# Etokys Lore and Story Guide

Pronounced EE-toh-kiss

<https://etokys-campaign-wiki.tiddlyhost.com/>

Password: Torus

Stat rolls:

Chris: 14/13, 9/13, 10/16, 18/9, 12/11, 11/15 (human/elven) Rogue

Ian: 13/8, 8/12, 14/15, 11/13, 15/12, 8/12 (Dohwar) Gambler

Sam: 7/16, 9/11, 11/14, 18/14, 14/11, 8/11 (Fire genasi) Paladin

Ana: 13/9, 12/10, 13/14, 14/15, 10/11, 9/9 (Goliath) Barbarian

# Miscellaneous

## Gaming Rules

This section details a variety of rules you can use to make gaming sets more varied than “roll dice, add modifier, see who’s higher”.

### Three-Dragon Ante

Three-dragon ante is a card game, most likely similar to poker—perhaps a specific version, like Texas hold ‘em? I’m really not sure, I don’t know how to play poker, but here’s how you can run it at your table.

The goal is to have the highest-scoring hand at the end of the game, or to obtain a hand with three dragons (20’s) in it.

For games with two or three players, there are three rounds, with each player having three d20’s (this is because a 20 is representative of the “dragon” card). For larger groups, increase the number of dice and rounds played by one for each player above three (4 for 4, 5 for 5, etc.). Typically, games with more than four players can get chaotic, so groups will usually split once a fifth player is introduced.

At the start of each round, you can roll any of the dice in your hand. You do not have to disclose what any of the resulting numbers are. Then, you can choose to save however many dice as you want from your hand or discard them. Discarded dice must be rerolled at the start of your next turn; saved dice do not have to be rerolled, unless you choose to.

After the end of the final round, you may add your Charisma modifier and your three-dragon ante proficiency—if you have it—to each dice’s value, then total them up. Whoever has the highest total wins. If, at any point during the game, a player has three dragons (natural 20’s), the game ends early and that player is ruled the winner.

There is an additional element of strategy to three-dragon ante that provides some of its allure. The dragon card is the most powerful card to draw from the deck—not just because of its high value. When you have a dragon, you can choose to spend it at the end of any round. You must display the dragon card (20) to the table (as proof that you have it) and then discard it. You reroll it, but then, everyone else at the table must discard their hands as well—including their saved dice. They immediately reroll all these values. A player with a dragon in their hand when one is played can sacrifice it to save themselves from rerolling. After the rerolling is finished, play continues as normal, enabling others to use any dragons they may have picked up, if they choose.

## Reasons to Spend Gold

This section details ways you can encourage players to spend currency (referred to as gold). Many characters save up their gold, feeling as though they have nothing to use it on. What this leads to is a situation where a few characters—especially wizards—end up consuming most of the party’s gold, and without any big spenders, the party just accumulates more and more wealth. This may discourage DM’s from actually giving out any gold in their game, seeking instead to offer other rewards. This section offers a variety of ideas you can use to help gold flow more freely.

You could implement rules for weapons wearing down, such as after several combats, nonmagical weapons take a -1 to attack and damage rolls until they get repaired, and the debuff can continue stacking. This can get tedious to track, though, and many players may find it irritating; this is also a pain point for many ranged weapon users, who do not enjoy tracking ammunition.

Instead, you can implement a variety of other options to encourage spending money. Perhaps a character could spend money on a luxurious feast and a night at a fancy inn, giving them a +1 to ability checks for the next day as they feel well-rested. Or, you could implement different kinds of weather, encouraging players to expand their wardrobe to counteract different effects. The easiest way to encourage players to spend their money, though, is with a variety of different shops. You can have all kinds of shops that sell nonmagical equipment, of course, but you can set up shops that sell magical items as well. Perhaps different magic shops specialize in different kinds of items, such as magic weapons or armor or wondrous items. You can also have shops that specialize in consumable items; consider giving these shops interesting shopkeepers, as players may frequent these kinds of stores. You may have a shop with materials for making and setting a variety of traps; or, you could have a shop that sells potions and poisons, allowing players to consistently access and use these. Another shop idea could be a spell scroll store, where players can either buy or commission scrolls of specific spells for use in a pinch; this can be especially useful if you are playing at a table where any player can activate a spell scroll, regardless of if the spell is on their spell list—suddenly, a party without a dedicated support character could save up for a scroll of revivify, providing a nice quality of life improvement.

## Weather Effects

This section discusses ways to implement weather into your game, and how various weather effects may affect gameplay mechanics. Depending on your environment, these effects may vary; for instance, heavy rain might be borderline impossible deep into a desert during the dry season, whereas it might be incredibly common in a rainforest. [Possibly provide several tables for different environments/seasons?]

## Adventurer’s Guilds Operations

*Operating throughout most of the world of Etokys is the Adventurer’s Guild. While jobs from the Guild may take adventurers all throughout the world, they are not directly associated with any one nation. For more information about the lore, visit the Adventurer’s Guild section under the Nations: Independent Factions. This section covers information pertaining to running an adventuring guild for DMs at their table.*

### Registering with the Guild

[Possibly small gold fee for paperwork, initial quest or test to gauge strength/prove ability]

### Guild Benefits

Free room and board while traveling.

Those who pass the initial test together are given a small home where they can room together if they choose; tenant changes must be run by the guild for paperwork and stuff.

Access to quests (consistent income).

Discount policy (some stores will offer discounts to adventurers with their cards; the guild will reimburse these discounts to the store, so the specific amount is on a per-store basis).

Some medical care (revival not guaranteed).

Travel policy—for urgent matters far away, the guild has druids who can tree teleport a party once a day to another guild hall elsewhere on Etokys. For less important matters, the guild can loan things like a cart/carriage and some mounts for quests that’d require them.

### Taking on Quests

#### Generating Quests and Tasks

Kinds of quests/tasks: fetch (1 specific item), [forage] (gather several materials, either of the same kind or multiple kinds), escort (take client somewhere), guard (similar to escort, but you protect them while they go out, do a thing, and return; guard quests may even be domestic, like bodyguarding a royal while they go shopping), dispatch (kill/remove a creature causing problems somewhere; could be a small pest, a large predator, or even bandits), hunt (hunt multiple of a specific kind of creature for population control or safety or material gathering; could also involve hunting multiple kinds instead of just one), survey (go explore and map out a location, often a dungeon, or scout an area, such as for a new settlement), uncover (solve a mystery; find the source of a problem and handle it, figure out how to fix a problem, etc). Some quests may involve multiple of these options, but they have a primary quest type.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **d8** | **Type** |
| 1 | Fetch Quest |
| 2 | Forage Quest |
| 3 | Escort Quest |
| 4 | Guard Quest |
| 5 | Dispatch Quest |
| 6 | Hunt Quest |
| 7 | Survey Quest |
| 8 | Discovery Quest |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Guild Rank | Gold (GP) reward |
| 1 | 4d6 + (party’s average character level) GP per party member |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |

### Ranking up

As you complete more quests with the Guild, or grow as an adventurer, you have the opportunity to rank up within the Guild. This allows access to more difficult quests, with higher rewards. Guild ranks roughly correspond to player levels; 1-4 is rank 1, 5-8 is 2, 9-12 is 3, and 13-16 is 4. Rank 5 is a mythical rank, reserved for only the most legendary of adventurers, and cannot be tested into.

# Important Factions

Within Etokys, there are a variety of important players on the world stage. Typically, the most powerful nations are linked together by an alliance, known as the Coalition, although there are a handful of other factions that have a notable presence—for some, their power even rivals the Coalition nations. Most of the important factions are detailed within this section, with information that is freely accessible to characters detailed here.

## The Nations of the Coalition

The Coalition is a group of four nations that have a loose alliance. They have semi-regular meetings to discuss world events and diplomatic agendas, although they do not always see eye-to-eye.

### Ikhet (Knowledge)

Capitol: Maerifa

Often frowned upon by the other nations, this nation has decreed that knowledge should be shared. Dangerous knowledge, including of magics forbidden or taboo in other nations, is available to learn here, but it is typically regulated in the hopes of instilling responsibility in those seeking it. Technology is also more advanced here, as inventors and artificers have access to any knowledge they could seek out. The standing army here is fairly small, full of well-trained and experienced warriors and adventurers. Most guards are basic undead, such as zombies and skeletons; most citizens donate their corpse after death to the nation in order to serve and protect their homeland and their families. Graves outside the capital surround the city with an army, 100,000 strong, capable of being risen at a moment by the leaders of the nation in the event of an emergency. Living creatures, with their ability to think and improvise, are relegated more to positions of leadership, since mindless undead make for fantastic foot soldiers and not much else.

Important people: The Monarch: an elderly tabaxi and retired adventurer, elected to office after he sought ways to improve his nation; fairly new to office. General Akelos: head of the military and advisor to the Monarch, a halfling blood mage of great renown and former professor of biomancy; nearly 5 feet tall and jacked, with a prehensile tail because he cool.

Tiered city layout; lowest layer is more common folk, higher tiers get fancier, highest tier is where the palace and government buildings are.

Ikhetians

So, currently I'm planning on starting y'all in the nation of Ikhet, in the capitol Maerifa. It's the most technologically- (and debatably magically-) advanced nation, meaning there's opportunity for a wide variety of characters. Also, given that it's a large city, it's completely reasonable to have traveled to it, rather than living there your whole life, so if you have a character that doesn't vibe with city life, that'd still work. A brief rundown on what Ikhet is about: in a word, knowledge. Ikhet is the main hub for knowledge and innovation in the setting, with its capitol encapsulating this design wholeheartedly. Ikhetians typically believe in the idea that knowledge is valuable, even if it may not always be "moral." Dangerous knowledge shouldn't be locked away—it should be carefully regulated to ensure it does not get out of hand, but what better way to fight someone wielding dark magics than to understand exactly what makes their magic work? As such, Ikhet may not always see eye to eye with other nations, but there is a level of begrudging respect for them that allowed them to become one of the four nations of the Coalition, a loose alliance that allows a sense of stability in most of the world. Fun fact about Ikhet: they only have a very small standing army; at least, a living one. Most citizens donate their corpses to the government to serve as guards or in the military after death, being given further purpose via necromancy. As such, living soldiers are fewer, and are usually given leadership positions, commanding undead to perform basic functions.

The main factions are basically the Adventurer's Guild and the government lol. The Adventurer's Guild is a separate entity, outside of any singular government's jurisdiction, but they maintain a major presence within every nation of the Coalition and offer their services throughout the world (with one exception, a country that currently heavily limits interaction with the outside world). The AG, due to it's cross-border presence, is always a major consideration politically, offering its services to any population willing to accept. Other than the AG, the main faction in Maerifa is, of course, the central government of Ikhet. It's a fairly hands-off government, though they do maintain a police presence and what not, to ensure their "legalize it and regulate it" approach to dangerous topics doesn't get out of hand. They also sponsor a school for biomancy within the city, which, while not an interest for most of the population, has put out many star pupils that have gone on to make a name for themselves.

Other, smaller factions: there is, of course, a Thieves’ Guild, though a business run primarily to break into, steal, and otherwise typically harm individuals isn't really legal. If you know where to find them, they have a small presence here, as they do in most major cities—just enough to do the jobs, not enough to cause a major crackdown though. There are a few factions politically, though I honestly haven't thought too much about them atm. If anyone's interested, I can try to flesh them out sooner and stop putting it off lol, but the main one, the one currently in power, is the People's Choice faction, a party with the aim of getting "ordinary" citizens into the presidency (word of warning: I might, many times, refer to the president as a king and the nation as a kingdom; there is no king, it's not a kingdom, I'm just an idiot lel). Their current representative, the active president, is a retired adventurer who wanted to try to improve his nation

There are also various schools of higher education; the school of biomancy is one, of course, but there is a general university and two different schools around artificery—one that specializes more on the magical side of being an artificer, while the other leans more into technology and magitech.

Religious groups aren't *particularly* common in Maerifa. You might find, like, a small community church or something, but no big religious presence. There is a big temple in the upper parts of the city, where most of the government buildings are, that is dedicated to the goddess of death (whose name I don't remember rn, oops), though it isn't frequented too often except by those mourning a loved one; it was founded early in the city's existence once necromancy started being used frequently by the government. Whether it was a part of a deal struck with her or an attempt to placate her so she wouldn't smite them down for interfering with her work, no one really knows anymore; the nation still exists though, so either the goddess doesn't care, was content with the temple, or she just has better things to be doing. As far as trade/merchant guilds go, there isn't actually one within the city. The merchant's guild is primarily run out of the nation of Abrûm Será, the economic powerhouse in the world. It maintains a presence in every other nation, but not in Ikhet. This has led to the cost of imported goods in Maerifa being more expensive than in other places. One of the president's current goals is to either put some market regulations in place to improve prices, or, ideally, convince the merchant's guild to officially enter a partnership with Ikhet. (Technically, the MG *does* have a presence in the city—they sponsor a singular store in one of the wealthier areas, selling their goods for way higher prices than they sell to other nations. They have no official presence within the nation though, which means the store does not have to follow any guild policies; technically, guild *sponsored* is not guild *run*.)

Following buildings are located in the lowest tier of the city:

Swill and Chill: fairly upscale and busy inn and tavern; barkeep is a half-orc named Gorbundus

Dave’s Tavern: run-of-the-mill tavern, not as busy as S&C; run by elf woman named Dave

Bits and Bobs: Artificer-run magic item shop, very upscale and fancy (glass front, pristine shelves and modern interior); everything from knick knacks and party items to rare magic items; created by a dragonborn named Lorun, currently run by his daughter Pera.

Nohj Artificery: Older magic item shop, mostly wooden décor, refurbished tavern; claustrophobic but warm antique-shop feel; run by a dwarf artificer woman named Jarana with assistance from her very elderly earth genasi husband (might be dead now)

In the middle tier:

The Well of Frogs Tavern: A smaller, middling tavern that usually only has a few patrons at any point, but seemingly never runs into monetary issues. Those in the know are aware that the tavern also functions as a brewery, run by a witch. The brewery offers a variety of potions and poisons, many of which may not be strictly legal. Merrick is a gnome who mostly works the counter and cleans tables, while his boss, [needs name], typically handles the business in the back, from cooking to potion-making. Merrick likely has no idea that his boss has a side-hustle providing additional revenue; there is a side entrance in an alley that those specifically looking for the brewery can enter in, so as to not be seen; there is an illusory wall concealing the door.

### Abrûm Será (Business/Money)

Capital: Derbana

Started by a council of 5 dragons, money is power here. Leadership is often delegated to the wealthiest non-dragon, from whom the largest tithe is required, and from whose pockets are taken the funds to improve society. Despite the inherent greed that drives many here, leadership positions are often rotated, as the richest expend their riches improving and running sociey and filling the dragons’ pockets. All citizens are taxed for the dragons, though, so all are encouraged to continue pursuing business endeavors. Many adventurers work here, seeking riches; goblinoids and kobolds are common in this profession here, while dohwar are prevalent in most other matters of business in this nation.

The five dragons maintain a mostly hands-off approach to allowing their nation to run, but when things stop running smoothly, they are willing to step in and fix problems, even if the problem is the current leader. In their free time, most of the dragons have taken up hobbies. Recently, one dragon decided to pursue art, and has spent a vast fortune to purchase an entire mountain for a canvas and inane quantities of paint to experiment and draw with. Two of the other dragons have secretly begun a relationship, even having a secret child.

Serainians

### Balam (Combat Ability/Strength)

Capital: Gaharib

Might makes right here; the right to rule is determined by those with ambition to rule, who challenge for the throne. Giants and giantkin are common here, though many treat those they view as weaker as inferior; half-breeds and false giants often deal with persecutions because they are viewed as weaker than the true giants who typically lead here. The false giant half-breeds, usually known as ogrekin, are among the most looked down on, although anyone who can prove their strength is able to take the respect they deserve.

Despite their eagerness for combat, the nation is not a particularly war-going nation. They seek to improve themselves by combat, not by war; a dead warrior cannot grow from their defeat, nor can they provide a challenge in the future for the victor. Should the need for war arise, however, many in the nation would leap at the chance to prove the strength of both themselves and their nation.

Balamites

Once upon a time, Xahr ran a gladiatorial arena here. Once he had grown in power enough, he migrated to his demiplane, but business then slowed down. Xahr eventually grew bored in his demiplane as he stopped getting visitors altogether, and started abducting adventurers to satiate his boredom, which may be leading to his downfall. See “Deal with Xahr” adventure hook in Story Ideas.

### Swayna (Enlightenment/Self-Actualization)

Capital: none; council meets in:

Swayna is a nation with very little unifying policy. Geographically, it has no capital city. In fact, there are no large cities at all, at least compared to the other nations of the Coalition. Towns and villages are dotted throughout the nation; most settlements try to live in harmony with the natural world, building as few buildings as necessary and trying to preserve as much wilderness as possible. Many Swaynans seek to improve themselves as a way of life, either through religion, spending time in nature, or meditation. As such, Swayna is home to many monasteries, druidic orders, and temples.

While there is a council of representatives that meets frequently to propose ideas for the nation, it is rare for any policy to be implemented everywhere; instead, individual settlements are allowed to choose what works best for them. This freedom means that the experience from one village to the next is likely to be very different. Should a particular settlement implement a policy that harms the rest of the nation, the council would seek to pursue measures against the errant settlement. This has rarely happened in the history of the nation, though; typically, bad policy impacts only those in the small settlement that implemented it, resulting in enough people leaving for other settlements (or to make a new one) that the mistake is either fixed or the settlement falls apart.

Home to many monks, rangers, and druids seeking wisdom and enlightenment, as well as clerics and paladins seeking to be closer to their gods.

Swaynans/Swayni

## Independent Factions

Beyond the Coalition, there are a number of independent actors. Some of these are mostly reclusive, while others still interact frequently with others.

### The Sea

Unlike the other factions, the Sea is not a unified force. Calling it a faction is almost wrong; within the Sea, there are countless independent groups who pursue their own agendas. However, there are some groups, such as the tritons and the otarii, who are willing to provide aid to any who may find themselves in their domain. Most of the Sea folk tend to focus on their own lives and the Sea around them, preferring to avoid the affairs of the land folk, although, should an attack come against the Sea for some reason, most of the Sea folk would rise up to defend their home.

The Sea itself is the largest body of water on the surface of Etokys; it encompasses nearly a full third of the world, nearly uninterrupted, save for a single large landmass in the middle and a few tiny islands that have cropped up over time.

The Sea is actually home to a wide variety of edible plant life. In Swayna, some of the coastal populations make use of the Sea to grow massive amounts of crops just off the coast, which are transported throughout Etokys. For the plants that don’t grow in sunlight, they utilize some of the caves throughout the rocky sections of coastline or create new ones; this was apparently done in collaboration with some deep-sea folk, who brought the crops to the surface dwellers as part of some deal, the details of which are now long forgotten.

Home to many water-breathing creatures and peoples.

### The Lone Island

Capital: Tennero

Home to most of the original human population. Until approximately 250 years ago, humans were very rare. Then, some of the sea folk made contact with the human settlement on the island and helped them to develop seacraft capable of successfully making the journey to the mainland.

The Lone Island is the name given to a large landmass near the center of the Sea. It is considered the homeland for most of the original human population; until approximately 250 years ago, humans were very rare. Then, some of the sea folk made contact with the human settlement on the island and helped them to develop seacraft capable of successfully making the journey to the mainland.

The Lone Island was home to a variety of villages, stretching throughout the island and up and down the mountains and caves along its interior. These villages were linked by a series of roads, allowing for easy communication between different villages. These days, there is a large coastal town that serves as a central pillar of government, helping unify the island and welcome new visitors to a land once isolated.

The largest mountain on the island is actually an active (but stable) volcano. The ash that spews from it enriches the soil, allowing for plants to grow far larger and more fruitfully than nearly anywhere else. This has lead to massive species of trees throughout the island, some of which became home to some of the villages on the island. Other villages made use of the cave systems or dug into the earth to create pockets of cooler air and escape the heat during the days. The ash, which is also an effective thermal insulator, is used in a lot of buildings for this purpose.

The occasional lava flows also provide a source of renewable rock, which is used for much construction on the island; most buildings in Tennero, the capitol, are black in coloration due to this, providing a unique—if unsettling—aesthetic. It is sometimes referred to as the Black City for this reason.

The source of the volcano is rumored to be a portal to the Plane of Fire, although no one has been able to confirm this—the energy that fuels it *is,* however, confirmed to have originated there, regardless of if there is an active portal. As such, many elementals find themselves feeling at home on the island. Genasi, particularly of the fire kind, are born more frequently on the island; they form the largest humanoid population on the island aside from the native human one. There are even some small villages on the island that have, historically, venerated fire genasi as messengers and speakers for the volcano at the center of the island, which they considered to be a god—or at least a sign of a god—that granted life to the island and its people.

### The Creeping Dark

Capital: Tejina

A land where a seemingly malevolent force has ruled for generations; the Dark’s territory has slowly been expanding over time, signified by an ominous aura that weakens positive emotions and strengthens negative ones. The Dark’s ruler has never made an appearance outside its domain, and no one from outside has ever been granted an audience with the ruler. The Dark may be home to many kinds of malicious creatures—no one knows for sure. None who snuck in returned to tell the tale.

Might be home to many Shadowfell residents, and other monsters.

Secret knowledge, only known to those who live there: There is an area within each city or town, known as a necropolis. It functions similarly to a cemetery, housing the remains of the departed. When a loved one passes away, those who remain behind construct a small house in the necropolis out of clay and mud, then decorate it in honor of the one who left. Some choose to leave behind a will, declaring their desire to instead rest in the house of a loved one who is already gone, rather than creating a new house. Once the home is prepared for its new resident, the loved ones gather for a housewarming party, celebrating the life and interests of the one being laid to rest in the necropolis. It is a common sight for people to go visit the eternal home of their departed loved ones, bringing gifts or taking care of the home in place of the one who is resting. New homes are often built into or on top of relatives who desired their own resting place, resulting in a web-like maze of buildings that can trace family histories back for generations. In larger cities, the necropolis can tower over the city proper. Those who don’t have loved ones left behind, or whose loved ones are incapable of building a home for them, are either interred in a communal house or have a custom one built by the stewards of the necropolis. Necropolis stewards, sometimes known as crypt-keepers, are individuals who work at the necropolis, providing upkeep and other services to care for the necropolis’s residents and provide peace of mind for those left behind; their work is a very important aspect of life in the Creeping Dark, garnering much respect for their position. Since life in the Creeping Dark is comparatively more difficult than elsewhere in Etokys, the belief that there will be a time of rest and peace, once their time is over, provides hope for many.

### Adventurer’s Guilds

Headquarters: City of Wani

Independent of the separate nations, but omnipresent in each nation, the Adventurer’s Guilds has a headquarters outside the land of the other nations. They maintain a policy of neutrality, existing only to ensure consistent treatment towards and availability of adventurers.

At one point, one of the leaders of Abrûm Será, in an attempt to keep more wealth and power for himself, withdrew from their contract with the Adventurer’s Guild. The Guild promptly withdrew all their resources from the nation, which pulled most of the nation’s adventurers away and left Abrûm Será rapidly falling apart as a cornerstone of their nation was suddenly crippled. The dragons stepped in once they realized the gold had stopped coming in; the leader was removed from office (and possibly eaten, though the rumors of that have yet to be verified) and the new leader immediately sought to reinstate the deal, offering an incentive to adventurers to come back once the deal was back in place. Since that time, the power that the Guild holds has gone unquestioned.

### The Witch Covens

Throughout the land—and the Sea—there are a handful of Witch covens. While not all covens agree on every matter, they all seem to have an alliance, granting them a much larger sphere of influence than if they all were independent. Outsiders are not typically allowed in, so the details of what binds them all together is unclear.

The Anaharajtil/Anaharajti?

### The Cult of the Divinity

The Divinity are a cult dedicated to pursuing godhood. They believe they can obtain power and become like a god by gazing upon divinity. Some sects use rituals to allow their chosen to peer into another realm, causing madness, mutations, and, in rare cases, the bestowal of power for those strong enough to handle it; those that feel the presence of its power grow intoxicated by it, desiring more and more to satiate their addiction, increasing the odds that they go mad or mutate as they absorb more power than they can handle.

The god that they worship and believe to be seeing is not, in fact, a deity. It is the abomination at the center of the world, whose power leaks out and corrupts those affected by the ritual.

# The LORE

## Timeline

1000 years ago: Etokys was formed by the chronal greatwyrm.

400 years ago: Balam formed

250 years ago: Xahr’s labyrinth conquered by one-shot

200 years ago: Xahr defeated, Astria impressed

## Creation

There was a great wyrm, rivaling even Bahamut and Tiamat in power, but they had a desire to wander. They traveled through the multiverse, taking in the sights, growing attached to existence. One day, they stumbled into a portal to the Far Realm and attracted the attention of a powerful entity, whose hunger knew no bounds. It sought to consume the Wyrm, taking its power for itself, and gave chase. The Wyrm, realizing the power this entity already held, feared for their life and returned through the portal, but the creature was relentless. For ages, it chased and chased. The wyrm had no escape.

After much fleeing, the wyrm came up with a plan. Should they be caught, they would be inevitably consumed. The entity, now unleashed into the multiverse proper, would then wield enough power to be nigh unstoppable. Its hunger was taking a toll on it, but the wyrm was wearying as well. If the wyrm could drag it far enough away from the multiverse, they could potentially hide away in a demiplane, stalling out the entity and preventing too much harm from coming to the multiverse. Or, most ideally, they could imprison the entity within a demiplane on its own. The wyrm began to prepare a spell as they flew through the Astral Sea, deeper and deeper~~, far beyond where anyone had explored before~~.

In the deepest known depths of the Sea, the wyrm activated its spell, creating a portal to a demiplane in front of it. However, the entity had caught up. The wyrm, in a moment of weakness, sought to use the portal to save itself, rather than try to trap the entity, and that was where it all went wrong. The wyrm, tired from the chase and gathering their magical energy for such a massive spell, felt a pierce in their side as they went through the portal. Dark, corrupting magic instantly flowed through them, like a magical poison.

The portal twisted and turned and stretched. The magic had been affected nearly instantly, causing the spell to warp. Even this far into the Sea, the surrounding area wasn’t completely devoid of life. While it was sparse, there were many small civilizations and burgeoning peoples, as well as some gates to other planes; all the material from the entire surrounding area was dragged into the portal, and even some material and creatures from through the nearest portals. The demiplane began to form, not out of raw magic, but from the materials and peoples pulled in. The portal eventually twisted all the way onto itself, forming the torus that is Etokys, the material settling inside the corrupted portal.

The wyrm, in its last moment of desperation, grabbed the entity and dragged it into the center of Etokys, before the demiplane vanished, leaving nothing but a void for countless miles around and a new gateway to a demiplane in its place. In their new demiplane, the wyrm rapidly fired off spells, sealing Etokys inside another plane and then sealing the wyrm and entity into a stasis demiplane. The wyrm, having given up on surviving, sought to buy as much time as possible for everyone else; perhaps there would one day be power enough to rival the entity. In the interim, the demiplane around the pair locked them at the center of the world, and it slowed down time and forced a kind of hibernation on the two. The wyrm was still corrupting, but slowly; countless generations could pass, and so long as the magic didn’t fail, the multiverse would be safe… for now. But one day, the magic would fail. The egg at the center of it all would hatch, and a new, corrupted wyrm would be unleashed upon all of existence, threatening everything.

1000 years have passed since then, and it is time for a new generation of heroes to be born.

## Physical makeup of the world

The world is a donuuuuut, but, like, the *inside* of a donut. That donut is inside a big pastry shell, which is the spirit plane. Access to the world can only come through the spirit plane, so the world is fairly isolated. Back to the donut world, it go spinny and hollow. On the inside of the donut ring is a world. They have, like, lakes and trees and mountains, seas and volcanoes, and even cities and people from all across the multiverse. It cool. And trippy. There are no stars, just the distant lights of civilizations and settlements from a different part of the world.

It’s a torus. That’s the shape. Duh. You’re inside a torus.

The world of Etokys is a complicated matter. While many other worlds follow similar patterns to each other, the mysterious circumstances involving Etokys’s creations led to an incomparable experience. To put it as briefly as possible, Etokys is an inverted torus, rather than a sphere. When standing on the surface, the world stretches far to your left and right, wrapping around you like a large ring. Far in the distance, this ring stretches out, turning up and away, until it eventually loops right back to where you are. At night, there are no stars in this world—only the glowing lights of whatever settlements exist on the opposite side of your portion of the world.

The light of this world is provided by a pair of glowing orbs of magic. No one knows where the Sunlight or the Moonlight came from, or why they orbit through the center of the world, but for their warmth and light, all are grateful. Seasons and the weather, too, seem to be magical effects, although their magic is far beyond what any in Etokys could comprehend.

As for the geography of Etokys, it is difficult to put into words how the different nations exist, where the borders are, and so on, but what is easy to say is that, despite the unusual shape of the world, Etokys is home to basically any geographical feature that is present in other planes. Mountains and caves, icy tundras and volcanoes, a sprawling ocean—all these and more can be found throughout the world.

*Note: I would LOVE to get a map of the world, particularly to show the rough outline of where the different factions operate and where points of interest are, but I have no idea how to get y’all a decent map lol. Maybe soon tho!*

## The Egg at the center of it all

Unknown to everyone, the hollow part of the donut has a big ol’ egg in the middle. It’s not really an egg; it’s more like a stasis chamber, where the Wyrm used its last act to seal itself in to prevent itself from ending everything. One day, the corruption will spread and its power will be too great to contain, but hopefully, there will be some mortals, strengthened by their world and resolved to save it, who will come and end the threat once and for all—a final, desperate hope by the Wyrm.

## Legend of the Chronal Dragons

Known as the Sunlight and the Moonlight, orbiting through the center of the world are two energy sources. Despite attempts to study them, no one has been able to discover what they are. The two lights are intangible; the Sunlight emits light and heat powerful enough to create daytime; individuals trying to approach it burn (20d8 typeless per turn within 30 feet, half that within 60 feet, with a DC 25 Con save for half). The Moonlight emits a cooler light that deals no damage, but it is still intangible. The two lights rotate through the world along the same path, half the world apart, as though the Moonlight is chasing the Sunlight, but it can never catch up. Parents tell their children that these are two dragons, who angered a god and were cursed to forever chase one another. The curse would break if one caught the other, but it made them dumb; neither dragon would think to deviate from their path to try something new, so every day and night, they chase each other anew.

Once upon a time, there were two great dragons. These dragons were incredibly proud creatures, wielding power over time itself. The two were always bickering with one another; the Sun thought that their powers were equal, and that they should use their powers for the good of all. The Moon, though, hated this idea. He believed that he was stronger than the Sun, and that he had a right to rule all else. Back and forth, day and night, their quarrel never ceased. One day, the goddess Shahari had enough. She schemed with the goddess Aikari and plotted for the downfall of the chronal dragons. Finally, she met the two dragons, arguing as always.

“Dragons, you have angered me for too long! You do not deserve your power; until you resolve this squabble, I shall punish you!”

With that, she cast a powerful curse on the two dragons, taking their intelligence. With no wits left to battle with, the two dragons took to the sky in flight, glowing with magical energy. The Sun, deep in his soul, felt that this fight was wrong, however. Rather than fight his brother, he turned and fled. The Moon, furious, gave chase. With their minds taken from them, though, the two became locked in a never-ending chase, the Moon chasing the Sun around and around the world. Even to this day, when their bodies have withered away, their souls still chase each other through the sky, offering their lights to all those who live here.

## The Spirit Plane

For those who seek passage to the world, and for those who die, the Spirit Plane is the destination to go. They have fairly strict immigration laws though, so if you aren’t dead, you probably will be kicked out. It wraps around the whole of the world, shielding its existence from all except the most inquiring minds. The Spirit Plane is run by one of the few deities to have been to Etokys, and she was actually born on the world. One of the first generation born after the [creation event], she grew to be a very powerful mage. Experimenting with magics, she discovered the Spirit Plane as the place where the souls of the world went after death. She was appalled at how disorganized the afterlife was, and, from the Spirit Plane, managed to reach out to an actual deity. Unfortunately, the deity didn’t care about this world, and handed her divinity and charged her with the care of the souls who passed away on the world. New task in hand, she begrudgingly began to organize the afterlife, before realizing she quite enjoyed the task. Believing she could make the afterlife a worthy reward for those who passed, she began constructing a paradise. As more souls came through, though, she found herself busier and busier handling souls and conflicts. Thus, she reached out to some fiends and pawned off troubled souls in exchange for… something. I dunno what yet. Bad souls get judged and punished accordingly, and some of the best souls are given the option to move on to other planes of existence for the afterlife. Occasionally, souls are given a chance to be reborn on Etokys, but most souls come to reside in the City of the Dead. Sprawling across much of the upper half of the plane, it’s a pretty nifty place.

The Spirit Plane is also pretty closely linked to the [Ranger Subclass].

The Spirit Plane is a plane of existence that wraps all the way around the world of Etokys, sealing it off from the rest of existence and blocking nearly all interplanar travel. It is the domain of Astria, the goddess of death, who was one of the first living beings who discovered the plane. Having been charged with the care of the departed souls of Etokys, she began to organize the afterlife, providing purpose to all those souls who had passed and wandered aimlessly before she got there. Under her guidance, systems were put in place for judging the dead and for offering a peaceful afterlife for most. She and her spirits built up a massive settlement, known as the City of the Dead, that currently occupies nearly a third of the Spirit Plane. Intending to create a paradise, Astria worked tirelessly for hundreds of years, transforming the Spirit Plane into a place where those who pass on can find peace.

## Deities in Etokys

There are very few deities in the world of Etokys. Most deities are fairly hands off and do not directly interfere with the world. Much of their influence comes from either their chosen few or from misattribution to their abilities; not every successful roll of the dice can be attributed to Mumpty, but that won’t stop people from saying it was him, after all. Most religion tends to focus on worshipping at least one of these deities, although there may be occasional, smaller religions out there worshipping beings that have not attained godhood—at least, not yet. An increasingly popular religion prays to the council of dragons who founded Abrûm Será, as though they were gods of riches and wealth.

### Astria, the Lady of the Dead

Species: High Elf

The first deity, and oldest (in position), is the goddess of the dead, ruler of the Spirit Plane, Astria. Long ago, she was simply an elven wizard of great renown. However, her knowledge of magic led her to explore far beyond the boundaries of Etokys, where she found the Spirit Plane in chaos. When she called out for aid for the dead, the only voice that responded gave her a task: “Do it yourself.” And so, for generations upon generations, Astria worked tirelessly to care for the souls of the departed, providing them with a suitable afterlife within the Spirit Plane. For countless years, she was the only deity in Etokys; over the past 250 years though, a variety of other deities have begun to appear and see worship.

Astria’s ideals are well-known to her followers; as the most veteran deity, she has had hundreds and hundreds of years beyond the others to provide guidance to her followers. Despite being a goddess of death, to her, life is sacred. What you do with your life is just as important as what you do with your afterlife. A life should not be squandered and thrown away without cause—all things have an appropriate time to end, and to cut that time short is to deprive the world—and that creature—the opportunity to grow. The life you live and your impact on the world helps determine your afterlife—to leave a lasting, negative effect on the world around you is a gross misuse of the life you have, and it will be punished—if not in your lifetime, then in the one to follow. Astria does not demand perfection from her followers; she simply asks, as has been passed down for generations: “Just… Don’t be a jerk.”

While her general life philosophy is summarized in those five words, she does have more specifics she asks of all creatures—especially her followers. The first request is to allow the dead to rest in peace. This specifically refers to the spirits of those who have passed on, whose time has come. The corpses left behind are fair game; the restless spirits who are not yet ready to pass, okay. But do not disturb those in her care; she will judge them and deal with them appropriately. The second request is to offer aid to restless spirits who are struggling to pass on. While it is rare, some souls become tethered to the material world and will interact with others around them; should anyone encounter one, they should attempt to help it, or they should seek out help to direct towards the spirit.

It is for these purposes and more that Astria began the Soul Stewards, an order of Rangers who straddle the border between life and death. The Stewards began within the last 200 years, after Astria entered into an agreement with an adventurer named Denerec. Denerec was tasked with hunting down an entity who had evaded his death and caused untold suffering for years, since Astria was too busy with her duties. After successfully fetching his soul, the two began working together, with Denerec handling many of the tasks that the Lady of the Dead was unable to do. As he grew older, the two came to the conclusion that his duties should be passed down and split—and thus, the Soul Stewards were born.

The Soul Stewards are marked by their Lady, granting them citizenship within the Spirit Plane and within the world of Etokys, putting them, to her followers, in as high esteem as her Clerics. These chosen few serve as guards for the border between life and death, preventing unwanted incursions in either direction. They are also often tasked with journeying throughout the world, using aspects of Astria’s power to carry out her ideals. Many of her followers will seek out a Steward to aid restless spirits they cannot help themselves. Stewards will also be occasionally tasked by their goddess herself with targets she has noticed have evaded death for too long—while those who expand their lives and use them for good or mundane things are generally overlooked, the unnaturally long-lived who do evil may find their plans cut short by the chosen of Astria.

### Elyssiadora, the Archayne Mistress

Species: Eldritch Spider

The oldest deity by age is the Archayne Mistress, Elyssiadora. She is the goddess of magic, and she shares the domain of life with the solar chronal dragon. Elyssiadora is typically portrayed in her eldritch spider form, eyes shining gold, using her knowledge of magic to create her web from glowing green strands of the Weave itself and to reach through all creation. Legend has it that she has been studying magic since before the dawn of the world.

### Balatos, the Unconquerable Warrior

Species: Cloud Giant

Balatos, the god of might, was the giant who founded the nation of Balam nearly 400 years ago. He believes in solving every problem with brute force. Balatos was around far before he became a god, although he is still younger than Astria and Elyssiadora; he is known to make occasional appearances, mostly in Balam, now that he has become a god—he claims that being a god gets boring and he wants to use his unmatched strength to actually do stuff, not just sit around listening to prayers. Balatos is also often worshipped by those who rely on their bodies and their strength for their livelihood; blacksmiths, sailors, guards, and many others.

### Mumpty, the Usurper of Reason

Species: Dohwar

Mumpty, a dohwar, is the god of luck, fortune, fate, and gambling, and he is the patron god of most gamblers. He is the youngest god, and also the most recent one to achieve godhood, having only been a god for around 100 years at this point. The legends of Mumpty’s life are still told as folk tales, though no one is really sure how much of them is true.

### Solar Chronal Dragon, the Bringer of Light

Species: Dragon

The solar Chronal Dragon has no known name. In fact, he has never been seen; many doubt he even exists, but enough people have worshipped him for the light he brings that he has become the god of light and the primary god of life. Since the life domain is such an expansive domain, he shares his responsibilities with Elyssiadora, although most choose to pray to the Dragon for their needs.

### Nadali, the Shaper of Minds

Species: Changeling

Nadali is the deity of emotions. They are a changeling, wearing countless faces to suit their moods and influence others. To Nadali, mortal nature is a malleable toy, one they were meant to play with and shape. They are a fairly aloof deity, rarely intervening in mortal affairs unless they think it will be fun; many mischief-makers find favor with them for that reason.

### Kaben Rin, the Fiery Preserver

Species: Serket

Kaben Rin is the god of nature. In his mortal life, he was a serket who sought to travel the world. Known for his fiery temper, he became obsessed with the wonders of the world, often fighting people if he saw them do anything to desecrate the natural world. As a god, Kaben has mellowed out some—he rarely smites anyone, though he does interact with clerics and druids more than any other god, and his temper still leads him to assign the occasional quest of “Go make problems for those hurting my world.”

### Shahari, the Omniscient Witness, knower of things

Species: Kalashtar

Shahari is the goddess of knowledge and order. To her, everything has its place: the world is the way that it is, and therefore, to try to resist what is would be inappropriate. Despite her position, she is not always the goddess prayed to for knowledge, much to her dismay. Many times, people will pray to Elyssiadora or Astria, as they are known to be very knowledgeable and less… prickly. While their prayers may not always receive an answer, many attribute this to Shahari’s jealousy over the other goddess’s popularity causing her to block their aid, which only contributes to her reputation as a rather difficult goddess to worship.

### Aikari, the Weaver of Curses

Species: Eldritch Spider

The minor goddess, Aikari, is not always considered to be a true goddess, although she is technically a deity. Another of the eldritch spiders, like her sister Elyssiadora, Aikari is the Queen of Spiders and goddess of curses, although any deity has the ability to use curses. She is primarily worshipped by occult groups, although she has no desire to partake in her duties as a goddess and instead spends most of her time locked away in her own demiplane, typically only coming out to meet with others like her.

*“Shavach no Doriir!”*

## “Dragon”/Eldritch Spiders and the Archayne

A race of incredibly powerful spiders. Many are very intelligent, even capable of tugging on the Weave and casting spells. The upper echelon of these spiders is known as the Archayne, and they are incredibly deadly, should they choose to be. Most eldritch spiders live in fairly solitary environments, residing in their own demiplane lairs where they can drag prey into. The asteroid spiders are the closest members of the spider family to them, being directly descended from the eldritch spiders, but due to an impure bloodline, they became monstrosities, rather than maintaining their ancestor’s intelligent demeanor—a fact the eldritch spiders hold against them. Eldritch spiders are typically very proud of their heritage, viewing themselves as equals to the mightiest of other races out there, like the dragons and true giants. Aside from asteroid spiders, who reject their heritage as spiders, other spiders will generally yield to an eldritch spider—especially an Archayne.

The Archayne is a loose term used to describe the most powerful eldritch spiders. An Archayne typically has power on-par with ancient dragons, although weaker eldritch spiders can still reach levels comparable to younger or weaker dragons. All Archayne are very in-tune with the Weave and are masterful spellcasters.

Elyssa Ariadne is a particularly powerful Archayne. She has been around since before the world’s creation, and eventually grew bored with her own demiplane and decided to polymorph into an “elf”, wandering the world to learn more and meet new people. She is also, unknown to most, the goddess of magic and shares the domain of life with the chronal greatwyrm, who—due to its position as dying and actively being corrupted by the entity, is the absent parent of the gods and doesn’t actively participate in godly duties. The goddess Elyssiadora, whose true identity is Ariadne, typically takes over the duties for the life domain, as she is one of the few creatures who has an idea what the Wyrm is going through, and since she already has partial dominion over it. Ariadne is fairly hands-off, like most of the other gods. Her sister, Aikari, is the queen of spiders and “leader” of the Archayne, although the Archayne do not typically listen to their leader and typically do not interact. Most Archayne come from the same brood.

## The Legend of Mumpty

Long ago, there was a dohwar named Mumpty. No one knows where his story began; his family, his past, they were shrouded in mystery. One day, he was in the land of Abrûm Será, as though he had always been there, unnoticed. A stranger, scheming to cheat the child out of easy money, looked at him and said:

“You there! Play my game, and if you win, I’ll give you money!”

These days, no one knows what Mumpty was supposed to give up if he lost. It didn’t matter; Mumpty, without even being told how the game worked, won; he trounced that schemer so completely that he ran home crying. This was how Mumpty lived. All who approached him were left in awe at his abilities. No matter the game, whatever the bet, Mumpty would win.

In time, he gained both fans and enemies—none more-so than the dohwar named Doyle. It was said that Doyle lost to Mumpty more times than any one else; he once was dragged away from their game, screaming that Mumpty was a fraud and a cheat. Doyle became obsessed with ruining Mumpty; he spent years planning his demise. His wife left him, his home was taken to pay his debts, and still Doyle would not relent.

Eventually, Doyle met a powerful entity. Pledging his soul to the creature in return for the power to make Mumpty pay, he dragged poor Mumpty into a game of life or death—with Mumpty’s friends on the line! And yet, despite all the odds being stacked against him, despite magic favoring his foe, Mumpty would not be beat. Doyle, foiled again, collapsed, his life forfeit in the very game he forced onto Mumpty.

No one really knows what happened to Mumpty in the end. Much like how he came, he vanished without a trace. And yet, after years of being gone, legend says that, if you call out to Mumpty, fortune might favor you too.

## Returning Characters

### Valkyr (200 years since)

Valkyr, in his quest to end slavery, went on to become the first non-Giant ruler of the nation of Balam. (Balam was where most of the slave trade existed, and it also was the former home to Xahr's coliseum.) Under Valkyr, the slave trade was officially outlawed in Balam, and he spent much of his time focused on shutting down illegal slave operations and trying to use his political power to pressure other nations to do the same. Valkyr's rule also set a precedent in Balam leadership; having broken a lengthy Giant-centric dynasty, Valkyr proved that there is more to being a strong leader than just size and pure muscle. His ideals, determination, skills, and (of course) his strength made him a fearless leader, and inspired others to stand up and try to take charge for themselves. In the time since Valkyr's reign, Balam has had a few Giant and Giant-related leaders, but there have been several talented individuals who weren't Giants that ended up leading Balam—including the current leader (whose identity I haven't entirely settled on, other than that he's a normal Humanoid—not a Giant).

New Balamite folk tale unlocked: "I hear Lord Valkyr once beat the god of gambling in a game of his own devising!"

Possibly. The typical Balamite leadership transfer is often brutal, so it is possible he was killed or severely wounded as a result of being removed from office. Tbh, I haven't quite decided if he's still alive or not; I knew his legacy, but that doesn't necessarily mean he's out of the picture entirely. He could very well have left power fairly whole, retired, and now spends his free time doing detective work, trying to track down any illegal slavers left in the world... who can really say?

I'm gonna give a think on Valkyr, since he could very well still be around. Perhaps he's gone back to his old order, where he became a Paladin, and volunteers some of his time there (when he isn't playing detective)

### Denerec (200 years)

Denerec, on the other hand, ended up having a lengthy, profitable relationship with the goddess of death, Celeste (name subject to change). Together, the two of them ended up founding an order of Rangers that would be trained and granted some of the goddess's power, so they could take over for Denerec when he left the job. These Rangers (whose name I still need to figure out) function as guards for the border between life and death, hunting down targets whose time has come or who have evaded the afterlife without Celeste's acceptance. (She does not need to give permission to every undead to exist, but if she rules that your time is up, her Rangers will come for you.) The Rangers also serve as a deterrent for those who would seek to abuse the dead, protecting the borders of the spirit plane and all its denizens. Likewise, should a spirit find itself determined to return to the land of the living without Her Grace's permission, it is their job to stop the spirit or to hunt it down if it escapes. These are all jobs that, once upon a time, Denerec had been tasked with. As issues became more frequent, he needed more and more help from others, which led him to propose the Ranger order to Celeste—an idea which she accepted and supported. Even after all these years, the order is still going strong, and members of the order are often recognized and respected. Very few are handpicked by the goddess for this honor—and Denerec was the first.

### Mumpty (200 years)

As for Mumpty... well, Mumpty's story is a bit more vague. No one knows quite what happened to him—he just... vanished, seemingly. Whether he was killed, got senile and wandered off into the wilderness, or something else, no one alive really knows. What is for sure, though, is that Mumpty's story lives on. From his early life all the way to his disappearance, Mumpty's story became a folk tale, passed down for generations. At one point, perhaps out of desperation, a lone gambler recalled the story of Mumpty he'd heard as a child, a story about a gambler who was fated to always win—and in a moment of desperation, in a gamble of massive stakes, odds stacked against him—he called out "Mumpty save me."

And he won.

Ever since then, Mumpty's name and folk tale have become synonymous with luck, fortune, fate, and—of course—gambling. During the era of increasing religious figures, Mumpty became the image of fortune and gambling. All hail Mumpty, god of luck and gaming, wherever he may be.

That is certainly a plausible explanation why he doesn't answer every prayer

People assume it's either "my fate is to lose" or "losing is a part of any game. Mumpty is just letting me experience every aspect of the game". Really, it could be anything

Mumpty always wins

### Bohiij (250 years)

### Lorun (250 years)

# Story Ideas

The following are some ideas for interesting hooks for an adventure, one shot, or campaign.

## THE CAMPAIGN

### The Web of Relations

This section details how the different characters are related, condensed to a bite-size format.

#### Ariadne:

underworld contact who works as informant for police, helps expose corruption; also the goddess of magic, Elyssiadora, in disguise. Zen has worked with her repeatedly, especially as a rogue investigator; Markus is familiar with her, though hasn’t worked as closely; Cheri has a blessing of Astria, one of the other deities, though that’s as close to a relationship Cheri and Ariadne have.

#### The Monarch:

AKA Styx, Rivers, and Meowi; current leader of Ikhet. Wants to root out the corruption, will recruit adventurers to investigate independently, since he’s not sure who can be trusted. Has a blessing of Astria, similar to Cheri and the Soul Stewards, though he rejected the offer to become a Steward; as the current head of government, he’s directly Markus’s superior; Zen left before he came into power, but she might still respect him or something.

#### Archimedes:

Crafty AG receptionist who is actually a clone/simulacrum of the immortal biomancer leader of the creeping dark; he’s in Ikhet, searching for answers on how to solve his “brother’s” issue—the Creeping Dark was an unintentional byproduct of a magical ritual gone foul inexplicably; unknown to them at the time, the ritual was corrupted by the goddess of curses, whose demiplane entrance is in the mountains within the CD. He’s a recurring character for the party as a whole, but he takes a particular interest in Cheri as he eventually finds out about her condition, since her blessing was also twisted into a curse by Aikari—this leads him to try to manipulate the party into visiting his brother to help end the curse on the CD. The parallels between Cheri’s curse and the curse in the CD could help lead to a breakthrough to break the CD’s curse.

#### The Minister of Finance

He’s the bad guy for act 1, responsible for much of the corruption. After being spotted by Markus’s partner doing some shady business (partner was following a lead and got split from Markus, resulting in being in the wrong place at the wrong time), he killed him and manipulated the chief into benching Markus and preventing him from looking into the murder. The minister employs the dragonborn, and eventually he puts a hit out on the Monarch. The minister would likely be wanted in Abrum Sera, where he is from, because he’s using schemes to split his wealth and avoid paying his proper taxes… a certain council of dragons might not like that.

#### The Dragonborn

Coerced Oswald’s dad into working on a heist, which he tries to loop Oswald into to help with his debt. The dragonborn may or may not escape, possibly murder Oswald’s mom, and flee to Abrum Sera, providing the party with some clues to eventually lead to the minister.

#### Markus:

Markus is a downtrodden cop out to find justice for his partner, killed on the job. He would want to take a swing at the minister, once he finds out what he did. He was mentored on the job by Zen, and he knows Cheri from the bar he frequents. He’s seen Oswald around there, but wasn’t too familiar with him before becoming a party. He’s currently still a cop, but that might change over time—potentially after being given a push by the Monarch after hiring the party to investigate the corruption independently from the police.

#### Cheri:

Received the blessing of Astria after it had been passed down from the first Charity {Charity had been blessed by Astria, but in her generosity, wanted to give her blessing to another, making her life worse in exchange for letting her chosen live. When she reached out for help with it, Aikari offered her “assistance”, but she corrupted the blessing; when Charity tried to give the blessing away, it worked, but her body shriveled up and she died very quickly.} Her blessing gives her a connection to the Monarch and to Ariadne, who can help cure her later. She’s met the group at the bar many times. She’s also seen Markus on duty at the wall while mending the undead guards, but she was anonymous at the time and Markus wouldn’t know.

#### Zen:

A former cop turned rogue investigator, she’s been trying to track the path of corruption for years. She’s got some leads that point to Abrum Sera, potentially, but it’s not quite concrete enough to warrant going there *yet*. Combined with later information though, she’d be able to put together some of the pieces and follow the clues. Zen mentored Markus before she left the force, and she knows Cheri from the bar (and has seen Oswald around).

#### Oswald:

Oswald has few ties to most characters outside his family. His wife passed away years ago, and his only real relationships are his parents. He knows Cheri from the bar, having lost at darts to her, and he decided adventuring might be a good way to either move on or move to the next life. Oswald’s dad, a deadbeat who lost a serious bet (or a few) to the dragonborn, tries to force his son into doing some shady work, which provides the party with some leads into the corruption case. Oswald’s mom may or may not get merc’ed by the dragonborn (get skill issue’d, kid!)—we’ll see. He’s seen the other party members around the bar a few times, but that’s really it.

### The Plot Points (and relevant arcs)

#### The corruption arc (level 1)

The years of corruption have begun to brew to the surface. Based on tips from Ariadne and spurred on by personal motives and the Monarch, the party begins to look into the corruption before it gets out of hand. A big lead comes in the form of Oswald’s dad, who is working for a crew to pay off his debts. To try to work it off faster, he tries to force Oswald into the heist. The heist in question involves a bit of arson of a government building to cover up an attempt to raid the treasury and take a specified amount of gold (this is to cover up that gold has already been going missing, taken by someone else).

Somehow, Oswald meets the dragonborn leading the crew, who seems to answer to someone higher. The group maybe deals with him, or maybe he escapes, but the clues lead to Abrum Sera. Following the information, they travel there and investigate into the individual’s past (or, if he survives, track him down). There, they realize he’s basically a puppet for someone in Abrum Sera, a mysterious figure high up in the city’s government. After tracking him down, they find out that he’s mysteriously absent, but they find a paper trail leading back to a bank account in Maerifa. It seems as though he’s splitting his wealth between the two nations, trying to get away with not paying his taxes to the dragons by storing his wealth elsewhere. The party journeys back home, hoping to end this corruption.

Back in Maerifa, they discover the identity of the account’s owner, the Ikhetian minister of finance. He’s been manipulating a lot of the city for awhile, pushing for cops who’d listen to him and for politicians to be elected who’d listen to him. Once upon a time, he was almost exposed by a pair of really good cops. He killed one of them in a panic, after he stumbled into the minister leaving an establishment known to cops for its shady dealings. The other, who didn’t see him, was left alive; however, worrying that the cop might discover his secret, he had him benched by the chief, effectively shutting down his investigation. This cop is Markus. The party find out that the minister, unable to manipulate the Monarch, has put a hit on him. The group rushes to let him know and potentially protect him.

After the fight, the group (the Monarch included) confronts the minister, either arresting him or killing him—we’ll let the party decide, eh? But then it’s revealed, later, that his bank accounts had been cleared out by someone else… who could it be? A lover? A partner? An opportunistic thief? The dragonborn from earlier? Regardless, the arc concludes with the Monarch vowing to find all the connections the minister had in place and rip out the corruption, and with an empty bank vault and nearly a million gold in the wind…

#### The Creeping D-arc (might swap with the next arc, we’ll see) (level 5?)

With the reveal of a connection to the Monarch via Astria, Cheri is put on the path to uncovering more about her “blessing”. A traveling soul steward appears at the church, stopping in town on his journeys, and reveals a bit about her blessing being similar to the ones that the Monarch and the Soul Stewards share, but hers seems to be somewhat twisted. Digging deeper into its history, she learns that her curse was originally a blessing, nearly identical to those she’d already encountered; however, it was once twisted into a curse by the goddess Aikari, for some reason. Thus, the most likely solution to solve it is to find out what Aikari did.

A strange clue arises in the form of Ariadne. She seems to have some insight into the whereabouts of Aikari, telling the party that she lives in the mountains of the Creeping Dark. She gives this information and requests that the party go there and bring back some unique mushrooms for her potions, but also to bring back a few hairs from Aikari herself (at this point, if she hasn’t supplied the party with the potion of respect ex machina, she does—or else gives them a different ex machina potion). She also suggests going to the guild hall, as she has heard rumblings of something unusual happening.

Back at the guild hall, Archimedes reveals he has a special quest for them. He offers them a unique, high-paying quest, in light of their recent achievements within the city and the Monarch’s glowing review of them. He sends them on an expedition to retrieve a family of voidborn from the Creeping Dark, which turns out to be a trap. There, they are dragged into the royal palace, where the leader of the CD lives.

The leader, who looks nearly identical to Archimedes but with a similar skin condition to Cheri, reveals that the Creeping Dark is actually under a curse that twisted a powerful magic once upon a time, which resulted in the despair and the ever-growing territory. As it turns out, Aikari is also behind it. The leader asks the group simply to keep him informed if they make any headway on breaking Cheri’s curse, promising a reward if it leads to the freedom of the CD.

The group leave to confront Aikari, who drags them to her demiplane (they see stars(!) shining in the sky above a glassy lakefront, with Aikari emerging from a massive cave on the side of a mountain within her plane). Aikari is not happy about her intruders, considering killing them (but potentially toying with them at first—maybe combat encounter as a test?), but she eventually decides not to after feeling her own work within Cheri and sensing her sister’s work on the group (a charm on the potion prevents her from being able to seriously harm the group, maybe? Calls it the work of a witch).

Aikari explains that Cheri’s curse is too twisted now, having been wrapped around in circles by each loop and the conflicting magics of her curse and Astria’s blessing. She says the only one who would likely be able to untangle it at this point would be her sister, the goddess of magic, and drops the bombshell that eldritch spiders, even polymorphed, are too proud of their heritage—at the very least, the characteristic four-eyes of the eldritch spiders are a constant. She reluctantly gives a few leg hairs to the party, due to Ariadne’s request.

After being kicked from the demiplane (or, if the group drinks the potion to escape, they find a few leg hairs in the cave before leaving), the party heads back home. The group meets up with Ariadne, who confesses her identity as Elyssiadora and brews Cheri a potion to free her from her curse. Ariadne then leaves on a quest to assist the creeping dark and secure a deal with the CD for unique potion ingredients (or sends the party to do that on her behalf, trying to maintain anonymity while also cleaning up her sister’s mess). The arc ends with the creeping dark becoming a fairly safe place, home to mostly those who don’t like the sunlight, but no longer under the negative effects of the curse (and potentially a smaller area now).

#### The stop-a-war arc (corruption arc 2, electric boogaloo) (level 10?)

To keep this simple for now, the money taken from arc 1 has been used to finance a venture for even more money: war. Whoever took it has been working their influence into a variety of nations, pushing for war. They’ve invested into serious factories to perpetuate war, and has kickstarted aggression against the nation of Ikhet in retaliation for the damage the party did when they outed the minister. The individual has even gone as far as kidnapping the child of two leaders of a nation—the secret child of two of the council of dragons. The dragons, fearing for their child’s safety but unable to confess they have a child or that they’ve been kidnapped, have stirred the other nations of the Coalition into a war with Ikhet.

The party’s goal in this arc is to save the child, stop the conspirator, and end the war. During this time, Elyssiadora is aiding the defensive efforts by secretly bolstering the defenses with her magic; the Creeping Dark is staying neutral, still trying to adjust to being a part of the larger world now, and the Sea is, as always, staying out of it all. The Lone Island explicitly marks itself as a neutral party.

#### The save-the-world arc (level 20 only)

This arc sees the stirring of the egg at the center of it all. Ariadne explains the origins of the world. Deep within Balam, a pair of miners, competing to see who is better, dig too deep, resulting in the creature stirring. The results leave Balam shaken; they summon the Coalition and any other nations who will come (the Creeping Dark shows up now, hoping to join the Coalition). The leaders all agree that this threat must be dealt with, and they call upon the group that has been at the center of solving so many problems: the party.

The party meets with the Coalition and a beholder, who explains the aberrations have all been brainwashed—as a beholder, he’s been able to resist so far, but he won’t be able to resist for long (he’s working with those he deems lesser than him because he wants their assistance stopping it—he’d rather fight and die of his own will than lose himself to whatever this entity is). Then, he and the Coalition detail what they know of the creature, and they gather their forces to launch an all-out assault on the egg at the center of it all.

#### Other, miscellaneous mini arcs? Or full arcs, who knows?

So far, we have arcs focused on Ikhet, the Creeping Dark, and Abrum Sera (sort of). The final arc is sort of focused on Balam, too. That leaves Swayna, the Sea, the Lone Island, the witch covens (big maybe), and possibly Balam open for arcs focused on them; we want to provide everyone with the party as a common face, if possible, and also let the group explore the world. We have an opening for a big arc, or a series of small arcs, at level 15. Could maybe do a mini arc on the island between the first and second arc? And move the war arc to level 15, opening an arc at a lower level for the players? Could also split the creeping d-arc up, with the information about Cheri’s curse earlier on, but the quest to go to the Dark becoming available later—maybe move that to 10, the war to 15, and put other, smaller arcs in the 5 to 10 range? Might need more arcs in general to fill out level ups, tbh. Depends on the pacing of the group. There should also be hints at the egg stirring, sprinkled throughout.

## The Labyrinthe

Escape Lord Xahr’s labyrinthine demiplane.

## Deal with Xahr

Xahr’s shenanigans are out of hand. End him.

## Kill the Egg at the center of it all; save the world

The Egg is stirring. The abomination is waking, and it is summoning the aberrations of the world to form its army and protect it as it wakes.