoming an 'official' god of the Church - provided its portfolio doesn't intersect too thoroughly with an extant god.

The Church is militant, evangelical, and powerful. Its styling can be imagined as "what if the Romans stole the Egyptian pantheon rather than the Greek, and then gone through the Renaissance and Enlightenment like the Catholic church?" That means a lot of rich fabrics, gilded everything, a tight relationship with a lot of the governments across the world. The structure of the Church is both religious and political, and strict. The closer you get to the 'heart' of the Church the less flexible it is, the more fundamentalist and the more originalist and committed to the doctrine.

Some few preachers and congregations offer worship to the gods outside of the boundaries of the Church, but these are often sought out and pressed into compliance. In some cases it's because there was a schism or fracture in the Church, and some of these sects have survived longer, though they often defer to the Church publicly to avoid being stomped out by the military might of the Orthodoxy.

The second most common strain of religion on Mura is animism or spiritual worship. This covers a lot of ground: individuals that worship a nebulous nature deity, those who propitiate natural spirits or similar, and it has also come to include those who worship the few remaining titans (provided they exclude the remainder of the Orthodox Church's gods - for those remaining titans have almost all become 'gods' of the Church at this point).

There is a very real, perceptible energy that suffuses Mura. This elemental animating power is expressed through small everyday miracles, and sometimes given form and presence by spirits. These spirits can be anything: elementals, genius loci, some argue even the fae. Most often they take the form of a natural object or occurrence: a lake, a field, a tree, a storm, an elderly stag, a burning bush.

Animists revere and often propitiate these natural spirits, viewing them most often as divine messengers of Mura, the planet, itself. These spirits, if given enough belief and power, can become very powerful. They often take on the role of protector of a community if they gather enough power, trading their metaphysical power for worship and sacrifices. These relationships can cover a lot of ground, though. One town may burn an animal carcass in the spring for a good harvest in the autumn, and have a guardian spirit that takes an almost matriarchal role. Another town might mark their bodies and homes with paint to keep away the great black eel that lurks in their river, and offer up three captured warriors from another town every rainy season to prevent floods and thunderstorms. Yet another town might have a group of three naiad 'sisters' that take the forms of columns of clear green water and move through the town as though they were citizens, and take their worship in the hospitality of a different family every night.

For towns that worship these forces of nature the community is usually unified in their worship. As well, these towns will have habits, taboos, and rites that are unique to their spirit, though there are often common threads: respect toward that spirit and others of its kind, for example. Outsiders are *usually* exempt from these requirements, as they don't benefit from the grace of the spirits either. Should they stay in town long enough they'll be expected to learn the right things to say and do - and the things to avoid. These small spirits sometimes go to battle with each other either individually - one on one - or through their worshippers. This can be for worshippers, for resources, for territory, or because of fundamental ideological differences. Sometimes towns will ally as well, with their spirits complementing each other or even 'marrying,' merging, or otherwise becoming more closely related.

Individuals that worship these figures may offer their faith to a single individual spirit, or to a whole class of spirit (like 'storm spirits' or 'the sea' or 'the harvest'). They often have a local representative of that concept nearby, so a worshipper of the harvest might offer specific prayers to Aphaph, the spirit of the wheat fields in their town that takes the form of a small golden deer with six-foot-long legs and wanders through the fields every autumn.

Individuals are often also more in tune with natural spirits on a smaller scale - a little bit of Mura's energy suffuses every natural object, from pebbles to pigeons. The larger and older a given thing is the more likely it is to have achieved a kind of sentience or spiritual representative. Areas can also have a shared sentience called a genius loci, a representative that encompasses an entire area. This means that a mountain might have a spirit like a gray grizzled old man that hikes across the rocky mountain without stopping day or night, and talks to other hikers from time to time. A forest might have a single spirit that feels every tree and clump of moss but is 'housed' in the oldest, largest tree in the woods right in the middle of the forest. A city might have a foul-mouthed red-skinned imp sort of spirit the size of a child

that hangs out in the central square and chain smokes cheap stogies while cussing about out-of-towners. In any case a spirit will be representative of the ethos and interests of its area or object.

Ideals and concepts can also have representative spirits, but these 'spirits of humanity' usually gain their take from their worshippers. This means that, say, a spirit of fire that is worshipped by a group of aggressive, expansionist folk may eventually start to act like and feel like a small god of war and honor. However, even with these spirits their primary tie is always natural: to a material, a place, an animal, or a natural occurrence. The realm of 'pure' ideological spirits is that of the gods.

The third most common tradition on Mura is ancestor worship. Spirits and ghosts are very close to the Material plane, in many places, and the wisdom of those who have passed on is often respected by their surviving family or community. The places that develop traditions of ancestor worship are often from areas that do not have a single unified nature spirit that can assume a role in their community, or they may worship those nature spirits beside their ancestors. Their other commonality is that they are from an area with a lot of afterlife activity - near Manifest, near the Well of Souls or the Greenwood, or somewhere else there is a confluence of ghost lines.

These practices are almost always closed to outsiders, and often deeply personal to the family itself. Each family worships their own ancestors, primarily, though in some cases there are shared ancestors. There might be a group of past mayors or city counselors that still offer their wisdom, there might be a gathering of priests that advise the current Orthodoxy priest in matters of theology and counsel, or there might be a town founder that still looks over the town or appears every midwinter, or etc.

Most of the ghosts worshipped in these towns are benign - almost all of them, in fact. Their personalities are kept stable by the constant reinforcement from their families through retelling of stories of their life or through conversation. Those that begin to 'outlive' their era often feel more and more the tug of the afterlife and slowly fade and move on. Rarely a spirit becomes deranged, infected, or unhinged - sometimes the result of a terrible event like their family members being murdered, their ancestral home being burnt down, their graves defaced, etc. - and becomes dangerous. These spirits are often powerful and vicious, and may manifest as poltergeists, ghosts, specters, allips, etc. (any kind of intangible spirit). They may wreak vengeance, harm their own family, or even go on a rampage through the town as a whole.

Both animism and ancestor worship can and do often exist in concert with Orthodox teachings. This is more common in the borderlands, less so near the heart of the Church. The official statement of the Church is that natural spirits are phenomena, not gods, and should not be worshipped lest they throw off the natural balance of things. The Orthodoxy also warns against ancestor worship, as it prevents the spirits from moving on to their final rest and denies Jagus his due. In the borderlands these dictates are bent a bit to allow a community, for example, to both worship Ceremar and the local deity of the harvest, or to worship both the Ekletheon and still respect but not propitiate the spirits of individual families. Oftentimes the worship of the gods is seen as a public, community thing, and the worship of spirits and ancestors is seen as more personal.

Finally, there are some individuals that don't worship any god, titan, nature spirit, or ghost. They might be called 'atheists' but this is in the sense that they owe allegiance to nothing rather than implying that

they believe in nothing. A person's reasons for rejecting worship could be anything: perhaps their town's spirit was antagonistic toward its charges and eventually violent, resulting in the town combatting and casting out their old guardian; perhaps the individual was raised in the Church and has seen the dirty tricks and backbiting politics at the heart of it; perhaps the individual's ancestors had their graves dug up and their houses of worship burnt by the Church and have given up on organized religion altogether. Who knows.

Atheists are only really distinguished from the religious folks by their distrust of divine spirits, and the fact that they don't typically engage in the rituals, ceremonies, and prayers that others do. This means they don't have to give anything up - no taboos, no holy days - but they also don't get the small blessings and charms from those practices. Atheists can certainly make deals with nature spirits or speak to ghosts, but are unlikely to offer ongoing worship or respect to these figures. Why worship a tree, right?

The grip of the Ekletheon Orthodox Church is strongest near its strongholds at Faith's Hearth in the Northeast, and Shavill and the Empire of the Sphinx in the Southeast. The Northeast also has a strong tradition of animism in and around the Greenwood, but the Church is attempting to proselytize up and down the coast and into Hein, and is doing quite well so far. The Empire of the Sphinx has an uneasy kind of 'truce' with the Church, in that the official religion is the Orthodoxy, but the cities are often reluctant to hand over too much power to the Church.

Animism is most common in and near the Greenwood, where it's both a matter of tradition and a natural consequence of the concentration of sentient spirits there. Much of Sarandib, in the Southwest, and the coast of the Fallen Sea also worship their local spirits.

The great plains of the North, including much of Hein, are where you'll find formalized ancestral worship. The folk there often invoke their bloodlines and relatives, whether or not their ghosts still remain on this plain. They also have a strong oral tradition that keeps the ghosts there strong. You'll also find many individual ancestral traditions the nearer you get to Manifest, including in and around Talmussin and Weej. The folk of Weej, especially, have an active ancestral population.

The folk across the sea, in Kirtania and greater Aden, also have their religious practices. Animism is all but snuffed out there under the weight of an otherwise permissive church. The Orthodoxy has not yet gotten a hold in Aden, but instead each major god (meaning most of the Ekletheon, though there are another dozen or so small gods that hold more power there, or even foreign gods that are barely worshipped elsewhere) has their own church organization. This means that Zhako's church and Avaleya's might be at odds, or that Senya may go by another name and be advancing completely different interests there than she does when acting in concert for the betterment of the Orthodoxy. Being so far from Manifest, there is also less ancestor worship there (though it's still present) and what ghosts there are go off the rails more often. In all it's a less hospitable land for the religious types, which may be freeing for those that don't have a taste for prayer.

Note that the gods and their origins are very much tied up with the new races, and that before they came the titans and spirits existed alongside those members of the first races. There is still a very real split between these races and their religious practices, despite the Church attempting to recruit as many of the first races as they can.

Ekletheon Orthodox Church

The Orthodoxy is an organization that oversees churches and empowers paladins to hunt heretics. It is perhaps the farthest reaching group on the planet. Every preacher and priest tries to earn their endorsement, or at least avoid their censure.

The Orthodox Church is presided over by the Hierophant. He is the high priest of the ten gods of the Small Pantheon. His duty is to interpret their divine will and make religious and moral decisions that pertain to the church as a whole. The Hierophant is also the direct head of the Ordo Fidelius, the Order of Faith, also known as the Priesthood.

The Hierophant presides until death, at which point a new Hierophant is chosen by the Body of Counselors. The Counselors are 178 priests chosen from the Ordo Fidelius. These Counselors include the ten High Priests and 168 members of the Ordo appointed by their High Priests. Traditionally there are nine from each of the churches of the ten gods of the Small Pantheon, with the other 88 being elected from the churches of the Greater Pantheon. Like the Hierophant, Counselors remain for life. Unlike the Hierophant a Counselor can retire before death, and they retain their title as High Priest during service as a Counselor.

Reporting directly to the Hierophant are the High Priests. Each High Priest preaches to a major congregation, or oversees the territory. High Priests sometimes deliver sermons only on special occasions, though some take a more active role in their local temple.

Anointed Priests, sometimes called simply the Anointed, are the spiritual and moral leaders of large congregations. They report directly to their High Priests. The Anointed are selected from the elder priests of a territory.

Each temple is maintained by a Priest. A Priest may act as a preacher, a confessor, a moral guide, or as a teacher. Priests perform holy rites, offer guidance and support to their people, and act as conduits for requests to the gods. Each Priest chooses a patron god from one of the Pantheons. The priest practices rites dedicated to that god and they earn favor from their patron.

A temple also often employs several Deacons. Deacons are acolytes learning the ways of the Orthodoxy, though they have not yet chosen a patron god. Many deacons spend their time in solitude or in contemplation of the lives of the saints and martyrs of the Orthodox Church. Deacons may perform some rites and may preach sermons, though they are not yet Ordained and cannot perform major rites such as marriages, burial rites, naming rites, etc.

Vicars are those laypersons that have dedicated their lives to the Church but have not begun walking the path of the priesthood. Vicars report directly to their Priests or Anointed Priests. They run errands, collect for charities, keep the vestry clean, and sometimes run the business concerns of the Church.

Outside the typical Church hierarchy are the monasteries and abbeys. An abbey or monastery is overseen by an Abbot or Abbess. The Abbot reports directly to an Anointed Priest as a spiritual and clerical leader. The heads of some abbeys are raised by a High Priest to a ranking of Archabbot or Abbot

Primate. These abbots are typically scholars and theologians considered remarkable for their acuity and piety.

Each abbey or monastery houses monks, friars, or nuns that look to their Abbot or Abbess as a religious guide and teacher. Monks spend their lives in seclusion and do not interact with the outside world for the most part. Monasteries are places of learning and contemplation, and many young Priests visit their nearest monastery before taking their vows and becoming ordained. Friars and nuns have also opted for lives dedicated to the church but they enact their gods' will by helping those in their community.

The Orthodox Church has many moving parts, of which the Priesthood is only one. The Ordo Pugilis or Order of Battle is the militant arm of the Church. The Ordo Pugilis is a military composed of paladins, knights, soldiers, squires, and mercenaries. These are arranged in ranks much like a secular military, with field marshals commanding up to ten thousand men, captains heading up regiments of two to four thousand, lieutenants with five hundred to a thousand soldiers, ensigns bearing the banner of a company of fifty to one-hundred-fifty men, and corporals with platoons of ten to twenty privates. The Church's naval force is less remarkable but there is an acting Admiral in control of the fleet. Commanding the entire militant arm of the Orthodox Church is the Lord High Marshal, a post selected from the Priests Militant by the Hierophant to command the nearly 100,000 soldiers of the Ordo Pugilis.

The paladins of the order are known as the Knights Radiant, and are the only part of the Ordo Pugilis that serves the Priesthood solely. The Knights Radiant are expected to lead the charge in battle and take part in the Church's military actions, but they technically act at the behest of the Hierophant, not the Lord High Marshal. Many of the Knights Radiant do not act as part of a standing army, instead traveling the continent and offering their services to individual temples and churches. Like Priests, Knights Radiant typically choose a patron god. Unlike Priests they may instead choose a patron saint or martyr.

Within and apart from both the Ordo Pugilis and the Priesthood is the Ordo Veritatis, the Order of Truth. This is the investigative and diplomatic arm of the Church. The Ordo Veritatis is less rigidly structured and regimented than the Ordos Fidelius and Pugilis. The Lord Investigator of the Ordo Veritatis has control of the Order, composed of Inquisitors, Emissaries, and Penitents.

The Inquisitors of the Order investigate threats to the Church both within in and without, and act on them when there is occasion. The Emissaries of the Church maintain relationships with the lands that the Church occupies and help to spread the holy writ by diplomacy. Finally, Penitents are the members of the Orders of Battle and Faith that report to the Ordo Veritatis to help keep the Church safe.

There is some fear of the Inquisitors and the Ordo Veritatis in general. The Order is intimidating and there are a number of frightening rumors about the organization. Some are true, some are not.

The fourth arm of the Church (fifth, if you count the abbeys as separate from the churches) is the ambassadors of the Church. Led by the High Chaplain, in what is mostly a clerical role, the ambassadors organize missions to the heathens, establish new churches in foreign lands, and act as direct liaisons to secular organizations and nations on behalf of the Church.

The High Chaplain occupies a position below that of the High Priest, Lord High Marshal, or Lord Investigator, more in line with a member of the Council Suprema, a Cardinal, or an Admiral. Reporting to the High Chaplain are a few Chaplain-Ambassadors Exceptional, below whom are Chaplain-Ambassadors, below which are lay Ambassadors. These lay Ambassadors partner with Priests and Deacons to guide worshippers on missions or pilgrimages. The Chaplain-Ambassadors handle local leaders, and Chaplain-Ambassadors Exceptional work directly with high nobles.

Ambassadors may also be drawn from another arm of the church, serving double-duty. Most often the Ordo Fidelius lends members to the Ambassadorial functions of the church, as priests are natural talkers. However, members of the Ordo Pugilis may lend tactical expertise to a leader under siege, and members of the Ordo Veritatis are always happy to guide a nation.

The Orthodox Church maintains offices, like a company, all over Talmussin. Many of these aren't clearly labeled, or the church doesn't run the business but only owns it to create income for the local temples. Some of the businesses provide day jobs to the clergy or laity, provide cover for Inquisitors, or serve as fronts for secret vaults of church secrets or relics, etc.

Notably, the Church of Avaleya has a series of small shrines at the back of postal offices, and many have attached apartments, basements, and store-rooms. These locations have undercover priests, itinerant paladins, and precious cargo. The church also has strong ties to a number of guilds, like the Compass/Mappists, and call on them to pursue joint goals.

The Emptiness

Every 5,000 years the planet passes through the field of detritus around Mura, bringing change and strangeness. It brought the monsters, the ancients, the titans, and finally the gods.

The last circuit was 5,000 years ago, and it is time again. The gods have withdrawn from the world a distance to plan their response to the potential threat. Some 1,000 years ago they stopped communicating with priests, nor granting great miracles, etc.

Nobody has been resurrected (excepting revivified) for 1,000 years, nor had access to clerical spells over lv. 5.

This marked the Church's change to a restrictive, fundamentalist force, and their expansionist policies. Where before faith was a given, the crisis of belief in the people necessitated a strong hand by the Church.

The Blessed Lord was quickly replaced, and the following BL sought immortality, finding an alchemical solution to the problem of aging, such that he could keep his hand on the tiller of the Church. He still commands the Church, and officially his immortality is a divine miracle.

The BL's infirmity (he is immortal, not invulnerable) and anxiety led the Church to expand (300 years), to eliminate other religions (400 years), and eventually to pair with governments (300 years). The Church is now an unshakeable pillar of society on the Eastern continents.

The Soul

A person's soul is made up of many parts (5, five parts). Only together do they make a person whole. Without one part, the result is something less than human. In some cases it's a horror. The five parts of the soul are the ib, the sheut, the ren, the ba, and the ka.

Ib. The heart. The ib is 'formed' of a single drop of blood taken from the mother during gestation. The ib is the most perceptible part of the soul. It's the body, essentially. When magic calls for the blood of a practitioner or a sacrifice, it's drawing power from this part of the soul.

Sheut. The shadow. The shadow of a person is inextricably linked to that person, and that person alone. There are many schools of magic that use the target's shadow as a sympathetic link. The behavior of a person affects their shadow, and their shadow affects them in a lesser way.

Ren. The name. This part of the soul remains in the world as long as it is remembered and used. Storytellers know that there's something of a person in a name, and that stories have power. Any mage that's worked with true names is also intimately familiar with this principle.

Ba. The spirit. This is the name given to a person's personality, their memories, their unique nature. When magic affects a living being it most often modifies the ba. Memory alterations, charms, most curses – these all wrap around and change the ba.

Ka. The vital animating essence, what you might call the spark of life. The ka is lost when the life ends. It leaves the body and returns to either the Veil or the Greenwood, depending on where it came from in the first place.

Akh. The akh is the ghost of a person. The akh is created when the ka, ba, and ren fuse after death. The ghost has the person's name, has their memories and their personality, and has their spark. The tragedy is that the ghost no longer has ties to the material world (like a sheut) and no longer has a body or blood.

Shadows are the opposites of ghosts. They, too, lack a body, but they don't have even the intellect of the living person, nor the drive to accomplish anything, nor any individuality.

The parts of the soul coalesce at birth when the ba (spirit) and ka (vital essence) are named (the ren), develop a sheut (the shadow) and are granted an ib (blood of the heart) by the mother. At death the ib is extinguished. The ren continues, attached still to the ba. The ba and ka either remain together as an akh (a ghost), or return to the Veil of Souls. The sheut continues *if* an akh exists when the ren is lost (that is, a ghost that is forgotten and loses its name creates a shadow). If the name is forgotten, the akh and ren split. The akh becomes mindless and dangerous, the sheut 'lives' but loses all memory and must begin 'life' again.

Study of the ren teaches truenaming. Study of the sheut is the source of shadowcasting. Study of the akh is essential to binders.

Aberrations have vital essence (the ka), a name (ren), a shadow (sheut), and a heart (ib); they simply lack a ba (a spirit) - their uniqueness, their 'soul' is absent. Aberrations disagree with this assumption, pointing out that each aberration is as unique as each human or goblin. Living scholars point out that they lack a ba, and are therefore wrong. Aberrations, most animals (those that are not awakened like bearhounds or similar), and plant life lack a ba and therefore cannot become ghosts.

Most aberrations hate Manifest, seeing it as a place where all that they lack is showcased. This is particularly true of yuan-ti. Their jealousy and fear drive frequent raids and infiltration attempts of the city.

Humans, halflings, and anything else brought along with the gods are born, as usual. They possess all parts of the soul, and the ib is extinguished upon death. They are native outsiders, and can manifest as an akh after death. These are tied to the Well of Souls. Their animating essence, their spirits, come from the same place as the new gods. While humans have been around for ages, they are not truly *from* this world.

Goblins and blues (the psychic goblins) came to this world like humans did, on the coat-tails of the gods. While they don't mix their societies with the tallfolk, goblins do have more in common with humanity than anyone likes to admit. It means that there are, in fact, goblin ghosts out there, and they appear in Manifest just like humans' do.

While less common than humans and goblins, there are a number of other races that also appeared alongside the new gods. Aasimar and tieflings, of course, are humankind and extraplanar entities blended together. Genasi are touched by the elements of this plane, but their essence is still that of humanity. The races of stone, dwarves, goliaths, and gnomes, were also 'imports' from elsewhere, though they may have been even earlier conquests by the gods.

Native creatures, unlike humans, are animated by the forces of the Prime Material. Their ka returns, after death, to the Greenwood. They can also spawn an akh after death. These creatures were here long before the gods showed up, and many of them were favored by the titans.

Before humanity ever appeared elves had empires, and hobgoblins founded great cities. Orcs roved in bands just as they do today. The firbolg walked the forests, aarakocra and kenku took to the air. Tabaxi stalked through tall grasses and bugbears crawled over the mountains. The titan Asmushneth created all of the scaled things, including dragonborn, kobolds, and lizardfolk.

Those last few creatures that no-one takes responsibility for may have come from elsewhere, or been disowned by their creators. They are classified, as a whole, as aberrations or as monsters. They do not

appreciate this designation. The yuan-ti, for example, are aberrations that have been around since long before the new gods arrived, but are not natives of this place in the same way that elves or kenku are.

Their larger kin – beholders, mind flayers, aboleths – are aberrations as well. Some arrived with the gods. Most aberrations come from elsewhere. They are infections that spread with spores, or they arrive in the wakes of incursions from terrible mad gods, or seeds seem to fall from some distant place like meteors and spill out new horrors.

The River of Souls

Jagus is the most militarily-prepared of the gods, but his forces are committed to guarding the river of souls.

The river runs thru the Astral, w/ rafts, skiffs, etc. running to Jagus' scales, and then to the gates to the afterlives. It starts from Manifest.

Astral predators raid the river, which is defended by archons. Predators are, like, githyanki, liches, astral maulers, etc.

The gates to the afterlife are upon a Sigil-esque city of portals through which one can go anywhere. The portals are mostly locked, and Jagus' reps give out the keys or shepherd souls through the right door.

Shade and the Shadowlands

The Shadowlands are the plane, but sometimes called Shade after the only real feature of the demiplane: the Kingdom of Shade, centered on the City of Shade, which climbs up the roots and trunk of the black tree in the center of the demiplane.

The City sprawls to the horizon in every direction around the tree, at least twenty-five miles from the Tree to the edge. The City grows increasingly denser the closer it gets to the Tree, so crossing it takes at least 5 days' hike for someone going edge to edge.

The King of Shade sits on a throne carved from the Tree's living heartwood, in a throne room carved from it also, deep in a castle that, itself, is so deep into the trunk of the tree that it's like a cave.

Some say the entire demiplane is circumscribed by the Tree: that its roots extend to the edge of the earth of the Shadowlands, that its branches extend in a dome encapsulating the entirety of the demiplane. This is probably not true, but it's not far off.

The Shadowlands reflect Mura, but in silhouettes and shadows, naturally. Figures here might be stretched or pale like shadows at dusk. The "stuff" there is less real: stones break apart in the hands,

wood from anything but the Tree feels insubstantial and plastic, even people seem two-dimensional or malleable. It's all made of shadows and nothingness.

The demiplane is characterized by its resistance to light and to sound, but as much by its dampening of emotion. Flames are dim and smoky. Sounds die like in snowstorms. Fierce anger becomes brooding resentment. Passionate love becomes detached affection. Crippling grief becomes precious melancholy.

There are cultists, here, of the Silence: an Outsider that rages coldly against life and motion and chaos, seeking to still it. The Silence is inclined toward cold, toward paralysis, toward silence, toward inaction. It can't stand that time continues to tick so cruelly forward, implacable, changing.

Mages often use the Shadowlands as a shortcut through which to travel because it's so (relatively) small and still, and time moves so quickly (relative to Mura), but nothing changes. A mage can hop to Shade, walk ten feet, and hop back having traveled two hundred feet in a blink. This is, for example, the mechanism of shadowstepping.

The Shadowlands "border" the Echolands as well as Mura, and have some portals to the Mirrorlands as well. That means that the natives of Shade are technically echoes (with the Shade tag), and there are echoes, reflections, and the undead scattered about. Like everyone else, these creatures are lost in time, always looking back and never changing. A warrior, slain in battle, for example, might rest against a tree and wonder when he'll see his beloved again, unaware that she's been dead two hundred years and he for two-hundred-forty.

The King of Shade is a figure dominated by regret and melancholy, almost by necessity: one must embody Shade a little to rule it. The Courts of Shade are the only places in the City that seem active and 'lively,' but are trapped in patterns. The vizier always betrays the King, and is betrayed in turn by the King's spies; the nobles jockey and wrestle for position and rise, only to fall inevitably back; it's all cycles. Nothing is new.

Nothing is new. The wares in the stalls in the City are used and repaired. The styles are recycled, the tools broken and remade a hundred times. The people are worn, their cares are worn, their tragedies are weathered and worn and weak. Even the nobility wears styles popular in Mura hundreds of years ago.

And people (shades) like it like this. Change, and fire, and frenetic activity threaten them. Should time pass again they'll forget the things they once knew, and perhaps die and be forgotten in turn. Even the great Tree might change, might put out leaves, or might die. Terrible. As such, individuals that cause too great a ruckus will be thrown from the City, left to the wan and wicked things that wander the wastelands outside.

The Echolands

The realm of the dead, the Echolands, was thrust open to Mura when the meteor carrying the deities smashed into the planet. The impact of such a large concentration of aether created a kind of metaphysical 'gravity' that drew previously free souls into the Echolands after death.

Once upon a time the dead simply gave up their life force back to Mura, and that life force was forged into new lives. Now there's an intermediary step: when a creature dies, the 'weight' of the Echolands causes their spirit to cross the Veil. To return to the great well of souls spirits have to trek across the Echolands to Manifest, where there's a kind of sea to walk into that leads back to the great wheel of memory and spirit and reincarnation.

The gods, when they came, were unconcerned with this right up until the Echolands began to truly *teem* with angry spirits, confused and trapped. The frequent incursions of life-draining specters across the Veil made it a concern, and so Jagus and his angels and disciples went to war against the ghosts, soon realizing that their enemies were not truly enemies, but victims. The god established guardians of the Veil, found the Well of Souls, and created the Long Path. He also created a kind of deific-level *sympathy* effect on the Well, which causes all echoes to experience a gentle but inevitable 'tug' toward their eventual end.

The Echolands are a reflection of Mura - not always, but since the apocalyptic impact of the meteor. People, places, and things have 'echoes' in the Echolands: faint, insubstantial versions of such things and people. Sometimes people can actually look through the Veil, spotting what's on the other side.

Hell

Hell is bifurcated, split between the cities of the Infernal Empire and the wastelands of the Abyss. This distinction is not just theological: order versus chaos, bureaucracy versus barbarity; but is behavioral and 'evolutionary.' Because the creatures of Hell - fiends - are more idea than flesh, they are malleable and can change throughout their existences to fit their needs better.

The demons of the abyssal wastes are adherents of individuality and freedom, each demon dying or surviving on its own merits and strengths. The goal is always the 'perfection' of form: to become more capable and survivable than their peers. There are creches and nests of demons that center around a 'spawning pit,' a living thing that constructs and births new demons. These demons then seek resources and return them to the pit. Pits that are successful gain resources and produce more of themselves; pits that are not fail. Each pit creates a specific type of demon, such as nalfeshnee or bulezau.

Additionally, demons are able to change themselves throughout their lives. If they find a new form that's more successful than their old form they take this change back to their Pit, refining the Pit's output.

The devils, by contrast, live in their vast brass cities governed by the infernal bureaucracy, overseen by emperor Asmodeus. Growth and change in the cities is determined by the judgment of those devils above. The archfiends have the ability to raise devils from one kind to another, and thus into a new niche in the social structure. The devils' shapes *are* their jobs, their jobs *are* their worth. These castes are largely stagnant, and promotion is rare. Demotion is, in fact, more common - the chain devils, torturers of the bureaucracy, strip away parts and powers until the devil is once again a lower caste.

Timeline

The timeline of Mura extends from distant pre-history to 'present day,' as well as some predicted milestones over the next few centuries. Major events, NPCs, and notes are made here.

The circuit of the comets and meteors that move around Mura every ~5,000 years are noted, as well as what events - if any - they cause on the world.

Dates are provided as P.D.E., or Pre Divine Era, or D.E., the Divine Era. This refers to the separation of time from before the current gods arrived on Mura and after. The exact beginning of the calendar is the date that the meteor carrying the gods crashed into the world at Faith Hearth.

~100,000,000 PDE	A hundred million years back, give or take, the intersection of the dark side of the moon and a gigantic asteroid composed of Adamantine results in a huge cloud of Aether-infused space dust scattering on, through, and around Mura and the nearest other planets and moons. The raw aether crackles through the cloud like a storm; portals open and close at random. The remainder of the asteroid & moon-rocks, now fused into a couple of smaller asteroids, begin an erratic orbit around the sun. The orbit carries these chunks through the rings of Mura every ~100,000 years, with the period shortening by around 1% every circuit as it aligns to Mura's elliptical orbit (at modern day the
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	period is about once every 5,000 years). Whenever the asteroids are seen overhead portals re-open and Aessence storms wrack the planet.
~75,000,000 PDE	Native flora and fauna flourish in a Permian/Triassic sort of period when a series of massive asteroids impact the planet, causing extinction among about 95% of the flora and fauna both. Massive fossils dating from this period with alien shapes crop up often. The animals, plants, fungi, etc. undergo a kind of magically-fueled pre-Cambrian explosion event, though it takes around 10,000,000 more years to restore the stability of life on Mura. The strangeness of the fossils from this period persists until about 25,000,000 after that explosion (around 40,000,000 PDE).
~10,000,000 PDE	A kind of extinction event occurs among the native flora and fauna as megafauna arrive with a series of portals via the asteroids. The invasive species radically reshape the biosphere. The most notable of them - the largest, at least - include gigantic armored fish, dinosaurs, and the apex predators: tarrasques. Over the course of 500,000 to 5,000,000 years the native animals and plants are either extinguished or adapt to live alongside the megafauna. Some theorize that draconids - dragons and drakes, or their predecessors - originate from this astral 'pass' as well, though the first identifiably draconic fossils date from a little later, around 5,000,000 PDE, implying either a later arrival via portal or a later evolution from a common ancestor of the gigantic reptiles of this era.
112,203 PDE	The Ancients, known in their own 'tongue' as Wefan, arrive via portals at the passing of the asteroids. Their inherent knack for spatial magic (conjunction & divination) is instrumental in safe arrival, and several Wefan Ancient cities in the borders of the Astral 'fall' gently to the jungles of Mura. They proceed to cannibalize their cities to create new structures on Mura, suitable for survival in the dangerous jungle. They use their magic to defend themselves from the megapredators of the planet, and fight and scrape for survival for several thousand years.
106,141 PDE	The meteors arrive again. The Ancients make a plan to harvest the magical energy the next time they come around, gathering as much mithril and aether as they can, and creating mechanisms that will gather energy for a Great Working.
101,040 PDE	The Wefan Ancients capture the magical energy of the meteors, creating huge stores of power to use. A few years after they perform the Great Working: a huge explosion as the tarrasques, ogrdru jahad, and other horrid creatures of Mura are ejected into space, frozen in ice. For the most part they take up orbit in the ring around Mura, trapped forever. Immense amounts of dust, volcanic ash, and detritus are thrown into the atmosphere as well, darkening the skies and ushering a new age of glacial advancement. The Ancients continue to harvest magic from the next few meteoric appearances, using the magic to fuel their great constructions and magnificent spellwork. The empires of the Ancients cover the world.
64,685 PDE	Ships appear all around the world, full of refugees from the end of time catapulted through the Astral and lured here by the meteors. They were dormant for a long, long time, and awoke hurtling toward Mura in the Material Plane. These 'ships' carry the illithids: mind flayers. They came in numbers too great for the aged

	Ancient empires, weakened by squabbles and decadence, to repel. The Wefan Ancients begin seeking a way to protect themselves from the illithids.
62,450 PDE	The Wefan Ancients come to the conclusion that they will not defeat the illithids, and cannot allow their magical workings to fall into their tentacles. They use the power of the meteors to complete one last Great Working, causing irreparable damage to the landscape (the scar around the equator and the shattering of the far continent). The working metaphysically evicts the illithids to space, locked in icy stasis alongside the tarrasques and other horrors of the world. The ring of Mura is now littered with creatures inimical to life on the planet. A thousand years later the Ancients have exhausted the aether available to them and prepare to leave the plane. They use the last gasps of their magic to seal their relics and depart to the nearest planes: the Astral, the Ethereal, and parts otherwise. This exodus tears open a permanent gap to the Ethereal plane, marking their exit from the world at a place near the equator: Manifest. The 'pressure' from Manifest begins to build up, like a magical black hole on the surface of the earth.
53,359 PDE	A gaggle of aelfr - the proto-progenitors of the elves and fey - arrive via the meteors, which they name the Fireflies. They bring with them their rituals and their gods. These nature spirits grow with the aelfr, eventually becoming what we recognize as the Titans as their portfolios and powers evolve over time.
47,258 - 5,100 PDE	During the eight passes of the Fireflies in these periods various humanoids appear or are shaped: the Titans of earth create the first dwarves; the kobolds and dragonborn take their first steps out of the caves and lairs of their forebears; the Ashmunethin's perverted worship of Ashmuneth warps their bodies; etc.
10,259 PDE	The Fireflies pass by again, causing ripples in the Ethereal plane as they always do. The pressure that has been gently building over the last ~50,000 years due to the hole in Manifest 'pops,' creating a swell of ghostly activity. A point on the planet roughly opposite Manifest erupts in pure spiritual energy drawn from the Ethereal Plane, causing a kind of ghostly cycle. The instability proves disastrous: there are still oral histories preserved from this time among the elves regarding the 'plague of ghosts.' The Titans find a way to end the disaster by channeling the excess energy into a pocket dimension, which 'consumes' a chunk of reality and becomes, eventually, Faerie. The stories say that a goddess called Feyr turned her body into the living conduit to Faerie, becoming a kind of goddess of the fey folk and giving them their name. The fey folk begin to diverge from the aelfr and other humanoids over time.
0 PDE/DE	The gods arrive. A huge meteor makes a dramatic impact in the Northern hemisphere near the Greenwood and the Well of Souls. It creates a gigantic impact crater but the direct intervention of the Titans prevents a cataclysm. The magically-charged dust and steam are captured by the Titans and thrust into the skies over the ocean, eventually resolving into a perpetual storm that surrounds and, by accident, isolates the two greater continents from the three lesser. The gods, carried on the meteor, bring with them humans. They begin actively spreading and encouraging a manifest destiny of humankind, racing the Titans and the other mortal kinds of Mura to expand their territories to the farthest edges of

	the planet. The first rudimentary temples date from this time, both the Titans' and the gods'.
~1,000 DE	The gods grant writing to mortals, encouraging them to use it to spread their faith. The prior rudimentary tallies and pictograms of mortal 'writing' are supplanted by a divine language. Holy books and tapestries spread along with humankind, and some tablets and papyri from this era still survive.
~2,000 DE	The gods and Titans run out of new territories to settle, bringing them more directly into conflict. Initial conflicts lead to amassing armies and to creating the engines of war. Humanoids have expanded to all the land masses, excepting the shattered continent.
~3,000 DE	The Titans unveil their greatest weapons: the Ziz, the Behemoth, the Leviathan. The war changes, with the Titans fighting the gods directly rather than fighting a proxy war between their followers. The Ziz soars over the Northern continent, the Behemoth tramples through the South, and the Leviathan swims through the waves all over the globe.
~3,250 DE	The gods respond to the war machines of the Titans by empowering avatars - the first paladins, essentially - who engage the great beasts. They defeat first the Behemoth, then the Ziz, then the Titans directly. The Leviathan is never destroyed, though it goes to rest for a hundred years beneath the Bay of Horrors.
4,101 DE	The last of the Titans surrender. Those who remain are incorporated into the pantheon, their powers and portfolios much diminished, now divided up, with the agreement that the gods would treat the children of the Titans as their own.
5,066 DE	The Firefly meteors pass by again. Spirits of war grip the land, and generals and emperors are born under the swarm of stars. Over the next ~500 years the great cities are founded, the first empires defined, and great epics are written about these conquests. First among these is the Heiad, the story of the Emperor Hei and his conquest of the infinite plains of the North. The epic is split into a dozen short stories, which are added to for a hundred years until codified into the <i>Ninety-Nine Tales of the Emperor Hei</i> .
6,022 DE	The Conqueror Hei's distant descendants, Hei and Yvar and Elga, found the Hein Empire, which spans much of the Northern continent from the Greenwood to the mountains of Dod.
6,160 DE	The Titan of Oleus is completed: a thousand-foot tall statue standing on the North side of the equatorial Rift and kept standing via magic.
7,640 DE	The Ekletheon Orthodox Church (often just "The Church") is founded. This is the finale of a thousand years of religious infighting that bring the gods into conflict with each other. The gods elect to have their church seated in the Faith Hearth by the Bay of Horrors, where the gods first touched Mura. Previously there was a small temple at the Faith Hearth, which held several small relics of the faith. This becomes the sanctum sanctorum of the new cathedral of the faith. The first bricks are laid to build the Burning Cathedral, which becomes a massive complex over the next few hundred years, built over the volcanic vents of Faith Hearth.

	The calendar is defined here soon after, with Year 0 being the year the gods fell to Mura. Work begins on a defined bible, the first of its kind to collect the teachings of the ten greatest gods of the pantheon, to be distributed as the Ekeletheon Codex. The first Blessed Lord is chosen from among the priests: Blessed Lord Narmer.
7,851 DE	Blessed Lord Menes unites the kingdoms of Ephes and Kvarot, establishing a holy kingdom on the Southern continent and making the Church a secular, political entity for the first time.
7,906 DE	Blessed Lord Athotis succeeds Menes and begins to amass a military directly controlled by the Church, reorganizing the Church into the Ordo Pugilis and Ordo Fidelius. At the same time the Ekeletheon Codex is produced en masse by Church magicians in an abbreviated form, now called Menes' Codex, and given out freely to the public.
7,910 DE	Talmussin University is founded. The area around Manifest has been inhospitable since its emergence seventy thousand years ago, but settlements have been attempted before: notably the area around and below Talmussin have been the holds of the Ashmunethin, elves, and others for thousands of years, with ruins layered atop ruins. The University is just a collection of wizards that band together to share information, and protect it from others, in a small town across the water from Manifest's little island. The founders include Aegmar the Blue (abjuration), Kvost (enchantment), Ygar Blackeye (divination), Great Stone (transmutation), Ellelesk Far-Hidima (conjuration), Barnabus the Wizeden (illusion), Faya Akh Allesh (necromancy), and Ylana Young (evocation). Each specializes in a different school of magic. The necromancer, Faya Akh Allesh, vanishes near Manifest soon after the University is founded but is still credited as a founder.
8,200 DE	Kirtania emerges on the far continent, a collection of clans united by Queen Magda and her holy sword Acies. Magda's brother Maccian travels to the far East of the continent and eventually becomes the Lich King.
8,385 DE	The first governor of Sarandib is elected, ending a generation of war among the tribes of the jungle. Borders and watchtowers and roads are cut through the plateaus and jungle over the next thousand years, bit by bit, cementing Sarandib's authority over the peninsula.
8,996 DE	The gods stop answering some prayers. Specifically, divine spells of 6th-level and higher stop working. Primal, Occult, and Arcane spells seem to be unaffected, except those that contact celestials or fiends, or draw such entities to the Material Plane. The Blessed Lord of the Church, Nebmaatre, immediately retreats for a period of 40 days to divine the cause. He returns and announces to his closest confidants that the gods have retreated to prepare for some great conflict or calamity. The gods have, long ago, identified the pattern of the Firefly meteors and are aware that this thing presents the greatest single threat to their primacy on Mura. They intend to retreat for a few hundred years to develop defenses against what may come.

8,998 DE	Waenre, an ambitious and aggressive Anointed Priest, arranges the assassination of Blessed Lord Nebraatre and emerges as the new Blessed Lord. Knowing that the Church is reduced to a precious position due to their weakened magic he recruits occultists and arcanists from the faithful, giving them instructions to use their non-divine magic to bolster the Church's strength. The Blessed Lord then makes a declaration that all non-divine magic that is not approved by the Church is heresy unless used in such a way as the Church recognizes as 'correct.' The BL forms the Ordo Veritatis to begin hunting down powerful mages. Several wars start as the Church pursues an aggressive campaign to attain secular power.
9,032 DE	BL Waenre feels his mortality - he's just a human - and has a mage turn him into a lich, fearing to let the Church out of his grasp while it is still weak. In public BL Waenre declares that the gods have granted him immortality as a reward for his piety and strength in leading the Church.
9,050 DE	Wars spread across every continent as the Church expands and various kingdoms vie for power in the turmoil. For 200-ish years a series of wars of succession and opportunity wrack the continents.
9,210 DE	The Waenre Doctrine is published, officially outlawing folk religions and heresies of all kinds.
9,600 DE	Virtually all folk religions are quashed in lands with strong ties to the Church. The Church controls kingdoms on the Eastern Coasts of both continents, centered around Faith Hearth and Shavill. BL Waenre continues to pursue the aggressive expansionist policies he's favored for 600 years. The Free Cities and Hein Empire define and reinforce their borders, eventually coming to a standstill. The Ordo Veritatis infiltrates nearly every world government to some degree and attempt to influence governments and organizations to create opportunities for the Church to assume political, religious, or financial control in those nations. Partly as a result of this common enemy - the Church - the various wars of the smaller nations are put on hold and alliances are built via marriage, trade, and contract. Nevertheless, nearly every nation remains nominally Orthodox, as it provides a 'shield' against direct conflict with the Church.
9,950 DE	The gods return from their retreat. A divine bolt of fire strikes down Hogan XII, the Hein Emperor. The Blessed Lord is somehow not smitten by the gods, perhaps protected by arcane means. A trio of heirs to the Hein Empire dispute the succession of the throne, leading to a tense kind of 'cold war' that splits the Northern continent into factions.
9,956 DE	The Moth recovers the Lantern of Ashali and attempts to extinguish all life in Talmussin, perhaps the world.
10,001 DE	The Engram Arks arrive, falling from the skies.

Nations, Languages, etc., Maps

Hein:

A vast, mainly empty steppe and desert, home of the barbarian tribes. Central leadership is extant but nominal, with a king in Hillport but each settlement ruled by a local governor.

The folk of Hein wear bells on their clothing and in their hair. Most notable for this are the warriors, though most men above the age of 16 wear them. Commoners wear copper and tin, while the wealthy wear silver and gold. These bells are a remnant of a time when sneaking up on an enemy from behind was a legitimate concern. The bells are a sign of trustworthiness for Heians.

The 'nation' is really more like a confederacy of tribes and smaller nations, each unique. Most of them travel, following the herds across the plains. Others follow the fish, or live beside the rivers. Some few have established permanent cities with farmland and all. Even those who travel across the plains have villages they travel between throughout the season, or else meet up at for bazaars. The folk of Hein often have patron spirits that they either visit or that travel with them - spirits of beasts, trees, or natural phenomena.

The major cities of Hein - Hillhome, Northport - are places that, historically, Heians came for pilgrimages, for meetings, to make war, to trade. Now they have grown up their own infrastructures, farmlands, and populations. Nevertheless they swell from season to season with tribes that come in at different seasons.

Northport: The largest settlement of the Hein Kingdom. Northport is one of the few points of contact with the lands across the Great Western Sea. The city is built at the edge of the desert of clay and shingles. Endless wind blows through the streets, so many streets are blocked at each end by canvas wind-breaks. This far north the sea is interrupted by ice floes, and not far to the north the ground is covered in a permanent frost marking the end of the deserts. Those who make the trek to Northport are rewarded with the goods of the blue-lipped, pale, tattooed people from across the waves.

In Northport prostitution is legal, but strictly regulated. A consortium of pimps and madames decides how many prostitutes can be active in the city, where they can work, etc. These pimps and madames are not empowered by any city official, but are simply a powerful group of players.

Hillport: The center of Hein, Hillport is a wood-and-stone city set into the mountainside. Hillport's most notable feature is the standing circle of hundred-foot-tall logs that surround a sand pit. The pit is the place where annual celebrations and the meetings of the clan chieftains take place. The pit is used as well for trial by combat, though other coliseums exist for lesser games.

At every major intersection is a wide stone plinth with a few steps up the back for guards to stand atop. Each street corner has three guards watching across the road. The broad streets are lined on either side

by stalls and tents during all seasons. Some are rented by street vendors from the shops backing them, and others are owned by the shops backing them. Striped cotton, silk, linens and canvas are all fringed with beads and the like. An observer well versed in the patterns of those beads can tell exactly what kinds of wares are sold by the length, color and arrangement of the bead patterns.

Of note in Hillport is a prominent square near the center of the city called the Shattered Pavilion. The pavilion is a broad stone floor scattered with broken stone shards like needles. The shards resist being moved, returning to the square almost magnetically. The needles point toward any use of shadow magic in the city. A few quiver and shake in a certain direction when minor magic is used, and for more powerful workings the whole field suddenly orients. Ritual magic or other workings related to the shadow plane will also cause disturbance.

Greenport: While technically a part of Hein, Greenport is so rife with creatures of the wood and pilgrims that the native population is dwarfed. The city is cold and wet, constantly raining, and the city's architecture reflects that in gray stone. Trade is lean, but travel is frequent both to the city and to Virren.

Greenport is close enough to the center of the Orthodoxy that religious icons can be seen everywhere. Churches, temples and statuary make up a significant portion of the city. Their catacombs run underneath the city, with vaults of paupers' bones and the crypts of lords all beneath the streets. In the midst of the city is a massive building of gray stone that still bears the carvings and statuary from its days as a temple of Vreik, Vecna and a handful of other dark gods. This temple was forced into retirement by the Orthodoxy nearly a hundred years ago and repurposed as a jail. The deepest, darkest dungeon of the jail is called the Vault of Bones and is a series of small cells walled entirely in skulls and bones.

Valsport: A large fishing village recently invigorated by whaling for oil and ambergris. The town is split into lots of picturesque log cabins among wooded dunes. The sudden boom in production of valuable material (that is, ambergris) has enticed all manner of dangerous people into the town. Most notably, the town is now home to two small family run criminal gangs. The gangs have created their own tiny villages in clusters of ramshackle shacks outside of the town to reduce interaction with the villagers.

The people of Valsport are particularly prone to knife fights, and not a person there goes unarmed. Everyone from gentlemen to farmers' wives keeps a curved blade behind their belt and each person is marked with a handful of scars. Duels are ritualized but never delayed; a few words are said and knives are drawn. Sometimes a circle is drawn in the sand, sometimes not.

Agate Oasis: One of many settlements perched on the western coast, notable primarily for its impeccable martial arts college. They train all manner of generals, specialists and warrior sages. This is also the second home of the Changrami monks, where they keep hiring offices (their training facilities are in the frozen wastes). Outside of the town spread clusters of farms ruled by small regional lords that keep their territories firmly under control. These small lords are usually graduates of the martial colleges and train their farmers as levies in case the need arises for the Agate Oasis to help defend Hein.

The town is built atop the ruins of earlier cities and has never been particularly defensible, excepting the Changrami facility and the dozens of martial colleges. White spires of plaster rise above dusty yellow stone that lies on foundations of black and red brick. Recycled stones and bricks make for a patchwork looking city with confusing staircases and alleyways and tottering buildings.

Culper's Cove: Home of the pasha Yasuin Mathia, the wealthiest woman of the coast. She elects to levy little pressure in the government, instead focusing on making money. The Cove is now indescribably wealthy and attracting notice. Also the home of the Jackdaw Guard, a very intimidating force indeed; everyone feels watched, likely because they are.

One thing everyone recognizes from Culper's Cove is the Bank of Tethia. The bank lends against the income of merchants and the holdings of nobility, and even commoners. The bank is the only major bank that allows interest on deposited sums, provided that the depositor signs papers allowing the bank to make a short delay on returning their funds when requested, if necessary. The Bank of Tethia is one of only three banks large enough to have their notes accepted most everywhere.

Dodd City: Source of Hein's finest steel, with facilities to process the copper and tin ore from up and down the mountain range, respectively. Smiths of all kinds practice as apprentices in Dodd, but the most respected are the swordsmiths. The legends of the swordsmiths of Dodd are inflated due to the actions of a few strange hermits.

Every generation the three best smiths retreat into the mountains to found their own smithies and keep their techniques secret. Thus hundreds of smithing schools exist scattered through the mountains, though three at any given time can be called "the best." The swords produced by these smiths have attained the status of legend, some saying they test them by throwing a silk handkerchief into the air and allowing it to come down onto the blade to be cut by its own weight.

Makay: Makay is the breadbasket of the east, producing grain and tobacco for all of Hein and even some export to the Empire of the Sphinx. In the rolling hills is the center of the town built of red brick and tiled in shingles of the same red clay. The town itself is nothing much to speak of: a few churches, a broad cluster of shops and store-houses, and a single spire of black iron, black stone and black painted wood. The spire can be seen from a hundred miles away guiding merchants and farmers into the town. The rest of the population of Makay is spread across the hills and fields for leagues.

There are a few things that people come to Makay to pursue: horses, horse-racing, dog-racing, gambling and gaming of all kinds, and whiskey. The town is not large enough to support a genuine culture of vice, but it does serve as the source for many other towns' vices. The horses bred here are of distinguished bloodlines and some of the longest, fastest runners in the world. The whiskey comes flavored by honey, jasmine, herbs from all over, and comes in a dozen different breeds of grain. The dogs are tall, lean and fast, and run like horses. People come from Makay from all over to buy horses, dogs and drink and take them back to the tracks in larger, more prosperous cities.

Shayfield: A city built to protect the Green, and later changed to take advantage of the trade and travel around the Green, regulating everything going in or coming out. They make most of their money on tariffs and customs, which is not much appreciated by the bric-a-brac sellers and luxuries merchants that make their way to the city, but the high taxes are counted as worth the value of doing business in the city. Pilgrims are willing to pay top price for the small luxuries they forgot to bring, and a shady circle of merchants fixes the prices to ensure that they are never given the true price of an item. Indeed, merchants are organized into circles (the Circle of Grocers, the Circle of Butchers, the Circle of Cartwrights, the Circle of Ironmongers, etc.) that help maintain the law through private guards and regulate all manner of trade and even law, pushed through the local lord's teeth.

A second shady consortium helps guide the path of Shayfield, sometimes in tandem with the Merchants' Circles and sometimes in opposition. The Prime Children have a strong presence in Shayfield and they intend to keep it that way. For this reason the Prime Children are wary of starting real trouble in

Shayfield. Instead they fund a thieves' guild and use them to support certain sabotages in the city. As well the Merchants' Circles of Shayfield are sometimes bribed with exorbitant sums to look the other way when hunted members of the Children must be hidden, providing a safe haven that does not like to extradite citizens.

Gedport: On the warmer eastern sea, Gedport is a town poised to become a city - even a metropolis. Known for local arts, music and philosophers, it has yet to gain the respect and acclaim of Talmussin. A few colleges have grown up, but many of them are not academically focused, instead encouraging education in a hundred artistic pursuits: a College of Oil Painting that competes with the College of Watercolors, a College of Poetry, one of Literature, etc. These colleges each boast a master or two and may only have a dozen serious students there on scholarships, though usually a half a hundred more students have paid their way in and make the colleges remarkably wealthy. These colleges are therefore sprawling compounds with open courtyards, fountains and statues, beautiful in every way.

There is also a hidden College, never spoken of and not proven to exist. It is called the College of Shadows and is the only stable, 'reputable' place to learn shadow magic outside of Talmussin. The College is deep within the grounds of several other colleges, the mansions of a few nobles and even a bit of it underground: a courtyard might be appropriated from a nobles' garden maze, a few rooms accessed in the midst of another College's store-rooms, and an abandoned warehouse near the docks, all connected by a series of narrow underground tunnels. The College of Shadows has a strict code of obedience, secrecy, etc.

The city is home to a powerful fire spirit called Maha-O. Whether Maha-O was exiled from the plane of fire, or made a deal with Gedport, or was tricked into his duty, it has become clear that Maha-O has developed a fondness for the city. Maha-O takes the form of a gigantic tiger of red coals striped with black and gray ash, bearing antlers of molten, dripping gold. Citizens often make their way to Maha-O's square to ask a blessing of the spirit or ask a favor, to admit their sins or to just ask some wisdom and advice from the ages-old tiger. Sometimes the spirit wanders the streets, often to visit a college and find out what lovely things they've created. In the rare cases that Gedport has been attacked Maha-O has defended the city viciously, destroying the invaders.

Empire of the Sphinx:

The Empire of the Sphinx is a collection of cities that banded together more for convenience than to share a common ethnic or cultural identity. The cities have since then established common laws - though a very few of them - that all cities and towns in the Empire obey. They employ traveling magistrates and judges that also act as messengers for a central Council. The Council is composed of a single representative from each town with a population over 1,000 (taken by a traveling judge in a census every 10 years).

Giant's Feet: The city of the northern jewel, Giant's Feet is arrayed in a gorgeous sprawl around a pair of truly colossal feet of some white stone. The city tumbles down a hillside to the sea in a wave of plaster walls and brightly colored roofs. Cobbled stone roads and stairways make frequent turns, and windows look out across layers of bridges, balconies and even cliff sides. Pools and canals make their ways through the city providing frequent river traffic. In between the houses and workshops is an all-year-round open-air bazaar. Awnings stretch out from balconies and tables rest on the lips of canals with merchants quietly talking to their neighbors and friends. Trade has a hushed, familiar sound in the Giant's Feet, where even a new face is treated like a family friend. Traditionally customers are treated

like guests, and a deal is often sealed with a small gift (frequently calculated into the price, of course) of a sweet roll, fruit, tea or wine.

The hills north of the Giant's Feet are rocky but fertile and produce tremendous crops of dry grapes and olives each year. Brandy and wine are made all along the coast, with wealthy vintners competing to have their best products recognized. An exclusive culture has grown up around the collection of certain limited runs, often of truly exotic wines spiced with expensive herbs or hinting at flavors rarely tasted. There is a story that a few casks a year are made with a truly distinctive flavor of leather, smoke and a little of meat to round out a full and wet fruity taste – the flavor comes from the scorched flesh of a ritual sacrifice of a thinking being. Whether or not this is true, there have been many collectors over the years who come looking for such a rarity. Never to drink, they say, merely to have; after all, who would drink such a wine?

Giant's Head: The southern jewel, Giant's Head almost perfectly mirrors the Feet, except that the city is built around the remains of a colossal cranium. The warm sea air keeps both cities alive and active year round. Like its northern twin the Giant's Head is crowded with bustling markets year round that sell all manner of produce and products. The specialties in Giant's Head are stonework, fireworks and a range of drugs that are refined from the forests and jungles to the south. The most popular of them is a thick gum called Chel that is smoked to produce a dazed euphoria.

The fireworkers in Giant's Head are very secretive about their craft, holding several guildhouses that are considered technically sovereign territory. The laws of the fireworkers hold in their houses in all ways and their laws even apply to fireworkers when outside their houses. The fireworkers are under some powerful pressure from the Orthodoxy to give up their secrets, but have so far held themselves well apart. The growing friction is causing some messy confrontations though nothing has come out into the open. Instead it is all cloaks and daggers and a few rough scraps in the back alleys.

Hwarth Bay: On the rocky coasts in the east, Hwarth Bayers carve a living out of the cliffs, fishing and sailing. Hwarth Bay is home to dedicated shipwrights, but a little inaccessible. Nearly everyone in the city belongs to a guild, from the beggars to the weavers. These guilds are strictly segregated and very controlling. The most powerful guild in the city is the Honorable League of Wrights, which claims as a member every shipwright in the area. When guilds begin to overstep their bounds there is often blood spilled, sometimes in open brawls and sometimes in suspicious accidents. The members of the guilds are identifiable by their sashes – each guild has a different color and cut, and method of wear. Fringes, pins, brooches, embroidery and the like help identify high-ranking members of the guilds, though many of the symbols are known only to other members of the guild. The Anglers make their home here, though many are not aware of their specialties.

As the nearest coastal village to Adas Bay there are significant defenses against piracy. Stone walls around the city help protect them from ballista strikes and fire flung from raiders. A strong fleet of maneuverable ships bearing rams and archers helps keep the bay free from pirates as well as smugglers, unlicensed fishers and sailors that get too close to secret fishing grounds. These ships are small but travel in fleets and are harbored on a half-dozen small islands nearby as well as along the coast, making finding the fleet or crippling it near to impossible. A series of lighthouses under the control of the Honest Brotherhood of Lamp-Lighters provide lookouts as well.

Adas Bay: Adas Bay has developed a reputation as a wretched hive of scum and villainy. The place is a tumble of disorganized shacks, hovels, cabins and even a few mansions and manors placed at random in the city. In this warren thousands of pirates, buccaneers, and freebooters loiter until the next raid. There

is no universally recognized leadership or infrastructure, things just seem to get done when they need to get done. That is, provided the one needing the thing is able to pay for it.

The islands are able to keep their independence due to a series of ancient obelisks that provide a kind of field of displacement that makes finding the place nigh impossible. The islands never appear quite where they are, so anyone trying to sight a safe harbor will run their ship aground, and they are protected as well against magical detection. Attempts to divine the location of the islands seem to scatter results across the seas, and attempts to force someone to tell their location by magic seem to turn up the wrong answer time after time. The only way to find Adas Bay is to have someone tell you the location willingly, guide you there unwittingly, or with a piece of one of the obelisks (which seem to home back to their obelisks, where they reattach). This weakness in the obelisks means that they are viciously guarded by a council of captains (an example list of fun pirates is below). The Council as a ruling body usually consists of thirteen pirate lords (and ladies), though pirates join and leave the council frequently.

Howay: Howay has little strategic importance, it's just a nice place to settle down. At least, now it is. The town is located in a series of remarkably fertile hills that can grow nearly any kind of crop, beneath mountains with rich veins of ore, and near the sea where the fishing is bountiful. The only real trouble with the area is that it is located immediately next to what is considered one of the last refuges of the wild. To the south and to the west lays the Cold Jungle, a sprawling mess of overgrowth and constant chilly rain. The jungle is home to a hundred tribes of giants, rapacious man-eating beasts and more bugs than anyone could ever want to count. The bugs are usually not a problem, but periodic incursions by clans of giants cause no end of trouble to the people of Howay, and everyone fears the day that a rogue monster stumbles out of the jungle to wreak havoc on the town.

The people of Howay have long debated the best way to defend against this eventuality, and have yet to settle on a method. Some advocate calling on other planes for guidance and for protection, but their riches have yet to pique interests. A few members of the fire plane are amenable to trading souls for a legion of djinni, but the town has not become so desperate yet. Others believe that they must court a more powerful nation-state and subjugate themselves to gain protection, but many are as wary of mortal rulers as they are of immortal djinni pashas. Still other citizens wish to hire mercenaries, some wish to found a school of battle-magic, and some simply wish to cut Howay from the land and move it out to sea where it can be an island, linked perhaps to the mountains and fertile hills by great bridges.

Free Cities:

The following places are unaffiliated with any greater government, though each city has its own rulership. Often the boundaries of a city extend to a hundred miles outside the city walls, making each town in effect a tiny independent state.

Talmussin: This city is the center of travel and trade in the southern lands, and also home to the greatest libraries and universities in the world. It is perhaps the largest metropolis in history, with sprawling urban squares and narrow alleys and side streets. The city is strictly segregated between the city's three primary populations: those who come for education, those who come for business and those who come for pleasure. The three areas of the city are called Wards.

The Old Ward is filled with alchemists, small libraries and bookstores, high-class shops, historic homes and, of course, colleges and universities. These colleges teach mainly academic pursuits, including shadowcasting, binding, writing, history and politics, but the colleges that are most famous teach

truenaming. Abutting the Old Ward is the Ivory Ward, the exotic destination of choice for many tourists. In the Ivory Ward there are too many gambling and gaming dens to count, menageries, operas and theaters of all kinds. Stretching alongside and around the other two wards is the Glass Ward. In the Glass Ward industry and commerce are rife. Shops, manufactories, laboratories, alchemists, traders and shippers, wealthy heirs and businessmen of all stripes meet to make deals and shift their goods.

One might expect such a magically aware city to have some strange goings on, and one would be completely correct. Talmussin is the site of so many alchemical experiments that the sewers frequently spawn things spontaneously. Rogue or undereducated binders frequently let things loose, or else release bizarre energies from other worlds. Truenamers have been known to accidentally awaken buildings, to change the names of huge crowds all at once, or to attempt resurrection (which almost always ends in a shambling monster full of alien hate and fear). With all of this trouble the Talmussin city guard has become quite skilled at reacting to unusual threats. Not a man of the guard bats an eye when some horrendous ooze pulls itself up from the earth and begins wrecking the city. However, when things get too rough for even the guard to take care of they call upon the spirit of the city, Stone Blood.

Filiat's Point: Perched on the road to Manifest and built atop ancient ruins, Filiat's Point offers amenities to weary pilgrims. The city is yet small but takes pride in offering every kind of thing. The new rich of the city have had mansions built in every style, making for a patchwork of houses from every era and culture. The permanent residents of the city are immigrants that ended their pilgrimage here, deciding to stay close to Manifest rather than return to their home. As such the city is full of people from every land, as patchwork as their homes. The wealthy look for ways to spend their money, and sometimes influence a vote for a City Council seat. Parades are thrown, holidays are declared, and sporting events are sponsored, all for show or for garnering support from the public.

Not surprisingly in a newly rich city, the local thieves' guild has become a powerful entity. The poor of the city gravitate to the thieves' guild for protection and sometimes a sense of fairness. Many people join the thieves' guild because it seems to be the best way to get rich quickly, or at least a surer bet than trading or working for someone else. The guild has hundreds of dedicated members and over a thousand informants, fences, and sympathetic friends. Safehouses are never far away, and the sewers (and their associated catacombs, tunnels and chambers) are completely under the control of the thieves. They also own (outright or secretly) the vast majority of the gambling dens, boudoirs, and drug dens in the city are under the control of the Guild, though they have yet been unsuccessful in wresting control of the racetracks from the merchants. Recently the city has been buckling under the strain of the secret war between the merchants and the thieves. Hired private guards and the like are close to making this a gang war taking place in broad daylight.

Weej: While Talmussin offers education in any academic pursuit you could shake a stick at, it leaves something to be desired for more practically-minded people. A day's ride away, Weej benefits from being near a center of learning but occupies itself with more useful trades. Here live the most imaginative masters of their professions and their apprentices. Clockmakers, glassblowers, herbalists, and papermakers all ply their trade in Weej. In essence Weej supplies the raw materials (and finished but mundane products) that Talmussin consumes. In return the alchemists of Talmussin create new ways to harden glass against scratches and chips, make waterproof cloth, hot-burning fuel, rubber and gum, all the things that will revolutionize the trade for the first master to make it useful.

This competition to be the best of a certain trade has made it imperative that secrets be kept tightly between master and apprentice. Apprentices are worked hard for years before they are trusted enough to learn the secrets of their trade. Even so, apprentices have been known to defect from one master to

another to gain favor or for absurd sums of money. In rare cases masters have tried to go undercover as apprentices themselves to learn the tricks of another school. These rivalries have sometimes led to bloodshed, though rarely to killings. An unusual side effect of this fighting has been the building of massive complexes, compounds that are well protected by hired guards and ingenious traps.

These compounds are far too large and expensive to be maintained by any one master, so alliances have grown up. However, these alliances are never between two masters of the same trade – that would be counterproductive – so instead a single compound might house a watchmaker, a wheelwright, a potter and a silversmith, for example. These compounds house the masters, their families, their apprentices, their workshops and the storefronts from which they sell their wares. Some even have enough space to hold massive orders of stock for later shipping.

High-Hold: There are few towns more unpleasant than High-hold. The wind is constant, the cold is bitter and the trade is nonexistent. The locals are the elders and the infirm of the nomadic bands that hunt in the mountains. The only crops are those that can grow in soil that's closer to stone. The only livestock are cantankerous yaks and ornery mountain goats. In fact, there is a single reason that High-hold persists and is not an abandoned cluster of shacks: it is the nearest settlement to the secret Changrami training grounds.

Somewhere in the snowy peaks is a sprawling monastery carved from the mountain's own stone and heated by hot water springs. The courtyards that are exposed to the elements are frozen nearly year round and constantly filled with red-robed acolytes standing stock still or working through complex exercises. Students here learn philosophy, history, tactics and warfare, and of course martial arts. The monastery brings in tremendous amounts of money from the hiring out of Changrami and the fees of educating those who come to learn but not pledge. With this money it keeps the nearby town afloat, spreads the reputation of the Changrami across the world, and of course keeps the monks comfortable in the monastery.

Fork at Millain: Trade between the Hein Empire, the Orthodoxy cities and the western Free Cities has been increasing in the current era of peace, and Fork at Millain is well placed to take advantage of this trade. Any trader going from Talmussin to Hein must go through Fork, and the same is true for those travelling between Shavill and Manifest. Fork even has the best seaport to reach Broken Chapel or Hillport. This steady flow of travelers has made for a city that swells and shrinks with the seasons. From spring until harvest time the walks are brightly lit, the inns are full and the city operates in a kind of carnival air. In winter, when fewer goods from far off are making their way through the moderate climates, the wealthy merchants that specialize in rarities take their vacations in more interesting locations. This leaves the city with an empty feel as many shops board up for the winter and houses sit unattended.

One of the first things visitors notice in Fork is the profusion of unusual animal life. Some time ago a fad began on the East coast and exotic animals became highly desirable. Sitting in the middle of a trade route, Fork merchants began to adopt these exotic creatures as well. In fact merchants began to intercept shipments of exotic animals as a way to stay on the cutting edge, and in time Fork was the last place that really prized unusual animals and it matured from a fad to a persistent identity. As animals were lost, escaped or were tossed out feral packs of bizarre pets began to roam the streets. Everything from apes and lemurs to boar-sloths, great jeweled scorpions to painted leaf-dogs, howling lizards to ruby-eyed flutterers make their homes on the streets of Fork. Inexperienced travelers are warned to take care of the local wildlife, because a significant portion of it is poisonous, venomous, or magically dangerous. Of course, people still keep pets, and often keep them by their sides at all times. Children are

given brightly colored birds for their birthdays, and adults always have an animal partner. The wealthier the merchant, the more likely they are to have something truly exotic (like a long-legged monitor lizard that speaks fluent Church Chant, or a desert dog that can smell good luck on a person).

Broken Chapel: A mystery set atop a barren island in the middle of the choppy Kohn Sea, Broken Chapel is a collection of ruins. Of course, the ruins have become a popular tourist destination and so a small town has grown up around them. The town is populated mainly by fishermen, potato farmers and charlatans. The charlatans are often styled as historians or adventurers offering information about, or tours through, the ruins. Every ship brings a handful of wealthy or stupid tourists that want to see the ruins for themselves and perhaps bring back some of the fabled riches. The rulers of Broken Chapel charge first a small fee for anyone looking to enter the ruins, and then a hefty tax on anyone looking to leave with goods or treasure looted from the ruins, but otherwise allow it. After all, the ruins aren't doing any good stuck where they are, they might as well be looted.

The ruins in question are a series of black basalt towers that rise in the center of the island in a rough circle. They are all different heights. Some have windows, some do not; some have doors, some none; some are marked and carved, and some are plain. Alongside all these towers are gaping pits, caverns and wells that lead to a series of dangerous tunnels under the island. These tunnels flood with the tide, though pockets of air can be found. Some contain nothing but deactivated traps and the corpses of monsters and men, while others are still pristine except for the bodies and supplies of other unsuccessful thieves and adventurers. Where the ruins came from and what they were for, no one knows. The only clues left are the strange flickering lights and apparitions that appear during the frequent thunderstorms. As lightning flashes sometimes faces can be seen staring out of every window, and when thunder peals it sometimes seems the rumble of thousands of voices. Visiting the tunnels during a storm is not advised.

Orthodoxy Cities:

These cities are ruled directly by the Church, and all laws are also religious dictate. Church doctrine is legally enforced, and heretical ideas are purged regularly. Trade is severely restricted in the cities, leading to them producing little of worth but subsisting instead on tithes and tribute from faithful pilgrims.

Shavill: A religious city of the Orthodox Church, called the Southern Gauntlet. The city garrisons the warriors of the Church and is ruled directly by the Lord Marshal. Like other cities ruled by the Orthodoxy there are churches aplenty to be found here, but in contrast to Faith Hearth and Virren there are hundreds of barracks, martial colleges and parade grounds here as well. While the city is never full, it is intended to be able to house every paladin of the Church were they all to be recalled at once. As well, it houses hundreds of reliquaries and is one of the few cities where all gods are revered (except Vecna and other gods worshipped only by heretics). The weather is cold and so homes are built with their windows high and shuttered. The ground is layered in red clay, used to make the red bricks of the city and streets. The trimmings are all iron, mined from the mountains to the south.

The city was originally built here, so far from other Church cities, as a guard against the bizarre incursions into the world that occurred in the south. The city served as a bastion of mortals against the strange and horrifying things that invaded from the sea and the land. Gates were known to open at random in the fields to the south of the Cold Jungle, and creatures like mad gods walked out of the frozen wastes. At that time in history the Church provided the strength to fight these things off, and Shavill became a towering fortress of brick and iron. While most people have forgotten this, historians

recognize that Shavill is mortality's oldest stronghold. It is rare that these gates open now, but on rare occasion they spill out foreign dangers and the wardens of Shavill must hunt them down.

Virren: Home of the Church and seat of the Blessed Lord. As well, it is the nearest habitation to Faith Hearth. A church city that relies on tribute for sustenance and tradition for permanence. This is the location of any faithful churchgoer's great pilgrimage. The city itself is a fortress surrounded by blocky, low buildings.

Faith Hearth: A single huge temple that lays across miles of land surrounding a vast crater. The temple is dedicated to every god, even the nasty ones. They say (the priests do) that this is where the gods first touched the earth. Many signs and relics remain. The Orthodox Church prevents visits by pilgrims.

Southern Continent

Aleomas. Gifted with a wealth of diamonds and adamant, Aleomas has even greater wealths of aether in its trees and stones. They are allied closely to the Church, left independent from their neighbors in exchange for preferential pricing and steady supply of aether. The aether is often mined or logged by the Church's 'indentured servants.'

Alotria. Secular guards against the horrors of the Southern Church lands, where SHavill guards the north/west. Large standing army, kind of Romanesque, relies on Aleomas for ocean access: trade, aether. Patrols the Accord. Volcanic path of peaks.

Ashkush. A kingdom built on the profane right of their kings. Their people are kept prosperous, safe, and compliant by fiends. Both breeding and worship allow them to exercise their strength. The nobility is tieflings and cambions, and a few warlocks and clerics of Hell. Every other nation but Tulinna are opposed on principle to everything about Ashkush.

Bioarse. A pastoral landscape packed with fields, fields packed with cows, cows turned into great dairy and meat for the chefs of Bioarse. The spirits of the fields have incorporated into the Ekletheon faith, posing as angels and small gods. The Church is not yet focused on this small heresy.

Burgand. A kingdom carved out of nothing by dwarvish princes. Burgand must defend itself constantly from the Cold Jungle on one side and the mountains themselves surrounding. The kingdom is a kind of test of peaceful relations between the dwarves and the jotun of the Cold Jungle. The nation is young, perhaps 30 years old, but already has a reputation for fine Eiswein from magical grapes and berries in the mountains.

Cirillus. A cold nation of warm people, herders and farmers. Set up against Pfent, one of the shadowlands. Gateway to the Highhold.

Cote Blanche. A favorite target of Hjemlander reavers, the white coast is known for copious supplies of diamond and adamant in seams beneath the ground. The magically-infused algae of the near sea glows

blue, and bleaches the sand shores iridescent white. The nation pays a huge mercenary navy to protect their diamond trade from piracy.

Crot. A deep mine in Crot's copper country yielded access, two hundred years ago, to Ancient ruins. Since then the nation has plumbed the depths of this immeasurably-large complex. The treasures they pull up are their guard against Ashkush and Threnn. Capital city was once a plague colony, pushed away from the rest of the world, now heirs to antique magic.

Frostland. A far Southern nation near Hjemlandet. A cult of ice-blooded druids exercise rulership – harsh but fair – over villages clustered on the coast. Secret cities built on geothermal pools high in the mountains are filled with seers and soothsayers.

Grunkust. Neighbors to Rotkust, once a single nation, now cut in half by Pfellin, one of the shadowlands. Grunkust is a nation of ragged rock ridges pocked with deep valleys of green.

Highhold. Among the highest mountains of Mura the Changrami order practices. Hot springs keep their homes warm, and fuel the people of the villages that feed and clothe the monks.

Hjemlandet. [Viking/Norse] A landscape dominated by mountains in the West and the Kaldskog in the East. Small villages dot the landscape, each led by a jarl, often guided by a skald.

Libertia. A state carved out of the dying Gleaming Kingdom. Promises of total, utopian freedom from law have led to a messy libertarian experiment, with powerful merchant-princes of the shipping lines controlling almost everything via silver and swords.

Miloss. Separated from the Gleaming Kingdom as part of a religious schism, the worship of Xvim has eclipsed all others in Miloss. Blood for the blood god! Gruesome human sacrifice and blood magic are rampant, and the people are governed by a mage-priest caste.

Montranet. Cathedrals occupy central places in every town large enough to build them, and are filled at all hours with chanting and song. Famous for painting and sculpture, much of which is directly funded by the Church.

Orgshland. Homeland of orcish-kind. Built on swamps, fed by the Toxic Peaks, and flowing into the Poison Seas. The orcs had to learn to breed plants and livestock that resist the poisonous water and earth of the Poisonlands, as well as the deadly flora and fauna that are native to the swamps. Everything is slightly tinted by the nether that is characteristic of the Toxic Peaks.

Pfellin. A shadowland, an extension of the kingdom of Shade. While Pfellin, Pfent, and Pfiirg are contiguous in the echolands, here on Mura they are separate nations. Walking from one country to another is a breeze... if you can walk across the veil at will. On the Muran side of Pfellin is a high plateau criss-crossed by cold stream and rivers that plunge into the lowlands. Pfellin is split between farmers at the top of the plateau and sailors by the sea.

Pfent. A shadowland, an extension of the kingdom of Shade. While Pfellin, Pfent, and Pfiirg are contiguous in the echolands, here on Mura they are separate nations. Walking from one country to another is a breeze... if you can walk across the veil at will. A tiny nation of pastoral shadow that grows crops of the food of the dead. Full of strange herbalists.

Pfiirg. A shadowland, an extension of the kingdom of Shade. While Pfellin, Pfent, and Pfiirg are contiguous in the echolands, here on Mura they are separate nations. Walking from one country to another is a breeze... if you can walk across the veil at will. Alchemist-warriors that use their echolands

memories to spy on their neighbors and their unquenchable fires and electrical devices – built on designs stolen from Tulinna – to keep back their bloodthirsty neighbors.

Republic of Oloss. Shortly after Miloss left the Gleaming Kingdom, Oloss left Miloss. A communistic nation, Oloss is now desperate to fend off Miloss on one side, the Gleaming Kingdom on the other, and Libertia all too close. In desperation they are courting all options – Pfiirg, Sarandib, and even the Serpentlands – to stay independent.

Rotkust. Like Grunkust, a country of high hills and glacial valleys. The shadowlands separate it from its sister-nation, Rotkust. Has a queen married to a spirit in a ritual that keeps her strong and young, but will burn out her body, eventually.

Sangranit. A gothic nation over which loom the Sangranit mountains: blood-red peaks feeding blood-red rivers. It's always raining over Courbleu and Pluville, and the major cities are infested with vampires, blood cultists, and political strategists.

Sarandib. The land of the peacock, and the seat of formal learning on Mura. Talmussin, Weej, and Manifest are the greatest settlements of the state. Weej supplies Talmussin, Talmussin leads to Manifest, Manifest is the city of ghosts.

Spey. The land of Giant's Head, the only settlement of note on this side of the rift. Giant's Head is home to the Guild of Illuminators, the fireworkers known far and wide. Also of Giant's Feet, to the North. The only nation to leap the Rift, aside from Sarandib. Their wealth comes from controlling the only easy pass between Sutu and Boro; they are a nation of naval fighters because of it, and tax-men.

The Gleaming Kingdom. A kingdom in decline, directly proportional to the decline of its monarch, an elven druid who's lived for almost 5,000 years. Their king has a magical tie to the land, and is at the end of his life.

The Holy Southern Empire of the Ekletheon Church. Built around Shavill, the Southern Gauntlet: a single gigantic castle fortress stretching miles over and under the mountains. The fortress stands vigilant against the fiendish incursions of the Poisonlands and the Cold Jungle. For a thousand miles in every direction the Church rules – small chapels double as post offices, cathedrals as town halls, and priests as mayors.

The Serpentlands. Last bastion of the yuan-ti. The serpentfolk venerate Asmushneth and make periodic attempts to subjugate their neighbors. They have already enslaved the lizardfolk. Were they more self-aware they might see the irony of enslaving the children of Asmushneth while proposing to worship her.

Summer Valley. The most isolated nation on Mura, centered around the small city of Abussos. A deep, impossibly deep chasm drilled into the center of the world supports the town.

Threnn. A nation being eaten alive by Ashkush, Threnn's people are running into the blighted lands to their north, leaving behind traps and warriors for Ashkush.

Tulinna. A seafaring culture on the edge of a huge technological leap – steam-powered craft are in their infancy, moving on fires of magic. Werewolf nobles lead the people, with a king using the wolf-dream to act as an immortal advisor to its descendants. They have a tentative alliance with Ashkush.

Utria. Sometimes called Jotunland, Utria is the homeland of the giants. They ply the seas in their huge stone ships, covered with runes. Half-giants are common, of course.

Vozug Free State. This tiny nation is even drawn overlarge on most maps: it's only 100 square miles (10 x 10), and almost the whole population lives in one city, Vozug. Vozug has combined Tulinnan clockwork and Ashkushite nether, via Sarandish craftspeople, to create infernal powered vehicles, buildings, and weapons. Their magitek is, startlingly, unrelated to Ancient tek.

Northern Continent

Beyhus. Tied to Hein by a thousand-year contract to remain free, but a vassal state of the Empire, Beyhus is now testing its freedom as Hein weakens. Soon they will declare independence with the support of the Church.

Democratic Kingdom of Sun & Soil. A bitter, miserable patch of land between Hein and three blighted lands called the Wildness, the Emptiness, and the Ice Wastes. They elect a leader through the most classic method of voting: fighting. Each clan sends a warrior, those warriors battle for their chosen leader, and those that win come back to act as governors of their states. Those that die or are incapacitated are replaced by delegates from those who won, but who must be supported by their people lest they be overthrown.

Dod. The homeland of the greatest smiths of the world, blessed by iron and good cattle. Legendary smiths make pilgrimages into the mountains each decade to compete for the title of Master Smith. The country is governed by a military junta/shogunate group, though comparatively not a terrible one.

Eksh. An isolated nation with animistic beliefs, constantly under threat from the Church. The capital city, Gedport, is under the protection of the powerful fire spirit Maha-o.

Eveless. An elven nation in the midst of strangers, built on the leadership of a large family of elves who take turns ruling, spending the rest of their lives as disembodied spirits while in suspended animation, meaning that the consortium has 'lived' and ruled for thousands and thousands of years. The nation explicitly endorses the supremacy of elves over others, and all others are considered second-class citizens, though there is little ill will toward others by elves (so they say).

Free Cities. Mercantile cultures of the deserts, spotted by oases. Each oasis and coastal town has its own government, and these governments are bound not by common laws or leadership, but by a complex series of treaties.

Hein. A massive empire built on the legacy of a legendary conquerer, now splintering under the pressures of succession after a thousand years. The nation is torn between its history and the reality of peace and trade. The three claimants to the throne have provisionally separated the nation into the Riverlands, the Plains, and the Hills of Hein.

Makay. Horses, grain, and whiskey. Pastoral and idyllic, with individual villages each guarding ancient artifacts handed down for... who knows how long? The country keeps a tense peace with the Sovereignty to the East.

Sisihey. Kings of naval warfare, Spey has hired more or less all of Sisihey's navy to protect their trade. The rest of Sisihey, that stretching from Eveless to Vilo, is the breadbasket that feeds the rest of the nation. Neighboring countries keep their distance under threat of marine attack.

Ta Ja Jia. A far Northern coastal country pressed between the Beastlands and Makay. They are dependent on Makay for food and raw materials, for which they trade their plentiful gold and skilled

craftspeople. A culture of (relative) deprivation has instilled a centuries-old impetus toward perfection in craft and combat.

The Greenwood. A semi-nation, more an independent territory. The Greenwood is a sea of trees of every kind, rife with fairytale nonsense. The well of souls, reputedly, is hidden in some sacred grove here. The power called the Green winds through the roots of the trees and flows from the pools of the forest.

The Lonely Kingdom. Surrounded on all sides by blighted lands, the Beastlands, the Lonely Kingdom consider their duty to fight back the monsters a holy order passed down from ancient times. Some kinds of holy caverns riddle the lands – maybe from the Ancients, maybe from the Titans, maybe divine – and the Kingdom protect these caverns from all comers, monstrous and Church alike.

The Northern Empire of the Ekletheon Church. The fundament upon which rests the Church. Once three separate kingdoms, plus the island Faithhearth, those kingdoms have since been ceded to the Church one by one. The landscape is dotted with crumbling pyramids, each housing the reliquary remains of a Saint of the Church.

The Sovereignty. A river nation using magic borrowed from the Greenwood to sail their riverboats, which are loaded down with magical siege weapons. These war-boats use the river's magic to fire up to five miles at long range (~15,000 ft). The Sovereignty, thus, believe that they cannot be invaded. They are working on walking siege weapon armors and carts, but are limited by their reliance upon the rivers that carry the magic of the Green. There are promising liquid-aether batteries in the works, but they are far too volatile currently.

Tillium. The West Coast's scrubby, forested taiga paradise. The land of witches. Rain and snow pour across the land in the wet season, stolen from the Free Cities to the south. Matriarchal villages keep the blight back by calling on spirits, echoes, and erarim to patrol their borders.

Viloz. Allied closely to Hein, Viloz is the only port from which one can legally set sail for the Azurian Isles. A hub, thus, of the aether trade between the empire and the island.

Island Nations

Azurian Isles. A magocracy ruled by the sorcerer-philosopher-kings of Azure City. The City hovers upside-down above the largest island, Azuria, chained down by mile-long chains of mithril-painted iron from the middle of a mile-wide *reverse gravity* field. Each link of the chains is ten feet long and weighs 4,600 lbs (such that each chain is 2,433,000 lbs of iron). People visit the Isles for cheap magical items, powered by the prodigious aether mines of the City.

Boiri. An island split in two, twin to Calathum, Boiri is a haven for criminals and the estranged. It acts as a kind of rehabilitation center: anyone that is fleeing an old life can come to Boiri, with the understanding that one misstep means permanent exile to the other island.

Calathum. A prison island, and haven of pirates. Constantly trying to encircle Boiri, and constantly being beaten back. No strong trading partners.

Evelentium. Once an island colony of Eveless, Evelentium executed a successful rebellion, fairly bloodless, funded by Dod and Hein. The country is now deeply indebted to these greater nations, who have installed a Robespierre-like figure as their governor to keep the island weak and in debt.

Ochre Island. Sometimes settled by giants, Ochre Island is a cradle of life, ancient and primitive. Any attempts to modernize or populate the island fail mysteriously, often of bizarre poor luck. No spirits reside here except a single, great, hidden spirit that is jealous of its territory. The spirit has leashed a dozen ancient giantish spirits as its agents, and these spirits lead the twelve clans of giants and half-giants that occupy the island.

Far Continents

Aden. The Eastern province of Kirtania, separated by the Hellpeaks and the Oujang Desert. A classic fantasy territory beset on four sides by a lich kingdom, a desert sorcerer, a toxic forest, and a pirate kingdom. Beneath the hills lie ancient secrets.

Aphontia. A country of blind prophets leading competing religious sects, locked in permanent combat with each other.

Drados. The impossibly tall and ancient tree that pierces Drados, from underground to sky, provides leaves large enough to laminate into seafaring vessels – which they do. The people of Drados keep strange pets that they train to go to sea with them.

Empire of Memories. A place where lost memories go to be remembered... or are sometimes taken by force. Libraries and black water. Every casting of *modify memory* adds to their stock, or pulls something from it.

Golasta. Rather than a northern border Golasta simply fades into the Gray Desert. Its proximity means Golasta is mostly cast in white and dark – colors brought into the nation fade over time. Even the people are rendered in sharp black and white colors, a few grays in between. They are religious fanatics, convinced that colors are a heresy, a weakness of the spirit.

Golir. A chilly, swampy tundra ruled by the Lich King, who demands a new bride each year. The rain pours down endlessly, and only the Lich King preserves the people and their crops.

Hivos. The trackless wintry wastes. Changelings and shifters of the Winter Courts roam, alone, from fire to fire. Tiny villages are the last refuges of the abandoned and the hopeless. Once a prison colony. From time to time a boatload of debtors, criminals, political refugees, and the desperate smallfolk show up on the shores again to start their lives anew.

Kirtania. Empire of empires, the hungry beast. So wealthy that they moved their capitol city, brick by brick.

Mirage Island. An island that is sometimes there and sometimes not, part of the elselands. Like their home, the people of Mirage Island are prone to fade into and out of existence, and to change from time to time, history rewriting itself for individuals or whole clans or towns.

Mocala. Stretched across the sea, Mocala is a volcanic paradise caught in the middle of the impassible storm that wracks the ocean. A powerful clan of sun, sea, and volcano spirits keep the islands inhabitable. Their people are all fireproof half-spirit folk that are, slowly, developing a kind of interplanar space program sort of thing to see if the world outside is a legend or a reality. Worship pigs.

Mydos. A lush jungle kingdom with a love-hate relationship with Pashtush, the forested folk of the South.

Pashtush. Occupied by the forest-folk, perpetually at war with – and dependent upon – the jungle people of Mydos.

Pliss Kingdom. Philosopher kings are tied up in the eternal task of justifying brutal murder as a way to soothe the consciences of their people, tied up in the endless battle against the black-and-white zealots of Golasta. Poetry and warfare are equally valued: swordplay is often an art; poetry is designed to kill.

Pylis Island. The entire island of Pylis waits, anxiously, for a prophesied hero to arise from their humble villages. Every ritual, rite, and social expectation is centered around this messiah-champion figure that will... well, the prophecies are unclear. It's unfortunately possible that there is no chosen one, and the island remains in a state of anxiety for no reason.

The Hugue. On one side, the Sunset Lands: a place where the sun goes to die, inherently unlucky, and full of strange beasts. On the other, the Dreaming Hills: strange and mutable rolling landscapes that change at random and change those crossing the hills as well. Between, the Hugue. This country is a plutocratic oligarchy of horse-mounted accountants that trade honor, favors, and shame in great ledgers tended to by arithmantic monks going from town to town.

The Spinwood. A wood elf haven in a sick forest, infected by a terrible toxic spider spirit.

The Timeless Lands. A chromantic disaster zone, where nothing seems to change, or everything changes all at once.

Yilikon. A sophisticated democratic nation of mutants, too close to The Blight to live comfortably. They use Ancient artifacts to further sciences and attempt to preserve their own lives. The experiments sometimes have terrible side effects, sometimes spanning the whole continent.

Yon. The opposites of Yilikon, and a result of a Yilikonian experiment. All the folks of Yon are beautiful, graceful, genius brutes that solve their problems with violence. The only currency in the nation is violence, in essence: everyone takes everything they can, and partnerships like marriages are based on either a tenuous alliance or destructive reinforcement of each other's worst tendencies.

Additional ideas/nation themes:

Nation trapped in a dream, waiting for a signal or event to awaken it.

A nation isolated by their own unearthed Ancient magitek, ala the Guardians from Zelda: Breath of the Wild.

An underground nation, built beneath a great forest, with roots as their rooves.

An underwater country of merrow, tritons, merfolk, with caravans of air bubbles that they shepherd along the bottoms of shallow seas.

A country or city without its memory - perhaps they're looking for it, perhaps not.

Faerie-adjacent fairytale land, where stories have as much power as anything else, and magic is incidental to life.

Land ruled by an actual dragon, because fuck it.

Bay of Horrors

In the North there is a bay where the Leviathan sleeps. The Bay is a huge body of water, steel gray and filled with rocks. The Leviathan's anger pervades it - while the creature sleeps its thoughts reach out and poison the water.

People have all kinds of experiences on the Bay: fish turn aggressive, even the little ones; someone looking into the water might see a mirage and throw themselves overboard; during storms there are rogue waves that come from nowhere and swamp boats, then the sea returns to placidity; horrible fish-men live in huts on the shore and worship the Leviathan...

Anything that would be appropriate in a Lovecraft story fits here. The Leviathan is a Cthulhian monster, its mind divorced from its body. That animating malice is instead spread around the Bay and the area surrounding it, resulting in monstrosities and inexplicable occurrences.

Every so often a fragment of the Leviathan shakes free from the beast and sets up shop - treat this as an aboleth.

Languages

There are several language families in Mura, many of which share commonalities due to their clustered origins: almost all language is directly descended from the gods, the titans, or Faerie. Some few languages are pre-titanic, but for the most part languages have had only five to ten-thousand years to diverge.

‘Ulth (Orcish). Common in Orgshland and among orcs abroad.

Aluennan (Celestial). The language of the Heavens.

Chostich. A guttural language from Crot, Threnn, Cirillus, related to Glepth.

Eldlang (Giantish). Runic, the native language of giant-kind and common in the far Southeast, in Hjemlandet.

Ennetese. One of three official languages in Kirtania, from the Ennian people. Just as common as Kirtish in Aden.

Famlish. A plains tongue, related to Heian, spoken commonly in Makay and the Sovereignty.

Far Tongue. A warped and twisted family of languages, all related and all awful, shared by aberrations and their masters in the Far Realms.

Glepth/Ashtongue (Infernal). The language of Hell, really only used in Ashkush.

Golan. The Northern dialect of Ennetese, distinct enough to be its own language, similar enough that speakers of Golan and Ennetese can communicate on simple topics.

Heian. A synthetic language, made by cramming together six or seven languages from across the plains. The language is built on the 'bones' of Tillish.

Hwyddan (Elvish). An old language directly derived from Sylvan.

Kelestish/Church Speech. Derived from Celestial, Keleshtish has become the de facto language of trade and academic writing, rivaled only by Sarandin.

Kirtish. The first official language of Kirtania.

Mahuathan. The language of Pfent, Pfiirg, and the Gleaming Kingdom.

Mocalatish. Spoken on the islands of Mocala and Mirage Island.

Myor Tiri Panta. Spoken as a trade language across Pliss, the Timeless Lands, Aphontia, and Golasta.

Or En Gaer (Primordial). The language of the rocks and fire, and also of the dwarves.

Phairish. Spoken by the Phair people of the Hugue, and some in Kirtania.

Phangese. Spoken by the Phang people of the Hugue.

Sarandin. Descended from Mahuathan, Sarandin has taken on its own alphabet and gone from dialect to language.

Sesspesh (Draconic). Abandoned by almost everyone except the yuan-ti and lizardfolk.

Speytak. The dominant trade language on the seas, and spoken natively near the equator: Sisipey, Spey, and many of the island nations.

Sto Na. Spoken in Ta Ja Jia, the Lonely Kingdom, and parts of Eksh.

Sylvan. The language of Faerie and the forest-folk.

Thwez. One of the three official languages of Kirtania, from the Thwethan people.

Tillish. The trade language of Tillium, closely related to Heian.

Yonkillet. Spoken in Yon, Yilikon, and Drados.

Yorcian. A Francophone language common around the Accord in the Southeast.

Yusti. A common language between Pashtush, Mydos, and Drados.

The 'base languages' of Or En Gar/Primordial, Glepth/Infernal, Aluennan/Celestial, Far Tongue, and Sylvan have their own alphabets.

'Ulth uses the Eldlang runic alphabet, though older forms of 'Ulth also have a pictographic alphabet still used for certain borrowed words or in rural areas. Yorcian uses an alphabet recognizably related to Eldlang's runes, but with the runes 'softened' and turned to 'lowercase'.

Chosthich uses the Glepth/Infernal alphabet. The alphabet can be spotted by its sharp loops and tight curls.

Kelestish uses a simplified version of the Aluennan/Celestial alphabet. The Celestial alphabet is composed of rings and geometric connections that each indicate a syllable, as well as inflection.

Ennetese and Golan share an alphabet, characterized by a single long line from which curves and strokes depend or ascend.

Heian borrows the simple alphabet of Speytak, as do Mocaltish and Famlish. This alphabet is notable for its infinite compoundability: each individual idea or word can be combined with others to represent new words. Combined with simple, straight marks the alphabet is exceptionally versatile, though it takes space to write.

Hwyddan/Elvish uses the Faerie alphabet of Sylvan. The close ties to Sylvan - the language of the timeless realms of Faerie - have kept Hwyddan from changing almost at all over the last 5,000 years. The alphabet can be recognized by its cursive, continuous script.

Kirtish uses a pictographic/ideographic writing system derived by the first Kirtish emperors, with borrowed shapes from Thwez.

Sarandin and Mahuathan have a common alphabet, each composed of top-to-bottom, left-to-right characters crowded with accent and inflection marks. A good eye can distinguish the two languages by the accent marks alone.

Or En Gaer/Primordial uses cuneiform marks arranged in complex patterns, often written without directional indication (that is, it could be written top-to-bottom, right-to-left, in a spiral, or just clustered together for simple phrases) in the original language; and more formally by dwarves.

Myor Tiri Panta and Yonkillet use the same language, directly descended from Ancient script. This influence can be seen in the many, many dots incorporated into the script. A version with the dots connected into lines, like a connect-the-dots game, is used for Yusti.

Phairish, Phangese, and Thwez all use the same alphabet, which shares many shapes and elements with Kirtish.

Sesspesh is a draconic script, and the Old version uses color and line weight in addition to characters to create an immensely complex alphabet. The modern version is syllabic symbols arranged in descending order to create a word, then words written right-to-left, such that each line may be of a different height.

Sto Na looks like Sylvan or Hwyyddan shattered to pieces, with each individual phoneme given its own shape or curl.

Tillish looks like a simplified version of the Mahuathan alphabet, missing many of its accent marks.

Calendar

Every year is 365 days, split into 73 weeks of five days each. Every week is four days of work and one day of study, worship, and rest (for farmers it's usually just the afternoon, of course, the work still needs to get done). Eight weeks makes a month, and there is one week just after harvesting in the autumn that is generally accepted as a time of relaxation, celebration, and preparation for the winter. This week is not part of any of the nine months, and marks the end of one year and the beginning of another.

Days are marked by the ringing of bells at morning, mid-morning, noon, afternoon, and sunset. Each of these periods is called, naturally, a 'bell.' In the winter (rainy season) they last less than two hours each, but at the height of summer they can last around three hours per bell. There's no need for a more precise timekeeping measurement since clocks are not common. Those with clocks measure in standardized bells: five in the day, five in the night, each lasting 2.4 hours. Each bell is further divided into 100 'clicks,' and for those with magical means to measure even finer those clicks are measured into 'clicklets.' Common people will look at you like you're mad if you try to time anything in clicklets.

[For those with any interest at all this means that each click is a bit longer than a minute (at 86.4 seconds) and a clicklet is a bit shorter than a second (at .864 seconds, of course). That means that every round of six seconds can be measured as around 7 clicklets. Hopefully this has been edifying and makes your gaming experience richer.]

Bells have different names, not commonly used. They're named for gods or things.

First Bell: Poppy Bell

Second Bell: Golden Bell/Foyes' Bell

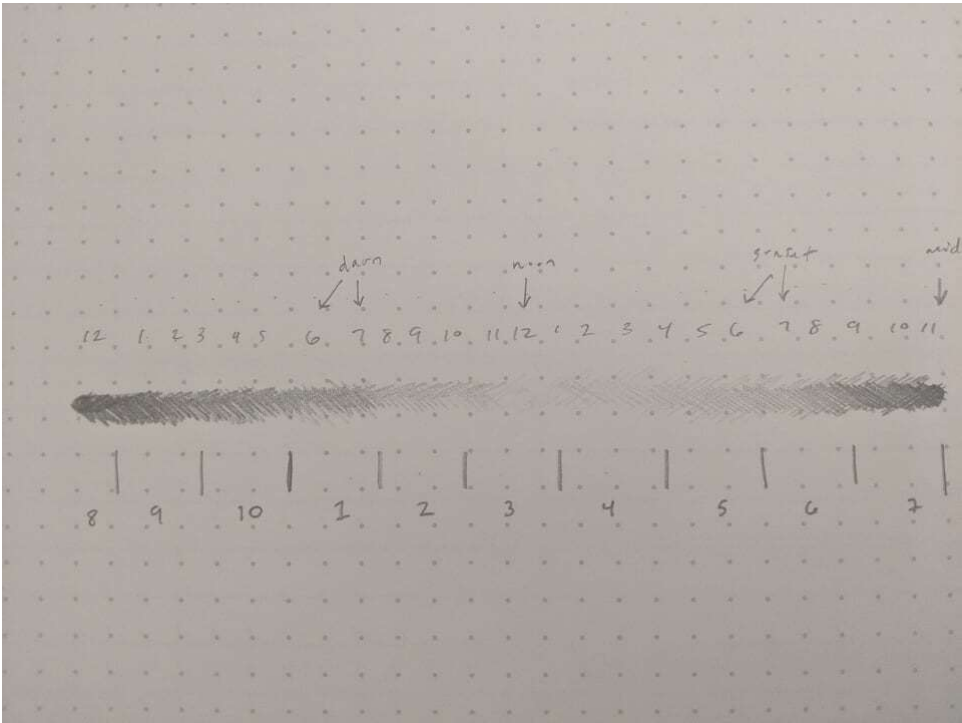
Third Bell: Cicada Bell

Fourth Bell: River Bell

Fifth Bell: Dragonfly Bell

Sixth Bell: Hearth Bell

- Seventh Bell: Moonflower Bell
- Eighth Bell: Silver Bell/Du's Bell
- Ninth Bell: Silence Bell
- Tenth Bell: Sand Bell



Months and Seasons

- Early Winter - saradi
- Midwinter - hiveri
- Late winter - kuliri
- Early Summer - garame
- Midsummer - lete
- Late summer - kotaje
- Early Autumn - patajhara
- Autumn - saratra
- Late Autumn - laiutara

CALENDAR									
Defroid (winter 1)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Premtemp (winter 2)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Commensomme (winter 3)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Centiver (summer 1)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Ventrevoisseur (summer 2)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Moydormir (summer 3)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Termeneige (autumn 1)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20

21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Finaison (autumn 2)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Arretmoisson (autumn 3)									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Recolte (harvest)					1	2	3	4	5

TALMUSSIN

Intro

Geography, Architecture, Wards

The city is based on the northern shore of the great canal between Manifest and the mainland. The city was founded around the southern end of the many-miles long bridge that spans the water. The canal is about 15 miles across, the bridge is **an eighth of a mile** across. The bridge is an ancient relic, with **264-foot** thick supports with arches **a full thousand feet** across between. These supports slope down at about 22.5 degrees, and go to the ocean floor. They make a kind of a danger for ships that aren't familiar with the bizarre architecture.

The city occupies an area that was once rounded cliffs, but has been cut and terraced. The city as a whole is an eighth of a mile above sea level, some **660 to 700 ft**. The lower wards, down beneath the first terrace, are just a few feet above the usual summer high tide, and mild flooding has occurred in the past. The tidal range is moderate, about **12 feet** in most seasons. The terrace cliffs between the upper wards and lower wards are sheer, almost as sheer as the canal gouged out of the earth beyond the lower wards. In most places the cliffs are rough stone, marked with drill-bits, hammers, and chisels. Ancient columns and arches of worked stone can be found embedded in the walls, though, and some portions of the cliff have been covered in silt and dirt, or worn smooth by rushing water.

The 'state' around Talmussin - the city and an area defined as everywhere surrounding it until there's a 10 mile stretch to the next homestead - is called Sarandib. As of the last census the area stretched about 40 miles back down the road from Weej, itself a day's ride from Talmussin. Sarandib also runs almost all the way along the coast, but barely stretches West or East away from the road. This means that the state is 15 or 20 miles wide, 65 or 70 miles North to South, and contains the coast and everything 5 miles back from the coast, in a big "T" shape.

Coastal dwellings are fishermen and lighthouse-keepers. There are a few small villages where pirates might offload goods in exchange for coin, loot, or basic supplies, but almost all legitimate business goes through Talmussin. Homes along the road are farmland and trading posts. Some of these trading posts are really quite elegant - at least once every day's worth of travel there's an inn suitable for traveling nobility (so once every 20 to 25 miles). These are accompanied by fine foods and drink, perhaps a small shop with nice clothing or bits and bobs. The owners of these places travel once a week or once a month to Talmussin to restock, and often have fine (and fresh) foods delivered. There is an entire economy based on the rapid delivery of fresh fish and seafood to these places. Cart drivers with magically-chilled chests of fresh seafood ride non-stop both day and night to deliver their goods for exceptional prices. Innkeepers might balk at paying five or ten times the price of a fish, but it's the only way to get seafood in less than 24 hours when you're 50 miles from the coast.

The jungle is old, but not untamed. Like the state, the jungle is named Sarandib.

It did have another name before, given by the clans that used to rule here. The Aztec-inspired folks were worshippers of a wide pantheon, and all united under a powerful theocracy. Their buildings were all dedicated to their gods, rife with temples and idols.

Their temples remain dotted through the jungle, crumbling stone and rusted metal. The art depicts a pastoral society obsessed with blood sacrifice, worship of the sun and moon, and snakes. Snakes just absolutely everywhere.

Their curation of the jungle is still evident, if you look closely. The ancient trees may be lined up a little too orderly, or perhaps a lake is squared at the edges and maybe was once a basement of a temple. Some of the least evident curation is in the form of the sweetly flowering and fruiting trees: a clever forager can survive off the many fruits out here (as do the many, many monkeys).

The rolling hills give way to broad, muddy rivers that suddenly rush down into cataracts and rapids as the land falls away toward the coast; lakes and ponds covered in scum slowly rise throughout the rainy season until they reach a critical depth and spill over into a nearby creek, flooding it and turning it into a dangerous river for a day.

Rare, short mountains poke up out of the jungle and into the sun, their peaks covered in thick grass and small scrappy brush. Here elephants sun themselves as peacocks fly limply overhead.

It's equatorial. The world is a few degrees colder than ours, and the mitigating ocean is right there, but it should be noted that the locals are dark-skinned. There's not really a winter and a summer, but a rainy season and a dry season. Clothes are appropriate for 60 (coldest it gets at night in the lowlands all year) to 90 degree weather (the hottest it gets in the daytime in the lowlands all year), and everything is waterproofed.

Fish makes up a huge portion of the local diet. Drainage is vitally important. Disease prevention is a top priority. Snow is never seen. Homes are ventilated with clever ducts. Hi-rises can get deadly hot if ventilation is blocked. The wealthy have their homes cooled, but never less than like 78 degrees - that's just a normal room temp here. Animal life is largely reptilian. Insects and arachnids are everywhere. Giant spiders are one of the most common threats. Basements keep to natural earth temp - 50° F in this world - which is considered frigid. Dwarves are built for this, and dark elves, which is part of why they live underground, while elves and humans are up top.

For those that want to live near the city but can't stand the heat, the highlands to the South are a few days travel and run perhaps 20 or 30 degrees colder at the tops of the plateaus.

The calendar runs through nine months, each with eight weeks of five days each. There is a final week, Recolte, which is outside the months and is a celebration of the harvest.

The rainy season runs from laiyutara through hiveri, with the winds and storms breaking just before the River Tal reaches flooding levels, usually. During the dry season, from lete through kotaje, the rain stops falling but the river runs high with snowmelt.

Rare storms in the late winter become charged with magic over Manifest, and then drive over Talmussin. These ghost storms bring the faded spirits of the dead, made physical like they would be in Manifest. These occasions are rare, and brief - a few hours at most - but they charge the powers of necromancers and the undead that live in the city.

Early Winter - saradi
Midwinter - hiveri
Late winter - kuliri

Early Summer - garame
Midsummer - lete
Late summer - kotaje

Early Autumn - patajhara
Autumn - saratra
Late Autumn - laiutara

The bridge has a uniform texture that's very like, but not quite exactly like, stone. It's actually a little more like coral. Each shape is a straight line, and crisp - undulled by time and erosion. The 'stone' is a mottled rosy pink, almost leopard-spotted with lighter patches and veins.

The bridge spans the ten miles between Talmussin and Manifest. It's 1,500 feet across and averages some 300 ft above sea level (depending on the season and the tide). From the perfectly level top of the bridge it cuts a 45-degree angle to the sea. Arches are cut into it each 1,500 ft, with the supports some 300 ft at their bases (making the arches 1,200 ft across at their widest).

Neighborhoods have sprung up beneath the arches, but are reserved almost entirely for the less sunlight-inclined races (in particular the dy'ar slums). The first 4 arches are the only ones with enough ground to support buildings. These neighborhoods are named for their geographies or histories.

Okay, so the reason we have like 750,000 people in one place is Manifest, just across the way, combined with the Road, combined with the port. The reason they're all in one place, clustered up together, is the ruins.

The city is the ruins of elves built over by the yuan-ti, built over by the dwarves, built over by the humans. All of this was alongside goblins, kobolds, whatever. Even the oldest ruins, the elven halls, are built on the bones of something older - whoever made the Road.

Elven architecture dominates at ground level and one below. These homes were abandoned after the yuan-ti invaded, at which point they began repurposing everything and manufacturing the caves. The dwarves came in to clear out the yuan-ti infestation and began tunneling. They contributed the bulk of the underground structures and tunnels. The humans came in and began building above-ground in partnership with the dwarves, and the population boomed. The monsters have just been lurking for basically ever. They mainly live underground in the caves and the unoccupied elven tunnels.

The current population is so large because many of the homes are multi-level homes underground. Nothing above the surface is likely to stand higher than 6 or 7 stories, but underground can easily contain another 6 or 7 levels of basements. Nothing beneath that, since it's below ocean level. Some homes actually extend from atop the terrace all the way down to the ocean level, so you can walk in a door in the Noble's Quarter, down ten flights of stairs, and out a second front door onto the street in the Guildsmans Ward.

There's room for about 36 (human-sized) floors, maximum, inside the terraces (300 ft., 7 ft. 2 in. per floor plus 8 in. per floor/ceiling combo makes 8 per level). More commonly it's a handful of higher-ceilinged levels and a handful of lower, and there's nowhere really with 36 stories. More like ten floors down, and on the terraced cliffs you get a full twenty or so.

Human habitations have a standard ceiling height of 8 ft., with a bare minimum of 6 ft. 6 in.

Dwarven homes and tunnels are built with lower ceilings in household spaces (commonly 6 ft. 6 in., and as low as 5 ft. 6 in.), but their common spaces and entertaining spaces are extravagant and often built to a scale comfortable for humans. Their preferred materials are stone and metal. The stone is almost always quarried, smooth stone - the most common in the area is a yellow or gray sandstone that was often covered with panels of more expensive, less common granite or marble. Fittings of iron lend support and decoration, and are treated with a secret technique that made them impervious to rust (though this appears to be surface-deep only - fittings and structures that have been scratched deeper than an 1/8th of an inch begin to show normal signs of weathering). There are also many iron monuments and pillars about the city from the dwarves.

Elves build with high ceilings when they can: as high as 10 feet where possible, and never lower than 6 ft. Lofts and open atria are common. They include stairs and platforms and daises everywhere to make the interiors feel organic, and even include hallways with low ceilings to make it feel like crawling through arboreal tunnels. Their craftwork was characterized by the blending of wood and stone together, often seamed with precious metals. Panels of wood seemingly derived from a single plank would be melded into broad expanses of marble with a thin line of gold or mithril pressed between them. Most of the antique woodwork was treated to make it impervious to rot or age, and the material is just as strong as though it were only ten years old. Some of the wood was even *darkwood*, an incredibly hard wood that looks like ebony but is hard as steel.

Gnomes and halflings both build small, with ceilings rarely higher than 4 ft. 6 in. unless they're meant to be shared with other races. Halflings tend to have large entertaining spaces built approximately to dwarven or human scale, though always subtly sized for halflings.

Human and halfling construction is always more modern, and rarely shows the attention to time that dwarven and elven architecture does. Wood is plentiful, and so wood is the primary material used. Where a structure needs to support more weight sandstone masonry is used, or else bricks made of the

pale red clay found on the banks of the Pulish River. Where the builder has the money the exterior walls, at least, are often covered in white or light-gray plaster, to preserve the cool indoors. The top floors of most human and halfling homes are open to the air outside - just a roof, columns, and a waist-high wall. These are the preferred homes of the aaracokra.

Spaces that are left over from the yuan-ti are mixed: in some places they simply borrowed the elven architecture and put on a new coat of paint; in others they tore down the extant spaces and reconstructed; in some they built from scratch. The places where they have built are almost always underground, and use either bare tunnels carved into the stone and earth (supported with sandstone blocks and pillars, and wooden structures) or else they construct things wholly out of sandstone and wood. The metals they used were virtually always iron or copper without any kind of magical or alchemical protection - the copper is covered in verdigris, the iron in rust. Generally spaces constructed by the yuan-ti should not be trusted to bear weight.

Spaces that are built or maintained by the city at large, like the Streets Below and the Metro, are usually built to human scale but a little grander. The ceilings are usually 10 ft., and very rarely lower than 8 ft. Squares for shops that are meant to house markets often have ceilings as high as 15 or even 20 ft. Many of these chambers are repurposed ruins from the old elven occupation of the city, or even the Ancient Race; they built to a grand scale.

Wards

The Docks

The Docks ward extends in a narrow strip along the water from the west edge of the bridge to a quarter-mile down the shore. The waterfront is all cranes, docks, marinas, and the like. Set behind all this is a broad paved road for the movement of cargo, and behind that ranks of offices, warehouses, and icehouses for the fish.

Behind the Docks is a wall that runs in bits and pieces all the way down, with customs agents along it regularly. They also patrol the area, ensuring that materials aren't smuggled into the city to avoid tariffs and customs.

The Docks, because of their high degree of policing and many foreigners, is a weird neighborhood. It is almost like a foreign area. No shops are allowed except eating & drinking establishments, whorehouses, inns, and duty-free shops with limited licenses granted by the Governor. The neighborhood is rowdy and dangerous without often being deadly (customs agents are well-armed). The prevalence of entertainment venues meant to strip coin from sailors gives it a kind of constant carnival atmosphere.

Turnstile

Nestled between the Docks ward and the bridge is a 'neighborhood' called Turnstile. This ward is a center of city administration. All the goods unloaded from ships or moved from warehouses must pass through Turnstile, or be accompanied by a customs officer authorizing the removal.

Pilots take small boats out from Turnstile to meet incoming ships, then review their contents. The captain may pay then and there and obtain a writ to move cargo, or may dock and go to Turnstile to haggle, there obtaining a writ or agreeing not to unload cargo. Customs agents then go from Turnstile to the ships or warehouses where they accompany the crews past the picket and fence backing Docks and into the city proper.

Guildland

Guildland is named such for the many respected and venerable shops, workshops, and guildhouses in the neighborhood. Virtually every guild in town has an office here, and all the second-best shops in town are here (the best are in the wealthier neighborhoods).

Because of the variation of the guilds there's a heterogeneity to the populace here: silk-clad models visiting the guildhouse of the Glorious and Dedicated Tailors' and Cutters' Union walk alongside burly and odiferous members of the Reliable Brotherhood of Docksmen and Laborers.

Generally the smells are unpleasant, but the goods are fine, and the people cosmopolitan.

Guildland is sandwiched between the bridge to the east and the Chemists' Quarter and Smokes to the west, separated by Ash Canal.

Chemists' Quarter

Separated from Guildland by necessity and tradition, the Chemists' Quarter is home to the alchemists, tanners, glass-blowers, smiths, paper-makers, and the like. If the work requires the refinement of chemicals, treatment of materials, or heavy kiln or forge, it is in the CQ.

Potters, glass-blowers, and other artisans that merely need the supplies provided by the chemists tend to cluster along Ash Canal, more or less in Guildland territory. The alchemists and anyone who deals with dangerous materials or exotics is in the heart of the quarter, where fire-suppression spells, bucket-chains, and sandbags are apparent. Residents are alert to and practiced with chemical and alchemical spills and containment, and drills are held regularly.

Tear Island

The water near the shore is dark and deep, and there are a few small islands and pillars that stand up out of the sea, making it a very dangerous shore for someone without experience here.

Tear Island is one of these, a chunk of stone from the same source as the Bridge and the shore - maybe calved from it by some incredible magic or the same disaster that cut the canal around the equator. The island's sides are sheer, rising up from the water. The top slopes maybe ten degrees down toward the mainland. Over hundreds of years stone, cement, and wood have been brought in to make level surfaces strung together with little bridges and steps. More wood extends out into the water, making rickety little docks. The island, in whole, is maybe five-hundred feet by three-hundred, making it really quite small.

At one point it was declared that this little spit of land was the only legal place for gnomes to live, and so they made it work as well they could, constructing upward and downward both in preposterous, gnommish ways. The tunnels dug down are like a silo four stories deep, fitted with pumps that force the water out in a continuous saltwater fountain from all sides of the island. The construction going upward is reinforced with buttresses and suspension arrangements and rises four stories.

Maybe it's been converted into an Alcatraz style prison? Maybe it's a gnommish neighborhood packed with small-scaled homes?

Black Shores

This is the name that's given to the spit of land poking out farthest from the mainland, separated from the rest of the city by the Bridge to the east and the Blood River canal to the south.

The name comes from the grit and black ash ground into the gravel and sand and stones, remnants and reminders from a series of fires that completely destroyed the ward a decade ago. Many buildings still show damage from the fires - new plaster and siding laid over the blackened bones of the previous buildings.

This is one of the slums, but in a unusual position, like Surindra Courts, owing to its exposure to the nicer parts of town. Unlike the Blinds or Knives, the ward is fully visible from the Glass Ward, the Ivory Ward, the Heights, and the taller buildings of the Gold Ward.

Due to its exposure to incoming ships and to the wealthy, the Black Shores have been the focus of a series of attempted revitalizations. Subsidies are granted for construction, infrastructure projects are brought to bear. Mostly this has had the effect of creating very nice parks and fountains in the midst of slums. There are, of course, new businesses and the like, also subsidized.

This combination of cheap housing, nice public places, and proximity to a variety of cultures has driven a new generation of inhabitants: hipsters, essentially. Young families that want to live near the nicer parts of town, but can't afford the nicer parts of town. These folks are slowly driving out the locals: gnomes, dy'ar, and dwarves, mostly. The natives are reacting with a mix of gratitude for the local infrastructure, frustration with the new populace, and anger at both for driving up prices and changing the landscape.

Surindra Courts

A decade ago terrible fires razed the entirety of this ward and the next over, the Black Shores. At that time it was called Overcanal, a single ward. The blaze, over the course of a night and two days, consumed everything. Many lives lost.

Afterward, when it came time to rebuild, the city made the decision to construct something newer and finer than the last, impervious to fire and arranged for looks: Surindra Courts. However, the time constraints made it impossible to construct with any kind of quality.

The homes and shops all share a kind of similarity. They are made of the same stone and wood, the same plaster, the same green roofing tiles. The construction is all almost identical, and is still going on. The shops and homes have begun to distinguish themselves by shingles hung out into the streets and alleys. Spars of white wood extend out with hanging boards and flags, describing or depicting the business within.

Rooftops are gently sloped and in this little 35-acre ward almost every home has either two or three stories. It's easy to get around on the rooftops, though nothing runs between homes up here but drying lines. Part of what caused the blaze was the haphazard construction of widows' walks, dormers, rooftop bridges and the like that went up like tinder and collapsed into the streets below. All construction of inter-home roadways has been banned at this time.

The people who live here are a mix of about half the folks that were initially displaced a decade ago, returned to home, and half immigrants. Dy'ari, foreigners, and halflings all live here side by side in these cookie-cutter homes.

Evershade

This tiny ward, snugged down south of Surindra Courts, pressed tightly between the Bridge and the cliffs below the Ivory Ward, is vertical.

A narrow crevasse between the gigantic structures around it, the light shines down only at noon, and then only for a few minutes. Homes are built with almost the density of the Warrens, but not cut into the stone. Instead the first stories are stone and brick, then plaster, then wood above. The tallest of these buildings are twelve or thirteen floors high, though only the top two or three poke out into the sunlight, and they are still many many feet below the cliffs above.

The roads here are less open spaces and more common spaces: a chasm might open between two brick walls, criss-crossed by narrow bridges and ropes, with cobbled stones showing below in a slender zig-zag. Above would be massive tar-covered beams supporting the next floor up. Tucked against the walls are hundreds of candle-holders, oil lamps, and *everburning torches*.

The population here is almost entirely dy'ari and gnommish. The dwarves prefer the solidity and sanctity of stone, the elves need the sun and moon, and the humans just don't do as well in cramped conditions.

The Heights

The most exclusive ward in the city, loved even better than the Gold Ward. This is where the very oldest money lives, with gated communities and all.

The Gold Ward

The second most expensive neighborhood in Talmussin, behind the Heights. The Gold Ward is the remnants of the old-money estates, from when the rich folks needed space outside the Oldtown to race their dogs and the like.

Of note in the ward is Anais Isou's literary salon, and the many cafés and playhouses that the occupants visit.

Café La Rotonde

Le Dome Café

Les Deux Magots

Café de Flore

Pedrocchi Café

The Monty (Café Montmartre)

Dingo Bar

Hari's

La Coupole

La Closerie des Lilas

Le Rosebud Speakeasy

Upper Bell

A wealthy neighborhood near the Pulish River and bordering the Gold Ward. Here is a kind of counterpoint to the Temple Row in the east. Shrines and holy places litter the ground.

Every morning university students travel through on their way to the Glass Ward; every evening they return. Upper Bell has become something like a guard against the intrusion of the students into the Gold Ward. Bars and places of entertainment have cropped up, displacing or replacing churches while often

keeping the appearances of holy sites. These places cater to the younger crowd, and also to the wealthy from the Gold Ward. This is where the old money comes to have fun, and the wealthiest students.

A number of playhouses and concert halls put on both vulgar and refined art to suit the tastes of visitors. Of particular note is the gigantic Ruby Palace, a concert hall that seats 2,806 in its primary performance space, the Peacock Hall, another 600 in the Governor's Hall, and 150 in the Garda Auditorium.

Ilisi Ward

Primarily residential, but nearing the borders of the city. This is where it becomes evident that every square foot of Talmussin is carved out of the unkind jungle. The greenspace here budes up against a low wall that surrounds the ward, extending from the cliff around to the south and east.

This ward has a few roads that come in from out in the jungle, with customs agents posted there all 'round the clock.

Shorrey

Named for the shore of the Pulish River, this is where the work is done to get the boats back upriver. Goods flow into the city atop broad barges and on small canoes, sneaking underneath the preposterously arched bridges.

The ward's most recognizable characteristic is the flotilla of ropes, chains, and half-bridges draped into the water. Wide tracks on either side of the river sport capstans, mules, and mechanical tools for hauling. In essence the goods are here unloaded, the boats gently turned back around, and sent on their way upriver. Since most boats cannot progress upriver at this point, as the water is too quick, the mechanisms and laborers in Shorrey help move them back upriver as much as a mile. In severe cases the boats are slid out of the river and onto the rolling tracks leading back up the river, and rolled right out of town dry.

Orbridge

Named for its position over the bridge (note: not the Bridge, but the bridge), Orbridge is now one of the larger marketplaces in town. With its proximity to the riverboats of Shorrey and the jungle goods from Ilisi Ward, and relative proximity to the Bridge Road, it has a pleasant blend of goods and services on offer.

Surrounding the marketplaces, of course, are people. The residential areas of the ward are mainly middle class - something unusual in other cities perhaps, but present here.

Lower Bell

This is the newest quarter of temples, and also features a few small theological libraries and a university of the city. The residences are almost entirely occupied by newcomers to town and university students.

The Glass Ward

This is the heart of the city, the ward in which you'll find the University of Talmussin and its associated research facilities. One single university and its accompaniments covers almost 4 acres, and almost ten thousand students, professors, and staff members occupy the area daily, with the majority traveling back out of the neighborhood in the evenings.

Ivory Ward

Here is where the universities that aren't the University are housed.

Ten thousand students occupy the neighborhood daily, about half that in the evenings in various dorms and hostels. The remainder leak to the south, in East Bend.

Pulish Island

This is where the most volatile facilities for the universities are located, on an island of hallowed and sanctified stone in the middle of a fast-moving river. Fiends and the dead are permanently banned from the island, and if summoned there can't leave. The universities conduct experiments on the nature of summoning, on energy and spellcrafting, and make artifacts of incredible power.

Rivergate

This is where the students live, if they can manage it. The buildings here are ancient, overflowing from Oldtown when they were first constructed. Now they've been built atop and rebuilt a dozen times, perhaps. The average height of construction is relatively low, here, only two or three floors to match Oldtown. Farther north the skyline continually rises.

Eastbridge

This is a point of control for much of the trade through Talmussin, that which comes in by the Bridge Road and the Pulish River. Warehouses, shops, customs offices, and broad roads characterize this ward. Here you'll find the families that match the middle classes in Orbridge, skilled laborers and small business owners.

Verdant Ward

The Verdant Ward is named such for the wide swaths of green that run alongside. It's a 'ward' in name only, and is actually the smallest part of the gardens and farms that supply Talmussin. Extending alongside the Bridge Road as far back as can be managed against the encroaching jungle, and as far south as is necessary to keep people fed, the Verdant Ward is a mix of camellia trestles and gardens, small household farms, massive greenhouses, ranches for the few livestock that are raised for Talmussin... all of it.

East Bend

The place of living and partying for thousands of students attending the universities of the Glass and Ivory Wards. Bars, hostels, entertainment houses, flophouses, drug dens, libraries, shops are all thick on the ground.

Oldtown

As the name implies, this is the oldest ward in Talmussin. Surrounded by walls, with a massive arch over the Bridge River. At either end of the ward's arch are massive portcullises, able to be dropped to block passage north or south on the road. They can also be used to trap carts and whole caravans in between until they can be searched by customs agents.

Oldtown's walls are perhaps two stories tall, and thick enough to have shops atop them alongside a broad walkway. Inside the walls runs plumbing and also the jail. Hundreds and hundreds of cells run throughout the interior of Oldtown's walls, along with jailer's offices, Pelte outposts, and apartments for guards.

The Governor's mansion is on the west side of Oldtown, as are hundreds of offices for the Pelte, customs, virtually every guild, and any government office possible. Oldtown also features a gigantic marketplace, open-air, across the arch in terraced levels of stalls and shops. Mostly these shops and stalls feature goods to be sold to the caravans coming into town, and a number of markets that sell those incoming wares to Talmussin's residents.

Mile One

Mile One is a strange ward, in that it's the last place someone will stop before walking to Manifest. As such it's a mix of residential housing, travel shops, markets of goods coming into and out of the city, customs and city officers, and the wealthy eccentrics that like to be up high in the middle of the chilled sea air.

Mile None

Essentially a massive open-air market backed on either side by a few hundred feet of housing, with precipitous drops to either side.

The Blinds

Tight, crowded hovels roll from the brutal seafront to a few blocks in. The buildings are rickety, the alleyways unlit. The slums are the most dangerous and tightly packed neighborhood outside of the Warrens. In some ways it's more dangerous: open to the elements, a center of smuggling, pimping, drug trade, and the like. The Pelte doesn't come down here unless they truly must.

The Tangle

Where the Blinds become well-constructed enough to reach three or four stories, they become the Tangle. Known as such because of the impossible mish-mash of bridges, alleys, tunnels, and the like, Tangle is a slum you might recognize in old-school Harlem. Families try to make it but everyone needs at minimum one side-hustle. Surrounded by organized crime in Pugil, disorganized crime in the Blinds, and pressed against the filth of Knives, the families of the Tangle are deeply clannish.

Pugil

A neighborhood in the slums on the East side of the river, about as East as you can go. In between a few canals is a neighborhood best known for its fighting rings. There are legendary bars that young fighters dream of headlining, and shacks where bare-knuckle boxers beat each other for coppers.

The Brass Knuckle Shuffle: a low-rent sort of tavern where the fights take place on the floor, in between the tables.

The Cestus: the finest bar in Pugil, and headquarters of the Kumpal (the Family). As fine as places get in Pugil, anyway. There's still more brass than gold, and the crystal is cut glass. Also the longest continuously operating fight club in the city.

Glass & Brass: an inn that strikes a weird balance between violence and sex. Tons of mirrors, windows, glass fittings, all of that. The ladies tend to wear a lot of flounciness, ribbony, silly skirts.

The Pit: it is what it says on the sign. There's a big hole in the middle, with coarse sand. The circle around it is packed with high stools. Folks can take a turn in the pit, all you have to do is put your name in the hat, basically. Match-ups are random.

Gorrik's: basically a shack where glassing your hand-wraps is encouraged. The drinks are straight-up rotgut, the ambience is the absolute worst. However, Gorrik cooks and serves hands-down the best steak in town. He gets his cuts over in Knives, and somehow always winds up first in line.

One of the Kumpal/Gold Hands operators out of the Cestus is a deadly half-orc named Kasun, a totem barbarian that sneaks up on you with a greatsword.

Knives

Butchers, fishmongers, and the like. Slummish, but not as bad as the Blinds. Named Knives for the proliferation of sharpening shops, smiths, and knife-sellers, there to serve the fishermen and butchers. The canal that runs along the back of the neighborhood is officially named the St. Cahris Canal but more commonly called Blood River or the Trench or Blood and Guts Canal. Anything that doesn't get used in sausage-making - offal, skins, bones, blood, etc. - goes straight in the canal. Sharks and tropical meat-eaters from the sea often swim straight up the brackish canal or wait in massive shoals and swarms at the mouth of it. Swimming is v ill-advised.

Place of Interest: Bloody Good Stuff. Vakker the barghest's pawn and consignment store, from whence he fences and hunts.

Ric's Skillet: one of the best diners in the city, run by the eponymous Ric. Does meat of every kind, including a gigantic seafood breakfast special to serve 6 to 8, featuring a massive side of salmon surrounded by herbs and

Tumor District

A leper colony, where the residents are either deformed or live alongside the deformed. Originally a single massive hospital and surrounding facilities, it fell into disrepair after being destroyed by an incursion from the necropolis. It was rebuilt, but fortified, and eventually became a place of exile. Jails, hospitals, leper colonies, and exiles.

The Necropolis

To the east of the Warrens, and deeper into the cliffside, is the necropolis. The poor are burned, their ashes interred here. The well-to-do are buried here in private alcoves as bones only. The wealthy are interred in full clothing, in carved stone sepulchers. There is no real 'soil' in Talmussin, only stone and grit, and so nobody is buried properly. Instead there are crypts, mausoleums, sepulchers, tombs, and all of that. These are dug into the stone of the cliffside, and have been for centuries. Now there are parts of the necropolis that are in frequent use, kept under *hallow* spells - and there are the parts that are not. The restless dead have been given free rein of those parts, and wander about keeping the living from their territory. Sometimes ghouls, ghasts, vampires, and what-have-you slip out of the necropolis to

feed on the poor residents of the Tumor District or the Warrens. On rare occasion they make it up to the Ledge.

There's at least one bodak out here, hunting at the border of the Warrens. He was for a time, and may be again, blocked in by runes of salt and charcoal that were disturbed.

The Warrens

It's basically the Kowloon Walled City, but pressed into stone. Thousands of occupants fill the hallways, chambers, and cells left by a thousand years of construction. The apartments closest to the cliffside, with fresh air or even windows, are by far the most desirable. Those deeper in are dangerous due to their poor ventilation, proximity to the Necropolis, and potentially hazardous construction.

Somewhere in the Ward is a Contract Devil known as Bronze Claw. He was running a cursed counterfeit cash printing press for a moment, there, before it all got blown up by PCs.

Ledge

Built on the precipice overlooking the slums, Ledge is a poor imitation of the Heights. The middle class struggling to be upper class congregate here, and it's become a center for new restaurants and shops that cater to the growing portion of disaffected or anxious not-yet-wealthy.

Midtown

Exactly what it sounds like: middling in every way. Too good for communal housing or apartments, not yet able to afford single-family homes, the inhabitants of Midtown are dwellers in duplexes, luxury condos, and townhomes. They have community gardens, small second-run theaters, and family dining establishments. If suburbia existed in the middle of a city, it'd be Midtown. This is where the hipsters come when they're done wrecking the Black Shores and aren't ready to settle into being nouveau riche.

Azure Ward

Just across the Bridge from the Ivory Ward, the Azure Ward has a school or two of its own, and a bustling student population. The East Benders sometimes live here and party in East Bend. The construction here is from the third wave of the city - the first was what became Oldtown, the second was Rivergate and Temple Row. Here in Azure Ward the buildings are put together intentionally, with space between and a unified sense of architecture and style.

Temple Row

The old temple district, still home to the Ekletheon Orthodox Church in Talmussin. The narrow strip called Temple Row truly is just one street, between Azure Ward and the South Market. Many of the shops here are owned by the Church, or operated by them. Many of the homes here are occupied by the Church as well. The city allows the Church to keep quite a few traveling priests in the town - it is, after all, across the water from Manifest. However, the city likes to keep an eye on them, so the Churchmen live in Temple Row, eat here, pray here, work here. It's like a miniature city in the city where the residents can't leave, but the rest of Talmussin passes through.

South Market

Once just a market, the bulk of South Market's goods and wares have been moved to Mile Zero and the Oldtown Market, not to mention the competition from Orbridge and Turnstile. Nevertheless, the profusion of shops, carts, and tents (cunningly arranged to force a visitor to walk through all of them like a gigantic Ikea), is still the heart of South Market. The change has been more in the occupants than what can be seen: now the folks living in the area are government officials, out-of-towners, Ekletheon big-wigs, and wealthy traders - once upon a time it was a community of small craftsmen and shop owners. Now a single family might own twelve or thirteen of the little stalls and shops, and not work at any of them. Their modest-seeming apartments have been knocked out inside and structured like a noble's mansion, simply quietly.

Smokes

Smokes is known as such for the constant pillars of black forge-smoke that rise over it. The blacksmiths, tinsmiths, whitesmiths, charcoal makers, and whoever else live here and work here. Most anything that needs to be burnt comes here. The shops are spaced out quite a bit, with low warehouses tucked in between and wide roads to make way for shipments going from the Docks and Turnstile to the Warrens and the Gold Ward.

Landmarks

Each ward should have a few unique, recognizable things that can be described in a sentence or two, but invites and rewards further study.

E.g.,

The oldest continuously-operating bar and tavern in the city, which is also haunted by the ghost of the first governor of Talmussin & Sarandib, who was assassinated there (actually the ghost of a con man).

A statue of a wrinkled old man dressed in dated finery, wrapped with a heavy cloak. His plaque, below, explains that he was the foremost healer of the city in his day and, as a personal favor to him, a medusa petrified him just before his death. He sits in a town square, now.

A gigantic billboard-sized portrait of a noble family's patriarch, put up two summers ago and widely hated.

An automaton that will copy any writing from one paper to another at a cost of a copper per sheet. It appears as a beautiful young woman made of brass cogs inside a "skin" of hammered silver, sitting at a massive desk with two small platforms to indicate the placement of the papers. Some kind soul has built a simple roof over her to keep off the rain, but the effects of the weather can be seen in the slow-creeping verdigris that will one day 'kill' her.

A sundial with intricate lenses and mirrors arranged in a thick wooden frame. It casts an image of a hand, pointing, at the time marked around the rim of a water-fountain in the square.

The Horseman's Square is where coaches gather up in this neighborhood, with a horse trough and cheap bars. You can recognize the square immediately by the several parked coaches and carriages, and the powerful smell of horses.

In one square there are 100 gold coins set into the cobble stones, the faces on them worn smooth (one coin per stone, dead center). Nobody has tried to retrieve them, for whatever reason. Local story says they were placed here as a petty payment for a petty bet.

The well that once sat at the center of a square collapsed into a sinkhole. The city planned, originally, to simply turn this into a new entrance to the underground. However, traffic was so high that a formal stairway was never made. Now people use it, but the ragged edges remain, the stairs are wooden and rickety, there are rope ladders. The general wisdom is it will improve as soon as someone needs stone stairs and builds them on their own.

One square is built around a public gibbet and guillotine, not used in years but there as a gory reminder. The structure has been covered in weeds and vines, but the blade remains clean and sharp.

A house shaped like a rearing horse made out of a hundred different exotic woods. Some eccentric noble or wizard or noble wizard surely lives there.

A square where, for whatever reason, gargoyles have been set on every corner and are all facing away from the public square rather than out at it.

A square where the largest structure is the remains of a church, burnt down. The rest of the buildings have been reconstructed, but one entire side of the square is nothing but antique charred wood and black bricks. Why it hasn't been rebuilt, nobody knows.

A bronze statue of a famous madame, from her younger days as a whore. At her feet a number of tiny men and women throw themselves at her. Most of the shops surrounding the square are brothels.

A square where every resident grumbles at a huge, incredibly tacky home built by some nouveau-riche foreigner in a foreign, dumb style. Total eyesore, an absolute McMansion mish-mash nightmare.

At one square the air is always crackling with undischarged energy. A needle, dropped here, will slowly rattle across the ground. Hair stands on end, gently, and static shocks are common. There is likely a University facility built underneath.

The Hein neighborhood, where there are bells and windchimes everywhere. Heinan men wear bells in their hair and on their clothing, and apparently cover their homes and businesses with them as well.

A public fountain where magic keeps the water pure. A side effect has large floating flowers appear spontaneously in the water as though they floated up from some deep well. Maybe the well is connected to an Arborean stream?

In the Dy'ar quarter a square features a massive circular mosaic of black tile and red gemstones on a black clay, depicting Lloth consuming the moon. Attempts to destroy or remove it have been divinely rebuffed, and so there are simply carts and cloths and stuff stacked up before it.

A large public square with small gardens arranged around a fountain features moving topiaries. They are normally quite docile, but someone got the topiaries hooked on salt, and they'll nudge and bother anyone carrying a bag or block. They munch it and push it into the ground to feed their roots.

An underground square features a fountain with a curtain of water pouring down from above in a ten-foot-wide circle to splash on the ground and then disappear through a drain in the ground. It serves as a shower, drinking water, place to wash clothing, etc.

A square built into the remains of a tower of the old walls. Walls line it on either side, crowded with stalls and vendors. Inside the shade of the tower is a thick garden of flowers and vines, with little paths all through it and small places to meet or sneak a kiss from a lover.

A wide balcony cut into the cliff face, with a guard rail and everything. The space is on a public path but sometimes closed for weddings, funerals, or parties.

A tall column of fire, like *flame strike* crossed with *everburning torch*. It's perhaps a relic from an age where it was useful, but now is mainly decorative.

A gigantic bank, not the largest branch or the main one, but among the oldest still standing. All columns and broad open spaces, with a tremendous front façade you can see for blocks.

The City Beneath the City

Talmussin goes almost as deep as it goes high. Throughout about 60% of the city there's basements and sewers 1 to 6 levels deep. Like the surface, it has neighborhoods. These are not always matched with those above: a nice gated community might sit over a kobold dungeon; slums might rest atop ancient elven ruins. Under the streets could be:

- Sewers. Mucky, gross sewers with open cesspits, or steaming-hot tunnels of brick crammed with lead pipes. Rivers, pools, drinking water cased in rusted iron pipes, alchemical runoff carried away from the city in aging rubber.
- Basements. Either still in use or boarded up. The doors could connect to the next over, to sewers, to dungeons, or simply be exposed through cave-ins. Storage, recreation, gambling dens, animal kennels, larders.
- Ruins. Once these levels were above ground, now sunk or reduced to rubble or simply built atop. Entire roads, shop-fronts, homes, warehouses, canals, temples... A whole city, bitten into pieces, sits down here.
- Secret complexes. Once the planned retreat of the city's wealthy in times of calamity, now a series of empty bunkers, barracks, storage units, shops, and roads.
- Caves. A series of natural caves that have caused some sinkholes, sure, and been the hideouts of bandits. Slick stone or dusty ground, echoing. Perhaps a part of a larger cave system ala the Underdark, or perhaps alone.
- Thieves' tunnels. Carved out and shored up like mining halls, these were smugglers' routes before the government turned lax.
- Dungeons. Actual, genuine dungeons produced for jailing, torturing, or darker purposes. Way too many demons, lich-dom laboratories, and all manner of monster cutting out their territories down here.
- Burrows. Gnomes, dwarves, and drow all prefer to live below the ground. Gnomish structures are often shallow, then dwarven halls a bit lower. Below those, even, are cathedrals of the dark elves. Some of these homes are abandoned, some are occupied. Sometimes travelers are aware of how deep they're going only because the décor changes from rustic to brutal, then from brutal to opulent.
- Sacred spaces. Springs in caverns, hidden lava flows, bricks of dense stone. These places are usually sacred to an elemental of some kind, or a nature or city spirit. Stone Blood, the Genius Loci spirit of Talmussin, moves from shrine to shrine, keeping the lesser spirits in check. Some shrines are darker, places for cults and crazies to meet. These are sanctified to foul gods or creatures, and are strange places.
- Lost spaces. Small snippets of space that sank here, or got lost. Parks, whole, with branching trees and babbling brooks, bordered on all sides by basements and accessible only by sewers, e.g.
- The Metro. Streets sunk under the streets above, meant to move tremendously heavy or bulky loads. Tracks laid out for mining carts that instead transport dozens of people in carts driven by small golems. These stations are mainly meant for freight and stay shallow. In places, though, the membrane between these worlds is too thin and things

peek through. Doors open, markets pop up, humans get lost. The Underground, Fallen London, is curiously connected to the other places underground. It's easy to step... away. But the doors aren't always here or there.

- Lairs. Kobolds build traps and tunnels. Goblins repurpose entire neighborhoods to their own needs. Beholders assume control over stretches of dungeons. Even a small wyrm might curl in a cavern and extend its reach upward.
- Streets below. Some shops actually operate down here! You take the underground to a neighborhood lined with a thousand torches. They sell clothing, snacks, leather goods, knives, jewelry, food, living goods, furniture, maybe even magic goodies. Sometimes you can only get down from the shops above and it's just a few layers of goods three or four stories deep. Sometimes it's an entire paved street and cul de sac with a bazaar connected to a few dozen roads.

City Layers

The city can be split, broadly, into layers. These layers correspond, roughly, with the layers of architecture that have accumulated over the years.

From the top down:

The highest tiers of the city are wood and plaster, often open to the sun. These are primarily constructed by necessity, and recently. Elven and human architecture dominates. The universities have a few beautiful domed buildings and spindly towers. The Nobles' Ward has a handful of prominent peaks. Otherwise it's all the rooves of shops and homes.

The other layers above ground are wooden, plaster, stone, and brick. These are mainly human constructions, with a healthy mix of everything else thrown in. A rare few of the buildings are antique dwarven construction from when they established their homes here above ground.

Below ground those halls nearest the surface are the basements of the homes above. Sharing the same space, more or less, are halfling burrows and gnome-holes. [-0 to -10 ft.] Human and halfling basements and burrows are torchlit. They have flues and chimneys, and where possible feature high windows to the streets above. Gnommish burrows are more likely to include sophisticated ventilation systems and alchemical lighting (ala sunrods, for example).

Immediately below these, sunk a full 20 ft. down and extending to 40 ft. below ground level are the Undercity and the Metro. Many of the dwarven halls from ages past have been torn down, repurposed, or incorporated somehow into this layer. Thick pipes run through this level as well, carrying water and sewage. [-20 to -40 ft.] Due to the difficulty of keeping lit fire down here, *everburning torches* are common, along with alchemical lights. There are giant ducts that run alongside the sewer and water pipes bringing in fresh air and flushing out the stale. Nevertheless, the air has a dead smell to it that newcomers to the city may not be comfortable with.

Below even these are the remnants of the dwarven construction. Those halls that weren't incorporated into the Undercity remain here. Some are in use, still occupied by dwarven clans. Some are lost chambers, walled off behind plaster, wood, or slim layers of brick from the

Undercity. [-40 to -70 ft.] Dwarves have natural darkvision and so tend to ignore lighting with some frequency, using *everburning torches* where they need light for fine work or color recognition. The dwarven forges are ventilated with massive tunnels blackened from ages past. Their sophisticated duct-work doesn't need the magical or manual power that the Undercity's ventilation system does, instead pulling ocean air from holes pock-marking the terrace's face into the tunnels.

The ancient yuan-ti relics are buried beneath the dwarven construction. These halls are sometimes overtaken by dwarven decoration, sometimes filled in with rubble, and sometimes time capsules with stale air and rotten accoutrements all intact. [-70 to -100 ft.] The yuan-ti did not have darkvision, but when they were building these tunnels were much closer to the surface. The ventilation here is lacking, and the air is sometimes dangerously stale. The lighting is whatever the dwarves and humans brought with them - an eclectic mix of magic, alchemy, and dangerous open flames.

The oldest recognizable ruins are those of the elves. These ruins are almost always destroyed, just the remnants of architectural features now repurposed. A stone arch detailed with vines and leaves might appear in a stone tunnel that's otherwise dwarven construction, perhaps with human doors and fittings; eons of shared occupation have nearly erased the elven architecture. [-100 to -130 ft.] Those elven ruins that are in good shape feature ceilings that resemble the night sky and shed dim light, faux windows that magically generate fresh air, and even a few clever permanent portals that lead to the terrace walls. Most of the ruins are non-functional, however, and have been reduced the same quality as the yuan-ti ruins.

What's left, the Ancient Race's works, are deeper than anyone goes consistently. There are remnants at the foundations of the elven construction, sometimes. [-130 ft. and lower] The lighting here is whatever you bring, and the ventilation is whatever natural caverns let fresh air in.

From the Lower Wards going back up you'd see a similar pattern in reverse. Human construction, often layered atop dwarven, makes up the first 3 levels. Beyond that is purer dwarven, maybe 2 more stories. A slender layer of yuan-ti architecture might extend beyond that, then another level or two of elven architecture (levels 7 and 8), then intermittent relics of the Ancient Race.

In between all these structures and tunnels are a few stairways, surely carved by magic, that run from the Upper Wards to the Lower Wards. A few of these stairways spread out into small complexes of rooms, hollowed out by later races. There's a single stairway carved by the Ancient Race, and the construction extending from it is layered in reverse of that above: first the elven is encountered, often still intact, then yuan-ti, then dwarven, finally human.

Other stairways, made by the elves, show yuan-ti, then dwarven, then human burrowing radiating out. The dwarves were the first to actually manually carve stairs, and only a few, and so their construction is really the only thing you'll see there.

Some of these underground structures are close enough to the terrace walls to have windows cut into it. In particular, the elves and humans were desperate to get some natural light.

Ancient underground structures are often enchanted or warded in some way. For example, there's at least one small territory that was warded by the elves against entry by anyone but those with elven blood. Despite their distaste for living underground, the elves have established an embassy here. Alternatively, it remains undiscovered and is in use by an entire clan of dark elves.

Woven between these hallways, and running through them, and sometimes using this ancient architecture in place of new construction: sewers. There are pipes that carry fresh water from far upriver to the city and its lower levels, pipes that carry waste down to the canals, and entire hallways that handle the rivers of waste from above.

Minerals in Sarandib:

Clay - clay in various grades is available throughout the jungle and along the river

Limestone - limestone runs along parts of the River, and so lime (and plaster) are easily available

Gemstones - blue sapphires & star sapphires are easily available (relatively), with rubies and emeralds less common but still present

Graphite - graphite is available in very high quality and abundantly

Silica Sands - along the beach silica and quartzite sands are easy to find - meaning glass is also easy to come by

Granite & Marble - quarries of granite and white marble exist in the jungle and on the outskirts of the state of Sarandib

Iron - available, in limited quantities

History

Demographics

The city is, at last count, about 500,000 citizens. The Universities total up another 150,000, but aren't counted as part of the population, which counts only citizens. There are another 100 to 150,000 non-citizens on the surface. This includes the dyari elves, who can't have citizenship by city decree, and any thralls, slaves, etc. in the city. Most monsters are also not citizens, even if they're Redeemed (1).

In all the population is around 750,000 to 800,000 people - approximately the same size as Seattle (excluding the metro area).

The citizenry is about 70% human. Elves make up 10%, dwarves another 5%. Halflings are some 5%, aarakocra 2%, gnomes 2%, with less than 1% being tieflings, half-elves, dragonborn, etc.

Of the University students the breakdown is a little more cosmopolitan: 40% human, 15% elven, 10% dwarven and 10% half-elven, 5% each halfling, gnome, and half-orc, 2% dragonborn, 1% genasi, goblin, aarakocra, tiefling, aasimar, and less than 1% each leonin, kenku, orcish, yuan-ti, goblinoids, and ghost-touched.

The non-citizens living in the city are disproportionately tilted toward non-humans, with about a quarter being human, a fifth elven (mostly dy'ari), 10% each gnomes, half-orcs, and dwarves, almost 10% aarakocra and halflings, 5% half-elven, and an outsize number of goblinoids and miscellaneous monsters.

The non-citizens are primarily immigrants that haven't yet attained citizenship. These non-citizens have about the same makeup as the citizenry. However, there are some 10,000 dwarves that live in the city limits but claim a sovereign clan-nation. There are also almost 15,000 dark elves that live in the city, and the remainder of the non-citizenry are Redeemed, goblins, lizardfolk, etc. living in the slums or underground.

All demographics below are approximate:

Ancestry	Citizenry	Students	Non-citizens	Total
Human	370,000	55,000	10,000	435,000

Elven	50,000	22,500	25,000 (15,000 dy'ari)	97,500
Dwarven	25,000	15,000	15,000	55,000
Halfling	25,000	7,500	10,000	42,500
Aarakocra	5,000	1,500	10,000	16,500
Gnommish	10,000	7,500	12,500	30,000
Half-elven	1,000	15,000	6,000	22,000
Half-orcish	500	7,500	12,000	20,000
Ghost-touched	250	500	1,000	1,750
Dragonborn	150	3,000	1,000	4,150
Aasimar	>100	1,500	250	1,800
Tiefling	>100	1,500	250	1,800
Leonin	>10	>100	300	355
Genasi	>10	500	150	655
Kenku	>10	750	1,000	1,755
Orcish	>10	150	3,000	3,155
Yuan-ti	>10	>100	1,000	1,055
Hobgoblin	>10	350	1,000	1,355
Goblin	>10	750	5,000	5,755
Bugbear	>10	>10	250	260
Other	>100	1,000	10,000	11,050
TOTAL	487,050	141,605	124,700	753,395

1. Redeemed. The Brotherhood of Redemption uses powerful alchemy, enchantment, and brainwashing to de-evil monsters, then reintroduce them into society. The Redeemed wear special tokens around their necks to show that they've been conditioned.

Government & Law

Because Talmussin is a Free City, and Sarandib is a state all of its own, there's no government that controls the city from on high - the city controls itself. There are dozens of councils and committees that come together to discuss everything from landscaping ordinances to military actions. These are, generally, overseen by one of a few major councils.

The governor has a seat, technically, on any council or committee at all. She is considered to abstain from any votes unless she sends a proxy or appears herself. In practice she usually attends the council meetings for the Pelte, the Jade Hall, the Court of Many Voices, and the Levee.

The committees and councils vest power in the governor for individual tasks and for ongoing tasks. For example, she has been given great powers by the Pelte to act in the interests of the city's defense, applicable until such a time as the council revokes it. This means that practically she is the head of the military and of the city guard, and can issue commands without limitation or requiring approval from those bodies, but her power is derived from that council. Theoretically.

The same is true when it comes to trade agreements, the city's treasury, building permits, and all of that manner of thing, but, like with the military, she often delegates powers back to members of the council or to experts. So she may have the power to create trade agreements, but delegate the power to a Minister of Export, and may have the power to enforce them, but delegate the power to a Minister of Customs, who then is empowered to delegate the duties of enforcing customs, taxes, and tariffs to a series of customs offices and officers and etc.

The current governor of Talmussin and Sarandib is Elfani Sattagali, a half-elven woman from one of the minor families lieged to House Sattambige. She began her career as a scholar at Ahaj, then became a member of the Azure Lodge and the Board of Regent Scholars, and from there began brokering agreements between the universities and the guilds. A few decades of lobbying and political maneuvering later, she ran for the position and took it without real opposition, having secured the majority of the votes of the Levee well ahead of time. Her predecessor's reign was conveniently destabilized about a year prior to that by the loss of a family fortune in a gambling den, followed by a tremendous amount of news about said event. Most in the city agree that Elfani arranged that little slip-up and its publicization, but disagree about whether it was the Kumpal or the Black Slippers that aided her ascent. She has been ruling without much opposition for the last twenty years, and looks to be in for another hundred - the blessings of a half-elven life span. Her tenure as governor is assured by her deft handling of different factions against each other: the Church, Pelte, Levee, guilds, universities, criminal elements, and public opinions are all stacked carefully against each other in a house of cards that she must attend to constantly - but which allows for the status quo to remain and for business to get done.

The Levee

The nobility, ten other members, and the Governor; typically held in a small chamber hosted by the governor or a noble house, thrown almost as an informal soirée, maybe with a party before or after the meeting to which other wealthy folk are invited.

Court of Many Voices

A place for citizens to raise concerns, like an overgrown town; this council is actually mainly a way to get to the governor. The general population applies to a secretary to earn an audience. The secretary selects matters to bring up.

Pressing matters, or those that affect a great number of people, move to the top of the pile. If an issue isn't addressed it goes back in the bucket. A petitioner can elect to have a matter brought before a councilmember instead of the governor if they feel they have waited too long.

The council is made up of practically-minded councilors selected by the governor directly, and a discerning secretary. There are hearings once each month or so, and matters that go to the councilors are handled as they come up in a series of offices in Oldtown.

Tribune of the Patricians

Concerned with law over the nobility; while there is, officially, no nobility in the city, this tribunal council concerns themselves with laws and strictures regarding 'noble' crimes: tax evasion, property disputes over 1,000 gp, agreements and defaults between noble houses, intellectual property and whatever - their range is pretty broad, but a general rule is if a noble would be interested in it, the Patrician Tribune takes care of it. The Patrician Tribune has the authority to review any cases before the People's Tribune, and to assert authority over those cases.

Tribune of the People

Concerned with the law of poor people; theft, assault, parking violations, whatever. This is the only tribune that most Talmussens will ever interact with. They not only decide what the law is, but also what the punishment is, and they conduct investigations, administer justice, and provide judgment.

Pelte

Concerned with enforcing the law and defending the city and state; once several councils now combined, including the city guard, the city watch, the committee on military tribunals, the committee on information, the militia, and the council on war.

Members of the Pelte are the commanders of these former organizations: three from the war, three from the guard, one from the watch, one from the tribune, one from information, one from the militia, and the Governor.

In practical purposes these members oversee their original organizations, they all just now are part of the Pelte and the Pelte presents a single unified front to the public and the governor.

Granite Hall

The council on city maintenance; this council was created to keep up the city's properties (roads, sewers, lighting, all that kind of thing) but gradually expanded to concern themselves with regulating construction companies and contractors, establishing zoning regulations, and handling property complaints (so, for example, if your landlord hasn't fixed a hole in your ceiling for 8 months you could report it to the Granite Hall and they might maybe eventually get around to fussing about it - quickly if you pay a 5 silver expediting fee).

Board of Regent Scholars

The universities; while the universities support the education of magic they cede that interest to the Lodge. The Board is composed of three members from each of the recognized colleges, meaning that a single university might have a dozen or more members in the council, one from each college.

The Board sets limits on student acceptance, handles complaints of one school against another, deals with academics in all manners, and also represents the interests of the schools to the outside world. This might seem uncommon, but the universities often fund discoveries by other guilds (the Lodge, the alchemists' guild, etc.), or those discoveries occur while a student is on campus or using campus equipment. In those cases the universities claim ownership, in whole or in part, of the product.

The Board of Regent Scholars dedicates a tremendous amount of time and effort to pursuing their property and recovering wealth from other guilds. These funds then pay for university needs, scholarships, and the like.

Jade Hall

The council on trade, tariffs, taxes, and the like; the heads of recognized Guilds are invited to join this council, as are a handful of influential moneychangers or wealthy nobles. This guild doesn't just govern the guilds' practices, but also dictates trade, taxes, tariffs, and regulates the prohibition or limitation of certain products or substances. These prohibitions are usually worked out with the Pelte, the Tribunes, or the Scholars, or all three.

In terms of taxes, the Jade Hall receives frequent - constant - requests for funds from every other council and committee, and from the governor. These requests are met from coffers the Jade Hall keeps and are then supported by taxes that the Jade Hall levies, or loans from guilds, nobles, or individuals. The Jade Hall also runs the mint, a state bank, and pursues counterfeiters and coin-cutters (in conjunction with the Tribune of the Patricians).

Citizenship

There are a few categories of privilege in Talmussin. There's a bill of rights that applies selectively to different castes of people, and even within those castes the law may apply differently (else what is nobility for?).

Status	Benefit	Requirements
Citizen	You get full rights, property ownership, representation and voting, fair trials, whatever else	You must be an intelligent, living person, born of another citizen or having purchased or earned your citizenship papers by military/public service
Non-citizen	Partial rights, can't own property, can't vote	Intelligent, living, long-term resident of the city
Beasts	You're property, basically	Constructs, animals, any kind of creature with no free will
Anathema	You are killed on sight	The undead, fiends, or most aberrations

There's a kind of space below non-citizen that includes monstrous non-citizens. Non-citizen, really, is for travelers and first-generation immigrants and whatever else. The second caste down includes dy'ari, goblins, half-orcs, yuan-ti, and other intelligent long-term residents that don't qualify for citizenship. In particular, the dy'ari are prevented from obtaining citizenship no matter the circumstances of their birth, military service, and can't buy citizenship. The monstrous are essentially prevented from ever becoming citizens, in addition to being non-citizens.

Citizenship is proved by papers issued in your name, and is required for all manner of things. Some people get their materials tattooed on themselves, particularly those who are proud of having achieved citizenship for themselves and their families.

The Nobility

The free cities have no formal nobility, as they threw off an ancient kingdom's rulership some time ago. That said, the houses that rebelled directly against the kingdom have a lot of power, hereditary seats on Talmussin's ruling council, and certain privileges.

There are eight houses that have, historically, been considered the noble houses. Several of them have been part of the great houses since the beginning. Others have earned their way in, while others have fallen out.

Moving in and out of the circle of great houses is difficult: a momentary lapse in judgment, wealth, or notoriety won't instantly disqualify your family. A history of laxness, treachery to the city or state, a severe reduction in wealth - these might find someone else invited to join the Levée instead.

House Garda - Nearly destroyed three years ago, the sole surviving member of the house is a young boy named Artis. Artis is a quiet genius that has so far fended off his cousins and aunts and uncles and kept the Lordship for himself. The Garda are one of two houses that were not founding houses of Talmussin, having supplanted House Vleda. Many in Vleda say it's time to reverse that change.

House Hettige - A mercantile house more concerned with money than with a good image. They have, thus, been left out of a number of parties, and their political influence is limited. This doesn't stop them from making a truly obscene amount of money through real estate development, banking, and speculation.

House Dallim - Also known commonly as House Dragon, so-called because of the family's seal (that of a dragon stretched out along a rippling banner, with a curved sword, blade up, beneath it. They also have a curious affinity for dragons, with several members of the family exhibiting sorcerous prowess, showing signs of dragon blood, or even (it's rumored) being shape-changed dragons. They do also have a handful

of draconic visitors that stop by regularly, and a manor house in the Heights that features a landing pad for incoming winged visitors.

House Sattambige - A house of elven and half-elven (and, thus, necessarily human) scholars, House Sattambige has a strong presence in the colleges. The elves, especially, compose maybe half the faculty of Stone College and Ahaj.

House Simha - Wealthy, attractive, talented artists and patrons of the arts. House Simha is held up as the ideal house, and what all others should aspire to be. Everyone, therefore, hates them. Jealousy is so difficult to bear. Symbol is a great eagle of many colors.

House Dissanayake - The higher ranks of the Pelte are packed with Dissanayakes. The martial colleges have scholarships named after individuals from the house, and the Dissanayakes sometimes take on individual apprentices for promising duelists.

House Kapu - Also known as the house of shadows, House Kapu produces more mages per capita than any other noble family. They have strong ties to the Order of the Azure Lodge, but also to the Lodge of Dusk.

House Gini - The path to nobility for this house was made with machines. They are one of two houses that weren't a founding house, having supplanted House Nagel. Gini is tightly allied with the House of Innovation, and holds exclusive patents on many mechanical contrivances and alchemical formulas.

Smaller Houses:

House Vleda - A founding house displaced from the great houses by Garda, Vleda harbors some ill will toward them. The house was removed from the great houses for reasons never made public but widely rumored: their line was tainted with fiendish blood.

House Pathi - The Pathis are an old house, one of the original eight that founded Talmussin. They are well known as charitable, but have recently fallen on hard times. They still give what they can, but their own clothing is a little threadbare, their jewelry a little pawned.

House Rau - If a house could gain real noble status while remaining rogues, scallawags, pirates, and mystics, House Rau would. They seethe against the ceiling they've struck: they can't ascend into the real circles of power without giving up their thievery and the like, but they can't become powerful without the criminal enterprises that fund their House's activities.

Vleda

The house is tainted with fiendish blood, but that's just a rumor. That said, it's a rumor with some support, and widely accepted among both the nobility and the common folk.

The house's attendants are often tieflings, though no tieflings are present in the family itself (the truth is that children born with obvious markings are often sent to school far away and return as 'servants' to the family, disinherited. These bastards are trained as house help, assassins, spies, and political operators).

The house's fortunes are built on year after year of worship to the archdukes of hell. The upper echelons of the house are all warlocks in service to Asmodeus, and there are a number of priests of the first fiend as well.

The current patriarch of the house, an ancient tiefling (that looks like a half-elf) named Ramar

Garda

One of the eight great noble houses, completely destroyed by a non-specific cataclysm a few years back. The only survivor was Lord Artis Garda, the (at that time) 10-year-old child of the heads of house.

Now the adults of the larger family attempt to establish themselves as heads of house with non-stop politicking that never seems to go anywhere. Lord Garda seems to be preternaturally well informed, skilled at politics, and intellectually dangerous.

SEE Artemis Fowl

Hettige

Dissanayake

Dallim

Sattambige

Simha

Kapu

Gini

Counselors of the Levee

Talmussin is carved up into a dozen parts, each of which has a counselor. This counselor is appointed by the Governor, but is almost always a compromise between the people of the district, the guilds, the nobility, and the governor. These counselors are often (very often) selected from among the noble houses, though there's no official requirement for such. Each counselor is empowered by the governor to oversee day-to-day matters in their districts, though they also attend to issues in the city at large.

Counselors use their positions to garner favors and power in their districts, and use their influence to better those districts. Despite being appointed, not elected, they have a responsibility to their 'constituents': poor counselors can't get things done, don't get paid, or get assassinated.

Classes

BRBs tend to join the fight clubs down in the Blinds. The neighborhood called Pugil got its name from a particularly violent fighting ring run by the Family (the yuan-ti mafia). There's an infernal 'guild' based out of the fighting ring as well. Membership in these so-called guilds is very much like a gang.

The Brass Knuckle Shuffle: a low-rent sort of tavern where the fights take place on the floor, in between the tables.

The Cestus: the finest bar in Pugil, and headquarters of the Kumpal (the Family). As fine as places get in Pugil, anyway. There's still more brass than gold, and the crystal is cut glass.

Glass & Brass: an inn that strikes a weird balance between violence and sex. Tons of mirrors, windows, glass fittings, all of that. The ladies tend to wear a lot of flouncy, ribbony, silly skirts.

The Pit: it is what it says on the sign. There's a big hole in the middle, with coarse sand. The circle around it is packed with high stools. Folks can take a turn in the pit, all you have to do is put your name in the hat, basically. Match-ups are random.

Gorrik's: basically a shack where glassing your hand-wraps is encouraged. The drinks are straight-up rotgut, the ambience is the absolute worst. However, Gorrik cooks and serves hands-down the best steak in town. He gets his cuts over in Knives, and somehow always winds up first in line.

Bards of the highest caliber are often found at the little salon run by an elderly halfling woman named Anais Isou. At #27 King's Street she hosts a regular meeting each weekend at which the brightest in the city meet to trade ideas and have affairs. Painters, poets, writers, performers, etc. are the usual. The core crew is only some 20-ish luminaries, but maybe another 100 have visited and left their names in the guest-book.

[SEE Gertrude Stein, occupant to 27 Rue de Fleurus. Guests included Picasso, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, Pound, Gavin Williamson, Thornton Wilder, Sherwood Anderson, Francis Cyril Rose, Bob

Brown, Rene Crevel, Elisabeth de Gramont, Francis Picabia, Claribel Cone, Mildred Aldritch, Jane Peterson, Carl Van Vechten, and Henri Matisse.]

The informal place these intellectuals go to drink, smoke, and generally by very French is a bar and playhouse around the corner, and a cluster of a dozen other cafes in the neighborhood, such as:

Café La Rotonde, Le Dome Café, Les Deux Magots, Café de Flore, Pedrocchi Café, the Monty (Café Montmartre), Dingo Bar, Harry's, La Coupole, La Closerie des Lilas, and Le Rosebud Speakeasy

The clerics of the city can be found in their temples. These temples vary wildly in power and in style, and in aim. The ten gods of the Ekletheon have large temples, the majority of which are in the Temple District. The dozens of gods in the greater pantheon have shrines and temples - sometimes shared - in the Temple District, and sometimes outside of it. The greater gods, in addition to their 'mother' temples have smaller temples scattered throughout the city (e.g., a small but richly-appointed temple of Senya in the Nobles' Quarter).

Xvim:

Ceremar:

Umain:

Jagus:

Senya:

Protorius:

Obeccai:

Mithron:

Zhako:

Avaleya:

In Talmussin druids are most often associated with a Circle. There are two in Talmussin of particular note: a Circle of Dreams called the Rose House and a Circle of the Land bound pretty tightly to the sea called the Kinship of Khnum. Druids are more likely than most to 'fly solo,' but even those that wander the jungles of Sarandib alone tend to have loose societies or groups of companions that can be relied upon in case of emergencies.

The Rose House

The Kinship of Khnum

Let's borrow the Green/the Dark from Arcana Evolved. The Green is, of course, linked to the Greenwood. Greenbond is the common name for the druids. Negative energy is known as the Dark, or the Antagonist, or Adversary, etc. It's a force rather than an entity, but it does seem to ENCOURAGE some malign will, if not exert it.

Corrupted druids, or darkbonds, tap into negative energy. Druids could be viewed as the remnants of the clergy of the titans, who shaped the world. Clerics, good or ill, channel negative energy or positive energy from the outer planes; greenbonds and darkbonds channel the energies in this plane.

Most often those of military bent join the Pelte. Those without a yen for order but a knack for violence join up with the gangs over in the Blinds, as Barbarians might (hanging out at the Cestus or one of the other taverns).

Those that don't join the military or a gang might join the mercenary guild, the Red and White Society. Any mercenary crew working in Talmussin must pay dues to the RWS, and the Pelte gets preferential hiring and rates at the RWS.

Martial artists in Talmussin tend to join a dojo. The best attended is the Hall of the Blue Heron, which is a temple and dojo espousing the Way of the Open Hand and reverence for Obeccai. There's also a 'clan' of tattooed monks called the Brotherhood of the Chimera. They tend to start a lot of fights. The Brotherhood also has one or two Drunken Masters that take on individual apprentices from time to

time. Finally, the School of Silence, the Assassin's Guild, has an order called the Night Sky Fist, a group of shadow monks trained as shinobi. They usually level dip in rogue, with an assassin specialization.

The druidic circles, the Rose House and Kinship of Khnum, often take in rangers as well as druids. Any rangers that don't find themselves in the spiritual way so much might join up with the Pelte or RWS. Those that go their own way have two options: one is a very informal and loose group of trailblazers, guides, and cartographers called the Mappists, or the Compass Society. The other way is for urban rangers: there is an informal gathering at the home of Padraig Vasawantha, a brilliant detective and author of *Reason: an Exploration of Inference*. Many urban rangers also take positions in the investigative branch of the Pelte.

Paladins crew up with the church and the temple of their god. Some join the Pelte, but many are part of the Orthodox Church's militant arm, the Ordo Pugnilius. Paladins of the old gods might revere a druid circle alongside the druids and rangers.

Sorcerers are in an awkward place in Talmussin, in that they don't benefit all that much from traditional education like wizards at the universities. They do wind up joining the Azure Lodge after gaining any power, but each sorcerer kind of has to blaze their own path of discovery. Dragon-blood sorcerers are organized into a fraternal group that doesn't have a formal structure. They cluster around nobles with draconic blood or ties to dragon-kind, and often enjoy a certain celebrity in literati circles, like Anais Isou's salon. Wild magic sorcerers are rarer, and more poorly understood. The two or three in the city are currently in chaos research roles at the Universities.

Like sorcerers, these guys are in an awkward position. Some may try to pass as other classes: adherents to the Archfey as druids or bards, fiend-worshippers as sorcerers, cultists of the titans as... something. A Book of Shadows can help you pass as a wizard, as a familiar can too. A pact weapon might enable a warlock to join a martial order as a passable fighter. Those that do 'out' themselves are often members

of the Azure Lodge, but usually keep their patrons a secret. A deal with the fiends is technically illegal, and pacts with the titans and Raven Queen are sure questionable.

[note: the Great Old Ones are titans, or the remnants thereof. They are dead gods, like the Neverborn or Death Lords, or are imprisoned insane gods like the Yozis. Maybe they're banished, like the Ogdru Jahad, or a Cthulhian monstrosity. Warlocks are the closest the titans can get to clerics, now.]

The Order of the Azure Lodge. The Order demands service or cash from its members in return for magical resources. Tithes are strictly monitored, membership is compulsory for practicing mages that can cast spells over 1st level. Visiting casters need to buy day-passes, basically.

Thieves guilds by the score. See: virtually any thieves' guild to know more.

Way of the Tattooed Monk

A short description of why they do this thing, how it works.

Path of Ink

When you choose this tradition at 3rd level you gain a tattoo and learn to focus your energy through it. Activating a tattoo uses ki points each time you use it.

You are marked with the Self tattoo and one other tattoo of your choice, detailed below. You earn one additional tattoo of your choice at 6th, 11th, and 17th level.

Whenever you are marked with a new tattoo you can also choose to 'cover up' an old tattoo, replacing one that you have already been marked with.

Casting Ink Spells. Some tattoos allow you to cast spells. See chapter 10 of the Player's Handbook for the general rules of spellcasting. To cast one of these spells you use its casting time and other rules, but don't need to provide material components for it.

Once you reach 5th level as a monk you can spend additional ki points to increase the level of tattoo spell that you cast, provided that spell has an enhanced effect at a higher level. The spell's level increases by 1 for each additional ki point you spend. For example, if you are a 5th-level monk and use

The maximum number of ki points you can spend to cast a spell in this way (including its base ki point cost and any additional ki points you spend to increase its level) is determined by your monk level, as shown in the Spells and Ki Points Table in the Player's Handbook (page 80).

Mystic Tattoos

The tattoos here are presented in alphabetical order. If a tattoo requires a level you must be that level in this class to be marked with and activate that tattoo.

Arrowroot. As lay on hands.

Bamboo. As bear's endurance.

Bat. As cat's grace.

Bellflower. As eagle's splendor.

Butterfly. As owl's wisdom.

Centipede. Requires level 5. Misty step.

Chameleon. As alter self.

Crab. Gain resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage for the duration.

Crane.

Dragon. Breathe fire.

Dragonfly. Spend a ki point as a reaction to Dodge.

Falcon. You have advantage on saves versus fear.

Lion. Gain a smite effect.

Monkey. Gain advantage on acrobatics and athletics checks.

Moon, crescent. Must be 9th level. Ethereal jaunt.

Moon, full. Spend a ki point to get advantage on a roll. Can only be used out of daylight.

Mountain. Gain advantage on any roll to resist being moved (shoved, knocked prone, grappled). Gain advantage on those rolls as well.

Ocean. As a ring of sustenance.

Phoenix. Requires 7th level. Advantage on saving throws versus magic.

Pine. Able to remain conscious like a half-orc.

Scorpion. Spend a ki to disadvantage someone somehow? Cast Bane, or use like bard's Cutting Words, or like a sorcerer's Tides of Chaos, or like the Lucky feat.

Spider. Requires stunning fist. Allows you to deliver poison with an attack. DC is 10+proficiency+Wis. Poisoned for 1 minute, roll each round to shake it.

Sun. Gain advantage on a roll. Can't be used at night.

Tiger. Beat additional attack, as rage.

Tortoise. Gain proficiency on an ability check.

Unicorn. Take a reroll.

Wasp. Cast haste.

White Mask. As a ring of mind shielding.

Sorcerers

The Psychic

The Psychic

Level	Proficiency Bonus	Features	Cantrips Known	Powers Known				
				1st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5th
1	+2	Psychic Powers	3	1	-	-	-	-
2	+2	Discipline	3	2	-	-	-	-
3	+2	Stress	3	3	-	-	-	-
4	+2		4	4	-	-	-	-
5	+3	Power Recovery	4	4	1	-	-	-
6	+3	Discipline Power	4	4	2	-	-	-

7	+3		4	4	3	-	-	-
8	+3		4	4	4	-	-	-
9	+4		4	4	4	1	-	-
10	+4	Discipline Power	5	4	4	2	-	-
11	+4		5	4	4	3	-	-
12	+4		5	4	4	4	-	-
13	+5		5	4	4	4	1	-
14	+5	Discipline Power	5	4	4	4	2	-
15	+5		5	4	4	4	3	-
16	+5		5	4	4	4	4	-
17	+6		5	4	4	4	4	1
18	+6		5	4	4	4	4	2
19	+6		5	4	4	4	4	3
20	+6		5	4	4	4	4	4

Cantrips

At 1st level you know four cantrips of your choice from the psychic spell list. You learn additional psychic cantrips of your choice at higher levels as shown on the Cantrips Known column of the Psychic table.

Psychic Powers

You know a number of psychic powers as shown on the table above. Each of these powers can be activated only once, though you regain the ability to activate these powers after finishing a long rest. You may elect to 'learn' a power a second time, allowing you to use it a second time before finishing a long rest.

The powers you learn are classified into five circles of ascending power.

Psychic Displays

Auditory. A bass-pitched hum issues from the psychic's vicinity or in the vicinity of the power's subject, eerily akin to many deep-pitched voices. The sound grows in a second from hardly noticeable to as loud as a shout strident enough to be heard from within 100 feet. At the spellcaster's option the instantaneous sound can be so soft that it can be heard only within 15 feet.

Material. The subject or the area is briefly slicked with a translucent, shimmering ectoplasm. This evaporates after 1 round and does not make the area more difficult to pass through.

Olfactory. An odd but familiar odor brings to mind a brief mental flash of a long-buried memory. The scent is difficult to pin down and no two individuals ever describe it in the same way. The odor originates from the spellcaster and spreads to a distances of 20 feet, then fades after the spell's duration is over.

Psychic. A sudden and rhythmic whispering enters the minds of creatures within 15 feet of either the spellcaster or the subject (at the spellcaster's choice). The whispering continues for the power's duration.

Visual. The spellcaster's eyes emit light while the spell remains in effect. A halo of rainbow light appears around the creature's head when the spell is cast.

Disciplines

Psychic disciplines are paths of power that psychics can pursue. These traditions are sometimes codified and taught by masters to apprentices, and sometimes they are spontaneous foci of applications of the psychic arts. Each path has its own powers, though all of the psychic traditions can learn and activate the same powers.

Seer

Prediction

Beginning when you select this focus at 2nd level you can make eerily accurate predictions about the near future. By focusing your attention on the future and structuring a yes or no question you see either the best possible outcome or the worst, indicating your answer. This ability allows you a view up to 1 hour in the future, and can be used once before you complete a short rest.

Clairvoyance

Starting at 6th level you can cast your consciousness out of your body, perceiving at a distance. As a bonus action you may create an invisible sensor within 30 ft. Each turn you may use a bonus action to move the sensor to another location within range. It cannot be attacked or otherwise interacted with. When you use this ability you choose one sense (hearing, sight, smell, or taste), and you can use the sense through the sensor as if you were in its space. As long as you are perceiving through the sensor you lose the benefit of that sense normally, so you see (or hear, or taste, etc.) only through the sensor. A creature that can see the sensor (through *see invisibility* or true seeing) sees a luminous, intangible orb about the size of your fist.

Precognition

When you gain this ability at 10th level your ability to see the future is expanded. You can ask the GM a single question regarding a specific goal, event, or activity to occur within 7 days. The reply will be truthful, but may be just a short phrase, an omen, or a flash of a future situation. This feature doesn't take into account major events, spells cast, companions gained or lost, etc. though the reply is usually remarkably accurate. This feature can be used once before you finish a long rest. If you use this ability to attempt a prediction focusing on an event you've already predicted either through this ability or other magic there is a 25% chance that you get a random or misleading reading. This failure chance is

cumulative, so the third attempt to predict an event's outcome has a 50% chance of failure, the fourth has a 75% chance to fail, and the fifth is certain to fail.

Fated

Starting at 14th level your ability to see the future translates into an ability to affect it. When you fail a saving throw, attack, or ability check you may elect to immediately re-roll it with advantage on the roll. This decision must be made after you have made the roll but before the results have been decided. You may use this ability once before finishing a short rest.

Kineticist

Telepresence

Beginning at 2nd level your sphere of influence is expanded by your telekinetic abilities. You can cast the *unseen servant* spell without expending a spell slot. The servant has your shape and half your Strength (rather than 2, as the spell says), and half your hit points. It has none of your skills or saves, but does not need to be commanded, as it is just an extension of your will.

You can concentrate upon your servant using a bonus action on your turn, allowing your servant to move up to 30 ft and take an action. Like the spell *unseen servant* your telepresence entity cannot attack, but can take any other basic action a character normally could, including Helping an ally.

If the servant is dismissed (a bonus action), drops to 0 hit points, or moves farther than 120 ft from you it vanishes. You may not create a new servant until you finish a short rest.

Control Energy

When you reach 6th level you are able to control pure energy, directing fire to move as you choose. You pick a single fire within 150 feet that is no smaller than a campfire (about 5 ft cube). You can produce one of the following effects:

Fireworks. There is a momentary burst of flashing lights. Creatures within 120 feet of the fire source are blinded for 1d4+1 rounds. This effect can be avoided with a Dexterity saving throw, and does not affect creatures that are not looking at or cannot see the fireworks.

Smoke Cloud. A stream of smoke erupts from the fire, spreading 20 feet in all directions and lasting 1 minute. The area is heavily obscured, and difficult to breathe in. Those spending more than 3 rounds in the cloud take disadvantage on Strength and Constitution ability checks. This effect ends 1 round after a creature leaves the cloud.

Flame Whip. A tendril of fire lashes out at a single target within 60 feet of the bonfire and makes an attack using your spell attack bonus. If the attack hits the target takes 3d6 fire damage.

You can use one of the effects above three times before finishing a long rest.

Control Matter

Starting at 10th level you are able to move matter around by virtue of your mind alone. You can cast either *control water* or *move earth*. Once you have used either effect you cannot do so again until you have finished a short rest.

Control Weather

Beginning at 14th level you can use the *control weather* spell. You may use this ability once before finishing a long rest.

Telepath

Read Thoughts

When you choose this focus at 2nd level you learn the *detect thoughts* spell. This does not count against your limit of spells known. You also double the duration of the spell *detect thoughts*. Finally, you gain the ability to speak telepathically to anyone with a language within 30 feet, though they cannot answer back. This range extends to 60 ft at 6th level, to 90 ft at 10th level, and to 120 ft at 14th level.

Dominate

Upon reaching 6th level you gain the ability to dominate a lesser mind. Those dominated by a telepath are referred to usually as thralls. You can cast the spell *dominate person* once before finishing a long rest. The spell does not require concentration and its duration becomes permanent, though it can be dispelled. If the target has class levels it must be at least 2 levels lower than you. If it has class levels it gains a level each time you do, and does not gain experience while enthralled. At 14th level you may use the spell *dominate monster*, with similar changes to the spell. The creature cannot be undead or a construct, must have a CR of 6 or lower, and does not gain class levels unless it would be allowed to take those levels normally. This means, for example, you could dominate an ogre and it could take barbarian levels each time you gained a level; but could not have a bearded devil gain levels. In any case the creature's CR + level must always be at least 6 lower than your level.

Mind Switch

At 10th level you can cast the spell *magic jar*, without expending a spell slot. This does not count as a known spell, and does not require a material component. The creature's mind is not trapped in a container, unlike the spell - it instead cohabitates the body with you, perceiving what you perceive but able to communicate only with you as though using telepathy.

Mind Seed

Beginning at 14th level you are able to create copies of yourself hiding in the subconscious of a target creature. You impress the totality of your psyche on a single humanoid target that you touch. The target makes a Wisdom saving throw. If the saving throw fails the seed is successfully implanted and 'germinates' over the period of a week. During this time the subject begins to unconsciously take on your mannerisms. For instance, if you habitually mutter "sure, sure, sure," this same litany is soon heard from the subject's lips, though not consciously. When the integration is complete the subject becomes you in mind as you were when you manifested the power, though it is a 6th level telepath. The subject does not have any of your physical ability scores, but does use the Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma you had when you were 6th level. The subject knows the powers you had at that level, and the proficiencies you had at that level as well. The subject is a perfect duplicate of you and the host consciousness is erased. Nothing short of a *wish* spell or similar intervention can repair this. The subject is not your servant, but is a person in its own right. *Protection from evil* or *magic circle* or a similar spell can prevent you from implanting a mind seed, and a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* effect will remove the seed while it is germinating. Once you have used this ability you cannot use it again until after the

germination of your previous mind seed is done. If that mind seed is prematurely terminated before the week is up you can use it immediately.

Power Recovery

After finishing a short rest you regain the ability to activate one 1st Circle power you've already activated since your long rest, essentially gaining a second use of that power.

Stress

At 3rd level you learn how to push yourself past the point of safety in activating your powers. When you use this ability you fuel the activation of that power with your life force. This usually involves burst blood vessels, bleeding from the nose, bruising around the eyes, hair falling out – it's a mess.

When you use Stress to activate a power it reduces your hit point maximum by 1d6 per circle of the power; for example, a 2nd Circle power would reduce your hit point maximum by 2d6.

Stress can reduce you to 0 hit points, potentially killing you. If your maximum hit points are reduced to 0, in addition to your current hit points being reduced to 0, any magical healing returns you to 1 hit point. In this case your hit point maximum is 1 for a full week, and does not recover after a long rest as normal (see below).

The reduction of your hit point maximum lasts until you finish a long rest, at which point your hit point maximum returns to normal (barring any other effects that would reduce your hit point maximum, of course).

Spell List

Cantrips

Dancing Lights
Friends
Guidance
Mage Hand
Mending
Message
Minor Illusion
Resistance
Shocking Grasp
True Strike
Vicious Mockery

1st Circle

Biorestitution*
Call to Mind*
Charm Person
Color Spray
Comprehend Languages
Daze*
Déjà Vu*
Detect Magic
Empathy*
Expeditious Retreat
Feather Fall
Jump
Mage Armor
Sanctuary
Shield
Sleep
Telepathic Projection*
Tenser's Floating Disk

2nd Circle

Augury
Biofeedback*
Blindness/Deafness
Blink
Calm Emotions
Clairvoyance
Concussion Blast*
Darkvision
Detect Hostile Intent*
Detect Thoughts
Dispel Magic
Enhance Ability
Enthrall
Fear
Haste
Hold person
Hypnotic Pattern
Invisibility
Locate Animals and Plants
Locate Object
Nondetection
Protection from Energy
Psionic Blast*
See Invisibility
Sending

Share Pain
Shatter
Suggestion
Sustenance
Tongues
Transfer Wounds*

3rd Circle

Adapt Body
Arcane Eye
Awaken
Compulsion
Confusion
Correspond*
Death Urge*
Dimension Door
Divination
Dominate Person
Dream
Geas
Greater Invisibility
Hallucinatory Terrain
Hold Monster
Intellect Fortress*
Legend Lore
Locate Creature
Mislead
Modify Memory
Otiluke's Resilient Sphere
Phantasmal Killer
Rary's Telepathic Bond
Scrying
Stoneskin
Telekinesis

4th Circle

Contingency
Co-opt Concentration*
Decerebrate*
Eyebite
Find the Path
Forbiddance
Forcecage
Globe of Invulnerability
Insanity*
Mass Suggestion

Mirage Arcane
Plane Shift
Prismatic Spray
Programmed Illusion
Project Image
Regenerate
Reverse Gravity
Sequester
Simulacrum
Suspend Life*
Temporal Acceleration*
True Seeing

5th Circle

Antimagic Field
Antipathy/Sympathy
Apopsi*
Astral Projection
Dominate Monster
Feeblemind
Foresight
Glibness
Maze
Microcosm*
Mind Blank
Power Word Heal
Power Word Kill
Power Word Stun
Telepathy
Time Stop
Weird

Adapt Body

5th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Display: V

Duration: 8 hours

Your body automatically adapts to hostile environments. You can adapt to be comfortable underwater, in extremely hot or cold environments, even a complete void. You can breathe and move as though you were native to that environment (though there may be penalties to movement or attacks in certain circumstances). You need not specify what environment you are adapting to when you cast this spell. You can somewhat adapt to extreme environmental features, such as acid, lava, fire, or constant electrical discharge. Any environmental feature that normally deals more than 10 (3d6) damage in a round still deals damage to you, though you have resistance to it. An attack of any form is not treated as environmental damage. For example, even if you're adapted to an extremely cold environment you are still vulnerable to spells that deal cold damage.

Apopsi

9th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Display: A, M, V

Duration: Permanent

By using this spell you delete one spell from the subject's mind permanently, though a successful Intelligence saving throw means the spell is only forgotten for 1 hour. You specify the level of the spell and the DM randomly determines which spell is deleted. *Limited wish* or a similar effect can be used to restore the forgotten spell, though it has to be used within 1 week of the spell being deleted.

Assimilate

9th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Display: A, V

Duration: Instantaneous

Your hand turns black as the void, and the creature touched must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the target takes 18d6 necrotic damage. If the creature is reduced to 0 hit points it is reduced to nothingness, completely assimilated into your form. The assimilated creature's equipment is unaffected. A creature that is partially assimilated into your form (taking at least 1 hit point of damage but still living) grants you a number of temporary hit points equal to half the damage you dealt with this spell. These temporary hit points last for 1 hour. A creature that is completely assimilated grants you a number of temporary hit points equal to the full damage dealt and a +2 bonus to all of your ability

scores, which also persists for 1 hour. You gain some semblance of the creature destroyed, gaining advantage on checks made to disguise yourself as the creature for 1 hour.

Biofeedback

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 reaction

Range: Self

Display: M, V

Duration: see text

You cast this spell in response to being hit with an attack. Until the beginning of your next turn you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from non-magical sources.

Biorestitution

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Display: M, O

Duration: Instantaneous

Your body begins to knit bones and flesh together again, restoring 1d10 hit points.

At Higher Levels. For each spell slot above 1st that you use this spell restores an additional 1d10 hit points.

Call to Mind

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Display: V

Duration: Instantaneous

You temporarily expand your cognitive power, gaining advantage on one Intelligence check to recall information.

Concussion Blast

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 ft.

Display: A, V

Duration: Instantaneous

A single target you can see takes 3d6 force damage. This damage is halved with a successful Constitution saving throw.

At Higher Levels. For each spell slot above 2nd you expend on this spell you do an extra 1d6 damage.

Co-opt Concentration

6th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Display: P

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You choose a single target within range and take control of a spell that target is currently concentrating on. The target can counter this with a successful Intelligence saving throw. Once you wrest control of the spell from the subject you have several options.

- You can allow the spell to continue as normal.
- You can keep the spell targeted on the subject, if it has a range of "self," but choose how the spell fulfills its function each round.
- You can change the target of the spell, if it has a range of "self," transferring the spell's effect to you.
- You can choose to stop concentrating, ending the spell's effect.
- You can change the target of the spell, if it allows the caster to change the target during the duration.

Correspond

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: see text

Display: P

Duration: 1 minute

You forge a passive mental connection with a creature you have previously had physical or mental contact with. The subject need not be within sight or even on the same plane as you are. The subject recognizes you and you can mentally communicate with it for the duration (though nothing forces the subject to respond to you), exchanging messages of 25 words or less once per round. Receiving a message is not an action, but sending a message does use your action for the round.

Daze

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 ft.

Display: A, V

Duration: 1 round

You pick a single target in range and overload their natural inclinations, forcing them to inaction. The target immediately makes a Wisdom saving throw. If it fails it is stunned until the beginning of your next round.

Death Urge

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Display: P

Duration: 1 round

You plant a hidden death-urge impulse in the subject's subconscious. It can resist this spell with a successful Charisma saving throw. On the subject's next turn it looks for the quickest method to end its life and attempts to do so. The subject takes no other action on its turn except attempting to harm itself. If armed the subject attacks itself. The attack automatically hits and is considered a critical hit. If unarmed the target runs toward the nearest armed foe. If the subject is near an immediate and lethal hazard like a cliff or a fire it may opt to use this method of suicide rather than attacking itself.

At Higher Levels. For each spell level above 3rd used to cast this spell the duration is extended by one round. If the duration is longer than 1 round the target makes a new save at the end of each of its actions to end the effect early.

Decerebrate

7th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 40 feet

Display: P

Duration: Instantaneous

With this spell you selectively destroy a portion of the subject's brain stem. Unless the subject succeeds on a Constitution saving throw it loses all cerebral function, vision, hearing, all other sensory abilities, and all voluntary motor activity. The subject becomes limp and unresponsive. Without extreme measures like *greater restoration* or a similar healing spell the subject dies in 1d4 days.

Déjà Vu

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 ft.

Display: P, V

Duration: 1 round

Your mental impulse forces the subject to repeat the actions it took on the previous turn. If the target fails a Charisma saving throw it goes through the motions again. If the situation has changed in such a way that the subject can't take the same actions again (it's foe is dead, the subject has no expendable spell slot, etc.) the subject is free to do as it will.

Detect Hostile Intent

2nd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30 ft. radius)

Display: P, V

Duration: 1 hour

For the duration of this spell you are aware of hostile intent in the range of this spell. You are aware of the direction and number of creatures hostile to you. This spell detects creatures that are acting aggressively, not just those with hostile intent or who are vigilant against threats. For instance, if you were to approach a door with an assassin behind it waiting for you, the spell would register hostility beyond the door. However, a soldier posted to guard the door would not trigger the spell.

Empathy

1st-level divination

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 ft.

Display: V

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You detect the surface emotions of any creature you can see within range. You can sense basic needs, drives, and emotions. You have advantage on Charisma and Wisdom checks regarding the subject for the duration of the spell.

At Higher Levels. For each additional spell level you use to cast this spell you can affect an additional creature.

Insanity

7th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 feet

Display: P

Duration: Permanent

A single target within range must make a Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted by insanity. The target gains a long-term madness and an indefinite madness, rolling once on each chart from page 260 in the Dungeon Master's Guide.

Intellect Fortress

4th-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction

Range: Self (20 ft. radius)

Display: A

Duration: 1 round

This spell encases you and your allies within a shimmering fortress of telekinetic force. All creatures inside the fortress have resistance to damage from magical sources. You can cast this spell in response to a successful attack, gaining resistance to the damage dealt.

Microcosm

9th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Display: M

Duration: Instantaneous

This spell warps the consciousness of one or more creatures, sending the victims into a catatonic state. When this spell is cast you choose to target either a single creature in range or a group of creatures that are all within range. If the spell targets a single creature that creature's senses are cut off from the real world if it currently has 100 or fewer hit points. The subject's senses are completely fabricated from within its own mind, though it may not realize this. In reality the subject sprawls limply, mewling and drooling, and it eventually dies of thirst and starvation without care. The subject lives within its made-up world until the time of its actual death. If *microcosm* is used on an area it sends all affected creatures into a shared catatonia (the world is a construct, but within the world the victims can interact with each other). It affects only creatures that have fewer than 30 hit points, and only up to a total of 300 such creatures, affecting those with the lowest hit point totals first. Casting this spell a second time on an affected creature turns its sensory pathways outward once more.

Psychic Blast

4th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (30 ft. cone)

Display: A

Duration: Instantaneous

Each creature within the area of this spell must make an Intelligence saving throw. On a successful save the targets take 2d6 psychic damage. On a failed save the targets take 4d6 damage and are stunned for 1 minute. Affected targets make a new save at the end of each turn to end the effect early.

At Higher Levels. If this spell is cast using a higher level slot the damage increases by 1d6 for each spell level above 4th.

Share Pain

2nd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Display: M, P

Duration: 8 hours

This spell creates a connection between you and another creature, allowing the two of you to share your injuries. The spell is one-way, meaning that wounds taken by you are shared by the subject, but wounds the subject takes do not affect you. You can cast the spell in such a way to switch the arrangement, meaning that injuries the subject takes injure you, but your injuries are not transmitted to the subject. Hit point damage caused by this spell is not considered an injury, and so is not transmitted by this or similar spells (that is, no setting up chains so that you take half a friend's damage, and another

friend takes half of that, etc.). Any damage taken by the protected target of the spell is halved (rounded down), and the rest is transmitted to the other subject of the spell. Resistance or immunity does not prevent this damage from affecting the second target.

Suspend Life

6th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Self

Display: O

Duration: Permanent

You put yourself into a trance so deep you are in a sort of suspended animation. Even spells that detect life or thought are incapable of determining you're alive. While you are in this state you are aware of your surroundings. You feel the passage of one day for every year that passes. Though on a slower schedule you still grow hungry or thirsty, and begin to suffer the effects of starvation or dehydration as appropriate. If you take any damage you come out of your trance 4 rounds later. The trance can also be ended with *dispel magic* or a similar effect. If you choose to dismiss the spell the effect ends 1 minute later.

Sustenance

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Display: M

Duration: 24 hours

When you cast this spell you reinforce your body, ignoring the need for food and drink until the end of the spell's duration.

At Higher Levels. If you cast this spell using a 4th-level spell slot you do not need to breathe for the duration, and if you cast the spell using a 6th-level spell slot you can go without sleep for the spell's duration.

Telepathic Projection

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 120 ft.

Display: A, O

Duration: 1 minute

You alter a subject's mood, adjusting its attitude toward you. This grants you advantage on any ability check made to influence it's behavior during the duration, and the spell alone may serve your needs.

Temporal Acceleration

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Display: non

Duration: see text

You speed yourself up so much that all other creatures seem frozen, though they are still moving normally. You can cast spells, move, or perform other types of actions for 1 round while no one else can. While this acceleration is in effect other creatures are invulnerable to your attacks or spells. This means you cannot target a creature while the spell is in effect, though a spell you cast that affects an area and has a duration longer than the remaining duration of your acceleration has its normal effect on creatures in the area once this spell ends. You can affect an unattended object but not one held, carried, or worn by another creature. You are undetectable by any means while accelerated. While under the effect of this spell you cannot enter an area protected by an *antimagic field* or similar. When your acceleration expires you resume acting during your current turn in the standard time frame, though you are stunned for 1 round upon your return to the flow of time.

At Higher Levels. For each spell slot above 6th that you use to cast this spell you gain 1 extra round in which to take action, though no more time passes in the normal flow of things.

Transfer Wounds

3rd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Display: O, M

Duration: Instantaneous

A creature you touch regains a number of hit points equal to 5d6 + your spellcasting ability modifier. You immediately take damage equal to the roll, to a maximum of the hit points the other creature regains. This damage is not reduced by resistance or immunity.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th or higher the healing increases by 1d6 for each level above 3.

Guilds

Guild dues generally come to 5 gp per year, and non guild members pay 5-15% more than book price for tools and raw materials. This makes it *very* worth becoming a member of a guild and doing all the work associated.

In Talmussin there are dozens, maybe more than a hundred, guilds and organizations for PCs to get involved with. These are the main engines of adventure in the town, providing resources, plot hooks, and acting as opposition.

However, there are also international organizations that pursue their own objectives. These have outposts in the city, but also operate globally.

The Fixers

Not a guild, per se, more a job title. There are individuals in Talmussin that operate as brokers for those seeking work and those seeking new hires.

Their role is entirely as middle-men. The best of them keep an ear to the ground and know what's happening in the city. They might employ informants, have powerful connections, or use magic to keep abreast of news and dangers. Those who are only adequate at their jobs are little more than proprietors of bulletin boards, haphazardly connecting freelancers with paying work.

A broker's role has two parts: their responsibility to the employer, and their responsibility to the freelancer. Brokers take both seriously. If you're seen constantly screwing over your freelancers - high fees, poor information, bad skills-to-job matches, too many deaths & dismemberments - you'll wind up having trouble finding new freelancers and you'll lose your income. Conversely, if you fail to perform for your employers - failed missions, high operating costs, poor performance by your freelancers, individuals gone rogue too often - you won't be sought out to fix problems, and again, there goes your job.

Individual brokers might have specialties or might be generalists, the former being more common. A broker might have mercenaries more or less on payroll for major events, caravan guards, or military engagements; or might know all the right people to talk to about issues of divinity and spirits; or might be well-connected when it comes to, uh, individuals that can liberate 'lost' items from their finders. If a broker has a specialty like this they probably (certainly) split their commissions with the relevant guild as well (a hired-sword broker with the Red & White Society, a burglary broker with the Venerable Order of Locksmiths, an arcanist broker with the Azure Lodge, etc.). For generalists they might have a membership with, or split commissions with, the Delves' Guild.

A few brokers even hire out to guilds specifically. Rather than developing their own stable of freelancers they act as contractors, almost, finding leads, jobs, and clients and then providing job details to the appropriate guild. The guild assigns members to undertake the task, the broker earns a bounty (usually a flat fee based on the job), the employer gets their desire, and the guild takes a cut rather than the broker. In this way guild members might wind up working for a broker without ever meeting them.

Guilds might even combine efforts: alchemists, magicians, thieves, and guards might all come together, contributing one member each to a task and splitting the commissions and costs as well as the rewards.

Commissions usually run 10 to 20% of the total cost of a job. Employers are paying for the convenience of not having to find, vet, and deal with the freelancers; freelancers accept the pay cut to be assured of good information going in and not having to go without work too long. A broker acts as a sort of guarantor: that the job will get done, and that there will be coin waiting at the end of it. The freelancers often don't know the amount of the commission, they only know that the job pays 1,000 marks, say, not aware that the employer is putting up 1,150 marks for it and the broker's taken their cut. Some brokers even take the payment up front, holding it in escrow until the job is complete as a kind of assurance that there won't be any foul play.

Many jobs are taken with the assumption of plunder and looting; these are usually a bonus for the freelancers. In some cases, especially where this is the primary reward, the broker takes a percentage or a share of the spoils. In a team of five, say, you might wind up splitting it seven ways: one share for each team member, one for the broker, and one for the buyer. Take care when considering whether to keep your broker out of the loop - you may find yourself suddenly without jobs, or worse: sent on a mission you're assured is a cakewalk only to encounter terrible disaster. In some cases the broker is the employer as well. They might have paid for a good lead or overheard some juicy gossip and decided to bankroll their own task.

That's not to say that there aren't freelancers outside of the system. Plenty of adventurers connect directly with their patrons, or get jobs from their guild directly. However, often the kinds of non-guild non-brokered jobs out there are the ones that nobody wanted to touch. Maybe the job is to recover a treasure that's obviously a myth. Maybe too many teams have died trying to accomplish the task already. Perhaps the job is distasteful or immoral. Perhaps it targets someone that nobody wants to be seen to target... These illicit jobs are usually high-paying (or have the potential to be), but you're just as likely to be left hung out to dry, honey-potted by the Pelte, or put in mortal danger as you are to complete the job and get paid.

Finding a good broker can be tough, but finding *any* broker is easy. Many have offices at which they advertise their role (Broker/Estate Attorney! Or Broker/Moneylender! are common), some are retired adventurers (thieves, guards, magicians) themselves with a reputation in town, and some can be found operating out of the back booth of a smoky alehouse.

The Navigators

One would think that there could be no truce between the Azure Lodge and any other guild of arcanists, but through some strange history they have come to an arrangement with a group called the Navigators.

The Navigators are a guild - or a cult, perhaps? - of specialist mages. They do not discriminate between divine and arcane, with the exception that any member of the Navigators must be able to cast *teleportation* or *teleport circle* (this does cut off most divine casters, but so be it). Navigators are

specialists in moving people, things, and information from one place to another. They are made up of several 'clans' that each have their own specialties and styles, but they are all sworn to a few things.

A Navigator can be summoned by visiting an obelisk, which are placed all over the world. A supplicant places a hand on the obelisk and says "I need a Navigator," and one will appear. Some Navigators, if they feel so moved, may lend a token to a supplicant that acts in the same way as an obelisk, but they may take that token back at any time. Navigators are not obligated to appear at an obelisk, though they virtually always will. If a client has welched on a deal, say, they may be blacklisted. If there is clear danger around an obelisk - a wildfire, a dragon, or armed soldiers - a Navigator may decline to appear or a supplicant may hear a request through the obelisk for additional payment as a guarantee against risk.

The Navigators extract terrible vengeance in retribution to attacks or, gods forbid, a client killing a Navigator. Their combined magical might can easily wipe out an individual, curse a whole family line, or even obliterate towns or small states. It's common knowledge that one does not harm a Navigator.

Similarly, Navigators will not fight for clients. Their unique position - allowed access to anywhere, at any time - requires that they avoid ever being seen as weapons or soldiers. The only time they will engage in violence is to protect themselves or their cargo. If a Navigator believes that their clientele has arranged a threat so that the Navigator is required to engage in combat on their behalf rather than to protect them the supplicant will be blacklisted.

Navigators all use the same pricing. This is an agreement among the clans, ensuring that there are no preferences and they can each count on the others to maintain fairness. Similarly, any Navigator may honor the debt of another clan, thus ensuring that they are bound together in a complex web of debts and allegiances. Navigators also provide virtually identical services - any individual Navigator should be able to complete any given task, thus becoming indistinct. A supplicant is unlikely to meet the same Navigator twice.

The services offered by the Navigators include:

Teleportation of an individual or a group, or of creatures or objects

Sending of messages, short or long, to a specific party

Making use of teleportation circles to move parties between identified places

Construction of teleportation circles to an individual's specifications

Planar travel to any plane that is permitted for that individual (there are prohibitions, for example, against bringing fiends into celestial realms or vice versa)

Navigation of a ship or an overland journey, with or without blessings to smooth the way

Sale of maps and charts

Blessings on journeys for individuals, vessels, or animals

Interplanar gates, such as via *gate*

Inter-locative gates, such as via *arcane gate*

Sale of teleportation and messaging magic items, from *wings of flying* to *capas of the montebank* to *sending stones*, or magical compasses and navigational items

Extraplanar storage for important items, ala *Leomund's secret chest*

Travel-oriented spells such as *fly* or *wind walk*

Scrying or *clairvoyance* spells that move information from place to place

Where there are risk with which the Navigator is familiar they will alert their charges before transporting them (e.g., a raging wildfire at the destination, the chance of a mishap due to poor coordinates, etc.). The Navigators seem to have a sophisticated network of information via magic, informants, and the like. Each of their obelisks also functions both as a *scrying* target that the Navigator can use for free and as a *teleportation circle*, such that movement from obelisk to obelisk is always safe (no mishap chance, and the Navigator can see what's happening within 500 ft. of the destination). Travel between obelisks is, thus, less expensive than a normal *teleport*. They also have such comprehensive maps and tools that they are rarely without some idea of their destination, and they seem to even keep a 'library' of objects and images related to specific places such that they can use them as foci for their *teleport* spells. Adventurers that voyage to strange places can even try to sell objects and images of the places they encounter - there's always a chance that the Navigators have not yet added that place to their library yet (or that the items in the library have become 'unattuned' to their original place, and must be replaced).

The Navigator clans, for the most part, spend the majority of their time in enclaves on the Astral Plane. The Navigators can typically *plane shift* themselves home, and of course can use the obelisks. The obelisks are keyed to æther-infused blood, and when Navigators take their vows their blood is transfused with a thick, sanguine fluid that is composed of mithril dissolved in plasma, essentially.

While on the Astral Plane Navigators do not age, giving them hundreds or thousands of years to learn and practice their craft. This also contributes to their emotional distance from mortal concerns: they have mostly seen a hundred generations, empires rise and fall, a dozen apocalypses averted, or not.

The eldest Navigators are bizarre six-limbed creatures that reserve themselves to leadership and education - the last remnants of the Ancients, cloistered from the world they abandoned.

The clans of the Navigators differ in appearance, magical 'flavor,' and personality.

The Woaded: When thinking of a Navigator many people imagine the Woaded, the most populous of the Navigator clans. Their method of teleportation is iconic: with a sweeping gesture through the air and a few harsh words a circle of blue fire spins off of their fingers and opens into a sun-bright circle hanging in mid-air, the destination on the other side. Clients then step through and, with a sizzle, the circle winds back down to a blue point in the air and vanishes.

Similarly, supplicants may be most familiar with the appearances of the Woaded. Whether human, elven, or other, they share a few characteristics: their skin is always weirdly pale, so much so that you might see veins through their skin; their hair is always uncut unless they are bald from age, and almost always left unbound and voluminous; and their skin is always painted with dozens of stripes and patterns of bright blue woad. Someone experienced with their clan might be able to divine the Navigator's age or status by the different whorls of their paint, though it's certainly more complex than just displaying that. In dress the Woaded show off as much skin as possible, wearing short skirts or loincloths. When moving through places with a different sense of decorum they may cover their breasts with simple bands of cotton or short leather vests, but that's rare. Otherwise they wear leather belts and braided bands of leather on arms and ankles, perhaps, with knives, pots of paint, or small trinkets hung off of their belts.

Wooded Navigators are typically genial and (relative to most Navigators) talkative, though always keep themselves at a remove from their supplicants. Their concerns simply aren't the same concerns that most mortals share. They'll share meals and games with their supplicants if on an extended assignment, and the only topics off limits seem to be those topics related to the origin of the Wooded or anything about the interior workings of the Navigators organization.

The Water Weirds: Water and light are natural conduits for transportation, and the Water Weirds have found a way to make the most of them. Their teleportations are always accompanied by rushing water and flickering light and shadow. Where possible a Water Weird will make use of rivers, wells, ponds - even large puddles. A Water Weird might link hands with their supplicants and lead them to walk straight into a body of water, emerging again onto another shore. Anywhere that is linked by water is a step away for a Water Weird. Even in spaces where water is scarce they can make use of shadows like seas, stepping into shadow until they vanish and reappearing in another shadow. Some supplicants are less than thrilled to have their possessions soaked at the end of travel, but a Water Weird will dry all their goods free of charge - cotton candy and water-soluble inks may not survive, unfortunately. No refunds.

This clan of Navigators is pretty instantly recognizable: to a one they appear to be feminine figures draped in layers of sheer pale silk, dripping with sea-water. Their outermost garments are always cloaks with hoods that drape over their heads to conceal everything but their lips and chins, with the vague outlines of a face visible beneath their hoods and veils. It is considered rude to try to peer under their coverings but those who have say that the Water Weirds have fragile gills behind their ears and milky second eyelids over gigantic dark-blue eyes.

In demeanor the Water Weirds are the most alien of the Navigators. They are almost always silent, or nearly so, speaking only as much as is required to complete their services. They offer no information about themselves, and ask nothing of their charges. They may ignore social niceties and impatiently cut a passenger short to get at the core of a rambling story or provide instruction or direction. Some say that speaking hurts them - even being out of water hurts them - and thus they are irritable and disinclined to speaking. This has no real evidence beyond their shortness, but has not been confirmed or denied by the Water Weirds.

The Runic Kings: Appearing in a flash of rainbow light and a clap of thunder the Runic Kings are the flashiest of the Navigators. Nevertheless, their methods are effective. When casting spells the Runic Kings draw (you guessed it) runes from before the dawn of creation and mutter their sacred names. A chain of complex runes might be sketched in the air with a finger, or on a nearby surface, or even shaped by careful dance in the dirt. When the pattern is complete there is a flash of light as each rune glows a different color, and when the light fades the landscape is different. This often leaves sparks and images of runes hanging in the air, or complex patterns burnt into the dirt or grass around the destination or departure point. The Runic Kings are best known for their *teleportation circles*, which are the best of the best. Many of their engagements are to create such circles for the wealthy that do not have a skilled mage on retainer.

The Runic Kings are the only Navigator clan to include giants, which makes sense, as they were the first runic scholars. Those members that are not giants are most often dwarves and humans. Many of those seem to have gigantic ancestry, showing the signs of a storm giant or cloud giant ancestor: blue or purple skin tones, hair tousled by wind that doesn't exist, small crackles of lightning from their fingertips or eyes, and most importantly being 9 feet tall. They virtually all dress in the manner one might be

familiar with from the giant clans: stone giants' simple wraps are in abundance, the ornate shells and metal fittings of storm giants, and the airy togas and angular jewelry of stone giants. In rare cases one might see a Runic King bedecked in the full and heavy armor of a frost or fire giant.

Speaking with a Runic King can be disorienting, as many of them are gifted with foresight. Whether from rolling rune-stones or simply the stone-giant gift of prophecy they often seem to have a disconcertingly good grip on what's about to happen in the near future, and even the vague shapes of things in the far future. Despite the initial discomfort the Runic Kings are usually friendly, if not polite. They speak bluntly and expect supplicants to do their fair share and pull their own weight while traveling or fighting. This affect only drops when they are interacting with non-Navigator giants, where their footing in the Ordnung is harder to define. After some preliminary 'dancing' to identify the other party's prestige they may even settle into a subservient role, as a carl to a jarl.

The Geomancers: Ley lines, nexi, and foci are sewn throughout the world's surface like veins of precious metals, or flow like rivers through a valley. The Geomancers are expert pilots of these ley lines and can move things and people along them. When a Geomancer teleports they often move, physically, taking a few steps in a given direction and aligning themselves a certain way, and encouraging their charges to do the same. They use elaborate hand gestures and may hum at a specific pitch as a way to bring themselves more into alignment with the ley line they traverse. Passengers traveling by ley line have described it as a sudden acceleration, as though they were at the top of a waterfall and began moving slowly at first, and then in a sudden rush, then slowing again until they come to a stop. This teleportation appears to be physical, in a way, and passengers often see the world blur around them as they move thousands of miles in a second or two.

Geomancers can be easily identified by their dress: bedecked in silk and heavy cotton in layers as though protection against frigid cold, and often sporting dozens of crystals and arcane symbols hung from chains and jewelry. The clan seems to be made up of dwarves and gnomes primarily, leading some to believe that the Geomancers' home is deep underground or on the Elemental Plane of Earth. Virtually all of them carry at least one small book - sometimes almost a whole library - that contain lines and lines of tight arcane notation interspersed with maps and multi-dimensional shapes. Whether these are reference books to supplement their knowledge or foci for their spellcasting is unclear.

While other Navigator clans are often easygoing to the point of being impossible to frustrate or confound the Geomancers seem to have a strict hierarchy and social structure that demands respect. They act with utmost politeness and respect to their clientele as a matter of course, but also expect it. They won't tolerate insults, questions about their methods, or excessively indecorous behavior. Some clients have said they were dropped off several miles from their destination and made to walk after spitting in the Geomancer's presence. If a particularly foolish supplicant ignores their warnings and insults a Geomancer past the point of tolerance they may find themselves blacklisted, or even grabbed and returned to their original destination, with the Geomancer then vanishing into the distance in a blur of motion.

The Folders: This clan's methods of teleportation are the most disorienting, in many ways, and the hardest to untangle. When a Folder moves their clientele it often happens without comment or fanfare - not even arcane gestures and words. It might happen in the middle of a sentence, without warning, or the Navigator might ask their charges to close their eyes. When the process begins it feels as though parts of space are being folded over each other, with the world wrapping up into a tight origami structure around the Navigator. Physical objects seem to occupy the same space, or move at strange

angles to each other. Things twist and warp, distance becomes meaningless as everything occupies approximately the same distance, then things begin to unfold. As things unfold the landscape has changed and voila, the clients have been teleported.

Members of the Folders are seen to have a higher incidence of psychic abilities than others. When forced to combat they are likely to use controlling spells like *reverse gravity*, *telekinesis*, and *synaptic static*. In appearance the Folders are human and gith most often, typically with dark skin and the slender frames of ascetics. They wear loose fabrics draped in togas and robes, and when they wear jewelry at all it is simple hammered metal, clay beads, or brightly colored thread braided in complex patterns [think Tibetan monks with psychic abilities]. They carry no equipment beyond maybe a small knife or a hair stick. Should they need anything they reach out and there is a folding, warping effect that appears as they reach their hands into extradimensional space and pull out whatever tool or product they need at the moment. It seems that they all have access to some shared extradimensional space stocked with virtually anything they could ask for.

In behavior Folders seem to embrace non-violence (even in combat they default to disabling or knocking their enemies unconscious) and a detachment from the world. Whether it's an affectation or a genuine disconnection from the needs of the material world they seem to have a tough time connecting with the physical concerns of clientele: food, sleep, safety, sex, family - they have moved past these (perhaps), and exhibit only a kind of paternalistic compassion for those who are still trapped by those needs.

The Arcane: Frail, blue-skinned giants with an additional joint on each finger. They share a collective memory, each knowing what the others experience less than a second after it occurs. This collective memory is fragmented and short-lived, and those who focus their skills on delving deeper into it and preserving the race's history are called akashics.

The Arcane are sometimes called the Mercane, and are only loosely affiliated with the rest of the Navigators. They, too, share Astral space and specialize in transportation, so the Arcane and Navigators ally and cooperate, though few Arcane actually become Navigators. Most of them, the Mercane, become interplanar merchants. They travel the spheres making, buying, and selling magical items. This includes the *spelljamming circles* that allow entire ships to sail between spheres, travel across the Astral Sea, and shift between planes (for skilled navigators). The Mercane are the only known people to have mastered spelljamming, and guard the secrets jealously, indicating that it is an important part of their power and leverage.

The Mercane have sold many *spelljamming circles* and spelljammers to the Navigators, though they have placed a formal ban on using them to visit Mūra at this time, knowing that the planet is not yet ready for this magitek, and likely never will be due to its perpetual bombardment by æther and nether meteorites.

The Mercane are also, likely, the only creatures with a dedicated stock of mundane items from other spheres and planes to use as targets for *dream of the blue veil*. Because these realities are layered in a way that leaves their Astral Planes unconnected spelljammers cannot be used to travel between them without such an item to be 'fed' to the *spelljamming circle*, meaning that the Arcane have some other way between realities, perhaps.

The House of Innovation

Alchemists and mechanists

Dreaming Apothecary

This is where you go to purchase potions of all kinds, drugs, magical incense of various kinds. The Dreaming Apothecary has some overlap with the House of Innovation, but while the HoI puts together substances like smokesticks and acids, the Apothecary deals almost exclusively in things you can ingest.

There is also a trade in poisons at the Apothecary, though you'll have to toe a careful line to get anyone to tell you that. Those that deal in medicines are also often those that deal in their opposites.

Finally, there's one member of the Apothecary that deals in second-hand magical items, without the blessing of the Azure Lodge. These may be stolen, lost, or inherited, and go for a premium. Wands, magical weapons and armor, wondrous items - staves are usually off limits, given their cost and the Lodge's aggressive possessive feelings for them. Anything else can get traded here.

Thieves' Guilds...

Thieves' Guilds: There are a few dozen guilds, but all of them play nice together, for the most part. Like other guilds, they demand dues, offer services, and have politics. Each guild has its own 'flavor.'

Burglars: the Venerable Order of Locksmiths

Assassins: the School of Silence

Footpads: various gangs in the Blinds

Arcanists: the Lodge of Dusk

Forgers: the Misfit Mint

Traps: the Horribilists

Spies: the Gray Family

Informants: the Whisperers

Con Artists: the Court of Thieves

The Venerable Order of Locksmiths

Burglars

The School of Silence

The assassins guild. Commanded by a leader that keeps concealed always, known as Vokuth, Shepherd of the Void. Unbeknownst to most, Vokuth is a beholder, and might have been brought to Talmussin by a meteorite.

The doctrine states that since we know there's an afterlife just across the bridge, there's really no difference between living and dead, and we're not doing anything particularly wrong by killing. It's more like exiling folks from the material plane than anything else, just messier.

Of course, this means there's also nothing wrong with *getting* killed, either. You can see who takes it seriously by how dead-eyed and reckless they are. Part of this is helped by a regimen of mind-numbing drugs that make the assassins quiet, malleable, and ruthless.

The Misfit Mint

Forgers & counterfeiters

The Gray Family

Spies, political operators, and the like

The Whisperers

Informants

The Court of Thieves

Con artists and the like.

The Horribilists

Trapmakers and breakers

The Lodge of Dusk

Arcane thieves

Halafa Crime Family/Black Slippers

The human-and-halfling mafia. The Halafas are a traditional sort of "Cosa Nostra" style Sicilian mob. Their main competition, family-wise, is the Kumpal.

The Halafas are almost a minor nobility, but instead of controlling a more traditional guild, business, or noble house, they have guild ties and businesses. The Halafas are tied strongly to the School of Silence, the Venerable Order of Locksmiths, and run their own whorehouses in the nicer parts of town. These criminals avoid the blinds, which are the Kumpal's territory, and avoid the high-class neighborhoods (also the Kumpal, unbeknownst to them), but they get everything in-between.

Middle class crime composed of kids trying drugs the first time, elderly matrons getting their jollies from high-stakes mahjonn, and depressed guild artisans with favorite whores - that's the Halafas' bread-and-butter.

The Halafas are notable for their strange marks of rank: black slippers. The slippers vary in material from leather to velvet to silk, and in ornamentation from plain to bejeweled to thread-of-gold. These designs, patterns, materials, cuts and styles all indicate something inside the family, but mean nothing if you're not familiar with the code.

The Kumpal

A gang of yuan-ti that run a large portion of the criminal underworld of Talmussin.

The Kumpal own half the Blinds. Run by a mysterious figure usually just referred to as Father, the mafia looks on the outside like a fairly standard criminal outfit. From the inside it quickly becomes apparent that it's a sort of a cult with some nefarious purpose.

Father is both criminal don and religious leader. It is a yuan-ti Anathema, hidden from view of the public by dozens of capos and consiglieres. His personal legend states that he's the consort of Asmushneth, the mother of scalykind. Whatever his connection to Amonet, it's difficult to question his devotion. He leads a Church of Asmushneth and spends a majority of his time in theological study, meditation, and experimentation.

The origins of the yuan-ti are rooted in experimentation: the worship, by humans, of Asmushneth was perverted/perfected as the high priests became scaled, a true-breeding serpentine race borne from

devotion to the Scaled Mother. The experimentation that Father carries out is related directly to this one-time arcane miracle. He'd love to transmute the population of Talmussin into yuan-ti en masse, but (as yet) lacks the resources. Even the anathema's attempts to transform single entities have failed - but it's getting close.

The mafia is known more popularly as the Kumpal, translated from serpent-speak as the Family. Their activities range from drug trafficking to protection to prostitution, but mainly they're focused on blackmailing and gambling. These two businesses are run by the two heads of the Family, Acosta Dhai and Imina Dhai. Acosta runs the blackmailing, carefully orchestrating a circle of informants, extortionists, and infiltrators. Imina owns the Cestus, the opulent fighting ring in the center of Pugil. She also directly commands the Gold Hands, the violent gangsters of the Family and their fighting organization.

The Gold Hands are a band of brawlers, killers, wrestlers, and etc. that put on exhibition fights. They accept new applicants from the champions of high-profile tournaments at the Cestus, though joining almost always means joining the Family as well, and being comfortable getting your hands dirty. This makes a good entry-point for PCs to begin investigating the Kumpal and Father's bizarre experiments.

The Red & White Society

Mercenaries' guild.

The Ash Guard

Undertakers, morticians, and gravediggers may all be members of the Ash Guard, but their most notable corps is composed of clerics and paladins that keep the dead in the ground.

Clerics may be from any domain, but most are of Life or Grave, and follow Umain or Jagus. There are a few from the houses of Nature or Light, as well. Paladins typically have an oath of Devotion, but there are plenty that swear Vengeance on the dead, or enforce the Ancients' order of life & death.

The only people not welcomed to pursue a career as an Ash Guard are necromancers, who are consulted at need but are irrevocably tied up in the wrong thing. This includes anyone who knows or has permanently prepared a spell to create undead, like Death domain clerics.

The Delvers' Guild

Adventurers and dungeon-delvers. The Delvers' Guild buys and sells maps of the Warrens, keeps a posting of bounties and recovery jobs that require venturing into the jungle or the Necropolis, and fund expeditions to faraway lands with loot and monsters to deal with.

Think like the Pathfinders Society.

They often partner closely with the Mappists to explore and adventure around.

The Delvers' Guild also supplies adventurers: this is where you go to buy a thousand ball bearings, a pound of pig grease, a time-share vault, and 100 ft of silk rope.

The Azure Lodge

Magical concerns; meets rarely, membership is very stable usually. Composed of the upper echelons of the guild of the same name. They position themselves as purely interested in the magical protections of the city and the advancement of magical study and art after the universities.

They charge a membership fee to any spellcaster that's graduated from the universities and anyone that is clearly a magic-user above 3rd level. This membership fee takes the form of an annual cost in silver. The cost can be waived with service to the guild, or a magical item, or a new spell, or etc. The cost is prohibitive for lower level spellcasters (thousands of silver pieces) by design, so the guild has a constant stream of services coming in from low-level spellcasters (and a respectable number of magical items coming in from adventurers).

This service is usually the equivalent of a week's worth of daily duties like patrolling the streets with *see invisibility* on and reporting to the Pelte, or potion-making and scroll-scribing, or manning the desks for the guild, or doing maintenance service on the ventilation tunnels, etc. The service can also be a single greater service, like accompanying an expedition into the wilderness or a caravan to Weej. Magic items used to waive the annual fee must be at least uncommon.

Universities

Each of the universities and colleges in Talmussin has its own character, and has something like a neighborhood around it. Most of them are in the Ivory Ward, with some surrounding it.

Talmussin University (largest by far, well-rounded curriculum)

TU is massive, with hundreds of classrooms and dozens of buildings. Over 15,000 professors and staff work here, supporting 62,500 students. The main campus is at the center of the Glass Ward, and it would be more appropriate to say that the Ward grew up around the university. The main campus is comprised of seven temple-like buildings around a huge central courtyard, each housing one of the 'core' departments of the university. The departments have burst their seams and expanded haphazardly beyond their single buildings into warrens of buildings, complexes, and individual rooms wherever they're available.

The majority of the classrooms, libraries, and offices of TU are above-ground, with the basement spaces being put to the use of laboratories, storage, library stacks, and the like. It's worth noting that one of the student accommodations is entirely below-ground, as well.

The arcanists & magical theory college of the university is rife with protections and magical wards. Unlike some other colleges it does not make excessive use of extraplanar spaces, illusions, or any of that - there's no need when it's the largest and most prestigious college of them all. Instead the abjurations simply prevent teleportation and summoning except in specific areas, protect libraries against fire, and that sort of thing. It's said that there's even a constant *death ward* effect on the student accommodations, though nobody wants to test that.

Stone College (small, liberal arts)

Stone College rarely has more than 1,500 students enrolled at any given time, making it among the smallest of the colleges in the city. The 'main campus' is a pair of stone buildings facing each other across a street, and the 'annex' is a collection of rented floors (leased for the next 30 years) almost a full neighborhood away. There is no student housing provided by the school.

St. Hevas University (military)

The centerpiece of Saint Hevas' is a huge open-air arena that gets used for mock combats, for sports, and for drills. There are two other arenas put to more specific use (one for smaller 'combats', the other for sports alone), but the main arena has some exceptional magical features. For example, it can have walls emerge from the sand to create a mock village, be filled with water for naval combat practices, be filled with fog or rain, or similar effects at a command.

Around the arenas are the 'barracks' the students live in, as well as living quarters for professors. Outside this ring of residences are a spread of one-and-two story 'bunkers' that contain classrooms and offices. The entire thing has the look and feel of a posh military installation, with some 22,500 students at any given time.

St. Ilgis Seminary (theology)

St. Ilgis' is the only major college in the Lower Bell neighborhood, separated from the rest of the schools. The strong focus on religion and theology is an easy indicator as to why it shares space with so many temples and churches. The 15,000 students that attend St. Ilgis' often live in the temples nearby, renting rooms from the Church. The Seminary itself is carefully constructed to *look* like a church, but not to include any of the holy symbols that would consecrate it as such. The spaces are, thus, huge and antique, and meant to inspire awe. However, the classrooms and offices also mimic those of a church: small, hidden away, often damp.

House of Stars (magic & expression; bardic)

The smallest (fully recognized) college in Talmussin, the House of Stars has no purpose-built spaces. The closest they have are two performance halls that were once a warehouse and a theater, both heavily customized to provide the best acoustic experience possible. The rest of the college is a smattering of spare floors in other buildings, personal residences, and practice studios scattered across the Ivory Ward (and a few beyond). The workshops, black boxes, and arcane libraries are connected only by the 500-or-so students and their educators.

Ahaj College of Music (performance & expression)

Widely recognized as the finest performing arts school in this hemisphere, the Ahaj has a small mock village to support its 10,000 students and their patrons. The mock village features a small acting theater, an opera hall, a few taverns, some open-air performance spaces and amphitheatres, and a small but operational market square. Around these constructions are plain homes for the professors and students both, and one administration building that sticks out like a sore thumb.

Bahish University (college of choice for the wealthy)

Second only to TU in prestige, Bahish University's grounds are exceedingly fine. The school is composed of five massive buildings of stone surrounding and surrounded by courtyards. The student housing and administrative offices are separated from the academic core by a short walk, as are the stables. Despite having only 12,500 students it takes up nearly the same space as TU, with buildings constructed to a grand scale.

The Academy (arcane, hyper-focused)

Unlike any other school in the city, the Academy has more square footage below ground than above. The buildings that it does own above ground are chosen for their access to the tunnels. They are often purchased, renovated to remove distinguishing features and improve their structural integrity, and then let alone. As such the Academy's offices and classrooms are often noted only with large, iconic steel plates that read like "ACADEMY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING ONE" or "ACADEMY DIVINATION HALL AND CAFETERIA". Like their students, the Academy wants their buildings to be nondescript and useful.

The halls beneath the Academy are maze-like and often layered with enchantments from generations past: wardings to prevent non-students from wandering in, protections against evil or fire, illusions to make the place impossible to find, or enchantments to warp space and give the Academy more room.

It is rumored that the Academy's below-ground laboratories stretch all across the city, with teleporting doors so seamless you'd never know you were crossing from the Ivory Ward to Lower Bell to the Smokes and back just by walking down a few hallways. This rumor has never been proven. It is also rumored that the Academy has several extraplanar classrooms and labs, just so that disastrous results can be sealed off from the rest of the college, and indeed the city - should a summoning go wrong, for example.

All 20,000 of the Academy's students live in student housing, in identical rooms cut out of the stone under Talmussin. The same-ness of the rooms is meant to help instill the discipline that's so necessary for their brand of learning.

The Pony Express

Armed postal delivery carriers that travel by horse, lizard, elephant, carriage, cart, and sail. Typically solo or small teams, depending on the circumstances. May hire mercenaries on dangerous routes, with regularity leading to specialist mercenaries that *just* work that route and know it backwards and forwards.

The Post

Mail can be sent district-to-district with ease. There are little stalls set up in most neighborhoods, staffed by one person up front and a half a dozen runners lounging in the back on bikes or stretching between runs. Larger districts keep post boxes for rent. In wealthier districts they have private offices for rent. In industrial or mercantile districts they have facilities for storage and the capacity to move huge volumes of goods.

To find a price for a standard letter draw a line from district to district, and voila:

Distance	Price
1 district	1 cp
2 districts	2 cp
3 districts	5 cp

4 districts	8 cp
5 districts	3 cp/district
Intercity	2 cp/mile

The Divinators

A small house in Talmussin hides an extensive basement housing a secret society of diviners: clerics, wizards, and even druids.

The diviners exercise their crafts to preserve the timeline, or fate, or the natural order - whatever they call it. By predicting the future as it's "supposed to be" they can identify major deviations and errors as they occur or begin to appear, and, if necessary, act to correct it.

These adjustments may be small and subtle, or less so. Members of the group have connections in government, trade, and the military, such that they can point these agents in the 'right' direction.

The most common threats are those 'outside of fate,' meaning not in the Material plane or its dependent planes (Ethereal and Shadow). Most extra-planar actors are not present enough to change destiny, but the farther (metaphysically) one gets from the Material the more likely it is that an intervention will cause trouble. Thus, elemental planes are not an issue, typically, while the heavens & hells present a constant danger, and the Outer Planes contain huge - if exceedingly uncommon - threats to the weave of fate.

The diviners attempt to maintain a global outlook, but placing agents in the Western continents is difficult, and they have little indirect influence outside of Talmussin. This is not regarded as a major issue as 99% of planar dangers originate in Talmussin or Manifest.

The Order of Balance

A philosophical order of monks with a small monastery in Lower Bell, the Balancing Monks embrace physical balance as an educational metaphor for spiritual balance. Thus, one will often see fit people in somber colors standing in the streets atop a board balanced atop a ball; or teetering at the edge of a tower; or doing a one-handed handstand at the tip of a 30-ft-tall pole 6 inches across.

The Satchins-Milliner-deVry Company

A company with strong ties to basically every mercantile group out there as either competitors or allies, sometimes both at different times. This includes the Zhentarim, the Arcane, the Navigators.

They are the largest import/export company around, running caravans by hundreds. They own entire routes, and you don't trade on them without their permission.

Think, like, Weyland-Yutani crossed with Exalted's The Guild.

Founded a hundred years ago by Aras Yan Satchins, Rumar Milliner-White, and Ellian deVry in Weej. Established a department store in Talmussin sixty-odd years ago, and was blessed with huge success. Rapidly expanded by purchasing dozens of trade routes and smaller shops, and opening a half a dozen department stores in capital cities around the world since then.

Around thirty-five years ago published the first SMdV catalogue, and rolled it out to most territories fifteen years ago, again, to huge success.

Ellian deVry retired just after the catalogue went worldwide, leaving her leadership position to her son Elias deVry (human, around 50 years old). Rumar Milliner-White passed away twenty-five years ago, leaving his share to his two children, Echo Milliner and Axe Milliner. Axe sold half his shares to Ellian deVry, and the other half to his sister Echo (half-elf, around 65 years old, appears 30-35). Aras Yan Satchins was in a terrible accident fifteen years ago, just before Ellian deVry retired, and has not been seen since. His solicitor, Rimhara Vaes Hettigen, has conducted all of his business since then (human, 35-40).

Satchins is in a magically-powered life support system, using spells like *magic jar* to move about the city and conduct his business. He's hired Vaes Hettigen as a kind of 'body-man,' allowing him to spend hours or days *magic jar*-ed into his body in exchange for a substantial salary. Satchins was old already, and intends to find a way to immortality by leveraging his huge wealth.

Due to purchases, exchanges, and unequal ownership from the founding the ownership of SMdV breaks down more or less as:

Aras Yan Satchins	25%
Elias deVry	28%
Echo Milliner	17%
Axe Milliner	2%
Rimhara Vaes Hettigen	1%
various investors	27%

The Red Wizards

A knockoff of the Red Wizards of Thay, but crossed with the Arcane from Spelljammer, and maybe the Navigators. Fierce competitors of the Order of the Azure Lodge, in Talmussin at least.

The Jackdaw Guard

Based in Culper's Cove on the Jeweled Coast, the Jackdaw Guard actually maintains small crews in most major cities, and has a real presence at the docks, keeping an eye on incoming and outgoing ships. There aren't many, but their specialties are in networking and information. A huge amount of money is spent on informants in the noble houses and guilds.

The Xvissa

Xvissans are devotees of the god of the hunt, beasts, and murder. They act as assassins and operate alongside the thieves' guilds, often infiltrating them.

The Changrami Monks

The Changrami monks are mercenary bodyguards-for-hire and some of the most skilled martial artists of the world. They wear crimson red robes and wraps, and use staves as their weapons of choice.

Becoming a Changrami monk requires five years of training, and costs 5,000 gp. You can also commit to spend the first five years of your life after 'graduating' working exclusively for the order, during which everything you earn goes back to pay off your temple. You can also work extra in that period to send gold back to the temple and pay off your debts.

Many monks, after that period, leave to do their own thing. Just as many stay with the order, training new monks and living very comfortably, or working for the order and taking the 50/50 split offered to fully paid-up monks.

Hiring a monk costs about 1,500 gp a year (as you might expect), or about 125 gp a month (4 gp a day, then). You can pay more for a better skilled monk.

In Talmussin there are a number of Changrami monks that are also members of the Hall of the Blue Heron.

The Healers of the Sacred Heat

A group of University graduates that's taken up the task of healing shit without magic. They perform surgeries, develop medicines, and attempt to understand the spreads of mundane diseases. It's not that they don't believe in magical healing, but they want something that can be used by anyone, in any circumstances, reliably.

Fallen

The Fallen are a few celestials that have taken up occupation on the material plane. They have a single tower at the center of the city from which most of them never emerge. The primary goal of the Fallen is to find a way back into the heavens, though many agree that the way to earn their true mission is to help humanity. Many of them are too afraid of affecting humanity's path to take any major actions, basically offering only the help that humanity could have reasonably gotten elsewhere.

Luddites

A crew of anti-magicians that hate users of magic. Clerical, arcane, whatever. They think magicians have done nothing but ill for the world, ultimately. They kill magicians, orchestrate magical catastrophes, disrupt the Weave, destroy magical items, etc. Some are technologists and alchemists, some are barbarians, etc. They even have a few magic-users that have enough knowledge to cause real trouble, and etc.

Skull & Bone Society

A college fraternity sort of thing, except it's for necromancers.

Brotherhood of Redemption

The Brotherhood of Redemption has a standing order for monsters. Any intelligent creature that is evil aligned and not fiendish or undead can be turned in here for a bounty based on its rarity and difficulty in redeeming it.

Upon being turned over to the Brotherhood the monster vanishes for some time - between a few days and a few months - and when it emerges it has a lawful good alignment, speaks Common, and has been brainwashed. It will follow the laws of Talmussin and attempt to be a contributing member of society. It can't do violence, period.

Those creatures with unusual needs, like raw meat or something, often stay close to the Brotherhood, working for their food and housing. Others, like ogres, might attempt to find employment in Talmussin at large and live on their own.

Monsters that have been brainwashed by the Brotherhood wear pendants that show they've been Redeemed, and are no longer a threat. They are not granted citizenship, and occupy a space around that of goblins when it comes to social matters.

Many people support this mission, contributing a great deal of money to the Brotherhood. Just as many are concerned with these methods and would very much rather the Redeemed just be killed rather than turned into something without genuine free will.

DRIL

The Dy'ari Resistance and Inclusion League, or DRIL, is a lobbying group fighting for the rights of dark elves, orcs, hobgoblins, and other maligned humanoid.

Grovekeepers

A circle of druids dedicated to keeping the natural ley-lines working the way they ought to.

The Banks

There are three types of banks in Talmussin: lending banks, vaults, and buerzen.

Lending banks, or savings and loan banks, make small personal loans to individuals or larger loans to businesses. These are letters of writ, and interest is charged. It's usually quite a lot. An individual may be required to put up collateral in the form of a business ownership, home, jewelry or cash, or even a noble title or herd of animals. These banks are often associated with vaults, such that they can write a note, the borrower can travel to the vault, and use that note to withdraw the proceeds of their loan.

Vaults and moneychangers are those who work with actual currency. Coins and cash go in, you pay a fee to the bank for the security. They also exchange currency for a cost, and provide appraisal services for antique coins, weights of precious metals, and gems and jewels. Finally, vaults may offer to issue and accept checks or notes, where an accountholder can write a note to be exchanged for actual cash by the bearer.

Finally, the buerzen. These are named for the family way way up north that started the practice. The buerzen are basically primitive stock markets. They allow people to fund trading expeditions for gain, finance buildings, and manage government debts. Government treasuries and company ownership are usually restricted to the wealthy, but some buerzen offer additional splitting-up of those shares. For example, a shipping expedition might need to raise 1,900 suns to pay for repairs, cargo, and crew, and offer to return 2,300 suns in 3 months after the trip is completed, with any excess in sales beyond that to be split between the captain and the investors equally. 1,400 might be claimed by private investors, and a buerzen might buy the other 500 directly, then parceling it out into 50 10-mark notes of debt. While the normal return is about 26%, the buerzen might offer a return of only 60 suns at 3 months on these smaller notes, pocketing the other 31 suns worth, or so, as an administrative fee. In addition they wouldn't pass on any of the excess earnings. This resale of debt is a fairly new concept, but is becoming very popular, with some ballsy (stupid) individuals taking out loans from a moneylender to then buy into a buerzen's parcels.

Currencies

The standard unit of wealth is the silver piece. This amount is not always traded in the same way, but it is the unit of measure. It can be paid in actual coins made of silver, in tokens made of jade, in beads made of gold, in pieces of a gold coin chopped up, in paper currency, or in letters of credit.

The city's mint produces copper coins called pennies, silver coins called camellia or just called pieces, gold coins called suns or marks, and platinum pieces called lotuses.

The mint also produces pre-cut wedges of gold suns, called scraps, that are worth two or five silver camellia.

There are also small gold beads called nocks (from knoch, or fishing sinkers) that are worth one silver piece each, though these are measured by weight. Some merchants won't take them without weighing them, as they aren't marked in any way - it's just a measure of gold (about a 30th of an ounce - the same weight as 1/10th of a gold sun).

The mint also produces tokens made of jade in three denominations: a small jade circle worth one silver camellia, a jade square worth 5 silver pieces, and a thin octagon of jade worth a gold piece. These jade tokens are prone to breakage, but are the official currency of the city and the guilds, and so they often are what's used to back the paper currency of the city, and remain stacked in vaults.

Finally, the mint produces paper currencies. These are cotton paper pieces that are chemically treated and inked elaborately. High denominations may bear an enchanted wax seal that prohibits forgery, and even middling denominations have an *arcane mark* that can be used to check for authenticity; the mark is that of the mint's secretary. Paper currency is available in virtually any denomination, but the denominations currently in production and most common in circulation are for 1/10, 1/5, 1/2, 1, 5, 10, 100, and 1,000 jade tokens (so one copper, two, five, a silver piece, five, a gold mark, 1, or 10 platinum lotuses).

What backs the currencies? There are a few things. The metals and jade 'back' themselves as precious materials. Sarandib also offers tea as a backing to their currency. The city and state have great warehouses full of compressed fermented bricks of tea that are kept as a safeguard of the currency, with each brick being worth one silver or one gold piece, depending on the size. Each brick is wrapped in yellow-brown wax paper to guard against damp and mold, and they are stacked tens- and hundreds-thousands per warehouse. The guarantee of the city is that anyone can present a Sarandib coin or paper note and receive an equivalent amount of tea. The tea's relatively low quality means that nobody uses this like a 'shop,' but the tie to real goods means that there is rarely a concern about the solvency of the state or the value of metals.

There are also aether-infused mithral coins and adamantine crystals that are traded between noble houses and powerful mages, worth hundreds or thousands of gold pieces each.

Trade

Output includes a tremendous amount of finished goods. However, the state Sarandib is more focused on agricultural output. Weej, of course, exports a great deal of unfinished manufactured goods: glass, refined ores, paper, cloth, rubber, various alchemical substances, cut stone, seasoned lumber, etc. The region as a whole is also known for fine manufactured textiles (silk, linen, and cotton all grow around here) and for tea (this area is the birthplace of the modern tea Camellia, and produces some of the 'cleanest' tea available, making it their greatest export both by volume and by cash value).

Talmussin is one of the largest consumers of the state's goods, of course. Tea, refined materials from Weej, and produce to feed the massive population all go straight to Talmussin in bulk. Whatever's not consumed is shipped out from the harbor to all over the world. A percentage of these materials goes South, down the road, but it's almost always faster, cheaper, and easier to ship it: the entire Jeweled Coast to the North and the Gryphon Empire to the East are Talmussin's primary trade partners.

NPCs, Threats

Random Encounters

When running random encounters, they should add to the story and the atmosphere, pointing PCs in the direction of their next leap.

That is, it should be like Arkham Horror: if Nyarlethotep is here in town, you should be seeing his masks.

So, for example: If the primary evil here, now, is an aboleth living in the sewers, your PCs should see the effects of that. There should be cultists in the town, animals bearing horrible grafts, mind-controlled people still slick with aboleth slime. In addition, maybe the aboleth has compromised the captain of the night watch, and a small thieves' guild.

This implies that, in addition to your usual random encounters, you should see thieves in the street, ignored by or working arm-in-arm with the guards. Perhaps instead of encountering a pack of dogs, you encounter a pack of dogs with tentacles and boils. Swap out your encounter with 1d6+1 stirges for a run-in with aboleth cultists on the hunt for a blood sacrifice.

Once your PCs mess up the thieves' guild, or identify the mind control of the guard, that threat gets removed. Every encounter should escalate things a little, or leave behind an indication of the darker machinations behind the scene.

This sort of reflects lair effects, or folklore: if a Dracula is in town, storms will hover overhead, rats will run in the street, dogs will leap about rabid in the streets, etc.

Big Villains include most of the good mastermind villains list: aboleths, illithids, vampires, mummies, necromancers and other wizards, rakshasa, demons and devils, and dragons.

This means also that random encounter tables should be tailored. The area and the threat, season and time and weather should all affect your encounters' probability and type.

In a perfect world we'd have one mega-table that crossed season/location and d% roll, with each cell divided into day and night. Or something like that. Then each cell would have weather conditions and a variety of encounters for whatever level.

Now, that would be huge and unwieldy, but something like one table per season, with environment on Y and d% on X axes might work. Or a keyed table: roll once for weather, roll once for encounter. SEE: Encounter 37 - Groll Ambush, and then the encounter has scaling rules for different levels.

Maybe do, like, ward maps and leave notes like "in this area there is a 30% chance to encounter 1d6 cultists; the ward has a total of 25 such cultists at any given time." Better for smaller maps, really, but potentially do-able at large scale.

While traveling you have a chance to be accosted every hour. The chances vary neighborhood to neighborhood.

Neighborhood	Daytime chance	Nighttime chance
Collegiate/wealthy	5%	5%
Guild controlled	5%	10%
Mercantile	5%	5%
Residential	5%	10%
Industrial	5%	20%
Impoverished	10%	15%
Slums	15%	25%
Thieves' Guild controlled	15% (usually thieves)	35% (almost always thieves)

Types of Encounters

Daytime (d6)	Nighttime (d8)	Encounter
1		Gang of street urchins
2		Confused tourist
3	1	Pushy salesman

4	2	Crazy street preacher
5	3	Drug pusher
6	4	1d4 footpads
	5	Deranged [artist, musician, spellcaster, homeless person; roll d4]
	6	Unusually well-connected fence
	7	1d6 Guild thieves
	8	A fight with [a CR 1d8 monster, or a band of 1d6 level 1d6 adventurers; flip a coin]

The Yuan-ti

Treat them like the lizard-people that control the government in the minds of conspiracy theorists everywhere. They run the guilds, the government, etc. The yuan-ti prefer subterfuge and sabotage to outright war. They have allies in the mafia down in the Warrens, and in the noble houses they've begun infiltration. These will provide the best long-term villains around.

The most public face of the yuan-ti is the Kumpal, a gang run out of a bar called The Cestus in Pugil.

Vicious Reavers

The Vicious Reavers are a semi-organized gang of ghouls and ghosts that have begun using actually intelligent tactics to make careful raids out of the Necropolis. They do everything from nick masses of disposed meat from the Knives district to kidnapping residents of the Warrens that don't guard themselves quite cleverly enough.

The Undead

From low-level incursions to high-level individuals, the undead are versatile and dangerous. In particular a cabal of necromancers is a good backing force. Maybe start with a circle of druids that made contact with a long-dead spirit deep in the mountainside that started borking peoples' minds... [SEE Darkbonds]

The Mind Flayers

They're devious, motivated, and powerful. Just three, maybe, looking to establish an elder brain here in Talmussin (the elder brain being the fourth - an incredibly old mind flayer). They would each have their own contacts and tools and personalities, so one would be all Frankensteinian monstrosities, one would be arcane applications of psychic forces, and one would be a subtle manipulator with hundreds of thralls and contacts in a vast web of informants and patsies.

The circle is from a far-away place and time and has chosen Talmussin for its proximity to Manifest, and the room and security of the underground tunnels in the Warrens, left here by the Ancient Race. Their leader (who goes by Jon, pronounced as yo-an), after a common humanoid name) is magnificently egotistical, completely convinced that it will fulfill a kind of divine mandate by creating a stronghold beneath Talmussin and then poisoning Manifest.

His retinue (the other three mentioned above, the common term being a Circle of Illithidae) has barely had time to settle in, but are already beginning to advance their plans. Illithidae are uniquely able to look ahead, relying on their intellect and scrying abilities. They are also physically strong enough to eliminate most threats, as well. This circle have begun brute-forcing their way to a solid foundation, from which they'll orchestrate their grander design.

Their first thralls will likely be dwarves, dyar, and goblins - the races most suitable for puttering around below ground.

Urgathoa's Cult

The cult has a foothold - just a small one - in the city. In the tunnels beneath the Warrens the pallid fungal flesh of Urgathoa is spreading. A single plague released in the packed living spaces of the Warrens could very easily decimate the population, and spread to every quarter of the city.

The Red Lotus Tong

The RLT have begun recruiting desperate goblins from the slums under the Bridge and in the Warrens. The goblins are desperate and in need of both leadership and resources; the RLT are taking advantage of them by having them carry out their thefts and knee-cappings, then using them as scapegoats.

The Firebugs

A small group in the Blinds has been setting buildings alight as part of a protection racket, acting outside of any gang's structure. Until now the Pelte has been willing to ignore it, but recently the firebugs have begun to work their way toward Midtown.

The Blackscals

A group of kobolds that go by the name Blackscale (featuring something like a black dragon's markings) have been collapsing buildings. Their engineering expertise and trap skills make them ideal sappers. They're in a kind of cat-and-mouse with the Granite Council, finding abandoned parts of the undercity to ruin in secret to collapse tunnels and structures. In the densely-packed city this is incredibly damaging and expensive to repair.

Jigitha the Blue

A blue goblin that's carrying out a political, psychic, coercive campaign to create a genuine goblin homeland. They want to carve out a territory and start lobbying for greater rights and the like.

The Moth

A dangerous necromancer that's set up shop deep in the Necropolis. He's given up on the living entirely, and intends to eliminate the entire living population of Talmussin - the world if he could manage it. See "Killing and Curses" in Adventures and Events.

In the mean-time he's doing general necromancy stuff: organizing bands of ghouls, working alongside vampires, creating disgusting necro-carnifexes and the like and unleashing them on the city.

Hagiiz

A displaced devil with a long and strange history, Hagiiz was torn from hell and cursed by the benevolent powers that be as a punishment for war crimes between heaven and hell. The Prime Material plane was chosen as his place of imprisonment since it is convenient both to hell and to heaven.

Hagiiz's curse prevents him from doing evil directly - he is not allowed to torture, kill, lie or anything of the sort. As well, a second and more infuriating curse prevents him from doing evil by extension or anything but pure accident and chance. He cannot manipulate others, allow them to act on his behalf,

command minions to do wicked deeds - nothing that would have a negative impact that could be traced back to him. His only chance to escape from the curse, or even affect reality in a negative way, is to start a series of events completely by accident that frees him.

In hopelessness, Hagiiz has simply retired to a cave to ponder and hate and sleep for the last thousand years. Hagiiz has impressive power despite his crippling condition - treat him as a Balor that is elementally oriented to acid rather than fire, and has spellcasting capabilities as a level 18 shadowcaster. His titles include "Pharoah of Silence and Darkness," and he is surrounded by a perpetual *silence* effect, and thus communicates by telepathy (100' telepathy, constant). His regalia is notable for the inclusion of a stone that allows him to turn intangible for 10 minutes a day (in one minute increments), and a staff of living obsidian that is identical to the *blackstaff* held by Khelban Arunsen (of Faerun).

Vokuth

The beholder master of the School of Silence. Their lair is ever-expanding and deadly, and their assassins are fanatical, brainwashed. Many monsters and creatures report to it. It is known, privately, as the Shepherd of the Void. It's aim is to amass more power, naturally, but also to infect people with a kind of memetic disease that inspires nihilism. When nobody cares who lives and dies, and nobody sees any difference between the two states, it will be the only creature with free will and motivation, and will not need to fear anything ever again.

Spawn of Cyran

The hatchling of the blue sand wyrm Cyran, pronounced Kai-ren, this wyrmling has never known another human but Captain of the Guard Edelein Eshah.

It's slowly coming to understand its place in the world - to eat - and its own abilities - considerable. It's on the border of turning into a young dragon, and as its magical abilities mature it will become more and more dangerous, and may eventually tap into a kind of ancestral racial knowledge that will force it to reckon with its embarrassing captivity by Edelein.

Captain Ibarra

The spirit of the captain of the ship Lady Marika, Ibarra is now a restless wraith that sails his ghost ship around to fuck peoples' lives up.

He once led Talmussin's fledgling armada before the city began growing, and he was betrayed by the second governor of the city and Sarandib. His ship ran against the Devil's Teeth, a set of razor-sharp rocks at the base of the cliff a few miles to the West of Talmussin, in the middle of the night in the middle of a legendary storm. He was on his way back to the city to effect vengeance against the Governor, but never made it, and now wrecks shit on the regular to get his ghostly justice.

The Lady Marika appears at night as a smudge on the horizon blotting out stars, and pushes a wave of dead air and flat sea ahead of it by a mile or two. Ships that are suddenly becalmed at night need to be very, very concerned. When the Lady Marika closes to a distance where you can make out the black rigging against the stars it blots out the 'running lights' turn on, and the entire ship is rimed in green fire. Ibarra and crew then board and kill everyone, leaving the ship covered in bodies with no marks on them (ghostly cutlasses).

Lord Agelstrom

A vampire that's the head of a minor noble house, House Shekh. Once a great house, the family collapsed under their debts a hundred years ago. Agelstrom of Shekh, the bedridden patriarch of the house, watched his family's money pissed away by his dissipate and stupid children. He committed that he'd repair the mistakes he'd made raising them, and restore his house to glory. This required getting turnt by a vampire.

Since then he's busted his undead ass to get his grandkids great jobs, his great-grandkids good educations, making smart investments, killing off political rivals, providing child-rearing advice to his descendants, has bettered himself spiritually and intellectually, and has generally made restoring his house's wealth and influence his sole goal. He's still evil and ruthless, mind you, but the family loves him.

Avegnezzar

A demon prince that's decided to set up shop. They seduce and twist the locals, and bring in fiendish backup as necessary. They've been at it a while, so there's cambions and tieflings around.

Lycanthropes

Maybe werewolves, more likely rats. As a city do. They control portions of the Docks and Warrens, with swarms of rats, cranium rats, ash rats, rat kings, giant rats, etc.

Rakshasa

A rakshasa that's begun using their illusions to put on wild stage plays and develop a coterie of theatergoers. They lead bacchanalian revels that almost always end in bloodshed. For those very close it's given away the mystery of the heart's blood, whereby one can gain power from eating a human heart in a weird ritual orgy thing. Ultimate aim is to bring the finest players back to faerie for eternal fun and games.

Oad

A lich that secretly controls one of the larger universities and wields great power through the Lodge. Content to grab dropouts and idiots and harvest their souls for sustenance. There are horror stories told by upperclassmen about how those that flunk in senior year are never seen again...

The Cat King

One of the most dangerous individuals in Talmussin is the Cat King, Felix Marquis Sarandib. He's a shapeshifter, a druid who's chosen as his favorite form that of a large black cat. He's frequently surrounded by a small cadre of housecats. He runs a circle of thieves with a spirit of aristocratic excitement. These thieves are slowly gearing up for a bit of a minor class war. The marquis is born to wealth but he despises the nature of the present nobility. His genteel veneer belies the savagery he's capable of beneath - anyone working alongside him may be startled at his casual violence in pursuing his ends.

Rogue Traitors

The Ships of the Black Fleet – the Rogue Traitors

1. Anne Dieu-Le-Veut captains *The Black Angel's Death Song*, whose crew is curiously fortunate.
2. *The Grey Knight*, a floating library, serves Jacquotte Delahaye, a priestess of Jagus who cannot die.
3. Terrian Bendacier's vessel *Morian's Child* is home to untold depravities.
4. The crew of Smiling Charlie Tann's *Perdurabo* attempts to summon unholy things from the briny dark.
5. Ching Shih commands the *White Scar*, the fastest ship in the sea.
6. The *Fenris* is commanded by Aelfhild, who is cursed with lycanthropy.
7. The *Phalanx* is a fearsome dreadnought. Its captain, Terra Dorn, will duel anyone over anything.
8. Duke Curse captains the *Dart of Harkness*, and her methods, involving snails and straight razors, are unsound.
9. The Sleeping Captain Ba'Al'Sheeba is an exiled vampire of Gyorsla, her ship is the *Blood Angel*.

10. Seela, a medusa, sails the sea in the *Iron Hand*. Her crippled crew is adorned with a wide variety threatening prosthetics.
11. The *Dead Templar* belongs to the Marquis de Majeron, married to the High Lady of Riang.
12. Anthony Geryon leads the bloodthirsty crew of the the *World Eater*.
13. The iron-clad *Ultramarine* leads the fleet of Geord McCaul, an entirely typical pirate king.
14. The crew of the *Dusk Raider* carries 1000 diseases. It is said Commodore Gyar prefers it that way.
15. Arturan the warlock researches unspeakable magics aboard the *Thousandth Daughter*.
16. Cthonia the Despoiler, Warmistress of the Rogue Traitors has three flagships: the *Daughters of Nephthys*, the *Lunar Wolf* and the *Black Fifty*.
17. The *Word Bearer* bears Sullen Culchis, Priest of the Slime on his endless inquisition.
18. Mad King Noctur incinerates all that oppose her from the deck of the flame-resistant *Salamander* with oil bombs and flaming arrows. His fleet is (predictably) small, and (predictably) much feared.
19. Lord Korax is captain of the *Deliverer*, and his crew are dead men walking.
20. The Conjoined Queen Alpha Lygeia rules the *Hydra* and the largest fleet in the Traitor navy.

The Pack

There is a magic ritual that creates a pack-bond, practiced deep in the jungle.

Once the ritual is completed all the members share pain, become fiercely defensive of each other, have an easier time working together, etc. When someone picks a fight with one, all of a sudden they are all involved.

The ritual takes a night to complete, and then is in effect for a month.

A small group of youths in the nice part of town - the Gold Ward - has found a ritualist living in the Blinds that taught them the means. Now they rampage through the ward doing minor vandalism, and traveling across town to mess with the middle class.

The animal spirits that are tied to the youths have been pushing them further and further. Recently they injured an elderly couple driving a stolen carriage through Orbridge. Next time they might commit a major theft, or kill someone.

SEE BtVS S01E06, "The Pack"

NPCs

Lord Artemis Garda

A young (13-year-old) genius, the last scion of the House of Garda. Made a deal with a fey court during the catastrophe that wiped out the rest of his immediate family. Now he has a fey butler/valet/bodyguard that accompanies him everywhere.

Is a warlock of the archfey, with a Pact of the Chain (his butler) and a bunch of familiar-improving stuff such that his bodyguard is, like, CR 6 or 7. His incantations and spells focus on non-combat information gathering, given that his Cha is so-so and his Int is great.

Balain

She is a shadowcaster, the most influential member of the Lodge of Dusk, and a member of the Gray Family.

Pashameen

The medusa. She wanders the streets in a heavy veil, collecting books and knowledge and living very comfortably. She's one of three sisters, possibly kicking around since the war between the titans and the gods, and she's definitely blessed by Asmushneth. She breeds snakes to read them and attempt to understand the direction of the world.

Regnus Steelheart

A member of the Pelte, he leads the day watch, now nicknamed the Steelhearts. The story goes that he got the name from his badge. He breaks a bit off the sword or knife of everyone he personally bests in a duel and smelts it onto his badge. Or, rather, it started as a badge: it's now more a breastplate of hammered sword-bits.

His men do the same, and you can tell their ranks, basically, by the sizes of their badges.

Think of him as Clint Eastwood in a time before guns. As badass as you can be, with a poncho and a longsword.

Stone Blood

The genius loci of Talmussin, Stone Blood is a very well educated, relatively friendly city spirit. It spends most of its time in the Glass and Ivory Wards among the University students. It can be found in public parks chatting with undergrads like a professor emeritus. He's afforded every respect by the Uni students and staff, and has a kind of deference from virtually everyone in the city.

He's a Huge creature with a shape like a gorilla made of brick and mortar, with no perceptible features but wearing a set of spectacles with lenses the size of manhole covers.

Tesh Havak

A half-giant plutocrat and member of the Ekletheon Orthodox Church, with the titles of Chaplain-Ambassador and Deacon.

He also happens to be 100% off his damn rocker and is the force behind a number of recent high-profile murders.

Vakker the Barghest

A barghest that's taken the form of a greasy gent that looks like the Thief from *The Thief and the Cobbler*. He runs a shop called Bloody Good Stuff, which is a secondhand shop backed against a canal in the Knives district.

He's a well-known fence, with little bits and bobs from anywhere he can buy them, but who specializes in gems. He's a decent gemcutter, and so will buy stolen jewels, recut them, and flog them again. He occasionally does a bit of business in small magic items or objects d'art, but isn't as comfortable there because he can't accurately appraise them - not his wheelhouse.

He also goes out and eats someone about once a week, keeping the bodies in the basement until he can butcher them, strip them of their possessions, and then dump the bodies into the canal along with all the butcher's shops on the same canal. He then keeps the possessions for a few months or years, and sells them in his shop. He tries to target the poor that won't be missed at all.

He's constantly anxious, afraid of being caught by the Pelte, the Church, or the relatives of his victims.

Lantern Jack

A princeling of the Autumn Court of the fey around here, Lantern Jack is tough to get along with. He comes from a time back when Jack meant a masculine noble, and so his name really translates to 'lantern knight' or something similar.

He sates his desire for fear by abducting folk when he's not attending some mortal ball or event or whatever it is. At night he wanders about, finds folk that are talking about him, and snatches them away to his manse in the feywild, where they stay - usually forever.

As his name indicates, he carries around an ornate little lantern. The shadows it throws are under his command. He's also got an enchanted rope that he can climb into his treehouse in the feywild, or that can wrap up an abductee and drag them into the feywild with him.

SEE Candlejack

Lucky Lins Halafa

Lins is a member of the Gray Family, and a bookie. He lends at very reasonable rates until he senses weakness, and then begins to lean on his debtors. Once he has his hooks in someone he'll make sure their life stays very easy if they lend him their influence, their cash, and information. If they try to buck him, he'll set out to ruin them financially and socially. He's a terrible blackmailer and loan shark. Also a member of the Balacazar family.

Captain Edelein

Guard Captain Edelein is a high-ranking member of the Pelte, assigned to the docks and running the daylight shift of the customs offices. He's a devotee of Governor through-and-through, dedicated to her vision for the city.

He's a member of the Eshah family, a lesser noble family that purchases Pelte officers titles for its scions habitually, and so comes from a strong military background.

He's also in deep with Lucky Lins Balacazar, having a weakness for dog races and a bad eye for odds.

Finally, he is the sole human contact of Son of Cyran, a blue wyrmling sand dragon that he hatched from an egg. At first he was curious and wanted to see if he could raise a good-aligned blue dragon from nothing, but lately he's been more and more nervous, and is trying to find a way to turn the wyrmling over to the Pelte or Governor's office without incriminating himself.

Eyeless Masi

The highest-level cleric of Obeccai in the city, but not a high-ranking member of the clergy. His eyes have been plucked out of his head, leaving empty sockets. On each shoulder perches a small owl, each with an eyeball in their beaks.

Pyrus Don'hvezzar

A dy'ar'i wizard. He appears young, perhaps 17 or 18, but in elven years that makes him 120. While most elves gather experience slowly as they age, making brief forays out from home between long stints spent in the grove, dy'ar have to do things a little differently.

Pyrus in particular launched himself into adventuring some time ago, and went just as hard as he possibly could, getting levels like crazy. Either that, or he's used magic/been cursed/whatever to appear much younger than he is. Whichever way, he has old, old eyes.

He's a professor at a University in the obscure field of magical atomics, which is essentially the attempt to break the pieces of magic down to as small a unit as is possible. The smallest element of magic so far found is a thaumecule, but Pyrus theorizes there is a thaumatom, something that makes up thaumecules. His field is so specialized he has one lecture class attended by one or two students, and some semesters an apprentice on a special project.

He dresses in an adventuring wizard's getup: very thin, wide strips of leather bound around his torso and limbs as armor, all of them terminating in an elaborate buckle of gold and rubies in the shape of an ox's head, the horns of which form the mouth of a scabbard. A shortsword hangs at his side, the blade a dull dark gray and the handle wrapped in sharkskin. Little red sigils float up and down the blade's channel. He has a pair of black leather boots that sometimes crackle as he steps over puddles, and over this all he has thrown a thick red velvet scholar's robe to keep himself warm, its edges sewn with golden geometric designs and tassels. He carries with him a staff of white stone, the color like alabaster or milk dropped into quartz. The edges are obtuse angles, the planes gently curved and bowed. Overall it appears almost like a snake carved of white crystal, and he mutters to it constantly - it is his familiar, and a *staff of the python*, which stands upright wherever he leaves it.

Beautiful Dayn

Gender-swap this dude at need.

A very pretty young man, maybe 25-30, with a lazy eye. His eyes are gorgeous, he just happens to have one that's permanently looking at his nose. The guy looks like Tarkan, or Jake Gyllenhaal as the prince of Persia. Smooth olive skin, light stubble, gently waved ink-black hair.

Unlike them, he appears mussed. His hair is slept-on, his clothes haven't been washed in a bit. He's maybe sleeping rough, or new to town after a long travel.

He has a sad backstory: maybe something like having lost a young wife to a terrible disease because there was no mundane cure and he couldn't afford a cleric's magic. He doesn't trust the church at this point, but doesn't begrudge anyone their faith. Instead he tries to find medicinal cures to illnesses. He still hasn't defined the cure to his young wife's disease, but he's found cures or remedies or treatments for several others. He carries around a stack of hand-drawn herbals and anatomical references. He's got ink on his fingertips, always, in a rainbow of colors. He smells of plants and perfumes and paper and the sourness of ink.

Once upon a time he was a member of the church, as well, but has since given up his robes and his magic.

Might be a quiet rebel against the Brotherhood of Redemption, the Orthodoxy, and/or the Governor.

Might just need to learn to love again.

Speaks quietly, loves painting and poetry, but has kept himself from practicing because it feels too frivolous. Quick-witted, never crass, strong moral compass.

Amarth the Merchant

Amarth calls himself a merchant, though truly he left such a humble term behind long ago. He is one of the few merchant-princes that has not yet been subsumed or compromised by the Satchins-Milliner-deVry Company.

This owes much to his ambition for legacy: everything else is secondary to leaving his mark on the city. In this pursuit he has built a criminal empire that runs beneath and parallel to his businesses, and which support those businesses.

Amarth is a half-giant, with a lot of muscle (both literal and hired) that keeps his offices in the nice part of town, but works often from the warehouses of the docks districts, keeping his hand in.

Think, like, Kingpin, but with hair.

Canary Lip

A witch with a tiny bird familiar that she keeps in her mouth. When she needs to speak she opens her mouth and the bird hops out to her lip to speak for her. She doesn't seem to have a tongue.

Curiosities of Mura

Portals

Certain places, due to magical confluxes of energy and remnants of essence storms, harbor semi-permanent portals to other planes. The portals are often difficult to pass through (are only accessible one day a year, or only accept a certain kind of person, or have a bizarre kind of key to open it, or what have you).

The portals are usually stable and stationary, though some roam within a small area (like one to Arborea may take the form of a walking tree that wanders through a patch of woods, and when one passes between the roots of the tree it activates the portal). The portals are also often the lairs of beasts that study them or use them to travel (especially spell weavers and similar).

These portals transport travelers by different means. Some teleport those that walk through, while some merely shorten the journey by passing between planes. The most common natural portals are pathways through the fae lands, though some go through the shadow plane or the astral. These paths are invariably dangerous. Those portals that offer swift and safe travel are sought out and tended by clerics of Avaleya, and shrines to her are often built at the entrance and exit.

Some very few portals are not naturally occurring and tended, but instead constructed. These gates are generally permanent *gates* or *teleportation circles*, and offer instantaneous travel between locations or planes. These incredibly expensive constructions are unknown outside of great cities and arcane sanctuaries.

Making Magic Items

Magic items are extraordinarily difficult to create, and so very few mages spend their time doing so. Those who dedicate a lifetime to it may produce a single major item or a dozen lesser relics. The tradeoff is generally considered unacceptable. Instead, magic items are generally brought to the Prime Material by outsiders, since even the materials of their home planes take on unusual qualities in the Material planes. Other sources include blessings of minor deities, spell weavers, sharn, phaerimm and a few aberrations that have many, many lifetimes to spend crafting magical items in their off time.

Watchtowers

Scattered throughout the land are great structures called Watchtowers. Watchtowers are structures built to not only withstand the vicious Essence storms but harness them. These structures vary in size and shape, from a slender tower of glass to a floating wooden cube to a monumental stone mountain fastness. Each Watchtower must have a master to be functional. Mastery over a Watchtower is unique. The Watchtower's designer and creator decides how mastery is gained. Some require the mixing of powerful elixirs, some require solving fiendishly difficult puzzles, and some require being painted in the blood of enemies.

Once mastery of a Watchtower is gained it is held until another master claims the Watchtower or the current master dies. Mastery grants unique and remarkable powers. All of these powers are magical in nature. Some towers grant their master the ability to cast spells, some allow their master to summon assistance from other planes, and some grant great skill in combat.

Not all Watchtowers are equal. A Watchtower is classified as lesser, moderate, or greater. Lesser towers are not weak - the master of a lesser tower will gain remarkable abilities that wouldn't be possible without many years of training otherwise. A moderately powerful tower makes its master a formidable general, a renowned thief, or an intimidating spellcaster. Greater towers grant their masters god-like powers over a very small domain, and a master of a greater tower may command armies, cast earth-shattering spells, or go toe-to-toe with demons and dragons.

A master of a Watchtower gains certain abilities just for establishing control of the tower. The master of a tower also gains abilities upon reaching certain levels. The master gains these powers upon attaining the listed level, no matter what class levels. Hit dice gained from spells or creature level adjustments don't count. Some towers have additional requirements or tests before level-dependent powers can be claimed. If a tower grants the ability to cast a spell the related ability score is always Charisma. If a tower grants a spell a number of times per day equal to Charisma it grants the spell a minimum of once per day.

There are dozens of Watchtowers, and only a handful are claimed. Not all of the masters are known to the public. A list of towers is below.

Tower of Aid (lesser): This tower is a modestly sized mottled white hemisphere protruding from the ground with only one entrance. The tower requires a supplicant to pray at the center of the dome for ten days and ten nights. The supplicant must be of a good alignment, and must prepare for a month beforehand by tending to the sick, weary, and needy. A test of moral questions takes place at the end of the prayer and the tower lends its power to the supplicant.

Native: The master of the tower grants a +1 bonus on ability checks to allies within 5 ft.

Level 2: The master of the tower can use *lay on hands* as a paladin of half his level (so a fifth level ranger could use lay on hands as a second level paladin, for example).

Level 5: The master of the tower can use the Help action in combat as a bonus action.

Level 8: The master of the tower can use *raise dead* once per day (with no material component cost) on a creature that has been dead less than ten minutes (rather than ten days, as the spell dictates).

Tower of Ash (moderate): A seeker at the tower of ash must be someone that's broken a major vow (a cleric or paladin that turned from their god, a monk that has given up their ki powers and changed classes, a warlock that has broken their contract, etc.). The tower's seeker has to perform a complex ritual and solve several puzzles before burning the tower down. From the ashes of the old tower a new one pushes up, made of charred black wooden beams and soot-covered stone.

Native: The master of the tower is immune to fire damage, does not suffocate in smoky conditions, and can see through smoke.

Level 3: The master of the tower learns the *fire bolt* cantrip and can tell the location and size of any fire within 1000 feet. With an action the master of the tower can extinguish or ignite fires the size of a torch or smaller (though to ignite something there must be something to burn).

Level 7: The master of the tower can step into one fire and out of another as part of a movement action, moving up to 500 feet between the flames. The fires must be campfire sized, at least (big enough to step into). The master of the tower can also extinguish or ignite fires of that size as an action.

Level 11: The master of the tower can heal using fire damage. Holding coals or standing in fire heals 1 hit point per round. The master can also cast the *fire storm* spell a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. In addition the master of the Watchtower of Ash can extinguish or ignite fires of bonfire size as an action. Finally, things that the master of the tower burns stay burnt - spells like *mending* cannot be used to repair them. Even the shadow or ethereal reflections of burnt things are gone permanently. This cannot destroy artifacts or other indestructible objects. *Requirement:* To gain this suite of powers the master of the tower must burn down a dozen buildings at once with no other intent than to watch them burn and satisfy this requirement (a portion of a city, most of a village, etc.).

Tower of Battles (moderate): The tower of battles is a fortress of gray stone and iron that can only be breached by the strongest combatant. Gargoyles and golems roam the halls and ward off intruders. A warrior must fight their way to the center of the keep and best the tower's patron spirit in solo combat to gain mastery.

Native: The master of the tower is proficient in all weapons, no matter how strange. This includes unarmed attacks. He also has a +1 luck bonus to armor class, attack and damage rolls.

Level 3: The master of the tower gains a fighting style, like a ranger or fighter, learns two maneuvers from the battle master abilities of a fighter and gains two superiority dice. The master can also cast the spell *aura of vitality* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma. *Requirement:* To gain this power the master of the tower must seek out, challenge, and fight an enemy with more class levels than he has.

Level 7: The master of the tower gains two more superiority dice and learns two more maneuvers. In addition the master gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. *Requirement:* To gain this power the master of the tower must seek out, challenge, and fight an enemy with more class levels than he has.

Level 11: The master of the tower doubles the damage of all weapons (rolling twice the usual number of dice), and learns another fighting style and two more maneuvers. *Requirement:* To gain this power the master of the tower must seek out, challenge, and fight an enemy with more class levels than he has.

Tower of Blight (moderate): A blight not only in name but in shape, this tower appears to be a ragged blot or growth on the side of a cliff. Black tendrils spread from the tower and a noxious fog surrounds it. Becoming the master of the tower of blight requires devising a new ritual or spell that has never been seen or used before, and which must be destructive, dangerous, or otherwise evil. The tower is filled with its own dangers to overcome first, of course.

Native: The master of the tower has resistance to necrotic damage, and advantage on damaging necromancy spells. Mastery of the tower causes the master's blood to turn black and sludgy, and his skin to become waxen and corpse-like.

Level 3: The master of the tower is infused with necrotic energy and can make unarmed attacks with proficiency. These touches deal 2d6 necrotic damage, and on a hit the master of the tower gains half that damage as hit points.

Level 7: The master of the tower can cast *blight*, *bestow curse*, and *blindness/deafness* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Level 11: The master of the tower is considered kin by the undead and they will not attack without being provoked or commanded. As well the master of the tower can animate the dead once per day, as per the *create undead* spell. This requires dripping a bit of the caster's own blood on the eyes and tongue of the corpse. The undead type created is dependent on the caster's level, as shown below. *Requirement:* To gain this power the master of the tower must kill a loved one or innocent (usually a child) and defile the corpse at the Watchtower of Blight.

Level 11-13: skeleton, zombie, or ghoul

Level 14-16: ghast or wight

Level 17-20: mummy

Tower of Blood (moderate): In the middle of a glen and surrounded by pools of clotted and fresh blood is a slick marble spire. Inside the spire is only blood. When the doors open blood spills out. When the walls are struck, they bleed. A veritable wellspring of blood seeps up through the foundations below. Those who wish to claim the tower must let the blood of a hundred willing participants over ten days, and then dive through the lakes of blood to reach the heart of the tower and make a deal with the tower itself. This often involves a sacrifice.

Native: The master of the tower does not bleed. Spells and abilities that cause bleeding damage have no effect.

Level 3: The master of the tower is able to expend three hit points to form a lash of blood for one minute. The master of the tower is proficient with the weapon, which takes one action to create. The whip of blood can target any creature within 30 feet as an attack. It deals 3d10 bludgeoning damage, though the target can make a Reflex save for half damage. The master of the tower can choose to pull or push the target 25 feet in any direction on a successful hit or knock the target prone, though the Reflex save negates this effect.

Level 7: The master of the tower can draw the blood from others in droplets or in fountains. As an action the master targets a single injured creature (with blood - no undead or constructs) within 60 feet. That creature must make a Constitution saving throw. That creature takes 1d10 points of damage for each unhealed wound they have. The master of the tower heals half this much. Any excess hit points are gained as temporary hit points that last 10 minutes. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must bleed a living creature of at least 100 hit points. Whether or not this kills the creature is irrelevant.

Example: During a fight the master of the tower is struck twice, once for 6 damage and once for 4. His enemy, an ogre, is struck four times for 3, 9, 10 and 14 damage. The master of the tower drains the ogre's blood. This forces the ogre to make a Constitution saving throw immediately. The save fails, and so the ogre takes 4d10 damage; 1d10 per each wound it had taken. The master of the tower rolls 29 damage, and gains half that (14 points). 10 points go to heal the master's wounds, and 4 points are gained as temporary hp that will fade or be used in 10 minutes.

Level 11: The master of the tower learns how to push people's bodies around using their own blood. This functions as *dominate person* with the following changes: the saving throw is a Strength saving throw instead of Wisdom; being openly hostile to the target does not allow advantage on the saving throw; the master must spend a bonus action each turn controlling the target's movement. This ability can be used once per day. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must bathe in blood once a month. This requires around 30 gallons of blood (around 20 humans' worth). If the master of the tower skips this requirement he loses this power until the requirement is met.

Tower of Cages (lesser): Some mad and heretical priest must have built this temple to Werethekau's works. The tower of cages is a single slender structure with pillories, cages, and gibbets hung from spars on the side of the spire. The tower has hundreds of ingenious traps, most of them designed to capture or trap the supplicant. To master the tower a supplicant must bypass every trap to reach the top, and then choose a cage to hang in for a month straight.

Level 2: The master of the tower gains proficiency in thieves' tools. He is also considered proficient when making ability checks to restrain a target, whether using shackles, ropes, etc. The master of the tower can also cast *arcane lock* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Level 5: The master of the tower can cast *hold person* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. Additionally the master of the tower can spend a week crafting a *glyph of warding*. The glyph contains the spell *magic circle*. The circle is inverted (containing a creature rather than barring it from the circle), and

targets only the creature that triggered the *glyph*, no matter the creature's type. This glyph is permanent until triggered, and the *magic circle* has a duration of one day.

Level 8: The master of the tower cannot be tied up or restrained by shackles, cuffs, etc. The master of the tower has advantage against magical effects used to restrain (such as *hold person*, *imprisonment*, etc.). The master of the tower also has advantage when attempting to escape magical restraints (enchanted manacles, for example). Finally, the master of the tower can cast *forcecage* once per week.

Tower of Changes (greater): Not a single person could say how the tower of changes looks - after all, it's always changing. Brick by brick the structure warps and shifts. This presents the first challenge to intruders. Finding a way through the ever-altering maze inside is a devilishly difficult challenge. Beyond that the tower was built at the center of an unstable magical field, and a minor Essence storm surrounds it at all times. The tower does not protect against it, but intensifies it, and inside it is a severe Essence storm (less the winds and rain, of course). A number of creatures roam the halls, most of them agents of Limbo drawn to the powerful chaotic aura.

Native: The master of the tower has advantage on saving throws against polymorph effects, and can wild shape as a druid of the circle of the moon, using his total levels as his druid levels when calculating the limits of the wild shape.

Level 4: The master of the tower can use *alter self* at will, and *enlarge/reduce* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Level 9: The master of the tower can make use of any transmutation spell of fifth level or lower once per day. The master of the tower need not select this spell when preparing spells in the morning, but can choose at the time of casting.

Level 14: The master of the tower can cast *shapechange* once per day, with the following changes: there is no material component required, the spell's duration is only 10 minutes, and the form assumed can be any at all including the undead or a construct.

Tower of Day (greater): This turret shines fiercely from every open window. The master of the tower of day is chosen personally by Foyes, the god of the sun. However, some say Foyes can be tricked.

Native: The master of the tower learns the cantrip *light*.

Level 4: The master of the tower is able to fire bolts of searing fire as a ranged weapon. The master of the tower is proficient with this attack. The bolts deal 2d6 radiant damage, have a range of 120 feet, and leave the target shining as though struck by a *guiding bolt*.

Level 9: The master of the tower can cast *daylight* at will, though only targeting a held item or himself. The radiant bolt weapon available to the master of the tower now deal 3d6 damage. Once per day the master of the tower can cast *circle of power*. In addition the master of the tower can Channel Divinity as a cleric with levels equal to his own. This channel can only be used to turn the undead, or to use Radiance of the Dawn if he has access to that ability.

Level 14: The master of the tower can become the sun incarnate for up to 10 minutes a day. The caster's form becomes that of an elder fire elemental, though attacks deal radiant damage rather than fire

damage. While in this form the master of the tower gains the ability to cast each of these spells once: *burning hands*, *faerie fire*, *flaming sphere*, *scorching ray*, *fireball*, *guardian of faith*, *wall of fire*, *flame strike*, *scrying* as a cleric with the Light domain. He also gains access to the abilities *Warding Flare*, *Channel Divinity: Radiance of the Dawn*, *Improved Flare*, and *Corona of Light* while in this form, again as a cleric with the Light domain.

Tower of Deceit (lesser): Unique among the Watchtowers, the tower of deceit has no single way to be claimed. The tower is infused with a powerful air spirit and it appreciates attempts to fool it or steal the mastery of the tower. The straightforward path is to find the tower (not easy, as it appears to be a run-down farmhouse at first glance), find a way in (all entrances are locked and most of them are trapped), and then find a way to the heart of the tower (drop-walls, hidden doors, and cunningly placed sliding stairs characterize this particular tower). At the center of the tower is a golem sphinx that asks three riddles, all of them deceitful and tricky. If they are all three answered 'correctly' then mastery is bestowed. However, most masters of the tower achieve their station by tricking others.

Level 2: The master of the tower can mimic the voices and mannerisms of those he's observed for at least ten minutes. The imitation is perfect, though of course he doesn't look like his target. This grants the master of the tower advantage on ability checks made to imitate someone, provided an adequate disguise can be found.

Level 5: The master of the tower may use *disguise self* at will, and *nystul's magic aura* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Level 8: The master of the tower may cast the spell *glibness* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier, with the following changes to the spell: the duration is one round, and the casting time is a bonus action. In addition the master of the tower can deceive detection spells at will, including showing any alignment when in the area of a *detect evil/good* spell and being able to create false responses to *detect thoughts* or similar. This does not counter *protection from evil/good*, or other alignment-based spells - only detection spells. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must skin a doppleganger and craft a cloak from the hide.

Tower of Focus (lesser): Windows studded with glass lenses, arcane markings pressed into the very bricks, ivy crawling up toward the green copper roof - everything about this building speaks of careful tending. The tower is a rambling structure with many rooms and a number of spires. The tower is rumored to be what remains of the college Obeccai founded during his life. Those that seek the tower must meditate for a dozen days in the courtyard, then enter the tower and solve a series of riddles and puzzles to claim mastery of the tower.

Native: The master of the tower gains proficiency in the Arcana skill, and can cast *detect magic* at will.

Level 2: The master of the tower can cast *identify* a number of times per day equal to his Intelligence modifier, with the following change: the casting time of the spell is one action.

Level 5: The master of the tower can cast *dispel magic* a number of times per day equal to his Intelligence bonus, with the following change: the master of the tower must make a check for all spell effects, not only those of fourth level or higher. In addition the master of the tower reduces the time

needed to learn a tool proficiency or language from 350 days to 100, and reduces the time needed to research something by two thirds as well.

Level 8: The master of the tower can cast *legend lore* once per week, and the spell requires no material components. Further, the master can spend one hour per day as a polyglot, benefitting from the spells *speak with animals*, *speak with plants*, *speak with dead*, *tongues*, and *comprehend languages* all at once. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must eat an entire book, one at least 250 pages long. The book can be consumed page by page or all at once, but must be eaten in a day.

Tower of Gold (lesser): Masters of the tower of gold are masters of trade as well. Having money is required to enter the tower - several pounds of the potential master's own gold must be melted and cast into a huge key to get in. Once in there are a number of deals, trades, and trials before the tower can be claimed. The tower's powers can be difficult to understand, but every master has grown immensely wealthy after obtaining the tower's blessings.

Native: The master of the tower earns twice what they normally would when performing, plying a trade, or running a business.

Level 2: The master of the tower has advantage when making ability checks to understand an economic system, arrange a trade, or run a business.

Level 5: The master of the tower can cast *bestow curse* once per day, though the curse does only one thing. A target cursed by the master of the tower will fall into financial ruin. For the space of one year the target of the curse will lose half his coin each night, businesses will fail, stock will go bad twice as quickly as normal and products will break with alarming regularity.

Level 8: The master of the tower can cast *creation* once per day, with the following changes to the spell: the spell can only be used to create gemstones, precious metals, and works of art; and the spell's duration is until sundown or sunup comes.

Tower of Growth (moderate): Green and growing things surround this tower and even make up the tower itself. An enormous and hollow but still living tree forms the outer walls. Roots and branches cross to other trees nearby that are tied into the tower as well. Those that seek to establish control of the tower of growth have to show a kindness to good and growing things. Befriending a bearhound is a start, and after that a druidic circle must bless the supplicant. They must then live off the forest alone and see no other civilized people for thirty days. Then the tower will accept the supplicant only then.

Native: The master of the tower learns the *druidcraft* cantrip, and gains proficiency with the Nature skill.

Level 3: The master of the tower can *speak with plants*, as the spell, and is immune to any non-magical poison made of plants.

Level 7: The master of the tower can cast *plant growth* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. In addition the master of the tower is affected as if by *freedom of movement*, with the caveat that only natural restraints are affected by the spell (that is, a druid's *entangle* spell cannot reduce the master's speed, but a wizard's *web* spell might).

Level 11: The master of the tower can cast the following spells once per day: *tree stride*, *transport via plants*, *wall of thorns*. Further, the master of the tower gains the plant type, resistance to bashing and piercing damage, and immunity to poisons and diseases that do not affect plants. *Requirement*: The master of the tower must abstain from eating plants, choosing instead to consume only flesh. This does not put the master of the tower at risk of scurvy, as might be expected.

Tower of Health (moderate): Holy to followers of Umain, the Watchtower of Health is an impeccably clean cube of white marble and nickel. Inside and surrounding the tower are hundreds of deathlights (lantern archons). The deathlights both guard the tower and judge those attempting to master it.

Native: The master of the tower has advantage on saving throws against diseases and poisons, and automatically stabilizes when reduced to negative hit points. Damage dealt to the master of the tower while he is at negative hit points can still cause automatic failures on death saving throws.

Level 3: The master of the tower gains the ability to heal others. The master of the tower gains a number of 'health dice' equal to twice his level. With an action the master can target any living creature within 15 feet and spend any number of these dice. The target rolls that many d6s, and gains hit points equal to the result. These health dice refresh when the master of the tower finishes a long rest.

Level 7: The master of the tower is affected by *death ward* continually, as though it were cast on the tower's master once each eight hours. As well, the master of the tower may expend three health dice to remove one of the following conditions from a target: blinded, deafened, paralyzed, poisoned. This can be done as part of a greater healing (spending eight health dice to cure a target of 2d6 damage and the blinded and poisoned conditions would be a single action, for example).

Level 11: The master of the tower can expend ten health dice to cast *heal*. *Requirement*: The master of the tower must spend at least one day each month ministering the sick and needy.

Tower of Ice (moderate): Atop a frosted mountain in the far north is a mound of blue ice riddled with tunnels and halls. This gigantic igloo is guarded by a construct of stone, silver, and glass shaped like a dragon. The dragon-golem guardian has powerful magic of its own and has placed a number of curses and wards on the tower. Those that evade or defeat the guardian, survive the bitter cold, and bypass some wicked traps can stake their claim to the tower.

Native: The master of the tower has immunity to cold damage, and moves normally on ice (no slipping or sliding). Further, the master of the tower can see with clarity even in a blizzard.

Level 3: The master of the tower can chill targets with a touch. This is a melee attack with which the master of the tower is proficient. The attack deals 2d10 cold damage.

Level 7: The master of the tower can cast *sleet storm* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. The master of the tower also gains a ranged attack. This attack deals 2d10 cold damage to a single target within 120 feet. The master's skin turns icy and stiff, and he is affected by a permanent *barkskin* effect, though the armor class granted by the spell is 13 rather than 16. The downside to this is that the master of the tower now has a vulnerability to fire damage.

Level 11: The master of the tower can cast *flesh to stone* once per day, though the target is turned to ice rather than stone. If the creature melts while made of ice it is dead. The master of the tower can also create an ice storm as though using the *control weather* spell once per day. He can move the weather conditions two steps by using this power, though he can only make conditions stormier and colder. Finally, the master of the tower is protected by *armor of agathys*. This protection grants the normal 5 temporary hit points, and deals 5 cold damage to an attacker. This pool of temporary hit points increases by 5 each hour to a maximum of 5 per 2 class levels (so a thirteenth level master of the tower would have 30; $13/2 = 6.5$, rounded down to 6, $6*5 = 30$). The damage dealt to a melee attacker is always equal to the remaining temporary hit points granted by this ability. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must

Tower of Instinct (moderate): The Druidic Circle of the Moon reveres this place, and druids are the most common masters of the tower. Despite the name this place is more a burrow than a tower. Many miles of tunnels are dug out beneath an unassuming wooden and clay hovel. At the center of the warren a perpetual bonfire rests. Supplicants must throw into the fire all their ties to civilization and renounce the affects of modernity and humanity in a dance with beasts.

Native: The master of the tower gains proficiency with the Handle Animal skill, and can cast *animal friendship* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Level 3: The master of the tower can *speak with animals*, as the spell, at will.

Level 7: The master of the tower can call a pack as though casting *conjure animals*. These summoned creatures remain indefinitely, following the master of the tower. If the pack is slain they are replenished by one animal per hour until the pack is complete again. These animals are always aware of the location of the master of the tower and will obey his commands. If the master of the tower is separated from the pack he can send out a telepathic call and the animals will return as quickly as they can.

Level 11: The master of the tower can use the spell *animal shapes* once per month. Each creature to be transformed must consume the heart of the animal they will transform into.

Tower of Night (greater): While most towers are obvious, or at least physically present, the Watchtower of Night exists only on the plane of shadow. Those that seek it will find only a flat stone plinth with inscribed hints and clues to the tower's location on another plane. A devotee of the Watchtower of Night not only has to make it to the shadow plane but defend against a circle of thirteen deathless shadowcasters tasked with guarding the tower, then find a way to make their ties to the shadowplane permanent (by becoming a shade, or being a shadowcaster, or otherwise taking some of the substance of the plane into themselves).

Native: The master of the tower can see into the shadow plane, and while on the shadow plane can see into the material plane.

Level 4: The master of the tower can cast *darkness* as a ritual spell, and gains darkvision 60 feet.

Level 9: The master of the tower can see 120 feet in darkness (magical or natural), and can use *plane shift* as a ritual spell once per week to shift to the plane of shadow.

Level 14: The master of the tower gains control of the Templar of Shadow. The Templar of Shadow is the remains of the previous master of the Watchtower of Shadow, a shadow-wreathed incorporeal being. The Templar has an alignment that matches the master of the tower's. The Templar of Shadow has the statistics of an greater air elemental on the plane of shadow, but does not physically manifest on the material plane, though it does appear as a column of black smoke or a black ghostly figure. It casts spells as a fifteenth level sorcerer, and these spells can easily cross the barrier between planes. The Templar follows its master, always attempting to stay within 60 feet unless commanded to guard an area or wait somewhere. The Templar awaits orders from its master before acting and never takes its own initiative (effectively it readies an action each round to do whatever the master of the tower commands it to do). *Requirement:* The Templar of Shadow comes to the master of the tower and offers its services, but the master of the tower must be willing to become the next Templar of Shadow. At the time of his death the master of the tower becomes a shadowy wraith and instantly teleports to the Watchtower of Shadow. He must obey the next master of the Watchtower of Shadow, and wait until a worthy supplicant reaches the requisite level. If the master of the tower refuses this deal he is stripped of all abilities granted by the Watchtower.

Tower of Pestilence (moderate): Shunned by all those but the darker priests of Umain the Plaguelord, this citadel of pestilence and plague corrupts and poisons the land around it. Animals in the area are mangy, frothing, and ill-tempered. Plants bloom only flowers with sticky, sickly petals. Those that remain too long without adequate protections contract rare and frequently disgusting diseases. Beyond the tower's reach the diseases are not communicable and so the tower does not spread plague everywhere. Supplicants must be adequately protected against this aura of disease. Beyond this there are legions of flesh golems made of the previous postulants, constructed in the laboratory in the bowels of the tower. Those who reach the laboratory and master the secrets of the tower by constructing their own golem can lay claim to the Watchtower of Pestilence.

Native: The master of the tower gains proficiency with the Medicine skill.

Level 3: The master of the tower gains immunity to diseases, and can cast *ray of sickness* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. The master of the tower gains a body modification from the list below.

Level 7: The master of the tower contracts one of the following diseases permanently: blinding sickness, filth fever, flesh rot, mindfire, or the slimy doom. Being immune to diseases, the master of the tower takes no damage and has no disadvantages. However, the master of the tower spreads the disease naturally. Those that come into contact with the master's bodily fluids contract the disease. The master of the tower also gains a body modification from the list below.

Level 11: The master of the tower can cast *animate objects* as a ritual spell once per day. The object animated this way acts as a carrier for the same disease the master of the tower carries. The master of

the tower can have a maximum of four animated objects active at any one time. These animated objects can only be created with the help of the laboratory in the Watchtower. The master of the tower can carry enough ichors and wires and springs to craft one animated object while on the move. Finally, the master of the tower gains a body modification from the list below.

Body Modifications:

The following modifications cannot be taken more than once. The master of the tower can choose to forgo an ability score improvement (such as that granted by most classes at fourth, eighth, twelfth, and sixteenth level) and instead take a body modification.

Amphibious Skin: This replaces your skin with a thick membrane. You become amphibious and can breathe in water or air.

Inksac: A thick and oily ink spreads in a cloud around the master of the tower if he is in water. A rancid smoke spews if he is on land. The effect is similar either way: in a ten foot radius the cloud provides concealment. A *daylight* spell dispels the cloud. This ability can be used once per minute.

Mucus Projector: The master of the tower gains an attack with a range of 30 feet that has a recharge of 6. A target struck by this phlegmy projection must make a Strength saving throw or begin to transform. Over the course of 1d4+1 minutes the target's skin turns clear and jelly-like. Once the transformation is complete the target must stay moist or take 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. If *remove curse* is cast during the transformation it is immediately stopped. If the transformation completes it can only be cured by casting *heal*.

Burrowing Claws: This graft replaces both the recipient's hands with thick-fingered claws. The master of the tower gains a burrowing speed of 20 feet, but has disadvantage on rolls involving fine manipulation (such as opening locks or writing fine calligraphy). The master also gains a natural melee attack dealing 1d6 slashing damage.

Wolf Eyes: The master of the tower gains darkvision 60 feet.

Chitin Plating: This series of interlocking plates acts like scale mail that can be worn at all times, even while sleeping. The master of the tower is, of course, considered proficient with this natural armor.

Flexible Skeleton: The master of the tower rubberizes his own skeleton. He has advantage on ability checks made to balance on narrow surfaces, squeeze into tight spaces, or to tumble and roll.

Extended Legs: The master of the tower gets a fine new set of legs, increasing his height by a few inches and his base speed by 5 feet.

Healing Blood: The master of the tower gains fast healing 1.

Rudimentary Eyespots: The master of the tower gains advantage on sight-based Perception checks.

Silthilar Bones: The master of the tower replaces his skeleton with artificially grown bones, gaining +2 bonus to Constitution.

Silthilar Heart: A new artificial heart is grafted into the master of the tower. If the master of the tower ever drops to 0 hit points (but is not killed outright) the heart activates on the next round. This cures

1d10 hit points immediately, restoring the master of the tower to consciousness. This can be used once per day.

Silthilar Muscles: The master of the tower inserts newly grown muscles, gaining a +2 bonus to Strength.

Silthilar Reflexes: A series of nervous tissue and tendon grafts grants a +2 bonus to Dexterity.

Tower of Poison (lesser): On the outside this tower looks like a needle of black glass. On the inside it's full of stacked tomes and bubbling glass mechanisms. Light comes dimly through the black glass windows, supplemented by smoky fireplaces and elaborate candelabras. Thousands of retorts and vials line moldering wooden cabinets, each a sample of a distinct poison. Those looking to master the tower have to pass a series of tests and riddles, mostly pertaining to poisons and venoms. Failing one of the tests invariably means being poisoned by something vile and deadly.

Level 2: The master of the tower has advantage on saving throws versus poison, and learns the *poison spray* cantrip.

Level 5: The master of the tower can secrete a poison. This poison is delivered by a bite attack. The master of the tower is not necessarily proficient with this bite attack. The poison can be 'milked' from the master of the tower and used to coat a weapon. The poison has a Constitution saving throw DC equal to 8 + the master's proficiency bonus + the master's Constitution bonus. On a failed saving throw the poison deals 1d10 points of poison damage per three levels (so, for example, a tenth level master of the tower would deal 3d10 points of poison damage), and the target is poisoned for 1 minute. The poison retains its potency for one day.

Level 8: The master of the tower is immune to poison. As well the master of the tower can secrete his poison through his skin. This allows him to poison a held blade as a bonus action. A touch can communicate the poison as well, including unarmed attacks. The poison can also be ingested along with food or drink. Any creature that succeeds on a bite attack against the master of the tower must immediately save against the poison, as the master's blood is also poison. Finally the master of the tower can breathe out a cloud of poison in a ten foot cone, poisoning anyone that inhales it. The master of the tower can choose to delay the poison, with it taking effect up to ten minutes later. The master of the tower must choose the onset delay of the poison at the time it is secreted. Multiple doses of poison can build up in a single target - up to a maximum of ten. This means, for example, a master of the tower with unrestricted access could apply ten doses of poison to a target, all of which could be timed to take effect at once. The target would then save against the poison ten times in a row, potentially taking damage each time.

Tower of Rain (lesser): A perpetual halo of rainclouds surrounds the tall rain-slicked walls of this crenellated tower. At the center of the storm the wind doesn't blow and the rain slackens. The rainwater collects at the bottom of the tower in a black tarn, a moat full of pike and barracuda. Within the tower is trapped Matariel, the angel of rain. Appeasing or defeating the angel allows someone to claim mastery of the tower.

Level 2: The master of the tower can cast *create or destroy water*, but can only use it to create water. In addition the master of the tower gains a familiar: a tiny raincloud. The raincloud follows the caster

around, even indoors when possible. The cloud is a 10 foot cube that hovers at an altitude of 30 feet or so. It has the intelligence of a smart dog and complete obedience to its master. The master of the tower can ride the raincloud like a steed. It can carry only the master and 50 pounds of equipment, and has a movement speed of 50 feet.

Level 5: The master of the tower can cast *call lightning*, *water breathing*, and *water walk* once per day. The raincloud familiar granted at 3rd level can make attacks for its master. Once per turn it will fire a small bolt of lightning at a target it chooses (unless directed otherwise by its master). The bolt of lightning has a range of 50 feet and deals 2d8 damage, though a Dexterity saving throw can halve that.

Level 8: The master of the tower can cast *control weather* once per week, and *control water* once per day. In addition the raincloud familiar learns how to move its master by means of lightning. This can be used three times per day, and has an effect identical to *dimension door* as the cloud's lightning bolt strikes the master of the tower, then snaps out to the desired location.

Tower of Reeds (moderate): In the shallows in the sea, surrounded by low reeds is a spire built of lacquered reeds. It is empty except for a circle of stone beneath several inches of water. The circle summons a powerful water spirit. The water spirit controls the interior of the tower. When properly questioned and called upon the spirit will release the tower. Reeds and papyrus spring from the tower's outer walls, forming furniture, floors, stairs. The tower's interior is covered in blue octopus ink that spells out the secrets of the Watchtower. By completing the many logic and word puzzles the tower's visitor can claim mastery.

Native: The master of the tower can cast *detect magic* at will, gains advantage on linguistic cyphering and puzzles, and if the master of the tower has a spellbook the costs to copy a spell are halved. The master of the tower can also read scrolls and use wands from the sorcerer or wizard spell lists, whether or not he can cast sorcerer or wizard spells. If the master of the tower does not yet have a spellbook he gains one. This spellbook is empty. This does not grant the master of the tower the ability to cast spells, though at later levels he may trade sorcery points for spell slots as though they had been expended. The maximum level of the spell slots regained this way is always half the master's total class level.

Level 3: The master of the tower gains a pool of 3 sorcery points. These can be used to recover spent spell slots as described on page 101 of the Player's Handbook. The master of the tower also increases the number of spells he can prepare per day by one.

Level 7: The master of the tower gains 2 more sorcery points, and can prepare an additional spell each day. The master of the tower gains advantage on saving throws against spells cast by wizards and warlocks (though not warlock incantations).

Level 11: The master of the tower's sorcery pool once again increases by 2 points, and he can prepare an additional spell each day. When the master of the tower casts *contingency* the contingent spell's spell slot is not expended.

Tower of Serpents (greater): Asmushneth's oldets temple has been rechristened as the Watchtower of Serpents. The temple is a ziggurat with many outlying houses and turrets connected by underground Asmushneth. Amunet herself keeps a presence here; a Asmushneth must follow Amunet's teachings to

obtain mastery. The tower is policed by lizardfolk and scaled creatures of all kinds and one of the most ancient dragons waits at the altar beneath the ziggurat. The dragon must not be slain, merely made to submit. Once this Asmushneth done the priest of Asmushneth will gain the blessings of Amunet and the Watchtower of Serpents.

Native: The master of the tower is immune to any venom produced by a scaled thing, and can *speak with animals* with serpents and lizards of all kinds. The master of the tower can also read snakes as yuan-ti and medusas do.

Level 4: A thin sheen of reptilian scales covers the master of the tower. When the master of the tower is not wearing armor his AC is equal to 13 + his Dexterity modifier. In addition the master of the tower can summon a giant snake familiar. This snake has a venomous bite, and acts as a divine focus for clerical spells granted by Asmushneth. The snake also grants spells to the master of the tower, allowing him to cast spells as a cleric of Asmushneth. His cleric level is half his total class level. If the master of the tower was already a cleric of Asmushneth he can prepare one additional spell per day and adds 1 to his spell DCs and attack rolls.

Level 9: The master of the tower can *polymorph* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. The master can only use this ability to assume a reptilian or draconic form. He can still cast cleric spells while in this form. The master of the tower can use an action to assert the majesty of Asmushneth, producing an aura of awe or fear. The aura can be activated once per day, has a radius of 60 feet, and can be resisted by a Wisdom saving throw. This effect lasts for one minute. Creatures in the area are charmed or frightened, at the master's discretion.

Level 14: The master of the tower is blessed by Asmushneth personally and can no longer die. If he would be killed by hit point damage, poison, disintegration, etc., he is instead immediately teleported back to the Watchtower of Serpents with 1 hit point. Magical effects that prevent teleportation or interplanar travel prevent this as well, though the master of the tower is allowed a saving throw against the effect. This effect can be negated by a *wish* or by divine intervention.

Tower of Shades (moderate): While Manifest is the city of the dead, the Watchtower of Shades allows incredible control over and insight into the remains of the deceased. Shadows and ghosts are in thrall to the master of this tower. The tower itself exists only partly in the material plane, and in part in the ethereal plane. Those seeking entrance must be able to move back and forth between the two with ease. Those who manage the feat are confronted by three ghosts, the remains of powerful mages. Past these guardians a seeing stone rests. The stone forces one to view all the things on each plane, and all the differences that divide the two. Such a sudden revelation is harmful and difficult to withstand, but those that can recover are masters of the tower.

Native: The master of the tower can see into the ethereal plane, and while on the ethereal plane can see the material plane. This allows him to see ghosts, clearly perceive force effects, and target creatures on the ethereal plane (though this does not grant the master the ability to strike those foes).

Level 3: The master of the tower can cast *gentle repose*, *speak with dead*, and *charm person* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. *Charm person* can be used only on the deceased (ghosts, shades, even the corporeal undead).

Level 7: The master of the tower can physically affect targets in the ethereal plane. His full armor class applies against incorporeal attacks, he can attack corporeal targets normally, and can even cast spells into the ethereal plane. The master of the tower can also enthrall a ghost or shade. The spirit must have a challenge rating no higher than the master's level minus two. This spirit is *dominated* for an indefinite period. The master of the tower can release the spirit at any time.

Level 11: A number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier the master of the tower can use an action to move to the ethereal plane, and can remain there indefinitely. He can also return with an action. Once per day the master of the tower can *plane shift* to the ethereal plane, as the spell. The master may also retain a retinue of souls. These souls swarm around the master of the tower continuously and can be unleashed once per day. This takes an action and takes the form of a 20 foot radius burst centered on the master of the tower. The burst deals 1d8 necrotic damage per level to targeted enemies in the burst radius. A Charisma saving throw can halve this damage. While the souls still swarm (before they have been unleashed, or 24 hours later) they provide protection from force effects. This grants immunity to *magic missile*, resistance to other force damage, and advantage on saving throws against force effects.

Tower of Shields (lesser): "The best defense is a good offense," - this is folly. The best defense is not being hit. The Watchtower of Shields is a concrete manifestation of this truth. Claiming mastery of the tower is simple once a supplicant finds a way in. However, there are no doors. The tower is protected from ingress by teleportation, by passing through other planes, protected from magical intrusion by passwalls or shaping the earth, etc. Inside the impermeable bastion is an empty and barren, but highly defensible, single room.

Native: The master of the tower's skin is studded by small metal plates. When not wearing armor the master's armor class is equal to 15 + half the master's Dexterity modifier.

Level 2: The master of the tower can animate a shield. This requires a ten minute ritual, after which the shield leaps up and begins to dart about its master. The shield provides its normal armor class bonus but frees up the master's hands.

Level 5: The master of the tower can cast *shield* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. Further, any shield worn by the master of the tower or animated in service to the master gains a +1 enhancement bonus. If the shield is already magical this has no effect.

Level 8: Dozens of semi-tangible shields surround the master of the tower. This grants the master of the tower half cover. The master of the tower also gains resistance to piercing, bludgeoning, and slashing damage.

Tower of Sight (moderate): Legends abound of seeing stones and scrying pools. This tower is the world's greatest scrying tool. The tower is broad and low and inside is a deep and very still pool that takes up the entirety of the tower's floorspace. At the bottom is a mirror. On the ceiling above is a lens open to

the sky. Floating on the surface of the water, half submerged, is a large crystal orb. To attain the tower's use the crystal must be removed from the water without a single ripple disturbing the pool beneath.

Native: The master of the tower can use the tower's pool as a scrying focus. The crystal orb allows the master of the tower to view and use the pool from anywhere. The scrying pool is a powerful focus, imposing disadvantage on the target's saving throws against the scrying.

Level 3: The master of the tower can activate the scrying pool's powers three times per day. This allows the master of the tower to cast any of the spells accessible to the scrying pool. Any of the spells granted by the tower can be cast through a scrying sensor or using the scrying sensor as an origin point for the spell as well. For example, if the master of the tower casts *scrying* on a target using the pool, he can then cast *locate object* to search for something near the scrying sensor rather than near himself. Divination spells that the tower's master can cast without assistance can also be used through the scrying sensor without expending one of the three uses of the pool. The pool's granted spells are *detect magic*, *locate object*, *clairvoyance*, and *see invisibility*.

Level 7: The master of the tower gains access to the following spells through the scrying pool: *arcane eye*, *locate creature*, *scrying*. Casting these spells still counts against the three uses per day granted by the tower. Additionally the master of the tower can cast any first level spell or cantrip using the scrying sensor as an origin point for the spell.

Level 11: The master of the tower gains access to the following spells through the scrying pool: *true seeing*, *telepathy*. The master of the tower can also use the scrying sensor as a spell origination point for any spell of third level or less. Finally, the master of the tower can *teleport* directly to the scrying sensor once per week.

Tower of Souls (greater): Claiming a soul from the underworld requires the permission of Jagus for any but the master of the Watchtower of Souls. The tower's golden walls house fields of unstable magic, devious traps, messengers of Jagus, and a blessed mausoleum filled with the bodies of all the previous masters of the tower. A genius loci animates the mausoleum and presents the final and most dangerous challenge of the tower. Etching a name into the next golden plaque of the mausoleum grants mastery.

Native: The master of the tower gains a lantern archon as a spiritual guide and familiar.

Level 5: The master of the tower gains three 'death points' to use on the following abilities. The master can expend a death point to cast *speak with dead*, *gentle repose*, *revivify*, or *spare the dying*. The master of the tower gains one death point at the end of a long rest. The master of the tower can regain a death point by performing a one hour ritual sacrifice of a living being. The living being must be someone that has sinned against Jagus or has requested (of their own free will) that they be sent to Jagus for judgment.

Level 9: The master of the tower gains two death points to add to his pool. He also learns new ways to spend these points. He can expend two death points to cast *raise dead*, can spend a point to ignore the material component requirement of *raise dead*, and can spend a point to cast *aura of vitality*.

Level 14: The master of the tower gains two more death points to add to his pool, and learns new ways to spend these points. The master of the tower can spend three death points to cast *resurrection*, two

death points to ignore the material component of *resurrection*, four death points to cast *true resurrection*, three death points to ignore the material component of *true resurrection*, and can spend eight death points to *plane shift* to the throneroom of Jagus to request an audience. While in the throneroom the master of the tower and any allies brought with are under a protection unless they act against Jagus' angels. Finally, if the master of the tower is killed he can choose to expend death points at the moment of his death. These can be used to raise or resurrect the master of the tower if there are sufficient death points remaining to do so.

Tower of Strength (lesser): Beaten and battered but still standing, the rough sandstone of the tower juts up from a forest floor. It is covered in vines and surrounded by enchanted animals. The tower is easy to enter but difficult to leave: impossibly heavy stone walls and oaken portcullises close the supplicant in. At the center is a mock gladiatorial arena filled with ready champions and creatures. Defeating them in turn earns the favor of the Fight King, and mastery of the tower.

Native: The master of the tower can call out a target for single combat. This requires an action and targets one intelligent creature within 100 feet. That creature and the master of the tower make opposed Charisma checks. If the target loses this contest it must do what it can to arrange or engage in solo combat with the master of the tower. If any other combatant enters the fray the charm is broken and will not work on the same target again.

Level 2: The master of the tower gains the ability to rage as a barbarian of fourth level. If he can already rage he counts his barbarian level as four higher when calculating rage benefits and limits. Additionally the master can cast *enlarge/reduce* once per day on himself, though this can only enlarge the caster.

Level 5: The master of the tower increases his Strength by two. Additionally he gains three strength dice. To use these the master of the tower expends one or more strength dice and can add them to melee weapon damage rolls or to Strength ability checks or saving throws. These dice are d10s, and the master of the tower regains one strength die after completing a short rest, or three after completing a long rest.

Level 8: The master of the tower can wield melee weapons of outrageous size. A specially made weapon increases its normal damage dice by a step (so a d6 becomes a d8, or 2d4 becomes 2d6, etc.). The master of the tower can also use a bonus action to cast *enhance ability score* by spending a strength die.

Tower of the Eastern Wind (lesser): The home of the Eastern wind is blustery and overbearing. It is made of glassy bricks of blue and gray and sits atop a swiftly rolling cloud. Attaining the cloud and entering the tower are the primary challenges facing a supplicant. Once the tower is breached the spirit of the Eastern wind offers a choice. Becoming master of the tower requires performing the duties of the Eastern wind, but offers many perks.

Native: If the master of the Eastern Wind is also master of the Northern, Southern, or Western Winds he gains a +1 bonus to Dexterity. If he is a master of three towers the bonus increases to +2. If the master claims all four towers the bonus increases to +4.

Level 2: The master of the tower has advantage on saving throws against wind effects, magical or otherwise. The master of the tower increases his movement speed by 10 feet.

Level 5: In addition when the master of the tower deals damage, whether from a weapon or a spell, he can push the target back 10 feet.

Level 8: The master of the tower gains a flight speed equal to his movement speed. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must make a binding pact with the Eastern Wind. This pact includes assuming the duties of the wind, spending at least one month of the autumn overseeing the movements of the winds and directing the spirits of air.

Tower of the Northern Wind (lesser): On a thin and scattered cloud is a low building of glassy gray bricks. Here the soul of the freezing cold Northern wind resides. Attaining the cloud and entering the tower are the primary challenges facing a supplicant. Once the tower is breached the spirit of the Northern wind offers a choice. Becoming master of the tower requires performing the duties of the Northern wind, but offers many perks.

Native: If the master of the Northern Wind is also master of the Eastern, Southern, or Western Winds he gains a +1 bonus to Constitution. If he is a master of three towers the bonus increases to +2. If the master claims all four towers the bonus increases to +4.

Level 2: The master of the tower has advantage on saving throws against wind effects, magical or otherwise, and gains resistance to cold damage.

Level 5: The master of the tower can cast *sleet storm* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Level 8: The master of the tower gains a flight speed equal to his movement speed. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must make a binding pact with the Northern Wind. This pact includes assuming the duties of the wind, spending at least one month of the winter overseeing the movements of the winds and directing the spirits of air.

Tower of the Southern Wind (lesser): A towering cumulus cloud hides the home of the Southern wind. The walls are blackened with lightning, but a dark glassy blue beneath. Attaining the cloud and entering the tower are the primary challenges facing a supplicant. Once the tower is breached the spirit of the Southern wind offers a choice. Becoming master of the tower requires performing the duties of the Southern wind, but offers many perks.

Native: If the master of the Southern Wind is also master of the Eastern, Northern, or Western Winds he gains a +1 bonus to Strength. If he is a master of three towers the bonus increases to +2. If the master claims all four towers the bonus increases to +4.

Level 2: The master of the tower has advantage on saving throws against wind effects, magical or otherwise. The master of the tower may also type his weapon damage as electricity damage.

Level 5: Three times per day when the master of the tower deals lightning or thunder damage he can opt to deal maximum damage instead of rolling.

Level 8: The master of the tower gains a flight speed equal to his movement speed. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must make a binding pact with the Southern Wind. This pact includes assuming the duties of the wind, spending at least one month of the spring overseeing the movements of the winds and directing the spirits of air.

Tower of the Western Wind (lesser): Sitting atop a sprightly and fluffy white cloud is the resting place of the warm Western wind. The tower is made of well buffed white bricks. Attaining the cloud and entering the tower are the primary challenges facing a supplicant. Once the tower is breached the spirit of the Western wind offers a choice. Becoming master of the tower requires performing the duties of the Western wind, but offers many perks.

Native: If the master of the Western Wind is also master of the Eastern, Northern, or Southern Winds he gains a +1 bonus to Wisdom. If he is a master of three towers the bonus increases to +2. If the master claims all four towers the bonus increases to +4.

Level 2: The master of the tower has advantage on saving throws against wind effects, magical or otherwise. The master of the tower also learns the *mage hand* cantrip, with the following changes: the spell produces a fluffy cloud-let that moves the target and the cloud-let carries 5 pounds per level.

Level 5: The master of the tower can assume a *gaseous form* for up to ten rounds a day. These do not need to be in consecutive rounds. Turning gaseous takes one action, while turning back takes a bonus action.

Level 8: The master of the tower gains a flight speed equal to his movement speed. *Requirement:* The master of the tower must make a binding pact with the Western Wind. This pact includes assuming the duties of the wind, spending at least one month of the summer overseeing the movements of the winds and directing the spirits of air.

Tower of Travel (greater): Very few people are lucky enough to find the Watchtower of Travel at all, as it flies and floats about. The tower is less a tower, more a cube of wood and brass. The tower floats at the whim of the breezes, though it rarely approaches cities. The tower is difficult to find, difficult to catch, and nearly impossible to gain entry to as it tumbles through the air. Once it's been opened the tower's seeker must find their way past the dangerous mechanisms and genius (but generally harmless) traps to reach the control room. Once there a seeker merely has to work out how to steer the great floating cube to master it.

Native: The master of the tower knows North at all times, and can tell how far and in which direction he's moved at all times. This makes navigating mazes to find the way back out fairly simple, and all rolls to locate a place with the aid of a map are made with advantage. The master of the tower knows where the tower is and can always find his way back to the tower, or direct another to its current location.

Level 5: The master of the tower can direct the Watchtower of Travel from up to a mile away through a magical remote control. The master of the tower can also cast *dimension door* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Level 9: The master of the tower can create a permanent *teleportation circle* in the heart of the Watchtower of Travel. This circle can send the master of the tower anywhere, though it cannot bring

him back. Creating this circle takes a full month of careful work for one hour each day. Once the circle is created it remains until the master of the tower creates a new circle to a different destination. The sigil sequence of the circle in the Watchtower of Travel cannot be learned by a spellcaster, since it is always changing. However, the master of the tower could successfully target a *teleportation circle* to match this ever-changing sigil sequence and teleport into the tower.

Level 14: The master of the tower can cast *find the path* a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. In addition the master of the tower can spot any manufactured or natural portal, and open it. This ability allows the master of the tower to ignore the normal requirements of portals, including specific times they must be opened, specific people that can open them, or keys that must be used. Finally, the master of the tower can incorporate a *plane shift* effect tied to the permanent *teleportation circle* in the tower. This requires spending a full year of working at least one hour each day on it. When the circle is activated the teleportation effect takes anyone in the area to a targeted place on a specific plane. As with the normal teleportation effect it is one-way and does not enable returns.

Magical Side-Effects

As a caster levels up they get small, cosmetic effects that follow them around. These should be evocative, and indicative of the caster's school, class, and power. Think like the witch table, but for everybody.

Sorcerers get stuff based on their bloodline: draconics start to smell lizardy, are dusted with ash or rimed in frost, etc. Wild magicians twist fate and luck around them and have distortions of light and fundamental effects (gravity, magnetism, whatever).

Schools define wizards, clearly.

Also maybe there's a bunch of effects that are relatively common, and shared. E.g., roll d10 for a minor effect. 1 through 7 are common between all casters, 8 thru 0 are unique to your class and archetype.

Effects are separated into cosmetic, minor, moderate, and major. You pick them up at certain levels, maybe? Levels 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 20. Cosmetic, minor, minor, moderate, moderate, major. Something like that. Or two of each, at 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20.

Gotta strike a balance between a) having each spellcaster be cool and unique, with recognizable stuff going on, and b) every damn person being ridiculously glittery and whatever.

Maybe you max out at three, but can upgrade stuff? Like, you wind up with 9 "points" to spend on your weirdo effects, and you can choose for that to be two majors and a cosmetic, or three moderates, or a major, a moderate, and a minor, etc.?

Rune Magic

The giants have runes, found in ages even past the Ancients, which persist. These are the magics of the old, old world: strength, storms, stones.

Runes can be drawn, carved, or spoken.

There are modern 'rune machines' with spinning dials like a Stargate or a rotary phone which can lock in certain runes to create magical effects from "phrases" or "sentences" of runes.

Healing Magic

When a caster uses *cure wounds*, *healing word*, *resurrection*, or similar there is a mark or similar left on the body.

The Church's spellcasting is almost always accompanied by holy texts written in Celestial or Keleshtish. When healing an injury new skin grows over the wound looking like fresh scar tissue, and the new skin is covered with text like a tattoo, appearing like it's being written. When curing poisons similar text often appears near the gut, liver, etc.; diseases often mark the body part where the disease symbolically 'rests,' like the lungs for pneumonia or the stomach for an intestinal illness. Resurrection often leaves marks on the crown (skull), the heart, or similar.

Healing can vary w/ specific gods. A god of the forge might leave behind shining, flexible metal rather than skin. A god of storms might dye the skin a dark blue or fill a wound with solid cloudstuff.

Druids do much the same: wood, leaves, water, or animalistic features.

Injuries healed by occultists are often left gaping, with ghostly flesh there instead. This can result in someone looking like a corpse, but being and feeling whole. Someone looking with *see invisibility* or similar would be able to see the body actually there. They might also have effects like a glowing blue point of light rather than an eye, or transparent skin revealing the guts benea

Curiosities of Talmussin

The Satchins-Milliner-deVry Catalogue

Some enterprising partnership, Satchins-Milliner-deVry, has recently begun offering the sale of hundreds of kinds of products by catalogue.

It's only possible here because of the prevalence of banks and paper currency here in Talmussin. A catalogue can be bought for a few copper pieces (again, this is maybe the only town where paper is so cheap as it can be sold for copper, even though it's cheap pulp print). Once you've bought the catalogue you can check any box you like and mail it back or drop it off with an appropriate value of bank check or paper currency and, voila! Within 2-8 weeks your goods will be delivered. Quicker if you pay for magic.

Royal Animals

The government of Sarandib and the government of Talmussin are separate, but invested in the same individual: the governor. Because they are separate they both have a set of laws, taxes, rituals, titles, and the like.

The most common interaction with this, to the average Talmussite, is the appearance of the great seals of state and city, and the animals featured on them. The state of Sarandib takes as its icon the peacock, which are native to the jungles of Sarandib and are all over both the state and the city. The city of Talmussin has, as its animal, one of the iconic Sarish elephants (elephants that stand about 2 m tall at the head).

The peacocks were part of the old kingdoms of Sarandib, and were domesticated thousands of years ago. The elephants earned their place in the settlement of Talmussin, where they've been used to haul cargo and complete construction for the last few hundred years.

The Chop

Everyone in Talmussin has a personal "chop." Some sign it in handwriting. Some use elaborate brushwork. Most have a small stamp that they use, carved from wood or stone or metal or etc. (the finer the material, the higher the caste, usually).

These are marked in a color of ink that indicates something about the owner (e.g., red is for the most common uses, academic papers and government use black, trade deals are blue, etc. and whatever).

Every official chop is on file with the local courts or lord or whatever. These files are, in large cities, room after room filled with cabinet after cabinet, cabinets filled with hundreds of small clay tablets with the form pressed into them. These may go back hundreds of years.

Each is unique - if just barely. Most wizards and nobles have a permanent *arcane mark* effect on their personal chops, and many more have a *prestidigitation*-esque effect for infinite ink.

Government bureaucrats use these chops as signs of office, as their seals, and as their signatures. Official documents, such as travel papers, citizenship papers, or deeds, are often marked with dozens of chops at various points from everyone from assessors to clerks.

Veils

There are a number of organizations or calls to wear veils in Sarandib.

The Sisters of Silence are a semi-religious organization that wears veils of beads with dozens of strands of fine thread strung with tiny clay and wooden beads. The beads fall in a design, like a simple face. Each is unique, but familiar.

The Dungeon Man

It's a dude who contains a physical space. That physical space is about half the size of a football field (like 150 ft x 150 ft) and an equal height/depth. You enter the space when you touch the dungeon man (no save).

The space has been filled up over the years with junk, treasure, traps, and buildings. Some are rickety wood, some are brick edifices or keeps. There are few permanent inhabitants, but a few visitors. Dungeon man can't control who gets in or out, so anybody that knows him can jump in whenever.

The way in is by touch; the way out is by going through the dungeon. There's a big Exit sign like a Teleportation Circle that gets you out, but it's guarded, often, or trapped. When you leave you appear within 5 ft of Dungeon Man, usually behind him.

Time is different inside Dungeon Man, compressed by about a factor of sixty. You can go in, spend a day, and come out 15 minutes later. Crossing the space quickly - 15 minutes, say - gets you through in 15 seconds, then.

Bank Security

Devils, invisible, with a ton of warding and shit. Average people don't care about them because they're bad guys - it's not really immoral to keep them bound indefinitely. They also have a good skill set: detect magic, see invisibility, good combat, invisibility powers.

Other options: shield guardians, golems, dragons, efreeti.

That's in addition to any "basic" magical defenses: a glyph of warding with a high-powered area *dispel magic* ready to go (or a straight-up null magic zone); guards; maybe the spell *guards and wards*; a dimensional anchor area (disallowing all teleportation in, out, or within the area). Maybe some unusual animals that make great guards, like blink dogs or something. It would also have some defense against *gaseous form*: a wind area, a perfectly sealed room, whatever.

The Dead Pit

In one quarter of town, over the border between the Warrens and the Necropolis, is a massive bronze-sheathed millstone that sits at street level. All over it's graven with messages like 'do not move or remove' or 'danger: unquiet dead.'

People in the ward basically ignore it, like you might ignore a power substation in your neighborhood.

Beneath it is a huge pit filled with zombies and ghouls and skeletons and shit. Some of the undead have carved out short warrens or burrows, and there's a section where it leads to a maze-like section of the Necropolis that is, as far as we know, a dead end.

There was a terrible time when all the city could do was cordon an area, corral the creatures, and create a sinkhole. They topped it with several thousand pounds of stone and bronze, and laid a *circle of protection* into the top of it.

The adventure, here, is that the PCs may need to get to an item that was buried there: maybe a noble house's ancient shield or whatever, which was last recorded on the person of an individual last seen at this big zombie corralling.

When PCs attempt to move the capstone, if they don't find a sneaky way or get Pelte approval, bystanders shout stuff like "what the fuck are you doing? There's zombies down there dumbass, can't you read?"

The Silent City

Not actually a city, but a settlement or three, a few large clans living out in the Sarandib Jungle. A few generations ago these people were affected by something that took their voices en masse (a curse, a Pied Piper situation, a type of bird that steals voices, a fever that leaves your larynx mangled, whatever). Since then they've made a hand-sign language much like drow hand-sign, and they communicate by that. The only sounds they make are whistles for hunting and tongue clicks to get someone's attention.

Few of these people live in the city - the constant babble is distracting and frustrating.

Air Traffic

Talmussin is unique in so many ways, but few are more visible than the crowded skies around the city. There are a number of ways to take to the sky, and the space above the rooves downtown can get crowded.

The aaracokra have a small but noticable population in the city, mostly living in attics and rooftops. Several aaracokra can be seen above the city at any given time. Some are guards, some are hunters, some are just commuting.

House Garda has a number of giant eagles that they ride, and many more birds that they use for packages, messages, and hunting. The sky is often filled with huge wheeling shapes, and every so often an errant eagle snatches up a farmer's goats or something.

House Dallim has drakes that they fly, usually no more than one or two, out over the old wards. There are also smaller pseudodragons, which the house breeds for pets and guards. These are a sign of status, as commoners typically can't afford them or aren't sold them by the nobility. There is something of a social moré that they are never sold, only given freely.

The University is host to a host of flying machines or magicians. The *fly* spell is relatively easy to access, and a lighter-than-air lantern balloon is not uncommon as a class project. As well, there are were-bats, flying familiars, genies, bound imps and quasits by the dozen*, and a healthy population of hyper-intelligent crows. The airspace around the Unis is basically packed with flying things of every size.

*If we assume that about half the familiars summoned can fly (ravens, imps, and the like); that a quarter of spellcasters have the spell *find familiar*, and that there are as many magicians as there are students in the Academy plus TU's College Arcane, that's .125 x (20,000+10,000), so 3,750 flying familiars at least. That's a lot of magically intelligent critters.

There is also the Frith family flying mansion. A gigantic cube of stone in the rough shape of a keep, the Frith family of sorcerors flaunt their air power as a matter of pride. Every member of the family is Gifted, because they dispose of those who are not and regularly reintroduce magical blood back into the family. There's an Omelas kind of setup where the mansion drains power from a young Frith, selected every ten years or so. The power source is basically a spelljammer helm, put to stupid purpose.

Seaside Considerations

Being a port city, Talmussin will have a hundred considerations to account for. A few things to place, or think about, or what-have-you:

Shipyards & dry docks: Shipyards are gigantic affairs financed by consortiums of investors, and naval architects design ever-larger ships, necessitating ever-larger dockyards. Dry docks are cut and locked into the coast a distance from the dockyards, the docks, and the town proper. Probably.

Shipbreaking: Ships that age out of use must be broken down and parted out to turn into new ships, garbage, and salvage.

Docks: Fishing vessel docks, marinas for pleasure craft, military docks for the warships, and every other kind of dock and mooring. These line the coast, the islands, and hidden coves in the cliffs.

Fish markets: With around 100kg/225lbs of seafood consumed per capita in Talmussin, and 750,000-ish souls in the city there's 170 million pounds of fish moved every year - and that's just the city's consumption. Another equal amount is dried and salted, or sold into Sarandib. 25 acres of seafront are fishing docks and fresh fish markets. Hundreds of little boats dot the sea every morning, noon, and night to fish.

Underwater Forests: Because the Ancients' breaking of the world crumbled thousands of miles of land into the ocean, some were preserved in weird ways by the freezing-cold salt water at the bottom of the ocean. There are whole forests, preserved in the totally lightless depths, especially where the salt content or cold is too severe for stuff like coral.

Submerged Habitation: There are plenty of creatures that need little light to see, and some of them are well competent enough to build underwater residences. Near Talmussin are at least one each of submerged gnome burrows, dwarven halls, and an elven garden (at different depths), as well as sea elves, sahuagin, merrow, merfolk, a

Crow Lake

Out in a clearing amid the hills is a single sheet of milky white glass that lays perfectly flat, like the surface of an iced-over lake. It is small, for a lake - maybe .75 miles by .33. When something touches the lake - a foot, a pebble - its reflection appears below in desaturated colors, and a tiny flock of black birds erupts on the other side, swirling around in that mirror universe.

Families bring their children here for picnics, skating along the surface and jumping on it, watching the imaginary birds erupt and disperse.

This is the remnants of a massive mirrored portal to the land of death, where the Raven Queen rules. It no longer functions, but some antique force keeps the surface clean - pebbles and leaves slowly migrate to the edges of the pond.

Riding Hogs

There are, in some places, boars large enough to ride and despite their terrible tempers and gross costs of upkeep there's a subculture of enthusiasts that tame, saddle, and ride them, referring to them affectionately as their 'road hogs.' These pigs have been 'customized' in many cases by druids, selective breeding, and decoration. The majority of them emit a low growl at all times, the result of their constant low-key grunting and snorting.

Because the hogs are ornery it's common for a rider to be thrown at high speed. The riders typically wear leather armor, at minimum, to prevent road rash.

Road hog cultures exist in bugbears, orcs, and other humanoids. There are huge hog-centric rallies where prizes are given out for unique or powerful hog-mounts, as well as parades and celebrations of the culture. These rallies certainly have their fair share of conflict - barroom brawls that turn deadly, muggings, grand theft porcine - but there is a shocking camaraderie that extends beyond species borders and unites orcs, goblinoids, and humanoids.

Concrete Boots

Stone, steel, and gold shoes worn by the nobility. The very real dangers of broken ankles and sinking in a deep puddle make it just dangerous and stupid enough to be exciting. The tiny mincing steps required are soon seen as noble and refined.

Transit

The metro tracks running through and between many neighborhoods' underground are part of the city's transit; the canals are a part; and the private carts & carriages through the city are another.

Most of the market squares are attended by caravan drivers and carters and the like who bring stuff in and out of Talmussin, and many of these folks drive single carts around between trips to earn spare coin. Many in-city cart drivers will also let someone hang on the back or sides of their cart for a copper, indicating such with a little box or bag near the driver's bench. Citizens just toss a coin in, grab onto the cart, and ride until they get closer to their destination.

Individual carriages for hire gather in likely locations (again, market squares are popular), and large multi-passenger "bus" carts drive specific routes, stopping when they're hailed. These buses look sort of like the pedal-pub street bike things, but drawn by animals: a central bar supporting an awning, and additional slim bench-bars on either side. You grab the central bar, rest your ass on the bench, and try not to fall off.

The underground works much the same way, except on tracks driven by machines powered by water, or by beasts.

Finally, the cliffside is dotted by elevators privately owned and operated. If you don't want to take a staircase approximately one Metroplitan Life Tower high, elevators are the way to go.

Insurers exist primarily to cover total catastrophe: there is little recourse to individuals for falling off a cart or suffering a crash, but should a driver go over a cliff or an elevator collapse, the penalty by law is death for the owner or a crippling fine, which is what the insurers pay. The city then distributes blood-money to families of maimed or killed victims, or those w/ property damage from the incident.