

The Chronicles of

Solís



Player's Guide ~ v1.01

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Introduction

THE WAR OF ETERNAL TWILIGHT

Eons ago, before time had meaning, there were three immortal siblings:

Mortivara, the Pale Lady, keeper of the dead; **Thalamesh**, the Earthfather, guardian of land and sea; and **Brisaya**, the Smiling Threadweaver, spinner of fate and whimsy. Together, they shaped the world of Shalarion, maintaining harmony between life, death, and destiny.

As ages passed, from the ether arose the mortal races—creatures of instinct and ambition, destined to shape Shalarion in ways even the gods could not predict. They learned, they built, they destroyed. They uncovered magic, bending reality to their will. And among them, three rose above all others, their power reaching heights beyond any before them:

Solis, the Champion of the Dawn, a warrior of unmatched might and virtue; **Kathgar**, the Frostbinder, a warlock who sought dominion over all; and **Ilyndra Noctis**, the Veiled Sorceress, a master of shadow and secrecy.

At first, their rivalry was no more than a clash of ideals—heroism and villainy, democracy and tyranny, light and darkness. But ambition begets conflict, and conflict begets war. What began as a struggle of mortals soon grew into something far greater. **The War of Eternal Twilight had begun.**

Solis, driven by justice, led armies against the rising shadow of Kathgar, whose hunger for dominion knew no bounds. With each battle, his power grew, bolstered not only by his own terrible magic but by the infernal might of the Nine Hells. Kathgar had forged a pact with dark entities beyond mortal comprehension, and with their aid, his devilish magic twisted the land itself into a frozen wasteland of endless night. Even as Thalamesh wove himself into the earth and sea, shaping rivers and mountains to aid the forces of light, it was not enough. The war of eternal twilight turned in Kathgar's favor—his victory seemed inevitable.

Seeing the balance of life and death itself threatened, Mortivara took action in the only way she could. From the depths of the void, the Pale Lady whispered to Ilyndra Noctis, a sorceress whose pursuit of knowledge knew no limit. Mortivara did not lie—she did not promise power, nor did she offer salvation. Instead, she revealed forbidden truths, unveiling the secrets of necromancy, a force that could bend death itself to Ilyndra's will. It was not a gift—it was necessity.

Ilyndra embraced Mortivara's knowledge, weaving the power of shadow into her own magic. At her command, the dead rose, a tide of souls bound in undeath, and the war turned once more. Solis and Ilyndra stood together, and with her newfound might, Kathgar was cast down. His mortal form was shattered, his essence bound in chains of

ice and fire, and his spirit was banished to the Nine Hells.

No mortal saw the final battle, but when dawn broke over a ruined world, the war was over. Ilyndra, changed by the dark power she had unleashed, retreated into the shadows, never to return as she once was. And Solis? He had won—but at what cost?

Shalarion had paid the price for their war. The land lay shattered, seas churned with fury, and entire civilizations had fallen to ruin. The gods watched as the world they had once shaped teetered on the brink of collapse.

Solis, knowing that true victory would require more than war, gathered the last of his strength. **It is said that he created a sanctuary, hidden across the sea—an untouched land of purity and light.** Some call it **the Last Haven**, others **the Sun King's Rest**. To many, it is no longer a place of this world, but a promise of paradise in the next.

But even Solis was not unscathed. His essence had been fractured, his divine spark scattered. And so, **Thalamesh gathered the remnants of Solis' power, shaping them into the Shards of Solis—fragments of divine radiance hidden across Shalarion.** A final gift to those who would carry his light.

But war does not end with the fall of a single tyrant. **Kathgar's followers did not vanish.** Nor did the entities of the Nine Hells forget the mortal who once served them.

The **balance was preserved... for a time.**

NOW, THE BALANCE SHIFTS ONCE MORE...

Several **millennia** have passed since the War of Eternal Twilight, yet its scars have never truly faded. The gods remain, shaping the world through their followers, their names revered, cursed, or twisted to serve mortal ambitions.

Civilizations have risen and fallen—not just from war against darkness, but from conflict **between those who claim to follow the same gods.** The faithful of Solis have turned on each other time and again, their crusades leaving ruin in their wake. **Thalamesh's stewards have warred over whether nature is to be protected or tamed.** Even **Mortivara's followers are divided**—some seeking peaceful passage for the dead, others craving dominion over death itself.

And **Brisaya, ever the trickster, dances at the edges of fate.** Is she a guide, helping mortals find their destined place? Or is she a capricious force, pulling at loose threads for her own amusement? None can say, yet the world twists around her unseen hand. But as mortals fight among themselves, **the greatest threat stirs once more.**

THE SHADOW IN THE WASTELAND

In the **charred ruins of the Ashen Expanse**, Kathgar's name is no longer a whisper of history—it is **a god's name, spoken in reverence**. His followers build temples atop ruins, their prayers carried on cold winds. **At their head is Hellspeaker Xeroth the Ironclad, Supreme Ebon Hierophant of the Frostbound Throne**. To those who revere Kathgar, Xeroth is both emperor and pontiff, the mortal voice of their god's will, guiding them toward the day of their master's return.

But **Kathgar's reach extends beyond the Expanse**. The **Cult of the Chained Blizzard** has embedded itself in every nation across Shalarion—covertly in most, openly in others. No longer content with mere survival, they **corrupt, manipulate, and infiltrate, planting seeds of ruin in the highest halls of power**.

Yet their most dangerous agents are **not their zealots, nor their assassins, but the lords, ministers, and scholars who listen to their whispers**. Some seek to preserve their power, hoping to stand on the right side of history when darkness inevitably falls. Others have already **sold their loyalty in secret, their ambitions fueled by the promise of Kathgar's return**.

THE GATHERING STORM

But even as darkness spreads, **the world does not stand idle**.

Nations, churches, and free peoples **rally against the rising shadow**. Cultists are hunted in the streets, diabolists exposed and purged. The many sects of Solis, once bitter enemies, now see a greater war on the horizon. **The divided faithful of Thalamesh and Mortivara begin to choose sides in a struggle far greater than their own**.

Even **Brisaya's gamblers, poets, and prophets** stir uneasily, sensing that the threads of fate are pulling tighter than before. The world teeters on the edge.

And though the shadows creep ever closer...

LIGHT REMAINS DEFIANT!

THE GODS OF SHALARION

Solis, the Champion of the Dawn – (Page 7)

God of light, virtue, and righteous conquest. His followers bring hope and order but often war over what it means to serve him.

Kathgar, the Frostbinder – (Page 8)

God of tyranny, cold dominion, and infernal pacts. Bound in chains of ice and fire, his cultists work to bring about his return.

Mortivara, the Pale Lady – (Page 9)

Goddess of death, fate, and the passage of souls. Some honor her as a guide to the afterlife, while others seek to twist her domain for power.

Thalamesh, the Earthfather – (Page 10)

God of soil, sea, and the natural order. He represents both the bounty and the fury of nature, worshiped by those who live in harmony with the land.

Ilyndra Noctis, the Veiled Sorceress – (Page 11)

Goddess of corruption, undeath, and the denial of fate. Once mortal, her faith lurks in the shadows, seeking to unravel the cycle of life itself.

Brisaya, the Smiling Threadweaver – (Page 12)

Goddess of luck, chaos, and endless possibility. She neither commands nor dictates, only nudges fate's threads and laughs as mortals gamble with destiny.

SOLIS, CHAMPION OF THE DAWN

- **Alignment:** Lawful Good
- **Symbol:** A radiant sun with a sword at its center, often stylized as a golden disk with eight rays.
- **Portfolio:** Sun, justice, honor, renewal, rulership, righteous war, sacrifice.
- **Favored Weapon:** Longsword (often depicted as a blade of pure sunlight).

Also Known As:

- The Sun God
- The Everlight
- The Sword of Renewal
- The Dawnfather (Rhomarion)
- The Unyielding Flame (Zealous sects)

Factions & Religious Orders

Solis' worship is deeply fractured, with multiple interpretations and sects often at odds with one another:

- **The Auric Dominion** (*Zealous Order of Absolute Law*) – Believes that Solis' light must be imposed upon the world by force, leading to holy wars against "unbelievers" and rival faiths.
- **The Order of the Radiant Path** (*Moderate Sect, Mainstream Worship*) – Seeks balance, preferring to guide rather than conquer, though still fiercely opposed to darkness.
- **The Dawnforged Templars** (*Warrior Monks of Discipline & Renewal*) – A militant order focused on righteous warfare, discipline, and upholding civilization. They often serve as defenders of the weak but also enforcers of strict moral codes.

General Information & History

Solis was once a mortal warrior of unparalleled virtue, ascending to godhood after the War of Eternal Twilight. His faith is one of the most widespread in Shalarion, yet sectarian disputes have led to countless holy wars, including devastating conflicts between factions that each claim to uphold his true vision. Though his light opposes darkness, his most zealous followers risk becoming tyrants themselves.

KATHGAR, THE FROSTBINDER

- **Alignment:** Lawful Evil
- **Symbol:** A black iron crown encased in frost, often depicted with chains or jagged ice spikes.
- **Portfolio:** Domination, conquest, cold, tyranny, diabolic pacts, remorseless order.
- **Favored Weapon:** Greatsword of ice and infernal fire.

Also Known As:

- The Chained Tyrant (by enemies)
- The Frostfather (by devoted followers)
- The Lord of Black Ice
- The Frozen God

Factions & Religious Orders

- **The Frostbound Throne** (*Ruling Order of Kathgar's Faith*) – Theocratic rulers of the Ashen Expanse, led by Hellspeaker Xeroth the Ironclad. They seek to establish absolute dominion, crush opposition, and bring the world under an unbreakable, frozen order.
- **The Cult of the Chained Blizzard** (*Secretive Cult Working in the Shadows*) – Operates in every nation, slowly corrupting governments, spreading fear, treachery, and infernal influence.
- **The Black Concord** (*Infernal Pactmakers*) – Diabolists, warlocks, and summoners who serve not only Kathgar but the devils of the Nine Hells, binding souls to service.

General Information & History

Once a mortal warlock of unparalleled ambition, Kathgar sought power beyond the mortal realm, forging pacts with the entities of the Nine Hells. Though he lost the War of Eternal Twilight, his influence never truly faded. Now worshiped as a god, his faith has spread through both overt conquest and secretive corruption. Many believe that his return is inevitable.

MORTIVARA, THE PALE LADY

- **Alignment:** Lawful Neutral
- **Symbol:** A white skull with an open doorway carved into its forehead, representing the passage into the afterlife.
- **Portfolio:** Death, fate, the afterlife, judgment, silence, the great beyond.
- **Favored Weapon:** Scythe (*symbolizing the severing of the soul from the body*).

Also Known As:

- The Keeper of the Dead
- The Bonemother
- The Gatekeeper of Souls

Factions & Religious Orders

Mortivara's faith is divided, but not over necromancy—which she wholly rejects. Instead, her followers argue over how mortals should approach death and the afterlife.

- **The Umbral Guardians** (*Traditional Death-Priests & Protectors of Souls*) – Maintain sacred burial grounds, ensure proper funerary rites, and prevent the profanation of the dead. They oppose Ilyndra's necromancers above all else.
- **The Eclipsed Host** (*Harbingers of the End*) – A radical, apocalyptic cult that believes the world is already dying and that it is Mortivara's will to hasten its inevitable end. They do not raise the dead—they simply ensure that all things die.
- **The Silent Procession** (*The Judges of the Departed*) – Mortivara's most devoted monks, who believe death is not an end, but a transition. They wander the land, ensuring that souls pass on without disturbance and punishing those who tamper with the dead.

General Information & History

Mortivara is as old as death itself, watching over the souls of the departed and ensuring the cycle continues without interference. Though her followers are rarely persecuted, they are often feared—for to walk in the service of the Pale Lady is to forever exist in the presence of the dying. While she is not evil, her name is rarely spoken with warmth. To Mortivara, death is not cruelty, nor is it mercy. It is simply what must be.

THALAMESH, THE EARTHFATHER

- **Alignment:** True Neutral
- **Symbol:** A tree with deep roots that transform into ocean waves, symbolizing the unity of land and water.
- **Portfolio:** Nature, balance, soil, sea, rivers, storms, renewal, primal order.
- **Favored Weapon:** **Spear** (crafted from sacred driftwood, stone, or coral).

Also Known As:

- The Green Warden
- The Tide and Trunk
- The Keeper of Soil and Sea
- The Stormroot

Factions & Religious Orders

- **The Verdant Keepers** (*Preservers of Land and Water*) – Believe in maintaining the balance of soil and sea, ensuring that civilization does not poison the land or overreach upon the waves. They teach that nature's bounty is to be respected, not exploited.
- **The Wildborn Pact** (*Druids, Mariners, and Shamans Who Embrace Nature's Wrath*) – More radical than the Verdant Keepers, they see storms, tidal waves, and earthquakes as the judgment of Thalamesh, punishing those who defy the natural cycle. Many are seafaring mystics, believing that the sea must be navigated with reverence, not arrogance.

General Information & History

Thalamesh is not merely the earth beneath one's feet—he is also the tides that rise and fall, the waves that shape the shore, and the storms that cleanse the world. He is not a god of kindness nor cruelty; his only concern is balance.

His presence is felt in the shifting sands, the ancient forests, the endless oceans, and the crashing waves. To farmers, he is the provider of fertile land; to sailors, he is the master of the deep, both protector and destroyer. The faithful say that every seed in the soil and every drop of rain that touches the sea is Thalamesh's will made manifest.

Unlike the other gods, Thalamesh does not dictate morality—he only ensures that the cycle of life continues.

ILYNDRA, THE VEILED SORCERESS

- **Alignment:** Chaotic Evil
Symbol: A black veil draped over an empty face, or a skeletal hand clutching a dying rose, symbolizing both hidden corruption and the perversion of life.
- **Portfolio:** Necromancy, corruption, decay, forbidden knowledge, secrets, temptation.
- **Favored Weapon: Dagger** (*symbolizing treachery and the quiet cut of inevitable decay*).

Also Known As:

- The Lady of Whispers
- The Queen of Decay
- The Shadow Mother
- The First Necromancer

Factions & Religious Orders

Ilyndra's worship is **forbidden in most lands**, but her influence spreads like rot in hidden places.

- **The Crimson Rot** (*Plaguebearers & Agents of Decay*) – A sect devoted to the slow, agonizing breakdown of all things, whether empires, bodies, or minds. Disease, madness, and cursed wounds are their tools.
- **The Pale Choir** (*Keepers of the Forbidden Dead*) – A cult wholly devoted to necromancy, believing that Ilyndra's will is to control death, not simply embrace it. They see undeath as the purest evolution, unshackled from the decay of mortality.

General Information & History

Once a mortal sorceress, Ilyndra Noctis sought balance through forbidden magic, bending souls and time itself. Though she helped defeat Kathgar, her own corruption consumed her, and she vanished after the Final Night.

Her faith is hidden, drawing those who defy fate and seek mastery over death. Unlike Mortivara, who guides souls, Ilyndra binds them, denying the afterlife and corrupting the cycle of life. Where her name is spoken, shadows deepen, and the air grows cold.

BRISAYA, THE SMILING THREADWEAVER

- **Alignment:** Chaotic Neutral
Symbol: A spinning golden coin mid-flip, or a loom with tangled threads representing the unpredictable weave of fate.
- **Portfolio:** Fate, fortune, luck, mischief, trickery, destiny, crossroads, uncertainty.
- **Favored Weapon:** Rapier (*symbolizing agility, wit, and the ability to strike unexpectedly*).

Also Known As:

- The Trickster of Fate
- The Laughing Seer
- The Weaver of Possibilities

Factions & Religious Orders

Brisaya's followers range from wandering seers to gamblers and spies. Some see her as a guide, others as a meddler.

- **The Gilded Gambit** – A loose network of gamblers, spies, and merchants who honor Brisaya through risk and cunning. They believe fate rewards the bold, subtly undermining the powerful in gambling halls and black markets. When fortune favors them, they say Brisaya is watching.
- **The Loom of the Unwritten** – A secretive order of oracles and mystics who see fate as ever-changing. Some help mortals shape their own destinies, while others revel in disrupting rigid prophecies. Many were exiled from more structured faiths for their dangerous ideas.

General Information & History

Brisaya is the goddess of possibility. Where Solis sees purpose and hope, Kathgar enforces law through tyranny, she watches the shifting web of fate, nudging but never commanding.

Some say she wove the destinies of gods before their ascensions; others believe she exists only to unravel plans for her own amusement. She has no temples—only dice games, whispered prayers, and risky bargains. Her shrines are crossroads and gambling tables, where fortune and ruin walk hand in hand. Her followers say, "*The only sure bet is that the Threadweaver is always watching.*"

ARCANE BACKGROUNDS

NOTE: The purpose of this section is to add setting-specific context to each background type. For more information, please see p.89 of SWADE Fantasy.

- **Alchemist** – Masters of transmutation and potioncraft, alchemists blend magic and science, creating powerful elixirs, oils, and volatile grenades. Found in Darijaan’s bustling markets, Rhomarion’s apothecaries, and Durnholm’s forge-labs, their craft is prized by scholars, warriors, and merchants alike.
- **Bard** – Weaving magic through song, poetry, and performance, bards are wandering historians, entertainers, and spellbinders. Common among halflings in Ephyreon, storytellers of Pohjaranta, and rogue courtiers in the Jadarra Isles, they often invoke Brisaya’s name with every gamble they take.
- **Cleric** – Devoted to the gods, clerics serve as their chosen vessels, wielding divine power through faith and prayer. Found in the grand temples of Rhomarion, the sacred ziggurats of the Kavashan Dominion, and the frozen shrines of Drustvald, their magic reflects the will of their patron deity.
- **Diabolist** – Forbidden practitioners who bargain with the Nine Hells, diabolists summon demonic forces to carry out their will. They are the architects of Kathgar’s cult in the Ashen Expanse, their power tainted by infernal pacts and whispered promises of dominion. **(NPCs Only)**
- **Druid** – Keepers of the wild, druids safeguard the balance between nature and civilization, calling upon Thalamesh’s gifts. Found in Drustvald, Warumpanji, and the untamed reaches of Nesathar, they act as guardians, healers, and warriors of the land.
- **Elementalist** – Channeling the raw power of the elements, elementalists draw upon Thalamesh’s dominion over earth and sea. Bajreth (earth) are warriors, builders, and guardians, while Tajiren (water) serve as oracles, healers, and stormcallers, thriving in Drustvald, Pohjaranta, and Kavashan Dominion.
- **Illusionist** – Tricksters and masters of deception, illusionists craft falsehoods from light and shadow. Many ply their trade in Darijaan’s courts, Jadarra’s back alleys, and Xyphonia’s grand theaters, blurring the line between reality and fantasy.

- **Necromancer** – Shapers of death's domain, necromancers command the restless dead and unravel the veil between life and oblivion. Their power is forbidden outside of Ravnoskar, where Ilyndra Noctis' followers twist mortality to their will. **(NPCs Only)**
- **Shaman** – Spirit-walkers and dream-seers, shamans commune with the unseen, guiding their people through visions and ancestral wisdom. Only found in Warumpanji and Pohjaranta, they channel Brisaya's whispers and Thalamesh's will, existing in harmony with the land.
- **Sorcerer** – Conduits of untamed cosmic forces, sorcerers wield magic drawn from the chaotic maelstrom of creation itself. Often self-taught, their power surges unpredictably, with many found in Nesathar, Xyphonia, and the ungoverned wilds of Shalarion.
- **Summoner** – Binders of creatures both mundane and otherworldly, summoners call upon loyal beasts and spectral allies. They are often seen in Zamashur's arcane circles, Drustvald's sacred groves, and among rogue mages who prefer strength in numbers.
- **Tinkerer** – Brilliant yet unconventional, tinkerers craft mechanical wonders powered by arcane ingenuity rather than spells. Found in Durnholm's subterranean workshops and Darijaan's artisan guilds, they blur the line between magic and machinery.
- **Warlock/Witch** – Mystics who blend ancient lore, whispered secrets, and arcane rituals, warlocks and witches are feared for their esoteric knowledge. In Shalarion, they operate like shamans—often misunderstood but rarely evil—thriving in Pohjaranta, Warumpanji, and the hidden fringes of civilization.
- **Wizard** – Scholars of magic, wizards pursue structured study, refining their craft through rigorous discipline. They are most prominent in Nesathar, home to the continent's greatest arcane academies, though they can also be found in Rhomarion, Darijaan, and beyond.

ANCESTRIES

BAELWYTH (THE MOURNING ELVES OF RAVNOSKAR)

Mysterious, death-revering, and bound to the shadows

The Baelwyth are the elves of Ravnoskar, deeply connected to Ilyndra Noctis and the endless cycle of death and decay. They dwell in the shadowed halls of Ravnoskar's black forests, their cities silent but alive with whispering spirits. Their culture is one of reverence for loss and remembrance, their songs echoing with longing and mystery.

- **Appearance:** Pale white skin, black or deep violet hair, and spectral, silver or ice-blue eyes. Their presence is haunting, with flowing robes and shadowy motifs.
- **Mindset:** Reserved, poetic, and reflective. They do not fear death but instead see it as an eternal guide.

Racial Traits

- **Low Light Vision:** Elven eyes amplify light. Other races often claim they can see stars in the elves' eyes. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Unsettling Presence:** +2 to Intimidation or Persuasion (choose one).
- **Outsider (Minor):** Most cultures see Baelwyth as eerie or unsettling. -2 Persuasion with non-Baelwyth.

WENDRALIS (THE Highborn Elves of Rhomarion)

Refined, noble, and the cultural heart of the Ardentwood

The Wendralis are the most human-like of the elven races, embodying Solis' ideals of civilization and law. They dwell in Rhomarion's grand cities, ruling over powerful institutions of learning, faith, and war. Their culture is structured and deeply hierarchical, valuing discipline, wisdom, and martial prowess.

- **Appearance:** Golden-brown skin, hair ranging from light brown to blond, and piercing green or amber eyes. Their clothing is regal, featuring military precision and religious symbolism.
- **Mindset:** Highly structured, disciplined, and often zealous. Many view themselves as the true stewards of Solis' faith.

Racial Traits

- **Low Light Vision:** Elven eyes amplify light. Other races often claim they can see stars in the elves' eyes. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Zealous Conviction:** Start with a free d4 in either Faith or Battle.
- **Hierarchical Society:** +1 to Networking checks.
- **Jingoistic (Minor):** The Wendralis believe in their divine purpose, often dismissing other cultures (-2 Persuasion with non-Solis worshippers).

BRIOWEN (THE ETHEREAL ELVES OF NESATHAR)

Mystical, arcane, and attuned to the unseen

The Briowen are the arcane scholars of Nesathar, dwelling in hidden glades and towers woven with living magic. Their society is built upon the pursuit of knowledge, the refinement of magic, and the preservation of history. Their interpretation of Solis leans toward the divine connection between magic and miracles, often causing conflict with the zealots of Rhomarion.

- **Appearance:** Skin tones range from light tan to golden, with hair that is a pale shade of any color of the rainbow. Their eyes glow faintly, reflecting their deep magic.
- **Mindset:** Philosophical, introspective, and detached. They do not rush to war but will defend knowledge with ruthless efficiency.

Racial Traits

- **Low Light Vision:** Elven eyes amplify light. Other races often claim they can see stars in the elves' eyes. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Arcane Affinity:** +1 to arcane skill (any) rolls.
- **Scholarly Culture:** Start with d4 in Academics.
- **Detached (Minor):** Briowen often prioritize knowledge over empathy (-2 Persuasion when dealing with anyone who doesn't have an arcane background).

TAWODI'NEHA (DWARVES OF WARUMPANJI)

Nomadic, tribal, and masters of the land

The Tawodi'neha are not miners but farmers, hunters, and legendary horse archers. They roam the vast plains of Warumpanji, their society bound by ancestral wisdom, spiritual reverence, and a deep connection to nature.

- **Appearance:** Reddish-brown skin, dark hair often worn in intricate braids, and strong, stocky builds.
- **Mindset:** Spiritual, independent, and deeply connected to tradition.

Racial Traits

- **Horse Lords:** +1 to Riding and Shooting rolls.
- **Endurance of the Earth:** Start with a d6 Vigor instead of a d4. This increases maximum Vigor to d12 + 1.
- **Suspicious (Major):** Tawodi'neha distrust excessive technology and “unnatural” magic. Support rolls to aid the distrustful individual are made at -2.

GURUBARRA (MINOTAURS OF WARUMPANJI)

Wise, strong, and guardians of peace

The Gurubarra are massive, powerful beings who choose wisdom over war. They rule alongside the Tawodi'neha in Warumpanji, acting as philosopher-kings, mediators, and peacekeepers.

- **Appearance:** Towering humanoid bulls with mottled fur, often adorned with ritual beads and carvings.
- **Mindset:** Gentle, deliberate, and fiercely protective of their lands.

Racial Traits

- **Size +1:** Gurubarra are tall and broad, adding +1 to their Toughness.
- **Goring Charge:** Their horns cause Strength+d4 damage, adding +4 if the character runs at least 5" (10 yards) and hits with them.
- **Stalwart Frame:** Gurubarra begin with a d6 in Vigor instead of a d4. This increases their maximum Vigor to d12+1.
- **Innate Strength:** They start with a d6 in Strength instead of a d4. This increases their maximum Strength to d12+1.
- **Pacifist (Minor):** Gurubarra only fight when given no other choice and never allow the killing of prisoners or defenseless victims.
- **Clueless (Major):** They suffer a -1 penalty to Common Knowledge and Notice rolls.
- **Lumbering:** Gurubarra are not the most subtle of creatures and take a -1 penalty to Stealth rolls.

SAURIANS (LIZARDMEN OF QHANTALA)

Cunning, pragmatic, and feared traders

The Saurians are a mercantile powerhouse, controlling vast trade networks across Qhantala, Darijaan, and Zamashur. Though often distrusted, they are renowned negotiators and ruthless survivalists.

- **Appearance:** Sleek, reptilian forms with **scaly skin in deep greens, browns, or golds**.
- **Mindset:** Pragmatic, adaptable, and deeply focused on **wealth and survival**.

Racial Traits

- **Cold-Blooded Resilience:** Saurians receive +4 to resist heat-based effects.
- **Keen Senses:** They begin with a d6 in Notice.
- **Natural Stealth:** Saurians are adept at moving unnoticed, gaining +1 to Stealth rolls.
- **Distrusted (Minor):** Many assume Saurians engage in underhanded dealings, resulting in a -2 penalty to Persuasion in matters of trust.

VEYDRAN (INFERNALS)

Touched by fiendish blood but not inherently evil

The Veydran bear the mark of devilish ancestry but are not bound to corruption. Many struggle between their dark heritage and their mortal soul.

- **Appearance:** Often **red-skinned, horned, and tailed**, though variations exist.
- **Mindset:** Charismatic, cunning, and often torn between destiny and choice.

Racial Traits

- **Dark Vision:** Can see in the dark a short distance, ignoring all illumination penalties and up to 2 points of penalties from invisibility or similar powers within 10" (20 yards) distant.
- **Devilish Charisma:** +1 Persuasion.
- **Shadow Dweller:** Start with +1 to Stealth rolls.
- **Resilience to Cold:** +4 bonus to resist cold-based effects.
- **Heat Vulnerability:** -4 to resist heat effects and takes +4 damage from heat attacks.
- **Distrusted (Minor):** Many assume Veydran engage in underhanded dealings (-2 Persuasion in matters of trust).

BAELIR (CAMBIONS) - *NPC ONLY*

Half-devil, wholly malevolent.

The Baelir are the offspring of devils and mortals, but unlike the Veydran, their infernal nature is dominant. They are cruel, manipulative, and entirely devoid of mercy. The Baelir walk the world as warlords, cult leaders, and harbingers of their dark progenitors' will, sowing discord wherever they tread.

- **Appearance:** The Baelir are unmistakably devilish, with sharp horns, cloven hooves, barbed tails, and eyes that glow with malevolence. Their skin ranges from deep crimson to abyssal black, and their presence carries an aura of menace.
- **Mindset:** Calculating, ruthless, and utterly convinced of their superiority. They believe it is their birthright to dominate lesser beings, and they use deception, force, and fear to achieve their ends.

Racial Traits

- **Dark Vision:** Baelir can see in total darkness, ignoring illumination penalties and up to 2 points of penalties from invisibility or similar powers within 10" (20 yards).
- **Infernal Dominion:** The Baelir add +1 to Intimidation rolls, as their presence exudes raw authority and fear.
- **Resilience to Cold:** They gain a +4 bonus to resist cold-based effects.
- **Heat Vulnerability:** They suffer a -4 penalty to resist heat effects and take +4 damage from heat-based attacks.

- **Hellish Claws:** In their true form, Baelir possess wicked claws that deal Str+d6 damage.
- **Two Faces:** The Baelir can shift between their infernal and mortal visage at will (an action). In mortal form, they are always unnervingly beautiful and gain +1 to Persuasion rolls.
- **Unholy Taint (Major):** Mortals instinctively fear and revile the Baelir. They suffer -2 to Persuasion rolls when dealing with non-Baelir unless using deception.

NORTHMEN

Fierce, independent, and unbreakable warriors of the frozen north

The Northmen of Pohjaranta are fearsome seafarers, relentless warriors, and stubborn survivalists who thrive in some of the harshest lands in Shalarion. Living in snowbound forests, storm-lashed fjords, and frozen tundras, they are a people forged by struggle and bound by honor, blood, and oath.

Northmen do not kneel easily—not to kings, not to priests, and certainly not to gods. They see Thalamesh as a distant force rather than a deity to be worshiped and Solis as a foreign god of rigid laws. Instead, they honor the land, the sea, and their ancestors, believing that only deeds—not faith—carry weight in the afterlife.

Their society is built around clan ties, raiding traditions, and personal honor. A Northman will never break an oath, never flee a battle without just cause, and never submit to a tyrant. This fierce independence makes them fearsome warriors, unbreakable allies, and frustratingly obstinate enemies.

- **Appearance:** Tall, broad-shouldered, and strong. Most Northmen have pale skin, thick hair (ranging from deep brown to golden blond), and piercing blue or gray eyes. Their warriors are known for their intricate tattoos, representing family lineage, past battles, or earned titles.
- **Mindset:** Loyal to clan and kin, but fiercely independent and stubborn. Strength is respected, weakness is not.

Racial Traits

- **Stormborn Endurance:** Northmen gain a +4 bonus to rolls made to resist cold and harsh weather conditions.
- **Imposing Stature:** Northmen are tall and broad, adding +1 to their Toughness.
- **Battle-Hardened:** They gain +1 to Fighting rolls.
- **Fearless Warriors:** Northmen start with a d4 in Intimidation.
- **Stubborn (Major):** Northmen refuse to back down, often escalating conflicts rather than de-escalating them. They suffer a -2 penalty to Persuasion when attempting to negotiate or compromise.

HUMANS

Adaptable, ambitious, and found in every corner of Shalarion

Humans are the most widespread and culturally diverse race in Shalarion, inhabiting every known continent, from the deserts of Kavashan to the frozen reaches of Pohjaranta. No two human cultures are entirely alike, yet all share a common trait: adaptability. Humans are often driven by ambition, faith, or conquest, shaping the rise and fall of empires, dynasties, and city-states. They are merchants in Darijaan, warriors in Mirzaban, zealots in Rhomarion, and scholars in Nesathar—they are everywhere, ever-changing, ever-rising.

- **Appearance:** Varies widely depending on region. Humans of the northern reaches tend to be pale-skinned and broad, while those of southern and desert lands are darker-skinned and leaner.
- **Mindset:** Ambitious, adaptable, and highly varied.

Racial Traits

- **Versatile:** Humans gain one free Edge at character creation.

HALFLINGS

Joyful wanderers, clever tricksters, and unexpected heroes

The Halflings of Ephyreon are free-spirited, easygoing, and deeply tied to Brisaya. They value good food, grand stories, and clever games of wit and mischief. While some nations see them as harmless and unassuming, others have learned the hard way that Halflings can be surprisingly dangerous when pushed too far. They are natural diplomats, cunning traders, and clever survivalists, thriving in both bustling cities and remote villages. Most despise tyranny and prefer independence, making them resistant to manipulation.

- **Appearance:** Small and compact (3 to 4 feet tall), with soft, round features. Hair color ranges from chestnut brown to golden blond. They have bright, expressive eyes, and their hands and feet are remarkably dexterous.
- **Mindset:** Optimistic, clever, and adaptable, but prone to mischief.

Racial Traits

- **Luck of the Smallfolk:** Halflings begin with one free Benny per session. This stacks with the Luck and Great Luck Edges.
- **Easy to Overlook:** +2 to Stealth rolls.
- **Short Stature:** Halflings average only about four feet tall, reducing their Size (and therefore Toughness) by 1.
- **Slower Pace:** Decrease the character's Pace by 1 and their running die one die type.
- **Spirited:** Halflings are generally optimistic beings. They start with a d6 in Spirit instead of a d4. This increases their maximum Spirit to d12+1.

- **Curious (Major):** Halflings have an insatiable desire to uncover secrets, investigate mysteries, and explore the unknown.

SAJRIN (ELEMENTAL SCIONS OF THALAMESH)

Chosen by the land, blessed by the elements

The Sajrin are Thalamesh's marked, born with a deep connection to either earth or water. They are guardians of balance, often seen as holy figures or feared outsiders, depending on the region. Those attuned to earth are called Bajreth, embodying endurance, strength, and stability. Those tied to water are Tajiren, marked by fluidity, adaptability, and spiritual insight.

- **Appearance:**
 - **Bajreth:** Strong, broad, and ruddy-skinned, their eyes like polished stone.
 - **Tajiren:** Sleek, blue-tinged, with silvery eyes that shimmer like water.
- **Mindset:** The Sajrin see themselves as stewards of balance, acting in accordance with nature and the will of Thalamesh. They are deeply pious, with Bajreth embracing discipline, duty, and honor, while Tajiren favor introspection, wisdom, and intuition. Though they do not seek conflict, they are unyielding in their purpose, standing against forces that threaten the harmony of the world.

Racial Traits

- **Elemental Resistance:** Gain +4 to resist effects related to their ancestral element.
- **Elemental Nature:**
 - **Bajreth** start with d6 in Vigor.
 - **Tajiren** start with a free d6 in Spirit.
- **Sacred Duty (Minor Hindrance):** Sajrin are bound by oaths to protect the balance, which can create conflicts.

DWARVES

Stubborn, proud, and bound to the mountain

Dwarves are unmatched craftsmen, warriors, and engineers, their cities carved deep into the frozen peaks of Durnholm. They value tradition, resilience, and loyalty above all else.

- **Appearance:** Short, broad, and muscular, with thick hair and beards in earthy tones.
- **Mindset:** Gruff, loyal, and unyielding.

Racial Traits

- **Dark Vision:** Can see in the dark a short distance, ignoring all illumination penalties and up to 2 points of penalties from invisibility or similar powers within 10" (20 yards) distant.

- **Tough:** Start with a d6 Vigor instead of a d4. This increases maximum Vigor to d12 + 1.
- **Reduced Pace:** Decrease the character's Pace by 1 and their running die one die type.

HALF-ELVES

Between two worlds, belonging to neither

Half-Elves are the offspring of elves and humans, existing in the liminal space between two vastly different cultures. While many thrive in both societies, they are often seen as outsiders, never fully accepted by either. This forces them to be adaptable, resilient, and independent, making them natural diplomats, wanderers, and free-thinkers. While Half-Elves inherit the refined features and graceful movements of their elven ancestors, they also possess the sturdier builds and ambitious minds of their human lineage. Their mixed heritage allows them to blend into human cities or embrace elven traditions, yet many choose their own path, forging identities beyond the constraints of either race.

- **Appearance:** Half-Elves almost always take after their elven parent's lineage, making a Baelwyth-descended Half-Elf pale-skinned with raven-black hair, a Wendralis Half-Elf golden-skinned with light brown or blond hair, and a Briowen Half-Elf ethereal, with pale rainbow-hued hair and piercing, luminous eyes. They are slightly taller and broader than full-blooded elves but leaner than most humans.
- **Mindset:** Independent, diplomatic, and introspective. They are highly adaptable, but often feel like they must prove their worth in either culture. Many embrace wandering lifestyles, becoming scholars, traders, adventurers, or mercenaries rather than binding themselves to any one nation or cause.

Racial Traits

- **Perceptive:** +1 to Notice rolls.
- **Opportunistic:** When his Action Card is a Five or less, he ignores up to 2 points of penalties on one action that turn, which can include Multi-Action, cover, Range, and even Wound penalties.
- **Unthreatening (Minor):** Half-elves have a hard time looking tough. -2 when making Intimidation rolls.

RAKASHANS

Cunning rulers, refined scholars, and graceful merchants

The Rakashans are an elegant, feline race, renowned for their keen intellect, sharp instincts, and refined sensibilities. Their civilization in Xyphonia is one of harmony, order, and cultural enlightenment, where art, philosophy, and governance intertwine seamlessly. They believe in graceful rule, preferring diplomacy, trade, and social maneuvering over brute force. The Xyphonian Rakashans have cultivated a utopian society, where intellect and discipline guide every decision. They are masters of intrigue, commerce, and scholarly pursuits, ensuring that Xyphonia remains one of the most advanced nations in Shalarion.

- **Appearance:** Tall and graceful, with lean, athletic builds and digitigrade legs. Their fur ranges from sleek black and silver to golden and russet, often with striped or spotted patterns. Their eyes are striking, resembling emerald, sapphire, or amber gemstones with vertical slit pupils.
- **Mindset:** Calculated, perceptive, and refined. They value knowledge, artistry, and balance, believing that every action should be deliberate and measured. While they are not naturally aggressive, they are highly competitive in matters of trade, status, and influence.

Racial Traits

- **Low Light Vision:** Rakashan eyes amplify light. They ignore penalties for Dim and Dark Illumination.
- **Keen Intellect:** A Rakashan's natural weapon is the mind. They start with a d6 in Smarts instead of a d4. This increases their maximum Smarts to d12+1.
- **Innate Awareness:** Rakashans begin with the **Danger Sense** Edge.
- **Disdain for Water:** While Rakashans can swim, they shun it and are not particularly good at it. They subtract 2 from Athletics (swimming) rolls, and each tabletop inch of movement in water uses 3" of Pace.
- **Arrogant (Major):** Rakashans have supreme confidence in their abilities, often underestimating others and dismissing perceived inferiors.

LANGUAGES

HUMAN, MULTIRACIAL, AND TRADE LANGUAGES

- **Trade Tongue (Low Mirz)** – The most widely spoken language across Shalarion, originally derived from **High Mirz** during Mirzaban's ancient conquests. It serves as the common tongue of most merchants, diplomats, and travelers.
- **High Mirz** – The ancient and formal language of **Mirzaban**, spoken primarily by scholars, military officers, and nobility. It is considered refined and poetic, yet complex.
- **Kavic** – The primary language of the **Kavashan Dominion**, also spoken in **Darijaan**, though the two nations have developed distinct accents since their split. Darijaani speakers affect a smoother, more flowing pronunciation, deliberately setting themselves apart from the rigid oratory of their Kavashani neighbors. Kavic is highly structured, lyrical, and well-suited for religious texts, philosophical discourse, and grand oratory.
- **Kathish** – The language of **The Ashen Expanse** and Kathgar's followers. It is a harsh, guttural language with infernal undertones, often used in diabolist rituals and cult doctrine.
- **Pohjish** – The native tongue of **Pohjaranta**, spoken by the Northmen. It is a deep, rolling language, filled with ancient poetry, battle chants, and seafaring terminology.
- **Xyphon** – The classical language of **Xyphonia**, spoken primarily by its Rakashan majority. It is a precise and flowing language, blending feline growls with a melodic cadence.
- **Zamashi** – The primary language of **Zamashur**, blending influences from Kavic, Saurian, and Trade Tongue into a structured yet flexible dialect.
- **Jadari** – The fluid and adaptable language spoken across **The Jadarra Isles**. It is a mix of Trade Tongue, Kavic, and various local dialects, often evolving to suit the shifting power of the archipelago's city-states.

OTHER LANGUAGES

- **Elvish** – The language of all elves, though dialects differ between the three major elven nations. It is an elegant and ageless language, suited for magic, poetry, and diplomacy.
 - **Baelwyth Dialect** (*Ravnoskar*) – More melancholic and solemn, reflecting their gothic and death-oriented culture.

- **Wendralis Dialect** (*Rhomarion*) – The most structured and formal, often used in Solis’ religious texts.
- **Briowen Dialect** (*Nesathar*) – Light and ethereal, carrying musical tones that shift depending on the speaker’s emotion and magic use.
- **Dwarvish** – Spoken by the dwarves of **Durnholm**, a sturdy, runic language designed for precision and craftsmanship. It has overlapping elements with Pohjish due to their close alliance.
- **Primordial** – The ancient and sacred language of the Sajrin (Elemental Scions), spoken in **Drustvald** and among Thalamesh’s most devout followers. It is believed to be the language of the earth and sea.
- **Saurian** – The guttural, hissing language of the Saurians, is the official language in **Qhantala** but is also common in Darijaan and Zamashur. It is efficient, direct, and rhythmic, well-suited for military commands and tribal storytelling.
- **Infernal** – The language of devils and the Nine Hells. Inherently spoken by both Baelir and Veydran. It is spoken fluently within Kathgar’s religious hierarchy and by military officers in The Ashen Expanse.
- **Panji** – The spoken and song-based language of both the Tawodi’Neha (Red Dwarves) and Gurubarra (Minotaurs) in **Warumpanji**. It is rhythmic and tied to oral storytelling traditions.

IMPORTANT LANGUAGE NOTES

- There is no Halfling tongue. People in **Ephyreon** speak a version of Xyphon with a more fluid sentence structure, and a tendency for poetic or rhetorical flourishes in everyday speech.
- Residents of **The Hinterlands** typically speak Trade Tongue and/or Dwarvish. Kathish and Pohjish are common second languages.
- Non-elven residents of various nations tend to speak Trade Tongue and usually at least one other language (either the local Elven dialect or a language of a neighboring nation).

HINDRANCES

PROHIBITED HINDRANCES

Corruption (Touched by Chaos is an option instead, see below.)

NEW HINDRANCES

Touched by Chaos (Major) - REPLACES THE CORRUPTION HINDRANCE

"Reality twists, time shatters, and my mind is the price."

This Hindrance may only be taken by a character with an Arcane Background. The caster's magic draws on a source that is inherently chaotic. Whenever he rolls a Critical Failure on his arcane skill roll, he gains a new Minor Hindrance, or trades or upgrades a Minor Hindrance gained by this hindrance for a Major Hindrance, that reflects the long term effects of chaos on his mind and body. A wizard might become Jealous (Minor), for example, as he realizes how difficult it is to gather his power. Then Bloodthirsty (Major) as his rage turns to violent thoughts. These Hindrances last until the spelluser's next Advance, at which time he may remove one Minor Hindrance, or reduce or trade a Major Hindrance for a Minor. This is in addition to his regular Advance.

Zealot (Major)

"Only my faith is righteous. All others must be corrected—or destroyed."

The character is fanatically devoted to their faith, ideology, or cause, unwilling to compromise or tolerate differing views. They refuse diplomacy with opposing factions and react hostilely to perceived blasphemy or heresy. The character must make a Spirit roll to cooperate with those of conflicting beliefs (GM's discretion), and their unyielding stance often makes enemies. Common among Rhomari inquisitors, Kathgar cultists, and militant Thalamesh devotees.

Heir to Blood Feud (Minor)

"Your ancestors made an enemy of my ancestors. That grudge is still mine."

The character comes from a lineage tied to an ancient feud, often involving war, betrayal, or religious conflict. Even if they personally bear no hatred, their mere existence stirs hostility in the opposing faction. The character faces immediate suspicion and hostility from the rival faction, suffering a -2 Persuasion penalty when dealing with them.

EDGES

PROHIBITED EDGES

Wizard (SWADE)

Blood Magic (Fantasy Companion)

Arcane Background – Diabolist (Fantasy Companion)

Arcane Background – Necromancer (Fantasy Companion)

NEW EDGES

Indomitable

"Magic bends. The weak break. But my spirit is unyielding."

REQUIREMENTS: Hero can't have an Arcane Background or Magical Awakening.

Some rely on magic or divine blessings to shield them from harm, but your strength comes from within. Whether through sheer grit, unwavering discipline, or an indomitable spirit, you refuse to falter, standing firm where others fall. Once per encounter, when making a Soak roll, roll an additional die and take the better result. If you would be Shaken, you may make a free Spirit roll to recover immediately (instead of waiting until your next turn).

Magical Awakening

"The spark was always within me. Now, it becomes a flame."

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned. The process also requires a sacred ritual performed by a chosen priest, druid, or arcane elder in a place of great spiritual or mystical significance. Other Requirements are listed in the specific packages below.

Magic is relatively common in Shalarion, and disciplined adventurers may learn a few simple powers to aid them on their journeys. Magical Awakening does not grant access to Edges that require an Arcane Background, but the hero may take the Power Points or Soul Drain Edge. If the hero already has an Arcane Background, they cannot use any of its Edges or abilities with Magical Awakening, and vice versa. Choose one of the power packages below. Abilities noted as "Self Only" do not get any additional benefit from that Limitation.

- **BARBARIAN** (Str d8+, Fighting d8+): Boost Trait (Fighting, Strength, Spirit, or Vigor only), smite, and speed. All have the Personal Limitation.
- **FIGHTER** (Agi OR Str d8+, Fighting d8+): Boost Trait (Fighting, Shooting, Strength, and Vigor only), protection, and smite. All have the Personal Limitation.

- MONK (Agi OR Spi d8+, Athletics d8+): Boost Trait (Agility, Athletics, Fighting, and Spirit only), deflection, and smite. All have the Personal Limitation.
- PALADIN (Spi d8+, Relevant hindrance): Boost Trait (Fighting and Spirit only), healing, protection, sanctuary and smite. All but healing have the Personal Limitation.
- RANGER (Survival d8+, Relevant hindrance): Beast friend, boost Trait (Athletics, Shooting, and Survival only), entangle, and farsight. All but entangle and beast friend have the Personal Limitation.
- ROGUE (Agi d8+, Thievery d8+): Boost Trait (Athletics, Stealth, and Thievery only), darksight, lock/unlock, and wall walker. All except lock/unlock have the Personal Limitation.

The hero gains 10 dedicated Power Points, which recharge normally. As an action, they may automatically activate a chosen power:

- For double its regular cost, it succeeds automatically.
- By spending 3 additional Power Points, it succeeds with a raise.
- Applicable Power Modifiers may be used at their usual cost.

Daring Strike

“A reckless blade is a dull one. Strike hard, strike true.”

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Alertness, Fighting d8+

Your precision on strikes does not weaken your blows as much as the untrained. When performing a Desperate Attack, your penalty to damage is half the bonus to you assign to your Fighting rolls.

Defensive Expertise

“The best warrior is the one still standing.”

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Athletics d8+

Your character has trained to maneuver while being on guard against enemy blows. The hero's Parry bonus is increased by +2 (to a total of +6) when using the Defend option and they may also Run. Alternately, you may decrease the Defend Parry bonus to +2 as an action (instead of your entire turn), which allows your hero to use the Multi-Action rule (at a -2 for one other action, or -4 for two additional actions) on their turn. The reduced Parry bonus still lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

Disarm Tactics

“You won't be needing that.”

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Fighting d6+

You love to deny your enemies their weapons in a fight. The character ignores 2 points of Called Shot or Scale penalties when attempting to Disarm. Additionally, if your opponent drops their weapon, your hero (if they have a free hand) may opt to have the weapon in their hand now. Otherwise, the item is displaced 1" from their foe in a direction of the hero's choice.

Hustle

"Move fast, strike first, never stop."

REQUIREMENTS: Novice, Agility d8+, Athletics d6+

You move like lightning! Your character may roll an additional die for running rolls, the character chooses the result they wish to use. Also, your hero reduces the penalty due to Running by one.

Note: Hustle combined with Steady Hands removes the Running penalty completely.

Lunging Assault

"Distance is an illusion. I am already upon you."

REQUIREMENTS: Novice, Agility d8+, Fighting d8+

You strike like a snake. The character may increase the Reach of a single Fighting attack by one this round, but you become Vulnerable (Distracted instead if used with Wild Attack) until the end of your next turn.

Power Attack

"One blow is all I need."

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Strength d8+, Fighting d8+

You know how to hit and when you do, you hit hard. The hero's Strength is counted as one die-type higher when making Fighting damage rolls. This bonus applies to minimum Strength for weapons as well.

Shove

"You're in my way. Let me fix that."

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Strength d8+

Opponents are ragdolls in your hands as you move them about the battlefield. You gain one free reroll when using the Push option. If you gain a raise over your opponent, they become Distracted or Vulnerable to the end of their next turn in addition to any forced movement. Finally, you may choose to move with your opponent if you wish when repositioning them.

Note: The Push option can also be used to reposition a target through tosses, checks, or drags. Also Push says you can move your opponent up to 1" (or 2" with a raise), so you may choose 0" to just knock them Prone as a trip maneuver.

Sunder Training

“Armor is just a cage waiting to be broken.”

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Strength d8+,

Fighting d6+, Notice d6+

Your hero has drilled and learned to defeat armor and destroy objects. All your Fighting attacks increase their AP by 2. They also get the bonus damage from raises (but still none of these dice can Ace) when Breaking Things.

Bodyguard

“Not today, friend.”

REQUIREMENTS: Seasoned, Agility d8+, Notice d8+

Your character is willing to take a bullet for their teammates, literally. Once per turn as a free action, the hero may switch places with an adjacent character when they are targeted for attack (after the attack roll, but before the damage is rolled), and the bodyguard becomes the new target of the attack.

Cavalier

“A true rider and their steed move as one.”

REQUIREMENTS: Novice, Fighting d6+, Riding d6+

Cavalier's prowess on a mount is unrivaled. The mounted character acts as if they have the Ace Edge for purposes of SoakingWounds (using their Riding) and negating penalties to control or maneuver their mount, including their mount's Wound or Fatigue penalties. They may use their Riding in place of Athletics to oppose weapons set against a charge. Also, your hero only needs to make a Riding check to see if they fall if they or their mount are rendered Incapacitated (barring outright attempts to trip their mount or dislodge them from the mount).

Note: Use the Steady Hands Edge to negate penalties for ranged attacks while riding.

SETTING RULES

Creative Combat (SWADE)

- A raise on a Test allows the character to roll on a special table that grants additional effects.

Dynamic Backlash (SWADE)

- A Critical Failure on an arcane skill roll forces the player to roll on a special table with various chaotic results.

More Skill Points

- Player characters in advanced or specialized settings start with 15 skill points.

Unarmored Hero (SWADE)

- Wild Cards without armor add +2 to their Soak rolls.

Downtime (Fantasy Companion)

- Adventurers often have time between their epic quests. Some might spend it practicing their sword fighting techniques or enchanting magic items. Others may pray to their gods, try to earn a few coins in town, spend time with their friends, or aid locals in need. When the Game Master decides there's "downtime" (generally a few days to a week), you can choose an activity. Each provides a benefit of some sort, from financial rewards to progress in crafting or rerolls on select Traits.
- Narrate what your hero is doing then follow the instructions under each activity. Some Game Masters might also require characters spend money on Lifestyle (see page 50) during Downtime. Unless an option says otherwise, its effect may only be gained once regardless of how long the downtime lasts.



THE NATIONS OF SHALARION

The Ashen Empire “Ashers” (Page 35) – A cursed land of frost and shadow, where Kathgar’s worshippers rule with iron law and whispered terror. Its people live under the dominion of the ruthless cultists who seek their dark god’s return. **Leader: Hellspeaker Xeroth the Ironclad.**

Darijaan “Darijaani” (Page 37) – A wealthy, trade-driven nation where scholars, merchants, and diplomats thrive in a cosmopolitan paradise. It remains neutral in most conflicts but plays all sides to its benefit. **Leader: The Council of Coin.**

Drustvald “*Drust*” (Page 40) – The sacred land of Thalamesh, where the elemental Sajrin rule in harmony with nature. Every faithful follower of the Earthfather dreams of making a pilgrimage here. **Leader: The Circle of Elders.**

Durnholm “*Durnish*” (Page 43) – A mighty dwarven stronghold in the snow-covered mountains of the north, renowned for its masterful craftsmanship and indomitable warriors. They stand with denizens of The Hinterlands against raiding forces from The Ashen Expanse. **Leader: High King Barak Oakshield.**

Ephyreon “*Ephyreoni*” (Page 45) – A halfling-led island nation of philosophy, diplomacy, and resilience, where reason and tradition walk hand in hand. A beacon of stability, it stands as a steady force in a turbulent world. **Leader: The Council of Hearthaven.**

The Hinterlands “*Hidden Ones or The Hidden*” (Page 48) – A harsh, frozen wilderness where the Veydran (Infernals) and battle-hardened humans wage an endless war against the forces of Kathgar. Its people live in hidden cavern networks, ever watchful. **Leader: War-Keeper Joram Baelkaith (chief among the war-keepers).**

The Jadarra Isles “*Jadarrans or Islanders*” (Page 51) – A chaotic archipelago of independent city-states, ruled by merchant lords, pirates, and ambitious schemers. Trade, treachery, and fortune rule the tides. **Leader: The Jadari Compact (loosely governed by the wealthiest factions).**

Kavashan Dominion “*Kavashani*” (Page 54) – A theocracy devoted to Thalamesh, enforcing the will of the Earthfather with zeal and unwavering faith. It remains in a bitter ideological feud with its northern neighbor, Darijaan. **Leader: Grand Flamebearer Ramin al-Kirash.**

Mirzaban “*Mirzites*” (Page 57) – A militaristic, isolationist nation of peerless warriors, once conquerors, now the vigilant protectors of the northern frontier. It holds a deep mutual rivalry with Pohjaranta. **Leader: Grand Stratarch Orzhan Khalid.**

Nesathar “*Nessites*” (Page 59) – A land of arcane mastery, where the Briowen elves and their human allies study magic as both art and science. Their loose interpretation of Solis’ teachings has led to tensions with Rhomarion. **Leader: Archmagister Rhaelis Vyrian.**

Pohjaranta “*Pohj*” (Page 61) – A land of snow and steel, where the Northmen and dwarves stand as brothers against the horrors of the frozen wastes. They share a long and storied rivalry with Mirzaban. **Leader: Jarl Styrmir Wolf-Eye.**

Qhantala “*Qhantalar*” (Page 64) – A rich and powerful island nation ruled by the enigmatic Saurians, thriving on trade, cunning diplomacy, and rumored dealings with Kathgar’s followers. **Leader: Golden Dynast Xhuatl the Undying.**

Ravnoskar “*Skari*” (Page 66) – A gothic land of ancient forests and shadowed halls, where the Baelwyth elves revere Mortivara and whisper the name of Ilyndra. The balance between faith and corruption teeters ever closer to ruin. **Leader: The Veilborn Lords.**

Rhomarion “*Rhomari*” (Page 69) – A zealous empire of Wendralis elves and humans, claiming to be the purest voice of Solis’ will. It wages endless holy wars against those who do not conform to its doctrine. **Leader: Pontifex Solari Veylthar Wendrith.**

Warumpanji “*Panjians*” (Page 72) – A vast and untamed land where the Tawodi’neha (Red Dwarves to outsiders) and Gurubarra (a race of pacifist minotaurs) live in harmony with the wilds. Its people reject modern civilization but are fierce when provoked. **Leader: Elder Ngarli Warranaya.**

Xyphonia “*Xyphonians*” (Page 74) – A disciplined and enlightened Rakashan-dominated city-state federation, dedicated to the ideals of wisdom, order, and martial excellence. However, corruption festers in the shadows. **Leaders: The Ephorate (a council of five philosopher-archons).**

Zamashur “*Zamites*” (Page 77) – A scholarly and spiritual melting pot, where Solis and Thalamesh are worshipped in unity, much to Rhomarion’s outrage. It welcomes immigrants from all lands, particularly those fleeing persecution. **Leader: Queen Naemira Shamashal.**

THE ASHEN EMPIRE

"The frozen maw of damnation, where souls are bound in chains."

Introduction

The Ashen Empire, located in The Ashen Expanse (used interchangeably in colloquial terms), is a scar upon the world, a vast, haunted dominion where ice and shadow entwine. Scarred by the final battle of the War of Eternal Twilight, its lands are forever tainted by magic, death, and infernal corruption. Blackened ruins, half-buried in the frost, whisper of civilizations that once flourished, before Kathgar's will turned them to dust.

Yet, despite its barren and unforgiving terrain, the Ashen Expanse is far from lifeless. Cities of obsidian and iron rise from the frozen plains, built upon the backs of the enslaved. Its people—the Ashers—live beneath the rule of Hellspeaker Xeroth the Ironclad, the Supreme Ebon Hierophant of the Frostbound Throne, and the unquestioned voice of Kathgar.

Though the Ashen Expanse could survive self-sufficiently, it thrives on war and conquest. Its armies raid The Hinterlands, the Stormcradle Mountains, and beyond, seeking souls, gold, and artifacts to fuel their infernal patron's power. And though few ships sail under the banners of Kathgar, his agents have infiltrated every nation, operating through puppet rulers, secret cults, and whispered lies.

Kathgar's chains are breaking. His worshippers know this. And the world trembles in the shadow of his return.

Capital & Major Cities

The Ashen Expanse is littered with ruined strongholds, cursed battlegrounds, and infernal temples, but its great cities remain intact—cold, cruel, and unassailable.

- **Nimath-Kor, The City of Chains** – The capital of the Ashen Empire, built upon a ruin from before the war. It is a fortress of black stone, where the enslaved toil endlessly to fuel Kathgar's growing power. The Frostbound Throne rises here, its halls lined with frozen souls encased in ice.
- **Ulzakhir, The Icebound Crucible** – A city of forges and slaughterhouses, where war machines, infernal weapons, and hell-bound steeds are crafted for Kathgar's armies. Fires never die here, fueled by the suffering of the damned.
- **Shadoth's Maw** – A great sinkhole, at whose depths lie the Gates of Perdition, rumored to be a direct portal to the Nine Hells. The Cult of the Chained Blizzard gathers here, calling forth frozen devils to do their bidding.

- **The Obsidian Sepulcher** – The greatest of Kathgar’s temples, a monolithic tower carved from volcanic glass. Its priests conduct unholy rituals beneath an eternal eclipse, draining the lifeblood of the faithful to empower their master’s return.

Demographics

- **Humans:** 65%
- **Baelir (Cambions):** 30% (*Their bloodlines strengthened by Kathgar’s rule*)
- **Other:** 5% (*Slaves, lost souls, and those unfortunate enough to be born into this cursed land.*)

Religion

The Ashen Expanse worships Kathgar, the Frostbinder, as the only true god. His faith is absolute, enforced by the clergy, the military, and infernal pacts forged in frozen blood and fire.

Kathgar’s followers do not fear Mortivara, nor do they honor Ilyndra Noctis, though both have a presence in secret cults beyond the clergy’s control. The frozen dead often rise in service to Kathgar, but their souls are chained, not free—a mockery of Mortivara’s natural cycle.

Government

A Theocratic Empire of Absolute Rule – The Supreme Ebon Hierophant of the Frostbound Throne, Hellspeaker Xeroth the Ironclad, is both sovereign and divine mouthpiece. His will is Kathgar’s will. The land is ruled by warpriests, inquisitors, and diabolists, enforcing the unshakable doctrine of their frozen god.

Major Factions

- **The Frostbound Throne:** The ruling theocracy, led by Hellspeaker Xeroth, who directs the Ashen Empire’s wars, rituals, and expansionist ambitions.
- **The Cult of the Chained Blizzard:** Kathgar’s most zealous and secretive order, tasked with spreading his influence across the world. Though feared even in the Ashen Expanse, they are unquestionably loyal to their god’s return.
- **The Blackened Host:** Kathgar’s elite army, composed of Baelir warlords, human fanatics, and summoned infernal entities. Their cold iron weapons sap the warmth from flesh, and their greatest warriors bind frozen souls to their armor, becoming undying juggernauts.
- **The Crimson Brand:** An order of torturers, inquisitors, and executioners, devoted to purging the unworthy and ensuring the absolute purity of Kathgar’s faith. They maintain dreaded “black temples” where heretics vanish, never to be seen again.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Hellspeaker Xeroth the Ironclad** (*Human, Supreme Ebon Hierophant of Kathgar*) – An immortal tyrant, bound by chains of ice and hellfire. None have seen his face, only the iron mask of his office.
- **High Inquisitor Vasha the Pale** (*Baelir, Leader of the Crimson Brand*) – A merciless enforcer, known for purging entire bloodlines in her hunt for heretics.
- **Zimrakh the Unchained** (*Baelir, Rebel Diabolist*) – Once one of Kathgar's greatest generals, now a fugitive, hunted for daring to break the chains of his infernal lineage.
- **General Rathok the Hollow** (*Devil Warleader of the Blackened Host*) – A devil-knight, bound in frozen armor, who has not known warmth in over five centuries.

Nation Description & History

The Ashen Expanse was not always a land of blackened ruins and frozen death. Before the War of Eternal Twilight, it was fertile and warm, dotted with bustling cities and sacred sites. But when Kathgar fell, the very land withered beneath his rage. What remained was a lifeless husk, overrun by warlocks, cultists, and infernal warbands, each seeking to restore their fallen god's dominion.

Though the rest of the world rebuilt, the Ashen Expanse only deepened in darkness. Under Hellspeaker Xeroth's iron rule, it became a true empire, forging cities of iron and glass, raising armies of the damned, and sending whispers of Kathgar's return into the halls of kings and lords.

Now, the Expanse is the great wound of the world, growing wider with each passing year. Its warpriests gather sacrifices, its cultists spread their doctrine, and its soldiers sharpen their blades. The frost is creeping south, and many fear it is not merely winter that approaches.

The war for Shalarion never truly ended.

DARIJAAN

"Where gold flows like water, and secrets weigh more than coin."

Introduction

Darijaan is the heart of commerce and diplomacy, a land where merchants hold more power than kings, and words can cut as sharply as blades. Nestled at the northern edge of the Namaru Desert, it is a land of oases, fertile river valleys, and sprawling trade cities, where silks, spices, and rare artifacts from every nation change hands.

Once one with the Kavashan Dominion, Darijaan split from its theocratic past over 800 years ago, choosing commerce over faith. The resulting civil war left scars that never truly faded, and though Darijaan thrives, the great wall along the Isthmus of Rukhat still stands—a silent reminder of old grudges and unresolved tensions.

Despite its wealth, Darijaan is not without danger. The city-states, ruled by merchant-princes and trade guilds, are rife with schemes, assassinations, and political maneuvering. The Cult of the Chained Blizzard has infiltrated many circles, whispering dark promises to the ambitious. And though Darijaan has always been neutral, some say its neutrality has made it blind to the storm gathering on the horizon.

Capital & Major Cities

Each major city-state in Darijaan is independent but bound by trade pacts, maintaining rivalries and alliances in a constant game of influence.

- **Azirash, The Sapphire Crown** – The largest and wealthiest city in Darijaan, built along the shores of Lake Saphirra (a vast freshwater lake). Its Grand Bazaar is the largest market in the known world, where everything—from rare spices to cursed relics—is for sale.
- **Rukhat, The Sentinel of the Isthmus** – A heavily fortified border city, built along the Wall of Sundering, separating Darijaan from the Kavashan Dominion. The wall's gates are sealed more often than open, and its people hold old grievances close to their hearts.
- **Zumaira, The City of Lanterns** – A bustling port city on the western coast, where Darijaan's grandest ships sail to Qhantala, Warumpanji, and beyond. At night, its canals glow with floating lanterns, and its rulers convene in secret parlors, plotting the future.
- **Al-Khajeem, The Whispering Tower** – A mysterious fortified enclave of scholars, alchemists, and seers, rumored to hoard knowledge that could reshape the world. Some say its archives hold records of Kathgar's first fall.

Demographics

- **Humans: 55%**
- **Saurians: 20%** (*Traders, mercenaries, and scholars who thrive in Darijaan's competitive environment.*)
- **Half-Elves: 10%** (*A blending of Rhomari, Kavashani, and Darijaani bloodlines.*)
- **Halflings: 7%** (*Many lead merchant houses or banking enterprises.*)
- **Sajrin: 5%** (*Elemental scions drawn to the wealth and ambition of Darijaan.*)
- **Rakashans: 3%** (*Often spies, diplomats, or members of the shadowy underworld.*)
- **Other: 1%** (*Wanderers, outcasts, and rare races seeking fortune or escape.*)

Religion

Darijaan has no state religion, but the faiths of Solis and Thalamesh are the most commonly practiced.

- **Solis** is revered as **the god of prosperity and civilization**, though many **interpret his teachings differently**—some see wealth as a divine blessing, while others believe **true virtue lies in generosity and fairness**.
- **Thalamesh** is honored by **farmers, sailors, and laborers**, who give thanks for **fertile lands and safe waters**.
- **Brisaya** is quietly revered in **gambling dens, brothels, and taverns**, where **her followers seek fortune, mischief, and poetic justice**.
- **Kathgar's cultists** operate **in the shadows**, their influence growing among **the discontented and ambitious**.

Government

A Mercantile Confederation of City-States – Darijaan is ruled by the Council of Coin, an assembly of merchant-princes, guild lords, and trade magnates. Power is not inherited but earned through wealth, influence, and cunning. Beneath the council, each city-state maintains its own rulers, be they elected merchant lords, dynastic houses, or guild-controlled enclaves.

Major Factions

- **The Council of Coin:** The ruling body of Darijaan, where wealth determines power. Allies today can be rivals tomorrow, and corruption is as common as gold.
- **The Gilded Blades:** A mercenary guild that sells its swords to the highest bidder. Though ostensibly neutral, some claim they have been bought by the Cult of the Chained Blizzard.
- **The Glass Veil:** A network of spies and informants, run by a shadowy figure known as The Silver Jackal. Their agents operate in every major nation, gathering secrets for those who can afford them.
- **The Keepers of the Last Light:** A secretive Solis sect, devoted to preventing the return of Kathgar. They seek Shards of Solis, believing them to be the key to stopping the creeping darkness.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Mahir Al-Safar** (*Human, Head of the Council of Coin*) – A master diplomat and merchant, known for balancing trade interests while keeping Darijaan independent.

- **The Silver Jackal** (*Unknown, Leader of the Glass Veil*) – A mysterious spymaster, who knows every secret in Darijaan—and beyond.
- **Zaida "The Veiled Viper"** (*Rakashan, Assassin & Cultist*) – A renowned killer, rumored to be working for Kathgar's cult.
- **Grand Seer Jorahn of Al-Khajeem** (*Saurian, Keeper of Forbidden Knowledge*) – A reclusive scholar, said to possess visions of Kathgar's return.

Nation Description & History

Eight centuries ago, Darijaan was one with the Kavashan Dominion, bound by faith, trade, and culture. But as theocratic rule tightened its grip, a schism formed—one side seeking divine order, the other pursuing the freedom of wealth and reason.

The resulting War of Sundering was brutal, ending in a stalemate and the creation of the Wall of Sundering across the Isthmus of Rukhat. Though the war ended, neither side forgave the other, and tensions remain to this day.

Since then, Darijaan has prospered beyond all expectations, becoming the trade capital of the known world. Every nation—from the frozen halls of Durnholm to the jungle riches of Qhantala—sends its merchants here, seeking fortune, power, and opportunity.

Yet with wealth comes corruption, and many whisper that Kathgar's agents have woven their influence into Darijaan's high places. The Cult of the Chained Blizzard operates in the shadows, bribing officials, spreading fear, and ensuring that when the time comes, Darijaan will not resist. For now, gold rules Darijaan. But gold alone may not be enough to stop what is coming.

DRUSTVALD

"The land is our shield, the sky our witness, and the storm our blade."

Introduction

Drustvald is a land of rugged highlands, mist-covered moors, and sacred groves, where the old ways hold firm. Ruled by the Sajrin, the elemental scions of Thalamesh, it is a nation in harmony with the land, its people bound by honor, oaths, and the natural order.

Drustvald is the holiest land of Thalamesh, and pilgrims from across the world make their way to its sacred city of Brannochdûn. But this veneration comes at a cost—the Kavashan Dominion disputes Drustvald's claim as the true heart of the faith, resenting the influence its shamans and druids wield.

Though its warriors are fiercely independent, Drustvald is not a nation of conquest. Instead, it stands eternal watch, ensuring that the world's balance is never tipped too far in any direction. Some say its people keep an eye on Mirzaban, ensuring its conquests never return. Others claim that Drustvald's druids guard secrets even older than the War of Eternal Twilight. Whatever the truth, one thing is certain—Drustvald endures. It has seen empires rise and fall, yet its people still walk the ancient paths, listening to the whispers of the land.

Capital & Major Cities

Drustvald's settlements are stone-built hillforts, deep-wood villages, and sacred sites, woven into the land rather than imposed upon it.

- **Brannochdûn, The Root of the World** – The holiest city of Thalamesh, built around an eternal spring said to flow from the god's own hand.
- **Tirnvarra, The Storm-Kissed Keep** – A warrior stronghold, where Sajrin paladins and rangers train in Thalamesh's name.
- **Dun Muir, The Circle of Elders** – A sacred conclave, where the Archdruids commune with the spirits of land and sea.
- **Lochfarach, The Sunken Grove** – A mystical city, where water Sajrin keep the secrets of the deep.
- **The Skarnhollows** – A vast underground network of caverns, home to mysterious shrines and hidden enclaves.

Demographics

- **Sajrin (Elemental Scions of Earth & Water): 65%** (*The ruling race, seen as the chosen of Thalamesh.*)
- **Humans: 25%** (*Mostly druids, rangers, and warriors bound to the land.*)
- **Other: 10%** (*Scholars, hermits, and wandering souls drawn to the faith.*)

Religion

Drustvald is the most sacred land of Thalamesh, the Earthfather and Tidebringer.

- **Thalamesh is the undisputed patron**, seen as **the soul of the land itself**.
- **Solis is honored**, but as **a guiding light rather than a ruler**.
- **Brisaya is respected**, for **fate is a river all must follow**.
- **Mortivara is acknowledged**, but her domain is **a path all must walk, not one to revere**.
- **Kathgar and Ilyndra are despised**, seen as **agents of destruction and imbalance**.

Government

A Theocratic Council – Drustvald is ruled by the Circle of Elders, a council of druids, rangers, and spiritual leaders, who interpret Thalamesh's will. Each clan and region is autonomous, but all recognize the wisdom of the Elders, who ensure balance is kept.

Major Factions

- **The Circle of Elders:** The ruling body, composed of druids, water-weavers, and earthshapers, guiding Drustvald's spiritual and political path.
- **The Oathsworn:** A warrior order, made up of paladins, rangers, and Sajrin champions, dedicated to defending the balance of the world.
- **The Stonecallers:** A mystic sect, devoted to deciphering the whispers of the land, ensuring that the old ways are never forgotten.
- **The Wardens of the Deep:** A hidden order, guarding sacred places beneath the seas, rumored to hold knowledge that even the gods fear.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Archdruid Morwyn Lochfara** (*Sajrin, High Elder of Drustvald*) – A calm, steady leader, who sees further than most.
- **Warden-Knight Brannoc Varhail** (*Sajrin, Grandmaster of the Oathsworn*) – A fierce warrior, sworn to hunt those who disrupt balance.
- **Seer Kareth Tuarvan** (*Human, Oracle of the Stonecallers*) – A blind mystic, who claims to hear Thalamesh's voice in the wind.
- **Elder Finnvaris Tideborn** (*Sajrin, Leader of the Wardens of the Deep*) – A mysterious figure, who knows the hidden truths of the seas.
- **Sorceress Yvanna the Wayward** (*Unknown, Apostate of the Elders*) – A heretic, who seeks to bend the forces of nature to her will.

Nation Description & History

Drustvald has never been conquered, never been broken. Its people lived through the War of Eternal Twilight, holding the land steady even as gods clashed. When the war ended, Drustvald's druids sealed wounds in the earth and waters, ensuring balance was restored. For millennia, it has stood as a land apart, keeping its own counsel while the world warred, burned, and rebuilt itself. Now, however, tensions rise.

The Kavashan Dominion claims Brannochdûn is a false holy city. Mirzaban's warriors grow restless, and Drustvald's people watch them closely. And Kathgar's cultists stir beneath the land, seeking to corrupt Thalamesh's sacred places. Yet Drustvald does not waver. The Sajrin walk the same paths they always have, holding firm against time, war, and even gods themselves.

DURNHOLM

"Stone and steel endure, as do those who wield them."

Introduction

Durnholm is a nation carved from the bones of the earth, its people as unyielding as the mountains they call home. Nestled within the Stormcradle Mountains, this dwarven stronghold is a bastion of craftsmanship, resilience, and unbreakable traditions. Its people—the Durnish—have weathered war, siege, and time itself, shaping a kingdom where honor is earned through toil, and steel sings louder than words.

Durnholm stands as the northern bulwark against Kathgar's forces, coordinating with the warriors of The Hinterlands and Pohjaranta to thwart the frozen god's incursions. Though once isolationist, Durnholm has become a pillar of trade, its forges producing weapons, armor, and machinery that fuel the continent's greatest conflicts. Yet within its deep halls and echoing mines, whispers grow of restless ancestors, hidden vaults, and dangers lurking beneath the stone.

Capital & Major Cities

Durnholm's cities are built into mountainsides, carved from living stone, or hidden within massive subterranean chambers. Many are connected by ancient tunnels spanning hundreds of miles, reinforced with dwarven ingenuity to withstand time and siege alike.

- **Durnholde** – The capital and heart of Durnholm, built within The Grand Hollow, a cavern so vast its ceiling is lost in mist. Great bridges of black iron span across molten rivers, and the High Forge of Thalamesh burns eternally at the city's heart.
- **Karag-Storn** – A fortified mountain hold near the Hinterlands border, its warriors standing guard against Kathgar's warbands. Known as "The Last Anvil", it produces the continent's finest siege weapons and war machines.
- **Velmhar's Delve** – A legendary mine-city, home to veins of enchanted ore and tunnels that descend deeper than any dare to explore. Some claim its lower halls hold relics from before the War of Eternal Twilight.
- **Stonehearth** – A trading hub where Durnholm, Pohjaranta, and Drustvald conduct business, renowned for its sky bridges and high-altitude terraces. Pohjish raiders and Hinterlands warriors often gather here to commission weapons before heading to war.

Demographics

- **Dwarves: 87%**
- **Humans: 8%** (*Pohj mercenaries, traders, and smiths*)
- **Sajrin: 3%** (*Elemental wanderers drawn to the mountains*)
- **Other: 2%** (*Exiled scholars, lost adventurers, or rare travelers from beyond the mountains*)

Religion

The Durnish revere Thalamesh, the Earthfather, as the divine architect who shaped both the world and their destiny. His faith is deeply ingrained in their culture, and every forge, hall, and stronghold bears his mark.

Some mountain-dwellers also whisper prayers to Brisaya, seeking luck in trade, inspiration in craftsmanship, or relief from hardship. Few dare speak of Mortivara, but deep miners and gravewardens carry quiet superstitions about the dead.

Government

A Monarchical Craft-Dominion – Durnholm is ruled by the High King, but power is shared among the Stoneguilds, powerful artisan clans who oversee trade, industry, and defense. The King's Council consists of the Guild Lords, the Grand Runemaster, and the Warthane of Karag-Storn, ensuring both tradition and military strength guide the nation.

Major Factions

- **The Stoneguilds:** The lifeblood of Durnholm's industry, each guild controls a trade—from armor-forging to clockwork engineering. They hold immense political power, and disputes between them can rival wars in scale.
- **The Runebinders:** A secretive order of scholars and smith-mystics who inscribe magic into metal and stone. Their greatest works are jealously guarded, and some say they know secrets of pre-cataclysmic metallurgy.
- **The Wardens of the Deep:** A militant order dedicated to defending the underways and forgotten halls. They claim that something ancient stirs in the depths, though the High King dismisses this as delusional paranoia.
- **The Crimson Pact:** A controversial warrior sect that believes the best defense against Kathgar is offense. They raid the Ashen Expanse, burning Kathgarite fortifications and sabotaging war machines, though some fear their zeal may lead to ruin.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **High King Barak Oakshield** (*Dwarf, Ruler of Durnholm*) – A wise and practical king, known for balancing diplomacy with relentless military resolve.
- **Grand Runemaster Thorna Flintvein** (*Dwarf, Arcane Smith of the Runebinders*) – A brilliant enchanter, whose mastery of runic metallurgy borders on forbidden knowledge.
- **Warthane Hrothgar Stormhammer** (*Dwarf, Commander of Karag-Storn*) – A battle-hardened general, leading Durnholm's defense against Kathgar's incursions.
- **Korrin Blackshard** (*Dwarf, Leader of the Crimson Pact*) – A controversial warrior with no patience for diplomacy, dedicated to taking the fight to Kathgar, no matter the cost.

Nation Description & History

Durnholm's history stretches back to before the War of Eternal Twilight, when its mountain halls were home to legendary dwarven kings. Though the war shattered empires and landscapes, the Stormcradle Mountains endured, shielding the Durnish from the worst of the cataclysm.

As the centuries passed, Durnholm became a center of craftsmanship, trade, and military might, forging alliances with Pohjaranta, Drustvald, and the Hidden Ones of the Hinterlands. They arm the warriors of the north, ensuring that Kathgar's minions never gain a foothold beyond the Expanse.

Despite their strength, Durnholm has its own internal struggles. The Stoneguilds vie for influence, the Crimson Pact pushes for war, and the Runebinders whisper of forgotten knowledge that could reshape the world. Deep beneath the mountains, the Wardens of the Deep claim that ancient horrors stir, but who among the Durnish believes in old ghosts? Durnholm stands as a fortress of order and steel, but in a world of shifting alliances and unseen threats, even stone may crack.

EPHYREON

"The world shifts like the tide, but we remain."

Introduction

Ephyreon is a land of philosophy, art, and quiet resilience. Its people, mostly halflings, value harmony over conquest, wisdom over impulse, and tradition over turmoil. In a world of war, they have mastered the art of existing without being swept away.

Once a fragmented archipelago of city-states, Ephyreon gradually unified under a shared cultural identity, not through war, but through diplomacy, trade, and shared tradition. While many nations have risen and fallen through conquest, Ephyreon has stood firm, weathering every storm.

The people of Ephyreon are pragmatic and adaptable, believing that fortune favors those who listen to the world's currents. While Solis and Thalamesh are respected, their hearts belong to Brisaya, whom they see as the weaver of fate—the goddess of small joys, clever choices, and the quiet magic of everyday life.

To outsiders, Ephyreon may seem too passive, too easygoing, but beneath its laid-back exterior lies a nation of shrewd negotiators, brilliant scholars, and unshakable resilience. The world rushes around them like a raging river—yet Ephyreon endures.

Capital & Major Cities

Ephyreon's cities are warm, inviting, and effortlessly beautiful—a blend of stone terraces, whitewashed homes, lush gardens, and open-air marketplaces.

- **Hearthaven, The Rock in the River** – The capital city, known for its open plazas, philosophical forums, and halls of quiet wisdom. The Council of Hearthaven, a body of elected elders, governs through debate and consensus.
- **Mythralis, City of Living Legends** – A place of poets, artisans, and wandering storytellers, where tales of heroes and tricksters are told beneath the stars.
- **Pelorion, The Sun-Clad Port** – The center of seafaring and trade, where merchants of every nation gather. Some say the city's luck never runs dry, for Brisaya herself once walked its streets.
- **Argathos, The Silver Haven** – A secluded city of scholars and mystics, where Brisaya's followers weave destiny through song, fortune-telling, and whispers of fate.
- **Nysandria, The Oracle's Throne** – A sacred site, where the wisest halflings and seers of Thalamesh offer guidance to those seeking their path.

Demographics

- **Halflings: 65%** (*The heart and soul of Ephyreon, filling every role from rulers to farmers.*)
- **Rakashans: 15%** (*Travelers, traders, and sea captains—restless spirits drawn to Ephyreon's calm.*)
- **Humans: 10%** (*Often scholars, sailors, or diplomats.*)
- **Saurians: 5%** (*Honored as wise sages and stalwart defenders.*)
- **Other: 5%** (*Foreigners who found peace in Ephyreon's embrace.*)

Religion

Ephyreon's faith is gentle and introspective, with Brisaya at its heart.

- **Brisaya** is the **beloved trickster-weaver**, seen as **the quiet force that guides fate**. She is worshipped through **music, luck-charms, and small daily rituals**—never grand temples, but **whispered prayers and offerings of honey and wine**.
- **Thalamesh** is revered as **the keeper of balance**, though his worshippers are **few in number but deep in wisdom**.
- **Solis** is honored as **a bringer of light**, but his doctrine is **viewed as rigid**.
- **Mortivara** is **acknowledged but not feared**, seen more as a **quiet companion of endings rather than a force of judgment**.
- **Kathgar and Ilyndra** are **abhorred**, but Ephyreon does not wage war against them. Instead, they **quietly root out corruption before it takes hold**.

Government

A Gentle Republic – Ephyreon is ruled by The Council of Hearthaven, a body of elder statesmen and wise women, chosen not by birth or conquest, but by respect and reputation. Each city governs itself, sending representatives to the council, where decisions are made slowly, through debate, patience, and a deep respect for tradition. The council does not seek power—it exists to maintain harmony.

Major Factions

- **The Council of Hearthaven:** The elders who govern Ephyreon, chosen for their wisdom and insight. Though slow to action, their decisions are deliberate and lasting.
- **The Fellowship of the Thread:** A mystic order of fortune-weavers, dream-readers, and storytellers who claim to glimpse Brisaya's handiwork in fate's tapestry.
- **The Golden Current:** A trade guild, ensuring that Ephyreon's wealth remains steady without ever becoming excessive. Prosperity, not greed, is their motto.
- **The Wandering Wardens:** A loose network of adventurers, rogues, and wayfarers who ensure that evil never takes root in Ephyreon. They do not seek war—they cut the sickness out before it can spread.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **First Speaker Olwin Breezecap** (*Halfling, Elder of Hearthaven*) – A soft-spoken but unshakable leader, who believes true power is not in force, but in wisdom.
- **Sienna Duskwhisper** (*Halfling, High Threadweaver of Argathos*) – A seer and storyteller, claiming to have seen Ephyreon's fate unravel.

- **Harric the Laughing Blade** (*Halfling, Leader of the Wandering Wardens*) – A former rogue, now a defender of Ephyreon, whose jokes hide sharp wit and sharper daggers.
- **Neravos Varkis** (*Human, Merchant-Lord and Hidden Cultist*) – A smiling merchant with dark ambitions, working in secret to spread Kathgar's influence.

Nation Description & History

Ephyreon was never forged by war—it was woven like a tapestry. Long ago, its many city-states stood apart, each content with its own way of life. But as empires rose and fell, the city-states realized that unity was strength, and gradually, they came together. Unlike most nations, there was no great conquest, no ruler demanding obedience—only an understanding that Ephyreon was stronger as one. For centuries, Ephyreon has remained untouched by war, choosing diplomacy over battle, wisdom over wrath. Yet even now, darkness stirs. Kathgar's cultists spread whispers in the ears of the ambitious, promising power to those who wish to rule. Brisaya's seers warn that Ephyreon may be at a turning point. The question is: Will it bend, or will it break?

THE HINTERLANDS

"Hidden from the world, hardened by war, guardians of the lost."

Introduction

The Hinterlands are a desolate, storm-ravaged frontier where survival is won through steel, secrecy, and sacrifice. Perpetually threatened by incursions from the Ashen Expanse, the Veydran and human inhabitants have adapted to life beneath the surface—a vast labyrinth of hidden cities, fortified tunnels, and sacred shrines carved into the living rock. Above, jagged canyons, frozen mesas, and perpetual thunderstorms make overland travel perilous, a testament to Thalamesh's unyielding domain over the land. The Hinterlands are not a nation in the traditional sense; they are a brotherhood of warriors, mystics, and exiles, bound by faith, honor, and necessity.

For centuries, the Hidden Ones have fought against Kathgar's raiders, denying them footholds beyond the blackened wastes. Though fierce and battle-hardened, they do not seek conquest—only preservation of their way of life and the protection of secrets long buried.

Capital & Major Cities

The Hinterlands have no surface cities. Instead, their settlements exist as fortified underground strongholds, connected by a vast network of tunnels, some natural, others carved by generations of warriors and masons.

- **Gharazan** – The largest and most well-defended city, an underground citadel hidden within the Stormbreak Cliffs. Its great halls are illuminated by veins of bioluminescent crystal, and its warriors train daily for raids against Kathgar's forces.
- **Jundrak-Tor** – A sacred stronghold and monastery where warrior-priests of Thalamesh meditate and train. The city sits beneath the Howling Canyons, where perpetual winds scream through jagged rock formations.
- **Vathrokh's Veil** – A hidden refuge located beneath a massive frozen lake known as Lake Vathrokh. The cavern walls are carved with ancient runes that some say predate the War of Eternal Twilight.
- **The Shadowed Warrens** – A vast, twisting network of tunnels and underground villages, used to move supplies, refugees, and warbands undetected. The true depth of these tunnels is unknown, with some saying they reach beyond the mortal realm.

Demographics

- **Veydran (Infernals): 60%**
- **Humans: 38%**
- **Other: 2%** (*isolated wanderers, exiles, or rare outcasts from neighboring lands*)

Religion

The Hidden Ones revere Thalamesh, the Earthfather, as the eternal guardian of the Hinterlands, offering prayers before battle and carving his sigils into their weapons. Some sects also honor Solis as a bringer of hope, though their worship is more pragmatic than devout. Many Veydran struggle with their infernal heritage, and some devote themselves to Brisaya, the Smiling Threadweaver, seeking redemption through service, laughter, and kinship.

Government

A Confederation of Clans & Strongholds – Each stronghold is led by a War-Keeper, a warrior chosen for wisdom, strength, and devotion. The War-Keepers form a council that convenes once a decade at Gharazan to determine matters of war and survival.

Major Factions

- **The Hidden Blades:** A highly trained group of scouts and assassins, tasked with infiltrating Kathgar's forces and striking down key figures. They move unseen through the wastelands, using ancient tunnel networks and disguises.
- **The Stoneborn Sentinels:** A warrior brotherhood dedicated to Thalamesh, sworn to defend the underground cities at all costs. They wear heavy stone-etched armor and train in the art of tunnel warfare and ambush tactics.
- **The Thundercallers:** Mystics who have learned to channel the Hinterlands' perpetual storms into battle chants and divine magic. Their storm-wrought tattoos glow with energy when they call upon Thalamesh's might.
- **The Embermarked:** A sect of Veydran who believe that their infernal blood is both a curse and a weapon. They seek to purge Kathgar's corruption by wielding fire and steel against his forces.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **War-Keeper Joram Baelkaith** (*Veydran, War-Keeper of Gharazan*) – A master strategist and warrior, renowned for uniting feuding clans against Kathgar's incursions.
- **Rania Ashveil** (*Human, Hidden Blade*) – A legendary infiltrator who once walked unseen within Xeroth's court for seven years before burning his archives.
- **Vathrokh, the Unyielding** (???) – A mysterious figure from before the War of Eternal Twilight, said to have carved the deepest tunnels beneath the Hinterlands. Some claim he still lives.
- **Hellspeaker Xeroth the Ironclad** (*Kathgar's supreme hierophant*) – Though he rules from the Ashen Expanse, his crusades against the Hinterlands define much of their history.

Nation Description & History

The Hinterlands were once fertile highlands, home to ancient kingdoms that thrived before the War of Eternal Twilight. But when Solis, Ilyndra, and Kathgar clashed, the land was forever scarred by magic, reduced to storm-lashed ruins. With their cities shattered, the survivors fled underground, carving out a new way of life.

For thousands of years, the Hinterlands have existed in a state of constant war—not of conquest, but of defense. The forces of Kathgar raid ceaselessly, seeking to capture souls for their frozen god. Though the Hidden Ones repel them again and again, they know the day may come when their defenses break.

Despite their hardship, the Hinterlands do not stand alone. They maintain strong ties with Durnholm, trading for weapons and coordinating defensive campaigns against

Kathgar's warbands. Some Pohjaran warriors travel south to earn glory in battle, and Mirzaban's elite warriors occasionally test themselves against the Ashen hordes. Yet even among allies, the Hinterlands remain an enigma—a land of secrets buried in stone, whispered prophecies carved into the canyon walls. Some say they guard a truth too terrible to share, while others believe they hold the key to stopping Kathgar's return. Whatever the case, the Hidden Ones endure, as they always have.

THE JADARRA ISLES

"The sea is a mirror, reflecting truth, treachery, and gold."

Introduction

The Jadarra Isles are a bastion of trade, piracy, and intrigue, where fortunes are made and alliances shift like the tides. Nestled in the warm southern seas, this archipelago is a crossroads of cultures, where coin speaks louder than kings and loyalty is as fleeting as a sea breeze.

Each island is its own realm, ruled by merchant lords, pirate kings, and secret councils. A loose confederation known as the Jadari Compact binds them together, but its unity is as fragile as glass. Some cities prosper through honest trade, others through subterfuge and stolen riches.

Jadarra is a battleground of diplomacy and deception, where every major nation has a stake—whether through merchants, spies, or rogue agents.

But shadows creep beneath the surface. The Cult of the Chained Blizzard works unseen, fanning the flames of greed and treachery. As storm clouds gather, the Isles must decide: Will they stand as a beacon of fortune—or sink into the abyss of treachery?

Capital & Major City-States

The Jadarra Isles have no capital, but the most powerful city-states vie for dominance.

- **Zaroun, The First Pearl** – The oldest and wealthiest city, ruled by merchant princes who see themselves as the true rulers of Jadarra.
- **Nashara, The City of Corsairs** – A den of pirates, mercenaries, and fugitives, where fortune is won and lost in a single night.
- **Vezhaan, The Sun-Kissed Spires** – A city of temples and scholars, home to the finest astrologers and navigators.
- **Mazhir, The Gilded Bazaar** – The heart of black market trade, where anything can be bought—for the right price.
- **Sharazi, The Veiled Harbor** – A hidden city ruled by an unseen council, whose influence spreads across the world.

Demographics

- **Humans: 35%** (*The dominant population, ranging from merchants to smugglers.*)
- **Half-Elves: 20%** (*Diplomats, spies, and wanderers caught between worlds.*)
- **Saurians: 15%** (*Feared sailors and warriors, known for their resilience.*)
- **Rakashans: 10%** (*Masters of intrigue, trading in both coin and secrets.*)
- **Halflings: 10%** (*Traders, fortune-seekers, and shrewd negotiators.*)
- **Other: 10%** (*A melting pot of diverse outcasts and exiles.*)

Religion

The Jadarra Isles **do not kneel to any one god**, but faith still weaves through the lives of its people.

- **Brisaya is revered as the Weaver of Fortune**, guiding both merchants and gamblers.
- **Solis is honored as the Bringer of Prosperity**, but only when the sun shines on profitable ventures.
- **Thalamesh is seen as the Keeper of the Seas**, ensuring fair winds and safe harbors.
- **Mortivara is feared, for the ocean is both giver and taker of life.**
- **Kathgar and Ilyndra lurk in the dark corners**, whispering to those who crave power.

Government

The Jadari Compact – A Fractured Confederation of City-States. Each city-state governs itself, but they are loosely bound by the Jadari Compact, an agreement of mutual trade, defense, and piracy rights. The Compact is fragile, and while it prevents outright war between the city-states, betrayals, sabotage, and power struggles are constant.

Major Factions

- **The Jadari Compact:** A loose alliance of city-states, meant to maintain peace, regulate trade, and prevent foreign conquest. In reality, it is a nest of scheming lords and ambitious captains.
- **The Corsairs of Nashara:** A fleet of renegades, privateers, and pirate warlords, who fight, steal, and sell their services to the highest bidder.
- **The Silent Ledger:** A shadowy network of spies, informants, and blackmailers, controlling the flow of information across the isles.

- **The Children of the Typhoon:** A cult of storm-worshippers, believing that chaos is the true ruler of the seas. They claim Brisaya weaves the fate of the ocean—and only those who embrace her storms will survive.
- **The Hidden Claw:** A Rakashan-led syndicate, running smuggling operations, assassinations, and black-market dealings.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Azhari the Gilded Jackal** (*Human, Grandmaster of the Silent Ledger*) – The most feared spy in the isles, whose secrets could topple empires.
- **Captain Vashti of the Iron Wind** (*Saurian, Pirate Warlord of Nashara*) – A ruthless corsair, seeking to unite the pirates under a single banner.
- **Jalil ibn Faraan** (*Half-Elf, Merchant Prince of Zaroun*) – The wealthiest man in the isles, known for his lavish feasts and deadly rivalries.
- **Suhana the Silver-Eyed** (*Rakashan, Mistress of the Hidden Claw*) – A whispering power in the underworld, with assassins in every city.
- **The Whisper in the Wake** (*Unknown, Kathgar's Hidden Hand*) – A faceless agent, spreading Kathgar's influence through debt, corruption, and fear.

Nation Description & History

For centuries, the Jadarra Isles have been a refuge for the ambitious, the exiled, and the desperate. While empires rise and fall, Jadarra remains neutral—profiting from all sides. It stands as a beacon of freedom to some and a den of lawlessness to others, its fortunes shaped by shifting alliances, whispered deals, and the ever-turning tide of trade and piracy.

Its rivalry with Darijaan is fierce, though fought not with armies, but with coin, cunning, and quiet betrayal. While Darijaan thrives on stability and structured commerce, Jadarra flourishes in chaos. Trade disputes, sabotage, and espionage define their competition, as each seeks to outmaneuver the other in pursuit of greater wealth and influence.

Yet Jadarra's defiance extends beyond mere trade. The Isles have long been a thorn in the side of the great empires. The Mirzites see them as parasitic profiteers, undermining order with unchecked commerce and reckless ambition. The Rhomari call them heretics, a land where faith is sold to the highest bidder. But no empire has ever tamed Jadarra—for every fleet that sails against it, five new pirate lords rise from the wreckage. Beneath the revelry of its markets and the clinking of coin, darker forces stir. The Cult of the Chained Blizzard whispers in Jadarra's back alleys and merchant halls, offering wealth and power to those willing to sow discord. Some take the coin, others the blade, and as tensions grow, the fragile alliance of the Jadari Compact stands on the edge of collapse.

Jadarra is a place of endless opportunity—and endless danger. To some, it is a haven of freedom, where anyone can carve their fortune. To others, it is a pit of vipers, where gold is the only law. As the world darkens and Kathgar's forces stir, the Isles must decide: Will they stand firm as the rock in the river—or be swept away by the tide?

KAVASHAN DOMINION

"Flames purify, the righteous endure, and faith is eternal."

Introduction

The Kavashan Dominion is a land of burning devotion, unshakable faith, and unyielding law. It is the center of Thalamesh's worship, though many of its people also revere Solis as the Light of Civilization. The Dominion was once united with Darijaan, but when commerce overshadowed faith, the nation split apart in civil war, and the Dominion emerged as a holy nation devoted to divine order.

The land itself is harsh but beautiful—vast golden deserts, fertile floodplains, and sun-drenched mesas carved by ancient rivers. Monolithic ziggurats, sunlit temples, and fortress monasteries dot the landscape, standing defiant against time and enemies alike.

But devotion comes at a cost. Though the Dominion's discipline and unity have made it strong, its rigid laws, intolerance of heresy, and unbending adherence to doctrine have also made it isolated. The people of Kavashan view Darijaan's wealth as decadence, Drustvald's independence as arrogance, and Zamashur's religious blending as blasphemy. To the Kavashani, faith is the foundation of civilization. To defy it is to invite ruin.

Capital & Major Cities

Kavashan cities are majestic but austere, their architecture defined by towering ziggurats, golden domes, and massive sandstone walls designed to withstand both time and siege.

- **Shal-Kadeth, The Dawn's Throne** – The capital of the Kavashan Dominion, a holy city of fire and faith. It is home to the Grand Ziggurat of Thalamesh, where the High Flamebearer rules.
- **Zarashan, The Sun's Gate** – The most sacred city of Solis, said to be where he walked the earth before his ascension. Though officially dedicated to Solis, its control by the Dominion is a source of tension with Rhomarion.
- **Ahraman's Vigil** – A fortified city standing at the Wall of Sundering, guarding the border with Darijaan. Its people are watchful, unyielding, and sworn never to let Darijaan's corruption spread.

- **Kasr-Azhan, The Iron Oasis** – A military stronghold at the edge of the endless dunes, where warriors train from childhood in the arts of war and faith.

Demographics

- **Humans: 70%** (*Most native-born Kavashani, fiercely loyal to the Dominion's ideals.*)
- **Saurians: 10%** (*Respected warriors and scholars, seen as blessed by Thalamesh.*)
- **Half-Elves: 10%** (*Often filling roles as diplomats, scholars, and scribes.*)
- **Halflings: 5%** (*Some serve as merchants and navigators, though many are watched closely for signs of disloyalty.*)
- **Other: 5%** (*Foreigners, wanderers, or rare individuals who have embraced the Dominion's faith.*)

Religion

The Kavashan Dominion is the heart of Thalamesh's faith, and his temples are grand, orderly, and ever-burning. However, Solis is also revered, with Zarashan standing as a holy site claimed both by the Dominion and by Rhomarion.

- **Thalamesh** is worshipped as **the Preserver of Order**, and **his faith is law**. Every city has a **grand temple**, and **priests govern as much as kings**.
- **Solis** is honored as **the Light of Civilization**, but the Kavashani see **the Rhomari interpretation as flawed and weak**.
- **Mortivara** is **feared but respected**—her priests are **few**, but **death rituals and purification rites** are a central part of Kavashani life.
- **Kathgar and Ilyndra Noctis** are **hated above all others**, and their followers are **purged without mercy**.

Government

A Theocratic Dominion – The Kavashan Dominion is ruled by the Grand Flamebearer, a supreme theocrat chosen from the most devoted priests of Thalamesh. Below him, the Order of the Sunlit Mantle governs the cities, enforcing divine law and ensuring faith remains strong.

Major Factions

- **The Order of the Sunlit Mantle:** The ruling priesthood, composed of warrior-priests and lawkeepers, responsible for governing, teaching, and purging heresy.
- **The Emberguard:** A holy military order, sworn to defend the Dominion from invaders, cultists, and unbelievers.

- **The Dawnfire Inquisitors:** A sect of zealots and witch-hunters, tasked with rooting out corruption, heresy, and spies from the Cult of the Chained Blizzard.
- **The Hands of Harmony:** An underground sect advocating for a return to Kavashan's ancient unity with Darijaan, believing the war was a mistake. They are hunted as traitors.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Grand Flamebearer Ramin al-Kirash** (*Human, Supreme Ruler of the Dominion*) – A stern but righteous leader, believing faith and order will hold the world together.
- **Inquisitor-Commander Veyda Talanir** (*Half-Elf, Leader of the Dawnfire Inquisitors*) – A ruthless zealot, infamous for breaking entire noble families on charges of heresy.
- **General Kasim Jalhara** (*Saurian, Lord of the Emberguard*) – A veteran warrior, torn between honor and the growing harshness of the Dominion.
- **Neriah Vasaan** (*Human, Leader of the Hands of Harmony*) – A former priestess, now an outlaw and political dissenter, believed to be hiding in Darijaan.

Nation Description & History

Eight centuries ago, Kavashan and Darijaan were one—a land of faith, prosperity, and unity. But as Darijaan's wealth and trade flourished, faith became secondary, and a schism formed. The conflict ignited into the War of Sundering, and after decades of bloodshed, the two nations split—one choosing faith, the other gold. The Wall of Sundering was built along the Isthmus of Rukhat, ensuring the divide would never be bridged again.

Since then, the Dominion has stood firm, rejecting the temptations of greed and foreign influence. It has no love for Darijaan, nor for Zamashur's heretical Solis-Thalamesh sect. While it maintains diplomatic ties with Rhomarion, it secretly resents its claim to Solis' faith.

Despite its strength, the Dominion faces struggles—trade is limited, neighboring nations distrust its zeal, and rumors whisper that some among its leaders have grown cruel, ruling through fear rather than faith. But the Kavashani believe they are the last bastion of righteousness in a world teetering on the brink. And as the darkness grows, only fire will hold it at bay.

MIRZABAN

"Steel is the soul of the empire, and we are its unbroken blade."

Introduction

Mirzaban is a nation of unyielding warriors, ironclad discipline, and an unbreakable martial tradition. Here, duty is law, strength is virtue, and weakness invites ruin.

Once, Mirzaban ruled the known world. Its warhosts conquered vast lands, shaping the very Trade Tongue spoken across nations. But the empire it built crumbled beneath its own weight. Now, it stands as a land of hardened warriors, isolationist yet ever vigilant, its people devoted to perfection in war.

At the heart of Mirzaban is a paradox: they have no desire to conquer, yet they cannot live without battle. They stand as guardians of the continent's northern reaches, keeping the horrors of the Ashen Expanse at bay, and yet, they refuse to engage in the petty wars of other nations.

To the outside world, Mirzaban is a fortress, its people stone-faced and unshakable. But beneath the surface, tensions stir. The empire is restless, its warriors hungry for purpose—and war always finds those who seek it.

Capital & Major Cities

Mirzaban's cities are fortresses as much as they are homes, built to withstand both war and time itself.

- **Bazramis, The Throne of a Thousand Domes** – The capital, a city of massive citadels, training grounds, and vast war-temples.
- **Suleymaris, The Crescent Citadel** – A border fortress, guarding the great wall against the Hinterlands.
- **Razikan, The Forge of Spears** – A mercantile and industrial city, known for steel, warhorses, and the finest weapons in the world.
- **Iskandurya, The Iron Gate of the East** – A fortified city, keeping watch over Zamashur and Nesathar.
- **Tazqir, The City of Law and Scrolls** – The seat of Mirzaban's bureaucracy, where generals and magistrates govern with absolute precision.
- **Zaraketh, The Sentinel of the North** – A fortress-city guarding the northern coast, where towering sea walls and bastion towers stand as eternal watchers against invasion.

Demographics

- **Humans:** 75% (*The dominant race, comprising warriors, statesmen, and rulers.*)
- **Saurians:** 10% (*Respected as mercenaries, smiths, and enforcers of law.*)
- **Half-Elves:** 5% (*Often serving as diplomats or spies in foreign lands.*)
- **Gurubarra & Tawodi'neha:** 5% (*Foreigners drawn to Mirzaban's martial traditions.*)
- **Other:** 5% (*Exiles, traders, and outsiders seeking refuge or employment.*)

Religion

Mirzaban's faith is pragmatic, harsh, and unwavering.

- **Solis is the Patron of Conquest, the warrior-king whose light is the fire of discipline.**
- **Thalamesh is respected, but seen as a passive god, unfit for the brutal realities of war.**
- **Brisaya is reviled, for trickery has no place in a warrior's heart.**
- **Mortivara is acknowledged, but worshipped only in funerary rites.**
- **Ilyndra and Kathgar are despised. Their followers are given no quarter.**

Government

A Stratocratic Empire – Mirzaban is ruled by the Grand Stratarch, the supreme warlord elected from among the warrior elite. Beneath him, the Circle of Generals commands the armies, bureaucracy, and law. Civilian rule does not exist—only those who serve the empire through war, governance, or duty may hold power.

Major Factions

- **The Bronze Host:** Mirzaban's standing army, a force of elite warriors and siege engineers, unmatched in discipline and training.
- **The Crescent Blades:** An order of warrior-monks, devoted to Solis' doctrine of strength, war, and sacrifice.
- **The Steel Council:** The bureaucratic arm of Mirzaban, ensuring that the empire functions with ruthless efficiency.
- **The Blooded Sons:** An underground faction of warhawks, believing that Mirzaban must reclaim its lost empire.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Grand Stratarch Orzhan Khalid** (*Human, Supreme Ruler of Mirzaban*) – A brilliant but aging warlord, seeking a successor who will not undo his work.

- **General Soraya Bashrami** (*Human, Commander of the Bronze Host*) – A tactical genius, beloved by the people but feared by the council.
- **Master Varesh Ilhami** (*Human, Keeper of the Steel Council*) – A cold, calculating administrator, ensuring order is absolute.
- **High Blade Nazim Isfandur** (*Human, Leader of the Crescent Blades*) – A spiritual warrior, struggling with doubts about Mirzaban's future.
- **Ozdemir, the Scarred Prophet** (*Unknown, Leader of the Blooded Sons*) – A mysterious warlord, whispering of a new age of conquest.

Nation Description & History

Long ago, Mirzaban was the greatest empire the world had ever seen. Its legions conquered vast lands, spreading its language, culture, and faith. But war is not governance, and the empire collapsed under its own weight.

Now, Mirzaban is a nation of warriors without conquest, soldiers without war. They guard the world from the horrors of the Ashen Expanse, but resent their isolation. There are whispers of rebellion, of young warriors dreaming of reclaiming lost glories. The Grand Stratarch's grip remains firm—but for how long?

NESATHAR

"Magic is not a gift. It is the language of the world."

Introduction

Nesathar is a land of ancient wisdom, towering sanctuaries of learning, and unmatched magical prowess. Here, magic is not just power—it is a sacred language, woven into the very fabric of existence.

Unlike Rhomarion's rigid faith or Zamashur's balance, Nesathar believes that Solis is the god of magic above all else. To the Nessites, divine will is not dictated by priests, but discovered through study, experimentation, and enlightenment.

For thousands of years, Nesathar has stood as the pinnacle of arcane mastery, its scholars unlocking secrets lost to time. Its mages do not seek dominion, only understanding—but that very power has made them a target.

Rhomarion has warred against Nesathar for centuries, denouncing their belief that magic itself is Solis' greatest gift. Though a fragile truce exists today, it is clear that the holy war is not over—merely waiting to ignite once more.

Capital & Major Cities

Nesathar's cities are glimmering sanctuaries of knowledge, built around the Ardentwood's northernmost reaches.

- **Zalpara, The High Keep of the Twin Eagles** – The capital, a city of floating towers and spell-wrought bridges, where the Archmagister rules.
- **Arinna-Kul, The Sun's Chosen Sanctuary** – A sacred temple-city, home to the Oracles of Solis, where the faithful and the learned debate the nature of divinity.
- **Teshubarnash, Crown of the Storm-Lords** – A fortress-city, guarding the southern border against Rhomaron.
- **Urzikara, The Iron-Bound Walls** – A city of artificers and enchanters, where some of the world's most powerful magical artifacts are crafted.
- **Malkuriss, The Whispering Vaults** – A forbidden city, sealed beneath layers of arcane wards, where knowledge too dangerous for the world is hidden.

Demographics

- **Briowen (Ethereal Elves): 50%** (*The rulers, scholars, and most powerful mages of Nesathar.*)
- **Humans: 30%** (*Many train in the magical academies or serve in the Mageguard.*)
- **Half-Elves: 10%** (*Bridging the gap between arcane and mundane society.*)
- **Saurians: 5%** (*Respected as alchemists, sages, and scholars of natural magic.*)
- **Other: 5%** (*Including wandering mages, outcasts, and arcane anomalies.*)

Religion

Nesathar's faith is intertwined with magic—they see Solis as the god of the arcane.

- **Solis, The Font of Magic**, is revered **not as a warrior-god, but as the ultimate source of arcane knowledge.**
- **Thalamesh** is respected, but seen as a **god of stability rather than wisdom.**
- **Brisaya** is honored, for **she embodies fate, trickery, and the unpredictability of magic.**
- **Mortivara** is accepted as a **natural force**, but **worship of Ilyndra is forbidden.**
- **Kathgar** is seen as a **corruptor of magic, an enemy of true knowledge.**

Government

A Magocratic Republic – Nesathar is ruled by the Archmagister, chosen from among the Seven Magi of the Arcane Conclave. The Conclave governs magic, law, and diplomacy, while the Mageguard enforces their will. Unlike other nations, power is earned through knowledge, not bloodlines or conquest.

Major Factions

- **The Arcane Conclave:** The ruling body, composed of seven archmages, each overseeing a different aspect of magical study.
- **The Mageguard:** A military order, composed of battlemages, spellknights, and arcane warriors, defending Nesathar's borders and knowledge.
- **The Seekers of the Infinite Script:** A scholarly order, dedicated to deciphering the mysteries of the cosmos and unlocking the true nature of magic.
- **The Vaultkeepers of Malkuriss:** A secretive sect, sworn to protect the most dangerous magical knowledge ever discovered.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Archmagister Rhaelis Vyrian** (*Briowen, Supreme Leader of Nesathar*) – A brilliant but enigmatic wizard, balancing progress and tradition.
- **General Kael Vathoris** (*Human, Lord Commander of the Mageguard*) – A warrior-mage, leading the defense against Rhomarion's incursions.
- **High Oracle Myrran Teshun** (*Half-Elf, Leader of Arinna-Kul*) – A mystic, revered for her visions of magic's future.
- **Master Alchemist Juharrak** (*Saurian, Grand Alchemist of Urzikara*) – A visionary craftsman, creator of some of the world's most potent artifacts.
- **The Veiled Prophet of Malkuriss** (*Unknown, Keeper of Forbidden Knowledge*) – A mysterious figure, ensuring that some truths remain buried.

Nation Description & History

Nesathar is the cradle of arcane knowledge, its people dedicated to magic above all else. In ancient times, Nesathar and Rhomarion stood as equals, both devoted to Solis' light. But when Nesathar declared magic to be Solis' greatest gift, Rhomarion branded them heretics. The first Holy War erupted, and for centuries, Nesathar defended itself, its magic holding back the zealous crusaders. Eventually, a fragile truce was signed—but no one believes it will last. Now, Nesathar faces new threats.

The Cult of the Chained Blizzard has begun seeking forbidden knowledge, hoping to unravel the balance of magic itself. Kathgar's influence festers in hidden places, and even some in the Conclave whisper of secrets better left unknown. The question remains—will Nesathar's thirst for knowledge be its salvation, or its undoing?

POHJARANTA

"The ice does not break for the weak. Neither do we."

Introduction

Pohjaranta is a land of snowbound forests, frozen fjords, and relentless storms, where only the strong endure. It is home to warriors and seafarers, skalds and stormcallers, a people who live by axe and sail, bound by honor and oaths rather than kings.

The Pohj revere the storm, the forest, and their ancestors, offering prayers to Thalamesh, Solis, and Brisaya for strength and guidance. Though they seek no conquest, they are feared raiders, unmatched sailors, and peerless warriors.

For millennia, Pohjaranta has stood apart from empire and corruption, shaping its own fate. But as Kathgar's influence spreads, the Pohj sharpen their axes and prepare their ships. If the world must burn, they alone will choose whether to stand against the storm—or sail into it.

Capital & Major Settlements

Pohjaranta has no singular capital. Instead, its power is centered in clan halls, great longships, and sacred groves.

- **Järnkota, The Iron Hall** – The largest settlement, home to the greatest smiths, warriors, and skalds.
- **Ukonsilta, The Thunderer's Bridge** – A holy site, where stormcallers commune with the sky.
- **Vaalarvik, The Last Port** – A southern trade hub, where merchants from distant lands risk the icy seas.
- **Hirvema, The Wild Hunt's Refuge** – A hidden valley, home to rangers and beast-bonded warriors.
- **The Frostpyre** – An ancient cairn, where chieftains are laid to rest with blade in hand.

Demographics

- **Northmen (Pohj): 90%** (*The dominant people, warriors, sailors, and mystics.*)
- **Dwarves: 10%** (*Smiths, stoneworkers, and kin to the Pohj in all but blood.*)
- **Other: 1-5%** (*Wanderers, traders, and outcasts who have proven themselves.*)

Religion

The Pohj follow the old ways, honoring gods, spirits, and fate itself.

- **Thalamesh is the Voice of the Storm**, the wild god of earth and sea, war and wisdom.
- **Solis is the Fire of the Hearth**, the bringer of light, warmth, and renewal.
- **Brisaya is the Weaver of Fate**, the one who binds warriors to their destiny.
- **Mortivara is the Keeper of the Last Battle**, the final judge of the fallen.
- **Kathgar and Ilyndra are sworn foes**, their influence burned away with fire and steel.

Government

A Confederation of Jarls & War-Chiefs – Pohjaranta is ruled by its strongest leaders, chosen by might, wisdom, or the will of the gods. Each clan is sovereign, bound only by oaths of alliance, bonds of honor, and the call of war.

Major Factions

- **The Stormbound Clans:** The ruling war-chiefs and jarls, who guide Pohjaranta's people through war, trade, and destiny.
- **The Frostborn Reavers:** A brotherhood of warriors and sailors, who raid foreign shores when food and fortune run scarce.
- **The Keepers of the Hearthfire:** A religious order, preserving the old stories, honoring the gods, and protecting sacred places.
- **The Duskwatch:** A secretive band of hunters, rangers, and mystics, watching for the creeping influence of darkness.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Jarl Styrmir Wolf-Eye** (*Pohj, Chieftain of Järnkota*) – A fierce but fair ruler, who believes war is coming whether the Pohj want it or not.
- **Yrsa the Stormsinger** (*Pohj, High Seer of Ukonsilta*) – A visionary and shaman, whose prophecies shake the resolve of the strongest warriors.
- **Thane Kjorn Frostmantle** (*Dwarf, Lord of the Forge*) – A master smith, whose weapons are worth more than gold.
- **Vigdis the Raven-Winged** (*Pohj, Leader of the Duskwatch*) – A shadowy figure, whose hunts stretch across the frozen wilds.
- **The Nameless Reaver** (*Unknown, Terror of the Northern Seas*) – A mysterious warlord, whose fleet is said to be blessed by Ilyndra herself.

Nation Description & History

The Pohj and the Dwarves of Durnholm share an unbreakable alliance, forged by necessity and bound by honor. The Pohj rely on Durnish steel, while the Dwarves depend on Pohj warriors to hold the northern line against Kathgar's incursions. Their bond is more than trade—it is a brotherhood of axe and anvil, tested in blood and battle. Across the Great Bay of Torskald, Pohj warriors sail to Drustvald, home to Thalamesh's holiest shrine. The Pohj and the Drust share deep ties, exchanging warriors, stories, and visions of the future. Many Pohj make the pilgrimage at least once in their lives, seeking wisdom from the spirits of the land and the sea.

For centuries, Pohjaranta and Mirzaban waged brutal war, their warriors competing for the title of the world's greatest fighters. Though peace now holds, their rivalry has become a tradition of martial contests. Every few years, the finest Mirzite and Pohj warriors gather to test steel against steel, strength against skill, honor against honor. These grand duels and war-games are displays of pure martial excellence, yet beneath the ceremony, both nations remain watchful, waiting to see if the old conflict will stir once more.

During the War of Eternal Twilight, Pohjaranta stood alone, battling frost-devils and shadow-things that threatened its land. It neither broke nor bent, an untamed land where only the strong endured. Now, the seers whisper of a greater storm, a reckoning beyond the ice. Pohjaranta holds fast, as it always has. But when the storm comes, it will not be caught unprepared.

QHANTALA

"The jungle devours the careless, but cradles the wise."

Introduction

Qhantala is a land of lush jungles, roaring rivers, and golden cities, where opulence and tradition reign supreme. It is a realm of wealth, power, and mystery, ruled by Saurian dynasties whose bloodlines stretch back to the dawn of civilization.

Though Qhantala is one of the richest nations in the world, its reputation is complex. Its palaces and temples gleam with gold, its merchants wield power that rivals kings, and its scholars hold wisdom lost to time. But behind the splendor lurk whispers of corruption, of forbidden pacts and shadowy dealings.

To outsiders, the Qhantalar are enigmatic, cunning, and fiercely independent. They trade with all nations, yet bow to none. Their vast wealth makes them diplomatic kingmakers, yet few truly know where their true allegiances lie.

Some say Qhantala profits from its neutrality. Others claim that its rulers see farther than most, and play a deeper game. Either way, one thing is certain—Qhantala thrives while others crumble.

Capital & Major Cities

Qhantala's cities are sprawling metropolises, where hanging gardens, temple spires, and rivers of gold weave together in dazzling harmony.

- **Mazatula, The City of the Golden Throne** – The capital, home to the Saurian Dynasts and their labyrinthine courts.
- **Ixabari, The Emerald Step** – A coastal trade city, where Qhantala's merchants weave fortunes and manipulate markets.
- **Thuruwana, The Raincaller's Gate** – A temple-city, where mystics and druids commune with the jungle's spirits.
- **Zankira, The Hidden Pearl** – A forbidden city, whispered to be a sanctuary for exiles, assassins, and smugglers.
- **The Sunbound Temple** – A massive ziggurat, dedicated to Solis' aspect as a god of light and wisdom.

Demographics

- **Saurians: 80%** (*The dominant race, rulers and stewards of the jungle.*)
- **Humans: 10%** (*Traders, diplomats, and scholars from other lands.*)
- **Half-Elves: 5%** (*Raised in Qhantalan courts, often serving as envoys and spies.*)
- **Other: 5%** (*Foreign merchants, travelers, and lost souls seeking their fortune.*)

Religion

Qhantala's faith is as rich and layered as its culture.

- **Solis is the Patron of Kings**, revered as **the giver of wealth and wisdom**.
- **Thalamesh is honored**, seen as **the god of rivers, rain, and the jungle's heartbeat**.
- **Brisaya is respected**, for **fate weaves its threads through all things**.
- **Mortivara is acknowledged**, but only as **the gatekeeper of the final journey**.
- **Kathgar and Ilyndra are feared**, their influence **forbidden—but not unheard of**.

Government

A Saurian Dynastic Council – Qhantala is ruled by a coalition of ancient Saurian houses, each presiding over a different region of the nation. At their head is the Golden Dynast, a ruler chosen by prophecy, cunning, and sheer power.

Major Factions

- **The Emerald Court:** The ruling council of Qhantala, composed of Saurian dynasts, merchant-kings, and priest-chancellors.
- **The Dawn Traders:** A merchant guild, controlling vast fleets and trade routes that stretch across the known world.
- **The Raincallers:** A spiritual order, blending druidic wisdom with Solis' light, ensuring the jungle's balance is preserved.
- **The Gilded Masks:** A shadowy cabal, rumored to influence kings, topple rivals, and control the flow of wealth.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Golden Dynast Xhuatl the Undying** (*Saurian, Supreme Ruler of Qhantala*) – A mysterious, long-lived sovereign, whose whispers shape the world's fate.
- **High Chancellor Zoyan Tzal** (*Saurian, Leader of the Emerald Court*) – A brilliant statesman, weaving diplomatic webs no blade can cut.
- **Priestess Nalira Sunfang** (*Saurian, Matron of the Sunbound Temple*) – A zealous devotee of Solis, waging a quiet war against corruption.
- **Zirha of the Veiled Lotus** (*Half-Elf, Master of the Gilded Masks*) – A faceless spymaster, her influence felt in every nation.
- **General Maq'hon the Dawnshield** (*Saurian, Warlord of the Raincallers*) – A defender of the jungle, ready to unleash its fury on those who would exploit it.

Nation Description & History

Qhantala has never been conquered. Its wealth rivals that of empires, its rulers have outlived kingdoms, and its lands have swallowed armies whole. During the War of Eternal Twilight, Qhantala remained untouched. While other nations bled and burned, the Saurians kept their borders closed, ensuring that their riches and knowledge endured. Over millennia, they perfected the art of neutrality. They trade with all, yet commit to none. They profit from war, yet wage none themselves.

But nothing lasts forever. Whispers say Kathgar's cult has slithered into Qhantala's courts. Others claim the Golden Dynast has lived too long, and that his death will bring chaos. And some speak of a hidden city, deep in the jungle, where ancient

pacts with devils and gods alike have been made. For now, Qhantala remains untouchable. But how long before its golden walls begin to crack?

RAVNOSKAR

"To walk in darkness is to see the truth."

Introduction

Ravnoskar is a land of endless dusk, where fog drapes the land like mourning shrouds and cold winds whisper through the Ardentwood's dying leaves. To outsiders, it is a place of melancholy and mystery, where sorrowful songs drift through ancient cathedrals, and grave-walkers leave offerings at endless sepulchers.

The Mourning Elves of Ravnoskar, the Baelwyth, are a people shaped by loss. They revere Mortivara, goddess of death, and see life as a fleeting breath between two eternities. They do not fear death, but neither do they seek it carelessly.

Yet not all who dwell in Ravnoskar are content to let souls rest. While the faithful of Mortivara guard the delicate cycle of life and death, others turn to Ilyndra Noctis, the patron of necromancers, whispering dark incantations to bend mortality to their will. This conflict between preservation and corruption has festered for thousands of years, and even now, Ravnoskar teeters on the edge of salvation or damnation.

Capital & Major Cities

Ravnoskar's settlements rise like gothic silhouettes, spires piercing the storm-laden sky.

- **Gloomsheim, City of Perpetual Twilight** – The capital, a vast city of cathedrals, mausoleums, and pale spires, where Mortivara's clergy guide the faithful and war against the necromantic cults.
- **Varengrath, The Black Rose Court** – A city of pale nobles and shadowed halls, where elven lords debate the nature of death and power.
- **Moordenholme, The Weeping Sepulcher** – A city built within an ancient necropolis, where death is studied as both faith and science.
- **Baelsbruck, The Hanging City** – A place of justice and judgment, where criminals are hung in the mist as a warning to those who would stray too far from Mortivara's grace.
- **Terenwald, The Wolf's Refuge** – A remote settlement deep in the Ardentwood, home to hunters, alchemists, and outcasts who reject both gods.

Demographics

- **Baelwyth (Mourning Elves): 60%** (*Pale-skinned, black-haired elves, deeply tied to Mortivara's faith.*)
- **Humans: 20%** (*Some serve Mortivara, others seek forbidden knowledge.*)
- **Half-Elves: 10%** (*Often torn between faith and corruption.*)
- **Halflings: 5%** (*Mostly found in Terenwald, preferring to avoid the gods' conflicts.*)
- **Other: 5%** (*Wanderers, exiles, and things best left unnamed.*)

Religion

Faith in Ravnoskar is split between Mortivara and Ilyndra, with cults of Kathgar lurking in the shadows.

- **Mortivara, The Pale Lady**, is revered as **the shepherd of souls**, guiding the dead to **rest and renewal**.
- **Ilyndra Noctis, The Veiled Sorceress**, is **worshiped by necromancers and those who reject the cycle of death**.
- **Brisaya** is honored by **thieves, gamblers, and outcasts** in places like Terenwald.
- **Kathgar's worship is forbidden**, yet his influence seeps **into noble courts and forgotten tombs**.

Government

A Fractured Aristocracy – Ravnoskar is ruled by a noble council of Mourning Elf houses, known as The Veilborn Lords.

The council is perpetually divided, split between:

- **The Deathwardens** (*faithful to Mortivara, seeking to preserve the cycle of life and death*).
- **The Black Requiem** (*followers of Ilyndra, who twist death into a tool of power*).

This cold civil war simmers beneath the surface, each side maneuvering for control of the nation's soul.

Major Factions

- **The Deathwardens:** A militant order of knights and priests, sworn to protect the sanctity of death and destroy necromantic corruption.
- **The Black Requiem:** A secretive cult of necromancers, liches, and death-witches, dedicated to Ilyndra Noctis.
- **The Moonveil Syndicate:** A mercenary and espionage guild, operating between the factions, selling secrets, souls, and silence.

- **The Gravetouched:** A group of mystics and oracles, claiming to hear the whispers of the dead. Some seek to guide, others to control.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **High Requiem Lord Vaerion Ilthalos** (*Baelwyth, Lord of the Black Requiem*) – A powerful necromancer, hiding dark ambitions beneath courtly charm.
- **Lady Cassandra Duskbloom** (*Baelwyth, Grand Inquisitor of the Deathwardens*) – A zealous priestess of Mortivara, leading the war against undeath.
- **Sevran the Graveborn** (*Human, Leader of the Gravetouched*) – A seer who speaks with spirits, neither living nor truly dead.
- **Althea Moonveil** (*Half-Elf, Mistress of the Moonveil Syndicate*) – A master manipulator, selling secrets to both sides.
- **Father Othric Hollowborn** (*Human, Prophet of Kathgar*) – A shadowed figure, preaching the inevitability of the Frostbinder's return.

Nation Description & History

Ravnoskar is a land of sorrow and conflict, its history written in grief. Once, all of its noble houses worshiped Mortivara, tending to the great cathedrals and sepulchers. But over time, dissent took root. Some among the nobility began to see death as a thing to be controlled, not accepted. Ilyndra's worship grew in secret, her followers turning to necromancy, undeath, and darker magics.

For centuries, this spiritual war has simmered—not fought with swords, but with whispers, assassinations, and forbidden rituals. And now, something is changing. The Black Requiem grows bolder, their followers no longer content with shadows. Kathgar's cultists stir in hidden tombs. The Deathwardens hunt more fervently than ever, fearing that Ravnoskar's soul is slipping from their grasp. One thing is certain—the balance of power cannot hold forever.

RHOMARION

"Through faith, we are made whole. Through Solis, we endure."

Introduction

Rhomarion is the beating heart of Solis' faith, a theocracy built upon unshakable doctrine and divine purpose. From the golden spires of Solis' Grand Basilica to the endless processions of the Radiant Orders, faith is not just a part of life—it is life itself.

The Rhomari see themselves as the true inheritors of Solis' will, the keepers of the one true faith. They do not merely worship the god of light; they believe they speak for him, interpret his law, and act in his name. Their faith, twisted by zeal, has become a weapon.

For centuries, Rhomarion has waged holy wars against those who "stray from the light." Their crusades against Zamashur and Nesathar have burned for centuries, fueled by doctrinal disputes and religious fervor. Even now, Rhomarion stands locked in war with Zamashur, convinced that the twin-worship of Solis and Thalamesh is heresy beyond redemption.

Though mighty in faith, Rhomarion's military strength wanes. Their armies march under banners of light, but faith alone does not forge steel nor train warriors. Their fierce devotion may yet lead them to ruin—unless Solis truly does favor them.

Capital & Major Cities

Rhomarion's cities are walled fortresses of faith, where temples and cathedrals dominate the skyline.

- **Auricourt, The Golden Seat** – The capital, home to the Grand Basilica of Solis, where the Pontifex Solari rules with divine mandate.
- **Sunsmarch, The Bastion of Light** – A fortress-city on the Zamashurian border, its soldiers believing victory is inevitable through faith alone.
- **Vespra, The Pilgrim's Haven** – A city of healing and miracles, where the faithful seek blessings and divine visions.
- **Erythion, The Crimson Crucible** – A city built on the blood of martyrs, where Solis' most zealous warriors train.
- **Dawnmere, The River of Reflection** – A city of scholars and scribes, where the sacred texts of Solis are copied and preserved.

Demographics

- **Wendralis (Highborn Elves): 45%** (*The ruling elite, scholars, and the most devout followers of Solis.*)
- **Humans: 35%** (*Commoners, warriors, and priests, comprising the bulk of the faithful.*)
- **Half-Elves: 10%** (*Often serving as intermediaries between elven rulers and human worshippers.*)
- **Saurians: 5%** (*An unusual presence, often relegated to menial labor or forced conversion.*)
- **Other: 5%** (*Mostly outsiders seeking pilgrimage or favor with the church.*)

Religion

Rhomarion is Solis.

- **Solis** is the **one true god**, the **Sunfather**, the **Lightbringer**, the **Sword of Renewal**. His worship is **absolute**, his will **interpreted by the clergy**.
- **Thalamesh** is **respected but distant**, acknowledged as a **lesser force within creation**. His worship is **tolerated**, but **never equal to Solis**.
- **Brisaya** is seen as **dangerous**, a **capricious trickster** whose influence leads to heresy.
- **Mortivara** is regarded with **unease**—death is a **necessity**, but **not to be revered**.
- **Ilyndra** and **Kathgar** are **reviled**, their names **uttered only in curses and exorcisms**.

Government

A Theocratic Dominion – Rhomarion is ruled by the Pontifex Solari, a divinely appointed high priest, whose word is law. Beneath him, the Council of Dawn consists of cardinals, warrior-monks, and scholars, ensuring that faith remains pure and unwavering.

Major Factions

- **The Radiant Orders:** A collection of holy knightly orders, clerical scholars, and zealous inquisitors, sworn to protect the faith and eradicate heresy.
- **The Ecclesiarchs of Solis:** The priesthood, charged with interpreting Solis' will and guiding the people through strict doctrine.
- **The Sunforged Legion:** Rhomarion's military force, a mix of fanatical crusaders and conscripted soldiers, believing that Solis will grant them victory through faith.
- **The Sable Hands:** A zealot order of inquisitors, dedicated to rooting out heresy, often clashing with more moderate factions.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Pontifex Solari Veylthar Wendrith** (*Wendralis, Supreme Ruler of Rhomarion*) – A charismatic but unyielding leader, convinced Solis' favor is eternal.
- **General Cassian Thryne** (*Wendralis, High Commander of the Sunforged Legion*) – A brilliant tactician, but struggling with faith in the face of military failure.
- **Cardinal Vysandra Leris** (*Wendralis, High Scholar of Dawnmere*) – A moderate voice in the church, seeking peace instead of war.
- **Inquisitor Karros Vale** (*Half-Elf, Grandmaster of the Sable Hands*) – A fanatical witch-hunter, seeing heresy in every shadow.

Nation Description & History

Rhomarion's history is written in faith and fire. Long ago, the Wendralis Highborn rose as Solis' chosen people, claiming that their divine bloodline granted them the right to rule. Over centuries, their doctrine solidified, and Rhomarion became the world's beacon of Solis' faith. But faith turned to zeal.

As neighboring nations interpreted Solis differently, Rhomarion declared them heretics. Wars erupted against Zamashur and Nesathar, and even now, Rhomarion wages war against those who defy the "true path." Yet faith alone does not win wars. Their armies falter, their allies dwindle, and their rigid doctrine leaves little room for adaptation. As the world darkens, will Rhomarion see the truth before it is too late?

WARUMPANJI

"The land sings its stories, and we walk within them."

Introduction

Warumpanji is a land of untamed beauty, vast plains, and sacred dreaming places, where tradition and spirit walk hand in hand. The Gurubarra and Tawodi'neha, two peoples as different as stone and sky, have forged a harmonious way of life, guided by ancestral wisdom, deep reverence for the land, and an unwavering commitment to peace.

Here, the past is never forgotten, woven into songs, stories, and the land itself. Unlike other nations, Warumpanji has no great cities, no walls, no standing armies. Instead, its people live in balance with the wilds, moving with the seasons, guided by dreams, visions, and the counsel of their elders.

Though outsiders may see Warumpanji as primitive, its people do not concern themselves with the judgments of the world. They walk a different path—one of unity, balance, and the understanding that all things are connected.

Yet, even in this land of peace, shadows grow. The cult of Kathgar whispers from the edges of the world, seeking to corrupt what cannot be conquered. The rulers of distant nations look upon Warumpanji's untapped resources and see a land ripe for exploitation.

And so, Warumpanji stands firm, not with armies, but with wisdom. Its people listen to the earth, follow the spirits, and remain ever vigilant.

Capital & Major Settlements

Warumpanji has no capital in the traditional sense. Instead, its greatest gathering places are seasonal meeting grounds, sacred sites, and spiritual centers.

- **Kurunytarra, The Dreaming Stones** – The spiritual heart of Warumpanji, where elders commune with ancestors, marking great events in painted stone.
- **Marrakoori, The Gathering of Seven Tribes** – A seasonal city, appearing only during great festivals and councils.
- **Burlangarri, The Painted Caverns** – A hidden labyrinth of caves, where warriors and visionaries undergo trials of wisdom and endurance.
- **Jilkkirri, Echo of the Old Ones** – A remote valley, where the spirits whisper their secrets to those who listen.
- **Maringurra, Red River's Song** – The largest permanent settlement, a place of trade, craft, and storytelling.

Demographics

- **Gurubarra (Pacifist Minotaurs): 50%** *(The stewards of the land, spiritual guides, and keepers of balance.)*
- **Tawodi'neha (Red Dwarves): 45%** *(Hunters, farmers, and master artisans, blending tradition with survival.)*
- **Other: 5%** *(Wanderers, traders, and outsiders who have earned their place in the land.)*

Religion

Warumpanji's faith is deeply tied to the land, the ancestors, and the cycles of nature.

- **Thalamesh is the Great Dreaming One, the breath of the earth, the giver of life and rain.**
- **Brisaya is the Weaver of Paths, the one who spins fate's song, guiding those who seek wisdom.**
- **Solis is honored, but as the keeper of renewal, the bringer of fire and warmth.**
- **Mortivara is respected, but her realm is a journey, not a finality.**
- **Kathgar and Ilyndra are seen as wounds upon the world, their corruption a sickness to be healed.**

Government

A Council of Elders & Dreamspeakers – Warumpanji is governed by its wisest elders, storytellers, and vision-seers, who guide the people through dreams, omens, and ancestral wisdom. Each tribe and community is autonomous, but all gather in council to make decisions for the good of the land.

Major Factions

- **The Wayfarers of the Deep Earth:** The spiritual guides of the Tawodi'neha, devoted to keeping the old traditions, preserving balance, and teaching through song and stone.
- **The Skydwellers:** A mystic order of Gurubarra, who commune with the spirits of wind and stars, seeking signs of the world's fate.
- **The Firekeepers:** A warrior-sect of peaceful guardians, ensuring that no force of darkness desecrates the sacred places of Warumpanji.
- **The Silent Watchers:** A hidden network of scouts, hunters, and travelers who keep an eye on foreign movements, ensuring Warumpanji remains free.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Elder Ngarli Warranaya** (*Gurubarra, Keeper of the Dreaming Stones*) – A gentle but unshakable leader, whose visions have guided Warumpanji for generations.
- **Harunji the Earthborn** (*Tawodi'neha, Master of the Wayfarers*) – A stoic, wise storyteller, who holds the songs of ages past.
- **Kooran the Wandering Sun** (*Gurubarra, Chief of the Firekeepers*) – A warrior who does not fight, but whose presence alone turns enemies away.
- **Balaka the Veil-Singer** (*Tawodi'neha, Mistress of the Skydwellers*) – A seer of incredible power, whose dreams have begun to darken.
- **The Whisperer in the Ash** (*Unknown, Agent of the Chained Blizzard*) – A corrupting force, planting doubt and fear in the hearts of Warumpanji's people.

Nation Description & History

For as long as anyone remembers, Warumpanji has stood apart from the world. It survived the War of Eternal Twilight untouched, its people guided by visions and wisdom to avoid destruction. As kingdoms rose and fell, as warriors battled for power, Warumpanji remained steadfast. Yet now, the world creeps ever closer.

Zamashur seeks closer ties, eager to protect its closest ally as the times become darker. Kathgar's cultists stir at the edges, whispering of power, of change. And some among the young begin to wonder if Warumpanji can truly remain apart forever. For thousands of years, Warumpanji has endured. Now, it must decide—will it continue to stand still, or will it step forward into the world?

XYPHONIA

"We are the light that outshines the darkness."

Introduction

Xyphonia is a land of wisdom, beauty, and martial discipline, where perfection is an ideal to be pursued in all things. Its people live by reason and self-sufficiency, believing that true strength lies in enlightenment, not conquest.

To outsiders, Xyphonia is a utopia—a place of flawless cities, brilliant minds, and unwavering harmony. But perfection breeds complacency. While the Xyphonians believe they are immune to corruption, Kathgar's influence festers in the shadows, preying on the pride of scholars, the ambition of leaders, and the hidden fears of a people who refuse to see their own weaknesses. For now, Xyphonia remains strong. But when the storm comes, will it be ready?

Capital & Major Cities

Xyphonian cities are wonders of marble and gold, with colonnaded streets, amphitheatres, and towering temples. Every building is a testament to order and beauty.

- **Xantheris, The Radiant Polis** – The capital, a city of scholars, warriors, and statesmen, where rulers are chosen for wisdom, not birthright.
- **Lykairos, The Spear of Xyphonia** – A fortress-city devoted to martial excellence, where the best warriors are trained.
- **Thalasson, The Pearl of the Eupolos** – A naval city, with fleets that keep Xyphonia's borders secure.
- **Delphion, The Oracle's Throne** – A sacred city, where visions guide the nation's fate.
- **Aegistra, The Market of the Wise** – A trade hub, where wealth flows and philosophies are exchanged.

Demographics

- **Rakashans: 45%** **(The dominant race, known for their grace, cunning, and natural leadership.)*
- **Humans: 40%** *(Scholars, warriors, and statesmen, blending into every part of society.)*
- **Halflings: 13%** *(Merchants, philosophers, and diplomats, often serving as advisors.)*
- **Other: 2%** *(Foreign scholars, traders, and the occasional exile seeking sanctuary.)*

Religion

Xyphonia follows a dualistic faith, honoring both Solis and Thalamesh in equal measure.

- **Solis** represents **light, justice, and discipline**, worshiped by **warriors and rulers**.
- **Thalamesh** represents **wisdom, balance, and nature**, revered by **scholars and mystics**.
- **Brisaya** is **quietly honored** in secret circles, particularly among **artists and philosophers**.
- **Kathgar's name is never spoken openly**, but his whispers have begun to **corrupt the hearts of the ambitious**.

Government

An Enlightened Republic – Xyphonia is ruled by The Ephorate, a council of five philosopher-archons, each chosen for their wisdom, virtue, and martial skill. Decisions are made through debate, tradition, and prophetic guidance, with no single ruler holding absolute power. The Five Pillars of The Ephorate:

Logos (Reason & Law) – Archon Nyxion of Aegistra (Rakashan)

"Through reason, we shape order. Through law, we shape destiny."

- Represents logic, justice, and governance.
- Ensures Xyphonia's laws are just and its structure remains stable.
- Often at odds with the more ambitious or esoteric Archons.

Arete (Excellence & Virtue) – Archon Callista of Lykairos (Rakashan)

"True strength is not in conquest, but in mastering oneself."

- Embodies personal greatness, honor, and self-perfection.
- Advocates for martial discipline, education, and philosophical inquiry.
- Views corruption as the greatest enemy of Xyphonian ideals.

Gnosis (Knowledge & Insight) – Archon Thaleia of Xantheris (Rakashan)

"To see beyond the veil, one must first open their mind."

- Represents wisdom, hidden knowledge, and prophecy.
- Encourages study of the stars, the mysteries of existence, and deeper truths.
- Some see Gnosis as dangerously close to hubris or forbidden knowledge

Thalassos (Dominion of the Sea) – Archon Lysandros of Thalasson (Human)

"The sea is our lifeblood, ever-shifting but eternal."

- Governs naval power, exploration, and trade.

- Believes that Xyphonia's strength lies in its fleets and maritime influence.
- Maintains dominance over the waves but clashes with more isolationist views.

Eusebia (Piety & Divine Order) – Archon Damaris of Delphion (*Human*)

"We are but mortals, but the gods watch and judge."

- Stands for faith, devotion, and the balance between gods and mortals.
- Seeks to preserve Solis' and Thalamesh's influence in Xyphonian society.
- A staunch opponent of moral decay and creeping corruption.

Major Factions

- **The Ephorate:** The ruling body of Xyphonia, where wisdom and philosophy guide governance.
- **The Silver Helms:** A prestigious order of warriors, sworn to defend Xyphonia from external threats.
- **The Keepers of the Oracle:** A mystic order, dedicated to interpreting Thalamesh's visions and shaping the nation's destiny.
- **The Veiled Forum:** A secretive society of nobles and merchants, whose hidden influence may prove either salvation or ruin.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Oracle Therion of Delphion** (*Human, Keeper of Prophecies*) – A mystic whose visions warn of a coming fall.
- **Lord Aetius of the Veiled Forum** (*Human, Merchant-Lord and Shadowy Manipulator*) – A hidden power behind the throne, whose allegiance is uncertain.
- **Commander Lysion of the Silver Helms** (*Rakashan, General of the Xyphonian Guard*) – A zealous warrior, who will stop at nothing to defend his home.

Nation Description & History

Xyphonia's history is one of steady perfection—at least, on the surface. Long ago, petty city-states warred endlessly, until a philosopher-king named Xyphon united them under the belief that strength, wisdom, and harmony must coexist. The Ephorate was founded, and Xyphonia became a beacon of enlightenment. But even perfection has its cracks. Kathgar's agents work in secret, whispering into the ears of those who seek more. Noble houses plot, seeking power beyond the bounds of tradition. The world sees Xyphonia as unshakable—but the wisest know that even the greatest city can fall from within.

ZAMASHUR

"The light and the land are one—we do not sever what is whole."

Introduction

Zamashur is a land of sun-drenched ziggurats, fertile river valleys, and great temple-cities, where faith and reason walk hand in hand. Here, Solis and Thalamesh are worshipped as twin aspects of balance—light and earth, fire and stone.

Unlike its zealous enemy, Rhomarion, Zamashur believes that faith must be tempered with wisdom, that war must serve a greater purpose, and that the gods themselves demand thought, not blind obedience. It is a land of peaceful philosophers and warrior-priests, where the sword is drawn only when needed—and then wielded with terrifying precision.

For nearly two centuries, Zamashur has stood in defiance of Rhomarion's crusades, rejecting their narrow view of Solis' faith. The Zamites do not seek war, but they will not bow, nor abandon their beliefs. Even now, as Rhomarion's armies march, the twin altars of Solis and Thalamesh remain alight, and the people of Zamashur prepare to stand against the tide.

Capital & Major Cities

Zamashur's cities are great bastions of sandstone and bronze, built along vast river networks that weave through the land.

- **Ur-Shamash, The Sun's Anvil** – The capital, a city of golden domes and grand temples, where Queen Naemira rules in defiance of Rhomarion.
- **Larsagath, The Bronze Citadel** – A fortress-city guarding the Rhomarion border, where warrior-philosophers train in both scripture and swordplay.
- **Nippuramun, The Seat of the Star-Seers** – A center of learning, where astronomers and sages chart the heavens to divine the gods' will.
- **Dūr-Enlil, The Unbreakable Wall** – A border city, once a Rhomari stronghold, now Zamashur's greatest line of defense.
- **Borsibumash, Jewel of the Twin Rivers** – A prosperous trade hub, where merchants from Darijaan, Warumpanji, and even Xyphonia gather to do business.

Demographics

- **Humans: 50%** (*The dominant race, ruling the nation and forming the majority of its scholars, warriors, and priests.*)
- **Half-Elves: 20%** (*A bridge between cultures, often serving as diplomats and spiritual leaders.*)

- **Saurians: 10%** (*Respected artisans and warriors, deeply tied to the land's traditions.*)
- **Sajrin (Earthborn & Waterborn): 8%** (*Revered as sacred beings, considered blessed by Thalamesh.*)
- **Gurubarra & Tawodi'neha: 5%** (*Some of the only Minotaurs and Red Dwarves to live outside Warumpanji.*)
- **Other: 7%** (*Merchants, exiles, and travelers from across the world.*)

Religion

Zamashur worships both Solis and Thalamesh equally, believing them to be two sides of a single divine truth.

- **Solis, The Light of Justice**, is honored as **the sun that reveals truth and guides the righteous.**
- **Thalamesh, The Earthfather**, is revered as **the foundation upon which all things are built.**
- **Brisaya** is acknowledged as **a force of change and fate, but her influence is treated cautiously.**
- **Mortivara** is respected, but **worship of Ilyndra is outright forbidden.**
- **Kathgar** is an enemy, and **his cultists are hunted mercilessly.**

Government

A Sacred Monarchy – Zamashur is ruled by Queen Naemira Shamashal, a priest-queen believed to be blessed by both Solis and Thalamesh.

She is advised by the Twin Councils:

- **The Keepers of the Sun**, who oversee justice, warfare, and religious matters.
- **The Keepers of the Earth**, who govern agriculture, trade, and diplomacy.

Unlike Rhomarion's rigid hierarchy, Zamashur's leaders embrace debate and compromise, seeing wisdom as the highest virtue.

Major Factions

- **The Sunbound Order:** A knightly order devoted to defending the faith, standing as Zamashur's greatest warriors.
- **The Seers of the Twin Altars:** A mystic order of scholars and oracles, seeking wisdom through study and divine visions.
- **The Brotherhood of the Crescent Flame:** A guild of merchants and diplomats, ensuring that Zamashur's wealth remains unmatched.
- **The Forsaken Vow:** A secretive group of spies and assassins, working to undermine Rhomarion's war effort.

Heroes, Villains & Other Dramatis Personae

- **Queen Naemira Shamashal** (*Human, Priest-Queen of Zamashur*) – A wise but battle-hardened ruler, struggling to balance faith with war.
- **Lord Rashid Al-Kavur** (*Half-Elf, Commander of the Sunbound Order*) – A brilliant general, honorable to a fault.
- **High Oracle Liranna Amurath** (*Sajrin, Leader of the Seers of the Twin Altars*) – A seer of visions, guiding the queen with prophecies of uncertain meaning.
- **Elder Kamaris Sa'dar** (*Saurian, Grandmaster of the Keepers of the Earth*) – A philosopher-priest, seeking to avoid war at all costs.
- **Shadowmaster Vashti of the Forsaken Vow** (*Human, Spymistress of Zamashur*) – A ruthless manipulator, fighting Rhomarion through subterfuge.

Nation Description & History

Zamashur's story is one of balance and defiance. For centuries, Zamashur and Rhomarion were allies, bound by a shared faith in Solis. But as Rhomarion's devotion turned to zealotry, they demanded Zamashur forsake Thalamesh and worship Solis alone. Zamashur refused.

The Holy War began nearly two hundred years ago, with Rhomarion sending crusades to "purge heresy." But Zamashur has never broken. Their warriors are tempered in both faith and wisdom, their defenses unyielding. Now, as the war drags on, Zamashur's patience wears thin. They will not strike first, but if Rhomarion's forces press too far, the response will be swift—and final.

Zamashur also welcomes immigrants from Warumpanji with open arms, seeing the Gurubarra and Tawodi'neha as kindred spirits who honor the land and its traditions. Many find refuge in its cities, integrating as respected artisans, warriors, and sages. This open acceptance enrages Rhomarion, which sees their beliefs as heretical and their presence as further proof of Zamashur's defiance against Solis' "true" doctrine.

SOME NOTES ABOUT CARTOGRAPHY

Though Shalarion is a world of vast knowledge and powerful magic, detailed cartography remains surprisingly elusive. While rough maps and regional charts exist, truly precise and widely accepted world maps are rare, contradictory, or outright forbidden. Adventurers who rely too heavily on maps may find themselves in peril, as the world resists being neatly charted.

The Unwritten Edict – Maps as Power

Many of the world's most powerful factions actively suppress the creation or distribution of accurate maps. Some nations view cartography as a strategic threat, while others believe mapping the world is an affront to divine order.

- **Mirzaban** considers detailed maps of its **fortifications, mountain passes, and naval routes** to be state secrets. Possessing such a map without military clearance is **punishable by death**.
- **Rhomarion's theocrats** claim that only **Solis' light should guide the faithful** and deem precise mapping of holy sites as **borderline heretical**—or, at the very least, a **dangerous precedent**.
- **The Jadarra Isles** thrive on **piracy and secrecy**. Here, maps are often **forgeries or half-truths**, designed to mislead rivals or lure the foolish into well-laid traps.
- **Zamashur and Darijaan**, as major trade hubs, maintain **detailed merchant charts**, but they **guard their routes jealously** and spread misinformation to maintain an economic edge.

Travelers should be careful—**possession of certain maps can be a crime**, and counterfeit maps are just as dangerous as the real ones.

The Whispering Wilds – Nature Does Not Obey Maps

Even when maps are accurate, they are often quickly outdated. The land itself resists being neatly charted, shifting beneath the feet of those who would claim to understand it.

- **The Ardentwood** stretches across three nations, yet its paths are **never the same twice**. Trees move, rivers vanish, and entire villages disappear under the dense canopy overnight.
- **The dunes of the Kavashan Dominion** shift unpredictably, swallowing roads and revealing ancient ruins no map can reliably track.
- **The Pohjaranta fjords change shape over generations**, molded by the spirits of the land and the great, grinding ice.

No matter how skilled the cartographer, **nature will not be tamed by ink and parchment.**

The Curse of the Cartographers – Forbidden Knowledge

An old superstition claims that those who attempt to chart the entire world will suffer a terrible fate. Some say it is Brisaya's trickery, others whisper that it is something older, deeper, and beyond mortal understanding. Many cartographers throughout history have vanished without a trace, and those who return often do so half-mad, their maps burned, torn, or rendered into nonsense.

This belief is so widespread that in some places, it is outright illegal to claim a map is "complete." In Rhomarion, an unapproved world map could be branded heretical. In Mirzaban, it might be seen as an act of espionage or treason. In Jadarra, the locals would simply laugh—and then sell you a dozen conflicting "accurate" maps at a premium price.

A Thousand Perspectives – Truth is Subjective

Maps in Shalarion exist, but they are wildly inconsistent depending on who created them. There is no singular, universally accepted world map—only fragments of truth, shaped by bias, politics, and purpose.

- A **Mirzite war map** is designed for military strategy, showing **fortifications and key strongholds** but **ignoring roads, villages, or natural landmarks**.
- A **Darijaani trade chart** details **mercantile routes and tariffs**, but **deliberately excludes secret passages used by smugglers**.
- A **Drustvald spiritual map** marks **ley lines, holy sites, and places of power**, but **has no regard for practical geography or borders**.

If one were to gather all these maps and **layer them atop each other**, they would find a **chaotic web of contradictions**, a world where no two accounts align perfectly.

In Short...

Cartography in Shalarion is as much about politics, faith, and deception as it is about geography. Maps are valuable, dangerous, and sometimes even forbidden. And even the best of them might not be worth the parchment they're drawn on.