

## World Book

The story of Outcast is played out in Calinthia, the Holy lands, the land of the gods, where only you, with the hand of destiny upon you can survive. It was a thousand years ago that the Great Sundering happened and God and Demon left this world. Man has survived and grown on its own in the Five Kingdoms of Valys, where they have warred and battled against each other for many years.

With Priests receiving visions from the Gods, Demonic cults starting up in the Nations and strange portents coming from the sky the Leaders of the Five Kingdoms have gathered their most trusted Warbands together and set upon the epic journey to the Holy Lands.

Here they must explore the old civilizations of the Calinthean Gods and find the mysteries of their past to understand their destinies. With allies from their new lands and unsteady truces in place, the leaders of the Kingdoms will meet on the holy land to discover what dangers there are and how they can combat them and to craft new stories of their own.

Due to the cursed mists that remain after the Sundering, the warbands cannot settle on the Calinthean shores, but guided by the Gods and by their own destiny they must uncover the secret to defeat the Demon Lords and protect the holy lands from the infernal cults and heathen tribes that wish to destroy the Gods.

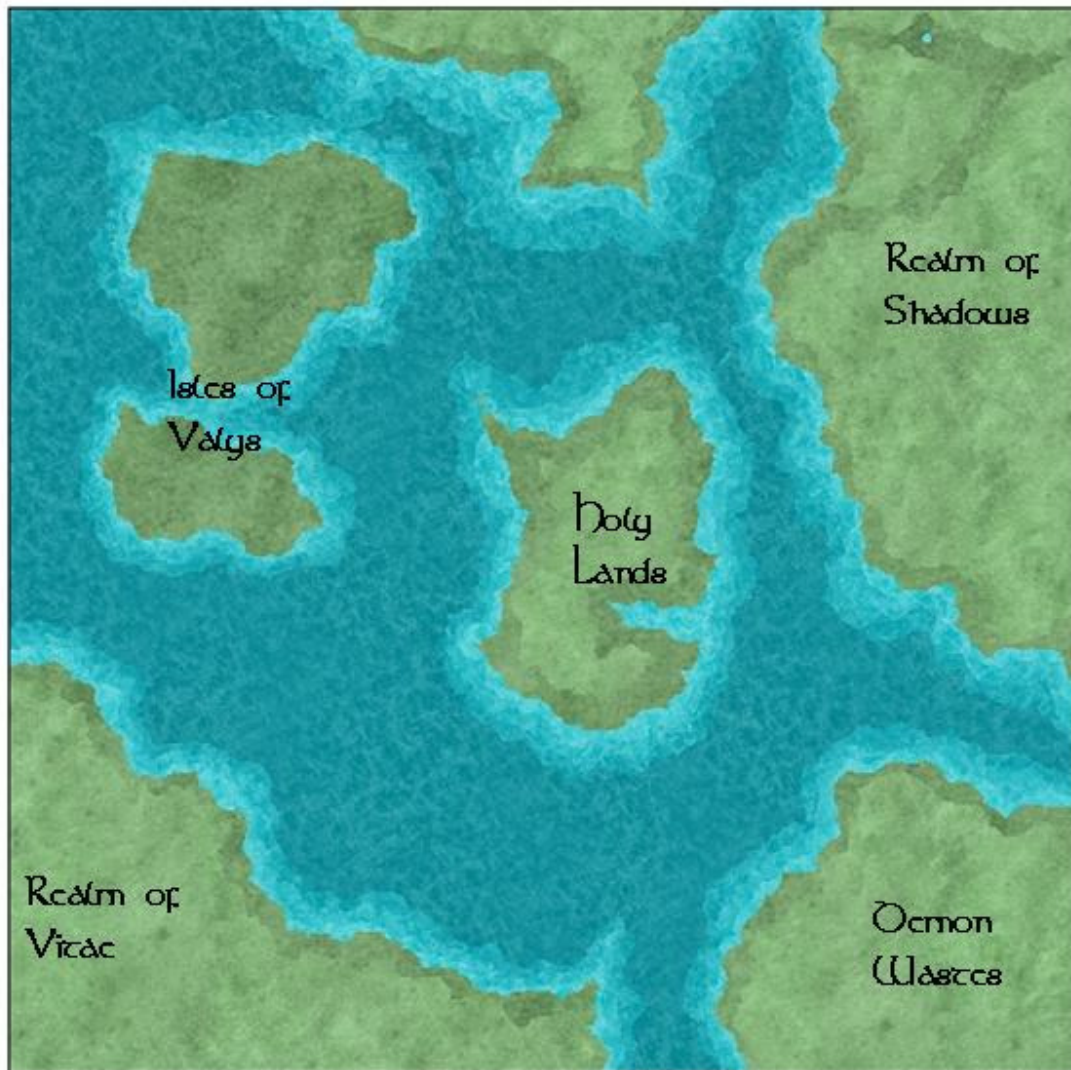
The world book is a guide for new players – the majority of this book is written by the players who play this game and we hope it will grow and develop as the game does.

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## World Map

The most unusual thing about this world is the fact that that north is measured by the way to the Holy Lands. North will also point to the birthplace of the gods, so every map of the world will show the Holy Lands in the centre of the map.



## **Religion**

Religion in Valys is polytheistic in nature. The Maestir do not generally follow one god and instead will give thanks and prayer to which ever god is appropriate for the given circumstances. Even priests of one of the Seven True gods will follow all the gods, however it is their duty to arrange for the worship and prayer of one of the Seven for others. Rites and customs are culturally appropriate and depend on the homeland that the worshipper. Names and symbology of the gods also change from homeland to homeland – read the kingdom section on religion to find out more details.

There are 3 different types of gods that are worshipped by the Maestir. The first of these are the Seven first Calintheans – the True Gods. The true gods have the majority of the temples across the land and it is them that have started to directly communicate with their priests through their dreams.

The second type of gods is the children of the True gods – these are the direct children of the first Seven. It was these Gods that led the Tribes of the Maestir from the land of Calinthea, and helped them find the lands of Valys. Normally these gods have shrines and statues in the temples of their parents. Although no priest has as yet received word from these gods directly, petition to their parents on their behalf has bought back word and vision.

The Third type of god that is worshipped is a lot more localised to a group, tribe or area. These are the local gods of the area. These are often the spirits of the local spring, well, forest, crossroads for example as well as the spirits of local heroes of note. Although these local spirits do not reply to dreams in the same way as the True Gods, it does not stop the Maestir giving offerings and prayer at crude shrines.

### **The True Gods**

The Father God

The Mother Goddess

The Lord of the Sun

The Lord of the Hunt

The Lord of the Seas

The Lord of War

The Winter Queen

### **Children of the Gods**

Lord of Summer - Son of the Father God and the Winter Queen

Lady of the Springs – Daughter the Mother Goddess and Lord of the Seas

Lord of Storms - Son of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of the Seas

Goddess of Strife - Daughter of the Mother Goddess and the Father God

Goddess of Fertility – Daughter of the Mother Goddess and the Father God

Goddess of War – Daughter of the Mother Goddess and the Father God

God of Scribes – Son of the Father God and Mother Goddess

Lord of Agriculture – Son of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of the Sun

The Smith – Son of the Mother Goddess and the Father God

Lord of the Dead - Son of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of War

The Fae and Naturae rarely follow the Gods of the Maestir, following a more druidic faith that focuses around the worship of the Earth herself. They show their worship through the veneration of her spirits. Worship of the Sky is very rare, for all evils come from the sky itself. Father sky also sends spirits to this world but they sow chaos and disorder wherever they step.

## ***Destinies***

Humans (and by extension Tainted and Risen) of note are more under a divine portent. This shows itself by a Sign that is seen in the sky when they are born. This sign means that they have a spiritual link to one of the True Gods.

This spiritual link has the most profound affect for the priests and often priests will see the divine portent as a calling to go into the priesthood. The Gods themselves also seem to bless those born under their sign and many of the great heroes are rumoured to have powers that the Gods have given them to fulfil their destinies.

It is said that the Gods will guide people's destinies for man to achieve its former glory. It is destined that those chosen by the gods will reclaim the great city of Calinthea. Priests are the key to this fulfilment of destiny and they are the ones that are the recipients of the visions of the Gods.

However, the demon lords have an agenda too. In the rising of demonic cults across the lands of Valys, it is those born with a destiny who seem to be their targets. It is those who the gods have destined for greatness that the demon lords have set their sights on also and seek to either corrupt or destroy.

## Races

### *Human*

The humans are the direct decedents of the Calinthean Gods themselves. They have all descended from the tribes that fled Calinthea at the great sundering. Although not the first race to the lands of Valys, the Humans formed the five kingdoms that now rule all of the lands. The most numerous of all the races the Humans wield the majority of the political and military power. Although their cultures are very different in each land, Humans are the dominant race. Humans generally live to about sixty years old. In the last couple of generations certain humans have been born with a divine portent in the sky, which marks them out as chosen for greatness and grants them a spiritual link to one of the first seven Calinthean Gods.

Coenred crept on his belly up to the brow of the hill, knocking his quiver to one side so it didn't knock on the jagged thorns of the briar. The smell of smoke filled his nostrils but he could see little sign of flames as he looked down on the farmstead. Surveying the scene he saw little sign of movement and then his love for life overcome his caution and he sprung into life.

"Cerenus protect me" he muttered under his breath, grabbing his carved wooden pendant in his hand as he did so often in times of stress. Coenred sprinted down the steep slope, half sliding, half falling as he did so and landing unsteadily on his legs at the bottom. Taking a moment to steady himself he ran towards the nearest barn. Throwing it open he looked at the slaughtered cattle the straw on the floor running red with their blood. From the rafters

Coenred saw a sight that would haunt him for many nights – a young man, tethered by a rope with many ceremonial cuts across his body, and his blood having run down mixing with that of the cattle on the floor. Coenred felt the vomit rise in his gullet and fill his mouth. Choking it down, he searched the entrance to the barn for clues. "Shadowkith" he spat, small chunks of partially digested venison fell to the floor with his bile. Coenrad had heard of the foul necromancy that the Shadowkith used, but had never before seen its victims. Normally the foul creatures were not brave enough to attack a farmstead on their own, what had driven them to it?

Coenrad unstrapped his bow and quiver from his back and left it by the door. Calling forth to the spirits like the druids had taught him, he looks for the clues they had left behind to what had happened here. Over a minute, but seeming more like an hour, he searched for what story they could tell him. The scene from the past became clearer in his mind the more clues he found. A nest of kith, maybe even a dozen strong, had made their way into this barn. They had slaughtered the cattle and the farmhand, but what was this. The sprits had left him a sign. The kith were wounded before they entered the barn, one of them leaving a subtle trail of putrescence where it had lent on the door. So, the ritual and butchery was done so they could heal themselves... but why?

Picking up his bow and restrapping his quiver to his back, Coenrad stood and cut down the young man. His burial rites would have to wait, and the smouldering fires would take his spirit to the other realm. Coenrad called for the sprits once more, the ancient fae secrets taught to the druids themselves, would have to be his guide. Following the tracks of the kith he would try to find their nest, and either seek vengeance for their deeds or see what threat to them would be so grave that it would have caused this sort of action...

### **History**

The Gods were the first children of Mother Earth herself. Seven children; 5 boys and 2 girls. They lived in the centre of the face of their mother under the watchful gaze of Father Sky. Across the seas laid the great realms, the realm of Shadows and the realm of Vitae. Here they created a great civilisation, the great city of Calinthea, that spanned across the land. On this land the race of man grew, the children of the gods themselves, and it was a great time – one of peace and harmony.

However, the Gods and their children were not the only people on this land. The Demon Lords - the children of Father Sky – dwelt in the dark places and watched the growth of Calinthea. They saw the worship and adoration that the Gods were getting from their children and they grew jealous. Wishing the worship for themselves the Demon Lords tried to tempt the children of the gods, teaching them the secret of fire.

The people of Calinthea could not be tempted by the Demon Lords and over the next thousand years their civilisation grew even more prosperous and they remained faithful to the Gods. The second time the Demon Lords tried to tempt the people of the Calinthea they tempted them with the secret of magic – sorcery. This magic had the power to control people’s actions and words and those that were taught it grew in position and strength. Many more years passed but soon sorcerers were in positions in power across the land. The Demon Lords called in the favours that they had been offered and their followers started to use their power to erect large temples to the demon lords.

This caused a war which tore the civilisation of Calinthea apart. Although the followers of the Gods were a lot more in number, the power that the Sorcerers held was mighty and many flocked to their banner. In the end the Gods themselves had to intervene, performing a great rite known as the Sundering.

The Sundering banished the Gods and the Demon Lords from this land for a thousand years – the Gods trapped deep within their Mother, where the Demons were banished to dwell with their father, far away from man. A black mist filled the land of Calinthea that clawed at the heart of any one that dwelt there. The First children of the Gods took the surviving loyal followers on boats across to the Endless Seas where they found a land known as Valys. The remaining demonic cultists left to the land now known as the Demon Wastes.

It was on the lands of Valys that the tribes of man discovered the other races. The Naturae, the walking spirits of the glades and streams, kept themselves hidden from man on his arrival. The Fae resented the newcomers – and started to war against them. The war carried on for almost a hundred years, until for reason unknown to man the Fae declared a truce. In return for peace, the tribes of man learnt from the Fae and elected druids who taught them the secret of Spirit magic, living in harmony with the Earth herself.

After wars with the brutal Yo’Tan and the dark Shadowkith, man ruled all of Valys. They split themselves into five kingdoms. Over the next thousand years the five kingdoms grew and warred amongst themselves. What started as rivalry grew over the centuries and without the God’s guidance the people of Valys became bitter and twisted. Distrust between the nations grew and border disputes between the nations became common place. Even the history of their past became distorted from kingdom to kingdom.

When a thousand years had passed people started to be born under the signs of the Calinthean Lords. The Gods began to start whispering to their faithful, sending them messages and prophesies in their dreams. Dreams about the Holy Lands and the banners of the kingdoms were sent to the priests and the kings started sending scouts and explorers across the sea to find their ancient homeland. At the same time the actions of the Demon Lords started to affect people in all the five Kingdoms. The Tainted were born, lighting storms struck the land and demonic cults started to grow in both power and activity.

### **Culture**

The Culture of the humans varies from kingdom to kingdom, although many hark back to the time of the Calinthean age. The land of Valys is a harsh and brutal place and the humans have their survival as a common theme to all of their concerns. See the kingdom section for more detail.

## Tainted

In the last 30 years children have been born with tails and horns, but have human parents. Those children that are not killed at birth grow up to be the tainted. They are hated by many of the populous, but some gain rank and prove themselves in the courts of their lords. The fact that they are often born under a divine sign has aided them in this matter. The tainted will still have human families and they are still products of their upbringing and as varied in personality as the humans are. Tainted generally look human, however they all have horns sprouting from their heads. They often also have one of the other following deformities... tails, discoloured skin, fangs, scales or vestigial wings

Alys crawled her way out of the ditch. She was bloodied and beaten from where the villagers had set upon her with sticks. There was a deluge of blood coming from her tail where she had tucked it away, and her clothing was ripped and soiled. Alys was used to the distrust and rejection. Her own parents had left her in a river, and it was only through the compassion of the local water naturae, a sylph, that has pulled her from the water and cared for her as her own. "*Demonwhore*" she heard shouted from the distance, she smiled, she had heard worse.

Alys had always respected trust beyond any other virtue, and was not going to betray the one man that had ever truly given it to her. She had told Coenred that she would get help, and help she would get. The humans wouldn't give it to her because of her appearance but there must be something. She looked through her bag, ripped and the strap half torn off, it hung lifeless from her shoulder.

She scabbled in the bottom of the bag for a small herbal poultice, a mush of seeds in a muslin bag, tied up with horsehair. Ripping the poultice open she rubbed it into her open wounds. The pain stung and tears rang down her face onto her fangs, but the wounds started to scab over and the bleeding stopped.

Alys took to her feet and ran, not running for her life like she had so many times before, but running for someone else's. The villagers told stories about the creatures of the wood come alive. The guardians of the forest who would defend the land with their last dying breath. Alys knew the woods well, they were her major source of seeds for her poultices, but more importantly they were the home of the deadly mushrooms that she used to make the venoms that covered her blades. Alys was definitely a survivor, that much was sure, but she didn't hold much hope that her parlour tricks would hold up much against the evil that was coming.

As Alys got into the woods she threw off her shawl. The Naturae were not known for their superstitions for all were alien to them. Her horns gleamed in the moonlight and the night's sky showed a ridge of scales around her neck. The creatures of the woodland howled, fortelling her arrival, but she gripped her knife in her left hand, using her right to steady her against the tree trunks as she ran.

At the centre of the woodland was a large oak, feathers and bones adorned it like a human might wear a torc or a scarf. Alys pulled her last poultice from her bag and threw it to the base of the oak. "*Lord Oak, guardian of these lands*" She intoned, panting for breath. "*I seek an audience, one that would be beneficial to the safety of all!*". Looking around in desperation she made a final plea. "*I give you a gift, from the wood itself, but by the spirits willing one that can aid you if you are struck down*". She waited alone in the darkness, until from behind a different tree another man stepped, handsome in his own way but with a willow like bark covering his skin.

### History

The tainted have no history of their own, due to them being a recent addition to the lands of Valys. It is not known whether there were tainted before the Sundering, although stories of the tribes of sorcerers do tend to imply that there were some in their number.

### Culture

Tainted tend to follow the culture of the human society they were brought up in, although many are outsiders and have no rank or station, others are brought up lovingly by their parents. There is no restriction of social class that a tainted can be born into, however, there is a heavy social stigma to the tainted and their parents so it is rare that a noble will acknowledge fatherhood of such a creature.



## Religion

Very few tainted become priests, mainly because people resent them speaking for the gods. However, this does not mean that all the tainted are not religious. Often seeking private prayers the tainted often took for forgiveness or acceptance from the churches. It is believed, however, that many of the tainted are tempted to worship their demonic progenitors and this has led to a lot of distrust of the race.

## Costume

Tainted will dress as appropriate to the homeland that they come from.

All tainted should have at least 2 horns, although the type of horns are up to them, some tainted are born with short goat-like horns on their forehead, others with curling ram's horns whilst others have large bulls-like horns. Every tainted should have at least one other deformity although they should realise that the more demonic they look, the less likely it is for them to be accepted by the majority of people. The deformities they should choose from are:

- Tails** demonic like tails are easy to hide away, but are a clear clue to the demonic nature of the tainted
- Skin** many tainted are born with a discolouration to their skin, although normally slight the tone is obviously inhuman. Red is the normal colour of discolouration although other tainted have a blue, green or black tint to their skin.
- Fangs** Although fangs are normally associated with the Fae, some tainted are born with 2 or even more pronounced fangs. These tend to make the tainted look more snakelike – although it has led to some rumours that the Fae are responsible for the tainted's birth.
- Scales** The scaled look to some of the tainted, especially around the neck, hints at a reptilian nature to the demons. These scales grant no protection, but often itch and cause discomfort for the tainted.
- Wings** Some of the tainted develop vestigial wings, and although these have no practical use it does make it harder for these tainted to hide their demonic nature.

## Names

Tainted often have the same names as humans from their homeland, although often they will have a nickname that is used for them – these are generally unpleasant to a lesser or greater extent.

## Risen

Risen are the result of necromantic rituals. If a necromantic spirit is bound inside a recently killed human then they can have a second chance of life. Some people take this on willingly for the advantages that a second chance of life can give them and in some cultures it is seen as a great honour. Although a spirit does not age, the body that they are in will age at the normal rate .

Anslem polished his chainmail before we walked into the town. His green and blue tabard carried the symbol of Sol himself and his plain wooden shield was neatly repaired by his own hand. For someone who had already died once before, Anslem looked surprisingly well. He was a man of older years now and was disappointed that the necromantic magicks that placed his soul back into his body could not also stop his hair growing grey. He pulled out the pewter sun he wore round his neck and placed it visibly on show. He needed to make a show of his faith if he was going to get the villagers to give him bed and lodgings for free.

Twenty years ago Anslem had been killed by the husband of one of his many lovers. A blacksmith who had returned from his king's warband a few days earlier than Anslem had expected. It was fate rather than divine providence that had brought him back to life, a manipulative kith by the name of Sorrel. Anslem had been brought back bound and made to put his mark to a contract that Sorrel had written. The shaman that sat with Sorrel had bound him to his word and he was now contracted by the spirits to perform one favour for Sorrel, however big, at a time of the kith's choosing. The time it seemed was now, and he had come to where he had been summoned.

"Lord Anslem", he proclaimed at the gate. "Brought back to this mortal realm by Sol himself, to fight against the forces of darkness and bring hope and light to the realm of man" Anslem was practiced at this lie, and although if the priests of Sol were ever to find out the truth he would face their wrath, but he had evaded them for twenty years and the spirits willing he would for twenty more. The reaction was not one that he expected. A few days of free board, lodgings and ales, maybe with the occasional wench trying to tempt him of his assumed chastity, and then off in search of the retched Shadowkith. However, it seems that strange demonic creatures were moving in the north and had attacked both the tribes of Yo'Tan there and the nest of Shadowkith that dwelt in the area.

Anslem tried hard not to show his sigh. "By Sol's light, this evil must be quelled" He announced. "Bring me some mead and some bread and I shall go forth to the bring light to the darkness" His gaze settled on a homely girl that was carrying bread, but he decided that this would have to wait. Some favours could be avoided but he had a feeling that this one his life depended on.

Putting the food in a small leather satchel, he set off on the journey to fight the demonic hoards that the villagers had told him about.

### History

The first risen were created by the Shadowkith. When the humans first landed on the kith's shores they had a lot more military strength than the kith themselves. Snakeroot, a great Shadowkith necromancer, developed the first rite that would take the spirit of a dead human and bind it into their body. The aim was to allow them to create mindless warriors that would rise once more and be controlled to protect their necromancers. The ritual was in many ways a great success, the humans did rise again and the rite was successful. The dead humans were much physically tougher than the living ones and more than a match for them in combat. Unfortunately for Snakeroot, the risen kept all their memories and intelligence. They deceived the Shadowkith necromancer and pretended to be under his control, marching to protecting him in the great war against the human invaders. As Snakeroot stood high on a hill casting a spell to destroy the human warlord they turned, striking down the Kith and taking his head.

## **Myths and Misconceptions**

There are many stories of horror about the risen, comparing them with foul creatures from the Shadow Realms. The body of a risen is simply that, a human body. Restored to life before the soul has completely left it, they have been granted a second chance of life, but their bodies are still mortal. They age around the same rate as a human body, and can get ill or infirm the same as any other man. Poisons and diseases still take their toll on the risen and they are not as easily cured as the living. Because of the permanent link to the realm of shadows, the risen cannot use Spirit magic or Vitality. No risen may ever take innocence either – for once dead all innocence is lost. It is this inability to use the spirits of the magic or the realm of vitae that makes people see them as evil, for their actions are as individual as any other.

## **Culture**

The risen's culture depends on their homeland. The Ulidians believe that all warriors deserve a good death and raising a warrior is a great dishonour to them. The Varkarnans' belief in reincarnation sees the risen as having their souls stolen from the great cycle of the gods. Solarian priests see the giving back of life a great gift from Sol himself and only given to the most honourable of warriors. The Hinterlanders also see the fallen as a divine blessing, but for them it is the Winter Queen that takes the souls back from the realm of shadows.

## **Religion**

The religion of a risen is normally the same as it was in life; however it is often true that they will convert to the faith of the church that brought them back. A fisherman who primarily gave offerings to the god of the sea, if brought back by a church of the Winterqueen – would normally start to look to her for protection and give his offerings and tribute to her directly.

## **Costume**

A risen will wear the same clothing and armourments as they did in life. Although the risen have a more military leaning they will often look towards that style of dress to be more useful to the nation that has brought them back.

The skin of a risen looks pale and gaunt, although they were only dead for less than a day, this takes a toll on their body. A risen's skin should be paler and they will often bear scars of the wound that killed them. Sometimes this is worn with pride, other times hidden in shame.

## **Names**

Risen tend to have the same names that they had in life, however, often a nick-name or honourific are given to the risen. Sometimes the risen in question will see it as an act of rebirth and take a new name symbolising their new life.

## Yo'Tan

The Yo'Tan are a strong and hardy warrior race that are found in the east. When the humans first landed on Valys they encountered the Yo'Tan. First thinking them to be servants of the Demon Lords there was a mighty war, however after many years of bloodshed, they found that the black skinned creatures were a proud and honourable warrior race who respect strength above all else. They have no like of demons or the Risen. Yo'Tan can live to over 40 years, but it is rare if they do. They reach maturity by the age of ten and normally fall in battle within the next ten years.

Bodush saw nothing but red as her axe smashed into the creatures that stood before her. Her brother Vaadush had already fallen, and her cousin Birz was slicing the throat of one of his foes on the ground. The creatures looked human but she could see by their black eyes that they were more than that. Her axe span round as though it had a life of its own, and took head from body.

There had been stories of these creatures. Stories told by mother to child for generations. Bodush had never really believed they were real in her heart, just a tale told to make younglings finish their ofal. But now she knew that she had to kill, for these would be nothing left of her tribe if they were allowed to perform their dark rituals to feed their ancient masters.

There was a crack at Bodush's feet – she looked down and saw a crow's head although the size of her own and covered in both blood and pus. Laughing at the loss of life of the pitiful Shadowkith, Bodush knew that she was mighty – for was she not Yo'Tan. Strongest of the River's end tribe and mightiest in the whole of the Southern Valley.

The bodies at Bodush's feet grew and she stepped forwards, the head of her large axe dripping with blood. From her side a spear was thrust with a strength that would have pierced both shield and armour. Bodush laughed, the shamans had called on the spirits to strengthen her armour before battle – and as the spearhead shattered she brought her axe blade down on the creature.

As the battle continued the cries of her comrades grew less and less – and even the sound of the shamans behind her seemed to have trailed off. Bodush was covered in blood and surely the battle was won soon. Bodush looked up and saw herself surrounded, she was the last of the Yo'Tan standing. Calling forth the powers from the realm of Vitae, she struck hard, splitting shield and armour with her blows, but the numbers were too many. Surrounded, she fell to the ground screaming in pain. She would live to fight another day. Her wounds started to close as they stabbed her over and over again. She wasn't just chieftain by being strong – Bodush was both cunning and strong in the link to Vitae. Before this day was done she would have earned the name Bodush Demonfoe.

### History

The origins of the Yo'Tan are shrouded in the mystery of the past. They are born with a link to the realm of Vitae and seem to gain strength from that realm. The Yo'Tan have not been on the lands of Valys as long as the Fae have, however, they were well established by the time that the humans came to the land. In their past they had a long running war with the Fae about the guardianship of the land, as the Yo'Tan tribes were divided the strength of the Fae courts was easily able to divide and conquer. Some of the tribes were lost completely, however in this, the war of expansion, the Yo'Tan were able to seize and hold their land that they still hold today.

### Culture

The primary virtues of the Yo'Tan are Strength, Bravery and Cunning. The tribes of the Yo'Tan respect Strength and consider it the prime virtue, whether physical strength or strength of will. Fear is a sign of weakness and shall not be tolerated, those who run in battle are normally cut down by their own side rather than to dishonour the tribe, or at the very least are exiled from their tribe. Cunning is also rated highly and those that can outthink their foes have the ability to give survival and victory for their whole tribe.

The Tribes of the Yo'Tan are not united and commonly war against each other. Although this is not always the case, the Yo'Tan have been united in the past many times and it was the Warlord Cargath the Unifier who led the Yo'Tan to their greatest victory over the Fae during the war of expansion. The Yo'Tan occasionally hold tribal moots where the warlords sit in council and the warriors compete/challenge each other to prove their strength. It is also a place for trade and exchange of knowledge.

Rather than fighting for ownership of territory, Yo'Tan believe that no mortal can own the land (humans who think different are clearly delusional). Instead mortals are actually owned by the land that birthed them ... it offers up food, water, shelter, etc and in return it is the duty of the tribe to protect the land that provides for them. Being appointed guardian of something (a valley, a lake or even a notable tree) is a great honour and warriors may well list what they are guardian of as part of their introduction (the more stuff, the more impressive). To allow something to happen to whatever you're guardian of is a terrible disgrace. A warrior (or tribe) who is disgraced in this manner is expected to fight to the last breath to regain the relevant land and cleanse it.

Each tribe is nomadic within its own lands; building no permanent settlements but instead moving to different sites with the seasons and to follow game.

No tribe would raid the lands of another purely for conquest; that's a human notion. If a tribe grows too large or food becomes scarce, however then they have no qualms about going wherever there actually is food (the territorial claims of other tribes are as irrelevant to them as those of humans). Once they have taken food from a new area of land, then obviously they then owe a debt to that land too and it becomes their duty to protect it (from the people who lived there previously if necessary).

When walking through land occupied by another tribe they wrap the heads of their spears and axes in cloth. This is traditionally accepted by other tribes as a sign that the stranger means no harm, and in times of peace free passage would normally be given without question. To ask another warrior to actually part with his weapons would be to imply that you believe him capable of treachery and a grave insult. Being asked to wrap weapons for a parlay, tribal gathering or meeting with other races is not unexpected or unacceptable though.

### Religion

The Yo'Tan have no gods, instead they worship spirits. Commonly these are spirits of places or animals. Many believe that it is these spirits who showed the Yo'Tan how to harness the gifts of vitality. They have Shaman who perform the rites and ceremonies that keep the culture and beliefs of their tribe strong.

### Costume

Yo'Tan have dark black or brown skin with a raised forehead and deep set eyes. They often have tribal tattoos and scars which mark out their tribe, their rank and any achievements that they have earned. They tend to wear chain and leather, in blacks, greys and browns. Their clothing is hard wearing and practical and they have little time for flamboyance. Most of their clothing is patched up and handed down or scavenged from their fallen comrades. Yo'Tan often wear totems of animal skulls, tails or feet that mark them out and give them protection from their guardian spirits.

### Names

Yo'Tan have a harsh guttural sound. Example Yo'Tan names can be found below.

Podish	Praagdush	Brigdush	Prirg	Buugdush
Erort	Gruurk	Vruuol	Gurk	Ragdush
Kang	Rorbag	Bruugash	Ruurag	Brulg
Birug	Grodish	Kraang	Vung	Briol
Krolg	Prarg	Virug	Vragdush	Braurk
Erulo	Vuurg	Gigash	Kidush	Gogash
Rogash	Rodash	Krarug	Kolo	Vrirk
Vraaol	Gugdush	Kruugash	Erarbag	Erogor
Vrurk	Gruurug	Bruurg	Runk	Erarz

## Shadowkith

The Shadowkiths' origins are steeped in secrecy, but what is known is that they have strong links to the realm of Shadows. The Shadowkith are born with the features of rats, crows and other carrion devourers and eat both freshly killed prey and carrion. They do not have long lifespans, but they do breed heavily with each other of the same type. The Shadowkith (or kith) are associated with death and decay for both their lifestyle and their use of necromancy.

Sorrel crouched low in the briar, his mangy fur protecting him from the long thorns. He held the small necklace of animal skulls round his neck tightly to himself and whispered to himself. His nest were clustered around him and took solace in his words, but he knew they were scared. The blood of the humans would come back to haunt them, however, they were not the immediate problem.

Sorrel would normally take pleasure at the aftermath of a battle, but he knew that this was not an ordinary foe. He had studied hard for many years, but he was at a loss. His only hope was the sacrifice that the rest of his nest had made was enough time for the humans to organise their warbands.

"Shadows curse their eyes" he swore. The warband he was expecting seemed to number four. A human huntsman, a pitiful demonblood rogue, a young river warden and a shadowborn charlatan.. This was not a fight he wanted to take part in, but he had little choice. With quickly whispered orders, the rest of his nest slowly started to crawl down the slope keeping close to the shadows.

Their ratlike features reflected the moonlight as they reached the shallow ditch at the bottom of the slope. As the four youths engaged the demonic creatures Sorrel sprang up, his fellow kith surrounding him protectively. Speaking dark whispered words that he had learnt from the Shadowrealm itself, he intoned, watching the young warriors fighting against their foes. At the end of his chant he cut his arm with his knife, blood dripping across the blade. The demon creatures dropped to the floor feeling the pain that Sorrel had inflicted. His nest took his lead and did the same, the creatures each falling at the feet of the warriors by their Shadowcurse.

Stealth was lost now though, for their curses to be affective they needed their target to hear their words and see their sacrifice. They were part of this fight now although the numbers were now in their favour, but each now cut and bloodied they were easy prey for any that could get close. Sorrel looked up and saw red burning eyes in front of him and his kin threw themselves onto the long blackened steel spear that the demonic foe tried to stab at him.

## History

Like the Yo'Tan the Shadowkith's true origins remain a mystery. However, the story of their origins is past down from father to pup.

When humans die their souls travel through the veil to go into the 'shadow' in order to be reborn. As they pass through the veil the souls are scrubbed clean of their 'life experiences and learning'. This is what the Shadowkith call their 'Essence'. The Essence usually just exists as huge roiling ugly mass, but once, back in the years gone by just the right pieces of knowledge collided and bonded as a cloud, the cloud rapidly gained sentience and became the creature known as the 'Great Kith'.

When the Great Kith came into this world from the shadow it was nothing but a roiling mass of energy and power, no true form, no true shape. The first living things this seething cloud came across was a rat and a crow locked in a vicious fight over the corpse of a snake. The cloud swept over the rat and crow, infusing them with knowledge, twisting and changing their bodies, leaving them as bipedal beasts a cross between beast and man. The first lesser kith had been born. For many, many generations the descendents of these two kith bred with each other and the numbers of the kith spread across the land. These first kith looked different to the kith of today, much more savage, animalistic and brutal in their pursuit of 'knowing'

## Culture

The Kith, being creatures born of the veil and of the knowledge of those who have lived before have an insatiable drive for learning and a strong link to the afterlife/shadow. The kith are not necessarily evil. They are just another race, some will be kind heroes, others will be twisted villains and the majority will lie somewhere in between. Some kith, those with close links to the savage first kith live like semi savages dressed in raggy clothing and caring not for their appearance, others with more human blood may choose to dress smartly and cleanly. A kith's appearance is a combination of bloodline and life experiences. Nearly all kith are curious and inquisitive. They generally go about their lives in a relatively reserved, controlled and intelligent manner.

The Kith eat carrion. Some eat any and all carrion they find, others are more choosy and only eat 'selected corpses' as part of a rite. They believe that by eating parts of bodies they can gain knowledge and insight from the dead. For example they may believe that eating the brain will allow an insight into their foe's knowledge, eating the heart, their emotions and so on

## Religion

The Shadowkith rarely follow the Gods, instead giving homage to the "Great Kith" that they see as their creator. They also pay homage to spirits of poisonous plants and carrion creatures.

## Costume

Shadowkith look like humanoid crows, rats and so forth. They usually sport a monotone plumage or skin tone in Black, grey or white.

They normally wear clothing in the same colours and normally ragged and tattered. A few shadowkith have been "civilised" and dress like humans, but these are usually outcast from their clans and hated by the other shadowkith.

## Names

Shadowkith tend to be named after poisonous herbs and plants, or other names that try to add to their reputation.

Monkshood  
Crocus  
Nightshade  
Locust  
Darnel

Snakeroot  
Dells Eyes  
Holy  
Foxglove  
Hemlock

Henbane  
Stinkweed  
Moonseed  
Pokeweed

## Naturae

Naturae are spirits of nature given human form. You are likely to see spirits of the rocks, spirit of the trees, spirits of the rivers and spirits of the air on Valys. They have a humanoid form, for they are part of the earth and take form to resemble the gods (at least in part). Naturae are often peace loving creatures, at one with the land, but there is always the exception to the case. Naturae are short lived creatures, born at full maturity but their life spans are rarely more than ten years.

Saeahal had only left the safety of the forest once before, normally he guarded the sacred stream that ran through its heart, but something had troubled it. It wasn't the pitiful creature crying and begging at Baelvan's glade that worried him, more that Baelvan did not respond to the presence of the intruder to the forest. He was the mighty of all the Naturae that dwelt in the valley, and had almost found his true image.

Humans did occasionally try to harm the forest, but they had learnt their lesson, and their current ruler was wise and did what he could to make sure the land was cared for. None of the villagers were strong enough or foolish enough to try to attack the great Oak lord or even to hinder his presence. Even the tribe of Black skinned Yo'Tans that lived to the north had only tried to take more than they needed from the forest the once. Saeahal smiled wryly to himself remembering the Yo'Tan warband running in fear. However, this time was different, Saeahal felt it some how.

It took walking for the best part of the day until Saeahal could hear the sounds of fighting. He pulled the thin woollen cloak around his silvery skin, and checked the knife at his belt. He didn't like having to use metal weapons, but there was something wrong about using a staff to fight that he didn't like. The scene that lay ahead of him was a sign of slaughter that he had never seen before. The ground was thick with bodies of all races. A lone Yo'Tan was swinging an axe the size of herself, cleaving into the bodies of demonic creatures that kept coming. Saeahal surveyed the scene to what was leading the creatures. They were the stream that ran down the mountain, however, the way to damn the stream was to go to the source.

A huge creature, nearly ten foot tall with large bat wings down his back. He carried a spear about eight foot long in his hands and screamed orders in a foul demonic tongue. His demonic minions were starting to return to his side, their foul deeds done. Saeahal was no warrior and although he could commune to the spirits to his metal blade he was not armoured and his bark was not likely to stop more than one of these creatures. His only choice was to see if he could find allies who were stronger than him. If this creature got to the stream then untold damage could be done.

Saeahal pulled back part of the silver bark on his arm, and sliced deep into his arm with his knife. The thick yellow blood ran slowly down his arm to his hand. He felt the stream that he guarded, the wood that surrounded him, the land itself. He could feel its pain as this creature walked across it. As he did so his silvery skin began to thicken, the blood within him thickening more. He walked slowly and purposely down the slope and saw a large metal sword gripped in the lifeless hand of one of the Yo'Tans. He picked it up slowly and weighed it. Speaking slowly to the blade he asked it a favour, telling it of the dangers ahead and the danger to the earth itself. The sword knew where it had come from, for although it had been crafted by man, it was still part of the earth at heart. The sword hummed as the spirits within it came alive.

### History

The Naturae are the oldest race in Valys, even the Fae cannot remember stories of times when the Naturae were not protecting the most sacred of places. The Naturae are the spirits of the sacred places of Valys made manifest. They have only had one purpose for as long as anyone can remember, and this is protect the land itself. It is said that the Naturae were created by the Earth herself and are an extension of her will. There are stories of when a ruler was harming the land and being selfish, the Naturae would rise up on mass and overthrow the ruler.

### Culture

The Naturae normally live a lonely life and rarely deal with other people regularly. However, over the years many have found that speaking to the humans is the best way to protect the land. The Naturae often have worked with groups and kings to advice them. Often a Naturae will grant favours to someone who has shown an act of loyalty or trust to them. It is the bond with these people that often will cause the Naturae to give their lives if necessary to repay the debt.



**Religion**

The Naturae venerate their mother Earth and the spirit world. They are highly spiritual in nature but have no real concern for the Gods. They often see themselves as above the petty squabbings of men and gods and instead seek to serve their true purpose and protect the land.

**Costume**

Naturae often wear simple cotton garbs to cover their bodies. They rarely wear any more human clothes than is necessary for human's decency.

They are the hardest of the races to physrep – and their makeup and costume should give the image of a spirit of their element. Physically they resemble the element that they are born of, although they are actually flesh and blood rather than being made of water or air. It should be obvious what their element is by looking at the naturae itself.

## Names

The Names of Fae and Naturae are traditionally formulaic, and speak of the destiny or calling of the Naturae.

## Prefix

Ael	warrior	Fir	dark	Raer	unicorn
Aer	law, order	Fis	light	Re	bear
Af	ring	Gael	pegasus	Ren	west
Ah	crafty, sly	Gar	owl	Rhy (Ry)	jade
Al	sea	Gil	griffin	Ru	dream
Am	swan	Ha	free, freedom	Rua	star
Ama	beauty, beautiful	Hu	horse	Rum	meadow
An	hand	Ia	day	Rid	spear
Ang	glitter	Il	mist	Sae	wood
Ansr	rune	Ja	staff	Seh	soft
Ar	gold, golden	Jar	dove	Sel	high
Ani	silver	Ka	dragon	Sha	sun
Am	south	Kan	eagle	She	age, time
Aza	life, lives	Ker	spell	Si	cat, feline
Bael	guardian	Keth	wind	Sim	north
Bes	oath	Koeh	earth	Sol	history, memory
Cael	archer, arrow	Kor	black	Sum	water
Cal	druid	Ky	ruby	Syl	faerie
Cas	herald	La	night	Ta	fox
Cla	rose	Laf	moon	Tahl	blade
Cor	legend, legendary	Lam	east	Tha	vigil, vigilance
Cy	onyx	Lue	riddle	Tho	true, truth
Dae	white	Ly	wolf	Ther	sky
Dho	falcon	Mai	death, slayer	Thro	lore, sage
Dre	hound	Mal	war	Tia	magic
Du	crescent	Mara	priest	Tra	tree
Eil	azure, blue	My	emerald	Ty (Try)	crystal
Eir	sharp	Na	ancient	Uth	shaman
El	green	Nai	oak	Ver	peace
Er	boar	Nim	deep	Vil	finger, point
Ev	stag	Nu	hope, hopeful	Von	ice
Fera	champion	Ny	diamond	Ya	bridge, path, way
Fi	rain	Py	sapphire	Za	royal
				Zy	ivory

## Suffix

-ae (-nae)	whisper	-ian / ianna (-ia; -ij; -ion)	lord / lady	-rail/-ria (-aral; -ral; -ryl)	hunt, hunter
-ael	great	-iat	fire	-ran (-re; -reen)	binding, shackles
-aer / -aera	singer, song	-ik	might, mighty	-reth (-rath)	spirit
-aias / -aia	wife, husband	-il (-iel; -ila; -lie)	gift, giver	-ro (-ri; -ron)	walker, walks
-ah / -aha	wand	-im	duty	-ruil (-aruil; -eruil)	noble
-aith / -aira	home	-in (-inar; -ine)	brother sister	-sal (-isal; -sali)	honey, sweet
-al / -ala (-la; -lae; -llae)	harmony	-ir (-ira; -ire)	dusk	-san	drink, wine
-ali	shadow	-is (-iss; -ist)	scribe, scroll	-sar (-asar; -isar)	quest, seeker
-am / -ama	strider	-ith (-lath; -lith; -lyth)	child, young	-sel (-asel; -isel)	mountain
-an / -ana (-a; -ani; -uanna)	make, maker	-kash (-ashk; -okash)	fate	-sha (-she; -shor)	ocean
-ar / -ara (-ra)	man / woman	-ki	realm	-spar	fist
-ari (-ri)	spring	-lan / -lanna (-lean; -olan / -ola)	son, daughter	-tae (-itae)	beloved, love
-aro (-ro)	summer	-lam (-ilam; -ulam)	fair	-tas (-itas)	wall, ward
-as (-ash; -sah)	bow, fletcher	-lar (-lirr)	shine	-ten (-iten)	spinner
-ath	by, of, with	-las	wild	-thal / -tha (-ethal / -etha)	heal, healer, healing
-avel	sword	-lian / -lia	master / mistress	-thar (-ethar; -ithar)	friend
-brar (-abrar; -ibrar)	craft, crafter	-lis (-elis; -lys)	breeze	-ther (-ather; -thir)	armor, protection
-dar (-adar; -odar)	world	-lon (-ellon)	chief	-thi (-ethil; -thil)	wing
-deth (-eath; -eth)	eternal	-lyn (-linn; -lihn)	bolt, ray	-thus / -thas (-aethus / -aethas)	music
-dre	charm, charming	-mah / -ma (-mahs)	mage	-ti (-eti; -til)	eye, sight
-drim (-drimme; -udrim)	flight, flyer	-mil (-imil; -umil)	bond, promise	-tril / -tria (-atri; -atril / -atria)	dance, dancer
-dul	glade	-mus	ally, companion	-ual (-lua)	holy
-ean	ride, rider	-nal (-inal; -onal)	distant, far	-uath (-luth; -uth)	lance
-el (ele / -ela)	hawk	-nes	heart	-us / -ua	cousin, kin
-emar	honor	-nin (-nine; -nyn)	rite, ritual	-van / -vanna	forest
-en	autumn	-nis (-anis)	dawn	-var / -vara (-avar / -avara)	father / mother
-er (-eri; -ern)	winter	-on/onna	Keep/Keeper	-vain (-avain)	spirit
-ess (-esti)	fae	-or (oro)	Flower	-via (-avia)	good fortune, luck
-evar	flute	-oth (-othi)	gate	-vin (-avin)	storm
-fel (-afel; -efel)	lake	-que	forgotten, lost	-wyn	music, musician
-hal (-ahal; -ihal)	pale, weak	-quis	branch, limb	-ya	helm
-har (-ihar; -uhar)	wisdom, wise	-rah (-rae; -raee)	beast	-yr / -yn	bringer
-hel (-ahel; -ihel)	sadness, tears	-rad (-rahd)	leaf	-yth	folk, people
				-zair / -zara (-azair / -ezara)	lightning

## Naturae Elements

### Naturae of Wood

The naturae of wood are often inquisitive and wild creatures. They tend to shy away from groups, but when they get a Maestir alone they are often both charming and charismatic. Two sample types of Wood Naturae can be found below:

#### Ghille Dhu

The Ghille Dhu are the guardian of the trees. They are rumoured to be kind to children, but generally wild and shy. Often dark haired, they are described as clothed in leaves and moss. The Ghille Dhu are often called Green men. Often worshipped as Gaia manifest, the Ghille Dhu protect the trees from those that would harm them.

#### Dryads

Dryads are the spirits of the trees who preside over the groves and forests. Each one is born with a certain tree over which they watch. A dryad either lives in a tree, or close to it. The lives of the dryads are rumoured to be connected with that of the trees; should the tree perish, then they die with it. The dryads themselves will also punish any thoughtless mortal who would somehow injure the trees.

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### Naturae of Rock

The naturae of rock are perceived to be stoic and sober. They are often sociable creatures but are rumoured to have a terrible wrath. Two sample types of Rock Naturae are found below:

#### Oriads

Oriads are the guardians of mountains and often there will be one or two for every mountain. They are sociable creatures and will often protect travellers, however, their fury is unmatched should anyone endanger one of their charges.

#### Trolls

Trolls are large creatures with an outwards appearance of stone. They are the guardians of cliffs and protect mountain passes from intruders. They are rumoured to have a taste for human flesh, although generally they are calm creatures until their home is endangered.

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### Naturae of Air

The naturae of air are rumoured to be inquisitive and flighty. They are generally nomadic in nature unlike other naturae and travel from land to land where the wind takes them. Two sample types of Air Naturae are found below:

#### Sylphs

Sylphs take a human form and appear to all extents to be made up of air itself. This is not true however, and it is only the mottled whites and blues of their skin that seems to give this illusion. The Sylphs tend to mix well with the Maestir and seek to find out all about them.

**Anemoi**

Anemoi see themselves as the Lords of the Wind. They are strong creatures that seek to bully and direct the actions of the Maestir. The Anemoi claim to direct the winds themselves and it is the harshness of the winds and storm that is the wrath of the Anemoi.

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**Naturae of Water**

The naturae of water are gentle and kindly beings. They are often the focal point of a community and those who live around the water will be granted the aid of the Naturae in return for caring for the lake, river or stream. Two sample types of Water Naturae are found below:

**Naiad**

Naiads are water dwelling creatures who come out of the water to deal with humans. Although kindly and reclusive a Naiad that has been wronged is a dangerous enemy. Generally, however, they will show their compassion to any that need their aid and are said to be very loyal to the community that they dwell beside.

**Nix**

The nix are often portrayed as cruel creatures that seek to lure humans into their domain. They will use tricks, lights and songs to try to lure unwary travellers into the water. But these folklores are unkind on the Nix. They see themselves as bringers of justice, only playing their tricks on the cruel and the selfish and protecting their community from those who would bring them harm.

## Fae

The origins of the Daoine Fae are shrouded in mystery. These feral creatures live in the wildest places on Valys and are Tattooed with mystical runes. They tend to live in harmony with nature and take only what they need. Fae are often very territorial, taking great delight in tormenting those that enter their homes and playing cruel and malicious tricks on those that they find. Upon maturity the Fae offspring will always tattoo themselves to identify their true heritage.

Erali watched the scene in the valley below. He had known of the demon armies for some time now, his queen's spies had had prior warning and he had taken his warband to observe. He stood flat against the tree, his furs kept his warm in the icy winds. His axe hung at his belt and a necklace of wolf teeth adorned his neck. He was not like the pitiful creatures below him. A servant of his Queen in the winter months, and of his King in the Summer. Erali was torn though, like many of his people he had sworn to the human king of these land. His summer liege had sponsored the choice, but this was late November. The queen ruled his court now and she seemed to care less for the humans than Erali wanted.

He had watched the scene for several hours now, not moving, not smiling, just watching. He had seen the devastation caused by this hoard below. But he followed the order to watch. He had been told this was not the fight of his people. His orders were simple, appraise the danger to his court from this creature. If possible work out how it could be manipulated and directed to use against his Queen's enemies. He was sure of one thing, the demonic creatures that had taken the valley were strong but his people could easily defeat them. The other creature below worried him. Seemingly ambivalent to his people he knew what it wanted – the souls of man. Not all humans had special souls but some were born under divine portent. The sign of one of their seven gods was in the sky at the time of their birth, but it was the souls of these people that the Demon below sought. It looked like it was going to be able to feast on the heroes below.

Erali knew what his King would have done. He knew the destiny of the humans and their place in the great tapestry of this world. Erali fingered the tattoos across his face, earned for his bravery and loyalty. If he disobeyed the Queen's orders he knew he would be punished, maybe even killed. He quietly licked blood from his fangs as he thought. He felt like a coward standing here, and knew that the people below were only mortal. Tainted by the sky and pure of the earth and the spirits.

"By storms" he cursed. Speaking for the first time since the battle below had started. He unlooped a hemp rope from his pack and tied it to the trunk beside him. "My thanks for your strength" he said, bowing slightly to the tree. Without a second thought he scampered down the cliff, the rope in both hands and he half fell and half climbed to the bottom. He saw a sea of warriors follow his lead as their hide covered bodies made the cliff look like a murky brown waterfall.

He had sworn to two kings and one queen. Maybe this day would be his last, but his people would not stand and watch at this evil. They would not break their oaths they had sworn to the lord of this land. His life was forfeit – but the demon creature would be defeated this day.

## History

The Fae have been around on the land of Valys for over five thousand years. They have seen the arrival of all the other races apart from the Naturae to this land and they have fought fierce battles against them all. The Fae seek to guide those who live on their chosen lands or to repel those who will endanger their way of life.

## Culture

The Fae are a highly misunderstood and spiritual race. They are often thought of as barbaric by the city dwelling humans, however, nothing could be further from the truth. The Fae are a highly cultured civilisation but their ways are often thought of as alien to the humans. They regard skill and art a lot more higher than wealth or political power and they rarely look for external beauty instead looking at the spirit inside people or objects.

The Fae are fanatically loyal to their courts, and so to their king in summer and their queen over the winter months.

There are three main castes of Fae, and each one takes a different role in the Fae civilisation.

### **Sidhe**

The Sidhe represent vicious and terrible justice. The Sidhe are by far the most martial of the Fae and are merciless when in battle.

Grimly determined, the Sidhe are justly feared by wrong-doers, but theirs is not to punish the petty crimes: only crimes that defile the land, unnecessary bloodshed and force attract their ire and they can be very creative in making the punishment fit the crime. Many have ventured opinions as to why the Sidhe walk this dark path but none truly know, not even the Sidhe themselves.

Direct and aggressive, Sidhe find friendship with only the most decent of companions and relations are often strained with those they are not comfortable with.

The Sidhe can be terrifying and nightmarish in appearance, bearing an aura of menace, even when near those of clear conscience. They have pointed ears, angular features which make their pale skin more pronounced and their dark hair is often black as pitch. When they open their mouths they reveal a mouthful of dagger-like teeth which serve them well when feeding. Sidhe often wear the symbol of skill at arms, hatred or vengeance when going to battle.

### **Satyr**

The Satyr represents the great hunt and the balance between hunter and prey; they are responsible for hunting the preservation of the balance of life. The Satyrs are also tricksters by nature, and are masters of tracking, traps and ambush.

Rightly so, the Satyrs are sought out by Fae and human alike to become teachers of woodland craft, hunting and trickery, but this often comes at a price too high for some to pay as the satyrs nature often tries to trick the potential student into relinquishing something of great value.

On the whole Satyrs are well received throughout the human settlements and the Fae courts, their prankish nature making them great at social gatherings.

Satyrs have the appearance of a half-bred human and goat and can be of either sex. Predominantly they have pale earth toned skin, pointed ears and horns. Satyrs often wear the symbol of Swiftiness and accuracy through Hunting.

### **Ankou**

The Ankou represent the cycle, the beginning and end of all things. They are responsible for the rites and rituals of death within the Fae courts. The Ankou have a presence that unnerves most people that are around them, including other Fae.

The Ankou are a misunderstood race of Fae and many believe them to be reapers, spreading death wherever they roam. In truth, the Ankou see things differently to other creatures and instinctively know when something is at the end of its cycle. They are very caring in nature and will ensure that anything travelling on is well prepared for its next life. That said when an Ankou is betrayed or feels threatened, they show no mercy.

Ankou do not care about race, religion or status and they complete their task regardless of whoever or whatever the creature or object is. This makes them generally feared and every town, city or settlement has a story about these dark priests.

Ankou have the appearance of black robed priests, their pale skin and pointed ears often hidden beneath a robe of dark grey, black, deep blue, dark browns or dark greens. They often have the symbol of the eternal cycle somewhere upon their clothing or visibly tattooed upon them.

### **Religion**

The Fae worship Gaia – the earth mother herself. For they are her children and her children alone for they are born of the earth and when they die they return unto the earth. The Fae venerate the spirits of the Earth and live in harmony with it, for the spirits of this land dwell within all creatures and crafted items.

### **Costume**

Fae all have pale skin and pointed ears. Fae are always tattooed across their face with tribal and spiritual marks. A Fae without these tattoos would be killed on site. Fae often have pointed teeth or fangs. In addition the Satyr have goats horns either side of their head.

Costume wise the Fae tend to stick to natural colours and plain, simple clothing. Furs and leathers are predominant as are flowing robes. They will normally wear earth tones rather than anything gaudy and with jewellery fine craftsmanship is more valued than so called precious metals and gems.

Fae tend to use weapons that have a use in their every day life rather than just weapons of war.

Generally, they will stick to knives, axes, staffs and bows rather than maces and axes.

### **Names**

Fae have similar names to the Naturae, however they will often have an honourific title or name after their given name. They will try to live up to their given name and calling for betraying their chosen destiny would be a matter of deep dishonour.

## Fae Courts

<b>Court of Ash</b>	The Spiritual leaders of the Fae, the court of Ash is mainly druidic in nature
<b>Court of Alder</b>	The most emotive of the courts, Fae from the Court of Alder seek to inspire
<b>Court of Birch</b>	Solemn in nature, the Court of Birch are the court who revere death.
<b>Court of Hawthorn</b>	Wild and Unruly, Fae from the Court of Hawthorn and known for their deceit
<b>Court of Oak</b>	The Ruling Court – wise and strong the court of Oak teaches honour above all other

### **Court of Ash**

*“The Court of Earth’s Heart”*

This court is the spiritual heart of the Fae. It is their duty to complete the cycle of the Fae and they give guidance to every part of Fae from birth. The Court of Ash is respected by all the other courts and tries to stay neutral to any politics, and often act as mediators between the other courts.

They feed on the more noble emotions of pioussness, compassion and sacrifice. It is these emotions that draw the Court of Ash to druids, shamans and priests. The court of Earth’s Heart are the most proactive in trying to guide men to reach their destiny.

It was the court of Ash that taught Spirit Magic to man, and they often act as tutors and mentors to human druids and priests. As such they are widely respected and accepted across many nations.

### **Court of Alder**

*“The Court of the thousand parts”*

The Alder Court has only one rule, there are no rules. Many of the Fae laws receive a token adherence, but for instance, a place may be reserved for a druid at a feast, but it will never be the same seat and indeed the last person to arrive may be left standing. All that said, the Alder Court adhere fully to all of the druidic precepts and would never do anything to harm the balance of the land.

The Court treads a fine line between the acceptable and the unacceptable, and there are many that believe their actions bring the courts name into disrepute.

The Alder Court prefer primarily to feed off strong positive human emotion, lust, desire, love and have a reputation for holding incredible feasts and parties.

Professions wise, the Alder Court are often great crafters and artists, but also provide many of the scouts and more sneaky elements of the Fae armies.

### **Court of Birch**

*“The Court of Songs End”*

This court is primarily, but not solely comprised of Ankou. Their primarily function is to serve as priests of endings, as a counterbalance to cyclic beliefs of the druids.

They feed on the emotions of tranquillity, contentment and resignation, although they will feed on feelings of grief and despair. They will never deliberately kill a human to feed.

The Court of Birch rely on their knowledge of when the time has come to identify their food, and most will dedicate as much time as possible to help prepare their charges for the transition. Certain members of this court have been known to appreciate the importance of a dramatic or poetic ending.

The second purpose of this court is as story tellers and lore keepers and the stories of those with destiny and those who have passed away are recorded and remembered here.



### **The Hawthorn Court**

*“Court of the shadow’s fall”*

The Hawthorn Court are the cruel tricksters of the Fae, they claim they help others by their actions teaching them to learn from their mistakes, however, the recipient of their tricks is often not as grateful.

The Hawthorn Court prefer to feed off negative emotions - such as fear shame and embarrassment. They seek to mock and trick the people to gain these emotions and relish the task.

The Hawthorn Court are often hated and hunted for their tricks that they play on mortals and other Fae alike. They seek out the most proud and try to belittle them, but they are also ferocious foes when their King and Queen demand it.

### **Court of Oak**

*“Court of the Silver Lance”*

The Court of Oak are seen by many as the ruling court of the Fae. Although the other courts have no formal fealty to the Court of Oak, it is their word that carries the most respect and on decisions that will affect all the Fae they are the people who will make the final decision.

The court of Oak will feed on the emotions of honour, bravery and courage and will try to support strong leaders amongst the Maestir to foster such emotions.

The Court of Oak has the largest armies of all of the Fae and they are the guardians of the Wild before all other concerns. They will generally seek to guide the other nations to make sure that their mother’s land is kept safe. It is only when their council is not heeded that they need to turn to other options.

# Kingdoms

## *Fiáin*

"Its raining again..." muttered Saryl Erswell as she put her hood up, sheathed her sword and walked the path towards Shann. The young ranger had spent all of her life to this point in the forests of Fiáin and was happy to have a chance to wander by herself for a while, away from the watchful eyes of her teacher Beregor.

\*crack\*...the sound was almost inaudible and without thought she pulled her sword and started backing away from the noise, her breathing steadying as she had been taught. "steady girl, breath and focus" she muttered to herself, wishing now that her master was with her. \*crack\*...the sound again, but this time from another direction and Saryl started to panic and she spoke out loud to the noise "wh..who..who's there?"

The answer came in the form of a strange creature that seemed to have eyes of ash and teeth sharper than knives, cloaked in hood made of green and brown, stepping on to the road in front of her. She cried out "Who are you! Declare yourself, I am a ranger of Varyllys and ward of master Beregor! I warn you not to test my steel!". The stranger smiled under the hood and drew it back to show his face. "And I am the voice of the Summer court, a child of the Silver Lance and protector of children who should know better". Saryl's panic turned to horror as she realised she was in the presence of a Sidhe of the court of the Silver Lance. "Come here" the Daoine said and the young ranger obeyed. As she approached she noticed a body off the track, two arrows expertly fired into its head and back. "You know what is?" said the Sidhe and Saryl had to confess she had never seen its like before, A humanlike creature with skin with the tone of ash, wickedly sharp claws and the smell of sulphur. "It is what we call the Ashen, and if they are in these woods then they are looking for young children like you, go home and warn Beregor the Ashen are back within the forest, tell him Baelyn Shadowstorm sends word"

With that the young ranger ran home scared excited and confused at the same time. Although through the confusion there was one thing of which she was certain...

She would never go into the forest alone again.

## Geography

The kingdom of Fiáin is split up into four major geographical areas. The terrain of these lands has influenced the people here and they are all very different in their outlook and appearance. However, they each heed the council of the druidic enclave and it is their laws and rule that they fall to.

### People of the forest

The People of the forest are a people that follow the laws set by the druidic enclave. They are raised to understand the forest and to live in perfect harmony with it. For every tree they fell, they take care to nurture another two in its place and their hunting is carefully restricted to those animals that will not negatively impact on the ability of that race to reproduce.

It is no surprise then that human druids are often chosen from their ranks by the Daoine to be trained in the more powerful of rites and rituals. The People of the forest also make excellent trackers and huntsmen and make some of the finest bows in all of Fiáin, so good in fact that Satyrs and Sidhe may sometimes come to trade for them.

A typical settlement within the forest would mimic a tree house city on several levels with rope ladders or stairs carved into the trees as ways of reaching the lower levels from the floor, or is a number of log cabins within glades and rudimentary defences.

People of the forest dress in typical ranger garb, lightly armoured in soft leather with cloaks weaved in earth colours. Greens and browns are a prevalent colour within these people.

### **People of the plains**

The plains men and women are mostly nomadic in structure travelling between the eastern shores, the forest and the marshes. As a result of this travelling, they are extremely knowledgeable about the kingdom and are often asked by all races to give reports or deliver goods between cities.

The people of the plains also helped the Yo'Tan of the wastelands to create the trading post at the south of the kingdom and have the best relationship with them of all the other races. The people of the plains have also encountered the Shadowkith and have opened trade with them.

These people are almost solely responsible for any communication or trading network within the kingdom of Fiáin. Universally liked by all, they are an invaluable part of the kingdom's infrastructure.

A typical settlement, whether on the road or not, is a vast tent city, with lavishly adorned tents and strange tobaccos and alcohol for visitors to sample and purchase. The people of the plains wear loose fitting robes and clothing fit for purpose, often in shades of cream and light browns.

### **People of the eastern shore**

From the bustling metropolitan port to the north to the lagoon to the south, the people of the eastern shore are by far the most numerous of the Maestir. Their towns and cities span the coastline and they work tirelessly to ensure their livelihood is profitable. These people are shipbuilders, fishermen and are expert traders of their wares.

The People of the eastern shores live predominantly the port city of Shann and are the wealthiest due to the trade that flows freely through the only port in Fiáin. Meanwhile, in the southern lagoon, a thriving boat building trade make excellent river boats and small fishing vessels. Apart from the boat building, these people also trade heavily in salt and fish from the seas around the eastern shore.

A typical town here is mostly crafted from stone to withstand the harsh winter storms. Shann is encircled with vast defensive walls. The people of the shores tend to wear leather for its waterproof qualities and durability, but relish social functions as an opportunity to air out their high quality colourful festive garments.

## People of the mountains

Living within the foothills and mountains of Fiáin, these people have suffered terribly from the Shadowkith raids that regularly come to plunder the resources of the forests. They build into mountain rock, using their mining skills to create vast tunnel networks where they live in small communities.

These People primarily quarry stone. A proud and loyal people to the Maestir; they also hold a secret that the Daoine must never know, for within the tunnels is a place where the tainted children are taken from across Fiáin and nurtured to adulthood.

In this community, both men and women take charge of teaching the young children about their heritage and how one day the Daoine Fae will see beyond their hatred of them.

There is only one major town of these people, and it consists of 25 stone dwellings on a sizable mountain ledge, although look beneath the surface and the town extends much further under the ground.

Clothing for the mountain folk is often furs and it is not uncommon to see iron armour pieces worn by the more warlike among them.

## Politics

Each area is served by a druid, who will guide and lead those under him. Smaller villages will have one druid that advises the chieftains of each village, however, it is the druids that wield the law and power in this country. The head of the druidic enclave is chosen by a vote of the druids, and they hold that position until they die. At this moment in time the Chief Druid is a vacant position and many of the up and coming druids are vying for position and favour.

## Religion

Unlike the rest of the human kingdoms, worship of the gods is a lot more scarce, a lot of the humans preferring to worship the spirits of the Earth in the same way as the Fae. However, worship of the Calinthean gods are growing and the Fae seem keen to encourage the destiny of man rather than hindering them.

<b>Bran</b>	-	The Father God
<b>Dôn</b>	-	The Mother Goddess
<b>Beli</b>	-	The Lord of the Sun
<b>Mabon</b>	-	The Lord of the Hunt
<b>Llŷr</b>	-	The Lord of the Seas
<b>Gwydyon</b>	-	The Lord of War
<b>Beira</b>	-	The Winter Queen
<b>Aranrhod</b>	-	Goddess of Fertility – Daughter of the Mother Goddess and the Father God
<b>Amaethon</b>	-	Lord of Agriculture – Son of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of the Sun
<b>Gorvannan</b>	-	The Smith – Son of the Mother Goddess and the Father God
<b>Arawn</b>	-	Lord of the Dead - Son of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of War

## Stereotypes

**Fae** are one of the most common races in Fiáin, and although they claim to take no role in human politics, they keep a close eye on the druidic enclave and they guide it strongly. The chief druid will normally have the full support of the Fae within the nation. Although there are some that claim that the druidic enclave is merely a puppet of the Fae courts. The **Court of Ash** and the **Court of Oak**, the spiritual and political leaders of the Fae are both based in Fiáin.

The **Risen** are despised within Fiáin itself, and generally their presence is seen as much of an abomination as the Tainted. The druid's enclave has warned against the danger of the risen and this is headed by many within the nation.

The **Tainted** are also outlawed by the druids enclave, although there are some within the nation who have defied the wishes of the council and raised them as their own. It is hoped that the next chief druid will have a more lenient view on these poor wretches.

**Naturae** within Fiáin are treated with respect, and generally join with the Fae here to join and support their courts. Many of the Maestir here often cannot see the difference between the Fae and Naturae and treat them both the same. The Naturae within Fiáin are the most politically active of all Naturae, seeing their future linked with the druidic faith and the success of the Fae Courts.

**Shadowkith** are rare within Fiáin, normally those who are there are travellers from the Hinterlands who have made Fiáin their temporary home. They are often thought of as spies and thieves and their link with the realm of Shadows makes them distrusted and disliked.

**Yo'Tan** live in the mountains and wastelands of Fiáin, and they generally keep out of the way of the Fae who their rivalries with are still brewing under the surface. Their tribes will trade with humans but they claim the land their own and see it as their own duty to protect it.

## Names

The people of Fiáin names are often welsh sounding. Their surnames either tell of profession or tell of the name of their father or a hero that they are descended from. For example, Agravaine ap Bran, or Gwyneth ap Geraint.

### Male Names

Agravaine	Elis	Grwn
Bryn	Enit	Lloyd
Cai	Folant	Morgan
Deiniol	Geraint	Reece
Dylan	Glyn	Rhys
Eira	Griffin	Tomos

### Female Names

Alis	Elen	Gwyneth
Anwen	Ffion	Megan
Carys	Ffraid	Morgan
Ceri	Generys	Neirinn
Cerys	Glaw	Reece
Dilwen	Gwen	Sian

## Hinterlands

'Words to the young' by Usko Tarvotytar, daughter of the Wyrm

Our home is true to its name. Other, more 'civilised' peoples, give their lands names 'Solaria' or 'Ulidia', names that tell you nothing of the essence that runs through the rock. Not us, there is no need to lie about the nature of our home. The Hinterland is the land of the Winter Queen and never has a land been more suited to its mistress. From the blizzard lashed peaks where the Osprey dwell, across the mighty forests where the suns weak light barely reaches the earth, all the way to the windswept tundra that the Mastodon call home you can feel her icy touch. It is a harsh land that breeds a hard people, it is a land where to be alone is to be dead.

We of the Predani rarely try to tame our home, why waste effort upon a futile task? We take what is needed for our people, our settlements and our worship and no more. To take more than is needed leads to waste, and waste should not be tolerated for the gifts of the gods should not be cast aside lightly. We are people of clans and of family, be you human, be you kith, be you risen or be you other it matters not, you are a clan brother, a clan sister and that is all that counts when the winter winds howl. By toiling together a people can survive our lands, to stand alone can lead only to a death from which there can be no return.

Ah yes, death, our ever present shadow. We have no great fear of it, for it may come to us at any time, a sudden storm, a failed hunt, a fall from the ice covered peaks and countless other ways. Death need not be eternal for the Predani. By the will of the Winter Queen we are granted several paths back to our kin. Firstly the queen does not stand in the way of those souls who will not cross the veil and forge their own path back into the land of the living. We must count ourselves gifted that the shadow weavers, both human and kith, walk amongst us wielding the power of shadow to pull the worthy and the needed back from beyond.

Outsiders frown upon us, shake their heads at our 'necromancy' and mutter of a taint. To them I say this, what better way to preserve the lore of ages than to hear it from those that were there when it happened?

Our seven brother clans of the founding share the land and its burden between them, the graceful Osprey, the patient Wolf, the determined Boar, the cautious Elk, the clever Selkie, the mighty Mastodon and the wise Wyrm. Other peoples shake their heads when we talk of a realm split seven ways, they talk of weakness and of conquering the clans one by one. To these people I say this, kin will always be kin, they will feud, they will fight and they will stand as one to face a threat to the family. The clans of the Predani are no different, the strongest will lead us, and they need not spare a worry for their flanks, for they know all Predani kinfolk will stand firmly at their side.

Outsider's call us uncivilised, we say they are wrong. Outsider's call us divided, we say they are wrong. Outsiders call us weak, we know they are wrong.

We are the Predani, beloved children of the Winter Queen.

### The Clans

When the Predani fled the old world the first to step ashore on the hinterland were a family of 7 sisters, their husbands, their children. There they were met by the Winter Queen herself. The queen took the couples by their hands and declared them to be the leaders of her people and that she had chosen them to be the first chiefs of the clans that would call this land home. Then she called forth the 7 totem spirits and bound them each to a couple, calling on the spirits to guide and protect their charges and for the couples to revere and protect the lands they were given. When the rest of the Predani came the Queen split them 7 ways and spread them amongst the clans till all were given a new home.

The Predani may be 7 clans but they know they once came from single people that were divided by their goddess, they also know that their first leaders were from a single family. This goes a long way to explain the importance place upon the Predani facing outsiders as one united family.

All the Maestir Predani and the vast majority of other races wear markings or tattoos upon their face and bodies. The patterns of these vary from person to person and place to place but the colour is important, the colour signifies which clan the person comes from.

Each clan has a set of traits that the clan embodies; members of this clan usually display these traits to a noticeable degree.

As well as the 7 founding clans there are several smaller 'children' clans, usually centred around large villages and towns that have begun to take on other traits. These smaller clans owe direct fealty and obedience to the founding clan that they came from. E.g. the small Fox clan, a child clan of the Wolf, is renowned for its stealth.

### **The 7 clans of the founding.**

- The Osprey clan are known for being perceptive in their views of the world and graceful in their actions. Their clan markings are light blue in colour and their territory is centred on the Mountain Ranges of the Hinterlands
- The Boar clan are the living embodiment of stubbornness and aggression. Their clan markings are red and they claim the forests as their home.
- The Wolf clan display great patience and a methodical approach to all they do. Their clan markings are brown and they hold sway over the Hinterland tundra.
- The people of the Elk hold the virtues of loyalty and family unity close to their hearts. Their clan markings are green and they are a nomadic clan.
- The Selkie or Seal clan are a resourceful and adaptable people, well suited to survive the vagaries of Hinterland life. Their clan markings are dark blue and they dwell upon the coastlines of the land.
- The Wyrms are the least numerous clan of the 7 founding clans. They are respected for their guile and deep knowledge of many things both mundane and bizarre. Their clan markings are yellow and orange, they dwell in the treacherous marshlands and fens.
- The mighty Mastodon clan are famous for their feats of strength and endurance. Their clan markings are purple and they are a nomadic clan.

The nomadic Elk and Mastodon move freely on their travels through the lands of the other clans.

### **Ranks and Titles**

- The King - leader of the Predani, chosen by the 7 chiefs of the clans
- The Speakers - the two chosen 'lieutenants' of the King. Speak for him in his absence. Can be from any clan, chosen by King. Usually high ranking members or chiefs of other clans.
- The Chiefs - The leaders of the seven clans. Chosen from inside the clan by their clan members.
- The Voices - Leaders of the towns and villages or in the case of the nomadic clans, leaders of very large family groupings.
- Mothers/Fathers - Heads of households and smaller family groups.

**Flags and Symbols** - As well as coloured tattoos each clan can be recognised by its 'glyph' which is a stylised picture of the totem animal which is burnt, carved or painted onto surfaces as needed. Clan Banners usually consist of some sort of animal skull or 'dream catcher' on a pole, the pole (with or without cross piece) is then festooned with trinkets, smaller skulls, sacred parchments and clan glyphs.

The 'Flag of the Predani' is a large leather skin mounted on a cross pieced pole. Into the leather skin has been drawn a 6 pointed snowflake. In the middle of the snow flake is the glyph of the Kings Clan. The other 6 clan glyphs are found at the 6 points of the snow flake. The whole snowflake design is then surrounded by various inscriptions to the winter queen

**Honours** - If a Predani excels in any way, be it in battle, as a hunter, an advisor or inventor then they are awarded 'Honour Marks'. These marks are simple coloured dots or scars along the cheek bones, nose and forehead. The awarding of the marks is done by the King or chiefs and then applied in the correct colour by a shaman in a rite commending the Predani to the Winter Queen for their actions. A Predani with many honour marks is one to be reckoned with in some way or the other. These honour marks can also be undone and removed for acts of failure or similar.

**Enemies** - As well as rivalries with other nations, the Predani have several internal foes and adversaries.

- **The Manniken** - Wooden and Stone constructs that have been made by the T'sil. The T'sil are a race of cold blooded lizard men that live in deep caves beneath the volcanoes of the far ranges. They cannot venture into the cold snow themselves so have constructed the Manniken to go out into the world to attack and pillage Predani settlements.
- **Nidagrisur** - Evil frozen spirits that take the form of wraiths made from ice and snow. They are the restless souls of those who die alone out in the snow - exiles, lost travellers, abandoned babies and the like. They seek to suck the warmth from the living beings that they hate with a passion.
- **Hags** - Twisted old ladies who have been tainted by the demons and driven out by their clan. Their demonic powers keep them alive in the snowy wastes and allow them to prey on the children of the Winter Queen.
- **Toa - Suo** - Snow apes. These ape-like beasts live in large troupes. Normally they steer clear of settlements but from time to time they grow brave and launch savage attacks on isolated homes and villages.

**Towns and Villages** - Each of the static clans has a main town in its territory which is the seat of its chief and his minions. As well as this there are a scattering of smaller towns and villages across the clan lands.

### **Holy Sites**

- **'The Sky Stones'** a circle of standing stones to be found on the outskirts of the Capital city of High Hall. The Sky stones are in the care of the Osprey clan.
- **'The Old Man'** - The lands of the Boar clan is home to this single huge tree of a species found nowhere else in the land. Some people claim it has a face and talks to them.
- **'Silent Lake'** – In the centre of the windswept tundra of the Wolf clan is the silent lake. On the holiest nights of the year no sound of any kind can be heard within a mile of its shores.
- The **'White Elk'**, once a season the white Elk reveals itself to a woman of the tribe and if the elk can be hunted and killed by the clan the Winter Queen herself will join them in the feast made from its flesh.
- The tiny island of **'Alaand'** in Kalaholm Bay. This most sacred of Predani sites is tended to by the Selkie, it is the place where the Winter Queen talked to the 7 founding sisters.
- **'The Serpent Stones'** A series of sacred stones carved in the shape of mighty serpent consuming its own tail, it is said that the Wyrms hold bizarre and bloody rites to wise Niska within its boundaries.
- **'The Valley of Bones'** – Its location is known only to the Predani of the Mastodon clan, it is the place where the great beasts themselves go to die.



### Other Places of Note

- 'The High Halls' The Capital city of the Hinterlands perched high upon the sacred mountain that lies in the lands of the Osprey.
- Proudly tended to by the Boar clan the 'Queens Orchard' produces the 'Snow Apples' which are used in many medicines and alcoholic drinks.
- 'Wolf Pit Mines' - A large percentage of the metal used in the hinterlands can be traced back to this deep and sprawling system of pits, quarries and mines to be found in the Wolf held tundra.
- 'Hunts Holm' - The Elk clan spend 1 month a year at this town and host a huge market that attracts folk from all across the hinterlands and beyond. The rest of the year it is almost abandoned save for a small group who volunteer to act as its keeper
- 'Kalaholm' – The biggest and most important port town in the Hinterlands is home to chief of the Selkie clan.
- 'The Caves of Memory' – These sprawling caves lie deep in the stinking marshlands that the Wyrms call home, they are said to contain all the history, records and learning of the Predani.
- 'The Black Pools' - Huge pits of hot tar that mark the half way point of the Mastodon migration route.

**The importance of truth and oaths** - The Predani place a good deal of value on honesty, especially amongst themselves. Lying is considered to be very bad form and an insult to the other person. They also place great value on promises and oaths. A Predani rarely gives his word or oath but once it is given then they will do all they can to uphold it. Woe betide those who break an oath without stretching every sinew to fulfil it first.

**Liars** - The Predani do accept that the rest of the world will lie to them and thus the rest of the world is not as worthy of the truth in return. The Predani do not have diplomats they have 'Liars', Liars are individuals appointed by the King who are given permission to lie on his behalf and suffer no stigma or dishonour for doing so.

**Heroes of Legend** - Each clan will have tales and legends that speak of great people from that clan. In addition to these there are a few heroes and tales that all Predani know and love.

- The Princess Stone
- Norrins Law
- The Battle of Hanniken
- The making of the Wyrms
- The Hollow Mountain.

**The Kith** - The land of the Predani is home to a large number of the Kith. These kith live in family groups or 'nests' as part of towns or villages. They are fully integrated and normal members of Predani society with all the rights and responsibilities that entails. The vast majority of them wear clan markings and colours just like any other Predani. A kith in the hinterlands is as entirely normal and unremarkable as a human.

**The Risen** - The Risen, just like the Kith, are part of the normal mix of society with all the loyalties, duties and rights that any living, breathing clansman has. Being a risen is seen as normal; being a risen is not a crime or judged as anyway abhorrent.

**The Others** - There are not many of the other races native to the Hinterland. Those that are 'born and bred' in the Hinterland are expected to act as any other clansman or face the consequences, their place of birth will dictate the clan they belong to and who they call chief.

**Outsiders** - Beings from outside the Hinterland that come to stay for any length of time usually stay in the capital town of High Hall or the port town of Kalaholm. Those outsiders who want to join the Predani as a clansman must first find a clan 'Voice' willing to accept him then get that clans chief to accept him and finally get the permission of the King or his Speakers.

**The Law** - There is no written code of law there is only a sense of right or wrong. The leaders of families and townships are expected to police their own people. If they cannot deal with an issue it is passed onto the clan chief. Only issues that a chief cannot deal with come before the King.

The decision of a 'Voice' can be overruled by his chief, a chief can be overruled by the King, and the King can only be overruled by all the other 6 chiefs acting as one.

Only a Chief or the King can order execution or even worse, exile.

## Religion

The Winter Queen - The Primary focus of Predani worship, she is seen as the creator, protector and provider all wrapped into one. Yes she deposited the Predani in a hard land but like any good parent she is seen as simply toughening up her children to make them mentally, physically and morally fit to survive the challenges that lie ahead. Human society fell once in the sundering due to weakness of body and spirit. The Winter Queen is determined that her children will never fail like that again.

Achta - The Father God

Mader - The Mother Goddess

Achta and Mader do not tend to have any priests in the Hinterlands but all wise and sensible Predani will acknowledge their power with a polite nod and mention during other ceremonies

Little Tuli - The Lord of the Sun

Brother Hittay - The Lord of the Hunt also known as the Wolf Lord

King Ahti - The Lord of the Seas also known as the Selkie Lord

Lord Tusk and Lady Tusk - The Twins of War – Children of the Mother Goddess and the Father God

Father Osprey - Lord of Summer - Son of the Father God and the Winter Queen

Great Ukko - Lord of Storms - Son of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of the Seas

Lady Peller - Goddess of Fertility – Daughter of the Mother Goddess and the Father God

Morla the Silent - Lady of the Dead - Daughter of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of War

The Wyrn - The Predani worship a great Wyrn spirit, The great Wyrn can be male or female and is referred to as 'Wise Niska'. The Wyrn is revered for its wisdom, knowledge and cunning.

**The Church** - The Predani do not have an organised church. Each and every Predani can, and does, talk with their gods on a daily basis. It may be a prayer for aid or blessing, a simple thanks or a curse. For many Predani the gods seldom answer directly or quickly but for some, the more devout or in tune with the supernatural, the gods do answer. These Predani become the priests, spell weavers or shaman of the clans. These Predani are then called upon to take the lead in the festivals or greater rites, to give guidance to those who ask for it. The Shaman are most assuredly not a 'caste apart', they are part of society. When not wielding the powers of the gods they can be found hunting and working side by side with the others of their clan.

## The Festivals

- The Godless day - On this day, when the year leaves the brief summer and plunges once more into winter, the Gods withdraw from the lands of the Predani. The people are left to truly fend for themselves and it is said that any actions done on this day is hidden from the sight of the gods.
- Darkest Night - This day is the deepest and darkest of the deep, dark hinterland winter. The Predani of a settlement gather at the house of their 'Chief' or 'Voice' and build a huge bonfire. The settlement feast together in a celebration of defiance at the dark beyond the flames and whatever lurks in it.
- First Day - The first day of the Hinterland spring is spent in a celebration of surviving the winter and remembering those that didn't.
- Totem days - Each clan has a day that it devotes in worship to its totem spirit. These days are not at set times of the year, instead they fall on dates decided by a combination of full moons, eclipses and tides. Most years a clan will celebrate one totem day but some years they may celebrate none or two.

## Names

A Predani full name is based on a personal name, a family name/patronymic, a settlement and a clan.

'Poika' means son of, 'tytär' means daughter of.

E.g. Mahel Asmopoika of Kalaholm, son of the Selkie - (Mahel, son of Asmo, of the people of Kalaholm, member of the Selkie clan.)

Or Mahel Karvinen of Kalaholm, son of the Selkie - (Mahel, part of the Karvinen family, of the people of Kalaholm, member of the Selkie clan.)

The Predani do not have separate names for men and women, for the use of poika or tytär will generally refer to the sex of the person rather than needed a different personal name.

Alpin	Denbecan	Galam	Oswiu
Breth	Deocilunon	Gartnai	Pidarno
Broichan	Deoord	Gede	Talorc
Bridei	Domelch	Gest	Taran
Caltram	Drest	Irb	Tharain
Carvors	Drosten	Lutrin	Uid
Cimoiod	Drust	Maelcho	Uist
Cinioch	Eddarn	Morleo	Uoret
Ciniod	Eoganan	Nechtán	Uvan
Constantin	Forcus	Oengus	Wroid

## Solaria

"Look around us, are we not the most fortunate of all who walk upon the earth. We are of Solaria, we are the chosen of Lord Sol who shines his countenance upon us giving warm summers, mild winters and well tilled soil.

Look round at what we have been given. Gentle rolling hills, sun kissed corn blowing in the breeze. To the south lie the pastures, truly home to the finest horses ever to be ridden. What the land cannot provide for us we can find in the cradle of the ocean.

Others might contest that they have all that we have that they too are chosen of the Gods, but we are no savages paying homage to twig and root, we do not prostrate ourselves before streams and valleys. Where they have huts and hovels we have towns made of stone. Where they fight like savages upon the field we have horsemen able to drive off the sternest of foes.

Divine providence lifts the Lord King from the common folk and grants him wisdom to rule well. The King and the Barons check against each other ensuring a fair and just society. They answer to the Gods and to the common folk, and we in turn the answer to them.

In times of battle it will be the nobility who ride in defence of the realm, atop their steeds with banners streaming in the wind. It will be a fearsome opponent indeed who does not quail before them.

Anyway enough time for chatter, we should get this corn before the rains come."

### Culture

The people of Solaria are a proud and honourable nation. They are a strict feudal society where rank and title is decided by birth and marriage. The people of Solaria are as pious as they are honourable and much of their day revolves around worship of Sol. The majority of the Maestir in Solaria contribute by farming their lord's lands and in return for their hard work and diligence they are given protection by his knights and blessings given by the local priests.

Although crime and banditry does exist in Solaria, the Barons and the church work hard to keep the outlaws in check and those that will act against the will of the appointed Lords of Solaria will find themselves excommunicated as well as hunted by well armed and armoured knights.

### Baronies

#### Vexille

Is not a true barony per se but is instead the seat of the Monarchy from which all power in Solaria is derived

#### Croy

Broad rolling plains, meandering rivers and good earth. Croy is an agrarian barony providing most of the livestock needs of the kingdom. In addition some of the great Solarian steeds are found and reared here.

#### Ardent

Is the Northernmost Barony in Solaria and has the Fish and Anchor as symbols on its heraldic seal. This represents that much of the trade and wealth of Ardent, and indeed the kingdom flows through the market town of Erport.

#### Overstone

The most heavily fortified Barony in Solaria. Unlike the others Overstone has no fertile fields providing food, neither do the great horses of Solaria roam here. Instead this border barony has access to the reserves of iron and precious metals which allow the chivalry of Solaria to have the finest weapons and armour in all the lands.

## Freyne

The heart of chivalry. At Freyne castle the sound of galloping hooves and splintering lances is an everyday occurrence. Here do the knights of the realm learn their trade. Here also the Church of Helios keeping a watchful eye out for new champions willing to spread the word of Sol to the masses.

## Heraldry

Each of the Baronial coat of Arms contains Azure and Vert (respectively representing Sky and Earth). The remaining symbols represent the area from which they come.

<b>Ardent</b>	Fish and Anchor
<b>Croy</b>	Knight, Crow, Sheep and Sun
<b>Overstone</b>	Castle, Sword and Sun
<b>Freyne</b>	Horse, Lance and Sun
<b>Vexelle</b>	Sun and Crown

## Stereotypes

**Fae** are a rare sight in Solaria often finding it too civilised and domestic for their tastes. The Fae that are seen are rarely accepted by the lords apart from in exceptional circumstances.

The **Risen** are granted great respect in Solaria. Those warriors who are strong and faithful in the eye of their lord Sol who died in battle are often brought back as Risen by his priest to continue in service. Those risen not blessed by Sol, however, are seen as unworthy as the tainted.

**Naturae** are often respected and venerated by the people of Solaria, but their council is not respected by the church of the lords who see their words as blasphemy. Although some of the lords have taken the rare Naturae into their entourage for council.

**Shadowkith** are prevalent in Solaria but they often keep themselves to themselves. They are not often trusted by the populous and often live outside the law in the wild places, however, the occasional lord will seek their council because of the skills and insight they can offer.

For years **Tainted** were killed on sight in Solaria, seen as evidence of sin of their parents. Times however are changing and in the more enlightened areas it is seen as a malady like madness and they are often sent to the Isle of the Dead to spend the rest of their days.

**Yo'Tan** are more of a campfire story to the people of Solaria than a reality, and very few of the people of the land have lived to tell a tale of these warriors. As such there are many myths about the creatures and they are seen as brutal and barbaric cannibals.

## Religion

The Solarians worship Sol – The Lord of the Sun – as the patron of all the Gods. Acknowledgements and respects are made, most offerings and duties are to Sol, however shrines to most of the other gods are in place in the temples of Sol. An exception to the place of respect for worship of the other gods is that of the Winter Queen.

Those who grant worship and praise to the Winter Queen are regarded with suspicion and are not to be trusted and those born under the sign of the **Hanged Man** often are found with a fitting demise to their sign.

## Holy days

Winter's end: Where great thanks are given unto Sol that he ascends once more into his power and begins again to spread warmth and life unto the land.

Day of Reflection Where praise is offered up unto Sol in thanks for the blessings of the last year

## Days of Ill Luck

Dark-night: When Sol's influence is at it's weakest and prayers are offered up to him for his safe return.

<b>Sol</b>	-	The Lord of the Sun
<b>Alaunus</b>	-	The Father God
<b>Damara</b>	-	The Mother Goddess
<b>Nodens</b>	-	The Lord of the Hunt
<b>Barinthus</b>	-	The Lord of the Seas
<b>Camulus</b>	-	The Lord of War

The Winter Queen has no local name other than the Winter Queen herself. However, she is often referred to many less polite names when bad luck happens.

## Names:

As well as a given name, the people of Solaria are proud of their lineage. Brothers, sisters and cousins share the same surname that will tell of the first disciples of Sol who led them from Calinthea.

## Male names

Aergad	Conant	Herve	Padrig
Alouarn	Corentin	Jodocus	Paol
Annaeg	Deniel	Jost	Pierrick
Aodren	Elouan	Kireg	Roparzh
Armel	Erwan	Loan	Winoc
Arven	Gwilherm	Madeg	Yann
Arvin	Haerviu	Maden	
Arzhel	Herv	Maugan	
		Mazhe	

## Female Names

Adelice	Armelle	Jocosa	Maëlys
Annick	Arzhela	Katarin	Nolwenn
Aodrena	Azelice	Katell	Oanez
Aouregan	Azilis	Loana	Rozenn
Aourgen	Enora	Loane	
Argantael	Franseza	Maela	
Armela	Gwénaëlle	Maëlle	

## Ulidia

*Credne surveyed the battle field, crouched, waiting, still.*

*It was about to start, she looked around the tribe, each member crouched, waiting, still.*

*This was her favourite part of battle.*

*Crednes' gaze settled on her son, not ten feet away, she remembered when her face was so clean, her hair so free from feathers, when her paint consisted of nothing more than a black bird on white and eyes on her eyelids, and she remembered being crouched looking at her mother on the day of her first battle*

*Credne's senses screamed at him, she could hear the Hounds screaming and running wild, the sons of Ogmah reciting the names of the fallen and she could hear the Wave Sweepers sharpening their blades, but they were all far off. And the time was close at hand.*

*The warriors of Badb Catha waited crouched, still, they had done this since the Tu'ath had first set foot on Ulidia, when the giant wars had raged, when Heremon the great granddaughter of Badb had lead them nearly a thousand years ago.*

*The smell of battle filled Credne's nose, she glanced across the field, at the foot of each of her tribe lay the casualties of battle, paint from all tribes stared upwards mouths lolling open faces contorted into the blissful moment of death. Again it had always been like this in one form or another, through the giant wars, when Tu'ath and Yo'Tan had clashed for control of the land, to the period when the tribes had clashed for power. Up until the unification this had been commonplace,*

*Credne examined the figure at her feet, her stomach turned, this was not human or Yo'Tan, not fae or shadokith or halfdead, this was gnarled, twisted unnatural. It had taken several of the tribe to finally bring it down, but as the Voch's champion, and the one to land the killing blow its power, its strength would be her prize.*

*And now it was time, they were coming*

*The sound of wing beats filled the air as the carrion came*

*The warriors of Badb Catha were still, crouched, waiting.*

*Credne watched as the crow landed on the face of the horror at her feet, she watched as the bird took its eyes, watched as the bird devoured its soul and went to take flight.*

*As one the warriors moved snatching the birds from the air ripping through feathers and breast with their teeth, devouring, freeing the bird so it may carry the soul to the next world to sit with Badb. freeing the soul and gaining the power.*

*Credne looked at her son, his face buried in the breast of his own crow. She walked the short distance to her son dipping her finger in the blood of the bird and tracing the mark of her son's first kill onto his face. Her son had earned his first mark. Later the wise woman would plait a feather from this bird into her hair in front of the tribe.*

*Credne left the field, today had been a good day to die, but it was not Crednes time, for her it had been a good day to live.*

## Geography

In the north there is a more structured military style to the land. There are more permanent settlements, mainly based around mines and farms. More of the crafters are based here. Green fields, jagged coastline. The capital city of Ulidia and major trading port, Kayel'tha, is based in these lands. The major trade here is livestock and salt. Traditionally the dominant tribe here is the Wave Sweepers of Manannon.

The middle lands are mainly boggy marsh and forest. The tribes that dwell here are normally of a more nomadic nature. They tend to be rangers and hunters and embody the virtue of survival more than any other. Following well trodden hunting paths season by season the tribes here make a subsistence living. The major trade here is furs and clay. Traditionally the dominant tribe here is the Warriors of Babb Catha.

To the South, the colder mountainous, home to Yo'Tan and the hardier of the Maestir. Generally living in warmer wattle and daub villages during the summer months, they retreat to their mountain caves in the winter. The mountains here are rich in iron and copper. Traditionally the dominant human tribe here is the Hounds of Khu Anoun, and this land is also the base of the all the Yo'Tan tribes and their spiritual home.

## Politics

The Ulidian rulership is based upon the principle that Might is Right. The number of seats on the tribal council is proportional to the size of the clan, and the seat of the Kadrioch is given to the person who has the largest clan site. Due to the support of the majority of the Yo'Tan tribes, the current Kadrioch is the Warrior Queen of the Warriors of Badb.

Families are traced back through their mothers side, and female warriors are respected above all others, although this does not stop tribes from being led by men. The Maestir of the Ulidians believe that right is not inherited and everyone must prove it through strength and ability.

There is a cast system within those who have gained their paint (come of age) with each cast split by sex. The female side of each cast is given more importance than the male side.

## Cast

Within Ulidia – there is a strict cast system, however this is not by birth but decided upon at the coming of age ceremony.

- Warrior - The Warrior Cast is given the highest status in all things. It is these people who not only fight but also who hunt.
- Healer - Those that can heal, and tend to wounds and create herbal poultices are granted status second only to warriors.
- Bards - Those that keep the lore and tell the stories are treated with respect and honour. Priests are often in the Bardic cast.
- Artisan - Those that create are in their own cast. This cast includes fishermen, farmers, tanners, milliners, coopers and miners.
- Children - Those who have not come of age are treated with respect and protected by all others.
- The Unworthy - An adult that has not gained their paint – or has been removed are the lowest status and will be granted little respect or status.

The wise women are the only people who are outside this cast system and are a law unto themselves granted respect and fear by all.

## Titles and honours

- Kadrioch Leader of the Tribal Council
- Tribal Leader The Tribal Leader is either called the Kadrioch or the Voch depending on the tribe.
- Champion The champion of each tribe has a very high status and is often called to resolve disputes between tribes.

The medals of honour changes from tribe to tribe  
For example, the Warriors of Badb gain face paint and markings denoting social standing and the feathers of the carrion birds that come to feast on the souls of those they have slain, plaited into their hair.



Most denouncements of rank are painted on their faces..

Any face paint at all denotes adult status meaning not only have they lost innocence but made a kill in battle or hunt.

People without face paint are considered to be below children in the social order

### **Banners**

The Maestir stand under painted banners of stylized animal forms linked to the Gods.

The Yo'tan form under banners of bones and animal skins.

Tribal markings are included in the face paint. Children are treated as members of all tribes and should be protected as such by all.

### **Stereotypes of kingdoms**

Humans on the southern coasts are physically tough and short tempered, although there are humorous murmuring that they may have spent a little too much time with the Yo'Tan if you get me

Humans to in the middle country are dirty, and a little odd they are by far the most religious as they have the least contact with other cultures. Those on the coasts to the north tend to be civilised and although seen as "delicate" by the tribes in the middle lands they are the best craftsmen of all the kingdom. These proud tribesman would refute the term "delicate" for washing the blood off your clothes before you sleep at night does not stop their fury in battle.

**Fae** are often distrusted by the humans and there are few that are freely able to travel across Ulidia. The Court of the Hawthorn is based in Ulidia however, so this may be the reason for the bad reputation of the Fae amongst this kingdom.

**Naturae** are often revered as spirits of the land or the messengers of greater spirits. They are normally treated with great respect.

**Risen** are treated with pity in Ulidia. They are acknowledged for their strength in battle and the fact their prowess was thought so worthy that they were brought back from the realm of shadows – but they are pitied for they shall never live their worthy death. Necromancers, however, are thought of as evil for their acts of stealing great deaths from worthy warriors.

**Shadowkith** are thought of with massive distrust and there are very few of them within this land.

**Tainted** have managed to escape total persecution in Ulidia, for in a culture where people are judged on their merit, they have the most chance to prove themselves.

**Yo'Tan** are slow and violent, barbaric creatures (almost noble savage ) who live to the south and eat each other.

### **Legends and heroes**

Most legends recall the battles that first raged between the humans and Yo'Tan when Heremon the great granddaughter of Badb lead the 'Tu'ath, or children into the new land and found Yo'Tan savges they called giants.

The oldest legends focus on the battles, bravery and cunning that forced the Yo'Tan south. There are many mentions of 'Cu chulain,' the head of the hounds and the great, great grandson of the lord of war, Heremon's lover and general who was brave, strong and brilliant in battle .

Slightly later stories refer to noble members of the Yo'Tan, who have either worked with or saved the maestri population.

Later tales tell of fights between all clans and mention some that have been wiped out and the unification of the tribes under another descendant of Badb and the lord of war, Abrith who founded the tribal council to aid the Yo'Tan reclaim land taken by the Fae and through strength in politics and cunning as well as battle brought the tribes together.

### **Songs and light entertainment**

The country has a strong bardic tradition. Nothing is written down but passed on word of mouth. The people can write but it is seen as a lesser skill, one for children and those unfit to fight. The stories and songs of the Ulidians tend to tell of battle and death.

### **Crime and punishment**

There are few main crimes that cover most things, the worst of these crimes are:

Kinslaying – punishable by death  
Killing a child (one without parent) - punishable by death  
Raising the dead – punishable by death  
Poisoning – punishable by death/exile  
Theft – exile  
Cowardice – exile

All crimes are decided by trials by combat, one who is sentenced to death is given the chance to die as is right leading the charge into battle. The crimes of children shall be visited on the parent. The use of cowardly weapons such as bows and traps in battle are seen as cowardice and the perpetrator is normally exiled for their crimes.

Due to the layout of resources and skills all tribes need each other to survive this is the truth that cements the tribal council.

Because of this the idea of currency seems ludicrous to the tribes they give what they can to each other, if I have something that you need I will give it to you because when I need something you will reciprocate. Skills are viewed in the same way.

### **Religion**

The primary gods worshipped are

<b>Dagda</b>	-	The Father of the Gods
<b>Danu</b>	-	The Mother Goddess
<b>Lugh</b>	-	The Lord of the Sun
<b>Lir</b>	-	The Lord of the Seas
<b>Machta</b>	-	Goddess of Strife - Daughter of the Mother and the Father
<b>Babd Catha</b>	-	Goddess of War – Daughter of the Mother and the Father
<b>Nemain</b>	-	Lady of the Dead - Daughter of the Mother and the Lord of War
<b>Oghma</b>	-	God of Scribes – Son of the Father and Mother Earth

The following gods are acknowledged although their temples are a lot more rare. As such there are few people from Ulidia born under the signs of the Hanged Man and the Thief. Temples to the Lord of War are rare for most follow Babd Catha instead and she takes his place as a major god – especially to those born under the sign of the Warrior.

<b>Neit</b>	-	Lord of War
<b>Fionn</b>	-	Lord of Hunt
<b>Cailleach</b>	-	The Winter Queen
<b>Creidhne</b>	-	The Smith – Son of the Mother and the Father

## **Names**

The names of the Ulidians often have a gaelic element. Sample names can be found below.

### **Male Names**

Abbán	Eamon	Jarlath	Ruarc
Aengus	Eoghan	Kilian	Senan
Berach	Fearghal	Lomán	Sorley
Braden	Felim	Mahon	Tadg
Cadogan	Fintan	Nevan	Torin
Cillín	Gréagóir	Odran	Uilliam
Conall	Heber	Réamann	Ultan
Dermot	Íomhar	Ruairí	

### **Female Names**

Ailís	Clodagh	Emer	Myrna
Aisling	Darina	Ennis	Nola
Aithne	Derval	Fionola	Orna
Aran	Dympna	Gráinne	Pádraigín
Bidelia	Eadan	Íde	Sadb
Bláithín	Eavan	Líadan	Saibh
Ciara	Eilís	Máire	Sorcha
Clíodhna	Eithne	Meave	

## Varkarna

Eadric looked around the frozen forest, he had followed the wolf for a day now and soon it was time to claim his vengeance upon the creature that had slain his parents. Unskilled in the art of tracking, Eadric relied on the tell-tale drops of blood on the crisp snow to find his foe. Eadric's family lived under the protection of Lady Sorcha the Red, and they paid their monthly tithes for the protection of her warband. Eadric had always dreamed about joining that warband, but the call of vengeance was first at hand. Lost in his own thoughts, Eadric turned to see the foul beast – its eyes glowing with an infernal hue as it stepped towards him. Lost in fear, Eadric took a few paces backwards before tripping and falling against the large fir that stood behind him. The wolf snarled, and crouched ready to pounce.

Eadric stood and backed up against the tree, he started to dream and called to the remains of his innocence, stolen from him by this creature. The creature paused, unable to harm the innocent child whilst Eadric also stood transfixed. As the minutes passed the wolf started to turn and suddenly the memories of his parent's corpses broke through his veil of innocence. He jumped at the creature, slamming his knife into its hide over and over again.

Eadric didn't remember stopping his assault but awoke from the experience his own blood mingled with the hide of the demonic beast. He stood and wiped the blood from the creature across his face. With vengeance done, his parents could be reborn with no fears. As for him, he would take his rightful place in his Lady's warband – for he was now a man.

## Geography

The land of Varkarna is split into four baronies. These baronies are protected by their lords and there is little travel between them. The land is harsh and dangerous and the wolves and bears that dwell in the snow-swept land keep the villagers in their homes at night. It is said that some of the wolves are possessed by Demons and they lead the other wolves to a thirst for human flesh.

The four baronies each take their name from the noble family that rules them. Although the Barons are now chosen by the King rather than being hereditary titles, the Lords will still take the title from their lands. The King bears the title Lord Varkarna.

### Wolfsholm

Lord Wolf is the ruler of Wolfsholm. The people of this barony are strong in arm and in purpose. Renowned for their strength of will as well as their strength of arms they have the bravest rangers and the strongest warriors. The armies of the Lord Wolf are stronger than any others and they are trained to live off the land and fight under any conditions. The land of Wolfsholm is not good for farming and the people of this land often take their sheep and goats long distances to find land for them to feed on.

### Ravenskeep

Lord Raven is the name given to the ruler of Ravenskeep. The land itself is full of dark forests and the Maestir that dwell within this kingdom live within walled towns within forest clearings. Ravenskeep is the large city that is in the centre of the Barony and here the armies of Lord Raven go out to protect the people of the land. The people of Ravenskeep are simple and superstitious people and the major trade is the farming of wild pigs and boar and charcoal farming.

### Bearsglade

Lord Bear is the name given to the ruler of Bearsglade. The thick forests that run across Bearsglade take up most of the land, but the large lakes and rivers in the middle of the Barony are where the majority of the towns are built. The people of Bearsglade make their living from fishing and from mining for gold in the local area. The warriors of Bearsglade are less organised than the armies of their neighbours but they are just as ferocious.

## Eagilsmount

The Lord Eagle is the ruler of Eagilsmount. The majority of the land here is lush valleys surrounded by high mountains. The farmland in the valleys is the bread basket of Varkarna and the people here are slightly more civilised than the surrounding kingdoms although they are thought to be less hardy and belittled for it by their neighbours. However, the armies of Eagilsmount are the best equipped and the best trained if not the most battle-hardened.

## Stereotypes

**Naturae** are a common sight in Varkarna and most villages have one or two Naturae in the area. The lords of the area will protect the Naturae and the land seeing is as part of their duty as a lord.

**Fae** in Varkarna keep themselves to themselves although they will tend to guide the Maestir where they see fit. They tend to have their own villages where any uninvited meet a brutal death. It is in Varkarna that the **Court of Alder** is based, although there are members of all courts here.

The **Risen** in Varkarna live a hidden life, their very presence seen as an affront to the gods and it is believed that their souls are stolen from the Realm of the Dead by the necromancers.

**Shadowkith** in Varkarna are a rare sight and they are often seen as demon-tainted even more than the tainted are. They are known as the thief's of spirits and it is thought that they do dark magicks using the spirits of the dead as bargaining tools.

The **Tainted** are more accepted in Varkarna than any other country. It is believed that the person who is born as **Tainted** lived a vile existence in their last life, but this is their chance to prove themselves in this life. Although seen as the lowest of the low, the tainted are treated as trying to prove themselves to do their best.

**Yo'Tan** are not often seen in Varkarna but they are seen as the half-bred spawn of demons, worse than the Tainted for these are not human spirits trying to prove themselves but the foul barbaric rage of demons.

## Religion

The Varkarna are rare amongst the Maestir, for they believe in reincarnation. It is believed that the immortal spirit that dwells within the Maestir is returned from the realm of Shadows by Eorthe herself. Those Maestir that are loyal to their lord in life will be reborn into a noble family. The nobles that act wisely and justly will be able to take their place in their lord Grim's halls for eternity. Those that do not act with honour and nobility are reborn as the lowest of the low.

The Varkarna are highly religious and worship of the Pantheon is incorporated into their every day, with praise and offering given regularly.

<b>Grim</b>	-	The Father God
<b>Eorthe</b>	-	The Mother Goddess
<b>Sonne</b>	-	The Lord of the Sun
<b>Ull</b>	-	The Lord of the Hunt
<b>Aegir</b>	-	The Lord of the Seas
<b>Tiw</b>	-	The Lord of War
<b>Hretha</b>	-	The Winter Queen
<b>Eostre</b>	-	Lady of the Springs – Daughter the Mother Goddess and Lord of the Seas
<b>Thunor</b>	-	Lord of Storms - Son of the Mother Goddess and the Lord of the Seas
<b>Niht</b>	-	Goddess of Strife - Daughter of the Mother Goddess and the Father God
<b>Wayland</b>	-	The Smith – Son of the Mother Goddess and the Father God

## Names

### Male Names

Æðelhun	Coenwalh	Eadwyn	Oswyn
Æðelwalh	Cuichelm	Egric	Redwald
Alchfrid	Cuðbert	Eni	Sabert
Aldfrid	Cynegels	Hengist	Swidhelm
Aldwulf	Cynefrid	Hereric	Wulfhere
Alric	Eadbald	Hlothere	Yffi
Andhun	Eadbert	Oeric	
Cearl	Eadfrid	Osfrid	
Coenred	Eadric	Osric	

### Female Names

Aelflaed	Bathilda	Ealdgyth	Milburga
Aelfthryth	Bathilde	Ebba	Mildreth
Aethel	Bathylle	Elfa	Mildryth
Aethelu	Batilde	Elva	Sunn gifu
Aidith	Bertrade	Elvina	Sunniva
Ailith	Branda	Eoforhild	Swanhild
Annis	Cyneburga	Frideswide	
Balthild	Eadburga	Frithswith	
Bathild	Eadgyth	Hrodwyn	

# The Holy Lands

## *Scouting Reports*

Since the Holy Lands were discovered, the dark mists that roll around the lands keep those that seek to explore its mysteries at bay. The bleak mist seeps into the bodies of those who spend the night on these shores and fills their lungs with black bile. Creatures from the Realm of Shadows stalk the night and haunt the dreams of those that have travelled to this most holy of places.

Back home in the lands of Valys, the evil cultists of the Daemon Lords plague the lives of all and seek to steal both political power and the immortal souls of the followers of the Calinthean Lords.

It was in March that the scouts discovered the Temple of the Oracle. The land was scorched and the temple was daubed with blood. Fearing their immortal souls the scouts fled to their ships.

At the beginning of April the rulers of the five nations had a great meeting. The second in the whole of the written history. It was a time of great feasting and equal animosity. Hosted in the lands of the Fian, the rulers of the five kingdoms spoke for ten days solid about what they would do.

It was decided that a great expedition would be sent to the Temple of the Oracle. Representatives of the five nations would all stand side by side to explore the ancient civilization and combat the evils that dwell there. United for the first time in a thousand years the nations would stand against the evils and all that they stood for.

## Glossary

Ankou	A caste of Fae, associated with Death
Chosen	A common name for those born under a destiny, or for those blessed by the gods.
Daoin	The Fae's name for themselves
Demon Tribes	The heathen tribes of Demon worshipping sorcerers
Demon Wastes	The lands the other side of the holy lands where the demon tribes dwell
Father Sky	The Father of the Demons and bringer of Chaos
Fiain	One of the five kingdoms of Valys
Gaia	The Earth, the mother of the Gods and the Fae.
Kith	The common name for the Shadowkith
Maestir	The name for the humans of the Kingdoms of Valys
Mourus	The demon worshipping tribes that dwell in the plane of Vitae
Naturae	Animated spirits of the land
Necromancy	Magicks of life, death and pain
Neverending Sea	The oceans that run from Valys as far as the eye can see
Predani	The name for the people of the Hinterlands
Realm of Shadow	The realm where the magicks of Necromancy comes from
Realm of Vitae	The realm where the magicks of Vitae comes from
Satyr	A caste of Fae, associated with tricks
Shadowkith	A feral race of crow or rat headed creatures
Sidhe	A caste of Fae, associated with Vengeance
Solaria	One of the five kingdoms of Valys
Spirit Magic	Magick based on
Sundering	The great rite that banished gods and demons from the Earth
Tainted	Demon children born to human parents
Ulidia	One of the five kingdoms of Valys
Valys	The land of the Fae where the players come from
Varkarna	One of the five kingdoms of Valys
Vitae	Magick of healing and self-improvement
Vykyr	The demon worshipping cannibals that dwell on the plane of shadows
Yo'Tan	A race of black skinned barbaric creatures