Background

History and Culture of the Faction

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History

The Republic of the Undergrowth (Anti-Magic Faction)

Discovery of "new" Magic

The Shaded People, they called themselves. Under the protective shadow and aegis of their royal family, the lineage of Valanidiá Royal Family. Their’s was a humble Kingdom, small but wealthy and peaceful.

When what they knew of Magic expanded beyond just healing, the people were elated. A tool for those weak of body, a shield to protect the young and a weapon to vanquish any that would dare disturb their peace.

Reluctant Acceptance of Magic

What many saw as boon for their people, for their neighbors and kin, some saw it as a path to power. Encouraged by **INSERT MAGIC FACTION HERE**, they amassed power and knowledge, admired by their peers. Many people were mistrusting of these new and potentially dangerous eccentrics, and met them with scorn.

But Melia Valanidiá (Lizard), Queen of the Undergrowth, bid them to meet these new developments with an open heart and mind. As an example to her people, she created the title of Court Magician, and welcomed a young and talented mage into her court. To reflect this, some cities and towns gave mages various occupations, coming with both duties and privileges. And so, mages started to find their place among the ruling class and the common people, slowly integrating with the Kingdom.

Devastation caused by Magic

It seemed that magic would become a fact of life in the Kingdom, a path to plenty and growth, but life was not so kind. One day suddenly, pillagers wielding magic started attacking villages and towns across the country, quickly overwhelming the guards who were unused to combat with magic.

And the few towns that possessed a local mage barely fared any better, with most of their own mages being researcher woefully unprepared for combat. Seeing the devastation caused by magic, and the ineffectiveness of their own mages, the people that were mistrusting of mages felt vindicated. The voices of discontent grew, but it did not yet escalate into violence.

Training to combat Mages

The queen cautioned her people not to be rash, but did not remain idle. Under the guidance of the Court Mage and the High Strategist of the Kingdom, she developed strategies to counter mages and started training her soldiers in anti-magic combat. Some mages left, angered that the crown would rather prepare to fight against them, instead of attempting to strengthen their own ranks.

The Queen's Murder

But before the training could really take off, a group of mages attacked the Palace in the night. With their training barely begun, the guards crumbled beneath the might of the first expert combat mages they encountered. The queen was slain, and the Court Magician was nowhere to be found.

The following Chaos

With their queen slain, their palace plundered, their armies shattered, and their people broken by grief, a period of unrest and lawlessness started. The remaining mages quickly found themselves exiled, if they were lucky.

The Queen was young, and as such had no direct heir. The royal family has always been small, and as misfortune would have it, the only viable candidate for Kingship, her brother, had gone on a journey (to discover something? WIP). Mired by grief and guilt, few dared to try and claim the throne. The ones that did try found themselves unable to obtain proper support from the remaining court, let alone the citizens.

Return to Order

Once some semblance of peace was restored to the Kingdom, two things had become clear: Firstly, that mages, once they delved deeply into the secrets of magic, attained powers no mere mortals should possess. It put them above their fellow people, and gave them leave to oppress them or even kill them at their leisure. Magic had to be forbidden. (This did not include healing magic, which existed long before the current known magic. To avoid any issues with their new laws, healing magic was considered a separate category from magic altogether.)

And secondly, they realized that having a sole ruler will leave uncertainty and chaos in the event of their untimely death, and so decided to create a ruling council instead. The council consisted of the highest members of the court, and the three citizens that were critical in restoring peace and order to the kingdom. Additionally, in honor of their history, they reserved a spot on the council for the queen’s brother should he ever return.

As long as all members of the council stay loyal to the newly christened Republic, a brighter future surely lays ahead of them…

Culture

Architecture & Community

Even before it became a republic, the people of the undergrowth preferred to live in close-knit communities, both socially and politically.

Preferred Architecture

With their stretch of the forest being populated by enormous trees and many cliffs, their buildings had been almost exclusively built in their shade, close to the ground. They preferred to build wide instead of tall, but would not shy away from taller buildings if the area they could use for building was too small.

Close-knit Communities

Multiple families lived in large buildings, often even building complexes, with villages with smaller populations sometimes even sharing only a single building complex. That meant that you could always run errands quickly and visit whoever you liked without problem, and that also meant that children could roam around the village without fear or direct supervision by their parents. After all, there was always someone there to watch over them.

Escape from Civilization for Privacy

That safety and security unfortunately had a drawback, as privacy was often lacking. With so many people living in a single area, you were never truly far from someone else. This led to the occasional person deciding to move away and live completely on their own, but few succeeded. Most returned after a while, unprepared to brave the dangers of the forest alone, and those even less prepared died. But every so often, people managed to not just survive alone, but also thrive.

Politics

And politically, despite being a monarchy, many of the royal court’s decisions were made by popular vote, or at least with the agreement of a few chosen representatives from amongst the populace. The final decision lay with the current monarch of course, but no monarchs in recent history had overturned decision made by the populace (largely because they were clever enough to led them decide on things they knew would lead to a result in the monarch’s favor).

Now with the last queen dead, and the monarchy abolished, the council ruled largely the same, but with far less decisiveness. Too many conflicting opinions often led to a decrease in efficiency.

Artifact

Backstory

First Discovery

Three generations ago, when the last queen’s great-grandfather still ruled, a powerful earthquake unveiled a magnificent man-made cave, carved into the heart of a cliff, and within its center sat a peculiar object that would later be recognized as an artifact.
The artifact seemed unassuming at first glance, just a particularly smooth metallic stone. The surrounding it was found in were rather conspicuous, so everyone suspected it to be an object of great importance.

Development of a Settlement

But much like the stone structure surrounding it, it proved resistant to any attempts to move or damage it. In the attempt to figure out its secrets, many interested parties, and their families moved to the surrounding area. It was supposed to be a short project of a few weeks, but in time, weeks turned to months and months to years. The people had begun to settle down, and a small town was born.

While the artifact remained a mystery, the quest for more durable tools strong enough to affect it led to a rapid growth in smithing techniques and discovery of more powerful alloys. With their unbelievable advancement in the forging industry, the town experienced a rapid increase in immigration, and grew to become a bustling city.

Activation of the Artifact

Many years passed, with any attempts to discover the secrets of the artifact having long since ceased. From time to time, a few curious people brave the maze to lay their eyes upon it, hoping against all reason that it would reveal its truth to them. Some other less curious people braved the maze out of boredom, and it was one of these people that first noticed the change in the artifact. One day, a group of kids returned from the cave in excitement, eager to report that the artifact had started glowing! Skeptical, but nonetheless curious, two guards followed them back to the artifact.

Tragedy inside the Artifacts Cave

After multiple hours, when people began noticing their absence and growing restless, a single figure emerged from the depths. It was one of the children, covered in blood and littered with numerous cuts, limping towards the people of the city. Upon reaching the exit they collapsed

without a word, their face streaked with tears.

According to them, lifeless imitations of people crafted from solid light started appearing en masse once they neared the artifact, and the soldiers quickly found themselves outmatched. They stood their ground, ready to sacrifice their lives for the children. But the real horror had only begun. Upon their attempt to return, they found the way back was already filled with even more constructs, dashing any hopes of a save getaway. One of them managed to brave the way back, but few would dare say that the survivor was fortunate.

Aftereffects of the Tragedy lasting until Today

And so, the entrance was declared of limits for civilians, henceforth watched over by a team of elite guards. Thankfully, none of the constructs ventured outside of the cave, with as good as none showing their faces anywhere close to the entrance.

The entrance remained under watch, but sometimes soldiers or adventurers enter the cave and brave the outer areas for training. The true danger began deep within its halls, and few where foolish enough to brave its depths again. To this day, the child from that one faithful day was the last person to lay their eyes on the artifact.

What kind of artifact does the faction possess?

- The actual artifact is found within a cave, but anything inside of its territory (the cave) is considered part of the artifact
- Produces artificial constructs imitating anyone or anything that has passed through its halls in the last 100 years (clones random units from the Anti-Magic Faction *(and any Player Parties that have entered the maze in prior runs) <- only an idea, most likely won't be implemented*)

What are they doing with the artifact?

- They keep it tightly guarded
- Use it for training occasionally, and sometimes let adventurers try their luck inside the maze

When and how did the artifact get to the faction?

- It remained undiscovered inside the heart of a cliff ever since the ancient civilization left it there
- The entrance was covered in a cave in far later, and very likely unrelated to ancient civilization
- It was uncovered after a powerful earthquake

When did the faction discover the artifact?

- More than a hundred years ago, during the time of the last queens great-grandfather

How much does the Faction know about the artifact?

- They only know what they can observe with their eyes
- They have not figured out exactly what the conditions are for people to be replicated as constructs
- No one has ever come close enough to turn it off, if such a thing is even possible