

NEW GODS OF MANKIND



FATE'S GUIDEBOOK

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Richard would like to dedicate this book to his loving wife Claudia, his dog Maggie, Jesper "Hund" who inspired him to create this game, his sisters, Valerie and Zipporah, his elite gaming friends, Travis, Rick, Hein, Jonathan W., Mitch, Paul, Chris "crazy toes", Crystal, Brian, Tito, Ten, Mike S., Mike M., Ryan, Justin, Randy and everyone who believed in him and his madness.

Brad would like to dedicate this book to his loving wife Jessica



New Gods of Mankind Fate's Guidebook
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INTRODUCTION

You pause beyond a veil of flowering vines and listen to the bickering within the grove. Another trade agreement gone awry, another shedding of blood at the borders. You shake your head. Nothing seems to change. This time, however, there must be peace. You know that a crisis is coming, one that will involve these two races—old and new—working together to save their people. This time, you must interfere.

You step through the green curtain and the two gods fall silent. You remain silent, but your presence makes those gods present look at one another as though for the first time. The conversation begins again, this time civil and productive. You stand unobtrusively in the background, but all are aware of your presence.

As the two gods reach negotiations you slip away, satisfied. You are Fate, the caretaker of the heavens, counselor to the gods, and the presence of something greater. This is your duty to the gods and the Fire of Creation.

WHAT THIS BOOK ENTAILS

Once you learn how the gods are formed and what the setting is like by reading the New Gods Handbook, one person—you—must learn how to run this game for your friends. You are the gamemaster, or Fate, and your goal is to ensure that everyone at the table, including you, is having a good time. This is not a difficult task; Fate's job is more work intensive than that of the other players but most who run the game find the position satisfying and fun.

In this book you will learn how to be a gamemaster for gods, the best methods for refereeing the PCs in this setting, and how to create and run adventures. Everything you need is here, including a detailed history of the Known World, in-depth information on the personalities and backgrounds of the elder gods, and an intro adventure to get you started. This book also provides plenty of optional rules for set-up and play, as well as a ruleset for playing New Gods of Mankind as a boardgame instead of a roleplaying game.



THE ART OF PLAYING FATE

As Fate, you are part storyteller, part referee, part set designer, and part supporting cast. If New Gods of Mankind were a video game, you would be the CPU, the scenario designers, the writers, and the voice actors. Fate's role is a big one: If people are bored or frustrated or unhappy, that is, unfortunately, ultimately your fault. If everyone is having a good time around the table—and that's usually the case—that's your doing as well and you deserve ample praise for it.

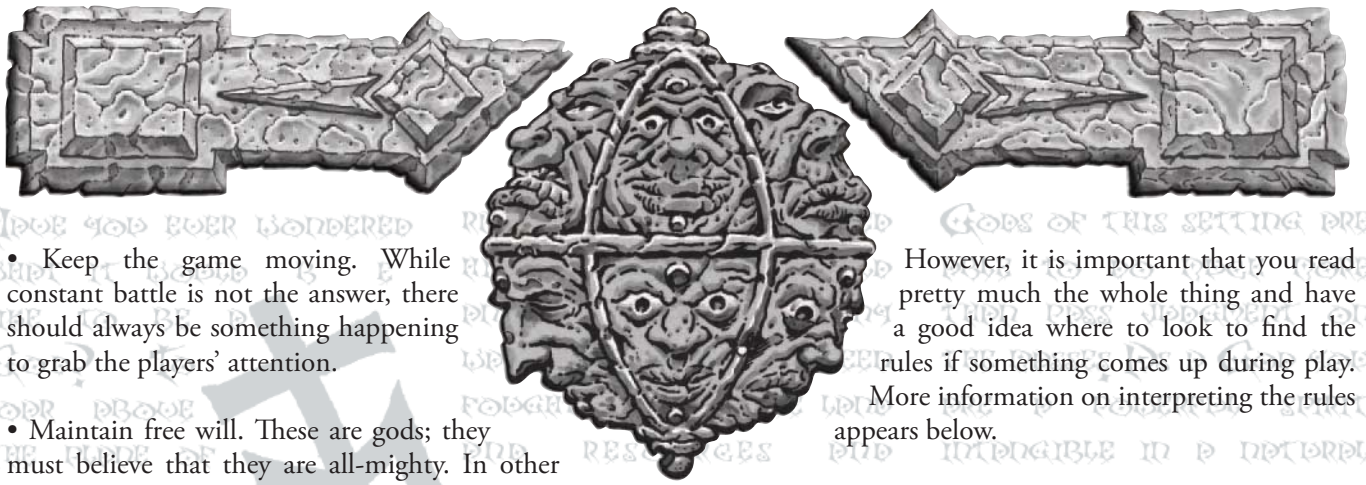
STORYTELLER

As a storyteller, it's your job to come up with adventures for the player characters to undertake, and then to set the PCs on those adventures and, along with the players, carry those adventures through to their conclusions. Like novels or movies, these adventures have characters; they have beginnings, middles, and ends; they have protagonists and antagonists; they have conflict and challenge. Because of these traits, people sometimes refer to adventures as "stories," and the better your story, the more fun the game.

Your goals as a storyteller are to:

- Tell a good story. You present a story each time you introduce an adventure. Published stories, like "Wolves at the Door" provided later in this book, provide everything but the characters' reactions to the situation. If you create your own adventure, you need an interesting plot and a "hook" to get everyone involved.
- Make the player characters the stars of this story. The players' decisions must matter; their choices are essential to the plot. You know what's really going on, but you have to center it on what the players want to do with their characters.
- Add perspective. The characters are part of a whole; your adventures should remind the players that there are many exciting things happening in both the Known World and celestial realm. They are gods, but not the only gods, and their corner is not the only place where drama is unfolding.





- Keep the game moving. While constant battle is not the answer, there should always be something happening to grab the players' attention.

- Maintain free will. These are gods; they must believe that they are all-mighty. In other words, if they choose to go in a direction that you have not planned, you cannot simply say no. However, you are allowed to come up with good reasons within the storyline why they can't go there. You may come up with a crisis that keeps the characters where they are or bring in another god that prevents them from passing into their Domain. Be warned, however, the reasons must be credible and interesting; otherwise you may be accused of "railroading"—forcing the players to follow your plot and only your plot.

- Improvise. Sometimes you have everything planned out and the players do something completely unexpected. That's when you may have to create new characters, scenes, or even entirely new adventures off the top of your head. Don't panic though; in most cases improvised adventures are more fun to run anyway.

More information on creating adventures appears below. Creating adventures is perhaps the one facet of Fate that requires the most preparation, but a solid adventure creates memories that players talk about for years.

REFEREE

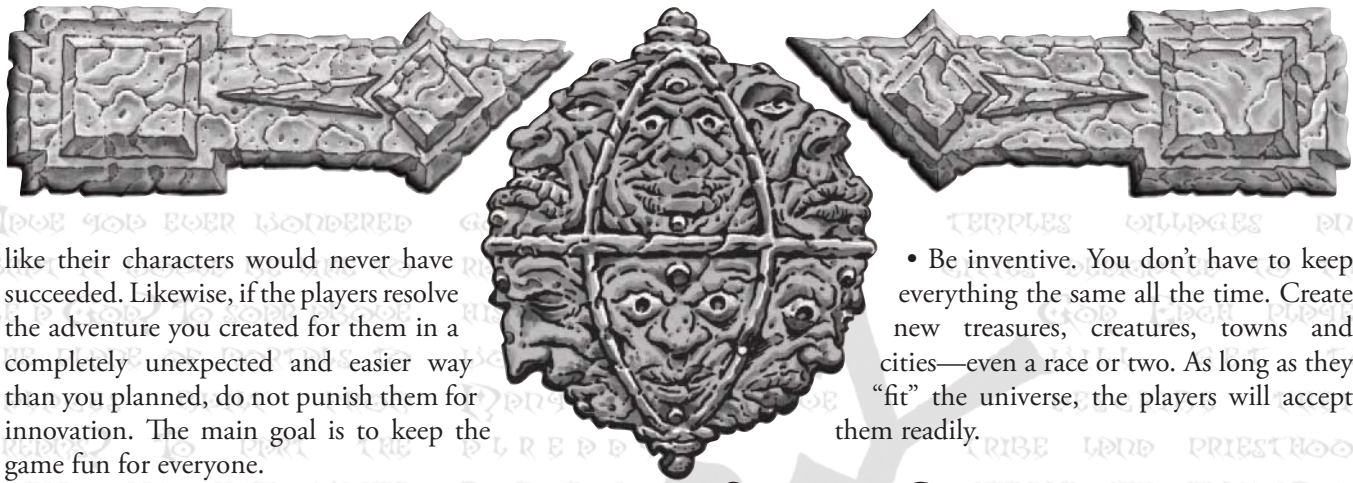
As a referee, it's your job to enforce, interpret, and make judgment calls regarding the rules. If a PC god wants to armor his peasants in plate mail of shining light, you decide (ultimately) of what power that Miracle must be. If a player wonders whether or not a specific Miracle falls under his Domain, you make the decision. Though the rules system is robust, it cannot take into account every action the players may want to take (especially since they're gods!), so you'll need to make rulings on the fly when the rules don't cover something that the players want to do. Though one of your jobs is to enforce the rules, you don't need to know this book word for word, end to end.

However, it is important that you read pretty much the whole thing and have a good idea where to look to find the rules if something comes up during play. More information on interpreting the rules appears below.

As the referee, remember:

- You are in charge. Your word is final. The players will let you know if you make a bad decision and you should listen to their arguments, but do not let them bully you.
- Play fair. You are not trying to win against the players. Do not change situations or numbers just to frustrate them or make things more difficult. If the players are defeated, they want to feel like they had a fair chance and should not feel like they had no choices. They should never feel





like their characters would never have succeeded. Likewise, if the players resolve the adventure you created for them in a completely unexpected and easier way than you planned, do not punish them for innovation. The main goal is to keep the game fun for everyone.

- The rules should not get in the way of fun. Let the characters and the action move the story along. If using a rule slows the story down, abbreviate it or eliminate it all together to keep everyone focused on the plot. The rules are only as important as you and the players think they are.

SET DESIGNER

As the set designer, you have to convince the players that they are in the game. You have to capture the ambiance and tone of a realm filled with primitive tribes, celestial heavens, self-important deities, and scary leviathans. You have to make the players believe they are gods with the lives of their Bronze Age followers on the line.

As a set designer, it is best if you:

- Use all the senses when describing scenes. Keep your descriptions filled with flavor and plenty of details when it is important. If the gods hear a call from their followers, they should feel the desperation of the prayer. If they walk into the celestial sphere of Everwinter, they should feel as though they just stepped into an eternity of ice and snow.
- Be consistent. Make sure your description is reliable and constant. If a treasure can be found where five stones stand in a circle, remember that there is five, not four, when they get there. If things do change, make sure there's a valid reason for that change. You may want to take notes so that you don't contradict yourself or to remember especially good descriptions, such as Jamab's tendency to spit tobacco at the feet of people he dislikes.
- Keep it exciting. Make things special; don't just describe the gnomes' land as a "mountain." Talk about the craggy peaks reaching towards the heavens and the ores flashing in the morning light.

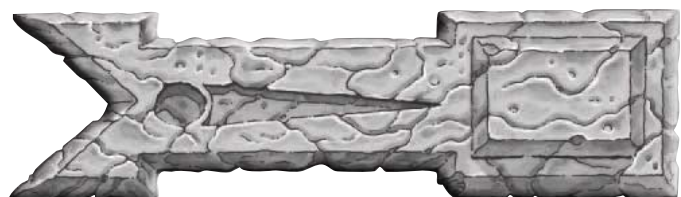
- Be inventive. You don't have to keep everything the same all the time. Create new treasures, creatures, towns and cities—even a race or two. As long as they "fit" the universe, the players will accept them readily.

SUPPORTING CAST

As the supporting cast, it is your job to portray all the other characters in the game. One of the PCs might take mortal form and speak to the barbarian leader—that barbarian leader is you. If the PCs upset a rival god, that god might come knocking on their doors, angrily demanding that they explain themselves. Again, that god is you. You don't need to be a theater student or command an arsenal of different voices and accents (though those traits certainly help), but the more distinct, realistic, and memorable the characters in the game, the more enjoyment everyone will get from it.

As an actor, try to:

- Make the characters you play notable. Whether god, hero, or a common mortal, the characters the PCs meet should be distinctive in some way. That way they will stand out in your plotline and help the players recall any clues they received from these characters. Once again, make notes so you can recall these traits.
- Give them flair and personality. While you are not required to take on new voices or accents, each character you portray should have a personality and you should speak and act like that person. Think of what that character would be doing and thinking. If the player characters are talking to a dragon god, the dragon god may respond to the PCs with barely contained hostility and disgust, just because they are gods of humans. Likewise, a priest of the new god would be exhilarated that his god is speaking to him and be complacent and humble.
- Maintain consistency. If a leviathan attacking a village wants only to destroy mortals by ripping apart any it sees with its bare hands, it does not suddenly poison the water hole, nor does it suddenly change tactics and use calculated





flanking maneuvers to gather the humans together in one small area.

HOW THIS GAME DIFFERS

Chances are, you're already familiar with roleplaying games and you already knew all that stuff (above) about Fate's role. New Gods of Mankind, however, is different from other roleplaying games; rather than controlling a single character, players control gods with numerous mortal followers. This dynamic creates a unique experience that requires special notes, even if you're already an ace at gamemastering.

GODS AND MORTALS

Each player controls a god—that's his character. However, each god, in a sense, also controls a bunch of mortals. In some respects, a PC god's followers are a cross between player characters and nonplayer characters (NPCs). In most cases, the players decide what their gods' followers do: march to war, till the fields, hold long celebrations, tap their fingers on oak trees one day a season, and so forth. However, these mortals are, for the most part, simply normal, unremarkable people, and you (Fate) also have some control over their actions and their capabilities. A player can say he wants his followers to all drop what they're doing, take up arms, and kill the barbarians in the field below, but you are within your rights to tell him that, while his followers might indeed be able to do this, many of them simply aren't fit for combat: They are weak, or old, or handicapped. Besides, if the entire population is out campaigning, what do they eat? How do they stay alive? What happens to their village if no one is around to protect it or even cut the weeds in the fields?

These factors are up to both you and your players to jointly resolve. Ultimately, though, the player controls his followers, and you control the consequences. If the villagers do all go to war, you might rule that they run out of food and need to start making Body checks to avoid starvation. You might rule that the lack of food weakens them, reducing their Body scores to d4s until they are able to get food again. When they return to their village, they might find that their envious neighbors have taken control.

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF MORTALS

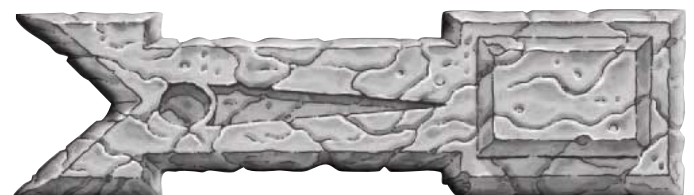
Gods of all stripes exist, from warlike savages to benevolent caretakers. Yet no matter a god's inclinations, Domains, or personality, he relies on his followers for power. That's an important point, because players, especially players who are familiar with roleplaying games and have played other games, are used to thinking of their characters as single, independent beings—and the fact that they control gods might reinforce that thought. However, gods are not independent; they need their followers, or they're no longer gods. Thus, players might be tempted to ignore the needs or pleas of their followers. That philosophy spells doom for a deity.

Make sure your players understand the link between them and their followers. Gods can interact with their followers in any way they like—they can be fearsome and vengeful deities of hot fire and cold steel who make their followers shiver in their beds or kind, wizened grandmothers who make their followers feel warm and cozy—as long as they properly care about them.

THE POWER—THE ABSOLUTE POWER!

This is a game about gods and Miracles. Since gods can do just about anything, the Miracle system allows players to do just about anything. However, that kind of freedom can force complex decision-making on Fate. Since the PCs can do whatever they want based on their powers and resources, you'll probably need to make judgment calls about a great many Miracles.

Unlike some other games, New Gods of Mankind doesn't attempt to codify everything it possibly can into a set of rules—such an approach, which some players find equitable and fair, takes power away from Fate and puts it into the rules. While rules are important, this game is not about rules—it's about crushing your enemies with balls of fire, sending your followers to explore the Known World, protecting them from their foes, and playing diplomatic games with the other gods. Therefore, the rules system, at its core, is simple: everyone has a **Body, Mind, and Spirit** score





that he uses for everything; you roll dice pools against each other to determine a conflict's outcome, and the highest score wins. The system for creating Miracles is fairly robust by necessity, but a lot of the specifics are left up to you. This game assumes that Fate—you—can make for a better and more fun game experience than dozens of pages of rules. And you can. Just be prepared—and make sure your players are prepared—for the degree of gamemaster decision-making this game asks.

Fortunately, you aren't alone out there; this chapter includes numerous tips and bits of advice for ensuring that the game runs smoothly, equitably, and everyone has a good time.

DON'T UPSET THE NEIGHBORS—THEY'RE GODS

The PCs have access to great power, but if they don't temper that power with the wisdom as to when and where to use it, chances are they won't last long. Other gods—some much more powerful than the PCs—hold sway in the Known World, and they take a dim view of upstart gods messing with their followers. If the PCs' solution to everything is just to throw Miracles at it, they'll make enemies quickly. This diplomatic labyrinth creates a check on the power of Miracles. Though the PCs can just make all their enemies' bones turn to goo, they might not want to. They may need to think of more creative solutions to their problems.

EVERYBODY WANTS TO RULE THE WORLD

In many games, the player characters exist in the world, and do all sorts of cool things in it, but only rarely, and usually only late in their careers, do they create significant and lasting changes on the world. The games give you a setting and plops the characters into it. *New Gods of Mankind* also gives you a setting, but says "pick up, break, spindle, and mutilate it." The player characters are gods, and gods can and should affect the world. Think of the setting as the current setup of a board game or a bunch of blocks in various stacks; the players move the pieces or the blocks as they play, and over the course of a campaign the board can change drastically. The PCs might take over a continent. They might wipe out an elder race. They could,

conceivably, destroy or enslave the entire world. Not only should you allow these sorts of things, you should encourage them. The PCs are mighty gods, and they should change the world over the course of the campaign. These changes might be small at first—affecting only a small area or small number of people—but as the campaign progresses, the PCs should be able to shake the world.

WHAT THE PCs DO

When you begin a new campaign, chances are good that new players will think: "Okay, I'm a god, that's cool, but what do I actually do in the game? I mean, if I was a mortal, I'd probably have a sword and go fight monsters to get their treasure, or something, but since I'm a god... do I still do that?"

The answer is that the PCs generally do two things: undertake adventures, and do whatever they want.

UNDERTAKE ADVENTURES

An adventure is like a story that you create for your players. It's like a story, except you don't write the roles of the protagonists, because that's where the PCs come in. In some ways, an adventure is more like a framework for a story: You have in mind an opening problem that gets the PCs involved in the adventure; you know the primary forces and characters at work; and you have at least some idea of what the PCs will want to accomplish and how the adventure will probably play out in a big-picture sense. The story isn't actually told, however, until the PCs get into the adventure; then they and you cooperatively tell the adventure's story. Sometimes the PCs do exactly what you expect them to do; more often, they surprise you in some way. In any case, everyone hopefully has a good time.

Adventures can revolve around anything: the PCs' followers face some threat; a new mystery needs solving; an outside party or the PCs' followers ask for help; diplomacy with other gods; and anything else you can imagine. More information on creating adventures and the different sorts of things they might involve appears under "Adventures," below.





WHATEVER THEY WANT

Since the PCs are gods, they probably have some ideas about things they want to do: expand their territory, convert the nearby barbarians, build a castle, conquer the neighboring tribe, or anything else. The PCs might also be working up to particularly large goals: they want to challenge the elder gods, take absolute control of the Known World, explore the Celestial Realm, stop the creation of Leviathans, discover the secret nature of Fate, or travel to other worlds. Since they're gods, they might get there eventually, but they'll need to gather followers, allies, and power if they are to succeed.

The PCs have their own ideas about what they want to do more often than in other games; in a typical New Gods of Mankind campaign, some adventures may be ones that Fate designs while others come from the players directly. The PCs are more likely to take up time with their own pursuits as their careers progress, they become comfortable with the setting, and they gather power.

Allowing the Players to Run: If you have a great adventure you want to introduce to your group, but the PCs have their own plans, what do you do? Do you introduce them to the adventure anyway, hoping that they'll either concentrate all their attentions on it or at least split their focus between the two pursuits, or do you allow them to do what they want and put your carefully constructed adventure aside?

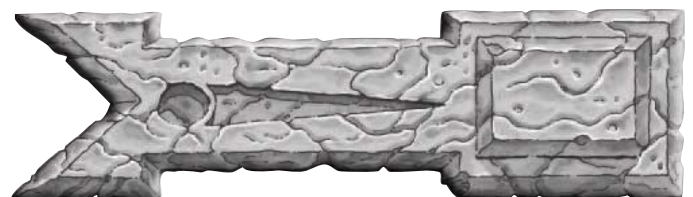
As difficult as it may sometimes be, when the players have their own plans, allow them to carry them out. Put your adventure back in the drawer—you can use it some other time. In fact, when the players have their own thoughts about what they want to do, that's a very good sign for both the game and for you as Fate. The players care enough about the game and the setting to want to take some control of it. It even makes your job easier, in a way; you don't need to go through the work of creating a plot hook to get the heroes involved in an adventure, because they already want to get involved with an adventure for their own purposes. Remember; hang on to that adventure you designed, because you'll use it later. You might need to adjust it

slightly based on any changes that occur in the world and to the PCs since you designed it, but it should be mostly good to go. Your players' actions may even lead into what you had designed weeks or even months ago.

Since the players are likely to have their own ideas about what they want to do, you might need to come up with adventures—or, at least, things that are like adventures—on the fly. The PCs, for example, want to stage a preemptive ambush on the salamander force camped twenty miles to the south of their tribes. The adventure needn't be particularly complex; if you didn't have other plans for the salamanders, well, all you need to know is how many there are and their statistics (which you can find in New God's Handbook Chapter 8: Other Races of the Known World), and they're ready to combat the PCs' followers.

That's a perfectly fine adventure, and it's probably what the PCs were expecting. However, you're free to throw some plot twists into the adventure, particularly those that relate to adventures you have planned for further down the line. Such plot twists might affect the adventure's outcome (i.e., they might throw a wrench in the PCs' plans) or they could simply be tantalizing hints about what's to come.

For example, as the campaign progresses, maybe you want to introduce a new salamander god who is gaining worship among secret sectors of their populace. Continuing the above example, maybe the salamander force contains a cell of cultists to this new god—and maybe one of the cultists is a hero of that god and wields frightening powers against the PCs' followers. Maybe the god himself watches the battle and supplies Miracles to keep his priests alive or to crush the PCs' followers. On the other hand, if you don't want the PCs to run into this sort of competition or want to reveal the mystery more gradually, maybe the PCs' followers simply find some strange symbols burned onto some of the salamanders' bodies in the aftermath, or they find some heretofore unknown holy symbols stashed in a secret compartment in a wagon.





BUILDING STUFF AND GOING TO WAR:

When the PCs take control, they might have any number of things they want to accomplish. They might want to build a fortress or train an army. While the basic rules don't include much information on these activities and therefore the success and effects of such actions are up to you, be sure to check out the optional board game rules in *New God's Handbook* Chapter 6: *New Gods of Mankind as a Strategic Board Game*. Even if you don't use these rules in your campaign, they should still give you a good idea of how long a castle takes to build and what sorts of benefits it supplies.

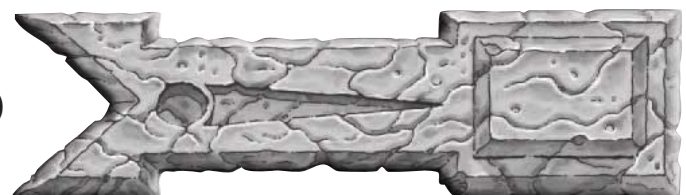
ADVENTURES

Adventures are an integral part of the game. An example adventure, "Wolves at the Door," appears in Chapter 6. This adventure is great if you're wondering what to design for your players; it's also good as a reference so you can see the sorts of things that make up an adventure. The adventures you create do not need to be quite as fleshed out as "Wolves at the Door." Unlike a published adventure in a book, you do not need to make sure all your words are spelled correctly, that you detail every possible outcome, and so forth. In most cases, your adventures will probably consist of about a page of hand-written or typed notes, a page or two of statistics and other game information, and a bunch of ideas in your head. This section helps you come up with those ideas.

If the descriptions below don't give you enough ideas to start making adventures of your own, Table 1–1 contains one hundred adventure ideas. Select one you think sounds good, or, if you like, roll randomly to determine the starting point for an adventure.

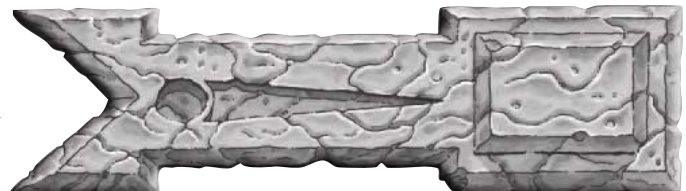
TABLE 1 - 1 One Hundred Adventure Ideas

d%	Adventure Idea
01	The PCs' followers discover an abandoned underground city.
02	The village's livestock fall sick for no apparent reason—another god is interfering.
03	An elder god takes a mysterious interest in the PCs, providing a challenge to overcome in exchange for future assistance.
04	A demon possesses the PCs' high priest.
05	The PCs discover a secret cult to a Leviathan or other god among their followers.
06	A solitary madman attacks the PCs' village—a madman with the strength of dozens.
07	A meteor crashes to the ground not far from the PCs' village. It radiates strange supernatural energy.
08	A minor Leviathan terrifies the PCs' followers.
09	A neighboring village has a sudden spike in power and efficiency.
10	Monsters of some variety appear near the PCs' village. They haven't killed any villagers—yet.
11	Strange lights and noises come from the ruined tower at the edge of the PCs' territory.
12	The PCs' scouts discover a cave with some valuable items—but undead servitors guard it.
13	A nearby, secluded vale holds a fruit tree with mystical power.
14	A villain escapes to the territory of a neighboring god.
15	A nearby mountain starts issuing smoke; the ground trembles; a fiery glow lights the smoke at night.
16	The villagers' babies are mysteriously stillborn.
17	A rival god's missionaries visit the village.
18	The soldiers of a neighboring territory perform "combat exercises" near the PCs' territory.
19	A PC's Domain in the Celestial Realm is mysteriously getting smaller.
20	A new god arises in the neighboring barbarian tribes.
21	A PC's priest is poisoned.
22	Local children discover a cave with thermal springs nearby—perhaps as source of power.
23	A dead man's spirit lingers in the tribe and threatens to become a god in its own right—but it also gives fine advice and is an asset to the tribe.
24	The nearby forest seems to be moving closer and closer to the village.
25	Woodsmen who venture into a forest do not return.
26	An undine tribe moves into the PCs' fishing waters.
27	A shadowy traveler offers immense riches in return for gems from gnome mines.
28	A haughty, aggressive youth against traditional ways—like the "old" gods—gathers a following.
29	A villager begins research on a way to live forever.
30	Something is wrong with the Well of Souls—many more souls than normal escape to become demons.
31	Fate has taken a keen interest in the PCs' tribe. It asks for a conference with them.
32	An elder god wishes to make a pact with the PCs' tribe.





- 33 Salamander slavers raid the PCs' tribal territory, taking half of their worshippers.
- 34 Recent followers who died and wish to go to the PCs' heaven are not making the trip. Their souls have disappeared without a trace.
- 35 The PCs' tribe is having nightmares; a Leviathan in the Veil of Dreams is responsible.
- 36 A meeting of the PCs' tribal elders declares the worship of another god acceptable.
- 37 Sylphs around the Known World leave cities and territories for destinations unknown.
- 38 A nearby graveyard prevents spirits from leaving the Known World, making for restless souls haunting the PCs' tribe.
- 39 Gnome artisans and merchants visit the PCs' village.
- 40 The PCs' tribes have learned new techniques for building structures and farming. They now want to build their first city.
- 41 A meeting of all gods of the Known World has been called in the Courtyard of Fate in the Celestial Gardens.
- 42 Lugos the Sylph god has challenged the PCs in a series of contest, intent on mocking human gods.
- 43 A dragon god asks for an audience with the PCs. The god is quite open about the meeting.
- 44 A distant, rival human god asks for help.
- 45 Demon spirits infest the livestock of the PCs' tribe.
- 46 A local demon wishes to serve under a PC or pantheon. Can it be trusted?
- 47 An exiled/lost god returns from the Abyss.
- 48 Climate changes forces the Jurelian giants further south. Although aggressive, they would like a temporary truce.
- 49 A gnome child is kidnapped by sylphs/raiders and winds up in the PCs' tribe. Gnorr and Methussa accuse the humans of stealing the child.
- 50 One of the elder gods has a (fleeting) romantic interest in one of the PCs.
- 51 A large unidentified object is traveling through the Abyss towards the Known World. Invaders or meteor?
- 52 One of the PCs' priests is corrupting the youth of a village, sparking fear among the children.
- 53 A young child is born with the memory of his previous incarnations, including as an elder race and perhaps even as a First One. All the elder tribes and gods show interest.
- 54 The PCs' followers discover a large meteorite, and its metal makes incredible weapons. Gnomes wish to trade.
- 55 A Plthunlos-worshipping undine is washed onto the PCs shore after a massive storm and offers a trade agreement in gratitude when the PCs unknowingly assist him. Celundynn finds out.
- 56 The leader of a village dies and the tribe is divided as to who should replace him.
- 57 The PCs' tribe discovers a plant that produces hallucinations, euphoria, and addiction.
- 58 The PCs' tribe discovers new irrigation techniques that produce an overabundance of food despite the land's condition.
- 59 A leader from another tribe in the region is requesting all humans unite under a common banner.
- 60 The PCs hear a rumor that a human who visits the island of Kukulcan can contact the Invader's spirits without conflict.
- 61 Two elder gods have decided to settle an argument with a game — and to use the PCs' followers as their pawns.
- 62 A sudden plague strikes the tribe, but is it natural or something more?
- 63 A minor feud between the PCs' followers and a neighboring tribe threatens to escalate into major conflict.
- 64 A Leviathan-cult demands tribute, making various threats of what will happen if the PCs' tribe doesn't comply.
- 65 Refugees from a far-off war ask to join the PCs' tribe, but their different customs and ways lead to friction as they try to integrate.
- 66 A god of gambling and trickery challenges the PCs to a game with their faithful as the stake - but he doesn't plan to play fair.
- 67 The neighboring tribe boasts of the magnificence of their grand new temple.
- 68 Some of the PCs' younger followers become impetuous and wild—they've been at peace too long, and are spoiling for a fight.
- 69 A powerful God vanishes. What happened to her, and who will convert or conquer her lands and followers?
- 70 The PCs' main temple burns to the ground—and it seems some of the priests were responsible.
- 71 A trader sold trinkets to many villagers last year—now those who bought them refuse to offer worship to the PCs.
- 72 The PCs' followers find a large seam of gold, bringing both wealth and the attention of powerful tribes.
- 73 Two leaders vie for a particular position, and each recruits other tribesmen to help him.
- 74 A neighboring tribe invites the PCs' villagers, along with other tribes, to a large festival.
- 75 Another pantheon approaches the PCs in the Celestial Realms and asks for an alliance.
- 76 A tribal elder dies suddenly under mysterious circumstances. The tribe is in shock, and no one wants to replace him.
- 77 The food the tribe stored for the winter wasn't sealed up properly, and is now rotten. Without the food, the tribe will starve.





- 78 The leader of the PCs' tribe assumes complete control of the tribe and becomes a tyrant.
- 79 One of the PCs' most faithful followers longs to enter the priesthood, but his family forbids it.
- 80 A PC's hero grows arrogant. Those around him begin to worship him directly, rather than the god he serves.
- 81 A member of the PCs' tribe manifests supernatural abilities. The tribe assumes the abilities are gifts from the PCs, but they are not.
- 82 Overnight, a sapling appears in the middle of a tribal village. It grows into a mighty tree over the course of the day, and just keeps growing.
- 83 The PCs' followers discover an ancient stone archway. When touched with divine power, the archway becomes a mystical portal leading to a distant part of the Known World.
- 84 During a battle with an enemy tribe, the PCs' tribe captures a mysterious artifact. They cannot discern its secrets, but now it is beginning to hum at night.
- 85 Hunting is poor this season. Wild game is nowhere to be found, though the rest of the ecology seems to be intact.
- 86 A group of the PCs' followers is captured by Wood Nymphs while hunting in the forest.
- 87 Salamanders approach the PCs' tribe and offer an alliance against a common foe.
- 88 A group of visitors arrive in the PCs' lands telling horror stories of vicious invaders who drove them from homes. A short time later, the invaders arrive in pursuit.
- 89 A neighboring tribe offers to share its technological secrets with the PCs' tribe in exchange for an exorbitant amount of food.
- 90 A caravan of human slavers passes through the PCs' territory. They are willing to buy any stock the tribe is willing to sell, and are selling their stock at very reasonable prices.
- 91 An elder god lays claim to part of a PC's home in the Celestial Realm.
- 92 A mortal claims one of the PCs as her parent, and appears to have evidence to support her demigod claims.
- 93 A rival god wants the land the PCs claim as their own. He is willing to move the followers, and compensate them for the troubles, but really wants the land.
- 94 The craft-makers of the PCs' tribe are obtaining craft-making secrets from gods outside their pantheon.

- 95 Two neighboring gods are having a bitter conflict, and both ask the PCs to take their side in the conflict.
- 96 A spirit appears to the PCs' tribe and claims to be an emissary from another world.
- 97 The PCs' followers are missing. Where the tribe once lived, there is now an enormous mountain.
- 98 The PCs' followers have adopted an additional set of commandments. They are not offensive commandments, but they are not those set down by the PCs, either.
- 99 A group of new gods are banding together in an effort to create their own new world, away from the Elder Gods. They want the PCs to help them in their mad quest.
- 100 Strange omens are seen in the sky: new constellations, strange comets, and blood-red clouds that do not change their shapes.

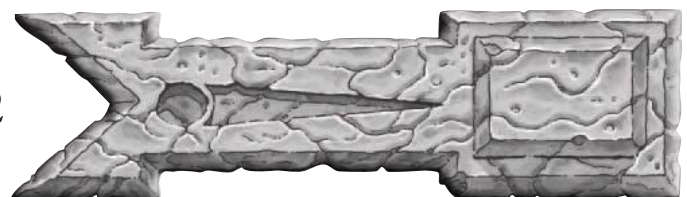
ADVENTURE STYLES

Adventures come in many varieties, and many blend different styles. The following are some elements you might include in your adventures.

COMBAT

Players like combat. It's thrilling, you should have little trouble adjudicating basic combat using the rules in *New God's Handbook* Chapter 5 *Playing the Game* and it gives PCs the chance to use Miracles to influence the outcome. Be careful, though, that you don't give the PCs challenges that they can't handle—or, at least, that they can't handle without specific tactics. Also, avoid the temptation to create obstacles that the PCs can solve only through combat. Every challenge they experience should have multiple ways to solve it. Since the PCs are gods with world-changing power, they'll probably think of all sorts of crazy ways to overcome their problems. Remember to allow these possibilities.

Examples of adventures that focus on combat include attempting to destroy a rival village, assassins slaying a temple's guards on their way to the high priest, and explorers encountering monsters in the wilderness.





DIPLOMACY

The Known World contains many gods, all living in the Celestial Realm, all controlling mortal followers, and most trying to grab a little more power, prestige, and land than the others. The Known World includes many gods more powerful than the PCs—more established human gods, Leviathans, and of course the elder gods—and such entities might ignore the PCs or might view them as potential resources or threats. These deities likely keep cautious eyes on the PCs—and the closer the PCs' followers are to the other gods' territories, the more closely the other gods, and their followers, watch the PCs. The PCs might view the gods of the surrounding territories in similar ways: as rivals to overcome, as potential allies to enlist against their enemies, as gods best avoided entirely, as beneath their notice, or in any other sense.

Divine diplomacy is common. Gods form alliances, barter for land, demand recompense for grievances, and, more often than their followers might wish, wage war on each other. The PCs can easily become involved in these diplomatic games. Another, nearby new god of mankind might ask the PCs to form an alliance for protection against the hostile undines nearby. The PCs might feel hemmed in by other gods and seek to expand their territory, but must think of a way to do so without angering more powerful deities. A PC might offer some sort of service—allowing gnomes to live on his territory, for example—in return for some other benefit, like permission to mine gems in the gnomes' mountains. The gods' followers might work out such arrangements on their own, but considering how active gods are in the world, they are likely involved in such affairs.

Gods can communicate with each other through their followers, and often do so. Though the exchange may look to be an emissary speaking with a village leader, the two gods involved watch closer and might inspire their followers with the proper things to say. Gods can also speak to each other directly in the Celestial Realm.

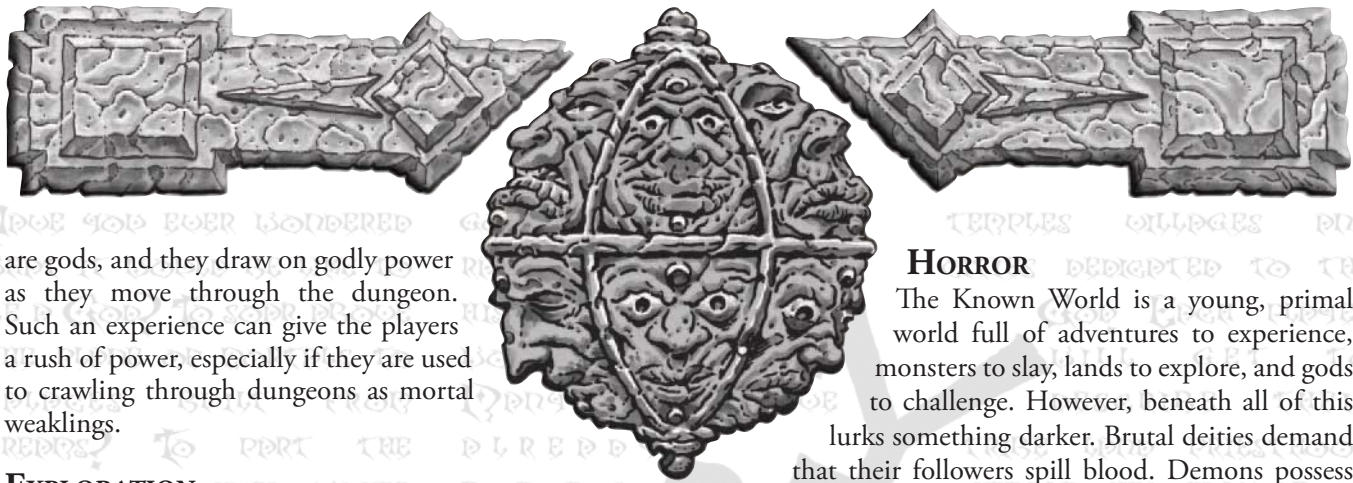
DUNGEON CRAWL

You and your players might be familiar with traditional fantasy roleplaying games, which often involve parties of adventurers descending into caves—"dungeons"—to slay the monsters, find the treasure, and/or rescue the prisoners. You can play these sorts of adventures in *New Gods of Mankind* as well. The Known World is rife with dungeons, whether these are natural cave complexes, ruined temples and cities, hostile fortresses, reeking sewers, or anything else. Rumors speak of these dungeons, whispering of the monstrous and demonic guardians and of the treasures—both magical and mundane—that they guard. In such a world, a tribe might produce a small group of young people eager to earn glory for themselves, their tribe, and their god by braving these perils and reaping the rewards. These people are adventurers. Their lifespans are understandably short, on average, but they can garner great rewards.

Of course, a dungeon crawl adventure in *New Gods of Mankind* is different from those in other games. Mortal creatures have only three statistics, for example—Body, Mind, and Spirit—while those in other games usually have many more statistics and capabilities. (Of course, the Body, Mind, and Spirit scores are all you need to run the game.) Yet even more telling is the fact that the players control gods who might be watching the adventurers, perhaps assisting them with inspiration and Miracles when the going gets tough.

One variation of a dungeon crawl adventure is when the gods themselves take mortal form and descend into a dungeon. Such a deity might join a group of mortal adventurers (disguising his divine nature or not, as he chooses), or an entire pantheon of gods might manifest and head into a dungeon. In this way, a *New Gods of Mankind* adventure is quite similar to the dungeon crawls from other games. In fact, you can adapt adventures for those other games for use in *New Gods of Mankind*—though of course the differences will be great, so you might just use the adventure's basic plot and dungeon layout. The PCs, however, are not your standard mortal adventurers—they





are gods, and they draw on godly power as they move through the dungeon. Such an experience can give the players a rush of power, especially if they are used to crawling through dungeons as mortal weaklings.

EXPLORATION

The Known World is a big place. While the players may have read New God's Handbook Chapter 2 Xil's Guide to the Known World, chances are they will not remember everything, and even if they do, their characters don't know that information. Even though they are gods, they are not omniscient—even gods don't know everything about the Known World—and to new gods of mankind, it is an unexplored land full of potential hazards and resources. And on the off chance that the players have assimilated all the information this is your campaign. You can add new areas or change any of the information as you like.

Gods may send explorers into the surroundings just to see what's out there. These hearty souls travel by land and sea to reach faraway places. As these they move farther afield, they (hopefully) take detailed notes and sketch accurate maps of the places, people, and things they encounter. If a god's tribe is lucky, these explorers may figure out how to send some of these items back to their homeland, but normally the tribe doesn't benefit from these explorations until the explorers return, which can take years.

An exploration adventure meshes well with a mystery adventure, and in some cases the two may be indistinguishable. For example, a fishing boat might spy a distant island on a particularly clear day. The mystery arises; what's on the island? Resources the village might use? A possible way to expand its territory? People? Possible trade partners or a hostile culture? Potential converts? The tribe might then send members to explore the island.

Exploration adventures are a good chance for you to introduce the player characters (and players) to the Known World, its history, its people, its mysteries, and its dangers. You can make heavy use of New God's Handbook Chapter 2 in such an adventure.

HORROR

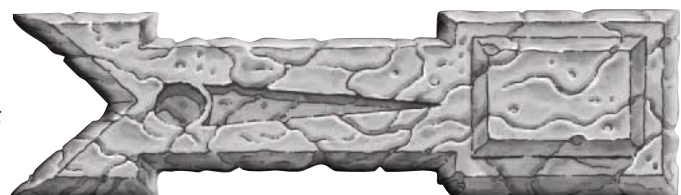
The Known World is a young, primal world full of adventures to experience, monsters to slay, lands to explore, and gods to challenge. However, beneath all of this lurks something darker. Brutal deities demand that their followers spill blood. Demons possess the unwary. Sinister cabals of evil gods gather innocents for human sacrifices. Gods struggle to consume each other. Leviathans strive to bury the world in madness and hatred. All of these elements lend a horror element to the game, if you and your players find such things engrossing, and you can base an adventure on such aspects.

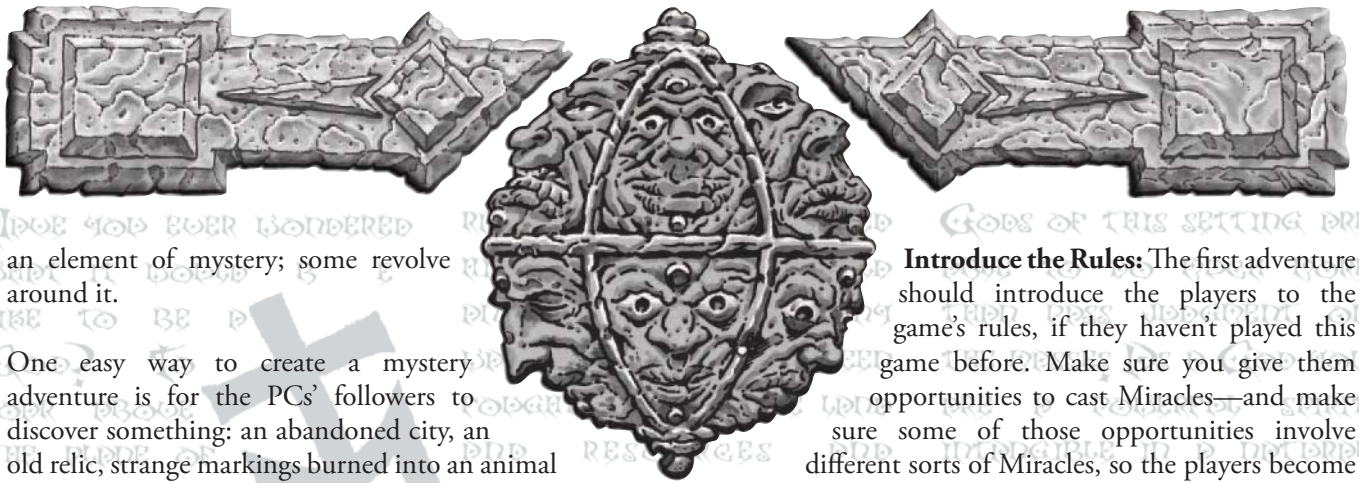
The players control gods, though, and how do you scare a god? You can't make it bleed or tear off its limbs or place it in a room with its greatest fear—a god is immune to such tactics. Sinister beings can inflict such hardships on a god's followers, however, and people under such horrors whimper to their gods for help. Such prayers are often frightening in themselves, full of half-mad recollections about tortures and beasts. In the end, you probably won't end up scaring the characters—but a horror adventure can still scare the players, which is what a good horror story is all about.

Not all groups enjoy horror adventures. Your group may prefer to gloss over these unsavory aspects and instead see Leviathans as big monsters to kill, as tragic souls to redeem, or anything else that isn't particularly horrifying. Yet for groups who enjoy horror experience, the Known World allows it—in as much or little detail as you like.

MYSTERY

The Known World is full of mystery. From the enigmatic First Ones who existed long ago to the Invaders who enslaved the world, wonder awaits even gods. Add myriad gods, demons, spirits, and Leviathans who leave nothing but ruins and bones and a god will have more questions than answers. More mundane mysteries also exist; a god may need to determine who or what is responsible for his people's missing sheep or why the native wildlife has recently become more aggressive. Most adventures include





an element of mystery; some revolve around it.

One easy way to create a mystery adventure is for the PCs' followers to discover something: an abandoned city, an old relic, strange markings burned into an animal hides, the same word written over and over again on the side of a wall, an underground cavern, a tiny barbarian tribe with bizarre practices, or anything similar. Many gods are motivated to investigate based purely on curiosity—and even if the gods are not motivated in such a fashion, their people might be, setting off a chain of events that sooner or later demands a god's attention. If no one's looking into your mystery, you can turn it into more of a threat or a resource: people vanish when they sleep in the cavern, or the ancient city's walls bear glyphs that speak of a powerful relic within.

THE FIRST ADVENTURE

The first adventure in a new campaign is important. It sets the tone for the rest of the campaign and, if you and/or your players are new to New Gods of Mankind, it serves as an introduction to the rules. It also serves to set the backdrop for the campaign; the players have already thought about what they want their gods and their followers to be like, but it's not until play actually begins—the first adventure starts—that they see their choices in action and solidify the details.

The following are some ideas you might consider when thinking about the first adventure.

The One in the Book: Chapter 6 contains a sample, introductory adventure called “Wolves at the Door.” It's a fine adventure to start your campaign. However, if you or your players have already played or read it, or you have your own ideas about how you want your campaign to begin, you might not want to use it. It's still valuable as a reference, though; you can look to it to determine what elements an introductory adventure should have. You might also modify it so it more closely matches your tastes.

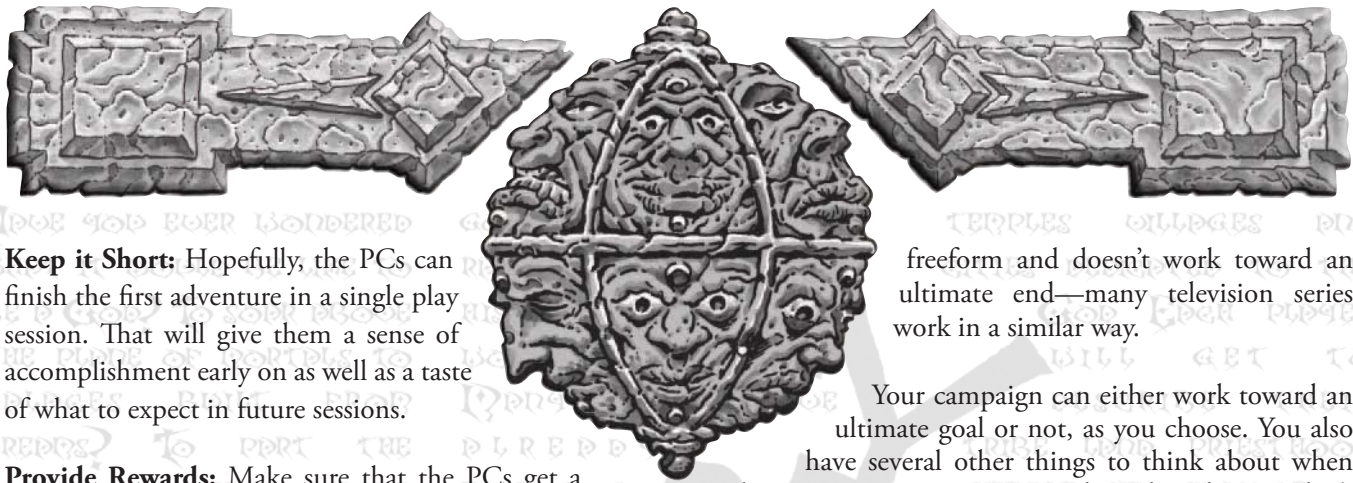
Introduce the Rules: The first adventure should introduce the players to the game's rules, if they haven't played this game before. Make sure you give them opportunities to cast Miracles—and make sure some of those opportunities involve different sorts of Miracles, so the players become

used to determining Miracle costs for various goals as well as using their creative thinking to use Miracles for different purposes. Also be sure to include some type of conflict so the players can try out the conflict resolution system. The conflicts should be straightforward and simple; basic combat is an excellent choice.

Introduce the Setting: Even if first-time players have read Xil's Guide to the Known World, they have yet to see the setting in a real game. Experienced players of New Gods of Mankind still may not be familiar with the particular corner of the world in which their gods begin. The first adventure should introduce the setting, even if it's in a small way. You probably want to introduce the important aspects: the Known World is a young and vital world full of spirits and gods. Some of these gods are much more powerful than the PCs, so you might want a small interaction with an elder race. The threat of demons and Leviathans also lurks, so you might want to incorporate one of these beings—or simply rumors or tales of one—so the PCs know they exist.

Keep it Simple: At its heart, New Gods of Mankind is a mechanically simple game. Much of the complexity doesn't come from the rules but in the stories that are told and how conflicts are judged. Therefore, you as Fate hold a great deal of power; the rules are all here, but you determine when and how the PCs experience them. You probably want to keep the first adventure simple, with a few basic Miracles and conflicts to get the players thinking about how they might use these aspects in the future. You might include a simple diplomatic encounter as well, but save the intricate web of divine diplomacy for later.





Keep it Short: Hopefully, the PCs can finish the first adventure in a single play session. That will give them a sense of accomplishment early on as well as a taste of what to expect in future sessions.

Provide Rewards: Make sure that the PCs get a significant reward for accomplishing their first adventure: a new ally and/or new followers are good choices. Rewards provide the players with a sense of success, and they'll be eager to get back to the game.

Make it Interesting: With all the above suggestions to keep the adventure short and simple, you might be tempted to create an adventure in which a small barbarian gang assaults the PCs' village, the townsfolk defeat them, and everyone goes home happy. While that could be a fun adventure and also serve all the other purposes of a first adventure, it sounds a bit boring. You probably want to throw in at least a small plot twist: the barbarians were hired by a rival village, for example, or constantly chant a strange name as they throw themselves into battle. Maybe a spy within the PCs' village gives them the guard patrol routes, allowing them to sneak into the village and attack the temple.

Hook to the Next: You might also want to include hints about the next adventure or the characters or story lines you plan to explore later in the campaign. For example, the name the barbarians chant could be a new Leviathan—you might plan for the PCs to interact with the Leviathan in the next adventure, or it could be a villain they'll confront much later in the campaign. The first adventure should also reveal the local surrounding, so the players know with whom they'll be interacting in the near future.

CAMPAIGNS

A campaign is a continuing game, a number of adventures linked together featuring the same main characters, like episodes in a TV series or chapters in a novel. Sometimes, campaigns work toward a final, ultimate conflict or goal, as in a novel; other times, while a few adventures together might form a cohesive story arc, the campaign itself is

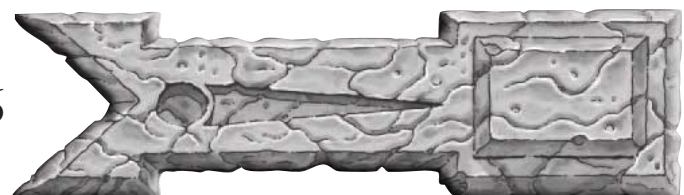
freeform and doesn't work toward an ultimate end—many television series work in a similar way.

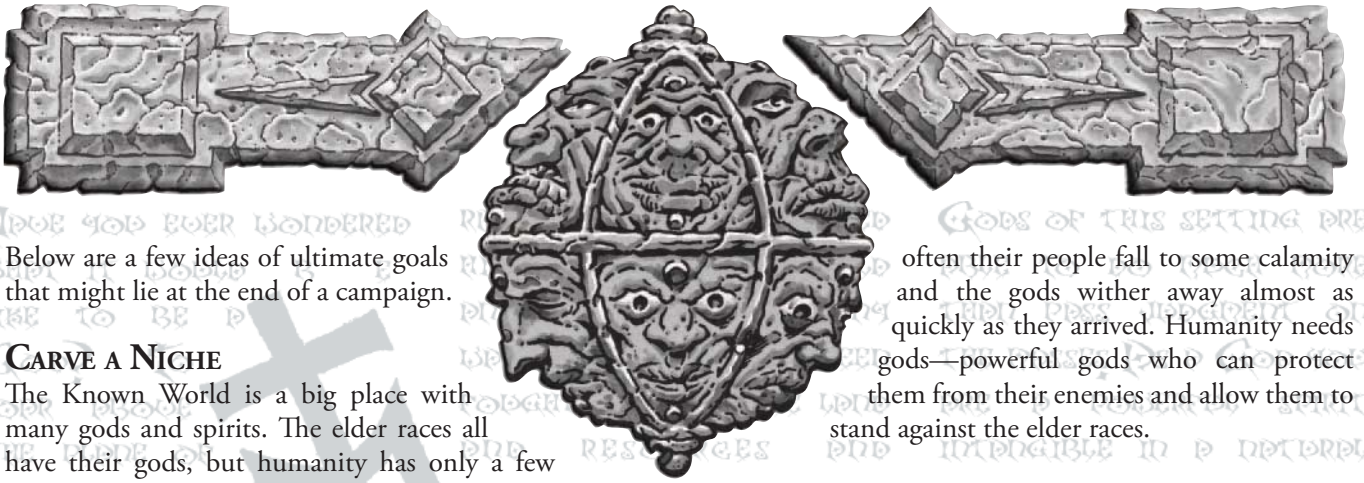
Your campaign can either work toward an ultimate goal or not, as you choose. You also have several other things to think about when planning a campaign. Remember, though, you don't need to figure out all of these aspects before you begin your campaign. Some of these aspects will come about naturally through play such as a long-term goal, and your players might come up with ideas they'd like to see incorporated in the campaign. Where possible, you should include these ideas; it saves you some work and keeps the players interested.

Even in a campaign with an ultimate goal at the end, not every adventure needs to work toward that goal. Every once in a while, something might happen that has nothing to do with that goal. These adventures serve several purposes: they give a break from the focused challenges of the other adventures, and it doesn't make sense that every adventure in a god's career are all focused on the same thing. Outside forces come into play; even if the PCs want to send their scouts to perform reconnaissance on the gnome city prior to crashing its gates, they may first need to deal with the mysterious illness afflicting their people. Of course, the PCs may eventually discover that what they thought was an unrelated adventure was instead part of a larger scheme: one of the gnome gods discovered their plan and visited the disease upon their people, for example.

The adventures in a campaign usually span the genres presented above. You might have a combat adventure, then a mystery adventure, then an adventure that blends exploration and dungeon crawling.

You can also take one of the genres described above and apply it to your entire campaign—you could base an entire campaign around exploration or combat (such as a great war). Even in these cases, the campaign's adventures don't all fall into that category. Players (and GMs) get tired of combat after combat, so throw in the occasional mystery or diplomacy adventure.





Below are a few ideas of ultimate goals that might lie at the end of a campaign.

CARVE A NICHE

The Known World is a big place with many gods and spirits. The elder races all have their gods, but humanity has only a few established gods and even they are weak compared to the elder gods. Most human tribes focus their attentions on new gods: gods like the PCs. However, new gods of mankind come about fairly often in these times, and just as

often their people fall to some calamity and the gods wither away almost as quickly as they arrived. Humanity needs gods—powerful gods who can protect them from their enemies and allow them to stand against the elder races.

The PCs might want to be these gods. They may have goals that stop short of taking over the world or slaying the elder gods, but they might want to establish themselves as the elder gods' equals. Doing so is not easy, as burgeoning human tribes are fragile and their enemies many. In addition, the more powerful a human god gets, the more warily the elder gods watch him. Other human gods jealously guard their positions and see other human gods as rivals to their power. Still, if the PCs are cunning and intelligent, they could lift themselves to become the gods for humans across the Known World.

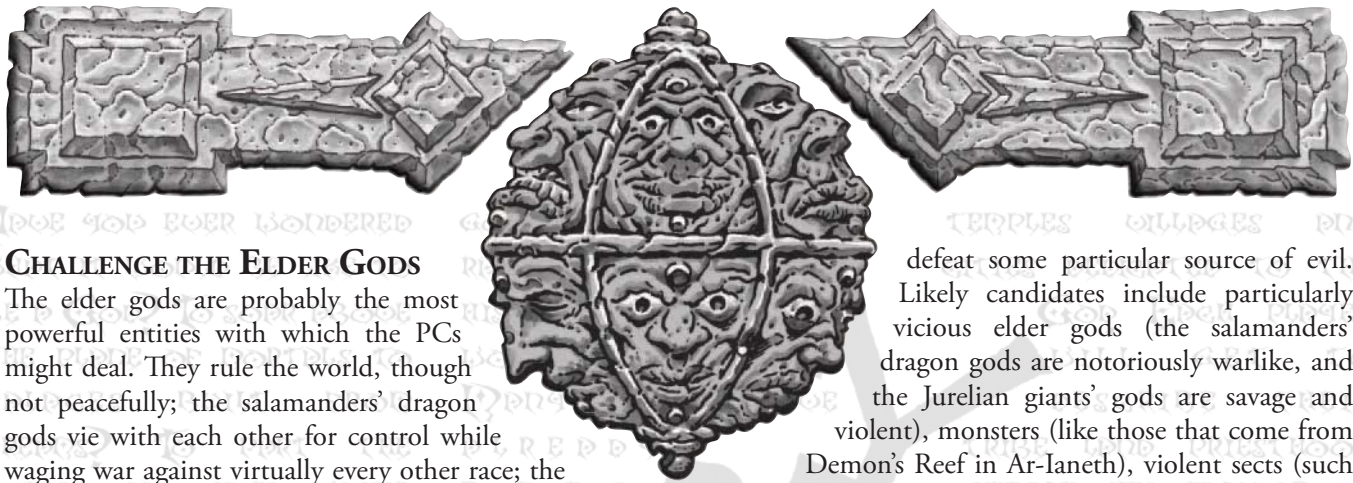
POWER LEVEL

By default, each PC begins with 100 followers and 50 Belief. Those are the starting numbers for new gods of mankind. That's enough followers and Belief for the players to feel like gods, but they need to be careful with their Miracles to avoid exhausting their resources—they can't just throw fire and lightning all day. Of course, if you and/or your players want a more powerful game, you are welcome to allow the PCs to begin with more followers and more Belief. You can choose whatever numbers you want for these statistics; the following are some benchmarks.

The PCs are...	Followers	Starting Belief
New gods of mankind*	100	50
Ascendant gods of mankind	500	250
Established gods of mankind	1,000	500
Major threats	10,000	5,000
World-shakers	100,000	50,000

* The default.





CHALLENGE THE ELDER GODS

The elder gods are probably the most powerful entities with which the PCs might deal. They rule the world, though not peacefully; the salamanders' dragon gods vie with each other for control while waging war against virtually every other race; the Jurelian giants' brutal deities want to kill everyone and drink their blood; the undines' two gods are engaged in an ages-old feud. The elder gods mostly see humankind as small and inconsequential: useful for slaves, but that's about it. They don't view human gods with much more esteem.

The PCs may want to change things. They may want to take rulership of the world away from the elder gods, exact vengeance for hardships done to their people, or simply prove that they can stand toe to toe with these great deities. A campaign could easily focus on the goal of, eventually, the PCs gaining enough power to challenge the elder gods. They probably have dealings of various sorts with the elder gods before this time: peacefully, diplomatically, or on the battlefield. The elder gods are extremely powerful, and if the PCs do something stupid they could easily see elder race armies march all over their populace, so they must be careful. Diplomacy serves them well; a PC may make an alliance with one elder god, for example, to assist him in battles against another.

Of course, the elder gods have so many worshippers that the PCs are unlikely to wipe them out entirely. The elder gods may lose power as their cities fall, but they remain gods, burning with hatred and a desire for vengeance.

DEFEAT EVIL

The PCs might set themselves up as a force for good in the world. Such selflessness is rare and it might not be the PCs' only goal, but the Known World needs such gods. Selfish deities, murderous Leviathans, cunning demons, and brutal mortals are everywhere.

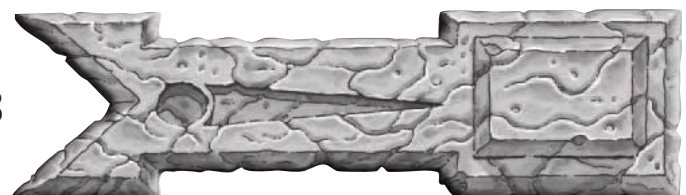
If the PCs hope to eliminate all evil in the world, they're asking too much. However, they could, potentially,

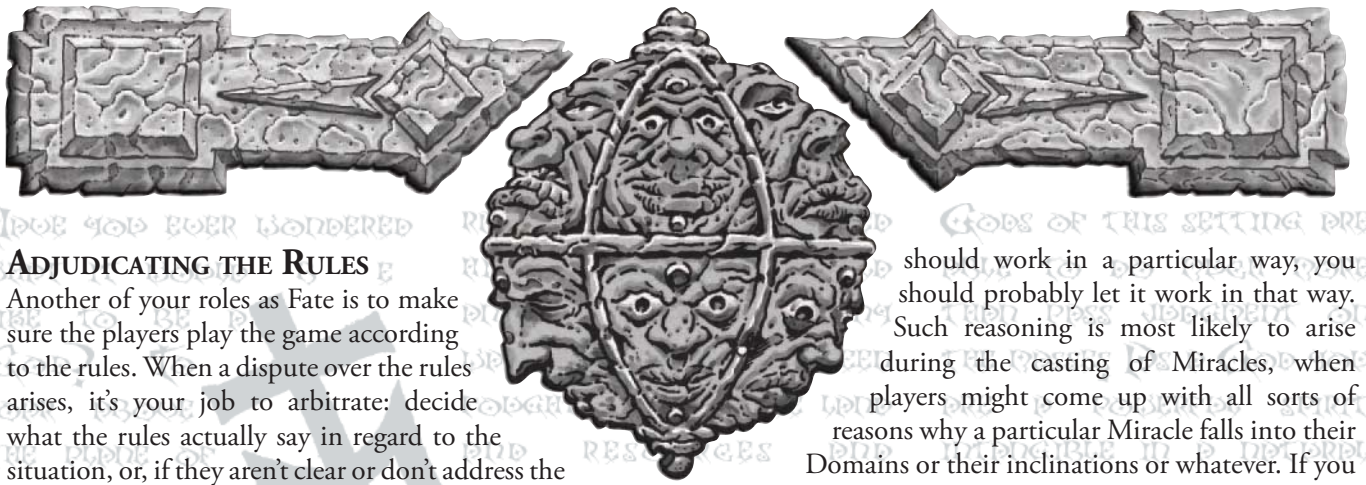
defeat some particular source of evil. Likely candidates include particularly vicious elder gods (the salamanders' dragon gods are notoriously warlike, and the Jurelian giants' gods are savage and violent), monsters (like those that come from Demon's Reef in Ar-Ianeth), violent sects (such as the followers of Plthunlos), and especially demons and Leviathans. The powerful and mysterious entity called Fate seeks to eliminate Leviathans and return demons to the Well of Souls, so the PCs would help it out if they take such tasks upon themselves. Though Fate's motives and thinking are inscrutable, it might indeed feel gratitude toward the PCs for assisting it with such a job—or even succeeding where it could not.

DISCOVER THE TRUTH

The Known World has many mysteries, and the PCs may set out to discover the greatest of these for themselves. They may wonder about Fate's true nature; they may be curious about the Creator that began the world and the universe; they may seek to discover if other worlds exist and, if so, what they are like and if they have their own gods. This book mentions numerous mysteries, but leaves the details for you and your players to discover. The true natures of Fate and the Creator, for example, do not appear in these pages, and you are free to invent whatever you like about them.

While the PCs work to uncover such secrets, they'll likely face many challenges along the way. Especially powerful entities (like Fate) guard some of these secrets and other, more obscure guardians might protect others. Yet the PCs may have help along the way: ancient prophecies and texts that supply them with hints; old weapons, relics, and forgotten gods that lend potent aid against the guardians; and diplomatic bargaining power ("we kill this Leviathan, you tell us what we want to know") all serve the PCs well. A campaign of this sort may require the PCs to send followers throughout the world, piecing together old texts to discover obscure bits of lore. While they do so, of course, the PCs face other dangers common to new gods.





ADJUDICATING THE RULES

Another of your roles as Fate is to make sure the players play the game according to the rules. When a dispute over the rules arises, it's your job to arbitrate: decide what the rules actually say in regard to the situation, or, if they aren't clear or don't address the situation, it's your job to come up with a judgment or alternative that makes sense and keeps the game moving. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, *New Gods of Mankind* leaves much open to GM interpretation. Expect to be called on at least once a session (at the very least) to resolve something that the rules don't clearly spell out. For example, if a PC's Domain is 'supremacy', what sorts of Miracles does it encompass? If a PC performs a particular dark and frightening Miracle, is it scary enough to generate Terror?

The following sections give you some advice on how to resolve these and similar situations.

THE BASICS

The following are some rules of thumb for resolving all disputes and rules questions the players might ask you.

COMMON SENSE

This is the most important "rule" of all. In general, when you're making a judgment about the rules, use common sense. In fact, common sense trumps the rules as they're written—the rules exist to provide you with a framework for casting Miracles and engaging in conflicts, not as a substitute for logic. For instance, one of the players has a question about his followers fleeing from a collapsing library: do they use Body or Mind? Body is the obvious choice, but if it makes more sense to use Mind—for example, if the followers' escape relies on how quickly they can navigate the library's underground labyrinth rather than simply how fast they can get out of the building—use Mind.

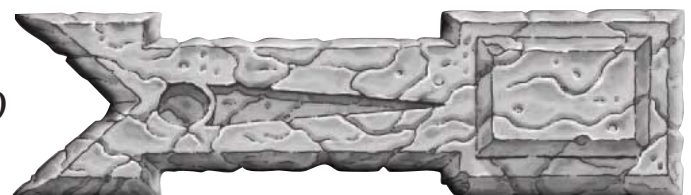
GOOD REASONS FROM THE PLAYERS

Be open to the players' arguments about the rules. If a player can give you a good reason why a particular rule

should work in a particular way, you should probably let it work in that way. Such reasoning is most likely to arise during the casting of Miracles, when players might come up with all sorts of reasons why a particular Miracle falls into their Domains or their inclinations or whatever. If you agree, then allow the Miracle to fall into that Domain or inclination—the new gods of mankind are already outnumbered and outgunned, and if they can cast the occasional Miracle at a lesser cost for some creative reason, no one's going to complain.

FUN

Remember, your primary role is to ensure that everyone around the table (including you) has fun. Therefore, you might want to give the players some leeway. Even if





a player's arguments about why the animal-killing spell is in his love Domain don't convince you, you might want to let it go anyway—or offer a suggestion for a Miracle that would fall into the love Domain—because that would just be more fun.

Similarly, you should probably be nice to your players. Don't make rulings against them just because you want to irritate them. Since you control the bad guys, sometimes it's easy to feel that the game is competitive: you against the players. That is not the case, so don't use your immense power as Fate as a weapon against the players. Generally, allow them to do what they want to do.

One aspect of trying to make the game fun that arises in most roleplaying games is whether or not Fate should

fudge die rolls in the players' favor. Since you're probably rolling dice where the players can't see them, it's easy to say "nope, the barbarians don't resist your Miracle" or "oh no, my highest was a 2!" even if the dice show otherwise. Many GMs say that fudging die rolls is acceptable when otherwise the PCs would die or suffer some other horrible calamity from something not brought about by stupid actions. Others say that you shouldn't fudge die rolls at all—the game includes that element of random chance for a reason, and you should let the dice land where they may.

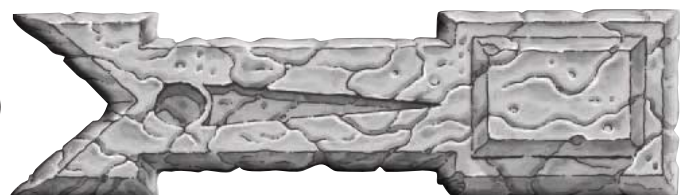
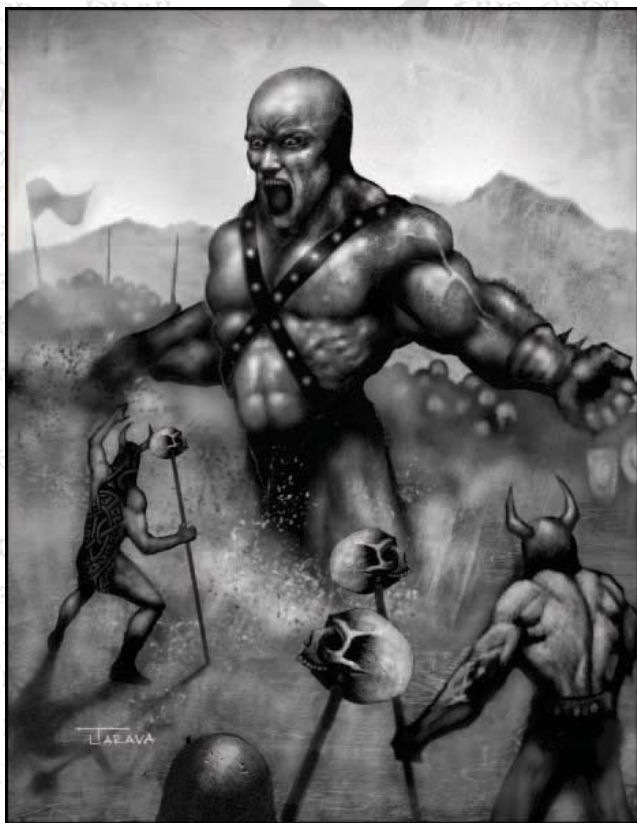
The decision as to whether or not to fudge die rolls is for you to decide. Your players might also have some ideas about how they want you to handle it—some players don't want you to ever cut them a break while others might appreciate the occasional fudge just to keep the game fun.

MAKE IT A CONFLICT

Any Miracle that affects living creatures in any way besides a flat-out bonus (i.e., anything that isn't clearly and only positive) creates a conflict. When in doubt, it's a conflict. For example, if a PC wants to create an image of his face on the side of a barbarian tribe's yurt, hoping to convert them to his worship, the result is a conflict: the barbarians resist the attempt with their Spirit. If they succeed, they dismiss the face as natural or unimportant; if they fail, they pay it heed. You might then rule that simply seeing your face on the yurt isn't enough to make them abandon their ways and join the ranks of your followers, but it might make them more susceptible to similar tactics. You might give them penalties on their Spirit rolls when it comes to resisting later conversion attempts. In this example, you made the Miracle a conflict, and common sense prevailed—you did your job as Fate.

EQUITY

Be fair to all the players. If a dispute arises between players, you might not be able to rely on the "be nice to the players" suggestion, because you can't be nice to both of them. Instead, you need to do your best to resolve the situation based on the rules, common sense, and your experience as a GM.





Such a situation is most likely to arise in a game that pits players against each other from the start—while *New Gods of Mankind* is a cooperative game by default, you can also play it competitively (see “Player Versus Players Games,” below, for more information). In such a game, your role is much more like a referee than in most games, so be sure to be impartial.

YOU’RE THE BOSS

You have ultimate power over the game. You can even change, delete, and add rules as you like (though hopefully not actually during play). It’s your game, so do what you want with it. This also means that once you make a ruling, even though the players can try to get you to come around, what you say goes. Most players familiar with roleplaying games understand this dynamic already, but in some cases you might find it important to remind them that you’re Fate and therefore have the final say. Fate can’t cheat—he’s Fate!

MATH

Sometimes the rules involve math. You might need to double something, for example, but what happens if you then need to double it again? What happens if you need to round a number? The following rules apply to such calculations.

Doubling: In most cases, when you would multiply a number (for example, to double it) and then apply another multiplier (like doubling it again or tripling it), each additional multiplier’s factor drops by 1. Therefore, two doublings equal a tripling. For example, if a god normally gets 20 Belief, but he has two effects that each double that number, he gains 60 Belief. You might think of this as adding percentages together before applying them to the base number; a doubling is +100%, so two of them together equal +200%: a tripling.

Rounding: When you end up with a fraction, you need to round. In general, use the normal mathematic rules for rounding: round down if the decimal number is 4 or

lower; round up if the number is 5 or higher. Thus, 4.5 rounds up to 5, while 4.4 rounds down to 4.

USE THE BOARD GAME RULES?

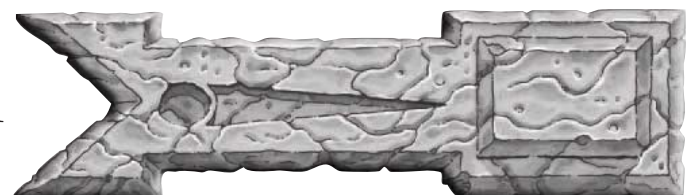
New God’s Handbook Chapter 6 includes rules for playing *New Gods of Mankind* as a combination roleplaying game/tactical board game. When you plan to start a new campaign, you probably wonder whether or not you should use these rules. Note that they make the game significantly more complex, but many players enjoy tactical combat and the board game rules allow them to experience that in the context of a roleplaying game.

Fortunately, you can’t really mess up this one. If you begin the campaign with the board game rules, and find that everyone hates them or has a difficult time with them, you can always kick them out and play the campaign as a straight roleplaying game. Conversely, you might begin the campaign as a straight roleplaying game and introduce the board game rules sometime in the middle. You might do so just because you or your players want to try them out, or because something in the campaign makes them suddenly necessary: a salamander army amasses close by, for instance, or a rival village sends troops to march on the PCs’ territory. You might then ditch the board game rules when they no longer seem necessary, or, if everyone’s having a good time with them, continue playing with them for the rest of the campaign.

You might consider the following when deciding whether or not to use the board game rules.

Ask the Players. Before the campaign begins, you should probably ask your players if they’d like to try out the board game rules. Be prepared, though, for answers like, “I don’t care.” What a player really means is, “I don’t care, as long as I have fun.” So you might want to consider some other points.

It’s Different! Odds are, you and your players have played roleplaying games before. You’ve probably also played





tactical board games, or maybe strategy games on the computer. Yet you probably haven't played a game that combines the two genres. Some players might find such a game to be fresh and stimulating. On the other hand, some players may prefer their game genres not to cross like that, or might simply dislike strategy games.

PvP. If your game pits players against each other (it's a "PvP" game), the board game rules are probably the way to go. They help ensure fairness to conflicts and provide concrete resources and territories that the players can affect. The players are probably more familiar with competition in board games rather than roleplaying games.

Armies and Territory. If armies are at work, the board game works best. They can maneuver around the board, attempting to second-guess each other. If you want your campaign to include such strategy—you envision gnome armies maneuvering near the PCs' territory, and imagine the PCs will want to raise armies of their own to combat them—the board game rules work well. They also work well in campaigns in which you and/or your players want to focus on territory: gaining it, improving it, conquering it, and the like. If your players primarily want to sit at home and tackle the adventures you throw at them—and don't mind representing territory and followers abstractly—the board game rules might not be necessary.

PLAYER VERSUS PLAYER GAMES

By default, New Gods of Mankind is a fairly traditional roleplaying game: The players and player characters work together—in this case, as a pantheon of gods—to complete shared goals. They may have differing ideologies and clashes of personality, but in the end, they're a team.

Another way to play this game is to pit players against each other from the beginning: you can run a player-versus-player (PvP) game. The Known World has plenty of gods, after all, and one of the best ways for them to gain more followers and territory is to conquer their neighbors. PvP games are mighty and brutal: Mortals butcher each other,

shining heroes inspire their troops, and god fights god in tremendous, ground-shaking conflict.

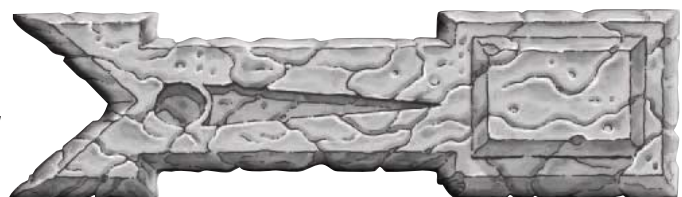
If you and your players want to play a PvP game, you probably want to use the board game rules in Chapter 6 in the New God's Handbook. Also, since the players face off against each other, you may want to give the roleplaying aspects—going on adventures and such—a backseat. Since the PCs aren't cooperating, they are unlikely to both undertake the same adventure.

The basics of such a game are simple: One player takes a turn, moving his troops and commanding his followers to build structures and so forth, then the other player takes a turn. After each player has taken a turn, that's the end of a season. New Gods as a Strategic Board Game includes everything you need to know about training armies, building defenses, acquiring territory, and the like. Note that a PvP game can easily incorporate more than two players, all competing against each other—or perhaps in teams of rival pantheons.

One question comes about regarding initiative: Which player goes first? You might have the players roll dice to see who will have the initiative in this season. Whoever scores the highest may chose which order he will play. If the highest roller chooses not go first, the second highest dice roll will start the season. You might also allow PCs to cast Miracles to influence their initiative rolls. Alternatively, you might have each player write down what he wants to do in the upcoming season, and then both sides take their turns at the same time.

INCLUDING ROLEPLAYING ELEMENTS

If you and your players still want some element of roleplaying, you might give them each small, individual adventures that they undertake on their own. These adventures work best if they are short (a player can complete one in just an hour or two) and provide tangible benefits or penalties to his strategic board game situation. Since you probably don't want one of your players to go





in the other room to play video games for a couple hours while you run an adventure for the other player, the best way to handle these adventures is to meet with your players each individually on different days, leading up to the day when they clash on the battlefield.

FATE'S ROLE

A PvP game likely plays out similar to standard strategic board games, except the PCs can throw Miracles around to influence the game. The players must manage their resources—primarily their followers—but the game's winner is likely to be the player who uses Miracles with the most creativity and intelligence. Thus, your role is mostly one of referee: ensuring that the players follow the rules

and arbitrating questions about Miracles and the like. You are likely more involved in the game than a referee in a sports contest, but not as involved as a GM in a traditional roleplaying game.

TIME

PvP games are generally over fairly quickly—within a single play session or two—just like other strategic board games. Only rarely does a PvP game turn into a full-fledged campaign, but if that's what your players want, you can certainly give it to them. Such a game might work best if the PCs aren't necessarily enemies at the beginning, but neither are they allies. As the campaign progresses, they may be forced to become either, and perhaps change from allies to enemies as time goes on.



CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORY OF THE KNOWN WORLD



*Covering the naked world was the oceans
Rising and falling with the swaying of the wind
For Air came
Telling Lies
After these small words life was born
Living and dying as all life does
Breathing Air
Touching Earth
Made of Water
Full of Fire*

New gods have a lot more to deal with than just their tribes' survival. The Known World has a lengthy history, and sometimes the past rears its ugly head to affect the present. Humanity is a relatively new factor in a world of elemental creatures, but humans and their gods have already played a significant part in protecting themselves and the elder tribes.

Before humankind arose, the Elder Gods helped shape and reshape the world—something most new gods don't learn except in bits and pieces from their tribes or encounters with the Elder Gods. You (the GM) might use this history for adventure hooks, plot advancement as your campaigns progress, and to provide you with a better understanding of the Elder Gods' motivations and psychology.

THE HISTORY OF THE KNOWN WORLD

As compiled by Shadora, Elder of Lore and Gatherer of History for the Crater of Lugos

My name is Shadora, and I have worked in the service of Lugos for well over a century. This compilation you hold in your hands is my life's work, and I am ready to join my god. I present this without bias to any race, no gentling of the words to spare any feelings. I start with the words of our gods themselves.

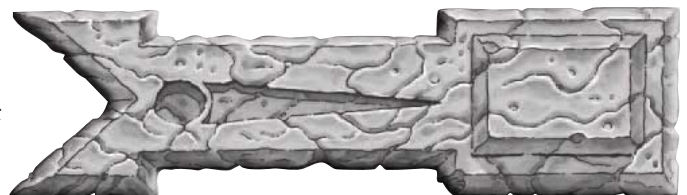
*In the Beginning there was Fire
A conflagration of creational energies
Spinning in Void
Spawning Earth
The earth formed our first world
Seething with subdued blazes
And it rained
Forming Water*

Most scholars believe that the Known World was once a place of raw elemental energy. Fire, Water, Air, and Earth were in harmony, constantly clashing yet melding. From these elements we, the elder tribes, came into being and lived as primitive souls on the unbroken world. We were many, so many—millions and millions of pathless immortal creatures in a world of our own making. We played for millennia, and while we wandered, the world took our energy and evolved, covering itself with life.

According to legend, the Creator rearranged the universe—the salamanders and sylphs both believe with the Creator accomplished this task with Its fiery breath. We were given mortality and became civilized. Our energies at that time were powerful and long-lived; thousands of years would fall away before our First Ancestors would pass on; to where, we do not know. During that time each elder race chose a newly evolving species to help lead to sentience. The salamanders chose the giants, the gnomes selected the nymphs, the sylphs took the sprites, and the undines watched over the selkie. Eventually, these creatures grew independent of us, and we saw them as comrades rather than servants.

THE INVADERS

Thousands of seasons ago, the elder races prospered, filling the lands with cities. Then the Invaders came. They came from beyond the stars in large metal airboats and landed among the islands of Celdynn. At first these Invaders were quiet and curious, as were our First Ancestors. They met with the Invaders and attempted to communicate with them. They were similar to the native races in that they





were bipedal, with faces and hands much like ours. But they were manipulators, these Invaders, and they betrayed the kindness of the elder races.

The Invaders were powerful; far more powerful than the elder tribes. Their ships were unlike anything the First Ancestors had ever seen. With these ships the Invaders had the capacity to travel throughout all the reaches of the Known World, from the deepest depths of the oceans to the fiery infernos of the volcanoes. It was as if they mastered all the elements and knew no bounds.

Season after season, the Invaders took more and gave back little. The First Ancestors found themselves trapped by the Invaders' machinations. Realizing the danger, they mounted an attack. The Invaders retaliated and destroyed the elder races' cities. They enslaved the entire Known World, harnessing the elements and taking the elder races as their slaves. We neared extinction. In desperation we all called out, and Fate intervened.

The gods came to us, for us, at this time of great need, as brothers and sisters working together, bringing us hope. We won small battles, and slowly the Known World freed itself from the chains of slavery. With each passing moment we became stronger—but were still unable to rid ourselves of the Invaders.

Finally, great Lugos gathered his fellow gods and traveled to the Invaders' largest city on what is now called Kukulcan. He tells us in his own words how he created dissension and chaos, destroying the Invaders while entrancing their gods. With the Invaders sufficiently distracted, he pulled together all the gods and all the tribes and attacked.

In the end, we, as one great tribe united under a common goal, went forth to destroy the Invaders. We fought over several seasons, until at last the armies were at a standstill. Our ancestors' numbers thinned considerably until we were but a handful compared to the myriad of beings that had existed before the war.

Then the gods forged Gnorrr's mighty hammer, World-Splitter, and destroyed the Invaders once and for all. The hammer's blow disrupted the world as we know it, but again Fate came and the world was whole again—although different than before. The elder races had lost much of their knowledge and started over with the simplest of villages. The Elder Gods helped where they could and became essential to our lives. This is the Known World as we know it today.

THE WAR OF THE ELEMENTS

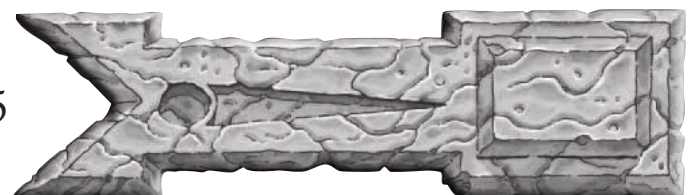
The first Elder Gods were many: Lugos of the sylphs, Gnorrr of the gnomes, Celundynn and Plthunlos of the undines, Thuun of the giants, and the nine dragon gods of the salamanders.

THE WINDS OF WAR

Once the Known World was reformed and civilization reestablished, the Elder Gods found themselves idle. The dragon gods outnumbered the other gods, and the salamander tribes benefited from this disparity in disputes of territories, the arts and sciences, and in battle. The dragon gods were a majority in the heavens and constantly influenced events to suit their desires. Tempers flared.

The other gods found ways to influence their tribes and raise other spirits to become gods. Celundynn and Plthunlos were the first to find a solution, "siring" Grun of the Ice and Snow. Gnorrr brought forth Methussa and Bruin to stand at his side, and later fathered Rethan and Fors from Methussa's mortal incarnation. Lugos, working with the sprites and sylphs, brought forth three wind gods—Nephton, Nihir, and the Unnamed One, and later took the Unnamed One as a lover.

The dragon gods were so many that they often spent their time bickering among each other in their celestial domain, but when they returned to the Celestial Gardens, they found that the other Elder Gods outnumbered them; no longer would the votes be constantly in their favor. Enraged at their brethren and despising the younger deities, the





dragon gods secretly prepared for war. Not all was well with the other Elder Gods, either. Grun, elevated to godhood by Plthunlos and Celundynn to be their God of Ice and Snow, regularly visited Thuun, God of the Giants, in his frozen domain. Grun was drawn to Thuun, first as a friend and then as a lover, and eventually Grun moved into Thuun's celestial home, estranging himself from the undine god and goddess. Thuun was smitten with Grun, given over to the newer god's whims. Thuun gave Grun total leadership over the giants, preferring to sit in the background and watch in contentment as his mate ruled in his stead. Grun was all too happy in his new place, but deferred to Thuun often, and together they brought forth even more gods from the frozen wilderness. These actions started the rift between Plthunlos and Celundynn, as each felt the other responsible for Grun's loss.

Meanwhile, the gnome gods could not control the wood nymphs. Much to their chagrin, the wood nymphs refused to worship anyone but themselves, raising their own kind to godhood. The wood nymphs separated themselves from the gnomes and other gods, gathering in the forests while the wood gods laid claim to many regions in the Celestial Spheres. The nymphs were the first to draw blood from the other races, denying everyone else entry into their forests. The wood gods were callous and rude to the other gods, refusing to give way on any matters they felt took anything away from their nymph tribes.

Lugos was also unhappy. The Unnamed One, whom Lugos had taken as a lover, no longer wanted to be with him. She was a cold wind god and frequently worked with Grun during the Known World's winter months. She fell in love with Grun, and when Grun did not return her love, she became grief-stricken. The other two wind gods felt their sister's pain and distanced themselves from Lugos, God of Thought and Air. The twisted love triangle between the gods spiraled out of control when Lugos decided to rid himself of both his lover and Grun. The dragon gods joined him and together they confronted Grun in the Celestial

Sphere of Winter. Grun cried out to his lover, and Thuun retaliated. The War of the Elements spilled out of the heavens and onto the Known World.

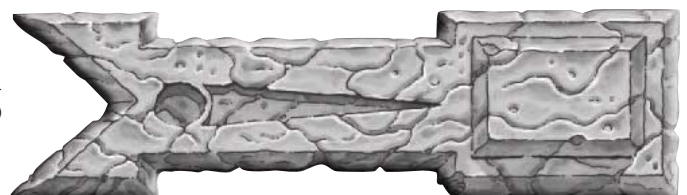
THE WAR

Season after season their fight raged, drawing in mortals as well. Giants came out of the frozen lands and attacked sylph cities. The wind gods convinced their sister to hide with Grun in Thuun's domain until the fighting was over. The disgruntled gods manifested themselves in the mortal realm to decide the victors. They became fierce mortal monsters, laying waste to the world. The mortals battled each other just as ferociously.

Only a few would not take sides. The gnome gods refused to battle. While Gnorr and his god-kin sympathized with Lugos, they refused to assist him. Celundynn also did not want to go to war, for although she was angry with Thuun for taking her "son" away, she also had contempt for the Unnamed One's foolishness. Her husband, Plthunlos, on the other hand, defended Grun against Lugos and the dragon gods—in particular the Dragon God Draax, whom Plthunlos defeated in a vicious sea duel.

While the dragon gods and Plthunlos recovered from their fights, Lugos entered Everwinter to attack Grun directly. Grun knew the Elder God was angry, but did not understand the true reason why, dedicated as he was to Thuun. Lugos found his Unnamable Lover hiding within Thuun's castle and dragged her to Grun and Thuun, throwing the Unnamed One at Grun's feet in a fit of rage. The wind goddess confessed her great love before all, leaving Grun and Thuun in shock. She reached for Grun while he stood dumbfounded, and Lugos's temper snapped. He moved to strike Grun, but Thuun stepped forward and blocked the blow.

In his anger, Lugos had terrifying power, but the god of the giants was more than a match for him. The battle spanned the heavens, and their rage sparked winds and storms that pounded the Known World. As devastation threatened





their people, several gods came as one to Gnorr, begging him to use his World-Splitter to end the conflict. Gnorr refused.

Unwilling to abide by Gnorr's decision, the dragon gods convinced the gods of wood, wind, and snow to steal World-Splitter while the Dragon-Kin distracted Gnorr. The young gods lifted the weapon from its hiding place on the Known World and together attacked Lugos while his back was turned. The blow split the heavens and sent Lugos crashing into the Known World, creating the crater on the plains of Jasinu. The blow killed thousands of mortals of all races. Everything, both above and below, paused in shock.

With his opponent defeated, Thuun, with some remorse, returned to his domain—and found Grun locked in a passionate embrace with the Unnamable Lover. His howl of anguish echoed throughout the heavens and in the mortal world as well. Grabbing both betrayers, Thuun prepared to hurl them both down onto the broken body of Lugos.

FATE INTERVENES

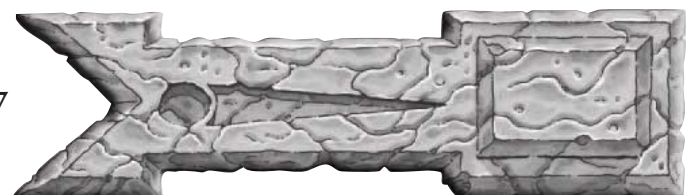
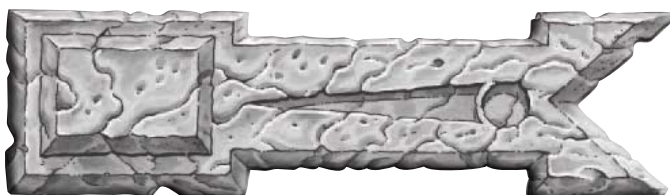
Before Thuun could act, a winged woman appeared. This was Fate. She stepped in front of Thuun and demanded the god to cease. Unable to move, Thuun looked on helplessly as Fate explained why this war had to end. The world below was crying out for mercy. No one was unaffected by the destruction. One mighty blow to the ruined world, and it would shatter. It is over, Fate decreed. Fate forced Thuun to release Grun and the Unnamed One to her for judgment and left Thuun to brood in his domain. Fate then gathered Lugos's broken energies and returned him to his rightful place among the spheres.

Then Fate set judgment on the gods. It exiled Grun and the Unnameable Lover to the Abyss. All of the younger wind and ice gods chose to go with them; only Nephon stayed with Lugos as an underling in the sylph god's service. Fate punished the wood gods for stealing World-Splitter, and returned them to spirit form to live again as mortals among the nymphs, where they eventually claimed the wood nymphs as their own clan.

THE AFTERMATH

Thuun, bitter over his lover's betrayal, grew sullen and withdrew from the other gods. His giant tribes took to calling him Lord of Destruction, and to this day Thuun reminds himself of Grun's treachery at the sacrifices of Grun's Circle of Stones.

Plthunlos and Celundynn settled their differences, albeit temporarily, and set about making repairs, as did Gnorr and his kin. The dragon gods avoided punishment for their actions in the War of the Elements, but lost the other gods' respect. Instead of retaliating directly, the dragon gods worked over the years to convince their salamander followers that they are more powerful than the other races. Dragon god Kanos and her siblings pushed their people to





become highly competitive, especially in battle, thereby preparing the salamander tribes for future conquest.

Lugos was subdued by his near-destruction. The great god of wind desired to make amends toward his followers. He returned to the crater and made it a holy place. After time Lugos regained his mischievous personality, but the god never again allowed his followers to worship any other sylph gods. Nephon was content to remain a small influence in the Known World, and eventually Lugos and Nephon became friends.

The War of the Elements left many long-lasting effects on the Known World. The air sprites were weakened from their battles and no longer thrived. Over the course of the next several hundred years, pure-blood sprites became extinct and only those who crossbred with sylphs were able to keep their lineage alive. The selkie comrades of the undines found that changes in the waters inhibited their reproduction; only through the combined efforts of Celundynn and Plthunlos did several hundred selkie survive. The wood nymphs, however, thrived and assimilated the rest of the nymph population.

A GOLDEN TIME

For several hundred years, there was peace. The gods helped their peoples develop new cities and for a time stayed very to their followers, repentant for nearly destroying the world. The gods believed there would never be another war.

Unknown to the elder races, though, more changes were coming. The War of the Elements did more damage than the gods realized. Spirits from the Well of Souls found ways into the Known World through tiny tears in the fabric of space and time. These were the first demons. The war had altered the face of the Known World, allowing for an increase in mutations and new species. The peace could not last.

THE COMING OF HUMANKIND

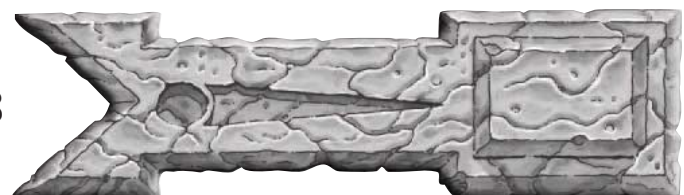
Distrust brewed among the gods. The salamanders prepared for conquest under their dragon gods' direction. The gnome gods passed edicts to their followers. Gnorrr, under Methussa's advisement, granted the gnomes with the gifts of forging and weapon-making. Lugos, who did not want the sylphs to fight, convinced his people to avail themselves of all races, using charm, eloquence, and subterfuge. This tactic ensured that they not only avoided direct attacks on their cities, but also allowed the sylphs to influence the other races and record their words and actions.

The undine god and goddess felt a distinct disadvantage. The undines were restricted to the water, unable to compete directly with the other races. Other races could attack the undines, but the aquatic mortals could not give chase. Plthunlos and Celundynn argued over the best course of action. Exasperated, Celundynn finally gave the power of metamorphosis to their followers, allowing them to transform their tails into legs to walk upon the land. Plthunlos hated this action, believing the change weakened the undines and made them more susceptible to other gods' influences.

Plthunlos's strategy for dominating the Known World was more sinister. He returned to the island of Kukulcan where the Invaders once lived. After finding their ancient remains, he took the doomed selkies and altered their bodies with the Invaders' bones and flesh. He created new beings with the intelligence of the selkies, but capable of walking on dry land like the Invaders. Filled with an ingrained need to conquer, yet an instinctive respect for the sea, these new beings burst from the waters throughout the Known World.

This new race was called humanity.

Celundynn was horrified, but Plthunlos assured her the creatures were under his control. For the first few hundred years of humankind's existence, humans, at Plthunlos's behest, spied on and created chaos for the land-bound races while Celundynn fumed.





THE UNDINE DIVIDING WARS

After Plthunlos created humans, Plthunlos and Celundynn could no longer work as partners of the seas. They lived separately, not speaking to one another for several seasons at a time. Yet Plthunlos wanted to create a new god, one for the humans, ensuring their loyalty to the sea. He came to Celundynn and asked her forgiveness. He convinced Celundynn they should both manifest on the Known World as undines so they could procreate. She prepared herself for the coming pregnancy, but her people's needs kept her away. Frustrated, Plthunlos decided to pull the undine tribes together and head to deeper waters, separating them from the rest of the world and ensuring that their people would no longer need her attention.

Celundynn was distracted by disturbing reports of demons shooting out from a reef in Ar-Ianeth. Twisted and maddened, these new beasts created havoc for the undines. This situation required her complete attention. The goddess told her husband that all the seas were their responsibility, and she needed to keep near her undine priests to battle the threat. From his underwater abode near the city at Fanos, Plthunlos grew angry as Celundynn left for long periods of time.

THE WAR

Plthunlos gave up on procreation and followed Celundynn back to the demonic reef. The god planned to kill her undine incarnation, sending her temporarily back to their domain in the Spheres. Then he would force her followers on the ocean's surface into the depths, abandoning Demon Reef. When Celundynn saw her husband and the intent in his eyes, which was the breaking point. She attacked, and Plthunlos was so surprised at this that she landed a fatal blow, killing her husband's incarnation.

When he reappeared in the Celestial Realms, Plthunlos was beyond rage. He incarnated again, this time as a great shark, and gathered his loyal servants on Fanos to force the goddess and her followers into the deep. Undine fought against undine, brother against brother, wife against

husband. At last, Celundynn walked ashore at Ar-Celdynn and Plthunlos was unwilling to follow. She helped her undine warriors strengthen their cities' fortifications. While on dry land she created several sets of enchanted claws for her champions and took Fanos, her husband's only surface city, by force. The magic claws became known as Lothnecels—"Hands of the Goddess."

FATE INTERVENES

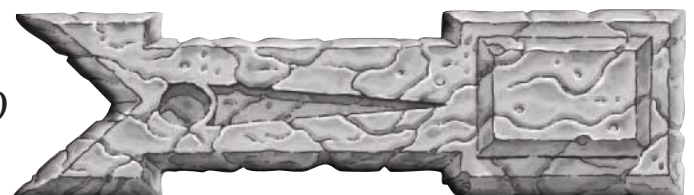
As a great shark in the depths, Plthunlos terrorized his wife's followers. The undines' faith in Plthunlos was shaken, but their faith in Celundynn was strengthened. The ancient scrolls say that Plthunlos became a great Leviathan of his own making, bent on destroying his own people. Finally, Fate subdued him and gave him an ultimatum: stop or be removed from the Celestial Realm.

This situation was unexpected for the Elder Gods. They could have their godhood taken away? Could Fate really do that?

None of the Elder Gods, including Plthunlos, wanted to test it. Both Plthunlos and Celundynn returned to the Celestial Realms. The sea was now divided between them—Plthunlos had the deep, and Celundynn had the surface waters and seashores. The undines continued their battle, but only half-heartedly. Many worshippers of Plthunlos turned to Celundynn, fearing the wrathful sea god. Celundynn forbade the worship of Plthunlos anywhere near the surface cities, and most of the undines were happy to acquiesce. Plthunlos was left with only a handful of dedicated worshippers who left for the deep and started their own colonies in caves and underwater grottos.

THE AFTERMATH

The Dividing Wars lasted for only a few years, but the results would be felt for many seasons. With their followers divided, both sea gods were significantly weaker than before. Celundynn still focused on Demon's Reef, but avoided the other gods in the Celestial Gardens. Plthunlos wanted nothing to do with surface creatures and gave up





his control of humans, expecting them to die without his influence.

The Undine Dividing Wars taught the gods that their existence is tied to the worship of their followers. Some, like Lugos and Thuun, were the primary gods of their tribes and remained powerful. Others saw their own weaknesses. Nephon, Lugos's servant, wandered the Gardens sadly, recognizing the extent of his punishment. The sprites that once worshipped the wind were gone, and few sylphs called out his name. Lugos tried to help the weakening god by reminding his people of Nephon's existence, but the wind god remained withdrawn.

THE BATTLE OF DRAGONS

The dragon gods were angry at the other gods. They believed that all the long-term damage to the Known World was the fault of the other Elder Gods. Each felt that they needed to rise to superiority—that the Known World would benefit from such an occurrence. After all, unlike some gods, they were not plagued by silly sentimentalism or bitterness.

They did not, however, work well as a unit. Star-Scaled Kanos believed that under her laws the Known World would no longer suffer from chaos and mayhem. Tukonos, Dragon of Searing Thought, felt they needed to return to a time when the dragon gods made the majority of decisions for the good of all mortals. The Dragon of the Forge, Moorhanos, claimed that the gnomes stole their smelting knowledge from her; she wanted the gnomes punished.

THE DRAGON GODS UNITED

It was Draax, dragon god of the Boiling Sea, who saw the weakening of Celundynn and Plthunlos as an opportunity for pushing the dragon gods' campaign. Draax watched the bitter fight between the sea gods and called to her brethren. By controlling the seas as well as the dry lands, Draax said, the dragon gods could become the most powerful deities in the Celestial Realms. Draax's celestial kindred agreed that wiping out the undines was the best way to gain power.

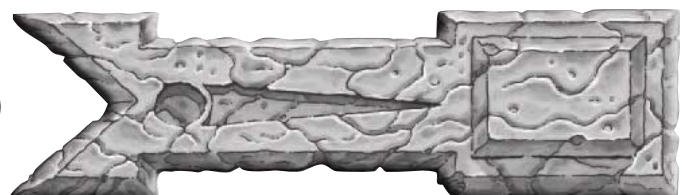
Celundynn heard the cries from her followers in the city of Jaash and came immediately to their aid. The salamanders used ships to attack Jaash from Ar-Feslynn's opposite side. The undines defended their city easily, and when Celundynn arrived at the Celestial Gardens to protest the attack, the dragon gods were arguing among themselves. This strife led Celundynn to believe that the attack was weak and did not have the support of all the dragon gods—but this assumption was part of the dragon gods' plan. In the Gardens the dragon gods "convinced" Draax to incarnate to boost her followers' morale. The salamanders fought harder, and Celundynn followed suit, incarnating on the Known World to counter her foe. As soon as the sea goddess appeared, a second salamander unit attacked the city from the north while the dragon gods created deadly firestorms to slam into the city from the sea. This mighty assault destroyed Jaash while Celundynn stood in the temple and watched. The sea goddess gathered what followers that she could and fled to Celune in tears.

THE GNOMES GODS INTERVENE

Unable to ask her husband for assistance, Celundynn returned to the Gardens to ask Gnorr and the other gnome-kin for aid. Methussa and Bruin wanted to support the undines; Gnorr's son, Fors, wanted nothing to do with them. Rethan felt that if the dragon gods were victorious, they would gain too much power and strike the gnomes next. Gnorr listened to his wife and children and decided to aid Celundynn. He granted her strength and outfitted her people with gnome-made weapons. Unbeknownst to Celundynn, these weapons would lead to future pain and suffering for her people, but at the time they helped her keep the salamanders from destroying her other surface cities.

A DUEL OF DEITIES

At the same time that Celundynn's undine faced the dragon gods' wrath, Plthunlos's followers suffered attacks in Ar-Naluun, near the place where Plthunlos had defeated Draax in the War of the Elements. Plthunlos challenged Draax to a rematch—if Plthunlos won, the dragon god





would exile herself from the Known World's seas. If Draax won, Plthunlos would leave. Draax agreed and they clashed again in the seas of Ar-Naluun. Mindful of Fate's warnings, both gods moved their followers away from the sea and the other dragon gods begrudgingly agreed to protect the lands for all.

Tribes on both coasts watched the spectacle as the two deities fought—a great shark against a fiery dragon. In the end, the two gods found themselves at a stalemate, neither able to do make headway against the other. They decided that they would share the seas—Draax above and Plthunlos below—if they could force Celundynn to leave the waters altogether. They left behind much devastation and what would eventually be known as the Rift of Draax and the Teeth of Plthunlos.

Draax and Plthunlos returned to the Celestial Realms, intent on destroying Celundynn and her followers. With the gnome gods' assistance, though, the sea goddess and her undines were not as easy to eradicate as they first thought. She triumphed in battle after battle.

THE DRAGON GODS DIVIDED

At this point, the dragon gods' unity collapsed. Moorhanos wanted to attack the gnomes for interfering, and she convinced Thaminx to join her, pulling several salamander tribes away from their other battles to attack Rhok-Darva. Tukanos discovered that the sylph tribes were recording their own version of the battles, and she wanted to punish them. Xtheni and Maathenos fell into fighting each other.

Amid this chaos, Celundynn retook the city of Jaash and pushed back the remnants of the salamander invaders, thereby regaining much of her strength. Plthunlos realized he could not defeat his wife by himself and re-gathered his tribes to move back into the deep, Celundynn and her followers chasing them. The gnomes and sylphs easily repelled the disorganized salamander attacks, and the salamander tribes turned against each other. Suddenly, the dragon gods realized they were fighting only themselves.

THE WAR ENDS

Once the dragon gods realized the futility of their war, the Battle of Dragons ended. Meeting again as a pantheon, the dragon gods settled their differences and made new laws for their people. These new laws created the salamander noble houses, allowing the dragon gods to decide who would organize their wars in the future. Also at this time, Thaminx and Xethalchoate formalized their marriage, leading to speculation that more dragon gods would come soon. Such progeny, however, have yet to appear.

THE WAR OF SEA AND EARTH

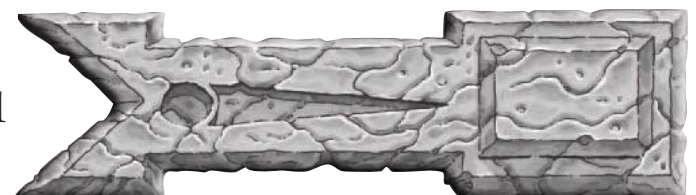
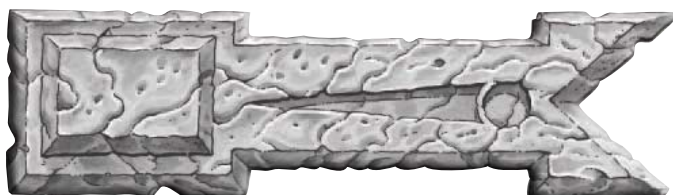
Before the dragon gods settled their differences, a second battle was already underway. Once Celundynn recaptured Jaash, she was stronger, but weakened considerably over the next several seasons. The undines knew their mighty weapons were gifts from the gnome gods. They also knew that without them, their people would have perished. Their relief in repelling the dragon gods turned to admiration for Gnorr and his family. Celundynn found herself in peril as several undine tribes took to worshipping Gnorr and his kin. The sea goddess moved quickly to secure her followers—and thus her power.

THE DESTRUCTION OF ARADOR

She chose the gnome city of Arador as her example. The Battle of Sea and Earth was not so much a war as a rout. Having incarnated to retake the city of Jaash, Celundynn commanded absolute loyalty among the Jaash undines. She gathered her powers and gave the order for the undines to attack Arador, a budding city of trade and commerce. The undine warriors destroyed the shoreline city from beneath, causing it to fall in on itself. Many gnomes died that day and, already repentant, Celundynn moved her undines away from the shores to allow the surviving gnomes to swim for shore unmolested.

NEGOTIATION

When a remorseful Celundynn returned to Jaash to plan her next move, she was startled to find Methussa, Gnome God of Diamonds, incarnated and waiting for her. Celundynn expected a battle, but the wife of Gnorr insisted she was





there to negotiate, having slipped away from her husband. Methussa was sympathetic to Celundynn's troubles despite the recent attack on her own people; she did not want to see Celundynn perish after all that had happened. The two goddesses sequestered themselves in a tower and talked for days while Methussa's brother, Bruin, helped rescue the surviving gnome tribesmen from the rubble of Arador.

After three days, the goddesses reached an agreement. Celundynn and Methussa convinced their tribes to open new trade and commerce. Celundynn collected the idolized gnome weaponry, promising her people would learn directly from the gnomes how to make weapons using gifts from the sea. In return, undines in the waters around Arador would no longer harass the gnomes, and the undines would provide the gnomes with minerals from the sea.

THE AFTERMATH

The War of Earth and Water was the shortest war between the tribes anyone had ever witnessed, and it was the last time the Elder Gods battled each other directly on the Known World. All was not calm, however; Methussa returned to the Celestial Realms to find her husband enraged. He had planned to take down the undine civilization and their goddess with it. Methussa eventually regained Gnorr's favor, but Lugos reported to his sylph priests that Gnorr's anger lasted for years.

No one knows what convinced the two goddesses to work together—most speculate that they were both wives and women and their conversations were on the softer things in life. Lugos, however, suspected that Fate asked Methussa to intervene. The mysterious being, perhaps, was concerned with upcoming events that would require all four elder races, and more, to work together if they were to survive.

THE FIRST GODS OF MANKIND

Over their centuries of war and trade, the Elder Gods saw many minor gods enter the Spheres, only to vanish again. A few stayed and carved out permanent residences. The wood nymphs' strong beliefs—that each of their

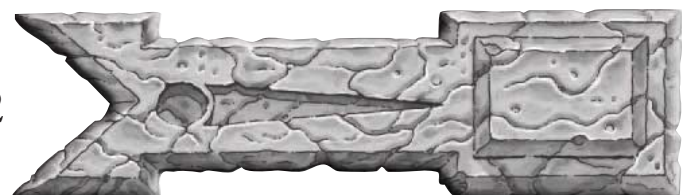
people was a god—caused Fate to set aside a portion of the Spheres for them. The gnome gods encouraged their people to revere family ancestors and heroes of their people, and these ancestors—such as Perrus, God of Flint, Gulfooss, God of Underground Streams, and Gern, God of Ash—eventually made their own homes in the Spheres. Each war brought forth heroes and individuals who stood out, and these too saw people worshipping them; some few became true gods, but most for only a few years. However, soon after the abortive War of Sea and Earth, a new type of god entered the Celestial Realms. These were the first gods of mankind.

The elder races did not like these new creatures; they reminded the older gods of the Invaders. The elder races believed these humans were nothing more than animals to be put under the plow or used as ritual meals, but they did note some differences between the humans and the Known World's other bestial creatures. The humans were prolific—far more prolific than the elder races. They were also adaptable and inventive, able to do well in even the harshest of environments. The Elder Gods were shocked when Fate allowed the first new gods to pass into the Spheres.

The Elder Gods looked upon these new beings with disdain, but they could not act upon them in the Celestial Realms since Fate had allowed them entry. Instead, the dragon gods and several others made sure these vile new creatures did not inhabit their heavens. The human followers who brought forth the new gods quickly met their ends; the first few human gods were extinguished.

But more human gods followed them, and still more after that, until new gods came not once every generation, but every year, and then every season. The humans were many—too many. Several Elder Gods believe that annihilating the species was the only answer, but Celundynn and Methussa, for two, bowed their heads and said nothing.

Then the Leviathans came.





THE WAR OF THE LEVIATHANS

The coming of the Leviathans was marked by a time of wary peace among the races. Celundynn and her ever-vigilant tribes managed Demon's Reef. The few demons that escaped were recaptured readily. Although scholars consider Plthunlos the first being to manifest on the Known World as a Leviathan (in the Undine Dividing Wars), Fate subdued him easily. None of the elder races considered the possibility that another Leviathan would ever appear.

After the War of Sea and Earth ended and the dragon gods settled their differences, trade bloomed between the races with new vigor. Members of all the races traveled throughout the Known World, searching for new lands to claim and new resources to further their civilizations. Rumors of ancient treasures spurred merchants and historians to wander the seas.

THE CURSED ISLAND OF KUKULCAN

It was at this time that a small salamander merchant fleet traveled south beyond Celdynn, to Kukulcan. The elder races knew that accursed island was where the Invaders met their end thousands of years ago and that their spirits haunted the island. These spirits were unlike those of Known World creatures. The Words of Lugos state that Lugos believed the Invaders were from a place so far away that their spirits could not return to their original habitat, and the Celestial Realms did not recognize them as belonging to the Well of Souls. So instead the spirits of the Invaders festered in the Known World, growing madder with each passing century.

Prior to the salamanders' endeavors on Kukulcan, curious explorers visited the cursed island numerous times. Many priests and priestesses hoped to experience the place where the First Ancestors defeated the terror from the stars and record their findings. Most who stepped foot on the island never returned and the island soon became known as Kukulcan, undine for "Dead-Not-Dead."

The salamander captain was a priest from the House of Draax, a divinely-powered hero with exorcism magic and scales hardened against spiritual attack. The captain (and possibly Draax) believed that an explorer armed against possession and resistant to spiritual attack could safely roam the island.

The salamanders docked just off shore and the captain went alone, hoping to map the island and possibly find new materials to make better ships and weaponry among the ash-covered ruins. He knew he was safe from possession by demon or spirit. Tales say he heard the whispers, but paid them no heed. He took an unknown quantity of metals from the island, planning to later determine their value, and cast exorcism spells on them just in case.

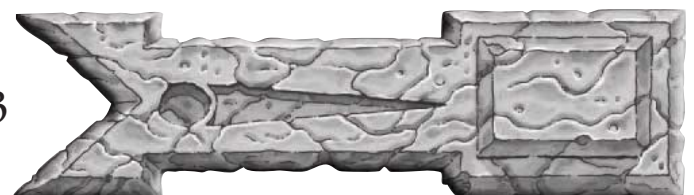
The priest-captain returned to the ship, secure in the knowledge that he had succeeded in his mission. He had heard the whispers, but was unharmed. Expecting to be hailed as a hero, he returned home.

BRINGING TERROR HOME

Yet the salamander captain had underestimated the power of the Invaders' spirits. Years of feeding off the terror of rare explorers had awakened a hunger in the evil spirits. Why bother destroying a mere mortal when they could destroy thousands? Unbeknownst to the captain, spirits infiltrated his ship while he roamed the island.

The ship now harbored hundreds of these spirits, which possessed the rats, fleas, cockroaches; even the barnacles on the ship's bottom. The ship sailed off with the priest-captain unaware, blissful in his success in mapping out the island's ruins, collecting salvage to study, and "defeating" the Invaders' spirits.

The ship docked in several ports on the continents of Raanon and Frinth before returning to Shha-Naaroht in the northern continent of Naalgrom. Every time the ship docked, some of the Invaders' spirits slid off the boat and found new homes. As Invaders they had ruthlessly enslaved





the elder races and ravaged the land. Now, as Leviathans, they destroyed everything in their paths.

CRASHING THE SPHERES

The Elder Gods tried to respond, but a new development surprised them. They captured three Leviathans—the first three—while they were still somewhat weak and brought them to the Celestial Realms.

The Elder Gods were curious about these new beings and perhaps they—and Fate—relaxed their guards too much. The Leviathans attacked. The celestial beings tried to fight but the Leviathans' powers matched the Gods, and they tore the Spheres apart with their hatred.

Nothing could bring the three Leviathans to heel, although Fate kept the Celestial Realms from being utterly destroyed. Each time a god fell, he reappeared in his own domain, but the Leviathans also seemed to have this power; every time the gods destroyed one, it rematerialized in the Celestial Gardens.

The gods grew desperate. They were weakening. On the Known World, thousands of angry Leviathans gathered the terror of the mortal tribes, and they were becoming wise to the ways of subterfuge and seduction.

The gods were trapped. The Leviathans in the Celestial Realms would not let them escape to help their followers. Fate could not help god or mortal, and the Spheres threatened to dissolve into the Abyss. It is written in the Words of Lugos that in that darkest hour, Lugos first felt the finality of total destruction, and was afraid.

Nephon, God of Wind and servant of Lugos, defeated the Leviathans in the Celestial Realm. He harassed them until they all focused on him. Nephon grasped the Leviathans, biting and slathering at all sides, and plunged into the Abyss. Nephon was lost, but he had saved the Celestial Realms. Fate repaired the Spheres and the Gardens, creating a special holding place in the Courtyard where it or the gods could cage Leviathans and separate them from the Celestial

Realms' energies, thereby leaving them without means of escaping or gaining more power.

CAPTURING TERROR

Mortified at Nephon's sacrifice, the Elder Gods were unsure what to do next. Fate charged them to collect the rest of the Leviathans and save the Known World. Yet, Fate reminded them, the Known World was fragile and the gods could not fight directly on the lands below, for the Known World could shatter under such might. All of the Elder Gods' previous wars were fought either face to face or through their followers. The Leviathans had no leaders, stole the gods' followers, and did not care if the world survived. The gods were spending all their energy simply keeping their people alive. The Leviathan cage remained empty. Time was running out.

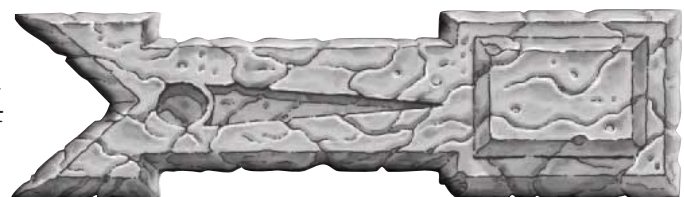
It was Baesop, Human God of Storms and Sea, who brought the first defeated Leviathan to imprisonment. The Elder Gods had not even considered the new human gods in their planning. Lugos, in his Words of Lugos, gives us a personal account of this incredible sight:

The gods stood as one in the Courtyard, like we had done so long ago in the time of the Invaders. The Gardens had been restored to their former glory, but we were solemn and still. Fate was not with us, overwhelmed by a tireless line of souls with no end, bereft of all that once held them alive. We were tired.

All of our mighty weapons were useless against the Leviathans. All of our powers were being sucked away. Our people fought hard but were overwhelmed by terror so quickly that we often could not intercede. We were dying, along with our world.

The Courtyard fell silent. The birds and animals vanished, leaving behind a feeling of anticipation. We turned, all our eyes falling to the empty cage, its door standing open, waiting for us to do something.

A cold wind suddenly poured over us. The door slammed shut and the Courtyard was filled with the howls of rage from the





beast within. The mortal souls shrank in terror, but the Leviathan was trapped and unable to feel their fear. Its powers ebbed. A form appeared next to the cage and we recognized it—a human god, recently placed among the heavens. It had done the unthinkable, the impossible.

As Fate stepped forward to deal with the beast, the new god turned to us with a twinkle in his eyes and humor twitching his lips. He had bested the Leviathan and, in his own way, bested us.

The humans, it seemed, were not as useless as we once thought.

The Words go on to reveal that the elder races were forced to ask the young usurper and his kin for assistance. Baesop showed the Elder Gods how to use trickery to defeat the Leviathans—a tactic the “honorable” Elder Gods had never considered. Together they wrestled the Leviathans to a standstill. Many of the ferocious beasts survived and went into hiding. Also, since mortals always have the potential to fear or be terrified, the door will always be open for more Leviathans to come forth from Demon’s Reef and elsewhere. Still, the Known World was safe once more, thanks to the concerted efforts of the elder races and mankind.

Perhaps the gods gave them too much leeway at first; the human gods increased in number as their tribes flourished, unimpeded by the elder races. The humans built new cities, sometimes on the ruins of the elder races’ cities. The Elder Gods’ tolerance for the humans evaporated quickly.

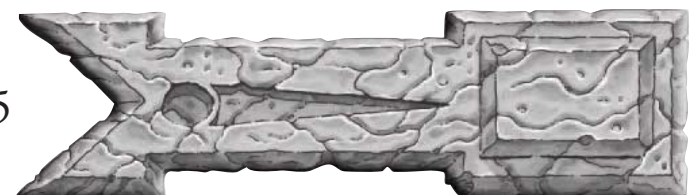
Since the defeat of the Leviathans, the spirits left on Kukulcan are merely spirits—for now. More explorers to that cursed place come back alive, and a few, mainly sylphs, choose to live among the horrifying whispers.

THE HUMAN-GNOME WAR

The humans were—and still are—strange to the elder races and the Elder Gods. The first notable human gods were Baesop, God of Storms and Sea, and Morgis, God of the Sun and Warriors. Later these two were joined by

Shenna, Goddess of the Home and Harvest, and Andelmar, God of the Woods and the Hunt. Unlike the elder races, however, the humans were inconsistent in their worship. Some believed in their deities, while others did not put faith in any gods. Such blasphemy was unheard of among the elder tribes and their gods—how can people not worship their gods?

In the generations that followed the War of the Leviathans, many human villages appeared, and they all wanted more land and resources—they wanted to be as powerful as the elder races. The first humans in Sonoma did not comprehend the leeway the elder races afforded them (and all humans) for Baesop’s assistance with the Leviathans. These barbaric humans felt that war was the only method for gaining power, and the nearest—and seemingly most





accessible—people to attack were the gnomes of Rhok-Galinth to the north. They wanted the gnomes' treasures and their skills of forging weaponry.

Although the gnomes did not feel particularly threatened, they prepared for battle, hoping to quickly dispatch the new menace. However, the humans quickly proved to be more than a mere nuisance. Several seasons passed before they finally admitted defeat.

Desperate to gain some ground in their hunt for advancement, the humans turned to Jaash, the undine city that held sway over Ar-Feslynn. Again the humans were defeated, but the undines saw their potential, both in their tenacity and creativity in battle. Gnomes and undines met in secret. Both races agreed that the younger race, while primitive, could be a useful tool to further their own goals. They decided that eradicating the humans was the least desirable option.

While the undines agreed only to trade with the humans for fishing waters, the gnomes negotiated peace and trade treaties to teach them forging. After several seasons, the gnomes could see that the humans were capable of innovation at the forge, inventing new techniques and designs the gnomes could use. These pacts between gnomes, undines, and humans benefited everyone and led to the founding of the richest human city, Hracc, thirty years later.

THE GREAT WAR BETWEEN SALAMANDER AND GNOME

The Great War was remarkably different than previous battles among the elder races. Most importantly, the gods did not start it. The salamander noble houses, without inspiration from their gods, conceived and put into motion their warlike plan. This war was also the first to see siege tactics, complex battle formations, and cavalry units. Another key difference is that this war continues to this day, and scholars consider it the longest mortal war ever fought.

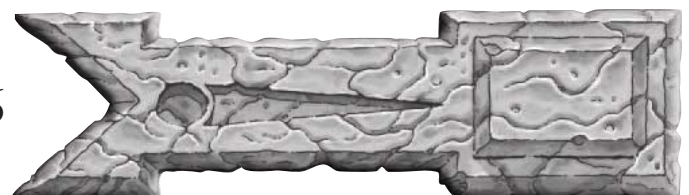
BLOOD AND SLAVES FOR THE FORGES

The War of the Leviathans severely handicapped the salamanders. The city of Shha-narath, on the continent of Naalgrom, suffered the most, as it was the home port for the Leviathan-infected merchant ship. The city was the blacksmithing capital for the salamanders, and many forges were damaged in the battles.

The houses of Shha-narath considered their options. House Moorhanos controlled the forges, and it thought to reconfigure the mines to operate exclusively on slave labor. This new policy freed the salamanders for battle. House Maathenos was in charge of obtaining the slaves, and their people raided the countryside. Whole families of humans, gnomes, sylphs, and undines vanished in the night. House Xtheni took charge of preparing the salamanders for war, training them through mock and sometimes real combat. House Thaminx and House Tukanos looked carefully for the perfect target.

The members of House Thaminx felt the gnome city of Rhovma, high in the mountains of Rhok-Drunnor, was the most viable option. Its lava-driven forges would double the salamanders' production of tools and weapons. The city's position high in the mountains would ensure control over the plains below. The nearby Night Sky Lakes and their wealth of jewels and minerals would boost the salamanders' trading power. Additionally, conquering Rhovma would grant the salamanders the power of World-Splitter, Gnor's mighty weapon. The dragon gods saw what their people were doing and decided to watch and wait rather than interfere.

The warriors trained, learning how to fight from the backs of winged mounts. When the humans attacked Rhok-Galinth, the salamanders waited to see the outcome before starting their own war. With all eyes on the human-gnome battle, the salamanders inched closer to Rhovma, taking slaves and setting up outposts along the way.





THE SIEGE OF RHOVMA

The salamanders waited until the summer after the human-gnome war. Then, they sent several hundred warriors marching up different routes into the mountains. The gnomes came out to meet them and fought fiercely. Then the salamanders changed tactics, using hit-and-run fireballs thrown by the airborne riders. The gnomes found these tactics difficult to counter, and the salamander forces slowly pushed them back.

The salamander tactics were working. The gnomes had to leave the safety of the caves and underground passages to stop the coming units. When a group of gnomes emerged, the salamander cavalry swooped down and threw magic or heavy objects upon them. Halfway through the battle, the forges of Rhovma fell silent. The gnomes did not have enough weapons to continue the fight. All seemed lost for Rhovma.

The courage of a single gnome turned the tide of battle. Pothesmo, a child, took on a daring mission: He slipped down the mountainside to an outpost where the salamander soldiers were resting. Using a putrid fungus that grew deep within the mountain, he poisoned the watering troughs of the salamanders' winged mounts. The boy did what no one else in Rhovma could do: he stopped the aerial attacks. He returned to Rhovma a hero.

However, the salamander army, despite the loss, doubled its efforts, sending for reinforcements from Shha-Naaroht.

THE DIVINE CHAMPION

Gnorr and his brethren slipped away during this temporary reprieve to find a way to save their followers without directly interfering. The dragon gods were watching the fight, but did nothing to aid the salamanders, and the gnome-kin did not want to provoke them into intervening. They formed a plan the likes of which had not been seen on the Known World. They came to Pothesmo as he slept that night and granted him gifts to make him a true hero. Methussa gave him a pair of axes with edges of impossible sharpness.

Rethan gave him a shield of the strongest iron, Fors gave him skin of impervious granite, and Bruin gave him a heart of gold. Gnorr visited the child last, and gave him the strength of the mountain and the steadfastness of the stone beneath his feet.

When Pothesmo awoke, he was a powerful warrior. The heartbeat of the gnome gods beat in his chest.

Hefting his axes and shield, he moved to the front lines and fearlessly charged the salamanders. Seeing this miracle gave the tired gnomes a new burst of strength and they tore down the path after Pothesmo with shining eyes.

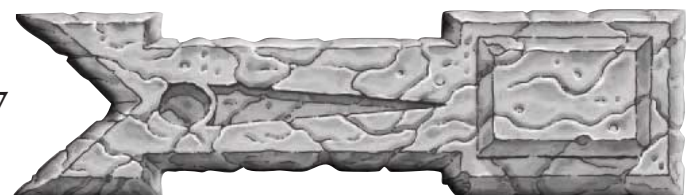
The salamanders retreated under Pothesmo's might. The gnome hero stopped at the mountain's base, leaving the wreckage of a firekin army in his wake. He refused to chase the defeated salamanders any farther, calling to all gnomes to fight only to defend their homes; to attack would be dangerous.

Twice more in the following seasons the salamanders attempted to take Rhok-Drunnor, and twice more they failed.

THE SLEIGHT OF HAND

While the salamanders continued to throw themselves at Rhovma, Pothesmo convinced the other gnomes to spread tales of his abilities. These rumors passed to unwary sylphs who spied on the gnomes for the salamanders. The spies told the salamander generals Pothesmo's power came from the gnomes' new skills in the western city of Gaaldor, in Rhok-Gerenth.

The salamander army changed directions and attacked the gnome city of Gaaldor, believing Pothesmo's power somehow came from the Forge City. The sylphs convinced them that destroying the city would leave Rhok-Drunnor defenseless. However, this attack was just what Pothesmo and the gnomes had planned. They forewarned Gaaldor





of the incoming attack nearly two seasons in advance; Gaaldor was ready. The salamander armies marched up the pass to Gaaldor and found themselves hemmed in on all sides. There were no survivors.

POTHESMO'S APOTHEOSIS

Immediately after the gnomes destroyed the salamander army, Pothesmo encouraged the gnomes of Naalgrom that the protection of their homes was their paramount concern. They created new barricades and reinforced their homelands and added new laws to ensure that hostile forces would never take their homes. They enacted new practices and rituals to ensure that their weapons would never run out in times of battle.

News of the gnomes' great warrior spread. After Pothesmo died, he became a protective spirit and eventually came to the Celestial Realms as Pothesmo, Gnome Ancestral God of War and Strife.

The salamanders have not forgiven the gnomes for using such dishonorable and duplicitous tactics. The Great War Between Salamander and Gnome continues. The sylphs, despite still being on fairly good terms with both salamanders and gnomes, were disturbed at the role their people played in the conflict and have, until recently, removed themselves from these skirmishes.

THE WARS OF RAANON

Word of the Great War traveled quickly. Salamanders across the Known World took this matter seriously, as did the gnomes. On Frinth, the races waited with baited breath as salamanders and gnomes spat insults and traded skirmishes along the Plains of Lashon.

THE GNOMISH TRIUMPH

The salamanders on Frinth abruptly received notice from Zzzfaa, on the continent of Raanon—gnomes were in Raanon and had taken the mountain region, calling it Rhok-Kuden. They were already building a city, Kandalar, and trading with the local humans. But how? The

salamanders had seen no ships, no sign of their landing. How did the gnomes not only reach Raanon, but build a city unnoticed?

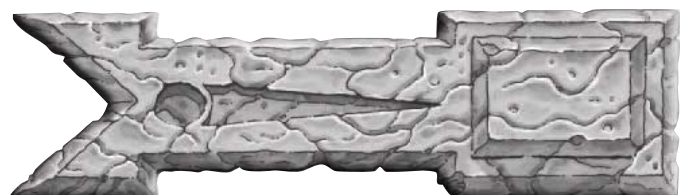
The salamanders did not realize the full extent of the gnome underground network. Since the War of the Leviathans, the gnomes had patiently tunneled out passageways throughout the ground—under the continents, and under the seas. By the time the salamanders learned of the gnome presence at Rhok-Kuden, the gnomes had already erected tunnel cities and underground systems between the three largest continents, complete with carts and tracks to better move supplies between the cities. A journey from one continent to another still took weeks to complete, but gnomes could make it undetected. The sylphs had heard about the possible underground realm, but they assumed this tale to be “another of those gnome rumors,” and they had said nothing.

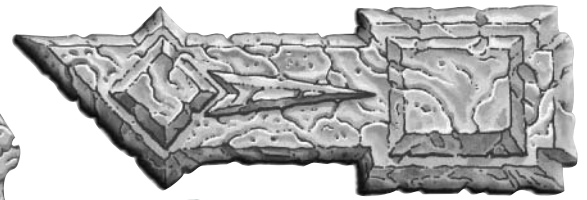
THE SIEGE OF KANDALOR

When the salamanders of Ssshna-rabath came to Kandalar, the gnomes were already fortified and waiting. The salamander armies besieged the stronghold to no avail. The salamanders could not penetrate the city's defenses to break the gnomes' hold, and the gnomes had enough supplies to last a lifetime via their underground network.

The gnomes held Kandalar for over ten years.

Finally, the salamanders decided that if the gnomes could defeat an army through duplicity, the salamander tribes could also use less-than-honorable means. Seasons before, House Maathenos of Ssshna-rabath came across a horrid Leviathan, called Gorlos, which destroyed creatures with a skin-dissolving plague; it then fed off the terror of its dying victims. Using Baesop's tactics, the salamander priestesses trapped the creature in a boulder, but instead of bringing it to Fate, Maathenos retained it for further study. Sufficiently weakened, the Leviathan could regain its former strength only if a god granted it a portion of his power.





Now with a ten-year siege sapping salamander resources, House Maathenos gathered its priestesses and sent them and the Leviathan to Kandalar. The salamanders placed the rock with the captured Leviathan within a catapult. The priestesses released a portion of its power. The catapult launched the boulder into Kandalar, and the salamander armies sped away to a safe distance to watch and wait.

THE PLAGUE BEAST FEEDS

The gnomes screamed for their gods as the plague spread over them. Hearing their desperate cries, Gnorr and his kin moved quickly and whispered their instructions. The gnome priests forced their infected brethren away from the tunnels and used their temporary god-granted magic to protect those as yet untouched by the strengthening beast. Once the healthy gnomes were safely in the tunnels, the priests destroyed the entryways, imprisoning their writhing, dying kin and the plague beast within the walls of Kandalar. Just before leaving, the priests used one last gift from Gnorr—they empowered Gorlos to its former strength.

When the cries of pain and anguish faded and the salamanders were certain Gorlos was spent, they returned with their priestesses to open the city and learn the gnomes' secrets. They had given the plague demon only enough power to wipe out the city, knowing that without terror the Leviathan would perish. When they entered the city, they found Gorlos huge, powerful, and ravenous. The priestesses and the other salamanders did not last long.

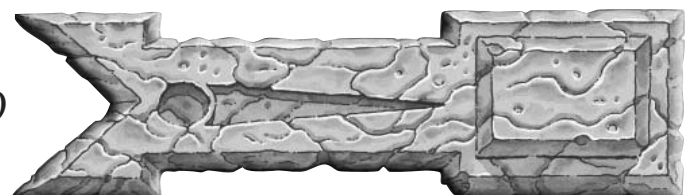
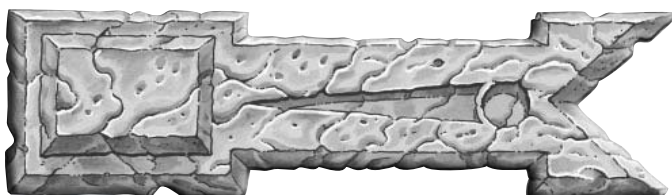
To add insult to injury, the salamanders learned that while they had been busy keeping Kandalar under siege, the gnomes built a second city within the mountains near Honoxia. Called Dulanor, or "The City of New Beginnings," the gnomes had even had enough time to erect special fortifications to prevent a second plague from entering the walls.

The salamanders were baffled as to how the gnomes could have shipped a second city's worth of gnomes to the continent despite House Draax's vigilant eyes on the seas. The sylphs then declared that they had heard rumors of an

underground system, but paid them no heed. The sylphs felt twice duped by the gnomes, and in many cities stopped working with them, feeling that the gnomes could not be trusted. The salamanders tried everything to rid their land of gnomes, even allying with Raanon's humans for a time, but to no avail. Dulanor was there to stay. Some say the Wars of Raanon yet continue, while others say that the more recent conquests in the regions of Gamath and Deluth are a part of the Frinthian Wars

THE FRINTHIAN WARS

The salamanders of Frinth are the most powerful of all salamanders; they train for battle since birth. Unlike the lands of Naalgrom and Raanon, Frinth is long and narrow. Sssthra's Frinthian salamanders showed the world how to conduct war in all its viciousness. They conquered Frinth's





humans, and then struck the gnomes of Arador from both the Plains of Lashon and the sea, from nearby Zzzalon. They used fire to collapse the suspected tunnels between Arador and Rhok-Drunnor and advanced on the mountain with intent to destroy.

The gnomes immediately surrendered.

The Frinthian Wars are an anomaly, because no elder race prior to this battle ever surrendered; they always fought to the last man. More than a little startled and very suspicious, the Queen of Sssthra negotiated the first contract of conquest and submission between salamanders and gnomes, taking the mountain and forcing the gnomes into slavery. The noble houses felt... unsatisfied with the turn of events.

THE CONQUEST OF FRINTH

The salamanders of Sssthra eventually took all of Frinth and part of Raanon, ignoring the wood nymphs to the north and the undines of Ar-Celdynn. The wood nymphs were too vicious to enslave, and the undines pointed out that as they were the only ones preventing creatures from Demon's Reef from destroying the world, conquering them would mean the dragon gods would need to deal with those demons and spirits themselves. The salamander queen saw wisdom in this truce and left Cuthe to its own devices. Aside from the undines and the nymphs, Sssthra ruled Frinth.

RETAKING ARADOR

The undines at Cuthe weren't as busy slaying demons as they made themselves out to be, however. They remembered the kindness of Methussa, the gnome goddess, toward their own goddess, and knew that only through a partnership could they hold Demon's Reef at bay. Thus, they helped the gnomes of Rhovma rebuild their tunnels beneath the sea, underneath Arador, and supplied them with arms and intelligence.

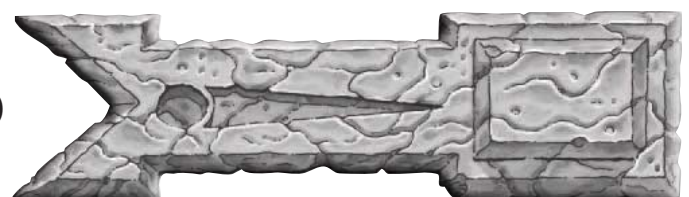
At around this time, a group of undines found an ancient scroll that House Tukanos had hidden near the city of Nesh. This scroll was an old manuscript of the Words of Lugos. The undines delivered the scroll to the Crater of Lugos where a small group of Silver Scroll Gatherers reviewed it. They were shocked to find a hitherto-unknown prophecy: Should the dragon gods hold sway over the Known World, it would crumble. This same scroll also contained the legend of the War of the Elements and Fate's warning that the Known World was fragile. These Silver Scroll Gatherers met with others of their kind, selecting the few sylphs who held not loyalty to the salamander tribes.

These sylphs helped the gnomes retake Arador. The Silver Scroll Gatherers told their comrades within the salamander armies that the gnomes had constructed an underground tunnel; a hole had opened in the ground near Guthenoth and gnomes were pouring from it. The salamanders within the gnome mountain were the closest to this alleged incursion and sent an army to combat the gnomes. With these salamanders gone, the gnomes of Rhovma stormed through Arador's sealed tunnels and retook their city.

Sylphs flew to Guthenoth ahead of the salamander army and convinced the wood nymphs that the salamander army was about to attack. The nymphs were waiting at the forest's edge when the firekin came into view. The wood nymphs' attack was brutal.

RETAKING FRINTH

Naara-Beesh held Frinth alone for six seasons before the gnomes retook Arador. From After recapturing their city, the gnomes aided Frinth's humans and welcomed them, the sylphs, and the undines inside their city walls. With the gnomes' help, the Silver Scroll Gatherers disseminated another rumor: The sylphs assisted Arador only because of a



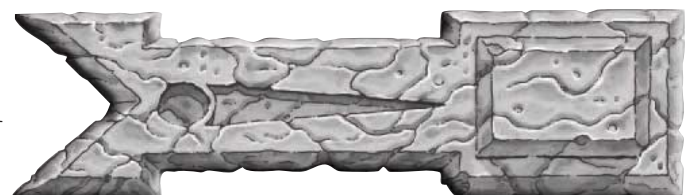


viable trade pact between Arador and Dulanor. The secret of Lugos's prophecy is safe, for now. With the other races' partnership strengthening, Ssshra's queen must content herself with what she has left.

Today, the elder races and the humans live in a tenuous balance, and the next war seems hours away. I will be glad to be rid of this aging body and return to my god's side in the Celestial Realms once more. I know that this scroll's secrets will never see the light of day, as only my successor will be able to find it. Perhaps she will be able to learn what to do with it before her time, too, runs out.

TIMELINE

3,000+ years ago	The First Ancestors rule the Known World.
-2,200 years	The Invaders arrive.
-2,000 years	The Elder Gods arrive and the War of the Invaders begins.
-1,200 years	Celune is founded.
-1,150 years	Jaash is founded.
-1,100 years	Ssshna-rabath is founded.
-850 years	The War of the Elements begins.
-740 years	The War of Elements ends. The Crater of Lugos is formed, as is Demon's Reef.
-600 years	Humankind first appears in the Known World.
-575 to -570 years	The Undine Dividing Wars.
-550 years	The horned men of Pashon first appear.
-450 to -430 years	The Battle of Dragons.
-415 to -414 years	The War of Sea and Earth.
-350 years	The human port city of Elio is founded. House Draax sends a merchant fleet to Kukulcan and the Leviathans escape the island.
-325 years	The first human gods enter the Celestial Realms.
-300 years	The humans of Samona march against Rhok-Gelenth; the gnomes defeat them after a year.
-275 to -272 years	The War of the Leviathans.
-255 to -251 years	The Human-Gnome War.
-250 years	The Great War between Salamander and Gnome begins. The human god Tonaida faces the Nargos and vanishes.
-248 years	The Battle of Gaaldor.
-225 years	The Samona humans found Hrace on Naalgrom.
-200 years	The Wars of Raanon and the Siege of Kandalor begin.
-190 years	Kandalor is abandoned. Dulanor is founded.
-180 years	The Wars of Raanon end.
-100 years	Plague strikes Elio.
-30 to -27 years	The Frinthian Wars.
-20 years	Gnomes from Dulanor destroy a salamander outpost in the Rhok-Kuden region.
-15 years	Amar conquers the human city of Calaba.



CHAPTER 3: THE ELDER GODS

Ancient and powerful, the gods of the elder races of the Known World sometimes seem as far above the new gods of humanity as those upstart gods are above their mortal worshipers. The most powerful of the Elder Gods have existed for millennia, molding and directing their race, and fighting countless wars that raged across the entire planet and killed unnumbered mortals.

For all their power, however, they are still fellow gods. Some of them visit the Celestial Gardens on a regular basis, eager to forge alliances and make trades, happy to deal with the new human deities when it will bring them some advantage. Many more will meet with new gods willing to cross the celestial spheres to their sanctums; the right combination of humility and compromise can win allies of enormous experience and power.

The Elder Gods are as diverse as they are powerful. Some are singular deities, guarding the sole rulership of their race with immense jealousy, while others are part of large pantheons. Some Elder Gods pay constant attention to the mortal realm, answering prayers and directing their faithful, while others rarely divert their attention from the celestial realm, leaving their followers to fend for themselves. Many of the pantheons have seen terrible conflicts between deities of the same race over the centuries, reflected for the most part in the mortal realm with wars that set brother against brother and scar a civilization for decades or more.

But more importantly than the undeniable threat they pose, more importantly than the opportunities and resources they could provide, the Elder Gods are palpable demonstrations of the power and influence that a deity—any deity—can aspire to. And rare indeed is the newly ascended god who does not hunger after the heights of power possessed by the most senior of his peers.



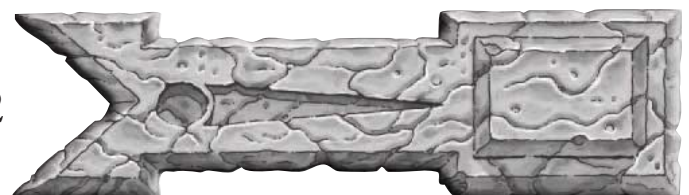
THE GNOME GODS

Powerful, clannish, and insular, the gnome pantheon eschews the expansionism of most other Elder Gods, preferring instead to simply maintain the status quo and avoid entanglements with other races. However, this apparent peacefulness extends only so far as wars of conquest: mortal gnomes will fight to the death to protect their ancestral homes, and their gods will back them with all their rarely wielded might, as any number of tribes and peoples now remembered only by history have discovered.

Unlike any other Elder Gods, the gnomish pantheon exists as a family: Gnorr and Methussa are married and have two sons, Rethan and Fors, while Methussa has a brother named Bruin. A number of other, minor gnome deities exist, worshiped by specific clans as their most honored ancestors now ascended to godhood, but all gnomes worship the five great gods of their pantheon.

All the gnome gods share the same habitation in the celestial spheres: Rhok-Etheril, a vast mountain range with peaks that extend far higher than any mortal mountain, is riddled with several millennia of tunneling by the souls of dead gnomes. Rhok-Etheril spans all four celestial spheres, with its heights on the border of the spheres of Everwinter and Perpetual Autumn. The mountains there are forbidding indeed: dark, windswept crags encrusted with ice, while what little vegetation there is forced to shelter within crevasses to avoid the killing winds. This harshness suits the dwellers within who rarely venture to the surface and appreciate that it keeps the curious from venturing closer. Near to the Celestial Gardens, the landscape is mundane and unchanging, and even outside the influence of the gnome gods other deities find it difficult to work their will upon it.

Despite their isolationism, Methussa and Bruin visit the Celestial Gardens from time to time to speak and negotiate with other gods on neutral ground, and a message of sufficient import or interest will eventually lead to such a meeting, though it may take considerable time to arrange. If matters are urgent, or are insufficiently important to





drag one or more of the gods from their hearths under the mountain, a desperate deity might travel to Rhok-Etheril and beg an audience directly.

GNORR, GOD OF MOUNTAIN AND STONE

Other races know him as the King of Stone, the Low Lord, The Unyielding One, He-Who-Speaks-Slow-Truth. Gnomes, not known for their poetic use of language, would never blaspheme by applying such frivolous turns of phrase to their greatest god, so they speak only of Gnorrr, God of Mountain and Stone. As insular and hard to rouse as the mortal race he commands, when angered his rage can level peaks and shatter cliffs.

Gnorrr's visage is enormously impressive. While the color and texture of his skin may resemble that of black basalt and his shell, dark iron, these features are barely visible beneath his enormously long hair and beard, worn wrapped around himself over and over until the only elements truly visible beyond the milky quartz-shade of his mane are a pair of black eyes that gleam like onyx. When he speaks, his voice is the rumble of boulders shifting, although he is heard only rarely, preferring instead to listen, to watch, to think. Gnorrr rarely stirs from his vast throne-room at the heart of Mount Kagramik, the huge central spire of the Rhok-Etheril range, preferring in the main to leave active governance of the celestial and mortal realms to the rest of his family. Between interruptions, he sits in the heavy silence of his empty hall, pondering deep unspoken thoughts he chooses not to share.

Husband to Methussa, father to Rethan and Fors, and brother-in-law of Bruin, Gnorrr is the most powerful of the gnome gods, the deity to which all other members of his pantheon defer. In practice he rarely needs to exercise his authority—in the static gnome society new issues that require arbitration are few and far between. When they do appear, he prefers to listen to the other gods debate and argue, trying to convince him, before making his final decision. Once that decision is made, he expects that it will be obeyed without further discussion (something that, at times, his wife has difficulty with).

As head of the pantheon, virtually all gnomes pay homage to him at the prescribed times of worship, and many follow him as their patron deity. His priests wield enormous influence within mortal society, and hold all but a few of the highest offices. The temples of Gnorrr are always hollowed from the mountain itself; construction of a new holy place takes generations before the entire edifice is considered complete, but the results of centuries of skilled labor are massive, intricate structures carved from the living rock without a single break or seam. The most skilled masons among the gnomes are even able to incorporate naturally occurring mineral and metallic seams into the designs, carving beautiful statues from outcroppings of precious ores and gems.





Beyond his complex and official hierarchy of priests is a semi-secretive group named the Stoneborn. The Stoneborn are a sect that is, in gnome terms, a relatively modern phenomenon: while it has existed in some form for millennia (indeed, its own members claim its foundation dates back to the very first of their race), it has only become a major factor in gnome society in recent centuries as the rise of humanity leads to greater pressure for both peaceful and warlike relations. The sect is a loose association of those who do not simply hold to the old ways (as do all mainstream gnome society), but actively reject any modern innovation, regardless of merit, preferring to maintain the “purity” of the race. Some members loudly proclaim their membership; others go to considerable lengths to conceal their part in the group. There are no centralized meetings or hierarchy and, as such, at times different factions within the Stoneborn have ended up pursuing contradictory goals (though the sect’s simple tenet of following the old ways means such internal conflicts are rare).

The cult is dominated by followers of Gnorr and Fors, who put particular emphasis on the importance of tradition and isolation. While to an outsider the two sets of faithful may appear identical, in practice the followers of the God of Mountain and Stone tend to represent the more moderate members of the Stoneborn, focused on advancing their beliefs within the strictures of gnome society. Worshipers of Fors are generally more extreme in their commitment and approach. One particularly distinctive feature of the Gnorrite members of the Stoneborn is their enormous commitment to aiding one another, helping each other in times of trouble and ensuring that their members receive preferential treatment and advancement where possible. This informal network is one of the major factors behind the dramatic increase in the influence of the Stoneborn, with many of their members now in positions of considerable authority.

Gnorr’s interventions in the mortal realm are both rare and unmistakably divine in origin; any concern important enough to warrant his intercession is handled with an emphasis on raw power rather than subtlety. In most cases this takes the form of incredible Miracles, almost

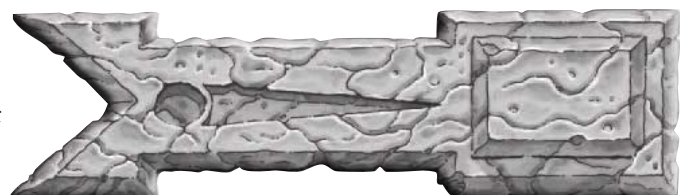
always concerning his domain of stone: crevasses swallow entire armies or hills and mountains are blasted to rubble; He has at times temporarily invested enormous power in a single mortal or artifact. For all the inefficiency and inelegance of this blunt approach, his Miracles are inevitably on a scale such that they will be spoken of in awe for generations, and fear of such displays has quashed more than one conflict before it even began.

METHUSSA, GOD OF DIAMONDS

Wife of Gnorr, mother of Rethan and Fors, and sister of Bruin, Methussa is a linchpin of the gnome pantheon. As the only female among the major gnome deities, Methussa has dominion over women, many of whom choose to follow her as their primary god, making the Diamond Goddess’s flock second only in number to that of her husband, Gnorr. Gnome society may appear strongly patriarchal to other races, but females have significant influence behind the scenes; wives and mothers form the backbone of the family unit, ensuring that everything that must be done is done.

Small but stunning, the Diamond Goddess is the very incarnation of gnomish beauty. While all gnomes will acknowledge that her face and figure are flawless, it is her magnificent hair that draws all attention. Methussa wears her ankle-length locks in elaborate coifs and spirals that dwarf the displays of even the most high-born and vain of gnomish mortals, and she never deigns to wear it in the same fashion twice. In most cases, the multicolor strands of her hair are decorated with hundreds of tiny but beautiful charms of gold, silver, and other precious metals set with countless precious gems, all crafted for her by her brother, Bruin.

As the gnome deity with dominion over beauty, it should be no surprise that the temples of Methussa are oases of elegance and artistry in a realm dominated by the dull and the functional. While ostensibly devoted entirely to the worship of the Diamond Goddess, most of the temples have large courtyards and annexes officially designed for the purpose of quiet contemplation and prayer. In practice these large, highly decorated spaces with numerous discrete corners serve an essential purpose by providing a private





place for mortals to be alone or with a friend or partner, isolated somewhat from the otherwise omnipresent pressures of work and family that saturate the rest of gnomish society.

Despite her beautiful appearance and highly decorated shrines, Methussa is not a deity of peace and contemplation. Of all the gods of the gnomes, it is Methussa who most often pushes for conflicts with other races. Her priests pride themselves on their clarity of vision and willingness to make clear what must be done, no matter how unpopular such opinions are. As a result, the followers of Methussa are invariably the first to call for close trade agreements with peaceful neighboring races or punitive raids against aggressive ones.

This belief in the need for involvement with other races is rarely a popular one; the Stoneborn support attacks on other races occupying ancient gnomish homelands, but most other elements of gnomish society prefer to dismiss other races no matter how important or profitable interaction with them could be. The Diamond priests hold their own in these arguments only with the experience of centuries of such struggles to convince others: the followers of Methussa have a well-earned reputation for cunning and politicking. Indeed, the goddess herself is the patron deity of tradesmen, politicians, and all others who would seek to turn others to their purpose with words and guile.

Methussa herself is an expert at such matters of manipulation, seeking to steer the rest of her family—and particularly her husband—towards the goals she finds most important. This brings her most often into conflict with her younger son, Fors, who steadfastly resists any change to the ancient ways of gnomish society. He is often supported in this by his elder brother, while Methussa can usually count on the support of her sibling, Bruin, leaving Gnorr to make the final decision. The God of Stone demands his word is final, but when a decision goes against her, Methussa often finds ways to twist those words into something more to her liking. For the most part the fact that she and Gnorr are husband and wife insulates her from the worst of his anger at such disobedience, but at times she goes too far and his rage is terrible.



Methussa keeps a close watch on the mortal world, rivaled in the attention she pays to gnomekind only by her son, Fors. But where Fors leaves mortals to suffer the consequences of their actions, rarely interfering, the Diamond goddess is much more willing to use her powers to do what she considers is necessary, or to aid her faithful in some fashion.

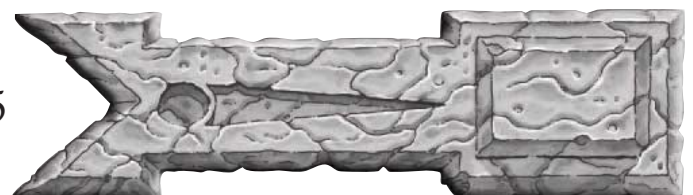
The method she chooses to achieve this intervention is dependent on the specifics of the situation; she might use her powers directly in the form of divine miracles, empower a mortal or grant him some artifact, or simply appear in a vision to one of her priests and give them specific orders.

BRUIN, GOD OF GOLD

Younger brother of Methussa, Bruin has dominion over gold, that most malleable and beautiful of metals, so easily reformed and never growing dull with age and time. This is very much reflected in his appearance; while his height is unremarkable for a gnome he is significantly slight, and his supple, flowing movements make him almost lithe. His light-brown red coloring is mostly obscured by his flowing beard of brilliant gold that he wears wound about his body in a shining spiral, over and about a relatively small and light shell of beautifully ornamented bronze.

As the one member of the gnomish pantheon not a direct member of the family of Gnorr and Methussa, Bruin tasks his priests and followers with the responsibility of care for those outside normal society. Gold priests run orphanages for those rare children who through disaster, illness, or war have somehow lost their entire extended adult family—many of these children grow up to become priests of Bruin themselves. Those gnomes who have for some reason been ostracized from the main will also pray to Bruin for help, and as such he is also the god of forgiveness, interceding with Gnorr at times (often through his sister, Methussa) when he feels the Great Father has been too harsh.

Though he has a special responsibility for orphans, in the same way that gold is always fresh and new, Bruin has dominion over all newborns, children, and childbirth. With the birthrate so low and newborn gnomes so rare, most families will make lavish sacrifices to Bruin in the event of a pregnancy, and grant a further donation when the child





is safely born. When angered, he has been known to spitefully strike against the children of the mortal or mortals that have offended him. To the clannish gnomes, the killing of these young family members is often a far worse fate than their own deaths.

His anger is rare and he is the least somber member of the pantheon. While any other race would consider him solemn and dour, he is still the most whimsical and light-hearted of the gnome gods. Indeed, some gnomes, particularly the followers of Fors, consider Bruin and his followers to be ungnomish and weak, in the same way that gold, while decorative, is of little practical use. The priests of Bruin usually respond with the analogy that gold illuminates and decorates the mundane and practical, making an object more beautiful and valuable. Despite that, many gnomes still consider Bruin the least of the major deities: he has the fewest followers of them by some margin, and those he does have are rarely able to achieve positions of power and responsibility, no matter their ability.

While the followers of Bruin may suffer a somewhat diminished social standing, the majority of gnomes do value the work of the goldsmiths. While the race has little use for personal ornamentation, master-crafted tools are often further set apart from their more mundane counterparts with beautiful inlaid patterns in gold and silver, while decorative plaques and friezes are used to beautify temples and public spaces (particularly holy places dedicated to Bruin or his sister, Methussa). Precious metals, worked or unworked, are often used by the gnomes as trade goods. Indeed, by bartering away mere gold and silver that, while undeniably beautiful, is far less vital than the tools and other utilitarian objects they do not wish to part with, gnome traders often feel they are outsmarting the greedy members of other races.

Bruin also has dominion over literature, though gnomes are little given to the form. Most gnomish stories are very old indeed, memorized and handed down within clans and families, and often jealously guarded, never to be recited when an outsider is present. Despite this fierce



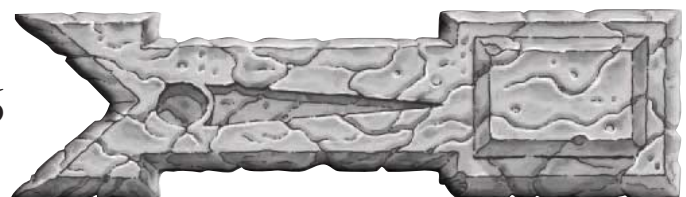
protectiveness, Gold priests still visit each clan on a regular basis to record these epics on thin stone tablets, swearing mighty oaths never to reveal what they hear or scribe. These tablets are cached within the inner sancta of temples to Bruin, where the sagas are preserved against tragedy or the erosion of time.

Most Gold priests also know a wide range of public sagas, so old they have no known clan associations. The most famous of these are the Etheril Saga, an epic poem of the creation of the race of gnomes, and the Teaching Saga, a more light-hearted series of brief stories about Gnorrr and Bruin walking the Known World together before the coming of mortals. In each story of the latter saga, Bruin asks a question that is answered by Gnorrr, or Bruin performs some foolish or mistaken act and is corrected by Gnorrr; this saga is recited to teach young gnomes how they should act and think. Despite the fact that the saga is almost entirely composed of their deity showing ignorance, the Gold priests are always happy to recite it (it is a rare priest who does not know all 106 stories by heart), as each tale helps a young gnome avoid making the same mistake—in this fashion, they preach that Bruin achieves far more by humbling himself with a good heart than by strictly adhering to proper behavior.

Bruin is the only deity who makes a regular habit of leaving Rhok-Etheril, both to walk the celestial spheres and to visit the mortal realm (incarnated as a nondescript young gnome for the most part). While his wanderings may at times glean useful information to share with the pantheon, for the most part they are for his own edification and amusement rather than to keep a careful eye on the state of affairs in the mortal realm. When not wandering, he spends time in his workshop inside Rhok-Etheril, where he crafts gold and silver decorations and jewelry of exquisite beauty.

RETHAN, GOD OF IRON

The elder son of Gnorrr and Methussa, the primary dominion of Rethan is over metalworking, and particularly iron and steel. As such the followers of Rethan are responsible for the production of the many tools and items required for





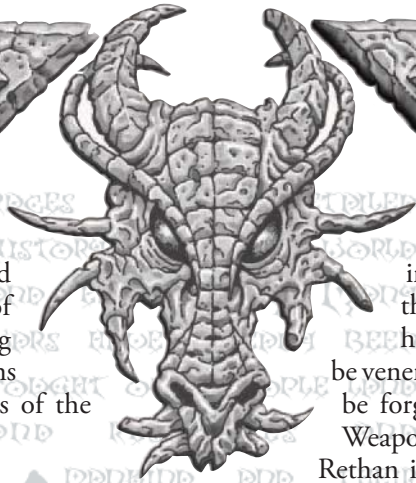
daily life, from hammers to hinges. Over the centuries the priests of the God of Iron have acquired an enormous store of forge-lore and, after completing their long and arduous apprenticeships, the smiths of Rethan are unequaled in all the races of the world.

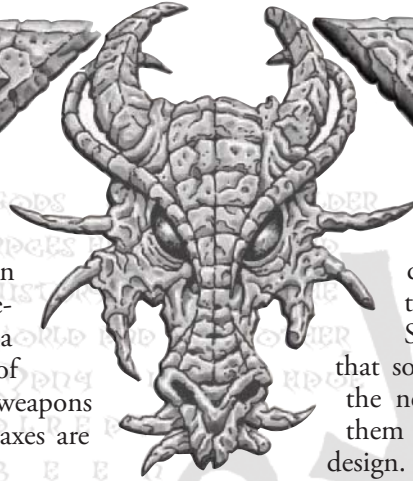
Rethan takes the form of a short, taciturn gnome with a rough-hewn look, seemingly carved from pitted gray stone. His hair and beard, while impressively long and of shimmering silver strands, are normally worn looped around his shoulders and waist in a utilitarian fashion rather than displayed more impressively, although this does serve to show off his massively thick shell of chased steel. While short even by gnomish standards, the enormous corded muscles of his forearms more than make up for any deficiencies of his legs—hardened from millennia at the forge, his powerful arms can wield both hammer and sword with stunning power.

As well as tools, the Forge-Priests are responsible for producing the unrivaled weapons of the gnomes. Though not a warlike race by nature, the harsh environment in which they live and constant raids by other species mean that combat is all too major a part of gnomish life. As such, Rethan also serves as the main god of battle, though he finds extremely distasteful the forging of weapons from metal that could otherwise produce tools and other more useful items. The duty of producing and maintaining these weapons is one carried out by all smiths on the appointed week of Mekk, the Time of Dark Forges. During this week all Forge-Priests seal themselves up in their workshops where, aside from breaks to eat and sleep, they busy themselves maintaining old weapons and forging new ones. By cutting themselves off from the rest of society for an intensive week they seek to dispatch the unpleasant duty as rapidly as possible. During major conflicts when even the ample armories are depleted, the head priest of Rethan may be forced to declare Dorr'Mekk—an emergency period of Mekk—for the production of new weapons. Such a step is never taken lightly and usually signifies a protracted siege or conflict with enormous losses.

This distaste for weapons is one inculcated in generations of gnomes by the Forge-Priests based on commandments handed down from Rethan that no weapon be venerated or displayed, no unnecessary weapon be forged, and no weapon receive decoration.

Weapons are maintained by the priests of Rethan in closed armories, and only handed out for drill, to guards and patrols, or in times of need. While they are commanded to disdain the forging of weapons, the followers of the God of Iron also put all of their skill into the construction of these tools of killing: to do otherwise might cost the clans lives, and necessitate the forging of new weapons when substandard blades break.





and bend in the heat of combat. For the same reason, significant attention is given to maintaining the armories of the temple-forges: a weapon lost to rust and age is a sign of blasphemous neglect. The skill of the smiths and the care given to these weapons means that some venerable swords and axes are centuries old, yet still hold a keen edge.

Alongside warfare, the followers of Rethan are responsible for the other major interaction of gnome-kind with the other races: trade. While such trade is limited to times of peace and to a few select partners, it gives the gnomes access to materials and luxuries they have difficulty producing for themselves, such as certain types of food, fine cloth, dyes, and myriad other miscellaneous items. The reason for the involvement of the Forge-Priests is that the trade goods invariably requested in return is ironwork of all kinds. While the provision of weapons is rare and only considered when arming an ally against a common enemy, other more peaceful steel tools and items are the staple trade items. On occasion, the trade will instead be one of skills—a smith will volunteer to tutor one or a small number of the other race in the techniques of the forge for a period of months or years. While such a bargain comes at an enormous cost and care is always taken to pass on none of the secret techniques holy to Rethan that account for the unmatched quality of gnomework, the newly trained smiths are more than a match for any others of their race and can pass on their skills to apprentices.

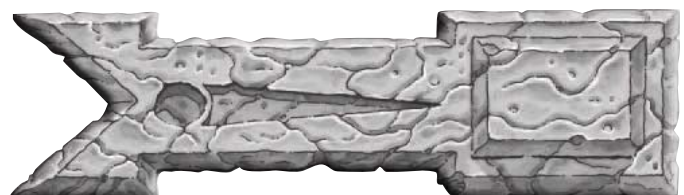
Despite their vital contribution to the twin fields of war and trade in which the gnome race deals with other peoples, followers of Rethan rarely involve themselves in the actual negotiations of trade or the prosecution of war, preferring in most cases to emulate the famous taciturnity of their god. For the most part they rely on the followers of Methussa to arrange such matters, and the priests of the two deities have a close working relationship, considering themselves the most practical of groups, preferring to focus on what must be done and not wrap themselves in tradition and pointless debate.

As for the other gods, the followers of the God of Iron have immense respect for Gnorrr, father of their god, father of

their race. However, on occasion they do clash with the Stoneborn, particularly those who follow Fors. They dislike the Stoneborn's arch-conservative tendencies that sometimes place them in opposition over the necessity of trade with outsiders or lead them to seek to quash innovations in tool design. They also particularly object to the secret caches of weaponry some Stoneborn maintain—the

Forge-Priests consider the keeping of such stores outside their temple-forges blasphemous, and feel the tendency of individual Stoneborn to obsess over these illicit stockpiles obscene. The influence the Stoneborn exert means that such caches are rarely discovered by the Forge-Priests, but when they are not even the tacit support of the sect by those in power can prevent the followers of Rethan from confiscating the weapons and smelting them all down to be re-forged into more peaceful and useful forms. Finally, the Forge-Priests maintain congenial relations with the priests of Bruin: both work with metal and individual smiths and craftsmen often collaborate to add a decorative inlay of precious metals to a particularly fine piece of work. However, there is tendency for followers of Rethan to look down upon followers of the God of Gold as doing work less vital than their own.

While his followers may clash with the followers of Fors, the relationship of the pantheon itself is less strained: Rethan and Fors have a close brotherly relationship. The God of Iron feels that his younger brother often goes too far, trying too hard to emulate their father, but Fors can nevertheless count on him for support when he needs it. Rethan prefers not to exercise his powers directly, instead preferring to provide followers with holy artifacts and direct them to act as they see fit. While this allows him to aid followers without directly involving himself it does also mean he tends to pay little attention to the state of mortal affairs, relying on the other members of the pantheon and his high priests to keep him informed of events. Instead he spends most of his time in his great volcano-forge, Mount Rellak. Here he taps the very magma itself to melt the steel and iron he works with to forge his potent artifacts. When not at work, he is known to wander the deep tunnels of Rhok-Etheril, examining new seams uncovered by the myriad gnome souls quarrying away and pondering new and more efficient forms of tool.





FORS, GOD OF GRANITE

The younger child of Gnorrr and Methussa, Fors is very much his father's son, taking many of his sire's traits to considerable extremes. As the God of Granite, hardest and most solid of rocks, Fors exemplifies both the conservative and stoic tendencies of the gnome race. While other gnomes may sometimes consider his followers somewhat dull and tiresome, they are widely respected for their hard work and reliability; a follower of Fors will give his life rather than break even the most minor promise.

Fors is rarely portrayed in statuary; his shrines and temples tend to be spartan affairs, with large spaces for a congregation and a simple raised dais of granite so that the priest can be seen above the crowd. His true form is large for a gnome, second only to his father in size among the main pantheon, and of light-colored, speckled granite rock. He wears his impressive sandy beard and hair gathered into a dozen heavy ropes, wound around his arms, legs, and chest. In striking contrast to his light form and hair, his shell is of a metal so dark as to be almost black.

Oaths are taken extremely seriously by his faithful; while all gnomes have a great deal of respect for their word, the followers of the Granite God treat them as a sacred trust. Vows should never be taken lightly and those sworn must be kept no matter the cost. Sermons by the Granite Priests often revolve around tales of the terrible cost of the fulfillment of an oath; while such stories invariably entail enormous loss and sorrow as the price of keeping one's word, the final message is always that such suffering is laudable in the pursuit of maintaining an oath.

Fors and his followers maintain a strict policy of isolationism: gnomes have no need of contact with other races and should have no dealings with them whatsoever. This extends not only to trade and diplomacy, but also to conquest; while the Granite-Priests may preach the perfection of the gnome spirit they strenuously oppose any attempt to go to war with other races, maintaining that such aggression is ungnomish and would serve no good purpose. The priests of Fors teach that his followers should fight only in defense of their homes and in such cases the

followers of the God of Granite prove themselves doughty warriors, refusing to fall back no matter the force arrayed against them.

A small portion of believers, however, do hold a more belligerent attitude; many members of the cult of the Stoneborn maintain that while expansionistic conquest is to be avoided, the gnome race must retake those portions of its ancestral homelands that over the centuries were annexed by other races. This is the point of greatest contention among the followers of Fors, some believing that by refusing to retake lands that were theirs millennia ago they betray the "old ways," while the majority believes that the need to launch wars of invasion and conquest to achieve this would be a far greater violation of these tenets. Since the Stoneborn rely on the followers of Fors for many of their members, they downplay this set of beliefs, contenting themselves with secretly stockpiling weapons, ostensibly for the purpose of self-protection in the event of an unforeseen invasion.

Fors also has dominion over death and the underworld. Priests of Fors conduct the elaborate funerals that take place upon the death of a gnome, after which they are sealed inside their family tomb. Such tombs are carved from granite and are set deep inside caves and mountains some way apart from the rest of society, both to give the dead respectful peace and to allow room for expansion—tombs are rarely designed for singular gnomes, but for entire extended families—extensions are crafted when they become full. The huge tombs of some of the largest and oldest clans are vast, sprawling granite edifices built up over centuries and hold thousands of corpses. When a gnome is lost in some fashion where their body cannot be recovered, an empty space is set aside for them in the hope that their remains can be recovered. The family goes to enormous effort to do so, as the funerary rites cannot be conducted without a body, and gnome belief has it that the spirit of the dead gnome cannot rest easy with their ancestors.

Among the pantheon, millennia-old Fors is perhaps overly aware of his status as the youngest of the major gnome deities and as a result he has cultivated an almost palpable aura of maturity and authority. He participates quite heavily in discussions and arguments amongst his kin, frequently





clashing with Methussa, his mother, who tends to favor riskier, more expansionistic plans and policies. In such disputes he can usually count on the support of his older brother, Rethan if he asks for it, while his uncle, Bruin, tends to side with his mother, leaving Gnorr the ultimate arbitrator. While at times arguments may go against him, he always submits to his father's will when a decision is made, and can be depended upon to carry out all plans to the utmost of his abilities even if he objected to them.

Fors pays considerable attention to the mortal realm, communicating frequently with his high priests as well as making his own observations, but rarely chooses to intervene. He prefers instead that his followers cope with the consequences of their own decisions and hence grow stronger and more independent. The only events that can reliably cause him to take action are threats from outside events, both natural disasters such as floods and famine, or attacks by other races. In these cases he wields his power in whatever way seems the most expedient, most often using it directly but occasionally empowering a chosen acolyte.

When not overseeing the mortal realm, he busies himself watching over the souls of those who dwell inside Rhok-Etheril. With dominion over the dead, he ensures that the departed gnomes lead lives much as they did on the Known World, carving deeper and deeper tunnels and caverns into the bottomless mountain range within which they dwell. Even in death, the gnomes live in vast and complex family-clans that stretch across hundreds of generations, governed by a hierarchy of seniority of stunning complexity.

ANCESTRAL GNOME GODS

Besides the five primary deities worshiped by all gnomes, most of the larger gnome clans have a particular deity to whom they alone pray. While less powerful than the main pantheon, gnomes are often fiercely loyal to their ancestral god. Over the centuries, the clans have developed complex and secret rituals for the worship of their family god, which foster strong clan ties and help them set themselves apart from other clans and gnomes. Some of the more powerful of these ancestral deities are described below.



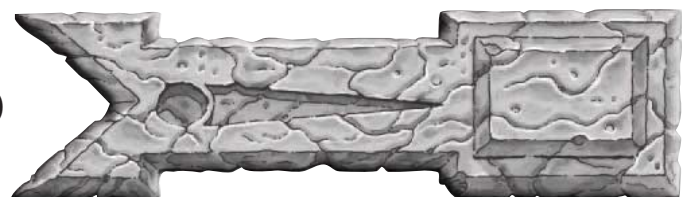
GULFOFF, GOD OF UNDERGROUND STREAMS

While at first glance water is no match for the solidity of stone, the faithful of clan Gulfoff understand the secret of its might: given time, even a tiny drip can wear a hole through yards of the hardest rock. Gulfoff has dominion over water and that which is hidden. He teaches

his faithful the importance of patience and persistence. Even amongst gnomes, the stubbornness of Clan Gulfoff is legendary, and they have been known to hold a grudge for centuries when they feel it is warranted. They are one of the more powerful political clans, having slowly built up a web of favors and debts that pay dividends hundreds of years later. The central shrine to Gulfoff is a massive cave where an underground stream bursts from the wall to cascade down the black basalt, forming a spectacular waterfall where they honor their god.

PERRUS, GOD OF FLINT

Those initiated into the mysteries of Perrus are taught that he is the second-oldest of the gnome gods, preceded only by Gnorr—a teaching that directly contradicts the orthodox chronology of the priests of the high pantheon. Perrus's argumentative nature means he does not get on well with the other gnome gods, but rather than skulk in the dark corners of Rhok-Etheril perpetually out of favor, he prefers to incarnate on the mortal realm, where generations of his clan can revere and worship him in person. As such he has no high priest, and even conducts rituals and ceremonies himself. With dominion over flint, both sparks and fire fall within his domain, and this, combined with his sharp temper, means that he is occasionally sought out by Rethan (for whom he has a grudging respect) to aid him in times of war, either from the celestial realms, or by directing battles in person.





PERRUS

Primary Domain: Flint

Additional Domains: Conflict, Anger, Fire

Inclinations:

- **Harmony:** Destruction
- **Balance:** Transformation, Creation
- **Opposition:** Control

Belief: 800

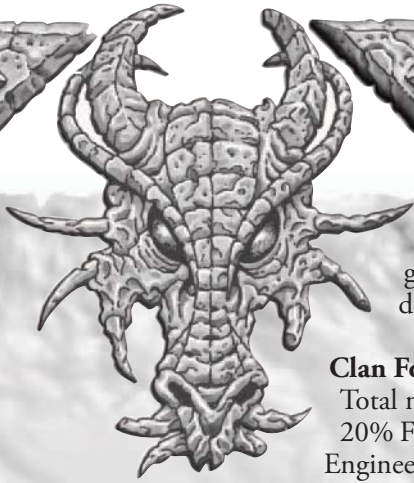
Appearance: His form in the mortal and celestial realms is the same: a tall, powerfully built gnome with gray-blue skin. His features are sharp and angular, and he wears his hair and beard looped repeatedly about his iron shell in a single rope many yards in length.

Personality: Perrus always feels he has been denied his due, believing all gnomes should worship him and not simply his loyal clan. He is moody and ungrateful, argumentative with other deities, and rarely anything but terse even to those that worship him.

Symbols: His faithful each wear a crude flint dagger, carved for them by their father or guardian while their mother was in labor. Losing or breaking the dagger is considered dire blasphemy.

Worship: Ignoring the celestial realm, Perrus spends most of his time in his temple, a vast complex beneath the Rhok-Kuden range. He prefers to sit atop of his massive, ostentatious throne, raised a dozen yards off the ground and approached by a long, straight staircase (no one but him may set foot on the stairs—even his most respected followers must wait humbly at its foot). Perrus acts as his own high priest, conducting major ceremonies himself, which involve much chanting of praise punctuated with the striking of sparks from polished flint shields with the daggers his faithful carry.

Followers: As Perrus has few if any priests, he has many devoted warriors and smiths to his cause. His warriors, known as the Flame Bearers, use fiery weapons in the field of battle to ignite the enemy. Smiths and Engineers of the flint god create weapons of great destruction involving flame cannons and smoke bombs. These practices alone



ostracize his followers from the other gnome clans as most gnomes have little to do with such destructive weapons.

Clan Followers of Perrus

Total number of followers: 500 (Devout)

20% Flame Bearers (Warriors), 10% Smiths and Engineers

Flame Bearers of Perrus: (Total 100)

Body: d8+4 (+2 Bonus for carrying flame hand cannons and smoke bombs.)

Mind: d8+1

Spirit: d6

Smiths and Engineers of Perrus: (Total 50)

Body: d8+2

Mind: d8+2 (+1 Bonus for technology of fire weapons)

Spirit: d6





Heroes and Artifacts:

• **Urtun:** Perrus empowers no heroes or artifacts, unwilling to trust any mortal with even a sliver of his jealously guarded power. In recent years, however, his most trusted follower has been a gnome named Urtun. Raised in the priesthood, Urtun has become an unofficial seneschal to his god, reporting news, making occasional discrete suggestions, and relaying orders. Despite having no formal rank beyond that of priest, over the years Urtun has become extremely good at judging the mood of his petulant deity, ensuring that audiences are held when he is feeling receptive, rewording reports to convey bad news tactfully, and suffering Perrus's rants and insults with a stoic equanimity. However, Urtun is now of advanced age and other members of the clan do not expect him to live out the decade. Urtun is searching for a successor to train, but has not yet been able to locate a suitable candidate.

Urtun Seneshal of Perrus

Body: d8 (Racial bonus of +2 taken due to old age)
Mind: d8+1
Spirit: d6+1 (Intuition of god's mood and assurance of afterlife)

Major Commandments:

Thou shalt wear thy birth dagger always – the flint daggers worn by every member of clan Perrus are sacred, and should any gnome lose theirs then they are cast out of the clan forever. There are no mitigating circumstances, and heroic warriors have been carried dying from the battlefield only to be turned away by their kinsmen as their dagger was broken or lost during the fierce melee.

Thou shalt keep the fire in thy hearth burning – fire is sacred to Perrus, and every family of the clan keeps a large stack of firewood and kindling by their hearthfire to ensure this commandment is kept. In the event a family moves, the fire moves with them, carried as smoldering coals in carefully-designed pottery vases that are fed carefully over the course of the journey.

Thou shalt wear no gold – a relatively new commandment, handed down in a rage after one of the Perrus's rare visits to Rhok-Etheril ended with a huge dispute with Bruin



over a minor matter of protocol; Perrus made the decree after Gnorr sided with his brother-in-law against Perrus. The clan raised significant capital as the women were forced to sell their gold ornaments, and now make do with silver, bronze, or other metals.

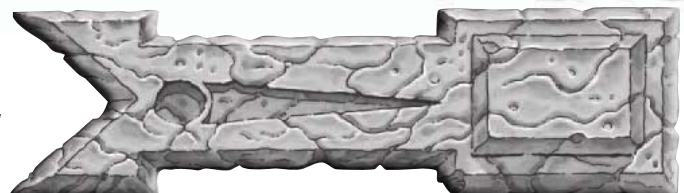
Favored Miracles:

• **Flint-Swarm:** A swarm of bat-like creatures formed from flint—all razor-sharp angles and corners—pull themselves from the ground and walls and fly at the enemy in a mindless frenzy, slicing through flesh and armor and shattering into lethal fragments against shield and weapons. Mechanically, this creates a d10 combat resource on the Group scale (equivalent to ten individuals).

Cost: 7 (Major Innovation of Creation(7), Duration +1, Domain -2, Inclination +0, Location +1, Scale +1, Total 1)

• **Curse of Cold:** Perrus is well aware of how vital fire is to mortals, and one of his cruelest and most effective miracles is to deny it to his enemies; when he uses this miracle, no mortal fire, no matter how large, will burn anywhere within a dozen miles, preventing the inhabitants from warming themselves or cooking food. Mechanically, this prevents any non-supernatural fire, no matter how large, from burning in a territory for an entire year.

Cost: 75 (Legendary Alteration of Destruction(6), Duration +3, Domain -1, Inclination -1, Location +1, Scale +3, Total 5)





OSRA, GODDESS OF OBSIDIAN

Osra is the goddess of obsidian, the rare black glass formed only when volcanic magma cools fast enough to vitrify. The only female minor deity of the gnomes, her clan is one of the smallest, but has considerable influence. Osra has dominion over speed and adaptability, virtues that do not come easily to gnomes. Nevertheless, at times these skills are irreplaceable, and the followers of the Obsidian Goddess are the best. Those in the clan who show potential for mental flexibility at a young age are gathered in groups of half a dozen, teams that they will serve in for the rest of their lives, forming a bond that exceeds those of clan and family. These groups spend decades learning dozens of obscure skills and trades to prepare them for service; when scouts are needed to find enemy locations or when some unforeseen accident threatens hundreds of lives, the faithful of Osra are called upon to serve. While the fatality rate is high, members of these teams are honored within the clan as heroes and paragons, and are considered the most blessed of Osra.

GERN, GOD OF ASH

It may appear lifeless, but the light-gray volcanic ash that piles into drifts across the mountain ranges is extraordinarily fertile; without this ash, the gnomes would find it almost impossible to farm the steep, arid slopes of their mountain dwellings. Even with ash, such farming takes considerable effort and skill, and is predominantly the domain of the clan of Gern, God of Ash. While unglamorous, his dominion over crops is a mainstay of gnomish life, and their control of the food supply means that Clan Gern is large and powerful, though their unexciting work means they are not accorded the respect they feel they deserve. Gern himself is stern and serious, never leaving Rhok-Etheril, and rarely willing to aid his followers should the crops fail or be destroyed in a raid: instead, his commandments make clear that they should also turn many underground caverns over to the cultivation of mushrooms—while the fungi are hard work to grow and taste unpleasant, they provide a vital food cache that can be maintained almost indefinitely should the mountain come under siege or blight strike the other crops.

POTHESMO, GOD OF WAR AND STRIFE

Pothesmo is the youngest addition to the gnome pantheon. His path to godhood is unique; in the beginning of the Great War between Salamander and Gnome, he was a young boy who showed exemplary courage during the siege of Rhovma in their darkest hour. The elder gods worked together to make him an unstoppable hero who broke the siege and drove the salamanders out of the mountains. He died sixty years after the siege, but his spirit remained in Rhovma for several more decades. Unlike the family gods, he has no specific clan. Pothesmo is called upon in the moments before battle, by mortals hoping for the strength, courage, and cunning to protect their home by defeating their enemies. The elder gnome gods look on Pothesmo with pride for his message of defense and protect rather than conquer. He is very accessible to followers, even those not of his race—several human tribes having taken to worshipping him as well.

THE SALAMANDER GODS

Powerful and fractious, the dragon gods of the salamander pantheon rule over a vast empire populated with powerful cities and numerous mortals. While the number and ferocity of their followers makes them a potent force, they are riven by constant internal schisms and feuds, with the varied houses (each sworn to a different deity) constantly jockeying and fighting for position and power.

Despite their numbers and experience with battle, their love of hot, arid regions means that they have little urge to launch wars of conquest against far-off, wet, rainy lands. For the most part they content themselves fighting constant border skirmishes and wars with neighboring races, as well as launching raids to carry off whatever slaves and valuables they can find.

While most deities take the forms of those that worship them, albeit often larger and more impressive, the salamander gods shun such mundane manifestations, and instead appear as great dragons, magnificent creatures at least five times the height and ten times the length of a salamander, resembling





the rare crag dragons of the mountains. Somewhat incongruously, many members of the pantheon prefer forms whose mighty forelimbs end in delicate, salamander-like hands, which while taloned still enable them to hold books or tools. A few even spend a deal of time in salamander form, rarely assuming their dragon aspect.



great darkness. As more salamanders go to their heroics deaths, so too will the Void be filled with more and more burning soul-stars until the Fire-Time, when the last star is placed to finally blot out the Void and fill the sky from horizon to horizon with burning light.

In the celestial realm, the dragon gods lay claim to the immeasurable desert of Jaa-naareth, an eternal expanse of trackless sand and barren rock that is spread across all four celestial spheres, dominating the sphere of Endless Summer. While each dragon maintains a vast temple-complex where they dwell surrounded by their most loyal and trusted spirits, few of them reside there for extended periods: the dragons spend their time in constant politicking, crisscrossing the desert to conclude alliances, haggle over terms and treaties, and betray trusts. Most of them also make frequent trips to the Celestial Gardens, to meet with other powerful gods on neutral ground in order to barter for information or negotiate secret deals.

KANOS, DRAGON GOD OF THE FIRES ABOVE

With dominion over the stars in the Void, Kanos is adjudged the most senior of the dragon gods, although not the most powerful—while the stars may be set higher in the sky than the sun or moon, they shine far less brightly. Nevertheless, the Highest Dragon is respected and venerated by virtually every salamander of every House, and her solemn, unadorned temples are never bare of offerings.

Though the Highest Dragon is less aloof from the other members of her pantheon than she is from the mundane world, she remains one of the least gregarious of the dragon gods. She invariably takes the form of a tall, thin dragon, iridescent black scales twinkling with myriad points of reflected light. Her large black eyes have no pupils: rumor has it that those who dare to meet her gaze find themselves lost in the gloss darkness, seeming to fall into an endless starfield, before awaking to the knowledge of the precise time and manner of their death.

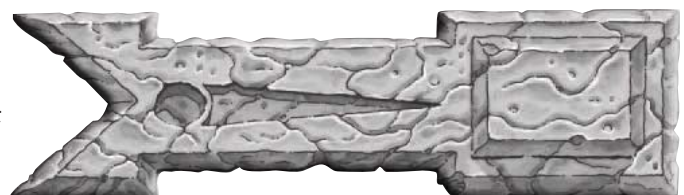
Salamander lore has it that the stars are the souls of great warrior-heroes of their race, set in the Void upon their deaths by Kanos to burn forever more and illuminate the

Until that glorious, far-off time, Kanos has the responsibility for judging the worth of the dead, singling out those rare few of eternal valor from the common dross. And though she is renowned for her even-handedness, most families of the departed will still arrange for her priests to conduct lavish funerary services in the hope of swaying her. From time to time even the other gods will attempt to intercede with her on the behalf of a favored hero.

Her dominion over truth and judgment, and her detachment from the politicking of the other dragons ensures that members of her House are respected as judges and adjudicators. Hence followers of the Star-Scaled are often called to mediate disputes between individuals and between Houses, or are responsible for interpreting law and precedent when required. As such the House of Kanos holds a position of respect in virtually every city in the salamander empire.

However, this self-same separation from politics, along with commandments against bias and favoritism and little military influence means that the House rarely achieves a preeminent position in society: overt attempts to gain power for themselves usually results in a loss of their appearance of fair-minded adjudication. In most cases they are content to have the ear of the dominant House, rather than attempting to achieve such dominance themselves.

Another reason for a lack of direct power is that Kanos is seldom willing to intercede directly on the behalf of her worshipers; she rarely imbues heroes or uses her powers on the mundane realm. Those who do require her aid usually find it necessary to prove the importance of their request by fasting, embarking on vision-quests, or making some major personal sacrifice. If she deems the request worthy, Kanos will usually reply with a vision revealing to them some hidden truth or personal revelation to help them in their endeavor.





XTHENI, DRAGON GOD OF THE FLAMING SKY

Fierce, powerful, and arrogant, more than any other god the Sun Dragon embodies those features the salamander race most admires and the other races fear. Despite the handicap of masculinity in a matriarchal society, Xtheni's belligerent nature and indomitable will have established him as one of the most powerful of the dragons, matched only by Thaminx, his constant rival and occasional ally.

Xtheni's appearance is undeniably magnificent: his huge, muscular form is covered in blindingly bright scales of gold and brass. His claws, fangs, and tail-spikes are fiercely impressive even for a beast his size, and on the rare occasions when he incarnates in bipedal form he still eschews armor and weapons in favor of oversized talons.

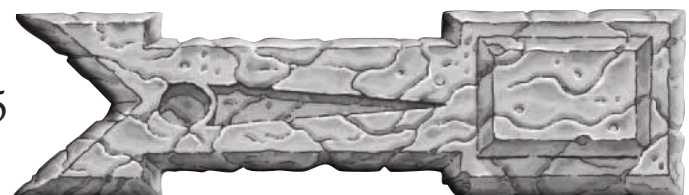
The Shining Lord has dominion over fire and the emotions salamanders associate with it—bravery, rage, and courage. His worship is uncomplicated and primal, with few rituals and much emphasis on simple, powerful rites. As such the worship of Xtheni is very popular among the young. His preachers and prophets are renowned for their fiery sermons that can whip a horde of worshipers into a frenzy of adulation and veneration.

The festival of Xelex, the High Sun, is held on the summer solstice and is a time of enormous celebration for the entire salamander race, not simply followers of Xtheni. The great drums of the temples of the Sun Dragon begin to beat at dawn, calling all to celebrate. Sermons are given to the assembled crowds by followers of each of the dragon gods, separated by periods of prayer, meditation, or song. The festival culminates in the final sermon by the highest-ranking priest of Xtheni in the region, who reminds the crowd of the essential virtues of the salamander race and their position at the pinnacle of nature.

The service is timed such that the final words are spoken as the sun reaches its zenith. The tightly packed crowds, atmosphere of celebration, and stirring sermons invariably

rouse the mass of festival-goers into a state of exhilaration. As the sermon ends the Sundance begins, and the temple drums (which have continued to beat at a steady pace since dawn) suddenly break into a flurry of fast beats and the entire multitude begins to dance. The frantic, exhausting rhythms go on all day and into the night as gigantic bonfires turn away the dark. Dancers drop out to eat, drink, and talk with friends before rejoining the dance. It is a mark of great stamina and virility to still be dancing when the sun comes up again the next day, signaling the end to the drumming and the festival; most young adults attempt the feat at some point, though few have the stamina to manage it.

The festival of Xelex is one of the foundations of prestige and power for the House of Xtheni; the other is the field of





warfare. As the Dragon God of courage and bravery, it is customary for those first joining the army to swear oaths to the Shining One, wishing dread fates upon themselves should they show cowardice in battle and desert their companions. The cult of Xtheni is strong on the battlefield; his priests often travel with the army, whipping up the troops into a frenzy of battle-fury with their exhortations before combat is joined.

Prayers to the Shining Lord are invariably requests for courage, vitality, or some other inner virtue, rather than direct requests for aid. This is because Xtheni rarely manifests Miracles directly, preferring instead to strengthen and empower his faithful—salamander history records more heroes of the Shining One than of any other Dragon God. This is in contrast with his great rival, Thaminx, the Dragon God of the Burning Earth, who prefers direct intervention and control.

While the Sun Dragon vies constantly with the Earth Dragon, his relationship with the rest of the pantheon is also frequently turbulent as his quickness to anger sparks off avoidable conflicts. His House is often involved in skirmishes and quarrels—even by salamander standards they are hungry for power, and are willing to sacrifice a great deal to attain it.

DRAAX, DRAGON GOD OF THE BOILING SEA

As the dragon with dominion over water in all its aspects, Draax has the greatest difficulty of any of the salamander pantheon attracting worshipers. Many young mortals see her domain as a distasteful, if necessary, counterpart to life-giving fire. Nevertheless, her constant battle to maintain her precarious position and attract new followers has not soured Draax on mortals; her mercurial nature means that she has come to understand and appreciate them in a fashion rivaled only by Maathenos.

While it is not uncommon for Draax to take on other forms when it so suits her, she is primarily portrayed



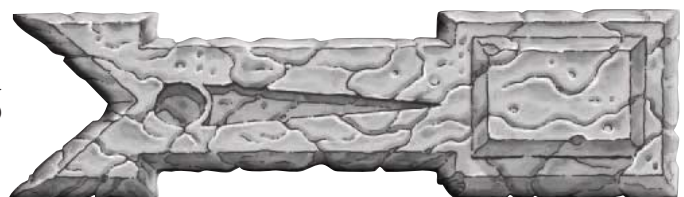
in religious iconography as a large, sinuous dragon with shining aquamarine scales and a frond-like pattern to her frills. However, the Lady of Storms is one of the dragons most willing to change her appearance on a whim, whether to better reflect her mood or as part of a joke or trick, and as such can (and often does) take any form at all. She is also known

for her wit and her sense of humor, a trait shared by few of her pantheon. These characteristics are often emulated by her worshipers, who cultivate both a facility with clever bon mots, and a love of incisive black humor.

Despite its idiosyncratic deity, the House of Draax enjoys significant mundane power thanks to their dominance of long-distance trade. Few others of their race are willing to brave the oceans, due to their dislike of water and cramped spaces, and the danger of drowning (their heavy bodies and short arms make salamanders badly adapted to swimming). With millennia of experience and their goddess' dominion over wind and wave, House Draax is able to ship goods to far-off locations much more rapidly than by caravan. Over the centuries the House has assembled an impressively sized trade fleet. Hence many members of House Draax become merchants, and the House treasury groans with currency.

Even the Draax fleets prefer to hug the coast. Alongside the threat of shipwreck is that of the undines; the aquatic elder race has a history of conflict with the salamanders (particularly House Draax). While the undines are mostly a peaceful race, groups will occasionally attack isolated salamander ships, preferring to hole the vessel and wait for it to sink before picking off the struggling crew in the water. By remaining within sight of the coastline, salamander ships can usually make landfall if an undine war party is spotted.

The wealth of House Draax and other merchant-traders who venerate the Lady of Storms, coupled with a psychological need to compensate for the lack of respect from other salamanders, has led to huge quantities of money being lavished on her temples. The massive edifices are traditionally constructed of pale stone, and the interiors





ostentatiously adorned with blue and gold. The focal point of the temple is always a large font filled with water and oil, perpetually burning, symbolizing that the relationship between fire and water need not always be an inimicable one.

When it comes to the granting of prayers, Draax is as whimsical as any other part of her nature; sometimes important pleas of fervent believers in good standing go unanswered, while on other occasions frivolous requests by a mortal who has never even visited her temple are granted instantly. Her prophets tend to explain this away as her method of encouraging her faithful not to become too reliant or dependent on her.

The one situation in which she invariably hears prayers is from those directly in danger on the ocean; committed believers can usually depend on her to at least calm the waves slightly to prevent the swamping of their vessel, or to send a squall to push them away from threatening rocks. Those who take to the sea without more than lip-service to her and then find themselves in danger are advised to make promises of commitment and offering in their prayers; as the dragon associated with trade she is often willing to overlook a lack of former worship in return for a sufficiently lavish inducement.

While she travels frequently, her temple-fortress in Jaanaareth is notable even in the Celestial Realms: a huge castle of sculpted coral rising from the center of a vast, bitter lake. While the water of the lake may be almost impossibly salty, it still represents the largest body of open water in the center of the endless desert. The faithful dead of House Draax ply the waters around her castle in an eclectic range of watercraft, from sleek ships that cut through lake in silken silence, to creaking ancient hulks that threaten to fall apart at any moment, to impossible, multi-hulled vessels that could never exist in the mortal realm.



DRAAX

Primary Domain: Water

Additional Domains: Wind, Trade,

Speechcraft

Inclinations:

• **Harmony:** Control

• **Balance:** Transformation, Destruction

• **Opposition:** Creation

Belief: 6000

Appearance: Draax is usually seen as a large, sinuous dragon with shining aquamarine scales and a frond-like pattern to her frills. She readily changes her shape, however.

Personality: Draax is known for her wit and her incisive black humor.

Symbols: Draax's followers wear blue as commanded by their god. Another symbol is the brazier of water with burning oil on its surface.

Worship: Although not often seen by mortals, Draax is readily accessible by her followers while out at sea. Her opulent temples are run by her priestesses, who also do double-duty as commanders of her fleet.

Followers: Draax hosts one of the largest sea armies in the Known World. Her followers travel the coast of every continent and every large body of water. The Shimmering Fangs of Draax are her finest warriors, resistant to fear and magic. Her craftsmen make the finest ships and sets of light armor for her warriors. Priests of Draax practice elemental magic to bend the winds, waves, and the heat of the sun to their will. Priests of Draax also serve as commanders of the fleets.

Followers of House Draax

Total number of followers: 10,000 (Normal)

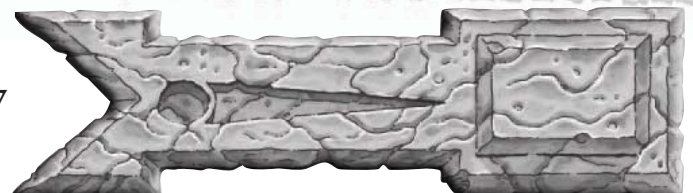
20% Warriors, 5% Craftsman, Shipwrights, 5% Priestesses and Priests

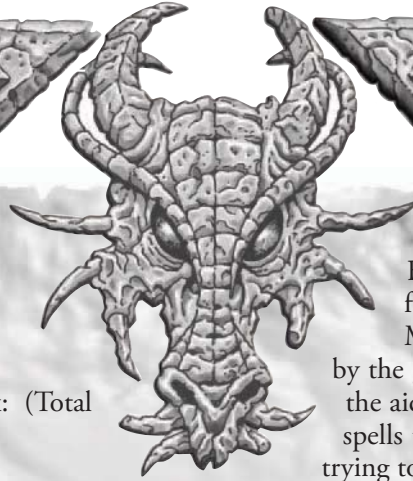
Shimmering Fangs of Draax (Sea Warriors of House Draax: (Total 2000)

Body: d8 +4 (+1 Bonus for extra-light yet durable armor blessed by priests)

Mind: d8+2 (+2 Bonus for resistance to magical attacks)

Spirit: d6+2 (+2 Bonus for resistance to fear and control attacks)





Craftsman and Shipwrights of House

Draax: (Total 500)

Body: d8+3

Mind: d8+1 (Skilled in labors)

Spirit: d6

Priestesses and Priests of House Draax: (Total 500)

Body: d8+3

Mind: d8+3(+3 Magical bonus from the goddess to harness the powers of the sun and wind (For more information on mortal magic see the Book of Mortals coming soon.)

Spirit: d8 (Step up bonus for resistance to fear and terror)

Heroes and Artifacts:

While Draax prefers to horde Belief, she invariably imbues her high priestess with a portion of her power to better convert others and aid her faithful. Over the centuries she has also empowered a number of artifacts, a few of which still survive.

• Hessix, High Priestess of Draax: Originally a member of House Maathenos, the young Hessix was en route to the continent of Naalgrom when a storm struck the vessel, and she was swept overboard. With seemingly no possibility of rescue, she begged Draax for help, promising first all of her meager possessions, and eventually her life in servitude. On a whim, Draax preserved her, calming the storm and sending a vision to the ship-master with the young salamander's location. Hessix entered the priesthood of House Draax, and rose through the ranks with impressive swiftness; her extremely sharp mind and ready wit meant that despite not being born into the house, she achieved the rank of High Priestess at the age of just forty-five. Now nearing sixty, her body is becoming slow and heavy, but her mind is clearer than ever thanks to her goddess' power. Her sermons are mesmerizing, and any mortal foolish enough to argue with her rapidly finds themselves coming around to her point of view, no matter their original opinion. These gifts, combined with her status as a convert to the House, have brought Draax thousands of new devotees over the past decade, and other Houses are beginning to become concerned at this poaching of their followers.

Hessix, High Priestess of Draax

Body: d8 +1 (Disadvantage old age -2 from normal stats)

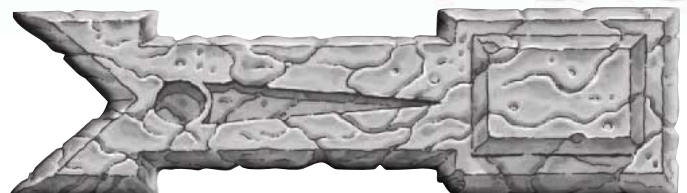
Mind: d10 +5 (Very powerful mind gifted by the goddess Draax herself. She may summon the aid of Draax once per season. She may cast spells to control Draax's followers. Any warrior trying to escape battle must roll Spirit vs. Hessix's mind score or involuntarily return to battle. For more information on mortal magic see the Book of Mortals coming soon)

Spirit: d8 +2 (Highly resistant to terror and other forms of control)

Tongue of Draax: (Cost 20/10: Major Alteration of Control (5), Duration +3, Domain -1, Inclination -1, Location +0, Scale +2 (factor of 3, 2 after first year))

• Wavegrazer, Flagship of House Draax: While a great warship bearing the name Wavegrazer has led the Draax battle-fleets ever since Draax created the first during the Battle of the Dragons some four and a half centuries ago, conflicts have led to inevitable losses, and the slender, proud vessel that now serves as the flagship of the fleets is the eleventh to bear the name. High-prowed, with a lethal ram forged from recast gnome steel, the ship cuts through the water propelled by its great sails. The vessel has no oarlocks or benches for rowers, as whenever the billowing blue sails are raised a powerful but controlled wind blows constantly, allowing Wavegrazer and any attendant vessels to slide through the ocean at speed. This is not the only power the vessel possesses; when the need is great the captain can extinguish the font of oil and water that burns perpetually on deck, whereupon the sea will roil and a vast tidal-wave will sweep out from the prow of the ship, gathering speed and size until it becomes powerful enough to annihilate entire fleets or swamp a city.

Major Commandments:
Thou shalt wear clothing only of the color blue – this commandment helps set the faithful of Draax apart from other salamanders (though the priesthood has decided that decoration and borders of other colors, particularly gold and silver, are allowed so long as the main color of the item of clothing is blue).





Thou shalt not harm a sylph, unless in self-defense—rumor has it that this commandment was Lugos' price for the granting of some great secret to Draax, though precisely what this revelation was is unknown.

Thou shalt take to the sea at least once a year—Designed to keep her faithful mindful of her power and the source of their House's wealth, this has led to the founding of a celebration in the late spring, as the entirety of the House closes their stores and spends the day on the water as part of a great flotilla of ships, rafts, and coracles, enjoying themselves with food, alcohol, and music.

Favored Miracles:

Breath of Draax: (Cost 20/10: Major Alteration of Transformation (5), Duration +3, Domain -1, Inclination +0, Location +0, Scale +2 (factor of 3, 2 after first year))

Rage of Draax: (Cost 64/32: Legendary Innovation of Destruction (8), Duration +3, Domain -2, Inclination +0, Location +0, Limited (one use per month) -1 Scale +4 (Total: 4, 3 after first year))

- Mercy of Draax: Her most common miracle, used to calm a patch of water around a struggling salamander whose life she wishes to preserve. The calm patch is just a few yards across, and the sight of a wave dividing around them is enough to convert many mortals to Draax's worship in an instant.

Cost: 4 (Significant Alteration of Transformation(4), Duration +1, Domain -2, Inclination +0, Location +1, Scale +0, Total 1)

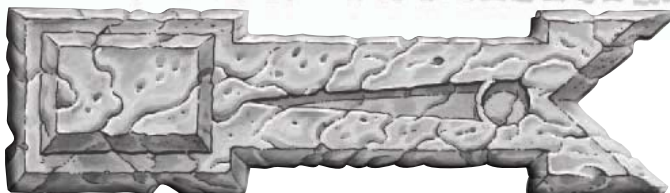
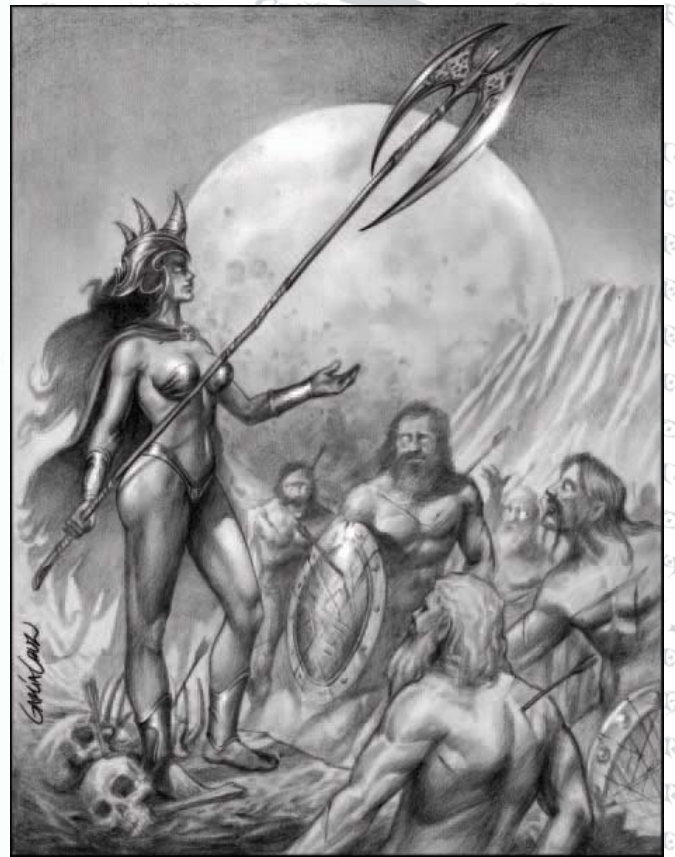
- Spirit of Draax: A miracle that Draax is as likely to use out of mischief as she is use it to preserve her faithful, this miracle suffuses a community or gathering with a sense of open-mindedness and levity. Strong emotions (particularly negative ones) tend to disperse, while mortals find themselves listening to one another and enjoying each others company.

Cost: 16 (Minor Alteration of Control(4), Duration +1, Domain +0, Inclination -1, Location +1, Scale +2, Total 3)

XETHALCHOATE, DRAGON GOD OF THE FIRES BELOW

Alongside Xtheni, the Smoldering One is one of only two male members of the salamander pantheon. Despite their shared gender, however, the natures of the two gods could hardly be more different: where the Shining Lord is brash, impulsive, and quick to anger, Xethalchoate is deliberate, generally good-natured, and slow to act.

Xethalchoate embodies those virtues that, while important, are rarely remarked upon: perseverance, loyalty, and stoic pride. He is the god of the worker, the impoverished, and the handicapped, those who stubbornly soldier on despite adversity making no complaint. As such his temples are rarely large or lavish and few political leaders worship him.





as their primary deity. However, he and his followers do draw a great deal of respect for their commitment, and their reputation for loyalty means that House Xethalchoate is often courted by the other Great Houses as an important and reliable ally.

For all his reticence Xethalchoate is an awesome sight to behold: by far the largest of the dragon-gods, his gigantic dark-brown frame towers over even Xtheni. Few gods are willing to face his wrath once roused: much like a flow of molten rock from a volcano, while it rarely breaks his placid surface his war-fury is implacable and terrible. Betrayal is the one reliable way to raise his ire, both by god and mortal, and there is more than one vitrified crater marring the surface of the mortal world that marks the final resting place of those who attempted treachery against the Smoldering One.

The House of Xethalchoate is most often allied with the House of Thaminx; not only does the careful and steady politics of House Thaminx suit the followers of the Smoldering One, but the two dragons have long maintained a unique relationship. Though its ardor burns relatively low and the two tend to pursue independent interests, the pair are formally married. In emergencies Xethalchoate can be counted upon to support his spouse.

In the main, however, Xethalchoate is placid and good-natured. Surprisingly, the dragon with whose company he tends to enjoy the most is Draax, Lady of Storms. Their natures are very different on the surface, but beneath it all they share a love of humor, a mutual understanding of necessary but unacknowledged factors that underpin salamander society, and a deep love for mortals in all their fragility. In contrast, his relationship with Thaminx is much more formal and based more on shared respect than true affection.

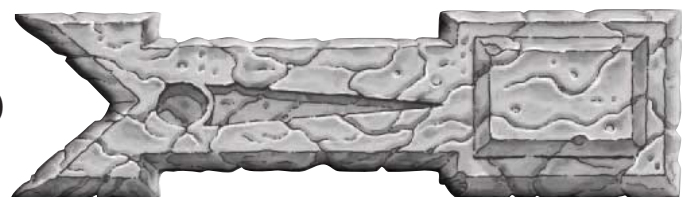
On the face of it, House Xethalchoate's tendency to avoid the power-scramble of politics so much part of salamander nature is odd (only House Kanos shares their habit of steering clear of politics in such a fashion, and they do so by virtue of their exalted position), but in practice the House actually wields far more influence and power than is



immediately apparent. Their hard-won reputation of loyalty increases their value as an ally enormously, as no other House can be as reliable. By rarely seeking direct control they can usually avoid significant damage if an enterprise should fail; the more visible House or Houses take the blame for any mistakes made. Instead House Xethalchoate prefers to act as the supporting pillar of administrations, allowing them to exert a great deal of influence without getting their talons dirty.

For all their reputation and the commandments of their dragon, House Xethalchoate is still made up of fallible mortals, many of whom would be all too willing to break with tradition and shift the House's alliances for short-term gain. To prevent such commanders and politicians doing so (and hence ruining the House's valuable reputation), important secular members of the House are strictly policed by the priests of the Smoldering One. Their responsibility is to manage political appointments, monitor their actions, and ensure no moves are made that could discredit the House (publicly, at least). Ironically, this means that the priesthood itself, with no such external oversight, is the portion of the House most consumed with politicking.

For the most part, the Smoldering One tends to use his power in a low-key fashion; he rarely empowers famous heroes or creates powerful artifacts, instead preferring to answer prayers such as increasing the fertility of fields. His most common, directly used power is in the sanctification of contracts—those taking part in important oaths or treaties often ask a priest of Xethalchoate to act as an independent moderator, drawing up the final version and having those making the agreement formally swear it in the temple of Xethalchoate, asking the dragon to strike down any of them who break their word. Such rituals usually include a significant donation to the temple; this is one of the major sources of income for the House.





MOORHANOS, DRAGON GOD OF THE MELTING ORE

With their tough hides and natural armaments salamanders are less dependent on the crafting of tools, clothing, and weapons. They are also somewhat disadvantaged at such arts by their clawed hands, which are less suited for delicate work than that of other races. Nevertheless, besides a few fanatical followers of Xtheni who disdain such things as a sign of weakness and impurity, salamanders are more than willing to use tools to further their goals; an enemy defeated with a sword is just as vanquished as one defeated with tooth and claw.

As the Dragon of the Forge, Moorhanos has mastery over the skills of crafting tools and weapons, as well as ships and houses and all manner of other construction. Given the salamander veneration of strength and power, the Craftmistress might be expected to have the form of a huge, hulking dragon. Instead, Moorhanos's form is not oversized and her most notable aspect is not bulging muscles, but instead extremely long, dextrous claws; she takes special pride in delicate, perfect work that displays true mastery of a craft, rather than the simpler, brutish works that any journeyman can turn out given sufficient time.

While the great factories and workshops of House Moorhanos build every sort of tool, their real power and specialty lie in their weapon-craft. The priests of the Craftmistress keep certain techniques of the forge careful secrets and this knowledge, combined with decades of training and experience, means the master-smiths of Moorhanos turn out weapons and armor superior to that available to any other House. As a rule, the more junior members of the House busy themselves with the creation of mundane tools, architecture, and other necessary but unglamorous works, while the senior masters craft the exquisite weapons and armor that so epitomize the skill of the followers of the Dragon of the Forge.

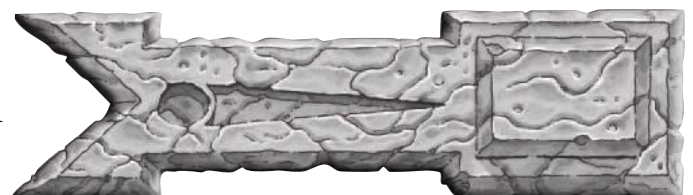
As might be expected, such workmanship is the source of their power. Sales of top-quality weapons and armor mean that the treasury of the House is second only to that of the traders of House Draax; they can also tip the balance of power in a prolonged war by refusing to supply one side or the other. They are most often allied with House Thaminx

whose generals are willing to pay a great deal to equip their elite soldiers with the best quality equipment. Such alliances are rarely long-term, however, for neither House is often willing to settle for anything less than placing one of their own members on the local throne.

While the worshipers of the Craftmistress will generally make deals and alliances with whatever House will aid them in their pursuit of power, House Draax is rarely partner to such agreements—the two Houses have a rivalry going back millennia. The Draax trade fleets bring in holds full of goods from the other races, threatening the Moorhanos monopoly on the best-crafted items, and the vast treasuries of the followers of the Lady of Storms exceed even those of the craft-masters. Moorhanos herself, obsessed with care and attention to detail, also finds Draax frivolous and wasteful, while Draax considers Moorhanos boring and disconnected from what really matters.

The temples of the Dragon of the Forge bear little resemblance to forges in the main; instead of dark hot workshops they soar airily, with great arching domes and slender spires that demonstrate the House's mastery of architecture. The walls and ceilings are invariably adorned with delicate filigrees of stonework, carved and painted frescoes, and beautifully sculpted gold ornamentation. As such the temples serve as a reminder to all who enter of the skills of the followers of Moorhanos, as well as flaunting the great wealth accrued by the House over the centuries. The great celestial forge of Moorhanos, in contrast, is at the center of an enormous crater of obsidian: the curve of the smooth crater walls means that all of the sunlight that falls upon it is reflected from the black glass to a central focus, where it burns so hot that none but a Dragon God can approach.

While she may rarely manifest her powers directly, the Craftmistress is famed for the artifacts she creates for her followers in times of need. Unsurprisingly, given salamander nature, most of these incredible creations are weapons of war, though more utilitarian artifacts are not unheard of in those rare periods in salamander history of mostly unbroken peace. The other dragon gods, on the occasions where they choose to empower an artifact, usually choose





simply to imbue some mundane item of significance with their will. Moorhanos, on the other hand, crafts her artifacts herself in her celestial forge, creating tools and weapons unmatched. It was she who, far back in history, forged the great double-handed sword Kelhandros for Thaminx, to seal a grand alliance that lasted for centuries.

Despite her role as the patron of craftsmanship, prayers to Moorhanos for direct Miracles and intercession in the construction of mundane tools and weapons are almost always an exercise in futility; she is rarely willing to use her power to assist insufficiently skilled smiths or architects in their work. On the other hand, those who frequently make offerings and observe her commandments may find themselves awaking from dreams wherein an elegant new design or insight is granted to them.

TUKONOS, DRAGON GOD OF THE SEARING THOUGHT

One of the smallest and most insular of the Houses, the followers of Tukonos are the scholars and lore-keepers of the salamander race, those who preserve the living past. These are not simply ivory-tower scholars, however: the Dragon of Memories has tasked them with the preservation of the ideals of the past and they take this duty very seriously. As such they search out moral weakness and suppress foreign influences, acting as inquisitors seeking to keep the salamander race “pure.”

Much like her house, Tukanos is the smallest of her pantheon, with mottled brown scales the texture of book leather. However, while her body may not be as formidable as her sister gods, her mind is unrivaled by any other dragon—her dominion is over thought and knowledge, and this is reflected in her razor-sharp mind and flawless memory.

Tukanos is a polarizing figure in salamander society. Many of the older and more conservative salamanders consider her a positive figure, preserving all that makes the race great, ensuring the younger generations respect those that came before and guaranteeing continuity of today's



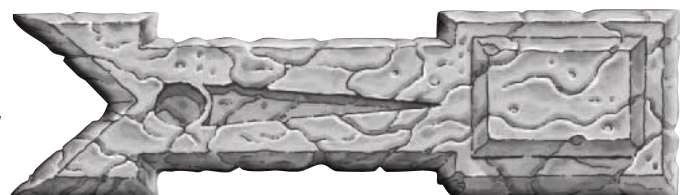
salamanders with the glorious past. While they may be of a different House and primarily follow a different dragon, many elder salamanders make appropriate offerings and prayers to her and observe her holy days.

Younger and more progressive salamanders, on the other hand, often reject her teachings, scorning the fact that the faithful of the Dragon of Knowledge spurn new science and ideas from other races, and otherwise ferociously resist new concepts. Few mortals are willing to go to such lengths as speaking out against one of their gods, but this revolutionary group (made up particularly of members of Houses of Draax and Maathenos) at best pay lip service to the worship of Tukonos.

Those who do follow the Dragon of Memories tend towards fanaticism. As they grow up young members of the House of Tukonos are thoroughly indoctrinated in the virtues of the old, tried-and-tested ways and the knowledge that has served Firekin for centuries. While any member who wishes may leave the House upon reaching their majority, few do so.

Tukonos has commanded her worshipers to purify themselves and their people, and many of her followers take this commandment very seriously indeed. Priests of the order rail against new fads or fashions, stirring up locals against visiting merchants or diplomats of other races, or those who espouse ideas the priests consider dangerous. Small groups of particularly devout followers of She That Endures take it upon themselves to roam the cities, listening for gossip and information that will mark particular individuals as impure. Even the more conservative salamanders generally consider such puritans to be unpleasant meddlers, but there are always spiteful or angry townsmen willing to provide information, either true or fabricated, to embarrass a rival or enemy.

Rooting out impure influences is not the only task of the worshipers of the Dragon of Memories. Tukonos has dominion over history and recollections, and her priests are the lore-keepers and scribes of the salamander race. Even the lowest-ranked acolyte of She That Endures can





recite hundreds of years worth of history detailing the great events of the race, and the best speakers can captivate a crowd for hours with a recitation of one of the defining events of salamander history, imbuing those who listen with a deep understanding of the virtues and lessons of the past.

While her followers may shun and scorn foreign ideas, Tukonos remains the dragon with dominion over knowledge—some of her faithful devote themselves to the study of diverse fields from alchemy to herb-lore. Research is invariably into long-established areas, and discoveries come in small, undistruptive steps that are carefully vetted and approved by a council of elders before release, but over the centuries House Tukonos has been responsible for many advances.

For all their devotion to lore and research, their obsession with pure ideology remains their public face; their extreme views and small size mean they rarely have the power to raise one of their own members to the throne, but the more conservative Houses such as Thaminx and Xethalchoate often grant power to the Tukonos representative on the council as a counter to the more progressive Houses. The constant watch they keep for slanderous and “impure” behavior by those in power, combined with their rabble-rousing potential, means they often have the capacity to stir up sufficient anger to topple unstable queens they oppose. More than one government has been torn asunder by angry mobs rampaging through the streets destroying the properties of those accused of consorting with foreign races and weakening the salamander people.

Ironically, Tukonos herself is considerably less fanatical than many of her followers in cleansing mortals of their impure influence; she generally leaves that distasteful task to her devoted worshipers. She remains extremely stubborn and rooted in the past, but spends most her time detached from the mundane world in her great library, a massive basalt tower rising from the flat sands of Jaa-naareth. Here she scribes scroll after scroll of hidden lore, tending to ignore the prayers of most of her followers, preferring to listen closely only to her highest priests and her fellow dragons, dismissing other appeals as too minor and unimportant.

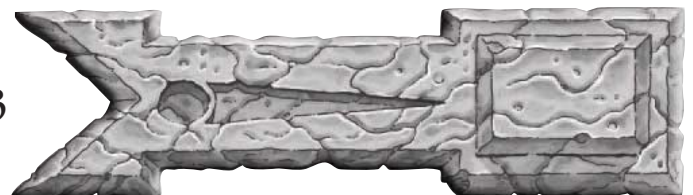
When she does seek to change the world, she tends to do so by imbuing one of her most trusted faithful with a portion of her power, allowing them to use it as they see fit to accomplish her directives so that she can return to her scrolls. While she rarely leaves her library, she always offers perfect hospitality to any member of her pantheon who chooses to visit, inviting them to stay as long as they wish, and even extends this hospitality to the deities of other races should they comport themselves in a suitably dignified and humble manner.

THAMINX, DRAGON GOD OF THE BURNING EARTH

As the dragon of stone and rock, with dominion over the skill of war, Thaminx is traditionally the most powerful god of the salamander pantheon. Unlike her fellow deities, she rarely wears her dragon form, preferring to appear as a powerfully built salamander clad in armor of shining bronze and wearing Kelhandros, her legendary double-handed sword, across her back. Her skin is striking yellow ochre beneath her armor, while grey eyes peer from the slit in her beautifully ornamented helm.

While the belligerent nature of the salamander race means that every House involves itself in warfare, it is House Thaminx that studies all its aspects. Where other salamanders simply learn to fight, the worshipers of Thaminx teach tactics, experiment with formations and equipment, and otherwise raise warfare to an art form. As a result, while a member of House Thaminx may not always be a match for other salamanders in one-on-one combat (though the House does include a considerable number of expert duelists), it is a rare army that can match them on the battlefield.

Such regimentation also extends to the towns and cities where followers of the Lady of Battle hold sway. High tax rates help pay for a strong militia, as well as the construction of new walls and public buildings. Such rule is rarely popular; many citizens object as much of their wealth is confiscated in taxes and tariffs, while the militia also serves to break up rowdy groups and other pursuits the priests of Thaminx consider questionable or wasteful. In the long





term, however, such repression does bear fruit: many of the great salamander cities owe their huge walls and soaring public buildings to long periods of control by House Thaminx.

The temples of the Dragon of War are generally also built on such a grand scale. Unlike most other dragons, there is rarely a distinct temple building separated from other buildings. Instead, House Thaminx prefers large building complexes, which combine rooms and dormitories for priests, acolytes, and militia members with drill fields, dining halls, and rooms consecrated for worship. In traditional structures, the main altar building is directly connected to the drill field, so the inner sanctum is filled with the sound of clashing weapons.

The military prowess of the House has given it enormous power over the years. In the fight for rulership of the various domains of the salamander race, the followers of Thaminx have generally held more thrones than any other House. Such power is not without price, however, and there is no House they have not feuded with over the centuries. In many cases the threat of a possible encroachment by House Thaminx is one of the few things that can unite two other warring Houses.

They do have traditional allies, often able to depend on the backing of House Xethalchoate, and have strong ties with House Moorhanos. Their main rivalry, on the other hand, is with the followers of Xtheni. Both Houses wield enormous power and both dragons have strong influence over the field of battle. This hostility often leads the generals of the Lady of Battle to decry the braves of Xtheni as ignorant of the basics of tactics, capable of no battle plan more complex than a screaming charge towards the enemy, while followers of the Shining One dismiss the troops of House Thaminx as hidebound dullards, unwilling to take the slightest risk and too cowardly to trust in raw courage to win the day. More than one battle against other races has been lost when troops of one House failed to follow the order of the general of another, with thousands of needless salamander casualties the result.



The method by which the rival dragons choose to influence the battlefield also marks the differences in their nature. Where Xtheni values individual bravery and strength, and hence seeks to influence the outcome of conflicts by empowering his chosen champions, Thaminx is rarely willing to delegate a portion of her power to a mere mortal.

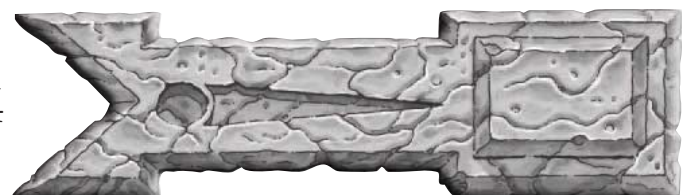
Instead, she prefers to wield her powers directly, tumbling down the walls of enemy fortresses with powerful earthquakes and annihilating entire battle-lines by opening gaping crevasses under them. These disasters are not solely visited upon other races; more than one salamander city still bears the scars of the Lady of Battle, after a mundane conflict flared into war.

Even for a god of her pantheon, Thaminx is very conscious of her status, and of the amount of power and respect she receives. As such, she pays close attention to the mundane world and actively seeks to advance her House and followers. Being a committed follower of the Dragon of War is not always an easy proposition, however. Over the centuries, Thaminx has handed down numerous commandments to regulate the actions of her faithful and ensure they better conform to her ideal of how salamander society should be organized. As a result, most of her followers lead regimented, sober lives in order to move up the complex hierarchy of House Thaminx as rapidly as possible.

MAATHENOS, DRAGON GOD OF THE BURNING MOON

The Inconstant Dragon has dominion over the moon and the night; her aspect is that of change. Just as the moon waxes and wanes, altering the face it presents to the Known World, so too does Maathenos stand for doing away with the old and bringing in the new. Nowhere in her many temples and shrines does a single statue or painting of her exist; she never wears the same form twice, and to try to portray her with a static, unchanging image would be blasphemy.

Maathenos is the god of illusion, of disguise and of stealth, and her reputation is one of crafty competence, achieving her goals through trickery and misdirection rather than main force. Despite millennia of dealing with her, her fellow





dragons all too often find that in going out of their way to thwart her, they have played right into her hands. Her skill at misdirection tends to infuriate some of the more serious members of the pantheon.

Xtheni in particular often falls prey to her machinations; his impulsive nature and quick temper makes him an easy target for her trickery and this enrages him enormously. For all their enmity and opposing natures (he represents the sun, she the moon), on rare occasions their rivalry has flared into passion—short-lived, tempestuous romances that burn with extraordinary intensity before invariably flaring out in a storm of recriminations.

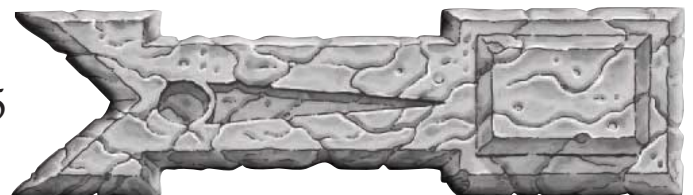
Followers of the Queen of Shadows often seek to emulate their deity's skill with politics. The House of Maathenos is famed for shifting its alliances as the wind changes, skirting the boundary of treaties to completely violate their spirit while still barely remaining inside the letter of the agreement, and otherwise seeking to exploit every advantage. There is good reason that “solid as the word of Maathenos” is a salamander saying that implies extreme fragility.

Their politicking isn't always disadvantageous to the other Houses; along with House Draax, the worshipers of the Inconstant Dragon are the ones who regularly deal peacefully with other races. Where the sea traders mainly deal with merchants looking for short-term profit, House Maathenos has established far-flung links with numerous foreign noble houses and kingdoms, even going so far in some cases as to exchange ambassadors. Any strategic alliance or peace treaty with another race is invariably made with the assistance and expert knowledge of House Maathenos diplomats.

The House of Maathenos is not a notably rich one; temples dedicated to the Queen of Shadows tend to be relatively simple affairs, filled with twisting silk drapes that shift in even the most minor breezes, hiding the shapes of rooms and making it difficult to count the number of worshipers present. Despite the lack of wealth, the House still wields more influence than even their skill with politics can

explain. The reason is an open secret: House Maathenos maintains an extensive network of informers and spies.

While most salamanders have heard rumors of this spy-network, the House goes to great steps to ensure that no more than tiny portions of it are ever exposed—this is their primary concern, and at times even vital information is not acted upon if doing so will endanger the source that provided it. Some members of the network are worshipers of Maathenos who hide their devotion and affiliation, while many more are those who occasionally pass on information in return for a monetary reward, or to avoid the exposure of some shameful secret.





This use of blackmail is one of the most potent tools of the followers of the Queen of Shadows, borne out by their rack upon rack of files detailing secrets that could disgrace salamanders from lowly peasants to powerful rulers. Not only do these secrets allow House Maathenos to influence policy and politics invisibly with threats of revealing their hidden knowledge, they can use the same threats to compel the victims to purchase their safety for a period by turning over knowledge that would incriminate a different mortal. In this way the store of secrets concealed in deep vaults below nondescript houses grows and grows.

For all their love of politics and desire for power, House Maathenos rarely seeks to rule directly. Instead they prefer to set a puppet of a different House upon the throne, one over which they can exert complete control. Not only does this allow them to avoid conflict if the citizenry should rise up—abandoning their puppet and fading away—but it is often the only route open to them; their not undeserved reputation for cunning and manipulation means that few other Houses could stomach the faithful of the Inconstant Dragon ruling directly.

Maathenos herself often intervenes on the behalf of her faithful; she rarely answers individual prayers, instead using her powers to aid her House and followers as a body. While other gods tend to have a preferred method by which to use their powers in the mortal realm, the Inconstant Dragon is less predictable: empowering artifacts, imbuing a specific follower with power, granting visions, or using Miracles directly as the whim takes her and the situation warrants. She also is known for her tendency to incarnate in mortal form and walk the world for a time, observing how individuals act and testing the devotion of her faithful. Sometimes she hands down punishments and rewards to those she meets as they deserve and sometimes...she doesn't.

KALAMANDI, DRAGON GOD OF THE FLAMING SPIRIT

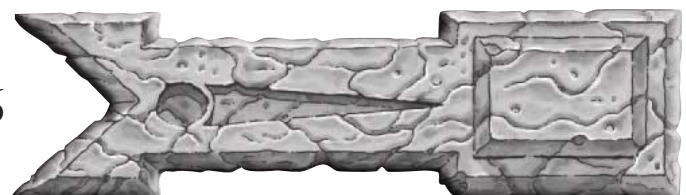
While other races may consider the average salamander fierce, dangerous, and unpredictable, it is the followers of Kalamandi who even other members of their species consider wild and feral. The Restless Dragon has domain

over the vast uncultivated deserts that form the burning hearts of the salamander empires, vast wastes of scorching red sand and rock populated only by tough brush and grasses, hardy desert animals, and the fierce nomadic tribes who roam the trackless barrens.

Kalamandi herself takes the form of a powerful dragon with mottled, dusty-brown scales, and fangs and claws oversized and atavistically curved, more akin to those of a wild beast than the well-proportioned talons and teeth of her sister gods. Her relationship with her followers is informal, particularly among the proud salamander deities. She has no permanent temples; each clan instead carries with them a small, simple portable shrine. Prayers to her involve a minimal of ritual and her priests allot little time for pomp and ceremony when they hold their short services.

Her clans follow the dictates of their god in throwing off the trappings of civilization that lead only to weakness, instead embracing the purity of an existence without permanence and concerns over material possessions. They travel in groups ranging in size from several dozen to several hundred, carrying with them only what they need to survive, such as the tough hide tents in which they rest and shelter from the scouring winds of the desert. Bodies unsuited to riding, coupled with a lack of suitable mounts, have led members of House Kalamandi to instead develop a distance-devouring lope—a slow run they can sustain for hours on end. With pack kree to carry the baggage and infants, a clan can cover 40 or 50 miles in a single day, beginning before dawn and sheltering for a few hours when the sun reaches its peak.

The Roaming Dragon has domain over the flora and fauna of the desert, much of which her followers depend on for survival. Central to these are the kree—lumbering lizard-beasts perfectly adapted to desert travel that serve as pack animals while living, and provide food, tough hides for tents and clothing, sinews for cords and bowstrings, and bones for carving with intricate scrimshaw once slaughtered. So important are the kree to the survival of the House that they are often venerated as an aspect of the Roaming Dragon herself. Other desert animals provide a





varied diet and comfortable and valuable furs, while some of the tough shrubs can be eaten or burned for warmth. Followers of Kalamandi also seek to emulate the fierce spirit of the more dangerous animals they hunt, which in warfare translates into a snarling ferocity that can shatter the morale of enemies even before the nomads manage to close to a distance where they can rip and tear at their foes.

While they roam across vast territories, the followers of the Restless Dragon are scattered thinly, as the harsh conditions force them to move from watering hold to watering hole to avoid exhausting the land's meager resources. Hence Kalamandi has significantly fewer worshipers than most of her fellow dragons—only Tukonos has a similarly small House. However, what they lack in numbers they make up for in commitment; while city-dwelling salamanders have a primary deity, they will also honor the remainder of the pantheon at appropriate times or when in particular need. In contrast, the devotion of House Kalamandi to the veneration of other dragons is perfunctory at best, and members tend to direct prayers and pleas to the Restless Dragon no matter the circumstances. A few young priests of other dragons do attempt to join the tribes and preach the importance of their own deity, but all but the most dedicated are quickly dissuaded by the harsh conditions and the scorn of those they hope to convert.

For all their talk of independence, House Kalamandi retains strong ties to a number of the other Houses. They are ultimately dependent on trade with the city-dwellers, exchanging furs, hides, and carved bone ornaments for weapons, tools, cloth, and other necessities they can't make for themselves. Despite their rejection of cultured ways, the nomadic clans still retain a surprising interest in politics. Their unusual lifestyle and lack of presence at court handicap them severely in the jostle for the throne, but they make excellent scouts and warriors when enlisted in the service of the city-states, or else may prey upon caravans and travelers if they find themselves at odds with a particular queen. As such they wield significant influence in territories where their numbers are strong, and while history records only a few Queens of House Kalamandi, those who do take the throne in such areas often do so having made significant promises to the followers of the Roaming Dragon.

Even more unique than her informal ways is the manner in which Kalamandi manifests her power: in times of need she prefers to incarnate in the mortal realm and command her followers directly. When she chooses to walk the deserts, the disparate clans converge under her banner. The harsh and simple lifestyle they lead makes her faithful perfectly suited to desert warfare, as virtually every adult becomes a warrior in times of need, able to march vast distances and ready to fight when needed. In battle, the Roaming Dragon leads every charge, giving herself and those around her powers and abilities far beyond those of any mortal. The goddess towers over the battlefield as she tears apart entire regiments of the enemy. Every victory swells the fervor of her faithful, lending her further power and strength. These savage campaigns rarely last long, as the House must move constantly to avoid draining their goddess's power to supplement the meager resources of the land, but while they do they provide a spectacle of unparalleled ferocity.

THE SYLPH GOD

As one moves deeper into the celestial sphere of Perpetual Autumn, the fallen leaves begin to change their hues from brown to white, and writing can be seen on them. Further on they pile into great mounds, now unmistakably parchment, until over a rise in the dunes of paper appears Arablis, the Mountain of Knowledge wherein dwells the god, Lugos, and a myriad of sylph souls, residing in countless tunnels and rooms burrowed into the drifts of documents. Alongside them lives a moderate contingent of other races that have been caught up in the eternal quest of knowledge for its own sake, who the sylphs are happy to share their endless research with.

Rumor has it that Arablis contains all the information ever recorded, and souls, spirits, and gods visit it hoping to learn some secret they desire. Lugos and his faithful are happy to allow them to search, but it rapidly becomes apparent that they have no hope of finding a single scrap of paper in a mound that reaches miles into the sky. Without the assistance of the god Lugos they have no hope of success, and so he acquires gifts, secrets, and favors in return for helping those who visit him.





LUGOS, GOD OF THOUGHT, DESIRE, WIND AND SKY

Despite his position as sole god of the sylphs, Lugos exhibits none of the obsessive jealousy that so often characterizes powerful deities who are not part of a larger pantheon. In fact, he pays so little heed to his followers—and they to him—that mortals of other races joke that the sylphs used to have other gods, but simply forgot their existence over time. Mockery aside, Lugos can still wield tremendous power on the rare occasions he feels the need, and as God of Thought and Desire, he has domain over two aspects that define the life of every sylph: the constant quest for knowledge and possessions.

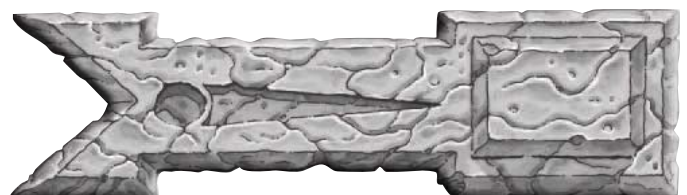
Lugos' favored form resembles that of a mortal sylph, but with much larger wings of leather so fine as to be translucent. Extremely long ears that droop to his waist



top off a slender, almost androgynous body of sleek black fur. An observer will take some time to notice these details, however; eyes are immediately drawn to the numerous bright sparkling ornaments, knick-knacks, and jewels that adorn his fur. Some of the mad variety of gewgaws Lugos finds in his explorations of the great mountain of Arablis; others are brought to him by the loyal sylph souls that also inhabit his home, and some he simply wills into existence to suit his whim. To an observer from another race, the mad, pattern-less ornamentation appears crass and tacky, but mortal sylphs understand it as a potent symbol of their god's power: it not only shows off his many acquisitions, but draws attention to him and proves he has no need to conceal himself from those who might harm him.

Mortal sylphs rarely have such luxuries and tend to restrict themselves to dull, utilitarian clothing when on the hunt for secrets and possessions. Their boundless avarice and inquisitiveness often excites ire among other races, or leads them into some other danger. Despite sharp fangs and claws, their small size and light frames make them poor fighters. However, they have one advantage not shared by any other intelligence race: flying. Unfurling their large leather wings, they can take to the air and quickly soar out of harm's way. Without this unique asset the sylph race would never have survived their terminal inquisitiveness, and with dominion over wind and sky, sylphs offer thanks to Lugos whenever they take flight, as well as praying for calm winds and clear skies.

While they have no formal priesthood, each sylph will have a small shrine to Lugos in their nest or cave, and they tithe a goodly fraction of the goods they acquire to their god. Sylphs are always torn between the desire to hold back as many valuables as possible to increase the magnitude of their horde, and the desire to demonstrate their prowess at acquisitions with lavish donations. These tithes are collected up by Great Gatherers, those acknowledged as being particularly skilled at the art of acquisition, who cache them in a hidden location (it is rumors of these treasure troves that often draw raiding parties of other races) and hold them in trust for emergencies and special occasions.





Lugos rarely exerts himself on behalf of his faithful. With most of his time spent searching through the great parchment mountain, Arablis, rather than using his Divine sight to watch over the mortal realm, and with no formal priesthood to inform him directly of the state of his followers, he pays precious little attention to his faithful. Only a large congregation of his faithful praying in unity, or some great disaster befalling his people, can shock him out of his search. In such cases he invariably responds directly, unwilling to delegate power to a mortal or give up some precious artifact he would prefer to hoard. He is, however, known for the inventiveness of his Miracles: he prefers blackly ironic curses and attacks on those who threaten his people, and stories of his more imaginative Miracles persists long after those unfortunate enough to have been the target have passed from living memory.

THE GODS OF THE UNDINES

For unnumbered eons, Celundynn and Plthunlos roamed the waters of Ansyllar, the eternal ocean that spans all four celestial spheres. At times they would change their forms to that of land-dwellers and venture forth to visit the Celestial Gardens or other gods, but for the most part they were content to watch over their faithful and hold themselves apart from the quarrels of other races. Peace was not total, however, as Plthunlos taught his followers of the superiority of the undine race and conflict with other races followed.

As their followers vied for power with the other elder races, Celundynn and Plthunlos drew further and further apart as they disagreed on how to lead their mortals. Eventually, Celundynn slew Plthunlos's mortal form, and the two gods set their faithful against each other in a terrible war. Plthunlos's destructive urges grew, and all but the most loyal of his followers fell away until eventually Fate itself halted his rampage.

The Great War ended centuries ago, and Plthunlos swims the inky depths of Ansyllar, worshiped by only a tiny fraction of Undines, while Celundynn keeps to the shores and sunlit upper reaches of the eternal ocean from where she watches over the race.



CELUNDYNN, GODDESS OF OCEAN WATERS AND CLIFFS

Mistress of the upper oceans and the sandy coastline, She-Who-Swims-In-Light embodies the undine's ability to adapt. For millennia she and Plthunlos, her mate and partner, guided and protected the undine race together. The Goddess of Light saw to it that the harsh storms of the upper oceans did not threaten her followers, that the rich coastal loams brought forth bountiful crops, and that her people lived in harmony. But as his madness grew, Celundynn repudiated her mate, and after a bloody internal conflict she had her priesthood turn out those still faithful to Plthunlos and led the rest to new lands in the shallows where they would worship only her. Only there could there finally be peace.





Celundynn changes between land- and ocean-going forms at will, with none of the effort and time it takes mortal undines to make the transformation. Her forms are lithe and graceful, with skins of shimmering silver-blue and large amber eyes. The top of her head is topped with luxurious turquoise fronds that resemble no mortal plant; at times of great holiness or celebration they bring forth a multitude of colored blooms, wreathing the goddess in an enchanting scent. Her shrines are light and airy—those in the water have no ceilings so as to let in the maximum amount of light, while those on land have high, arching windows. They are built from pale stone in flowing, almost natural curves and are decorated simply but elegantly with silver and diamonds. Shrines on land have a statue of Celundynn in her bipedal form as their focal point, while those underwater have a sculpture of her aquatic shape at their center.

As goddess of light, Celundynn has particular dominion over physical art and beauty: particularly gifted artists or beautiful youths are said to be “blessed by Celundynn,” and are often selected for the priesthood. Beaches and other lands by bodies of water are also her domain, and undines making the transformation to their bipedal form will float on the surface in the shallows while they change, exposing themselves to as much sunlight as possible to receive her blessing. She oversees the crops grown around the lakes and seas that provide food for her faithful, and in times of hardship is known for her willingness to bless the crops and make them swell with supernatural vigor.

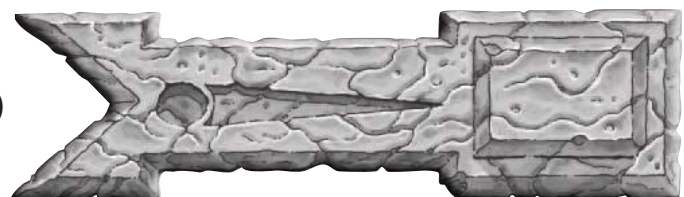
As the Great Mother of the undine race, Celundynn’s priesthood traditionally held supporting roles in running mortal society while the priesthood of Plthunlos took more active roles in warfare and rulership. With the ousting of the latter, the priesthood of She-Who-Swims-In-Light has assumed all roles over government. Since taking total control, they have instituted more and more rules governing every aspect of undine life, some commandments handed down by Celundynn, some strictures of their own devising, all to keep their people safe and productive. After centuries of such reforms, most undines now lead deeply regimented lives, with little room for risk or choice. Those who are

unwilling to submit to the system are disciplined calmly but firmly, all the while being assured the constraints placed on them are for their own good; the few who continue to rebel are eventually cast out of undine society, forced to live with the stragglers, renegades, and remaining faithful of He-Who-Waits-In-Water-Dark.

Under this new regime, the undines have had time to recover from their bloody past, a peace broken only by fitful raids, skirmishes, and the occasional minor war. Art and architecture have exploded: the general exodus to shallower waters necessitated the construction of new towns and cities, and the dominance of the priesthood of the Goddess of Light ensured enormous care was lavished on the new buildings. Carved mostly from pale stone over the course of decades, and with the water supporting much of the weight, the result are cities of breathtaking grandeur, with massive, curved domiciles that can house dozens or hundreds of undine.

But this period of calm has also marked a time of isolationism: few undines now venture far beyond their farms and cities to trade, parley, or fight. Ancestral lands that had been under undine control for millennia were abandoned as the salamander empire continued to spread and the priesthood made concession after concession in return for a stable peace. The remaining undine communities are increasingly isolated from one another as fewer and fewer of them are willing (or allowed) to make the long and sometimes dangerous ocean journeys between them. Few can be found who object to this new lethargy though; most are willing to trade isolationism for peace, and those who feel otherwise say nothing for fear of being cast out.

Since the schism in which her priesthood ousted those loyal to Plthunlos, She-Who-Swims-In-Light has thrown herself into the care of her race. Where previously she had been light-hearted and optimistic to offset her mate’s dour seriousness, now she has taken upon herself both roles. Most of her time is spent in watching over her people, listening to her high priests and issuing commandments where she sees the need, taking little time to swim with the souls of





undines who inhabit the celestial ocean of Ansyllar or to visit other deities.

Her attention does have some recompense, however: with the undivided worship of virtually every undine Celundynn is more powerful than she has ever been. In most matters she prefers to use her powers directly, invoking the Miracles of Creation to help her people. But she still shies away from warfare; though the past century has been mostly peaceful, at times her mortals must fight and in such cases she invariably empowers a mortal or artifact with a portion of her majesty rather than intervene directly.

PLTHUNLOS, GOD OF THE OCEAN DEPTHS

For millennia, Plthunlos, He-Who-Waits-In-Water-Dark, was worshipped alongside Celundynn as one of the twin deities of the undine race. Undisputed god of the dark depths of the oceans, Plthunlos has domain over all water that the light of the sun cannot reach and all that moves within his realm. He is also a god of war and of violence, and before the schism any undine who took up their spears against the land-dwelling races would first purify themselves with a period of meditation in the silence of the ocean bottom, surfacing only to breath. But after a destructive series of wars, first with other races and then with other undines, his surviving faithful were cast out and the rest of the undine race renounced his worship.

While Plthunlos has been known to manifest in more mundane shapes, while swimming in the deep waters of Ansyllar his form is that of a leviathan: a vast blue-black beast far out-massing even the largest mortal creature. For all its size, the Deep-Dweller's shape is more akin to shark than whale, with streamlined form, impossibly powerful muscles, and a huge fang-rimmed maw large enough to swallow sailing vessels whole. In his watery temples (most now neglected and empty), his faithful never tried to capture the magnitude of his terrible form: instead, statues and decorations depicted only teeth, or a huge fin, or a single vast eye, all molded into the walls of the building to show that even his greatest temples could not rival his scale.



The priesthood of He-Who-Waits-In-Water-Dark preached frequently of the superiority of the undine race: as the only species able to change forms at will and survive both on land and in water undines were clearly superior to the land-dwellers. As their god of war, the followers of Plthunlos sought to bolster this dominance through force of arms. Where the faithful of Celundynn sought trade and peaceful relations, the priesthood of the Deep-Dweller counseled war, taking what they desired from the "lesser" races.

Before his worship was banned, Plthunlos also had dominion over acts of celebration, as the god responsible for both meat and music. Hunters were almost exclusively followers of the Deep-Dweller, and the great animals they hunted lived deep in the oceans where his rule held sway. No sunlight can filter down to these depths; instead, mortals must rely on sound for all things. The primitive hunting and location calls of the early undines evolved into a range of beautiful melodies that could carry for miles through the water, and the holy days of Plthunlos were marked by thousands of undines spread throughout the deeps singing such that the entire ocean would be filled with music of surpassing beauty.

Plthunlos's power is now only a tiny fraction of his former might. His priesthood is shattered, tending to a small flock of outcasts and renegades who still dwell in the deep places, while most undines offer him no worship at all. But even in the sunlit oceans a few still pray to him in secret, and many raiding parties carry out the ritual purification and prayers in his name, unwilling to go into battle without the blessing of the god of the Ocean Depths. Despite these lapses, Celundynn still receives virtually all worship of the race as a whole.

Before he was ousted, He-Who-Waits-In-Water-Dark paid close attention to the mortal realm. He listened to his priesthood, and lent his power and Miracles when he saw the need. Now he swims the deeps of the eternal ocean Ansyllar, never surfacing, never seeing sunlight, and prayers go unanswered. On rare occasions he has aided those who remained loyal to him, but to those who abandoned him he offers no assistance, no matter how dire





their peril or how hard they pray. Since the schism, the mortals have shied away from major conflicts, preferring to recover from the ravages of the wars. If that were to change—if another conflict were to threaten the entire undine race—only their God of Battle knows if he would come to their aid.

Thuun was betrayed by another god and left the Celestial Realms to live on the Known World with his followers. Still another rumor is that Thuun defied Fate and was punished for all eternity. All of this is hearsay, since the giants rarely talk to outsiders about their god.

THE GODS OF THE GIANTS

Although considered members of a minor race, the giants have existed on the Known World nearly as long as the elder races. It is known that the Jurelian giants worship tribal gods and goddesses, but venerate Thuun, Lord of Destruction, above all others. Very few races outside the Jurelians themselves know the full extent of their religious lore. It is said, at the beginning of time, their god Thuun stood alongside the elder gods. According to some, however,

THUUN, LORD OF DESTRUCTION AND GOD OF THE JURELIAN GIANTS

Thuun rules over the icy realm of Jurel, located in the northwestern region of Naalgrom. His followers are the giants, large and ferocious beings bent on savagery and bloodlust, killing anything living and each other. Despite their animal-like dispositions, the giants have very strict religious rites and worship and are very dedicated to their gods.



Thuun is rarely seen in either the celestial or mortal realms, and many are grateful for this respite. When he does choose to leave his icy domain in Everwinter, his monstrous visage strikes terror in the hearts of mortals and even the gods are wary. Thuun stands as tall as the largest Dragon God. His three eyes glow like lightning, and his coat of fur is the color of the blackest earth. His four heavily muscled arms carry tree trunks for clubs and his hunched-over body stands on two massive legs.

Thuun's followers consist of all the giants of Jurel. With limited resources for building in the icy tundra, the giants have no temples to their gods, but build shrines throughout Jurel using standing stones and obelisks. At these primitive altars the giants perform ritual sacrifices of creatures, races, and sometimes each other. Each tribe has a shaman who waits for calls from their god or the Lord of Destruction.

Thuun has one major temple, the Grun Circle, where all the tribes worship him. Thuun himself annually leads worship in Jurel, most often at the Grun Circle of Stones. He has several dozen smaller temples (obelisks) scattered throughout Jurel, where the local tribes worship him alongside their tribal gods. Because even the tribal gods worship Thuun, a portion of the Belief they receive at their cairns and obelisks is passed on directly to him. It is said that long ago Grun was a powerful god who rule





over the giants either before Thuun or in his stead. Many believe that Grun betrayed Thuun, or that Thuun defeated Grun for control of the Jurelian tribes.

Thuun is known to have domain over most things destructive, but uses storms to inflict the most harm. He also presides over death and the tribes do him honor with every kill they make. In lean times when victims are scarce in the cold north, the Jurelians will head south to more populated lands. They do not seek to conquer these other races and take their place; the giants only want to destroy.

When the Lord of Destruction is not on the Unknown World spurring his followers to fighting, he broods in his domain of Everwinter, in a great ice castle on a mountain. His abode is near to the Celestial Gardens, and the tall spires can be seen for miles around. While in the celestial realms, Thuun appears as a great blackened stormcloud crackling with lightning. He does not talk or visit with the Elder Gods, nor does he visit any other part of the celestial realm. He also does not tolerate visitors, and will attempt to destroy any that step within his domain. His followers live there after death, and amuse him by fighting each other to the “death.” The tribal gods of the Jurelian Giants also make their home in the mountain, each with his or her own cave in the side of the mountain. These lesser gods are just as violent and inhospitable as Thuun. Though none dare speak of it, the mountain itself is whispered to be the corpse of Grun.

Very rare is the prayer to Thuun for assistance or intervention, and the Lord of Destruction does not answer unless sufficient sacrifices are made. His followers do not believe in calling out for help—death is as common as breathing in the frozen north—but they do call out for aid in victory. His shamans are there to hear the commands of their gods and obey them without question. The Jurelian giants use the name of the Lord of Destruction as a proud cry of courage just before battle or at the ritual bloodletting among the stones.



THUUN, LORD OF DESTRUCTION

Primary Domain: Destruction

Additional Domains: Death, Storms, Chaos

Inclinations:

- **Harmony:** Destruction
 - **Balance:** Control, Transformation
 - **Opposition:** Creation
- Belief:** 5000

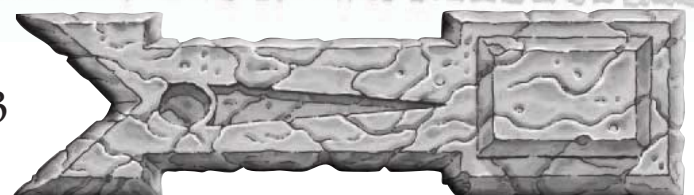
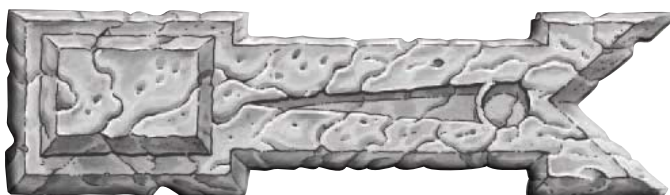
Appearance: In the Celestial Realms, Thuun appears as a black stormcloud crackling with lightning. When he incarnates (which is rare), he assumes the form of immense Jurelian Giant twice as tall as any found in Jurel. His fur is black, his eyes flash lightning, and when he speaks, it is a voice of thunder.

Personality: Thuun is short-tempered, easily bored, and not particularly bright. He hates stagnation, and loves to “shake things up.” Unfortunately for many, his idea of “shaking” usually entails destroying. In many ways, Thuun is like a child: he enjoys the simple pleasure of breaking things, and strikes out at those around him when things don’t go his way.

Symbols: The black fist of Thuun appears painted and carved on many stones throughout Jurel. The symbol is a stylized fist, sometimes with stylized rubble beneath it.

Worship: Thuun commands sacrifices, festivals, and other random acts of worship at least once a season. But there is no pattern to his demands. He may demand blood sacrifices in the autumn one year, and then demand ritual combat the next. The shamans live in a constant state of alertness, ready to answer the whims of their punishment-prone god.

Followers: A very large portion of Jurelian Giants follow Thuun, but giants as a whole are very few in number. Those who do mostly worship him out of fear as he does little for his followers. Warriors known as Brutes make up most of the elite of the giants with a few shamans known as Heads guiding the tribes on raids into other lands and other tribes.





Tribal Followers of Thuun

Total number of followers: 3000

25% Brutes (Warriors), 5% Heads (Shamans)

Brutes of Thuun: (Total 750)

Body: d10+5 (+1 Bonus for better armor and weapons.)

Mind: d6

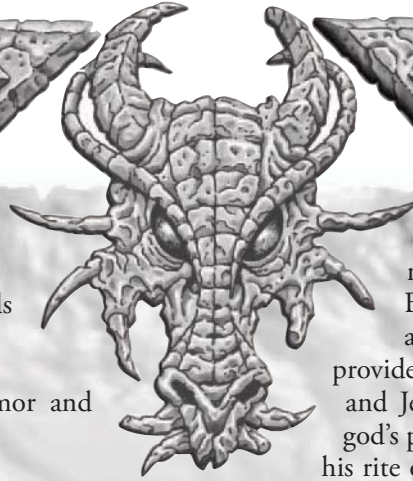
Spirit: d6

Heads of Thuun (Shamans): (Total 150)

Body: d10+4

Mind: d6+1 (Use of small arcane magic)

Spirit: d8 (Step up die bonus for fearlessness)



black patch near his chest that closely resembles a black fist. Jesanoc never speaks. Before he was born, Jesanoc was promised as a sacrifice to Thuun should the god provide a victory for his parents. Thuun provided, and Jesanoc was faithfully turned over to the god's priests when he was born. Upon surviving his rite of passage, Jesanoc's fur changed from its natural light-blue color to its current coloration, and he refused to speak ever again. Since then, he has roamed the north lands, guided by Thuun's voice urging him to seek and destroy the god's enemies.

Heroes and Artifacts: Thuun has had many heroes over the years. He sends them on destructive sprees that generate a nice bounty of Belief for him, but inevitably end in his heroes' deaths. Below are three of his current heroes:

- **Hudur, Giant Warlord:** A stark white giant who wears nothing but a sash of human skulls, Hudur has been leading his tribe on a series of raids against the humans to the south. Hudur has been blessed by Thuun with "Eyes of Lightning." When he uses his gift, his eyes flash and he can see for hundreds of miles in any direction, regardless of any obstacles. He can look through mountains to see the ambush waiting on the other side, spot an enemy general sitting with his lieutenants in their tent, or watch a human army go on the march and leave its village defenseless. Hudur's god-given gift allows him to be a brilliant tactician, since he almost always knows where his enemies are. In game terms, all those who follow Hudur's plan increase their die type by one level in combat.

Hudur Giant Warlord of Thuun

Body: d10 +5 (Crude bronze sword and bronze shield)

Mind: d6 +2 (Brilliant Tactician—use of god miracle)

Spirit: d6 +2 (Fearless)

Eyes of Lightning (Cost: 30 (Trivial Alteration (2), Scale +3, Duration +0, Inclination -1, Location +1, Domain 0, Used monthly +2))

- **Jesanoc, the Fist of Thuun:** Jesanoc is enormous, even by Giant standards. He stands more than three times as large a man, and just as wide. His fur is pale grey, with a large

Jesanoc the Fist of Thuun

Body: d12+4 (Godlike strength and endurance)

Mind: d6

Spirit: d6 +2 (Fearless)

- **Pietan, the Voice of Thunder:** A wizened old female Giant who is losing patches of hair, Pietan wanders through Jurel, speaking for Thuun as his high priest. She is close to three hundred years old, but remains strong due to the power of Thuun coursing through her. Pietan is a powerful speaker. This is partially due to practice, and partially due to her supernaturally loud voice. She can also call down lighting (or rain or hail) at will, which is always good for getting the crowd's attention.

Pietan the Voice of Thunder

Body: d10+1

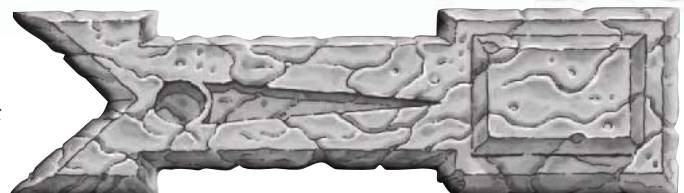
Mind: d6 +2 (Intelligent and powerful speaker, May use some arcane magic and miracle gift from her god)

Spirit: D8 +4 (Chosen of the god, Fearless)

Create Storm (Cost: 16 (Trivial Innovation (4), Scale +3, Duration +0, Inclination +1, Location -1, Domain -2, Used monthly +2))

Major Commandments:

Thuun is too chaotic to maintain a strict set of laws. Instead, he encourages his followers to abide by a set of guidelines: Destroy anything not of Giant kind, attack those who are weaker than you, and fight not with honor but to win.





Favored Miracles:

• **Hail of Stones:** When enraged, Thuun unleashes a mighty storm of stones. Rocks ranging from pea-sized pebbles all the way up to boulders the size of man rain down from the heavens, laying waste to an area the size of a large town. Mechanically, this miracle creates 5d6 of resources bent on destroying the village. Cost: 20 (Minor Innovation of Creation (5), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination +1, Location +1, Domain -2, Total 3)

• **Crushing Fist:** Thuun likes to smash things. He especially likes to smash the walls of his enemies, and the temples of his rivals. When he performs this miracle, the target (one large building or the equivalent) crumbles as if struck from the roof with a terrible force. In game terms, this miracle removes a resource up to d12. Cost: 8 (Legendary Innovation of Destruction (8), Scale +1, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +1, Domain -2, Total 1)

• **Wave of Decay:** One of his few subtle miracles, this one Thuun likes to use when his people go to war. He unleashes a wave of entropy across his enemy's army, infusing their weapons, armor, and equipment with decay. Mechanically, he reduces all the resources in one territory one die type. He may do this multiple times. Cost: 4 (Trivial Alteration of Destruction (2), Scale +3, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +1, Domain -2, Total 2).

Gods of this setting are able to do much more than pass judgement on the masses. As a God you are a powerful spirit intangible in a natural state able to affect the known world with miracles obtained through the belief of your followers. Gods may travel from their temples to the earth with the aid of their ancient heralds. The gods of the Elder Gods of old times will followers as wind ages and descend into the known world to directly interpret God's will wherever they are and can respond

species of humanity struggling for survival beside six Elder Gods and their ancient gods. The gods of the Elder

get to describe their tribe and priesthood temples heralds. Those and even their heralds and hell.

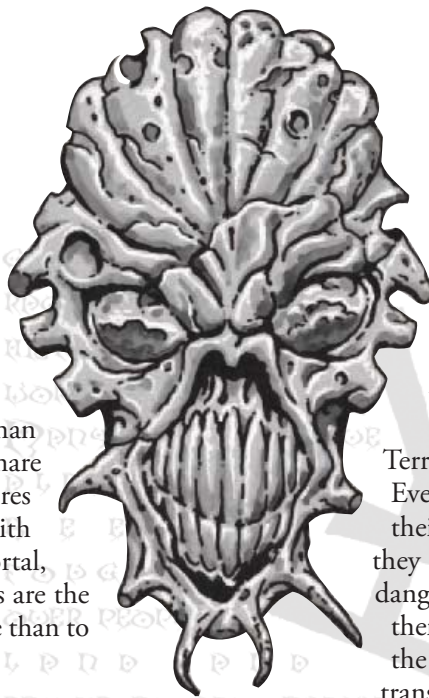


CHAPTER 4: LEVIATHANS

There are monsters in the world. More than mere beasts, these creatures of nightmare lurk outside the flickering campfires of civilization, their eyes alight with malevolent madness. Far more than mortal, yet a little less than gods, these creatures are the Leviathans, and they want nothing more than to feast on the fears of their victims.

COSMOLOGY OF TERROR

Leviathans are former spirits or demons that are now nourished and empowered by Terror just as gods are by Belief. Because of their constant diet of Terror, they are all quite mad, though some may appear sane on the surface. In their natural state, Leviathans are invisible, incorporeal entities trapped in the mortal realm. Though they can



enter the Veil of Dreams (see below), the gates of the Celestial Spheres are forever closed to them, which only adds to their rage.

Terror is everything to the Leviathans. Everything they do is geared toward claiming their next banquet of fear, and the longer they go without, the more desperate—and dangerous—they become. Unfortunately for them, mortals have a finite capacity for fear: the first time all their first-born children are transformed into hideous squid-monsters, the tribe is certainly terrified. But by the fifth time it

happens, the tribe is more despondent than scared, and the Leviathan goes hungry.

Therefore, Leviathans must constantly up the ante of their Terror attacks, so that each is more horrible than the last. In this way, they wring all the Terror possible from a mortal tribe, usually destroying the tribe in the process. Without a tribe's Terror to sustain them, the Leviathans must move on or whither away for lack of Terror. A Leviathan without Terror reverts to its natural spirit or demon state, with very limited ability to influence the physical world.

ABILITIES

Mechanically, Leviathans are very similar to gods, though they are sustained by Terror and not Belief. Specifically, Leviathans can:

- Only directly affect the mortal world by spending Terror.
- Possess a mortal creature indefinitely by spending a single Terror.
- Incarnate into a mortal form by spending a single Terror.
- Incarnate into a monstrous form through the use of Miracles.
- Have no territory to call their own. When calculating Miracle cost, they are never considered to be inside their own territory.
- Never receive Belief directly. Any Belief-generating mortal activities (sacrifices, worship, etc.) generate Terror instead.
- Enter the Veil of Dreams at will.





DEFEATING LEVIATHANS

Aside from rival gods, Leviathans are probably the most dangerous supernatural threat the PCs will face. If left unchecked, a Leviathan that's feeding on the PCs' tribe will eventually destroy that tribe, leaving nothing but a few shattered survivors too devastated to offer their Belief to anyone or anything.

The key to defeating a Leviathan is to destroy its stockpile of Terror. This means performing Miracles that oppose the Leviathan and sustain the tribe in the face of its attack. Such Miracles rob the Leviathan of its Terror, and transform that Terror into Belief for the Miracle-working god. (For complete rules and examples of gaining Belief through Miracles, see the "Conflict Resolution" section.) If a Miracle is within the Leviathan's weakness (see below) it may provide even more Belief.

A Leviathan without Terror reverts to its original form (a spirit or demon). It is powerless to affect the physical world, and is subject to the whims of any gods that find it. Once a Leviathan is reduced to this state, a god can take it captive by spending a single point of Belief. A captive Leviathan can be brought to Fate for judgment, imprisoned in the god's Celestial Realm, or released back into the Known World (perhaps inside an enemy's territory). A captive Leviathan can also be "bound" to a location or object in the Known World, though it costs a Belief per season to keep the Leviathan bound.

LEVIATHANS IN THE VEIL OF DREAMS

The Veil of Dreams is a wild, turbulent place where the minds of mortals and immortals can meet and mingle and come away changed. For Leviathans, the Veil is also vast reservoir of Terror waiting to be tapped.

A Leviathan can enter the Veil of Dreams at any time at no Terror cost. When it does so, it leaves no part of itself in the mortal realm (unlike mortals, Leviathans don't leave "sleeping bodies" behind), although it remains "anchored" to the location in the physical world where it enters the Veil. If a Leviathan makes contact with a mortal in the physical world, it can enter that mortal's dreams no matter where the mortal may be.

Once inside the Veil, the Leviathan can enter the dreams of any mortals sleeping near the "anchor point." If there are no mortals nearby, the Leviathan can "walk" through the veil looking for dreamers...and can spend years doing so. Inside the mortal's dream, the Leviathan transforms the dream into a nightmare, from which it can gain a small amount of Terror. This "dream feeding" is

not very efficient: A Leviathan must raid ten different dreams over the course of ten nights in order to collect a single point of Terror. Still, Leviathans are immortal, so they can afford to be patient.

Upon leaving the Veil, the Leviathan reappears at its anchor point in the Known World.

Note that gods can also enter the Veil of Dreams at will, and easily track down a dream-raiding Leviathan through the use of Miracles.

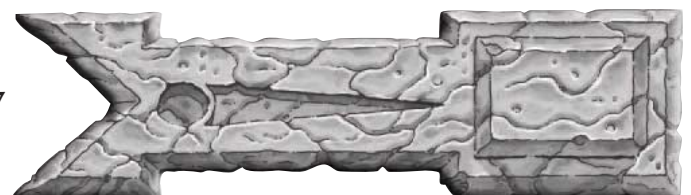
CREATING LEVIATHANS

As GM, you may want to create your own Leviathans with which to challenge your players. Since each Leviathan is unique, you can tailor your creation to fill whatever role you need it to play in your campaign. Do the players need an insidious, recurring villain? Or maybe they just need a good monster to beat down. Whatever you need, the ideas below provide a guide to creating your Leviathan.

ORIGINS

When creating a Leviathan, one of the first decisions you must make is the creature's origin. Leviathans begin their existence as either demons (souls that have escaped the Well of Souls and never known mortal life) or spirits of mortal who have died but, for some reason, have remained in the Known World.

What experiences shaped your Leviathan's personality? How did it learn the taste of fear, and set upon the path of becoming a Leviathan in the first place? If your creation began life as a mortal, what was that mortal's life like, and why is he or she still on the earth after death? Answering these questions will help you determine not only what your Leviathan does, but also why the creature does it.





Mechanically, there is no difference between a Leviathan that began life as a demon and one that started as a mortal, but the two may have radically different viewpoints and agenda.

(imagine just what a Leviathan could create), as can Transformation (“What’s happening to your eyes?”) and Control (“Why are the children looking at us like that?”).

DOMAINS

Even more than gods, domains define Leviathans. You should choose primary and secondary domains for your Leviathan that are frightening; Leviathans live to create fear, and their domains should reflect this.

WEAKNESS

As mentioned earlier, the key to defeating a Leviathan is to take away its Terror. But some Miracles are more effective than others are when robbing a Leviathan of its power.

In order for Leviathans to feed on the Terror their Miracles generate, their victims must know that it is the Leviathan who is performing the Miracle. Otherwise, the victims’ Terror is broad and unfocused; they don’t know what to fear aside from the Miracle itself. For this reason, Leviathans almost never perform Miracles outside their domains.

Each Leviathan should have a weakness. It could be as simple as the opposite of its domain (“Birth” could oppose the domain of “Death”), or it could tie into the creature’s origin. A mortal who died while seeking righteous vengeance, for example, and turned into a Leviathan, could lose much of its power when that vengeance is satisfied.

For example, if the Leviathan “Morgul” is known as the master of the restless dead (which is his domain), and the region is plagued by zombies, the mortals in the area will fear Morgul, and he will reap Terror from it. But if Morgul causes an earthquake that kills hundreds, the mortals have no reason to suspect that Morgul is on the move, and will not feed him their Terror.

When creating your Leviathan, you should give it a weakness, and have an idea of how the PCs can exploit that weakness. If the PCs target the Leviathan’s weakness, you should reward their efforts, perhaps by reducing the cost of their Miracles, giving them additional Belief (stolen from the creature’s Terror), or some other benefit. Since such things are subjective, it’s ultimately up to you to interpret how effective the PCs’ efforts are, but the weakness itself should provide a guide.

TACTICS

Leviathans have their trademark Miracles that they find effective for generating Terror. (Raining blood, for example, or creating a plague of boils, even changing the water supply to a stinking, chunk-filled black ichor.) Note what these Miracles are, and their costs, so you can perform them quickly without having to do the math during the game.

LEVIATHANS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

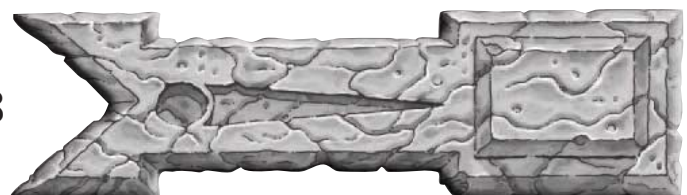
Leviathans make excellent antagonists for your campaign. Unlike Elder Gods, they’re not so powerful that it’s an act of courage bordering on foolishness for your players to engage them. And unlike New Gods, challenging their power won’t open up a Pandora’s box of politics and cascading repercussions. At their core, Leviathans are simple: they are bad, and must be defeated for the good of the tribe. Below are some suggestions for using Leviathans in your campaign.

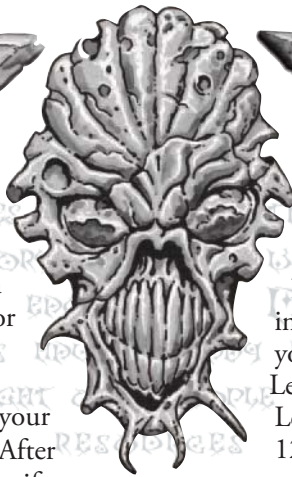
Some Leviathans have special tricks they might use that don’t necessarily require Miracles. Perhaps they possess mortals, or briefly incarnate in disguise to sow fear and discord. Or maybe they use hit-and-run tactics, so the gods have to work hard to catch them.

AS MONSTERS

Finally, note that Leviathans have as much diversity in Inclination as the gods. Just because they’re ultimately destructive forces doesn’t mean that they’re in harmony with Destruction. Creation can be just as terrifying

Mythology is full of hideous, giant monsters that could die at the hands of the gods and their champions. There is nothing subtle about this kind of Leviathan: it’s big, it’s bad, and it eats people and destroys their resources.





Monstrous Leviathans spend most of their time incarnated as terrible beasts, and often have lairs where they digest the meat and Terror they have ingested.

Monstrous Leviathans work great when your players just need to kick a little monster butt. After all, what good is it to have near-infinite power if you don't get to unleash it on your enemies every now and then?

AS AN OUTSIDE THREAT

Leviathans can serve as plot devices. Perhaps a terrible Leviathan lies between your players' gods and their rival pantheon, acting as "buffer zone." Perhaps your players can find a way to turn a Leviathan against their enemies. Or maybe a Leviathan is so powerful that only by putting aside their differences and working together can two rival pantheons hope to defeat it. Not all adventures have to focus on the direct defeat of the creature itself.

AS METAPHOR

Gods and Leviathans alike are rich with symbolism, which makes them ripe for metaphor. If your players' tribe is affluent and stagnant, for example, you could attack them with a Leviathan that is a metaphor for "sloth" or "corruption." If the tribe is made up of simple, nomadic hunters, the Leviathan could be a metaphor for technological advancement (it uses pulleys and wheels!), or maybe the dangers of overhunting. In any case, the metaphor should represent a danger to the tribe separate from the danger of the Leviathan itself.

AS AN EPIC FOE

When playing *New Gods of Mankind* at the strategic level, the machinations of Leviathans are resolved the same way as those of rival gods. The only difference is that instead of gaining Belief from their victories, Leviathans gain Terror (as detailed in the "Terror" section of the rules). Also, note that Leviathans have no followers as such: the only way they have dice in a conflict is if they create minions with Miracles.

SAMPLE LEVIATHANS

Below are sample Leviathans for you to use in your campaign or as inspiration for creating your own Leviathans. Assume that a challenging Leviathan has 100 Terror per PC god, a weak Leviathan has 75 per PC, and a strong one has 125.

Ahknath, the Withering Worm

Primary Domain: Decay

Additional Domains: Worms and Maggots

Inclinations:

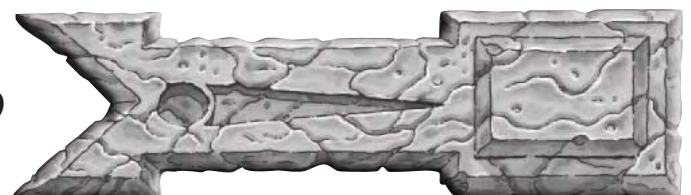
- Harmony: Destruction
- Balance: Control, Transformation
- Opposition: Creation

Description: Ahknath is a Leviathan of corruption and rot found in region of Samona. It spends most of its time incarnated in the form a pale, pulsating maggot-like creature as tall as a man and four times as long. Its slick, segmented body moves as fast as a trotting horse along the ground through a series of pulses and wriggles that is rather disturbing to watch.

Personality: While Ahknath may not be truly mindless, the creature does not speak or otherwise communicate with others, and is driven more by instinct than any specific malice—evidence that it began its existence as a demon rather than the spirit of a mortal. When on the hunt for Terror, Ahknath appears on the outside edge of a populated area, then circles the region in an ever-tightening spiral, tainting the crops, structures, and mortals inside the circle with a black rot as it closes in. If the creature comes to a village with buildings, it must destroy those rot-weakened buildings. The Leviathan's taint is limited the area directly around its physical form, however, so if Ahknath cannot move, it cannot spread its rot.

Favored Miracles:

- Worm Form: This form gives the Leviathan the following stats: Body d10+4 (hard to damage), Mind d10-2 (less than an animal), Spirit 0 (not much of a talker). Cost: 56 (Major Innovation of Creation (7), Scale 0, Duration +3, Inclination +1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 4)





- **Aura of Rot:** All organic material within the worm's circle begins to decay. It reduces one die type every four hours until dead. Cost: 8 (Significant Alteration of Destruction (4), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)

Bemikis, the Stone Slug

Primary Domain: Stone
Additional Domains: Trickery

Inclinations:

- Harmony: Transformation
- Balance: Creation, Destruction
- Opposition: Control

Description: Bemikis usually incarnates as a shapeless blob the size of a cottage that can turn anything it touches to stone. Its flesh is a mottled gray-green in color, and jiggles most unwholesomely when touched. It moves by shifting some unseen weight within its body, allowing it to roll and ooze wherever it needs to go. Bemikis most commonly appears in Lashon.

Personality: Bemikis is a trickster. Rather than simply rolling through a populated area turning everyone to stone, it prefers to lure its victims to their stony fates. The Leviathan manifests near a populated area (such as outside a village) and waits to be discovered. If necessary, it sings a haunting, alien tune to attract the curious. Bemikis began its existence as a mortal thief, con artist, and murderer. Caught and executed for his crimes, he pulled one last trick—avoiding his final judgment.

When first encountered, Bemikis does not move or use its stone-touch ability, but lays motionless until its victims feel safe around him. Then it moves with lightning speed, enveloping its prey and chasing down any who are fleeing, turning them all to stone and reveling in their Terror.

Bemikis' main weakness is that it has no power over something—or someone—already made of stone. Its

trickster nature can also work against it. If the people around the Leviathan simply ignore it, the creature loses its patience and goes on a careless rampage.

Favored Miracles:

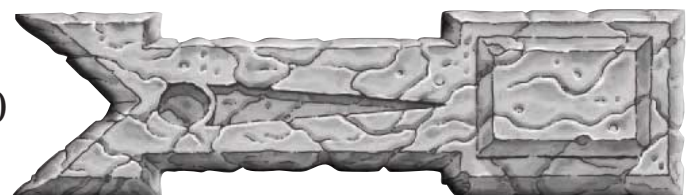
- **Blob Form:** This form gives the Leviathan the following stats, and the ability to squeeze itself through any opening. Body d10+2 (very fast), Mind d10+2 (thinking up tricks), Spirit d10+1 (ego of a trickster). Cost: 28 (Major Innovation of Creation (7), Scale 0, Duration +3, Inclination +0, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

- **Stone Touch:** Any organic material that touches Bemikis immediately turns to stone. If only part of a creature (like a human's hand) is touched, only that portion changes to stone. It remains connected to the body, but it is dead weight; the creature has no control over it. If the vital organs are affected, the creature dies. Even if the creature survives, it is unable to continue fighting. Cost: 6 (Significant Innovation of Transformation (6), Scale 0, Duration +2, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2 Total 1)

- ***Blob Budding (Creation):** Bemikis can "bud" off smaller versions of itself that have the same "stone touch" powers. These creatures are a little smaller than a man is, and not very intelligent, but follow simple orders from Bemikis such as "destroy that" or "bring that to me." Bemikis can also sense through its offspring and control them directly if it wishes. The smaller blobs have the following stats, Body d6+2, Mind d6-1, and Spirit d6-1. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Creation (5), Scale 0, Duration +2, Inclination -0, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)(*Note: This miracle is cast along with Stone Touch as every little blob will have the same ability as Bemikis. Total cost is 16 to create the Blob Budding with the same abilities as Bemikis.)

Chalnak, the Sea Devil

Primary Domain: Water
Additional Domains: Organic Growth, Vengeance, Water Travel





Inclinations:

- Harmony: Creation
- Balance: Destruction, Transformation
- Opposition: Control

Description: Chalnak is an ocean-dwelling Leviathan, found mostly in the waters of Ar-Nadull, who remains incarnated as an enormous squid-like creature the size of a large ship. It has at least six tentacles: some with traditional suckers, some with hook-like barbs for snaring food, and some lined with eyeballs that allow it to see wherever it might be hunting. The creature can sprout new tentacles as needed. At the center of the tentacles is a round, tooth-ringed mouth that is large enough to swallow a man whole.

Personality: Chalnak is extremely vindictive. On the ocean, it feeds by hounding lone vessels for days until it finally sinks the ship, drowns those on board, and feeds on their dying Terror. But if one of those aboard should survive the attack, Chalnak uses its Miracles to follow the survivor, even on land, until it can harvest the poor soul's final scrap of Terror.

The Leviathan uses its Miracles to open mystical portals to any body of water larger than a washtub. Sending its eye-tentacles through the portals, it can see where its victims are. Then using other tentacles, it reaches through the portal, grabs its victims, and pulls them back through into the ocean. If the body of water is large enough, Chalnak can swim through in its entirety. If Chalnak doesn't have any ships to harass, sometimes it uses the portals as its primary feeding tactic.

According to tradition, Chalnak originated as a water demon who sought godhood, but fell onto the quicker, easier path to being a Leviathan. The would-be god is still bitter about its own failing, and is taking out its anger on the mortals it longs to have as worshippers, but can only have as prey.

If someone knows how Chalnak's portals work, he might be able to trap the creature on land by strategically sealing up bodies of water.

Favored Miracles:

- **Tentacled Form:** In its incarnated form, Chalnak has six tentacles: two with eyes, two with suckers, and two with barbs. Eye tentacles have Mind +3 (spotting things), and the other two have Body +3 (holding things and damaging prey, respectively). Chalnak can transform one type of tentacle to another at will for the cost of one Terror. Each tentacle is long enough wrap around a small ship. Each tentacle has its own base die (d6). Cost: 20 (Minor Innovation of Creation (5), Scale 1, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)
- **Water Portal:** Using this Miracle, Chalnak creates a mystical portal between a point in the ocean to a point inside any body of water within 100 miles. The body of water may be natural or man-made, but must be larger than a wash tub. Chalnak can pass as much or as little of its body through the portal as can fit in the body of water. Cost: 8 (Trivial Innovation of Creation (4), Scale +3, Duration +0, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)
- **Regeneration:** Chalnak can add new tentacles at will, either to replace those that have been lost, or simply to add more tentacles to its incarnated body. These new tentacles are one of the three types described above, and can be changed from one type to another by spending one Terror. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Creation (5), Scale 0, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)

Deenyx, the Screaming Crawler

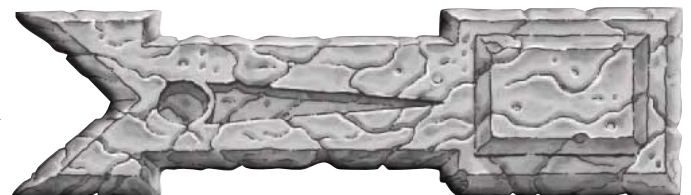
Primary Domain: Spiders and Webs

Additional Domains: Confinement, Consumption

Inclinations:

- Harmony: Creation
- Balance: Control, Destruction
- Opposition: Transformation

Description: Deenyx incarnates as an enormous red and black spider that stands tall enough to walk over a small house. The sides and underside of the creature are covered in the faces of the humans and elder races it has devoured.





The faces are screaming, and each can bite with venomous teeth, sing a horrid song, or lick with an acidic, prehensile tongue. Deenyx crawls where it wills, but is often found in Honoxia, where it began its existence as demon-possessed spider.

the liquid and flesh from inside. Despite common belief, while Deenyx may add the face of a victim to its screaming exterior, the souls of the victims still go on to whatever afterlife awaits them.

Personality: The Screaming Crawler loves a good rampage. The Leviathan incarnates just out of sight of a populated area, and lets the sound of its presence wash over the people in a Terror-generating wave. Once the locals are suitably warmed up, Deenyx strides into view and covers the area in sticky webbing. The spider-creature then takes its time picking through web-coated populace, knocking over structures if necessary to get at the soft morsels of flesh and fear hiding inside. Deenyx physically eats its prey by tearing them in half with its mandibles and sucking out

Deenyx has no interest in an actual confrontation with its prey, and counts on its webbing to hold everyone still while it consumes their flesh and Terror. If faced with actual danger, Deenyx gives up its physical form to flee.

Favored Miracles:

- **Spider Form:** In Deenyx's spider form, the Leviathan has the following stats: Body d12+4, Mind d12+2, and Spirit d12-2. Cost: 16 (Legendary Innovation of Creation (8), Scale 0, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)



- **Webbing:** The spider's webbing can cover a full village with a single use of this Miracle. The die has a base die of d8 for holding its victims in place (the mortals can only attack the webbing, and not do anything else.) Subsequent uses of this Miracle add dice to the webbing. (So once the village has been webbed three times, a mortal would have to overcome 3d8 to escape the web.) Cost: 24 (Significant Innovation of Creation (6), Scale +2, Duration +2, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

- **Horrid Songs of Screaming:** The mind-shattering screams of the Leviathan's mortal mouths paralyze with fear all who hear it. Due to their horror, their die type is reduced by two steps. Cost: 12 (Minor Alteration of Creation (3), Scale +2, Duration +2, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

Erenog, the Burning Bird

Primary Domain: Fire

Additional Domains: Birds, Carrion, Wood

Inclinations:

- **Harmony:** Transformation
- **Balance:** Creation, Destruction
- **Opposition:** Control





Description: Erenog incarnates as a gigantic vulture-like bird with a wingspan the length of ten men. Its eyes are flaming red, and thin wisps of smoke trail from its feathers when it is in flight. Its common hunting ground is the plains of Sssnamon.

Personality: The Leviathan strikes on clear, sunny days, when its shadow can be clearly seen gliding over the ground as it flies. When it passes over a populated area, any people touched by the creature's shadow suffer their bones turning to wood. This is extremely painful (and Terrifying), and reduces the people to immobile husks.

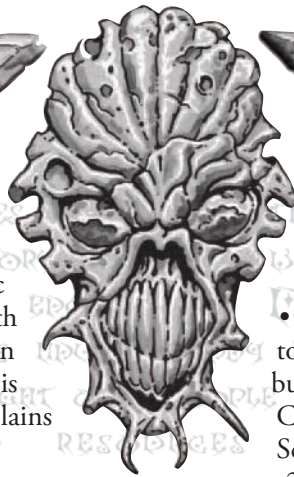
The second time Erenog's shadow touches its victims, however, their wooden bones burst into flame, literally cooking them from the inside. Erenog then circles over its prey, waiting for the fires to burn out while it feeds on the Terror that rises to him like smoke. Once the fires are out, the Leviathan lands to fill its belly with over-cooked meat.

According to human tradition, Erenog was once a Salamander warrior. His cowardice offended the dragon gods, so they cursed him into this vulture shape, decreeing that as he was the last onto the battlefield in life, like a carrion bird, so he would feed on carrion for all eternity. If the Salamanders share the humans' belief, they aren't talking. The fact that Erenog seems to avoid Salamander settlements suggests there is some truth to the tale.

Favored Miracles:

- **Vulture Form:** This form gives the Leviathan the following stats: Body d10+2 (flies fast and high), Mind d10+2 (very observant), Spirit d10+2 (enjoys its work). Cost: 28 (Major Innovation of Creation (7), Scale 0, Duration +3, Inclination 0, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

- **Bone to Wood:** All those touched by Erenog's shadow suffer their bones turning to wood, which reduces their die type 4 steps. Mortals can avoid this by remaining indoors, or hiding under things so the shadow doesn't touch them. Cost: 10 (Major Alteration of Transformation(5), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)



- **Scorch:** The second time Erenog's shadow touches a mortal, that mortal's wooden bones burst into flame, burning the mortal to death. Cost: 8 (Trivial Innovation of Transformation (4), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)

Farrakis, the Eater of Children

Primary Domain: Childhood

Additional Domains: Darkness, Silence, Eating

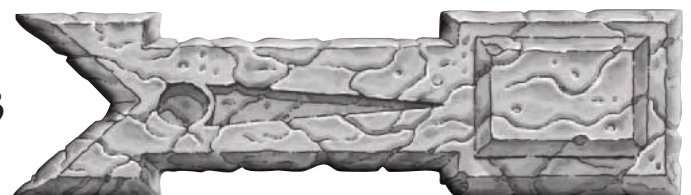
Inclinations:

- **Harmony:** Transformation
- **Balance:** Creation, Control
- **Opposition:** Destruction

Description: Farrakis is a loathsome bogeyman who feasts on the fears—and flesh—of children. A squat, dark-green humanoid with an oversized head and a grinning mouthful of dagger-like teeth, the incarnated Leviathan somewhat resembles a child-sized toad. Farrakis cannot be seen or heard by adults unless he wills it so. Farrakis prefers to hunt in cities, and was most recently reported in Vohens.

Personality: A sadistic, evil creature, the Leviathan lurks in the shadows of where children play and sleep. He haunts their dreams, and taunts them in their waking hours with giggles and gurgling threats that only they can hear. Farrakis prefers to stalk a single child at a time, reaping a little bit of Terror at a time. When the child-eater can't stand it anymore, it breaks down and gorges itself on its prey's flesh and Terror. Farrakis usually eats the child while he or she is in bed, but always leaves enough remains for the child's parents to realize what horrors befell their child. Their anguish is a sweet dessert to the Leviathan.

What makes this Leviathan even more horrible is that he began this existence while still a mortal: a depraved and psychotic child-killer, he was exposed and killed by a mob centuries ago, but his evil was too deep to be completely rooted out. If he were faced once more with a mob of adults who believe in the danger he represents, Farrakis would flee





rather than face those who killed him once already.

Favored Miracles:

- **Child-Stalker Form:** This form gives the Leviathan the following stats: Body d10+2 (savage biter), Mind d10+2 (crafty), Spirit d10-1 (coward). In this form, Farrakis is invisible to all but the child he is stalking. Cost: 7 (Major Innovation of Creation (7), Scale 0, Duration +1, Inclination 0, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 1)

- **Silent Screams:** This Miracle creates a zone of silence about the size of a room centered on where Farrakis is. Sounds inside the zone cannot be heard outside the zone, though outside sounds can enter in. (Using this Miracle, Farrakis can let his victim scream all they want. No one will hear them.) Cost: 2 (Trivial Alteration of Control (2), Scale

0, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 1)

- **Frozen by Fear:** By using this Miracle, Farrakis completely paralyzes his victim. The victim cannot move, cannot scream, cannot even blink or look away. Cost: 5 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale 0, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2,

Domain -2, Total 1)

Gorgos, the Serpent Queen

Primary Domain: Snakes

Additional Domains: Poison, Mind-Control

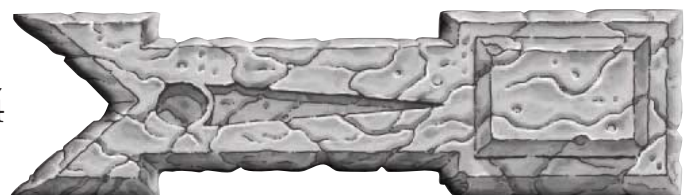
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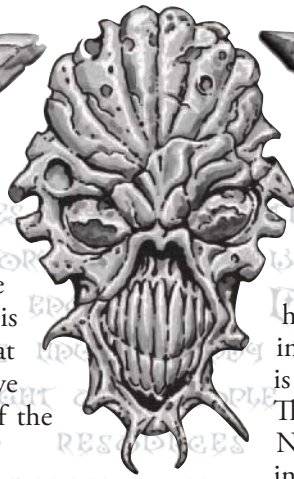
- **Harmony:** Transformation
- **Balance:** Creation, Control
- **Opposition:** Destruction

Description: When incarnated, Gorgos looks like an attractive human woman... until she opens her mouth impossibly wide to reveal a nest of poisonous vipers writhing and striking like a mouthful of hissing, prehensile tongues. She can expel the snakes if she wishes, launching them several feet from her mouth. Gorgos commonly rides from one place to another in the Yannawy region atop a giant black snake.

Personality: Gorgos is as cold as she is beautiful. Her common tactic is to slither into a highly populated area. Her mouth explodes with snakes, which immediately start biting and spreading mayhem. Those who are bitten by the snakes lose all muscle control within minutes. While they remain fully conscious (and therefore feeding Gorgos their Terror), the bitten are given over to a horrible twitching and twisting as their own muscles betray them. This involuntary motion brings her victims together into a long chain of flesh on the ground. The victims' flesh begins to meld together, and their writhing turns into the coordinated movements of a giant black snake. The victims are aware and giving off Terror right up until their transformation into a snake is complete.

Before she was a Leviathan, Gorgos was human. She and





her family were poisoned by a jealous rival. Her final moments were filled with bitter rage that changed her into the vicious creature she is today. If she were to see vengeance upon that rival's descendents, she might be able to give up her role as Leviathan and seek the rest of the Celestial realm.

Favored Miracles:

- Mouth of Vipers: Gorgos creates her mouth-vipers in batches of ten. The snakes' bites are painful, and while not directly poisonous, do make the victim susceptible to the "Snake Dance" Miracle (below). The snakes have a Body stat of d4. Cost: 8 (Trivial Innovation of Creation (4), Scale +1, Duration +1, Inclination 0, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)
- Snake Dance: Those who are bitten by Gorgos' snakes lose all muscle control, and are given over to a loathsome writhing that draws them instinctively together. Once all the victims are touching, this Miracle melds them together to form a single giant snake with a Body stat of d10. Cost: 28 (Major Innovation of Transformation (7), Scale +1, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)
- Control Snakes: As the queen of snakes, Gorgos can control all snakes within ten miles. This includes the giant snakes she creates with her Miracles, and those victims on their way to becoming those giant snakes. Cost: 5 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale +1, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 1)

Hodd, the Dream Stalker

Primary Domain: Dreams and Nightmares
Additional Domains: Madness, Exhaustion

Inclinations:

- Harmony: Control
- Balance: Creation, Transformation
- Opposition: Destruction

Description: When Hodd incarnates, the Leviathan takes on an appearance similar to the people nearby that it plans

to prey upon. It does its best to fit in, but its mind is full of madness, and its heart full of hate, so its disguise doesn't last long if forced to interact with people. In its natural state, Hodd is a gray shadow with long, claw-like fingers. The Leviathan has been reported throughout Naalgrom, but is most commonly encountered in the inhospitable land of Atanastan.

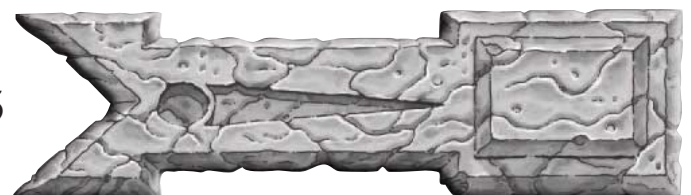
Personality: Hodd is manipulative and cruel. Beyond the rush that Terror brings, the Leviathan just enjoys tormenting mortals. Hodd only incarnates in order to make contact with its prey. After touching them, listening to them, looking into their eyes, and coming to know their souls, the Leviathan reverts to its true form and prepares for the hunt. Before it was a Leviathan, Hodd was a demon who lived among the merciless men of Atan, so it equates its spirit form with safety and power.

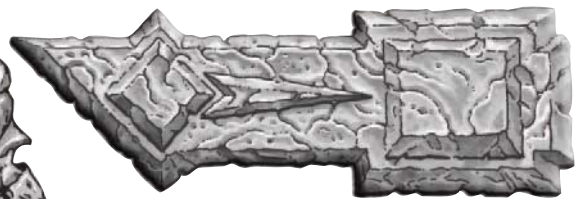
While any Leviathan can haunt the dreams of mortals, Hodd specializes in it. It is a master of creating nightmares, and torments its victims until they are afraid to sleep. At that point, Hodd begins creating environments and circumstances during the day that simulate the nightmares. The Leviathan replicates a set of illusions based off of what it learns scares its victims the most, and feeds off the resulting Terror. In the end, Hodd's victims don't all die. Many just go completely insane, no longer able to tell reality from dream, or waking from sleeping.

Hodd's power is much more limited in the waking world. If one were to force a confrontation with the Leviathan outside of dreams, one would find the Leviathan weak and quick to flee.

Favored Miracles:

- Lullaby: The sounds of the world turn to a comfortable drone and the whole village falls asleep. Hodd can direct this Miracle against a single target or a whole community. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)
- Insomnia: No one sleeps if Hodd does not will it. Using this Miracle, the Leviathan can prevent anyone from falling asleep. Exhaustion and hallucinations are sure to follow. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale





+2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)

- **Nightmare Realm:** Even when awake, Hodd's victims cannot escape the Leviathan's claws. This Miracle plunges up to a whole village of people into a horrible hallucination filled with terrifying imagery and events. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)

Inges, the Mad Piper

Primary Domain: Music

Additional Domains: Despair, Rage

Inclinations:

- Harmony: Control
- Balance: Destruction, Transformation
- Opposition: Creation

Description: The Mad Piper uses music to drive people to madness and Terror. Inges doesn't often incarnate. When it does, it takes on the form of a waifish boy with a pipe and large dark eyes. In its natural form, Inges is a large black bird with three ichor-stained beaks stacked atop each other. It talks through the top one, sings through the middle, and eats with the bottom beak. Inges is often heard in the bleak realm of Rothena, especially in the city of Phatul.

Personality: A doleful and morose Leviathan, Inges uses music to Terrify his victims and drive them insane. One tactic is to sing a song that only a single mortal can hear: a song so terrifying, it drives that mortal mad. Another is to enchant whole groups of mortals with a song so melancholy and bleak, they agree with each other that the only solution to their problems is to take their own lives.

Though none remember the boy Inges, the Leviathan was once a talented musician from Rothena who traveled to Phatul to seek his fortune. Instead, he found himself captured and sold into slavery. He spent the rest of his short life playing music for his Salamander masters and nurturing his anguished rage. When he was killed for some imagined infraction, his body died but his rage and anguish lived on.

Once the piping starts, the best defense against Inges' music (for one cannot simply shut it out) is laughter. A bawdy song, a silly rhyme, even a stupid joke can save lives. It's impossible to dwell on things so terrible when one is laughing.

Favored Miracles:

- **Song of Despair:** Those who hear this song are moved to such despair, they can barely act, their die type reduced by one. Upon subsequent hearings (i.e., additional uses of the Miracle) their die type is reduce further until they can take it no more and kill themselves. Cost: 8 (Trivial Alteration of Control (2), Scale +2, Duration +2, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

- **Song of Rage:** Upon hearing this song, mortals are driven into a rage; they will attack anything and anyone in their way—especially if Inges points them at his enemies. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)

- **Song of Isolation:** This hideous song can only be heard by the one mortal singled out for Inges' attention. It is a terrible, maddening song that goes from a whisper so soft that it might be thought to be imagined, to a deafening roar. The target who hears it is driven insane. Cost: 5 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale 0, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 1)

Jonakesh, the Stone Jailer

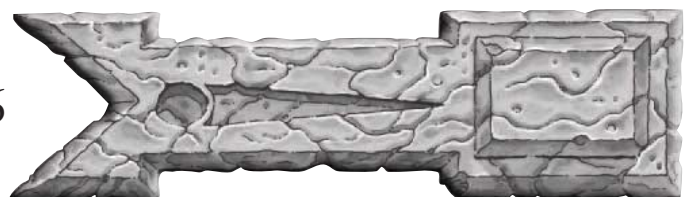
Primary Domain: Confinement

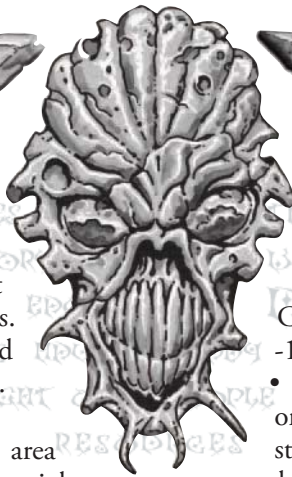
Additional Domains: Darkness, Isolation, Silence

Inclinations:

- Harmony: Creation
- Balance: Control, Destruction
- Opposition: Transformation

Description: Jonakesh draws its Terror from containment and isolation. The Leviathan, most commonly found in Jasinu, almost never incarnates. When it does, it keeps its natural shape: a man-sized pillar of rough black stone. The only sign that the stone is alive is the pair of gleaming red eyes that glower and narrow.





Personality: A former demon, the Stone Jailer is cold and merciless. Unlike some, it does not mock its prey. It does not toy with its victims. It merely harvests Terror in the most direct and efficient method it knows: the Prison of Stone.

Jonakesh selects a relatively small, populated area such as a farm or small village, etc. and, overnight, surrounds it with four stone walls. The walls extend well above the tallest structure and well below the ground, and are connects by two more walls that serves as “floor” and “ceiling.” The entire area is enclosed in a single prison cell.

The people inside the cell are left unmolested and to their own devices. If they want to try to burrow through the wall, they’re welcome to the attempt—though they will fail. If they fall to panicking and turn on each other, that’s more Terror for Jonakesh. The walls are completely soundproof.

The next night, the Leviathan regenerates the walls if they’ve been damaged and adds four new walls inside the original cell. These walls divide the prison into quarters, creating four new cells. The walls grow up from the ground and, within a minute, have reached the “ceiling.” Since the walls are soundproof, the people in each cell are very effectively isolated from those in other cells.

The third night, 16 new walls likewise grow out of the ground, dividing each of the four cells into quarters, so there are now 16 cells. And so it goes, night after night, until the stone prison is a solid block honeycombed with vertical coffins. Without food, water, or space to even breathe, the people eventually die. In the end, nothing remains but an enormous stone cube full of corpses.

As immobile and implacable as stone, Jonakesh has but one weakness: It can only derive Terror from the stone prison. While it may perform other Miracles at will, they cannot provide Terror.

Favored Miracles:

- Stone Prison: This Miracle creates the stone prison described above. Once a day, Jonakesh performs this Miracle to reinforce the walls that are already standing and

to raise the new walls from the earth. Each stat will be a d10. Cost: 28 (Major Innovation of Creation (7), Scale +2, Duration +2, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

- Silence of Stones: By performing this Miracle once, Jonakesh ensures that no one outside a stone prison cell can hear anything from inside the cell. Cost: 8 (Trivial Alteration of Control (2), Scale +2, Duration +2, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

Kroodekai the Unspeakable

Primary Domain: Knowledge

Additional Domains: Madness, Scholarship, Arrogance

Inclinations:

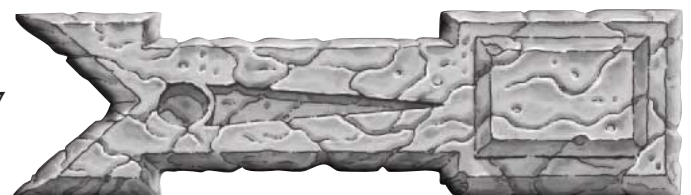
- Harmony: Transformation
- Balance: Creation, Destruction
- Opposition: Control

Description: Kroodekai is a Leviathan of the madness that comes from too much knowledge. He incarnates, usually in Kathonia, as a wizened old man with a crooked back, a satchel of scrolls, and eyes that burn with a disturbing inner light. In his natural form, Kroodekai looks the same, except his eyes are mouths that endlessly whisper secrets that only he can hear.

Personality: Kroodekai is not concerned about gorging himself on Terror; he is more interested in maintaining a steady stream of it. To this end, he employs the Unspeakable Truth. When necessary, he incarnates and whispers the secret, horrible, Unspeakable Truth to an unsuspecting mortal. The Truth is such that it immediately drives the mortal insane with Terror—and drives the mortal to share the Truth with as many people as he or she can.

Each subsequent mortal who hears the Truth also feeds Kroodekai his or her Terror, and is also driven to spreading the Truth. In this way, the madness is passed like a virus throughout a tribe, and Kroodekai’s appetite for Terror is sated.

Due to the nature of the Truth, it can only be passed from





one person to another in secret. Furthermore, those who are inflicted with it are often too mad to eat, drink, and otherwise take care of themselves, so their lifespans are usually short.

Kroodekai was once a mortal scholar who hungered for the most forbidden of knowledge. Some say he sought the secret names of the gods, or to watch the creation of the world. Whatever his quest was, it took him deep into the spirit world where no mortal belongs. He found it.

And it transformed him. Without truly dying, Kroodekai's flesh was converted to spirit, and his spirit into a Leviathan. Now burdened with this mind-shattering Truth, the former scholar is cursed to forever wander the land, sharing the bitter fruits of his knowledge.

Because Kroodekai puts such stake in knowledge, rituals opposing him that destroy knowledge (burning scrolls, punishing the learned, etc.) may cause him to flee in horror—or attack in rage.

Favored Miracles:

- **Unspeakable Truth:** This horrible Miracle not only drives its victim insane, but forces the victim to share the Unspeakable Truth with others, as described above. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Transformation (5), Scale 0, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)
- **Legion of the Mad:** By focusing his will through the Miracle, Kroodekai is able to use the senses of all his “mad children” and coordinate their actions. Control does not come easily to Kroodekai, so he doesn't do this often. Cost: 20 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale +1, Duration +1, Inclination +1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

Laamesh, the Eater of Youth

Primary Domain: Aging

Additional Domains: Children, Elderly

Inclinations:

- Harmony: Transformation

- Balance: Creation, Destruction
- Opposition: Control

Description: Laamesh feeds on mortals' fear of aging. She often incarnates as a beautiful young baby who appears as if she has been abandoned. In her natural form, she appears as a young girl with the head of an old woman. Laamesh incarnates only in the Celdynn islands.

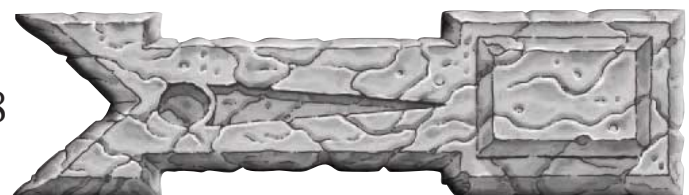
Personality: A cruel, mocking Leviathan, Laamesh is amused by mortals' fears—especially their fear of growing old and dying. It's a natural part of existence that has been denied to her, having begun her existence as a demon, and yet, mortals are terribly afraid of it.

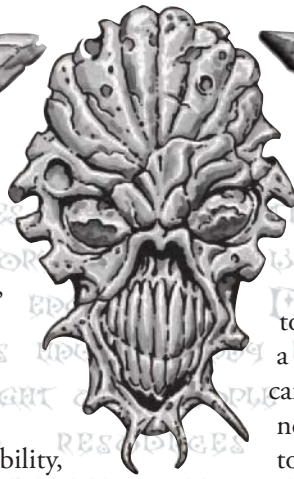
Laamesh enjoys incarnating as a seemingly abandoned baby near a populated area. Once she is discovered and taken into a mortal family, she begins to miraculously age those around her. Once they are too old and decrepit to be a threat, the “baby” walks around, mocking them and, after feasting on their final Terror, killing them.

If Laamesh were to experience the pain of growing old herself, she would be shocked and horrified. It might even give her a strange empathy for mortals, which she would also find horrifying.

Favored Miracles:

- **Rapid Aging:** Those in Laamesh's household age at an exponential rate: two days the first day, four days the second, etc. If they are children, the effect becomes obvious very quickly. It's not as obvious in adults until they start visibly aging. In game terms, the people in the household lose a die type every week until they are too weak to do anything. Cost: 16 (Significant Alteration of Transformation (4), Scale +1, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)
- **Aura of Innocence:** While Laamesh is incarnated as a baby, no mortal can conceive of the idea that there may be some connection between her and the rapid aging. While people outside her household may see it, they cannot keep the idea once they are in the child's presence. Cost:





20 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale +1, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

Morgul, Lord of the Undead

Primary Domain: The Dead

Additional Domains: Disease, Nobility,

Resurrection

Inclinations:

- Harmony: Control
- Balance: Destruction, Transformation
- Opposition: Creation

Description: Morgul, the self-styled “Lord of the Undead,” incarnates as a regal-looking middle-aged man dressed in fine furs and soft fabrics. He prefers to remain incarnate in the physical realm, in the Pashon region, where his undead servants fulfill his every need.

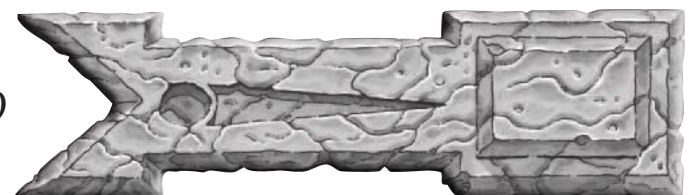
Personality: Morgul plays at being a noble lord. He is arrogant, condescending, and easily flattered. He claims that he longs to rule the realm as its necromantic master—but he is only fooling himself, since he is just as obsessed with Terror as any other Leviathan.

When on the hunt for Terror, Morgul raises a small army of undead from any nearby graves, and then sets them upon his target tribe with orders to kill everyone. Mortals who are killed during the ensuing battle are raised as undead under Morgul’s control. When the area is controlled, Morgul himself strides in and feeds on the blood and Terror of any survivors.

Morgul began life as a human of very low standing. In life, he dreamed of rulership, but was incapable of achieving it. Upon his death, he saw an opportunity to seize the power that had eluded him in life, and thus set upon the path of Leviathan. Given his origins, it’s not surprising that the truth is a point of weakness for him: that he’s just another addict; he’s not even a ruler of himself, but much less others.

Favored Miracles:

- Raise the Dead: This Miracle allows Morgul to raise an army up to a hundred corpses within a mile around. The corpses can be fresh, or they can be nothing but bones long-buried; it does not matter. With his Miracle, they are all raised to life with body of d6-1 (weakened flesh held together with miracle), Mind 1 (rotted brain controlled directly by Morgul), Spirit d6-2 (unwilling). Morgul controls the undead, and can use their senses (whatever senses remain). Cost: 40 (Minor Innovation of Transformation (5), Scale +2, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 4)
- Burning Gaze: By looking into mortal’s eyes, Morgul can take control of that mortal’s mind. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Control (5), Scale 0, Duration +3, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)



CHAPTER 5: BESTIARY OF THE KNOWN WORLD



The Known World is bursting with life. Many of the creatures that call it home are familiar to the reader—horses, wolves, water buffalo—but some are not.

This chapter also introduces some of the more exotic creatures found in the Known World. Each entry details what the creatures are like and where they are found, and provide inspiration for using them in your game. The GM is encouraged to create his or her own creatures, using the creatures below as a guideline.

The Bestiary splits creatures into three divisions: Animals, Beasts, and Demon Beasts.

Animals are normal animals commonly found throughout the Known World.

Beasts are exotic animals. Some have strange, even supernatural abilities, but they have no true civilization or sentience.

Demon beasts are destructive, warped creatures of minimal intelligence that try to get away from Demon's Reef and spawn.

ANIMALS

The Known World is full of animals. Most of them are the same as those found on Earth, or with such minor differences—an extra toe, a different shade of fur—they might as well be the same. Below is a list of animals and their abilities. This is nowhere near a comprehensive list,

but serves as a broad sampling of what animals the PCs and their tribes may encounter. Based on these examples, the GM may extrapolate the abilities of any additional animals as needed.

BAT

Found in all but the coldest parts of the Known World, the bat is a flying nocturnal predator that feeds primarily on flying insects. Bats do not attack people, but may bite if trapped. While most bats are smaller than a man's hand, some breeds in Celdynn have a wingspan almost half as long as a man is tall.

- Body: d4+1 (quick)
- Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
- Spirit: d4-1 (flees danger)

BEAR

The forests of Naalgrom are thick with bears. Brown and black bears live in the central and southern regions, often making their way into the mountains to winter in shallow caves and live off fish in the streams. In the north, the white bears swim off the frigid shores of Jurel. Bears are rare in Raanon, but a few have been spotted over the years. These are probably descendants of those brought over by colonists from Naalgrom centuries ago.

- Body: d8+3 (strong)
- Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
- Spirit: d6 (proud, very fierce)

BISON

Hundreds of bison are commonly found in herds on the plains of Raanon. They are dangerous when spooked, since they stampede away from the perceived danger, and can easily crush anything smaller than a lashon in their path. Bison are rarely seen in the same area as lashon, as the plains cannot support both herd animals.





Body: d8+3 (very large)
 Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
 Spirit: d4-1 (flees danger)

CAMEL

Wild camels are found in the deserts of Raanon, where they travel in fast-moving herds migrating from one watering hole to another. Many have been captured by humans and are now bred in captivity for desert travel.

Body: d6+2 (resilient)
 Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
 Spirit: d4 (defensive)

CROCODILE

The rivers and shallow lakes of Celdynn, Raanon, and southern Naalgrom are common hunting grounds for crocodiles. The predators usually hunt fish, water birds, and small animals in the water, but have no problems attacking humans or other sentient creatures if hungry. They are very fast, even on land, over short distances.

Body: d6+2 (strong jaws)
 Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
 Spirit: d4 (predator)

EAGLE

A flying predator, eagles are commonly found in the mountains of southern Naalgrom and northern Raanon. A smaller breed, common to the mountains of Rhok-Nirith, has been somewhat domesticated by the Frinth gnomes, who use the birds for hunting.

Body: d4+2 (sharp beak and talons)
 Mind: d4+1 (keen senses)
 Spirit: d4+1 (determined predator)



ELEPHANT

The mighty elephant is found only in the jungles of Celdynn. Elephants live in small herds and have few natural predators. The humans of Celdynn have domesticated a few of them with some success.

Body: d10+1 (huge)
 Mind: d4+2 (clever animal)
 Spirit: d4+1 (ferce)

FOX

Foxes are practically everywhere in the known world. They are omnivores, and can find food in the deserts of Raanon, the jungles of Celdynn, the plains of Frinth, and even the arctic wastes of northern Naalgrom. Wily, nocturnal creatures, they avoid contact with people when possible and prefer to be left alone.

Body: d4+1 (small and wiry)
 Mind: d4+1 (keen senses)
 Spirit: d4-1 (flees danger)

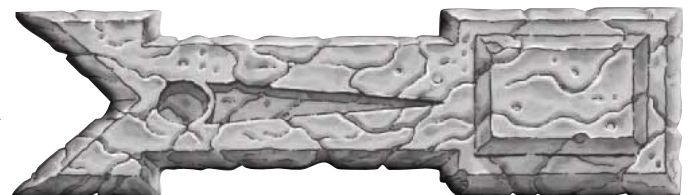
GORILLA

Mostly restricted to the jungles of Celdynn, gorillas are occasionally spotted in the northern forests of Feth on Raanon. Some have been bred in captivity and brought far from their natural habitats, but these are rare and highly prized possessions.

Body: d8+1 (strong and dexterous)
 Mind: d6-1 (almost human intelligence)
 Spirit: d4+2 (very fierce)

HORSE

Wild horses run the plains and deserts of Raanon in vast herds. Domesticated horses are found throughout the Known World, though they are less common in Celdynn and the northern reaches of Naalgrom. Horses





are commonly bred on ranches and farms wherever humans are found.

Body: d8+2 (strong and enduring)
Mind: d4+2 (clever animal)
Spirit: d4+1 (fierce)

LION

Families of lions are found in the tall grasses of Duluth on Lashon, and a few hunt the jungles of Celdynn. These ferocious predators stalk herd animals, mostly, but aren't afraid to hunt humans or elder races if driven by hunger.

Body: d6+3 (powerful teeth and claws)
Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
Spirit: d4+1 (determined predator)

MOUNTAIN LION

These nocturnal predators are smaller than man, but faster, and equipped with sharp teeth and claws. Mountain lions are found in the mountains and high-altitude forests, though they may prowl near civilized lands if they get hungry enough. They lurk in trees and other high places, and then pounce down on their prey.

Body: d6+2 (claws and teeth)
Mind: d4+1 (keen senses)
Spirit: d4 (predator)

MOOSE

The majestic moose is a territorial beast that lives in the forests and tundra of northern Naalgrom. Moose are especially populous in the Frost Ward Forest. As herbivores, moose do not pose a direct threat to people unless spooked. When threatened, moose will defend their territories with their mighty antlers.

Body: d8+4 (strong and tough)
Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
Spirit: d4+2 (very fierce)

OCTOPUS

The octopus is rarely found outside of the deep oceans, where it hunts fish and generally avoids contact with other predators. If surrounded, it will attack a potential enemy (such as undines) but prefers to flee.

Body: d6+1 (strong but soft)
Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
Spirit: d4-1 (flees danger)

PYTHON

The constrictor snake is as long as a man is tall. The creature hunts the jungles of Celdynn and swamps of Atanastan and Pashon. The snake attacks humans, elder races, and any other prey without thought beyond its hunger. It drops out of trees and loops itself around its prey, crushing it to death.

Body: d6+2 (strong)
Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
Spirit: d4 (predator)

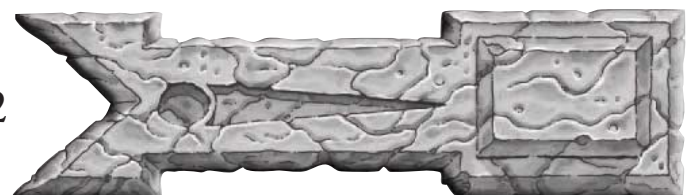
SHARK

Sharks range in size from half the size of a man to three times a man's size. They hunt the deep oceans for fish, and the shallow shores for amphibians and other land creatures that make their way into the sea. Some undines have tried to domesticate sharks, but they have mostly failed. Some were even eaten.

Body: d8+3 (quick and deadly in the water)
Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
Spirit: d4+1 (determined predator)

WOLF

Wolf packs are common throughout the Known World, though they are most common in the forests of Naalgrom. They prefer to hunt weak prey, and avoid people whenever possible. If hungry enough, wolves will attack humans or elder races.





Body: d6+2 (fast runner with teeth)
 Mind: d4+1 (keen senses)
 Spirit: d4-1 (pack hunting predator)

BEASTS

Beyond the standard animals, the Known World is populated by thousands of exotic creatures. Some are somewhat similar to the mundane animals we know, while others are alien and bizarre. Some are even touched with supernatural origins or abilities. Below is a list that is not exhaustive, but highlights the most common and iconic beasts the new gods may encounter during their adventures in the Known World.

CRESOX

Cresox are winged reptiles roughly the size and shape of horses. They have four legs, and a set of featherless wings growing from their shoulders. On land, they often walk on their hind legs, using their long tail for balance. Their front legs are small and thin; good for holding meat when eating, but not for running. Their heads are broad and elongated, like those of crocodiles, and full of razor-sharp teeth.

The cresox is found in the foothills of Rhok-Galenth. From high atop these hills, it hunts the creatures of the mountain slopes, as well as those that live in the desert of Zzzalon. It is a solitary creature, and avoids the company of other cresox except during its bi-annual mating season. Female cresoxen lay small clutches of eggs in the hidden crags of the hills, then abandon the eggs. Hatchlings are flying and hunting within hours of hatching, and instinctively avoid others of their kind.

The salamanders of Zzzalon have had some success in domesticating the cresox. The creature can be trained as a mount if raised from the time it is a hatchling, but only its trainer can ride it. Therefore, only those who have dedicated themselves to the care and training of cresoxen have the honor of riding them into battle. Furthermore,

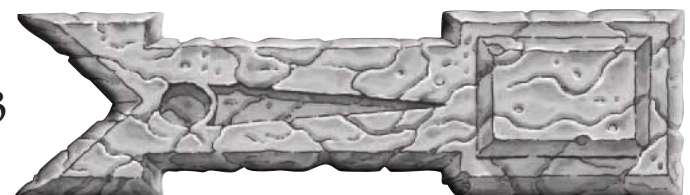
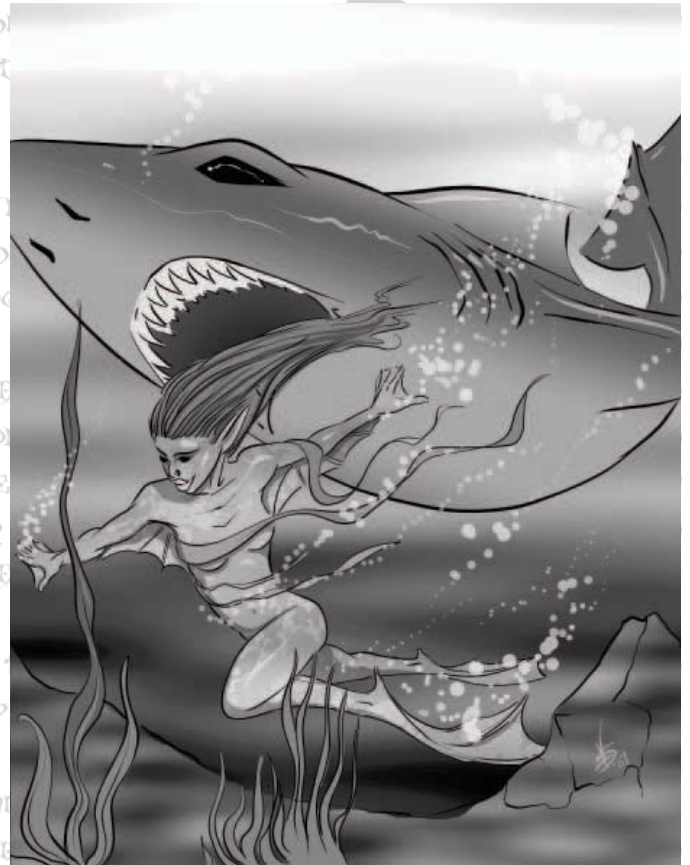


the creatures do not mate well in captivity, which makes their eggs extremely valuable.

Body: d10+2 (vicious hunter with mighty wings)
 Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
 Spirit: d4 (predator)

N'SIRRIN

Between the ice floes of Ar-Naluun, there swims a terrible predator with a beautiful song. The n'sirrin is a dolphin-like mammal, long and sleek and powerful, armed with a long, single straight horn out the center of its head. The top of the animal ranges from pale blue to dark green, and its underside is the light gray of arctic ice as seen from





underwater. The creature is not much larger than a typical human, with three rows of razor teeth.

The n'sirrin is most commonly found hunting through the frigid waters of Ar-Naluun, but has been sighted in Ar-Feslynn, and a small colony is rumored to live off the coast of Guthenoth.

For generations, sailors reported n'sirrins hunting in the Frozen Teeth of Plthunlos, but such reports have mysteriously fallen off in recent years. No one knows what would drive the predators away. Because they primarily feed on land creatures, n'sirrins live near shorelines and ice floes.

While the n'sirrin is a strong swimmer with a mouth full of sharp teeth, it prefers to use its song rather than more traditional tools when hunting. Through an intricate series of air bladders beneath its skin and holes along its horn, the n'sirrin emits an eerily beautiful song that has a mesmerizing effect on those who hear it. Those who hear are drawn towards its source, regardless of the danger. Sailors will step off their boats into freezing water; seals will swim until they're too exhausted to swim back; even the great white bears of the north have been seen diving down, down, down until they drown in search of the mysterious singer. The n'sirrin's ideal hunt is one in which its prey simply drowns, and the creature can eat the remains at its leisure.

N'Sirrins live in colonies ranging from 10 to 50, which stake out a territory some fifty miles wide. N'Sirrins are typically solitary hunters, though they bring their prey back to the rest of the colony once they have eaten their fill. If the colony's territory is threatened by another predator, the n'sirrins work together to defend their home, lashing out with their horns, teeth, and powerful tails. A colony is led by a mated pair of n'sirrins, and made up largely of that pair's offspring. They reproduce once every few years,

and only one offspring at a time. When a baby n'sirrin is born, the rest of the colony brings it food for the first few days, but then it must learn to hunt on its own. When a colony is too large to be supported by its territory, the leading pair will choose a male and female n'sirrin to leave the colony and start their own colony somewhere else.

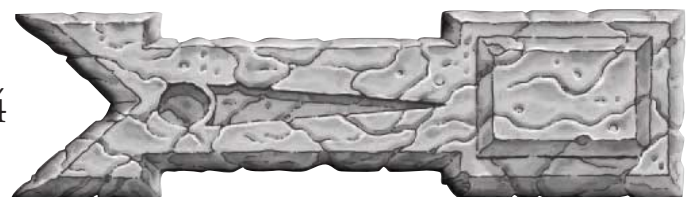
Sailors of the northern seas have no doubt that the n'sirrin's song is magical. Even the knowledge that the song is deadly isn't always enough to keep them safely in their boats. Only the power of their gods has been proven to resist the lethal call. Scholars are more skeptical about the song's magic and wonder if there's something in the sound that affects the listeners' minds. An n'sirrin corpse is worth thousands of gold pieces to the right people, and even just the horn can fetch a high price. While there have been many attempts, no one has been able to reproduce the song from the horn of a dead n'sirrin.

- Body: d6 (strong swimmer, skilled hunter)
- Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
- Spirit: d4+2 (dangerous predator)

RAZOR WOLF

In ages past, there were no razor wolves stalking the plains of Jasinu. There were wolves, but they grew no larger than a man and their intelligence was that of a dumb beast. But somewhere in the mists of time, a demon found its way from the Well of Souls to the plains of Jasinu, and took up residence inside a wolf there. Thus, the first razor wolf was born.

The razor wolf resembles its mundane cousins in coloration and shape, but grows half again as large, with a full-grown specimen stands nearly to a man's shoulder. The razor wolf is smarter as well, combining its natural hunting wiles with the crafty mind of a sentient race. The creature's





most distinguishing features are the razors for which it is named. Sharp, blade-like bones protrude like fins from the wolf's shoulders, spine, and forelimbs. The razor wolf can retract these blades when it wants, much like a cat retracts its claws.

The Jasinu plains are the legendary home of the razor wolves, though they have spread into Kathonia and are evermore common in Samona. While rarely seen in the mountains of Rhok-Drunnor and Rhok-Galenth, some razor wolves have made their way there, as testified by the bone-bladed hides hanging on several gnomish walls.

Razor Wolves live and hunt in packs of three to six. They reproduce in litters, but only once every few years, and stay in their dens with their pups for the first month of life. Pups join their parents' packs and replace them as they die.

Razor Wolf packs have a wide terrain in which they hunt. They are protective and attack other predators—including other razor wolves—they find in their territories.

Herd animals such as deer make up most of the razor wolf's diet. The intelligent wolves create ambushes for their prey, and set up obstacles forcing the herd to spread itself thin, leaving one or two animals undefended. The wolves then harry their prey, using their razor fins to cut the creature's leg tendons and bring it down. Razor wolves lack an instinctive fear of man or the elder races, but respect them as dangerous predators. If they feel threatened, they remain hidden and formulate a plan so that when they attack, their enemies are taken by surprise.

There are stories of those who have adopted razor wolf pups and raised them as domesticated companions. This is rare, but not entirely impossible.

Body: d6+2 (powerful hunter)
Mind: d6-1 (almost human intelligence)
Spirit: d4-1 (pack hunting predator)

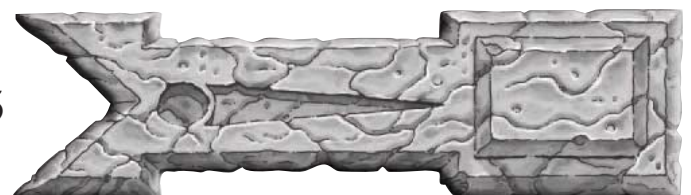
TRONODAR

The tronodar is a featherless, flying reptile with thin legs, a razor-sharp beak, and a long, whip-like tail. About the size of a large eagle, the tronodar has a wingspan of five to six feet. Its leathery skin ranges in color from green to brown. The underside of the creature's neck bulges with its scent glands, which it uses in hunting.

Tronodars live and hunt in flocks of 30 to 50. While they can feed on dragonflies, small birds, and other aerial snacks, their preferred prey are the larger creatures found on the ground. When searching for prey, the creatures separate, so the prey doesn't see an obvious flock of predators overhead. They look for creatures (about the size of a man) that are alone or in small groups, and nowhere near shelter. Once one of the tronodars finds a good target, it dives at the prey and "spits" a secretion from its scent glands onto the prey. This secretion is odorless to most creatures, but gives off a powerful aroma to tronodars, who can smell it for miles. Once the rest of the flock catches a whiff of the scent, they descent en masse upon the prey, striking at it with their sharp beaks. Each tronodar takes a small bite, darts away, and then darts back for another bite.

Once the tronodars catch the scent, they are absolutely relentless in their pursuit of their prey. If the prey goes to cover, the creatures do their best to follow, even breaking through windows or flying deep underground. If they cannot follow, they wait until they cannot smell the scent any more. The scent cannot be washed off in water, though it can be diluted and then covered with another scent.

Tronodars reproduce once a year. Females produce a clutch of several eggs at a time. The female protects the eggs





during their month-long gestation and feeds the hatchlings until they are old enough to hunt. The male has nothing to do with the female after the initial mating, and is actually driven away from her nest should he try to visit.

twice the size of their northern cousins.

Body: d4 (small and light)
 Mind: d4-1 (instinctive)
 Spirit: d4+1 (determined predator)

Crag Dragon

In Kathonia, tronodar flocks make their nests in the high tree tops. In the nearby Horn and Rhok-Kanmor Mountains, the flocks nest in the high mountain crags, and soar out over the valleys below to hunt. A larger, more solitary breed of the tronodar is said to roam the mountains of Sssthra on Frinth, but reliable eyewitnesses are few, and their stories conflicting. On one thing all the accounts agree: the tronodars of Sssthra are black as onyx and at least

There are still dragons in the Known World. These are true dragons, not salamanders, with minds and bodies as ancient as the world itself. They are rare and reclusive, and largely defy classification, but one breed that has been identified is the so-called “crag dragon” of Rhok-Kuden.

Crag dragons average a hundred feet long and thirty feet tall when standing erect on their four massive legs. They have long tails and heads with sharp, frilled edges. Their eyes are large and intelligent, and their mouths are full of dagger-like teeth. Their most prominent feature, however, is their scales. Rough and irregular, their scales have a texture that can only be described as “stony.” This effect is amplified by the scales’ mottled gray, black, and brown coloration.

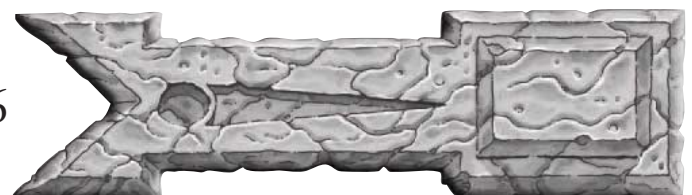


This camouflage helps the crag dragon to sleep. The ancient beast is known to sleep for decades. Insects and small animals nest in the creature’s nooks and crannies. Loose soil sometimes collects in the craggy scales, and plants can even take root. Animals and people come and go, usually not even noticing the dragon. And the dragon, so long as it sleeps, does not notice them.

Crag dragons awake only to feed and breed. They rouse themselves for a few months, then find another suitable cave or hillside nest and return to their slumber.

Watching a crag dragon awaken is a terrible sight. The mountain shifts and trembles, and rises up with a mighty roar. Birds go flying, their nests slipping and crashing around them. The ground shifts and rocks slide. Trees topple, taking other trees with them. And with that, the dragon is gone.

A hungry crag dragon can deplete a mountain of all its





animals in a few days, and then turn its attention to the area around it: livestock in the valley below, a small village of humans, a herd of goats on the next peak over—the dragon isn't picky and will eat until it is full.

The crag dragon is surprisingly fast for such an immense creature. Its hide is, as one would expect, extremely tough, making it nigh-invulnerable to normal mortal weapons. It has no particular interest in killing or eating sentient creatures, but has no qualms about doing so in the course of filling its belly. A crag dragon feeding frenzy lasts up to a week.

After feeding, a crag dragon either finds a remote mountain hollow to sleep in or, if the time is right, finds a deep cave in which to lay its egg. Crag dragons are asexual; all of them can lay eggs, though it is theorized that each one has but a single egg inside it. Like the dragon itself, the egg can easily be mistaken for an oddly shaped rock due to its color and texture. The egg lies dormant for years—usually about two—before stirring.

Crag dragons are most common in Rhok-Kuden, but have been seen in other mountain ranges on other continents. In Rhok-Kuden, they are held sacred by the salamanders, which consider them emissaries from the gods, and gladly offer up their slaves and livestock as food. The gnomes of Rhok-Kuden consider the dragons too dangerous to let live, and honor those who hunt them.

Body: d12+5 (nigh-invulnerable)
 Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
 Spirit: d8+4 (magically resistant, extremely willful)

NASSYX

The nassyx resembles a large panther with greenish brown fur, bat-like ears, a long neck, and two mouths. The first mouth is where it should be—at the bottom of its face—and filled with the teeth of a predator. The second mouth

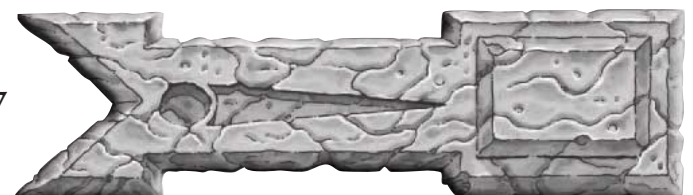
is half-hidden in the fur of its throat. This mouth has no teeth, but a complex system of muscles, tendons, and cartilage that play the parts of teeth, lips, and tongue. This mouth is not for eating, but for speaking.

Scholars debate if it is magic or nature that gives the nassyx its gifts. One thing they do agree on is the creature's astounding ability to mimic any sounds that it hears. When hunting, it uses this ability to attract prey by producing mating calls or other calls suggesting that there are other prey creatures around and that it is safe. When hunting humans or elder races, the nassyx calls out random phrases that it has heard before, but with no understanding of their meaning. While it may attract prey by calling, "Hey, over here!" it's just as likely to say something nonsensical, like, "I dug it as deep as I can." Still, people are curious when they hear a strange voice talking to them, even if that voice isn't making sense. Like most cats, the nassyx can see well in the dark, and prefers to hunt at night.

Nassyxes are commonly found in the forests and grasslands of Raanon, as well as the Lashon plains of Frinth. They are well known in the mist-shrouded woods of Gamath, where it is said they learn the names of all who travel there. Those who enter the woods hear a whispered litany of names...names they may recognize as those who have never returned from this dreaded wood.

Loners by nature, nassyxes only seek each other's company once a year during mating season. Kittens are born in litters, and are hunting within a matter of days. Within a month, their mother has moved on, leaving the kittens to survive on their own. Most of them do.

Body: d6+1 (fierce hunter)
 Mind: d4+1 (keen senses)
 Spirit: d4 (predator)





KRTIKA

Krtikas are everywhere in the Known World. They were domesticated ages ago, and have since migrated with the sentient races to practically every corner of civilization. Wild krtikas are rather common as well, mostly the descendants of domesticated bugs that fled captivity.

Krtikas are beetle-like insects roughly the size of a man's fist. They have six legs, two long antennae, and sharp mandibles for eating and defending themselves against predator. Their hard carapaces range from deep black to light green, and many have patterns of spots their owners find pleasing to the eye (some domesticated bugs have their spots painted on by their owner.) There are wings beneath the carapace, but they are small and weak; the creatures can fly slowly, and only over short distances. They can make it a long way by flying, but it will take them some time to get there.

As pets, krtikas are taught tricks and fed table scraps and household garbage. They have the intelligence and general mind-set of a dog. Some bugs have been trained to serve as messengers. The gnomes devised special sets of chimes, with each chime having a specific meaning. They then trained their krtikas to "play" the chimes by flying from chime to chime and tapping them with their hard bodies. To relay a message, the sender taps out a "chime tune," which the bug repeats. The tune has a meaning the receiver can decipher. The gnomes traded this chime system to outsiders centuries ago, and now it is as ubiquitous as the krtikas themselves.

Domesticated krtikas are raised in artificial nests. Trained keepers breed the bugs and keep the population under control by destroying most of the hundred eggs each bug female lays. Of those hundred eggs, roughly twenty hatch as female. In the wild, krtika eggs are mostly eaten by other insects and other predators, but enough survive to continue the line.

Krtikas are extremely resilient. They can withstand extremes of heat and cold, and survive times without food by going into a dormant state and burrowing into the earth. Their hard exoskeletons make them almost impossible to crush. Wild bugs do not hunt, but eat carrion, plants, and other refuse. krtikas prefer to scuttle away from danger, but if cornered by a predator, they use their mandibles to defend themselves. It is not unheard of for human children to lose fingers when chasing wild krtikas.

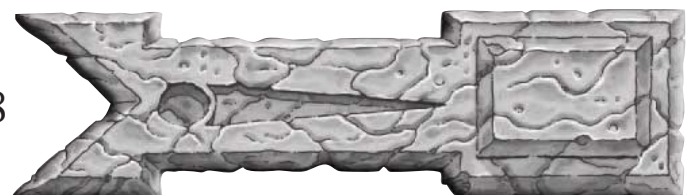
Body: d4-2 (tiny)
Mind: d4+1 (keen senses)
Spirit: d4+1 (fierce)

ARNASSA

The massive carapace of the arnassa ranges from 6 to almost 12 feet across, and can withstand all but the most determined attacks. More than one predator has actually broken its teeth trying to penetrate the creature's trademark shell. While the shell appears circular at first glance, it is actually slightly elongated to allow the turtle to glide through the water faster and easier.

The arnassa has no bones inside its body. Instead, it has cartilage that it can rearrange and solidify to play the role of bones in its various limbs. While in the water, the turtle's limbs are mighty flippers that push and pull it through the water at incredibly high speeds. While on land, the limbs shift and twist to form thick, stubby legs that allow it to waddle its half-ton body around. It is not fast on land, but it is faster than it looks like it should be. When the turtle senses a predator nearby, it retracts all its limbs into its shell, and then morphs them into hard, spiky shields, protecting the soft parts between the edges of its carapace.

The arnassa's head and tail are likewise malleable. The tail shifts depending on whether the creature is in water or land. The head also shifts between a streamlined "swimming mode" and a sharp-beaked "hunting mode."





When hunting, the arnassa alternates between eating fish in the ocean and small animals along the shore. It does not seem to have a preference, but simply eats where ever the food happens to be.

During mating season, female arnassas eat for days on end, and then swim to the deepest reaches of the ocean, where they deposit their eggs in hereditary nests. A specific nesting site may be used for centuries, so long as it is not disturbed by predators. Hundreds of turtles nest in the same area at the same time once a year. While the females lay their eggs, the males swim around the region, jousting amongst themselves to see who will be first to fertilize the eggs. Once the eggs are fertilized, the females swim back to their hunting grounds while the males remain to guard the eggs. When the eggs hatch, the males guide their clutch of hatchlings to their respective feeding grounds. Since this trip can be hundreds of miles, many of the young fall prey to predators, injury, and even starvation on their way home.

Arnassas are commonly found in the warm waters of Ar-Celdynn, Ar-Ianeth, and even the stormy seas of Ar-Nadull. They avoid the frigid waters of Ar-Naluun, but have been found on the Ar-Feslynn shoreline. In general, the turtles prefer to live and hunt within a few hundred miles of shore. They only swim to the far ocean during the breeding season.

The undines have domesticated one breed of arnassa. Recognizable from their distinctive red color, these turtles serve as mounts and pack animals for their undine masters, who count on their incredible stamina when making long underwater journeys. Undines often paint decorations on their turtles' shells to show ownership and their pride in their amphibious minions.

Body: d8+3 (well—protected)
Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
Spirit: d4-1 (flees danger)

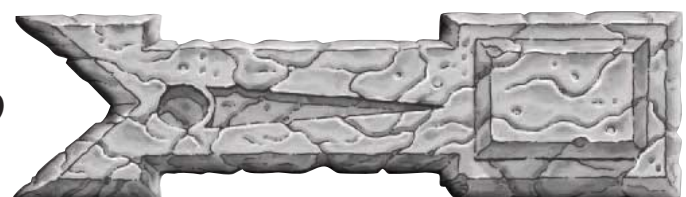
LASHON

These massive, six-legged creatures stand three times as tall as a man, and twice as long. Their long, shaggy hair ranges in color from light brown to solid black, though legend tells of an albino lashon born into every generation. The broad necks of the lashon are set low in their shoulders, both so they can easily reach the ground to feed and to support the enormous antlers protruding from either side of their wide head.

Lashon live in herds of several hundred. They are most commonly found on the plains from which they received their name, as well as the plains of Yannawy and Duluth. Lashon are always on the move. They must graze constantly in order to fuel their massive bodies, and if they don't keep moving, they quickly deplete the region of all its grass.

During the annual mating season, male lashon fight for dominance by butting each other in a sort of tournament that results in a single male winning out over the rest of the herd. This male is the "alpha." He has the first pick of mates and leads the herd for the next year. The alpha and his immediate family are at the leading edge of the herd, so they get the grass that is fresh and untouched. Those who follow have to graze on whatever is left over. The weak and old are at the back of the herd, so they have to make do, and are easy prey for predators.

Female lashon give birth to a single calf, which they feed their milk for the first eight weeks. Calves milk while they walk, since the herd is always walking. If a calf can't keep up, its mother may slow her pace somewhat, but if the calf slows its mother to the rear of the herd, with the old and weak, its mother has no choice but to leave it behind.





When a predator is sighted, the herd follows the alpha's lead. If the alpha turns to face the predator, the rest of the herd grows aggressive and attacks with their hooves and antlers. If the alpha turns tail, the herd stampedes away from the predator. Regardless of the alpha, any predator that threatens a calf will face the fearsome antlers of the calf's mother.

and common animal paths. Their nests are always well-camouflaged; a person could walk right by one and not know it is there.

Humans of the plains hunt the lashon for their meat, bones, and thick hides. The meat from a single lashon can feed a family of two dozen for a week, its bones are used as tools, and its hide can provide shelter, clothing, and even simple shields. Hunting lashon is dangerous business. Smart hunters only pursue them on horseback, and shoot the ones in the rear of the pack with bow and arrow. If they're lucky, the herd won't even miss the stragglers.

Kyphaw mate for life and live in mated pairs. The mates take turns hunting. While one hunts, the other protects the nest and any eggs or hatchlings it may hold. Kyphaws hunt by stalking their prey from far overhead. When the time is right, they dive at a tremendous speed, latch onto their prey in their talons, and swoop back into air with it. They drop the prey from a great height, killing it, and then bring the carcass back to the nest to share with their families.

The plains of Duluth are home to the "horned lashon," which are smaller than their cousins. Instead of antlers, these lashon sport numerous bull-like horns from their heads and shoulders.

Female kyphaws lay one egg at a time, once a year. The egg hatches after two months, and the hatchling learns to fly a few months later. Hatchlings stay with their parents for about a year. After that, they leave the nest to find their own mates and their own hunting territories.

- Body: d10+3 (huge)
- Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
- Spirit: d4+1 (fierce)

Territory is important to kyphaws. They do not tolerate another hunting pair in their territory, though a solitary kyphaw may pass through unmolested.

- Body: d8+1 (with claws and beak)
- Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
- Spirit: d4+1 (determined predator)

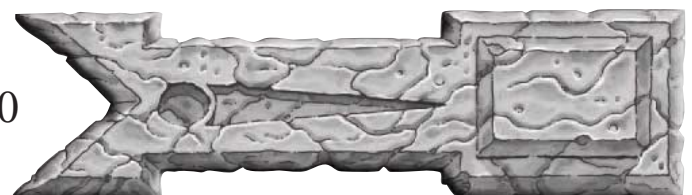
KYPHAW

The kyphaw has the wings, feathers, talons, and basic shape of a giant, man-sized bird of prey, but its head is broad, covered in fine fur, and features a mouthful of sharp predator's teeth that give it a feline appearance. A final feline touch is the long, lion-like tail that twitches nervously whenever the creature is perched.

SNAAR

The snaar is a ten-foot long tube of aquatic cartilage wide enough to swallow a man, with eight ten-foot tentacles at either end. Its flesh is naturally translucent, making it difficult to see from afar. It has no brain to speak of; its nervous system runs throughout its body with sensitive "feelers" on its tentacles. The creature propels itself by aiming its tube body in the direction in which it wants to go, then squeezing its body for propulsion. It uses its trailing tentacles for steering and added thrust.

The grasslands of Lashon and Duluth are the prime hunting grounds for the kyphaw, though some are found in the mountains of Frinth as well. In the plains, they make their nests from grass and brush far from watering holes





Snaars are found where the oceans are warm and land is close enough to provide animals on the surface of the water. As such, they are commonly seen in the waters off Celdynn, and in the dangerous seas of Ar-Nadull and Ar-Ianeth. There is a colony near the bay of Pashon, where the Ellion River empties into the sea, but the locals have discovered how delicious snaar is when fried, so the colony is slowly drifting north along the coast.

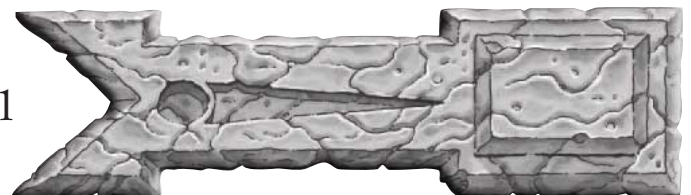
When hunting, the snaar “stands,” so that its long tubular body is perpendicular to the water’s surface. One set of tentacles reaches up to just below the water’s surface; the other stretches down toward the sea floor. When prey is nearby, the snaar shoots out both sets of its tentacles to snatch the prey, and then rotates in the water so that it is “upside-down.” In this way, prey from above the ocean is held underwater until it drowns, and aquatic prey is held above the waterline until it suffocates.

Once its prey has stopped struggling, the tentacles pull it down (or up) into the snaar’s tube body, where it is digested for several days. If the prey is too large to fit inside its tube, the snaar uses its tentacles to tear it into bite-sized chunks. When the snaar has sucked all the nutrients it can from its prey, it relaxes its body. Undigested bits of its meal float out the bottom of its tube and drift towards the ocean floor.

Snaars are asexual and reproduce by splitting; where there was one snaar yesterday, today there are two. Splitting occurs at irregular intervals and requires a lot of energy. Snaars feed ten times their normal amount before splitting. Splitting can take days. During this time, the snaar cannot feed and cannot defend itself well against predators. On occasion, snaars will split many times over a short period, leading to a population boom. It is unclear what trigger the snaar reproductive instincts.

The snaar is rarely alone. They live in colonies, though a small colony may have up to a mile between its members. A large colony consists of hundreds of snaars, packed densely enough to form a writhing, translucent forest along the surface of the ocean.

Undine swimmers are known to hunt snaars if the creatures grow populous enough to be a danger. Humans have some success in hunting the creatures for food, but prefer to do so from the safety of large boats, and armed with harpoons. Salamanders who have tasted the flesh of the snaar consider it a delicacy and, while they don’t hunt the creature themselves, they purchase its meat from those who do.





Snaars have few natural enemies. Small sharks sometimes brave both sets of tentacles to try for a bite of tube body, but often end up prey rather than predator. If a snaar senses that a potential predator is getting too close to its tube body, it flails its tentacles in an effort to either capture the invader or drive it off.

Body: d4+1 (hunter)
Mind: 1 (insect intelligence)
Spirit: d4 (predator)

ROTELLA

The rotella is an aerial predator that flies—not with wings, but through the use of a unique “balloon” sac. The mottled gray-brown sac is made of thick hide, and large enough for ten men to stand inside it. The sac is filled with a lighter-than-air gas secreted by the rotella itself. A complex system of muscles and vents along the sides of the sac allows the rotella to release the gas, and thus soar, dive, and steer with surprising precision. (The gas also has a terrible smell, which most races find quite noxious.)

Below the sac hangs a mass of bone, muscle, and cartilage commonly called the creature’s “head.” Like most heads, the rotella’s has eyes, four of them in a ring around the outer edge and a mouth with outer mandibles and inner chewing teeth. Unlike other heads, the rotella’s head also serves as its body. Its digestive and reproductive organs also reside in this single mass of flesh, and six tentacles are attached between its eyes and its balloon sac.

It is these tentacles that give the rotella its nickname of “sky-squid.” Each tentacle is 20 feet long, and lined with fine barbs laced with a sedative. Touching one barb will have no effect aside from a momentary, localized numbness. But being brushed with a whole tentacle of barbs can be quite effective, and being brushed by all six repeatedly is enough to take down a lashon.

Rotellas are found high in the mountains of the Known World. They are especially populous in Rhok-Kanmor and Rhok-Khuden, where they hunt the valleys and plains below. Some hunt the forests, but only where the trees are thin enough for their tentacles to glide along unimpeded.

Rotellas hunt at night when their prey cannot see them floating across the fields. Sometimes, the only warning is the faint smell of noxious gas and then the rotella is atop its prey, stinging it into submission. Once its prey has ceased its struggles, the rotella secures it in its tentacles and floats back up to its nest to feed without fear of interruption. Rotellas are sometimes seen near mountain cities, and it is theorized that they are attracted to light.

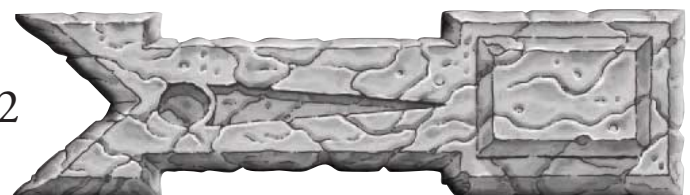
Rotellas are not social creatures. Females lay eggs, one at a time, at irregular intervals, and abandon them in the crevices of the mountain peaks. Males float through the mountains, fertilizing any eggs they find. When an egg hatches, the infant rotella instinctively begins to hunt, but does not seek the company of its own kind.

Some sylphs try to domesticate the rotella. They search out fertilized eggs and bring them home in hopes of training the hatchling. This hasn’t worked out well for them yet, but others keep trying.

Body: d8+3 (many tentacles)
Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
Spirit: d4-1 (nocturnal predator)

PINTARR

The pintarr is a burrowing insect about twice as long as a man’s hand. The creature secretes an acid that loosens soil and softens rock around it. The acid, combined with the pintarr’s powerful digging limbs and crushing mandibles, allows the pintarr to dig even through solid stone. Because it lives its life underground, the pintarr has no eyes but





navigates both above and below ground by sensing the vibrations around it.

Pintarrs are commonly found in dry, temperate, non-rocky regions such as Croesus, Honoxia, and the plains of Yannawy. They sometimes venture into swampy or jungle regions if those regions are being farmed. The farming process dries the moist soil enough so the pintarrs can move through it efficiently, and the crops provide the insects with all the food they can eat.

In fact, pintarrs are naturally attracted to any agriculture they can find. While they typically feed on microbes and nutrients found in the soil, they prefer the taste of plant roots, and even emerge from the ground to feed on stalks and leaves. An infestation of pintarrs can spell doom for any farmer's crop. There have even been reports of harvested crops falling prey to determined pintarrs who burrowed through the floor of the storehouse to get their taste of grain or fruit.

There are thousands of pintarrs in a single colony. Most of them are workers. Their role in the colony is to dig tunnels in the area, eat any food they find, then return to the nest and feed their secretions to the queen and her attendants. The queen's role is to lay hundreds of marble-sized eggs each day; her attendants make sure she is fed and the eggs protected. The queen can grow up to six times the size of a work pintarr—not including her attached elongated egg sac that more than doubles her length. The queen controls the colony through the use of pheromones; if she dies, the colony falls apart in a matter of hours unless a new queen is hatched.

Pintarrs avoid contact with other creatures. While their mandibles and limbs are quite powerful, their exoskeletons are soft and rubbery; they can easily be squashed underfoot. If confronted, they scuttle down their tunnels away from

danger. If their tunnel system is damaged, however, the workers rush to the break and attack any intruders en masse. In regions where pintarrs are known to be common, the rule is that if you break into a tunnel while walking or working outside, you should get away from the tunnel as quickly as possible, lest you be overwhelmed. A swarm of angry pintarrs can kill a person in a matter of minutes.

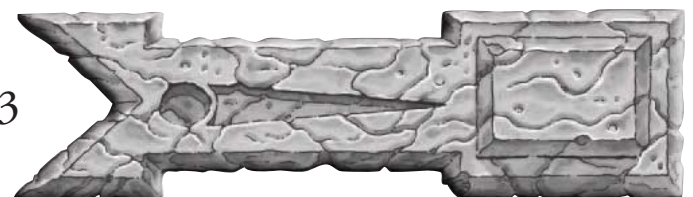
Farmers and others have come up with dozens of methods for ridding themselves of pintarr nests. Poison food, magical curses, and flooding the tunnels with water are all popular, and have varying degrees of success. Some humans have even trained Krtikas to go into the tunnels and kill the pintarr queen.

Colony Size: 1000 (Territory Size)
 Body: d4+1 (hard carapace, swarm)
 Mind: d4-2 (hive intelligence)
 Spirit: d4+1 (ferce)

SSMOLTA

According to legend, the ssmoltas weren't always immune to heat. In the ancient times, when the gods were young and the elder races were not yet elder, the Dragon God Xethalchoate needed to warn his followers in Rhok-Kuden that a mighty volcano was soon to erupt and would likely destroy them all. But who would carry his message? He chose the three-foot-long lizards found the deepest parts of the mountains and blessed them with flesh that could not melt or burn. He then called them to his molten lair, gave them instructions, and sent them out to warn the salamanders and gnomes who called the mountain range their home.

Today, the mountains of Rhok-Kuden have been volcanically dormant for centuries and the gnomes who live there have little love for the salamanders or any of their





gods, including Xethalchoate. But still the gnomes hold the ssmolta sacred as those who have been touched by a god. If they find a ssmolta nest in their mining, they take great pains to avoid disturbing it; if a ssmolta appears near a gnomish settlement, it is considered an ill omen, and the elders look for signs of volcanic activity.

As for the salamanders, they respect the ssmolta as a creature once blessed, but don't revere it as the gnomes do. This is likely because ssmoltas are actually quite common around the Sssnoth Mountains, and the whole region is holy to Xethalchoate and the other Dragon Gods.

Ssmoltas are common through the Known World, but are rarely seen because they are mostly subterranean. They live in the roots of the world, where the magma flows beneath the mountains and hills. When do they appear above ground, it actually is a sign of impending volcanic activity, because they likely arrived there by swimming up a magma channel. Whenever a volcano spills its contents, there are usually ssmoltas in the lava.

As underground creatures, ssmoltas feed on the nutrients found in the soil around them. They also have a strange sort of photosynthesis in which they receive nutrients from the heat and light of the magma itself. They make nests for themselves near magma flows, dug out of the soil. Ssmoltas are excellent diggers, with powerful forelimbs, slender bodies, and a snake-like ability to wriggle through the smallest of holes.

All ssmoltas have the ability to lay eggs. Once a year, a ssmolta lays a small clutch of eggs. Though the eggs' shells are relatively soft, they are just as immune to heat as the creatures that laid them. Ssmoltas have no natural predators, so they often leave their eggs unattended. When the eggs hatch, the parent teaches the hatchlings to dig,

feed, and swim in magma, then ejects them from the nest after a season.

Ssmoltas are solitary creatures. They don't need to mate to reproduce, have no enemies to combine their strength against, and have virtually the entire underworld to call their territory, so there is no reason for them to stay near each other.

Even in sites ideal for ssmoltas, such as active volcanoes, there may be hundreds of the creatures in the area that have nothing to do with each other.

It is surprisingly easy to hunt a ssmolta. Since they live underground without predators, they don't know enough to avoid over-land predators, and aren't very good at fighting back. When they do sense they are in danger, the creatures run for cover, looking for cracks and crevices in which they can hide to burrow back to the safety of the underworld. If cornered, they lash out with their long tails and sharp claws; since they are roughly half the size of a man, these attacks have quite a bit of force behind them.

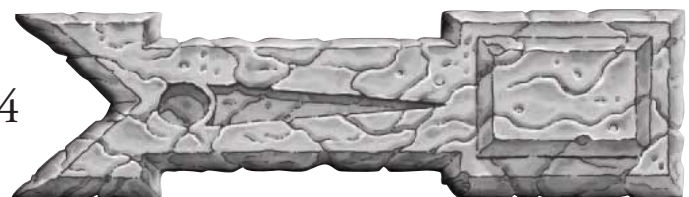
Body: d6+1 (fast)

Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)

Spirit: d4-1 (flees danger)

CHINGAREE

The chingaree is a short-haired, furry creature with eight spindly limbs and a prehensile tail. Each of its eight limbs terminates in a four-digit hand, with three fingers and an opposable thumb. The chingaree's head has two small ears, two oversized multi-faceted eyes, and a complex system of mandibles, teeth, and other mouth parts used for eating its prey. Chingarees are about half the size of a man on average, but some breeds are three times that size. Their coloration ranges from white through gray and brown all the way to black, depending on where they live. Some chingarees even change their fur color with the seasons.





Chingarees love trees. They are commonly found in jungles—the islands of Celdynn are thick with the creatures—as well as forests and swamps, with particularly large varieties living in the woods of Gamath. They don't like cold weather, so are rarely found in the mountains or northern parts of Naalgrom.

As omnivores, chingarees eat the fruit and nuts from the trees that they call home, but a large part of their diet is the prey they capture in their webs. Chingarees spin thick, sticky webs from spinnerets beneath their tails. The webs are translucent and large enough to hold human-sized creatures that do not see them in time to avoid them. The creatures spin webs high in the trees to capture flying and climbing creatures; they spin other webs at ground level to catch those walking or crawling through.

Once captured in a chingaree's web, prey is cocooned in more webs and hauled back, still alive, to the chingaree's nest. Here, the chingaree either lets the prey die of starvation or, if it is hungry immediately, kills the prey with a decapitating snip of its mandibles. The creature then uses its long, tube-like tongue and specialized teeth to eat its prey from the inside out.

Chingarees are curious. They are easily distracted by shiny objects, loud sounds, or strong smells. Sentient prey can buy themselves time if they can keep their captor amused and interested with sights or sounds it has not experienced before. Chingarees are also intelligent, able to figure out simple tools and experiment with trophies taken from their prey.

Extremely social creatures, chingarees live in colonies of 20 to 50 inhabitants. They live in a central cluster of trees, and spread out from there to hunt and gather food. They mate for life, and each mated pair has its own nest in the central cluster. They reproduce sexually roughly once a

year, producing a single offspring that is trained by its parents for about two years. Chingarees have complex relationships with the others in their colonies. They have friends, rivals, hunting partners, even respected elders. The colony is run by an alpha male, who physically dominates all who would oppose him until he is deposed by another, stronger chingaree.

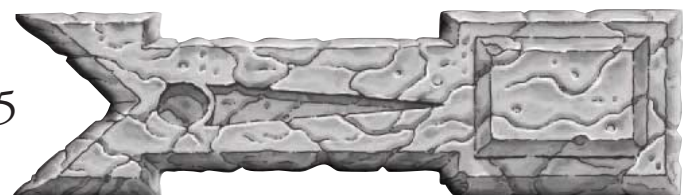
Chingarees use their brains—and their hands—when dealing with predators. They build elaborate traps and ambushes, and sometimes even use simple weapons like rocks or sticks if necessary. There are stories of undine soldiers who tried to rid a Brun Island jungle valley of a colony of chingarees. They were armed with spears, bows, and magic. Only one soldier staggered out of the jungle alive, and his mind was shattered. He could only mutter about the “the webs” and “the teeth,” showing the strange cuts and marks on his flesh.

Body: d4+1 (nimble)
Mind: d4+2 (clever animal)
Spirit: d4+1 (fierce)

NARGOS

Not even the gods know the full size and shape of the Nargos.

The titanic underwater demon moves deep beneath the waves of the Ar-Ianeth Sea, unseen even by the undines. When the Nargos hungers, it creates a vast whirlpool that starts in the murky depths and, by the time it breaks the surface, is more than two miles across. The edges of that rushing whirlpool are lined with dripping, hundred-foot tentacles. The tentacles flail and stretch, searching for prey to pull into the deadly water. Once caught in the whirlpool's grip, the Nargos' prey is doomed. It matters not if the prey is a whale, a ship, a fleet of ships...or even a god.





Across the Known World, the story is told of the human god, Tonaída, who faced the Nargos and lost. Some say he was the god of ocean travel. Others say he was lord of wood and boats. But they agree that he was god of a proud sea-faring people who relied on his protection to turn their small village into a thriving string of colonies all along the coast. When his people lost two elders and their families to the Nargos, Tonaída set out to destroy the foul beast.

Again, the stories are in conflict. Some say he fought with lightning, and others that he sang songs of rage. Some even say he charged the creature directly, swinging a mighty battle ax and screaming his battle cry. In truth, the only

witnesses to the battle would be been the other gods, and their word is rarely to be taken at face value. But again, every account agrees on the battle's outcome: Tonaída was caught and held between four tentacles. He was pulled into quarters and then swallowed by the whirlpool. He was never seen again.

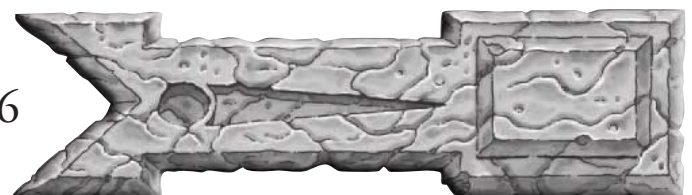
Without their god, Tonaída's people crumbled. Their growing civilization stagnated, faltered, and was subsumed by other tribes in less than a generation. Even their name was lost.

The Nargos appears once every few months. While it restricts itself to the Ar-Ianeth, it is impossible to predict just where the creature's deadly whirlpool will surface. Luckily, there are warning signs of an impending attack: agitated sea creatures, strange churning and coloration of the water, and sometimes even the sky itself turns dark. Mystics, magi, and others gifted with supernatural senses can also feel the creature stirring beneath them. Once the warning has been given, those in the area usually have less than an hour to make their escape...or make peace with their gods.

THE DEMON BEASTS OF DEMON'S REEF

The demons of the Known World start out as neither evil nor good. They are spiritual creatures of pure energy and potential, without conscience or sentience to guide them. But in the depths of Demon's Reef, something has gone horribly wrong: there is a crack in the world and the demons pouring through it are not merely chaotic, but inherently evil. They desire nothing more than destruction and suffering, and only the undines of Ar-Ianeth can keep them at bay.

Demons have no physical forms, yet the demons surging up from the depths of the Reef not only have bodies, but hundreds of forms and shapes, each more horrible than the last. Undine scholars theorize that perhaps there are simply many types of creatures lurking at the deepest points of





the Reef, and they are being possessed by the angry demons. Or maybe there is but one creature, but it can change its shape and is thus transformed by any demon that possesses it. There have been numerous expeditions to the bottom of the Reef to see the origins of the demons, but none have succeeded, and few have survived.

Body: d8-1 (slow)
 Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
 Spirit: d6+1 (demonic malevolence, vicious killer)

ODYSTRO THE DEVIL FROG

The odystro is a bloated, greenish-black amphibian with the body, legs, and mouth of a man-sized frog.

It has bulging red eyes at random spots along its back and head, spread out like slimy, slitted warts. Inside its mouth are rows of jagged teeth and a trio of prehensile tongues, each more than ten feet long.

While there are hundreds—maybe even thousands—of different types of demons rushing up from the Reef, a handful of types are seen time and again. They are accepted as “breeds” of demons, with common forms and habits. Here are some of the more common breeds:

PTOMES THE CHOKER

The ptomes is a fat black fish as long as a man. It has one swollen yellow eye in the middle of its head, and a ring of six whisker-like tendrils dripping off its face. The ptomes is not a fast swimmer, but it doesn't need to be. Wherever it goes, it secretes oily black ooze that blocks up the gills of those who inhale it. Fish and undines who take in too much of the ooze eventually suffocate and die. If an undine gets a gill-full of ooze, he can clean out his gills through rest, clean water, and a minimal amount of healing magic. Undines setting out to fight a ptomes may choose to do so in their human forms; they have no gills to pollute, but they have to hold their breath.

Odystros are patient creatures. With their mottled skin and irregular shape, they can avoid detection underwater by simply remaining immobile along a rock face or sea bed. Only their eyes, slit open just a fraction, give them away. If hunting, the odystro lies in wait until its prey is alone, then lashes out with its three tongues and snatches the prey into its mouth before it can cry out.

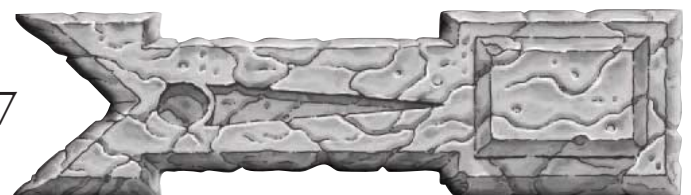
The ooze of the ptomes partially conceals it from its enemies, but the demon fish does not eat what it kills. It appears the ptomes merely kills for the sake of killing. Indeed, the creature has little more than animal intelligence, but what little thought it has is given to how best to poison the largest number of creatures before it is killed itself.

The odystros of the Demon's Reef are less interested in hunting than they are in leaving the Reef and reaching the shore. They lie motionless, waiting for their undine enemies to pass, and then use their legs to leap up to a quarter mile away, often breaking the surface of the water in the process. Then they remain motionless again, for days if necessary, until they can make another leap towards land.

Ptomes usually swim alone, but the undines have faced schools of these things in the past and are prepared to do so again.

The odystros travel in packs of up to five. They seem to have some sort of communication between themselves, as the creatures help each other watch out for hunters and prey.

No one knows what the odystros want on land, but the undines who hunt them have a terrible clue: of those they've caught near the shore, half of them have been swollen with hundreds of tiny eggs inside them. If the devil frogs were to lay these eggs inland, there is no telling what horrors would be unleashed.





Body: d6+1 (strong jumper)
 Mind: d4 (animal intelligence)
 Spirit: d4 (predator)

a natural point of view, suggesting there is some malevolent, supernatural force behind them.

THYLUS THE DEVOURER

While fighting giant squid-like monsters, lobster-clawed horrors, and other hideous beasts from the Demon's Reef, the undines are likely to overlook a couple of fist-sized slug-like creatures floating by. A thylus is easy to overlook. It is relatively small, pale gray in color, and has an irregular shape without eyes or fins or any distinctive features.

As to the creature's origins, one theory has it that there was but one thylus centuries ago. All thylus since then are offspring of that original demon, being born anew from countless slug-eaten corpses rotting at the bottom of the Demon's Reef.

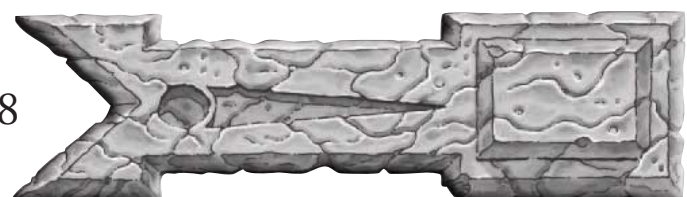
Body: d4-2 (small and soft)
 Mind: 1 (insect intelligence)
 Spirit: d6+2 (spirit—breaking)

When a thylus latches onto one's skin, all one might notice is the coolness of its touch, and even that fades once it injects its numbing, paralyzing poison. As the poison spreads from the injection site, the victim might notice its flesh going numb. By the time he realizes something is wrong, he has lost most of his muscular control. Finally, as the victim starts to panic and call for help, the poison reaches the throat and his voice falls silent. The victim remains conscious and aware of his surroundings, even as he begins to sink into the ocean depths.

Once the thylus has immobilized its prey, it slowly begins depositing its eggs into the prey's flesh. The number of eggs depends on the size of the prey—a normal fish could receive dozens of eggs; an undine could receive ten thousand. Once its eggs are deposited, the thylus shrivels up and dies, still attached to its victim.

When the eggs reach maturity in a matter of weeks, they eat their way out of their host and begin new lives floating on the currents, looking for prey. Luckily, most hosts have died of starvation before the eggs hatch.

The thylus doesn't appear to eat, except as a hatchling. As with other demons, its life cycle doesn't make sense from



CHAPTER 6: "WOLVES AT THE DOOR"

A BEGINNING SCENARIO FOR NEW GODS OF MANKIND

INTRODUCTION

"Wolves at the Door" is an introductory adventure for a group of 3 to 6 new gods. The purpose of this adventure is two-fold. First, it serves as an example of what kinds of adventures you can play with New Gods of Mankind. Second, it provides enough background, characters, and action to serve as the foundation for a new campaign. After playing through this adventure, the players will have enough connection to the world that their second adventure can pick up right where this one leaves off.

Before proceeding any further, one person should take the part of the Game Master (called Fate in this game). Fate should read the entirety of this adventure and familiarize himself with the material.

Next, the other players (who will be playing the gods in this adventure), read the "Player Background" section below. This provides an overview of the Croesus region, where the adventure takes place.

Based on the information they've been given, the players now work together, and with Fate, to create their characters and the tribe they are sharing. This is the part to get creative. Players should add details to their tribe like names, holidays, clothing, art, customs, and important human characters. It is these player-created details that bring a tribe to life



and help differentiate it from the tribes around it.

The players should also work together to create their celestial home, as described earlier in these rules. As with a single tribe between them, it is not unusual for them to share a single celestial realm.

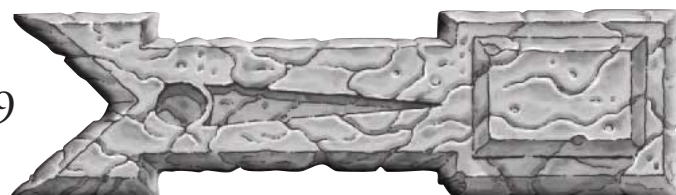
When Fate is familiar with the adventure, and the other players have created their characters and tribe, the game is ready to begin.

PLAYER BACKGROUND

"Wolves at the Door" is set in and around the Croesus region in the western portion of the Raanon continent. The adventure specifically centers on the northern part of the region, where the players' tribe makes its home near the forest of Feth.

Across the plains of Croesus, tall grasses ripple and nod in the wind. The land is fertile and inviting, with warm summers, mild winters, and a long growing season that human farmers can't pass up. Several human tribes call Croesus home. Some are nomads, who herd goats, sheep, and the cow-like megidons. These nomads drive their animals from one watering hole to the next, never staying too long lest their livestock graze the ground bare, leaving nothing for next year. Others are farmers, who raise crops where the prairie grass once grew, and keep livestock in pens. Small human villages dot the region. Villages usually build up around fresh water regions and the paths where the nomads and farmers intersect.

North of Croesus is the forest of Feth. The humans of Croesus know the forest to be full of wood nymphs and wild beasts. Some tribes venture into the forest to hunt wild game, but never very far, and never at night.





Southeast of the players' tribe is a rocky desert region at the base of the Sssnoth Mountains. The desert and mountains are home to vicious Salamanders, who maintain a population of human slaves. Salamander scouts are not an uncommon sight in northeastern Croesus, and are often followed by raiding parties looking to replenish their supply of human slaves. The nomads of Croesus take the appearance of Salamander scout as an omen that it's time to move on; villagers and farmers don't have that luxury, so they maintain their vigilance and an armed militia. If they see a scout, they are to kill him before he can report to his masters.

Due east of the players' tribe is the human Dirce tribe, named for their local goddess. The Dircians are spread out around their central village of Panarae. The village sits at the crossroads of several nomad paths and is known for its trading posts. The nomads bring rare and exotic foods, animals, and crafts from across Croesus, even as far away as Baathun.

The goddess Dirce is older than the PCs, but her tribe is merely surviving, not thriving. Though her domain is the "safety of home," her tribe has actually been slowly shrinking over the past century due to Salamander raids and her people moving further west in search of safety. Dirce is kind and supportive, and friendly towards the PCs. She believes that if humans are to flourish in Croesus, their gods must put aside petty rivalries and work together for a common defense.

To the west and directly south of the PCs' tribe, the plains roll on towards the horizon with no other gods to speak of. There are human tribes, but many have no gods, or pay only the lightest lip service to whatever god they have last encountered. Without gods, these tribes are small and without much potential for future development. They are

more concerned with surviving the next Salamander raid than finding gods to call their own.

FATE BACKGROUND

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

This adventure is divided into three broad chapters:

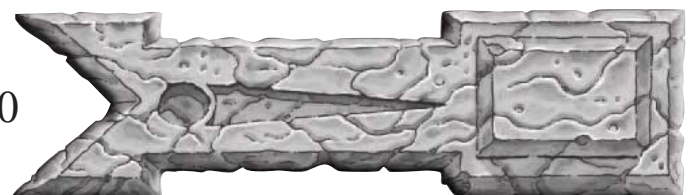
In the first chapter, the PCs are drawn to the trouble with their tribe: great wolves from the north are raiding livestock and killing tribespeople. Upon investigating, the PCs discover that the "wolves" are, in fact, lycanthropes and servants of Kargore the wolf god, who were driven out of their traditional hunting grounds by a mysterious plague called the "Black Wind." It's up to the PCs to decide whether to confront the werewolves, negotiate with Kargore, or look into this lethal "wind."

In the second chapter, the Black Wind strikes the nearby Dirce tribe. The PCs have a chance to help heal and protect their neighbors, and catch their first glimpse of the Leviathan behind the mysterious disease. The Dirce tribe has its own goddess, who does her best to defend her people, but without the PCs' help, her best might not be enough.

In the third and final chapter, the Leviathan reaches the PCs' tribe and unleashes its fury. Thus begins a battle of wills, Miracles, and faith as the Leviathan and the PCs fight for the hearts of the tribespeople. If the tribe gives the Leviathan the fear and belief it craves, the PCs will lose their followers and it can become too powerful for the PCs to defeat. It is up to the PCs to maintain their followers' faith and find a way to eliminate the threat of the Black Wind forever.

THE BLACK WIND

Wood nymphs are exceptionally long-lived. This is partly due to their inherently magical nature, but also to the belief of their fellow nymphs. So long as a wood nymph





has the faith of his tribe to support him, he is virtually immortal and cannot die of natural causes.

afflict his former tribesmen, which caused greater fear, and the cycle of sickness and power continued. But with power came madness.

Therefore, when Tallus, a wood nymph from deep in the forest of Feth, fell ill from eating some tainted food, he thought nothing of it. A few days' discomfort, a bit of a fever—these were minor things, and would soon pass, he thought.

When the adventure begins, Tallus has lost much of his mind and his former personality. There is little of the wood nymph left; he has transformed into a true Leviathan of pestilence.

But there were other forces at work. Tallus had made enemies in his tribe, and they successfully argued that his illness was contagious and he should be cast out from the tribe lest he infect the others. By the time Tallus realized what was happening, he was too weak from his illness to rally his own defense. He was hauled to a cave two days away from his home, and abandoned with provisions for two weeks.

He has killed off most of his old tribe, which has filled him with power like he has never felt before. He seeks nothing now but to spread more sickness and consume more fear.

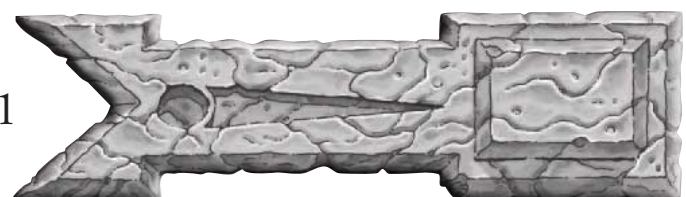
“If your health returns,” he was instructed, “You may come home and be welcomed with great rejoicing.”

Tallus fought the sickness the best he could. But he had been cast out: the tribe had lost its faith in him. Without their belief, he was mortal. And as a mortal, he finally succumbed to the fever. Angry, bitter, and betrayed, Tallus slipped into death.



But death was not to be the end of the wood nymph. Fueled by rage and vengeance, his spirit was bound to the mortal plane. He wandered bodiless for a time, then learned to possess minor forest animals. He finally took up residence in a pack of rats, the universal symbol of pestilence. Considering the pestilence that killed him, Tallus found his choice bitterly satisfying.

Over the next three seasons, Tallus adapted to his role as the self-styled “spirit of pestilence.” In the form of his rat pack, he roamed the forest of Feth, using his supernatural power to inflict illness on the forest creatures. When his sickness afflicted creatures close to his old tribe, he discovered that his tribe’s fear empowered him. The power let him





TALLUS, THE BLACK WIND OF PESTILENCE

Primary Domain: Sickness

Additional Domains: Rats, Darkness

Inclinations:

- **Destruction:** Harmony
- **Balance:** Transformation, Creation
- **Opposition:** Control

Belief: 200

Appearance:

In the physical realm, Tallus inhabits his large pack of rats. These rats are twice as large as normal, and seem to have a cold intelligence behind their glowing red eyes.

If Tallus leaves (or is driven out of) his rats, he is a spirit that is invisible to mortal eyes. To those who can see spirits, he appears as black, wispy shadow creature roughly the size and shape of a man, with glowing red eyes.

Personality:

Tallus is power-mad. He has tasted the power of fear, and now longs to gorge on it. He wants the power of the gods, and knows that the path of fear will lead him where he needs to go. Tallus takes pleasure in the terror and pain of others—not just because it feeds his soul, but also because it amuses him.

Tallus still carries the arrogance of a wood nymph with him. He assumes he is better, smarter, and more powerful than anyone else, and act accordingly.

Symbols:

In as much as the nascent Leviathan has any symbols to call his own, the color black is one of his favorites.

Celestial Home:

None. As a Leviathan, Tallus does not have access to the celestial realm.

Heroes and Artifacts:

None.

Worship:

Tallus has no formal rituals or followers, so he is making up with worship as he goes along. He likes a good animal sacrifice, and covering people and things in black also pleases him.

Commandments:

The only commandment Tallus has handed down is, “Thou shalt wear black,” though it doesn’t really provide him any benefits yet.

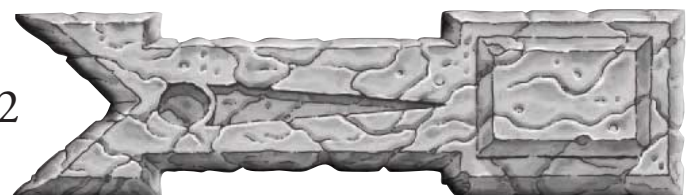
Favored Miracles:

- **Shape of the Black Wind:** This simple Miracle merely creates a thick black fog, roughly a mile in diameter, that inhibits visibility and (Tallus hopes) creates fear in the hearts of those who see it. The fog can last up to a week, and Tallus can move it at will. Cost: 16 (Trivial Innovation of Creation (4), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination 0, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)

- **Touch of the Black Wind:** This is a minor version of the Black Wind that affects only a single creature. Like the “Shape,” above, this Miracle creates a black smoke, but only in a small area. Those who touch the smoke are afflicted with black spots. They reduce one die-type every four hours until they are dead. Cost: 5 (Minor Innovation of Destruction (5), Scale 0, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 1)

- **Black Wind Rising:** This is the full-blown version of the Black Wind. It creates a black fog about a mile in diameter that afflicts every living creature with black spots and the illness described above. Cost: 10 (Minor Innovation of Destruction (5), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 2)

- **Summoning the Rat:** Tallus’ rats are not immortal, and can fall prey to predators and enemies same as any rat. That’s fine by him. He can just summon more. This Miracle summons 100 rats. The rats are not under Tallus’ control, but he possesses them as soon as they arrive. Cost: 12 (Minor Alteration of Control (3), Scale +2, Duration 0, Inclination +1, Location +2, Domain -2, Total 3)





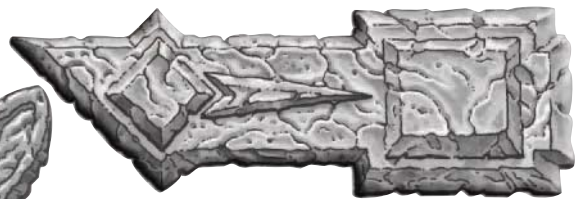
THE CHILDREN OF KARGORE

The wood nymphs are not the only sentient creatures living in the forest of Feth. A small tribe of humans claims a narrow band near the southern edge of the forest as its own territory. As normal humans, they probably would have been driven out by the nymphs ages ago, but these are not normal humans. They are werewolves, infected with lycanthropy and therefore imbued with a certain inherent magic that garners the respect of the nymphs.

In the ancient times, when the humans of Raanon were soft and young and hunted by the elder races, one tribe of northern men turned to the wolf-god Kargore for protection. He taught them the laws of tooth and claw, showed them how to survive without the crutch of elaborate tools, and gave them the gift of a second skin.

These Children of Kargore have the ability to transform into wolves at will. The transformation takes less than a minute and is painless, though it does require great





exertion. Only the Child's body is changed; clothing and possessions must be discarded before shapeshifting, lest they entangle the newly formed wolf. In wolf form, the Children are half again or even twice the size of normal wolves. Their shape and coloration is normal, however, and their fur ranges from white to gray to brown and black.

The werewolves of Feth have a very simple culture. Their god emphasizes reliance on the gifts of nature and breeding, so they aren't encouraged to develop much in the way of tools, art, or education. They live in caves and burrows, and some simple tents made of animal skins. Their clothing is minimal and crudely made; if they get cold or are bothered by the elements, they simply shift to wolf form and let their thick fur keep them warm and dry. Some of their leaders wear simple jewelry and paint their skins to show their status.

The Children of Kargore have a wolf-like society, divided into family-based packs of 5 to 20 members. Each pack has an "alpha" who leads them by his wisdom and strength. If he proves himself weak or foolish, he is replaced by another, stronger pack member. The packs travel separately from each other, but meet up twice a year for a grand gathering to worship Kargore, trade tales, and choose a new tribal leader. This tribal alpha is the ruler of the tribe and speaks for Kargore in all matters. If Kargore makes his will known, it is usually through the tribal alpha. The tribal alpha and his pack make their temporary home in the tribe's only permanent settlement: a tree-covered hill riddled with rocky caves and surrounded by crude huts. This settlement serves as Kargore's temple, and is maintained by the eldest members of the tribe who are too old to hunt or travel.

The Children of Kargore are little more than hunters and gatherers. The youngest and oldest members of the pack spend their time gather fruit, berries, eggs, and nuts from the forest around them. Those in their prime hunt wild game in wolf form and bring it back to feed the rest of the pack. Below are the statistics for Kargore's Children:

Followers of Kargore.

Total Number of Followers: 400

(30% Warriors, 0% others)

Warrior Lycanthrope: (Total 120)

Body: d8+2 (Supernaturally strong Lycanthropes with claws and teeth)

Mind: d6-1 (Disadvantage: simple people)

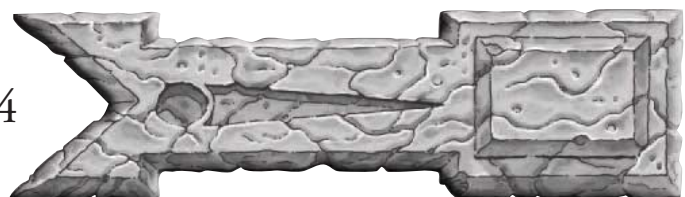
Spirit: d6

Other Followers: d6 with no modifiers

These simple people have no interest in dealing with other humans or the elder races. They have encountered the wood nymphs before, and found their neighbors frustrating, arrogant, and dangerous. They've come to blows before, and held their own, but the fight wasn't worth the trouble it cost them. They likewise avoid the humans to the south by staying inside the forest. If a hunter ventures too deeply into the wood, the werewolves usually just show themselves in growling wolf form to scare the intruder back to the soft, weak tribe he calls home.

Over the past season, food has been growing scarce for the Children of Kargore. The forest used to full of deer, rabbits, and other game, but these animals have been dying out. There is a mysterious illness—a Black Wind—blowing through the wood, killing off the werewolves' natural prey. Kargore's Children have been forced to move further and further south as the plague has spread. Many packs are now within a half-day's journey of the plains, and have no choice but to leave the forest in search of game.

Their search has brought them to the civilized lands of Croesus. Here, the Children of Kargore have found plenty of prey for the taking, in the form of the herds and livestock of the PCs' followers. Though they do not know it, the werewolves have put into a motion a chain of events that will bring about a battle of gods and leviathans that may doom them all.





KARGORE, THE WOLF GOD

Primary Domain: Evolution (adapting for survival)

Additional Domains: Hunting, Singing, Family

Inclinations: Transformation (Harmony), Creation and Destruction (Balance), Control (Opposition)

Belief: 400

Appearance:

Kargore appears as a giant wolf with human eyes. He stands nine feet tall, and the color of his fur changes with the phases of the moon: it is black during the new moon, blindingly white during the full, and various shades of gray in between.

The god's secondary appearance is that of 15-foot-tall wolfman. In this form, he has a wolf's head but his body is that of a muscular human covered in shaggy fur.

Personality:

Kargore holds sacred the idea of "nature." He believes there is a natural rhythm to life—birth, hunting, killing, dying—and those who adapt to match the rhythm will thrive. Those who try to interfere with the rhythm are fools who will suffer for their arrogance.

The wolf god's convictions make him something of a paradox. One the one hand, he is the embodiment of change—specifically, changing to adapt, to survive when your environment changes around you. On the other hand, he is fiercely traditional: he opposes innovation if it's not absolutely necessary, and refuses to confront the changes in the world around him.

Symbols:

A simple, natural god, Kargore's only symbol is a row of four parallel lines, like the slash-mark from a wolf's claw.

Celestial Home:

The Eternal Forest is where Kargore spends his time in the celestial realm. The Forest is warm and sunny during the

day, and simply crawling with prey. The trees of the forest reach up forever, and yet do not block out the sun. At night, the clouds disappear, the moon is always full, and it's almost as bright at night as it is in the daytime. The Eternal Forest is found in the sphere of Endless Summer, well away from the Gardens.

Heroes and Artifacts:

None. Kargore doesn't believe in Artifacts, and hasn't found a need for Heroes yet.

Worship:

The Children of Kargore aren't ones for elaborate rituals. They pray before each hunt and after a successful kill, offer thanks to Kargore and set aside a portion in his honor. Once a year, the tribe gathers at Kargore's hill (the closest thing the god has to a temple) to feast in his honor. They conduct a great hunt, and all the prey they bring back is offered as a sacrifice to their wolf-god.

Commandments:

Kargore has few laws for his people, but those he has are strictly enforced.

Use the gifts your god and nature have given you, and eschew the trappings made by men, for they will make you weak.

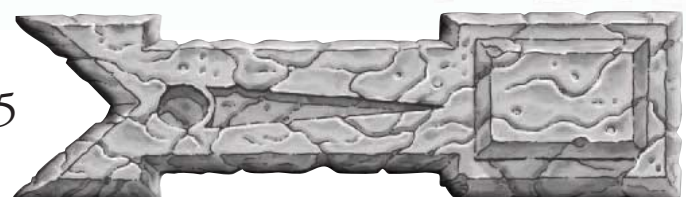
Defend your pack and your tribe with your life.

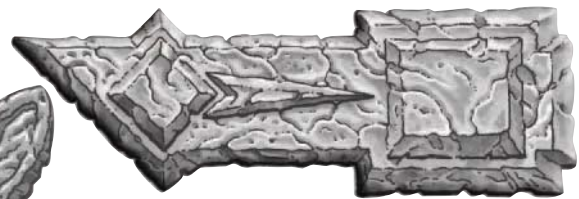
Do not help the weak or helpless. The strong survive. The weak shall perish. This is as it should be.

Sing to the moon at least once a night when it is full.

Favored Miracles:

Senses of the Hunter: When Kargore's Children pray to him for a good hunt, he sometimes blesses them with this Miracle, which enhances their senses of smell, hearing, and sight. This Miracle affects the whole hunting pack,





who roll a d12 (instead of the normal d8) for all sense-related tests for the duration of the hunt (up to a week). Cost: 3 (Minor Alteration of Transformation (3), Scale +1, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +0, Domain -2, Total 1)

Hide of Iron: While Kargore encourages his believers to avoid weapons like bows and swords, those who oppose them have no such compunctions. Therefore, this Miracle hardens the hides of his children (up to a hundred of them) so they are resistant to normal weapons for the duration of the battle. In game terms, any attacks against them have their die type reduced by four steps. Cost: 5 (Major Alteration of Transformation (5), Scale +2, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +0, Domain -2, Total 1)

Shape of the Warrior: When Kargore incarnates, he often uses this Miracle to achieve his true god-like status. He is transformed into a 15-foot-tall wolf man with enormous claws and teeth, and a thick hide that's impervious to normal weapons. He is rated as an individual with 2d12 for purposes of combat. Cost: 4 (Significant Alteration of Transformation (4), Scale +0, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +0, Domain -2, Total 1)

DANGER FROM THE DESERT

As for the Salamanders of Sssnoth, they are not the immediate threat posed by the Children of Kargore and the Leviathan Tallus. Nevertheless, their scouts and furtive movements at the outskirts of the PCs' realm serve to add tension to the adventure by pulling the PCs' attention back to their home territory. They help remind the players that their tribe is still young and needs defending.

Over the course of the adventure, Fate can use reports of Salamanders and actually sightings of the creatures to keep the PCs on edge. Fate should be careful not to overly distract the players, however, lest they become frustrated and feel they're being manipulated. Furthermore, an actual Salamander invasion is strongly discouraged. While such

an event would definitely make for a great adventure, it should be its own adventure, after the PCs have dealt with the Leviathan and the players are ready for a greater challenge.

Finally, Fate should note that one or more of the dragon gods may likely be monitoring the region and keeping an eye on how the PCs deal with this threat to their realm. Xethalchoate, Dragon God of the Fires Below, is the main Dragon God in the region, as well as Tukonos and Thaminx, Dragon God of the Burning Earth.

ADVENTURE TIMELINE

(-5 Seasons) Over a year before the adventure begins, Tallus dies and is reborn as the spirit of pestilence.

(-2 Seasons) Three seasons later, Tallus returns to his former village and afflicts the wood nymphs with his horrid disease.

(-1 Season) Over the past season, food has grown scarce for the Children of Kargore, forcing them to hunt ever-further south.

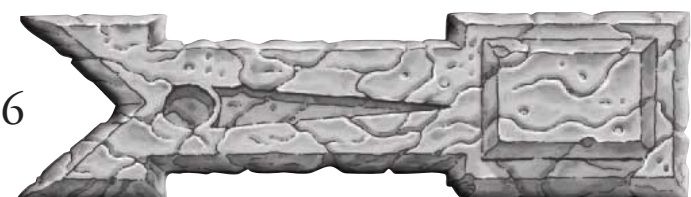
(-10 Days) Over the past ten days, the tribe has lost a hundred head of livestock to wolf attacks.

(Day 1) The PCs receive the call of their people, and the adventure begins.

(Day 2) A day and a half later, Tallus leaves the forest.

(Day 3) A day and half after that, the Black Wind appears north of Panarae at sunset.

(Day 4) The next day, the livestock and a shepherd in the area are found dead. Rumors start flying as the farmers go south. That night, the Black Wind appears once more,





spurring more panic and sending people fleeing to Panarac.

(Day 5) At dawn, Panarac is surrounded by the Black Wind. By noon, the village is smothered in darkness. An hour later, Pytus has his final showdown with the rats, and the lethal fog rolls into the village. An hour after that, the fog dissipates, leaving the village broken and filled with disease.

(Day 7) The Black Wind appears in the PCs' territory.

CHAPTER ONE: WOLVES IN THE FIELDS

As the adventure opens, the PCs are in their celestial realm, dreaming their divine dreams laying plans for the future. Suddenly, from the mortal realm below, comes the call of the PCs' followers: they are suffering, they are frightened, and they need the help of their gods.

THE CALL

The nature of this cry for help is up to Fate and varies according to the gods and their believers. Priests of a god of wisdom and mercy may cry out the ritual chant of supplication from atop the temple steps. Warrior-priests of the god of war may inscribe their prayers on the flesh of a dead enemy, then burn the body as an offering. Simple peasants full of faith may pour their passion and belief into a mighty prayer for deliverance that makes up for any lack of ritual with its purity of purpose.

Regardless of how the PCs are made aware of trouble below, they learn the following information:

Their people have lost almost a hundred head of livestock in the past ten days. Witnesses say that the animals are being killed by giant wolves (twice the size of normal wolves), who drag the carcass northward, toward the forest of Feth. The tribe has posted guards to defend the livestock, but

they have failed to drive the wolves away.

The first time a guard tried to get between the wolves and their prey, he was torn to bloody bits. (His carcass was left in the field, and not dragged to the north.) Two different hunting parties have gone into the forest in search of the wolves, and neither of them returned.

VISITATION

Armed with this information, it is up to the PCs to help and protect their tribe. (They could choose to ignore their peoples' prayers, but this will only cost them Belief as faith goes unrewarded.)

Once they are aware of their peoples' plight, the PCs have any number of ways to investigate the mysterious wolves:

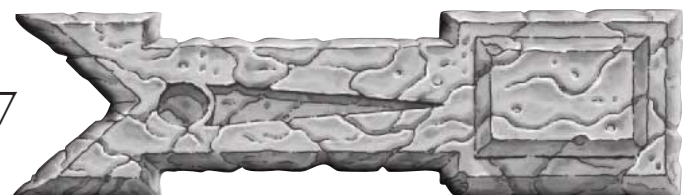
In Person: The simplest and most direct method of investigation, the PCs can simply take on their physical forms and walk their land in search of answers. They can ask questions and make demands of their followers, and perform Miracles as needed to help them in their search for answers.

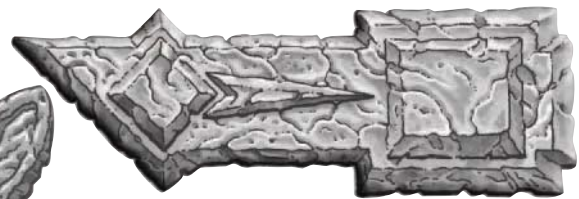
In Disguise: The PCs may disguise themselves as mortals from another tribe, so as not to create a disturbance by their presence.

As a Mysterious Force: If the PCs prefer to avoid direct contact with their followers, they may move as spirits amongst them, invisible and intangible. They can still speak and listen of course, and use Miracles to provide the faithful with signs of their presence.

Through Their Miracles: The PCs can miraculously create spies and servants to carry out their will in the world. With such creations to serve as their eyes and ears, the PCs can act without drawing attention to themselves.

The PCs' investigation eventually leads them to the forest





of Feth, where they find the Red Hand—the werewolf pack that has been raiding their tribes' livestock.

THE RED HAND

The lycanthrope pack known as the Red Hand has made its temporary camp in the southern edge of the forest of Feth, roughly two miles from the plains that the PCs' tribe calls home. There are 18 Children of Kargore in the pack, most of whom are young and strong and ready to hunt, which is why this pack chose to come south when the prey grew scarce.

The alpha of the pack is Torga, a middle-aged, battle-scarred man who has kept his position of authority by balancing his brutal strength with wisdom and the shrewd ability to adapt. It was his idea to take the pack south, and other packs have since followed his lead. Torga's top priority is the safety and welfare of his pack; his second is to maintain his leadership role. Torga has shaggy black hair in both human and wolf forms, and wears a necklace of bear claws.

Torga's right hand is Meshug, a woman too old to hunt but experienced enough to manage the camp and all of its food stores. Under Meshug's watchful eye, the pack sends half of its meat back north to Kargore's temple, where it keeps the tribes' elders and pups fed. Meshug is the mother of Torga's mate, who was killed three years ago hunting a bear. Meshug's first loyalty is to Kargore and the tribe, then to Torga, then finally the pack of the Red Hand. Meshug prefers her human form ("I like thumbs," she snaps at those who mention it), and wears her light gray hair in a long braid.

The pack's best hunter is Kanog, a young male who is in his prime and he knows it. While he may feign humility and grace when necessary, Kanog is arrogant, and cares for nothing beyond his own ambition. His current ambition is to usurp Torga as alpha of the Red Hand pack. He thinks he's being subtle in his machinations, but half the pack knows what he has in mind, and only a quarter of

the pack support his bid. Torg and Meshug are keeping their eyes on Kanog, but don't consider him a serious threat just yet. They keep him busy hunting the southern plains.

The Red Hand camp itself is little more than a handful of crude tents around a cooking fire inside a small clearing. There are bones, innards, and other evidence of the missing livestock nearby. During the day, most of the pack is out hunting, leaving only Meshug and three others (two in wolf form, one in human) working in the camp preparing meat for transportation. At night, the Children of Kargore are gathered around the fire eating and talking until going to sleep, while taking turns guarding the perimeter in pairs.

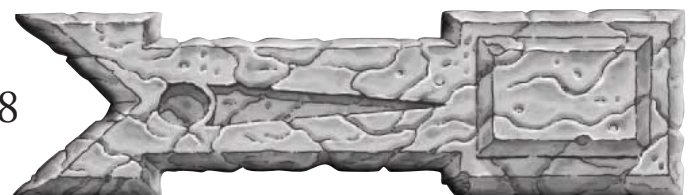
MEETING WITH THE RED HAND

The outcome of the PCs' encounter with the Red Hand largely depends on how they approach the werewolves. If things go well, they could end up with a peaceful understanding between their tribe and Children of Kargore. If not, they could end up facing down Kargore himself.

ATTACK!

In combat, a single werewolf is worth two armed men. Still, there are but 18 members of the Red Hand pack, and the PCs are gods, so it is very possible for the PCs to overpower the lycanthropes, either with or without the help of their own tribesmen from the plains. When attacked, the Children of Kargore shift to wolf form to defend themselves. Once combat has been initiated, they have no interest in conversation.

One potential complication of this strategy is that if the PCs use their followers to fight the battle, there is a chance that those followers will contract lycanthropy. If a human is bitten by a werewolf and survives, he will turn into a wolf during the next full moon, and be a full-fledge lycanthrope (same as the Children of Kargore) thereafter. As a





lycanthrope, he will have an overwhelming urge to hunt, to eat meat raw, and to generally reject civilization. Lycanthropes are naturally inclined to worship Kargore.

running out of food in the north. Sooner or later, they will be back.

Another complication is Kargore himself. Unless the PCs wipe out the Red Hand immediately, the pack will call out to their god in the midst of combat. Since the Red Hand's mission is so important to the tribe as a whole, Kargore materializes to defend his children. (See below for more information on Kargore.)

DISCUSSION

While the Children of Kargore are not, in general, big on negotiation and conversation, the leaders of the Red Hand are wiser than most of their tribe. If the PCs approach them from a position of power and respect, Torga is willing to speak with them. (He isn't willing to speak to the PCs' followers, however, unless those followers are obviously blessed with supernatural power.)

Finally, the GM should note that even if the Red Hand is wiped out, the PCs' troubles are far from over. They have made a terrible enemy of Kargore and his Children. A few weeks later, the rest of Kargore's tribes swoops from the forest and descends on the PCs' tribe with the intent of completely eradicating them. They are no longer hunting for their survival; they are hunting for vengeance.

Torga is willing to explain his tribe's position, and how the Black Wind has killed off much of their prey to the north, thus forcing them to hunt in the southern plains. He is not apologetic, and the hardships of the plains people obviously do not concern him. Nevertheless, he does not want to make enemies of his southern neighbors if he doesn't have to—especially since they have gods who are willing to intervene on their behalf. He is willing to negotiate a temporary halt to the raids if the PCs can offer him a worthwhile incentive.

INTIMIDATION

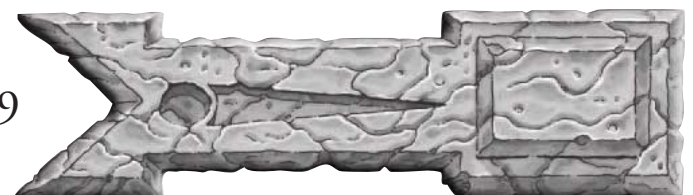
The PCs may decide to stop short of actually attacking the Red Hand, and simply try to scare them away instead.

Any intimidation attempt using the PCs' tribe or some other mundane agent is doomed to failure. The Children of Kargore consider themselves the pinnacle of nature; they have no fear of normal humans, no matter how impressive those humans' weapons, armor, or technology may be.

Meshug encourages the PCs to investigate the Black Wind, which is the root problem for both their tribes. She is willing to guide them north to where the plague is ravaging the forest, and to introduce them to Kargore. The old woman is as practical as she is experienced; she knows that conflict with the plains people is inevitable as long as the Black Wind keeps them from hunting the forests of their home,

The PCs would have much better results with an obvious supernatural display of power. Even the Red Hand must think twice when confronted with a 50 foot-tall man made of fire who proclaims, "You shall come no further!" This may very well intimidate the werewolves into breaking camp and retreating north, but it is only a temporary solution. Such a supernatural display draws the attention of Kargore, who is not pleased. And the lycanthropes are still

Unless he is put in his place, Kanog mocks the PCs and their tribe. "The plains people are so weak, even their gods have come to beg us for mercy!" he laughs. Unfortunately for the PCs, his attitude is common amongst the Red Hand; only Torga and Meshug are willing to seriously talk





to them. If the PCs chastise Kanog for his dishonor, they gain the respect of the rest of the pack. If they kill him outright, however, the whole pack turns against them, and even Torga and Meshug stop talking to them.

DESPERATE MEASURES

If the conflict between the Children of Kargore and the PCs' tribe grows to point of an all-out war between the two tribes, Meshug breaks ranks to talk with the PCs. She may simply sneak off and offer a prayer to them, or she may walk straight toward their tribe, hoping they will see her and intervene.

Meshug knows that a war between the two tribes would be wasteful and deadly, and she wants to avoid it. She also knows that Kargore is too proud and set in his ways to back down from a fight with the plains people, so if there is to be a peaceful solution, the PCs must a solution to the problem of the Black Wind. Once the food is restored in the forest, Kargore can bring his children north without losing face, or the tribes losing more lives.

KARGORE

One way or another, the PCs learn of the god Kargore during this part of the adventure. If they attack the werewolves, he appears to defend them. If they talk with the werewolves, he is mentioned if not directly invoked. If they head north (either with Meshug or by themselves), he appears to them to find out what they are doing in his territory.

In combat, Kargore prefers to use his Miracles to turn himself into an unstoppable rampaging beast and slaughter his enemies directly. He transformed into a 15 foot-tall wolf man with enormous claws and teeth, and a thick hide that's impervious to normal weapons.

In conversation, Kargore is impatient, arrogant, and abrupt. He is also easily flattered, and can be tricked – though if

he finds out he's been fooled, his rage is uncontrollable. Kargore makes it clear he doesn't care about the PCs or their tribe. "The strong survive," he says with a shrug. He considers the Black Wind a part of nature, albeit a supernatural part (same as he is), and therefore he doesn't want to fight

it. But if the PCs want to, he won't stop them. He's not concerned about a conflict with the plains people (his children could wipe them out in a night if they had to, he believes), but he prefers the forest and wants his tribe to keep their current home.

LOOKING FOR THE WIND

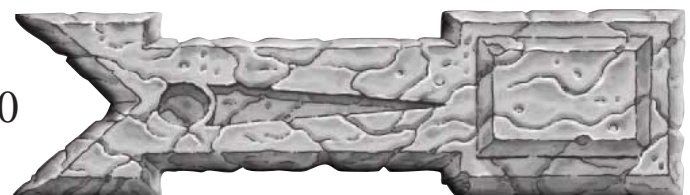
After their encounter with the Red Hand, the PCs know that it is the mysterious Black Wind of disease that has driven the werewolves south. If they can find and put a stop to the source of the Wind, the Children of Kargore will leave the plains people alone.

If the PCs have Meshug as their guide, she can bring them to the region some twenty miles north of the plains where the Black Wind has cut a swath of death through the forest. (Though she will not enter the region herself.) If the PCs have no guide, they can find the region through any combination of investigation and Miracles.

The "wind-touched" region of the forest is silent. No birds call from the trees. No squirrels chatter from overhead. Even the breeze that might rattle the leaves has fallen still, as if in mourning. A subtle scent of death and rot hangs over the land, and a thin oily film still clings to some branches.

Poking around in the area, the PCs find dead animals. Some are simply lying dead underfoot. Others are huddled, along with their families, in their nests. Mammals and birds seem the hardest hit, though there is one pond full of bloated, floating fish.

All the dead animals sport black spots on their skin, their fur, their feathers. Many of them have dried blood around their mouths and eyes. PCs who take a closer, magical look at the corpses can determine that the creatures' organs have degenerated into pulpy masses. And no, the dead animals are not contagious.





The PCs have many different ways to find out what happened here. Perhaps they ask a dead animal, or ask the trees, or project their minds two months into the past. If nothing else, they can ask Kargore, who watched it happen.

Regardless of how they learn it, here is what they can discover:

- In the beginning, a thin black smoke appears. The smoke fills about a square mile of area, and appears as a light ground mist.
- Over the course of a half-day, the smoke grows thicker, darker, and taller. It turns into a bank of black fog that blankets the land.
- By the time the animals realize what's happening, it's too late. Those that are touched by the black cloud manifest black spots almost immediately.
- In the midst of the black smoke are hundreds of tiny, malevolent red eyes watching coldly as death wraps the forest in its shroud.
- The eyes belong to a horde of black rats. If they are affected by the Black Wind, they don't show any symptoms.
- Within twelve hours, the black cloud has dissipated, and begins drifting, without wind, towards the southeast. The black rats are gone.
- Even once the smoke is gone, the animals were slow, sick, and choking on blood. They were dead within 24 hours.
- There are no signs of the black rats in the dead zone of the forest. If they are traveling with the black wind (which seems likely), they are moving southeast, and will be leaving the forest in another day or two.

VILLAGE OF THE DEAD

If the PCs work follow the trail of black death back the direction from whence it came (that is, the northwest), about another 20 miles in they find an abandoned village that was once home to a colony of wood nymphs.

This is, of course, the village that Tallus once called home. The village is a grove of enormous trees which have been shaped and hollowed out to form homes for the nymphs. The quarters are large enough for entire extended families to reside inside the still-living trees. Some of them are even two stories tall, with crude ladders and tube inside to let people “upstairs.”

There are 14 such “tree houses” in the center of the grove, and another 18 smaller ones on the outskirts. In the center of the village is a stone sculpture, twice the size of a man, of what might be an abstract representation of a wood nymph. The stone is a non-native white marble, and its smooth lines suggest that it has been shaped by magic, not by tools.

Silence hangs over the village like the rest of the forest. The village is abandoned: poking through the houses reveals that nothing of value is left, though minor trinkets and furniture are left in disarray. All evidence suggests that the wood nymphs left in a hurry.





wood nymphs left in a hurry.

The largest house, near the center of the village, is still occupied – by six dead wood nymphs. They lie in beds, their faces lined and coated in dry blood. Some of them wear grimaces of agony. None of them have been prepared for burial, and all of them are covered in black spots.

If the PCs make themselves known, one of the wood nymphs coughs up a little blood and turns to them. He wasn't dead after all, but will be soon enough.

“Beware the Black Wind,” he croaks. “Beware the rats. Death is all it leaves in its wake.”

The dying wood nymph is named Raandu. He was an important elder in the village, surviving the longest due to his store of Belief. If asked, he describes, slowly and with much coughing, the black smoke, the spots, and the rats, as detailed above. The village was evacuated, but he suspects that most of the nymphs merely died later, alone in the forest.

Raandu offers one extra detail, however: At one point, when the nymphs realized what was happening and began to flee in terror, the smoke coalesced into a humanoid shape. And that shape, Raandu says, was that of Tallus, a member of their tribe who fell to a mysterious disease and was exiled last year.

“But Tallus is dead,” wheezes Raandu. “He’s dead and gone.”

Unless the PCs intercede, Raandu is also dead within the hour.

RESTORING THE FOREST OF FETH

If the Children of Kargore are to resume their hunting in the Forest of Feth, the PCs need to do something to bring back with wild game killed off by the black wind. Since they are gods, they are limited only by their imaginations and

their peoples’ Belief. Below are a few ideas of how they may correct the situation.

CALLED FORTH FROM THE DUST

Bringing new animals into existence is a relatively simple thing for a god. The creatures of the forest are not inherently supernatural or even unusual. There are rabbits, beavers, bears, foxes, deer, squirrels, mice, and many different types of birds. The PCs probably won't get the ecological mix right, but since they are trying to make up for a pandemic that completely wiped out the ecosystem in a matter of days, the details aren't that important.

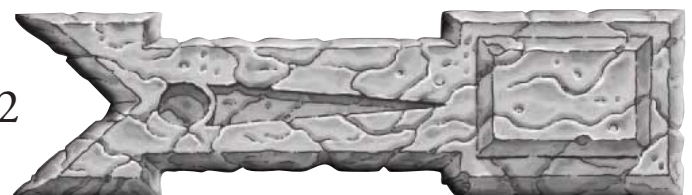
The downside of this plan is that magically created animals, like all magical constructs, vanish when the power that created them dissipates. So unless the PCs are willing to sacrifice a bit of their power each season – at least until this created generation of creatures has a chance to reproduce – this solution might be too short-term to be effective.

In game terms, this Miracle is a Significant Innovation (base cost 6) on the scale of City (+3) with a Duration of at least a Season (+2). Note that this region is outside the PCs’ control, so they receive another +2 modifier to the Miracle cost.

CALLED FROM THE GRAVE

Of course, there are plenty of animals already in the forest—they're just dead. The PCs can resurrect the animals if they wish, but again, they need to keep a constant stream of magic pumping through the creatures, lest they collapse once more into death. Resurrected animals are free of spots and the Black Wind disease.

In game terms, this Miracle is a Legendary Alteration (base cost 6), but is otherwise the same as simply creating the animals as described above.





GO FORTH AND MULTIPLY

The entire forest has not been depopulated. There are vast reaches of northern woods completely untouched by the Black Wind. The PCs may go north and retrieve a number of animals to “seed” the blighted region to the south, and perhaps speed those creatures’ reproductive cycles to make them spread through the area faster. The downside of this plan is that the northern forest is fiercely protected by the wood nymphs, who have no fear of any god. While they may not be able to harm the PCs directly, they may take out their anger on the PCs’ tribe, or the Children of Kargore.

Calling the animals from the north to come live in the blighted forest is a Significant Alteration (base cost 4) with a scale of at least a Village (+2) with a Duration of at least a Week (+1). Once the Miracle runs its course, some of the animals will likely return north to their homes, but some will stay in their new homes in the south. Remember that this region is outside the PCs’ control, so they receive another +2 modifier to the Miracle cost

TOUCHED BY THE GODS

Of course, even if the PCs do replenish the lycanthropes’ food supply, there is no guarantee that the Black Wind won’t return and just kill the animals again. The PCs can certainly alter the creatures to make them immune to the illness, though they may have to study how the disease killed the animals in order to do so.

Making an animal immune is a Minor Alteration (base cost 3), with a scale of Individual (+0), and the duration of at least a Season (+2). A god may make the alteration part of the creature’s genetic makeup, so it is naturally passed along to its offspring; they are immune without any divine intervention.

CONCLUSION

By the end of the chapter, the PCs know that the mysterious wolves that have been raiding their tribe’s livestock are actually lycanthropes who worship their own god of strength and natural selection. They also know that the lycanthropes have been hunting southward because a mystical black wind has been killing their prey to the north. Finally, the PCs know that the black wind is heading southeast, down into the plains near where their tribe makes its home.

CHAPTER 2: SHADOWS OVER PANARAE

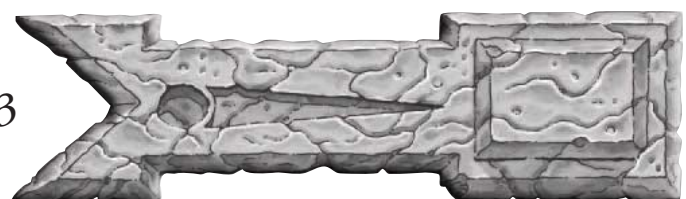
The Black Wind is blowing south and east, out of the forest and onto the plains, scattering panic before it and leaving death in its wake. It is on a collision course with Panarae, the village of Dirce, and if that village is to survive, it will need the PCs’ help.

PARARAE AND THE DIRCIANS

To the east of the realm the PCs call home is the small tribe of Dircians, named for their goddess, Dirce.

The Dircians are a warm, nurturing people who pride themselves on being open to new people and new ideas. They are quick to laugh and quick to forgive, but just as quick to strike at any who would threaten them. Dircians are known to consider all who humans who travel their land as part of their extended family—and Dircians are fiercely protective of their family.

Beneath their generally cheerful demeanors, Dirce’s followers are troubled by the dangers around them. The Salamanders from the south and east are a constant threat, and each season brings more reports of the creatures enslaving entire families on the outskirts of Dircian territory. With each





passing year, the Dircian population shrinks and contracts in upon itself. Faced with Salamander raids, many flee to the west, while others leave their lands to go make their living in the village of Panarae.

Panarae sprawls atop a rolling hill a two-day walk south of the forest of Feth. From the highest point on the hill, one can see the steaming black peaks of Sssnoth to the east, and far distant horizons to the south and west.

The crown of the hill is surrounded with a stone wall which is twice the height of a man and stronger than it looks. The wall has withstood numerous attacks from Salamander raiders over the years, and its very stones have been blessed through and through by Dirce and her priests. Every adult male who lives in Panarae

takes a turn at least one

night a moon walking the wall, watching for Salamanders and other dangers.

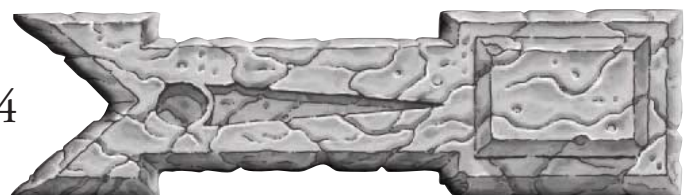
Farmland stretches down from Panarae's hill. Local farmers grow their crops and livestock here, and maintain their households outside the village walls, but retreat to town at the first sign of Salamander trouble.

Inside the wall, the village is composed of nearly a hundred cozy, stone-walled, thatch-roofed cottages. Since Panarae sits at the crossroads of several nomad paths, the village is home to three different boarding houses, four independent trading posts, and a large open market area in the village square. Each trading post is controlled by one of the four major families, whose elders are responsible for keeping the village running.

Panarae is full of dogs of all kinds. The creatures are sacred to Dirce, and it is a sin to kill or mistreat them. They are kept as pets and trained to help out around the village. Some of them are a permanent part of the wall defense.

As part of Dirce's blessing upon Panarae, the village is full of dogs, but never overrun. Guided by the goddess, the dogs form packs and leave the village when it grows overcrowded, and Dirce herself seems to keep them from overbreeding.

Near the center of the village is the temple of Dirce. It shares the basic construction of the rest of the cottages—stone walls, thatched roof—but its walls are painted the sky-blue color sacred to Dirce, and her holy circle is made of bronze and hangs over its door. The main room of the temple is hung with woven tapestries; the floor is lined with cushions, and another, even larger, bronze circle hanging upon the wall. Incense burns in braziers set into the walls. The back room serves as the living quarters for Pytus, Dirce's only priest.





Pytus is an old, old man. His sky-blue robe is thin and worn, and he supports himself on a gnarled wooden staff that seems even older than he is. But there is power and pride in him yet, and he has the respect of all those who worship Dirce. Even the nomads who are merely passing through Panarae will ask for the priest's wisdom in regards to their problems. The goddess speaks to Pytus in his dreams, and sometimes manifests in her temple in the middle of the night to address him directly. Pytus is quick to smile, but quiet, with thoughtful eyes. He is always accompanied by a large, blue-eyed dog he calls simply, "Dog."

Pytus shares responsibility for the village with a council of elders, who represent each of the four major families: Mides, Laphos, Tece, and Clo. The council can overrule Pytus in secular matters if they feel strongly enough about it, and he can break their ties, but Pytus has free rein in matters of the spirit.

DIRCIANS

(10/0/20) Total 110 Followers

Elders of Dirce (20% 22 total)

Body: d6 (human average)

Mind: d6 (human average)

Spirit: d8+2 (strong-willed and charismatic)

Warriors of Dirce (10% 11 total)

Body: d8

Mind: d6

Spirit: d6

Other Dircians d6 with no modifiers

PYTUS, PRIEST OF DIRCE

Body: d6-2 (Disadvantage: decrepit)

Mind: d6+2 (Arcane knowledge and Magic)

Spirit: d8

(Note: No cost for miracle upkeep due to Disadvantage)

DIRCE

Primary Domain: The Safety and Security of Home

Additional Domains: Dogs, Weaving, The Sky

Inclinations: Creation (Harmony), Transformation and Control (Balance), Destruction (Opposition)

Belief: 75

Appearance:

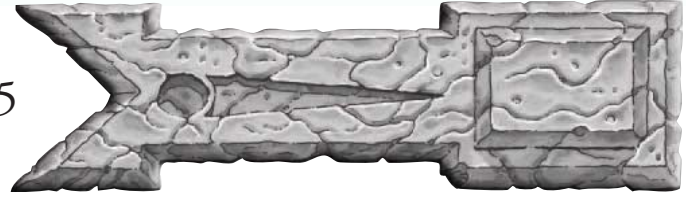
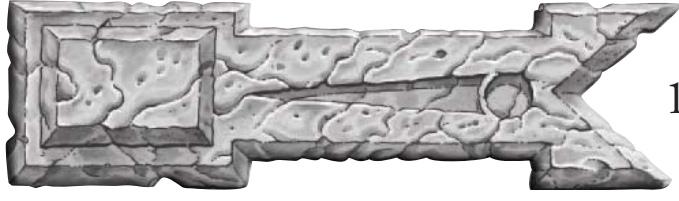
Dirce appears as a middle-aged woman, with gray-streaked hair. She has thin wrinkles around her laughing mouth and striking sky-blue eyes. Her cloak is a single bolt of thick cloth the color of her eyes that wraps around her body as robe, hood, and cape, and seems to move of its own volition. Even when Dirce is standing still, her cloak floats about her as if on an unseen breeze.

Personality:

Dirce is a mother. She is quick to smile and laugh and comfort her children. She wants nothing more than to make her followers feel safe, and to protect them from harm. Her warmth and protection extend even beyond her own people, to include any humans in her territory. She considers them all her children, and will fiercely defend them against any dangers.

This inclusive attitude leads Dirce to be friendly and supportive towards the PCs. She believes that if humans are to flourish in Croesus, their gods must put aside petty rivalries and work together for a common defense.

Unfortunately for her people, Dirce's idea of defense is purely defensive: she raises walls, but not armies. As generations of Salamander raiders can attest, such tactics are of limited use. Dirce is aware of this, but she is so reluctant to put her people in harm's way, she just can't allow herself to turn them into warriors. No mother wants to send her children off to battle.





Symbols:

Dirce's holy symbol is the circle: specifically, a disc with a small hole in the center. According to her priests, the circle represents both the sky, which surrounds us all, and Dirce's protection, which likewise surrounds her children and keeps them safe.

The color blue—specifically, the color of the sky—is also sacred to Dirce. Those who wear it are said to be “wearing the sky,” and only her priests are allowed to do so.

Celestial Home:

Dirce's celestial home is a sun-dappled valley of green and gold, safely nestled between the mountains of the Endless Summer that form the valley walls. At the center of the valley is a charming two-story cottage with walls of stone and a roof of thatch. The cottage is larger on the inside than the outside, with thousands of rooms, and smells of baking bread. Behind the cottage is a large, elaborate garden that spills into an orchard that is forever in bloom. The valley itself is full of dogs—and rabbits for them to chase for all eternity.

Heroes and Artifacts:

Dirce has made a hero of Pytus, her lone priest. She has blessed him with the wisdom that has made him legendary along the nomad trade routes, and made him effectively immortal. He is 152 years old, and cannot die of natural causes. Pytus has also been given the ability to communicate with dogs.

Worship:

In the spring, Dirce's people come together for a celebration of sky and community. They weave kites out of grass and join for a day of picnics and kite-flying. The acts of making and flying the kites are acts of worship. The celebration is particularly enjoyed by children (who love flying kites) and young adults (who traditionally turn the day in to “dating” opportunity).

In the early autumn, after the harvest, the Dircian celebrate the Homecoming, when all the families from across the wide territory return to their traditional home of Panarae. This is a time to renew family bonds, strengthen relationships, and resolve any conflicts that may have come up between various families during the year.

There are times when not only the living attend the Homecoming—it's not that unusual for the spirit of a dead relative to appear to check up on her descendants.

Throughout the year, Pytus provides weekly offerings of prayer and praise on behalf of the people, and preaches of Dirce's compassion and protection. The people also worship through acts of hospitality: by ritually receiving human visitors into their village or homes, they not only make their guests feel welcome, but serve Dirce in the process.

Commandments:

Like a strict, but loving mother, Dirce has a number of commandments. Here are the main ones:

The home is a sanctuary of peace and safety. Any who violate this sanctity with violence are exiled or (if their violence severe enough) put to death.

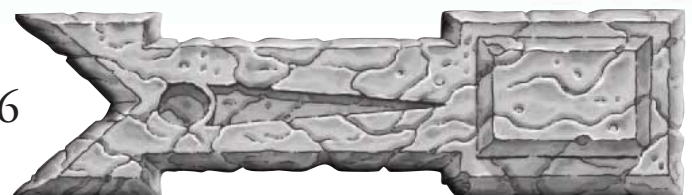
No human in need is to be turned away. All humans are family, and you must help your family when you can. If you cannot help directly, you must help by finding someone else—who is also obligated to help—who can directly aid the one in need.

Dogs are holy to Dirce. Do not harm them in any way.

The color blue is holy. Only those people and things which are dedicated to Dirce may be adorned with the color of the sky.

Favored Miracles:

- Barring the Door: The home is very important to Dirce.





Inside their homes, her children should be safe from whatever dangers are lurking outside their doors. This Miracle shuts and locks all the doors and windows of a home. The portals cannot be opened again until the Miracle wears off up to a week later, or Dirce wills it, whichever comes first. Cost: 2 (Trivial Alteration of Control (2), Scale +1, Duration +1, Inclination -1, Location +0, Domain -2, Total 1)

- A Mother's Protection: This Miracle creates an invisible wall of force around an area roughly the size of a single home. For up to a week, creatures cannot move through the wall, weapons cannot harm it, projectiles bounce off it, but air and water still permeate it. In game terms, the invisible wall has a d8 for keeping out enemies and their weapons. Cost: 6 (Significant Innovation of Creation (6), Scale +1, Duration +1, Inclination +0, Location +0, Domain -2, Total 1)

- A Mother's Rage: While Dirce isn't comfortable with her children going to war, she has no problems doing so herself. She does not fight directly, but uses this Miracle to turn her enemies against each other and themselves. The target (up to an army of 100) must roll against a d8. If they fail, they fall to quarreling, then blows, and tear themselves apart before reaching Dirce's children. The effects takes only minutes, so Dirce sometimes uses the Miracle several times before her enemies reach her children. Cost: 3 (Significant Alteration of Control (3), Scale +2, Duration 0, Inclination -1, Location 0, Domain 0, Total 1)

BLACK WIND RISING

What follows is a description of what happens in and around Panarae if the PCs do not interfere. In short, Tallus terrorizes the village with his black smoke, then smothers it, effectively killing off the Dircians and reducing Dirce to a withered, powerless memory. The PCs have plenty of opportunity to prevent any of this, though how and when they step in is up the players themselves.

SHADOWS ON THE PLAINS

Three days after the PCs respond to their people losing livestock to wolves from the north, the Dircian farmers north of Panarae spy a black fog rolling down from the forest of Feth at sunset. The next morning, they find their fields full of dying, black-spotted sheep.

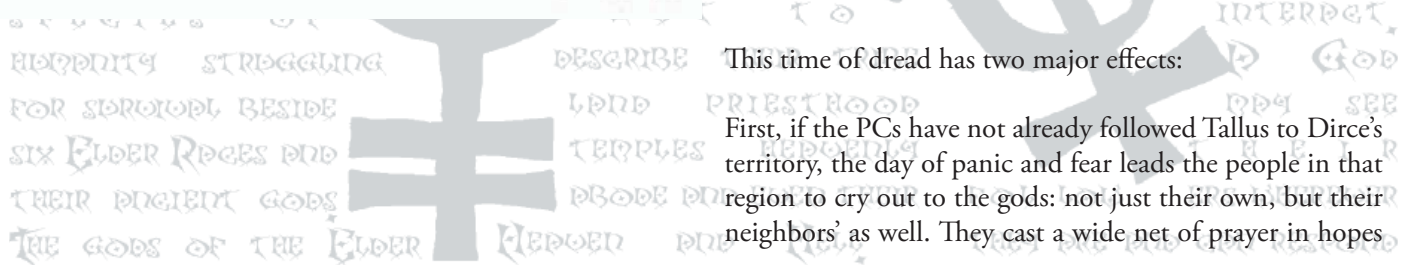
An overnight shepherd is also covered in black spots and coughing blood.

"The rats..." he wheezes. "Hundreds... black rats. Staring. Just staring. They brought the black cloud... they brought the death...."

Some of the farmers round up their livestock and keep them close in pens and barns. Some take their animals and/or families south to Panarae. But all of them grow anxious, and quickly spread word of the deadly Black Wind throughout the Dircian region. As the sun sets on this long day of terror, a black mist rolls across the fields north of Panarae, and those who see it know what it means and flee south.

This time of dread has two major effects:

First, if the PCs have not already followed Tallus to Dirce's territory, the day of panic and fear leads the people in that region to cry out to the gods: not just their own, but their neighbors' as well. They cast a wide net of prayer in hopes





of snaring any divine protection they can. If necessary, these prayers make the PCs aware that the Black Wind is on the move and heading toward Panarae.

Second, Tallus experiences his first true taste of fear from humans—and he likes it. Now that he knows humans are a good source of fear, and that there’s a whole tribe of them to the south, he scurries his rats through the fields with one goal in mind: Panarae.

PANIC IN PANARAE

As the sun rises on the third day of the Leviathan invasion of Dirce’s realm, the village guards are horrified as they gaze out over the walls. The black wind described the refugees the day before did not dissipate overnight. It is, in fact, a thin gray along the horizon, slowly drifting closer. But what makes this sight truly shocking is that the smoke has stretched and slithered and coiled itself all the way around the village. Panarae is surrounded.

In truth, Tallus has spread his rat pack thin, into a line some ten miles out from Panarae’s walls. The black mist that hovers over them is little more than an illusion. It has no power to infect anything, for its true purpose is to instill fear in the people of Panarae. If a human approaches the line of rats, however, the mist thickens into the Black Wind, and tries to touch and infect the human. If the human retreats back toward the village, the fog thins and becomes harmless again.

Over the course of the next six hours, the circle slowly closes in around Panarae. As it draws closer, the fog thickens. Animals caught in it come down with spots and fall ill. Livestock left in the fields panic and begin running towards the village. Inside the walls, things aren’t much better.

Once it becomes evident that the black smoke (which is known to cause black spots and eventual death) is coming for them, the Dircians grow anxious. The leaders of the

village encourage calm, while frantically debating amongst themselves what to do. Pytus retires to the temple to pray and seek Dirce’s guidance. While the elderly priest is just as fearful as anyone, his demeanor is calm and relaxed. “We are Dirce’s children,” he reassures his flock. “She will not abandon us in our time of need.”

Indeed, Dirce is doing what she can to keep the Black Wind from destroying her people. Drawing on her reserves of Belief, she empowers the enchanted stone walls so they block out the black smoke.

“Bring my people inside the walls,” she whispers to Pytus. “They will be safe here.”

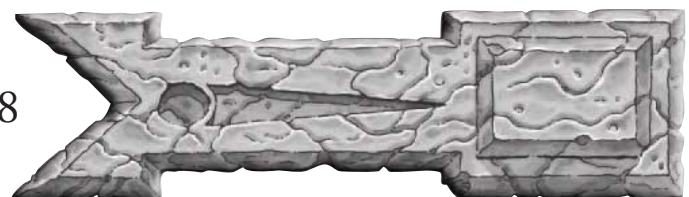
THE BLACK PROPHECY

But Tallus has a secret weapon already inside Dirce’s mystical walls. His name is Alamedes, one of the northern farmers who saw his whole flock fall to the black spots of death. Never a devout follower of Dirce, the young man has taken his loss as a sign that the goddess has indeed abandoned her people. If they are to save themselves from the Black Wind, he reasons, the Dircians must appeal not to their helpless goddess, but to the Wind itself.

Alamedes did not come to this conclusion all by himself. He had some assistance, in the form of suggestions planted in his mind by Tallus. The Leviathan is using the man to spread fear and discord... and to suggest a course of action that turns into a crude sort of worship. With each passing hour, as Tallus grows stronger, so does his control of Alamedes.

Below is a description of what Alamedes does, and how the village reacts, if the PCs do not interfere.

First, Alamedes points out that while his white sheep were struck down by the black spots, he saw black sheep that were





not. (This is true.) Therefore, he concludes, the Black Wind won't hurt you if you cover yourself in black. He wraps himself in black cloak and strongly encourages others to do likewise. Quite a few people join him in wearing black over the course of the day. It doesn't hurt anything, and they're willing to try anything to keep the spots away.

As the day wears on and the black ring closes in around Panarae, Alamedes insists that colors other than black are an affront to the Black Wind, and will draw its ire. Using a crude blackish pigment, he begins painting over large, brightly colored things inside the village, such as signs and white-washed walls. Alamedes encourages others to help, and some do. Those who don't aren't keen on his vandalism, but don't necessarily have the time to deal with such foolishness.

When the late morning sun turns gray from rising fog, Alamedes' teaching takes on a more desperate tone. "The Wind has only taken our animals thus far," he says (though this isn't true). "If it wants our livestock so badly, let's give it what it needs, so that it will spare our human lives!"

Even amongst those who joined Alamedes in wearing black, not many are willing to join him in sacrificing their animals to placate the Black Wind. But some are, and some are willing to sacrifice others' livestock—with or without those peoples' permission. Violence ensues, and the end result is more than a dozen animal sacrifices, and three of Alamedes' followers beaten bloody. The village is on the brink of chaos.

As the black cloud finally surrounds Panarae, Alamedes rallies his handful of remaining followers for one final sacrifice to the Black Wind: they intend to tear down the sacred circles from the temple of Dirce and paint the temple black.

This time, Alamedes has gone too far—but he too far gone to care. He and his six followers attack the temple

in a desperate frenzy. Wielding paint and hammers, they fall upon the temple and rip the metal disc from its home. They splash paint across where it once hung.

Dirce and Pytus are too busy protecting the village as a whole to defend their temple, but the other villagers rise up against Alamedes and cry out for him to stop. When he does not, the villagers seize him and his follower and drag them away from the temple. His followers are beaten and locked in a root cellar. Alamedes is beaten to death.

GM Note: The PCs should recognize what Alamedes is doing: namely, creating rituals by which he and his people are worshipping Tallus, and thereby giving the Leviathan strength. If they put a stop to this dark priest soon enough, he won't be able to empower Tallus—or take the power of Belief away from Dirce.

LAST STAND

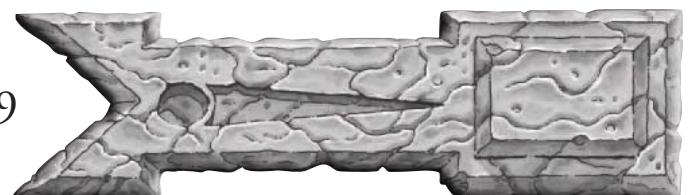
By noon, the village of Panarae is smothered in darkness.

A thick black fog roils just outside the walls, held at bay by Dirce's will. Dirce's will protects not just the wall itself, but extended a hundred feet into the air on all sides, and arc over the top, creating a dome of protection over her village. Inside the dome, the sun cannot be seen for the lethal smoke pressing in on all sides.

For an hour, a hush falls across the village. Torches are lit. Desperate prayers are offered to Dirce and—furtively, but a few—to the Black Wind of Pestilence. Those looking out at the fog see faces forming, laughing and mocking them. And then the eyes appear.

Across the tops of the walls, a thousand pairs of beady red eyes stare unblinking down at the village. As one, the thousand black rats descend upon Panarae, silent but for the clicking of their claws upon stone. The Dircians scream and hide inside their homes, but the rats have no interest in the villagers. They are here for Pytus.

When the rats appear, Pytus steps out of the temple, weary but determined. He knows that he is the last line of defense





for his tribe, his village, and his goddess. His staff gleams sky-blue with supernatural light. The dogs of the village stand with him, and with their teeth make short work of the first few dozen rats that surge towards them. But while there are nearly a hundred dogs in Panarae, there are more than ten times as many rats, and the canines eventually fall beneath the tidal wave of vermin.

As the last of the dogs fall, and the rats turn their attention to Pytus, the priest raises his glowing staff. He stands defiantly as they crawl up his legs, his trunk, his arms, and cover his flesh in bloody bites. For almost a minute he stands, a crawling mound of black fur with a single glowing blue eye at its peak... then the mound collapses, the blue light blinks out, and the priest is no more.

FEEDING ON THE FEAR

As a Leviathan, Tallus does not have true worshippers *per se*. What he has are people who are afraid of him. He feeds not on their Belief, but their Fear. Mechanically, the two work the same. But in practice, the difference is that Belief is given, while Fear is taken.

Over the course of his day-long attack on Panarae, Tallus take Fear from the Dircians. In game terms, he steals Belief from Dirce and takes it (as Fear) for himself.

Every two hours between dawn and noon, Tallus receives 8 Belief and Dirce loses 8 Belief.

If Alamedes convinces people to wear black, Tallus steals 1 additional Belief from Dirce. If Alamedes succeeds in his animal sacrifice, Tallus steals 3 additional Belief. And Alamedes successfully violates Dirce's temple, the Leviathan steals an additional 5 Belief from the goddess.

GM Note: When the PCs come into conflict with Tallus, remember that Belief is won and lost depending on which side wins the conflict. If the PCs can defeat Tallus in front of the Dircians, they will garner Belief and help relieve the Dircians' fear.

THE FALL OF PANARAE

With Pytus dead, the Dircians' faith is broken, and Dirce's power to protect Panarae begins to fade.

Slowly at first, the black smoke seeps in through the walls. It oozes in through the cracks between stones, drifting on some unseen wind. Few villagers notice until the fog reaches the torches and turns their bright flame muted and gray.

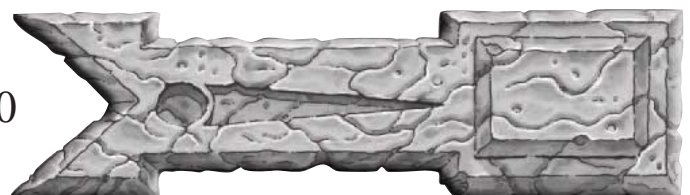
When the torches go, everyone notices, and the village descends into bedlam. Some villagers go into a frenzy against the rats, trying to crush them with rock or cut them with blades. Others try to flee over the walls and through the black fog. Still others paint themselves black and cry out for mercy.

The Black Wind takes no notice of the villagers. It drifts in from all sides, slowly, inexorably, as Tallus savors the villagers' dread at their impending doom. The rats scurry back to atop the walls, where they watch the chaos and despair.

Finally, the sky begins to fall. Dirce's protective dome over the village collapses all at once, and vast black clouds come tumbling down, blotting out the sunlight. Even the torches faint to black. Darkness falls on Panarae, and the village, as it has been, is gone.

AFTERMATH

As expected, when the fog dissipates an hour later, the villagers of Panarae are covered in black spots. They grow





feverish within hours, and too weak to move before the end of the day. By midnight, they are vomiting blood and pulp. Many are dead by sunrise. By noon, many more follow.

But not every villager falls to the Black Wind.

Those who wore black and cried out the Leviathan were spared, as were those who offered animal sacrifices, and those who helped Alamedes desecrate Dirce's temple. Tallus has discovered the utility of mortal servants, and has preserved this handful to serve as his priesthood. He intends to probe and nudge their minds, and use them to spread worship in his name.

As for Tallus himself, he drifts westward. He senses more human there, another tribe ready to be harvested of their fear. This tribe is, of course, made up the PCs' followers. If the PCs do nothing to stop Tallus in the next few days, they will find themselves facing the same fate as Dirce.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Of course, all of the above is merely what happens if the PCs do nothing to interfere—which is not very likely.

How and when the PCs get involved is largely up to the players themselves, but below are a number of paths they may wish to pursue:

TALKING TO DIRCE

Depending on when the PCs arrive, they may find Dirce near Panarae itself, or still in her celestial home. Dirce welcomes any assistance the PCs can provide in her conflict with Tallus. She explains how her reservoir of Belief is not what it used to be (what with her people fleeing and being captured by Salamanders), and that she fears Tallus' attack may cost her even more faith. If there is anything the PCs can do to help her, she would be extremely grateful, and would find some way to make it up to them. After all,

she points out, the new gods have to stick together.

DEFENDING THE DIRCIANS

The PCs can help the Dirceans directly by making them immune to the black spots, healing them of their disease, and keeping the black smoke at bay through the use of wind or mystical shields. They can add their power to Dirce's to keep the smoke out of the wall—and adjust the Miracle to keep out rats as well. They can make moats, chasms, or rings of fire to keep the rats away from Panarae.

Indirectly, the PCs can help Dirce's people by calming their fears and soothing their panic. They can encourage the villagers to keep their faith, and to reject Alamedes' words as heresy. After all, it is the peoples' fear that fuels Tallus, and gives him the power he needs to destroy them.

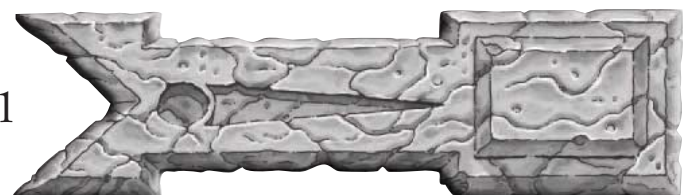
Note that the PCs can help the people of Panarae in their own names. That is, they themselves can try to take the credit for any Miracles they perform on the villagers' behalf. This is a good way to make an enemy of Dirce, but if the PCs don't care about such things, this would be the best time to make such an enemy. After all, she is already fighting for believers on one front. She is weakened, and cannot easily defend her territory.

Defending the Dirceans, directly or indirectly, likely brings the PCs into conflict with Tallus himself.

DEALING WITH TALLUS

While Tallus won't seek out the PCs, he is willing to talk with them if they approach him. He gazes at them coldly with his red rat eyes, and tries to learn as much about them (who they are, where they are from, what their spiritual domains are) as he can. If asked, he sullenly declares that he wants what they have: a people and a place to call his own. What he doesn't say is that the "people and place" he wants are "everyone and everywhere."

Tallus cannot be talked out of his plan of action. In fact, he





considers any attempt to do so a confirmation that he is on the right track: why would the gods try to stop him if he were not a threat to them?

The most direct attacks against Tallus are against the Black Wind, his rats, and his neonate priest, Alamedes.

Attacking the Black Wind: Creative PCs may try to blow Tallus' black fog away from Panarae, water it down with rain, or otherwise cause it to dissipate. As a Miracle, the fog resists all such efforts with a d6—or a d4 if it is the result of the “Shape of the Black Wind” Miracle. (As a trivial innovation, “Shape of the Black Wind” provides only d4, while the stronger minor innovation creates a resource of d6.)

If the PCs succeed in eliminating the black fog, Tallus gives up on using the fog as a plague-carrying agent. Instead, he creates new small patches of fog to distract the PCs while he creates a new, unseen wind to carry his pestilence of black spots. (The new Miracle has the same mechanics as the Black Wind, but is invisible.)

Attacking Alamedes: At the first sign of supernatural affliction, Alamedes cries out to the Black Wind to save him. He secretly fears that Dirce is jealous of his new god, and will try to smite him. If Alamedes has not yet reached the point of offering animal sacrifices, Tallus probably steps in to counter the PCs' attack on his servant, for the mortal still has an important role to play in today's events. After the animal sacrifices, Tallus doesn't care so much about Alamedes.

ALAMEDES, THE BLACK PROPHET

Body: d6

Mind: d8+2 (Arcane Knowledge & Public Speaking)

Spirit: d6

Attacking the Rats: Tallus is extremely protective of his rats, as they are his body. Like natural rats, they run and hide at the first sign of danger, and are too quick to simply

smash. Unlike natural rats, their speed and ability to dodge is supernaturally enhanced. Because Tallus is so protective of his rats, the PCs can keep him preoccupied with the rats and distracted from Alamedes, Dirce, or the village of Panarae itself.

SAVING THE DAY... AND DIVINE RETRIBUTION

Throughout this long day of smoke and anguish, there are many points at which the PCs can turn the tide of battle and ensure the survival of Panarae. The most important point is this: If Pytus survives, the villagers retain their faith in Dirce, and the both the village and the goddess live to owe the PCs a great debt of gratitude.

If Pytus survives, Tallus abandons his plans for the Dircians, but turn his now-blazing rage against a new enemy: the PCs' tribe.

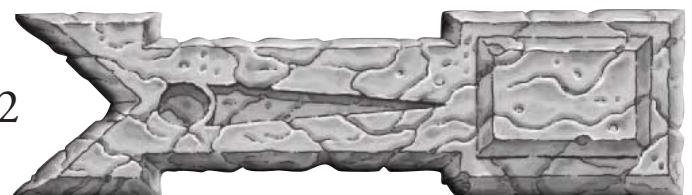
CHAPTER 3: A LEVIATHAN'S RAGE

Three days after the battle for Panarae, the Black Wind blows into PCs' domain. As before, Tallus is looking for human fear upon which to feed, and does his best to spread terror before his rat pack even gets there. But he is driven not only by his lust for power, but also by his lust for revenge.

DREAM OF THE BLACK RAT

What Tallus really wants is to fill the PCs' worshippers with such fear, they lose faith in their gods. In this way, he not only strips his enemies of their power, but steals it away for his own. Tallus has learned about creating fear over the past few weeks, so his techniques have grown in strength and subtlety. The specifics of how and where he attacks depend on the specifics of the tribe itself, but his main tactics are described below:

Patience: Unlike the attack on the Dircians, which took a





total of three days, Tallus is willing to stretch his attack on the PCs' territory as long as possible... weeks, or even months if he can. The people's terror is something to be savored, not wolfed down in a single gulp. Still, he knows that if he "savors" too long, even the horrifying becomes mundane, and his meal quickly loses its flavor.

The Dark Priestess: One of Alamedes' followers, a middle-aged woman named Maera, has been adopted by Tallus as his new priestess. She is a hard, bitter creature, dressed in black and muttering to herself. Driven by Tallus' voice in her mind, she is walking west along a nomad route, spreading the terrifying tale of Panarae to all who will listen, and warning of the great and terrible "god of the black wind." Once inside the PCs' territory, Maera sneaks about, and spreads her dark tale through rumors rather than bold proclamations. Her purpose is to sow seeds of fear and doubt. "Dirce couldn't save her people," she says. "What makes you think your gods can save you?"

Spotted Smoke: Rather than concentrate on a single, large attack (like the one on Panarae), Tallus uses the black smoke to strike quickly in small areas, always within sight of those who can live to tell the tale. In this way, he spreads word of the Black Wind, so that the very sight of it will cause his prey to fear.

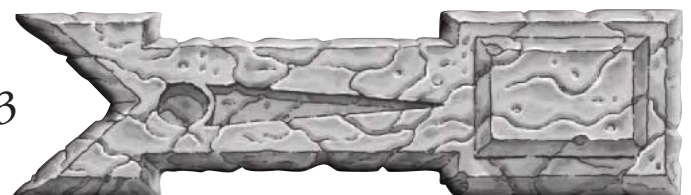
Explosion of Rats: Through a combination of creation and alteration, Tallus increases the number of rats in his pack tenfold, and spread through throughout the region. The purpose is two-fold: one, to give him eyes and ears in every corner of his enemies' realm; and two, to let the rats

be seen and thereby spread fear of himself. As an added benefit, by secretly spreading his rats across the realm, Tallus can affect Miracles where ever he needs to.

Attacking the Priesthood: From his experience in Panarae, Tallus knows that taking out clergy is a great way to drain a god's faith. The believers who see their gods' representatives fall cannot help but have their faith shaken. But rather than save this move for last—when the gods and clergy are best-prepared—this time he strikes at the PCs' devout followers shortly after his arrival. And if their gods heal them, he infects them again.



<p>Plague Rats (Approximately 500) Base Die: d6 Body: -3 (small and squishy) Mind: +2 (only for scurrying from danger) Spirit: 0 (animal)</p>





Changing the Formula: In order to keep the PCs and their believers from growing complacent (“Oh, it’s just the black spots. We know how to deal with that.”), Tallus changes the symptoms of his disease. Maybe the black spots themselves begin to bleed, or cause blindness before death, or inflict their victim with terrible hallucinations. One element that Tallus does not change is that the disease is spread by touching the black smoke; without that aspect, the people will simply fear—they won’t fear Tallus.

AGAINST THE WIND

Once again, the PCs have any number of ways to defend their people against the ravages of Tallus and his Black

Wind. After facing him and his aftermath twice now, they likely have a good idea of what they’re up against and what strategies work best: healing disease victims, making people immune, killing rats en masse, etc.

Aside from dealing with Tallus’ attack, the PCs have to deal with two main challenges: keeping their people faithful and fearless, and defeating the Leviathan once and for all.

FAITHFUL AND FEARLESS

In order to keep their followers from feeding the Leviathan with their fear, the PCs must encourage them, bolster their courage, and calm their fears. At this point, the PCs should be aware how important it is that their people focus their energies on their own gods, and not on the invading Leviathan.



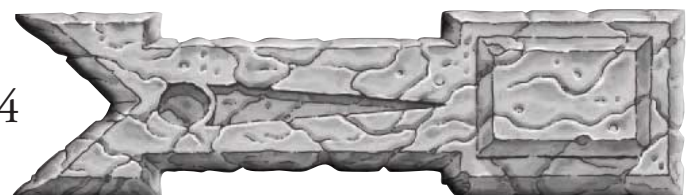
Some of this can be done through the direct use of mind-altering Miracles on an individual basis (by calming a frantic leader who is panicking the people, for example), but other, broader tactics may be more efficient:

Ceremonies: Rituals, celebrations, and other religious ceremonies are always good for re-establishing the faith of the faithful. (In game terms, worship increases the PCs’ Belief pools.)

Heroes: If the gods imbue a mortal with the supernatural ability to find and kill rats, such a hero would be a source of faith and courage. (Other heroes are also possible, of course.)

Manifestation: A potentially desperate move, the PCs can always appear to their people (or at least, to their devout followers) and personally tell them that everything is under control, and they have nothing to fear.

Mockery: You cannot fear that which makes you laugh. If the PCs can get their people to laugh at Tallus and his machinations, the Leviathan will find little sustenance here.





DEFEATING THE LEVIATHAN

It is far easier to drive Tallus away than to defeat him forever. When faced with overwhelming odds, the Leviathan retreats north back to the forest of Feth to lick his wounds and plan his revenge. This is a temporary solution for the PCs, but whether it takes one season or ten, they can rest assured that Tallus will be back.

No, it is better to find a permanent solution to the Tallus problem. Leviathans cannot die. Like spirits, demons, and gods, they are eternal beings. They can, however, be reduced to a powerless state, which makes them much easier to dispose of. They can also be imprisoned

Below are a few suggestions for defeating Tallus:

Bind Him: By using their Belief, the PCs can bind Tallus into an object or in a location. This is a permanent Miracle, and requires upkeep each year to keep him trapped. Once he is thus bound, the PCs have to spend Belief to counter any Miracles that Tallus may try to perform.

Destroy his Power: With no one to fear him, Tallus reverts from being a Miracle-casting Leviathan to a wretched, powerless Spirit. In game terms, if the PCs can keep Tallus from receiving Belief through fear, he may eventually use up all his Belief and revert to being a spirit.

Destroy his Rats: When the last of Tallus' rats is destroyed, his link to the earth is broken, and he becomes a bodiless spirit once more, and his consciousness is fixed in a single location.

Appeal to Fate: Once Tallus is reduced to a mere Spirit, the PCs may take him before Fate for judgment. Fate sentences the wayward spirit to be returned to the Well of Souls for his crimes.

CONCLUSION / CAMPAIGN NOTES

By the end of this adventure, the PCs have learned about their own powers, the power of Leviathans, and some of the secrets of the Forest of Feth. They have made enemies or allies of Kargore and Dirce, their neighboring gods to the north and east. And they have explored the territories around them, perhaps noticing which are ripe for takeover (the Dircians) and which should probably be avoided (the Children of Kargore).

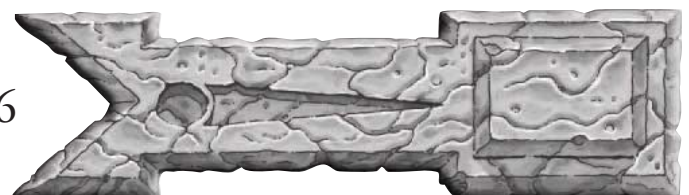
Armed with this knowledge and experience, the PCs are ready to continue their campaign as New Gods of Mankind.





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Today, Darrell is an independent writer, game designer, and project manager working in the games and comic book fields. He can be reached at www.darrellhardy.com.

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Luke Johnson is a freelance game designer who has worked with Wizards of the Coast, Blizzard Entertainment, White Wolf Publishing, and many others... but never before on a game like New Gods of Mankind! He got started in 2002 with an adventure in Dungeon magazine, and he's been rolling along in the glamorous, rockstar- and centerfold-laden world of freelance game design ever since. Some of his favorite games include Settlers of Catan, World of Warcraft, and Dungeons & Dragons. Two days after he writes this bio, he leaves America to visit this "Europe" continent everyone's been talking about. Yay!

For more information on Luke, check out his website, www.lukejohnson.com

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Bradley K. McDevitt is a sixteen year veteran of the gaming industry, and has worked for more companies than he can remember, though he vaguely recalls working for TSR, FASA, PEG, AEG, and did a stint as a staff artist for GDW. His resume includes far too many acronyms. He lives in Bowling Green, Ohio with his wife, Jessie, and may be reached at bkmcdevitt@yahoo.com. His website is at www.bradleykmcdevitt.net

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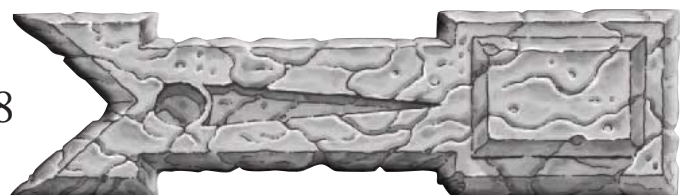
Jennifer Seiden Schoonover has worked and played in the gaming industry for over ten years, starting with a stint at West End Games that lasted from 1996 to 1998. She remained interested in game design after leaving WEG, publishing her own game, Chaos University, in 2005, under the company name FireWater Productions. Since 2004 she has taken on freelance editing and writing projects for numerous companies, with credit in over fifty products from a dozen companies. Despite all the "fame" she's still waiting fortune in western Pennsylvania with her husband, daughter, and extended family.

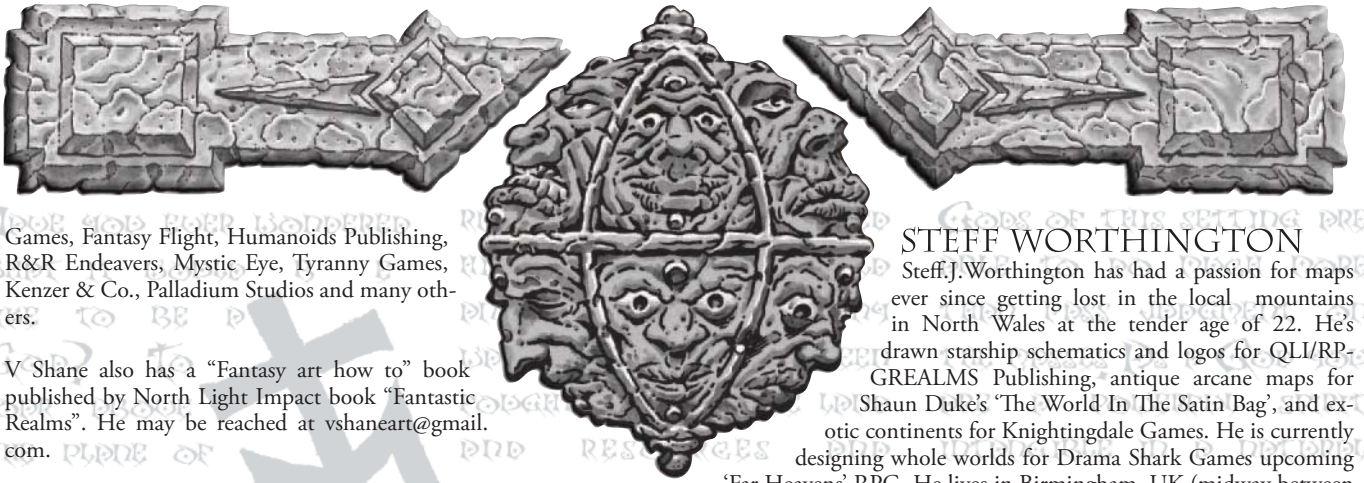
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Shane has worked for Image Comics, Decipher Games, Alias Comics, Icepond Studio, Precendence Publishing, Jim Baen's Universe online, Mayfair Games, 3rd World Pub., Last Unicorn Games, Goodman





Games, Fantasy Flight, Humanoids Publishing, R&R Endeavors, Mystic Eye, Tyranny Games, Kenzer & Co., Palladium Studios and many others.

V Shane also has a "Fantasy art how to" book published by North Light Impact book "Fantastic Realms". He may be reached at vshaneart@gmail.com.

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Go to www.joeslucher.com to see what else Joe has been working on. He can be contacted through slucherj@yahoo.com.

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Nathan Watson is a relative newcomer to the world of professional illustration, working primarily in comics. He has done work for Alias Entertainment, Bluewater Productions and Zenescope entertainment. New Gods of Mankind is his first foray into rpg illustration. Nathan lives in the San Francisco bay area with his wife and children. He may be reached at knownstrangemail@comcast.net. His work may be seen at Skrribln8.deviantart.com

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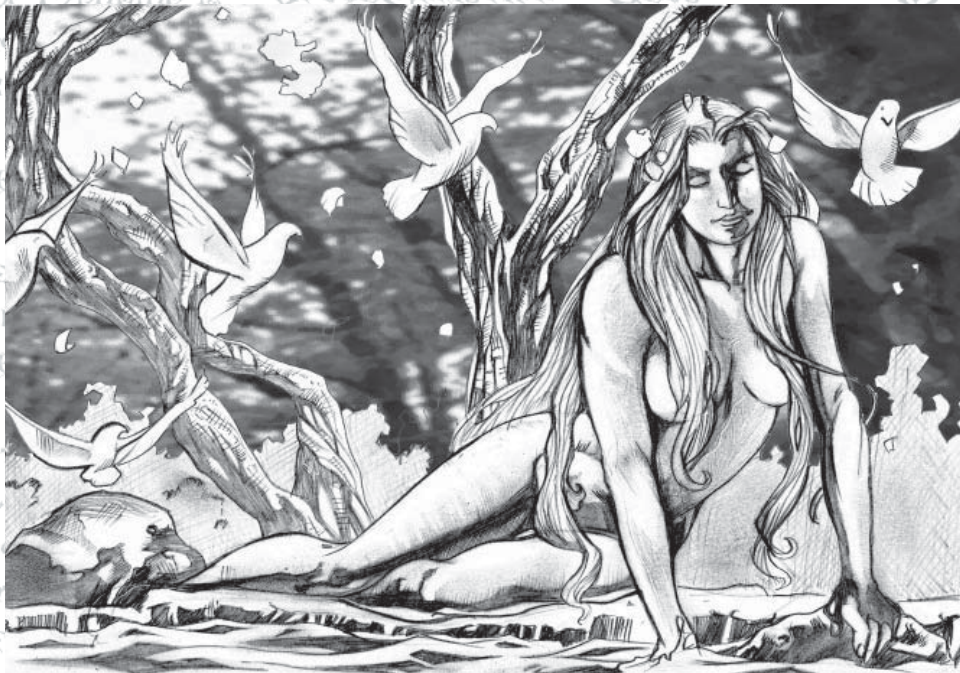
<http://steffworthington.blogspot.com>

DEBORAH BALSAM

Deborah Balsam has been a graphic designer since 1999. She has done layout and cover creation work for Tabletop Adventures, Highmoon Media, Dark Quest Games, and Emerald Press Publishing.

She also runs the rpg publishing company, Dog Soul, 2006 ENnie Award winner for Best Electronic Book.

She can be reached at deborah@dogsoul.net. Visit Dog Soul's website at <http://dogsoul.net>.



NEW GODS OF MANKIND

Character Sheet

Player Name: _____

Name: _____

Pantheon: _____

Titles: _____

Primary Domain: _____

Appearance: _____

Symbols
Draw Your Symbol Here

Secondary Domains:

Incarnated: _____

1. _____
2. _____

Commandments

Elemental: _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Inclination

Harmony: _____
-1 Cost

Balance: _____
+0 Cost

Opposition: _____
+1 Cost

Celestial Realm

Season: _____

Description: _____

Belief

Current: _____

Maximum: _____

Terror: _____

Worship Details

Festival Season: _____

Ceremony: _____

Belief Scale Chart

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
X1	X2	X4	X8	X15	X30	X60	X125	X250	X500	X1000	X2000

Base Cost:

- 2 - Trivial Alteration
- 3 - Minor Alteration
- 4 - Significant Alteration / Trivial Innovation
- 5 - Major Alteration / Minor Innovation
- 6 - Legendary Alteration / Significant Innovation
- 7 - Major Innovation
- 8 - Legendary Innovation

Scale:

- +0 - Individual (1)
- +1 - Household (~10)
- +2 - Village (~100)
- +3 - Territory (~1000)
- +4 - Nation (~10,000)
- +5 - Continent (~100,000)

Duration:

- +0 - Round/ Instant
- +1 - Conflict/ Week
- +2 - Season
- +3 - Year/ Permanent*

Inclination:

- 1 - Casting God is in Harmony with style of miracle
- +0 - Casting God is in Balance with style of miracle
- +1 - Casting God is in Opposition to style of miracle

Location:

- +0 - location controlled by the casting God
- +1 - location controlled by no major God
- +2 - location controlled by another major God

Domain:

- 2 - Miracle falls within the casting God's Domain

NEW GODS OF MANKIND

Character Sheet

Campaign Notes

<p>Allied Gods</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Rival Gods</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
--	---

Noteworthy Events

<p>Additional Notes</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Territories</p> <p>Type: _____</p> <p>Households Sustained: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Temples</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Territories</p> <p>Type: _____</p> <p>Households Sustained: _____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Artifacts</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Temples</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Artifacts</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Temples</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Campaign Work Sheet

Tribe _____

Population: _____

Followers:

% _____

Tribal Castes: *of population*

% _____

% _____

% _____

Belief Spent: _____

Territory: _____

Hero: _____

Body: _____

Mind: _____

Spirit: _____

Hero: _____

Body: _____

Mind: _____

Spirit: _____

Hero: _____

Body: _____

Mind: _____

Spirit: _____

Tribal Customs:

Notes:

NEW GODS OF MANKIND

Character Sheet

Miracles Work Sheet

Belief Scale Chart

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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- 3 - Minor Alteration
- 4 - Significant Alteration / Trivial Innovation
- 5 - Major Alteration / Minor Innovation
- 6 - Legendary Alteration / Significant Innovation
- 7 - Major Innovation
- 8 - Legendary Innovation

Scale:

- 0 - Individual (~1)
- 1 - Household (~10)
- 2 - Village (~100)
- 3 - Territory (~1000)
- 4 - Nation (~10,000)
- 5 - Continent (~100,000)

Inclination:

- - Casting God is in Harmony with style of miracle
- +0 - Casting God is in Balance with style of miracle
- +1 - Casting God is in Opposition to style of miracle

Location:

- +0 - Location controlled by the casting God
- +1 - Location controlled by no major God
- +2 - Location controlled by another major God

Duration:

- +0 - Round/Instant
- +1 - Conflict/Week

- +2 - Season
- +3 - Year/Permanent*

Domain:

- 2 - Miracle falls within the casting God's Domain

Miracles

Creation	Cost	Effect	Scale	Duration
Destruction	Cost			
Transformation	Cost			
Control	Cost			

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