

# MALADON'S HANDBOOK

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# GETTING STARTED



Welcome to Maladon! In this page you will find all the basic information you will need to get started in our world.

## DISCORD SERVER

We use the Discord app ([link](#)) for communication, including voice and chat. If you want to play a game, you will need to install it and to set your username in it to the same username you have on Roll20. Once you have installed it, you can join our channel by following [this link](#).

## CREATING A CHARACTER

### CHARACTER CONCEPT

To create a character, first post a character concept in [this thread](#). The character concept usually includes a picture as well as a simple description of your character. Please don't post any "secret" bits; keep it restricted to what other party members meeting you might know.

A GM will look over your concept and usually approve it. Once that happens, you can ask a GM or Co-GM (they usually roam in the Discord channel) to give you a character sheet.

### CHARACTER CREATION

Maladon uses 5th Edition D&D character generation using 27 point buy. A handy tool to determine you starting stats can be found [here](#). All standard Races and Classes from the [Se PHB](#) and from [any](#) official 5e sources are permitted. Content from unofficial splat or netbooks is **not** allowed.

Human characters may use the Variant Rules where they take +1 to two different attributes, a Feat and an extra skill. This feat doesn't count toward the maximum number of feats a character can have. Human characters also have social advantages over other characters because non-humans are 'second class citizens' in the setting.

All characters must take the standard equipment from their race/class/background, but equipment swaps may be allowed. Check with your GM!

Languages are treated differently in Maladon. Check [this page](#) for more info.

A character may start Maladon with an XP 'debt' in order to buy a feat; this costs 150 XP for a first level and 300 XP for a second level character. No character may start with an XP debt larger than 600 XP and only human variant characters may have two feats at character generation. See [here](#) for a list of all the feats currently allowed.

If your character dies you get the XP from their last mission to use to build your next PC, possibly advancing them to higher levels.

As part of making your background, you will need to consider how your character feels about the Empire and why you were sent to Maladon? Are you here willingly or have you been sent here?

Do **not** turn up to a session without a character created.

### CHARACTER TOKEN

Please make sure to prepare a picture and a token for your character. If you don't know how to make a token, you can post a picture in the [#art-tokens](#) channel and ask nicely if someone can make one for you. The following is an example of a token.



More info on finding a suitable picture and making a token is available [here](#)

### CHARACTER DEATH

When a character dies, the XP they earned for their last adventure (i.e. the one they died upon) is passed to your next character. When you roll up your next character they start with an XP bonus equal to the amount of XP your dead character earned for their last adventure. This XP may be used to purchase feats or research spells or train an animal companion before the game starts. If there is a sufficient amount, it may also allow your character to start at a higher level than first.

Also you will receive 100gp for each level that you start above the first, i.e.:

Lvl 2 = 100gp

Lvl 3 = 200gp

...

### BUYING ITEMS

Any standard items that you want to buy are available from the PHB or from the handouts in-game. When you buy an item, don't forget to remove the coins spent from your character sheet and to note down the item's name and weight in your inventory.

A list of special equipment is available [here](#).

### FEATS THAT GRANT ATTRIBUTE INCREASES

You can only gain a total of +1 point in each attribute from feats. For example, if you take two feats that increase strength +2 in total, you will only be able to increase 1 point in that attribute instead. You still get all the other benefits from the feats.

# LEVELLING UP & JOINING SESSIONS



Characters may not level up whilst playing; levelling up can only happen in the downtime between adventures.

10 days minimum must elapse in Maladon to level up; this is now dictated by the campaign chronology as detailed in [the Calendar](#).

Characters going up in level for their current class merely need to let 10 Maladonian days pass and need to train (no adventures allowed for that character) in order to level up.

Training for multiple things can be concurrent but you can train for no more than two feats, levels etc at a time.

Characters may train to become proficient in skills; this takes 1 Maladonian Month. XP costs are available from your DM. Training more than 2 skills takes up a feat slot over the life of your character.

## HIT POINT INCREASES

Your HP increases by  $0.5 \times$  hit-dice maximum + 1 + Con modifier.

## CHANGING CLASS

You need to wait longer before levelling up (and cannot adventure) as follows:

To change to a different martial class (i.e. from martial to martial) requires 30 Maladonian days of training; to change from any class to a different arcane or divinely magical class requires 2 Maladonian months of training and must also be supported by events in game. If you intend to multiclass; please inform the DM before you gain the XP required.

## LEARNING A FEAT

This requires 1 Maladonian month (45 in-game days) of training and you must find someone who knows the feat to train you (see [here](#) for a list of trainers). You must also spend XP equal to  $0.5 \times$  (minimum XP for next level - minimum XP for current level). This XP is 'lost' and does not contribute to gaining levels. You cannot spend XP such that you would lose a level. You can adventure in the middle of training but days on adventure are lost and do not count towards the month of training. See [here](#) for a list of feats.

## CHANGING FROM MARTIAL TO MAGICAL

Classes that start as martial and become magical e.g. Arcane Trickster or Eldritch Knight need special handling in game. Please tell the DM before you have the required XP to level up, if you want to enter these paths.

## LEVEL 4 CHANGES

At level 4th etc where a character normally may take either a feat or an attribute increase, they may now only take an attribute increase. Feats can only be bought between levels via XP spends.

## IMPORTANT

Any time your character levels up, multiclass, changes classes or learns a feat you must mark it down in the [Imperial Calendar](#) next to where it say "Current Time in Maladon".

Your character, Orguk, has earned enough experience to level up to two. He opens up the Imperial Calendar, looks up where it says "Current Time in Maladon", and marks down "Orguk starts levelling up to 2" in the column to the right.

Since it takes 10 days, he goes down 10 rows and marks down "Orguk" finished levelling up to 2".

## JOINING A SESSION

There are two ways of joining a session.

### JOINING A PREMADE GAME

From time to time, GMs will post joinable sessions in the forum. These sessions usually have a signup period to give everyone a fair chance. If you want to join the session, you should post on this thread when the signup period opens with your tier number (more info on Tiers [here](#)).

If you are a new player, you have two of what's called a Bronze Pass, which means your tier number for your first two games is equal to 0. If you have played 2 or more games, you can find your tier number is on [this list](#).

### STARTING A GAME YOURSELF

It's perfectly acceptable and even encouraged for you to start your own expedition!

You can choose to explore anywhere you want in Maladon. Perhaps last session you found an ancient elven passage that you didn't have time to explore? Perhaps you killed a big beast but didn't have time to explore further?

You can start a thread in the forum to propose an expedition. Please state the day and time you want to play it as well as what you want to achieve. If enough players rally under your flag, an available GM can sanction your game and run it.

Last session you managed to defeat the hybrid Red Dragon / Demilich of the Nine Hells. Unfortunately, you were so hurt and weak after the battle that you didn't dare explore further. You could now propose a session (i.e: next Saturday at 17:00 UTC+1) to go back and explore more.

# HOW TO FIND AND USE A PICTURE/TOKEN



picture is worth a thousand words, and so it is in Maladon as well. Your token represents your character on the virtual tabletop.

## FINDING A PICTURE

First, you need to have an idea.

If you know how your character looks like you will have an easier time finding one. Some players though go the other way around, they find a picture and then create the character around it. So how do you find a picture? There are thousands of pictures to be found on the internet and some good places to check are: [Deviant Art](#) and Tumblr ([example](#)) as well as your favourite search engine's image search...

The next step is to check if the picture can be used as a token. Some pictures look amazing but will not make your character recognisable if only part of it is visible and then again if the whole thing is visible it might be too big and resizing it will turn it into a mash of too small colourboxes...

Here are some parameters a picture has to fulfil:

- It has to be at least 200x200 pixel: if it is smaller it will be resized by roll 20 and will look dead ugly. 400 x 400 pixel would be ideal.
- It must distinguish the character: most of the tokens you can see on the Virtual Tabletop are faces. There is a good reason for that, it is easier for us to recognise people by their faces.
- It must not already be used by another player. That should go without saying...
- Check if the background of the part of the picture you want as a token is monochrome or not. The background is something else that is drawn? Great! Move on! If the background is monochrome it will not make a very appealing token. In that case you can start searching for an image that you want to have instead of the monochrome colour. Modern graphic programs can turn the monochrome parts transparent with ease.
- Decide on how to make the token: there are people in the community here that will be willing to turn an image you have into a token. You can also use software for this purpose: an example of such a software is token-tool. You want something a bit more tailored to your wish? Hop into the [discord art channel](#) and ask! No hurting in asking.

Are you actually someone who knows how to properly do things with graphic design? Great, make your token and perhaps you will also like to do it for others! (And maybe teach us a thing or two!)

If you want to learn how I do it, feel free to ask.

# SESSION EXPECTATIONS



This page includes expectations for sessions. This will give both expectations for what you should have prepared before the game, and what to do during and after the game.

Before the game begins you are expected to have:

- Your character sheet complete (at least as much as possible)
- Any equipment purchased, and added to your character sheet unless it needs GM approval
- A token ready and to be the Maladon map.
- A working microphone, headphones, and computer.

Obviously we're all humans, and none of us are perfect. Sometimes computer problems will happen, or you will need to ask questions to finish filling in your character sheet. With that said if you sign up for a session, and show up with 1/4th of your character sheet complete you may be turned away in favor of a player who is already ready to play. It is your responsibility to be prepared for a game. If you need help with getting prepared please ask for help on our discord server before the game begins.

We are all happy to help, but once the game starts it's not fair to the rest of the players to delay the game so you can finish your character, or work out technical problems that could have been resolved in advance.

## SHOW UP ON TIME.

As usual all of us are humans, and will make mistakes from time to time. With that said if you show up late to a session do not be surprised if your spot has already been forfeited to another player. If you are going to be late please try your best to inform your group so they can be aware of the situation.

## PLAYER LIST

At the beginning of the game, or right before it starts please ready a list of who is playing. After the game double check to make sure the list is accurate. The format is the following:

Character name; Race Class Lvl # (Player Name)  
Character name; Race Class Lvl # (Player Name)  
Etcetera

Later you can use this list for the session log.

## DURING THE GAME

- **Pay attention to what is going on in the game:** if you want to play Skyrim please wait until after the game session has concluded.
- **Be available:** this somewhat falls into paying attention to the game. If you sign up for a game please be sure you are available. If the game is expected to last 5 hours do not sign up if you can only play for 3, or have some other obligation that will prevent you from dedicating 100% of your attention to the game. Having to leave for 15 minutes once during the game is usually fine, but having to leave every 5 minutes is not acceptable.

• **Take notes:** this is more of a suggestion, but taking notes can help improve the gaming experience for everyone involved. You should have access to an editable handout called 'Notes' that you can use for this if you want, you can find it in the journal section with your character sheet. If you don't have one or want another one please ask one of the GMs.

• **Be ready to act before your turn:** while other players are taking their turns try to figure out what you will do on your turn. When your turn rolls around you should already know what you want to do.

• **Be aware of what your character can do:** you should know what abilities your character has, and how to use them. When we are in the middle of the game you should not have to stop to look up your character's abilities, or ask another player. Obviously all of us are human, but in general try to be aware of what options you have.

• **Be respectful of other players:** Try your best not to talk over others, and not talk too much during other player's turns. Everyone is here to have fun.

• **Respect the GM's rulings:** often times your GM will have to make rulings on the fly for the sake of the game's pace. If your GM makes a ruling please try your best to move on. After the game is over you can bring up any issues with the GM, or on the forums.

• **Don't be "That Guy":** this is a classic Dungeons and Dragon request. Your character is in Maladon to adventure. The party is under no obligation to drag your character on missions. If you make a character who wants to brood in the corner, and not adventure the party can and will leave them behind. Your character should be able to work with groups, and want to go on adventures.

• **No Backtracking:** please do not backtrack. If your character performs an action please do not try to change that action 3 rounds later. If you say "I walk into the room." and then trigger a trap you will not be allowed to say "Well I meant to say I sneak into the room carefully looking for traps." Be careful with your actions, and word choice.

## DETERMINE WHO'S WRITING THE LOG

After the game please make sure to determine who is doing the log. The thread detailing the campaign logs can be found [here](#). Below is the generally expected format of a campaign log. The actual contents of the log are up to your desecration, but should be written from your character's perspective. The title uses Header 3 for the size.

### Present:

Character name; Race Class Lvl # (Player Name)  
Character name; Race Class Lvl # (Player Name)

[Log of what happened in the session.]

## THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF ROLEPLAYING

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- 1) **Don't talk over other players!** Let everyone speak.
- 2) **Conversely, don't be bullied by other, louder players.** Ask them to stop in a whisper but also speak up. Players who don't contribute are annoying.
- 3) **Don't argue with the GM:** if you think he has got the rules wrong, just pause; very often a lurking CoGm will correct them. If it isn't corrected, whisper the GM but don't expect a roll-back. We have to keep the game moving and mistakes are inevitable.
- 4) **If you say your character does something, don't try to take it back afterwards.** Once it is said, it is done. No retconning once you hear of the consequences, so THINK before you act.
- 5) **Don't try to stop other players from acting:** each character should be able to do as they choose as far as possible. Especially don't try to stop other players when your character has no idea they are doing something. If there are disputes about what other characters are doing, deal with them IN CHARACTER.

## YELLOW CARDS

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In order to enforce these policies, we are instituting a system of yellow cards; if you get three, you will be booted from Maladon permanently. They last one month (real world) and will be awarded to players if you break the above unwritten rules. Please observe the rules and be respectful.

## SPECTATING A GAME

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It is perfectly ok to join a game you aren't playing in so you can watch it unfold in real time. To do so please try and turn up before the game and set your display name to be "USERNAME (SPECTATOR)" or something like that (not character name) and let the GMs know you want to watch. If you turn up while the game is already in progress, approach a co-gm that isn't running the session first to be added to the camera if one is available, if not, please be patient. There are a lot of things GMs have to do and manage during a game, even when it might not seem like it from the outside.

Also remember that some events that occur in sessions won't be common knowledge to characters that weren't there, so just because Tom the player witnessed an event, does not necessarily mean his character Agorath the Slayer of Evil also knows about it.

## MISSING A SESSION

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If you are among the first 6 players to sign up for a session, you are required to attend. If you are not present at the session start, your absence will be noted and you will be required to say justify yourself [in this thread](#).

# THE TIER SYSTEM AND PASSES



ll player in Maladon have assigned a number to them. This is their Tier. A player's Tier will change depending on how times they have played in the last 8 sessions. This number is calculated for you and can be found [here](#). A tier determines your priority when signing up for a game. A lower tier is better.

You sign up for a game. You write down your Tier which is 3. 5 other players sign up for the game. The signup closes and this is the list of players ordered, first by tier and then by signup date:

## Tier 2

Clarence

Justine

## Tier 3

You

## Tier 4

Adolfo

Sam

## Tier 5

Witchhunter

The final players to play the game will be taken from this list starting from the top.

## PASSES

### BRONZE PASSES

- Bronze Passes are awarded for role-playing (including text based RP) for good attendance or for helping around the site. For every 10 times a player signs up for a game, arrives on time, and does not get a Yellow Card, they will be granted a Bronze Pass.
- Two Bronze Passes are awarded to all new players who enter Maladon. They are played automatically in the first two games a new player enters.
- Bronze Passes allow a player automatic entry at Tier 1; though the game does count against their tier count for determining their Tier for future games.
- A Bronze Pass may be played in any game on this site; including all Co-GM games.
- Bronze Passes do not allow a player any special input into party composition or to influence the mission choice beyond their normal vote.
- A Bronze Pass must be played within the legal sign up phase of a game and can be played in any game (including CoGM games).

### SILVER PASSES

- A Silver Pass is awarded for monumental Roleplaying, or being really helpful around the site with administration.
- A Silver Pass grants automatic entry into a game at Tier 1; though the game still counts for the player's sessions played for calculating their tier.
- A Silver Pass allows the player who plays it to set the mission they want to tackle.
- A Silver Pass allows the player who plays it to veto (but not choose) characters who go on the mission; i.e. if a player signs up but their character is considered unsuitable, the Silver Pass player can force them to play another character (or create a new one if one is not available). Silver Passes do not allow a player to veto a player.
- A Silver Pass must be played before signups open or more preferably before the next mission signup gets posted. This allows for GM's to prep for the mission earlier and for players to decide if they also want to sign up for the special mission and create a new PC if you provide a requirement of no Evil/Good characters and they do not meet this. These can be played in any game (including CoGM games).

### GOLD PASSES

- Gold Passes are awarded only to CoGMs or for a vital story thread based RP that is central to the main campaign.
- A Gold Pass can be played in any game (including Co-GMs games).
- A Gold Pass can be used to ask a GM to run a game when none is planned; provided the GM is available. Obviously, this requires negotiation but allows urgent missions to be forced into play.
- A Gold Pass allows the player playing it to automatically join a game at Tier 1; though the game still counts against their tier count.
- A Gold Pass allows the player playing it to handpick the mission, the players and characters on the mission. They have complete control over party composition. They may also pick the campaign date provided it would not advance the timeline more than 1 month. It can be used to force a mission in the past but cannot contradict the canon timeline.
- A Gold Pass can be played like a Silver Pass just setting what type of PCs go or what PCs can not. (I want an evil party so Cain is not allowed). If played in this way it can be played before signups start or beforehand by speaking to the GM as it does not effect sign ups so much.
- A Gold Pass also allows you to choose the people/PC's you would like to go on the mission but this must be worked out with the GM you wish to run the mission before their next game is announced. This is to avoid players signing up and being first in line to play to just have a gold pass played and be booted out because they were not selected.

# PLAYSTYLE AND PHILOSOPHY



The Maladon Campaign is based off of games like 'West Marches' by Ben Robbins (and popularized by ItmeJP on Twitch)

West Marches games are Open Game Tables; which means that there is a big player pool. Players form groups to adventure on the forum, post where they want to explore, and beg the GM to run a session. Sessions will take place as often as possible and not necessarily at set times. Note however I have a busy real life and so there will be limits. Get your group together and propose an expedition. Exploration is a valid goal in the absence of any other.

## CONCEITS OF THE GAME

Groups must start and end the session in some 'safe environment'. Initially there is only one; The City of Haven, because you have not found any others. Players can establish safe bases of operation to push further into the wilderness, but this must be done 'in game' and resources either provided or begged from your faction; typically as a 'downtime action' (see later!). Tents and caves are not valid safe zones; the safe zone must be fortified or well hidden and constantly manned. Groups are not static; I hope members will mix freely; this is the reason for the 'back to home base rule' to avoid situations where players want to play but have characters 'stuck in an adventure somewhere' and we can't get the original group back together to 'finish' the adventure. Hence any groups who do not return to base by session end will be automatically returned there by a rescue party from their faction and will lose renown in the process.

This will be an unusual Roll20 game because I am running the same exact campaign face to face and some players (in Birmingham UK) will be both on and off-line participants. I am hoping that groups will become rivals and your actions in game will affect the other party. If I post a mission and the online group completes it, the offline group may not know and might set out only to discover that the reward has already been collected.

## ZONES OF DANGER

Maladon is a persistent environment that uses the idea of 'zones of danger' that often correspond to the prevailing magical aura (see setting info). Maladon does NOT scale for your character. If you walk into an area with an aura of 9, don't be surprised to meet Dragons and other terrible creatures, who will kill you if you act against their interests.

Before you wander into a dangerous area, you will be given various warnings through the DM's descriptions (tracks, spoor, rumors) but if you ignore these warning signs, YOU WILL DIE! This is a game that will be run with NO fudging. The 'dice shall fall where they may' and clever players will survive whilst poor, reckless players will die. Players are advised to plan ahead and act cautiously until they are sure of their ground. Prepare lines good lines of retreat and be ready to run if over-matched.

Any mage or magic user can sense the power of an aura with a DC15 Arcana check and an action. Elves, Dragonborn and Tieflings also have an in-built ability to sense auras; but for them it's a straight DC12 wisdom check. The stronger the aura, the easier it is to sense.

Another way to sense the power of an aura is with a laen glass; this is a crystal flask that is nearly unbreakable and filled with a strange fluid. The fluid glows when you enter a magical aura and the colour also tells someone experienced the nature of the aura (since some auras are divine etc). The laen glasses on Maladon are almost all Sithi artifacts found during the Great War. If you have enough renown you can beg one from your faction or you can buy one for 50 gp.

Exploration is a big part of the game; as are politics and religions. More XP will be allocated for roleplaying, exploration and cleverness than for killing monsters. Monsters that are bargained, intimidated or tricked will grant the same experience as those that are killed.

## HOW THE GAME IS RUN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Maladon is not 'balanced' like normal D&D. The encounters are set at a certain CR that has nothing to do with the level of the party exploring an area. I set the CR when I first post the mission on the job board without knowing who will go on the mission nor when they will go. One of the 'behind the scenes' rules for Maladon is that I never make an encounter easier just because a bunch of 1st levellers take it on. That is the essence of West Marches. The encounter difficulty is set in stone and though I don't do much advance prep before someone decides to go on an adventure, I have a shorthand to tell me about difficulty that I don't just alter on a whim.

### AN EXAMPLE 'STAT BLOCK' FOR A MISSION FOR MALADON:

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Lord Rufus of the Black Lions hearby offers a reward of 100 gp for any willing to go to Gatesgarth and investigate rumours of Lord Gategarth's disappearance (job dated 1st Havis 984)

The tomb of an ancient Vampire is sited under Gatesgarth Tower. The Vampire's body is ash but the spirit lingers. On the festival of Sorth 983, the Lord of Gatesgarth sleep-walks and opens the hidden crypt under the influence of a siren spell cast by the Vampire spirit. Life energy is drawn from him. Each full moon the spirit summons him and draws off more life force. The Vampire starts off very weak but by the 1st of Havis 984, the spirit possesses Lord Gatesgarth and he becomes a Vampire spawn and vanishes. PCs investigating may find the tomb; any spawn will be present in the tomb in the daytime. At night they will be prowling Gatesgarth:

**Start Date:** (1st Havis 984)

**Starting Difficulty:** CR 2 (1 modified Vampire Spawn; see notes)

**Progression:** Each month after the start date (1st Havis 984) roll 1d6: on a 1-3 the CR of the Lord increases by 1; on a 4 the number of CR 1 spawn increases by 1d4, on a 4 the CR of one spawn increases by 1, on a 6 there is no change.

**Progression Cap:** Vampire Lord progression cap is CR 13; Spawn progression cap is CR 5. Maximum number of spawn is equal to 3d6. The spawn cannot grow to higher level than the Lord-1.

**Encounter Tables:** Modify encounter tables in Bonewood/Gatesgarth; add 5% chance of Vampire encounter per month this threat is left unchecked to a maximum of 20%

The whole of Maladon is set up like this. Why have I done it this way? Because I want the game to be 'impartial'! I don't want to decide as a DM that 'tonight it's time to kill some characters'. If I don't do this kind of prep before the mission is discussed, then there's a chance that knowledge of who is going on the mission will start to sway me into being lenient or harsh. This method takes the 'burden' of running the world out of my hands and the thing basically runs itself. It is a powerful GMing technique that I developed years ago and have been refining ever since. I have simplified the example above to make a point, but you hopefully get the idea.

For further discussion on this 'behind the curtain' type of mechanics see here.

# HOUSE RULES



The following Rules are changed from standard 5th edition D&D:

1) Flanking now grants a +2 bonus to both combatants without spending an action. You need to be opposite your flanking partner for the bonus to apply. The aid bonus stacks with this flanking bonus.

2) Half XP for killing or interacting with monsters.

3) Extra XP for roleplaying, exploration, completing missions and forming alliances.

4) Social interaction is handled as follows; all NPCs/monsters have a starting disposition that is a function of your (players') race/class and standing in the area or organization that the NPC or monster is a part of, and there is also a component that is determined by your Charisma. How they treat you is also based upon your past actions in the form of Fellowship and Renown. Fellowship is awarded to players and can be 'spent' to gain favours from individuals. Renown works the same way for organizations or factions. The way that actions affect NPCs/monster is complex; e.g. if you are too nice to an NPC orc, it will lower his respect for you, since orcs respect strength and posturing.

5) Most PCs do not spend all of their time adventuring because of the needs of the colony. Time passes quickly in Maladon; based on the Campaign Calendar here. Game time is tracked constantly and death from old age is a possibility before the campaign ends.

6) An important interaction is with the factions; the most obvious are the Ten Companies, though you cannot formally join as a 'Freeman' of any of the Companies until your Renown is at least 5 with that faction. Before that you are just an associate. Whilst an associate you are not barred from working for or rising in standing with other Companies; but once you join one Company as a Freeman you are tied to them and your Renown with the other Companies is frozen at its current level.

The point of joining factions is that certain benefits are only available to Freeman. Other factions do exist but must be unlocked through exploring Haven and elsewhere. In order to gain access to certain goods, services and equipment, you need to rise in standing with your faction.

Your standing is measured by your Renown for that faction. Renown rises when you complete tasks, donate money or interact with Company Sargeants and The Captain. It also rises if you find resources for your Company, such as mines, minerals, plants, dungeons and locations that can be fortified or settled safely. It drops when you fail to return to Haven at the end of each session (since the Company sends out someone to find you and bring you back to Haven, and this wastes resources).

Renown is also lost by failing missions or bringing your Company trouble or making them enemies. If you complete a mission that is in the interests of one Company but discomferts another you can both gain Renown for one faction and lose it for another.

7) The game uses the concept of virtual rolls as championed by Ben Robbins. The concept is simple and is designed to stop the following happening; the players come up with a brilliant speech to convince a monster to leave an area. The speech is wonderfully crafted and convincing. The DM asks for a diplomacy check and a 1 comes up.....and so the whole thing fails and falls flat.

This not only penalizes creative play, it also turns the game into mindless dice rolling. The virtual roll system works as follows; the player tells the DM what they will do in detail. If it's a speech, they speak in character, if setting camp, the player describes setting the fire deeply into the ground with an air tunnel at a 45 degree angle so that the chimney effect makes the fire smokeless and virtually impossible to see. The DM then assigns a number to activity the player just described, from 1-20, based on how good the description or roleplaying was.

That number becomes the virtual d20 roll the player applies to their check. Players then add ability mods, proficiency bonus etc to this and the DM compares the total to the DC to determine success. The difference is, no roll is ever made. This mechanic is primarily for social situations but can be used anywhere except in combat (though I will even allow combat exceptions for clever play). If a player actively role-plays in a social situation they will be awarded a minimum of 10 on the check. Active roleplaying is speaking in character.

8) This game will use active role-playing as it's preferred mode. As DM I will not say 'the NPC says.....' I will use a voice and actually say what is said to you in character. I expect and encourage players to do the same.

9) At the end of every session, PCs are automatically returned to the safe zone in Haven (unless they have been captured) if they have not returned by themselves. This return mechanism is in the form of a 'rescue' by the Rising Sun patrols and causes a loss of renown to every party member that affects prices, access to services and advancement within their Company.

10) At the end of every session, one player must write a brief expedition log and post it in the campaign forum. This log should note important places or locations discovered. PCs earn NO XP and receive no payment for missions until this is done.

11) At 4th, 8th and 12th levels, the only option is to train attributes. Feats cannot be gained from levelling up in Maladon; instead they are purchased by a homebrew 'XP spend' mechanism detailed below. Learning a Feat requires 1 Maladonian month of training and you must find someone who knows the feat to train you (see [here](#) for a list of trainers).

You must also expend XP equal to  $0.5 \times$  (minimum XP for next level - minimum XP for current level). This XP is 'lost' and does not contribute to gaining levels. You cannot spend XP such that you would lose a level. You can adventure in the middle of training but days on adventure are lost and do not count towards the month of training. See here for a list of new feats (note that only one's marked 'active' are currently allowed).

## RULE CLARIFICATIONS

### PERCEPTION

This is not radar and does not allow you to detect everything in your field of view just because you roll well. Here is what the PHB says about this;

- **FINDING A HIDDEN OBJECT:** when your character searches for a hidden object such as a secret door or a trap, the DM typically asks you to make a Wisdom (Perception) check. Such a check can be used to find hidden details or other information and clues that you might otherwise overlook. In most cases, you need to describe where you are looking in order for the DM to determine your chance of success.

For example, a key is hidden beneath a set of folded clothes in the top drawer of a bureau. If you tell the DM that you pace around the room, looking at the walls and furniture for clues, you have no chance of finding the key, regardless of your Wisdom (Perception) check result. You would have to specify that you were opening the drawers or searching the bureau in order to have any chance of success.

If you want to actively search for something, that is an ACTION. This includes if you are trying to find a monster you heard by passive perception but cannot see, or trying to find a monster who is hidden.

Likewise, if you are searching for a secret door or other object, your Wisdom check does not apply if a monster creeps up on you (though you still get your passive Perception). Essentially you are distracted.....

So a good advice is when the party enters a room, you cover the doors or doorways and one person covers each entry and exit with active perception checks and another just stands with them with the benefit of passive perception. Meanwhile, other characters actively search specific walls and floor areas for hidden objects/doors/etc.

As an addendum to this; if you want to search for a secret door, 30 seconds allows you to search a wall/floor section 10ft x 10ft in area.

### ENCUMBRANCE

We use the variant system for encumbrance in the PHB. All characters must note weight on their sheets now including armour. Armour must appear in the carried list even if worn; otherwise its weight does not count in the automatic total.

In addition:

- Dwarfs don't count armor to their weight limit.
- Heavy armor mastery reduces the effective weight of heavy armor by 1/2.
- Improved heavy armor mastery reduces the effective weight of heavy armor to 0.
- Medium armor mastery reduces the effective weight of medium armor to 0
- Light armor mastery reduces the effective weight of light armor to 0

### VARIANT ENCUMBRANCE

When you use this variant, ignore the Strength column of the Armor table in chapter 5 of the PHB.

If you carry weight in excess of 5 times your Strength score, you are encumbered, which means your speed drops by 10 feet.

If you carry weight in excess of 10 times your Strength score, up to your maximum carrying capacity, you are instead heavily encumbered, which means your speed drops by 20 feet and you have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws that use Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

Your maximum carrying capacity is 15 times your strength score. If you exceed your maximum carrying capacity you are Restrained.

### OIL FLASKS

You use your Str modifier to hit with them (no proficiency bonus since it is an improvised weapon). The AC is the target's normal AC. Attacking a square is AC = 5 if the square is 5-20 feet away or AC 12 if 21-40 feet away.

- **Single oil flask made as a Molotov:** If you hit a creature it takes 1d6 fire damage (no save) but does not set them on fire.. On a miss, it hits a random 5x5 foot square, and burns for 1d6 rounds (GM rolls in secret). Any creature passing through must make a DC12 Dex save to avoid damage; creatures that end their turn in the square get no saving throw and automatically take damage.

- **Waterskin filled with oil.** If you hit a creature it does 2d6 fire damage (no save) but does not set them on fire. On miss: it ignites a random 10 x 10 foot square, and burns for 1d6 rounds. Creature passing through must make a DC12 Dex save to avoid 1d6 damage; creatures that end their turn in the square get no saving throw.

### DEATH SAVES

Death Saves are done in secret. Players roll them by using the command /gr 1d20.

### FAMILIARS

All familiars with an intelligence less than 8 now have an intelligence of 8, can speak one language the caster speaks and can speak this language aloud, though not necessarily very well or understandably. If you buy a Familiar Ring from the White Horses or Unicorns and your familiar dies, you must return to their chapterhouse to have it resummoned, though it will be the same creature and will remember its past service and how it died.

Familiars die at 0 HP and do not get death saving throws.

The Telepathic link and the ability to see through your familiar's sense do not work in an aura of less than 2. In addition, you can only see what your familiar sees on the VTT when you are looking through its sense. In future, no familiar with 'have sight' as a token unless you are using an action to look through its senses.

### ANIMAL COMPANIONS

These are mundane animals that have to be trained for a particular purpose. It costs XP to train an animal to do 'tricks' representing orders you can give them that they will obey under conditions of stress. An animal can only learn a number of tricks equal to its Int rating (so Int of 2 equals 2 tricks). Tricks are things like attack, fetch, stay etc. They must be one word orders and cannot be complicated in any way. Every time a PC orders its animal companion, they must make a DC7 handle animal check as a Bonus action. An animal companion can be taught more tricks but each extra trick costs double the XP to learn and this stacks; so a creature with Int 2 that needs to learn 4 tricks, the first two cost normal XP but the third costs double and the fourth quadruple.

The normal XP cost to learn a trick is as follows:

Your Level	XP Cost to learn one trick
1	25
2	25
3	50
4	150
5	315
6	625
7	750
8	915
9	1165
10	1333
11	1750
12	1250
13	1665
14	1665

Animal companions do get death saving throws and do not automatically die at 0 HP; the same rules apply to them as to player characters.

### FLANKING

Flanking gives you +2 to attack.

### LUCKY FEAT

As lucky is too strong for regular use in between sessions (advantage on all rp rolls) the following changes are done:

The lucky feat gives one luck point between two session and one every Maladonian month. The points granted by the months do not stack.

That means the maximum of these luck points outside sessions is two (having the one from the month and one from between sessions).

These luck points cannot be carried over into a session, your luck points in a session are always maximum 3. However: If you used a luck point in an RP at the same Maladonian day as a session starts/ends, they are subtracted from the total.

Example: You get an between sessions luck point. You use it in an RP that happens. On the same Maladon day also is a session. Since you used one of your 3 luck points of that day, even though you used it in RP out of session, you will have only 2 luck points left for that day.

### COMPANIES' FEATS

The 'free feats' from the Companies do not cost XP but and do add to the standard progression. You also now have a dedicated trainer and don't need to pay any gold. Normally a trainer will charge a serious amount of money and/or demand a quest or some aid for feat training.

In addition, you must always obey the rule that you can't have more feats than level/2 rounded up. The only exception so far is the human first level feat, which does not count and is truly 'free'.

## **LINGERING INJURIES**

We are now following the rules for lingering injuries. In short, this means that when you are taken down, you need to roll a 1d20 to determine what kind of injury you suffer. This might include mutilations if you are really unlucky, but also minors scars.

## **FALLING DAMAGE**

If you fall 10 feet the normal rules for falling damage apply: you take 1d6 of bludgeoning damage for 10 feet. Should you fall more than 10 feet, you will take 6 bludgeoning damage for each 10 feet you are falling, i.e. the maximum of the roll will be taken. This resembles more realism since a fall from 30 feet would kill most people whereas with the standard rules you might end up only loosing 3hp.

E.g. a character gets pushed off a 33 feet cliff, the character takes  $d6+2*6$  damage.

Note: this also applies to enemies that "drop" on you e.g. the Piercer (they still take half damage in accord with the MM)

# PLAYER VS PLAYER RULES

**T**he PvP lock is now removed from Maladon. This does not mean that there are no consequences for PvP; if there are witnesses and you do something illegal, you will face the full weight of Imperial Law. This could mean fines, imprisonment (and so the character might be out of the campaign for years) or even face execution.

Meanwhile, evil and cowardly characters had better wake up; cowards who endanger their companions, and evil doers who murder, steal from their companions or deliberately cause events that lead to loss of life can be summarily executed whilst on 'Expeditions under Imperial Writ' and all adventures on Maladon come under this heading, though happenings on Haven Isle do not.

# ACTIVE FEATS IN MALADON

**F**eat represents a talent or an area of expertise that gives a character special capabilities. It embodies training, experience, and abilities beyond what a class provides. You start the game with 0 feats (1 if variant human), although you may choose to start with an XP Debt to buy a feat at character generation (at a cost of 150xp for level 1 chars and 300xp for level 2 chars). Later on you can attempt to learn one feat by finding a suitable trainer and spending 1 Maladonian month (45 days) and XP equal to half of the difference between the minimum xp for your next level and the minimum xp for your current level. Any time you spend adventuring doesn't count toward your training. The maximum amount of feats you can have at any time is your total character level divided by two rounded up (+1 if variant human). You can't earn more than 1 point in any stat from feats. You can take each feat only once, unless the feat's description says otherwise. You must meet any prerequisite specified in a feat to take that feat. If you ever lose a feat's prerequisite, you can't use that feat until you regain the prerequisite. For example, the Grappler feat requires you to have a Strength of 13 or higher. If your Strength is reduced below 13 somehow - perhaps by a withering curse - you can't benefit from the Grappler feat until your Strength is restored.

## EXAMPLE

Say you just created Oklan, a level 1 human variant barbarian. You choose the Athlete feat as your free feat for your race - giving you +1 Dex - and then you choose to have a 150xp debt at the start to choose another feat.

At level 3, your feat limit is  $3/2 + 1 = 3$  (the division is rounded up).

Oklan could now decide to find a trainer for a specific feat and have him teach him for a month to learn it. He would have to spend 900 xp ( $0.5 * (2700 - 900)$ ) for this. He chooses the feat Burglar. Because the feat Athlete already gave him +1 Dex, this new feat will not grant him that stat increase.

## STANDARD FEATS

The following are untouched feats from the Player's Handbook.

### ALERT

You are always on the lookout for danger. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain a +5 bonus to initiative.
- You can't be surprised while conscious.
- Other creatures don't gain advantage on attack rolls against you as a result of being hidden from you.

### ATHLETE

You have undergone extensive physical training to gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you are prone, standing up uses only 5 feet of your movement.
- Climbing doesn't halve your speed.
- You can make a running long jump or a running high jump after moving only 5 feet on foot, rather than 10 feet.

### ACTOR

Skilled at mimicry and dramatics, you gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Performance) checks when trying to pass yourself off as a different person.
- You can mimic the speech of another person or the sounds made by other creatures. You must have heard the person speaking, or heard the creature make the sound, for at least 1 minute. A successful Wisdom (Insight) check contested by your Charisma (Deception) check allows a listener to determine that the effect is faked.

### CHARGER

When you use your action to Dash, you can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack or to shove a creature. If you move at least 10 feet in a straight line immediately before taking this bonus action, you either gain a +5 bonus to the attack's damage roll (if you chose to make a melee attack and hit) or push the target up to 10 feet away from you (if you chose to shove and you succeed).

### CROSSBOW EXPERT

Thanks to extensive practice with the crossbow, you gain the following benefits:

- You ignore the loading quality of crossbows with which you are proficient.
- Beings within 5 feet of a hostile creature don't impose disadvantage on your ranged attack rolls.
- When you use the Attack action and attack with a onehanded weapon, you can use a bonus action to attack with a loaded hand crossbow you are holding.

### DEFENSIVE DUELIST

*Prerequisite:* Dex 13 or higher

When you are wielding a finesse weapon with which you are proficient and another creature hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to add your proficiency bonus to your AC for that attack, potentially causing the attack to miss you.

## DUAL WIELDER

You master fighting with two weapons, gaining the following benefits:

- You gain a +1 bonus to AC while you are wielding a separate melee weapon in each hand.
- You can use two-weapon fighting even when the one handed melee weapons you are wielding aren't light.
- You can draw or stow two one-handed weapons when you would normally be able to draw or stow only one

## DUNGEON DELVER

Alert to the hidden traps and secret doors found in many dungeons, you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and Intelligence (Investigation) checks made to detect the presence of secret doors,
- You have advantage on saving throws made to avoid or resist traps.
- You have resistance to the damage dealt by traps.
- You can search for traps while traveling at a normal pace, instead of only at a slow pace

## DURABLE

Hardy and resilient, you gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you roll a Hit Die to regain hit points, the minimum number of hit points you regain from the roll equals twice your Constitution modifier (minimum of 2).

## ELEMENTAL ADEPT

*Prerequisite:* The ability to cast at least one spell

When you gain this feat, choose one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. Spells you cast ignore resistance to damage of the chosen type. In addition, when you roll damage for a spell you cast that deals damage of that type, you can treat any 1 on a damage die as a 2. You can select this feat multiple times. Each time you do so, you must choose a different damage type.

## GRAPPLER

*Prerequisite:* Strength 13 or higher

You've developed the skills necessary to hold your own in close-quarters grappling. You gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on attack rolls against a creature you are grappling.
- You can use your action to try to pin a creature grappled by you. To do so, make another grapple check. If you succeed, you and the creature are both restrained until the grapple ends.

## GREAT WEAPON MASTER

You've learned to put the weight of a weapon to your advantage, letting its momentum empower your strikes. You gain the following benefits:

- On your turn, when you score a critical hit with a melee weapon or reduce a creature to 0 hit points with one, you can make one melee weapon attack as a bonus action.

- Before you make a melee attack with a heavy weapon that you are proficient with, you can choose to take a -5 penalty to the attack roll. If the attack hits, you add +10 to the attack's damage.

## HEALER (MODIFIED PHB)

You are an able physician, allowing you to mend wounds quickly and get your allies back in the fight. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain proficiency with the medicine skill. If you are already proficient with it, you add double your proficiency bonus to medicine checks you make with the healing kit.
- As an action, you can spend one use of a healer's kit to tend to a creature and restore  $1d6 +$  your Medicine score hit points to it, plus additional hit points equal to the creature's maximum number of Hit Dice. The creature can't regain hit points from this feat again until it finishes a short or long rest.

## HEAVILY ARMORED

*Prerequisite:* Proficiency with medium armor

You have trained to master the use of heavy armor, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with heavy armor.

## HEAVY ARMOR MASTER

*Prerequisite:* Proficiency with heavy armor

You can use your armor to deflect strikes that would kill others. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- While you are wearing heavy armor, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage that you take from nonmagical weapons is reduced by 3.
- Reduces the effective weight of heavy armor by 1/2 (Does not count toward encumbrance)

## INSPIRING LEADER

*Prerequisite:* Charisma 13 or higher

You can spend 10 minutes inspiring your companions, shoring up their resolve to fight. When you do so, choose up to six friendly creatures (which can include yourself) within 30 feet of you who can see or hear you and who can understand you. Each creature can gain temporary hit points equal to your level + your Charisma modifier. A creature can't gain temporary hit points from this feat again until it has finished a short or long rest.

## **KEEN MIND**

You have a mind that can track time, direction, and detail with uncanny precision. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You always know which way is north.
- You always know the number of hours left before the next sunrise or sunset.
- You can accurately recall anything you have seen or heard within the past month.

## **LIGHTLY ARMORED**

You have trained to master the use of light armor, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with light armor.

## **LINGUIST**

You have studied languages and codes, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You learn three languages of your choice.
- You can ably create written ciphers. Others can't decipher a code you create unless you teach them, they succeed on an Intelligence check (DC equal to your Intelligence score + your proficiency bonus), or they use magic to decipher it.

## **LUCKY (MODIFIED PHB)**

You have inexplicable luck that seems to kick in at just the right moment.

You have 3 luck points. Whenever you make an attack roll, an ability check or a saving throw, you can spend one luck point to roll an additional d20. You can choose to spend one of your luck points after you roll the die, but before the outcome is determined. You choose which of the d20s is used for the attack roll, ability check, or saving throw. You can also spend one luck point when an attack roll is made against you. Roll a d20, and then choose whether the attack uses the attacker's roll or yours. If more than one creature spends a luck point to influence the outcome of a roll, the points cancel each.

The lucky feat gives one luck point between two session and one every Maladonian month. The points granted by the months do not stack.

That means the maximum of these luck points outside sessions is two (having the one from the month and one from between sessions).

These luck points cannot be carried over into a session, your luck points in a session are always maximum 3. However: If you used a luck point in an RP at the same Maladonian day as a session starts/ends, they are subtracted from the total.

Example: You get an between sessions luck point. You use it in an RP that happens. On the same Maladon day also is a session. Since you used one of your 3 luck points of that day, even though you used it in RP out of session, you will have only 2 luck points left for that day.

## **MAGE SLAYER**

You have practiced techniques useful in melee combat against spellcasters, gaining the following benefits:

- When a creature within 5 feet of you casts a spell, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature.
- When you damage a creature that is concentrating on a spell, that creature has disadvantage on the saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration.
- You have advantage on saving throws against spells cast by creatures within 5 feet of you.

## **MAGIC INITIATE**

Choose a class: bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard. You learn two cantrips of your choice from that class' spell list. In addition, choose one 1st-level spell from that same list. You learn that spell and can cast it at its lowest level. Once you cast it, you must finish a long rest before you can cast it again. Your spellcasting ability for these spells depends on the class you chose: Charisma for bard, sorcerer, or warlock; Wisdom for cleric or druid; or Intelligence for wizard.

## **MARTIAL ADEPT**

You have martial training that allows you to perform special combat maneuvers. You gain the following benefits:

- You learn two maneuvers of your choice from among those available to the Battle Master archetype in the fighter class. If a maneuver you use requires your target to make a saving throw to resist the maneuver's effects, the saving throw DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier(your choice).
- If you already have superiority dice, you gain one more. The superiority die is added to any others you have no matter when you gain them: otherwise, you have one superiority die, which is a d6. This die is used to fuel your maneuvers. A superiority die is expended when you use it. You regain your expended superiority dice when you finish a short or long rest.

## **MEDIUM ARMOR MASTER**

*Prerequisite:* Proficiency with medium armor

You have practiced moving in medium armor to gain the following benefits:

- Wearing medium armor doesn't impose disadvantage on your Dexterity (Stealth) checks.
- When you wear medium armor, you can add 3, rather than 2, to your AC if you have a Dexterity of 16 or higher.
- Reduces the effective weight of medium armor to 0 (does not count toward encumbrance)

## **MOBILE**

You are exceptionally speedy and agile. You gain the following benefits:

- Your speed increases by 10 feet
- When you use the Dash action, difficult terrain doesn't cost you extra movement on that turn.

- When you make a melee attack against a creature, you don't provoke opportunity attacks from that creature for the rest of the turn, whether you hit or not.

## MODERATELY ARMORED

*Prerequisite:* Proficiency with light armor

- You have trained to master the use of medium armor and shields, gaining the following benefits:
- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with medium armor and shields.

## MOUNTED COMBATANT

You are a dangerous foe to face while mounted. While you are mounted and aren't incapacitated, you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on melee attack rolls against any unmounted creature that is smaller than your mount.
- You can force an attack targeted at your mount to target you instead.
- If your mount is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

## OBSERVANT

Quick to notice details of your environment, you gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Intelligence or Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- If you can see a creature's mouth while it is speaking a language you understand, you can interpret what it's saying by reading its lips.
- You have a +5 bonus to your passive Wisdom (Perception) and passive Intelligence (Investigation) scores.

## POLEARM MASTER

You can keep your enemies at bay with reach weapons. You gain the following benefits:

- When you take the Attack action and attack with only a glaive, halberd, or quarterstaff, you can use a bonus action to make a melee attack with the opposite end of the weapon. The weapon's damage die for this attack is a d4, and the attack deals bludgeoning damage.
- While you are wielding a glaive, halberd, pike, or quarterstaff, other creatures provoke an opportunity attack from you when they enter your reach.

## RESILIENT

Choose one ability score. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase the chosen ability score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency in saving throws using the chosen ability.

## RITUAL CASTER

*Prerequisite:* Intelligence or Wisdom 13 or higher

You have learned a number of spells that you can cast as rituals. These spells are written in a ritual book, which you must have in hand while casting one of them. When you choose this feat, you acquire a ritual book holding two 1st-level spells of your choice. Choose one of the following classes: bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard.

You must choose your spells from that class's spell list, and the spells you choose must have the ritual tag. The class you choose also determines your spellcasting ability for these spells: Charisma for bard, sorcerer, or warlock; Wisdom for cleric or druid; or Intelligence for wizard. If you come across a spell in written form, such as a magical spell scroll or a wizard's spellbook, you might be able to add it to your ritual book.

The spell must be on the spell list for the class you chose, the spell's level can be no higher than half your level (rounded up), and it must have the ritual tag. The process of copying the spell into your ritual book takes 2 hours per level of the spell, and costs 50 gp per level. The cost represents material components you expend as you experiment with the spell to master it, as well as the fine inks you need to record it.

## SAVAGE ATTACKER

Once per turn when you roll damage for a melee weapon attack, you can reroll the weapon's damage dice and use either total.

## SENTINEL

You have mastered techniques to take advantage of every drop in any enemy's guard, gaining the following benefits:

- When you hit a creature with an opportunity attack, the creature's speed becomes 0 for the rest of the turn.
- Creatures provoke opportunity attacks from you even if they take the Disengage action before leaving your reach.
- When a creature within 5 feet of you makes an attack against a target other than you (and that target doesn't have this feat), you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against the attacking creature.

## SHARPSHOOTER

You have mastered ranged weapons and can make shots that others find impossible. You gain the following benefits:

- Attacking at long range doesn't impose disadvantage on your ranged weapon attack rolls.
- Your ranged weapon attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.
- Before you make an attack with a ranged weapon that you are proficient with, you can choose to take a -5 penalty to the attack roll. If the attack hits, you add +10 to the attack's damage.

## **SHIELD MASTER**

You use shields not just for protection but also for offense. You gain the following benefits while you are wielding a shield:

- If you take the Attack action on your turn, you can use a bonus action to try to shove a creature within 5 feet of you with your shield.
- If you aren't incapacitated, you can add your shield's AC bonus to any Dexterity saving throw you make against a spell or other harmful effect that targets only you.
- If you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you can use your reaction to take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw, interposing your shield between yourself and the source of the effect.

## **SKILLED**

You gain proficiency in any combination of three skills or tools of your choice.

## **SKULKER**

*Prerequisite:* Dexterity 13 or higher

You are expert at slinking through shadows. You gain the following benefits:

- You can try to hide when you are lightly obscured from the creature from which you are hiding.
- When you are hidden from a creature and miss it with a ranged weapon attack, making the attack doesn't reveal your position.
- Dim light doesn't impose disadvantage on your Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight.

## **SPELL SNIPER**

*Prerequisite:* The ability to cast at least one spell

You have learned techniques to enhance your attacks with certain kinds of spells, gaining the following benefits:

- When you cast a spell that requires you to make an attack roll, the spell's range is doubled.
- Your ranged spell attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.
- You learn one cantrip that requires an attack roll. Choose the cantrip from the bard, cleric, druid, sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell list. Your spellcasting ability for this cantrip depends on the spell list you chose from: Charisma for bard, sorcerer, or warlock; Wisdom for cleric or druid; or Intelligence for wizard.

## **TAVERN BRAWLER**

Accustomed to rough-and-tumble fighting using whatever weapons happen to be at hand, you gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You are proficient with improvised weapons and unarmed strikes.
- Your unarmed strike uses a d4 for damage.
- When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike or an improvised weapon on your turn, you can use a bonus action to attempt to grapple the target.

## **TOUGH**

Your hit point maximum increases by an amount equal to twice your level when you gain this feat. Whenever you gain a level thereafter, your hit point maximum increases by an additional 2 hit points.

## **WAR CASTER**

*Prerequisite:* The ability to cast at least one spell

You have practiced casting spells in the midst of combat, learning techniques that grant you the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Constitution saving throws that you make to maintain your concentration on a spell when you take damage.
- You can perform the somatic components of spells even when you have weapons or a shield in one or both hands.
- When a hostile creature's movement provokes an opportunity attack from you, you can use your reaction to cast a spell at the creature, rather than making an opportunity attack. The spell must have a casting time of 1 action and must target only that creature.

## **WEAPON MASTER**

You have practiced extensively with a variety of weapons, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with four weapons of your choice.

## UNEARTHED ARCANA FEATS

Here you can find a series of additional feats originating from the Unearthed Arcana.

### FELL HANDED

You master the handaxe, battleaxe, greataxe, warhammer, and maul. You gain the following benefits when using any of them:

- You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls you make with the weapon
- Whenever you have advantage on a melee attack roll you make with the weapon and hit, you can knock the target prone if the lower of the two d20 rolls would also hit the target.
- Whenever you have disadvantage on a melee attack roll you make with the weapon, the target takes bludgeoning damage equal to your Strength modifier (minimum of 0) if the attack misses but the higher of the two d20 rolls would have hit.
- If you use the Help action to aid an ally's melee attack while you're wielding the weapon, you knock the target's shield aside momentarily. In addition to the ally gaining advantage on the attack roll, the ally gains a +2 bonus to the roll if the target is using a shield.

### FLAIL MASTERY

The flail is a tricky weapon to use, but you have spent countless hours mastering it. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls you make with a flail.
- As a bonus action on your turn, you can prepare yourself to extend your flail to sweep over targets' shields. Until the end of this turn, your attack rolls with a flail gain a +2 bonus against any target using a shield.
- When you hit with an opportunity attack using a flail, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier) or be knocked prone.

### GOURMAND

You have mastered a variety of special recipes, allowing you to prepare exotic dishes with useful effects. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with cook's utensils. If you are already proficient with them, you add double your proficiency bonus to checks you make with them.
- As an action, you can inspect a drink or plate of food within 5 feet of you and determine whether it is poisoned provided that you can see and smell it.
- During a long rest, you can prepare and serve a meal that helps you and your allies recover from the rigors of adventuring, provided you have suitable food, cook's utensils and other supplies on hand. The meal serves up to six people, and each person who eats it regains two additional Hit Dice at the end of the long rest. In addition, those who partake of the meal have advantage on Constitution saving throws against disease for the next 24 hours.

### MASTER OF DISGUISE

You have honed your ability to shape your personality and to read the personalities of others. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- You gain proficiency with the disguise kit. If you are already proficient with it, you add double your proficiency bonus to checks you make with it.
- If you spend 1 hour observing a creature, you can then spend 8 hours crafting a disguise you can quickly don to mimic that creature. Making the disguise requires a disguise kit. You must make checks as normal to disguise yourself, but you can assume the disguise as an action.

### SPEAR MASTERY

Though the spear is a simple weapon to learn, it rewards you for the time you have taken to master it. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls you make with a spear.
- When you use a spear, its damage die changes from a d6 to a d8, and from a d8 to a d10 when wielded with two hands. (This benefit has no effect if another feature has already improved the weapon's die)
- You can set your spear to receive a charge. As a bonus action, choose a creature you can see that is at least 20 feet away from you. If that creature moves within your spear's reach on its next turn, you can make a melee attack against it with your spear as a reaction. If the attack hits, the target takes an extra 1d8 piercing damage, or an extra 1d10 piercing damage if you wield the spear with two hands. You can't use this ability if the creature used the Disengage action before moving. As a bonus action on your turn, you can increase your reach with a spear by 5 feet for the rest of your turn.

# MALADONIAN FEATS

Here you will find a list of feats custom-made for the world of Maladon.

## ESCHEW COMPONENTS

*Prerequisite:* Cleric, Druid, Warlock, Wizard or Bard of 3rd level or higher.

A spell cast using this feat no longer requires the caster to have his spell component pouch, divine, magical or arcane focus in hand. Thus spells with the M component can be cast without the material component, unless it has a listed value. In the case of material components with listed gp values, the spell component is still required. This feat also allows druids or polymorphed wizards to cast spells in animal/monster form if combined with Eschew components and Still Spell but the slot increases stack: thus a spell cast using eschew components, silent and still spell would be cast 3 levels higher to achieve the same effect as casting the spell at its default level.

A spell cast using the benefit of this feat uses up a slot one higher than normal: thus a cantrip uses up a first level spell slot etc.

## EYES IN THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD

*Prerequisite:* Wis 13

When flanked in melee combat, foes do not gain +2 to hit you nor advantage if they have the Vexing Flanker feat.

## EXPERTISE

*Prerequisite:* +5 in a trained skill you desire expertise in.

Choose 1 skill that you are trained in: you are now very proficient in your chosen skill. You gain a +2 bonus to all uses of the chosen skill outside of combat.

## EXPERTISE, IMPROVED

*Prerequisite:* Expertise in the chosen skill

Choose 1 skill that you have expertise in, including any granted by the Rogue class feature of the same name: you are now very gifted in your chosen skill. You gain an additional +2 bonus to all uses of the chosen skill that stacks with normal expertise or with the bonus granted by the Rogue class feature. This feature can only be used on skills outside of combat.

## EXTENDED CASTING

*Prerequisite:* Cleric, Druid, Warlock, Wizard, Sorceror, or Bard of 3rd level or higher.

You can now cast spells in low level auras by extending the casting time of your spell. If the prevailing magical aura is lower than the level of the spell you want to cast, you can increase the casting time of your spell, to leech energy from the aura more slowly and allow the spell to be enacted. The amount of time required is worked out as follows:

Level of spell, minus the level of the aura, equals the extra casting time in consecutive actions that are required to enact the spell. This is added on to the spell's normal casting time. For example, caster in an aura of 0 wants to cast a second level spell that normally requires an action to cast. He now must spend 3 consecutive actions in order to cast the spell (2-0 + the spell's normal casting time of 1 action).

A caster enacting a spell by extended casting must make a DC10 concentration check if he is forced to move, speak or is attacked whilst casting. He also takes a normal concentration check if he is damaged. For the entire duration of the extended casting, the caster has disadvantage on all ability checks, saves and perception checks and so is at -5 to his passive perception.

This feat is limited in that spells requiring casting times longer than 3 actions cannot be cast using; as the power drain whilst the spell is in operation is too high to allow successful casting.

## EXTEND SPELL

*Prerequisite:* Cleric, Druid, Warlock, Wizard or Bard of 3rd level or higher.

When you cast a spell using the extend spell feat, the duration of the spell is doubled. This feat can only be used on spells with durations equal to or less than 1 hour. Spells cast using this feat expend a spell slot 1 higher than normal. All other parameters of the spell remain the same.

## EXTRA SORCERY

*Prerequisite:* Sorceror level 2

You gain a permanent increase in sorcery points at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th levels: an increase of 1 at each of these levels.

## GRAPPLER, IMPROVED

*Prerequisite:* Grappler, Str of 16

When you grapple a creature and pin it, it is incapacitated until it breaks free; i.e. the only action it can take is to attempt to escape the Grapple. You are only restrained whilst pinning another creature.

## HEAVY ARMOUR MASTER, IMPROVED

*Prerequisites:* Heavy Armour Mastery

- When you wear Heavy armour, you deduct 5 from the damage of any attack that deals bludgeoning, slashing or piercing damage and 3 damage from any attack that deals fire, acid, cold or thunder damage. In addition, Heavy Armour no longer grants disadvantage on stealth checks. Nor does it count against encumbrance.
- Reduces the effective weight of heavy armor to 0.

## HEIGHTEN SPELL

*Prerequisite:* Cleric, Druid, Warlock, Wizard or Bard of 3rd level or higher.

This feat allows casters to increase the DC of their spells by expending higher level spell slots. For each level of slot used to power this feat, the spell save DC of your spell increases by 1. Hence a level 1 spell with a normal DC of 13 cast as a second level Heightened spell would have a DC of 14. No other parameters of a heightened spell are affected; thus a Heightened spell does not also gain extra damage or other effects normally gained by casting a spell at a higher level.

## IMPROVED INITIATIVE

*Prerequisite:* Dex 14, Alert feat

When others are caught flat footed, you are ready. You gain a +2 bonus to initiative that adds to your dexterity modifier for the purposes of determining turn order. This stacks with the +5 granted by the Alert feat.

## IMPROVED OPPORTUNITY ATTACK

*Prerequisite:* Dex 13

You are now better able to take advantage of an opponent who lowers his guard. Now, anyone who casts a spell or drinks a potion within 5 feet of you (reach weapons do not extend this threat range) provokes an opportunity attack as a reaction from you. You can also take reactions when surprised and gain +2 to hit on an opportunity attack.

## IMPROVED SNEAK ATTACK

*Prerequisite:* Rogue level 1, Dex 16

Your sneak attacks are now more deadly. Increase your damage dice from sneak attacks to a d8. You can still only make one sneak attack per turn and you must still have advantage on the roll or have an adjacent ally to be able to sneak attack.

## LIGHT ARMOUR MASTER

*Prerequisites:* Proficiency with Light Armor

You have mastered the ability to duck, dodge and weave whilst using Light Armor and gain the following benefits:

- You reduce the damage of any attack by bludgeoning, slashing or piercing weapons by 1.
- You gain a bonus +1 to AC while wearing Light Armor
- Light armour no longer counts against encumbrance

## MASTER OF RANGE

Choose one ranged weapon type or spell. Whilst attacking with that weapon or spell you gain +1 to hit. You can now make attacks whilst threatened by adjacent foes and not take disadvantage on your rolls with this weapon/spell.

In addition, you can use your reaction to make an extra attack with your weapon/spell if a foe leaves a specific 5 foot square that you designate as your Killing Ground. You designate this killing ground as a Bonus action and it is a bonus action to move it. This 5 foot square killing ground must be within a range where you do not suffer disadvantage on attacks rolls and you must be able to see the square and your foe clearly to gain this extra attack. The designated square can be adjacent to you.

## MAXIMISE SPELL

*Prerequisite:* Cleric, Druid, Warlock, Wizard or Bard of 5th level or higher and either Heighten, Extend, Silent or Still spell feats.

When you cast a spell that deals or heals damage (or uses damage as a way of measuring its effect, like sleep) instead of rolling the dice you deal or heal the maximum amount of damage possible for that spell. A maximised spell uses up a spell slot two higher than normal.

## MULE

Your carrying capacity is increased. Instead of being able to carry 5 times your Str score in pounds before being encumbered, you can carry 15 times. In addition, you are not heavily encumbered until 20 times your Str score and have a maximum carrying capacity of 30 times your Str score.

## PILUM

This feat allows ranged combatants to reduce the effectiveness of shields.

You target a foe's shield with special arrows made of lead or javelins with soft tips that bend on impact. You must have this feat to use and craft these arrows or javelins. They do not destroy the shield but instead make it too heavy to use effectively.

Each arrow that hits the shield (attack roll must beat AC of target minus the shield) reduces the AC of the shield by 1. A javelin that hits, forces the foe to drop the shield. These lead arrows cost 1 gp to make and weigh 2 lbs each.

These javelins cost 10 gp and weigh 5 lbs. You must have stated that you have made these weapons or ammunition and have them on your inventory to use this option.

The arrows have a maximum range of only 30ft/60 feet, the javelins' range is 10ft/30ft. The arrows can be removed from the shield as an action: the javelins take 1 minute to remove.

## SCRIBE SCROLL

You can create magical scrolls from spells that you know of levels 0-3rd. Each spell can be inscribed on specially prepared parchment and becomes an imbued magic item.

If you set up a shop to create scrolls, you require a scriptorium as a place of business costing 500 gp. Whilst in your shop or scriptorium, any scrolls your scribe, do so with double your proficiency bonus to Scribe Scroll checks. You must follow the magic item creation rules for all such scroll creation.

## SHIELDBREAKER

*Prerequisite:* Str 13

You are adept at making smashing attacks against an opponents shield, reducing its ability to protect your foe.

When you make an attack against a foe armed with a shield you may attempt to Sunder it instead of attacking the foe. Make an opposed attack roll against your enemy, who gets no bonuses to his roll that do not specifically apply to shields (so Weapon Focus, and magical bonuses granted by weapons do not count). If you win (note: you win if the rolls tie) you deal damage and reduce the shield's AC bonus by 1. A shield reduced to zero AC is destroyed.

## SINGLE ELEMENT MASTERY

Choose one of the elements (Electricity, Fire, Cold, Thunder). Whenever you cast an evocation spell that does damage of another elemental type, you may change the damage type to your chosen element.

All other features of the spell remain the same, except as indicated below. In addition, the damage dice of any spells involving your favored element changes: d12 becomes 1d6+6, d10 becomes 1d6+4, d8 becomes 1d4+4, d6 becomes 1d3+3, d4 becomes 1d2+2. Your spells also gain one extra feature as follows:

Electrical: +2 to attack roll or +d4 damage versus targets wearing metal armour (chosen before roll is made).

Fire: Targets hit take 1d6 fire damage per round until they spend a reaction to put the flames out.

Cold: Targets struck have their base movement reduced by 5 feet for 1 round.

Thunder: Targets struck must make a DC 7 saving throw or be knocked prone.

## SHARPSHOOTER, IMPROVED

*Prerequisites:* Sharpshooter, +10 to hit with your bow

- When you attack with a missile weapon you can choose how accurately you want to shoot. For every 1 point you deduct from your 'to hit', you add +2 to the damage of your attack. The maximum amount you can deduct is -7 to gain +14 damage.
- In addition, you are not at disadvantage when you attack an unseen opponent, if you attack the correct square.

## SPELL SNIPER, IMPROVED

*Prerequisites:* First level spellcaster (feats, such as Magical Initiate do not count), Spell Sniper Feat, Dex of 13

You are now able to attack with low level spells more accurately than most. When you attack an enemy you can see with a cantrip or spell of first or second level that requires an attack roll, you can take -5 on the to hit roll to deal +10 damage. This feat can also be employed when first or second levels spells are cast at higher levels.

In addition, if you have the sneak attack class feature then spells that you can cast that require attack rolls can also benefit from sneak attack damage once per turn.

Note that if a spell grants multiple rays or attacks, only one can benefit from extra damage and from sneak attack via this feat e.g. scorching ray.

## STILL SPELL

*Prerequisites:* Cleric, Druid, Warlock, Wizard or Bard of 3rd level or higher.

You no longer need to move or make gestures in order to cast spells: and thus ignore the Somatic (S) component requirement of any spell. You still require any spell components to be in hand to cast, but casting itself no longer requires any movement. Indeed, if combined with other feats, this feat allows casting whilst paralysed, restrained or otherwise prevented from moving. This feat allows druids or polymorphed wizards to cast spells in animal/monster form if combined with Eschew components and Silent Spell, but the slot increases stack: thus a spell cast using silent and still spell would be cast 2 levels higher to achieve a normal effect.

A Still Spell uses up a spell slot one higher than usual: thus a cantrip uses up a first level spell slot etc.

## VEXING FLANKER

*Prerequisite:* Str or Dex of 13

When you flank your enemies, you are now more dangerous in combat. You and your flanking ally now gain advantage on attack rolls against flanked foes.

## WEAPON FOCUS

*Prerequisites:* Dex or Str of 13 (must correspond to the attribute used to wield the weapon)

You choose one type of weapon that you are proficient with (e.g Longswords) and spend one month extensively practising with them. Thanks to your additional training you gain +1 to attack with the chosen weapon types.

## WEAPON SPECIALISATION

*Prerequisites:* Weapon Focus, Character Level 4, Dex or Str of 15 (must correspond to the attribute used to wield the weapon)

Choose one individual weapon of the type you have selected previously for the Weapon Focus feat. You spend one month practising with that exact weapon in order to better understand its size and balance. If you are a two weapon fighter (i.e. possess the two weapon fighting style or the dual wielder feat), you can spend twice the xp cost and gain this ability with both your weapons for only one feat slot. After completing your training, you gain the following benefits:

When you hit with the chosen weapon, the damage die for the weapon increases by 1 step on the dice tree as follows:

2d8 2d6 1d12 1d10 1d8 1d6 1d4 1d2

If you lose the weapon(s), you have to retrain and spend the xp again to gain this ability with the new weapon. This replaces the original feat and does not take up an additional feat-slot.

## **WEAPON MASTERY**

*Prerequisites:* Weapon Specialisation, Character Level 8, Dex or Str of 17 (must correspond to the attribute used to wield the weapon)

Choose one individual weapon that you have selected previously for the Weapon Specialisation feat with. You spend one month practising with that type of weapon in order to perfectly understand its size and balance. If you are a two weapon fighter (i.e. you have the two weapon fighting style or the dual wielder feat), you can spend twice the xp cost and gain this ability with both your weapons for only one feat slot. After completing your training you gain the following benefits:

- +1 to attack with the chosen weapon
- Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20
- Lower the threshold for a critical hit by 1 if you are wielding the chosen weapon

If you lose the weapon(s), you have to retrain and spend the xp again to gain this ability with the new weapon. This replaces the original feat and does not take up an additional feat-slot.

# LANGUAGES IN MALADON

  
he tongues of Mystbound Realms are entirely different from standard D&D. There are many versions of the standard races; lots of Elves, Dwarves and many races that are not a part of the default game. The languages of these apparently related races are entirely different in many cases. This is because each race of Elves etc was made by a different God Or Goddess and so they are all independent creations. Many arose on worlds far from where the game is set: deep in the Mysts. Because there are so many more languages, a character now speaks Low Valmari, their own tongue and at least one other; plus one more per point of (positive) intelligence modifier they possess.

For clarification: This means if your background + race includes more than 3 languages, you will get those + one for each positive intelligence modifier. As clarified in the postings below a -1 intelligence modifier does not mean you know less languages. Note: **the languages marked with a \*** are not learnable, except in game.

## HUMAN LANGUAGES:

### TONGUES OF THE HIGH MEN

**Horth:** the language of the Horkonlords

**Lykeri:** the language of the Lyceans

\***Keldish:** the language of the Erkeldi

**High Valkari:** the language of the Valkari

\***Hardic:** the language of a race of High men who lived in Netherfell and were not of the four kindreds

### LOW MANNISH TONGUES

**Low Valmari:** the trade tongue of the Empire. Related to High Valkari but debased and corrupted

**Glarnic:** the language of the Glarns and of the Kingdom of Shaldis and the Drornlords

**Geatish:** language of the Geats. Related to Horth

**Kothic:** the language of the Kothic peoples of Netherfell, Yurland and Skarn

**Frenish:** the tongue of Frenis

**Mardac:** the trade tongue of Medara

**Urish:** spoken in Yurland

### ELVISH TONGUES

**Sith:** spoken by the Dark Elves of Maladon

**Moredhel:** Spoken by the Dark Elves of Skara

\***Sondish:** spoken by the Wood Elves of the Sondar

**Tarnellion:** spoken by the Sea Elves of Lir, on Medara

**Quamar:** spoken by the Snow Elves of Tyrassis

**Quendish:** spoken by the Wood Elves of Skara

**Ashanni:** (many dialects): spoken by the savage elves of Maladon

**Sheean:** the language of the Myst Elves, who are also known as the Sidhe

\***Avalonian:** the language of the Ice Elves

\***Archaic Avalonian:** an old distorted version of Avalonian spoken by the gnomes on makra\* (DC10 Int to understand one if you know the other)

## DWARVISH TONGUES

\***Encakhuli:** spoken by the Dwarfs of Khulican

**Baraki:** spoken by the Dwarves of Karthstone

**Teshan:** spoken by the Mountain Dwarves of Skarn

**Dukkan:** spoken by the Grey Dwarves of Skara

**Veyc:** spoken by the extinct Duergar and by Gnomes

**Goamish:** spoken by the Dwarves of Ankara

**Kernish:** spoken by the Dwor of Kerlund

## EXOTIC LANGUAGES:

**Erdari:** the equivalent of Celestial and the language spoken by many Gods.

\***Vorac:** Black speech, a language so evil that even demons and devils have trouble speaking it

\***Alvar:** The language of the fabled Elvarin, the High Elven race that inspired the Gods to create all the others

\***Dwarro:** the language of the Dwarren or High Dwarves of old

**Cengor:** The language of the Centaur folk of Medara

**Slann:** the language of the Fishfolk of the Great Swamp

\***Cernish:** the language of the Fey of Cerngard including Cernas, Snowmantle and Arawn

\***Quor:** the language of the Sea-Kith; a race of Fey who roam the Mysts in great ships

\***Sandspeech:** the language of the Jinn or Sandfolk

**Yrch:** the language of the Orcs of Skarn

**Klar:** spoken by the black orcs of Maladon

**Varthan:** the common tongue of the Underverse

## STANDARD D&D LANGUAGES

**Infernal.**

**Abyssal.**

**Draconic:** trade tongue of Dragons; there are many Draconic languages

**Sylvan**

\***Primordial:** the language of Abberations and some monstrous humanoids

# THE MALADON COMPANIES



he reconquest of Haven and Maladon ordered by Emperor Octavian is founded on the formation of the Ten Companies; each ruled by a Noble Lord of the Empire, at least in theory.

The Emperor hereby requires the formation of Ten good and worshipful Companies; and said Companies are given leave to enter the former Fortress of Haven and to make it their own. They are further required to fortify and make good said City, such that the Isle of Maladon, that is a rightful protectorate of his Majesty by right of Conquest, shall hence-forth be occupied by his subjects and not by those foul enemies of the Empire known as the Sithi. The Captains of the Ten Companies shall survey the Isle of Maladon to learn of it's fullest extents and shall map it's surface in order that his Majesty shall know the extent of his domains. They shall also gather any such treasures as they find in his Majesty's dominion and shall cede one half of them to the Imperial Treasury; the other half portion shall be disposed of as each Captain sees fit.

Player Characters can join a Company. Their rank in the company is determined by their renown, which can be increased by doing tasks for the Companies.

Iron Fist Brigade	COMPANY OF THE RISING SUN	BROTHERHOOD OF THE ROSE	The White Horse Brigade	THE COMPANY OF THE BLUE SASH
COMPANY OF THE BLACK LION	COMPANY OF THE SCARLET BLADE	COMPANY OF THE BLACK AND WHITE BANNER	Red Dragon Brigade	THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE UNICORN
THE TEMPLE OF THE TRIPARTITE GOD	THE CITY OF HAVEN			

**THE TEN COMPANIES OF HAVEN**

The Ten Companies of Haven are represented by ten distinct heraldic shields, each featuring unique colors and symbols. The shields are arranged in three rows: the top row contains five shields (Iron Fist, Company of the Rising Sun, Brotherhood of the Rose, The White Horse, and The Company of the Blue Sash); the middle row contains five shields (Company of the Black Lion, Company of the Scarlet Blade, Company of the Black and White Banner, Red Dragon, and The Fellowship of the Unicorn); and the bottom row contains two shields (Temple of the Tripartite God and City of Haven).

## THE TEN COMPANIES

### THE IRON FIST BRIGADE

The Iron Fist brigade recruits only Knights and Nobles and does not open up to Full Membership unless one has noble blood, is human, and can maintain an expensive lifestyle. Failure to main the required lifestyle results in immediate expulsion. The Iron Fists do accept Associates who do not fulfil these requirements.

Yet this Company are not a bunch of drunken nobles like the Brotherhood of the Rose; they go in for serious fighting. Full Membership of the Iron Fists grants instant and unlimited access to the upper city and the citadel.

The Iron Fists currently hold primacy in the City of Haven and seem to be the force keeping the fragile alliances that the City requires alive. They are the most politically active of all the Ten Companies. The Fists force associates to join as full members at a renown of 8; it is not possible to gain more renown as an associate. The Iron Fists are based in the White Tower and their leader is the current Seneschal of Haven, Garek Lindon.

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE IRON FISTS

Associates must have noble blood of any race (or pretend to have it via forged letters of patent, appropriate dress and fawning servants) OR have the Knightly background (including Paladins; or pretend to have) OR must agree to pay a yearly stipend of 500 gp (first year payable up front). Most members are martial classes.

#### Associate Membership:

[3] Associate: access to the Upper City whilst accompanied by a Full Member or a single pass to enter and leave unaccompanied

[4] Associate: loan of a Riding Horse or Warhorse

[5] Squire: loans of up to 500 gp at 50% interest per year

[6] Squire: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour

[7] Squire: access to Accommodation for rent in the Upper City

[8] Knight: loans of up to 650 gp at 30% interest per year

#### Full Membership:

[9] Knight: free Access to learn the Feat Great Weapon Master (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)

[10] Knight-errant: free Access to the Upper City;

[13] Knight-errant: loans of up to 1000 gp at 20% interest per year

[15] Knight-Banneret: audience with the Seneschal and access to special missions

[17] Knight-Banneret: loans of up to 5000 gp at 10% interest

[20] Knight-Banneret: access to Buy Property in the Upper City

[30] Knight-Marshall: membership of the Privy Council of Haven

[50] Lord-Marshall: leadership of the Iron Fists and Seneschal of Haven

## THE COMPANY OF THE RISING SUN

The 'Suns' are a mainly religious Company who hate the Sithi and have come back to Maladon ensure that the entire race is wiped out. Many are members of the Brotherhood of Light, a cult from Valmar that preaches racial purity of humans and worships the Valmari God Sol, who is a personification of their first King. They are fairly fanatical to the point that it's rumored that the Emperor granted them a charter to get them out of the Imperial City.

They do however, offer healing to the sick without fear or favour and are the major source of healing magic in the city. They accept only humans as full members and their base is in the Temple of Light. Their leader is the charismatic and charming Tancred of Valmar, who welcomes any to the fold (except Elves) as Associates to 'fight the good fight'. They can be joined in Lower town by contacting the Templars in the Lodge of Light. Note that this Company have a bad reputation in Haven for double-dealing and playing political games. As a result, they are not trusted by most common folk.

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE RISING SUN

To qualify for membership, an associate must be of any martial class of any race but Elves. They must donate 1/10th of all treasure they earn to the Brotherhood of Light and must report all information learned about Sithi to the Templars immediately. Associates must have noble blood of any race except Elves OR have the Knightly background (including Paladins) OR be a Cleric of Sol. Most members are martial or divine classes.

Full membership can be gained by achieving a Renown of 8 and applying to the Temple of Light; though postulants should be aware of the political game that must be played in order to be invited. The 'Suns' force associates to join as full members at a renown of 8; it is not possible to gain more renown than 8 as an associate.

#### Associate Membership:

- [3] Associate: access to the Upper City whilst accompanied by a Full Member or a single pass to enter and leave unaccompanied
- [4] Associate: loan of a Riding Horse
- [5] Postulant: free access to holy water
- [6] Postulant: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour
- [7] Postulant: access healing potions at 30% of normal cost
- [8] Templar: loan of Warhorse

#### Full Membership:

- [9] Templar: free Access to the Upper City
- [10] Templar: free Accommodation in the Temple of Light
- [13] Knight: Cure Disease or Remove Curse cast free of charge
- [14] Knight: free access to the Feat War Caster or Shield Master [takes] Maladonianmonths to learn)
- [15] Knight: audience with the Seneschal and access to special missions
- [17] Knight-Templar: command of the Lodge of Light in the lower City
- [20] Knight-Templar: access to Buy Property in the Upper City
- [25] Knight-Marshall: membership of the Privy Council of Haven
- [35] Lord-Templar: leadership of the Rising Sun

## THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE ROSE

This 'Company' is little more than a group of idle and foolish third and fourth sons and daughters of Noble Families from the Empire. It is a closed Company and few can join it from outside (although characters with the Noble background can apply at character generation). Members are all human, extremely rude and haughty and go around Haven holding drunken parties and revels whilst sending home lurid tales of their fictitious 'adventures' back to the Empire.

No one takes them seriously except vinters and bawdy-house owners. Occasionally they will go on a hunting trip; but take so many retainers that they travel as a virtual army. They can be useful as sources of coin; since many lend money at reasonable rates. Friendship with one of this Company grants access to the very best of what Haven has to offer; including passes into the Upper City and possibly even an audience with the Senechal of Haven Castle. Since they are all inveterate gamblers, it is not so hard to make their acquaintance and is it with some of the other nobles. There are no associate members of this company; only full members can enter and only at character generation.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROSE

Benefits are all based upon Renown:

- [0] Wastrel: access to the Upper City whilst accompanied by a Full Member or a single pass to enter and leave unaccompanied
- [2] Wastrel: loan of a Riding Horse or Warhorse
- [5] Wastrel: loans of up to 500 gp at 50% interest per year
- [6] Reveller: access to the Linguist feat for free [4] months:to learn)
- [7] Reveller: access to Accommodation for rent in the Upper City
- [8] Reveller: loans of up to 650 gp at 30% interest per year
- [9] Reveller: free Access to learn the Feat Defensive Duelist [takes] Maladonian:months to learn)
- [10] Dilettante: free Access to the Upper City;
- [13] Dilettante: loans of up to 1000 gp at 20% interest per year
- [15] Dilettante: audience with the Seneschal
- [17] Master of Revels: loans of up to 5000 gp at 10% interest
- [20] Lord of Dice: Access to Buy Property in the Upper City
- [25] Lord Bawdy: membership of the Privy Council of Haven
- [30] The Lord Arithmos: leadership of the Rose

## THE WHITE HORSE BRIGADE

The White Horse Brigade are the strangest of the Companies. They are based in the White Horse Inn; on the very southern-most tip of Haven Isle, and all are scholars, mages and other members of Arcane and Magical sects. Since Magic is limited on Haven Isle, they also boast a secret tower where most of them carry out their experiments; but the location of 'White Horse Tower' is a closely guarded secret. The White Horse Brigade boast the only library in the lower town of Haven and protect it with their lives; though paid access is possible for 5 gp per day of study.

The Horses accept only magic-users as members without restriction on race and class; specifically, members must be able to cast a first level spell to qualify for membership and they do not allow associate membership; as they have too many secrets to guard.

Although they are effectively a Mages Guild, there are no really high level members; since powerful Wizards would be unlikely to fall foul of the Empire so easily. Their leader is Ablard Grainger; a wizard more concerned with his own arcane studies than the governance of his cabal. Indeed, the Horses have no member on the privy council though they are often called in to advise.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE WHITE HORSES

### Membership

- [0] Acolyte: free food and Accommodation at the White Horse Inn
- [2] Acolyte: access to the Common Library of Lore at the White Horse Inn
- [5] Acolyte: gain the spell Find Familiar as a Ritual for free
- [6] Mage: access to the Linguist feat for free (4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [7] Mage: access to free accommodation at the Tower of the White Horse
- [8] Mage: learn the feats Light Armour Training and 2 weapon profs for free ((takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [9] Magister: free Access to learn the Feat Magical Initiate (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [10] Magister: laboratory Access at the Tower of the White Horse
- [13] Magister: gain the Feat Ritual Caster as a Free Feat (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [15] Magister: access to the Restricted Library at the Tower of the White Horse
- [17] High-Lord: access to the Oracle
- [20] High-Lord: access to the Trove of Magic in the Tower of the White Horse
- [30] High-Magister: leadership of the White Horses
- [40] Chancellor: membership of the Privy Council of Haven

## THE COMPANY OF THE BLUE SASH (THE 'SASHES')

The Sashes are a rough but honest crew who seek to earn their pay fairly. They are a poor company and have few resources for helping members or building up new locations. Their only plentiful resource is labour as they are one of the larger Companies. They have a reputation for toughness and getting the job done. They are meritocratic and nobles will get no favor and may even find that their birth means they are looked down upon. The Sashes invite anyone, no matter their race, sex or station to join their ranks who is willing to work and is not afraid of a fight but won't kill unless it's necessary.

Their Captain is Lord Darvin of Pellinore but he leaves the day to day running of the Company to Bruno and Adolfo, his two rumbustious Sargent-at-arms. The Sashes' Chapter-house is sited in the Tipsy Mermaid Taverna. Sadly, the Sashes have little political power in Haven and are often overlooked by the Noble Companies. They currently have no voice on the privy council of Haven, despite the fact they are one of the most active of the Ten in actual exploration of Maladon.

Because they meet people off of the boats and offer free food and lodging in exchange for labouring around Haven, repairing the streets and buildings, they are often the first 'port of call' for most newcomers to Haven. Many later move on.

The Sashes require anyone with a Renown of 9 to join their ranks as a Full member. It is not possible to join the Sashes as a full member until asked and only full members can gain Renown higher than 9 with the Sashes.

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BLUE SASHES

Associates can be of any race or class though most members are martial classes.

### Associate Membership:

- [0] Associate: access to the Tipsy Mermaid Taverna with full board and lodging.
- [3] Associate: loan of a Riding Horse
- [5] Blade: loan of a Laen Glass (for detecting magical auras)
- [6] Blade: loan of any standard medium armour or simple weapon
- [7] Blade: free training in any simple or martial weapon (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn 1 weapon)
- [8] Corporal: free Light armour training (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [9] Corporal: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour

### Full Membership:

- [10] Sergeant: loan of Warhorse
- [13] Sergeant: free training in medium armour (takes 4 Maladonian Months to learn; must have light armour prof)
- [15] Lieutenant: writ to form a permanent war-band and establish you own base of operations in Haven
- [16] Lieutenant: free Access to learn the feats Tavern Brawler or Tough or Martial Adept (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [17] Lieutenant: free Heavy Armour training (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn; must have medium armour prof)
- [20] Lieutenant: free Access to the Upper City.
- [25] Castellan: command of Castle Dorn
- [30] Captain: leadership of the Blue Sashes
- [40] Captain: seat on the Privy Council of Haven

## THE COMPANY OF THE BLACK LION (THE 'LIONS')

The Company of the Black Lion are rivals of the Blue Sashes and the Badgers; and they are also classed as a poor Company. The Lions are based out of the Black Lion Inn on the Street of Blades. Their Captain is Rufus Redbeard; a famous but exiled former general of the Imperial Army. The Lions gather recruits from any martial class and have no preference for race.

They dislike subterfuge and so Rogues are not welcome, though many Rangers call the Lion home because of Lord Rufus' emphasis on proper scouting. The Lions rebuilt Gatesgarth and Lord Gatesgarth is one of their Lieutenants.

Taxes from this village are an important source of revenue for the Lions and the recent troubles with Goblins have hit them hard. The Lions are politically active but currently have no seat on the privy council.

The Lions require anyone with a Renown of 9 to join their ranks as a Full member. It is not possible to join the Lions as a full member until asked. It is not possible to gain a Renown greater than 9 as an associate.

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE LIONS:

Associates can be of any race, but only Rangers, Barbarians, Paladins, Clerics, and Fighters can apply for associate membership.

### Associate Membership:

- [2] Associate: access to the Black Lion Inn with full board and lodging.
- [3] Associate: loan of any standard medium armour or martial weapon
- [5] Blade: loan of a Laen Glass (for detecting magical auras)
- [6] Blade: loan of a Riding Horse or Fishing Boat
- [7] Blade: free training in any martial weapon (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn 1 weapon)
- [8] Corporal: free training in the Sailing Skill (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [9] Corporal: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour

### Full Membership:

- [10] Sergeant: free training in Heavy armour or shield proficiency (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [13] Sergeant: free training in the weapon smithing, stealth or armour smithing skills (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [15] Lieutenant: feat access to learn the Feat Heavy Armour Master or Sentinel or Observant (Takes 4 Maladonian Months to learn).
- [17] Lieutenant: loan of the Black Lion; a war-cog with a full complement of sailors
- [20] Lieutenant: free Access to the Upper City.
- [25] Castellan: command of Gatesgarth and Title 'Lord Gatesgarth'
- [30] Captain: leadership of the Black Lions
- [40] Captain: seat on the Privy Council of Haven

## THE COMPANY OF THE SCARLET BLADE

The Scarlet Blades are now a 'former Company' and have been declared outlaws, though rumour suggests that they still run all the illegal rackets in the City from afar. They attract scum and criminals of all stripes and are lead by Lord Mardok who is said to have been a pirate for all that he has noble blood. The Blades enjoy ambushes and have been known to attack members of other Companies and hence were expelled by the Seneschal. They murder and kill wantonly and some say they force their members through horrific initiation rituals.. There is a bounty offered for capturing or killing a member of this Company by the Seneschal of Haven.

One can only join the Blades by having a Fellowship of 15 with someone who is already a member; as their outlaw status means that they are very distrustful. And first you have to find them.....

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCARLET BLADES**

Membership of the Scarlett Blades is open to any race or class but members MUST be evil. Membership is not exclusive (indeed members are encouraged to keep their affiliation secret and join other Companies and report back).

### **Membership**

- [2] Filtch: access to a 'safe-house' in Haven with full board and lodging.
- [3] Filtch: loan of any standard medium armour or martial weapon
- [5] Cutpurse: loan of a Laen Glass (for detecting magical auras)
- [6] Cutpurse: access to a Fence for selling stolen goods
- [7] Curpurse: free training in any martial weapon (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn 1 weapon)
- [8] Footpad: free training in Poisoners' Kit (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [9] Footpad: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour
- [10] Footpad: free training in the Crossbow Expert feat (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [13] Assassin: free Access to the Upper City by Forgery or the Secret Tunnels
- [15] Assassin: free access to learn the Sentinel or Observant feats (Takes 4 Maladonian Months to learn)
- [17] Assassin: free training in the Keen Mind feat (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [20] Night-blade: gain the Mark of Murder; a sign of favor. Gain the Magical Initiate Feat for free
- [25] Sword Lord: command of The Fortress of the Burning Blade
- [30] The Lord Raven: leadership of the Scarlett Blades

## **THE COMPANY OF THE BLACK AND WHITE BANNER (THE 'BADGERS')**

The Badgers are one if the three so called 'poor Companies' that also include the Sashes and the Lions. They are one of the most active Companies in exploration of Maladon and are rumored to have established a number of holds in various locations across Maladon; including Hunters' Inn and the Fortress of the The Rock on an island to the south of Maladon. The Badgers welcome humans, Elves, and Gnomes as members mostly and prefer classes that are comfortable in wilderness settings.

Many Badgers were former Imperial Army scouts and they also boast a large number of Kullish barbarians amongst their ranks. The Badgers are lead by Lord Ersin de Vere; a disgraced Noble who was tried for treason but escaped punishment due to his political connections. Whilst in Haven, members of this Company frequent the Black Tower Inn in the Street of Three Fishes. Despite being a poor Company, the Badgers have somehow managed to retain a seat on the Privy council; possibly because they seem to be involved in lots of mining in the Red River valley and may no longer be quite as poor as they were a year ago.

## **ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP OF THE BADGERS**

Associates can be of any race EXCEPT orcs, but only Rangers, Barbarians, Paladins, Clerics, Fighters and Rogues can apply for associate membership. Full membership is by invitation only once Renown reaches 7 and only full members can gain Renown scores higher than 7 in this Company.

**Associate Benefits:** are all based upon Renown:

- [2] Associate: access to Hunters' Inn with full board and lodging free.
- [3] Associate: loan of a Riding Horse or Fishing Boat
- [5] Blade: loan of a Laen Glass (for detecting magical auras)
- [6] Blade: loan of any standard medium armour or martial weapon
- [7] Blade: free training in any martial weapon (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn 1 weapon)

### **Full Membership:**

- [8] Corporal: free training in the Stealth or Survival Skill (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn each)
- [9] Corporal: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour
- [10] Sergeant: free Access to learn the Alert or Observant Feat (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [13] Sergeant: command of Hunters Inn
- [15] Lieutenant: feat access to learn the Sharp Shooter feat (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [17] Lieutenant: command of the ship Black Wing
- [20] Lieutenant: free Access to the Upper City.
- [25] Castellan: command of the Fortress of the Rock
- [35] Captain: leadership of the Badgers

## **THE RED DRAGON BRIGADE**

The Red Dragon Brigade arose from the Worshipful Order of the Knights of Calenn; a mendicant order of Knights who ensure the safety of travelers in the Empire and beyond. The Knights of Calenn are often of poor birth and have little time for nobles and their frippery. They are the champions of the commoners and this probably explains their exile here, for they often displease the great and the good.

The Red Dragons are so named because of their Home base in the Red Dragon Inn close to South-ferry in Haven. They are lead by Mallory de Toyne, who renounced his noble up-bringing for a life of poverty and service. Currently the Dragons patrol the Red River Valley and bring swift justice to bandits and other scum; though the emphasis is on justice and not on retribution. The Dragons accept only Good aligned martial characters as full members but will embrace those of any race. Any race or class can join as associates provided they are also Good (there is a magical test to ensure this). Associates are asked to join to become full members at a Renown of 7 and only full members can gain Renown scores higher than 7.

### **Associate Membership:**

- [2] Associate: access to The Red Dragon Inn with full board and lodging free.
- [3] Associate: access to Animal Handling skill (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)

- [5] Warden: loan of a Laen Glass (for detecting magical auras)
  - [6] Warden: loan of any standard medium armour or martial weapon
  - [7] Warden: free training in any martial weapon (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn 1 weapon)
- Full Membership:**
- [8] Protector: gift of personal War Horse.
  - [9] Protector: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour
  - [10] Guardian: free Access to learn the Mounted Combatant or Martial Adept feats (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
  - [13] Guardian: develops Lay on Hands ability as a Paladin of 1st level or increases Paladin level for Lay on hands by 1.
  - [15] Guardian: feat access to learn the Medium Armour Master (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
  - [17] Knight-warden: gain the durable feat for free (no training required)
  - [20] Knight-warden: free Access to the Upper City.
  - [25] Knight Marshal: command of The Red Redoubt
  - [35] The Lord Warden: leadership of the Red Dragon Brigade

### THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE UNICORN

The Unicorns meet at the Unicorn Inn in Westgate. Their leader is Jared Northcrown; a Waysider from the edges of the Empire; but their structure is much looser than most Companies and they have no seat on the privy council.

The Unicorns favor hunters and those who love nature; they boast a few Druids from the forests of the Sondar amongst their number and many Elves, Gnomes and Halflings. They tend to seek exploration and knowledge for the most part. Rangers, Cleric of nature, Barbarians, Warlocks with the Archfey pact and Paladins who intend to take the Oath of the Ancients are all welcomed as full members. Others may join as Associates. The Unicorns encourage members to become full members at a Renown of 7; it is not possible to progress further in this Company without full membership nor gain more Renown.

**Associate Membership:**

- [2] Wanderer: access to The Unicorn Inn with full board and lodging free.
- [3] Wanderer: access to Animal Handling skill (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [5] Explorer: loan of a Laen Glass (for detecting magical auras)
- [6] Explorer: training in Survival or Stealth skills (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [7] Explorer: free training in any martial weapon (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn 1 weapon)

**Full Membership:**

- [8] Ranger: gift of personal War Horse.
- [9] Ranger: access to buy Masterwork Grade Weapons and Armour
- [10] Ranger: feat access to learn the Medium Armour Master (takes 4 Maladonian months to learn)
- [13] Waysider: gains a spirit guide as the Find Familar spell and the ability to recall it as a 1 hour ritual with no component cost
- [15] Waysider: feat Access; Martial Adept Feat (takes 4 Maladonian Months to learn)
- [17] Waysider: gain the durable feat for free (no training required)
- [20] Lord Oak: gain Magical Initiate Feat for free (no training)
- [25] Lord Yew: command of Falling Water Redoubt
- [35] The Lord: leadership of the Unicorns

## RULES GOVERNING MEMBERSHIP OF THE TEN COMPANIES:

- 1) The Articles of Association mean that you can be an associate member of as many Companies as you like.
- 2) The same Articles mean that you can only join ONE Company as a full member; though you can still retain your associate status and gain Renown with other Companies up to the maximum allowed for associates according to their rules.
- 3) The Scarlet Blades are an exception to the 'One Company' rule but note that everyone else in the game is authorized to kill you if you are discovered as a member of this outlawed group.
- 4) 'Free Feats' that are gained as a result of joining a Company take time to learn and take up feat slots as normal they are only free in the sense that no money nor XP need be exchanged.
- 5) If someone is forcibly ejected from a Company they may not join another as a Full Member.

# MYSTBOUND REALMS

**T**his is the name given to the Campaign Setting where this game is located. This setting is composed of 40 or so 'worlds' that are each surrounded and separated by an eldritch 'Myst' that blocks magical and mundane sight and irredeemably corrupts any mortal creature that it touches.

The Worlds of the setting are extremely varied but most will not directly impact this game, except as part of the background for Player Characters.

## THE MYSTS

The Mysts are about a mile high and flight over them is usually impossible. Travel through the Mysts is also impossible; though temporary corridors or tunnels sometimes open up through the Mysts that allow passage; these are the so called 'Mysts tides'. And like the tides of the sea, many of these partings of the Mysts occur with a regular and periodic pattern and are used for trade and travel. The corollary of this is that most worlds are cut off from the others for much of the time; and hence each world retains a very distinct culture, religion and history. The Mysts and Myst tides are a fact of life in the worlds of the campaign and are no more strange to it's inhabitants than the rising of the sun is to us. Some worlds are also linked by Ur-Gates; portals built by an unknown race that directly connect the various worlds at all times; and this is especially true of the world of Skarn, which acts as a 'hub' world and is connected to more of the other worlds than any of the others.

The Mysts are feared because they are slowly closing in on the various worlds as the centuries pass. This inward movement is just noticeable within the lifetime of a normal human. Hence some of the worlds are now very small; e.g. Netherfell is just a few days' ride across. The Mysts are also responsible for creating both magic, since the Mysts represent the power of chaos, and monsters, since any mundane animal or creature that enters the Mysts is terribly changed. Some 'monsters' are also races that innately dwell within the Mysts; and these are greatly feared, because the Gods themselves were just Mystwalkers once.

## THE GODS

The Gods walked in the Mysts in the time before the worlds were first born out of them. The Gods of the Mystbound Realms are not remote, ethereal nor omnipotent creatures; they actually had physical forms; though they could change their form or lay all form aside if they so desired. Most of the Gods fell into Eldritch Sleep at some time in the distant past, and their sleeping forms quickly became enmeshed in protective sarcophagi or temples that grew up around them because of some instinctive exercise of divine power.

Many of the sleeping Gods and their avatars (those faithful who became divine by virtue of service to their God) are now protected by projections of their will; and hence the temples of some sleeping Gods and avatars are extremely dangerous places, though others are simple temples. Indeed all temples, fanes and shrines in the Mystbound Realms contain a tomb of a sleeping avatar or God hidden somewhere within the structure and are often guarded by traps, worshipers and 'divine guardians'. They are also often full of treasures; gifted by supplicants as offerings. Thus followers of rival gods often try to destroy, rob or despoil the Fanes of their enemies; and this is the primary mode of religious wars.

The Gods speak to their followers in dreams and visions; and miracles often occur at temples. Followers usually carry a fragment of the mortal remains of their God in an amulet; as a connection to their God and all clerics require these connections to work their magics. Note also that most Gods are associated with one particular race; since the definition of a God in Mystbound Realms is a Myst-walker that used their divine might to create one of the 'Races of Adamant'. Indeed scholars suggest that The Gods created all of the solid, immutable races that are harmed by the Mysts, whereas all the ancient and 'natural' races arose in the Mysts.

## THE NATURE OF MAGIC

Magic is not the same everywhere; it's power varies across the surface of the worlds and is defined by a series of auras that are caused by geomantic forces in the earth that scholars believe were laid down by the Gods as the worlds were created. Each area has an aura rating that roughly corresponds to the highest level of spell that can successfully be cast there. An area with an aura of 0 means that only cantrips work there. Other, higher level magic will fail if attempted in such an area. Humans and other races tend to settle in auras of less than 2, meaning that magic is limited to 2nd level spells or lower.

Such auras are preferred as Kingdoms/dwelling places because most monsters will not willingly enter such a place since many monsters are unable to access their full range of powers in such an aura e.g Dragons can enter but not fly in an aura of 1 and would also be unable to use their breath weapon. Hence a Dragon is much more vulnerable in such an area and would be unlikely to attack a human settlement located there unless the need was great.

Indeed monsters encountered in auras of 0 or 1 are likely to be restricted to orcs, goblins and other creatures that are primarily physical beings who lack magical power or abilities. Note also that auras can change rating at certain times of the year; strengthening or lessening according to natural cycles. Another reason for avoiding areas possessing a high magical aura is that the Mysts seem to swallow those areas first; and this is something that all the races fear. Most of Valmar is in areas with aura ratings of 2 or less.

Whilst this might seem to limit the power of spell-casters, in practice it does not because of the social effect of magic. Normal humans and other mundane races are not used to magic and fear and distrust it. Also, knowledge of magic is very limited and spell-casters are very few. Hence clever spell-casters can exaggerate or bluff easily and illusions are hence very powerful. In addition, there are no special defenses against magic in many places.

## THE EMPIRE OF VALMAR

The Empire is located on the world of Skarn. It is an ancient Empire, founded by a race of Holvari or High Men; a race who arose in the Mysts and were not created by any Gods. Hence these original High Men were very arrogant and had a long history of conflict with the Gods and other races. They were also immensely gifted and powerful, lived for thousands of years and could wield magic as easily as breathing. Now, the High men are just a memory; their only legacy is that they bred with normal humans and passed a measure of their power into various human bloodlines. Hence, within the Empire, the purest patrician families can trace their line back to the Holvari of old, and some Imperial families boast living members who are hundreds of years old.

The Empire of Valmar is based around ancestor worship; the entire City of Valmar is a huge necropolis. The living dwell in the houses of the dead and their days are taken up in veneration and sacrifice. The Valmari believe that their ancestors are reborn into new children and so infants are swaddled and sleep upon the cold tombs of the ancestors of old.

The other obsession is with the Mysts; the Valmari are terrified of the encroaching Mysts and actually started conquering other worlds and races to subjugate them. They did this after Valmari scholars noticed that the Mysts seldom swallowed the Fanes of a God, as if divine power can hold the Mysts at bay. This caused past Emperors to launch wars of conquest to steal and relocate the Gods of other races back to the City of Valmar; indeed Valmar is now known as 'The City of a Thousand Gods' as so many stolen Gods have been brought back as spoils of war. This is so much so that Valmari families sometimes have small Gods or avatars sited in their own family homes as personal shrines. Valmari now worship, venerate and try to placate these various Gods because worship stirs the Gods from sleep and increases their powers to hold the Mysts at bay.

The official Religion of the Empire, is the Imperial Cult; Valmari believe that their own Emperors are divine because of their bloodline connections to the Holvari and also because many Emperors ritually imbibe the blood of the sleeping Gods of Valmar to lengthen their lives and gain power. Indeed, Emperors seldom die; they merely fall into slumber, much like the Gods once did. After this happens they are interred in Imperial Shrines and used as objects of veneration. Miracles do happen at such shrines and Clerics of the Imperial Cult do indeed gain magical powers from venerating the past Emperors.

The Campaign is set on the Isle of Maladon; an island that was once the home of the terrible Sithi. The Sithi were an elflike race who used blood magic and worshiped a fell God known as Arawn; The Horned King. The Sithi used to secretly roam the many worlds on their hunts as part of their rites of passage into man and womanhood. The Sithi killed a Prince of Valmar during a hunt about a century ago and the Emperor Vedin declared war upon them and sent his War-Talons out to seek out the Sithi homeland.

Eventually, The Isle of Maladon was discovered; though the Isle was hidden in a previously unknown world that was only connected to the Empire once a year for a mere month by an opening in the Mysts.

The Empire launched its war machine and started the conquest of Maladon. This war was terrible because Maladon is a highly magical realm and includes areas with very high auras that the Imperials were unused to. The Sithi used their blood-magic and made the Empire pay for every step. Yet eventually the Sithi broke under the onslaught and retreated into the vast forests that cover Maladon.

The Empire then located a colony on the banks of the Sable River and made plans to map and conquer the whole island; and to wipe the Sithi from the face of creation in the process. For twenty years, all was well, though the colony was cut off from the Empire for eleven months of the year. Then one year, the first ship through the Myst Tide came to the colony and found it completely deserted with no signs of violence. The captain turned his ship around and fled and no-one from the Empire went back for over fifty years.

Six years ago a new Emperor was crowned in Valmar. As part of his inaugural celebrations The Emperor Octavin announced his plans for reconquest of Maladon and granted licenses to Ten Captains to form Companies of men and Women to retake the island. Now the Imperial Colony has been restarted at a new location; re-using the old island Fortress of Haven as its base of operations. The Empire has now began shipping debtors, criminals and malcontents to Maladon to act as unwilling colonists, though the colony is only a year old.

The PCs are willing or unwilling colonists and are tasked with the exploration of the mysterious Isle.....

## MALADON

# SETTING LORE

## THE GREAT WAR

The War started when the Sithi killed Prince Varthis; favorite son of the Emperor Vedin, about a century ago. The Empire sent five full Talons to Maladon and founded a Redoubt on the Isle of Haven after being pushed back from landings on the banks of the Sable River. Imperial forces husbanded their strength for a year, building up the defenses of Haven, and then launched a massive assault on Sithi lands as soon as the Mysts parted and fresh supplies arrived.

The War was long and bloody. The Sithi had the advantage of magic but were fewer in numbers. The Empire sent fresh waves of troops every year and one by one the Sithi strongholds were thrown down. The turning point came after Lord Galvinus ordered the burning of the forests around the mouth of the river and this seems to have broken the Sithi's will to fight. After 25 years of inconclusive war where the battle-lines raged back and forth, the Sithi abandoned their homelands and fled into the forest. They never gave battle again and have seldom even been glimpsed since that time. The ruins of their ancient strongholds now stand as mute testimony to their now-vanished race.

But the Emperor was not satisfied and ordered a colony to be laid over the ruins of the Sithi homelands. The Colony was cautiously built but there was no sign of the Sithi. In time, Haven was abandoned, as the lands around the Colony became safe and the guard was relaxed.

## HAVEN

Haven was originally a redoubt and supply point for the Army of the Empire during the original Great War, that ended 71 years ago. It is located in an aura of 0 and hence no magic will work on the island except cantrips; and so it was always safe from Sithi attacks. Haven was never taken during the Great War, and is the last surviving outpost of that era.

## THE IMPERIAL COLONY

The old Imperial Colony was started 50 years ago, at the end of the Great War. It was sited somewhere to the north of Haven; in the lands once claimed by the Sithi. Its exact location has been lost after a fire in the Imperial Hall of Records in Valmar twelve years ago. The colony thrived for 22 years after the end of the Great War but then all the inhabitants completely vanished without trace. The expedition launched to find them found the lands around the colony mysteriously changed and wild and fled the Isle. They were executed for their cowardice but no expedition was sent back within the lifetime of Emperor Vedin.

## MALADON ISLE

Maladon is a vast forested Isle that boasts ranges of mountains on the Northern and Southern coasts. The island has only been circumnavigated once during the Great War and all of the maps from that expedition were lost in a fire at the Imperial Hall of Records a decade or so ago. Indeed, no accurate maps of Maladon exist and the Eastern half of the Island was never explored even during the period of the original colony or the Great War. In fact, less than one third of Maladon has ever felt the tread of human feet and so the interior of the Island is a complete mystery to the Empire.

# THE LAY OF SKARN AND SKARA

**T**he following Book is an obscure tome that can be found in various libraries throughout the Mystbound Realms. It is not widely known and few human characters would ever have heard of it. It is dismissed by most as a tall tale. Yet some of the ancient races, such as the Elves, can dimly recall these times. What of it is true and what is fable, who can tell though?

## OF SKARN AND SKARA

This is the tale of the Titan Drakes, and of the worlds that took their names; for these Drakes were accounted the mightiest of all creatures, and the most fell. Larger than the greatest fortress of men they were said to be, and armoured with scales the height of a house; the dread Titan Drakes were feared by all; even the Gods themselves.

How many there were in the beginning is not remembered; for they arose in an age before the High Men, before the Gods; some say before even the Erdar had drawn their first breath. Two names are all that have survived down through the ages; Skarn and Skara, the twin despilers of worlds.

Dagerii, the Spider Goddess, who is also known as the Fate-spinner, tells that she saw the Titan Drakes writhing at the roots of the earth in the days before the worlds were born; when the Mysts clothed all the lands. Deep in the earth they lived then; sleeping banes awaiting their time.

As they slept, they created the races of Dragons in their dreams; and so are the Titan Drakes worshipped by all evil Dragons as Gods, though Skarn scorned all such worship and ate all other Dragon-kind that he met; for his hunger was said to be insatiable.

Yet once the worlds had their births did the fell Drakes rise up and begin despoiling any who fell across their path. So powerful were the Titan Drakes that none could stand against them and they wrecked a thousand worlds; leaving them smoking ruins. Slaves and treasure they took; and they stole the memories of all their captives, using a magic so powerful that even Gods and Goddesses were brought to forgetfulness. All tribute, treasures and chattels did they bear back to their fell lairs.

## THE LAIRS OF EVIL

Skarn had bored deep into the roots of the earth and delved himself a lair that was hundreds of miles in extent and was known as the Wurmwarrens of Drorgoroth. Skara too had reeking palace of obsidian that he called Gartumma. Each Dragon-hold was overflowing with treasures and captives; many of whom soon transformed into fell Drakonids; for any who stole even a single coin became subject to an evil curse. Within hours their bodies slowly corrupted, until they became bestial Dragon-men who hated all living things, so great was their hatred for themselves and their ruination. Skarn and Skara used these Drakonid creatures as foot-soldiers in a vast army; and they set this army on whole worlds and their reign of terror was terrible.

Skarn and Skara had no love for one another; each desiring to devour the other; and they vied to be the greatest and to lay the other low. Yet Skara had a fell power that Skarn lacked; for his breath was a flame as black as night and nought could stand against it. Skarn knew his brother's secret; for Skara had once, before the Time of Mysts, swallowed a race of creatures known as the Vor-ar. Yet even Skara could not consume the Vor-ar, so great was their might, and so they became bound into the very essence of his flesh. The power of the Vor-ar was the source of Skara's black breath and also his ravening madness; a madness that even his Brother feared.

For an age of the world did the two brothers contest with one another; and threw down any Gods who got between them. The many worlds were their battleground and no world they visited was ever the same thereafter. Yet Skarn and Skara always returned to their lairs after each conquest; there to sleep for centuries, for time was as nothing to such terrible creatures. And in these ages of slumber did the worlds know great peace.

## THE DOOM OF DAGERII

Yet one day did Skarn capture and bring under his sway Dagerii; who is accounted the wisest of all the Gods and Goddesses. He stole Dagerii's memories, for she was too potent to leave wakeful. Yet in that moment did Skarn awaken the seeds of the Forever War; for Dagerii also had a secret; she was the Keeper of The Four. She had found them at the Beginning of Time and hidden them; for Dagerii knew what they were and what they heralded. She knew also who would claim them and what they would do with them and so she swallowed The Four and kept them safe within her. Yet Skarn had now robbed her of her memories and she no longer remembered her oaths nor purposes.

Dagerii wandered the Wurmwarrens; so lost that she did not even know her own name. Skarn had laid a spell across her eyes; for Dagerii had made the stars and Skarn knew that if she saw them she would read her past and future in the heavens and his magic would be broken. He sent Dagerii to be his general and she led an army of Drakonids to the first worlds, close to the centre of all creation.

There she found four races of men, though these had as little in common with the men of our day as a Lion has with a cat. For these creatures were High Men; that were once called the Holvari. They had arisen in the Mysts; and had not been made by Gods, and so were more akin to Gods than Men in truth.

## THE HIGH MEN OF OLD

And here at last did the Titan Drakes find a foe that was worthy of them. The Holvari humbled Dagerii and held her captive, breaking her armies and slaying all the Drakonids she had commanded. She had bitten several of the High Men and all but one known as Elisvara died.

As Dagerii lay beaten, she coughed up The Four and having no memory of them; stood amazed and surrendered them to the High Men. Elisvara tried to hide these weapons; suddenly afraid, though she did not know why, but Dagerii gave them up and thus did the sword Urkenhart; the Bow Elb; the spear Kinespar; and The Greenstaff, return to the pages of history.

Skarn awoke, sensing Dagerii's defeat and roared across the skies and came then to the four worlds of the High Men and attacked, expecting an easy victory. Yet the Holvari were ever a mighty race and fought with Skarn and were not overawed by him. He fled; amazed that any dared stand against him and called for his brother; thinking that these High Men might slay Skara or else together he and his brother might overcome these terrible new enemies.

But The Four could not be overcome; and in the hands of the High Men; they were unstoppable. The battle raged night and day for seven days and seven nights and was known ever afterwards as the Battle of Dark-Fire. Skarn recaptured Dagerii and sent her back to The Wurmwarrens, to raise another host of Drakonids. Meanwhile, the battle twixt the Titan Drakes and the Holvari was terrible. Anything slain or wounded by Skara was tainted, and soon fell into evil, for Darkfire was a terrible thing that could corrupt even the Gods. The tide of battle was turned when one of the races of High Men summoned their friends for aid; and thus did the Windlords enter battle with Dragons for the first time and did drive off Skarn, leaving his brother alone.

## RETURN OF THE VOR-AR

At the last, did the Holvari and the Windlords have the mastery and Skara was slain; his body crashing down to the ground with such a terrible force that the earth was rent asunder. Yet as he died, fell shadows leapt from his body and fled into the Mysts; for the Vor-ar did not die with Skara and thus was Dagerii's vision fulfilled and a great evil unfettered once more.

Skarn fled in terror, back to his Wurmwarrens; for he read his death in The Four and he cannot bear the sight of them, even unto this day.

The names of these High Men who defeated Skara and the worlds they came from would later echo down through the ages; for the Kelds, The Horkonar, The Lyceans and The Valkari later took other names and all are bound up with Skarn's fate.

Yet Skara's curse did not die with him and the Holvari sensed a growing evil in those who had been wounded by him. They told these tainted Holvari to leave and never to return until the stain of Darkfire was washed from them. Thus did Erkengel, Elisvara, Ban and Harkan gather their tainted kindreds together and pass into exile.

## THE EXILE

For an age of the earth did these Unhomred Kindreds wander, seeking a cure; yet all they found were growing signs of evil across the many worlds. The Vor-ar had returned, and their power was greater even than that of Skara, as they could curse other creatures to become like themselves and wield the Darkfire.

Yet at the last did the Unhomred find the City of Emeraldis and the Light of the Erdar. The Erdar were ancient beings of great power; and as soon as they saw the tainted Erkeldi they knew the truth in their hearts and thus did the Age of Light Undimmed come to a tragic end.

## ELISVARA

The Erdar spoke with the High Men and their allies and warned them that no magic could undo the curse of Darkfire save that of the Emerald Flame. The Erdar took the High Men nigh to the Fires of Creation where Emerald Flame still raged in the Mysts. And so did the Four Kindreds give themselves up to the Emerald Fire and in so doing were forever changed; becoming as mighty as Gods. And one of the High Men amazed the Erdar; for Elisvara walked into the centre of the Fires, where even the Erdar feared to tread, for the Emerald Flame there was so hot as to be able to unmake anything.

Yet Elisvara had been bitten by Dagerii and in her blood flowed the power of the Spider Goddess and somehow she survived even this, greatest of tests. Ever afterwards did Elisvara have a measure of power and foresight denied to all others, and the Erdar and the High Men exalted her and made her a Queen and the three greatest of the other kindreds, they raised up as Kings. These were Harkan of the Horkonlords, Ban of the Valkari, and wise Erkengel of the Kelds; who now named themselves Erkeldi; but over all of them ruled Queen Elisvara of the Lyceans.

## THE FOREVER WAR

Now the High Men took counsel with the Erdar and learned of the Vor-ar. Before the beginning of time had the Erdar created the Titan Drakes to destroy the Vor-ar and the great beasts had devoured them ere the coming of the Mysts. When the Holvari heard what they had unleashed, they swore to overcome the Vor-ar and the Erdar were well pleased. Together the Erdar and the Holvari went amongst the many worlds and raised a great army and sought out the Vor-ar and thus did the Forever War begin anew.

Of that War little more is said here, save that The High Men soon foreswore their oath, for the Erdar were unyielding and inhuman and fought the Vor-ar unceasingly. After a thousand years of war did The High Men leave the service of the Erdar and sought for a home for themselves. This they did at the bidding of Queen Elisvara; who was sick of the war that had no end.

## SKARN

Now that his Brother was dead, Skarn rejoiced once he realised the High Men had not pursued him back to Drorgoroth. He plundered Gartumna and brought back his brother's hoard to his own Wurmwarrens, with the aid of his chattels. Yet he had not marked that Dagerii had taken for herself a necklace of eyes and at first this did little harm yet in the end was it Skarn's downfall.

Skarn began despoiling worlds again, and came to the world of Glamis. Glamis was a cold world; of swamplands and endless permafrost. A race of gold Dragons, calling themselves the Drorakin, ruled a race of humans; who called themselves the Glarns. The Drorakin were benevolent and ruled the Glarns in human form, and together they lived in huge basalt fortresses that rose out of the dark, frozen swamps.

Skarn was incensed that Dragonkin should treat a race that looked like the High Men with anything other than contempt. He descended on Glamis and despoiled much of the land. The Drorakin were no match for Skarn and all were slain; great Shaldinara the High Queen and Talavaldin the wise counsellor and many others of their kindred whose names are not remembered.

Skarn took their eggs back to his Wurmwarren; for in their unborn state, the Drorakin eggs would know unending pain because of his magic and Skarn thought this a fitting punishment for allying themselves with Men; even if they were Mirdari, made by Gods and not Holvari, who had their birth in the Mysts.

Skarn also commanded that his Drakonids herd many of the Glarnic tribes to Drorgoroth and he used them as slaves or for food and thought himself invulnerable.

## SKARN'S DOWNFALL

Yet Skarn had forgotten Dagerii and she wandered Drorgoroth; still bound by the Titan Drake's fell spells, and one day she wandered up to the surface of the land where Skarn had made his lair. The land was scoured and blasted and not a single tree grew. Dagerii could see because although Skarn had blinded her with spells, she now wore the necklace of eyes she had taken from Gartumna.

There was no sun at this time; for the Holvari had not yet created it, and so the sky was dark but lit by vast auroras. As soon as clouds cleared; Dagerii saw the stars and in that instant she read her future and all that had happened, for she had made the stars at the dawn of time and was their mistress in all things. Skarn's spells shattered like glass and Dagerii came back to herself and descended into the earth full of wroth.

The battle that followed lasted twenty days and destroyed much of Drorgoroth; Skarn was almost invincible above ground and in the air; but his tunnels were the perfect ground for Dagerii. She turned her magic against him, filled his warren with webs and poisoned him with her most potent venom. Skarn fought for another day but then succumbed to the Goddess' poison. He fell into a slumber from which he has never awoken. And there he sleeps still; in his own Wurmwarrens, until the day when Dagerii's magic wanes and releases him.

## THE EMANCIPATION OF THE GLARNS

Dagerii led the Glarns out onto the surface of 'Skarn' and taught them about their lost land and history; giving each one back their name. The Glarns have revered her ever since; calling her 'Name-Giver' and 'The Mistress of Memory' and offered her their prayers. One, named Vadwy Onwyn, she took back down into the earth and he emerged carrying a Golden Egg.

## THE DRORNLORD AND VALSHALDINARIS THE GOLDEN

In time, Vadwy Onwyn became Vadwy the Great; the first High King of the Glarns, though he took the title of Drornlord and so did all those who came after him. Vadwy's egg hatched and Valshaldinaris the Golden was born; greatest of the Drorakin. He became the Drornlord's protector and advisor and together they built the Shining City of Shaldis over the main entrance to Drorgoroth and sealed as many of the others as they could find. Valshaldinaris taught the Glarns much lore and together the world where they had emerged, whose name was also Skarn, was healed.

Valshaldinaris summoned the Elvarin of Cernguard and they came and great forests arose in a single night, and sweet meadows grew in profusion for the Elvarin could tap into the soil and undo all its hurts, so potent was their earth-lore. The Forests of Sond became so impenetrable and fair that they were accounted a wonder of the many worlds; and some said that no forest anywhere better recalled the grandeur of the vast wildwood that covered all the land in ancient ages.

Valshaldinaris taught the Glarns much knowledge and lore; both of making and crafting and also of magic and war. He and all who came after him gave their human protectors a measure of their power, wisdom and longevity; so that one could not die of old age until the other did. Yet this binding meant that the Drorakin did not live as long as they would once have done; and their span was reduced to bur four or five centuries. After Vadwy and Valshaldinaris died, they were interred together in the Kingshald; and attended by Drakkenhald priests who venerated them. As more Drornlords came and went, each new double burial attracted its own order of Drakkenhald Priests.

Once a Drornlord had died, Glarns seeking lordship would descend into the Wurmwarrens to test their strength in what became known as The Ritual of Kingship. Any claimant would have to enter the Wurmwarrens and emerge with a golden egg. The egg would hatch and become the King's Counsellor if it found its rescuer worthy of Kingship. Yet there was ever hazard in this ritual for Skarn still slept in Drorgoroth and legion were his minions who skulked in the lightless depths of that fell place. Hazard there was too of a different form, for Drorgoroth was a hoard unlike any other; and jewels, eldrich things and gold spilled out of the many warrens; as uncountable as grains of sand on a beach. Yet Dagerii had warned the Glarns what would befall those who brought up any such treasure; for Skarn's hoard was hedged about with evil spells and all who stole from him went mad or else passed into shadow and became one of his fell servants.

## HEAVENSWEAVE AND THE NORMS

Dagerii; weary of battle, emerged from Drorgoroth after leading Vadwy back to the surface and went to the highest peak she could see and there raised a great hall of crystal strands and dwelt there, watching the stars for an age; this house became known as Heavensweave, and around it a monastery soon arose, where Glarns dedicated themselves to Dagerii.

It was afterwards said, that those who wanted true knowledge would be bitten by Dagerii or drink of her venom and gain the same measure of foresight as the Spider Goddess once bestowed on Elisvara. In time, the servants of Dagerii became known as The Norns and they aided the Drornlords and the Glarnic peoples until the time of the Demon-Wars.

## ORIGIN OF THE DRORGARD AND THE DRAGONKNIGHTS

Valshaldinaris took mortal form to better walk amongst humans; as the Drorakin did in the days when they lived on Glamis. Soon, Valshaldinaris took human lovers and these women bore him children. Some looked human and others like scaly dragon-kind that walked upright as men did. Regardless of their form, both had draconic blood and were greater in might than any mortal man. These offspring of Dragon and Glarn became two lineages of warriors, known as the Drorgard and the Dragonknights. Valshaldinaris trained both groups to be fearsome fighters and to resist evil magic. This practise continued long after the death of Valshaldinaris, as other Dragons were brought up and born and also coupled with Glarnic and later Holvari humans.

The Drorgard were ever chosen from those who had draconic forms. They became a caste of hereditary bodyguards of the Drornlords and the guardians of the City of Shaldis. The Drorgard ensured that the Drornlord and his family were kept safe, and also guarded his home and lands. In later years, some Drorgard would descend into Droroth with claimants to the throne; to ensure their survival.

The Dragonknights looked superficially human and formed two orders; The Warrenguard controlled the entrances to Droroth and tested the purity of the Drornlords as they emerged with their eggs at the end of the Kingship Ritual. This purity ritual was to ensure that any that emerged had not stolen from Skarn and thus become tainted by his magic. The Warrenguard took this duty very seriously as Dagerii had once sent a message to Valshaldinaris warning him that 'the Age of the Drornlords shall end in flames sent by Skarn, but wielded by one of your own.' Valshaldinaris formed the Warrenguard to protect against this possibility. The Warrenguard hunted Drakonids and allies of Skarn openly and were also the Drornlord's elite warriors during war. The second branch of Dragonknights were known as the Talons; they travelled the land, meting out the Drornlord's justice and also slaying those who sought to bring the Kingdom low. The Talons also formed a secret chapter known as The Golden Hand; who had a hidden fortress within Shaldis and watched the Drornlord constantly for corruption by evil. Even the Drorgard did not trust these 'Hands' but the wisdom of having them was soon to be proved.

## THE FIRETHANE

Eventually, Dagerii's prediction came true and a claimant went into the Wurmwarrens and was corrupted. This had happened many times before; but what made Caradnas different was his cunning and his power. He did not emerge into Shaldis to be cut down by the Warrenguard; instead, he hid in the tunnels and killed and ate Drakonids for years.

As many claimants died in the Wurmwarrens, this was not immediately noticed. Slowly, Skarn's power drove Caradnas mad and Skarn was able to command him through his dreams. Caradnas took up a Drakkenstaff and used it to hatch a Red Dragon, whom he called Grorgramor. Grorgramor was evil to the core and lusted for revenge, for the Drorakin had been the enemies of his people on Glamis.

Caradnas bided his time and opened tunnels to the surface that had long been sealed. He gathered Drakonids to him and started welding them into an army. Caradnas discovered the corrupting power of Skarn's treasure, and emerged from the Warrens using a long forgotten entrance, near the Sighting Caverns. He began by giving the gold out to any foolish humans who would take it. Soon, he had a band of corrupted followers, and they began spreading their evil throughout the land of Skarn. These corrupted followers became known as the Skarnshald; in mockery of the Drakkenshald priests who attended and venerated the Drorakin after they died. Within a century, The Dragonknights knew something was very wrong in the Kingdom and warned the Drornlord and his Dragon consort of a coming evil. Yet it was too late, and the Caradnas struck, slaying King Cadarn and his family in a brutal attack. His Dragon, Malakarnarsis rallied the forces of the Glarns and The War of Fire began.

## THE WAR OF FIRE

Caradnas emerged from Droroth with a host of evil artefacts from Skarn's hoard; including an amulet of Darkfire. He also had a flight of young red Dragons with which to devastate the land. He quickly destroyed Shaldis and drove Malakarnarsis out of Skarn, scattering the Glarnic army in the process. Any who died by the power of Caradnas rose as terrible undead, blazing with dark fire, and plagued the land. Caradnas' magic became known as Skarnfire for it was a dreadful fusion of Darkfire and Skarn's evil might. The more powerful the slain, the deadlier the creature they became and this Fire-plague was Caradnas' felest weapon.

Soon, Caradnas had a dark army that even the Drorgard could not defeat; for every time a hero fell, he joined the ranks of the enemy.

Malakarnasis created weapons and armour for his Drorgard with the help of the Dwarren smiths of Morrendeep; these shields and weapons were forged in Dragon-fire and so were proof against Skarnfire. Indeed, some whisper that the Mantle of Scales, and the sword Skarnbane, that were the heirlooms of the Drornlords down through the ages, were fashioned in Morrendeep by the last of the Dwarren Gods; Mahal himself. These artefacts, whose names are now legend, helped turn the tide for fifty long years.

Then disaster struck and Caradnas slew Malakarnarsis. With their leader dead it was a simple matter to hunt down the Drorgard and the Dragonknights, who were forced into hiding. The land became part of the Dominion of the Firethane, and for five hundred years, no Drornlord sat on the Throne of Shaldis, as Drakonids slew any who entered the Wurmwarrens and other darker things haunted the ruins of the Shining City.

The Glarns were enslaved or driven into the Forests of The Sondar; for even Caradnas feared the arrows of the Elvarin. Caradnas now set about conquering the surrounding worlds and sent his armies to Tregarn, Skara and Yurland. He enslaved the Dwarren of Morrendep for the help they had given Malakarnasis and the Elvarin of the Forests of Sond were punished until they retreated so deep into the Sondar that they were seldom heard from again. Yet even Caradnas did not dare to burn the trees for fear of the Great Spirits that dwelt within the forest; and any army of his that went under the eaves, never returned. Now the Sondar became a place of fear and few cared to tread its lightless paths. Yet of all other parts of Skarn did the Firethane hold in the palm of his hands. He scorned Shaldis and set up his City of Lead on the summit of the Red Mountain.

## THE COMING OF THE HIGH MEN TO SKARN

The Holvari had wandered for a thousand years and now were seeking a home. They had carried with them the sleeping form of Queen Elisvara; who had slain one of the Vor-ar and had also created the Sun to light the way for her people and chase back the Shadows.

They had been sundered into two groups by now, for the Valkari and the Horkonkin had become estranged from the Erkeldi and the Lyceans. By chance or fate, the Horkonkin and Valkari chanced upon Skarn and found it a devastated land; save the forests of the Sondar. They immediately felt the power of a Titan Drake and also smelled the evil of Darkfire. This, they knew they could not ignore and so held a council at which the Four Kindreds met for the first time in centuries. High Queen Ella, a scion of Elisvara, bade them all put aside their differences; for she too had the gift of Foresight and knew this was to be where all the kindreds were destined to live.

The Horkonlord Hargor; King of the Horth, summoned his allies from Abora and the Windlords answered his call. Together, they assembled a host such as had not been seen on the face of Skarn and could have laid the Drake himself low, if he had fought beside the Firethane. Such was the might of the Holvari host of old that little could stand before them, save perhaps the Vor-ar. The Holvari drove into the world of Skarn and attacked the Firethane. For years the war raged; and the Fireplague caused by Skarnfire proved its deadliest weapon for when one of the Holvari fell, the creature they became was more powerful than the Firethane himself. These dead had to be sealed into tombs of Icerol and warded with spells so powerful that even a God could not have escaped them. The Windlords struck down Caradnas' Red Dragons and smote their ruin on the mountaintops, and slowly the war was won over thirty long years.

At the last, did the Avowed; greatest warriors of the Holvari, capture the Firethane and bring him in chains before Hargor of the Horkonlords. Caradnas had one last trick before he escaped and was killed; for he poisoned the King's mind with tales of Skarn's treasure and in time did this bear dark fruit and led to the Rule of the Masters.

## THE HIGH KINGDOMS

Hargor counselled that none should be allowed to enter Drorgoroth and so no new Drornlords could be invested. The Drorgard emerged and protested at this but the Holvari would not risk someone waking Skarn himself, and set them and the few remaining Dragonknights, to hunting down all the scattered pieces of Skarn's hoard. This they set to doing and it was a hard task, during which many of them died. Both orders were sorely depleted for most had died in the War of Fire. They were aided by the Avowed whenever one arose who was truly tainted and could wield Skarnfire.

The Horkonlord raised the Kingdom of Horthomer and the Valkari dwelt there also, in the City of Horthild, whilst the Lyceans built the Sorrenhold in the forests of Sond, where the Elvarin had once dwelt. The Sandfolk created the realm of Duneharrow on the shores of the Sea of Shale and the Erkeldi raised up Spireswarren and the delved out the underground City of Elisvara in the Keldonvale. The Avowed guarded the sleeping form of the High Queen Elisvara and were ruled by the Erkeldi Lords of Spireswarren, who became mighty in the arts of magic. For centuries there was peace. The Horkonlords grew powerful and their King ruled Skarn in all but name. The Horkonkith raised a great hall for their lord in the land of Horthomer and this they named Kineshalid, in memory of the Goddess Kine who had taught them speech at the time of their awakening on Abora. The Erkeldi continued to seek lore and to guide but did not seek lordship. The Lyceans withdrew and became secretive; for their Queen Ella knew some of what was to come. She consulted with the Norns and with Dagerii; and her fears were confirmed. She warned the Erkeldi and all the kindreds; but knew her words were in vain and would not be heeded in Horthomer.

And indeed all was not well; for Hargor brooded long on Caradnas' descriptions of the power contained for in Drorgoroth and in truth this is why he forbade the Wurmwarrens to others; coveting its power for himself. He began exploring the ruins of Gartumna; the once citadel of Skara and found evil lore there. He died before he could make any use of it, but the books and some artefacts passed into the hands of his champion and soon corrupted Hagrimor, his wife Nera, and her brother Gulgarin. All of these Holvari had been born on Skarn, after the War of Fire and so were heedless of the lessons of the past. Indeed, a schism had opened in the Horkonlords and Valkari; twixt those who had lived for many ages of the world, but who were burdened by all they had seen and done, and those who were born on Skarn and who coveted the power they saw imbued in those who had fought in the Forever War. This schism proved to be the undoing of both of these kindreds. These younger Horth and Valkari were also afraid, as the Mysts were encroaching on Skarn and were beginning to divide it up and they were wise enough to know that with their long lifetimes, the Myst could yet be their doom.

## THE TIME OF THE MASTERS

Nera and Gulgarin learned darker and darker magics and became convinced they could wield the power of Skarn safely. They removed themselves from Horthild and moved to Gartumna, shielded from sight by Hagrimor's influence. There they began experimenting with dark magicks and even found artefacts hidden from the time of Skara; one of these was an ancient bane that Skara had taken from The Quamori. This thing was a sphere that looked as if it were made of quicksilver, but was in fact a Dreamstone; left over from the Time before the Mysts.

Soon, others had joined Gulgarin's cause as his power became more evident; what these fools did not know is that the Dreamstone had begun using their powers whilst they slept as their minds called to it in dreams. The Horkonlord Hagar son of Hargor suddenly died; killed by assassins who were shadowy and could not be fought. His sons went into hiding and the realm was soon in chaos. Then the weather turned evil and crops failed, causing widespread famine. Finally, an army began ravaging the countryside at night, vanishing by dawn. No force of the Horkonlords could find them by day nor bring them to battle by night. Not even Gulgarin or his sister Nera guessed that all of these things occurred because of their unspoken desires.

Hagrimor was by now ruling Horthomber as steward and he ordered his kindred to raise a 'White City' that all might shelter in; already most Valkari had left Horthomber and fled to Shaldis and began helping the Glarins to rebuild the glory of the Shining City. Once the White City of Horkonor was finished the Dreamstone was moved therein and suddenly it gained access to the minds of thousands of High Men; some of whom were mighty indeed and had fought in the Forever War. In an instant, the power of Gulgarin, Nera and their circle was enhanced a hundred fold and all the Horkonkith in Horkonor fell into slumber, including Hagrimor. Yet the Dreamstone had corrupted Gulgarin and his circle and they cared for nothing but power. They now bent their will to finishing the City and the eldritch might they manifested meant that they could move the White City with a thought, and thus could move it great distances.

The Lords of Spireswarren, who had been distracted by strange portents, suddenly realised that the happenings in Horthomber were linked to the omens they had discovered. Quickly, they dispatched the Avowed to destroy The Masters, as they now called themselves. It was a mistake, as the Masters were now too powerful and bent the Avowed to their will and used Skarn's Magic to steal their memories. Yet even the Masters could not taint the swords of the Avowed; and so they were all cast into the Wurmwarrens where none might ever recover them.

The Avowed now became the servants of the Masters; as did Cernas, the Mistlord who had many old grudges against the Holvari. Together, they began conquering Skarn and the lands around; even as Caradnas and the Titan Drake before them had done. They took tribute from all around them; also delving into Drorgoroth. One of those they conquered were the Dwarren of Morrendeep; these creatures were masters of stone, metal and water and had aided the Drornlords of old.

The Masters used Dwarren magics to augment the White City until it became a terrible arcane laboratory and was filled with dreadful weapons of war. Most eerily, all of its inhabitants slept; for the Masters needed their Horth and Valkari captives alive to continue to wield their power.

Each Master took a tower; and soon they began vying with each other for greater control as distrust, paranoia and hatred grew. Some of them then began raising Dragons and binding them to their will; and so Drakes again darkened the skies above Skarn in wars of conquest, as the Masters sent armies out into the many worlds, to bring home spoils and plunder.

## THE MASTERS SEALED INTO SKARN

Yet the Lords of Spireswarren had not been idle; and had summoned aid from Keld and Abora. The Keepers of Keld came to their call, not worried by the Masters, but by the rumour of a forbidden Dreamstone. As soon as they had confirmed the Dreamstone was real, they raised up the Mysts and sealed Skarn away from the other worlds; save Skara and Yurland, that were almost swallowed by the Mysts anyway.

Then they broke the Urgates that they had made in ages past and humbled the Masters, showing them the power of Emerald Fire, for the Keepers of Keld are the greatest wielders of the Deep Magic present in this age; and Dagerii herself has foretold that they will never be surpassed. It is the Keepers who fought the Sargorian Sorceror-Kings to a standstill though that dark tale is for another telling.

The Keepers then erected a web of magics around the world of Skarn and broke the fabric of magic itself; so that it is fractured into Gloamings. Thus was the power of the Masters forever blunted, though it was still potent. This also caused the Mysts, which had been slowly advancing every year, to accelerate their encroachment. Now the Mysts were visibly gnawing at the edges of Skarn within the lifetime of an ordinary Glarin. The Aborn, who some call the Windlords came then; humbling the Masters' Dragon servants that the Masters had tried to hide. Yet the Aborn could not bring themselves to harm their former friends; for the Horkonlords first awoke on Abora and there was ever great love between the two kindreds. And so the Windlords fled Skarn and it is said that they never again answered the summons of the Keepers nor of the Erdar; for the grief of fighting their former comrades was too much to bear.

The Keepers left then; leaving Skarn to its fate; yet just as they departed, Dagerii screamed, for she foresaw that some power was acting against fate; and even as her scream died in her throat did the Masters rage enact a terrible magic. As they slept, so filled with wroth was Gulgarin that he summoned up a creature from the dark dimensions beyond the veil of this reality. Thus was Slaygar, Lord of Demons summoned and with the aid of the Dreamstones, were all the sleeping Horkonkith transformed instantly into Demondim.

The Masters awoke, but it was too late. Slaygar took his new army out of the White City and with it most of the Masters' remaining power. The Demondim quickly journeyed to Gartumna, the once hold of Skara and made it their own. There they discovered all the secrets that Skara had hidden even from his Brother and released many banes that they wielded openly for the first time in millennia.

Meanwhile, the Avowed slowly came back to themselves and Elkior of the Valkari deliberately caused the White City, which was almost a living thing now because of centuries of human sacrifice, to turn on him, killing all of the Masters in the process. The other Avowed were instantly freed and fled the White City; which now fell dormant. They returned to Elisvara and found the Lords of Spireswarren arrayed for war; for the Demon-Wars had begun.

## THE DEMON-WARS

Long did the Demon-wars rage and many races were destroyed by it. The Dwarren vanished and the Elvarin also disappeared, as did most of the Sand-folk. Slaygar attacked Spireswarren many times; but each time he met the Avowed; though they were greatly lessened without their blades.

This lack caused Trajanus of the Avowed to journey to Shaldis, now a ruin again, and to enter the Wurmwarrens. What passed under the earth there is told in no tale; yet he emerged with the swords of the Avowed and a golden egg. From that egg was born Gildonethral the Golden; and this ushered in a new age of Drornlords, for Trajanus was accounted both Drornlord and Avowed and both High Men and Glarns flocked to his banner. He raised the house of Estaneveral and it became the hall of the Avowed ever after until it was swallowed by the Mysts.

It is said also that Lord Greenstaff appeared at the very lowest point of the wars; and he carried with him The Four, and he rallied the Lords of Spireswarren; who now called themselves the Gravenlords and they brought the Emerald Fire against the Demons and they were scourged and blasted. Greenstaff also brought lore that allowed for the fashioning of wards against the Demons. For five centuries the wars raged on; humans hiding underground, warded against demons and fearful of discovery. A demon entered Morrendeep and slew all the humans hiding there but was killed by Tarkentil of the Erkeldi and Songara of the Lyceans. Then at last did Maktil of the Sandfolk and Trajanus corner Slaygar at the gates of Elisvara and slay his mortal form, ending the war; though both died in the battle. The Gravenlords then drove the Demonidom back to Gartumna and sealed its fell gates with spells potent enough to hold a God within. The Mysts were now closing fast around Gartumna and only a year after the end of the Demon Wars, it was cut off from the rest of Skarn forever by the closing of the Mysts around it.

## THE RED PLAGUE

All the High Kindreds were now greatly diminished after millennia of wars and predation by Cernas' Dromen; the Horkonlords were almost extinct, and the Valkari and Erkeldi greatly lessened; of the Lyceans, there was almost no word. Yet hope there was amongst the Glarns; for a Dragon had survived the Demon Wars and Gildonethral the Golden took human form and ruled as a Drornlord till a human lord could be anointed. Shaldis was rebuilt, though the craftsmanship was not that of old. The Dragon also took Trajanus' widow; Queen Ella of the Lyceans to wife, and their sons became a new generation of Dragonknights and Dragonshields.

Yet all was not well and a plague arose that seemed only to take root in those of Holvari blood. It was called the Red Death and some whispered that it was sent from Gartumna and was an evil raised by the Demons. Within a few hundred years, almost all the pure blood Holvari had died or fled, and the only Holvari left were those offspring of High-men and Glarns that had arisen from intermarriage. The gates of Spireswarren and Elisvara were fast shut and were never to open again. Some whispered that their silent halls were now the realm only of ghosts or else of Demons. Yet the Avowed endured, though diminished, and would allow none to enter the ancient places, guarding them against the foolish or curious; and the White City they guarded most closely of all. Estaneveral was now the last beacon of hope; though the Avowed themselves were by now also of mixed blood.

A new age of the Drornlords arose and once again Eggs were brought to the surface and new Drornlords crowned. Shaldis became the ruling city of Skarn once more as Horthomber and the City of Horthild fell ever deeper into memory and were soon forgotten.

## THE GOLDEN AGE

This age was accounted a golden age, for it was the time of the Drornlords and of their Golden Drorakin companions. The blood of the High Men was so diluted by now that their race was legendary and few survived. It was at this time that the Avowed also faltered, as fewer of the claimants had sufficient lineage to master the blades, and those who were accounted worthy soon died, for they had only a slightly longer lifespan than ordinary men. The Mysts also had been ceaselessly marching in for ages of the world and now Estaneveral and the Keldonvale were threatened.

The Avowed could not agree on a course of action to answer the threat of the Mysts; but many stayed in Estaneveral, hoping to find a way to save the swords. They took this sad decision because of their rituals; any who wanted to join their order had to enter the 'Forest of Swords' a graveyard wherein were interred the former wielders of each blade. These wielders were buried such that their arms held aloft the sword they had once borne, so that it protruded out of the grave. A postulant was required to purify himself and then spend a night in the 'forest'.

He or she would then, by dawn's first light, grasp the chosen blade and try and take it from the bony hand of its former owner. Only the next ordained wielder was able to remove the sword; for the sword chose the wielder and was aided in this by the shade of its former master. At this time, so soon after the Demon Wars, most of the swords were in the 'Forest' as their owners had been slain and no new postulants had yet come forth. The last few Avowed were unable to remove the blades and were loath to abandon them to the Mysts. They were soon forced to flee for the Mysts closed off the Keldonvale in the time of Drornlord Galikar III and his mount, the dragon Asharakhin; and so were Spireswarren and Elisvara also lost to men at the same time. The passing of Estaneveral was also soon the loss of the Avowed; for without their ancient home, they soon dwindled and no tale records what became of the few blades that escaped the Mysts, though it is remembered that the Dromen ever hunted the Avowed above all others.

For a time, the surviving Avowed and the Dragonknights and Dragonshields maintained the watch upon the ancient holds and places of the enemy, but soon, as the memory of past ages faltered, was the watch neglected. When the Mysts threatened the ways to Shaldis, the watch failed altogether as the Last Drornlord sought a way to save his City. Yet all attempts to stay the Mysts failed and they marched ceaselessly in, until Skarn was a fraction of its size; and divided into realms; each only joined to the others for a few days or weeks at a time by Myst-tides. The last Drornlord fled Shaldis with an egg; hoping somehow to preserve the ancient traditions, but vanished and his fate was never discovered, nor that of his egg. With the passing of many of the ancient places and of the Drornlords, the stewardship of Skarn fell to the last of the High Men.

## THE DRORGARD BECOME THE DRAGONSHIELDS

Over time, the Mysts rolled in and the Shaldis was cut off from the rest of Skarn; forever lost some would say. The Drorgards who left the city before it was finally enveloped changed their role as the time of the Drornlords came to an end; for without the Wurmwarrens, there was no way to bring up new eggs or to proclaim new Drornlords. Thus the Drorgards turned to hunting down the cursed treasures of Skarn and hiding them away where they could cause mortals no further harm. To this end, they took up the shields made by the Dwarren, during the War of Fire and turned them to their purposes. These shields had great power that could ward off and protect the wielder from Skarnfire and its terrible curse and gained the Drorgard a new name; the Dragonshields. So long have they borne this name that they themselves have almost forgotten their ancient role. Since many Dragonshields were originally of Lykeri blood, for most came from the line of Gildonethral the Golden and Ellasansara of the Lykeri, so some portion of the ward of Elisvara protects them from evil and from baleful magic, though its strength is greatly diluted after so many centuries. It also means that Dragonshields are wiser and less martial than the human Dragonknights, and are known as healers and seers amongst common folk.

## THE TIME OF THE EMPIRE

During the time of the Red Plague, Valkari survivors awoke in the White City and began exploring. Most had been held in eldritch sleep for the whole of the Time of the Masters and the Demon Wars and had not been released until Slaygar was killed. Many died in the evil city but some escaped to the outer lanes and managed to survive. The Red Plague did not spare them and soon most of the ancient ones, some of whom had fought with the Erdar, finally met their ends. Once Estaneveral was cut off, and the Avowed's watch on Horkonor failed, other Glarns and mixed blood Valkari joined them and they began building a city around the ruins of The Masters' City. At first their numbers were few but by the time that Shaldis was swallowed by the Mysts had the City of Valmara grown to vast size and had even warred with the Golden Realm of the Last Drornlord.

The Valkari were all mixed blood by now with varying degrees of Holvari and Glarnic lineage. These 'Valmari' had become a backward looking culture; obsessed with the past glories of their Holvari forebears, until the houses of the dead outnumbered those of the living and the City of Valmara became a vast necropolis.

The Valmari took upon themselves the Mantle of Kingship and usurped many ancient glories. The Avowed arose again; reimagined as the protectors of the Emperor and their ancient purpose was quietly rewritten. These 'Avowed' were the proudest scions of the houses with the purest blood; some of who still had a life four times the span of an ordinary Glarn. Yet they lacked the blades that had truly defined the ancient order; and without them were just another order of knights clothing themselves in borrowed glories.

The Valmari Emperor Valdinus III brooded long on the matter of the Mysts, for now much of Skarn was severed from the other lands and joined to the others only by Myst tides. He became obsessed with the idea that the Gods might hold the key to holding back the Mysts; for all the Gods had now fallen into slumber and their vast sarcophagi were now temples where Gods or their Avatars were interred and worshipped.

Valdin his son conceived the idea that the Gods were the key to holding back the Mysts and also prolonging his own life. He started a war of conquest and his armies began marching across the face of Skarn around two centuries ago, annexing lands and then moving the huge sarcophagi back to Valmara in the hopes that the sleeping forms within would spare his people and his city.

Valdin the Mad as he came to be known, was killed by Trajanus of House Estaneveral and Constantine of House Bannic; but when the latter took the Mantle of Emperor upon himself, he proved an even crueler ruler than his forebear; even killing his friend Trajanus, the last of the Avowed, in an act of betrayal. Once he had consolidated power he began trying to subvert all the surrounding lands, causing wars between neighbours and petty realms to pay him tribute. It was in his time that the Valmari name became one that was feared rather than loved.

Now the lands are a patchwork of petty realms and all the ancient places are lost in the Mysts. Without true leadership, many of the lands have sunk into barbarism or else are lost in their own struggles. The 'Spires Lords' of Horthomber rail against the Empire but are just as debased and misguided as Emperor Constantine and their claims to be 'the heirs both of Horthomber and Spireswarren' are taken seriously by few. Their magic though, is respected; though they are but foolish meddlers beside the glory of the Gravenlords of Old. Of the Golden Realm there is now little sign; the occasional Dragonshield or Dragonknights roam the land; but they are almost a forgotten order now and only the Glarns remember or love them.

As for the Norns; the priests of Dagerii, they are now distrusted by most because of their stated aim to 'return fate to the path foreseen by The Spider Goddess' for it is said that Dagerii has sent them visions that show that the summoning of Demons has somehow altered the tides of fate and that they will return and destroy all life. Dagerii's followers now try to manipulate the fates to return things to the way they are supposed to be. Accordingly they have assassinated Kings in the name of this purpose; and have also raised up unnamed boys to Kingship in their place.

# PEOPLE DISCOVERED



his is an *incomplete* list of noteworthy people that have been encountered so far:

**Adolfo of the Blue Sashes:** is one of two twins, Adolfo is the 'loud' one of the two siblings and a Sergeant and unofficial 'father' of the Company of the Blue Sash in Haven. Adolfo is protective of his charges but often feels out of his depth in the politics of the Ten Companies.

**Bruno of the Blue Sashes:** is the 'quiet' twin of Adolfo but the more dangerous. Rumour has it that Bruno once killed a troll after it slew one of his friends. Bruno is also a Sergeant of the Blue Sashes and keeps the coin and the accounts.

**Corporal Carlos:** is a veteran of the Blue Sashes, Carlos was one of the first to venture onto Maladon and the experience seems to have scarred him. One or the ladies, it is rumoured that Carlos is the only survivor of a terrible expedition to the Blackspire in the early days of the re-conquest. Recent events now suggest that Corporal Carlos is some kind of revenant; since his body was discovered sealed into crystal in a cave close to Haven. His dress suggests he died during the Great War and was a member of the Fifth Talon of the Imperial Army.

**Eadric of Northferry:** is a sour boatman who ferries the Blue Sashes across Haven Sound and onto the shores of Maladon. The old man is over fond of gambling and frequently takes wagers as to who will survive any expedition. Harlon Fegg: is a fence and member of the local Thieves' Guild in Haven. He seems quite brazen and is obviously protected by someone in a high position. Fegg does not trust the Blue Sashes after they were employed to 'clean up the City' several months ago.

**Harven Redoran:** is a book seller who came to Haven to sell a rare book. Lydika of the Blue Sashes insists Redoran is a cultist and the book he came to sell was evil. Pursuing Redoran pitted a band of Blue Sashes against a demon.

**Hywel of Mounford:** A valeman who was rescued from the Imperial Guards by Dorn Dundragon and a Company under the direction of Zeke Boone of the Blue Sashes. Meave of Westgate: is the wife of Torrigg the Huntsman and his son Torstan.

**Meg of Gatesgarth:** is the mother of two foul mouthed and rebellious boys. She is a shepherd and recently lost her Husband. Her brother is a renowned hunter called Earlann, who is said to know something of the Goblins of the Bonewood.

**Sithi:** were a race of evil Elves who lived on Maladon and worshipped The Horned King. They were pushed back into the Forest of Shadows during the Great War and have not been seen since.

**The Cider Boys:** are a group of smugglers and bully boys who have a lair on the Street of Three Fishes somewhere. The Cider Boys were once simple thugs but recent events suggest they have new backers or leadership and that they are a far more potent force than they once were. The Cider Boys once controlled Castle Karstan that is now under control of the Blue Sashes and has been renamed Castle Dorn.

**The Horned King:** was the chief God of the Sithi, this is a common name for Arawn.

**The Haunter of the Dark:** a Sithi God or godling who's Fane is located in the Bonewood. His servant, the Huntsman was recently killed by Mindartis (Erolith) and Orryn of the Blue Sashes; but a cult dedicated to this avatar may well still be active in Haven.

**Tobrin of Hunters' Inn:** a Hunter and probably a Valeman, Tobrin has a grudge against Mindartis the elf, who once used a spell to force information from him.

**Tomb Isle:** lies a few days sail south of Haven; in the host of islands off of Maladon's southern coast. The Isle is the site of several dangerous tombs, including one where Thanatos the Sorceror was interred but his apprentices and acolytes.

**Torrigg of Haven:** a Hunter who went missing in the Forest of Shadows. Torrigg seems to have had some dealings with fell shards of crystal and to have lost his son to the Forest. He himself has now disappeared, though he was rescued. Yet after his rescue he vanished again.

**Lord Ulrich:** is the Master of the White Horse Inn and nominal leader of the Mages in Haven.

# PLACES DISCOVERED



his is an *incomplete* list of noteworthy places that have been encountered so far:

**Bonewood:** is a Goblin infested forest that is carpeted with animal bones, the Bonewood lies but a day's hard travel from Haven. Hunters often go there, believing the forest to be safe during daylight hours, though wolves, bear and game seem plentiful. Rumours persist of many caves and deep caverns in the mountains surrounding the wood.

**Blackspire:** is a single tower of black rock, over a kilometre high, that thrusts up from the head of a dark lake nestled in the Forest of Shadows. The lake is artificial and is created by a Dwarven dam that encompasses the lower part of the Blackspire and bridges two rocky upland areas on either side of the lake. Halls delved into these upland areas are now haunted and one company reports that the Blackspire now blazes with red light at night and summons all manner of birds and beasts to it; and that these beasts are later found dead and drained of all life. What lives in Blackspire is unknown but it is a cause of much concern in Haven, for its power appears to be growing.

**Castle Dorn:** was once an Imperial Fortress known as Castle Kastan during the Great War but was left to fall into ruin after Maladon was abandoned. Now the Castle is being rebuilt by the Blue Sashes after they captured it from a bandit gang known as the Cider Boys. The Castle is now named after Dorn Dundragon, a Blue Sash who died during the assault. Two Knights now man the walls calling themselves The Knights of Dorn; Ector and Gwain of Timodos.

**Forest of Shadows:** is a large wood, said to be hundreds of miles in extent that stretches further than any map of Maladon has ever shown. It begins just east of Haven and continues east and north as far as the eye can see. The forest is very dense and dark and is the subject of an eldritch curse whereby all light is dimmed inside it; even mundane torches. Many Sithi cities and fortresses were said to be sited in this wood at its northern borders; as was the old Imperial Colony. It is a very dangerous forest but during the Great War, the edges were burnt down and the secondary forest that has sprung up at these margins appears to be much safer and is the haunt of many woodsmen and hunters.

**Gatesgarth:** is a village on the edge of the Bonewood, this village is founded on some ancient earthworks by the Company of the Black Lion. The village is ruled by Lord Edvard Gorensson, who is also known as 'Lord Gatesgarth'. Recent rumour suggested he was ill and he has now disappeared. Gatesgarth was ruled during his illness by the Mercenary 'Kur'; who showed much contempt for the people under his charge, referring to them as 'sheep'. Ghelena the Sorceress: is the leader of the Goblin Matriarchs of the Grey Arrow tribe. Her powers and purpose are unknown, but she does seem intelligent and reasonable, once brokering a pact with the village of Gatesgarth of a goat-a week in exchange for peace between the Goblins and the folk of Gatesgarth.

**Hanging Tree Caverns:** are close to Haven, on the edge of the Forest of Shadows. Some dark power resides within the caves and has the ability to possess people and to speak directly into their minds. Under this creature's thrall or worshipping it are a small band of Dark Elves, who claim to hate the Sithi and the Horned King.

**Hunters' Inn:** is a large Inn and stables built on old Sithi earthworks at the head of the Red River Vale;. Some power protects the Inn and visitors with magical powers often feel uncomfortable and cut off from their magic whilst staying here. The Inn was established by the Company of the Black and White Banner and staff rotates regularly. The Inn is guarded by two towers and is close to the Valewall.

**The Kingdom of the Vale:** The Kingdom of the Vale is rumoured to lie beyond the Valewall. Its people are said to have originated from the original colonists who arrived on Maladon after the Great War, 70 years ago; but this is currently only a rumour.

**Valewall:** A large earthwork wall that crosses the Red River Valley just Northwest of Hunters' Inn, the Valewall prevents all passage into the Vale of Blood beyond. It is rumoured that the Valemen often visit Haven and are trading illicitly for wine and food but the Empire has no official contact with them. The Kingdom of the Vale is rumoured to lie beyond this wall.

# STARTING AND RUNNING A BUSINESS

 In Maladon you have the possibility of running your own business. Do you want to run a restaurant? You want to sell weapons and armor to other adventurers? Perhaps you are more interested in scribing and selling scrolls? Everything is possible!

## MUNDANE BUSINESSES

There are two types of businesses in Maladon; mundane and magical. This section deals with mundane businesses. To run a legal business in Maladon, you have to be registered with the Imperial Registrar of Taxes. Once registered, you pay 20% of your net income to the Imperial Treasury if you make less than 1000 gp per year or 50% of earned income if you make more than 1000 gp. Imperial Tax collectors are very aggressive and failing to pay can result in huge fines or even imprisonment that can result in characters being out of the game for years of game time.

Registration has a number of benefits; If your income is less than 1000 gp per year you get 2 writs to enter the Upper City (to meet with Imperial Officials in case of tax problems). These writs can of course be used for other purposes but are dated and only valid for the year they are issued in.

A business owner making more than 1000 gp per year gains free access to the Upper City by non-transferrable writ. A Business owner can appeal to the Courts of the Upper City in case of legal problems, even if their business is located in low town.

## CREATING A BUSINESS

You have 3 options. In any case, you character will need to spend one Maladonian month to get the business started.

- Build it in the Lower City for free: this is the cheapest option. Your business will start with a quality of "Struggling"
- Build it in the Lower City for 300gp: this allows you to start your business with a quality of "Fledgling".
- Build it in the Upper City for 1000gp: this allows you to start your business with a quality of "Solid".

## BUILDING A BUSINESS

A business can gain XP: this represents time invested into the business by character owners. XP invested into a business can be used to increase its attributes. Businesses have the following attributes:

- a) **Business Quality:** how generally successful the business is.
- b) **Chattel:** how loyal, well trained and good at their jobs the employees are.

All businesses set up in Lower Town begin as Struggling and then progress up the Business Quality chart by XP spends. Businesses in High Town begin as Solid but establishing a business there requires 1000 gp in capital up front or as a loan from one of the Banking Houses. Any noble can apply for such a loan. It takes a feats-worth of XP to progress up to the next level of Business Quality in the chart; this XP is invested into the business by the owner.

Alternatively, a business owner can raise his business one quality level for free by investing all his time in the business for four months of game time. A business can only reach a Quality of Solid using this method. The only way to achieve higher business quality is via XP spend.

All businesses start with a Chattel of -4 + the owner's Cha modifier. A business may not have a higher chattel level than indicated by the Business Quality. Chattel may be raised by spending XP equivalent to two skill purchases and uses one month of game time training employees.

## BUSINESS QUALITY

1) **Struggling:** Your business is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Roll two events on the Events table each month, with a -7 modifier. If you make more than 50 gp income per month, that income is reduced to 50 gp because of repairs needed to your business or because of servicing loans. Your business cannot have a Chattel score higher than +0. Your income is 1d10 gp per month +/- events

2) **Fledgling:** Your business is now slightly more established. You make one roll on the Events table each month with a -5 modifier. Your business' Chattel score can now be +1 or lower. If your business makes more than 100 gp in income per month, then reduce your income to 100 gp. Your income is 1d20 gp per month +/- events.

3) **Solid:** Your business is now an even keel and you have got to the point where the business is becoming viable. Roll one event per month on the table with a -2 modifier. If your business makes more than 150 gp per month then reduce your income to 150 gp. Your chattel score may now be +2 or lower. Your income per month is 2d20 gp per month +/- event

4) **Established:** Your business is now well known and profitable. You produce high class goods or services and are patronised by artisans and merchants. You make one roll on the Events table each month with a +2 modifier. Your Chattel score can be +4 or lower. If your income is more than 300 gp per month, it is reduced to 300 gp. Your base income is 1d100 gp per month +/- events.

5) **Successful:** Your business is now the premier business in Haven in your trade and even Nobles are starting to use your services.. You make one roll on the Events table each month with a +5 modifier. Your Chattel score can be +7 or higher. Your base income is 2d100 gp per month +/- events.

A handy spreadsheet exists intended to facilitate the management of your business. It lists all player business in Maladon and depending on the quality of your business will show you stats such as your monthly profit rolls, your chattel, etc. You can find it [here](#).

## EVENTS

Every month that you operate a business, you roll 1d20 on the Events table as follows (unless your Business Quality says to roll more than once). This roll is modified by modifiers stated above in your Business Quality. The results of this roll modify your monthly income. If you want to avoid the events where your business is burned down or a local gang threatens it, you can decide to pay 10% of your profit (before rolling) to another gang for protection.

**1) Disaster:** Your business is burned down by a rival or is just unlucky and is engulfed in fire. Your premises are destroyed and many workers desert you. You gain no income for 3 months and lose 100 gp rebuilding your business. If you pay this money, lose 1 from your Chattel score and drop one Business Quality (if possible). If you do not pay this money, your business is wound up and you end up owing debts of 2d100 gp. If you cannot pay your debts, your character spends 1 month in debtor's prison for every 20 gp you owe.

**2) Order:** You are asked to quickly fulfil an important order. Make a saving throw by rolling 1d20, using your Chattel score as a modifier. The DC is 7; if you make the roll, you increase your income for this month by +1d100 gp. If you fail, you lose 1d20 gp in income.

**3) Special:** You ignore your Business Quality for this month's roll; make an unmodified roll and take the result.

**4) Bad Luck:** roll 1d8.

**1) Squeeze:** a local gang threatens your business and demands 1d100 gp per month in protection money (this cannot be higher than your average income roll). If you pay, you ignore a result of 1 on this table because the toughs do protect your business from arson. If you do not pay, you will automatically get a 1 result in addition to other event rolls next month unless you hire adventurers to destroy the gang. Ignore this result if you have a Chattel score of 3 or higher or if you are currently paying another gang.

**2) Flood:** Your business is flooded. You gain no income this month and must pay 2d20 gp in damage repair to your premises.

**3) Theft:** A worker steals from you before disappearing. They manage to steal half your income from this month. Ignore this roll if your Chattel is 2 or higher.

**4) Minor Fire:** There is a minor fire. Your business gains no income for one month and you must pay 1d100 gp in damages to repair your business. Your business cannot operate again until the money is paid

**5) Defect:** The raw materials you have purchased are defective. You make no income this month.

**6) Bad Egg:** an employee is revealed to be a spy for a rival, or is found out to be a good-for-nothing who has been harming your business. Lose 1 Chattel as you expel the villain.

**7) Setback:** An employee makes a critical error and an entire batch of goods is ruined. Lose 1d100 gp of income this month. Ignore this result if you have a Chattel score of +5 or higher.

**8) Audit:** the Imperial Tax collectors come visiting a do an audit. If you are registered, and are paying taxes then all is well. If you are not registered you are arrested and sentenced to six months in prison and permanently lose 1 point of Con. Ignore this result if it is rolled twice in the same year.

**5) Boost in Income:** You experience a boost in income as shortages elsewhere send customers to your door. Gain +1d100 gp in income this month.

**6) Great Employee:** You find an excellent employee who adds to your business. Gain 1 chattel.

**7-17) No event**

**18) Rival Offer:** A rival tries to buy your business. He offers 5d100 gp per each level of Business Quality and 1d100 gp for each point of Chattel you possess. If you accept, your business is transferred and you gain the money but must pay taxes at your usual rate. If you decline, you gain an enemy.

**19) Special Order:** One of the Ten Companies asks your business for a service or some goods. Make a Business saving roll using your Chattel as a modifier. The DC is 15. On a success, gain 1 Renown with that Company; on a fail lose 3d20 gp in income. **20) Backer funding:** A backer appears and asks you to move to new premises. If you are in Low Town you are offered premises in High Town. If in High Town, you are offered better premises. Improve your Business Quality by one step or gain +1d100 income if your business quality is already Established or higher or if you are already situated in High Town.