

TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO ATH AH-LAGON

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
inspired campaign setting

A custom-built world for the greatest fantasy RPG of all time, complete with its own unique pantheon, kingdoms, and a political landscape on the verge of collapse.

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CHAPTER 1: BUILDING A CUSTOM CAMPAIGN SETTING

WELCOME

WORLD building is fun, and I mean a *lot* of fun. Spending hours reading about ancient culture and religion, different kinds of architecture and industry, or even how to build a sewer system in the desert - you never know which bit of the world of Ath Ah-lagon you're going to start exploring next. There are maps to draw, hymns to write, and names to chew on, and every detail helps bring the campaign to life.

But for the players, all that can be a bit much. It can feel draining and boring, little more than some set-dressing that distracts from the real fun to be had, that is, their characters and the adventures they're having. Ultimately, there's a balance to be had. Without detailed world building, D&D is little more than a glorified board game without a board. With too much, it becomes more like an advertisement for the DM's inflated ego.

With that in mind, you don't have to read this campaign guide. You can skip everything, turn up to session one with your character sheet and a vague idea of their backstory, and still have fun. If reading isn't for you, then just don't. Put the campaign guide down. It won't be worth it. Your character will still be a key part of the story we're going to tell together, and this world will still ultimately be theirs to live in.

Alternatively, you could read it once, or maybe just read some of it. It will give you a sense of the tone and flavour of the world you're about to jump into, and will help provide insight and context for the things that you'll see, people you'll meet, and drama that is bound to unfold. Hopefully some it will be interesting, and it might even give you some ideas of how to

weave your character more deeply into the world.

Or, if you're like me, you can read the whole thing multiple times, pull out the bits that feel interesting and build them into your character's backstory. You can file away the details about this random town and that spooky city, never knowing when they might show up in the campaign. And even if they do, your character might not know about them, so you might never get to use that information, but you don't care. Just knowing the lore is fun.

Each of these approaches is fine, and I genuinely don't mind which one's for you as long as it's fun and you're looking forward to stepping into the shoes of your character and exploring Ath Ah-lagon with your friends. That's all this campaign guide is for.

That being said, I've tried to include some useful pieces of information as well as the campaign lore. I've provided an overview of the different nations and peoples, with an estimate of how prevalent the D&D races would be in each place. This gives you an idea whether you'll be welcome in taverns in the capital city of the Lanserrat as a goblin - or not, as the case may be.

There's a summary of the Gods that form the pantheon in this world. They're real, living beings of immense power who play an active role in the events that unfold in Ath Ah-lagon, so having some familiarity with the main deities and their tenants might be beneficial if you want to play a cleric or paladin. But again, you can skip reading about the Gods and still have a great time playing as a cleric of Thrym Skyborn, God of Justice. There's no homework that you *need* to do to have fun.



There are also some homebrewed rules and rule tweaks for the veteran D&D players among you, largely focused on making death and resurrection more gripping moments in a character's life (no pun intended), with sometimes gruelling consequences. In reality, the changes make little difference to the *results* of bringing someone back to life (so you don't need to worry!) but they will create the space for memorable moments and moving narrative potential.

All that to one side, I'm confident that there will be something interesting and useful in here for everyone. It is meant to help new players get a feel for D&D and collaborative storytelling before sitting down at the table while also offering more experienced players the opportunity to delve into the world and lore before we start. I hope it's fun to read.

WHAT IS D&D?

D&D is most commonly described as a role playing game (RPG) where you build a character and then pretend to be that character. This means it's really common for players to ask themselves questions like *What would my character do in this situation?*, *Would my character know that?*, and *How would my character respond to this?*

But D&D is not an RPG in the same way that a video game is. This is because - more than being an RPG - D&D is a collaborative story-telling experience where a group of friends sit around a table and make incredible memories together fighting dragons, raiding temples, and meeting demons. Because of a neat quirk of human psychology, the same bit of the brain that creates and stores real physical memories creates and stores D&D memories as well, so players literally remember killing that dragon. It feels real. This is why D&D is used as a therapy tool for war veterans and PTSD survivors.

This collaborative story-telling element is key. It means that you don't need to play optimally like in a video game. If a dragon appears and bellows a challenge, the optimal thing might be to find cover. But *what would the barbarian do?* They would probably release a battle cry and charge the dragon headfirst, much to the horror and amusement of their fellow adventurers. These sub-optimal but heroic moments make the best memories, and are the most fun for everyone sitting around the D&D table.

Similarly, losing the fight with the dragon and having to retreat with the body of a dead party member isn't the same as losing as it might be in a video game. Instead, it's an opportunity to play out the dramatic and perhaps heart-wrenching consequences of loss and defeat. The story doesn't end here; it keeps on being told.

Getting out of the win/lose mindset of video games is really important, but that doesn't mean that you don't want to kick-ass with your character! Feeling powerful, casting cool spells, and smashing monsters is still a massive part of D&D. That's why the DM tries to build exciting encounters with different levels of challenge and risk, filled with dangerous foes of all different kinds.

The Power of Yes, and...

Yes, and... is a technique used within the improvisation community to aid in collaborative story-telling. When someone else has an idea and says 'Well, what if I do this...', it's important to support them in their fun rather than take the spotlight away from them. If you have a different idea, why not say 'Yes, and I could help with this...' rather than saying no. The principle of *Yes, and...* is great for D&D too.

MAGIC AND MONSTERS

ATH AH-LAGON is a continent on the fantasy world of Archaea. It is a high fantasy medieval setting, which means that powerful magic exists but is rare, while low level magic is somewhat familiar for most people. Hot running water from taps exists



but only for the wealthy, while well-water heated over the fire is much more widespread. Public baths are commonplace because of this.

Those with money can afford to buy healing potions instead of herbal medicine to magically restore their health. Though not uncommon, most people wouldn't be able to afford a healing potion, or would need to save up over the course of a year or two before they had enough gold. Crafting a healing potion isn't easy, requiring both non-magical resources and magical components, as well as time, knowledge of herb-craft, and arcane skill.

Enchanted items are even more expansive, reflecting the rare expertise of the person who did the enchantment, the necessary components, and the time it takes to perform the magic itself. More powerful enchanted items are more likely to be found in a ruin rather than bought in a shop, being relics of ages past when magecraft was more common and mages were more reckless. Such items will often sell for a small fortune, with a powerfully enchanted sword having the same value as a whole ranch with livestock and workers.

MAGIC

Common: a candle that burns green, being able to fix a crack in the china with a quiet spell, a pebble that glows in the dark, small illusory fireworks at a festival.

Uncommon: enchanted weapons, casting spells, shape-shifting, turning invisible.

Rare: flying carpets, teleportation, summoning magical beings.

Outlawed: most dangerous magic that causes harm or damage is seen as illegal, or is regulated by the relevant magical authority.

But magic doesn't only take the form of spells. As well as the mundane races, Ath Ah-lagon is home to fantastical and sometimes terrifying creatures of all different kinds. From the wise elegance of the elves, to the divine bloodline of the aasimar, to the bestial strength of the minotaur, to the shrewd cunning of the goblin - magic runs in the veins of the people of Ath Ah-lagon.

As well as beasts of the wild such as wolves and bears, more monstrous creatures prowl the wilderness beyond the light of civilized places. Some monsters are little more than magical beasts grown to giant size, or with magical powers that might turn you to stone. Others are powerful and ancient, more intelligent than all but the most studied of sage, with their own innate magical abilities.

MONSTERS

Common: goblins, giant beasts.

Uncommon: orcs, the *riffven* (undead), smaller devils, small fey, basilisks.

Rare: dragons, demons, devils, hags.

Outlawed: most monsters who raid livestock and ambush caravans will be challenged and even attacked on sight.

THE PLANESCAPE



ATH AH-LAGON is part of a wide-reaching cosmos where the limitations of time and space can be blurred. Countless planes exist, with each plane being its own dimension with its own rules. Ath Ah-lagon exists within the Prime Material Plane, the central plane of existence where the laws of matter are much like our own.

INNER AND OUTER PLANES

Closely connected to the Prime Material Plane are the Elemental Planes of Fire, Water, Earth and Air. Equally closely related to the Material Plane is the Feywild, known as Dulwenna to its native inhabitants - a realm of faerie and natural magic, of talking trees and chaotic beauty, ruled by sly fae beings with little regard for the transience of mortal life.

These planes are known as the Inner Planes, and are separated from the so-called Outer Planes by the Divine Gate constructed by the Gods long ago. Beyond the Divine Gate are even stranger realms. The most hostile among them are the Nine Layers of Hell, home to the fiends and devils who oversee the eternal punishment of those souls which have been judged lacking. Each layer is under the watchful command of one of the Lords of the Nine: powerful and almost god-like archdevils which themselves form part of the strict and predatory hierarchy of Hell.

The Divine Gate

After the Godswar between the good and evil divinities threatened to eradicate all life, some of the remaining Gods joined their powers together to forge the Divine Gate in an attempt to save what remained of creation. The Gate prevents all Gods from passing into the Inner Planes and walking on the Prime Material Plane as they once did, separating them from mortal beings and preventing the terrible destruction of the Godswar from happening ever again.

Where Hell represents pure evil in its most ordered and authoritarian form, the planes of existence collectively known as the Abyss are filled with unbridled chaos. Demonic beings spill

forth into demonic armies under the control of the Demon Lords in a never ending war between the devils of Hell and the Demons of the Abyss.

Many of the Gods have their own Planes of Existence, or share a plane with other similar deities. These realms are manifestations of their power; a literal physical representation of all that the God stands for. For the good Gods, or Gods of Civilization as they are sometimes known, most of them reside within a collection of planes and demi-planes known as the Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia, with Mount Celestia at it's centre. For those who dutifully follow the teachings of a God, their soul will pass beyond the Divine Gate after death to reside on one of these planes.

Beyond the celestial planes are realms that become ever more abstract, such as the Plane of Pandemonium and eventually the Far Realm where the Elemental Chaos dwells. These bear very little resemblance to the Prime Material Plane, where many of the laws of existence we take for granted cease to function.

INTER-PLANAR TRAVEL

In some rare instances, the Inner Planes are connected by naturally occurring portals. As the old wives' tale goes, stumble across a ring of toadstools deep within a forest and you might find yourself magically transported to the Feywild, and there may be some truth to this; while not every toadstool ring is a portal to another plane, some portals may indeed be toadstool rings.

Such portals are incredibly rare, often carefully guarded secrets, but they are not the only method of inter-planar travel. Powerful mages and other arcane casters can summon gateways or project themselves and others between the planes. In fact, this is the only way to travel to the Outer Planes. But such powerful magic can be dangerous, leaving the caster uncertain of exactly where they will end up and potentially even stranded.

The Astral Plane and the Ethereal Plane play a special role in inter-planar travel. The Astral Plane, more commonly referred to as the Astral Sea, is the plane of dreams which connects all conscious beings, as well as all the other planes of existence. Portals between the planes are common there, and it is possible to transition from the Astral Sea to another plane without even realising. Similarly, the Ethereal Plane exists everywhere, hovering just above and between all the other planes like a shadowy copy. For this reason it is often referred to as the Border Ethereal, since it acts as a kind of border region between the planes.



CHAPTER 2: BUILDING A CHARACTER

BACKSTORY

THE backbone of a D&D character is their backstory. Who are they? Where do they come from? How old are they? What race are they? What did they do before now? Why are they travelling? Do they have any secrets? What about their family, or friends? How did they come to develop their skills and talents? These are important questions to think about, but you don't have to write pages of prose about the last ten years of their life. It can be as simple as a vague idea and a couple of bullet points or notes to help you remember.

It's often fun to build elements of the game world into your character's backstory so that they feel like they belong there. This is why the next chapter, *Chapter 3: The Peoples of Ath Ah-lagon*, contains a brief description of the major nations, peoples, and powers that exist in Ath Ah-lagon. This can help answer questions like where your character is from.

The descriptions in Chapter 3 are kept purposefully vague. If you have an idea for part of your character but aren't sure whether it fits into the world, just talk to the DM about it and we'll build it into the world. For example, there are no descriptions of monastic orders in Chapter 3, but if you're playing a monk we could come up with something like this: you're from a small order with a temple on a mountain

somewhere which guards a set of sacred scrolls believed to be written by the god of reason and navigation Iallanis from before the Gods were banished beyond the Divine Gate. Perhaps the scrolls contain an ambiguous prophecy, and the temple elders have sent you out into the world to uncover some hidden details about it. . . Now, that's a backstory!

If you're stuck for ideas altogether, don't worry. When playing RPG video games, what kind of character feels coolest to you? A rogue, a wizard, warrior, or cleric? Then ask yourself questions like:

- *For the rogue* - Are you part of a criminal organisation? Are you a spy? Are you a rogue by choice, or is someone blackmailing or threatening you?
- *For the wizard* - Who taught you magic? Were you part of a school? Where do you get your magic from? Your bloodline? Books and study? From a powerful inter-planar being? From nature itself?
- *For the warrior* - Bow, sword, or axe? Who do you fight for? Why do you fight? Are you angry or calm? Is there a reason why you train to be a fighter?
- *For the cleric* - What kind of God do you serve? Are you part of a temple, order, or sect? Did you have a teacher? Does your God take an active or passive role in your faith? Does your God have any special requirements of you?



ABILITY SCORES

ROLLING your ability scores is the next step in building a character. There are six ability scores in D&D: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma. These form the basis of your character's mechanics, describing the relative strength of their physical and mental attributes.

ABILITIES

Strength	Physical ability, brawniness, how hard you can hit with a hammer etc.
Dexterity	Measure of agility, grace and precision, as well as quickness of reflexes.
Constitution	Toughness, health, how hardy you are, also alcohol tolerance.
Intelligence	How much you know, whether or not you are well educated.
Wisdom	Perceptiveness, practical knowledge such as survival skills, ability to discern truthfulness.
Charisma	The allure of personality, ability to act, persuade, deceive and frighten.

Your ability scores are each determined by rolling 4d6 and then discarding the lowest roll. The total of three remaining dice is then put to one side and the process repeated until you have six numbers. These can then be arranged as you wish to get your six ability scores.

For example, I might roll a 3, 4, 3 and 1. The lowest roll is a 1 which gets discarded, leaving me with 3+4+3=10, so I note down a score of 10. Six such rolls are shown in the table below in the *total* column. These would form the six ability scores of a character.

EXAMPLE ABILITY SCORES

roll I	roll II	roll III	roll IV	total	modifier
3	4	3	1*	10	+0
3	6	6	1*	15	+2
1*	6	5	4	15	+2
5	2*	5	2	12	+1
3*	3	3	6	12	+1
3	1*	1	2	6	-2

*drop lowest, so do not include in total

ABILITY MODIFIERS

Each ability score has an associated ability modifier, also shown in the *Example Ability Scores* table. The ability modifier is calculated by subtracting 10 from the ability score, dividing by 2 and then rounding down. In case that's too much maths, here are the ability modifiers for the possible ability scores:

- 6-7 gives a -2 modifier,
- 8-9 gives a -1 modifier,
- 10-11 gives a +0 modifier,
- 12-13 gives a +1 modifier,
- 14-15 gives a +2 modifier,
- 16-17 gives a +3 modifier,
- 18-19 gives a +4 modifier,
- 20 gives a +5 modifier, and so on.

If two of your ability modifiers are negative then you can choose to re-roll one of them, though you must keep the result of the new roll even if it is worse. Alternatively, if more than two of your ability modifiers are negative or the sum of all your ability modifiers is less than 2, you can choose to re-roll the entire character, discarding all previously rolled scores.

This method of rolling characters is very generous and results in characters with higher stats on average than other accepted methods of character generation, but if you would prefer to use another method such as the standard point-buy method then that is fine as well.

Negative Modifiers

Having negative modifiers doesn't have to be a bad thing. In fact, a negative modifier is an opportunity for some great role play and hilarious shenanigans. For example, a low Intelligence character might make comically bad decisions, offer terrible suggestions, and not understand what's going on half the time - think Drax from Guardians of the Galaxy. This can lead to really memorable moments that might otherwise be lost if they didn't have that low modifier, so consider keeping your lower ability scores. You can even choose to knock a few points off here and there if you think it would make your character more interesting!



RACIAL BONUSES

Once you have your six rolls, you need to add the racial bonuses that come from your chosen race. The races can be found in the following D&D books (in order of importance): *Player's Handbook*, *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, *Elemental Evil Player's Companion*, *Guildmasters' Guide to Ravnica* and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*. All a player really needs is a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, and I can provide PDFs of all the aforementioned books.

For example, a regular human gets a +1 bonus to all their ability scores, whereas a half-elf gets a +2 bonus to their Charisma and a +1 bonus to two other ability scores of their choice. Note that these bonuses are to the ability score (the bigger number, eg, 12) and not the modifier (eg, +1). Once you have assigned your ability scores to the different attributes and taken into account the racial bonuses, your ability scores and modifiers are complete.

EXAMPLE ABILITIES

USING the ability scores in the *Example Ability Scores* table and choosing to be a half-elf character, I could build the following example character.

Lothar is a half-elf paladin of Nicnevin, the Goddess of Natural Magic. The paladin class needs a high Strength or Dexterity to hold its own in melee combat, but also a high Charisma since this ability score determines the strength of their divine magic which is granted to them by the God they follow. This synergises well with the half-elf race, which gets a +2 bonus to their Charisma.

Lothar's baseline ability scores and modifiers are 10 (+0), 15 (+2), 15 (+2), 12 (+1), 12 (+1), and 6 (-2). I'll pick one of the 15s to be his Charisma, getting the +2 racial bonus making it a 17 (+3), and since I imagine him being graceful rather than strong I'll pick the other 15 to be his Dexterity and add one to it from the racial bonus, making it a 16 (+3). Finally, since he is going to be fighting on the frontline and taking a lot of damage, I'll take the next highest score of 12 and add the final racial bonus of +1 to it and make that his Constitution, since this determines his total number of his points.

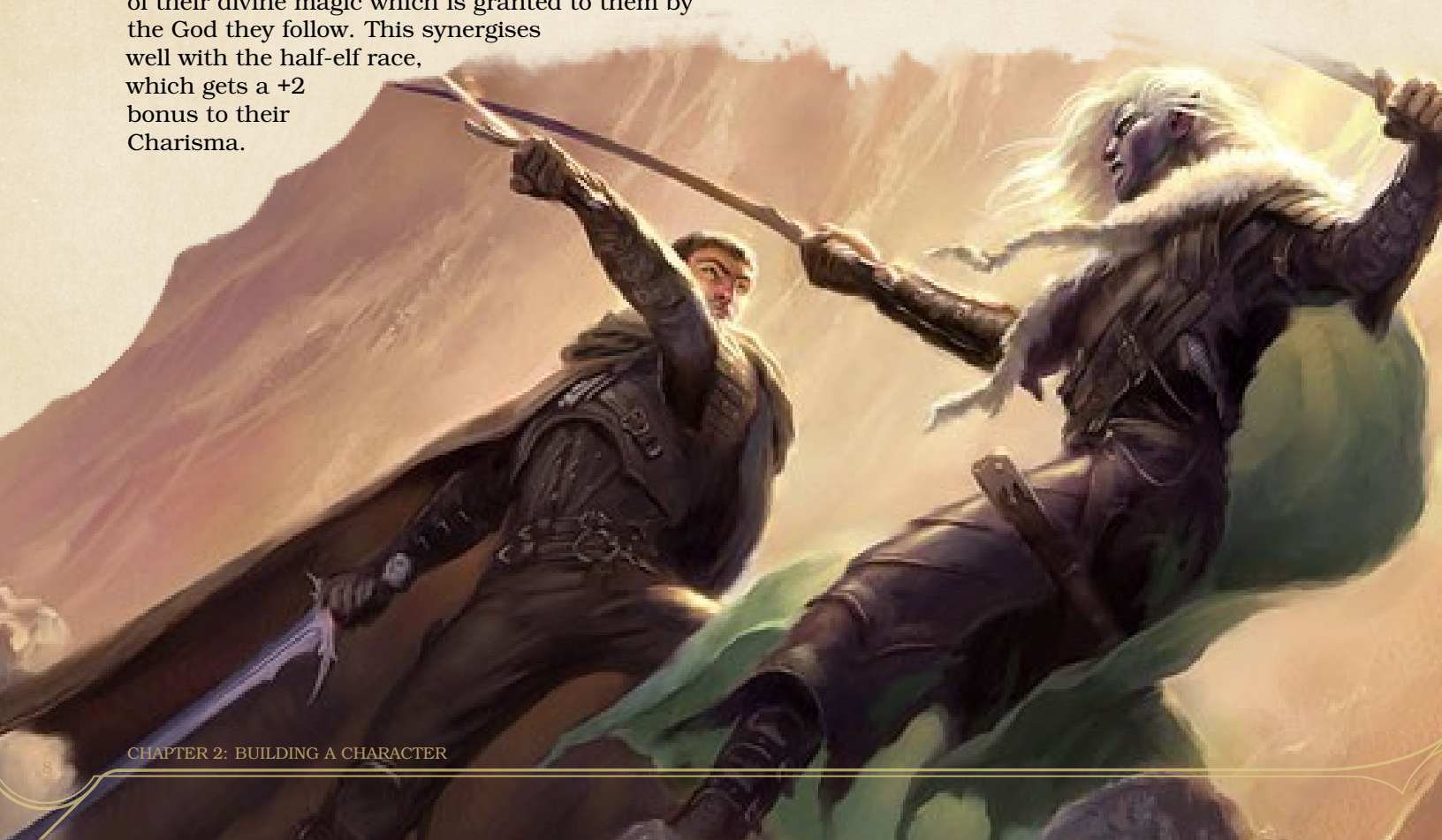
That gives us his Dexterity, Constitution and Charisma and leaves us with his Strength, Intelligence and Wisdom to be determined. Perhaps he is more interested in studying Nicnevin and her teachings rather than fighting, so I'll give his lowest score of a 6 to his Strength, and his next highest score of a 12 to his Intelligence. This only leaves the score of 10 to be his Wisdom.

Lothar the paladin's final ability scores might look something like this:

LOTHAR THE PALADIN OF NICNEVIN (LEVEL 1)

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Char
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)

The rest of Lothar's abilities, traits and skills can all be found in the *Player's Handbook*; specifically, the sections about races, classes, and backgrounds.



CHAPTER 3: THE PEOPLES OF ATH AH-LAGON

THE KINGDOM OF RYNN



ATH AH-LAGON is dominated by the vast cosmopolitan Kingdom of Rynn, formed from a union of nine ducal Houses: Alfonse, Brennus, Capetta, Drachendarrion, Dunail, Kandaya, de Strozzi, Tymanther, and Voellen. Before coming together as a single nation, these nine Duchies, sometimes referred to as Petty Kingdoms, were separate counties spread across the region of Kadaan, the central plains of Ath Ah-lagon. Over time, many of the smaller families faded into obscurity, either merging with their more powerful neighbours via political marriages and personal unions, or being defeated in local conflict, but the main threat came in the form of the Madyars: violent marauders from orcish clans to the north-east.

Meeting at the mountain-pass fortress of Rynn-Kadaan which had held firm against the orcs for centuries, the dukes and lords of Kadaan put aside their differences and signed the Treaty of Rynn-Kadaan to establish the Kingdom of Rynn, founding an elective monarchy and making the city of the Lanserrat their new capital. Now unified, the danger posed by the Madyars diminished and the Lanserrat grew in size, with the nine duchies emerging as the dominant political powers of the kingdom.

Predominant Races of Rynn

Humans and halflings are the predominant races of the Kingdom of Rynn, closely followed by dwarfs and half-elves. Half-orcs and gnomes are uncommon, full-blooded elves and dragonborn might attract a few stares, while tieflings and other rarer races can cause confusion and sometimes even confrontation among the populace. However, the Lanserrat is incredibly diverse, with all but the strangest or most monstrous races causing minimal disturbance.

After vanquishing the orcs and joining their lands, a second treaty was written to ensure that the dwarvish city of Cotaway would remain independent and never be attacked by any of the dukes, since the Garamond Mountain on which the city was founded now lay within the borders of the Kingdom of Rynn.

The current King, King Richard Kandaya, is well loved and respected by the people. Known for his diplomacy, he has overseen an age of relative peace and prosperity,

successfully navigating the endless bickering of the other Houses in the Lanserrat.



THE LANSERRAT

The Lanserrat is as much a symbol of peace and strength within the Kingdom of Rynn as it is the capital city and home to the Monarch. On the death of the monarch a new King or Queen is chosen by the Lanserrat Ducal Assembly, with representatives from each of the ducal Houses as well as other powers like the merchant guilds having a say. This ensures agreement between the Houses and the promise of stability during the monarch's rule.

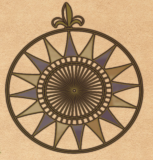
The Lanserrat itself is a massive city of red shale roofs and cobbled promenades, with eleven bridges crossing the Timpani River that runs through the city. The Royal Quarter marks the centre of the city about which the nine ducal districts spread out like a fan.

The World Below

Beneath the Lanserrat is the World Below, a turbulent under-city home to three criminal syndicates: the Sicarii, a group assassins; a muscle gang run by a woman known only as the Mallet; and a spy ring with Mr Slim the Broker at its head. As the adage goes: *you might as well rid the sewers of rats than fight the World Below*. It is only the balance of these three forces and tense agreements with the surface that has managed to keep the peace.



The continent of Ath Ah-lagon



- capital caravel - 10mph
- ducal seat stage coach - 3mph
- other city stage coach w.
- fortress fresh horses - 9mph
- port airship - 30mph



ALTHINONIAN
CARTOGRAPHY
SOCIETY



THE NINE DUCAL HOUSES

ALFONSE

House Flag: white background with an orange songbird.

House Words: "*Forever free.*"

House Seat: Diyal

BRENNUS

House Flag: green tower gate in front of a white shield with a red diagonal cross and dark green border.

House Words: "*Conquered by none, our walls stand strong.*"

House Seat: Brennus Gate

CAPETTA

House Flag: teal shield with teal and gold ribbons and a brown stag on the shield.

House Words: "*Wardens of the West.*"

House Seat: Labella

DRACHENDARRION

House Flag: diagonal stripes in two shades of red behind a black and white feathery lion.

House Words: "*Never wake the sleeping lion.*"

House Seat: Ourmeron

DUNAIL

House Flag: checkerboard of orange and dark blue squares behind a green and white leaf.

House Words: "*Grow forever, never yield.*"

House Seat: Kelhyana

KANDAYA

House Flag: black background with a yellow chevron and three crossing ornate keys.

House Words: "*Serve and protect.*"

House Seat: Aimon district, The Lanserrat

DE STROZZI

House Flag: off-white background covered in tiny black daggers with a red bar at the top.

House Words: "*Through the shadows we persevered.*"

House Seat: Berrenoct

TYMANTHER

House Flag: green ochre background with an armet helmet in the middle.

House Words: "*Gold in peace, steel in war.*"

House Seat: Taromell

VOELLEN

House Flag: a black, a silver, and a white sun on a purple background.

House Words: "*Spirits guide us, spirits watch over us.*"

House Seat: Voll

THE DWARF HOLDS



LONG before any human empire rose to prominence in Ath Ah-lagon, the dwarves of the hills chose the lofty peaks of Garamond Mountain out of all the mountains in Kadaan to be their home. There they carved the city of Cotawayy into the mountainside, spread across three central peaks connected by bridges and cable cars while the great mountain goat *druren*-riders guarded the mountain passes.

Meanwhile, the dwarves which dwelled underground rather than above it delved deeper and deeper beneath the Olden Mountain Range. The greatest of their mines was Ringdeene beneath Mount Cyris which they forged in partnership with the deep gnomes of Blingdenvoll, and about which the great subterranean kingdom of Kragzvold emerged.

COTAWAYY

The three spires of Cotawayy are built into the surface of Garamond Mountain, rather than beneath it. The Jewelspire is home to the wealthy, the successful innovators, and the enchanters of the city. The Hearthspire houses the common folk along with the tools of their trades, from tanners to candle-makers. And the Fluespire, with great chimneys that drag air and smoke upwards, is filled with furnaces and workshops for every kind of smelter and forge.

There is precious little arable land between the spires and their ridges which can be used for growing crops or rearing livestock. The dwarves that live here are peaceful and industrious folk, preferring to innovate and design rather than mine or craft weapons and armour. Though relatively small, Cotawayy has amassed wealth and fame as a result of its ingenuity, most notably for the construction of shield guardian constructs.



It was because of this peaceful nature and stored wealth from their innovations that the Treaty of Garamond was signed by the Dukes of the Kingdom of Rynn, promising that if any Duke should ever attack Cotaway then all the others would come to defend them. With Garamond Mountain situated in the very centre of Kadaan in the middle of the Kingdom of Rynn, the relationship between the Lanserrat and Cotaway has at times been filled with anxiety, though the current Kandayan King, King Richard, has a close relationship with Overseer Thulmerra Drurenmar of Cotaway.

KRAGZVOLD

"We take pride in order. Do you know what happens to a mine that is disorderly? They flood, asphyxiate, wallow in their own shit, and collapse. We absolutely love order here."

— Elder Duthirn Strakeln of Clan Strakeln of Kragzvold

Deep beneath Mount Cyris and the Olden mountain range sprawls the ancient dwarvish city-kingdom of Kragzvold and the mines of Ringdeene. The mountain dwarves rule by clan and honour, with no king or queen to rule above the elders of the clans. The biggest of these clans are Strakeln, Bardbeard, Bouldermit and Gretgen, though there are at least thirty five clans living within the city.

Predominant Races of Cotaway and Kragzvold

Dwarves form the bulk of Cotaway and Kragzvold, with hill dwarfs being more common in the former and mountain dwarves in the latter. Humans and halflings are also common in Cotaway, though this is not the case for humans in Kragzvold; instead, you are more likely to see a gnome than a human. Other races are rarely found in these cities, and are largely seen as outsiders.

IVANDAR, CITY OF THE ELVES

THE elves have existed for countless ages, with each elf living many times longer than a human. As a result, for some elves the younger races are too changeable and their memories too short, making them intolerable company and questionable allies. For these more traditional elves, Ivandar represents a final refuge and safe-haven for elvish culture, though others see this attitude as being closed-minded and overly restrictive. Ivandar itself is hidden in the heart of the Elderwood, an ancient forest which protects

the elves almost as much as they protect it, and under is ruled by the benevolent high-elf Queen T'layla.

Predominant Races of Ivandar

Unsurprisingly, the elves are the predominant race in Ivandar. Humans are rare, since they are seen as members of a brash and upstart race. Though more common than humans, half-elves suffer from similar prejudice. Magical races and those with a connection to the natural world, such as the genasi, gnomes, drow and tieflings can also find a home here.

IPQY ARCHIPELAGO

OFF the western coast of Ath Ah-lagon lies the Ipqy Archipelago, a chain of islands roughly 400 miles from mainland Ath Ah-lagon. For as long as anyone cares to remember, the two maritime city-states of Lanschang and Pomodoro have been in a state of conflict known as the Reef War. To sailors and traders travelling to and from the mainland, the small island and pirate city of Haven serves as neutral ground before docking at either of the two city-states' main harbours.

Each city has their own fantastical tale of how the Reef War began and why it was necessary to fight, casting their opponent as the oppressor. But war is not the only source of peril in these waters. Tropical storms blow through the islands on a regular basis, threatening to send unsuspecting ships crashing into the reef or out to deeper waters where sea monsters prowl and hunt. Here, piracy is a fact of life rather than something rare and terrifying, with countless coves dotted along the coastline used as hideouts.

Predominant Races of the Ipqy Archipelago

The Ipqy Archipelago is full of all kinds of people with little care given to their race, especially in the pirate city of Haven. There is a strong tiefling presence that has been naturalised in Lanschang, and dragonborn can find a comfortable home in both city-states.



POMODORO

A sprawling city of canals, cranes and smoking towers, Pomodoro is one of the most industrially advanced places in all of Ath Ah-lagon, rivalling even the dwarven city of Cotaway atop Garamond Mountain. Ruled by the great Pomodore himself, Ortez Abish, the Pomodorian navy consists not only of regular wooden vessels driven by wind and sail, but of iron longships with rotating water-wheels that propel them through the waves like floating battering rams.

LANSCHANG

Set within the Zjayan Gulf and guarded by the ever watchful cannons and ballistas of the Zjay Cliffkeep, the city of Lanschang sits between two huge stone reliefs carved into the adjacent cliffs, one depicting a graceful stork in flight and the other a dragon perched atop a mountain. The city is a checkerboard of blossom-tree gardens and white wooden houses with curved eaves overhanging shaded verandas; red-sailed ships of varying size are moored in the harbour, lit by pale blue arcane lanterns atop long wooden poles and anchored buoys.

The people of Lanschang follow a strict form of social order, with five key tenets that they call the Heijin Laws. These laws emphasise living in balance with nature, respecting elders and those who have served the city, and being forthright and decisive. The most respected members of society are called the *izzu*, orphans or unwanted children who have been sterilized before being trained as soldiers or in statecraft to function as administrators and bureaucrats, even forming the ranks of the city guard. Wealthy families will often send off one of their children to become one of the *izzu* as a way of giving back to society.

At the heart of Lanschangi culture and government is the palace complex called the

Sundoku. Situated a few hours' travel away on the slopes of a small mountain, the Sundoku is home to Queen Seondur, the supposedly immortal ruler of the city and writer of the Heijin Laws. Rarely seen outside of the palace, she is a figure shrouded in mystery and is viewed by some as an a semi-divine figure.

THE TRAPPIST NATION

"Bal Hamuun be praised!"

— common expression within the Trappist Nation

THEP within the blistering heat and shifting sands of the Red Desert lies the Trappist Nation. In reality, the Trappist Nation is more a collection of city states and wandering tribes than a country. The Athribis is the biggest of the cities, carved into a chasm of red stone, while the city of Tel Shimshara sits the flood plains of the Red River, and the Alfannak nomads roam between the Dalyeshi lake and Tolbur Wastes.

Predominant Races of the Trappist Nation

The Trappist Nation is a predominantly dragonborn society, though humans, halflings and half-elves are also common. Other races such as dwarves, elves and gnomes prefer living in their original homelands or central Kadaan.

THE SHINTERLAND

THE frozen wastes and frigid mountains of northern Ath Ah-lagon house the remnants and ruins of the continent's oldest cities, built long ago when Gods still walked the earth. In many ways the city of Shinter is a holy city, with shrines and temples to nearly every deity making it the religious centre of Ath Ah-lagon, and where many of the high priests and senior-most clerics reside. Indeed, the city is ruled over by Queen Dima Uminet, the High Priestess of Iallanis.

Predominant Races of the Shinterland

The icy expanse of the Shinterland is a wilderness home to many wild tribes of goliaths, humans, and orcs; whether they have been there since the Godswar or were expelled from other societies, no one knows. But in the city of Shinter itself, all races can be found. As a holy city that celebrates nearly all deities, even those that would be outlawed elsewhere, even the duergar can occasionally be found walking its streets at night. Humans remain most common, followed by half-elves and dwarves, with reasonably large elven and dragonborn communities.



CHAPTER 4: THE GODS

FOLLOWING A GOD

RELIGION and the Gods are an important part of life in Ath Ah-lagon. The Gods are real and powerful, having created the cosmos, or having been there when the cosmos was created. They are beings of incredible power and knowledge, and wield influence on a truly inter-planar scale.

Most people worship different Gods at different times and for different reasons. For example, an athlete might pray to Ara the Brawler before competing in a competition, a farmer might pray to Eredhrel Dawnlight for a good harvest and then to Han the Merchant's Friend when they come to sell their produce, and a fisherman might offer a plea to Sirseer that the sea would be calm on catch-day, though by far Thrym Skyborn the Lawbearer is the most widely known and worshipped God in Ath Ah-lagon.

Many people will have a favourite God whose teachings are most relevant to their life, but only a small few choose to devote themselves to their God in service, become temple wardens, clerics, paladins, and other acolytes of the faiths. For those who do follow a God, it is important to think about what motivated their decision, how and where they received their religious training, what the core tenets of their faith are, what their relationship to their God looks like, and why they are now out travelling the world.

Divine casters such as clerics and paladins are also granted incredible powers from their Gods, even going as far as being able to bring the dead back to life, rain fire and meteors down from the sky, and summon celestial guardians to provide them with aid. But this power can come with certain requirements or expectations about that character's behaviour, ensuring that they live up to the teachings of their God.

DIVINE HIERARCHY

ALL Gods are powerful, but not all Gods are good. Long ago all the Gods, good and bad, walked and existed on the Prime Material Plane among their followers. Violence among the Gods was common, whether in the form of petty feuds or all out war, often leaving the Material Plane and its inhabitants in a state of ruin. It was because of this that a number of Gods joined their power to forge the Divine Gate, forever separating the Gods and mortal beings. Now, the Gods reside on the Outer Planes and manifest their power on

the Material Planes in the form of divine magic, miracles, and avatars of their might.

Each God rules over different aspects of existence, representing specific ideals and having different practices relating to those aspects. The greater deities are the most powerful of the Gods, often overseeing or *outranking* other lesser deities in the divine hierarchy. Some Gods have naturally close relationships, often with aligning values, while others exist in a state of tension or permanent antagonism, often actively seeking the undermine and weaken each other.

To help classify the Gods, I have provided a full list of the thirty-two Gods that exist in the main Ath Ah-lagon pantheon. Other divine powers do exist, but are either long forgotten or incredibly secretive; the Gods shown here represent all the Gods that are generally recognised within society. They each have a *portfolio*. These are the aspects they are associated with, for example, Nicnevin the She-Witch has natural magic as her portfolio; this means she is the Goddess of natural magic.

They also have a *domain*, with their clerics typically being of one of the domains given, and an *alignment*. This alignment should give you some idea of what the deity is like: whether they are good or bad, value strict adherence to a set of rules or prefer chaos, are on the side of innovation and order or the disorder of nature. A breakdown of the Gods by their alignment is given at the end.

ALECTO (SHE)

Other names: Matron of Vengeance, The Vigilante, Lady of Revenge.

Portfolio: vengeance, retribution, justice.

Domain: Order, Tempest, War.

Holy Symbol: a bandaged hand holding an upright blackjack baton.

Alignment: Lawful Neutral.

ARA (SHE)

Other names: The Skysplitter, The Unbridled Lady, The Brawling Goddess.

Portfolio: thunder, physical strength, athletics.

Domain: Life, Tempest, War.

Holy Symbol: upright broadsword with lightning around the blade.

Alignment: Neutral Good.

ATRAXUS (HE)

Other names: The Shadow Drake, Undying Serpent.

Portfolio: undeath.

Domain: Death, Tempest.

Holy Symbol: draconic skull pointing down.

Alignment: Lawful Evil.

BAL HAMUUN (HE)

Other names: Lord of the Red Land, Sand King, Red Eyed Tyrant.

Portfolio: anger, dessert, endurance.

Domain: War.

Holy Symbol: a fist carved from red rock.

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral.

BOEHETHIAH (SHE)

Other names: The Darkness, Queen of Darkness, She Who Came Before, The Un-Maker.

Portfolio: strife, destruction.

Domain: Death, Trickery, War.

Holy Symbol: a black shard crafted into a pyramid.

Alignment: Lawful Evil.

CICELIN (HE)

Other names: The Knife Unseen, Lord of the Long Night, The Blade-Limb-ed Horde, White Faced Reaper.

Portfolio: murder, insects.

Domain: Death, Grave, Nature.

Holy Symbol: white jawless skull in front of a lime-green starburst.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil.

The Sundering

During the Godswar, Boehethiah was one of the Betrayer Gods who fought against the Gods of Civilization. Pictured here, she takes the form of a gigantic shadowy dragon with canine features, capable of un-making reality and leaving behind only destruction. The area of the Shinterland where she was defeated is now known as The Sundering.

CORELEEAGH/CREGORALEE (HE)

Other names: He Who Laughs/The Smiling God.

Portfolio: trickery.

Domain: Trickery.

Holy Symbol: a laughing jester's mask.

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral.

DENNA (SHE)

Other names: Lady of Reeds, River Queen, Nymph Goddess.

Portfolio: rivers and lakes, beautiful things found underwater.

Domain: Life, Nature.

Holy Symbol: a pearl in the centre of a circle formed between two fish swimming head to tail.

Alignment: Chaotic Good.

DIANCASTRA (THEY)

Other names: Warden of the Weary, Counselor of Dreams.

Portfolio: healing, dreams.

Domain: Knowledge, Life.

Holy Symbol: a bismuth statuette of a couatl (mystical winged serpent).

Alignment: Lawful Good.

DRURUMGAMA (HE)

Other names: The Deep God, Father King,

Portfolio: deep things, subterranean darkness, patron of the duergar.

Domain: Knowledge, War, Forge.

Holy Symbol: rough-hewn amethyst in the shape of a hammer.

Alignment: Neutral Evil

EMMANTIESSEN (THEY)

Other names: Father of Trees, Old Mother Tree.

Portfolio: forests, sacred places, small animals.

Domain: Life, Nature, Light.

Holy Symbol: oak leaf with golden horns and blue eyes.

Alignment: Neutral Good.

EREDHREL (SHE)

Other names: Dawnlight, Queen of Bounty.

Portfolio: agriculture, light.

Domain: Life, Light, Nature.

Holy Symbol: the sun with the face of a golden haired woman.

Alignment: Lawful Good.

FROSTMAIDEN (SHE)

Other names: Lady of Winter, Ice Queen.

Portfolio: winter.

Domain: Tempest, Nature.

Holy Symbol: snow leopard.

Alignment: Lawful Neutral.

GROLANTOR (HE)

Other names: Beastlord.

Portfolio: wild beasts, wilderness.

Domain: Nature, War.

Holy Symbol: a tusked boar head with amber eyes.

Alignment: Neutral Evil.

HAN (HE)

Other names: the Wily God, Merchants Friend, Luck of the Smallfolk.

Portfolio: trade, greed, luck.

Domain: Trickery.

Holy Symbol: a golden coin.

Alignment: Chaotic Neutral.

HEKATII (SHE)

Other names: The Crone, Forgotten Goddess, Keeper of Secrets.

Portfolio: secrets, forbidden knowledge.

Domain: knowledge, trickery, order.

Holy Symbol: a crystal ball with many eyes.

Alignment: Neutral.

HIATEA (SHE)

Other names: The Mother Goddess, Mother of Wolves, The Protector.

Portfolio: fertility, protection.

Domain: Life, War.

Holy Symbol: painted white wooden wolf.

Alignment: Lawful Good.

IALLANIS (HE)

Other names: Peace in the Centre of the Storm.

Portfolio: reason, navigation (pictured below).

Domain: Forge, Knowledge, Light, Order.

Holy Symbol: albatross silhouette flying in front of a full moon.

Alignment: Neutral Good.

ISHNUKK (HE)

Other names: The Warmonger, God of Hunger.

Portfolio: violence, patron of the brutish races.

Domain: War.

Holy Symbol: a bloody axe.

Alignment: Neutral Evil.

JANAVITA (SHE)

Other names: The Silver-Haired Lady, Lady Moonsong.

Portfolio: music, dance, the moon.

Domain: Life, Light, Trickery.

Holy Symbol: a harp with six silver strings.

Alignment: Chaotic Good.

JERGal (HE)

Other names: Seneschel of Death.

Portfolio: death.

Domain: Grave, Order.

Holy Symbol: a skull biting down on a wooden scroll with an ink-pot and quill embedded atop the bone plate.

Alignment: Lawful Neutral.

LAUMA (SHE)

Other names: God of Gears and Wheels, Lady of Progress, Queen of Wonder.

Portfolio: crafting, innovation.

Domain: Forge, Knowledge, Light.

Holy Symbol: hammer and anvil.

Alignment: Neutral Good.

MORRIGAN (SHE)

Other names: The Plague Crone, Lady of Poison.

Portfolio: rot, disease.

Domain: Death.

Holy Symbol: the head of a king cobra with a heart between its fangs.

Alignment: Neutral Evil.

NICNEVIN (SHE)

Other names: She-Witch.

Portfolio: natural magic.

Domain: Knowledge, Nature, Trickery.

Holy Symbol: a silver ring.

Alignment: Chaotic Good.

OBADIAH (HE)

Other names: The Whistling Hunter

Portfolio: hunting.

Domain: Nature.

Holy Symbol: an obsidian spear covered in vines.

Alignment: Neutral Good.

PTAH (THEY)

Other names: the Far Wanderer.

Portfolio: order, balance.

Domain: Knowledge, Order.

Holy Symbol: an hourglass.

Alignment: Neutral.

SINDRA (SHE)

Other names: Queen of Pain.

Portfolio: dark magic, pain.

Domain: Death, Knowledge, Tempest, Trickery.

Holy Symbol: a wrought iron spiked crown.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil.

SIRSEER (SHE)

Other names: Stormgoddess, Sailors' Bane, Queen of the Frigid Deep.

Portfolio: oceans, storms.

Domain: Nature, Tempest.

Holy Symbol: a sea serpent or sea dragon.

Alignment: Chotic Neutral.

TALOS (HE)

Other names: Prince of Demons, Ebony Skinned Master.

Portfolio: demons, lust.

Domain: Trickery, Death.

Holy Symbol: an upright ebony hand with long nails.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil.

THRYM (HE)

Other names: Skyborn, the Lawbearer, the Lawbringer, the Ever-Rising.

Portfolio: city patron, truth, law.

Domain: Forge, Life, Light, Order.

Holy Symbol: a phoenix clutching a scroll.

Alignment: Lawful Good.

VORKHESIS (HE)

Other names: Master of Fate, Judge of All, He Who Waits.

Portfolio: fate, judgement.

Domain: Grave, Order.

Holy Symbol: a skeletal arm balancing a set of scales.

Alignment: Lawful Neutral.

YANESH URR (THEY)

Other names: Great Devourer, the Endbringer, the Massacre in Shackles.

Portfolio: madness, entropy.

Domain: Death, Trickery, War.

Holy Symbol: a jagged swirling vortex engraved with twisted runes.

Alignment: Chaotic Evil.

LIFE AND DEATH

SPELLCASTING

Upon death, a person's soul passes beyond the Divine Gate before awaiting judgement by Vorkhesis, the Master of Fate. The souls of those who have followed the tenets of a god faithfully will go on to reside with their deity on their plane of existence, but death doesn't have to be the end. Powerful magic exists which can restore the body and summon the soul back to the Prime Material Plane, restoring the dead to life.

This magic is typically the purview of divine spell casters who get their magic from the power of the gods themselves, and is rare indeed. Few temples will offer the service of bringing someone back to life, and those that do need good reason to do so, while the teachings of some deities outright oppose the use of such magic. It is also expensive, requiring valuable spell components such as a scarce kind of diamond which is carefully regulated by the more powerful temples.

The following spells have the ability to bring someone back to life (there may be changes here compared to the rules as written).

Revivify. Must be cast *within 1 minute* of death.

Raise Dead. Must be cast *within 1 day* of death.

Reincarnate. Must be cast *within 10 days* of death.

Resurrection. Must be cast *within 100 days* of death.

True Resurrection. Must be cast *within 200 years* of death.

Being brought back to life is a gruelling ordeal for both the body and mind. Upon being brought back, the target takes a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. Every time the target finishes a long rest, they can make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw to reduce the penalty by 1 until it disappears. The only spell that does not confer this penalty is the *True Resurrection* spell.

RESURRECTION RITUALS

To bring someone back to life, the spell caster must perform a resurrection ritual as part of casting the spell. This involves up to three ability checks from three different people who bring something to the ritual. For example, a close friend of the one who died might give an impassioned plea to the soul of the deceased to return, in which case the DM might ask for a Persuasion check. The follower of a deity might offer up a prayer to their god to intercede and help usher the lost soul back to the Material Plane, doing a Religion check. Or a barbarian might lay their fallen friend's weapon beside

them as a sign of respect, scattering a ritualistic herb over the blade; this might require a Medicine check.

The success or failure of these checks helps determine the final DC of the ritual. The base resurrection DC starts at 10 and decreases by 3 for each successful contribution, but increases by 1 for each failure, with a critical success or critical failure counting as two successes or failures respectively. But it is not easy to bring the same soul back to their body multiple times. Every time a spell is cast on someone to bring them back to life, the base resurrection DC of all future rolls to bring them back to life increases by 1. The DM then rolls a d20 against the final resurrection DC to see whether the spell has been successful, with a critical failure or success counting as an automatic failure or success of the spell. Even if the spell fails, the components are still consumed and spell slot expended.

Revivify in Battle

When a friend has fallen in the heat of battle and you need them back up and fighting there and then to help overcome the encounter, there isn't time for a full resurrection ritual. Casting the *Revivify* spell without a proper ritual is possible, but risky. Successfully casting *Revivify* during battle requires the caster to make an ability check using their spell casting ability modifier against the target's base resurrection DC, taking into account the number of times the target has been brought back to life in the past.