

PATHFINDER[®]



LOST OMENS

IMPOSSIBLE LANDS

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This book refers to several other Pathfinder products, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available for free at paizo.com/prd.

APG

Advanced Player's Guide







INTRODUCTION

There's a land where the dead toil in the fields, where a mortal can walk alongside bleached-bone skeletons and pale and hungry ghouls, where the quick and the dead live under one roof. It's a land where a goddess once ruled, a ghost now reigns, and blood is currency. It's a land where forever has a different meaning entirely, and eternity is a matter of law and not luck. Impossible? Not in Geb.

There's a land where wizards build things of steel and sinew and spell, where great colossi of otherworldly metals guard the gates to a city of wonder, where monsters walk and talk and trade on the streets. It's a land of piercing spires and spiraling stairways, skewering the heavens and shattering reality. It's a land where things live that shouldn't live, lakes and weapons and stranger things besides. Impossible? Not in Nex.

There's a land where one can learn to speak with the moon and the stars; where flame and iron, wind and wave are courses of study for the devout and the dedicated. It's a place where genies dwell and wishes become wonders; where the elements are matters of heritage and experience, not merely philosophy. It's a land of curses and cycles, where all things come round once more. Impossible? Not in Jalmeray.

There's a broken land where magic runs wild and rampant, or else dead and stagnant. It's a land where the

souls of armies still shamble in misery, and where storms of broken glass and poisonous fog arise without warning. It's a land where there's life without wizards, and also a land where wizards broke the world in their wars. It's a land where, on a clear night, you can see through the great spell-storms and look across a hundred worlds. Impossible? Not in the Mana Wastes.

There's a city where artisans make weapons that can kill gods and demons. It's a city in the shadow of an ancient fortress, but it's a place of new things and new ideas, where new people make new wonders and new horrors. It's a city of guns and cannons, from little pistols to great, belching bombards, as powerful as any archmage. Impossible? Not in Alkenstar.

The Impossible Lands aren't. But they might seem so to outsiders.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

The Impossible Lands were founded through unmitigated hubris and unprecedented bloodshed, and the nations within the region are often disturbing and cruel. One of the most prominent kingdoms, Geb, is infamous for raising humans and other sapient beings like cattle and eating them! Even the kindest or most inoffensive locales are stained with the legacy of colonialism, genocide, war



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crimes, nonconsensual experimentation, suicide, enslaved genie servitors, and deep-rooted prejudice. This is a dark setting, filled with material that can be uncomfortable or outright unwelcome. Please talk your players through the subjects they might encounter through the course of a campaign—and use specifics where needed, as terms like “mature” are often too vague. You might realize that this setting isn’t for your group, and that’s perfectly fine!

CHECK IN

The X Card mentioned on page 485 of the Core Rulebook is a useful tool for ensuring safety at your table, but it can put a lot of pressure on the people who most need to use it. Few people feel comfortable interrupting and ending a scene that everyone else seems to be enjoying. This can especially be true if the player is stressed or uncomfortable but doesn’t feel the issue is severe enough to warrant the X Card. Consider adding another card to indicate a “Check In.” When used, the GM can pause the game action and allow the player to voice what they need to without automatically ending the scene. For example, a player could raise the Check In card to have a moment to cool down from an intense encounter, or to make their concerns clear to ensure the game doesn’t go in a direction that they don’t want (for example, “I’m fine if something happens to my character, but I can’t handle it if my PC fails to save this NPC” or “This character reminds me of my ex, can you adjust their behavior slightly?”).

IMPOSSIBLE NATIONS

The modern nations of the Impossible Lands are inextricably defined by the legacy of their pasts and the monuments to progress they’ve made in the face of uncertain futures. Though independent from one another and often in competition or conflict, the nations of the Impossible Lands all share a common origin as sites of colonial conquest and cultural diasporas. It was the height of the Osirion’s Ascension reign, during the union of the Four Pharaohs, that saw expansion southward down the eastern coast of Garund, conquering and assimilating whatever fledgling powers would challenge the pharaonic rulers in Tumen. Under the might of Osirion, the lands were plundered for their plentiful ores and resources until the time of the pious Kenaton, who reigned in an era of decline over the Osirian Empire and who would cede the southernmost colonial lands to the exiled necromancer Geb. It’s from Geb that the legacy of colonization, revolution, and independence is most notable.

After the necromancer’s conquest and the ceding of lands from the failing Osirian Empire, the newly founded eponymous nation ruled in relative peace. War wasn’t the trade of Geb, or so they claim—not until the coming of the wizard-king Nex, which led to a thousand-year war that ravaged the populace across the eastern coast. In the face of famine and supernatural blighting by the northern conqueror, Geb raised his fallen into an endless legion of the walking dead. To this day, the scars of Nex’s conquest linger, both in the borderlands of the Mana Wastes that

divide the territories and in the shift in Gebbite culture. The dead reign in Geb now, and though their society is ordered, it's unkind to the living. The nation's lush fields and ample farmlands are worked by unloving hands, reaping the fruitful bounty of the earth to sell in foreign markets as a show of good will in mutual trade.

Nex tells a different tale, claiming that the workings of Geb provoked their conflict, the necromancer's hunger for further dominion driving him northward to Quantum and the lands that the wizard-king would claim to reforge in his name. Whatever the truth might be, there's no refuting that it was Nex who conquered and subjugated Oenopion and Ecanus before plundering other nations beyond Golarion for the benefit of his kingdom. As Geb is

belligerent and recalcitrant in its cultural lynchpins toward a failing Osirian imperial state, Nex is a study in contrasts: a willful embrace of all that's opulent in aesthetics across the sensory spectrum. Nex is a nation of astonishing, magically augmented cities and barren wilds populated by those discarded and untamed by the wizard-king's march toward arcane supremacy. With his alleged reemergence into the world, it remains unclear what role he shall take in the state of his nation.

This in turn leads to growing worries within the Grand Duchy of Alkenstar, a city-state formed during the centuries-long conflict between Nex and Geb, populated by the displaced survivors of the rival wizards' hatred. Founded by a fugitive engineer from Nex, Alkenstar has long been on the path of technological innovation, producing works of steam and black powder with power enough to rival the arcane might of their neighbors. Nestled within the Shattered Range and enriched with resources from the long-abandoned Sky Citadel of Dongun Hold, Alkenstar has a wealth of weapons and metallurgic commodities, but it finds itself in a precarious position should Nex come to enforce its claim of ownership over those it once displaced or should trade with Geb for foodstuffs be viewed as anything more than a mutual trade alliance.

Should any power within the mainland of the Impossible Lands find itself once again drawn into the horrors of the world, the desolation of the Mana Wastes might expand and claim new victims to its ravaged state. Though the lands of Nex show the bitter wounds of the rival wizards' long conflict, such devastation is a mere grazing strike when compared to the broken earth that now separates Geb and Nex. For want of sovereignty, both nations and their masters warped once-sublime grasslands into a wasteland pockmarked with zones where the very laws of the cosmos are forced into flux. Magic dies here, is reborn here, takes forms here in the most unlikely and horrifying manifestations. Safety is never assured, and the dangers of the wasteland have helped ensure the long but tenuous peace between Nex and Geb. The Mana Wastes aren't worth dying for.

Mostly removed from mainland conflicts sits the Vudran colony of Jalmeray, an island nation granted to the legendary maharajah Khiben-Sald after formally opening relations between Vudra and Garund in the courts of Nex. Its splendid marble palaces and adherence to Vudran aesthetics make modern Jalmeray a shining beacon for pilgrims and immigrants, and the current reigning Thakur and his supplicants appeal to the image of Iroran wisdom and wondrous magical alliances with genies upon the national stage. In judgment of their neighbors' bickering, they'll click their tongues, yet one can't help but note that the island's history has been stripped from any archives and the indigenous inhabitants given the terrible ultimatum of exile or uncertain fealty to foreign masters. When called to answer for the bloodied



KING GEB

history of their own people upon the isle, few will have anything to say.

RELATIONS

Despite animosities that have defined centuries, the Impossible Lands currently enjoy a period of relative peace among one another and their foreign neighbors. The Shattered Range keeps the political intrigue of the Mwangi Expanse mostly isolated from the eastern coast of Garund, and despite its origins as a founding power within the Impossible Lands, Osirion and other nations upon the Golden Road hold only as much influence as can be afforded when posturing between the rival mage-founded nations and those that border them.

Geb shall always hate Nex, even in times so long removed from their ancient conflict—no matter how far removed the next generation is from those devastations. Trade and wealth won't change this hate, but both parties know well that knives are best sharpened in the dark, such that those born in foreign lands and unaware of ancient grudges wouldn't be remiss in thinking the two nations to be on amicable, cooperative terms. The Gebbites trade in good faith with Katapesh and Qadira, as well as with Jalmeray, affording grand luxuries only the unliving could truly appreciate. Alkenstar trades ice wine for food, and the technological state is all too aware of how their supply lines would be severed in the event of a war. Geb is a patient state, and the only nation to truly hold their friendship is the Darklands city of Nemret Noktoria, whose ghouls share ancient alliances with the Blood Lords.

The wizard-king Nex was notably well traveled, and in greeting Khiben-Sald, he opened up trade relations with the Vudran homeland. As such, the city of Quantum houses embassies to most nations in the known world as well as more than a few from lands, planets, and planes of existence beyond. Navigating the obtuse bureaucracy and politics of guilds within Nex will often leave foreign traders with an ill taste in their mouths, but the profits for successful navigating the system offer riches few would turn away. Few but Geb would spit at the name of Nex, for such are their riches and their influence.

Alkenstar's niche place in the region and the relative scarcity of its influence see that it holds little influence in global affairs but is still courted by Avistani states such as Taldor, who see potential in the proliferation of black powder and firearms. They trade resources as far as Vudra and are held in good company with the dwarven people of Dongun Hold.

The island nation of Jalmeray is held in high esteem by its neighbors and contemporaries, for while they might intercept and funnel trade from the Vudran mainland through their ports, they also call for the Vudrani to trade openly in Garund. Alliances with Katapesh, born of trade with the Golden City, have seen many fruitful returns. The flow of wealth and foreign courtiers in the nation has historically garnered the attention of the Aspis Consortium, who have long sought to

entrench themselves within the state and gain further contacts for trade in distant Vudra.

ADVENTURES

Intrigue and ancient grudges abound throughout the Impossible Lands, as even an era of peace and mutual cooperation between independent nations won't stop the subtle machinations of ancient archmages—or the cosmic upheavals of a region so thoroughly saturated in both arcane power and the ruination it has long carved into the very earth. The Impossible Lands are well charted, settled by the encroachment of generations of colonies. Though chances to make a name for oneself abound within the polities and city-states, most who seek wealth and fame must cleave into the ravenous desolation of the Mana Wastes.



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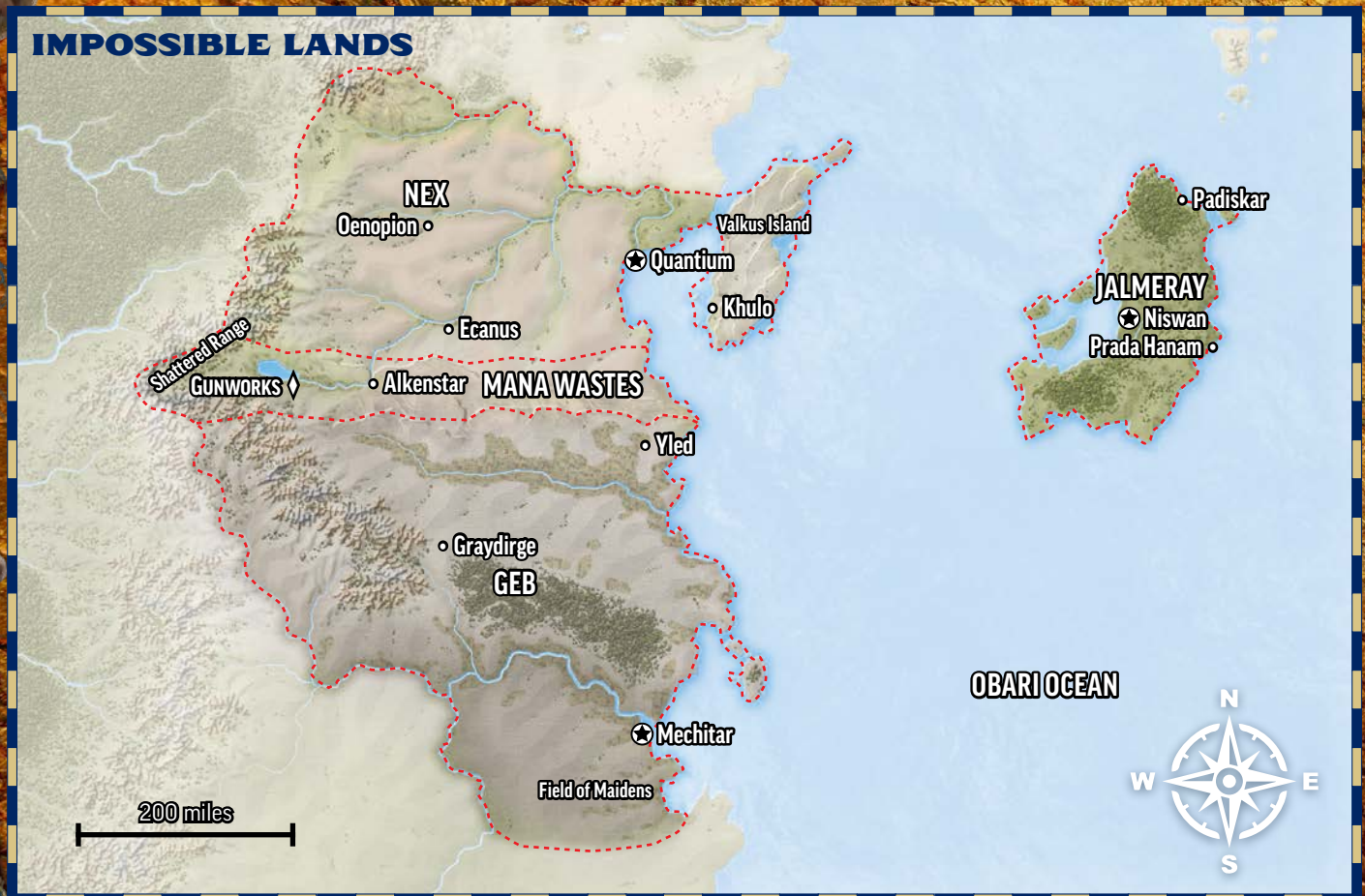
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The threats of mana-warped mutants and horrid beasts escaped from the Nexian fleshforges stymie all but the bold and foolhardy, who abandon caution to pursue rumors of treasure and ancient vaults lost to the ravages of the Mana Wastes, unblemished by the ancient conflict between Nex and Geb. Mages from across Golarion have sought to study, contain, and manipulate the wild energies of the Wastes; those who don't fall into despondence at the task or die trying all too often find themselves in the drinking lounges of Quantum, gazing in avarice at monuments to powerful magics that might never again grace the world. Many an Avistani venture will dare to brave the Wastes or act as patron to those with more mettle to their name, all for want of war weapons forged in the Gunworks of Alkenstar.

In the courts of Niswan in Jalmeray, newly arrived courtiers for the Vudran rajahs posture for influence with the Thakur, often requiring interlopers to serve as proxies in matters that would sully the honor of their noble birthright. Genies, rakshasas, asuras, and all manner of both local and foreign spiritual beings seek to guide the fate of the nation's soul toward their own ends, often at the expense of mortals. Martial arts tournaments by the Houses of Perfection offer chances at enlightenment through combat and a fine purse to any savvy enough to gamble away from the judging eyes of monks. Those of academic hubris or a particularly

self-destructive bent might seek to unravel the mysteries of the Murrur Dome of Prada Hanam, which warps the blood and very soul of those who enter its mirrored halls, destroying trespassers as their insides churn with warping, manifest metals.

Geb and Nex rattle their sabers in acts of subterfuge that risk untold collateral as their animosity returns to its ancient fever heights. Though trade profits the Blood Lords of Geb, the low nobility hunger to slake their dread cravings for the flesh of the "quick," perhaps to the fool's end of provoking war. Legalists in service to Abadar and Pharasma insurgents seek greater understanding of the nation's Dead Laws, so as to better make sense or war against the unliving and their capacities. Living souls in need of stewards and saviors to liberate them from a life destined for butchery will eye any foreign traveler with pitiable despondency and what little coin they can offer, ever hopeful for a hero.

In Oenopion, the City of Alchemists, the fleshforges churn terrible new works, and sludge percolates with malign intelligence. Warlords across the ravaged lands await any moment of dissent or chaos, hungering to avenge their ancestors who were left to suffer in the hubristic wake of a wizard-king and his hated southern foe. Nightmarish creatures roam the wilds here, each worthy of a tall tale and toasting to, should one be cunning enough to hunt them.

As a haven for refugees and immigrants, Alkenstar buckles under generational shifts and compromises made to the industrial powers that strip the common people of their wealth, liberty, and dignity, often by ways of debt or servitude. In the frontier city's backstreets, families, gangs, outcasts, and orphans of other nations look upon the dreams of safety they were promised and spit the bitter taste upon the dusty ground. Black powder and firearms will light the path forward, be it a revolution among the underclass or a terrible new war machine in need of freelancers to help smuggle it into another nation.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The subject on everyone's mind in the Impossible Lands today is the return of the archmages. In 4716 AR, after thousands of years of quiescence, the gates of the Refuge of Nex opened once more, prompting a tidal wave of speculation that the great wizard had survived the fall of Quantum eons ago and now aimed to return to his namesake nation. Not long afterward, the fleshforges rumbled once more to life, giving the rumors wings. A few years later, the Lich-Queen Arazni, the former herald of Aroden and the effective ruler of the land of Geb, contrived to throw off her bondage and escape the Ghost King's control. In the aftermath of this great shock, the necromancer has taken renewed interest in his own kingdom, and as rumors of Nex's return grow, Geb has worked to put his land on a war footing.

This isn't a situation that pleases everyone. While Geb, and presumably Nex, are eager to return to the great conflict of the past, most everyone else has moved on—it has been a good 4,000 years since the war ended, after all. In Nex, the Council of Three and Nine has become accustomed to ruling over their country, and not everyone is interested in ceding their seat to a figure from the past, however notorious. Should the wizard-king truly have returned, Nex will be thrown into a state of flux. The Council of Three and Nine in Bandeshar are equally fearful of both their founder's response to their stewardship and how his resurgence would threaten the comfort of power to which they've long acclimated. The Arclords, descendants of Nex's household servants and apprentices, seek any collaborators whose deeds might assure they cling to their station or cast down those who have long spurned them. The Blood Lords of Geb have likewise had a very long time to get used to casually trading food, easy to grow in Geb's fertile farmland and of little interest to its skeletal farmhands, for wealthy goods from other parts of the world. A great war would disrupt their comfortable existence.

Both countries also have their war parties, whether the more bloodthirsty undead in Geb or the Arclords of Nex who view peace with the dead as a blasphemous affront. If the two archmages will it, all the opposition in the world might not stop them. But the two countries are bigger than they once were, wealthier and wiser and

more sophisticated, and even an archmage might not command the absolute loyalty they once did.

In Alkenstar, tucked away in the Mana Wastes between the two warring sides, the prospect of a war has sent all into panic. The Duchy has long benefited from being a third option between the wizard-formed lands on either side, but this simply means that if a war comes, Alkenstar will be a prize to be plucked—or a thorn to be ripped out. A few in the Duchy believe that some technological superweapon might secure their independence, but cooler heads doubt the small nation can do anything to stop a determined army of dead or conjured beasts. Only a diplomatic solution will save the city, which already faces other problems. Rapid industrialization, soaring inequality, and a new philosophy of biological essentialism—the concept that unaltered humans and dwarves are superior to the mage-wrought mutants of the Mana Wastes or the clockwork constructs of the city—have all sparked unrest.

In Jalmeray, scandal still hovers over the bizarre Challenge of Sky and Heaven of a few years past, when all of the Houses of Perfection were disqualified for reasons not entirely clear. This has consumed much of the attention of Jalmeray's people and of its ruling class, but a few have been casting uneasy glances toward the mainland. While currently on the sidelines of the great conflict, Jalmeray was once part of Nex's kingdom, and if a war breaks out, it might get dragged into conflict once more.



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