



Breaking the Reign of the Dead

A Pathfinder RPG Novel by H. Rad Bethlen

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H. Rad Bethlen

Rooster & Raven

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Published by Rooster and Raven Publishing, LLC

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For the Daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne

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Author's Preface

Readers will find that this work diverges from the orthodox—what has been published by Paizo. I have taken as my starting point the information contained in the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*, yet, even as far as that goes, if the story needed to diverge, it did so. Having said that, I hope the story that follows is both acceptable and enjoyable to most people who tell their own tales in the Inner Sea.

This work was done independently of Paizo and its editorial staff. They are not to blame for anything contained herein. Indeed, they most likely have no knowledge of this book's existence. And while the intellectual property associated with the Pathfinder game is theirs, all faults are my own.

I went back and forth on whether to write this book. First, the information in the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* is not my intellectual property. I could be sued for using it *if* I attempted to claim it as my own and profit from it. My solution is to fully acknowledge that while I created many of the characters and wrote the novel, the world the characters act in is not mine. Nor do I wish to profit financially from this work. I'm giving it away. If you paid for it, someone has cheated you.

This raises a question: it takes months, sometimes years, to write, rewrite, edit, polish, and publish a novel-length work. Is it wise to spend my time on something unprofitable when I could work on a marketable project? Here I must admit to being a slave to the story. This story wanted to be told. Besides, I saw in the story a challenge. I saw an opportunity to push myself as a writer and advance my understanding of craft. That alone is worth the effort and is its own reward. hope at least one person

discovers and enjoys this story. If so, I shall be doubly rewarded.

I would rather be a slave to the poorest peasant than reign
over the dead.

- Homer: *Odyssey*, XI, c. 800 B.C.

A Pressed Flower, Grain Exports, Aired Thoughts, and a Warning

The Cinerarium, Mechitar, Geb, Pharast, 4711

A cinerarium is a container in which to keep the ashes of a cremated body. It was Geb's morbid sense of humor that inspired him to name his palace so ignobly. It is an apt name, however. The immense pyramid—made not from sandstone blocks like those in Osirion, the country that birthed and exiled the immortal Geb, but from feldspar, a stone of granite, gneiss, basalt, and other crystalline rocks—was to be his eternal home, just as a true cinerarium holds one's mortal remains until time empties it.

Those massive blocks, quarried from the Shattered Range Mountains, were a plagioclase feldspar and thus were tinted red. The dawn sun made the massive pyramid—it dominated Mechitar's skyline, dwarfing the other pyramids, dwarfing even the Cathedral of Epiphenomena, Urgathoa's temple—pink. The noonday sun made it glow reddish-orange. The evening sun turned it the color of dried blood. The moon drained it of all color, turning it as pale as lifeless flesh.

Geb no longer occupied the pyramidal palace. He cared not for any of his palaces, libraries, summoning chambers, or macabre workshops; where, when he did care, he assembled rotting remains into semblances of life that more properly insulted it. Geb gave all such concerns over to his Harlot Queen, Arazni. She ruled the nation of Geb—he would, of course, name it after himself—in conjunction with Geb's hand-picked Chancellor and one-time confidant, Kemnebi, and the Blood Lords, a collection of sixty elites, many undead, but not all.

The Blood Lords met in what Geb nicknamed “the mortuary” but what was really the grand hall of the Cinerarium. Off one side of this grand hall was Arazni’s personal chambers, the other, Kemnebi’s offices. Kemnebi had a home of his own, a pyramid a fraction of the size of the Cinerarium—one does not upstage Geb—yet he visited it so infrequently he often forgot about it. No Blood Lords lived in or worked out of the Cinerarium, only Arazni and Kemnebi. It was a cold, silent, lifeless palace: a massive, empty tomb.

On this night the dead met. A meeting of the Blood Lords was just concluded. The business of the dead, old and new, considered. The reign of the dead continued unabated. These meetings were usually presided over by Kemnebi, with Arazni seated in a throne just behind him and a statue of Geb peering over her shoulder. Not this one, nor the two previous. Arazni was annoyed at the Chancellor’s repeated absence, which forced her into bureaucratic duties she despised. The Blood Lords did not comment. They were not given to gossip. When the meeting was concluded they left—all but one.

...

Kemnebi had the keen senses of a predator. He was a predator. Geb bestowed upon him the blessing of vampirism. It was due to these vampiric senses that he heard the hinges of the iron door squeak, pause, then squeak again. He felt the air pressure in the room drop. He felt the warmth of life come into his space. Above all these sensations was the beating of a mortal heart, the rush-and-pause of blood in mortal veins, the iron-taste of blood on his tongue.

He knew a great deal from these clues. There were few beings, living or dead, but especially living, who had the courage or brazenness to enter his offices unannounced and uninvited. He knew, therefore, it must be one of the

Blood Lords. There were only nine mortal Blood Lords. This narrowed the possibilities. As he ran through the list of potential visitors he heard the *clack-clack* of heels. A floral fragrance came to his nostrils. Still more clues.

He thought first of Narcisse, the former Duke Between the Rivers. He sometimes wore boots with heels, sometimes wore perfume, even cosmetics, but the lightness of the *clack-clack* ruled out the grossly obese cleric of Urgathoa. There was a tiefling, that is, a human with demonic blood somewhere in her lineage, also a worshipper of Urgathoa, who—while mortal—shared a supernatural tie with a phantom, but he could not recall the tiefling's name, even though she was a Blood Lord. She would never assume enough familiarity with him to enter his offices without his personal invitation.

He thought next of She-mah-hon, an ostirius kyton, emissary from the Abbey of Nerves, sent to Geb by Aroggus to welcome those few undead who can still feel and those remaining mortals in Geb to the glory of the Abbey's lightless halls and endless tortures. She was an unsettling presence, like all kytons, a race given to disturbing body modifications, and was crazy enough to desire an impromptu meeting, but Kemnebi ruled her out. She was mortal, or so he surmised, but her blood held an otherworldly and disagreeable odor. He would have tasted it in an instant.

There was Baya-Iza, a noble from Zirnakaynin, the greatest of the drows' subterranean cities, come to Geb to study in the Ebon Mausoleum and continue the ingrained habit of merciless social climbing, of which, she proved a great success. Or perhaps Kimberly Silent Eyes, a Vishkanyas assassin clever enough to realize that if she killed her employer and took their place few would object. Both were recent additions to the ruling elite of Geb, but neither seemed likely. They were minor powers in the

hierarchy of Geb, like the nameless tiefling, and could be ruled out. As the *clack-clack* neared he decided from the few remaining candidates.

"Saskia."

"Chancellor." Saskia Kalff stepped into the circle of light created by the candles on the shelf above Kemnebi's desk. "I hope I'm not disturbing you."

Kemnebi set down the pressed flower he had been contemplating and turned his head to look at his unexpected visitor. A moment of silent observation passed between the two.

Saskia was no more a friend to Kemnebi than was She-mah-hon or any of the others. This was the first time she had been in his office alone, or really, with the Chancellor alone in any setting. She knew him, of course, being a Blood Lord, but he was as unapproachable as any truly powerful leader is. By all rights she was as entitled to his time and attention as any other Blood Lord, but to act upon that right was dangerous.

She found it odd that Kemnebi was contemplating a pressed flower. It brought so many questions to her mind she nearly forgot her purpose in coming. Of all the things she expected the undead Chancellor of Geb to be doing, pressing flowers was not amongst the likely activities. She looked down at him but made a conscious effort not to possess the demeanor of one looking down on another.

He had once been human, of the Mwangi people. Specifically he was of the Mauxi people, who denied kinship with the other tribes of the great Mwangi Expanse; a dense jungle cradled by mountains. The Mauxi people still speak the Osirioni tongue and unlike the brown-skinned Mwangi their skin often showed a tint of gray. Also unlike the kink-haired Mwangi, their hair was straight. The one trait they willingly shared with the Mwangi was patience.

Kemnebi was tall and athletic without appearing overly muscular. The nobility of his features fit him well as chancellor but would be equally noticed were he a common beggar. His nobility did not come from his station but from his being. His dark eyes were made still more enchanting by the gift of vampirism. He was handsome in a way that promised delightful ruination of any seduced by him.

That he was a practitioner of the arcane arts was well known. To be a one-time confidant of Geb was to share a love of necromancy with the immortal wizard-king. To rise and stay above the Blood Lords required a true mastery of the arcane, for the Blood Lords culled the weak from their own herd. Kemnebi had learned his necromancy from Geb himself, who, in turn had learned it from Hent-er-Neheh, one of his now mummified ancestors who taught him many a millennia prior, when both were still mortal.

That Kemnebi prickled with power was obvious to any who came near. To be chancellor of Geb required a keen knowledge of protective magics. What struck Saskia the most was not Kemnebi's power but his powers of observation. His gaze was attentive which made it unnerving, unnerving because he saw what was before him, not merely the reflection of his own desire. Kemnebi, seated, looked up at Saskia.

She was one of those rare practitioners of necromancy who did not lean upon that dark school of magic in order to surpass life, but to prolong it. Nor was necromancy her obsession, as it was for so many of her peers. She knew just as much about transmutation and alteration as she did about the school of death. In mortal years she was approaching seventy. In appearance, she was approaching thirty and had remained so for a long time.

She was a native of Qadira via Taldor. Her face was squarish with high cheekbones, framed by a mass of luxurious black hair. Her eyes were large and alluring, her eyelashes long and dark, lips full and red. A beauty mark lay just below the center of her right cheek. All that was seen of her creamy white flesh was her face, neck, and upper chest, as she wore a dark blue dress, a black corset, black satin gloves, and black leather boots. About her neck was a simple gold chain and an amulet with a blue stone. Tucked somewhere in her clothing was a song bird, now quietly nesting in its mistress's pocket. This was her familiar.

"Lilith?" inquired Kemnebi. Lilith was a fellow Blood Lord, a member of the clique that had long ago formed around Arazni, a lich, like Arazni, and Saskia's mentor.

"She is well," answered Saskia. "Our dear Marquis?" The Marquis Chevonde Garron was a vampire, Kemnebi's grandchild, in a sense. His sire was one of Kemnebi's "children," that is, a mortal he had embraced and turned into a vampire. Her name was Leah Ben-Reuven. Her memory was a painful one to Kemnebi as he had destroyed her in a rare fit of rage. Ever since then he had been especially kind to the Marquis and tolerant of his eccentricities. It was only by Kemnebi's leave that Chevonde was allowed to live beyond the borders of Geb. He had both a mansion in Katapesh and a pleasure barge in its harbor. He came to Geb only to attend the meetings of the Blood Lords. At all other times he kept livelier company.

It had been the Marquis Chevonde Garron who purchased Saskia from the slave markets of Katapesh. She was only seven at the time and Chevonde had elaborate plans for her. Thus began her tutelage in courtesanship and espionage. When Saskia was thirteen, polished in

manner and speech, and knew what to look for in Arazni's court and how to secretly communicate that to the Marquis, she was sent to Arazni, the perfect child courtesan. Lilith put an end to it.

"A cute trick, Chevonde," she said during a meeting of the Blood Lords five decades prior.

"An amusement, nothing more," he replied.

"Would Arazni agree?"

"If she knew," responded the Marquis, "the child would be destroyed. Am I mistaken in believing you've taken a motherly role?"

"Don't expect any courtly gossip from our lovely Saskia."

"I would never. I only hope she remembers her eccentric uncle Chevonde favorably."

Much had transpired since then. Lilith had groomed Saskia for far greater things. At Lilith's insistence Saskia became a Blood Lord. Arazni was not hard to convince. She almost always took Lilith's advice.

"Has Lilith sent you?" asked Kemnebi. The smile on Saskia's face gave him pause. "I do not mean to imply —"

Saskia stepped more into the candlelight. She reached down, her eyes and smile on him, and picked up the pressed flower. She contemplated it. "Perhaps a delicate necromantic spell," she said, twirling the flower in her gloved fingers, "has taken the life from this yet kept it whole." She looked from the flower to Kemnebi. "Is that what occupies our Chancellor and causes him to miss three meetings in a row?"

If Kemnebi could blush he would have. He had forgotten about the meeting. He had not, so engrossed had he been, even heard the Blood Lords just outside his door. As if reading his thoughts, Saskia added, "You failed even to send a representative to make your will known," before

setting down the flower, sitting on the edge of his desk, and folding her hands in her lap. The song bird chirped at the disturbance but tucked its face beneath a wing and resumed its slumber. "I make no accusations," said Saskia. She reached out and placed a hand on Kemnebi's. "I worry."

It was a bold gambit on her part. Kemnebi looked at her gloved hand, his expression unchanged. His eyes, though, spoke what his countenance did not. Saskia removed her hand to her lap but retained her casual seat. Despite her studied nonchalance, beads of sweat began to form on her brow.

Kemnebi's gaze moved to the flower. "In one of those," he said, looking now at the books. Saskia glanced at them and saw at once they had nothing to do with the arcane. "The legal codes of every nation of the Inner Sea," said Kemnebi, "that has a legal code." He looked up at Saskia. "Some do not. Some are not written down. Some legal codes are comprised only of parables and folk-wisdom kept in the heads of the village elders."

"Cheliex?" inquired Saskia.

"A labyrinth." Both chuckled at this and for a moment the tension between them lessened. Kemnebi reached out and picked up the pressed flower. "No doubt the wife of some scholar found a better use for her husband's books." He set the flower down.

"This?" Saskia picked up a single sheet of parchment marked with columns of numbers.

Kemnebi glanced at it. "Grain exports to Nex." His gaze shifted, as if he now looked to Geb's northerly neighbor. "The population of Nex grows."

"Good," announced Saskia. "We've an excess of labor and land." Both knew that legions of zombies worked the wheat, oat, and corn fields of Geb, the bounty of the land passing through decayed hands to Nex, Geb's

former enemy. The soil of Nex could barely sustain life. Geb had seen to that in the millennia-long war between himself and his closest rival, Nex. Rare was it that two such wizard-kings should stomp about the land at the same time. That they did not keep a continent between them was due to ego. That they once shared a border and warred over it was due to folly. Saskia studied the null effect her words had on the Chancellor. "If economic matters make for poor—"

Kemnebi stood and began to pace in and out of the circle of light, alternately retreating and advancing. Saskia watched as he disappeared and reappeared. "Nex grows," he said. "Nex thrives. Nex evolves." He cast his glance at Saskia. "What of Geb? There is precious little life in Geb—"

"Precious?"

Kemnebi paused. "Yes, life is precious. You must certainly believe so. Given your—"

"I do."

Kemnebi resumed his pacing but did not speak. Saskia picked up the dropped thread.

"When any mortal within the boundaries of Geb dies," she began, speaking of a law Kemnebi certainly knew of, "they are raised as undead."

"Of course," mumbled Kemnebi.

"The poor go on to work the fields or have their skeletons added to the Bonewall. Those who can afford it, or who have secured favor, are brought back as higher forms of undead." When Saskia said higher forms a smile flashed across Kemnebi's face. He knew that those of wealth and station endeavored to secure a higher place in the hierarchy of Geb by becoming various types of undead, the more powerful the better. To be a mindless undead, or a type of undead devoid of freewill, was the greatest fear of all of Geb's mortal inhabitants.

Again a moment of silence passed. Kemnebi was occupied by his thoughts. Saskia bent and looked once more over the open books. "I forgot," she said, turning a few pages. "You're redefining Geb's legal code." She looked up at Kemnebi. He met her gaze but said nothing. "It must be difficult," she added, ceasing to finger the pages. "Is it this that occupies you so?"

"All nations founded and ruled by individual personalities share the same fate," said Kemnebi. "When those individuals no longer lead, they leave behind a vacuum."

"But Geb—"

"You must remember," interrupted Kemnebi, "that for almost all of Geb's history as a nation we were at war. Now we suffer peace." He smiled, but it was a forced smile. "A warring people know not how to manage peace."

"And so?" asked Saskia, glancing at the legal books.

"And so I must establish the rules that shall govern peace, so long as it lasts." He shook his head. His pacing took on a more violent motion, an external sign of internal emotion.

"Geb hasn't fallen apart—"

"Nor will it," announced Kemnebi, stopping at the edge of the candlelight, his face defined by the flickering flames. "It will stagnate. It will decay. It will die slowly, agonizingly. Finally, it will calcify. Meanwhile," he said, resuming his pacing, "the other nations of the Inner Sea will outgrow us, evolve beyond us." He stopped again at the edge of the candlelight. "And then—" But the look on Saskia's face alarmed him. She rose and looked past him to the door but Kemnebi knew it remained closed. She looked at him.

"No other Blood Lord would tolerate such heretical talk," she said. "Let alone Arazni or—Geb," she whispered

the last, as if Geb would hear. She stepped to Kemnebi who stepped forward to meet her. Her movements were those of a panicked animal and she fell into him. He caught her, his hands around her waist, her hands on his chest. She looked up into his dark eyes and saw both the multitude of flickering candles and her own miniaturized self reflected within. "I pray you speak to no other as you've spoken to me." She parted from him, passed him, and hurried to the door. He watched her pull the heavy iron door open and slip out.

Glossary of People and Places

Abadar: the god of cities, law, merchants, and wealth.

Abaddon: An Outer Plane, home to the Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Abbey of Nerves: When the kytons, the original natives of Hell, were forced to flee, they went to the Plane of Shadows, led there by Aroggus. Aroggus created a massive cathedral to house his homeless race. Not only is the Abbey of Nerves an ever-shifting maze of rooms, halls, and corridors—to confound would-be attackers—it is a place of torture, pain, and suffering where the kytons are free to explore their twisted art.

Abraxas: The demon lord of forbidden lore, magic, and snakes.

Absalom: Perhaps the most famous city in all of the Inner Sea, Absalom is also the wealthiest. It is rumored that Aroden created the island and city of Absalom. It is home to the artifact known as the *Starstone* as well as the *Spire of Nex*.

Abyss, The: One of the Outer Planes, home to the demonic races and the demon lords, as well as many evil deities.

Aedha “Weeping Tree” Nijis: An elf, born in Kyonin. She ventured into the Axan Woods seeking the Twilight Unicorns. She did not find them, instead, she was nearly killed by evil fey of that forest. She saw Rhianna’s hunting lodge and asked for aid. What she got was undeath. She became Rhianna’s lover and in time a Blood Lord.

Agrellus Kisk, Archmage: Leader of the Arclords and one of the three of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Ahrhune ag-Hashid: A Garundi born in Thuvia. He was a pirate under the protection of Prince Zinlo. Upon retirement he became a cleric of Sarenrae.

Aleksandr Kovalenko: Born in Cheliav, he made his way to Ustlav where he met and fell in love with Rhianna Ceinwen. He would later travel to Geb where he was embraced by Kemnebi. He is a Blood Lord.

Alkenstar: A city in the Mana Waste, founded by and named after a refugee from Nex. It is home to many forges and other heavy industry.

Aluum: A type of golem created by the Pactmasters of Katapesh, powered by the souls of slaves.

Andoran: A fledgling democratic state on the northeast corner of the Inner Sea. It is considered a revolutionary country due to its free-market ideology and military abolitionist philosophy.

Apollyon: The horseman of pestilence.

Araminta, a Carnival of Death: Once a Varisian (and a changeling, not wholly human) who traveled as part of a caravan, she was a harrower, a type fortune teller that uses specially designed cards with symbolic meanings. She was killed by Lilith and raised as a zombie lord. She is a Blood Lord.

Arazni, Queen: Once a herald of Aroden, she was ripped from the afterlife and forced into undeath by Geb. She became his queen and is the nominal leader of Geb.

Arcanamirium: One of the most powerful institutions of magic in the Inner Sea region. It was founded by the Arclords and is in the Wise Quarter in Absalom.

Arclords: This group of spellcasters trace their lineage to the household servants of Nex and claim they represent his true beliefs and intentions. However, they stood apart from Nexian politics until one of their own gained a powerful seat on the Council of Three and Nine.

Arlantia: A dryad and resident of the Southern Fangwood in Nirmathas. She was corrupted by Cyth-V'sug.

Aroden: A powerful wizard who raised the *Starstone* and became a living god. Despite his divinity he died in the year 4606, one hundred and five years previous to current events.

Arodus: The eighth month of the calendar year, a summer month, named after Aroden.

Aroggus: A kyton demagogue, he led the kytons out of Hell and made the Abbey of Nerves to hide them from their foes.

Ashoka: A member of the Whispering Way, a lich, and a Blood Lord.

Asmodeus: The ruler of Hell and the god of contracts, pride, slavery, and tyranny.

Aspenthar: The second largest city in Thuvia, ruled by Prince Zinlo.

Astor Bizet: High Priest of the temple to Pharasma in Quantum.

Avistan: A continent on Golarion. Avistan is divided from Garund, which is to the south, by the Inner Sea.

Axan Woods: A forest in central Geb.

Axanir (River): A river that flows from the Shattered Range Mountains to discharge in the Obari Ocean just north of Mechitar.

Azlant: A continental empire whose collapse led to the Age of Darkness.

Azlanti: The people of the Azlant Empire, now extinct.

Bandeshar: A sprawling mansion in Quantum, home to the Council of Three and Nine.

Barrier Wall (Mountains): A long, east-west mountain range in northern Garund. South of the range is the Mwangi Expanse. North of the range is Rahadoun, Thuvia, and Osirion.

Basimah Pareja: Daughter of Castelli Pareja.

Baya-Iza: A drow and native of Zirnakaynin. She is now a resident of Mechitar and a Blood Lord.

Bhavya: A catfolk who is also a merchant in Mechitar. He runs a pawn shop with his business partner, Xylia.

Birth of Light and Truth, The: The holy book of Sarenrae.

Blackmarrow Altar: A powerful artifact made of black skulls which can create a set amount of undead every day.

Blood Lords: Part of the ruling elite of Geb, along with Queen Arazni and Chancellor Kemnebi. There are sixty Blood Lords, only nine of which are mortal, the rest being undead.

Bonewall: A massive—and animate—wall of bones created by Geb to protect the city of Yled.

Borume: The Master Alchemist of Oenopion and one of the nine of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Brevoy: A nation in the northeastern corner of the Inner Sea region, bordered in the north by the Lake of Mists and Veils. Lilith is a native of Brevoy.

Calikang: A blue-skinned, six-armed giant used by Nex in his war against Geb. They now roam the Mana Waste in a futile attempt to right the long-ago wrongs of Nex and Geb by restoring the aberrant magic of the land to its natural state.

Casmaron: A continent of Golarion which lies to the east of Garund.

Cassius Allius: A member of the Whispering Way, a lich, and a Blood Lord. He is also a ratfolk who achieved lichdom not through necromancy but through alchemy, with a touch of necromancy.

Castelli Pareja, Master: A member of the Nexian intelligence service whose chief area of concern is Geb. He is also a spellcaster and crafter of magic items.

Catfolk: A feline humanoid race.

Cathedral of Epiphenomena: A church devoted to Urgathoa, located in Mechitar, Geb.

Cayden Cailean: The god of bravery, ale, freedom, and wine. He was once mortal and became a god through the *Test of the Starstone*.

Changeling: A race of humanoids with hag blood in their ancestry. Their eyes are different colors and, depending on the type of hag, they have other defining characteristics.

Charon: The horseman of death.

Cheliox: A powerful nation devoted to the worship of Asmodeus.

Chevonde Garron, Marquis: Born in Galt, his family, like that of Narcisse's, was wiped out in the revolution. However, by this time Chevonde was already a vampire residing in Katapesh. He is Kemnebi's grandchild. His sire was Leah Ben-Reuven. He is a Blood Lord, the only Blood Lord allowed to reside outside of Geb.

Cinerarium: A pyramid constructed by Geb in Mechitar. It is home to Queen Arazni and houses both Chancellor Kemnebi's offices and the meeting hall for the Blood Lords.

Council of Three and Nine: Nex's rulers—the Three (Iranex of the Orb, Elder Architect Oblosk, Agrellus Kisk) and the Nine (Borume, Dunn Palovar, Master Phade, Gen Hendrikan, Elemion, Astor Bizet, Rixende Orth, Fero Zetterling, and Pyree).

Cruciform Cathedral: A cathedral devoted to Iomedae in Nerosyan, Mendev.

Cyth-V'Sug: The demon lord of disease, fungus, and parasites.

Dagillus: An instructor at the Ebon Mausoleum and member of the Whispering Way. Not yet a lich but on the path to becoming one, led to that destination by Eratosthenes. Despite his association with the Whispering Way and his powerful allies, Dagillus is not a Blood Lord.

Darklands: A vast series of tunnels and caverns beneath the surface of Golarion.

Daughter of Urgathoa: A rare type of undead created by Urgathoa to reward her faithful.

Deathsnatcher: A type of monstrous humanoid that can create and command undead.

Deskari: The demon lord of chasms, infestations, and locust.

Desna: The goddess of dreams, luck, stars, and travelers.

Destiny, The: A pirate ship once captained by Ahrhune ag-Hashid. It was destroyed by a div.

Div: A relative of the genie. An evil spirit.

Dread Wraith: A large and more powerful wraith.

Drow: An offshoot of the surface-dwelling elven race that now resides in the Darklands. Unlike their cousins, drow are almost universally evil.

Dryad: A type of fey that protects nature.

Dunn Palovar: The Chief Fleshforger of Ecanus (he crafts golems) and one of the nine of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Dwarf: One of the races in Golarion, stout, often surly, and tradition-bound. Dwarves primarily live in mountain strongholds. They are known for their love of stone and metal work.

Earthfall: An event in which the *Starstone* fell to the surface of Golarion, creating the Inner Sea.

Ebon Mausoleum: A school of necromancy located in Mechitar, Geb.

Ecanus: The second largest city in Nex, known for the Fleshforges.

Ecorche: A type of undead giant without flesh. It flays its victims and temporarily wears their flesh.

Elana de Oliveira: A native of Nex. She is a student at the Ebon Mausoleum and assistant and companion to Saskia Kalff.

Elemion (Individual): A mutant from the Mana Waste. He is a tripartite being. He is a member of the nine of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Elemion (River): A river that flows from the Brazen Peaks to discharge into the Obari Ocean just north of Quantium.

Elf: A long-lived and noble species of humanoid, adept at magic.

Empty Threshold, The: A temple to Zon-Kuthon in Graydirge, Geb.

Encarthan, Lake: A lake in central Avistan.

Erastil: The god of family, farming, hunting, and trade.

Erastus: The seventh month of the calendar year, a summer month, named after Erastil.

Eratosthenes: An elven lich from Kyonin. He is a Blood Lord and the leader of the Whispering Way in Geb.

Fangwood: The Southern Fangwood is the largest forest in Nirmathas. The Northern Fangwood is in Lastwall. The Fangwood is vital to Nirmathas's economic, military, and cultural survival.

Fero Zetterling: An agent of Nex's powerful Merchant's League and one of the nine of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Fetchling: A semi-derogatory nickname for the kayal race.

Fext: A type of humanoid undead born of battle and death. It is exceptionally hard to kill and can only be wounded by obsidian. It "lives" for war.

Final Blade: An artifact used in executing the revolution's enemies in Galt.

Fleshforges: A complex of magical workshops in Ecanus which are used to create golems and other unnatural beings.

Galfrey, Queen: The ruler of Mendev.

Galt: A nation enduring a bloody terror, a revolution gone wrong. Both Chevonde and Narcisse are refugees from this failed state.

Garund: A continent on Golarion. Garund is divided from Avistan, which is to the north, by the Inner Sea.

Garundi: A dark-skinned, proud yet friendly human race found in Absalom, Geb, Katapesh, Nex, Osirion, Rahadoum, Thuvia and elsewhere.

Geb (Individual): One of Golarion's most powerful necromancers. Born in Osirion and a founding member of the death cult that arose amongst the Pharaoh's royal embalmers. Geb was exiled from his homeland and went on to found his own nation. He is the mortal enemy of Nex. When Nex disappeared into his Refuge, Geb committed ritual suicide. However, he was cursed to return to Golarion as a ghost.

Geb (Nation): The nation founded by Geb, ruled by undead.

Geb's Rest: A remote location near Geb's northern border. Geb waits here, for what and why, only he knows.

Gen Hendrikian: A nagaji, cleric of Abraxas, and Chief Riddler (equivalent to High priest) of the Scrivenbough.

Ghoran: A plant-based humanoid that reproduces via a seed grown in the abdomen.

Ghoul: An intelligent type of humanoid undead that consumes the flesh of corpses.

Giant, Tomb: A race of giants concerned with death and the undead.

Gnoll: A hyena-like humanoid, intelligent yet feral.

Gnome: A humanoid race of short stature, descended from fey.

Golarion: The third planet from the sun, home to many forms of life. The Inner Sea region resides on Golarion.

Gorum: The god of battle, strength, and weapons.

Gozran: The fourth month of the calendar year, a spring month, named after Gozreh.

Gozreh: The god of nature, the sea, and weather.

Grave Knight: A type of undead bound to its armor.

Graydirge: A town in central Geb, just northwest of the Axan Wood.

Groetus: The god of empty places, oblivion, and ruins.

Hag: A humanoid female, usually hideous in appearance but not always, which can command powerful magics. Hags are loners and evil but they occasionally gather to cast potent spells.

Half-Elf: A mixed race of human and elven origins.

Hell: A deep, multi-layered pit in the outer planes, ruled by Asmodeus and his archdevils.

Hent-er-Neheh: The daughter of Nakht-Neb-Tep-Nefer and Geb's aunt and initial instructor in magic and necromancy. She was mummified by her father and is a mummy lord. She was one of the founding members of the death cult in ancient Osirion. She is a Blood Lord.

High Isgerian: An architectural style modeled after the architecture of Hell.

Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Four god-like beings who are the instruments of death and destruction. They reside in Abaddon. They are: Apollyon, Charon, Szuriel, and Trelmarixian.

Ilyx: A svirfneblin solo adventurer who uses firearms.

Inner Sea (Region): A collection of nations that surround the Inner Sea and occupy the northern half of Garund and western half of Avistan.

Invisible Stalker: A creature native to the Plane of Air. It is comprised of air and is impossible to see and difficult to injure.

Iomadae: The goddess of honor, justice, rulership, and valor.

Iranex of the Orb: A witch and member of the three of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Irori: The god of history, knowledge, and self-perfection. He was once mortal and became a god through self-perfection.

Isgar: A nation beholden to Cheliaz, its neighbor to the west.

Isle of Kortos: An island in the Inner Sea, home to Absalom the nation and Absalom the city.

Iztahuatzin: A deathsnatcher that lives in the foothills of the Shattered Range Mountains in western Geb.

Jalmeray: An island nation off the coast of Nex in the Obari Ocean.

Jasmine, the Dead Bride: A zombie lord and Blood Lord of Geb. She died on her wedding day and still wears her blood-stained and tattered bridal dress, thus her name.

Kaltessa, Lady: A noble woman who lives in Isger. She is the high priestess of the archdevil Mammon in the Inner Sea region.

Katapesh: A nation, the northern neighbor of Nex. Also, the capital of this nation.

Kayal: A humanoid race from the Shadow Plane.

Keleshite: A people of the desert, arrogant yet able. They are a human race found in Katapesh, Nex, Osirion, Qadira, Taldor and elsewhere.

Kemnebi: The Chancellor of Geb. He was once a student of Geb's. He descends from an advisor to the Pharaoh and studied under Geb. He is a vampire and the leader of the Blood Lords.

Khamati: Cousin to Geb, nephew to Hent-er-Neheh. He is a mummy lord, cleric of a god long forgotten, and a Blood Lord.

Kharswam: The ruler of Jalmeray.

Khemet, Ruby Prince: The ruler of Osirion.

Khufnu: A distant relative of Geb's. He is a mummy lord, a worshipper of Shax, and a Blood Lord.

Kimberly Silent Eyes: A Vishkanyas assassin who killed her employer (a former Blood Lord) and took his place.

Kyonin: A nation of elves that was once abandoned by them, although they have now returned.

Kyton: A humanoid race given to extreme body modifications. They were the original inhabitants of Hell but were betrayed and have removed to the Shadow Plane.

Lamashan: The tenth month of the calendar year, a fall month, named after Lamashtu.

Lamashtu: The goddess of madness, monsters, and nightmares.

Land of the Linnorm Kings: A nation in the northwest of the Inner Sea region. It derives its name from a dragon-like creature called a linnorm that inhabits the frozen plains and mountains of that region.

Latitia, the Diseased: One of the highest ranking priests to Urgathoa in Geb. She was changed from a human into a Daughter of Urgathoa. She is a Blood Lord.

Leah Ben-Reuven: One of Kemnebi's children (a mortal he embraced a.k.a turned into a vampire). She is Chevonde Garron's sire. She was killed by Kemnebi.

Lich: A powerful type of undead. Becoming a lich is a long, arduous process. Most fail.

Lilith: A lich and advisor to Queen Arazni. She is called "Mother" by Arazni and many of those who surround the Queen. Although a lich and a Blood Lord, she is not associated with the Whispering Way.

Llorona: A type of undead that drowns its victims in rivers. Llorona are created from mothers who drown their own children.

Mammon: The archdevil of avarice, watchfulness, and wealth. He rules the third layer of Hell.

Mana Waste: A region between Geb and Nex. This was the battleground for the war between those two god-like wizards. The land is filled with aberrant magic and magic dead zones. The eastern half is largely unstable and dangerous, home to roving tribes of

mutants. The western half is more stable. Alkenstar, Dongun Hold, and Martel are all in the west. The Grand Duchy of Alkenstar is nominally under the control of Nex, although it has a great deal of independence.

Masgava: A lich, member of the Whispering Way, and a Blood Lord.

Material Plane: The known universe and all that resides within.

Mauxi: A people native to the Mwangi Expanse, although descended from the Osirioni people.

Mechitar: The capital of Geb.

Mendev: A nation on the western shore of the Lake of Mists and Veils, occupied with a crusade into the World Wound.

Mohrg: A type of undead that resembles a skeleton but retains its digestive tract, which it uses to consume the living, for which it has a great hunger.

Moir the Disowned: A refugee from Galt. A human wizard and Blood Lord. She was disowned by her family, prior to the revolution, due to her study of necromancy.

Molthune: A nation run by a military oligarchy. It is the northwestern neighbor of Isgar.

Mummy: Mummification was originally a religious ritual meant to prepare the body for the afterlife. This ritual has been corrupted to turn the corpse into a type of undead.

Mutant: The aberrant magic of the Mana Waste has mutated the region's inhabitants. Many are born with debilitating defects, although some have strange and even useful "powers."

Mwangi Expanse: A dense jungle nation surrounded on three sides by mountain chains.

Naga: An intelligent monster with a serpentine body and a humanoid head.

Nagaji: A race said to be descended from or created by nagas. These serpentine humanoids have lidless eyes and are not widely trusted by other races.

Nah-le-tah: A tomb giant, cleric of Urgathoa, and Blood Lord.

Nakht-Neb-Tep-Nefer: The great uncle of Geb and one of the original founders of an ancient death cult in Osirion. He is a mummy lord and a Blood Lord.

Narcisse, the former Duke Between the Rivers: A refugee from Galt who conspired to murder his own family and steal their wealth. He is a cleric of Urgathoa and Blood Lord.

Neacal Aodhan: A lich, member of the Whispering Way, and a Blood Lord.

Nemret Noktoria: An ancient necropolis beneath the sands of Osirion.

Nethys: The god of magic. He is known to have both a good/protective side and an evil/destructive side.

Nex (Individual): One of the most powerful wizards ever to exist on Golarion. He founded the nation of Nex. He fought Geb to a standstill. He finally left Golarion, disappearing into the Refuge of Nex. He has not been seen since.

Nex (Nation): The nation created by Nex. It has a high density of spellcasters.

Nirmathas: A war-torn nation comprised of a distinctly independent people.

Noreen Paisely: A llorona and a Blood Lord.

Obari (Ocean): The ocean that separates Garund and Casmaron.

Oblosk, Elder Architect: A pech and one of the three of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex. Of all the council members, only Oblosk knew Nex personally.

Oenopion: The third largest city in Nex and home to both a large ooze colony and a great many alchemist.

Ólchobar Yevan: A lich, member of the Whispering Way, and a Blood Lord.

Oppara: The capital of Taldor.

Osirion: One of the oldest continually inhabited regions in the Inner Sea. The birthplace of Geb.

Pactmasters: The secretive ruling elites of Katapesh.

Pashow: A town in south central Thuvia, near the Barrier Wall Mountains.

Pech: A type of humanoid fey that lives underground. The pech are known for their shyness and their stonework.

Phade, Master: An invisible stalker and member of the nine of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Pharasma: The goddess of birth, death, fate, and prophecy. It is Pharasma who judges the souls of the dead.

Pharast: The third month of the calendar year, a spring month, named after Pharasma.

Pyree: A holy hermit and worshipper of Iroiri. He is one of the nine of the Council of Three and Nine, the rulers of Nex.

Qadira: A nation on the western coast of Casmaron. It is on the eastern shore of the Obari Ocean, across from Osirion.

Quantium: The capital of Nex.

Ragathiel: The Empyrean Lord of chivalry, duty, and vengeance.

Ratfolk: A humanoid race of bipedal rats.

Ravener: A type of undead dragon.

Refuge of Nex: A crystalline tower erected by Nex that leads to a different dimension. After Geb attacked Quantium with a killing fog Nex entered the tower and has not been seen or heard from since.

Rhianna Ceinwen: A vampire, the child of Aleksandr Kovalenko, who was once her lover and a Blood Lord. She sired Trevedic Faull after being asked to do so by Aleksandr.

Rixende Orth: High Priest of Nethys in Nex.

Rova: The ninth month of the calendar year, a fall month, named after Rovagug.

Rovagug: The god of destruction, disaster, and wrath.

Sands, The: The first pirate vessel that Ahrhune ag-Hashid sailed on as a youth.

Sarenith: The sixth month of the calendar year, a summer month, named after Sarenrae.

Sarenrae: The goddess of healing, honesty, redemption, and the sun.

Sarkosis: A nation that was destroyed by the arrival of the World Wound.

Saskia Kalff: A native of Taldor who was later orphaned in Qadira and transported to Katapesh to be sold as a slave. She was purchased by Chevonde Garron

who molded her into a courtesan and spy. It was Chevonde's intention to place her close to Queen Arazni but Lilith discovered his plot and took Saskia as a student. She is a Blood Lord and the mentor to Elana de Oliveira.

Scrivenbough: The temple to Abraxas in Quantum.

Sellen (River): An east-west river that runs along the northern border of both Galt and Kyonin.

Serving Your Hunger: The holy book of Urgathoa.

Shadow (Undead): A simple-minded type of incorporeal undead that is little more than its name implies.

Shadow Plane: A plane of existence that darkly mirrors the Material Plane.

Shattered Range (Mountains): A long, north-south mountain range in eastern Garund. West of the range in the Mwangi Expanse. East of the range is Katapesh, Nex, the Mana Waste, and Geb.

Shax: The demon lord of envy, lies, and violent or sadistic murder.

She-mah-hon: A kyton and emissary of Aroggus. She is a Blood Lord.

Shoanti: A war-like but proud people who inhabit Belkzen, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Varisa and elsewhere.

Skoan-Quah (Skull Clan): One of the clans of the Shoanti people. They have a fascination with death.

Southern Fangwood: See fangwood.

Sovyrian: Little is known about the land to which the elves escaped from Kyonin before Earthfall.

Sovyrian Stone: The gate through which the elves of Kyonin escaped before Earthfall.

Spellscar (Desert): A desert on the eastern side of the Mana Waste. It is known for violent and unpredictable weather and other magic-fueled geological features and hazards.

Starstone: An artifact that fell to the surface of Golarion (much like a meteor), creating the Inner Sea and initiating the Age of Darkness. It was later brought to the surface by Aroden. It has the power to grant divinity to those who past its test, few do.

Starstone, Test of: Anyone may attempt the *Test of the Starstone*. Anyone who passes the test is granted divinity. Those who fail die. Each test is unique to the individual who takes it. It is unknown who created the *Starstone*, why, or how it came to fall on Golarion.

Stavian, Grand Prince: The ruler of Taldor.

Sthaga: Sthaga was once a human cleric of Urgathoa but has since become a dread wraith. He is the High Priest of the Church of Epiphenomena in Mechitar, Geb.

Stilgar: A dwarven wizard and owner of Stilgar's Scrollworks.

Stilgar's Scrollworks: A business that creates scrolls to order and scrolls for sale to the general public. It is located in Oenopion, Nex.

Stormflood (River): A river in southeastern Galt.

Styx (River): A supernatural river that flows through Abaddon and the Abyss. The waters of the Styx can erase a person's memory.

Sulah, Bones of Wood: A ghoran who was corrupted and is now a unique type of undead. She is a Blood Lord.

Svirfneblin: A type of ebony skinned gnome that lives underground.

Szuriel: The horseman of war.

Taldor: An imperialistic nation in the southeast corner of Avistan.

Tanglebriar: During the period when the elves had abandoned Kyonin a demon named Treerazer was exiled to the southern forest of that nation. His presence has corrupted the forest, earning it its current name. The elves have so far been unable to dislodge him.

Tar-Baphon: A powerful lich and tyrant who was imprisoned.

Thuvia: A desert nation in northern Garund.

Tian: One of the natives of Tian Xia.

Tian Xia: A continent on Golarion which is difficult to reach from the Inner Sea.

Tiefling: A humanoid with demonic blood somewhere in his or her lineage, revealed by physical markers such as wings, horns, barbed tails and so forth.

Treerazer: A powerful demon that inhabits the Tanglebriar in southern Kyonin.

Trelmarixian: The horseman of famine.

Trevedic Faull: A kayal who came with his clan group from the Shadow Plane to Taldor. He later went to Geb to study at the Ebon Mausoleum, at which he now teaches. He met Aleksandr Kovolenko and the two became friends. He was embraced and made a vampire by Rhianna Ceinwen. He is a member of the Whispering Way, a worshipper of Nethys, a necromancer and a Blood Lord.

Twilight Unicorns: A group of unicorns residing in the Axan Wood. They are unlike unicorns found elsewhere in that they are not inherently good and they have the ability to prophecy; although, few have been able to locate them in order to make use of their gifts.

Tykylainen: A ravener, who bargained with Geb for the boon of undeath.

Ulfen: A tall, blonde haired, pale skinned race of humans found in Irrisen, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Varisa, and elsewhere.

Uoser: The apprentice and personal assistant of Hent-er-Neheh. He is a mummy lord and a Blood Lord.

Urgathoa: The goddess of disease, gluttony, and undeath.

Ustalav: A cursed land on the north shore of Lake Encarthan. It is home to many undead.

Vampire: A type of undead that both survives on and draws power from the blood of the living.

Vennonius: A ghoul and one of the diplomats to Geb from Nemret Noktoria.

Viratus: A ghoul and the chief diplomat to Geb from Nemret Noktoria.

Vishkanyas: A somewhat serpentine humanoid race. They are known for their ability to produce poison which they often coat their weapons with using their long, forked tongues.

Vocorix: A ghoul and one of the diplomats to Geb from Nemret Noktoria.

Voradni Voon: A warlord who sieged Absalom twenty two years after Aroden had created it. He failed.

Wamukota: A Zenj and a native of the Mwangi Expanse. He is one of Kemnebi's blood thralls and his most loyal and trusted retainer.

Well of Lies: A dangerous dungeon complex in southwest Nex. Nex himself explored the dungeon and ordered it sealed.

Werewolf: A lycanthrope, a cursed humanoid that changes shape into a wolf and a wolf-man hybrid.

Whispering Way: A secret cult dedicated to undeath, especially the achievement of lichdom.

Whisperwood: A large forest in eastern Cheliox.

World Wound, The: Once a nation known as Sarkosis, now a blasted region surrounding a rift that connects Golarion to the Abyss.

Wraith: A type of incorporeal undead that drains the life force from its victims.

Xylia: A gnome, native of Nex, who now runs a pawn business in Mechitar with her catfolk business partner, Bhavya.

Zenj: One of four distinct peoples of the Mwangi Expanse. They are the most numerous. They inhabit the central area of the expanse.

Zinlo, Prince: The ruler of Aspenthar in Thuvia.

Zirnakaynin: The largest drow city in the Inner Sea region. It is located in the Darklands.

Zon-Kuthon: The god of darkness, envy, loss, and pain.



H. Rad Bethlen has been compared to Isak Dinesen (*Seven Gothic Tales*) and Fritz Leiber (*Swords and Deviltry*). He is known for his work in the fantasy and horror genres as well as his non-fiction. He has been published in Europe and America.

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