**The Minimum Guide for Busy Adults to Role Playing in the World of Harthe**

**Human-centric:** The world of Harthe is human-centric. Humans are only aware of a few other races, namely orcs and goblins. Some doubt even those. Most people in the party should play a human. If you want to play another race, you can, but you need to email me first and I’ll give you some race specific information that you’ll need. Humans believe all other races are myths.

**Soladon and Solanor:** The main religion of the world of Harthe (particularly the Tarlinium Empire) is the religion of “Soladon.” Soladon means “All that is Good.” He is opposed by “Solanor” which, of course, means “All that is Evil.” Here is a trick to remember the difference: Solanor = Nor, which is negative. Soladon = Don, which sounds like “Dawn” which is positive. Lesser spirits called Virtues or Unvirtues serve them as well.

**The Light and the Dark – No Clerics – Sort of:** According to the Soladonic religion, both Spirits have a group of Servants – how many, no one knows – that operate secretly. (Though they used to operate more openly.) Soladon and Solanor gave their Servants powers or Gifts. These like Cleric powers, except a lot more powerful. People today either believe Servants only exist in secret today or no longer exist. If you play a Cleric or Paladin your powers are weaker (regular D&D level) and you know they come from Samuel Meladon imbuing you with his power, and not from Soladon or Solanor.

**The Veranites:** A race of kings arose called the Veranites. They were the rulers of the Tarlinium empire at its peak, as well as the kings of the other countries. They had Gifts similar to the Servants of Soladon and Solanor, but were independent of either. Most Veranites choose to ally with Soladon and a golden age ensued driving Solanor’s Servants underground. Then 1000 years ago the Veranites vanished, perhaps because their blood was too diluted to continue to pass their powers on to their heirs. The Greatest of the Veranites was the last emperor: Christopher Roeland.

**The Tarlinium Empire:** You are all (probably) citizen of the so-called “Tarlinium Empire” which is a long dead empire broken into the following major kingdoms:

* Anvid – The center of the empire and home of the Tarlinium Seat (throne of the emperor) which has been empty for 1000 years since the disappearance of the Veranites.
* Seradez – Main enemy of Anvid. Small, but uber aggressive.
* Shala – Home of many barbarian tribes
* Calufix – Home of nomadic tribes. Calufixers are dark-skinned.
* Amoz and Trenton – Where all the radical feminists (Amoz) and male chauvinists (Trenton) live.
* There are other tribes and smaller countries, and I’ve had players make up new ones before.

**Samuel Meladon:** Recently a man has started to claim he is a Veranite and some claim he even has Gifts. Most think he’s just one more of a long line of deceivers. You grew curious when some of his followers were recruiting to Samuel’s cause. Many of Samuel’s own followers don’t really believe his claims, and have varied beliefs about him. Others believe in him almost religiously. He doesn’t seem to care as long as you are helping his cause. You will need to decide your own view on whether his claims or true or not. In the past, I’ve had characters all over the board on this, including one that only wanted to work with Samuel to learn his powers because he was power hungry. Feel free to be creative here.

**Angels and Huraquai:** Most believe in the existence of various orders of Angels and Demons. The most important type of Angel is called an Eternal. Demons usually go by the name “Huraquai.”

**Cheat Sheet**

Eternals – Warrior Angels

Harthe – Name of world

Huraquai – This worlds name for demons. They sometimes also call them demons, so that word is understood as well.

Samuel Meladon – Your boss. Claims he’s a Veranite.

Servants – Soladon and Solanor have secret Servants that they give powers or Gifts to.

Soladon – Evil Spirit

Soladon – Good Spirit

Tarlinium Empire – Empire you are likely a citizen of. Long dead and broken.

The Dark and The Light – Technically speaking “The Light” refers to either the Servants of Soladon or to them and their Veranite allies. “The Dark” refers to the Servants of Solanor. However, the term has diluted to where it means anyone that follows the ways of one of those spirits.

Veranites – Race of Kings that had Gifts independent of Soladon and Solanor. All of them disappeared over a 1000 years ago.

Virtues and Unvirtues – Lesser spirits of good or evil that work with Soladon and Solanor. Supposedly Virtues and Unvirtues can influence humans emotionally -- causing the person to strengthen a ‘virtue’ or it’s opposite. For example, one Virtue is named Courage and one is named Fear. Virtues normally can’t talk to humans unless the human possesses Gifts (i.e. are Servants or Veranites). Samuel claims he can speak to the Virtues.

Character Creation Guidelines:

1. Most party members should be human
2. If you are going to play another race, contact me first. Then roleplay that you are just another human. (For example, a Dwarf is just a midget human.)
3. Specify where you come from. I gave you a list of country names and basics about the country to make this easier. Or make something up and claim it’s a lesser country or tribe.
4. How did you get recruited by Samuel?
5. What do you think of his claims?
6. Are there any background events that helped form who you are today that I might be able to work into the story? Examples:
   1. One player play a woman from Trenton that was beaten by the men there but later escaped slavery. She could barely talk to others at first and didn’t initially get along with the other party members due to trust issues with other human beings.
   2. One player play a polytheistic worshiper that didn’t believe in the Soladonic religion at all and talked about how he was mentored by a wise tribe leader who taught him the ways of the druids. He later encountered that mentor.
   3. One player played a barbarian from Shala that couldn’t read, so he refused to read anything in game and had to have others read to him.
   4. Another player played a wizard that was power hungry and was only helping Samuel because he hoped to find out how Samuel obtained his powers so he could gain them too.

You don’t have to make up a complicated background unless you want to. You don’t even have to give me something to try to work in unless you want to. This is optional.

The rest of this document is optional reading. It’s two books written by NPCs in the game world that explain what I just did on the first page but in more detail and from the point of view of someone living in this world. It’s a bit long, however.

Empires of the World, by Jonathan Alabas

Chorlanic Empire

The Chorlanic Empire is a great empire to the west of the Tarlinium. It is more a myth to the average citizen of the Tarlinium then a reality. If stories of it are true, then it is much larger and technologically more advanced then the Tarlinium. It would seem that the Chorlanic has very advanced science. Stories tell of their wide roads and very large buildings. They may have invented the printing press hundreds of years before us.

Berelin Empire

The Berelin Empire is across the ocean to the east of the Tarlinium. The Berlin Empire is a much older empire, just like the Chorlanic. The Berelin Empire was once a great empire, but eventually fragmented into many nations and tribes, which has made them weak. They really aren’t an empire at all any more. Their technology is stagnant. They do not have the Soladonic religion at all, but rather have a polytheistic worship of nature, elements, multiple gods, etc. War has ripped the nations of the Berelin Empire apart for the last century.

However, in recent years an order called the Rising Sun has formed to bring order to the chaos and make the land safe for everyone again. These do-gooders will hopefully succeed at their quest.

Tarlinium Empire

Once Tarlinium really was an empire ruled by an emperor. Traditionally, only a Veranite legally ruled the Tarlinium Empire. When the Veranites disappeared 1000 years ago, the lineage of the emperor ceased to exist. The last emperor was Christopher Roeland. He was killed in battle trying to bring order to the empire, according to the most popular legends. Those not of the Soladonic faith have started to dispute these claims, however, and are attempting to defame Christopher's good name. In any case, all Tarlinium mourned Christopher's loss and the loss of a single emperor uniting the empire. However, it is doubtful that any of the current rulers would want to give up their positions of power to allow a new emperor. After the death of Christopher, and the disappearance of the Veranites, the throne has sat empty. There have been many attempts by one nation or another in the Tarlinium Empire to seize control of the throne, but so far all have failed. Since there are no Veranites left, there is no one that can legally be emperor. For the last 1000 years, the nations of the empire have drifted into independent nations that are tied only by their ancient heritage.

The Countries of The Tarlinium Empire

The Tarlinium Empire is made up of several countries. The most important country (in my humble but biased opinion) is Anvid because this was the center of power of the old Empire.

Anvid

King Wolfrud -- a good king that has kept law and order very effectively -- rules Anvid. However, King Wolfrud is getting old and is no longer as capable as he once was. Many nobles are taking advantage of the situation to advance their own agendas, in my opinion.

The Soladonic religion has traditionally been very strong in Anvid. Though in the last generation a new religion sprung up that challenged and almost surpassed the Soladonic religion. They were called the Haspactians and their beliefs were strongly opposed to the Soladonic religion. They were extremely popular due in no small part to their "priestesses" who were little more than ladies of the night. But then just as the Haspactians seemed to have become too powerful to stop, it was discovered that they were in fact in league with Seradez, the sworn enemy of Anvid. Overnight the Haspactians lost all popularity and virtually disappeared. Little is known about how this revelation came to light. The leader of the Haspactians, Tarmael, disappeared after this time and hasn't been heard from since.

Anvid is also the home of the Tarlinium Seat, which is the throne of the Tarlinium Emperor. (The term Tarlinium Seat refers to both the physical throne of the emperor as well as the office he holds.)

Anvid has a very powerful army and has little to fear from the other kingdoms of the empire, except Seradez.

Shala

Shala is a weak kingdom on the northern border of Anvid. They represent no threat to Anvid. A great deal of their land is swamp, desert or mountain. Their ruling king is known to be a cowardly man who fears invasion so much that she has become little more than a puppet of other governments. Shala is full of barbarians that do not consider themselves subjects of the king.

Seradez

Seradez is a powerful nation with a strict monarchy. The whole nation is very dark and lifeless due to being located in the worst lands in the whole continent. Seradez has a smaller population than Anvid and shouldn't represent a threat to them. But Seradez has one thing going for it that makes them truly a threat. They are aggressive beyond words.

A king named Kalyl rules Seradez. In fact, every king of Seradez for more than a millennia has taken the name of Kalyl. Anvid scholars are uncertain if they change their name when they ascend the throne or if they were all named Kalyl as some sort of tradition.

Little else is known about Seradez and there is little or no trade between Anvid and Seradez.

Calufix

Calufix is a nation of nomadic tribes. They have no central government or structure. Rather, government only exists within the family structure of the tribes. Calufix, like Anvid, has traditionally been very strong in the Soladonic religion, though belief has waned in recent generations. There are three particularly powerful tribes of Calufix: The Moasaa, the Vermee, and the Seprattos. These three tribes are in almost constant battle amongst themselves vying for control of the whole country. Because of this, Calufix represents little threat to Anvid, though they would if they ever came under the control of a centralized government. Calufixans are a dark-skinned people due to their nomadic nature and always being outside.

Amoz and Trenton

Amoz and Trenton were once a single nation, but are now spilt into two very different nations. Amoz is ruled by a matriarchy. Men have no rights here and in fact are all slaves. The women of Amoz use magic collars used at the birth of every male child to "tame" them, or in other words to force them into servitude. The women of Amoz do not believe in the Soladonic religion. Instead they worship a goddess they call Dianna. Their religion teaches that men were created by Dianna as the warriors and workhorses of the human race and that women, in their superior intelligence, where intended as the leaders and rulers. They believe that, unfortunately, the men used their brute force to take power and then completely ruined the order originally intended in the world because of their lack of intellect and leadership abilities. The women of Amoz believe that their taming collars are restoring the order to the world that was originally intended. Amoz is a very controlled environment with strict laws that are strictly enforced. Collared men serve as the police under the direction of their women leaders. Amoz is ruled by a parliamentary council, which elects a Consul for a ten-year term.

Trenton is almost the exact opposite of Amoz. Here, men reign through violence. The leader is the strongest, not the wisest. Women are second-class citizens, if not outright slaves. There is very little social order at all. Men have formed gangs that walk the streets. The gangs are the real social order here. There really are no laws here that are enforceable. The police called "enforcers" are really just another very powerful gang. Duels to the death are very common, so visitors should be wary. Trenton is used as an example by Amoz of what happens when men rule. Trenton would love to conquer Amoz, just so that they wouldn’t have to be reminded by Amoz’s existence that women are ruling a nation with more success than they are. Unfortunately for Trenton, they aren’t organized enough to raise an army of any sort.

The split between Amoz and Trenton happened about 400 years ago.

Servants and Followers of Soladon by His Holiness the Blessed Arduin, advisor to the King

Servants of Soladon and Solanor:

Soladon and Solanor have certain specific boundaries sets that they are unable to break. Or rather Soladon, who we know to be the all-powerful Creator, could break them, but chooses not to and Solanor is restrained from doing so.

When Solanor fell he was left with the Power to influence Harthe, but he is limited to using his Powers only through mortal servants whom he can communicate with. The Unvirtues can negatively influence the emotions and passions of mortals, but they cannot ever communicate with them directly.

Soladon and the Virtues have the same powers as Solanor and thus a struggle between the Light and the Dark began.

Besides being able to communicate with servants, Soladon and Solanor can grant powers to them to accomplish their purposes. These divine powers similar to the powers of Eternals, though obviously to a lesser degree. These Gifts are not like magic used by wizards.

Both Light and Dark are limited in the amount of power they can give to mortals and thus they are limited in the number of servants they can call. The oral traditions and the various sacred writings do not say how many servants each side can have.

Those that become servants of one side are called "Servants of Soladon" or "Servants of Solanor."

Followers of the Ways of Soladon:

There is only a limited number of Servants of Soladon. All others who believe in the religion of Soladon (called the Soladonic religion by some) call themselves "Followers of the ways of Soladon." These people, while not granted Powers, represent the real force behind the Light and are numberless.

Veran and The Veranites:

Thus the struggle between the Light and the Dark began on Harthe, with both spirits choosing servants to do their will. Both granted their servants the ability to utilize certain Gifts, that is, the ability to use the Power, be it of a Light or Dark nature. These Gifts gave the servants of both sides great Powers beyond normal men though these powers could only be used according to the will of Solanor and Soladon. The struggle between the two sides waged for 4000 years with neither side seeming to get the upper hand.

One day a man was born that was found to have the ability to touch both the Power of Light and Dark without assistance from Soladon or Solanor. This man was named Veran. After much solicitation on both sides, Veran chose the Light. All mortals were amazed to find that Veran’s children also had the ability to use the Power of Light and Darkness. The servants of Soladon soon found that they had a new group of allies, all able to utilize the Gifts. Veran’s children become known as the Veranites. Some Veranites did choose to serve the Dark, but most choose the Light. The Veranites marked a turning point in Harthe's history.

The Golden Era of the Veranites:

Soon Solanor and his servants were driven back. The combined Power of the servants of Soladon and the Veranites were too much for Solanor. A new era began to issue in as peace and prosperity abounded around all of Harthe. The people of Harthe called this time period The Golden Era of the Veranites. The Veranites were made kings and rules of many of the nations of Harthe, and they ruled with fairness and mercy. This golden era lasted for 1000 years.

The golden era of the Veranites came to an abrupt and mysterious end. The prevailing theory amongst scholars and theologians such as myself is that the blood of the Veranites had been spent. Diluted through inter-marriage, their descendants lost their powers. With no Veranites remaining many of the great empires began to break apart. The golden era of the Veranites ended about 1000 years ago.

The Creation of Harthe by His Holiness the Blessed Arduin, advisor to the King

The Creator formed Harthe from The Fire. It is one world amongst the Creator's many creations. The inhabitants of most of the Creator’s worlds eventually choose to serve the Light and enter into a golden era called paradise that lasts forever. The Creator’s desire is that Harthe does this as well.

The Eternals and The Huraquai:

Once Harthe was formed, the Creator left the inhabitants to choose for themselves what they wish to do. However, he did not leave them alone entirely. The Creator assigns angelic beings that serve him to watch over our world and to do his will. This is necessary to both guide us and also because there are evil influences from other worlds that would gladly invade Harthe if not checked. These evil creatures are called Huraquai.

Amongst the various orders of angels assigned to Harthe, there is an order of warriors called Eternals. The Eternals surround Harthe and protect it from invading Huraquai.

The Fallen:

Out of the many Eternal assigned to protect Harthe, 13 of the Eternals that were assigned became prideful and fell. They became evil and twisted. These Eternals lost their standing as protectors of the world to which they are assigned and become its tormentors instead. Because they are assigned to a world, because the Creator allows all his creations to choose for themselves, and as a punishment for their crimes, they continue to inhabit Harthe, but only as spirit manifestations that are mere shadows of their former selves. The rest of the Eternals are to not interfere with The Fallen.

Solanor and the Unvirtues:

The leader of the 13 Fallen is now called Solanor, which means "All that is Evil." His minions are called the Unvirtues because each took on a power to influence people in a particularly un-virtuous way.

Soladon and the Virtues:

There is some difference of opinion on this next part. Some falsely say that one of the Eternals and 12 of his followers choose to give up their status and power as Eternals after the fall of Solanor and that then they descended to Harthe as spirits to fight against Solanor and the Unvirtues. These became know as Soladon and the Virtues.

Others correctly believe that Soladon actually came first and that he is The Creator himself come to Harthe to guide the inhabitants as a spirit. In my opinion there were once 25 Virtues, but 13 departed and became the Fallen, as explained above, thus creating Solanor and the Unvirtues.

I am glad to see that the correct point of view is starting to take hold and push aside the false one that Soladon is not the Creator.