

Kronos: The Eternal Storm

Centuries ago, a cataclysm caused the sky to tear apart and change into a never-ending tempest of lightning and clouds that blocks out the sunlight in many areas, making a large part of Kronos uninhabitable. This phenomenon is known as the Eternal Storm. Far below the churning chaos overhead, the races of Kronos are subject to disastrous erratic, pulse-storm strikes known as Turbulents.

Kronos is a plane full of adventure and intrigue. Our story follows a young sailor named Ripple Sundowner, a boatswain on the vessel The Wellwisher, who has lived most of his life on the waves, battling the hardships and pirates of the Sea of Pericles which surrounds the mainland of Kronos. Underneath it all though, Ripple is a spymaster in the ranks of a terrorist cell known as the Thoughtcrafters who use their mental powers to manipulate and brainwash others in order to gain access to and infiltrate the suspicious activities of the Merphites, the merfolk civilization that dwell on a volcanic island known as The Swell.

Although he is gifted with his psionic abilities, Ripple and his fellow Thoughtcrafters are highly susceptible to the one thing that connects every life on Kronos, the blazing flames of fire. Lost to history, but passed down through generations, is the importance of fire to the people of Kronos. Every collective of beings either reveres or disdains the light of fire. Will Ripple be able to use his spy skills to piece together the mystery of the Merphites' diabolical plan and discover the true use of the machine they are building before it's too late? Will he be able to save the plane of Kronos and finally understand the spark of fire he feels inside himself? Or does peril await all as the eye of the Eternal Storm approaches? The adventure awaits.

"The Tragedy of Kronos"

written by Alistar Sundowner, for his son Ripple Sundowner

The earth god Kronos was once in love with the wind goddess Sky. The two were inseparable. One day Kronos' brother gods of water and fire decided to play a trick on him. Together they took the form of Kronos and taunted and struck Sky, wounding her badly. The two brothers fled to a safe distance and laid in wait for Kronos to appear. When Kronos did appear Sky did not seem mad, she instead was sad, for she did not understand how her beloved could do such harm to her. As Kronos tried to prove his innocence Sky took to the wind and called down from the above. She cursed Kronos and shuttered the clouds, hiding amongst them. Sky told Kronos his curse was to be that he would never again look upon her beauty until he was able to find it in his heart to show his forgiveness. The clouds turned black and a storm encompassed the world. In a bent of mischievousness, Kronos' brothers quickly came to the side of their heartbroken brother, pretending to console him. In his weakness, Kronos allowed his brothers to talk him out of keeping his heart for it would only cause him more pain. It was only upon his brothers' return from hiding Kronos' heart did reason strike him. He called on them to return his heart so that he could show his true love for Sky. When the brothers refused Kronos began to fight with them. Over time, all three brothers became locked in an eternal struggle, seemingly melding together to form the single land of Kronos, which is forever hidden from whatever beauty of lies beyond the clouds above.

The Map of Kronos



The Inhabitants of Kronos

Aurators

"The role of an Aurator is to observe life and regale others through the enchantment and illusion of magic." - Zindquist, Master Aurator

High atop the Knoll of Observance in the snowy southern mountain range of Kronos live, the Aurators peer at the world through their crystal scrying orbs. This prestige gathering of high class entertainers and artisans consists mainly of Angels and Faeries that live on the tallest peak of a great mountain upon which light always shines unhindered by the Eternal Storm. Because of this attraction, the citizens of the Knoll believe themselves to be favored by the powers that be in comparison to all others. Despite their arrogant posture, the Aurators are adept at crafting auras and illusions for both entertainment and other more seedy purposes. Their abilities also endow them with the ability to perform the occasional and often scoffed at healing spell, which they consider a mockery of their true talents. The spotlight is the only shine of fire that the Aurators truly care about, but there are some that say their powers wouldn't be nearly as strong if it was not for the great beam of sunlight that crests their mountaintop city.

Primary Races: Angel, Faerie, Bird, Illusion
Primary Classes: Wizard, Mystic, Cleric
Subtheme: Enchantments

Behind the Scenes

The Aurators magic may seem just for show, but much of it is for protection as well as an effective offense. While a few pickpockets work in the midst of the Aurators, most aim their eyes on the access to new magic rather than gold. Their interest in the powers that may be acquired through the possession of a stone called the Pureflame has created a good ally in the form of the Tectonic miners, who while having the ability to dig for the stone lack the knowledge of how to control its powers.

Knoll of Observance

The Knoll of Observance sits atop the highest mountain peak in the southern mountains of Kronos. Inhabitants travel from far and wide to experience the splendor and partake in the leisure of the Aurators. The Knoll itself is a weather fortified city protected from the harsh elements which is made up of many buildings connected by halls. Crystal-mosaic windows befit every wall of the city, reflecting and spreading as much light as possible in order to allow all its citizens to bask in the warm beam of sunlight that shines down on apex.

Seafarers of Pericles

"Land may be no place for a shark, but the sea is no place for a lion." - Sartan Drakescale, Captain of the Wellwisher

Life on the sea is one of danger and adventure, but it's also hard work. Whether it be diving for sunken treasure or navigating pirate waters to deliver goods on the other side of Kronos, being a seafarer is definitely no breeze. Brief respites in harbor towns allow for the travel of news between cargo ships on goods in demand or a visit to the local ale houses. Ship hands often sell their tales of excitement with traveling Aurators for a pretty price. The crews of many ships are made up of mostly Humans and Vedalkens. The occasional Elf or Merfolk may grace ship's deck, but neither are looked upon in too a kind manner. Sailors tend to be knowledgeable about the many areas of Kronos and each tends to have his or her own preference of ports to frequent. There is tell of a secret society among seafarers, a terrorist cell of pirates that invades cities and disrupts businesses related to mining operations as specific targets, probably for the precious metals. Most mentions of the rumor quickly pass with with a questioning of why it came up anyway and a return to the regular conversation without a second thought to the forgetful topic.

Primary Races: Human, Vedalken, Drake, Leviathan

Primary Classes: Rogue, Pirate, Wizard

Subtheme: Manipulation

Behind the Scenes

The Thoughtcrafters Cell is a compiled league of tactical psionic spies, interrogators, mind controllers, and manipulators. They are hellbent on infiltrating the tightly guarded ranks of the Merphites who they suspect of attempting to harness the power of the Eternal Storm to set every last surface of Kronos ablaze while they safely hide away in the depths of the seas. They've recently gained information that the Merphites are seeking a stone called the Pureflame, which can power their destructive machine, that the Tectonics are attempting to cultivate.

Sea of Pericles

The Sea of Pericles is a deathtrap for most land-lovers. Only the most brave and skillful sailors dare face the perils of the high seas that surround Kronos: merciless, bloodthirsty pirates; reef and rock-infested shipping routes; spontaneous pulse-storms; elemental sea creatures; water drakes; and underwater leviathans. The only thing that gives most seafarers ease is that their distance from the Eternal Storm makes for less intense pulse-storms and their combined hatred for all things fire-related.

Forgers

"We forge on through the Fiendfire." - Jorthos, Reservoir Blacksmith

The Forgers are a band of devilish artificers and blacksmiths. With their foundries they forge and supply all weapons to the inhabitants of Kronos. Being arms dealers, they tend to dislike competition and have the means to deal with them. While many might consider their best customers to be the religious savages of the Highlands or the pirates of Pericles, it is in fact the warring, militant regions of the Valley and the Scar that make up their most loyal clientele base. The Forgers tend to purchase much of the supplies for their good from the mines of the Tectonics. While it is a somewhat strained relationship due to the nature of the Forgers' business, the two groups do well to maintain a balance of respect for each other that allow them both to continue making capital. The Forgers have also found a knack for creation of golems and constructs which they to sell into servitude. The Aurators find these machinations to be of great amusement and often include them in their acts.

Primary Races: Devil, Construct, Golem, Ogre, Goblin

Primary Classes: Artificer, Warrior, Shaman

Subtheme: Artifacts

Behind the Scenes

With a monopoly on basic arms, the Forgers have taken to building destructive weapons infused with magic. Most recently, they have been contacted by the Merphites to build numerous pieces to one single machine. The Forgers are no fools and have come to the conclusion that the machine while have great destructive capabilities. If all goes to plan, the resilience of the fiends to fire is what pushes them to allow the Merphites to continue construction of their machine. In the meantime, the Forgers have begun to mold an army of golems to wreck havoc on any that survive the destructive wave of chaos that will come from the Merphites machine.

Fiendfire Reservoirs

The Fiendfire Reservoirs are made up of numerous calderas scattered across a volcanic wasteland where which a foundry has been at each. Each foundry is run by a different devil and although there is enough business to go around, there are sometimes territorial skirmishes. This is especially likely when a new reservoir is uncovered in the wasteland which also houses mineral goods. Many of these reservoirs dot the landscape surrounding a giant volcano which legend says is where the Pureflame was first mined. Ever since, they say the volcano burns to have its treasure returned to it.



"Worship the Combustion Idol; allow yourself to be engulfed in the flames of glory." - Cinder, Combustion Mage

If you can survive the wilds, perhaps you can survive the Igniters. While not extremely violent or volatile, the Igniters are fervently religious. The seemingly ever growing numbers of the Igniters worship the Combustion Idol. The Combustion Idol is a wooden statue carved in which is carved the form of a great six eyed, six armed, six legged creature. The idol itself gained its name from the fact that it can be set on fire, yet doesn't burn. Over time it has become the central component in the Igniter's religion and worship of fire as the essence of life. The interaction of the Igniters among most other folk on Kronos is limited to sermons on the all divine Combustion Idol and how everyone will eventually become part of the fire. To anyone not involved with the Igniters though, this appears as little more than some strange ritualistic ceremony in which the Igniters waves around torches and set things on fire; sometimes resorting to self-immolation when nothing else of flammability is within reach. Overall, the Igniters are good-natured, but considered savages.

Primary Races: Goblin, Beast, Giant

Primary Classes: Warrior, Shaman, Berserker

Subtheme: Tokens

Behind the Scenes

Although thought of as mere savages by most, the Igniters are truly righteous in their own minds. Despite the occasional sacrifice of a worshipper to the Combustion Idol, they live by a strict code of conduct which is communicated by the idol. Its main message is if it can become fire, it should become fire. The idol prefers that the Igniters keep to themselves as it finds comfort and safety among its worshippers. It has always had a penchant for precious stones though that none of the shamans can understand, but they think it may have to do with the concave spot covered with grooves that lies at the idol's center.

Tinderspark Highlands

The Tinderspark Highlands are a woodland realm plagued by wildfires. Surprisingly, the cause of the majority of wildfires stems from lightning pulse-storms which occur more frequently in the Tinderspark Highlands than anywhere else on Kronos. These wildfires act as beacons for the migration and worship of many Igniter sects. To anyone from outside the territory, these wildfires are rather seen as an obvious safety hazard. Granted, there are small settlements in the Highlands, and with the exception of the fiends from the south, all others tend to reside as close to the borders as possible.



Order of the Valley



"The Valley shall remain unscathed. The Valley shall remain bountiful. The Valley shall remain pristine." - Nastor, King of the Valley

If it wasn't for all the warfare, Angelfire Valley would be close to a utopia. Well, that is if a utopia was run in the manner of a feudal monarchy and ruled over by a tyrannical "pacifist" king. King Nastor has long presided over his kingdom, seeking the absolute protection of his servants from the monstrous evil of the neighboring Eclipse militias. War has been so constant in the two regions that it has become a part of daily life in the Valley. Regular warfare has gone by the wayside though as the Eclipses have resorted to guerilla warfare, a strategy that Nastor has had troubles combating. While the King has his concern, many in the only truly unified nation, aside from the Merphites, sometimes question why they are in a war or how the war even started. Some say it began when Nastor came to power after a rebellious coup on the previous king and attempted to cleanse the Scar of its nomadic inhabitants, claiming they had succumbed to some powerful, dark force and posed a true threat. Others say the Valley was attacked first and led to the formation of the first King's Army.

Primary Races: Human, Goat, Cat, Angel

Primary Classes: Knight, Cleric, Druid

Subtheme: Tokens

Behind the Scenes

King Nastor believes in the present tense of preservation. His nation caught in a perpetual war with the horrid guerilla Eclipse contingents, he has begun to lose hope that he will ever see an end to his struggle in his lifetime. Nastor is under the serious belief that the Eclipse have gained support from a rumored society of mind controllers who he suspects are spreading fear throughout his kingdom and causing the standstill in the war. Nastor seeks an army that will not fold to such tactics and has conscripted the funding of an army of golems from the Forgers in order to finally force his enemy into submission without further bloodshed.

Angelfire Valley

Angelfire Valley is a fertile land with pleasant and mostly happy servants. Although citizens are sometimes conscripted into the King's Army against their own will, they know they will be serving a benevolent cause as they fight side by side with their brethren against the charging hordes of horrors and shadow soldiers of the Eclipse militias. Other service opportunities include the King's court, which holds a council of Angelic advisors and his personal bodyguard which is built from only the most ferocious cat and goat men.

The Eclipse

"True pain and suffering comes from the light, not the dark." - Balesh, Moonlite Commando

In the dark of night, squads of men patrol the boundaries of Eclipse settlements protecting their people. During the light of day, packs of monsters prowl the the boundaries of the their predators. The two are one in the same. After a great Turbulent storm struck the area and turned it into the barren Scar. The refuge inhabitants living there that had flooded over from the Valley Rebellion were transformed into a cursed race of men. During the night the people of the Eclipse settlements retain their human form, but during the daylight they transform into aberrant horrors; ghostly, incorporeal entities; and deadly shadows people. People outside of the Scar call them "Glowers" due to a silky sheen that bounces off their mutated forms. There terrible have been stories that when an Eclipse is killed in human form that they rise during the day in their Glower form until they are killed again. Both the Eclipse and the Glowers appear to fear fire and light, often times extinguishing torches on sight. It is also said if you see an Eclipse in a concentrated silver of moonlight, they appear in their Glower form.

Primary Races: Human, Horror, Shade, Spirit

Primary Classes: Soldier, Mercenary, Rebel

Subtheme: Recursion

Behind the Scenes

Although the Eclipse may appear as the though they turn into monsters when they change into Glowers, they manage to maintain their human mentality and personality. The real difference is that the Eclipse feel at peace in the darkness, but more powerful, aggressive, and protective when they transform in the light into their Glower form. The leader of the roaming Hollow City is in actuality Cyril, the brother of King Nastor. The two led the Valley Rebellion and Nastor betrayed Cyril in a move to take power. Then, Nastor attempted to have everyone involved in the rebellion assassinated as to not be revealed as an original rebel. Cyril has been protecting himself and other refuges ever since.

The Scar

The Scar is a desolate scab on the face of Kronos. The scorched earth and charred soil is all that remains of a once lush brushland that fell victim to the most devastating Turbulent ever seen. In an instant, a giant wave of lightning struck and woodland groves became petrified forests, rural villages became soot and ash, and men become monsters. Militant settlements now form the backbone of what little civilization the Scar can sustain. The most populated Eclipse settlements is a group of mobile caravans known as The Hollow City.

Reclaimers

"To understand ourselves, we must first understand our past." - Obsidian, Elder Relic Harvester

Deep within the misty, forgotten wilderness of the Reclaimed Realms live the Reclaimers. These groups seek to uncover more about themselves and the world around them by studying the history etched into everything they find. Reclaimers don't let the idea of death control them as they've learned, albeit far from perfect, the magic of resurrection. Curators of their own history, they use the power of fire as they burn their deceased on pyres to begin life in a new existence. The general result is the mortal coil remains attached to a now charred and zombified body of an elder Reclaimer, but sometimes the body burns to the bones and they survive as a sentient skeleton. Even within an undead state the Reclaimers continue to study. Given their magic longevity, some Reclaimers have used that extended time to uncover long hidden secrets and buried treasures which have funded expeditions as far as the Tinderspark Highlands. When the Reclaimers find something of more historical importance, they often weigh that a greater attribute than monetary value and place the relic in a museum. Sometimes it can take a Reclaimer decades beyond resurrection to decipher cryptic puzzles or encoded maps.

Primary Races: Elf, Zombie, Troll, Plant, Skeleton
Primary Classes: Druid, Shaman, Warrior
Subtheme: Recursion

Behind the Scenes

Despite their best efforts, there is one thing that the Reclaimers have yet to uncover which is the most puzzling of all, why is all of the history of Kronos shrouded in mystery? The leader of the Reclaimers, the dark skeleton Obsidian, believes he has an idea and the answers all starts with a small idol which was hidden away in the depths of Kronos a few centuries ago. According to a manuscript found in the remains of a shipwreck at the bottom of the Seas of Pericles the idol was uncovered by previous Reclaimers, but was quickly lost in a scuffle with some unknown force

Reclaimed Realms

The Reclaimed Realms are a steaming jungle of ruins filled with treasures from before the Eternal Storm came about. What was once a great kingdom was lost when it was destroyed by wind pulse-storms. The Reclaimers took to the land originally because it has excellent foil to farm upon, but they soon found treasures that revealed more about the true nature of the past of themselves and Kronos. Along with their treasures the ruins also come complete with danger as they are laden with death traps and natural hazards.



"What great teeth it has! It must be mine!" - Welse Hugtar IV, Extreme Zoologist

Adventures among the Basin Isles may be small, but they always reap the benefit of knowledge. Pursuing creatures, extracting plant specimens, finding undiscovered animals that sprout up all the time; these are the adventures of the Collectors. Primitive scientists, herbologists, florists, zoologists, big game hunters, animal trappers, specimen gatherers, and the occasional poachers of endangered species make up the numbers of these groups. If the world of the past is what interests the Reclaimers, pursuit of knowledge and intrigue of the present and future is what interests the Collectors. While their studies have allowed for some advancements, the Collectors still feel as though their main skills are in the field of economics. The Collectors tend to have a hand in most exchange of goods on Kronos. Sometimes it involves imposing taxes on shipping routes, other times it involves outright theft and transfer of goods. With the funds collected from their less than desirable activities, the Collectors are able to continue the work on their more mutually beneficial endeavors.

Primary Races: Elf, Human, Beast, Bird
Primary Classes: Wizard, Rogue, Pirate
Subtheme: Manipulation

Behind the Scenes

Ventures of the Collectors behind closed doors are more often about the gritty side of things than the extravagant hunts, expeditions, expositions, and travelings. Collectors have recently found that beyond some of their more dubious operations relating to taxes and theft that many in their service are quite good at concocting poisons from the same specimens they create medicines from. Therefore it is only natural that the Collectors begin to capitalize on these shady dealings and enter into the world of subterfuge, espionage, sabotage, and counterintelligence gathering. This shift in business comes much to the chagrin of both the Aurators and Seafarers of Pericles who have become aware of such confidential activities.

Basin Isles

The Basin Isles are an area teeming with peculiar wildlife and lush flora and fauna. Every isle acts as a breeding ground that is host to its own plethora of animals, each of which is slightly different than the next. Some of these species have commercial uses, but others are just collectively interesting enough to capture and study. There are many who find a great time in the thrill of hunting and mounting these prized possessions on their walls. The exotic plant life finds its way into much of the cuisine and medicine found on Kronos.



"Stay off the beach... if you know what's good for you." - Pulos, Merphite Sentry

The Merphites are an ascetic military state and reclusive civilization primarily made up of merfolk. Along with the merfolk are various contingents of elementals and weirds, all who dwell on the volcanic island known as the Swell. Merphite society subsists off the earnings from their tradecraft of magical, technological research and development. The Merphites are master craftsmen in regards to creating magical machines for various practical uses across Kronos, as well as for military use. The extent of the Merphites military operations remains strictly defensive and breeches no further than the waters surrounding their island. While one might think that merfolk surviving on a volcanic island would be nonsense, they would be correct according to tradition, the Merphites have become accustomed and acclimated to the heat. The few who have visited the molten city have said they've even seen merfolk swim right through lava when their bodies have been fused with a special elemental ointment. Outside of defensive machines, the Merphite also have a special command units of soldiers that patrol the island on flying manta rays.

Primary Races: Merfolk, Elemental, Weird, Manta

Primary Classes: Wizard, Artificer, Soldier

Subtheme: Artifacts

Behind the Scenes

While the Merphite island is home to storehouses of artifacts and machines of various technology, the main goal of the Merphites is to perfect a project called the Decimation Stone. From experiments and extensive testing in regards to portals to other dimensions, with this machine they plan to dig into the center of the Kronos in order to create a fluctuation to open a portal through the Eternal Storm, the other side of which they believe will lead them to a paradise. Unfortunately, this fluctuation will come at the cost of every other soul on Kronos as the surface of the earth is engulfed in a world-ending storm of raging inferno while the Merphites wait the destruction out underwater, but that's a sacrifice the Merphite are willing to make. Now all they need is a power source.

The Swell

The Swell rests above a volcanic funnel to the core of Kronos. It's not the most ideal location to maintain a society, but the Merphite manage. Jagged patches of rocks work a natural defense that keeps away most pirate ships and unwanted visitors. Also, the hot springs surrounding the island act as the perfect breeding grounds for the deadly Molten-tail Mantas, which tend to enjoy the heat of the bubbling waters.



*"If we keep digging, we're bound to find something eventually." - Vargas,
Tectonic Foreman*

Breaking earth, hollowing out caves, navigating canyons, all for what, rocks? To the Tectonics, the goal of digging isn't merely rocks. The Tectonics have built up a commercial empire on their skills of finding and redistributing minerals, material resources, precious stones, and metals. Every once in a while, groups of Tectonics uncover buried ruins, which they then sell access to the Reclaimers for gain a profit, but their main mission is to dig. The deposits that the Tectonics find eventually become melted into weapons by the Forgers for use by both of the warring nations of the north. The stones they recover are used in the decorative crafts of the Aurator artisans. Everything the Tectonics dig up has a use and the Tectonics know exactly who will want them. Living in the Badlands allows for the isolation and the focus of work. No other area on Kronos has such a bountiful repository of natural resources as the Badlands, but not other place is as similarly dangerous due to natural hazards. The Tectonics are used to the obstacles by now and its become a daily part of life. Fortunes come at a price and every Tectonic miner knows that price can eventually lead to death.

Primary Races: Dwarf, Goat, Giant, Beast, Wurms
Primary Classes: Mystic, Warrior, Monk
Subtheme: Enchantments

Behind the Scenes

While the Tectonics know that they are being used by the Aurators to uncover the Pureflame stone, they'd rather have it in the hands of the Aurators than the despicable Merphites, who offered more for its discovery. The Tectonics have a plan to steal back the Pureflame once the Aurators have deciphered its power and seek to use it to pursue greater treasures hidden deep within Kronos. In addition, the Tectonics plan to use the Pureflame as a conduit source of magical power by creating protective wards and enchantment spells to defend against the harsh living conditions and predators found in the Alabaster Badlands.

Alabaster Badlands

The Alabaster Badlands are a mixture of a labyrinth of caves, canyons, and ravines surrounded by seas of desert dunes. Perils of the Badlands include sand wurms, ferocious desert beasts, menacing giants, wind pulse-storms that create dust bowls, heat exhaustion, and dehydration. So, considering the dangers, what makes the Alabaster Badlands so compelling to the dwarves and satyrs that live there? The bounties below the surface, of course.