

# Union



Valid AU21

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# GENERAL OVERVIEW

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Union was originally an empty continent, now it boasts several progressive settlements which have sprung up in recent years from refugee populations from other continents. Most notably from Faerie and Salem. It is also home to the Vampires and a centre for the growth in steam power.

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## GEOGRAPHY

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Union is basically one giant volcanic island created by a single, vast volcano. Its climate is warm & wet in the winter and hot and dry in the summer.

At its centre is the Union Eye, the now extinct volcano. To the south-east are the very fertile lava plains and the north side of the island is very rocky with poor soil, all the good stuff eroded away by prevailing winds. Most of the rest is forested with the majority of the population being fishing villages on the coast.

By far the largest settlement is the Smoke, but other settlements such as Yana, Compton and the Institute of Curiosities are significant and worthy of note.

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## POLITICS

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Union has no overall leaderships its politics are defined by each settlement.

## HISTORY

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Union existed alone for many thousands of years, no one lived there.

Then the Union of The Gates occurred and worlds separated since the shattering found a way to meet and travel to each other through portals. All this portal travel was through Union, the hub of the spokes of the portal network.

From that time Union became a valuable military asset and has seen its share of bloodshed as the other worlds tried to control it.

Union was the first Shard world to join with another, an unnatural joining which caused catastrophic effects as it crashed into Archipelago sinking many of the Fenris isles. Many refugees moved to the Union island, particular those displaced from Faerie, Fenris and Salem.

Then not long after all the Shards joined to form The Shards World around AU1 the Union eye, under terrible pressure from the rejoined planet, exploded killing many more.

Around AU12 the portal system collapsed and only the 7 core portals remained, this heralded the start of great exploration of oceans and the creation of a world map showing the position of each former worlds, now continents relative to each other.

Gradually it was discovered that within the shattered Union Eye were dozens of small portals leading all over the world, so once more Union has become the centre of travel.

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# REGIONS

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## THE SMOKE

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On the east coast of Union sits The Smoke. Once known as the town of New Borgengast, it was set up by Church Knight-Sergeant Gordon Du Mornay in or around 1812 for refugees fleeing the oppression of the Salem Church.

The town has grown vastly, quietly becoming the most industrialised city in the world. Its streets are full of canals which carry the heavy loads of material consumed by this ever growing city to and from the docks. Workshops burning coal, and melting iron dug from hills around the West coast of Union line the streets. This has left streets choked with thick smog, made worse with being tightly packed and noisy with machines from the Workshops all over the city to produce textiles at a rate that would outstrip a whole nation. People are used like any other consumable resource and while not slaves, live poor lives working seven days a week and rarely seeing what little daylight filters through the ever present oppressive smog.

The streets are filled on most days with the dense smog that can take lives at its thickest, but nobody seems to care. They only care about getting out the next order on time.

In AU 14 the Vampires made themselves known in this place and have made their home here although they had been there much longer. Using vast wealth accumulated over the ages they have bought up all the land, making the Smoke effectively owned and belonging to The Vampire Nation.

However in recent times a civil war of sorts has begun in The Vampire Nation. This resulted in a Vampire known as Mr Du Mornay, one of the 13 leading Vampires attempting to take control of the Smoke. He failed but was strong enough to gain control of over half the city, he has since ordered his factories to make the smog in the Smoke so thick Vampires can walk in the day.

The rest of the Council of 13 Vampires are resisting in the form of a Cold War that is playing out throughout the Smoke. Since its rise to prominence a lone business 'Sprockets Toys' has arisen as an independent concern and is expanding rapidly. Its owner, Ivan Kollanov, has been buying up portions of The Smoke from the vampires. Creating a dividing line cutting New Borgengast in two, where vampires may not pass. While his impact is felt, the somewhat eccentric owner has not been seen in many years.

## INSTITUTE OF CURIOSITIES

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The Institute of Curiosities is the size of a major town but is in fact a vast college campus with many libraries, buildings, hospitals, veterinary hospitals and large research estates. Along with its teaching facilities and dormitories. Full of scholars, teachers, professors, archaeologists, doctors, scientists etc.

It carries out research into unknown artifacts, plants and animals. Collecting strange, rare or unusual objects, plants and animals for study. Before returning them back to safe, quasi-natural environments.

The College of Our Lady is the best college in the Shards worlds, with a long waiting list of students wishing to learn within its walls.

The institute is surrounded by protective wall and a dangerous forest planted as protection for the college, the only safe ways in are the main road from Yana and Compton.

The college has as its members and patron a vast number of well known people, making it centre for all that wish to study across all lands and cultures.

Its Patrons include King Snow, Von Dumas, His Imperial Highness, Emperor Steiner, Ropers of Faerie, Captain Dove, Medici, Ilona Ap Lokion, the Guilds of Whitewater and many more.

## UNION EYE

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The Union Eye is the extinct volcano that made Union. Not a place that you would think would be inhabited, but this vast caldera is home to dozens of small stable portals that allow rapid travel around the world.

There are now regular caravans from the main Portal to the Union Eye, where all of the new portals open up to. The Navigators Guild have invested a lot of funds in establishing facilities at this new portal 'hub'. A small town of temporary structures has formed as the portals start to get more people using them. Only small groups of people can use these portals, so while proper trading through the portals is still limited, many merchants are establishing stalls to trade with those passing. Most of those using the portals at the moment are couriers and envoys.

## YANA

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The settlement of Yána, the Fey word for Sanctuary, was established by Danan Nolwe since just before the AU0, the union of worlds. It lies south of the Union Eye, right next to the core portal of Union.

Danan set it up for the refugees of Atlantis rising so they could have somewhere to go away from all the fighting and wars. By luck or fate they have managed to stay safe and protected during all of the Monarch wars. The predominant race and culture of the Settlement is Fey, but there are human families there - Danan's philosophy being turn no one away. If they want to stay and earn a living by farming or other rural crafts and if they have a skill to offer they are always welcome. When the Union Eye erupted it deposited vast amounts of volcanic soil not very far from the settlement - as a result the farming has been very successful since it happened.

When the main gates open the first thing that the guests see is the very large Oak Tree. Clustered around it in various forms are shrines to whichever Gods and Beings the villagers see fit to worship, ribbons and material denoting Favours hang from the boughs of the tree. Both the tree and the shrines are well managed and kept. At the head of all the shrines stands a half life size statue of a young Fey woman seated on a rock, a statue of Danan's older sister Raya who she believes died in the resulting floods of Atlantis rising. It is in commemoration of all the families lost in the waters that day.

It's a very functional settlement, but anyone who arrives is made welcome. The use of metal weapons isn't really practiced as 90% of the population are farmers and land workers and don't really know how to use them, but Archery is very popular. It's not only good for bagging wild game for the table, also in case of an attack. An entire settlement raining down arrows onto would be attackers is a good deterrent.

If anyone arrives during the summer months and, as long as they're not dignitaries, they are quite often caught up in helping to bring the crops in from the fields. Danan has always protested that she came from a farming family and wasn't by any means a Noble, or rich, so she more often than not helps with the day to day chores.

## COMPTON

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Compton is a large trading port settlement on the western end of Union.

Its population consists of just over a thousand people, with three times as many visitors, sailors, soldiers, and Academics from the Institute of Curiosities visiting every day.

The town itself exists to service its port and tourist industry, consequently it has many gambling houses, brothels, inns as well as many legitimate merchant houses. One of note being the Consortium of Compton and the longest pier in the world.

The Docks have many warehouse for storing goods before they are sent on to next destination. Very little of the shipments are moved inland, perhaps only to the Institute of Curiosities.

The shops sell many shell encrusted decorative items, sock hats with 'cish me kwik' stitched on them. Some even sell food although it mainly comes on sticks and is covered in icing sugar. Whatever is underneath the coating you don't want to know.

Purple is the colour of brothels and worn to indicate your available here, so please take note

## PHOENICIA

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Phoenicia is small village only of note as it's the only stable settlement of the Children of Star Mother that live off the poor lands to north of Union Eye.

## HERRINGTON

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The biggest of fishing villages on the south coast ruled by local lord.

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# RACES/CREATURES

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Below is bit of information on the creatures and races of Union it is by no means complete or accurate.

Playable Races: players who choose to play a characters with Union origin can pick from these races, Human, Cat Beastkin and Fey

Any other race listed are for Union background information.

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## HUMANS

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Humans make up 85% of population of Union.

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## CAT BEASTKIN

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The Cat Beastkin or Children of the Star mother originally came from the northern part of Dust where they were at war with the Star mothers other children a race of Serpents. The star mother guided them out of the region to end the war and eventually negotiated a settlement on land on the north slopes of the Union Eye.

The Cat Beastkin are few in number by great warriors they occasionally get hunted by young vampires wanting to prove themselves, these vampires rarely live to tell the tale since the Children of Star Mother hunt them down as a pack.

Players wishing to play a Cat Beastkin should choose appropriate skills from the Beastkin Heritage. Cat Beastkin are all warriors few have any learning and all follow the Star Mother as their god.

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## FEY

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The Fey originated on Faerie, they are a long lived ancient race (Think Tolkien Elves) and have pointy ears although this may be hidden by a glamour, players wishing to play a fey should choose the Fey Heritage from the rules.

## VAMPIRES

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Players cannot play vampires.

Vampires are undead; soulless; they are vulnerable to fire and sunlight; have increased vulnerability to Blood Oak; they must feed on blood.

Vampires, however, have many skills. The older they are, the more they have and the more they can use them. They are strong, can change form to bat or wolves, turn to mist, produce glamour's that make them appear as anything they wish or not there at all, they can dominate even the strongest minds, move faster than the eye, heal almost instantly any wound not caused by fire or blessed weapons.

Vampires can create more vampires by their infectious bite should they choose to feed and not kill, it will take more than one bite however, so get your bites treated.

Vampires hide themselves in Salem, they have been wiped out twice and so are very careful, and only the oldest possess all the skills we have listed.

Vampires are vulnerable to sunlight so in the day they are often hidden or guarded by Vampire Ghouls. Vampire Ghouls are humans linked and marked by their vampire masters, they are often imbued by their master with extra abilities, but they are and remain human.

## VAMPIRE GHOULS.

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Players cannot play vampires Ghouls

Vampire Ghouls are humans linked and marked by their vampire masters. They are often imbued by their master with extra abilities, but they are and remain human. They are totally enthralled to their masters

# COSTUME

## THE SMOKE (AND LOCAL FISHING VILLAGES)

The costume of the Smoke is that of victorian London with wealthy men sporting top hats and straight long coats, and the women boast lace underskirts, gowns with bustles, and bonnets. The poor are seen wearing cloth caps and trousers and usually covered in soot and dirt.

With its Salem background dark colours are favoured

See samples below



## YANA (FEY)

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When thinking about playing the Fae, you should remember that these are the fantasy elves. For preference they like to dress in bright colours, with the nobility choosing light, airy fabrics.

Women wear long gowns and skirts, decorated with beads and leaves or anything pretty and sparkly.

Hair may be similarly dressed.

Men favour tunics, shirts and waistcoats and a dashing cloak.

Of course, practicality may act to curtail the Fae's natural tendency for high fashion, with more practical clothing being worn as required.

Characterised by pointy ears - unless they choose to disguise them - the Fae love anything shiny. Weapons are typified by bows, broadswords and shields.

Fae never use black power weapons, they are famed for archery.

See samples below



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## THE INSTITUTE OF CURIOSITIES AND COMPTON

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Compton and the Institute are so mixed with people from all over the world that pinning down a costume is impossible suffice to say pick something to suit your backstory

Picture below are members of the institute.



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## THE CHILDREN OF THE STAR MOTHER

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The children of the star mother are cat themed beastkin so should wear appropriate masks or make up to make them look cat like.

They originated in Dust so costume associated with the Oasis is appropriate.



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# THINGS TO NOTE.

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## NOTEWORTHY PEOPLE

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- **Abraham DuMornay** - one the 13 vampire elders/leader of the Smoke, currently at war with other vampires
- **Strommler** - One the 13 vampire elders/leader of the Smoke, enemy of DuMornay
- **Dieter Saberhagens** - Vampire General - one the 13 vampire elders/leader, hot headed and antagonistic, enemy of DuMornay, recently claimed he is moving back to Salem
- **Falco** - hot headed Vampire of the Smoke enemy of DuMornay
- **Contessa Angelika Carnhurst** - One the 13 vampire elders/leader of the Smoke, friendly enemy of DuMornay, helped to set up Beggars Roost in Salem.
- **Lady Charlotte Carnhurst** - One the 13 vampire elders/leaders of the Smoke.
- **Alex Medicci** - One the 13 vampire elders/leader of the Smoke.
- **Lady Shang Von Tassenick** - One the 13 vampire elders/leader of the Smoke, very friendly and trusted by many.
- **Kelevra** - One the 13 vampire elders/leader of the Smoke. Rarely seen outside the company of Lady Charlotte Carnhurst.
- **Izzanbard Devlin** - Built up the Institute of Curiosities, also Sorcerer Supreme protector of the Multiverse.
- **Dashal Avalon** - Born in the Institute, tomb raider, field researcher, expert in Alfar objects, and history teacher at the Institute. Runs much of the Institute of Curiosities in Izzanbard's many absences, Izzanbard's adopted son.
- **Orinada Devlin** - 1st and only newly hatched Dragon in thousands of years and Izzanbard's adopted Daughter.
- **Tsren Foxblade** - Leads the research section of the Institute of Curiosities
- **Hadir Akim** - Ex Intelligencium now Institute Scientist working for Tsren
- **Erik Johanssen** - Ex Hatters Guild, Institute of Curiosities Scientist
- **Pauline Devon** - Institute of Curiosities weapons specialist
- **Alistair Knight** - Institute of Curiosities scientist
- **Professor Kronhagen** - Institute of Curiosities scientist
- **Jessica Goodfellow** or Professor Goodfellow - General research, botanical research, historical research and environmental research, particularly where the environment is hostile.
- **Tricksiebelle Roper** - A star pupil in the Institute College
- **Danan Nolwe** - Wise ruler of Yana

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## GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

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(not previously mentioned in regional backgrounds)

- **The Thirteen** - The Thirteen vampires that have lived the longest and rule the vampire nation, they made a promise not to breed and grow their numbers in return for not being hunted. They have kept this promise although Du-Mornay created artificial vampires in Salem and Saberhagen has threatened to break this promise.
- **Edgewater** - Believed to be part of the Institute of Curiosities a secret organisation that help deal with dangerous problems

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## GODS

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Gods in Union are tricky. The easiest thing to say is all Gods are tolerated but none worshipped above the calling of the people, be that learning, farming, industry, machines, tourism or something else, the people here worship endeavour. The exception to this are the Star Born

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### CHILDREN OF THE STAR MOTHER

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The star mother calls her people here the Star Born and her guidance is that of freedom, everyone is free to make their own choices, they are not to be bound by anything.

Followers always have a choice on their actions

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## NOTES

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The Colour of Union is Gold which also represents the Body and neutrality

Union is the centre of things, it is the first or last.