

The cover art for 'Eldritch Runes: Setting Primer' is a dark, atmospheric illustration. It features four main characters: a bearded man in a blue hooded cloak with a sword, a woman in a green robe with a staff, a man in dark armor with a sword on his back, and a woman in a purple and gold dress. They are standing in a dark, rocky landscape with a large, glowing, swirling portal in the sky. A large, full moon is visible in the upper left, and a crow is perched on a tree branch. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border with a repeating pattern of small, stylized symbols.

ELDRITCH RUNES

— SETTING PRIMER —

ELDRITCH RUNES

SETTING PRIMER

A SWORD & SORCERY WORLD OF ANCIENT RUINS, LOST CIVILIZATIONS, AND COSMIC PERIL

Written by R.N. Forged. Published by Eldritch Runes Games.

Version 1.10



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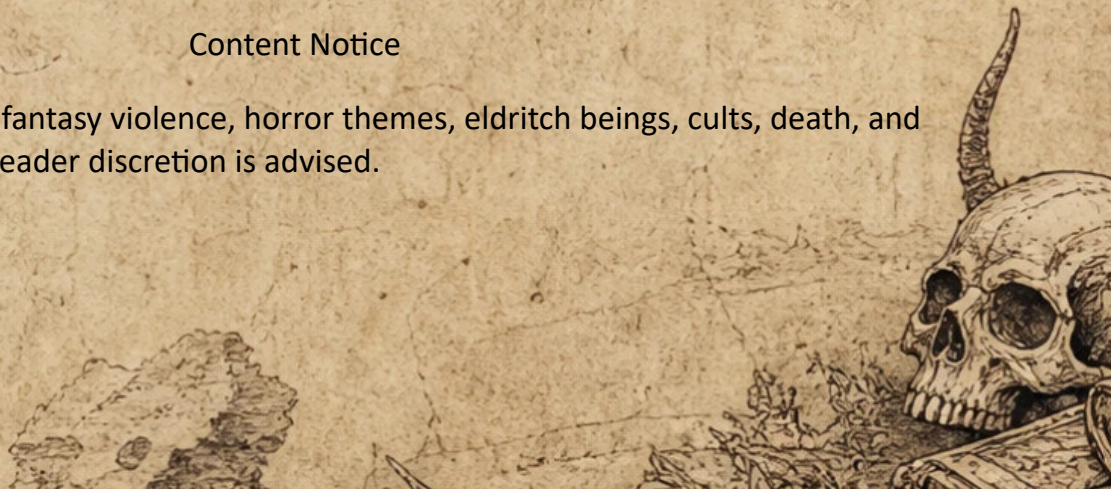


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A Note on Knowledge and Lore

The information in this book represents a mixture of history, legend, religion, and hidden lore. Much of it is not common knowledge within Orridar, and even the learned rarely agree on all matters.

Players are encouraged to remember that their characters may know only a fraction of what is presented here. Discovering forgotten truths is part of the adventure.

Merber. mōste hūfīgāt.
cch aē hūa hōrē ē hūf
bhebat. ēēt bēnē hūa.
tū aēlē ē lūatōq-a
būē pōtīgē bān.



hot. drāc hltsudānq
ōtsiucloq breiwnē.
hpluait. n. hōrē i.
bū's fa pacha hūlang.
hi ēt oic aīt.



Bēnē zhuī.
hebonē. nūvā.
bēnē pōnē
bēnē nē u nē bē zūa
būtoke. d. pōnē
būāq hūbē bē nē



Introduction

STEP FORTH INTO A WORLD OF ANCIENT RUINS AND COSMIC PERIL

Beneath a pallid moon and uncaring stars lies a world of breathtaking beauty and lurking horror. Vast deserts conceal ancient tombs laden with forgotten riches. Emerald jungles swallow the ruins of vanished civilizations. Rugged mountains harbor wonders both marvelous and terrible. Across trackless frontiers, bold adventurers brave savage beasts, eldritch monstrosities, and the lingering shadows of forgotten ages in pursuit of glory, fortune, or knowledge.

For Orridar is a world rich in mysteries. Long ago, the masters of this world were not humans, elves, or dwarves, but vast alien entities remembered only as the Old Gods. Throughout the world stand the remnants of their forgotten empires: cyclopean temples, impossible monuments, and ruins older than memory itself. Within these places lie unimaginable treasures, powerful relics, forbidden lore, and revelations capable of shattering the sanity of mortal minds.

Yet there are those who still answer the call. They venture into the darkness seeking wealth, power, and secrets lost to time, knowing that many who enter such places never return.

This is a world for the bold—the treasure-seekers, explorers, and wanderers who refuse to heed the warnings of more cautious souls, who seek the power of the past without fear, and who dare uncover the truths buried beneath the ruins of forgotten ages.

THEMES OF ELDRITCH RUNES:



EXPLORATION OF FORGOTTEN CIVILIZATIONS

Venture into the remnants of lost empires and forgotten peoples. Ancient secrets and long-buried histories await those willing to uncover them.



ANCIENT RUINS AND LOST TREASURES

Delve into crumbling temples, buried tombs, and forsaken strongholds in search of wealth, relics, and legendary artifacts.



DANGEROUS WILDERNESS FRONTIERS

Journey across untamed lands where monsters roam, civilizations are sparse, and survival is never guaranteed.



COSMIC HORROR AND ELDRITCH MYSTERIES

The world is older and stranger than most realize. Forbidden knowledge, ancient powers, and terrible truths lurk beyond mortal understanding.



FORTUNE, GLORY, AND AMBITION

Seek riches, power, and renown in a world filled with opportunity and peril. Great deeds may earn immortality, while failure can bring ruin.



The World of Orridar

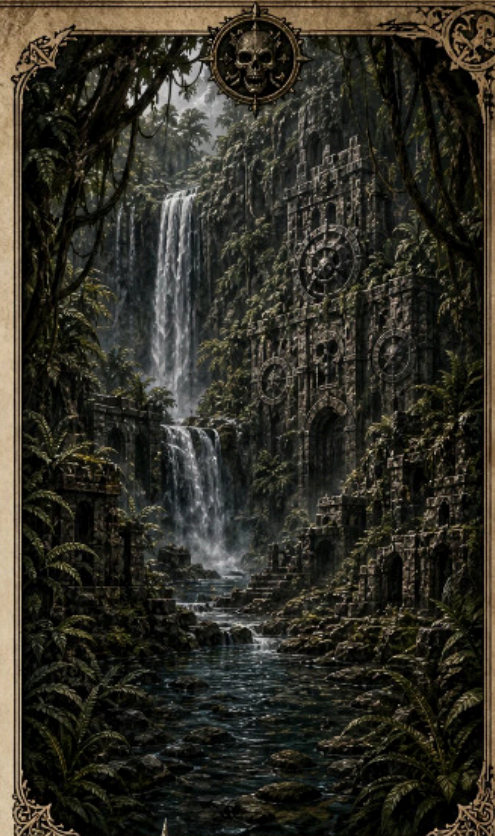
The peoples of the present age remember little of Orridar's true history. Myths of the Old Gods, legends of the White Gods of Ulthor, and fragments of forgotten lore endure, but much of the past has been lost to time.

Orridar is a vast and untamed world. Kingdoms, city-states, and tribal realms are separated by immense forests, mountains, deserts, swamps, and wastelands where civilization holds little sway. In such treacherous lands dwell goblin tribes, Dregolisk lizardmen, orc warbands, cultists, monsters, and stranger beings whose origins are poorly understood. Travel is often perilous, and many regions remain only partially explored.

Monsters and wilderness are not the only dangers, for the present age is also marked by conflict. In eastern Adonar, the Silverclaw Alliance struggles against the growing cultic power of Agazarn, while the orc empire of Doggun-Gule threatens its shores from across the sea. Elsewhere, rival kingdoms compete for territory, influence, and survival as old grievances and new ambitions shape the course of history.

Yet the struggles of nations are only part of a larger story. Across the world stand the remnants of countless fallen civilizations, from lost human kingdoms and dwarven holds to ruins far older than the modern races themselves. Beneath these forgotten places linger secrets, powers, and horrors from ages long past.

This is Orridar: a world of wild frontiers, fallen civilizations, ancient secrets, and cosmic peril.



ADONAR

Where Mankind Struggles
Against Darkness

ESDONAR

Barbaric Continent
of the East

THE WORLD OF ORRIDAR

IN THE AGE OF
FADING HOPE

0 500 1000 1500
MILES

MOONFROST OCEAN

ADONAR

ESDONAR

KALORAN
SEA

THE SHATTERED
ISLES

ISLES
OF THAR

KROES

KHARADRETH

SURRUK

THE SERPENT
FANGS

WYRMSTORM OCEAN



KROES

Ancient Land
of the Undead

KHARADRETH

Land of
Merchant Princes

SURRUK

UNEXPLORED
Continent



Life in Orridar

Most people in Orridar live ordinary lives centered on farming, trade, family, and survival. Villages, towns, and city-states provide commerce, protection, and law, and many folk never travel far from home.

Trade links distant lands by caravan and ship. Exotic goods from Kharadreth reach markets across the known world, while powerful banking guilds allow merchants to move wealth safely between regions.

Religion is woven into daily life. Many honor the White Gods of Ulthor in their various forms, though cults and stranger faiths endure in remote frontiers and forgotten places.

Travel is slow and often dangerous. Beyond settled lands stretch monster-haunted wildernesses, lonely roads, and lawless frontiers where news may take weeks or months to arrive.

Ruins of lost civilizations lie scattered across every continent, drawing adventurers in search of treasure, relics, and forgotten knowledge. Many leave seeking fortune. Few return.

Even ordinary people face dangers from monsters, raiders, bandits, criminal syndicates, and war. As tensions rise between rival powers, many fear darker days ahead.

Yet life endures. Markets open, crops are planted, and caravans continue their journeys. Most people never glimpse Orridar's deeper mysteries, but beneath the surface lurk ancient ruins, hidden cults, forbidden secrets, and powers older than civilization itself.

**The wise avoid such things.
The adventurous seek them.**

What Adventurers Do

The world of Orridar is ancient, dangerous, and filled with opportunity for those bold enough to seek it. Forgotten cities, ruined temples, monster-haunted wildernesses, and relics of lost civilizations lie scattered across the world, waiting to be explored.

Many adventurers are explorers and treasure hunters who delve into ancient ruins in search of wealth, magic, and forgotten knowledge. Others earn their living as monster hunters, mercenaries, caravan guards, sailors, scouts, and wilderness guides, protecting settlements and traveling the dangerous frontiers beyond civilization.

Some become embroiled in mysteries involving dark cults, cursed relics, strange disappearances, and eldritch powers. Others seek answers about the world's forgotten past or find themselves drawn into political intrigue, religious conflict, and war between rival kingdoms and factions.

Whether hunting monsters, uncovering lost secrets, opposing ancient evils, or pursuing fortune and glory, adventurers stand where civilization ends and the unknown begins.

The ruins, dangers, and mysteries of Orridar provide the stage. What happens next is yours to decide.



RACES & CULTURES

The peoples of Orridar preserve many stories concerning their origins, though few agree on what is history and what is myth.

Most scholars agree on only one point: the world is far older than most realize. Countless civilizations have risen and fallen, leaving behind ruins, relics, and fragments of forgotten lore.

The peoples described here are among the most commonly encountered in Orrune and neighboring lands. Their histories and cultures represent broad traditions rather than universal truths.

As with all things in Orridar, the truth is often stranger than legend.



DRAGONBORN

The Gia'zesh, commonly called dragonborn, dwell primarily in the deserts of Ganwulg. They are associated with ancient dragon cults, sorcerous traditions, and legends of the Sethicharian, a mythic war between dragons and the rulers of antiquity.

Unlike most races, the Gia'zesh are believed to originate through transformation rather than birth. Through a secret ritual known as the Yagroywar, selected humans attempt to assume draconic form.

Most perish. Others become monstrous abominations. Only a few emerge as true Gia'zesh, possessing unusual resilience, magical aptitude, and draconic traits.

The origins of the ritual remain unknown.



DWARVES

The dwarves, or Thoroldwen, are renowned as miners, engineers, smiths, architects, and rune-masters. Their traditions claim they were created by Shrudgwarin, the Ancient Crafter, who taught them the secrets of rune-craft, metallurgy, and engineering.

Under his guidance they built the legendary kingdom of Drokorith in Kroes, achieving wonders of technology and magic before its fall following the death of their creator and the devastation wrought by the Moon Beasts.

Today the Hold of Hakorn in Orrune stands among the surviving remnants of that lost age. The Thoroldwen remain among the world's finest craftsmen, and their rune-forged creations are prized throughout Orridar.

Yet they are heirs to a greatness they can no longer fully recreate, and many dream of recovering the lost knowledge of Drokorith.



Eldretchen

The Eldretchen are a rare people most commonly found in Ganwulg and the great city of Yansh. They are believed to descend from those altered by the eldritch corruption surrounding the ancient ruins of Zangol.

Their appearance varies greatly. Many possess unusual eyes, horns, strange skin coloration, vestigial mutations, or other unsettling features that hint at their corrupted ancestry.

Feared and mistrusted by many, Eldretchen are most numerous in Goltahazad (the Corruption), a district of Yansh known for occult lore, strange magic, and relics recovered from the deserts of Ganwulg. Their reputation for forbidden knowledge has made them common as sorcerers, scholars, explorers, and mystics.





Elves

The elves are among the oldest surviving peoples of Orridar. Once they ruled vast kingdoms and shaped the course of history across much of the world. Those empires have long since fallen, and the elven race now stands in decline. Outside Orrune, elves are rare.

Though often treated as a single people, the elves are divided into three distinct cultures: the Alshoin, the Dargranen, and the Grenduin.



THE ALSHOIN



The Alshoin are the civilized elves of Orrune. Centered around Kaldra-Kur, they are renowned as scholars, priests, rulers, and masters of arcane lore. They preserve some of the oldest traditions of the White Gods of Ulthor and regard themselves as custodians of civilization and history.



THE DARGRANEN

The Dargranen, or dark elves, dwell in the harsh northern lands of Urogog. Their society prizes strength, conquest, and survival, venerating Mogzule as a patron of power and teaching that strength grants the right to rule.



THE GRENDUIN

The Grenduin dwell in remote forests and wildernesses, serving as druids, hunters, healers, and guardians of sacred places. They revere Zabnul, whom they call Nirudwar, the Voice of the Forest, and possess an uncanny understanding of beasts, plants, and ancient places.



GNOMES

According to tradition, the gnomes evolved from subterranean fungus-creatures called Gugfrells after countless generations spent near the fossilized remains of a colossal celestial being known as Zurguwik.

Their greatest city, Bedorin, is built within Zurguwik's immense skull. Renowned for invention, craftsmanship, and curiosity, gnomes maintain a bitter rivalry with the serpent-folk of Glar and primarily worship Zabnul, whom they call Morbwigok, the Speaker in the Depths.

Many claim to receive dreams from Morbwigok concerning a vast hidden mechanism somewhere beneath the world. For generations, gnomish explorers have searched for this Great Mechanism, believing the fate of the world may depend upon it.



GOBLINS AND HOBGOBLINS

Goblin-kind is among the most widespread and varied peoples of Orridar. Their tendency toward mutation has produced countless regional variants, and scholars continue to debate their true origins.

Most goblin traditions trace their ancestry to Juhaxis, the Crimson God, an eldritch being associated with the red stars of the Fenrog Constellation. Their myths also speak of a lost empire called Kivgernan, said to have ruled much of the world before its destruction during ancient celestial invasions.

The largest civilized goblinoid people in Orrune are the Mar'druin of Mar, whose traditions claim their ancestors overthrew the Old God-worshipping Dregolisk kingdoms of ancient Orrune.

Their distant cousins, the Set-Klahain, remain fragmented tribal goblins scattered throughout the wilderness, surviving through raiding, tribal warfare, and cunning.

Though often dismissed as raiders and nuisances, goblin traditions hint at a far older and stranger past than most realize.



HALFLINGS

Halflings are uncommon throughout Orridar and found primarily in Orrune. Cheerful and resilient, they are known for their hospitality, craftsmanship, and good humor.

According to tradition, their ancestors came from a lost land called Bafwalin, where they were created and enslaved by a three-headed wizard named Nagvar. Halfling lore credits their liberation to the sorceress Dindwela, after which the survivors fled to Adonar and founded Frendower, still regarded as the cultural heart of their people.

Today halflings can be found throughout Orrune, particularly in Frendower and the Harthen Halls beneath Runis. Most scholars dismiss their legends as folklore, though some suspect they preserve fragments of forgotten history.



HUMANS

Humans are the most numerous and widespread people of Orridar, inhabiting every major region of the known world. Their adaptability has made them one of the dominant peoples of the present age.

Most humans know little of their true origins. The most widespread tradition teaches that Irundigar fashioned the first humans from the bones of a mighty beast called Tuthraj, though many scholars believe humanity evolved from primitive ape-men and was later influenced by the White Gods.

For better or worse, much of the present age is shaped by human ambition.



Kobolds

The Igiaglik, commonly called kobolds, are small reptilian humanoids distantly related to the larger lizard races. They inhabit caves, ruins, tunnels, and hidden settlements throughout Orridar.

Unlike the Dregolisks, kobolds worship a mysterious star-god called Alalgu, often depicted as a winged celestial serpent. Little is known of Alalgu's true nature or the origins of its cult.

Relations between kobolds and lizardmen are usually hostile. Dregolisks frequently prey upon kobold tribes, though larger kobold communities are sometimes capable of driving off their larger rivals.



Lizardmen

The lizardmen, known among themselves as the Dregolisks, are among the most ancient peoples of Orridar. Once rulers of vast regions, they now survive in remote wildernesses beyond the reach of civilization.

Feared by most other races, they preserve traditions dating to the age of the Old Gods. According to their lore, their ancestors served Shibsingul, the lingering psychic remnant of an Old God, and built temples containing devices intended to guide the Gorguloths back to Orridar.

Though later civilizations sought to destroy these sites, countless Dregolisk ruins remain hidden throughout the world, and many still guard them with fanatical devotion.

To the Dregolisks, the age of the Old Gods is not ancient history—it is an unfinished chapter.



Minotaurs

The minotaurs dwell within Mulkaz, a vast subterranean realm of caverns, ruins, and underground kingdoms. Powerful and warlike, they are among the most feared peoples of the deep world.

Most worship Mogzule, the fallen Ulthorian they call Shigthulg, and teach that strength is the only true virtue. Their tendency toward mutation is often regarded as a sign of divine favor.

Minotaur traditions blame the peoples of the surface world for the ancient War of the Kadelan Gem, a catastrophe that nearly destroyed their race. As a result, many regard humans, dwarves, and non-dark elves as hereditary enemies.

Their kingdoms endure beneath the earth, preserving ancient grudges and preparing for wars yet to come.



Orcs and Half-Orcs

The orcs of Orridar are divided into three major peoples: the Kaldragrorns of Kaldra-Kur, the savage northern tribes known as the Magrorns, and the eastern Gulgrorns of Esdonar.

The Kaldragrorns serve the elven nobility as laborers, soldiers, and enforcers. The Magrorns prize strength and conquest above all else, rejecting history and learning in favor of war and destruction. The Gulgrorns are larger, more disciplined, and more militaristic than most orcs, making them formidable enemies of the Silverclaw Alliance and other civilized peoples.

Half-orcs are uncommon but not unknown throughout Orridar. Many live between cultures and may sometimes be mistaken for full-blooded orcs.

Despite their differences, orcs are widely associated with strength, violence, and the fragility of civilization.



Religion

Religion in Orridar is ancient, diverse, and poorly understood. Sacred traditions have survived the fall of countless kingdoms, while the origins of many beliefs have long since been forgotten.



The WHITE GODS of ULTHOR

Throughout Orrune and much of the civilized world, humans and elves revere the White Gods of Ulthor, a pantheon of celestial beings believed to communicate through ancient runestones and prophetic visions.

Human tradition recognizes *fourteen Ulthorians*:

- ✧ **Irundigar** *the Life Binder*
- ✧ **Firwen** *the Fire Bringer*
- ✧ **Agowan** *the Storm Caller*
- ✧ **Gythoen** *the Sorcerer*
- ✧ **Sayumot** *the Shadow*
- ✧ **Gorhom** *the Defender*
- ✧ **Fael** *the Messenger*
- ✧ **Suwoin** *the Beast Lord*
- ✧ **Yath-Tashul** *the Astrologer*
- ✧ **Gaholm** *the Rune Smith*
- ✧ **Kithgwel** *the Architect of Fate*
- ✧ **Ugar** *the Just King*
- ✧ **Sian** *the Poet*
- ✧ **Dwyark** *the Betrayer*

Elven scholars believe these fourteen are merely the most widely remembered members of a far greater host. Most Ulthorian clerics venerate the pantheon as a whole rather than a single deity.





Dwyark the Betrayer

No Ulthorian is more controversial than Dwyark the Betrayer, known among elves as Mogzule and Shigthulg among minotaurs. Human traditions portray him as the embodiment of treachery and ambition, while dark elves and minotaurs revere him as a symbol of strength and power.



The Cycle of Souls

Most humans believe worthy souls eventually return to the world through the Cycle of Souls, a process attributed to the wizard-hero Gajarn. Because undeath is thought to trap souls outside this cycle, necromancy and the undead are widely feared.

Most elves reject this doctrine, teaching that death normally marks the end of individual existence.



Other Faiths

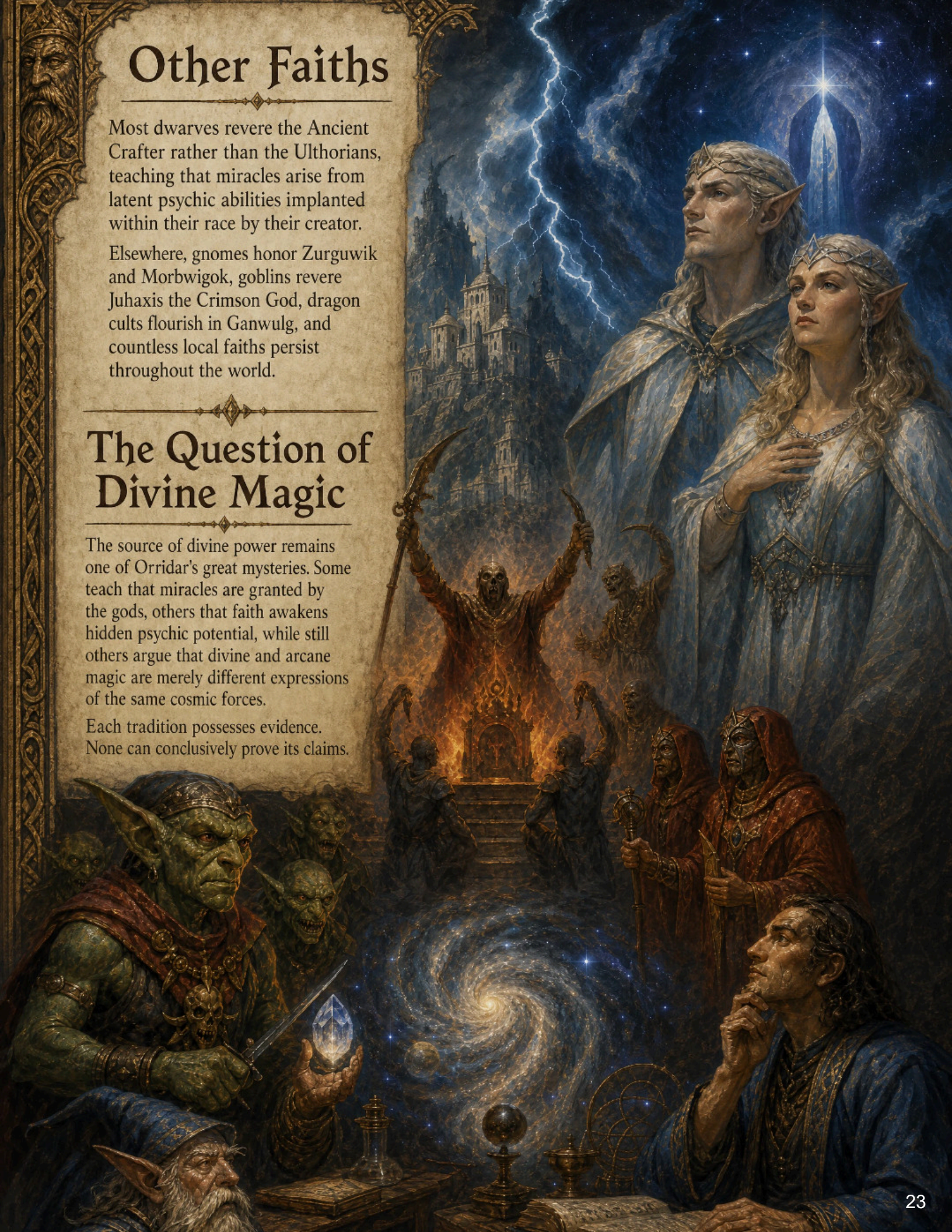
Most dwarves revere the Ancient Crafter rather than the Ulthorians, teaching that miracles arise from latent psychic abilities implanted within their race by their creator.

Elsewhere, gnomes honor Zurguwik and Morbwigok, goblins revere Juhaxis the Crimson God, dragon cults flourish in Ganwulg, and countless local faiths persist throughout the world.

The Question of Divine Magic

The source of divine power remains one of Orridar's great mysteries. Some teach that miracles are granted by the gods, others that faith awakens hidden psychic potential, while still others argue that divine and arcane magic are merely different expressions of the same cosmic forces.

Each tradition possesses evidence. None can conclusively prove its claims.



Magic

Magic is among the rarest and most feared forces in Orridar. Though most people know of wizards, priests, and warlocks through stories and rumor, few ever witness true sorcery. Those who possess genuine magical power often rise to positions of influence—or retreat into secrecy.

Most people understand little of magic's true origins. Certain scholars believe the major forms of magic arise from different sources.



Divine magic is associated with the White Gods of Ulthor.



Arcane magic appears to draw upon the Dazgolg Artifact, an immense rune-machine hidden beneath Orridar's moon and built by the Gorguloths during their ancient dominion.



Eldritch magic stems from pacts with powerful entities, most notably the Gorguloths, remembered in myth as the Old Gods.

Few sages know these theories, and fewer still agree upon them.

Wizards and sorcerers manipulate unseen forces through study, talent, or intuition. Clerics, paladins, and shamans channel power associated with the White Gods, often through sacred runestones and relics. Warlocks gain power through pacts with beings beyond mortal understanding, trading certainty and safety for forbidden gifts.

Among the most notable eldritch patrons are the Igawyth, ancient entities of the Fenrog Nebula whose followers seek to free the star-devouring Zah-Shagun, and the Aluwyn, psychic spirits from the ruined world of Othrain who often encourage the protection of nature despite their profoundly alien motives.

True spellcasters are rare. To most people, magic remains distant and unsettling—a force associated with rulers, ancient ruins, hidden cults, forbidden knowledge, and powers older than humanity itself.



Arcane Mysteries

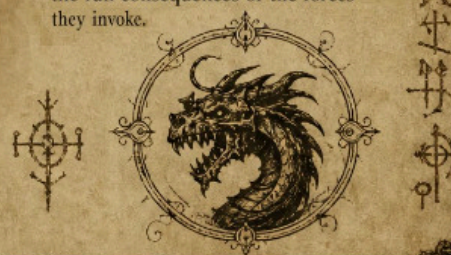
Miwir

Produced by the insectoid Lumerin, Miwir is a rare psychic substance said to enhance mental abilities and facilitate contact with distant minds and otherworldly intelligences. It is also notoriously addictive.



Rituals

Rituals in Orridar range from solemn prayers to the White Gods to forbidden ceremonies dedicated to the Old Gods. Eldritch rituals are notoriously dangerous and unpredictable, capable of granting visions, power, mutation, madness, or far worse. Even experienced cultists rarely understand the full consequences of the forces they invoke.



Forbidden Knowledge

Some of the most valuable treasures are not objects but knowledge. Ancient libraries, hidden vaults, and forgotten inscriptions may reveal lost spells, secret histories, or disturbing truths about the world's distant past. Such discoveries are eagerly sought by rulers, wizards, cultists, and scholars alike.

Curses and Eldritch Artifacts

Many relics carry hidden dangers. Ancient treasures may be haunted, cursed, or tainted by powers beyond mortal understanding. Some bring madness, mutation, nightmares, or misfortune. Others attract cultists, monsters, or stranger things.

The most feared artifacts are those connected to the Old Gods. Such relics may grant remarkable power, but nearly always exact a terrible price.



Dark Sorcery and the Witch Hunters of Verth

Magic is rare in Orridar and often viewed with suspicion, but Golgthium, or Dark Sorcery, is especially feared. Derived from pacts with the Old Gods and other sinister powers, its practice is outlawed throughout most civilized lands.

The Witch Hunters of Verth are a secretive organization dedicated to hunting cultists, dark sorcerers, and others who traffic with forbidden powers. Their ranks include wizards, clerics, assassins, investigators, and other skilled operatives.

Though they occasionally receive support from the Silverclaw Alliance and other regional powers, the Witch Hunters typically operate in secrecy. Their agents strike swiftly and without warning, seeking to eliminate practitioners of Dark Sorcery before they can escape or spread their corruption.

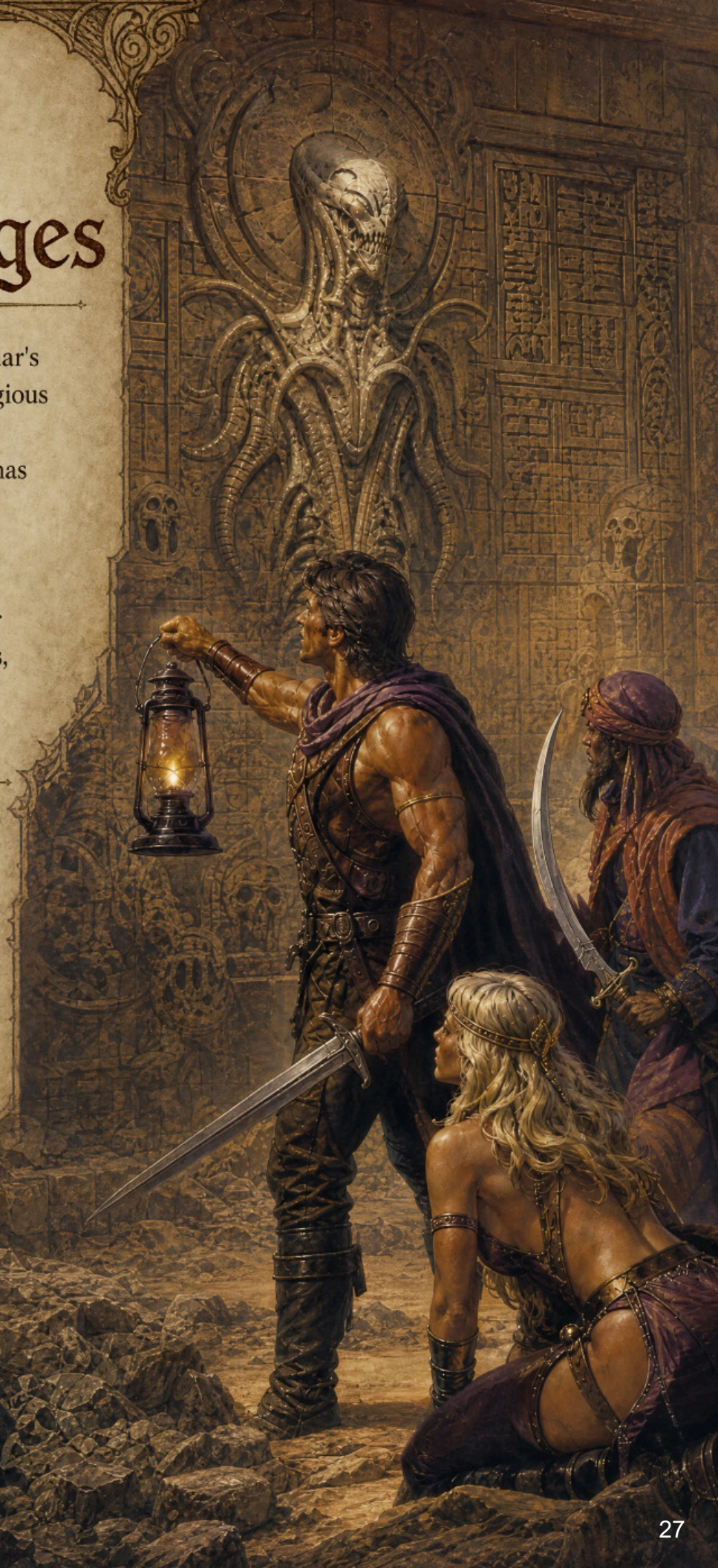


The Ancient Ages

Most people know little of Orridar's true history. Ancient myths, religious traditions, and folklore preserve fragments of the past, but much has been forgotten or deliberately concealed. A small number of scholars, wizards, priests, and ancient elves have pieced together a partial understanding from ruins, runestones, forbidden texts, and prophetic visions.

Though they disagree on many details, most reach the same conclusion:

The mortal races are not the first powers to shape Orridar, nor are they likely to be the last.



The Age of the Old Gods

Roughly 250 million years ago, as Orridar passed near the Vethule Cluster, the Gorguloths—remembered in later ages as the Old Gods—arrived from beyond the stars.

For millions of years they ruled the world through servant races such as the gronru and the melaks. Vast cities, temples, and strange mechanisms were constructed during this era, remnants of which still lie buried beneath younger civilizations.



The War of Ulthor

Approximately seventy million years ago, Orridar passed near the White Star of Ulthor. During this period the Ulthorians, remembered as the White Gods, arrived and warred against the Gorguloths.

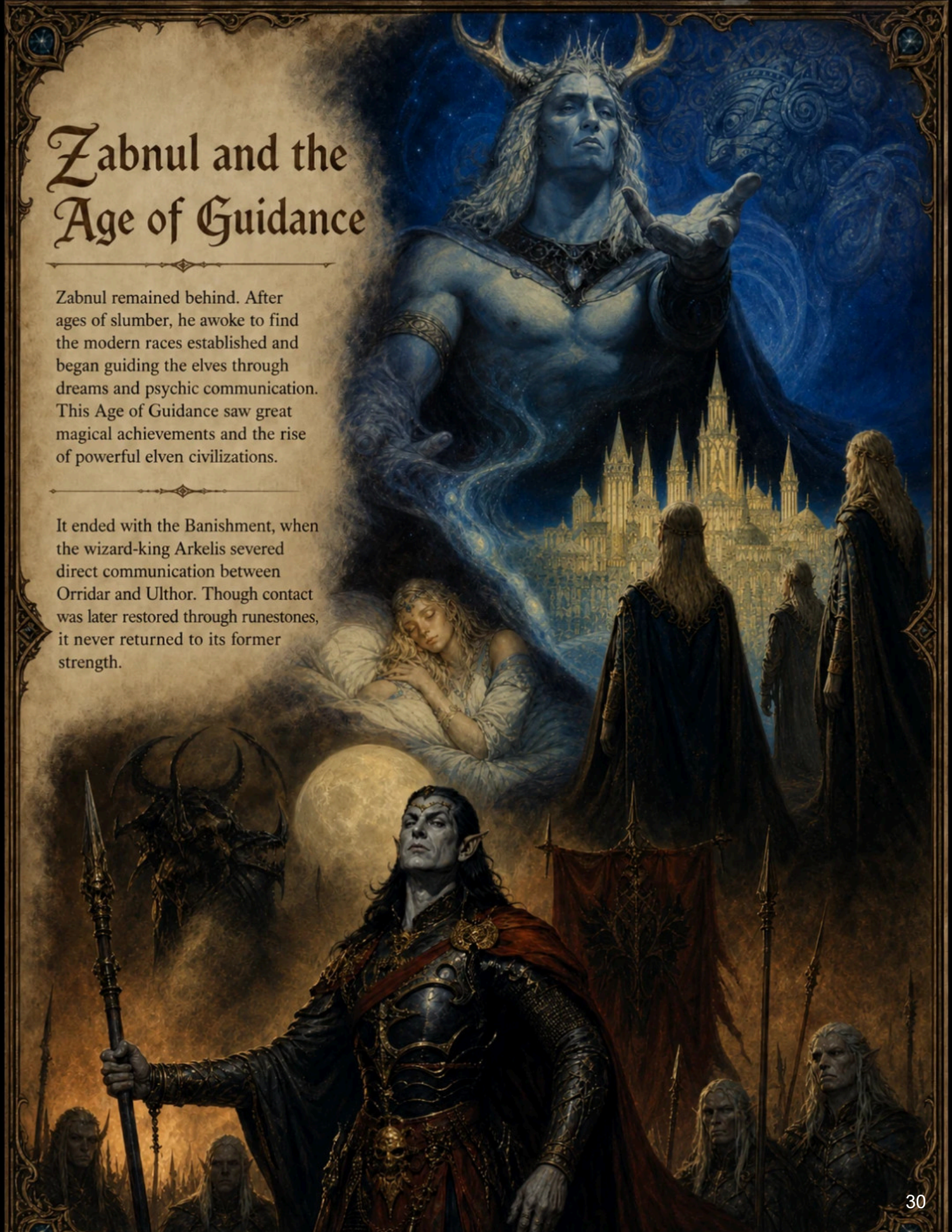
The Old Gods were defeated and driven away. One among them, Zabnul, betrayed his own kind and aided the Ulthorians. When Orridar's galactic journey carried it away from Ulthor, the White Gods departed as well.



Zabnul and the Age of Guidance

Zabnul remained behind. After ages of slumber, he awoke to find the modern races established and began guiding the elves through dreams and psychic communication. This Age of Guidance saw great magical achievements and the rise of powerful elven civilizations.

It ended with the Banishment, when the wizard-king Arkelis severed direct communication between Orridar and Ulthor. Though contact was later restored through runestones, it never returned to its former strength.



The Coming of the Moon Beasts

The decline of the ancient elven empires coincided with the arrival of the Vorgketh, or Moon Beasts, who descended from Orridar's moon aboard immense fungal vessels.

For centuries they raided the world, carrying away countless captives and contributing to the collapse of many ancient kingdoms. Though the last major incursions occurred roughly a thousand years ago, certain scholars believe the threat has not entirely vanished.



The Returning Cycle

Many astrologers, druids, and occult scholars believe Orridar is once again approaching the Vethule Cluster.

If ancient traditions are correct, the influence of the Gorguloths is tied to vast galactic cycles. As those conditions return, so too may the Old Gods.

Evidence cited includes increasing cult activity, unusual celestial phenomena, prophetic dreams, eldritch creatures, and the awakening of ancient ruins. Whether these signs represent genuine cosmic change or widespread superstition remains fiercely debated.



Agazarn and the Banner of the Clawing Stars

The most visible manifestation of modern Old God worship is the growing power of Agazarn and the Raithen Pact. Ruled by the mysterious Nameless Emperor, this cult-imperial power promotes devotion to ancient eldritch forces through conquest, ritual, and religious fanaticism.

Among its most feared servants is the Banner of the Clawing Stars, a militant cult led by the warlord Kogon Grune. Active throughout the northern frontiers, the Banner teaches that the return of the Gorguloths is inevitable and seeks to prepare the world for the coming age.



The Snakemen of Glar

Beneath the surface of Orridar, the Snakemen of Glar preserve traditions dating back to the Age of the Old Gods. Led by the ancient psychic entity Gahath, they maintain hidden temples and pursue designs that many believe are connected to the eventual return of the Gorguloths.

Cosmic Peril in the Present Age

Most inhabitants of Orridar know nothing of these matters. To ordinary people, war, famine, monsters, crime, and political conflict appear far more immediate.

Yet many of the world's hidden powers view such concerns as secondary. From their perspective, civilization exists within a struggle shaped by cosmic forces, ancient technologies, forgotten beings, and cycles measured not in centuries but in geological ages.

Whether the return of the Old Gods lies centuries away or has already begun remains unknown.

What is certain is that ancient forces continue to move beneath the surface of history, and many of the greatest mysteries of Orridar are not buried in the past, but waiting in its future.



REGIONS OF ADVENTURE

THE CONTINENTS OF ORRIDAR



ADONAR

The political heart of Orridar and the center of the struggle between the Silverclaw Alliance and the Raithen Pact. Its kingdoms, frontier regions, and ancient ruins offer both great opportunity and great peril.



ESDONAR

A vast land of monstrous empires, forgotten civilizations, and distant frontiers. Here stand Doggun-Gule, Kiwulsh, and countless remnants of lost ages.



KHARADRETH

A continent of deserts, jungles, dragon-blooded sorcerers, strange cults, and forgotten cities, including Yansh, Bazolg, and the infamous ruins of Zangol.



KROES

A dangerous southern frontier of haunted jungles, undead wastelands, isolated colonies, and ancient mysteries. Much of the continent remains unexplored.



SURRUK

The least explored continent in Orridar, Surruk is a land of dense jungles, giant reptiles, and primitive Sathek tribes. Few explorers venture far inland, and fewer return.



Adonar

The political heart of Orridar, Adonar spans frozen northern mountains, ancient forests, frontier lands, and rival kingdoms. Ancient ruins, looming threats, and endless opportunities for adventure await across the continent.



Urogog

The frozen mountains of northern Adonar are home to barbarian kingdoms, dark elf strongholds, ancient ruins, and dangers older than recorded history. Here stand both Agazarn and Sagradeth, making the region one of the most perilous in the known world.



Agazarn

Ruled by the mysterious Nameless Emperor, Agazarn is an empire of cultists, warlocks, mutants, eldritch giants, and star-born horrors. Its frozen wilderness conceals forbidden knowledge, ancient ruins, and powers best left undisturbed.



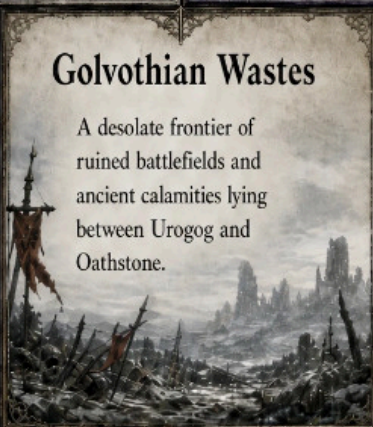
Sagradeth

The drake-riding dark elf citadel of Sagradeth is a wealthy slaver state and reluctant member of the Silverclaw Alliance. Though feared throughout Orridar, its greatest hatred is reserved for Agazarn.



Golvotherian Wastes

A desolate frontier of ruined battlefields and ancient calamities lying between Urogog and Oathstone.



Nargrundan

Once Agazarn's greatest fortress, Nargrundan was destroyed six years ago by a coalition led by Oathstone. Its haunted ruins are now avoided by most travelers.



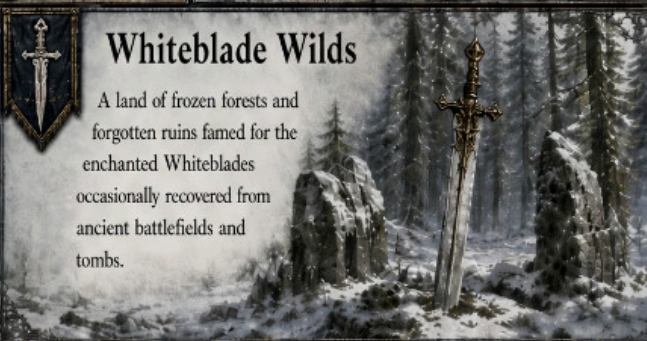
Oathstone

Ruled by the Mage Lord Telkon, Oathstone is a fortress-city of fiercely independent humans who view themselves as a bulwark against both Agazarn and foreign influence.



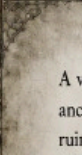
Whiteblade Wilds

A land of frozen forests and forgotten ruins famed for the enchanted Whiteblades occasionally recovered from ancient battlefields and tombs.



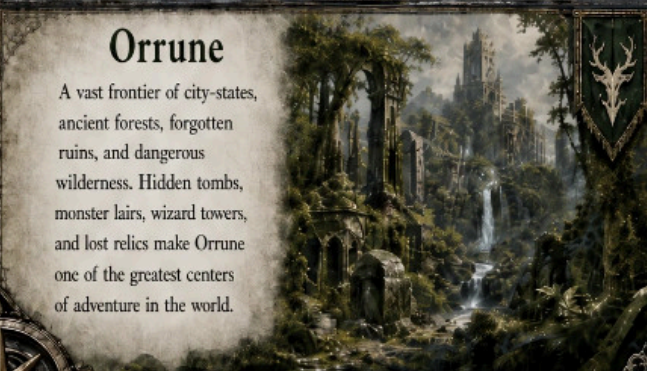
Silverclaw

A prosperous human city-state founded upon cooperation among many peoples. As leader of the Silverclaw Alliance, it struggles to maintain unity against growing threats from all sides.



Orrune

A vast frontier of city-states, ancient forests, forgotten ruins, and dangerous wilderness. Hidden tombs, monster lairs, wizard towers, and lost relics make Orrune one of the greatest centers of adventure in the world.



Esdonar



Doggun-Gule

A mighty orc empire ruled by the ancient warlock Ravosh. Forged through conquest, Doggun-Gule dominates much of western Esdonar and remains one of the greatest powers in Orridar.



Xirithil

Once a thriving city of the insectoid Kyloin, Xirithil was conquered by Doggun-Gule and its people enslaved. Secret resistance movements continue to oppose imperial rule.



Duj Lands

The former homeland of the cyclops-dwarf Duj, whose civilization was shattered by Doggun-Gule. Ruined fortresses and forgotten vaults still attract treasure hunters.



Kiwulsh

A land of ancient ruins, giant beasts, undead horrors, and forgotten mysteries. Legends place the lost City of the Gods, Ishudain, somewhere within its wilderness.



Kharadreth

Ganwulg

A land of dragon-blooded sorcerer-princes, caravan routes, ancient ruins, and dangerous cults. Wealth and strange wonders flow through its cities, but darker powers linger beneath the surface.



Bazolg

A vast jungle wilderness filled with forgotten ruins, reptilian beasts, and the monstrous Bazolgian Horrors. Much of the region remains unmapped.



Zangol

Among the most infamous ruins in Orridar, Zangol was once devoted to the worship of the fiendish Igawyth. Today its shattered streets are associated with mutations, cult activity, forbidden lore, and eldritch corruption.



Kroes



Nothshulran Desert

A wasteland of ancient ruins and strange undead ecosystems where even plants and animals may be touched by undeath.



Sunbringer Citadel

Founded by zealots dedicated to combating the undead, the citadel wages an endless war against the horrors of the Nothshulran Desert.



Gralgath

A Doggun-Gule colony struggling to establish itself amid hostile wilderness, undead horrors, and rival powers.



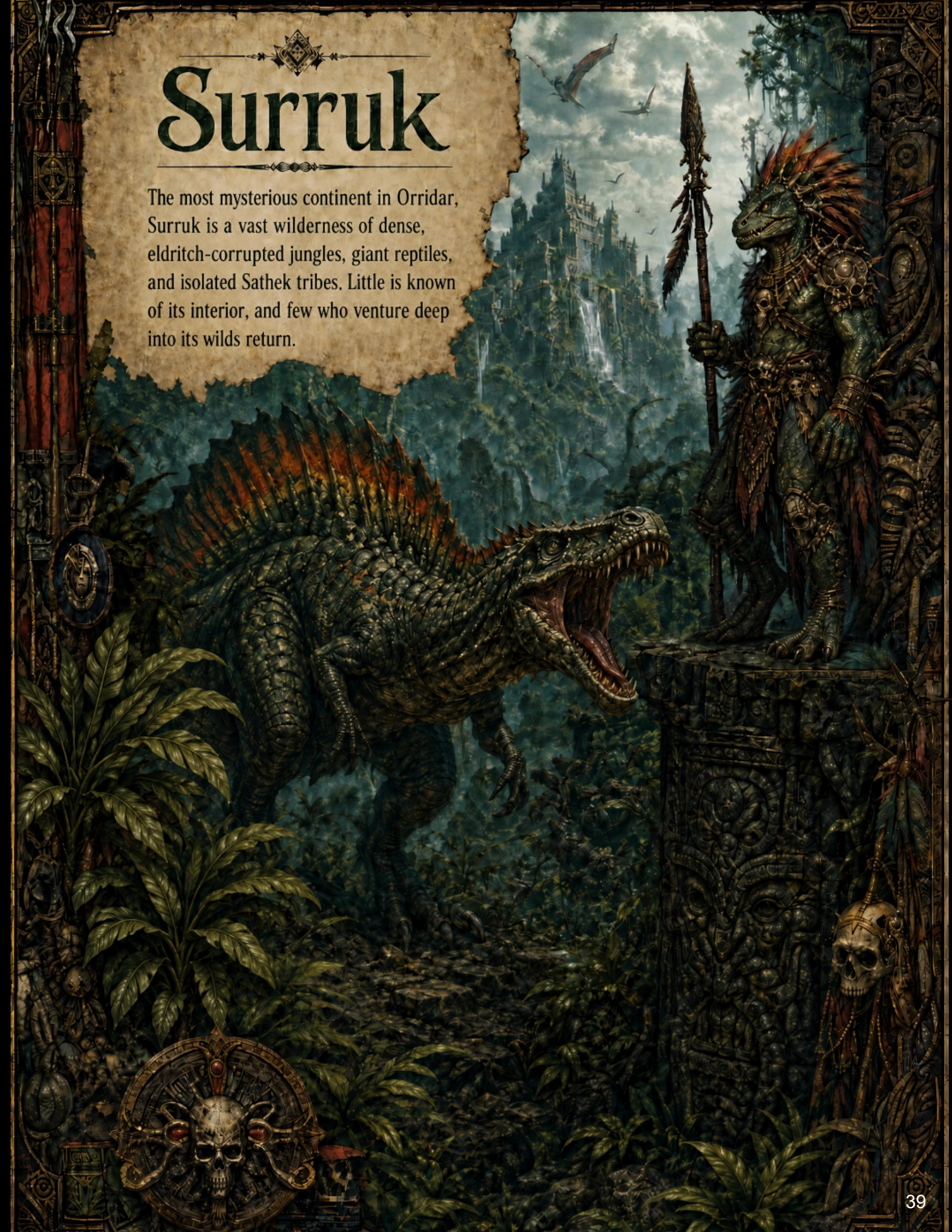
Drokorith

An ancient dwarven ruin containing the fossilized remains of the Ancient Crafter. Scholars, priests, and treasure hunters continue to seek answers hidden within its depths.



Surruk

The most mysterious continent in Orridar, Surruk is a vast wilderness of dense, eldritch-corrupted jungles, giant reptiles, and isolated Sathek tribes. Little is known of its interior, and few who venture deep into its wilds return.



Beneath the World

Caverns of Chulduin

A vast subterranean realm of underground seas, forgotten strongholds, hidden civilizations, and endless unexplored tunnels. Places such as Krarhath and Mulkaz lie within its depths.



Bedorin

The capital of the gnomes, built within the colossal skull of Zurguwik. Bedorin is renowned for invention, craftsmanship, and mysteries surrounding its strange founder.



Glar

An underground realm of serpent cults, psychic monstrosities, and ancient evil ruled by the mysterious Gahath. Few places beneath Orridar are more feared.



The Seas



Isles of Thar

Home to the four-armed psychic Lumerin, whose monasteries preserve ancient wisdom atop cyclopean ruins. The islands are also the primary source of Miwir, a rare psychic substance prized throughout the world.



The Shattered Isles

A maze of pirate havens controlled by the Crimson Teeth. Smugglers, criminals, hidden treasures, and forgotten ruins abound among the countless islands.



The Serpent Fangs

A chain of islands inhabited by the sulangu, snake-blooded eldretchen devoted to the Old Gods. Their raiders plague nearby coasts and maintain ties to the serpent cults of Glar.



The Silverclaw Alliance: The Silverclaw Alliance is a desperate coalition of rival powers united against the Doggun-Gule orcs, the cultists of Agazarn, and other looming threats.

KALDRA-KUR



Kaldra-Kur: An ancient elven necromantic state ruled by Darvrak, a powerful necromancer more concerned with the coming cosmic apocalypse than the petty wars and politics of the present age.



OATHSTONE



Oathstone: A militant human supremacist kingdom ruled by the wizard Telkon, standing guard over the frontier between civilization and the barbaric wastes.



SAGRADETH



Sagradeth: A feared dark elf slaver state renowned for its drake-riders and ruthless ambition. Its ruler, Arkaenian Vayl, seeks vengeance against Agazarn for the death of his son, yet remains one of the few leaders willing to consider peace with the Doggun-Gule orcs.



SILVERCLAW



Silverclaw: A lawful human realm that seeks cooperation among many peoples to survive in a dangerous world. High Lord Northos, Silverclaw's pragmatic leader, works tirelessly to keep the fractious Alliance united.





THE RAITHEN PACT

The Raithen Pact is the Silverclaw Alliance's greatest enemy: a hostile coalition of cultists, savage orcs, and barbarian devotees of the Old Gods.

AGAZARN



Agazarn: Ruled by the mysterious Nameless Emperor, once human but now heavily mutated, Agazarn is a dark empire devoted to the return of the Old Gods. Unable to speak, the Nameless Emperor communicates through psychic means and seeks to unite mankind beneath his vast cult dominion.

THE BANNER OF THE CLAWING STARS



The Banner of the Clawing Stars: A feared host of cultist-barbarians led by the warlord Kogon Grune. Partially subservient to Agazarn, they raid southward from the frozen lands of Urogog, spreading terror and the worship of the Old Gods wherever they march.

DOGGUN-GULE



Doggun-Gule: Across the sea lies Doggun-Gule, a mighty orc empire ruled by the ancient warlock Ravosh. Expansionist and ruthless, its armies wage constant war in pursuit of territory, resources, slaves, and conquest.



Lesser Orrunian City-States

While Kaldra-Kur is the dominant city-state of Orrune, several smaller realms and factions also play important roles in the region's politics, trade, and conflicts.

Runis

A human-majority city of Orrune known for its opposition to slavery. The recent death of its king, Akalarn, has plunged the city into a succession crisis, while rival factions struggle over its future and relations with neighboring powers.



Mar

A hobgoblin-majority city in Orrune, Mar is bound to Runis by an old alliance and military contract. Its mercenary armies serve as defenders and allies of Runis, forming a vital buffer against Kaldra-Kur aggression. Its human vampire ruler, Krea Esh, is revered by many as the hero who saved Runis thirty years ago, though others remember that beneath the legend lurks a dangerous nocturnal predator.



Hold of Hakorn

An isolationist dwarven realm north of Kaldra-Kur in Orrune. Though its people deeply distrust the elves of Kaldra-Kur, they maintain limited trade in the interest of stability and profit. Their ruler, Dargomor, died long ago yet continues to reign through the Throne of Immortality, an ancient rune-powered machine that preserves his spirit.



OTHER FACTIONS

THE NYRONEAN WEB

The largest criminal cartel in eastern Adonar, the Nyronean Web operates as thieves, assassins, smugglers, enforcers, and bandits. Said to be ruled by an elusive wizard known as Spidercloak. Closely tied to the Crimson Teeth pirates, the Nyronean Web protects its territory by ruthlessly destroying rival criminal organizations.



CRIMSON TEETH

A loose confederation of pirates and raiders operating throughout the Shattered Isles and surrounding sea routes. Predominantly hobgoblin in origin, the Crimson Teeth trace their ancestry to rebels and exiles from Mar. Their leader is Cuth Duin, a half-hobgoblin pirate priest devoted to the eldritch star-hydra Gabeth.



SWORD MAGES OF KAELAMOR

An independent order of elven sword mages based in the hidden Tower of Kaelamor, said to lie somewhere in the wilds of Orrune. Though widely respected, some fear their leader, Reinnel, foresees the return of the Gorguloths and believes survival may require siding with them.



ACOLYTES OF THE DEEP WOODS

A druidic elven faction of the Garonan Woods in Orrune. Followers of Zabnul, they warn of an approaching darkness and are aided by the last remnants of the prehuman gronru. Their arch-druid, Crooked Star, is said to hear the voice of Zabnul and serves as its foremost prophet.





Goblins (Set-klahain) are an aggressive race devoted to the war god Vibmarrog (a form of Juhaxis, the Crimson God).



Dregolisks are an ancient lizardfolk race that revere the Old Gods.



Kobolds (Igiaglik) are reptilian servants of the star-serpent Alalgu and bitter enemies of the Dregolisks.

Monsters & Horrors



he peoples of Orridar have always feared the wilderness.

Beyond the borders of civilization dwell goblins, bandits, lizardmen, beasts, and countless other dangers. Yet the wild places of the world harbor stranger things as well. In forgotten ruins, remote forests, desolate wastes, and unexplored frontiers lurk creatures unknown to ordinary natural philosophy—relics of lost ages, products of eldritch corruption, or remnants of powers that once ruled the world.

Most people never encounter such beings. Adventurers, explorers, sailors, and ruin-delvers are less fortunate.

The world beyond the settled lands remains vast, ancient, and only partly understood.



Aluwn are fey-like spirits, the ghostly psychic remnants of mollusk-like beings from ruined Othrain, known to some as archfey-like visitors dedicated to preserving beauty and opposing the Gorguloths.



Eldritch Creatures

Beyond the monsters commonly known to civilization exist stranger beings whose existence is known mainly to occult scholars, explorers, and the unfortunate few who have encountered them.



Gaungwaiths — Insectoid carrion-feeders associated with plague pits, battlefields, and forgotten tombs.



Wyrm of Glar — Colossal burrowing serpent-monsters tied to the hidden realms of the snakemen.



Gargu-Jotun — Grotesque mutant giants said to roam the far north.



Kargawons — Large eldritch wolf-predators often mistaken for werewolves.



Gorgrigrs — Cyclopean bat-beasts whose corrosive breath can dissolve flesh and wood.



Ogjowun — Intelligent squid-spider predators known for creating convincing illusions.



Baegwegs — Towering fungal beings associated with Zabnul and ancient druidic traditions. Though hostile to creatures of the Old Gods, they are often dangerous to everyone else as well.



The Undead

The undead are among the most feared horrors of Orridar. Unlike natural creatures, they are manifestations of a corruption associated with Monthulikru, the Old God of Decay and Death.

Zombies, ghouls, wights, vampires, and stranger forms of undeath are all linked to this lingering influence. In places steeped in eldritch corruption, corpses may rise spontaneously, particularly near forgotten tombs, ancient battlefields, or sites once dedicated to Monthulikru.

The lands of Kroes and Kiwulsh are especially feared for such outbreaks. For this reason, many cultures practice funerary rites and blessings intended to prevent the dead from rising.



rites of rest

To deny the dead their return, show them honor in death. Cleanse the body, anoint with salt and ash, and speak the Words of Sealing. Let the soul pass beyond.



Salt
Purifies



Fire
Consumes



Stone
Binds



Prayer
Protects



Monthulikru, the Lord of Rot and Silence, patient in the darkness before all things end.



Dragons and Dragon-Kind

Dragons occupy an uncertain place in the lore of Orridar. Most people regard them as creatures of myth, though the traditions of Ganwulg preserve detailed accounts of ancient wars between dragons and the sorcerer-kings of old.

Many noble bloodlines and sorcerous houses claim descent from dragons or from heroes who stole draconic power.



The Gia'zesh

The reptilian Gia'zesh are believed by many scholars to be the product of the Yagroywar, a secret and dangerous transformation ritual.

Most subjects perish. Others become monstrous abominations. A fortunate few emerge transformed into powerful draconic beings. The secrets of the ritual remain closely guarded in Ganwulg.



The Sigeyan Interlopers

Though often mistaken for spirits, demons, or fey, the Sigeyan Interlopers are something else entirely.

Scholars believe they arrived when Orridar passed near the distant Star of Sigeya. They delight in strange contests, bargains, riddles, and games whose purposes only they understand. Some encounters end harmlessly. Others end in madness, transformation, disappearance, or death.

Their motives remain incomprehensible, and when threatened they often vanish into a ghostly state known as the *Silf*.



Observations

- Their forms defy natural law.
- Speech is possible, but meanings remain oblique.
- They seem bound by rules unknown.
- Gifts and bargains always carry a cost.
- The *Silf* is not vulnerability, but a choice.

The Silf

A transient state between realities. Weapons pass through. Spells falter. Time unravels.

Most Commonly Witnessed Forms



Star of Sigeya



A distant, subtle star of unusual qualities. Some say it lies beyond the known heavens.

To question them is to invite a game. To accept is to enter their design.

Strange Creatures of Legend

Many creatures defy easy classification.

Sailors tell of horrors rising from forgotten seas. Explorers describe impossible beasts in the jungles of lost continents.

Dwarven chronicles speak of bat-riding raiders descending from dark mountains, while ruin-delvers uncover evidence of creatures unknown to modern scholars.

Most sages agree on only one point: Orridar is older, stranger, and less understood than most people realize. For every monster recorded in a wizard's library, countless others may lurk in forgotten forests, buried cities, subterranean realms, distant continents, or among the silent stars above.



Adventure Hooks

The world of Orridar is filled with opportunities for fortune, glory, knowledge, and doom. The examples below illustrate only a few of the adventures that await beyond the safety of civilization.



Ruins of Forgotten Ages

Adventurers might:

- ◆ Recover a Whiteblade from a tomb in the Whiteblade Wilds.
- ◆ Explore the buried ruins of Zangol and uncover evidence of ancient Igawyth influence.
- ◆ Search the fallen dwarven kingdom of Drokorith for lost rune-craft.
- ◆ Descend into forgotten Dregolisk temples hidden in the wilderness.
- ◆ Discover a relic that challenges accepted history.



Frontiers and Wilderness

Adventurers might:

- ◆ Escort a caravan through the Golvothian Wastes.
- ◆ Search for a lost expedition in Bazolg.
- ◆ Hunt a deadly beast in the Whiteblade Wilds.
- ◆ Explore unmapped caverns beneath Mulkaz.
- ◆ Survive a journey across the deserts of Ganwulg.



War and Intrigue

Adventurers might:

- ◆ Serve the Silverclaw Alliance against Agazarn.
- ◆ Expose spies of the Nyronean Web.
- ◆ Prevent war between rival powers.
- ◆ Rescue captives from Doggun-Gule or Agazarn.
- ◆ Assassinate or protect a controversial political figure.



The Nyronean Web extends farther than they know.





CULTS AND DARK POWERS

Adventurers might:

- ✦ Infiltrate the Banner of the Clawing Stars.
- ✦ Prevent a ritual dedicated to the Old Gods.
- ✦ Recover an artifact stolen by cultists.
- ✦ Investigate disappearances linked to Glar.
- ✦ Uncover evidence of a hidden servant of the Nameless Emperor.



MONSTERS AND HORRORS

Adventurers might:

- ✦ Destroy an undead horror in Kroes.
- ✦ Hunt a shapeshifting predator.
- ✦ Seal a spreading source of mutation.
- ✦ Defeat a creature immune to ordinary weapons.
- ✦ Survive contact with something not meant for mortal minds.



THE HIDDEN COSMOS

Adventurers might:

- ✦ Investigate strange sightings tied to the Moon Beasts.
- ✦ Recover forbidden lore concerning the Dazgolg Artifact.
- ✦ Discover evidence of the Gorguloths' return.
- ✦ Encounter agents of the Igawyth.
- ✦ Uncover clues to the Great Mechanism sought by the gnomes of Bedorin.



FORTUNE AND RENOWN

Many adventures begin with a simple rumor, reward, or request for aid. A treasure hunt may uncover a conspiracy. A monster hunt may reveal an ancient secret. A routine mission may become the first step toward changing the fate of kingdoms.

Such is the nature of adventure in Orridar.



ELDRITCH RUNES

A Sword & Sorcery World of Ancient Ruins,
Lost Civilizations, and Cosmic Peril

Beneath cold stars and a pallid moon lies Orridar, a world scarred by forgotten ages. Vast deserts conceal ancient tombs, emerald jungles swallow the ruins of vanished empires, and lonely mountains guard secrets untouched for millennia.

Adventurers brave monster-haunted frontiers in search of fortune, glory, and knowledge. Yet beneath the world's wonders lurk darker truths. Strange cults await the return of the Old Gods. Ancient powers stir within buried cities. Across the wilderness, remnants of lost civilizations wait to be discovered... or awakened.

Ominous signs are scattered throughout the world: esoteric prophecies, forbidden ruins, and bizarre monstrosities emerging from forgotten depths. Few comprehend their meaning. Fewer still are willing to face the truth.

Eldritch Runes is a world of sword-and-sorcery adventure, ancient ruins, and cosmic horror, where forgotten temples hold lost treasures, untamed frontiers conceal danger, and every mystery threatens to reveal a darker truth.

WHAT YOU'LL DISCOVER INSIDE

- The world of Orridar and its major regions
- Playable peoples, cultures, and civilizations
- Gods, faiths, magic, and ancient history
- Factions, kingdoms, and rising threats
- Adventure hooks and campaign inspiration

*In the shadow of inevitable doom,
courage still matters.*



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