

RIIHTHAVEN

THE MIDDLE PLANE

Earth. Terra. Gaea. Greenwood. The Bole.

The middle plane is the realm of mortals. Best known for being where humans reside, it is also the plane that contains (or thinks it contains) the fae realm. Mortal creatures such as animals, beastmen, magic-users, and those that exist as a part of nature such as elementals, all call the middle realm home. The middle plane is the most populous plane, but what they have in numbers they lack by most of those numbers being humans.

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Geography

The geography of the middle plane is as varied as they come; so extreme and rich are the biomes that most humans can easily accept that this, *their Earth*, is the only plane. However, in the deepest oceans, in the darkest forests, through the faerie doors, there is more to their home than they will ever know.

Notable Locations

Living Among Humans

As the human population has grown, living among them has become the best way to find a peaceful life. **Glamours**, accessories or charms with illusions baked in, help those who are not human to look just like them with minimal effort. These glamours must be sought out from magic-users, and finding them in the middle plane is the most difficult, but all it takes is knowing the right keywords to look for in that Craigslist ad for “necklace to chase away demons.” Many magic-users are capable of creating glamours, but as with any product it’s important to keep an eye out for charlatans and poor quality.

Underwater Cities

All across the oceans, the seafloor has large, naturally-occurring **air pockets**. Amphibious seafolk have taken it upon themselves to build cities inside of these air pockets, and as communication with the land has begun to increase, the cities have further grown as the only place politics can comfortably take place. There are several canals built throughout the cities by their residents, so that swimming is always an option. Visitors are warned to simply accept that they will be consistently damp, as the air outside of buildings is almost always filled with a fine mist from above.

Also occasionally raining from above are lost sea creatures. While there is a natural instinct in the less sentient seafolk to avoid the air bubbles, early on in the use of bubble cities there was a problem with *falling sharks*. There is now an infrastructure in place to catch these sharks (and other unlucky piscines) and ferry them back home.

The Tunnels

Beneath the feet of the unaware masses lie **the tunnels**. There are several names for the tunnels (and for prominent features and landmarks within), but because they go all over the entire middle plane, no one name has ever stuck. The tunnels are a gargantuan network of underground transportation that allow quick travel between anywhere in the plane, moving

between two countries across the world -- on foot -- in just an hour or two. They are filled floor to ceiling with beautiful softly glowing crystals in all colors.

However, these tunnels have gotten more and more dangerous as the human population has grown. While the entrances are meant to be hidden, further efforts to make them outright inaccessible to humans have never been implemented, and nearly every person who wanders in unaware is summarily devoured by the tunnels' residents.

It is unclear if **the denizens** (also given many disparate names across the plane) created the tunnels, provide them with upkeep, or simply evolved to live in them, but they are large bat-like natural predators. Travel is safe so long as you know where you're going and how to navigate the tunnels, but the moment you wander off your intended path, showing up in the wrong country or coming out in a deep sea trench is the *least* of your worries. And as more humans go missing in the tunnels over the decades, the denizens have gotten more aggressive in turn. Use of the tunnels is still extremely convenient, but only if you know *precisely* what you are doing. The denizens can smell a lost soul.

The strong and immortal are not safe in the tunnels, either. The denizens' echoed calls across the cavernous tunnels are tuned to agitate their prey, and the sound will heighten a person's emotional state until they are easy pickings.

Faerie Doors

Rings of mushrooms¹, lakes that are so still as to look a little too much like mirrors, trees in the mist forming a perfect archway-- these are hallmarks of **faerie doors**. Faerie doors are ways into their realm, both *of* the middle plane and yet apart from it². While some doors may be freely walked through once found, others are locked to anyone the door doesn't like, or require a fae escort to be opened at all. Extreme caution should be used with faerie doors, as there is no sure way to tell a door from a trap, and it is not always *fae* doing the trapping.

¹ Did you know? Fungus are a type of fae! Mushrooms (including the kinds you eat) are eternally-reincarnating fae, and the more sentient ones take great joy in humans trying to classify them as plant or animal.

² Or so they like to claim. There is no evidence for either side of the argument about the fae realm's connection to the rest of the middle plane, except that the tunnels lead here as well.

Population

Mortality is the predominant trait in the middle plane. Most (though not all) creatures that call it home have a finite time in the world, even if finite means several hundred years instead of the thousands other planes are accustomed to.

Humans get the most notice in this plane due to their massive population, their frequent interference with other creatures, and the fact that most others must hide from them. However, they are not the middle plane's sole inhabitants, and suggesting such is a grave insult. Werewolves, beastmen, magic-users, the more magical of the animals, elementals--even the most 'basic' aspect of the middle plane is a diverse and lively world. And this is to say nothing of the entire fae population, and the bizarre depths of the seas, both holding horrors untold. The size of the middle plane and its population is responsible for the feeling of separation even among its own residents, with a werewolf unlikely to consider themselves in the same category as a sirin, or a sirin the same as a kelpie.

Governance

Due to the vast differences in the middle plane's biomes, the duties of the **three lords** are "unofficially" split by population. By technicality, all lords of the middle plane have jurisdiction over all beings of that plane, but most of the population has become accustomed to following their own lord and no other. Some say this allows the middle plane residents to have a more personal experience with their lords and be more certain their unique concerns are heard, but others claim that division for any sake will cause strife.

The **sea lord** governs all the oceans and aquatic creatures of the middle plane. This position is monarchical in nature, with a direct bloodline determining who may take the throne. If a sea lord is deemed particularly unfit by the masses, they can be removed, but this gets more and more difficult to achieve as there are fewer blood relatives to take their place.

The **gaea lord**¹ handles all in this realm that is not the sea. Their reign includes the massive human population, but historically the gaea lords have utterly ignored the humans, except when needing to keep them in check. Eligibility to become the gaea lord is determined by fate. About 1 in 100,000 people from the middle plane (or with middle plane blood) are born with a certain unique trait. When a gaea lord dies or retires, every person eligible and aware has a right to lay claim to the throne. All who wish to claim the throne then must prove who among them is the most worthy of having it. Usually, this means bloodsport, and the mightiest among them earns their lordship. However, over the generations there have been several other methods used, including outsmarting opponents, poisoning them all, or even a renowned lord who achieved her throne by convincing all other candidates to surrender

peacefully. Notably, killing or otherwise forcing the retirement of the gaea lord will instantly disqualify someone from the following competition.

The **fae lord** is in the unique position of telling the fae what to do. The fae realm being *separate* from the middle plane while also *within* it gives the fae a sense of being untouchable by the laws of the plane otherwise². The fae also have the least strict requirements for lordship, in that the only requirement is being picked on a whim. In fact, there have been several lords who were unwilling, or not even full-blooded fae. The details of how a fae lord is chosen are unclear, only that the fae themselves pick their lord, and that lordship is transferred more frequently than any other. It is exceedingly rare for a fae lord to leave the position naturally-- though they are occasionally killed, the trend is that the fae as a whole will simply grow bored of their current lord and get themselves a new one. The timeline for each lord averages around 500 years, and it is not uncommon for the other lords to not know who they will be meeting for official business until the fae lord arrives.

¹ Also colloquially called "the landlord."

² This is not remotely true.

Currency

Under the waves, value is determined on an individual basis. This has given rise to a **bartering system** that also uses a **coin currency**. In fact, it utilizes *all* coin currency, but each coin's value is determined purely by how much the other person wants it-- or thinks someone else wants it. Coins from all over the planar system find their way into circulation here, with particularly large or colorful coins fetching better prices, with no regard for their initial worth. A strong poker face is essential in doing business with seafolk.

When dealing with the fae, of course, **words hold immense power**. Being open and emotional is perfectly fine, so long as one is extremely careful with spoken word. A fae can make a deal from thin air, near as it seems, and falling for faerie tricks is a tale as old as time. There is no telling what a fae considers valuable, except that it will be missed.

Planar Relations

Upper Plane

Though rarely aware of it, humans play an active role in the upper plane: providing faith to the gods and entities who live on it. While it is not *only* humans who do so, not by a long shot, they are seen as the easiest to curry belief in, due to their short lifespans and desire for answers that everyone else already has.

The older or more politically-aware of the plane may remember the war between the upper and lower planes, and that the middle plane was chosen as the battlefield. It's unclear who was responsible for choosing that battleground, but some choose to blame the upper plane, or both of them together.

Lower Plane

The opinion of the lower plane is generally quite negative, though arguably undeserved. Because most residents of the middle plane are mortal, they will be judged by the lower plane, and their eternal fate lies in that judgement. This brings an unpleasant association, which is not helped by the fact that there are many creatures such as vampires who belong to the lower plane, but *hunt* in the middle.

Like with the upper plane, those who know of the middle plane's scars from a war they did not partake in have to choose someone to blame. The lower plane frequently receives this honor, though sometimes in tandem with the upper.

Outer Plane

Most of the outer plane's residents once belonged to the middle plane, and so the overwhelming feeling regarding it is fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of being unable to pass on, fear of death as a whole. This plane is the most difficult for mortals to enter, and the easiest to be lost to forever.

Intraplanar

Fae Realm

The fae consider themselves separate from the rest of the plane, and typically look down on the non-fae with disdain. While they hold some respect for the seafolk's solitude and can agree to stay out of each other's ways, those on land get a much harsher treatment. Not just humans but anyone gaeen is considered fair play.

Seafolk

As a whole, the seafolk are inherently reclusive and keep to themselves. As a result, they can be easily forgotten in middle plane matters whenever their lord is not an aggressive one, and as a whole they tend to consider *anyone* not from the sea arrogant and self-centered.

Gaea

As the largest population, most gaeans feel they deserve the most say in what the middle plane does. If the fae refuse to be a part of things, and the seafolk hide away, so be it. Many truly ignore that the rest of the middle plane exists, or consider the others shallow beyond their danger.