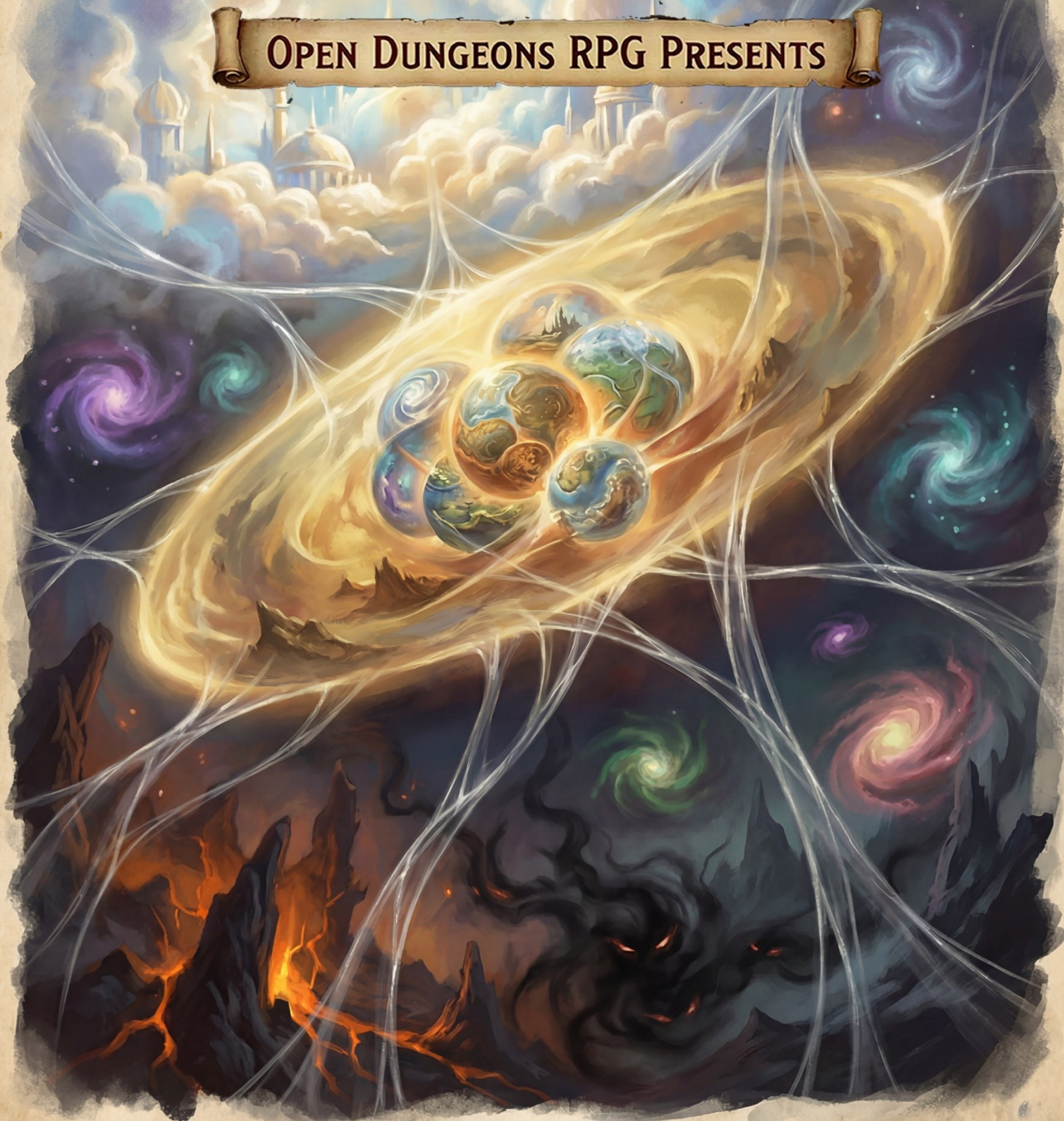


REALMS GUIDE: ATLAS OF THE INFINITE

OPEN DUNGEONS RPG PRESENTS





Realms Guide

Atlas of the Infinite

WORLDS OF THE FUTURE

For DNs and Players who dare to look beyond the horizon of the known world.

OpenDungeons.com

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How to Use This Book

This is not a core rulebook. There are no new systems players must memorize before play. The mechanics here exist to support planar travel, creatures, relics, and DN storytelling.

Every world that has ever been run at an Open Dungeons table exists somewhere in the Multirealms. Every dungeon your players have crawled through, every kingdom they have saved or doomed, every tavern argument they have started - all of it is part of something infinitely larger, and that larger thing has shape, logic, and weight.

The Realms Guide does several things. It describes the cosmological structure of the Multirealms - the infinite oblong of existence that contains all realities, all gods, all hells, all heavens, and everything in between. It explains how the pieces fit together, why magic works the way it does, and what happens to souls when their bodies stop using them.

It gives you creatures native to the cosmos itself - things that live in the Ethereal membrane between worlds, things that guard the thresholds between realities, things that crawl out of the deepest Lower Realms. Full stat blocks, behaviors, and DN notes.

It gives you named areas - specific places in the Multirealms with character, survival requirements, and the kind of detail that makes a world feel real when players ask questions about it.

It gives you practical travel mechanics - how you actually get from one reality to another, what that crossing does to your body and mind, how different classes handle the journey differently, and what you need to survive the trip.

And it gives you relics - items that carry the fingerprints of the realms they came from.

***None of this is required to run a great game.
All of it is available when you want to go
further.***

Use this book as scaffolding, not scripture. The Dungeon Narrator is always the final word. DNs make the universe for their players.

Chapter 1: The Shape of All Things



Here is what no mortal cartographer has ever successfully drawn, though thousands have tried.

The Multirealms is not a stack of planes. It is not a wheel. It is not a great tree with roots in hell and branches in heaven. All of those images are metaphors, and metaphors are lies that point toward truth.

The truth is an oblong - an infinite elongated sphere of fabric, stretching in directions that mortal geometry does not have names for. It contains everything that is, was, or could be. Every world ever dreamed, every god ever worshipped, every hell ever deserved. All of it, inside this one impossible shape.

You cannot stand outside it to observe it. You are inside it. You have always been inside it. Everything you have ever known is inside it.

There is no edge. There is no outside. There is only the infinite middle.

The Fabric of Existence

The oblong is not empty space with worlds scattered through it. It is more like a single continuous substance that exists at different densities. In the dense center - the Material Realm - reality has rules. Physics governs. A sword cuts because it is sharp, not because you believe it should.

In the upper reaches, where divine domains cluster, the fabric thins into resonance. Belief shapes matter. A god's word becomes law not because of power but because the fabric there agrees with their nature. In the lower reaches, the fabric is dense again but differently - compressed under entropy, suffering, and the absence of hope. Stone grows heavier. Darkness is not the absence of light. Hunger is law.

The Realism Gradient

The closer you are to the dense center - the Material Realm - the more physics governs reality. As you move outward toward the divine upper reaches, physics yields to intent. The fabric becomes responsive. In the lower regions, the opposite problem presents itself - reality is hyper-dense, entropic, resistant to change, resistant to hope.

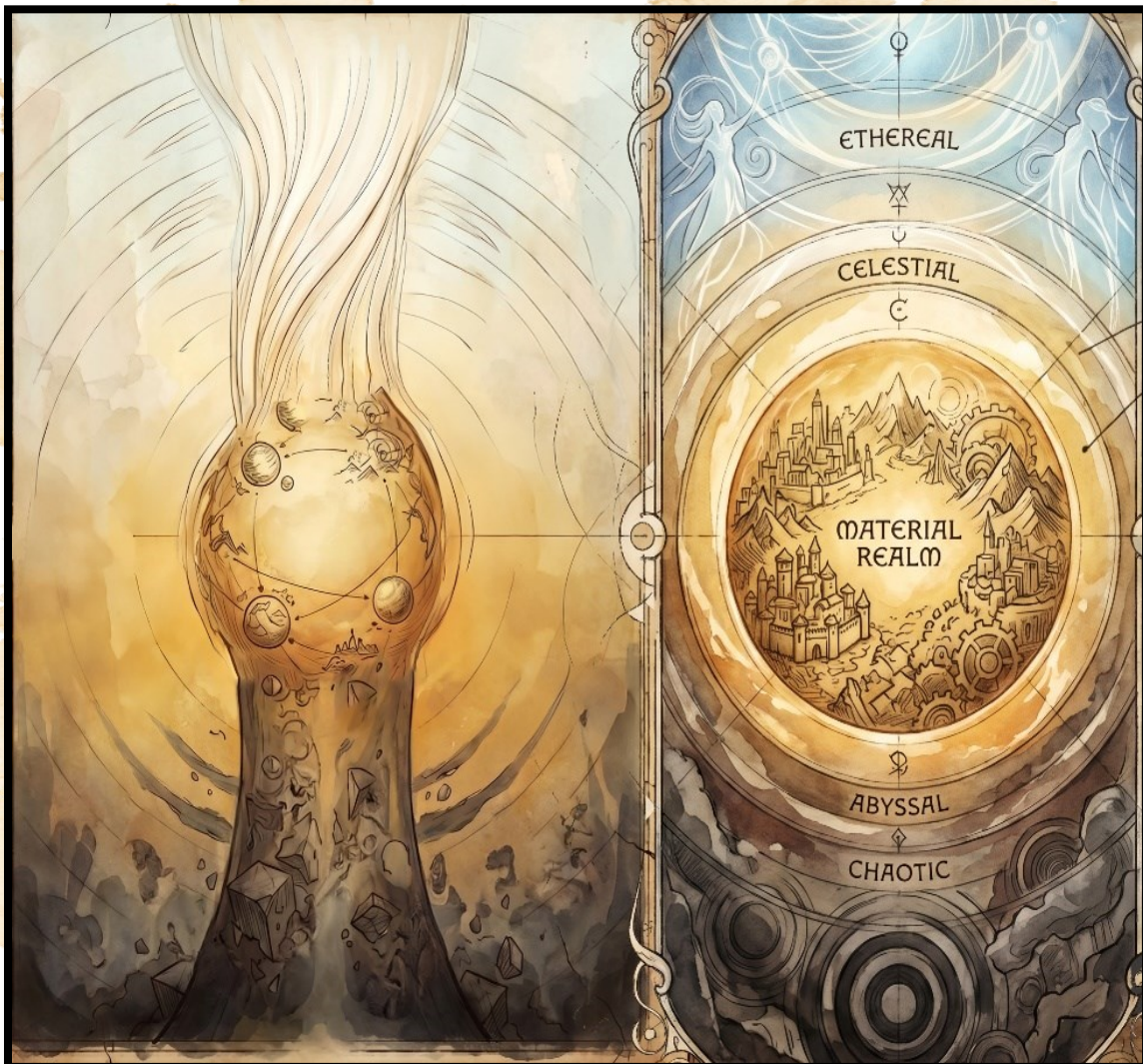
Upper and lower are not judgments. They are descriptions of how real reality is in a given place.

This is why the Gate Keepers exist at the Ethereal boundaries. Not every soul can survive the shift in resonance. A mortal who walks directly from the Material into the pure divine would find their sense of self dissolving - their thoughts becoming landscape, their fears taking form around them, their past and future bleeding together.

Why Upper and Lower Are Lies

Mortals invented the vertical metaphor because mortals live on ground and look up at sky. The actual cosmological structure has no up or down. The oblong stretches in a direction that has no compass bearing. When a cleric prays upward, their prayer reaches the Ethereal and finds its way to their god through resonance, not altitude. The metaphor works. The mechanics are just different than imagined.

The practical importance: upper and lower are not literal directions. They are not sky and pit, heaven above and hell below. They are resonance positions within the infinite oblong. But the distinction is real. The Lower Realms are evil because their dense entropic fabric rewards cruelty, domination, hunger, despair, and decay. The Divine Realms are not “above” in any physical sense, and the Lower Realms are not “below” in any physical sense, but the moral danger of the Lower Realms is not a metaphor. It is part of what they are.



The Visual Atlas of the Multirealms

The chapters that follow describe the Multirealms in words. A cosmological sourcebook called Atlas of the Infinite requires an actual atlas - diagrams that show the structure, the relationships, the relative positions of things that the prose can only gesture at.

These diagrams are not maps in the cartographic sense. The Multirealms cannot be mapped - it is infinite, and its organizing principle is resonance rather than geography. What can be diagrammed is the structure: how the layers relate, where things sit relative to each other, what a planar crossing looks like in cross-section, how divine gravity organizes the upper reaches and entropy organizes the lower ones.

Diagram of The Infinite Oblong

The complete cosmological structure of the Multirealms - the shape of everything.

The oblong extends beyond what any diagram can contain. What is shown here is the structure - the relationships, the resonance tiers, the position of the Ethereal membrane. The infinite continuation in both directions is implicit in the fading at the ellipse's poles. There is no edge shown because there is no edge.



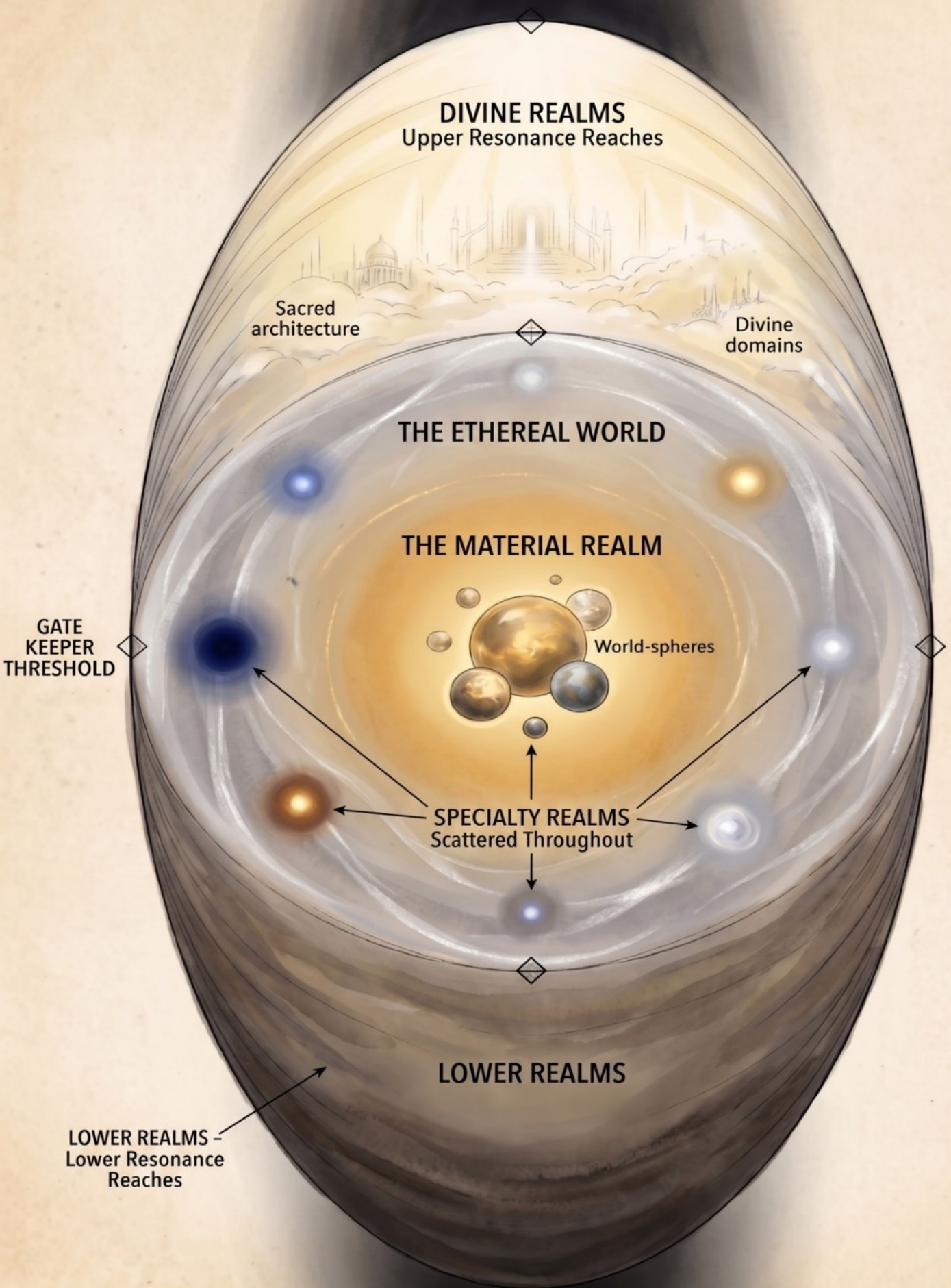


Diagram of The Realism Gradient

The cross-section reveals what the full oblong diagram implies but cannot show in detail: the gradient is continuous, not stepped. There is no sharp line where the Material becomes the Ethereal or where the Ethereal becomes the divine. The transitions are gradients, and the named zones are regions of dominant character rather than distinct containers.



The Realism Gradient (cosmological cross-section)

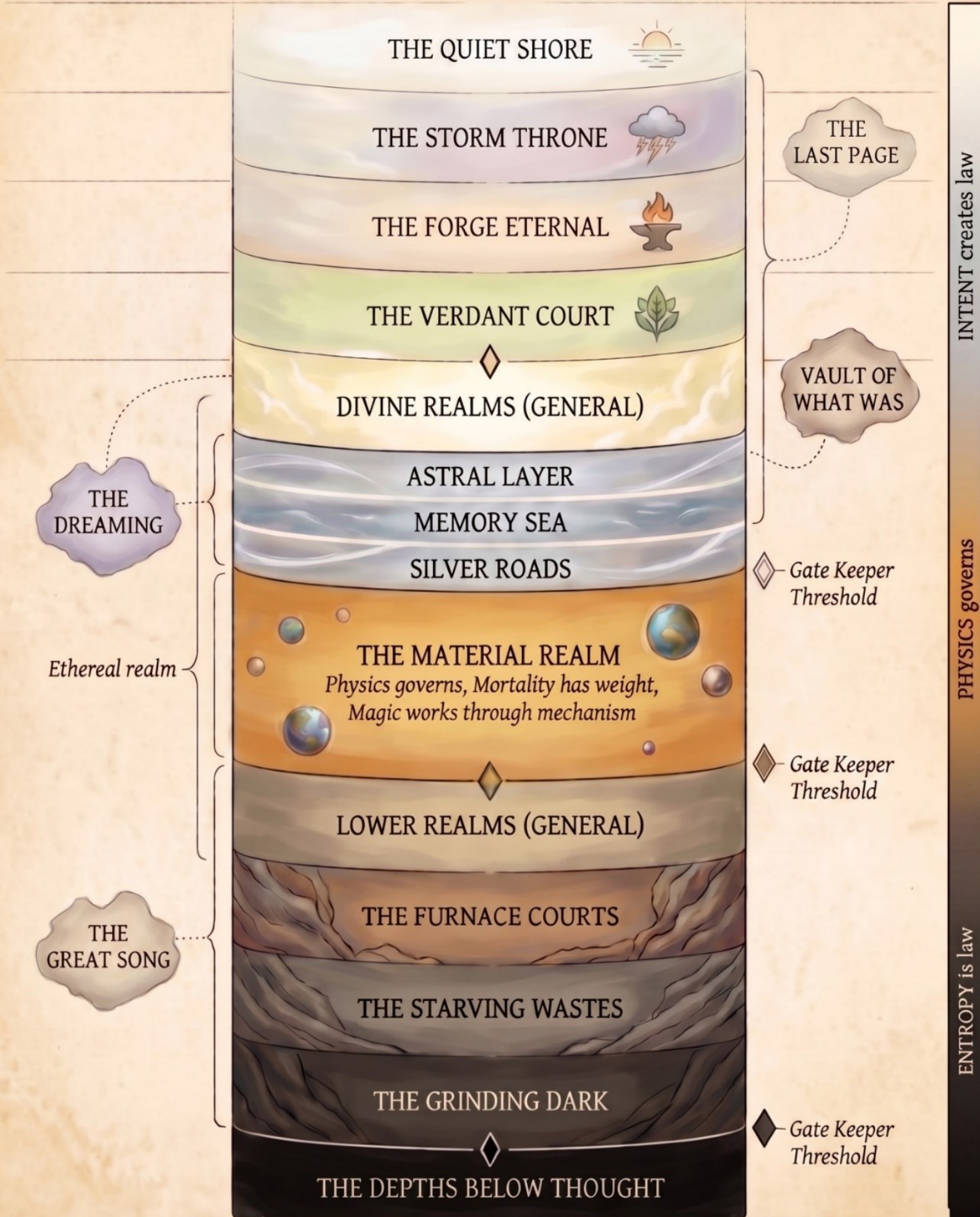
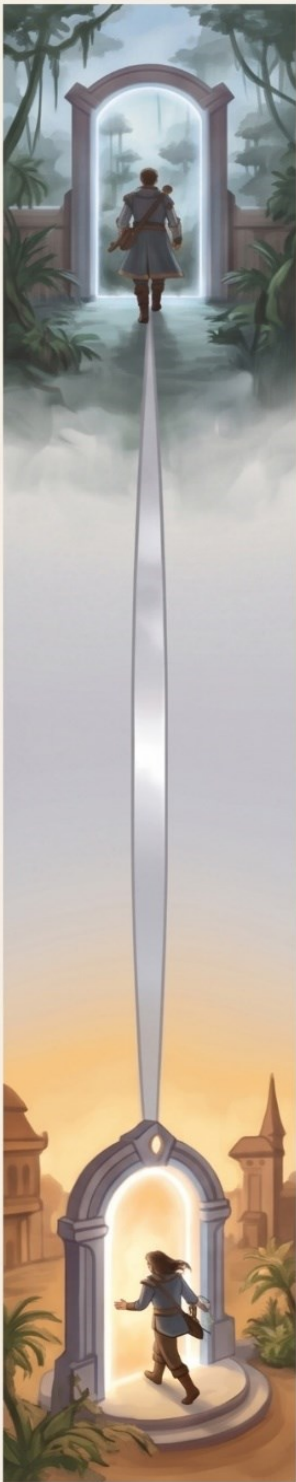


Diagram Methods of Planar Travel

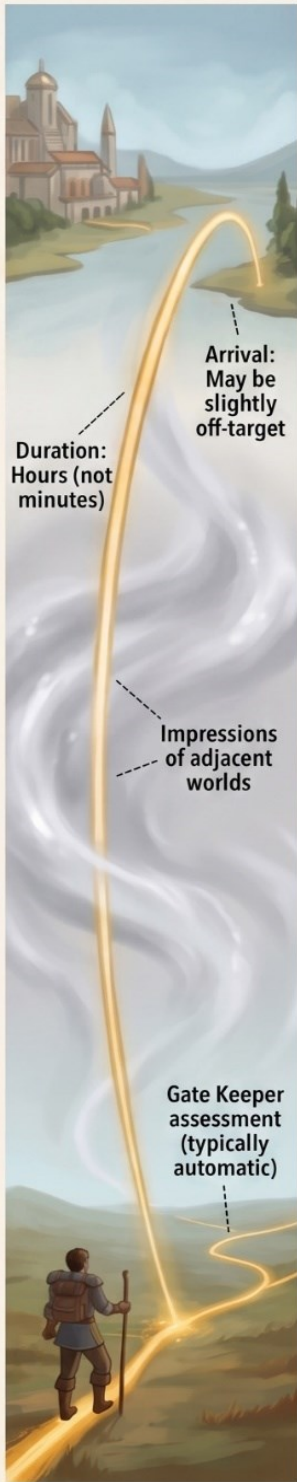
A comparative diagram showing what each method of crossing looks like and where in the cosmological structure it operates.

The five methods shown are not the only ways to cross planar boundaries - Gate Keepers themselves can facilitate passage, divine intervention can move a cleric directly to their deity's domain, and certain artifacts create their own crossing mechanics. These five are the methods that planar travelers learn and use systematically.

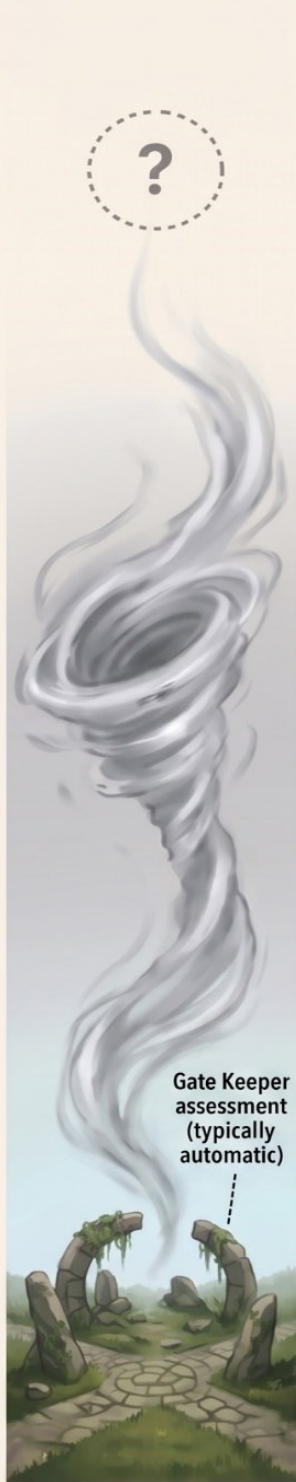




PORTAL TRANSIT -
World to world. Instant
Ethereal transit.
Shortest possible exposure.
Gate Keepers rarely engage
sanctioned portals.



LEY LINE TRAVEL -
Riding accumulated
magical energy. Slower.
Imprecise. Rich with
Ethereal experience.



VORTEX CROSSING
Ancient natural thresholds,
Directional. Seasonal.
Not always reliable.
Connects paths that
portals do not.



RESONANCE SHIFT
Leaving the Material
entirely. Always passes
through Gate Keeper
assessment. Physical experience
of crossing changes reality.



ASTRAL TRAVEL
Consciousness without
body. Navigation by intent.
Body remains vulnerable.
Extended separation
thins the traveler.

MATERIAL REALM

Each method has a different relationship with the Gate Keepers, a different physical experience, and a different set of failure modes.

Chapter 2: The Material Realm

The Material Realm is not one world. It is infinite worlds - each governed by physics, each separated from the others by vast stretches of Ethereal between them. The blacksmith in your homebrew setting and the desert pharaoh in an Egyptian-mythos campaign exist in the same Material Realm. They are simply unfathomably far apart.

This is the playground. Every setting you have ever used, borrowed, or invented. Every campaign world that has ever hosted an Open Dungeons session. All of them exist here, in the central dense fabric of the oblong where physics holds court and mortality has weight.



The Material Realm is where mortals live. It is also the only realm where reality feels most certain, which makes it the easiest place to forget that certainty is only another kind of faith.

Demirealms

Where the Material meets the Ethereal, the boundary is often blurry - places where the Ethereal has seeped in and the Material has been shaped by it. These are demirealms. Not quite Material and not quite Ethereal. A demirealm might be a haunted forest where the trees remember things they shouldn't, or a desert fortress that drifts through mist because a god died there once.

Time might pass differently. Distances might not be trustworthy. A door that opens one way from inside may open somewhere else from outside. Demirealms are not dangerous by nature. They are simply places where the rules acknowledge that they exist.



Physics and Mortality of the Material Realm

This is what makes the Material Realm distinct: consequences are real. A wound closes or doesn't based on biology. Magic functions here mechanically - there is a framework, spells have shapes, magical effects have logic. Even the most reality-bending working has rules it must respect.

And mortality. In the Material Realm, every living thing dies. This is not a tragedy - it is the fundamental organizing principle. Mortal life has weight because it ends. Every moment costs something. This is why the Material Realm produces the kinds of heroes it does - fierce, determined, burning with purpose, because the clock is always running.

Your World's Position in the Material Realm

Every Material world - every campaign world - has a position in the infinite oblong defined by proximity to various divine and lower domains. A world with deep Egyptian mythological roots will have formed near the domain of the Egyptian gods. A world built on Norse mythology is near the Norse pantheon. The DN does not need to map this explicitly. The framework simply provides an explanation for why certain divine flavors feel more natural in a given setting.



Chapter 3: The Ethereal World



Between all things flows the Ethereal. It is the medium that separates and connects all places. Every plane of existence is surrounded by and connected through the Ethereal. When a wizard teleports, they briefly dissolve into the Ethereal and reconstitute elsewhere. When a cleric's prayer travels to their god, it passes through the Ethereal. When a soul departs a body, it drifts through the Ethereal. Magic itself flows through the Ethereal like blood through veins.

The Ethereal does not move. The Ethereal is movement.

What the Ethereal Looks Like

Near the Material Realm, travelers see ghostly echoes of the Material world - faint impressions of buildings, roads, and forests built from silver mist. These are resonance impressions, the Material world's presence imprinted on the adjacent Ethereal like heat radiating from warm stone.

Deeper into the Ethereal, the echoes fade. Thoughts have physical form here - a strong enough emotion can manifest as weather, terrain, or architecture. The ruins of civilizations that have forgotten themselves drift through the deep Ethereal as memory-fossils, perfectly preserved but inhabited only by crystallized recollection.

Thought as Physical Substance

In the Ethereal, thought is the physical substance other things are built from. A strong enough fear, held by enough people, can calcify into something you could walk around. Travelers carrying strong unresolved emotions may find those emotions taking form around them. Not as hallucinations. As participants.

The Astral Layer

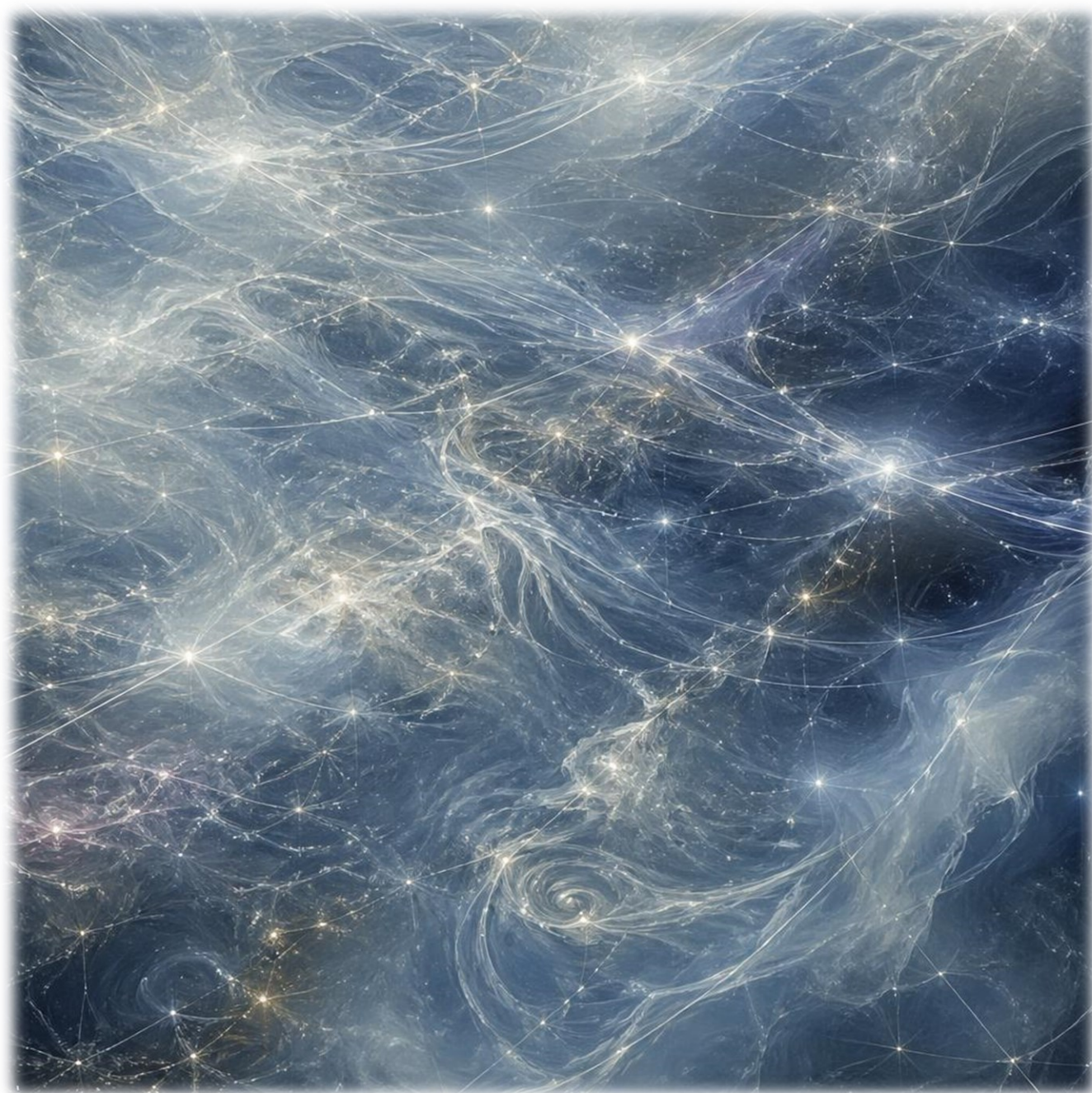
High in the Ethereal, where distance ceases to be a physical property and becomes a matter of intent, lies the Astral. Gravity loses meaning. A traveler moving astrally does not walk - they aim their awareness and arrive.

The Astral appears as a vast sea of slow silver stars, or a current of pure thought connecting all realms simultaneously. Both descriptions are correct. The Astral is the Ethereal at its most transparent, when the medium reveals its fundamental nature.



Magic's Highway

Every spell that has ever been cast in the Material has passed through the Ethereal. When a wizard conjures fire, the spell-form exists simultaneously in Material and Ethereal. Divine magic travels differently - a cleric's prayer passes through the Ethereal like a thread of intention seeking resonance, moving not in a straight line but along the paths of strongest connection between caster and deity.



Chapter 4: The Gate Keepers



They were not created. They condensed. Wherever two states of existence press against each other, the boundary develops a logic of its own. That logic, given enough time and pressure, becomes aware. Awareness at a boundary becomes a presence. And a presence with sufficient weight and purpose becomes a Gate Keeper.

The Gate Keepers are ancient beyond any mortal reckoning. They existed before most of the realms they guard borders between. They are not divine, though gods treat them with caution. They are not creatures in the way a wolf or a demon is a creature. They are the Multirealms' own mechanism for ensuring that the gradient doesn't tear itself apart.

Every spell that crosses planes, every soul that departs a body, every prayer that reaches a god - all of them have passed, unseen and unaware, through a Gate Keeper's consideration.

What They Embody

Each Gate Keeper is a threshold - a metaphysical junction between states of being. Life and Death. Sleep and Wakefulness. Form and Spirit. Time and Eternity. Ignorance and Revelation. Dream and Waking. Truth and Illusion. There are dozens of these junctions, perhaps hundreds. Most mortals pass through several without awareness.

What They Are Not

They are not judges in the moral sense. They test readiness, resonance, and capacity - not goodness. A deeply good person might be turned back from a divine realm not because they are unworthy but because they are not prepared for the resonance shift. The Gate Keeper turns them back for the same reason a doctor sends a patient home - not as punishment, but because arriving where they intended would destroy them.

Encountering a Gate Keeper

Most planar crossings carry their own resonance as a key. Teleportation spells encode a destination and a purpose. Divine spells carry the authority of the deity who granted them. The Gate Keeper reads this resonance and, satisfied, allows passage without manifesting at all.

A Gate Keeper manifests when the key is insufficient or absent. The manifestation varies - some appear as figures of geometric perfection, others as monstrous reflections of the traveler's own fears. Some manifest as pressure only - the sense of something vast considering whether to allow you to continue.

The encounter is always a test, never a battle. The answer does not have to be impressive. It has to be true.

Use Gate Keepers sparingly. Their power as a storytelling tool comes from their rarity. Not every teleport. The moment a character returns from death and the Gate Keeper has something to say about it. The moment a party crosses into a divine realm and the Keeper makes clear, without hostility, that entering changes them.



Chapter 5: The Countless Realms

Beyond the Ethereal lie innumerable planes - some vast and eternal, others as fleeting as a half-remembered dream. The Multirealms is not an ordered system of numbered planes arranged by alignment or element. It is an ecosystem of realities, each defined by its dominant resonance.

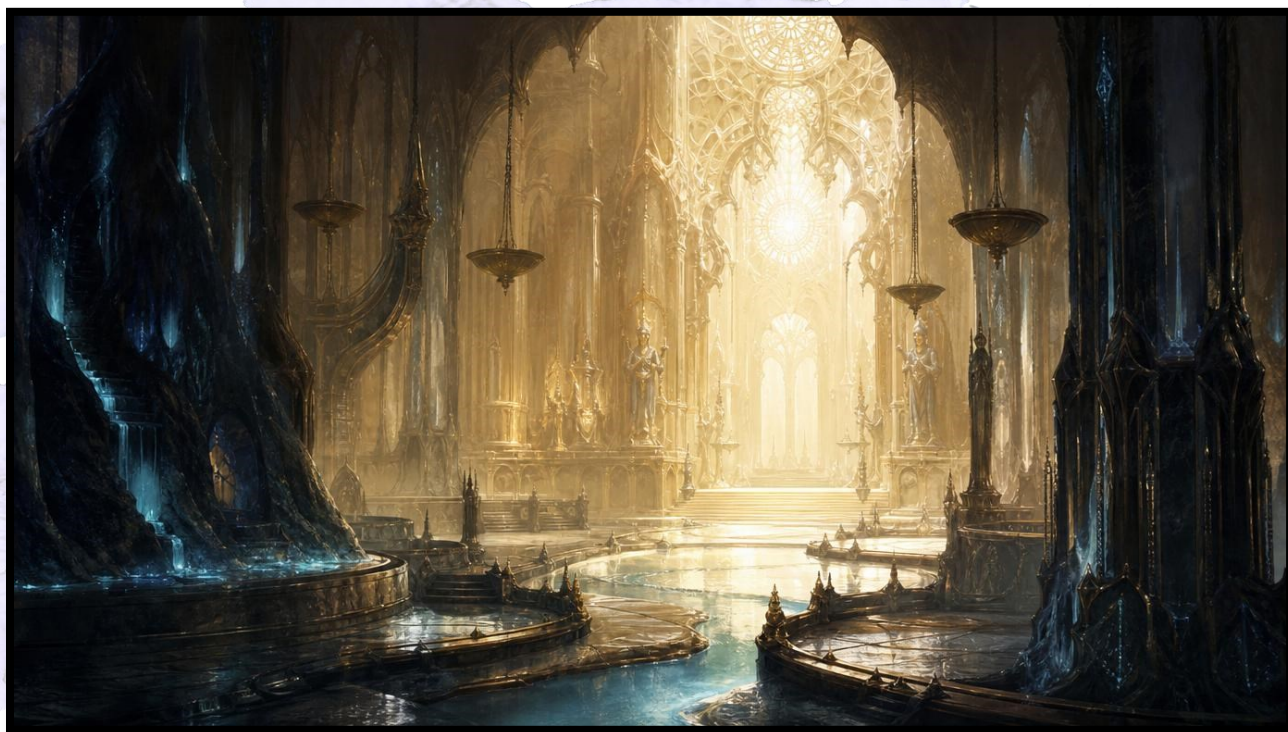
Every deity that has ever been worshipped - in any mythology, any legend, any game system, any human tradition - exists somewhere in the Countless Realms. They are not metaphors. They are residents.



The Divine Realms

In the upper resonance reaches of the oblong, where belief shapes matter and a god's will and the fabric of existence are the same thing, lie the divine domains. Each god of sufficient power maintains a domain shaped entirely by their nature, portfolio, and the accumulated faith of their worshippers.

Walking into a divine domain is walking into a continuous embodiment of a deity's nature. Creatures who share that nature find it beautiful and clarifying. Creatures whose natures conflict with it find it steadily hostile - not through any intent, simply because the fabric of the place resonates against them.



The Lower Realms

The lower realms are not one hell. They are many. There are lower realms of pure entropy. There are hells of specific suffering - places whose very fabric resonates with particular kinds of pain, crystallized over enough time to become a universe. There are abysses with no organizing principle except descent. There are infernal kingdoms with hierarchy and politics.



What lower realms share is the gradient's effect at that end of the oblong. Reality is dense here in a way that resists hope. Evil resides in the lower realms not as metaphor, but as a condition of existence. Creatures that emerge from the lower realms carry that evil with them. They are shaped by a reality where the fabric itself does not naturally support recovery, growth, or hope.

The Specialty Realms

Between the divine upper reaches and the lower depths, scattered throughout the Ethereal's infinite middle space, lie the specialty realms - places defined by a single dominant quality of experience that has accumulated enough weight to become a universe.

The Realm of Dream

Dream borders every sleeping mind in every Material world simultaneously. In sleep, consciousness partially departs the body and drifts into Dream. The Realm of Dream feeds on consciousness and feeds consciousness in return. It operates on narrative logic rather than physical logic - cause and effect apply the way they apply in stories, not physics.

The Realm of Hunger

Hunger is a realm defined by the absolute absence of satiation. Entities from Hunger consume because the realm demands it. They will eat material objects, magical energy, memories, hope, and life force with equal indiscrimination.

The Realm of Song

At its most beautiful, a place where music is the governing physics and harmony is the highest law. At its corrupted edges, where the Song has turned inward, it produces things that consume sound rather than make it.

Other Realms

The Multirealms contains specialty realms for which mortals have not yet coined useful names. A realm of pure unresolved potential. A realm of accumulated regret. A realm that corresponds to the exact emotional state of a decision being made at maximum weight. A realm of echoes. A realm of things that were almost real but weren't.



Chapter 6: Divine Gravity

Gods do not float free in the Multirealms. They are fixed. Not in the sense of being incapable of extending influence - gods reach across enormous distances constantly. Fixed in the sense that their domain occupies a specific position in the infinite oblong, defined by the nature of their accumulated worshippers and the cosmic weight of their portfolio.

Material worlds form in positions that reflect their mythological character. A world built on Norse mythology is near the Norse pantheon's domains. A world built on Egyptian mythology is near the Egyptian domains. This is not by design but by resonance - the worlds and gods reinforce each other across the Ethereal membrane in a feedback loop that spans generations.

A god's position in the cosmological structure is not political. It is gravitational. It is the physical consequence of what they are.

Proximity as Influence

The closer a Material world is to a divine domain, the more naturally that domain's deity tends toward involvement in the world's affairs. A world in the cosmological neighborhood of Zeus's domain will have more frequent storms of divine significance, will produce more clerics whose instinct runs toward sky-sovereignty and justice, will find that myths of sky-gods arise naturally in its cultures even without specific worship of Zeus.

All Mythologies Are True

Every deity that has ever been worshipped in any mythology, any ancient tradition, any game system, any legend - exists somewhere in the Countless Realms. Thor and Zeus can both be real. Anubis and Hades can both hold domain over aspects of death. Your cleric can serve a god borrowed from Greek myth while the party's other cleric serves an entirely invented deity. They are simply praying in different directions through the Ethereal.

Inter-Divine Conflict

Gods generally do not wander far from their domains. But a god who actively moves their projected attention toward another deity's home territory is encroaching. The history of divine conflict in mortal mythology is largely a reflection of these cosmological encroachments playing out through the medium of mortal events. When Mars decides to extend influence over a territory adjacent to Zeus's domain, Zeus notices. When Jupiter simultaneously backs Mars in that bid, the cosmological event creates ripple effects felt in the Material worlds of both neighborhoods.



Chapter 7: Ascension and the Cosmos

Level 10 is not a power ceiling (see *DN Guide*). It is a resonance ceiling. The point at which a mortal character has accumulated enough experience, enough will, enough weight of deed and story that the Material Realm can no longer comfortably contain them.

Ascension happens when a mortal becomes too much themselves to remain merely mortal.

The Cosmological Mechanism

The Material Realm is shaped for mortal-scale existence. An Ascended character has accumulated enough weight - enough choices, enough consequence, enough genuine transformation - that their presence begins to distort the local fabric of the Material slightly. Their dreams bleed into the Ethereal. Their instincts sharpen in ways they cannot explain. Strangers pause when they pass close enough.

This is the Realism Gradient doing what it does: a being whose resonance outgrows the local density of reality begins to experience the gradient pulling at them. The Material can no longer hold them comfortably at its center.

Where Ascended Mortals Go

Some drift toward the Ethereal, becoming half-unbound from the Material. Some remain in the Material world but become legend rather than active participants - a warrior who has Ascended might be found at a single road, having stood watch there for decades, becoming so identified with the protection of that stretch of ground that the road itself is slightly safer. Some take a final great action that functions as a conclusion: this thing happened, by this person, and the cosmos changed accordingly.

Ascended characters should not return as adventurers. Their time as heroes is complete. But they may appear as patrons, legends, quiet guardians, or rare figures who offer guidance or warnings to those who now stand where they once stood.



Chapter 8: Bestiary of the Realms

The following creatures are native to the various layers and realms of the Multirealms. They are not dungeon inhabitants. They are cosmological fauna - things adapted to the specific conditions of their home reality, shaped by its resonance, carrying its character wherever they travel.

Material and Ethereal Natives

Creatures - born in the cracks between realities.

Material and Ethereal natives arise where the laws of physical reality blur against the strange pressure of the Ethereal. They are not demons, spirits, undead, or divine servants, though mortals often mistake them for such things. They are the wildlife of unstable borders: things that learned to feed, hunt, hide, breed, or endure in places where stone remembers dreams and shadows sometimes have mass.

Some emerge in old demirealms where the boundary has remained thin for centuries. Others form in the deep Ethereal from abandoned memories, lost travelers, broken spells, or emotional residue strong enough to become living matter. A few are true predators, evolved to stalk the paths between worlds. Others are scavengers, parasites, or confused animals that do not fully understand the Material creatures they encounter.

What unites them is adaptation. A wolf belongs to a forest. A shark belongs to the sea. A Boundary Stalker belongs to a threshold. A Memory Wraith belongs to grief that has lasted too long. A Thought Leech belongs to the moment when a mind is stretched thin during transit. These creatures are not intruders in the Multirealms. They are part of its ecology.

For the Dungeon Narrator, Material and Ethereal natives work best when they make reality feel slightly unreliable. They should not appear in empty rooms waiting to be fought. They are signs that the boundary is thin, wounded, old, hungry, or awake. Before one appears, let the environment misbehave. Footsteps echo before they are taken. A door remembers being opened. A torch flame leans toward an unseen wind. A character hears a thought they never spoke aloud.



DEMIREALM SHADE

A creature born from the overlap of Material and Ethereal where a demirealm has grown old enough to produce its own inhabitants. It moves between states of existence with the ease of breathing, partially real, partially something else.

HP: 28

AC: 12

DR: 1

Save Roll: Quick +2, Tough +0, Mind -1

Alignment: Wild Seeker

Intelligence: 6 - Below Average

Magic Resistance: Resistant to non-magical physical damage (half damage)

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: d20+4 vs AC, 1d8+2 cold/necrotic (shadow grasp)

Size: Medium

Special Defense: Partially Incorporeal: non-magical weapons deal half damage.

Special Attack: Reality Blur: once per encounter, attacks against it suffer -3 to hit for 2 rounds. Cooldown: 3 rounds.

Behavior

Drifts through demirealms without purpose, drawn to strong emotions and magical residue. Becomes aggressive and territorial when threatened. Will attempt to reach the Ethereal layer if reduced to half HP.

DN Note

Not malevolent - more like an animal in a strange ecological niche. A clever party might leave offerings of magical items or raw arcane energy to distract one rather than fighting it.



BOUNDARY STALKER

An apex predator that evolved to inhabit thresholds between realities - cave mouths that open to demirealms, crossroads where ley lines intersect, shores where ocean meets strange fog. It senses every crossing.

HP: 112	AC: 15
DR: 2	Save Roll: Quick +3, Tough +3, Mind +0
Alignment: Wild Reaver	Intelligence: 8 - Average
Magic Resistance: -	Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: d20+5 vs AC, 1d10+3 slashing (dimensional claws)	Size: Large

Special Defense: Threshold Sense: cannot be surprised near any planar boundary. Detects creatures passing between realms within 1 mile.

Special Attack: Dimensional Pin: once per 3 rounds. CON Tough save (TN 15) or unable to use teleportation or planar travel for 2 rounds. 1d8 force damage regardless of save.

Behavior

Ambush predator at natural threshold points. Does not pursue prey far from boundaries.

DN Note

Boundary Stalkers fear Gate Keepers - a Gate Keeper's presence will drive a Stalker away completely. Killing one may attract its mate within 24 hours.



MEMORY WRAITH

The accumulated weight of forgotten things - grief crystallized into predatory form in the deep Ethereal. It wears the faces of people who are no longer remembered anywhere.

HP: 85

AC: 12

DR: 0

Save Roll: Quick +1, Tough +0, Mind +2

Alignment: Wild Seeker

Intelligence: 10 - Average

Magic Resistance: Immune to non-magical physical damage. Resistant to cold and necrotic.

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: d20+4 vs AC (touch), 2d6+2 psychic (memory drain)

Size: Large

Special Defense: Incorporeal: immune to non-magical physical damage.

Special Attack: Memory Devour: when target is reduced to 0 HP by memory drain, target loses all memories of the past 24 hours permanently unless restored by Remove Curse. The Wraith gains +2 to all rolls for 1 hour. Once per target.

Behavior

Drawn to those carrying strong recent memories - particularly loss, regret, or longing. Rarely pursues fleeing targets.

DN Note

A character who offers a Memory Wraith a memory willingly - truly traumatic, truly personal - might cause one to withdraw satisfied.



MIST HORROR

An apex predator of the deep Ethereal that disperses into ambient silver mist until it is the mist, then coalesces instantly to strike. You hear nothing before the tendrils.

HP: 115

AC: 14

DR: 2

Save Roll: Quick +3, Tough +3, Mind -2

Alignment: Wild Reaver

Intelligence: 5 - Below Average

Magic Resistance: Resistant to fire and lightning.

Number of Attacks: 3

Attack: d20+5 vs AC, 1d8+3 cold/piercing per tendril

Size: Large

Special Defense: Mist Form: in the Ethereal, can disperse into mist for 1 round (untargetable). Cannot attack while dispersed. Cooldown: 2 rounds.

Special Attack: Engulf: if all three attacks hit the same target in one round. CON Tough save (TN 13) or grappled and takes 2d8 cold damage at start of each turn. Cannot cast spells with verbal components while engulfed.

Behavior

Disperses into ambient mist, then coalesces to strike. Will not pursue prey into the Material realm.

DN Note

Announce the Horror's dispersal without telling players where it went. One moment it's there. The next the mist settles back into stillness.



THOUGHT LEECH

A parasite of the Ethereal that feeds on the psychic signature of travelers in transit. It attaches invisibly, sips quietly, and is rarely noticed until the confusion starts.

HP: 26

DR: 0

Alignment: Wild Seeker

Magic Resistance: -

Attack: d20+3 vs AC (proximity touch), 1d6 psychic + 1 WIS drain

AC: 11

Save Roll: Quick +2, Tough -2, Mind +0

Intelligence: 7 - Below Average

Number of Attacks: 1

Size: Tiny

Special Defense: Difficult to Perceive: WIS Chance Roll (TN 15) to detect before attachment. Appears as a faint shimmer.

Special Attack: Mental Anchor: once attached, target takes 1d4 WIS drain per round. Removing requires a full action and WIS check (TN 13). If WIS drops to 3: catatonic until healed. WIS returns at 1 per day of rest.

Behavior

Does not fight. Feeds and flees. Will follow the party from a safe distance if detached before feeding adequately.

DN Note

By the time someone starts fumbling their words or forgetting spell names, the Leech has been there a while. The delayed realization is the horror.

Gate Keeper Aspects



ASPECT OF THE THRESHOLD

A Gate Keeper does not manifest unless the situation demands it. The Aspect appears as geometric perfection or as the worst thing you have ever done given form. It has appeared as both simultaneously.

HP: 230	AC: 18
DR: 5	Save Roll: Quick +2, Tough +5, Mind +5
Alignment: Orderly Arbiter	Intelligence: 18 - Super-Genius
Magic Resistance: Immune to charm, fear, illusion, and all mind effects. Resistant to all elemental damage. Cannot be banished.	Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: d20+8 vs AC, 2d10+5 radiant/force (reality strike)	Size: Large

Special Defense: Threshold Ward: cannot be killed. Reduce to 0 HP and it disperses, reforming at full HP in 3 rounds. True resolution requires completing the test it has set.

Special Attack: Judgment Cast: once per 3 rounds. Creatures within 60 feet who have acted dishonestly in the past hour make WIS Mind save (TN 18) or are stunned 2 rounds. Those who have acted with genuine integrity may reroll any one failed save this round.

Behavior

Does not pursue. Does not retreat. Stands at the threshold and asks its question until the answer is right or the traveler gives up.

DN Note

Fighting an Aspect is almost always the wrong answer. The real encounter is the test. A party that defeats it in combat has simply delayed the question.



The Aspect of the Threshold is not a creature to poke, provoke, or test with steel. It appears when a crossing matters, when a soul is unready, or when the party is about to pass into a reality that may change them forever. Violence may delay the encounter, but it does not solve it. The Aspect exists to ask the question the traveler must answer.

The Aspect asks **the question that proves whether the traveler is ready to cross.**

Not a riddle. Not trivia. Not “what walks on four legs.”

A **truth-question**. The kind that makes the fighter stop gripping the sword and the wizard stop pretending knowledge is the same as wisdom.

General Threshold Questions

These work for almost any crossing:

Situation	The Aspect asks
Entering a dangerous realm	"What are you willing to lose to enter?"
Leaving the Material Realm	"What still binds you to the world of consequence?"
Seeking forbidden passage	"Why should the boundary open for you?"
Running from danger	"Crossing toward purpose, or away from fear?"
Trying to force entry	"What right do you claim?"
Carrying a relic or soul	"What have you brought that does not belong?"
Attempting resurrection or soul travel	"Who calls this soul, and why should it answer?"

Example Scene

The party reaches a gate into the Lower Realms.

The Aspect appears.

It asks:

"What part of you already belongs there?"

That question forces each character to look inward. Rage. Cruelty. Hunger. Guilt. Vengeance. Shame. The gate opens only when the answer is true enough to survive being spoken.

Divine Realm Inhabitants



Citizens and servants of the upper realms - shaped by divine resonance, carrying divine authority.

CELESTIAL ARBITER	
<i>A divine law enforcement entity from the upper realms, armored in solidified light, carrying the weight of divine authority that makes evil things stumble.</i>	
HP: 148	AC: 17
DR: 4	Save Roll: Quick +2, Tough +4, Mind +4
Alignment: Orderly Guardian	Intelligence: 15 - Exceptional
Magic Resistance: Immune to poison, disease, fear, and charm. Resistant to necrotic and fire.	Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: d20+7 vs AC, 2d8+5 radiant (judgment blade of concentrated divine law)	Size: Large
Special Defense: Divine Authority: evil-aligned creatures who directly attack an Arbiter make WIS Mind save (TN 16) or suffer -3 to all attack rolls against it for the encounter.	
Special Attack: Holy Writ: once per 3 rounds. CON Tough save (TN 16) or take 3d8 radiant damage and be marked. While marked, each attack against the Arbiter or its allies also deals 1d8 radiant to the attacker. Mark lasts 1 minute.	
Behavior <i>Does not initiate combat - it arrests. Issues a single command before striking. Fights to subdue rather than kill when possible.</i>	
DN Note Arbiters are terrifying because they are not the villain. A party fighting one has usually done something wrong - or is being mistaken for someone who did.	

SOLAR WARDEN

A patrol entity of the divine upper realms - armored in solidified sunlight, patrolling the borders of divine domains with the dispassionate efficiency of something that has done this since before the current age began.

HP: 94

AC: 15

DR: 3

Save Roll: Quick +3, Tough +3, Mind +2

Alignment: Orderly Guardian

Intelligence: 12 - Bright

Magic Resistance: Immune to radiant damage. Resistant to fire.

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: d20+6 vs AC, 1d10+4 radiant (light lance of pure concentrated solar energy)

Size: Medium

Special Defense: Solar Aura: undead and lower-realm creatures within 30 feet suffer -2 to all rolls.

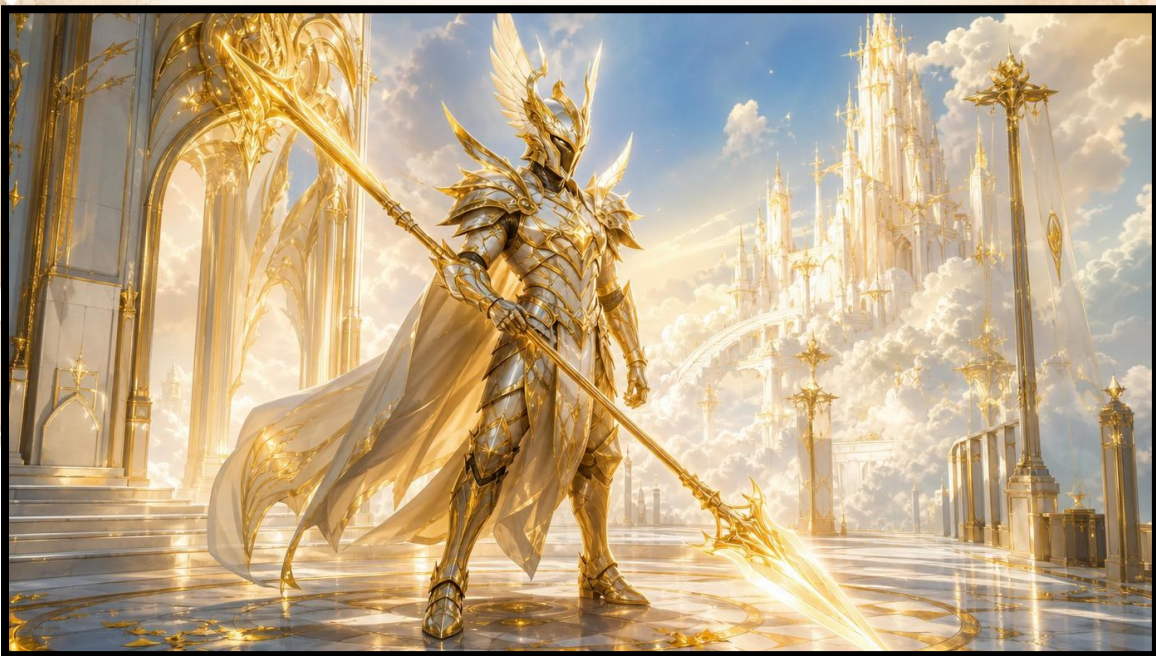
Special Attack: Blinding Pulse: once per 4 rounds. DEX Quick save (TN 14) or blinded until end of next turn and take 2d6 radiant damage.

Behavior

Patrols come in pairs. Challenges first, attacks second. If one is attacked, the other begins sending distress signal within 1 round.

DN Note

Use Solar Wardens to establish the inhabited, governed nature of divine realms. They make divine domains feel like real places with real borders.



Lower Realm Inhabitants

Creatures shaped by the dense entropic resonance of the lower reaches.

VOID WRAITH	
<i>From the deep lower realms where entropy is the highest law, the Void Wraith arrives in the Material as an absence of warmth dressed in the shape of a shadow.</i>	
HP: 115	AC: 14
DR: 3	Save Roll: Quick +2, Tough +3, Mind +0
Alignment: Wild Reaver	Intelligence: 9 - Average
Magic Resistance: Immune to necrotic. Resistant to cold and psychic.	Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: d20+6 vs AC, 2d8+4 necrotic (void touch that drains warmth and color)	Size: Large
Special Defense: Void Step: once per round as a free action, dissolves into shadow and reappears within 40 feet in darkness or dim light.	
Special Attack: Despair Shriek: once per 3 rounds. WIS Mind save (TN 14). Failure: -2 to all rolls for 2 rounds. Critical failure (roll 3 or less): target uses next action to flee.	
Behavior <i>Drawn to warmth, faith, and life because those things are what it most profoundly lacks. Will not retreat unless forced by sustained radiant damage.</i>	
DN Note Before it appears, have lights dim slightly, colors seem less vivid, the air taste of nothing.	



HUNGER FIEND

The Realm of Hunger wearing flesh. It does not distinguish between organic and inorganic - it will attempt to consume stone, metal, magical items, life force, and memories with equal thoroughness.

HP: 102

AC: 13

DR: 2

Save Roll: Quick +1, Tough +4, Mind -1

Alignment: Wild Reaver

Intelligence: 6 - Below Average

Magic Resistance: Immune to poison and disease. Regenerates 3 HP per turn. Regeneration ceases for 1 round if struck by radiant damage.

Number of Attacks: 3

Attack: d20+5 vs AC, 1d8+3 slashing/necrotic per strike

Size: Medium

Special Defense: Endless Hunger: regeneration continues even at low HP unless suppressed by radiant damage.

Special Attack: Consuming Grasp: if two of three attacks hit same target in one round. CON Tough save (TN 13) or lose 2 maximum HP until a full week of rest. Applications stack. Magical healing restores 2 maximum HP per casting.

Behavior

Eats constantly. Will pause briefly if it encounters something particularly interesting to consume. Fights to the end.

DN Note

The maximum HP drain is the dangerous element. Make certain players understand what is happening. The psychological impact of watching the number fall is part of the creature's power.



ABYSSAL DREDGE

The floor of the abyss given ambulatory form. Heavy, slow, patient in the way geology is patient. It senses vibration through ground and deep water. It does not experience pain.

HP: 245

AC: 16

DR: 5

Save Roll: Quick -2, Tough +5, Mind -1

Alignment: Wild Reaver

Intelligence: 7 - Below Average

Magic Resistance: Resistant to fire and poison. Immune to charm and fear.

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: d20+7 vs AC, 2d10+6 bludgeoning/acid (crushing appendage dripping with abyssal acid)

Size: Gargantuan

Special Defense: Abyssal Constitution: when reduced to 0 HP, makes CON Tough save (TN 10). On success: surges back to 20 HP and gains +2 to all attack rolls for 3 rounds. Once per encounter.

Special Attack: Acid Wave: once per 4 rounds. DEX Quick save (TN 14) for half. 3d8 acid damage. Reduces DR of struck non-magical armor by 1 for the remainder of the encounter.

Behavior

Does not pursue - it waits. Guards a location without understanding why. Fights until destroyed with no interest in retreat.

DN Note

The Abyssal Constitution surge is designed for one specific moment: when the party thinks the fight is over and it isn't.



INFERNAL WARDEN

Armored, systematic, and committed to the specific laws of whichever hell it serves. It explains the rules exactly once. Then it enforces them.

HP: 138

AC: 16

DR: 4

Save Roll: Quick +1, Tough +4, Mind +3

Alignment: Orderly Tyrant

Intelligence: 13 - High

Magic Resistance: Immune to fire.
Resistant to poison and necrotic.

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: d20+6 vs AC, 2d8+4 fire/slashing
(hellfire blade)

Size: Large

Special Defense: Infernal Authority: any creature attempting to move past the Warden without clearance provokes an immediate free attack. Cannot be Charmed by mortal magic.

Special Attack: Soul Brand: once per 3 rounds. Target takes 2d8 fire damage and makes CON Tough save (TN 15). Failure: brand deals 1d8 fire damage at start of each turn for 1 minute. Must be dispelled to end.

Behavior

Enforces with dispassionate efficiency. Will offer terms if approached diplomatically. Will not betray its hell's laws under any persuasion.

DN Note

Their calm efficiency in enforcing horrible laws is more disturbing than any rage would be.



Chapter 9: Relics of the Realms

The items in this chapter are not found in dungeons. They are the residue of cosmological events - fragments of divine domains, crystallizations of specific resonant frequencies, objects that have absorbed so much of a particular reality's character that they carry that character wherever they go.

A shard of divine influence is not a bonus. It is a fragment of a living god's will, hardened into something a mortal can hold.

Ethereal Compass

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A brass compass whose needle points toward the nearest threshold between realities. Pulses once per 30 seconds when a planar boundary is within 1 mile, faster as distance decreases. In the Ethereal, shows direction toward the Material. In the deep Astral, points toward inhabited realms.

Uses: Permanent.

About

Cool to the touch always. The needle is made from a genuine Ethereal boundary fragment. Traders who work the threshold regions pay fortunes for these.

Gate Keeper's Seal

Type: Wondrous Item / Amulet

Effect: A disk of crystallized threshold material granting safe passage through one designated planar boundary per day without triggering a Gate Keeper manifestation. Up to 4 willing creatures may pass simultaneously. Does not function against Gate Keepers acting under direct divine command or to specifically prohibited realms.

Uses: 1 use per day (resets at dawn).

About

Gate Keepers did not make these. They simply consented to their existence once. The Seal was shaped from a boundary that a Gate Keeper chose not to guard one specific time, and the moment of non-judgment crystallized.

Demirealm Anchor

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A weighted spike of iron and crystallized dream. When driven into any surface in a demirealm, stabilizes local reality for 8 hours within 200 feet: reality-bending suppressed, spontaneous manifestations blocked, allies within 100 feet gain +2 to saves against reality-altering effects.

Uses: 3 charges. Recharges 1 charge per full week embedded in an active demirealm.

About

Made by a scholar who spent forty years in demirealms and eventually simply wanted to sleep without the furniture moving.

Shard of Divine Gravity

Type: Wondrous Item / Amulet

Effect: Fragment of crystallized divine influence from a god's domain. Passive effect depends on deity portfolio (DN determines). All shards: bearer recognized as associated with that deity by followers, and can sense direction to nearest temple or altar within 50 miles.

Uses: Passive effects permanent; active effects 1 per day.

About

When divine influence pools in one place long enough, occasionally a fragment crystallizes and can be gathered. Every shard is technically a fragment of a living divine being's will.

Lower Realm Iron

Type: Weapon Enhancement Material

Effect: Metal forged in the deep Lower Realms. Weapons: deal 1d6 additional necrotic damage on hit, treated as magical for overcoming resistances, cannot be enhanced or blessed by divine magic. Armor version: DR +1, but wearer takes -1 on all saves against divine effects.

Uses: Permanent.

About

Not evil. Simply unable to be made holy. Warriors who carry Lower Realm Iron weapons are effective. Some people find them slightly unpleasant to be near without being able to say why.

Dream Catcher's Lens

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A round lens of stretched dream-stuff in a copper frame. Three times per day: gaze at a sleeping creature and perceive the core emotion driving their current dream (DN reveals one true thing). In the Realm of Dream: +3 to all WIS Chance Rolls and immunity to Silence Eater's Song Drain.

Uses: 3 per day (resets at dawn).

About

Made by a merchant of the Realm of Dream who found that some travelers could not navigate without seeing what was real and what was narrative.

Astral Drift Stone

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A smooth stone polished by centuries in the high Astral. Grants ability to enter the Astral through 10-minute meditation. While in Astral, move at will-speed by intent alone. Can reach any other user of a paired Drift Stone anywhere in the Multirealms within 1 hour. Stones are attuned in pairs when created.

Uses: Permanent; 2 hours per day before requiring 8 hours rest.

About

Always made in pairs. The stone knows its sibling. The two stones grow faintly warm when the other user is in distress.

Resonance Mirror

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A small hand mirror of polished void-metal showing not your reflection but your current resonance. Once per day on 10-minute meditation: the DN privately tells the player one true thing about how the Multirealms currently reads their character. Cannot be used in combat.

Uses: Once per day.

About

There are no instructions. It simply shows what is true. Some people use it regularly and become philosophers. Some use it once and put it away forever.

Hunger Shard

Type: Weapon Enhancement

Effect: A fragment of crystallized hunger set into a weapon's hilt. Deals 1d6 additional necrotic damage on hit. On a natural 20: target loses 2 maximum HP until a full week of rest. Cost: the bearer must eat twice normal food daily or suffer -1 to all rolls per skipped meal (stacking).

Uses: Permanent.

About

The fragment was once part of the Realm of Hunger itself. The smith who made it thought the price was worth paying. She was right, for a while.

Void Glass

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A lens formed from the boundary between the deepest Lower Realms and the total void. When held to the eye: any magical or divine effect within 30 feet becomes clearly visible as distinct threads and flows. Cannot be blocked by anything short of a Seal of Unmaking. Additionally: immune to illusions while actively looking through it, though only one eye is usable during use.

Uses: Permanent (passive while held to eye).

About

Looking through Void Glass for extended periods is disorienting. One scholar looked through it for three continuous hours and could not stop crying for a week, though she reported seeing nothing sad - only everything, perfectly clearly, all at once.

Chapter 10: Further Relics of the Realms

The Multirealms produces more than any one collection can document. These additional relics carry the fingerprints of their origins as clearly as those in Chapter Nine.

An incomplete vessel holding things between states. A bell that rings for what it senses. A rope that keeps you tethered to what is real while you reach for what isn't.

Ethereal Anchor Rope

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A 50-foot length of woven Ethereal boundary material that remains solid in both Material and Ethereal simultaneously. One end fixed to a Material anchor; the other carries a loop a traveler can wear. While wearing the loop, the traveler can go up to 50 feet into the Ethereal and return by following the rope back. Prevents Ethereal drift entirely while tethered. If the anchor is moved or destroyed while the traveler is in the Ethereal: WIS save (TN 14) or lost in the Ethereal for 1d4 hours. Supports up to 3 simultaneous tethered travelers.

Uses: Permanent.

About

Made by a scholar who lost her research partner to Ethereal drift and spent six years perfecting prevention. The knots at each end were tied by a Gate Keeper, which is the uncomfortable part of the provenance she does not discuss.

Void Candle

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A black candle producing light only where magic has been suppressed or is being hidden. In antimagic zones, Null Zones, or anywhere a Seal of Unmaking is active, it burns with steady white light as though perfectly normal. Reveals magical concealment: any illusion, invisible creature, or magically hidden object within 30 feet becomes faintly outlined in white. Cannot be extinguished by magical means.

Uses: One candle burns for 4 hours. Found and sold in sets of 1d4+1.

About

The flame comes from the boundary between deep lower-realm void and the rest of existence - a place where magic's absence is so total that the void itself becomes visible.

Memory Lantern

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A lantern of pale silver glass that stores and replays memories as three-dimensional projections. To store: concentrate on a specific memory and touch the lantern for one minute. To replay: speak the memory's name aloud. The projection appears at full size and fidelity - sight, sound, and a faint impression of the emotional state of the person who recorded it. Holds up to 5 distinct memories.

Uses: Permanent. 5 memory capacity.

About

Built in the margins of the Realm of Memory by someone who wanted proof of things they had seen. The emotional impression was not intended - the Realm of Memory insisted on including it.

Lower Realm Shackles

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: Iron shackles forged in a lower realm inscribed with entropic binding glyphs. When locked onto a creature of extraplanar origin, the creature is bound to within 100 feet of wherever the shackles are fastened and cannot plane-shift or teleport. Non-extraplanar creatures are physically restrained but can attempt STR check (TN 16) each hour. Cannot be dispelled - the binding is entropic, not magical.

Uses: Permanent until deliberately unlocked. One set, one lock, one key.

About

These work not because they are magic but because lower-realm entropy pulls things toward entropy, and a bound extraplanar entity is simply pulled toward staying bound.



Divine Splinter Arrows

Type: Ammunition

Effect: Arrowheads tipped with fragments of crystallized divine domain. Against undead and lower-realm creatures: deal 2d8 additional radiant damage and force WIS Mind save (TN 14) or be repelled for 1 minute. Against other creatures: standard arrow damage plus 1d6 radiant. Against divine realm entities: standard arrow damage only - these arrows are made from divine material and divine entities recognize them as kin.

Uses: 1d4+2 arrows per found set.

About

Made from actual physical material harvested from a divine domain's edge. The god whose domain was harvested is not typically aware this happened.

Spirit Cage

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A palm-sized lattice of silver and void-glass that captures and contains one incorporeal entity. To capture: target must be below half maximum HP and fail WIS Mind save (TN 14). Once caged: fully contained, unable to act or affect the world. Can be opened deliberately to release the entity (resumes at captured HP), or smashed to permanently destroy it.

Uses: Single-use for destruction. Reusable for capture and release.

About

The void-glass is what actually holds them. Caged entities are technically held in the void-layer, which is somewhere genuinely unpleasant.

Dream Dust

Type: Consumable

Effect: Fine silver-blue powder from the crystallized margins of the Realm of Dream. Scattered near a sleeping creature: creature enters deep dream-state and the scatterer may suggest one subject for the dream. Against a waking creature (hostile use): WIS Mind save (TN 13) or confused as dream-logic bleeds into waking perception for 1d4 rounds (-2 to all rolls, may mistake allies for enemies on natural 1).

Uses: One use. Found in pinches of 1d3.

About

Sold legitimately by travelers who work the Dream realm margins. Frequently misused. The Realm of Dream is aware of this and has not expressed an opinion.

Resonance Bell

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A small iron bell forged at a planar boundary that rings without being struck when certain cosmological conditions are met. Rings once when a planar boundary is within 300 feet. Rings twice when a Gate Keeper is present. Rings three times when a Divine or Lower realm creature has fully manifested in the Material within 500 feet. Rings continuously when an active planar portal is within 100 feet. Cannot be made to ring by striking it.

Uses: Permanent.

About

Made by a scholar who was tired of being surprised by planar incursions. It occasionally rings for reasons the user cannot immediately identify, creating a different and arguably worse category of anxiety.

Covenant Ink

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: Ink that appears black but shifts to deep gold when writing a binding agreement. Both signatories feel a mild physical sensation when approaching the agreement's terms. A creature that directly violates a written covenant takes 2d6 psychic damage immediately and once more each day the breach continues. When an agreement is fulfilled, the text vanishes - absorbed by completion.

Uses: 3 uses (one per binding agreement).

About

Infernal scribes developed a version of this for their own contracts. Celestial scribes independently developed an identical version. Both groups are annoyed about this.

Celestial Feather Mantle

Type: Cloak

Effect: +2 to all saves against lower-realm effects. Once per day as a reaction when the wearer would take necrotic or psychic damage: reduce that damage by 2d8 (minimum 0). The feathers maintain faint warmth regardless of environment.

Uses: Permanent. Once per day reactive defense.

About

The feathers were shed willingly, which matters. These carry the warmth that comes from choosing to give something away.



Entropy Ward

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A circular ward inscribed on divine-realm marble. When placed on a flat surface, creates a 30-foot radius where lower-realm entropy is dampened. Within: natural healing proceeds at double the normal rate, lower-realm creatures suffer -2 to all rolls, and the environmental pressure of lower-realm territory is lifted.

Uses: 3 charges. Recharges completely when left in a divine realm location for 24 hours.

About

A practical tool designed for clerics making expeditions into lower-realm territory. Several infernal entities find these wards deeply offensive on a personal level.

Realm Ink

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: Ink that writes on Ethereal surfaces - the membrane between realities - leaving visible marks that persist for 24 hours and can be seen by any creature with Ethereal sight, Night Vision, or similar enhanced perception. Can mark demirealm surfaces in ways readable in both Material and Ethereal simultaneously.

Uses: One vial writes approximately 500 words.

About

Realm Ink marks can be read by Gate Keepers and may, depending on content, affect how they regard the message's author.

Gate Caller's Horn

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A horn carved from void-bone that, when sounded, signals a Gate Keeper that its attention is requested. The Gate Keeper will arrive. It will then determine whether the call was warranted. An unwarranted call is not punished, but the Gate Keeper's thorough consideration of who summoned it is approximately as comfortable as a complete audit of every decision you have ever made.

Uses: 3 charges. Does not recharge.

About

Every scholar who has used one describes the experience as the second most important thing that has ever happened to them. No one has agreed on what the first is.

Hunger Ward Amulet

Type: Amulet

Effect: Provides specific protection against effects originating from the Realm of Hunger. The wearer is immune to the Hunger Fiend's Consuming Grasp maximum HP drain. The Starving's Consume Hope has no effect. Any hunger-based effect that would reduce maximum HP deals half its listed effect. Additionally: requires only half normal food and water to avoid starvation effects.

Uses: Permanent.

About

Carved in a single sitting by a scholar who had just returned from the Realm of Hunger and wanted to never feel that specific flavor of emptiness again.

Lower Realm Lantern

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A lantern of void-glass and infernal iron that produces light functioning normally in all lower-realm environments. Light radius 40 feet clear, 40 feet dim beyond. Magical darkness does not affect it. Acts as a planar compass calibrated for lower-realm navigation: pulses when high-entropy areas are within 500 feet, faster as proximity increases.

Uses: Permanent lamp. Requires refilling every 8 hours with standard oil.

About

The infernal iron is what allows it to penetrate magical darkness - the lower realms recognize their own material and do not obstruct it.

Sorrow Stone

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A smooth heavy stone that absorbs emotional trauma. A creature who holds it during a full night's rest and concentrates on a specific grief may transfer that emotional weight into the stone. The memory remains but its sharpest pain is stored externally. Holds up to 3 transferred weights. A full stone must be placed in the Realm of Dream or emotional-resonance demirealm, where it absorbs over 1d4 days. A broken stone releases all stored grief at once in a 30-foot radius (WIS Mind save TN 15 or incapacitated 1 round).

Uses: Holds 3 emotional weights. Reusable after emptying.

About

Some clerics use them therapeutically. Others argue emotions should not be shelved in rocks. Both positions have merit. The stones do not have an opinion.

Astral Map Fragment

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A piece of silver-and-void parchment on which cosmological position can be read. Once per day on 10-minute meditation: the DN provides one true statement about the user's current cosmological position - which divine gravity is nearest, whether any planar entities are aware of their location, which direction the nearest demirealm lies, or what the dominant resonance of local Ethereal currently is.

Uses: Once per day.

About

Pieces of the same original Map find each other over time - two Fragment holders who come within a mile of each other both feel a faint pull of recognition.

Song Shard Instrument String

Type: Instrument Enhancement

Effect: A single string from the Realm of Song. When fitted to any stringed instrument: heard clearly at twice normal range; bearer is immune to the Silence Eater's Song Drain; once per day, a chord creates a 20-foot radius of harmonic resonance for 1 minute in which all allies gain +1 to all saves. The string still plays faintly when the instrument is not being touched.

Uses: Permanent once fitted.

About

The string still plays when the instrument is not being touched. Not loudly. Just present. Musicians who fit it to their instruments generally stop noticing within a week. Scholars who study them never stop being unsettled.

Truth Brand

Type: Consumable

Effect: A piece of void-glass chalk. When used to mark a creature (touch required or markings made on a surface they step through), leaves a brand visible only through Void Glass, Truesight (see invisible creatures and through illusion), or equivalent perception. The brand marks every lie the branded creature tells for 24 hours with a visible flare of red light. The creature is not aware of the brand or when it flares. Fades naturally after 24 hours.

Uses: One use per piece. Found 1d4 pieces at a time.

About

Considered deeply unethical by most clerics of gods who value honesty, on the grounds that honesty coerced by surveillance is not virtue.



Stellar Drift Dust

Type: Consumable

Effect: Silver dust from the deep Astral. When scattered in a 20-foot radius, creates temporary Ethereal permeability for 10 minutes. During this time: incorporeal Ethereal entities can enter the Material without Gate Keeper assessment; Material creatures can see into the adjacent Ethereal; magical effects interacting with the Ethereal have their range doubled while operating from within the dusted area.

Uses: One use. Found 1d3 pinches at a time.

About

Several Gate Keepers asked about it have said something translating approximately as 'be careful' and declined to elaborate.

The Vessel Incomplete

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A ceramic urn that appears unfinished - smooth surface, unpainted, as though the maker stopped. Objects placed inside are held in a stable liminal state between Material and Ethereal indefinitely. Objects do not age, decay, or interact with the physical world. Cannot be found by magical searching while inside. Retrieving requires speaking the object's name aloud while reaching in. Holds up to 5 objects simultaneously, each no larger than a human head.

Uses: Permanent. 5-object capacity.

About

The maker stopped because they did not know how to finish the glaze. The unfinished quality turned out to be the functional component. A complete vessel would have contained things in Material reality. The incomplete one contains them in the space between.

On Stacking and Cosmological Items

Standard magic stacking rules apply to all numeric bonuses. The qualitative effects - perception, planar interaction, cosmological sensing - do not stack mechanically but combine narratively. A party that has assembled a coherent cosmological toolkit - things that work together - has done something interesting. Reward it by making the cosmological layer genuinely explorable to them.

When a relic would bypass a major story obstacle, sealed realm, divine ward, Gate Keeper judgment, or campaign-defining mystery, the DN decides how the relic interacts with that force.



Chapter 11: Travel and the Realms

Moving between the realms of the Multirealms is not as simple as stepping through a door. It is a negotiation between what you are and where you are going, mediated by the Ethereal, assessed by the Gate Keepers, and limited by the physical reality of your mortal body. Some crossings are trivial. Others are the most dangerous thing a character will ever attempt.

This chapter explains the practical mechanics of planar travel - how each method works, what crossing feels like, how different classes handle the journey differently, how to survive once you arrive, and what happens when the trip goes wrong.



The Multirealms is infinite. You can go anywhere. Whether you survive the going is a different question entirely.

Methods of Travel

Not all planar travel is equal. The method you use determines the experience of crossing, the risks involved, and what the Gate Keepers make of your passage.

Lateral Movement - World to World Within the Material

The safest form of planar travel. When a party uses a portal, ley line, or vortex to move from one Material world to another, they are moving horizontally through the Ethereal membrane - never leaving the Material's resonance tier, simply relocating within it.

Portals are the cleanest crossing. Someone created them with intent, embedded a destination into their structure, and the resonance key is built into the arch or the activation mechanism. Step through, feel the briefest sensation of the Ethereal - a single breath of silver mist, a moment where your shadow is in a different place than your body - and you arrive. Gate Keepers rarely intervene in portal crossings unless the portal is malfunctioning or the traveler lacks the resonance the portal's creator encoded.

Ley line travel is older and less predictable. Ley lines are natural channels of accumulated magical energy threading through the Material Realm - the veins in the world's body. Attuning to a ley line and riding it to another confluence point takes time (typically hours, not minutes), requires concentration and a baseline magical sensitivity, and has a meaningful chance of producing arrival slightly off from the intended destination. The experience is a sustained low-level Ethereal immersion - travelers see flickering impressions of the worlds adjacent to the ley line's path, feel the emotional residue of the magic that has flowed through it, and arrive with the specific mental texture of someone who has been thoroughly washed.

Vortexes are ancient, natural threshold points where Material realities press close enough together to be accessible - old battlefields that happened in two worlds simultaneously, sacred sites where different cultures independently decided the same location was holy, geographic features that share resonance across the Ethereal membrane. Vortex travel is not reliable by human standards. The passage may be open only at certain times, or only to certain types of travelers, or only in one direction. But vortexes predate every civilization that has ever mapped them, and they connect some paths that no portal or ley line covers.



Resonance Shift - Leaving the Material Entirely

Crossing out of the Material Realm altogether - entering the Ethereal, ascending toward divine domains, descending into lower realms, or reaching specialty realms - is a fundamentally different kind of travel. The traveler is not merely relocating within a resonance tier. They are changing which tier they occupy.

The physical experience of a resonance shift is distinctive enough that experienced planar travelers can identify it in retrospect - a qualitative change in the sensory texture of the world around them. Material reality has a particular denseness: the air has friction, light has direction, silence sounds like something. As a traveler shifts resonance, these qualities change. Moving toward divine domains, reality becomes lighter - not physically but experientially, as if the specific gravity of consequence decreases and possibility increases. Moving toward lower realms, reality becomes heavier. Not the heaviness of fatigue but the heaviness of the specific knowledge that things tend toward dissolution and not much can be done about it.

Resonance shifts always pass through the Ethereal. There is no shortcut around the membrane. Every journey from the Material to any other realm includes an Ethereal transit period, even if it is brief. This is the moment of Gate Keeper assessment. Most sanctioned crossings - divine spells, proper portal use, authorized magical transit - move through this period so quickly that travelers only experience it as a heartbeat's worth of silver mist. Unauthorized crossings linger.

Astral Travel - Consciousness Without Body

The highest form of planar mobility and one of the most dangerous. Astral travel separates the traveler's consciousness from their body - the body remains behind in a protected state while the mind moves through the Astral layer of the Ethereal and from there to any destination in the Multirealms.

The advantages are significant: consciousness traveling astrally does not require the body to survive the resonance shifts that physical travel demands. A mortal body ascending toward a divine domain might begin to dissolve in the intensity of the resonance shift. A consciousness traveling astrally can navigate the same journey as pure awareness and experience none of the physical consequences.

The disadvantages are equally significant. The body left behind is vulnerable. Standard bodily maintenance ceases - the body does not eat, breathe, or respond to danger during astral projection. In safe locations, a few hours of astral travel poses no risk to the body. In dangerous locations, leaving the body unattended is leaving it undefended.



Additionally, a consciousness separated from its body for extended periods begins to thin. The Ethereal is happy to absorb wandering minds gradually, the same way water gradually absorbs warmth from a cooling object. Astral travelers returning from extended journeys sometimes find that they need to spend time consciously reconnecting with material existence - eating, handling physical objects, engaging in sensory activity - before they feel fully anchored again.

Navigation in the Astral is by intent. You do not swim through space. You aim at a destination - a place you know, a person you recognize, a concept you understand well enough to reach - and you move. The more clearly and specifically you can picture your destination, the more reliable the arrival. Vague destinations produce vague arrivals. A wizard who thinks 'I want to reach a divine realm' may arrive in any divine domain at all. A cleric who thinks 'I want to reach the hall of judgment in my deity's domain, specifically the hall where the golden scales hang and the feathers of truth are weighed' will arrive precisely.



The Physical Experience of Crossing

Every type of planar crossing has a physical and psychological texture. Experienced planar travelers develop a vocabulary for these experiences. First-timers are typically too disoriented to describe them accurately until afterward.

Portal Transit

The briefest of crossings. A heartbeat of silver mist. A sound like a word in a language you don't speak but almost understand. The sensation that you are in two places simultaneously for a fraction of a second, and then you are only in the new one. Some people find this pleasant. Some find it nauseating. The difference appears to be constitutional rather than psychological - some bodies handle discontinuity better than others.

Ethereal Immersion

Entering the Ethereal deliberately produces a sustained version of the portal transit sensation. The mist that was a heartbeat during portal use becomes the environment. Vision becomes doubled - Material world impressions layered over Ethereal reality, with neither quite solid. Sound behaves incorrectly: some sounds are louder than they should be, others muffled or absent. The traveler's own body is slightly translucent when they look at their hands. After a few minutes, most people adapt. After a few hours, the Ethereal starts to feel normal, which is the first warning sign.

Ascending Toward Divine Realms

The body becomes lighter, but this is not comfortable in the way physical lightness is comfortable. It feels more like certainty becoming optional - like the walls of your sense of self are becoming permeable. Experienced travelers describe it as the feeling of being held to a great intensity of attention. Less experienced travelers sometimes panic at this stage, and panic in a resonance shift is dangerous because strong emotion given physical form is exactly what the Ethereal produces given any encouragement.

As the traveler moves higher into the divine resonance, colors become more vivid than colors in the Material. Light does not come from a source but from everywhere. The sound of the traveler's own thoughts becomes audible - not as an external voice, but as a clear interior presence that is suddenly much more difficult to ignore than it normally is.

Descending Toward Lower Realms

The opposite. The body becomes heavier in the specific way that bad news feels heavy. Colors don't become less vivid - they become more so, but in the wrong direction, leaching toward shadows. The traveler's own hope becomes perceptible as a texture, a quality of the air around them, and that quality diminishes with each step deeper. Experienced travelers who have made this journey describe the key practice as keeping something to think about: a purpose, a person waiting for them, a task that must be completed. Abstract hope does not survive the descent. Specific, concrete, particular things to do - those hold.



Class-Specific Travel Notes

Not all travelers navigate the Multirealms the same way. A character's training and fundamental nature shape how they experience and survive planar transit.

Clerics

The natural planar travelers of the Material Realm. A cleric's divine connection is, at its core, a maintained Ethereal thread between the cleric and their deity's domain. They have been managing a low-level resonance connection their entire adventuring career. Full planar transit is an amplification of something they are already doing.

Clerics navigating toward divine realms aligned with their deity find the crossing significantly easier - the resonance key is built into their faith, and the Gate Keeper often reads the divine connection itself as sufficient sanction. Clerics ascending toward their own deity's domain may notice the Gate Keeper's presence only as a warmth and a brief sense of recognition, rather than the full weighing other travelers experience.

In lower realms, a cleric's divine connection provides meaningful psychological protection. The thread of divine resonance is a reminder that the lower realm is not the only reality - that somewhere, hope is not a structural weakness. This does not eliminate the lower realm's environmental pressure, but it creates a tether that keeps the cleric anchored to their own values and sense of purpose in a way that purely mundane travelers lack.

Wizards

Understand the Ethereal mechanically. A wizard who has studied planar theory can navigate the Ethereal the way a navigator uses charts - not by instinct but by knowledge, working systematically through the current position and applying known principles of Ethereal physics to reach the intended destination.

Teleportation spells encode this mechanical knowledge in their spell-form. The wizard constructs a destination in precise magical language, and the spell dissolves the caster through the Ethereal with a resonance key built from that precision. Sloppy destination encoding produces sloppy arrivals. Precise destination encoding, especially for locations the wizard has personally visited and can recall with accuracy, produces precise arrivals.

In divine realms, wizards often experience profound disorientation - not from the resonance shift itself but from encountering a reality where their mechanical understanding of magic



simply does not apply. The frameworks they use to organize arcane knowledge are based on Material physics, and the divine realms do not share that physics. Wizards who have studied theology alongside arcane theory navigate this better than those who haven't. The experience is humbling in a useful way.

Fighters

Physical training does not translate into planar resilience in any direct sense. A fighter does not cross the Ethereal more easily because they can run farther or lift more. But certain qualities that physical training produces do matter: the ability to endure discomfort without fixating on it, the discipline to maintain a specific mental focus under difficult conditions, the capacity to continue functioning when the environment is deeply unfamiliar.

In lower realms, fighters often adapt more readily than expected. The physical hardship that lower realms emphasize is something they have spent years training to endure. The psychological pressure is the harder challenge - a fighter whose survival has always depended on being able to reliably read a physical environment will find lower-realm reality more disorienting than lower-realm weight.

A Level 10 Ascended fighter, specifically, has a cosmological presence that divine realm entities recognize even before any formal introduction. The aura of a completed mortal story is unusual enough in divine space that Wardens and Arbiters may approach with curiosity rather than suspicion.

Thieves

Natural threshold-readers. A thief's professional attention to the difference between surfaces - what is solid and what will give, what is watched and what is not, where the gaps are - translates with surprising directness to Ethereal navigation. The Ethereal is full of gaps. A thief's instincts tell them where.

In the Realm of Dream specifically, thieves adapt to narrative logic faster than most other classes. Thieves are already accustomed to operating within a world organized around what people believe is happening rather than what is actually happening. Dream logic is an extreme version of a dynamic they have been navigating professionally since Level 1.

Survival Requirements by Realm

The realms of the Multirealms are not uniformly survivable. What you need to stay functional varies enormously by destination. The following covers the primary hazards and minimum preparations for each major realm tier.

The Ethereal World

The Ethereal does not require normal biological maintenance. Travelers in the Ethereal do not need to breathe, eat, or sleep in the same way the Material demands. This is an advantage on short transits and a trap on long ones - the absence of the body's usual maintenance requirements removes the natural rhythm that keeps mortals oriented in time.

The primary hazard of the Ethereal is drift. Extended presence without an anchor - a physical object of strong personal significance, a living creature who will notice if you start to fade, a destination that you are actively moving toward rather than simply existing in - allows the Ethereal to begin incorporating you. Drift Ghosts are the extreme endpoint of this process. Travelers who feel their name becoming less important, who find themselves thinking about nothing for long stretches, who notice that the emotional significance of their memories is thinning, are drifting.

Secondary hazards: predators (Mist Horrors, Thought Leeches, Veil Weavers), manifested fears taking physical form near emotionally volatile travelers, and the specific disorientation of the Memory Sea if entered without preparation.

Minimum preparation: an anchor object (strongly preferred), a companion, a clear destination. The Ethereal Anchor Rope is specifically designed for this. If none of these are available, a written record of who you are and why you entered the Ethereal, kept on your person, provides measurable psychological resistance to drift.

Divine Realms

The primary hazard of divine realms is resonance incompatibility. Mortal bodies are not built for the resonance density of the upper reaches. A mortal spending extended time in a divine domain without protection begins to experience what theologians call dissolution of self - the boundary between the traveler's own identity and the domain's resonant character becomes porous. In small doses, this produces profound spiritual experience. In large doses, it produces the equivalent of an identity lost to immersion.



The practical manifestation: extended time in a divine domain without divine sanction or protection causes the traveler to gradually take on the character of the domain. In a war god's domain, this might mean becoming progressively more aggressive and honor-focused. In a knowledge god's domain, progressively more detached and observational. These are not purely negative changes, but they are changes, and undirected change is usually less good than intentional growth.

Protection: divine sanction (a cleric's connection to the domain's deity provides automatic sanction), a powerful blessing from any divine realm entity that recognizes you as a legitimate visitor, or temporary divine items (Shard of Divine Gravity from the relevant deity's domain provides basic resonance insulation). Without protection, safe time in a divine domain is roughly 8 hours for a prepared traveler, 2-3 hours for an unprepared one.

Additional note: undead cannot enter most divine domains. Lower-realm creatures are actively repelled. The physics of a divine domain's resonance functions as a barrier to entities whose fundamental nature conflicts with it.

Lower Realms

The Lower Realms are evil because their very fabric resists life, hope, mercy, and recovery. The primary hazards of lower realms are environmental other than creatures: the Realism Gradient at the lower end of the oblong produces a physical pressure on hope, on rest, and on biological recovery that operates continuously regardless of what creatures are present. In places where healing weakens, rest fails, darkness presses back, and despair becomes part of the air, evil does not merely appear - it evolves as the natural behavior of a reality built against restoration.

Natural healing is halved in most lower realms. In the deepest regions - the Grinding Dark, the Depths Below Thought - natural healing ceases entirely. Magical healing functions normally but feels different: the energy required to heal is real and the results are real, but the sense of restoration - the feeling of having recovered - does not accompany it. A cleric in the Grinding Dark can heal the party to full HP. The party will feel injured.

Rest is partial. A full night's sleep in a lower realm provides the biological benefits of rest (HP recovery per the unsafe rest rules) but does not remove mental fatigue or restore the kind of purpose and clarity that rest in the Material produces. Multiple nights in a lower realm without returning to the Material begin to accumulate a specific psychological weight. Players should feel this, not just track it mechanically.



Light is hostile in lower realms in a way that can be difficult to describe precisely. Mundane light sources work. They work shorter and dimmer than their specifications suggest. Magical light works at specification. But the darkness between light sources in a lower realm is not merely the absence of illumination - it is something that presses back. The Lower Realm Lantern's value is not just its range. It is the specific quality of the light it produces - infernal iron's resonance makes the darkness treat it as native, rather than pressing back against it.

Protection: the Entropy Ward covers the environmental pressure within its radius. The Celestial Feather Mantle helps with specific lower-realm damage types. Clerics with a connection to protective or death-transition deities have meaningful native resilience. Fighters and warriors adapted to physical hardship endure the physical aspects more readily. No one endures the psychological aspects easily - that is not a failure of preparation, it is the correct response to a place whose fundamental nature is antithetical to life.

The Realm of Dream

The Dreaming operates on narrative logic. This means that the primary survival skill in the Realm of Dream is not combat, healing, or magical power. It is the ability to maintain a coherent sense of your own story.

The Dreaming will attempt to incorporate you into its narrative. This is not malicious - the Realm of Dream does this to everything, the way a river shapes everything in it. A traveler without a strong, clear, specific sense of who they are and what they are doing in the Dreaming will find the realm building a story around them, assigning them roles in its own ongoing narrative that may or may not align with their actual goals.

Extended stays without leaving: After one full dream cycle in the Dreaming, the traveler makes a WIS Mind save (TN 12). A dream cycle may resemble 24 hours, but it is measured by the movement of the local dream-narrative rather than by Material time. Failure means the traveler has become partially integrated into the dream and cannot willfully leave until the narrative reaches a resolution point. Save TN increases by 2 for each additional dream cycle spent without leaving.

The Dream Catcher's Lens is the most useful item for Dreaming navigation. The Astral Drift Stone can provide an exit anchor for astral travelers. For physical travelers, maintaining a ritual of Material connection - eating food brought from outside, speaking your own name aloud regularly, handling objects with strong emotional significance from your own history - provides meaningful protection against narrative absorption.



The Realm of Hunger

Do not bring magical items you cannot afford to lose. The Realm of Hunger does not steal them. It simply consumes them more quickly than the Material would. Magical charges drain faster. Consumables last shorter. Objects deteriorate. This is the realm's ambient physics, not creature behavior.

The specific survival requirement is caloric. All biological processes in the Realm of Hunger cost more than they should. A traveler who is not actively hungry when they arrive will be within hours. A traveler who is hungry when they arrive should leave. The Hunger Ward Amulet suppresses this drain. Without it: double all normal food and water requirements per day in the Realm of Hunger, or suffer -1 to all rolls per day without adequate intake.

The specific psychological hazard is contagion. Extended time in the Realm of Hunger produces a specific flavor of want in travelers - not necessarily hunger for food but an amplification of whatever personal lack currently resonates most strongly in them. Travelers who are missing something emotionally, who are pursuing something they have not achieved, who have an unmet need of any kind find that need intensifying until it is difficult to think about anything else. This is not a magical effect - it is the realm's fundamental resonance expressing through them. Having specific, immediate, achievable purposes while in the Realm of Hunger provides meaningful psychological resistance.

The Realm of Song

The Realm of Song is one of the more hospitable specialty realms for prepared travelers - it does not actively threaten most visitors and its fundamental nature (harmony, resonance, the beauty of sound as organizing principle) is not hostile to life.

The primary hazard is sensory overwhelm. The Realm of Song is loud in a way that transcends decibels - the volume is manageable but the information density is not. Every sound carries meaning, and the meaning arrives whether you want it or not. Travelers in the Realm of Song for extended periods report persistent mild tinnitus upon returning to the Material, which fades over days. Some also report a period of finding the Material's ambient sound significantly less interesting than it was before, which is disorienting in a subtle way.

Spells with verbal components are amplified in the Realm of Song, and require more precise enunciation than in the Material - the realm's physics responds to the quality of the sound, not just its presence. A poorly spoken verbal component may produce a spell with slightly different parameters than intended. A beautifully spoken one may produce a spell that slightly exceeds its listed parameters. The DN should adjudicate both with generosity.



Protection against Silence Eaters (common in the corrupted margins of the Realm of Song) is the Song Shard Instrument String or any item that reinforces the user's own resonance. The Silence Eater targets incoherent resonance - a traveler whose own sound is clear and strong is a harder target.

Natural Thresholds and How to Find Them

Not all crossings require constructed portals or powerful spells. The Multirealms is perforated with natural thresholds - places where the Ethereal membrane has grown thin through long use, geographic coincidence, or the accumulated weight of human significance.

Ley line confluences are the most reliable natural thresholds. Where two or more ley lines meet, the accumulated magical energy creates a natural thinning in the Ethereal membrane. These confluences are typically marked by generations of use - prehistoric stone circles, sacred groves, ancient battlefields, the sites of significant magical events. A traveler with magical sensitivity (any spellcaster, or a thief trained to read magical environments) can detect a ley line confluence within roughly half a mile.

Places where death has concentrated are natural lower-realm thresholds. Not places where single deaths have occurred - mass casualties, places where many died with strong shared emotion, locations of ongoing suffering. The accumulated weight of those deaths creates a natural thinning in the direction of the lower realms. This is why ancient battlefields are cosmologically significant: they are natural lower-realm access points, and the creatures that use them treat them accordingly.

Places of profound regular worship - not grand temples (which are constructed thresholds) but sites where genuine, sustained, deeply felt devotion has occurred over generations - develop natural thinning toward the relevant deity's domain. A small shrine that has been genuinely prayed at every morning for three hundred years may have a more accessible divine threshold than an enormous cathedral built as a political statement.

Demirealm boundaries are their own category of natural threshold. Every demirealm has a border, and that border is, by definition, a place where Material and Ethereal are already



mixed. Entering the Ethereal from inside a demirealm is significantly easier than entering from ordinary Material space - the membrane is already compromised.

When Things Go Wrong

Planar travel has failure modes. Some are inconvenient. Some are fatal. Experienced planar travelers develop contingency habits the same way experienced dungeon delvers develop torch-lighting protocols.

Misaimed Teleportation

The most common serious planar travel failure. A teleportation spell with imprecise destination encoding may produce any of the following: arrival in the correct general area but wrong specific location (usually harmless, occasionally embarrassing, sometimes into walls); arrival in the correct dimension but the wrong world entirely (survivable if the world has breathable air); arrival in the Ethereal rather than the destination (lost, but alive, and the Ethereal is at least navigable); or arrival partially inside a solid object (this is fatal).

The DN should scale mis-aimed teleportation to the precision of the spell's construction and the caster's level. A Level 9 wizard teleporting to a location they have visited thirty times should rarely fail catastrophically. A Level 4 wizard teleporting to a description from a book has significantly more room for the story to create complications.

Gate Keeper Refusal

A Gate Keeper that refuses passage does not kill the traveler. It holds them. The traveler exists in a suspension state at the threshold - unable to proceed, unable to return without the Gate Keeper's decision, but not in immediate danger. The suspension can last moments or what feels like years.

Gate Keeper refusal is not punishment. It is assessment. A traveler held at a threshold needs to provide what the Keeper requires - truth, clarity of purpose, adequate resonance preparation, or the understanding that they are not ready for their destination and should return to complete their preparation. The correct response to Gate Keeper refusal is never violence. The correct response is attention to what is actually being asked.



Resonance Incompatibility

When a traveler enters a realm whose resonance is too far from their own for safe occupation - a purely Material-oriented character attempting to enter the deepest divine domains without preparation, for example - their body and soul begin to diverge. The physical body resists the new reality (unable to properly exist in a place where belief shapes matter and physics doesn't govern). The soul is pulled toward the new resonance (because souls are resonance-based entities and will always tend toward alignment with their environment).

Early signs: confusion about which things are real, difficulty maintaining a consistent sense of personal identity, perceptions from the destination realm bleeding into normal sensory experience. Late signs: the body and consciousness operating on different assumptions about reality. DN intervention is appropriate here - this is a story moment, not a mechanical one, and the resolution should reflect the character's specific nature and situation.

Soul-Body Separation During Astral Travel

During astral travel, the body remains alive but inert, like a lamp with its flame elsewhere. It must be guarded, because harm to the body can strand the traveler's consciousness beyond the Material.

Time does not always pass evenly between the Astral and the Material body left behind. In shallow Astral travel, the difference is usually minor - minutes remain minutes, hours remain hours. In deeper Astral currents, especially near divine domains, lower realms, old demirealms, or Gate Keeper thresholds, subjective time may stretch or compress dramatically. A traveler might experience a day of wandering, conversation, or trial while only minutes pass around the physical body, or return from what felt like a brief crossing to find that hours have gone by. The DN decides the exact relationship, but astral time should always feel slightly untrustworthy once the traveler moves far from the Material anchor.

The most dangerous failure specific to astral projection occurs when the traveler's body is killed while their consciousness is traveling astrally. If this happens, the consciousness cannot return. The soul continues in the Astral or moves toward the appropriate afterlife. This is not immediate death - it is a state of genuine cosmic crisis, as the person still exists as consciousness but has no body to return to.

If the traveler's astral connection is severed by hostile action - certain creatures and magical effects can cut the cord between astral consciousness and physical body - the consciousness is immediately lost in the Ethereal and must find its own way back to the



body (which typically regains consciousness when the connection is severed, disoriented and Weary). This is recoverable but harrowing.

Precaution: never leave a body unguarded during astral projection. Ideally, leave it in a location with a companion specifically tasked with protection. The Gate Caller's Horn, held by the guardian, allows them to summon Gate Keeper attention if the body is threatened - an extreme measure, but available.

Gear, Weapons and Traveling

The simplest rule is this: **when the body travels, the gear travels with it. When only the consciousness travels, physical gear stays behind.**

A character who steps through a portal, rides a ley line, or passes through a vortex carries what they are wearing and holding, unless the crossing specifically rejects it. Armor, weapons, packs, coins, relics, spellbooks, and holy symbols travel with the body because the body itself has crossed.

Portals are usually the cleanest form of travel for equipment. A properly made portal carries the traveler and their immediate possessions as one complete physical presence. The sword at the belt, the cloak on the shoulders, the pack on the back, and the ring on the finger all pass through as part of the traveler's Material pattern. The portal's resonance key decides what belongs to the traveler and what does not. A worn amulet passes easily. A wagon full of stolen temple bells may not.

Ley line travel also carries physical gear, but less neatly. Because ley lines move travelers through natural magical channels rather than crafted doors, carried objects may pick up residue from the journey. Metal may feel warm, cold, or faintly humming. Ink may blur and settle again. Food may taste slightly different. Most of these effects are harmless, but sensitive relics, cursed items, divine objects, or lower-realm materials may react strongly to the current being traveled.

Vortex travel is the least predictable. A vortex is not built to serve travelers; it is a natural threshold where realities press close together. Most of the time, gear travels with the body, but the DN may decide that certain objects arrive changed, delayed, marked, or rejected if they do not match the nature of the crossing. A blade carried into a realm of peace may grow heavy. A holy symbol taken through a lower-realm vortex may burn cold against the skin. A stolen relic may arrive before its thief, waiting in the dust like an accusation.

Astral travel is different. During astral projection, the traveler's consciousness leaves the body, but physical gear remains behind. Weapons, armor, packs, coins, tools, scrolls, spellbooks, and ordinary relics do not travel into the Astral unless a specific spell, item, or



realm effect says otherwise. The body remains where it was placed, surrounded by the traveler's real possessions, vulnerable to theft, damage, or interference.

An astral form may still appear clothed, armored, or armed, but these appearances are expressions of identity, memory, faith, and training. A fighter may appear with a ghostly version of their trusted sword. A cleric may appear with the symbol of their god shining at their chest. A thief may appear with spectral tools at their belt. These are not physical items. They are the traveler's idea of themselves given temporary shape.

The DN decides what astral gear can actually do. In most cases, astral weapons and armor function only as part of the traveler's spiritual presence, not as true equipment. A warrior's astral blade may allow them to fight astral threats because the warrior's will knows itself through the weapon. A

wizard's astral spellbook may appear as pages of memory, but losing it does not destroy the real spellbook beside the body. A cleric's astral holy symbol may carry real devotional force because faith is not purely physical.

Some items are exceptions. Certain relics are made specifically to cross boundaries of body and spirit. A Gate Keeper's Seal, astral stone, divine shard, dream-lens, soul-chain, or similar object may project an echo of itself with the traveler, or may allow its power to be invoked from the body's side of the connection.

Such items should be rare and clearly noted. Ordinary gear stays with the body. Realm-touched relics may bend that rule.

This distinction matters because travel should have consequences. A party entering a portal is still physically armed. A party riding a ley line still carries its packs. A party stepping into a vortex may bring everything and still arrive changed. But a party traveling astrally leaves its steel, rations, armor, and sleeping bodies behind. They enter as selves rather than as inventory.



Senna Voss



I have been everywhere you are planning to go. I am not going to tell you what to expect. If I tell you what to expect, you will expect it. What you need instead is to be ready for something else.

Who She Is

The first thing most people notice about Senna Voss is that she is already oriented to the exits. Not nervously - there is no anxiety in it. It is simply a habit of awareness that has had thirty years of planes travel to become reflexive. She knows where the doors are, which walls are load-bearing, where the ley lines run under the floor, and whether the local Ethereal is stable. She registered all of this in the first thirty seconds after she arrived, and she filed it away the way experienced travelers file away weather, and she is now paying complete attention to the conversation.

She is a hundred and eighty-seven years old, which for an elf is not particularly old - she could live another three centuries without unusual effort. She has been traveling the planes for thirty-one of those years. She looks like an elf woman in her middle thirties: dark hair kept short and practical, a face that has learned not to express surprise, clothes that are well-made and very worn in the specific pattern of someone who moves through environments that are hard on clothing. The twin blades at her hips are the nicest things she owns, which is a choice she made deliberately thirty years ago and has never reconsidered.

What is harder to see immediately, and what becomes apparent over the course of a conversation, is that Senna is genuinely lonely in a way she has not yet found the language to describe. She has been moving for thirty-one years. She knows the Silver Roads better than most Gate Keepers. She can navigate the Ethereal by feel, read ley lines like river currents, and identify a demirealm boundary from a hundred yards by the specific quality of the air pressure. What she cannot do, after thirty-one years of moving through the most extraordinary places in the Multirealms, is stay.

Where She Came From

Senna was born in a port city in a world she no longer names, the youngest of four children in a family of dockworkers who were unremarkable in every way that she eventually became remarkable in. She was a thief from approximately age twelve, which in that city was not unusual, and she was very good at it, which was. She worked the docks and the cargo districts and the occasional wealthy house, and she was building toward something she would have described at the time as security, which she understood to mean a room that was hers and enough money that the room could stay hers for a while.



The portal was in a warehouse she was robbing. She did not know it was a portal - it looked like a door, which is often what portals look like, which is part of the problem. She stepped through it because there was someone behind her and the door was in front of her, and the logic of her profession said that doors are for going through. She came out in a world that smelled wrong in three different ways and where the sky was the wrong color. She was twenty-three years old.

Getting back took three years. Not because the distance was great - it wasn't, as planar distances go - but because she did not know what she was doing, had no equipment, had no knowledge, and had no one to ask who spoke a language she recognized. She learned. She learned planar navigation by navigating the planes incorrectly several hundred times and noting what went wrong. She learned Ethereal movement by getting lost in the Ethereal for two weeks and using the time productively. She learned which creatures could be negotiated with and which could not by attempting negotiation with most of them. By the time she found her way back, she was someone different.

She stayed for eleven days. Her family was alive and well. The city was exactly as she had left it. The room she had been saving toward was available. She stood in the doorway of it for a long time, understanding something she did not have the words for yet, and then she walked back out and went to find another portal.

What She Does Now

Senna Voss moves. She has been in every realm documented in this book and several that aren't. She makes her living through a combination of skills that do not have a tidy professional name: she finds things that are lost in the planes, she carries messages between people who cannot carry them themselves, she occasionally acquires objects from locations that are difficult to reach and more difficult to survive long enough to leave. She is very good at all of these things.

She keeps the journal she has been writing in for thirty-one years. It is the most comprehensive single document on planar navigation currently in existence, and she is aware of this, and she does not distribute copies. The knowledge is hers. It was earned by a method that is not reproducible without repeating the thirty-one years.

She appears where she is needed, which is not the same as where she is wanted. She has a quality of arriving at the specific moment when someone is about to make a mistake that she has made before, and offering them one piece of information that reframes the situation



entirely. Whether she does this deliberately or whether she simply moves toward situations that require what she has and arrives accordingly is something she has not been able to determine. She suspects both are true and the distinction is not as large as it appears.

What she is looking for - what she has been looking for, she suspects, since she stepped through that warehouse door at twenty-three - is a place that feels the way home is supposed to feel. She has not found it. She has found many places that are extraordinary and beautiful and worth the visit. She has not found the one that makes her want to stop moving. She is not sure anymore whether this means the place does not exist or whether the thirty-one years of moving have changed her in ways that make stopping impossible regardless of destination.

SENNA VOSS

Elven thief, 187 years old. Has been moving through the planes for thirty-one of them. Reads Ethereal currents the way sailors read water. Has stopped being surprised by anything, which she considers both an achievement and a loss.

HP: 56

AC: 16

DR: 2

Save Roll: Quick +6, Tough +3, Mind +3

Alignment: Impartial Impartial (Wanderer)

Dexterity: 18

Magic Resistance: Resistant to planar disorientation effects. Cannot become lost in the Ethereal.

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: +6 vs AC, 1d6+4 (damage) per blade (two paired short blades of Ethereal-forged steel)

Size: Medium

Special Defense: Threshold Read: when any planar boundary is within 300 feet, Senna is immediately aware of it, its approximate stability, and whether anything has crossed it in the past hour. Cannot be surprised at planar thresholds. Keen Hearing.

Special Attack: Twin-Strike Necklace: The necklace Senna wears allows her to make two melee attacks on her turn with her paired short blades.

Behavior / Roleplaying

Senna does not explain herself in advance. She answers questions with questions until she decides you are worth talking to directly, at which point she is entirely honest in a way that can be disorienting. She helps when she judges it worth her time and does not apologize when she judges it isn't. She always knows the nearest exit.

DN Note

Use Senna as the party's most knowledgeable planar contact - she has been where they are going, probably more than once. She will not guide them. She will tell them one true and specific thing about their destination that they could not have found elsewhere, then she will be somewhere else. If the party earns her ongoing attention, she is one of the most valuable allies in any planar campaign.

What She Carries

Senna travels light. Everything she owns fits in a pack that she can put on and run with in under ten seconds. The following items are always with her.

The Accumulated Journal

Type: Wondrous Item (unique)

Effect: A journal Senna has been writing in for thirty-one years. If a reader spends one hour with a specific section, they gain +3 to all navigation and survival Chance Rolls for any realm that section covers. The journal covers every realm in this book and several that aren't. Senna does not lend it.

About

The binding has been replaced four times. The pages are a mix of three different papers from three different worlds. The handwriting changes as you move through it - more hurried in the early sections, precise and economical now. Several pages are blank, which she has noted means she has not yet decided what those experiences meant.

Twin Blades: Margin and Threshold

Type: Weapon (paired short blades)

Effect: Forged from Ethereal boundary material by a smith in a demirealm that no longer exists. Margin deals 1d6+4 slashing and ignores the DR of incorporeal or partially-Ethereal creatures entirely. Threshold deals 1d6+4 and on a natural 18-20 forces the target to make a WIS Mind save (TN 14) or be briefly displaced one step into the Ethereal - untargetable for 1 round but unable to affect the Material.

About

Senna had them made after her first year in the planes, when she understood that ordinary weapons were insufficient for what she was walking through. The smith accepted payment in the form of three days of Senna telling her everything she had seen. She considered this a fair exchange. Senna was less certain.

The One Coin

Type: Wondrous Item

Effect: A coin from a civilization that no longer exists anywhere. Senna flips it when she cannot decide. She claims it is not magical. She has never tested this claim and is aware of the irony.

About

She has had it since before she started traveling. It is the only thing she carries that predates her departure. She does not discuss where it came from.

DN Guidance

Senna Voss works best as a recurring figure the party encounters at unexpected moments across multiple sessions or a campaign arc. She is not a quest-giver - she does not have missions to hand out. She has information, and she trades information for information, and the party will find over time that she knows more about what they are doing than she should.

She is not a villain and she is not a mentor. She is the person who has been where the party is going and made it back. Use her for the specific piece of knowledge that reframes a situation - the thing about the realm they are entering that changes their entire approach. One true thing per encounter is the right economy. Anything more and she becomes a resource to be mined rather than a person to be known.

If the party earns her genuine respect - by doing something she has not seen before, by surviving something she expected to kill them, by asking the right question - she may offer to travel with them briefly. Briefly means until the current situation resolves. She will then move on. This is not a betrayal. It is what she does.

Davan Crucis



I went in to bring someone back. I want to be precise about that. I did not go in for myself. I went in for someone else. I want that to be clear before I say anything else, because everything else follows from it.

Who He Is

Davan Crucis is a man who came back from the Depths Below Thought, which almost no one does, and who has spent twenty-four years since his return trying to be the person who came back rather than the person who went in. He is not sure how successfully he has managed this. He does not think the distinction matters as much as he once thought it did.

He is forty-seven years old. He looks older in some lights and younger in others, which is what happens when the face has settled into an expression of permanent equanimity - without the usual markers of ongoing emotional weather, age becomes harder to read. He is large and very still and carries his great axe with the casual familiarity of someone who has been carrying it for twenty-four years. The stillness is not calm exactly, or not only calm. It is the stillness of someone who has discovered that most things resolve themselves if you wait long enough, and who has the patience to wait long enough, and who learned that patience in a place where patience was not a virtue but a survival requirement.

He speaks in sentences that are shorter than the thoughts they contain. Not because he lacks words - his vocabulary is extensive, his thinking is precise, and he reads when he can find things worth reading. But the Depths took something from his relationship to language that he has been slowly recovering for twenty-four years and has not entirely recovered. He trusts physical things. He trusts what has already happened. Abstract futures and complex plans require a specific kind of cognitive trust that the Depths spent eight months carefully dismantling, and which he has rebuilt, imperfectly, piece by piece.

Where He Came From

He was twenty-three and a soldier in a war that has since ended and been mostly forgotten, which is the fate of most wars. He was not remarkable. He was brave in the way that people who have not been tested yet can be brave - with the specific confidence of someone who does not yet know what the testing feels like. He was good at what he did. He had a partner who was better, and who he would follow anywhere, and who was taken into the Depths Below Thought by something that came out of a lower-realm portal during the battle's worst hour.

He went in after her. The decision took approximately four seconds and he has never reconsidered it in the twenty-four years since. He did not know what the Depths were. He



had not heard the name. He went in because she went in and he was not the kind of person who did not follow.

He was in the Depths for eight months. Time moves strangely there - for him it felt like two years and like two weeks simultaneously, which is what happens when the faculty that organizes experience into sequence begins to fail. He found her. He found her in the specific way you find something in the Depths: not by navigating toward it but by moving toward what he most needed to find, which is the only navigation that works in a place where spatial logic has been dissolved. He found her and she was not recoverable, which is a word he chose carefully for what he means, and which he does not explain further.

He came back alone. The Gate Keeper at the Depths' boundary held him for what felt like three days - testing something, weighing something - and then let him through. He has not asked the Gate Keeper what it was weighing. He is not certain he wants to know. He walked out of the lower-realm transit into the Material and sat down on the ground for an hour before he could make himself stand up and move.

What He Does Now

Davan goes where he is needed, which is a sentence that sounds like heroism and is actually more specific than that. He goes where something difficult needs to be endured by someone who knows how to endure difficult things. He has been in seventeen lower realms, three specialty realms, and more demirealms than he has counted. He has helped parties survive environments that should have killed them, not by being stronger than the environment but by being patient enough to outlast it.

He does not charge for this. He does not charge for anything. He has almost no possessions and no expenses and no fixed location and has not needed money in a meaningful way for the better part of two decades. People offer him things and he accepts what is useful and returns what isn't, and everyone involved understands this is not generosity or philosophy but simply the accounting system of someone who travels light for reasons he does not entirely explain.

He is working on the letter. It has been fourteen pages for six months now, which is the longest it has stayed the same length. He thinks he may be approaching something he can say. He is not rushing it. He has learned that the things worth saying cannot be rushed, and he has learned this the way he has learned everything since the Depths: by discovering the cost of the alternative.



What he carries from the Depths - what he will always carry, in the specific way that certain experiences become architectural rather than biographical - is a relationship to impermanence that most people spend their lives avoiding. He does not avoid it. He has been in the place where thought itself becomes difficult, where language retreats, where the self thins to its most essential components. He came back. He knows what came back. Most days he considers this enough.

DAVAN CRUCIS	
<i>Human barbarian, 47 years old, went into the Depths Below Thought at 23 and came back alone after eight months. Speaks carefully. Fights without hesitation. The two qualities are related.</i>	
HP: 108	AC: 15
DR: 4	Save Roll: Quick +3, Tough +6, Mind +5
Alignment: Orderly Kind (Guardian)	Strength: 19
Magic Resistance: Immune to INT drain. Resistant to psychic and fear effects. Cannot be reduced below 1 INT by any means.	Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: +7 vs AC, 1d12+5 per strike (great axe, no name, never named)	Size: Medium
Special Defense: What Remains: Davan has already lost most of what can be taken from a person and still come back. Any effect that would stun, charm, or disorient him requires him to fail two saves in the same round rather than one. The second save occurs at the end of the round. Resilient.	
Special Attack: The Long Patience: once per encounter, Davan may wait. He takes no action this round. His next attack deals triple damage and ignores all damage reduction. He has been known to wait three rounds for the right moment. The effect does not expire.	
Behavior / Roleplaying <i>Davan is very still. Not frozen - present, but with the specific stillness of someone who has learned that most movement is unnecessary. He listens entirely when someone is speaking. He answers after a pause that is slightly longer than comfortable. He does not raise his voice. When violence is necessary he moves with a directness that is almost shocking in someone who moves so slowly otherwise - no escalation, no warning beyond the single moment of decision visible in his face before it happens.</i>	
DN Note Davan works best as a figure who arrives when the situation has become genuinely dire - not to rescue the party, but to be present with them in it. He does not fix problems. He endures them alongside whoever needs enduring alongside. The party will understand, after one encounter, that he has survived worse than this.	

What He Carries

Davan carries nothing that is not useful. He has four items: the axe, the letter, a bedroll, and a knife for eating. The bedroll and the knife are not listed here.

The Axe Without a Name

Type: Weapon (great axe)

Effect: A great axe that Davan made himself after returning from the Depths. No magical enhancement. No known special material. It deals **1d12 + Strength bonus** damage as a great axe. It has never broken. It has been used for twenty-four years of steady, serious use across multiple realms and has never chipped. Davan has never had it examined. He does not want to know.

About

He made it because he needed something to do with his hands in the first months after he returned, when he was relearning what it felt like to make decisions. The making of it was the therapy. The axe is the record of that process. He is not sentimental about it in the way others might be sentimental about a weapon. He is practical about it: it works, and so does he.

The Single Letter

Type: Personal item

Effect: A letter Davan has been writing for twenty-four years to the person he went into the Depths to retrieve. It is currently fourteen pages long. He adds to it occasionally. He has no intention of delivering it because there is no one to deliver it to. He carries it because some things need to be said even when there is no one to say them to.

About

If the party ever reads it - which would require stealing it from him - the DN should determine its contents privately and communicate them to one player character as a scene. Not a stat. Not a game mechanic. A story.

Depths-Touched Scar

Type: Permanent condition (cosmological)

Effect: The specific quality of the Depths Below Thought has left a mark on Davan's cognitive architecture that is not entirely a disadvantage. He is immune to Intelligence drain of any kind and cannot be reduced below 1 Intelligence by any effect. He also has a permanent -1 penalty to all Chance Rolls that require abstract planning more than one day in advance. The Depths taught his mind to distrust the future's reliability. He finds this trade acceptable.

About: The mark is not visible. It is occasionally audible - in the very long pauses before he speaks, which are not hesitation but the sound of a mind that learned to be very careful about which words are worth using.



DN Guidance

Davan Crucis is the figure you bring in when the party is in the kind of trouble that cannot be fixed by cleverness or magical power - the trouble that must simply be survived. He does not solve problems. He sits with the party in the middle of them and demonstrates, by existing, that survival is possible.

His most powerful quality as an NPC is not his combat statistics but what he communicates without saying it: that there are things worse than what the party is currently facing, and that those things can be survived, and that the person who survived them is sitting right here, choosing to be present. This is the most useful kind of comfort and one of the rarest.

Use the letter as a long-term story thread. If the party is with him long enough, they will wonder about the letter. If they ask, he will not tell them what is in it. If they earn his trust over a sustained arc, he may read them one passage - not the whole thing, one passage - which the DN should write before the moment arrives and make good.

Orreth



My god died three hundred and eleven years ago. I have written four hundred pages of theology attempting to explain this and I consider all four hundred pages preliminary notes.

Who She Is

Orreth is four hundred and twelve years old, which for a gnome is genuinely old - gnomes live long but not this long without paying attention to the living. She looks like a gnome woman in her apparent mid-hundreds: small, silver-haired, with the specific quality of someone whose face has settled into the expression it will keep. In her case the expression is intense, benign curiosity. It is not a mask. It is what three hundred years of trying to answer an unanswerable question does to a face.

Her god died in the year she turned one hundred and one. She was celebrating the centennial of her ordination that week, which she considers the universe's most pointed editorial comment on the practice of religious devotion. The death was felt by every cleric in the god's service simultaneously - a specific quality of silence where the divine connection had been, like a voice stopping mid-sentence. Some of her colleagues lost their spells. Some lost their faith. Some lost both.

Orreth lost neither, which is the problem she has been working on ever since.

She heals people. This is the first and most important thing about her practically: she will heal anyone who needs it, without charge, without condition, without theological prerequisites. This is not generosity. It is obligation. She has the capability and the person needs it and the accounting is straightforward. She has healed people she disagrees with profoundly and people she actively dislikes and people who were, in her considered judgment, significant contributors to their own poor condition. None of these considerations affect the healing. The healing is a separate matter.

Where She Came From

She was born in a gnomish community of scholars and tinkerers in a world with a robust theological tradition that included, among other things, a deity of small precise mechanisms - locks and gears and the specific elegance of a system whose parts fit together without waste. This deity's portfolio was narrow enough to be coherent and broad enough to encompass, at its philosophical edges, a theology of right relationship: things that fit together because they are meant to, because their natures align, because the universe is organized on principles of elegant connection.



Orreth became a cleric of this god at thirty-one, which for a gnome is early, and she was good at it in the way that people are good at things when the thing matches something fundamental in their nature. She had a gift for the specific kind of healing that addressed the mechanism of an injury rather than simply closing its visible expression - a broken arm healed correctly rather than just quickly, a fever broken by addressing its cause rather than suppressing its symptom. She spent seventy years being very good at something she loved.

Then her god died and her spells kept working and she has spent three hundred and eleven years trying to understand why.

The first century after the death she spent in grief and confusion, which is the appropriate response. The second century she spent in systematic scholarly investigation, examining every theological and cosmological framework she could locate for an explanation that fit the evidence. The third century she spent in the Quiet Shore and the divine realm margins, consulting directly with death gods and transition entities about the mechanics of divine death and what, if anything, persists. She has not found an answer that satisfies her. She has found enough partial answers to fill four hundred pages of preliminary notes.

What She Does Now

Orreth moves between the Quiet Shore, the divine realm boundaries, and the Material worlds she finds most theologically interesting. She heals people she encounters. She asks questions. She writes down the answers and the questions raised by the answers. She has become, over three hundred years, the most comprehensive expert on divine death and its cosmological consequences currently in existence, which is a distinction she holds in the same spirit she holds everything: with curiosity about what it means and genuine uncertainty about its implications.

She is working on a theology. Not the theology of her dead god - that is documented, finished, historical. A new theology, built from the evidence of her own continued existence, whose central question is what it means to serve a function when the institution that defined the function is gone. What is a cleric when the god is dead? What is devotion when its object no longer exists? She does not find these questions distressing. She finds them the most interesting questions she has ever encountered, and she has been alive for four hundred years, and she has encountered a very large number of questions. She writes about them with the specific energy of someone who is genuinely engaged with a problem that has not yet been solved. She laughs when she finds an answer that opens three new questions, which is often. She has been laughing like that for three hundred years. She expects to be laughing like that for several hundred more.



The warmth that radiates from her - that animals feel, that children rest in, that makes lower-realm creatures uncomfortable - she cannot explain and has stopped trying to explain. The Solar Warden who told her she smelled like a god's unfinished intention said it with evident discomfort. She wrote the observation in the Record and then, after a moment, wrote next to it: perhaps the unfinished is the point.

ORRETH

Gnome cleric, 412 years old. Her god died three hundred and eleven years ago. She still has her spells. She does not know why and has been trying to determine this ever since, which is either devotion or compulsion and she is no longer certain of the distinction.

HP: 72

AC: 14

DR: 2

Save Roll: Quick +3, Tough +4, Mind +5

Alignment: Orderly Kind (Guardian)

Wisdom: 20

Magic Resistance: Immune to divine compulsion and divine fear effects. Resistant to psychic.

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: +5 vs AC, 1d8+3 radiant (channeled through a focus she is still working out the theology of)

Size: Small

Special Defense: Unanswered Prayer: once per encounter as a reaction to taking damage, Orreth's unknown divine connection manifests unbidden - she gains 2d10 temporary HP and all enemies within 20 feet must make WIS Mind save (TN 15) or suffer -2 to all rolls for 1 round. She did not ask for this. It happens anyway. Illusion Sense.

Special Attack: The Old Liturgy: once per 3 rounds, Orreth recites a prayer in her dead god's language. All living allies within 30 feet are healed 2d8+4 HP. All undead within 30 feet take 2d8+4 radiant damage. The prayer still works. She has stopped being surprised by this and started being disturbed by it.

Behavior / Roleplaying

Orreth is warm and professionally curious in the way of someone who has been asking a specific question for three hundred years and has genuinely not run out of interest in finding the answer. She asks good questions. She listens to the answers with complete attention. She will help anyone who needs healing without condition or charge, which she considers the minimum obligation of someone with her capabilities regardless of their theological status. She has a wry humor that arrives unexpectedly and a laugh that is too large for her size.

DN Note

Orreth is the NPC for campaigns that engage with questions of faith, divine death, and what obligation means when its original object no longer exists. She is not a tragic figure - she is an active one, genuinely engaged with the most interesting unresolved question she has ever encountered, which is herself. Use her when the party needs to think about what their own faith means.

What She Carries

Orreth carries her focus, her books, and her three hundred and eleven years of careful attention. The books are heavy. She does not consider them optional.

The Unfinished Holy Symbol

Type: Focus (unique)

Effect: A holy symbol of Orreth's dead god, partially remade - she has been adjusting it for three hundred years as her understanding of what she is has changed. It functions as a divine focus for all her spells and grants +1 to healing rolls and radiant damage rolls, already included where applicable. Once per day, she may ask it a question. It never answers. She writes the questions in a separate journal. She believes the accumulated questions are themselves a kind of theology.

About

When she first remade it, she was trying to preserve what it had been. After the first century, she understood she was making something new. She has stopped trying to make it look like the original. It looks like something in the middle of becoming.

The Record of Divine Deaths

Type: Wondrous Item (unique reference)

Effect: A comprehensive scholarly text that Orreth has assembled over three centuries documenting every confirmed divine death and its cosmological consequences. Any cleric who studies a relevant section for one week gains +2 to Chance Rolls involving divine death, dead gods, broken domains, divine succession, lost faith, or divine-realm boundaries for the next 30 days. During that time, the cleric can also sense divine domain boundaries within 1 mile after concentrating for 1 minute. There is only one copy.

About

She writes the entries as if she is a historian documenting events that happened to someone else, which is how she has survived writing them. The entry for her own god is the shortest in the book. She has rewritten it sixty-two times and considers none of the drafts adequate.

The Warmth She Cannot Explain

Type: Permanent condition (cosmological)

Effect: Orreth radiates a faint warmth that has nothing to do with temperature - animals will approach her without being called, small children fall asleep easily near her, and creatures of the lower realms find her presence uncomfortable in a way that has nothing to do with her combat statistics. Divine realm entities of every tradition recognize her as carrying divine favor regardless of which deity's domain they serve. None of them can explain why.

She has asked. The first Solar Warden she ever asked stood in silence for a long time before saying, with evident discomfort, that she smelled like a god's intention that had not been completed. She wrote this in the Record. She still doesn't know what it means.

DN Guidance

Orreth is the NPC for campaigns with theological depth. She is not an oracle - she does not have answers. She has three hundred years of very good questions, and her most powerful quality as an NPC is demonstrating that the right questions are more sustaining than available answers.

She works best as a figure the party consults on matters of divine cosmology, divine death, and the nature of faith in contexts where faith's objects are uncertain. Any cleric character in the party will find her fascinating and possibly unsettling. She does not proselytize her uncertainty. She simply embodies it with such evident vitality that it becomes difficult to dismiss.

The warmth she radiates is a mystery the DN should never fully resolve. Partial answers are available. The full answer should remain just past the horizon of what the party can determine. This is not a cheat - it is the correct treatment for a mystery that has been genuinely unresolved for three hundred years and is more interesting for remaining so.

Marek Toln



Someone has to keep them. The last things. If no one keeps them then what happened to them is simply - ending. And ending without a witness is a different kind of ending than ending with one. I find that distinction important. I have found it important for forty years and I am still finding it important, which I take as a meaningful data point.

Who He Is

Marek Toln is sixty-three years old, which for a halfling puts him in the specific life stage that halflings describe as 'finding out what the point was all along' - the comfortable middle age when the energy of youth has settled into something more sustainable and the projects that will define a life have become clear. He is short even by halfling standards. He has a face that has arranged itself over sixty-three years into the default expression of someone who has just heard something interesting, which is accurate because he nearly always has.

He collects last things. This is not the first sentence he would use to describe himself, because the description he would use is longer and more specific and involves a great deal of context that he cannot provide in one sentence without losing what he considers the essential quality of the project. The essential quality is this: not everything that ends is remembered. Most things that end are not remembered. The last speaker of a language, the last practitioner of a tradition, the last physical object from a destroyed civilization - these end, and the ending is simply the ending, and nothing marks it, and the world continues with something missing that most of the world does not know was there.

Marek marks it. He has been marking it for forty years. He has six hundred objects, testimonies, recordings, and living things in his demirealm repository, each one the last of something. He is professionally charming and genuinely interested in people and has a gift for making whoever he is talking to feel that the thing they just said was exactly the thing he needed to hear. These qualities have served his project well. He is aware that they serve his project well. He is also aware that he actually is interested in people and actually does find the things they say valuable, and that the distinction between using something and doing it naturally is the kind of distinction that becomes harder to maintain clearly over forty years of practice.

Where He Came From

He was born in a halfling community in a fertile valley in a world he remembers with the specific combination of fondness and distance that comes from a childhood that was genuinely good and genuinely complete - a place he loved and left because he had used up what it had to teach him. His family were gardeners: not metaphorically, not as a cultural archetype, but literally - they grew things, carefully, with specific knowledge of what each thing needed to thrive. He learned from them the practice of understanding an individual thing's requirements before attempting to meet them. This is the foundational skill of everything he does.



He was twenty-three when he found the first last thing: a song. He was traveling between cities in his home world, passing through a village during a festival, and he heard an old woman singing a song in a language he could not identify. He asked, afterward, what language it was. She told him it was the language her grandmother's grandmother had spoken, that she was the only person left who knew any of it, and that she did not know anyone to teach. He sat with her for two weeks and recorded everything she knew. She died the following spring. He has carried the record of that language for forty years.

That was the first. He did not understand at twenty-three that he was beginning something. He understood it at twenty-seven, when he found the second, and at thirty-one when he found the third and realized he had been systematically looking without knowing he was looking. By thirty-five he had twelve objects and the beginning of the Index and the demirealm and the understanding that this was his life's work - not one of his interests, not a compelling project, but the thing he was for.

He has spent the forty years since getting better at finding last things, which requires a comprehensive knowledge of what exists in order to identify what is ceasing to exist. This requirement has made him, by necessary consequence, one of the more broadly knowledgeable people in any realm he visits. He knows what is current and what is historical and what is the specific status of things at the border between the two. He is careful about this knowledge - careful in the way that a person who knows how quickly last things become lost things is careful.

What He Does Now

Marek Toln moves between realms with the agenda of someone who has a specific list and has been working through it for forty years. He is looking, currently, for three things: the last speaker of a language that has no recorded name, which he has been tracking for six years through a chain of secondhand references that keep almost converging; the last physical artifact of a divine domain whose god ascended entirely beyond the oblong's structure three centuries ago, which is an unusual enough theological event that the objects connected to it should be extraordinary; and someone who understands, fully, what he is doing and why.

The third item is the one he added to the list most recently. He is sixty-three years old and has been doing this work alone for forty years and he has become aware, gradually and then suddenly and then as an established fact he cannot un-establish, that the work is incomplete in a specific way. He can record last things. He can preserve them with extraordinary care in his demirealm. He cannot witness them. Witnessing requires someone



else. The old woman's song is preserved in his records as faithfully as he could manage, but he was twenty-three and she sang it to him in a village he was passing through and he sat with her for two weeks and then she died and he has been the only person who heard that song for forty years.

He is working on this. He approaches it the way he approaches everything: with charm and genuine curiosity and patience and the specific strategic intelligence of someone who has spent forty years finding things that do not want to be found. He is currently traveling with more frequency than usual between the Material worlds and the Vault of What Was, looking for something he cannot quite name yet, which he has learned over sixty-three years is the reliable sign that he is close to finding it.

The empty shelf in his demirealm is for the thing he has known he was looking for since approximately eleven years ago, when he found the artifact that would sit next to it and understood from the artifact's nature what the space beside it required. He has not discussed this with anyone. He has not written it in the Index. He is, for the first time in forty years of meticulous documentation, keeping something to himself. He is not sure what this means. He finds it, as he finds most things he does not understand about himself, genuinely interesting.

MAREK TOLN

Halfling wizard, 73 years old. Has a demirealm he uses as a repository. Is currently looking for three specific things: the last speaker of a language with no name, the last physical artifact of a divine domain whose god ascended beyond the oblong's structure entirely, and someone who knows why he is doing this. He has not found the third yet.

HP: 40

DR: 0

Alignment: Orderly Impartial (Arbiter)

Magic Resistance: Resistant to memory and knowledge-based effects. Cannot be made to forget something he has deliberately chosen to remember.

Attack: +6 vs AC, 2d8+4 force (a spell he designed specifically for quick, efficient, minimally destructive application of force - he considers lethal combat wasteful and architecturally uninteresting)

AC: 13

Save Roll: Quick +3, Tough +2, Mind +4

Intelligence: 18

Number of Attacks: **Spellcasting:** Marek casts as an 8th-level wizard. He knows wizard spells up to 8th level, along with additional rare spells he has created, collected, or deciphered.

Size: Small

Special Defense: I Have One of Those: once per encounter, when Marek would be affected by any magical effect, he may reach into his demirealm and produce a counter-item or



relevant protective artifact, reducing the effect by half. He always has something. This has disturbed people who thought they had a novel approach. Lucky.

Special Attack: The Last Example: once per encounter, Marek may describe something in precise scholarly detail - a creature's weakness, a spell's exact mechanism, a location's specific vulnerability. The subject of the description takes 3d8 force damage and is treated as having -3 to all defenses against the party for 2 rounds. He has had sixty-three years to become extremely precise.

Behavior / Roleplaying

Marek Toln is professionally charming in a way that takes a minute to identify as professional. He is interested in you. He is genuinely interested in you. He will ask good questions and listen to the answers with complete attention and remember everything you tell him and never be tedious about it. This is all real. It is also the behavior of someone who has discovered that people who feel genuinely seen tend to tell you things. He is not manipulative, exactly. He is a person whose natural inclinations happen to produce the outcomes of manipulation without the intent.

DN Note

Marek is the most complex NPC in this book to run because his motivations are the most opaque - even to him. He is charming, helpful, genuinely interested in the party, and pursuing a project whose full scope he has not explained to anyone. The question of what happens when he has assembled everything he is looking for is the DNs to answer. Make it something that takes the party by surprise in a way that, in retrospect, was inevitable.

What He Carries

Marek carries more than is visible. The floating objects that orbit him when he is at rest are not a magical effect - they are things he is currently thinking about, externalizing the way some people pace. The three items documented here are the significant ones.

The Demirealm Key

Type: Wondrous Item (unique)

Effect: A small brass key, apparently ordinary, that opens a specific door frame Marek carries with him. When the frame is set up and opened with the key, it leads into his private demirealm repository. The demirealm contains approximately six hundred objects, organized by a system only Marek fully understands. The key does not work for anyone else, and the door frame without the key is just a door frame.

About

He found the demirealm empty and unclaimed and moved into it the way a hermit crab moves into a found shell - not by building but by recognizing a fit. He has been filling it for forty years. He considers it his most significant ongoing project and his home. The second of these is something he admitted to himself only recently.

The Index

Type: Wondrous Item (unique reference)

Effect: A small leather-bound book that is an index of everything in Marek's demirealm repository, cross-referenced by type, origin, age, and Marek's personal significance rating. Once per day, a reader of the Index may ask it one question about the current status of any last surviving example of a category of thing. The Index knows. It answers in Marek's handwriting.

About

The Index updates itself, which Marek discovered three years after he started writing it. He does not know how. He considers this the most interesting thing about it. He has written this in the Index under his own name: 'Marek Toln: the most interesting thing about him may also be something he does not understand about himself.'

DN Guidance

Marek Toln is the most naturally useful NPC in this book for a Dungeon Narrator because his resources and his project create hooks rather than consuming them. He knows where things are. He needs things found. He has a demirealm full of objects that might be exactly what the party needs and that he will loan under specific conditions. He is charming enough that players will enjoy talking to him before they understand what he is doing.

The empty shelf is the long game. It is the thing the DN plants early and pays off late. What belongs on the empty shelf should be determined before Marek is introduced to the campaign, and it should connect to something in the party's story - not their quest, specifically, but something about who they are or what they represent. The moment Marek sees the party and understands the connection is the moment the shelf comes up. Not before.

He is not a villain. He is not secretly sinister. He is a halfling wizard who has spent forty years keeping last things because someone has to, and who has recently understood that keeping things alone is not actually keeping them - it is just postponing the forgetting. What he wants from the party, ultimately, is witnesses. He wants people who know what he has and why it matters. The party may find this either straightforward or the most complicated gift they have ever been offered, depending on who they are.

Atlas Appendix: Visual Reference Plates

Additional visual reference plates appear in the Atlas Appendix at the end of this book, including the Ethereal World, Divine Gravity, the Dreaming, the Great Song, Gate Keeper thresholds, and named realm locations. These plates are provided as reference tools for DNs who want a clearer view of specific realms, routes, and cosmological relationships.

Diagram One: The Ethereal World

The structure and named regions of the Ethereal membrane - the medium that connects all things.

The Hollow Meridian's position in the diagram is approximate - its exact cosmological coordinates shift slightly over time, which is one of several things about it that scholars find troubling. The routes around it shown in the Silver Roads represent the standard paths that experienced Ethereal travelers use to avoid it.



ETHEREAL WORLD

Material Realm

THE ASTRAL LAYER

slow silver stars



consciousness-figure moves by intent toward a distant point of light

crystallized memory of a decisive battle

THE SILVER ROADS
Well-worn near-Material pathways.
Navigation by landmark.

silent bell

compressed record of a founding treaty

THE HOLLOW MERIDIAN
30-mile dead zone. No magic flows.
Cause unknown.

NEAR-MATERIAL BOUNDARY
Resonance impressions of Material worlds

floating staircase

lone door

cloud in the shape of a face

OPEN ETHEREAL
Thought has physical form.
Unanchored travelers drift here.

GATE KEEPER
PRESENCE

Mist Horror dispersed into ambient mist

Veil Weaver

THE MEMORY SEA
Crystallized memories of all experience. Organized by emotional character.

Archive of Joys (shaliows)

Weight of Grief (depths)

Memory Wraith

The Forgotten (deepest)

Diagram Two: Divine Gravity and World Formation

How divine domains position themselves in the upper reaches and how Material worlds form in resonant proximity.

The positions shown are approximate. Divine domains do not have coordinates in any system of measurement mortals have devised. What the diagram shows is relationship - the Norse pantheon's domain is near worlds where sky-father mythology arose naturally, not because the god chose proximity to those worlds, but because those worlds and that divine domain share a fundamental resonance that caused them to form near each other. The proximity is a consequence of what they both are, not a decision either party made.



DIVINE GRAVITY

How Gods and Worlds Relate

THE VERDANT COURT

THE HALL OF
PERFECT MEASURE

THE FORGE ETERNAL



ZONE OF DIVINE
PROXIMITY TENSION - When
domains press adjacent, Material
worlds in the neighborhood feel
it as mythological conflict.



THE STORM THRONE

A world of Norse mythology
- positioned near sky-storm
divine resonance

THE GOLDEN FIELD

A world of Egyptian
mythology - positioned
near judgment and
death divine resonance

RESONANCE
INFLUENCE - not physical,
but gravitational.
Material worlds form near
resonant divine domains.



THE QUIET SHORE

Internal Structure - The Dreaming

The four regions of the Realm of Dream and how they relate to each other and to the sleeping minds that border them.

Between the Dark Dreaming and the Dreamer's Seat is the least documented transition in the Dreaming. Travelers who have reached the Dreamer's Seat describe the approach as the experience of a dream becoming aware of being dreamed - a recursive quality that most find either clarifying or unbearable, with few positions between those poles.





THE
SHALLOW
DREAMING

THE DEEP
DREAMING

THE DARK
DREAMING

THE
DREAMER'S
SEAT

Internal Structure - The Great Song

The four regions of the Realm of Song and the corrupted margin where Silence Eaters dwell.

The First Chord is the most restricted destination in the Great Song. The Concord's divine inhabitants do not forbid access - they simply note that the Chord changes people, and that the change is permanent, and that not everyone finds the change welcome. This is presented as information rather than warning. The distinction is theirs.

THE GREAT SONG

A LANDSCAPE OF MUSIC AND MEANING,
WHERE EVERY NOTE SHAPES THE WORLD.

I. THE CONCORD

WHERE HARMONY FLOWS.
THE MUSIC OF ORDER,
CREATION, AND
UNDERSTANDING.

II. THE DISSONANCE

WHERE IDEAS CLASH.
THE MUSIC OF STRUGGLE,
CHANGE, AND
CONTRADICTION.

III. THE FIRST CHORD

WHERE ALL BECOMES ONE.
THE MUSIC OF ORIGIN,
TRUTH, AND PERFECT
RESONANCE.

IV. THE SILENCE BETWEEN NOTES

WHERE SOUND ENDS.
THE SILENCE OF POTENTIAL,
FORGOTTEN THINGS,
AND WAITING.

HERE DWELL THE SILENCE EATERS—
CREATURES OF ABSENCE THAT HUNGER
FOR MEANING, DEVOURING ALL
THAT MAKES THE SONG.

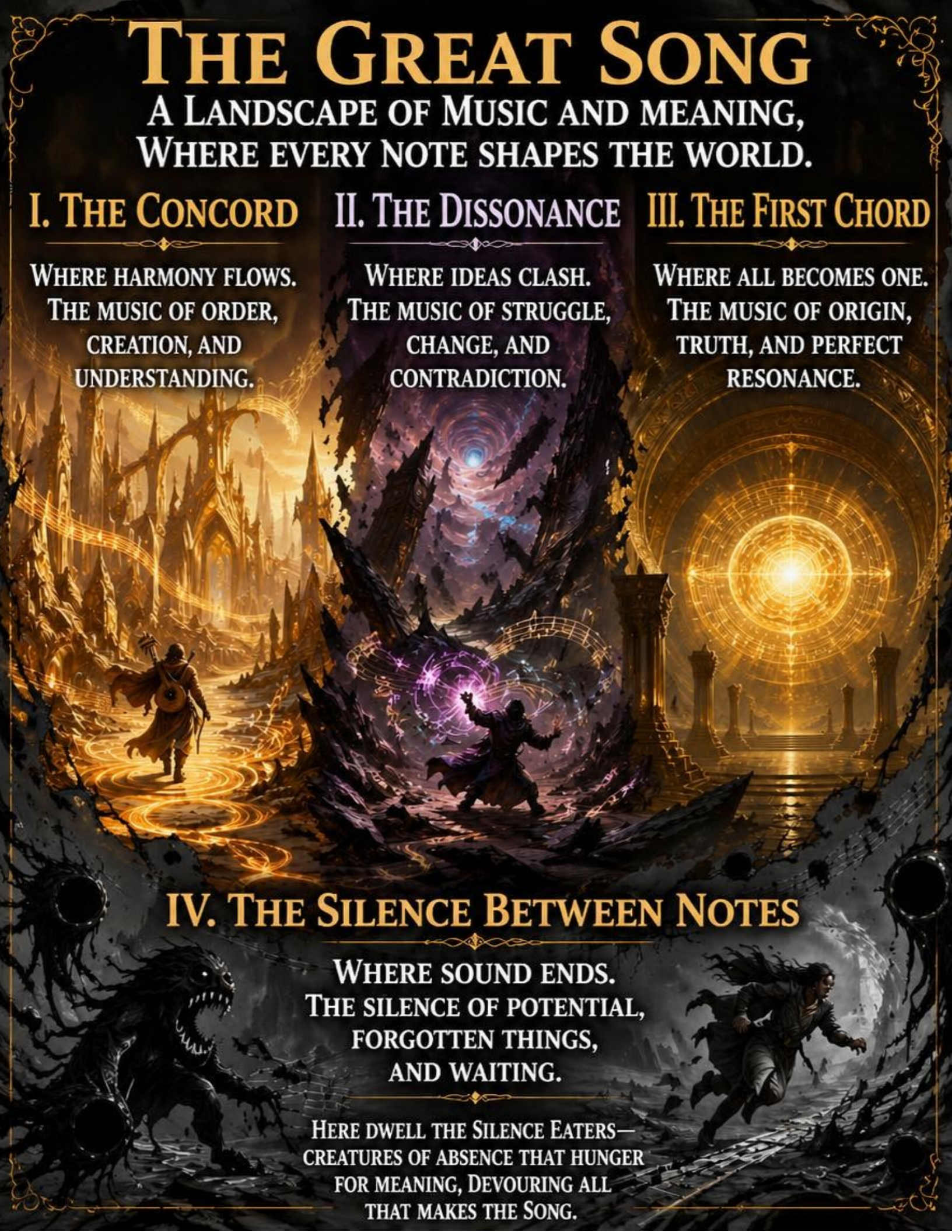





Diagram Three: Gate Keeper Threshold Map

Where the Gate Keepers are present and what transitions they govern.

The threshold types are not the Gate Keepers' names - Gate Keepers do not have names in any language mortals speak. The threshold types are descriptions of what each one governs, derived from accumulated accounts of travelers who have encountered them and attempted to categorize the experience.

Gate Keeper Threshold Map



	Gate Keeper
	Passive Crossing
	Hollow Meridian