



WELCOME TO
ROSHAR™



COSMERE®

ROLEPLAYING GAME

THE COSMERE® RPG was created by Brotherwise Games and Dragonsteel Entertainment.

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Brandon Sanderson's novel series, the *Stormlight Archive*, is epic in every sense of the word. The sweeping scope of Brandon's narrative is enough to fill five substantial novels, with another five to come. The gripping story and unparalleled world-building have inspired a legion of fans to read and reread not only these stories, but the entire Cosmere universe of fantasy fiction.

What you hold in your hands is not a weighty tome. It's a sampler and teaser, designed specifically for people who haven't read the *Stormlight* novels. This booklet introduces Roshar, a world of conflict, storms, and Investiture. Divine forces shaped this planet, some leading to subjugation and cruelty, others cultivating ideals of growth and honor. It's a world where flawed heroes gain incredible powers by forging bonds and seeking redemption.

If you're playing the *COSMERE RPG* and beginning an adventure in the *Stormlight* campaign setting, this guide illustrates Roshar's unique world-building and tells you what a typical citizen of Eastern Roshar would know about the world without revealing any character or plot spoilers for *The Way of Kings*.

Welcome to a universe unlike any other, and a fantasy setting as captivating as it is alien. Welcome to Roshar! We hope this is just the first step of your journey.

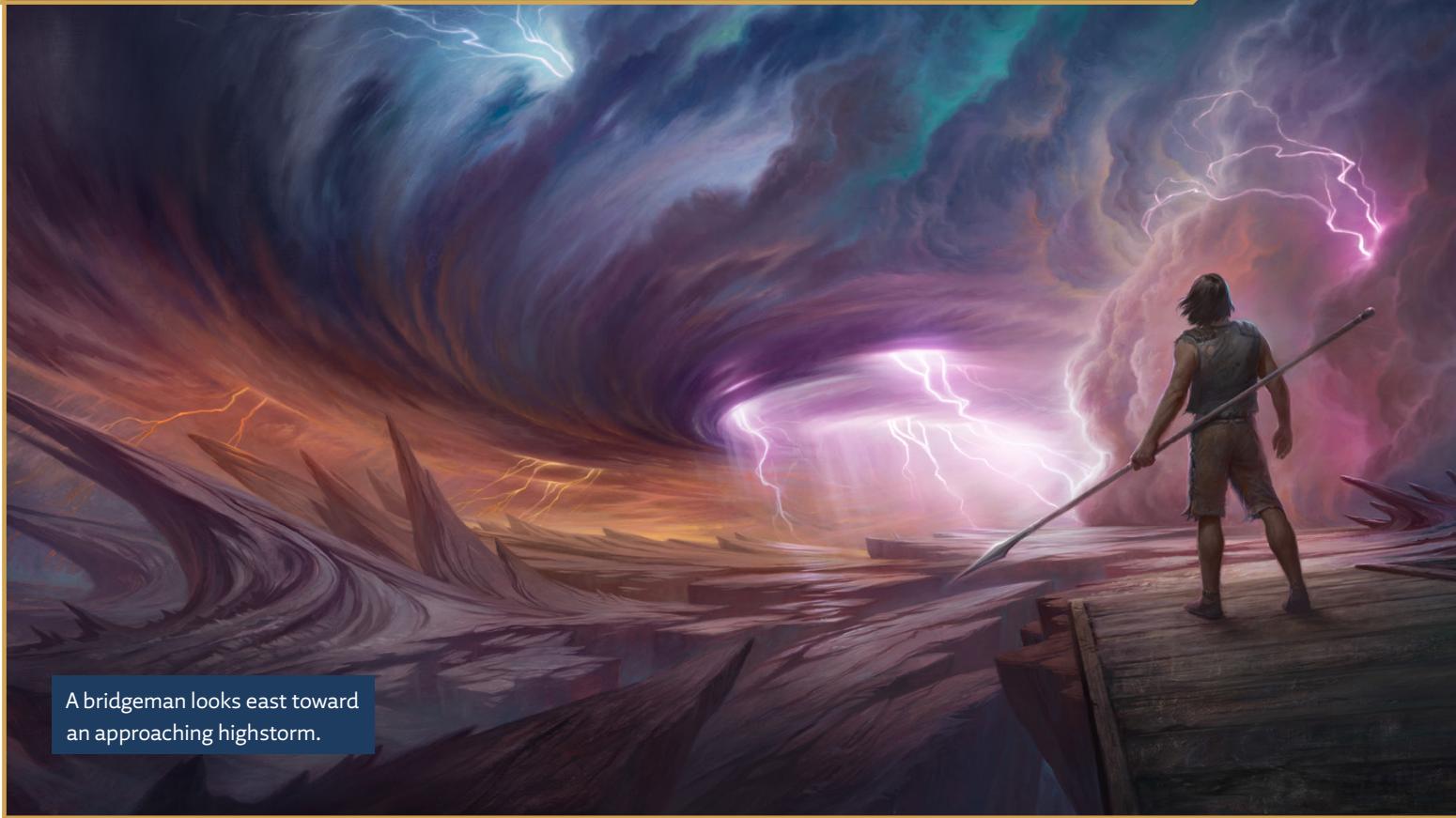
— Johnny O'Neal

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A WORLD OF STORMS AND WAR



A bridgeman looks east toward an approaching highstorm.



HIGHSTORMS

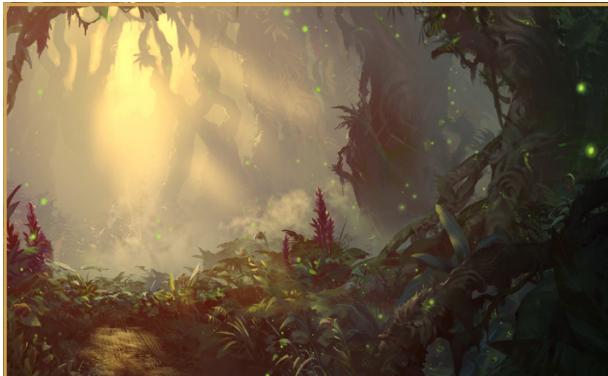
No force has shaped Roshar's ecology and culture more completely than **highstorms**: hurricane-force storms of incredible power that sweep across the continent about once per five-day week, always traveling from east to west. Heralded by a powerful stormwall with enough strength to hurl boulders, highstorms can be incredibly destructive. However, the highstorm also infuses Roshar with incredible energy called **Stormlight**.

SPHERES

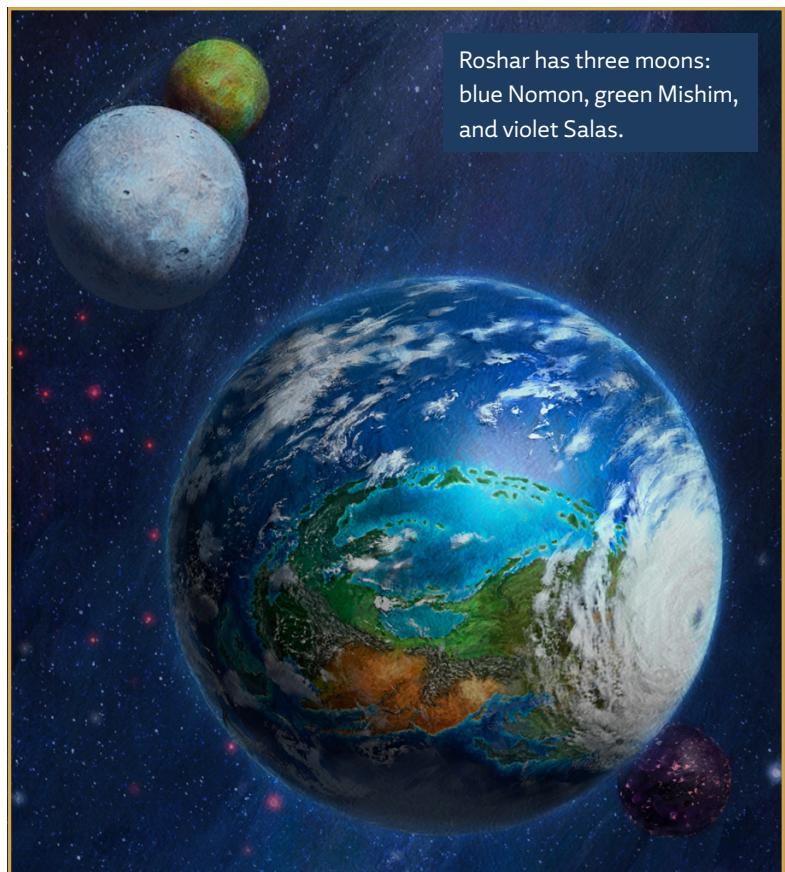
Throughout Roshar, **spheres** are the most commonly accepted currency. Small gemstones embedded in glass, their denominations are based on the size and type of gems inside. Well-cut gemstones glow for several days when infused with Stormlight, so merchants distrust dun spheres. Infused spheres glow brightly enough to be a helpful light source, especially when multiple spheres are placed in a lantern, and most people carry at least one sphere for good luck.

A VAST SUPERCONTINENT

Roshar is the name of the planet and its single continent. The majority of the continent's terrain is stone, and its storm-swept lands are harsh. However, this world is far from barren. Every type of biome can be found on Roshar, from snow-capped mountains to lush jungles.



Roshar has three moons: blue Nomon, green Mishim, and violet Salas.



SHARDBEARERS

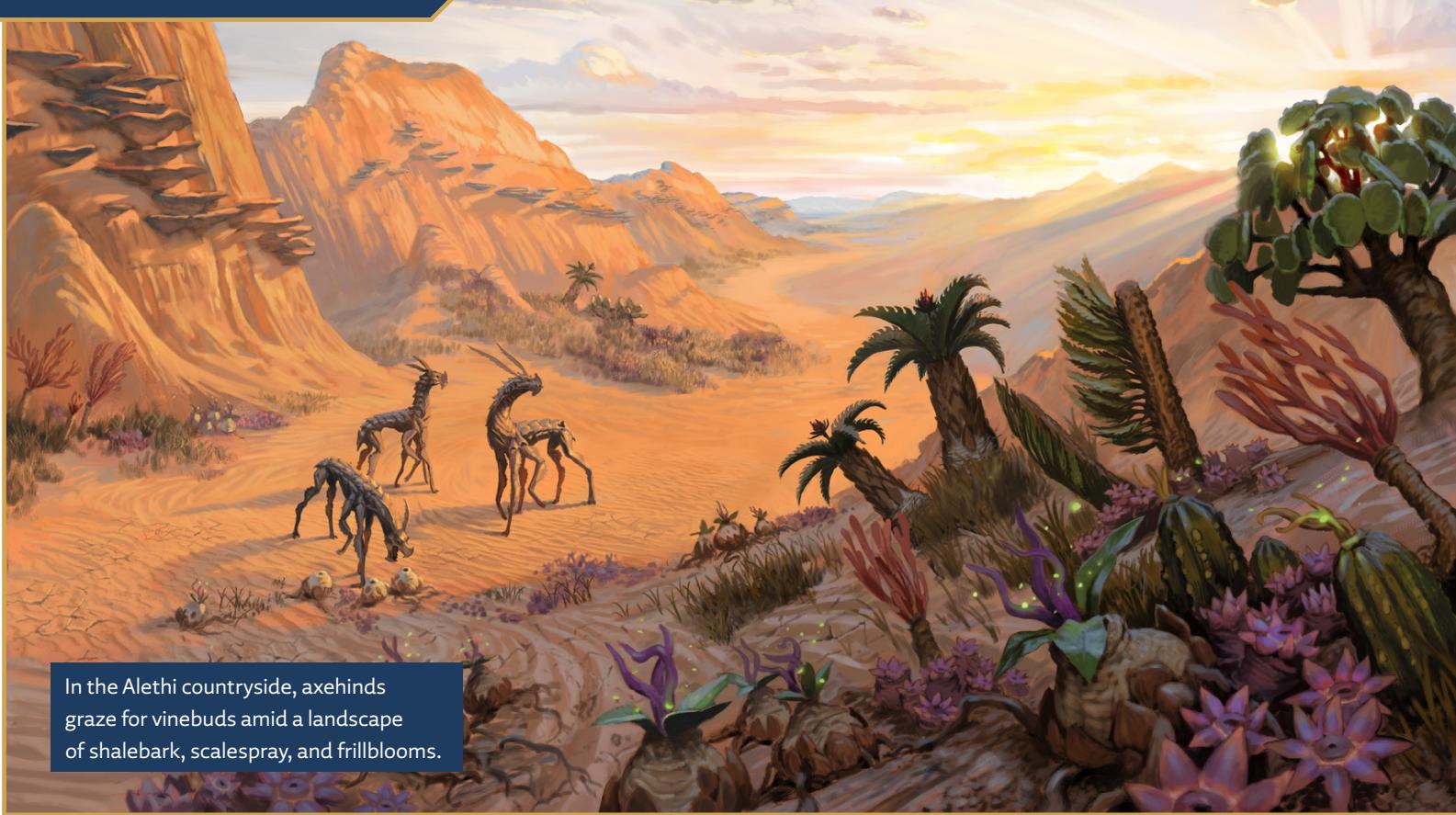
Across Roshar, two relics are prized above all other material possessions: Shardblades and Shardplate. Shardblades slice effortlessly through any unliving matter, and kill foes with a single strike, leaving no wounds except burning eyes. Fueled by Stormlight, Shardplate is the only armor that can deflect a Shardblade, and each suit endows its bearer with superhuman speed and strength. A single Shardbearer can turn the tide of an entire battle, and wars have been fought to claim a single Blade or suit of Plate.



Despite massive size, Blade is lighter than a longsword



ECOLOGY

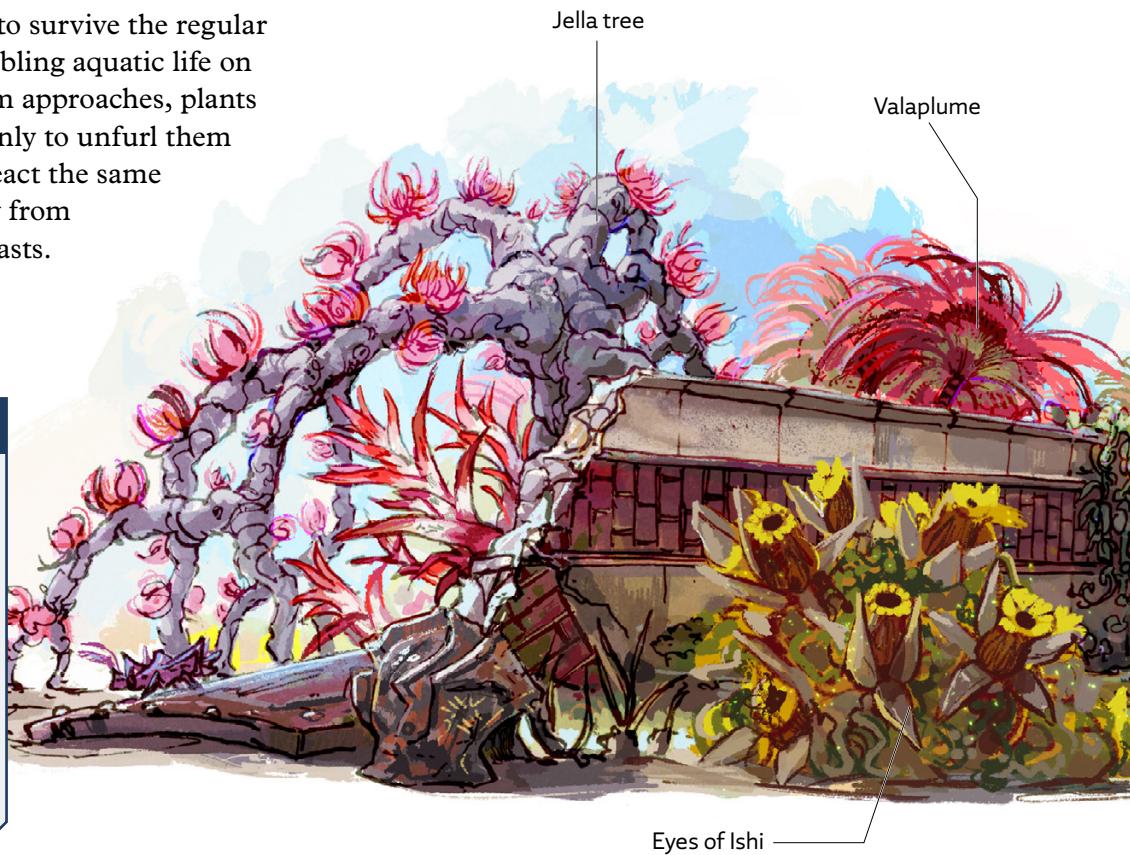


VEGETATION

Plants on Roshar have evolved to survive the regular onslaught of highstorms, resembling aquatic life on other worlds. When a highstorm approaches, plants retract their vines and leaves, only to unfurl them when the storm passes. They react the same way to animals, shrinking away from passing travelers or foraging beasts.

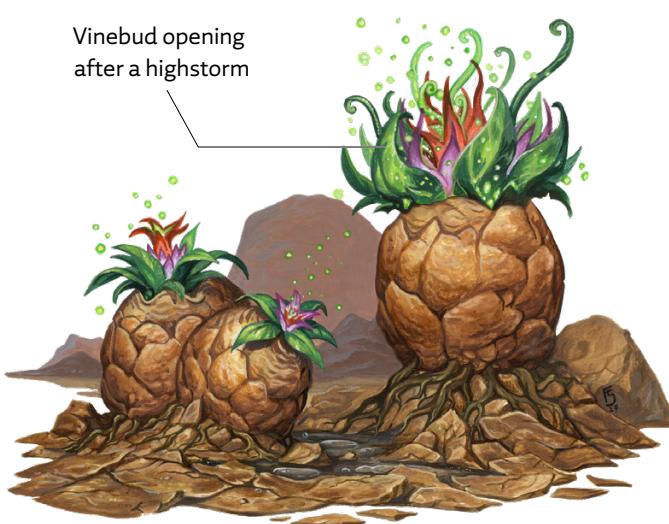
VARIED ADAPTATIONS

Rosharan plants employ a range of adaptations to protect themselves from highstorms. Many plants wrap and withdraw their leaves and tendrils. Jella trees and prickletacs absorb *crem* and form stone-like trunks. Thaylen deadfall trees lie flat during storms. In eastern Roshar, many plants grow only on the leeward side of cliffsides, taking shelter in protected laits.



STONE AND CREM

On most of Roshar, soil would be quickly washed away by the strength of highstorms. Instead, plants cling directly to the stony terrain with strong roots. Soil and mud are alien to most Rosharans, but when a highstorm passes, it leaves behind a coating of mineral-rich **crem** that acts as fertilizer for Rosharan flora. Crem is clay-like when wet, and can be shaped into pottery, but hardens quickly and must be chipped away before it covers every surface exposed to the elements.



Vinebud opening after a highstorm



In the sheltered mountain nation of Shinovar, highstorms pass as gentle rainfall. Plants grow in soil and do not retreat when trod upon. Shinovar is home to strange animals seen nowhere else, including chickens in all shapes, sizes, and colors. It is the only nation in the world where wild horses thrive, and Shin horses are prized throughout Roshar.

ROCKBUDS

Rockbuds are a family of hard-shelled plants found across Roshar, especially in the east. Like other Rosharan flora, rockbuds can contract during highstorms and bloom afterward. The seeds of lavis polyps, a variety of rockbud, can be dried and served as grain. Lavis grain is a staple food for people around the world, served with curry, steamed in leaf wraps, or ground into flour.



Overgrown garden on an estate ruined during the Veden civil war

Emberblooms

Prickleshell

Markel tree (dwarf variety)

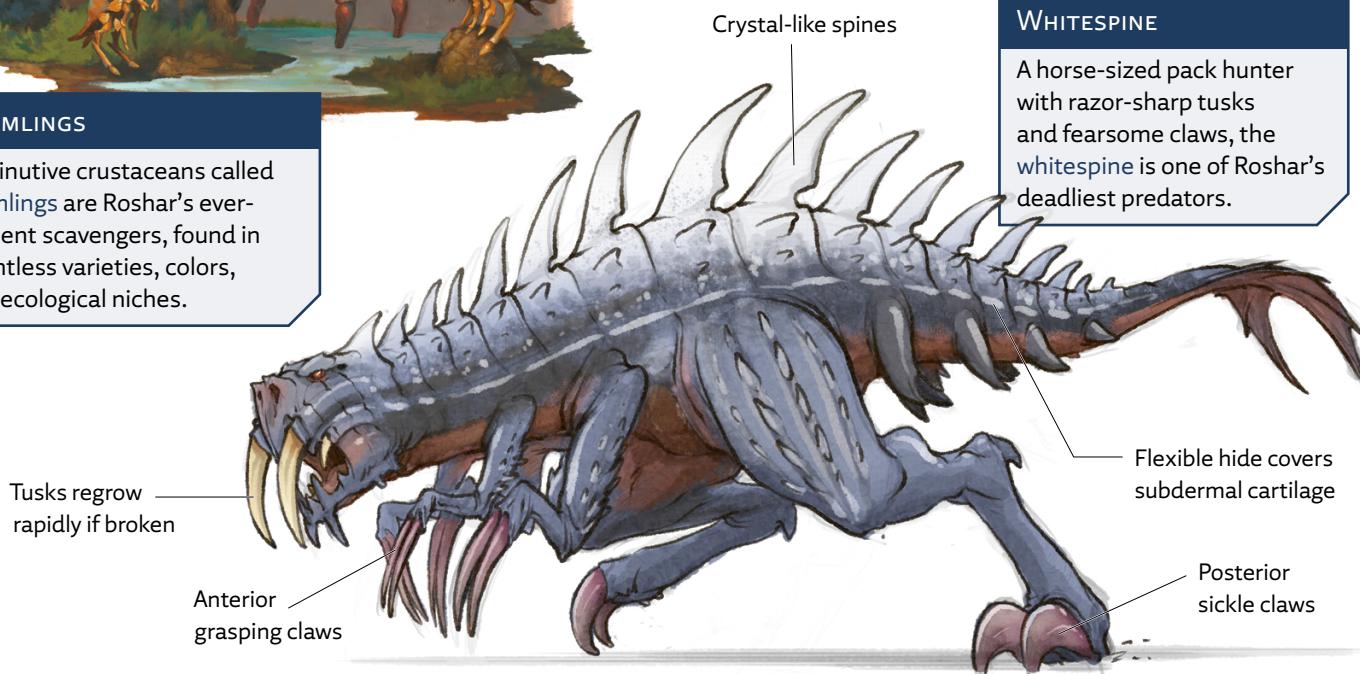


CREMLINGS

Diminutive crustaceans called cremlings are Roshar's ever-present scavengers, found in countless varieties, colors, and ecological niches.

ANIMALS

Rosharan fauna has adapted to the harsh environment of a storm-torn world. Most animals on Roshar possess hardened exoskeletons or leathery hide to protect their bodies from severe weather and other beasts. Aside from domesticated hogs and minks, mammals are rare. Mollusks, amphibians, and crustaceans are better suited to survive the relentless onslaught of highstorms.



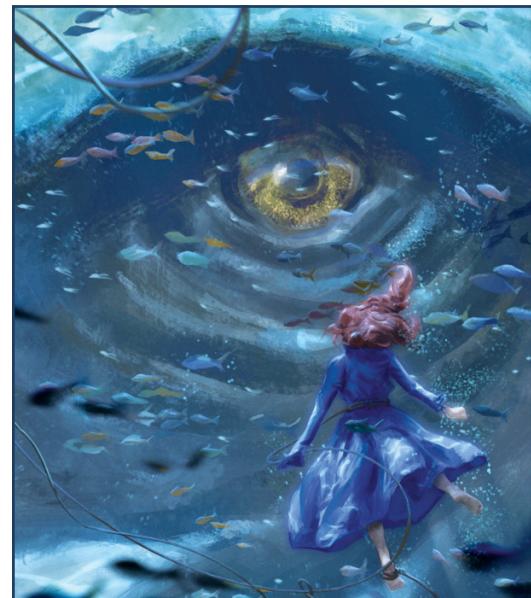
WHITESPINE

A horse-sized pack hunter with razor-sharp tusks and fearsome claws, the whitespine is one of Roshar's deadliest predators.



CHASMFRIEND

No creature on Roshar is more feared than the chasmfiend, a massive greatshell that roams the Shattered Plains. Forty feet high and eighty feet long, the chasmfiend is an apex predator with nearly impenetrable carapace. Only an army, or a highly skilled Shardbearer, can reliably bring one down.



MARINE GREATSHELLS

The largest animals in the world hide beneath the waves. From the drifting santhid to the fearsome yu-nerig, these aquatic greatshells can grow to titanic sizes.

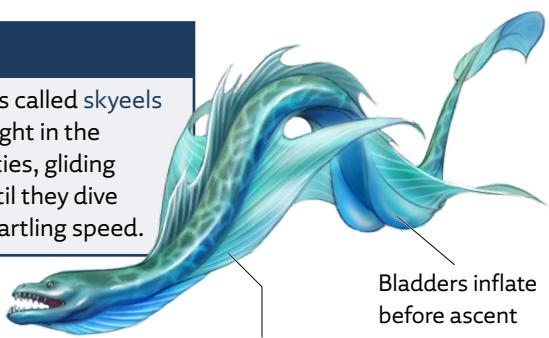


CHULL

The chull, which retreats into its shell during highstorms, is slow but powerful. Chulls can grow to nearly twice the size shown here, and make reliable beasts of burden.

SKYEEL

Aerial predators called skyeels are a familiar sight in the skies of port cities, gliding on updrafts until they dive for prey with startling speed.



Bladders inflate before ascent

Flexible wings

Sensitive antennae



Powerful jaws

AXEHOUND

The axehound is a carnivorous crustacean common in the wild, but domesticated axehounds have been bred for hunting, fighting, security, and companionship.



Tail for balance



HORSES AND RYSHADIUM

Horses are rare and precious animals, and even a Shin Thoroughbred can easily cost a thousand spheres. Ryshadium, however, are priceless. Majestic beasts who stand several hands taller than ordinary horses, they have stone hooves and the strength to carry a Shardbearer in full Plate.

SPREN

The manifestations called **spren** are one of Roshar's most unique features. Called spirits by the Shin and gods by the Unkalaki, spren are a ubiquitous part of everyday life for people around the world. They typically appear as luminous shapes in the air or upon the ground, and manifest in response to specific phenomena.



NATURE SPREN

Many spren appear as reactions to natural phenomena. Rotspren have ghostly mite-like forms that crawl over decaying bodies or infected wounds. Lifespren are glowing green motes that hover above healthy plants, and sometimes in densely populated human settlements.



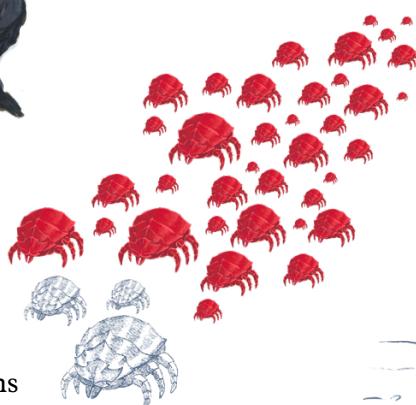
LUCKSPREN

Massive greatshells, like this yu-nerig, attract arrow-shaped spren. These so-called luckspren also follow much smaller flying creatures, such as skyels.

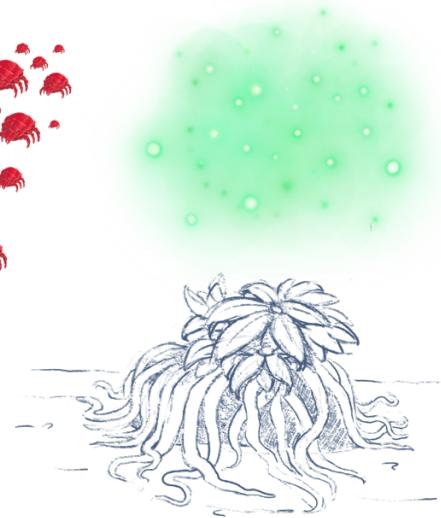


WINDSPREN

Windspren are wisps of blue-white light that zip through the air. They most often ride the winds, but are also drawn to people and animals moving at high speeds. Folktales describe them as mischievous spirits who enjoy causing people to trip and stumble.



ROTSPREN



LIFESPREN

EMOTION SPREN

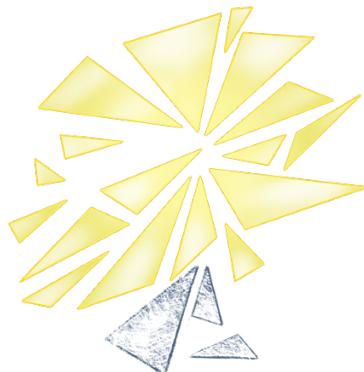
On Roshar, when people feel strong emotions, they can attract a seemingly endless variety of emotion spren. Red **angerspren** pool like blood at the feet of enraged soldiers, yellow **shockspren** might shatter in the air around a scandalized noble, and leaf-shaped **joyspren** swirl around reuniting friends. While they are vivid, spren have no physical substance. Ordinary people consider emotion spren an unremarkable fact of life. Only scholars and philosophers question their existence and purpose.



ANGERSPREN



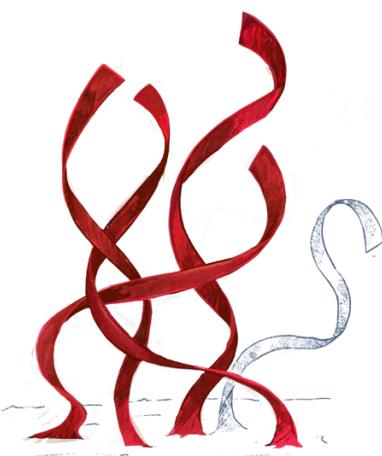
SINCERITYSPREN



SHOCKSPREN



ANGSTSPREN



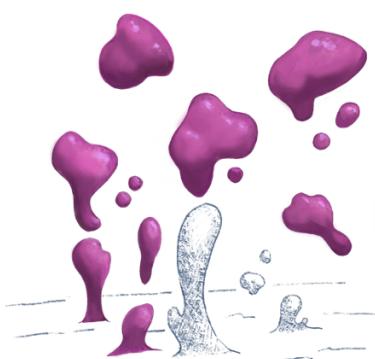
ANTICIPATIONSPREN



Gloryspren manifest around a father as he meets his child.



JOYSPREN



FEARSPREN

ONE LAND, MANY NATIONS

Thousands of years ago, during the age of Desolations, Roshar was united into ten Silver Kingdoms. Today, the continent is divided into many warring kingdoms and city-states. Some trace their legacy back to the Heraldic Epochs, while others are relatively new. All have grown and changed over time, resulting in a rich tapestry of cultures, ethnicities, and religions.

ENDLESS OCEAN

Millennia ago, the island nation of Aimia fell during an event known as the scouring. Today it is a barren, abandoned wasteland.

Roshar's supercontinent occupies the planet's southern hemisphere, so it is hottest in the northern lands, while its southern waters are nearly ice-cold.



OCEAN OF ORIGINS



A continental shelf extends beneath the shallow Reshi Sea.

Highestorms arrive from the east. Many tales exist of sailors seeking the Origin of Storms, but no ship has ever returned safely from such a journey.

Mountains on the continent's eastern edge provide some protection from the westward procession of highestorms.

NATIONS AND CULTURES



ALETHI

The militaristic kingdom of Alethkar glorifies conquest, hierarchy, and competition.



AZISH

The sprawling Azish Empire is known for bureaucracy, logistics, and intricate codes of law.



HERDAZIAN

Herdaz is a coastal nation of prolific agriculturalists who value family and community.



NATAN

The remnant of a once-mighty civilization, New Natanan is a bleak hinterland shaped by highstorms.



RESHI

Every island in the Reshi Isles has its own independent culture, ranging from warlike to relaxed.



SHIN

The isolationist nation of Shinovar is a mystery to the people of eastern Roshar.

Most people in Roshar spend their lives in one village or princedom, and only learn of other nations from stories. Those who journey to other lands have the chance to experience an array of cultures and traditions.



IIRALI

The golden-skinned people of Iri believe their ancestors were travelers from other worlds.



KHARBRANTHIAN

Kharbranth is a sheltered city-state home to the world's greatest library and hospitals.



LISTENER

Called Parshendi by their enemies, these tribal families live in the Shattered Plains.



THAYLEN

Thaylenah is a maritime kingdom known for merchants, sailors, and wondrous fabrials.



UNKALAKI

In the Horneater Peaks, clans of people live near hot springs nestled within alpine craters.

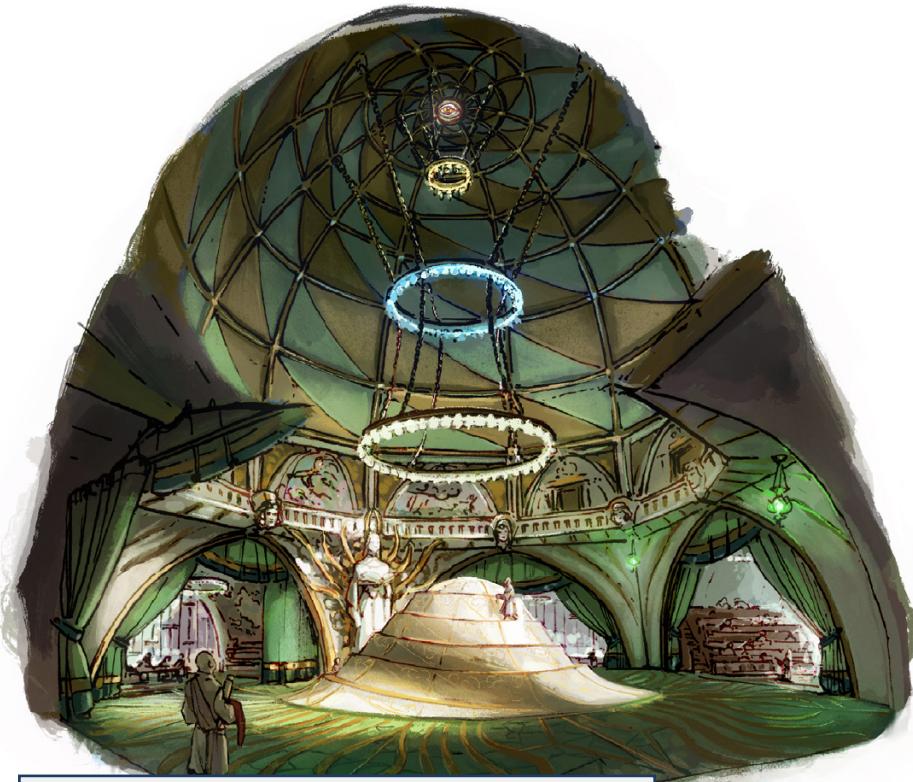


VEDEN

Jah Keved is a kingdom where tradition and religion shape modern political intrigue.

THE VORIN CHURCH

The world's most influential religion is **Vorinism**, practiced throughout eastern Roshar. The priests of the Vorin church, called **ardents**, serve as counselors for commoners and servants for the wealthy. Vorins worship a monotheistic god they call the **Almighty**, a creator god said to reside in the hearts of all people. Vorinism preaches the value of oaths, honor, law, and obedience to rigid social hierarchy. Vorinism imposes a caste system that divides dark-eyed common folk from light-eyed nobles. It also enforces traditional gender roles, prohibiting men from reading and women from fighting. Vorinism also condones slavery, including human conscription and enslavement of the silent, marble-skinned people called **parshmen**.



The Devotary of Sincerity features several motifs common to Vorin temples: a central mound, sculptures of the Ten Heralds, and the Double Eye of the Almighty.



An ardent of the Vorin church.

Vorin men do not learn to read or write, but can recognize **glyphs**. The faithful often carry **glyphwards** painted with simple prayers.



THE LOST RADIENTS

Vorinism teaches that the Almighty chose ten Heralds to fight against the **Voidbringers** during the time of Desolations. These Voidbringers were servants of evil who sought to drive humans into Damnation, just as they had once cast humanity out of the Tranquiline Halls. A group of knights, now called the **Lost Radients**, fought beside the Heralds. While they were once regarded as heroes, they failed catastrophically. On a day called the Recreance, they betrayed their oaths. The Vorin church rarely speaks of the fallen knights, and only then as archetypal pretenders and traitors.

HERALDS OF THE ALMIGHTY

The ten **Heralds** were human beings who exemplified divine traits. Across Roshar, theologians and historians agree on their importance, and they are key figures in most religions. In the Azish Empire, they are individually worshipped as gods. In the Vorin Kingdoms, people regard the Heralds as immortal servants of the Almighty who eternally fight the Voidbringers in the Tranquiline Halls. Though stories vary, each Herald is associated with certain qualities and a particular domain. The wisdom of the Heralds still guides religious leaders and scholars today, though their lives have passed into legend.



JEZRIEN

Herald of Kings
Protecting • Leading



NALE

Herald of Justice
Just • Confident



CHANA

Herald of Bravery
Brave • Obedient



VEDEL

Herald of Life
Loving • Healing



PAILIAH

Herald of Knowledge
Learned • Giving



SHALASH

Herald of Beauty
Creative • Honest



BATTAR

Herald of Wisdom
Wise • Careful



KALAK

Herald of Will
Resolute • Builder



TALN

Herald of War
Dependable • Resourceful



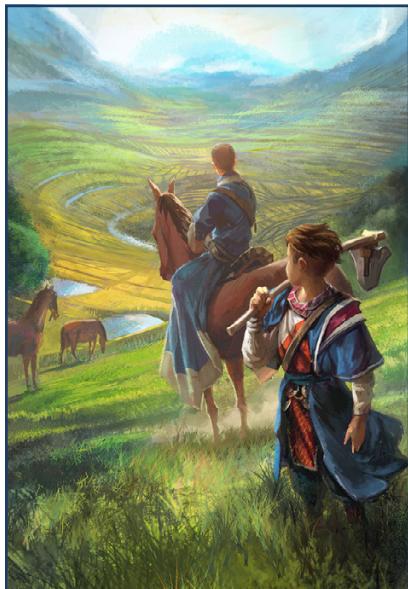
ISHAR

Herald of Mysteries
Pious • Guiding

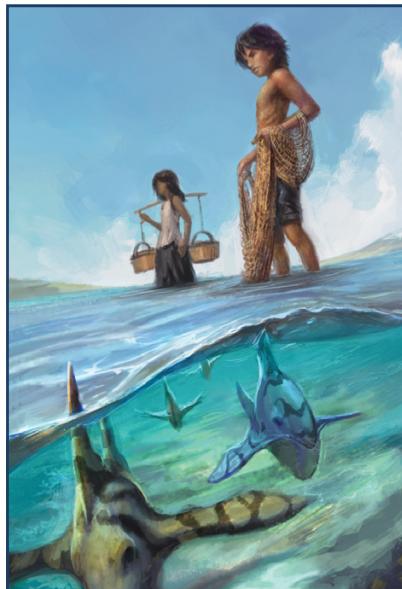
WESTERN ROSHAR



The **Azish Empire** stretches across southwestern Roshar. Its ten member states have unique cultures and governments, but all pay homage to the Prime Aqasix, who rules from the Bronze Palace in Azimir. Azish people are renowned as experts in bureaucracy, logistics, and complex legal codes.



Shinovar is a mountain enclave where soil covers the ground and plants do not retreat when trod upon. Its people raise horses, revere stone, and abhor violence.



In the vast but shallow Purelake, peaceful people live in villages built upon the water. Purelakers believe their fish have curative properties and bring good fortune.



RELIGION

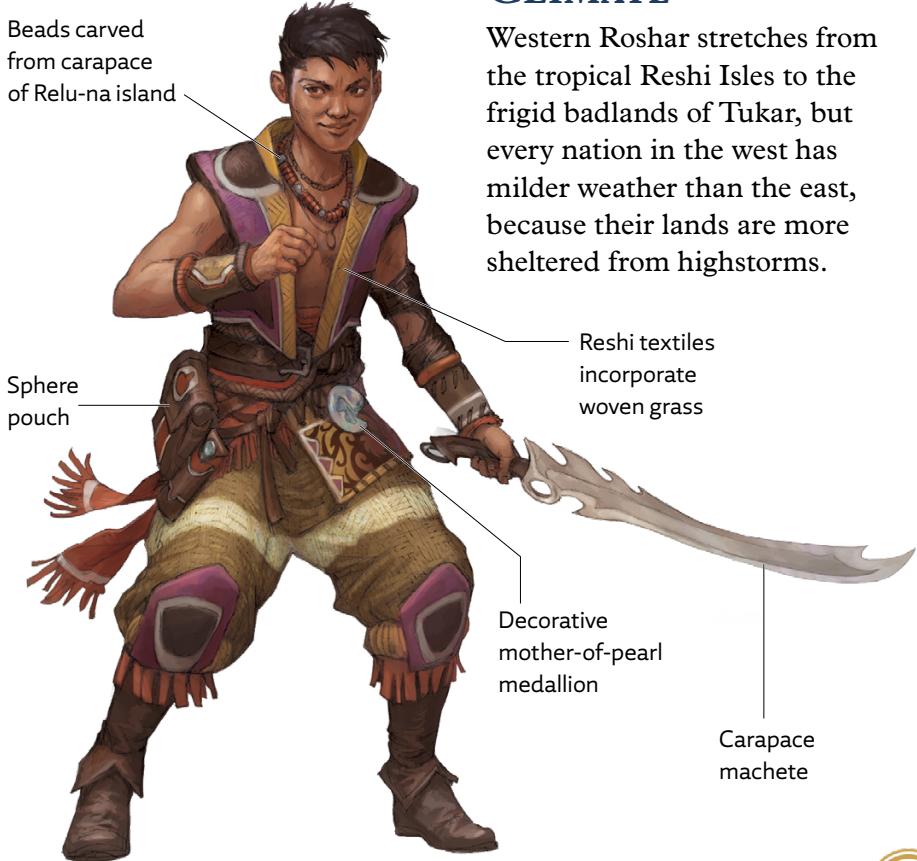
Nations in western Roshar do not practice Vorinism. Each Azish nation worships one Herald as its god. Purelakers openly praise a jealous god called Vun Makak while secretly revering his virtuous brother, Nu Ralik. In Shinovar, people are said to believe that stone is sacred.



In the Iriali city of Rall Elorim, residents live in hanging stalactites and buildings carved from the mountainside. After highstorms, waterfalls pour into cisterns that collect in the city's huge reservoir.



The archipelago of the Reshi Isles is home to a host of tribes and monarchies, some of which sit upon the backs of colossal great-shells called the **Tai-na**. Entire jungles, hillsides, and villages can thrive upon a Tai-na.



CLIMATE

Western Roshar stretches from the tropical Reshi Isles to the frigid badlands of Tukar, but every nation in the west has milder weather than the east, because their lands are more sheltered from highstorms.

Carapace
machete

Reshi textiles
incorporate
woven grass

Decorative
mother-of-pearl
medallion

Beads carved
from carapace
of Relu-na island

Sphere
pouch

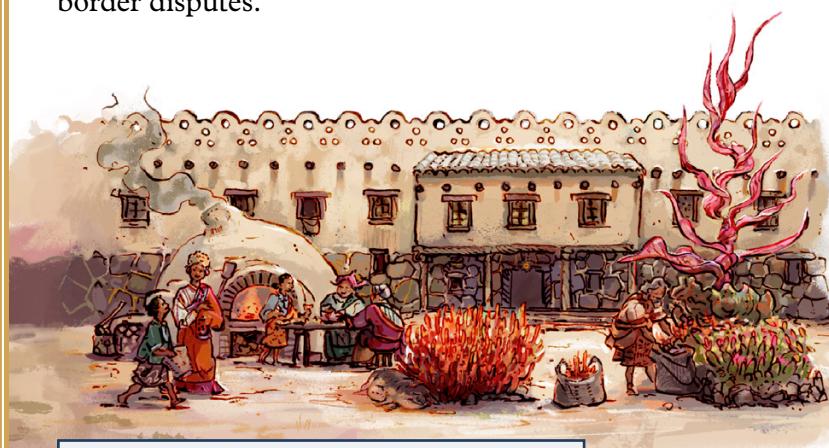
EASTERN ROSHAR



In Kholinar, the Alethi capital, rooftops face east to bear the brunt of passing highstorms.

The nations of eastern Roshar comprise the **Vorin kingdoms**: Alethkar, Jah Keved, Kharbranth, New Natañatan, and Thaylenah. The northern coastal nation of Herdaz also practices Vorinism, though Herdazians take a more relaxed view of certain strictures.

In spite of their common religion, these nations are frequently at war. Alethkar is the most common aggressor, but Jah Keved is nearly as warlike. Only the Unkalaki and Natans, geographically isolated from their neighbors, manage to avoid border disputes.



Herdazians build farm estates with sturdy windbreaks to shelter crops from storms.



A Veden couple in traditional clothes. The man wears a hogshide vest over a vakama. The woman wears a havah, a dress distinguished by a long sleeve covering her left hand. It is taboo for Vorin women to expose their left hand, called a safehand, in public. In less formal settings or lower social castes, women cover their safehand with a glove instead of a sleeve.



Ruled by the elderly King Taravangian, the sheltered city-state of Kharbranth is home to the world's greatest library, the Palanaeum. It is also renowned for its world-class hospitals and surgeons.



The hardy **Unkalaki** people live in the frozen Horneater Peaks, home to vast crater lakes that they call oceans. These emerald pools provide life-giving warmth to Horneater clans, creating tropical micro-climates that allow for farming. The burly, red-haired Horneaters mostly keep to themselves, but they sometimes intermarry with people in the neighboring nation of Jah Keved.

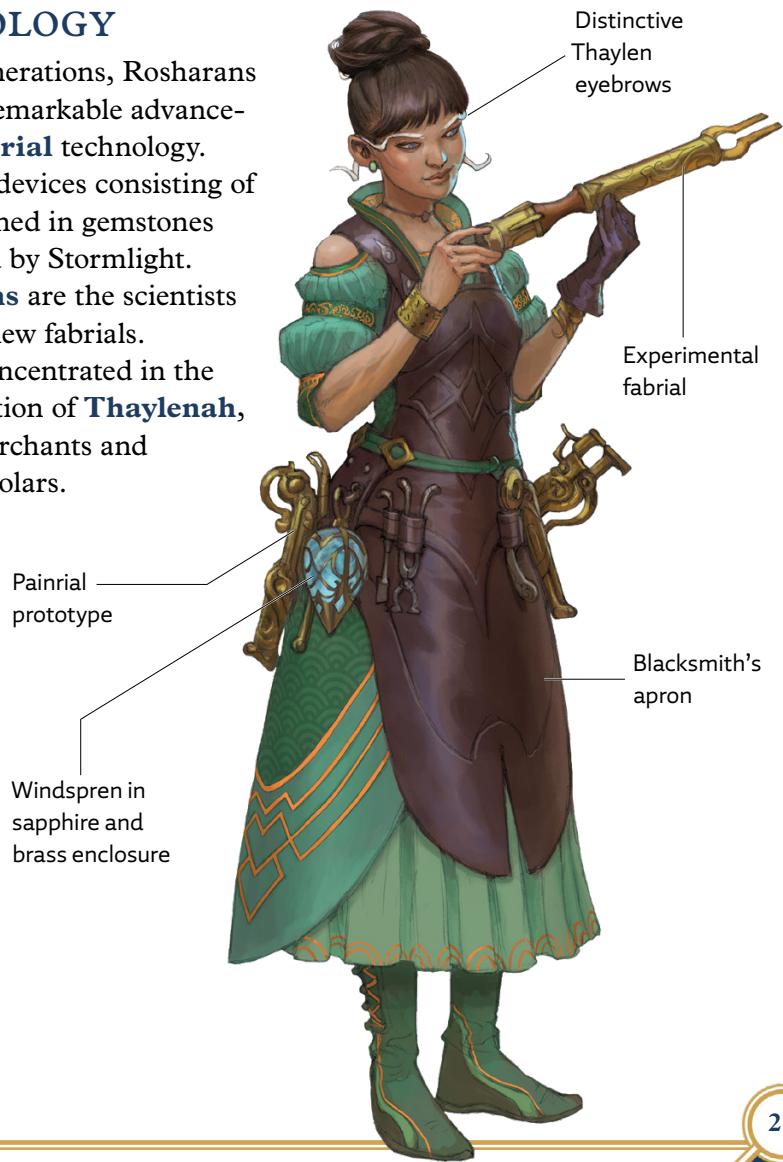


In eastern Roshar, men pursue the art of war while women find their callings in scholarship. Men can have books read to them, or join the ardentia if they wish to become scholars. Otherwise, books are written in women's script and contain undertext commentary that is only read by female scholars.

TECHNOLOGY

In recent generations, Rosharans have made remarkable advancements in **fabrial** technology. Fabrials are devices consisting of spren contained in gemstones and powered by Stormlight.

Artifabrians are the scientists who invent new fabrials. Many are concentrated in the maritime nation of **Thaylenah**, a hub for merchants and traveling scholars.



THE ALETHI



Lighteyed nobles, wearing the latest fashions, gossip and scheme in the Kholinar Palace ballroom.

The nation of Alethkar is the largest on Roshar, and its military is unparalleled. More than one hundred thousand soldiers are supported by Shardbearers, Soulcasters, and a robust civilian corps. Within the past generation, the nation has risen to prominence under the rule of King Gavilar Kholin. He and his brother Dalinar conquered the warring highprinces to form a unified nation.

COMPETITION AND WAR

A spirit of brutal competition and rigid social hierarchy underpins Alethi society. Even after unification, the highprinces still pit their soldiers against one another in deadly border disputes, and lighteyes regularly face each other in duels. Alethi warriors frequently experience the Thrill, a berserker rage that removes a warrior's inhibitions.



ALETHI INFANTRY

Rank-and-file soldiers wield spears, as only lighteyes are allowed to carry swords. Squadleader is the highest rank a darkeyed officer can hope to achieve, but every spearman dreams of defeating an enemy Shardbearer and leaping up the ranks of Alethi social hierarchy.



LIGHTEYES

Social hierarchy is directly linked to bloodline, marked by eye shade. Only lighteyed people own land and hold political power. Whether their eyes are tan or green, violet or blue, the colors are strikingly pale.



DARKEYES

Darkeyed people, the majority of Alethi, range from peasants to skilled professionals. Their eyes come in a range of colors in dark shades. They often endure cruel treatment at the hands of privileged lighteyes.



SLAVES

Slavery is legal in Alethkar, and is especially prevalent in times of war. Prisoners of war, debtors, and accused criminals are pressed into back-breaking servitude or placed on the front lines of bloody battles.



Elhokar Kholin's golden Shardplate and his legendary Shardblade, Sunraiser.

STRATEGIC RESOURCES

While most nations are lucky to field a handful of Shardbearers, Alethkar commands more than thirty. **Soulcasters** are just as vital. Using Stormlight, these holy artifacts can transform stone to grain, or clay into steel, allowing Alethi armies to fight without reliance on long supply lines.



An ardent uses a Soulcaster to transmute crystal into wood.

THE LISTENERS

Humans are not the only sapient species on Roshar. The **listeners** are a people who make their homes in the Shattered Plains. Among humans they are known by their Alethi name, **Parshendi**, meaning “parshmen who can think.” They appear to be closely related to parshmen, with skin in stark shades of red, black, and white resembling marbled stone. But where parshmen rarely speak, and demonstrate little in the way of free will, the Parshendi are an independent culture consisting of several nations, called families.

The listeners fiercely protect the lands they call home. Their warriors are more than a match for Alethi soldiers, protected by chitinous armor and possessing impressive strength.



Parshendi warriors surround an Alethi Shardbearer.



PHYSIOLOGY

Alethi soldiers have been shocked to realize that listener armies include both malen and femalen warriors, distinguished only by facial hair. Most combatants bear distinctive red carapace armor, which does not seem to impede their movement, or their ability to leap across chasms. Listener scouts and civilians are almost indistinguishable from parshmen, but typically have hairstrands that resemble thick strands of grass.

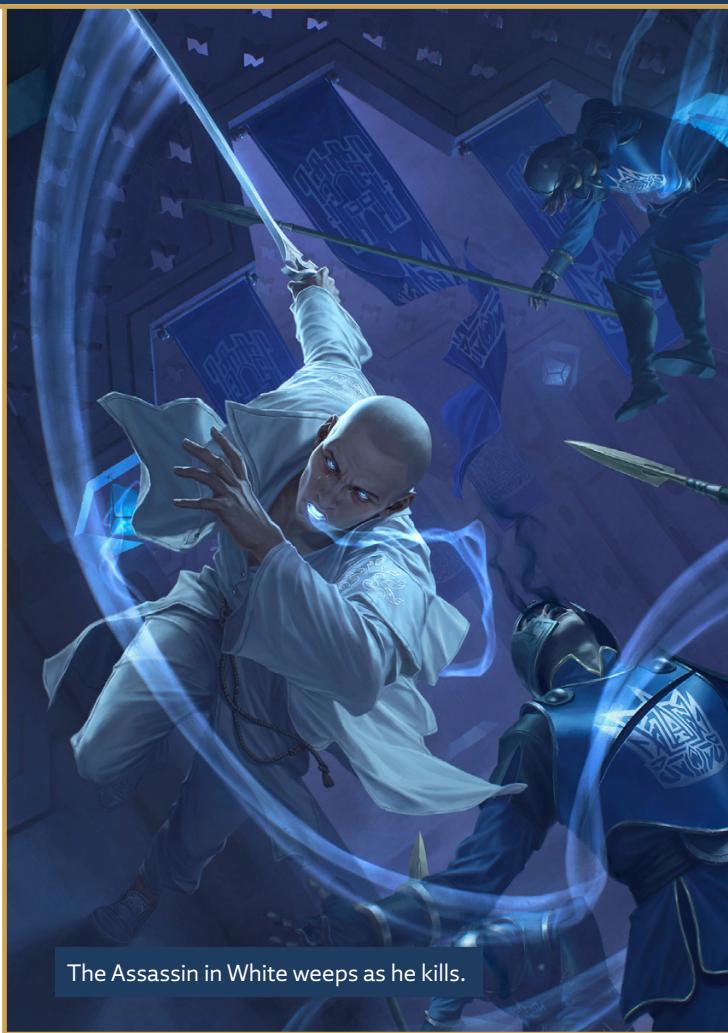


Listener children exploring together.

To the highprinces' surprise, the Parshendi have their own Shardbearers. They avoid risking their Shards in pitched battles, always supporting them with elite warriors.



A CHANGING WORLD



The Assassin in White weeps as he kills.

THE WAR OF RECKONING

After the death of the Alethi king, the Parshendi emissaries declared responsibility. Shocked and enraged, the Alethi highprinces swore the Vengeance Pact, marching their armies to the Shattered Plains with the goal of wiping out the Parshendi.

What began with an act of vengeful unity has descended into infighting between the highprinces. The Alethi discovered that the chasmfiends native to the Shattered Plains contain massive emerald gemhearts, each worth tens of thousands of spheres. The gemhearts could be harvested from pupating chasmfiends, prompting a race between the Alethi highprinces whenever one is sighted. The Parshendi also vie for the gemhearts, leading to relentless battles that never escalate into a full-blown war of conquest. The warcamps have become the new center of Alethi power, where soldiers die in droves while the highprinces jockey for power.

The modern age, the **Era of Solitude**, has been defined by humankind forging its own path. For millennia, no Desolations have devastated the world. Neither Heralds nor Voidbringers have appeared to guide people toward virtue or vice. However, the winds are shifting. Dying people whisper words of prophecy: a new age is on the horizon.

THE ASSASSIN IN WHITE

On the night of a banquet honoring Parshendi envoys visiting the Alethi capital city, King Gavilar Kholin was assassinated by a man wearing white robes and wielding a Shardblade. This man, Szeth son-son-Vallano, possessed uncanny abilities like those described in folktales of the Lost Radiants. Gavilar is not the last monarch he will kill.



Armed with Blade and Plate, two Shardbearers face a chasmfiend.

BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY



Now that you've read this guide to Roshar, you're ready to take the next step! The COSMERE RPG is a chance to tell your own stories in the *Stormlight* campaign setting. Join a bridge crew, become an artifabrian, or explore the mysteries of the Lost Radiants... there's no limit to the stories you can tell in Roshar, a planet defined by conflict and infused with magic. You'll begin by choosing your **ancestry**, up to two **cultural expertises** from the cultures introduced in this guide, and one of six **heroic paths** that define your initial training and capabilities (as summarized on the Heroic Paths table).

HEROIC PATHS

Path	Theme	Specialties
Agent	A talented operative who solves problems with a keen mind or deft hand.	Investigator Spy Thief
Envoy	An insightful negotiator who adeptly influences others.	Diplomat Faithful Mentor
Hunter	A skilled sharpshooter and outdoorsperson who seeks and eliminates problems.	Archer Assassin Tracker
Leader	A poised commander who directs and guides others to be their best.	Champion Officer Politico
Scholar	An adroit thinker who excels at planning and building.	Artifabrian Strategist Surgeon
Warrior	A fighter who relies on their skill, brute strength, or indomitable will.	Duelist Shardbearer Soldier

You'll invest points in six **attributes**: Strength, Speed, Intellect, Willpower, Awareness, and Presence. These determine your baseline **skills**, which you can also customize. You'll complete your character by defining their fundamental **purpose**, their ingrained **obstacle**, and their short-term **goals**.

To build your character and learn the game rules, you will need a copy of the *Stormlight Handbook*. To run a campaign as the Game Master (GM) or if you simply want to learn more about the world, pick up the *Stormlight World Guide*. Reading Brandon Sanderson's acclaimed novels, beginning with *The Way of Kings*, is optional but highly recommended!

Visit CosmereRPG.com for more information, including free rules and resources.



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