

An introduction to the four remaining regions and the nine known races of the world of Attia, 400 years post Maelstrom.

- **Name: The Caldera**
 - Climate: Desert

The Caldera is a realm forged in desolation, where blistering sands stretch endlessly beneath the unrelenting sun, and lava vents sigh with the heat of a world both alive and dead. Jagged obsidian stones punctuate the ground like the fangs of a slumbering beast, while the oppressive heat seeks to devour anything that dares to thrive in its gaze. Though vast and inhospitable, the land carries a sense of finality; beyond the last dunes, an endless rift yawns into shadowy oblivion.

In the northeastern reaches, the Steps of Rakhim rise—a range of modest cliffs that pierce the horizon, composed of obsidian and ancient minerals, their surfaces gleaming like the remnants of a long-forgotten battle. Southward lies the Crescent Blade, a half-mountain shaped like a crescent moon, its edge a stark boundary marking the end of the Caldera’s embrace. Just beyond its jagged arc, the remnants of the City of Wailing Spirits cling precariously to the cliffs, a place where whispers of the past echo ominously. Torn in half, this forsaken city stands as a monument to loss, its streets haunted by the spirits that roam freely, their wails carried on the wind, a haunting melody that keeps all but the foolhardy at bay.

To the south, the Spire of Flame rises defiantly from the sand, a solitary column of obsidian and some eldritch stone, its peak crowned by a flame that flickers not, a beacon for miles around. This flame, eternal and unwavering, casts an aura of mystery, luring few to approach its dangerous brilliance.

The rest of the Caldera lies barren, a vast expanse of sand dotted with the occasional oasis, while the remnants of once-grand cities—crafted from brass and marble—now crumble under the weight of time, claimed by the Orcs who roam their desolate halls. Here, survival is a testament to tenacity, where the echoes of the past blend seamlessly with the struggle of the present.

- *Races:*
 - **Efreeti** - The Efreeti's skin holds a sun-kissed bronze hue, while dark hair frames faces marked by red pigmentation around their eyes, like embers still aglow. Some have black horns; slender and curved, adding to their striking presence, and many adorn themselves with dark tattoos circling their eyes. Among the Efreeti, these marks are a matter of pride—a declaration of the fiery heritage they embrace. Their lifespans mirror those of humans, though their spirits burned hotter. And while humans seek

shade and water, the Efreeti can wander for days under an unrelenting sun, needing little water, as if they are molded by flame itself. Their history is a tapestry woven from spoken tales, their heritage held not in script but in story. There are no books or scrolls to detail their past; all that could be known was passed down in grand tales of valor and in their Epic of the Winds. The Efreeti call themselves the children of the Sun and the Wind, and like their ethereal parents, they are restless wanderers. For as long as their people can remember, they traveled from place to place, seeking every joy, every experience life could offer. Even in troubled times, they radiate a warmth, a zeal for life that few could match. To the Efreeti, life is to be savored, each moment a taste of freedom. No chains can bind them; they cherish their freedom above all else, considering captivity worse than death itself. Their travels bring them to every corner of the Caldera, but they never linger long, drifting away like a desert breeze as soon as the world has offered its secrets. And yet, wherever they went, the traditions of hospitality followed. To insult a guest, to harm a host, or to exploit the kindness of another—these are crimes most grievous in the eyes of the Efreeti. In their wandering way, they honor the bonds of kindness with fervor, knowing that a gift of freedom, however brief, was among the greatest gifts of all.

- **Skratta (Orc/Goblin)** - Few outside their ranks know the truth: Orcs and Goblins are, in fact, one and the same. They begin their lives as small, stunted creatures known as Skratlings, born with green-tinted skin, sluggish minds, and frail bodies. Weak, dim-witted, and slow, they hold no resemblance to the fierce Orcs or cunning Goblins they would soon become. Skratlings are raised by the tribe as a whole, under the watchful care of a matron who rules over their early years with steady hands and sharp eyes. Around the age of five, a dramatic transformation begins. Over the course of two short weeks, each Skratling's path is set: they grow either more agile and sharp-witted, or larger and more powerful. By the end of this metamorphosis, the Skratling would emerge either as a Goblin, quick and clever, their long noses twitching as they took in the world; or as an Orc, brawny and broad, with ears pointed like daggers, ready for battle. Goblins would often become scouts or shaman, trusted for their keen senses and trickery, while Orcs took on the roles of warriors, each a wall of muscle and raw strength. Despite their divergent paths, both Orc and Goblin share the same jade-hued skin, and neither are destined to live much longer than fifty years. The Skratta, as they call themselves, care little for history, dismissing the past as distant and irrelevant. Few records survive from the time before the Sundering, and the tribes themselves

seem content to live in the present, bound to their ancient instincts of tribe and war. For them, it is the thrill of the hunt, the clashing of arms, and the call of battle that defines who they are—not scrolls, stories, or echoes of a forgotten age.

- **Humans of Caldera** - The humans of the Caldera live lives of constant motion, drifting across the arid plains and broken stone valleys, always on the search for the next spring or oasis. Once, perhaps, they called the grand marble cities their home—the sprawling structures now fought over by the Orcish tribes, their walls glinting with brass beneath the relentless sun. But even the oldest of the Calderan elders can only guess at what might have been, piecing together vague memories passed down through fireside whispers and faded tales. Life in the Caldera is a fleeting thing, lived from one day to the next. There is little room for history or for the luxury of learning. Water and food are as precious as breath itself, and with the constant threat of Orcish raiders lurking on the horizon, each moment is devoted to survival. The Calderans have learned to travel light, to listen for the wind's warning, and to trust only the trails they know best. For them, history is less a memory than a mirage—always just out of reach, and often better left behind.

- **Name: Sea of Ranmai**

- Climate: Tropical

The Sea stretches out like a vast canvas of shimmering blue, its waters entirely drinkable, albeit tinged with a hint of salt. Scattered across this expansive realm are tiny islands, barely large enough to support a handful of people. Yet, these minuscule patches of land are fiercely contested, treasures worth fighting for in a world where every inch is precious.

Bound by great waterfalls, the Sea is not limitless. These cascading edges beckon all things toward a dizzying drop into the unknown, where the current pulls with a relentless force, hinting at the mysteries that lie beyond. The air hangs thick with humidity, the warmth ever-present, only interrupted by the frequent storms that sweep through, intensifying the oppressive atmosphere.

At the heart of this watery realm stands The City, the only significant landmass to be found. Nestled in the southwest, The City is a chaotic jumble of shacks and shanties, home primarily to humans who navigate life in a state of squalor. Here, the stench of salt and sweat mingles with the cries of seagulls, forming a cacophony of survival. Occasionally, Merfolk glide through the alleys and bustling markets, their presence a reminder of the Sea's mysteries, but they come only for trade, not for the fleeting dream

of land ownership. In this world, stability is an illusion, and the fight for territory is a constant tide that ebbs and flows, leaving both desperation and ambition in its wake.

- **Races:**

- **Ceriantha** - At a glance, the Ceriantha might seem like any other humanoid race. They stand as tall as humans, their forms strong and graceful, but those who look closer will find the Ceriantha are shaped by the crushing depths of the deep ocean. Their bones and skin are denser, hardened by years beneath the sea's weight, granting them a resilience beyond that of surface dwellers. Some bear small fins along their arms and heads, lending them agile grace as they weave through the water. Their skin, deep blue and streaked with natural black patterns, is unmarred by hair—yet, to those unfamiliar with the sea, the colorful symbiotic creatures clinging to the Ceriantha's heads might look deceptively like it, a wild array of colors blending with their marine surroundings. Unlike other races, the Ceriantha are born without gender or sex, though they do display certain physical traits akin to male and female mammals. Their truest distinction, however, lies within their minds. Each Ceriantha emerges into the world without any inkling of emotion. This absence of feeling drives them to research and observe those who possess it—humans and the other surface folk—with an almost insatiable curiosity. To the Ceriantha, emotions are a phenomenon as foreign as the skies above, an unknown realm they seek to understand with the rigor of a scientist and the fascination of an artist. Their quest to unravel the mysteries of feeling has spurred a unique culture, one that reaches out from the depths to grasp at the warmth of the world above, hoping that, perhaps, they might learn what it truly means to feel.
- **Merfolk** - To an untrained eye, Merfolk might pass as humans. They stand the same height, with eyes and hair in every hue found on land, their lives spanning only slightly shorter—though the sea's dangers might be more to blame than biology. Yet, no matter how similar, each Merfolk bears certain marks of the ocean upon them. Small gills adorn their necks, inactive at birth but slowly learned with time, while the skin around their eyes is tinted in hues of deep ocean blue. Some Merfolk display further signs of their aquatic heritage—webbed fingers or extra gills for example, each a subtle reminder of their bond with the sea. Their markings may appear elaborate, but those are their tribal tattoos, symbols of their family and heritage. From a young age, every Merfolk child is taught the same foundation: that they are one with the ocean and all that swims within it. This lesson instills pride, but it is their second lesson—taught as they learn to swim, hunt, and survive—that shapes them further. They learn that to be a hunter in

these vast, dangerous waters is to hold a place at the top, one earned and sustained only by working together. This truth fosters in them the beginnings of their most sacred tradition: honor. Over countless generations, the Merfolk have crafted an intricate code based on community, unity, and their role as hunters. This code is no mere guideline but a law written into the fabric of their lives, defining their every act. It decides which females continue their lineage, who among them is worthy of joining the elite hunting clans, and, most importantly, who must lay down their life for the good of the tribe. This code, inflexible, governs each Merfolk's life and death alike, ensuring that their people remain as steadfast and resilient as the seas they call home.

- **Humans of the Sea of Ranmai** - The humans of the Sea hold their history like water in cupped hands, passing it from one storyteller to the next, never written, always spoken. Their legends span generations, epic tales of heroes and daring figures who braved storms and monsters, often serving as lessons for the young—though these tales do far more than teach. They spark a fierce ambition in each listener, a desire to carve their own story into the endless waves, to live a life worthy of being told around a fire. But humans, being what they are, have a knack for twisting noble ideals to fit their own purposes. What was meant as a legacy of bravery has transformed over time into something else entirely. That urge for heroism has morphed, becoming an unquenchable thirst for fame and self-importance, and in the Sea's cutthroat society, it's led to a culture rooted as much in piracy as in valor. The sea-bound human clans take pride in their names, not for the honor of heroic deeds, but for the thrill of outwitting rivals, of becoming figures feared and revered in equal measure. What remains of their ancestors' legacy is a shadow, an echo, twisted into a world where the only true goal is to make one's mark—no matter what it costs.

- **Name: Field of Spires**

- **Climate:** Depends on location and the whims of the Fae courts

The Field of Spires sprawls across the horizon, a fractured kingdom lifted above the fog-drenched void. Five realms cling to these columns that plummet into bottomless depths—some no wider than a single cottage, others vast enough to cradle a city. The very air shimmers with power here, each district steeped in its court's domain and pride.

First, there lay the realm of Hope, belonging to the Spring Court, where life pulses verdant and endless, ruled by Fae as ancient as they were capricious. Then there was the Crimson Fire of Summer, a realm where the heat seemed to pulse from the stones

themselves, energy thrumming beneath every step taken in that red-streaked world. Next came the Autumn Court, the Dreadlands—a desolate place where harvest's edge touched death and decay; it whispered secrets in the breeze, and its Fae lord over mortals with shadows in their smiles. Across the Spires, shrouded in frost, stretches the Winter Court's Land of Illusions, a place where reality lay twisted, and the boundaries between what is seen and unseen are blurred. Each of the courts include a not insignificant amount of Fae-Touched human slaves, those who have been beguiled or captured by the Fae to serve their every whim.

And then, there is the fifth domain—the haven of the Aerials. They inhabit columns that soar highest into the thinning air, remote from the magic-laden courts, removed from both the Fae's eye and the human's strife. They are as independent as they are isolated, untouched by servitude like the humans. Below them, in the dizzying reaches where oxygen thinned and survival demanded fierce ingenuity, live the humans who had managed to avoid or escape the Fae's grasp.

All who live in the Spires know the unwritten laws. Do not cross the Fae, for their vengeance was swift, cruel, and unyielding, lingering like an ancient curse. And the Aerials—though not unkind—have their own survival to guard. They can not take in refugees; to do so would draw the Fae's eye upward, and none could afford that. In the Field of Spires, survival is a matter of knowing one's place—and staying far from the wrath of the Fae.

- *Races:*

- **Fae** - Every Fae is bound to an Aspect—a sacred concept chosen at the moment of their creation. This Aspect can be anything of meaning: an emotion, a creature, a symbol, or even a natural element. Whatever form it takes, the Aspect is woven into their very being, and to insult it, or anything tied to it, is to risk the wrath of the Fae. Their bodies reflect this devotion. Fae forms are strange and varied, each shaped not by lineage but by the essence of their chosen Aspect. Despite this diversity, they all share a few common traits: pointed ears and a complexion marked by at least two distinct hues, patterns of color that reflect something deep and essential within. Though they are, by nature, as bound to change and whim as the winds, all Fae carry one unshakable belief: they are immortal. None of the Courts have records of a Fae passing from old age. Yet, they are as mortal as any race in matters of blade and spell; violence claims them just as swiftly, if not swifter, for they are fragile compared to humans, their unnaturally long lives tempered by a physical frailty that belies the magical power within them. Thus, Fae lives are marked by a unique balance—a fearlessness drawn from their sense of timelessness,

tempered by the sharp awareness that, at any moment, they may return to the unknown from which they were first born.

- **Aerials** -In form, the Aerials resemble humans, matching their height and build, though their features are unmistakably their own. Their hair often gleams in lighter shades, and their skin is fair, marked by white spirals and swirls that appear at birth and grow more intricate with age—a natural marking, not a tattoo, as if the wind itself had traced its patterns across their faces. Their bones, though, set them apart, sharing the lightweight structure of birds, granting many of them the ability to ride the currents of air, floating on the breeze as easily as one walks across land. Aerial society is steeped in contradiction. Though they are a people forged in the fires of war, they have become champions of peace, bound by a solemn commitment to avoid the violence that once defined them. The Lorekeepers of their race tell of a time before the Sundering, a time when Aerials served as weapons, obedient tools wielded without question. Their role in the Sundering remains uncertain, a shadowed memory all but lost to time. But the Lorekeepers teach that the Sundering, for all its devastation, may have been a gift in disguise for the Aerials. In its wake, they awoke to a new purpose. No longer bound to the whims of others, they could choose their own path, free from the conflicts they once followed so blindly, striving now toward a future of peace as if to atone for the wars they once were used as weapons in.
- **Humans of the Spires** - Among the humans dwelling in the shadow of the Spires, a stark difference sets them apart from their kin in other regions. The Earthbound, those who call this harsh terrain home, often appear gaunt and undernourished, their growth stunted by the unforgiving environment. In contrast, those who are Fae Touched—whether escaped or still shackled—display a bewildering array of appearances, each a reflection of their Fae masters' whims. While tattoos and body modifications are not uncommon among them, they are typically restrained enough to retain a semblance of humanity; one mark they will never bear, however, is the pointed ear that signifies true Fae lineage. The humans of the Spires are an oppressed folk, locked in a relentless guerrilla struggle against a race that sees them as little more than livestock. Their existence leaves scant room for the preservation of history or tradition. This is not to say they are uneducated; rather, their knowledge is fragmented and often shaped by the experiences of those who have broken free from Fae control. Much of what they know comes from the lessons imparted by liberated Fae Touched, and often, this education lacks the formalities of literacy. Instead, it is woven into the fabric of oral

tradition, tales passed down through whispered stories shared around flickering fires, each account a lifeline to their scattered past and a beacon of hope for their uncertain future.

- **Name: The Evermount**

- Climate: Underground

The Evermount loomed, a colossal world of stone, larger than the mind could truly grasp. Its surface remained untouched, veiled in mystery and hazard. There was no air to breathe beyond its borders, no warmth to sustain life; even the light from the stars was too distant to provide any brilliance. Only magic—old as the mountain itself—breathed life within, keeping the inner caverns filled with air and sustenance, a haven carved deep within rock and shadow.

Inside, the Evermount is home to the GEGs, warlike and hardy, their settlements winding through stone corridors like veins. Below them were the Proteans, ancient beings who shaped the caverns as though molding clay. But there are tales whispered by miners and wanderers—stories of something else that lurks beyond the torchlight, watching from hidden crevices. Rats that walk on two legs as tall as a Geg, their beady eyes glinting with an unnatural intelligence, scurrying through abandoned tunnels. And worse still, there were creatures twisted by darker forces, horrors with tendrils in place of mouths, that prowled the deeper, older passages. These monsters fed on more than flesh; they craved the very thoughts and memories of their prey, devouring minds with a hunger that could never be sated.

In the Evermount the shadows might be alive. Those who ventured too far or strayed too deep rarely returned, for the heart of the mountain held secrets that even the oldest Proteans dared not seek.

- **Races:**

- **Geg** - GEGs are a hardier breed than humanity, shaped by the unforgiving embrace of the Evermount. While they share a resemblance to humans in stature, they are denser, their bodies honed by the mountain's challenges. Strength courses through their very being and none possess the unyielding perseverance of the GEGs. Their faces, marked by the mountain's touch, bear a distinctive band of brownish skin across their eyes, a reminder of their stone-like endurance, etched with deep black weathering cracks that speak of age and hardship. Many GEGs choose to accentuate their "éclat"—their essence or personal glory—by adorning their skin with black markings, which from a distance appear as tribal tattoos but signify far more. For as long as they can remember, their lives have been a relentless series of trials, with the Evermount posing threats

that can claim life in an instant: cave-ins, falling boulders, and other perils loom over them from the moment they draw their first breath. The Geg society is a harsh landscape of conditioning and discipline, structured like a tribal hierarchy. Their leaders, known as “War Masters,” command troops—family units that consist of several bonded mates, their children, a handful of warriors, and the War Master himself. Some troops can grow beyond these bounds, becoming a Clan. GEGs wander from cave system to cave system, ever in pursuit of “*éclat*,” the ultimate currency of bragging rights and status among their kind. Nothing holds greater importance to a Geg than their personal *éclat*, a measure of their worth and a pathway to recognition. Stories of bravery, skill, and cunning are the lifeblood of their culture, told and retold, each tale reinforcing the strict social structure. Discipline is instilled from the cradle; duels that result in the loss of offspring are a grim reality in the larger troops and Clans. From birth, every Geg learns the history of their group, the ranking system drilled into them until it becomes second nature. They may not fully grasp why *éclat* carries such weight, but they understand instinctively that without it, they are of no value. A Geg that loses its *éclat* is doomed to shame, a burden so great that self-destruction feels preferable. Questions and doubts are luxuries for lesser races; for the GEGs, action is paramount. They follow their path without hesitation, and those who dare to challenge their way do so at their peril.

- **Protean** - For as long as any Protean can remember “the people” have emerged from one of five revered “Great Hearthstones.” These beings of pure stone experience a process of creation that resembles carving and molding more than traditional birth. When a new Protean is born, their semi-liquid form flows forth in a molten cascade from the Hearthstone, a sight both majestic and profound. It is then that the elders of the Hearth step in, wielding their ancient wisdom to shape the youngling. This molding is a sacred art, a rite known only to the elders. Through a direct mental link, they impart essential knowledge, teaching the newborn basic language skills and survival instincts. By the time the molding is complete, the young Protean is fully equipped to engage with society, emerging as a functional member. The male or female form they adopt reflects the newborn's personality, and each “brother” or “sister” is instantly welcomed into the familial embrace of their Hearthstone. Integral to Protean physiology is the concept of sharing. Each Protean can partially merge with their Hearthstone, intertwining their experiences and wisdom. This bond enriches the collective knowledge of their “Family,” an intricate tapestry woven from the threads of individual lives. Upon returning to their

place of origin, the elders will demand that a Protean “shares” with the Hearthstone without delay. This act reveals not only their experiences but also any actions that might bring shame upon their family. The elders, guardians of tradition, will determine appropriate punishment for any transgressions revealed in this sharing. Each Hearthstone holds its own set of ideals and values, which means that what offends one family may not even raise an eyebrow in another. This delicate balance of tradition and personal identity shapes the Proteans as they navigate their intricate society, constantly striving to honor their Hearthstone while embracing their unique essence.

■ **Hearthstones:**

- **Granite:** The children of Granite are few, known for their extreme boldness and willingness to protect their Hearths fiercely. Originally created in small numbers, they became targets of raiders when their Hearthstone lost its warmth, leaving only a few Granite Proteans to defend what remains of not only their Hearth but their race.
- **Obsidian:** The children of Obsidian, deeply rooted within the Evermount, avoid conflict and live for gathering knowledge to share with their community. They approach life with scientific curiosity, presenting their discoveries in a yearly Hearthstone gathering.
- **Marble:** Known as artisans, the children of Marble embrace beauty and craftsmanship, creating flowing forms and adorning themselves with clothing, a practice inspired by humans. This fascination with aesthetics and practicality has since spread to the rest of their race.
- **Amethyst:** Guardians of magical knowledge, the children of Amethyst use and study magic, keeping their skills within their family. Their radiant, colorful caverns reflect their commitment to mastering magic.
- **Sandstone:** The children of Sandstone are collectors and traders of unique trinkets, seeing more value in interesting items and their stories than in wealth. They gather annually to share their findings, wearing pieces with compelling backstories as garish jewelry to display their discoveries.