

Call of the Netherdeep

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Characters knowledge

KRYN DYNASTY. The Kryn Dynasty is the dominant nation in Xhorhas. It was founded by a drow queen named Leylas Kryn, who fled the Underdark and the tyrannical rule of Lolth the Spider Queen along with her disciples. The Bright Queen still rules the dynasty centuries later, and its cities contain more than just drow. Orcs, goblinoids, tieflings, humans, and many others call the cities of the dynasty their home. Countless more denizens of the dynasty are nomads who roam the wastes in clans, hunting mastodons and other Xhorhasian megafauna.

JIGOW. This coastal settlement is actually a string of villages that are home to a collection of folk from all over Xhorhas. Goblin and orc clans founded Jigow, which explains why the settlement is governed by two elders—a goblin and an orc. The Aurora Watch (the military arm of the Kryn Dynasty) maintains a presence here, under the command of a drow called Taskhand Durth Mirimm. Townsfolk tend to be competitive, and friendly rivalries are commonplace. Most of Jigow's residents live in a central region called the Jumble.

Neighborhoods...

- * Meatwaters, main dock area on the shores of the Ifolon River.
- * The Wetwalks, houses on stilts closest to the wetlands and marshes.
- * The Jumble, densely populated among giant mangrove trees and houses on young horizonback tortoises.

Noteworthy locals...

- * Durth Mirimm, Taskhand of the Aurora Watch, drow political liaison for Kryn Dynasty. (Think state sheriff.)
- * Elder Ushru, orc tribal leader, civic and religious leader. (Think co-mayor.)
- * Elder Colbu Kaz, goblin tribal leader, loves riddles and games. (Think co-mayor.)

THE LUXON. The official deity of the Kryn Dynasty, whose symbol appears on the nation's heraldry, is the Luxon. This mysterious divine entity of light and rebirth has granted its faithful several esoteric secrets, the greatest of which is consecution—the act of preparing one's soul for rebirth. Through consecution, some people within the Kryn Dynasty have lived many lifetimes, often in bodies different from the ones they were first born in. In the sequence of consecution, a

drow might become a goblin, then be reborn as a bugbear, then an orc, and so on—all the while gaining greater knowledge about the world through their experiences. This process has no mechanical benefit, but players can make consecution and rebirth an interesting part of their characters' backstories.

If a follower of the Luxon who has undergone the ritual of consecution dies within 100 miles of a Luxon beacon, their soul is ensnared by it and reincarnated within the body of a random Humanoid newborn within 100 miles of the beacon.

MYTHIC HISTORY: Proficiency in Religion or History automatically gets a character this knowledge...

Shortly after the gods formed the planet Exandria, Primordial titans attacked this new creation. A schism arose between those gods who wanted to abandon this world (those later called The Betrayer Gods) and those who stood to fight the elemental titans (those later called The Prime Deities). Some of the gods who would not fight even sided with the elemental Primordials and shared their fate when the Prime Deities were victorious, banishing their traitorous kin into secluded prison planes. These Betrayer Gods would remain restrained until the archmage Vespine Chloras freed them during the Age of Arcanum, setting off The Calamity of gods directly waging war across the mortal world. In the aftermath, the most lawful deities appeared before the City of Vasselheim (on the continent of Issylra) and announced a Divine Gate would block any god from manifesting directly on Exandria except through clerics and magical items later known as the Vestiges of Divergence.

THE PRIME DEITIES (who fought the Primordials)

- * Avandra, The Change Bringer (CG) (Change, Freedom, Luck)
- * Bahamut, The Platinum Dragon (LG) (Honor, Justice, Good Dragons)
- * Corellon, The Arch Heart (CG) (Art, Beauty, Elves)
- * Erathis, The Law Bearer (LN) (Civilization, Law, Peace)
- * Ioun, The Knowing Mentor (N) (Knowledge, Learning, Teaching)
- * Kord, The Storm Lord (CN) (Battle, Competition, Storms)
- * Melora, The Wild Mother (N) (Seas, Wilderness)
- * Moradin, The All-Hammer (LG) (Craft, Creation, Dwarves)
- * Pelor, The Dawnfather (NG) (Healing, Sun)
- * Sarenrae, The Everlight (NG) (Atonement, Compassion)

* Sehanine, The Moon Weaver (CG) (Illusion, Moonlight, Night, Wood Elves)

* The Raven Queen, The Matron of Death (LN) (Death, Fate, Winter)

THE BETRAYER GODS (who refused to fight the Primordials)

* Asmodeus, The Lord of the Nine Hells (LE) (Political Power, Devils)

* Bane, The Strife Emperor (LE) (Conquest, Tyranny)

* Gruumsh, The Ruiner (CE) (Slaughter, Warfare, Orcs)

* Lolth, The Spider Queen (CE) (Deceit, Spiders, underdark Drow)

* Tharizdun, The Chained Oblivion (CE) (Darkness, Destruction)

* Tiamat, The Scaled Tyrant (LE) (Evil Dragons) (Greed?)

* Torog, The Crawling King (NE) (Enslavement, Torture)

* Vecna, The Whispered One (NE) (Necromancy, Secrets)

* Zehir, The Cloaked Serpent (CE) (Assassins, Poison, Snakes)

ANCIENT HISTORY: No proficiency needed to know this info, it's the much-simplified version of history told in oral traditions and tales to children.

In the beginning, the gods came and seized upon primordial chaos, creating the world **Exandria** and populating it with mortal beings (first elves, then dragons, later came humans, and so forth). About 1,000 years ago, mortals became so powerful with magic during a time called the Age of Arcanum that they challenged the gods themselves, accidentally releasing the evil **Betrayer Gods** that had been held in check by the good and neutral **Prime Deities**. War escalated until many gods themselves walked the world, causing an apocalypse known as **The Calamity** and ending with **The Divergence**, a permanent ban on divine beings physically entering the prime material plane.

RECENT HISTORY: It is now the year 836 PD ("Post-Divergence") on the continent of Wildemount, a year into the ceasefire between the Dwendalian Empire in the west and the Kryn Dynasty in the east. Tensions between the two states had been building for decades, and after an inciting flashpoint involving stolen relics, both sides suffered violent losses during eight months of open warfare until the truce was made.

The adventure begins in a rural northern coastal area of **Xhorhas**, the home nation of the **Kryn Dynasty**. This land was once the seat of power for many evil gods during The Calamity, though hundreds of generations later the goblin, drow, and orc decedents of those monstrous armies now live together in peace and prosperity. Kryn military forces known as the **Aurora Watch** patrol

against the dangerous demons and mutant creatures that still roam the local wilderness.

ELSEWHERE AROUND THE WORLD...

* **Wildemount:** Your home continent, largely divided among the Dwendalian Empire (think: pre-Aragorn Gondor) in the west, Kryn Dynasty/Xhorhas (think: a recovered post-Sauron Mordor) in the east, and The Clovis Concord trade empire (naval merchant princes) along the southern coast.

* **Tal'Dorei:** Continent beyond the seas to the far west; feudal lands of humans, elves, and hobgoblins.

* **Marquet:** Continent beyond the seas to the south; lands of deserts and mountains, exotic merchants and scholars.

* **Issylra:** Continent beyond the seas, on the other side of the planet; mostly wilderness and home to the world's "cradle of civilization" in ancient times.

* **The Underdark:** Subterranean regions with significant connections to the alien Far Realm.

* **Catha:** Exandria's bright moon, very similar to Earth's moon in size, cycles, and mythic significance (lycanthropy, sacred to some elves).

* **Ruidus:** Exandria's smaller red moon, an unpredictable object associated with strange magics, curses, and overall bad luck.

FYI: The module begins with characters meeting in **Jigow**, a fishing town on the far northern coast of Xhorhas, during the fun-filled day-long party called the **Festival of Merit**.

EXANDRIA-WIDE ORGANIZATIONS. I'm just listing these here as non-Xhorhas options if anyone wants to expand their character's background beyond the scope of the adventure set-up...

* **Library of the Cobalt Soul**, guild-ish independent archivists and archaeologists.

* **The Ashari**, elementalists who guard rifts between the Elemental Planes and Exandria.

* **The Claret Orders**, secretive users of blood magic (blood clerics, blood mages, blood hunters) who seek to destroy undead.

* **Houses of Kraghammer**, ancient ancestral dwarven subterranean city-state below Tal'Dorei. (Pretty much the only dwarf community in Exandria?)

* **The Myriad**, an organized crime organization active on the continents of Wildemount (Dwendalian and Clovis Concord lands) and Tal'Dorei.

Exandria timeline

Years are noted in relation to The Divergence (negative years before the event, positive years following it).

Mythic past ... The Founding: Several gods (and/or The Luxon) conflict with chaotic elemental titans called Primordials. Exandria is given order and shaped. Mortals are created, after which the primordials attempt to destroy the new world. The gods split between Prime Deities (who defended mortals and order) and Betrayer Gods (who sided with the Primordials to return to chaos). Losers in this conflict are imprisoned until The Calamity.

-2,000 PD (approx.) ... Age of Arcanum begins as mortals master the art of magic.

-665 PD (approx.) ... Age of Arcanum nears its peak. Magic users learn to manipulate the flow of time.

-480 PD (approx.) ... The City of Avalir atop Mount Ygora in Domunas breaks off and becomes a flying metropolis.

-310 PD (approx.) ... A mortal mage usurps the God of Death and becomes The Raven Queen.

-290 PD (approx.) ... The archmage Vecna, a native from the planet Oerth, becomes active on Exandria. Vecna draws many followers before retreating with them into the Shadowfell, possibly part of his multiverse-altering plan to achieve supreme divinity over the cosmos. (Vecna is also active in the Demiplanes of Dread/Ravenloft, Oerth/Greyhawk, Toril/The Forgotten Realms, and Sigil, the City of Doors/Planescape campaign settings prior to the events of [Die, Vecna, Die!](#))

-190 PD (approx.) ... The Calamity begins when the archmage Vespene Chloras and others unseal Asmodeus from his prison. Soon all Betrayer Gods are freed to return to the mortal world. Elemental rifts burst open across Exandria. War between gods rages across the mortal realm, destroying civilization and almost wiping out mortalkind. Only the first human city of Vasselheim (aka The Dawn City, The Cradle of Creation) on the continent of Issylra survives into the modern era. The continent of Domunas is shattered, leaving only an archipelago of scattered islands now known as The Shattered Teeth. The continents of Tal'Dorei, Wildemount, and Marquet suffer major

topographical and climatic changes.

1 PD (approx.) ... The Calamity ends when the Betrayer Gods are defeated at their stronghold of Ghor Dranas (now the modern Kryn Dynasty capital of Rosohna along the southern edge of the Barbed Fields region of Xhorhas). The Divergence seals all deities off from directly entering the mortal realm. Exandria's ley lines are shifted.

After The Calamity ... Mortals slowly recover and again settle across the continents of Tal'Dorei, Wildemount, Issylra, and Marquet. The Library of the Cobalt Soul, a religious/scholastic order, forms to rediscover knowledge lost during The Calamity.

445 PD (approx.) ... The City of Ank'Harel is founded on Marquet by the mysterious J'mon Sa Ord. Around the same time, Zehir cultists seal the elder thing Uk'otoa under the ocean floor.

500 PD (approx.) ... Archeologists increase study of relics found around the City of Ank'Harel.

725 PD (approx.) ... Archeologists formally form a guild called the Allegiance of Allsight in Ank'Harel. Headmaster of the Crystal Chateau James Cryon is a founding member.

809 to 810 PD ... A Briarwood noble is revealed to be a necromantic cult leader seeking to help Vecna achieve godhood over Exandria. Four dragons form the Chroma Conclave and prey upon the lands of Tal'Dorei. (Adventures of Vox Machina, pre-show and Critical Role Campaign 1.)

823 PD ... Apex War fought in Marquet between the Stratos Throne and the Court of the Lambent Path.

830 PD (approx.) ... Consortium of the Vermilion Dream society forms in Ank'Harel to collect and study an exotic red mineral called Ruidium.

835 to 836 PD ... The War of Ash and Light fought across Wildemount between the western Dwendalian Empire and the eastern Kryn Dynasty. The conflict ends in a truce with little change in national borders.

Catha and Ruidus

When the people gaze into the morning sky, they see the sun, a blazing disc the size of a gold piece, looking back at them. It is the domain of the Dawnfather, a god of life and light honored politely by nearly all the realm's denizens. At night, the skies are filled with countless distant stars, a gleaming silver-white moon called Catha, and occasionally, a dim, ruddy moon called Ruidus that is nearly half Catha's size. Both moons are the domain of the Moonweaver, a capricious god of trickery and illusions, but there are sects throughout the world that believe only Catha represents the Moonweaver's cunning and grace. Catha's pearly glow is said to bless the just with cunning and caution, and to make hidden the goodhearted when they require stealth and subtlety. Ruidus, the second moon of Exandria, is much smaller and farther away. With a slower rotation around the world and dark redbrown coloring, Ruidus is often difficult to see among the stars of the night sky and nearly impossible to spot during the day. Little is known of Ruidus, though older cultures and texts speak of it as an omen of ill tidings, or even a remnant of a Betrayer God plot left abandoned and unrealized. Ruidus is so surrounded by disquieting rumors and folkloric tales of misfortune that some believe another unknown god or power rules this small, reddish-brown moon.

"During the Founding, a time when the gods still walked the face of Exandria, the world's divine creators discovered an unidentifiable power seeping through the fabric of reality. Legends assert that this alien influence was a threat to all life on Exandria, and the gods banded together to banish it. This cancerous incursion of dark power is said to have crystallized into Ruidus, the small, vermilion moon that hangs in the sky along with Catha, the world's natural moon. The gods agreed to create a tale about Ruidus to conceal its alien origin from the mortals of the world, informing them that it was a moon of ill omen, and its magical influence was always to be avoided. This tale concocted by the gods was not a lie, for Ruidus's alien magic twists the fate of those who are born or embark on ventures while bathed in its vermilion light."

Cultures around the world tell countless legends of prideful rulers who made grand plans or attempted deeds under the moon's full light—when it shines a brilliant vermilion rather than its usual ruddy color—and were forced to watch in horror as their endeavors fell to unforeseen misfortune. It is said those who fall afoul of Ruidus failed to give it the deference it is due—and so superstitious folk rarely dare to make plans while the full light of Ruidus shines above, let alone enact them. Worse yet, some tales forebode dark fortunes for those born under the light of a full

Ruidus, a curse of ill luck that will follow them throughout their lives. Though the cruel practice of moon-sacrifice is no longer permitted in any city, some far-flung settlements still secretly sacrifice children born under a full Ruidus to “save” them from a cursed life, and to appease the dark and unknowable appetites of the red moon. Fortunately for the superstitious, Ruidus is rarely full. While its cousin, Catha, completes a full cycle approximately once a month, Ruidus’s haunting, halfyear orbit, combined with its eerie and unexplainable tendency to simply not appear in the sky on certain nights or glow with unknown light, creating an unexpected full moon, has only added to its mythic reputation as an omen of ill fortune.

"O Ruidus, grant humble chorus leave

To sing the song which hails the zenith of

Your accurséd, thrice-blessed Apotheon;

Remember'd best by deeds in war, and yet

Whose acts were driven oft by fate most foul.

His kindly brow bore gifts from gods

of change,

And art, and moon, yet in his soul was pain,

The suffering of your vermilion light

Drove the Paragon to a desert realm

Bestrewn with blades and drenched

in crimson blood.

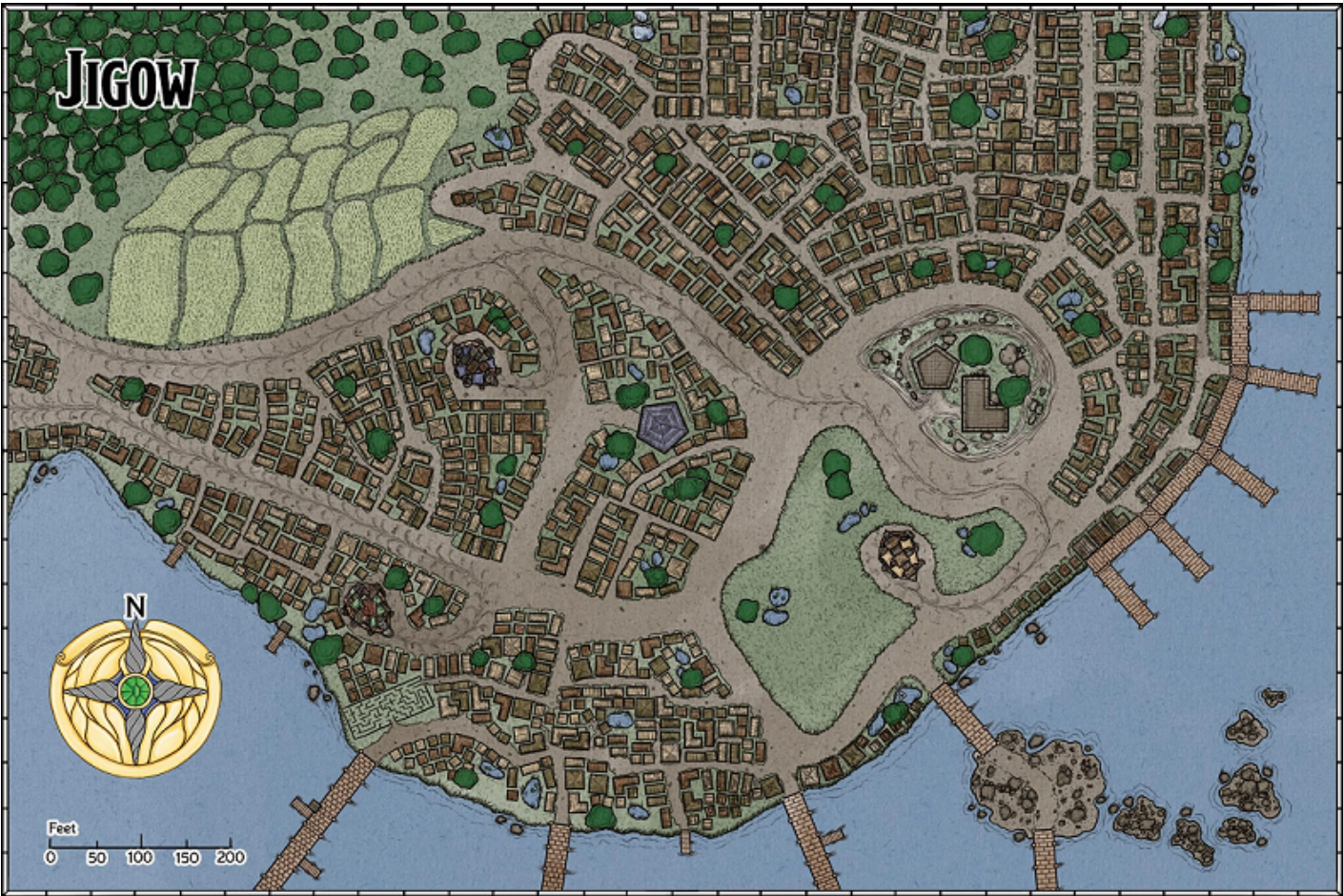
So hear, O moon of curséd deeds and fates!

The song of he who rose above your great

And mighty pow'r, to save Exandria.

From flames of war fanned by the Ruiner's blade."

Jigow



Rivals



Bazzoxan



Population: 2,610 (81% dark elves, 8% goblinoids, 11% other races)

Government: Martial law is enforced by Taskhand Verin Thelyss and maintained by the local military.

Defense: The Aurora Watch defends the town and keeps the demonic incursions at bay. The few citizens learn combat skills out of necessity.

Commerce: Very basic supplies are available, if scarce, due to the dangerous circumstances surrounding the town. Most trade involves provisions and goods for survival and defense.

Organizations: There are a number of partially destroyed temples and a handful of small ones that are still intact.

Bazzoxan was once a dark temple instrumental in the machinations of the Betrayer Gods during the Calamity, but the remaining ruin was left to gather dust like many relics of those terrible times. After Ghor Dranas was claimed by the Kryn, settlers roamed north through the Barbed Fields to

discover this site with hopes of renovating it as well. A community began to flourish within the ruins of Bazzoxan over a few generations, building the foundations of a new city around the looming stone structures of the abandoned sanctum-until demonic forces from within the old temple threw the burgeoning society into chaos. Bazzoxan is now perpetually locked in a stalemate between the dynasty's forces and the abyssal incursion from within the temple. This unholy site is the subject of constant research and of growing worry for the dynasty.

Never left alone

About forty years ago, a group of curious local dungeoneers uncovered a long-dormant gateway to the Abyss. Its demonic influence drove them mad, and they accidentally reactivated the gateway of Bazzoxan-an immense rift between the Abyss and Exandria. This enabled demonic forces to pour out into the ruins and surrounding city. The incursion was eventually stifled, though at a great loss of life. The civilians that remain in Bazzoxan support the warriors who keep the forces of the Abyss at bay, as well as the arcanists who work to reseal the rift and reclaim the city.

Government

The town is under martial law, with Aurora Watch soldiers keeping the peace under the current governance of Taskhand Verin Thelyss. The taskhand's lieutenants serve as minor officials and bureaucrats, and even the civilians who continue to stay are trained to defend themselves and fall into rank if malevolent forces rise from beneath their home.

Crime

With the tension of living in constant fear of demonic threat, the focus on survival in Bazzoxan leaves little room to break the law for personal gain. Even so, the rare grifter sometimes profits from gouging the price of provisions or swindling the fearful. Criminals who are caught by the Watch are sent south to Rosohna for punishment or simply executed, depending on the severity of their crimes.

Geography

The towering ruined temple sits against the rocky southern base of the Penumbra Range, carved directly from the natural stone of the mountains. The ominous onyx doors that lead into the heart

of the temple remain barred and under constant watch. Surrounding the temple are over a hundred abodes and structures, as well as a partially reconstructed town square. Construction equipment lies abandoned in the streets, and vacant homes sit untouched since their denizens were slain or forced to flee. Makeshift Aurora Watch barracks are continuously expanded to make room for the reinforcements sent to push back the fiends that assail the city from beneath.

Factions of Ank'Harel

Numerous political, academic, and criminal factions are active in Ank'Harel. Driven by ambitions both apparent and unseen, these organizations and their rivalries shape the city's social and political landscape, and they offer opportunities for adventurers to rub shoulders with powerful individuals and thereby enhance their reputations.

Three of the groups have a strong interest in the Apotheon and what he represents: the Allegiance of Allsight, the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream, and the Library of the Cobalt Soul. Each of these factions has a set of missions the adventurers can undertake, which are detailed later in the chapter.

Allegiance of Allsight

"To peer into the past is to illuminate the future."

- **Headquarters.** The Crystal Chateau, a university in the Sigil District, is the Allegiance's headquarters.
- **Leader.** The Allegiance is led by two headmasters: the dour [James Cryon](#), a lawful neutral elf, who is also the head of the Crystal Chateau's program for the arcane arts; and the kindly [Gryz Alakritos](#), a neutral good [goblin](#), whose infectious enthusiasm makes him the more popular of the pair. Both use the [scholarly mastermind](#) stat block (see [appendix A](#)).
- **Allies.** The Allegiance and the Library of the Cobalt Soul are staunch allies.

[Headmasters James Cryon and Gryz Alakritos of the Allegiance of Allsight](#)

Headmasters [James Cryon](#) and [Gryz Alakritos](#) of the Allegiance of Allsight

Tyler Walpole

- **Opponents.** The Allegiance opposes the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream and the Sentinels of Memory (see "[Minor Factions](#)" later in the chapter).

The Allegiance of Allsight is an academic collective known across Marquet. Its original members came to Ank'Harel from across the continent to rebuild the robust academic tradition that defined the elves and orcs of ancient Cael Morrow.

The Allegiance of Allsight is embodied in two of Ank'Harel's academic institutions: Teres Schoolhouse, the city's largest center of education, and the Crystal Chateau, an elite school of arcane principles and the center of the Allegiance's operations. Students from anywhere in Ank'Harel are welcome at Teres Schoolhouse, but the Crystal Chateau's programs are extremely competitive, and all pupils there are required to join the Allegiance of Allsight.

In recent years, the faction's leadership has been focused on uncovering the secrets of Cael Morrow, the sunken ruins beneath the city. For decades previously, the headmasters of the Allegiance petitioned J'mon Sa Ord for permission to unseal the long-lost ruins, and finally, the city's mysterious leader relented. The opening of an entrance to the ruins infuriated the Sentinels of Memory, a minor faction whose members fanatically believe the sunken city is best left forgotten, lest some unknown terror left over from the Calamity be disturbed.

How to Join. Joining the Allegiance of Allsight requires one to be referred by an active member, then be reviewed and audited by the Allegiance's council of leadership prior to the issuance of a judgment on the candidate.

Allegiance Story Track. The series of missions offered by the Allegiance of Allsight is described in "[What Lies Beneath](#)," later in the chapter.

Consortium of the Vermilion Dream

"Seek the stories others fear to know."

- **Headquarters.** Consortium members meet in First Eclipse, a tavern in the Suncut Bazaar, and hold private conversations in a secret storeroom there.

~~Master Aradrine the Owl~~

Master [Aradrine the Owl](#)

David Sladek

- **Leader.** The Consortium is led by a council of five masters who all use the [occult silvertongue](#) stat block (see [appendix A](#)). They are [Aradrine the Owl](#), a lawful neutral goliath (see the "[Goliaths of Exandria](#)" sidebar later in the chapter); Dendarron the Sun Bear, a chaotic neutral halfling; Larthul the Wolf, a chaotic evil human; Khelkur the Gull, a neutral evil dwarf; and Vrill the Moth, a lawful evil elf.

- **Allies.** The Consortium maintains a tenuous alliance with the Sentinels of Memory (see "[Minor Factions](#)" later in the chapter).
- **Opponents.** The Consortium opposes the Allegiance of Allsight and the Library of the Cobalt Soul.

This group of occult mystics has assembled a membership of like-minded souls from across Exandria. The Consortium of the Vermilion Dream focuses on studying the magic described in folklore that has been dismissed as fanciful by more "proper" institutions. The group takes its name from its foremost object of fascination: Ruidus, the ruddy moon of Exandria that is fabled to bestow ill fortune and suffering upon those who are born, enter into contracts, or begin new ventures under its baleful light.

The Consortium was founded by five influential individuals, all renowned in occult circles from across Exandria, who sought to gain wealth and prestige from their studies. The Consortium is still young, and thus all five of its founders still live. Older academic institutions such as the Allegiance of Allsight and the Library of the Cobalt Soul express concern and sometimes disdain toward the upstart Consortium and its aggressive, profit-driven attitude toward scholarship.

Due to the expensive nature of its research, the Consortium is in constant need of funding. It leans heavily on its members for such support, selling the services of its magically skilled devotees to government officials, wealthy diplomats, and other persons of means. A large portion of its income goes to support the Sentinels of Memory, the Consortium's tentative ally against the Allegiance of Allsight.

How to Join. The Consortium gladly welcomes any enthusiast of the strange and occult to its ranks—as long as the faction's leaders can be reasonably certain that the individual has no ulterior motives that would undermine their efforts.

Consortium Story Track. The series of missions offered by the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream is described in "[Vermilion Gambits](#)," later in the chapter.

Library of the Cobalt Soul

"Reason. Knowledge. Truth."

- **Headquarters.** The Marquesian branch of the Library of the Cobalt Soul is based at the Temple of the Mentor—a temple of Ioun the Knowing Mentor—in the Guided District.

High Curator [Jamil A'alithiya](#) of the Library of the Cobalt Soul

High Curator [Jamil A'alithiya](#) of the Library of the Cobalt Soul

Anna Veltkamp

- **Leader.** At 29 years old, [Jamil A'alithiya](#), a chaotic good human, is the youngest [monastic high curator](#) (see [appendix A](#)) in the history of the Cobalt Soul. He is often underestimated by his contemporaries and uses that fact to his advantage.
- **Allies.** The Cobalt Soul maintains alliances with the Allegiance of Allsight and the Hands of Ord (see "[Minor Factions](#)" below).
- **Opponents.** The Cobalt Soul opposes the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream.

The Library of the Cobalt Soul was founded in the heart of Wildemount centuries ago, before any of the nations that currently wage war over that land were born. Its archivists have stood strong against conflict, propaganda, and upheaval during all this time in their dogged hunt for the truth. Their mission has spread across Exandria, with advocates in various locales defying local governments in the pursuit of truth.

The Cobalt Soul founded the Temple of the Mentor in Ank'Harel nearly 150 years ago. The archivists here focus on rooting out evil in the city's civilian factions—principally the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream, whose members reportedly wield magic weapons made of some strange, red mineral the likes of which no Cobalt Soul archivist has ever seen.

The faction is wary of the Allegiance of Allsight's fascination with Cael Morrow, but as fellow academic institutions, the Allegiance of Allsight and the Cobalt Soul work together most of the time, sharing resources from their libraries.

How to Join. The Library of the Cobalt Soul accepts for consideration any volunteers who express interest in gathering and preserving knowledge. These volunteers are put to work as librarians, performing menial tasks such as organizing records and transcribing notes from expeditions—drudgery designed to weed out those who want to join the organization for the sake of fame and adventure. Typically, this duty lasts about six months, after which a librarian is formally inducted.

Cobalt Soul Story Track. The series of missions offered by the Library of the Cobalt Soul is described in "[Knowledge Is Power](#)," later in the chapter.

Minor Factions

Other, smaller factions are important to life in Ank'Harel but take a backseat in the plot of this adventure.

Hands of Ord

"By the code of Ord, we stand vigilant."

- **Headquarters.** The city guard is based in Ord Bastion in the Sand-Herald District.
- **Leader.** Ironhand Sem, a lawful good [minotaur](#), commands the Hands of Ord and oversees all military operations in Ank'Harel.
- **Allies.** The Hands of Ord and the Library of the Cobalt Soul are staunch allies.
- **Opponents.** The Hands of Ord aim to root out and destroy the Veil (see [below](#)).

Established four hundred years ago by J'mon Sa Ord, the Hands of Ord are a peacekeeping order of desert warriors who have long watched over Ank'Harel and kept the city safe and stable.

The order is governed by the code of Ord, which is the backbone of the city's legal system. Members of the Hands dedicate their lives to the city and the code, and many come from a long, respected bloodline of previous Hands. Well-appointed barracks in the Sand-Herald District provide members of the Hands with a comfortable home; places of worship; and sources of food, armor, and weapons.

Despite their best efforts, the Hands of Ord have failed to thwart the Veil, the crime syndicate that pervades Ank'Harel society.

Scarbearers

"We do not break."

- **Headquarters.** The Bowl of Judgment, an arena in the Sand-Herald District used for combat tournaments, is the Scarbearers' headquarters.
- **Leader.** Once a mercenary in his own right, Quartermaster Croog Lynn, a chaotic neutral, goliath [gladiator](#), has now taken to running the guild in his later years (see the accompanying "[Goliaths of Exandria](#)" sidebar).
- **Allies.** None.
- **Opponents.** None.

The Scarbearers are the most famous mercenary company in Ank'Harel. Named for the scars their founders displayed to J'mon Sa Ord as proof of their service to the realm, the Scarbearers occupy an honorable position in Marquesian society. They often take high-profile jobs, such as serving as bodyguards for diplomats and protecting caravans and expeditions into the desert. The members promote themselves as a guild that respects honor and guidelines, but they often come across as brash, thuggish fighters who are out for a paycheck.

In addition to their mercenary exploits, the Scarbearers also supervise the tournaments that take place in the Bowl of Judgment.

Sentinels of Memory

"Let the past die in peace."

- **Headquarters.** The Tower of Memory in the Guided District is the meeting place for the Sentinels of Memory.
- **Leader.** Watcher Trast, a neutral, elf [priest](#) and a former cleric of Ioun, founded the Sentinels of Memory and maintains command over the faction to this day.
- **Allies.** The Sentinels are allied with the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream.
- **Opponents.** The Sentinels oppose the Allegiance of Allsight.

The Sentinels of Memory are a group of fanatics who believe the sunken city beneath Ank'Harel isn't some grand ancient wonder—it's a prison that must be kept sealed at all costs. Citing the lack of recorded history about Cael Morrow as proof that powerful forces wanted to expunge the city from memory, the Sentinels of Memory are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that no one speaks of that ill-fated city ever again.

Since they oppose the excavation of Cael Morrow, the Sentinels of Memory are constantly at odds with the Allegiance of Allsight. Though their efforts to date have mostly been political, some of their members have been connected to violent acts intended to thwart the excavation efforts.

Recently, the Consortium of the Vermilion Dream has been supplying the Sentinels of Memory with funds and agents to support the Sentinels' conflict against the Allegiance of Allsight. The Sentinels are grateful for the aid but treat the Consortium with caution, suspecting the faction has ulterior motives.

The Veil

"Welcome to the other side."

- **Headquarters.** None.
- **Leader.** Twenty-year-old Ilena Hapayhari, a chaotic evil, human [assassin](#) and ruthless pirate from the western coast of Marquet, recently disposed of the Veil's old leadership. She now rules the Veil from the shadows, though only high-ranking members are privy to this knowledge.
- **Allies.** None.
- **Opponents.** The Veil opposes the Hands of Ord.

A secret network of spies, thieves, and assassins, the Veil is the largest crime syndicate in Ank'Harel. It is the chaotic counterpoint to the order of the Hands of Ord.

Not much is publicly known about the Veil; the identities and personal details of its members are kept secret even among the group, and those who let such secrets slip are often found murdered before they can be apprehended. The Veil has no permanent headquarters in the city, constantly changing bases to cover its trail.

Although the Veil doesn't play a role in this adventure, you can use this faction as an adversary in your own adventures set in Ank'Harel.

Travel flyer

Ank'Harel