

The World of Jalanay

Fifteen generations have passed since the First Bright Crusade. Almost three hundred years since the light of the Sky Elves was snuffed out by the Talstrom Empire, the first testament to the will of humans to conquer the world. A betrayal of ancient trust, where the bonds of hard-won friendship were swept aside in the face of ambition. When the great hero Ipthalia the Uniter drew together the Consortium of the Argram Coast, the Kingdom of Golden Fields and the tribes of the Saltrise Steppes to forge the greatest nation on all of Jalanay. These events changed the face of the world; the ideals, philosophies and power behind them define the times we now find ourselves in. They echo throughout history, repeated and repealed, but always driving the destiny of all who would seek change, glory or adventure in this world.

Yet in more recent times a new power has risen; formed of passion, desperation, need, trickery and prophesy. The Autumn Constellation shows a potential no entity, from Gods to Demons, has in living memory; a chance to challenge the boundless expansion of the human race. It is from this alliance that the heroes of our story will be drawn. But it's hard to know the world without context so first we will discuss....

The History of the Talstrom Empire

The Rise of Humans

No one species has defined the current Age of Unity more than humans. The world of Jalanay has long been inhabited by many differing species of sapient humanoids who at differing times have held varying levels of sway. The Age of Change, which characterized the period before the Age of Unity and after The Ravages, saw a great deal of advancement among the humans born out of cooperation in the aftermath of the previous age. A great alliance had existed between the Sky Elves, the Mountain Dwarves, the Sea People and the humans in the wake of their successful efforts to oust the Elemental Lords and Demon Princes who had conquered and colonized large portions of the world during a time called the Ravages. Though the Sea People were distant friends, the bond between the other groups was strong. The Mountain Dwarves, who were not broadly fond of distant travel, found great appreciation in the human trade networks that would ferry their goods to markets, returning with even grander wealth. But the Sky Elves had greater ambitions still, seeing humans as their natural students whose passion could carry forward Elven ideals and better the world.

Commerce boomed and the humans of many nations prospered in this Age. Yet while all seemed outwardly well, some among the highest ranks of human societies recognized the patronizing ways in which their Sky Elven allies viewed them; not as equals but as at best protégés. The Sky Elves would share their knowledge of magic and lore yes, but only in small nuggets coupled with moralistic lessons. It was a policy that no great secrets would be shared without proper vetting and consideration. Deliberations that would take no less than a decade; a fairly brisk pace for a Sky Elf, but sluggish for the shorter lived humans.

It was during the Famine of the Long Summer that this bureaucratic quirk would turn from a protective measure into a doom for the Sky Elves. For three years an unprecedented heat wave and drought settled across the Kingdom of Golden Fields. The vast agricultural reaches, famous for their plenty, turned to plains of dust. Other regions were affected as well and starvation became an ever-growing reality for wide swaths of the land. The King of Golden Fields, Gregor the 4th, turned to the same allies his ancestors had fought alongside. The Mountain Dwarves did send some aid, but were never a great food-producing power. Still their engineering had recently produced a new kind of plow, which they set to significant production at generous pricing (which still seemed a burden to the economically depressed nations suffering the famine).

Greater aid, however, was sought from the Sky Elves. Their nations, the Sunlands and the Moonlands, were known to be places where the seasons would last years, influenced by great elven magics. Gregor and leaders from other human powers pleaded for these enchantments to be shared so that human magicians would end the devastation. The reality was a grim one; even if it were not for their deliberations the magic that influenced the seasons in the Sky Elven lands took centuries to put into place and could not be swiftly, if ever, duplicated in the human nations. Still, as was their way, the Sky Elves informed the petitioners that though they would spare what aid they could, they would need to deliberate for at least a decade before they could share this knowledge.

Gregor the 4th returned to his lands with far too little in the way of elven aid to make a meaningful difference. Many of his advisors, particularly his Court Magician Xoldranin, were furious with the Sky Elves, seeing this as a betrayal and further evidence that their allies cared more about maintaining their position than being true friends. It was not long after that Gregor was met with a proposal by a young yet wealthy trade prince named Ipthalia Talstrom. She proposed to marry and bring about a firm alliance between the Argram Consortium and Golden Fields. The Argram Coast had been less affected by the Famine of Long Summer than nearly any other nation and Ipthalia's great wealth could prove a boon to the Kingdom. Gregor divorced his wife, a rather taboo concept in Golden Fields among high nobles, and married Ipthalia.

Matters progressed rapidly from that point. Ipthalia proved a highly effective politician and communicator. Her wealth did provide a measure of relief and her economic savvy served to genuinely ease the plight of the land. Yet humanitarian efforts were not the extent of her ambitions. She publicly demonized the former queen, a half-elf whom she painted as the face of the Sky Elven refusal to provide aid. She became swift allies with Xoldranin, emphasizing the need for human magicians to innovate for the good of all. In a few short years she functionally deposed Gregor who ceded all functioning governing power to her while remaining a nominal head of state. Simultaneously she consolidated her power among the Argram Consortium and was elected its Chief Magnate. She also made significant inroads in negotiations with the various tribes of the Saltrise Steppes, making promises of new lands that would soon be theirs for the taking.

In what would coincidentally be the final year of the Long Summer, Ipthalia made her own journey to council with the Sky Elves. But rather than coming with a hand outstretched for aid as her husband had, she came with a hand upon her saber. Her message was clear; either the Sky Elves would immediately share all of their knowledge of how they controlled the seasons with the humans or she would take the knowledge by force.

Some might say that the Sky Elves would have said this was proof that humans needed the guidance they sought to instill. Some might say they would have seen it as impatience or even that they might have been convinced were the plea presented differently. But the likely truth of it was that they simply did not see or believe the threat that was posed. The oldest elves could still remember when they fought side by side with humans against the extra-planar invaders, and even those too young to recall still saw these events as fresh in the pages of history. The rulers of the Sunlands and the Moonlands simply could not comprehend how different they were seen by these new human rulers, for whom a few hundred years was forever.

These misperceptions would prove their undoing. Whether Ipthalia had truly hoped for the Sky Elves to change their minds or whether the effort was merely a pretense is a matter for historians to argue. What is not up for debate is how the events of the Age of Unity unfolded. With political acumen and strategic brilliance, Ipthalia created the First Bright Crusade. She launched an attack upon the more sparsely populated Moonlands and quickly gained numerous victories against the unsuspecting Sky Elves. Shortly into the war, King Gregor passed away of seemingly natural causes. He was cherished by many and his death was openly spoken of as linked to years of malnutrition he sought to share with his people. In a more private whisper campaign, his former wife was held to blame and portrayed as a traitor in league with the Sky Elves. Within a year, Ipthalia had done what no one would have thought possible; she had allied three of the strongest nations of humans and conquered half of the elven holdings.

Though signs had already pointed to an easing of the famine even before the First Bright Crusade, the year proved a kind one and prosperity blossomed in Ipthalia's new empire, bolstered by the spoils of war. She was hailed as Ipthalia the Uniter, and though careful negotiations over many more years would be required, the Talstrum Empire had taken seed. The next few years of the war were far less clean than the first and progressed into an increasingly bloody affair.

In time the Sky Elves mobilized, furious at what had been done. Xoldranin and his many students plundered the depths of elven magical knowledge raided from the Moonlands, heedless of the traditions and taboos which kept certain arts sealed away and secret. This vast new base of knowledge, combined with a feverish push for innovation, led to the creation of the Telluric Academy; an advancement that Ipthalia generously funded. The Mountain Dwarves, for their part, debated hotly how to handle these events. Many did see the Sky Elves as friends, yet others shared certain elements of human frustration with the haughty attitudes of the elves. Indecision led to slow response and though the aggression was condemned, they did not provide meaningful intervention.

As the needs of the nations eased, and the costs of war became more apparent, voices did begin to question whether the Sky Elves had suffered enough for their arrogance. In response to this, Ipthalia made a choice which was perhaps as prudent to history as beginning the Bright Crusade itself was; she devised and published a philosophical manifesto entitled *The Humane Principals*. This manifesto posited that humans had a fundamental right to command the world and argued that only human society had ever shown the empathy, adaptability and capacity for unity which would allow the world to prosper. It laid out many concepts among them the Pillar Rights; 1. That all citizens of the Empire would be free, particularly in marriage, labor and choice of home, 2. That all humans born in the Empire would be citizens, yet that all other people could earn such rights, 3. That the Empress or Emperor must always be worthy of their Empire, 4. That learning, advancement and prosperity were virtues and 5. That no force can be good and just if it seeks to bind humankind to mediocrity.

The Humane Principals tore through the lands like a flood, capturing the hearts and minds of its people. Many came to associate the Principals with the economic relief that came from the end of the famine and bigotry against elves at first, then other non-humans, took root. The Bright Crusade earned its name during this time and zealotry began to fuel its course. Whether Ipthalia had always intended her great venture to result in the extinction of the Sky Elves is unclear. What is certain, however, is that the feat was achieved in the 10th year of the conflict. The defenders of the last Sky Elven city fought to the last, spending their blood in a futile effort to preserve their land.

The truth was, few quite understood for years that the Sky Elves were functionally extinct. Their numbers were never vast and their society was closed off. While records were kept of their casualties, it was not immediately clear that the species had been wiped out; after all, many more humans had died than elves and humans remained abundant. The Gods understood, because they are Gods, but even the conquering Empire didn't quite comprehend. As for the Gods, those who still held favor for the Sky Elves were furious. But the reality was that the Sky Elves had turned from the Gods centuries before, seeking to influence destiny and the world in their own way. Even in their sunset hours, they had not turned to the divine for aid.

So if the Talstrom Empire in many ways began by a conquest of the Sunlands and the Moonlands, why are these fiefdoms no longer seen on maps? The answer lies with the very solutions old Gregor had sought in the first place. The enchantments which the elves had laid across their lands to command the seasons were vast, requiring delicate maintenance. And while the Telluric Academy harvested great swaths of arcane knowledge, that is not the same as being taught all the right things to do. A combination of seeking to reverse engineer the process and the lack of sustaining rituals irrevocably ruined the twin nations. The magic broke and became disrupted, twisting the landscape into an unrecognizable tangle of magical wastelands and even flinging pockets of corrupted land into other regions of the world. Weather violently clashes and one hour one might find a monsoon chasing them while the next they might find themselves baking in an unseen and unforgiving sun. They are now called the Lands of Shattered Seasons and while the borders and occasional pockets are inhabitable, no true nation could survive there. The resulting eldritch disruption led to a resurgence of monsters across the world and a weakening of many important barriers from extraplanar invasions the Sky Elves had maintained.

Ipthalia would live thirty years after the conclusion of the First Bright Crusade. She spent much of this time pressing further into other territories and using her skills as a statesman to consolidate humankind under her banner. She would publish further revisions and catalogs of the Humane Principals. By the time most of the rest of the world came to fully accept the Sky Elves were no more, Ipthalia had solidified her Empire and her legacy, both in legend and in the moral underpinnings of human society. She had ushered in a new age, with all the glories and terror appropriate to a tyrant.

TL: DR: The humans, dwarves and elves had a long standing alliance after defeating a great evil. A great tragedy struck the humans and the other races didn't help quickly enough. Seizing upon this opportunity the First Empress Ipthalia united humankind and set war upon the elves, wiping them out and claiming their vast knowledge and magic under the pretense of saving her people from natural disaster. She developed a manifest destiny style philosophy called the Humanistic Principles which formed the ethical and cultural underpinnings of the expansionist new Empire.

A Fruit of a Poisoned Tree: Early Talstrom Dynasty

Like so many despots and madmen, Ipthalia never believed herself to be a genocidal monster. The Pillar Rights demanded that the ruler of the Empire would be worthy of it, which meant that though Ipthalia had numerous children and relatives, she would choose a successor without consideration of these matters. In the end she ended up selecting a grandniece of hers. Ipthalia the Younger, as she came to be known after being chosen, was a brilliant philosopher who had impressed Ipthalia with her writings and capacity for articulation. The choice of someone virtuous and intelligent was a stroke of ego with a mind towards posterity rather than perhaps shrewd reality.

Ipthalia the Younger did not prove an equal to the founder of the Empire in ambition. While she upheld the Humane Principals, she felt sincerely that the ascendancy of humans was self-evident and that through rhetoric and diplomacy she could convince other species to both accept this and become more human-like in culture and outlook. To the rest of the world, even those who did not care deeply for the Sky Elves, this argument was profoundly unconvincing.

The second Empress's reign saw countless missions sent out to other peoples, preaching word of the Humanistic Principles. She was free with the wealth built up by her predecessor, funding many failed endeavors and expeditions. Still, it was a testament to the elder Ipthalia's skill that the mismanagement of the Empire's resources did not create significant decline. The reign of Ipthalia the younger did see the creation of universities and forums within the empire and the growth of education, as well as a largely successful effort to largely standardize one "Common" tongue among the people of the Talstrom empire. Solidification and growth of the Telluric Academy was substantial during this time period. Xoldranin, the arch-mage who had served the elder Ipthalia, was ever the doting and most beloved grandfather to the second Empress and was greatly favored by her.

Ipthalia the Younger's reign did not last until the end of her life. Over time she grew ever-more committed to her philosophical mission. She never married, eventually abdicating her throne in favor of having more time to write and educate others. Though she made some significant cultural gains for the Empire, history remembered her largely as a weak ruler, often compared poorly to the first Empress.

Though strong in rhetoric and thought, Ipthalia bowed to a measure of pressure from her advisors in choosing the next leader. Economic interests had strained with her many cultural endeavors and the military had grown restless since the Bright Crusade. Thus she was encouraged to select a more martial successor. In these circumstances a young champion who she felt embodied many of the merit-based qualities of the Humanistic Principles even if he was very little like her.

Draystin Talstrom would become the third ruler of the Empire, a charismatic champion who was beloved for his slaying of monsters and winning of tournaments. In practice, he likely reflected Ipthalia much more than her chosen heir did. Concerned with what he felt should be a renewed emphasis on the military strength of humans, he envisioned and began the Second Bright Crusade; this time an effort to conquer the lands of the Dwarves. The first effort at this proved a disaster; while a deeply capable warrior, Draystin did not have the logistical understanding of how to lay siege to mountains and deep cities, nor did the Talstrom empire have the element of surprise as it had in the First Bright Crusade. The dwarves were now deeply wary and had been preparing for decades for such a potential assault. The Second Bright Crusade, in practical terms, lasted for some 5 years, with little effect achieved, though it

would not formally end for decades. The dwarves had little interest in outward expansion and the effort was broadly unpopular as it had no foundational provocation or rationale.

Still Draystin remained popular on the sheer bent of his charisma, the blame for the failures being deflected to various military leaders. The Emperor eventually shifted his efforts to capitalizing on his source of fame; he popularized monster hunting, particularly dragons, as a method of proving worth, mettle and earning status. Though not a gifted writer, he expanded the works of the Humanistic Principles to include such elements. He also formalized the concept that each Emperor should contribute chapters or new additions to the Humanistic Principles, envisioning them as a living philosophy. Draystin formally launched the Third Bright Crusade near the end of his reign, increasingly broadening the concept to suggest the right of Humans to bring to submission any 'monstrous' creatures as well as any who do not yield to human expansion. Beloved in his time despite his failings, Draystin remains an icon in the hearts of the empire and his statues nearly match Iphtalia's in number.

Draystin did not consider his successor as well as others, eventually dying in battle facing down a great wyrm dragon. A short series of emperors followed who are considered somewhat unimportant to history. They continued the Third Bright Crusade which turned into a morass of flares and cooling with few gains for the humans. Still, they were able to more rapidly replenish their numbers and resources than the dwarves were and, over the course of nearly a century, took a significant toll on dwarven lives and resources. As food grew scarce from sieges and lack of trade, cities and mountains were abandoned. Refugees fled to regions further from humans, seeking mercy and aid. The humans looted the wealth within, but found it unsuitable to live in most dwarven lands. Thus, great abandoned cities came to exist, allegedly still filled with untold treasures guarded by deadly traps or hidden passages.

TLDR: Humans established and expanded their territory, largely driving the dwarves near to extinction and out of their lands. Further development of the Humanistic Principles lionized the slaying of Dragons and other monsters as virtuous.

The Searing Light

And what did the gods think of humanity's efforts to reshape the world? They were unamused, as it should turn out. Not only had humanity destroyed one of the great races of the world, they seemed bent on continuing the trend. Further, the Humanistic Principles had largely supplanted the primacy of the worship of gods in the Empire. Deities were still given offerings and prayers, but no longer did their messages influence morality or hold great cultural importance. They sent omens, even curses, to allow their displeasure to be felt, but this made no great impact.

It was in the reign of the 9th empress, who would eventually be called Calistra the Pious, that these matters came to a head. At the celebration of the Empire's bicentennial, the gods agreed to send a direct message. Solarin, god of Light, Vengeance and Purity would himself climb down from the Sanctic Mountain and punish the humans directly so that there could be no mistake.

Human ingenuity would be tested once again. As it should so be, a young cleric named Chasten had caught the attention of some within the Empire. His fiery sermons suggested the Gods themselves were not above judgment by the Humanistic Principles and that humans should not live in fear of the very entities that may have caused the Long Summer in the first place so many generations before. He had been brought to Calistra's court out of interest, but it was here he met Xoldranin, still very much alive

and still at the head of the Telluric Academy. The ancient archmage found the cleric interesting and his research had certain threads in common with Chasten's ideas. The two worked together and were largely prepared when Solarin descended the mountain.

Through tremendous cost in lives, foul magic and material resources, the two worked together to create a trap that could bind a deity. Feigning supplication, Calistra arranged an offering of such vast wealth in shining gold (much of it plundered from dwarven halls) that its equal had never been assembled. Gold was a sacred metal to Solarin and he strode with his legion of angels into the capitol, ready to accept the groveling of mankind brought to heel. Yet as with the elves before him, Solarin underestimated human ambition and creativity. The trap was sprung, thousands of pounds of gold melted by arcane fire formed a pool around Solarin's feet. It climbed up him, sealing him in a statue of his own sacred metal and binding his power fast. His legion fell into disarray, their divine powers inconsistent and failing. Though fifty humans died for each angel killed or captured, the numbers proved comfortably in their favor.

Solarin's golden statue was shattered and broken, his divine power within it bound. Its pieces separated far and wide across the empire in order to prevent him from being reformed and released. Instead his power was taken up by Chasten and his followers, now able to compel divine magic without the consent of the gods. All in line with the Humanistic Principles. The remaining angels were bound into service with the power of their imprisoned, shattered god. Their blood was used to create aasamir, humans infused with divine power from birth and used as the martial arm of the new Church of the Radiant Word. Calistra appointed Chasten as the High Bishop of the Church and quickly directed the construction of temples across the empire, principally through the conversion of existing ones. The worship of other gods was quickly outlawed and the Church of the Radiant Word became the state religion of the Empire. Chasten himself became a consort of Calistra, beginning a long tradition of tying the leadership of the church to the person of the Empress, even if only symbolically.

The gods were mortified at the capture of one of their own. They debated fiercely, the very world trembling as they did. But ultimately they all agreed; it was a risk to the world (and, perhaps more importantly, themselves) if the humans could have a chance to capture more of them in such bondage. The gods left the Sanctic Mountain and journeyed above the heavens. This caused their power to grow more distant and by mutual agreement they were forbidden to walk upon the world. They could only act through their agents and messengers, granting spells and sending heralds.

The Fourth Bright Crusade was declared to have started with the capture of Solarin. With great divine power now easily accessible, humanity was stronger than ever. The hunting of monsters intensified and the last of the dwarven kingdoms fell. Calistra The Pious reigned for many years, though she is said to have died a strange death, being killed by a freak accident that saw her fall into a cauldron of boiling lead.

TLDR: Using magic developed from the vast troves of the elves, Humans evaded divine punishment for their crimes by capturing and enslaving the god sent to carry out their punishment, as well as his angelic forces. They created a central state religion around this enslaved deity, driving out the worship of other gods. The other gods fled their home on Jalanay to distance themselves from meeting the same fate, now only able to influence the world indirectly.

The Modern Era

So it came to be that the original great alliance had been destroyed by the ambition of humankind. The dwarves were not so extinct as elves, but they became a rare sight with no functional society, reduced to being refugees in other lands, most prominently amid the drow in the Deep Reaches. The empire was now by far the largest single nation on Jalanay. Yet expansion brought new neighbors and humans began to encounter races which had only been rarely seen before. For some, like the halflings who had previously relied on dwarven protection, their lands were taken with ease, for others, things were substantially more complicated. The empire neared its 300th year and was on its 19th empress when the events that shaped the modern era began in earnest.

The expansions of humans had taken on an almost methodical pace by this juncture. The Humanistic Principles were an intrinsic element of humankind, such that no one meaningfully questioned or debated the morality of conquest. The Academy, the Church and the Imperial Throne were in harmony and though there were squabbles and power shifts throughout, the top levels remained stable and mighty. Despite the efficiency and experience of their methodology, this era would also find them meeting the first potent opposition in three generations; the orcs.

The arrival of the humans into orcish territory of the east was met with fierce resistance. The greenskins had heard tales of the humans and their expansions for decades. They had prepared for such an occasion and proved to be far more than the chaotic bands that the Empire had suspected them to be. The empire's exploratory force suffered a crushing route which shocked the ruling bodies back home. Incensed, Emperor Sardan Talstrom prepared a far greater invasion force, against the advice of High Bishop Amelira and Xoldrnin, both of whom had foreseen woe to come from such an action and had their own suggestions for expansion. The archwizard proposed a delay in the campaign against the orcs, having lobbied in favor of a project he had been working on for some time; movement and acquisition of elements of the Feywild instead. Amelira, on the other hand, championed a crusade against the dark elves, who she believed were not only inherently sinister beings aligned against the faith, but also ones who sought the return of the Gods to the soil of Jalanay. Sardan was furious with the division between his advisors and their lack of support, ordering both to remain within the capitol while he led his armies himself.

The march of such a weighty force became known to the orcish leaders, for it could not move swiftly. A All-Meet was called from the earls, warlords and mayors of many cities and bands. One among them, a gifted young sorceress named Vera persuaded the gathered to evoke an ancient tradition which had gone unused for centuries. It allowed that an earl might claim the right to rule the clans if they could endure one of the great trials; in this case, to kill a high monarch and offer their blood as proof of worth to rule. Most of the gathered leaders agreed, swayed by both pragmatic need and the power of Vera's personality.

History often depicts battles in terms of numbers and, in this regard, the Talstrom legions certainly had a distinct advantage. But as often provides the case, defensive battles, knowledge of terrain and motivation played larger roles in the clash. After weeks of skirmishes and near misses, the main force of the orcs staged a direct attack on the invading armies, having carefully maneuvered them into favorable conditions. The resulting battle itself represented one of the largest in the history of Jalanay. Outnumbered some three to one, it was a dangerous gambit for the orcs, but one that would pay great dividends. Yet all of it is far better recalled as a backdrop for the actions of Sardan and Vera, about which

countless songs have been written. Vera, along with a small elite group of her personal retainers, were bound and determined to face off against the Emperor. Her spies had told her of the insatiable popularity of dragon-slaying amid the kings of man. Thus, with great effort, she had convinced one of her ancient ancestors, the origin of her sorcerous bloodline, to join her in battle. When she rode upon the back of a Wyrms straight for Sardan, he found himself unable to resist the challenge. It was a pitched and fierce fray, but Sardan directed too much of his soldiers' efforts on the dragon and underestimated the sorceress. With unexpected and primal power, Vera overwhelmed the layers of defenses warding against hostile magic put in place by Sardan's contingent of Tellurian wizards and slew the emperor with a lance of fire. His body destroyed beyond the capacity of Solrain's clerics to heal, he gained the dubious honor to be the first Talstrom emperor to ever be slain on the battlefield by an enemy military force.

The human generals ordered a withdrawal; though they were arguably winning the offensive by sheer numbers, their position had become disordered. The calculations that the orcs would not further pursue were accurate; their momentum was spent and their losses considerable. What was not expected, however, was the appearance of a hidden force of dark elves that ambushed the retreat. Disorganized, demoralized and having had no prior warning, the human casualties were immense and 2 full divisions were forced into surrender.

The Talstrom Empire had never suffered such a defeat; even in the most disastrous campaigns of the Second Crusade. Scandal rampaged through the Empire, with whispered worries of madness in the Emperor, betrayal by the Telluric Academy in failing to protect the monarch or even that Solarin himself had turned his back (as common folk of the Empire were not aware that the Sun God was functionally enslaved). To make matters more challenging, Sardan had been a relatively young emperor who had decided that he would raise his successor from a very young age in order to better prepare them for the throne. He had orchestrated a great many trials for children across the empire to compete until the most talented among them in several fields rose to the top and was made his successor. Yet, there was a problem with this plan; the contest had been won a scant year earlier. Now-Empress Paloma Talstrom was 11 years old when the legions returned to inform the capital of the death of her predecessor.

The Battle of the Cloven King, as it would come to be known, formed the beginnings of the Autumn Constellation, an alliance of nations that would prove a significant foe for the Empire. The Prophet Dulceth, a revolutionary reformer among the dark elves, met Vera on the battlefield. With divine clarity they expressed the mutual need for union in the face of what would be an ongoing conflict. Shrewd and tenacious, the newly made orc sovereign agreed to a potential alliance. Still, it would be some five years before the final piece fell into place.

Methodical and long-lived, the Archwizard Xoldranin had never lacked for ambition. Though his guidance had allowed for the enslaving of a god, the other entities of the divine were now well out of reach. Hungry for other potential outlets to draw new forms of magic from, he used his considerable influence and near stewardship over the young Empress to guide her where her predecessor declined to go. He had orchestrated the capture of a god: the Archfey seemed a fair easier target. Binding open the flickering gateways into the Faewyld, the Telluric Wizards ushered battle companies forward. The lands of the fairy were tricky things to conquer, but Xoldranin had gleaned much during his preparations. Unity was not a common concept among the fairy, who sought to trick and foil one another across the lines of the courts of seelie and unseelie as much as they worked against outside threats. The crafty old mage used this to his advantage, carefully avoiding the realms of 9 fairy rulers and focusing on one thane

alone; that of the youngest Archfey, Brancil the Prince of Cats and Thorns. Territory was ever the goal of the Empire, but Xoldranin wished to rob magic, not land. When the legions arrived to sack his capitol, Brancil surrendered himself rather than have his subjects slain and ransacked. Xoldranin withdrew the forces, much to the anger of the generals who had spent their men's lives returning with little to show for it beyond one captive.

Much as he had done with the deity before, Xoldranin had prepared a meticulous spell to enslave the Prince of Cats and Thorns. Yet Brancil's cunning and brash nature proved more elusive than Xoldranin had anticipated. Though he made a Promise-Bound bargain to undergo the ritual in exchange for the sparing of his Thane, the prince had no intention of serving as a slave. When the ritual was at its pique, he discarded his mantle of immortality, dissipating it rather than allowing it to be captured. This profoundly disrupted the ritual, sending magical energies flying uncontrolled and destroying a portion of the Telluric Academy's prime campus. He escaped unharmed and spent the next few years wandering the lands. Eventually, he found his way into the clandestine negotiation between Vera and Dulceth. With flawless timing, he offered them the final piece that would cement the foundation of the Autumn Constellation; an alliance with the Faewyld and with it the use of the fairy roads.

To seal the compact, the three leaders of their people entered into a union of marriage, forming the Triune Throne, three years after the battle of the Cloven King. Twenty five years have passed since the formalization of the alliance which has proven the first entity in centuries to challenge the might of the Talstrom Empire. The Fifth Grand Crusade stands open and enduring now as Empress Paloma Talstrom has vowed its destruction. A cold conflict that flares into blazing heat at nearly any provocation, the balance of power in Jalanay lies between a vast ambitious nation ruled by the Humanistic Principles and a strange nascent alliance between disparate peoples who refuse to bend a knee. It is from the latter that our heroes will be drawn; like their nations both untested and possessed of great promise.

TLDR: Humans expanded into the lands of ever more species, conquering as they went. That is, until they encountered the orcs, the first meaningful opposition they had faced in some time. Vera, a young leader and powerful sorceress, made a desperate gambit to unite the orcs. In a pitched battle she slew the human emperor and a surprise intervention of a large army of dark elves resulted in a stinging defeat for the Talstrom empire. These events formed the beginning of the Autumn Constellation. The humans then sought to turn their attention to conquering the fae, but were tricked by an Archfey called the Prince of Cats and Thorns. Soon after, the same prince gambled again, throwing in the lot of the fey with the burgeoning alliance between the orcs and the dark elves which resulted in a marriage and the formalization of the Autumn Constellation.

Characters Guidelines

PCs in this setting can be from a wide variety of different backgrounds in this setting, though some things shine with more importance in the character creation process. Note that this game uses the rules in Tasha's Cauldron of Everything allowing characters to assign their attribute bonuses as they like, so players will not be disadvantaged if they want to play an orc warlock or a dark elf paladin. While some races will be expanded upon more, this section will serve as an overview of how choices of class or race may inform roleplay and story. Note that while some class/subclass choices might be very commonly tied to certain institutions or setting elements it is not strictly required you adhere to those (for example, not all PC sorcerers had to have been trained at the Spire of Blood, though it may create more interesting stories and integration if you choose to be). If your desired subclass is not specifically listed here, you may of course still play it; I simply haven't developed a cultural tie for it.

Races:

(The no-nos)

Humans: Humans are not considered a playable race. They are a central antagonist of the setting.

Elves (High, Sylvan): Called 'Sky Elves' commonly or Saer'Alshana in their own language, these elves are not playable as they are functionally extinct as a race.

Dwarves (Hill, Mountain): Are extremely rare and should not generally be played. Their civilization is gone and while remnants remain here and there, other options are preferable.

Aasamir: Aasamir in this setting are an artificially created off-shoot race of humans suffused with stolen divine energy. Though thought of with adoration by humans, they are functionally owned and brainwashed by the Church of the Searing Light.

(Common Races)

(A Note on mixed races: Essentially all humanoids are capable of producing offspring. Save for those defined mixed-race species with their own mechanics, other combinations may use either the custom lineage rules or choose a parent race to define their racial mechanics)

Orcs: Orcs are the most numerous race in the Autumn Constellation. Though there are elements of 'warrior culture' within their ranks, it would be misguided to suggest they are brutal or savage. Orcs as a culture value deep passion and ferocity, though this does not exclusively apply to battle. Art, cooking, familial bonds, magic, politics are all respected within orcish society as routes to pursue. Strength does prevail in many orcish settings, but it is strength of will and personality that does so as opposed to strict strength of arms. Orcs are also known for having many (almost comically so) ancient traditions which are observed somewhat inconsistently. Their culture carries some elements of Norse influence in the West and some elements of Byzantine and Arabic influence in the East.

Dark Elves: The correct name for dark elves is "Drow'Alshana" and they are a people of recently revolutionary change. For centuries they sequestered themselves in the Deep Reaches, a series of

underground tunnels which existed on the border between the world of Jalanay and the Shadowfell, a dark plane filled with strange unknowable eldritch things, as well as the passage to the afterlife. They were deeply devoted to the worship of the gods, solemn discipline and to aesthetic self-perfection. Since the gods departed, their society was cast into chaos until a new Prophet named Dulceth emerged to lead them forward. Dulceth brought forward radical reforms, casting out elements of xenophobia, repression and shattered many taboos. The younger generation of drow'alshana embraced these new ideas, yet much of life still carries echoes of the old traditions. There also yet remain strong factions who, while acknowledging the truth of Dulceth as a Prophet, resent the changes they have made. For note, Dark Elves have no special connection to the fey in this setting and their racial template is slightly altered to reflect this. Dark elves may use the template for Shadar-kai instead of the one for drow if they wish, particularly if they hail from the stranger, deeper and untamed portions of the Deep Reaches.

Feywild Races: (Goblins, Satyrs, Hobgoblins, Gnomes, Centaurs, Bugbears, Changelings, Fairies) These races all have their origins in the Feywild, a chaotic dimension of strange wonder that weaves and overlaps with Jalanay. Though originally immortal and ephemeral spirits, many fey choose to give up their immortality to gain the power to remember (something which is typically difficult for them) and feel a broader set of experiences through a process called "Grounding", which also allows them to remain outside of the Feywild as much as they like. Children of Grounded fey are born Grounded. This process has become increasingly popular since the Autumn Constellation was founded. Fey society is complex, filled with countless rules and even more countless work arounds and inconsistencies. All fey have a connection to the season in which they were born and the vast majority owe allegiance to one degree or another to the Seelie (Spring and Summer) or the Unseelie (Fall and Winter) courts. Note that Gnomes are a fey race in this setting and have their racial template slightly altered to reflect this.

The Broken Peoples

Half Elves: Though the Sky Elves have passed, their blood still touches a number of people throughout the world. Unfortunately for them, the vast majority of the "Chul'Alshana" live as second class citizens among the Talstrom empire. A few rise to earn citizenship, where they are often patronizingly paraded around as examples of how merciful the Humanistic Principles can be, while the rest of the race are treated with scorn and suspicion. There have been small efforts in the past to rise up, which are universally crushed, often leading to rampant abuses in their wake. A few half elves have more recently sought refuge and defection to the Autumn Constellation. While there is a measure of improvement to be found, many treat them with suspicion owing to their human blood.

Deep Dwarves: When they fled their homes, many dwarves found kinship in the deep places with the cousins of their former allies. Though they kept a social distance, elements of Dark Elf culture demanded they aid such refugees. Though unions were previously frowned upon, they became somewhat common and deep dwarves (a typical result of these pairings) now significantly outnumber those without drow'ashana blood. Dulceth herself dubbed these dwarves "Duregar'Alshana", acknowledging them as an elven lineage at least as much as the Chul'Alshana (half elves) in a display which further irritated conservative elements of the dark elves but won the prophet the hearts of the deep dwarves.

Halflings: Halflings share a similar lot to Half Elves in that they are largely integrated into the Talstrom Empire as second class citizens, particularly in the provinces. Like half-elves, they sometimes achieve citizenship with many working to do so for much of their lives. Yet they too struggle under the yoke of human oppression, but find a warmer welcome if they can defect to the eastern lands. While they were

a generally peaceful people who did not put up a great deal of resistance to conquest, a growing urge for liberty has risen among the more adventurous smallfolk in recent years.

The Beastfolk: (Aarocora, Lizardfolk, Kobolds, Owlin, Kenku, Tabaxi, Kobolds, Minotaurs, Tortles, Gripli Leonin) The Beastfolk have long been wanderers, though most of them also had small countries which were readily conquered by the Talstrom Empire. Now they have no homes but have adapted to a wandering lifestyle with extended bands and family units traveling across the lands. These bands are called Vardo-cuffs in recognition of the typical mode of transportation. At best they are seen as entertainers or merchants; at worst thieves and signs of ill omen. Most places allow them to come and go, but they are rarely treated without suspicion. Increasingly they have become fonder of the eastern lands of the Autumn Constellation, where they are certainly treated better than in the Empire. Quietly and slowly some have even become spies into the lands of the Empire, passing along vital information earned through their freedom of movement while largely being beneath human contempt.

The Touched:

Tieflings and Yuanti: Centuries ago, Jalanay was subject to an invasion of elemental, infernal and abyssal forces whose eons-long war spilled over into this world during a period called the Ravages. In ancient and almost forgotten times, the elves, dwarves and humans banded together and drove out these entities. However, their corrupting magic and pockets of influence forever tainted aspects of Jalanay. On certain days in certain places or with certain weather conditions, these energies infuse conception and the resulting birth is a tiefling. In the Empire such children are often not permitted to live. Even elsewhere tieflings are treated with a measure of suspicion and are seen to varying degrees as bad luck, though at times they might be instead seen as alluring or special instead. Tieflings will pass down their blood to their own children should they have any. In this setting, Yuanti are a specific sect of tieflings who have interbred over the generations to create a more 'pure' line; they have also developed magic to forcefully convert others to their race. While largely sinister if members of the Yuanti cults, many individuals do escape the lifestyle and take up other ways of living.

Genasi: Similar to tieflings, Genasi are the result of elemental infusion and corruption in the land from the same planar incursion. They are more numerous, however, and more commonly tied to areas instead of dates or other phenomena. Small communities surrounding such places are not uncommon.

Dragonborn: Dragons were once a reasonably common sight and most folk might expect to see one in their lifetimes. However, courtesy of the philosophy brought about by the Third Bright Crusade, their numbers have been decimated and their once mighty presence reduced to hunting trophies. Recognizing the dwindling numbers of their race, and seeing the reality of what happened to the Sky Elves, some dragons took the unique step of cooperation to seek to save their lines. Championed by some silver dragons, but followed by other dragons of nearly all colors, a scheme was devised to keep dragon blood alive amid humanoid races. Some who could stomach it, and had the power to change their shape, took on harems of humanoid mates (dragons had bred with humanoids before, but perhaps only a few in a generation). Others employed a ritual which was developed that allowed for the 'blessing' of a newborn with willing parents to take on the blood of the caster. The children which resulted are often deeply gifted, often with magical talents, physical beauty, intellect or significant athletic ability. They are also burdened by being glorified genetic experiments which their draconic forebearers seek to use to preserve their own race, a task which they never willingly accepted. Many struggle with this notion, coming to resent it or question their purpose entirely.

The Others:

Firbolgs and Goliaths: These Giantkin races are not very commonly seen among the other humanoid folks, but they do exist. Giants themselves exist in extremes of nature and are neither a part of the Autumn Constellation nor have they been bowed by the Talstrom Empire. Giants are quite hierarchical and view these smallest giants as natural servants. Family bands and small 'herds' are often beholden to individual Giant lords, though their masters are often absent or inattentive, meaning they spend much of their time left to their own devices.

The Sea Peoples: (Sea Elves, Tritons, occasionally others) The Oen'alshana and their close allies the Tritons dwell beneath the oceans and, like the giants, are insulated from politics by their extreme environment. Though they were allies with certain parts of the empire prior to the development of the Humanistic Principles, their relations have grown frosty. They are not often seen on the surface, though it is yet unclear how they will respond to the formation of the Autumn Constellation.

The Soul Mirrors: (Warforged/Autognomes) The Sky Elves created wonders with their magic which even centuries later the Telluric Academy has not managed to duplicate. One such wonder were Soul Mirrors, beautiful humanoid constructs of a special ivory-like wood and intricate metals. In order to imbue these constructs with intelligence sufficient to function in a sapient fashion, their creators had to imbue in them large portions of their own memories and experiences, sometimes even of their whole families. Few Soul Mirrors survived the First Bright Crusade, but some have reawakened from areas of storage or ruins over the years. Their memories and spirits often fractured by the eldritch storms that rage across their creator's lands, these lonely beings often take to wandering and are perhaps the closest things to living Sky Elves remaining on Jalanay.

Lineages: Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft introduced races which were once living but underwent strange transformations or had undead-related peculiarities. All of these are valid for play but have no special cultural significance beyond the races they belonged to in life.

Classes

Artificers: Technological advancement varies wildly across Jalanay (see Technology below). Though no formal schools exist for artificers, they draw their inspiration from a combination of natural creativity and scouring the world for pieces of bygone mystical technology which traces its roots back to the time before the Ravages. The city of Scraps is well known as a hub for such individuals to travel to or originate from, particularly members of the Armorer or Artillerist subclasses, whereas Alchemists are somewhat common among the Vardo-cuffs of the Beastfolk.

Barbarian: Barbarians are a commonly seen class. Among the orcs, the Path of the Storm Herald, Battle Rager and the Ancestral Guardian are both well established in practice and well respected to those who follow them. But it is also quite common for Satyrs, Centaurs and other fey races of the summer courts to follow the path of Wild Magic, caught up in passions and volatile emotions. Even among the dark elves, particularly devoted members may take up the Path of the Zealot, their hearts brimming with religious ecstasy.

Blood Hunter: Though the rituals and pacts required to pursue this profession are spread throughout small cells across the east, the largest number of Bloodhunters come from the Black Citadel, a branch of the renowned (and feared) Tritower.

Bard: To call oneself a Bard is no snickering matter in the realm of Jalanay. For they are known as powerful magicians, spies, lorekeepers and all-around general badasses by the public. True Bards are taught at one of the great colleges, most of which in the east are headquartered in the Spire of Words, which is one of the Tritowers. The most commonly trained here hail from the Colleges of Lore, Tragedy, Eloquence and Whispers. The College of Revelry (custom homebrew) can be found amid the Feywilds and had recently come to accept members of non-fey races, though the vast majority hail from the feyfolk. Rivalries between the Colleges of Swords and Valour are legendary, particularly as the former is headquartered in the Talstrom Empire.

Clerics: Religion is important in many cultures, but the Drow'alshana take this to the next level as faith is a core pillar of their society. Clerics hold great importance within the society of the dark elves, but are generally viewed positively throughout the Constellation. Traveling Clerics will often favor one deity (reflected by their subclass) but know invocations to a variety of gods and will freely employ such. The exception to this are human clerics, who uniformly worship The Searing Light, Solarin (Light Domain); as he is enslaved by humans, he will not grant spells or the favor of his Domain to others.

Druids: Druidic magic is likely the oldest form of mysticism practiced on Jalanay, but it would be wrong to view this power as gentle or even particularly about faith or 'attunement' with nature. Druids are wise and learned persons, who study the patterns of nature and have a fierce oral tradition of knowledge. Their practices are also quite dangerous, as they tap into volatile elemental forces, evoking the power of the primordial lords and the fabric of the Feywild. Druids are often respected but also feared by many. Druidic magic is largely outlawed in the Talstrom Empire, though it is still practiced in some places. In the Autumn Constellation, it is most commonly practiced by the fey races (who favor the Circles of Spores, Dreams and Stars), genasi (who favor the Circles of the Land and Wildfire) and beastfolk (who favor the Circles of the Shepherd and Moon) owing to their inherent connections to the dangerous forces at play.

Fighter: Ubiquitous in all societies, fighters are welcomed in times of violence such as these. Many cities will have individual academies for those who turn war into art. The Ballet of Steel in Fort Stormfront is renowned for the skill of its Battlemasters, whilst the Black Citadel trains warriors in the strange arts of the Echo Knight and Eldritch Knight. Rune Knights primarily hail from the city of Mountain Toe if they are not from the giant races themselves. The Society of the Fletch is a secretive underground half-elf resistance sect that preserves and practices the ancient Arcane Archer style of the Saer'Alshana and has more recently begun to count halflings among their numbers. Psi warriors almost exclusively hail from the Deep Reaches, where the strange powers there have allowed them to manifest their unique abilities.

Monk: Second only to clerics as an adventuring class for dark elves, monastic arts are highly esteemed among their traditions. They most commonly follow the Way of Resolution (custom homebrew), Mercy or Shadows. The Way of the Drunken Master is popular among orcs and certain fairy races alike, while the Way of the Ascendant Dragon offers Dragonborn a path to grow closer to their lineage. The Way of the Sun Soul is headquartered in the Talstrom Empire, often attached to temples of the Searing Light and is rarely seen in the east.

Paladin: Champions of the gods are not an uncommon sight, though they are a diverse lot. Many such persons are humans and aasamir empowered by the Searing Light and often swear the Oaths of Conquest, Crown or Glory. Yet these sacred warriors are also well known among the orcs who will often honor their old traditions by swearing the Oaths of Vengeance or the Watchers, whereas many centaurs and hobgoblins follow the Oath of the Ancients or Seasons (custom Homebrew). And, of course, given their society's focus on faith, Dark Elves have paladins of many Oaths, though most commonly Devotion (or Redemption, if they are more modern-minded).

Ranger: Jalandar is filled with many untamed wildernesses; even in relatively populated areas, wilds, forests and unknown reaches remain the dominant features. Rangers are quite common among nearly all races, though the nomadic Beastfolk perhaps most commonly pursue this class. The most well-known rangers, however, hail from the international affiliation of the Horizon Walkers. A loose union which has for centuries stretched across the land, they serve as watchers for incursions by elemental powers and other extraplanar threats. When such cases arise, they are both the early warning system and the first line of defense.

Rogue: Like fighters, rogues are ubiquitous among the nations of Jalandar, but their organization varies significantly. Spycraft is a honed skill in the Mastermind archetypes that populate thief societies of the Empire, while Arcane Tricksters are common among gnomes, fairies and several other fey races. Assassins are trained in some of the temples of the dark elves with similar rigor and devotion to the schooling of the Monks, while Soulknives, like other psychic classes, draw their origins from the strange powers that reside in the Deep Reaches.

Sorcerer: Likely the most common spellcasters in the Autumn Constellation, sorcerous bloodlines are abundant among several races; wild magic among the fey, Shadows among the dark elves, with Aberrant Mind bloodlines arising from the Deep Reaches. But orcs are the best known among these, often training and honing their skills in the renowned Spire of Blood, one of the segments of the Tritower, though all who show talent and commitment are accepted for teaching.

Warlock: The final Spire of the Tritower, the Spire of Pacts, is devoted to the art of mastering and maintaining bargains with great and terrible powers. Many warlocks earn patrons on their own, though untested and unaided they can often find themselves on the bad ends of such deals. Warlocks are less common in the west, though some in the Empire circumvent the arduous road of the cleric to instead draw power more forcefully from Solarin and make Pacts of the Celestial.

Wizard: Wizardry is the foremost magical practice in the Talstrom Empire and the Telluric Academy, where almost all Imperial wizards are trained, using the stolen knowledge from many cultures, foremost among them the Sky Elves. They have expanded considerably on this over time and the Academy agents are famous for acquiring new magic for the Academy...and ensuring others do not have it. Wizards are therefore very uncommon among other cultures and are looked upon with mistrust. Still, if one is to believe the stories about the elusive Soul Mirrors, it is entirely possible they may know secrets of the craft lost even to humankind. (Largely not suited for PC play unless playing as a Soul Mirror).

Entities of Power (Gods, etc.)

Gods

That the gods exist is not a question in anyone's minds. In the times before Solarin was captured by the Talstrom Empire, the Gods dwelled on the world itself atop the Sanctic Mountain. They would, from time to time, walk among the mortals, be seen in person, sire demi-gods and the like. Heroes of legend would at times journey to the Sanctic Mountain and undergo many trials to gain favors or miracles. But when one of their own was captured, the Gods departed the surface of the world and made a new home upon one of the three moons called Gelena. Here they have dwelled since, forbidden to walk upon the world directly and only able to act through agents.

In terms of creation stories, these vary considerably by culture. But most agree that they did not solely create the world, but instead came upon it as a barren and lifeless rock floating in the infinite Astral Sea. Using their great powers they created many things on Jalanay, though thought by many that they were not the only source of creation and that other extraplanar entities also brought certain things into existence. The individual known gods are as follows. There are lesser deities which exist as well, usually the children of the gods, though these are not usually thought to grant spells and are typically either not worshiped or are revered by small cults. All of the gods have a name and a title; most people (outside of the dark elves) are much more likely to use the title than the name; they may recall the name of their favored deity but are unlikely to know more than that.

Ibronka, The Spark of Creation: (Life Domain) Ibronka is the first among equals when it comes to the gods. She rules over life in the sense of motherhood, but is also very much a deity of discovery, curiosity and creation. Patron of inventors and innovators as well as healers, she nurtures creativity and inspiration. She is portrayed as benevolent and merciful, but angered by pointless death and excess banality. She is also the patron of lovers and artistry as well as the goddess of gunpowder.

Trist, The Gold-Handed Thief: (Trickery Domain) A classical trickster deity, he was once said to be a darker, more sinister figure until a mortal hero struck off his hand. After spending time in reflection, he was shown kindness by Ibronka who made for him a new hand of gold. The two married and ever since then the Gold-Handed Thief has set his tricks to teaching lessons, creating laughter and toppling tyrants. He is certainly the god of thieves, but favors those who punch up rather than down and is also the patron of actors.

The Raven Queen: (Grave Domain) Though the Raven Queen has a name, it is said to be kept hidden for she was once a mortal and one of the only ones known to have attained status among the divine. A powerful sorceress in life, most suspect she was a dark elf, though some obscure human cults do illicitly worship her under the assumption that only a human could attain such heights. She ascended to her throne after the death of her beloved sister. In the time before she became a goddess, death was even more cruel than it is now and she could not bear the thought of how her sibling suffered in a life cut short. She is said to have climbed the Sanctic Mountain and challenged the Reaper Cowled in Blood himself. Her will and determination were so great that she bested him and tore from him half of his divine power, along with half of the Shadowfell. She reshaped the realms and changed their purpose. She taught mortals the ways to her realms and guided worthy souls to kinder ends than those the

Reaper would have for them. The two clash constantly, each seeking to undermine the other's efforts. The Raven Queen is the patron of death used to good ends as well, such as the harvesting of grain or wood and the butchering of animals for food and fishing. She is also the goddess of just revenge.

Grigon The Huntsman: (Nature Domain) The wilds are considered a very dangerous place in Jalanay and to foray into them for game is a mighty task indeed. The Huntsman teaches mortals how to challenge the might of nature and emerge victorious. He commands the wild places because they respect his strength, savvy, cunning and knowledge. He is a patron of athletes and competition, a deity of strength and primal emotions. An amorous deity, he is also associated with carnal lust, drinking and revels. Said to have ties to the fey as well.

Raze, The Lord of Metal: (Forge Domain) Raze is the son of Ibronka and Trist and is an aggressive deity. He rules over the shaping of metal and other crafts; the firm, grounded applications of his mother's inspiration. His favored methods are those associated with fire including smithing and pottery. He is a patron of workers and craftsmen, but also in the recognition of rewards from hard labor. A god of vice, he is also the patron of music, drugs, celebration and drink. He is known to be married to Luris, for whom he forges his finest weapons.

Luris, The Lady in Black: (War Domain) The Lady in Black is the deity of battle and has no shortage of opportunity of worship. Though she is an insatiable fighter, she is shown to win battles as much by strategy, cunning and wit as much as pure prowess. Luris is said to have once been married to the Reaper Cowled in Blood but left him after he was defeated by The Raven Queen. Though she initially pursued the new deity in his stead, the two did not prove compatible. In time she married Raze, who is said to have composed a song for her she cherished more than any sword. Luris guides those who are in conflict, both martial and otherwise, as well as protecting soldiers, mercenaries and gladiators. She also watches over those whose partners are claimed in her wars.

Wither, The Reaper Cowled in Blood: (Death Domain) Once the only god of death, the Reaper was a cruel judge and kept nearly all the dead to torture for so long as their souls endured. This changed when the Raven Queen challenged him, defeated him and took a great portion of his power. Though angered and wounded by this insurrection, Wither was no great fool. And though he still despises her, he has also learned from his rival. He now focuses his efforts on more specific punishment rather than blanket cruelty. He is the god one prays to when they wish curses, ill fortune and dark fates to befall their enemies. He is also the patron of those who would study death along with those who hold strange relationships with it including necromancers. If he is sufficiently appeased or convinced, he also allows the dead to depart their fate to exist as the undead and vent their rage upon the world. Wither is said to know a great many things as he spends his time conversing with the dead.

Hirisa, The Orphan: (Peace Domain) Hirisa is the child of Luris and Wither, but forswore both and forcefully severed any family bonds they had. They loathe both of their parents, Death and War, seeking to undo many of their works. Hirisa is the deity associated with sorrow, pain and loss. Also associated with rain, Hirisa watches over those who have lost much and gives their aid to those who seek to maintain a world without cruelty. They protect cripples and the downtrodden, but are known to also recognize those who use strength to defend the weak.

Solarin, The Searing Light: (Light Domain) Solarin was once the god of the sun, light, purity, beauty and vengeance. In truth, he remains these things but is more a slave than a god. Captured by the humans

and sealed into an enormous golden statue, his power is now commanded by the Talstrom Empire through specific rites tied to relics; fragments of the statue broken up and sent across the empire.

Vex, The Wanderer: (Knowledge Domain) While some may think that learning comes best from stuffy books in dusty halls, the Goddess of Knowledge knows far better than that! New places, experiences, differing peoples and other ways of life grant one greater understanding than any page or picture could. Though she is also the patron of books and libraries, she much more favors those who go about to collect this knowledge as she herself does. Accompanied by her faithful paladin (the turtle-like creature, not the holy warrior) who pulls a cart containing a thousand thousand journals she has composed, The Wanderer journeys far and wide and is said to ignore the ban on wandering the mortal world. She is the patron of bards, scholars, travelers and merchants, as well as being the sister of Raze and the daughter of Ibronka and Trist.

Araya, The Mirror: (Twilight Domain) Araya is a curious god/goddess. Fluidity, liminality, uncertainty and the spaces between light and dark define her. He is the god of change and exchange, transition, doors, portals and pathways. It is difficult to earn her favor or know precisely how to appease him, but she is prayed to often despite this. They protect those who seek to create change or who are undergoing change, as well as things existing in areas of gray.

Wisp, The Shooting Star: (Arcana) Said to be one of the goddesses most inclined towards mortals, it is Wisp that is said to have given magic to the world. She laid forward the hidden messages in nature to teach the druids, blessed the bloodlines of sorcerers, created the languages and formulae of wizardry, lent power to the words of bards and countless other small miracles. She adores little else but to watch the pursuit and development of such things, having a notably chaotic streak to her distributions. Indeed, her name comes from her tendency to send magic in many forms soaring from on high just to witness who might stumble upon it. She is a bright and cheerful goddess and is also the wife of Frem, proving perhaps better than any other that opposites attract.

Frem, The Ledgerkeeper: (Order) Frem is a dour grim and yet determined goddess. She is the ruler of organization, civic duties, bureaucracy, fate and organization. Kings and queens are of little concern to the Ledgerkeeper, for she is the patron of those who keep society running. She is also seen as the goddess of time and measurement, instructing when seeds must be sown, reaped and stored. It is said she gifted mortals with calendars. She is also the goddess of debts, investment and the flow of coin. She is married to Wisp and it is said the only thing that can pull her eyes away from her tomes is the sight of her wife.

Brotal, the Hermit: (Tempest) Among the most cantankerous of deities, Brotal is tasked with keeping watch over the incursions that seek to enter into the world of Jananay. He is patron of defenders, fishermen, towers, solitude and walls. Much of his power has been gained from his ages long conflict with the Elemental Lords and he has claimed many of their tricks and strengths for his own. A deity of grudges, it is said he does not forget slights or boons. Indeed, he grants powers over storms and seas out of sheer spite to his ancient enemies, mocking their abilities by granting them to mortals. He protects against demons and devils as well. He is said to have a begrudging respect for Ibronka, but rarely speaks to any other god.

The Archfey

Unseelie

Mab, the Queen of Air and Darkness: Beautiful and terrible, Mab rules over her fane from an icy stronghold amid the mountains that compose it. Mercurial and merciless, she enjoys politics and power and often makes Pacts with mortal warlocks. Though it is not commonly known, Mab also inhabits the personae of Jack of the Frosts, a much more mirthful figure who is said to bring gifts to the kindhearted in times of winter and shield the seeds in the ground from death with blankets of protective snow.

Baba Yaga, The Hag Queen: Baba Yaga roams her forested thane in her chicken-legged hut, always hunting for interesting tidbits be they of lore, ingredients or living morsels. She has a grandmotherly tone to her and is kind to the faeries in her charge. But crossing her is ill advised and her revenge may strike whole generations.

Rumpushanks, The Goblin King: Though goblins (and their cousins, hobgoblins and bugbears) hail from all across the Feywild, a great many of them dwell in the fane of the goblin king. The majority of military might amid the fey is found in this land, which boasts enormous foreboding trees mixed with jagged rocky outcroppings, the settlements constructed in the style of forts.

Morgan Le Fay: Whispered as perhaps the most powerful magician among the Archfey, Morgan commands a fane that resembles a vast and looming swamp. Amid many of the trees, however, are shaped bookshelves filled with strange knowledge, the poems of madmen or blank pages altogether. Often reclusive, Morgan will typically only treat with those who would bring new understanding or stories to her, though she is also fond of trade in children.

Brancil, The Prince of Cats and Thorns: The youngest archfey and perhaps the most peculiar as he is no longer even immortal, having given up the mantle to trick the human archmage Xoldranin. Further complicating matters is that he is married to two mortals and spends much time outside of his Fane. Non-fey are comparatively common there and it resembles a mixture of city and forest, with each blending into the other, such as trees that serve as buildings and bricks held together by moss and fungus. He is known for his cunning, shrewdness and social acumen which has earned him greater status than his relative strength and age would allow.

Seelie

Titania, the Golden Lady: Ruler of perhaps the most beautiful of fanes, Titania's realm is one of meadows and flowers and endless warm days. She is alluring and gentle, yet the honey of her words has entrapped things far mightier than mere flies. She is well loved by even the fey of rival courts and is thought by many to be the de-facto leader of the feywilds. While perhaps not true, she is often a diplomat between her fellow archfey and has managed to create cooperation more often than would otherwise occur.

Nicnevin the Night Witch: Ruling from atop a fane of many hills and bogs, the nightwitch celebrates the heat of summer fires and primal dances. Hers is a lively realm from which many satyrs hail. She is well

known as a seer, her cauldron able to conjure visions of the future which she sometimes uses to guide mortals and fey alike. She is deeply tied with concepts of fate and the order of time.

Polivik, the Duke of Sticks and Stones: Known as a giant of broad-shouldered and round bellied man, Polivik rules over a fane that holds vast fields of crops and livestock, dotted with squat but welcoming little houses. Gnomes often find home in his domain and he is seen as a generally jolly and jovial figure. His generosity is legendary and much of the food produced in the Feywild comes from his blessed lands.

Dullahan, the Headless King: Chief among the knights of the fairy, the headless king rules a thane which is set with gray castles that watch vigilantly over the roads and borders of the Feywild. He is an honorable fairy, though deeply concerned with matters of propriety and manners. As he must often work with Rumpushanks on matters of military concerns, these limits are often significantly tested. Many centaurs hail from his realm and serve as protectors of the fairy roads.

Smirk of a Thousand Masks: The consummate shapeshifter of the Feywild, none have ever seen the true form or face of this elusive creature. Their realm is one of ever changing landscapes, geography and location, filling in many places in the Feywild which are not specifically ruled by other Archfey. A consummate trickster and prankster, Smirk loves every new challenge and role. Many changelings and fairies come from Smirk's realm, though fewer Grounded fairies make their homes there than most fanes.

Elemental Lords

(Will be further expanded)

The lords of the elemental planes are well known as generally hostile conquerors who have in the past sought to break into the prime material plane and take it for their own. They are fond of raiding for slaves, goods and wealth. They war fiercely among each other, with each sort generally loathing the others. They will sometimes use bribes or wishes to trick mortals into terrible bargains or work their will in the world.

Demons and Devils

(Will be further expanded)

Archdevils: The Archdevils of Jelanay do not carry commonly known names, as it is said to speak an archdevil's name is to draw its attention and invite an audience. Thus these names are closely guarded secrets, known only to skilled scholars, devil-seekers and occultists. One cannot be forced to learn an archdevil's name if one does not wish to and accepting the knowledge is a deliberate rather dangerous act. Archdevils are instead known by their number and the first element of their domain, for example: "The Archdevil of Hunger" or "The Eighth".

It is generally accepted that drawing power from archdevils by Warlock pacts is dangerous and must only be done in a careful fashion. It is easy to lose too much in such a deal. The Spire of Pacts of the Tritower has great expertise in the art and has even been known to be able to renegotiate foolish pacts. Typically a controlled degree of service is required and negotiated, specific acts or duties rather than general adherence to an Archdevil's will.

Archdevils are known to loathe the Gods. Rumors whisper that they are fallen Gods themselves or perhaps they aspire to be Gods. Some even say they are mortals who drew near to the power of the Divine only to fall short as only one mortal has ever been known to become a deity.

Archdevils do seek out souls to use as valuable currency, though generally these can only be given away freely by the owner. An archdevil possessing a soul gives them influence over the individual whose soul they possess, both in terms of having a measure of influence over their thoughts and actions and threatening to give it over to the Reaper after death. They are political and philosophical entities; they seek to permeate the world with their own specific vice, methodology or ideology. They barter in service, which can eventually become eternal. Archdevils are very often concerned with contracts, laws and boundaries. There are exceptions to this.

Specific acts and methods may be common to multiple Archdevils. Violence, for example, might be used by the 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th Archdevils rather commonly. The purpose behind such acts is what matters to them. Archdevils are capable of encouraging or benefiting acts that can be circumstantially beneficial, though their ultimate goals are not. It is generally accepted that there are 13 current archdevils, though this number fluctuates.

The 13th: Greed, avarice, possession, splendor at the cost of others.

The 12th: Cruelty, sadism, delight at the suffering of others.

The 11th: Addiction, self-delusion, detachment, dissociation.

The 10th: Lies, secrets, deception, manipulation.

The 9th: Hunger, consumption, gluttony. Taking more than one needs.

The 8th: Competition, independence, destruction of community, victory at the expense of others.

The 7th: Freedom, anarchy, the ability to act in any way one chooses, defiance of law.

The 6th: Conquest, domination, the control of others.

The 5th: Obsession, vengeance, unhealthy love of things, others and of the self.

The 4th: Desolation, the destruction of things for no reason or to excess.

The 3rd: Fear, xenophobia, anxiety, anger, submission.

The 2nd: Apathy, indifference, stillness, surrender.

The 1st: Sorrow, loneliness, mourning, guilt, anhedonia, hopelessness.

Demons and devils exist much as they do in 'standard' D&D cosmology, though their involvement in the concepts of afterlife is absent.

The Nations of the Autumn Constellation

The Or'ukralms

The name for the collection of fiefs, city-states and provinces which make up the vast swaths of territory dominated by the orcs. If one were to listen to the Talstrom Empire's propaganda, one would think this a land of savages and brutes. Far from it, the Or'ukralms are an eclectic collection of lands with widely varied geography and blessed with many cosmopolitan cities. Ranging from deserts and badlands to lush jungles and coastal metropolises, the orcs have incredibly varied ways of life bound together by ancient and often confusing traditions.

Orcish political structures are loosely defined by locality. The relative power and importance of any given fief varies wildly, though most orcs would boast about their homeland regardless of its actual significance. On top of this, there are also more nomadic orc clans which travel between the lands or roam particular territories, often less hospitable regions. These groups sometimes coexist with or absorb vardo-cuffs on a temporary or permanent basis. The governance of each area also varies significantly; sometimes inherited titles, other times merit trials (such as by combat), religious practice or even elections. Broadly cooperation is the norm, but conflicts between neighbors are fairly common though rarely escalate beyond a few fiefs. Often these end up resolved by marriage or spent aggression but sometimes end up with maps being redrawn. Regardless of local matters, most major issues are taken up at Tings, celebratory gatherings lasting roughly a week which occur at the end of winter, the middle of summer and the beginning of winter. These raucous occasions are part festival and part senate meeting, with the leaders of every different fief arriving with their entourages. Matters are debated and resolved here, often more-or-less democratically, though conflicts being resolved through combat or other contests are not unheard of. Economic concerns are frequent topics and trade agreements are common as is the bartering of large amounts of trade goods or smaller amounts of rare and high-end goods. Entertainers of all kinds come to the occasion as well, as do non-participants looking for a fun time. Hosting duties for a Ting are considered an honor, but also a burden owing to the clean up required.

It was at such a Ting that Queen Vera made her bid to become ruler of the Or'ukralms, successfully evoking an ancient and respected tradition of Kingslaying. It has been over a century since there was a monarch over the Or'ukralms, with about a 40-60 split historically of time spent with a monarch vs time without. Vera's drawing of the Or'ukralms into the Autumn Constellation has enjoyed broad though far from universal support. She is a popular ruler, but with so many voices it is impossible to please everyone. Fortunately she has also proved a capable diplomat, often able to smooth egos and make deals. And, failing that, she has also been ruthless enough to impose her political will by force.

On a more local level, structure varies by the type of community. Age and experience are respected among the orcs and while it is common to have a central leader, they are often advised by wise counselors and there is a measure of division of power. Almost every community will have at least one Lawkeeper (and often more for larger communities) who act as arbiters and judges, knowledgeable in

the vast tangled traditions that govern life. Spiritual leaders are also respected, with a spectrum ranging from formal priests and temples (common in more metropolitan areas) to more primal kinds of spirituality (more common in small or nomadic groups). Warlocks, druids and clerics are all equally likely to serve in this capacity. Sorcerers are highly valued as well, often seen as blessed and champions.

Orcs do have a strong military tradition and most communities will have both capable individual combatants and a militia of sorts. Larger ones will have standing forces, though commonly they are part-time professional soldiers who otherwise engage in trade, crafts or agriculture. Raiding in a viking-type fashion is also a very common activity. While this used to be towards other orc regions, this has diminished in more recent times with the Empire being a particularly favored target. In times of larger conflict, armies are mustered from differing regions and there is nothing like an outside threat to draw the various bands, heroes and units together. Special Tings can be called for such occasions to muster troops and ready for war.

While the Or'ukralms are primarily orcish, citizenship has never been limited to orcs alone. Cities are often quite cosmopolitan and there is no particular prohibition against other races becoming contributing members of communities. This likely contributes to the broad acceptance of the Autumn Constellation. In terms of education, there is a spectrum but most communities have at least informal schooling in early and middle childhood. Most people from the Or'ukralms would be at least semi-literate; able to read and write common simpler writings but not complex texts. Larger cities do boast actual universities, though oral traditions are much more common with values, morals and skills often taught through stories and songs.

The Deep Reaches

The Deep Reaches are difficult to describe in terms of landmass as the home of the drow'alshana exists both underground and partially in the Shadowfell, an adjacent plane to the world of Jalanay. While there are some partially above-ground settlements, and more are growing at present, the country exists as a series of vast interconnected caverns, caves and underground water features. The line between the planes is a blurry one and it is often less a question of if one is in the Shadowfell but more a matter of degree. For more information on the Shadowfell, see below.

Geographically speaking, the Deep Reaches are heavily aquatic, interconnected by many underground waterways and adjacent to vast lakes some of which are comparable to the size of small seas. These waterways are those that carry the essence of the dead into the Shadowfell and thus are considered sacred and hold certain properties other waterways do not. This is particularly true in terms of their capacity to nourish crops. Agriculture is limited but possible and a staple food of the drow'alshana is a black rice that grows along the banks of the various waterways without need for sunlight. Despite the name, most places in the Deep Reaches are not cast in eternal night; instead the very faint glow of the water combined with bioluminescent moss and crystal formations provide light comparable to a starry halfmoon night.

The deeper sections of the Deep Reaches correspond to stranger and more unusual places. The further one goes, the sparser the drow population becomes and strange phenomena intensify. The proximity to

the psychic energy of the Shadowfell can cause strange powers to manifest in those who live nearby and skirmishes with strange eldritch creatures like mind flayers become more common. These regions are untamed and shift at times in unusual ways.

The drow'alshana did not always live in the Deep Reaches. Many centuries ago they occupied the Moon Lands while their cousins the sky elves (Saer'Alshana) occupied the Sun Lands. A rift formed between the two peoples when the Sun Elves wished to pursue ever more the understanding of the broad world, the wizard arts and greater distance from the gods. The dark elves protested this, believing that focus on the self and the will of the divine was the more important. Over time the rift grew so great that one of the Drow'alshana Prophets took their followers on a deep pilgrimage to the darkest place that could be lived, seeking to offer proof of their people's devotion and endurance.

And so for many centuries, dark elves built their society directed by these philosophies. Self-discipline, detachment from excess material matters, devotion to the gods, perfection of the self and stoic asceticism. Life was assumed to require suffering, demonstration of discipline in matters of the physical, spiritual and mental were highly prized. Devotion to the gods was important, as was sacrifice for others. There were many taboos amid society and their structure was fairly rigid. They did not interact extensively with the outside world, though more out of cultural differences than true xenophobia. Indeed, many of the principals of their religions demanded they assist those who could not help themselves. The lands were not without artistry or expression, but these were typically related to religious works or demonstrations of profound fervent devotion to a given art. This is not to say all of society was without emotion or desire; there were plenty of markets, vices and the like. Simply these were not held up as highly moral or worth pursuing. Extended families called Houses typically dominated given regions or settlements. Status and reputation of a house were important and outward perception as well as the blessings of the gods strongly influenced the power of a given House. Those with no houses would often occupy lower rungs of society.

For a great long time, there was no separation of church and state in the society of the Deep Reaches. While House leaders did form elements of civil society, decision-making authority rested in the hands of high priests and priestesses of local temples. They were seen as guided by the gods and given their wisdom. From time to time the gods would choose a Prophet, signifying this person as a vessel of their will and the recipient of their greatest blessings. When a Prophet appeared, and could be confirmed, they would become the functional head of state with comparatively few checks and balances. They typically appeared in times of turmoil or difficulty and are thought to be uniquely equipped to lead the drow'alshana through perilous times.

The proximity of religion to daily life was thrown into absolute chaos when Solarin was enslaved by the humans and the gods abandoned the Sanctic Mountain. Many took this as a sign of apocalypse as the number of interventions fell dramatically and many clerics lost their powers or had them diminished. Omens vanished, the gods would no longer direct judgment in matters of law and one deity stopped answering prayers entirely. The pillars on which society was based were shaken to their foundations and many different interpretations were made.

One particularly radical voice came from a young cleric named Dulceth. They were not of a particularly important house or particularly high rank, but their ideas and capacity to articulate those ideas swayed many young dark elves. They advocated that the departure of the gods was a sign that drow'alshana should take a greater hand in forging their own destiny, equating these trials to those children must

undergo when separating from their parents. Not that the gods would no longer watch over the dark elves, but that they must now step forward and decide more of their own path. Dulceth advocated for more civil structures and a diminished focus on sacrifice and self-denial. In truth, the young cleric's views would likely have been quashed in time; they may have even been assassinated. But something happened that changed the course of history for the Deep Reaches; Dulceth was chosen as a Prophet.

Suddenly the very forces most likely to oppose their ideology were forced by their own to recognize Dulceth's ascendance. The new Prophet wasted little time in pressing for significant changes. They called the heads of the houses to form a Senate as a civil arm to advise the Prophet alongside the high priests. They changed laws to begin trade with the outside world, encourage more travel amid differing regions and enhance economic initiatives. Indeed, they would even eventually place the previously closed off society of the drow'alshana into a nascent new alliance, marrying two other rulers in the process.

Dulceth's reforms have largely proven popular and a boon to society. They have spurred growth and innovation and have inspired a generation. The alliance and trade with the outside have brought new foods, knowledge, entertainments and prosperity. Still, there are many pockets that resent the Prophet's actions, feeling change has come too quickly. While the prophet's word is holy, centuries old traditions do not fade quietly.

The Feywild

The Feywild is a location of shifting wonder and beauty. Strange things are inherent there and magic is abundant. The Feywild is divided into fanes, small nationstates ruled over by an Archfey, whose temperament dictates the geography and nature of the Thane (see the Archfey above for descriptions of the thanes). The Feywild is connected to the prime material plane by gates which flicker open and closed at different times in different places, though some places and times more frequently than others. The Feywild is not entirely ephemeral; many fey do need to eat and do practice crafts or have some manner of job, though the rules around the Feywild are perhaps more loose in regards to reality than in other places. There are even fey who worship the gods to a degree, though the Archfey are something like god-kings within their own domains.

The fey have numerous ways of dividing and organizing themselves. First are the courts; Seelie, fey of Spring and Summer and Unseelie, fey of Autumn and Winter. Your season of birth determines your court rather than your place of birth, but it is much more often Autumn or Winter in the Thanes of the unseelie and likewise but opposite for the seelie. A fey's loyalty to their court varies greatly from fey to fey, but few exist who won't at least pay lip service to it. The individual Archfey frequently scheme against each other, but none seek to destroy one another, even across courts. It is instead a political dance of face and insult and manipulation. Courts do work against each other, but even internally the Archfey of given courts squabble.

The other major divide in fey society is between Grounded and Unbound fey. Fey can exist as spirits, which are largely immortal in that if they are destroyed they will typically reconstitute somewhere in

their thane of origin eventually. Unbound Fey have widely varied lengths of time in a given life but often have a great deal of difficulty remembering or forming attachments beyond those inherent to them (such as to their court). Such fey can travel outside of the Feywild, but their stays are typically short or limited in some way. However, at any given point in their existence, fey of sufficient intelligence can cause themselves to become Grounded. Grounding is most commonly done in response to a significant event; falling in love with a mortal or another fey is a common catalyst, but so is having any given profound experience. Hearing an extremely funny joke, listening to a beautiful song or even learning a terrible secret. Any given attachment, revelation or memory a fey spirit feels they simply cannot give up can cause them to make the decision to become Grounded. Sometimes a fey spirit will undertake some manner of rite (such as getting married) to reflect this change, but in truth this isn't required. Once a fey is sufficiently determined, they may will themselves so. Grounded fey may remember fully, have a finite (though often relatively lengthy) lifespan and gain ease of travel amid the prime material plain. There is no particular stigma to becoming Grounded and there is a relatively seamless coexistence between Grounded and Unbound (though it is sometimes comedic). Grounding has become much more popular in recent years since the formation of the Autumn Constellation.

The Feywild is also a place of roads; the paths that wind through the realms offer significant shortcuts between corresponding gates into Jalaanay. It was this vital element of strategic importance that made the Talstrom empire attack the Feywild, seeking to conquer it. They assaulted the Fane of the youngest Archfey, the Prince of Cats and Thorns. He surrendered himself rather than allowing his people to suffer, but tricked the archwizard who sought to enslave him. Doing so cost him his mantle of immortality, though strangely it seems not his political status as an archfey; it is somewhat unclear what power he retains, though he is much loved by his fane. But escape was only part of his plan for giving up his mantle. In so doing he fundamentally weakened the unseelie court giving the seelie the upper hand. However, he also cleverly maneuvered himself into a grand political alliance, marrying two other monarchs in the process. He did not consult the other Archfey before doing so or before offering the alliance of both courts; but he knew perfectly well they would comply. For as he did so, his fane was suddenly greatly elevated in power as he became the key to this new alliance. Now the other unseelie archfey had little choice but to join along, lest they be eclipsed in influence by one who was not only the youngest among them but also one who had lost his mantle of immortality. And, of course, knowing that this would skew the balance of power towards the unseelie court, the seelie court also had no choice but to go along. The balance of power remained, as the prince of cats and thorns became the primary point of contact and the feywilds themselves a part of a loose confederation over which he was part of the executive. This alliance has proven wildly popular among the common fey, for it has brought them new experiences. While some may grumble it is mostly a question of whether the Archfey themselves are terribly pleased with the tricks that brought them into the fold.

The Metaphysical

Moons

The world of Jalaanay floats in the astral sea surrounded by 3 moons. The brightest of these moons is called Gelena and is the home of the gods since their departure from the Sanctic mountain. It is a silvery white color, slightly more metallic-tinged than earth's moon and follows a pattern of movement that is

sufficient to measure time by. It is only seen at dusk, twilight and night but matches the pattern of the sun. Its appearance is about twice as large as earth's moon and its typical radiance is about 50% brighter. Celena is the second moon and is indigo/purple in color. About a third of the size of Gelena, it has a much slower movement, shifting in an arc that lasts a year. It is associated with magic and divination. The final moon, Relena appears as a sinister yellow-green with stormy quick moving clouds enshrouding it which can be seen with the naked eye. It is not seen with a regular orbital pattern and appears perhaps on average for a week out of the year. It is considered a bad omen to see this moon and the longer it remains the worse the omen is considered.

Death and the Afterlife

The afterlife is not a particularly kind thing in the world of Jalanay. When one dies their soul (which is largely synonymous with 'mind'; indeed, the brain is seen as the location of the soul, though the heart also plays a role) is said to travel along the waterways of the world on a journey to the Shadowfell. In the times before the Raven Queen claimed half of the Shadowfell, souls would largely be made to endure sadistic trials by the Reaper Cowled in Blood, and only those with good memories of a well lived life could endure such without coming to despair. Now such trials still occur, but there can be hope of success and the Raven Queen makes certain that there is fairness in the outcomes. Souls are not thought to endure forever; they fade over the years until they are eventually no more. But in modern times, the Raven Queen has shaped portions of the Shadowfell to be areas of peace, serenity, memory and contemplation.

In general it is thought that good memories, accomplishment and a good death can give strength on the journey to and through the Shadowfell. It is also thought that good or kind deeds can help as well; one never knows when they will meet a soul they helped in life or the relative of someone they helped in life. Such persons may provide them with aid on their journey. It is known that at times demons or devils will seek to infiltrate the Shadowfell to hunt for souls which are valuable currency to them.

Resurrection is possible through the use of magic, though it is considered a dangerous prospect, particularly the longer the soul is gone. It is quite possible that a demon or a devil could inhabit the revived body instead; indeed, this occurred once in the Talstrom Empire and took over a year to discover which is why the resurrection of Emperors is now forbidden by the Humanistic Principles.

As mentioned above, water has a strong connection to the dead. Souls travel waterways to reach the Shadowfell. Burial is considered an acceptable form of internment; rain that soaks through the ground is thought to be more than sufficient to achieve the needed task, though graveyards are most often set up near waterways, even small ones. The oceans are somewhat strange in this regard; it is believed that only certain currents will make it to the Shadowfell and while seafolk or very experienced sailors will know them, it is not so clear cut as with other bodies of water. Committing bodies to large rivers or lakes is considered a holy and sacred method of disposing of the dead and bodies do vanish relatively quickly when this is done (and doing so has none of the real world downsides of propagating disease). Death by fire or burning a corpse is considered particularly horrific/insulting/sacrilegious and greatly increases the risk of someone returning as the vengeful dead; it is seen as very difficult for a soul to flow into the waterways if such occurs.

The Shadowfell overlaps with the world of Jalanay in the Deep Reaches. The barriers here are thin and it is theoretically possible to fully walk into the lands of the dead, though walking back out is unlikely.

Closer to the border the myriad collected minds/souls act as fonts of psionic energy. The concept of psionics, such as they exist, are localized to these regions, owing to the immense number of minds and mental fragments which accumulate there. Those who dwell nearby are sometimes infused with strange powers as a result.

Life, Technology, Agriculture, Food, etc.

A List of 15 important Dishes/Foods

1. Black Rice Salad: The principal staple grain of the Drow'alshana can be made in many ways but most commonly as a mixed salad with mushrooms and seafood. Taste and texture similar to wild rice.
2. Klava: A drink made from coffee filtered through egg shells with vanilla and honey added, often with other spices as well.
3. Cave Lobster bisque: A celebratory delicacy in the Deep Reaches.
4. Wibblefruit: A naturally occurring fruit variety in the feywild which has a consistency like jello and a very random flavor.
5. Brastril: A thick slightly fermented drink similar to yogurt made from Paladin milk, typically made spicy with peppers. Often consumed when one has a cold or other illness.
6. Honey Candy: a common children's confection made from hardened honey typically with pieces of waxy comb in it.
7. Road Cakes: A common ration among the nomadic orcs and beastfolk, consisting of a very dense cake packed with nuts and dried fruit similar to fruit cake but with a denser texture.
8. Solverity: A condiment made from fermented black rice and a specific type of cave mold which resembles a product somewhere between vegemite and soy sauce.
9. Fried drub: A method of preparing the tuber popular as a tavern food. Also served at fairs.
10. Sun bread: One of the staples of the Talstrom Empre, it is a flat bread made from a mix of wheat and barley served with a wide variety of meals.
11. Stuffed Flecka: A holiday dish popular in the Or'uckralms involving stuffing and glazing the poultry with citrus fruits.

12. Blacksap: A thick sweetening agent similar to molasses. Can also be dried into a sugar-like substance.
13. Gnome Oats: A dried and roasted cereal from the Feywild which tastes naturally sweet and like fruits that don't exist.
14. Blood Clot: A thick stew made from ground meat (paladin traditionally), ginger, garlic and chilies. Contains no blood but named so for its red color. Often served over oats or rice. Orcish origin.
15. Mysterious Cloaked figures: Dates stuffed with soft cheese and wrapped in a 'cloak' of bacon.

Agriculture

Broadly speaking, agriculture in Jalanay is fairly advanced. Animal husbandry techniques, crop rotations, the interactions between differing plants, animal use in agriculture alongside literal magic ensures that only a relatively small portion of the population (ranging between 60-75% depending on the region) needs to be directly involved in various agricultural pursuits; or in earth terms the approximate level of advancement present in the 1800s (though the techniques used to achieve this vary considerably from the aforementioned magic to those from differing periods in history and differing areas of the world). Markets for food are common, as are cash crops and even most relatively lower class persons do not subsist solely on grains. Preservation techniques such as pickling, fermenting and salting are used extensively, though canning has not yet been developed. Distilling is common.

The following is a sampling of some fantasy crops and agriculturally important species:

1. Paladins: Not to be confused with the noble warriors, paladins are turtle-like mammals the size of a large bison. They are even tempered herd animals which generally prefer to be near water as they are capable swimmers. They are prized for their meat and heartiness along with their value as dairy animals. They produce a relatively thick and nourishing milk which takes readily to being processed into dairy products. Their shell, which is actually shed multiple times throughout life rather than being part of their skeleton, is also suitable for use in simple armor, jewelry and pottery. While they do not do well in extreme cold, there is a desert breed which trades endurance without much water for a much meaner temperament. Paladins are sometimes used as pack animals as well, but they are relatively slow. They are most popular in the provincial lands of the Empire and in the Or'uckralms.
2. Flecka: Flecka are a kind of nearly featherless poultry resembling a cross between a lizard and a chicken, though they have mouths rather than beaks. They are temperamental but delicious and excellent foragers. Their soft-shelled eggs, which have nearly black yokes, are a staple food in many places.
3. Swifts: A kind of riding lizard native to the Deep Reaches, Swifts resemble slightly thicker raptors the size of ponies but lacking extensive claws. They have beaks at the front of their snouts but also teeth. They are omnivores and subsist on crustaceans, fish and fungus. They are very capable swimmers, but they do struggle in areas of full light. Their primary use is as mounts in the Deep Reaches.
4. Chorls: A very large insect, usually weighing nearly 3 lbs, Chorls are butterfly-like creatures cultivated in the Talstrom Empire. Their wings produce a dust that can be manufactured into a drug that produces euphoria and mild hallucinations and they also produce a silk-like material. Chorls are highly prized and their ownership quite regulated.

5. Swinekings/queens: A fantastically large breed of pig the size of a cow and covered with shaggy thick fur. Common food animals in chilly climates, they can also be trained as pack and riding animals.

The following are other important agricultural animals:

1. Talstrom Empire: Sheep, goats, cows, horses, ponies, ducks, geese, quails, chickens and donkeys
2. Or'uckralms: Yaks, swine, goats, sheep, horses, ponies, donkeys, llamas, camels, guinea fowl and buffalo.
3. Deep Reaches: Cultivated oysters, clams and muscles, trout farming, turtles, snails, ducks, geese.
4. Feywild: Varies by Fane but most commonly ducks, geese, chicken, goats, sheep and swine.

The following are important agricultural crops:

1. Talstrom Empire: Wheat, barley, quinoa, millet, grapes, olives, apples, pomegranates, cherries, citrus, onions, tomatoes, potatoes, melons, pine nuts, walnuts, lettuce, garlic. Coffee and certain spices are also grown in specific regions.
2. Or'uckralms: Rice, oats, buckwheat, corn, potatoes, drubs (similar to sweet potatoes with a slightly more onion-y flavor), peppers, sugarcane, cabbage, beats, parsnips, carrots, ginger, garlic, onions, dates, prunes, plums, peaches, apricots, mangos, pineapples, almonds, pistachios, walnuts, peanuts, cashews, bananas, citrus fruit, tobacco, various spices, tea, coffee.
3. Deep Reaches: Black rice, turnips, rutabaga, radishes, seaweed, kelp, mushrooms, edible moss. For note, food scarcity, or at least limited range, has long been a challenge for the residents of the Deep Reaches. By far one of the most popular aspects of the Autumn Constellation is the vastly increased agricultural trade.
4. Feywilds: Potatoes, wheat, barley, oats, corn, mushrooms, apples, cherries, almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, melons, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli (considered a punishment in some Fanes) turnips, and a variety of fantastical fruitstuffs.

Currency

The standard unit of currency is silver. We will be using considerably different money rules than those presented in the PHB which are a little silly. The ratio of copper to silver remains 1:10, silver to gold 1:10 and gold to platinum 1:10. Many different currencies are minted, often with major cities or regions minting their own money which is generally fairly interchangeable. There is not yet a standardization of coin in the Constellation. The Empire, however, does mint its own coin and trades in the coins of other cultures disfavorably, often as much as 30-40% less, though the provinces are more forgiving. Gems are fairly common currency for larger transactions as are other unique forms of coin such as golden pyramids and platinum spheres (both minted by the Empire). Barter is also quite common, particularly in the Feywilds.

Languages

There are two 'common' tongues. One is High Imperial and spoken in the Talstrom Empire and the other is called Starspeak and is a...work in progress unifying elements of Deep Speech, Ralmspeak and Sylvan. "Racial" languages don't exist per say in common use, though Elvish (which is related to Deep Speech about as closely as Spanish and Latin are) exists in ancient writings as does Dwarvish to a degree. Halfling is still remembered by some but an active effort has been made by the Empire to eliminate it. Sylvan is

the language of the Feywild though it has many variations. Aquan is spoken by the seafolk and there is a hand-sign language called 'Cuffed' that exists among the Beastfolk and other vardo-cuff dwellers. Other creature-based languages like draconic do exist as well.

Technology

Technology varies quite radically across the world setting both in terms of advancement upon particular technological lines and with significant regional differences even in the same countries. Compounding this, 'ancient technology' does exist in some places as civilizations from before the Ravages had developed further. As well, certain institutions have at times deliberately suppressed and sabotaged the development of certain technologies, most notably the Tellurian Academy and the elements of the theocracy in the Deep Reaches. As well, magically infused technology of the sort practiced by Artificers does exist, though much more commonly in either specific communities or even the product of individual mad geniuses. Either way, technology does not tend to spread quickly in the world.

Weapon/armor technology is fairly advanced; steel is the norm, crossbows are common place and plate armored knights are a terror of the battlefield. Guns do exist, but from a quirk of how this world's version of gunpowder works are largely confined to coastal areas. Gunpowder and firearms strangely function much better amid the salty sea air and are far less reliable further inland. Thus, cannons are known ship armaments, but have nearly no use inland. Rare inventors have come up with versions that function well inland but such things are expensive. Firearms are considered emerging: **Classes with d10 hit dice as well as Rogues are considered proficient in Firearms. There are no mechanical penalties for using Firearms inland; these restrictions are relevant for large scale war rather than individual PC use.**

Travel technology is also relatively advanced. Age of Sail level ships do exist, though their production is limited to specific naval powers. Chinese- and viking- style ships are also common. Navigation is a highly guarded technique but is also relatively advanced; detailed and accurate maps are quite uncommon and very valuable. Wagon technology is also relatively advanced, comparable to 18th century levels such that covered wagons and vardos exist commonly. A wide variety of animal power is used in the pulling of carts and both the Empire and the Or'ucklands have some access to elephants. Teleportation circles are also extensively used in the Empire as means of travel for important individuals but are exclusively under the control of the Tellurian Academy. The Empire also has a vast and truly impressive system of roads that is unmatched in Jalanay. Yet it the most critical transportation 'advancement' is not in Jalanay; the Autumn Constellation's access to the fairy roads, which, while somewhat unpredictable and inconsistent, provide not only a profound strategic advantage but also allow for transportation between points to be greatly diminished as spots in the Feywild are often closer together than they are in Jalanay. The Shadowfell has some similar properties, but the paths of the dead are far more dangerous to employ in this way to the point of being impractical in all but the most well established routes.

Medicine is primarily the province of magic. While certain remedies are practiced, magic and pseudo magical applications like alchemy are far more reliable, particularly for physical wounds. Eye glasses do exist.

Industrialization is largely non-existent. Technology is not often openly shared even within a country and at best guilds of artisans band together more to monopolize or guard their secrets than advance them in a cooperative fashion. Fossil fuels are not yet in common use; coal has not yet begun to replace wood,

though whale oil has begun to be used in certain coastal areas in recent years. The woodburning stove has been invented, however, and is currently a highly sought after item.

Love, Sex and Unions

Homophobia, sexism and transphobia are not concepts that exist because this is fantasy and I don't want them to. Even the bad empire humans don't hate the gays or women or trans people.

The concept of arranged marriages is one which exists and is common both in the Empire and the Deep Reaches, though for somewhat differing reasons. It is more common among those of high social station, though the idea of union for social gain or political reasons is common. Marriage to multiple people is uncommon in the Empire, though keeping official concubines among higher social strata is not. In the Or'uckralms multi-person unions are typically the result of one individual having substantial wealth or power and marrying multiple partners, though nothing demands that this be the case; extra-marital relations are not uncommon though do justify wrath if not consented to. Multi-person unions are very common arrangements in the Deep Reaches, though are carefully planned; extramarital affairs are extremely taboo in this society. Owing to a relatively small population and a tendency to maintain houses among the Drow'Alshana, relatively close-relation marriages are very common; direct siblings are taboo but cousins/nieces/nephews etc are very common. Large age disparities are also common; it would not be odd to wed your great great grand nephew. Fey rules in this regard vary wildly and free love is a very common thing. Still contracts are deeply important to Fey and they will abide by full terms of any such agreement. Since the formation of the Triune Throne, multi-person cross-species unions have become somewhat fashionable in the Autumn Constellation.

Divorce is legal in the Empire and occurs with some regularity. In the Or'uckralms, a Lawspeaker is almost always involved; if they determine mistreatment they will dictate appropriate compensation be given to the offended party. Divorce is somewhat taboo in the Deep Reaches, but if all of the appropriate grueling rites are adhered to it is permitted.

Sex work is legal in all countries. In the Deep Reaches the concept of sacred prostitutes is a well respected one and achievement in the arts of sex are considered a worthy pursuit of self-perfection. In the Or'ucklands brothels are common and typically mixed in terms of gender representation, almost always owned by the prostitutes themselves. The Talstrom Empire restricts such work to specific segments of a given city; such 'red lantern' districts are not uncommonly inhabited by a greater share of non-humans for whom such work is rarely restricted in the ways other professions are. The Feywilds have areas of vast sexual liberty and such enjoyments can be traded for any number of things from a variety of fairy spirits.

Slavery, Property and the Lower Classes

Chattel slavery (as practiced in the American South) does not functionally exist in Jalandar in a legal fashion. The only truly known people who engage in such are elemental lords who raid the prime

material plane for such captives. Other forms of functional slavery do exist to a degree, though even when the term slave is used such persons do have rights.

In the Talstrom Empire, citizens cannot be made slaves, but of course only humans are born as citizens. The only ways individuals can become slaves are either to sell themselves into slavery, be put there as legal punishment or to be prisoners of war. Children born to slaves are not themselves slaves. Laws exist to a degree to protect slaves; owners of such persons may not kill their slaves nor rape them and have some obligation to their well being. Slaves lack freedom to depart their service before a period expires and that period might be indefinite based on the terms of their slavery; they may also be sold without their consent. They do have the right to marry. Slaves in the Empire most commonly come from half elves, halflings or other non-humans who reside in the Empire; while they are not required to become so, the realities are such that economic conditions may force them to be so. Non-citizens cannot own land and are denied many opportunities. While many areas do offer tenant farming or service positions that do not require the loss of freedoms, when economics dip these opportunities are the first to vanish. As well, living conditions which are allowed to non-citizens are sometimes worse or more squalid than what even slavery might offer.

The Or'uckralms slavery is entirely a legal matter and a specific measure implemented as a matter of punishment. Not infrequently a lawspeaker will rule that someone who has committed a crime should serve a period of time as a slave to the offended party. Failure to repay debt (like say...gambling debt) is particularly common. Such a term may be circumvented by paying a fine instead, though if the person cannot pay such a fine then slavery becomes the option. For high crimes (rape, murder, etc) such prices become a percentage of a person's wealth rather than a set amount, forbidding even the wealthiest from escaping punishment. Slaves have considerable protections against abuse, mistreatment, rape and inappropriate punishment but are obligated to perform the duties in their contracts. Slaves may own land, property and marry. Slaves may also negotiate their terms to a degree; a slave for example who agrees to fight for their master may serve a shorter term than one who only serves as a farmer. They may not be sold without their consent. Laws surrounding slaves are taken seriously; if a master were to rape one of their slaves for example, it would be a very likely outcome their property would be forfeit to the slave and they themselves might become their former slave's new slave. As a 'quirk' of this system, prisoners of war often end up as slaves. Being at war with the Or'uckralms is technically considered a crime. Despite Empire propaganda, Raid-Runners (similar to vikings) rarely ever take captives; only enemy soldiers would be considered legal targets for such. The Or'uckralms do not have a concept of serfdom; a typical low-class farmer is a yeoman who is considered to share partial ownership with their land with the ruler of the land; they give a share of the harvest to the ruler as tribute, but may choose what to farm and may depart at their leisure; typically receiving a stipend from their lord to settle elsewhere in acknowledgement of the need to leave the structures they built. Lords are expected to provide certain civil services, protection and aid in lean times. Free farmers are the upper side of this coin; they are considered to own their land (though they must still pay tribute to their lord). This is most common among wealthier families, settlers or individuals who earned their wealth in other ways (such as soldiering).

The Deep Reaches do not have a formal concept of slavery; they are, until recently, a cloistered society with a relatively small population. However, though no formal slavery exists, orphans or persons born to lower classes who come from poor Houses often end up in the lowest rungs of temple structures. Such persons have so many restrictions on their behavior and relatively low quality of life that they are

functionally slaves. It is almost always possible to rise above such a station with time, diligence and piety but there is no shortage of harsh rebukes when one steps out of line. Almost all property is held by Houses (large extensive family units) and Temples, with the balance being in the favor of Temples. Shops are sometimes more independently owned, but being out of favor of both House and Temple is a very difficult prospect. Starvation is a real fear in the Deep Reaches (though it is becoming less so now) and few can survive on their own.

Slavery most certainly exists in the Feywild, almost always the result of inadvisable contracts and bargains struck with unsuspecting, foolish or desperate mortals. The kind of service involved varies wildly; sometimes slaves might have enviable lives other times they might be compelled to perform pointless and humiliating tasks. Sometimes they serve no purpose but to be functional trophies for powerful fey who do regard such as a status symbol. Unlike in the rest of the world it **is** considered acceptable for parents to barter their children into slavery to fey by whatever passes for fey 'law'.

Notable Institutions

As with any world, institutions exist within Jalandar that impact life and culture nearly as much as governments do. What follows is a listing of some, to be expanded later.

The Tower of The Three Rapturous Strikes Against the Manifold Ravages

(But everyone just calls it the Tritower)

The Tritower, as everyone calls it, predates the existence of not only the relatively new Autumn Constellation but also the Talstrom Empire itself. The Tritower is an ominous, sinister fortress that exists in a gouged-out mountain crater that has been smoldering for centuries. Legend has it that three great planar invaders; an elemental lord, a demon prince and an archdevil, were all bound and slain in true death by a cabal of frighteningly powerful champions in this spot. The surviving champions bound their power and built the Tritowers out of their bones, founding a school to teach future generations their mastery of their crafts.

Though not truly beholden to the Or'uckralms by government, the Tritower exists within its borders and generally acts in the interest of the Autumn Constellation, yet keeps its own mysterious agenda as well. A small fortress-town has been built up around the Tritower and includes the Black Citadel where more overtly martial students are trained, often to act as guardians to other members of the Tritower or else as part of its aggressive arm.

The Tritower's primary role is in the training of Bards, Sorcerers and Warlocks. These are trained in the Spire of Words, the Spire of Blood and the Spire of Pacts respectively. While each spire operates semi-independently and has differing methods, all of the training in the Tritower is extremely demanding. To even be allowed in to be evaluated involves having to cross the smoldering crater that surrounds the towers for miles and the various planar entities that slip between its blackened cracks. While some amount of wealth and station can help with the first part, status plays little benefit once actually a member of the Tritower. There is little luxury to be had by the tower, regardless of what wealthy families might believe by their offers of donations. Supplies must also be brought across the

crater and the defense of such shipments is a common and dangerous exercise the students are put through.

The Tritower's brutal methodology is well worth the price of success to many, for some of the most skilled practitioners on Jalanay emerge from the fire-blasted battlements of the ancient school. While one can debate whether the constant rehearsals and sleepless nights of lore memorization of the Spire of Words might not be as harsh as the constant physical trials conducted in the Black Citadel or the grueling tests of will within the Spire of Pacts, no one who completes a course of study at the Tritowers returns without steel in their spines. Its reputation is respected (and a little feared) throughout the Constellation and it is spoken of in campfire horror stories in the Empire. It has long been a harsh rival to the Telluric Academy; both sides consider it a badge of honor to slay a member of the other.

Queen Vera herself is a graduate of the Tritowers and holds considerable influence there. Those who were a part of the Tritower may take the Background: Trained at the Tritower

The Feathers

The Feathers is a name given to a loose conglomerate of resistance that exists within the Talstrom Empire among the non-humans and a small handful of sympathizers to them. It seeks to aid those who are most impacted by the inequities forced by the Humanistic Principles and promote alternative viewpoints. The Feathers is well known enough that the Talstrom Empire has made membership in it a serious crime, potentially punishable by death in some cases. Included in The Feathers is the more martial Society of the Fletch which trains in the ways of the Arcane Archer and has employed more violent resistance methods. Most members, however, are not warriors or resistance fighters but, rather, are simply the downtrodden. Outside of the Empire, the Feathers are not terribly well known but might be heard of by some characters. Halflings and half elves comprise most of the group membership, though some Beastfolk and the rare tiefling or genasi might be involved as well. In recent times, there have been some efforts to create a smuggling operation to take some imperiled people to the Autumn Constellation. PCs who are members or former members of the Feathers may take the Background: Feather Operative.

The Vardo-Cuffs

The endless traveling caravans of the Beastfolk are known in all lands and are tolerated even in the Talstrom Empire. While they are not looked upon particularly highly, and are more likely to be blamed for crimes, they are still seen as an amusement and even treated with a measure of excitement. They bring news and trade goods and stories and entertainment and for these things a certain amount of latitude is given. Their strangeness is also tolerated more than it would be from most sources. While authority figures may crack down on them sometimes, no small amount of superstition surrounds the traveling wagonfolk, often making such investigations comparatively unobtrusive or cursory.

Vardo-Cuffs are typically composed of very extended families, though some are large enough to contain multiple distinct family groups. They do have irregular gatherings to trade stories and goods. In Jalanay, running away with a Vardo-Cuff is the equivalent of running away with the circus. While they do not have any formal political alliances, Vardo-Cuffs have certainly been tangentially involved in a variety of causes or acted as smoke screens for them. PCs who were raised in or involved in a Vardo-Cuff for a lengthy period of time may take the Background: Vardo-Cuff Vagabond.

The Riptide Revel

Amid the archipelagos of the Saltdash Sea (as well as in smaller numbers across the great lakes such as Lake Ibronka) exists a league somewhat apart from much of the rest of Jalanay's dealings: pirates! Drawn from all walks of life, the Riptide Revel is a loose conglomeration of various pirates, criminals and other assorted rabble that make the dangerous waterways their own. On and off the Empire has sought to quell the groups and colonize the archipelagos with very limited success. They currently do have a foothold, which is more than can be said for most periods in history. The truth of the Revel is that it is actually maintained clandestinely by elements of the Seafolk, who use it as a means of indirect trade and economic advantage without having to make any formal agreements. The sorts of people involved with the revel do range widely from overt pirates to smugglers to even something close to legitimate merchants. They are even a popular contact for Raid-Runners from the Or'uckralms who barter, trade or stop for supplies.

The Riptide Revel maintains a network of contacts and agents in coastal cities as well, to promote and maintain their interests. The Revel operates by a loose code of honor which is usually upheld despite their piratical ways. One should not mistake them for a jolly bunch, however; there are plenty of cutthroat killers among their ranks who make no hesitation to prey upon relatively innocent ships.