

AGE OF ATLANTIS

PLAYER'S GUIDE TO PLAYING A MARINER.



THINGS YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST KNOW TO PLAY:

- THERE IS NO MAGIC IN ATLANTIS. NO SPELLS, NO MAGIC ITEMS, NO MONSTERS. THIS IS ABOUT TO CHANGE...
- AS FAR AS ALL ATLANTIANS ARE CONCERNED, THE REST OF THE WORLD WAS DESTROYED BY A TITANIC STORM CALLED THE MAELSTROM, WHICH EVEN NOW SURROUNDS THEIR ISLAND. THIS APOCALYPSE OCCURRED OVER 500 YEARS AGO AROUND THE TIME OF THE GREEK DARK AGES (900 BCE). THEIR HISTORY PRECEDING THIS TIME IS SIMILAR TO OUR OWN.
- ATLANTIS IS TECHNOLOGICALLY SOPHISTICATED. COMMONPLACE TECHNOLOGY IS ON PAR WITH COLONIAL AMERICA AND THEORETICAL SCIENCE IS MUCH MUCH FURTHER (SEE THE TECHNOLOGY SECTION)
 - RACES AREN'T ENTIRELY WHAT YOU'RE USED TO

ATLANTIS

The history of Atlantis is a history of apocalypse and post-apocalypse. Until 500 years ago, Atlantis was an unremarkable island off the coast of Spain inhabited primarily by Elves and Humans. It had little political importance in the Ancient Greek world, minimal resources and a small population... yet it was the only land spared in the Maelstrom that broke apart the world.

Surviving accounts of the Maelstrom describe a wall of clouds that stormed the horizon, tidal waves that rose and fell like hungry jaws, hurricane winds that blew away entire mountains and, everywhere, a mist so cold and penetrating it seemed alive. When the chaos subsided, thousands lay dead among the rubble.



Artist's portrayal of Poseidon defending Atlantis from the horror of the Maelstrom

The storm subsided, but it has never faded. The Maelstrom still surrounds the waters around Atlantis with roiling clouds and tendrils of mist, miles away in some places, within hand's reach in others. None who have ventured into the mist have ever returned and nothing but aberrations of nature have ever come out. The people of Atlantis survived the apocalypse, but it seems no one else did.

MAGIC

IT DOESN'T EXIST.

Just like the real world, magic is found only in Pre-Maelstrom legends and fiction. Racial differences are purely a result of evolutionary divergence and the notion of racial "magical powers" (like Elves living for millenia or "psionics") is considered an incredibly insensitive superstition.

One exception prevents total rejection of the supernatural: acts of God. These aren't rumors or strange looking pieces of toast, these are documented, cross-referenced miracles that defy known natural laws. Is it a coincidence that most of these miracles have been performed by priests of Poseidon? The faithful certainly don't think so.

RELIGION

POSEIDON WORSHIP

The state religion of Atlantis, the oldest and most popular worship. Followers of Poseidon believe that the sea god used his power to keep the Maelstrom at bay and that all Atlantians owe him their lives.

Monotheistic Reform. Is Poseidon the greatest among a pantheon or the only true god? The Temple of Poseidon has supported the multiple divinities of the Greek Pantheon for centuries, but younger generations find them superstitious and superfluous: there is only evidence of one God, after all.

ATHEISM

The trendiest new "faith" in Atlantis City, popular with public intellectuals and counter-culture teens. Growing in popularity, especially amongst Gnomes, for freeing up so much time otherwise spent at Temple.

OTHER PANTHEONS

THE SILENT GODS (EGYPTIAN)

A small, non-evangelical faith known mostly only to Gith, and likely to stay that way. The Silent Gods are more symbolic than other pantheons: followers worship concepts as entities, Leadership and the falcon-god Horus are one and the same.

WARRIOR GODS (NORSE)

This faith blurs the line between "religion" and "really good war stories." Followers (usually dragonborn or half-orcs) model their lives on these legendary heroes, whether they are actually divine or not.

OTHER GODS

Other faiths do exist, but have too few followers to be called "organized"

GOVERNMENT

Constitutional Monarchy. Atlantis has a royal authority, His Royal Majesty Agathon Atreides, who wields mostly ceremonial power and a veto (rarely used). The true decision makers are the two branches of parliament:

- The Lord's Council (50 members) represents Atlantis City.
- The Territorial College (55 members) represents the rest of the island.

ONE NATION... FOR NOW

From Atlantis City, the same authority has held stable rule in Atlantis since the Maelstrom. However, as the non-urban population ascends into the multiple millions, this system has become less and less feasible, with rural territories demanding greater amounts of self-governance.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology in Atlantis is on par with the early industrial era. Starting from an almost Neolithic base following the Maelstrom, Atlantian society progressed unnaturally quickly thanks to old world relics found on the borders of the Maelstrom and the widespread utilization of Aquum.

Resource limitations. Given Atlantis's small size, mass production, of any kind, is unfeasible. Wondrous technologies (rifling, telecommunication, even transistors) have been well established in the academic literature, but without mass production, remain the exclusive domain of the ultra-rich and elite military units.

Aquum. An obsidian colored natural mineral, the most renewable resource in Atlantis and, luckily, the most useful. Used in everything from weapon forging to energy generation: Atlantians come into contact with Aquum more often than water and appreciate it just as much.

PLAYABLE RACES OF ATLANTIS

NATIVE RACES

ELVES

The most diverse Atlantian race, “Elves” are really a conglomeration of dozens of sub-races united by an increased lifespan (a little over a century) and ancient origins (Elven architecture in Atlantis predates even the oldest Pre-Maelstrom trading ships).

Some of the more well-known sub-races are:

High Elves. Also called “City Elves,” high elves are most often administrators, politicians, CEOs or research directors: any leadership position where their extended lifespan can help them direct a long term project to improve or beautify their city.

Sea Elves. Elves adapted to living both underwater and above ground, sea elves are most famous for being the best sailors in the world and founding the Fellowship of Mariners hundreds of years ago.

Dark Elves (Drow). Seen rarely outside their enclaves, Dark Elves (also called Drow) are radically xenophobic, even of other elves. Some Dark Elves are racial supremacists while others simply prefer to be left alone, but none of them are stupid: Dark Elven leaders know they have no choice but to share this island with others.... At least, for now.

HUMANS

Intrepid Explorers. Before the Maelstrom, humans were supposedly so common that many lived and died never even knowing other races existed. The ancestors of Atlantian humans were those that rebuked this fate and set out to explore the world and its continents. Atlantis was an early discovery and a significant human population of explorers and merchants survived the Maelstrom there. Nevertheless, humans in Atlantis still mourn for the loss of a larger world, full of both familiar faces and unexplored continents.

HALF-ELVES

Notable only for being technically the most common race in Atlantis, half-elves most often choose to simply pass as human or as Elven. Centuries of good relations between the two races means this is relatively easy, even if unnecessary.

The sole exception is **Half-Drow**. Drow consider racial hybrids an affront to nature and those children that escape infanticide spend their lives hated (and even hunted) by Drow and distrusted by everyone else.

REFUGE RACES

DWARVES

When the Maelstrom swallowed the world, the only dwarves in Atlantis were laborers from the local mining company who had come to protest unsafe working conditions and unequal pay. This eccentricity of fate left political radicals and tough-as-nails day laborers as the exclusive architects of Dwarven society in Atlantis.

To this day, Dwarves are deeply united by an almost religious admiration for the bravery and plight of the worker (and, of course, a correspondingly powerful hatred for the cowardice and greed of the capitalist!)

ORCS AND HALF-ORCS

No one knows how Orcs ended up on Atlantis and no one is particularly happy they did. Orcs, by and large, have no interest in civilization: they are fierce nomads with no interest in politics or even agriculture. Cynics call them “roving thugs,” Romantics call them “radically free,” but most Atlantians avoid Orcs out of sheer prudence.

Half-Orcs bring much needed compromise to the Orc spirit: they may act unpredictably and chafe at the demands of social etiquette, but a half-Orc won't cut your head off so he can have your beer. Half-orcs sometimes stay with their nomadic clan of origin, but most choose to integrate with Atlantian society, often finding work in the military sector.

DRAGONBORN

The (very loudly self-proclaimed) greatest warriors of Atlantis and backbone of the Atlantian military, Dragonborn live for glorious battle in a just cause. Bigger (and definitely louder, if their celebrations are anything to go by) than any other race in Atlantis, Dragonborn make an intimidating sight...

GITH

Few of the refuge races remember their Pre-Atlantian origins, but hate keeps the Gith's memory sharp. Before the Maelstrom, Gith everywhere, from toddler to grand-matron, toiled as slaves for generations to build the monuments of a powerful and despotic empire. The empire fell, even its name is lost, but the fire of Gith hatred has never faltered. This hatred is re-branded into every new generation of Gith: the cruelty shown to their ancestors suffuses Gith art, games and even cuisine.

Every Gith is affected by this tradition differently, but most common is an explosive temper and a near fanatical obsession with justice.

AARAKOCRA

The only Atlantian race capable of flight, Aarakocran's aerial perspective has given them a very... unique philosophy of life. Aarakocra all live as monks in the barren mountains of Atlantis, adhering to a strict prohibition against all forms of government, economy and law, except for "the single principle of mutual aid between individuals".

While some Aarakocra leave their mountain temples, frustrated with the dogmatism of their peers, few are able to leave their bias against "propertarianism" entirely behind.

"The mountains are ugly, all dust and dark ice. Life is dull, and hard work. You can't always have what you want, or even what you need, because there isn't enough. In the mountains, nothing is beautiful, nothing but the faces. We have nothing but that, nothing but each other. Because our men and women are free—possessing nothing, they are free. And you the possessors are possessed."

— AARAKOCRAN MONK PREACHING TO A GROUP OF (VERY PATIENT) ATLANTIANS.

GNOMES

"WE LOVE FUCKING SCIENCE"

Led by the Gnomes of Atlantis, the march of scientific progress has become an all-out charge. While most Atlantians respect science, gnomes are in passionate, desperate love with it: in Gnomish, the word for "successful replication" refers equally to good experiments and excellent sex.

While other races in the scientific fields (Elves in particular) might find the Gnomish approach a bit haphazard, there is no denying the results: Gnomish names flood the pages of scientific textbooks and journals alike.

HALFLINGS

Long thought to be a type of gnome, modern Atlantian science has proven the two species are genetically distinct. Nevertheless, Halflings are as much technicians as Gnomes are, just agricultural ones.

Halflings love to work the earth and, apparently, it loves them back: Halfling farms produce harvests of unrivalled bounty. A good thing too, without the agricultural toil and ingenuity of Halflings, Atlantians would have exhausted the food supply on their small island centuries ago.

EXOTIC RACES

The ruins of an entire world washed up on the shores of Atlantis following the Maelstrom and no one has ever been able to catalogue it all. It is not so farfetched to believe that living things too could have escaped notice, either blending in with the other Atlantian races, hiding themselves in the deep, dark corners of the islands or simply laying inactive for centuries...

THE MARINERS

When the chaos of the Maelstrom subsided and the survivors began to rebuild, many relics of the old world were discovered in the waters around Atlantis. Those close to shore were quickly gathered and used to speed reconstruction, but the majority lay on the tempestuous borders of the Maelstrom. Brave (or desperate) sailors braved the storms only to encounter deadly traps, unnatural phenomena, and monstrous creatures of supernatural malice. Most died... but some survived to share their experiences with others and sail out once more. As these intrepid sailors came to rely more and more on each other, they named their community The Fellowship of Mariners.

In this day and age, most old world relics near the Maelstrom have been gathered and the only dangerous creatures prowling the borders of the Maelstrom are vicious sharks. The Mariners would have suffered similar obsolescence, but their legendary feats lived on in the imagination of Atlantians everywhere. Reality mirrored art, and the Mariners became in reality what popular culture had imagined them as: a league of exceptional people sanctioned to improve the world and act in ways normal authorities cannot.

PURPOSE

The official purpose of the Mariners is **“to protect and improve Atlantian society by any means necessary.”** Mariners are above the law, immune to prosecution from even the most powerful royalty. They are not, however, immune to more violent forms of retaliation, and a Mariner who finds himself with powerful enemies and no allies is likely to “mysteriously” die in his sleep.

A student of history might see a more cynical, practical purpose to the Mariners: to easily and non-violently remove problematic and radical elements from society. **Mariners cannot hold military, political, religious, or academic office, and cannot own property extraneous to their function**- rendering them effectively powerless to effect change on a large scale. Certainly, a religious radical or rebellious general could be executed or arrested, but naming them a Mariner (with or without their consent) achieves the same purpose and does not invite scandal or debate- it is, after all, a great honor.

“Gold doesn’t count as property”

—Mariner Xrisoi, richest woman in the world

MEMBERSHIP

Mariners come from all walks of life and each is remarkable in his or her own (sometimes absurd) way. Dragonborn war heroes, virtuoso musicians, destitute card sharks, and Gnomish prophets can all be found in the Fellowship.



Mariner Headquarters in Atlantis City

Inauguration. Mariners are nominated by one of three powers: The Crown, The Lord’s Council or a current Mariner who has served for three years or more. Nominees are collected every spring and sworn in together as a single crew. After a summer of training at Mariner HQ, this cohort is assigned an impossible task by one of the nominating powers. More than half perish. Those that accomplish the mission emerge having forged bonds and alliances that will define their future as full-fledged Mariners.

ORIGIN STORIES

A path that leads to the Fellowship of Mariners is never a traditional one. Here are some recent nominees:

- **Mariner Kagonos.** Former medical student at the University of Atlantis. Nominated for his "revolutionary" dissertation: *Differential Burning Temperatures of Humanoid Flesh: Anatomical and Biological Implications*
- **Mariner Quintus.** The most decorated Atlantian NCO of all time and, to date, the only soldier ever field promoted to General. Personally awarded Mariner status by His Royal Majesty Agathon Atreides.
- **Mariner Methismenos.** Known as “The Drunkest Man Still Alive.” Nominated by popular demand during the Feast of Dionysus.
- **Mariner Roshenko.** Founder of the radical political party Red Dawn and former president of the Dwarven Worker’s Guild. Nominated by a unanimous vote of the Lord’s Council.
- **Mariner Aristophanes.** Satirical playwright. Nominated when his play, *The King and (my) Ass*, won the Royal Jester Prize.

STRUCTURE AND LEADERS

The Fellowship of Mariners is nominally *egalitarian*: Mariners take orders from none, not even each other. Communal matters (like management of the armory or expulsion of a criminal Mariner) are decided by anonymous tribunals, with members selected by lot.

More practically, social clout imposes a *hierarchy based on veterancy*. Mariners have enemies: to survive as a Mariner, you need friends to watch your back. Making these friends involves working closely with other novices and earning favor with well-connected veterans. Not being proactive as a Mariner, refusing to patrol or take missions, is an easy way to find yourself murdered.

Leaders. The most powerful Mariners, both martially and socially, are the longest serving members. Most Mariners don't survive their first six months, those few that survive more than three decades have enough experience, social clout and external allies to be not only legends, but actual leaders.

THE MARINER'S OATH

"No reproach shall halt my hallowed arms, no doubt shall slow my wit, no greed shall stain my loyalty. I serve Atlantis. I defend her altars and her hearths, her people and her beauty. By my life or my death, I will nurture her heritage. Let the gods be my witness."

TRADING CARDS

Pioneered by the **Notendo Gaming Company**, these cards have been an obsession of children (and some adults) for two generations now. With each new Mariner, a new card is printed with a biography and set of abilities that mixes the fantastical with the realistic. As Mariners gain renown, their card becomes more and more valuable: the first printing of a veteran's card can be worth a small fortune.

The cards can also be used to play a complex game involving life "points," traps, and monsters. The game is widely derided for being so overly designed that even adults can't figure out how to play. Nonetheless, some Mariners take great pride in the "top tier stats" of their printed card.

Some more famous card printings are included below, along with a brief biography of the Mariner portrayed.

LEADERS

ORION



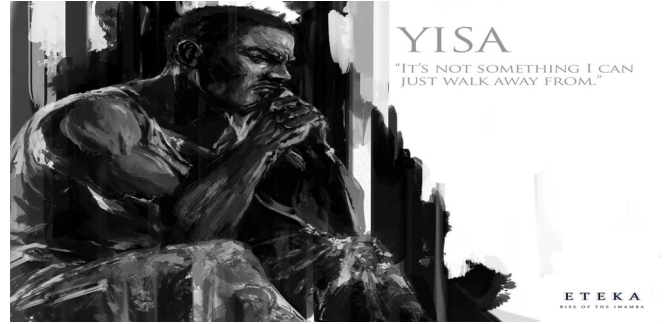
Elf. Longest serving Mariner of all time. Famously resurrected the dead after an Orc raid. Very proactive in mentoring and protecting novices that help others.

MAXIMUS



Half-orc. Legendary warrior. None survived to testify, but supposedly slew an ambush of 75 assassins single-handedly. Unpopular due to his brutality and bullying.

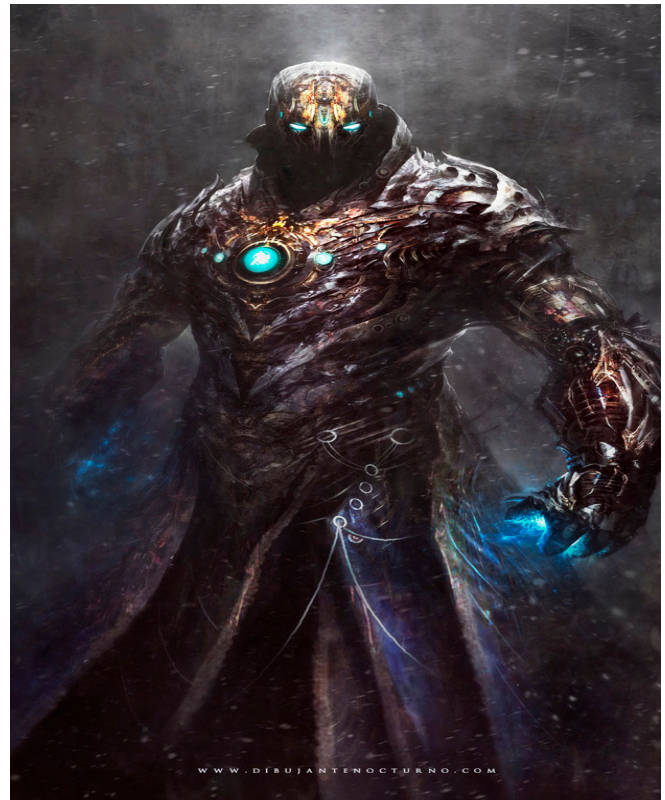
YISA



Human. Former crown prince. A mischievous dilettante in public but very secretive among Mariners. Nonetheless, one of the wealthiest and most politically connected veterans.

VETERANS

THE CLOCKWORK KNIGHT



Not the hero Atlantis deserves but the one it needs right now. The Knight prides himself on anonymity, appearing always in a clockwork exoskeleton of incredible capabilities. The only thing known for sure about the Knight is his passion for vigilantism and his hatred of the corrupt.

JANT



Half-elf, Half-Aarakocra, Jant's unique biology makes him the fastest flying courier in the world. The consummate hedonist, Jant treats other Mariners with total neutrality, relying on his unique niche and celebrity status to support his lifestyle.

GRUMMAR



Half-Orc. The master of the Mariner armory, Grummar's metalwork is beautiful enough to hang in a museum and strong enough to outlast it. Grummar forges all the Mariner's equipment and he's not one to let anyone forget it.

MARIA



Elf. The oldest Mariner by age, Maria holds doctorates in Chemistry, Biology, Botany and Clinical Toxicology. Joining the Mariners at the age of 87, Maria has little interest in anything except the massive garden that surrounds Mariner headquarters.

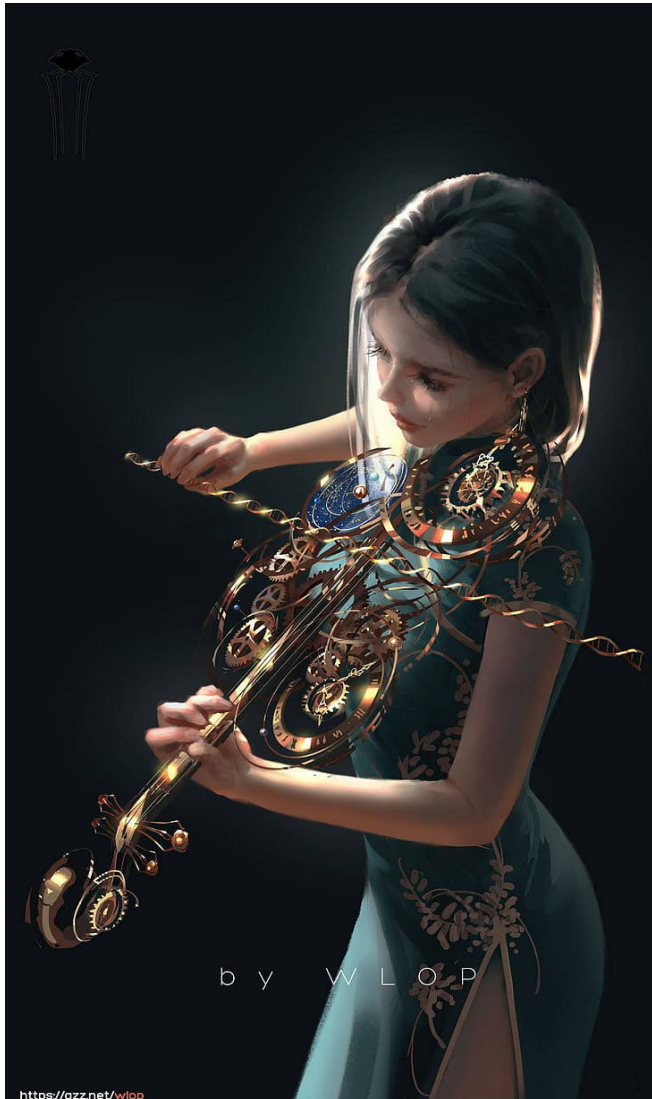
XRISOI



Human. Former pirate, now the most feared privateer in Atlantis, Xrisoi's personal wealth makes up such a large percentage of the Mariner's treasury that they might as well be one and the same.

NOVICES

VIOLETA



Half-elf. A musical prodigy, Violeta was outperforming virtuoso violinists at the age of 8, composed experimental symphonies at 13 and, at the age of 18, became the first musician in 350 years able to play the Violino Anima, an artifact from the Pre-Maelstrom era.

TRAINEES

None yet, but maybe you'll be the first...

FLURG THE DARK FLAME MASTER

GRISMOL

CLANK

ANGELA

RAISA

MARLIN ROAN'COEL

QUELL