

Setting Details

History

The world was created many ages ago. The details of the creation vary by culture — perhaps one of the various creation stories is true, or none of them are, or all of them are. Who can say? What everyone agrees on is that primeval Things were imprisoned beneath the earth in a time before history, and they stir in their uneasy slumber as they dream of destruction and chaos.

The Makers were races of giants who established mighty civilizations many centuries ago. Humans, fae, and many other creatures served them. (Some believe that the Makers created all these servants, including humans and fae.) The noteworthy clans of Makers were:

- The Stone Lords, masters of shaping matter
- The Tempest Lords, masters of travel and weather
- The Forge Lords, fiery masters of craftworks and the underground
- The Rime Lords, ascetic masters of ice and mountains
- The Green Lords, who shaped and ruled Nature itself

At some point, the Makers' civilization collapsed. Some say the Makers' servants rebelled, or the Things Below escaped and fought them, or that they fought amongst each other. Who can say? But they left the ruins of their mighty constructions all over the world, as well as many strange and magical artifacts which people nowadays can neither understand nor replicate. The lightning-attracting obelisk that Stonetop is built around is almost certainly a relic of the Stone Lords or Tempest Lords, its original purpose long forgotten.

Animism

The realm of the spirits bleeds over into the real world. Everything has a spirit — trees, rocks, animals, places, everything — and these spirits can often be propitiated and bargained with.

Any water deep enough that you cannot see the bottom is very dangerous. Everyone knows this and will not willingly enter deep rivers or lakes, nor travel by water. When Stonetop villagers go down to the Stream to do laundry or bathe, they never go alone. The spirits of deep water are no friends to humans, let alone the monsters that may lurk beneath the water's surface.

Religion

Four main gods are worshipped by the people of Stonetop

- Tor the Rain-Maker, god of weather and storms, patron of warriors and hunters
- Aratis the Lawkeeper, goddess of civilization, order, and justice
- Helio the Daybringer, god of the sun, protection, hope, and mercy
- Danu the Great Mother, goddess of fertility, plants, and animals

Tor is particularly venerated in Stonetop, thanks to his association with lightning and storms, but all four gods are respected and invoked whenever people need aid in each god's specific area of authority. Other cultures may have other gods, but these four are the main ones in this region.

When you die, the Lady of Crows guides your spirit as it passes through the Last Door. Nobody is certain about what lies beyond the Door, or the nature of the Lady. Spirits of the dead who don't pass through the Door might become ghosts or revenants, unquiet dead who lament their fate or pursue some goal that was left unfinished in life. People speak in whispers of the Pale Hunter, some manner of powerful spirit or god who hunts the undead and similar aberrations of nature.

The Region

Stonetop: A small village of around 300 people on a bluff at the edge of the Great Forest. The storm-calling Stone, the Old Wall which surrounds it, and the underground vault beneath it are remnants of the Makers, but these days the Old Wall is a convenient quarry for building stones and the vault is the town's cistern for water storage. Farming, hunting, and herding sheep and goats are the main occupations. The villagers trade food, textiles, and whiskey with the other settlements in the region.

Gordin's Delve: A wretched hive built around old Forge Lord mines. Capitalist exploitation of the miners' labour. Very few people are from here; they just end up here when they have nowhere else to go.

Marshedge: A mercantile town ruled by old, powerful families which raises the question "What's the difference between law enforcement and organized crime?"

The Steplands: A rugged plateau inhabited by bands of nomadic Hillfolk. Some bands are peaceable traders; others are fierce bandits.

Barrier Pass: The northern mountains are inhabited by the strange descendants of the Rime Lords' servants. Odd monks and unfamiliar spirits inhabit a land of year-round ice and snow.

The Great Forest: The Forest Folk took over the stewardship of this massive wood after the Green Lords fell. Now that the Forest Folk seem to have disappeared, malicious fae and all manner of monsters are multiplying there. The villagers of Stonetop have a long-standing compact with the Forest Folk to never fell a living tree in the Great Forest, but we'll see how long that treaty survives after the Forest Folk's disappearance.

