

ELDURA

A WORLD MARKED BY WAR

THE WORLD OF ELDURA HAS KNOWN LITTLE BEYOND war. For three hundred years, the dark goddess Alessandra and her legions have laid siege to cities of Eldura, most recently claiming Ardor for her own. As dark towers rose from the ruins of Ardor in the new city of Reckoning, Alessandra turned her sights to the island city of Beacon. Ships with black sails raid Beacon's shores, and their supply routes remain under constant threat. Hope inside the city hangs by a thread. All too soon, it seems, Beacon will fall to the goddess's schemes.

In Eldura's storied past, legends tell of earlier cities that disappeared without a trace. A flash of light consumed the city of Orison, pulling it and the millions of souls within beneath the waters of the Central Sea. A few millennia later, the land of Steymhorod disappeared entirely, its fate unknown.

An unlucky few were there to witness the first wave of a similar path of destruction for Beacon: dark clouds gathered and swept across the horizon, rolling and twisting into the shape of eyeless skulls. The Titan's light, ever-burning over the city, extinguished, leaving a vacuum of darkness and shadow in its place. Bolts of lightning rained down, striking the earth around the city so that the ground quaked. A few survivors escaped in boats, braving an unruly sea, crashing on the shores of the continent. The maw of the Negative Planes yawns open beneath the city, ready to devour the tributes to light and life and drag them into the hellscape below.

BUT LET US TURN THE WHEEL OF TIME BACK FURTHER.

Six thousand years ago, a champion of Ilona grew displeased with her lot following the brilliant being. Alessandra wanted more, and she set about a path to find it. As she crept across the planes of the multiverse, she found one theme repeated, over and over again: the fastest way to absorb power is to siphon off the powers of others.

At the time, Alessandra was one of six champions, one for each Elemental Titan. The champion of light killed her five compatriots and took their power for her own, ascending into godhood. The newly born deity slipped free of the betrayed Titans and found shelter in the Realm of Shadow.

A quiet millennia passed as Alessandra bided her time.

Just as the Titans' hearts had nearly mended following the betrayal, Alessandra struck once more, winning over the ambitious champion of water, Reka. Alessandra showed him how he might follow in her footsteps, but it would take a great price. Reka forfeited the souls of Orison, his patron city, and condemned them to a watery, eternal grave so that he too could arise to godhood.

As is often the case, Alessandra's victory only satisfied her for so long. Whatever the allegiance of the other deities, Alessandra implored them to see reason—they would gain greater power and influence if they did away with the Titans and their champions once and for all. The celestial beings turned her away, but the fiends assented. If she would share her expanded authority with them, they would assist her in overthrowing the tyranny of the Elemental

Titans, those who controlled access to magic across the planes of the multiverse.

The periods of bloodshed ran one into the next. Great cities arose alongside ever-strengthening instruments of war. Some of the peoples of Eldura sided with the dark goddess, while many others opposed her schemes. Dwarves and elves, humans and orcs, fought among one another, their battles mirroring those taking place across the planes between the fae and fiends, celestials and negata.

THE CITY-STATE OF RESPITE

LIFE INSIDE THE WALLED CITY

RESPIE IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING STRONGHOLDS in the Elemental Titans' fight against Alessandra and her forces. The city has long stood against the dark goddess's oppression, though its resolve has faltered in recent years as the war continues to rage on.

The city is favored by Ignis, the Titan of Fire and home to his personal military faction, the Blazing Battalion, though they are primarily involved in fighting in the reaches beyond the city.

CITY LAYOUT

Respite is organized into three concentric rings that increase in security and opulence as one travels inward. There are a few settlements along the outer wall of the city, but this area remains dangerous after the purging by Braemorn's forces ten years earlier.

OUTER RING

The most impoverished area in the city of Respite is home to several small farms and markets as well as some of the more difficult or dangerous trades. Many families and travelers settle here in their first years in Respite, finding their way to the city when their homes are no longer safe, or when they are displaced by the war elsewhere. Many who work in the inner part of the city also reside in the outer ring. The area contains a lively tavern district, La Taverna, often frequented by the Guard of the Gate after completing their watches.

MIDDLE RING

The middle ring of the city contains many merchants and traders as well as the lower nobility. The city's blacksmiths and bakers work in this area alongside fine jewelers and many of the city's clergy. A large stone wall separates the middle ring from the outer ring, and the City Watch post patrols at the gates between them when the city is under threat.

INNER RING

The inner ring is the exclusive residence of the city's militia, high-ranking government officials, and nobility. The City Watch maintains a constant patrol around the iron gates that surround the Inner Ring, and they only allow entry to those with a writ of passage. A few favored artisans and clerics work in this region as well and, unlike the rest of the crowded city, there's plenty of space to be had on the wide, well-kept streets of the Inner Ring.

CITY GOVERNMENT

Council of Four—The Council of Four contains one representative of each of the four branches of the city-state's government: the Senate, the Keepers of Peace, the Consulate of Nobles, and the Militia.

SENATE

After a great deal of effort by Respite's people, the city finally instated a quasi-representative body to speak on the people's behalf in the city-state's government. Each of the provinces beyond the city's borders sends a delegate, and the various traders and service guilds of the city appoint delegates as well. The senate elects one representative to speak before the Council of Four, and a selection of ten delegates attend council meetings with the representative. At the moment, the speaker of the Senate is a popular tavern owner, Devan Stanbury, who fought for the Outer Ring's protection following the massacre outside the city walls ten years prior.

KEEPERS OF PEACE

The Keepers of Peace functions as the overarching organization for all of the city's internal security: all aspects of the City Watch, the Guild Protectorate, and the Order of Clerics and Mages serve as part of the Keepers of Peace alongside a vast spy network that runs through all aspects of the city and the world of Eldura. Traditionally, the head of the Nightwatch, called the Raven, serves as the Keepers' representative in the Council of Four.

CONSULATE OF NOBLES

One of the oldest governing bodies in all of Eldura, the Consulate of Nobles maintains a firm hand on the leadership of Respite, careful to ensure the city's future unfolds along a beneficial and profitable trajectory. One member from each family is appointed to serve on the Consulate, and they select from among themselves who will speak to the Council. This honor is primarily occupied by one of the three wealthiest families in Eldura: the lines of Reese, Arnet, and Seymour. Eliza Seymour, the self surviving daughter of a powerful military general and wealthy nobleman, has maintained this position for the last several decades. Rumors of a part-elven bloodline from her youth seem to have proven true as, despite being well into her sixties, Eliza shows few signs of age and no signs of desiring to turn over her powerful position to another.

MILITIA

The city's militia represents the various military branches, the training academy, the Blazing Battalion, and liaisons to other city-states across Eldura. The military commander appointed to the Council is a sharp-eyed half-orc named Fabius Drexel who has amazed his few superiors in the Militia with his tact and insight, an equally powerful combination to his cleverness and creativity on the battlefield. Fabius saw what many of his predecessors had missed—that a close alliance between the populace of Respite, forged through the Senate, would pave a clear path forward to maintaining the public's trust in their armed protectors during a long-standing war that shows few signs of abating.

OFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS

CITY WATCH

The City Watch is responsible for maintaining the peace and enforcing the law in Respite. There are two special organizations inside the overarching structure of the City Watch: the Guard of the Gate and the Nightwatch.

Guard of the Gate

Elite guard responsible for keeping outside threats from entering the city. They're the final line of defense should the war raging across Eldura make its way to Respite's gates.

Nightwatch

A secret part of the City Watch who have their eye on the larger picture protections needed in the city. They've noticed an uptick in

fiendish activity and a rebirth of cults thought long extinguished and are looking for some help with bringing these organizations to heel without causing a public panic.

GUILD PROTECTORATE

Group of elite fighters, knights, guards, and secret agents hired by the city's nobles to protect themselves and their interests

ORDER OF CLERICS AND MAGES

Officially sanctioned magic users trained in the academies and hired out to serve the various parts of the city as well as see to its protection. They serve for one week a month shielding the city from outside magical influences

UNOFFICIAL ORGANIZATIONS

THE BRIGADE

An extra-judicial organization based out of the Faerie Door Inn and Tavern in the city's Outer Ring. They have grown concerned with the Watch's inaction on the disappearances of residents of the Outer Ring and have taken matters into their own hands.

GUILD OF THE GLOVE

A union of craftpersons who agree to a set amount of pay for goods of certified quality across the city, which protects both buyers and makers

COLLECTIVE OF NINE

One of many related organizations spanning the war-torn world of Eldura, the Collective represents nine different factions with extra-judicial interests in the city of Respite. Some of the groups are part of thieves' guilds, others revolutionary bands, others spy organizations. They represent a variety of aims for the future of Respite and the world of Eldura, from a vision of rule by the people to an anarchic free-for-all in a world without deities or titans. Spies for both sides of the conflict and many of those who attempt to straddle the oppositions in the War of the Titans have infiltrated all nine organizations.