

Post-Myth Campaign Setting Background

<keywords content="dungeons and dragons,dark fantasy campaign,alternative 3.5 rules,D&D in edinburgh" />

The world is an untamed place.

The human civilization struggles to make a living in a land where the spirits and savage creatures rule the fields. Crops and livestock are subject to the whims of supernatural beings. The souls of the dead haunt the world. Superstition only makes it harder to distinguish fact from folktale.

The people rely on the Gods' guidance, provided through those faithful souls who are lucky enough to be picked to wield a God's miracles. Clerics of a god become beacons of safety, wisdom and bounty, in a land surrounded by hostile and unknowable forces. And sometimes, the Gods themselves are said to walk on the world, fighting their secret wars or entertaining themselves seducing mortals and immortals alike.

Only centuries ago, talk of Elves, Dwarves, Gnomes and Giants was still met with skepticism, seen as folktales and superstition. But the stories were real, and over time the races came to acknowledge each others' presence. Cultural differences, racial fear and ambitions of conquest eventually brought them to war with each other. This conflict became known as the Crimson Century, and tore the island continent of Ivernia apart. But after many decades of fighting, the conflict was ended abruptly with an upheaval brought on by the Spirits themselves.

Humans still distrust the furtive elves and their sorcery, and the dwarves never overcame the slaughter of their brothers by the spell-slinging elves. A fragile peace was slowly erected out of attrition, as the races got more accustomed to living side-by-side with such different people. And the disparate races of Giants, the fallen remnants of the most powerful civilization ever to exist, still eke out a miserable existence, craving for the power they lost.

In the last century, the mortal races have consolidated their presence over the land. The Aelfen have retreated into the depths of the woods, and became even more ruthless in maintaining the secrecy of their borders. The Dvergar have perfected their engineering skills and magical craft, creating many wondrous items of power and new technological wonders, which have been put to good use in their war against the Jotnar and to defend their great mountain halls. The Little People have successfully integrated in many regions, building their homes under the hills, mining and shaping some of the most exotic materials in the land, all the while evading Ogre marauders. The sons of Man have stuck mostly to the shores, but as accomplished seafarers they have spread out along the continent. Their nations are scattered and conflictuous, something the other races see as a shortcoming.

Times change, though, and progress drives people forward. The human Milesian empire

started to research and dig up the old ruins of the Titans. They have uncovered many magical artifacts and edifices, and from them have been learning how to unravel the mysteries of magic. They have been bargaining with the Dvergar to obtain their metalworking skills and the explosive substances they develop. Huge machines of war have taken to the skies, powered by magic and technology. With such power, dreams of conquest are breeding again.

But the world is still a strange and unforgiving place, and the common people still struggle with the presence of unseen forces around them, perhaps manipulating them towards some goal, or maybe just toying with them for their own amusement.

□

Contents

Setting and Mood of the campaign

Ivernia

History

Regions

Religion

Souls, angels and demons

Setting and Mood of the campaign

The post-Myth setting is a world where normal, mundane people slowly saw their folkmyths and superstitions become real, and in most cases, with violent and frightened reactions. The supernatural has a way of making people feel powerless, and due to fear, many of these documented encounters or cases remained still as rumours and something that could not be completely confirmed. This includes the presence of other races, like dwarves and elves, and most mystical creatures.

The social development and technology level of the mortal societies also impacts heavily on how they deal with the unknown.

Human technology is mostly at the Iron age level, and most communities are rural, where the common occupation is hunting or tending to livestock and crops. Some small city-states have emerged, and these became points of convergence for commerce, but they are far from what we commonly conceive as a medieval fantasy urban setting. Only some nations (especially in Archipelago or Mil in Ivernia) have a more developed civilization, with centers of learning and organized government.

Dvergar society has all their settlements underground or on mountainsides. Unlike humans, their architecture and engineering skills are much more developed, and their settlements are generally interconnected by a series of tunnels and their communication systems very efficient. Technological advancements have allowed them to make their lives easier, and use less manpower for the same amount of work. This asset, combined with

their cultural industriousness, means that Dvergar progressively work harder and harder in more advanced pursuits. It should be noted that not all Dvergar societies adhere to this pattern: some lead more simple, primitive lives, but their desire to shape things with their hands and tools is apparent in every one of them.

Aelfen technology is very simplistic in terms of tools and contraptions, but very advanced in its artistry and decoration. Aelfen prize art in all its forms, and dedicate much of their lives pursuing very diverse ways of expressing themselves and experiencing the world around them. Their mastery over the magical arts makes their life easier and replaces the need for complicated technology, and although many elves know a few magical cantrips, only a few in every settlement actually possess higher magical prowess. It should be noted that Aelfen do not make use of metal in their society (with the exception of the rare mithral jewelry and weapons), and all their utensils and clothing are derived from natural sources and weaved either by hand or magically.

The Little People live almost universally simple lives in small settlements in forests, hills or in plains near streams. They live more in tune with the natural than even elves, and their technological development is considered even less advanced. They are, however, more versed in magic, and are capable miners, making use of metal items and being acclaimed by their skill at jewelry-making. They can communicate with animals and plants, and enlist their aid in collecting resources, and aid them in their times of need. Their most distinguishing trait, however, is their curiosity and love of knowledge: gnomes are innate explorers, and each settlement is a trove of knowledge, all collected by previous generations in that region and from visits of other explorers. Thus, gnomes can be considered the retainers of most of the knowledge and history in the world, although the veracity of all their sources is generally contested, even among themselves.

The Post-Myth campaign uses the conflict and uneasiness between the races (and within them) as a backdrop for the struggles that make up the stories. The forces of "evil" are ill-defined and motives and morals are more ambiguous, for the same thing can have several interpretations and points of view.

Unlike many fantasy campaign settings, there are no "evil humanoid races", like orcs and goblins, that make up the general threat to the "good, proper" human societies. The evils in Post-Myth are internal and wear familiar faces, and although there are malicious and/or capricious supernatural forces, their interaction with mortals is obscure and infrequent. Most encounters with mystical beings or murderous monsters have a feeling more similar to the investigations common in "The X-files" or "Supernatural", and their morals are convoluted and not one-dimensional. It should be noted that the campaign will feature grim themes and gory details, and mature subjects will be approached.

The biggest influences for me in creating the mood and style of the setting must have been "The Witcher" game(s) and books, "Battlestar Galactica", "The Black Company" book series especially, Todd Stewart's "Planescape Storyhour", "Myth: the Fallen Lords" and "Panzer Dragoon" game series. The mythology used tries to draw more from ancient Celtic, Nordic and Slavic myths than the more common Tolkien and D&D fantasy staple, so be prepared to see many differences in the way you used to deal with monsters :)

Ivernia

History

The northern jewel across the Gulf, Ivernia was first colonised by Men on a vengeance: the house of Mil the thousandfold, a powerful family of northern Achaea. The Milesian lord Ith's exploration party to Ivernia had been gone for months, and when they finally returned, they brought home his corpse. He had been murdered by the Aelfen folk.

The invasion force of the Milesians sailed to Ivernia with the intent of retribution, and razing the Fair Folk's kingdom to the ground. They were successful in killing the three Aelfen leaders, who rode out to meet them, but suffered severe losses. The efforts of all their subjects were directed to the war effort, and the House of Mil was soon settled in conquered Ivernia. Many kingdoms of Archipelago lent their hand to the conflict, and secret deals were made with the Dvergar folk. Sabotages by the fabled Little People and magical curses brought on by Aelfen witches bore down on the Milesians, but little by little they gained ground.

Over the course of 60 years, much of southwestern Ivernia had now a human presence, and settlements started to take shape amidst the abandoned barricades and embattlements. But all the while the people had to deal with the presence of capricious spirits, hidden things that go bump in the night, and of course, elves and gnomes out to drive them from their land.

The bloody conflict, which had become known by then as the Crimson Century, proceeded for yet another two decades before the Milesians decided to advance northwards in retaliation for recent attacks. The Aelfen decided this time to ride out again to meet them in full force, and both armies met at the Barren Moors. The region was generally avoided by everyone, but war requires desperate measures. And because of this trespass, as the armies met in the soggy lowlands, the Spirits retaliated with extreme force, and both armies just disappeared. Survivors still speak of landslides, fire and lightning, and howling winds that tore a man's flesh from their bones, and swore they would never approach the place again.

War in Ivernia died down, and although minor skirmishes still occur, there has been no desire to provoke the Spirits any further, from any side. The moors, grave to thousands of warriors and lair to who knows what, have become a land where no man would go, The Forbiddance, where the Spirits demand their due, in the form of mortal young.

Regions

Map of Ivernia

Ivernia was originally inhabited by the mortal races of Aelfen, Dvergar and the Little Folk, together with various races of Giants which still claim the place as their own.

Mankind has settled in the southern parts of Ivernia, having established the thriving Milesian Empire in the southwest. The rest have spread across the land in scattered,

independent city-states and villages, in a region most commonly know as The Fringe.

The Dvergar clans hold miles of subterranean halls underneath the central mountain chain called the Titan's Back, stretching into the northwest in a series of connected tunnelroutes and canyon-cities.

The Aelfen are scattered throughout the land, in hidden villages in the woods or under the mounds. Most have abandoned human-held lands, and their greatest numbers are believed to live in Dairean Forest and other remaining primeval forests.

The Little Folk has remained pretty much everywhere, even in human lands, hiding away in wild places or remaining unnoticed by the nearby settlements.

The Giants (Fomoiroi to the aelfen and Jotnar to the dvergar) are found occasionally throughout the island, retaining settlements in the mountains or hiding away in forests. Those that keep to the ruins of the Titans are the most dangerous, for who know what artifacts they uncovered and can use against the unwary (apart from their immense strength and size). The majority of the Giants live in Thur Island, where they possess strongholds among the ruins and have a semblance of a civilization.

Religion

Most of the peoples in the World believe in both the existence of Gods and Spirits.

Fairies, elementals, genius loci, fey. The designation Spirit is very broad, mainly used to describe most supernatural creatures that the peoples encounter or suspect that are not overtly threatening monsters. But the term is believed by the majority to apply more to those creatures that are the living embodiment of the World: those immortal creatures that sprout from the land and are bonded to it. The Spirits are considered to be everywhere, and generally there are one or two that each village knows about, and some have a relationship with these mortal settlements: protect and help them, manipulate them or exploit them, sometimes demanding offerings in exchange for their services (or just for sparing them). There are tales of those who pledge their services to a powerful Spirit, gaining supernatural powers in return. In a local setting, some spirits achieve a level of worship similar to the Gods. Sometimes a Spirit is believed to be a God or a God's manifestation believed to be a Spirit. It is indeed hard to draw the line between them.

To most mortal cultures, however, there exist archetypal deific figures, that surface to one degree or another in every society. They come under many names, but scholars have drawn parallels between many of them, even across the races. Gods have a more active interest in the lives of mortals, and their worship is considered less uneasy than to the elusive spirits. Gods show their power in the World often, and prayers are actually answered sometimes (although not necessarily with the intended effect). Additionally, some very devout mortals are chosen by their gods for special purposes, and are granted divine powers to work their God's will in the World. These are the Prophets, and they wander the land spreading the worship of their God, or performing some other task appointed by their divine lord, wielding the power to work miracles.

Most of the Gods are not necessarily good or evil. They exist, and they answer prayers, but can also be fickle and demanding. A typical form of worship and tribute is the sacrifice, in which goods or livestock are ritually burned or slaughtered, respectively, as an offering to a God. With the exception of the more benevolent Gods, most of them do accept mortal sacrifices, and the more violent ones may actually demand it.

Following is a list of the most commonly worshipped gods, some of their alternative names, area of worship and the divine Domains that Prophets will be able to access. These domains (and their powers and spells) can be found in the Player's Handbook, the Spell Compendium sourcebook, and a few other sourcebooks.

Danu *Don, Donau, Rodd*

The Mother of Life, the Breath of the Land. The patron goddess of the aelfen, she is also revered by the little folk and many of the known spirits. She is also the guiding force and patron of the wide-reaching (though loose-knit) druid community.

No domains: druid powers

Cernunnos *Carnonos, Vosagos, Ipabog, The Horned God*

The Hunter God, the Cunning Lord. He is a symbol of virility and prowess, revered especially by males, of every race. His name is called by the hunter seeking his prey, by the athlete attempting a stunt, by the youngster trying to prove himself.

Domains: Strength, Competition, Courage, Wrath

Brigid *Brigantia, Bidang, Trebaruna, Gabia*

The Goddess of the Home, Lady of Care. She cares for the sick, mends broken things and protects the dispossessed. She is the patron of communities and families.

Domains: Family, Craft, Community, Healing

Gobannos *Goffanon, Goibniu, Svarog*

The Builder, the Smith. He is the patron of invention, of toolbuilding. He was the one who first taught mortals how to create weapons. He is one of the Gods most revered by the Dvergar.

Domains: Metal, Craft, Creation

Lir *Aegaeon, Bangput, Veles*

God of the Sea, Lord of the Deep Abyss. He is prayed to by all seafarers, in the hopes of calm sea and a safe trip. He is a fickle God, prone to wrathful fits, and difficult to please.

Domains: Ocean, Water, BlackwaterSTW

Taranis *Tuirean, Thunor, Donar, Perun*

God of Storms and natural disasters. He is the wrath of the skies, the Fury of the World. Mortals appeal to him for respite against his continual tantrums, and when his anger is great, it becomes very difficult to appease him.

Domains: Storm, Windstorm, Destruction

Teutates *Toutates, Toutatis*

The Protector, the Guardian of the People. Mortals pray to him for safety against outside dangers, such as raiders, invasions or attacks from monsters.

Domains: Protection, Retribution, Pact

Sucellus *Soucellos*

God of Bountifulness, Agriculture, and Livestock. He is the giver of goods, the supplier of sustenance. He is praised for the gifts of food and drinks, and his blessings are revelries and merrymaking.

Domains: Animal, Plant, Joy(EXD)

Stribog *Aeolus, Notus, Eurus*

God of Winds and the Skies. He brings the favourable (or unfavorable) winds to sailors, and he is prayed to most often by the sea-faring humans. When he becomes displeased, his wrath provokes the God Taranis, who brings in the storm.

Domains: Air, Windstorm

Mimir *Nabu, Nisaba, Metis*

The God of Knowledge, Lore and Scribing. His is the word of wisdom, that brings lore to the common folk. He receives prayers from storytellers, sages and those who need advice on tricky problems.

Domains: Knowledge, Planning, Rune

Epona *Rudiobus, Consus*

The Goddess of Horses, of the open plain. She bestows safe and swift travel to mortals, and most mortal travellers and migrants pay her devout homage in exchange for her blessing.

Domains: Animal, Travel, Endurance(EXD)

Sunna *Vindonnus, Dazbog, Endovellic*

God of the Sun, of Cleansing. He is the chaser of shadows, the light that brings life to the world. His touch makes the crops grow and brightens up hope. He is safety and protection against the encroaching darkness, and he chases away the powers of death.

Domains: Healing, Sun, Renewal, Purification

Ataegina *Ceridwen, Gontia, Mani*

Goddess of the Moon, Ensnarer of Minds. She is the hypnotic gaze in the sky, leading mortals to commit acts of madness against their wishes. She is prayed to by those who wish to deceive, twist and cajole. She is the patron of witches and enchanters.

Domains: Moon, Madness, Domination

Woden *Dilis, Boreas, Negafook*

The God of Winter and Cold. His touch brings the harsh season, and mortals beckon for his mercy and departure in spring. He is unforgiving and rigid, and yearly religious events are held to appease him at every time.

Domains: Cold(FSB), Winter(FSB)

Ogma *Segomo, Mogons*

The Warrior God, the Strong. His is the gift of strength, of victory, of leadership. He is the patron of armies and leaders. Prayers are offered to him by warriors and generals alike.

Domains: Strength, Nobility, Competition

Crom Cruach *Cenn Croithi, Vidarr*

The God of Vengeance, of Slaughter. He is the hand that causes disgrace, who feeds the hatred of mortals. Prayers to him are too often carried out with disastrous results, but not without great sacrifice.

Domains: Hatred, SpiteHRR, Pestilence

Cessonius *Visucios*

The Herald of Good Tidings, the Messenger. His word brings hope, carries news from long-lost friends and family. He is prayed to for good tidings, especially in times of war, and those in the front lines beseech him for victory.

Domains: Herald, Courage

Silvanos *Selvans, Jarilo*

The God of the Wild, Forests and Fields. His domains are the fringes of the civilized human lands, who beseech him their mercy in the wilds, but for the dwellers of the woods like aelfen and little people he is a protector and the guardian of the natural world.

Domains: Plant, Life

Dis Pater *Peklenc, Soranus*

The Lord of the Underworld, Father of Riches, Judge of the Dead. His domains are the bowels of the earth, where he receives the bodies and souls of the deceased, and judges them according to their true natures and deeds. He holds the riches of the earth, and is the patron of miners. Dvergar especially hold him in high regard, while most other mortals pay him respects fearfully.

Domains: Earth, Death, Inquisition

The Morrigan *Morrigna, Morana*

The Raven of Doom, Goddess of Mischief and conflict. She is the hand of Fate that comes for mortals to herald their doom, who plays mortals like pawns and seeds conflicts that span kingdoms and continents. She is called only by those who wish to bring war and disgrace, others only pray for her mercy.

Domains: Oracle, Trickery, Envy, Hatred

Ziva *Prende, Cliona, Milda*

The Goddess of Love, Marriage and carnal pleasures. She is the patron of couples and families, and a deity of celebration. She is beseeched for help with broken marriages and by lovestruck (or just lustful) mortals.

Domains: Lust, Pleasure(EXD), Joy(EXD)

The Fates *Moirae, Parcae, Norns*

The three Goddesses of Destiny and Prophecy. It is said that they see into the future, they control the Fate of the World, including that of the Gods. Theirs are the patterns in the stars, in the (some say random) casting of stones and bones, the drops of water and many other omens that most consider innocuous. It is said that the Great Serpent in the Sky (Uroboros, Jormungand and other names) is their pet, and studies the stars around the World for patterns.

Domains: Oracle, Destiny, Fate

Souls, angels and demons

Different races, and the different cultures within them, have different ideas on exactly what happens to the souls of the dead.

A general belief is that dead that are not given the proper funerary rites (burying or cremation) can rise again as shade of their former selves, a ghost, a wraith, they have many names. Some of the most despicable mortals can suffer further torment and rise up from their graves, physically, as unliving corpses: vampires, ghouls or wights, collectively called the undead.

When a dead mortal receives the proper burial rites, it is said that he is brought to the presence of the Judge of the Dead, who has many names (mentioned above), and stands trial over his deeds in life.

Some cultures then mention an afterlife in a heaven-like place, others say that the faithful will be received in their god's abode and rewarded, others say their spirits are allowed to return to their families and remain as protectors (revered as guardian ancestors). Whatever the case, there seems to be some kind of metaphysical existence that people believe in, although they can't agree on exactly what is.

Of metaphysical beings, mortals believe there are two powerful forces that influence the mortal world. There are the good ones, and the bad ones. The first have been called angels, devas, fravashi and other names, and are forces of hope and kindness, of inner peace and protection. The others are called demons, devils, shedim, asuras, rakshasa or other things, and are considered forces of rage, destruction, evil impulses and greed.

Mortals believe that both angels and demons interact with their lives, ascribing miraculous survival against dangers to the work of angels; and cases of murdering sprees and psychotic behaviours to possessing demons. There is no consensus as to exactly how they interact with gods and spirits, but it's generally believed they exist in a higher realm.

Retrieved from

'https://orcedinburgh.co.uk/wiki/index.php?title=Post-Myth_Campaign_Setting_Background&oldid=2948'

This page was last modified on 3 July 2012, at 01:38.