



HISTORY

The history of the Impossible Lands seems strangely locked-in—merchants trade, soldiers fight, rulers scheme—but the presence of the immortal and the unliving lends stability, or perhaps stagnancy, as ghosts and genies and golems march unceasingly through the ages. Scratch beneath the surface, however, and one discovers a surfeit of events, a hundred swirling eddies of migration, innovation, and destruction.

THE STATUE BUILDER CULTURE

Little is known of the mythic history of Eastern Garund. Based on a few picked-over ruins and obscure mentions in ancient texts, it appears both serpentfolk of the Mwangi interior and cyclopes of Ghol-Gan had a few scattered outposts on the continent's eastern coast, but no great cities or mighty fortresses. Visitors to the Shattered Range's foothills can still make out a few cyclopean towers—now just hollow husks—interesting for their size and little else.

The main pre-Osirian civilization in Eastern Garund was a culture known to history as the Statue Builders. They left behind few ruins and no writings and remain largely a mystery to modern scholars. They might have been humans from the Mwangi Expanse or possibly the Inner Sea region. They built mostly in wood and animal hide. Only a few ditches or earthen hovels mark their settlements. How they lived and who they worshipped remain unknown, but they did leave behind one thing: statues.

The Statue Builder culture carved hundreds of curiously stylized statues crafted from soft marble or soapstone. Typically between 8 to 12 inches in height, though some were much larger, the statues depict faceless humanoid forms with a sharply angular style of art unique to the region. Most of the figurines have their arms folded, though some carry weapons or musical instruments, and a few hold their hands in an odd, finger-laced gesture that indicates more fingers than normal.

It was during these early days that the dwarves first emerged onto the surface of Golarion, tunneling up into

an otherwise unexceptional stretch of farmland. These dwarves had been sent far to the south and east of the main body of dwarves to establish a new outpost. It was with some surprise that they found the place already inhabited, though not nearly as much surprise as the locals had for these strange, subterranean people. Initial encounters might have given way to violence were it not for a novel solution of from a local nomarch, a wily old politician named Pethraseth. The newly arrived dwarves were given a large territory to call their own, and in exchange, every year they had to deliver a small coffer of silver to the nomarch—who, purely of his own free will and initiative, would send a few wagon-loads of food and goods to the support the new dwarven settlement. This face-saving arrangement avoided a war, and for several centuries the dwarves dutifully upheld their end of the bargain. The dwarven Sky-Citadel of Dongun Hold was founded as High King Taargick had planned, though little of its earliest records remain, destroyed by war and lost in migration.

What ultimately became of the Statue Builders is a mystery. Most believe they were conquered by and absorbed into the growing Osirian Empire during the early Age of Destiny.

OSIRIAN RULE

With the coming of Osirion, or more properly, with the coming of Osirian writing, recorded history of the Impossible Lands truly began. The Osirians called this region the Southern Reach and saw it as a vital route into central Garund. From the fertile valleys of Osirion came pottery and metalwork in bronze and copper, to be exchanged at trading posts for skins, ivory, and polished wood. Forts and trading posts sprang up and, in time, transformed into citadels and cities as the Southern Reach of Osirion grew wealthy, powerful, and eventually, independent-minded.

Remaining records suggest rebellions in the Southern Reach were a perennial problem for the pharaohs of Osirion's First Age, as generals and nomarchs saw a chance to line their pockets rather than send tribute north, declaring themselves kings and high lords. Most of these minor kingdoms were crushed in short order, of little interest now to anyone but antiquarians, but a few lasted longer, surviving for a century or two before being suppressed by the might of Osirion's armies.

The most successful of these petty kingdoms was founded by the Queen of Ebon Feathers. Though the accounts of her reign were purged with some thoroughness after her fall, a few stelae escaped destruction. One, now on display in Absalom, claims "she came garbed in the light of the dying sun, and claimed to be to death as a daughter." Beginning her conquest in a small town not far from modern-day Mechitar, she routed Osirian armies thrice the size of hers within a decade using skilled generalship and startling luck. The first army to face her was riven by a camp fever long before reaching her, while the general of a second perished of a sudden stroke on the eve of battle.

Osirian scribes later accused her of foul magic and the worship of evil gods, claiming her palace, now lost to time, was the scene of blood-curdling depravity and debauchery. Such things would be easy enough to write off as the sour mutterings of war's losers, but the accounts clearly indicate the Queen of Ebon Feathers ruled for more than 400 years without aging a day. She was eventually defeated by the combined might of the Pharaohs of Ascension, culminating in a grand battle at the Field of Charish, where the diabolic legions of the Fiend Pharaoh Hetshepsu defeated the Queen's "armies of dust and woe." Supposedly, the queen was eternally bound beneath the battlefield. The location of the Field of Charish has long since been forgotten, though it's believed to be somewhere in the modern-day Mana Wastes.



QUEEN OF EBON FEATHERS

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TIMELINE

- 7000 to -4000 AR The Statue Builder culture resides in the modern-day Impossible Lands.
- 4980 AR The Sky Citadel of Dongun Hold is founded.
- 3000 AR The region is colonized and turned into Osirion's Southern Reach.
- 1000 AR The Queen of Ebon Feathers forges a rebel kingdom in the Southern Reach.
- 1456 AR The Fiend Pharaoh Hetshepsu defeats the Queen of Ebon Feathers at the Fields of Charish.
- 1140 AR Geb is born in Sothis to an Osirian noble house.
- 1119 AR The necromancer Geb flees Sothis during the reign of the god-favored Pharaoh Kenaton.
- 1108 AR Geb conquers the town of Mechitar and begins to slowly expand his kingdom.
- 1070 AR Nex is born in the city of Quantum, of uncertain parentage.
- 987 AR Nex arrives at the gates of Quantum with an army and takes control of the region.
- 929 AR Osirion formally cedes control of the Southern Reaches to the archmages Geb and Nex.
- 892 AR The Thousand-Year War between Geb and Nex begins.
- 585 AR Nex attempts to destroy the land of Geb with the Rain of Venomous Tears.
- 147 AR Geb sends a great undead leviathan to shatter Quantum. Nex builds the pair of Quantum Golems in response.
- 166 AR The Archmage Nex unsuccessfully launches a siege against Absalom, erecting the mile-tall Spire of Nex in the Cairnlands.

THE RISE OF NEX AND GEB

Following the fall of the Queen of Ebon Feathers, the Southern Reach continued to blossom. Goods once more flowed over the mountains from the Mwangi Expanse, roads and irrigation systems were built across the badlands, and towns gradually grew into cities. During this time, Quantum first rose to prominence as a major seaport on the eastern coast of Garund, receiving ships from Vudra, Iblydos, and far-off Tian Xia.

Then came the Pharaoh Kenaton. Pious, cunning, and equally skilled in war and administration, Kenaton brought a temporary halt to Osirion's slow decline. In a lightning series of military campaigns, he reunited the disjointed Osirian lands and brought the Southern Reaches back under the control of Sothis. In the process, he put many warlords and renegade mages to flight to the farthest edges of the empire.

One of them was the man who would become known to history as Geb, the Ghost King. A lesser son of one of Sothis's greatest noble houses, Geb's appointed role in life was to become a wizard and mortuary priest so he might better support his family's ambitions to the throne. Though brilliant, determined, and ruthless, Geb couldn't save his house when it went against the favored of the gods. Kenaton sundered the family's armies, entombed alive their leaders, and sent the rest into exile. Most vanished from the face of history. But not Geb.

Traveling from Sothis to the southernmost reaches of what the Osirians considered the civilized world, Geb arrived in the port town of Mechitar, old home of the Queen of Ebon Feathers. He tarried there for a little while before politely asking the nomarch of the province to make him king. When the provincial governor laughed at the young upstart, Geb tore the nomarch's soul from his body. In short order, Geb was crowned king of a new country, which he named after himself and his lost house.

A few decades after Kenaton's death, another great mage arose in the Southern Reach. Nex was no scion of the nobility, but a Quantum wharf orphan who learned his first spells from the weather wizards and sea mages there. Eerily attuned to the Great Beyond, the young Nex became a wanderer and an adventurer, guided by the tantalizing hints of power and glory and immortality he saw in his visions. Where exactly he went during those years is a matter of considerable conjecture, but it's known that Nex traveled several times to the Mwangi Expanse and found a great deal of occult lore there. Persistent rumor holds he visited the Lost City of Ird and learned some of the forbidden magics that brought about its end.

When Nex returned to Quantum, he came at the head of an army of summoned monstrosities: squamous and twisted things that hailed from the furthest corners of the Great Beyond. The city surrendered without a fight, and so Nex became the Wizard King, ruler of the northern part of what had been Osirion's Southern Reach.

THE ARCHMAGES' WAR

No one quite knows the truth of how the grand necromancer Geb and master archmage Nex came to blows, save for the two main participants, and neither has ever seen fit to illuminate the matter. Nevertheless, the historical consensus is that it was a professional rivalry gone sour in the most spectacular way possible.

Initially, the two mage-ruled lands seemed relatively comfortable with one another, engaging in trade, diplomatic missions, and all the standard trappings of peaceful neighboring nations. At this time, the land of Geb was still an overwhelmingly living land, with the dead appearing only in the necromancer's armies or toiling at the most thankless tasks. The two wizards visited with one another, and while they might not have been precisely friends, they were cordial. Geb and Nex were the only two archmages in the region; indeed, they were the most powerful wizards of their age. No one else

understood the nature of magic and power on that level. No one else could appreciate the finest points of occult theory and thaumaturgical control they demonstrated. Geb and Nex had no peers but each other, and it was only natural each would begin to show off their powers to the one person in the world who could grasp the significance of their achievements.

What had started as a friendly, professional sort of competition grew ever more vicious, for neither wizard could stand being second-best at anything. The two mages began to quarrel, and then to fight. Historians mostly agree Nex, who was brash, confident, and aggressive, made the first attack against his more phlegmatic rival, though Nex's partisans have long claimed it was in response to some hidden Gebbite gambit. In any case, war erupted between the two countries and lasted for well over a thousand years.

The Geb-Nex War, the Mage War, the Thousand-Year War—it was one of the most destructive conflicts Golarion had ever seen, before or since. The two archmages had immense supplies of power and equally vast reserves of spite. Time and time again, they assaulted one another with summoned hosts, killing spells, and mundane weapons. The number of battles was so great that even the chroniclers grew weary of cataloging them all.

On one occasion, Geb cast a pall of night across the land, an endless darkness that was pierced by only the faintest rays of sunlight at high noon. Curtains of murk obscured vision, and shapeless things of wind and malice crept across the border. Nex developed a countermeasure and sent a baleful fire racing through every strand of shadow in the land, burning Geb's spell away. Another time, Nex developed a new ritual, the Rain of Venomous Teeth. The archmage found and slew an old dragon, and then used the wyrm's broken fangs to make an elixir in a great pit on the border. Once the viscous potion was ready, Nex summoned a mighty wind to carry it over Geb and rain the mixture on the land. Each drop held a fleck of dragon bone suspended inside, like an insect in amber. As each drop landed, it transformed into a venomous serpent that slithered away to kill all it could find. Faced with the mass poisoning of his people, Geb summoned a clammy, gray mist from somewhere deep beneath the earth, and then had undead servants kill every now-sluggish serpent they could find.

On another occasion, Geb uncovered an ancient leviathan in the abyssal depths of the sea; he raised it with necromancy and labor alike. Of its bones, he made a monstrosity as big as a cathedral that walked on its ribs and lashed at its foes with three fluke-tipped tails. Geb had the horror creep toward Quantum under the waves to wait until Nex was absent to attack. The assault was only barely beaten off when an apprentice mage spotted the controlling diadem inside the leviathan's skeletal brain case and gave her life to dislodge it. According to legend, the uncontrolled beast returned to the ocean and still lurks off the coast of Nex. It was after this assault that the archmage constructed the two Quantum Golems, a matched pair of titans, to guard the city in his absence.

Yet there were also some times of peace. The Thousand-Year War is better thought of as an endless series of dreary ceasefires and uneasy truces, punctuated by short, horrific bouts of war. The two mages were evenly matched, and so they would spend years, even decades searching for some new gambit that might give them the edge. During one such foray, Nex ventured north to Absalom and constructed his Spire there, aiming to besiege the city and take the Starstone by force—according to popular legend, he nearly succeeded, only to turn back as being unwilling to pay the final price to ascend to godhood. Though in truth, no one quite knows why the Siege of Absalom ended.

KHIBEN-SALD AND THE FOUNDING OF JALMERAY

During the war between the archmages, the area that was once Osirion's Southern Reach first gained the name Impossible Lands, due to the impossible

253 AR

Nex assumes control of the Isle of Jalmeray, though little is done to bring the island into the Nexian administration.

378 AR

The dwarves abandon Dongun Hold, retreating into the Darklands.

562 AR

Khiben-Sald, the legendary Maharajah of Vudra, arrives at Quantum with the Hundred and One Ships. Nex bequeaths the Isle of Jalmeray to Khiben-Sald, who spends the next decade bringing Vudrani culture and Vudrani administration to the island.

563 to
573 AR

576 AR

The Thousand-Year War unofficially ends. Nex destroys much of Geb, prompting the necromancer to resurrect a vast undead army and turn Geb into a land of the dead. Nex vanishes from his capital in Quantum during a Gebbite poison attack, and the war peters out afterward.

632 AR

Geb dies in an act of ritual suicide but soon returns as a ghost.

2279 AR

The Arclords of Nex, forced out in one of Nex's interminable power struggles, move to take over Jalmeray.

2822 AR

Vudrani rajahs wrest control of Jalmeray from the Arclords of Nex.

2850 AR

The Arclords of Nex attack Absalom in the event known as the Conjured Siege.

3890 AR

In response to an attack from the Knights of Ozem, Geb steals the corpse of Arazni, herald of Aroden, and raises her as a lich. Arazni takes over the day-to-day administration of the Ghost King's nation.

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- 3996 to 4000 AR The Cult of Weeping Stars spreads throughout Nex.
- 4329 AR Geb petrifies the invading Holomog army of the Pirate Queen Mastrien Slash, creating the Field of Maidens.
- 4330 AR Prominent Pathfinder Selmius Foster is killed on the island of Bhopan. His assistant, Adolphus, escapes with the Bhopanese Princess Ganjay.



KHIBEN-SALD

things Nex and Geb routinely and murderously accomplished. It was also during the war that the third of the region's kingdoms arose.

According to chroniclers of the age, a lookout on the seawall of Quantum gazed across the ocean and saw what looked like an invasion fleet. A fleet it was, but not of Geb, and not of war, for these vessels were the Hundred and One Ships of the Maharajah Khiben-Sald, the Ever-Traveling, the War-King, the Uniter of Vudra. Khiben-Sald claimed direct descent from ancient Vudrani kings who had slain Unyielding Kothogaz, the Dance of Disharmony and the Spawn of Rovagug. Taking this claim as his pretext, Khiben-Sald united Vudra for the first time in its history, with war, diplomacy, and a certain degree of strategic treachery, as he did against the Warrior Princess Chhaya. That act accomplished, Khiben-Sald spent the rest of his life traveling his kingdom and those of his neighbors, spreading the glory of Vudra and not-quite-coincidentally bankrupting most of his rivals. A Hundred and One Ships require a lot of hosting.

At first, Nex was reportedly pleased by the Maharajah's arrival. The charming conqueror and the headstrong archmage became fast friends. But Khiben-Sald's presence quickly began to pall as his vast traveling court seemed set to eat through even an archmage's impressive treasury. Looking for a way to evict the Maharajah without causing a diplomatic incident, Nex gave the island of Jalmeray to Khiben-Sald and encouraged him to explore his new possession.

Neither Nex nor Khiben-Sald consulted with Jalmeray's indigenous inhabitants, the Sunghari people, during this process, and the people of the island were much surprised to find they'd been given away by someone whom they'd never met to someone else they'd never heard of. Nevertheless, it wasn't Khiben-Sald's first time pacifying an unruly people, and he set out to win over the populace with gifts of genie-spun magic and Vudrani-funded royal architecture. Most of the local people decided a generous ruler was better than a risky civil war, but a portion chose to flee to the nearby island of Kaina Katakha, preferring to live in freedom and poverty than in purchased Vudrani splendor. Purportedly, Khiben-Sald was so intrigued by their decision that he let them go, treating the island almost as his own preserve of people.

After 10 years, Khiben-Sald returned to Vudra, but he left a Vudrani administration on Jalmeray, along with a great deal of Vudrani architecture and hundreds of bound genies.

THE WASTES AND THE WAR

The Thousand-Year War dragged on. Inexorably, the once-rich land between the warring mage kingdoms became a blasted and forsaken waste. The formerly Osirian residents fled. The dwarves of Dongun Hold, tired of being traded like a token on a game board, collapsed their tunnels and retreated underground to wait out the conflict in one of the subterranean vaults of the Darklands. Slowly, the borderlands became known as the Mana Wastes, the result of centuries of magical saturation, alchemical poisoning, unquiet dead, and dimensional rending. The Mana Wastes were a place of value to no one—a blasted, eldritch testament to the power of its creators and to their unceasing, unchanging spite.

The war ended quite abruptly and a trifle unexpectedly when the two archmages succeeded too well. The proximate cause was a blight unleashed by Geb on its northern neighbor; a twisted fungal infection devoured all that lay in its path

and brought the country of Nex to the brink of starvation. Nex retaliated by sending a series of magical cataclysms—earthquakes, hurricanes, sudden volcanoes—not at his foe directly, but at all of Geb. Tens of thousands of people died until there wasn't a family in the land that had not lost at least a third of its members.

Geb ruled as a necromancer-king, but he had still ruled over a living land. No more. Driven by rage and grief, Geb animated his entire nation, calling up and binding the souls of all who had ever perished in his self-named country, and then forced this entire host of the dead north against Nex and against Quantum. Before the walls of the city, Geb conjured a poisonous, yellow-brown fog, which he sent on enchanted winds throughout the city. Thousands died, only to stand up as Geb's new soldiers, and all marched on the Bandeshar, the fairytale palace of Nex.

Only to find the archmage missing.

Somehow, Nex escaped, or vanished, or died without anyone noticing. Some say he fled to the Refuge of Nex, a demiplane only he could access. Others thought he perished, and none of his household mages, the Arclords of Nex, cared to give Geb the satisfaction of knowing. In any case, after a few days, the Arclords repelled the overstretched Gebbite army.

The war more-or-less petered out afterward. Nex didn't return, and Geb became consumed with paranoia, uncertain as to where his nemesis had disappeared. After half a century of doubt, Geb took his own life in an act of ritual suicide, only to return to his land as a ghost, bound by chains of obsession too strong to break.

With Nex gone and Geb ever more withdrawn, the Thousand-Year War came to an unceremonious close. Officially, the war never concluded, and every so often, one side or the other launched some token raid or minor punitive expedition. Without the driving force of the two mages, no one else had the stomach to keep this conflict going.

THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED

In the years following Geb's death and Nex's disappearance, the Impossible Lands settled into a sort of peaceful, prosperous status quo. Each of the three major nations was borderline impregnable, whether defended by the golems of Quantum, the bound genies of Jalmeray, or the countless undead of Geb. The times someone tried to interfere with those lands often ended very badly.

On one occasion, the Knights of Ozem, fresh from their victories over the Whispering Tyrant, chose to attack the other great undead nation of Golarion. Hostilities began when a poorly thought-out infiltration of Geb by a team of knights roused the Ghost King from his usual torpor. After reanimating the heroic knights as undead horrors, he dispatched them to steal the corpse of Arazni, the Herald of Aroden. When the furious Knights of Ozem invaded in force, they were met with an army of the dead led by the revived Arazni, who came to rule Geb as the necromancer's Lich Queen.

Another aborted invasion was that of the Holomog a few centuries later. Led by the Pirate Queen Mastrien Slash, Holomog was a kingdom south of Geb undergoing a period of profound military expansion. Feeling more powerful than ever before, Mastrien chose to invade north into Geb, only to discover why rousing the Ghost King was never wise. With a single spell, Geb turned the entire army of warrior women to stone, forming the Field of Maidens that mark the dead land's southern border today.

Despite their status quo, the nations didn't utterly stagnate. On the contrary, with foreign adventures out of the question, internal politics became ever more vicious and cultural ferment ever more exciting. The country of Nex, for instance, suddenly had to deal with creating a new approach to governance after more than a thousand years of magical dictatorship. Over the centuries, numerous factions struggled to control Nex, among them various city-states and religious leaders, and the descendants of Nex's household mages, the Arclords.

4333 AR

Adolphus and Ganjay found Nexus House in Quantum, Nex. It's recognized as the Society's second official lodge.

4374 AR

The reign of the Beggar-Rajah Jharka begins on Jalmeray.

4588 AR

Fleeing an arrest warrant in Quantum, Ancil Alkenstar enters the Mana Wastes and discovers the ruins of Dongun Hold.

4601 AR

The Duchy of Alkenstar is founded; construction of the Gunworks begins with the aid of the dwarves of Dongun Hold.

4620 AR

The Gunworks of Alkenstar are completed. The first firearms begin emerging from Alkenstar.

4690 AR

The Gorilla King of Usaro attacks Alkenstar and steals the largest cannon as a trophy.

4716 AR

The Refuge of Nex opens in Quantum, prompting rumors that Nex himself will soon return.

4718 AR

All the Houses of Perfection are disqualified from the Challenge of Sky and Heaven, leaving it unfinished.

4719 AR

Arazni abandons the nation of Geb. Stirrings from the Refuge of Nex prompt the Ghost King to take an active part in world affairs once more.

4720 AR

A group of Pathfinders following Selmus Foster's notes reestablishes contact with Bhopen on more peaceful terms.

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MISSING RECORDS

The constant devastation of the Impossible Lands resulted in the loss of countless historical records, through warfare, unnatural disasters, or deliberate destruction. For every ancient scroll or written record found in libraries, there are ten more hidden in the oceans, sealed in caverns, or buried beneath cracked earth, and the past of the Impossible Lands is rewritten as often as the present.



MASTRIEN SLASH

At one point, the Arclords managed to fully regain control of their homeland and, in time, began hoping to challenge Geb once more. However, they were forced out in a palace revolution. Several supposedly almighty mages were murdered in their beds, and the coterie fled to Jalmeray. There, they evicted the now-isolated Vudrani administration. For several centuries more, they ruled in something that approached peace and tranquility, or at least as much of it as a land rife with genies and curses and ruled by experiment-minded wizards can reach. The Arclords' rule ended with the advent of the Fleet of the Hundred Rajahs, a massive armada of Vudrani warships led by Khiben-Sald's heirs, or at least claimants to the same title, who put the Arclords to flight and reconquered Jalmeray. The furious Arclords made a few efforts to regain the island and then to conquer Absalom in the Conjured Siege of 2850 AR, only to fail as their master did before.

Other movements and challenges arose, and some stood the test of time. A few centuries ago, a beggar in Niswan came upon a stoppered bottle. When uncorked, the bottle unleashed a mighty and puissant marid, bound since Khiben-Sald's day. The marid had stood at Khiben-Sald's left hand during his conquests, and still could command an army of a hundred djinn and ifrits. She asked the beggar to make three wishes, and so he did. The first is not spoken of today. The second saw the young man become the Beggar-Rajah Jharka, ruler of all Jalmeray. The third outlawed the practice of genie binding forever on Jalmeray. Jharka ruled for 60 years before dying peacefully in his sleep. To this day, many cakes in Jalmeray are marked with the marid's ring.

Other movements proved more ephemeral. The Cult of Weeping Stars was a religious movement that swept through Nex at the turn of the millennium, proclaiming an apocalypse would soon arrive in the form of 11 new stars in the sky, which would rain 56 burning tears upon the world until all was drowned in flames.

The cult spread rapidly, and on the promised day, several great sacrificial rituals were prepared outside Ecanus. When the prophesized apocalypse day came and went without incident, the cult entered a deep decline. A few scattered cultists still remain, however, insisting their predecessors simply miscalculated and that the apocalypse would come soon.

Some moments in history fizzled out, and the relics of their actors lay dormant. The famous Pathfinder Selmius Foster, following a lead initially discovered in the Mwangi Expanse, found his way to the island of Bhopan off the coast of Nex. The Bhoponese people were rendered insular by the devastation of their civilization by the fey monarch Qxal, but enough clues and records existed for Selmius to make the trip. The purpose of his journey was somewhat darker than mere academic exploration, however; driven by whispers from Qxal, Selmius sought to steal an artifact known as the *Perennial Crown* from the royals of Bhopan. Selmius and his assistant, Adolphus, allied with the revolutionary Bhoponese Princess Ganjay to pull off the theft, but Selmius was caught during the heist and executed. Adolphus and Ganjay succeeded in fleeing Bhopan with a substantial portion of the royal treasury, later using their massive wealth to found the Pathfinder Lodge of Nexus House in Quantum. Selmius was mourned, and Bhopan was left cut off from the greater world once more.

THE FOUNDING OF ALKENSTAR

In 4588 AR, the balance of power in the region shifted permanently when a young Nexian engineer named Ancil Alkenstar escaped

an arrest warrant by fleeing into the Mana Wastes. He discovered an entire community of refugees and outcasts had taken up residence in the ruins of Dongun Hold. How exactly Alkenstar rallied that motley band, how he took them deeper into the ruins and past the old gates, how he met the dwarves and convinced them to return—these questions are the subject of hundreds of songs, paintings, and cheap pamphlets.

The key fact is Alkenstar convinced the dwarves to return to Dongun Hold, and they didn't come empty-handed. During their long sojourn beneath the earth, they invented a new weapon, the firearm, that could change the face of warfare on Golarion forever. In one stroke, Dongun Hold was restored to the dwarves, and the Duchy of Alkenstar was founded. On paper, the united polity is theoretically beholden to Nex, but in practice, the twin kingdoms form a new, fourth nation, a city-state huddled between the titans of Geb and Nex, surrounded by the Mana Wastes.

Alkenstar's rise wasn't without a few bumps. Firearms, though effective, were also an irresistible temptation. Over the decades, several organizations made off with contingents of guns, the most famous of these being the Gorilla King of Usaro. These thefts combined with the rigors of living in the blasted Mana Wastes to give Alkenstar something of a siege mentality, a feeling of being eternally under pressure from all sides, one false move from disaster.

AN AGE OF LOST OMENS

When Aroden perished a century ago, his death ushered in a time of increasing instability in the Impossible Lands. Though the changes took some time to pick up steam, they're now hurtling through the former equilibrium of the region, overturning old certainties and replacing them with excitement and fear in equal measure.

In Nex, the gates of the Refuge of Nex have opened once more, and rumor runs rampant that after more than 4,000 years, the great archmage will return to his land. Some treat this return as if it were Aroden reborn, the coming of a great and long-awaited lord, but not everyone is thrilled at the prospect of seeing the Thousand-Year War ignite anew.

In Geb, the Ghost King had long withdrawn from mortal concerns until he was awakened when the Lich Queen Arazni broke free of his control. Suddenly, the long-prosperous and stable dead nation of Geb was cast rudderless into a tense future. Geb readies his war machine once again, but as in Nex, not all who serve the Ghost King are entirely happy with the thought of replacing peace and security with the vicissitudes of war.

In Alkenstar, the siege mentality of the Duchy has only deepened, and debates over the nature of humanity threaten to spill from the parlor and into the street. Surrounded by Mana Waste mutants, clockwork servitors, and undead neighbors, the people of Alkenstar cling to the idea that natural humanity, that the living form without alteration or transformation, is the apex of possibility. This idea will be tested soon enough.

In Jalmeray, unrest and uncertainty sparked among the populace when, a few years ago, all the Houses of Perfection were disqualified from the Challenge of Sky and Heaven, the greatest martial arts tournament in the land. Sparse details have made it to the wider public, and rumors devise more scandalous explanations every month.

In isolationist Bhopan, a skeleton from the past has opened a door in the present. A group of Pathfinders, following notes from Selmius Foster's journal, retraced his steps to the island. After driving off the fey tyrant Qxal, the explorers contacted the Bhoponese royals on more peaceful terms, potentially opening their city and people to the greater world. Whether this development bodes good or ill is up to the actions taken in the present and the future.

Soon, the world might once more learn nothing is impossible in the Impossible Lands, not even change.

ADDITIONAL READING

While this book is meant to be a comprehensive guide to the Impossible Lands metaregion, providing enough information to run any adventure or campaign, other Pathfinder products can supplement this material. For further reading, consider the following sources.

Pathfinder Lost Omens: World

Guide: This book provides a high-level overview of the Impossible Lands metaregion, as well as the other metaregions within the Inner Sea setting of Golarion. While not as robust as this setting book, it is a helpful resource for players to read in order to get a sense of the world of Golarion without revealing all of its potential secrets.

Pathfinder Lost Omens: Legends

This book provides profiles on many of the major power players in the Inner Sea, including the two ancient wizards Nex and Geb. It also provides information on more recent influential figures, including King Among Arunak of Dongun Hold.

Pathfinder Book of the Dead

Written by King Geb himself, this tome provides his thoughts on both undead hunters and the undead themselves, as well as offering rules for player characters to play as undead creatures.

Outlaws of Alkenstar: A prewritten campaign for a GM and players to run, this Pathfinder Adventure Path takes PCs to the City of Smog in the Mana Wastes, where a band of outlaws seek to unravel an explosive criminal plot.

Blood Lords: A prewritten campaign for a GM and players to run, this Pathfinder Adventure Path takes PCs to the undead-ruled nation of Geb, where the PCs play agents of the nation's insidious Blood Lords.

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