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BACKSTORY

## *Boredom and Quintessence*

Thousands of years ago, Elves, Dwarves, and Humes lived ignorant of each other’s existence. Yet each independently developed the mystical powers of Earth, Fire, Water, and Air*. And as their powers grew, so did the marvels that Magic brought.* Foremost of these marvels was the ability to prevent unnatural death and circumvent any disaster; to merely incur discomfort instead of death, grief instead of pain. Thus each society thus grew and prospered. But such was the power and facility of Magic that in time, each society grew complacent and worst of all, bored. It seems that the blessing of an easy life brought with it the curse of ennui.

In time a fifth element, Quintessence, was found and harnessed by a handful of the most powerful mages in each Realm. Its use tore down the barriers between Realms and eventually Humes and Dwarves and Elves met. The initial curiosity at meeting relieved tedium on all sides but only lasted a short time. It wasn’t long before an incident turned friendly relations into aggressive confrontations. To this day, all three races tell a different story of what started the war and yet all agree: it was welcome relief to their boredom! *However, since no race could kill another, warfare became an exercise in making each other’s lives as uncomfortable as possible. This is the start of the Grief Wars.*

## *The Grief Wars and Now-Here*

This warring lasted for centuries, fueled as it was by the vicious cycle of a war as a relief to boredom. And while no one died, buildings, forests, farms, towns and entire landscapes were destroyed... creatures were imprisoned and tortured by the mere act of being held against their will... others were flung across their lands, often hundreds if not thousands of miles from their home territory... strange and harmful apparitions were conjured to torment the already distraught... and much, much more. The Griefing lasted long and dug deep and was hurtful to the social fabric of all three realms. And while most research focused on The War, the same Magical exploration that initially opened up the Three Realms eventually found a fourth realm unlike any other. It was desolate and forlorn. It was unoccupied and in constant night with magic all but nullified in most areas. The exploration of this land and its surrounding cosmos subsumed some of the boredom that fueled the war but not enough to stop them completely. *With incredible foresight that would change history for the better, the initial explorers of this land decided that this new realm would be a neutral zone, an area where one race could not grief another.*  The subdued nature of magic in this realm, controlled immigration to the New Realm, and certain protective spells all helped in their quest for peace. Eventually, the three races in fact did set up a small, peaceable community on this land, on a place out in the middle of nowhere, seemingly apart from space and time and magic... *a place known by the locals as Now-Here.*

## *Games and Peace*

Back on the original Three Realms, the Grief Wars continued. Aware of the continued lack of mutual understanding between the races and seeing no end to The Wars due to the vicious cycle of a boring war fueled by boredom, members of the Now-Here community set about spreading their peaceable environment by introducing The Games: Archery, Races, Bowling, and more. Each game was based on a form of Griefing warfare which was translated into a friendly competition. The Games were a tremendous success at entertaining the races and in time led to the end of the Grief Wars. In honor of the dedication a community in the middle of nowhere had to ending the war, a castle funded by the Leaders of all three races was erected to house the new peaceful political structure that emerged after The Wars.

At mighty Castle Now-Here, the various members of the Council of Magicians hold session maintaining peace among the Realms. For while the races are not particularly keen to resume Griefing, individual Dwarv, Hum, or Elv may still carry the same preconceptions and biases from centuries or millennia ago and stir up trouble. Only the Council at Now-Here can effectively help keep the peace and arbitrate disputes between the races between and between the realms. As well, Now-Here Arena was set up next to the Castle to host the yearly Inter-Realm Olympiads in an effort to promote racial understanding and relieve boredom.

*So while true peace currently reigns over the Four Realms, old propaganda and beliefs lay dormant, waiting for a spark to stir up old angers. And at the same time, a new menace appears on the magical horizon ready to disrupt a whole universe...*

PLOT

The Main plot, dealing as it does with the mistakes of the Elementals, the guidance of the Tri-V, and the fixing of the Disruptures, provides the main motivation for narrative discovery in the game. It also provides the main 3 Act timing against which the rest of the game and story will be played out. The Physics plot is secondary to the above story but intricately and inexorably weaves itself into the Player’s Story (Narrative Experience + Game Experience = Player’s Story). These plots weave in and out of each other in Acts 1 and 2 and fully merge in the resolution of Act 3 which requires the Physics knowledge you have gained in the Secondary Plot to resolve the problem presented in the Main Plot. Hence the game narrative as presented in the Main plot will be roughly 45% of our narrative while the pedagogical narrative as presented in our Secondary plot will be roughly 10% of our narrative.

The remaining 15% will be in sub-plots that add texture and depth to our world but are not as closely coupled to the Main or Second plot above. They will still weave and cross the other plots however. For example, the Elemental Plots are mostly for spell discovery. However, we can also use this plot to expound on the truth behind Aristotle’s Elements and how they shaped Physics for thousands of years; this naturally will have something to do with the Secondary Plot. As well, the racial plots are mostly for back-story discovery. However, we will also use this plot to expound on peace, war, grief, xenophobia, etc; this will naturally have something to do with our Grief Wars plot and our Main Plot. The Sub-Plots have independent 3 Act structures that do not map to the Main Acts at all. Hence, a person could visit the Grief wars and progress quite independent of how well the player is doing at fixing the Disruptures.

All the narrative will be doled out during the players journeys through Space (throughout The Realms) and Time (between The Grief Wars and Realm’s End). The Quest Lines are coupled to the Plot Lines; there is at least one per each. Hence the discovery of plot elements within our game is tied into our Quest system. While all Questlines will have opportunity for solo and group play, their balance can change from act to act within a Questline. We therefore make note if most of the plot elements are found by playing alone (solo quests) or by joining other student-players in cooperative learn-play (group quests). Other methods to dole out narrative include buying information (like buying “Grief Wars: the abridged version” at a local bookstore), finding it through world exploration (such as time traveling to see the Grief War plot unfold), or being told by NPCs (clicking “talk” on random individuals to be told various different opinions about the Grief Wars).

## Main Plot: *The Elementals and The Disruptures*

Where we learn the threat the Disruptures present to all Realms, how the Elemental’s erroneous solution was based on insufficient evidence, and how the player et al. attempt to uncover the true nature of the Disruptures and nullify its threat.

**Act 1: The Journey of Discovery  
Place: The Three Realms  
Time: Present +/- 500 years  
Quest: Solo**  
About 10 years ago, members of The Council started to notice and report unpredictable disruptions in Magic throughout the Realms. Some council members had even seen visual manifestation of this effect which came to be known as “Disruptures”. They pop up randomly, cause Mana to be drained from the land, and can be dangerous to touch. Up until now, these events have been sparse and they have always been able to be dispelled away. Unfortunately, the Disruptures have been on the rise and it’s getting harder to make them go away.

The majority of The Council does not believe this rise to be a major problem. In particular The Elemental Council, representing Air, Earth, Wind and Fire, believe they already know how to fix these Disruptures once and for all. They believe that the Greif Wars used up so much magical energy, that the Disruptures are the result of a universal magical deficit; that is why they drain Mana from the land. Thus, the solution is in the form of the powerful spell to dramatically augment the magical levels in all Realms. However, another group within the Council known as the Triumvirate does not agree with this conclusion or in acting so hastily. They feel that more investigation is necessary before any more spells are thrown at the problem. As the Triumvirate are ancient and honored members of The Council, their advice is heeded and it is agreed to select several individuals to continue to study the Disruptures until such time as the Elemental’s spell cast becomes inevitable.

You and others are thus summoned by the Triumvirate and Elemental Council to investigate these Disruptures. You were chosen by the latter because your demonstrated skills in the Games will be useful and accepted by the former because they believe you are no threat to their schemes. To help you on this task, the Council agrees to give you access to a new school of magic: Quintessence. This will allow you to time travel, space travel, and overall do thing miraculous things in what is already a miraculous land!

To start your investigation, both groups tell you of an ancient knowledge that might be relevant to the problem. Long before Magic took over every facet of life, society was based on another set of principles. In fact, there are still are remnants of this knowledge spread throughout these Realms, as holdouts from another era (like the Amish or Amazon Tribes in our world). You quickly find out that in these lands, people still recall notable teachers like Ary the Dwarv, Galy the Elv, and Iza the Hum who could do amazing things with this ancient knowledge. Thus informed, you time- and space-skip all along the Realms and History in search for more information that could help fix the Disruptures. During these investigations, you come in contact with many Peoples and different adventures.

Over time, you discover two important things:  
 1) You have discovered that even with the Elemental’s spell, in the future the Disruptures continue to take over the lands. Travel far enough to the future and the world is consumed by them. As the Disruptures consume each Realm, the survivors take refuge in Now-Here. Thus the Castle becomes a central locus for when a player is traveling through time. However the devastation is so vast and Now-Here was never meant for a large population so that in time, all realms are desolate of anyone and merely filled with inanimate objects and Disruptures.   
2) Unlike Energy, Mana is a non-conserved quantity: the more we use of it, the more we make it. Hence during the Grief Wars, so much Magic was used that as much as 10 times as much was produced so that the world is currently bursting at the seams with magical energies! Hence, the Disruptures are directly due to the overuse of magic during the Grief Wars but not because The Wars drained Magic but because they created too much of it.

Feeling that you have found an important piece of the puzzle, you tell Elementals of your findings. Their reception is not what you expected.

**Act 2: The Council’s Haste  
Place: The Three Realms and Now-Here (The Four Realms)  
Time: Present +/- 1000 years  
Quest: Solo and Group**

The Council of Magicians entrusted the solution of the Disruptures to the Quintessence and Elemental Council. So while both Councils have sent you to investigate the Disruptures seemingly in earnest, the Elementals truly intended it only to be a wild goose chase. They only complied with the Tri-V’s recommendation to keep them occupied for the longest time possible while they finish their plans, which ultimately consist of casting the spell to end the Disruptures no matter what you find. They staunchly hold on to the belief that they and they alone can solve the Disruptures through magic. The main magical motivation for this course of action is that they only took the time to see Drain Disruptures. They therefore erroneously conclude that the solution is to cast a spell to dump a tremendous amount of Mana into the Disruptures so that their appetite for Mana is sated. That should then shut the Disruptures once and for all. Their main political and individual motivations are vast and complex.

What you have actually discovered is that their spell actually causes the Disruptures to dramatically spread and eventually destroy all the Realms. You need to stop this spell from being cast as it will accelerate the process of destruction. To do this, you will need to convince each member of the Elemental Council (or perhaps the Council of Magicians at large) of why their individual reason for casting the spell is incorrect. If you can do this, there may not be enough Elementals left willing to cast the spell! Because the Elementals fear that you might be saying this to undermine their political power and cast a shadow on their magical competence, they will actively try to stymie your investigation by sending minions to divert you or by casting destructive or distracting spells in your vicinity or setting you on tasks to actively disprove the reasoning you present.

In the process of convincing the Elementals not to cast the spell, you learn how to properly stop the Disruptures. For while The Elementals came to their solution based on their hasty observation of only Drain Disruptures, you came to your conclusion through investigation, careful experimentation, and by understanding both the physical as well as magical laws of the Realms. It turns out that The Disruptures true nature is the root of its solution. While the Elementals l advocates using large amounts of Magic because of a perceived lack of magic, the correct answer is to bleed the existing energy in a way that doesn’t use magic (since any amount of magic used would produce more magic than it relieves!). Hence the solution is not to feed a Disruption, but to lance them like a boil and “drain” off the magical energies! How will this be done? To be continued!

**Act 3: Physics Adventures in Space and Time   
Place: The Three Realms   
Time: Future and Past; +/- 2000 years  
Quest: Solo and Group**  
Having successfully prevented the Elementals from casting the wrong spell, you partner up with them, the Tri-V, and their other selected investigators to go about finding a permanent solution. Eventually, you find ways to very effectively make Disruptures go away. While you make good progress with the individual Disruptures, as it turns out The Disruptures have done too much damage over space and time for these measures to be permanent. Thus you are slowing the problem down but not eliminating it all together.

After some further investigation, the ultimate solution is found. It is in the form a spell called the Arch Spell. It is a complicated sequence of spells cast throughout space and throughout time which will fix the Space-Time fabric. Each spell in this sequence represents an individual voussoir... for example going back to the Grief Wars and set off a Null Bomb to nullify magic and going to the future to collect sample measurements of what is left of the Realms would represent one voussoir each in the past and future. Once you have placed enough V. Spells though space and time, you will need to return to the present time Now-Here to cast the Keystone Spell, the one spell that will hold all the rest together and the fabric of space and time together! After a successful casting, the Disruptures can now be eliminated forever. You set about eliminating individual Disruptures once again and note that they are truly going away this time! A few “boss” Disruptures later and the past, present, and future are Disrupture free forever! The Realms Rejoice. The player most likely quits his game account. The End.

## Secondary Plot: *The Ancient Art of Physics*

This is the story of how Physics was forgotten, rediscovered, and then applied to banish the Disruptures in all Four Realms.

**Act 1: Physics Forgotten  
Place: The Three Realms  
Time: Present and Past (<200 years)   
Quest: Solo  
Pedagogy: Equations and Trigonometry**

The ancient knowledge the Council sends you to investigate was lost (or suppressed) when Magic took over. It is is not strictly forgotten though; there are areas in the Realms that are still hold on to remnant of this knowledge, some revering it, others vilifying it. Each Realm has one of each area and since both the like and dislike of the subject can be used to lend insight into subject itself, these villages form the starting point for the player’s investigation. It is here that the player finally learns what the ancient knowledge was called, Physics.

Eventually, the player will be motivated to travel to the near past and future of the realms to better understand this knowledge. They will then be introduced to the many points of view about physics, flavored by race, time, and individual. *Along your travels you can’t help but pick up the old language of this old art, known as “Math”.* It is here that the basic organization and views of physics are first encountered. What the player finds in these villages will be motivation for near time-travel as the player sees how these villages came to be and how their attitudes have changed over time. *And while these initial investigations tell you nothing useful towards the Disruptures, the way that Physics approaches investigation and organizing of events gives you fresh insight into how you can try to understand the Disruptures.*

**Ac t 2: Physics Relearned  
Place: The Four Realms  
Time: Past (< 1000 years)  
Quest: Solo and some Group  
Pedagogy: Kinematics OR Dynamics**As you learn its history, so do you start learning the art. Using Physics to do things proves to be interesting, fun, and sometimes very profitable. Having picked up the language makes it easier for you to begin to learn the basics of Physics. This in turn leads you to apply the same way of reasoning to the Disruptures problem and leads you to discover the Disruptures true nature in the excess, not lack, of mana in the realms. You are therefore surprised when you tell the Elementals of these results and it turns out they are all (all?) anti-magic supporters and will not heed your advice!   
  
Because your knowledge of the Disruptures true nature is based on your physics explorations, the Elementals are un-swayed in their commitment to cast their spell. Yet each holds a unique misconception which is the lynchpin of their lack of belief in Physics. If you can rid them of that misconception, they might believe your arguments after all*. As such, you fine tune your physics knowledge and proceed to produce enough evidence (in either kinematics or dynamics) to rid the individual Elemental of their misconception.*  In doing this you not only finally shed your own personal biases towards Physics but the corrected Elemental will no longer participate in the spell cast. Once enough Elementals are thus corrected, they join you and the Tri V in an all out effort to learn all you can about Physics in an attempt to put an end to the Disruptures once and for all.

*Thus, as a result of your efforts to convince the Elementals, you discover that the true nature of the Disruptures leads the way towards finally eliminating them all.*

**Act 3: Physics Applied  
Place: The Three Realms   
Time: Future and Past; +/- 2000 years  
Quests: Group and some Solo  
Pedagogy: Dynamics OR Kinematics**  
Now united, it seems clear that Physics might still have some use. The Elementals, The Triumverite, and all the Players are now united in an attempt to find the real solution to the Disruptures using physics. *As such, they push your exploration, experimentation, and investigation to a frenzied pace where you learn some of the most advanced physics the Realms have to offer (either dynamics or kinematics; whichever was not taken in Act2)*. It is soon found that using the ancient art of physics, a Disrupture can be sated in a way that does not create more Disruptures. This provides a clue to the final solution and also a good stop gap measure. By using physics to remove a Disrupture you make things easier down the road. *At the same time, the concept of Space-Time is introduced and the players learn through physical (not magical) investigation that it’s very fabric is in danger due to the Disruptures (and thus indirectly through massive magic use). This leads to the investigation of the Arch Spell to “brace” space time.* And with “The Arch” in place, the individual Disruptures can finally be removed permanently!

## Sub-Plot: *Elemental Discovery*

These plots are side explorations into the magic of the elements and mostly used to let you learn how to obtain and use the spells of the Realms. As well, the serious side of elemental magic as the basis for alchemy and the first form of physics can be explored. They will mostly be doled out by Trainers and Others with the most powerful elemental magics found as major quests given by the Elemental council members. Any character can engage in any colored quest line and thus all Elemental plots are conceivably open to the player. Note that some plots require a mage of certain color to proceed and this can halt your plot progression unless you have one in your party.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 1: Magic 101 Place: The Three Realms Time: present +/- 200 years  Quest: Solo** | **Act 3: Magic 200 Place: The Four Realms Time: present +/- 100 years Quest: Solo** | **Act 2: Magic 400 Place: The Four Realms Time: present +/- 100 years Quest: Solo** |

## Sub-Plot: *Visiting The Grief Wars*

Time travel gives us the opportunity to experience the Grief Wars first hand as a way of filling in our Backstory. This plot will deal with how the wars started, continued, and finally ended. As seen through the eyes of the different races and personalities of the time, the reasons for the start of the grief war vary but all share the same element: they are all bred in a flammable atmosphere of boredom. Sparks that set off explosive tension (and relieved boredom) were not therefore surprising. This plot line will have natural tie- ins with the Now-Here plot.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 1: The War Begins! Place: The Three Realms Time: -900 PD  Quest: Solo** | **Act 3: The Vicious Cycle Place: The Three Realms Time: -800 PD to 0 PD  Quest: Solo** | **Act 4: An end in sight. Place: The Four Realms Time: -800 PD to 0 PD  Quest: Group** |

## Sub-Plot: *Exploring Now-Here’s History*

The discovery, colonization, and eventual Castle are the subjects of this story which serves to fill in the Backstory. Towards the end, it will become obvious that the same people that found Now-Here were also the same people that stopped the Grief Wars and, incidentally, these people turn out to be the Triumvirate! After so many millennia, this is not common knowledge and only the Council and Leaders are supposed to know. Ary, Iza, and Galy are all thought long dead by The Realms at time the player arrives on the scene. Their involvement will become critical at the end when Physics (and thus the Tri-V’s specialty) turns out to be the key to stopping the Disruptures. Having revealed themselves to you, you work more closely together to prevent the casting of the Council’s spell.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 1: Discovery... Place: Now-Here Time: -300 PD to present PD  Quest: Solo** | **Act 2: ...colonization... Place: Now-Here Time: -300 PD to present PD  Quest: Solo** | **Act 3: ... and The Castle. Place: Now-Here Time: -300 PD to present PD  Quest: Solo** |

## Sub-Plot: *Racial Tension*

These plots deal with the interracial relationships relating the realms mostly filling in the Backstory. While the Four Realms are a peaceful land, it has a much tormented part. The Humes were the first to meet the Dwarves and The War starts between them. Eventually, Dwarves found the Elves and enlisted them as allies, but a trick by the Humans caused the Elves to distrust the Dwarves as well. It wasn’t long before all three took equal part in the Wars, fueled by patriotic propaganda on all sides. Tapping into this tension will lead to many interesting story possibilities. For example, going to the past to talk to your racial ancestors and find out what really happened during the war; and once there, being rewarded with a new spell and a new direction for exploration. They are mostly doled out as quests given by high ranking racial personalities (like Leaders or outstanding Others) though common citizens and even other Players can also add to this plot . Each player can only access the Quest line related to their own race and thus will only experience one racial sub-plot at any one time.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 1: My People! Place: Homerealm  Time: present +/- 200 years  Quest: Solo** | **Act 2: Me and you... Place: Homerealm +1 Time: present +/- 1000 years Quest: Solo** | **Act 3: ... you and me Place: The Three Realms Time: present +/- 2000 years Quest: Group** |

## Sub-Plot: *Realm Road Trip*

In traveling the realms, there will be many adventures related to the Others or otherwise completely unrelated to any plot. This is the “Side Quest” or “Runner” portion of our narrative that consists of many unrelated threads that build up the world and make it more alive and vibrant. It is also a device to encourage players to explore the world physically, magically, geographically and temporally. Ultimately, these side plots add nothing nor weave with any other plot but they add significantly to the back story and feel of the world.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Act 1: Varies Place: Homerealm Time: present +/- 200 years  Quest: Varies** | **Act 2: Varies Place: The Three Realms Time: present +/- 1000 years Quest: Varies** | **Act 3: Varies Place: The Four Realms Time: present +/- 2000 years Quest: Varies** |

# CHARACTERS

## *The Student* (aka: The Player; You)

* + **Narrative Role:** Protagonists; other players are allies.
  + **Game Significance**: You are a great athlete. In a magical world, this doesn’t mean much though. You never acheived first place at magical competitions for your insistence to do some things physically, but you got by. One day you receive a summons at your normal place of work by The Council of Magicians. It is odd that such a powerful group would be interested in you, but exhilarating at the same time. You respond to the summons a week later when all your affairs are in order. Along with other chosen few, you will be instrumental in the fate of the Realms through this crisis. Remember, you are not alone, but you are unique.
  + **Pedagogical Significance:** The Player is the recipient of the world’s pedagogy. It is the only sink to the sources below. However the player is source and sink to other players, often helping people out by providing the right answer or a unique way of looking at a system.
  + **Systems Analysis:** The Player is the controller of the system and at the same time controlled by it. The player will undergo the following during the course of the game:
  + **Members:** Variable, but Finitely Denumerable. On the personal level, there is only one member -- aka: you. Over time, individuals come and go into the game and this defines how many Players are available. Thus on the grander scale, the members can be your current four person group or the 500 other players in world with you are the same time.

## *The Disruptures* (aka:Rifts in Space, Time, and Magic)

* + **Narrative Role:** Antagonist
  + **Game Significance**: Fixing the problem of The Disruptures is the driving motivation for the narrative discoveries of the player. They are a result of too much magic in the realms as a result of indiscriminate use of Magic during the Grief Wars. They are visual spectacles, lots of flash bang and lights and colorful effects related to their element. They have many effects, the most basic of which will drain magic that comes to their vicinity or have random magical effect spew from it (for example fireballs). They can be individually subdued (How? TBD), but for every one you take out, two or more appear somewhere else in any Realms! And while today, the individual usage of Magic won’t make much difference, large magic use will have a catastrophic effect by making the Disruptures more common. Hence the Elemental’s plan to solve the problem by casting a large spell into the Disruptures is flawed and will only lead to more plentiful and powerful Disruptures for the future!
  + **Pedagogical Significance:** The Disrupture presents itself as the ideal object for our Measure game. Since we already have the Grief game to mimic conventional MMOG combat, we can use the battle with the Disrupture to introduce and motivate the physics based interaction model I had originally wanted to be by combat. Hence, defeating the individual Disrupture will consist of using measured data for some purpose. We can then use the defeat of the Disrupture to be tied in with a physical measurement and that motivates real world Measuring. For example, a particular Disrupture may be a ball of magical energy that needs to be hit with a physical (ie: non-magical) object of the right mass to be dispelled. There are many rocks around you. You can use the Measuring spell to find the rock of the right mass and use it to close the Disrupture.
  + **Systems Analysis**: They will basically be magic using NPCs with whom you cannot interact peaceably (chat, emote, trade) but only aggressively (take data, drain mana, throw fireball). Some of the spells they cast will be unique to this Disruptures and have no Character counterparts. Most weak to medium strength ones will be Static; the rest mobile. All powerful types will be Static.
  + **Members:** Variable; the type and amount created by the system according to the players narrative position. Organized by Element, Effect, and (colored) Effectiveness (roygbiv). Hence the most powerful Disrupture would be a Red Fire Generator that spews massive fireballs at anyone that comes near it or we might have the weaker Violet Fire Drain that will drain a bit of Fire Elemental energy from anything around it.
    - *Drain:* This type of Disruptures will only drain or cast spells from one element. Completely harmless to other schools. Powerful enough elemental Disruptures can affect more than one school or even affect Quintessence. The most common form of Disrupture. This is the only type The Council experiences and leads them to the incorrect conclusion that there is a Mana deficit in the land.
    - *Source:* An unusually beneficial form of Disrupture, this will one fill up the energy stores of any one elemental mana supply. Just like the drain, more powerful versions can fill up multiple elements. Less common than the drain but because of their beneficial effects, are rarely classified as Disruptures.
    - *Generator:* This type will continuously generate one or more spells. If it is a ranged spell, it will target whatever is closest. If the Generator is large enough, it will start to summon golems and cast multiple spells to those nearby, spells which are rarely beneficial. The second most common type of Disrupture and the type that gets most people worried!
    - *Grief:* What would normally be instant death is now “reduced” to a Greif Disrupture. These rifts will suck the like out of you, leaving you empty of spirit and joy and energy. Some of these Greif Disruptors are so vile, that merely looking at them will send you to the depths of depression for months on end. Overall very rare.
    - *Space Flinger:* While Space Skipping is the voluntary travel through space, Flipping is the involuntary. Get too close to these energies and you are likely to be flung from very far to very very far. At the most extreme cases, the strongest of these can even fling you across Realms! And in some rare cases, these ruptures in space can actually lead you to interesting places or serve as shortcuts but like all Disruptures, they should not be trusted over time. Rare.
    - *Time Flinger:* The shortest lived of all Disruptures, if you get too close to these, you will be instantaneously flung to another time within the same realm. There is also no guarantee that when you will be flung will be unoccupied or not when you get there... it can get nasty. Very, Very Rare.

## *The Triumvirate* (aka: Quintessence Council; The Tri-V)

* + **Narrative Role:** Mentor through Act 2; Ally in Act 3.
  + **Game Significance**: The Council of Magicians is comprised of the various magical disciplines in the land. Within its 100’s of member, the council is broken along roughly elemental magic lines with each element having a council of its own. And while unlike any other element, Quintessence does have a council of its own. While magically in danger of overwhelming all the rest, politically they are equal to the Council in virtually every way, the biggest difference is that the 3 members of the Tri-V were instrumental in stopping the war. As such they were afforded an honorary permanent spot on the council. Little did the original council know how permanent; at the time the player steps in, the Grief Wars ended some 1000 years ago and the Tri-V are alive and healthy!! They will serve as the characters permanent champions in the game, the one source of information the player can always trust as well as the companions for the final act of the game. All players will meet Ary first, which can be a shock to our Elven players. After that, the next Tri-V the player meets is based on their pedagogical choices and which area, kinematics or dynamics, they choose. In the end game, the player will have met with and thus will team up with all three members and bring the combined might of three races and three pedagogies to the final acts.
  + **Pedagogical Significance:** The Tri-V map to the three pedagogical areas we cover: Algebra and Trig (aka: Math), Kinematics, and Dynamics. Each character will present themselves to the player to guide, mentor, test, and help the player along in its respective area of expertise.
  + **Systems Analysis**: The Tri-V will interact with players as quest and information givers. Completion of their quests will be critical in terms of advancement. Key information, equipment, spells, etc should be given by these characters. They do not otherwise engage the player (not physically; not grieving). *They are the same character model with same animations though all space and time.*
  + **Members:** 3; One per physics area. Each based on their real pedagogical counterpart.
    - *Ary the Dwarv.* Based on Aristotle (300BC) and embodies Algebra and Trigonometry, collectively known as Math in game. Being that Math is the foundation for all that is to come; Ary will be interacting with characters from early on. This will be a shock to any Elven players though!
    - *Galy the Elv.* Based on Galileo Galilee (1600AD) and embodies Kinematics. Normally, Galy would be the next person you would interact since learning Kinematics normally comes before Dynamics. However in our game, we will do everything possible to make Dynamics a good place to start. Hence you may meet Galy after Iza.
    - *Iza the Hum.* Based on Isaac Newton (1650AD) and embodies Dynamics. Normally you would meet him last but as stated above, this may be the second Tri-V you meet.

## *The Elementals* (aka: Elemental Council; The Council)

* + **Narrative Role:** Antagonist through Act 2; Ally in Act 3
  + **Game Significance**: With the exception of the Tri-V, all Council members are sent representatives from each race. In case of debate, a vote among the Council is held with each council members votes being equal. This means that although extremely powerful, the Tri-V can’t mandate policy though their voice is followed more often than not by many on The Council. The Elementals are the next most power group within Council. They represent each races crowning achievement in elemental research and practice and before Quintessence, held sway politically and magically across the land. Hence there is an old undercurrent of resentment from the Elementals to the Tri-V with whom they are forced to share power. They are leaders among the users of their elements and are long used to a life where magic is the solution. As such, it is not surprising that they believe they have come to the right conclusion and have the right spell for the occasion. While arrogant in their beliefs, they are ultimately just wrong and will capitulate in face of evidence. This is why they become your Allies in Act 3 as become aware that their own biases against Physics was what was holding them back from finding the true answer.
  + **Pedagogical Significance:** The Elementals maps to the Physics Misconceptions. Each individual will represent on Misconception. Hence Alpheus will not only play the role of a Merchant Representative to Council, but he will also hold to a Physics Misconception which will need to be corrected to move on to Act 3. There is a variable difficulty level here... we can have the player have to convince as few or all of the members for success. The fact that the Elementals becomes your allies in Act t 3 is important for it sends the message that the Misconceptions, once conquered, can be a valuable ally in understanding the true content. We can choose what role they play in the story and the misconception independently or they can be closely coupled in some way to strengthen both messages.
  + **Systems Analysis**: The Elementals will interact with players as quest and information givers. Completion of their quests will be critical in terms of advancement. Key information will be given by these characters but otherwise there is scant reward in dealing with them directly. They do not otherwise engage the player (not physically; not grieving). However, as they try to indirectly foil you, you gain experience and thus grow by overcoming the challenges they throw your way. They are different character model with different animations though all space and time (hunched over wave at old age; youthful hello as a hum example).
  + **Members:** 12. One per race per element.
    - *Earth Council*
    - *Air Council*
    - *Fire Council*
    - *Water Council*

## *The Leaders* (aka: Heads of State; Kings and Queens)

* + **Narrative Role:** Helpers and Heralds
  + **Game Significance**: Each Realm retains its political system from before the races met. While The Leaders are absolutely dominant in affairs within their own realm, they defer to the Tri-V and council in Inter-Realm matters. Each realm has a subtly different political system with not so subtle effects on that race. Since each realm chooses their representatives, the Elves only send royalty, the elves their best military minds, and the hums by vote. This preserves the flavor of each Realm on the otherwise homogenously powered Council of Magicians.
  + **Pedagogical Significance:** The Leaders will map to the entertainment misconceptions surrounding physics (why is it boring or viewed as boring). We will give each member of royalty a similar disposition as the Council has to Physics Misconceptions: they will each embody one and convincing them of the error of their ways will be part of the challenges you will face.
  + **Systems Analysis**: Leaders will interact with players as quest and information givers. Completion of their quests will not be critical in terms of advancement and will be often related to the Racial sub-plot. Information, equipment, spells, etc should be given by these characters but none that affects the characters ability to progress through the Main or Secondary plot. They do not otherwise engage the player (not physically; not grieving). They are different character model with different animations though all space and time (hunched over wave at old age; youthful hello as a hum example).
  + **Members**: Each realm has a binary head hence there are a total of 6 Leaders. This head is chosen by a different method in each realm. Due to life style and political system, the current Elven leaders have been around for 500 years, the current Dwarven leadership for about 200, and the current human for about 40.
    - *Elven King and Queen*; Realm is a (feudal) monarchy.
    - *Dwarven First and Second;* Realm is a (military) meritocracy.
    - *Humen President and Vice*; Realm is a (democratic) republic.

## *The Others* (aka: Questors, Informants, Merchants, and Trainers)

* + **Narrative Role**: Helpers and Heralds
  + **Game Significance**: The Others are the general citizenry of the Realms and thus form the necessary infrastructure for their smooth running. They are the unsung hero without whom the leaders would be individually defensibly against the world. To the common citizen of The Realms after the wars, most of the Backstory and plot is either stories told to kids at night or in boring history classes. The Realms are at peace now and the day to day concerns of living all that matter. The yearly Inter-Realm games are the highlight of any Realm citizens’ years no matter how they started. It is played at an undisclosed area magically selected and protected for the games (Now-Here Arena). The existence of these higher magics, mysterious councils, and powerful forces in this already magic filled land, though known to the common citizen as nuclear engineering or Shaolin Karate would be known to us, are less important than playing The Games or perfecting your magical skills.
  + **Pedagogical Significance:** Variable. Merchants will have no pedagogical content; they just sell and buy items. However an Informant or Trainer might be informing or training you on physical information. And Questors will very often concern themselves with physical content, giving out Quests and Quest/ions meant to teach the student a particular concept.
  + **Systems Analysis**: The Others will interact with players as quest and information givers. Completion of their quests will not often be critical in terms of advancement. Information, equipment, spells, etc should be given by these characters but none that affects the characters ability to progress through the pedagogy or major narrative elements. They do not otherwise engage the player (not physically; not grieving). They are different character model with different animations though all space and time (hunched over wave at old age; youthful hello as a hum example).
  + **Members:** There are TONS of Other players as there is at least two or more per race, that means there are at least 32 Other possible character to consider. Here are just a few:
    - *Elven Merchant*
    - *Dwarven Questor*
    - *Humen Trainer*
    - *Humen Informant*

# LOCATIONS

## Glr’s Timeline and Geography

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PAST** | -800 PD | -300 PD | -200 PD | 0 PD | 200 PD | 700 PD | 800 | 900 PD |
| GLR | Grief War Start | Grief War Continues | Grief War Escalates | Peace Day; Grief War ends |  |  | No Disruptures reported | Disruptures first noticed |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PRESENT** | 1000 PD |
| GLR | Dwarves recruited by Council |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FUTURE** | 1100 PD | 2400 PD | 3000 PD | 3100 | 3400 PD | 3500 | 3600 PD |
| GLR | Disruptures expand | Disruptures expand | Disruptures Overwhelm | Disruptures Overwhelm | Wasteland | Wasteland | Wasteland |

**PLACES**

-Realm Capital  
-Fire village

-Water village

-Earth village

-Air village

-Strong Pro-physics village

-Weak Anti-physics village

-Games Training arena

-Ionia portal

-Mearth portal

## Mearth’s Timeline and Geography

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PAST** | -800 PD | -300 PD | -200 PD | 0 PD | 200 PD | 700 PD | 800 | 900 PD |
| MEARTH | Grief War Start | Grief War Continues | Grief War Escalates | Peace Day; Grief War ends |  |  |  | Disruptures first noticed |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PRESENT** | 1000 PD |
| MEARTH | Humes recruited by Council |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FUTURE** | 1100 PD | 2400 PD | 3000 PD | 3100 | 3400 PD | 3500 | 3600 PD |
| MEARTH | Disruptures expand | Disruptures expand | Disruptures expand | Disruptures Overwhelm | Wasteland | Wasteland | Wasteland |

**PLACES**

-Realm Capital  
-Fire village

-Water village

-Earth village

-Air village

-Pro-physics village

-Anti-physics village

-Games Training arena

-Ionia portal

-Glr portal

## Ionia’s Timeline and Geography

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PAST** | -800 PD | -300 PD | -200 PD | 0 PD | 200 PD | 700 PD | 800 | 900 PD |
| IONIA |  | Grief War Spreads | Grief War Continues | Peace Day; Grief War ends |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PRESENT** | 1000 PD |
| IONIA | Elves recruited by Council |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FUTURE** | 1100 PD | 2400 PD | 3000 PD | 3100 | 3400 PD | 3500 | 3600 PD |
| IONIA |  | Disruptures first noticed | Disruptures expand | Disruptures expand | Disruptures Overwhelm | Disruptures expand | Wasteland |

**PLACES**

-Realm Capital  
-Fire village

-Water village

-Earth village

-Air village

-Weak Pro-physics village

-Strong Anti-physics village

-Games Training arena

-Mearth portal

-Glr portal

## Now-Here’s Timeline and Geography

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PAST** | -800 PD | -300 PD | -200 PD | 0 PD | 200 PD | 700 PD | 800 | 900 PD |
| NOW-HERE | ? | Discovered | Settled | Council Est. | Castle Built | First Inter-Realm Olympics | 8th Inter-Realm Olympics |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PRESENT** | 1000 PD |
| NOW-HERE | Council recruits all races to Investigate Disruptures |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FUTURE** | 1100 PD | 2400 PD | 3000 PD | 3100 | 3400 PD | 3500 | 3600 PD |
| NOW-HERE | Double Spell | Emergency Protocol | Emergency Protocol | Last Survivors migrate | Disruptures first noticed | Disruptures Overwhelm | Empty |

**Locations**

-Castle Now-Here  
-Now-Here Arena

-Settlers village

-Glr portal

-Mearth portal

-Ionia portal

# APPENDIX

## Race Interaction Matrix

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **how below feels about right** | **Elv** | **Dwarv** | **Hum** |
| **Elv** | trust | distrust | dismiss |
| **Dwarv** | hate | distrust | distrust |
| **Hum** | envy | distrust | trust |

## Character Interaction Matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **how below feels about right** | **Student** | **Tri-V** | **Elementals** | **Leaders** | **Others** |
| **Student** | Variable | Trust | Distrust | Trust | Trust |
| **Tri-V** | Trust | Trust | Suspicious | Trust | Concern |
| **Elementals** | Distrust | Envy | Scheme | Envy | Dismiss |
| **Leaders** | Distrust | Unknown | Envy | Scheme | Concern |
| **Others** | Trust | Unknown | Unknown | Subservient | Variable |

## Glossary

Council of Magician

Elemental Council

Quintessence Council

The Triumvirate

The Elementals

Disruptures

Magic

Physics

Mana

Spells

Realms

The Three Realms

The Four Realms

Now-Here

Castle Now-Here

Now-Here Arena

The Grief Wars

The Games

Dwarv

Hum

Elv

## Version History

V1.0

March 14

V1.1

March 16

-Renamed “The Council” to “The Elementals”. The Council now becomes a term that is used for the Q. and E. Council but in the past (and hence sometimes during our narrative) used to refer to the E. Council exclusively.