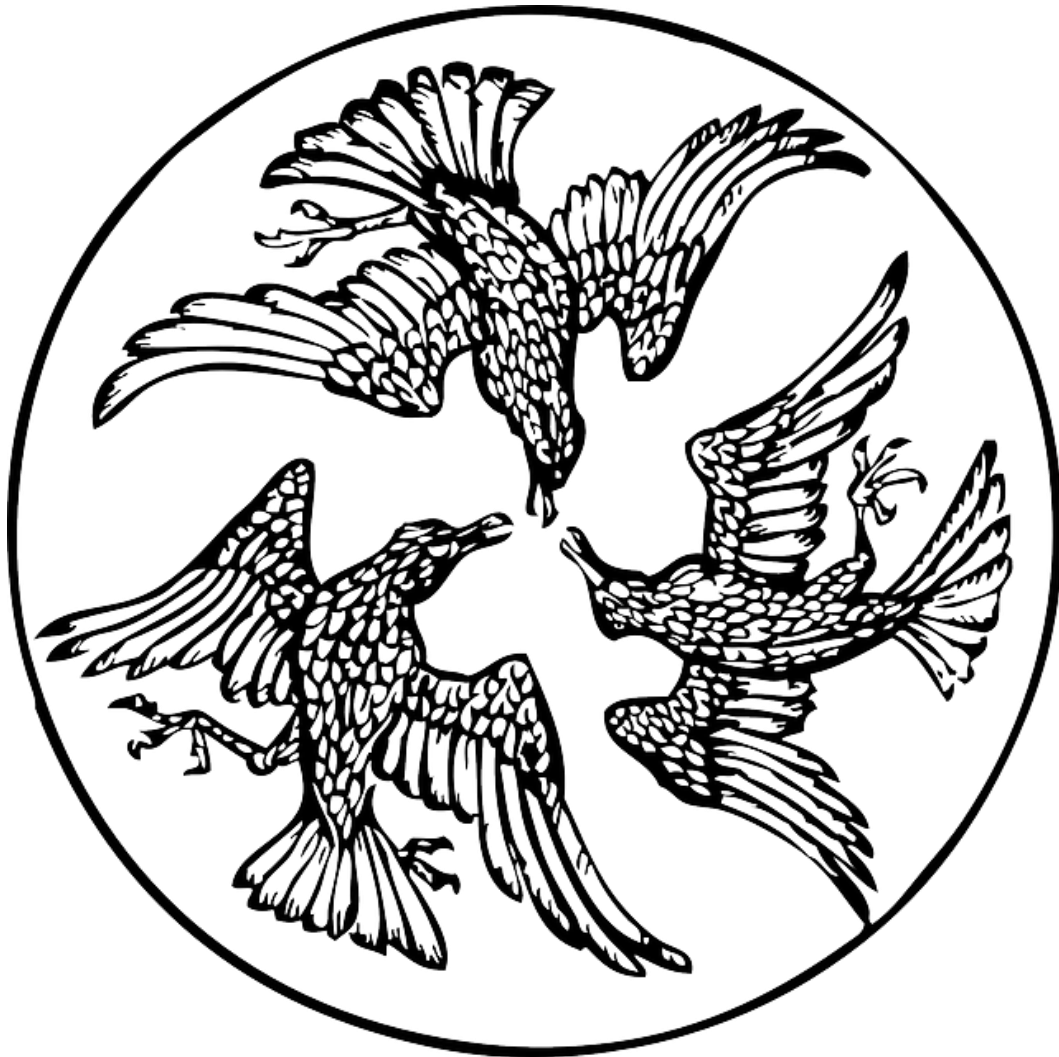


THE SPLINTERING WORLD



PLAYER'S GUIDE

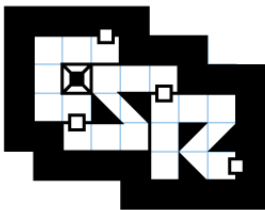
BY
AARON RYYLE

THE SPLINTERING WORLD

IN THE FIFTH AGE

PLAYER'S GUIDE

BY
AARON RYYLE



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PREFACE

The *Splintering World Campaign Setting* is a project that has consumed far too much of my time for far too many years. At first, I came up with ideas for two different settings for two different editions of the world's most popular roleplaying game, one centered on the Four Nations of Midgard and another centered on the fallen empire of Arast. I experimented with different editions. I drew dozens of maps and wrote more than one hundred pages of text. Fortunately for the players of the current setting I discarded most of that.

Then I had an idea that would allow me to use the best of what I had already done and bring it all together into a single setting...

What if, I asked myself, the world is a massive Pangaea, modeled after the single, primordial continent of our own Earth? Our own Earth was once a Pangaea that had split into the continents of today. What if the world I was creating was in that process, splitting apart but still made up of clustered land-masses?

What if instead of a single pantheon of gods (which would be unrealistic considering the size of the World and our own history) this world had many pantheons, each guarding their own territory and sometimes squabbling? That allowed me to put the Aesir in the same world as the Zostarian Church, and to imagine that somewhere the Egyptian gods watched a desert land just as the Olympian gods watched their lands from their mountain home.

I could incorporate the fruits of my past labor, keeping the best and discarding excesses. Everything began falling into place. The *Splintering World* was born.

The *Splintering World* is indeed vast. Not every adventure taking place in that world will involve the actions of a small group of heroes (or perhaps mercenaries). You, the players, are encouraged to broaden this world, to make it all your own. But to start with, use the information provided here to create a character.

What was once a single continent is beginning to break apart. The World is splintering as the gods fail to maintain Order and allow Chaos to rise. Thus it is that mere mortals must take their stand for one side or the other, whether to profit from war and schism, or to fight to regain peace and stability.

THE WORLD

It is the year 443 of the Vanir Era, by Midgard reckoning. By Arastrian reckoning it is the year 100 of the Fifth Age. One hundred years ago, a war among the gods tore the World asunder. Now, chaos is ascendant while the gods negotiate peace.

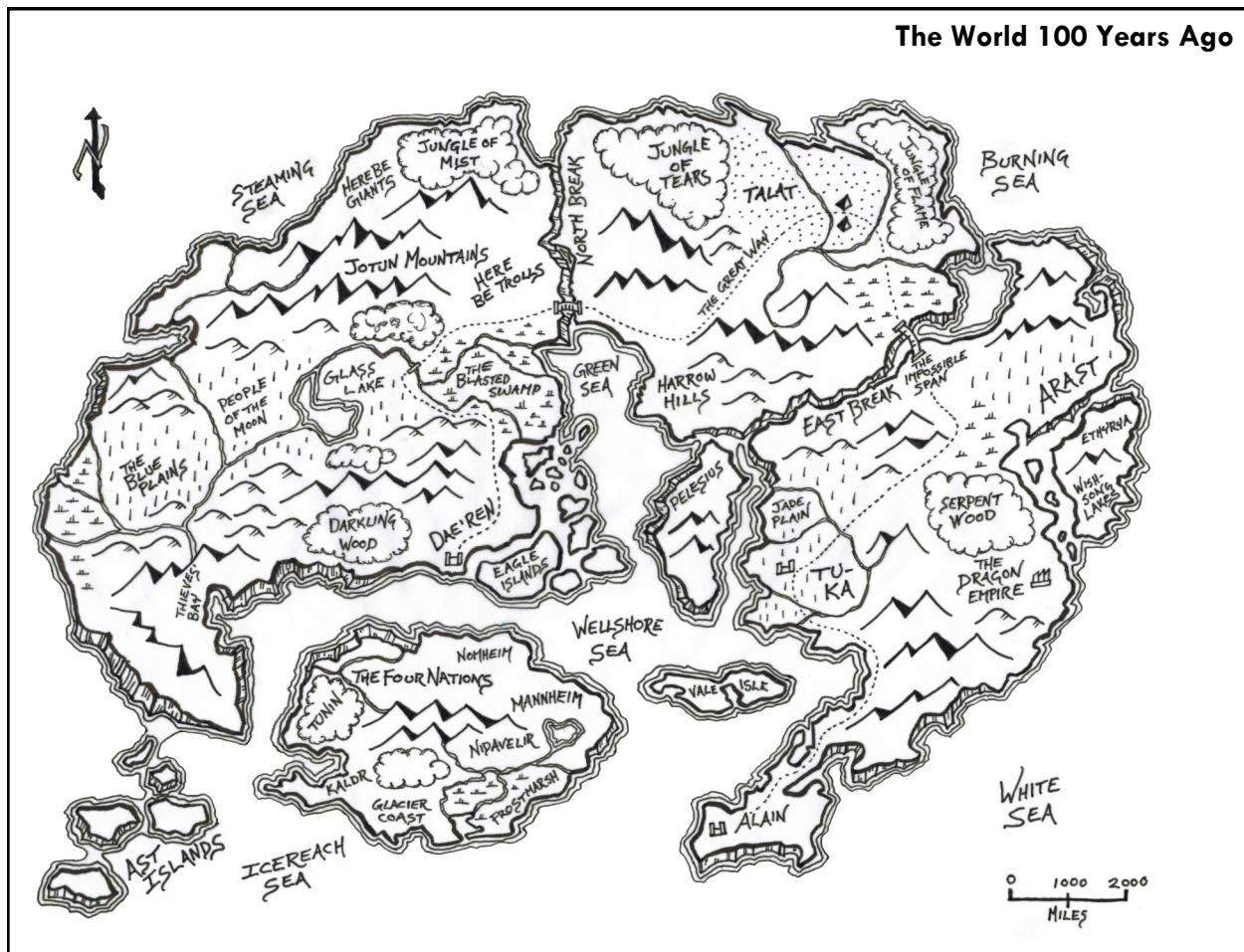
The storms that ravage the world increase in force. Earthquakes spread across the land, opening deep fissures. What was once a single continent is breaking apart.

The World is splintering.

The World

The World is a globe circling a single, golden sun with a single, silver moon. It is tilted twenty-three degrees at its axis. It spins around its axis once every twenty-four hours and it travels around its sun once every three-hundred and sixty-five days. Seventy-one percent of the World is covered by ocean. The other twenty-nine percent is covered by four continents surrounded by islands of varying sizes.

Summer and winter are separated by month-long storms that are formed by a rotating weather pattern driven by the air heating and cooling as the World circles the sun.



These storms are so fierce that all activity in the World come to a halt. Those without shelter during these months of storms are almost certain to die.

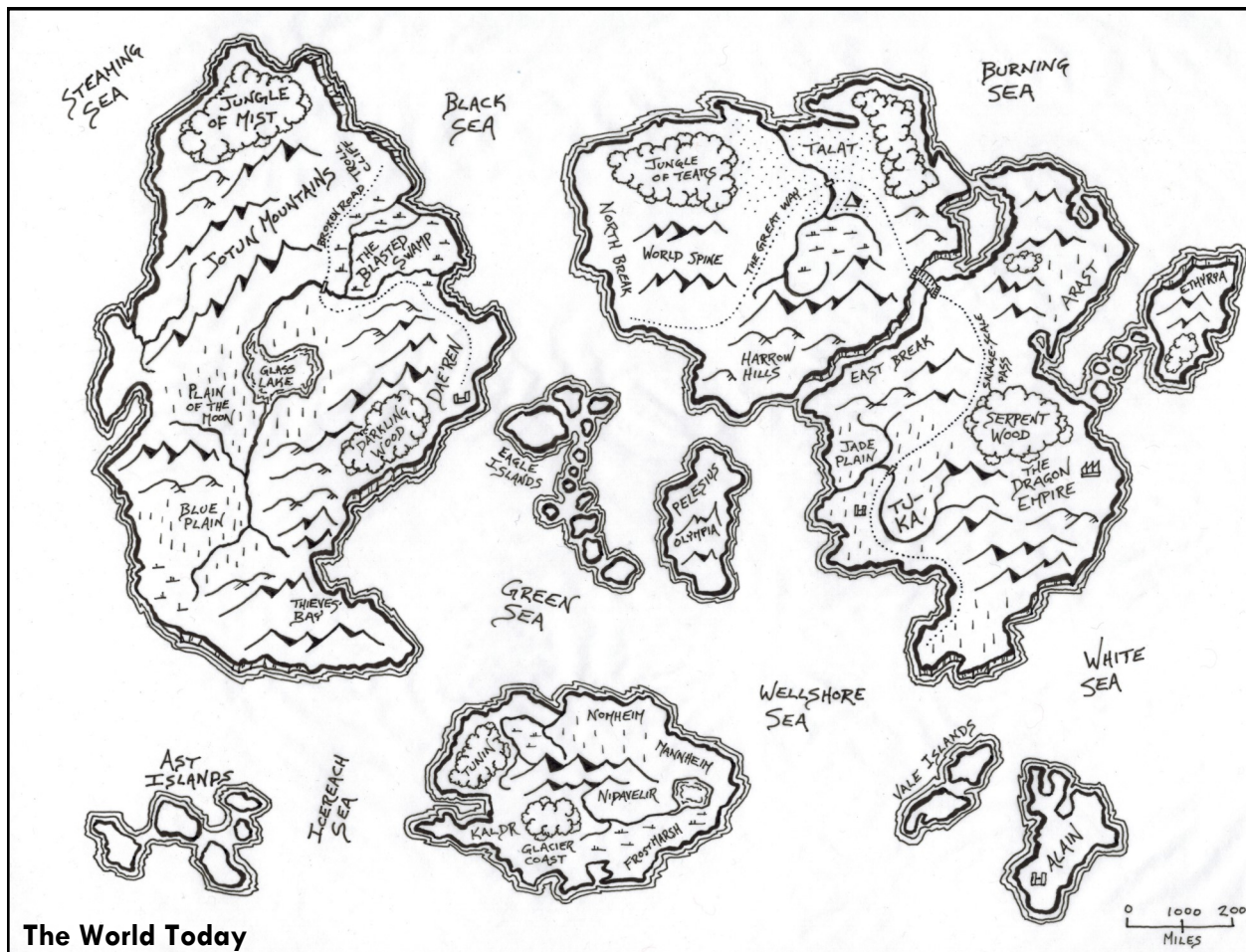
The Splintering

As a result of the War of the Gods, Chaos has become ascendant and Order is weakened. The World is splintering as the gods fail to maintain Order.

The Splintering is driven by tectonic plates beginning to move faster and more violently than pure geology would entail. This, in turn, is literally tearing the world apart, and that tearing is accompanied by frequent and dangerous earthquakes.

Religion in the Splintering World

In this World there are multiple pantheons of gods, each jealously guarding their own territories. The more intelligent monstrous races even worship gods all their own. The civilized regions of the Splintering World are widely separated, both geographically and culturally, though they all share a relatively similar level of technology. Technological progress has remained static for more than a millennium due to the jealousy of the gods, who do not like to see a rival pantheon's worshipers gaining advantages over their own.



THE YEAR

SUMMER

Doorway

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Blossoming

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Gold-Sky

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Growth

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Harvest

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Sun's Storms

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

WINTER

Darkening

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Frost

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Hearth-Hold

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Cruel-Wind

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Hope

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

Moon's Storms

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

YULE

DAY OF SONGS

DAY OF TALES

DAY OF FEASTING

DAY OF REST

DAY OF GIFTS

The inhabitants of the Splintering World are aware that other regions have other gods, and they take it for granted that when a person leaves one territory and enters another he or she will pay respects to that region's gods. If a farmer moves from Arast to Midgard, for example, it does him little good to continue to offer sacrifices to Grandmother Soil; Grandmother Soil has no power in Midgard. That farmer will offer his sacrifices to Freya if he wants his crops to grow.

There is one important exception to this: clerics. Clerics do not change gods as do the wider populace; rather, their divine patronage follows them wherever they go. For this reason clerics often distrust other clerics from foreign lands, since their very presence is seen as an encroachment.

The Calendar

There are two seasons in the World: Summer and Winter. Summer ends with the Sun's Storms. Winter ends with the Moon's Storms.

There are twelve months, each thirty days long. Each month has five weeks and each week is six days long. The Sun's Day is a day of rest. This accounts for three-hundred and sixty days.

The remaining five days celebrate the end of the Moon's Storms, which mark the end of Winter and the beginning of the warm season. Called Yule, these five days are marked with feasts, drinking, storytelling, and gifts across the World.

CHARACTERS

The *Splintering World Campaign Setting* is designed for use with the fifth edition of the world's greatest roleplaying game, though it is generally compatible with any edition. Players will need this booklet, access to the rules, a set of polyhedral dice, a notebook, a pencil, a character sheet, and one 25 mm miniature figure for at least one character.

Style

Campaigns set in the Splintering World combine "Sword and Sorcery" with "High Fantasy." The War of the Gods drives world-changing events, yet the focus is on the characters.

The first session of a *Splintering World* campaign begins with character creation, and the players should work together to connect their back-stories. Some examples of possible character concepts include:

- Cleric of neutrality serving at the Red Temple ...
- Barbarian adventurer from the Blue Plains ...
- Slumming elf prince from the Eastern Lands ...
- Halfling sailor out of Port Liberty...
- Paladin working to rebuild the glory of the Zostarian Church...
- Samurai warrior from Tu-Ka...



Races

While members of each race can be found anywhere in the World, many races have ancestral homelands—for example, it is said that the Dwarves were born in Worldspine, and they continue to rule that land from their fortified mines. In other places, the races naturally form their own kingdoms—for example, in Midgard Humans, Elves, Dwarves, and Halflings each claim one of the Four Kingdoms. In yet other cases, some races are extremely rare outside of a particular territory—for example, Dragonborn were created as a slave race in the Dragon Empire, and any Dragonborn outside of the Dragon Empire is either a refugee from that land or the descendant of a refugee.

Players should weave such information into their character's back-story.

Dwarves: As one of the most common races in the World, Dwarves can be found in almost any land. According to legend, however, the first four Dwarves were born of in Worldspine from the marriage of Earth and Wind. They were named Austri, Vestri, Nordri, and Sudri. The children of Austri and Nordri became the Hill Dwarves, and the children of Vestri and Sudri became the Mountain Dwarves. Dwarves in every nation, therefore, consider themselves children of Worldspine.

Elves: The first Elves came from the demi-plane of Arcadia and entered the World in Ehyrya. Unlike Dwarves, though, Elves do not tend to bear any ancestral loyalty to Ehyrya. Instead, the Elves have spread across the entire World. They are extremely influential in Arast, Ehyrya, and Tu-Ka, and they control both Tunin Wood and Kaldr in Midgard.

Halflings: While there are isolated Halfling communities throughout the World, and while Halflings live in almost every town and city, only in Midgard do Halflings rule an entire kingdom: Nomheim. Many of the most accomplished ship's captains on the Seven Seas are Halfling sailors based out of Port Liberty in Nomheim.

Humans: Humans of many ethnicities live throughout the World, often one of the majority races in any given territory. They are especially dominant on the Blue Plain and the Plain of the Moon, where tribes led by Barbarian warriors hunt the grasslands, in Mannheim in Midgard, and in Alain, where the Human king rules from a legendary castle of marble.

Dragonborn: In ancient ages, dragon servants of the draconic goddess Tiamat created a race to serve and fight on behalf of the Dragon Empire, the Impireacht. Working dark rituals in cavernous temples, these clerics combined the astral essences of Tiamat with the elemental physicality of dragon eggs to create the Dragonborn. Dragonborn are short-lived by dragon and half-dragon standards, and are treated as little more than perpetual children by their longer-lived relatives. Most Dragonborn outside the Impireacht are refugees or the descendants of refugees, and they hate and fear the Dragon Empire.

Gnomes: According to gnomish legend, the first Gnomes burrowed up from the deep places of the World ages ago. Most scholars agree that it is far more likely that they evolved from Dwarves, possibly through some magical or divine intervention. Both Dwarves and Gnomes find the implications of this theory distasteful. In any case, Gnomes are extremely rare in the World, living in small, scattered enclaves. Only in Midgard do they have any real political power; there they are recognized as cousins to the Halflings, and share in the governance of Nomheim.

Half-Elf: Born of two races—Human and Elf—Half-Elves can be found across the entire World. Most Half-Elves have one Human and one Elvish parent, though Half-Elves can breed with other



Half-Elves, with Humans, or with Elves. When a Half-Elf does reproduce with either a Human or an Elf, however, the blood of the other race invariably proves stronger, so that the offspring is generally seen as either Elf or Human. Most other races find Half-Elves to be more relatable than full Elves and more thoughtful than full Humans. There are no majority Half-Elf nations.

Half-Orc: Like Half-Elves, Half-Orcs are born of two races. Unlike Half-Elves, however, Half-Orcs cannot reproduce with either Orcs or Humans—they can reproduce only with other Half-Orcs. Half-Orcs are extremely rare and often mistrusted; in fact, many people have difficulty distinguishing between an Orc and a Half-Orc. Yet it is said that far to the north of the Jotun Mountains tribes of tropical Half-Orcs make the Jungle of Mist their home, self-sufficient and self-governing. Many Half-Orcs dream of making the dangerous journey to join the Tribes of the Mist, where they will finally be at home.

Tiefling: According to legend, long ago in the prehistory of Talat the nobles of the Hor-Akhan dynasty made a series of pacts with the Demon Lords of the Abyss. The nobles gained unnaturally long life and dark, necromantic magic. The children of the houses of Hor-Akham, too, were born into power... but they were also born with demonic aspects. The Hor-Akham dynasty is long over, but still some descendants of that ancient house are born with demonic aspects and the power that comes with it. By far the most rare of all the World's races, Tieflings are often shunned as demon-spawn in every nation but Talat, where they are recognized as heirs of Hor-Akham. Many Tieflings in Talat rise to positions of great influence.

Classes

Some classes, like Fighters and Wizards, can be found among all the races and all the nations of the World—many cultures have their own distinct take on these common roles, like the Samurai fighters of Tu-Ka. In other cases, certain classes are distinct to certain nations or institutions—for example, human barbarians hail from Mannheim or the Plains, while all Paladins in the World serve the Zostarian Church.

Players should weave such information into their character's back-story, and take care to account for any deviations from the norms presented below.



Barbarian: Barbarians are rare among the World's warriors; they practice distinctive fighting styles learned in wild places. In Mannheim in Midgard, human berserkers go to battle wearing the skins and skulls of bears. Among the People of the Moon are found totem warriors and ancestral guardians. Half-Orc barbarians might learn to rage as solitary wanderers, and barbarians are especially respected among the tropical tribes of the Jungle of Mist.

Bard: Every race enjoys music and art; bards can be found in every nation.

Cleric: Every race knows that the gods are powerful, sometimes fickle, and often jealous. Every region has its own pantheon of gods. While each pantheon of gods preside over a limited territory, clerics can bring the power of the gods with them wherever they travel.

Druid: Elven Druids do not serve the gods of nature—they serve nature itself. Druidic circles guard their ancestral secrets and their magic jealously, passing them down only to Elves or Half-Elves. Druids are generally of neutral alignment.

Fighter: Every race and every nation have fighters among their armies and guards. In many cases the most noble or skilled fighters take on distinctive roles

within their cultures—for example, in Alain chivalrous knights ride to battle on powerful warhorses, while in Tu-Ka the noble houses are served by honor-bound and iron-willed samurai.

Monk: In Tu-Ka, a specially trained class of spies and mercenaries use stealth, secret meditation techniques, and ancient martial arts to make their very bodies into weapons. Most monks are humans, though some Halflings and Elves have also been instructed in the Way of the Shinobi. The Way is only taught in Tu-Ka, and Shinobi masters are extremely reluctant to share their wisdom with foreigners.

Paladin: All Paladins in the Splintering World serve the Zostarian Church. For fifteen hundred years the Zostarian Church and the Arastrian Empire ruled hand-in-glove, and during that time worship of the gods was persecuted in the lands controlled by the Arastrian Empire... but now the empire that Paladins once defended has fallen. Zostarianism has traditionally emphasized the Balance of Law and Chaos, but in the past century a faction has arisen that preaches the ascendancy of Law.

Ranger: Skilled hunters, trackers, and explorers can be found among any race in each nation.

Rogue: Thieves, gamblers, assassins, bounty hunters, spies... rogues can be found in every nation, represented by any race. The most skilled, however, tend to find their way to the Thieves' Guild based in Thieves' Bay.

Sorcerer: Born with raw magic flowing through their veins, sorcerers are especially susceptible to the disruption of cosmic balance driving the Splintering. All sorcerers in the Splintering World are prone to surges of untamed magic, and those with wild magic running through their veins are especially likely to produce chaotic magical effects.

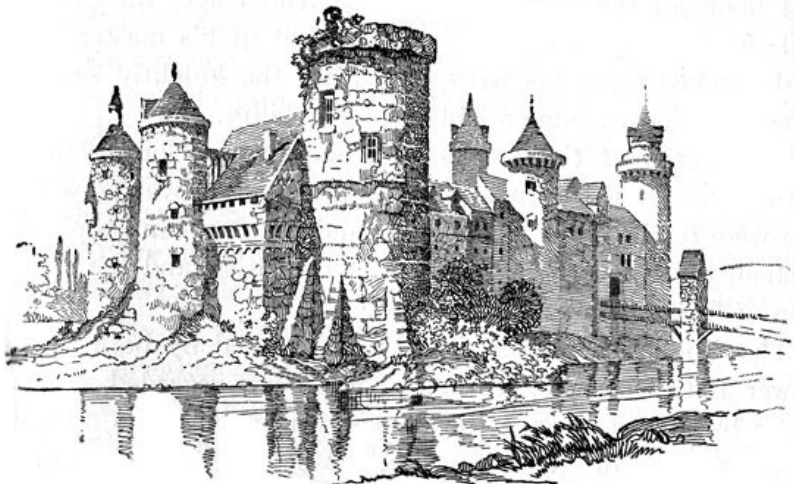
Warlock: Having forged a bargain with some other-worldly patron for their magical abilities, warlocks can be found among any race and in every nation.

Wizard: Wizards are not only magic users, they are scholars of magical theory and lore. Such knowledge is not easily gained, and it is jealously guarded. To become a true wizard, adepts must first be accepted to a wizards' college—and only the most academically accomplished are admitted to these schools. Wizards' colleges can be found in several urban centers across the World, but the most famous is the Tower Academy in Corvale, Arast. The Tower Academy's impressive library and museum are one of the Nine Wonders of the World.

Character Class & Race Options

The basic rules offers plenty of opportunity for character customization. Other sources offer yet more, including a number of new rare and monstrous races available for player characters. Players may use sources in any combination to craft unique characters.

Note that if you choose a rare race or class your character background may be restricted.



Character Class & Race Restrictions

Barbarians must be Humans from Mannheim in Midgard, the Blue Plains, or the Plains of the Moon, or Half-Orcs who grew up in the wilds or among the tribes of the Jungle of Mist.

Druids must be either Elves or Half Elves.

Fighters who choose the Knight Archetype must serve or have served the Round Table in Alain. Fighters who choose the Samurai Archetype must serve or have served a noble house in Tu-Ka.

Monks are only trained in Tu-Ka, and the Shinobi masters are reluctant to train foreigners.

Paladins must serve the Zostarian Church, which was founded in the Arastrian Empire nearly two thousand years ago. Most Zostarians serve the Balance, though a new faction within the Church serves Law.

Wizards must have studied at an Academy. The most famous Academy is in Corvale, the capitol of Arast.

Other Character Class & Race Restrictions

Barbarians must be Humans from Mannheim in Midgard, the Blue Plains, or the Plains of the Moon, or Half-Orcs who grew up in the wilds or among the tribes of the Jungle of Mist.

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HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

World History

Across the World events more than one thousand years past are lost in the mists of time, remembered as myth, if at all.

The years of the World are traced in a variety of ways in by her many people. Two of the most widely used are the Vanir system of dating used in Midgard and throughout the West, and the Ages system of the fallen Empire of Arast. These two nations are the most concerned to keep a written history. Other dating schemes are used in other places.

The Vanir System of Midgard: Years in the Four Nations of Midgard are counted in relation to the Vanir Alliance: the year that the Alliance was forged is year 1. The years prior to the alliance are counted backwards and named BV (Before the Vanir). The years since the Alliance

are named VE (the Vanir Era). It is now the year 443 VE in Midgard.

The Ages System of Arast: According to the sages in Corvale, the World has seen four ages and has recently entered a fifth. The fourth Age was the Royal Age—that age has ended. It is now the year 100 of the Fifth Age, a newly-dawned age.

Timeline:

1507 Before Vanir (Midgard Reckoning)—The Discovery of Steel in Nomheim: A Gnomish blacksmith by the name of Hus Forgekeeper discovered that by adding a small amount of charcoal dust to molten iron it became more durable than the softer wrought iron, but more resistant to shock than the more brittle cast iron.

1400 BV—The Raising of the Red Temple in Ullak Bay: According to legend, when the Red Lady had seen the World and decided to cease her wandering she found a bay protected by sea to the east and sharp mountain peaks behind. There she raised from the rocky shores a temple of red granite and silver. It is said that the Red Lady still watches her temple from gardens deep in the Ullak Mountains.

1 Royal Age (Arastrian Reckoning)—The Zostarian Faith is Founded in Arast: At the age of three hundred and thirty-three Zostar brought his teaching to the devastated nation of Arast. After three short years he gained the ear of the human king, Bjorn Half-Hand. King Bjorn converted to Zostar's teachings, outlawing worship of the gods in the realm of Arast and establishing the first Zostarian Church in Corvale. Zostar's conversion of King Bjorn Half-Hand marks first year of the Royal Age, the fourth age of the World by Arastrian reckoning.

500 RA—Peter I Crowned Emperor of Arast: In the five-hundredth year of the Fourth Age of Arast the High Cleric of the Zostarian Church crowned Peter I Emperor of Arast. In all Peter's lands the clerics of the mortal gods were persecuted and driven underground.

577 – 570 BV—The Frost Giant Bale Invades Mannheim: Loading his armies onto Minotaur ships, Bale sailed the Icereach Sea and began raiding Mannheim for slaves and gold. In battle after battle the forces of Mannheim were pushed back. In seven years the giants had taken the western half of Mannheim and the High Cleric's forces were holed up in Barrad Keep. The hero Ban-dir appealed to Sif, promising all that he had for one opportunity to face Bale on the field of battle. Ban-dir defeated the tyrant Bale, but not before he was mortally wounded.

562 BV—The Minotaur Migrate to the Ast Islands: Only months after the Frost Giants' defeat at Barrad Keep the elves took their chance to move against their ancestral enemies, the minotaur. The elves forced the Minotaur out of Midgard. Defeated, the Minotaur settled on the Ast Islands to nurse their ancient grudge.

1000 RA—Calin the Hungry Crowned Emperor in Arast: In the one-thousandth year of the Royal Age the Arastrian Empire began to stagnate. A corrupt and hedonistic Emperor, Calin the Hungry squandered the Empire's resources as the clergy grew corrupt. Thus it was that the Empire was beset by forces of ascendant Chaos.

340 – 1 Before Vanir (Midgard Reckoning)—The Border Wars in Midgard: By this time the Four Nations of Midgard had been consolidated—at least internally. Between them, however, the situation was one of conflict. For an age, border wars raged between the elves, dwarves, and humans.

1 Vanir Era (Midgard Reckoning)—The Vanir Peace: In the end, it was the dwarves who



saw that the Border Wars could not be sustained. Their diplomats forged a brief truce. Negotiations lasted for six months during which time the Vanir Council drafted the Codex Law to bind all of the Nations. They named their alliance the Vinur Alliance, an alliance that ushered in a golden age of peace between the Nations.

1406 RA—Ethyrya Splinters from Arast: During the ascendancy of Chaos earthquakes tore Arast apart, until a great cataclysm tore the realm asunder.

1500 Royal Age (Arastrian Reckoning)—The War of the Gods and the Death of the Last Emperor of Arast: As Chaos ascended the gods fell finally to open war. The gods of Order and Law forged alliances against those of Chaos, so that Good, Evil, and Neutrality found themselves allied on both sides of the conflict. In the East the last Emperor of Arast, Tayel the Sonless, died in 1500 RA, ending the Royal Age and ushering in the Fifth Age, the Age of Separation.

1 Fifth Age (Arastrian Reckoning)—The Flight of the Dragon Armies: As Emperor Tayel lay dying an army flew out of the Dragon Empire led by a lawful good emperor. So the gods of law marched their chess pieces into Arast. In the end it was left to a rag-tag group of murderers and thieves to draw the Dragon Armies into a trap using the legendary Rings of Draconis. Following the pivotal battle at Trovia Keep, a great storm

swept out of the west, and earthquakes once again shook the entire World.

1 FA—The Divine Council: The gods looked down at the damage they had wrought on the World. The gods of Neutrality, led by Forseti of Midgard, called a divine council to make peace. That council has been meeting for a century and it is unlikely to end soon. While the gods are in council they are distracted from the affairs of the Splintering World, and many mortals count that a blessing.

1 – 100 FA—The Separation Era Begins: Over the past century the pieces of the Splintering World began drifting ever more rapidly apart—it has been a century of geological upheaval but also one of political peace. Still, the forces of law are in retreat.

The Present: 443 Vanir Era / 100 Fifth Age— In the past one hundred years the World has changed dramatically. As tectonic plates shifted they caused earthquakes and tsunamis, rendering old maps and trade routes no longer trustworthy. In many ways, the World today is very new. The dawning Fifth Age is a new age of exploration.

Gazeteer

gaz·et·teer (noun) \,ga-zə-'tir\ : A book or list that is arranged in alphabetical order and gives information about places.

Alain: This is a land of green summers but brutal, icy winters, for the land is so far to the south. It is a land of brave knights and a wise king advised by an ancient and mysterious wizard.

Arast: Arast is the birthplace of the Zostarian religion. One hundred years ago Emperor Tayel the Sonless died, leaving no heir. Seizing its opportunity, the Dragon Empire invaded from the west, but were beaten back by a group of legendary thieves and murderers. Since then Arast has become a collection of fiefdoms organized by the Regent in Corvale.

Ast Islands: These islands are home to the feared Minotaur pirates. The ships of their massive fleet sail all of the seven seas, and their island nations are steeped in stolen luxury.



Black Sea: As the North Break splintered wider and wider and the Western Lands separated from the Central Lands, the waters of the Green Sea and the Steaming Sea rushed in to fill the gulf. The violence of the splintering opened under-water volcanoes, and the churning waters diffused their black ash, giving this new sea its name.

The Blue Plain and the Plain of the Moon: The People of the Moon are a tribal people. Both nomadic and settled, they range across their ancestral plains and return to the prehistoric city at Glass Lake for feasting and marriages every seven years.

Burning Sea: The fierce equatorial sun reflects off of this northern sea, heating the air to the point that sailors feel like they are burning in an oven.

Dae'ren: This rocky, costal nation is home to a clan-based society of hunters and fighters. The clans often war against each other, especially over access to the Eagle Islands, a region of high adventure watched over by families of intelligent raptors.

The Dragon Empire: The Dragon Empire is perhaps the most dangerous place in all of the Splintering World. It is an empire in which the flora and fauna are strictly regulated to serve as a source of food for hunting dragons. The population is generally kept rigidly in check, but there are rumors that it has begun to grow in recent decades. Civilized races that make their homes in the Dragon Empire are few and secretive.

Ethyrya: Ethyrya is a small and isolated city-state once part of the fallen Arastrian Empire. It is ruled by a elven Warlock-King who seeks to revive the worship of the old gods after centuries of persecution by the Zostarian Church.

Green Sea: Before the splintering, the Green Sea was an inland sea. Algae and other plant-life flowed into the Green Sea from the Blasted Swamp, coloring the water along that shore and giving this sea its name. Today the Green Sea is much larger than it was one hundred years ago, and the Blasted Swamp is bordered by the Black Sea. The waters of the Green Sea are a clear blue these days.

Icereach Sea: Great glaciers from south of Kaldr continuously grow and splinter into this sea, where they can float upon swirling currents for decades. The Minotaur pirates of the Ast Islands have an entire fleet dedicated to tracking and charting the movements of ice floes.

Midgard Ruled by a pantheon known as the Aesir, the Four Nations are a coalition of racial homelands bound by the Vinur Alliance.

Pelesius: Ruled by a bickering family of Gods from atop Mount Olympia, Pelesius is a land of democracy and philosophy. Though it is isolated, it trades both goods and ideas with the neighboring nation of Tu-Ka.

Steaming Sea: From below, the Steaming Sea is heated by ancient volcanoes, and from above it is heated by the bright equatorial sun. The waters of this northern sea literally steam and sometimes boil, making sailing here extremely dangerous.

Talat: This is a desert nation, ruled by gods of death and of the sun. It is believed that the ruler of Talat, the Pharaoh, is himself a god. In its massive pyramid temples bizarre funeral rites involve mummification, and in the dungeons beneath them the undead wait for the unwary.

Thieves' Bay: Nestled at the foot of the Ullack Mountains is a sprawling collection of brothels, drug dens, gambling establishments, and retreats of all kinds for the well-to-do criminals of the World. This jumble of buildings—called a "town" by those who frequent it—is named Refuge.

Tu-Ka: The area encompassed by Tu-Ka includes the Jade Plain. It is a land of Samurai and

Ninjas, a land of honor and exotic creatures unknown elsewhere. Tu-Ka itself is composed of four empires: Lu-Sha, Ko-Sha, Ra-Sha, and Wo-Sha.

Wellshore Sea: The waves of Wellshore break upon the shores of five great kingdoms: Nomheim, Mannheim, Pelesius, Tu-Ka, and Alain. It is the safest of all the Seven Seas to travel.

White Sea: On most charts, the White Sea is marked “Here be Monsters.” Only the most daring sailors brave this sea, and the eastern shores of the Dragon Empire are especially dangerous.

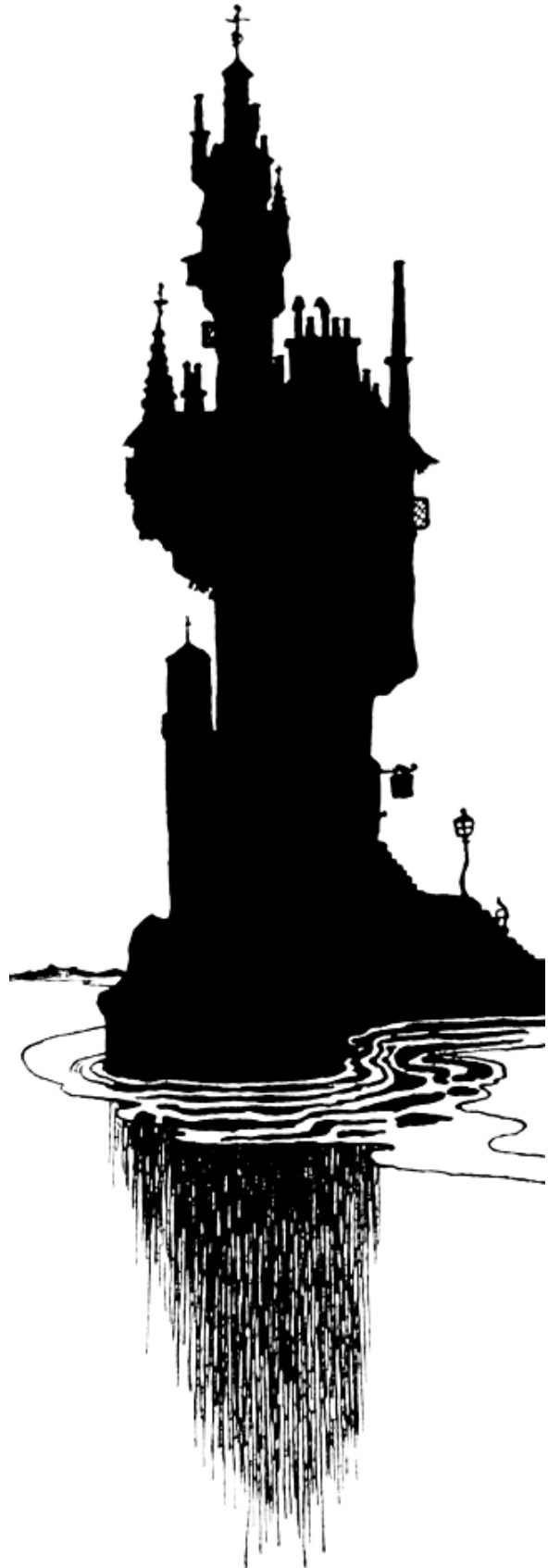
Worldspine: Worldspine is home to distant and isolated tribes united by a trade hub centered in the dwarf stronghold, Mineholt. To the north, Worldspine is a land of fertile plains, bordered by the Jungle of Tears, a swampy and dangerous rainforest. To the south, the land rises steeply to the Worldspine Mountains that give the region its name. Mercantile goods flow through two merchant cities, travelling along trade routes established one thousand years ago.

The Nine Wonders of the World

Ast Labyrinth: The Ast Islands are an archipelago of five large, rocky islands ruled by Minotaur pirates and covered in ice. For the most part, therefore, these pirates do not live on the surface of the islands—instead, they have carved a massive labyrinth beneath the sea that connects the five islands. The Ast Labyrinth is unicursal, has only sea entrances (one on a coast of each island), and houses numerous clan villages.

Castle Camelot: In the south-west of Alain there is a wide plain deep in a valley sheltered from the storms by high bluffs. In the center of this plain stands a lonely mesa above a wide river, and upon that mesa rises Castle Camelot. Built of white marble with silver veins, the castle literally shines in the sun, a glow visible from miles away. Its magnificent cathedral houses shrines to dozens of gods.

The Impossible Span: In the past century, the



Impossible Span has earned its name. Originally brought forth from the bedrock itself to bridge the East Break, this bridge was impressive enough at one hundred feet wide and three hundred feet long. But since the Splintering has sped up, the Impossible Span has actually held the central and eastern continents together even as the rest of the World drifts apart.

The Mad Dwarf's Maze: In the deepest parts of the World a huge complex of dungeons and natural caverns forms a great maze. According to legend, a dwarf named Rak Grimbolt, with the aid of the Rat God's clerics and no few slaves, dug out this complex filled with traps and dead-ends. The Maze itself does not connect to the surface directly—instead, a series of magical portals connect the Maze to eight different entrances scattered across the World: known entrances can be found in the Ast Labyrinth, Ethyrya, the Jotun Mountains, Nomheim, and in the plains south of Tu-Ka. Three other entrances have been lost to time.

The Giant Cities of Jotun: The Jotun Mountains are a vast range of cliffs and crags, and in the center of them all stands the most massive cities ever constructed by any mortal race. The Giant City spans seven peaks, with great, arching iron bridges between them. To reach the cities requires either flight or a perilous mountain climb.

Rast Necropolis: In the Scorpion Desert south of Sephis in Talt a great complex of temple-tombs is dominated by four massive pyramids dedicated to Ra, Anubis, Ptah, and Sobek. These pyramids are capped in gold and gleam in the sun. They are each thousands of years old, each was built of more than two million individual granite blocks, and each cost the lives of countless slaves to construct.

The Red Temple: Unique to Refuge, the Red Temple is built of clean, white stone, with windows of crimson gemstone. During the day, the Temple is thus filled with a diffuse red light, making all the white and silver furnishing inside glow red. Inside, the temple is empty but for a few simple features: white benches with white cushions line the walls; spiral stairways in each corner lead up to a broad balcony where clerical chambers are located; and in the center of the Temple is a huge silver globe, bearing a map of the World. It is said that this map changes as the World splinters. Though the Temple belongs to the Red Lady, the true-neutral goddess of the Bay, any god from across the World will hear prayers to them from the Red Temple.

Tower Academy Library: The greatest and most famous wizard's academy in all the World is located in the Corvale, the capital city of Arast. It is tightly laid-out complex of classrooms, offices, dining halls, and dormitories, all centered on a high tower containing the academy's library and museum. The library and museum are open, with the exception of the top floors, where the truly dangerous books and artifacts are kept.

The Trains of Worldspine: Mineholt is the largest settlement in Worldspine and its capital. Mineholt is also home to one of the wonders of the world: the trains, a wonder of engineering. A series of cars, tracks, and water-wheels allow for efficient transportation throughout the city and to and from the deep mines. These trains run on miles of tracks and are driven by the power from huge wheels set into underground waterfalls—these are in turn connected to gears that drive chains that pull the trains along their tracks.

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