d12
Monthly

POWERFUL FACTIONS

3 FACTIONS YOU CAN DROP INTO YOUR CAMPAIGN

THE POWER OF GUILDS

BUILD YOUR OWN CURRENCY

New Random Monster: The Paper Elemental

d12 Monthly is a helpful resource for fantasy roleplayers.

Contents

Features

Acknowledgements

The Guilds & Factions Issue

Guilds and factions can play an important role in your campaign, and can be both antagonists and allies for your PCs.

But guilds and factions aren't the only thing in this issue.

Especially for patrons, I have partnered with **Old Skull Minis** to bring them some paper minis (pre-printed for printing tier patrons). See page 7 for more details.

This is the first of many partnerships I will make with other indie creators to help them get the word out, but also to bring patrons an extra gift to say thank-you.

Lastly, the guest article by Petros Moros this issue is all about sci-fi, but it is also about expanding your horizons and trying new games, and new genres. I hope it resonates with you.

And, as always, happy gaming!

- Russ from YUMDM
https://yumdm.com/
https://twitter.com/yum_dm

About Me

I have been roleplaying for over 30 years and DMing for most of those. I have played over 50 different roleplaying games, but my first love is fantasy - it's like coming home.

Thanks to my Patrons

Guilds R Us
Guilds in your Campaign

Guilds are organised associations of skilled craftsmen and merchants that play a vital role in the economic and social fabric of society.

These guilds emerged during the Middle Ages of our own world, with their origins dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries.

Guilds were formed to regulate and protect the interests of their members, who shared a common craft or trade.

They provide a framework for training apprentices, maintaining quality standards, controlling the production and sale of goods, and establishing fair prices.

Guilds also play a significant role in upholding social order, as they maintained strict rules and enforced codes of conduct within their respective trades.

Membership
Membership in a guild is typically limited to individuals who have completed an apprenticeship and demonstrated proficiency in their craft.

Guilds establish a hierarchical structure, with masters at the top who have achieved the highest level of skill and experience.

Apprentices and journeymen, who are in the process of learning their trade, aspire to become masters and gain the privileges associated with that status.

Influence
Guilds wield significant influence in the communities they operate in.

They often have close ties to local authorities and hold considerable sway over economic activities.

Guild members can also enjoy certain privileges and protections, such as monopolies over specific trades or exemptions from certain taxes.

Local Support
Guilds also provide support to their members, including access to loans, pensions, and support for families in times of need.

Guilds play a vital role in shaping mediaeval urban life, as cities and towns are often centred around specific trades or crafts.

They contribute to the growth of local economies, the establishment of trade networks, and the development of skilled labour.

Guilds also foster a sense of community among their members, organising social events, festivals, and religious ceremonies.

So, next time you get old Ironhands to fix your armour, know that he is most likely part of an influential guild.

Members Only
List of Guilds
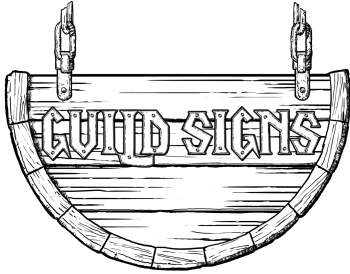
Guilds were popular and important institutions in our real world mediaeval society, and they can be just as important in your fantasy world as well.

Below is a list of guilds, both mundane and magical, that you can add to the towns and cities of your campaign world.

Standard Guilds

Guild of Blacksmiths
Members: Blacksmiths, apprentices, metalworkers

Guild of Weavers
Members: Weavers, textile artisans, dyers

Guild of Masons
Members: Stonemasons, architects, sculptors

Guild of Brewers
Members: Brewers, alewives, maltsters

Guild of Tanners
Members: Tanners, leatherworkers, curriers

Guild of Bakers
Members: Bakers, pastry chefs, millers

Guild of Painters
Members: Painters, illuminators, artists

Guild of Carpenters
Members: Carpenters, joiners, woodworkers

Guild of Fishermen
Members: Fishermen, net makers, fishmongers

Guild of Tailors
Members: Tailors, seamstresses, clothiers

Guild of Apothecaries
Members: Apothecaries, herbalists, pharmacists

Guild of Bookbinders
Members: Bookbinders, book restorers, parchment makers

Guild of Glassblowers
Members: Glassblowers, glass artisans, stained glass makers

Guild of Coopers
Members: Coopers, barrel makers, cask manufacturers

Guild of Potters
Members: Potters, ceramic artists, tile makers

Guild of Scribes
Members: Scribes, calligraphers, copyists

Guild of Furriers
Members: Furriers, fur traders, skinners

Guild of Sculptors
Members: Sculptors, stone carvers, bronze casters

Guild of Shipwrights
Members: Shipwrights, naval architects, riggers

Guild of Clockmakers
Members: Clockmakers, horologists, watchmakers

Secret Guilds
Below are a group of guilds that may have many members but secret themselves away, keeping out of the spotlight.

Thieves' Guild
Almost every city has one: a guild that coordinates and maintains a group of thieves, rogues, and ruffians. See article *Backstabbed!* in ***d12 Monthly*** issue 23 for a guild on creating a thieves' guild.

Assassins Guild
A clandestine guild of highly skilled assassins and infiltrators. Operating in the shadows, their members are trained in stealth, combat, and the art of killing.

Veiled Scribes
This covert guild comprises skilled forgers, counterfeiters, and document manipulators.

Magic Guilds
The guilds below could exist in any fantasy world where magic exists. Use these to drop into your own campaign world, or as inspiration for your own unique guilds.

Guild of Dreamweavers
Members of this unique guild possess the ability to enter and manipulate dreams. They use their powers to offer guidance, healing, and insights to those plagued by nightmares or seeking prophetic visions. Their dream-enhancing potions and enchanted tools aid them in navigating the realm of dreams.

Elementalist Guild
This guild consists of individuals who have an innate connection to the elements. They can communicate with and command elemental beings such as fire sprites, water nymphs, earth golems, and air sylphs. The guild focuses on maintaining balance between the elements and harnessing their powers for various purposes.

Guild of Shadow Puppeteers
Members of this mysterious guild have mastered the art of shadow manipulation. Using intricate hand movements and enchanted puppets, they can create illusions, manipulate shadows, and even tap into the energy of darkness. They entertain audiences with mesmerising performances and occasionally employ their skills for espionage or subterfuge.

Guild of Mythical Beast Keepers
Dedicated to the preservation and study of mythical creatures, this guild houses and cares for a variety of fantastical beasts. Their members possess deep knowledge of the magical creatures' behaviours, habitats, and abilities. They work to protect these creatures from harm and educate the public about their significance.

Guild of Arcane Architects

This guild combines the arts of architecture and magic. Its members design and construct structures imbued with magical properties, such as self-repairing walls, enchanted lighting, or portals to other realms. Their creations harmonise aesthetics and functionality with magical elements, offering unique and enchanted spaces.

Guild of Astral Navigators

Members of this guild are skilled in celestial navigation and astral projection. They chart the movements of the stars, planets, and other celestial bodies to guide travellers on long journeys and help them navigate uncharted territories. Their abilities also allow them to venture into the astral plane and explore otherworldly realms.

Guild of Memory Keepers

This guild specialises in capturing, preserving, and manipulating memories. Using magical artefacts and rituals, they can extract memories, store them in enchanted vessels, and even transfer them to others. Their services are sought after by those who wish to relive important moments or erase painful memories.

Guild of Harmonic Artisans

Comprising musicians, sculptors, and craftsmen, this guild focuses on creating art that resonates with magical harmonies. Their creations emit ethereal melodies or evoke powerful emotions when touched or observed. Their works can imbue spaces with tranquillity, enchantment, or heightened magical energies.

Guild of Shadow Alchemists

This secretive guild delves into the manipulation and extraction of shadows, harnessing their properties for various purposes. Their alchemical concoctions allow them to create shadow constructs, manipulate darkness, and even harness the energy of shadows for powerful spells or illusions.

Paper Mini Inserts

I partnered with **Old Skull Minis** to bring my patrons a small gift of my appreciation.
https://en.tipeee.com/oldskullminis

If you sign up for my Patreon you can also access this small gift, and look forward to many more in the future as I plan to work with many other indie creators.

SUPPORT ME ON PATREON

https://www.patreon.com/yumdm

The Merchants' Hand
Example Thieves' Guild
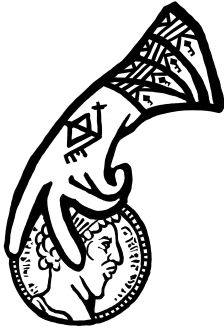
In the port city of Isleholm, the Merchants' Hand seems to most like a respectable merchant guild, controlling much of the trade which comes into the city.

The Merchant's Hand Guild however, is, in reality, a thieves' guild in disguise.

History

The guild's origins can be traced back to a time of economic turmoil, when a group of skilled thieves recognized the potential for profit by exploiting the city's bustling trade routes.

Under the leadership of a cunning rogue named Harlan Blackthorn, the guild transformed itself into a merchant guild, adopting a sophisticated cover to shield its illegal activities.

Blackthorn's vision was to infiltrate the city's bustling trade networks and exploit the vast wealth passing through Isleholm's markets and ports.

The Merchants' Hand Guild became an integral part of the city's economic fabric, gaining the trust and respect of legitimate merchants and other guilds.

To maintain their cover, the guild's members took on dual roles, appearing as reputable merchants during the day and skillful thieves during the night.

Activities

They use their legitimate business connections to gather information, identify lucrative targets, and manipulate the market to their advantage.

The guild's activities range from smuggling and counterfeiting to high-stakes heists of valuable goods.

While the Merchants' Hand Guild engages in criminal activities, they adhere to a strict code of conduct known as the "Shadow Pact."

This code ensures that the guild's actions do not disrupt the delicate balance of power within the city.

Current Situation

In the present day, the Merchants' Hand Guild continues to thrive in Isleholm, operating as a powerful merchant guild while secretly orchestrating a wide range of criminal activities.

The guild is divided into various factions, each specialising in a particular area of expertise such as burglary, forgery, and espionage.

The guild's headquarters is a grand trading house, serving as a front for their illegal operations.

Within its opulent halls, deals are made, information is exchanged, and plans for elaborate heists are devised.

The guild's influence extends beyond Isleholm, reaching other major cities and trading hubs throughout the kingdom (albeit less successfully than in Isleholm).

They maintain a web of contacts, both legitimate and criminal, allowing them to manipulate trade routes and control valuable resources.

This network enables the guild to amass immense wealth and wield significant influence over the city's economy.

They avoid unnecessary violence, refrain from stealing from the impoverished, and maintain a sense of honour among themselves*.

* Although this has become strained in recent months as an off-shoot of members under the leadership of Kathik Arbeiter, are wresting control of the docks from Blackthorn.

The authorities in Isleholm remain oblivious to the true nature of the Merchants' Hand Guild. Law enforcement and even rival criminal organisations perceive them as a legitimate merchant guild, shielding the guild's members from suspicion.

This allows the guild to operate with relative impunity, using their dual identities to manipulate the city's economic landscape and protect their criminal interests.

The Merchants' Hand Guild represents a subtle and complex force within Isleholm. Their ability to seamlessly blend into the legitimate business world while simultaneously orchestrating elaborate criminal operations sets them apart from traditional thieves' guilds.

They are the unseen hands behind the city's economic machinations, ensuring that wealth and power flow into their coffers while maintaining an illusion of respectability.

Membership

Membership in the Merchants' Hand Guild is exclusive and highly coveted.

Prospective members must undergo a rigorous vetting process, proving their skills and loyalty to the guild.

Once accepted, they gain access to a vast network of connections, resources, and training, enabling them to become exceptional thieves and cunning merchants.

Easy Money
Creating Currencies

At some point in your world building you will want to create coinage for your various nations and city-states.

These tables should get you started and inspire you as you create your coinage.

Roll twice on the *Coinage* table.

Table: Coinage

D12	Made From	Name
1	Gold	Crown
2	Silver	Stag
3	Copper	Penny
4	Electrum	Griffin
5	Bronze	Scepter
6	Iron	Shield
7	Brass	Dragon
8	Nickel	Moon
9	Obsidian	Raven
10	Jade	Mermaid
11	Amethyst	Tower
12	Mithril	Phoenix

Then roll twice on the *Coin Description* table to see what is on each side of the coin (or just choose what is appropriate).

Table: Coin Description

D20	Description
1	Effigy of the reigning monarch
2	Graceful stag leaping
3	Kingdom's emblem
4	Crown or Sceptre
5	Inscription of its value
6	Rolling fields
7	Scepter
8	Fortified castle
9	Embossed shield
10	Crossed swords
11	Lotus flower
12	Engraved dragon
13	Majestic tree
14	Geometric patterns
15	Patron saint
16	Inscriptions in ancient language
17	Religious symbol
18	Coat of arms
19	Castle or fortification
20	Star

Coins & Trade Bars

In mediaeval Europe, the use of coins and trade bars as forms of currency was widespread. However, the availability and acceptability of different types of coins and

bars varied depending on the region and time period.

Here are a few facts about currencies to keep in mind.

Currency Variations

Most continents have a diverse range of currencies, with numerous regional variations.

Each region or kingdom typically mints its own coins, often featuring the ruler's image or emblem, and the coins are issued in different denominations: such as pennies, groats, shillings, and florins.

Counterfeiting and Clipping

Counterfeiting and debasement of coins are common issues.

Counterfeit coins are produced to resemble genuine ones, while debasement involves reducing the precious metal content of a coin.

People often scrutinise coins to check for signs of counterfeiting or clipping (shaving off small amounts of precious metal from the edges).

Clipping reduced the weight and value of the coin, allowing individuals to profit from the metal they collected.

Trade Bars

In addition to coins, trade bars are used as a means of exchange.

Trade bars are typically made of silver or gold and have a standardised weight. They are commonly used for large-scale transactions or for payments between merchants.

Exchange Rates

The value of coins varies across different regions, and exchange rates are generally not standardised.

When travelling or engaging in trade between different areas, individuals have to be aware of the local exchange rates to ensure fair transactions.

Merchants and money changers can provide exchange services, allowing individuals to convert their coins into the local currency.
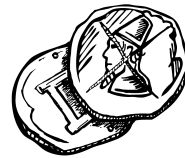
Currency Conversion

When it comes to changing coins or trade bars, individuals seek out money changers or merchants who specialise in currency exchange.

These individuals evaluate the weight, purity, and quality of the coins or bars being presented and provide an equivalent value in the local currency.

Depending on the reputation of the money changer and the trustworthiness of the coins or bars, exchange rates might vary.

Merchants and Money Changers

Merchants and money changers play a crucial role in providing exchange services.

They act as intermediaries, facilitating the conversion of different currencies and trade bars for individuals engaged in trade or travelling between regions. Or with adventurers who find large amounts of gold and silver coins, some of which could be hundreds of years old.

Here's an overview of how they provide exchange services and set exchange rates. And, in turn, how you can set them in your campaign.

Evaluation of Currency

Money changers and merchants carefully evaluate the coins or trade bars presented to them for exchange.

They examine factors such as the weight, purity, and quality of the currency to determine its value.

They have to be knowledgeable about the various currencies in circulation, including their legitimacy and the prevailing rates of counterfeiting. As well as knowing the value of older (possibly defunct) currencies as well.

Local Currency Standard

Exchange rates are typically based on the local currency standard. Each region has its own preferred currency, which serves as a benchmark for valuation.

Money changers compare the foreign currency or trade bar to the local standard to calculate the equivalent value.

Market Demand and Supply

Exchange rates are influenced by market demand and supply dynamics.

If a particular currency or trade bar is in high demand, its value increases relative to other currencies.

Similarly, if there is an abundance of a certain currency in the market, its value might decrease.

Money changers consider these factors to set exchange rates that reflect the current market conditions.

Negotiation and Trust

Exchange rates are often subject to negotiation between the money changer and those seeking to exchange currency.

Negotiations can be influenced by factors such as the reputation of the money changer, the quantity and quality of the currency being exchanged, and the urgency of the transaction.

Trust plays a crucial role in these negotiations, as individuals rely on the expertise and integrity of the money

changer to ensure fair and accurate exchange rates.

Local Regulations and Standards

Local authorities sometimes issue regulations and standards regarding currency exchange.

These regulations aim to maintain the stability of the local economy and protect individuals from fraudulent practices.

Money changers have to comply with these regulations and adhere to the specified exchange rates, ensuring consistency and fairness in their services. Well, the official ones anyway.

It's important to note that exchange rates are not as standardised as they are in today's real world.

They varied from region to region, and even within a particular region, different money changers might have slightly different rates.
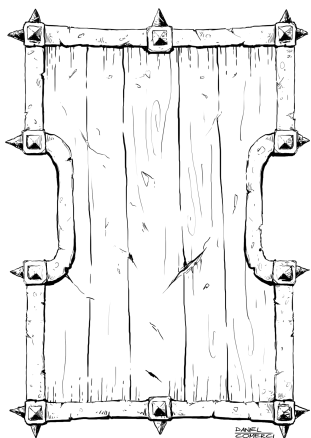
A Faction Too Much Fiction
Importance of Factions in Your Campaign World

Factions are an essential component of a vibrant and immersive campaign world.

They provide a rich tapestry of narratives, dynamic roleplaying opportunities, and meaningful choices for players to navigate.

In this article, we explore the importance of factions in your campaign world.

Dynamic and Engaging Storylines

Factions introduce compelling storylines, injecting intrigue, conflict, and tension into the campaign. Whether PCs choose to align with a faction or find themselves at odds with its goals, faction-based quests and narratives provide exciting opportunities for character development, moral dilemmas, and unexpected twists.

Realistic & Vibrant Worldbuilding

Factions breathe life into the campaign world, mirroring the diversity of beliefs,

cultures, and ideologies found in real-world societies. By populating the realm with different factions, each with its own presence, traditions, and influence, the world becomes more immersive, layered, and believable, allowing players to interact with a living, breathing setting.

Player Agency and Meaningful Choices

Factions empower players with agency, enabling them to align themselves with causes and ideologies that resonate with their characters' values. Through their actions and choices, players can impact the balance of power, forge alliances, or become adversaries of specific factions, shaping the direction and outcome of the campaign.

Diverse Roleplaying Opportunities

Factions offer a wealth of roleplaying possibilities. Players can assume various roles within a faction, such as loyal members, undercover agents, or double agents working for rival factions. Interactions with faction NPCs provide opportunities to explore complex relationships, navigate political intrigue, and develop unique character arcs.

Rich Opportunities for Conflict and Collaboration

Factions introduce conflicts and collaborations between different groups, generating a dynamic and evolving landscape for players to navigate. Tensions may arise from clashing ideologies, competition for resources, or territorial disputes. Players can find themselves caught in the crossfire, negotiating alliances or fanning the flames of conflict.

Quests, Rewards, and Advancement

Factions offer a plethora of quests, rewards, and opportunities for character advancement. Faction-specific quests can provide access to unique magical items, specialised training, or valuable information. Advancing within a faction's ranks can unlock exclusive perks, titles, or resources, incentivizing players to actively engage with faction-related content.

Campaign Longevity and Replayability

Factions contribute to the longevity and replayability of a campaign. Different factions can be explored in subsequent playthroughs, revealing new storylines, encounters, and outcomes. Players can discover alternate paths, make different choices, and witness the consequences of their actions, creating a fresh and engaging experience each time.

Embrace the power of factions and unlock the boundless potential for epic adventures, political intrigue, and unforgettable moments in your campaigns.
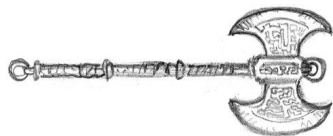
Not Just Another Faction
Faction Template

There may come a time when you need to create some factions that are unique to your campaign world. Below are a series of questions - prompts - that can help in that process.

Your answers to each can be as minimal or as detailed as is needed. And not all questions need to be answered immediately, and can be fleshed out during your campaign as needed.

Faction Name
What is the name of your faction? Does it have any special significance or meaning?

Description
Provide a brief overview of your faction's history, culture, and purpose. What sets it apart from other factions in the game world?

Entry Requirements
Who can join? Can PCs join? What are the requirements or initiation process?

Leadership
Who leads the faction? Is it a single individual, a council, or something else?

Symbols and Colours
What symbols or emblems represent your faction? What colours are associated with it?

Territory
Where is the faction's main territory located? Are there any significant landmarks or features?

Population
How many members are there in the faction? What races or species are commonly found within it?

Beliefs and Values
What are the core beliefs and values of your faction? How do they shape its actions and decisions?

Goals and Motivations

What are the faction's primary goals and motivations? Is there a long-term vision they are striving to achieve?

Allies and Enemies

Does the faction have any allies or enemies? What are the reasons for these alliances or hostilities?

Technology and Magic

What level of technology or magical proficiency does the faction possess? How do they utilise these resources?

Military and Defense

Describe the faction's military strength and strategies. How do they defend themselves or wage war if necessary?

Social Structure

Explain the social hierarchy within the faction. Are there different ranks or classes of members?

Economy and Trade

How does the faction sustain itself economically? What do they produce or trade with other factions?

Traditions and Customs

What are some unique traditions or customs observed within the faction? How do they celebrate important events?

Challenges and Internal Conflicts

What internal challenges or conflicts does the faction face? Is there any dissent or opposition from within?

Notable NPCs

Create some key NPCs associated with the faction, such as leaders, advisors, or influential members. You can use my MAP method for making up quick NPCs (see *Issue 0* of **d12 Monthly**).

Interaction with PCs

How does the faction interact with the PCs? Are there any specific quests or opportunities for collaboration or conflict?

Faction Rewards and Benefits

What rewards or benefits do members gain by aligning themselves with this faction?
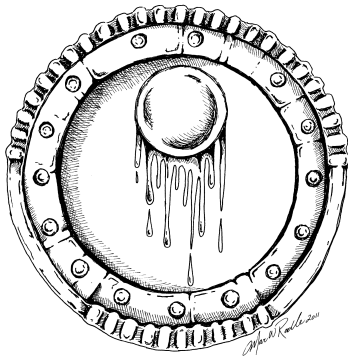
Miscellaneous

Is there any additional information or details you would like to add to enrich the faction's background?

They Work For Who!?
Incorporating Factions into Your Campaign World

Factions provide an excellent opportunity to inject depth, intrigue, and dynamic storytelling into your campaign.

By incorporating factions, you can create a diverse network of groups with their own goals, motivations, and conflicts.

This article will guide you through the process of adding factions to your campaign, exploring ways to develop them, integrate them into your world, and create engaging narratives.

Designing Factions

The first step is to design factions with your campaign world in mind.

Establishing Goals
Determine the overarching goals and objectives of each faction. Are they political, religious, or driven by a desire for power? Define their motives, whether they seek to save the world, dominate a region, or uncover ancient secrets.

Defining Ideologies
Each faction should have distinct ideologies or philosophies that guide their actions and shape their relationships with other factions. Consider factors such as alignment, core beliefs, and moral stances.

Creating Rivalries and Alliances
Develop relationships between factions, including rivalries, alliances, and power dynamics. Determine which factions are adversaries, which are allies, and the reasons behind these alliances and conflicts.

Major Faction Personalities

One way to have the faction be remembered is to give it a charismatic leader or memorable henchmen.

Faction Leaders
Introduce charismatic, influential leaders who embody the essence of each faction. These leaders can provide quests, guidance, or act as adversaries to the players.

Noteworthy Members
Populate factions with memorable personalities, such as skilled warriors, cunning spies, or wise advisors. These characters can serve as allies, quest givers, or foils to the players' own abilities.

Internal Struggles
Highlight internal conflicts within factions, such as power struggles, differing ideologies, or betrayals. These conflicts add

depth and opportunities for intrigue within the factions themselves.

Integrating Factions into the World

The next part to think about is blending them seamlessly into your campaign world.

Geographical Placement

Position factions strategically within your campaign world. Consider their presence in specific cities, regions, or hidden enclaves. Determine how their influence spreads and interacts with other factions and the environment.

Impact on Society

Explore the effects of each faction on the society and culture within your campaign world. How do they influence the economy, politics, or social structure? How do common people perceive and interact with these factions?

Interactions with Non-Faction Characters

Determine how factions interact with non-faction characters, such as NPCs or player characters. Are they recruiting members, seeking allies, or influencing key individuals? Consider the potential conflicts or alliances that can arise from these interactions.

Engaging Faction Storylines

Once you know who the factions are and where they are, the next part is to weave them into story arcs and adventures. And how the factions and the PC's actions impact the world and those in it.

Quests and Missions

Develop faction-specific quests and missions that players can undertake. These can involve gathering information, retrieving artefacts, or resolving conflicts. Tailor these quests to align with the goals and ideologies of each faction.

Faction Reputation and Standing

Establish a reputation system that tracks the players' standing with each faction. Their actions and choices can influence their reputation, opening up new opportunities or closing doors.

Faction Consequences

Determine the consequences of player actions within factions. Their choices may impact faction relationships, alliances, or trigger unforeseen events. Emphasise that players' decisions can shape the course of the campaign and the world itself.

By designing factions, integrating them into the world, and creating engaging storylines, you provide players with opportunities for meaningful choices, diverse interactions, and memorable adventures.

Faction Reaction
Legendary Factions

Some factions have been around for so long, or are so powerful or important, they reach legendary status.

Below are some of these factions you can use in your own fantasy campaign world.

Order of the Draconic Knights

The Order of the Draconic Knights is a revered knightly order dedicated to protecting the realm from supernatural threats and upholding the values of honour, chivalry, and justice.

Founded centuries ago during a time of great peril, the order draws its strength from its connection to powerful good-aligned dragon allies.

The Draconic Knights are renowned for their formidable combat skills, their ability to wield dragon-infused magic, and their unwavering dedication to defending the realm from ancient evils and dark forces.

Primary Missions

Defending the Realm: The primary mission of the Draconic Knights is to safeguard the realm from supernatural threats such as monstrous creatures, dark sorcery, and ancient curses. They serve as a bulwark against the encroachment of malevolent forces, battling enemies that would bring chaos and destruction to the lands.

Quests and Adventures: The order undertakes perilous quests and adventures to seek out and confront sources of darkness, recover lost relics, and unravel ancient mysteries. These quests often take the knights across the realm, facing formidable challenges and engaging in epic battles to restore balance and protect the innocent.

Enemies

Cults of Dark Magic: The Draconic Knights frequently clash with cults that seek to harness dark magic for nefarious purposes.

Ancient Evils: The order stands against ancient evils that awaken from slumber or seek to break free from their prisons.

Evil Dragons & Their Cults: The order struggles against the evil-aligned dragons and their malevolent cults.

Major Personalities

Grand Master Aldric Flameheart: A wise and noble knight who leads the order with unwavering dedication.

Lady Seraphina Stormwing: A skilled warrior and powerful sorceress, Lady Seraphina is renowned for her mastery of dragon magic.

Dame Elysia Windrider: A renowned archer and skilled tactician, she leads the knights in scouting missions and ambushes.

Sir Reynard Ironscale: A veteran knight known for his exceptional combat skills, who is often seen leading the charge against the order's most dangerous foes.

Shadow Syndicate

The Shadow Syndicate is a clandestine organisation renowned for its mastery of intrigue, manipulation, and covert operations.

Operating in the shadows, they navigate the complex web of politics, espionage, and clandestine affairs to further their own interests and maintain their influence.

The syndicate comprises skilled spies, assassins, informants, and master strategists who excel in the art of deception and secrecy.

Their actions often blur the line between legality and illegality, making them feared and respected by their allies and enemies alike.

Primary Missions

Espionage and Intelligence Gathering: The Shadow Syndicate specialises in gathering sensitive information through covert means.

Assassinations and Eliminations: When diplomacy fails or when the syndicate deems it necessary, they employ their deadly assassins to eliminate key targets. Their assassinations are meticulously

planned and executed with precision, leaving little trace of their involvement.

Influence and Manipulation: The Shadow Syndicate manipulates influential figures, exploiting their weaknesses and secrets to gain control or influence over them. They excel at blackmail, bribery, and leveraging their network of informants to exert control behind the scenes.

Enemies

Law Enforcement and Official Authorities: The Shadow Syndicate operates outside the boundaries of the law, making them a constant target of law enforcement agencies and official authorities (these are often targets as well).

Rival Syndicates and Criminal Organisations: Competition among various criminal syndicates and organisations can lead to conflicts and power struggles.

Vigilante Groups and Heroes: The presence of vigilantism and heroic individuals - like the PCs - poses a threat to the Shadow Syndicate's operations. Heroes driven by justice and a desire to expose and dismantle criminal organisations are a constant obstacle to the syndicate's plans.

Major Personalities

The Shadow Master: The enigmatic and elusive leader of the Shadow Syndicate, known only as "The Shadow Master." Their true identity is a closely guarded secret, and they operate from the shadows, rarely revealing themselves directly.

Lady Nersis Nightshade: A seductive and deadly assassin, Lady Nersis is renowned for her stealth and precision. Her expertise in infiltration and assassination makes her a feared and respected member of the syndicate.

Kuss "The Blade": Kuss is the syndicate's deadliest enforcer, known for his unparalleled skill with various weapons. His cold-blooded efficiency and unwavering loyalty to the syndicate make him a fearsome figure among both allies and enemies.

Vikor "The Whisper": Vikor is the syndicate's master spy and information broker. With his network of informants and ability to extract valuable secrets, he plays a vital role in the syndicate's intelligence-gathering operations.

Council of the Enchanters

The Council of the Enchanters is an esteemed order of spellcasters dedicated to the study and mastery of the arcane arts.

Comprising the most skilled and knowledgeable enchanters in the realm, they wield incredible magical power and possess a deep understanding of the mystical forces that permeate the world.

The council's primary objective is to safeguard the balance of magic, preserve ancient knowledge, and ensure the responsible use of their formidable powers.

Primary Missions

Magical Research and Study: The council is dedicated to advancing the study of magic. They delve into ancient tomes, unravelling arcane secrets, and expanding their knowledge of spells, rituals, and magical artefacts.

Preservation of Ancient Lore: The council acts as custodians of ancient magical knowledge, ensuring that precious spells, incantations, and rituals are not lost to time. They maintain vast libraries and archives, safeguarding ancient manuscripts and magical artefacts, and pass down their wisdom to the next generation of enchanters.

Arbiters of Magical Ethics: The council serves as guardians of magical ethics, ensuring that the powers of the arcane are not misused or abused. They establish guidelines for the responsible use of magic, intervene in disputes related to magical practices, and pass judgments on those who violate the council's code of conduct.

Enemies

Dark Cults and Necromancers: The council opposes dark cults and practitioners of forbidden arts, such as necromancy. They combat those who seek to pervert and manipulate magic for nefarious purposes, striving to thwart their dark rituals and put an end to their dangerous experiments.

Unruly Sorcerers and Reckless Mages: The council often finds itself at odds with sorcerers and mages who wield magic without regard for its consequences. These individuals may endanger the delicate balance of magic, causing chaos and instability.

Magical Aberrations and Entities: The council confronts magical aberrations, such as rogue elementals or summoned creatures, that pose a threat to the realm.

Major Personalities

Archmage Starn Stormweaver: A wise and powerful archmage, Starn Stormweaver serves as the leader of the Council of the

Enchanters. His mastery of a wide range of magical disciplines and his profound understanding of arcane lore make him a respected figure among the enchanters.

High Enchantress Selene Moonshroud: Selene Moonshroud is a revered enchantress known for her expertise in ancient magics and her connection to mystical realms.

Master Magnus Runecaster: Magnus Runecaster is a renowned enchanter specialising in rune magic and the forging of enchanted weapons.

Grand Illusionist Isabella Whisperwind: Isabella Whisperwind is a renowned illusionist and expert in the art of illusions and glamours. As the council's leading authority on illusion magic, she advises on matters of perception, deception, and misdirection.

Master Diviner Rolan Starwatcher: Rolan Starwatcher is a master of divination magic, capable of peering into the future and unravelling hidden truths. Roland's wisdom and keen intuition make him a trusted advisor within the council.

Arcanum Sigil

The Arcanum Sigil (also known as the "Enchanters' Coin") looks like a coin, but has several different uses:

1. Identity Verification: The Arcanum Sigil acts as a form of identity verification among the members of the Council. It bears the unique emblem of the guild, which can only be recognized and attested by other enchanters.

2. Access to Restricted Areas: The coin acts as a magical key, granting members access to restricted areas within the council's guildhalls, libraries, and sanctuaries.

3. Alarm System: The coin can also act as a silent alarm system, alerting nearby members if one of their brethren is in danger or requires assistance. Once triggered (which requires the coin plus a spell-like incantation), other members will be able to locate the member in trouble and assist.

The Case For SciFi

By Petros Moros | TheNatOne.com
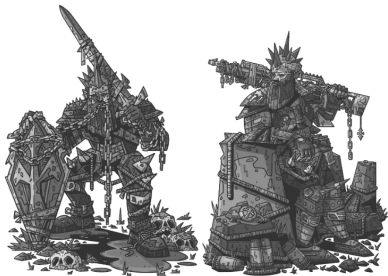
Our hobby was born when a group of wargamers chose to take their mediaeval campaign and shift the focus from playing armies to playing individuals. Since that fateful day, mediaeval fantasy has been the default for most TTRPG groups.

It's easy to see why fantasy has been such an enduring and beloved staple:

➔ Both problems and solutions can be hand waived with magic. The town is overrun by undead?! Find a mcguffin and everyone will be cured!
➔ Rather bleakly, grabbing a sword to fix a problem is much more romantic and palatable to our modern sensibilities than doing the same with a gun is.
➔ Mediaeval fantasy carries a quasi-universally accepted image: forests, elves, dwarves, dragons, wizards, etc. Science fiction conjures up vastly different mental images between individuals: Hopeful planet hopping adventure, grim post-apocalypse, gritty cyberpunk, etc.

These staples make for relatively easy roleplaying. Tone and setting details can vary, but generally players have a rough idea of what to expect. Comfort in the familiar is understandable, but it isn't challenging; It doesn't force the GM and players to grow their roleplay skills.

If you're reading this zine, it indicates that your passion for the hobby is beyond that of the average participant and you're looking to hone your craft. Articles in ***d12 Monthly*** are fantastic for that, they teach readers how to deepen their fantasy roleplay toolset.

Depth is only one consideration, however.

Breadth is the other. If your friend tells you they've only ever watched movies set in Victorian England, you'd probably be surprised, confused, and a little concerned.

Most people would try to talk them into watching almost anything else. Expanding your table's game to other genres is similar to watching different types of movies. Your appreciation and knowledge grows the more games you experience.

To be fair, there is a good chance that after you try different genres, you'll end up back to your starting point of mediaeval fantasy. Many do, it's quite alright. However, there is also a good chance that SciFi, or another genre, speaks to you and your passion intensifies.

So, why try SciFi?

1. It allows you to tell stories that wouldn't work well in a fantasy setting. *Alien* is horrifying because it's set in space. *Judge Dredd*'s brutal cityscape works because it's our cities in a dark timeline. *Starship Troopers* works because killing giant bugs with guns scratches our caveman brain.

2. It makes you stretch those game-running muscles in new ways. Even if you're a "Forever DM" that has decades of experience running fantasy games, I can guarantee that you've grown a little stale in your craft. A new setting and system forces you to rethink many of your go-to tactics. Example: Cell phones make communication between teammates easy, but also allows for your enemies to easily track you. How does this affect the game?

3. It makes the players think in terms of what they would do, not just what abilities their characters have. Fantasy has always seemed an extra layer removed to me. I speculate it's because the lifestyle difference between the middle ages and now is more significant than life now and the future. A person today would more easily transition to a future lifestyle over a past lifestyle. If we throw in engrained fantasy tropes, players spend more time thinking of what a character in a story would do over what they themselves, an actual human being, would do. A player acting human will make the story more immersive.

This is not to say that I don't like fantasy. I love fantasy and a vast majority of my gaming hours over the last 20 years have been playing games in the D&D family. In fact, one of my favourite characters I've ever played was Krimz. Krimz was originally a paladin in a pathfinder game, but I liked him so much I decided to re-play him in an unrelated SciFi game years later. I wanted to see how that character, with established and defined traits, acted in an entirely different world with different rules and culture.

At its core, that is what Science Fiction is really all about, it's a study of humanity and how we as a race will change and react to different possible futures. If fantasy is about looking back at a simpler, more heroic time, then SciFi is about looking forward and speculating about what the wonderful, scary, crazy, hopeful future may hold for us and how we'll adapt to it.

Interested in trying out a SciFi game?

There are plenty of wonderful options and you get the added benefit of trying a different game engine. While it never happened with me, some people find a new engine they love more than the d20 system. If you want to try a new system, take a peak at Traveller, Cyberpunk Red, Apocalypse World, Shadowrun, or Star Wars: Age of Rebellion RPG.

If you want to try SciFi but don't want to learn a new system, I recently wrote **Troopers: RedHack** (available at **drivethrurpg.com/product/417971**). It's a d20-based system so readers of this zine will feel especially comfortable with it.

Random Encounter
Monster of the Month

Each month I want to bring you a new monster for you to pit against your PCs.

Paper Elemental

Paper Elementals (also sometimes known as Book Elementals) are used primarily as guardians for great libraries, guilds, and other places of scholarly learning.

The priests of Banoth (the god of wisdom and knowledge) regularly use these elementals to guard their temples and libraries. Their creation is a closely guarded secret.

Paper Elemental

Large Elemental

Climate/Terrain: Any
Frequency: Very Rare
Organisation: Singular, Ream (D3+1)
Activity Cycle: Any
Diet: N/A
Alignment: Neutral
Advancement: By size (increase HD)
Languages: All
—
Armour Class: 15 (Natural armour)
Hit Dice (HP): 8 (50)
Move: 0; 30 (12) Flight

Abilities: S 16 **C** 14 **D** 14 **I** 21 **W** 8 **Ch** 6
Attacks: D4 Slam
Damage: D6+3 (Heavy Books)
Morale: Very High

Special Abilities:

Fire Vulnerability: A paper elemental takes double damage from fire-based attacks.

Knowledge Burst: If convinced of someone's authority, a paper elemental may unleash bursts of knowledge and information stored within the enchanted books and scrolls, bestowing one target with newfound wisdom or enhanced skills (this can be a new spell, some lore, or anything the GM sees fit to provide).

Paper Manipulation: A paper elemental can control and shape nearby paper, folding it into origami-like constructs and animating them as miniature paper minions to assist in combat or to collect something.

Paper Mimicry: The paper elemental has the capacity to blend into piles of ordinary paper or parchment, making it challenging for enemies to identify and target the elemental. It surprises on 4-in-6 (+8 to hide checks).

Slam Attacks: Paper elementals cause damage from heavy tomes travelling at high velocity.

Understand Any Language: A book elemental, due to its access to numerous texts can understand any language.

Whirlwind: A paper elemental can create a whirlwind of books in a 60-ft diameter: all within take damage as Attacks above, but also blinds anyone caught in the swirling of papers (no save).

Want More?

Looking for more adventure? Back issues are available to download on [my website](#).

I am also expanding this zine via new articles on the website. This will include web enhancements and regular features.

Web Enhancements are articles that for whatever reason didn't make it into the zine. Usually 2-3 are published throughout the month for that issue.
https://yumdm.com/

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https://www.patreon.com/yumdm


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Next Month

For September, I am working on an issue that will be completely full of random tables for you to use in your campaigns.

Whether you are a solo roleplayer, or just need some inspiration, these random tables will help you create a better session.

There will be around 28 pages of various tables, plus an article on various rolling methods and which to use for different purposes.

This issue will be due out on September 1, or earlier for patrons. Another reason to join over 80 of your fellow gamers.
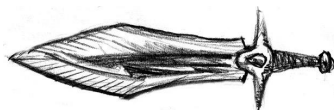
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