

## **Nexus Planar Supplement**

Earth is linked to Nexus and borders the edge of reality at one extreme away from Earth itself, but Nexus is only one of six realms linked to Earth and sitting at the edge of reality itself, not to mention this iteration of earth itself. And to add onto this, it is possible to find your way to these other realities from Nexus, though most will need to go through Earth first to get to these other realities. Additionally, the Shard of Unreality makes this much easier to accomplish, though it can take several years of practice to reach these other realities, though it cannot allow one to cross directly to a plane opposite the one you are currently on.

This supplement will primarily be to describe these other realities and what can potentially be gained from them while visiting.

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### **Reality 1: Earth**

This version of Earth is very similar to the modern day Earth we know, but the cracks leading to other worlds has allowed creatures from other realities to come through and interbreed with humanity. This has opened up the path for magic to emerge from the mixing of bloodlines and the interconnection of realities. This potential for magic requires exposure to another reality to awaken, though even just seeing one of the cracks in reality would be enough to allow it to awaken, leading to only rare, hidden cabals existing.

The only real note here beyond that the world is effectively modern day Earth is the magic.

### **Races**

*Humans:* Run of the mill earth humans are nothing special, really, at least until they awaken into a *Homo Magi* or fall through a crack in reality.

*Homo Magi:* Humans that have awakened to magic, these individuals possess a heritage containing several races from each of the many worlds at the edge of reality. Simply awakening their magic causes several changes to the body that, if allowed to go to other worlds, can be expanded on quite easily. (A human with the Edge of Reality perk is effectively a *Homo Magi*, though they will need to return to earth before they can gain access to human magic).

### **Powers Available**

*Arcana:* The magic of Earth is a mixing of several other forms of magic from other worlds. The Light of Nexus, the Sparks of Betwixt, the Arias of Paradise, the Burn of Fortuna, the Void Runes of D'void, and the Artifice of Asherati, with traces of other magics to supplement them. Burn provides the fuel for Arcana, a source of power for it, Arias and Artifice give the appropriate structure to shape the power produced by Burn, Void Runes allow the Imprinting of the structure provided by Arias and Artifice, the Spark reduces the mental strain of keeping those imprints, and the flexibility of Light to make the structures fluid enough to be useful for multiple tasks. This allows a caster to imprint a small subset of spells into a slot within their mind that can then be fueled using magical energy they've built up over time with little mental strain beyond a slight tickle at the back of the caster's mind.

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## Reality 2: Betwixt

The reality known as Betwixt is the most technologically advanced of the realities, with intelligence generally being much higher than other realities barring exceptional cases. Genetic engineering is one of the most advanced fields in this reality, leading to nearly every individual being significantly superior physically and mentally to other realities based purely on biology. Additionally, the superior biology combined with heightened intelligence, along with certain chemical compounds that are moderately uncommon, has led to the presence of psionics.

The plane itself is largely a giant stone, glass, and metal metropolis, consisting primarily of buildings with artificial parks as the only sign of plant life and obvious water sources. No natural settings anywhere you can find except for a single, incredibly large tree that makes up the very center of the plane, and even that may well be something bioengineered, no one alive today knows its origin. It is, however, considered one of the most important places in Betwixt due to one thing; it produces the chemical necessary to awaken psionics.

There are three main factions in Betwixt. The two “White Hat” organizations, the Barracks and the Playground, and the one “Black Hat” organization simply called the Underground. Though it should be noted that the Playground is technically a neutral party, they still support the Barracks. These organizations nominally answer to the laws of the local government.

The Barracks are both the military branch and the industrial center of Betwixt. Most technologies and resources not related to bioengineering are produced by the Barracks, including the weapons and power armor commonly used by the military wing. Schools to train people in combat, get used to high end bio-template modifications, to use plug suits and power armor, as well as methods to train up psionic capabilities. Outside of the military branch, there are trade schools that teach necessary handicraft that they don’t want to trouble the Playground with.

The Playground is the name for the collective scientific research labs across the entirety of the plane. These labs are not just places for experimentation, but also have schools that teach those that possess strong Sparks, especially those that possess a Bright Spark. Here, they study many forms of science, psionics, and dimensional boundaries in an attempt to better combat Nulls and their primary abilities, which has led to the formation of cracks between realities across the entire cosmology.

The Underground is the criminal element in Betwixt and matches the military at times, spreading their influence through bribes, blackmail, and espionage. The Underworld normally does not act openly, but they do have enough manpower and influence to be able to function in the shadows and, every now and then, be a bit more blatant in their actions. This has a side effect of leading to a thriving black market that has a lot to offer unscrupulous dimensional travelers, especially since several of the Underground go to ground across dimensions (primarily Earth).

The main enemy of Betwixt are the creatures known as Nulls, which are large, insect-like creatures that attempt to make their way to the World Tree so they can devour it. They are compared to Earth locusts in their appetite and would reduce the Tree to little more than dust within a matter of hours if not held back, they are the reason most of the plane has little plant life, having consumed most of it after their initial arrival. Nulls come in different ranks, similar to what you’d see in an ant colony. A strange property of Nulls allows them to “dig” into the space between dimensions. This can be spotted and disrupted with an application of psionics, and gets weaker when closer to the World Tree, but this gives Nulls an advantage since they can simply hide in this boundary until they decide to make a move against the people of Betwixt.

## **Races**

*Humans:* A common sight on Betwixt, humans, despite technically not being natives, have permeated the entirety of the plane due to their genetic flexibility, most races on Betwixt now are some manner of hybrid of human and one of the original races. This is also true of humans themselves, being genetically altered or possessing some DNA from one of the other races of Betwixt, giving them unusual skin, eye, and/or hair colors. Those that lack the genetics tend to end up Sparkless and in a slow descent into the Underground.

*Wilders:* Natural psions that do not need World Tree Sap to awaken their power, the race is marked by green eyes, including the sclera and pupil, though the sclera is a lighter shade and the pupil a darker one. Their skin often takes on a bronzed or dark golden color regardless of genetic manipulation. All Wilders naturally possess a Psi-Spark and are constantly on Phase 1 with their innate Psi-Spark, easily able to push into Phase 2 with a bit of training.

*Elves:* The source of inspiration for the Tolkien elf of Earth, elves are known to be incredibly intelligent even when Sparkless, matching a Phase 1 Demispark even without a Spark. Elves themselves are whipcord thin humanoids with incredibly steady and smooth movements that make them seem much more graceful than they really are, as well as having rather substantial lifespans. Elves have an oddly rigid bio-template that makes bioenhancements less effective. Most Bright Sparks are elves and most elves develop Demisparks fairly early in their lives.

*Marru:* Natural Dullsparks, the marru possess arms that are a bit longer, proportionally, compared to other races with their hands partially coated in a flexible resin that hardens under impact, digitigrade legs with claws designed to grip the ground better, and elongated heads like some human tribes on Earth. They are surprisingly quiet and capable of getting into places they really shouldn't thanks to their Dullsparks.

*Drones:* Robotic beings built and programmed by the Playground for various purposes, drones have a vastly varied appearance ranging from floating orb with a camera eye to full on android. They also come in mechanical and biomechanical models. Drones are generally Sparkless due to their nature, but some with advanced enough programming can end up gaining or developing a Spark over time, and can even replicate psionics. Drones that do gain a Spark tend to feel more natural in their mannerisms and attitude, less robotic, as it were.

## **Powers Available**

*Bioenhancements:* The genetic manipulations of this plane are incredible and relatively easy to access on the most basic level. Mainly cosmetic changes to appearance and vanity. There are also black market deals, though these are not always the safest due to the very nature of black market deals. Supersoldier serums are on offer, but they often have serious drawbacks, such as mental instability or rapid mutation that likely needs several rounds of gene therapy to properly reverse, though it is unlikely for someone to obtain such given these mutations are often a mark of illegal genetic manipulation. There are also cybernetics for those that want a quicker path to power.

*Psionics:* Psychic powers are a known commodity within Betwixt, possessed in large part by the three main factions of the plane. The source of these powers is the World Tree at the very center of the plane, which produces a sap that awakens the psionic potential within the mind, like a key to a house. However, such powers are not built up to their potential, merely unlocking the most basic levels for their user. The standard baseline for a fresh psion is a decent range of telepathic communication, a degree of point-blank and tactile telekinesis, and a subtle form of psychometry that makes it easier to learn how to use certain objects by knowing the quirks it may possess immediately. These psionics can all then be improved with further applications of the World Tree Sap (See Items Below) or through training over time. Proper techniques to train up these psionic capabilities are taught in military academies.

*Spark:* This is a rare thing, bound to the soul and mind rather than the body, the one thing the scientists of Betwixt understand little of. The Spark is... the only known form of magic in this world, providing enhanced mental attributes and is the reason for much of the technological advancement found on the plane. But, not all Sparks are equal. Most people of Betwixt have a Spark, but these only offer the basics of improved memory, enhanced thought speed, and a boost in comprehension. These do not possess the Phases of more advanced Sparks, but can eventually be cultivated to become one of the more advanced Sparks. It is also possible to possess multiple Sparks, usually through Transfer, an Heirloom, or an Artificial Spark. Possessing multiple Sparks accelerates how quickly a Spark will evolve into one of the more advanced variations.

More advanced sparks (see below) possess Phases, temporary empowerments to their Spark that they can enter under certain circumstances, usually through stress, fear, or anger, though the Barracks teach special meditation techniques to Psi-Sparks to allow them to enter Phase 1, though attaining higher levels is questionable with these methods. This also applies to Demisparks which much more easily rise in Phase than other Sparks. The highest known Phase for natural Sparks is 3, though Null Sparks and some rare Heirloom Sparks are capable of going to Phase 4. It is theorized that a Phase 5 exists, but most wave it off as pure speculation or myth.

It is possible for a person to be born or become Sparkless, such individuals are considered second class citizens in most instances, though some prove their usefulness despite lacking a Spark, unless, of course, this is the result of a Spark Transfer, a special technique that allows a person to transfer their own Spark to another individual. This is rarely done except when a person is on their death bed or when forced onto a criminal that's done an egregious enough crime to warrant the punishment. Sparks transferred in this way tend to have some small echo of their original owner, granting some of their skills and talents to the person gaining the Spark. It is possible to steal a Spark, but requires complex machinery that's sensitive enough to not be mobile. A transferred or stolen Spark will allow the one using it to more easily reach the highest Phase of the one that previously used the Spark.

- *Demispark:* A normal Spark that's been "trained" to gain Phases like more advanced Sparks, these tend to not have much more than increased mental capabilities while in the higher Phases compared to other Sparks which offer more unique benefits. It is, however, theorized that a Demispark could breakthrough to Phase 4, or even 5, with enough training and the right mix of stimuli. There is an inkling of truth to the Phase 4 theory, but the Phase 5 theory is considered a myth with little to no proof backing it up, even by Bright Sparks specialized in the study of Sparks. With training, a Demispark can be linked to a set of skills, turning it into a new type of advanced Spark, which include examples such as the Iron Spark, a Spark that gives improved situational awareness, reflexes, and muscle memory, or the Noble Spark, a Spark that improves empathy, hellstromism, and the ability to link information.
- *Bright Spark:* The most potent form of naturally occurring Spark, the Bright Spark is what gives the Playground so much sway and why the government ignores their more dangerous experiments. Baseline, a Bright Spark provides five times the mental enhancement of a Normal or Demispark, but its true benefit comes with the fact that it massively enhances one's neural plasticity and offers a variety of scientific theories that act as the basis for Betwixt's rapid advancement. Bright Spark Phases are difficult to achieve, but offer a great deal of benefit. Phase 1 increases the creativity of the user and allows them to create their works with shocking speed. Phase 2 further enhances upon Phase 1 as well as offering the ability to 'see' the universal laws of the world. Phase 3 enhances upon Phase 2 but also allows the user to interact with universal laws in a small fashion, effectively granting them the ability to bend certain laws to help better understand them and create "Prototech" or, "technologies that shouldn't work but do because the Spark says so."

- *Psi-Spark*: The most common of advanced Spark is the Psi-Spark which come about when someone with a Demispark is given a dose of World Tree Sap and it resonates with their Spark. This connects their psionic capabilities to their Spark and gives them Phases that amplify the power of their psionics. Such Sparks occur in one out of three individuals, though certain chemicals can be used to guarantee the result if taken regularly for a few years. A Psi-Spark will naturally possess slightly more precise psionic capabilities than normal, but the true benefit is when they go to higher Phases. Each Phase gives a substantial jump in their psionic capabilities, often including the manifestation of a psionic power beyond the standard, such as cryokinesis or teleportation.
- *Heirloom Spark*: An incredibly rare modified Spark, an Heirloom Spark is one passed down through generations, from parent to child. With the prevalence of genetic bioengineering and the distaste for natural pregnancies some have, this form of Spark is exceptionally rare. Such a Spark is duplicated into the first child the one that holds the Spark, carrying an echo of all passed holders of the Spark to give the talents and skills as if through Spark Transfers. This makes such a Spark one of the strongest to form, though they are not considered natural by most. An Heirloom Spark is equivalent to a Demispark normally, however, the knowledge and skills it carries are increased with each Phase, to the point where, at Phase 3, they can access the full skills and memories of all who came before them, as well as mimic the functions of a Phase 0 or 1 of any other Spark that was possessed by one of the previous owners of the Heirloom. The downside is, Heirloom Sparks have the hardest time increasing in Phase compared to any other Spark, even a Bright Spark, and the mental bleedover sometimes leading to an eccentric personality. Heirloom Sparks cannot be transferred or stolen through any known means. At least with what is present on Betwixt alone.
- *Dullspark*: A truly subtle example of a Spark. A Dullspark is a Spark that affects other Sparks. Most Dullsparks use this to suppress another Spark, leaving it weakened or reduced in Phase, however, it can also be used to enhance the effects of a Spark instead, which makes it a sought after commodity. A Dullspark does not technically possess Phases like other Sparks, it instead possesses what most Dullsparks call a Meter, which increases as they apply the effects of their Spark. Each Phase is a threshold for this ability and they more they suppress or enhance, the higher the meter goes and the harder it is to push this ability to affect more. It can also be used to enhance or weaken other forms of magic with a bit of training.
- *Mixed Spark*: The rarest type of Spark out there, the Mixed Spark is a combination of two advanced sparks, such as a Bright Psi-Spark or an Heirloom Dullspark. These are technically the result of someone possessing multiple Sparks and fusing them together to have them linked in such a way that each stage affects both equally. This can also occur naturally in children that are born naturally, the Sparks of each parent donating part of their potential to the child and forming a Mixed Spark of the donor Sparks.
- *Null Spark*: A type of unstable, artificial spark that was created by the Underground as an answer to the Playground having so many Bright Sparks. Created with the essence of the Nulls, the Betwixian equivalent of Hackers, they are highly unstable and can lead to madness in anyone that uses them. Possessing a Null Spark is, in and of itself, illegal, though it can be determined if it was implanted willingly or not. Those with one implanted against their will are still detained, but in asylums where they learn how to better fight off the madness of the Spark. Null Sparks also have the unfortunate trait of absorbing other Sparks within the same host, condensing them into a single one and making the madness stronger for each such Spark absorbed. If someone were to fully succumb to the madness of a Null Spark, they would become a Null themselves. Though it's more like the Null Spark becomes a Null and rips its way out of a host, being stronger based on the Sparks absorbed by the Null Spark. However, the benefits of a Null Spark are nothing to sneeze at, they are twice as potent as a Bright Spark and can push to Phase 4 if really pushed, though this runs a very real risk of causing the user to become a Null shortly thereafter.

### Items Available

*Plug Suit:* These skin tight suits are made of a reactive material that, besides being tough enough to shrug off small arms fire with only minor bruising, acts as extra, superdense muscle to augment the body's natural strength and speed. This does require additional conditioning to adapt to since it does not enhance your own senses or reaction speed. More than this, if the user possesses psionic capabilities, the suit naturally forms a barrier from the ambient psychic energies to act like armor all its own. These suits are the base on which power armor is built and without a plug suit it's impossible to use power armor. The underground tends to prefer plug suits, reinforced with simple armor plating, rather than the bulkier, and noisier, power armor used by the Barracks.

*Power Armor:* Used primarily by the Barracks, power armor is designed to be as versatile as possible while offering protection against the dangers from the edge of reality and physical enhancements. Most power armor possesses methods of ranged attack, primarily in the form of guns, though recent developments have allowed for focusing kinetic force beams by those utilizing psionics. Propulsion systems are equally common and can range a variety of methods, usually simple rocket propulsion, though antigravity, kinetic control, and psionic amplification are somewhat common on their own. Some models of power armor also come with a built in Virtual Intelligence to aid in their use.

*Psionic Foci:* Branches, leaves, knots, and roots from the World Tree are known to amplify psionic abilities while relatively fresh, something that got many scientists to research the phenomena and eventually create a plant that produces a resin that preserves these properties when used to coat the parts of the World Tree. This later developed further into a mix of resin and various minerals that serve a similar purpose of amplifying psionic capabilities. This resin mix is surprisingly versatile and can be molded into various objects or even used as a somewhat stiff thread.

*World Tree Sap:* This substance, extracted from the World Tree, is the source of most psionic powers on the plane, though acquiring it legally is difficult, and acquiring it illegally is prohibitively expensive. The sap is given out to military trainees in their fifth year of training in single use ampules that hold only a few milliliters of the substance, enough for a single person to awaken their psionic potential and no more. To get that far, one must undergo the intense training given in these facilities, undergo gene therapy to remove any detrimental conditions, and pass several psyche evaluations by those trained to use their own psionics to aid in understanding the mind, something most dimensional travelers can't or won't achieve. In the black market, a single ampule would cost enough to buy a full suit of high end power armor, the necessary plug suit, and several illegal upgrades.

There is also the option of Artificial Sap, which is... spotty at best. Artificial saps tend to align towards a specific power and skew the user's abilities massively, often coming with mental detriments as well such as overstressing the brain that can result in headaches, nose bleeds, internal hemorrhaging, and death if pushed too far before the body can adapt, which can take years, or even decades, to fully do so.

*Artificial Spark:* A rare commodity in Betwixt, artificial Sparks are still a known creations. The first examples were created by the Bright Sparks that originally created the Drone race as they wanted to see if it was possible to give a Drone a Spark and determine if an artificial Spark was possible and simply decided to combine the experiment. The end result was... less than perfect, but showed the theories held merit. It was then refined over the decades to the point where an Artificial Spark is near as good as a normal Spark, and can even achieve the rank of Demispark eventually.

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### **Reality 3: Paradise**

Paradise is a truly beautiful and vibrant place, it is a colorful realm with vivid combinations everywhere and even the air seems to have sparks of color carried on the wind. Most of the plane is open air with cloud-like islands that are solid and have settlements where the people of Paradise reside. The people in this realm all possess incredibly colorful, patterned wings that vary from feathered to bat-like to skeletal to butterfly or dragonfly. These wings, song, and the winds of the realm, are the primary basis of the magic within Paradise.

The islands of Paradise are varied as they tend to possess an attraction to certain colors of Chroma above others, leading to those with those colors on their wings being more common on their wings. Traditions and cultures tend to differ from island to island even when two islands are close together, they usually have a few traditions that are not shared with other such islands. There are even some that travel from island to island to go to one festival after another or to trade between islands.

An unusual thing here is that the crops of Paradise grow off of Chroma instead of nutrients normally found in dirt, and some don't even need water and subsist entirely off of Chroma. Similarly, the clouds that make up the islands, which come in several types, can be shaped and structured using Arias to infuse them with Cadences to use it as a building material. Metals and stone are rare in this realm, only what metal and stone is created through the use of Chroma exists on Paradise at all. Most objects made here are made of plant materials or the island clouds because of this lack of earthen materials.

Like all realities, Paradise does have a being that occur when humans without some means of protection against the edge of reality come to Paradise, but unlike others, the result isn't a creature, but instead a dispersal into a storm cloud that will join up with other such clouds, which then become a storm front that travels through the plane and can, when built up enough, cause heavy damage to the cloud islands, but will also drop some of the clouds behind that build up on the islands or float along the winds where they will slowly disperse into colorless Chroma.

### **Races**

*Humans:* Referred to by the locals as Lightwings, humans do not actually possess physical wings here and can instead manifest wings of colored light that looks like stained glass. These wings are still capable of allowing for full flight and are able to act as if they were solid, even being quite sharp and useful as weapon and shield. However, these wings rely on the magic of this plane to function, and using the magic can drain the Light used to compose their wings, which can result in them not being enough to allow for flight or to fail entirely. Many humans rely more on Arias themselves than actual Chroma Casting.

*Sprites:* Small, frail, and vulnerable is the feel given off by most Sprites, their diminutive size, thin frames, insect-like wings, and often childish appearance certainly give that facade some traction. But, Sprites are anything but vulnerable. Sprites themselves are artists and have an innate understanding of color and the ways they mix, something that has made them premier enchanters as well due to their ability to imbue Cadences and Chroma into objects, though they are better with decorative crafts than functional ones, normally. This has also allowed them to create the Windcasters used throughout Paradise. There are two subraces of Sprite, the Pix, which have butterfly-like wings, and the Nix, which possess dragonfly-like wings. The main difference is the Pix are better Chroma users and the Nix are better Aria users.

*Archon:* Archons are one of the races originally mistaken for angels by the humans of Earth, almost universally possessing beautiful feathered wings and an inner light that makes them appear more beautiful than they really are. Archons are actually known primarily for their ability to trick others as they can hide the color of their wings, making them appear pure white to anyone that sees them, though they cannot replenish their Chroma while their wings are so hidden. They also possess a 'Halo' of colorless Chroma that they can ignite to supplement their Chroma Casting or Cadences.

*Wizen:* The Wizen are a varied race, with wings that can range from simple cloth chutes, to large leaves, to even wings of bone, the only common factor is that they fold up over the body easily to appear as clothing and rarely, if ever, appear as feathered or insect-like wings. Even when quite young, a Wizen will look older, and the colors they possess in their wings are usually faded or a tainted mix of colors. This gives them an odd form of Chroma Casting that is far more subtle in nature that goes well with their echoing, whispery voices. Unlike other races, however, a Wizen generates their own colored Chroma without the need to recharge it at all.

### **Powers Available**

*Wings:* Every race in Paradise possesses wings of some sort that are all colored in various patterns. The wings are essentially a bank that stores Chroma, with the more of a color present in the wing allowing greater storage of that variety of Chroma, and allows the various colors of Chroma to interact and create the basis of a proper spell. Other things can be used to store Chroma, besides wings, but it is far more difficult for reasons unknown.

*Lightwings:* A trait unique to humans, Lightwings are a manifestation of Chroma stored within the body, rather than wings, spread outwards to act as wings in and of themselves without being used up. This also means that humans are the only race capable of *designing* their wings, choosing the colors and patterns involved to achieve a desired form of Chroma. However, once a pattern is set, it is difficult to change it to another one, requiring the crafting of an entirely new set of Lightwings before subsuming the old wings, which can take weeks to accomplish. Any human that comes to Paradise will eventually develop their own Lightwings after absorbing enough Chroma from the plane.

*Arias:* An integral part of the use of Chroma as well as a minor power themselves, Arias are song-like vocalizations that further shape and refine the effects of Chroma into proper spells. When sung, an Aria creates what is known as a Cadence, a framework that interacts with the user and their Chroma. At the most basic level, an Aria's Cadence is a structure that pulls ambient colorless chroma to itself, acting as an amplifier geared towards the Aria's influence. These are usually quite minor, but a complex weaving of Arias can build an equally impressive Cadence, and some do specialize in the use of Arias over Chroma Spells.

*Chroma:* The proper power of Paradise, Chroma is a name given to the small motes of colored light that drift along the winds of the plane and seem to drift everywhere. Each color is aligned with a different focus, such as green's focus on growth, harmony, and ambition or gold's focus on illumination, courage, wealth, and wisdom. Chroma on its own is merely an energy source, it cannot normally do anything on its own, though humans have shown it is possible with their Lightwings, it is the application of Chroma to a Cadence that creates an actual, tangible effect. The Aria will pick parts of the focus of each color linked into the pattern and combine them to create a final effect. As an example, the use of Gold, Red, and Black may allow one to focus on the aspects of Triumph from Gold, Energy from Red, and Fear and Authority from Black to create a suffocating aura of pressure that subjugates those exposed to it, or it could emphasize the aspects of Wealth from Gold, Fire from Red, and Elegance from Black to create a flame that burns away impurities and increases the 'value' of the substance affected, though this is temporary. Earth Color Theory is based on the effects carried by Chroma.

Chroma can be garnered from sources other than the motes on the wind and will replenish slowly on its own as the user's wings absorb colorless Chroma and convert it to colored Chroma.

### **Items Available**

*Windcasters:* One of the most common examples of Chroma infusion are the Windcasters, small painted cards that fit easily in the hand. Each Windcaster is itself a constructed Cadence with special paints storing the necessary Chroma for it. A Windcaster can be used to cast a prepared spell from the card with a simple Aria to act as the trigger. This uses up all of the Chroma within the card, leaving it dull, but it can be recharged if given Chroma.

*Moonsilver:* A type of cloud that's been structured with the use of an Aria to take on more metallic properties. Moonsilver itself has properties that allow it to break through various magics, including Chroma and Cadences, and can even negate the effects of Chroma Casting. This works best when the moonsilver is moving quickly, making it most effective when used in weapons rather than armor. Moonsilver is also a natural source of White and Silver Chroma, producing a decent amount of both forms of Chroma.

*Chroma Sun:* A very rare, naturally occurring source a single color of Chroma that can be internalized into the body, providing a constant supply of the specific color of Chroma. This can have an effect on the body, altering the color of the body in a small area (usually a dot on the forehead or one of the main chakras) to or creating a halo in the same color as the sun, though it will never change the color of the individual's wings.

*Prismatic Sun:* A Chroma Sun that produces multiple colors of Chroma. This can range anywhere from two to ten colors in a single sun, with ten being so rare that only one has ever been known to exist. Otherwise a Prismatic Sun acts exactly like a Chroma Sun.

*Talismans:* A form of jewelry that is able to store up a single, specific color of Chroma. These can be used as a supplement for Chroma Casting, but need to have Chroma stored up to be of any use.

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## Reality 4: Fortuna

Fortuna is a living plane, with emotions and moods of its own which are reflected in its weather and world conditions. It has been on a steady decline for millennia and has now reached a state where it has violent mood swings, causing extreme weather, with the world itself suffering from a depression that causes things to seem leeched of color. This planar emotional state is present in the people of the realm as well, giving them a measure of the same power, which is the basis of the magic of this plane.

Most of the races on Fortuna consist of war-like races that are inclined towards combat and strength, with the various races separated into dozens of tribes or clans that are constantly fighting, forming alliances, breaking said alliances, and going back to fighting. There are only a few cities present on the plane, and many tribes and clans possess an unspoken and tense truce when going to these cities. The reason for this is that cities have a greater variety of high quality resources than most tribes or clans could obtain on their own. On top of this, the cities themselves didn't exist until humans started to make their way onto Fortuna, bringing with them a more advanced form of civilization than the people of the plane were used to.

The main power of Fortuna is Heart, a form of magic fueled entirely with emotion, with different emotions producing different effects. For example, Ragers use Anger, Hate, and Bloodlust to manipulate the more volatile elements of fire and lightning, with some even managing ice for those that manage to focus their rage in a specific way, while a Serene uses Calmness, Contentment, and Satisfaction to form areas where violence is difficult to initiate, heal wounds, and form barriers. There are many types of Heart because of how varied emotions can get, with even the most esoteric of emotions, such as *schadenfreude*, producing their own effects, though some combine the effects of other emotions, such as Thrill combining the effects of Anger and Joy. There are many names for Heart users based on the emotions they focus on; Serenes, Ragers, Sages, Dauntless, Joyous, Glooms, and many other titles for the many emotions available.

There is a danger to using Heart, however, those unprotected from its effects have their emotions burn out and become Cinders, zombie-like beings of Apathy and Malice. Cinders are so named for both the burning ashes that waft from their bodies constantly and their ability to ignite the Hearts of others, a condition that, if untreated, can lead to the individual becoming a Cinder themselves. Serenes are immune to the Burn of a Cinder unless they allow it to take hold. Humans protected from the edge of reality, however, have a unique opportunity to ignite their soul with the same curse as a Cinder and *control* the Burn, keeping themselves from ever burning out and creating a new power all their own.

Ruins exist of a time long lost, showing a more sophisticated society that once existed on the plane before the storms started, even an old, now extinct race has traces in these old ruins. These ruins a source of materials that aren't found anywhere else on Fortuna.

### Races

*Humans:* The humans of Fortuna are a varied lot, with an equal spread of all forms of Heart users and bringing with them a more civilized state to the races of Fortuna. They built the few cities that now dot Fortuna's surface and have developed effective training to develop nearly any form of Heart use. Beyond the use of Heart, humans here possess the ability to internalize the effect a Cinder has on Heart and regulate it, which allows them to create a power that they simply refer to as Burn.

*Drakon:* The drakon are a nomadic, draconic race of warriors, the most disciplined of warriors at that, trained well and taught restraint even as they fight against all of the emotions built up from this self-same discipline. This discipline is the basis of the magic utilized by drakon, the ability to suppress their emotions and channel it into a Storm held within their chest, they must suppress this storm until they choose to release it, but when they do, the drakon become a truly terrifying force of nature. While the magic is something that can be taught, it is dangerous for any race other than a drakon to try and utilize.

*Dwarves:* One of the more stable races to be found in Fortuna, their Hearts innately connected to the world below rather than the storm above, as such, many dwarves are far more grounded and dour than the other races of Fortuna, making the dwarves the foremost users of Commune on Fortuna. This allows a dwarf to not rely on their own emotions when using Heart, instead using the emotions of people around them and the world itself, which also acts as a buffer against the effects a Cinder has on Heart.

*Orcs:* The most violent race of Fortuna, orcs are big, physically strong, and have intense emotions that make their use of Heart all the stronger, the strongest on Fortuna, in fact. However, the reason for their violent streak is not because of rage or a desire to be dominant, it is because they simply like to fight and are adrenaline junkies. The more danger an orc is in, the more they'll revel in the danger and violence. However, the intense emotions possessed by orcs mean they often lack the more subtle emotions, especially the ones that are used by Serenes, meaning healers are a rarity for the race.

### **Powers Available**

*Heart:* The primary magic of Fortuna, Heart is the self same power that the consciousness of the plane itself exerts every moment of every day. Emotion. The conditions of the world are reflections of its emotions, and so, the power of Heart reflects the emotions of the user. Every emotion feeds into one of many abilities Fortuns utilize just as easily as the plane itself does, creating a magic that is as reactive as it is potent. Most emotions are linked to a few others with three main emotions, though similar emotions feed into them as well, these develop a set of abilities based on those emotions. For a few examples of types of Heart Users, see below:

- *Ragers:* One of the most common examples of Heart User, ragers operate on Rage, Hatred, and Bloodlust primarily to manipulate the volatile elements of fire and lightning. More controlled forms of Rage and Hatred even allow a rager to drain heat from their surroundings to create ice and cold.
- *Serenes:* A rarer form of Heart User, Serenes utilize the emotions of Calmness, Contentment, and Satisfaction to heal themselves or others, conjure potent barriers, form auras where they can calm emotions and impose restrictions. Serenes are able to shrug off the burning of a Cinder with a moment's thought.
- *Dauntless:* Common amongst dwarves, the Dauntless use Determination, Resolve, and Courage to manipulate earthen materials like stone and metal, as well as allowing the user to support a greater load than they otherwise would be able to.
- *Joyous:* A favorite amongst orcs, Joyous are enhanced physically by the emotions of Joy, Pleasure, and Passion, vastly improving the athleticism and acrobatic abilities of the Joyous. This doesn't truly .
- *Gloom:* Running off of Grief, Fear, and Misery, Glooms are one of the darkest of Heart Users out there, they poison those around them with weakness and pain, inflicting a number of effects that hinder, harm, and weaken their foes so they can more easily take them down.
- *Lord:* Incredibly common among orcs and, surprisingly, only slightly less common to dwarves, Lord's rely on Ambition, Pride, and Confidence, with Avarice often feeding into it, to manipulate the minds and perceptions of those around them, creating illusions and minor charms.

This is not a definitive list, but these are a few examples.

Dimensional travelers are often surprised when they first manifest Heart, it seems to unlock itself during a single moment that can occur after any length of time after entering the plane, anywhere from at the exact moment they arrive all the way to five years later. This is often accompanied by a massive surge of extremely powerful emotion that, for a few moments, overwhelms the traveler. This can be anything from rage, to grief, to joy, to calm. After that moment, the traveler can use Heart as if they'd always possessed it, though they'd lack training in its use.

*Storm:* The magic developed by the drakon, this magic allows one to shunt part of their emotions into a Storm within their chest that gives the magic its name. This Storm is controlled through the will and discipline of the user, which allows the Storm to remain contained while providing the power of the stored up emotions, even if the user isn't currently feeling that emotion. However, as the Storm builds strength, it starts to fight against the will and discipline of its user until it can break free, something that must constantly be suppressed lest all the emotions break free and wash through the user. As it gets closer to breaking free, it starts to manifest a glow within the user's chest to the point it even starts to show through the skin. For a drakon, this isn't an issue as the magic was designed with their unique physiology in mind. For other races, this is where the use of Storm starts to get dangerous as the glow is effectively caused by the Storm thundering, which can start to damage the body if left for too long.

Additionally, there's the danger of the user's discipline Breaking, allowing the Storm to truly rage. When this occurs, a non-drakon finds themselves plunged into a berserker state fueled by pain so intense it blanks out the mind entirely, producing black lightning that lashes out at everything around the user until they collapse. For a drakon, this is a bit different, when their discipline breaks, their body instead rapidly increases in size and muscle mass even as they go into a semi-directed berserker state. Their entire body glows with a pale blue light that shows through the gaps in their scales and extends into their claws. Humans with a drakon heritage enter an odd, mixed state where they both increase in muscle mass and are coated in the same black lightning as other races, and can even learn to direct their berserker state somewhat with training.

Finally, the methods to safely quell the Storm are numerous, but for the drakon, the easiest is to funnel the Storm out of their chest into their throat and firing it as a glowing blast of raw power from their mouth, this can even be used to release some of the Storm rather than the full thing. Humans with a drakon heritage can emulate this method, though the blast is usually black rather than blue in this case. For others, this is far more complicated as they must find a method to calm, disperse, or otherwise vent the pressure of the Storm into something else. Dwarves had this easiest, using Commune to cast the Storm into their surroundings harmlessly. The most reliable method is to, in a slow and controlled manner, reintegrate the emotions that make up the Storm into themselves and allow them to dissipate on their own afterwards.

*Burn:* A power completely unique to humans, Burn is the power that comes from a controlled burn of the outer periphery of the user's Heart, which regenerates faster than it burns. At least most of the time. This generates an energy that slowly pools in the body and can be added into the use of Heart to enhance its effects, or even generate an effect without the emotion being present. However, the amount of energy within the body is somewhat limited and a human must be careful since it can react instinctively to particularly strong emotions, which can lead to lashing out with wildly uncontrolled Heart.

*Commune:* Fortuna is a living world, it breaths, it dreams, and it *feels*. Its emotions permeate everything, and those in tune with the emotions of the plane are able to draw on them to fuel their use of Heart. By drawing in ambient emotions, both from the world itself and from any individuals around, a Communer is able to fuel Heart without needing to feel the necessary emotions themselves as anything more than a faint echo. Oddly, this functions even in other, non-living worlds as the emotions of the people living on the world slowly stain it and become a constant source of power.

While dwarves are the best at using this particular power, it is not exclusive to them, anyone can utilize it to one degree or another. However, dwarves (and humans with dwarven blood) are the only ones known to be able to infuse Heart into an object using Commune.

### **Items Available**

*Heartstone:* A creation of the dwarves, heartstone is, simply put, a form of stone, especially the heavier forms of stone like granite or basalt, infused with a mix of different types of Heart to grant it new properties. This often makes the stone look and/or act a good deal like metal. It is especially useful in the creation of armor and acts as a source of Heart based on what was used in it for Communes. Different types of stone will have different properties. While in its raw state, Heartstone is able to be molded like clay, then an initial firing makes it act like metal, with a final firing at intense heat setting it in its final form. Another name for Heartstone is adamantine.

*Stormfont:* This incredibly rare elixir fashioned by the oldest of drakon communes is able to allow another race to use Storm in the same way as a drakon, including immunity to the damage caused by a building Storm and the ability to release it as blasts of power. It has the side effect of giving the drinker scales along their neck, face, shoulders, back, and sides. It takes years of work to produce a single vial of Stormfont and most drakon with the skill to do so will make only two or three vials in their lifetime.

*Cinder Claw:* Quite literally. This is the claw of a Cinder preserved in a glass vial. By cutting someone with the claw, it induces the same effect a living Cinder would have on Heart. This is primarily sold to humans as a way to gain access to Burn and usually come with instructions on how to properly internalize it.

*Mood Ring:* These rings, when worn, induce the emotion they are associated with, it is not overwhelming, but a constant background noise form that allows for low level use of the appropriate sort of Heart, and can enhance the power of the type of Heart if you actually feel the emotion normally, though the latter is fairly minor in comparison. It is not recommended to wear more than three of these rings or to use conflicting emotions such as Joy and Grief or Anger and Calm, this often lowers the effectiveness of the rings and can lead to one or both rings losing power.

*Cinderheart:* The heart of a Cinder fully extracted, dried, powdered, and mixed into glass to form a crystalline substance, which is usually formed into a pendant. This substance is a useful tool for someone looking to quell tempers, especially their own, as it can be used to drain an emotion from the wearer or someone the wearer touches. Doing so builds up the same energy utilized by humans as the Heart absorbed alongside the emotions is burned up, fulling up the substance in the process. This energy slowly dissipates, allowing it to absorb more emotions as necessary. The energy built up is normally inaccessible, even by humans, but it is thought to be possible.

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## Reality 5: D'void

D'void is the primordial chaos of all reality concentrated into a single place, the plane a heat sink for the chaos of the multiverse. The very substance of the plane constantly shifts from one thing to another with both fluid transitions and sudden, violent shifts that can hit at any time with little to no warning. The very essence of D'void is change and inconsistency, however, the chaos is this way because there is nothing to impose order on it, nothing to make it act in a controlled manner, nothing to give it *structure*. And the thing to give it that structure is the mind.

With the way D'void looks to an outside view, many would say no one can live there, but that's simply not true. The mind gives a small amount of structure to the surrounding areas, just enough to make it safe to live in. This allowed the first humans, long before Earth's modern age, to fall into D'void to create pockets of safety that allowed new things to form within the chaos, eventually leading to the creation of new races that emerge from the chaos itself, which further led to entire civilizations being built in large structures where the chaos is kept stable by the people within, and the collective conscious of them all.

Of course, multiple such civilizations have popped up over the millennia, founded by people of different cultures and isolated for long enough to form new, unique ones that give an end result where each and every civilization is as different as night and day, which inevitably has led to conflicts, which in turn led to the development of Chaos Warfare, the battle of wills used to turn the environment itself into a deadly weapon, which then allowed for the development of Void Runes, which aid in Chaos Warfare.

D'void is the only plane where humans are innately protected from the edge of reality, the chaos of D'void has touched every plane, including Earth, giving an innate protection to every living being in every plane. Any race can come to D'void without fear of its influence, though they must be careful of their own influence on the plane itself instead, fear and paranoia can lead to the plane forming the very things that a person expects, including attacks by feral beasts from their own nightmares. In fact, dreams and nightmares are the main danger of D'void, the uncontrolled thoughts and ideas that flow through the sleeping mind leading to many a beast that now roam D'void unhindered to this day.

This is the danger humanity can present as the other races of D'void do not dream, and many do not sleep at all. To counter this, humans have developed a method of remaining alert and aware even when asleep, which they refer to as Trance. This does have its downsides, as well as some unforeseen benefits that make it something looked into as more than simply a way to stop the creation of Terrors.

Terrors themselves are, as the name suggests, horrific entities born of human nightmares. They seem to blend into the chaos and actively hunt any living thing that wanders D'void outside of the cities they've built. A Terror can look like anything, they are born of fear and nightmares after all, and commonly use mind games to induce fear and paranoia in their mark, which both makes the Terror stronger and grants them a small number of minions to use. When in large enough numbers, they will attempt to attack the cities of D'void.

## Races

*Humans:* The first race to come to D'void, humans are the source with which all civilization was built within this plane and the ones that developed all of the various powers found on D'void. They're even the ones that created the other races of the plane, though this was initially an accident and is incredibly difficult now that so many races exist and put their own will into the chaos.

*Caryll:* Born after the advent of the language of Void Runes was developed, the Caryll are a living manifestation of the language's effects on the planar chaos. Each Caryll inherently possesses a single Void Rune marked within their mind permanently and can imprint more Void Runes than any other race on D'void, which also has the effect of redefining their physical nature as well as augmenting their wills. In their baseline form, most Caryll are skeletally thin, bald, black skinned, and white-eyed with only the pupil being visible. If one were to look carefully, a Caryll's skin is marked with slightly darker runes, especially focused around their eyes. As a Caryll imprints and utilizes Void Runes, their form, coloration, and overall appearance shifts and takes on a more filled out and defined form. Caryll do not sleep or dream.

*Imagines:* What occurs when someone thinks of a creature and makes it intelligent, befriends it, or otherwise treats it as its own being, or birthed from the pleasant dreams of someone asleep with an unprotected mind. Imagines are like imaginary friends on Earth, but real entities... sort of. An imagine can appear as anything, but only has a single form, unlike the changeling, but they are only partially real, like certain forms of illusion and other mind magics. Most imagines start their life bonded to a host, residing within the mind and being able to manifest as a real being when called upon or after their host's death. Some enjoy the freedom once they've left their host, though they'll still grieve their original host after their death, but others never seem to function well without and seek out someone willing to let them reside within the mind. Each mind offers a little strength to the Imagine and reinforces its existence until it can function on its own, becoming a unique entity with its own capabilities. Such an imagine is able to conjure planar chaos it can control with greater ease than any ambient form of it, which they can offer to anyone that hosts them within their mind, though they will take up space as a Void Rune to do so. Imagines cannot benefit from Void Runes or utilize Trance.

*Changelings:* The genius loci that humans created to hold their settlements together weren't always made perfectly, in fact, very few were. This inadvertently led to the genius loci slowly developing quirks and errors that resulted in pieces splintering off, never enough for them to fail as the splintered portion would regenerate, but enough to give rise to the beings known as changelings. This splinter would form into a mind all its own and "infect" a portion of the planar chaos to give rise to a changeling's body, ordered by their own mind into what could be considered their base form, the first form they ever manifest and the one they will return to when they die. Their bodies are mutable, able to shapeshift into nearly any living being, and even take on traits of other substances for short periods of time without dispersing into planar chaos once more. Most simply use this trait to make themselves look like exotic humanoids, but some enjoy looking like other creatures. Their will over themselves is much stronger than what they can exert over the planar chaos around them. Changelings cannot make use of Trance as they do not dream.

### **Powers Available**

*Chaos Binding:* The planar chaos is reactive to the minds and wills of those within its bounds, allowing someone to manipulate the surrounding planar chaos into a semi-stable environment. For most, this is as far as it gets, but for others, they become Chaos Binders and train their ability to control and stabilize the planar chaos into something usable. The training for this focuses on creating a flexible will and the ability to form a solid image within the user's mind without it wavering, to the point some can do so in the back of their mind while thinking and doing other tasks entirely, this is especially true of those that typically fight battles between the various settlements.

However, this alone isn't always enough. As such, Chaos Binders often quite literally pull planar chaos with them, forming it into a stable shape until they need to use it for something else, at which point it becomes whatever they need it to be. This planar chaos slowly becomes attuned to the user and reacts more readily to their will while actively rejecting the wills of others.

In a battle between Chaos Binders, they pit their wills against one another to take control of the planar chaos and use it against their opponent, supplemented with the chaos they've attuned to themselves, all the while physically combatting each other. With more Chaos Binders present, things tend to either get hectic or they lock down their surroundings entirely to prevent it from being used, relying only on their attuned chaos.

This training can also be applied to tame other normally chaotic or wild energies, such as the Wild Magic sometimes found on Earth and Asherati.

*Void Runes:* An accidental discovery, Void Runes are a language invented by humanity that has properties making it useful for those that use Chaos Binding, and even those that don't can benefit in some fashion. Using a Void Rune requires much the same training as a Chaos Binder, but more focused on memorization, which inevitably forms 'slots' within the mind. These slots can then be imprinted with a Void Rune to gain its effects.

The effects of a Void Rune vary heavily, with the most common simply giving increased stamina or vitality, and a few offering small increases in strength. However, the more useful Runes are those that directly affect Chaos Binding, ones that make holding an image easier, give greater impact, or allow for quickly forming an image with specific elements. It is possible to imprint a good number of these Runes, with a freshly trained Chaos Binder usually being able to imprint three such runes and a seasoned one easily achieving upwards of twenty five.

The true power of Void Runes is when they are used in combinations. In combination, Void Runes can create unique effects that can alter the user in various ways, though this requires at least five Runes to accomplish even basic combinations of this sort. This can do some odd things to the user, both mentally and physically, but it is rarely, if ever, harmful or expressed in an outward fashion, always being an internal shift barring its effects on planar chaos.

Additionally, the Runes are a basis for a complex language that can be spoken to reverberate with the imprinted Runes, greatly enhancing their effects for a short time, though overusing this can erase a Rune from its slot.

*Trance:* A technique developed by humans to allow their minds to rest while remaining alert, functional in an attempt to prevent more Terrors from emerging. Trance itself is a form of autohypnosis that slows the body's metabolism and makes one's thoughts more fluid, easing the strain of thought and wakefulness while retaining the ability to actually think. It can also be maintained while actually asleep to enter a dreamless sleep or have a lucid dream that can be used to protect the user's body.

However, Trance has some benefits beyond simply allowing for dreamless sleep, it unlocks the subconscious mind and allows the user to enter a waking dream. This, on its own, is immensely powerful as it greatly amplifies a Chaos Binder's ability to influence the world around them as well as providing a slow regeneration of stamina that allows a user to keep going far beyond the point where a non-Trance user would collapse. Even without planar chaos, this waking dream can be of use as it gives an odd sort of awareness of what the dream can and cannot touch.

Trance also gains some interesting boons from the use of Void Runes when they are in combination. By synergizing a combination of Runes with their Trance, a user can alter the properties of their Trance to express the effects of the Runes outwardly. This gives access to unique styles of martial arts that, by practicing while using Trance, can be performed even without the use of Runes or Trance. This also allows the user to absorb small amounts of planar chaos to augment their physical capabilities by a small degree.

Relying solely on Trance without sleep to stay alert is possible, but has some complications to it, namely the user's will starts to suffer from cracks and slowly weaken.

### Items Available

*Distilled Chaos:* Planar chaos, when properly attuned, is much easier to use, the issue is the actual attunement as you need to suppress all other past influences on the chaos to do so, which can take time. To counteract this, some individuals have taken to creating Distilled Chaos, planar chaos completely free of outside influence and stored within a special glass that prevents ones will from touching upon the chaos inside.

*Genius Loci Fragment:* Genius Loci are a type of AI formed from Chaos in the early days as a way to maintain a safe bubble of stabilized chaos, stable enough to establish entire settlements without fear of it collapsing even after millennia. This is a fragment broken off from one such creation. Such a fragment carries with it the stable mind that the Genius Loci possess and can be set to maintain a stable section within the planar chaos, one set by the holder. Once set, the fragment exerts enough will to maintain that stability until the original user dies or asks it to stop.

A fragment will slowly build up a personality over time, develop its own mind, and eventually become a changeling if allowed, or, it can be internalized, becoming an AI within the users mind, taking up several Rune Slots as it does so, and act as a personal advisor, friend, and ally. Though, it is a good idea to be careful as some may try to take control of their user if mistreated or if they don't like them.

*Rune Stones:* Void Runes weren't completely invented by humans. Instead, they took patterns noticed in the Chaos, false patterns, but patterns nonetheless, and used them as a basis for the Runes, establishing those patterns into the Chaos as a result. Now, every now and again, a stone will emerge with a Void Rune written on it, completely stable among the chaos. Such stones are useful in that they can, just by looking at it, Imprint a Rune into a Slot, something that can sometimes take several minutes, or even a few hours, of meditation to accomplish.

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## Reality 6: Asherati (The Husk)

Asherati is commonly called the Husk due to it being "what was left after the formation of the other planes" according to many, but it has the most magic of any of the planes. The rules and structures of the plane of Asherati have trapped magic within and pushed the planar chaos out, directly leading to the creation of D'void and the touch of chaos on all other planes. However, these rules and structures permeate the plane and place restrictions on the magic, and the people of the plane. The most prominent rule of Asherati's magic, however, is that it cannot create effects all its own, it must instead be infused into an object, and the object shapes it.

Asherati's magic, the very essence of it, primarily takes the form of crystals, which the people have learned to use to power enchantments that are similar to magical circuitry in place of actual casting. These crystals can be found in nature and are commonly mined from certain locations where the crystals naturally grow, but they can also fall from the sky like shooting stars. These shards that fall from the sky hold the most power of any crystal and are quite rare, with each starfall leading to expeditions and hunts to find them, whether to use them directly or to sell them and earn a handsome profit.

Even with most of the magic locked away in a crystalline form, there is magic that is free and wild, like an untamed animal in how it behaves. This free magic is known as Wild Magic and it is one of the main resources and dangers found on Asherati. There are regions infused with Wild Magic permanently where the very land takes on magical properties that are as dangerous as they are useful, along with giving rise to growths of the magic crystals that are harvested and sold by those brave enough to go into these regions. However, the more dangerous are the roaming forms of Wild Magic that, like a storm, follow a type of current that makes it regularly cross through certain regions. This form of Wild Magic is more tumultuous and can overload enchantments within it if they are running while exposed to the Wild Magic, potentially destroying the enchantment with a violent burst of magical power. There is, however, a benefit to this as it will naturally infuse into things exposed to it, including living beings, granting them small forms of magic all their own, though over exposure can result in a rather horrific disease known as Arcane Fever which can eventually lead to becoming an Eldritch, though those that overcome the illness will instead become an Arcane.

Beyond the development of magitech and the varied effects of Wild Magic, there are some able to use and access a form of magic more readily, without the need for crystals or exposure to wild magic, of which there are two varieties. The first is Animation, which allows its user to simply grant a semblance of life to a substance within a certain range, which then obeys the user's commands. This is especially useful when a shell is specifically prepared to accept Animation. The second is known as Investment and is shaped by the user's experiences and connections, which they push into an object, altering it to suit the user. The more invested in the object the person is, the more important it is to them without the magic, the more impressive the effects Investment has on it.

Those exposed to Wild Magic for too long develop a magical disease that slowly transforms the individual into a being known as an Eldritch, giant beings that induce madness with their mere presence. It is fortunate that most Eldritch leave the world to fly amongst the stars rather than remain on the lands of Asherati, and even those that do remain will find a place to slumber, their dreams extending to the surface and touching on the minds of others. The Eldritch are able to travel, consistently, through unreality to go between realities, where they observe other universes and manipulate events. Arcanes are the stillborn result of the disease being cured, humans with some of the nature of an Eldritch infused into them (See below for full details). Humans that aren't somehow protected from Wild Magic, usually in the form of having blood from another race, are particularly susceptible to this disease.

## Races

*Humans:* On Asherati, humans are the masters of Investment, by a wide margin. Every human possesses at least some capacity for the magic and can pick it up with ease, something thought to be a result of their ability to put more meaning into things than other races. However, humans also suffer most from Wild Magic and can, if unprotected, easily be converted into an Eldritch or Arcane, though this is only true in regards to roving Wild Magic, the stationary variety has much less of an effect.

*Drow:* The drow are dark skinned humanoids with white hair, red eyes, and pointed ears. While not actually related to the elves of Betwixt, they did inspire the concept of dark elves on Earth. The drow, as a race, are known for possessing a very stable form of the magic that makes Artifice possible, which allows them to create incredibly well refined and efficient enchantments. Moreover, they have enough magical stamina to do at least thrice the work any other race could accomplish with artifice in a single session.

*Gnomes:* The race known as gnomes are a race that are proportionally similar to humans, if a human was scaled down to three feet tall on average. Gnomes themselves are hardy individuals despite their small size with exceptional resistance to both disease and poison, as well as being slightly more tolerant of hot and cold temperatures. Most gnomes possess some measure of skill as Animators, with well over 90% of gnomes possessing the capacity natively. Those that don't are called halflings.

*Arcanes:* The result of successfully fighting off the effects of Arcane Fever, the race known as arcanes are much changed from the initial effects of the disease, often bearing tendrils of flesh, additional eyes, and sometimes even an extra mouth, with rubbery skin that secretes a thin film of slime. Arcanes are the only race known to be able to directly interact with Wild Magic, capable of absorbing, storing, and releasing it. The arcanes call this Astra, but they do not consider it an actual form of magic, the main use for this particular magic is to fuel or overload enchantments.

## Powers Available

*Artifice:* The process of creating magitech is focused on the building of channels within an object through which magic can more easily flow, aiding in defining the enchantment created as a result. This harnesses the, admittedly limited, form of magic possessed by all living beings on Asherati to simply carve these channels into the magical presence of an object and allow it to take on the properties. This, by definition, is a slow and exacting process that requires several days of work as any true craft. However, it can also be performed while doing other forms of crafting to incorporate the enchantments of Artifice more easily. It is thought to be possible for this to be used to affect a living being in a safe manner, and attempts have been partially successful by some, but it is often as much a detriment as a boon since the change in ones magical presence also alters the way they must perform Artifice, requiring they relearn the process each time.

*Animation:* A type of magic that naturally builds up in a small portion of the population, though it can also be gained under the correct circumstances, often requiring an implantation of a specific type of Mana and the carving of channels within the Mana to allow it to function, Animation allows one to, as the name suggests, animate materials into a mobile state with a semblance of life and basic programming to allow it to follow orders. These are commonly referred to as Golems. The actual process of Animation takes a lot of energy unless the shell to be animated is specifically designed for it or has been used often enough to 'remember' the magic.

It is possible to create an intelligent and self-aware Golem using Animation, but the practice is frowned upon, as is the use of the dead as a medium for Animation. However, the benefit of such is that the Golems will build up or access a form of ‘muscle memory’ allowing them to either learn new skills or utilize the ones they possessed in life, respectively, a useful boon for an Animator as many do not know how to properly fight on their own.

Animation can be used on the user if they are paralyzed to allow them mobility or as a way to push their physical limits as doing so dulls pain, holds the body together, and can allow an animator to temporarily ignore massive trauma that should have immediately killed them. However, the moment the magic ends, the damage hits them all at once, which can be lethal unless they possess a means to heal themselves beforehand.

Animation is based on the concept of Purpose, requiring the Animator to give their Golem a Purpose otherwise it will collapse back to its base materials. The Golem will naturally be geared towards its Purpose and will not function as well outside of its intended Purpose, and may even collapse if it is given a task that runs counter to its Purpose.

*Investment:* Much like Animators, Investors make up a small portion of the population naturally, however, where Animation can be gained through the implantation of a Mana, Investment can be gained through exposure to Wild Magic and meditation on the effects of Wild Magic. Investment allows its user to push a form of magic into an object, in much the same way an Animator does, however, instead of giving a semblance of life to the material, the user imbues the object with their own experiences, attachments, and mindset which is then shaped by the object’s mystical presence. This in turn changes the object into something else, such as a necklace becoming a sword or a badge of office becoming a suit of armor. These changed objects possess unique magical traits that give the Investor their strength, such as the above sword being able to cut at a greater distance than its physical edge would suggest or the armor amplifying the user’s physical capabilities.

Investors find it easier to use their magic on objects that have sentimental value to them, something that they have a genuine connection to as something other than a weapon or tool. A cherished ring given by a loved one or pulled from a bitter foe’s body after their last breath would be inherently stronger than the same ring simply purchased from a market stall on a whim. The Investor’s connection need not be a positive one. Hating what something represents can be enough of a connection to ease the process to the same degree as something they treasure or love. Such a connection can, over time, grow stronger and alter the nature of the Investment as their connection solidifies and deepens. An Investor can Invest in multiple objects at once, they are not restricted to a single object, and can even combine Invested objects.

It is possible for an Investor to Invest in their own body, however, this is incredibly difficult as the connection they possess needs to go beyond simply being their body to form the appropriate connection. It is nearly impossible to gain such a connection after becoming an Investor, nearly requiring the connection be established beforehand.

*Astra:* The magic possessed by the arcanes, and a few humans that are descended from arcanes, Astra makes its user completely immune to the effects of Wild Magic, both good and bad. Astra users possess the ability to absorb ambient magical energies, usually in the form of Wild Magic, which is then stored within the body and stabilized, tamed into a usable form. This stabilized Wild Magic can be directly fed into a Mana to recharge it or directly into an enchantment to power it without the need for a Mana. This can also be used to overcharge an enchantment or Mana. If done carefully, such an overcharge can add extra power to an enchantment’s effects or improve the capacity of a Mana by a minute amount, however, if used recklessly or intentionally overdone, this can instead result in the breakdown of an enchantment or Mana. This can result in a harmless failure or a violent explosion of magical power depending on just how much power was used to overpower the effect.

### **Items Available**

*Manas:* The crystals that store most of the magic found on Asherati, these are essentially magical batteries able to hold vast quantities of magical power, some even able to regenerate their supply if allowed to do so, though this is usually much slower than the rate the energy is used up.

*Magitech:* Magical technologies formed through the use of Artifice. The magitech of Asherati is on par with the technology of Earth, and even some of what can be found on Betwixt. Protective equipment and construction are the most common forms of magitech, especially those that protect against raw Wild Magic.

Potions are another common form of Magitech that involve the use of powdered Manas dissolved into a mix of medicinal ingredients that have their effects amplified by the magic of the Manas.

*Mana Infusions:* Wild Magic can't exactly be captured, but a Mana that's ruptured in containment can very readily mimic the effects of Wild Magic on an individual, and can even be shaped to give a desired result. A mana infusion will make a specific alteration to an exposed object or being's mystical presence, thus granting it unique properties. These vary in difficulty, with the most difficult one to create, and thus obtain, being the one that grants access to Investment.

*Animator Mana:* A prepared Mana designed to grant access to the magic of Animation. This Mana must be implanted into the body, but will slowly be consumed over time until the magic is inherent to the user rather than being a part of the Mana.