

There is a story that very few these days know. Thousands of years ago, the world was under threat. A gargantuan monster, believed until then to be a mere legend, had woken from its slumber and began terrorizing the land.

People all over prayed to their gods for help. Finally, they answered. Drenera, the god of the Sun, chose the Hallowed. Their duty was to travel to special temples dedicated to twelve of the gods and collect hidden Blessings. These blessings were magical flames, created to light a corresponding candle inside a tower in the center of the continent. When all twelve are lit, the tower will activate, and an incredibly powerful wish could be granted.

The Hallowed traveled by foot for months, collecting each of the blessings and finally coming to the tower. With their wish, they shielded the last and largest settlement from the beast's onslaught, and finally smote it. The blessings, it is said, returned to their resting places and were forgotten by time.

Now, prophets and oracles all over have cried out about the danger the gods are in. The story, once a forgotten legend, has become the only hope for mortals to help save their gods. Drenera's prophets claim she has yet to name a Hallowed, but they have discovered that individuals with incredible strength or magic, appropriately referred to as Heroes, would be able to hold a blessing without being named by Drenera.

That is what brought you to seek out a group to adventure with today. You have spent quite a bit of time making a name for yourself, training on beasts and bandits, growing more powerful to obtain a blessing. You will travel to the tower and light your candle among eleven other Heroes. Whether or not you intend to actually live up to this namesake remains to be seen. One thing is for certain, you intend to take this journey, and you can't do it alone.



A Brief History

Ashdra was the first nation to begin recording history. As people migrated, evolved, and developed new cultures, new versions of history came out. This reports the consistencies.

Cerulea was established by those who migrated North. In many centuries, their people became hardier. They were the second people to be granted the use of magic by the gods. A hierarchy quickly formed around this gift until it was only nobles who could use it. This ended in a civil war, where the rebels won and declared their own nation, called Hydrulus. Wars between these two nations were commonplace until King Vander Trahorn VII took the throne. Cerulea has completely changed its tune since, but Hydrulus is still wary and stubborn.

Meanwhile, to the south, more peace-loving people settled Therris. Incredibly devout to nature, they were the first people to be granted the use of magic. With it they constructed many towns and cities within forests. The gods began choosing a child to bless with incredible power, and the nation often looks to them for advice.

Ashdra was focused on military to expand their territory to the west, where barbaric tribes had claimed it for themselves and had been slowly encroaching on the borders. But soon, all that military power would be challenged in the opposing direction.

A rift burst open in the center of the continent with a swarm of earthquakes in the year 1319. Demons razed the Ashdran capital to the ground and killed over half of the population. The other nations suffered losses as well, but none as great as Ashdra. Four powerful mages, one from each nation, raised great walls of earth to close the Fracture off from the rest of the world. Three have since died, and the last has gone missing.

Today marks the day that Ashdra opens its borders once more, having spent the last 30 years rebuilding on their own. Adventurers from all over have flocked here for work or glory. You are among them, whether having grown up here or recently traveled, you know there is still plenty to do here.

SETTING

THE FRACTURE

The Fracture is a vast wound in the center of the continent. Its exact size is unknown. All we know is that it is a rift-- a portal to the plane that demons reside in. They have unlimited access to the surface through the Fracture.

EMPEROR OF ASHDRA



CONSTANTIN LAVERN I

ASHDRA

Capital: Dershire

This warmhearted nation started off as various small tribes. When these tribes began to record history, they named their settlement Ashdra. They were the first to establish the calendar, and marked the year of its creation as year 0. For a while, settlements simply had the equivalent of mayors that would meet regularly to discuss things as a whole. As the centuries went by, they decided to elect a figurehead, and granted power to the first Emperor. While his line, due to their desire for glory, would struggle to survive-- many emperors who had no heir would grant the power to a second in command. Ashdra has, as such, been heavily military-focused, even in its government.

The nation has shrunk to half its original size and glory following the Fracture. Demons razed the capital to the ground and killed over half of the population. Courageous armies, led at the time by Emperor Alaric Lorentz IV, held them back long enough on their side for one of four mages to raise a wall of earth, trapping the demons within the center of the continent.

Lorentz IV was killed in combat, sacrificing himself to save stragglers. Without an heir, the position of king was given to his second in command, Constantin Lavern. He has worked tirelessly to restore the people's hope. However, the nation has been too proud to accept outside help until now. The borders have been closed ever since the attack to keep the struggling nation safe while they rebuild.

Constantin Lavern I

During the Fracture, Emperor Alaric Lorentz IV was slain while fighting for Ashdra. Constantin Lavern, as his second in command, was soon named the next Emperor. He is a benevolent ruler, if not a bit prideful. He believes in the individual strength of Ashdra, and closing the borders to

all but political figures and vital trade routes following the Fracture was his doing. He wasn't wrong, as Ashdra was able to rebuild many cities and towns. Now his focus is on re-establishing Ashdra to its former glory. He is the first Emperor in a while to have sired an heir, Aurel Lavern. However, the boy's mother is unknown.



CERULEA

Capital: Caeruleum

This nation was settled by people originally from Ashdra, but it has since become the home of elves. Due to their natural longevity, they adapted to the colder climate easily. A hierarchy quickly formed around magic and a deviation from the norm of worshiping Drenera. As Cerulea's government was established, they instead answered to Theren. Magic was seen as status, and eventually, only the upper class and royalty were even allowed to use it.

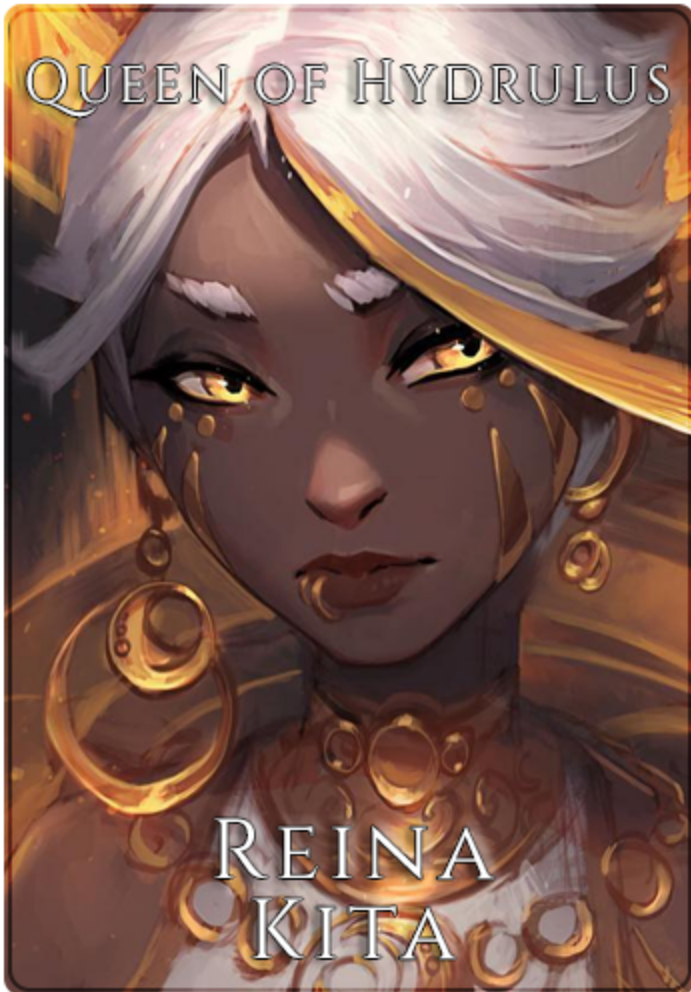
It was this strict system that eventually led to a rebellion, and then a civil war. The nation was split in half, and the rebels took the land to the northeast. Eventually the king surrendered, and the nation of Hydrulus was established.

Tensions didn't end there. Many wars have been happening on and off between these two nations. The current king, Vander Trahorn VII, is trying to form an alliance between all four nations in an attempt to band together to truly fight off the demons and seal the wound.

Vander Trahorn VII

Vander Trahorn VII has ruled Cerulea for some hundred years. While initially he rallied for the rightful and peaceful return of Hydrulus land to Cerulea, the Fracture changed his mind. He believes that only through a great alliance between the four nations will the Fracture be reclaimed and the demons driven out of their land. He'd taken the throne following the assassination of his father, who constantly tried to wage war against Hydrulus. He is generally seen as kind and merciful, and many tried and true Ceruleans aren't in favor with him due to his peaceful way of trying to reclaim Hydrulus. Even now, having shifted his focus, Cerulea is once again extremely split on how to feel about their king.





HYDRULUS

Capital: Azadi

Citizens discontent with the Cerulean system fought long and hard against it to establish the nation of Hydrulus. Their government is a monarchy, but they are more peaceful than the militaristic Ashdran system. Still, they are no strangers to war, frequently having to fight off Cerulean armies. Most of the population harbors no ill will towards them, and only wish to be left alone.

People who reside farther north have long had to adapt to harsh weather. These people are hardy, and magic becomes more commonplace the further north one goes. They have built impressive cities using magic. Despite this, and much to Cerulea's distaste, many worship Zearus.

Many laws are dependent on the city you're in, and very few are enforced across the nation as a whole. In this sense, the monarch is more of a figurehead than a ruler, but she is sought out for approval anyway.

Reina Kita

Reina is an elected monarch, and she was one of the military leaders during the Fracture. Like Ashdra, Hydrulus had lost their previous monarch in battle. She resigned from her position in order to serve as queen, and her focus is strengthening Hydrulus against the two threats at their borders. She doesn't intend to launch any attacks on Cerulea, and has warned Vander that any action that Hydrulus takes against him will only be provoked. While Vander doesn't seem to care about Hydrulus anymore, she is the last person that wants to join his alliance. Outside of tension, Reina is headstrong and doesn't take herself too seriously. She's kind to everyone and treats her citizens like friends. Many were unsure of her at first, but her care for Hydrulus has eased their minds.





THERRIS

Capital: Vivero

This nature-loving nation has long drawn the hearts of those who feel the same. Its society is the same as it always has been, its people having found it peaceful and effective. They are mainly hunter-gatherers, builders, and crafters, though the economy is not lost to them. They happily do trade with the other nations and each other, but they mostly keep to themselves. Highly pacifist, they stay as far from politics as they can, finding any form of government to be tyrannical. Instead, each village and city is their own leader, though there is a sort of royalty that serves the nation as a whole.

Therrians are devout worshipers of the Agtris and Edos, and rightfully so. For as long as the nation has been loved by Agtris, she has granted a single child longevity and wisdom. The child has the ability to commune with nature and the elements, and are often sought out for advice and guidance. To this end, they are protected by what little official military force the nation will muster, for they understand that they cannot simply talk down evil hearts.

The community is incredibly free-form, and mostly inhabited by those with an affinity for nature-- popular among druids, of course.

Aster Valley

The blessed children of Therris are a temporary position. There comes a point in the natural cycle of life that causes these blessed ones to lose the innocence and purity that the gods favor for their peace-loving emissary. It is different for each. Many serve an average of five to ten years. Aster was chosen following the maturity of the last, her eyes glowing a brilliant gold when open. With them she could see things no one else could, and it was the sign that she'd been chosen. Usually the children are blindfolded unless they need this special Sight, but Aster has

exercised a great patience to simply keep hers closed. She shares the same qualities that all the blessed children have: she's pacifist, magnanimous, and ever-fascinated by the nature of life. To the gods, you will not find a kinder soul.



PANTHEON

DRENERA

?

God of the Sun - Some say that nothing can exist without Light—and so came to be Drenera, the catalyst that would pave the way for this new world. She represents **sun, strength, and protection**, and is easily the most beloved of the gods. Due to her role in naming a Hallowed, her word and guidance is sought by many, and she is often viewed as the God of Gods.

THE ARTIFICER

?

Running the world ended up being a task even the six gods struggled to do alone, so Drenera made a demonstration of power. She created two beings that would serve a specific purpose, and perform thematic tasks in her stead. First came the **Artificer**, and civilization began to create and invent. He represents **fire and nobility**.

WORD OF LAW

?

With a burst of creation would come chaos, and so came Law. She established order in a world without it, constructing codes and the idea of morality. While everyone would have their own standards for what was "right", the Word of Law represented all order, whether good or evil. She represents **law and community**.

AGTRIS

God of Life - Following Light comes Life, the miracle that things in a place can grow and change over time. Agtris represents **healing, liberation, and community**, coming in close second to Drenera. She is seen as gentle and kind, a mother to all. Many healers turn to her for their magic.

VOICE OF THE FOREST

?

Agtris was overwhelmed with so much life to care for, so the Voice of the Forest would care for the animals.

This split focus is said to be how humans began to evolve and live longer, and more life forms came to be. He represents **animals and vermin**.



?

God of Nature - Life becomes Nature, and so Edos was next. High concentrations of plant life would become forests, and she was granted the power to shape what wasn't living itself. Mountains, valleys, deserts, and all land masses are said to be formed by her. She represents **air, earth, and plants**. It is said that when all is said and done, only Edos will remain once civilization is spent, and the cycle will begin once more because of her.



?

Edos created the Eye of the Storm to balance herself out-- he is a manifestation of her destructive power that would test civilization and bring death as necessary. This would allow her to work freely, while the Eye of the Storm would grow as she did and unleash his power in natural disasters. He represents **weather and madness**.



God of the Moon - Everything needs rest—Zearus is Drenera's counterpart. With his darkness the world would sleep, though life would adapt to the absence of light. New, terrifying things evolved. Creatures of the night made it dangerous to leave homes at night. While some say this led to conflict, many agree and understand that Zearus was the first tilt towards a balanced world. He represents **darkness, ruin, and repose**.



?

The Heart of the Sea serves as a counterpart to the Artificer, a natural means of destruction. They also, of course, guide the ships on the seas. They represent **water and travel**.



?

The Lady of Fortune counterparts the Word of Law, bringing hope to societies that could not establish an order, or to help those who were not born in favorable circumstances due to law. While favored by thieves, everybody wants to be fortunate. She represents **luck and charm**.



XIALDIN

God of Death - Without an end, the world would doom itself. Xialdin was created to complete the circle of life, and many respect her position to do so. Rather than being seen as evil, she is seen as a connection to the next life. However, she is jealous of Agtris and how adored she is in comparison, and detests being seen as simply a "need". Many pity her for it. She represents **death, spirits, and fate**.

PRINCE OF WAR

?

Xialdin knew that many of the gods would only create gifts for mankind, and her jealousy manifested in twin evils. The Prince of War is seen as a necessary evil, to reclaim lost land or to fight against unfair order. She weighs in for honor rather than for rampant destruction—that would be her brother's forte. She represents **war and glory**.

KING OF DESTRUCTION

?

Some disasters are unnatural, and that is where he has been. He destroys only to destroy, to test the human race, to be a challenge. Some say he was the beast that terrorized the land in the tale of the blessings, and his true motive is hard to understand. He is a manifestation of Xialdin's hatred and jealousy. He represents **chaos and evil**.

THEREN

God of Magic - In a world so blessed by the gods, a gift was given—Theren. Things once thought impossible became incredible rarities. It is said that any individual capable of magic was handpicked by Theren during their ancestry. Fire could be created without friction, water without nature, the very elements were under the control of special individuals. Many envy magic users, and Theren is one of the most controversial gods to exist, but he tends to stay mysterious. He represents **magic, knowledge, and trickery**.

LORD OF DRAGONS

?

A guardian of the skies, though one so frequently misunderstood. Dragons are true representations of magic, being almost wizards themselves in control of the elements. Because they are seen as beasts, the Lord of Dragons has led them far from civilization, safe from people. Many dragons grew to hate mankind, but just as many still wish to keep them safe. She represents **balance and dragonkind**.

THE SCHOLAR

?

Mankind was gifted knowledge by the Scholar, and as a creation of Theren, he is seen as the connection to him. When the first schools were established, many had altars to the Scholar within them. It is said that worshipping him will open new roads to enlightenment. He represents **runes and knowledge**.

Calendar reference

Sunday - Lux

Monday - Nox

Tuesday - Civitas

Wednesday - Moretem

Thursday - Terra

Friday - Magus

Saturday - Arx

1 - Artificium | 2 - Tempest | 3 - Oceanus

4 - Exitium | 5 - Peritus | 6 - Solis

7 - Fortuna | 8 - Iuris | 9 - Vita

10 - Draco | 11 - Cassis | 12 - Silva