

ASHWELL

Ashwell was a remote farming community of little importance to the world until an earthquake struck the parish forty years ago. Following the quake a number of sinkholes opened up under various major structures in the town making many of them uninhabitable, even sinking some completely into the earth. After the initial damage, many residents left, while only those too poor or stubborn to leave remained behind.

Some of the poor or desperate people that remained attempted to plunder the ruins for any valuables that had been abandoned. In truth, some succeeded in finding lost treasures in the ruins of the church, the brewery, the fort, or the manor. Some treasures were easily identified, while others were not so familiar. In time, rumors spread that the parish had been built over a much older city, one which had itself sunken beneath the earth many many generations prior.

Over the years a new town sprung up around Ashwell, one built by new hands working with old stone. Some of the uncovered city below was intact, and the city combined new, old, and much older into a strange testament of ingenuity. The civilization that had been here before had a type of magic that was not well understood to the sages of the modern era. A new artifice had to be invented to repair and make use of this foreign technology.

ADVENTURE IN ASHWELL

A desperate man with a lantern carefully crawls through a gap in an old wall of a church. The man finds a silver statuette, one not of

something familiar. He sells the piece to a traveling merchant for medicine to cure his illness.

The merchant sells the statue to a silversmith for the price of the metal. The silversmith decides to keep the piece along his mantle for a time till he has enough silver to justify heating the forge. A noble visits the smith and takes an interest in the artifact.

A few weeks later, there are fifty armed soldiers in a tiny forgotten parish. A desperate man is arrested and taken from his family. Some of the soldiers become ill.

Within a few years Ashwell is a bustling settlement. A gold rush brings merchants, mercenaries, and madmen. Fame, fortune, or failure await those who come to Ashwell seeking adventure.

Ashwell pits thieves, nobles, priests, and occultists against each other. Artifacts unearthed from Ashwell have proven to be invaluable, everything from permanent light sources to stones that can make an entire ship fly.

Characters in Ashwell can be anything from the rugged veteran soldier to the arcanist drawing power from some eldritch horror from another dimension. Either way, the typical character should have an interest in both dungeon delving into the ruins of Ashwell and into comprehending and navigating the politics of various factions that have come to the city.

RACES & CLASSES

Ashwell is set in a world where "magic isn't real" to the world as a whole. People around the world might be spiritualists or have religions or beliefs, they may even believe in witchcraft, or

misunderstand perfectly natural occurrences to be mystical in some way, but the world largely seems to behave according to natural science. The city of Ashwell, however, is on the boarder to a whole new strange world in more than one way. The occurrences in and around Ashwell may have great significance in discovering where the world as we know it may not be what it seems.

Ashwell is in a human-centric setting, with various tribes of men with different hereditary tendencies and cultural traits. There are also a few of the more human-like D&D races, though they would be exceptionally more rare. Halflings, Elves, and Dwarves would be the most likely.

Magic does work, at least in and around Ashwell. Whether divine, arcane, or psionic in nature; you may be among the few people to start to discover and use these powers.

Further, technology exists in more ways than is typical in D&D. When combined with some of the artifacts in Ashwell, it may even surpass some science fiction in ways. Firearms exist in limited fashion, but perhaps a weapon using ammunition made from metals in Ashwell engraved with runes copied from tomes there might rip right through a sorcerer's mage armor.

There is plenty of room for skepticism as well, and it too can be a source of power. Certain specific creatures, items, and spells might be more effective against characters empowered by arcane, divine, or psionic power. Someone who rejects these forces might find themselves particularly capable of facing down certain kinds of dangers in the face of madness.

FEATS, TRAITS, & ITEMS

This game will not feature feats as handled in the core rulebooks. Instead, there are traits. Traits are earned independent of character levels. Traits might be a benefit or a burden. If you are interested in some specific feature from an existing feat, let me know in advance so I can potentially take that into account going through the game. There may be ways to let something that would usually come with a feat come from a trait or item.

Similarly you cannot strictly assume any magic items from the D&D core rules will necessarily be available. If there was a specific magic item that particularly fits your character or such, let me know so I can take it into consideration. Certainly something as traditional as a healing potion might exist, or a spell scroll, but there's no guarantee across the board.

ABILITY SCORES

Ability scores will be generated with standard point-buy. You can assume you can either take +1 to all ability scores or +2 to one ability score and +1 to one other ability score.

BACKGROUND & ORIGIN

I believe many of the D&D backgrounds work fine, perhaps with some adjustments. It's also quite possible that your background or cultural heritage may give you additional skill or equipment proficiencies.

Characters will be starting at first level, and the powers you gain as you advance are intended to be a bit superhuman for the setting. The average person doesn't have more than 10 hit points, but you might not be the only people that can become more powerful than average.