

# Locales and Backgrounds

## The Council of War

Originally founded as the Council of Peace to end the ongoing wars between Andelsis, Diadem, Forbax, Garmalah, and Ilidiere, the Council became the Council of War during the aftermath of the Feystorm. They are united to defend the natural world against the fey incursion, and have even put aside their differences with the war-priests of the Banemarches for the sake of protecting the world.

- Andelsis
- The Banemarches
- Caverndeep
- Diadem
- Forbax
- Garmalah
- Low Ilidiere
- The Rimecrag
- Titan's Fall

## The Tide of Summer

Under the leadership of Tiandra, Queen of Summer, the eladrin armies of the Tide of Summer have occupied the Summerlands and forged an alliance with their distant kin, the elves of High Ilidiere. The former prison colony of Qadera broke from the Council and allied itself with the Tide, hoping for a better deal.

- High Ilidiere
- Qadera
- The Summerlands

## Non-Aligned

Not all in the natural world see the Fey threat as the most important issue; the dragons of the Dragonspires, the nomadic tribes of the Plains of Blood, and the cultists of the Serpent Coast all refuse to enter into any formal alliances with either the Council or the Tide, preferring to deal with both sides to their own advantages.

- The Dragonspires
- The Plains of Blood
- The Serpent Coast

### **Background Benefits**

Select *one* of the following background benefits

- Gain a +2 bonus to skill checks with one skill associated with any of your backgrounds.
- Add one skill associated with any of your backgrounds to your class's skills list before you choose your trained skills.
- Choose one language connected to any of your backgrounds. You can speak, read, and write that language fluently.
- Gain proficiency in one weapon associated with any of your backgrounds.

# The Council of War

## Andelsis

The glorious city of Andelsis was once the height of human civilization, the chosen people of the god Erathis. Wonders were worked that blended together arcane magic and martial prowess; primal energies and divine blessings. Its lofty towers shone day and night over the cold Sea of Andelsis as a testimony to the diversity and prosperity of its people.

Then the Feystorm struck, and Andelsis was lost.

It vanished in an instant, disappearing beneath a worldfall wave as the Feystorm peaked. The city of splendor was not gone forever, however; 170 days later, it returned to our world, surrounded by the isles of the Summerlands. Returned Andelsis was completely devoid of all life, and the few material belongings that remained gave hints of chaos, madness, and death. To this day, the eladrin of the Tide of Summer do not venture into Andelsis itself, even though the city is unguarded and its buildings mostly intact.

**Population:** 0

**Religion:** Erathis, the goddess of civilization, was the primary deity of Andelsis. Pelor, Ioun, and Moradin were respected, but the city was specifically devoted to Erathis.

**Races:** Now, no one lives in Andelsis; the only survivors were those away from the city of splendor at the time of the Feystorm. Communities of Andelsian refugees have been established in Low Ildiere, Garmalah, and Diadem, and tend to retain their cultural identities as scions of Andelsis. The vast majority of these refugees are human; several decades before its destruction, Andelsis also granted full citizenship rights to its created race of servitors, the warforged.

**Heroes:** All types of heroes were found in Andelsis, representing the diversity of humanity and the strength of civilization; artificers, swordmages, invokers, and shamans were common. These days, Andelsian refugees often become vindictive rogues, warlocks, avengers, or barbarians as they grieve for their lost civilization.

**Travel:** Andelsis is reachable only by sea now; the overland route was lost during the Feystorm, when most of the lands surrounding the city were replaced by the Summerlands. The portals in Andelsis were sealed shortly after the city's return; previously, they had connected the city of splendor to Garmalah, Diadem, Low Ildiere, Caverndeeep, Stoneheart, Qadera, and Forbax.

### **Background: Andelsis Refugee**

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, History

**Associated Language:** Common

**Associated Weapon:** Crossbow

**Related Backgrounds:** Birth - Among Another Race, Geography - Urban, Half-Elf - Wanderer, Human - Ancestral Holdings, Occupation - Artisan, Occupation - Merchant, Occupation - Scholar, Society - Poor; Arcane - Arcane Refugee, Divine - Found Religion Among Others, Divine - Missionary Life, Divine - Out for Revenge

## The Banemarches

Last century, a cult dedicated to the dark god Bane found willing converts in the tumbling hills between the Plains of Blood and the Sea of Qadera. Slowly at first, but with increasingly ruthless efficiency, the goblin, hobgoblin, and bugbear tribes were organized by the cult leaders into the most powerful military in the known world. They effectively cleansed the orc presence from their lands, drove out the gnoll bands, and established one town, then another, named for their deity. They were preparing for an invasion of Garmalah when the Feystorm

struck and the forces of the Banemarch found a new enemy in the Tide of Summer.

Bane -- the current capital, not the original which is now known as Old Bane -- is literally under permanent martial law, and is also the safest city in the world. There is no crime in Bane; no bandits stalk travelers on the heavily patrolled trade routes; the people of the Banemarches fear nothing in the world -- save their own military rulers.

**Population:** 45,000; Bane (City, 16,000), Old Bane (Town, 3,000)

**Religions:** Bane. Bane, Bane, and Bane. Asmodeus is respected, but really, it's all about Bane.

**Races:** The goblinoid races are the most common in the Banemarches, but anyone who is willing to swear loyalty to Bane and enlist in the military for a term of three years is afforded full rights as a citizen regardless of race. Humans, half-orcs, tieflings, and dragonborn can be found in sizable numbers among the armies of the Banemarches.

**Heroes:** Disciplined battle prowess is paramount in the Banemarches; fighters, warlords, battle clerics, invokers, avengers, and paladins are plentiful. Warlocks with the infernal pact are welcomed, while those with fey pacts are summarily executed.

**Travel:** The new city of Bane is a seaport, home to the navy of the Banemarches. They formerly traded with the tieflings of Qadera, but since joining the Council of War those ties have been severed, and Banite ships regularly sail to Low Ilidiere now. Portals have recently been opened to Garmalah and Diadem, controlled by the priests of Bane, and they also maintain a portal to Old Bane. Banite merchants are working on developing overland trade routes to both Garmalah and Forbax.

### ***Background: The Banemarches***

**Associated Skills:** Endurance, Intimidate

**Associated Language:** Goblin

**Associated Weapon:** Morningstar

**Related Backgrounds:** Dragonborn - Dishonored, Birth - Among Another Race, Geography - Forest, Geography - Mountains, Half-Orc - Orc Birth, Occupation - Military; Divine - Convert, Divine - Veteran of a Religious War

## Caverndeeep

Once considered the less important of the two dwarven major clanholds, Caverndeeep became prominent after the Feystorm when Stoneheart was destroyed. Now the center of dwarven life, Caverndeeep is home to over a dozen clans whose sturdy warriors guard against frequent incursions by cyclopes, fomorians, and drow coming up through the ancient tunnels that once led to Stoneheart.

**Population:** 26,000; Caverndeeep (City, 20,000), nearby clanholds (24 Villages, 6,000 total)

**Religion:** Moradin is the chief god of Caverndeeep. Respect is also given to Kord and Ioun, and there's a small but vocal faction of Banites among the clans. Some dwarven berzerkers pay homage to Gruumsh.

**Races:** The populace of Caverndeeep is primary dwarves, but a few humans, kobolds, and halflings have settled here.

**Heroes:** Martial, primal, and divine heroes are all well-represented in Caverndeeep, with fighters, warlords, paladins, clerics, barbarians, and wardens being the most common. Arcane characters are rarely seen in Caverndeeep, save for a few bards and artificers.

**Travel:** Mountain passageways from Caverndeeep lead high into the Rimecraggs and on to Diadem, while another pass leads out of the mountains to Forbax, via Titan's Fall. A clan of runecasters maintains portals to Diadem, Forbax, and Garmalah.

### **Background: Caverndeeep**

**Associated Skills:** Athletics, Dungeoneering

**Associated Language:** Dwarven

**Associated Weapon:** Warhammer

**Related Backgrounds:** Dwarf - Dedicated to an Ancestor, Geography - Mountains, Occupation - Artisan, Occupation - Military, Society - Wealthy; Divine - Family Tradition

### **Background: Stoneheart Survivor**

**Associated Skills:** Dungeoneering, History

**Associated Language:** Dwarven

**Associated Weapon:** Battleaxe

**Related Backgrounds:** Dwarf - Ancestral Home Lost, Dwarf - Dedicated to an Ancestor, Geography - Mountains, Occupation - Artisan, Occupation - Military; Divine - Family Tradition, Divine - Out for Revenge

## Diadem

Diadem is a city of arcane power, ruled over by a magiocratic aristocracy of six houses. Each house practices a different form of arcane magic, and claims to have invented their respective specialty. Although this is certainly an exaggeration, it is true that they have perfected the arcane arts to a level unseen elsewhere in the world. Its ruling families each occupy one of the peaks surrounding the pristinely clear lake around which the city is built.

Diadem was a founding member of the Council of Peace, and continues to provide the majority of the arcane power behind the Council of War. During the Feystorm, Diadem's House Citrine was destroyed by a crashing worldfall wave, and the other Houses damaged.

**Population:** 20,000; Diadem (City, 12,000), nearby settlements (4 Villages, 2 Towns, 8,000 total)

**Religion:** Ioun, the goddess of knowledge and magic, is the patroness of Diadem. Her worship is watched over by the warlock-priests of House Emerald. Erathis, Asmodeus, The Raven Queen, Tiamat, and Vecna are venerated by the other houses in addition to the official worship of Ioun.

**Races:** Centuries of exposure to the magical energies found around Diadem have had their effects on its residents; while originally human, the population is now split about equally between normal humans and genasi. A few dwarves, half-elves, and warforged also dwell in Diadem.

**Heroes:** Nearly all Diademic heroes use the arcane power source. Titled members of Houses usually will follow their House's arcane traditions, while non-titled citizens can pursue training in any House -- and possibly, with enough arcane accomplishment, be accepted as a titled House member. Rare Diademans who show no arcane talent whatsoever will usually become rogues or avengers devoted to Ioun.

**Travel:** Well-traveled trade routes exist to Forbax and Garmalah, but those are usually traversed by non-Diademic traders. Scions of the Six Houses most often travel via the extensive network of portals maintained by House Amethyst, reaching to Garmalah, Forbax, Bane, Caverndeeep, the Dragonspires, and Low Ilisire; the portals to Andelsis, Qadera, and Stoneheart have been sealed.

### **Background: Diadem**

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Diplomacy

**Associated Language:** Primordial

**Associated Weapon:** None

**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Mountains, Geography - Urban, Occupation - Artisan, Occupation - Scholar; Arcane - Arcane Mercenary, Arcane - Arcane Sentinel, Arcane - Arcane Tracker

# Noble Houses of Diadem

## **Background: House Amethyst**

*The noble sorcerers of House Amethyst are canny merchants and skilled hagglers. Besides Ioun, they often follow the teachings of Tiamat.*

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Diplomacy, Insight  
**Associated Languages:** Common, Primordial  
**Associated Weapon:** Dagger  
**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Urban, Occupation - Merchant, Society - Noble; Arcane - Arcane Mercenary

## **Background: House Diamond**

*House Diamond's nobles take primary responsibility for the defense of Diadem by training as swordmages. They respect the Raven Queen alongside Ioun.*

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Athletics  
**Associated Language:** Primordial  
**Associated Weapon:** Longsword  
**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Mountains, Geography - Urban, Occupation - Military, Society - Noble; Arcane - Arcane Sentinel

## **Background: House Emerald**

*The nobility of House Emerald make warlock pacts of knowledge and with Ioun and her representatives, with many serving her as multiclassed clerics.*

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Religion  
**Associated Languages:** Primordial, Supernal  
**Associated Weapon:** None  
**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Urban, Occupation - Scholar, Society - Noble; Divine - Family Tradition

## **Background: House Ruby**

*The nobles from House Ruby are skilled crafters who focus their arcane energies into artifice. Both Ioun and Erathis are worshiped by House Ruby.*

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Thievery  
**Associated Language:** Primordial  
**Associated Weapon:** Throwing Hammer  
**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Urban, Occupation - Artisan, Society - Noble; Arcane - Arcane Tracker

## **Background: House Sapphire**

*Nobles from House Sapphire use bardic magic and are often diplomats or performers. Asmodeus is respected in House Sapphire along with Ioun.*

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Bluff  
**Associated Language:** Primordial  
**Associated Weapon:** None  
**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Urban, Occupation - Performer, Occupation - Scholar, Society - Noble; Arcane - Arcane Mercenary, Arcane - Arcane Tracker

## **Background: House Topaz**

*House Topaz nobles are renowned scholars of magic and practitioners of wizardry. Members of the House look to Vecna as well as Ioun.*

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, History  
**Associated Language:** Primordial  
**Associated Weapon:** Quarterstaff  
**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Urban, Occupation - Scholar, Society - Noble; Arcane - Arcane Mercenary

# Forbax

Founded over 300 years ago by settlers from Garmalah (and sacked three times since), Forbax is a large frontier town. Eschewing stone walls, Forbax is defended by wooden palisades and watchtowers that defend its nearby farming communities. The king of Forbax initiated the Council of Peace two centuries ago, bring the warring states together and instituting the Pax Forbaxia. Since the Feystorm, Forbax has become the center of the Council of War.

**Population:** 14,000; Forbax (Town, 9,000), nearby farms and settlements (5,000)

**Religions:** The people of Forbax are primarily druidic in belief, seeking harmony with nature and its primal energies. The residents who choose to worship specific deities will usually honor Kord, Melora, and Avandra.

**Races:** Forbax is primarily a human town, but is far from exclusively so. Many members of other races will come to Forbax seeking a new start on the frontier, and it's not usual to see halflings, half-elves, dwarves, goliaths, half-orcs, dragonborn, or kobolds on the streets.

**Heroes:** Adventurers from Forbax typically pursue martial or primal power sources, although divine characters are welcomed and practitioners of the arcane are only considered slightly disreputable. Rangers, wardens, barbarians, shamans, and druids are quite common in Forbax. Hide and leather armor are the most often used, and bows, spears, and axes are typical Forbaxian weapons.

**Travel:** Major trade routes from Forbax lead to Caverndee (via Titan's Fall), the Dragonspires, Garmalah, and Diadem. The portal chamber in Forbax is maintained by druids, and is connected to Diadem, Garmalah, and Caverndee.

### ***Background: Forbax***

**Associated Skills:** Insight, Nature

**Associated Language:** Common

**Associated Weapon:** Broadsword

**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Forest, Dragonborn - Dishonored, Dwarf - Outcast, Half-Elf - Outcast, Half-Elf - Wanderer, Halfling - Avandra's Kiss, Half-Orc - Stormtouched, Human - Heir of the Forgotten Gods, Occupation - Farmer, Occupation - Merchant, Occupation - Military

## Garmalah

Garmalah is a stone-walled fortress city, surrounded by smaller fiefdoms controlled by nobles loyal to the Immortal Holy Emperor, a deva presently on his (or sometimes her) 28th incarnation as ruler. Garmalah was established 1,200 years ago by the first (and also current) emperor.

**Population:** 42,000; Garmalah (City, 15,000), nearby fiefdoms (8 Towns, 12 Villages, 27,000 total)

**Religion:** The people of Garmalah are religious to a fault, venerating Pelor over all other gods. Kord and Bahamut are paid respect as well, and refugees from Andelsis have introduced Erathis to Garmalah. Since the admission of the Banemarches to the Council of War, worship of Bane has been tolerated -- and is beginning to catch on among the more militant residents of Garmalah. Avandra is worshiped by the halflings and is viewed by the humans and devas as a minor, unworthy deity.

**Races:** The majority of Garmalans are human, with halflings being the second most common race. Half-elves and half-orcs are often looked upon with mistrust. Devas play important roles in the nobility, priesthood, and trade companies, but numerically there are few of them.

**Heroes:** Heavy armor, shields, swords, and lances are quite common in Garmalah, and so paladins and clerics abound, as well as fighters and warlords. Other divine classes (avengers, invokers) are met with skepticism, and primal characters are frowned upon. Rogues aren't welcome, nor any type of warlock or sorcerer.

**Travel:** Garmalah is a coastal seaport, on the Sea of Andelsis. Well-traveled trade routes exist between the city and Diadem, Forbax, and Low Ilisiere. The church of Pelor maintains publicly accessible portals to Diadem, Forbax, Low Ilisiere, and Bane; a prior portal to Andelsis has been sealed.

### ***Background: Garmalah***

**Associated Skills:** History, Religion

**Associated Language:** Supernal

**Associated Weapon:** Lance

**Related Backgrounds:** Birth - Blessed, Birth - Prophecy, Deva - Brink of Enlightenment, Halfling - Banned, Occupation - Military, Society - Noble; Arcane - Arcane Agent, Divine - Divinely Inspired, Divine - Family Tradition, Divine - Heretic, Divine - Veteran of a Religious War, Divine - Ward of the Temple

# Low Ildiere

Originally, Ildiere was a single kingdom of elves, over two millennia old. There were two distinct principalities within the kingdom, one in the highlands of the Ildiere Forest, and one in the lowlands on the Sea of Elves. Because foreigners -- non-elves -- were banned from entering the Ildiere Highlands, a trading post was established at the base of the Dieran Cliffs. This attracted a number of non-elven traders, especially humans from Garmalah and Andelsis, and Low Ildiere grew into a cosmopolitan city, albeit one with a few problems such as smuggling or crime rings.

When the Feystorm struck and the First War of Summer broke out, the mostly half-elven merchant families broke from the rule of the Court of Ildiere, declaring their own independence and joining the Council of War.

**Population:** 11,000 (City)

**Religion:** Worship of the older gods of Low Ildiere -- Corellon and Sehanine -- has been officially banned from the city, a condition of Low Ildiere's membership in the Council. Avandra, Melora, Pelor, and Erathis are proving popular in Low Ildiere, as is the Raven Queen. The druidic faith has been making recent inroads in Low Ildiere.

**Races:** Half-elves are more common in Low Ildiere than anywhere else. Humans are found in plentiful numbers as well. The elves in Low Ildiere are considered traitors by their Highland kin.

**Heroes:** Martial characters predominate in Low Ildiere, most notably rogues and fighters. The city is famous for its fencing schools taught by talented half-elven swordmasters. Warlocks and sorcerers are more common than trained wizards; the region also has a rich bardic heritage.

**Travel:** The road between Low Ildiere and the elven Court was erased during the Feystorm, as was all of the city of Andelsis, leaving Garmalah as Low Ildiere's only overland trading partner. Ties with Qadera's fleets were cut during the First War of Summer, and recently Low Ildiere opened sea trade with the Banemarches. The portals to High Ildiere and Andelsis have been sealed, but the merchant guilds still maintain portals to Garmalah and Diadem.

## **Background: Low Ildiere**

**Associated Skills:** Insight, Streetwise

**Associated Language:** Elven

**Associated Weapon:** Shortbow

**Related Backgrounds:** Elf - Urban Elf, Geography - Urban, Half-Elf - Cultural Half-Elf, Occupation - Entertainer, Occupation - Mariner, Occupation - Merchant, Society - Poor; Divine - Penitent

# The Rimecraggs

The frozen peaks of the northeast are collectively called the Rimecraggs, and are primarily home to giants; various steadings and halls are found here in glacial rifts, ruled over by chiefs, jarls, or petty kings. The goliath tribes of the Rimecraggs have collectively joined the Council of War, but the ogres, giants, and titans of the ice-covered, volcanically-heated mountains have resisted alliances thus far.

**Population:** ~ 8,000; Crag Keep (Town, 2,000), scattered villages (6,000)

**Religion:** Among the goliaths, Kord, Gruumsh, Moradin, and the Raven Queen are well-regarded, although they also follow shamanistic traditions as well.

**Races:** Giants of all types occupy the Rimecraggs, but only the goliaths wish to have friendly contact with their human and dwarven neighbors. Few non-goliaths move to the Rimecraggs, due to the extreme cold.

**Heroes:** Primal classes abound in the Rimecraggs, particularly shamans, barbarians, and wardens. Beastmaster rangers are quite commonly seen with polar bear companions. The only arcane magic regularly practiced is storm sorcery, and there are few divine heroes.

**Travel:** A difficult mountain trail leads through the Rimecraggs; it begins in Diadem and ends in Caverndee, or vice versa if you ask a dwarf. There are no known portals in the Rimecraggs.

### ***Background: The Rimecrags***

**Associated Skills:** Endurance, Nature

**Associated Language:** Giant

**Associated Weapon:** Greatclub

**Related Backgrounds:** Birth - Omen, Geography - Mountains, Goliath - Skywatcher, Occupation - Artisan, Occupation - Military

## Titan's Fall

The Feystorm collapsed a hillside near Forbax and Caverndeeep, exposing the enormous, fossilized remains of an ancient primordial of earth and thunder. A camp was set up more than a dozen years ago to exploit this resource when it was discovered that thunder resonated in the ores mined from the primordial's bones. The camp has grown to be a small town, and it attracts both craftsmen and students of the arcane. Titan's Fall is officially affiliated with both Caverndeeep and Forbax, and is a protectorate of the Council of War.

**Population:** 1,800 (Town)

**Religion:** The primary deities of Titan's Fall are Moradin and Ioun, but druids and shamans also claim the site as a source of ancient power. Before the primordial was uncovered, standing stones atop the hill were used for rites of primal energy. Followers of Bane have recently established a presence in Titan's Fall as well.

**Races:** An approximately equal mix of dwarves and humans form the majority of the population of Titan's Fall, with a handful of other races present.

**Heroes:** Both arcane and primal characters are seen in Titan's Fall, with swordmages, artificers, shamans, and druids being the most common. A small number of martial heroes have come to Titan's Fall seeking armaments, as have a contingent of divine Banites from the Banemarches.

**Travel:** Titan's Fall is on the New Road between Caverndeeep and Forbax; the Old Road became impassable due to a Feywild incursion during the Feystorm. There are no known portals in Titan's Fall.

### ***Background: Titan's Fall***

**Associated Skills:** Dungeoneering, History

**Associated Language:** Primordial

**Associated Weapon:** War Pick

**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Forest, Occupation - Artisan, Occupation - Scholar; Arcane - Arcane Sentinel, Arcane - Arcane Tracker



# The Tide of Summer

## High Ildiere

Originally, Ildiere was a single kingdom of elves, over two millennia old. There were two distinct principalities within the kingdom, one in the highlands of the Ildiere Forest, and one in the lowlands on the Sea of Elves. Only those of elven blood -- and pure elven blood at that -- were allowed peaceful entry into the Court of Ildiere; all others were steered away, with only a few special exceptions over the centuries being allowed to locate and enter the hidden capital of the elves.

The Feystorm changed the very topography of the Dieran Highlands, as worldfalling waves of the Feywild rewrote the forest. The Court of Ildiere, long separated from their eladrin kin, eagerly embraced the changes and made alliance with the Queen of Summer after withdrawing from the Council of Peace.

**Population:** 12,000; Court of Ildiere (Town, 3,000), other villages (9,000 total)

**Religion:** Corellon and Sehanine are the two primary deities of High Ildiere, and the only ones whose worship is officially approved by the elven Court. However, a number of elves are turning to darker gods recently -- especially Lolth, goddess of the dark fey, who promises them victory over their human and dwarven enemies and revenge against their traitorous kin in the Lowlands.

**Races:** Traditionally, only elves of pure blood were allowed into the Highlands; since the Feystorm, this has been somewhat relaxed, but not much. Elves are still the vast majority, but a few half-elves have been allowed to enter Highland society despite their mixed blood. A small number of eladrin, gnomes, and wilden live among the elves; most are emissaries of the Summer Queen.

**Heroes:** A long history of hunting makes rangers the dominant class in High Ildiere, although the resurgent energies of the Feywild have awakened a new interest in arcane magic. Primal classes are almost unknown, but divine characters following the two elven gods are not uncommon.

**Travel:** Well-hidden pathways traverse the Dieran Forest, mostly inaccessible to non-elves. The portal to Low Ildiere has been sealed, but new portals have been opened by eladrin wizards to Qadera and the Summerlands.

### **Background: High Ildiere**

**Associated Skills:** History, Nature

**Associated Language:** Elven

**Associated Weapon:** Longbow

**Related Backgrounds:** Elf - Elf Ally, Geography - Forest, Half-Elf - Outcast, Occupation - Military, Society - Noble; Divine - Heretic

## Qadera

Qadera was originally founded by Andelsis as a penal colony, where the worse aspects of society were banished over the course of centuries. A rocky desert island, the city itself was spared most of the devastation of the Feystorm, but found its surrounding countryside changed from sunbaked stone to lush Feywild jungle. Out of resentment for their treatment by the rest of the Council of War, Qadera officially allied with the Tide of Summer. In most of the Council lands, "Qaderan" is a synonym for "traitor."

Qadera is an open cryptocracy; it's well known that the city's true rulers are unknown. The powers behind Qadera work through powerless puppet organizations and complex political and financial moves. The leaders of Qadera are most likely a small group of Torog-worshipping tieflings -- but no one has lived long enough to publicly name any members of the inner circle of the Qadera cryptocracy.

**Population:** 13,000 (City)

**Religion:** Torog is the patron deity of Qadera; it's said that the God Who Crawls lives deep below the city

itself. Vecna, Lolth, and Avandra are also worshiped here; all other deities are officially banned from recognition within Qadera.

**Races:** Tieflings are the dominant race in Qadera; although they constitute a plurality and not a majority, they control the civil, religious, and economic life of the city. Humans, half-orcs, half-elves, duergar, and drow are present in sizable numbers.

**Heroes:** Martial and arcane power are favored in Qadera; rogues, warlocks, sorcerers, and warlords are quite common, especially among Qadera's licensed privateer crews. A faction of avengers devoted to Torog serve as the secret police for the city; the official watch itself is toothless and corrupt. Primal heroes are rarely found here.

**Travel:** Qadera is primarily reached by sea, although it no longer trades with Low Ilidiere. Portals to Diadem and Andelsis have been sealed, but new portals to High Ilidiere and the Summerlands have been established by eladrin wizards.

### **Background: Qadera**

**Associated Skills:** Bluff, Streetwise

**Associated Language:** Deep Speech

**Associated Weapon:** Dagger

**Related Backgrounds:** Geography - Desert, Geography - Forest, Half-Elf - Outcast, Half-Orc - First Generation, Occupation - Criminal, Occupation - Mariner, Society - Poor, Tiefling - Merchant Dynasty; Divine - Out for Revenge, Divine - Penitent

## The Summerlands

The Summerlands came into existence during the Feystorm; the islands were originally from the Feywild and now occupy the land once controlled by Andelsis -- although the eladrin do not approach that empty ghost-city. The Summerlands are ruled by a succession of military regents in the name of Tiandra, the Summer Queen, who replaces her official representatives quite often and on a whim. The current regent is the 27th since the Feystorm, and is an eladrin swordmage named Son'dallier, Noviere of the Southern Current.

**Population:** 28,000 in a number of scattered outposts

**Religion:** The Seldarine are revered throughout the Summerlands; Sehanine and Corellon rule the night and the day respectively. Worship of Lolth is strictly banned, but there are rumors of underground cults dedicated to the Queen of Spiders. All other religions are forbidden within the Summerlands.

**Races:** Eladrin are the dominant race in the Summerlands, and crew the orange-sailed ships and airships which make war with other ships in the Sea of Andelsis. Wilden, gnomes, and other fey races can also be found here. Non-fey races are usually hunted for sport when encountered.

**Heroes:** Arcane, divine, and martial heroes are very common in the Summerlands, especially wizards, fey pact warlocks, swordmages, warlords, paladins, and fighters. Few, if any, primal heroes hail from the Summerlands.

**Travel:** There are numerous fey circles within the Summerlands that allow eladrin ritualists to move quickly between the islands; these are warded against use by non-fey mortals. The oceanic navy of the Tide of Summer primarily engages in piracy against ships sailing between Diadem and Garmalah, and this has caused a major reduction in the number of merchant ships sailing in the Sea of Andelsis. Eladrin airships are often seen traveling to High Ilidiere.

Portals within the Summerlands connect to High Ilidiere and Qadera; in addition, there are well-guarded fey crossings that allow passage between the mortal world and the Feywild.

### **Background: The Summerlands**

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Endurance

**Associated Language:** Elven

**Associated Weapon:** Longsword

**Related Backgrounds:** Birth - On Another Plane, Eladrin - Estranged Fey, Geography - Forest, Gnome - Estranged Fey, Occupation - Mariner, Occupation - Military, Society - Noble; Divine - Heretic

# Non-Aligned

## The Dragonspires

Although dragons are found throughout the world, they are concentrated in the Dragonspires -- tall, thin mesas that rise from the rugged hillsides and are home to true dragons of all kinds, who rule over the settlements at the base of the spires like feudal lords. Peace between rival dragons is maintained via very strict rules involving hunting territory, treasure acquirement, and inter-draconic etiquette, known as the Pact of Scales. There are simpler rules that apply to non-dragons within the territory claimed by the 'Spires: "No non-dragon may shed dragon blood," "Whoever kills a dragon forfeits his life," and "Steal from a hoard and your bones shall replace the wealth you steal." The communities below each spire take on some of the character of the dragon or dragons who rule them from above.

The draconic rulers of the Dragonspires have never formally allied with the Council of War (or its predecessor, the Council of Peace), nor any other nation-states; the Pact of Scales prohibits them from treating any non-dragons as equals. Thus, the 'Spires remain neutral in the conflict with the Tide of Summer. Residents of the base-towns are not considered actual citizens of the Dragonspires by the dragons, and are thus welcome to engage in whatever trade or activities they want without reference to the Pact. This allows the residents to trade with either side -- or both sides -- as well as any other groups they wish.

**Population:** 17,000; 3 towns, 10 villages

**Religion:** The faith of the Dragonspires is dualistic: both noble Bahamut and greedy Tiamat are worshiped -- and residents of the 'Spires may choose either one as a patron, or even both at the same time. The two deities are both enemies and allies, rivals and lovers. Worship of other deities is not forbidden, but is not encouraged either. An underground cult devoted to Zehir is attempting to gain a footing in the Dragonspires but has yet to catch on.

**Races:** Dragonborn and kobolds comprise the bulk of the population in the Dragonspires. Notable numbers of dwarves, humans, halflings, goblins, genasi, and half-orcs have also settled in the communities at the bases of the 'Spires.

**Heroes:** Barbarians, dragon sorcerers, fighters, rogues, paladins, wizards, and artificers are the types of heroes most commonly found in the Dragonspires.

**Travel:** Overland routes connect the Dragonspires to Forbax via Titan's Fall, and to Old Bane. The residents of the 'Spires also trade with the nomadic tribes of the Plains of Blood. There is only one known portal in the Dragonspires, connecting to Diadem and maintained by the sorcerer-paladins of Bahamut in the base-town called Argentaine.

### **Background: The Dragonspires**

**Associated Skills:** Arcana, Thievery

**Associated Language:** Draconic

**Associated Weapon:** Trident

**Related Backgrounds:** Dragonborn - Rare Egg, Geography - Desert, Geography - Mountains, Occupation - Artisan, Occupation - Merchant; Divine - Divinely Inspired, Divine - Heretic

## The Plains of Blood

Although many in more civilized locales mistakenly believe the Plains of Blood to be named for the savagery of its nomadic inhabitants, the trackless steppes actually got their name from the ruddy, iron-tinted soil that is found here -- said to be stained with the lifeblood of either a forgotten god or an immense primordial. Despite the mistaken etymology, the Plains of Blood do live up to their name as well, especially for travelers who fall prey to the prowling gnoll war-bands.

**Population:** 12,000? (nomadic tribes)

**Religion:** Few civilized faiths are found here; instead, a variety of demon gods are revered by the gnolls, and

the other tribes of the Plains follow the shamanistic spirit faiths. At least one groll war-band has been converted to the worship of Gruumsh, and a few human or shifter tribes have been known to pray to Melora.

**Races:** Gnolls, humans, and shifters comprise the majority of the nomadic tribes to be found in the Plains of Blood. A few representatives of other races can be found, either acting as traders and go-betweens to the various tribes, or living among them as honorary tribal members. The humans and shifter tribes of the Plains of Blood are renowned for their horsemanship.

**Heroes:** Primal heroes predominate in the Plains of Blood, with some martial heroes; barbarians, shamans, rangers, and warlords are common. Arcane heroes are very rare with the exception of vestige pact sorcerers, and divine heroes are almost unknown.

**Travel:** Horseback is the primary way to traverse the steppes of the Plains of Blood. There are few marked trails or roads, although each tribe has its own well-used and closely guarded set of camps that are occupied at different times of the year. Those camps closest to the western edge of the Plains are known as trade camps, and it is here that the tribes come to trade with each other and the more settled peoples of the world. There are no known portals within the Plains of Blood.

### ***Background: The Plains of Blood***

**Associated Skills:** Nature, Perception

**Associated Language:** Abyssal

**Associated Weapon:** Spear

**Related Backgrounds:** Birth - Omen, Occupation - Merchant, Occupation - Military; Divine - Followed a Cult

## The Serpent Coast

The colonies of the Serpent Coast, established two centuries ago by Garmalah, were quite quickly taken over by yuan-ti in the service of Zehir. Several Garmalan crusades to recapture the Serpent Coast all failed miserably, and the colonies have been left to fend for themselves ever since. The colonies have effectively "gone native" and are ruled over by serpent cults. Isolationist by nature for years, the colonies of the Serpent Coast have recently taken an interest in the rest of the world. They refuse to make exclusive alliance with either the Council of War or the Tide of Summer, and instead seek to sell their wares -- primarily exotic poisons -- to both sides.

**Population:** 7,000; 1 town, 3 villages

**Religion:** A number of competing serpent cults -- all dedicated to Zehir -- hold sway along the Serpent Coast and deeper into the jungles. Garmalan missionaries sometimes come to the Serpent Coast to preach the worship of Pelor, and usually end up as reptilian dinners. Tiamat's missionaries are finding a more receptive audience.

**Races:** Yuan-ti, humans, and lizardfolk are the most common races found along the Serpent Coast. Bullywugs, tieflings, drow, and dragonborn can be found as well.

**Heroes:** Many heroes hailing from the Serpent Coast use the divine or martial power sources. Avengers, rogues, rangers, clerics, assassins, and druids are found in large numbers.

**Travel:** Sea travel is the most common way to get to the Serpent Coast, although pirates and Qaderan privateers make such voyages risky. The thick jungles are even harder to traverse, and occupied by savage lizardfolk. There are no known portals in the Serpent Coast.

### ***Background: The Serpent Coast***

**Associated Skills:** Nature, Stealth

**Associated Language:** Draconic

**Associated Weapon:** Scimitar

**Related Backgrounds:** Dragonborn - Dishonored, Geography - Forest, Geography - Wetlands, Human - Heir of the Forgotten Gods, Occupation - Criminal; Divine - Followed a Cult, Divine - Missionary Life