



ENsider Presents:

The ZEITGEIST Adventure Path Player's Guide Part 1

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OUR HUMBLE AND SPECIAL THANKS TO to the hundreds of gamers who backed the original release of Zeitgeist on Kickstarter, and to the over one thousand generous patrons of EN World ENsider whose support has made this Fifth Edition update possible.

Introduction

Steam and soot darken the skies above the city of Flint, and winds sweeping across its majestic harbor blow the choking products of industrial forges into the fey rainforests that dot its knife-toothed mountains. Since the earliest ages when the people of Risur founded this city, they feared the capricious beings that hid in those fog-shrouded peaks, but now, as the march of progress and the demands of national defense turn Flint into a garden for artifice and technology, the old faiths and rituals that kept the lurkers of the woods at bay are being abandoned.

The Unseen Court, the Great Hunt, and the many spirits of the land long ago conquered by Risur's kings no longer receive tribute, but they cannot enter these new cities of steam and steel to demand their tithe. The impoverished workers who huddle in factory slums fear monsters of a different breed, shadowy children of this new urban labyrinth. Even their modern religions have no defenses against these fiends.

Times are turning. The skyseers – Risur's folk prophets since their homeland's birth – witness omens in the starry wheels of heaven, and they warn that a new age is nigh. But what they cannot foresee, hidden beyond the steam and soot of the night sky, is the face of this coming era, the spirit of the next age. The *zeitgeist*.

Zeitgeist Adventure Path.

Game Masters, you can use this setting guide as a jumping off point for your own steam & steel fantasy campaign, but we invite you to check out the free ZEITGEIST: The Gears of Revolution Campaign Guide, available separately. The Campaign Guide is effectively system-neutral, and can be used as-is with your Fifth Edition game.

The original thirteen ZEITGEIST adventures will be serialized through EN5IDER over the coming months, after the full EN5IDER release of this Player's Guide. Additionally, at DriveThruRPG you can order Premium Handouts and decks of cards with NPC portraits and other useful info to share with your players, as well as the PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME and Fourth Edition versions of the adventures, if you want to read ahead.

Contents

This Player's Guide, presented in six parts, contains materials for both players and the Game Master. The ZEITGEIST Campaign Guide has details of all the adventures and should only be read by the GM. This document includes a brief primer on the world of ZEITGEIST in addition to Part One of the Player's Guide.

Part One: Characters (this document) offers new backgrounds and equipment for PCs and guidelines for handling the campaign's industrial age technology with Fifth Edition rules.

Part Two: Equipment and Prestige gives the PCs industrial age options to handle the challenges they will face in this campaign.

Part Three: Royal Homeland Constabulary provides an overview of the local offices of the Royal Homeland Constabulary, to which the PCs all belong. It also presents guidelines for common investigative tasks, useful for both GMs and players.

Part Four: Setting describes the nations and history of the ZEITGEIST adventure path. You can read only the parts of this section that relate to your character, or you can skip over it entirely. This section will be released through EN5IDER in two installments.

Part Five: Flint explores the campaign's focal city in detail. All players should have at least a passing familiarity with the city before starting Adventure Two.

Part Six: Prestige Classes unveils unique specializations for PCs as they discover who they are in the world of ZEITGEIST.

Pronunciation Guide.

- ♦ **Risur.** REES-ser (rhymes with “fleece”). A native is a Risuri (rhymes with “Missouri”).
- ♦ **Crisillyr.** kris-SILL-lee-ur (rhymes with “the sillier”). A native is a Crisillyri (rhymes with “this ill eerie”).
- ♦ **Danor.** DAN-nor (rhymes with “fan oar”). A native is a Danoran (rhymes with “can foreign”).
- ♦ **Drakr.** DRAHK-kur (rhymes with “locker”). A native is a Drakran.
- ♦ **Elfaivar.** el-FIE-vahr (rhymes with “bell five bar”). A native is an Elfaivaran.
- ♦ **Lanjyr.** LAN-jeer (rhymes with “fan jeer”).
- ♦ **Yerasol.** YAIR-uh-sahl (rhymes with “aerosol”).
- ♦ **Aodhan.** Traditionally, AID-un, like the name Aidan. Foreigners mispronounce it OWD-hahn (rhymes with “loud Ron”).
- ♦ **Srasama.** srah-SAH-muh (rhymes with “the llama”).

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Campaign Primer

A Step Away from Classic Fantasy.

In the ZEITGEIST adventure path, your characters serve in the Royal Homeland Constabulary of the nation of Risur, protecting the country and its citizens from foreign threats lurking within its borders. During missions of investigation, espionage, and assassination, your duty will be to root out hostile spies and pursue international conspiracies. As you learn more of your homeland's own secrets, however, your loyalties may be tested, may even be turned, and you may find that it is you whose hand controls the gears of the turning age.

It is not necessary to read all parts of the Player's Guide in order to play. Anything that matters to your game will be introduced in the course of the adventures. We do suggest all players give pages 3 and 4 a quick read to get the gist of the setting. Then players who want to sink their teeth into the world can read the full guide to see how ZEITGEIST stands apart from the assumed world of traditional fantasy roleplaying games.

Humans and the Great Nations.

Humans rule three of the five great nations of the continent Lanjyr. Their ascendancy in the past two thousand years toppled a mighty eladrin empire and has provoked belief in doomsday prophecy and fatalism among many dwarves. The campaign begins in Risur, and every PC should have a strong loyalty to the nation, even if the character does not hail from there.

While Risur is predominately human, halflings are not unknown, and the nation's traditional druidic religion makes it a welcome home of elves and gnomes.

Eladrin, Devas, and the Great Malice.

Long ago a civilization of elves known as the eladrin built an empire of magical wonders. Then five hundred years ago the death of the eladrin goddess Srasama caused nearly every eladrin woman to perish. Those few who survived were often claimed as trophies by human conquerors, though a handful of free matriarchs head their own family lines in the ruins of the old empire. Those interested in the eladrin should read the section on Elfaivar.

Mortals present at the death of the eladrin goddess have continually reincarnated in the following centuries as devas, as if a sliver of Srasama's divine spark has granted them a semblance of immortality. Those interested in devas should read the section on Crisillyr.

Tieflings and Dead Magic.

When the eladrin goddess died, Danor became a dead magic zone, and some in that land were marked by a curse, turning them into tieflings. In the centuries since, however, the tieflings have come to rule that nation, and in the last few decades they have begun a revolution of industry and mighty science almost as powerful as the magic they lack. Those interested in tieflings should read the section on Danor.

Technology.

If you're interested in having your character use some of the new revolution's technology, particularly firearms and explosives, you should read the section on Equipment.

Dwarves, Doomsday, and Nihilism.

The major dwarven nation is bleakly resigned to an imminent doomsday, when ancient horrors will claw free from glaciers and engulf the world in a frigid death. Adherence to duty is so ingrained in their culture, however, that the dwarves continue to toil in their forges even as they prepare for the world's end. Those interested in dwarves should read the section on Drakr.

Savages, Primitives, and Peace.

Freed from the yoke of toppled dragon tyrants, the youngest of the great nations formed from an alliance of several monstrous races which now live in an uneasy peace as their rulers seek to force the disparate peoples into the modern age. Those interested in dragonborn, gnolls, goblins, kobolds, minotaurs, and orcs should read the section on Ber.

Piety and the Planes.

The heavens possess an undeniable hold on the world's religions, its people, and its very structure. In Risur, skyseers believe that the movements of the night stars foretell the future and direct the fate of the world. More enlightened scholars study distant planes of elemental and temporal power to understand how the flow of their energies affects the fundamental nature of reality. The eladrin people have begun to withdraw into the Dreaming (a shining reflection of this world, inhabited by fey), and to frighten sinners the bishops of the high church of the Clergy invoke condemned spirits from the Bleak Gate (a dark mirror of the real world, where dead linger before they find their eternal reward).

Other planes exist only as postulations, and there are countless theories on the nature of reality. No one in this world has ever traveled to the Astral Plane or Nine Hells, and even travel between the known worlds of the night sky is brief, with summoned beings never remaining more than a few minutes.

Those interested in the setting's metaphysics should read the section on The World.

Heroic Themes and Deeds.

The ZEITGEIST campaign setting presents nine character themes that reinforce the heroic archetypes of the world, such as eschatologists, gunsmiths, and technologists. Each player should choose one of these themes, which grant a bonus feat and suggest ways to hook the character into the setting.

Moreover, because constables of the RHC are only chosen from among those with talent and experience, player characters start the ZEITGEIST campaign at 3rd level.



Exceedingly Brief Timeline.

- ♦ **-1200 B.O.V. (Before Our Victory):** King Kelland defeats the fey titans and founds Risur, the first mortal nation on the continent of Lanjyr. In the following centuries, other nations rise up throughout Lanjyr.
- ♦ **-1117 B.O.V.:** The demonocracy arises, its monstrous rulers enslaving the primitive nations of the north. Risur keeps it from expanding south, and Elfaivar blocks its eastward growth.
- ♦ **-500 B.O.V.:** Triegenes the fisherman founds the Clergy in what is modern-day Danor, overthrows the demonocracy, then dies and ascends to godhood.
- ♦ **-50 B.O.V.:** The First Victory, a holy war between humans and eladrin, ends with the eladrin losing much territory.
- ♦ **1 A.O.V. (After Our Victory):** The Second Victory begins as an eladrin effort to reclaim lost lands, but ends in their decisive defeat when the eladrin goddess Srasama manifests physically, and is slain. Danor collapses into chaos as the nation becomes a dead magic zone. The seat of the Clergy moves to Crisillyr, which begins to colonize the devastated lands of Elfaivar. Dwarves seize control of their own nation in Drakr.
- ♦ **300 A.O.V.:** King Boyle of Risur slays the last dragon tyrant of Ber. The nation of Danor, resurgent with industry and technology, begins to contest Risur for control of the lush Yerasol Archipelago.
- ♦ **460 A.O.V.:** King Aodhan is crowned in Risur. He encourages his people to pursue industry so they can fight back against Danor. Meanwhile in Ber, Bruse Le Roye unites tribes of monstrous races into a new nation.
- ♦ **493 A.O.V.:** The Fourth Yerasol War ends, with Risur having lost many islands.
- ♦ **500 A.O.V.:** Present day.



Characters

Setting Considerations

Races.

By default, the full gamut of character creation options is available in the ZEITGEIST setting, though some choices might mark your character as exceedingly rare, even unique – like sentient golems, half-elementals, or mantis-men. Note that the nature of the world makes creatures from other planes effectively unknown; in addition, there's no drow race or underworld on the continent of Lanjyr ... but perhaps a dark-skinned race of elves lurks in the mountains of the Bleak Gate.

Classes.

Every class has a place in the world, though the RHC is unlikely to admit a savage barbarian who hasn't at least learned Risuri manners. Due to its druidic traditions, clerics from Risur tend to have the Nature domain, paladins favor the Oath of the Ancients, and warlocks favor Archfey patrons. However, as long as a person is loyal to Risur, they can be a constable regardless of nation of origin.

We assume as a baseline that your characters in the ZEITGEIST adventure path will work for the Royal Homeland Constabulary, a Risuri organization created by King Aodhan to monitor threats to his nation, both home-grown and from foreign lands.

Every constable must have passed a background check and magical inquisition to prove his or her loyalty to Risur. These precautions allow even foreign-born citizens to serve, giving the constabulary a valuable tool in pursuing investigations overseas. Groups of constables are often assigned to pool their talents to accomplish dangerous and complex tasks, such as rescue missions, surveillance to catch smugglers and traitors, and even espionage or assassination.

In the default version of the adventure path, every PC should have a strong devotion to Risur, though PCs can certainly have other affiliations and allegiances that may eventually draw them away. Additionally, over the course of the campaign the PCs will encounter other power groups with their own motivations. One of the themes of the campaign is deciding what one believes in and why, so feel free to nudge your fellow PCs toward one faction or another as the campaign progresses. Remember, though, that games can quickly turn unfun without party unity.

Of course, if your GM chooses, you may begin the campaign affiliated with a different organization, or perhaps as free agents hired by the RHC, much the same way Scotland Yard sought help from Sherlock Holmes.

If you're playing the ZEITGEIST adventure path, your character starts the first adventure at 3rd level.



Religion.

Gods do not make themselves regularly known in this world, and it is impossible to visit the planes where they reside, so it's even possible to doubt whether they exist at all. Indeed, some strong-willed people have drawn divine power from the shared will of others who share their same philosophy. A few deities played a prominent role in history – like the dead eladrin goddess Srasama and the fisherman-turned-god Triegenes – but otherwise you and your GM are free to decide which gods your characters worship, if any.

Magic.

Only two types of magic are wholly off-limits: long-duration flight, and long-duration planar travel.

The nature of the elemental planes that feed energy into the world makes it impossible for magic to create permanent flight. Powers that grant flight for never last more than five minutes, though flight with wings is fine, as long as the creature is Medium sized or smaller. There are no flying carpets or airships. Since the reported extinction of dragons, flying creatures do not grow any larger than an eagle or condor.

Likewise, despite theories that suggest it should be possible to travel to distant planets via mighty rituals, all attempts to visit any foreign world never last longer than a few rounds before the traveler is shunted back to this plane. It is possible to wander into the Dreaming or the Bleak Gate and return, but even these trips are usually only possible when the moon and stars align properly, and getting back can be even more difficult than going in the first place.

Mechanically, this means that no creature can ever leave its home plane for more than five minutes, barring unique circumstances that are beyond the control of player characters. Such options may become available to PCs later in the campaign, but traveling to another world in ZEITGEIST is never as simple as casting a single spell.

Technology.

While the city of Flint sits under a haze of coal soot, its streets illuminated at night by gaslight lanterns and its ferries powered by steam boilers, the majority of Risur remains at roughly a Renaissance level of technology. Soldiers carry alchemical pistols as back-up weapons, and elite fusilier units carry muskets and carbines, but aside from the occasional new rail line splitting the countryside, most citizens of Risur never see any of the new technology that is changing the world around them.

To be clear, though, there are no automobiles, electric lights, or flying vehicles. Most firearms still are muzzle-loaders, and rifles and revolvers only exist as custom creations of innovative gunsmiths.



Gold and Teleportation.

In ZEITGEIST, in addition to its value as a precious metal for jewelry and currency, gold can be fashioned into a barrier against teleportation. While characters can teleport freely while carrying gold, but they cannot teleport through an opening framed in gold. Certain buildings thus often have thin strips of gold inlaid around doors and windows; typically, this gold is concealed by additional masonry or some other artistry. Prison cells meant to hold eladrin and others thought to be capable of teleportation are often surrounded by rings of gold.

Similarly, a creature wearing a gold ring — or bracelet, or even a thin thread of gold wire — cannot teleport or be teleported, so those wary of abduction might wear hidden gold toe rings to stymie would-be kidnappers. Simply carrying or wearing gold is not a problem unless it forms a full loop. Even with full circles of gold, the protection can be bypassed by simply removing part of the ring. This, combined with the temptation for thieves, keeps gold warding circles from being in common use.

Setting-Specific Races.

Deva

Devas were those people — mostly human — who were present at the defeat of the goddess Srasama. The divine energy released by her death granted them a sliver of immortality, and now whenever they die they reincarnate into a fully-grown adult form, reappearing within a few days somewhere generally three miles from where they died.

A reincarnated deva has vague recollections of her previous life, and often will easily connect with the people and places of her former life if given the chance. But she might just as easily find herself adopting a new life and training in new skills. Even then, though, sometimes she will have flashes of one of her former lives.

Physically, devas resemble their original race, but with unearthly beauty and an uncanny stillness. Their skin is covered in geometric patterns of light and dark. Some of noteworthy power will occasionally manifest insubstantial and wholly decorative wings or extra pairs of arms, though they can conceal these with practice and concentration.

It is rumored that some deva sages have discovered the secret of maintaining their memories and personality upon reincarnation, but that they hide the knowledge since few are worthy of such immortality. Magic to raise the dead is rare, but if used on a deva within a few days of her death it can restore her and prevent reincarnation.

Devas gain the following traits.

Ability Score Increase: Your Wisdom score increases by 2. Additionally, devas are insightful, and when they reincarnate they usually discover some new knack. You gain a +1 bonus to your choice of Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, or Charisma.

Age: Devas do not appear to age, and you always reincarnate at the same apparent age.

Size: Devas are the same size as in life. Your size is Medium.

Normal Speed: Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Deathless Calm: You gain resistance to necrotic and radiant damage, and cannot be blinded by bright light.

Memory of Past Lifetimes: You gain proficiency in one skill of your choice. Once per day, you can roll 1d4 and add it to any one ability check, skill check, or saving throw you make. If you do this for a skill you are not proficient with, you gain proficiency for the next minute.

Languages: You know Common and Primordial, plus one extra language of your choice.

Eladrin

The eladrin race branched off from common elves in the ancient past, developing an empire that straddled the real world and the Dreaming. For over a thousand years they had their own rises, falls, and petty squabbles while generally not interacting with the human nations of Lanjyr. Then came the holy wars known as the Victories, which ended with the death of Srasama, the eladrin goddess who represented the three stages of womanhood. Nearly every eladrin woman died in an event known as the Great Malice, which shaped the course of history ever since.

Today most eladrin live in enclaves in the ruins of Elfaivar, hidden in demiplanes that can only be accessed by those with their innate fey magic. These enclaves protect the precious few women left in their race, who are vastly outnumbered by the men even now, since eladrin live for centuries. But a few eladrin wander the world, either outcasts or adventurers who aren't interested in dwelling on the tragedies of the past.

Physically similar to normal elves, eladrin's fey origin becomes clear whenever they use magic, which causes their entire eyes to glow faintly with the color of their irises. Every eladrin possesses the inherent power to step briefly into the Dreaming, allowing them to bypass enemies and difficult terrain before reappearing in the real world. As such, almost every town guard in the world carries a gold ring in case he needs to apprehend an eladrin and keep him from teleporting away.

Eladrin are a subrace of elves, and have the following traits in addition to normal elven traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 1.

Eladrin Lore. You gain proficiency in the History skill.

Step through the Dreaming. You can cast *misty step*. Doing so is colloquially called a "fey step." You can't use this feature again until you finish a short or long rest.



Character Themes

Choose one of the nine themes below to provide a quick hook to link your character to the ZEITGEIST campaign setting. Your theme is in addition to your race, class, and background. It grants you a bonus feat. If later on you want to pursue a different theme, you can take the appropriate feat.

- ♦ **Docker.** Bohemian working-class artist or performer.
- ♦ **Eschatologist.** Philosopher devoted to the proper endings of things.
- ♦ **Gunsmith.** Designer and wielder of custom firearms.
- ♦ **Martial Scientist.** Educated and analytical warrior.
- ♦ **Skyseer.** Folk prophet who see the future in the stars.
- ♦ **Spirit Medium.** One who contacts and controls spirits of the dead.
- ♦ **Technologist.** Designer of contraptions and devices.
- ♦ **Vekeshi Mystic.** Devotee of the philosophy of slow, proper vengeance against those who oppress the weak.
- ♦ **Yerasol Veteran.** Highly regarded naval war hero.

Docker

Flint's industrial docks – with their unusual conflux of peasant workers, educated engineers, and constantly-arriving refugees from the wars in the border states between Danor and Drakr – have in the past decade given birth to an unorthodox social movement. Graffiti artists brighten soot-cloaked warehouses with colorful murals and boastful self-portraits. Dancers and musicians bolster moods in breezy bars, while amateur philosophers giddy on fey pepper entertain drunken teamsters with humorous moral puzzles that often mock public figures.

Occasionally these popular artists, called dockers, get it in their heads to start a riot or get a tad too precise with their criticism. The dockers and the city police have each taken their hits in these confrontations, and tensions grow higher with every accidental death, but for now Roland Stanfield, the city governor of Flint, seems to have a soft spot for these tepid anarchists.

Playing a Docker.

The docker spirit is not limited just to those who perform in public, but extends to anyone who suffers through hard work and low wages, yet can still appreciate intelligent art for its sublime beauty. The worse conditions get for the workers in Flint, though, the more they turn to dockers for relief from their fatigue. When things get heated, every good docker needs to be able to handle himself in a scrap.

Sometimes a docker gets in over his head, and with a little help from sympathetic bar owners or police officers he'll drop out of the scene and find a new safer career. In this way, the docker movement has spread to pockets of the city slums and even out to the surrounding farmlands. One popular song on the docks even tells of a graffiti artist who fled to Crisillyir and is now painting cathedrals with subversive interpretations of the Clergy's doctrines.

You gain the Docker's Jank feat.



More Information.

At higher levels, you might take the Notorious Celebrity prestige class, having gained enough prestige or infamy to affect your foes by reputation alone. One such celebrity is musician and adventurer Rock Rackus, who claims to have explored fiery dungeons, traveled to the moon, and cuckolded a fey king.

New Feat: Docker's Jank

In a band, every musician has to know his bandmates' parts in case they need to switch places or pick up the slack. Choose up to four allies; you may change your chosen allies if you spend a few hours training with them. You and those allies can each use Help as a bonus action, but only to aid you or one of your chosen allies. Once a character uses this ability, he or she must take a short or long rest before doing so again.

Additionally, once per day as a bonus action you can shout a line from an inspiring song to grant an ally a Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. The die becomes a d8 at 5th level, a d10 at 10th level, and a d12 at 15th level. Except for the limited use, this functions as the Bardic Inspiration feature.



Eschatologist

The Heid Eschatol movement began among the dwarves of Drakr, after the scholar Vlendarn Heid published a treatise on the myths of his nation and how they continued to influence modern perceptions. The book captured the culture's consciousness, particularly a section that used the legend of the Lost Riders to explain the Drakran tradition of defining civilizations and eras by how they end. In the three decades since its publication, Heid's "On the Proper Endings of Things" has given birth to a whole field of academic study devoted to finding the perfect way to end friendships and romances, business relationships, wars, serialized literature, and even one's own life.

Heid's disciples refer to themselves as eschatologists, from the term for the study of the end of the world. Their popularity has only strengthened Drakr's existing obsession with apocalyptic prophecies and doomsaying, and has raised awareness of their beliefs in other nations. The Clergy, however, denies that the dwarven end times are near, and its agents take a dim view of Heid's followers.

Playing an Eschatologist.

Dwarves from any nation likely feel some sympathy toward Heid Eschatol, and soldiers who fought in the wars in the border kingdoms between Drakr and Danor often saw enough horrors that when they came home they were comforted by the thought of an orderly judgment day. A handful of apocalyptic cults have sprung up, and increasingly their members are seen less as fringe nuts and more as just another religious sect. Only a few outside of Drakr actually believe in a literal imminent end of the world, with most adherents simply appreciating the comfort they can find by confronting death with reason instead of fear.

Regardless of how a character was drawn to Heid's movement, he is likely to give regular thought to the future, especially to life's thresholds and endings. Every eschatologist regularly updates his will, and pays heed to his companions' desires in the event of their untimely yet unavoidable deaths. A few race toward death, but most are pragmatic and take exceptional precautions to forestall any accidental demise that might ruin their plans.

You gain the Proper Ending feat.

More Information.

At higher levels, you might take the Logos prestige class, allowing your speech to alter reality. It is said the doomsday philosopher Grandis Komanov, who presides over a cult of frost-bitten, beardless dwarves in the far north, can be harmed by no living creature, since she exists partially at the end of time.



New Feat: Proper Ending

With the dire knowledge that the world shall end in ice, you do what you can to prevent such fate from befalling your allies. As a bonus action, you can touch a dying creature or a creature that died in the past round. That creature is restored to life if dead, stabilizes, and is considered to have failed no death saving throws, but remains unconscious. The body must be relatively intact. This ability doesn't function on decapitated or disintegrated creatures, for example.

As an action, you can concentrate on your own mortality in order to manifest a zone of cold in a 10-foot radius around you. Once manifested, the zone is stationary, and it lasts until you dismiss it as a bonus action, or you fall unconscious.

At the start of your turn, creatures in the zone take 1d6 cold damage. This increases to 2d6 at 5th level, 3d6 at 11th level, and 4d6 at 17th level. Creatures in the zone cannot heal or gain temporary hit points. Since you manifested this fragment of the world's icy end, you are affected by the zone even if you are not inside it, and you cannot reduce the damage this power deals to you by any means. Other creatures' resistances and immunities can still protect them.

Once you manifest this zone, you cannot use it again until you complete a long rest.



Gunsmith

Knowledge of fusils – the cylindrical weapons that use explosive alchemical reactions to propel bullets at deadly speeds – has existed for centuries, but these weapons were considered inferior to existing magical attacks, which were more accurate and had less risk of accidental death. Only after the Great Malice did the Danoran military begin to refine and improve fusils. The latest innovations in these weapons, now commonly called “guns,” have led to their spread into Risur and Drakr, where industrial production helps equip armies with firepower on par with a well-trained sorcerer.

Firearms fascinate gunsmiths, who are not content simply to purchase and practice with guns. They tweak and tinker with their own refinements, and whenever two such craftsmen cross paths they bargain and deal for each other’s secrets. Especially now that firearms have moved beyond the null magic lands of Danor, seemingly limitless possibilities have opened up for the development of weapons that mix spellcraft and chemistry. Flint’s city governor Roland Stanfield is already planning a technological exposition where gunsmiths and other inventors can showcase their creations.

Playing a Gunsmith.

Not all gunsmiths devote their combat training to wielding firearms; some just like to have the weapons for their aesthetic appeal, or to take advantage of the common man’s fear of their power. More often, though, gunsmiths practice endlessly to improve their aim, and try to learn as many trick shots as possible to prove the superiority of their chosen killing device. Those with magical training often master rituals to enchant their pistols. One gunsmith, Lerema Kurtz, is said to be able to conjure a cannon from her petticoat pocket.

Many romanticize the deadly purity of guns, or decorate their weapons with baroque inlays and carvings. A few gunsmiths, however, take a bleaker view, rejecting any form of poetry. They just know guns are damned good at killing people, and that life’s as good as worthless when a bullet costs less than a mug of beer.

You gain the following feat:

More Information.

At higher level, you might take the Mad Shootist prestige class, experimenting with freeze rays, rocket launchers, shrink rays, and the like. Meanwhile, more mundane explosives and ballistics are on sale in the arms markets of Trekhom, the capital city of Drakr, which guards its harbor with cannons so massive they can crack the hull of even an ironclad ship. But not all the clever weapons are designed by dwarves; this autumn Flint will be hosting the Kaybeau Arms Fair, sure to bring in plenty of gun-happy inventors.



New Feat: The Man with Two Guns Is God

You have discovered the coolest fighting style in the world. You can draw and stow two firearms when you would normally be able to draw or stow only one. You can use two weapon fighting with dual pistols (or target pistols) just as with light melee weapons. Any creature you attack with a firearm cannot make opportunity attacks until the start of your next turn.

You are proficient in gunsmithing tools. Crafting common firearms only requires time and money. Crafting a grenade takes 25 gp of materials. Doing it safely takes 10 days of work, or you can rush it in 1 day, but then must succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence check or else the grenade explodes and injures you.

Likewise, you can craft target pistols, rifled carbines, or rifled muskets by paying half their price for raw materials, then spending a day for every 5 gp of total price to craft the item from scratch. Or you can take a normal firearm, spend 25 gp on a rifling kit, and successfully make a DC 10 Intelligence check to upgrade the weapon in a single day. If you fail this check, the weapon is ruined.

Whenever you take a long rest, choose two firearms in your possession to maintain. Those weapons cannot misfire for 24 hours.



Martial Scientist

In the war academies of Danor, students speak of combat like a science. Their curriculum involves not merely practicing forms and maneuvers, but writing theses about renowned warriors, or crafting and defending theorems regarding the mechanics of swordplay. The normally reserved Danorans honor the graduates of these battle colleges like other nations honor great poets and sculptors. As those warriors have proven the efficacy of their innovative techniques, the sentiment has spread throughout Lanjyr, and other nations have founded similar schools.

Any brute can hurl a spear or hack through a ribcage, but students of the war academies bring reason to the savagery of war. Often rising to high military ranks, these scholars of battle study anatomy and perform autopsies to learn vulnerabilities of the body, learn physical theorems that underlie the most effective angles of attack and defense, and take time to ponder the psychological and sociological considerations of mortal conflict – from the vast scope and human cost of an invasion, down to the emotional resonance and cultural significance of specific sword techniques through history.

Playing a Martial Scientist.

Danor has the greatest concentration of war colleges, but the Banhaman Academy in Risur's capital Slate has a reputation for elite siege engineers and artillerists, and the Battalion outside of Flint trains the best wilderness forces in Lanjyr. Smaller local schools mostly serve to provide pensions for retired soldiers turned tutors, but even they have led to noteworthy theses, such as *The Wounding Effectiveness of Stealthy Singular Rapier* contrasted with a *Twin Strike of Dual Long Swords*, which provoked a very spirited debate and even a few expulsions when things got heated.

In Drakr, emphasis is given to testing the physiological limits of endurance and surviving in battle with limited resources, as would be likely in a world-ending conflict. The Clergy in Crisillyr add a strong theological and monstrous anatomy component to the students in their military academies. The lone war college in Ber has a vast library of battle songs, which according to a disputed theory will inspire the courage and attack accuracy of soldiers, though most likely it is just meant to keep in check the often wild emotions of its bestial students.

You should work with your GM to determine what your graduate thesis was, unless you left before finishing your education.

You gain the Martial Studies feat.

More Information.

At higher level, you might take the Polyhistor prestige class, using your deep well of martial knowledge to craft unique fighting techniques in the heat of battle. The legendary Henri Jierre who founded the Jierre Sciens d'Arms martial academy is said to have never needed more than three sword strokes to defeat any foe.



New Feat: Martial Studies

Research is important for science and for combat. If you don't know just the right fighting technique, you're pretty sure someone else has published a thesis about it. You gain proficiency in one martial melee and one martial ranged weapon.

In addition, every martial scientist learns the Experimental Strike technique. During the campaign you will have the opportunity to learn new techniques. Keep track of which you know. At the end of a long rest, choose one technique you know. You have access to that technique for the day.

Experimental Strike (Martial Scientist Technique)

Scientific breakthroughs are born of both careful study and wild experimentation. Whenever you use the Attack action and miss with every attack, you may make an improvised attack without spending an action, such as slicing a rope to pin an enemy with a chandelier, or smashing a pipe to spray blinding steam on an enemy. Make an Intelligence check and add your proficiency bonus; the GM determines the DC based on how difficult the task is. For example, dropping a chandelier straight down might be very easy (DC 5), but slicing it, grabbing it to arrest its fall and make it jostle, then releasing it at the perfect moment so it swings laterally and flies at an enemy ten feet away might be hard (DC 20).

The GM should refer to the core rules for guidelines on the effects of improvised attacks. Circumstances will dictate how many foes are affected, how much damage is dealt, and whether any conditions can be applied (such as prone or blinded), but generally this should do at least "setback" damage.

After you use experimental strike you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.





Skyseer

Truly ancient lore suggests that once the mortal races were able to travel to the stars with the aid of lost magic, much like demons and angels can be briefly summoned into this world. But for the full length of remembered history, the heavens have been nearly inscrutable. The druids, used to thinking in long terms of seasons, years, and the lifespan of trees, were the first to notice subtle connections between the movements of stars and the affairs of this world. They too were first to learn how to step through the veils that lead to the Dreaming or the Bleak Gate, and without their aid King Kelland could never have defeated the fey titans.

For over a thousand years, the druids would gaze into the sky night after night, awaiting dreams that would grant revelations of the future. These seers, by guiding journeyers and heroes with their visions, averted many catastrophes. When the Second Victory led to Srasama's fall, the skyseers read the signs and helped hundreds of eladrin women flee their homeland so they could avoid genocide.

In the past few centuries, however, the many orders and factions of skyseers in Risur have struggled to divine much of import from the stars. Their visions, never precise or clear to begin with, failed to foresee the rise of Danor's industry, failed to avert scores of natural disasters and man-made tragedies. The people of Risur still go through the motions of skyseer rituals, but the old druids' influence has faded. Few young people today aspire to join their once-prestigious ranks.

Playing a Skyseer.

Those few who study to be skyseers today usually have a close mentor among the druids. Some may have spent countless nights as children staring up at the stars, before one night waking from a vivid, prophetic dream. Apprenticed to an elder skyseer, they learned the names of the stars and planets, their patterns and influence. Though precise visions are rare, it is still indisputable that magic of travel works better under the full moon, and that any ship that sets sail the night when Jiese enters retrograde within the constellation of the Mad Pirate will face great misfortune before it reaches its destination.

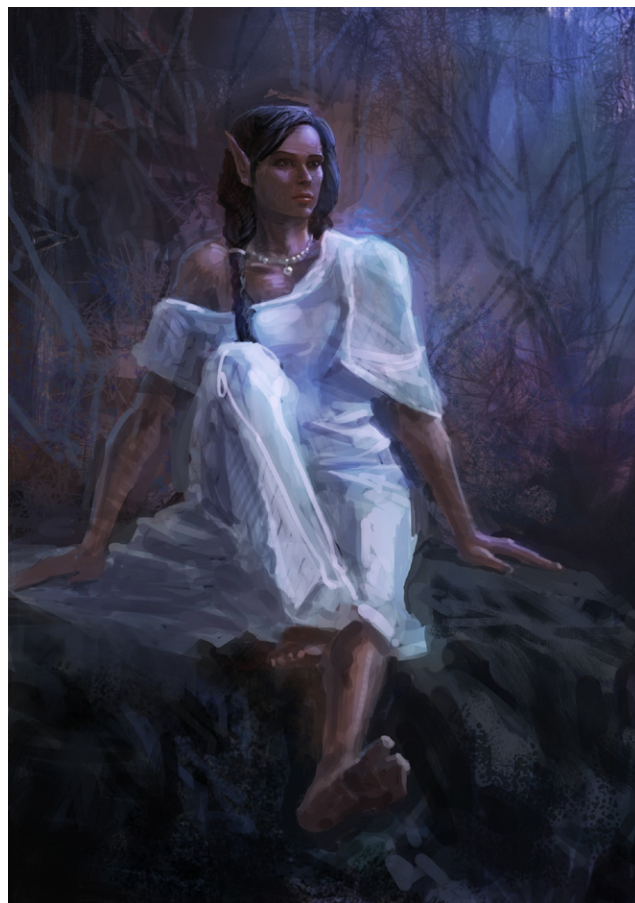
Skyseers favor the night, and with a glance at the starry sky can tell time as precisely as any clock. Even in this new age of technology, most Risuri ship's captains won't sail beyond sight of shore without a skyseer aboard. Though their influence has faded somewhat, they still have strong connections with many families, villages, and organizations, and they can easily find a welcome home – as long as they do not begin speaking of prophecies.

You should definitely read the sidebar on Planets and Planes.

You gain the Skyseer Vision feat:

More Information.

At higher level, you might take the Applied Astronomist prestige class, letting you manifest the powers of the different planets in the night sky. Perhaps you might even discover why the visions of the skyseers have grown so vague these past few decades.



New Feat: Skyseer Vision

As a bonus action you may touch an ally and give them insight into future actions. The touched ally chooses one of the following — attack roll, saving throw, ability check, or skill check — and then rolls a d20. The next time the ally would make the same type of roll before the end of the encounter, they may use the previously rolled result or opt to make a new roll. If the ally has advantage or disadvantage, only the first roll is replaced.

After using this ability you must take a short or long rest before you can use it again.

As part of a long rest during which the night sky is visible, you may focus your mind on the future and receive a prophetic dream regarding one question. Upon completion of your rest you awaken with insights into the future as though you had cast a divination spell regarding a task you plan to take the following day.





Spirit Medium

The Danoran industrial revolution has changed the ways of war, giving even the poorest man weapons that can kill the wealthy and well-equipped. Why then should not matters of the soul also move from the purview of the enlightened into the grasp of the common people? So ask spirit mediums, who wish to explain the mysteries of spirits and the afterlife so that men no longer need priests to tell them what awaits beyond death.

Certainly, many mediums are charlatans who prey on the weakness of bereaved aristocrats. But a few have discovered how to contact the dead through a form of psionic meditation called a *séance*. Some will only use their talents to help those who have a sincere need to know the secrets of the dead, and will only train students who share the same worldview, but most mediums reject such insularity as smacking of organized religion, and will gladly wake the dead for a quick chat at the drop of a few coins.

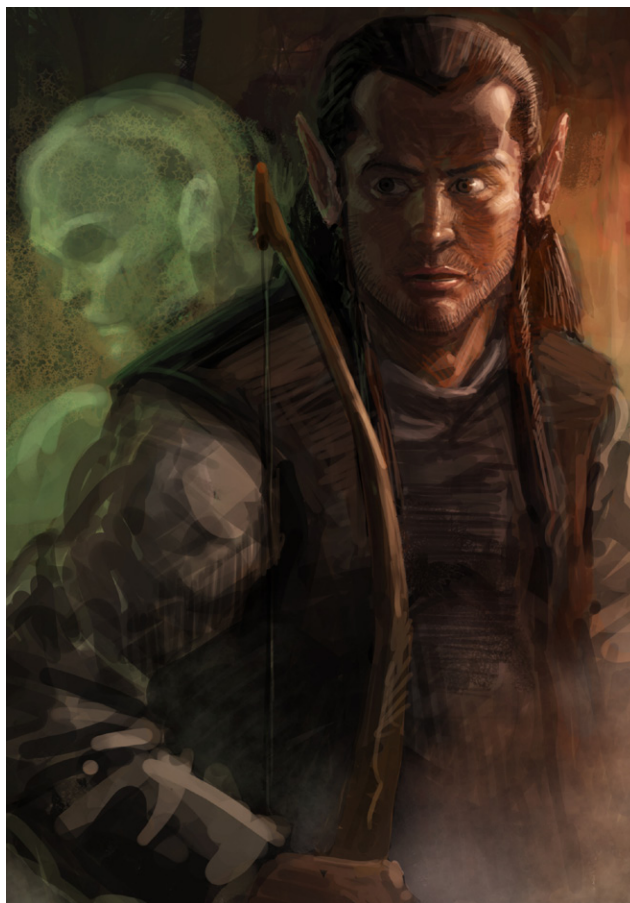
Playing a Spirit Medium.

The ability to speak with the recently departed is of great value to the Royal Homeland Constabulary, which recruits enthusiastically people with useful talents. Compared with the normal life of a medium, criminal investigators seldom have to convey messages between the dead and their living friends and relatives, though such conversations can help elicit otherwise unyielding secrets.

You gain the Unfinished Business feat:

More Information.

At higher level, you might take the Urban Empath prestige class, gaining the power to communicate with the genius loci of cities, learning their secrets and calling upon their unique powers. The most famous medium, the halfling Jared Smithee, had a prosperous career giving comfort to the bereaved, until he attended the state funeral of the last Sovereign of Danor. The Danorans tried to arrest him when he claimed to have a message from the deceased, and he remains on the run.



New Feat: Unfinished Business

You possess a deep understanding of spirits and the ties that bind them to the mortal world. With the simplest of actions and words, you can stir the recently deceased into action.

With your urging, the spirit of a recently dead person will speak briefly with you. You can cast speak with dead. The body must be within three miles of where it died, and must not have died more than a day ago. You do not require a complete body as the ability speaks with the spirit and needs no corporeal connection. You can't do so again until you finish a long rest.

At the GM's discretion, you could also use this power to communicate with uneasy spirits who have not yet moved on, regardless of how long ago they died.

Using this power against undead, or in any combat situation for that matter, is possible but very difficult. By expending this power you can force an undead creature you can see to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier). If it fails, you may take control of it for one round, as the dominate monster spell. Alternately you can call up the spirit of a creature whose body you can see that died in the past five minutes. It does not receive a save to resist. Its spirit manifests in a space you choose within 25 feet of you, and performs a single action of your choice as if it were still alive, then disappears.

Designer Notes: Martial Scientists

If you've ever played *Final Fantasy* games, you might be familiar with the concept of blue mages: characters who learn the techniques of their enemies. The martial scientist follows that conceit, while also promoting the idea that combat in the world of ZEITGEIST is more the work of refined thinkers than berserkers or savages.

The Martial Scientist theme (see page 10) offers players the opportunity to acquire numerous small and quirky talents. While not typically useful in a normal fight, they can come in handy in niche situations. If you're the kind of player who likes outwitting enemies or having a deep bag of tricks to draw from, Martial Scientist might well be the theme for you.

Technologist

Some people cannot get enough of new technology. Those with talent tinker or create. Those without collect, study, or simply nag every engineer and inventor they meet. Whether dabblers or professionals, often these technology enthusiasts come up with ideas for devices that straddle the line between clever and impractical.

In Danor, academies train technologists in specialized fields, while in Drakr master dwarven craftsmen guide huge stables of apprentices in the massive engineering projects. Crisillyir punishes such tinkering with holy flagellation, and eladrin are as unsettled by technology as are the denizens of the Dreaming. A few enterprising technologists in Ber curry favor of the royal court, which responds eagerly to such intellectual pursuits.

New Feat: Disposable Simulacrum.

By spending 10 gp to acquire the necessary parts, you can craft a contraption, which functions somewhat similarly to a familiar called by the *find familiar* spell. When deactivated it weighs 5 lbs. and can fit in a pouch or pocket, but you can infuse a bit of your life force into the contraption so that it becomes animate. As a bonus action, you can activate your contraption and place it in an unoccupied adjacent space, at which point it becomes a Tiny construct creature, with a form roughly similar to one of the animals available with *find familiar*. The contraption has that animal's stats, with the following adjustments. It uses your AC and save bonuses (if higher), and its hit point maximum is 2 times your character level.

Your contraption acts on your initiative; it moves where you direct it. To get it to take any other action, such as Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help, you must spend an action to control it.

Additionally, your contraption can be designed to perform one special task, such as attacking with a natural or light weapon you integrate into its body, casting a single spell you store in it, or using some other ability (like Lay on Hands or Deflect Missiles) you have access to. You still must spend the appropriate type of action to have your contraption perform this task, and spells or abilities used through the contraption count towards your daily limit. Since it is bonded to you, however, the contraption performs this one special task as if you were performing the action in its space. Changing this special task requires an hour of tinkering. Changing the contraption's shape requires eight hours at a properly furnished workshop.

You can only control one contraption at a time. Your contraption only functions while within 120 feet of you, beyond which it deactivates. While within that range, you can spend an action to see and hear from its space until the start of your next turn, during which time you are blind and deaf with regard to your own senses.

If reduced to 0 hit points, the contraption is automatically deactivated and you must spend an hour making repairs before you can activate it again. Replacing a lost contraption costs 10 gp and takes eight hours at a properly furnished workshop.

At 5th level you can spend 100 gp to craft a contraption in the shape of a Medium or smaller animal of up to CR ½. At 10th level you can spend 1,000 gp to craft a contraption in the shape of a Large or smaller animal of up to CR 1. The larger the animal, the larger a weapon that can be integrated into its body.



Playing a Technologist.

After centuries of reliance upon swords, bows, plate armor, and the occasional arcane evocation, keeping up with the modern pace of developing technology is daunting to many power groups, especially law enforcement and the military. Such groups might enlist technologists as specialists to explain unfamiliar devices, or to craft specialty weapons or tools. While the Danoran industrial revolution has mass-produced many common tools and weapons, only a few have the knowledge and talent to create custom items.

Technologists tend to gather lots of disposable tools and weapons, so that they always have something handy in an unusual situation. Many make a point to learn a bit of magic or alchemy as well, though every technologist is inspired by a different vision of what technology can provide.

You gain the Disposable Simulacrum feat, and you can craft your first contraption for free:

More Information.

At higher level, you might take the Steamsuit Pilot prestige class, designing a machine you can wear into battle. Not all technologists are solitary tinkers, however. The gregarious Risuri industrialist Benedict Pemberton who made his wealth in mundane factories is said to have developed an interest in more exotic creations, and is recruiting clever engineers and mages for a secret project.



Vekeshi Mystic

If fatalism defines the traditional dwarven philosophy, then the cornerstone of eladrin ideology is that living well is the best revenge.

After the goddess Srasama died and nearly all eladrin women perished with her, there was a great drive in Elfaivar to fight until the last man in a short-sighted bid for vengeance. As the rest of the nation whipped itself into a frenzy, however, a composer named Vekesh wrote a song of mourning that contained a simple sentiment: defeat is only tragedy if we choose to let the story end.

While many eladrins could not be stopped from their self-destruction, Vekesh convinced some of his people that a tale that goes from defeat to revenge to death is a shameful tragedy. Revenge serves only to distract from one's grief, but is ultimately valueless. Instead, he said, a tale of defeat, resilience, and renewal is the best way to thwart their enemies' goals.

The proper form of retribution, then, is to endure, rebuild from weakness, and prosper into strength.

His guidance ensured that in at least a few isolated enclaves, the eladrin race pulled back from the brink of annihilation. In the following decades a loosely codified collection of vekeshi teachings spread throughout Lanjyr. The mantras of Vekesh have helped many cope with loss and find a new path for themselves.

To the general public, though, 'vekeshi' is synonymous with murderer and terrorist. While the majority of vekeshi avoid violence when possible, Vekesh believed that taking up arms is sometimes necessary to protect those at their most vulnerable. The deepest secrets of vekeshi mysticism are taught only to a rare few adherents who demonstrate a skill for battle, and the wisdom to know when to use their power.

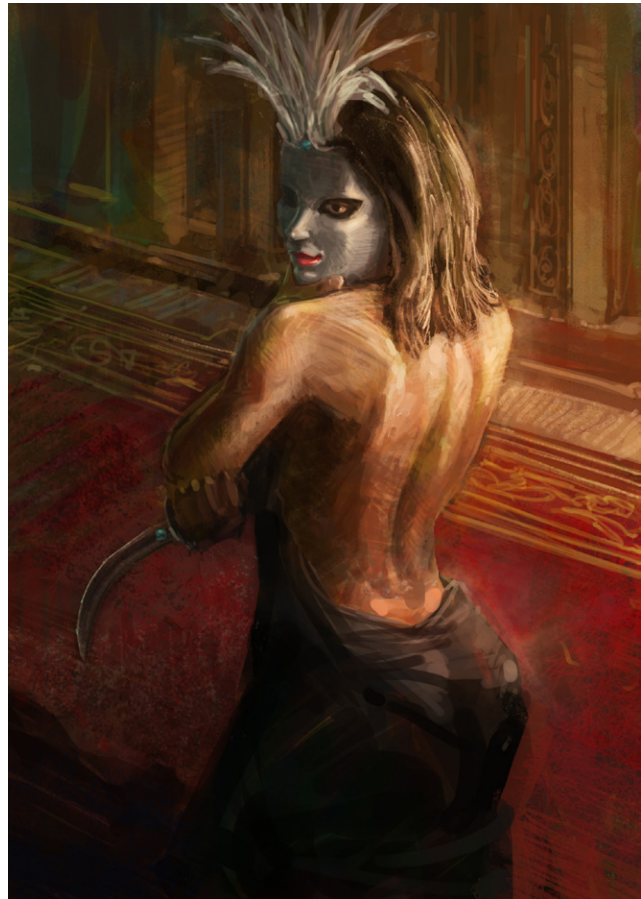
Playing a Vekeshi Mystic.

Anyone might casually study Vekesh's teachings for a bit of personal guidance, but to be initiated into the mystical side of the philosophy requires painful rituals. Aspirants are taken in the night across the threshold of the Dreaming, where they experience the fall of Srasama through psychic illusions, making them keepers of the shared memory of the Great Malice. Thereafter they are held in a cage for days, along with poisoned food that they must resist, so that the starvation teaches them the importance of patience. Finally, they are burnt until their skin blackens, and then are magically healed to seal in the power of the flames.

If a vekeshi passes these trials, he rests and recovers in luxury as his teachers instruct him in the secrets of the philosophy, and drill into him the necessity of discretion. Upon leaving the Dreaming, vekeshi mystics return to their normal lives, but seek positions of power in military, law enforcement, or the underworld, where they use their authority to punish those who continually threaten people who are simply trying to make a better life for themselves.

Vekeshi mystics seldom gather in large groups, but on certain irregular lunar holidays they slip into the Dreaming for secretive festivals. Only on the rarest occasions will a mystic be called to act openly. Donning an iconic mantle of eladrin armor and a mask that conceals his face, the mystic acts as the surrogate hand of the fallen goddess Srasama, with the sole purpose of meting out punishment against one directly responsible for large-scale suffering.

You gain the Hand of Retribution feat.



More Information

At higher level, you might take the Vekeshi Excoriant prestige class, to let you wield the power of the dead goddess Srasama. The secrets of your order are not to be shared with other players, but speak to your GM to learn the names and operations of mystics active in Flint and beyond.

New Feat: Hand of Retribution

You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill, or another skill if you already have Intimidation.

In battle, a vestige of the power of Srasama waits to punish those who harm your allies. When an enemy you're aware of deals damage to one of your allies, as a reaction you can deal 1d4 radiant damage to the enemy who made the attack. That enemy sees a faint burning outline of a six-armed goddess hovering behind you, which then lashes out in retaliation with blades of fire. You cannot use this power twice against the same creature in the same encounter. After you use this power six times, you must take a long rest before you can use it again.

At 5th level, the damage increases to 1d4 radiant and 1d4 fire. At 11th level, the enemy also catches on fire and takes 1d4 fire damage each round until it spends an action to make a DC 10 Dexterity check to put the fire out. At 17th level, using this ability does not require spending your reaction.



Yerasol Veteran

The islands of the Yerasol Archipelago were perhaps the most verdant, beautiful battleground in history. During two centuries of intermittent warfare, untold thousands of soldiers from Risur and Danor died among the windblown rainforests and flowered beaches of those isles, trying to protect their homelands' exceedingly prosperous plantations. Those who survived – the ones who didn't succumb to aberrant infections, crippling physical injuries, or unyielding mental trauma – often turned their war-time glory into profit or political clout.

Poets of the two nations have memorialized, and sometimes sensationalized, the greatest acts of heroism from the Four Yerasol Wars, the last of which ended seven years past. It's an open secret that history is written by the survivors, and many so-called war heroes were merely lucky enough to witness something brave and amazing, and not die in the process so they could take the credit for themselves. A rare few, however, demonstrated genuine heroism and lived to have their tales told by others.

Playing a Yerasol Veteran.

Everyone knows the names of a few veterans who distinguished themselves in battle – not quite famous, but certainly memorable. Every veteran of the isles has a story that made him a celebrity, though many do not enjoy recounting their tales. The fact that everyone likes a war hero doesn't lessen the trauma of having seen friends die.

After two centuries of trial and error, though, Risur and Danor have learned to exploit these heroes of the moment, giving them cushy jobs and helping them reacclimatize to civilian life. It doesn't do to have a "hero" become a vagabond or a drunkard who will embarrass his nation, after all. The aid and adulation from their nation helps a great many Yerasol veterans become pillars of their communities. Such aid quickly dries up, though, should the hero ever decide to publicly criticize or cast aspersions upon his homeland.

You gain the Display of Heroism feat.

More Information.

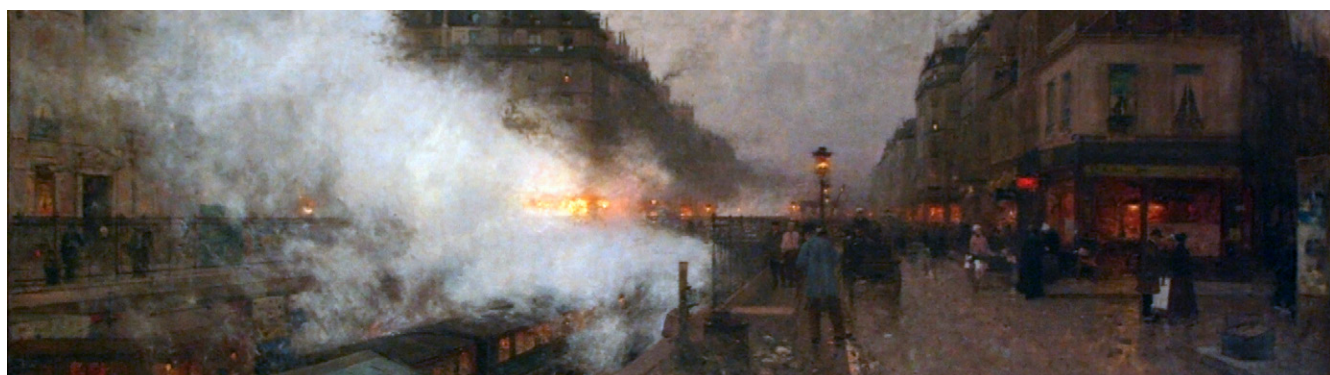
At higher level, you might take the Monument of War prestige class, which lets you give form to your memories of war, calling in gunfire and artillery. You'll also want to become familiar with the naval combat quick-play rules in the Seas of ZEITGEIST appendix. You too might one day achieve a feat as grand as King Aodhan, who sailed into the harbor of Danor's capital, seized its flagship, and sailed it back to Risur as his prize.



New Feat: Display of Heroism

You unfortunately have great experience rescuing allies on the battlefield. As an action you can assist an ally who is imperiled. You can lift the ally to their feet if they are prone, and if you have any movement left for the turn you can drag the ally with you. Until the start of your next turn, as long as the ally remains beside you, any attacks made against that ally have disadvantage. Your heroic example can rouse your ally's, even from the brink of consciousness, allowing the ally to spend a hit die to heal. Only 1 point is actual healing; the rest are temporary hit points.

At 5th level you can do this as a bonus action. At 10th level this no longer requires any action, though you can help no more than two allies this way per turn.





Salary, Stipends, and Requisitions

As constables of Risur, your characters have a slightly different relationship with treasure than typical Fifth Edition adventurers.

Firstly, you're assumed to receive a reasonable salary that covers "comfortable" living expenses, but needs not be tracked in-game.

Additionally, the Constabulary's resources and connections let you requisition the tools you need for your missions. Particularly respectable constables can even make use of magic items from the royal vaults.

Upgrades, Loot, and Skimming Off the Top.

When you recover magic items, treasure, or other valuables, RHC protocols allow you to make use of them for a limited period of time, if you need them. However once they are no longer required, you are expected to hand them over to higher authorities, who will make proper use of them. If desired, you can place a requisition to keep these items long-term, assuming you file the proper paperwork and your request is deemed warranted. (See Requisitions in Part Two.)

An alternative, of course, is to hold onto items and not report them to the RHC. This is illegal, and would likely be grounds for dismissal. Such pecuniary misdeeds are expected of common police, but the RHC is held to higher standards. Be careful, because prison is not kind to former law officers who turn to crime.

Powers of Kings and Gods

As the campaign begins, it is well known that some rare people possess great personal powers, and heroic characters (in game terms, between level 3 and 10) are not unheard of. Students of metaphysics have determined that some supernatural limit exists on how much power a single individual can personally accrue, but those who serve as leaders or heralds of large groups can access much greater powers.

Kings, their might borne upward by the loyalty of their subjects, can achieve deeds no normal man could, but even they have limits. Though arcane theorists know spells that grant wishes, stop time, or call down meteors should be possible, no one in recorded history has been confirmed to have commanded such magic. It's as if there has been some seal placed by the gods to restrain the might of mortals.

Rumors hint that those officially charged with management of royal resources — such as the heads of the RHC — actually receive some sliver of the monarch's power.

If you should happen to receive a gift during the course of your duties, you can keep it, though the RHC keeps an eye on constables to ensure they are not being influenced by bribes. 

