



# ZEITGEIST™

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION

## PLAYERS' GUIDE

FROM THE PEN OF RYAN NOCK



A CAMPAIGN ACCESSORY USABLE BY  
INTREPID HEROES OF ALL LEVELS

COMPLETELY COMPATIBLE WITH  
4TH EDITION DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®





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**DUNGEONS  
& DRAGONS**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME

Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook®, Monster Manual®, and Dungeon Master's Guide® Player's Handbook® 2, Monster Manual® 2, Adventurer's Vault™ core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, LLC

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**SPECTACULAR  
KINETOSCOPIC MARVEL.**

Use the magic of the Internet to view the official ZEITGEIST adventure path movie trailer! Click on the graphic to actuate your browser:







# INTRODUCTION

**S**TEAM AND SOOT DARKEN THE SKIES ABOVE THE CITY of Flint, and winds sweeping across its majestic harbor blow the choking products of industrial forges into the fey rainforests that dot its knife-toothed mountains. Since the earliest ages when the people of Risur founded this city, they feared the capricious beings that hid in those fog-shrouded peaks, but now as the march of progress and the demands of national defense turn Flint into a garden for artifice and technology, the old faiths and rituals that kept the lurkers of the woods at bay are being abandoned.

The Unseen Court, the Great Hunt, and the many spirits of the land long ago conquered by Risur's kings no longer receive tribute, but they cannot enter these new cities of steam and steel to demand their tithe. The impoverished workers who huddle in factory slums fear monsters of a different breed, shadowy children of the new urban labyrinth. Even their modern religions have no defenses against these fiends.

Times are turning. The skyseers—Risur's folk prophets since their homeland's birth—witness omens in the starry wheels of heaven, and they warn that a new age is nigh. But what they cannot foresee, hidden beyond the steam and soot of the night sky, is the face of this coming era, the spirit of the age: the *zeitgeist*.

## CONTENTS

This *ZEITGEIST Players' Guide* contains material for both players and the DM. The *ZEITGEIST Campaign Guide*, also freely available, includes details of all thirteen adventures in the ZEITGEIST adventure path, and should only be read by the DM.

- ♦ **Section One: Characters** offers new backgrounds and equipment for PCs, and guidelines for handling the campaign's industrial age technology with the 4TH EDITION DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules.
- ♦ **Section Two: Setting** describes the nations and history of the ZEITGEIST adventure path. You can read only the parts of this section that relate to your character, or skip over it entirely.
- ♦ **Section Three: Flint** explores the campaign's focal city in detail, and provides an overview of the local offices of the Royal Homeland Constabulary. All players should have at least a passing familiarity with the information in this section before starting the second adventure in the campaign.

## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

- ♦ **Risur.** REES-ser (rhymes with “fleecer”). A native is a Risuri (rhymes with “Missouri”).
- ♦ **Crisillyir.** kris-SILL-lee-ur (rhymes with “this sillier”). A native is a Crisillyiri (rhymes with “this ill eerie”).
- ♦ **Danor.** DAN-nor (rhymes with “fan oar”). A native is a Danoran.
- ♦ **Danoran.** dan-OR-uhn (rhymes with “can foreign”).
- ♦ **Drakr.** DRAK-kur (rhymes with “tracker”). A native is a Drakran.
- ♦ **Elfaivar.** el-FIE-vahr (rhymes with “ell five bar”). A native is an Elfaivaran.
- ♦ **Lanjyr.** LAN-jeer (rhymes with “fan jeer”).
- ♦ **Yerasol.** YAIR-uh-sahl (rhymes with “aerosol”).
- ♦ **Aodhan.** AID-un (rhymes with “Aidan”), traditionally. Sometimes OWD-hahn (rhymes with “loud Ron”).
- ♦ **Srasama.** srah-SAH-muh (rhymes with “the llama”).

## WHAT IF I WANT TRADITIONAL FANTASY?

Some gamers are hesitant to introduce any technology more recent than the Renaissance to their fantasy campaigns. While the conflict between technology and traditional magic is a key component of the ZEITGEIST adventure path, it is certainly possible for the DM to retool the campaign so arcane and psionic power fill the role normally played by industry, leaving primal and divine power to represent “tradition.”

Likewise, if you are playing ZEITGEIST in a different setting, the DM will have to decide how to adapt the geography, history, and cosmology to fit with that world. For questions like this, and any other help you'd like for your game, we encourage you to post on the EN World messageboards, where the community and the E.N. Publishing staff are always willing to help fellow gamers.



## A Step Away from Classic Fantasy.

In the ZEITGEIST adventure path, your characters serve in the Royal Homeland Constabulary of the nation of Risur, protecting the country and its citizens from foreign threats lurking within its borders. During missions of espionage and assassination, your duty will be to root out hostile spies and pursue international conspiracies. As you learn more of your homeland's own secrets, however, your loyalties may be tested, may even be turned, and you may find that it is you whose hand controls the gears of the turning age.

It is not necessary to read the entire *Players' Guide* in order to play. Anything that matters to your game will be introduced in the course of the adventures. We suggest all players give this primer a quick read to get the gist of the setting. Then, to sink your teeth into the world, you can read the full guide to see how ZEITGEIST stands apart from the “points of light” assumed world of traditional DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. If you're interested in learning

more, follow the links to the recommended pages.

## Humans and the Great Nations.

Humans rule three of the five great nations of the region. Their ascendance in the past two thousand years toppled a mighty eladrin empire and has provoked belief in doomsday millennialism among many dwarves. The campaign begins in Risur (pg 17), and every PC should have a strong loyalty to the nation, even if the character does not hail from there.

## Eladrin, Devas, and the Great Malice.

Five hundred years ago the death of the eladrin goddess Srasama caused nearly every eladrin woman to perish. Those few who survived were often claimed as trophies by human conquerors, though a handful of free matriarchs head their own family lines in the ruins of the old empire. Those interested in eladrin characters should read the section on Elfaivar (pg 25).

Mortals present at the death of the eladrin goddess have continually reincarnated in the following centuries as devas, as if a sliver of Srasama's divine spark has granted them a semblance of immortality. Those interested in devas should read the section on Crisillyir (pg 22).

## Tieflings, Technology, and Dead Magic.

When the eladrin goddess died, an entire other nation became a dead magic zone, and some in that land were marked by a curse, turning them into tieflings. In the centuries since, however, the tieflings have come to rule that nation, and in the last few decades they have begun a revolution of industry and mighty science almost as powerful as the magic they lack. Those interested in tieflings should read the section on Danor (pg 23).

If you are interested in utilizing some of the new revolution's technology for your character, particularly firearms, see the section on Equipment (page 12).

## Dwarves, Doomsday, and Nihilism.

The major dwarven nation is bleakly resigned to an imminent doomsday, when ancient horrors will claw free from glaciers and engulf the world in a frigid death. Adherence to duty is so ingrained in their culture, however, that the dwarves continue to toil in their forges even as they prepare for the world's end. Those interested in dwarves should read the section on Drakr (pg 24).

## AN EXCEPTIONALLY BRIEF TIMELINE.

- ♦ **-1200 B.O.V. (Before Our Victory):** King Kelland defeats the fey titans and founds Risur, the first mortal nation on the continent of Lanjyr. In the following centuries, other nations rise up throughout Lanjyr.
- ♦ **-500 B.O.V.:** Triegenes the fisherman founds the Clergy in what is modern-day Danor, overthrows the demonocracy in the east, then dies and ascends to godhood.
- ♦ **-50 B.O.V.:** The First Victory, a holy war between humans and elves, ends with the elves losing much territory.
- ♦ **1 A.O.V. (After Our Victory):** The Second Victory begins as an elven effort to reclaim lost lands, but ends in their decisive defeat when the elf goddess Srasama manifests physically, and is slain. Danor collapses

into chaos as the nation becomes a dead magic zone. The seat of the Clergy moves to Crisillyir, which begins to colonize the devastated lands of Elfaivar. Dwarves seize control of their own nation in Drakr.

- ♦ **300 A.O.V.:** King Boyle of Risur slays the last dragon tyrant of Ber. The nation of Danor, resurgent with industry and technology, begins to contest Risur for control of the lush Yerasol Archipelago.
- ♦ **460 A.O.V.:** King Aodhan is crowned in Risur. He encourages his people to pursue industry so they can fight back against Danor. Meanwhile in Ber, Bruse Le Roye unites tribes of monstrous races into a new nation.
- ♦ **493 A.O.V.:** The Fourth Yerasol War ends; Risur loses many islands.
- ♦ **500 A.O.V.:** Present day.



## Savages, Primitives, and Peace.

Freed from the yoke of toppled dragon tyrants, the youngest of the great nations formed from an alliance of several monstrous races which now live in an uneasy peace as their rulers seek to force the disparate peoples into the modern age. Those interested in dragonborn, goliaths, half-orcs, minotaurs, or shifters should read the section on Ber (pg 21).

## Piety and the Planes.

The heavens possess an undeniable hold on the world's religions, its people, and its very structure. In Risur, skyseers believe that the movements of the night stars foretell the future and direct the fate of the world. More enlightened scholars study distant planes of elemental and temporal power to understand how the flow of their energies affects the fundamental nature of reality. The eladrin people have begun to withdraw into the Dreaming (the Feywild), and the bishops of the high church of the Clergy invoke condemned spirits from the Bleak Gate (the Shadowfell)

to frighten their congregations into worship.

The Astral Sea, Elemental Chaos, and Far Realm exist only as postulations, and there are countless other theories on the nature of reality. No one in this world has ever traveled to these planes, and the few beings that are summoned through the veil are only visitors, returning as soon as the spell that called them ends.

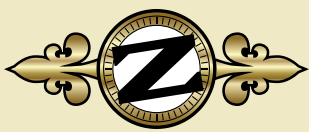
Those interested in the setting's metaphysics should read the section on The World (pg 26).

## Heroic Themes.

Recent products introduced the concept of character themes. The ZEITGEIST campaign setting presents character themes that reinforce the heroic archetypes of an industrialized fantasy world, such as dockers, gunsmiths, and technologists. Each player should choose one Theme for his or her character, preferably one unique to the world of ZEITGEIST (pg 5).







# SECTION ONE: CHARACTERS

**W**E ASSUME AS A BASELINE THAT YOUR CHARACTERS in the ZEITGEIST adventure path will work for the Royal Homeland Constabulary, a Risuri organization created by King Aodhan to monitor threats to his nation, both home-grown and from foreign lands.

Every RHC constable must pass a background check and magical inquisition that proves his or her loyalty to Risur. These precautions allow even foreign-born citizens to serve, giving the constabulary a valuable tool in pursuing investigations overseas. Groups of RHC members are often assigned to pool their talents to accomplish dangerous and complex tasks, such as rescue missions, surveillance to catch smugglers and traitors, and even espionage or assassination.

In the default version of the adventure path, every PC should have a strong devotion to Risur, though PCs can certainly have other affiliations and allegiances that may eventually draw them away. Additionally, over the course of the campaign the PCs will encounter other power groups with their own motivations. One of the themes of the campaign is deciding what one believes in and why, so feel free to nudge your fellow PCs toward one faction or another as the campaign progresses. Remember, though, that games without party unity can quickly turn unfun.

Of course, if your DM chooses, you may begin the campaign affiliated with a different organization, or perhaps as free agents hired by the RHC, much the same way Scotland Yard sought help from Sherlock Holmes. We offer suggestions for such options in the *Campaign Guide*.

## SETTING CONSIDERATIONS

Almost every class power and magic item is available for the ZEITGEIST campaign setting, unless your DM decides otherwise.

Some character options might be exceedingly rare, even unique—like sentient golems (warforged), half-elementals (genasi), or mantis-men (thri-kreen). The nature of the planes of the world makes creatures with the aberrant and immortal origins effectively unknown, aside from devas. Strange races could be reskinned—a bladeling as an unusual dragonborn; a shardmind as a human who fell victim to a strange arcanoscientific accident—or just be from the far corners of the world.

Feats, powers, and items that reference materials from other settings or that involve different planes should generally be reskinned. There's no Underdark or drow in ZEITGEIST, but perhaps a dark-skinned race of elves lurks in the mountains of the Bleak Gate. Nor was there a Bael'Turath, but tieflings could pine for the glory days of their kingdom that existed before the Great Malice.

Gods do not make themselves regularly known in this world, and it is impossible to visit the planes where they reside, so it's even possible to doubt whether they exist at all. You can use existing gods or those of the DM's own creation.

### Classes.

Risuri natives tend to favor arcane, martial, and primal classes. Most warlocks follow fey or dark pacts, since the nature of the planes makes it difficult to contact infernal or far realm patrons.

Few gods have large followings in Risur, but pockets of foreigners or native converts provide a likely source for divine classes. More rarely a person with strong philosophical ideals can wield divine power through the gestalt will of those who share his beliefs.

Psionic classes are relatively new and rare, though many cultures have their own variations of people who seem to be able to see through the veil of reality and forsake the limits of their flesh. In particular, eladrin monks are infamous for their unusual fighting techniques, while dwarven philosophers sometimes possess the powers of ardens.

### Magic.

Only two types of magic are wholly off-limits: long-duration flight, and long-duration planar travel.

The nature of the elemental planes that feed energy into the world makes it impossible for magic to create permanent flight. Powers that grant flight for never last more than five minutes, though flight with wings is fine, as long as the creature is Medium-sized or smaller. There are no flying carpets or airships. Since the reported extinction of dragons, flying creatures do not grow any larger than an eagle or condor.

Likewise, despite theories that suggest it should be possible to travel to distant planets via mighty rituals, all attempts to visit any foreign world never last longer than a few rounds before the traveler is shunted



back to the world. It is possible to wander into the Dreaming or the Bleak Gate and return, but such trips never last long, and are usually only possible when the moon and stars align properly.

Mechanically, this means that no creature can ever leave its home plane for more than five minutes, barring unique circumstances that are beyond the control of player characters. Such options may become available to PCs later in the campaign, but traveling to another world in ZEITGEIST is never as simple as performing a single ritual.

### Technology.

While the city of Flint sits under a haze of coal soot, its streets illuminated at night by gaslight lanterns and its ferries powered by steam boilers, the majority of Risur remains at roughly a Renaissance level of technology. Soldiers carry alchemical pistols as back-up weapons, and elite fusilier units carry muskets and carbines, but aside from the occasional new rail line splitting the countryside, most citizens of Risur never see any of the new technology that is changing the world around them.

To be clear, though, there are no automobiles, electric lights, or flying vehicles. Most firearms still are muzzle-loaders, and rifles only exist as custom creations of innovative gunsmiths.

## CHARACTER THEMES

The nine themes below provide a quick hook to link your character to the ZEITGEIST campaign setting. As with all new character options in this document, we strive to make them as compatible with the Character Builder software as possible. While the powers these themes offer aren't actually in the Character Builder, we have included a collection of these powers at the end of this document for ease of printing, with empty spaces to let you fill in the appropriate numbers.

- ♦ **Docker.** Bohemian working man artists and performers.
- ♦ **Eschatologist.** Philosopher devoted to the proper end of things.
- ♦ **Gunsmith.** Designer and wielder of custom firearms.
- ♦ **Martial Scientist.** Educated and analytical warrior.
- ♦ **Skyseer.** Folk prophet who see the future in the stars.
- ♦ **Spirit Medium.** Contact and control spirits of the dead.
- ♦ **Technologist.** Design small contraptions.
- ♦ **Vekeshi Mystic.** Devoted to the philosophy of slow, proper vengeance against those who oppress the weak.
- ♦ **Yerasol Veteran.** Highly regarded war hero.

### Docker.

Flint's industrial docks—with their unusual conflux of peasant workers, educated engineers, and constantly-arriving refugees from the wars in the border states between Danor and Drakr—have in the past decade given birth to an unorthodox social movement. Graffiti artists brighten soot-cloaked warehouses with colorful murals and boastful self-portraits. Dancers and musicians bolster moods in breezy bars, while amateur philosophers giddy on fey pepper entertain drunken teamsters with humorous moral puzzles that often mock public figures.

Occasionally these popular artists, called dockers, get it in their heads to start a riot or get a tad too precise with their criticism. The dockers and the city police have each taken their hits in these confrontations, and tensions grow higher with every accidental death, but for now Roland Stanfield, the city governor of Flint, seems to have a soft spot for these tepid anarchists.

**Role:** Leader.



## GOLD AND TELEPORTATION

In ZEITGEIST, in addition to its value as a precious metal for jewelry and currency, gold acts as a barrier for teleportation. Characters can teleport freely while carrying gold, but they cannot teleport through an opening framed in gold, so critical buildings often have thin strips of gold inlaid around doors and windows, concealed by additional masonry. Prison cells for eladrin and other creatures thought to be capable of teleportation are often surrounded by rings of gold.

Similarly, a creature wearing a gold ring—or bracelet, or even a thin thread of gold wire—cannot teleport or be teleported, so those wary of abduction might wear hidden gold toe rings to stymie would-be kidnappers. Simply carrying or wearing gold is not a problem unless it forms a full loop. Even with full circles of gold, the protection can be bypassed by simply removing part of the ring. This, combined with the temptation for thieves, keeps gold warding circles from being in common use.



## Playing a Docker.

The docker spirit is not limited just to those who perform in public, but extends to anyone who suffers through hard work and low wages, yet can still appreciate intelligent art for its sublime beauty. The worse conditions get for the workers in Flint, though, the more they turn to dockers for relief from their fatigue. When things get heated, every good docker needs to be able to handle himself in a scrap.

Sometimes a docker gets in over his head, and with a little help from sympathetic bar owners or police officers he'll drop out of the scene and find a new, safer career. In this way, the docker movement has spread to pockets of the city slums and even out to the surrounding farmlands. One popular song on the docks even tells of a graffiti artist who fled to Crisillyir and is now painting cathedrals with subversive interpretations of the Clergy's doctrines.

**Benefit:** If you choose Docker as your character's theme, the party's Prestige with Flint starts at 2 instead of 1. See "Prestige," page 15. Additionally, you gain the following power at 1st level.

### Docker's Jank

### Docker Attack

*In a band, every musician has to know his bandmates' parts in case they need to switch places or pick up the slack.*

**Encounter** ♦ Arcane, Teleportation

**Standard Action**

**Close Burst 5**

**Effect:** You and a willing ally within the burst teleport and switch locations. Your ally may then use a 1st-level at-will power that can be performed as a standard action, with a +2 power bonus to his or her attack rolls.

## Eschatologist.

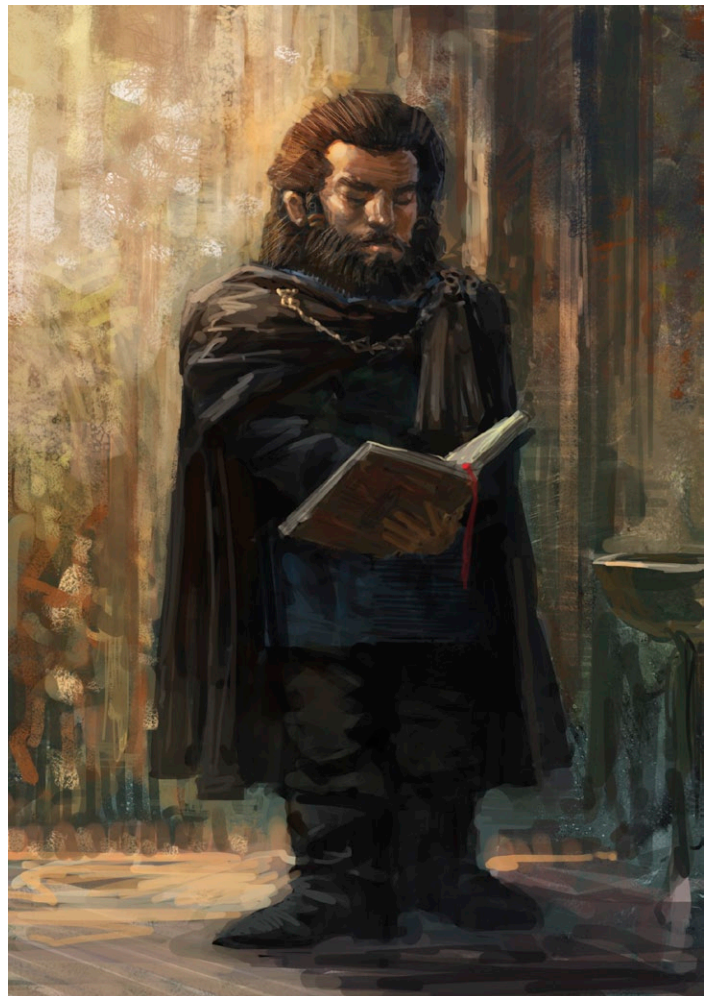
The Heid Eschatol movement began among the dwarves of Drakr, after the scholar Vlendam Heid published a treatise on the myths of his nation and how they continued to influence modern perceptions. The book captured the culture's consciousness, particularly a section that used the legend of the Lost Riders to explain the Drakran tradition of defining civilizations and eras by how they end. In the three decades since its publication, Heid's "On the Proper Endings of Things" has given birth to a whole field of academic study devoted to finding the perfect way to end friendships and romances, business relationships, wars, serialized literature, and even one's own life.

Heid's disciples refer to themselves as eschatologists, from the term for the study of the end of the world. Their popularity has only strengthened Drakr's existing obsession with apocalyptic prophecies and doomsaying, and has raised awareness of their beliefs in other nations. The Clergy, however, denies that the dwarven endtimes are near, and its agents take a dim view of Heid's followers.

**Role:** Controller.

## Playing an Eschatologist.

Dwarves from any nation likely feel some sympathy toward Heid Eschatol, and soldiers who fought in the wars in the border kingdoms between Drakr and Danor often saw enough horrors that when they came home they were comforted by the thought of an orderly judgment day. A handful of apocalyptic cults have sprung up, and increasingly their members are seen less as fringe nuts and more as just another religious sect. Only a few outside of Drakr actually believe in a literal imminent end of the world, with most adherents simply appreciating the comfort they can find by confronting death with reason instead of fear.



Regardless of how a character was drawn to Heid's movement, he is likely to give regular thought to the future, especially to life's thresholds and endings. Every eschatologist regularly updates his will, and pays heed to his companions' desires in the event of their untimely yet unavoidable deaths. A few race toward death, but most are pragmatic and take exceptional precautions to forestall any accidental demise that might ruin their plans.

**Benefit:** If you choose Eschatologist as your character's theme, the first time each encounter that you or one of your allies would die from a failed death saving throw, that character may choose to stabilize instead. Additionally, you gain the following power at 1st level.

### Icy End of the Earth

### Eschatologist Attack

*The world shall end in ice. As you sense the closeness of your own mortality, this undeniable doomsday manifests in your presence.*

**Encounter** ♦ Psionic, Cold, Zone

**Standard Action**

**Close Burst 2**

**Prerequisite:** You must be bloodied to use this power.

**Effect:** You create a stationary zone of unnatural winter in the burst, including your own space. The zone lasts until you leave its area, until you are unconscious, or until you are not bloodied. Creatures in the zone cannot heal damage or gain temporary hit points. Creatures that start their turn in the zone take 5 cold damage. You cannot reduce the damage this power does to you in any way. (Other creatures can apply their resistances and immunities as normal.)

**Level 11:** 10 cold damage.

**Level 21:** 15 cold damage.



## Gunsmith.

Knowledge of fusils—the cylindrical weapons that use explosive alchemical reactions to propel bullets at deadly speeds—has existed for centuries, but these weapons were considered inferior to existing magical attacks, which were more accurate and had less risk of accidental death. Only after the Great Malice did the Danoran military begin to refine and improve fusils. The latest innovations in these weapons, now commonly called “guns,” have led to their spread into Risur and Drakr, where industrial production helps equip armies with firepower on par with a well-trained sorcerer.

Firearms fascinate gunsmiths, who are not content simply to purchase and practice with guns. They tweak and tinker with their own refinements, and whenever two such craftsmen cross paths they bargain and deal for each other's secrets. Especially now that firearms have moved beyond the null magic lands of Danor, seemingly limitless possibilities have opened up for the development of weapons that mix spellcraft and chemistry. Flint's city governor Roland Stanfield is already planning a technological exposition where gunsmiths and other inventors can showcase their creations.

**Role:** Striker.

## Playing a Gunsmith.

Not all gunsmiths devote their combat training to wielding firearms; some just like to have the weapons for their aesthetic appeal, or to take advantage of the common man's fear of their power. More often, though, gunsmiths practice endlessly to improve their aim, and try to learn as

many trick shots as possible to prove the superiority of their chosen killing device. Those with magical training often master rituals to enchant their pistols. One gunsmith, Lerema Kurtz, is said to be able to conjure a cannon from her petticoat pocket.

Many romanticize the deadly purity of guns, or decorate their weapons with baroque inlays and carvings. A few gunsmiths, however, take a bleaker view, rejecting any form of poetry. They just know guns are damned good at killing people, and that life's as good as worthless when a bullet costs less than a mug of beer.

**Benefit:** If you choose Gunsmith as your character's theme, you can perform the ritual *enchant magic item* in order to create firearms and firearm ammunition. Additionally, you gain the following power at 1st level.

### The Man with Two Guns Is God

### Gunsmith Attack

*You have discovered the coolest-looking fighting style in the world.*

#### Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon

##### Standard Action

##### Ranged weapon

**Effect:** You may drop, sheathe, or store what you're holding, then draw one or two firearms.

**Target:** One creature. If you are wielding two firearms, you can target one additional creature within 5 squares of the first creature.

**Attack:** Primary ability vs. AC.

**Hit:** 1[W] damage, and the target cannot take opportunity actions until the end of your next turn. If making two attacks, one target takes damage from the primary hand weapon, the other from the off-hand weapon.

*Level 11:* 2[W] damage.

*Level 21:* 3[W] damage.

**Special:** This power does not provoke opportunity attacks.

## Martial Scientist.

In the war academies of Danor, students speak of combat like a science. Their curriculum involves not merely practicing forms and maneuvers, but writing theses about renowned warriors, or crafting and defending theorems regarding the mechanics of swordplay. The normally reserved Danorans honor the graduates of these battle colleges like other nations honor great poets and sculptors. As those warriors have proven the efficacy of their innovative techniques, the sentiment has spread throughout Lanjyr, and other nations have founded similar schools.

Any brute can hurl a spear or hack through a ribcage, but students of the war academies bring reason to the savagery of war. Often rising to high military ranks, these scholars of battle study anatomy and perform autopsies to learn vulnerabilities of the body, learn physical theorems that underlie the most effective angles of attack and defense, and take time to ponder the psychological and sociological considerations of mortal conflict—from the vast scope and human cost of an invasion, down to the emotional resonance and cultural significance of specific sword techniques through history.

**Role:** Striker.

## Playing a Martial Scientist

Danor has the greatest concentration of war colleges, but the Banhaman Academy in Risur's capital Slate has a reputation for elite siege engineers and artilleryists, and the Battalion outside of Flint has a reputation for training the best wilderness forces in Lanjyr. Smaller local schools mostly serve to provide pensions for retired soldiers turned tutors, but even they have led to noteworthy theses, such as *The Wounding Effectiveness of Stealthy Singular Rapier contrasted with a Twin Strike*





of *Dual Long Swords*, which provoked a very spirited debate and even a few expulsions when things got heated.

In Drakr, emphasis is given to testing the physiological limits of endurance and surviving in battle with limited resources, as would be likely in a world-ending conflict. The Clergy in Crisillyir add a strong theological and monstrous anatomy component to the students in their military academies. The lone war college in Ber has a vast library of battle songs, which according to a disputed theory will inspire the courage and attack accuracy of soldiers, though most likely it is just meant to keep in check the often wild emotions of its bestial students.

You should work with your DM to determine what your graduate thesis was, unless you left before finishing your education.

**Benefit:** If you choose Martial Scientist as your character's theme, you gain training in History. If you already are trained in History, you may gain training in another skill. You are proficient in all military weapons. Additionally, you gain the following power at 1st level.

**Experimental Strike**

**Martial Scientist Attack**

*Scientific breakthroughs are born of both careful study and wild experimentation. Your old reliable attack technique has failed, so it's time to try option B.*

**Encounter ♦ Martial, Weapon**

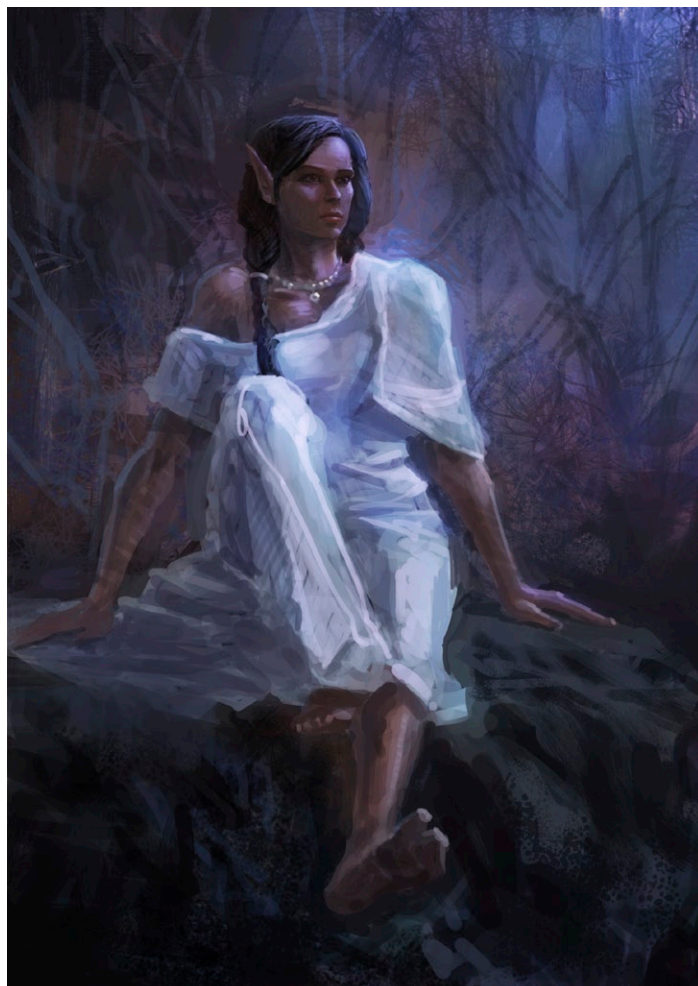
**Free Action**

**Personal**

**Trigger:** You miss all targets with an at-will attack power on your turn.

**Effect:** You may sheathe a weapon or implement and/or draw a melee weapon.

You can shift 2 squares and attempt something the rules don't cover (as detailed in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE), such as slicing a rope to pin an enemy with a chandelier, or smashing a pipe to spray blinding steam on an enemy. After the attack, you may sheathe a weapon and/or draw a weapon or implement.



**Skyseer.**

Truly ancient lore suggests that once the mortal races were able to travel to the stars with the aid of lost magic, much like demons and angels can be briefly summoned into this world. But for the full length of remembered history, the heavens have been nearly inscrutable. The druids, used to thinking in long terms of seasons, years, and the lifespan of trees, were the first to notice subtle connections between the movements of stars and the affairs of this world. They too were first to learn how to step through the veils that lead to the Dreaming or the Bleak Gate, and without their aid King Kelland could never have defeated the fey titans.

For over a thousand years, the druids would gaze into the sky night after night, awaiting dreams that would grant revelations of the future. These seers, by guiding journeyers and heroes with their visions, averted many catastrophes. When the Second Victory led to Srasama's fall, the skyseers read the signs and helped hundreds of eladrin women flee their homeland so they could avoid genocide.

In the past few centuries, however, the many orders and factions of skyseers in Risur have struggled to divine much of import from the stars. Their visions, never precise or clear to begin with, failed to foresee the rise of Danor's industry, failed to avert scores of natural disasters and man-made tragedies. The people of Risur still go through the motions of skyseer rituals, but the old druids' influence has faded. Few young people today aspire to join their once-prestigious ranks.

**Role:** Leader.





## Playing a Skyseer.

Those few who study to be skyseers today usually have a close mentor among the druids. Some may have spent countless nights as children staring up at the stars, before one night waking from a vivid, prophetic dream. Apprenticed to an elder skyseer, they learned the names of the stars and planets, their patterns and influence. Though precise visions are rare, it is still indisputable that magic of travel works better under the full moon, and that any ship that sets sail the night when Jiese enters retrograde within the constellation of the Mad Pirate will face great misfortune before it reaches its destination.

Skyseers favor the night, and with a glance at the starry sky can tell time as precisely as any clock. Even in this new age of technology, most Risuri ship's captains won't sail beyond sight of shore without a skyseer aboard. Though their influence has faded somewhat, they still have strong connections with many families, villages, and organizations, and they can easily find a welcome home—as long as they do not begin speaking of prophecies.

**Benefit:** If you choose Skyseer as your character's theme, you gain the following powers at 1st level.

### Skyseer Vision

### Skyseer Utility

*You find a clear view of the night sky, focus your mind on the future, and await a prophetic dream.*

### Daily ♦ Primal

### Special Action

### Personal

**Prerequisite:** You can only use this power during an extended rest, and only if you can watch the night sky for an hour and then sleep.

**Effect:** Ask up to three questions about possible courses of action in the near future.

At the end of your extended rest, you awaken from sleep having received a vision regarding your questions. This functions similarly to the *hand of fate* ritual, with you receiving vague images that provide guidance.

### Look Skyward

### Skyseer Utility

*You share with your allies a glimpse of the motions of the heavens, revealing fortuitous and unfortuitous paths.*

### Encounter ♦ Primal

### Minor Action

### Close Burst 5

**Target:** One ally in burst

**Effect:** The ally chooses an attack power he knows, rolls a d20, and marks the result. The next time the ally would make an attack roll for that power during this encounter, he must instead use the rolled result. If the power has multiple targets or attack rolls, only the first roll is replaced.

When the ally uses the rolled result, he can still apply effects and powers to modify the attack roll. For example, a human could still use *human perseverance*, an elf could still use *elfen accuracy*, a warlord's *tactical presence* would still grant a bonus if the ally used an action point to use the power, and an avenger would still roll a second die and pick the better of the two results.

## Spirit Medium.

The Danoran industrial revolution has changed the ways of war, giving even the poorest man weapons that can kill the wealthy and well-equipped. Why then should not matters of the soul also move from the purview of the enlightened into the grasp of the common people? So ask spirit mediums, who wish to explain the mysteries of spirits and the afterlife so that men no longer need priests to tell them what awaits beyond death.

Certainly, many mediums are charlatans who prey on the weakness of bereaved aristocrats. But a few have discovered how to contact the dead

through a form of psionic meditation called a *séance*. Some will only use their talents to help those who have a sincere need to know the secrets of the dead, and will only train students who share the same worldview, but most mediums reject such insularity as smacking of organized religion, and will gladly wake the dead for a quick chat at the drop of a few coins.

**Role:** Controller.

## Playing a Spirit Medium.

The ability to speak with the recently departed is of great value to the Royal Homeland Constabulary, which recruits enthusiastically people with useful talents. Compared with the normal life of a medium, criminal investigators seldom have to convey messages between the dead and their living friends and relatives, though such conversations can help elicit otherwise unyielding secrets.

**Benefit:** If you choose Spirit Medium as your character's theme, you gain the following powers at 1st level.

### Speak with Spirit

### Spirit Medium Utility

*With your urging, the spirit of a recently dead person speaks briefly with you.*

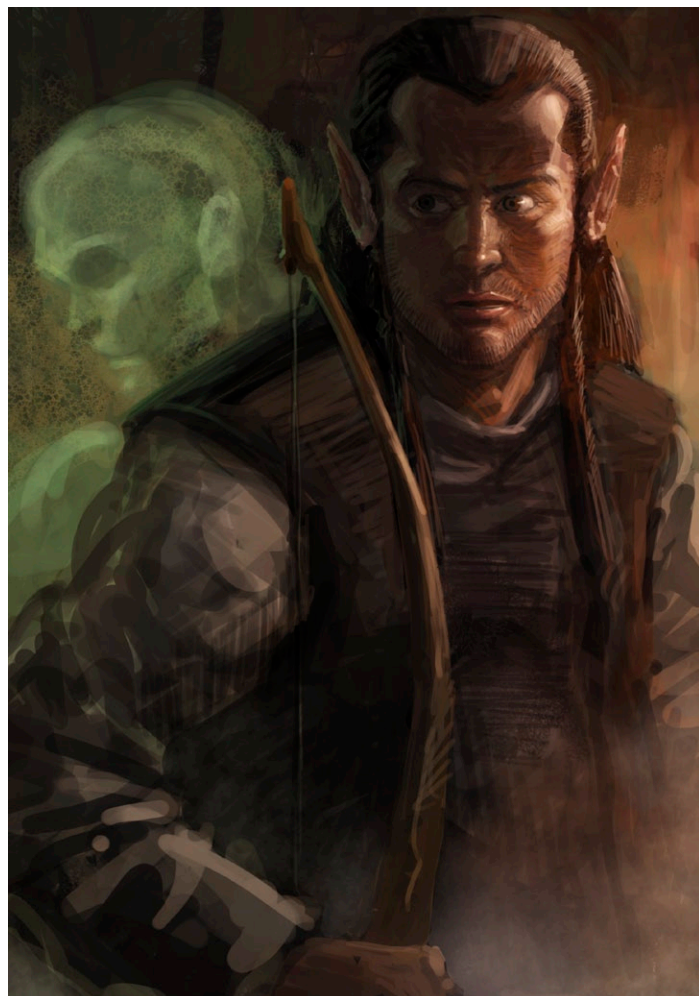
### Daily ♦ Psionic

### Standard Action

### Close Burst 1

**Target:** One creature in burst. The creature must have died within the past day, and must still be dead.

**Effect:** You may ask three questions of the target. For each question make an Arcana, Diplomacy, or Insight check. The DC is based on the target's level, and is Easy, Medium, or Hard depending on the target's demeanor toward you when it died and





how protective it is of the knowledge. If you succeed the check, the target gives you a short answer, usually a minute or less.

At the DM's prerogative, you could also use this power to communicate with uneasy spirits who have not yet moved on, regardless of how long ago they died. Using this power against undead, or in any combat situation for that matter, is possible but very difficult.

**Unfinished Business****Spirit Medium Attack**

*With a manipulative whisper, you call up the spirit of a recently slain creature for one last attack.*

**Encounter ♦ Conjunction, Psionic****Standard Action****Close Burst 10**

**Effect:** Choose a creature that was killed or destroyed this encounter within three miles of your current location. It must still be at 0 hit points or fewer. You conjure the spirit of that creature in a square within the burst. The creature attacks with one of its at-will attacks as if it were alive. You choose the power it uses and make any decisions the power requires, such as targeting or forced movement. The creature gains a +2 power bonus to its attack rolls for this attack, and it deals full damage to insubstantial targets. After the attack, the conjured spirit is removed from play.

**Technologist.**

Some people cannot get enough of new technology. Those with talent tinker or create. Those without collect, study, or simply nag every engineer and inventor they meet. Whether dabblers or professionals, often these technology enthusiasts come up with ideas for devices that straddle the line between clever and impractical.

In Danor, academies train technologists in specialized fields, while in Drakr master dwarven craftsmen guide huge stables of apprentices in the massive engineering projects. Crisillyir punishes such tinkering with holy flagellation, as do colonists in Elfaivar, whereas the native eladrin are as unsettled by technology as are the denizens of the Dreaming. A few enterprising technologists in Ber curry favor of the royal court, which responds eagerly to such intellectual pursuits.

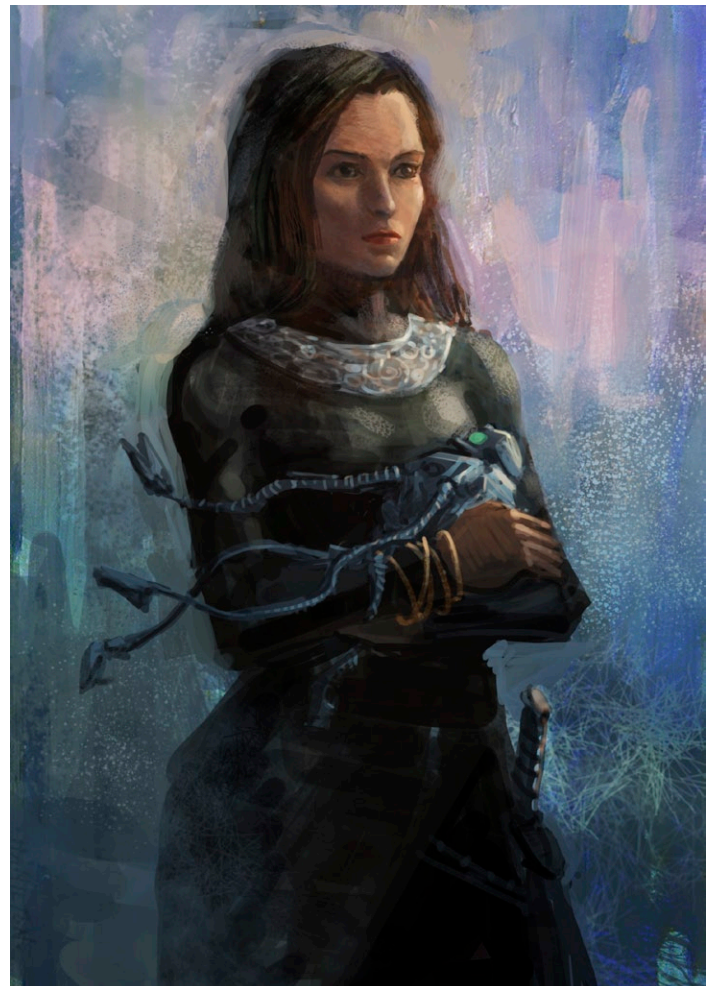
**Role:** Controller.

**Playing a Technologist.**

After centuries of reliance upon swords, bows, plate armor, and the occasional arcane evocation, keeping up with the modern pace of developing technology is daunting to many power groups, especially law enforcement and the military. Such groups might enlist technologists as specialists to explain unfamiliar devices, or to craft specialty weapons or tools. While the Danoran industrial revolution has mass-produced many common tools and weapons, only a few have the knowledge and talent to create custom items.

Technologists tend to gather lots of disposable tools and weapons, so that they always have something handy in an unusual situation. Many make a point to learn a bit of magic or alchemy as well, though every technologist is inspired by a different vision of what technology can provide.

**Benefit:** If you choose Technologist as your character's theme, you will have access to certain technological information and resources not readily available to other characters. Additionally, you gain the following power at 1st level.

**Disposable Simulacrum****Technologist Attack**

*You pull out a pre-assembled gadget, tie it to your life force, and animate it so it can recreate one of your fighting techniques.*

**Encounter ♦ Arcane, Summoning****Minor Action****Ranged 1**

**Effect:** Choose an at-will power you know that can be used as a standard, move, or minor action. You place a Small contraption in an unoccupied square within range. It has your defenses, speed 4, and hit points equal to half your bloodied value. The contraption cannot move on its own or manipulate items, unless the at-will power you chose lets it do so. You can give the contraption the following special command as long as it is within 10 squares of you.

**Standard Action (At-Will)**

**Effect:** The contraption uses the at-will power you chose, using your normal statistics, as if you were in the contraption's square. If the power is sustainable, you can spend actions to sustain it. You cannot enhance the power with power points.

**Vekeshi Mystic.**

If fatalism defines the traditional dwarven philosophy, then the cornerstone of eladrin ideology is that living well is the best revenge.

After the goddess Srasama died and nearly all eladrin women perished with her, there was a great drive in Elfaivar to fight until the last man in a short-sighted bid for vengeance. As the rest of the nation whipped itself into a frenzy, however, a composer named Vekesh wrote a song of mourning that contained a simple sentiment: defeat is only tragedy if we choose to let the story end.





While many eladrin could not be stopped from their self-destruction, Vekesh convinced some of his people that a tale that goes from defeat to revenge to death is a shameful tragedy. Revenge serves only to distract from one's grief, but is ultimately valueless. Instead, he said, a tale of defeat, resilience, and renewal is the best way to thwart their enemies' goals.

The proper form of retribution, then, is to endure, rebuild from weakness, and prosper into strength.

His guidance ensured that in at least a few isolated enclaves, the eladrin race pulled back from the brink of annihilation. In the following decades a loosely codified collection of vekeshi teachings spread throughout Lanjyr. The mantras of Vekesh have helped many cope with loss and find a new path for themselves.

To the general public, though, "Vekeshi" is synonymous with murderer and terrorist. While the majority of Vekeshi avoid violence when possible, Vekesh believed that taking up arms is sometimes necessary to protect those at their most vulnerable. The deepest secrets of vekeshi mysticism are taught only to a rare few adherents who demonstrate a skill for battle, and the wisdom to know when to use their power.

**Role:** Defender.

### Playing a Vekeshi Mystic.

Anyone might casually study Vekesh's teachings for a bit of personal guidance, but to be initiated into the mystical side of the philosophy requires painful rituals. Aspirants are taken in the night across the

threshold of the Dreaming, where they experience the fall of Srasama through psychic illusions, making them keepers of the shared memory of the Great Malice. Thereafter they are held in a cage for days, along with poisoned food that they must resist, so that the starvation teaches them the importance of patience. Finally, they are burnt until their skin blackens, and then are magically healed to seal in the power of the flames.

If a vekeshi passes these trials, he rests and recovers in luxury as his teachers instruct him in the secrets of the philosophy, and drill into him the necessity of discretion. Upon leaving the Dreaming, vekeshi mystics return to their normal lives, but seek positions of power in military, law enforcement, or the underworld, where they use their authority to punish those who continually threaten people who are simply trying to make a better life for themselves.

Vekeshi mystics seldom gather in large groups, but on certain irregular lunar holidays they slip into the Dreaming for secretive festivals. Only on the rarest occasions will a mystic be called to act openly. Donning an iconic mantle of eladrin armor and a mask that conceals his face, the mystic acts as the surrogate hand of the fallen goddess Srasama, with the sole purpose of meting out punishment against one directly responsible for large-scale suffering.

**Benefit:** If you choose Vekeshi Mystic as your character's theme, the party's Prestige with the Unseen Court starts at 2 instead of 1. See "Prestige," page 15. Additionally, you gain the following power at 1st level.

#### Hands of Retribution

#### Vekeshi Mystic Attack

*The faint burning outline of a six-armed goddess hovers behind you. As enemies strike your allies, the goddess lashes out in retaliation with blades of fire.*

**Encounter ♦ Divine, Fire, Radiant**

**Free Action**

**Close** Burst 10

**Trigger:** A creature you can see in the burst hits one of your allies, and the ally is bloodied before or after the attack.

**Target:** The triggering creature.

**Effect:** You deal fire and radiant damage to the target equal to your primary ability score modifier.

**Special:** You can use this power once per encounter at 1st level, twice at 6th level, three times at 11th, four at 16th, five at 21st, and six at 26th, but no more than once per round.

### Yerasol Veteran

The islands of the Yerasol Archipelago were perhaps the most verdant, beautiful battleground in history. During two centuries of intermittent warfare, untold thousands of soldiers from Risur and Danor died among the windblown rainforests and flowered beaches of those isles, trying to protect their homelands' exceedingly prosperous plantations. Those who survived—the ones who didn't succumb to aberrant infections, crippling physical injuries, or unyielding mental trauma—often turned their war-time glory into profit or political clout.

Poets of the two nations memorialized the greatest acts of heroism from the Four Yerasol Wars, the last of which ended seven years past. It's an open secret that history is written by the survivors, and many so-called war heroes were merely lucky enough to witness something brave and amazing, and not die in the process so they could take the credit for themselves. A rare few, however, demonstrated genuine heroism and lived to have their tales told by others.

**Role:** Defender.





### Playing a Yerasol Veteran.

Everyone knows the names of a few veterans who distinguished themselves in battle—not quite famous, but certainly memorable. Every veteran of the isles has a story that made him a celebrity, though many do not enjoy recounting their tales. The fact that everyone likes a war hero doesn't lessen the trauma of having seen friends die.

After two centuries of trial and error, though, Risur and Danor have learned to exploit these heroes of the moment, giving them cushy jobs and helping them reacclimate to civilian life. It doesn't do to have a "hero" become a drunkard and embarrass his nation, after all. The aid and adulation from their nation helps a great many Yerasol veterans become pillars of their communities. Such aid quickly dries up, though, should a hero ever decide to publicly criticize his homeland.

**Benefit:** If you choose Yerasol Veteran as your character's theme, the party's Prestige with Risur starts at 2 instead of 1. See "Prestige," page 15. Additionally, you gain the following power at 1st level.

#### Display of Heroism

#### Yerasol Veteran Utility

*Seeing an ally in peril, you rush into harm's way and cover his escape.*

#### Encounter ♦ Martial

#### Standard Action

#### Personal

**Effect:** Shift 3 squares. One bloodied or unconscious ally adjacent to you can spend a healing surge and may stand as a free action. You may then switch spaces with that ally. You and that ally gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

## FEATS

### Fantastic Contraption.

**Prerequisite:** Technologist theme.

The contraption you summon with *disposable simulacrum* gains a speed of 6, and a Strength score of 1. As long as it is within 10 squares of you, you can spend a move action to have it walk its speed, or spend a minor action to have it pick up or manipulate an item.

### Firearm Expertise.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls with firearm weapons. This increases to +2 at 11th level, and to +3 at 21st level. You can load firearms as a minor action instead of by spending a standard action. When you use a power that lets you make multiple ranged attacks, reloading between the attacks takes no action. See the equipment section below for more information on firearms.

## EQUIPMENT

The new technological revolution has produced new weapons, and some items are unique to the ZEITGEIST adventure path.

### Treasure, Salary, and Requisitions.

As constables of Risur, your characters have a slightly different relationship with treasure than typical DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventurers.

In heroic tier you receive a combination of salary and official stipend to fulfill your duties, and the Constabulary's resources and connections let you easily purchase or requisition the tools you need for your missions. Likewise, you can easily trade in items you no longer need, which can be used by other constables or local police. When you recover rare magic, treasure, or other valuables, you are expected to hand it over to higher authorities, who will make proper use of it. If desired, you can use your salary or stipend to acquire these items for yourself, assuming you file the proper paperwork and your request is deemed warranted.

In paragon tier, your actual salary becomes relatively inconsequential compared to the contacts and allies available in most major cities, who can help you procure whatever you need. You will be entrusted with great wealth, and given leeway to retain and exploit items you recover in your missions. If deemed worthy, you might even be granted access to precious relics held in the Risuri royal vaults.

In epic tier you will have at your disposal the wealth of entire cities or nations, to buy things any sane person would consider priceless: weapons forged from the essence of whole demi-planes, rituals that harness the collective will of a thousand state mages, long-forgotten artifacts unearthed by the concerted efforts of an entire nation's adventurers, all toiling to aid you, their god-like champions. Of course as the campaign begins, affairs of this grandeur are nigh-unthinkable, for no mortal has gained such power in a thousand years or more.

### Working for a Living.

Each adventure in heroic tier will include guidelines for the DM to provide money to you and your fellow PCs at regular intervals, usually once per level. You can use this money to equip your character, though getting uncommon and rare items is not guaranteed.

Whenever you're in a suitable place to shop, you can buy common items without restriction. Uncommon and rare items cost their normal amount, but whether you can get them and how long it takes depends



on your Prestige. (See “Prestige,” page 15.) This abstraction represents what would realistically be a complex system of salary, stipend, and very large quantities of paperwork.

### Upgrades, Loot, and Skimming Off the Top.

You can turn in any functioning item to the RHC for its full value. This allows you to keep yourself equipped with the best material available, or at least the best that government bureaucracy thinks you can be trusted with.

Whenever the party acquires any sort of treasure in the course of a mission, you will be expected to hand it over to your superiors, which should keep you at the expected power for your level. If you recover something you want for yourself, you can spend money to requisition it, though that may take some time.

There is always some leeway, and constables are allowed to hold onto loot for a reasonable period of time. If you defeat a foe with a magic sword, and his weapon would aid you in your immediate investigation, you can hold onto it for a few days, but you're expected to turn it in.

An alternative, of course, is to hold onto items and not report them to the RHC. This is illegal, and would likely be grounds for dismissal. Such pecuniary misdeeds are expected of common police, but the RHC is held to higher standards. If you attempt to sell such an item, you cannot take advantage of the RHC's favorable rates, and must use the normal values (20% base cost for common items, 50% for uncommon, 100% for rare). Be careful, though, because prison is not kind to former law officers who turn to crime.

### Exceptions and Variants.

If you receive a gift, you can keep it, though the RHC might factor it into how much of a stipend they need to provide for your next mission.

If the DM prefers, you could alter the setting so that magic items are rarer. The PCs could use the inherent bonuses rule, and they would be provided a much smaller stipend (about one-fourth the suggested amount), which could be used to purchase expendable items and ritual components.

Finally, if the DM decides to run a campaign where you are not part of the RHC, or if the party decides to spontaneously become pirates out of frustration with the bureaucracy they have to deal with, you can use traditional treasure parcels. The adventures will provide suggestions for what the PCs find and where.

### Drugs.

Neither of the two drugs below have any specific in-game effect, but characters would be aware of them and might even engage in their recreational use.

**Fey Pepper.** This rare plant only grows near paths to the Dreaming, and since the fall of the Elfaivar empire five hundred years ago it has been a black market item in most of Lanjyr. When chewed or smoked, the pepper makes the user giddy and upbeat. With a sufficient dosage, the user begins to hallucinate, though many claim these visions are actually glimpses into the Dreaming.

**Leaf of Nicodemus.** Monks cultivate this herb, which grows best on the islands of the Yerasol Archipelago. When crumbled, rolled, and







smoked as a cigarette, the monk's leaf soothes nerves and sharpens perception slightly. It can be addictive if used extensively, but has no social stigma, unlike fey pepper.

## Explosive Alchemicals.

Early firearms used smoky gunpowder as propellant for its ammunition, but recent alchemical advances have produced firedust. This powdered variant of alchemist's fire produces less smoke when used in firearms, has a lower risk of fouling or corroding the weapon's internals, and is hydrophobic, allowing it to burn even after immersion in water.

Many other firearm accelerants exist, including magmite (a granular black substance rendered in alchemical furnaces) and phlogistite (translucent red vapor slime that floats in globules if exposed to open air), but firedust is by far the most widely used. Steam engines use a variant, firegems, which burn slower but longer.

Firedust is relatively harmless as a weapon in its own right, since it burns too fast to cause serious wounds like traditional alchemist fire. However, if someone ignites a cask full of firedust, the resulting explosion could seriously hurt those nearby.

Use the improvised attack guidelines in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE® to determine damage from detonating firedust, usually the low limited entry, though possibly higher if a character has spent time preparing the explosives. Detonating a cask requires striking the object with an attack that can deal fire damage. A twenty pound cask of firedust, roughly a foot across, might explode in burst 1. A one-ton pallet, enough to fill an entire square, could explode in a Burst 5.

## Firearms.

Firearms use explosive alchemicals to fire metal ammunition. Reloading involves drawing and tearing open a paper cartridge, which contains firedust and a bullet. The gunman pours firedust down the barrel, then packs in the bullet with a ramrod. Pistols and carbines are fairly easy to aim, but the extreme length of muskets (over five feet long) makes them unwieldy for untrained users.

Reloading takes a standard action. Normally powers that let you make multiple ranged attacks let you reload freely between attacks, but you cannot freely reload firearms in this way. For that reason, a typical character might carry a loaded firearm to use as a once-per-encounter weapon. A character who wants to use a firearm as a primary weapon should take the Firearm Expertise feat, which lets him reload as a minor action. A fully specialized gunman may also want Speed Loader, which turns it into a free action.

We understand that many gaming groups use Wizard of the Coast's Character Builder, and that—barring revisions to the software—adding new items is impossible. For that reason, we have based each firearm on an existing crossbow. The firearms trade a slower reload time for the brutal 2 and high crit properties.

To give your character a firearm, just equip the analogous weapon. When you print out your character sheet, you just need to remember or mark the different traits. To give your character Firearm Expertise, instead take the feat Crossbow Expertise. You gain the same attack bonus benefit, but use the firearm feat's faster reloading in place of the secondary benefit of the crossbow feat. Feats, abilities, and powers that apply

## OPTIONAL FIREARM RULES.

The firearm rules are designed to be easy to use while providing enough flavor to differentiate guns from crossbows. The default assumption for the campaign is that firearms have advanced so that they no longer release goutts of smoke or have significant risk of mishap, but neither rifled barrels nor metal cartridge ammunition are in mainstream use. You can change these assumptions if you want, though.

- ♦ **Gunsmoke.** Whenever you shoot a firearm, you create smoke in a Close Burst 1, including your own square. This smoke provides concealment, and lasts until the end of your next turn. Strong winds may disperse such smoke immediately, whereas very enclosed spaces might cause the smoke to linger additional rounds.
- ♦ **Mishaps.** Whenever you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll with a firearm, you can choose to reroll the attack. If you do, the gun is damaged after the attack, and must be repaired during a short rest before it can be used again. Additionally, if the second roll is a 1, the weapon deals 1[W] damage to you. If the gun is magical, it is only damaged if the second roll is a 1 to 5. Magical guns still damage you if the second roll is a natural 1.
- ♦ **Rifling.** Rifling greatly extends the range a firearm can accurately hit a target, though lining up a shot takes time. A gunman can spend a standard action to aim at a target. He chooses a creature he is aware of, and until the end of his next turn he can attack that creature as long as it is within 10 times his normal close range distance. He takes a -4 penalty to this attack roll (instead of the normal -2 penalty for long range). The gunman loses this benefit if he moves.
- ♦ **Metal Cartridge Ammunition.** Metal cartridges require precise weapon design to expel a spent round after firing, but in advanced firearms they allow for much faster reloading. Firearms that use metal cartridge ammunition come in two varieties. The first variety load a single shot at a time, which requires a minor action, or no action if the gunman has Firearm Expertise

or Rapid Reload. The second variety uses a clip or cylinder that contains multiple rounds; reloading is still a standard action, but is only necessary after firing six shots.

Because DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® is a heroic adventure game, weapons of all varieties are arguably less lethal in the game than in reality. However, if you feel guns should be significantly more dangerous than archaic melee weapons, the following options achieve that, albeit by wildly altering the balance of combat and the world's aesthetic. If you use these options, more people will want guns, and fights involving firearms will probably end much more quickly.

- ♦ **Killing Tool.** Firearms lose the brutal property. Instead, pistols deal an extra two dice of damage. A 1[W] attack with a pistol deals 3d6 damage; with a carbine 3d8; with a musket 3d10. A 3[W] attack with a musket deals 5d10 damage. On a critical hit, that attack would do 50 damage, plus 1d10 from the weapon's high crit property.
- ♦ **Threat of Force.** The real power of a firearm is that a character armed with one can easily strike before a melee attacker can close the distance. A character wielding a firearm can make a ranged basic attack as an immediate reaction when a target he is aware of enters a space within 6 squares of him. If the target had cover or concealment relative to the shooter at any point during its movement, it benefits from the cover or concealment for this attack. If the shooter fires, he skips his standard action on his next turn.
- ♦ **Hail of Bullets.** If you're also using the metal cartridge option above and a weapon has a clip of ammo, whenever a gunman spends a standard action to make an attack with a firearm, he can spend one or two minor actions to fire one or two extra rounds of ammunition, divided among the targets of that attack. If he fires one or two extra bullets at a target and beats its defense by 5 or more, he deals 1[W] extra damage. If he fires two extra bullets and beats its defense by 10, he deals 2[W] extra damage.





## Simple Ranged Weapons.

### One-Handed Weapons.

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Pistol	+2	1d6	10/20	25 gp	2 lb.	Firearm	Load standard, brutal 2, high crit

### Two-Handed Weapons.

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Carbine	+2	1d8	15/30	25 gp	4 lb.	Firearm	Load standard, brutal 2, high crit

## Superior Ranged Weapons.

### Two-Handed Weapons.

Weapon	Prof.	Damage	Range	Price	Weight	Group	Properties
Musket	+3	1d10	20/40	30 gp	6 lb.	Firearm	Load standard, brutal 2, high crit

## Miscellaneous Gear.

Item	Price	Weight
Ammunition: bullets and firedust (20 shots)	1 gp	2 lb.
Firedust, cask	20 gp	20 lb.
Pocket watch	25 gp	—
Surgeon's kit: bone saw, debriding curette, ether, forceps, morphium, probes, retractors, scalpels, scissors, sutures, syringe	50 gp	2 lb.

to crossbows also apply to firearms, and any character proficient in a crossbow is proficient in the equivalent firearm.

We admit this is a bit of a kludge, but it should let you take advantage of the Character Builder's automatic calculations of attacks and damage, while giving firearms their own unique identity.

**Pistol.** This weapon is analogous to a hand crossbow.

**Carbine.** This weapon is analogous to a crossbow.

**Musket.** This weapon is analogous to a superior crossbow, from the D&D 4E ADVENTURER'S VAULT®.

## Combination Weapons and Bayonets.

Some firearms integrate a bladed weapon into their designs, such as a dagger with a pistol that fires along the crosspiece, or a carbine that fires down the length of a longsword. Such weapons are almost always custom-built. Other firearms have attachments that let the wielder affix a melee weapon to a gun barrel. Typically this is to attach a bayonet to a carbine or musket, allowing the weapon to be used as a spear.

Mechanically, these hybrid weapons function as two distinct weapons, and each would need to be enchanted separately. Their main benefit is to allow a wielder to switch between ranged and melee attacks without having to draw a new weapon.

The DM should use common sense to determine whether a combination is feasible, and if it should reduce the efficacy of a given power. You might be fine with a rogue using a pistol with a bayonet as if it were a rapier in melee. Likewise, a carbine/axe could theoretically work, but a pistol/spear or spiked-chain/musket is ridiculous. (Some groups might like ridiculous, though.)

## Vehicles.

This campaign heavily features naval vessels. We intend to release these rules as a supplement later this year.

## PRESTIGE

Most fantasy adventurers are “free agents,” with no boss but themselves, usually out on the edge of civilization with few allies they can call on in a pinch. In ZEITGEIST, though, you and your fellow PCs may want to call in favors from the RHC, the local police, or other power groups. The Prestige mechanic provides a quick guideline of how much clout the party has, whether they're calling in a mage to perform a ritual too high-level for them, or trying to get their hands on a rare battle wand before assaulting a criminal stronghold.

The DM will need to track the party's Prestige with five groups: the city and people of Flint, the RHC and greater Risuri government, the Unseen Court in the Dreaming, and two other groups you'll discover in the course of the campaign. Please note that these are just guidelines, and the DM should use his best judgment.

## Using Prestige.

You can use your Prestige to call in favors from allies and requisition gear. The higher your Prestige, the easier and faster you can get what you want. Use the following guidelines to determine the Favor Rating of what you want. Then compare that rating to your Prestige to see how fast you can get what you want. You can make a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 15 + 3 per level of the favor) to increase the speed of your favor one step; for example, from a week to a day.

If the Favor Rating is...	Then your favor gets fulfilled in...
Less than your Prestige	As little time as humanly possible.
Equal to your Prestige	A few hours.
Your Prestige +1	A day.
Your Prestige +2	A week.
Your Prestige +3	A month.
Your Prestige +4	Never.

## PRESTIGE RATING

The prestige rating represents how well-regarded the party is, either as an ally or enemy. If the party thwarts several criminal plots but anger Flint politicians in the process, the syndicate might view them as a significant threat (Prestige 3), even though they're pariahs with the RHC (Prestige 0).

- **Prestige 0:** Viewed with disdain, as buffoons or pariahs. The group will not take the party seriously, which could potentially be useful when tricking enemies.
- **Prestige 1:** The party is relatively unknown to the group.
- **Prestige 2:** The party has done a few noteworthy things, but most in the group don't know them or assume they won't do anything else interesting.
- **Prestige 3:** The party has distinguished itself, and most members of the group know about their actions and talents.
- **Prestige 4:** The group pays close attention to the party, either viewing them as a powerful ally or a dangerous enemy.
- **Prestige 5:** The party is one of the top priorities of the group. A lot of resources are devoted to either helping them out or taking them down.
- **Prestige 6:** The party has the ear of the leader of the group (or actually is in charge), or they're viewed as the face of the enemy.





Calling in a favor represents the party expending its resources and good will to find people who are both able and willing to help, so there are limits to how often the party can take advantage of the Prestige system.

The party as a whole can call in one favor per day from a given allied group. For example, a party with Risur Prestige 2 might call on a soldier for back-up (Favor 1) and get someone to show up in a few minutes. The next day they might call for a ritual caster to craft some common magic items for them (Favor 2), and he'd show up in a few hours. If the next day they requisitioned a flaming sword (Favor 3) to fight a frost monster, it wouldn't arrive until the next morning unless the party pulled some strings or yelled a lot.

If the party needs to call in more favors, one PC needs to make a Diplomacy or Intimidate check [DC 15 + (3 × Favor Rating) + 2 per previous favor beyond the limit in the same day]. For example, if after requisitioning the flaming sword, the party above also needed a squad of four police officers to stake out a wharf that same night (Favor 3), they would need to make a check (DC 24) to even get the favor, plus also another check (DC 24) to round up the squad in time for that evening.

If they failed the first check they'd have to wait until the next day to call in that favor. If they failed the second check, the squad might be willing, but wouldn't be able to get their schedules together until the next day.

All the above favors would be based on the party's Prestige with Risur, and wouldn't count against the limit if the party wanted to call on favors from the people of Flint. If they wanted some street urchins to tail a suspect for a week (Favor 3), and needed a group of technologists to spend a few hours testing the air in various districts for traces of a particular chemical (Favor 4), it wouldn't make the police any less likely to help the party out.

At first, only Risur and Flint count as allied groups. It's possible to find other allies or alienate your existing ones, depending on your party's actions.

The Favor Ratings below are just guidelines. The DM can impose modifiers as he sees fit, or state that certain favors are impossible. For instance, if you call in back-up to a crime scene, and all the officers are killed because you screw up, the Flint police force will be less inclined to send you back-up next time, even if your Flint Prestige Rating hasn't actually decreased. If you just saved the police chief's life and need a dozen men to track down the assassin, you'll have an easier time of that, even if your Flint Prestige Rating hasn't actually increased.

## Requisitioning Equipment.

Start with a base Favor Rating of 3 for Uncommon items, and 5 for Rare items. Add 1 if the item you're looking for is higher level than you. Then add 1 for each other uncommon or rare item you have. Do not count single-use items or items that the group providing the favor doesn't know about.

Remember that the favor only represents making the item available; you still have to pay for it.

## Help in a Hurry.

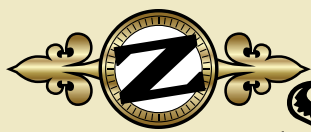
As a default, people doing you favors help for up to half an hour. If you want help for a few hours, increase the level by 1. If the favor requires a day or more, increase the level by 2; if it requires a week or more, by 3. Here are some sample help, provided by Flint's citizens and police.

- ♦ **Favor 0.** Urchins to watch a street for you. A secretary to look through documents or handle your paperwork. A carriage-driver to provide you discreet passage around a district.
- ♦ **Favor 1.** A ferry-man to give you discreet passage around the city. A craftsman to make a custom non-magic item for you. A local bureaucrat to bend the rules for your sake. A journalist to run a story. An officer to provide back-up or investigate a lead for you (treat as a level 2 minion).
- ♦ **Favor 2.** Four officers. A gang of dockers to create a distraction that will likely get them beaten up or arrested. A level 6 ritual caster who knows several rituals (the PCs pay for any ritual components).
- ♦ **Favor 3.** A squad of twelve officers. A level 10 ritual caster.
- ♦ **Favor 4.** A district-wide alert for all officers to assist. A level 12 ritual caster.
- ♦ **Favor 5.** A city-wide alert for all officers to assist. A level 14 ritual caster.
- ♦ **Favor 6.** A call for all citizens to take arms against a threat.

Help provided by Risur's government or the RHC might consist of the following:

- ♦ **Favor 1.** One soldier to fight alongside you (treat as a level 2 non-minion creature).
- ♦ **Favor 2.** Four soldiers.
- ♦ **Favor 3.** A squad of twelve soldiers.
- ♦ **Favor 4.** A company of one hundred soldiers.
- ♦ **Favor 5.** A battalion of soldiers.
- ♦ **Favor 6.** An entire army of soldiers. Principal Minister Harkover Lee, a level 18 ritual caster.





# SECTION TWO: SETTING OVERVIEW

**M**OST OF THE ACTION OF THE ZEITGEIST ADVENTURE path occurs in Risur, a subtropical nation with ancient ties to the magic of its land, struggling to adapt to a recent revolution of technology and industry. While the nation's historic capital lies in Slate with its antique castle manors and elite gated villas, the fulcrum of its power is slowly shifting to Flint, an industrial powerhouse benefiting greatly from the nation's need these past few decades for more and more advanced weapons and warships.

It was Risur's traditional enemy Danor—bereft of magic after a cataclysm five centuries past—which began the industrial revolution. Their steam-powered ships and deadly cannon fusillades won them many battles, but the artificers of Flint are combining magic and industry in ways impossible for their enemies, and the tiefling nobility of Danor seems content with the land it has acquired.

Many of the other great nations, however, fear what Risur can achieve with the marriage of magic and technology, and King Aodhan of Risur worries they might try to disrupt his nation's safety and prosperity.

Elsewhere, the dwarven homeland Drakr preaches of a nihilist doomsday and sells technomantic arms and war machines to warlords and mercenaries across the land. The clergy of theocratic Crisillyir loathe Danor and its tiefling nobility, and they wield piety as a lash to inflame distrust of what they claim is a godless abomination.

Just across a mountain border to Risur's south, the warlike clans of Ber have formed an alliance, which might signal a coming invasion. Even in distant Elfaivar, where a small Risuri colony struggles against settlers from other nations to claim the broken empire's bounty, the natives lash out at these interlopers, unable to forgive a centuries-old grievance still fresh in their long-lived hearts.

## RISUR

Every Risuri child knows that before King Kelland, no human nation had ever endured more than a few years in Lanjyr. The mighty nature spirits only allowed the elves to walk their domain, and they terrorized all others with beasts and storms and blight. But in 1200 B.O.V. (Before Our Victory), Kelland subdued the lord spirits of field and forest, of marsh and mountain. With their grudging blessings he established Risur.

The people of Risur offered the spirits tithing and tribute, and eventually lulled them to sleep. What were once uncharted wilds of fierce fey titans and tiny enclaves of elves became a prosperous civilization of men. In the seventeen centuries since, Risur's rites of rulership have ensured that Kelland's crown only passes to those mighty enough to cow the land's primal spirits should they ever seek to reclaim their domain.

### Land and Culture.

Risur is a subtropical country, possessed of vast forests and fertile fields fed by hundreds of rivers and streams, which flow from the southern Anthras mountains to the northern shore of the Avery Sea. Temperatures are warm but comfortable year-round, though a rainy season strikes near the end of what the northern nations consider summer.

Even the poorest Risuri can enjoy fresh fruit year-round. Wealthy foreigners cherish Risur's pineapples, limes, bananas, and massive jackfruit, but most prized are its cocoa and sugarcane, and alcohols made of each. A typical Risuri meal consists mostly of fruit, beans, bread, and fish, with the occasional beef or pork. Factory workers in Flint seldom can afford quality meat, and instead make savory stews by soaking bones and sausages in dark beans. Holiday celebrations often include steaming milk flavored with either chocolate or honey.

### Terrain.

Four main landscapes make up Risur. The northern Avery Coast is dominated by a mix of wooded beaches—where mountainous granite domes rise out of the sea and anchor dry lands—and forested swamps, often referred to by the native Elven word *bayou*—where the country's many rivers sweep soil out into broad floodlands.

The Westlands of Risur are low plains covering most of the western two-thirds of the country, which draw their name from the countless rivers that weave toward the sea like yarn in a cloth. Most towns and farms lie here, though pockets of wild forests and rocky hills create uninhabitable divides between provinces.

The land rises to the south, and in the mid-altitude hills an unusual swamp wriggles across the landscape, known as the High Bayou. Though the hills are uneven, huge numbers of nesting beasts and giant insects have dammed swaths of the land, slowing the rivers that flow out of the mountains and ensuring a steady source for rivers year-round. Few





Risuri live here aside from tribes of Ber savages, or villages of elves who never integrated with the rest of the nation.

Beyond the High Bayou, the rain-carved Anthras Mountains forms a broad border with Ber. Forests cover most of these mountains, though mining in the east has stripped many peaks. Centuries of attacks from Ber have kept many towns from flourishing here, but numerous old forts dot the King's Road, which runs from the richest mining lands, all the way north to the capital.

### Major Cities.

Risur's capital **Slate** lies on the banks of the Great Delve River, in verdant plains fifty miles from the Avery Sea. It is by far the largest city in the country, with a population of nearly a million people. A half-dozen major highways converge on Slate, including the King's Road. Slate is still the heart of Risur's internal trade and business, though more and more international trade goes through the next-largest city.

The industrial powerhouse **Flint** sits nestled among dozens of granite peaks along the eastern stretch of Avery Coast. With a rapidly-growing population of over half a million, slums for factory workers have begun to clump along these steep hills, while builders work to clear large sections of rainforest from within the city limits. Small satellite towns cling to the islands outside Flint's harbor, and many foreign nations and businesses have flocked to the city to gain influence in the past forty years.

Other prominent cities include the beleaguered **Shale** on the western coast near the war-wracked Yerasol Archipelago, and lumber-rich **Bole** in the Antwalk Thicket southeast of Slate. Both cities were once capitals of their own smaller nations in ancient times, before joining with Risur. A dozen other cities with a hundred thousand or more people dot the coastlines, and a few more flourish along the most traversable rivers, but much of the country's interior is rural.

## LANGUAGES AND ACCENTS.

If you're interested in giving characters from different nations distinctive accents, here are some guidelines. These suggestions are intended for Anglophones, so if English isn't your native language, just choose whatever sounds best to you.

Risur speaks Primordial, the language derived from the ancient speech of the original fey titans who ruled the land. Educated people of Risur often speak Common as well. Risuri speakers have English accents (or whatever local variant of English you speak: American, Australian, Canadian, etc.). All PCs gain Primordial as a bonus language.

The language Common, which served a role in Lanjyr similar to Latin in Europe, is spoken in Ber, Crisillyir, and Danor, albeit with some local variations.

Ber mixes Draconic, Giant, and Common. Berans have a Spanish accent (or Mexican, if that's easier for you).

Crisillyir speaks Common as well as Dwarven, with strong Drakran influences. Crisillyiri sound like Eastern Europeans.

Danor speaks Common, but its schools and academies are strict in maintaining the language's purity. Danorans sound like the French.

Drakr speaks Dwarven. Drakrans sound Russian.

Elfaivar speaks Elvish, plus the Common of their conquerers. Elfaivars should have a non-European accent: perhaps Iraqi, Indian, or Japanese.

### Race and Religion.

The humans of early Risur outfought or outgrew the native elves, though many elves and half-elves call the land home today. The sub-men races from what is today Ber—dragonborn, goliaths, half-orcs, minotaurs, and shifters—survive in pockets, often as the descendants of slaves taken in old wars, now freed but not accepted. Dragonborn in particular are viewed with suspicion, even more-so than the normally reviled eladrin.

Some families of halflings mingle with humans in farming communities, and dwarves similarly in mining towns. Tieflings receive an odd mixture of fear and respect, though common folk tend to believe their influence on the nation is dangerous. Other races are too rare for most people to recognize them, and are generally lumped together with eladrin as being distrusted fey.

Risur's main religion is a mix of old human pantheism, elvish druidic rites, and reverence for local fey titans who slumber in the earth. Centuries ago many gave worship to the eladrin gods or even archfey of the Unseen Court, but such beliefs have faded since the fall of Elfaivar in the Second Victory.

For most of Risur's history, their most respected religious leaders were the skyseers, druids who devoted themselves to understanding patterns in the stars. The skyseers offer guidance and occasionally proclaim prophecies to guide kings, lords, and common folks alike. But the skyseers have many sects, and in the past century their prophecies have grown more and more vague. Many still respect them, but they no longer hold the same political power they once did.

Some elements of the millennium-old Clergy faith have taken root in Risur, in particular the Great Man doctrine, which sits well with a people whose first king personally changed the course of history. However, Risuri reject the Clergy's elaborate celestial hierarchy of planar domains and stars, which states the dots in the night sky are actual worlds of their own. To the Risuri, such belief reduces the prominence of the mortal races, instead placing greatest import on beings from realms no man has ever visited.

### Fey and Mortal Realms.

The folk of Risur know that the Dreaming exists, though they might call it the Feywild, the Green Land, the Unseen House, the World Beyond the Looking Glass, or the Happy Hunting Grounds. Most Risuri treat it like an unpredictable neighbor. While human kings rule in the material plane and there are clear cities, nations, hierarchies, and borders, the Dreaming follows rules mortals can only struggle to understand.

Once every few years the Unseen Court sends emissaries to collect the tribute that King Kelland promised the fey titans at Risur's founding, typically made in the form of magic items, prize hounds and horses, or more exotic gifts. In one notable event, a cadre of archfey arrived on the summer solstice and demanded one thousand engraved silver moons before sunrise.

The ultimate desires or motives of the Unseen Court are unknown, but so far their requests have never been onerous. When they are not appeased, however, they retaliate by seizing infants from cribs, driving wild animals into cities, or calling forth impossible weather like flash-droughts and hailstorms of frozen toads.

The most famous manifestation of the Dreaming in Risur is the Great Hunt. Every seventeen days an army of mounted fey warriors gallops across the length of the nation, avoiding cities and sticking to the uncertain borders of civilization and the wilds. The wind carries the stamping of their steeds' hooves, the melodies of their riding sounds, and the baying of their hounds, but they are only ever seen by the light of the full moon.





Many folk charms are said to ward off the unwanted attentions of the fickle fey. Lines of salt supposedly block their crossing, iron and the sound of iron bells are thought to drive them away, and red liquid—blood, paint, or muddy clay—supposedly distracts their attention. The fey are reportedly unsettled by anything with spinning parts, from wagon wheels to the gears of a clocktower, and often try to break such devices as fervently as a man might chase a mosquito. On the other hand, milk or cheese left outside a home might win a fey's favor. Of course, the fey are a fickle lot and do not always follow their own rules.

### Monarchy and Government.

Risur's current monarch, **King Aodhan**, rules from Torfield Palace in Slate. Now in his seventies, Aodhan was only thirty when the previous king chose him as his successor. Aodhan had distinguished himself in the Third Yerasol War against Danor, performing feats of strength and heroism most men today assume are just tall tales.

Aodhan has always been fascinated by Danor's technology, ever since he lured its first steam-powered warship into a kraken's reef lair, waited for the crew to abandon ship, then beat back the kraken and single-handedly piloted the vessel—still bearing scars of the kraken's tendrils—to the harbor of Flint. Once he took the crown, Aodhan pushed for industrial investment to keep up with Danor, but regional governors forced him to keep foreign technologies out of Slate. Flint became the next most obvious choice.

King Aodhan's aged wife died four years ago. Though heredity and

marriage has little impact on national succession, many wonder whether the king will seek a new bride so late in life. Despite his great strength in his youth, the king grows weaker each year.

Many suspect he will name his youngest sister **Duchess Ethelyn of Shale** as his successor, and indeed she has distinguished herself as a leader in the Fourth Yerasol War that ended seven years ago, despite that her city nearly fell to Danor. She is rumored to have close ties to the Unseen Court, and acts as Risur's ambassador to its nearest neighboring nation. However, her coronation would be the first in Risur's history that transferred the crown between two blood relatives.

### Politics.

Twenty-three governors direct the affairs of Risur's various provinces. Most of these are of noble lineage, descended from one of the nation's previous kings. Noble governance tends to follow family lines, unlike the crown. Each governor sends several representatives to the national Parliament, which handles the details of implementing the king's decrees. Various officers of the court and of Parliament direct specific sub-bureaucracies and agencies to handle affairs involving the nation's commerce, culture, defense, and so on.

One famous exception to the power of the nobility is **Roland Stanfield**, the deva governor of Flint. Five hundred years ago he witnessed the fall of the eladrin goddess Srasama, and in various reincarnations he has called Risur his home ever since. Forbidden by the rites of rulership from pursuing the crown because he is no longer precisely "mortal," Stanfield was long content to govern Flint and its relatively



## THE SWORD OF THE BLACK NEEDLES

Five centuries ago, as Lanjyr was reeling from the fall-out from the Great Malice, a fey titan known as the Voice of Rot rose up against Risur and cast a smoky pall across the sun. The king at the time, Dukain, was a mighty but aged wizard who wielded magic through his sword. He traveled to a mountain ridge overlooking the High Bayou, known as the Black Needles, and there he battled the fey titan, which had taken the form of a towering anaconda of smoke and peat.

The king battled the titan high into the Black Needles, and after three days neither side could force the other to surrender. Realizing he could not defeat the titan and thus was unworthy of his crown, Dukain cast aside his sword and abandoned the battle. The titan, in its fey logic, saw that it and the king were equally matched, so when Dukain ceased to fight, so did the titan. Dukain yielded his crown to his chosen successor, the titan returned to its slumber, and Risur was saved.

Scholars fear that should the lost Sword of the Black Needles ever be recovered, it would signal a resumption of battle for the fey titan, and once again threaten the existence of Risur.

insignificant province of farmers, miners, and fishermen. When King Aodhan decreed Flint would become the seat of Risur's industry, however, the old deva eagerly took to the challenge, claiming he was excited to try something new after so long.

### Royal Homeland Constabulary.

With the recent influx of foreign technologies and therefore foreign influence, King Aodhan ordered the formation of a new government agency to protect the traditional identity of the Risuri homeland. Within a decade this mission had morphed into investigating significant threats

to the nation, particularly those involving technology. Today the Royal Homeland Constabulary uses a combination of investigators, spies, and warriors to root out, undermine, capture, and if necessary kill any groups who endanger Risur.

Though most activity occurs in Flint, officially the Constabulary's central chamber is based out of Slate and headed by **Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill**, who was a commander in the Fourth Yerasol War. His Lordship's greatest success as director was presiding over the apprehension of a group of Drakr necromancers attempting to animate undead dragons in the Anthras Mountains.

The Flint branch is run by **Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby**, who recently won the role through political assignment after the former director lost favor in a scandal. The directorate in Flint keeps busy thwarting arms smuggling, industrial espionage, and the sorts of magical and monstrous threats once handled by plucky self-motivated "adventurers." Regardless of where they are based, agents of the Royal Homeland Constabulary have broad jurisdiction throughout the nation, and enjoy mild immunity while overseas when acting in an official, acknowledged capacity.

### History and Place in the World.

Risur paved the way to nationhood, and many others followed the same path. By placating, tricking, or slaughtering the dominant fey titans of Lanjyr they turned the continent into a land for mortals. The Risuri people have always respected the spirits and the fey they share the land with, but they believe the era of those beings has rightfully passed.

While the northern nations waged holy wars between the Clergy and the Seedism faith of Elfaivar, Risur was preoccupied defending its borders from the sub-men of what is modern Ber. The dragons who terrorized the lands south of the Anthras Mountains feared the progress of civilization, and would often gather armies of savages to raid or assault Risur. It is believed that three centuries ago King Boyle slew the last great dragon of Ber, after which attacks from the south finally faded.





No sooner had Risur found safety to its south than did Danor arise in power to the north. Risur and Danor have warred for nearly two hundred years, mostly using the islands of the Yerasol Archipelago as a proxy battle ground, in a series of four Yerasol Wars. Occasional waves of conquest have lapped over each nation's shores, and today the two countries have more in common than either likes to acknowledge. The current king assumed the throne at the end of the Third Yerasol War, four decades ago, and he presided over the fourth, in which Risur lost much land against the threat of Danor's superior technology.

Leaders of Risur's merchant guilds, its military, and its noble families are grateful for the stability, but fear a resumption of hostilities. They have taken advantage of the new international cordiality in order to catch up with Danor's technological revolution. Whether the next threat comes from Danor or another foe, Risur is arming.

## BER

Ber's history is tied to dragons. Until just a few centuries ago, the land was in constant flux, with different dragons battling for supremacy while the mortal races served as their slaves. Tribes of dragonborn, goliaths, minotaurs, orcs, and shifters ascended to tiny nation states under the banners of their draconic overlords, built cities and strip-mined mountains to gather wealth for these kings, and eventually collapsed into chaos when their rulers fell. Newborn nations conquered each other like a ring of serpents devouring their tails, and whenever a dragon had will-power enough to unite all of Ber, it would inevitably make the mistake of pressing into Risur or Elfaivar, and be slain in retaliation.

Despite the endless turnover of rulers, Ber did manage to establish a few long-lasting cities—Ursaliña, Reo Pedrecoso, and the capital **Sego-briga**, among others—and develop a shared culture. After the death of the last dragon king two hundred years ago, Ber splintered into racial and tribal factions. Only in the past forty years has a semblance of unity returned to the land.

## Le Roye Bruse.

Four decades ago, an orc warlord, Vairday Bruse, declared himself king of Ber after he managed to conquer the three largest cities in the land. Risur expected an imminent invasion, but instead the new king opened diplomatic channels with Danor and arranged for the construction of factories. The wealth from this new industry helped keep tribal warlords cooperative, and the work gave would-be soldiers something to do with their energy.

Dubbed "Le Roye," a Danor diminutive for "the king," Bruse managed

to keep peace until his death five years ago, and had the foresight to arrange a peaceful transition of power. He took his cue from Risur, and passed the crown to a respected ally who was not a blood relative; indeed he was a minotaur, not even an orc. The new king kept his predecessor's name in place of the typical "king," and so was crowned **Bruse Shantus**.

Though there are still factions in the Anthras Mountains who refuse to bow to the new monarchy, many old enemies are now clamoring for a share of this new prosperity. Against nearly everyone's predictions, it appears that Ber will endure as a unified nation.

## Executores dola Liberta.

One of Vairday Bruses's more contentious programs was to aggressively end the practice of slavery except as a punishment for criminals. He enlisted bureaucrats from Crisillyir to reform the country's legal system and track convicts, and then created a law enforcement group of warriors and priests, the Enforcers of Freedom.

Comprised primarily of women, the *executores dola liberta* are officers of the king, tasked with wandering the country and finding rich or powerful people who abuse their station by forcing others into slavery or slave-like conditions. Such wrongdoers they thrash brutally, dragging them into public locations and pummeling them with royally-empowered fists or staves while proclaiming the person's crimes.

They inflict similar punishments on those who try to quash protests, silence vocal complaints, forbid undesired religious practice, or hoard wealth from those they tax rather than providing value for their money. Membership in the Enforcers is strictly monitored, and those few who hypocritically abuse their own authority suffer excruciating public torture, then are executed.

## Remnants of the Dragon Kings.

Ber cities tend toward stout, vertical buildings with prominent rooftop perches. Dragons no longer alight these roofs, but they have become part of Ber's romantic conception of its own identity. Many festivals are celebrated on these old draconic perches, and many inventors from Crisillyir come to Ber to study winged flight and test glider designs. Window cleaners can commonly be seen swinging from colorful ropes tethered to high rooftops, singing of lovers meeting to watch the sunset from the top of the city.

In the countryside, the dragon kings left an even more obvious mark: megafauna. Beasts of great hunger and great size, dragons protected herds of elephants, massive cattle, and deer as large as houses, forbidding their enslaved mortals from hunting the creatures. Huge swaths of Ber are still relatively uninhabited because these megafauna and the giant bears and tigers that hunt them pose too great a threat for cities to endure. But some ranches have managed to domesticate these titans, which can feed a whole village for days. Wealthy foreigners pay huge amounts for the privilege of serving such a beast at their banquets.

The nation bears the scars of many mines. Sadly, the wealth from these mines is mostly lost, hidden away in the lairs of paranoid dragon kings, and booby trapped even after the tyrants' deaths to prevent their recovery.

## The Panoply.

This young movement consists of a few educated Berans who have proclaimed themselves scholars. Inspired by the new—and comparably peaceful—cooperation among the many races of Ber, they have begun to found schools throughout their nation. There they educate students

## THE TYRANT'S EYE.

In 700 B.O.V., the dragon Yerev controlled a small empire, cowing his enemies with the power of his unblinking third eye. It was said this pale, scarred orb could slay any creature it could see. On a moonless night, an army of thousands rose up against the dragon tyrant and managed to slay the beast, but when he collapsed, his eye remained open, killing any who crossed its path.

Nearby townsfolk carefully surrounded Yerev with all his treasure to appease his spirit, then carted the soil from the nearby hills to bury his corpse, finally blinding his eye. Supposedly the only sign today of Yerev's cairn is a field of lush potato flowers. Only the most foolish or desperate seek the treasure, lest they inadvertently unearth the deadly eye.



in matters of art and culture from around the world, pursuits normally mocked by those who follow the old tribal ways.

A few traveling professors from the Panoply schools have made a splash among the dockers in Flint, and every year more foreign artists and poets attend the parties of wealthy Beran nobles who are eager to appear cultured.

### The Ursaliña Bear Games.

The mountain city of Ursaliña hosts a strange tradition, wherein those who wish to act as ambassadors of Ber hold proxy battles using trained short-haired bears, each standing a dozen feet high at the shoulder. A great coliseum, once used for entertaining bloodthirsty dragon tyrants, now hosts these vicious battles, which occur every few months; different days determine the positions of different ambassadorships.

Thousands turn out to watch the games, which are surrounded with grand pomp and much feasting. The fights between the bears are seldom to the death, because each beast is worth a small fortune. One game five years ago, however, witnessed an event so unbelievable that word of it spread throughout Lanjyr.

A minotaur merchant, **Brakken of Heffanita**, was competing to be named Ber's ambassador to Orithea, a tiny wartorn nation between Danor and Drakr, when his dire bear had its throat mangled in the arena. Brakken leapt into the arena and stepped between his bear and its opponent, staring into the other bear's eyes. To the shock of the crowd, the other bear hesitated in its attack, then fled, as if intimidated by a person half its size. Bruse Shantus gladly named Brakken an ambassador.

Perhaps even more unexpected, two years after Brakken began his ambassadorship in Orithea, the country's civil war ended, and it came under the protection of Danor. Today Orithea is part of the rail route along the north Avery Coast, and it is enjoying unprecedented prosperity.

This past year, Brakken competed to become ambassador to Risur, and won without any challengers.

### Fear of the Clergy.

Ber has never had any close ties to Clergy religion, for it was insulated by its neighbors. Some eladrin sought refuge in Ber after the Second Victory, and brought with them great distrust of the Clergy. Ber's religions are a disjointed mish-mash of different tribal beliefs, involving hundreds of gods and spirits without any unifying doctrine.

Recently, however, preachers from Crisillyir have begun to visit Ber,

and a few have set up missions to spread their faith. Some of these have been met by violence retaliation, including one incident where an Enforcer of Freedom tossed a battered priest into a rowboat and told him to return home after the man's church abducted several children from a nearby village under the auspices of teaching them.

Ber has seen what the Clergy can do to a nation when they disagree with its faith. Especially since the Bruse became so friendly with Danor—itsself deemed heretical by the church—many in Ber fear that Crisillyir might someday invade in a bid to forcibly convert them.

## CRISILLYIR

Crisillyir is ruled by the hierarchs of the Clergy, the religion that freed the nation from demonic rule a millennium ago. Today, Crisillyir is a rich land, its fields bountiful, its coffers full of colonial gold. Centuries of divine rituals have turned its great cities into beacons of enlightenment and magical research, though this prosperity seems to attract attention from supernatural threats. Elaborate aqueducts feed water from the snowcapped Enfantes Mountains throughout the nation; it is said that each column in the aqueduct system is engraved with one chapter from the Clergy's holy book, acting as a massive ward against the ancient evil that still lurks in the land.

In Crisillyir, the power of the church is supreme, but not unquestioned. While the grand summoners conjure forth tortured specters from the Bleak Gate to cow their flocks into piety, collegial arcanists debate conceptions of the cosmos that do not match church dogma. Fat merchant lords pay lip service to the faith, sell weapons and ritual components to eladrin assassins, then purchase indulgences to absolve themselves. And though the inquisitive gold-mantled *geneu credetos* ("spirits of belief," or more commonly "godhands") are tasked with guarding the nation from unholy, fey, and undead influences, criminal organizations nevertheless manage to smuggle in contraband and use resurrections to extort even the dead.

### The Clergy.

According to the church's holy text, one thousand years ago a human fisherman named Triegenes from what today is Danor discovered the secret of divinity while lost in a storm at sea. He returned and preached about the divine spark within all mortals, and how by constantly challenging oneself, a person can become like a god. He inspired followers to fight beside him, and together they toppled tyrants, slew legendary monsters, and eventually established a new nation, based upon a hierarchy of divinity, where rank and reward were based solely on merit.

After his kingdom was established, Triegenes undertook the greatest challenge left in the mortal world: to defeat the demonocracy that oppressed the lands to the east. He confronted the abyssal lords who had taken residence on this world, sacrificed himself to banish them forever, and then left his mortal shell and ascended to godhood.

The Clergy believe in many gods, with no pinnacle godhead, but they preach foremost the teachings of Triegenes, that every man has greatness within him, and he merely needs to be challenged to awaken his potential. And while a thousand years have burdened this original message with a complex celestial bureaucracy, vaguely-interpreted visions of a multiverse of planes, and a strong emphasis on the superior potential of humans above all other races, the simple dogma that anyone can improve their life, and that indeed this is the main *purpose* of life, holds strong appeal. The Clergy is now the most widespread faith in Lanjyr.

## THE HUMBLE HOOK.

When Triegenes passed on from his mortal shell, the prelates of the Clergy cremated his remains in a grand state funeral. As they gathered his ashes to spread across the nation's soil, they found a small harpoon hook—the kind used by some fishers—which somehow had been caught in the living god's body since before he achieved divinity.

The priests crafted the hook into a pendant, and for over a thousand years it has been worn by the hierarchs of the faith, as a reminder that we all have humble origins. Doctrine claimed that it let its wearer learn the history and background of anyone he met, allowing the leader of the faith to deal with overly prideful enemies and heads of state.

In 260 A.O.V., however, it was lost when an eladrin assassin slew that era's hierarch and stole the pendant. Critics of the faith claim that its loss was part of a plan to steer the Clergy away from its original humble core, so that high priests could better profit from their stations.



## Cities and Colonies.

The capital city **Alais Primos** is dominated by massive temples, sepulchers, and libraries, some so large they straddle the canals that run through the city. Since the Clergy views the godless tieflings of Danor as apostates, industry and technology are forbidden in Alais Primos. Confiscated items are ritually disposed of in a fiery rift of Enzyo Mons in the nearby mountains, symbolically casting back the tools of evil.

The island city of **Sid Minos** is site of the nation's greatest naval yards and its military academies, which train paladins and warpriests to hunt unnatural beasts, as well as fight foreign armies. Tunnels and dungeons riddle the rocky island beneath the city, and undead horrors occasionally emerge from these dark lands, but their source is unknown. Because the hierarchs view Sid Minos as already somewhat tainted, they allow technology onto the island.

An isthmus connects Crisillyir and Elfaivar, and the city of **Vendricce** has grown fat from taxing trade through its gates, including the Avery Coast Railroad feeds through the city and into Elfaivar.

After the eladrin empire fell in the Second Victory, Crisillyir and the other conquering nations established garrisons within the collapsing eladrin nation, and divided the land into several colonies. Despite the great wealth these colonies provide, they are a thorn in Crisillyir's side; intermittent rebellions and acts of terrorism target the colonial governors and their allies in the homeland. At least once a decade, a spree of assassinations strikes, shaking the complacency of the nobility, and frightening the common folk.

## Devas, Angels, and the Dead.

The Second Victory ended with a legendary battle just outside the walls of Alais Primos, where legions of Clergy-blessed warriors faced an army led by the goddess Srasama herself. After hours of battle, Srasama was felled by a thousand cuts, and fire exploded from her body. The warriors closest to her were annihilated, but those who survived and were close enough to see the death of a god were marked by the experience.

Many of these veterans settled in the lands liberated by the eladrin army's retreat. In the years that followed, whenever one of them died, open flames would flicker for miles around, and somewhere within three days' travel the man or woman would be reborn in the wilderness. No longer quite human, these reincarnated souls took the name *deva*, from an eladrin word for deity.

When a *deva* reincarnates, he recalls language, culture, and enough knowledge to make his way in the world, but usually possesses only vague recollections of his previous life. Acquaintances are unfamiliar, and expert skills like magic, craftsmanship, or swordplay fade, but usually the *deva* quickly slips into the same basic role he held before death.

Where *devas* are rare, one that dies is usually found quickly after reincarnation, and after a period of acclimation he will manage to continue as if nothing had happened at all. In Crisillyir, though, *devas* are common enough that they seldom manage to return to their previous lives. In either case, *devas* still fear death because it means an end to all they are. While a reincarnated *deva* might be able to continue the same mission, he'll never recreate the emotions and memories that made him unique.

Many *devas* find a place in the Clergy, where through special training they can act as vessels for invoked celestial beings. Such angelic visitations never last long, and occasionally result in the death of the vessel, so they are only used in situations where the priesthood feels inadequate to answer questions of guilt or opine on matters of morality.

In a similar way, on certain bleak holy days the priests of the Clergy will reach through the veil into the Bleak Gate and capture uneasy



spirits, which they parade in front of crowds of worshippers. Compelled by magic, these undead specters wail about the sins they committed in life that left their souls trapped in "Purgatory." The priests then offer absolution and destroy the unholy beings.

## The Family.

One of the few chinks in the strong face the Clergy presents is a criminal organization known as the Family. Most people only know of them in rumors and hearsay, but it is said that they are behind most of the crime on both sides of the Avery Sea.

## DANOR

Guided by a congress of businessmen and scholars, Danor is devoted to endless progress. Old beliefs, especially religion, are cast aside in the face of newer and more profitable ideas. After surviving an apocalyptic collapse five hundred years ago, reason and hard work have created armies more powerful than any in the world, where a common man can wield weapons as mighty as the magic of legendary heroes. After centuries of complacency, the other great nations eye Danor with envy, and with fear.

Following the Second Victory, the social order in old Danor was upended. The Great Malice left the capital of the Clergy bereft of magic. Horrible monsters spawned in the border regions of wild magic wrought havoc as quivering holy warriors struggled to destroy them without their divine aid. The whole country was cut off from its usual channels of communication, and in a matter of weeks, thousands of priests killed



themselves, believing their gods had died, and many more fled in every direction. A once-mighty nation fractured into desperate enclaves, and the old capital was abandoned as an accursed place.

After decades of chaos, a tiefling named Jierre, once a priest near the top of the sacred hierarchy, gathered the fractious leaders and managed to convince them in the span of a mere five years to reunite under a new vision. If the hands of the gods could no longer reach into Danor, then it would be the hands of mortals that would give them power and safety.

It was magic, after all, and the superstitions and archaic beliefs that were its trappings, that had held back the people of Danor from their potential. Jierre understood that they had a unique opportunity. No foreign nations would bother a land without magic, so the new Danor needed not to worry about invasion. It would decide its own fate, and as long as all were devoted to the ideal of progress, Danor would one day be the strongest nation in the world. Finally, after centuries of insular work and struggle to build a new society, Danor has begun to claim its place in the world.

## The House of Jierre.

Common belief attests that Srasama cursed the leaders of the Clergy with infernal horns and jagged tails, sacrificing half her mortal followers in a Great Malice when she realized she could not defeat the armies arrayed against her. When Jierre united Danor's factions, almost all those so accursed, dubbed "tieflings," joined him. Some became decisive merchant leaders, while others took a role in government.

Jierre, for his part, refused to be crowned king, and for his remaining years he served as part of a congress of peers. In the centuries since his death, though, his family—tieflings all—has proven a source of many great

statesmen, scholars, and inventors. Though officially Danor has only a Congress and a Sovereign who is elected every decade, the House of Jierre is effectively Danor's royal family. Where they point, most follow.

The Sovereign today is **Han Jierre**, former president of the nation's oldest and most prestigious academy of war, the *Jierre Sciens d'Arms*. Various relatives and in-laws hold many positions in the government and military. A few have even traveled abroad to study magic and apply Danoran principles of science to explain how it works, rather than relying on traditional beliefs. So far, detailed theories have eluded them, as if magic itself refuses to let itself be understood.

Without a doubt, the House of Jierre rules Danor, but their prominence has not gone uncontested. In past periods of riots and protests, though, it certainly helped that, even in a realm where ritual magic does not work, any tiefling can still rebuke a person who attacks him with infernal fire.

## Cities and Industry.

Danor's historical capitol of **Methia** lies abandoned. Though Danorans reject superstition, even they cannot help but feel uneasy in these ruins. Nothing grows there, wild animals stay out, and even in the height of summer, a chill breeze blows under overcast skies.

The modern capitol of **Cherage**, though, is a bustling center of business and trade. Two centuries of practice at industry has moved the pollution-coughing factories and poverty-riddled worker villages outside the city, where deep canals provide the water for mills.

Trains powered by steam crisscross the nation, and the great Avery Coast Railroad runs from mountainous **Beaumont** on the west coast, through Cherage, and on eastward to Drakr, passing through Crisillyir, before finally ending three thousand miles away in Elfaivar. Warships armored with iron churn along the nation's coast and among the islands it holds in the Yerasol Archipelago, protecting shipments of food that feed Danor's burgeoning population of industrial workers.

## WILD AND DEAD MAGIC.

Within Danor's borders, magic quickly seeps away, a consequence of the Great Malice, where the eladrin goddess Srasama died five hundred years ago. Rituals cannot be cast within Danor. Magic item powers, enhancement bonuses, item bonuses, and properties function normally, subject to DM adjudication.

A creature's own innate magical powers still function, such as a tiefling's *infernal rebuke* or an eladrin's *fey step*. Magic class abilities that aren't implement-based also function normally. Creatures cannot use implement-based class powers unless they have a magic implement with at least a +2 enhancement bonus. These items carry enough innate magic with them to power spells and prayers, but over a period of weeks or months, even their power fades entirely.

Since it's impossible to create magic implements in Danor (doing so requires the Enchant Magic Item ritual), almost no Danorans study magic. The few Danoran mages there are either traveled to other nations to study, or purchased magic implements and paid exorbitantly to import tutors.

Just beyond Danor's borders, in a broad swath hundreds of miles wide, the fabric of magic is damaged but not destroyed. In these places, known as the Malice Lands, whenever a character performs a ritual, uses a magic item power, or uses an implement-based class power, roll an unmodified 1d20. On a 1, a mishap occurs. This usually takes the form of the power backfiring, manifesting as a free-willed monster, or otherwise going dangerously awry.

## DRAKR

Before the rise of the kingdom of Triegenes, dwarven warlords in Drakr subdued the undead titans of the land, encased them in crystal, and buried them deep beneath the earth. The dwarven warlords made alliances with the demonocracy in the east, trading the lives and souls of their mostly-human subjects for infernal power. Each warlord erected a tower as a symbol of his power, and from these bases they marched unnatural armies to battle for territory and supremacy.

Later Triegenes marched upon those towers, toppling each as a stepping stone toward the demonocracy itself. The tyrants fell, and dwarves became an oppressed minority in what had once been their homeland. When the Great Malice shattered the kingdom of Triegenes, several clans of dwarves overthrew the priests who had ruled over them. They prepared for war, intending to recreate new dwarven kingdoms, but the deadly threat from the Malice Lands forced them to band together, even unite with humans to keep newly-birthed abominations at bay.

The dwarven clans and fractured human provinces that survived the collapse of the kingdom of Triegenes created a loose federation that has grown ever more united. Regional governors, mostly human, handle normal farming and trade, while dwarven lords direct grand mining operations and command the nation's army and navy.

Once again the nation has grown fond of towers, not just as symbols of power but as strongholds against intermittent waves of monstrous incursions from the Malice Lands. Dark magic is not precisely endorsed, but it is tolerated as a necessary evil for the nation's defense. Criminals convicted



of any great crime vanish into mountain prisons to serve in hellish mines, until the day they are sacrificed to empower a magical ward or weapon.

### Metal and Magic.

Unsurprisingly, Drakr has taken easily to alliances with Danor, both military and economic. In particular they helped build and still today defend the Avery Coast railroad, and are in the process of building their own rail lines. Their trains, however, are powered by arcane furnaces that burn blood red yet whose metal skin feels eerily cool to the touch.

Similarly, the Drakran military has embraced firearms, and several companies have become famous for slaying implacable malice beasts which previously would have taken an army to defeat. The finest guns come from Drakr, and many of those are enchanted. Unlike Risur, however, Drakr has not rushed to develop steam warships. They have limited interest in naval matters, and prefer to defend their coasts with forts and cannons, though a few Drakran shipyards do construct iron-clad vessels for Danor.

The capital city of **Trekthom** is a major hub of industrial trade, as well as a nexus for several rail lines. Every day countless tons of refined steel arrives by train from the northern forge city of **Mirsk**, high in the snowy Shawl Mountains. It is said that giants work some of the mines in those frigid mountains, lending their physical might in exchange for enchanted weapons and armor.

Where the Avery Coast railroad crosses the border into the Malice Lands, a steel spire rises five hundred feet above the desolate landscape, guarded by a battalion of soldiers and mages. Its purpose is unclear, but some suspect it is enchanted to drive away malice beasts, or to help mend the tear in the fabric of magic.

### The Philosophy of Governance.

Though intellectuals of the rest of the world are quick to disassociate themselves with some of the darker trends in Drakran philosophy—those grounded in the power of the old warlords—many heap great praise on the wise and open deliberations in the nation's parliament.

The old ecumenical tradition of the Clergy survived the Great Malice in the form of schools of philosophy. Often each clan or township would have its own line of local philosophers. Their ideas would influence local leaders and businessmen, who would in turn spread them through the rest of the nation, with the most successful and intriguing philosophers earning their home prestige and profit.

Today the most visible philosophy is Heid Eschatol, which focuses

on proper endings to all of life's affairs. But other ideologies still battle in the marketplaces and academies of Drakr, and any successful federal representative has to be a studied philosopher, or else espouse wild teachings that will get him noticed.

## ELFAIVAR

Before the Great Malice, the kings of Elfaivar held power to rival all the other nations of Lanjyr. Commanding legions of slave armies from the far east and fielding battalions of fey mages and monsters, the long-lived eladrin monarchs were able to ensure the security and prosperity of the mightiest nation in the world.

Today, only ruins survive.

The Great Malice slew every eladrin woman in the empire and beyond, with only the rarest and most unlikely survivors: women currently polymorphed, on other planes, or who had forsaken the Elfaivaran faith entirely. Within weeks the once-glorious empire, which had been poised to crush the impudent Clergy who had twice launched a holy war against it, descended into chaos. Within decades the population had collapsed to the tiniest sliver of its original number.

A stirring eulogy of the poet Vekesh convinced a few eladrin to seek harmony, to endure, and to prosper—and above all else, to find and free eladrin women from bondage so the race could heal. But for millions of grief-stricken eladrin men, the aftermath of the Great Malice was a time of constant battle.

Those few women who had survived were quickly claimed as property, and anyone who could keep ownership of a wife against a hundred thousand other suitors could command enclaves of desperate followers. Whole cities of despairing men would fight to the death for the chance of winning their lord another wife. Mages laid curses upon swaths of cropland, but some enclaves chose to starve rather than hand over their “queen.” Slaver brought ships of human and elf women, sorcerously transmuted to pass as eladrin, who were sold into servitude, and often slain horribly once the truth was discovered.

Many eladrin men fled to other lands, seeking wives of other races, but they could sire no children. As attrition whittled down survivors, and too few children were born to keep society alive, ever more wealth and magical relics pooled in the hands of fewer and fewer men. When foreigners from Crisillyr or the distant east tried to claim Elfaivaran land they were driven back by fearsome eladrin warriors. Trained by constant battles for survival, and possessed of the finest arms and armor of entire cities, each man was match for a hundred normal soldiers.

Eladrin are long-lived, but old age eventually claims even them. Some made pacts with the powers of the Dreaming or other planes, but after two centuries, Elfaivar was practically a ghost nation. It took nearly a century more for Crisillyr and other nations to defeat the few vengeful hold-outs and begin to colonize the empty landscape.

Jungle reclaimed cities. Mighty magical effects lost their cohesion, spilling strange enchantments into the land. In some places the material world blended and merged with the Dreaming. It was in these confusing borderlands that a handful of Vekesh-inspired enclaves survived.

### Modern Enclaves.

Early on, the freed women of Vekesh enclaves gained great power, both politically and magically, for they came to embody the hopes of hundreds if not thousands of survivors. New daughters were fiercely guarded and intensely trained so they could defend themselves and someday lead their own enclaves. Despite this, sometimes foreign mercenaries would

## THE LOST RIDERS

After most of the dwarven tyrants had fallen to Triegenes, the last five warlords gathered at a fiery tower in the Shawl Mountains to discuss a plan for war. As they camped and planned, one of their archmage servants warned that a winter storm stronger than any in history was approaching. Afraid of being stranded from their battle, the five warlords mounted their various dread steeds and rode forth. But when the storm fell upon them, they lost their direction.

Too cruel and convinced of their invincibility to die, the five continued riding until they vanished forever into the blizzard. For over a millennium the dwarves of Drakr have told tales of the lost riders, continuing to search for the battle that they should have fought and won. Folk tales warn never to offer aid to lost travelers, lest you anger their pride and earn their wrath.

manage to abduct an eladrin woman, for they became prized status symbols in the rest of Lanjyr.

These abductions led to the first Vekeshi retributions, as mystics undertook daring missions to rescue lost women or at least punish those who would steal them. In general, though, the enclaves stay hidden. They'll deploy spies to keep eyes on human activity in nearby lands, and will make bargains with fey to scare off those who get too close, but they realize that they cannot risk antagonizing the human nations.

A rare few eladrin seek to integrate with human society. They wear as much gold as they can, which prevents them from using *fey step*, in an effort to cut themselves off from their fey heritage. By contrast, some Vekeshi mystics also adorn themselves in gold, but only as a ritual of self-flagellation, to meditate on their distance from their people's history so they can ponder how best to reclaim their birthright.

### The Fallen Goddess.

Srasama was just one of dozens of prominent gods in the Elfaivar pantheon. Traditionally she was the six-armed sculptor who gave form to the raw creation discovered by her husband. She had dominion over the lives of women, and she particularly oversaw rituals of womanhood, marriage, and grief. For these, she would take three different forms of maiden, mother, and crone, but in all she was a fierce defender of the Elfaivar empire.

The famous adventurer **Hamyd of the East** once claimed to have witnessed a conclave of eladrin matriarchs, wherein they performed the ancient rituals of Srasama. According to him, though, they cut short the rituals of the crone, and his guide alleged that this was because the matriarchs had forsworn grief, and so can never age.

## THE WORLD

All of the events of the campaign occur on the continent of Lanjyr, aside from a few forays into the coterminous planes of the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate, so we leave it to the DM and players to decide the nature of the rest of the world.

### THE ARSENAL OF DHEBISU.

Eladrin tell a tale of a god who turned against their pantheon and was transformed into a tiger that walked like a man: a rakshasa. As a god, no weapon in the world could harm him, and he ravaged the lands of Elfaivar, drowning villages and tearing entire cities free from the earth with a swipe of his clawed hands.

A warrior named Dhebisu, infamous for her incongruous brilliance as a poet and lewd sense of humor, was called upon to defeat the rakshasa. She befriended the cats of the jungle to learn of the monster's weakness, and consulted with sages to learn when the next meteor shower would occur. That night she sang a mocking tune to lure out the rakshasa.

The beast attacked her, but she pulled a falling star from the sky and wove it into her hair. Thenceforth any weapon she touched became infused with the powers of the heavens. They battled through the night, until finally, the rakshasa tried to slay her with a poisoned arrow. But Dhebisu snatched the bolt and plunged it into the fiend's loins, destroying it so that it could never reincarnate.

### Border States and the Malice Lands.

Risur, Ber, Crisillyir, Danor, Drakr, and Elfaivar are the largest and most prominent nations in Lanjyr, but by no means are they the only ones. Some regions on the continental map are marked as "border states." These lands play no noteworthy role in the ZEITGEIST campaign, but you should feel free to use them for whatever purpose the DM needs.

Other areas surrounding Danor are called the Malice Lands. When Danor had its magic stripped away during the Great Malice, these lands were at the edge of the effect's radius. The magic there was left fractured and unstable. While Danor was able to restore itself in the relative stability of its dead magic zone, the wild magic of the Malice Lands has led to irregular catastrophes and small cataclysms that tend to wipe out any nation that tries to establish itself there.

Most people in the Malice Lands live in small villages or as nomads in order to avoid the more deadly manifestations of this wild magic. These wartorn lands tend to become havens for criminals who cross into their neighboring lands to pillage and plunder. One noteworthy exception is the city-state of **Oritheia**, which has managed to prosper in a small pocket of stable, albeit weakened magic.

In general, the border states between Risur and Ber are little more than mountainous tribal lands that refuse to join either larger nation. The border states between Crisillyir and Drakr are fairly autonomous and stable, while the border between Drakr and Danor is near anarchy. North of Drakr, a few minor nations stay out of the politics of greater Lanjyr, while beyond Elfaivar lie powerful protectorates of a distant empire, still recovering from the fall-out of the collapse of Elfaivar centuries ago.

These lands are generally outside the scope of this campaign, which gives the DM an excuse for whatever foreign oddness he wishes to introduce in his own games.

### Planes.

Everyone knows that the fey live in the Dreaming, and that spirits of the dead can linger in the Bleak Gate, but most people are unclear on just what they are. They disagree on whether one can physically go to these realms by walking, or if one would need magic, and if one went there just what one would see.

The Clergy states that the Dreaming, which they call the Green Temptress or Hell's Garden, is where people's minds go when they sleep, and that the beings called the fey are dreams given flesh by evil magic. Folk religion in Ber proclaims that the moon is a looking glass, and the Dreaming is what we look like reflected in it, while many Drakrans believe it's a trap between this world and the afterlife, meant to trick people from their just ends.

As for the Bleak Gate, common lore of the Clergy calls it Purgatory, and envisions it as lying underground, a place where the dead pass through on their way to their reward or punishment in the afterlife. The dwarves of Drakr know better, and believe that it is a vision of the distant future, of what the world will look like when everyone has died. Berans believe it lies on the dark side of the moon.

In Risur, folk tales say that once the Dreaming was easy to reach, and that the beings there would often come to our world to trade, steal, or play tricks. The Bleak Gate was thought to be a darker, more malevolent part of the Dreaming, a belief reinforced of late. As industry has narrowed the streets of Flint and darkened its alleys with soot, more and more people have begun to speak of disappearances, and of strange black beings that walk in the shadows.





"Planet sizes have been greatly exaggerated to reveal details invisible to the unaided eye."

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## THE DISTANT PLANES.

Common lore in Risur claim the heavens are a massive distant dome, and that the planets of the night sky move in reaction to the unseen hand of fate. According to the skyseers, each star is a source of magic, and the planets in particular are the source of key elemental powers.

Each planet and star is conceived of as an empty garden that only comes alive when an outsider enters, and which has no permanent existence. Skyseer myths say ancient men once traveled freely to these worlds, where they could tap directly into powerful magic, but that the stars grew distant. Even today, though, wise men can look skyward and see clues to the course of fate.

The Clergy, by contrast, believe that the heavens are a black sea, and that every star and planet is a physical world, each with its own people and gods. Danoran astronomers, though usually loathe to agree with the Clergy on anything, claim that they have seen the surfaces of the planets through their finely-crafted telescopes, though they cannot confirm any civilizations. Meanwhile, a few modern adventurers tell wild tales of using magic to visit these worlds, meet the strange locals, and return with treasure as proof. Skyseers dismiss such claims as stories by fools being tricked by fey.

Below we list the most prominent objects in the sky, along with the myths and theories associated with each. These myths aren't necessarily consistent with each other.

- ♦ **Vona.** The sun, source of pure arcane force and magical radiance, but too bright to observe the surface. It influences revelations and discoveries.
- ♦ **Jiese.** The plane of fire, home to serpent men whose skin glow like coal. Ancient myths claimed this was a dragon, which chased Avilona. Influences war and strife, as well as notable births.
- ♦ **Avilona.** The plane of air, where desolate islands of rock float amid the clouds, covered in long-abandoned ruins. Ancient myths claimed this world was a titanic eagle, constantly fleeing the ravenous Jiese. Influences weather, notable deaths, and animals.
- ♦ **Av.** This ancient name for the moon comes from a legend about a sleeping queen of the fey, cursed to slumber after her soul was captured in her reflection on a bottomless pool. Influences nothing, but reflects subtle clues of people's desires.
- ♦ **Mavisha.** The plane of water, home to krakens lurking beneath the waters and leviathans swimming rippling liquid columns that writhe above the sea like the tentacles of a living world. Legend states that a drowned bride long ago cursed sailors to join her in the lightless depths of this endless ocean. Influences the seas, great movements of people, and conflicts within families.
- ♦ **Urim.** The plane of earth, or rather a scattered, shattered belt of relatively tiny shards of metal, which sometimes fall from the sky bearing precious ores and accursed worms. Influences the earth, the rise and fall of fortunes, and random meetings of strangers.
- ♦ **Apet.** The distant plane, said to be a permanent storm of sand and dust on a featureless plane, with the only point of reference being an arc of silver an unknowable distance above. Influences subtle nuances of distance and time, as well as the grand cycle of ages.
- ♦ **Nem.** The plane of ruin, this planet is a myth among the skyseers, who say it sheds no light, and can only be seen as it glides silently through the heavens, devouring stars and leaving nothing but a hole in the night. Influences secrets and the dead.

## Key Religions.

Four religions dominate the ZEITGEIST campaign setting. Unlike typical DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®, there is no planar travel, magic to summon extraplanar creatures is exceedingly rare and brief, and only once in recorded history has a god actually physically appeared in the world—and then she was killed. While powers and forces beyond the world certainly exist, their shapes cannot be proven, and must be taken on faith.

- ♦ **The Clergy.** Organized religion based in Crisillyir. Every mortal can empower himself, even reach godhood, if he confronts the challenges of the world. Beyond this world exist many planes, each a more perfect manifestation of some aspect of our reality, and they are presided over by powerful gods, angels, and spirits that can be entreated for power.

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF WILLIAM MILLER.

While Drakran philosophy is in ascendance today, many older works are still read and discussed throughout Lanjyr. Most popular are the writings of a clerical monk, William Miller, who in the run up to the Great Malice composed a treatise on hypocrisy, suggesting that it is better to admit you are uncertain of your beliefs than to act in contradiction with your stated values. The book, widely recognized as an attack on the Clergy, allegedly drove the monk to flee persecution.

Miller reappeared several years after the Great Malice with a new work of political philosophy that coincided with his effort to found a small nation, Pala, amid the chaos of the Malice Lands. In his multi-chapter book he examined possible social structures, comparing robustness and stability with various moral values. Early chapters allude to a conclusion that would detail a handful of ideal nations, but today there are no complete copies of the book.

In 18 A.O.V., the reconstituted Clergy branded Miller a heretic, invaded Pala, and sacked its capital. He was brought to Alais Primos, the new seat of the Clergy, where he was tortured in an effort to compel a confession. After he refused to recant, his captors made a pyre of his heretical writings and burned him alive upon it.

Today, Miller's incomplete writings are popular among the bohemian dockers in Flint and followers of the Panoply in Ber. Rumors say that copies of Miller's final chapters are kept in a library vault in Alais Primos, where it shares shelf space with other "heretical" texts.

- ♦ **Guerro.** Folk religion of Ber. Every tribe has its own gods, conquered from the tribes who were not strong enough to stand alone. As the tribes battle, so do the gods. For now, it seems, the gods are at peace, and so we make peace, but all good things die in battle. A syncretic combination of Clergy and Guerro is popular in Drakr.
- ♦ **The Old Faith.** Folk religion of Risur. Honor the spirits of the land, and draw power from nature. The stars above trace patterns that predict events on our world, but the only other worlds are the ones we can visit: the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate.
- ♦ **Seedism.** Folk religion of Elfaivar. Our actions are seeds, and will shape the face of the world, though it may take ages. Elves and eladrin have long memories. Before the rise of Man, the gods spoke to us, and we still remember their names and teachings. Srasama, the three-faced mother-warrior-queen, was slain by human treachery, but it is our duty to endure and outgrow this injury. The archfey of the Dreaming were once vassals of the gods, and so we revere and respect them.

## Dominant Philosophies.

Certain groups promote secular ideologies independent from the metaphysics of religion.

- ♦ **Heid Eschatol.** Developed in Drakr, popular in Risur. It is important to plan for good endings, whether that's for a business venture, a story, a love affair, or your own life.
- ♦ **Panoply.** Nascent philosophy from Ber, concerned with examining how and why cultures differ. Followers often feel dissatisfied with the traditions of their homeland, and defend the value of foreign ideas.
- ♦ **Pragati.** Official position of the Jierre ruling party in Danor. Gods are the creation of men who were unable to comprehend the real structure of the world. Those who hold false beliefs, be they in gods, in disproven economic theories, or anything else, are a threat to progress.
- ♦ **Vekesh.** Guiding principle that helped the eladrin survive after the fall of Elfaivar. After a tragedy, the best revenge is to heal and grow stronger than you were before.





# SECTION THREE: FLINT

THE CITY OF FLINT IS THE HEART OF RISUR'S INDUSTRIAL revolution, and it is the base of operations for the PCs. Before Adventure Two, you and your fellow players should have at least passing familiarity with this section, to prepare you for a murder mystery that will take you from the heights of the city's majestic rainforest mountains to the depths of its criminal underbelly.

**Population:** 800,000

**Head of Government:** City Governor Roland Stanfield.

**Key Districts:** The Ayres, Bosum Strand, Central District, the Cloudwood, the Nettles, North Shore, Parity Lake, Pine Island, Stray River.

**Prominent Landmarks:** Cauldron Hill, Parity Lake, Stanfield Canal.





## CITY DISTRICTS

### Bosum Strand

Depending on who you ask, the name Bosum Strand comes either from the boatswains who frequented its taverns, or from the harbor's more traditional name, which translated to bosom of the sea. In either case, the docks along the east shore of Flint Bay are the heart of the city's trade, culture, and crime.

Hundreds of warehouses serve Flint's merchant fleet, and dozens of bars, taverns, gambling houses, and brothels serve its dock workers. Craftsmen, artists, and money changers own shops surrounding several scattered public squares throughout the district, and the district's mayor **Griffin Stowe** has strong-armed property owners along major streets to ensure that when the wealthy and influential travel the strand they are not forced to see any of the district's uncouth underbelly.

This is why, of course, the dockers make a point to perform on as many street corners and squares as possible.

The district is currently clearing out tenants and demolishing buildings for a freight rail line. The station is already under construction, and once complete it will speed delivery of raw materials and natural exports. More importantly, it let Flint share its industrial bounty with the rest of the nation. Unusually, many local druids have been recruited to speak with the spirits of the land and appease them so they will not disrupt the building process.

The Night of the Mirror Moon occurs when a blue moon (the third full moon in a season with four full moons) falls during winter. From the moment the moon shines on Flint Harbor, anyone who enters the water while holding a mirror will emerge in the Dreaming analogue of Bosum Strand. There, it is said, the docks are replaced by a glorious beach where all the fey from miles around gather for the wildest party one could ever imagine. Sometimes people fail to get back before the moon sets, while others return with magical powers, a gift or bargain from the fey. The last such Mirror Moon happened seventeen years ago, in 483 A.O.V., and the next will be in two years.

### THE NAVRAS OPERA HOUSE.

Flint's oldest surviving building is the Navras Opera House in the central district. Navras, an eladrin who fled Elfaivar after the Great Malice, designed the opera house and laid the cornerstone with a brick he had brought from his homeland. He spent nearly two hundred years personally overseeing its construction, and was aided by no less than eight Risuri kings. When he completed the building, incongruously huge for what was at the time just a small river fort city, Navras gave the first performance by singing the dirge of Vekesh. As the audience cheered and wept at his performance, he walked off the stage and disappeared forever.

The acoustic design of the performance hall somehow captures magical power from song, or from the emotional reactions of the audience. Impresarios who coordinate performance almost always hire spellcasting bards to harness this energy and craft a magic item as a memento of the show. In the three hundred years since the Navras Opera House opened, most of these items have found their ways into private collections, but a rare few have become famous, such as the Hurricane Violin, which commemorated the Fable of Seaquen and later banished a sea monster that threatened Flint Harbor in 417 A.O.V.

### Central

The oldest and most developed district of Flint is home to its main government structures, including the city council, superior court, police headquarters, and the offices of various civil functionaries like tax collectors. Grand party halls, ornate druidic garden temples, and parks filled with monuments to old wars provide recreation and entertainment for the city's nobility and prospering middle class, while the Orange Street commodities market and the prestigious Pardwight University are the dual hearts of Flint's economic and academic cultures.

The district mayor **Oncala Putnam** recently approved construction of a grand subrail station to serve as the hub of a city-wide transportation network. Currently the Central district is often clogged with traffic from the surface rail station, since the proposed tunnel through Humble Hill in the Nettles, meant to provide an easier route to the factories of Parity Lake, has been dogged by sabotage from elements opposed to the industrialization of Risur.

Just off the coast in Flint Bay, the city governor's mansion occupies what was once an island fortress. For the past four hundred years the deva **Roland Stanfield** has, through various incarnations and with only rare disruption, served as city governor, earning near universal respect for his wisdom and leadership.

Perhaps most importantly for the PCs, Central district is home to the local headquarters of the Royal Homeland Constabulary, headed by **Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby**.

### Cloudwood

The eastern outskirts of Flint are dominated by towering mountains, their peaks constantly shrouded in clouds that feed lush rainforests and verdant streams. The steep highlands are sparsely populated, but numerous plantations and small farms fill the flatter terrain near the coast. Few city folk venture out to these lands, believing that here the veil between the real world and the Dreaming is thin. Local myths include countless tales of farmers, travelers, and juvenile miscreants who wander into the foggy woods and suffer wretched fates at the hands of capricious fey.

While most who live in Cloudwood consider it common courtesy to share a bowl of milk or plates of sliced fruit with unseen nightly visitors, the district's new mayor, **Doyle Idylls**, has forbidden district employees from engaging in the old tradition. Mayor Idylls shares his office with the local police branch, and he recently had salt baked into bricks around its base in order to keep away curious fey. Soon thereafter, the building developed a gopher problem.

Though criminals in Flint tend to make the Nettles their first stop when on the run from the law, those who really need to lay low find the wild rainforests of Cloudwood ideal. The most rural areas of the district are practically independent thorps and hamlets, many of which are sympathetic to desperate outsiders. Until recently they reaped rewards from collaborating with at least three gangs which operated out of the forest, but some a player in the area has somehow managed to get the gangs to call off their attacks.

Somewhere in the high misty mountains hides **Hana "Gale" Soliogn**, an eladrin who fled to Risur after she escaped the rich Danoran family who had kept her as a trophy for over a century. Upon leaving the dead magic zone of Danor, Soliogn discovered an exceedingly rare talent for innately controlling winds and weather, which earned her the name Gale.

She enjoyed a brief celebrity upon arriving in Flint a year ago, but almost immediately withdrew into the wilderness and began recruiting followers among those opposed to the influx of industry. Law enforcement officials believe she's trying to punish Danor by proxy, and in the





past several months hundreds of acts of sabotage on factories and steamships have been linked to her. In one incident, Gale was caught in the act of trying to assassinate a sleeping industrialist, but she managed to fly away and avoid capture.

### The Nettles

A small spur of the mountains of the Cloudwood cuts into the heart of Flint, and for most of the city's history these hills were home to druidic rituals, or simply let romantics witness wondrous vistas of the beaches from on high. Their traditional name came from an old commander of the Flint fort, who saw them as a thorny barrier against attack from the north.

But then in 346 A.O.V. a coven of witches took residence upon a jagged mountain at the range's edge, which ever since has been called Cauldron Hill. For decades they terrorized the city, sending goblins and specters to abduct people for sacrificial rites, then hiding in the veil between this world and the Bleak Gate whenever any tried to assault them.

Eventually the witches were defeated when King Lorcan allied with a Crisillyiri godhand and led an assault during a lunar eclipse. Ever since, the peak of Cauldron Hill has been rife with haunting and spirit activity, and one of the key tasks of the district mayor has been to keep daring fools from ascending the mountain and coming down possessed.

The greatest achievement of the previous district mayor was constructing a highway across Humble Hill to make travel across the city easier, but in the past few decades the district, even the base of Cauldron Hill itself, have grown thick with slum housing, as more and more people flock to Flint hoping to find work in the factories. The broad switchbacks of the highway are cluttered with shacks, often with two or three families sharing the same building. Poorly crafted houses cling to the sides of

slopes, and they have become a nightmare for local police to patrol, giving a whole new connotation to the name "The Nettles."

The current district mayor **Reed Macbannin** has been unable to halt the new arrivals, and he hasn't been helped by the common prejudice that the factory workers are prone to crime, laziness, and general mayhem. Despite this, he has managed to earn passing respect from the people of his district; few are trusted with the stewardship of Cauldron Hill, and he has leveraged his office to get city tax money for the poorest of the poor.

### TRAVELING BETWEEN DISTRICTS.

Flint is a sprawling city, and often the party's investigations will take them across it and back in the course of a single day. In general, by making use of carriages it takes a half hour to move from the heart of one district to the heart of an adjacent one. Walking can double this time.

Crossing Flint harbor or reaching one of The Ayres is usually an hour-long affair by sailboat, or half an hour if you know a friendly steamboat captain. Moving through the maze of rookeries in the Nettles can take hours, and it's always faster to just go around than go over. Few paved roads lead to the Cloudwood, which makes carriages unsuitable, and one could spend hours or days roaming the mountains to the east or bayous to the west.

Once the subrail lines are completed, it should be possible to move between Central and either Bosum Strand or Stray River in as few as ten minutes. And if ever the route under the Nettles can overcome sabotage, it could shave nearly an hour off the time to go around the troublesome hills.

## North Shore

The sun rises through the mists of Cloudwood, banishing the night with pale purple clouds dashed by the golden gleam of dawn. Fresh sea breezes sweep the gloomy haze of soot away from pristine beaches, letting clear daylight fall upon gently crashing waves. The day wanes, and the sky explodes with crimson and vermillion as the sun sets behind the twin peaks of Great Horned Mountain. Night drapes a starry curtain across the world, and still the waves gently lap upon the North Shore.

Home to the most beautiful urban beaches in all of Lanjyr, Flint's North Shore district prides itself on its appearance, despite being so close to the polluted Parity Lake. Demand for beachside property has pushed out all but the wealthiest land-owners, those who can afford to hire druids to pray for favorable winds to keep the smoke at bay, and armies of cleaning crews to scrub their walls and streets when the druids fail.

Of course with wealth comes corruption and temptation. Young girls end up dead in alleys. Criminals stage daring robberies of villas protected by curses. Destitute nobles, dragged down from their towers by the machinations of rivals, stumble into strangely-scented shops they'd never seen before, and find offers they cannot refuse.

The district mayor, **Aaron Choir**, serves the interests of the wealthy, and is petitioning to build a wall between North Shore and Parity Lake to keep out undesirables. Likewise, police violently deter the occasional protest that crops up outside the Danoran consulate, which sits a few blocks inland from the shore. Mayor Choir is careful, though, not to appear too friendly with the unpopular Danorans, no matter how much they pay him in kick-backs.

## Parity Lake

When Flint first began building factories, this inland lake fed by runoff from the Nettles was chosen by the city governor Roland Stanfield. A massive construction project widened and deepened a natural river that ran from the lake to the harbor in Bosum Strand, providing easy transit of manufactured goods out of—and coal or heating oil into—the district. Homes of fishermen on the lake were demolished, while new flophouses and stacked tenements were erected for the waves of people who came from around the country seeking work in the new factories. Wealth poured into the city's coffers, and into the pockets of those canny enough to lease their land here, rather than sell it.

During the Fourth Yerasol War seven years ago, factories in Parity Lake mass-produced firearms, cannons, and other weapons, and a lumber mill transformed logs from the Cloudwood into components for shipyards in Bosum Strand. New factories sprang up to create armor for men and ships, and soon even steam engines were being churned out to retrofit Risur's fleet.

The war effort transformed Parity Lake from a booming collective of new businesses to a crowded, foul-smelling, soot-choked warren, overcrowded with the children of now second-generation factory workers, surrounding a pool that every day more resembles sludge than water. The police manage to keep crime down through heavy-handed measures; the district's mayor **Rosa Gohins** has publicly stated that the safety and stability of the factories are more important than the morale of the factory workers.

In the past few months a spate of fires have struck around the district, which authorities suspect to be arson, possibly tied to the fey terrorist known as Gale (see The Cloudwood, above). The fires have precisely targeted individual homes and businesses related to local industrialists, but despite their minimal collateral damage, people in the district fear an inferno if one goes out of control.

More dreaded, however, is a killer known as the **Ragman**, who is said to stalk dark alleys near the canals and drag young men into the sewers. He has been tied to at least six disappearances in the past year, but so far law enforcement have taken few steps to catch him. Strange occult symbols scrawled on the undersides of bridges that cross the canal have provoked suspicions that the Ragman might be retribution from the long dead witches of Cauldron Hill.

## Pine Island

Though the ground of most of Flint's coast is rocky and hilly, the western coast of the bay has a strange sprawling bayou surrounding dozens of short granite hill-islands. Pine Island takes its name from the aquatic pine trees that anchor the bits of dry land throughout the bayou, though the hills are mostly grassy ranchland. Not as well known or developed as the bustling east coast, this district nevertheless plays a significant role in the city's business.

Where Bosum Strand handles industrial and textile trade, Pine Island handles agricultural trade, servicing hundreds of plantations in its soggy lowlands and small ranches in its western hills. The main docks on Flint Bay are practically a floating city of wooden bridges and stone anchors, which has slowly grown away from the silt of the bayou to better serve deep-water merchant ships. Further inland, complicated streets, connected by ferries and bridges, weave between islands ranging from the size of a single house to a small neighborhood.

Criminals ply the waters of the bayous in shallow boats, often parking ships of smuggled drugs, magic, or women just off shore, then taking circuitous routes through the flooded forests in order to bypass dock authorities. While most dockside businesses are legitimate, deeper in the bayou you can find gambling houses, brothels, and opium dens. Pacts with local fey who are angry with the spinning gears on the other side of the bay help these criminal establishments hide from law enforcement, all for the low price of just a few newborns a year.

Farther west, where there are no longer even the occasional outcroppings of hills, the Battalion academy trains elite soldiers and martial scientists in the ways of war, with an emphasis on wilderness survival and the best techniques of intimidation against an occupying force. The district's mayor, **Roger Pepper**, is a graduate. Many of the Battalion's teachers served in the Yerasol Wars and various skirmishes, and the common fishermen of Pine Island say some of them brought back strange spirits from those distant islands. Recent folk tales tell of pale fish-scaled men who steal fowl and livestock each month during the neap tide.

## Stray River

The cluster of businesses and homes where Stray River empties into the bay is the closest thing to a typical Risuri city one can find in Flint. The Stray River district has well-tended streets, quaint two-story brick houses, and enjoys easy prosperity as the place most visitors to the city stay. The district is also home of some of the oldest mills in Risur, powered by small canals that loop off the main river to avoid disrupting water traffic.

One strange attraction of the district is the Penny Pyre. Originally it was a small blackened pit, where a mage's accident caused copper to burn as easily as wood, but last far longer. When the effect persisted, it became a fixture of the district's festivals. Various copper sculptures are designed by the districts artisans and placed atop the pit to burn over the course of hours or days. On normal occasions, people occasionally toss spare copper coins into the pyre for good luck. The royal mint has tried to end the practice, but the district's mayor, **Christine Robinson**, defends the tradition, saying more coins are lost in the dirt than tossed in the pyre.



## The Ayres.

North of the city lies a clear island chain and several satellite islands. Many of these are merely rocky sandbars with a few trees, but a few larger islands serve as remote villas for the city's wealthiest. Nobles hold many family estates here, though one island is owned by a man new to his money: **Guy Goodson**, who swindled his initial wealth from a dozen naïve villages, and invested early in Flint's industrial boom. Today he owns dozens of factories in Parity Lake, and regularly dines with his noble neighbors, who delight in the small steamboat he uses to visit them.

Since technically The Ayres is considered part of North Shore, it does not have its own district mayor. In practice, law and government officials never bothers the nobles on their islands unless an equally wealthy or powerful individual lodges a complaint.

## ROYAL HOMELAND CONSTABULARY

The ZEITGEIST adventure path assumes the PCs will begin as agents of the Royal Homeland Constabulary. RHC constables are law enforcement officers tasked with protecting Risur from serious threats, usually in the form of foreign plots, magically-equipped criminals, and various supernatural foes everyday police are not equipped to deal with.

### Authority and the Law

Constables are invested with the authority of the king, and so are granted great leeway in their pursuit of justice and safety. While normal police must acquire warrants before they can search a building, RHC constables are trusted to not abuse their authority, and so can act as swiftly as needed. However, they are required to fill out proper paperwork and give testimony justifying their actions. A constable who uses his power for personal gain—or to harass anyone of political clout without good reason—will find himself penalized, demoted, and possibly even in prison.

Constables are expected to take suspects alive whenever possible. Do note that the Fourth Edition rules allow characters to choose to subdue an enemy rather than kill it when it's reduced to 0 hit points. Execution is a likely punishment if a trial deems a suspect to be an enduring threat, though some criminals with political value might be kept under special house arrest, as long as they do not actively pursue plots against Risur.

#### Mage-Cuffs

Lvl 1 360 gp

#### Wondrous Item

**Property:** When a person wearing *mage-cuffs* uses any magical power (generally defined as an arcane, divine, primal, psionic, or shadow power, or equivalent non-typed abilities), the cuffs glow, make a warning whistle sound, and deal 10 damage to the wearer. A creature reduced to 0 hit points this way is knocked unconscious, not killed.

#### Common Item



## BEFORE ADVENTURE TWO.

The second ZEITGEIST adventure, *The Dying Skyseer*, takes place in the city of Flint, as do parts of other adventures. To help players learn about the city, after the end of Adventure One and before the start of Adventure Two, the DM should ask each player to pick two districts and come up with a contact his or her character has in each district.

This contact could be a friend or family member, a criminal informant, an ex-girlfriend, a merchant whose shop you frequent, a minor noble who owes you a favor, a religious figure, or many other options. These NPCs help connect the PCs to the city, and will come in handy as they investigate a murder mystery and other threats.

Every constable has access to binding ropes as well as handcuffs (these are not quite as advanced as the modern police variety). Most handcuffs include gold wire or thread, which can be tied off after the cuffs are closed to prevent creatures from teleporting while wearing them. In special cases, *mage-cuffs* can be requisitioned.

Constables can usually hand over arrested suspects to the police, though the RHC headquarters in Flint does have specially prepared cells to handle more dangerous criminals. These cells are all lined with enchantments similar to those of *mage-cuffs*, and are surrounded by rings of gold and bricks baked with salt and other warding agents. When needed, even more specialized items can be used, such as chains that can hold incorporeal entities or prevent shapechanging, hoods that block gaze attacks, and sigils to nullify innate elemental threats like flaming elementals.

When it comes to interrogations, this is not a modern police force. Characters who choose to be enlightened and use less-violent approaches can often get what they need with less hassle, but threats and actual violence are common tools when trying to make suspects talk, and most superiors won't bat an eye as long as no one is seriously injured or dies.

### The Military

The Battalion school of war in the bayous of Pine Island trains hundreds of future officers every year, and works in connection with various district forts throughout the city, as well as naval bases on an island near the mouth of Flint Harbor. Flint still remembers a few naval skirmishes that threatened shipping eight years ago, and so the military maintains a constant watch for possible threats. Normally, though, they will not respond unless a district mayor or the city governor himself calls on them.

While few individual soldiers have magical training, the military has acquired over the years a wide variety of enchanted weapons and defenses. Perhaps foremost among these, every soldier stationed in The Nettles district fort is given an amulet to ward them against supernatural influence, should they be called upon to face a reawakening of the eldritch horrors that reigned over Cauldron Hill during the time of the witches.





### Docker's Jank

Docker Attack  
Arcane, Teleportation

Standard  
Encounter

#### Close Burst 5

**Effect** You and a willing ally within the burst teleport and switch locations. Your ally may then use a 1st-level at-will power that can be performed as a standard action, with a +2 power bonus to his or her attack rolls.



### Icy End of the Earth

Eschatologist Attack  
Psionic, Cold, Zone

Standard  
Encounter

#### Close Burst 2

**Prerequisite** You must be bloodied.

**Effect** You create a stationary zone of unnatural winter in the burst, including your own space. The zone lasts until you leave its area, until you are unconscious, or until you are not bloodied. Creatures in the zone cannot heal damage or gain temporary hit points. Creatures that start their turn in the zone take 5 cold damage. You cannot reduce the damage this power does to you in any way. (Other creatures can apply their resistances and immunities as normal.)

*Level 11:* 10 cold damage.

*Level 21:* 15 cold damage.



### The Man with Two Guns Is God

Gunsmith Attack  
Martial, Weapon

Standard  
Encounter

#### Ranged Weapon

**Effect** You may drop, sheathe, or store what you're holding, then draw one or two firearms.

**Target** One creature; if wielding two firearms, you can target a second creature within 5 squares of the first.

**Attack** Primary ability vs. AC.

**Hit** 1[W] damage, and the target cannot take opportunity actions until the end of your next turn. If two attacks, one target takes damage from the primary weapon, the other from the off-hand weapon.

*Level 11:* 2[W] damage.

*Level 21:* 3[W] damage.

**Special** Does not provoke opportunity attacks.



### Experimental Strike

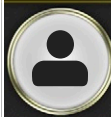
Martial Scientist Attack  
Martial, Weapon

Triggered  
Free  
Encounter

#### Personal

**Trigger** You miss all targets with an at-will attack power on your turn.

**Effect** You may sheathe a weapon or implement and/or draw a melee weapon. You can shift 2 squares and attempt something the rules don't cover (as detailed in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE™), such as slicing a rope to pin an enemy with a chandelier, or smashing a pipe to spray blinding steam on an enemy. After the attack, you may sheathe a weapon and/or draw a weapon or implement.



### Skyseer Vision

Skyseer Utility  
Primal

Special  
Daily

#### Personal

**Prerequisite** You can only use this power during an extended rest, and only if you can watch the night sky for an hour and then sleep.

**Effect** Ask up to three questions about possible courses of action in the near future. At the end of your extended rest, you awaken from sleep having received a vision regarding your questions. This functions similarly to the hand of fate ritual, with you receiving vague images that provide guidance.



### Look Skyward

Skyseer Utility  
Primal

Minor  
Encounter

#### Close Burst 5

**Target** One ally in burst

**Effect** The ally chooses an attack power, rolls a d20, and marks the result. The next time the ally makes an attack roll for that power during this encounter, he uses the rolled result (only the first roll is replaced).

When the ally uses the rolled result, he can still apply effects and powers to modify the attack roll. For example, *human perseverance*, *elven accuracy*, and *tactical presence* still grant bonuses if the ally used an action point to use the power, and an avenger would still roll a second die and pick the better of the two results.



### Speak with Spirit

Spirit Medium Utility  
Psionic

Standard  
Daily

#### Close Burst 1

**Target** One creature in burst that died within the past day and is still dead.

**Effect** You may ask three questions of the target; for each, make an Arcana, Diplomacy, or Insight check with DC based on the target's level (Easy, Medium, or Hard depending on the target's attitude and the particular knowledge). If you succeed, the target gives you a short answer, usually a minute or less.

You may be able to communicate with uneasy spirits who have not yet moved on, regardless of how long ago they died. Using this power against undead, or in any combat situation, is very difficult.



### Unfinished Business

Spirit Medium Attack  
Conjuration, Psionic

Standard  
Encounter

#### Close Burst 10

**Effect** Choose a creature that was killed or destroyed this encounter within three miles of your current location. It must still be at 0 hit points or fewer. You conjure the spirit of that creature in a square within the burst. The creature attacks with one of its at-will attacks as if it were alive. You choose the power it uses and make any decisions the power requires, such as targeting or forced movement. The creature gains a +2 power bonus to its attack rolls for this attack, and it deals full damage to insubstantial targets. After the attack, the conjured spirit is removed from play.



### Disposable Simulacrum

Technologist Attack  
Arcane, Summoning

Minor  
Encounter

#### Ranged 1

**Effect** Choose an at-will power you know (a standard, move, or minor action). You place a Small contraption in an unoccupied square within range (your defenses, speed 4, hp = half your bloodied value). It cannot move or manipulate items, unless the power you chose lets it. You can give the following special command within 10 squares:

#### Standard Action (At-Will)

**Effect** The contraption uses the power you chose (your normal statistics) as if you were in the contraption's square. If the power is sustainable, you can spend actions to sustain it. You cannot enhance the power with power points.







## Vekeshi Mystic Attack

## Divine, Fire, Radiant

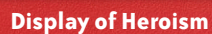
### Close Burst 10

**Trigger** A creature you can see in the burst hits one of your allies, and the ally is bloodied before or after the attack.

**Target** The triggering creature.

**Effect** You deal fire and radiant damage to the target equal to your primary ability score modifier.

**Special** You can use this power once per encounter at 1st level, twice at 6th level, three times at 11th, four at 16th, five at 21st, and six at 26th, but no more than once per round.



## Yerasol Veteran Utility

## Martial

## Personal

**Effect** Shift 3 squares. One bloodied or unconscious ally adjacent to you can spend a healing surge and may stand as a free action. You may then switch spaces with that ally. You and that ally gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.





**B**ECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF NPCs THE PARTY WILL MEET, EACH ZEITGEIST ADVENTURE will include two hand-outs to help you and your DM keep track of their various statuses, mannerisms, and role in the adventure. The DM's hand-out lists keywords and traits to help in portraying the NPCs, while a player handout will help the players keep track of whom they've met.

Each adventure will also include more detailed entries detailing the NPCs when they first appear.

Here's an example of the players' handout from Adventure One, *The Island at the Axis of the World*.

## Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft.

A local Flinter in his early 40s, Delft is your direct superior. Generally good-natured to his subordinates, he has a penchant for grouching about people behind their backs. A much better manager than investigator, Delft has advanced this far in the Constabulary by finding good agents, supporting them on difficult missions, and sharing the accolades from their successes.

Delft chews tobacco, and thinks he looks charming if he grins while sucking on tobacco juices. He walks with a cane because a mimic tore a chunk out of his leg fifteen years ago. He has a habit of poking inanimate objects with the cane before he gets too close to them, and spitting on them when he wants to be extra sure.



## Principal Minister Harkover Lee.

Perhaps the most powerful mage in Risur, Lee acts as King Aodhan's bodyguard and chief of staff. Straight-backed and virile despite being in his 60s, Lee has a slight Ber-tinged accent, and was said to be quite the ladykiller in his youth. He always dresses in reds and golds and carries a solid gold wizard's orb tucked into his robes. He never eats or drinks in public.



## Geoff Massarde.

A 40-something tiefling with an airy voice and a fondness for wine that outmatches his ability to handle his alcohol, Massarde is one of a handful of Danoran tieflings working for the Risuri military to help construct warships and other weapons. He has few kind words for his homeland. He is fascinated with ice, and carries a wand which can chill small objects with a touch. Mostly he just uses it as a novelty to cool beverages.



**Captain Rutger Smith.** Captain of the *R.N.S. Impossible*, one of the RHC's vessels. Smith earned his first command five years ago. Now 37, he has never led his ship into battle. That, combined with his fondness for the Malice-era philosophical writings of the pacifist monk William Miller, has made him the target of mockery by more established naval officers.



## Duchess Ethelyn of Shale.

The king's sister, Duchess Ethelyn was a commoner before earning her title in the Third Yerasol War. She dislikes industry and leads a coalition of powerful individuals with strong ties to the Unseen Court. She wears extravagant diamond cluster earrings – representing the stars of the night sky – to show her allegiance to the old ways. Accounts tell of her possessing many different types of magic, though many of these could be exaggerated.



## Flint City Governor Roland Stanfield.

Stanfield witnessed the fall of the eladrin goddess Srasama five hundred years ago and died soon thereafter in the chaos of Elfaivar's fall. But he reincarnated, and has for centuries served as Flint's governor.



## King Aodhan.

Now in his 70s, the current king of Risur looks rather unassuming, and was a common warrior before the previous king chose him as a successor after the Third Yerasol War. He prefers to resolve disputes by being cool-headed and rationally persuading those who will listen to his side. Despite all this, though, he trains regularly to keep his stamina and swordplay robust, and the rites of rulership grant him daunting magical powers.











# ZEITGEIST™

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION

## PLAYERS' GUIDE

Prepare to Take One Step Away from Classic Fantasy.

Steam and soot darken the skies above the city of Flint, and winds sweeping across its majestic harbor blow the choking products of industrial forges into the fey rainforests that dot its knife-toothed mountains. Since the earliest ages when the people of Risur founded this city, they feared the capricious beings that hid in those fog-shrouded peaks, but now as the march of progress and the demands of national defense turn Flint into a garden for artifice and technology, the old faiths and rituals that kept the lurkers of the woods at bay are being abandoned.

The Unseen Court, the Great Hunt, and the many spirits of the land long ago conquered by Risur's kings no longer receive tribute, but they cannot enter these new cities of steam and steel to demand their tithe. The impoverished workers who huddle in factory slums fear monsters of a different breed, shadowy children of the new urban labyrinth. Even their modern religions have no defenses against these fiends.

Times are turning. The skyseers—Risur's folk prophets since their homeland's birth—witness omens in the starry wheels of heaven, and they warn that a new age is nigh. But what they cannot foresee, hidden beyond the steam and soot of the night sky, is the face of this coming era, the spirit of the age: the *zeitgeist*.

This guide for players includes information about the world of the ZEITGEIST adventure path and its burgeoning industry, options that help your character take part in the technological revolution, and a detailed look at the city of Flint and its Royal Homeland Constabulary.

For use with the 4th Edition

**DUNGEONS  
& DRAGONS**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME

Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook®, Monster Manual®, and Dungeon Master's Guide® Player's Handbook® 2, Monster Manual® 2, Adventurer's Vault™ core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, LLC

A CAMPAIGN ACCESSORY USABLE BY INTREPID HEROES OF ALL LEVELS

