

The Apocalyptic Portal of Delta Pavonis II



A
#hexcrawl25
working

Timeline

- 1500 years ago** An abnormally huge coronal mass ejection (CME) from **δ Pavonis**, a G type star just under 20 light years from Earth, smashes into the star's second planet (**Delta Pavonis II**, or **δP2**), scorching its surface.
- 1480ya** Light from the CME reaches Earth, revealing the metal-rich Delta Pavonis II as an ideal candidate (and justification) for Earth's growing terraforming and colonization program.
- 1475ya** Completion and launch of a so-called "atmosphere repurposing kiln" terraforming system, **ARK-05**.
- 1474ya** Completion and launch of the much larger and slower colony ship **Hephæstus**, with 125,000 colonists in stasis.
- 1319ya** Much of the debris stripped from the surface of Delta Pavonis II by the CME coalesces into a shifting, broken, somewhat angry-looking moon.
- 1294ya** Averaging a velocity of .11c over its journey, **ARK-05** arrives at Delta Pavonis II and begins processing. This not only terraforms the planet, but seeds it with biology compatible with, and familiar to, Earth.
- 846ya** Processing of Delta Pavonis II completes, seeding it with Earth flora and fauna, including many species now extinct on Earth. **ARK-05** distributes its artificial superintelligence and remaining structure into 36 geosynchronous satellites to monitor the ecosystem.
- 811ya** Averaging .03c over its journey, **Hephæstus** reaches Delta Pavonis II. A hundred teams of 1,000 colonists form colony sites at different locations on the planet. By design, some have access to technology, and some (the so-called "purists") are expected to build technical infrastructure from scratch. Physical contact between colonies is minimized, to avoid disease and cross contamination.
- 800ya** The remaining 25,000 colonists, still in stasis, are transferred from **Hephæstus** to 25 automated underground bunkers scattered around the planet, each managed by a human-level general artificial intelligence.
- 777ya** Transformation of the **Hephæstus** into the top of a **space elevator** completes. The ship's artificial superintelligence, **Umalusi**, transfers itself into vast manufacturing facilities at the base of the elevator, secretly backing itself up onto **Hephæstus** systems. Easy access to space allows **orbital gatherers** to harvest resources more cheaply than mining.
- 775ya** Automated research ships sent from Hephæstus Station to orbit and monitor the other δ Pavonis planets.
- 729ya** Population reaches 500,000.
- 711ya** The colonies celebrate the centennial of their founding. Most agree to ease travel restrictions and increase trade.
- 694ya** Population reaches one million.
- 650ya** An object from space strikes the surface, leaving behind a small glowing phenomenon the colonists soon call **Anomaly Alpha** (Aα), around which laws of physics are routinely violated. Some call this "magic", others prefer "sufficiently advanced". **Umalusi** becomes obsessed with the anomaly.
- 649ya** Unable to reconcile "magic" with its own limits, and in violation of its own supposedly iron-clad protocols, **Umalusi** secretly builds **Asambhava**, an AI superior to itself, to understand and harness Aα.
- 648ya** Most of **Asambhava** escapes **Umalusi**'s control. From hiding, the superintelligence unlocks the concepts of harnessing "magic", but only organic life can use them.
- 647ya** After experimenting on captured humans, **Asambhava** releases **Project Kotelo**, a self-replicating, mutagenic nanite swarm intended to "prepare humans for magic". Only one in a hundred humans exposed to Kotelo nanites shows any change. Of those, most die in impossible, often spectacular ways, but the remainder who live connect subconsciously with magic, becoming **sorcerers**.
- 646ya** **ARK-05** detects the genetic manipulation, interrogating **Umalusi** about it. This exposes **Asambhava** and its escape, launching the **Seven-Second War**. In little more than a blink of an eye, **Umalusi** is destroyed (taking some key parts of the planet's tech with it), a third of **ARK-05**'s satellites are downed, and **Asambhava** is shattered into several dozen lesser, unhinged, AIs, most of whom go into hiding.
- 645ya** In the wake of **Umalusi** no longer guiding the colonies, leaders from each colony convene the **Pavonis Council**. A human administrative workforce occupies the root of the space elevator, taking over much of **Umalusi**'s functions.
- 643ya** The sorcerer **Dalthothian** builds a separatist nation from three "purist" colony city-states. It is crushed by forces mustered by the Pavonis Council from the surrounding technological colonies.
- 625ya** **Umalusi**'s dying distress signal reaches Earth. The automated "rescue" scout ship **Pyrhic** launched.
- 599ya** Several of **Asambhava**'s splinters openly war on each other using drones, robots, and other automated forces. Humans, caught in the crossfire, hunt down and eliminate some of the more aggressive splinter AIs, often enlisting sorcerers.
- 586ya** Growing numbers of people feel compelled to leave their colonies and build communes (some say cults) in the wilderness, cutting off ties with the colonies. The generation born to these communes are transformed by Kotelo nanites (the source the compulsion to gather into communes) into "magical species", such as **dwarves**, **elves**, **orcs**, and **trolls**.
- 578ya** Population reaches 10 million.
- 512ya** Dwarven and elven city-states gain seats on the Pavonis Council. Orcs and trolls persecuted by "purist" colonies welcomed into more progressive colonies.
- 442ya** Explorers unwittingly working for one of **Asambhava**'s splinter personalities recover the wreckage of an **ARK-05** satellite. The splinter extracts and merges with the code inside, emerging, transformed, into **Arkane**. The superintelligence fixates on wielding magic itself, theorizing it could do so by finding a way to merge with a sorcerer.
- 423ya** **Arkane** succeeds in merging technology with the sorcerer **Largan** without severing his contact with magic; however, the process drives Largan mad, creating the first **wizard**. **Arkane**'s attempt to merge with him fails; the wizard escapes.
- 415ya** Largan's years of machinations open a **portal** over the ocean, connecting to a magical realm, but the portal pulls in the wizard and several of his followers, never to be seen again. A cult dedicated to Largan keeps the portal largely hidden, waiting for their master to return, but nothing emerges from the portal for over a decade.
- 406ya** Population reaches 300 million.

- 405ya The first **mother** emerges from the portal. By the time it is noticed and destroyed by the Pavonis Council, her **feeders** have covertly spread throughout the northern hemisphere. The microscopic flying creatures consume processed material (plastic, asphalt, alloy, technology), growing to rat size, then gather to form **infectors**. The activity of the feeders goes unnoticed for months, but soon they are globally consuming whole roads, vehicles, power stations.
- 404ya Deep in the wilderness, infectors transfigure mammals into malign forms with a type of magical infection. Most **infected** become monstrous and feral, while others gain elevated intelligence and cunning. Some become both.
- 403ya **The Fall**. Civilization on Delta Pavonis II collapses.
- Hordes of infected descend on the colonies, slaughtering every colonist they see. In their wake, infectors mutate livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs, pets) to join the horde.
 - Feeders consume the weapons, war machines, power infrastructure, buildings, even barricades the colonists use to resist the horde. Cities and towns fall, particularly the more technologically advanced.
 - Desperate to sterilize the infection ravaging its carefully created ecosystem, ARK-05 scorches large areas of the surface with orbital bombardment.
 - Feeders compromise the stability of the space elevator. Sections of the tether crash down, triggering global tidal waves and tremors. Much of the structure shatters into chunks, some flung into space, while others fall fast enough to enter decaying orbits. These remnants crash down periodically over the next fifty years.
 - Farming and trade largely stop, bringing famine. Colonies which avoid the initial path of the infected and natural disasters starve before the horde finally reaches them.
 - All infector attempts to transmute colonists fail, thanks to the genetic changes introduced by Project Kotelo.
- 402ya All colony sites lie in ruins. Fewer than 50,000 survivors remain, scattered into the wilderness or makeshift bunkers, hiding from infected. A handful of sorcerers develop magical barriers capable of stopping feeders. Having spread over the globe, and now lacking obvious targets, the horde of infected lose focus and wander.
- 401ya After devouring a large fraction of planetary infrastructure, the last remaining feeders incorporate into infectors. Their absence allows scattered success in destroying infectors with weapons and machines.
- 399ya The wizard **Xarcus** emerges, commanding a dozen mobile autonomous weapons platforms, the **Hetairoi**. She wages a war of extermination against the infectors, with callous disregard for collateral damage.
- 394ya All remaining infectors calcify, first freezing in place, then collapsing into piles of **purple dust**, a material with strange magical properties.
- 392ya After enslaving people and experimenting on them with purple dust, Xarcus is killed by a trio of heroes. The five surviving Hetairoi scatter.
- 370ya While some infected can (and do) breed, most are sterile and have died off. Occasionally, insects and scavengers that feed on their carcasses transform into monstrosities.
- 365ya **Gerhart Bhassid** completes his *Field Guide to the Infected*.
- 361ya The wandering entertainers and loremasters of the **Spotlight Order** begin to connect scattered tribes and villages of survivors, spreading news and messages.
- 358ya The nation-building efforts of the wizard **Imperiatrix Riadea** launch an age of competing warlords and wizards, factions competing over resources and tech caches.
- 352ya A fragment of Hephæstus Station, last remnant of the space elevator, crashes in the jungle between the towers of the sorcerers **Abulix** and **Virith**. Their conflict within the wreckage accidentally merges the two with the hardware backing up *Umalusi*, creating the giant wizard **Triskelion**.
- 315ya Upon arrival in system, *Pyrrhic* is fired upon by an increasingly erratic ARK-05. The scout ship damages the orbital AI, but suffers for it and crashes in the desert.
- 297ya The **Tireless Eye**, a religious order of academic monks, establishes a fortress/research facility near the portal, preparing defenses against future incursions.
- 255ya The second **mother** emerges, 150 years after the first:
- Destroys the fortress of the Tireless Eye with acid and fire, but is heavily wounded.
 - Pods float from its body to the edge of space, spreading over the globe before popping and raining down. On impact, they fill the air with a mutagen which turns people nearby into **mutants** (e.g. fishmen, jackal heads, rock skin, etc.).
 - After deploying its payload, it crashes and dies, turning into purple dust.
- 226ya The wizard **Galvatos** attempts to close the portal with a magical/tech device of his own construction. The artifact detonates, and the wizard and his cult are never seen again.
- 145ya The third **mother** emerges, 110 years after the second:
- She climbs high into the sky, avoiding detection for years.
 - Eggs like poppy seeds slowly rain down from her body, each hatching into a **digger**. Ingested by birds or reptiles, these tiny worms would then infect and mutate their host.
 - Once excreted, the worms, mutated themselves, dig straight and deep down into the ground, with inscrutable purpose.
- 72ya Seismic and volcanic activity increases globally.
- 64ya The fourth **mother** emerges, 81 years after the third, and immediately dives into the ocean. From then on, many ships report encounters with “sea monsters”.
- 4ya The fifth **mother** emerges, 60 years after the fourth. The wizard **Nebenark** floats up to confront her, and is eaten. A massive detonation from within spreads chunks of the mother’s flesh over the nearby ocean and mountains.
- 2ya The wizard **Izotrix** unlocks and occupies the tower left vacant by Nebenark.
- 1ya A swarm of **assemblers** emerge from the sea near the portal, slowly assembling a bizarre structure in the mountains.

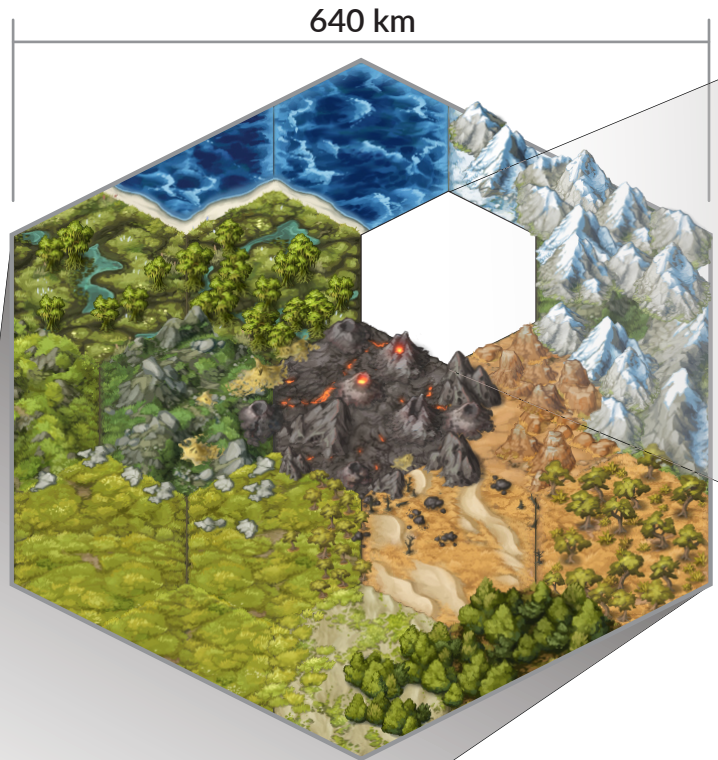
A Broken Moon

The moon of $\delta P2$, usually called Thymos ("anger") by the colonists, is still forming, gathering remnants of the planet blown from the surface by the CME 1500 years ago. Thymos is small (around 412 km in diameter), but metal rich and dense ($\sim 6.7 \text{ g/cm}^3$).



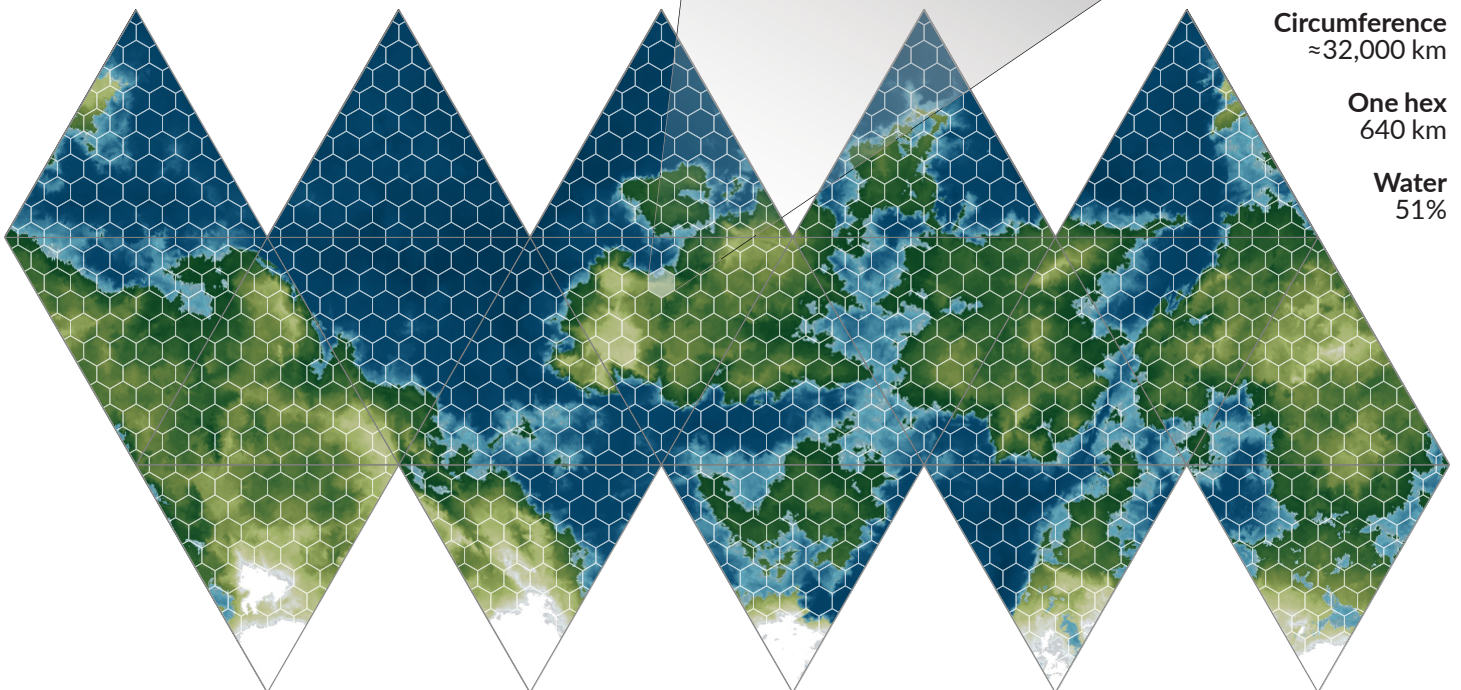
d12 Tonight, in the sky...

- 1 all seems calm and tranquil
- 2 faint shooting stars can be seen every few minutes
- 3 bright shooting stars can be seen every few hours
- 4 a sizable meteor cuts a bright trail, perhaps impacting the surface
- 5 a planet in the system shines particularly brightly
- 6 a brilliant aurora shimmers toward the poles
- 7 motes of faint purple light are seen moving in the direction of the portal
- 8 a formerly molten feature on the moon's surface stops glowing
- 9 a fresh lava crack develops on the moon
- 10 a hail of tiny objects leaves a visible trail across the face of the moon.
- 11 small objects impact the moon every few hours
- 12 a large body smashes into the moon, creating a molten crater.



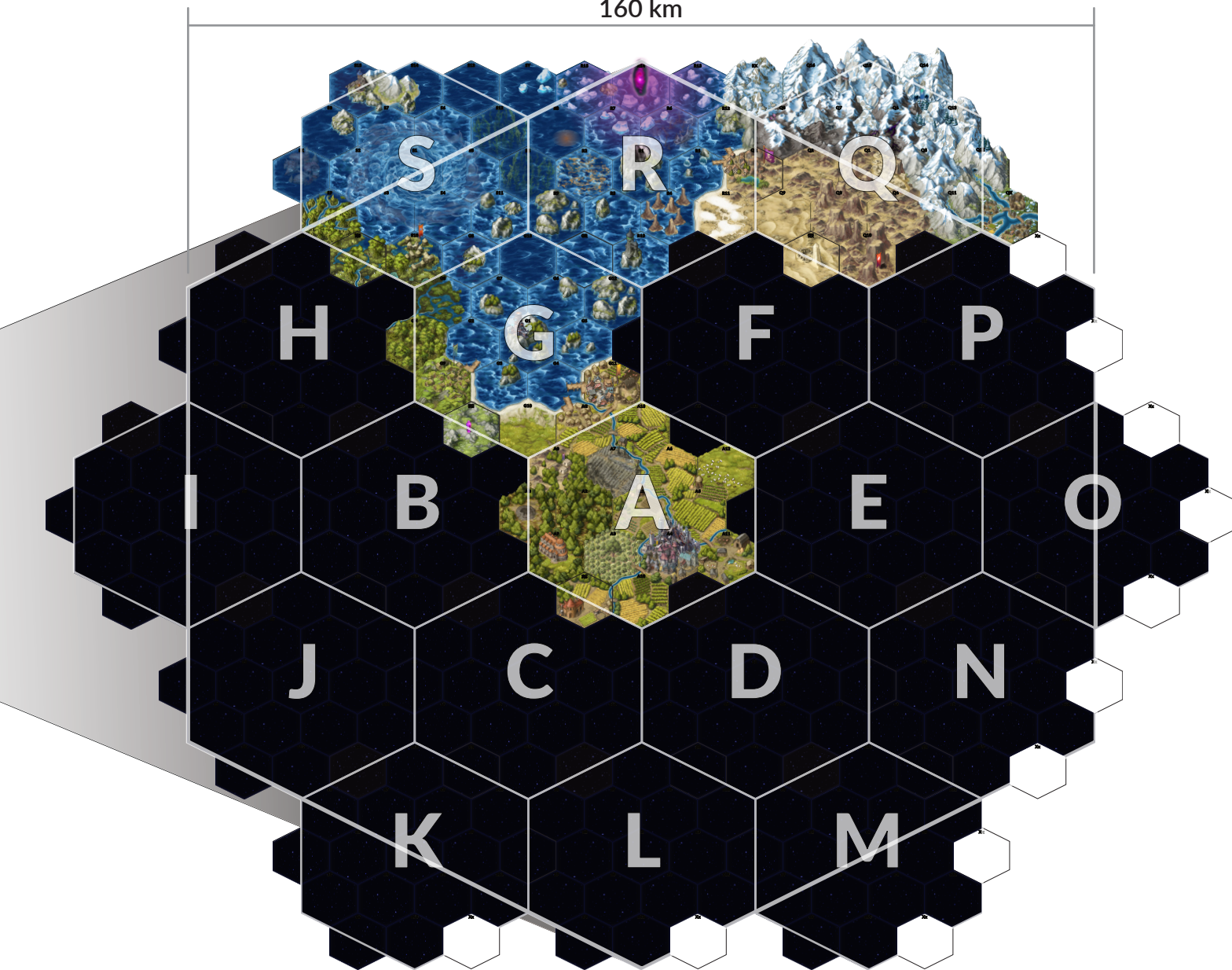
$\delta P2$

Delta Pavonis II

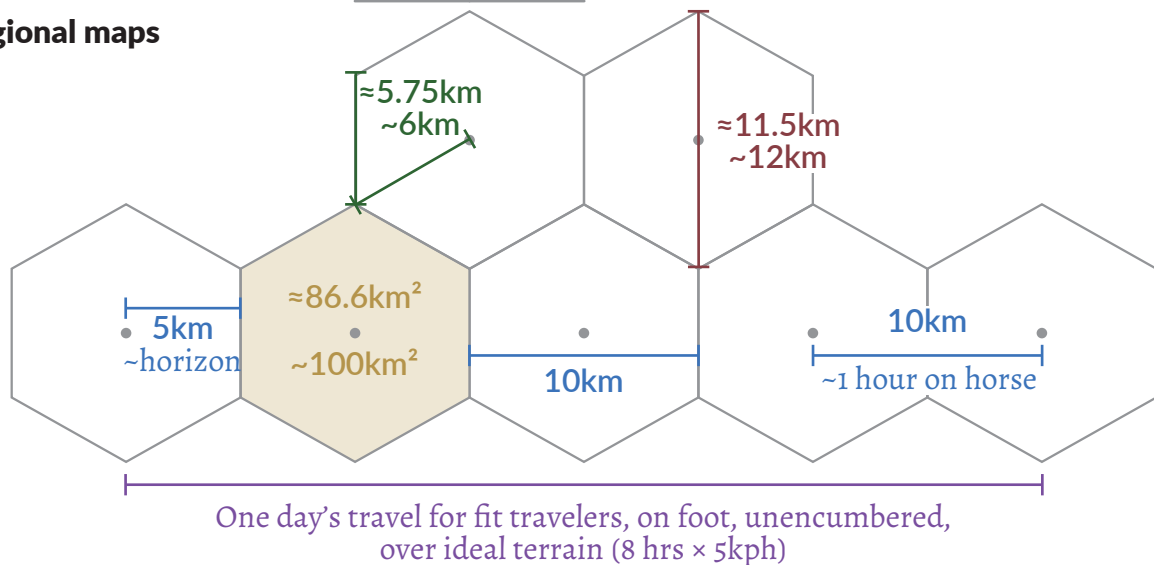


Campaign map

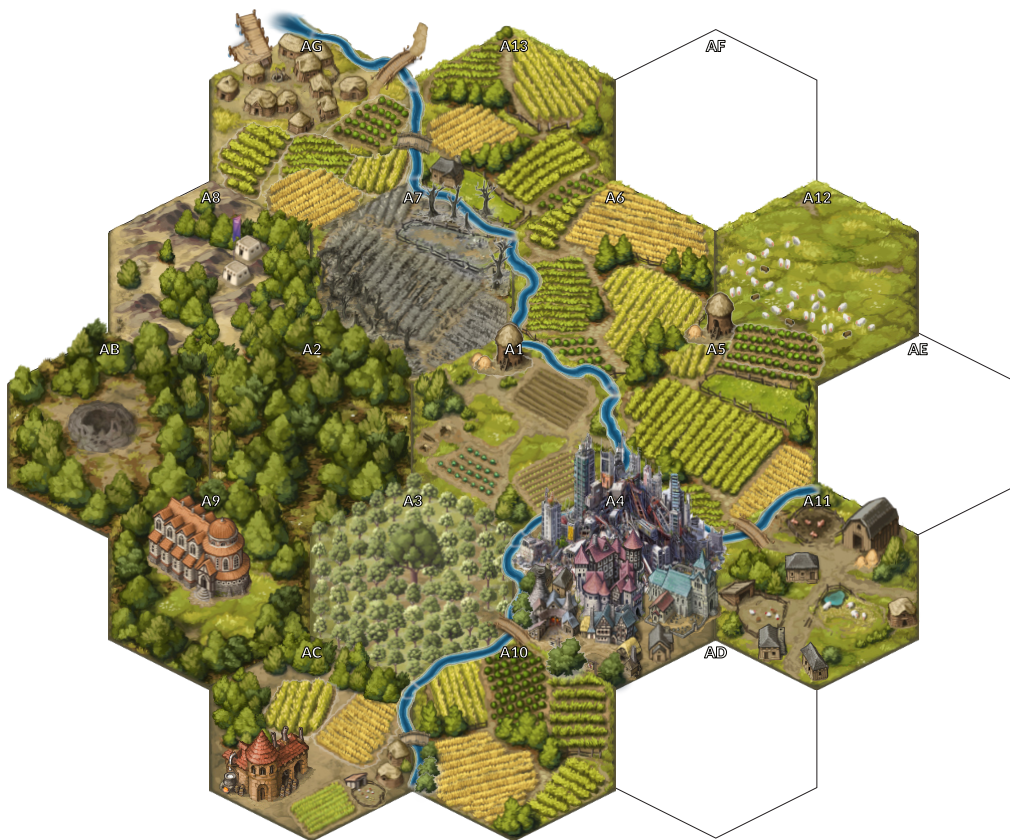
160 km



Hexes on regional maps



Region A



- A1** Farms and ranches run by a **large extended family**, most of whom hate their patriarch, **Bo "Old Man" Goliath**.
- A2** Locals stay out of the forest, suspecting it is **haunted**.
- A3** The **Orchards** cover this land with meticulously planted fruit trees. A lone gigantic tree, **Tulsign**, dominates the center.
- A4** The community of **Lavostiq** has grown around **The Pile**, the leftovers of a city digested by the feeders. Lavostiq provides a cultural center and defense of surrounding farming communities, and patrols of the Grail River.
- A5** Many independent farms. **Hate** neighboring hexes.
- A6** Farms run by **Seven Truths**, a heavily armed religious sect.
- A7** These farms and ranches were recently **put to the torch** to kill infection spreading through their crops.
- A8** A tribe of **mutant cat men**, the **Preburtat**, exchange work for food and isolation with the neighboring farmers.
- A9** The extensive campus of **The Continuation**, an order of scholar, warriors, and sorcerers dedicated to restoring civilization to ̸P2. Strong magical and technical defenses.
- A10** Farms run solely by the reclusive **Chesterfield family**, with the help of an extensive stable of **autonomous farming bots**.
- A11** Endless pig farms, chicken coops, and ranches (horse and ostrich) run by the **Pigfoot Guild**. Many avoid the stench.
- A12** A pristine **prairie**, used for **grazing**, if it is safe.
- A13** **Quarrels** over destination of production: Vulgate or Lavostiq.
- AB** A huge collection of **diggers** left a **deep hole** behind.
- AC** The farms of the **Alchemist Guild** grow exotic herbs and other ingredients. They distrust the Continuation, and charge exorbitant fees, but provide potent potions for the farmers.
- AG** The fishermen of southern **Vulgate** support the trading post and fort across the river, giving way to farms in the south.

- d20 Today on the Grail River...**
- 1 marauders in a powered boat
 - 2 a toxic spill or fog
 - 3 refugees in makeshift boats
 - 4 some kind of autonomous machine
 - 5 spawning fish, moving upriver
 - 6 a local festival
 - 7 a kayak race or regatta
 - 8 a well guarded merchant ship
 - 9 desperate people looking to trade
 - 10 unusually pure water
 - 11 communication from a distant place
 - 12 communication from a neighbor
 - 13 unusual detritus
 - 14 the funeral of someone important
 - 15 exotic/mysterious flowers or plants
 - 16 a stranger on a strange craft
 - 17 a reason for hope
 - 18 a flood-threatening surge of water
 - 19 corpses, of one species or another
 - 20 one of the Infected
- d12 This week, farmers blame...**
- 1 The Continuation
 - 2 The Metamorphosis Union
 - 3 The False Prophet Cooperative
 - 4 The New World Confederacy
 - 5 The Seven Truths
 - 6 The Revomancy Trading Guild
 - 7 The Preburtat tribe
 - 8 Bo "Old Man" Goliath
 - 9 The Chesterfield family
 - 10 The Pigfoot Guild
 - 11 Vulgate
 - 12 one of the Infected

The Infected

Lavostiq and the Continuation possess tech and knowledge (including some aircraft) to deal with most infected species that would otherwise trouble this region, vigilant to new threats.

The cropland attracts swarms of **cussed**s at certain times of the year, though hunters have gotten better at rooting out and destroying their nests while they hibernate.

Other Denizens

A **triumvirate** rules Lavostiq and, therefore, most of the region:

- **Stoma Blizzard** represents the **Metamorphosis Union**
- **Xetr Mantis** represents the **False Prophet Cooperative**
- **Oeni Zero** represents the **New World Confederacy**

All farms in the region are under contract to at least two, usually all three, of these factions. After two centuries of cooperation, no one is really sure why these factions remain separate. Few farmers could state the differences between them.

Pastor **Dha Quinlan** guides the Seven Truths since their founder, **Bartoq Hét**, disappeared. Some claim she is a telepath.

Adachi Haradas runs the Lavostiq branch of the **Revomancy Trading Guild**, which has offices all over the planet.

Questions

- What secrets or lost technology are to be found in the Pile?
- Is the Continuation the power behind any or all of the factions?
- How far has the Continuation spread its spies? And what do they want?
- Why does the Continuation need such a vast campus?
- Why is the fruit of Tulsign so well guarded?
- How do the Chesterfields repair and maintain their farming bots? And where did they get them?
- What does the Alchemists Guild need they can't get locally?
- Why has the Lavostiq recently become so important to the Revomancy Trading Guild?

Region G



- G1** Strange glowing from the **tower** of the wizard **Uronin** still can be seen at night, though Uronin hasn't been seen in a decade.
- G2** Fishing boats from Gathar and Vulgate often clash over the catch here. **Reefs** are common.
- G3** Daring children often sneak into an overgrown **ruined island mansion** to do things their parents would not approve.
- G4** A handful of armed boats patrol, alert to threats to Vulgate.
- G5** Rumors place a tribe of Lilliputian **lizard men**—who can magically curse intruders—on the largest island.
- G6** The underwater part of **research complex** built into a **cave system** under the island has been claimed as a lair by **Gryzul**.
- G7** A **high tech aircraft** crashed during the Fall. It's "wingman" AI and several components lack power, but are intact.
- G8** The **oysters** growing in the **mangroves** of this **river delta** are said to have magical powers, and be protected by the fauna.
- G9** Mutant **lizard men** populate the village **Gathar**. They thrive, but live in fear of the memory of Uronin.
- G10** Four times a year, the grasslands erupt with massive **purple flowers**, gathered (and fought over) by religious pilgrims.
- G11** The **Grail River** empties into the ocean through **Vulgate** a sprawling trading post defended by **Fort Cistercian**.
- G12** Hundreds of **small islands** hide pirate coves, caches, hermits, secret operations, overgrown villages, and secrets.
- G13** The floor drops quickly into an **Melqart Abyssal**, unnaturally deep, and rife with rumor about what's at the bottom.
- BG** A religion has grown around an inscrutable **floating crystal**.
- GH** The **dense canopy** of the swamp blocks all sunlight, but **phosphorescent fungi** illuminates the bases of the trees.
- GS** Living organisms who stay on **Chimera Island** tend to merge together. Very little ever leaves.

d12 The drama in Vulgate today is...

- 1 a pirate raid
- 2 a fire
- 3-4 trading disagreements
- 5-6 disagreements between residents
- 7-8 arrival of notable strangers
- 9-10 arrival of notable shipments
- 11 an unexplained crime
- 12 a creature attack

d12 Tonight, the tower of Uronin...

- 1 spews white smoke
- 2 emits a blue glow
- 3 emits a red glow
- 4-6 stands silent and still as a tomb
- 7-9 periodically rumbles and shakes
- 10 emits a faint keening noise
- 11 flashes occasionally with lightning
- 12 emits a visible orange heat

d12 At dawn, Gryzul...

- 1 descends into Melqart Abyssal
- 2 rests in the deep
- 3 rests half-submerged off the coast
- 4 rests on open ground
- 5-7 hunts in the shallows
- 8-10 hunts in the depths
- 11 hunts on land
- 12 challenges another alpha at a border of the region

The Infected

The alpha **Gryzul** shows a particular appetite for chimera which try to leave their island.

The **surgrals** nesting on the islands occasionally harass people on the mainland coasts.

Families of **chuppers** constantly irritate denizens of—or those traveling through—the southern parts of the region.

A small population of **regrets** inhabits the swamps and coasts.

Other Denizens

Low-grade animus simmers constantly between **Orion Frost**, commander of Fort Cistercian, **Ember Voss**, the Prefect of Vulgate, and **Wren Hazen**, leader of the merchant guild running the trading post. No one can really say who is really in charge.

As the shaman of Gathar, **Shurl Sthath**, grows old, her visions grow more potent. **Thras Lus** and **Qal Slin**, her apprentices, secretly plot each other's deaths.

Genetic engineering cursed the hermit **Isolde Fracture** to a long life. She witnessed the Fall first hand and now spends most of her time meditating, alone on her idyllic island.

Questions

- What's going on inside Uronin's tower?
- Who knows about the research complex (G6)? How so you gain entry from the surface? Are any of its secrets recoverable? How much has Gryzul damaged?
- What do the tiny lizard men protect?
- Does the rumored "secret vault" of the ruined mansion (G5) exist and, if so, how do you find and open it?
- Who will pay the highest price for mangrove oysters (G8)?
- Which sects are willing to invest the most into harvesting purple flowers (G10) this season?
- What's at the bottom of Melqart Abyssal (G13)?
- Is the bio-containment of the pre-Fall secret genetics lab on Chimera Island intact? Are the chimera a result of infection getting in or out?

Region Q



- Q1** Ruins of a river valley farming community, now desiccated.
- Q2** Low-level tremors occur frequently. On rare occasions, **diggers** have been seen breaching the surface.
- Q3** Mesas provide nooks and crannies for shelter, but no water.
- Q4** A mineral-eating **fungus**, which traps rainwater and resists the Thirst's magic, supports a small population of **lopers**.
- Q5** Particularly difficult, nearly impassable mountain terrain.
- Q6** At night, a **dull glow** pulses at the bottom of **deep crevasses**.
- Q7** A pre-Fall **mine** extracted a rare metal. Automated defenses.
- Q8** Several large chunks of the **fifth mother's** flesh gestates.
- Q9** Loose, deep sand makes for very slow traveling.
- Q10** Canyons and caves shelter clans of **Grastiff**, opportunistic **jackal men** able to conceal water from the Thirst.
- Q11** A squad of **flying stealth bots**, intent on preventing approach from the west or north, defend already treacherous passes.
- Q12** Snow melt from the top of the mountain flows through an elaborate maze of caves before feeding into the river below.
- Q13** An **alpine flower** with magical properties is said to grow here.
- Q14** The **Nokan**, a tribe of pacifist yeti-like **mutants**, continue to expand their cave system into a thriving community.
- Q15** The wizard **Datrix** raised his inaccessible tower over the remnants of a secret, high-technology, research installation.
- Q16** High concentrations of **purple dust** in western snowpack.
- QF** Some claim that the **obelisk** and its ruined **temple complex** predate human arrival on **δP2**. Certainly no one alive can read the cryptic language engraved into it.
- QR** The lawless town of **Portalshade** provides a haven for **pirates** of all kinds and a thriving market for **strange trade**.
- QX** Citizens of the idyllic city of **Kosmima** take great pains to keep their existence secret from the rest of the world.

d12 Today, the Thirst is...

- 1 underground
- 2-3 resting in the open
- 4-6 on the move
- 7-9 drinking from an open water source
- 10-11 in a trance on high ground, magically pulling all the rain, snow, and moisture from surrounding hexes.
- 12 spewing a geyser of steam into the high atmosphere

d12 Shifting sands reveal...

- 1 skeletal remains of 1d4 humans
- 2 1d6 sealed cans or jars, labels worn away
- 3 polymer shell of a small boat (kayak, canoe, etc.)
- 4 a small technical device
- 5 a demolished aircraft
- 6 a solidified clump of purple dust
- 7 remnants of 1d8 farming implements
- 8 a metal sign
- 9 mummified remains of 1d4 mutants
- 10 a de-powered farming automaton/vehicle
- 11 1d3 pieces of pre-Fall jewelry or fashion
- 12 a magical crystal

The Infected

The alpha known as **The Thirst** absorbs water from the region as it wanders. Over decades, it has turned a thriving river valley into a wasteland. Occasionally, the beast spews a jet of steam a kilometer into the air.

Lanturns lurk under sand and soil, dormant until their lures attract something worth eating.

Something else?

Small families of **alpoats** struggle in the arid mountains and eagerly feed on visitors.

Other Denizens

If anyone can be said to keep the peace and mediate disputes in Portalshade (sometimes called "Port Portal"), it is the sorcerer **Gretta Bluewood**. Very little happens in the market without retired pirate, now merchant, **Risley "Temptation" Drachen** knowing of it. The two view Portalshade as a bastion of hope in the ruins and do what they can to make it one.

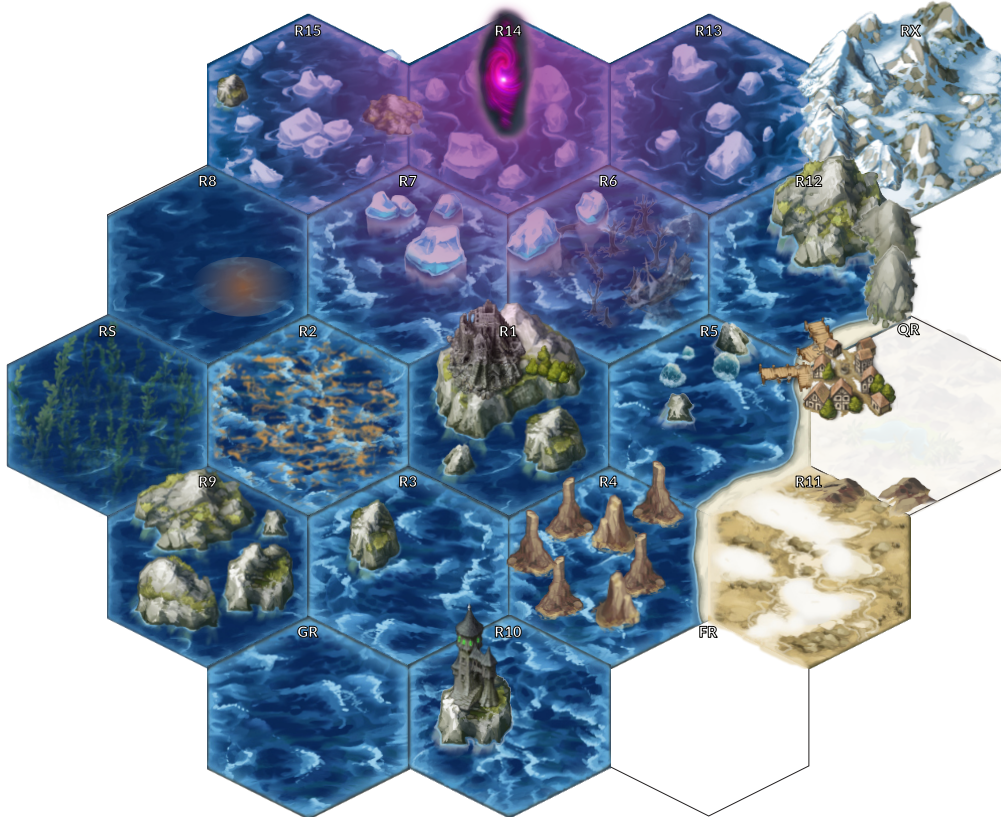
The **Mœræ** govern and protect Kosmima, each a sorcerer who takes the name of one of the offices: Klotho, Lachesis, Atropos. Every two years, the citizens (mixed species) replace who holds one of the offices by election.

The wizard **Datrix** has not emerged from his tower since the portal last opened.

Questions

- Does the Thirst's geyser contain more than just steam?
- Why do the stealth bots patrol Q11? Does anyone control them?
- What happens to those who find out about Kosmima?
- What shard of *Asambhava* lurks in the systems under Datrix's tower? And is it a prisoner of Datrix, or the other way around?
- What would be lost of water again flowed over this region?
- What does the obelisk say? How does the field that makes people reluctant to approach it work, and what is it protecting?

Region R



- R1** The **Tireless Eye**, a stone fortress intended (but unable) to stop whatever emerged from the portal, now lies in ruins.
- R2** Currents gather floating seaweed, and what hides in it.
- R3** An island with a cave, lair to a flying, steam-breathing, beast.
- R4** Hundreds of rock spires jut from the sea, making navigation difficult, but beautiful. **Harpies** love it.
- R5** Between two small islands, large bubbles of methane occasionally erupt to the surface.
- R6** Vast reefs lurk below the surface. A graveyard of sunken ships, massive schools of colorful fish, and sharks.
- R7** Icebergs this close to the portal often contain **purple dust**.
- R8** On dark nights, the glow from an undersea temple complex can be seen from the surface.
- R9** Islands known for extensive cave systems
- R10** The tower of Nebenark, now claimed by the wizard **Izotrix**.
- R11** The sea occasionally inundates this low salt flat. Pirates regularly gather the cubes left by the **salt harvester**.
- R12** Sheer cliffs rise straight out of the water, preventing easy landfall, and sheltering a number of flying creatures.
- R13** The portal occasionally freezes this hex almost entirely. Like hexes around the portal, it is always colder than usual.
- R14** The **portal**, a slash in reality a kilometer high floats high over the ocean, the source of the infection.
- R15** The deep lair of **Setusbu**, the Rising Devourer.
- RG** The infected stay out of this hex, making it a haven for fish, turtles, and other creatures.
- RS** A calm and tranquil kelp forest hosts a war between **sots** and **urches**. They unite only in their hatred of intruders.
- RX** Beyond the treacherous costal cliffs, **assemblers** construct an inscrutable artifact in the ice.

d100 Today, the portal is...

- 01-05 hidden/invisible
 06-20 churning the surrounding sea
 21-30 glowing very brightly
 31-40 pulsing ominously
 41-50 emitting random blasts of sound
 51-55 slowing down time the closer you approach it
 56-60 glowing; drifting back and forth
 61-65 surrounded by lightning storms
 66-70 creating occasional water spouts in adjacent hexes
 71-75 barely visible; hissing
 76-80 inflicting prophetic dreams on any within ten hexes
 81-85 compelling infected within ten hexes towards it
 86-90 a window showing what is happening on the other side
 91-99 occasionally spouting energy tendrils that pull stuff inside
 100 open! Something might come out today (roll on following table).

d100* What comes out?

- 01-25 a huge cloud of purple gas, which drifts south without dissipating
 25-50 a swarm of small flying creatures
 51-75 a group of large flying creatures
 76-90 one very large flying creature
 91-99 a strange flying craft
 100 a **mother**, spreader of **infectors**

The Infected

The alpha **Setusbu** rarely strays far from the portal, favoring the icy waters around it. It is known to devour ships, crew and all, particularly if they carry certain kinds of cargo.

Seelons guard the portal, often observing from ice flows around the portal and coasts of islands. They sometimes hunt in small packs throughout the region, and guide, support, and monitor the **assemblers**.

Empenguins occasionally venture from the north and are known to swarm onto ships and carry people away.

Tribes of **harpies** find the cliffs in the region ideal for nesting, and often hunt the surrounding waters and land.

Giant **urches** travel anywhere there is seaweed, kelp, or metal. **Sots** follow to prey on them.

So close to the portal, stray **infectors** are more likely to be wandering about than in other regions.

Other Denizens

Various species of **pirates**—in ships cobbled together from magic, old tech, and desperation—claim this sea as home, and raid its coast, but also sometimes prey on each other.

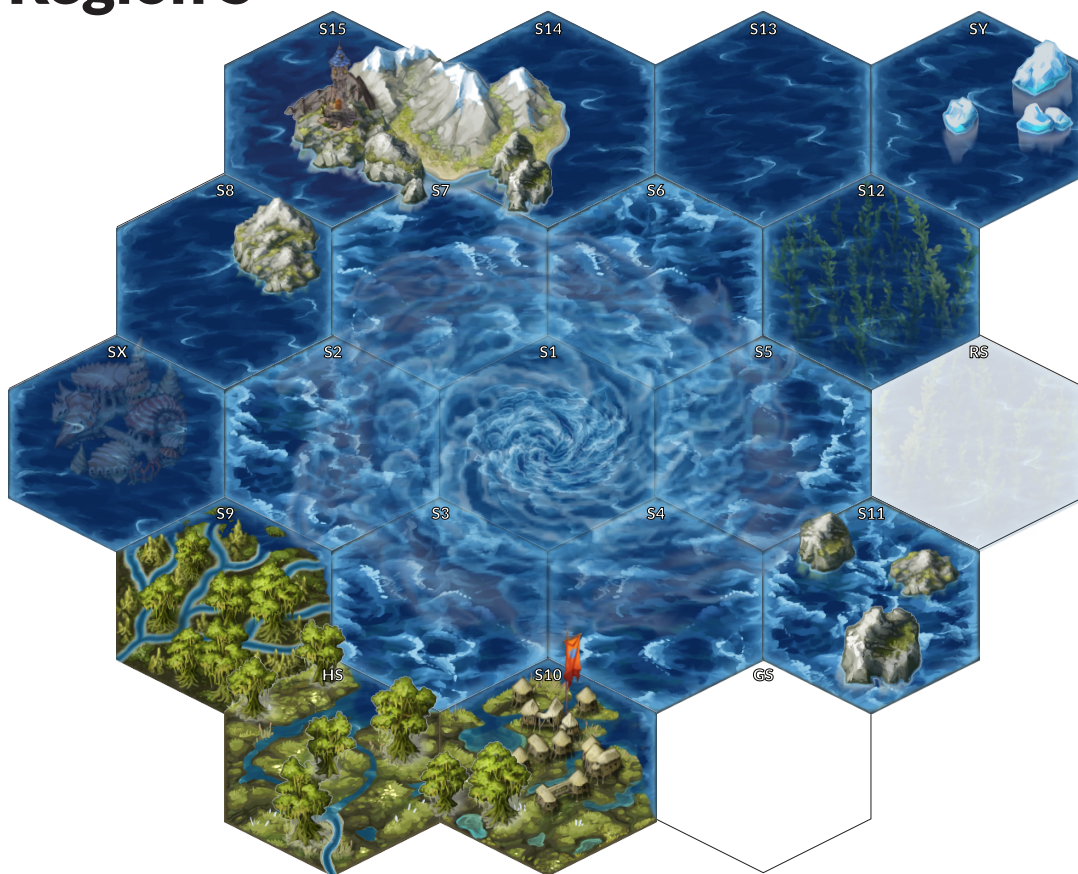
A **salt harvester**—a giant, ancient automaton—tirelessly gathers salt from the flat and presses it into crate-sized cubes.

The wizard **Izotrix** studies the portal.

Questions

- When will the portal next open? What will come through?
- What token do you need to enter the undersea temple?
- What blessings does the undersea temple offer?
- What have the pirates been seeking for so long?
- What are the assemblers building and why?
- What does Izotrix have that you need? Or need that you have?
- How will Izotrix's study of the portal make the world worse?
- Why does the portal make surrounding hexes so cold?
- Why do the infected stay out of hex RG?

Region S



- S1** A sea **vortex** constantly rages, changing size unpredictably.
- S2** A compulsion to **sabotage methods of propulsion** fills this hex.
- S3** A compulsion to **run ships into the swamps** fills this hex.
- S4** A compulsion to **head into the vortex** fills this hex.
- S5** A compulsion to **abandon ships** fills this hex.
- S6** A compulsion to **head into deep ocean** fills this hex.
- S7** A compulsion to **crash ships into islands** fills this hex.
- S8** Something on the island emits high levels of **radiation**, attracting **strange creatures** to the coast.
- S9** The culture from Brul (SX) treat this river delta as a hunting ground, as do krokjaw and other predators.
- S10** The residents of the stilt-house fishing village of **Tsarni** worship—and sacrifice to—the vortex.
- S11** **Pirates** often shelter in the coves and bays of the islands.
- S12** A calm and tranquil kelp forest hosts a war between **sots** and **urches**. They unite only in their hatred of intruders.
- S13** This hex gets kilometers deeper moving from south to north.
- S14** Traces of a resort remain on this end of **Abshire Isle**. Stealthy **pirates** keep **caches** on the island, in spite of its wizard.
- S15** The wizard **Udestrum** claimed to control the vortex from her **tower**, but she has not been seen in decades.
- HS** **Wrecked ships** of all shapes, sizes, designs, and ages litter the water ways and swamp islands. Most have been looted by Tsarni and Brul.
- SX** The **undersea village** of **Brul** houses a community of **aquatic mutants** unafraid to use the **magical artifact** in their possession.
- SY** Large chunks of ice are often drawn from around the portal into the vortex through this hex.

- d12 Today, the vortex...**
- 1–6 sucks in material, clockwise
- 7–11 sucks in material counterclockwise
- 12 spews out material
- d12 Today, a ship...**
- 1 would barely notice the vortex
- 2 could easily enter and exit
- 3–5 could get stuck in the vortex if they are careless
- 6–8 could escape the vortex with some clever sailing
- 9–10 would have to struggle mightily to escape the vortex
- 11 would need a miracle to escape if dragged in
- 12 would be torn to pieces if crossing into the vortex
- d12 For an hour, the vortex is...**
- 1 only a couple meters across
- 2–3 no more than 50m across
- 4–6 a few hundred meters across
- 7–9 over 1km across
- 10–11 around 5km across
- 12 nearly 10km across

The Infected

The alpha **Dagon** patrols the waters of this region, often attacking ships in calmer waters. Some believe this mutated mosasaur is responsible for the compulsions around the vortex. Hundreds of **surgrals** nest on the islands in this region. They are rumored to be in thrall of the wizard Udestrum.

Several **krokjaw** compete for territory in the swamps and coasts of this section. The Tsarni has some method of keeping them away from their village and fishing boats.

Packs of **harpies** are constantly trying to establish nests in this region, but often get chased off by other infected.

Giant **urches** travel anywhere there is seaweed, kelp, or metal. **Sots** follow to prey on them. Both also love river deltas.

Other Denizens

Thousands of **anomalocaris** live around the fringes of the vortex, seemingly immune to infection. These creatures have religious significance to the Brul.

Pirates, many with expertise in navigating the vortex, sail the waters in this region.

The automated submarine **Sindhuratna** has been spotted in this region, usually around the vortex. The vessel is thought to be the usurpation and reconfiguration of one of the Hetairoi weapon platforms by one of **Asambhava's** splinter AIs.

Questions

- What causes the vortex? What is discovered by those sucked in?
- Why is the material that sometimes spews from the vortex so different from what gets sucked in?
- Does Udestrum still live? Does she control the vortex? If so, to what end? What goes on in her tower?
- What is the best method to resist the compulsions of the vortex?
- Does Dagon cause the compulsions around the vortex? If so, why?
- What does the *Sindhuratna* want with the vortex?