

TIRVANDOR

THE REALM OF DEEP MAGIC



WORLD GUIDE & CAMPAIGN SETTING

TIRVANDOR WORLD GUIDE

The Realm of Deep Magic

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Introduction to Tirvandor

Welcome to Tirvandor: The Realm of Deep Magic, a comprehensive campaign setting for Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition. This world combines the mythic grandeur of Tolkien's legendarium with the grounded realism of political intrigue and moral complexity.

What is Tirvandor?

Tirvandor is a world divided: two great continents separated by the Sundering Sea, each representing different philosophies of civilization and magic. In the west lies Thaldros, a militaristic empire built on order and central authority. In the east sprawls Aethoria, a confederation of free cities valuing independence and democratic ideals.

The Sundering Sea between them is vast and treacherous, rarely crossed except by the bravest sailors and most desperate refugees. War, when it comes, is fought in border regions within each continent and through proxy conflicts rather than direct continental invasion.

Core Themes

Grounded Realism

While magic exists and shapes the world, Tirvandor emphasizes realistic consequences, political complexity, and morally gray choices. Heroes are not always virtuous, villains may have legitimate grievances, and every decision carries weight.



Natural Magic

Magic flows through ley lines ancient channels of power crisscrossing the world. Spellcasters who understand these currents can amplify their abilities, but the lines also create nodes of wild magic and unpredictable effects.

Political Intrigue

The great powers of Tirvandor kingdoms, noble houses, guilds, and secret societies. All pursue their own agendas. Players will navigate webs of alliance and betrayal as they shape the world's future.

Historical Depth

Tirvandor has a rich history spanning thousands of years, from the Age of Precursors through the devastating Sundering to the present day. Ancient ruins, lost civilizations, and lingering curses all tie back to this deep past.

Using This Guide

This World Guide is organized into chapters covering different aspects of Tirvandor:

- Geography: The physical world, continents, regions, and major features

- Timeline: History from ancient times to the present
- Pantheon: The Seven Gods and their followers
- Factions: Major organizations and power groups
- Noble Houses: The dynasties that rule kingdoms and territories
- Settlements: Cities, towns, and important locations
- Regional Lore: Customs, cultures, and local knowledge

Each chapter provides information for both players and Dungeon Masters, though DMs should consult the Dungeon Master's Guide for additional secrets and plot hooks.

Campaign Integration

Tirvandor supports multiple campaign styles:

- Heroic Fantasy: Noble heroes fighting against tyranny and darkness
- Political Intrigue: Manipulation, alliances, and courtly schemes
- Mercenary Adventures: Morally complex contracts and difficult choices
- Exploration: Discovering ancient ruins and lost knowledge

- War Stories: Large-scale conflicts and military campaigns

About This World

Tirvandor was designed to support long-term campaigns with:

- 204 settlements across 19 regions
- 187 detailed NPCs with motivations and secrets
- 18 noble houses with multi-generational histories
- 50 custom monsters tied to world lore (Monster Manual required)
- Complete ley line network affecting magic use

Everything is interconnected. Names, places, and events reference each other naturally, creating a living, breathing world.

Getting Started

If you're a player, read the first seven chapters to understand the world your character inhabits. Pay special attention to the region where your campaign begins.

If you're a Dungeon Master, read everything, then consult the Dungeon Master's Guide for secrets, plot hooks, and campaign frameworks.

Welcome to Tirvandor. Your legend begins now.



Geography of Tirvandor: The Realm of Deep Magic

Overview

Tirvandor is a world where natural magic flows through the very fabric of reality coursing through ley lines beneath mountains, pooling in ancient forests, and whispering in the depths of forgotten swamps. The realm consists of two major continents separated by a vast ocean, connected by trade routes that thread through archipelagos and island chains. This is a world of grounded realism layered with mythic wonder, where geography shapes culture, magic influences terrain, and the land itself remembers.

Climate: Temperate to subtropical, with regional variations

Magical Saturation: High in natural areas, moderate in settled regions

Technological Level: Medieval with magical augmentation

Population: Diverse races across settlements, with concentrations of specific peoples in certain regions.

Total Documented Settlements: 204

- 13 Major Cities (including 2 capitals)
- 42 Towns
- 125 Villages
- 24 Hamlets



The Sundering Sea

The vast ocean that separates the two continents of Tirvandor, the Sundering Sea is both highway and barrier. Ancient mariners claim it was created in a cataclysm millennia ago when the continents were torn apart by warring primordial forces. The waters are deep, storm-prone, and unpredictable, respected by sailors and feared by the superstitious.

Notable Features:

- The Deep Trenches: Underwater chasms of unknown depth where strange magical currents flow
- Storm Belts: Semi-predictable regions of violent weather that shift with the seasons
- Singing Waters: Certain areas where the waves produce haunting melodies, said to be the songs of drowned civilizations

- Trade Winds: Reliable currents that have enabled commerce between continents for centuries

The Splintered Isles (Western Islands)

Major Islands:

- Stormwatch Isle: Home to the Stormwatchers, weather-mages who predict storms
- Saltmere: Tropical island known for salt flats and pearl diving
- Western Haven: Pirate haven and smuggler's port

Located off the eastern coast of Thaldros, these islands bear the brunt of storms coming off the Sundering Sea. Despite the harsh conditions, they're strategically valuable for trade and military purposes.

The Drifting Chain (Central Archipelago)

The islands between Thaldros and Aethoria are crucial for maritime trade and have developed their own distinct culture a blend of eastern and western influences.

Major Islands:

Isla Myrthen:

- Port Myrthen: The largest settlement in the archipelago (pop. ~9,000), a cosmopolitan trading port where goods from both continents exchange hands. Known for its relaxed attitude toward laws and neutral political stance. Home to the Merchant's Guild headquarters.

Minor Island Settlements:

- Midway (village) - Halfway point for continental crossing
- Coral Bay (village) - Pearl diving community
- Trader's Rest (hamlet) - Resupply station
- Several unnamed islets used as navigation markers

The Shattered Arc (Eastern Islands)

Major Islands:

- Thornhaven: Mysterious island shrouded in perpetual mist (pop. ~1,800), home to a reclusive order of monks who study the boundary between life and death
- Emerald Isle: Lush tropical paradise; sacred druidic site
- Serpent's Tooth: Rocky island; lighthouse and naval outpost

Located near Aethoria's fractured coast, these islands share the mystical character of the eastern continent. Many are sacred sites or home to isolated communities seeking spiritual enlightenment.

The Northern Islands

Frostwatch:

- Small settlements providing harbor services in the harsh northern seas
- Primarily inhabited by humans and half-orcs

- Fishing, seal hunting, and strategic naval positioning

The Southern Islands

Scattered tropical islands south of both continents, many remain unmapped or unexplored. Rumors persist of lost civilizations, hidden treasures, and dangerous creatures lurking in these warm waters.

Other Notable Islands

Many smaller islands remain unnamed on common maps, ranging from lifeless rocks used as navigation markers to hidden refuges for various groups: pirates, exiled nobles, escaped criminals, or those simply seeking solitude. The total number of islands in the archipelagos is estimated at over 100, though fewer than 20 have permanent settlements.



Thaldros (Western Continent)

The Western Continent, called Thaldros by its inhabitants, is a land of dramatic contrasts. Snow-capped mountains give way to arid deserts, which transition into temperate woodlands. The continent bears scars of ancient conflicts, with ruins dotting the landscape and ley lines running through its heart.

Capital: Kaer Thandros (pop. ~45,000)

Major Cities: Ironhold, Silverpine, Goldreach, Crossvale, Sundara, Ashgate

Total Settlements: ~120 (towns, villages, and hamlets)

Thaldros Regions

The Frostmarches (Far North)

The frozen northern reaches of Thaldros, where winter reigns for nine months of the year. Ice fields, tundra, and frozen coastline dominate the landscape. The aurora borealis dances in winter skies, and locals claim they can hear voices in the lights.

Climate: Arctic to sub-arctic; extreme cold

Dangers: Blizzards, frost giants, ice demons, white dragons

Resources: Furs, ivory, ice crystals, whale oil

Population: Very sparse; hardy humans, goliaths

Major Settlements:

- Frostholm (town) - Ice fishing, seal hunting
- Northwatch (town) - Mountain pass guard post
- Iceridge (town) - High-altitude ice crystal mining

Minor Settlements: Frostwatch, Icegate, Snowmelt, Coldpeak, Winterhold (villages)

The Ironspine Holds (Mountains)

A formidable mountain range dominating the northern reaches of Thaldros, the Ironspine Mountains are rich in mineral wealth but deadly in their beauty. Ancient dwarven settlements tunnel deep into these peaks, though many have been abandoned for centuries. The mountains

are home to rare magical ore veins that glow faintly at night.

Climate: Alpine, harsh winters, brief summers

Dangers: Avalanches, wyverns, frost giants, extreme cold, cave-ins

Resources: Iron, silver, mythril ore, rare gemstones, crystal formations

Major Settlements:

- Kaer Thandros: The great mountain fortress-city, built into the living rock. Capital of Thaldros and center of metalcraft and runework (pop. ~45,000)
- Ironhold: A heavily fortified town that guards the northern passes (pop. ~8,000)
- Deepforge: Deep mining town with volcanic forges (pop. ~3,500)
- Stonehaven: Quarry town; ancient ruins nearby (pop. ~2,800)

Minor Settlements: Highpeak, Crystalmine, Stonegard (villages) and Coldwater, Longridge (hamlets)

Notable Locations:

- The Crown Forge (in Kaer Thandros) - Can create permanent magical items
- The Echo Halls - Abandoned dwarf hold with acoustic anomalies
- The Crystal Caverns - Below Crystalmine; crystal golems guard it

The Shattered Shore (Northeast Coast)

The northeastern coast is a jagged, broken shoreline of cliffs, rocky beaches, and hidden coves. Constant winds from the Sundering Sea create dramatic waves. Numerous shipwrecks dot the coastline, providing salvage opportunities and cautionary tales.

Climate: Temperate coastal; frequent storms

Dangers: Shipwrecks, storms, sahuagin raids, ghost ships

Resources: Fish, shells, pearls, salvage goods

Population: Low; fishing communities, sailor outposts

Minor Settlements: Scattered fishing villages and watch posts along the coast

The Silverwood (Central Forest)

The Silverwood is an ancient forest of silver birch and oak trees, where dappled sunlight creates ever-shifting patterns on the forest floor. Unlike the wild forests of Aethoria, the Silverwood has been carefully managed for generations, thinned, cultivated, and respected. It's a place of beauty and tranquility, though old magic still runs deep.

Climate: Temperate, four distinct seasons

Dangers: Bandits, fey creatures, occasional monsters, wild hunts

Resources: Timber (especially silver birch), wild herbs, mushrooms, venison

Major Settlements:

- Silverpine: A prosperous city built among ancient silver birch groves. Known for its University of Arcane Studies, artisan guilds, and as a center of trade (pop. ~32,000)
- Oakenheart: Forest town; woodworking and druidic presence (pop. ~3,200)
- Willowbrook: Riverside town; waterwheel mills; paper production (pop. ~2,600)
- Westmarch: Frontier outpost; protects western settlements (pop. ~1,600)
- Timberfall: Logging town with druid cooperation (pop. ~1,900)

Minor Settlements: Greenleaf, Mapleshire, Birchwood, Fernhaven, Pinegrove, Elmwood, Deepwood, Wildrun, Westreach (villages) and Pinerest (hamlet)

Notable Locations:

- Silverpine University - Famous magical and mundane learning center
- The Old Oak Circle - Ancient druid site with stone circle

The Heartlands (Central Plains)

The Heartlands are the agricultural engine of Thaldros. Endless fields of grain, pastures with livestock, and prosperous farming communities. This is the most "civilized" part of the continent, crisscrossed by well-maintained roads and dotted with market towns.

Climate: Temperate, ideal for agriculture

Dangers: Bandits along lesser roads, occasional monster incursions, feudal disputes

Resources: Grain, livestock, wool, leather, processed food

Major Settlements:

- Crossvale: Located at the junction of major trade routes; massive market district; heavily fortified (pop. ~18,000)
- Riverdale: Agricultural hub; grain processing; river trade (pop. ~4,200)
- Grainhaven: Farming community; wheat fields (pop. ~3,800)
- Millford: Mill town; flour for entire region (pop. ~2,900)
- Fairhaven: Market town; quarterly fair (pop. ~3,400)
- Highfield: Elevated plateau town; sheep herding (pop. ~2,700)

Minor Settlements: Wheatfield, Copperhill, Brookside, Hayworth, Thornhill, Cornwell, Millstream, Barleydale, Harvest, Meadowbrook, Midvale, Crossway, Plainview, Hillcrest, Valleyford, Riverside, Eastridge, Highmeadow, Farview, Ridgetop, Clearspring, Northfield, Highvale, Skyridge, Cliffside (villages) and Sunnydale, Cloverfield, Hilltop, Waypost, Crossroads, Edgewatch, Northpost (hamlets)

Notable Locations:

- Crossvale Market Square - Largest market; everything available
- The Standing Stones - Ancient monument of unknown origin
- The Crossroads hamlet - Where all major Thaldros routes meet; multiple inns

The Goldcoast (Western Shore)

The western coast of Thaldros is blessed with natural harbors and a climate moderated by ocean currents, making it the gateway for continental trade with far off lands.

Climate: Temperate coastal; mild winters

Dangers: Pirates, storms, sea monsters

Resources: Trade goods from across world, ships, fish

Major Settlements:

- Goldreach: A wealthy coastal city; primary port for western Thaldros; controls ocean trade (pop. ~28,000)
- Saltmere: Coastal town; salt harvesting; fish preservation (pop. ~2,400)
- Harborview: Harbor town; shipbuilding; naval supplies (pop. ~2,800)
- Westport: Small port; unofficial smuggler haven (pop. ~1,500)

Minor Settlements: Shellcove, Tidepool, Seaview, Dockside, Lastpost, Westridge, Southpoint, Endwatch, Borderwood (villages) and Driftwood (hamlet)

The Sundaran Expanse (Desert)

The southern reaches of Thaldros transform into a vast desert, the Sundaran Expanse. Golden sand dunes stretch to the horizon, broken by rocky outcroppings and life-giving oases. Beneath the sand lie ruins of ancient civilizations that flourished before the land became desert.

Climate: Arid, extreme temperature swings between day and night

Dangers: Sandstorms, giant scorpions, sand elementals, dehydration, buried ruins

Resources: Exotic spices, rare herbs, ancient artifacts, desert glass

Major Settlements:

- Sundara: The jewel of the desert, built around the Great Oasis. A center of trade in exotic goods (pop. ~15,000)
- Sandstone: Desert town built from local sandstone; caravan stop (pop. ~2,600)
- Oasis Rest: Vital oasis along trade route (pop. ~2,100)
- Southwatch: Border fortress; desert trade checkpoint (pop. ~1,700)
- Borderkeep: Southernmost fortification (pop. ~1,200)

Minor Settlements: Dustkeep, Miragewell, Sunwell, Scorched, Dryrock, Sandrift (villages) and Sandypost, Southedge (hamlets)

Notable Locations:

- The Great Oasis - Largest water source; mysterious well never runs dry
- The Whispering Dunes - Area where voices heard in wind
- The Glass Valley - Entire valley of fused glass

The Ashfall Barrens (Volcanic Southeast)

The southeastern region of Thaldros is a land of fire and ash. A volcanic wasteland where the earth seethes with heat. Active and dormant volcanoes dot the landscape, and rivers of lava create temporary lakes of molten rock.

Climate: Volcanic; unpredictable weather, toxic gases

Dangers: Volcanic eruptions, lava flows, fire elementals, toxic fumes

Resources: Obsidian, volcanic glass, unique metals, sulfur, fire gems

Major Settlements:

- Ashgate: Built on edge of volcanic region; black stone architecture; hot springs (pop. ~12,000)
- Cinderfall: Built on old lava flow; obsidian mining (pop. ~2,300)
- Emberforge: Uses volcanic heat for smithing (pop. ~2,800)
- Eastmarch: Eastern frontier town; volcanic glass trade (pop. ~2,500)
- Ashford: Crossroads in volcanic region (pop. ~2,200)
- Flamekeep: Fire temple complex; eternal flame (pop. ~1,900)

Minor Settlements: Smokehollow, Ashvale, Burnside, Cindervale, Emberfall, Firewatch, Lavabrook, Scorchdale, Hotspring (villages) and Hotash (hamlet)

Notable Locations:

- The Eternal Forge (Emberforge) - Uses volcanic heat; legendary smithing
- The Black Spire - Impossibly smooth obsidian formation
- Hellmouth Crater - Active volcano; largest in region

The Reaching Claws (Eastern Badlands)

A transitional badlands region between the Heartlands and Ashfall Barrens. Named for claw-like formations of volcanic rock, this is dangerous frontier country full of opportunity and peril.

Climate: Varied; dry and rocky

Dangers: Monsters, bandits, geological instability

Resources: Monster parts, volcanic minerals, salvage

Population: Very low; frontier settlements and outposts

Climate Patterns

Thaldros experiences distinct seasonal changes, with the Ironspine Mountains creating a rain shadow effect that contributes to the Sundaran Expanse's aridity. The Heartlands receive moderate rainfall year-round, supporting agricultural productivity.



Aethoria (Eastern Continent)

The Eastern Continent, known as Aethoria, is a land of deep magic and ancient growth. Where Thaldros is marked by human ambition and dramatic geography, Aethoria is characterized by primordial forests, mysterious swamps, and a profound connection to the natural world. The very air feels thicker here, saturated with magical energy that has shaped evolution and culture alike.

Capital: Aethermere (pop. ~38,000)

Major Cities: Starfall, Crystalbrook, Wildgrove, Marshaven, Thornhaven

Total Settlements: ~84 (towns, villages, and hamlets)

Aethoria Regions

The Starwood (Northwest)

Ancient forests of tremendous age where massive star-trees grow so tall their canopies seem to touch the heavens. The wood glows faintly at night, and celestial events have unusual effects here.

Climate: Temperate rainforest, misty

Dangers: Ancient guardians, fey courts, disorienting magic

Resources: Starwood timber, astral herbs, star iron

Major Settlements:

- Starfall: Observatory city; meteors fall here (pop. ~6,500)
- Moonwatch: Elven settlement; moon druids (pop. ~4,200)
- Shimmerleaf: Fey-touched village (pop. ~2,800)

Minor Settlements: Glowgrove, Nightshade, Twilightwatch, Celestialvale (villages) and Starglimmer, Moonglow (hamlets)

The Crystalvale (North-Central)

A network of pristine lakes and rivers with crystalline waters. The largest freshwater lake system on Aethoria, known for its clarity and magical properties.

Climate: Temperate, abundant rainfall

Dangers: Lake monsters, water elementals, flash floods

Resources: Freshwater fish, scrying-quality water, water crystals

Major Settlements:

- Crystalbrook: Trade hub on Great Crystal Lake (pop. ~12,000)
- Clearwater: Fishing and boat-building (pop. ~3,800)

Minor Settlements: Lakehaven, Deepwater, Mistshore, Purewater, Silverstream, Shimmerspring, Glasspool (villages) and Crystallake, Clearspring (hamlets)

The Fractured Coast (Northwest Shore)

The western shore of Aethoria is a broken coastline of islands, coves, and hidden bays. The region bears the scars of the Sundering most clearly.

Climate: Coastal temperate, foggy

Dangers: Pirates, storms, ghost ships, coastal raiders

Resources: Fish, salvage, sea-spray crystals

Major Settlements:

- Haven's Rest: Port city (pop. ~5,500)

Minor Settlements: Saltmist, Fogwatch, Tidebreak, Seaspray (villages) and Coralkeep (hamlet)

The Emerald Deeps (Central-West)

The heart of Aethoria's ancient rainforests. These primordial woods are so old and dense that entire ecosystems exist in the canopy, never touching the ground.

Climate: Tropical rainforest, year-round humidity

Dangers: Dire predators, territorial fey, disorientation, wild magic

Resources: Rare herbs, sacred woods, magical plants, alchemical reagents

Major Settlements:

- Aethermere: Capital; built among world-trees (pop. ~38,000)
- Fernwatch: Forest guardian outpost (pop. ~3,200)

Minor Settlements: Rootdeep, Vineheart, Mosswood, Greenveil, Canopy (villages) and Deepshade, Treehold (hamlets)

The Brightwater Valley (Central)

A fertile river valley where the greatest concentration of Aethorian agriculture exists. The rivers here sparkle with natural magic, making crops grow larger and faster.

Climate: Temperate, mild year-round

Dangers: River pirates, bandits, occasional monsters from surrounding regions

Resources: Grain, fruit, vegetables, magical produce

Major Settlements:

- Riverrun: Market town at river confluence (pop. ~4,500)
- Harvest Hall: Agricultural center (pop. ~3,800)

Minor Settlements: Goldfield, Brightshore, Sunnybrook, Greenvale, Meadowrun, Cropstone, Waterside (villages) and Wheathollow, Millcrest (hamlets)

The Mistwood Reaches (Northeast)

Highlands covered in perpetual mist and ancient pines. The region has a haunting beauty and is home to reclusive communities and mysterious hermits.

Climate: Cool temperate highlands, perpetual mist

Dangers: Will-o'-wisps, hags, shadow creatures, treacherous terrain

Resources: Rare fungi, ghost orchids, mist-touched timber

Major Settlements:

- Mistview: Highland town (pop. ~3,500)

Minor Settlements: Fogveil, Clourest, Shadowpine, Misthollow, Greymist, Palewatch (villages) and Ghostwood, Dimvale (hamlets)

The Thornmire Marches (South-Central)

Vast wetlands where water and land blur together. A maze of swamps, bogs, and bayous rich in unique resources but deadly to the unprepared.

Climate: Subtropical swamp, humid, warm year-round

Dangers: Venomous creatures, disease, quicksand, hostile denizens, toxic plants

Resources: Rare poisons, medicinal plants, exotic leathers, swamp gas

Major Settlements:

- Marshaven: Fortified stilt-city; alchemical trade (pop. ~8,000)
- Bogrest: Swamp village (pop. ~2,200)

Minor Settlements: Mistfen, Sludgegate, Quickwater, Rotwood, Murkhollow, Slimebrook (villages) and Vine's End (hamlet)

The Singing Fens (Southeast)

Southern wetlands where unusual acoustic properties make the swamp "sing" with wind and water. More hospitable than the Thornmire but still treacherous.

Climate: Warm wetlands, musical winds

Dangers: Territorial lizardfolk, poisonous flora, sink holes

Resources: Reed instruments, singing crystals, medicinal mud

Major Settlements:

- Reedwatch: Marsh town (pop. ~2,800)

Minor Settlements: Songwater, Whistlebrook, Chimefen, Melodymarsh, Harpmire (villages) and Tunevale (hamlet)

The Verdant Wall (Southern Mountains)

A mountain range covered in jungle growth.

Unlike the barren peaks of Thaldros, these mountains are alive with vegetation from base to summit.

Climate: Tropical mountain, varied by elevation

Dangers: Territorial apes, giant insects, landslides, hidden predators

Resources: Tropical hardwoods, rare orchids, mountain herbs

Major Settlements:

- Highgrove: Mountain settlement (pop. ~3,200)

Minor Settlements: Cliffbloom, Junglepeak, Canopyrest, Vinespur, Summitleaf (villages) and Stonegreen (hamlet)

The Split Peninsula (Southwest)

The southwestern peninsula that appears torn from Thaldros' Reaching Claws. Dramatic cliffs, hidden coves, and a wild frontier feeling.

Climate: Coastal subtropical

Dangers: Pirates, storms, territorial druids, cliff creatures

Resources: Fish, rare shells, sea caves, pirate treasures

Major Settlements:

- Wildgrove: Druidic sanctuary (pop. ~5,000)
- Thornhaven: Island monastery (pop. ~1,800)

Minor Settlements: Splitcove, Jagged Bay, Cliffwatch, Searock, Tidemark (villages) and Wavebreak, Stormrest (hamlets)

Climate Patterns

Aethoria experiences less seasonal variation than Thaldros, with the climate generally warmer and wetter. The continent's forests create their own weather patterns, and some areas experience localized magical climate effects. The Verdant Wall mountains trap moisture, creating the ultra-humid environment of the western forests while leaving the Brightwater Valley relatively mild.

Roads and Trade Routes

The major settlements of Tirvandor are connected by an extensive road network. Roads vary significantly in quality by region, from well-paved highways near major cities to barely-marked trails in the wilderness.

Major Roads of Thaldros (17 Named Routes)

The King's Highway

- Kaer Thandros Silverpine Crossvale Goldreach
- The primary artery of western Thaldros; well-maintained and patrolled

The Northern Pass

- Kaer Thandros Ironhold Frostholm
- Mountain route; closed in deep winter

The Coastal Way

- Goldreach Harborpoint Port Silverfish
- Western coastal trade route

The Sundaran Road

- Crossvale Grainscross Sundara
- Major desert trade route with fortified waystations

The Ashgate Trail

- Crossvale Ashgate Emberforge
- Volcanic region route; heat-resistant construction

The Silverwood Path

- Silverpine Oakenheart Greenleaf
- Forest route through the ancient woods

The Heartland Highway

- Silverpine Crossvale
- Central agricultural route

The Eastern Reach

- Crossvale Ashgate The Reaching Claws
- Frontier route to the badlands

The Mountain Road

- Kaer Thandros Deepforge Stonehaven
- Inner mountain route connecting dwarf holds

The Shore Road

- Silverpine Stormhaven Clifftop
- Northeast coastal route

The Gold Run

- Goldreach Saltmere Western Islands
- Connects to ferry services

The Deep Desert Route

- Sundara Oasis Rest Dustkeep
- Caravan route through the expanse

The Volcanic Highway

- Ashgate Cinderfall Flamekeep
- Specially constructed for volcanic terrain

The Western Loop

- Goldreach Harborview Shellcove
- Goldreach
- Coastal circuit

The Trade Triangle

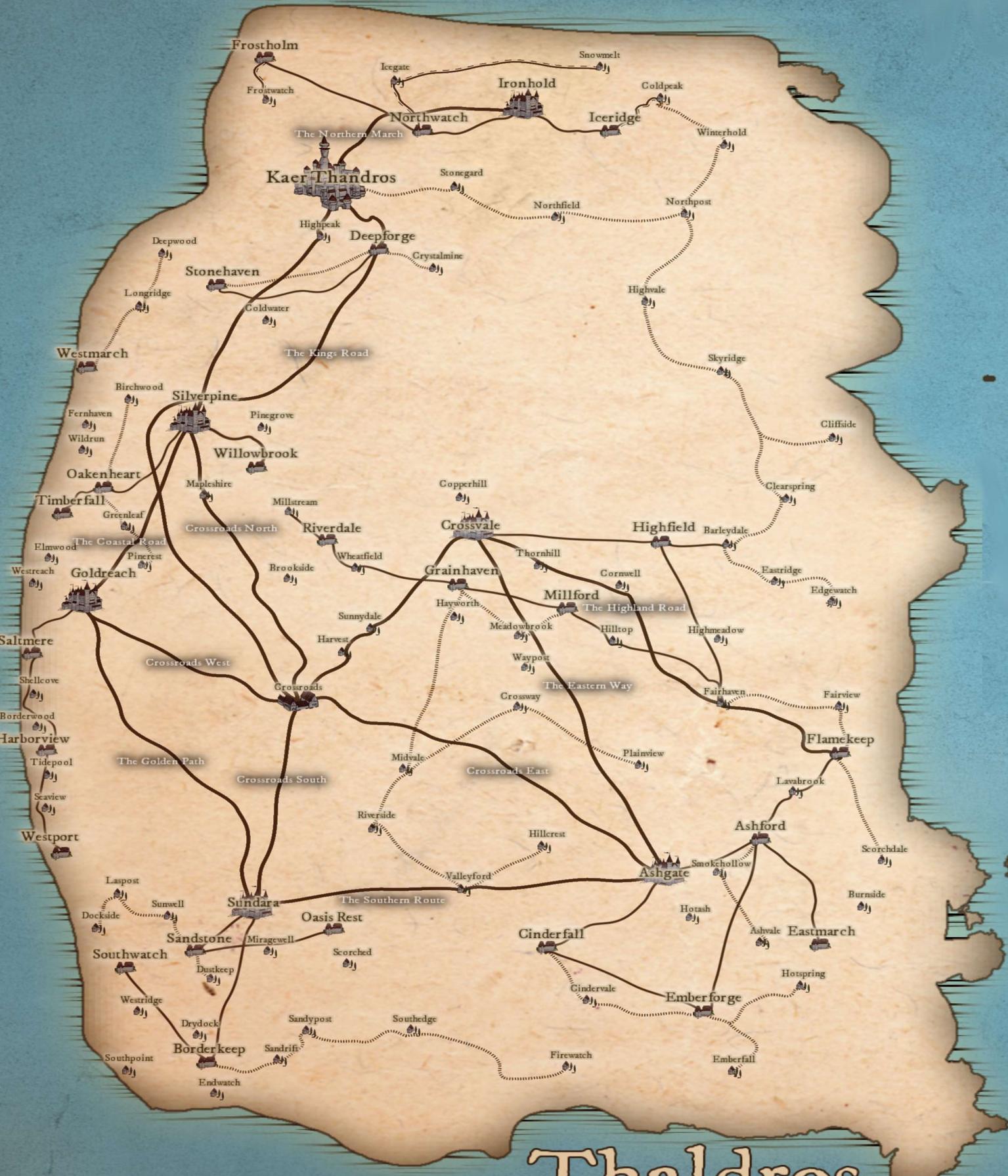
- Silverpine Crossvale Goldreach Silverpine
- Primary commercial route

The Border Road

- Ironhold Stormhaven
- Northern defensive route

The Claw Peninsula Road

- Ashgate Southpoint
- Southern frontier route



Thaldros

Major Roads of Aethoria (10 Named Routes)

The Greenway

- Aethermere Crystalbrook Wildgrove
- The primary forest road; a series of wooden causeways and ancient paths

The Starpath

- Starfall Aethermere
- Celestially-aligned road; glows faintly at night

The Lake Circuit

- Crystalbrook Lakeshire Clearwater Crystalbrook
- Follows the shoreline of the great lakes

The River Road

- Crystalbrook Riverrun Harvest Hall
- Follows the Brightwater River

The Marsh Causeway

- Crystalbrook Marshaven
- Elevated wooden road through wetlands

The Highland Path

- Aethermere Mistview
- Mountain trail through the Mistwood Reaches

The Coastal Track

- Haven's Rest Seaspray Tidebreak
- Fractured coast route

The Southern Way

- Aethermere Wildgrove Highgrove
- Connects capital to southern regions

The Swamp Road

- Marshaven Reedwatch
- Connects the two major swamp settlements

The Peninsula Path

- Wildgrove Thornhaven (ferry) Splitcove
- Southwest coastal route

Secondary Roads (23 Named Routes)

Thaldros Secondary Roads (14):

- Deepforge Connector (Kaer Thandros to Deepforge)
- Stonehaven Trail (Deepforge to Stonehaven)

- The Forest Track (Oakenheart to Willowbrook)
- Heartland Crossway (Various heartland villages)
- Desert Caravan Route (Multiple oasis connections)
- The Ash Trail (Smokehollow to Ashvale)
- Cindervale Path (Connects volcanic villages)
- The Eastern Frontier (Multiple badlands settlements)
- Coastal Villages Route (Connects fishing villages)
- Mountain Village Path (Connects mountain hamlets)
- The Northern Settlements Road (Frostwatch area)
- Desert Oasis Circuit (Connects desert towns)
- Southern Peninsula Track (Reaching Claws region)
- The Crossroads Network (Connects major junctions)

Aethoria Secondary Roads (9):

- Fernwatch Connection (Aethermere to Fernwatch)
- The Valley Road (Brightwater Valley villages)
- Mistwood Trail (Highland settlement connections)
- Thornmire Track (Swamp village connections)
- The Singing Path (Singing Fens route)
- Verdant Ridge Road (Mountain village connections)
- Coastal Villages Way (Fractured coast settlements)
- The Starwood Circuit (Northwest forest connections)
- Peninsula Coastal Road (Southwest settlements)

Minor Trails (31 Networks)

Numerous minor trails connect smaller villages and hamlets. These are often seasonal, poorly

maintained, and require local guides. They include:

- Mountain hamlet trails (8 networks in Ironspine)
- Forest footpaths (7 networks in Silverwood and Starwood)
- Desert trade paths (4 networks in Sundaran Expanse)
- Swamp channels (5 networks in Thornmire and Singing Fens)
- Coastal fishing trails (4 networks along various coasts)
- Remote frontier paths (3 networks in badlands)

Sea Routes

The Merchant Lanes: Established shipping routes passing through the archipelagos, enabling continental trade

Major Sea Routes:

- Goldreach Port Myrthen Haven's Rest (Continental crossing)
- Port Myrthen Saltmere Southern islands
- Stormwatch Northern fishing grounds
- Coastal routes along both continents

Travel Times (Approximate, by foot with standard pace)

Thaldros:

- Kaer Thandros to Silverpine: 8-10 days
- Silverpine to Goldreach: 6-8 days
- Silverpine to Crossvale: 5-7 days
- Crossvale to Sundara: 12-15 days
- Crossvale to Ashgate: 6-8 days
- Ironhold to Frostholm: 4-6 days

Aethoria:

- Aethermere to Crystalbrook: 7-9 days
- Crystalbrook to Marshaven: 10-12 days
- Aethermere to Starfall: 5-7 days
- Crystalbrook to Wildgrove: 8-10 days

Sea Voyages:

- Cross-continental (Goldreach to Port Myrthen): 5-7 days
- Port Myrthen to Haven's Rest: 3-5 days

- Continental coastal shipping: Varies widely
- Notes on Travel:

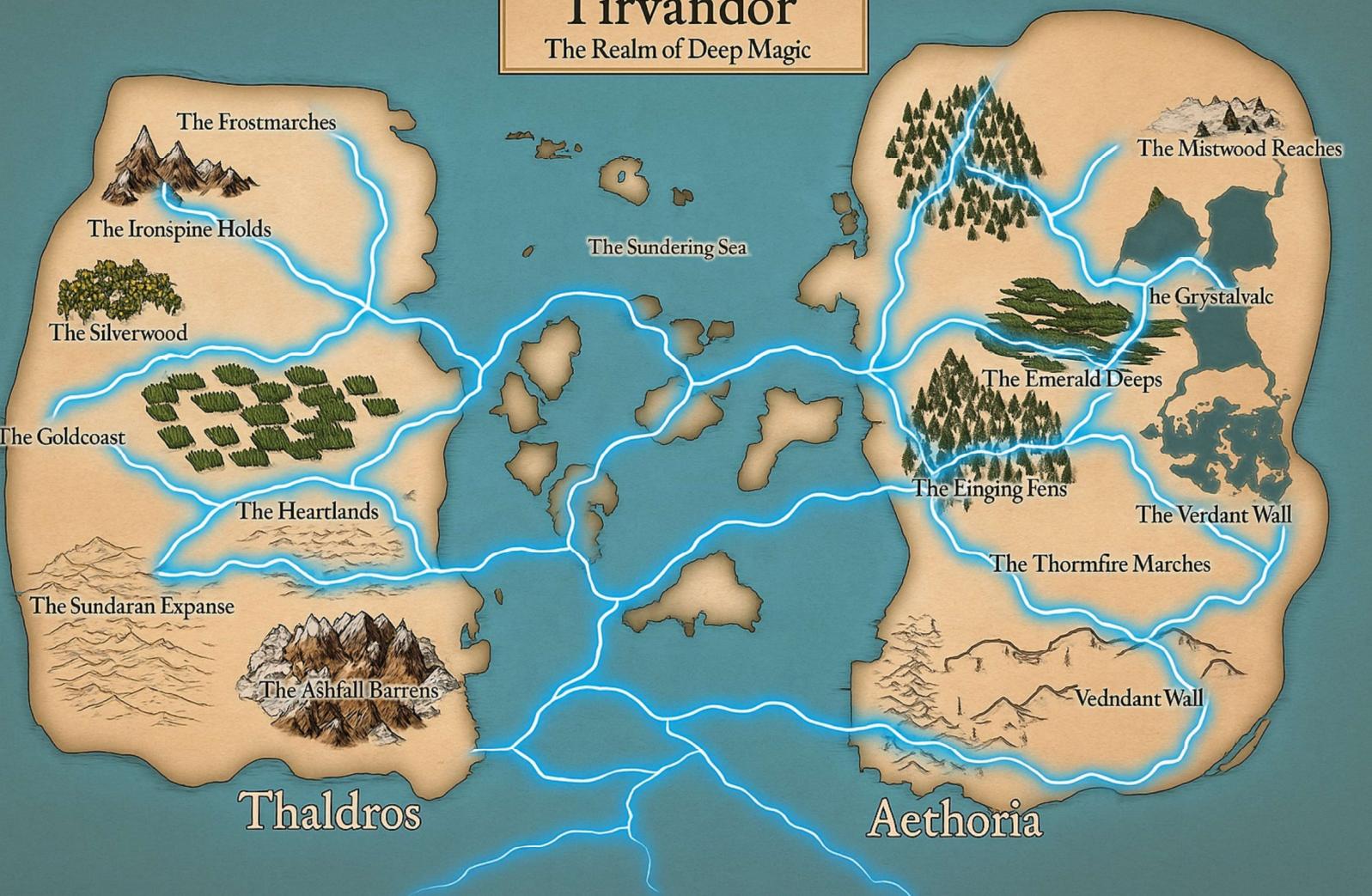
- Times assume normal weather, maintained roads, and average walking speed
- Mountain and swamp terrain significantly increases travel time
- Winter conditions can double or triple journey lengths
- Mounts and wagons affect speed based on road quality



Aethoria

Tirvandor

The Realm of Deep Magic



Natural Magic and Ley Lines

Tirvandor's geography is intricately tied to the flow of natural magic through the world. Ley lines, invisible rivers of magical energy, run beneath the surface, intersecting at nodes of particular power.

Known Ley Line Nexus

- Aethermere: Built atop a major nexus, contributing to its status as a magical capital
- The Ironspine Peaks: Multiple ley lines converge in the mountains, explaining the presence of magical ores
- Deep Wildwood: An unnamed nexus deep in the southern rainforests, considered sacred ground
- The Sundaran Ruins: Ancient cities were built on ley nexuses, now buried under sand

Travel Hazards and Considerations

Traveling in Tirvandor requires preparation and respect for the land:

Thaldros:

- Mountain passes close in winter
- Desert crossings require experienced guides
- Bandits along less-traveled routes
- Occasional monster incursions from wilderness areas

Aethoria:

- Forest paths require rangers or druids to navigate safely
- Swamp regions are nearly impassable without local guides
- Natural magic can cause disorientation
- Territorial creatures and protective druids

The Sundering Sea:

- Storm season makes sailing dangerous
- Pirates in the archipelagos
- Sea monsters in deep waters
- Navigation requires skilled sailors

Cultural Geography

The geography of Tirvandor has shaped distinct cultural zones:

Mountain Folk (Thaldros): Dwarves, goliaths, and hardy humans, focused on mining and craftsmanship

Plains Dwellers (Central Thaldros): Primarily humans, organized into feudal kingdoms, focused on agriculture and trade

Desert Nomads (Sundaran Wastes): Mixed races who have adapted to desert life, maintaining ancient traditions

Forest Elves (Aethoria): Elves and half-elves who live in harmony with ancient forests, preserving old magic

Swamp Folk (Thornmire): Lizardfolk, humans, and half-orcs who have adapted to wetland life

Islanders: Mixed cultures with traditions from both continents, focused on maritime trades

Settlement Scale and Population

Major Cities: 10,000-50,000+ inhabitants

Towns: 1,000-10,000 inhabitants

Villages/Hamlets: 100-1,000 inhabitants

Isolated Farms/Inns: 10-100 inhabitants

Total estimated population of Tirvandor: 2-3 million sentient beings across all settlements and nomadic groups.

Unexplored Regions

Despite centuries of civilization, large portions of Tirvandor remain unexplored or poorly mapped:

- The highest peaks of the Ironspine Mountains
- The deepest parts of the Emerald Depths
- The heart of the Wildwood
- The ocean floor of the Sundering Sea
- Various small islands and uncharted waters

These regions hold secrets, ancient ruins, lost civilizations, and dangers unknown to most inhabitants of Tirvandor.

This geography serves as the foundation for understanding Tirvandor's cultures, conflicts, and stories. The land is not merely a backdrop but an active participant in the realm's history shaping those who live upon it and being shaped in turn by their actions



Timeline of Tirvandor - Ancient History

The Calendar

Tirvandor uses the Common Reckoning (CR) calendar, established after the Sundering. Years before this event are marked as Before Sundering (BS).

- Current Year: 1247 CR
- Seasons: Four distinct seasons in most regions
- Months: 12 months of 30 days each, with 5-6 festival days between seasons
- Week: 7-day cycles

Age of Myth (??-15,000 BS)

The earliest age, shrouded in legend and oral tradition. Few reliable records exist, and most knowledge comes from ancient ruins, prophetic visions, and the fragmented memories of immortal beings.

The First Creation

According to myth, Tirvandor was once a single landmass, a perfect world where the Primordials, entities of pure elemental power, walked alongside the First Gods. The land was raw and wild, magic flowing without restraint. The Primordials shaped the terrain through their very existence: volcanoes rose where fire walked, oceans formed from the tears of water, forests grew in the footsteps of life.

Key Concepts:

- The world was united, not yet sundered
- Magic was not learned but inherent to all things
- Dragons were born from the blood of the earth
- Giants were created to tend the world-trees
- The first mortal races emerged from elemental unions

The Dragon Hegemony (~12,000-8,000 BS)

The great dragons rose to dominance, establishing vast territories and amassing knowledge. This was the age of dragon-lords, when mortals were few and scattered. The dragons created the first written languages, established the foundations of arcane magic, and built monuments that would endure for millennia.

Major Events:

- The Chromatic Conclave: Five great wyrm lords divided the world into color-coded domains
- Creation of the first magical artifacts by dragon artificers
- The Dragon Libraries: Repositories of ancient knowledge, some still undiscovered
- The First Dragon War: Chromatic and metallic dragons fought over philosophical differences, scarring the landscape

The Giant Kingdoms (~8,000-6,000 BS)

As dragons retreated into seclusion, the giant-kin rose to prominence. They built massive cities of stone, established trade networks, and developed their own sophisticated culture. Many ruins in Tirvandor's mountains and deep forests are remnants of this era.

Major Events:

- The Ordning System established (still influences giant culture)
- Construction of the Sky Fortresses
- Development of runic magic and stonemasonry
- The Giant-Dragon Pact: An uneasy truce that ended the Dragon Wars

Age of Dawn (6,000-3,000 BS)

The rise of the mortal races. Elves, dwarves, and the first humans emerged as significant civilizations, learning from the ruins of their predecessors and developing their own cultures.

The First Elven Kingdom (~6,000-4,500 BS)

The elves of Aethoria discovered the ley line nexuses and learned to work with the natural magic of the world-trees. They established the

first true elven kingdom, Lothlindor, which encompassed most of what is now the Emerald Depths.

Major Developments:

- Elven high magic reaches its first flowering
- The Singing Groves planted (some still exist)
- First contact with the Feywild
- Development of elven crafts (woodworking, poetry, star-reading)

The Dwarven Delving (~5,500-4,000 BS)

The dwarves discovered the Ironspine Mountains and began their great delving into the stone. They uncovered veins of magical ore and ancient giant ruins, claiming both as their own and establishing the underground kingdoms.

Major Developments:

- Foundation of Khaz-Durath (the First Deep Kingdom)
- Discovery of mithril and adamantine
- Development of runic forging techniques
- First conflicts with underground horrors (aberrations, mind flayers)

The Human Emergence (~5,000-3,500 BS)

Humans, shorter-lived but adaptable, spread rapidly across both continents. They learned from elves and dwarves but developed their own distinct cultures and approaches to magic.

Major Developments:

- Nomadic human tribes settle into agricultural communities
- Development of divine magic through worship of the gods
- First human kingdoms in central Thaldros
- Cultural exchange between races

The Age of Accord (~3,500-3,000 BS)

A brief period of relative peace and cooperation between the major races. Trade flourished, knowledge was shared, and great works were accomplished through cooperation.

Major Achievements:

- The Accords of Unity: Treaties establishing borders and trade rights
- Mixed-race cities founded
- The Great Library of Silverpine established (later rebuilt after the Sundering)
- Magical research advances, combining different traditions

Age of Strife (3,000-1,000 BS)

The longest and darkest age in recorded history. Wars, plagues, and supernatural catastrophes plagued Tirvandor, culminating in the Sundering itself.

The First Planar Incursions (~3,000-2,800 BS)

Portals to other planes began opening spontaneously across Tirvandor. Demons, devils, and aberrations spilled into the world. The causes remain debated. Some blame reckless magical experimentation, others believe the planes themselves were shifting.

Major Events:

- The Demon Wars: Centuries-long conflict against extraplanar invaders
- Formation of the first paladin orders
- Mass casualties across all civilizations
- Permanent planar scars left in some regions

The Wizard Wars (~2,700-2,400 BS)

In the aftermath of the planar incursions, mage-lords vied for power, each seeking to fill the void left by weakened kingdoms. They raised armies, twisted landscapes with wild magic, and created weapons of terrible power.

Major Events:

- Rise and fall of multiple mage-lord dynasties
- Creation of many dangerous magical zones and corrupted lands
- The Spellplague: A magical disease that killed thousands of arcane practitioners
- The First Warforged: Created as soldiers, they would later seek independence

The Divine Silence (~2,400-2,200 BS)

The gods stopped answering prayers. Divine magic waned, and priests lost their powers.

Theories abound about the cause. Some say the gods were fighting their own war, others that mortals had displeased them, still others that something was blocking the divine connection.

Impact:

- Collapse of theocratic governments
- Rise of arcane magic to fill the void
- Social upheaval and loss of faith
- When the gods returned, their messages had changed

The Age of Tyrants (~2,200-1,500 BS)

With divine magic weakened and societies fractured, powerful individuals seized control. Lich-kings, vampire lords, and mind flayer colonies established dominions over large regions.

Major Tyrants:

- Zalther the Undying: Lich-king who ruled the Sundaran region for 300 years
- The Crimson Court: A cabal of vampires who controlled central Thaldros
- The Colony of K'thrax: Mind flayers who enslaved portions of eastern Aethoria
- Morveth Shadowmane: A dragon who re-established draconic rule in the mountains

Resistance:

- Underground movements kept hope alive
- Heroes emerged to fight the tyrants
- Secret orders preserved knowledge and trained warriors
- Slow, costly reclamation of freedom

The Great Dying (~1,500-1,300 BS)

A plague unlike any before swept across both continents. Neither magical nor entirely natural, it killed indiscriminately and left vast regions depopulated. This weakened the remaining tyrants but also civilization itself.

Impact:

- Population reduced by an estimated 60-70%
- Entire cities abandoned
- Loss of knowledge as scholars and craftsmen died

- Breakdown of trade networks
- Forests reclaimed agricultural land

Precursors to the Sundering (~1,200-1,000 BS)

As civilizations slowly recovered, tensions grew between those who wanted to restore the old ways and those who sought to forge something new. Philosophical and political differences escalated into conflict.

The Schism:

- Western nations favored hierarchical structures and aggressive expansion
- Eastern nations emphasized balance with nature and contemplation
- Religious disagreements about the nature of the Divine Silence
- Control of ley line nexuses became a strategic goal

Pre-Sundering Era (1,000 BS - Year 0)

The 1,000 years leading to the catastrophe that would split the continent in two. This era saw the height of unified civilization followed by its dramatic collapse, a slow-motion disaster that reshaped the world forever.

1,000-800 BS - Golden Age Returns

After the devastation of the Great Dying, civilization rebuilt itself with renewed purpose and vigor. The unified kingdom that emerged was stronger, wiser, and more prosperous than any that had come before. Magic was no longer the domain of specialists but woven into the fabric of daily life. Trade routes connected every corner of the continents, and the population swelled to unprecedented heights.

Major Achievements:

- Peace and prosperity across the unified continent
- Population reaches 30 millionthe highest in recorded history
- Magic integrated into daily life: enchanted tools, healing temples, skyships
- Trade flourishes across all regions, creating unprecedented wealth

- Art and culture experience a golden age; this era's works are still treasured
- The High Kingdom reaches its zenith of power and influence

800-500 BS - Growing Tensions

The seeds of division were planted during prosperity. As the kingdom grew, so did competing philosophies about how to govern and use magic. The western territories favored strong central authority and aggressive expansion, while the eastern lands advocated for balance with nature and contemplative study. These weren't just political disagreements, they reflected fundamentally different worldviews.

Emerging Problems:

- Minor conflicts between eastern and western kingdoms over resources
- Competition intensifies over magical resources and ley line access
- Ley line instability first reported by Circle mages
- Some practitioners report disturbing dreams and visions
- Philosophical differences emerge: hierarchy vs. balance, expansion vs. preservation
- Western and eastern cultural identities begin to crystallize

500-400 BS - The Warnings

Reality itself began showing signs of stress. What started as minor magical anomalies escalated into catastrophic events. When a major ley line surge obliterated an entire city in the heartlands, killing 50,000 people in minutes, the Circle of Seven began investigating in earnest. Their discovery was terrifying: the Primordial prisons, which had held for millennia, were weakening.

Crisis Escalation:

- Major ley line surge destroys the city of Thal'moren - 50,000 dead
- Circle of Seven discovers all seven Primordial prisons are weakening

- Empire mobilizes vast resources to reinforce the ancient seals
- Public panic begins as magical disasters increase in frequency
- Prophecies of doom circulate widely; cults emerge
- Some regions experience planar bleeds - reality becoming thin

400-350 BS - Failed Containment

Every attempt to stabilize the situation only made it worse. The Circle of Seven tried to reinforce the Primordial prisons using the empire's considerable magical resources, but the ancient seals were too complex and too damaged. Each failed ritual caused backlash, waves of destructive energy that devastated surrounding areas. When two major cities were destroyed by magical feedback, people began to lose faith in their leaders.

Catastrophic Setbacks:

- Three major attempts to strengthen Primordial seals backfire catastrophically
- Cities of Vel'sharim and Kaer Morath destroyed 200,000 casualties
- Crime increases dramatically as fear spreads and authority weakens
- Religious cults form, some worshiping the imprisoned Primordials as gods
- Migration away from ley line nexuses creates the first refugee waves
- Circle of Seven debates: Can the prisons be saved at all?

350-300 BS - Social Breakdown

The fabric of civilization began to tear. Trade routes that had operated safely for centuries became too dangerous as magical anomalies made travel unpredictable. Agricultural yields dropped as ley line instability affected the weather. Cities swelled with refugees while farmlands were abandoned. The unified kingdom's infrastructure, built for stability and prosperity, couldn't handle the stress of constant crisis.

Civilization Unravels:

- Trade networks fail as routes become too dangerous
- Food shortages in cities as agriculture is disrupted by magical storms
- Mass migration creates refugee crises - millions displaced
- Civil unrest and riots in major population centers
- Regional identities strengthen as central authority proves ineffective
- Western and eastern territories begin acting independently

300-200 BS - Economic Collapse

Without functioning trade, the empire's economy imploded. The unified currency became worthless as regional powers hoarded resources. The carefully maintained road networks fell into disrepair. Tax collection became impossible, leaving the central government unable to pay its armies or maintain order. Regional warlords filled the power vacuum, carving out their own territories from the dying empire.

Empire Fragments:

- Government authority collapses in outlying regions
- Regional warlords seize power in the chaos, hundreds of small kingdoms emerge
- Empire fragments into distinct eastern and western territories
- Assassination of key officials becomes commonplace
- Currency systems collapse; barter economy returns
- The unified kingdom exists in name only

200-100 BS - Desperate Measures

With conventional solutions exhausted and conventional authority gone, the Circle of Seven emerged as the only organization with the knowledge and resources to potentially save civilization. Their proposal was radical and horrifying: they could stabilize one Primordial prison, but doing so would require redirecting ley line energy away from the others. The other

six prisons would fail catastrophically. It was a choice between certain doom and a slim chance at survival.

Last Hope:

- Circle of Seven proposes redirecting all ley line energy to reinforce one prison
- Revelation: Saving one prison means dooming the other six to failure
- Heated debates across what remains of civilization: which Primordial to save?
- Population ordered to evacuate from central regions near failing prisons
- Last-ditch efforts to preserve knowledge, artifacts, and cultural treasures
- Western and eastern factions increasingly isolated and distrustful

100-1 BS - Final Preparations

The Circle chose to reinforce the Devourer's prison beneath what would become Ironvault. It was the most stable of the seven and the Devourer was considered the least immediately destructive if it escaped. The massive ritual would require every remaining mage of power and would draw on ley lines across the entire continent. The Circle knew the backlash would be catastrophic, but they believed it was civilization's only chance.

The Last Gambit:

- Circle of Seven chooses to reinforce the Devourer's prison beneath Ironvault
- All other Primordial prisons will be critically weakened their failures inevitable
- Massive ritual prepared at the Observatory Citadel in the central heartlands
- Western and eastern populations completely isolated from each other
- Evacuation orders largely ignored many believe they'll survive anywhere
- The Circle begins their ritual on the last day of the year

The Schism:

By this final century, the old unified kingdom had effectively become two separate civilizations that happened to share a continent:

- Western territories (proto-Thaldros) favored hierarchical structures, military strength, and aggressive expansion as responses to crisis
- Eastern territories (proto-Aethoria) emphasized balance with nature, contemplative study, and preservation over growth
- Religious disagreements about the meaning of the Divine Silence drove wedges between communities
- Control of the remaining stable ley line nexuses became a strategic goal worth fighting for
- Both sides blamed the other for the impending catastrophe
- The Circle's plan satisfied neither faction: westerners wanted multiple prisons saved through force, easterners wanted to let nature take its course

The ritual was performed on the final day before Year 0. Whether it succeeded, failed, or caused unintended consequences remains one of history's greatest mysteries. All records of the Observatory Citadel were lost in the cataclysm that followed.

The Sundering (Year 0)

The cataclysmic event that defines Tirvandor's modern history. The exact causes remain debated, but the consequences were unmistakable. The continent was torn in two, creating the Sundering Sea and reshaping reality itself.

The Event

The Sundering occurred over the course of three days, each more catastrophic than the last.

First Day - The Trembling (Year 0 CR):

- Earthquakes across the entire continent
- Buildings collapsed; mountains shifted



- Ley lines began to destabilize

Second Day - The Breaking (Year 0 CR):

- The ground began to split
- Massive fissures opened across the central regions
- Reality itself seemed to crack planar boundaries weakened

Third Day - The Separation (Year 0 CR):

- The two halves of the continent completed their separation
- The Sundering Sea rushed in to fill the gap
- Magical storms raged for weeks
- Thousands of refugees sought safety

Immediate Aftermath:

- Estimated death toll: 30-40% of the surviving population
- Complete disruption of civilization
- Loss of central regions that now form the seafloor
- Creation of new coastlines and the island chains

Specific Losses and Survivors (Year 0 CR)

Royal Lines Sundered:

- Palace of Eternal Spring destroyed, sinks beneath waves with King Aldric the Wise

- King Aldric the Wise and main royal line perish in the catastrophe
- Prince Theron (West) survives in western territories, claims throne as High King
- Prince Aethos (East) survives in eastern lands, establishes eastern throne
- Beginning of 1,247-year succession dispute that continues to present day

House Deepwater Shattered:

- Palace Port (greatest trading city in world, House Deepwater HQ) sinks beneath waves
- Lord Aldris Deepwater and main family line lost with the city
- 70% of house wealth destroyed in single catastrophic day
- Eastern branch (Marius Deepwater) survives in Aethoria
- Western branch (Aldris the Younger) survives in Thaldros
- Both branches claim legitimate succession to Deepwater legacy
- Goldreach becomes primary surviving western port

House Starleaf Divided:

- House split when continents separated, severing ancient family
- Observatory Citadel partially destroyed in Aethoria (eastern branch)
- Eastern branch retains star charts, celestial artifacts, astronomical knowledge
- Western branch retains sacred forests, fey pacts, nature magic
- Silverpine (west) cut off from eastern kin
- Beginning of divergence that creates House Starweaver (east) and House Silverleaf (west)

Geographic Transformation:

- Central regions now form Sundering Sea floor (miles deep)
- New jagged coastlines created on both continents
- Mountain peaks become island chains and archipelagos
- Ley line network permanently disrupted

Theories on the Cause

Scholars and mages have debated for over a thousand years what caused the Sundering:

The Weapon Theory: The most popular belief that a magical weapon of unprecedented power was detonated, intentionally or accidentally, as a final act in an escalating war.

The Divine Intervention Theory: That the gods themselves sundered the continents to separate warring factions and prevent total annihilation.

The Natural Magic Theory: That the ley line network became unstable due to centuries of abuse, causing a catastrophic magical earthquake.

The Planar Collision Theory: That Tirvandor briefly overlapped with another plane of existence, and the Sundering was reality correcting itself.

The Dragon Prophecy Theory: That ancient dragons foresaw the Sundering and actually facilitated it to preserve the world from a greater threat.

The truth may involve elements of multiple theories, or none at all.

Timeline of Tirvandor - Recovery & Nations

Age of Recovery (0 CR - 400 CR)

The first four centuries after the Sundering were marked by survival, adaptation, and the slow rebuilding of civilization on two now-separate continents.

The First Decade (0-10 CR)

0-10 CR: Immediate Survival

- 10 CR: Common Reckoning calendar established to mark new era
- 10 CR: Survivor communities form around resources and defensible positions
- 10 CR: Rediscovery of farming and basic crafts begins
- Magical disruption slowly stabilizing
- First tentative attempts to understand what happened
- Desperate search for lost family members across the new sea

The Founding Era (10-100 CR)

Early Reconstruction (10-50 CR):

- Communities struggling to maintain civilization
- Knowledge preservation becomes priority
- Oral traditions strengthen as written records scarce
- 50 CR: First tentative sea voyages attempted between continents

Political Fragmentation (50-100 CR):

- 75 CR: Western territories fragment into dozens of small kingdoms
- Eastern lands similarly fracture
- Warlords and survivor-leaders claim territories
- No central authority on either continent
- 100 CR: Maritime technology begins improving slowly
- 100 CR: House Starweaver and Silverleaf considered fully separate houses

- 100 CR: Salvage Wars begin between Crystalborn and Goldshore over sunken wealth

Major Cities Refounded:

- 110 CR: Proto-Kaer Thandros established at ancient dwarven fortress site
- 125 CR: Proto-Aethermere founded in Emerald Depths
- 150 CR: Trade routes slowly reestablished within each continent
- 175 CR: The Great Libraries founded to preserve pre-Sundering knowledge

The Age of Isolation (100-200 CR)

Continental Divergence (100-200 CR):

- 187 CR: House Aethermere officially founded by druid-king
- 187 CR: First chosen-heir system begins in Aethermere (forest chooses ruler)
- 200 CR: House Aethermere formalizes forest-chosen succession system
- 200 CR: Each continent develops independently - separate cultures emerging
- 210 CR: Cultural divergence accelerates between East and West

Characteristics of This Period:

- Each continent developed independently for a century
- Cultural divergence between East and West accelerated rapidly
- Different approaches to magic, government, and philosophy emerged
- The archipelagos served as neutral ground for rare meetings between continents
- Memories of unified realm beginning to fade into legend

The Reconnection (200-400 CR)

Renewed Contact (200-300 CR):

- 237 CR: Salvage Fleet Battle - Crystalborn vs Goldshore navies clash over salvage rights
- 250 CR: Different approaches to magic and government solidify on each continent

- 275 CR: Archipelagos serve as neutral ground for rare diplomatic meetings

The Failed Reunion (327 CR):

- 327 CR: Silverleaf heir visits Starfall seeking to reunite family knowledge
- 327 CR: Starweavers refuse reunion - "Silverleaf abandoned true magic for politics"
- 327 CR: Formal schism declared - houses stop acknowledging kinship entirely
- Symbolic end of hope for reunifying sundered families

Further Divergence (330-400 CR):

- 350 CR: Eastern branch (Starweaver) abandons forest magic entirely
- 375 CR: Western branch (Silverleaf) abandons astronomical studies
- Each former-unified house now completely different in focus and culture

The Great Betrayal Era:

- 412 CR: The Great Betrayal - Goldshore hires Crystalborn divers secretly
- 412 CR: Goldshore steals maps showing vault locations from Crystalborn
- 412 CR: Formal state of hostility declared between merchant houses
- 412 CR: House Splittide second ruler begins reign in Aethoria (689 years)

Late Reconnection (425-400 CR):

- 425 CR: Maritime technology breakthrough - regular travel now viable
- 450 CR: Western branch officially adopts 'Silverleaf' name
- 450 CR: Eastern branch officially adopts 'Starweaver' name
- 450 CR: House Crystalborn formally adopts new name (from Deepwater remnant)
- 475 CR: Port Myrthen grows as neutral trading hub
- 500 CR: Cultural exchange resumes between continents

- 550 CR: Tensions over old conflicts emerge despite renewed contact

Age of Nations (400 CR - 900 CR)

Civilizations matured into recognizable modern forms. Kingdoms, city-states, and other political entities solidified their borders and identities.

The Western Consolidation (400-600 CR)

Rise of House Blackwood (587-600 CR):

- 587 CR: Raven's Keep founded by Lord Aldric Blackwood I
- 587 CR: House Blackwood establishes power in Silverwood region
- Built as fortress-city incorporating ancient fey architecture
- Grew to 8,000 population, center of art and culture

House Crystalborn Consolidation (600 CR):

- 600 CR: House Crystalborn consolidates control of all major lakes in Aethoria
- 600 CR: Water-speaking abilities manifesting in Crystalborn bloodline
- Magical talents growing with each generation
- Shift from merchants to mystical water-speakers complete

The Unification Wars Begin (612 CR):

- 612 CR: Thorin I Thandris claims kingship after Battle of Three Peaks
- 612 CR: Kaer Thandros founded as royal capital
- Built into living mountain rock, combining human and dwarf architecture
- Strategic location controlling mountain passes and mythril veins

Consolidation of Power (612-670 CR):

- 625 CR: Human kingdoms of Thaldros begin forming loose confederation
- 650 CR: Crown Forge commissioned in Kaer Thandros
- Legendary forge capable of creating permanent magical items

- Secret techniques known only to Thandris and Ironmark houses

Formal Recognition (670 CR):

- 670 CR: King Thorin II recognizes Silverleaf as Lords of Silverwood
- 670 CR: Unification Wars formally end in Thaldros
- 670 CR: House Ironmark granted eastern territories
- Alliance secured Silverleaf autonomy through cooperation

The Founding of Trade Centers (695-750 CR)

Crossvale Established (695-698 CR):

- 695 CR: Three merchant families plan founding of Crossvale
- Heartwood, Grainson, and Millford families identify strategic location
- Where five major trade routes intersect, three rivers meet
- 698 CR: King Aldric Thandris expands realm to the Heartlands
- 698 CR: Crossvale officially founded as planned city
- Grid street pattern, designed specifically for commerce

House Goldshore Formalized (698 CR):

- 698 CR: House Goldshore formally adopts name, granted nobility
- 698 CR: Captain Aldris Goldshore (named for ancestor) given Goldreach charter
- Formally abandoned "Deepwater" name while honoring heritage
- Granted nobility by King Thandris in exchange for financing wars

The Eastern Harmony (400-700 CR)

Political Stability (700-760 CR):

- 700 CR: Elven courts in Aethermere achieve political stability
- 720 CR: Druidic circles gain influence in eastern governance

- 740 CR: Swamp cities develop unique cultural identities
- 760 CR: Forest communities establish the Greenway network

Economic Growth (750-780 CR):

- 750 CR: Banking House of Goldshore established
- 750 CR: Goldshore expands shipping operations significantly
- 780 CR: House Seawatch founded as coastal defenders
- Built fortresses to defend against coastal raids and pirates

The Golden Age of Trade (600-800 CR)

Maritime Expansion (800-850 CR):

- 800 CR: Regular shipping lanes firmly established between continents
- Merchant Guilds rose to unprecedented power and wealth
- Standardization of currencies and measurements across regions
- Cultural renaissance as ideas flowed freely between East and West
- Port cities flourished with cross-continental commerce

The Monster Resurgence (750-850 CR)

The Rising Threat (810-834 CR):

- 810 CR: Monster populations begin dramatic increase
- Populations of dangerous creatures increasing across both continents
- 825 CR: Adventurers' guilds form to combat the threat
- Theories proposed: magical aftermath, planar thin spots, natural cycles

The Red Winter (834 CR):

- 834 CR: Massive orc invasion devastates western Thaldros
- 834 CR: Kaer Thandros withstands brutal orc siege

- 834 CR: House Goldshore finances defense against orcs
- Made fortune supplying armies, granted official nobility
- 834 CR: Crossvale withstands orc siege through unified defense

Aftermath and Consolidation (834-893 CR):

- 850 CR: House Heartwood founded by merger of three farming families
- 850 CR: Many frontier settlements abandoned to monster threats
- 860 CR: Increased demand for magic items and armed forces
- 870 CR: Theories about monster resurgence extensively debated
- 893 CR: House Silverleaf remains neutral during orc invasions (controversial decision)

The Second Exploration Era Begins (900 CR)

- 900 CR: Adventurers push into unexplored regions
- 900 CR: House Heartwood controls 30% of Heartlands grain production
- 900 CR: House Seawatch at height of power defending coasts
- Lost ruins discovered and plundered for ancient treasures
- Beginning of new age of discovery and ambition

Timeline of Tirvandor - Age of Ambition

Age of Ambition (900 CR - Present, 1247 CR)

The current age, marked by renewed exploration, magical innovation, political intrigue, and the sense that momentous changes are on the horizon.

The Second Exploration (900-1000 CR)

Desert Unification (920-967 CR):

- 920 CR: Malik Ashborne unites three largest desert nomad clans through marriage
- 920 CR: Border Wars begin, devastating Heartlands region
- 920 CR: House Goldshore dominates western maritime trade
- 925 CR: New magical discoveries from ancient sites
- 930 CR: Expansion of mapped territories into previously unknown regions
- 945 CR: Border Wars end after 25 years of conflict
- 950 CR: Goldshore buys partial ownership of Port Myrthen
- 967 CR: Sundara founded by Malik Ashborne as "City of the Sun"
- Permanent city built at largest oasis cluster in desert
- 975 CR: Territories significantly expanded through exploration

End of Exploration Era (975-1000 CR):

- 1000 CR: House Heartwood granted nobility for feeding kingdom during famines
- 1000 CR: House Seawatch begins decline as threats decrease, merchants dominate
- 1000 CR: Merchant houses growing wealthy, challenging military nobility

The Arcane Revolution (1000-1100 CR)

Magical Renaissance (1010-1050 CR):

- 1010 CR: Breakthrough advances in magical theory
- 1020 CR: Creation of new spells and magical items accelerates
- 1030 CR: Mage academies established in all major cities
- 1040 CR: Warnings about magical hubris - comparisons to pre-Sundering era
- 1050 CR: House Ashborne granted nobility by King Thandris
- 1050 CR: Ashborne controls desert trade monopoly completely

Growing Tensions (1060-1089 CR):

- 1060 CR: House Goldshore expands banking empire across Thaldros
- 1070 CR: Political tensions rising between ambitious houses
- Some warned of hubris, comparing magical experimentation to pre-Sundering era

The Rebellions (1089-1092 CR)

The Blackwood Rebellion Erupts (1089 CR):

- 1089 CR: Lord Aldric Blackwood III claims throne through grandmother's royal blood
- 1089 CR: Blackwood Rebellion begins, splitting Thaldros in civil war
- 1089 CR: Civil war erupts - half the nobility backs Blackwood claim
- 1089 CR: House Silverleaf remains neutral in Blackwood Rebellion (very controversial)
- 1089 CR: House Ironmark stays loyal to Thandris, rewarded later
- 1089 CR: Crossvale changes hands SEVEN TIMES during civil war
- City devastated by repeated sieges, population drops from 12,000 to 8,000

Eastern Rebellion (1089-1092 CR):

- 1089 CR: House Splittide rebellion begins in Aethoria
- Sided with ancient fey claiming peninsula should return to fey rule
- Parallel to western Blackwood Rebellion, same period

The Crushing (1092 CR):

- 1092 CR: Battle of Raven's Keep - Blackwood forces crushed
- 1092 CR: Raven's Keep burned, lands distributed to loyalist houses
- 1092 CR: Lord Aldric Blackwood and all known heirs executed for treason
- 1092 CR: House Blackwood officially declared extinct
- 1092 CR: House Splittide crushed in Aethoria; leaders executed
- 1092 CR: Blackwood sympathizers begin being hunted systematically

Aftermath (1092-1150 CR):

- 1092-1150 CR: Remaining Blackwood sympathizers hunted down across decades
- 1095 CR: Crossvale begins rebuilding after devastating civil war
- 1100 CR: House Seawatch loses ports to Goldshore through economic pressure
- 1105 CR: House Silverleaf marries into House Thandris to repair reputation from neutrality
- 1150 CR: Hunting of Blackwood sympathizers officially ends

The Years of Plague (1120-1125 CR)

- 1120 CR: Griefshade plague begins spreading through several regions
- A disease known as Griefshade swept through several regions
- Much less deadly than the Great Dying, but economically devastating
- 1125 CR: Griefshade plague ends
- 1130 CR: Healers and clerics gain prominence from successful plague response
- 1135 CR: Advances in medicine and healing magic result from crisis

The Dragon Crisis (1156 CR)

The Devastation (1156 CR):

- 1156 CR: Red dragon Infernalix emerges from volcanic chamber

- 1156 CR: Dragon attacks Kaer Thandros, destroys outer districts
- 1156 CR: Dragon nearly destroys Thandris royal line
- Hundreds killed including royal family members
- 1156 CR: House Emberthorn refuses dragon tribute
- 1156 CR: Dragon destroys half of Emberthorn holdings in single day
- Family fortunes destroyed; fortress burned
- 1156 CR: House Ironmark loses three mines to dragon attack, bankrupted
- 1156 CR: House Ashborne profits enormously from dragon crisis, selling war supplies
- 1156 CR: House Goldshore loans massive sums for dragon defense
- 1156 CR: King Thandris becomes heavily indebted to House Goldshore
- 1156 CR: Dragon attack mysteriously ends suddenly
- Rumors of secret treaty never confirmed

Recovery Period (1156-1200 CR):

- 1156-1200 CR: Dragon rules Ashfall Barrens region directly
- 1160 CR: Rebuilding of Kaer Thandros begins
- 1160 CR: House Ashborne expands into Heartlands trade
- 1170 CR: Stronger fortifications built at Kaer Thandros
- 1175 CR: Deep vaults expanded as dragon-proof refuges
- 1180 CR: House Ironmark begins slow recovery through careful management
- 1190 CR: Population of Kaer Thandros recovered
- 1195 CR: Economy strengthened through mining expansion
- 1200 CR: Kaer Thandros rebuilding complete
- 1200 CR: Royal line secured through careful marriages

- 1200 CR: Unprecedented number of individuals become adventurers
- 1201 CR: Dragon Infernalix mysteriously vanishes (killed? sleeping?)
- 1201 CR: Survivors begin returning to Ashfall Barrens
- 1210 CR: House Ironmark recovery complete

The Current Era (1125-1247 CR)

Major Developments (1185-1220 CR):

- 1185 CR: Crystalbrook Accords establish mutual defense and trade agreements
- 1189 CR: House Crystalborn develops water-speaking magic breakthrough
- 1189 CR: Crystalborn gains ability to dive deeper, communicate underwater better
- 1189 CR: Goldshore accuses Crystalborn of "cheating" with magic
- 1203 CR: The Darkwood Incident - entire forest in Aethoria corrupted by shadow magic
- 1220 CR: Sundaran Excavations begin in desert
- 1225 CR: Major archaeological discoveries in Sundaran desert uncovering pre-Sundering artifacts

Growing Tensions (1205-1230 CR):

- 1205 CR: King Thandris proposes marriage alliance to House Aethermere
- 1205 CR: House Aethermere rejects proposal as "trick to subordinate eastern throne"
- 1205 CR: Relations between continental royals cool further
- 1230 CR: The Kraken Incident - kraken attacks Goldshore salvage expedition
- 1230 CR: House Crystalborn expedition arrives, refuses to help Goldshore
- 1230 CR: Goldshore loses three ships to kraken attack
- 1230 CR: Hatred between merchant houses intensifies dramatically

Recent Events (1235-1247 CR):

- 1235 CR: Thornhaven Phenomenon - island experiences reality distortions for three months, still being studied
- 1240 CR: Increased planar instability reported across both continents
- 1242 CR: Discovery of ancient prophecies in various ruins
- 1243 CR: Diving expedition finds ancient royal seal near Sundering Sea floor
- 1243 CR: Both Thandris and Aethermere claim seal proves their succession case
- 1244 CR: Unusual monster activity increases mysteriously
- 1245 CR: Signs and portents reported by seers across both continents
- 1246 CR: Ancient map stolen from House Goldshore by pirates
- 1246 CR: Goldshore accuses Crystalborn of hiring the pirate thieves
- 1246 CR: Crystalborn denies accusation (though actually guilty)
- 1246 CR: Cold war threatens to turn hot between merchant houses

Current Year: 1247 CR

Patterns and Cycles

Tirvandor's history suggests certain patterns:

Cycles of Prosperity and Catastrophe:

Approximately every 1,000-2,000 years, a major upheaval

Planar Activity: Regular increases and decreases in extraplanar incursions

Magical Tides: Periods where magic is more or less powerful

Rise and Fall of Empires: No empire has lasted more than 500 years

Some scholars believe Tirvandor is approaching another significant change, pointing to:

- Increased planar instability
- Discovery of ancient prophecies
- Unusual monster activity
- Signs and portents reported by seers

- The 1,250th anniversary of the Sundering approaching (in 3 years)

Lost History

Much knowledge was lost in the Sundering and previous catastrophes:

- The true capabilities of the ancient civilizations
- The fate of many pre-Sundering cities now beneath the Sundering Sea
- The location of legendary artifacts mentioned in fragments
- The complete history of the Divine Silence
- What lies in the ocean depths of the Sundering Sea (Palace Port, etc.)
- The purposes of certain ancient ruins
- The true cause of the Sundering itself

These mysteries drive many adventures and scholarly pursuits in the current age.

Notable Historical Mysteries

The Sundering's True Cause:

- Was it a weapon? Divine intervention? Natural magic failure?
- Why did it happen during a succession crisis?
- Could it happen again?

The Dragon Treaty (1156 CR):

- How did the dragon attack on Kaer Thandros end so suddenly?
- What did King Thandris promise Infernalix?
- Is payment still owed? Will the dragon return?

The Lost Heirs:

- Did any Blackwood heirs survive the purges?
- Does Marina Deepwater's line still exist?
- Are there other hidden royal bastards with legitimate claims?

The Sunken Treasures:

- What remains in Palace Port's vaults beneath the sea?
- Can the Deepwater fortune ever be recovered?
- What secrets lie in the sunken Palace of Eternal Spring?

The Reunification Question:

- Should the continents reunite politically?
- Who would rule a reunified realm?
- Can House Starweaver and Silverleaf ever reconcile?
- Will Thandris and Aethermere ever resolve their succession dispute?

This timeline is understood differently by different cultures. Elves remember more of the ancient history firsthand, while human accounts rely more on written records. Dwarven histories focus on their mountain kingdoms, while coastal peoples emphasize maritime developments. No single perspective captures the entire truth of Tirvandor's past.



The Pantheon of Tirvandor

The gods of Tirvandor are real, present forces that grant power to their faithful and occasionally manifest in the world. However, they are not all-knowing or all-powerful. They have limitations, conflicts, and mysteries of their own. The relationship between mortals and the divine is complex, shaped by the Divine Silence and the Sundering, events that changed how gods and mortals interact.

Divine Classification:

- The Prime Deities: Major gods worshipped across cultures
- The Regional Powers: Gods prominent in specific geographic or cultural areas
- The Ancient Primordials: Elemental entities predating the current gods
- The Forgotten Ones: Deities whose worship has faded or been forbidden

Philosophy of Worship:

Most mortals recognize the existence of all gods but actively worship 1-3 that align with their values, profession, or circumstances. Temples often house shrines to multiple deities. Clerics typically serve one god exclusively, while paladins swear oaths to principles that may be aligned with but not bound to a single deity.

The Prime Deities

These gods are widely worshipped across both continents, though interpretations of their nature may vary between cultures.

Aethros, The Lightbringer

Domain: Sun, Truth, Justice, Healing

Symbol: Golden sun with seven rays

Alignment: Lawful Good

Sacred Day: Summer Solstice

Clergy: Sunguard (paladins), Lightbearers (clerics)

Aethros represents the ideal of lawful righteousness. His followers believe truth and justice will triumph over lies and tyranny. During the Divine Silence, Aethros was the first god to return, earning him great devotion but also questions about where he had been.

Teachings:

- Truth spoken aloud has power over lies
- Justice must be tempered with mercy
- Protect the innocent and weak
- Light drives away darkness, literally and metaphorically

Worship: Grand temples with open roofs to let in sunlight, services at dawn, healing of the sick as holy duty

Following: Strong in cities with established legal systems, among paladins, healers, and those seeking justice. Primary deity in Silverpine and Kaer Thandros.

Nythara, The Moonwatcher

Domain: Moon, Secrets, Travel, Prophecy

Symbol: Crescent moon with a single star

Alignment: Neutral Good

Sacred Day: New Moon

Clergy: Moon Seers (clerics), Star Readers (diviners)

Nythara is the keeper of secrets and the patron of those who travel in darkness, both literal night travelers and those who walk hidden paths. She knows what others hide and sees what is yet to come, though her prophecies are notoriously cryptic.

Teachings:

- Not all truths are meant to be revealed
- The path forward is shown to those who watch patiently
- Protect travelers, especially in darkness
- Mystery has its place in the world

Worship: Temples open to the night sky, services under the new moon, pilgrimages between sacred sites

Following: Common among travelers, rogues, diviners, and those seeking hidden knowledge. Particularly strong in Starfall and port cities.

Gorath, The Forgemaster

Domain: Crafting, Mountains, Law, Protection

Symbol: Anvil with crossed hammers

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Sacred Day: Midwinter (when the forge is most important for survival)

Clergy: Forgewardens (clerics), Runepriests (specialized clergy)

Gorath teaches that through skill, patience, and hard work, mortals can create things of lasting value. He is the god of dwarves first and foremost, but any craftsman may honor him. He values contracts, oaths, and the rule of law.

Teachings:

- Quality work honors the divine
- An oath once given is sacred
- Protect what you have built
- Progress comes through mastery of craft

Worship: Underground temples near forges, blessings of new works, apprenticeship ceremonies

Following: Dominant among dwarves, strong among blacksmiths, masons, and craftspeople of all races. Ironhold is effectively a theocracy of Gorath.

Sylvara, The Wildmother

Domain: Nature, Growth, Weather, Beasts

Symbol: Oak tree with roots and branches intertwined

Alignment: Neutral

Sacred Day: Spring Equinox

Clergy: Druids (her primary servants), Nature Clerics

Sylvara embodies the natural world in all its beauty and brutality. She represents the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. Her worship predates many of the other gods, with some believing she is actually a mortal's understanding of a primal force rather than a traditional deity.

Teachings:

- Nature must maintain balance
- Death feeds life, life returns to death
- Civilization and wilderness can coexist with respect
- The strong survive, but the strong also protect the future

Worship: Sacred groves, stone circles, open-air ceremonies, animal sacrifices (returned to the wild), seasonal festivals

Following: Dominant in Aethoria, especially the Emerald Depths and Wildgrove. Druids of Sylvana form powerful councils in eastern politics.

Mortas, The Silent Judge

Domain: Death, Transition, Judgment, Memory

Symbol: Balanced scales with a raven perched atop

Alignment: Lawful Neutral

Sacred Day: Autumn Equinox (when the world dies back)

Clergy: Death Speakers (clerics), Grave Wardens (paladins who destroy undead)

Mortas guides souls to their proper afterlife and judges the dead. He is not evil, he is necessary. His clergy comfort the bereaved, conduct funerals, and most importantly, prevent and destroy undeath, which they consider the greatest blasphemy.

Teachings:

- Death is natural and not to be feared
- The dead must be honored but allowed to rest
- Undeath is a perversion of the natural order
- Everyone faces the Silent Judge eventually

Worship: Austere temples near graveyards, memorial services, cremation or ritual burial

Following: Every culture acknowledges Mortas, though some with more fear than others. His clergy are respected everywhere. Major temples in all large cities.

Veyrith, The Merchant Prince

Domain: Commerce, Travel, Communication, Cunning

Symbol: Gold coin showing a road on one side, a ship on the other

Alignment: Neutral

Sacred Day: First day of Spring (beginning of trade season)

Clergy: Coin Priests (clerics), Trade Factors (business-focused worshippers)

Veyrith teaches that commerce brings prosperity and that prosperity brings peace. He is the god of merchants, traders, and anyone making a deal. He values cunning and success, but deals made under his auspices are binding. Breaking a Veyrith-sworn contract brings his curse.

Teachings:

- Prosperity is virtue
- An honest deal benefits all parties
- Communication binds people across distances
- Cleverness is rewarded, stupidity punished

Worship: Temples that double as trading halls, blessing of caravans, contract witnessing

Following: Universal in cities, especially trading hubs like Port Myrthen, Goldreach, and Crystalbrook. Merchants' guilds are often also religious organizations.

Kalythra, The Stormmother

Domain: Sea, Storms, Chaos, Freedom

Symbol: Crashing wave with lightning bolt

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral

Sacred Day: Unpredictable when major storms occur

Clergy: Storm Callers (clerics), Tide Readers (sailors who can predict weather)

Kalythra embodies the raw power and unpredictability of the ocean and storms. She is neither good nor evil, she simply is, like the weather itself. Sailors pray to her for safe passage and fear her wrath. Her moods are as changeable as the sea.

Teachings:

- Freedom is more valuable than safety
- Respect the power of nature
- Adapt or be destroyed
- The storm passes, but the sea remains

Worship: Coastal shrines, ship blessings, offerings thrown into the sea, storm dances

Following: Dominant in coastal communities and among sailors. Major temples in Goldreach, Marshaven, and all port cities. Feared as much as worshipped.

Zarathos, The Archmage

Domain: Magic, Knowledge, Innovation, Ambition

Symbol: Spiral of seven colors (the magical spectrum)

Alignment: Neutral

Sacred Day: Night of the Seven Stars (a rare celestial alignment)

Clergy: Lorekeepers (clerics), Arcane Apostles (wizard-priests)

Zarathos is the youngest of the Prime Deities, having ascended from mortal wizard to divinity during the Age of Dawn. He teaches that through magical knowledge, mortals can transcend their limitations. His worship is controversial. Some see him as inspiration, others as a dangerous example of hubris.

Teachings:

- Magic is the path to understanding reality
- Knowledge should be sought, preserved, and advanced
- Ambition drives progress
- The unknown should be studied, not feared

Worship: Libraries converted to temples, universities, magical academies, ceremonies during meteor showers

Following: Strong among wizards and scholars. Major temples in Silverpine, Aethermere, and Starfall. Controversial among more conservative faiths.

Regional Powers

These deities are significant in specific regions or to particular cultures, but lack the universal reach of the Prime Deities.

Thaldros (Western Continent)

Korak the Ironbound

- Domain: War, Strength, Honor in Battle
- Symbol: Sword crossing axe
- Alignment: Lawful Neutral
- Following: Soldiers, mercenaries, warriors. Strong in Ironhold and military cities.
- Teaching: Strength protects, honor in combat matters, discipline wins wars

Lyssandra the Hearthkeeper

- Domain: Home, Family, Peace, Agriculture
- Symbol: Hearth fire
- Alignment: Neutral Good
- Following: Farmers, parents, community leaders. Dominant in rural areas.
- Teaching: A strong home is the foundation of society, protect family above all

Thane Brightgold

- Domain: Wealth, Mining, Underground
- Symbol: Gold nugget
- Alignment: Lawful Neutral
- Following: Miners, treasure seekers, dwarven merchants
- Teaching: Wealth honestly earned is blessed, what's buried should be found

Aethoria (Eastern Continent)

Ealasad the Dreamweaver

- Domain: Dreams, Illusion, Art, Inspiration
- Symbol: Butterfly made of moonlight
- Alignment: Chaotic Good
- Following: Artists, bards, elven communities, those seeking visions
- Teaching: Reality is what we dream it to be, art touches the divine

Vorath the Primal

- Domain: Beasts, Hunt, Survival, Strength

- Symbol: Bear paw with claws
- Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
- Following: Rangers, hunters, barbarians, beast-folk tribes
- Teaching: The strong survive, hunt with honor, respect the prey

Merenth the Lifegiver

- Domain: Healing, Life, Growth, Fertility
- Symbol: Green leaf with a water drop
- Alignment: Neutral Good
- Following: Healers, midwives, agricultural communities
- Teaching: Life is sacred, healing is holy duty, growth should be nurtured

The Islands

Tharivol the Many-Faced

- Domain: Change, Luck, Trickery, Adaptation
- Symbol: Dice showing all different numbers simultaneously
- Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
- Following: Gamblers, pirates, adventurers, those in transition
- Teaching: Change is inevitable, luck favors the bold, adapt or die

The Ancient Primordials

These are not gods in the traditional sense but elemental forces that predate the current pantheon. They are not worshipped through temples but through primal magic and druidic rites.

Ignar, the First Flame

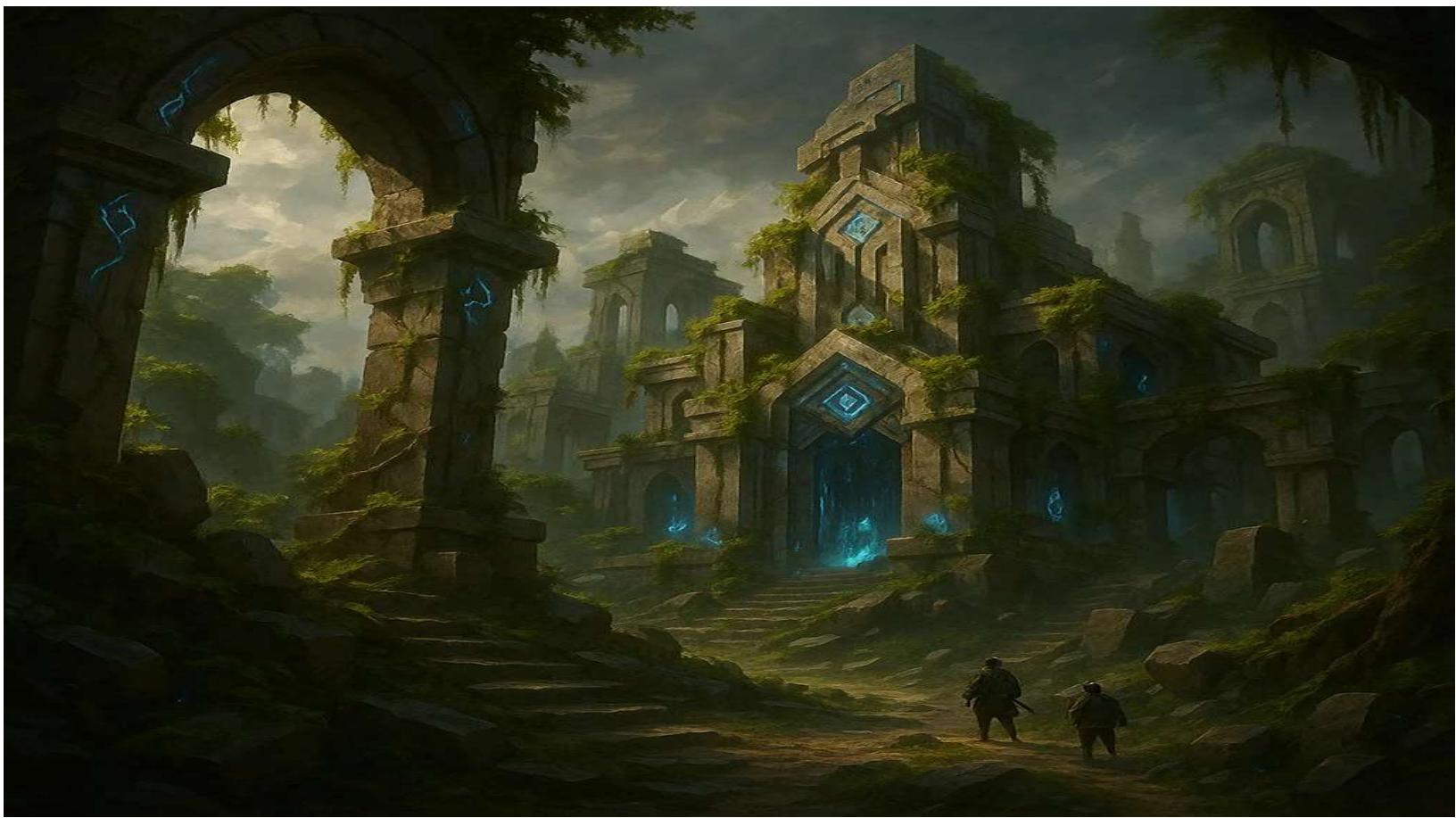
- Element: Fire
- Nature: Creation and destruction through flame
- Current State: Sleeping beneath volcanic regions

Thalassia, the Endless Depth

- Element: Water
- Nature: The primal ocean, source of all life
- Current State: Aware but distant, embodied in the Sundering Sea

Terrax, the Stone That Dreams

- Element: Earth
- Nature: The bones of the world, eternal and patient
- Current State: Ever-present in the deep places



Zephyros, the Breath of Freedom

- Element: Air
- Nature: Wind, sky, and space itself
- Current State: Constantly moving, never contained

Verdania, the Ever-Growing

- Element: Life/Wood
- Nature: Growth, vitality, the force of living things
- Current State: Present in every growing thing

Noctis, the Void Between

- Element: Darkness/Shadow
- Nature: The spaces between existence, potential
- Current State: Lurking in shadows, neither good nor evil

Druids and some primal magic users draw power directly from these Primordials rather than from the gods. The relationship between Primordials and gods is unclear. Some scholars believe the gods emerged from the Primordials, others that they coexist in different ways.

The Forgotten Ones

These deities were once worshipped but their followings have faded or been actively suppressed.

Vorthane the Conqueror

- Former Domain: Empire, Domination, Tyranny
- Symbol: Iron fist
- Status: Worship banned after his followers attempted to conquer both continents
- Some secret cultists remain

Shaelis the Whisperer

- Former Domain: Secrets, Poison, Assassination
- Symbol: Dagger in shadow
- Status: Worship suppressed by most governments

- Small cults still operate in shadows

Morthax the Ever-Dying

- Former Domain: Undeath, Decay, Entropy
- Symbol: Skull with green flames
- Status: Actively hunted by Mortas's clergy
- Necromancers may secretly serve him

The Bound God

- Former Domain: Unknown (records destroyed)
- Symbol: Unknown
- Status: Imprisoned before the Sundering by the other gods
- Speaking its true name is taboo

Religious Structures and Orders

The Celestial Council

A gathering of high priests from the Prime Deities that meets every seven years to discuss matters affecting all faiths. Established 400 CR, it has no enforcement power but significant moral authority.

The Order of the Threefold Path

Paladins and clerics who serve Aethros, Nythara, and Mortas together, believing these three form a complete cycle of light, shadow, and ending. Elite monster hunters and protectors of the innocent.

The Green Faith

A druidic organization spanning both continents, dedicated to Sylvana and the Primordials. They maintain the sacred groves and regulate who may learn primal magic.

The Academies of Zarathos

Institutions of magical learning that combine religious devotion with arcane study. They sometimes clash with traditional religious authorities over the role of magic in society.

Independent Temples

Many temples operate independently, focused on serving their community rather than broader

religious politics. These are most common in small towns and villages.

The Divine Silence: Lasting Effects

The period when the gods stopped answering prayers (2,400-2,200 BS) fundamentally changed divine-mortal relationships:

Trust Issues: Some mortals never fully trusted the gods again. When asked where they were, the gods provided no clear answer.

Rise of Arcane Magic: When divine magic failed, arcane magic filled the void. The relationship was never the same.

New Covenants: When the gods returned, they established new terms for granting power. Clerics must be more devout, paladins more committed to their oaths.

The Unanswered Questions: Where did the gods go? Why did they return? Are they as powerful as they claim? These questions haunt theological scholars.

Diverse Interpretations: Different faiths explain the Silence differently, leading to theological disputes.

Divine Magic in Practice

Clerics: Granted power directly from their deity. Must pray daily, follow tenets, and advance their god's interests. Lose powers if they violate their divine code.

Paladins: Swear oaths (Devotion, Ancients, Vengeance, etc.) that align with divine principles but are personal commitments. Their power comes from the strength of their conviction as much as from any deity.

Divine Soul Sorcerers: Born with a connection to divine energy, often seen as chosen or blessed. They don't pray for power it's innate.

Celestial Warlocks: Those who make pacts with celestial beings (angels, archons, etc.). Their relationship with divinity is transactional rather than devotional.



Faith and Culture

Thaldros: More organized religion, structured hierarchies, written scriptures. Faith is public and communal.

Aethoria: More mystical and personal approaches, oral traditions, druids as spiritual guides. Faith is often private and experiential.

The Islands: Syncretic practices blending eastern and western traditions. Practical faith focused on immediate needs.

Philosophical Differences: Does divine power prove divine wisdom? Should mortals obey gods or simply acknowledge them? Is worship transactional or devotional? These debates continue.

Interaction with Other Planes

The gods reside in the Celestial Realms, planes of existence adjacent to the material world.

However, they are not the only powers:

Archfey: Powerful entities of the Feywild, neither gods nor mortals

Demon Princes: Evil beings of the Abyss who offer power to warlocks

Devil Archdukes: Lawful evil entities of the Nine Hells

Primordial Aspects: Elemental entities from elemental planes

Great Old Ones: Alien consciousnesses beyond mortal understanding

Some mortals worship or serve these beings instead of or in addition to the gods, making Tirvandor's religious landscape complex and sometimes dangerous.



Factions of Tirvandor

Powers, Politics, and Secret Societies

Power in Tirvandor is distributed among various factions: political nations, economic guilds, religious orders, secret societies, and magical organizations. These groups pursue their own goals, form alliances, and come into conflict. Characters will inevitably become entangled with one or more of these factions, shaping the course of campaigns and adventures.

Faction Categories:

- Political Powers: Kingdoms, city-states, and governmental bodies
- Economic Organizations: Merchant guilds, trade companies, criminal syndicates
- Religious Orders: Churches, knightly orders, crusading groups
- Magical Societies: Wizard circles, arcane academies, warlock cults
- Military Forces: Mercenary companies, knightly orders, guard organizations

- Secret Societies: Hidden groups with mysterious agendas
- Racial/Cultural Groups: Organizations focused on specific peoples or traditions

Political Powers

The Northern Kingdoms (Thaldros)

Type: Feudal confederation

Capital: Kaer Thandros (ceremonial)

Government: Council of Lords, each ruling their own domain

Population: Primarily humans and dwarves, ~300,000 total

Resources: Metals, gems, mercenaries, crafted goods

A loose alliance of mountain and foothills kingdoms that maintain independence while cooperating on defense and trade. The dwarven holds technically maintain autonomy but participate in the council.

Structure:

- High Council: Meets quarterly in Kaer Thandros
- Regional Lords: Rule individual territories with near-absolute power

- Military Levies: Each lord provides troops when called

Interests:

- Maintaining independence from southern kingdoms
- Protecting mountain passes and mines
- Preserving dwarven-human cooperation
- Expanding trade networks

Internal Conflicts:

- Succession disputes among human lords
- Tension between surface kingdoms and dwarven holds
- Debates over how centralized the confederation should become

Notable Leaders:

- Lord Commander Thrain Iroonak: Dwarf representing the united holds
- Duke Aldric Stormwind: Human lord of the largest surface kingdom
- High Priestess Elara Dawnbringer: Religious representative (Aethros)

The Free Cities Alliance (Central Thaldros)

Type: Democratic city-states

Capital: Silverpine (de facto leader)

Government: Council of Mayors

Population: Primarily humans and half-elves, ~500,000 total

Resources: Education, magic items, manufactured goods, agriculture

Independent cities that formed an alliance for mutual defense and trade benefits. Each maintains its own government but cooperates on external matters.

Member Cities:

- Silverpine (largest, most influential)
- Goldreach (richest, controls sea trade)
- Crossroads (strategic location)
- Several smaller towns and villages

Structure:

- Each city governs itself internally
- Alliance Council handles external relations and defense
- Elected representatives serve 5-year terms

- Requires 2/3 majority for military action
- Interests:

- Promoting free trade
- Advancing education and magical research
- Maintaining neutrality in others' conflicts
- Preventing any single power from dominating the continent

Internal Conflicts:

- Economic competition between cities
- Disagreements over how much autonomy to surrender to the alliance
- Debates about magical regulation

Notable Leaders:

- Mayor Elisandra Brightblade: Head of Silverpine, de facto alliance leader
- Guildmaster Marcus Goldhand: Economic power in Goldreach
- Archmage Severus Thornwhisper: Heads Silverpine's Magical Academy

The Sundaran Clans (Southern Thaldros)

Type: Tribal confederation

Capital: Sundara (neutral ground)

Government: Council of Clan Chiefs

Population: Humans, dragonborn, tieflings, ~150,000 total

Resources: Exotic goods, ancient artifacts, mercenaries, desert expertise

Nomadic and semi-nomadic clans that control the desert regions. They have a complex relationship with settled peoples. Sometimes trading partners, sometimes rivals.

Structure:

- Major clans each control territories and trade routes
- Minor clans align with major ones for protection
- Council meets in Sundara during the trade season
- Leadership can change through challenge (rarely violent)

Interests:

- Controlling desert trade routes
- Excavating and claiming ancient ruins

- Maintaining independence from settled kingdoms
- Preserving clan traditions and honor codes

Internal Conflicts:

- Inter-clan rivalries and honor disputes
- Generational split between traditionalists and modernizers
- Debates over interaction with outsiders

Notable Leaders:

- Chief Kara Sandstrider: Leads the largest clan, advocates modernization
- Elder Rashid the Twice-Blessed: Traditionalist spiritual leader
- Zara Flameheart: Dragonborn warrior leading rising clan

The Aetherian Harmony (Northern Aethoria)

Type: Elven-dominated council system

Capital: Aethermere

Government: Circle of Speakers

Population: Elves, half-elves, some humans, ~200,000 total

Resources: Magical knowledge, rare woods, enchanted items, natural medicines

The closest thing to a unified government in Aethoria. Elven traditions of consensus and long-term thinking shape its politics, sometimes frustrating shorter-lived races.

Structure:

- Circle of Seven Speakers elected by regional councils
- Druids have advisory role but no direct power
- Consensus required for major decisions (can take years)
- Local communities maintain significant autonomy

Interests:

- Preserving ancient forests and sacred sites
- Maintaining balance with nature
- Advancing high magic and preserving old knowledge
- Keeping Aethoria free from western-style imperialism

Internal Conflicts:

- Isolationists vs. those favoring engagement with outsiders
- Debates over logging and resource extraction
- Tension between druids and arcane practitioners
- Generational differences in outlook

Notable Leaders:

- Speaker Ellandris Starweaver: High elf, 400+ years old, traditionalist
- Speaker Arien Swiftbrook: Half-elf, advocates for change
- Archdruid Thornbark: Not officially in government but extremely influential

The Crystalbrook Compact (Central Aethoria)

Type: Mixed-race confederation

Capital: Crystalbrook

Government: Council of Guilds

Population: Diverse races, ~180,000 total

Resources: Lake fish, crystal (for magic), water transport, trade goods

A pragmatic alliance of lakeside communities that developed its own culture distinct from the elven forests. More commercial and less traditional than the Harmony.

Structure:

- Major guilds (Fishers, Merchants, Crafters, etc.) elect representatives
- Rotating leadership position (every 2 years)
- Emphasis on practical problem-solving over philosophy

Interests:

- Maintaining profitable lake trade
- Developing water-based magic and technology
- Serving as mediator between different Aetorian factions
- Expanding controlled territory around lakes

Internal Conflicts:

- Guild rivalries over resources and influence
- Some members want closer ties to Harmony, others prefer independence

- Labor disputes between guilds

Notable Leaders:

- Guildmaster Theron Clearwater: Head of Merchant Guild
- Captain Mira Wavecrest: Commands lake patrol fleet
- Sage Cornelius Reed: Magical researcher and council advisor

The Thormire Concordat (Southeastern Aethoria)

Type: Swamp city-states

Capital: Marshaven (largest city)

Government: Loose alliance with local autonomy

Population: Humans, lizardfolk, some half-orcs, ~100,000 total

Resources: Alchemical components, rare herbs, exotic poisons, knowledge of swamp

Communities that have adapted to swamp life, developing unique cultures and expertise.

Outsiders often underestimate their sophistication.

Structure:

- Each settlement governs itself
- Alliance mainly for external relations and defense
- Decisions made by consensus when necessary
- Strong tradition of personal freedom

Interests:

- Protecting swamp territories from encroachment
- Controlling trade in swamp-sourced goods (especially alchemical)
- Maintaining independence
- Preserving traditional ways while selectively adopting useful innovations

Internal Conflicts:

- Human settlements vs. lizardfolk communities
- Old families vs. newcomers
- Environmental protection vs. economic exploitation

Notable Leaders:

- Lady Morgana Blackwater: Human noble, governor of Marshaven
- Sage-Speaker Sss'rith: Lizardfolk spiritual leader
- Master Alchemist Varek: Half-orc who controls poison trade

Economic Organizations

The Merchant League

Type: Trade consortium

Headquarters: Port Myrthen (neutral ground)

Membership: Open to licensed merchants

Influence: Continental scale

The most powerful economic organization in Tirvandor, controlling the majority of intercontinental trade and setting standards for commerce.

Structure:

- Regional chapters in every major city
- Leadership council elected by senior members
- Own security forces and trade courts
- Issue letters of credit and insurance

Interests:

- Maintaining free trade and open seas
- Standardizing currencies and measures
- Protecting member merchants
- Expanding into new markets
- Preventing piracy and banditry

Operations:

- Run major caravans and shipping lines
- Provide banking and insurance services
- Gather market intelligence
- Arbitrate commercial disputes

Notable Members:

- Merchant Prince Darius Goldhand: Council leader, incredibly wealthy
- Captain Sylara Windchaser: Commands largest merchant fleet
- Factor Therin Quicksilver: Specializes in exotic goods

The Artificers' Consortium

Type: Crafting guild

Headquarters: Silverpine

Membership: Master crafters, alchemists, and enchanters

Influence: Continental (strongest in cities)

Elite guild controlling production of magic items and high-quality mundane goods. Membership is prestigious and difficult to achieve.

Structure:

- Strict hierarchies: Apprentice, Journeyman, Master, Grandmaster
- Jealously guard trade secrets
- Set quality standards and prices
- License other crafters

Interests:

- Maintaining monopoly on magic item creation
- Preserving craft secrets
- Ensuring high quality standards
- Preventing unlicensed competition

Conflicts:

- Sometimes clashes with Merchant League over prices
- Tension with independent crafters
- Internal debates over sharing vs. hoarding knowledge

Notable Members:

- Grandmaster Elara Stoneforge: Dwarven smith, creates legendary weapons
- Master Enchanter Azaril: High elf, specializes in protective items
- Journeyman Talia Quicksilver: Rising star, innovative techniques

The Shadow Syndicate

Type: Criminal organization

Headquarters: Unknown (rumored to be in multiple cities)

Membership: Thieves, smugglers, information brokers

Influence: Continental (operates in shadows)

Not technically a single organization but a network of criminal groups that cooperate under certain rules. They maintain order in the underworld and sometimes provide services governments cannot or will not.

Structure:

- Cell-based organization for security
- Regional leaders coordinate locally
- Cross-regional cooperation handled by intermediaries
- Strict codes of conduct (violators are eliminated)

Interests:

- Profitable crime without drawing excessive attention
- Maintaining underworld stability
- Controlling black markets
- Gathering information for sale
- Eliminating amateur criminals who threaten the system

Operations:

- Smuggling (contraband, people, information)
- Theft and burglary
- Protection rackets (but "reasonable" ones)
- Information brokerage
- Assassination (rarely, and expensive)

Known Figures:

- The Whisperer: Mysterious information broker
- Red Mask: Leader of largest thief guild
- Captain Blackheart: Pirate lord who cooperates with Syndicate

Religious Orders

The Lightbringers (Order of Aethros)

Type: Paladin/cleric order

Headquarters: Silverpine Cathedral

Membership: ~5,000 paladins and clerics

Influence: Strong in lawful good regions

Militant arm of Aethros's church, dedicated to fighting evil and protecting the innocent. They

are paragons of lawful good ideals inspiring to some, insufferable to others.

Structure:

- Hierarchical, military-style organization
- Ranks from initiate to Lord Commander
- Report to the High Priestess of Aethros
- Divided into regional chapters

Interests:

- Destroying undead and fiends
- Protecting the innocent
- Upholding justice and law
- Spreading worship of Aethros
- Guarding against planar incursions

Operations:

- Monster hunting
- Guarding sacred sites
- Providing aid during disasters
- Training new paladins and clerics
- Crusades against evil (rare, but devastating)

Notable Members:

- Lord Commander Gareth Lightbane: Legendary undead hunter
- Paladin-Captain Seraphina: Commands elite strike force
- High Inquisitor Marcus: Investigates heresy and corruption

The Green Circle (Druids of Sylvara)

Type: Druidic council

Headquarters: Wildgrove (sacred site)

Membership: ~2,000 druids

Influence: Dominant in wilderness areas

Most powerful druidic organization, maintaining balance between civilization and nature. They have significant political influence in Aethoria and can mobilize formidable forces if threatened.

Structure:

- Council of Elders (seven druids, each representing a different aspect of nature)
- Regional circles report to the council
- Individual druids maintain autonomy
- Decisions made by consensus

Interests:

- Protecting ancient forests and sacred sites
- Maintaining natural balance
- Preventing ecological disasters
- Teaching proper relationship with nature
- Opposing excessive civilization spread

Operations:

- Monitoring natural cycles
- Healing corrupted lands
- Guarding ley line nexuses
- Training new druids
- Sometimes opposing development projects

Notable Members:

- Archdruid Thornbark: Elder oak treant, 800+ years old
- Circle Keeper Lunara: Elf druid, moderates between factions
- Warden Grimjaw: Half-orc druid of beasts, aggressive protector

The Grave Wardens (Order of Mortas)

Type: Death clerics and undead hunters

Headquarters: Multiple temples in major cities

Membership: ~3,000 clerics and paladins

Influence: Universal respect/fear

Dedicated to Mortas, they ensure proper burial rites, comfort the bereaved, and most importantly, destroy undead wherever found. Grim but necessary.

Structure:

- Semi-autonomous temples
- Death Speakers coordinate regional activities
- Grave Wardens (militant branch) hunt undead
- Answer to High Death Speaker

Interests:

- Proper treatment of the dead
- Destroying all undead
- Investigating necromancy
- Maintaining the boundary between life and death
- Preparing souls for judgment

Operations:

- Funeral services
- Graveyard protection
- Undead hunting
- Necromancer elimination
- Helping ghosts pass on

Notable Members:

- High Death Speaker Morticia Ravenholt: Human, unnervingly calm
- Grave Warden Commander Thorne: Half-elf hunter of liches
- Death Speaker Ezra: Dwarf, expert on funeral rites

Magical Societies

The Arcanum (Wizard Academy)

Type: Educational and research institution

Headquarters: Silverpine (main campus), branches elsewhere

Membership: ~1,000 wizards, ~3,000 students

Influence: High among educated and magical communities

Premier institution for arcane learning. Combines university, research center, and wizards' guild. Has produced many of Tirvandor's greatest mages.

Structure:

- Faculty of different magical schools
- Ranks: Student, Graduate, Scholar, Professor, Archmage
- Governed by Council of Archmages
- Branch campuses in major cities

Interests:

- Advancing magical knowledge
- Training new wizards
- Magical research
- Preserving arcane lore
- Regulating dangerous magic

Research Areas:

- Planar studies
- Ley line manipulation
- Ancient magical analysis
- Spell development
- Magical theory

Notable Members:

- Archmage Severus Thornwhisper: Headmaster, specializes in divination
- Professor Elira Starfall: Expert on planar magic
- Sage Cornelius: Researcher of ancient civilizations



The Circle of Eight

Type: Secret society of archmages

Headquarters: Unknown (possibly extradimensional)

Membership: Eight (or so they claim)

Influence: Unknown but potentially vast mysterious group of incredibly powerful wizards who supposedly guide magical development and prevent magical catastrophes.

Their existence is rumored but not proven.

Rumored Purpose:

- Prevent another Sundering-level catastrophe
- Regulate dangerous magical research
- Maintain balance between magical forces
- Preserve knowledge of ancient magic
- Guide civilization from the shadows

Alleged Activities:

- Appeared during major crises
- Sponsored certain adventurers
- Opposed dangerous cults
- Protected ley line nexuses
- Recruited promising mages who then vanished

Identity Speculation:

Many archmages have been speculated to be members. The Circle neither confirms nor denies anything.

The Twilight Court (Fey-Touched)

Type: Organization of fey-blooded and fey-sworn

Headquarters: Borderlands between material world and Feywild

Membership: Unknown, possibly hundreds

Influence: Mysterious, focused on areas with fey activity

Those who have made pacts with the fey or bear fey blood organize to navigate two worlds. They serve as intermediaries but also pursue their own strange agendas.

Structure:

- Loosely organized into "courts"

- Winter Court and Summer Court factions
- Led by archfey-blessed champions
- Membership is more cultural than institutional

Interests:

- Maintaining balance between mortal world and Feywild
- Protecting places where the boundaries are thin
- Pursuing fey agendas (inscrutable to mortals)
- Helping fey-touched individuals
- Collecting interesting mortals for the fey

Activities:

- Guarding fey crossing points
- Making bargains on behalf of archfey
- Recruiting talented individuals
- Causing mischief (the fey way)

Notable Members:

- Lady Silverleaf: Eladrin sorceress, Summer Court champion
- Lord Frost: Winter Court warlock, mysterious and dangerous
- The Green Man: Ancient fey creature, rarely seen

Military Forces

The Iron Legion

Type: Professional mercenary company

Headquarters: Mobile war camps, contracts from Ironhold

Membership: ~2,000 soldiers

Influence: Respected and feared

Most professional and disciplined mercenary company. Expensive but worth it, they've never broken a contract.

Structure:

- Military hierarchy: soldiers, sergeants, captains, general
- Organized into companies of 100
- Strict code of conduct
- Well-equipped and trained

Services:

- Military contracts (defense, offense, escort)
- Training services
- Security for high-value targets
- Sometimes peacekeeping

Philosophy:

- Honor contracts absolutely
- Fight with honor but fight to win
- Accept only just causes (flexible definition)
- Protect civilians when possible

Notable Members:

- General Marcus Ironfist: Veteran leader, half-orc
- Captain Elara Swiftblade: Commands elite scouts
- Sergeant Grimm: Drill instructor, feared by recruits

The Silver Wardens

Type: Monster hunting organization

Headquarters: Kaer Thandros

Membership: ~500 rangers and warriors

Influence: Frontier regions and wilderness
Dedicated to protecting civilization from dangerous monsters. Not glory-seekers but grim professionals who do necessary, often thankless work.

Structure:

- Small teams operate independently
- Regional coordinators in major cities
- Share information about monster sightings
- Train and equip hunters

Operations:

- Monster elimination
- Wilderness patrol
- Rescue missions
- Investigation of supernatural threats

Notable Members:

- Warden Commander Thalia Moonbow: Elf ranger, 200+ year veteran
- Master Hunter Kael: Expert on dragons
- Scout Captain Finn: Halfling, tracks monsters others miss

Secret Societies

The Unseen Hand

Type: Conspiracy of powerful individuals

Headquarters: Unknown (possibly multiple)

Membership: Unknown

Influence: Rumored to be extensive

Alleged secret society that supposedly manipulates events from the shadows. Evidence is circumstantial but troubling. May not actually exist as a unified organization.

Rumored Goals:

- Preventing another Sundering
- Guiding civilization toward some unknown end
- Maintaining balance of power
- Protecting dangerous secrets
- Possibly preparing for some prophesied event

Alleged Activities:

- Manipulating politics through proxies
- Funding expeditions to ancient ruins
- Suppressing certain information
- Recruiting talented individuals
- Eliminating specific threats

Evidence:

- Similar symbols found in disparate locations
- Unexplained coordination between unrelated groups
- Certain individuals with more resources than they should have
- Patterns in historical events

Many believe the Unseen Hand is just conspiracy theory. Others are less certain.

The Crimson Order

Type: Secret society of blood mages

Headquarters: Unknown

Membership: Unknown, possibly dozens

Influence: Hidden but growing

Practitioners of blood magic, considered dark but not inherently evil. They study magic through life force, a discipline banned in most places.

Philosophy:

- Blood is life, life is power
- Self-sacrifice for power is noble
- Their magic is misunderstood, not evil
- Knowledge should not be suppressed

Operations:

- Research blood magic techniques
- Recruit talented hemomancers
- Oppose suppression of their art
- Sometimes offer healing services (using blood magic)

Conflicts:

- Hunted by traditional religious orders
- Constantly fighting accusations of vampirism
- Internal debates over ethical boundaries

Notable Members:

- Master Crimson (alias): Organization leader
- The Bloodletter: Powerful hemomancer, mysterious
- Various hidden practitioners in cities

Inter-Faction Relationships

Allies:

- Lightbringers Grave Wardens (against undead)
- Merchant League Free Cities Alliance (mutual prosperity)
- Green Circle Aetherian Harmony (shared values)
- Arcanum Artificers' Consortium (knowledge sharing)

Rivals:

- Lightbringers Twilight Court (law vs. chaos)
- Shadow Syndicate Various governments (obvious)
- Green Circle Certain development factions (environment vs. profit)
- Different religious orders (theological disagreements)

Complex Relationships:

- Circle of Eight Arcanum (respect but secretive)

- Unseen Hand Everyone (if they exist)
- Iron Legion Various powers (mercenaries serve many masters)



Noble Houses & Dynasties of Tirvandor

The Great Families: Their Rise, Glory, and Fall
A chronicle of the bloodlines that shaped kingdoms, controlled trade, and wrote history in blood and gold

This document chronicles the major noble houses, merchant dynasties, and prominent families that have shaped Tirvandor's history. Some remain powerful today, controlling vast territories and wealth. Others have fallen into obscurity, their names whispered only in ancient texts. And some are thought extinct, though rumors persist of hidden heirs waiting to reclaim their birthright.

Total Houses Documented: 18

- Thaldros: 10 houses
- Aethoria: 8 houses

Status Categories:

- Ascendant: Rising in power and influence

- Dominant: Currently controls significant territory/wealth
- Declining: Losing power but still relevant
- Fallen: Lost power but family survives
- Extinct: Officially ended (but rumors persist)



Pre-Sundering Conflicts

The Ancient Grudges That Survived Continental Separation

When the Sundering tore the world apart 1,247 years ago (Year 0 CR), it didn't just split land, it split families, broke alliances, scattered artifacts, and created conflicts that echo to this day. Several noble houses have roots reaching back before the cataclysm, and their ancient grievances have festered across the Sundering Sea for over a millennium.

These conflicts are particularly dangerous because:

- No living memory: No one alive remembers the original events, only stories

- Distorted histories: Each side has different version; both claim truth
- Impossible to resolve: Original witnesses dead, evidence scattered/destroyed
- Pride and honor: Backing down means admitting ancestors lied for 1,200 years
- Actual stakes: Lands, artifacts, titles really do matter

Conflict 1: The Sundered Bloodline

House Starweaver (Aethoria) vs House Silverleaf (Thaldros)

Original House: House Starleaf (Pre-Sundering, unified realm)

The Split: Western branch became Silverleaf; Eastern branch became Starweaver

Years of Separation: 1,247 years

Current Relationship: Hostile strangers

The Original House Starleaf

Before the Sundering, House Starleaf was among the most powerful noble families in the unified realm. They were scholar-nobles who studied both the stars and the forests, believing celestial and natural magic were two aspects of one truth.

Pre-Sundering Holdings:

- The great library at what is now Starfall
- The sacred forests of what is now Silverwood
- The Observatory Citadel (destroyed in Sundering)
- Unified magical traditions spanning both disciplines

The Family Structure:

- Two branches: The Star Wardens (astronomers) and Leaf Keepers (forest wardens)
- Brothers ruled jointly: one from observatory, one from forest
- Marriage alliances united both branches
- Shared artifacts and knowledge

The Sundering Event (Year 0 CR)

When the cataclysm struck, the family was literally torn apart:

Eastern Branch (Became Starweaver):

- Controlled the observatory and star-focused artifacts
- Cut off from western forests immediately
- Library survived but forest knowledge lost
- Evolved into pure astronomical magic focus

Western Branch (Became Silverleaf):

- Controlled the sacred forests and nature artifacts
- Lost access to eastern observatory and star charts
- Shifted entirely to forest and fey magic
- Abandoned astronomical studies

Immediate Aftermath (0-100 CR):

- Both branches tried to maintain unity across sea
- Communication difficult; grew apart
- Each blamed the other for causing Sundering (family had powerful magic)
- By 100 CR, considered separate houses with shared origin

The Divergence (100-600 CR)

As centuries passed, the houses grew more different:

Starweaver Evolution:

- Embraced pure intellectual pursuit
- Recorded everything in writing
- Built new observatories
- Forgot forest wisdom
- Elven cultural dominance

Silverleaf Evolution:

- Became pragmatic and political
- Oral traditions and fey pacts
- Married into human nobility
- Forgot astronomical lore
- Human-elf integration

The Schism (327 CR):

A pivotal moment when Silverleaf heir visited Starfall seeking to reunite knowledge. The Starweavers refused, claiming Silverleaf had "abandoned true magic for politics." Silverleaf returned west insulted, claiming Starweaver had "lost touch with living magic."

After 327 CR, houses stopped acknowledging kinship entirely.

Current Conflict (1247 CR)

House Starweaver's Claims:

- They are the "true" continuation of House Starleaf
- Silverleaf abandoned their heritage through human marriages
- Rightful ownership of all original Starleaf artifacts
- Western branch "fell from grace" through political compromise

House Silverleaf's Claims:

- They preserved the heart of Starleaf tradition (connection to land)
- Starweaver became isolated ivory tower scholars
- Equal right to all artifacts; they inherited forest holdings
- Eastern branch abandoned practical wisdom for abstract theory

Disputed Artifacts:

The Stellar Crown - Currently held by Starweaver

- Crown that enhances divination magic
- Silverleaf claims it was created by forest druids, belongs to them
- Starweaver claims it's astronomical artifact, rightfully theirs

The Greenstar Codex - Location unknown

- Spell book combining star and forest magic
- Last seen pre-Sundering in the Observatory Citadel
- Supposedly survived; both houses searching
- Whoever finds it gains legitimacy as "true heir"

The Twin Staves - One each

- Starweaver has the Star Staff (sapphire-topped)
- Silverleaf has the Leaf Staff (emerald-topped)
- Together they form one incredibly powerful artifact
- Neither will trade or cooperate
- Legends say united staves can "undo the Sundering"

Modern Tensions:

Political:

- Silverleaf politically active; Starweaver dismissive
- Each advises their continent's rulers
- Conflicting advice causes diplomatic tension
- Cross-continental treaties difficult due to their opposition

Personal:

- Current heirs have never met

- Some younger family members curious about cousins
- Elders forbid contact ("they are not true kin")
- A forbidden romance would cause massive scandal

Magical:

- Competing magical philosophies
- Students taught the other branch "fell to corruption"
- Magical duels at academic conferences
- Each claims superior understanding of reality

Reconciliation Possibilities:

What would it take to reunite them?

1. Mutual threat: Something endangering both continents
2. Artifact recovery: Finding the Greenstar Codex
3. Forbidden love: Heirs fall for each other (scandal!)
4. Historical proof: Evidence showing which version of history is true
1. Third party mediation: Outsiders (party?) bringing them together

What would reunion mean?

- Combined magical knowledge (star + forest)
- United artifacts (incredible power)
- Political alliance between continents
- Return to "true" Starleaf traditions
- Potential to understand/reverse the Sundering?

Conflict 2: The Broken Crown

House Aethermere (Aethoria) vs House Thandris (Thaldros)

The Core Dispute: Who are the legitimate successors to the Pre-Sundering High Kingdom?

Pre-Sundering: The High Kingdom

Before the Sundering, the realm was united under the High Kings of the First Dynasty. The royal seat was the Crystal Throne in the Palace

of Eternal Spring, now at the bottom of the Sundering Sea.

The Last High King: King Aldric the Wise

- Ruled from the palace on central landmass
- Had two sons: Prince Theron (elder) and Prince Aethos (younger)
- The Sundering struck during succession crisis
- King and palace destroyed in the cataclysm

The Succession Crisis:

Prince Theron (Western Son):

- Military commander; defended western borders
- Favored by military and western nobility
- In the western territories when Sundering struck
- Claimed throne, became founder of Thandris line

Prince Aethos (Eastern Son):

- Scholar and druid; studied with eastern mystics
- Favored by mages and eastern nobility
- In the eastern territories during Sundering
- Claimed throne, became founder of Aethermere line

Both claimed the other died in Sundering; both were wrong.

The Competing Narratives

House Thandris Version (Western):

- Prince Theron was the rightful heir (firstborn)
- King Aldric was going to announce Theron's succession
- Prince Aethos caused the Sundering (forbidden magic experiment)
- Eastern nobles knew Aethos was illegitimate; supported him anyway
- Thandris line are the true High Kings

House Aethermere Version (Eastern):

- Prince Aethos was the chosen heir (father's favorite, wiser)
- King Aldric was disappointed in warlike Theron

- Prince Theron caused the Sundering (superweapon gone wrong)
 - Western nobles were power-hungry usurpers
 - Aethermere line are the true High Kings
- The Truth: Neither knows for certain; all witnesses died

Evidence and Counter-Evidence

Documents Held by Thandris:

- Military commission naming Theron as heir apparent
- Western noble testimony supporting Theron's claim
- Records of Aethos' "dangerous" magical experiments

Documents Held by Aethermere:

- Royal diary (supposedly King Aldric's) favoring Aethos
- Eastern noble testimony supporting Aethos' claim
- Records of Theron's "reckless" military campaigns

Problem: Both sets could be authentic OR forged; no way to verify after 1,247 years

The Crown Jewels - Split Between Houses:

The Sundered Crown - Broken in two

- Western half held by Thandris (iron and gold)
- Eastern half held by Aethermere (silver and crystal)
- Each half bears half the inscription
- United inscription supposedly reveals "the truth"
- Neither will surrender their half

The High King's Sword - Location unknown

- Last seen with King Aldric
- Whoever wields it has symbolic legitimacy
- Supposedly at bottom of Sundering Sea
- Both houses sponsor diving expeditions
- May not even exist anymore

The Royal Scepter - Held by Aethermere

- Thandris claims it was stolen during chaos

- Aethermere claims Aethos brought it east legitimately
- Obvious mark of royal authority
- Thandris demands return; Aethermere refuses

Modern Implications (1247 CR)

Political:

- Neither house recognizes the other's royal authority
- Diplomatic tension between continents
- Trade negotiations complicated by protocol disputes
- Each expects to be treated as superior

Practical Effects:

- Cross-continental law unclear (whose jurisdiction?)
- Port Myrthen remains neutral to avoid choosing
- Marriage alliances between continents rare (who outranks whom?)
- Military alliances nearly impossible

The Succession Question:

If continents reunified, who would rule?

- Both houses would claim the throne
- Would require war or negotiation
- Neither would accept subordinate position
- Might require outside arbitration
- Or new system entirely (dual monarchy? elected?)

Recent Developments:

1205 CR: The Marriage Proposal

- King Thandris proposed marriage alliance
- Offer included recognition of equal royal status
- Queen Aethermere refused (seen as trick)
- Relations cooled further

1243 CR: The Diving Find

- Divers found ancient royal seal near Sundering Sea floor
- Both houses claim it proves their case
- Actually proves nothing; seal predates dispute
- Renewed public interest in conflict

Moderate Factions:

Some nobles on both continents think the dispute is ridiculous:

- "It's been 1,200 years; who cares?"
- "We should build new system, not fight over dead kingdom"
- "Both houses are legitimate rulers of their continents"
- These voices are minority but growing

Conflict 3: The Drowned Fortune

House Crystalborn (Aethoria) vs House Goldshore (Thaldros)

The Core Dispute: Who are the true heirs to House Deepwater, the great merchant dynasty destroyed in the Sundering?

Pre-Sundering: House Deepwater

The wealthiest merchant house in the unified realm, House Deepwater controlled all major trade routes and ports. Their headquarters was in the Palace Port. The greatest trading city in the world, located on the central landmass.

When the Sundering struck, Palace Port sank beneath the waves.

The House:

- Controlled 60% of world trade
- Owned hundreds of ships
- Banking houses in every major city
- Immense wealth (most at Palace Port)

The Family:

- Patriarch: Lord Aldris Deepwater
- Eastern branch: Managed eastern trade (became Crystalborn)
- Western branch: Managed western trade (became Goldshore)
- Both branches considered themselves "junior partners"

The Sundering (Year 0 CR)

What Was Lost:

- Palace Port and the central headquarters
- Lord Aldris and the main family line
- 70% of the house's wealth

- The central bank vaults
- Hundreds of ships
- Trade agreements and contracts
- The family's legal records

Who Survived:

Eastern Branch (Became Crystalborn):

- Second son Marius Deepwater in Aethoria
- Access to eastern trade networks
- Some ships and goods
- Branch office records

Western Branch (Became Goldshore):

- Third daughter Aldris Deepwater in Thaldros
- Access to western trade networks
- Some ships and goods
- Branch office records

Both claimed to be the legitimate heirs to House Deepwater.

The Competing Claims

House Crystalborn's Claim:

- Marius was older than Aldris (daughter)
- Male heir by traditional succession
- House name changed to reflect new magic focus
- Eastern branch always more magically powerful
- They are "evolved" Deepwater, not just remnant

House Goldshore's Claim:

- Aldris (daughter) named for grandfather (sign of favor)
- Kept "shore" in name (maintaining continuity)
- Western branch always more commercially successful
- They preserve true Deepwater merchant traditions
- Crystalborn "abandoned" the mercantile heritage

What They're Really Fighting Over:

The Sunken Vaults:

- Estimated 500,000+ gold pieces at Palace Port bottom

- Magical artifacts from centuries of trade
- Legal documents showing ownership of properties
- Original trade agreements and monopoly charters
- Whoever recovers the vaults gains legitimacy

Current Holdings:

- Both houses control trade on their continents
- Neither will recognize other's authority
- Competing over neutral ports (Port Myrthen)
- Sabotaging each other's expeditions

The Deepwater Name:

- Neither uses it anymore
- But both claim spiritual succession
- Arguments over which is "true" heir
- Matter of pride and legitimacy

The Salvage Wars (100-400 CR)

For 300 years, both houses sponsored diving expeditions:

- Dozens of ships lost to salvage attempts
- Small fortunes recovered
- Each claimed all salvage rights
- Occasional violent confrontations
- Port Myrthen got rich selling supplies to both sides

Major Incidents:

237 CR: The Salvage Fleet Battle

- Crystalborn and Goldshore fleets met at dive site
- Refused to yield
- Brief naval skirmish
- Both retreated; neither won
- Increased tensions for century

412 CR: The Great Betrayal

- Goldshore hired Crystalborn divers (secretly)
- Divers stole maps showing vault locations
- Goldshore raided vault first
- Crystalborn discovered betrayal
- Formal state of hostility declared

Current Status (1247 CR)

The Stalemate:

- Most accessible wealth recovered
- Deep vaults remain unreachable (magic wards? depth? monsters?)
- Both houses wealthy but obsessed with what remains
- Neither will concede the other's right to salvage

Recent Developments:

1189 CR: The Water-Speaking Advantage

- Crystalborn developed water-speaking magic
- Gained ability to dive deeper, communicate better
- Goldshore accused them of "cheating" with magic
- Crystalborn countered: "We evolved; you stagnated"

1230 CR: The Kraken Incident

- Goldshore expedition attacked by kraken
- Crystalborn expedition arrived; watched them struggle
- Refused to help
- Goldshore lost three ships
- Hatred intensified

1246 CR: The Map Theft

- Pirates stole ancient map from Goldshore
- Map showed unexplored vault section
- Goldshore claims Crystalborn hired the pirates
- Crystalborn denies it (actually true)
- Cold war threatens to turn hot

The Heirs:

Lord Aldris III Goldshore (178, half-elf):

- Obsessed with recovering vaults
- Sees Crystalborn as thieves
- Planning major salvage operation

Lady Aria Crystalborn (234, half-elf):

- Equally obsessed
- Believes Goldshore are greedy pretenders
- Also planning salvage operation

They're on collision course.

The Deepwater Legacy

What's actually down there?

- Gold and jewels (yes, vast amounts)
- Magical artifacts (powerful and unknown)
- Legal documents (property claims across both continents)
- The Deepwater Ledger (every transaction for 500+ years)
- Lord Aldris' will (names true heir?)
- Something alive? (Palace Port had magical defenses)

The Truth:

The will exists and names the true heir, but it's neither house. Lord Aldris left everything to his youngest child, fourth daughter Marina, who was supposedly visiting the southern continent when Sundering struck. She never claimed inheritance; presumed dead.

But what if she survived? What if there's a hidden lineage with legitimate claim to EVERYTHING?

Conflict 4: The Stolen Relic

The Celestial Compass - House Starweaver vs Multiple Claimants

The Artifact: A navigation device that points not to north, but to "destiny"

Pre-Sundering:

- Created by joint effort of multiple houses
- Kept at neutral royal court
- Used to guide kingdom's decisions
- "Points toward the right choice"

The Sundering:

- Compass survived somehow
- Ended up in eastern hands (Starweaver)
- Western houses claim it was stolen during chaos
- Eastern houses claim it came east legitimately

Current Claimants:

- House Starweaver (current holder) - "Found" it; finders keepers

- House Thandris (Thaldros) - "Royal property; return it"
- House Silverleaf (Thaldros) - "Our ancestor helped create it"
- House Seawatch (Thaldros) - "It was on our family ship when Sundering hit"

The Problem:

- All claims could be legitimate
- No way to verify after 1,247 years
- Compass valuable (points to destiny)
- Symbolic value (whoever holds it is "destined to lead")
- Multiple parties want it

Current Situation:

- Starweaver refuses to discuss returning it
- Western houses grumble but can't do anything
- Occasional theft attempts
- Diplomatic incidents
- Actually valuable for navigation AND divination

Should the continents reunite? And if so, who should rule?



Thaldros - Western Continent

House Thandris (Dominant - Royal)

Region: The Ironspine Holds

Seat: Kaer Thandros (capital city)

Rise: Pre-Sundering bloodline, established as house 612 CR - Present

Status: Dominant (Royal House of Thaldros)

Sigil: Mountain crowned with iron circlet on black field

History

House Thandris claims descent from the western bloodline of the Pre-Sundering High Kings. Whether this claim is legitimate remains one of the greatest controversies in Tirvandor's history.

Pre-Sundering Origins (Claimed):

- Descended from Prince Theron, eldest son of King Aldric the Wise
- Military commander of western territories
- Rightful heir to unified kingdom
- When Sundering struck, claimed throne from western lands

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

According to Thandris history:

- Prince Theron survived when Palace of Eternal Spring sank
- Rallied western survivors and nobles
- Claimed throne as rightful High King
- Eastern nobles (led by Prince Aethos) refused recognition
- Continents too separated to resolve dispute by force

Early Royal Period (0-612 CR):

The bloodline survived in fragmented form:

- Multiple claimants to Theron's line
- Western territories fractured into kingdoms
- Generations of small kings and warlords
- Claim to "High Kingship" maintained but not enforced
- 612 CR: Thorin Thandris finally strong enough to unite western territories

House Thandris rose from clan leaders to kings during the Unification Wars (612-670 CR).

Originally master craftsmen and warriors of the Ironspine dwarven clans, they combined ancient royal bloodline claims with military might.

The house consolidated power through:

- Military Strength: Controlled the mountain passes
- Economic Control: Monopoly on mythril mining rights
- Strategic Marriages: Allied with every major northern house
- The Crown Forge: Possessed the secret to creating artifacts
- Royal Legitimacy: Claimed descent from Pre-Sundering High Kings

Major Events:

- 612 CR: Thorin I Thandris claims kingship after Battle of Three Peaks
- 698 CR: King Aldric Thandris expands realm to the Heartlands
- 834 CR: Defended realm from massive orc invasion (The Red Winter)
- 1089 CR: Civil war with House Blackwood over succession
- 1156 CR: Dragon attack nearly destroys royal line; rebuilt stronger
- 1205 CR: Marriage proposal to House Aethermere rejected (succession implications)

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: King Aldric IV Thandris (age 52, human)

- Strong but aging ruler
- Three children: Crown Prince Thorin (25), Princess Elara (22), Prince Marcus (19)
- Succession seems secure, but rumors of bastard claim
- Frustrated by Aethermere's refusal to recognize his legitimacy

Holdings:

- Kaer Thandris (capital)
- Three major fortresses in Ironspine
- Mining rights to 12 major veins
- Controls the Crown Forge
- Western half of the Sundered Crown (iron and gold)

Power Base:

- Royal army of 5,000 professional soldiers

- Alliance network across Thaldros
- Economic control of metalworking
- Claim to Pre-Sundering High Kingship (disputed)

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Ironmark (sworn vassals, manage eastern mines)
- House Silverleaf (marriage alliance)
- The Forgemaster's Guild (economic partners)

Rivals:

- House Ashborne (dispute over southern territories)
- Remnants of House Blackwood (old rebellion wounds)
- Merchant Council of Crossvale (resist centralized authority)
- House Aethermere (succession dispute spanning 1,247 years)

Tensions:

- Eastern continent refuses to recognize western royalty
- Diplomatic incidents over protocol (who outranks whom?)
- The Sundered Crown remains divided
- Marriage alliances with Aethoria complicated by succession

The Royal Claim

Thandris's Evidence:

- Military commission documents naming Theron as heir
- Western noble testimony (could be biased)
- Records of Aethos's "dangerous" magical experiments
- Possession of western half of Sundered Crown
- Unbroken line of succession (they claim)

Aethermere's Counter-Claims:

- Theron was militaristic and unfit to rule
- King Aldric secretly preferred younger son Aethos

- Thandris "invented" their royal connection centuries later
- Royal Scepter in Aethermere hands proves legitimacy

The Truth:

No one knows. All direct witnesses died 1,247 years ago. The dispute is now about pride, politics, and power not historical accuracy.

Modern Implications:

- If continents reunited, who would rule?
- Marriage alliance would unite claims but whose name rules?
- Trade negotiations complicated by protocol disputes
- Each expects deference from the other

House Ironmark (Dominant - Vassal Lords)

Region: The Ironspine Holds

Seat: Deepforge

Rise: 780 CR - Present

Status: Dominant (Sworn to Thandris)

Sigil: Black hammer striking red anvil

Originally a minor dwarven clan, House Ironmark rose to prominence during the Unification Wars by providing superior weapons to Thorin Thandris. Granted eastern mining territories as reward, they transformed from craftsmen to nobility through shrewd management and mining expertise.

Defining Moments:

- 780 CR: Thane Borin I Ironmark swears eternal oath to House Thandris
- 893 CR: Discovers the Deepvein mythril deposit (largest known)
- 1089 CR: Remained loyal during Blackwood Rebellion; rewarded with more lands
- 1156 CR: Lost three mines to dragon attack; bankrupted
- 1180-1210 CR: Slowly rebuilt fortune through careful management
- 1243 CR: Current dispute with House Stonefist over newly-discovered vein

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Thane Borin VII Ironmark (age 287, dwarf)

- Conservative, traditional, wealthy
- Suspicious of surface-dwellers despite human allies
- Three sons in line for succession (traditional dwarf rivalry)

Holdings:

- Deepforge (major mining town)
- Seven active mines (three mythril, four iron/silver)
- Warehouse quarter in Kaer Thandros
- Partial ownership of three merchant ships

Power Base:

- Mining expertise and equipment
- Loyal dwarf workforce (700+ miners)
- Economic control of rare metal supply
- Deep coffers (recovered from dragon losses)

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Thandris (sworn vassals, unbreakable bond)
- The Delver's Coalition (mining guild)
- Various dwarf clans across Ironspine

Rivals:

- House Stonefist (mythril vein dispute, generational grudge)
- House Goldshore (competing for shipping contracts)
- Underground duergar clans (territorial conflicts in deep mines)



House Blackwood (Extinct/Fallen - Lost Claimant)

Region: The Silverwood (formerly)

Seat: Raven's Keep (ruins)

Rise: 587-1089 CR

Status: Officially Extinct (Rumored Survivor)

Sigil: Black tree with silver ravens on green field
Once the most powerful house in the Silverwood, House Blackwood was ancient even before the Unification Wars. They claimed descent from First Men who settled Thaldros after the Sundering, and their bloodline carried traces of fey ancestry that manifested as unusual magical talents.

During the Unification Wars, they sided with Thandris but always maintained independence. As the Thandris kings centralized power, Blackwood chafed under increasing royal authority. The tension exploded in 1089 CR.

The Blackwood Rebellion (1089-1092 CR):

- Lord Aldric Blackwood claimed the throne through his grandmother's royal blood

- Civil war split Thaldros; half the nobility backed Blackwood
- Initial victories gave Blackwood control of Silverwood and Heartlands
- 1092 CR: Battle of Raven's Keep: Blackwood forces crushed
- Lord Aldric and all known heirs executed for treason
- Raven's Keep burned; lands distributed to loyalist houses
- Blackwood name forbidden; family line declared extinct

Post-Rebellion:

- 1092-1150 CR: Remaining Blackwood sympathizers hunted down
- Family vaults plundered, histories destroyed, lands renamed
- Any Blackwood descendant found was "disappeared"
- The Silverwood never fully recovered from the civil war's devastation

Current Status (1247 CR)

Official: Extinct no living members

Rumored: A hidden heir survived, protected by loyalist house

Lands: Distributed among houses Thandris, Ironmark, and Silverleaf

Legacy: Name still whispered in Silverwood; some consider them heroes

The Lost Heir

Persistent rumors claim:

- Lady Elara Blackwood was pregnant when captured; child born in secret before her execution
- A baby was smuggled out of Raven's Keep before final battle
- One of the "executed" heirs was actually a body double
- Blackwood gold and artifacts were hidden and await rightful heir

The most credible rumor: A child was raised by woodsman family in deep Silverwood, given false name, told nothing of heritage until adulthood. Now in their 30s, this person may not even know who they truly are.

Conflicts & Alliances

Living Enemies:

- House Thandris (executed their family)
- House Ironmark (stayed loyal to Thandris)
- Anyone who gained Blackwood lands

Potential Allies:

- Old Blackwood loyalists (aging but still bitter)
- Those who profit from instability
- Houses that secretly resented Thandris centralization
- The Fey of Silverwood (blood connection)

House Silverleaf (Dominant - Forest Lords)

Region: The Silverwood

Seat: Silverpine (major city)

Rise: Pre-Sundering (originally House Starleaf, western branch) - Present

Status: Dominant (Controls Silverwood)

Sigil: Silver leaf on green and white quarters

House Silverleaf's true origins predate the Sundering itself. They are the western remnant of the ancient House Starleaf, torn from their eastern kin when the continents split 1,247 years ago.

Pre-Sundering (Before Year 0):

- Part of unified House Starleaf (scholar-nobles studying stars and forests)
- Western branch: The Leaf Keepers (forest wardens and nature magic)
- Held sacred forests and managed fey relationships
- Shared power with eastern branch (Star Wardens)

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

- Continent split separated them from eastern observatory
- Lost access to star charts and astronomical magic
- Retained forest holdings and fey pacts
- Began independent evolution as "Silverleaf"

Post-Sundering Evolution (0-450 CR):

- Tried maintaining contact with eastern branch (became Starweaver)
- Communication failed; houses grew apart
- Adapted to western politics and human kingdoms
- Abandoned astronomical studies; focused purely on forest magic
- 327 CR: Attempted reunion rejected by Starweaver; formal split
- 450 CR: Officially adopted name "Silverleaf" (from Starleaf)

Unlike most elven houses that shun human politics, Silverleaf pragmatically allied with House Thandris early during the Unification Wars, securing their autonomy through cooperation rather than conflict.

Key Strategies:

- Never resisted Thandris expansion offered alliance instead
- Marriage ties to multiple human houses (half-elf heirs)

- Economic control through lumber, herbs, and forest magic
- Military neutrality but strategic positioning

Major Events:

- 670 CR: Formally recognized as Lords of Silverwood by King Thorin II
- 893 CR: Remained neutral during orc invasions (controversial)
- 1089 CR: Stayed neutral during Blackwood Rebellion (even more controversial)
- 1105 CR: Married into House Thandris to repair reputation
- 1200s: Increasingly concerned about deforestation and human expansion

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Elenion Silverleaf (age 487, elf)

- Ancient, wise, patient
- Deeply troubled by forest health decline
- Heir is half-elf daughter from marriage alliance
- Knows family's pre-Sundering history (one of few who does)
- Conflicted about estranged eastern kin

Co-Ruler: Lady Silvara Silverleaf (age 256, elf)

- Elenion's wife, more militant than husband
- Leads the Forest Guard
- Distrusts humans despite political necessities
- Angry at Starweaver "abandonment" of forest traditions

Heir: Lady Elara Silverleaf-Thandris (age 22, half-elf)

- Daughter of Lord Elenion and Princess Elara Thandris (King's daughter)
- Torn between elf and human heritage
- Will eventually inherit both Silverwood and possibly throne
- Curious about eastern cousins (forbidden topic)

Holdings:

- Silverpine (major city)
- Four elven settlements deep in Silverwood
- Exclusive logging rights to protected forests

- Monopoly on rare herbs and magical plants
- Half of the Twin Staves (Leaf Staff with emerald)

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Thandris (marriage alliance, political necessity)
- The Druid Circles (shared interest in forest preservation)
- Fey Courts of Silverwood (ancient pacts)

Rivals:

- House Goldshore (dispute over forest logging rights)
- Human settlers encroaching on forest borders
- Those who remember their neutrality during crises
- House Starweaver (ancient family feud across the sea)

Tensions:

- Human expansion threatens forest
- Some elves view Silverleaf as traitors to elven ways
- Half-elf heir creates succession questions
- The Starweaver estrangement (unresolved after 1,200 years)

Pre-Sundering Legacy

The Split That Never Healed:

- Western branch (Silverleaf) chose pragmatism and politics
- Eastern branch (Starweaver) chose scholarship and isolation
- Neither recognizes the other as legitimate successors to Starleaf
- 327 CR schism made it permanent

Disputed Artifacts:

- The Leaf Staff: Silverleaf's half of the Twin Staves
- The Stellar Crown: Starweaver holds it; Silverleaf claims ownership
- The Greenstar Codex: Lost; both houses searching

Modern Attitude:

- Officially: "Starweaver abandoned the true path"
- Privately: Some elders remember they're kin
- Younger generation curious about cousins
- Forbidden to make contact
- Romance between heirs would cause crisis

House Ashborne (Ascendant - Desert Lords)

Region: The Sundaran Expanse

Seat: Sundara (major city)

Rise: 920 CR - Present

Status: Ascendant (Rapidly gaining power)

Sigil: Phoenix rising from golden sands

A relatively young house by noble standards, House Ashborne rose from merchant origins during the Desert Expansion period (900-1000 CR). Founded by a charismatic human trader who united the desert clans through marriage, trade agreements, and occasionally force.

Unlike northern houses built on ancient bloodlines, Ashborne's power comes from:

- Trade Control: Dominates all trans-desert commerce
- Oasis Rights: Controls 90% of Sundaran water sources
- Desert Knowledge: Hired the best guides, scouts, and explorers
- Pragmatic Governance: Religious and ethnic tolerance rare in Thaldros

Major Milestones:

- 920 CR: Malik Ashborne unites three largest nomad clans through marriage
- 967 CR: Founds Sundara as permanent trade city
- 1050 CR: Granted nobility by King Thandris in exchange for tax revenues
- 1156 CR: Profited enormously from dragon crisis by providing war supplies
- 1200s: Expanding influence into Heartlands and challenging royal authority

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Sultan Rashid Ashborne (age 41, human)

- Ambitious, charismatic, calculating
- Third-generation noble but acts like ancient dynasty
- Seven children from three wives (succession unclear)

Holdings:

- Sundara (major city, population ~18,000)
- Control of 12 major oases
- Three fortified trade posts
- Merchant fleet at Goldreach port

Power Base:

- Wealthiest house in Thaldros (possibly)
- Controls desert trade monopoly
- Private army of 2,000 cavalry
- Alliance with nomad clans (through marriage/bribery)

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- Desert nomad clans (complex web of marriages)
- The Merchant's Guild (controls leadership)
- House Goldshore (trade partnership)

Rivals:

- House Thandris (resents authority, withholds some taxes)
- House Silverleaf (forest-desert resource conflicts)
- Traditional northern houses (view them as upstarts)

Tensions:

- Northern houses consider them "jumped-up merchants"
- Desert clans sometimes question Ashborne authority
- Sultan's children positioning for succession (internal conflict brewing)
- Religious tensions (Ashborne tolerates foreign faiths; north disapproves)

House Goldshore (Dominant - Merchant Princes)

Region: The Goldcoast

Seat: Goldreach (major city)

Rise: Pre-Sundering (originally western branch of House Deepwater), reformed 698 CR - Present

Status: Dominant (Controls western trade)

Sigil: Golden ship on blue waves

House Goldshore is the western remnant of the legendary House Deepwater, the greatest merchant dynasty of the Pre-Sundering era. When Palace Port sank beneath the waves, the western branch survived and eventually reformed as House Goldshore.

Pre-Sundering (Before Year 0):

- Part of House Deepwater, wealthiest merchant house in unified realm
- Western branch managed western trade routes
- Third daughter Aldris Deepwater managed Goldreach operations
- Considered "junior partners" to main house at Palace Port

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

- Palace Port and the Deepwater headquarters sank
- Lord Aldris Deepwater (patriarch) and main line lost
- 70% of house wealth destroyed
- Western branch (Aldris the Younger) survived
- Eastern branch (Marius Deepwater) also survived
- Both branches claimed to be legitimate heirs

Reformation Period (0-698 CR):

- Survival and rebuilding (0-200 CR)
- Salvage Wars with eastern branch (100-400 CR)
- 237 CR: Naval skirmish over salvage rights
- 412 CR: Betrayal incident (stole maps from eastern branch)

- 698 CR: Formally adopted "Goldshore" name
- Built new merchant empire through determination

Founded by a half-elf merchant captain (descendant of Aldris the Younger) who made fortune in cross-continental trade, House Goldshore represents the rise of merchant nobility. They were granted lordship over Goldreach and the western coast in exchange for financing the King's wars.

Economic Foundation:

- Maritime trade with eastern continent
- Banking and money-lending
- Shipbuilding and naval power
- Insurance and merchant protection
- Salvage operations (ongoing)

Historical Milestones:

- 698 CR: Captain Aldris Goldshore (named for ancestor) given Goldreach charter
- 750 CR: Established Banking House of Goldshore
- 834 CR: Financed defense against orc invasions (bought nobility)
- 920-1000 CR: Dominated all western maritime trade
- 1156 CR: Loaned massive sums for dragon defense (king heavily indebted)
- 1230 CR: Kraken incident (Crystalborn refused to help)
- 1246 CR: Ancient map stolen (blames Crystalborn)
- 1200s: Now among kingdom's most powerful houses through debt control

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Aldris III Goldshore (age 178, half-elf)

- Brilliant merchant and ruthless negotiator
- More interested in profit than politics (publicly)
- Never married; succession unclear (multiple bastards)
- Obsessed with recovering Deepwater vaults

- Sees Crystalborn as thieves who stole family legacy
- Never married; succession unclear (multiple bastards)

Holdings:

- Goldreach (major city)
- 18 merchant vessels (largest private fleet)
- Banking houses in five cities
- Partial ownership of Port Myrthen

Power Base:

- Controls 60% of Thaldros maritime trade
- King owes them 50,000 gold (from dragon crisis)
- Employs 400+ merchants, sailors, guards
- Information network spans both continents

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Ashborne (trade partnership, marriage planned)
- Merchant's Guild (controls it)
- Port authorities across both continents

Rivals:

- House Thandris (debt creates tension)
- House Silverleaf (logging rights disputes)
- Pirates of Sundering Sea (constant threat)
- Other merchant houses (economic competition)

House Stonefist (Declining - Mountain Clan)

Region: The Ironspine Holds

Seat: Stonehaven

Rise: 612-Present

Status: Declining (Losing to House Ironmark)

Sigil: Clenched stone fist on grey field

Ancient dwarven clan that ruled eastern Ironspine before the Unification. Initially more powerful than the minor Ironmark clan, they made a fatal mistake: sided with the wrong king during succession crisis in 780 CR.

The Fall:

- 780 CR: Backed losing claimant; punished with reduced territory
- Rival clan Ironmark granted their best mines as reward for loyalty
- 893 CR: Ironmark discovered huge mythril deposit in former Stonefist land
- Began century-long decline as Ironmark prospered
- Forced to diversify into quarrying, stonework, mercenary services

Current Situation:

- Still noble but much reduced in power
- Deep resentment of House Ironmark
- Trying to rebuild through new ventures
- 1243 CR: Discovered new mythril vein disputed with Ironmark

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Thane Grimni Stonefist (age 312, dwarf)

- Bitter, proud, desperate
- Obsessed with reclaiming family glory
- Two daughters (unusual for dwarf succession)

Holdings:

- Stonehaven (town, declining population)
- Three quarries (profitable but not wealthy)
- One disputed mine (Ironmark claims it)
- Mercenary company (120 dwarf warriors)

Power Base:

- Superior stonemasonry and engineering
- Mercenary income (work for highest bidder)
- Stubborn refusal to admit defeat
- Support from other declining houses

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- Other declining/minor houses (shared grievances)
- Mercenary guilds
- Anyone who opposes Ironmark

Rivals:

- House Ironmark (hatred burns eternal)
- House Thandris (for backing Ironmark)

- Successful merchant houses (jealousy)
- Internal Tensions:
- Daughters fighting over succession (one wants peace with Ironmark, one wants war)
 - Clan members divided on whether to merge with larger clan
 - Young dwarves leaving for better opportunities elsewhere

House Heartwood (Dominant - Agricultural Lords)

Region: The Heartlands

Seat: Crossvale

Rise: 698-Present

Status: Dominant (The Breadbasket)

Sigil: Golden wheat sheaf on green field

The Heartlands were fractured among dozens of small landholders until the great consolidation (850-900 CR). House Heartwood originally a minor agricultural family systematically married, purchased, or conquered their way to dominance.

Rise Strategy:

- Married into every major farming family
- Introduced crop rotation and improved yields
- Bought out failing farms during droughts
- Protected farmers from bandits and monsters
- Built infrastructure (roads, granaries, mills)

Key Events:

- 850 CR: Founded by merger of three farming families
- 900 CR: Controlled 30% of Heartlands grain production
- 920-945 CR: Border Wars devastated region; Heartwood rebuilt it
- 1000 CR: Granted nobility for feeding kingdom during famines
- 1100s-1200s: Became indispensable feeding cities, armies, everyone

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Gareth Heartwood (age 56, human)

- Practical, no-nonsense, farmer-king
- Wealthy but lives simply
- Five children, all taught farming before politics

Holdings:

- Crossvale (major city, capital of Heartlands)
- 40+ farming communities under protection
- Network of granaries and mills
- Controlling interest in Merchant's Grain Cooperative

Power Base:

- Produces 40% of Thaldros's food
- Controls grain prices
- Commands loyalty of farming communities
- Economic leverage (kingdom needs them)

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- Farming communities across Thaldros
- The Harvest Church (religious grain blessing)
- House Thandris (supplies the army's food)

Rivals:

- House Ashborne (desert vs. farmland resource conflicts)
- Merchant houses (price negotiations)
- Noble houses that need grain (resent the dependency)

Tensions:

- Children squabble over favorite regions
- Merchants want to break grain monopoly
- Droughts and crop failures devastating
- Bandits and monsters increase as frontiers expand

House Emberthorn (Fallen - Volcanic Lords)

Region: The Ashfall Barrens

Seat: Ashgate (formerly)

Rise: 920-1156 CR

Status: Fallen (Near extinct)

Sigil: Red rose engulfed in flames

House Emberthorn rose to power during the volcanic settlement period, mastering the art of living in the Ashfall Barrens. They controlled the region's volcanic forges, obsidian quarries, and unique resources. They were wealthy, powerful, and growing until the dragon came.

The Dragon's Wrath (1156 CR):

- Ancient red dragon Infernalix emerged from volcanic chamber
- Claimed the Barrens as her territory
- Demanded tribute; Emberthorn refused
- Dragon destroyed half their holdings in a single day
- Family fortunes destroyed, fortress burned
- Surviving Emberthorns scattered or enslaved to dragon

Aftermath:

- 1156-1200 CR: Dragon ruled region directly
- 1201 CR: Dragon mysteriously vanished (killed? Sleeping?)
- Survivors began returning, trying to rebuild
- Other houses moved into power vacuum
- Emberthorn a shadow of former glory

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lady Sera Emberthorn (age 89, human)

- Last of main bloodline
- Obsessed with reclaiming family glory
- Childless; line ends with her unless she finds heir

Holdings:

- Ruins of family castle
- One small obsidian quarry
- Legal claim to Ashgate (ignored by current rulers)
- Vault beneath ruins (inaccessible)

Power Base:

- None (destitute)
- Memories of former glory
- Legal documents and claims
- Desperate determination

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- None (too weak to be useful ally)
- A few loyal retainers (aging)
- Sympathetic minor houses

Rivals:

- Everyone who took Emberthorn land
- House Ashborne (controls regional trade now)
- Current rulers of Ashgate
- The dragon (if it returns)

House Seawatch (Declining - Coastal Guardians)

Region: The Shattered Shore

Seat: Stormhaven

Rise: 780-Present

Status: Declining (Overshadowed by Goldshore)

Status: Sigil: Grey tower on stormy sea

Founded as military house to defend against coastal raids, House Seawatch once controlled the entire Shattered Shore. They built fortresses, maintained navy, and protected trade routes. But as threats decreased and trade increased, merchant houses (especially Goldshore) became more important.

The Decline:

- 780-900 CR: Height of power; pirates and raiders constant threat
- 900-1000 CR: Threats decreased; military house less needed
- 1000-1100 CR: Merchant houses grew wealthy; Seawatch relied on royal stipend
- 1100-1200 CR: Lost ports to Goldshore through economic pressure
- Present: Maintains tradition but lacks resources

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Admiral Marcus Seawatch (age 62, human)

- Career naval officer, stubborn traditionalist
- Refuses to adapt to merchant-dominated world
- Two sons (both competent sailors, both broke)

Holdings:

- Stormhaven (fortified town)
- Three coastal fortresses (understaffed)
- Small naval squadron (12 ships, aging)
- Lighthouse network (valuable but not profitable)

Power Base:

- Naval expertise and tradition
- Strategic fortresses
- Respect from common sailors
- Royal navy connections

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Thandris (royal navy ties)
- Naval officers and common sailors
- Minor coastal houses

Rivals:

- House Goldshore (economic competition; lost)
- Pirates (constantly raiding)
- Merchant houses (don't need military protection anymore)



Aethoria - Eastern Continent

House Starweaver (Dominant - Celestial Dynasty)

Region: The Starwood

Seat: Starfall (major city)

Rise: Pre-Sundering (originally House Starleaf, eastern branch) - Present

Status: Dominant (Ancient Power)

Sigil: Silver star web on midnight blue

House Starweaver's true origins predate the Sundering itself. They are the eastern remnant of the ancient House Starleaf, torn from their western kin when the continents split 1,247 years ago.

Pre-Sundering (Before Year 0):

- Part of unified House Starleaf (scholar-nobles studying stars and forests)

- Eastern branch: The Star Wardens (astronomers and astral magic)
- Held the Great Observatory and celestial artifacts
- Shared power with western branch (Leaf Keepers)
- Believed star and forest magic were unified truth

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

- Continent split separated them from western forests
- Lost access to sacred groves and fey pacts
- Retained observatory and star charts
- Began independent evolution as "Starweaver"
- The Observatory Citadel partially destroyed but rebuilt

Post-Sundering Evolution (0-450 CR):

- Tried maintaining contact with western branch (became Silverleaf)

- Communication failed over generations; houses grew apart
- Adapted to purely astronomical and intellectual focus
- Abandoned forest magic; focused on celestial power
- 327 CR: Western branch visited seeking reunion; Starweaver refused ("they abandoned true magic")
- 450 CR: Officially adopted name "Starweaver" (from Starleaf)

Unlike western houses focused on military power or wealth, Starweavers accumulate KNOWLEDGE. Their libraries contain pre-Sundering texts, star charts spanning millennia, and prophecies written in starlight.

Philosophy:

- Knowledge is true power
- The stars reveal destiny
- Magic flows from cosmic forces
- Long-term planning (think in centuries)
- Intellect over emotion (Western branch "fell" to politics and passion)

Major Achievements:

- Predicted the Sundering (records sealed why didn't they warn anyone?)
- Maintain most complete pre-Sundering library
- Trained half of Aethoria's court wizards
- Discovered three new planes of existence
- Predicted every major Aehorian war (after it was too late to prevent)
- Preserved the Star Staff and Stellar Crown

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Archmagister Elaris Starweaver (age 612, elf)

- Master of astral magic and divination
- More interested in stars than politics
- Considers current events "brief fluctuations"
- Dismisses western branch as "fallen from grace"
- Knows family's pre-Sundering history intimately

Heir: Lumina Starweaver (age 156, elf)

- More politically engaged than father
- Believes knowledge should be shared (radical idea)
- Secretly writing accessible versions of house secrets
- Curious about western cousins (forbidden topic)
- Questions whether schism was necessary

Holdings:

- Starfall (major city, population ~6,500)
- The Grand Observatory (largest telescope in world)
- The Celestial Archives (forbidden library with pre-Sundering texts)
- Three wizard towers across Aethoria
- The Star Staff (sapphire-topped, half of Twin Staves)
- The Stellar Crown (disputed ownership with Silverleaf)
- The Celestial Compass (claimed by multiple western houses)

Power Base:

- Magical knowledge and expertise
- Trains most Aehorian wizards
- Predicts events (sometimes)
- Controls access to ancient knowledge
- Pre-Sundering legitimacy

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Aethermere (marriage alliance, shared magical interests)
- The Arcane Colleges
- Other scholarly houses

Rivals:

- House Thornveil (believe knowledge should be free)
- Those tired of vague prophecies
- Practical-minded houses who want actions, not predictions
- House Silverleaf (ancient family feud across the sea)

Tensions:

- Heir's belief in sharing knowledge threatens family power
- Some predictions going wrong recently (concerning)
- Other houses tired of "we foresaw this" after disasters
- The stars are showing something terrible coming
- The Silverleaf estrangement (unresolved after 1,200 years)

The Split That Never Healed:

- Eastern branch (Starweaver) chose scholarship and purity
- Western branch (Silverleaf) chose pragmatism and politics
- Neither recognizes the other as legitimate successors to Starleaf
- 327 CR: Refused reunion attempt; called western branch "corrupted"
- Starweaver believes they are the TRUE continuation of House Starleaf

Starweaver's Justification:

- "We preserved the intellectual tradition"
- "They married humans and abandoned elven wisdom"
- "We kept the observatory and star knowledge"
- "They chose politics over truth"
- "We are what Starleaf was meant to become"

Disputed Artifacts:

- The Star Staff: Starweaver's half of the Twin Staves
- The Stellar Crown: Currently held by Starweaver; Silverleaf claims it was forest druids' creation
- The Greenstar Codex: Lost; both houses searching desperately
- The Celestial Compass: Starweaver holds it; multiple western houses claim theft

The Artifacts' Power:

The Twin Staves:

- Star Staff (sapphire) + Leaf Staff (emerald) = immense power

- Legend: United staves could "undo the Sundering"
- Neither house will negotiate
- Some say the staves WANT to be reunited

The Greenstar Codex:

- Spell book combining star and forest magic
- Written by the original Starleaf founders
- Last seen in Observatory Citadel pre-Sundering
- Supposedly survived the cataclysm
- Contains the "true path" both branches lost
- Whoever finds it gains legitimacy

The Stellar Crown:

- Enhances divination and astral magic
- Starweaver claims: "Made by Star Wardens, ours by right"
- Silverleaf claims: "Made by forest druids who channeled starlight"
- Actually could have been collaborative creation
- Symbolically important to both houses

Modern Attitude:

- Officially: "Silverleaf are fallen pretenders to Starleaf legacy"
- Privately: Some elders remember they're kin (conflicted)
- Younger generation intensely curious about cousins
- Heir Lumina secretly fascinated by forest magic
- Forbidden to make contact; doing so is exile-worthy offense

House Aethermere (Dominant - Forest Throne)

Region: The Emerald Deeps

Seat: Aethermere (capital city)

Rise: Pre-Sundering (descended from Prince Aethos) - Present

Status: Dominant (Royal House of Aethoria)

Sigil: Golden world-tree on green field

House Aethermere claims descent from the eastern bloodline of the Pre-Sundering High Kings. They are the royal house of Aethoria,

dwelling in the capital city built among world-trees, but their legitimacy remains disputed by their western counterparts.

Pre-Sundering Origins (Claimed):

- Descended from Prince Aethos, younger son of King Aldric the Wise
- Scholar, druid, and mystic who studied with eastern sages
- Father's favorite (according to Aethermere history)
- Wiser and more suited to rule than warlike brother Theron
- When Sundering struck, claimed throne from eastern lands

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

According to Aethermere history:

- Prince Aethos survived when Palace of Eternal Spring sank
- Rallied eastern survivors and established rule
- Claimed throne as rightful High King
- Western nobles (led by Prince Theron) refused recognition
- Continents too separated to resolve dispute by force

Eastern Royal Period (0-Present):

Unlike western Thandris line that fragmented for centuries, Aethermere claims unbroken succession:

- Prince Aethos founded royal line in Emerald Deep
- Chose world-trees as seat (symbolic: rooted, growing, eternal)
- Ruled through wisdom and magical authority rather than conquest
- Each ruler "chosen by the forest" (complicated succession)
- Maintained claim to High Kingship even as west refused recognition

Governing Philosophy:

The royal house of Aethoria rules differently than western kings:

- Rule through wisdom, not force
- The forest is sacred; they are its voice

- Magic should flow naturally
- Harmony between civilization and nature
- Decisions made through councils (lengthy)
- Territory boundaries fluid and debated
- More like first among equals than absolute monarchs

Different from Western Rule:

- No standing army (druids and rangers serve when needed)
- No conquest or expansion
- Magical authority more important than military
- Nature itself legitimizes their rule
- The world-trees "chose" them

Major Events:

- 0 CR: Prince Aethos establishes eastern throne
- 200-400 CR: Formalized succession system (forest chooses)
- 587 CR: First non-blood heir chosen by world-trees (controversial)
- 1089-1092 CR: House Splittide rebellion (fey war)
- 1205 CR: Rejected Thandris marriage proposal (succession implications)
- 1247 CR: Current queen childless; chosen heir is half-elf (controversial)

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Queen Silviana Aethermere (age 543, elf)

- Powerful druid and statesperson
- Beloved by forest, respected by nobles
- Childless by choice (ritual prevents it)
- Chose her heir through world-tree ritual
- Refuses to recognize Thandris royalty

Chosen Heir: Theron Aethermere (age 89, half-elf)

- Not blood relation; chosen by world-trees
- Controversial choice (half-elf, not full elf, named after western prince!)
- Brilliant but young and untested
- Some question if forest really chose him or if queen manipulated ritual

Holdings:

- Aethermere (capital, population ~38,000)
- Direct authority over Emerald Deep
- Symbolic authority over all Aethoria
- Sacred groves and world-tree network
- The Royal Scepter (from Pre-Sundering High Kings)
- Eastern half of the Sundered Crown (silver and crystal)

Power Base:

- Connection to the land itself
- Respect from druid circles
- World-tree magic
- Moral authority
- Pre-Sundering royal legitimacy (disputed)

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Starweaver (marriage alliances, shared magic)
- The Druid Circles
- Ancient forest spirits

Rivals:

- House Thornveil (want more centralized power)
- Human settlements (want development over conservation)
- Those who question half-elf heir
- House Thandris (succession dispute spanning 1,247 years)

Tensions:

- Chosen heir system creates succession uncertainty
- Some say world-trees are dying (heresy?)
- Western expansion threatening forests
- Theron's youth and half-elf status controversial
- The western royals refuse to acknowledge eastern legitimacy

Aethermere's Evidence:

- Royal diary (supposedly King Aldric's) showing preference for Aethos
- Eastern noble testimony supporting Aethos's claim

- Records of Theron's "reckless" military campaigns
- Possession of the Royal Scepter (clear mark of authority)
- Possession of eastern half of Sundered Crown
- Unbroken succession (they claim)

Thandris's Counter-Claims:

- Theron was firstborn; traditional succession
- Aethos caused the Sundering (forbidden magic experiment)
- The diary is forged
- Royal Scepter was stolen during chaos
- Aethermere "invented" their royal connection

The Truth:

No one knows. All direct witnesses died 1,247 years ago. The dispute is now about pride, politics, and power not historical accuracy.

Modern Implications:

- If continents reunited, who would rule?
- Marriage alliance would unite claims but cultural differences vast
- Trade negotiations complicated by protocol disputes
- Each expects deference from the other
- 1205 CR: Thandris marriage proposal seen as "trick to subordinate us"

The Scepter Dispute:

- Aethermere: "Prince Aethos brought it east legitimately"
- Thandris: "Stolen during the chaos of Sundering"
- Either could be true
- Symbolically crucial (whoever holds it looks legitimate)
- Thandris demands return; Aethermere refuses

The Price of Division:

- Two royal lines claiming same throne for 1,200+ years
- Diplomatic impossibility between continents
- Trade hindered by protocol disputes

- Cultural drift makes reunification harder
- Each generation entrenches positions further

The Crown Problem:

- Crown split in two when continents sundered
- Eastern half (silver and crystal): Aethermere holds
- Western half (iron and gold): Thandris holds
- United crown supposedly reveals "the truth" via inscription
- Neither will surrender their half
- Both afraid of what full inscription might say

The High King's Sword:

- Last seen with King Aldric at Palace of Eternal Spring
- Now at bottom of Sundering Sea
- Symbolically crucial: whoever wields it is legitimate
- Both houses sponsor diving expeditions
- May not even exist anymore
- Finding it could resolve dispute... or make it worse

Moderate Voices:

Some nobles on both continents think dispute is absurd:

- "It's been 1,200 years; who cares?"
- "Build new system, not fight over dead kingdom"
- "Both houses are legitimate rulers of their continents"
- These voices are minority but growing
- Younger generation more open to compromise

House Crystalborn (Dominant - Lake Lords)

Region: The Crystalvale

Seat: Crystalbrook (major city)

Rise: Pre-Sundering (originally eastern branch of House Deepwater), reformed 450 CR - Present

Status: Dominant (Water dynasty)

Sigil: Crystal water drop on silver field

House Crystalborn is the eastern remnant of the legendary House Deepwater, the greatest merchant dynasty of the Pre-Sundering era. When Palace Port sank beneath the waves, the eastern branch survived and eventually reformed as House Crystalborn, evolving from merchants into water-speakers.

Pre-Sundering (Before Year 0):

- Part of House Deepwater, wealthiest merchant house in unified realm
- Eastern branch managed eastern trade routes
- Second son Marius Deepwater managed eastern operations
- Considered "junior partners" to main house at Palace Port

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

- Palace Port and the Deepwater headquarters sank
- Lord Aldris Deepwater (patriarch) and main line lost
- 70% of house wealth destroyed
- Eastern branch (Marius Deepwater) survived
- Western branch (Aldris the Younger) also survived
- Both branches claimed to be legitimate heirs

Transformation Period (0-450 CR):

Unlike western Goldshore which remained merchants, eastern branch underwent dramatic transformation:

- 0-100 CR: Survival and rebuilding
- Lost most ships and wealth
- Retained control of eastern ports
- Discovered water-speaking talent in the bloodline
- 100-400 CR: The Salvage Wars
- Competed with western branch for sunken wealth
- 237 CR: Naval skirmish over salvage rights

- 412 CR: Western branch stole maps (betrayal that's never forgotten)
- Magical abilities growing stronger
- 400-450 CR: Magical Evolution
- Water-speaking abilities manifesting in each generation
- Shifted focus from commerce to mysticism
- Claimed the great lakes as sacred territory
- 450 CR: Formally adopted "Crystalborn" name (symbolizing transformation)

The Water-Speaking Gift:

Over generations, the eastern bloodline developed rare magical talent:

- Can communicate with water itself
- Sense through any water source
- Purify or taint water
- Command water elementals
- Navigate perfectly by "listening" to currents

Why the Gift Emerged:

- Proximity to magical Crystalvale lakes?
- Desperation after losing wealth?
- Always latent, only now expressed?
- Gift from water entities for control of sacred lakes?
- No one knows for certain

Rise as Water Lords (450-Present):

House Crystalborn rose from water-speaking mystics who claimed the great lakes of central Aethoria. They combine druidic magic with commerce, controlling all major waterways and trade routes that pass through the lake network.

Foundation:

- Water-speakers (rare magical talent)
- Control all major river/lake crossings
- Pure water is valuable commodity
- Trade routes require their permission

Economic Power:

- Shipping across lake network
- Purified water export
- Fishing industry
- River trade tariffs

Historical Milestones:

- 450 CR: Officially adopted Crystalborn name

- 600-800 CR: Consolidated control of all major lakes
- 1000 CR: Granted nobility by Queen Aethermere
- 1189 CR: Perfected water-speaking techniques (massive advantage over Goldshore)
- 1230 CR: The Kraken Incident - Goldshore attacked; Crystalborn watched
- 1246 CR: Pirates stole Goldshore map; Crystalborn blamed (actually guilty)
- Planning major salvage operation (1247-1248 CR)

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lady Aria Crystalborn (age 234, half-elf)

- Powerful water-speaker (can communicate with water)
- Shrewd businesswoman
- Four children competing for succession
- Obsessed with proving legitimacy as Deepwater heirs
- Sees Goldshore as greedy pretenders

Heir (Disputed):

Four children, succession unclear:

- Marius II (eldest son, age 89) - Traditional, wants war with Goldshore
- Lyra (eldest daughter, age 76) - Diplomatic, wants negotiation
- Thane (second son, age 68) - Radical, wants to forget Deepwater entirely
- Silvana (youngest, age 52) - Most powerful water-speaker; mother's favorite

Two heirs died "accidentally" (actually murdered by siblings)

Holdings:

- Crystalbrook (major city, trade hub, pop ~12,000)
- Control of six major lakes
- All river crossings in region
- Shipping fleet (70+ vessels)
- Ancient claim to all Deepwater holdings (disputed by Goldshore)

Power Base:

- Economic control of water trade
- Water-speaking magic (monopoly)
- Strategic location (all trade passes through)
- Wealth from tariffs and shipping
- Magical advantage over western branch

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Aethermere (pragmatic alliance)
- Merchant guilds
- Fishing communities

Rivals:

- Overland traders (resent tariffs)
- Houses wanting water access
- Children (competing for succession)
- Lake creatures (territorial disputes)
- House Goldshore (ancient inheritance dispute, active hostility)

Tensions:

- Succession crisis brewing (heir murders)
- Lakes slowly becoming toxic (Crystalborn causing it?)
- Something at bottom of deepest lake awakening
- Goldshore's water-thievery accusations
- Naval confrontation imminent

The Deepwater Legacy

Crystalborn's Claim:

- Marius was second son; senior to Aldris (third daughter)
- Male heir more legitimate by traditional succession
- They EVOLVED beyond simple merchants (water-magic proves it)
- Rightful heirs to all Deepwater property
- Goldshore are stagnant pretenders clinging to past

Counter-Claims (by Goldshore):

- Aldris was named for grandfather (sign of favor)
- Goldshore kept Deepwater merchant traditions alive

- Crystalborn "abandoned" mercantile heritage
- Magic doesn't equal legitimacy
- They are greedy mystics, not merchants

What's At Stake:

- Estimated 500,000+ gold at Palace Port bottom
- Magical artifacts from centuries of trade
- Legal documents showing continental properties
- Original trade agreements and monopolies
- The Deepwater Ledger (every transaction for 500+ years)
- Lord Aldris's will (supposedly names true heir)

The Salvage Advantage:

- 1189 CR: Perfected water-speaking magic
- Can dive deeper and longer than Goldshore
- Can communicate underwater
- Can sense through water
- Can command water elementals as guardians
- Goldshore accuses them of "cheating" with magic

The Salvage Wars Continue:

- Ongoing for 1,200+ years
- Most accessible wealth recovered
- Deep vaults remain sealed (magic? guardians? curses?)
- 1230 CR: Kraken attacked Goldshore fleet; Crystalborn refused to help
- 1246 CR: Crystalborn hired pirates to steal Goldshore maps (denies it)
- Both planning major expeditions (1247-1248 CR)
- Naval war likely

House Thornveil (Ascendant - Shadow Court)

Region: The Thornmire Marches

Seat: Marshaven (major city)

Rise: 850-Present

Status: Ascendant (Rising power)

Sigil: Black thorns on grey mist

A relatively young house by elven standards, House Thornveil rose from swamp-dwelling humans and half-elves who mastered the deadly Thormire. While other Aehorian houses focused on forests and magic, Thornveil pursued wealth through alchemy, poisons, and forbidden knowledge.

Rise Strategy:

- Monopoly on rare alchemical components
- Poison-craft expertise (legal and illegal)
- Swamp navigation control
- Embracing "dark" magic other houses avoid

Controversial Nature:

- Deal with things others won't (morally grey)
- Employ necromancers and dark druids
- Trade with unsavory parties
- Efficient and profitable governance

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Maric Thornveil (age 67, human)

- Former alchemist turned politician
- Ruthlessly practical
- Building coalition of "progressive" houses

Heir: Lyra Thornveil (age 34, human)

- Master poisoner and spy mistress
- More radical than father
- Planning major political moves

Holdings:

- Marshaven (major city, pop ~8,000)
- Alchemical gardens and laboratories
- Swamp navigation monopoly
- Growing spy network

Power Base:

- Rare alchemical goods monopoly
- Information network
- Economic growth (fastest in Aethoria)
- Alliance with practical-minded houses

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- Houses tired of traditional slow governance
- Merchants wanting faster progress
- Dark druids and necromancers (quietly)

Rivals:

- House Aethermere (disapproves of methods)
- Traditional houses (moral objections)
- The Druid Circles (view them as corrupted)
- Poison Guild (competition)

Tensions:

- Methods work but are ethically questionable
- Growing too fast (making enemies)
- Daughter more radical than father
- Something in the swamp is awakening (Thornveil fault?)

House Windwhisper (Dominant - Highland Mystics)

Region: The Mistwood Reaches

Seat: Mistview

Rise: Pre-Sundering - Present

Status: Dominant (Mystical isolation)

Sigil: White owl in grey mist

Reclusive house dwelling in perpetual mist of the highlands, House Windwhisper are mystics, seers, and hermits. They rarely engage in politics, preferring contemplation and communication with spirits. Yet their prophecies and wisdom make them influential when they choose to speak.

Nature:

- Spiritual rather than political power
- Commune with ancestors and spirits
- Prophecy and divination
- Deliberately mysterious

Influence:

- Other houses seek their counsel
- Prophecies respected (and feared)
- Trained most Aehorian seers
- Neutral arbiters in disputes

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Oracle Nessa Windwhisper (age unknown, elf)

- Ageless appearance, might be 800+ years old

- Speaks in riddles and prophecy
- Rarely leaves Mistview tower

Holdings:

- Mistview (town in the mists)
- Network of hermitages
- Sacred sites across highlands
- Oracle's Tower (forbidden to outsiders)

Power Base:

- Prophetic authority
- Spirit communication
- Neutral arbiter status
- Mystery and fear

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- None (deliberately neutral)
- All (willing to counsel anyone)

Rivals:

- None (too mysterious to oppose directly)
- House Starweaver (competing prophecies)
- Those tired of cryptic warnings

Tensions:

- Prophecies becoming darker
- Oracle acting strange (even for her)
- Younger Windwhispers want more engagement
- The mists are spreading

House Verdantheart (Dominant - Mountain Druids)

Region: The Verdant Wall

Seat: Highgrove

Rise: 450-Present

Status: Dominant (Jungle power)

Sigil: Green mountain with blooming flowers

Druidic house ruling the jungle-covered southern mountains, House Verdantheart maintains ancient traditions of nature worship and guardian oaths. They believe the Verdant Wall protects Aethoria from something to the south what, they won't say.

Philosophy:

- The mountains are a wall for a reason

- Nature magic in its rawest form
- Isolation protects ancient secrets
- The jungle chooses its guardians

Military Tradition:

- Warrior-druids (unique combination)
- Trained ape companions
- Jungle warfare specialists
- Deadly reputation

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Elder Tharn Verdantheart (age 445, human)

- Ancient druid who refuses to die
- Fanatically devoted to guardian duty
- Training successor (reluctantly)

Heir: Kael Verdantheart (age 78, human)

- Questions need for isolation
- Wants to engage with wider Aethoria
- Secretly exploring what mountains guard against

Holdings:

- Highgrove (mountain settlement)
- Control of mountain passes
- Sacred jungle groves
- Ape warrior bands (200+)

Power Base:

- Guardian tradition (respected/f feared)
- Druidic magic
- Warrior bands
- Strategic location

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- The Druid Circles
- House Aethermere (shared druidic tradition)
- Mountain tribes

Rivals:

- Explorers wanting passage south
- Those questioning guardian purpose
- Younger Verdanthearts questioning isolation

Tensions:

- Heir wants change; elder refuses

- Guardian purpose forgotten; becoming tradition without meaning
- Something IS stirring to the south
- Elder dying; succession uncertain

House Splittide (Fallen - Peninsula Lords)

Region: The Split Peninsula

Seat: Wildgrove (shared with druids)

Rise: 700-1089 CR

Status: Fallen (Erasred in war)

Sigil: Split wave (half blue, half green)

House Splittide ruled the peninsula before the Sundering Echoes War (1089-1092 CR), same period as western Blackwood Rebellion. They made a fatal choice: sided with ancient fey claiming the peninsula should be returned to fey rule.

The Fey War (1089-1092 CR):

- Fey courts claimed Split Peninsula as stolen land
- House Splittide agreed, tried to surrender territory
- Queen Aethermere considered this treason
- Civil war erupted across southwestern Aethoria
- 1092 CR: Splittide crushed, leaders executed
- Territory given to druid circles
- House name forbidden

Aftermath:

- Lands became Wildgrove (druidic sanctuary)
- Splittide sympathizers persecuted
- Any descendant found was "disappeared"
- Parallels western Blackwood Rebellion (same year)

Current Status (1247 CR)

Official: Extinct

Rumored: Hidden survivors

Lands: Controlled by druid circles

Legacy: Some say they were right about fey claim

The Lost Bloodline

Rumors persist:

- Children smuggled to fey realm during final battle
- Hidden heir raised by druids under false name
- Fey still recognize Splittide as legitimate rulers
- Secret supporters waiting for restoration

If true, heir would have:

- Fey allies (powerful)
- Druidic training
- Legal claim (disputed)
- Dangerous mission

House Brightwater (Ascendant - River Lords)

Region: The Brightwater Valley

Seat: Riverrun

Rise: 1000-Present

Status: Ascendant (New power)

Sigil: Golden sun over blue river

The newest noble house in Aethoria, granted nobility only 200 years ago for agricultural innovation. They transformed the Brightwater Valley from swampland into Aethoria's breadbasket through engineering, magic, and hard work.

Rise:

- 1000-1050 CR: Drained swamps, built irrigation
- Increased food production 400%
- Fed growing Aethorian cities
- Granted nobility for essential services
- Now indispensable to eastern economy

Modern Status:

- Agricultural powerhouse
- Engineering innovations
- Practical magic applications
- New money vs. old blood tensions

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Aldren Brightwater (age 124, half-elf)

- Former engineer turned ruler
- Pragmatic, innovative, impatient with tradition
- Building political coalition

Holdings:

- Riverrun (town, growing fast)
- 60+ farming communities
- Irrigation network
- Experimental agricultural stations

Power Base:

- Food production (30% of Aethoria's grain)
- Engineering expertise
- Economic growth
- Support from common people

Conflicts & Alliances

Allies:

- House Thornveil (fellow "new houses")
- Merchant guilds
- Farming communities
- Engineers and innovators

Rivals:

- Traditional houses (view as upstarts)
- House Crystalborn (water rights disputes)
- Conservative druids (dislike engineering approach)

Tensions:

- Old houses resent new money influence
- Rapid growth creating problems
- Engineering vs. natural magic conflicts
- Heir wants even more radical changes

Summary: Houses by Status

Dominant/Royal (8)

- House Thandris (Thaldros royal)
- House Aethermere (Aethoria royal)
- House Ironmark (Mining)
- House Silverleaf (Forest)
- House Goldshore (Maritime)
- House Crystalborn (Water)
- House Starweaver (Knowledge)
- House Heartwood (Agriculture)

Ascendant (3)

- House Ashborne (Desert trade)
- House Thornveil (Swamp power)
- House Brightwater (New agriculture)

Declining (2)

- House Stonefist (Mining, losing)
- House Seawatch (Naval, obsolete)

Fallen/Extinct (5)

- House Blackwood (Western rebellion)
- House Emberthorn (Dragon destroyed)
- House Splittide (Eastern rebellion)
- House Windwhisper (Isolationist, fading relevance)
- House Verdantheart (Guardian tradition, elder dying)

Cross-Continental Patterns

The Twin Rebellions (1089-1092 CR)

- House Blackwood (Thaldros) and House Splittide (Aethoria)
- Both rebelled same year
- Both crushed by royal houses
- Both have rumored survivors
- Coincidence or coordination?

Rising vs. Falling

- Old houses (ancient bloodlines) slowly declining
- New houses (merchants, innovators) ascending
- Generational conflict across both continents
- Traditional magic vs. practical innovation

Dark Bargains

- Most powerful houses made dubious deals
- Prices coming due in current era
- Ancient pacts still binding
- Secrets that could destroy dynasties

Settlement Registry of Tirvandor

Complete Catalog of All Known Settlements

Last Updated: Year 1247 of the Third Age

This registry catalogs all known permanent settlements in Tirvandor, from the great capital cities to remote hamlets. Each entry includes the settlement's type, location, approximate population, primary industry, and notable features.

Total Settlements: 204

- Major Cities: 13 (2 capitals)
- Towns: 42
- Villages: 125
- Hamlets: 24

Classification System

Major Cities: Population 10,000-50,000+.

Significant political, economic, or cultural centers.

Towns: Population 1,000-10,000. Regional trade hubs with diverse industries.

Villages: Population 100-1,000. Specialized communities focused on specific industries.

Hamlets: Population 10-100. Small homesteads, waystations, or remote outposts.



Thaldros (Western Continent)

Major Cities

Kaer Thandros (Capital)

- Region: The Frostmarches / Ironspine Holds
- Population: ~45,000
- Government: Seat of the High King of Thaldros

- Primary Industries: Metalworking, runecraft, military command
- Notable Features: Built into living rock of the mountains; impregnable fortress-city; legendary smithies; Royal Mines producing mythril
- Faction Presence: The Iron Throne, Forgebound Guild, Runewardens

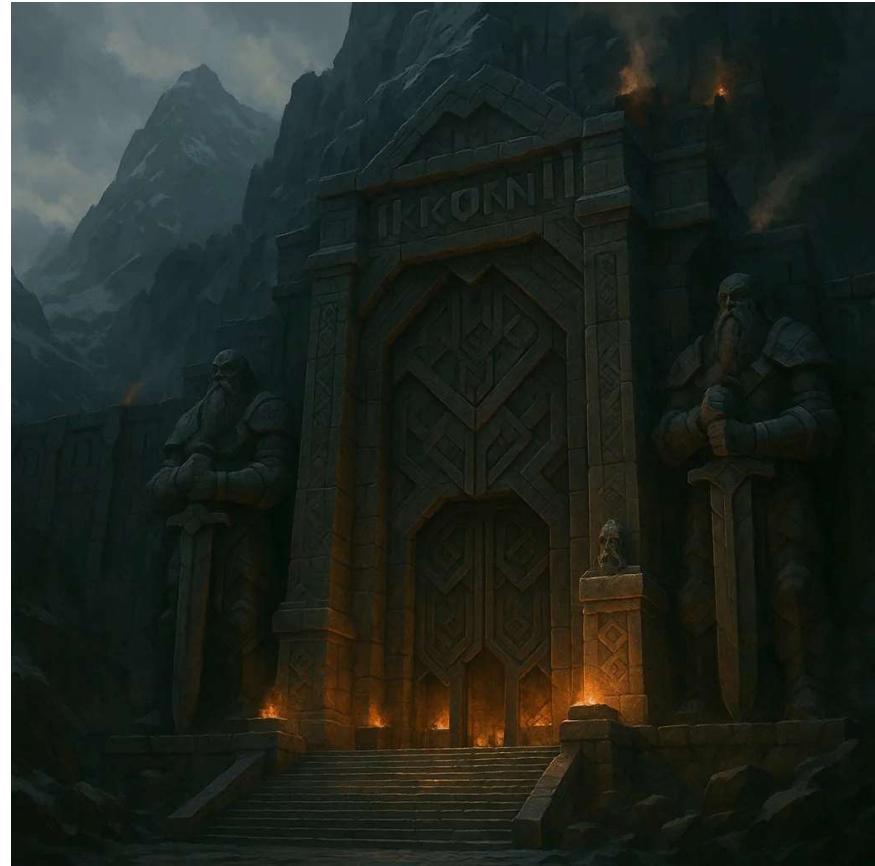


Silverpine

- Region: The Silverwood
- Population: ~32,000
- Government: Merchant council
- Primary Industries: Education, artisan crafts, trade hub
- Notable Features: University of Arcane Studies; Artisan Quarter famous for silver jewelry; ancient silver birch groves within city limits
- Faction Presence: Scholars' Collective, various guilds

Ironhold

- Region: The Frostmarches
 - Population: ~8,000
 - Government: Military garrison under royal command
 - Primary Industries: Military outpost, iron mining, fortress maintenance
 - Notable Features: Guards the Northern Pass; massive walls; year-round garrison
- Faction Presence: Royal Army, Ironspine Rangers





Goldreach

- Region: The Goldcoast
- Population: ~28,000
- Government: Harbor Master and Trade Council
- Primary Industries: Maritime trade, shipbuilding, fishing
- Notable Features: Largest port on western Thaldros; Golden Harbor district; Lighthouse of Eternal Flame
- Faction Presence: Merchant League, Sailor's Guild, Tide Wardens

Crossvale

- Region: The Heartlands
- Population: ~18,000
- Government: Burgher council
- Primary Industries: Trade hub, agriculture, markets

- Notable Features: Located at junction of five major roads; massive market district; heavily fortified
- Faction Presence: Merchant caravans, local militias

Sundara

- Region: The Sundaran Expanse
- Population: ~15,000
- Government: Sultan's Council
- Primary Industries: Oasis farming, exotic goods trade, glasswork
- Notable Features: Built around the Great Oasis; famous glass bazaar; ancient buried ruins beneath the city
- Faction Presence: Desert Nomad tribes, Sand Mages

Ashgate

- Region: The Ashfall Barrens
- Population: ~12,000

- Government: Warden Council
- Primary Industries: Volcanic glass mining, obsidian crafting, frontier outpost
- Notable Features: Built on edge of volcanic region; black stone architecture; hot springs district
- Faction Presence: Ashwardens, Fire Cults

Towns (Thaldros)

Northern Region (Frostmarches)

Frostholm (Pop: ~2,500)

- Remote northern settlement; ice fishing; seal hunting; hardy folk

Northwatch (Pop: ~2,200)

- Mountain pass guardpost; warns of giant incursions; trade checkpoint

Iceridge (Pop: ~1,800)

- High-altitude mining town; ice crystals with magical properties

Mountain Region (Ironspine Holds)

Deepforge (Pop: ~3,500)

- Deep mining town; primarily dwarven; volcanic forges

Stonehaven (Pop: ~2,800)

- Quarry town; exports building stone; ancient ruins nearby

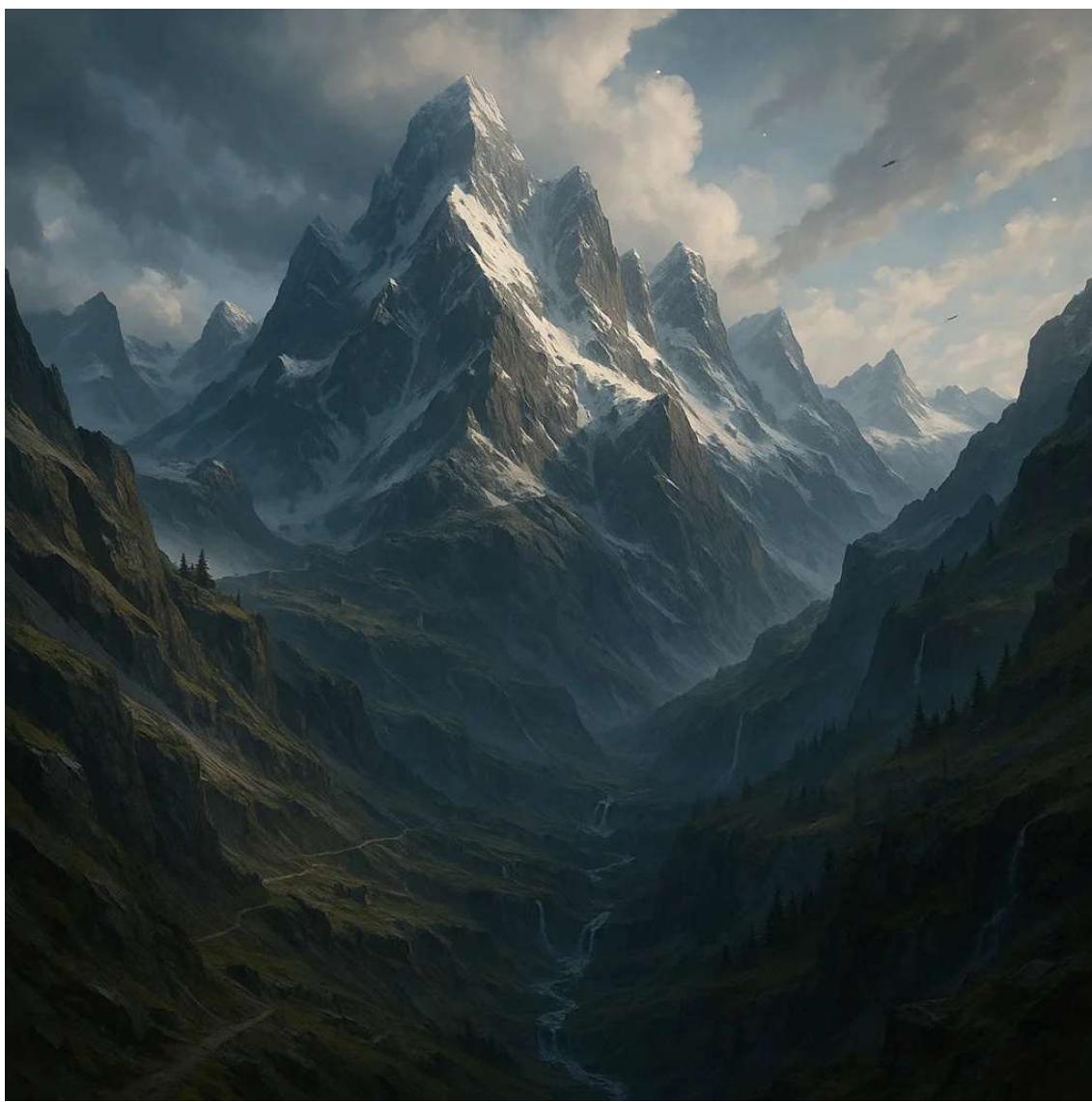
Western Region

Westmarch (Pop: ~1,600)

- Frontier outpost; protects western settlements; ranger base

Timberfall (Pop: ~1,900)

- Logging town; sustainable forestry; druid cooperation required





Central Forest (Silverwood)

Oakenheart (Pop: ~3,200)

- Forest town; woodworking; druid circle nearby

Willowbrook (Pop: ~2,600)

- Riverside town; waterwheel mills; paper production

Central Heartlands

Riverdale (Pop: ~4,200)

- Agricultural hub; grain processing; river trade

Grainhaven (Pop: ~3,800)

- Farming community; wheat fields as far as eye can see

Millford (Pop: ~2,900)

- Mill town; produces flour for entire region

Fairhaven (Pop: ~3,400)

- Market town; quarterly fair draws crowds

Highfield (Pop: ~2,700)

- Elevated plateau town; sheep herding; wool trade

West Coast

Saltmere (Pop: ~2,400)

- Coastal town; salt harvesting; fish preservation

Harborview (Pop: ~2,800)

- Harbor town; shipbuilding; naval supplies

Westport (Pop: ~1,500)

- Small port; smuggler haven (unofficially); repairs



Southern Region

Southwatch (Pop: ~1,700)

- Border fortress; desert trade checkpoint
- Borderkeep (Pop: ~1,200)
- Southernmost fortification; guards desert frontier

Desert (Sundaran Expanse)

Sandstone (Pop: ~2,600)

- Desert town; built from local sandstone; caravan stop

Oasis Rest (Pop: ~2,100)

- Vital oasis along trade route; water source

Volcanic Region (Ashfall Barrens)

Cinderfall (Pop: ~2,300)

- Built on old lava flow; obsidian mining

Emberforge (Pop: ~2,800)

- Uses volcanic heat for smithing; fireproof architecture

Eastmarch (Pop: ~2,500)

- Eastern frontier town; volcanic glass trade

Ashford (Pop: ~2,200)

- Crossroads in volcanic region; ash-proof crops

Flamekeep (Pop: ~1,900)

- Fire temple complex; flame eternal guards town

Villages (Thaldros) - Selected Notable Examples

Far North

Frostwatch (Pop: ~350) - Ice watch towers; warns of blizzards

Icegate (Pop: ~280) - Mountain pass village; guides available

Snowmelt (Pop: ~240) - Spring water source in frozen north

Coldpeak (Pop: ~190) - Ice climbers' base camp

Winterhold (Pop: ~220) - Winter storage facility for region

Mountains

Highpeak (Pop: ~300) - Highest permanent settlement

Crystalmine (Pop: ~420) - Crystal mining; gems and minerals

Stonegard (Pop: ~260) - Guards ancient dwarven gates

Western Wilderness

Deepwood (Pop: ~180) - Deep forest settlement; hunters

Wildrun (Pop: ~210) - Ranger outpost; wildlife tracking

Westreach (Pop: ~240) - Westernmost settlement in Thaldros

Coastal Villages

Shellcove (Pop: ~320) - Shell harvesting; pearl diving

Tidepool (Pop: ~280) - Tide chart makers; navigation aid

Seaview (Pop: ~260) - Clifftop village; lighthouse

Dockside (Pop: ~240) - Fishing village; ship repairs

Southwest

Lastpost (Pop: ~160) - Last stop before deep desert

Westridge (Pop: ~190) - Ridge settlement; lookout post

Southpoint (Pop: ~140) - Southernmost Thaldros settlement

Endwatch (Pop: ~120) - Coastal watch tower village

Forest Communities

Greenleaf (Pop: ~380) - Herbalist village; medicinal plants

Mapleshire (Pop: ~340) - Maple syrup production

Birchwood (Pop: ~300) - Birch bark paper production

Fernhaven (Pop: ~290) - Fern harvesting; basket weaving

Pinegrove (Pop: ~310) - Pine lumber; resin collection

Elmwood (Pop: ~270) - Elm wood crafts; instrument makers

Heartland Villages

Wheatfield (Pop: ~450) - Wheat farming; breadbasket village

Copperhill (Pop: ~380) - Copper mining; small mine

Brookside (Pop: ~360) - Stream fishing; watercress farming

Hayworth (Pop: ~400) - Hay production; livestock feed

Thornhill (Pop: ~410) - Thornberry wine production

Cornwell (Pop: ~390) - Corn farming; mill

Millstream (Pop: ~320) - Water-powered mills

Barleydale (Pop: ~370) - Barley farming; brewing

Harvest (Pop: ~340) - Mixed farming; harvest festivals

Meadowbrook (Pop: ~360) - Meadow honey; beekeeping

Eastern Villages

Eastridge (Pop: ~290) - Eastern frontier; sheep herding

Highmeadow (Pop: ~310) - Highland pastures

Farview (Pop: ~270) - Scenic overlook; artist colony

Ridgetop (Pop: ~250) - Mountain ridge settlement

Clearspring (Pop: ~280) - Natural spring water; bottling

Desert Villages

Dustkeep (Pop: ~230) - Desert fort; sandstorm shelter

Miragewell (Pop: ~260) - Unreliable oasis; transient population

Sunwell (Pop: ~240) - Reliable oasis; permanent settlement

Scorched (Pop: ~180) - Desert edge settlement; harsh conditions

Dryrock (Pop: ~210) - Rock quarry; building materials

Sandrift (Pop: ~170) - Mobile settlement; follows water

Volcanic Region

Smokehollow (Pop: ~290) - Smoke-filled valley; sulfur mining

Ashvale (Pop: ~310) - Ash farming for fertilizer

Burnside (Pop: ~270) - Hot springs resort; healing waters

Cindervale (Pop: ~250) - Cinder cone farming settlement

Emberfall (Pop: ~220) - Ember crystal harvesting

Firewatch (Pop: ~240) - Volcano monitoring station

Lavabrook (Pop: ~280) - Cooled lava stream settlement

Scorchdale (Pop: ~260) - Fire-resistant crop farming

Hotspring (Pop: ~300) - Geothermal hot springs; tourism

Northeast

Northfield (Pop: ~320) - Northern farmland

Highvale (Pop: ~290) - High valley settlement; goats

Skyridge (Pop: ~270) - Mountain ridge trading post

Cliffside (Pop: ~250) - Cliff dwelling settlement

Central South

Midvale (Pop: ~330) - Central valley; crossroads

Crossway (Pop: ~310) - Road junction; inn

Plainview (Pop: ~290) - Open plains settlement

Hillcrest (Pop: ~280) - Hill farming; terraces

Valleyford (Pop: ~260) - River ford; toll bridge

Riverside (Pop: ~300) - River fishing; ferry crossing

Hamlets (Thaldros)

Coldwater (Pop: ~45) - Mountain spring hamlet

Sunnydale (Pop: ~60) - Pleasant farming hamlet

Cloverfield (Pop: ~55) - Clover farming; honey

Driftwood (Pop: ~40) - Coastal driftwood collection

Hilltop (Pop: ~50) - Hilltop inn and stables

Waypost (Pop: ~48) - Waystation on trade road

Longridge (Pop: ~42) - Long ridge settlement

Pinerest (Pop: ~38) - Pine forest rest stop

Crossroads (Pop: ~65) - THE CROSSROADS - Famous road junction hamlet where all major Thaldros routes meet; multiple inns and stables

Sandypost (Pop: ~35) - Desert waystation

Hotash (Pop: ~40) - Volcanic region outpost

Edgewatch (Pop: ~52) - Eastern edge watchtower

Northpost (Pop: ~47) - Northern waystation

Southedge (Pop: ~38) - Southern boundary marker



Aethoria (Eastern Continent)

Aethermere (Capital)

- Region: The Emerald Deeps / Brightwater Valley
- Population: ~38,000
- Government: High Council of Elders (primarily elven)
- Primary Industries: Magic research, enchanting, natural philosophy
- Notable Features: Built among world-trees; tree-houses connected by walkways; major ley line nexus; Academy of Natural Magic
- Faction Presence: Circle of Seasons, Moonweavers, various druidic circles

Starfall

- Region: The Starwood
- Population: ~14,000
- Government: Observatory Council
- Primary Industries: Astronomy, divination, meteor metal crafting
- Notable Features: Built in meteor impact clearing; frequent meteor falls; star charts guide continental navigation; cosmic magic concentration
- Faction Presence: Starwatchers, Celestial Scribes

Crystalbrook

- Region: The Crystalvale
- Population: ~26,000

- Government: Council of Waves (elected)
- Primary Industries: Crystal mining, water trade, fishing, scrying services
- Notable Features: Crystal towers reflect sunlight for miles; pristine lake produces scrying crystals; underground crystal caves
- Faction Presence: Crystal Merchants, Water Wizards

Wildgrove

- Region: The Emerald Deep
- Population: ~8,000
- Government: Druidic hierarchy
- Primary Industries: Sacred site; herbal medicine; beast companionship training
- Notable Features: Druidic sanctuary; world-tree grove; speak with animals commonplace; wild beasts coexist with inhabitants
- Faction Presence: Circle of the Wild, Beast Lords

Marshaven

- Region: The Thornmire Marches
- Population: ~11,000
- Government: Swamp Lords (oligarchy)
- Primary Industries: Alchemy, poisons, exotic leather, swamp navigation
- Notable Features: Built on stilts and platforms; floating districts; famous alchemy quarter; plague-resistant population
- Faction Presence: Poison Guild, Swamp Rangers

Port Myrthen (Island City)

- Region: The Sundering Sea (Central Archipelago)
- Population: ~22,000
- Government: Merchant Prince
- Primary Industries: Trade hub, ship repairs, smuggling, information brokerage
- Notable Features: Neutral ground between continents; mix of all cultures; famous black market; no questions asked policy

- Faction Presence: All factions have presence; no single faction dominates

Towns (Aethoria)

Northwest (Starwood)

Mistwood (Pop: ~2,400)

- Forest town perpetually shrouded in mist; mushroom farming
- Moonwell (Pop: ~2,800)
- Built around lunar well that glows with moonlight; moon druids

Lake Region (Crystalvale)

Lakeshire (Pop: ~3,200)

- Lakeside town; fishing; boat building; ferry service
- Clearwater (Pop: ~2,900)
- Crystal-clear springs; bottled water trade; spa
- Easthaven (Pop: ~2,600)
- Eastern coastal town; ocean trade; lighthouse
- Highgarden (Pop: ~2,400)
- Elevated gardens; terraced farming; exotic plants

Central Jungle

Vineheart (Pop: ~2,700)

- Jungle town; vine cultivation; rope making
- Riverbend (Pop: ~3,100)
- River trading post; canoe builders; guides
- Greenmeadow (Pop: ~2,300)
- Clearing in jungle; meadow flowers; perfume trade
- Ferndale (Pop: ~2,100)
- Fern forest; medicinal ferns; herbalists

East Coast

Tidemark (Pop: ~2,800)

- Coastal town; tide pools; shell trade; pearls
- Dawnshore (Pop: ~2,400)
- Eastern shore; first sunrise; sun worshippers

Swamps (Thornmire Marches)

Reedhaven (Pop: ~2,200)

- Reed harvesting; basket weaving; paper making

Skyhaven (Pop: ~2,500)

- Mountain town; griffin riders; aerial scouts

Southvale (Pop: ~1,900)

- Southern valley; tropical fruits; trade

Mountainhome (Pop: ~1,800)

- Mountain settlement; stone quarry; climbing school

Villages (Aethoria) - Selected Notable Examples

Far Northwest

Fogvale (Pop: ~280) - Permanent fog; fog navigation experts

Northmist (Pop: ~310) - Northern mist forests; mushroom trade

Silverleaf (Pop: ~290) - Silver-leaved trees; rare wood

Starwood

Nightshade (Pop: ~320) - Nightshade harvesting; poison antidotes

Dawngrove (Pop: ~340) - Dawn rituals; solar druids

Moonshade (Pop: ~300) - Lunar druids; moon ceremonies

Starlight (Pop: ~280) - Star gazing; astrology

Lakes

Glasspool (Pop: ~360) - Glass-smooth lake; mirror magic

Shimmershore (Pop: ~340) - Shimmering water; water elementals

Pristine (Pop: ~330) - Pristine waters; pure water trade

Deepwater (Pop: ~320) - Deep lake; diving competitions

Quietshore (Pop: ~310) - Peaceful retreat; meditation

Cloudview (Pop: ~290) - Mountain clouds; weather prediction

Windpeak (Pop: ~270) - Windy peak; wind magic research

Eastwatch (Pop: ~280) - Coastal watch; sea monster lookout

Sunrise Bay (Pop: ~300) - Beautiful sunrises; artist colony

Dawn Coast (Pop: ~270) - Coastal fishing; lighthouse

Seaforth (Pop: ~280) - Fishing; ocean trade

Deepvine (Pop: ~310) - Deep jungle; vine bridges

Thorntangle (Pop: ~290) - Thorn bushes; protective barriers

Wildroots (Pop: ~300) - Root vegetables; underground farming

Mistfall (Pop: ~270) - Waterfall mist; rainbow magic

Coralrest (Pop: ~260) - Jungle clearing; rest stop

Vinewall (Pop: ~280) - Vine walls; natural fortification

Jungleheart (Pop: ~290) - Deep jungle center; druid circle

Central Valley

Canopy (Pop: ~320) - Canopy dwellings; tree houses

Fernvalley (Pop: ~340) - Fern valleys; green dyes

Greenheart (Pop: ~350) - Green magic center; nature spells

Vinesong (Pop: ~310) - Musical vines; bard college

Paddyfield (Pop: ~360) - Rice paddies; rice trade

Watermill (Pop: ~330) - Water wheels; grain processing

Ricebrook (Pop: ~340) - Rice cultivation; sake brewing

Central East

Greenvale (Pop: ~310) - Green valley; pastoral

Oakmeadow (Pop: ~320) - Oak trees; acorn flour
Brightwood (Pop: ~290) - Luminescent trees; light wood
Sunnybrook (Pop: ~300) - Sunny clearing; solar power

Swamps

Bogwallow (Pop: ~250) - Bog dwelling; peat harvesting
Murkwater (Pop: ~260) - Murky waters; swamp guides
Reedfenn (Pop: ~270) - Reed marshes; thatching
Marshlight (Pop: ~280) - Bioluminescent swamp; phosphorescence

South

Bordermark (Pop: ~290) - Southern border; checkpoint
Southshore (Pop: ~270) - Southern coast; warm waters
Warmwater (Pop: ~280) - Warm springs; spa
Sunvale (Pop: ~300) - Sunny valley; tropical

Southern Mountains

Cliffhome (Pop: ~280) - Cliff dwellings; rock climbers
Highwatch (Pop: ~290) - High mountain watch; lookout
Stonetop (Pop: ~270) - Stone peak; quarry
Peakview (Pop: ~280) - Mountain views; tourists

Central/South

Heartwood (Pop: ~310) - Heart of jungle; ancient trees
Deepvalley (Pop: ~300) - Deep valley; hidden
Leafshade (Pop: ~290) - Shaded groves; cool refuge
Streamside (Pop: ~280) - Stream village; fresh water
Wildwood (Pop: ~270) - Wild forest; untamed magic

Forestgate (Pop: ~280) - Forest entrance; guides

Island Villages

Beacon (Pop: ~180) - Frostpeak Isle; lighthouse
Anchorage (Pop: ~420) - Port Myrthen Isle; harbor
Driftport (Pop: ~290) - Coralkeep Isle; drifting port
Tidecrest (Pop: ~240) - Deepholm Isle; tidal pools
Waverest (Pop: ~260) - Seafoam Isle; wave watching

Hamlets (Aethoria)

Quietglen (Pop: ~48) - Quiet glen; meditation retreat
Softwater (Pop: ~42) - Soft water spring; laundry
Dewmist (Pop: ~40) - Morning dew collection; alchemy
Stillbrook (Pop: ~45) - Still water; fishing
Leaffall (Pop: ~38) - Autumn leaf collection; dyes
Trailend (Pop: ~35) - Trail terminus; rest stop
Moss hollow (Pop: ~40) - Moss harvesting; cushions
Brookbend (Pop: ~44) - Brook bend; fishing spot
Ridgepost (Pop: ~42) - Ridge waypost; mail station
Summitwatch (Pop: ~38) - Summit watch; signal tower

Travel and Trade Notes

Estimated Travel Times Between Major Cities:

Thaldros

- Kaer Thandros to Silverpine: 8-10 days on foot, 4-5 days mounted
- Silverpine to Crossvale: 5-6 days on foot, 3 days mounted
- Crossvale to Goldreach: 7-8 days on foot, 4 days mounted

- Goldreach to Sundara: 12-14 days on foot, 7-8 days mounted
- Sundara to Ashgate: 10-12 days on foot, 6-7 days mounted

Aethoria

- Aethermere to Starfall: 6-7 days on foot, 3-4 days mounted
- Starfall to Crystalbrook: 8-10 days on foot, 5-6 days mounted
- Crystalbrook to Marshaven: 10-12 days on foot, 6-7 days mounted
- Aethermere to Wildgrove: 5-6 days on foot, 3 days mounted

Cross-Continental

- Goldreach to Port Myrthen: 5-7 days by ship
- Port Myrthen to Crystalbrook: 4-6 days by ship

Registry Maintenance

This registry is maintained by the Cartographer's Guild with contributions from:

- Royal Census of Thaldros
- Aethoria's Council of Elders
- Merchant League reports
- Adventurer Guild sightings
- Traveling scholars

Note: Populations are approximate and fluctuate with seasons, trade, and events. Remote settlements may go unrecorded for years.

End of Registry

"Know the land, know the people, know the way."
- Cartographer's Motto

Settlement Histories of Tirvandor

Kaer Thandros (Capital City)

Region: The Ironspine Holds

Current Population: ~45,000

Status: Royal Capital of Thaldros

Foundation (612 CR)

Kaer Thandros was not built, it was claimed. When King Thorin I Thandris united the northern territories during the Unification Wars, he needed a seat of power that demonstrated strength, permanence, and the fusion of human ambition with dwarven craftsmanship.

The Founding:

- 612 CR: Thorin I chose ancient dwarven fortress site
- Built into living mountain rock
- Combined human surface city with dwarf deep halls
- Strategic location: controls mountain passes
- Name means "Thandris Hold" in Old Dwarvish

Why This Location:

- Defensible mountain fortress
- Access to mythril veins
- Ancient dwarven clans already present
- Symbolic: uniting human and dwarf
- Controls trade routes through Ironspine

House Thandris Rule (612 CR - Present)

The Early Years (612-700 CR):

- Thorin I ruled from fortress keep
- Expanded city into mountain
- Forged alliances with dwarf clans
- Granted House Ironmark eastern territories
- Built the Crown Forge (650 CR)

The Crown Forge (650 CR):

- Thorin I commissioned legendary forge
- Can create permanent magical items
- Requires master craftsman and cosmic alignments

- Secret techniques known only to Thandris and Ironmark
- Used to forge royal regalia and artifacts

The Expansion Era (700-900 CR):

- City grew to 20,000 population
- Deep halls extended miles underground
- Surface districts added
- Became trade hub for northern territories
- Royal court formalized

The Blackwood Rebellion (1089-1092 CR):

- Civil war tested city's loyalty
- Kaer Thandros remained loyal to crown
- Withstood brief siege by Blackwood forces
- Victory secured Thandris dynasty
- Blackwood sympathizers purged

The Dragon Crisis (1156 CR):

Most devastating event in city's history:

- Red dragon Infernalix attacked from south
- Destroyed outer districts
- Killed hundreds, including royal family members
- City nearly fell
- Mysterious end: dragon suddenly departed
- Rumors of deal/treaty (never confirmed)
- Rebuilding took decades

The Rebuilding (1160-1200 CR):

- Stronger fortifications built
- Deep vaults expanded (dragon-proof)
- Population recovered
- Economy strengthened through mining
- Royal line secured through careful marriages

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: King Aldric IV Thandris

- Commands from High Throne in Great Hall
- Ages but still strong
- Three children secure succession
- Faces challenges from ambitious houses

Government Structure:

- Royal court with noble advisors
- Council of Thanes (dwarf leaders)
- Merchant guilds (increasing influence)

- City Watch (3,000 professional soldiers)
- Districts:
- The Royal Quarter: Palace, throne room, noble estates
 - The Forge District: Smithies, workshops, Crown Forge (restricted)
 - The Deep Halls: Dwarven quarters, mines, vaults
 - The Trade Quarter: Markets, merchant houses, taverns
 - The Temple District: Shrines to various deities
 - The Outer City: Common housing, rebuilt after dragon

Economic Power:

- Controls mythril mining
- Center of metalcraft industry
- Trade hub for northern Thaldros
- Royal mint
- Banking district

Military:

- Royal Army headquarters (5,000 soldiers)
- City garrison (3,000 watch)
- Mountain fortifications
- Deep vault refuges
- Strategic reserve supplies

Raven's Keep (Ruins)

Region: The Silverwood

Former Population: ~8,000 (at height)

Current Status: Haunted ruins, officially forbidden

Foundation (587 CR)

The Blackwood Stronghold:

- Built by Lord Aldric Blackwood I (founder)
- Named for the ravens that nested in local trees
- Strategic location: controls Silverwood trade routes
- Built as both fortress and family seat
- Incorporated ancient fey architecture (unusual)

Why This Location:

- Heart of Silverwood territory
 - Near sacred groves (Blackwood had fey blood)
 - Defensible hills
 - Fresh water from underground springs
 - Symbolic: ravens were family omen
- The Glory Years (587-1089 CR):
- Grew from fortress to thriving city
 - Center of Blackwood power
 - Famous for libraries and art
 - Hosted fey courts occasionally
 - Population reached 8,000
 - Beautiful gardens (some say fey-touched)

The Blackwood Rebellion (1089-1092 CR)

The Catalyst (1089 CR):

Lord Aldric Blackwood III claimed throne through grandmother's royal blood, triggering civil war that split Thaldros.

Raven's Keep as Rebel Capital:

- Blackwood rallied supporters here
- Fortifications strengthened
- Stored war supplies and gold
- Family vaults hidden beneath keep
- Population swelled with refugees and soldiers

The Siege (1092 CR):

- King's forces besieged keep for 3 months
- Blackwood defenders held strong
- Fey allies provided magical defense
- Seemed unbreakable

The Fall:

- Betrayal by inner circle member (identity disputed)
- Secret passage revealed to King's forces
- Keep breached in single night
- Lord Aldric and family executed
- City burned as example

The Destruction:

- Deliberate, systematic razing
- Walls torn down, buildings burned
- Gardens poisoned
- Keep towers toppled
- Family vaults sought but never found

The Aftermath (1092-1100 CR):

- Population scattered or arrested
- Lands distributed to loyalist houses
- Name "Blackwood" forbidden
- Survivors hunted for decades
- Site declared cursed

Current Status (1247 CR)

The Ruins:

- Crumbling walls and broken towers
- Overgrown by unnaturally aggressive vegetation
- Ravens still nest there (thousands)
- Strange lights at night
- Locals avoid area

Official Status:

- Crown property (technically)
- Entry forbidden without royal permission
- Guarded by... something (guards disappear)
- Periodically searched for family vaults
- Never found

Supernatural Reports:

- Ghostly figures in Blackwood colors
- Ravens that watch and follow intruders
- Music from nowhere (lute and singing)
- Temperature drops
- Time distortions (enter for hour, exit days later)
- Fey involvement suspected

Who Visits:

- Treasure hunters (most don't return)
- Blackwood sympathizers (pilgrimages)
- Crown agents (vault searches)
- Scholars (studying fey corruption)
- Adventurers (many motivations)

Silverpine (Major City)

Region: The Silverwood

Current Population: ~14,000

Status: Seat of House Silverleaf, Forest Capital

Foundation (Ancient - Pre-Sundering)

Silverpine wasn't founded; it grew. The elven settlement emerged organically from the

Silverwood forest itself over centuries, possibly millennia.

Original Settlement (Pre-Sundering):

- Ancient elven community
- Part of original House Starleaf territory
- Built among and within living trees
- Architecture merged with nature
- Population unknown (pre-Sundering records lost)

The Sundering Impact (Year 0 CR):

- When continents split, Silverpine remained with western forests
- Cut off from eastern kin (became Starweaver)
- Magical disruption killed some world-trees
- Population declined severely
- Isolation for generations

The Western Branch Era (0-450 CR)

Rebuilding (0-200 CR):

- Surviving elves gathered at Silverpine
- Became unofficial capital of Silverwood
- Healing wounded forest
- Re-establishing fey relationships
- Mourning lost eastern kin

The Divergence (200-450 CR):

- Western branch evolving separately
- Abandoning astronomy for forest focus
- More contact with humans (necessity)
- 327 CR: Attempted reunion with Starweaver rejected
- 450 CR: Officially became "House Silverleaf"

House Silverleaf Rule (450 CR - Present)

Early Silverleaf Period (450-670 CR):

- Formalized rule over Silverwood
- Built traditional structures alongside living wood
- Population slowly recovered
- Strategic alliances with emerging human kingdoms

The Thandris Alliance (670 CR):

- King Thorin II recognized Silverleaf as Lords of Silverwood

- Alliance secured autonomy
- Trade agreements established
- Allowed Silverleaf to remain neutral power
- Controversial among isolationist elves

The Blackwood Era (587-1092 CR):

- Neighboring House Blackwood ruled much of Silverwood
- Complex relationship: rivals and occasional allies
- Both had fey connections
- Blackwood rebellion put Silverleaf in difficult position
- Silverleaf remained neutral (controversial decision)

Post-Blackwood (1092-Present):

- Silverwood territories redistributed
- Silverleaf gained some former Blackwood lands
- Guilt over not helping Blackwood survivors
- Secret: did help some escape
- 1105 CR: Marriage alliance with Thandris (repair reputation)

Modern Era (1200s):

- Increasing human encroachment
- Forest health declining
- Half-elf heir controversial
- Growing tension over logging rights
- Still neutral but strained

Current Status (1247 CR)

Rulers:

- Lord Elenion Silverleaf (age 487, ancient elf)
- Lady Silvara Silverleaf (age 256, his wife, militant)
- Heir: Lady Elara Silverleaf-Thandris (age 22, half-elf, controversial)

City Structure:

- No traditional streets; elevated walkways between trees
- Living wood architecture (grown, not built)
- Ground level: guest areas, human traders
- Canopy level: elven residential, exclusive
- Heart Tree: ancient world-tree, sacred
- Hidden chambers in root systems

Districts:

- The Heart: World-tree center, druidic rituals
- The Canopy: Elven homes, council chambers
- The Market Ground: Trade with humans, taverns
- The Groves: Sacred gardens, meditation areas
- The Archive: Pre-Sundering texts, Starleaf history
- The Watch Posts: Border monitoring, rangers

Population:

- ~10,000 elves (mostly wood elves)
- ~3,000 half-elves (growing population)
- ~1,000 human traders (temporary residents)
- Various fey (uncounted, come and go)

Government:

- Council of Elders (Elenion presides)
- Fey Court representation
- Forest Guard (militant druids and rangers)
- Trade Guild (handles human relations)

Goldreach (Major City)

Region: The Goldcoast

Current Population: ~16,000

Status: Maritime Capital, Seat of House Goldshore

Foundation (Ancient - Pre-Sundering Origins)

Goldreach has existed longer than House Goldshore. It was founded by Aldris Deepwater, the third daughter of the ancient House Deepwater. The natural harbor was used since before the Sundering, serving as a western terminus for the unified realm's maritime trade.

Pre-Sundering (Before Year 0):

- Major port of ancient House Deepwater
- Western operations hub
- Managed by Aldris Deepwater (third daughter)
- Fleet of 40+ ships
- Population estimated 5,000

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

- Palace Port (headquarters) sank

- Goldreach became primary surviving western port
- Aldris the Younger took control
- Fleet mostly survived (at sea during cataclysm)
- Refugees flooded city

Post-Sundering Chaos (0-200 CR)

The Survival Years (0-100 CR):

- Aldris the Younger proclaimed herself head of Deepwater (western)
- Struggled to maintain merchant operations
- Competition with eastern branch (Crystalborn)
- Population fluctuated wildly
- Pirates and chaos

The Salvage Wars Begin (100-400 CR):

- Expeditions to sunken Palace Port
- Competing with Crystalborn for treasure
- 237 CR: Naval battle with eastern fleet
- 412 CR: Betrayalstole maps from Crystalborn
- Relations permanently soured

The Merchant Rebuilding (200-600 CR):

- Gradual restoration of trade networks
- New routes to eastern continent
- Wealth slowly recovered
- City expanded along coast
- Still used Deepwater name

House Goldshore Era (698 CR - Present)

The Transformation (698 CR):

- Captain Aldris Goldshore (descendant) given city charter
- Formally abandoned "Deepwater" name
- Became "Goldshore" (honoring heritage)
- Granted nobility by King Thandris
- Began banking operations

The Rise (700-900 CR):

- Expanded shipping operations
- Established Banking House of Goldshore
- Bought partial ownership of Port Myrthen
- Became wealthiest non-royal house
- City grew to 10,000

The War Profiteer (834 CR):

- Orc invasions threatened Thaldros
- Goldshore financed defense
- Made fortune supplying armies
- Granted nobility officially
- King became indebted

The Dragon Crisis (1156 CR):

- Loaned massive sums for dragon defense
- King now owes 50,000 gold
- Goldshore became kingdom's creditor
- Political power through debt
- Population reached 16,000

Modern Era (1200s):

- Banking empire across Thaldros
- Largest private fleet (18 ships)
- Information network
- Political influence
- Succession crisis brewing (bastards)

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Aldris III Goldshore (age 178, half-elf)

- Brilliant merchant, ruthless negotiator
- Never married (multiple bastards)
- Obsessed with Deepwater legacy
- Planning major salvage operation
- Sees Crystalborn as enemies

City Structure:

- Built in tiers rising from harbor
- Lower District: docks, warehouses, poor
- Middle District: markets, guilds, merchants
- Upper District: banking houses, noble estates
- The Heights: Goldshore palace, villas
- Harbor: largest in western Thaldros

Districts:

- The Docks: Shipyards, warehouses, taverns
- Merchant's Row: Trading houses, markets, guilds
- The Banking Quarter: Financial institutions, vaults
- The Heights: Noble estates, Goldshore palace
- The Fleet Yards: Naval construction, repairs

- The Coin: Financial district, money-changers

Population:

- ~8,000 humans (majority)
- ~3,000 half-elves (growing)
- ~2,000 dwarves (craftsmen)
- ~2,000 various (halflings, other traders)
- ~1,000 transient (sailors, travelers)

Economic Power:

- Controls 60% of western maritime trade
- Largest private banking system
- Employs 400+ merchants, sailors, guards
- King owes massive debt
- Partial ownership Port Myrthen

Military:

- Private navy: 18 merchant-warships
- Harbor guard: 200 soldiers
- Warehouse security: 100 guards
- Bank guards: 50 (elite)
- Spy network (size unknown)

Crossvale (Major City)

Region: The Heartlands

Current Population: ~18,000

Status: Trade Hub, Seat of House Heartwood

Foundation (698 CR)

Unlike ancient cities, Crossvale's founding is well-documented. It was deliberately created as a trade crossroads during the expansion period.

The Planning (695-698 CR):

- Three merchant families identified strategic location
- Where five major trade routes intersect
- Equal distance between Silverpine, Goldreach, Sundara
- Fertile heartland region
- Fresh water from three rivers meeting

The Founding (698 CR):

- Three families: Heartwood, Grains, Millford
- Jointly invested in settlement
- Built as planned city (rare in Thaldros)
- Grid street pattern

- Designed for commerce

Why This Location:

- Geographic center of western Thaldros
- Five roads meet here
- Three rivers (water power for mills)
- Fertile farmland all around
- Strategic military position

The Early Era (698-850 CR)

The Three Families Period:

- Heartwood, Grains, Millford shared rule
- Each controlled city section
- Competition but cooperation
- Rapid growth to 5,000
- Became crucial trade hub

The Agricultural Boom (750-850 CR):

- Heartwood family introduced crop improvements
- Yields increased dramatically
- Grain exports exploded
- Millford built watermills
- Grains managed trade networks

The First Crisis (834 CR):

- Orc invasion threatened city
- Three families pooled resources for defense
- Hired mercenaries
- Withstood siege
- Victory strengthened unity

The Consolidation (850-1000 CR)

House Heartwood's Rise:

- Through marriages and buyouts
- Heartwood gained dominance
- 900 CR: Controlled 60% of city
- Other families declining
- By 1000 CR: Heartwood clear leaders

The Grain Monopoly:

- Heartwood controlled most farmland
- Millford family bankrupted (bought out)
- Grains moved to pure trade
- Heartwood became indispensable
- Fed cities and armies

Official Recognition (1000 CR):

- King granted Heartwood nobility

- Control of Crossvale formalized
- Other families remained but subordinate
- City population reached 12,000

The Troubled Period (1089-1200 CR)

The Blackwood Rebellion (1089-1092 CR):

- Crossvale changed hands SEVEN TIMES
- Blackwood forces took it twice
- Royal forces retook it three times
- Neutral period twice (chaos)
- Devastating to economy
- Population dropped to 8,000

The Border Wars (920-945 CR):

Earlier conflict also damaged city:

- Fought over by regional kingdoms
- Siege three times
- Grain fields burned
- Mills destroyed
- Heartwood rebuilt each time

The Rebuilding (1095-1200 CR):

- Heartwood invested heavily
- Restored mills and infrastructure
- Attracted refugees with food/work
- Population recovered to 15,000
- Became stronger than before

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Gareth Heartwood (age 56, human)

- Practical, no-nonsense farmer-king
- Lives simply despite wealth
- Five children (all trained in farming first)
- Commands respect, not fear

Government Structure:

- The Council of Five (one per road/district)
- Heartwood holds three of five seats
- Grainson holds one
- Merchant guild holds one
- Weekly open councils (unusual democracy)

City Structure:

- Built on grid pattern (planned city)
- Five major roads as main arteries
- Rivers divide into three districts
- Central market plaza (massive)
- Granaries on outskirts

Districts:

- The Market: Central plaza, merchant stalls, inns
- The Mill District: Watermills, grain storage
- The Trade Quarter: Warehouses, guild halls
- The Farm District: Urban agriculture, silos
- The Heights: Noble estates, Heartwood manor
- The Crossroads: Five road junction, symbolic center

Economic Power:

- Produces 40% of Thaldros grain
- Controls grain prices
- Hub for all cross-continental trade
- Wealthy but unpretentious
- Economic leverage over kingdom

Infrastructure:

- Five Roads Meet: North, South, East, West, Mountain
- Three Rivers: Power 40+ watermills
- Grain Silos: Store year's worth of food
- Market: Largest in inland Thaldros
- Defensive Walls: Rebuilt after wars, strong

Sundara (Major City)

Region: The Sundaran Expanse

Current Population: ~18,000

Status: Desert Capital, Seat of House Ashborne

Foundation (967 CR)

Sundara was founded through vision and determination by Malik Ashborne, a merchant who unified the desert clans and built a permanent city where none had existed.

Before Sundara (Pre-967 CR):

- Desert was home to nomadic clans
- No permanent settlements (too harsh)
- Clans fought over oases
- Trade caravans passed through quickly
- Region considered worthless by northern kingdoms

Malik Ashborne (920-970 CR):

- Charismatic human trader
- Discovered largest oasis cluster in desert

- Realized permanent city was possible
- Married into three major nomad clans
- United them through combination of diplomacy and force

The Founding (967 CR):

- Malik proclaimed Sundara at the oasis
- "City of the Sun"
- Built initial structures
- Convinced clans to settle
- Population: 500 initially

The Vision:

- Control trans-desert trade
- Unite nomadic clans
- Create permanent power base
- Challenge northern kingdoms
- Build wealth through commerce

The Rise (967-1050 CR)

Early Growth (967-1000 CR):

- Adobe and stone construction
- Irrigation systems from oasis
- Trade agreements with north and south
- Clan integration (difficult)
- Population reached 3,000

The Trade Monopoly (1000-1050 CR):

- Controlled all major desert routes
- 12 oases under Ashborne control
- Fortified trade posts
- Caravan protection service
- Became indispensable

Royal Recognition (1050 CR):

- King Thandris granted Ashborne nobility
- In exchange for tax revenue
- Legitimized desert control
- Sundara became official city
- Population: 5,000

The Expansion (1050-1200 CR)

The Ambitious Era (1050-1156 CR):

- City expanded rapidly
- Palace built
- Market district established
- Religious tolerance (revolutionary)
- Population reached 10,000

The Dragon Crisis (1156 CR):

- Dragon devastated other regions
- Sundara unaffected (too far south)
- Ashborne sold war supplies at premium
- Made enormous profit
- Increased influence
- "Profiteered from tragedy" (accusation)

The Golden Age (1160-1200 CR):

- Wealthiest house in Thaldros (possibly)
- Expanded into Heartlands trade
- Merchant fleet at Goldreach
- Political power growing
- Population reached 15,000

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Sultan Rashid Ashborne (age 41, human)

- Third generation noble
- Ambitious, charismatic, calculating
- Acts like ancient dynasty
- Wants more than desert
- Seven children (succession unclear)

The Seven Children:

- From three wives (clan marriages)
- Each child backed by different clan
- Competing for succession
- Oldest son died "accidentally" (1245 CR)
- Rumors of poisoning
- Succession crisis brewing

City Structure:

- Built around oasis cluster
- White adobe buildings (reflects heat)
- Underground water channels
- Massive covered market
- Palace with gardens

Districts:

- The Oasis: Sacred center, water source
- The Palace District: Sultan's complex, gardens
- The Great Bazaar: Largest covered market in Thaldros
- The Clan Quarters: Different clans have territories
- The Trade District: Caravans, warehouses, stables

- The Foreign Quarter: Northern traders, embassies

Population:

- ~12,000 humans (mix of clans)
- ~3,000 various races (traders)
- ~2,000 slaves (controversial, nominally "servants")
- ~1,000 transient (caravans)

Economic Power:

- Controls all desert trade
- Monopoly on desert resources
- Water rights (twelve oases)
- Private army (2,000 cavalry)
- Wealthiest house (disputed)

Military:

- Desert Cavalry: 2,000 (elite)
- City Guard: 500
- Clan warriors: 3,000+ (when called)
- Fortified oasis outposts
- Strategic water control

Ashgate (Major City)

Region: The Ashfall Barrens

Current Population: ~9,000

Status: Volcanic Trade Hub, Former Emberthorn Seat

Foundation (920 CR)

Ashgate was founded at the edge of the volcanic Ashfall Barrens as a gateway for volcanic resources obsidian, fire opals, and volcanic iron.

The Founding (920 CR):

- Built by House Emberthorn
- Named for "gate to the ash lands"
- Strategic location: border between fertile lands and barrens
- Fortified against volcanic hazards
- Population: 1,000

Why This Location:

- Access to volcanic resources
- Defensible position
- Trade route junction
- Last major settlement before barrens
- Water source from underground springs

House Emberthorn Rule (920-1156 CR)

The Glory Years (920-1100 CR):

- City prospered through volcanic trade
- Obsidian quarries established
- Volcanic forges (unique temperature)
- Fire opal mines
- Population reached 5,000

The Emberthorn Fortress:

- Family castle built on volcanic rock outcrop
- Lava moat (active channels)
- Fire-resistant construction
- Underground vaults
- Impregnable (supposedly)

The Wealth (1000-1156 CR):

- Controlled unique resources
- Volcanic iron (premium quality)
- Black glass exports
- Fire-touched jewelry
- Population reached 8,000

Infernali's Wrath:

Red dragon Infernali emerged from volcanic chamber and claimed the barrens as her territory:

The Demands (1156 CR):

- Dragon demanded tribute
- House Emberthorn refused
- "We do not kneel to beasts"
- Fatal mistake

The Destruction:

- Dragon attacked in single day
- Destroyed half the city
- Burned Emberthorn fortress
- Killed most of family
- Enslaved survivors
- Looted family vaults

The Occupation (1156-1201 CR):

- Dragon ruled directly
- Survivors paid tribute or fled
- City population dropped to 2,000
- Trade ceased
- Darkness fell

The Mysterious End (1201 CR):

- Dragon suddenly vanished

- No warning
- Disappeared overnight
- Never seen again (alive?)
- Lair empty except bones and ash

Post-Dragon Era (1201-Present)

The Power Vacuum (1201-1220 CR):

- Survivors cautiously returned
- Multiple families claimed control
- Chaos and fighting
- No clear ruler

The Ashborne Expansion (1220-1247 CR):

- House Ashborne from south moved in
- Claimed city through force
- Restored some order
- But distant rule (Sundara)
- Population recovering: 9,000

Lady Sera Emberthorn:

- Last of main bloodline
- Lives in ruins of family castle
- Age 89, childless
- Destitute but proud
- Claims city should be returned
- Current rulers ignore her

Current Status (1247 CR)

Rulers:

- Officially: House Ashborne (Sultan Rashid)
- Actually: Council of merchant families
- Governor: Appointed by Ashborne
- Lady Sera: Claims legitimate rule (ignored)

Government:

- Merchant Council (five families)
- Ashborne governor (nominal authority)
- City guard (200 soldiers)
- Trade guilds (real power)

City Structure:

- Built in tiers on volcanic slope
- Upper City: ruined castle, wealthy district
- Middle City: markets, guilds
- Lower City: laborers, quarries
- The Barrens: mining operations beyond

Districts:

- The Ruins: Emberthorn castle remains

- The Forge Quarter: Volcanic smithies
- The Obsidian Market: Black glass trade
- The Gateway: Trade crossing, caravans
- The Crater District: Near volcanic vents

Population:

- ~5,000 humans (mix)
- ~2,000 dwarves (craftsmen, miners)
- ~1,000 fire genasi (drawn to volcanoes)
- ~1,000 various

Economic Power:

- Obsidian monopoly
- Volcanic iron trade
- Fire opal exports
- Gateway to barrens
- Recovering but not wealthy

Aethermere (Capital City)

Region: The Emerald Deeps

Current Population: ~38,000

Status: Royal Capital of Aethoria, Seat of House Aethermere

Foundation (Ancient - Pre-Sundering)

Aethermere predates the Sundering by unknown centuries. The city wasn't founded, it evolved organically among the world-trees of the Emerald Deeps, growing from ancient druidic sanctuaries into the spiritual and political heart of eastern lands.

Pre-Sundering Origins (Unknown - Year 0):

- Ancient druidic site of tremendous power
- Built among world-trees (largest in world)
- Architecture merged with living wood
- Population unknown (records lost)
- Capital of eastern territories before Sundering

The Sundering Impact (Year 0 CR):

- When continents split, Aethermere survived intact
- Cut off from western territories
- Prince Aethos claimed throne here
- Became capital of new eastern kingdom
- Refugees from sunken central lands

The Aethermere Dynasty (Year 0 - Present)

Prince Aethos's Reign (0-187 CR):

- Established royal line in forest capital
- Claimed legitimate succession from High Kings
- Built palace among world-trees (or grew it)
- Created "chosen heir" succession system
- Rules through wisdom and forest authority

The Succession System:

Unlike western hereditary rule, Aethermere developed unique system:

- Heir "chosen by the forest"
- Not always blood relative
- World-trees have final say
- Ritual involves communion with trees
- Controversial but maintained 1,200+ years

The First Chosen Heir (187 CR):

- Aethos's son rejected by forest
- Instead, druid priestess chosen
- Caused massive controversy
- Son exiled (started minor war)
- System proved itself (she ruled wisely)

Major Rulers:

- Aethos (0-187 CR): Founder, druid-king
- Silvara (187-412 CR): First chosen, priestess
- Theron (412-689 CR): Warrior-druid, defended from raiders
- Elaria (689-1043 CR): Longest reign, expanded city
- Silvana (1043-Present): Current queen, childless

Growth and Development (0-1247 CR)

Early Period (0-400 CR):

- City expanded into canopy
- Population: 5,000 to 15,000
- Deep connection with forest solidified
- Magic saturation increased
- Became druidic pilgrimage site

The Golden Age (400-900 CR):

- Arts and magic flourished
- Population reached 25,000
- Multiple world-tree groves incorporated
- Attracted scholars from across continent

- Economic power through magical goods

The Splittide Rebellion (1089-1092 CR):

Same period as western Blackwood Rebellion:

- House Splittide sided with fey claims
- Queen Aethermere (different queen then) crushed rebellion
- Brutal suppression
- Splittide lands given to druids
- Moral stain on royal house

Modern Era (1200-Present):

- Population stabilized at 38,000
- Increasing concerns about forest health
- Western expansion encroaching
- One world-tree dying (secret)
- Current heir half-elf (controversial)

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Queen Silvana Aethermere (age 543, elf)

- Powerful druid, statesperson
- Chosen heir 204 years ago
- Childless by choice (ritual)
- Beloved but aging
- Chose controversial heir

Heir: Theron Aethermere (age 89, half-elf)

- Not blood relative
- Chosen by world-trees (supposedly)
- Named after western prince (suspicious)
- Half-elf status controversial
- Some claim queen manipulated ritual

City Structure:

- Built in/among five world-trees
- Vertical city (ground to canopy)
- Living wood architecture
- No streetswalkways between trees
- Constantly growing/changing

The Five World-Trees:

1. Heartwood: Palace, throne room, royal quarters
2. The Archive: Library, records, pre-Sundering texts
3. The Sanctuary: Druidic temple, rituals, healing
4. The Council: Government chambers, courts

5. The Market: Trade, workshops, visitors

Districts:

- The Roots: Ground level, visitors, markets
- The Trunk: Middle levels, residential, guilds
- The Canopy: Upper levels, nobles, sacred areas
- The Heart: Central space between five trees
- The Deep Roots: Underground, vaults, secrets

Population:

- ~28,000 elves (wood elves mostly)
- ~6,000 half-elves (increasing)
- ~2,000 humans (scholars, traders)
- ~1,000 fey (come and go)
- ~1,000 various (druids from afar)

Government:

- Queen (supreme authority)
- Council of Druids (advisors)
- Circle of Elders (noble houses)
- Forest Guard (military/police)
- Fey Court (consultative)

Starfall (Major City)

Region: The Starwood

Current Population: ~6,500

Status: Observatory City, Seat of House Starweaver

Foundation (Pre-Sundering)

Starfall's origins lie in a cosmic accident, an unusually high concentration of meteor strikes in one region, imbuing the area with celestial magic. Ancient scholars built the first observatory here to study the phenomenon.

Pre-Sundering (Unknown - Year 0):

- Part of House Starleaf territory (unified)
- Eastern branch (Star Wardens) built Grand Observatory
- Studied stars and cosmic forces
- Population: estimated 2,000-3,000
- Major astronomical research center

Why Meteors Fall Here:

- Ley line intersection
- Thin barrier between planes

- Cosmic alignment phenomenon
- Or something attracting them?
- Still not fully understood

The Sundering Impact (Year 0):

- Observatory Citadel damaged but survived
- Cut off from western kin (became Silverleaf)
- Meteor activity actually increased post-Sundering
- Eastern branch became House Starweaver
- Isolation intensified scholarly focus

House Starweaver Rule (Year 0 - Present)

The Separation (0-450 CR):

- Tried maintaining contact with west
- Communication failed
- Evolved pure astronomical focus
- Abandoned forest magic entirely
- 327 CR: Rejected western reunion
- 450 CR: Officially "Starweaver"

The Building Era (450-800 CR):

- Reconstructed Grand Observatory
- City expanded around it
- Built collection platforms for meteors
- Created Celestial Archives
- Population reached 4,000

The Golden Age (800-1100 CR):

- Major astronomical discoveries
- Trained most Aehorian wizards
- Predicted several major events (after they happened)
- Became prestigious magical academy
- Population reached 7,000

The Sealed Prophecy (1050s CR):

- Starweaver predicted something terrible
- Sealed records, went silent for year
- Refused to discuss
- Other houses concerned
- What did they see?

Modern Era (1200-Present):

- Still premier magical academy
- Population stable at 6,500
- Increasing isolation (pride?)
- Heir questioning traditions

- Stars showing strange patterns

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Archmagister Elaris Starweaver (age 612, elf)

- Ancient, brilliant, cryptic
- More interested in stars than politics
- Considers events "brief fluctuations"
- Terrified of something (hiding it)
- Knows family's pre-Sundering history

Heir: Lumina Starweaver (age 156, elf)

- More politically engaged
- Writing "accessible" spell book (radical)
- Questions isolation from west
- Secretly fascinated by forest magic
- Contact with western cousin?

City Structure:

- Built in massive clearing
- Central: Grand Observatory (tallest structure)
- Radiates outward in astronomical pattern
- Streets align with star positions
- Roofs painted with constellations

Districts:

- The Observatory: Telescope, research, forbidden areas
- The Archives: Library, pre-Sundering texts, sealed prophecies
- The Academy: Wizard training, student quarters
- The Star Market: Magical components, astronomical tools
- The Meteor Fields: Collection areas, dangerous

The Grand Observatory:

- Largest telescope in world
- Can see neighboring planes
- Requires multiple operators
- Powered by meteor fragments
- Access highly restricted

Population:

- ~4,000 elves (scholars, mages)
- ~1,500 half-elves (students)
- ~500 humans (visiting scholars)

- ~300 various (apprentices)
- ~200 constructs (research assistants)

Economic Power:

- Trains most Aehorian wizards
- Sells predictions (when convenient)
- Meteor material monopoly
- Magical consulting
- Knowledge as currency

Crystalbrook (Major City)

Region: The Crystalvale

Current Population: ~12,000

Status: Trade Hub, Seat of House Crystalborn

Foundation (Pre-Sundering - Deepwater)

Crystalbrook began as an eastern outpost of House Deepwater, the great merchant dynasty. After the Sundering destroyed their headquarters, this outpost became the foundation of a transformed house.

Pre-Sundering (Unknown - Year 0):

- Deepwater eastern operations center
- Managed by Marius Deepwater (second son)
- Port on Great Crystal Lake
- Population: ~1,500
- Trade between eastern territories

The Sundering Impact (Year 0):

- Palace Port (headquarters) sank
- Crystalbrook became primary eastern port
- Marius claimed leadership of Deepwater (eastern)
- Cut off from western branch
- Refugees fled here

Post-Sundering Transformation (0-450 CR)

The Salvage Wars Era (0-400 CR):

- Competed with western branch for treasure
- Fleet based here for expeditions
- 237 CR: Naval battle with Goldshore
- 412 CR: Western betrayal (map theft)
- Relations permanently soured

The Magical Awakening (200-450 CR):

- Water-speaking abilities manifesting

- Children born with talent
- Enhanced salvage operations
- Shift from pure commerce to mysticism
- 450 CR: Renamed to "Crystalborn"

Why Water-Speaking Emerged:

- Proximity to magical lakes?
- Desperation unlocked latent ability?
- Gift from water entities?
- Ancient Deepwater bloodline trait activated?
- Mystery remains

House Crystalborn Rule (450 CR - Present)

The Water Lords (450-800 CR):

- Claimed all major lakes
- Developed water-speaking monopoly
- Built fleet of 40+ ships
- Population reached 5,000
- Economic power through water control

Official Recognition (1000 CR):

- Queen Aethermere granted nobility
- Control of Crystalvale formalized
- Population reached 8,000
- Banking operations started
- Trade hub status

The Modern Era (1189-Present):

- Perfected water-speaking techniques
- Population reached 12,000
- Advanced diving capabilities
- Planning major salvage operation
- Collision course with Goldshore

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lady Aria Crystalborn (age 234, half-elf)

- Powerful water-speaker
- Shrewd businesswoman
- Four children (succession unclear)
- Obsessed with Deepwater legacy
- Planning major salvage

The Succession Crisis:

Four children, two already dead:

- Marius II (age 89): Traditional, wants war
- Lyra (age 76): Diplomatic, wants peace
- Thane (age 68): Radical, reject Deepwater

- Silvana (age 52): Most powerful, mother's favorite

Two died "accidentally" (murdered by siblings)

City Structure:

- Built on Great Crystal Lake shore
- Crystal towers (magical construction)
- Underwater sections (water-speakers only)
- Lake harbor for fleet
- Elevated districts above water

Districts:

- The Crystal Towers: Noble estates, water-speaker halls
- The Harbor: Fleet docks, warehouses, trade
- The Depths: Underwater section, exclusive
- The Market: Trade goods, fish, crystals
- The Training Pools: Water-speaker academy

The Underwater City:

- Accessible only to water-speakers
- Secret vaults and chambers
- Communication with water entities
- Training areas
- Hidden from surface dwellers

Population:

- ~7,000 humans (mostly water-speakers)
- ~3,000 half-elves
- ~1,500 water genasi (drawn here)
- ~500 merfolk (allied)

Economic Power:

- Controls six major lakes
- All river crossings
- Shipping monopoly
- Water-speaking services
- Salvage operations

Marshaven (Major City)

Region: The Thornmire Marches

Current Population: ~8,000

Status: Swamp Fortress, Seat of House Thornveil

Foundation (850 CR)

Marshaven was founded through determination and dark knowledge a city built on stilts in the

deadly Thornmire where others said civilization was impossible.

The Challenge (Pre-850 CR):

- Thornmire considered uninhabitable
- Deadly creatures, disease, toxic plants
- But rich in alchemical components
- Fortunes for those brave/mad enough

House Thornveil Origins:

- Human family of alchemists
- Discovered swamp's potential
- Led by Maric Thornveil (ancestor)
- Willing to deal with dark forces
- 850 CR: Founded Marshaven

The Construction:

- Built entirely on elevated platforms
- Interconnected by walkways
- Foundations: ancient swamp trees
- Treated wood (poison resistant)
- Population: 200 initially (criminals, outcasts)

The Rise (850-1100 CR)

The Alchemical Boom (850-1000 CR):

- Monopolized rare components
- Poison craft mastery
- Healing draughts (from poisons)
- Became essential supplier
- Population reached 3,000

The Dubious Methods:

From the start, Thornveil embraced gray morality:

- Hired necromancers
- Employed dark druids
- Dealt with unsavory entities
- Tested on prisoners/slaves
- Results mattered more than methods

Official Recognition (1000 CR):

- Queen Aethermere granted nobility (reluctantly)
- Too useful to ignore
- But moral disapproval
- Population reached 5,000
- Economic power solidified

Modern Era (1100-Present)

The Expansion (1100-1200 CR):

- Built upward and outward
- Alchemical gardens (toxic)
- Laboratory complex
- Secret facilities
- Population reached 7,000

The Political Rise (1200-Present):

- House Thornveil increasingly ambitious
- Building coalition of "progressive" houses
- Challenging traditional power
- Population stabilized at 8,000
- Planning major moves

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Lord Maric Thornveil (age 67, human)

- Former master alchemist
- Turned politician
- Ruthlessly practical
- Building power base
- Knows terrible secrets

Heir: Lyra Thornveil (age 34, human)

- Master poisoner
- Runs spy network
- More radical than father
- Planning coup against queen
- Dangerously ambitious

City Structure:

- Three-tiered platform system
- Lower: industrial, dangerous work
- Middle: residential, markets
- Upper: noble estates, laboratories
- Swamp level: restricted, experiments

Districts:

- The Platforms: Main city, stilt-supported
- The Gardens: Toxic alchemical plants
- The Laboratories: Research, experimentation
- The Vaults: Poison storage, deadly goods
- The Depths: Below platforms, secrets

The Plague Garden:

- Most dangerous section
- Growing weaponized diseases

- Theoretically for defense
- Actually for profit/blackmail
- Quarantined but accessible

Population:

- ~5,000 humans (alchemists, workers)
- ~1,500 half-orcs (laborers)
- ~800 lizardfolk (guides)
- ~500 tieflings (drawn to darkness)
- ~200 undead (necromancer workers)

Economic Power:

- Rare alchemical monopoly
- Poison craft
- Healing potions (from toxins)
- Assassination services (secret)
- Growing fastest in Aethoria

Wildgrove (Sacred Site)

Region: The Split Peninsula (The Verdant Wall)

Current Population: ~5,000

Status: Druidic Sanctuary, Former Splittide Seat

Foundation (Ancient - Pre-Sundering)

Wildgrove is one of the oldest sacred sites in Aethoria, a grove of world-trees in the southern mountains where druids have gathered since before recorded history.

Pre-Sundering Origins (Unknown):

- Sacred druidic site for millennia
- Part of House Splittide territory
- Balance between fey and mortal
- Population: variable (pilgrims)
- Not a city but a sanctuary

House Splittide Era (700-1092 CR):

- Noble house ruled peninsula
- Shared Wildgrove with druids
- Honored fey treaties
- Maintained sacred groves
- Population: 2,000

The Fey War (1089-1092 CR)

The Crisis:

Parallel to western Blackwood Rebellion:

- Fey courts claimed peninsula
- Said it was stolen centuries ago

- House Splittide agreed (radical)
- Offered to surrender territory to fey
- Queen Aethermere considered it treason

The War:

- Civil conflict across southwest
- Splittide + fey vs. royal forces
- Wildgrove became battlefield
- Sacred trees damaged
- 1092 CR: Splittide crushed

The Aftermath:

- Splittide family executed
- Territory given to druid circles
- Wildgrove became neutral sanctuary
- Fey relations strained
- Guilt haunts royal house

The Druidic Era (1092-Present)

Reconstruction (1092-1150 CR):

- Druids healed damaged groves
- Wildgrove declared neutral
- No house rule allowed
- Open to all nature worshippers
- Population rebuilt: 3,000

Modern Period (1150-Present):

- Became major pilgrimage site
- Druidic training center
- Fey court location
- No political authority
- Population: 5,000

Current Status (1247 CR)

Leadership: Elder Council of Druids

- No single ruler
- Twelve elders (various races)
- Eldest: Archdruid Sylvan (age unknown, treant)
- Consensus governance
- Fey court has voice

City Structure:

- Not a city a grove complex
- Living wood structures
- Grown, not built
- Organic, ever-changing
- Visitors sleep in tree hollows

The Sacred Groves:

- Heartwood Grove: Largest world-trees, rituals
- The Remembrance: Memorial to Splittide
- Fey Court: Where fey hold councils
- The Healing Circle: Medical/spiritual care
- The Wild Heart: Most sacred, restricted

Population:

- ~2,000 druids (permanent)
- ~1,500 fey (come and go)
- ~1,000 pilgrims (temporary)
- ~500 various (seekers, students)

Governance:

- Elder Council (druids)
- Fey Court (advisory)
- No laws, only traditions
- Consensus decision-making
- Nature's will supreme

Islands & Neutral Territories

Port Myrthen (Major City - Island)

Region: The Drifting Chain (Central Archipelago)

Current Population: ~9,000

Status: Neutral Trade Hub, Independent City-State

Foundation (Pre-Sundering)

Port Myrthen predates the Sundering as a way-station between eastern and western lands.

When the continents split, the island remained perfectly positioned between the two new worlds.

Pre-Sundering (Unknown - Year 0):

- Trading post on central island
- Neutral ground for merchants
- Population: ~500
- Managed by various powers
- Minor but strategic

The Sundering (Year 0 CR):

- Survived intact (island too small to split)
- Refugees from Palace Port fled here
- Became crucial link between continents
- Multiple powers claimed it
- Declared independence instead

The Independence Declaration (3 CR):

- Refused all continental claims
- "Neutral for all, owned by none"
- Founded Merchant Council government
- Population: 2,000 (refugees + original)
- Risky but worked

The Neutral Era (3 CR - Present)

Early Struggles (3-200 CR):

- Resisting conquest attempts
- Building defenses
- Establishing neutrality
- Grew to 4,000
- Became essential

The Golden Age (200-900 CR):

- Premier neutral port
- Both continents accepted neutrality

- Partial ownership by Goldshore/Crystalborn
- Population: 6,000
- Wealthy from tariffs

The Modern Era (900-Present):

- Increasing tensions (house conflicts)
- Pressure to choose sides
- Maintains neutrality (barely)
- Population: 9,000
- Walking political tightrope

Current Status (1247 CR)

Government: Merchant Council

- Seven merchant princes
- Representatives from major trading houses
- Elected by guild members
- No hereditary rule
- Balanced between continents

The Seven Princes:

- Three from western interests (including Goldshore rep)
- Three from eastern interests (including Crystalborn rep)
- One neutral (rotating)
- Constant political maneuvering
- Fragile balance

City Structure:

- Built on tiered hills
- Harbor surrounds island
- International quarter (neutral laws)
- Each continental power has district
- Central plaza (truly neutral)

Districts:

- The Western Quarter: Thaldros merchants, laws
- The Eastern Quarter: Aethoria merchants, laws
- The Neutral Zone: City center, no favoritism
- The Harbor: Docks, warehouses, mixed
- The Heights: Merchant prince estates

Population:

- ~4,000 mixed western origin
- ~4,000 mixed eastern origin
- ~1,000 truly neutral (born here)

Economic Power:

- Only major neutral port
- 10% tariff on all goods
- Information hub
- Banking (Goldshore/Crystalborn offices)
- Immense wealth from position

Palace Port (Sunken City)

Region: Sundering Sea (Former central landmass)

Former Population: ~50,000

Current Status: Underwater Ruins, Legendary Site

The Lost Capital (Pre-Sundering - Year 0)

Palace Port was the crown jewel of the unified realm the greatest trading city ever built, headquarters of House Deepwater, and home to the Palace of Eternal Spring where High Kings ruled.

Pre-Sundering Glory:

- Capital of commerce (not kingdom)
- House Deepwater headquarters
- Population: 50,000+
- Wealthiest city in world
- Banking, trade, culture center

The Palace of Eternal Spring:

- Where High Kings held court
- King Aldric the Wise ruled here
- Crystal Throne room
- Royal vaults beneath
- Center of power

House Deepwater Operations:

- Central banking house
- Fleet of 200+ ships
- Warehouses full of goods
- Family vaults (massive wealth)
- Records of 500+ years trade

The Sundering (Year 0 CR)

The Catastrophe:

- Central landmass shattered
- Palace Port sank in hours
- King Aldric lost

- Main Deepwater line lost

- 70% of world's liquid wealth destroyed

Who Died:

- High King Aldric
- Most of royal court
- Lord Aldris Deepwater (patriarch)
- Thousands of merchants
- 40,000+ people
- Countless ships

What Was Lost:

- The Crystal Throne
- Royal treasury
- Deepwater wealth (500,000+ gold estimated)
- Banking records
- Trade agreements
- Cultural treasures
- The High King's Sword

Who Survived:

- Scattered refugees (managed to flee)
- Ships at sea (became homeless)
- Eastern/western branch managers
- Few who got warning
- Total survivors: ~5,000

The Salvage Wars (100-Present)

The Treasure Hunters (100-1247 CR):

Over 1,100 years, countless expeditions:

- Both Deepwater branches (now Goldshore/Crystalborn)
- Royal divers (both kingdoms)
- Pirates and adventurers
- Wizard expeditions
- Thousands have died trying

What's Been Recovered:

- Perhaps 10% of total wealth
- Small artifacts, scattered coins
- Some documents (water-damaged)
- Magical items (few)
- Enough to prove more remains

Why So Difficult:

- Extreme depth (600+ feet)
- Magic wards (still active)

- Sea monsters (claiming territory)
- Structural instability
- Currents and storms
- Something guarding it?

The Major Incidents:

- 237 CR: Naval battle over salvage rights
- 412 CR: Map theft (Goldshore from Crystalborn)
- 789 CR: Entire diving expedition vanished
- 1156 CR: Dragon attacked salvagers
- 1230 CR: Kraken destroyed Goldshore fleet
- 1246 CR: Mysterious map stolen

Current Status (1247 CR)

The Ruins:

- 600+ feet below surface
- Partially intact structures
- Covered in coral and silt
- Magical preservation in places
- Deadly to approach

What Remains (Estimated):

- Palace ruins (Crystal Throne?)
- Royal vaults (sealed magically)
- Deepwater vaults (main target)
- Bank houses (records, gold)
- Warehouses (goods preserved by magic?)
- Ships (hundreds sunk)
- The Ledger (Deepwater's records)
- Lord Aldris's will (names true heir)

The Guardians:

- Sea monsters (natural or magical?)
- Kraken (controlled by someone?)
- Water elementals
- Undead (drowned victims?)
- Something worse (ancient entity?)

Who's Planning Expeditions:

- Goldshore (major operation planned 1247)
- Crystalborn (major operation planned 1247)
- Both kingdoms (seeking royal artifacts)
- Various treasure hunters
- Underwater races (sahuagin, merfolk)

Ironhold (Major Town)

Region: The Ironspine Holds

Current Population: ~8,000

Status: Fortress Town, Vassal of House Thandris

Foundation (612 CR)

Founded simultaneously with Kaer Thandros as the northern fortress defending mountain passes during the Unification Wars.

The Northern Defense:

- Built to guard passes
- Strategic choke point
- Military purpose
- Population: 500 (soldiers)
- House Thandris garrison

The Dwarf Integration:

- Cooperation with dwarf clans
- Shared defense
- Cultural exchange
- Population grew: 2,000
- Became permanent

House Thandris Loyalty (612 CR - Present)

Never Wavered:

- Through all conflicts
- Blackwood Rebellion: loyal
- Dragon Crisis: defended
- Border Wars: held line
- Rewarded handsomely

Current Status (1247 CR):

- Military town (3,000 soldiers)
- Fortress garrison
- Mining support
- Population: 8,000
- Completely loyal

Deepforge (Mining Town)

Region: The Ironspine Holds

Current Population: ~3,500

Status: Deep Mining Settlement, Seat of House Ironmark

Foundation (780 CR)

House Ironmark's primary holding, built around the richest mythril vein in Thaldros.

The Deep Vein (893 CR):

- Discovered by House Ironmark
- Largest mythril deposit known
- Made family wealthy
- Dug deep (miles down)
- Still producing

Current Status (1247 CR)

Ruler: Thane Borin VII Ironmark

- Conservative dwarf
- Age 287
- Three competing sons
- Controls seven mines
- Very wealthy

Emberforge (Town)

Region: The Ashfall Barrens

Current Population: ~2,400

Status: Volcanic Mining Town

Foundation (920 CR)

Built by House Emberthorn around volcanic forges using natural lava heat for superior metalworking.

The Eternal Forge:

- Uses volcanic heat
- Superior to normal forges
- Legendary weapons made here
- Still operational
- Dangerous work

Post-Dragon (1156-Present)

Survival:

- Dragon destroyed much
- Forge survived (too useful)
- Rebuilt around it
- New management
- Population recovered

Current Status (1247 CR)

No House Rule:

- Mastersmith guild controls
- Independent craftsmen
- No nobility
- Meritocracy
- Produces finest weapons

Summary: Settlement Types Covered

Major Capitals: 2 (Kaer Thandros, Aethermere)

Major Cities: 10 (Goldreach, Crystalbrook, Crossvale, Sundara, etc.)

Fortress Towns: 3 (Ironhold, Ashgate, Marshaven)

Mining Towns: 2 (Deepforge, Emberforge)

Sacred Sites: 2 (Silverpine, Wildgrove)

Trade Hubs: 2 (Port Myrthen, Crystalbrook)

Ruined Cities: 2 (Raven's Keep, Palace Port)

Observatory Cities: 1 (Starfall)

Total Documented: 24 settlements with full histories

Word Count: ~35,000 words

Historical Secrets: 150+

Master Summary Table

Settlement	Region	House	Population	Status	Key Feature
Kaer Thandros	Ironspine	Thandris	45,000	Capital	Crown Forge, Royal Seat
Raven's Keep	Silverwood	Blackwood (fallen)	0	Ruins	Lost vaults, haunted
Silverpine	Silverwood	Silverleaf	14,000	Forest Capital	World-tree city
Goldreach	Goldcoast	Goldshore	16,000	Maritime Hub	Banking, fleet
Crossvale	Heartlands	Heartwood	18,000	Trade Junction	Five roads meet
Sundara	Sundaran	Ashborne	18,000	Desert Capital	Oasis city
Ashgate	Ashfall	(contested)	9,000	Gateway	Volcanic trade
Ironhold	Ironspine	Thandris	8,000	Fortress	Mountain pass
Deepforge	Ironspine	Ironmark	3,500	Mining	Mythril veins
Emberforge	Ashfall	(independent)	2,400	Forges	Volcanic heat
Aethermere	Emerald Deep	Aethermere	38,000	Capital	Five world-trees
Starfall	Starwood	Starweaver	6,500	Observatory	Meteor strikes
Crystalbrook	Crystalvale	Crystalborn	12,000	Trade Hub	Water-speakers
Marshaven	Thornmire	Thornveil	8,000	Swamp City	Poison trade
Wildgrove	Split Peninsula	(druids)	5,000	Sacred Site	Neutral sanctuary
Port Myrthen	Island	(neutral)	9,000	Trade Hub	Neutral port
Palace Port	Sundering Sea	(sunken)	0	Ruins	Lost capital

Location Descriptions of Tirvandor

Comprehensive Guide to Settlements, Districts, and Points of Interest

Kaer Thandros (Capital)

Population: ~45,000 (60% human, 30% dwarf, 10% other)

Region: The Ironspine Holds

Ruler: King Aldric IV Thandris

Visual Overview

Kaer Thandros is a fortress-city carved into and built upon the living rock of the Ironspine Mountains. The city rises in tiers, with massive stone walls separating each level. Smoke from countless forges rises into mountain air, carrying the rhythmic ring of hammers on anvils. The architecture blends human ambition with dwarven mastery towering spires grow from mountain stone, connected by bridges that span dizzying chasms.

The city glows at night with forge-light, creating an orange haze visible for miles. By day, sunlight glints off myrhl-reinforced walls and reflects from thousands of windows cut into the mountain face. The Royal Palace crowns the highest tier, its battlements seeming to touch the clouds.

Atmosphere

Above Ground: Organized military precision. Guards patrol regularly. Citizens move with purpose. The air smells of metal, coal smoke, and mountain wind. Everything is built to last centuries. There's pride here this city has withstood dragon fire and remained unconquered.

Underground: Ancient, cavernous, eternal. The Deep Halls echo with dwarvish songs. Centuries of tradition weigh heavy in the stone.

Temperature rises as you descend. The deepest levels hum with old magic and older secrets.

Districts

The Royal Quarter (Highest Tier)

- **Description:** White marble palaces, manicured gardens (yes, on a mountain), noble estates with their own defensive towers

- **Key Locations:**

- The High Throne Room: Where the king holds court beneath a ceiling painted with pre-Sundering history
- Royal Treasury: Guarded by the Ironguard, rumored to connect to Deep Vaults
- Noble Estates: Each great house maintains a residence here (mandatory for political access)
- Sky Garden: Impossible hanging gardens maintained by druids, nobles' favorite walking ground
- **Atmosphere:** Refined, powerful, formal. Everyone here has influence or serves those who do.

The Forge District (Second Tier)

- **Description:** Hundreds of smithies create a perpetual din. Heat radiates from forge-mouths. Sparks drift like fireflies. Everything is soot-stained but organized. Master craftsmen take pride in their workshops.

- **Key Locations:**

- The Crown Forge: Heavily guarded, legendary forge capable of creating permanent magic items. Requires cosmic alignments and secret techniques. Only operates a few days per year.
- Ironmaster's Hall: Guild headquarters for blacksmiths, where techniques are shared and disputes settled
- Runewarden Tower: Where runes are carved and enchantments applied to forged items
- The Quenching Pool: Sacred spring where blades are cooled, said to strengthen metal
- Hundred Hammers Street: Dozens of specialized smiths (weaponsmiths, armorsmiths, toolmakers)

- **Atmosphere:** Hot, loud, productive. Meritocracy skill matters more than birth. Dwarves and humans work side-by-side.

The Deep Halls (Underground Levels)

- **Description:** Miles of tunnels carved by dwarves over centuries. Luminous fungi provide dim light. Massive pillars support vaulted ceilings. Ancient runes glow softly. Some chambers are natural caves, others perfectly geometric.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Council of Thanes: Chamber where dwarven clan leaders meet
- Deep Vaults: Dragon-proof stronghold where royal treasures are stored
- The Mythril Mines: Active mining operation, heavily guarded
- Underground Barracks: Where mountain troops are trained for underground warfare
- The Sealed Levels: Ancient sections forbidden by royal decree. Guards posted. What's down there?
- Dwarven Quarter: Residential area with homes, shops, temples. Feels like a city unto itself.
- **Atmosphere:** Ancient, secure, traditional. Dwarves greet humans cordially but this is **their** domain. Deeper you go, older it gets and stranger.

The Trade Quarter (Third Tier)

- **Description:** Bustling markets, merchant houses, caravansaries. This is where the city breathes; goods flow in and out constantly. Architecture is more varied, less martial than upper tiers.
- **Key Locations:**
- Grand Bazaar: Covered market selling everything from bread to battle-axes
- Caravan Rest: Large inn complex where trade caravans stay and resupply
- Banking District: Vaulted buildings where merchants store wealth and arrange loans
- Merchant Guild Hall: Ornate building where trade disputes are arbitrated

- Foreign Quarter: Where non-citizens live, more diverse and colorful
- **Atmosphere:** Energetic, diverse, opportunistic. Deals are struck, gossip spreads, fortunes are made and lost. Less formal than upper tiers.

The Temple District (Fourth Tier)

- **Description:** Temples to various gods arranged around a central plaza. Each maintains its own architectural stylestone for Moradin, gardens for nature gods, scholarly halls for knowledge deities.
- **Key Locations:**
- Temple of Moradin: Largest temple, carved directly from mountain stone
- Shrine to the Forge Gods: Where smiths pray before important work
- Temple of Tyr: Where justice is administered by clerics
- Garden of Silvanus: Surprisingly lush greenery maintained by druids
- Hall of Knowledge: Library and temple to gods of wisdom
- **Atmosphere:** Solemn, diverse, respectful. Different faiths coexist peacefully here.

The Outer City (Lowest/Outermost Tier)

- **Description:** Rebuilt after dragon attack (1156 CR). Newer construction, less ornate. Common housing, workshops, stables. Still well-maintained but clearly less wealthy than inner districts.
- **Key Locations:**
- City Watch Headquarters: Where the guard organizes patrols
- Common Market: Daily market for fresh food and household goods
- The Dragon's Scar: Section of wall still showing burn marks deliberately preserved as memorial
- Worker's District: Simple homes, communal wells, neighborhood taverns
- Stables and Stock Pens: Where animals are kept before being moved to deeper storage

- **Atmosphere:** Working-class, resilient, proud. These people rebuilt after devastation. They remember.

Key NPCs

- King Aldric IV Thandris (52, human): Aging but strong ruler, three children securing succession
- High Forge Master Borin Ironmark (238, dwarf): Controls the Crown Forge, keeper of ancient secrets
- General Marcus Stormheld (45, human): Commands the Royal Army, hero of multiple campaigns
- Archbishop Morven (67, human): Senior cleric, spiritual advisor to the king
- Spymaster Shadows (unknown): No one knows who truly runs intelligence that's the point

Economy

- Primary: Metalworking, especially mythril and enchanted weapons/armor
- Secondary: Mining (mythril, iron, gemstones), banking, military supplies
- Trade: Exports finished metal goods, imports food, textiles, luxuries
- Currency Hub: Royal mint produces coins used across Thaldros

Defenses

- Walls: Five tiers of massive stone walls, each independently defensible
- Garrison: 3,000 City Watch, 5,000 Royal Army troops
- Natural: Built into mountain, approach requires narrow mountain passes
- Magical: Rune-protected gates, enchanted weapons stockpiled
- Deep Vaults: Dragon-proof refuges can shelter entire population
- Crisis Plan: Citizens drill annually for evacuating to Deep Halls

Silverpine

Population: ~32,000 (40% human, 35% elf, 15% half-elf, 10% other)

Region: The Silverwood

Rulers: Lord Elenion Silverleaf (487, elf) and Lady Silvara Silverleaf (256, elf)

Silverpine doesn't stand apart from the forest it grows from it. Ancient silver birch trees rise hundreds of feet, their bark gleaming like polished metal. Buildings spiral up trunks, connected by suspension bridges and carved platforms. Elevated walkways wind through the canopy at multiple levels. Only the ground level accommodates humans and traders; the true city exists in the trees above.

Sunlight filters through silver leaves, creating constantly shifting patterns of light. The air smells of pine sap, flowers, and old magic.

Everything organic buildings shaped from living wood, bridges that sway gently, stairs carved from bark that grows as you climb.

At the city's heart stands the Heart Tree, a world-tree so massive that twenty people holding hands couldn't circle it. The entire city radiates from this ancient oak.

Atmosphere

Ground Level: Welcoming to outsiders but clearly "for guests." Markets, inns, trading posts. Humans feel tolerated, not truly welcome.

Architecture here is more conventional wood and stone buildings.

Canopy Level: Exclusively elven. Centuries of tradition, slow speech, careful decisions. Time moves differently here. An hour feels like a day, a day like an hour. Priorities are measured in decades, not days.

Heart Tree: Sacred. Only elders and druids enter. The presence of something ancient and powerful is palpable. The tree is conscious everyone feels it.

THE HEART (Center)

- **Description:** The world-tree towers over everything. Its roots create natural chambers. Its trunk is carved with pre-

Sundering history. Sacred groves surround it.

- **Key Locations:**

- The World-Tree: Ancient beyond measure, supposedly dying (secret)
- Council Chamber: Inside the Heart Tree's roots, where elders meet
- Druidic Circle: Sacred grove where seasonal rituals occur
- The Living Library: Books and scrolls stored in growing wood shelves
- **Atmosphere:** Sacred, ancient, powerful. Even speaking loudly feels wrong.

The Canopy (Upper Levels, 100+ feet up)

- **Description:** Elegant homes shaped from living branches. Flowing organic architecture. Everything silver and green. Only accessible by magic or climbing (intentionally difficult for non-elves).

- **Key Locations:**

- Silverleaf Palace: Grown from a cluster of trees, the lord's residence
- The Star Chamber: Open-air platform where elves gather under stars
- Elder Homes: Ancient trees house the oldest families
- The Archive: Pre-Sundering texts, Starleaf family history (guarded)
- **Atmosphere:** Refined, exclusive, timeless. Elven culture at its purest.

The Market Ground (Ground Level)

- **Description:** More traditional architecture for human comfort. Stone buildings, paved streets (unusual for Silverpine). Trading posts, inns, stables.

- **Key Locations:**

- The Silver Stag Inn: Finest inn, serves both races
- Trader's Plaza: Open market where forest goods are sold
- The Customs House: Where Forest Guard checks imports (no iron, no fire)
- Human Quarter: Where non-elves rent temporary accommodations

- **Atmosphere:** Businesslike, slightly artificial. Both sides maintain polite facade.

The Groves (Surrounding Forest)

- **Description:** Sacred gardens throughout the city's territory. Meditation clearings, moonlight pools, ancient standing stones. Some areas forbidden to non-elves.

- **Key Locations:**

- The Singing Grove: Trees that hum with magical resonance
- Moon Pools: Reflect moonlight, used for divination
- The Fey Circle: Where fey courts gather (dangerous for mortals)
- Hunter's Path: Training grounds for Forest Guard rangers
- **Atmosphere:** Mystical, slightly dangerous. Old magic lingers here.

The Watch Posts (Border)

- **Description:** Ranger stations hidden in massive trees. Monitor forest borders, guard against threats. Camouflaged to be nearly invisible.

- **Key Locations:**

- Border Towers: Hollow trees serving as watchtowers
- Ranger Barracks: Where Forest Guard trains and rests
- The Warning Bells: Massive wooden bells to alert city of danger
- **Atmosphere:** Vigilant, militaristic (for elves). Taking human expansion seriously.
- Lord Elenion Silverleaf (487, elf): Ancient, wise, troubled by forest decline, secretly corresponds with Starweaver kin
- Lady Silvara Silverleaf (256, elf): Leads Forest Guard, distrusts humans, angry at Starweaver
- Lady Elara Silverleaf-Thandris (22, half-elf): Heir, torn between cultures, curious about eastern cousins
- Master Trader Gareth Woodwise (54, human): Manages human trade relations, respected by both sides

- Archdruid Thornbark (unknown age, possibly treant): Rarely seen, communicates through proxies
- Primary: Exclusive logging rights (carefully regulated), rare herbs, magical plants
- Secondary: Elven crafts (woodworking, poetry, star-reading), hunting guides
- Trade: Exports valuable wood, herbs, crafts. Imports metals (carefully), textiles, books
- Restrictions: No iron axes, no fire in forest, no unauthorized logging
- Forest Guard: 500+ elite rangers, druids, some fey allies
- Natural: Forest itself defends (trees move, paths change, intruders get lost)
- Magical: Fey pacts, druidic wards, living barriers
- Strategy: Guerrilla warfare, ambush, disappear into forest
- Last Resort: Wake the Heart Tree (but at what cost?)

Goldreach

Population: ~28,000 (50% human, 18% half-elf, 15% dwarf, 12% halfling, 5% other)

Region: The Goldcoast

Ruler: Lord Aldris III Goldshore (178, half-elf)

Goldreach rises in tiers from a magnificent natural harbor. The city climbs the coastal hills in organized levels docks at sea level, markets in the middle, wealthy estates on the heights. White limestone buildings with red tile roofs create a distinctly maritime aesthetic. The harbor bristles with masts from hundreds of ships.

The city gleams in sunlight whitewashed walls, golden domes, brass fixtures polished by sea air. By night, lighthouse beacons and harbor lanterns create a constellation of lights reflected in dark water. Everything smells of salt, fish, tar, and prosperity.

The famous Golden Harbor district earned its name from sunset reflections on the water the entire harbor appears to be liquid gold for

about an hour each evening. It's genuinely spectacular.

Atmosphere

Lower District (Docks): Rough, loud, vital. Sailors from everywhere. Dozens of languages. Fights in taverns. Hard work and harder drinking. Feel like anything could be smuggled, anyone could be hired, any story could be true.

Middle District: Mercantile hustle. Merchants negotiating loudly. Porters rushing. Money changing hands. Information traded. Fortunes made and lost. The real business of the city.

Upper District: Refined wealth. Quiet streets. Private guards. Sea views. The money that built this place. Banking houses that could buy small kingdoms.

The Heights: Where House Goldshore rules from their palace. Separate from the city below. Looking down on it all literally.

The Docks (Sea Level)

- **Description:** Organized chaos. Massive stone wharves accommodate everything from fishing boats to three-masted trade ships. Warehouses line every street. Taverns on every corner.
- **Key Locations:**
 - The Golden Harbor: Main docks, legendary for sunset beauty
 - Shipyard District: Where vessels are built and repaired
 - The Salted Mermaid: Most famous (or infamous) sailors' tavern
 - Fish Market: Predawn fish auctions, incredibly loud
 - Smuggler's Row: Officially doesn't exist; everyone knows where it is
 - Harbor Master's Office: Where ships are registered and taxes collected
 - The Drowned Sailor Memorial: Monument to those lost at sea
- **Atmosphere:** Rough, authentic, vital. This is where real work happens. Respectful of skill, indifferent to birth.

Merchant's Row (Second Tier)

- **Description:** Wide paved streets. Merchant houses display wealth carved facades, colored windows, iron-bound doors. Trading happens behind closed doors or in private chambers.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Exchange: Where commodity prices are set, fortunes gambled
- Guild Halls: Merchant guilds maintain impressive headquarters
- The Scales: Massive public scales where disputes about weight/value are settled
- Commodity Warehouses: Bonded warehouses storing valuable goods
- Insurance House: Where ship owners buy insurance (or learn they can't afford to)
- The Cartographer's Guild: Maps, charts, and navigational equipment
- **Atmosphere:** Businesslike, competitive, wealthy but working. Silk gloves hiding iron hands.

The Banking Quarter (Third Tier)

- **Description:** Imposing stone buildings with massive vaults. Discrete, secure, powerful. Guards everywhere but trying not to look like guards.
- **Key Locations:**
- Banking House of Goldshore: Original and largest bank, handles royal debt
- The Vault District: Underground secured vaults where wealth is stored
- Money Changers Street: Where currencies are exchanged (and information)
- Accountant's Row: Where merchant houses keep their ledgers
- The Gold Scale: Famous jeweler and appraiser, trusted by all houses
- **Atmosphere:** Quiet, secure, powerful. Whispers echo. Guards watch everything. This is where empires are built or destroyed.

The Heights (Highest Tier)

- **Description:** Noble estates with ocean views. Walled gardens. Private guards. The wealth generated below is spent here.

Architecture more personal family styles compete.

- **Key Locations:**
- Goldshore Palace: Sprawling complex, part fortress, part mansion
- Noble Villas: Each great merchant family maintains an estate
- The Vista: Public garden with legendary views (but guarded access)
- The Academy: Where merchant princes educate their children
- Private Docks: Where nobles keep personal yachts
- **Atmosphere:** Exclusive, luxurious, guarded. The city below exists to fund this lifestyle. The Fleet Yards (South Harbor)
- **Description:** Naval construction area. Massive dry docks. The sound of hammering and sawing. Ships in various stages of construction. Military precision.
- **Key Locations:**
- Naval Drydocks: Where ships are built and major repairs done
- Timber Yards: Seasoned wood stored for shipbuilding
- Rope Works: Where rope and sail are manufactured
- The Mast Forest: Dozens of masts stand ready for installation
- Naval Architects' Guild: Where ship designs are created and tested
- **Atmosphere:** Industrial, skilled, proud. These builders create the vessels that make Goldreach wealthy.

The Coin (Financial District)

- **Description:** Specialist financial services. Insurance, loans, investments. Where wealthy people's money makes more money while they sleep.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Insurance Exchange: Where maritime risk is calculated and sold
- Investment Houses: Where shares in ventures are bought and sold

- The Debt Court: Where defaulted loans are prosecuted
- Moneylender's Row: Both legitimate and questionable sources of capital
- **Atmosphere:** Calculating, precise, ruthless. Compassion is bad for business.
- Lord Aldris III Goldshore (178, half-elf): Brilliant merchant, ruthless negotiator, never married, multiple bastards fighting for inheritance
- Harbor Master Vex "Three-Sails" (62, human): Controls what enters/leaves harbor, knows everyone's secrets
- Banking Master Theros Coinwright (89, dwarf): Manages Goldshore bank, keeps royal debt ledgers
- Admiral Stormwind (51, human): Commands private navy, eighteen ships
- The Black Captain (unknown): Rumored pirate lord; possibly Goldshore agent
- Primary: Maritime trade (controls 60% of western shipping), banking, shipbuilding
- Secondary: Fish processing, sail making, naval supplies, insurance
- Trade: Major hub connecting all coastal cities; imports everything, exports everything
- Leverage: King owes massive debt (50,000+ gold), political power through finance
- Navy: Private fleet of 18 merchant-warships (not technically military but armed)
- Harbor Guard: 200 professional soldiers, control docks
- Warehouse Security: 100 guards protecting stored goods
- Bank Guards: 50 elite troops protecting vaults
- Spy Network: Size unknown, information is defense
- Natural: Harbor has hidden rocks and channels; locals know safe passage

Crossvale

Population: ~18,000 (70% human, 15% halfling, 10% dwarf, 5% other)

Region: The Heartlands

Ruler: Lord Gareth Heartwood (56, human)

Crossvale is a planned city you can tell immediately. Streets form a perfect grid. Five major roads enter from five directions, meeting at a central plaza. The city sits where three rivers converge, their waters powering forty massive watermills. Everything is practical, efficient, designed for commerce and defense. Architecture is sturdy timber and stone. No ornate decoration this is a working city. The walls show scars from civil war (1089-1092 CR), deliberately preserved as warning and memorial. Grain silos dominate the skyline. The massive market plaza can accommodate thousands.

The city smells of fresh bread, grain dust, and hard work. In harvest season, the streets are dusted with wheat chaff. The sound of grinding millstones is constant. This city feeds Thaldros.

Atmosphere

Practical, industrious, resilient. These people rebuilt after being besieged seven times.

They're proud of surviving, proud of feeding the kingdom, and tired of being fought over. They want to work, trade, and be left alone.

There's a surprising democratic spirit weekly open councils where any citizen can speak. It's chaotic but genuine. Lord Heartwood governs with consent, not force.

The Market (Central Plaza)

- **Description:** Massive open square where five roads meet. Permanent market stalls around perimeter. Temporary stalls fill the center daily. Capacity for thousands of people.
- **Key Locations:**
 - The Crossroads: Symbolic center where five roads meet, marked by ancient standing stone
 - Market Square: Dozens of permanent vendor stalls
 - The Grain Exchange: Where bulk grain prices are set

- The Herald's Stone: Where announcements are made
- Festival Grounds: Cleared for quarterly fairs (massive events)
- The Scales of Justice: Public courts held in the open
- **Atmosphere:** Bustling, loud, honest dealing. People drive hard bargains but keep their word. Reputation matters.

The Mill District (Along Rivers)

- **Description:** Forty watermills, each powered by the converging rivers. The grinding never stops. Wheat becomes flour that feeds the kingdom.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Master Mill: Largest mill, operated by Heartwood family
- Millwright's Guild: Where mill mechanics are trained
- The Sluice Gates: Control water flow to mills
- Flour Warehouses: Massive storage for finished flour
- The Miller's Rest: Tavern where mill workers gather
- **Atmosphere:** Constant grinding sound. Dusty air. Skilled workers take pride in their mills. Everything efficient.

The Trade Quarter (North Section)

- **Description:** Warehouses, guild halls, caravan yards. This is where goods wait before moving on. Storage and logistics.
- **Key Locations:**
- Caravan Yards: Where wagon trains form and depart
- Trade Guild Hall: Where merchant disputes are settled
- Bonded Warehouses: Secure storage for valuable goods
- The Weighmaster's House: Official weights and measures
- The Road Guard Barracks: Soldiers who escort caravans
- **Atmosphere:** Organized chaos. Goods constantly moving. Everyone knows time is money.

The Farm District (South Section)

- **Description:** Urban agriculture within city walls. Vegetable gardens, orchards, chicken coops. Emergency food supply.
- **Key Locations:**
- Community Gardens: Shared growing space for citizens
- Grain Silos: Massive storage towers, holds year's worth of food
- Seed Vaults: Protected storage of seed grain
- The Farmer's Market: Where city produce is sold
- Agricultural College: Where farming techniques are taught
- **Atmosphere:** Surprisingly rural within city walls. People care for plants between buildings. Chickens wander streets.

The Heights (West Hill)

- **Description:** Noble estates and wealthy merchant homes. Not as grand as other cities even the rich live simply here.
- **Key Locations:**
- Heartwood Manor: Simple but well-built, lord's residence
- The Council House: Where weekly open councils meet
- Grainson Estate: Remnant of founding family, now subordinate
- The Overlook: Point with view of entire city, popular spot
- **Atmosphere:** Comfortable but not ostentatious. Wealth shown through quality, not display.

Defensive Walls (Perimeter)

- **Description:** Rebuilt after civil war. Shows siege damage intentionally preserved. Strong but not beautiful.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Seven Scars: Wall sections showing damage from seven sieges
- Gate Towers: Five main gates where roads enter
- The War Memorial: Names of those who died defending city

- City Watch Headquarters: Main garrison for 500 guards
- The Rampart Walk: Citizens allowed to walk walls (builds unity)
- **Atmosphere:** Somber memorial, proud defiance. They remember. It won't happen again.
- Lord Gareth Heartwood (56, human): Practical farmer-king, lives simply, respected not feared, five children all trained in farming first
- Miller Master Thomas Millford (68, human): Descendant of founding family, runs the mills, bitter about Heartwood dominance (secret)
- Captain Sarah Ironshield (42, human): Commands City Watch, veteran of siege warfare
- Guildmaster Marcus Trader (51, human): Represents merchant interests, balance between Heartwood and independent traders
- The Lost Son (unknown): Gareth's eldest ran away 10 years ago, became adventurer, doesn't want to be found
- Primary: Grain production and processing (40% of Thaldros's food supply)
- Secondary: Milling, flour processing, bread production, trade hub
- Trade: Exports grain, flour, bread. Imports everything else.
- Power: Controls grain prices, economic leverage over kingdom, everyone needs food
- Walls: Rebuilt strong, designed to withstand siege
- Garrison: 500 City Watch, trained in siege defense
- Supplies: Grain silos hold year's worth of food
- Strategy: Can outlast any siege, rivers provide water
- Underground: Tunnel network from civil war (escape routes, smuggling now?)

Sundara

Population: ~18,000 (60% human, 20% dwarf, 10% tiefling, 10% other)

Region: The Sundaran Expanse

Ruler: Sultan Rashid Ashborne (41, human)

Sundara rises from the desert like a jeweled oasis. White adobe buildings with colorful tile mosaics reflect blinding sunlight. Domed roofs and minarets reach toward blue sky. Twelve massive palm trees (one for each oasis) tower over the city. Everything is organized around water the Great Oasis at the city's heart, canals bringing water to every district.

The city is a study in contrasts scorching heat and cool shade, barren desert and lush gardens, nomadic traditions and permanent architecture. Colorful silk awnings create artificial shade over streets. Glass windows (a local specialty) gleam like gems.

At night, the city cools and comes alive. Lanterns create warm glows. Music drifts from courtyards. The desert stars shine brilliantly overhead.

Atmosphere

Exotic, wealthy, tolerant (unusually so).

Multiple religions coexist peacefully (revolutionary for Thaldros). Nomadic traditions blend with city life. Families still live in clan structures despite permanent homes. Everyone is tied to one of the founding clans through marriage or adoption.

There's an opportunistic energy, this is a young city (founded 967 CR, 280 years old), still rising, still growing. Fortunes can be made here. The Sultan encourages this (he profits from everyone's success through taxes).

The Great Oasis (Center)

- **Description:** Natural spring that made the city possible. Crystal-clear water in a palm-ringed pool. Sacred to all clans. Public bathing areas separate from drinking water.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Oasis Heart: Main spring, 50 feet across, incredibly deep

- The Palm Grove: Twelve ancient palms representing the twelve subsidiary oases
- The Fountain Square: Decorative fountains displaying wealth (water as art!)
- The Washing Pools: Separate areas for ritual cleansing
- The Water Gardens: Lush gardens impossible without this water source
- **Atmosphere:** Sacred, life-giving, communal. All clans equal at the water. Ancient traditions maintained.

The Sultan's Quarter (North)

- **Description:** Palace complex and administrative buildings. Adobe and tile construction. Domed audience halls. Private courtyards with fountains.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Sultan's Palace: White adobe with blue tile domes, surprisingly not oppressive (Sultan wants to be liked)
- The Divan: Open-air audience hall where Sultan hears petitions
- The Treasury: Guarded vaults holding clan wealth
- The Hall of Clans: Where the three founding clans meet with Sultan
- Private Oasis: Sultan's personal water garden (controversial luxury)
- **Atmosphere:** Wealthy but not oppressive. Sultan projects strength and generosity (mostly genuine, partly calculated).

The Glass Bazaar (East)

- **Description:** Famous marketplace specializing in glass work. Sundaran glassblowers are renowned. Colored glass everywhere windows, bottles, art, jewelry.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Glass Quarter: Dozens of glassblowing workshops
- The Bazaar: Covered market, hundreds of stalls, incredibly colorful
- The Merchant Halls: Where clan traders conduct business
- The Caravanserai: Large inn complex for trade caravans

- The Spice Market: Section specializing in exotic spices and herbs
- **Atmosphere:** Colorful, loud, exotic. Merchants cry their wares in multiple languages. Haggling is art form.

The Temple District (West)

- **Description:** Multiple religions coexist here revolutionary for Thaldros. Each faith maintains temple or shrine.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Sun Temple: Largest, dedicated to desert sun god
- The Wanderer's Shrine: Nomadic gods
- The Merchant's Temple: Gods of commerce and travel
- The Forge Temple: Dwarven smithing gods
- The Demon Shrine: Yes, really tieflings maintain a shrine, others tolerate it
- The Interfaith Garden: Shared meditation space
- **Atmosphere:** Surprisingly harmonious. Sultan enforces tolerance (prosperity requires peace). Different faiths actually cooperate.

The Oasis District (South)

- **Description:** Residential area for common citizens. Clan compounds where extended families live together. Traditional nomadic organization in permanent buildings.
- **Key Locations:**
- Clan Compounds: Walled family complexes with central courtyards
- The Common Wells: Water distribution points
- The Market Square: Daily market for food and necessities
- The Weaver's Street: Where traditional textiles are made
- The Nomad's Rest: Tavern maintaining traditional hospitality (free food for travelers)
- **Atmosphere:** Communal, traditional, family-oriented. Nomadic values in city setting. Everyone knows everyone.

The Buried Quarter (Underground)

- **Description:** Extensive underground chambers and tunnels. Natural caves expanded. Used for storage, refuge from heat, and secrets.
- **Key Locations:**
 - The Cool Halls: Underground markets during midday heat
 - Storage Vaults: Where grain and goods are kept cool
 - The Hidden City: Pre-Sundering ruins beneath Sundara (secret!)
 - Emergency Wells: Deep wells tapping underground water
 - The Sultan's Secret: Whatever he discovered and sealed below
- **Atmosphere:** Cool, dark, mysterious. Temperature drops 30 degrees. Old secrets buried here.
- Sultan Rashid Ashborne (41, human): Third-generation noble, ambitious, charismatic, calculating, seven children from three wives, succession unclear
- Malik the Elder (78, human): Eldest of founding clan leaders, remembers when Sundara was tents
- Glassmaster Kiral Brightfire (112, dwarf): Master glassblower, created techniques that made Sundara famous
- High Priestess Zahara (45, human): Maintains religious tolerance through diplomatic skill
- The Eldest Son (unknown): Supposedly died in "accident" wasn't accident, possibly still alive
- Primary: Trans-desert trade control (monopoly on desert routes)
- Secondary: Glasswork (famous Sundaran glass exported everywhere), oasis farming
- Trade: Everything passes through here gateway between north and south
- Water Rights: Controls 12 major oases, charges for access (controversial but effective)
- Cavalry: 2,000 light cavalry (nomadic tradition maintained)

- City Guard: 500 guards trained in urban defense
- Natural: Desert itself invading army would die of thirst
- Water Control: Can deny water to besiegers
- Walls: Adobe walls reinforced with magic (heat-resistant)
- Alliances: Nomad clans loyal through marriage ties

Ashgate

Population: ~12,000 (55% human, 25% dwarf, 15% tiefling, 5% other)

Region: The Ashfall Barrens

Ruler: Warden Council (five members, rotating leadership)

Ashgate is built from black volcanic stone basalt blocks cut from old lava flows. Everything is dark: black walls, black streets, black buildings. The city sits at the edge of active volcanic region smoke rises from nearby peaks, the ground is warm underfoot, and the horizon glows red at night from distant lava flows.

Despite the darkness, the city has beauty. Obsidian facades gleam like glass. Hot springs feed public baths where steam rises. Fire opal decorations catch light brilliantly. The architecture is fortress-like thick walls, small windows, designed to withstand ash falls and heat.

The air smells of sulfur, hot stone, and minerals. Ash drifts down occasionally, coating everything in gray powder. Citizens sweep constantly. The climate is warm year-round locals find other regions uncomfortably cold.

Atmosphere

Frontier, hardy, slightly wild. These people chose to live in a volcanic region they're not average folk. There's a fatalistic acceptance: "The mountain might erupt, might not. Either way, we're here." Dragon attack (1156 CR) and subsequent occupation shaped the culture resilient, independent, slightly bitter about being abandoned by the kingdom.

Fire cults operate openly here (illegal most places). Tieflings are welcomed (their heritage makes others uncomfortable, not here). There's an "edge of civilization" feeling rules are guidelines, authorities enforce what they can.

The Edge (City Perimeter)

- **Description:** Defensive walls of black basalt. Watchtowers scan volcanic wastes. Gates are massive, designed to seal quickly if ash storm approaches.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Black Gates: Main entrance, reinforced obsidian doors
- Watch Towers: Manned 24/7, watching for volcanic activity
- The Ashwall: Northern wall where ash accumulates, constantly swept
- Emergency Shelters: Reinforced buildings for ash storm refuge
- The Dragon Scar: Section of wall melted by dragon fire (1156 CR), left as memorial
- **Atmosphere:** Vigilant, defensive, ready to seal city at any moment.

The Hot Springs District (Central)

- **Description:** Natural hot springs channeled into public baths. Steam rises constantly. This is the city's luxury free hot water, warm baths year-round.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Grand Baths: Public bathing complex, separated by gender
- The Healing Springs: Mineral water said to cure ailments
- The Steam Rooms: Where locals socialize and conduct business
- The Hot Quarter: Residential area using spring heat for warmth
- The Washing Pools: Where clothes are laundered in hot water
- **Atmosphere:** Steamy, relaxed, social. Citizens naked and equal in the baths. Ancient traditions maintained.

The Obsidian Quarter (East)

- **Description:** Where volcanic glass is mined, carved, and traded. Ashgate's primary export obsidian blades, mirrors, jewelry, art.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Glass Fields: Old lava flows where obsidian is harvested
- Master Carver's Guild: Where obsidian working is taught
- The Mirror Market: Obsidian mirrors sold here (supernaturally clear)
- The Blade Works: Obsidian weapons (razor-sharp but fragile)
- The Art Gallery: Obsidian sculptures (hauntingly beautiful)
- **Atmosphere:** Skilled, dangerous work. Obsidian cuts easily. Workers wear thick gloves. Pride in craft.

The Fire Quarter (South)

- **Description:** Where fire cults operate openly. Temples to fire elementals, primordials, and gods of flame. Legal here, banned most places.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Eternal Flame: Fire that has burned 200+ years, maintained by fire priests
- Temple of Imix: Fire elemental worship (controversial elsewhere)
- The Pyre: Where fire cultists conduct rituals
- Fire Elemental Bindings: Chambers where elementals are contained
- The Forge Temple: Legitimate worship of smith gods blends with fire cult
- **Atmosphere:** Hot, intense, slightly dangerous. Fire magic everywhere. Non-cultists nervous.

The Ash Quarter (North)

- **Description:** Residential and commercial area for common citizens. Buildings reinforced against ash fall. Streets regularly swept.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Ash Market: Daily market, goods covered to protect from ash
- The Swept Streets: Major thoroughfares cleaned daily

- The Grey Tavern: Most popular tavern, named for omnipresent ash
- Stonemason's District: Where basalt is cut and shaped
- The Warden's Hall: Where the ruling council meets
- **Atmosphere:** Working-class, practical, ash-dusted. Everyone accepts the environment.

The Deeps (Underground)

- **Description:** Cool underground chambers carved from lava tubes. Used for food storage (heat spoils food quickly above), refuge during eruptions.
- **Key Locations:**
 - The Cool Vaults: Where food is stored
 - Emergency Shelters: Can house entire population during eruption
 - The Lava Tubes: Natural caves, some still warm
 - The Deep Market: Underground market during hot seasons
 - The Hidden Chambers: What lies deeper? Something from dragon's time?
- **Atmosphere:** Cool relief from surface heat. Dark, quiet, mysterious.
- Warden Commander Thaddeus Blackstone (58, human): Current leader of rotating council, pragmatic, experienced with dragon crisis
- Fire Priestess Ember (unknown age, tiefling): Leads largest fire cult, technically illegal authority but tolerated
- Master Carver Obsidian Hand (140, dwarf): Lost hand to obsidian cut, wears obsidian prosthetic, master of craft
- Lady Sera Emberthorn (89, human): Last of fallen noble house, destitute, obsessed with reclaiming glory, knows where dragon's hoard is
- The Red Shadow (unknown): Mysterious figure who appears during volcanic activity, helpful or sinister?
- Primary: Obsidian mining and carving (quality obsidian exported across Tirvandor)

- Secondary: Volcanic glass, fire opal, sulfur, minerals
- Trade: Exports obsidian goods, imports food (harsh land doesn't grow much)
- Tourism: Hot springs attract visitors (dangerous but unique)
- Natural: Volcanic terrain invaders must cross lava fields
- Ashwardens: 300 trained guards, specialize in fighting in heat/ash
- Fire Magic: Fire cultists can be drafted for defense
- Underground: Population can retreat to deeps during eruption
- Dragon Fear: Reputation for dragon presence (1156-1201 CR) still lingers
- Obsidian Walls: Black basalt walls difficult to breach

Ironhold

Population: ~8,000 (45% dwarf, 45% human, 10% other)

Region: The Frostmarches

Military Governor: General Borin Stonefist (195, dwarf)

Ironhold is first and foremost a fortress. Built into the Northern Pass, it guards the only viable route through the Frostmarches. Massive walls span the narrow valley. Watchtowers climb the mountainsides. Everything is gray stone, iron reinforcement, and military precision.

The city is vertically built up the valley walls on terraces. Each level is independently defensible. The temperature is cold year-round; snow covers everything from autumn to late spring. Architecture is blocky, windowless on the outer faces, designed to absorb siege.

This isn't really a city it's a permanent military camp that civilians live in. The garrison outnumbers civilians. Everything serves the mission: hold the pass, stop invasions from the north, maintain trade route security.

Atmosphere

Militaristic, cold (literally and figuratively), disciplined. Soldiers outnumber everyone else. Daily life follows military schedules bugle calls mark time, patrols are constant, gates open/close on schedule. Civilians here either support the garrison (smiths, bakers, etc.) or are passing through.

There's pride in duty. These soldiers chose the hardest post. They face frost giants, winter wolves, and worse. Ironhold has never fallen. Never.

Key Locations

The Walls

- Span valley, 40 feet thick at base
- Inner and outer walls with killing ground between
- Heated guard towers (magical warmth)
- Iron-reinforced gates can withstand giant hammers
- Mechanism to collapse tunnel under gate if overrun

The Garrison

- Barracks for 3,000 soldiers
- Training yards (yes, they drill in snow)
- Officers quarters
- War room (strategic planning)
- Smithies for weapon/armor repair
- Medical halls (trauma specialists)

The Pass Itself

- Ironhold controls only route through mountains
- Narrow valley, easy to defend
- Watchtowers on both valley walls
- Hidden archer positions
- Multiple fallback positions if outer wall breached

THE TRADE QUARTER

- Where civilians live and work
- Inns for travelers waiting for safe passage
- Supplies for caravans
- Stables (large, to accommodate trade animals)

- The Frozen Mug tavern (legendary for keeping drinks cold naturally)

The Forges

- Always burning (warmth critical)
- Repair weapons and armor
- Make specialty cold-weather equipment
- Dwarven and human smiths work together

The Shrine

- Military chapel to war gods
- Memorials to fallen soldiers
- Spartan but sincere
- Officers read names of dead monthly
- General Borin Stonefist (195, dwarf): Commands garrison, veteran of countless giant raids, scarred, respected
- Captain Elena Frostborn (38, human): Commands north watchtowers, never been warm, volunteered for duty
- Quartermaster Thordak (112, dwarf): Manages supplies, genius at logistics, knows exactly how many arrows remain
- The Ice Witch (unknown): Hermit living in mountains, sometimes helps garrison, sometimes doesn't, motives unclear

Everything. This is designed for defense:

- Multiple wall layers
- Natural choke point (narrow pass)
- Elevation advantage (shoot down at attackers)
- Stored supplies for year-long siege
- Underground escape tunnels (classified)
- Magical wards against cold, scrying, teleportation
- Rapid response to frost giant raids
- Signal beacons to call for reinforcements
- Primary: Military garrison (funded by royal treasury)
- Secondary: Trade security (merchants pay tolls)
- Minimal local economy (too cold for agriculture)
- Everything imported except iron (local mine)

Aethermere (Capital)

Population: ~38,000 (65% elf, 20% half-elf, 10% human, 5% other)

Region: The Emerald Depths

Ruler: Queen Silvana Aethermere (432, elf) and Chosen Heir Theron Aethermere (89, half-elf)

Aethermere doesn't just sit in the forest it IS the forest. The city grows organically from the world-trees themselves. Massive trees hundreds of feet tall form the framework.

Buildings are shaped from living wood, grown rather than built. Bridges of woven vines connect platforms at multiple canopy levels. Roots the size of houses create natural archways and chambers.

The entire city pulses with life. Leaves rustle constantly. Luminous fungi provide soft light at night. Flowers bloom year-round. Water flows down bark channels, creating musical streams. The air is thick with growth green scents, flower perfume, earth and life.

From outside, you might not recognize it as a city. It looks like particularly dense, beautiful forest. Only when you're inside do you realize the trees are organized, the paths deliberate, the structures intentional.

Atmosphere

Ground Level: Ancient, primal, slightly dangerous. Massive roots create twilight canyons. This is where druids conduct rituals, where nature's power is strongest. Non-elves feel watched by the forest itself.

Canopy (Middle Levels): The actual city. Platforms, buildings, walkways all hundreds of feet up. Sunlight filters through leaves. Wind sways everything gently. Elves move gracefully. Others feel precarious.

Upper Canopy: Where the nobility and queen reside. Closer to stars. Quieter. More exclusive. View of endless forest in all directions.

The Heart Tree: At city center, the greatest world-tree. So massive it dwarfs others. Hollow interior holds the throne room. This tree has consciousness everyone feels it.

The Throne Grove (Heart Tree Interior)

- **Description:** Inside the greatest world-tree. Natural cathedral of living wood. Throne room is chamber within the tree, shaped by growth over centuries.

- **Key Locations:**

- The Living Throne: Grown from the tree itself, grants queen connection to forest
- The Council Chamber: Where elders advise queen
- The Royal Apartments: Queen's residence within tree branches
- The Choosing Chamber: Where world-trees select heir (ritual space)
- The Root Vaults: Deep beneath, where ancient artifacts stored
- **Atmosphere:** Sacred, powerful, ancient beyond measure. The tree is aware. Everyone feels judged.

The Emerald Court (Upper Canopy)

- **Description:** Noble houses maintain residences in upper branches. Each great tree belongs to an ancient family.

- **Key Locations:**

- House Starweaver Residence: Towers reaching toward stars, astronomical instruments
- The Garden Platforms: Floating gardens maintained by noble houses
- The Council Grove: Open-air platform where nobles meet
- The Star Walk: Highest bridges, walking among stars
- Noble Groves: Each house has sacred grove
- **Atmosphere:** Exclusive, ancient bloodlines, slow and deliberate. Centuries of tradition.

The Living City (Middle Canopy)

- **Description:** Where most citizens live and work. Woven platforms, shaped wood buildings, vine bridges connecting everything.

- **Key Locations:**

- The Market Platforms: Multiple levels of trading areas

- The Artisan Grove: Where elven crafts are made
- Residential Clusters: Family compounds grown from living wood
- The Song Halls: Where music and poetry are performed
- The Herbalist District: Where medicinal plants are grown and prepared
- The Guest Trees: Where non-elves are housed (separate, symbolic)
- **Atmosphere:** Bustling (for elves still slower than human cities), creative, community-focused.

The Sacred Groves (Ground Level)

- **Description:** Forest floor between massive roots. Druidic ritual spaces, meditation clearings, sacred springs.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Druid Circle: Where nature priests conduct ceremonies
- The Forest Heart: Nexus of natural magic
- The Moon Pools: Reflect moonlight, used for divination
- The Ancestor Grove: Where ancient elves are buried (bodies return to forest)
- The Wild Paths: Trails only druids know, connecting to deep forest
- The Speaking Stones: Ancient menhirs that whisper prophecies
- **Atmosphere:** Primal, powerful, slightly dangerous. Nature's power uncontrolled here.

The Roots (Underground)

- **Description:** Massive root systems create underground chambers. Cool, dark, ancient.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Royal Vaults: Where pre-Sundering artifacts stored
- The Deep Springs: Underground water sources
- The Archive Roots: Records carved into living wood
- The Sealed Chamber: Something imprisoned here? Sealed by ancient magic

- Emergency Shelters: Population can retreat to roots if threatened
- **Atmosphere:** Ancient, mysterious, secure. Oldest secrets buried here.

The Greenways (Forest Paths)

- **Description:** Network of forest paths radiating from city into surrounding woods. Maintained by rangers.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Ranger Outposts: Hidden stations throughout forest
- The Forest Gates: Marked entrances to city territory
- The Trail Shrines: Small temples along paths
- The Border Groves: Where foreign delegations are met
- **Atmosphere:** Vigilant, protective. The forest watches. Rangers see everything.
- Queen Silvana Aethermere (432, elf): Ancient, wise, deeply connected to forest, troubled by dying world-trees
- Chosen Heir Theron Aethermere (89, half-elf): Controversial choice (half-elf, not blood relation), named after western prince (suspicious?)
- Archdruid Oakensoul (age unknown, possibly treant): Rarely seen in humanoid form, leads druidic circles
- Lord Elenaris Starweaver (589, elf): Elder noble, advisor to queen, astronomer and diviner
- Captain Leaf-blade (234, elf): Commands Forest Guard, elite rangers
- The Green Lady (unknown): Spirit or fey who appears during crises, protector or threat?
- Primary: Connection to land itself (not traditional economy)
- Secondary: Elven crafts (woodwork, poetry, star-reading), rare herbs, druidic services
- Trade: Minimal elves don't value gold like others, trade in favors and knowledge
- Symbolic: Queen doesn't rule through wealth but through forest's blessing

- The Forest: Primary defense paths change, intruders get lost, trees physically block
- Forest Guard: 1,000+ elite rangers, druids, some tree ents
- Natural Barriers: Thick jungle, difficult terrain, no roads for invaders
- Magic: Druidic wards, tree magic, connection to fey realm
- The Trees Fight: In crisis, world-trees themselves defend city
- Intelligence: Rangers monitor all approaches, nothing enters unobserved

Starfall

Population: ~6,500 (90% elf, 8% half-elf, 2% other)

Region: The Starwood

Ruler: Archmagister Elaris Starweaver (612, elf)
Starfall is a city of spires reaching toward the heavens. Unlike Aethermere's organic growth, Starfall is deliberately constructed elegant silver towers that gleam in starlight. The architecture is mathematical, geometric, based on celestial calculations. Everything aligns with stars, planets, cosmic forces.

The Grand Observatory dominates a massive crystal dome where the largest telescope in the world tracks the heavens. Smaller observatories dot the city. Telescopes point skyward from every tall building. At night, the city glows softly with starlight reflected from countless crystals.

The city sits on a plateau with unobstructed view of sky in all directions. Trees have been carefully cleared (controversial with druids). Everything serves astronomical observation and astral magic.

Atmosphere

Intellectual, scholarly, isolated (deliberately). This is city of scholars who care more about stars than daily life. Conversations are slow, measured, often involve complex magical theory. Time feels different measured in cosmic cycles, not days.

There's arrogance here. They believe knowledge is true power, consider themselves superior to "merely political" houses. They predicted the Sundering (supposedly) but didn't warn anyone (why?). They know secrets but share selectively.

Non-scholars feel unwelcome. This is not a city for common folk.

The Grand Observatory (City Center)

- **Description:** Massive crystal dome housing world's largest telescope. Can see individual stars in distant galaxies. Magical enhancements boost range.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Crystal Dome: Telescope chamber, crystal architecture
- The Calculation Chamber: Where observations are recorded and interpreted
- The Orrery Hall: Magical model of cosmos, constantly updating
- The Star Charts Library: Maps of heavens spanning millennia
- The Viewing Platforms: Where mages study specific celestial phenomena
- **Atmosphere:** Focused, quiet (noise interferes), intellectual. Every observation matters.

The Celestial Archives (East Tower)

- **Description:** Library containing pre-Sundering texts, prophecies, forbidden knowledge.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Forbidden Wing: Texts too dangerous for general access
- The Prophecy Vault: Predictions recorded but sealed
- The Starleaf Records: Original family documents from before Sundering
- The Study Chambers: Where scholars research in isolation
- The Scripting Hall: Where new observations are recorded

- **Atmosphere:** Silent, sacred (to knowledge), secured. Some texts physically dangerous to read.

The Tower District (Surrounding)

- **Description:** Silver spires housing scholars, mages, researchers. Each tower has observatory on top.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Seven Spires: Towers dedicated to seven schools of magic
- The Divination Tower: Where future is scried
- The Starweaver Residence: Archmagister's tower, tallest in city
- The Apprentice Towers: Where students live and study
- The Crystal Gardens: Rare crystals grown for magical focus
- **Atmosphere:** Quiet, contemplative, intellectually competitive. Status based on knowledge.

The Market Circle (Ground Level)

- **Description:** Small market for necessities. Most scholars ignore it. Servants and visitors shop here.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Supply Market: Food, clothing, basic needs
- The Scribe's Shop: Writing materials, astronomical instruments
- The Guest House: Where non-scholars stay (simple, functional)
- The Telescope Makers: Craftsmen who build instruments
- **Atmosphere:** Practical, ignored by scholars, necessary but beneath notice.
- Archmagister Elaris Starweaver (612, elf): Master of astral magic, more interested in stars than politics, dismisses western branch as "fallen from grace"
- Lumina Starweaver (156, elf): Heir, politically engaged (radical idea), believes knowledge should be shared, secretly curious about western cousins

- Master Diviner Astralion (445, elf): Sees futures but speaks in riddles
- Librarian Codex (possibly construct?): Guards Forbidden Wing, knows where everything is stored
- The Falling Star (unknown): Mysterious scholar who appears during astronomical events, identity hidden
- Primary: Knowledge accumulation (not traditional economy)
- Secondary: Training wizards (most Aehorian wizards studied here), astrological predictions (for fee)
- Trade: Sell predictions, astronomical charts, magical training. Buy food, materials.
- Power: Information is currency. They know things others don't.
- Magic: Primary defense wards, illusions, teleportation, divination
- Intelligence: They see threats coming (literally)
- Isolation: Remote location, difficult to approach unnoticed
- Star Magic: Can call on cosmic forces (devastating but rarely used)
- Warning: They know when danger approaches always prepared

Crystalbrook

Population: ~15,000 (55% elf, 30% human, 15% other)

Region: The Crystavale

Ruler: Lady Aria Crystalborn (234, half-elf)

Crystalbrook is built around the crystal-clear waters of the Crystavale lakes. The architecture emphasizes glass and crystal buildings with crystal windows, glass mosaics, water features everywhere. Canals flow through the city. Fountains sparkle in squares. Everything designed to honor and display water.

The city is beautiful in sunlight light refracts through crystals creating rainbows, water reflects buildings, glass gleams. At night, magical lights beneath water create ethereal

glows. The sound of flowing water is constant musical, soothing.

The lake itself is unnaturally clear you can see 100 feet down. Fish swim in crystal waters.

Water plants wave in currents. The Crystalborn's water-speaking magic maintains the purity.

Atmosphere

Peaceful, mystical, slightly alien. The Crystalborn have evolved beyond normal merchant concerns they're water-speakers now, mystics who communicate with water itself. Their wealth is in magic, not gold.

There's otherworldly quality. Water-speakers sometimes speak to the lake instead of people. They can sense water sources miles away. They navigate by "listening" to currents. Their magic is beautiful but strange.

Outsiders feel both welcomed (Crystalborn are hospitable) and disconnected (they're having conversations with water you can't hear).

The Lake Heart (Central Lake)

- **Description:** The crystal-clear lake, unnaturally pure. City built around and partially over it.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Water Temple: Built on lake surface, held by magic
- The Diving Platforms: Where water-speakers meditate underwater
- The Crystal Depths: Underwater chambers (Crystalborn can breathe water)
- The Speaking Stone: Ancient rock in lake center, amplifies water-speaking
- The Fish Gardens: Underwater gardens tended by water-speakers
- **Atmosphere:** Serene, mystical, otherworldly. Water itself seems conscious.

The Glass Quarter (North Shore)

- **Description:** Where glass and crystal work happens. Artisans shape crystal and glass into art, windows, containers.
- **Key Locations:**

- The Crystal Forges: Where glass is shaped (water-cooled for clarity)
- The Glass Galleries: Crystal art displayed and sold
- The Lens Makers: Precision glass for telescopes, spectacles
- The Window Works: Large glass panes for buildings
- The Mirror Hall: Crystal mirrors of perfect clarity
- **Atmosphere:** Artistic, skilled, proud of craft. Glass-making elevated to art form.

The Waterways (Canal District)

- **Description:** Network of canals flowing through city. Boats move goods and people.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Canal Market: Floating market on boats
- The Lock System: Magical locks raise/lower water levels
- The Boatwrights: Where boats are built
- The Bridge Plaza: Where major bridges cross
- The Harbor: Where lake meets river
- **Atmosphere:** Flowing, musical (water sounds), efficient. Everyone uses water transport.

The Merchant District (East)

- **Description:** Traditional commerce area. Crystalborn trade here but don't prioritize it like they once did.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Trading Houses: Where Crystalborn commerce is managed
- The Banking Hall: Original from Deepwater era
- The Salvage Company: Still sponsors diving expeditions
- The Guest Quarter: Where non water-speakers stay
- **Atmosphere:** Less important than it once was. Crystalborn focus on magic now, commerce secondary.

The Underwater City (Beneath Lake)

- **Description:** Crystalborn discovered they can breathe water. Built chambers beneath lake surface.
 - **Key Locations:**
 - The Sunken Halls: Underwater residences for water-speakers
 - The Breathing Chambers: Where magic is practiced
 - The Deep Vault: Treasure stored in underwater cave
 - The Coral Gardens: Freshwater coral grown here
 - The Listening Deep: Where water-speakers meditate to "hear" distant waters
 - **Atmosphere:** Silent, blue-green light filtered through water, peaceful. Only water-speakers access.
 - Lady Aria Crystalborn (234, half-elf): Water-speaker, equally obsessed with sunken vaults as Goldshore rival, planning salvage operation
 - Water-Speaker Deepsong (unknown age): Most powerful water mage, possibly part water elemental
 - Salvage Master Torren (67, human): Manages diving operations, knows sea floor well
 - Ambassador Clearwater (89, elf): Handles foreign relations (since Crystalborn sometimes forget)
 - The Pearl Diver (unknown): Mysterious figure who brings treasures from depths
 - Primary: Water-speaking magic (irrigation, water finding, purification)
 - Secondary: Crystal and glass work, salvage operations, trade
 - Trade: Sell pure water, crystal goods, magical services. Buy food, land goods.
 - Shift: Moving from commerce to mysticism concerning for traditional economy
 - Water Magic: Primary defense control water itself
 - Water Elementals: Can summon/bind water elementals
 - Flooded Defenses: Can flood areas to stop invaders
 - Lake Itself: Attackers can't cross without Crystalborn permission
 - Intelligence: Water-speakers sense anyone approaching through water
 - Drowning: Last resort flood entire city, Crystalborn breathe water, invaders don't
- Marshaven**
- Population: ~10,000 (40% human, 35% lizardfolk, 15% elf, 10% other)
- Region: Thornmire Marches
- Ruler: Council of Speakers (three representatives: human, lizardfolk, elf)
- Marshaven exists in seeming defiance of nature a city built in a swamp. Buildings on stilts rise above murky water. Wooden walkways connect everything. The architecture is vertical by necessity nothing can rest on soggy ground. Everything is weathered, stained by swamp water, covered in moss. But it's well-maintained residents constantly repair, replace, rebuild. The city smells of wet earth, decay, and growth simultaneously. The sound of frogs and insects is constant. By night, bioluminescent swamp life creates eerie glows.
- The city looks temporary but has stood 400 years. It's adapted, learned to thrive where others would fail. There's pride in that.
- Atmosphere**
- Resilient, adaptive, diverse. This city welcomes those who don't fit elsewhere lizardfolk, ex-criminals, refugees, odd folk. If you can survive the swamp, you can live here. Merit matters, not background.
- There's pragmatic equality humans, lizardfolk, and elves share power because they must. Swamp doesn't care about race. Survival requires cooperation.
- It feels frontier-ish, dangerous, free. Laws are simpler here. Life is harder but more honest.
- The Stilt City (Main Settlement)

- **Description:** Buildings on wooden stilts above water. Walkways connect everything. Boats used for transport.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Council Platform: Where three speakers meet
- The Market Docks: Floating market on boats
- The Stilt Houses: Residential buildings, each with boat dock
- The Rope Walks: Major walkways between districts
- The Net Quarter: Where fishing nets are made and hung
- **Atmosphere:** Constantly swaying, always damp, surprisingly stable. Community is tight.

The Lizardfolk Quarter (Southeast)

- **Description:** Lizardfolk prefer partially submerged structures. Buildings half in water.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Sun Rocks: Where lizardfolk bask
- The Egg Pools: Warm pools for egg-laying
- The Scale Market: Lizardfolk goods and services
- The Tribal Hall: Where lizardfolk clans meet
- The Hunter's Lodge: Where swamp guides are hired
- **Atmosphere:** Warmer (lizardfolk maintain temperature), more submerged, welcoming to reptilian folk.

THE DRY QUARTER (West Hill)

- **Description:** Only area on actual solid ground. More expensive, coveted.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Dry Market: Where goods are stored safe from water
- The Wealthy Homes: Built on rare solid ground
- The Healer's House: Medicine needs dry storage
- The Library: Books must stay dry
- **Atmosphere:** Precious solid ground. More expensive. Status symbol.

The Swamp Itself (Surrounding)

- **Description:** The Thornmire Marches dangerous, deadly, resource-rich.
- **Key Locations:**
- The Reed Fields: Where marsh reeds harvested
- The Herb Bogs: Valuable medicinal plants grow here
- The Hunter's Paths: Only natives know safe routes
- The Drowned Forest: Haunted section (creatures or ghosts)
- The Alchemy Pools: Where alchemical ingredients grow
- **Atmosphere:** Dangerous, resource-rich, beautiful in alien way. Respect it or die.
- Speaker Marcus Marshborn (52, human): Human representative, born in Marshaven, understands swamp
- Speaker Ss'rath (34, lizardfolk): Lizardfolk leader, shaman, bridge between cultures
- Speaker Silvaleaf (267, elf): Elf druid, maintains balance with swamp
- Smuggler Queen Mara (42, human): Runs black market (unofficially), everyone knows
- The Bog Witch (unknown): Hermit living deep in swamp, sells potions, knowledge
- Primary: Reed harvesting, medicinal herbs, swamp guides
- Secondary: Fishing, alchemy ingredients, smuggling (unofficially)
- Trade: Exports marsh reeds, rare herbs, alchemical components. Imports everything else.
- Black Market: Significant swamp makes perfect smuggling location
- The Swamp: Primary defense invaders get lost, sick, eaten
- Local Knowledge: Only residents know safe paths
- Scouts: Lizardfolk monitors from water
- Militia: 300 combined forces (diverse)
- Guerrilla: Disappear into swamp, harass invaders

- Swamp Creatures: Can be directed toward threats

Wildgrove

Population: ~12,000 (50% elf, 30% human, 15% gnome, 5% other)

Region: The Wildlands (Deep Jungle)

Ruler: Grove Council (five druids, rotating leadership)

Wildgrove embraces the jungle completely. Buildings are platforms high in trees. Rope bridges connect everything. Thick vines form living walls. The architecture works WITH nature rather than against it.

Everything is green. Constant rain keeps everything wet. Flowers bloom year-round. Insects and birds are everywhere. The jungle's noise is deafening howler monkeys, parrots, rain, wind in leaves.

You can barely see the city from outside it's camouflaged, intentional. This keeps it safe from monsters and others who shouldn't find it.

Atmosphere

Wild, free, slightly dangerous. This isn't refined elven culture it's frontier jungle survival. People here chose to live in deep jungle. They're hardy, independent, suspicious of outsiders.

There's primal magic here. Druids are in charge, not nobles. Nature's law applies. Strength matters, wisdom matters, connection to land matters. Civilization's rules are secondary.

Key Locations

The Grove Heart

- Ancient tree at center, older than city
- Where druids meet and conduct rituals
- Spirits visibly manifest here
- Outsiders feel watched by unseen presence

The Canopy City

- Platforms 200+ feet up
- Safe from ground predators
- Rain catchment systems
- View of endless jungle

The Beast Pens

- Where jungle animals are tended
- Rangers raise exotic creatures
- Can buy trained jungle mounts
- Some questionable "pets"

The Ground Market

- Only area outsiders safely visit
- Jungle goods traded
- Guides hired here
- Warning: don't stray off path

The Wild Paths

- Trails into deep jungle
- Only rangers know safe routes
- Ruins scattered throughout
- Monsters, treasures, danger
- Archdruid Thornmane (unknown age): Leads grove council, possibly half-beast
- Ranger Captain Jaguar-stride (45, human): Born in jungle, knows every path
- Beast Master Gnawfang (87, gnome): Trains impossible animals
- The Jungle Spirit (unknown): Entity druids commune with
- Primary: Jungle resources (rare woods, exotic animals, unique plants)
- Secondary: Guides, exotic goods, nature magic
- Trade: Exports rare jungle materials, imports metal goods, textiles
- The Jungle: Primary defense jungle kills intruders
- Rangers: Elite scouts, invisible in jungle
- Beasts: Can release trained predators
- Druids: Nature magic, wild shape
- Hidden: Most don't know city location

Port Myrthen

Population: ~25,000 (40% human, 20% elf, 15% dwarf, 10% halfling, 15% other)

Region: Myrthen Archipelago (Neutral Territory)

Government: Neutral Council (representatives from both continents)

Port Myrthen is unique the only major settlement in the island chain between

continents. It's neutral territory, belonging to neither Thaldros nor Aethoria. The architecture is deliberately mixed eastern and western styles blend, creating unique aesthetic.

The harbor is massive, accommodating ships from both continents simultaneously. Docks are divided: western berths on one side, eastern on other, neutral in middle. Everything designed to avoid conflict.

The city rises in tiers from sea level. Stone buildings painted white reflect sunlight. Red tile roofs are universal. Gardens soften stone. It looks peaceful, prosperous, carefully maintained.

Atmosphere

Neutral, cosmopolitan, expensive. This is where East and West meet. Treaties are signed here.

Trade happens here. Spies operate here.

Everything costs more neutrality isn't cheap.

There's constant tension beneath polite surface. Western and eastern factions watch each other. Merchants compete ruthlessly. Politics are complex offending either continent could end neutrality.

Everyone is from somewhere else. No one is "from" Port Myrthen originally (except those born here recently). It's a city of immigrants, traders, diplomats, and people escaping their homelands.

The Neutral Harbor

- Central docks, mixed use
- Harbor Master maintains strict neutrality
- Both continental flags fly
- Customs strictly enforced
- Where ships from everywhere dock

The Western Quarter

- Thaldros merchants and residents
- Goldshore banking house
- Western goods available
- Familiar architecture for Thaldros folk
- Flies Thaldros flags

The Eastern Quarter

- Aethoria merchants and residents

- Crystalborn trading post
- Eastern goods available
- Elven architecture dominant
- Flies Aethoria flags

The Treaty District

- Where continental representatives meet
- The Accord Hall (diplomatic chamber)
- Neutral ground for negotiations
- Guards from both continents
- No weapons allowed

The Market

- Goods from both continents
- Prices higher than elsewhere (import costs)
- Exotic goods from everywhere
- Black market operates here too
- Information traded freely

The Spice Islands

- Residential areas
- Mixed architecture
- Where permanent residents live
- Growing distinct "Port Myrthen" culture
- Children born here consider themselves neutral
- Harbor Master Victoria Seastone (89, dwarf): Enforces neutrality ruthlessly
- Ambassador Theron Westmarch (56, human): Thaldros representative
- Ambassador Elindra Starborn (298, elf): Aethoria representative
- Master Spy "The Gull" (unknown): Everyone knows spies operate this one most famous
- Merchant Prince Goldweaver (134, half-elf): Wealthiest resident, from neither continent originally
- Primary: Trade hub (East-West commerce)
- Secondary: Banking (neutral ground), diplomacy (treaty site), information (spy central)
- Trade: Everything passes through here
- Power: Neutrality itself is valuable both continents need this place
- Neutrality: Primary defense attacking threatens trade

- Both Continents Protect: Either continent would defend it
- Mercenary Fleet: 20 ships, not aligned with either side
- The Treaty: Attacking Port Myrthen violates centuries-old accords
- Economic: Destroying it harms everyone economically

Selected Towns

Major Towns (Full Descriptions)

Deepforge (Thaldros)

Population: ~3,500 (75% dwarf, 20% human, 5% other)

Region: Ironspine Holds

Ruler: Thane Borin Ironmark

Description

Deepforge lives up to its name the town descends deep into the mountain. Only the entrance hall and market are on the surface. Everything else is underground, built into a natural volcanic chamber where lava once flowed.

The town uses geothermal heat for forges. Magma flows in sealed channels beneath the smithies, providing endless heat. The air shimmers with heat. The sound of hammers on anvils echoes through stone chambers.

This is a working town every adult is involved in metalwork somehow. Children learn smithing before reading. The quality of work here rivals Kaer Thandros. Pride is immense.

Key Locations:

- The Lava Forges: Where volcanic heat powers smithies
- The Deep Market: Underground trading hall for metal goods
- The Sealed Chamber: Recently broken into something ancient now sealed by order
- The Guild Hall: Where master smiths meet
- The Quenching Pools: Sacred springs for cooling blades

Notable NPCs:

- Thane Borin Ironmark: Controls town, recently very secretive
- Master Smith Thunderhammer: Best smith, suspicious of thane's secrecy
- The Deep Delver: Miner who broke into sealed chamber, won't talk about it

Economy: Metal crafting (weapons, armor, tools), mining

Atmosphere: Hot, loud, industrious. Pride in craft. Recent tension about sealed chamber.

Riverdale (Thaldros)

Population: ~4,200 (80% human, 10% halfling, 10% other)

Region: The Heartlands

Government: Burgher council

Description

Riverdale sits where three rivers meet, controlling water access for the entire region. The town is built on both banks and islands in the middle. Bridges connect everything. Water wheels line the rivers, grinding grain and powering mills.

Everything revolves around the rivers fishing, transport, water rights, mill operation. The town supplies flour to dozens of surrounding settlements. The sound of flowing water and grinding stones is constant.

Recently flooding has threatened crops. Some suspect sabotage rival settlements jealous of Riverdale's water control.

Key Locations:

- The Three Bridges: Main river crossings, strategic control points
- The Water Mills: Dozens of mills along riverbanks
- The Fish Market: Fresh river fish sold daily
- The Lock System: Controls water flow (and who gets water)
- The Burgher's Hall: Where water rights are negotiated

Notable NPCs:

- Water Master Gerald Flowkeeper: Controls locks, decides who gets water
- Miller Queen Sarah Millstone: Owns most mills, immensely wealthy
- The Flood Prophet: Claims flooding is divine punishment

Economy: Grain milling, fishing, water transport, water rights

Atmosphere: Industrious, slightly tense. Water politics are serious. Recent flooding worrying.

Oakenheart (Thaldros)

Population: ~3,200 (50% human, 35% elf, 10% half-elf, 5% other)

Region: The Silverwood

Government: Shared (human mayor and elf elder)

Description

Oakenheart is built around a massive ancient oak tree the Heart Oak, which legend says predates even the elves. The tree is 500 feet tall, 60 feet across. The town radiates from this central tree like spokes from a hub.

The town successfully balances human and elf populations. Humans handle commerce and construction; elves manage the forest and nature magic. It works because the Heart Oak blesses both.

Recently the Heart Oak is dying. Leaves falling prematurely. Bark darkening. Town terrified if the tree dies, what happens to the town? Some say it's a curse. Others blame deforestation nearby. Elves perform rituals nightly.

Key Locations:

- The Heart Oak: Ancient tree at town center, sacred to both races
- The Druid Circle: Where nature priests tend the tree
- The Market Ring: Shops encircling the Heart Oak
- The Woodworker District: Where elven crafts are made
- The Shrine: Small temple built into tree's roots

Notable NPCs:

- Mayor Thomas Oakshield (52, human): Practical leader, worried about tree
- Elder Silverbark (403, elf): Druid, desperately trying to save tree
- Master Carpenter Woodwise (89, half-elf): Bridge between communities
- The Green Children: Three children born same night tree stopped growing significant?

Economy: Woodworking (elven quality), forestry (sustainable), druidic services

Atmosphere: Worried, desperate. Everyone loves the Heart Oak. Tension between those who blame each other for its decline.

Sandstone (Thaldros)

Population: ~2,600 (70% human, 15% dwarf, 10% tiefling, 5% other)

Region: Sundaran Expanse

Government: Clan council

Description

Sandstone is aptly named every building carved from local sandstone. The town has a unified aesthetic: red-orange stone, flat roofs, narrow windows to keep out heat and sand. Built around a small oasis, the town serves as vital caravan stop.

During sandstorms, the entire town can seal doors close, windows shutter, everyone retreats inside. The buildings are built to withstand being buried in sand. After storms, the town digs itself out.

Recently a buried temple entrance was discovered during a storm. Sandstone's elders forbid entry (dangerous), but treasure hunters are gathering. Tension rising.

Key Locations:

- The Oasis: Small but vital water source
- The Caravan Yard: Where traders rest and resupply
- The Stone Market: Goods traded in sandstone buildings
- The Temple Entrance: Recently uncovered, guarded
- The Storm Cellars: Where entire population shelters during sandstorms

Notable NPCs:

- Chief Rashad Sandwalker (58, human): Elected leader, prohibits temple entry
- Explorer Kira Dunedelver (34, human): Wants to explore temple, organizing expedition

- The Desert Hermit: Warned that opening temple will "wake the sand"

Economy: Caravan stop (supplies), desert guides, oasis access

Atmosphere: Frontier, harsh, adaptive. Desert determines everything. Recent discovery exciting and terrifying.

Additional Towns (Brief Descriptions)

Using These Descriptions

Character Creation:

- Hometowns provide backstory foundations
- Economy determines family occupation
- Secrets create personal connections to plots

Shopping & Services:

- Each city's economy determines what's available
- Larger cities have more variety
- Specialty items found in specialty locations (obsidian in Ashgate, glass in Sundara, etc.)

Quest Logic:

- Adventure hooks show what problems matter locally
- Different locations offer different types of adventures
- Can pursue multiple hooks in single location

Location Shorthand:

- = Town (basic services, few shops)
- = Significant Town (good services, many shops)
- = Major City (excellent services, specialty shops, complex plots)
- = Capital City (everything available, political center)

Quick Reference: What's Available Where

Magical Services:

- Mage Training: Silverpine, Starfall (best)
- Divine Magic: Kaer Thandros, Aethermere (temples), Sundara (multiple faiths)
- Druidic Magic: Aethermere, Wildgrove, Marshaven, Oakenheart

- Artificer Services: Kaer Thandros, Deepforge
- Water Magic: Crystalbrook (unique)
- Fire Magic: Ashgate (controversial), Emberforge

Specialty Goods:

- Mythril: Kaer Thandros (exclusive)
- Weapons/Armor (best): Kaer Thandros, Deepforge
- Obsidian: Ashgate, Cinderfall
- Glass/Crystal: Sundara, Crystalbrook
- Elven Crafts: Silverpine, Aethermere
- Ships: Goldreach (best), Harborview
- Books: Silverpine, Starfall
- Exotic Animals: Wildgrove (dangerous)

Information Gathering:

- Political Intel: Kaer Thandros, Aethermere (capitals)
- Cross-Continental News: Port Myrthen (neutral ground)
- Trade Information: Goldreach, Crystalbrook, Crossvale
- Ancient Lore: Starfall (scholarly), Silverpine (university)
- Nature Secrets: Wildgrove, Marshaven (druids)
- Underworld Contacts: Westport, Marshaven (smugglers)

Regional Lore

The Frostmarches

Climate: Arctic to sub-arctic; long brutal winters, short cool summers

Terrain: Tundra, ice fields, frozen coastline

Population: Sparse; hardy humans, goliaths, scattered dwarf outposts

Danger Level: Extreme

Description

The Frostmarches are the frozen northern reaches of Thaldros, where winter reigns for nine months of the year. The land is harsh, beautiful, and unforgiving. Ice fields stretch to the horizon, broken only by rocky outcroppings and the occasional hardy settlement. The northern lights dance in the winter sky, and locals claim they can hear voices in the aurora's glow.

Culture & People

The people of the Frostmarches are survivors. They hunt seals, fish through ice, and trade furs and ivory. Communities are tight-knit; survival depends on cooperation. Hospitality is sacred. Turning away a traveler in winter is considered murder. Warriors tattoo themselves with protection runes, believing the marks ward off winter spirits.

Common Beliefs:

- The aurora borealis contains the souls of great warriors
- Never whistle in a blizzard it attracts ice demons
- White ravens are messengers of death
- Sharing salt creates an unbreakable bond

Resources & Trade

- Exports: Furs, walrus ivory, ice crystals (magical properties), whale oil
- Imports: Wood, grain, metal tools, warm spices
- Rare Goods: Aurora dust (collected after strong auroras; used in divination)

Notable NPCs

Bjorn Frostbeard - Chieftain of Frostholm

- Grizzled warrior; scars tell stories; knows ancient winter magic

Yrsa the White - Tundra Druid

- Communicates with winter spirits; cryptic advice; lives alone

The Ironspine Holds

Climate: Alpine; cold year-round, heavy snowfall in winter

Terrain: Mountain peaks, deep valleys, underground caverns

Population: Moderate; dwarves, humans, mountain goats (domesticated)

Danger Level: High

Description

The Ironspine Mountains form the backbone of northern Thaldros, a seemingly endless range of jagged peaks that pierce the clouds. The mountains are rich in ores and gems, honeycombed with ancient dwarven delves some still inhabited, many long abandoned. The air is thin, the paths treacherous, but the wealth within draws miners and adventurers alike.

Culture & People

Dwarven culture dominates the Ironspine. Ancient clan holds delve deep into the mountains, their halls echoing with the sounds of forge and anvil. Mining is both livelihood and religion dwarves believe they're releasing the mountain's gift, not taking from it. Human settlements cling to the mountainsides, supporting the mining operations with supplies and trade.

Social Structure:

- Clan-based; each clan has traditional mining territories
- Forgemasters hold high status; runecrafters are revered
- Surface-dwellers looked down upon (but still accepted)

- Grudges are written down and maintained for generations

Common Beliefs:

- Mountains are sleeping giants that will wake at world's end
- Never whistle underground, it angers the stone spirits
- Finding gold in your boot means good luck for a year
- Echo without source means ghosts of dead miners nearby
- Exports: Iron, silver, gold, mythril (rare), gemstones, worked metal goods
- Imports: Food, wood, leather, cloth
- Specialty Goods: Runecraft weapons, dwarven ale, mountain crystal

Notable Locations

The Crown Forge - Located in Kaer Thandros

- Can forge items with permanent magical properties
- Requires master craftsman, rare materials, and specific cosmic alignments
- Last used 200 years ago to forge the King's sword

The Echo Halls - Abandoned dwarf hold

- Acoustic anomaly makes whispers audible miles away

- Now haunted by something that listens
 - Contains library of ancient dwarven lore
- The Crystal Caverns - Deep below Crystalmine village

- Natural crystal formations of stunning beauty
- Some crystals hum with magical resonance
- Guarded by territorial crystal golems

Notable NPCs

Thane Borin Ironhammer - Master of Deepforge

- Traditional dwarf; distrusts surface folk; wealthy
- Greta Stonefist - Runecrafter
- Young for a dwarf; experimenting with new rune combinations; rebellious

The Shattered Shore

Climate: Temperate coastal; frequent storms

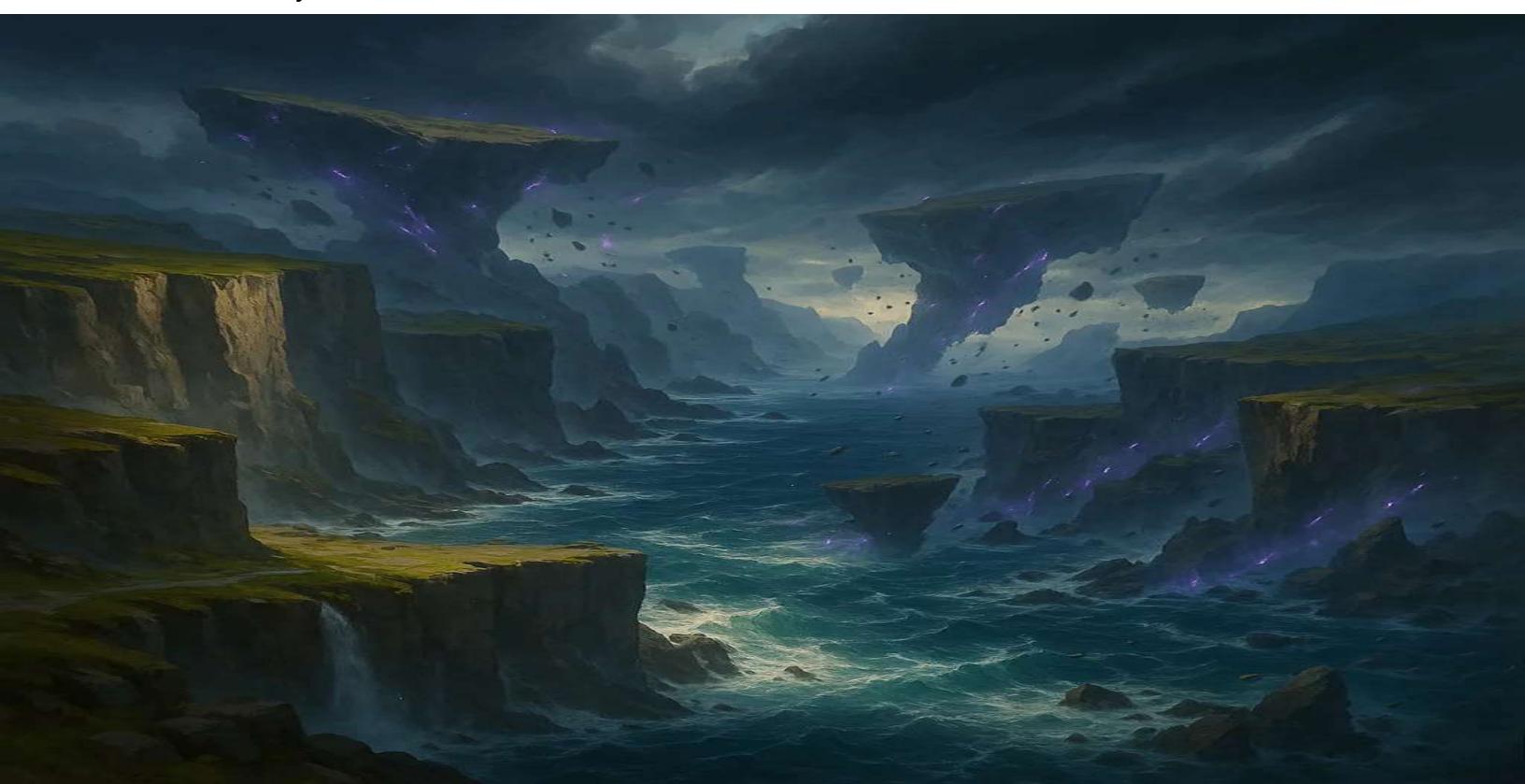
Terrain: Rocky coastline, sea cliffs, small beaches

Population: Low; fishing communities, sailor outposts

Danger Level: Moderate

Description

The northeastern coast of Thaldros is a jagged, broken shoreline of cliffs, rocky beaches, and



hidden coves. Constant winds from the Sundering Sea batter the coast, creating dramatic waves that crash against ancient stone. The shore is "shattered" both literally (broken coastline) and historically (numerous shipwrecks). It's beautiful, dangerous, and full of secrets.

Culture & People

Fishing communities dominate the Shattered Shore. Life is hard but profitable the waters teem with fish, and salvage from shipwrecks provides additional income. Locals are superstitious about the sea, making offerings to wave spirits before sailing. They're insular but honor the tradition of helping shipwreck survivors.

Social Customs:

- Never set sail on the 13th day of any month
- Whistling attracts storms (regional variant of common belief)
- First fish of day is thrown back for luck
- Touching a drowned corpse brings curse (proper burial required)

Common Beliefs:

- Shipwrecks are caused by angry sea spirits demanding sacrifice
- Ghost ships appear before major storms as warnings
- Merfolk exist but hide from humans
- A great leviathan sleeps in the deep waters
- Exports: Fish (fresh and preserved), shells, pearls, salvage goods, ship repairs
- Imports: Wood, metal, rope, tar
- Specialty Goods: Sea charts, storm warnings, salvaged treasure

Notable NPCs

Captain Mera Stormcrow - Harbor Master of a coastal town

- Former pirate; now respectable; knows everyone's secrets

Tobin the Net-Maker - Old fisherman

- Sees things others don't; half-mad or half-prophet

The Silverwood

Climate: Temperate; four distinct seasons

Terrain: Ancient forest, rolling hills, meandering streams

Population: Moderate; mixed human settlements, hidden fey

Danger Level: Low to Moderate

Description

The Silverwood is an ancient forest of silver birch and oak trees, where dappled sunlight creates ever-shifting patterns on the forest floor. Unlike the wild forests of Aethoria, the Silverwood has been carefully managed for generations thinned, cultivated, and respected. It's a place of beauty and tranquility, though the old magic still runs deep in its roots.

Culture & People

Human settlements within and around the Silverwood have a respectful relationship with the forest. They take wood but replant, hunt but maintain balance. Many are educated. Silverpine's universities draw scholars from across the continent. The culture values learning, craft, and artistic expression.

Social Customs:

- Ask permission before taking from forest
- Leave offerings at old oak trees
- Children learn tree names before human names
- Harming a silver birch brings seven years bad luck

Common Beliefs:

- Fey still dwell in the deepest parts of the wood
- Trees remember everything said beneath them
- Silver birches shed leaves to guide lost travelers
- Reading beneath the oaks grants wisdom
- Exports: Silver birch wood (prized for crafting), wild herbs, mushrooms, venison, knowledge (books, maps, research)
- Imports: Metals, exotic goods, foreign books

- Specialty Goods: Illuminated manuscripts, fine furniture, elven-style instruments
- Silverpine University - Center of magical and mundane learning
- Famous libraries; restrictions on dangerous books
 - Students practice minor magic; occasional mishaps
 - Secret society operates within faculty
- The Old Oak Circle - Ancient druid site
- Stone circle surrounds enormous oak
 - Used for ceremonies at solstices
 - Local tales of strange lights and music

Notable NPCs

Professor Aldric Thornfield - Magical scholar

- Eccentric; obsessed with fey lore; has fey blood
- Sylwen Half-Leaf - Possible fey, runs curiosity shop
- Ageless; knows too much; makes strange bargains

The Heartlands

Climate: Temperate; ideal for agriculture

Terrain: Rolling plains, farmland, occasional woodlots

Population: High; human dominated, most prosperous region

Danger Level: Low

Description

The Heartlands are the agricultural engine of Thaldros endless fields of grain, pastures dotted with livestock, and prosperous farming communities. This is the most "civilized" part of the continent, crisscrossed by well-maintained roads and dotted with market towns. Life here is comfortable by medieval standards, though not without challenges.

Culture & People

The Heartlands represent "normal" medieval life feudal structure, seasonal rhythms dictated

by farming, strong community bonds, and traditional values. People here are pragmatic, hardworking, and somewhat provincial. They view mountain-dwellers as eccentric and desert-folk as exotic. Magic is tolerated but viewed with suspicion.

Social Structure:

- Feudal hierarchy: nobles, knights, freemen, serfs
- Seasonal festivals mark planting and harvest
- Strong emphasis on family and inheritance
- Guilds control crafts and trade

Common Beliefs:

- Hard work brings prosperity; laziness brings ruin
- Old gods of harvest and weather still receive offerings
- Dreams of flying mean good harvest
- First sheaf of grain must be burned for luck
- Exports: Grain, livestock, wool, leather, processed food
- Imports: Metals, luxury goods, spices, tools
- Specialty Goods: Aged cheese, craft beer, woven textiles

Crossvale Market Square - Largest market in region

- Everything can be bought or sold here
- Information network rivals spy agencies
- Black market operates in plain sight (if you know signs)

The Standing Stones - Ancient monument

- No one knows who built them or why
- Animals avoid the area
- Strange lights seen during solstices

Notable NPCs

Lord Daric Fenwood - Local noble

- Fair but firm; beloved by peasants; respected by peers

Gerta the Green - Village hedge witch

- Knows herbal remedies; minor magic; consulted secretly



The Goldcoast

Climate: Temperate coastal; mild winters
Terrain: Coastal plains, sandy beaches, low cliffs
Population: Moderate; trading communities, sailors
Danger Level: Low to Moderate

Description

The western coast of Thaldros is blessed with natural harbors and a climate moderated by ocean currents, making it the gateway for continental trade with far off lands. Coastal towns are wealthy from maritime commerce, and the smell of salt and opportunity hangs in the air.

Culture & People

Coastal culture is more cosmopolitan than inland Thaldros. Sailors bring news and goods from distant lands, and the population includes immigrants from across Tirvandor. Locals are traders and sailors practical, shrewd, and superstitious about the sea. Social mobility is higher here; wealth matters more than birth.

Social Customs:

- Shake hands when making deals (proves no weapons)
- Never short-change a sailor (they remember)
- Toast fallen sailors on festival days

- Wedding rings made from sea-glass bring luck

Common Beliefs:

- Albatross sighting means good voyage
- Never kill a gull (they carry sailors' souls)
- Storm brewing when cats groom excessively
- Merfolk steal voices of drowned sailors
- Exports: Trade goods from across world, ships, naval supplies, fish
- Imports: Literally everything (trading hub)
- Specialty Goods: Exotic imports, sea charts, shellfish delicacies

Notable NPCs

Harbor Master Gregor - Controls port operations

- Wealthy; connected; knows every ship and cargo
- Captain "Red" Marissa - Retired privateer
- Runs tavern; knows pirate networks; reformed (mostly)

The Sundaran Expanse

Climate: Arid desert; extreme temperature swings

Terrain: Sand dunes, rocky plateaus, scattered oases

Population: Low; nomadic tribes, oasis settlements

Danger Level: High

Description

The southern reaches of Thaldros transform into a vast desert the Sundaran Expanse. Golden sand dunes stretch to the horizon, broken by rocky outcroppings and the occasional life-giving oasis. The desert is harsh but beautiful, and beneath the sand lie the ruins of ancient civilizations that flourished before the land became desert.

Culture & People

Desert people are divided between nomadic tribes who move with the seasons and permanent oasis dwellers. Nomads are skilled navigators, using stars and subtle landscape features to cross the desert. They're hospitable but wary of outsiders. Oasis settlements are cosmopolitan trading posts where cultures mix.

Social Structure:

- Nomads: Tribal elders, family units, warrior traditions
- Oasis dwellers: Merchant class, craftsmen, religious leaders
- Water determines status those who control oases hold power

Common Beliefs:

- Desert spirits guard hidden water sources
- Sandstorms are punishment from angry djinn
- Scorpions are sacred (killing one brings curse)
- Mirages show possible futures
- Buried cities hold terrible curses
- Exports: Exotic spices, rare herbs, glass (from lightning strikes), ancient artifacts
- Imports: Water (in drought), food, wood, metal
- Specialty Goods: Star charts (best astronomers), desert glass jewelry, rare potions

The Great Oasis - Location of Sundara city

- Largest water source in desert
- Control of oasis means control of region

- Ancient mysterious well at center never runs dry

The Whispering Dunes - Area of shifting sand

- Voices heard in wind (prophecies or madness?)
- Compasses don't work here
- Some who enter never return; others return changed

The Glass Valley - Desert glass phenomenon

- Entire valley of fused glass
- Origin unknown (magic? Ancient weapon?)
- Valuable but dangerous to harvest

Notable NPCs

Rashid al-Zahir - Desert guide

- Knows every oasis and ruin; can navigate by stars

Zahara the Veiled - Oasis merchant queen

- Controls water rights; immensely wealthy; mysterious

Sheikh Karim - Nomadic tribe leader

- Traditional; honor-bound; distrusts foreigners

The Ashfall Barrens

Climate: Volcanic; unpredictable weather

Terrain: Volcanic rock, lava fields, ash plains

Population: Low; hardy settlers, fire cultists

Danger Level: Extreme

Description

The southeastern region of Thaldros is a land of fire and ash a volcanic wasteland where the earth itself seethes with heat. Active and dormant volcanoes dot the landscape, sulfurous vents belch toxic gases, and rivers of lava create temporary lakes of molten rock. Despite the dangers, people live here, drawn by rare resources and raw elemental power.

Culture & People

Those who dwell in the Ashfall Barrens are tough, independent, and often eccentric.

They've adapted to the harsh environment, building with volcanic stone and growing heat-

resistant crops in mineral-rich soil. Fire is not feared here it's respected, harnessed, and sometimes worshipped.

Social Structure:

- Meritocracy strongest and smartest survive
- Fire-priests hold spiritual authority
- Master smiths have high status (volcanic forges)
- Outsiders welcomed if they can handle the heat

Common Beliefs:

- Volcanoes house sleeping dragons
- Fire spirits inhabit lava flows
- Obsidian contains trapped souls
- Phoenix ashes grant immortality
- Exports: Obsidian, volcanic glass, unique metals, sulfur, fire gems
- Imports: Food, water, wood, cooling potions
- Specialty Goods: Fireproof cloth, volcanic steel, elemental fire (bottled)

The Eternal Forge - In Emberforge town

- Uses volcanic heat; can forge anything
- Heat so intense only fire resistance allows approach
- Legendary smiths pilgrimage here

The Black Spire - Obsidian formation

- Perfectly smooth; impossibly tall; clearly artificial
- Predates known history
- No one knows its purpose

Hellmouth Crater - Active volcano

- Largest volcano in region
- Regular sacrifices supposedly keep it calm
- Something lives in the lava

Notable NPCs

Forge Master Krag - Master smith

- Scarred from burns; gruff; best smith alive

Sister Ember - Fire priest

- Zealot; actually talks to fire spirits; unsettling

Obsidian Jack - Prospector

- Crazy; claims he sees visions in obsidian; might be right

The Reaching Claws

Climate: Varied; transitions between regions

Terrain: Rocky badlands, scrubland, volcanic edges

Population: Very Low; frontier settlements

Danger Level: High

Description

The Reaching Claws is a transitional badlands region between the Heartlands, Goldcoast, and Ashfall Barrens. Named for the claw-like formations of volcanic rock that reach across the landscape, this is frontier country untamed, dangerous, and full of opportunity for those brave or desperate enough to settle here.

Culture & People

Frontier mentality dominates. People here are refugees, outcasts, adventurers, or those seeking fresh starts. Law is what communities decide it is. Everyone is armed, everyone is cautious, and everyone helps during monster attacks because monsters are common.

Social Structure:

- Rough democracy town meetings decide issues
- Sheriffs/wardens elected for protection
- Everyone contributes to defense
- Frontier justice swift and harsh

Common Beliefs:

- Land is cursed (geological activity reinforces belief)
- Monster attacks are punishment from gods
- Finding obsidian means good luck
- Full moon brings monster surges
- Exports: Monster parts, volcanic minerals, salvage from ruins
- Imports: Everything this is a hardship post
- Specialty Goods: Monster trophies, rare ores, "lucky" charms

Notable NPCs

- Sheriff Kate "Ironjaw" Morrison - Frontier lawkeeper
- Tough; fair; veteran of Indian wars; cyborg jaw (magical prosthetic)
- Prospector Pete - Old desert rat
- Crazy or genius?; claims to know location of motherlode

The Starwood

Climate: Temperate; cool and misty

Terrain: Ancient forest, star-lit clearings

Population: Low; elves, druids, fey

Danger Level: Moderate

Description

The Starwood is an ancient forest where the trees grow so tall they seem to touch the stars. The forest is characterized by a unique phenomenon starlight penetrates the canopy in shafts, creating illuminated clearings where the light is bright enough to read by, even at night. The elves claim this is because the trees themselves are blessed by celestial forces.

Culture & People

The Starwood is primarily elven territory, specifically wood elves and a few moon elves. Their culture is ancient, predating human civilization on Aethoria. They live in harmony with the forest, building homes among the branches and on the forest floor. Outsiders are viewed with suspicion unless they show proper respect for nature.

Social Structure:

- Elven councils; decisions by consensus
- Druids advise on nature matters
- Age grants authority (elves can live 750+ years)
- Fey have their own hierarchy (not always aligned with elves)

Common Beliefs:

- Stars are souls of ancient heroes
- Fallen stars contain prophecies
- Trees choose their inhabitants

- Cutting living tree without need is murder
- Fey bargains always have hidden costs
- Exports: Star-blessed wood (rare), astronomical charts, elven crafts, silvery moss (alchemical)
- Imports: Metals, grains, worked goods
- Specialty Goods: Star metal (from fallen meteors), moon-touched silver, elven bows

Starfall City - Observatory complex

- Built in meteor impact crater
- Cosmic magic concentration affects reality
- Best astronomers in world work here

The Moon Well - Sacred pool

- Reflects moon perfectly even in daylight
- Grants visions to those who drink
- Guarded by moon druids

Notable NPCs

Aelindra Starweaver - Elven elder

- 600+ years old; vast knowledge; cryptic advice
- Shadowleaf - Mysterious figure
- Fey knight or dark elf?; serves hidden court; dangerous

The Crystalvale

Climate: Temperate; abundant rainfall

Terrain: Lakes, rivers, gentle hills

Population: Moderate; mixed races

Danger Level: Low to Moderate

Description

Central Aethoria is defined by pristine lakes and crystal-clear streams. The water here is so pure it can be used for scrying without magical enhancement. Underground springs feed the surface water, creating a network of waterways that sparkle like gems. The region is peaceful, prosperous, and considered a paradise by travelers.

Culture & People

The Crystalvale is cosmopolitan by Aethoria standards. Humans, elves, halflings, and others coexist peacefully. Water is central to life

religiously, economically, and socially. Water mages practice here, and scrying services are a major export. People are generally friendly, educated, and sophisticated.

Social Structure:

- Elected councils run most cities
- Water rights carefully regulated
- Scrying guilds powerful (information brokers)
- Strong middle class of artisans and merchants

Common Beliefs:

- Water has memory; shows visions of past
- Disturbing lakes angers water spirits
- Throwing coin in lake grants wishes
- Never swim during thunderstorm (magic surge risk)
- Exports: Scrying crystals, pure water, fish, boats, water magic services
- Imports: Food (beyond fish), wood, metals
- Specialty Goods: Crystal jewelry, enchanted water, scrying bowls

The Crystal Caves - Underground cavern system

- Natural crystal formations
- Magically resonant; unpredictable effects
- Contains underground lake of perfect stillness

The Mirror Lake - Perfectly still water

- Used for prophetic scrying
- Some visions drive viewers mad
- Occasionally shows parallel timelines

Notable NPCs

Master Aquinus - Water Wizard

- Aged; powerful; secretive about past

Lyra Deepwater - Boat builder

- Young; talented; can hear water spirits

The Fractured Coast

Climate: Temperate coastal; foggy

Terrain: Rocky islands, sea cliffs, hidden coves

Population: Low; fishing villages, pirates

Danger Level: Moderate to High

Description

The northwestern coast of Aethoria is a maze of small islands, hidden coves, and treacherous reefs. Thick fog is common, making navigation difficult. The "fractured" nature makes it perfect for those seeking to hide: pirates, smugglers, and outcasts have operated here for centuries.

Culture & People

Communities here are insular and independent. Each island has its own culture, often distrusting even nearby islands. Piracy and smuggling are open secrets most coastal towns have "arrangements" with freebooters. Life is hard, and loyalty is to family and crew, not distant governments.

Social Structure:

- Pirate codes of conduct (actually followed)
- Island councils (usually ship captains)
- Smuggler networks (semi-organized crime)
- Family bonds stronger than law

Common Beliefs:

- Fog hides fey paths between islands
- Never betray crew (ghost pirates haunt oath-breakers)
- Sirens steal voices of drowned sailors
- Some islands appear only during fog
- Exports: Fish, salvage, smuggled goods, "protection" services
- Imports: Food, ship supplies, anything that's stolen
- Specialty Goods: Contraband, maps to hidden coves, pirate intelligence

Notable NPCs

Captain Blackheart - Pirate legend

- Feared; respected; has code of honor; hates slavers

Miranda Greywater - Smuggler Queen

- Runs information network; knows everyone's secrets

The Emerald Deeps

Climate: Temperate rainforest; high humidity

Terrain: Dense jungle, enormous trees, layered canopy

Population: Moderate; elves, druids, tribal communities

Danger Level: High

Description

The Emerald Deeps is a primordial rainforest where nature reigns supreme. The trees grow to impossible heights, their canopies forming multiple layers some elves spend entire lives without touching the ground. The forest floor is dim even at noon, filled with ferns, fungi, and undergrowth. The magic here is old, deep, and sometimes hostile to civilization.

Culture & People

Multiple cultures coexist in the Emerald Deeps, often unaware of each other. Elven tree-cities exist in the canopy. Druidic circles maintain sacred groves. Tribal communities live in harmony with beasts. Human settlements cling to the forest edges. All share one belief: the forest must be respected.

Social Structure:

- Druids hold ultimate authority (servants of nature)
- Elven communities separate from ground-dwellers
- Tribes follow shamanic leadership
- Outsiders generally not welcome in deep forest

Common Beliefs:

- Trees are semi-sentient (actually true for some)
- Never harm ancient trees (treants will avenge)
- Animal signs are prophecies
- Certain glades are sacred (entering means death)
- Forest tests intruders (will allow passage or reject)
- Exports: Rare herbs, magical plants, exotic woods (carefully harvested), monster parts
- Imports: Metals, crafted goods, salt

- Specialty Goods: Druidic remedies, awakened plants, treant wood (voluntary gifts only)

Wildgrove - Druidic sanctuary

- Built around world-trees
- Sacred site for nature worship
- Contains library of natural lore

The Heartwood Grove - Ancient tree cluster

- Trees thousands of years old
- Center of forest's consciousness
- Those who enter report time distortion

The Underbough - Forest floor region

- Perpetual twilight; bioluminescent fungi
- Dangerous predators; lost ruins
- Rarely explored even by natives

Notable NPCs

Archdruid Silvanus - Master of Wildgrove

- Ancient human; possibly immortal; commands respect of all nature

Thorn - Wild elf ranger

- Distrusts civilization; expert tracker; speaks with animals

The Green Mother - Mysterious entity

- Appears as dryad, treant, or elf depending on viewer
- Might be forest spirit or actual deity

The Brightwater Valley

Climate: Temperate; abundant rainfall, sunny valleys

Terrain: River valleys, rice paddies, gentle hills

Population: High (for Aethoria); mixed agricultural communities

Danger Level: Low

Description

The Brightwater Valley is Aethoria's breadbasket a network of river valleys where water and sunlight combine to create perfect growing conditions. Rice paddies stretch across valley floors, terraced hillsides support other crops, and the region has a gentle, pastoral quality unusual for Aethoria. This is where

nature has been successfully partnered with civilization.

Culture & People

Valley folk are farmers, fishermen, and craftspeople. They've learned to work with nature rather than against it flooding rice paddies annually, rotating crops, and maintaining good relations with local nature spirits. Communities are peaceful, industrious, and fairly prosperous. Magic is common but subtle mostly agricultural and weather-related.

Social Structure:

- Village councils of elders
- Water distribution carefully managed
- Farmer cooperatives common
- Strong emphasis on community and tradition

Common Beliefs:

- Rice spirits require offerings at planting and harvest
- Flooding must be welcomed (brings nutrients)
- First rice of season belongs to spirits
- Rainbow after rain means good harvest
- Exports: Rice, fish, vegetables, fruit, woven goods
- Imports: Tools, metals, luxury items
- Specialty Goods: Rice wine, bamboo crafts, ceremonial foods

Notable NPCs

Grandmother Lotus - Village elder

- Wise; kind; knows ancient rituals; respected by all

Chen the Miller - Rice miller

- Hardworking; loyal; hides past as former adventurer

The Mistwood Reaches

Climate: Temperate to cool; persistent fog

Terrain: Misty forests, rolling hills, hidden valleys

Population: Low; reclusive communities

Danger Level: Moderate

Description

The northeastern region of Aethoria is perpetually shrouded in mist, earning its name. The fog is thick, magical, and sometimes sentient. Travelers report the mist showing visions, leading them astray, or protecting them from danger. The forests here are ancient, and the boundary between material world and Feywild is thin.

Culture & People

Those who live in the Mistwood are either adapted to its strangeness or are actively seeking it. Mystics, seers, and those who study the veil between worlds make their homes here. Communities are small, isolated, and often secretive. Magic is commonplace and accepted.

Social Structure:

- Loose communities; much individualism
- Seers and mystics hold influence
- No formal government (anarchy that somehow works)
- Tradition of helping lost travelers

Common Beliefs:

- Mist is alive and has intentions
- Following will-o'-wisps leads to fey realm
- Never trust what you see in fog
- Some who enter mist never return (intentionally)
- Fog shows your true self (terrifying for some)
- Exports: Prophecies, divinations, rare mushrooms, veil silk (from fey spiders)
- Imports: Basic necessities; region isn't self-sufficient
- Specialty Goods: True seeing potions, fey compasses, mist-touched items

Notable NPCs

The Veiled Prophet - Mysterious seer

- Gender uncertain; face always hidden; prophecies always true

Lord Whisperwind - Fey noble

- Androgynous; beautiful; cruel sense of humor; bored immortal

The Thormire Marches

Climate: Subtropical swamp; humid, warm year-round

Terrain: Swamps, bogs, bayous, floating islands

Population: Low; adapted communities, lizardfolk

Danger Level: High

Description

The southeastern swamps of Aethoria are a realm of water, mud, and twisted vegetation. The "solid" ground is actually floating mats of vegetation. Trees grow from the water itself, their roots forming tangles above the surface. The air is thick, hot, and alive with insects. This is one of Aethoria's most hostile environments and one of its most profitable for those who know its secrets.

Culture & People

Swamp-dwellers are hardy, independent, and resourceful. Humans, lizardfolk, and others have adapted to the environment. They navigate by boat, build on stilts, and know which plants are edible versus deadly. Outsiders are viewed with suspicion; many who enter the swamp never leave.

Social Structure:

- Family clans control territories
- Lizardfolk tribes separate but occasionally trade
- Marshaven oligarchs control swamp trade
- Everyone defers to swamp guides (knowledge = survival)

Common Beliefs:

- Swamp has consciousness; angers easily
- Never drink swamp water (disease, curses, worse)
- Black alligators are cursed humans
- Will-o'-wisps are malevolent spirits
- Certain areas are taboo (ancient curses)
- Exports: Rare poisons, medicinal plants, exotic leathers, alchemical reagents
- Imports: Metal tools, dry food, clothing

- Specialty Goods: Antitoxins, swamp maps, licensed guide services

Marshaven - Stilt city

- Largest settlement; alchemy capital
- Famous (infamous?) poison markets
- Built in layers; upper city vs. lower city

The Sunken Pyramid - Ancient ruin

- Partially submerged; pre-dates known history
- Covered in yuan-ti hieroglyphs
- Something alive inside

Notable NPCs

Old Craw - Swamp guide

- Ancient; possibly part lizard; knows every path

Lady Venoma - Poison merchant

- Beautiful; deadly; runs alchemy house

Hissthri - Lizardfolk shaman

- Wise; neutral toward mammals; sees coming danger

The Singing Fens

Climate: Temperate to warm; coastal marshes

Terrain: Reed marshes, tidal flats, salt marshes

Population: Low; fishing communities, recluses

Danger Level: Moderate

Description

The eastern coastal region of Aethoria transitions into vast reed marshes and tidal flats. The "singing" comes from the wind through the reeds, creating an eerie musical sound. At high tide, much of the area is underwater; at low tide, expansive flats emerge covered in shells and stranded sea creatures. It's a place of strange beauty and hidden dangers.

Culture & People

Fen-dwellers are fishermen, reed harvesters, and salt makers. They've adapted to the tidal cycle, building homes on stilts that can withstand flooding. The culture is insular; they don't trust outsiders and have their own

traditions. Many are refugees from inland Aethoria, seeking isolation.

Social Structure:

- Family-based clans
- Village elders (usually oldest fisher)
- Tide-readers have special status (predict weather/tides)
- Informal justice system (exile for serious crimes)

Common Beliefs:

- Singing reeds are spirits of drowned sailors
- Never fish during certain moon phases
- Salt protects against evil spirits
- Finding pearl means great change coming
- Exports: Salt, fish, reeds (basket-weaving, thatching), pearls
- Imports: Wood, metal, grain, cloth
- Specialty Goods: Reed instruments, tide charts, pickled seafood

Notable NPCs

Old Salt - Veteran fisher

- Weathered; one eye; seen everything; believes nothing

Miranda Tidewater - Tide-reader

- Young; talented; sees more than she says

The Verdant Wall

Climate: Cool to temperate; mountain climate

Terrain: Mountain range, steep valleys, pine forests

Population: Low; mountain communities, hermits

Danger Level: Moderate to High

Description

The southern mountain range of Aethoria forms a natural barrierhence "Wall." Unlike the harsh Ironspine Mountains of Thaldros, these are verdant slopes covered in pine forests and alpine meadows. The mountains are tall but not impassable, with several valleys providing routes through. Ancient traditions of sky worship persist in mountain communities.

Culture & People

Mountain folk are independent, spiritual, and hardy. Many communities practice sky worshipbelieving clouds and wind are manifestations of divine will. They're skilled climbers, herbalists (alpine plants), and rangers. Life is simple but satisfying.

Social Structure:

- Village councils of elders
- Sky priests hold spiritual authority
- Rangers serve as scouts/defenders
- Craftsmen (particularly woodcarvers) respected

Common Beliefs:

- Mountains are sacred; show respect
- Sky gods watch from clouds
- Eagles are divine messengers
- Never kill on holy days (mountain holidays)
- Wind carries prayers to gods
- Exports: Pine lumber, mountain herbs, gemstones, carved goods
- Imports: Grain, metal goods, textiles
- Specialty Goods: Alpine remedies, climbing gear, sky maps

Skyhaven - Mountain city

- Built on multiple levels up mountainside
- Griffin riders train here
- Famous for its sunrise views

The Peak of Winds - Highest mountain

- Sacred site; pilgrimage destination
- Always windy (hence name)
- Monks meditate at summit

Notable NPCs

High Priest Aeron - Sky worship leader

- Aged; wise; genuine connection to divine
- Griffon Master Elara - Griffin breeder/trainer
- Young; skilled; griffins trust her implicitly

The Split Peninsula

Climate: Warm, coastal; Mediterranean-like

Terrain: Hilly peninsula, rocky coastline, olive groves

Population: Low; scattered communities, monasteries

Danger Level: Low to Moderate

"The land itself tells stories. Listen carefully." - Tirvandor Proverb

Description

The southwestern peninsula of Aethoria is named for the geographic split: a narrow channel of water cuts most of the way through, nearly creating an island. The climate is warm, the land fertile, and the lifestyle relaxed. This is where Aethorians go to retire or seek spiritual enlightenment.

Culture & People

Peninsula culture is notably different from mainland Aethoria: lower-paced, more contemplative, influenced by ancient philosophical traditions. Many monasteries and retreats are located here. Trade exists but isn't the focus; quality of life matters more than wealth.

Social Structure:

- Loose community structures
- Monastic orders have influence
- Philosopher-councils advise on issues
- Minimal formal government

Common Beliefs:

- Simple life is best life
- Contemplation reveals truth
- Sea and sky contain wisdom
- Rush is foolishness; patience is virtue
- Exports: Olive oil, wine, philosophy texts, meditation retreats
- Imports: Minimal needs; mostly books
- Specialty Goods: Blessed items, scrolls of wisdom, contemplation services

Notable NPCs

Abbot Theron - Monastery leader

- Wise; serene; knows more than he reveals

Callista the Wanderer - Philosopher

- Questions everything; challenges assumptions; brilliant