

# WHAT EVERYBODY KNOWS



*Any adult from a city in Cerngoth knows this information, and would be willing to share it with a friendly outsider over the course of a couple days.*

## Cerngoth

Our realm stretches along the fertile coast, but its influence extends much further. The capital is Nikosdros, the busiest port in Umathela. New ships are always being built there, and they bring trade and tribute from all the other cities of the coast to Patriarch Mituba. Our ships even cross the ocean and visit northern ports.

Because of this, our land is the wealthiest and the most cosmopolitan. We grant foreigners their own quarter of the cities, and even allow women to become dryads if they are unhappy.

## Elves

The elves are the people of the forest. They tried to destroy us once, and are still the enemies of mankind. But our Patriarch convinced them that the Fonritans are their real enemies, so now we're at peace with them. I still wouldn't trust one — they're made of wood, you know.

## Fonrit

Fonrit is the land of slavery. People there have dark brown skins, or blue, or a cross between the two. Most of their slaves are blue, but some of them are our folk, stolen by cruel slavers. They are kept from fleeing by evil sorcery.

The northern coast has many large cities. It's called Afadjann, and is ruled by an emperor called the Jann. The hilly part to the east is named Mondoro, and has only a few cities.

Armies from Fonrit have invaded many times. Sometimes it took years, but we always drove them out. Now we trade with some of their cities.

## God Learners

Our ancestors from Jrustela and Seshnela founded a mighty empire, including every land washed by the ocean. But many in the empire were seduced by false gods, and turned away from the Creator. They ignored the caste rules and twisted even the church of Malkion into blasphemy. Eventually their sins brought the Cataclysm.

You can still find places where God Learners once lived, but they are haunted and cursed.

## Malki

All the God Learners perished in the Cataclysm. Those who had not forsaken Malkion survived, cut off from the rest of the world. Over the years, they suffered many trials, but persevered, and built new cities.

The other cities of the coast still worship the Creator, but have become misguided in different ways. Some of them even worship pagan gods as if they were some sort of inferior saint. Still, we can find welcome if we visit other Malki lands, and worship our saints in their churches. The other cities all respect our Patriarch.

To the east is Ediruss, ruled from Tortrica. To the west, the

The Malki are civilized monotheists who inhabit the Umathelan coast. Most of their city-states are small, but Nikosdros has risen to prominence thanks to its shipbuilding program. The Malki are beginning to take advantage of the newly-opened oceans.

They practice agriculture, plowing with water buffalo. They can work iron, and build great stone churches.

Although they follow many of the standard Malkioni practices, such as a patriarchal caste system, the Malki reject *The Abiding Book* as a God Learner perversion, and are divided into many small sects, some of which allow sacrifice to theistic deities.

Dunstarth Valley and the Glastrin Coast aren't unified.

## Umathelans

South of us live primitive barbarians. Because they worship pagan gods instead of the Creator, they're cursed to live in the woods with the elves, rather than in cities. We call them the Hendarous, which means Obedient Ones, because they are pawns of the elves.

The Kormarkan tribe lives in the Vralos forest. Although they're uncivilized, they are useful allies in our struggle against Fonrit, using the magic of their storm gods.

## Vadeli

When my grandfather was young, ships came from the ocean for the first time since the Cataclysm. At first we didn't know that they were the Vadeli, because they hadn't been seen since the Dawn. It soon became obvious when they seized control of the entire coast. At first some of us helped them, because it was the only way to return to the sea, but once we had learned the sailing secrets, we rose against them.

Now we know that they are indeed Malkion's ancient enemy, and their traders are allowed only in certain parts of the cities.

## God and the Saints

The Creator is the Invisible God. He made everything, even pagan gods and spirits. Malkion showed our ancestors how to live according to the Creator's laws, and taught them about Solace. Some of them were especially blessed, and became saints, who can intervene with the Malkion and the Creator on our behalf.

St Hrestol taught people how to experience Joy, and the Brithini killed him for it. When we are sick, we call on Hrestol's mother St Xemela, who sacrificed herself to end a plague. Soldiers ask for the blessings of St Haldos or St Gerlant Flamesword. Our ships are protected by St Makri, who sailed around the entire Middle Sea. Farmers ask St Stinos to protect their fields. No matter what you need, there's a saint who can stand for you with the Creator.

Many people consider the Seven Holy Men of Fengwal, who wrote the Sedalpist scripture, to be saints. The Sedalpists mean well, but their worship is far more severe than Malkion intended. Still, I'm told you can find them in every city, which is more than I can say for the Weeping Brethren.

## Monsters

After dark outside the cities, you need to beware of Shadowstalkers. Predators like dire wolves, leopards, oxyaenas, and scimitar-tooth tigers hunt at night too.

The Lucan beetle-folk who live in the hills are slow-witted but aggressive.

Various monsters live in the ocean. The worst are the mal-asps, semi-intelligent brutes who band together and command powerful water demons to attack our ships.