

WOLFSUNG

STEAM PULP FANTASY

FALL
TITANIA
FREE
ANALON

EST
UTHER

SPRIT
SERRA

WIE ZNAM
GOSYKAT
JADEN
EMERKATOR
ZE SLAM

TOWNI

BUTCHER 'LL
GET YA!

LIKE TOM
BIG TRIN

Steam Pulp Fantasy: World Tour



Wolsung presents an alternative version of our world at the end of the 19th century, a version strongly influenced by adventure novels, penny dreadfuls, action movies, video games and comic books. The world is familiar enough, so you will not feel out of place, and at the same time it has the freshness, dash and magic that will compel you to explore it during your game sessions.

This free World Tour presents the setting of the game: its history, geography, technology, as well as details on everyday life in the daring times of Magical-Industrial Revolution.

VICTORIAN FANTASY

The world of **Wolsung** is a magical version of our 19th century in which Victorian ladies and gentlemen come from fantasy races, and mysterious magic interweaves with amazing steam technology.

Under the sky crowded with airships, steam-powered automobiles race the streets and luxurious steamers cruise to overseas colonies. The marriage of magic and science gave birth to mechanical golems, cabalistic thinking machines and fearsome iron dragons.

Yet most of the world is still unexplored – who knows what treasures and mysteries await deep in the jungles and high on the mountain tops. In the dark corners of the earth the undead lurk (a terrifying relic of the Great War) while villains and evil masterminds plot their deranged plans.

In **Wolsung** you will find lots of familiar elements, that will remind you of your favorite action movies, the classics of fantasy, video games, graphic novels and the adventure books from your childhood. This is a world meant for playing, and the number of sources of inspiration you may use is practically infinite.

SCENES FROM A HERO'S LIFE

Miss Shackleton stopped suddenly, turned on her heel and spoke reproachfully towards the bushes. "I have heard you over a quarter ago. You 're making so much noise". If there was anybody hiding in the shadows, they gave no sign of their presence. Adrianne tilted her head. "In case you have not noticed, the bush you're standing in is a scorpion ivy". Something budged in the darkness. "If you take a cab, you might get to the

hospital before the first convulsions start". There was a moment of silence and then frantic sounds of someone trying to run through thick bushes. Miss Shackleton smiled.

A black figure slipped through the window and silently stepped into the study. A man sitting silently in an armchair looked up from the paper he was reading, a mild curiosity in his eyes, and cleared his throat. The burglar jumped and quickly reached for a gun.

"Open the safe! I want jewelry and all your securities!" he snapped. The host folded up the paper and slowly lit up his pipe.

"Please, take a look around." he let out a cloud of smoke. There were hundreds of trophies hanging on the walls of the library. Bare-toothed muzzles of man-ticores, razor-sharp beaks of griffons, hydra's thirteen heads, stuffed crocodiles, leviathan's whalebones, masks, shields and spears of the savage.

"Do you think that any of these monsters constituted a smaller challenge than you?" the man grinned, flashing his very white teeth. In this moment, even in his silk housecoat, he did not look like a gentleman at all. The burglar shivered.

Only when the freezer's door slammed, did Heinrich Stein realize that this was a trap. "They tricked me. Darned halflings". Frost started to cover his mustache. The dwarf rubbed his hands, looked at the rows of hanging beefsides, and started searching his pockets... What the butchers found in the freezer the following morning, was one happy engineer, one improvised mana heater and twelve tons of defrosted meat.

"Petunia, my dear..." Fili Vollenwander looked through the window and stirred his coffee, a bit distressed. "This masked gentleman ran on our roof again! He broke off the drainpipe and slid down on it, straight onto the roof of a passing omnibus. That is the third time this week! Tell Bob to call the police. Probably there are several thugs up there, on the roof, trying to find some way down".

The tattooed ork attacked with a furious roar. The first hit of the club broke Miss Amalia Twist's rapier in two. Not waiting for the second blow to come, she hid behind a tree, grabbed the first thing that came to her hand

and threw it straight into the savage's face. This thing turned out to be a poisonous cobra. Miss Twist was really impressed by the effect.

"Do not despair, Mr Livingstone, the jungle is not as big as it may seem" the ogre could not stop talking for three days now. "My cousin Winston often hunts griffons in this area and, if I'm not wrong, we are right in the middle of the hunting season! Let's sit down on this rock and just wait, surely someone will find us soon". He sat his tired friend down. "Oh, look! There are even some griffons here...". The monsters were just about to attack them, when cousin Winston really appeared.

"He's going to... escape... us..." gasped Dr Watts, leaning against a street lamp. His companion, a dignified elf in a checkered coat, looked calmly at the figure disappearing in the crowd. "Quite the opposite. Did you notice the red clay on his shoes? One can find it only in the Bridgebank district. Our friend is an ork, so he won't venture beyond Lumney Street. This is enough to deduce exactly where he's heading to". The elf called a cab with a lordly gesture. "Come on, doctor. I'm a detective, not a sportsman. We will wait for him there".

The troll in a black uniform looked at the gnome with scorn. "There are situations in life when your famous deduction is not enough." he pushed the barrel against the journalist's forehead. "Goodbye, Mr Wittman". The gnome smiled. "There are situations when simple arithmetic is perfectly enough. I counted your shots. The magazine is empty".

RACES

There are eight playable races in the world of **Wol-sung**:

- **elves**: aristocrats and artists with an allergy to iron;
- **gnomes**: a mysterious and clandestine race of golem-builders;
- **dwarves**: a subterranean race of engineers and bankers;
- **humans**: a race of travelers and vagabonds;
- **halfings**: once peaceful farmers, now confused factory workers;

- **ogres**: a cursed race of apelike giants, only male ogres exist;
- **orks**: strangers from distant lands communicating with spirits;
- **trolls**: a furious race of doomed heroes.

ELVES

Tall and slim beings with slightly pointed ears, big almond eyes, narrow noses and small white teeth. Elven women usually have a petite figure, and ampler shapes are considered plebeian. Elven gentlemen usually have no facial hair. All this makes men and women of this race not so different in terms of appearance. They have fair hair: from white, through light blue, golden, to light brown or even green. Ginger or black hair, or a beard are an oddity and constitute a strong sign of mixed blood – humans or trolls among ancestors.

Elderly elves get more and more detached from the physical world and drift into their memories and constant daydreaming. Finally, every old elf loses the way back, the mind floats to uncharted lands of dreams, while the body lapses into lethargy and usually does not wake up again. It is said that some elves just slip the other side, literally disappearing from the material world. Rumors about the oldest elven families from Alfheim say that under many elven estates there are crypts where ancient ancestors rest dreaming.

For centuries, most of the gentry in Vanadia were



BEHIND THE SCENES

Elves in **Wolsung** are a mixture of Tolkien's stereotype, the Faerie from English legends and the 19th-century aristocracy. This race is connected with high society, art, faultless accent and total detachment from everyday routine. An elf who even once in their life soiled their hands with real work is considered an oddity.

To make things clear – elves are not “good”. They are just classy. If lord Byron had lived in Vanadia, he would have been an elf – this should explain everything.

elves. Nowadays the proportions are changing, but it is still very difficult to meet an elf who would not come from a rich, respected family with a long tradition and ancient roots.

The most noticeable elven tribe living outside Vanadia, are the Yakshas – sensual, swarthy, black-haired elves from Dekan.

By the way, it is worth noticing that all elves have blue blood. Yes, literally blue.

GNOMES

Gnomes are small and energetic, of the height similar to halflings, but slimmer, with a more dwarf-like appearance. A traditional picture of a gnome is a little man with a long beard and characteristic black and red clothes. Recently more and more gnomes dress according to the common fashion, but only few decide to shave off their mustache.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Vanadia draws countless inspirations from the culture and the history of Europe, and every element in the world of **Wolsung** is related to a stereotype from the real world.

Gnomes are no exception here. They are inspired by the Jews, but coming from the far north and worshipping Odin. They live in a closed communities, have their own religion, customs and many troubles with the world outside. You can use this similarity at your own discretion. If you like to, you can to introduce mature and serious topics to your sessions, if not – feel free to ignore the cliches. This is just a game.

Gnomes are secretive and mysterious folk. For centuries they have been living door to door with the rest of the society, but they stayed isolated in their own world of clandestine customs and rigid tradition.

They stick together much more than other races, constituting a separate nation within a nation. You do not hear much about gnomish generals or politicians, but every educated person should be able to enumerate at least a few mages, scientists or inventors coming from this race. Despite their staying on the sidelines (or maybe just because of this), gnomes sometimes evoke aversion or even open hatred in other citizens. And nobody can be really sure how much truth there is in the rumors about their dark rituals.

Most gnomes belong to the middle or lower class of the society, but all of them are thoroughly educated. According to their belief, it was gnomes who invented writing. The most honorable members of their walled-in community are the wise men called *godi*. They study old legends and guard the memories of the race's past. The majority is skilled at writing runes and using the magic hidden in them.

Gnomes come from Thule, an island on the Sea of Ice. The turbulent history has scattered them all over Vanadia, from the icy Hrimthorst, through the sunny Coriole and the mist of the Kingdom of Alfheim, to the vast tundras of Morgovia. Gnomes inhabit also every major colony, from Vinland to the farthest islands of Shan-Dekan.



DWARVES

Although dwarves are rarely taller, than a meter and a half tall, they are usually stronger and tougher than average men. They have dark or black hair, males sporting bushy beards, which strongly contrasts with their characteristic pale complexion. Used to underground darkness, they rather try to avoid sun to which their skin is very sensitive.

Dwarves are famous for their self-control and somberness. For a dwarf, the world is just a complicated mechanism which can be measured, analyzed part after part and logically interpreted. They trust the mind, not emotions. Maybe that's why they are naturally skilled at working with machinery and they show unusual tolerance for mechanical or golemic implants.

They have always been related to mining, metal processing and trade. Dwarves usually work as technicians, miners or engineers. Many famous inventors, factory-owners or bankers are also members of this race. In some countries, dwarven clans constitute the very core of aristocracy. Those who have chosen military career serve in heavy infantry, armored divisions, or as sappers. Dwarves often hold high positions as officers too.



BEHIND THE SCENES

The picture of dwarves in **Wolsung** is strongly influenced by Nordic legends – it is the race of underground blacksmiths, who play the roles of engineers and inventors in the fantastic 19th century. Their temperament is very similar to the stereotypes concerning the German – down-to-earth, reliable and almost deprived of any sense of humor.

Dwarves enable you to introduce cyberpunk elements to the game, especially the questions of the blurred boundary between man and machine.

It is not known whether the mountains of Vanadia or the mighty peaks of central Sunnir are the cradle of this race. What is known for sure is that nowadays they can be met almost everywhere, apart from Lemuria and Atlantis.

HUMANS

Humanity is a very diversified race. Depending on from which part of the world a man comes, the color of their skin may vary from white to dark brown. Their eyes are usually green, celadon or dark blue. However, even dark brown eyes have a slight undertone of green – like water in a muddy river.

And indeed, humans are like water – they get into every crack, fit every free space, collecting all the dirt and scum in the process. They do not fit any stereotype (or you can say, that there is at least one man for every stereotype).

They are the essence of the middle class in Vanadia: freelancers, the first ones to follow new fashions or bring curiosities from abroad. Many humans are sailors, travelers or explorers.

Human tribes can be also found in the deserts of Lemuria and Sunnir, the jungles of Atlantis or the prairies in Vinland. However, they are not the majority on any continent.

BEHIND THE SCENES

In the fantasy genre men are usually pictured as the mediocre common denominator. In **Wolsung** we rather made them eccentric. You can meet them everywhere, they easily adapt to new conditions and are the unpredictable avant-garde.

They are the best choice for new players – every idea for a human character is a good one.

HALFLINGS

Halflings are usually over a meter tall, with human body proportions and thick curly hair. Gentlemen usually sport impressive sideburns – and promote this fashion in every country they live in. The color of hair and eyes varies, it is equally easy to spot a swarthy black-haired halfling as a pale ginger with a freckled face.

For ages halflings lived off the land, their huge families constituting to the idealized image a quiet and peaceful countryside. Nothing lasts forever and with the dawn of the Magical-Industrial Revolution, this picture changed as well and has now been replaced by the a new cliché: a lower-class con man with itchy fingers.

The average life span is almost half longer than human's, but it also depends on the conditions of living. Factory workers working 14 hours a day can expect not much more than an average of 30 years.

The countryside changed after the War. Farming was no longer profitable and multigenerational halfling families had to move to the cities and work for a living. Away from their old community, deprived of tradition and their friends' support, they soon blended in an anonymous crowd of workers, craftsmen and thugs. The traditional hierarchy of values could not survive in dirty, cramped tenement houses. Devoid of their tradition, halflings slowly fall underclass or seek shelter in the organized crime structures.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Halflings in **Wolsung** mix the Tolkienistic stereotype of a family-loving farmer, with a much more playable picture of a halfling rogue.

The world itself provides a fair justification: the 19th century was the time when the countryside started changing and former farmers began the formation of the proletariat. This is why every second halfling in **Wolsung** is a revolutionist or at least a

Outside Vanadia, native halfling tribes can be found in fertile valleys and deltas of the great rivers in Lemuria and Atlantis.

OGRES

Ogres are really huge – taller and stronger than adult trolls. Some say that they are half animal and half human. Hairy, with disproportionately long arms, prominent fangs and grim faces they are more similar to giant apes than to any rational being.

There are no ogre women, every member of this race is male. Legends attribute this phenomenon a curse cast by angry ancient gods. Despite their bestial demeanor ogres have this spark that fascinates and attracts women from other races. If a son is born from such a relationship, he is always an ogre, while the few girls are always the same race as the mother.

The civilized world thinks of ogres as beings with a child's mind and a bear's strength. They are usually employed for hard and dangerous jobs. After the

BEHIND THE SCENES

Yeah, ogres are all male. They are ideal for role-playing classical themes such as a romance between an aristocrat and her gardener, hidden bastard children or the issue of racial segregation. Besides, they look like a combination of Ron Perlman and John Goodman.

More and more ogres start to fight for a better place in the society. Just go through the morning papers and find out how many movie stars, sportsmen or detectives are ogres. The gossip column also explains much – you can often read about unusual marriages, surprising verdicts in inheritance cases and heirs to aristocratic fortunes suddenly found in orphanages.



War governments made efforts to bring ogres into the society. Their young are brought up in special childcare centers, where, thanks to modern educational methods, they can grow up to be decent citizens.

Outside the civilized world, in the northern plains, one can stumble upon savage hunting tribes where the majority of men are ogres.

ORKS

Orks have a slightly animal, predatory look: sharp teeth, protruding cheekbones, pointed ears, flat noses. Full of exotic charm and magnetism, they are easily distinguished from the Vanadians. This is an old race, that has given birth to both cannibal tribes of Lemuria and the sophisticated ancient civilization of Shang-In. What do they have in common? All orks are strongly connected to the world of spirits.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Orks combine two strong cliches: the evil race from classical fantasy literature with the sinister Chinese and lecherous Turks from the 19th-century adventure novels.

In **Wolsung** they stand for all that is alien and dangerous (yet compelling).



The majority lives outside Vanadia – in Sunnir, Atman, Vinland and Lemuria, in their own strange societies. Their position changed with the beginning of the colonial era: nowadays more and more young orks study at Vanadian universities and move to the Old Continent to live there.

TROLLS

Young trolls, with their characteristic pointed ears and sharp teeth look like little wild animals and behave like them as well.

Adult ones are very tall and well-built. Despite sharp-featured faces and magnetic fiery eyes many consider them rather handsome. Wild-red-colored hair is very common.

Old trolls slowly become monsters with steel-strong muscles, thick skin, sharp claws and slobbering bare-toothed mouths. Trolls do not stop growing and with age they can achieve a size inaccessible for any other races.

The changes in both the physical and the mental side of a troll are gigantic. Young, adult and old trolls are almost three separate species. Self-reliant from early stages of development, adolescent trolls grow rapidly, only in order to degenerate in the old age. When in their seventies, trolls are nothing more than bloodthirsty mindless beasts. Nobody knows how long a troll can live, most of them com-

mit suicide just before they lose control of themselves forever. Those who do not, end up killed by families, neighbors or the police.



Trolls are a race of honor and strong moral spine. Their main aim in life is to leave something behind – earn immortality through their outstanding achievements. They are brave, even daring. Ambitious, even ruthless. Their careers are brilliant, but quick as a flare.

Vanadian trolls come from Hrimthorst, but some wild tribes can also be found in the jungles of Lemuria, the steppes of Sunnir or the plateaus of Atlantis.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Wolsung trolls are a compilation of numerous Scandinavian legends and myths. Young ones are troublesome but harmless imps, while the old are inspired by a stereotypical fantasy image of huge and deadly beasts.

Only adult trolls are playable. They are also a stereotype – fearless Viking warriors, with their splendor going before their safety, ready to die in order to become a legend.

Setting

THE WORLD OF WOLSUNG

TECHNOLOGY AND MAGIC

Amazing inventions, devices created with the use of New Magic are nowadays something common for Vanadian people. On the crowded streets, the last carriages are giving way to noisy shining steamobiles. The cities are full of life, growing; skyscrapers compete with factory chimneys in the race towards the sky. And the sky itself is crossed by majestic airships and small but maneuverable postal wyverns, while mine shafts, tunnels, sewer systems and geomantic chambers cut deep into the ground.

Seas are filled with military leviathans, transoceanic palace-ships, *mana* extractions rigs, transport steamboats and yachts of the wealthy. Even the underwater world has less and less secrets, as modern bathyscaphes constantly break new records of submersion. With every shipment of iron, every new steam engine, civilization enters colonies. The world is tamed.

Thanks to the efficient postal and crystalograph services, information circulates between continents



QUOTES

“The world is changing rapidly. After the Great War a new kind of magic emerged – the Magic of Steam. Recent developments in science and technology brought us the most amazing of all inventions, the steam engine. It is the proud symbol of our times.

With the first giant factories the age of mass production began: nowadays cheap products of high quality are available for everyone, not only the rich, popularizing the recent achievements of science. Beautiful steamobiles zoom on the streets. The sky is filled with majestic airships. The Metropolitan Rail trolleys move constantly both in underground tunnels and on over-passes. The railway network entangles the whole globe, and luxurious streamers provide a comfortable way to reach the overseas colonies. The infrastructure of great cities provides the standard of living unavailable for our ancestors. Gas lamps light up our houses, while the pneumatic mail enables quick communication between any addresses within the city. Metropolises use great networks of crystalographs instead.

Magic has entered universities and schools, no more a plaything for the chosen, and became a working tool for every educated person. Thanks to the work of geomancers, buildings are constructed in such places and from such materials, that their natural energy flow promotes the building's purpose – the parks make you more relaxed, the ill recover faster in hospitals, and schools improve your learning capabilities. Alchemists have moved from their cramped

faster than it used to between cities before the War. Gas lamps illuminate the streets and houses. The power of steam heats and fuels the everyday machinery in our houses.

COMMUNICATION

The network of the pneumatic mail (popular “pneuma”) entangles all the major cities. How does it work? First, you put the capsule with the letter into the feeder. Then, compressed air pushes it into the labyrinth of pipes, where a system of switches interprets the arrangement of serrated rings on the capsule and directs it towards the selected number. In great cities, such as Lyonesse, letters are usually delivered in no more than two hours. Long-

workshops to modern laboratories and factories and golems are utilised more and more extensively. Cabalists and numerologists created first mechanical calculating machines.

These are the brave new times.”

Excerpt from „Know your nation” – textbook for the first year of the common school.

“I believe that this omnipresent optimism is premature at least.

The scars left behind by the Great War are much more serious and grim, than the authorities are willing to admit. They seem to underestimate the fact that an enormous stretch of land along the wotanian-aquitanean border, where the greatest battles of the conflict took place, is totally and irretrievably destroyed. During the final stage of the War, this area suffered radiation of intensity exceeding 700 thaums, and 20 tons of shells were dropped on each square meter! Taking into consideration the death of thousands of soldiers, one should not be surprised by disturbances in the structure of the Astral, that warped those places. Most of the lands in question does not, and probably never will, have any vegetation. Disruptions in the energy flow are so big, that even the regular airship lines won't fly over those lands, which lengthens the journey by more than 100 miles. (...)

Excerpt from a controversial book „The Lands of Havoc” by sir Jonathan Glimpshire

distance pneumatic lines are still uneconomical by now.

The radio makes use of the specific qualities of crystals, which start pulsating under the influence of *mana*, spreading the vibrations through the Astral and evoking the same effect in other crystals nearby. This phenomenon, however, has a limited range of only several kilometers, which forces building a dense network of aerial transmission masts. Radio receivers are the size of a pretty large cupboard and need individual powering.

The crystalograph is similar to the radio, but it is used for long-distance communication, not entertainment. It does not have the main transmitter, and transmission masts do not form a network, but

BEHIND THE SCENES:**THE RETRO-COMMUNICATION CRIB**

What to say during the game if you want to:

- call from a mobile phone? – “I’m sending a pneuma”, “I’ll send a messenger”, “I’ll send a crystallograph”;
- lookup something online? – “I’m going to library”, “I’m browsing the morning newspapers”, “Alfred, bring me the encyclopedia”;
- watch TV – “the radio shows starts within an hour”, “let’s go to opera”, “a famous archaeologist is giving a lecture in a Ash and Oak Club”;
- listen to music – “let’s go to philharmonic”, “I’ve heard you’re playing the piano beautifully”, “lets try out my new gramophone”;
- go to cinema – “lets drive to Lyonesse, to cinema”, “I have invited a touring cinema to our mansion”, „I would love to see a new film, so I’ll be happy to fund your production”.going before their safety, ready to die in order to become a legend.

they fork into lines ending with a sending-receiving devices. The message is transmitted from one station to another, and is immediately written down on paper as soon as it reaches a receiver. Crystallographs are used mostly by companies, especially newspapers. Messages can be also sent and read in major post offices.

The cinema is almost hysterically admired by people, and famous actors are treated as national heroes. In every small town you can easily find a projection hall, even if it is only a rented school classroom, the screen is nothing else but a white sheet on the wall and all the films presented are silent. Cinemas in metropolises look like real temples of entertainment – flowing with gold and velvet, with shining marble walls. Here the films are hand-colored and accompanied by sound – recorded on perforated tapes and played in high-class speakers.

TRANSPORTATION

Steamobiles are probably the most popular means of transport nowadays – steam-powered cars have conquered the roads of the whole Vanadia. They are no more the awkward pre-War horseless carriages, but modern and really stylish vehicles. Alchemically enhanced coal briquettes are their fuel. Before the ride, remember to take some time to heat up

the boiler and fill it with water – then you just have to control the pressure and feed the briquettes from time to time. A well-developed network of service stations helps refuel the vehicle quickly and clean its hearth. The major stations also provide all necessary repairs.

Railway is irreplaceable for longer distances. Its lines connect all major cities and make the journey across Vanadia possible in less than two days, even including stops at the stations. The level of comfort varies much – from wood seats in third-class suburban lines to crystals and velvet in the saloon-carriages of long-distance expresses.

Metropolitan Rail – due to the elves’ sensitivity to iron, the first railway lines connecting Lyonesse and nearby towns were built underground. This was the beginning of the famous Metropolitan Rail which has inspired similar enterprises in other capital cities. Even now railway lines in Alfheim tend to go through rather unoccupied areas, and stations are built mostly on the outskirts of the cities.

Mechanical animals are a very peculiar type of golems. They are faster and stronger than their living counterparts and have a certain level of intelligence and consciousness. They can understand even relatively complicated commands and cope with the



BEHIND THE SCENES

The technology in **Wolsung** is based on magic, so some of the inventions may deny the laws of physics as we know them. The level of technological advancement has a lot more in common with the roaring 20s, than the XIX century. Machines are powered by magic and steam, but still are close enough to modern devices, for the players to use their common knowledge and not worry about anachronisms.

The rules are simple:

- there is no internet nor computers, there are mechanical difference engines;
- there are no telephones, there are crystalomantic transmitters;
- there are no planes, there are golemic wyverns;
- there is no electricity, there is *mana* (magical energy);
- there are no chemical elements, there are classical elements (fire, earth, air and water);
- there is alchemy instead of chemistry, engineers are called technomancers, mathematics is supported by numerology, and astrology the most common way to study and describe the Space.

LYONESSE

Lyonesse had a rich history, and now, after over two millennia, it's the greatest metropolis of the world. Just look at the glorious palace of Queen Titania, or at the Tall Tom near the Houses of Parliament, or at the skyscrapers in Tintagel District, but please, avert your eyes from the other side of the river. There's nothing to look at in Bridgebank, just decay, poverty and fog.

The Metropolis of Lyonesse

Administrative division: 54 districts and the autonomous Tintagel District

Mayor: sir Horace, the First Baron of Erlkin

Languages: Alfish, Old Alfsh and Utalian, Wotnian, Shangese and others

Population: 7 million (unofficially more than 10 million): 16% elves, 15% halflings, 14% humans, 12% trolls, 12% orks, 12% dwarves, 11% gnomes, 8% ogres

terrain a steamobile would not. The most popular mechanical animals are horses and oxen. The former are used by elite police units in most countries, while the latter work mainly in agriculture.

Behemoths are huge multi-legged combat golems, invented during the Great War. They have the best cannons, heavy armor, are more than 5 meters tall and need a crew of six to ten people. Nowadays these golems are the core of the armor divisions in almost every army in the world.

Wyverns are flying machines based on their living counterparts. Just as all the other mechanical animals, they have residual consciousness. They are fast and maneuverable, but capricious. Wyverns are mostly used for delivering mail, and the biggest can take up to six passengers. However, when an experienced pilot takes the yoke, they can turn into a deadly weapon.

Airships, thanks to the air elementals closed in the balloons, are better at load capacity, reach and the height achieved than wyverns. They provide a comfortably transport for hundreds of passengers, linking capital cities and overseas colonies.

The capitol of Alfheim is a city of universities, museums, art galleries, textile workshops, docks, forges and factories; it's a centre of cinematographic industry and the last harbor and new home for thousands of immigrants from all corners of the earth. A melting pot of religions, cultures and cuisines. It is a city of commerce, art and crime, ostentatious luxury and extreme poverty. The city of contrasts. The city of wonders. The city of the cities.

The City in the Fog.

CHARACTERS

The keywords for characters coming from Lyonesse are: progress and the empire.

Lyonesse is the most progressive of cities and the heart of vast colonial empire. You can travel half the world and see less, than what you will see in a year living here. Growing up in Lyonesse is an experience like no other. In this city mere street

BEHIND THE SCENES:

Lyonesse is designed as the universal, archetypal city. It's siblings are Terry Prattchet's Ankh-Morpork, Nightcity from Cyberpunk 2020, New York depicted in Marvel comic books, and, most of all: Victorian London. It is the default setting for steampulp adventures in an urban environment. If you want to play in a city, choose Lyonesse.

We described only some of the districts – the rest is yours to create. If you need a unique scenery, some bizarre location, or a secret society just drop it somewhere. We are sure, it has always been there, you've just never got out of the Tube on this particular station.

Tintagel District is the City of London mixed with pre-war Manhattan. All the major crimes are investigated by inspectors from Alven Yard. And there is the Fog. In Lyonesse, fog is not just a weather, it's a magical phenomenon; not only people get lost in it, sometimes even whole houses disappear in this thick pea souper.

ruffians witness wonders, that would never occur to even the most educated Wotanians.

It's hard to find more open-minded people than those living in Lyonesse – and more self-reliant. Well, if you encounter, day after day, those endless riches form all over the world, you do not just have *trust* in the Empire, you *know* it's power.

Here are some character concepts for heroes from Lyonesse:

- Alven Yard inspector, born in Dekan and specializing in ethnic crimes.
- A halfling actress during the day, a burglar with a thousand faces at night.
- A troll, engineer and monster-hunter, looking for prey in the Tube's tunnels.

A Lyonesse character in a nutshell

Do not leave the city – there is no need to. Lyonesse offers all you could ever want, and sometimes even more. If you have to leave, face it – there's nothing abroad, that cannot be found on the spot.

Even exotic cuisine tastes much better in this nice small place round the corner than at a maharaja's court.

- An elven artist born in the royal family, with an extraordinary talent, and a knack for scandals.
- A retired air ace and a war hero, honorary member of the Ash and Oak Club.
- An orkish martial artist, adopted daughter and heiress of an influential Lord.

STORY SEEDS

Daring – fierce competition between river-cabs corporations. Halflings form scylla fighting against orkish triads. Aerial duels above the Tall Tom clock tower. Evil mastermind constructing giant steam golems in the forges of Stableton. A giant ape escaping from the Zoological Garden. Breaking and entering a manor inhabited only by an old troll. Saving the Queen. Bank robbery in Tintagel District. Rush-hour omnibus chases.

Exploration - Lost in the Fog. Mapping the Tube's tunnels. Nocturnal escapades to the pubs in Uldnesse, culinary journeys through ethnic restaurants. Experiments and inventions at the University. Looking for lost artifacts in the Archaeological Society's storerooms. Hunting ghouls at the communal cemetery in Bridgebank.

Investigation – mutilated bodies of the Butcher's victims. Luddites conspiring against the industrial-





ists and the gentry. Crimes of passion on a Belville movie set. Clandestine cults in Old Ipswitch, kidnappers and pickpockets in Bridgebank. Gnomish mysteries in Svart Thule, stranglers in Yakshatown.

Society – the Buckingham Palace and intrigues on Her Majesty’s secret service. Clubs for Ladies and Gentlemen: Griffon Club, Ash and Oak. Charity balls organized by Duchess Nimblewist, romancing on the ice rink in Abbot’s Gardens, betting on Winledon tennis courts, gossiping on the Fairy Pond golf fields, dueling in Ferret Forrest.

SOCIETY

In Lyonesse people talk all day long in every language possible. They whisper in the docks at night, declaim in university classrooms, sing over glasses of ale and stout, gossip over gin and pickled eggs, testify in courtrooms, chat in clubs over brandy and cigars, flirt in theaters and ballrooms.

What do they talk about? They say that eleven bridges over the Tether is not enough anymore, comment upon the last delivery of colonial goods at the d’Arrots, and this new Golemic Museum that is soon to be opened, complain about the influx of immigrants, laugh at the caricatures in the press and drink to the Queen.

Nobody mentions the hundreds of thousands of homeless, the poor housing conditions in the industrial districts, strange disappearances in the

docklands or the juvenile crime, drunkenness and prostitution. Nobody frets that after all those years the Alven Yard still haven’t stop the Butcher. Nobody questions the idea, that absinth, black lotus and laudanum are really such wonderful cures for the big-city melancholia.

INTERESTING PLACES

Treecoven – the Royal Astrological Observatory is located near the dockland area, exactly on the Prime Meridian – which makes it a perfect place for performing magic rituals.

Comedians End – part of Uldnesse (the old town), known for its cabarets, theaters and pubs. You must visit the New Theatre, the Moon Theatre and the world’s famous Hand and Mask Pub – situated right between them.

Ethnic districts – in Lyonesse the strangers stick together. Everyone knows that Svart Thule is a gnomish ghetto, immigrants from Dekan live in Yakshatown and dwarves from the continent never leave Stableton. Quirinale, famous for it’s halfling restaurants, is openly called Little Scylla just as Pothill is the oriental Shang Town.

Clairvale – the posh district of the aristocracy. This part of the city is full of manors, lavish gardens, hidden affairs, hushed scandals, dangerous habits, all kinds of eccentricity – and elves. So, it shouldn’t be a surprise that the iron is banned in all Clairvale.

Setting

WOTANY

The love for the fatherland, the cult of technology and ubiquitous order – in this country these things are visible everywhere as far as the eye can see. Wotany is the fastest developing economy in Vanadia, but tradition and history are also very important for its citizens.

The society of Wotany is like a giant mechanism, where every gear has its place. However, order is not forced, quite the contrary – the people here are born with it. It starts with the family: no matter how much your relatives may irritate you, you can always count on them. The family, just like dwarven clans in the past, stick together and meet in crowds during holi-

Wotanian Empire

Capital city: Heimburg

Political system: Federal monarchy

Ruler: Emperor Frederick-Willem II (dwarf)

Religions: Reformatism (state religion), in the south also Pontificalism

Language: Wotanian

Currency: 1 mark = 100 pfennigs

Area: 759 000 square kilometers

Population: 61 million: 21% dwarves, 16% humans, 15% elves, 14% halflings, 14% trolls, 12% gnomes, 6% ogres, 2% orcs





Setting

days and celebrations. You do not exactly know what is the level of blood relationship between you and your cousin or how his grand-grandmother was related to your brother-in-law? No problem. You are both parts of one family and in time of need you are always there for each other. This is how it works in Wotany.

BEHIND THE SCENES:

Wotany is the 19th-century Germany mixed with the Weimar Republic – a federation of lands which do always agree with one another. There are some similarities to the situation after World War 2, as the memories of the Great War still cast a dark shadow over every aspect of life in Wotany. This is a country where all citizens drink beer and love blood sausage, but at the same time they secretly miss the Order brought by the Undead Chancellor.

Wotany is a good setting for political adventures. The main figures include Chancellor ven Lofar (inspired by Bismarck), supporter of the final unification of Wotany, and Dukes-Electors who desire autonomy. Add to this wealthy industrialists, courtiers, officials, secret agents, occultist lodges and Wormund – the Wotanian dragon – with his own idea for a new, better fatherland.

The principles that rule the family life are valid also for every other level of the society. Just as in town it is important, what family you come from, that on the level of a district people pay attention to the town you were born in. In the province people from the same district are considered almost relatives. Provinces matter on the level of a land, and lands – on the level of the empire. The world-famous Wotanian love of their fatherland is constructed of tens of small local patriotisms.

CHARACTERS

The keywords for the characters coming from Wotany are: technology and order.

Wotanians are stiff, boorish and extremely pedantic – or just well-behaved, decent and respecting tradition. And most characters coming from this country will be like that. However, there are black sheep in every herd. This group contains, among others: idyllists who postulate getting rid of privileges for the aristocracy, and nihilists – terrorists regarding any social order as pure filth. There is also a whole group of rebel artists, philosophers, spiritists and other activists. What is more, everyone here remembers the times of chancellor ven

A Wotanian character in a nutshell

Always praise the Emperor, your local beer und the Sehr-Gut-Wotanian-Technology. Add “Herr” and “Frau” before your interlocutor’s name. Try to pretend that during the War all Wotanians were on holidays abroad or at least were in the support service far from the front – or better, avoid this topic at all costs.

Rier. Many industrialists and aristocrats would like to hide the dark secrets from their past – serving the Undead Reich.

Here are some character concepts for heroes from Wotany:

- a chairwoman in a great concern, controlling the stock market operations and the local Housewives’ Society;
- a dwarven mechanic, brilliant at repairing and tuning steamobiles;
- an agent of the Wotanian Bureau of Thaumologic Control, hunting horrors which survived the Great War;
- a secret agent in the service of the Chancellor, infiltrating nihilist and autonomist conspiracies;
- a young countess, heiress to the family fortune and golem factories;
- a student of the university in Grommingen, a specialist in khemrean hieroglyphs.

SOCIETY

People in Wotany meet and talk in restaurants and beer cellars, on bicycle trips, visiting their friends, during spiritualistic séances and at marksmen’s fraternities.

They talk about new railways, amazing inventions, discuss the news from the press and family events. Comments are made upon the colonial politics of Aquitaine and Alnheim, the domestic issues of Morgovia, or the theories concerning other countries’ dragons. Scandals are mentioned occasionally in a patronizing tone.

Never try to talk about death or serious illnesses. Do not refer to the War in other words than “the seventies”. Do not mention Wormund. Bear in mind that no supporter of the unification will openly criticize the Dukes-Electors and no autonomy enthusiast will dare to say a bad word about

the Chancellor, at least in public. And remember: putting words “Wotany” and “necromancy” in one sentence practically means social death.

STORY SEEDS

Daring – great business and even greater politics. Zombies in the sewers, hungry gargoyles on the roofs. Stealing patents and plans, kidnapping scientists and engineers. Dangerous maneuvers in the newest prototypes of steamobiles, airships and wyverns. Betraying tradition and social order.

Exploration – the Fields of Death and the abandoned (at least officially) strongholds of ven Rier’s army constitute the greatest challenge on the Old Continent. A labyrinth of towers, chimneys, extensions and attics in Grommingen, where a killer gargoyle hides. The Silent Forest. Abandoned factories; museums; laboratories where extraordinary gadgets are developed. Old town backstreets. The hangars of the ven Keisel concern – the biggest producer of airships.

Investigation – stolen True Names, plots of secret lodges and cabals, wars of intelligences and political powers. Underground organizations of ven Rier’s followers plotting against the Empire. Illegal trade in astral beings. Mysterious people in black uniforms with a symbol of a dragon’s eye. Corpses awfully mutilated with a razor – victims of the infamous Barber from Heimburg.

Society – the Emperor’s court and the Dukes-Electors. Eight lands, countless duchies, provinces, free cities and autonomous regions. Parties at the aristocracy’s palaces, industrialists’ balls, first presentations of new inventions. The war of ideas between the puritan townsmen, nihilists and young artists. Cafes, cabarets, illegal meetings of the Children of the Undead Reich and the clandestine Ancient Lodge of the Enlightened Mysteries.

INTERESTING PLACES

The Free City of Heimburg – the smallest, but the most important of all the Lands in Wotany covers the area of the capital city of Heimburg. It is one of the biggest ports in Vanadia. Its duty-free zone constitutes the biggest store of exotic goods on the whole continent. The city grows rapidly thanks to the income from trade and has recently exceeded the number of three million inhabitants.

Quellen – a fashionable health-resort visited annually by the Emperor himself. The town lives off the patients and tourists – boarding houses, hotels and posh restaurants burst at the seams, hosting the people from all levels of the society.

Wolfenburg – the ruins of the Undead Chancellor's wartime residence. Lost in the forests in the south-east of the country, Wolfenburg attracts only the most determined tourists. The evil fame of this

place effectively discourages most adventurers and mystery-hunters.

Grommingen – the oldest city in Wotany, founded in the ancient times of the Resian Empire. It is a true pearl of the gothic architecture, with its famous Cathedral, the heart of Reformatism. It has the biggest population of city gargoyles in the world: more than two hundred active specimens.

LEMURIA (CONTINENT)

For thousands of years the hot and unexplored continent of Lemuria has been the embodiment of the mystery. It was a cradle of ancient cultures, the strangest creatures and a source of innumerable riches. Lemuria provides leviathan ivory, ebony, diamonds, gold and thousands of other colonial goods. As well as slaves. The heart of the continent is still uncharted – terra incognita starts several dozen miles away from the coast. Wild orkish tribes perform their pagan rituals there, griffons and manticores attack careless travelers, while winged monkeys build their nests in the ruins of ancient cities. To be honest, nobody really knows what to expect in this place.

STORY SEEDS

Daring – sandstorms, venomous animals, nomads, blasphemous rituals, khanjar-fights in the backstreets, playing cards at a crowded bazaar, a crazy chase in the crowns of the rainforest trees, thieving winged monkeys.

Exploration – the pyramids and their treasures, excavations, looking for temples lost beneath desert sands, tropical jungles, ancient ruins, mythical creatures carved in stone, abandoned mines, labyrinths beneath ancient cities, uncharted tunnels under the city of Khemre.

Investigation – bootlegging, rebellious warlords, audacious artifact-theft, unknown narcotics, mysterious disappearances of the consulate's officers, missing supplies of the Colonial Legion, a hippopotamus' footprint in the garden of a small country residence near Lyonesse.

Lemuria

Kingdoms and colonies: Khemre, Aksum, Coriolean Lemuria, Aquitean Lemuria, Punt, Tera, Prester John's Kingdom

Major cities: Khemre, Presteria

Religions: Alfism, Pontificalism, Reformatism, Ormism, Polytheism, minor cults

Languages: Alfish, Coriolean, Aquitean, Khemrian

Surface area: 17,5 million square kilometers

Highest peak: Kibuhura (5859 meters above sea level)

Lowest point: Lac Assail (107 meters below sea level)

Longest river: Taygete (at least 6 thousand kilometers)

Outermost points: Cape Black (north), Cape of Lost Hope (south), Ponte de Maladie (west), The Eye of a Needle (east)

Biggest desert: Hamra (4,5 million square kilometers)

Temperatures: min. -23°C, max. 58°C

Society – sheiks' palaces, fertile oases, monasteries in the middle of a desert, bawdy houses, dives smelling of date moonshine, a ball in the embassy, a meeting in a consulate, negotiations on a hanging bridge, slave market haggling.

SOCIETY

Even if we do not take into consideration various colonial invaders, Lemuria is a melting pot of nationalities, nations and tribes – multiculturalism is an inexhaustible source to draw from.

BEHIND THE SCENES: OTHER CONTINENTS

Atlantis is the wild South Africa from adventure movies, rich of mysteries left by the Aztecs and the Maya. Here people look for legendary golden cities, meeting cannibal tribes who offer bloody sacrifices to their gods. Here also loiter numerous expeditions led by bearded professors, whom you usually rescue in the final scene of the session. After World War 2 Argentina was a shelter for Nazis, so Atlantis is also the place where many of ven Rier's followers fled. Santa Luna is Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo in one – a gigantic city of contrasts, where the palaces of the rich, huge churches and museums neighbor slums.

Sunnir is a cross section through the most interesting (from the geographical and political point of view) fragments of Asia. The Telogan massif is the Himalayas, Atteman is nothing else than the Ottoman Empire at its heyday. Dekan is the colonial British India with its strangler cults, taken straight from the book by Kipling and Verne. Shang-In is China, weakened during the opium wars and the Boxer rebellion. Ozumu is Japan, successfully getting out of isolationism and beginning the period of rapid development – a unique mixture of samurais, Godzilla and giant steam robots. And what can be found in Indo-China, here called Shang-Dekan, is totally up to you.

Sunnirians are ideal antagonists – a perfect combination of an evil ork from the canonic fantasy fiction and a villainous Chinese from 19th-century adventure novels.

Vinland – America, where Charles May meets Al Capone, Buffalo Bill and Jack London. The frontier is pure western, cities offer the mix of the colonial times and the prohibition, while the countryside is Lovecraft's New England. At first, the continent may seem similar to Vanadia, but they are completely different at heart. The Independence War was lost so there are no United States in the world of **Wolsung**, but a few small countries do exist in Vinland: the League of Free Counties (not recognized by world powers) in the west, Vindians' countries on the Great Plains, colonial Vinlandian Alheim on the east coast and vast plantations in the south, belonging to the cotton tycoons from the loyalist Southern Confederation. The historical conflict North-South takes place between the East and the West. Its current stage can be called the Cold Civil War.

Purgatory is the Australian penal colony, cut off from the outside world by a magical barrier and surrounded by the astonishing beauty of Polynesia – white beaches, shockingly blue lagoons, intensely green jungle. The area which belongs to wild brave warriors, devious rat-like midgets and powerful shamans, devoted to the spirits of nature. The continent is cut off by the barrier of magically altered currents and wild, uncontrolled force discharges. The interior of Purgatory it's a post-apocalyptic steampulp Mad Max. Exile is usually a one-way trip.

People talk here in two ways. One is long, multi-layered stories, the pride of the continent. The other – tumultuous, spectacular haggling on the markets and bazaars. The locals love talking – but they are careful to whom and what they talk about. Do you want to get to know every single secret of Lemuria within one evening? Perhaps a decade is not enough.

INTERESTING PLACES

Aksum – millennia ago Aksum was a powerful kingdom. At its heyday, it ruled mercilessly almost the whole continent. Nowadays, Aksum is only a murky legend about an ancient city in the heart of the Black Jungle, a gossip about the revolting cults of some alien gods and about merciless slave hunters.



Transalanea – usually referred to as Prester John’s Kingdom, it is a young, teocratic country which gained independence during the Great War. The descendants of the settlers from Ys, Alfheim and Wotany made great use of diamonds and gold deposits. Although the country still has not been officially recognized by Queen Titania, its independence is not in danger.

Port Beauregard – a fortress on the coast, the capital of Aquitean Lemuria. The headquarters of the Colonial Legion: the most elite unit in the Aquitean army.

Tera – a rocky island on the Inner Sea, the residence of the Order of the Burning Sword and the place where the infamous Aquitean emperor Rovannon Villanteau died.

BEHIND THE SCENES:

Lemuria is nothing other than wild and hot Africa, known from action movies and novels, such as “King Solomon’s Mines”, “The Mummy”, “Indiana Jones” or Polish “In Desert and Wilderness”.

The north is dominated by the Vanadian civilization, with governors’ palaces, the Colonial Legion and the Order of the Burning Sword (the counterparts of the French Foreign Legion and the Order of the Knights of St John of Malta). However, the further south you go, the more cunning traders and half-savage desert tribes you meet.

Khemre is more similar to the ancient Egypt of the pharaohs than to a typical Arab country. Prester John’s Kingdom is a magical South Africa after the alternative Boer Wars.

HISTORY

The history of the world is important during the game only when it may influence the characters’ adventures. There is no room for dates and boring enumerations – we want a flourish and interesting stories, as if taken from adventure movies and fiction.

THE HISTORY OF LICHES

Thank Providence (or the Laws of Nature) that so few liches ever existed in the whole known history. Shame that as many as four of them – in our times.

The nature of the liches

The very nature of the lich transformation remains a mystery. Each undead ruler came into existence in a different way and under different circumstances. What is needed for sure is a combination of necromantic knowledge and skill, perseverance stronger than the instinct of self-preservation and vast amounts of energy torn out of the lich’s victims.

The key to the transformation is always some form of suicide. If at the end of his days the mage has enough perseverance, power and skill, he can prolong his dying moments forever. Body functions

QUOTES

First came the rotten wind, bringing fever and death from the illness. When enough men died, the procession of the undead came. At the sound of their bells and rattles, the dead were rising from their graves. The living were caught and slain before the Mourning King. When the procession moved on, there was nobody – and nothing – alive left behind.”

An excerpt from “The history of medieval Vanadia” by Jurgen ven Stellanke

The Chancellor arranged the meeting with the king of Nordia in his study. They started the discussion from important issues – of political and military character. The Chancellor insisted on accepting his demands, but the king was strongly against. Then ven Rier began to talk about things trivial, such as fashion, sport and dog breeding. In his presence, the king weakened more and more with every second, but did not dare to turn the guest out, due to the delicate situation he was in. Finally, out of his own will, the king returned to the military topics and accepted each and every Wotanian proposal. Only then the Chancellor left.

An excerpt from “The true history of the Undead Reich” by Alexei Samsonowich Henrikov

stop, the flesh gets cold, but decay does not begin and the sorcerer's spirit remains perched on the border between existence and non-existence. The reward is eternal un-death, the control over the undead and the power growing with every life taken away. What are the consequences of a failure? Final and permanent annihilation.

Delaying the moment of death, a lich creates an astral wound through which energy leaks out of the material world. The very presence of such a creature is deadly – grass withers immediately, animals die after a few hours, people – after days.

Zahared

Legends say that the first lich was an orkish priest-king called Saher-Addini, also known as Zahared. The story happened over four thousand years ago. Zahared reigned mercilessly for four centuries and the end of his domination was brought by the fiery rain sent by the angry god Orm. The description of the transformation ritual survived in several copies until the ancient times, but fortunately, none of them was complete.

The Mourning King

The next successful attempt was undertaken only in the 14th century by bishop Tanaric of Godaker, later known as the Mourning King. During the time of the plague, he made use of the fragments of

the ancient manuscripts and, getting his strength from the ill and dying, became a lich. Soon after this Tanaric, preceded by the Black Death, led an army of the undead to conquer the world. He was finally defeated after a century of wars, and all authorities, both religious and secular, did their best to make sure that every copy of his treatises was destroyed. Parts of the text survived, but they were fragmented and completely useless.

Mictlan and Nataleo Vasquez

Two centuries later, the conquistadors led by Nataleo Vasquez, landed on the shores of Tzitzimime and faced the undead ruler of Atlantis. It is not known why Mictlan, strong with the power of thousands of victims and reigning then for the fifth century, believed in some ancient prophecy and voluntarily surrendered to the fair-skinned invaders. Before he was burnt, he confided the secret of the un-life to Vasquez.

Three days later the conquistadors slayed all the inhabitants of the city and threw a pile of torn-out hearts to the feet of their leader. Vasquez performed the rituals and became a lich.

Drunk with his newly gained power, he set off back home, in order to take over the Coriolean throne by means of black magic and gold. He did not realize that the sailors could never survive a journey in his presence. Only one ship reached Vanadia, bringing the news about the bloody gold and Vasquez's insanity. Nataleo and his followers disappeared, but one man survived – the monk who wrote down Mictlan's confession.

General ven Rier

During a Wotanian offensive against Aquitaine, general ven Rier and his units landed in the line of the heaviest fire. Surrounded by enemies, exposed to both shellfire and powerful magic, the ambitious commander made a decision fraught with consequences. He muttered an incantation and led a frontal attack on the Aquitean lines. He got right into the enemy fire, but the bullets that were supposed to kill him only made the ritual complete.

On this fateful day several thousand soldiers died on the fields of Nordaly. Ven Rier fed on their deaths and absorbed most of the magic freed by the sorcerers from both fighting sides. The defense line was broken and Wotany won the battle. The



lich-general and his undead soldiers were hailed as heroes. Soon after this, the emperor nominated ven Rier chancellor and handed over the power to him.

The war continued and nothing could stop the advance of ven Rier's troops. The world was helpless in the face of the Undead Reich's atrocities. Only when it turned out that three most trusted confidants of the chancellor: Otto von Roher, Johann Tepitz and professor Frederick Leich, also underwent the lich transformation, did a coalition form, so strong that it could win the Great War.

Tepitz was captured and sentenced to destruction by the Furienfels tribunal, but two other chancellor's advisers managed to escape. Ven Rier himself perished under the rubble of his destroyed office. However, the body has never been found.

After these events, necromancy was forbidden in most civilized countries. All the copies and descriptions of the ritual that could be found were destroyed, and nowadays even possessing such materials is severely punished by the law as the most serious crime.



THE HISTORY OF DRAGONS

The legends

Eons before the Eight Races, the world was ruled by the dragons. Long-lived, commanding great magic, they could have everything. But there was only one thing dragons really cared for: the fear they evoked and the power resulting from it.

Millennia passed and finally, the Dragon Era came to an end. The world cooled down, old continents disappeared under the waves, new ones emerged from the deep. Even the long lives of the dragons turned out to be too short. Fewer and fewer eggs hatched, while death was constantly taking its toll. One after another, dragons started to fall to sleep from which they were not to wake up again. The last of the dragons gathered the remaining eggs and hid them deep in the hottest spheres of the earth. Then he cast a powerful spell on the young to sleep and wake up only when the better times dawn. Such was the end of the Dragon Era.

At least the legend says so.

The dragon dreams

When the conditions became friendly again, the dragons woke up and crawled out of their caves. However, the world was theirs no more. Many died and the young were born too rarely to revive the race.

They waited patiently then, hiding for centuries in their deep caverns, dreaming about the power. If they woke up, they went down to the valleys to relish the fear and death. Dragons destroyed kingdoms, erased whole nations, and then left satisfied. For some time.

The Eight Races have met no more than two dozen dragons in their whole history, but each awakening was a memorable event. The dragons, slaves only to their own whims, never showed any consideration for anything and never cared about the consequences of their actions. Their minds and their motives are incomprehensible even nowadays. At that time, nobody could fight a dragon. They were still too strong.

The first heroes

Centuries passed and dragons grew older, while people became more and more powerful. Finally, an Eo-

lian hero named Lycaster, for the first time in history, defeated one of the beasts. He did not kill it, but trapped and wounded. Swearing by the most terrific spells, the dragon promised to fulfill Lycaster's one wish in return for sparing its life. It kept the promise, but the wish brought only death and doom. The hero died, but the dragons knew, they had to face a serious challenge. A challenge. At last.

From this moment on, destruction was no longer the aim in itself for the dragons, it began to be a tool. They would not stop until somebody challenged and defeated them. Always before the final hit they promised fulfilling the winner's wish. And the wish always brought only suffering and death. Heroes invariably hoped to outsmart the dragon and invariably failed. But what motivated the beasts to act this way is not known.

The dragon empires

The situation changed when a young warrior named Xandrius defeated the ancient dragon Basilicus. Xandrius' wish was: "Serve me and all my sons loyally."

Within the next three years Xandrius the Great took control of almost the whole then-known world and created the greatest empire of all times. But two years later Xandrius died of an illness somewhere in the wilderness of Sunnir. In his memory, Basilicus made the biggest funeral pyre in history – no one from a several-thousand-strong army survived the beast's flames. When the fire finally died down and the wind blew the ashes, the dragon left. The empire fell down in a second like a house of cards, but people remembered that dragons can be tamed and bring ultimate power to those who defeat them.

Several centuries later a nomad leader named Gizmir fought and defeated the dragon Asusen on the vast steppes of Sunnir. When the creature offered a wish, Gizmir said: "You are just like me, Asusen – wild and untamed. Join me and we will together experience so much joy of fight and conquest as we would never be able to experience alone." The khan and the dragon were inseparable from then on. They rushed through the steppes and wherever they came they brought fire, war and death.

They never created an empire, but this was not their aim, only the thrill of the fight and the en-

QUOTES

A new, sensational exhibition is opening this evening in the Museum of Natural History. The exhibits, brought by a world-famous archeologist, professor Funelli, from his last expedition to the deserts of Sunnir remember the time when dragons ruled our world with absolute power. Visitors with weak nerves should be warned – the main attraction of the exhibition is a reconstructed skeleton of a Sunnirian dragon, more than ninety feet long!

"Lyonesse Crystalograph", special edition

- You defeated me – the dragon said. – Now I am at your mercy. Spare my life and I will fulfill your one wish. There is nothing I could not do.

- I am tired of constant fighting – Lycaster replied. – I just want to live out my days in happiness. Can you give me this, dragon?

- I can. Are you not happy now, knowing that you defeated the greatest of all monsters and your reward will be eternal splendor, power over this land and a beautiful woman to warm your bed?

- Indeed – said Lycaster – I am happy now.

Then the dragon killed him.

An excerpt from the Legend of Lycaster and the Dragon

emies' fear. When the khan died, Asuen realized that Gizmir was the one who protected it from the overwhelming boredom of a thousands-years' existence and decided to lapse into lethargy.

The First Deal

In the dark barbaric times, somewhere in the mountains of Wotany happened a thing that changed the world forever. A dwarven king named Guntric defeated the dragon Wormund and chose his wish: "When I or any of my descendants call you, you will come and do whatever we demand from you." However, the hero did not really want to summon the dragon again. He gained control over the beast, but if he used it, he would be exposed to a mortal danger. Guntric was a politician and he knew that a threat itself can be more effective than its real results. As long as Guntric's enemies knew that he could call the dragon at any time, he did not have to do it. The dragon-tamer's fame and his political skills helped Guntric create an empire.

When he died, his sons started struggling for domination. The right to call the dragon was in the blood of each of them and finally one decided to summon Wormund to ensure the kingdom's throne. The dragon came, killed all the rivals and later, no longer bound by the deal, took also the life of the dwarf who called it. Guntric's bloodline existed no more, but his legacy lived on.

The dragon kingdoms

The next person to follow Guntric's footsteps was Utter of Alfheim. After he tricked and defeated the dragon Garwitnir, he made a change in the text of the Deal – the right to call the dragon was never lost, but given to the rightful owner of Malvador – the sword Utter wounded Garwitnir with.

From then on, the owner of the sword had the control over the dragon and the power to rule all the clans of Alfheim.

A new era began. Heroes who defeated their dragons started to bind the Deal to the victorious weapons. Such a sword, axe or hammer was a precious artifact, handed down from generation to generation in the winner's family. Years passed, the families turned into dynasties, and when the dark ages of Vanadia finally ended and the Emperor was crowned by the Holy Couple, there was no more need for the dragons' presence. Every major monarchy had its beast bound with the Deal, but nobody planned to use it. Dragons were slowly becoming only a legend.

The Revolution

The status quo was disturbed by an act of regicide. The inept reign of Philip XVI led to a revolution breaking out in Aquitaine. When the mob entered his palace, the desperate monarch turned to his last resort and summoned the dragon Graudel.

Led to the scaffold, Philip shouted "Avenge me!" But he could not save his life. Just after the guillotine blade fell, the dragon appeared in the sky. Woken up from a thousand-years' sleep, free and bound only by Philip's last wish, Graudel ruled Aquitaine for seven years. This dark period in the history of the country is known as the Great Terror.

The whole Vanadia looked at what was happening, but as long as the dragon's anger was turned only

against Aquitaine, nobody wanted to act. When the situation finally changed, it was too late. A young and ambitious officer, Rovannon Villianteau, drew the dragon into a trap. Threatened by artillery fire, Graudel offered him a wish.

The Dragon Wars

Villianteau proclaimed himself an emperor and, with the dragon's help, conquered almost the whole Vanadia within three years. When Aquitean troops entered Morgovia, tsar Oleg V summoned his dragon – Zmey Gorynych. Rovannon was driven back, but the war did not end. The political balance on the continent was destroyed and the rulers, one by one, started calling their dragons. These events finally resulted in the outbreak of the Great War.

The change of Garwitnir

The war caused very fast development of the technomagic. Each side of the conflict was looking for the ultimate weapon. The Named Golems – artificial creatures with True Names, souls and consciousness – were supposed to be such a weapon, but the spells needed to create them were too difficult even for the most powerful mages at that time.

The battle of Mitteleup turned out to be the turning point. Garwitnir fought there the First Wotanian Armored Division. Artillery, behemoths and enchanted bullets made of cold iron finally achieved the impossible. When the dragon realized that the wounds were fatal, it fled and managed to get to the coasts of Alfheim. With its last breath, the dragon called the high golemologist, Waylent, and confided the secret of Giving Names to him. The creature demanded in return that the first of the new golems would be a steel dragon named by Garwitnir's True Name. So it happened.

The beast's new body was made of the strongest magical iron, equipped with the deadliest modern weapons and enhanced by the most powerful runes. When the ritual was completed, Garwitnir's spirit came to life in the iron body. The dragon of Alfheim returned, stronger than ever before.

There was one thing Garwitnir did not tell Waylent – its death completed the Deal and freed the dragon from any obligations. However, the mages remembered the history and the mistakes of their predecessors and did not reveal all the secrets to the dragon

either. Malvador was melted in the vat which contained the metal Garwitnir's new body was made of and a new spell was cast to renew the Deal. The dragon itself was chosen as the weapon symbolizing the agreement. The specific construction of the golem guaranteed that the creature could not even move a leg of its own will and regained partial freedom only with a pilot behind the rudder.

So, both sides tried to cheat and both were cheated. The dragon wanted to escape death and be free again, while the mages wanted total control over the dragon. In the end, nobody succeeded.

When Garwitnir woke up, it realized that without a pilot it would be only a motionless statue. It looked as if Waylent's plan had worked, so the pilot took a seat in the cockpit. Just a moment later he was struck by all the anger, hate and malice of the dragon. All the power and passion of the ancient reptile's mind stormed to destroy everything in its wake. The hands that held the rudder belonged to a man, but were driven by Garwitnir's will. The mages finally managed to immobilize the monster, but the casualties were heavy. The sides agreed to make a deal – the pilot's role was only to supervise

the dragon's actions and stop it if it turned against Alfheim. In return Garwitnir regained the freedom of movement. The dragon came back to the battlefield and contributed greatly to the victory of the Alliance.

Steel dragons

The secret of the Named Golems could not be kept for long. In the same year, the intelligences of Aquitaine and Wotany had the spells needed for the creation of the Named and within the next two years almost all the royal dragons died in the battle only to be reborn in steel bodies.

Nowadays, after the Great War, steel beasts still serve the monarchs of Vanadia. The Dragon Riders are carefully chosen pilots, brave and strong-minded, making sure that their charges were never left without supervision. The dragons patrol the seas surrounding Purgatory, guard the colonies and also for the first time in history – guard peace.

THE GREAT WAR

The most important event in the whole history – the event separating the world that used to be and



the world that is now – can be described in many different ways.

We give you the events, the facts and present the mechanisms – any moral judgments are up to you. We are going to begin the story of the Great War much earlier than usually, just to present the chain of events that finally led to a terrible tragedy.

The Dragon Wars

The first person responsible is the last king of Aquitaine. When the furious crowd was taking him to the scaffold, the monarch, realizing that he had nothing to lose, summoned the dragon Graudel. The beast was back after almost a thousand years of sleep. We already know the rest of the story: the Great Terror ended by Rovannon Villanteau, his reign and the army marching east, monarchs calling their dragons and finally the war spreading all over the continent. A new political balance was forged in the fire of deadly battles. Alfheim, not as weakened by Rovannon as other countries were, gained advantage over the rest of the kingdoms. A strong fleet supported by the greatest achievements of traditional magic was the basis of Alfheim's hegemony on the seas and oceans.

Colonies and inventions

Vanadia was divided. Alfheim ruled the seas and took over the majority of Vanadian colonies. It became the Empire the sun never set on. No other country on the continent could change this situation. After the wars ended, dragons had nothing to do, so they were sent to the oceans to bring the overseas territories back to their previous owners. However, the spectacular fights did not result in any long-term profits. It was the research in to the magic of the elements that turned out to be the most promising way to power. The first steam machines, modern golems and iron ships were developed in Wotany. The era of the New Magic began.

The outbreak of the War

Wotany led the way in organization and technology on the Old Continent. The country in which the Magical-Industrial Revolution started had no colonies, so it became a very natural opponent for the traditional colonial Alfheim. Networks of alliances and secret deals started spawning around these two political centers. Some even started mentioning the need to bring

dragons back to the continent. At that time, Vanadia resembled a barrel full of gunpowder, ready to explode. The spark was provided by the infamous Ostrian incident. Even today it is not really known which vampire inveigled prince Radolf and turned him into one of his own kind, but only weak circumstantial evidence leading to Drahan Zmeysky, the duke of Silvanegro, was enough for Oustria to attack the neighbor. Soon the other countries of the Trimonarchy joined the conflict. Within several weeks, the majority of the Vanadian countries declared war on one another. The attack of the Wotanian fleet on the Lemurian colonies of Alfheim made this conflict a true world war.

Magic and iron

Nobody in Alfheim expected such a spectacular defeat. Traditional magic and wooden ships could not resist steam-powered, iron-clad battleships and brand new battle curses. During the first stage of the war, the Empire lost almost all the colonies in Lemuria and Atlantis. When the final downfall of Alfheim seemed only a matter of time, conflicts started between the allies on the continent. Wotany and other countries argued about the division of the overseas territories and the war broke out again. The Reich's technological superiority was still unquestionable. After defeating the Trimonarchy, Wotanians began the operation against Aquitaine. The victory seemed unavoidable, but it turned out that Wotany did not have a monopoly for bold inventions – mechanical wyverns equipped with the first machineguns fought for the other side. The impasse in the air influenced the front and a long positional war began.

The gentlemen's war

The line of the front stabilized and long periods of relative peace altered with deadly fights. Alliances were changing and several hundred kilometers from the border there was no trace of war to be noticed. The struggle reached a higher level. Everyone realized that the side possessing the most advanced inventions would eventually win. An unprecedented war of intelligences began. This period, full of acting behind enemy lines, stealing plans, kidnapping engineers and magical attacks on enemy laboratories, is called the "gentlemen's war" because of its relative bloodlessness. Many monumental, or even crazy projects were developed then, including the famous Wotanian

armored rail, which connected the most important industrial centers and big cities to the front line. The Trimarchy, seemingly withdrawn from the war, turned out to be the winner of this behind-the-scenes struggle. Ostrians cooperated with Serenissima, famous for its excellent intelligence, but very weak militarily. In return for protection, the Merchant Republic was stealing the secret plans of the Trimarchy's enemies. All projects were handed over to one person. The person who was destined to change the course of the war – an engineer called Gutric Gemeine.

This brilliant gnomish inventor used to serve on the front line during the early stage of the war. His talent was quickly noticed and appreciated by the magical intelligence. When the Trimarchy started the cooperation with Serenissima, Gemeine was ordered to gather a group of scientists and create a department dedicated to the implementation of new inventions. This is how the legendary group known as the Forge came into being. Its secret factories produced golems, behemoths and wyverns, developed more and more efficient steam engines, better cannons, more effective machine guns and deadlier spells. Gemeine and his seven partners made use of the best ideas by Wotanian and Aquitean engineers and improved them. In the final stage of the war the Alliance was formed – a coalition of Aquitaine, Alfheim and the Trimarchy against Wotany.

In the trenches of Nordaly

An incident in Lemurian colonies, resulting in the Alliance's attack on Wotany, was a perfect excuse for employing the inventions of the Forge. The gigantic Wotanian trains were immobilized by air strikes, rails destroyed, supplies cut off. The Reich was at the same time attacked from three sides and even the alliance with Silvanegro and the help of Hrimthorst could not change the situation. In an act of desperation, the emperor sent all the army reserves to the battle on the fields of Nordaly – an area between Wotany and Aquitaine. This fight went down in history as the bloodiest and the most horrifying in the world. Thousands of soldiers, mighty behemoths, a rain of iron and fire, a burning sky filled with wyverns and giant airships. Hundreds of deadly spells, charms and curses, demons and ghouls crawling everywhere. And then, when the power of Wotany was about to collapse once and

for all, from the orgy of death and destruction ven Rier emerged. The Wotanian general cheated death, becoming the first lich for centuries. The dead rose up and followed their new master. The battle turned into mindless bloodshed.

The Undead Reich

Triumphant ven Rier came back to Heimburg. The lich became the chancellor and took over the power, sending his undead armies to battle. The lines of resistance, one after another, were broken effortlessly by Wotanian troops. The modern army of the Trimarchy could fight for long, but ven Rier made an alliance with Drahan Zmeysky and forced his enemies to play a double game.

Numerous defeats and the news about the lich transformation of ven Rier's three adjutants undermined the allies' morale. After the battle of Mitteleup, where the Alfheim dragon Garwitnir was mortally wounded, it seemed that nothing could stop the army of the undead.



Finally the emperor of Ostria decided to share the inventions of the Forge with his allies. Groundbreaking technology based on the New Magic provided a ray of hope that the power of the Reich could be stopped. Soon the dragon of Alfheim, born again in a steel body, returned to the battlefield stronger than before. Other countries, terrified by the vision of the Undead Reich dominating Vanadia, joined the Alliance: Baventia, Slavia, Scylla and Charibdis...

The last years of the Great War were a period of a constant struggle between the Alliance and the Reich. The situation teetered on the edge of disaster several times, but the vision of the end of the world as they knew it made the allies fight till the last drop of blood. They eventually managed to destroy ven Rier and defeat the Undead Reich.

The post-war period

The struggle on the continent lasted several months after the downfall of the Reich, while it took two years to bring the situation in the colonies under control. Many war criminals were captured and sentenced and necromancy was forbidden in the whole civilized world. Alfheim generally maintained its hegemony, but had to give up some colonies.

The Trimonarchy lost its technological advance. Gemeine died under mysterious unexplained circumstances in the last days of the war, and the rest of the Forge, conflicted, without a charismatic leader, fell into disfavor with the monarch. The majority of the former Gemeine's subordinates work

now for the **Wolsung** concern. It is said that this can be the cause of the surprisingly fast development of the post-war Wotany.

The war irreversibly changed the world of politics and the mentality of people, but it also left its mark on nature. Once fertile plains of Nordaly are now a wasteland where the spells cast during the war are still present. The place which saw ven Rier's lich transformation is now called the Fields of Death and is still uninhabited. Bloodshed and magic warped the woods on the south of Wotany. The Silent Forest seems to be a conscious organism, intolerant of civilization and any signs of animal or rational life.

However, the most spectacular effect of the War is the Paroxysm. When the major peace treaties were finally signed, it turned out that secret laboratories are filled with magic – numerous powerful battle spells ready to be cast. Many of them had been being developed for so long and had gathered so much energy that they could not be stopped. A decision was made to turn the biggest island on the Southern Ocean into a penal colony for the most dangerous criminals from the whole Vanadia. To make escape impossible, the authorities decided to rise up new islands, sink some old ones and change the direction of currents, creating an impassable barrier and cutting Purgatory off from the rest of the world. All the post-war spells were used to do the deed. The magical Paroxysm which created the Barrier, at the same time partly sinking the eastern coasts of Lemuria, is commonly considered the ultimate end of the Great War.

Wolsung World Tour

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