

Blood of the Primordials Campaign Guide

"Si em tow en can de lach."

"We speak the language of the unformed."

- Stephen King, *Desperation*

The eastern reaches are home to the City of Arches, a city of splendor and camaraderie regardless of the dangers surrounding it. In the west lie the Deadlands — a land of cracked earth under the burning eye of an alien sun where the gods do not watch and the blood of the primordials flows in rivers beneath the land.

Here in the Deadlands mortals struggle to survive against bloodthirsty predators, the obsidian blades of cultists giving their lives to careless hulks who slumber under the ground, and the spears of the armored soldiers of the land's Dread Kings who claim dominion over the Deadlands and clash over its hidden power.

Yet through the red clouds of the sky, pillars of light shine on those who protect fellow travelers from the dangers of the Deadlands and those who seek treasures lying in forgotten vaults hidden in ruined cities or buried in the sands for thousands of years.

In the heart of the Deadlands stands a city surrounded by spires jutting up like teeth. Here the roar of the arena echoes for miles around as scarred gladiators smash axes on shields. The faerie queen and gladiator champion known as the Red Belle floats above her throne on gossamer wings and watches. In the shade of the lawless city, merchants from parts unknown sell exotic food and wares protected by hired mercenaries while cloaked cultists hide in the shadows and beneath the city in forgotten temples soaked in blood.

Blood of the Primordials is a fantasy campaign setting for whatever fantasy RPG system you choose. In and around the city, your heroes travel through the Deadlands seeking treasures, protecting those in need, and battling the evil seeping up through the ground.

Fictional Inspiration

- *Berserk* — written by Kentaro Miura
- *Color Out of Space* — directed by Richard Stanley
- *Conan the Barbarian (1982)* — directed by John Milius
- *The Dark Tower* — written by Stephen King
- *Desperation* — written by Stephen King
- *Elden Ring* — published by From Software
- *The Fifth Season* — written by NK Jemisin
- *Gangs of New York* — directed by Martin Scorsese
- *Gideon the Ninth* — written by Tamsyn Muir
- *Hereditary* — directed by Ari Aster

- *Mad Max Beyond the Thunderdome* — directed by George Miller
- *Mad Max Fury Road* — directed by George Miller
- *The Ritual* — directed by David Bruckner
- *The Warriors* — directed by Walter Hill

Six Truths of the Deadlands

The following six truths are known to the people of the Deadlands. Feel free to give these truths to your players during a session zero of your *Blood of the Primordials* campaign.

A Land Between Worlds

Two skies lay above the Deadlands — one from a world of mortals and one from a world of primordials and their twisted followers. Two suns shine on the lands, one a golden orb bringing life to the lands below — the other a black sun whose rays bring death and undeath to the sands. Wizards, priests, and sages say the two suns bring two strains of magic to the world.

The Blood of the Primordials

Deep in the ground slumber the primordials — ageless hulks whose alien minds care not for the lives of mortals. Eons ago they walked the lands and fought one another in world-shattering conflict. Many died and some now slumber in the depths, whispered to sleep by the voices of robed cultists and children's nighttime fairy tales. Others walk the land, silhouettes on the heat-shimmered horizon whose mere appearance shatters the minds of those who witness them.

The Scions — Mortal Vessels of Divinity

The gods do not smile upon the Deadlands. Instead, a handful of mortal beings channel divine energy as they walk the Deadlands. Their mortal coils are as varied as the domains they represent — an ancient gold dragon may represent knowledge and arcana while a small child in a village may channel light, life, and the stars. The will of these divine beings are as varied as the domains they represent — some bringing hope, happiness, and life while others spread disease, murder, and undeath. Some scions channel the will of the primordials themselves.

Lands of Ruins and Lost Relics

For hundreds of thousands of years mortals built keeps, towers, shrines, cairns, temples, and monuments to the powers that rose and fell since the





days of the primordials. Magic flowed thick in the blood-soaked land, empowering relics of legend now lost in the depths of the desert. Treasure seekers, fortune hunters, sages, and historians travel the hostile lands, delving into the depths of these ruins seeking these relics and uncovering the power and dangers contained within.

Strength of Mind, Arm, and Spell

In the center of the Deadlands lies the City of Blades — a city with no laws, courts, standing army, or elected leader. Strength — be it physical, mental, and magical — set the hierarchy of the people of the city. The faerie princess known as the Red Belle leads the city after having defeated the half-fiend fire giant warlord Vorsun who now stands at her side as advisor and guardian. Though strength rules the city, it is not without compassion. The Knights of the Red Sun, well respected and feared guardians of the city, regularly shield those unable to protect themselves.

City-States of the Dread-Kings

Several other forgotten cities rise from the cracked earth — most ruled by powerful warlords known as the Dread Kings who consider themselves above mere mortals. These Dread Kings seek power above all else and attempt to expand their holdings. They reside in ancient cities with secrets profound and terrible lost in their vaults.

Heroes of the Deadlands

The PCs in the Deadlands are hardened by the grim existence of the land but steeled by a desire for wealth, discovery, and a desire to help those who cannot help themselves. Players running characters in *Blood of the Primordials* might use one of the following motivations to draw them into their adventures in these forsaken godless lands.

Treasure Hunter. Just below the dead sands lie forgotten treasures for those bold enough to seek them and smart enough to avoid the fate of those who came before. Strength and resilience come from your bonds with fellow adventurers who likewise delve into ruins thousands of years old seeking the artifacts that bring you your fortune. Deep down, however, you know a life of quiet luxury is not your goal — you always hunt for the treasure that comes next.

Deadlands Sage. Much knowledge rests in the vaults of abandoned keeps, the musty libraries of ruined cities, and on fading frescoes on the walls of sunless tombs. Though you prefer the confines of a private study, only through first-hand experiences delving into these ancient ruins will you find the knowledge you seek. You and your companions climb down shafts to chambers untouched by the scorching sun above seeking engravings with the answers to the

riddles that follow you through consciousness and into dreams.

Protector of the People. The sands bleach the bones of those unable to protect themselves from predators — bestial, sentient, and environmental. You take it upon yourself to protect those who the Deadlands leaves unprotected and giving them a life that would otherwise be plucked from their bodies by the uncaring land. You seek fellow adventurers to aid you in shielding those with noble heart from the deadly fingers reaching for them.

The Primordials

Little facts are known of the primordials. Older than mortals, older than the gods — these vast soulless and careless entities once ruled over the lands. They are beings of creation and destruction with no motivation any conscious mind can comprehend. Though many primordials died in their earliest days of existence, one death stands above the others — the draconic progenitor, Ix the Sky Sunderer, whose death at the hands of two other primordials sundered the sky and cracked the boundaries between worlds.

Mortal worshippers of these primordials sometimes devote their lives to keep these creatures in slumber deep beneath the earth or in massive vaults within the mountains. Other worshippers conduct sacrifices in their name, absorbing the power emanating off of these immortal beings in return for the souls of mortals. The minds of many followers cracked, having touched the presence of their beloved primordial in vision or in the etchings of ancient tombs. These damaged creatures now follow their perception of the will of the primordials as they conduct terrible deeds.

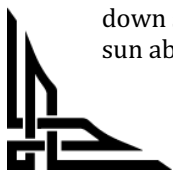
Yet the primordials care not for the will or actions of mortals — if they consider mortality at all. Instead, they slumber in vast chasms, float above a damaged sky, or wander on the horizon of the desert sands of the Deadlands, leaving death in their wake.

Below is a list of eight such primordials. Use this list to flavor monuments, adventure locations, items, NPCs, and other elements of your campaign.

1. Gulsung the Crawling Chaos
2. Vyxis the Hive
3. Voor the Red Sun
4. Skytheer the Silver Blade
5. Worgatan the Insatiable Maw
6. Slayrevar the Red Mist
7. Othyrun the Dreadful Steppes
8. Jungivar the Underworld Serpent

Gulsung the Crawling Chaos

- **Alternative Names:** Father of Oozes, the Gray Mass
- **Common Symbols:** A blob-like shape with six tentacles spread out from it.





Gulsung is often appears as a massive crawling slug leaving a trail of primordial ooze in its wake from which oozes spawn and mutated horrors rise from those creatures unfortunate enough to touch the river of horror it leaves behind. Seventeen eyestalks protrude from the front shape of Gulsung above a mount of writhing cilia. Gulsung is said to reside in a vast chasm deep under the Deadlands, though some say it sometimes travels across the cracked earth leaving its rivers of acidic slime in its wake. Followers of Gulsung believe creatures with internal or external bone structures are a mistake of creation and that all creatures should return to their ooze-like primordial state. Rituals conducted by cults of Gulsung are said to turn humanoids into the more pure state of being — that of a slime.

Adventure Hook: While traveling through the Deadlands, the characters find a section of their path crossed by a large slimy river filled with malevolent oozes. Investigating the location reveals that other travelers were grabbed up and dragged by humanoid figures in league with the slimes to an altar atop a platform formed from calcified organic material. There the cult of Gulsung prepares to liquify their captives in a massive sentient ooze — a child of Gulsung — if the characters do not stop them.

Vyxis the Hive

- **Alternative Names:** Mother of the Swarm, the Million Minds, Princess of the Spine.
- **Common Symbols:** A thin insectoid shape with nine barbed limbs.

Some scholars and theologians believe that, before the time of mortals, all insects spawned from the body of Vyxis. Vyxis is depicted and described as a towering being formed from countless writhing insects of all different types. Each insect in her body has its own mind yet all minds are bound to a single consciousness. Some of these insects, from tiny to huge, break free from her body in order to conduct her will independently. Thus, the spawn of Vyxis scour the earth engaged in quests whose goals mortals can only guess at. Followers of Vyxis often augment their bodies with insectoid grafts — bladed arms, stingers, multi-segmented eyes, and wings.

Adventure Hook: Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands learned that a merchant's caravan has gone missing along the eastern road from the City of Blades. They carried a very rare insect in a glass case whose intelligence was far greater than any mere bug. Conophas is convinced it can communicate with other insects and even some humanoids connected to Vyxis. Conophas seeks adventurers willing to find the missing caravan and return with the intelligent insect intact.

Voor the Red Sun

- **Alternative Names:** The Red Eye, Grandfather of the Void, Door of Oblivion.
- **Common Symbols:** An eclipsed sun with a red corona.

When the sky tore open above the Deadlands, after the death of the primordial Ix, a new sky appeared — overlapping that of the world with one of a world beyond. The permanently eclipsed red sun of that world sometimes appears over the Deadlands, pushing the natural golden sun away. A deep hatred for life seethes in the blackness of the eclipsed sun Voor. Its depths open to the Void — a soulless realm from which massive shapeless horrors reach out to snuff out all life they can find. Followers of Voor believe the red eclipsed sun to be an Scion of the Void, an avatar of Oblivion. They long for the day when the sun's black depths expand to swallow everything. Followers of Voor often have eyes like black pits, with small veins writhing out across their face.

Adventure Hook: Galrond Silverstar of the Knights of the Golden Sun has heard of a strange primordial monument in the desert appearing like a great claw surrounding a red orb. Travelers say when one approaches the orb, the Red Sun appears in the sky and the dead come to life. Galrond wants the monument destroyed. Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands would love a piece of the strange red crystal at the center of the primordial claw.

Skytheer the Silver Blade

- **Alternative Names:** The Spined One, The Impaler
- **Common Symbols:** A silver triangle crossed with spikes.

Skytheer appears as a multi-legged silver insectoid lower body and a humanoid torso with a triangular head atop a long thin neck. His body has no joints, its metallic form shaping itself to Skytheer's will. Often Skytheer's upper limbs are shaped into long blades, lances, or spears; and he can form several such limbs as he wills. Parts of his body can break off, turning into silvery spiders and other insect-like creatures whose sharp limbs can pierce through armor. Assassins and murderers often worship Skytheer, calling themselves the Silver Splinters. They often use thin shining steel knives or swords to kill their victims and sometimes replace their own fingers or hands with slivery blades.

Adventure Hook: Several high-ranking clients of the Sharpened Coin have shown up dead, along with their hired protection. Thin silvery blades marked with a silver triangle crossed with spikes have been found at the murder sites. Thervus Stonehelm of the Sharpened Coin seeks adventurers willing to discreetly investigate these murders, leading to a sect of Silver Splinter assassins at hollowed out and half-





buried giant statue of Skytheer two days outside of the City of Blades.

Worgatan the Insatiable Maw

- **Alternative Names:** The Void of Teeth, The Devourer
- **Common Symbols:** Circular mouth filled with teeth.

It's said Worgatan has no body and simply exists as a devouring maw opening anywhere in the world. All it devours is deposited to a world where the remnants of thousands of empires rot in a wasteland lying below a dead sun. Followers of the Void of Teeth believe Worgatan devours heretics, battlegrounds soaked in blood, and entire cities overtaken with gluttony and greed. These followers, sometimes known as the Order of the Endless Appetite, hurl victims into pits filled with sharpened bone hoping to summon the maw so they might hurl themselves into the world beyond.

Adventure Hook: Travelers of the deeper Deadlands describe a massive sinkhole in which lies a ruined city. As they peered over the side, parts of the city fell into a gaping maw. Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands seeks daring adventurers who can enter the city and find what relics they can before the city is completely devoured.

Slayrevar the Red Mist

- **Alternative Names:** The Eternal Miasma, the Bloodshade
- **Common Symbols:** A red mist with two white eyes.

Few can comprehend the existence of Slayrevar, said to float over the land as a red mist that eats away skin, evaporates blood, and turns bones to dust. Some believe Slayrevar to be the remnants of a fallen primordial whose history is lost to time — a devouring mist seeking revenge against the living. Others believe the world itself expelled Slayrevar as revenge for the ecological disasters caused by mortals upon the Deadlands. Followers of Slayrevar, known as the Mistwalkers, have a love for deadly poisons and mind-altering hallucinogens. High-ranking members are said to have inhaled the purist form of the Red Mist, becoming elder vampires.

Adventure Hook: The tragic death of a beloved debutante, Dolvia Hillcrest, has the Hillcrest family in mourning. Brinraith Hillcrest, patriarch of the Hillcrest family, reports to trusted contacts in the Sharpened Coin that the body of his daughter disappears from her glass coffin in the family crypt each night, returning before dawn the following morning. Thervus Stonehelm seeks discreet adventurers willing to follow the dead-walking Dolvia, find out where she goes, and end what evil might awaken her from the dead.

Othyrun the Dreadful Steppes

- **Alternative Names:** The Living Dungeon, the Hungering Depths
- **Common Symbols:** A stone hallway with a pair of eyes peering out of the dark.

The deepest halls of forgotten dungeons may not be mere stone but part of a vast primordial sentience seeking to devour those foolish enough to enter its depths. Stretching many layers deep, the dungeon of Othyrun continually rebuilds itself, spawning monsters from the depths of mortal nightmares to lurk in its halls and drawing souls into its darkness with visions of gold and treasure. Maps of this bottomless lair lose accuracy as the halls of the dungeon reform into a maddening maze. Many of the levels of Othyrun contain the ruins of other dungeons — ancient crypts, lost citadels, monstrous lairs, and profane temples — the treasures of which entice explorers to travel into its depths. Followers of Othyrun, known as the Dread Crawlers, tend to be adventurers with sparkles of gold in their eyes while higher-ranking members understand the entity they serve is the dungeon itself — not some monster in its deepest depths.

Adventure Hook: A caretaker at the vast and ancient cemetery outside of the City of Blades reports that a tomb has risen out of the earth containing a staircase leading into the ground where none existed. Shadowed and hooded members of the Dread Crawlers informed both Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands and Imedia Wyrmbright of the Arcane Eye that a powerful relic lies in the depths of the catacombs exposed by the tomb — a shadowed mask said to draw life from those who gaze upon the wearer. Both factions seek adventurers willing to enter the mysterious tomb and find the mask before the other retrieves it first.

Jungivar the Underworld Serpent

- **Alternative Names:** The Shadow Wyrn, Breaker of the World
- **Common Symbols:** A black serpent surrounding a sphere and eating its own tail.

Some priests proselytize sermons of a world surrounded by a large serpent while others believe the world spawned from the roots of a great tree. Legend speaks to not one serpent of creation, but two — one of which is the antithesis of life and creation — a serpent of pure destruction, chaos, and entropy. This underworld serpent, named Jungivar, is said to surround the night sky, struggling against the forces of life to squeeze the world into oblivion. Some believe the serpent slumbers under the earth, spawning black worms of tremendous size who pierce through the desert sands of the Deadlands. Followers of Jungivar, known as the Fangs of the





Shadow Serpent, conduct sacrifices to appease the World Breaker's appetite for mortal souls with daggers carved from the poisoned teeth of these black worm brood of Jungivar.

Adventure Hook: Traveling merchants report that a nearby village has been under assault by huge worms burrowing out of the ground, crushing and swallowing any in their path. Galrond Silverstar of the Knights of the Golden Sun believes a relic in the town, a glyphed tooth of Jungivar, calls the works to attack. He seeks adventurers willing to travel to the village and retrieve the twisted relic. Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands would instead very much like to have the relic returned to her in a special bag said to prevent the relic's call to the children of Jungivar.

The Scions of the Deadlands

The scions are mortal beings touched by the divine. They channel their divine energy to the land and people around them. Some scions are touched by light, life, and goodness. Others by bloodshed, nightmare, death, and undeath. They might manifest as an ancient gold dragon soaring the skies for centuries or a small child who fills the wells of their village with clear water. Some scions were born with their manifest destiny as a scion of the divine. Others came to it over time or in deed.

Like all mortals, scions can live and die — and many have. Scions do not often die quietly, however, and are harder to kill than most mortals. They live and breathe and walk the sands of the Deadlands like other mortals but can project their divinity through dreams, nightmares portents, spectral manifestations of themselves. Many times they have no knowledge that they're doing so, as though their divine manifestations are a separate part of them than their mortal consciousness.

Many scions spread the will of peace, light, health, and love. Others project much darker urges: death, murder, necromancy, war, disease, and oblivion. It's rare to meet a scion in person but almost all are touched by the divine powers of the scions during their lives.

Scions of Light

Though the light of the gods does not shine upon the Deadlands, the scions of light bring their will to the land and those living in it. These scions of light are conduits of divine power channeled from the heavens. Scions of light serve as sources of divine power to the characters traveling in the Deadlands. While a god's prayer may not be heard in the Deadlands — these Scions of Light answer calls for divine magic often subconsciously.

The Scions of Light reside in the Deadlands. Some may be secluded — their locations only whispered in rumor. Others are well-known in the lands. They

often aid adventurers loyal to their cause or offer quests to adventurers in their names.

The symbols, glyphs, and iconography of the scions of light often decorate shrines, altars, and relics throughout the land.

Use the list of eight Scions of Light to flavor items, monuments, NPCs, or locations.

1. Aragon of the Golden Ray
2. Edea the Blue Leaf
3. Maylin the Summer's Star
4. Mother Valenel
5. Ovendar of the Thousand Eyes
6. Sareth the Nature's Step
7. Traga the Lady of Storms
8. Uldrin the Living History

Aragon of the Golden Ray

The Winged Sun, The Gilded Claw

- **Domain:** Life, Arcana, Knowledge, Dragons
- **Symbol:** A gold dragon on a white background

Some say the ancient gold dragon Aragon is as old as the primordials and has the blood of both primordials and celestials in his veins. Others say he is simply an old dragon touched by the gods of light. Aragon lives in solitude in the western mountains, only taking flight to hunt the mountain yetis who hunt in the area. Many say his flights are fewer with every decade that passes. Once, long ago, Aragon sought treasure, magic, and knowledge buried deep in the sands of the Deadlands which he hoarded in several vaults throughout the region. Now he seeks a simple life of solitude. Some say he travels the lands in the guise of an old monk leaning heavily on an oak staff speaking with the travelers whose path he crosses and blessing them with a golden light.

Adventure Hook: The demonic sorcerer Ikalezal has been terrorizing the small village of Yellowgrass. A sage at yellowgrass seeks heroes to recover the Golden Spear of the Winged Sun, a weapon once wielded by the human form of Aragon at a lost temple to the scion now overtaken by bloodthirsty gnolls. When the characters find the spear, they must convince the manifestation of Aragon of their heroic purpose before wielding the spear against Ikalezal.

Edea the Blue Leaf

The Lifebringer, Daughter of the Pond

- **Domain:** Life, Nature, Water
- **Symbol:** A blue leaf floating on a still pond.

Over one hundred years ago, Edea was like every other human who lived in the deserts of the Deadlands — finding community among those who fought for survival under the red sun. When the village's well went dry, Edea's other lineage manifested — that of her dao mother. She restored





clean water to the well. These days Edea travels the desert with a small retinue of followers, bringing water to those in need while her divine powers flow from her into those calling for her aid across the land.

Adventure Hook: A band of thieves known as the Chipped Daggers stole an elemental stone of water from the village of Stillwater and now the village's water has become poisonous. The Chipped Daggers took the stone to their secret den within a ruined stronghold thought cursed by the ghosts of two warring armies. The villagers of Stillwater seek heroes willing to find the stone and return it to their village.

Maylin the Summer's Star

Sister of Light, The Stardancer

- **Domain:** Light, Life, Stars
- **Symbol:** A finger pointing to a shining star.

Maylin, a young dwarf woman, doesn't know when she became the scion of light. She was found alone in the desert as a small child, weeks after she should have passed away. She spoke of a star guided her to the village of Straylight that took her in. The village's elders consulted their ancient texts and identified her as the scion of light and gave her the title of the Summer's Star. Maylin still resides in the village of Straylight today, a dwarf of twenty years who serves the people of Straylight as she does in dreams those who call upon her divine power.

Adventure Hook: Each night the red sun rises on the horizon, sending ever more dangerous aberrant horrors against the village of Straylight. The elders protecting Maylin seek heroes to follow a new rising star on the western horizon to a forgotten temple to a long-dead god of the stars where they can find a star-touched tiara and fulfill Maylin's prophecy to protect the village from these horrors and restore the natural sky above Straylight.

Mother Valenel

Grandmother of the Sands, The Mountain Queen -

Domain: Fire, Wisdom, Protection - **Symbol:** A volcano on a yellow circle

Mother Valenel resides among a clan of reclusive fire giants in the western mountains of the Deadlands. These fire giants, known as the Swords of the Red Sands, follow the lore and path to keep the primordials of the desert asleep. Mother Valenel is welcoming to those able to find the Swords of the Red Sands, offering food and accommodations for weary travelers able to navigate the harsh mountains surrounding their village. For all her joyous mirth, however, lies a burning glint in her eye to find heroes and put them to work for the good of the mortals of the Deadlands.

Adventure Hook: Demons from nearby ruined city of Vastair threaten the village of Dawnshadow. Elders



at the village see heroes willing to travel into the nearby mountains and treat with Mother Valenel and the Swords of the Sands and form an alliance so the Swords of the Sands will protect the village from the threat of Vastair. In return, Mother Valenel asks these heroes to recover a gemstone bracer lost in a vault buried deep in the mountain beyond tunnels too narrow for her giants to travel.

Ovendar of the Thousand Eyes

The Whisper in the Shade, Old Manylegs

- **Domain:** Arcana, knowledge, insects, underground
- **Symbol:** Six silver orbs in pairs of different sizes on a black background

Given his massive size and spider-like form, Ovendar is often mistaken for a scion of fel deeds but his calm telepathic voice often soothes those filled with fear or who seek violence. Ovendar is said to be thousands of years old — perhaps even being a primordial himself. Others say he has spoken to faraway gods, learning the secrets of their power and channeling the weave of magical energy throughout the world. Ovendar lairs in the depths of the earth, sometimes many thousands of miles away from a previously held destination. Ovendar's magical web allows him transport across the furthest reaches of the vast caverns beneath the Deadlands.

Adventure Hook: During their adventures, one of the characters hears the voice of the Spider Sage asking them to find a forgotten library filled with dangerous secrets. The voice of Ovendar asks that they return these dangerous tomes to their cavernous lair deep in the Sword Mountains. In return, Ovendar offers the characters advice and council for their future journeys.

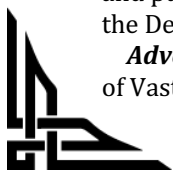
Sarethe — Nature's Step

The Stag King, The Halfstag

- **Domain:** Nature, Life, Wisdom, Spring, Autumn
- **Symbol:** A pair of silver antlers on a green background

Sarethe appears as a male, female, or non-binary elf with the lower body of a large stag and silver antlers glowing above his head. Sarethe often resides in oases found across the sands of the Deadlands with green grass, trees, brooks, and pools. Sarethe's oases appear to those of noble heart and purpose who otherwise find themselves at the mercy of the desert. Some say they've seen the half-stag hunting huge desert wolves in the heat mirages of the Deadlands, silver arrows fired from his massive bow.

Adventure Hook: Villagers of the village of North Arrow whisper that hunters have captured a centaur stag and hold him at a ruined keep outside of a wild grove. The village elder, Gnovis Longsong asks the





characters to rescue the half-stag centaur who has blessed their small village for two hundred years.

Traga the Lady of Storms

The Tempest, The Bringer of Rain

- **Domain:** Tempest, water, weather, nature
- **Symbol:** Three bolts of cross-crossed lightning

The Lady of Storms is said to only appear when weather turns foul in the Deadlands and the rare tempest roars across the desert sands. Some say they see Traga standing upon the rocks, arms outstretched as the rain and hail flows around her. Others say they found Traga at various oases in the desert, as calm as an untouched pool and a smile upon her face. Yet her storm-filled eyes reveal the chaos brewing beneath her calm voice and quiet manners.

Adventure Hook: Raiding bandits have stolen an elemental gem from the shrine of Traga in the center of the village of Hawktaill. Now the village crops are dying and the bitter cold of night threatens their very lives. The villagers ask the characters to recover the stone from the bandit's lair, a fallen temple to the primordial Jungivar two days journey away.

Uldrin the Living History

The Glyphed One, The Walking Word

- **Domain:** Knowledge, Arcana, Secrets
- **Symbol:** A glyphed stone tablet

The stone titan, Uldrin, often sleeps embedded in the rock of the mountain for centuries at a time. Explorers who once found Uldrin half-embedded in the stone wall of a cave noted that the vast surface of his body is covered in tiny etchings of primordial glyphs. It would take decades to record and translate these etchings. Of what little has been translated, the etchings capture the world's history and magical secrets long forgotten. During his few waking years, Uldrin carves pieces of these histories into cavern walls or on stone tablets. Followers of Uldrin translate and transcribe these writings into texts and scrolls found throughout the Deadlands. Those bound to the divine nature of knowledge dream of the stone titan's gifts.

Adventure Hook: During their journeys, the characters find a piece of a stone tablet with glyphs upon it showing part of a powerful spell. On their investigations, the characters learn that the remainder of this tablet resides deep in the mountains at a shrine for Uldrin now beset upon by mountain raiders and their trained beasts. Should the characters join the stone, they reveal a powerful spell to aid them in their journeys.

Dread Scions

Like their light-aligned counterparts, the Dread Scions are mortals touched by the divine. Unlike the scions of light, the Dread Scions touched darkness in their lives. Some may have manifested from the fell energy directly while others found it in their travels or through their own dark actions.

Dread Scions attract followers aligned with their tainted and twisted views of the life around them. These followers build altars to their walking deities and chant whispers to them in the darkness of night. They pledge their fell actions to the Dread Scions, leaving symbols painted in blood on the walls above their victims.

The dread scions themselves walk the lands as mortal beings but may also manifest as shades or possess other living beings to enact their will. Their mortal coil may have no memories of these events — their projects coming from the divine power they channel rather their own conscious actions.

Use the list of dread scions below to flavor monuments, items, quests, locations, or NPCs.

1. Gestell Blackstar
2. Gothin
3. Kethmal the Claw of Shadows
4. Lord Thresh
5. Revel
6. Sever
7. Stella the Red Cloak
8. Valde the Blood Seeker
9. Vetal-Qor
10. Xemnon Hell-Touched

Gestell Blackstar the Fellwalker

The Song of the Void, The Empty Heart

- **Symbol:** A black starscape with a pair of eyes.
- **Domains:** The Void, Emptiness, Darkness.

One a great and terrible warlord of the wastelands, Gestell sought weapons and armor of great power in the lost vaults of the world. In one such vault he found a pool to the void. On the lightest touch, the void flowed over him, turning his skin into a vast alien starscape. Now Gestell walks the desert at night, a black greatsword over his shoulder and strange alien armor covering his starscape body. A band of followers known as the Fellwalkers seeks the truth of oblivion from Gestell, building monuments to him which occasionally draw spectral avatar of Gestell into existence.

Adventure Hook. Cloaked and armored bandits kidnapped Hunter Windsong, a young man who fell in with the wrong crowd. The Guardians learned that they plan to end his life and reanimate him with the essence of the void at a starry pool below an obsidian obelisk erected on behalf of Gestell Blackstar on a hill several miles away from the City of Blades. Hunter's





mother, Tansa Windsong, begs the characters to find her son before their ritual begins as the black moon peaks in the nighttime sky.

Gothin the Thing in the Pit

The Blood-birthed, The Foul Lord.

- **Symbol:** A bloody gauntlet wrapped in spiked chains.
- **Domains:** Abyss, War.

It's said that two creatures crawled out of the well leading down into the heart of the Underworld, the chain knight Lord Scale and Gothin, the Thing in the Pit. Lord Scale took on the honor and defense of the weak as his charge while Gothin seeks blood and war. Gothin is sometimes depicted as a dark knight armored in spikes and wearing a horned helm. Othertimes he is depicted as a powerful horned and winged demon, hands wrapped in spiked chains dripping blood. Gothin has been known to serve evil masters, defending their realm but quick to leave them to their deaths or conduct their deaths himself if it serves his greater purpose.

Adventure Hook. A powerful warband known as the Hell's Arrows recently took over the citadel known as the Red Sun's Glory. When they traveled into the lowest vaults, their screams filled the nighttime sky. Now their reanimated bodies guard the citadel, wrapped in the barbed chains and painted with the symbol of Gothin. The Sharpened Coin seeks adventurers willing to break into the citadel, end whatever horror of Gothin slew and reanimated Hell's Arrows, and recover a glyphed talon held in the lower vaults whose magic it's said is able to imprison even the most powerful foes.

Kethmal the Claw of Shadows

The Primal Nightmare, The Beastlord of Dusk.

- **Symbol:** A three-fingered claw.
- **Domains:** Darkness, Beasts. Description

It's said that the desert hunter Kethmal Swiftborn, badly wounded, found an oasis in the middle of the night — one not filled with the life-giving clear water sought but one with water as black as oil and filled with a seething malevolence. Sick with thirst and succumbing to his wounds, Kethmal drank from the pool and transformed into something between his humanoid form and the wolves who hunted him in the night. Moreso, he found that he could reach out to his primordial power and blend into the shadows, becoming nearly invisible in the night. Now he thirsts for blood in the desert, followed by a packs of wolves and werewolves who hunt in his name.

Adventure Hook. Explorers of Arcane Eye discovered an altar to the Primal Nightmare in series of natural caves at the base of the Skytouch Mesa. Before they could sanctify the altar, wolves and

werewolves routed them from the site. Imedia Wyrmbright of the Arcane Eye seeks heroes willing to travel to the mesa, cut through the wolves and werewolves protecting the site, and destroy the altar so its unholy presence can't convert even more humanoids into lycanthropes.

Lord Thresh the War Bringer

The Chipped Axe, The Dread Impaler.

- **Symbol:** A chipped axe on a blood-red field.
- **Domains:** War, Chaos.

Stories of Lord Thresh's wars go back several centuries, spurring rumors that the warlord is not a single man but many who take up the mantle. Others say it is the armor that makes the lord and that only smoke and fury flow within the dark gray scaled armor. Those who speak of him say he stands as tall as a giant, a huge chipped axe hung over his shoulder, riding atop a beast of scales and piercing tentacles not of this world. Some believe this scion of war grows an army in the deserts and shadows of the mountains, an army of demons and giants that will soon swarm over the few civilized villages left in the Deadlands.

Adventure Hook. A banner of the chipped axe flies over a ruined keep five days north of the City of Blades. Galrond Silverstar of the Knights of the Golden Sun seeks adventurers willing to reconnoiter the keep and see if it is mere foolish bandits waving the banner to scare travelers or an actual scouting part of the War Bringer come out of the shadows.

Revel the Voidwatcher

The Whisperer in the Dark, Wielder of the Black Tome

- **Symbol:** A grinning face with pits for eyes.
- **Domains:** The Abyss, Forbidden Knowledge.

Revel is said to be a halfling, gnome, or other small-sized humanoid, always smiling and with eyes that appear as an inky black liquid. Some say Revel was a sage's apprentice before he delved into forbidden tomes and was touched by the void beyond — his mortal mind shattered by what he witnessed over thousands of years poured into him in an instant. Now some whisper he hides in the shadows in the depths of forgotten libraries or ancient tombs, his quiet laugh following those who followed his same dangerous path so long ago. Some sages believe he appears where he will, placing just the right book, scroll, or tablet in the way of a knowledge-seeking researcher to push them closer to the abyss.

Adventure Hook. An dwarven apprentice sage of the Arcane Eye named Latona Rainborn has gone missing. Imedia Wyrmbright found a scroll showing a map to a lost temple of Ovendar of the Thousand Eyes and describing a ritual to draw knowledge from the lost primordial. Imedia seeks adventurers willing to travel to the lost temple and save Latona before she





dives to deep into the forbidden knowledge of the Abyss.

Sever the Soul Blade

The Red Scythe, Lord Hush

- **Symbol:** A finger over lips or a scythe wreathed in shadows.
- **Domains:** Death and Undeath.

Legends say Sever appears to those who have misspent their lives in debauchery and villainy. His twin curved blades are the last thing his victims see. He appears as a thin-limbed humanoid, body wrapped in bands of gray and black, a pair of blue shining eyes appearing in the darkness of his cowed head. Some believe Sever descended from the same fate as his victims, a creature who delved too deeply into the pleasure of other peoples' pain and torment until a shadow from another world filled him with his current mission. Followers of Sever bring his dreadful justice to those they deem deserve it, though many believe his followers use their scythes towards their own end.

Adventure Hook. Captain Thervus Stonehelm of the Sharpened Coin seeks adventurers who can capture and escort of a notorious halfling bandit captain, Therant Blackheart, back to the city. Therant currently hides with his followers at a ruined temple to Gulsung the Crawling Chaos outside of the city. They've heard that followers of Sever, calling themselves the Scythes of the Crescent Moon, seek to find Therant Blackheart and end his lives upon their blades before the Sharpened Coin can get to him.

Stella the Red Cloak

The Crimson Spore, The Silent Hood

- **Symbol:** A skull covered in red moss.
- **Domains:** Plague, Nature.

Travelers of the deep desert sometimes speak of a strange lush land of roses and red moss that smells as sweet as the heavens' embrace. Those who walk through the beds of flowers and moss find their cares flowing from them and their pain ended until they lie in the beds and let life flow out from them into the flowers around. Among these corpsebeds walks Stella the Red Cloak — once a druid of the lifegiving nature who came to the conclusion that sentience itself is a curse upon the land and cause for the devastation of the Deadlands. Though her specific motivations are unclear, some find caravans or military camps overtaken by Stella's scarlet wildgrowth, eyes and mouths filled with blooming buds.

Adventure Hook. Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands seeks adventurers willing to travel to a ruined watchtower outside of the city where a bandit gang calling themselves the Silent Whispers fell prey to the Red Cloak's touch. She's

heard that the slain bodies of the bandits still shamble about, covered in the red moss of the Crimson Spore. Conophas believes a single perfect bloom of the scarlet growth resides within the tower. With it in hand, she believes she can find a cure to the curse of Stella's crimson touch.

Valde the Blood Seeker

The Sanguine Grandmother, The Illuminated Blossom

- **Symbol:** A blood red eye outlined in black.
- **Domains:** Death, Blood.

Before being given her divine gift, Valde had already murdered dozens in and around the City of Blades and outskirt neighborhoods. Her very existence was considered a plague. Every night someone else would be found killed with perfect precision, cut with a blade as sharp as a whisper. Each death at her hands brought her closer to her divine nature as the Blood Seeker. Soon her taste for death became literal instead of figurative, transforming her into a vampire and scion of blood and death. Valde appears as a thin elven woman in black and red leather wielding a pair of small curved blades and eyes glowing red in the depths of night and shadow. Her thralls, the Sanguine Grandchildren, are made up of mortal murderers, assassins, and vampire thralls who serve her unending thirst for blood.

Adventure Hook. Several disappearances of high-paying customers of the Sharpened Coin has led Captain Thervus Stonehelm to hire adventurers and investigators to locate their lost sources of revenue. The trail leads to a mausoleum in the Thousand Sunless Temples under which members of the Sanguine Grandchildren reside in a network of crypts. There they begin a ritual with their captured aristocrats in worship of their divine matron — Valde the Blood Seeker.

Vetal-Qor the Father of Bones

The Glyphed Skull, The Marrow Lord

- **Symbol:** A skull covered in runes.
- **Domains:** Death, Forbidden Knowledge, Magic.

For his whole mortal life, Vetal-Qor sought to command death. Delving into the darkest arts of necromancy found in the land, Vetal-Qor eventually attained lichdom yet found no contentment in traversing the boundary between life and death. Instead, he continued his studies, creating constructs of bone and flesh beyond the nightmares of mortals. For ten centuries, Vetal-Qor continued his studies in several laboratories hidden throughout the Underworld and in ruined obsidian towers piercing out of the sands of the Deadlands. He often appears as an old human man with gray wrinkled skin and wisps of white hair on his scalp or as a humanoid construct pieced together from several skeletons with three





grinning crowned skulls under his black hood. Followers of Vetal-Qor seek his wisdom in traversing life and death, often made up of those with mortal afflictions or, in some cases, very rich aristocrats who come to the conclusion that their wealth will not help them live forever.

Adventure Hook. Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands seeks adventurers willing to travel to a shrine of the Marrow Lord outside of the City of Blades. There several cultists of Vetal-Qor practice their arts of reanimating the dead. Conophas believes their leader holds an ancient tome containing some of Vetal-Qor's necromatic spells and wants the tome brought to the Seekers of the Sands for further study.

Xemnon Hell-Touched

The Red Knight, Lord of the Pit

- **Symbol:** A black blade with red flames.
- **Domains:** Chaos, Hell.

Once a valiant knight of an unknown order, Xemnon found himself betrayed by his liege and the religious order who supported his corrupt king. Losing all faith in his kingdom and his faith, Xemnon reached out to beings of the lower planes and a voice answered — granting Xemnon incredible power and a burning never-ending fury. Alone, Xemnon entered the opulent palace of his former king and slew every living being inside. All that remained was the melted stone of the kingdom's greatest temple, its altar now bathed in blood and the heretically defaced statue of its deity. Xemnon's wrath never ended. Centuries later, the hell-knight can be found walking the lands, leading followers known as the Red Riders, who seek corrupted leaders in all forms and bring any who follow these leaders to the torch.

Adventure Hook. A nearby village of Daybreak has recently come under attack by members of the Red Riders who claim that the village's elder delves into the heretical practices of druidcraft. Galrond of the Guardians seeks heroes willing to travel to Daybreak, investigate the situation, and defend the village from the Red Riders if required.

Fallen Scions

Scions do not live forever. They live their lives and can die, or be killed, just as mortals can. Killing an scion is harder than killing a typical mortal but it can happen and has happened in times past.

The symbols and iconography of fallen scions decorate the ruins in the lost chambers below the City of Blades and across the Deadlands. Shrines to fallen scions remain in the world, prayed at by heartbroken followers or their mournful descendants long after their passing.

Use the list of fallen scions to flavor items, locations, NPCs, and monuments as desired.

1. Galvus the Free Runner
2. Kravun the Father of War
3. Lady Chase the Golden Protector
4. Librion the Golden Owl
5. Lord Scale the Knight of Chains
6. Magus Wynn Hollow the Walker of the Sapphire Forest
7. Navarr the Gnarled Root
8. Sevela the Walker Between
9. Sir Grimvold the Dark Knight
10. Starfall the Child of Light

Galvus the Free Runner

The Gilded Smile, The Lute Strummer

- **Symbol:** A fiery lyre and over a mug of mead.
- **Domains:** Trickery, Revelry. Galvus was once a satyr drawn from the realm of the fey.

In his early days in the mortal world, Galvus was the only survivor of an adventuring party delving into the deep ruins and became thrall to a efreeti before breaking his bonds with the efreeti through trickery. Upon breaking his bond with the efreet, Galvus found himself the divine conduit of trickery and luck throughout the land. Galvus was often found at the loudest and most boisterous drinking establishments in the Deadlands until it is said the efreeti who he betrayed found him and incinerated him on the spot one year and one day after Galvus's wish was complete.

Adventure Hook: Imedia Wyrmbright of the Arcane Eye learned that the resting place of Galvus's prized lyre has been found in a vault beneath a celestial prison where Galvus once found himself incarcerated. The ruins of the prison only appears as the full moon crests the desert at rock two days south of the City of Blades and it's said the prison's celestial guards still patrol its halls while beasts of the damned roar from the prison's cracked cells. Imedia seeks adventurers willing to find the prison and the vault below it to recover Galvus's lyre before it falls into the wrong hands.

Kravun the Father of War

The Broken Sword, The Sleeping Soldier

- **Symbol:** A shattered sword.
- **Domains:** War, Peace.

A fire giant warlord from an army destroyed hundreds of years ago, Kravun's legacy speaks of hundreds fallen under his brutal broadsword until the day he planted the blade in the ground, kneeled, and never harmed another soul. For one hundred years the giant spoke of peace to those who sought him out until a vengeful descendent of one of Kravun's many victims confronted him and impaled him upon their own terrible blade. Kravun moved not a muscle to defend himself, letting the blade pierce





his body and plant him in the ground where he sits to this day upon the cracked desert ground.

Adventure Hook: It is said that Kravun wrote many texts exploring his history before and after his transformation to peace. One of these books, the Book of Blood, which documented his days before he found peace, is said to be held in a special chamber off of a ruined library in the abandoned town of Blackstone five days north west of the City of Blades. A band of half-demon bandits known as the Riders of the Abyss travel to the town to find the book and use it as their own creed to ravage the deserts and slay those peaceful inhabitants they might find. Galrond Silverstar of the Knights of the Golden Sun seeks heroes willing to travel to the village, fight off the Riders of the Abyss, and recover the book so it can be sequestered away in forbidden stacks of the Golden Sun.

Lady Chase the Golden Protector

The Sun Shield, Armor of the Smallfolk

- **Symbol:** A round shield with a circular sun.
- **Domains:** Light, Protection.

The dwarven general and knight, Lady Chase, wielded a shield that reflected the sun even in the greatest darkness. The radiance of the life-giving star flowed from her into those who followed her, providing justice and protection for those unable to protect themselves. Unwilling to compromise, Lady Chase was murdered by vampiric assassins who shrouded her radiant light before slitting her throat and feasting upon her divine blood. Though slain many decades past, the Guardians still seek vengeance for her death and pray at shrines devoted to her radiant light.

Adventure Hook: Imedia Wyrmbright of the Arcane Eye learned that the Helm of the Golden Sun, an artifact once worn by Lady Chase has been located in the depths of a den of ghouls and vampires who overtook a forgotten shrine to the Sun Shield deep in the Thousand Sunless Temples. She has also learned that Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands hired a band of unscrupulous artifact hunters, the Wyrmtails, to find the artifact themselves.

Librion the Golden Owl

The Illuminated Tome, The Wind Watcher

- **Symbol:** An open book with a star shining down upon it.
- **Domains:** Knowledge, Light.

Librion was said to have walked the earth as an elf or fey-touched human whose skin shone with a sunlit glow. He was often seen with a large book in one hand and a golden owl perched upon his shoulder. Many sages sought the scion for understanding and enlightenment. One day, however, his golden eyes

beheld the runes and glyphs of a fell tome of the Underworld, brought and revealed to him by a member of a secret vampire cult of Slayrevar known as the Knot of Truth. The glyphs shredded Librion's mind and disincorporated his body into ribbons of blood that flowed out into the lands. Travelers of the desert whisper of hearing screams and seeing the figure of Librion trying to reform — speaking a warning of coming darkness and bloodshed.

Adventure Hook: Travelers report seeing a red mist manifesting into a figure reforming into a screaming elf, body half corporeal and half of spiraling clouds of blood. The figure gestures towards a set of rocky peaks south west of the City of Blades. Galrond Silverstar of the Knights of the Golden Sun seeks characters willing to follow the trail, believing it leads to a coven of cultists loyal to the Knot of Truth who hold some of Librion's scrolls in their unholy library. Galrond wants justice brought to the Knot of Truth and the scrolls returned to the libraries of the Golden Sun.

Lord Scale the Knight of Chains

**Descender of the Stair, Survivor of the Abyss*

- **Symbol:** An open hand wrapped in chains.
- **Domains:** Darkness, The Underworld.

A well deep in the desert is said to have a spiraling staircase down into the heart of the Underworld. Lord Scale, an armored knight wrapped in chains, is said to have ascended this stair and come into the world, protecting those who face injustice in the uncaring desert, watching over those upon whom the darkness of night descends, and bringing peace to those who might pass on to the afterlife. Legends tell of a battle between Lord Scale and Gestell Blackstar the Fellwalker. They battled through night and day until Blackstar's blade shattered Lord Scale's chains. Blackstar lifted the sundered body of Lord Scale and hurled him back down into his well, never to be seen again.

Adventure Hook: Deep in the Thousand Sunless Temple lies a shrine to Lord Scale overlooking a deep pit said to be one of the pits leading into the Underworld. In the barbed statue's hand rests a single red rose. An old woman named Franny Lavaster seeks daring adventures to travel to the shrine of Lord Scale and recover the rose for her — a memento of the love she briefly share with the Descender of the Stair.

Navarr the Gnarled Root

The Old Oak, The Green Man

- **Symbol:** Three twisted brown roots on a green background.
- **Domains:** Nature, Life.

Travelers in the desert sometimes find strange oases, thick with trees. When entering these woods, they





find twisted paths and winding game trails traveling far outside the perceived bounds of the oases. Some believe these Oases of the Green Man are doorways to the wild forests of the Fey and the dryad Navaar to be their navigator. In recent days, travelers found these oases now filled with dead trees. In one of them sits the slain corpse of Navaar, pierced through with a spear of unmelting ice. Druids tied to the natural realms speak of a knight of the King of Winter who killed the peaceful dryad over disagreements from centuries ago and worlds away.

Adventure Hook: Travelers of the Deadlands speak of a former oases now overgrown with winding roots and giant glowers whose spores cause those who inhale them to fall into a deep slumber while their bodies are drawn into the depths. A single cold heart of stone is said to rest in the center of this twisted mass of vines, a powerful artifact for one able to retrieve it. Conophas Needlehair of the Seekers of the Sands seeks adventurers willing to navigate the strange grove, recover the stone sphere, and return it to her.

Sevella the Walker Between

Lady of Light and Dark, The Hand Across the Threshold

- **Symbol:** A white face with two closed eyes and crossed hands below.
- **Domains:** Life and Death.

Those soon to fall to the everlasting darkness sometimes whisper of apparition who visits them — a young woman of pale complexion, whispering kind words as they travel to the afterlife. A century ago a necromancer named Vestile Horux summoned the Walker Between, corrupting her with his foul magic and trapping her in a ruined staff to channel her energy between life and death for his own malevolent purposes.

Adventure Hook: Greedy sages of the Seekers of the Sands learned that a tome containing the potential location of Vestile's staff rests in a forgotten shrine to the fallen Scion deep in the Thousand Sunless Temples. Agents of the Seekers already hunt for the tome, with plans to betray their patrons and find the staff themselves while Imedia Wyrmbright of the Arcane Eye seeks adventurers to recover the tome before the staff should fall into the wrong hands.

Sir Grimvold the Dark Knight

The Moonwalker, The Embracing Shadow

- **Symbol:** A greatsword behind a shining moon.
- **Domains:** Death, Protection, the Moon.

People often misjudged the sinister appearance of the Dark Knight as one of villainy yet others speak of a knight who stood as bulwark against demons pouring from rifts from the lowest layers of the abyss. Sir Grimvold's energy came from the largest moon in the

sky — named Uldaara after a goddess long since forgotten. Sir Grimvold manifested when called upon for aid on the nights where the moon hung lowest in the sky, called for justice against the otherworldly threats who walked the land. It's said that Sir Grimvold stood against the archdevil Grythes Gloomblade in the city of Vastair and fell under the devil's might. Others say the twisted visage of Grimvold now serves the devil — corrupted by the black moon Kryss that circles the world only once every hundred years.

Adventure Hook: Rumors whisper that the shield of Sir Grimvold lies in the ruins of an old temple high in the frozen mountains where the knight had trained with his brethren who did not hold his righteousness in their hearts. Decades after his death, the temple is now beset upon by devils spawned from his betraying comrades.

Starfall the Child of Light

Sunshine, The Lost One

- **Symbol:** A silver star surrounded by three blue stars in a triangle.
- **Domains:** Light and Life.

Starfall appeared as a young child in one of the small villages of the desert. She was otherwise a normal child as the others in the village except for her eyes which swam with the blackness of night and filled with pinpoints of light that moved as though one peered into the heavens themselves. Starfall spoke of premonitions that often came true, saving her village from raiders and monstrous threats several times. One evening, as the red sun climbed into the sky and the villagers fled into the caves of a nearby mesa, scouts of the village saw Starfall meet a shadowy apparition appearing as a black silhouette surrounded by a red corona who took the child's hand and led her over the horizon, never to be seen again.

Adventure Hook: Travelers of the deep desert claim to have seen the Child of Light out in a desert in which no child should survive. They say she points towards a red horizon over which lies a ruined keep of the primordial Voor where the red eclipsed sun hangs high no matter what time of day or night. Within lies the secret of Starfall's disappearance and potential return.

Wynn Hollow

Walker of the Sapphire Forest, Grandfather of the Elves

- **Symbol:** A glowing staff over a blue circle.
- **Domains:** Magic, Nature.

Wynn Hollow has walked the lands since the days of the Sapphire Empire over a thousand years ago. One of the last living members of the Sapphire Empire before their departure and subsequent return, Wynn





Hollow spent her days exploring the deepest mysteries of the desert, the mountains, and the tunnels and chambers below. Wynn understood the danger of the return of King Thrael and the Sapphire City more than any. Thus, Thrael's assassins sought out the sage quickly. Though successful in slaying the sage, the battle left a crater hundreds of feet in diameter with a single crystalline sapphire tree in its center — one in which some say the voice of the Magus can still be heard.

Adventure Hook: Sensing the arrival of the Sapphire Empire, Galron Silverstar of the Knights of the Golden Sun seeks adventurers who can travel to the sapphire tree where rests the soul of Wynn Hollow and treat with the Sapphire elf to learn more about the sinister nature of the Sapphire Empire and how it might be stopped. Unfortunately mutated creatures of the deep desert seek the power emanating off of the tree while assassins of the Sapphire Empire hunt for those who would dare speak to the infidel spirit.

The Dread-Kings of the Deadlands

This section outlines three Dread-Kings of the Deadlands — three scions whose thirst for power grows over the Deadlands. These ruthless rulers command over their followers and thralls absolutely — treated as demigods by those who kneel at their feet. These Dread-Kings include:

1. Styxia the Daughter of Sett
2. King Thrael, the Sapphire Eye
3. Voorn, Lord of the Underworld

Styxia, the Daughter of Sett

- **Symbol:** A portrait-view of a female face protruding from the mouth of a dragon.

Said to be the half-dragon daughter of the God-Queen Sett, Styxia resides in the ruined city of Lok-Var in a massive and ancient temple to her long-dead demigod mother. Styxia presents herself as an elven woman with green scales across half her body and face. She dresses in white robes and gold serpentine jewelry adorned with emeralds. Some believe her half-dragon appearance exposes her identity as an ancient green dragon.

Styxia's followers travel across the Deadlands hunting for artifacts and assassinating those who oppose their dread queen. They sometimes hire out or ally with other dreadful leaders in the Deadlands, acting as assassins, thieves, and spies for those groups but only to further the interests of their queen as well.

Styxia's Goal. Styxia seeks the magic to resurrect her mother, the God-Queen Sett. All attempts to do so in the past have failed — even when using the most

powerful magic they could find. Styxia heard legend of a powerful ring known as the Ring of the Evening and said to be able to let its wearer bend reality. Rumors whisper it lies buried somewhere in the depths of the Deadlands.

Styxia's First Quest. Styxia sends her Children into the desert, learning information and exploring lost locations for signs of the Ring of the Evening. She seeks a series of scrolls known as the Scrolls of Thyvand supposedly outlining the location of the Ring of the Evening.

Styxia's Second Quest. After learning that the Ring of the Evening resides in the lost Vaults of Three Storms, Styxia sends her explorers into the ruins across the Deadlands seeking three of the five keys required to open the Vault of Three Storms.

Styxia's Third Quest. With three of the five keys in hand, Styxia travels with her most powerful followers to the Vaults of Three Storms to recover the Ring of the Evening and restore her mother to life at last. ### The Scales of Styxia

Servants of Styxia refer to themselves as the Scales of Styxia (or simply the Scales) and include any humanoid race. The Scales receive quests through premonitions, dreams, and portents while others receive their orders directly from Styxia's lieutenants — dragonfolk and serpent folk close to the Daughter of Sett.

Some of the most loyal and capable servants of Styxia are transformed in a ritual conducted by Styxia herself or her priests. During the process their bodies transform into medusa, half-serpents, or half dragons that still retain some of their original form.

Several warbands of the desert have allied with Styxia, becoming auxiliary members of her growing army as her relic hunters delve into ruins seeking ever more power for their queen.

King Thrael — The Sapphire Eye

- **Symbol:** An blue sword over the palm of an open hand.
- **Also Known As:** Emperor of the Blue Sun; Grandfather of the Sapphire Star.

Long ago a vast elven empire ruled over several regions of the lands now known as the Deadlands. During the region's great ecological collapse, the empire teleported their capital, the Sapphire City, to another realm. Now the Sapphire City has returned, ruled over by King Thrael, known to his people as the Sapphire Eye. For over a year the city stood silently in the desert but now scouts and troops of the city begin expanding outside of the city, speaking an ancient elven dialect few understand and acting with little tolerance for their fellow desert travelers.

King Thrael plans to rebuild the empire lost so many thousands of years ago. He and what remains of his ageless regency plot to take over the region, find the ruins of other civilizations buried beneath the





desert, and rule over the whole of the Deadlands — restoring it to its glory even if it means the death of all current inhabitants.

King Thrael's Goal. Restore the Sapphire Empire to its former glory. Remove all other regents, transform the land into a source of his own power, and bend all people of the Deadlands to his will. Recover the relics of the past, known as the Vessels of Kelsavar — named after a long dead elven deity the Sapphire Empire used to follow.

King Thrael's First Goal. Send scouts into the Deadlands and seek the Vessels of Kelsevar — relics of the Sapphire Empire from over a thousand years ago. Send Saspshire Sun scouts and hire local artifact hunters to delve into various lairs and retrieve as many of these relics as possible.

King Thrael's Second Goal. Restore the Sapphire Spires — several spires of magical crystals embedded in the ground that syphon the power of the blood of the primordials and send that power into King Thrael himself back in the Sapphire City. As each spire is restored, the very ground surrounding it transforms, sprouting blue crystals and blue grass while the sky turns amber above it.

King Thrael's Third Goal. Send spies and assassins into the settlements of the Deadlands. Assassinate or depose the other leaders of the Deadlands. Plant his own governors in their stead and subjugate their people.

King Thrae's Fourth Goal. Open the gates of the Sapphire City and send his armies and hired mercenary forces he can muster to take over the Deadlands by force.

The Goals of the Dread-Kings Each of the three dread-kings outlined in this section have four goals. You can mix and mash up these goals across these villains as you choose or focus on one set of goals to act as the main arc of a campaign. Each of the four goals is intended to challenge a group of characters at low, medium, high, and epic levels. You'll have to decide which levels best suit which goals and the challenges they lead to based on the system you choose. If running 5e-based systems, the goals are loosely based on 1st to 4th level, 5th to 10th level, 11th to 16th level, and 17th to 20th level. You are, of course, free and encouraged to add and move any of these goals or challenges to whatever challenge level you prefer.

Subjects of the Sapphire Sun

The followers of King Thrael and citizens of the Sapphire City are known as Subjects of the Sapphire Sun. These subjects are often elves biologically indistinct from other elves. Like other humanoids, they have a wide range of skin and hair color and are otherwise indistinguishable from elves outside of any symbolism or mannerisms that identify themselves with the Sapphire Empire. Their dialect is a form of

elven, understandable to others who speak elven but with an accent unique to the Sapphire Empire. Only those who have regularly heard the dialect of the Sapphire Empire would recognize it.

Spies of the Sapphire Sun have learned many languages and studied to remove their accent and change their appearance to blend in. Other humanoids may act as agents of the Sapphire Elves as well, usually handled by a Sapphire Elf spymaster for the job. Spies of the Sapphire Sun are known as the Shaded Eyes or just "The Shaded". They use slates of blue glyphed crystal to communicate with their handlers back in the Sapphire City when needed but otherwise blend in to every day society to watch and manipulate situations to serve King Thrael's desire.

Voorn — Lord of the Underworld

- **Symbol:** A face, eyes closed, covered in black glyphs.
- **Known As:** Baron of the Dead; Father of Ash; the Wormcaller

Deep beneath the sands and mountains of the Deadlands lies the Underworld. Named for its close connection to the realms of the dead and undead alike. Some believe the tunnels and rivers of the Underworld connect to these dark realms. Those who live in the dank caves and subterranean cities have blood from both worlds running through their veins.

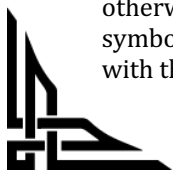
Among these dwellers rules Voorn, the Lord of the Underworld. Said to be a stone giant whose blood flows with undeath, Voorn rules over vast armies of humanoids, beasts, and undead creatures who invade the surface in the darkest night through sinkholes and ruins known as the Dreadbarrows.

Voorn rules from the City of Bone, a city built from the titanic rotted carcasses of fallen primordials. There he conducts horrifying experiments and profane rituals seeking to bring an end to the world of the living. Voorn sends his flock, the Fangs of the Shadow Serpent to the surface to aid in his quests.

Voorn's Goal. Voorn seeks to resurrect the great wrym Jungivar and use the worm to devour the whole world along with all of the souls living within. Voorn seeks ancient texts written on the stone walls of the Underworld and relics connected with the primordial Jungivar to accomplish his goal of bringing the primordial back to life.

Voorn's First Quest. Through visions from other worlds, Voorn learned of several relics connected to the body of Jungivar spread across the Deadlands. Voorn commands spectral scouts and ghoulish hunters of the Fangs of the Shadow Serpent to enter the Deadlands through the Dreadbarrows and hunt these artifacts, murdering any who might possess them and bring them back to the City of Bone.

Voorn's Second Quest. The first priests of the primordials in the earliest days of mortality on the planet wrote pictograms and glyphs connected to the





then-living worm Jungivar. Undead scouts and profane priests of Jungivar hunt through the tunnels of the Underworld seeking these writings and copying them down to return to the City of Bone.

Voorn's Third Quest. With writings and relics in hand, Voorn begins to resurrect Jungivar. Doing so raises Jungivar's children, twisted worms of shadow burrowing up from the sands to devour the souls of those living above. Voorn establishes several shrines required to reanimate the massive primordial and unleash it upon the world.

The Chosen

Over his millenia of exploring the depths of the sacrilegious magic of the underworld, Voorn learned of the power to tear the souls free from mortals and twist them into his unwavering thralls known as the Chosen of Voorn or more simply "The Chosen." Each thrall bear his mark — a brand upon their forehead or upper back. Often this mark is that of Jungivar — a serpent eating its own tail surrounding a black sphere. Othertimes it bears the mark of the Fangs of the Shadow Serpent — two serpent heads of the same body facing one another, their mouths joining into a central eye with fangs piercing down on either side.

The Chosen can be of any sentient species, though with gray pallid skin, the pigments stripped from their skin along with their souls. They are not undead, but often serve alongside undead or use undead as their own minions. The Chosen have memories of their former lives but none of their feelings. What skills and power they had in their former lives stay with them but they become completely subservient to Voorn and his desires.

Priests of Voorn, known as the Blood Priests of Jungivar, are able to conduct the ritual that strips the souls out of mortals, feeding it to the Father of Ash. Doing so requires a good deal of magical energy, however, so they do not do it for every being they face. Instead, they save it for those who bring a new value or capability to Voorn's cause. Instead, the Blood Priests of Jungivar convert less powerful mortals into mindless undead flesh eaters — ghouls who terrorize those who dare face Voorn's will.

The Red Sun

Most of the time the sky above the Deadlands and the City of Arches shines as a golden sun down upon the lands. Horrors lay under the depths but the sun's light brings pockets of life to the badlands. Waymarkers point the way to oases crossing from one settlement to another. Waterfalls flow from the mountains into valleys teeming with life.

But the Deadlands is a land between two worlds. Another sky sometimes manifests above with a red sun shining down. This sun hunts for life as brutally as any predator. When it's red light touches the sands, the dead return to life. Desecrated hands pierce up

from the ground and the undead seek to sink their shattered blades and chipped teeth into the flesh of the living. Horrors that lay beneath the ground rise up in the dawn of the Red Sun, roaring centuries of rage and thundering towards those victims stuck under the Red Sun's rays. Vile cults seek these moments to conduct their most sacrilegious rituals on blood-stained altars, holding their waved blades high towards the malevolent orb in the sky.

It is rare to predict the rising of the Red Sun but it is not random. Horrendous events, like the fall of a scion, can cause the skies to shift and the Red Sun to rise. Other times travelers find themselves in a particular location at the wrong time — when the Red Sun shines on them alone. Explorers might see the Red Sun above when approaching an ancient monument in the deserts and spill blood upon the sand surrounding it. None can accurately predict the Red Sun's rise and fall but all know when it does rise, best to stay out from under it's gaze.

The Red Sun is a tool the GM can use to escalate the tension in a Blood of the Primordials game. The rising of the Red Sun might be a random event — say one time out of ten journeys might cause the characters to witness the rise of the Red Sun. Othertimes you can invoke the coming of the Red Sun when the characters find a sinister monument or engage in battle with a powerful foe — such as a dread scion's spectral avatar. You can choose what effects the Red Sun has depending on the circumstances in the world and your system of choice. Here are a few suggestions for modifying a situation with the rise of the Red Sun.

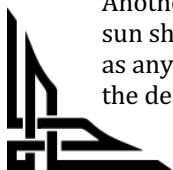
1. Monsters have advantages against their foes.
2. Undead rise from the ground hungering for blood and flesh.
3. Sinister cultists find their power greatly enhanced.
4. Bolts of red lightning arc to the ground, randomly striking living beings.
5. Swirling elementals of blood and ash threaten to tear the skin off living beings.
6. Large bone hands rise from the ground trying to pull the living into the earth.
7. The avatar of a dread scion begins hunting for prey.
8. A dreadful monument filled with fell power rises from the ground.
9. Undead assassins step out of the red sands hunting for the lives of the characters.
10. A long-dead priest rises to power once again.

Notable Locations

This section offers three notable locations you can expand to fill out your adventures below the City of Blades and into the Deadlands.

The Thousand Sunless Temples

The City of Blades stood against the sands of the Deadlands for thousands of years. Below the city lie





vast endless caverns said to be carved by the great primordial worm Jungivar or their brood. Within these caverns, countless cults built temples and shrines as small as an altar tucked into an alcove to multi-story spired temples with halls big enough to house ancient dragons (as some do).

Narrow passageways, underground lakes, and worked stone halls connect many of these temples to one another and to the broken walls and sinkholes in the sewers beneath the City of Blades. The cultists of the Thousand Sunless Temples worship all manner of gods, demons, beasts, and primordials. Some sects are as old as the primordials themselves while others are only months old. Many cults are benign followers of an archaic faith. Others bathe their altars in the blood of innocents.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of the cults of the Thousand Sunless Temples.

1. **Brothers of the Fervent Bond** — followers of an archdevil named Xeravisu the Dead Claw.
2. **Scales of Blackwing** — followers of the ancient black dragon, Barvenodyr Blackwing who sleeps for decades at a time.
3. **The Shards of Devest** — Followers of the forgotten lich, now a demilich, named Devest Ironcowl.
4. **The Claws of Krusus** — Followers of the demon prince Krusus, a raging horned monstrosity thirsting for those slain in war.
5. **The Sparks of Red Ember** — Followers, many kobold, who worship the ancient red dragon Ravistan the Red Ember.
6. **The Lights of Skara** — Followers of the fallen celestial Skara who betrayed her father Io, hundreds of thousands of years ago and was abandoned to the lands below as a mortal.
7. **Followers of the Sphere** — A sect that worships a strange black sphere floating in an alien chamber through which they see visions of other worlds of impossible geometry.
8. **Wings of Thrayx** — Humanoid followers of the half-humanoid half-insect queen and daughter of the insectoid primordial Vyxis, known as Tharyx.
9. **The Blood of Reven** — Followers of the ancient vampire Reven, said to be entombed deep in the Thousand Temples.
10. **The Gray Blade's Edge**. Followers of a sentient sword stuck in an otherworldly rock that speaks to them of finding its true champion.

Adventure Hook: An infestation of flesh-eating worms invades the food vendors of the City of Blades. Now these worms have been found on the corpses of unfortunate victims as well. A strange symbol painted on walls near these incidents points to cultist fanatics of Jungivar, known as the Teeth of the Worm who operate out of a forgotten temple to their divine primordial in the Thousand Sunless Temples. The characters may encounter these hideous worms while

exploring the City of Arches or become aware of the blight from one of their faction leaders who seeks to end the infestation or recover relics said to be in the possession of the Teeth of the Worm.

The Ruined City of Vastair

Many centuries ago, the city of Vastair bustled with travelers, traders, knights, and adventurers. Now it is a walled ruin of dust and the echoing wails of the dead in the air. Once the most prosperous cities in the land, next only to the elven Sapphire City, Vastair's greed and hubris led to its downfall. Undead, demons, and devils lurk throughout the city keeping treasure hunters at bay.

A thin tower stretches high into the sky from the city's center. Once the literal pinnacle of excellence and nobility, the tower now holds the name Doomspire — a vast multi-leveled ruin filled with monsters and treasures alike. Rumors speak of an undead archdevil now lurking in the highest chambers of the spire named Grythes Gloomblade who sends his minions to collect the souls of those foolish enough to journey to the city or enter the spire.

Adventure Hook: The characters' patron became aware of a powerful and sacrilegious artifact, a black-iron goblet decorated with swimming red rubies. The goblet, now kept at a shrine within the ruined city of Vastair, is said to draw souls of the damned to its call. A cabal of necromancers known as the Void of Teeth seek this artifact with the hopes of using it to summon legions of undead in the City of Arches. The characters' patron asks the characters to find the iron goblet before the followers of the Void of Teeth.

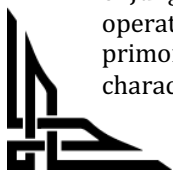
The Underworld

Some believe entire worlds reside beneath the sands of the Deadlands. The deeper you travel, the closer you come to worlds beyond. Some say the river of the dead flows through the deepest chambers of these vast caverns and the wrong cave entrance can take you to worlds with sands of bone and skies of blood. The carcasses of primordials lie half-embedded in the rock and obsidian cities swirl with storms of lost souls screaming for release.

Beauty also lies in the Underworld. Cities carved from vast mushrooms of every color house civilizations of intelligent humanoids and fungus-folk living in harmony together. Crystalline caverns sing songs of enchantment and draw the flow of magic like no other place in the world.

The deeper one travels into the Underworld, the stranger it becomes. Ruined towns, keeps, and vaults mark its upper levels while the lower levels open up to alien caverns and the realms beyond.

The undead stone titan Voorn claims rulership of the Underworld, a glyphed giant cloaked and hooded in shadow. He rules from his City of Bone, sending





wights and armies of skeletons out into the chambers to do his bidding.

Adventure Hook: A wraith commander in service of Voorn named Streva the Sallow began sending intelligent skeletons, ghouls, and specters into the lands of the living. Scouts of the desert discovered sinkholes in desert camps, their former occupants turned into flesh-eating zombies. The characters' patron hires them to find one of these sinkholes, known as Dreadbarrows, and track it back to the subterranean ooze-covered unholy tower from which Streva commands his undead servants.

Locations in the City of Blades

The following location descriptions help you bring the City of Blades to life and give your heroes locations to explore and engage in adventure.

The Hovel

Low price, low comfort, low safety, the hovel has all three. For adventurers, travelers, and others simply low on luck and low on coin, the Hovel offers accommodations for any who seek its shelter. The hovel spans a series of ruined buildings, roofs covered in tattered waxed canvas to shelter those inside. Four stories of the crumbling stone buildings give access to roughly fifty rooms — each different and in various states of decay. Rooms run from 1 silver per night to 1 gold per night depending on the quality of the room. Some tenants have stayed in theirs for years at a time. It's well known that the owners and employees of the Hovel are connected to the Night Blades and only through bribes can rich patrons ensure word of their arrival and status doesn't reach the thieves' guild.

A half-giant ex-gladiator named **Kastar Ironteeth** runs the establishment, along with a dozen of his hired hands. Missing an arm, a leg, and an eye — the latter of which finally ended his gladiatorial career — Kastar smiles with a mouth full of metallic teeth whenever new patrons arrive.

Adventure Hook. One of the lower floors of the Hovel collapsed down into previously unknown cellars from which giant rats emerged and infest the lower floors of the Hovel. Even for the low standards of the establishment, such infestation cannot last. The giant rats, however, only fight to defend themselves and seem insistent on grabbing valuables in their yellowed teeth and dragging them back into the ruins below. Kastar believes something down there commands the rats to steal from his patrons and would like word with whoever it is — either to cast out the thief or employ him into Kastar's operation.

The Chipped Blade

Adventurers, traveling gladiators, and the merchants who supply them often stay at the Chipped Blade.

Once a gladiatorial school, the Chipped Blade offers utilitarian accommodations at reasonable prices and with good protection. The noise of the Chipped Blade's common room never ceases. The mixture of boastful talk, loud music, and the clash of practice blades in the establishment's three fighting pits offers a continual din that returning occupants says puts one right to sleep. Three former gladiator sisters — **Maryssa Halfhand**, **Gloriana the Golden Flail**, and **Therestar Thrice-forked** — own and operate the establishment. On occasion one of the three gladiators takes on challengers in their own fighting pits for a good show. Thieves, cheats, and swindlers are dealt with harshly in the Chipped Blade, attested to by the rarely occupied stocks found out front of the establishment.

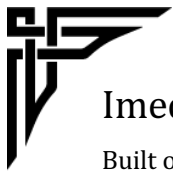
Adventure Hook. Slippery thieves stole Therestar's prized trident and net and ran off to a ruined mine and dry cistern outside of the city. The three sisters seek adventurers willing to recover the lost weapon. A band of thieves and brigands known as the Silent Fiends operates out of the area. The thief, a gnome named **Philatra Riddletooth**, hopes to bring the fabled weapon to the Silent Fiend's leader, a half-fiend bandit captain named **Skyvar Firestarter** and secure her place among the band.

The Emerald Sanctuary

One of the city's higher class accommodations, the Emerald Sanctuary is sought by well-off vendors, traveling dignitaries, and successful adventurers. The Emerald Sanctuary offers a full-service spa, baths, food, entertainment, and rest. A private vault safeguards any valuables clients wish to protect. The cost to stay in the establishment are very high but all-inclusive. Some rich nobles and former adventurers retire in the establishment, taking one of the Sanctuary's private villas as their new homes in return for a significant percentage of their wealth. A winged half-celestial named **Clovella Silversong** operates the establishment but the actual owners are quite mysterious, only known as the Partners.

Adventure Hook. A long-term client of the Emerald Sanctuary named **Erinmache Strifehand** recently passed away. While going through their possessions, Clovella's aids found a will describing Erinmache's desire to have a bottle brought to a long-time associate now residing in a ruined ziggurat outside of the city said to be haunted by undead. The will stipulates that the ones who bring the bottle open it in the presence of the elf **Eva Moonwing**. Clovella has no idea what is inside the bottle or what it will do but is able to pay adventurers to fulfill the will's stipulations and boost the reputation of the Emerald Sanctuary as a full-service establishment for clients alive or dead.





Imedia's Curios

Built out of a small ruined building, Imedia's Curios might be one of the most dangerous and well protected buildings of its size. Standing two stories tall with an cellar connected to the sewers below the city, **Imedia Wyrmbright** uses her curio shop as both a front for the Seekers of the Sands and the trailhead for expeditions into the sewers, the Thousand Sunless Temples, and the Underworld below. The surface level of the shop contains all of the materials, components, reagents, and relics she sells to the general public — mostly trinkets and curiosities. The level below contains relics of greater power but the most powerful artifacts of her collection lie in hidden vaults to which only Imedia has access. Two hulking suits of armor contain the rotting remains of flesh guardians she can command with word or thought and numerous traps protect her shop from thieves. Imedia only opens the shop for one patron at a time, appointment only, scheduled by leaving parchments nailed to a nearby wall.

Adventure Hook. Outside of the city, on the rocks of the western mountains, lies a gold mine long abandoned known as the Golden Smile. During their deep dig, miners uncovered a series of worked stone vaults and chambers dating back to the days of the primordials. The few miners who returned spoke of murder and madness in the unhallowed chambers and, either purposefully or accidentally, the mine caved in. Now, centuries later, a rockslide exposed the shaft and Imedia seeks adventurers willing to brave the dangers inside to see what treasures lie in the darkness of the abandoned mine.

Temple of the Dead Gods

The gods' gaze does not fall upon the City of Blades nor the lands around it — their divine province pushed aside by the power and will of the primordials. Yet there are those still who whisper to these far-off beings, hoping beyond hope that they heed their call. Rough cracked stone forms the Temple of the Dead Gods in one of the less affluent areas of the City of Blades. It's arched ceiling has long since caved in, exposing the inner chambers to the sky above. Large faceless humanoid statues stand out front and around the outskirts of the temple, many having fallen to dust centuries ago. A scattering of would-be parishioners of many different gods sit or kneel on the temple's stone pews facing a stone altar and headless winged statue behind it — arms outstretched and its one remaining palm facing upwards. Tattered rags lie in the corners — beds for the inebriated who care not at all for the statues of forgotten gods and simply seek shelter from the burning sun.

Adventure Hook. A cracked stone tile on the floor of the temple reveals a series of chambers and vaults

below containing altars to several forgotten gods. A viscous fluid flows through some of these vaults, bubbling up into oozes and jellies while streams of the stuff cause bloodthirsty undead to erupt from ancient crypts. **Galrond Silverstar** of the Guardians seeks adventurers to quell the source of this vile fluid while **Nela Gloomsmile** of the Seekers of the Sands seeks a relic thought lost in these vaults — an aberrant lamp marked with the symbol of the vampire Valde the Blood Seeker said to be able to cast light that peers into parallel worlds.

Veth and Val's General Store

Many shops sell a variety of goods for those living in and traveling through the City of Blades but Veth and Val's General Store is among the most well respected. Honestly goods for honest folk at honest prices is their motto — marked above the door in wood burned with iron and they aim to keep it so. Veth and Val's is unremarkable — a refurbished stone building with heavy wood support pillars and goods arrayed on a series of shelves, in sturdy barrels, and displayed on the walls. Val Wyrmwatcher, a slight dragonborn man is outgoing and friendly yet soft-spoken. Veth Ironshield, a celestial-touched human woman, is quiet and loyal to those deserving of it but quick to anger. It's well known that Veth often works with the Knights of the Golden Sun but will not join their ranks — yet she suffers no injustice in her sight and her skills with her pair of short swords ensure those who deal it meet a quick end.

Adventure Hook. An extended family of farmers and prospectors made their way through the City of Blades for Dawn's Oasis, purchasing goods at Veth and Val's. Though Veth gave fair warning to the stubborn family leader, a gnome matriarch named **Avelyn Emeraldsmile**, she did not take heed and continued their journey, catching the eye of a band of brigands and cutthroats known as the Bloodfang Jackals. Learning that the Jackals now target the family, Veth seeks adventurers who serve justice to protect the family and deal said justice to the Bloodfangs outside of town. Veth believes the Emeraldsmile family seeks shelter at caravan camp south of the city known as the Moonstop.

The Iron Citadel

For over one hundred years, the Sharpened Coin has operated out of the Iron Citadel — a fortress on the eastern side of the City of Blades. Three towers of the triangular-shaped fortress give the mercenaries a fair view of the City of Blades and its surroundings. The citadel's massive drawbridge crosses a deep gorge filled with sharpened spears, bones, and carrion to give the citadel a foreboding reputation. A handful know that the mercenaries actually pay for the disposal of bodies into the gorge to keep up its fearsome appearance. The keep contains a training





yard, armory, and several offices where the Sharpened Coin's solicitors and accountants make deals with their employers. Few outside of the Sharpened Coin know that several vaults below the citadel contains the Sharpened Coin's massive hoard of wealth — the largest in the city it's said.

Adventure Hook. A band of Sharpened Coin mercenaries was dispatched to protect a caravan headed north out of the city containing a chest of gold intended to buy off several hunting tribes and bring them into the Coin's service. It's several days overdue and **Captain Thervus Stonehelm** of the Sharpened Coin is looking for adventurers to seek out the caravan and discover it's fate — ideally recovering the gold and returning it to the Coin's vaults. Doing so gives them ten percent of the returned moneys and increases their standing with the mercenaries — a priceless commodity, or so Thervus would have it.

The Sundered Tower

On the eastern edge of the city's walls stands the remains of circular watchtower, the upper reaches of which has long since collapsed. The Knights of the Golden Sun have taken over the tower, using its humble chambers as their living quarters and meeting rooms. Scribes, servants, and squires of the Knights greet visitors in the tower's lowest chambers while the knights themselves conduct business in meeting halls above. Knight Commander Jovera Northstone, an elderly halfling knight, presides most of these meetings and visits regarding important matters. She is venerated by knights one forth her age and four times her size who refer to her as the Dragonraiser after a tale in which she slew the blue dragon warlock Vetheremane, but never in her presence.

Adventure Hook. The specter of a fallen knight, Lady Danae Thornclaw, has begun to appear to knights residing at the tower. Long thought killed in the depths of the Thousand Sunless Temples seeking the crypt of a known vampire, her reappearance has the knights eager to lay her soul to rest — yet other matters demand their attention. Each time Lady Danae appears, she leaves behind the mark of a red mist with two white eyes surrounded by sharp teeth — recognized as a variant of the primordial Slayrevar. Knight Commander Jovera seeks adventurers willing to enter the Thousand Sunless Temples and seek the Crypts of Slayrevar where they might find the remains of Lady Danae and lay her to rest.

Ziggurat of the Eye

The sun paints the silhouette of the Ziggurat of the Eye upon the city below. Its shadow hiding vaults of artifacts recovered over centuries of exploration into the depths below.

The Ziggurat of the Eye once stood as a temple to fell gods now long forgotten. Long ago, a group of sages and wizards took over the step pyramid, ridding it of the cursed remnants of the fallen guardians who protected the unholy temple. As the order of the Arcane Eye expanded, so too did their use of the temple, turning its halls and chambers into their studies, laboratories, and meeting halls. Below the ziggurat lie the vaults of the Eye — powerfully protected vaults containing ancient and potentially apocalyptic artifacts. The order of the Arcane Eye uses various constructs to protect the temple, along with their own personal hired guard. The head of their order, a human wizard named Novan Nightborn, spends his days in the temple, meeting with acolytes and studying ancient scrolls, tomes, and tablets to locate further relics to recover.

Adventure Hook. One of the order, a dwarf named Lukkal Anvelstorm, has absconded with a powerful artifact, an ancient jeweled egg said to contain the soul of the ancient dragon Kryshak the Living Carnage, and plans to sell it to mercenaries of the Seekers of the Sands at a giant statue of Skytheer the Silver Blade east of the city. Novan Nightborn seeks adventurers of discretion to travel to the statue and recover the egg with as little violence as possible and bring Lukkal back to the Eye alive.

Dawn's Oasis

The green grass, lush fields, and somber atmosphere of Dawn's Oasis stands in stark contrast to the sharp spires piercing up from the walls of the city supported by it's bounty.

South of the City of Blades lies a land of fertility and bounty. Several farms with dozens of workers enjoy their days tending animals and tilling fields. The results of the farms and fields flow into the city's markets — feeding the people of the City of Blades. Six wells and a network of aqueducts bring water throughout the field. So vital is the field that none of the warlords of the area dare to threaten it, let alone others fall down upon them like an executioner's axe. When beasts of the deep desert threaten the fields, the gladiators, mercenaries, and adventures of the City of Arches come quickly to it's aid, felling whatever creatures fall upon the oasis. A council of five elders maintains the order of the farms, ensuring fair distribution and pay for its workers and merchants. Their speaker, a turtle-folk druid named Ladysia Raindrop, speaks with visitors on behalf of the council.

Adventure Hook. A sinkhole recently opened in one of the farms, through which ghouls rose, attacking nearby farmsteads. Though quickly dispatched, the sinkhole caused concern among the council of the Oasis. Ladysia seeks adventurers willing to explore the sinkhole ensure whatever brought it into existence doesn't threaten the rest of the farms. A





strange amulet on one of the ghouls points towards the Fangs of the Shadow Serpent, servants of the underworld lord Voorn.

Grandma Krouse's Tonics and Oils

Towered over by ancient structures, this unassuming leather-roofed hut marked with strange glyphs and decorated with soothing chines of hollowed bone belies the strength of the concoctions within or the one who deals in them.

Patrons of the City of Blades often seek Grandma Krouse's Tonics and Oils to find balms or potions to soothe various ailments while others order more powerful brews or deliver rare ingredients to the shop's only vendor. Grandma Krouse herself appears as a light-skinned halfling, face tattooed with strange ancient glyphs. Her wrinkles appear as an ancient map, rivers cutting across mountains for millenia. No guards protect the shop — for none need to. Any thieves foolish enough to attempt to rob the establishment have never returned. Some believe Grandma Krouse to be a very powerful hag — once queen among the people from another world. Others believe her to be some powerful demon, banished to this world or one awaiting the end of days. Whatever the truth, in the meantime, patrons of Grandma Krouse's Tonics and Oils continue to patron the establishment to sooth their daily pains.

Adventure Hook. Grandma Krouse seeks adventurers willing to delve into the caverns of the underworld, to a chamber known as the Cave of Storms to recover the spinal fluid of a fallen titan whose bones lie half-buried in the stone floor of the caves. Elemental magic tears through the cave, sought after by mind-shattered mages who plan to use the energy to resurrect the titan and bend it to their twisted will.

The Sovereign

The central hole of massive stone wheel marks the entrance to the adventurer's guild in the City of Blades built within the dead hulk of a massive war machine — its purpose now buried in the sands of time.

Over the last few hundred years, various bands of adventurers formed together into an official adventuring company calling themselves the Sovereigns — named after the massive dead war machine half-embedded in the north-western wall of the City of Blades. None know the origin of the iron hulk half buried in the ground. Whatever power once drove it was enough to melt the stone upon which it sits and still drips from a cracked steel sphere in one of the rear chambers through a hole burning deep into the ground below. The front chambers of the Sovereign have been repurposed into a raucous tavern and eatery where adventurers trade stories of their adventures and patrons seek those who might fulfill their next job.



Adventure Hook. When they get into their cups, adventurers who have spent a lot of time at the Sovereign speak of the chambers below, natural caves now twisted by the corruption of the Sovereign's power-rich fluid. Strange mutated creatures hunt in the caves below surrounding the Sovereign's eviscerated innards still contain relics and remnants of the incredible power that fueled the war hulk a thousand years ago.

The Twin Suns Market

Though protected with cloth, leather, and supports of wood, many of the stalls of the open-air market have operated here for hundreds of years.

Named for the two suns that share the sky, the Twin Suns market offers foods, beverages, equipment, weapons, armor, and more. It's said just about anything can be found in the market if you look hard enough. Sharpened Coin mercenaries patrol the market day and night, paid for by the collected sum of the market's vendors. Thieves flit among the shadows, but not in abundance, for the swift justice of the mercenaries is well known. A large fountain in the center of the market spews clean water from four bestial heads fed by a natural underwater reservoir, bringing clean water to much of the city.

Adventure Hook. Recently some who drink water from the fountain complain of nightmares and strange twisted visions of the days of the primordials to those who drink it. Instances of such events began to escalate. Several merchants of the market have banded together to hire adventures to travel beneath the fountain and into the caves below to find the source of primordial corruption and end it.

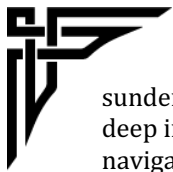
The Keen Edge

The sound of ringing steel and the grunts of gladiators and adventurers trying out their new wares flow from the circular stone building known as the Keen Edge, smoke spouting out of the top into the sky above.

Several ironsmiths and armories exist in the City of Blades but the Keen Edge holds them to shame. The halfling master smith Felsea Scalebond, trains her half-dozen apprentices in the ways of forging steel and working leather to construct the best weapons and armor wielded by those within the arena and outside of it. The smith's four furnaces burn day and night, smelting iron to steel while the anvils ring across the city's streets. Though fine weapons and armor can be purchased at the Keen Edge for reasonable prices, Felsea's personal work commands a premium. Some boast that with the right metals, she can forge a weapon to slay a primordial.

Adventure Hook. Sages of the Seekers of the Sands have convinced Felsea of a metal said to have fallen from the stars of another world and crashed down to this one. It lies buried deep in the ruins of a draconic keep three days west of the City of Blades, having





sundered the ruined keep and buried itself down deep in the vaults and catacombs below. One must navigate through several levels of the ruins below to find the alien meteorite and face the hideous monstrosities who seem attracted to the meteorite's otherworldly call.

The Sunset Villas

On western rocky hillside of the city stand the quiet Sunset Villas. When blades clash in the arena and coins change hands between adventurers and seekers of the relics beneath the ground — all eyes shift to the opulent villas and dreams of a restful life most never acquire.

Once the homes of corrupt nobility, the Sunset Villas now house those who can simply afford them — and the cost is not cheap. The cost goes well beyond buying the villa itself. Upkeep in the harsh climate requires continual work and guarding the villa usually requires a dedicated force whose loyalty is directly tied to the amount they are paid. Some smaller villas are simple two-story affairs while others have large grounds with several buildings and a network of vaults and chambers buried beneath them.

Adventure Hook. The long-time gladiatorial champion, Bessius Sundershield, owns a small manor on the Sunset Cliffs and spends a fair bit of time the Chipped Blade sharing stories of glory in the arena. Recently he revealed to friends that he has been conducting an excavation beneath the manor seeing a legendary blade known as Ghostwind thought long forgotten. A few weeks ago he came into the Chipped Blade looking haggard and speaking of strange alien dreams. Now he's disappeared completely. Friends of his seek adventurers willing to enter the manor and investigate the excavation in hopes of finding their friend.

The Arena

The clash of blades and roars of the crowd echoes across the sands and throughout the streets of the City of Blades as it has for thousands of years previous from the city's mighty arena.

No structure stands mightier in the City of Blades than the arena. Massive spires carved from the spines of the primordial Jungivar surround the arena, topped with thin leather coverings that shade the stadium's seats. So large is the arena that the entire populous of the city can sit and enjoy the battles with half of the seats remaining. Vast underground vaults, chambers, and traprooms allow for a wide range of setups and obstacles — spinning bladed automatons, pools of molten lava, and cages of angry beasts captured in the deep desert being some of the favorites. The title of master of ceremonies changes hands often but now the painted and well-decorated elven performer Alisa Tigerclaw and her retinue of masked servants

manage the games, always seeking the Red Belle's approval for the more significant rosters.

Adventure Hook. A delivery of mutated spiders from the eastern mountains recently broke free from their bonds and now has built a nest in a series of lower vaults. Servants and beastmasters of Alisa have been unsuccessful in routing them out. Those that survived exploration say the spiders have built and seem to worship a strange effigy, giving them strength and cunning above their bestial skills. Alisa seeks adventurers willing to travel into the lair and root out the primordial villainy within.

Factions

The following section outlines factions the characters might get involved with, either as patrons of the characters' activities, competitors to their plans, or direct adversaries the characters cross during their adventures.

Use the list below to tie items, quests, NPCs, locations, and other elements of your game to the factions in this setting. Each includes a common symbol for the faction.

1. Arcane Eye (eye with a star for a pupil)
2. Knights of the Golden Sun (sword hilt over a desert background)
3. Sharpened Coin (sharpened coin with three marks over the face of a devil)
4. Seekers of the Sands (step pyramid with an eye in the upper tier)
5. Night Blades (pair of curved blades over a full moon)
6. Offspring of the First Age (flaring black sun over a fiery background)

The Arcane Eye

Symbol: An eye with a star for a pupil.

The arcane eye represents an organization of scholars, wizards, and explorers who seek to learn the secrets of what lies beneath the sands. Knowledge is a reward unto itself. Though the Arcane Eye seeks relics, it isn't the value of these relics that drives them but the discovery of what these relics represent and the knowledge they can gather from their discovery. In times past, various factions debated the merits and dangers of *too much* discovery. Those that believed in acquiring knowledge at all cost split away becoming the Seekers of the Sands (described later in this section). This philosophical friction grew and continues to exist between the two groups.

Notable NPC: Imedia Wyrmbright, an elven mage of the Arcane Eye operating out of the City of Blades. She is well funded and seeks explorers who bring her information, maps, parchments, relics, and other discoveries found beneath the city. From the information she receives, she often provides maps to adventurers willing to delve into dangerous regions





and recover lost relics — some of which might otherwise land in the hands of the Seekers of the Sands.

Adventure Hook: Imedia of the Arcane Eye learned of a hidden vault beneath a cracked draconic statue jutting out from a crag in a mountain wall to the south. Inside are said to be scrolls of a dragon priest containing magic unspoken in the world for thousands of years. Imedia learned that the Seekers of the Sands hired an unscrupulous mercenary company known as the Amber Scythes to recover the scrolls and fears what the Seekers will do with such power. She asks the character to travel to the draconic vault, delve through its dangers, and recover the scroll before the Amber Scythes get ahold of them first.

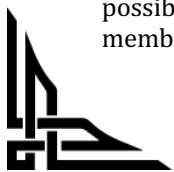
Knights of the Golden Sun

Symbol: A sword hilt on a desert background.

The Knights of the Golden Sun, often referred to as the Guardians, are a group of knights operating independently from any governing body with one central purpose — to protect those in need. Members of the Guardians embrace lives of benevolence, wearing and carrying all that they own in the world as they travel between cities and through the dangerous sands. They have no formal hierarchy in their order but among the Guardians, younger members revere, protect, and seek guidance from more venerable members. Even in the City of Blades, the Guardians are respected and feared among the city's otherwise nefarious citizens — proving themselves as formidable in battle as the city's most brutal warlords.

Notable NPC: **Galrond Silverstar**, an orc Knight of the Golden Sun operating out of the City of Blades. Galrond works to ensure no one gets cheated in the merchant district of the city who doesn't deserve it. He believes that growth comes from those who learn to protect themselves but stands in when he sees someone weaker getting pushed around. Galrond continually seeks new members to recruit into the Guardians and provides quests to rescue unfortunate victims of the many dangers within and below the city.

Adventure Hook: Galrond is interested in seeing if the characters have what it takes to join the Knights of the Golden Sun. A gnomish bandit captain named Huvana the Harrier commands her band of thieves known as the Spineteeth from an old ruined watchtower surrounded by a permanent fog outside of the City of Blades. Galrond seeks adventurers willing to navigate the monster-filled fog and convince the Spineteeth to change their ways of feeding off of the weak — without lethal bloodshed if possible. Should they succeed, Galrond offers them membership among the Knights of the Golden Sun.



The Sharpened Coin

Symbol: A sharpened coin marred with three cross marks over a devil's face.

Several mercenary companies have come and gone in the deserts over the years. While many fail and fall, those who succeed find themselves drawn into the Sharpened Coin mercenaries. Hiring skilled adventurers of all types and species, the Sharpened Coin centralize around profit. Many times, the Sharpened Coin need only identify themselves to stop a skirmish or provide protection for those willing to pay for it. In the few instances where members of the Coin must draw weapons, they do so swiftly and fiercely. The Sharpened Coin operate with dozens of Captains, each of whom commands their own squad and pays a percentage up the chain to the current leader of the Sharpened Coin, the dwarf general Vyce Ironskar. Some whisper that the Sharpened Coin has dealings not just in this world but with the devils of the lower hells as well.

Notable NPC: Captain Thervus Stonehelm, a dwarf mercenary, commands one of four contingents of Sharpened Coin in the City of Blades. He's always on the eye for new talent and loves outsourcing the work of the Sharpened Coin to freelance adventurers for a reasonable percentage on return.

Adventure Hook: Captain Thervus seeks adventurers able to escort the famous and eccentric bard Wynefreede Goldentongue to a recently uncovered cairn outside of the City of Blades. The bard Wynefreede seeks a book of magical songs and poetry said to be at the location known as the Palimpsest of Persephone. Unknown to either the Sharpened Coin or Wynefreede, the Seekers of the Sands too hunts for this tome while ghouls of the Pale Lord tunnel from below, seeking the tome for their liege.

The Seekers of the Sands

Symbol: A step pyramid with an eye floating above.

The Seekers of the Sands split away from the Arcane Eye several years previous, believing that *all* knowledge, dangerous or not, deserved discovery. Members of the Seekers aren't fools, however. They understand the dangers they uncover and seek ways to protect it from those who might misuse it. The Seekers also have less scruples in who they deal with to acquire knowledge of hidden vaults and chambers beneath the City of Blades and the ruins of the Deadlands. The Seekers have several "rings". The sixth ring are new acolytes and scouts while the first ring are a group of five mysterious sages whose identities are so secret, only those who work directly for them know they are a member of the first ring at all. The loose and secret structure of the Seekers, along with their less morally encumbered beliefs, sometimes leads to infighting, betrayal, and even





assassinations. Some ambitious members of the seekers hire killers to acquire relics rather than try to bargain with those who possess them.

Notable NPC: Conophas Needlehair, a halfling explorer and fifth-ring member of the Seekers of the Sands is one of several members of the Seekers operating in the City of Blades. Conophas seeks new members to bring into the sixth ring and is willing to do so once these adventurers when they show their worth to the Seekers.

Adventure Hook: Conophas of the Seekers wants to hire a band of adventurers to find the lost laboratory of Styvax in a ruined keep half-sunk in a poisonous bog. Within lies an ancient gemstone of the primordial age said to hold a spark of the primordial Worgrathan the Insatiable Maw. The tower itself is infested with aberrants drawn to the gemstone while hunters of the Sapphire Sun infiltrate the tower to bring the gemstone back to their ancient city.

The Night Blades

Symbol: A pair of black curved blades over a white moon.

The Night Blades are a notorious guild of thieves and assassins operating out of every major city and many towns across the Deadlands. They have known representatives and secret operatives all throughout the City of Blades and are mutually considered enemies of the Guardians. No one knows who leads the Night Blades but it's said whoever does isn't human — perhaps a vampire or devil. Little is known of their motivations as well. Sometimes people are found dead, clearly assassinated by the Night Blades, for no known reason. Some believe the Night Blades and their leader has a secret plan or working knowledge of the future and act to keep the continuation of one of those many possible futures intact.

Notable NPC: Idama Nightrunner, an elf assassin, operates as an open member of the Night Blades in the City of Blades. Idama claims to have retired many years ago yet it's whispered that one wouldn't know if she was still operating or not. Several small gangs of bandits and toughs claim to be operating from Idama's orders but no proof ever finds its ways into the hands of the Guardians.

Adventure Hook: Galrond Silverstar of the Knights of the Golden Sun learned that the Night Blades have targeted a former member of the Blades who holds evidence of several assassinations the Knights would like to learn about. Galrond seeks adventurers willing to escort this former member of the Blades, the bugbear Terek Bearsong, from his hideout, a ruined gatehouse overlooking a cleft known as the Cleft of Skytheer to the City of Blades. At the gatehouse, the characters must fight off waves of bandits and toughs hired by the Night Blades before escorting Terek back

to the City of Blades and into the protection of the Knights of the Golden Sun.

Offspring of the First Age

Symbol: A flaring black sun over a fiery background.

The Offspring of the First Age believe all power and life in the world ties back to the primordials who once ruled the land. They seek all manner of lore and artifacts that lets them speak to the distant voices of the primordials with the hope of bringing them back to power. Different sects of the Offspring follow the teachings of different primordials and sometimes come to violence over their activities. The Offspring are organized enough to hire explorers to seek what they desire or can be found themselves at ancient bloodstained altars attempting to speak to their sworn deities.

Notable NPC: Klamantha the Crow is a human follower of Skytheer the Silver Blade but speaks on behalf of all the Offspring. She long ago mutilated herself, removing her own eyes and carving a new one into her forehead through which she claims to have a deeper sight. This seems to prove out when she's tested. Klamantha is very persuasive and has recruited hundreds of lost souls in the City of Blades to the Offspring. She also pays well from the coffers of anonymous patrons for verified relics and lore tied to the primordials.

Adventure Hook: Both Conophas of the Seekers and Imedia of the Arcane Eye seek heroes who can infiltrate the ruined temple of Othyrin in the Thousand Sunless Temples and recover an ancient book of maps, known as the Book of Dungeons Deep held by followers of the Offspring who use it to conduct a terrible ritual to raise a living portion of Otyyrun's massive living dungeon to the surface. After battling the followers of the Offspring and their summoned dungeon-delving monstrosities, the characters must choose which patron to return the dangerous book.

Intro Scenario — The Kidnapping of Calden “Ninetoes”

This intro scenario gives you an outline of events to introduce you and your players to the City of Blades and its factions. Fill in the details of this scenario with adversaries from your chosen system and any other details you want to add to build your own customized adventure.

You can use the following map and add details as desired.

In preparation for this scenario, roll or choose one of the primordials as the subject of the main antagonists in the scenario. Use details from your chosen primordial to flavor the cultists, symbols on the walls, and the details of their lair.



Scenario Start

While walking through the merchant's district of the City of Blades, the characters find the marketplace in commotion. Vendors and guards speak of a thief who stole a wrapped cheese wheel from **Thespi Ghostheart**, an elf caravaner setting up in the market. Thespi sent his two hired Sharpened Coin mercenaries (**Valoria Keenblade** and **Divin Grash**) to hunt the thief down.

Witnesses say they saw three robed figures grab the thief and drag him through a cracked hole leading into the sewers below the city. The Sharpened Coin mercenaries have no desire to delve into the sewers — the smell is horrible, the danger high, and the thief likely already dead. They offer coin to the characters to delve into the sewers to find him or at least find proof of his demise and maybe the missing wheel of cheese.

Dolly Baverin, a young human woman, cries out that the thief is her brother, **Calden Baverin** also known as Ninetoes, who stole the cheese to feed their family.

Nearby, **Galrond Silverstar**, a Knight of the Golden Sun, remarks to the characters that being sacrificed on a stone altar is likely a greater punishment than stealing a wheel of cheese deserves, asking the characters what they think.

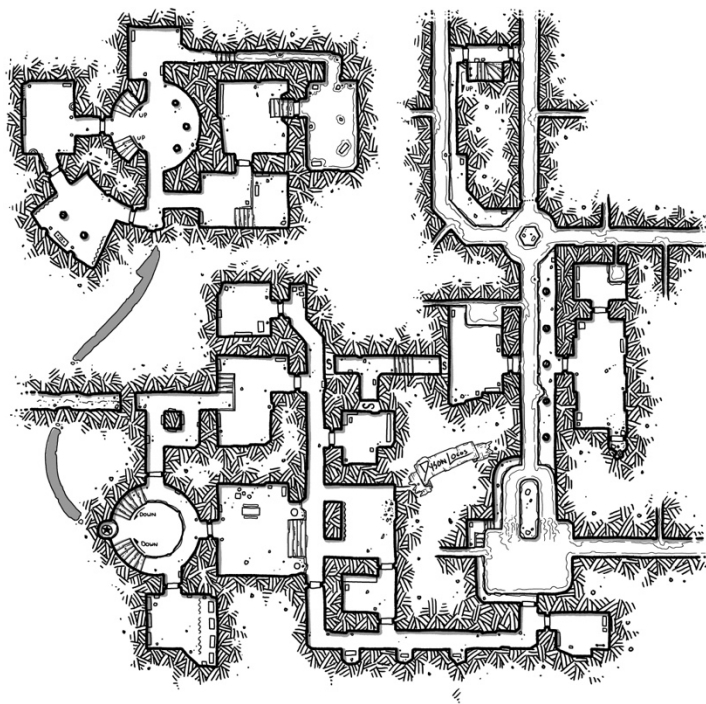
An older halfling woman with a golden eye amulet around her neck introduces herself as **Imedia Wyrmbright** and notes that great and dangerous relics can be found in the ruins beneath the sewers. She would pay well for the retrieval of any such artifacts before they end up in the wrong hands.

Galrond watches the characters to see if they go down into the sewers to save the thief. Should they not be interested, he sighs with disappointment and prepares to delve into the sewers to save the young man himself.

Should the characters choose to delve into the sewers to save Calden, they may find the following notable locations during their journey:

1. Altar to one of the primordials.
2. Small shrine to one of the fallen scions.
3. The slain and looted body of one of the factions.
4. An ancient dangerous sluice.
5. A deep well with strange runes around it.
6. Big pipe with periodically rushing filthy water.
7. A cracked wall with a hidden stash.
8. A flooded chamber with a broken machine.
9. An abandoned hovel with an altar to a scion.
10. Strange mushrooms with smelly spores.

Along their journey, the characters find signs of the passage of the cultists leading to forgotten chambers in the sewers. They may also run into one or more encounters. Use or roll on the list below to inspire your own encounter:



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1. Gray oozes disintegrating a dead body wearing a shining amulet.
2. White-skinned crocodiles seeking a meal.
3. Giant rats devouring a bloated zombie corpse from the inside out.
4. Nela Gloomsmile, a kobold sage of the Seekers of the Sands seeking (and paying well) for artifacts, no questions asked.
5. Ancient skeletons from a hidden vault.
6. Strangely tattooed serpentfolk ghouls hissing in an unknown language.

Deeper in the sewers, the characters discover a temple to one of the primordials used by the cultists for their fell sacrifice. Include details from your chosen primordial to flavor the temple and the cultists within. You may select different types creatures to defend the lair depending on your chosen primordial as well.

In a chamber of your choosing, the characters face several cultists of the primordial along with a higher ranking cultist fanatic or priest. They might be further protected by a monster appropriate for your chosen primordial. Among the cult's possessions the characters find a relic symbolizing the primordial with a powerful single-use spell effect. Roll the relic and flavor tables in appendix X for details. The characters might also find other treasure or rewards depending on the system you choose to run.

Should they save Calden, the young man begs to be released along with his wheel of cheese for his sister and family. The characters can choose to set Calden free, pay his fine to the merchant, or turn him over to the Sharpened Coin mercenaries. They might also turn over the relic they found to Imedia Wyrmbright



who offers potions or other less powerful single-use magic items in return.

Depending on the decisions they make, the characters might find themselves with offers to join the Knights of the Golden Sun, the Sharpened Coin mercenaries, the Arcane Eye, or the Seekers of the Sands as future potential patrons. Depending on the type of campaign you want to run, they can ally with multiple factions or each character can join one of their own. They need not pledge full loyalty to any one of them for some time — instead receiving quests from factions based on how well they do on previous quests.

The Thousand Sunless Temples Generator

Use this generator to inspire your own temples in the Thousand Sunless Temples — the caverns, passages, dungeons, and tombs found deep beneath the City of Blades.

Themes

1. Beasts
2. Snakes
3. Death
4. Gold
5. Darkness
6. Mutated Life
7. Constructs
8. Blood
9. Metal
10. Fungi
11. The watery depths
12. The endless void
13. The primordial forest
14. War
15. Thievery
16. Dragons
17. Hell
18. Crystals
19. Eyes
20. Insects

Elements

1. Fire
2. Water
3. Earth
4. Air
5. Acid
6. Ooze
7. Smoke
8. Lightning
9. Poison
10. Cold
11. Force
12. Sonic

13. Necrotic
14. Radiance
15. Darkness
16. Psionics
17. Illusion
18. Cold iron
19. Nightmares
20. Arcane energy

Structures

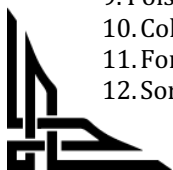
1. Ornate temple
2. Hollow meteorite
3. Giant skull
4. Crumbling tower
5. Ancient keep
6. Spiraling pit
7. Jaw-like stalactites and stalagmites
8. Giant ossuary
9. Huge cenotaph
10. Titanic corpse
11. Festering hive
12. Hollow pillars
13. Deep lake
14. Cracked archway
15. Towering ziggurat
16. Wrecked ship
17. Giant statues
18. Iron dungeon
19. Abandoned aqueducts
20. Crystalline palace

Inhabitants

1. Undead
2. Demons
3. Devils
4. Beasts
5. Aberrants
6. Elves
7. Dwarves
8. Orcs
9. Goblins
10. Constructs
11. Insects
12. Elementals
13. Dragonkin
14. Aquatic creatures
15. Celestials
16. Dinosaurs
17. Mercenaries
18. Fey
19. Plants
20. Serpentfolk

Paths Through the Deadlands

1. Dry riverbed
2. Bone trail markers
3. Ley line in the sky





4. Smoke signals
5. Ancient waymarkers
6. Primordial trail
7. Narrow canyon
8. Visible stars
9. Large dead trees
10. Pointing skeletons

The Syndicates

1. The Furies — face paint and blunt weapons
2. The Broadwords — two handed weapons and scars
3. The Violet Rogues — purple fade masks
4. The Anglers — bloodthirsty killers who use the innocent as bait
5. The Night Rangers
6. The Black Hats
7. The Sundered Shields
8. The Planewalkers
9. The Orphans
10. The Sandstorms
11. The Lords of the North
12. The Lords of the South

Relic Generator

Relics play a strong role in *Blood of the Primordials*, serving as the catalysts for many quests and adventures.

Relics are built by rolling on several tables:

- Description
- Effect
- Item
- Faction
- Ability

Mixing these elements gives you many hundreds of thousands of possible relics. Roll on the following tables, sit with them for a bit, and see what ideas come to you. If something really doesn't make sense, reroll — but not before you let your brain come up with potentially interesting things.

Conditions

1. Cracked
2. Glyphed
3. Pristine
4. Shining
5. Tarnished
6. Bloody
7. Dusty
8. Scratched
9. Gilded
10. Silvered
11. Wooden
12. Steel
13. Inlaid
14. Jeweled

15. Stone
16. Ceramic
17. Crystal
18. Sharpened
19. Bone
20. Platinum

Effect

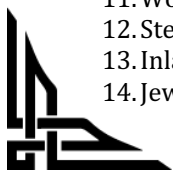
1. Smoking
2. Bleeding
3. Acidic
4. Poisonous
5. Necrotic
6. Lightning-infused
7. Radiant
8. Frozen
9. Fiery
10. Oozing
11. Thunderous
12. Psychic
13. Diseased
14. Ringing
15. Shadowy
16. Ethereal
17. Whispering
18. Windswept
19. Voidtouched
20. Moontouched

1-2 Common Items

1. Cup
2. Key
3. Coin
4. Bell
5. Knife
6. Doll
7. Lamp
8. Tablet
9. Figurine
10. Skull
11. Femur
12. Finger Bone
13. Idol
14. Sphere
15. Disk
16. Urn
17. Rod
18. Box
19. Bowl
20. Wand

3-4 Jewelry

1. Ring
2. Amulet
3. Tiara
4. Crown
5. Earring





6. Insignia
7. Clasp
8. Bracelet
9. Mask
10. Medallion
11. Monocle
12. Hair clip
13. Bangle
14. Medal
15. Buckle
16. Brooch
17. Charm
18. Choker
19. Comb
20. Locket

5-6 Weapons

1. Dagger
2. Shortsword
3. Scimitar
4. Longsword
5. Hand Axe
6. Battle Axe
7. Mace
8. Flail
9. Hammer
10. Warhammer
11. Quarterstaff
12. Sickle
13. Shorbow
14. Longbow
15. Crossbow
16. Javelin
17. Spear
18. Glaive
19. Greataxe
20. Greatsword

Factions

Choose or roll 1d4 for a faction type and then 1d8 for the particular faction to associate to a relic.

1. The Primordials

1. Gulsung the Crawling Chaos
2. Vyxis the Hive
3. Voor the Black Sun
4. Skytheer the Silver Blade
5. Worgatan the Insatiable Maw
6. Slayrevar the Red Mist
7. Othyrun the Dreadful Steppes
8. Jungivar the Underworld Serpent

2. Scions of Light

1. Aragon of the Golden Ray
2. Edea the Blue Leaf
3. Maylin the Summer's Star

4. Mother Valenel
5. Ovendar of the Thousand Eyes
6. Sarethe Nature's Step
7. Traga the Lady of Storms
8. Uldrin the Living History

3. Fallen Scions

1. Galvus
2. Kravun
3. Lady Chase
4. Librion
5. Lord Scale
6. Magus Wynn Hollow
7. Navarr
8. Sevela
9. Sir Grimvold
10. Starfall

4. Dread Scions

1. Gestell Blackstar
2. Gothin
3. Kethmal the Claw of Shadows
4. Lord Thresh
5. Revel
6. Sever
7. Stella the Red Cloak
8. Valde the Blood Seeker
9. Vetal-Qor
10. Xemnon Hell-Touched

Relic Powers

Relics contain magical power invocable by any who possess it. One who spends a short time investigating the item becomes aware of its power.

Relics can have several power levels.

1. Low power (usable at will)
2. Medium power (usable once or once daily)
3. High power (usable once)
4. Very high power (usable once)

Power levels can be associated to spell levels, tiers, or circles if your RPG of choice uses them. Power level is often associated to the size of the effect of the item, the damage an item might inflict, or the scale of the effect the item has on the world. A low power item might glow brightly while a very high power item might emit a devastating wave of necrotic energy.

Relics may have either damaging effects or in-world effects. Choose or roll any die: odds for damaging effects and evens for in-world effects.

Damaging Effects

Many relics emit damaging effects. These effects might have several shapes or targets. Your chosen RPG system can better define the size, range, and number of targets affected. We used abstract





distancing here with a description of the number of expected targets. The size of the effect often dictates the power level of the item.

1. A target within touch distance.
2. A single close target.
3. A single far target.
4. A line of targets (three targets).
5. A cone of targets (five targets).
6. A small area centered on the item (four targets).
7. A small area centered at a location the user can see (four targets).
8. A large area centered on the item (eight targets).
9. A large area centered at a location the user can see (eight targets).
10. A very large area centered on the item (all targets within sight).

The effect of the item can give you an idea what sort of energy might be emitted from it should it be a damaging effect. Your system of choice can dictate how much damage the item might inflict based on the damage ranges within your RPG system.

In-World Effects

Many relics also contain in-world effects. You can choose an effect from these lists instead of a damaging effect.

1. Low Power

1. Create Light
2. Put out a light
3. Create a small fire
4. Make a small noise or minor illusion
5. Move small objects in a close range
6. Make minor repairs or cause small amounts of damage

2. Medium Power

1. Levitate
2. Create water
3. Fall slowly
4. Create fog
5. Create small amounts of food
6. Move more quickly
7. Speak with animals
8. Charm creatures
9. Detect magic
10. Comprehend languages
11. Disguise Self
12. Put someone to sleep

3. High Power

1. Fly
2. Become invisible
3. Enlarge or reduce something or someone
4. Create a large area of darkness
5. Detect thoughts

6. Teleport short, medium, or long distances
7. Create a large illusion
8. Banish a creature
9. Summon an entity
10. Learn a divine legend
11. Move through solid objects
12. Heal several people

4. Very High Power

1. Summon meteors
2. Slay a living creature
3. Destroy an undead creature
4. Destroy a building or structure
5. Disintegrate someone or something
6. Transfer to another plane of existence
7. Banish a powerful creature
8. Heal a great number of people
9. Raise the dead
10. Stop time

