

# *The Home City*

*Known as Lauresia, which means “the shard of light”.*

Visitors to the city – which are few (PCs are unlikely to have never seen any), are at first impressed by two things. Firstly, the sheer diversity of races, cultures, architecture and even species. The city is a very eclectic place; a visitor may see a clever mechanical waiter serving at a timeless stone table where a drow and an assimar sit down to lunch, or bonded elementals power a furnace for smelting the iron the albino minotaur armor smith uses. This eclectic culture is a great asset, and information and examples of just about any esoteric weapon, class or race are available at the city.

The second thing visitors note is the high magic culture – most everyone knows a spell or two to do their job. City culture, history and society are heavily influenced by gemstones – even the streets are set in geometric patterns like carved faces of a diamond. The city is an almost unrivalled source of information, with a vast library filled with literary treasures from across time and the universe. Sages have been known to spend literally a lifetimes earnings just to study in the libraries for a week.

Yet the city has little in the way of primary production – not even enough to be self-sufficient – however, it does have a lot to offer in terms of skills artisans and magic item creation. Regardless of its isolated location, the city brings some of the finest gems smiths, potion brewers and craftsperson’s to be found. However, the city usually sponsors planar merchants to ship all wares in secret – so many are unaware they are dealing with the ‘Exiles.’

Children are all expected to attend school they finish their youth years. Elves (who spend

up to 80 years attending school irregularly) tend to benefit more than half orcs (who frequently leave by 10 to pursue a trade). All youth are expected to follow a craft or profession. One rare profession allowed is that of the ‘hero’ – those specially chosen by the stones of the city itself to brave the world outside the protective walls. None have been chosen for this occupation for over a generation (of humans), and it seems as if this may so be for some time yet.

One drawback of living in the city is their intense social phobia of anyone not of the city – verging on paranoia. Even with all these skilled artisans and intellectual treasures, few outsiders will ever see the city and fewer even know about it – and those in the city like it that way. Those that wish to enter must undergo a powerful binding ritual which would slay them rather than have them willingly betray the trust of the city to the Great Enemy (a wish cast at 20<sup>th</sup> level). Those that leave the city frequently have their memory wiped clean of the experience. The city does, however, have a clear benevolence streak as they have been known to rescue other refugees or ‘exiles’ from war torn areas around the plains (adding to their kaleidoscopic cultural mix). As an added precaution, many fear to speak the name on any god lest they be heard...

Even those born of the city, who leave to trade on behalf of the others, are carefully chosen and tested. Even a stray word can be caught by the spies of the enemy, and if their original culture was destroyed in a day, then a single city would surely not stand an instant. But while fear of discovery is their constant companion, most citizens have adjusted to a happy life, even if the conditions are a bit cramped. It is better than the alternative...

## *Overview - City of the Exiles*

The city: Republic integrated Small city, gp limit 17,000. Non adults 2400. Power centers: LG the high council. CN Shadow guild (rogues). NG order of the Illend (clerics), LN the military (fighters). Guards 340. Militia 1700. High level locals: Palayon: 14<sup>th</sup> level wizard. Lady of the Illend 14<sup>th</sup> level cleric. Master of Shadows 14<sup>th</sup> level CG rogue. Shim albino minotaur general, 6<sup>th</sup> level fighter. Approximately 200,000 citizens.

Once a part of a massive planar civilization numbering billions of citizens, the Enemy came and destroyed their ancient and glorious race and now hunts the remnants across time and space. Citizens of the city are descendants of this forgotten people or other exiles from other places around the Metaverse. While they have touches of advanced technomancy and culture from the hundreds of races they have visited, they are still in a state of decline, and have lost most of their original glory and culture. The city is overcrowded and unhappy, with internal politics threatening to tear the city apart. The city has been hiding in the astral plane for about a century and through its powerful (and poorly understood) magic and is in serious need of making moving venue. Maybe even risking the highly dangerous task of meeting and even trading with the locals. Its citizens must be wary, for should the enemy ever discover their location, they will come in great force to destroy them all...

### *Geography*

See picture.

### *Military*

The city has a standing army of over 2000 souls that also act as police, and up to 10,000 in

times of war. However, all the populace are armed and well trained, most are at least level 4, so it is unwise to consider war with the City.

### *Daily life*

Most racial tensions are set aside among the exiles, but old prejudices are difficult to forget. But by and large, most people get along on an individual basis, and don't know what it means to live in a mono-racial culture. They are tied together by a mutual need to survive and the powerful enchantments that ensure *most* citizens get along. And then there is that tree people are fond of speaking to.

### *Government*

The city is ruled by the high council of the wise: 12 rulers elected by the people from each suburb for making important decisions on law, policy and religion. Membership is for life, till the member announces retirement, or till a general vote of the suburb ends their membership. The Chair of this council can call on their double voting rights, and is voted in by the other council members to represent the white suburb. This council meets when necessary, about once a week, and otherwise things are just left to run by themselves. Some council members are very active in the community (such as Lady Illend) while others are popular but rarely seen figures (such as the current Chair, Palayon).

### *Religion*

Citizens are relatively pious, however, they usually do not risk worshipping Gods, but the pure essences the Gods epitomize. There are strict laws prohibiting drawing attention to themselves by speaking the Gods names out loud – especially since the last set didn't fare so well.

On Piousday the city comes to a virtual standstill while most people stay indoors. Those less religiously inclined claim to worship Industry (and keep working throughout the day), Revelry (and take the day off to party) or Serenity (and use it as an excuse to sleep all day). However, most citizens clearly value strength, beauty, light and knowledge as the four most valuable virtues.

### *Crime and punishment*

Punishment: The most severe crimes are punished by imprisonment or death (and subsequent incarceration of the soul in a soul gem rather than release to any afterlife). There is no banishment. Several serious crimes may be punished by memory alteration, which also alters the personality of the person permanently. Punishment is generally carried out in the black, silver and gold suburbs.

Lesser crimes are punished through incarceration or repayment.

### *Origin of the people*

By far the majority of people are drawn from the ancestors of the *original citizens* of the city of light, Lauresia herself being the only known survivor of the original destruction.

*Refugees* form the next largest group. Occasional residents come to the city as Lauresia is moved to compassion for their cause. More often than not as victims to the Enemies' brutality to anyone who once trades with the city, and then does not inform him immediately and rat them out; entire civilizations have been laid waste thus. However, Lauresia has been known to rescue individuals from countless war-torn worlds simply because they would have died otherwise. All then become residents, are magically compelled into never revealing their

new people, and are cursed with the eternal hatred of the Enemy as well.

The final and rarest category is the *defectors*. Rarely an individual or people will attempt to flee the Enemy. Some have even been sent across time and space for the exact purpose of finding and betraying the Exiles – even if they are not consciously aware of it. Lauresia invariably detects such individuals, and faces a difficult choice: 1/ Destroy them, or 2/ Free them, heal them, and help them join the city. She never tells anyone of their backstory however, and all are left to assume they are simply another refugee. She won't even talk about it with the traitor, unless they bring it up.

### *Cultural oddities*

- This society is very eclectic – in clothing, race, beliefs, professions. The city has visited hundreds of worlds in its endless ages. One can find just about *anything* if you just look around hard enough.
- While distinctions of social class are generally discouraged, age is highly respected in City culture as measured by racial qualities (youth, adult, senior etc). Adults are supposed to defer to seniors, children to youth etc. Age ceremonies are standard among all races to announce social status, and social responsibilities. It is easy for locals to tell someone's age category from their dress and demeanor. (Adult and older women wear covered heads, boys don't wear vests etc.)
- The citizens of the city tend to greet each other with a courteous "How do you do?" The traditional answer is "Well, thank you" and anything else seems to throw them out. In what seems puzzling to other cultures, individuals from the city have been known to ask each other but then

frequently don't wait around for an answer. At other times, a citizen may answer this question even without being asked, simply on force of habit.

- When greeting new people or cementing business deals, they are also known for holding each other's hand and moving them in unison up and down anywhere between one and a half dozen times. This 'hand shake' is best performed with a

palm perpendicular to the ground, and a hand tilted incorrectly may be perceived as dominance or sub ordinance.

- There is a movement growing in the city which believes the failure and distress they now face are a result of their failure to worship explicit Gods. They are starting to put pressure on to have the worship of the Greater Gods made the state religion.

## City Map

