

ARKUS:

EPIPHYTIC EPHEMERA

A 5E SETTING COMPANION

New character customization options and DM inspiration for Arkus:
the arboreal realm of intrigue and the arcane.

ARKUS

NEW MECHANICS AND LORE FOR THE ARKUS CAMPAIGN SETTING

INTRODUCTION

Arkus is a campaign setting for Dungeons and Dragons set atop colossal monolithic trees known as Arks. Intricate politics, technological oddities, and a magical cataclysm with far-reaching ramifications make Arkus a unique setting for adventurers looking for nuanced intrigue in their RPG campaigns. The [original setting primer](#) includes an overview of the various factions, magical forces, geography, religions, and culture. This supplement introduces new options for both players and Dungeon Masters to shape their Arkus adventures.

Every detail in this document is intended to be both immediately usable "out of the box" and suitable as a jumping-off point for RPG fans who prefer to homebrew their own player options and adventures. This document provides a bevy of mechanics and lore details to help players flesh out this unique campaign setting with greater granularity.

PLAYER OPTIONS

Arkus is a world of towering trees, mechanical marvels, and ancient arcane consequences. While it's simple enough to create characters using the existing options in published Dungeons & Dragons materials, it's also possible you'll want to embody a character archetype that is unique to Arkus. In addition to the threndl and orxi races, the Resonant Sorcerer subclass, and the Flowmiller, Runist, and Vasculant backgrounds from the original document, this document introduces:

- The Cosmologist artificer
- The Circle of Enark druid
- The Way of the Blackflow monk
- Optional features for the threndl race
- Background conversion guide

Finally, much of the lore presented in this document might help you to flesh out your character's backstory. Did your reclusive firbolg float to Enark on an Epi-Ark? Did your gnomish doqter train at an observatory? Does your threndl need potassium in their soil? The more you can anchor your Arkus characters in the novelty of the word, the more fully you'll be able to experience Arkus as a living and breathing setting.

DM INSPIRATION

Dungeon Masters have a unique challenge when creating Arkus campaigns. The geography of the world makes certain facets of adventuring that are trivial in other settings infinitely more complicated (how does one create an adventure *on the side* of a giant evergreen?), and the relative "newness" of the world leaves little room for the decrepit catacombs that typically make up the bulk of dungeoneering in traditional settings.

This document provides a wealth of inspiration for designing homebrew campaigns in the world of Arkus. Section 2 provides inspiration for unique dungeon archetypes such as the observatory and the corrupted gnarl. Section 3 presents an overview of Epi-Arks, a sort of sub-Ark megaflora that occasionally drift through the skies above Arkus. Finally, Section 4 gives a smattering of details regarding threndl nutrition and the unique culinary culture of Storth.

Throughout this document, you will also find useful lore, tables to help you plan out adventures, as well as descriptions for items your players might encounter on Arkus adventures.



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ARKUS SUBCLASSES

The following optional subclasses present ways to deepen your character's connection to the world of Arkus. These options are subject to DM discretion, so make sure to consult with your Dungeon Master to see if they are okay with your use of these brand new mechanics.

ARTIFICER

At 3rd level, an artificer gains the Artificer Specialist feature. Here is an option for that feature that is specific to the Arkus campaign setting: the Cosmologist.

COSMOLOGIST

Suggested Music: "Ritual of the Dawn" by [Music d20](#)

Arkus Cosmologists are among the most important members of gnomish society. By channeling the magic of astral bodies, they are able to imbue celestial power into arkbloods, divine the future, and perform powerful rituals influenced by the turning of the spheres. As opposed to gnomish docters, a Cosmologist is specifically a *creator*, not a mere researcher. They use their astral gifts to bring life to machinery and to bless their allies with the magic of the stars.

Cosmologist adventurers use these powers to harness sunlight and starlight via their custom-made astrolabes. Taking advantage of the magic of the cosmos, these artificers are able to empower their comrades and shift the tide of battle.

The overwhelming majority of Cosmologists who helm Ritual Forges in Trunktop are gnomish. That said, the secrets of cosmological magic are also known to a handful of studied artificers of different races. If you're playing a non-gnomish Cosmologist, it is worth considering where and how your character learned the ritual magic of the stars. Did you apprentice in a Ritual Forge? Or did you steal closely guarded texts? If you're an arkblood, it's possible that you picked up the trade from your creator!

TOOL PROFICIENCY

3rd-level Cosmologist feature

When you adopt this specialization at 3rd level, you gain proficiency with navigator's tools. If you already have this proficiency, you gain proficiency with one other type of artisan's tools of your choice.

COSMOLOGIST SPELLS

3rd-level Cosmologist feature

You always have certain spells prepared after you reach particular levels in this class, as shown in the Cosmologist Spells table. These spells count as artificer spells for you, but they don't count against the number of artificer spells you prepare.

Cosmologist Spells

Artificer Level	Spell
3rd	<i>healing word, false life</i>
5th	<i>blindness/deafness, moonbeam</i>
9th	<i>clairvoyance, daylight</i>
13th	<i>divination, sickening radiance</i>
17th	<i>circle of power, wall of light</i>

ASTROLABE

3rd-level Cosmologist feature

Your study of the cosmos has allowed you to craft an intricate astral guide to aid you in reading the stars and casting artificer magic. Over the course of 1 hour, you can turn a normal set of navigator's tools into a clockwork astrolabe.

You gain the following benefits while wielding this astrolabe.

- Your group can't become lost except by magical means.
- You can use the astrolabe as a spellcasting focus for your artificer spells.
- You can cast the *light* cantrip as a bonus action.
- As a bonus action, you can glean limited insight into the future of one enemy that you can see. Any reaction this creature takes against you before the start of your next turn automatically fails.

HEAVENLY BOONS

3rd-level Cosmologist feature

You have three Cosmology dice that will determine how the stars above will aid you. The size and number of these dice increase at certain levels according to the table below.

Artificer Level	Cosmology Dice
3rd	2d8
5th	3d8
9th	4d10
15th	5d10

When you finish a long rest, roll your Cosmology dice. The result of each roll is one heavenly boon available to you. If you roll the same result on two or more dice, your choices will be more limited. Some options will not be available until your Cosmology die becomes a d10.

Choose one boon from the options rolled. Once you select a boon, you must wait until your next long rest to roll again and select a new boon.

Heavenly Boons

d10 Effect

- 1 **Arksol's Aid.** All allies within 10 feet of you can add 1d4 to all attack rolls and saving throws.
- 2 **Channeled Starlight.** You can use your action to make a ranged spell attack, firing concentrated starlight at a target you can see within 120 feet of you. On a hit, the creature takes radiant damage equal to twice your artificer level. The strain of focusing this energy also causes you to take 1 damage.
- 3 **The Light Within.** You gain +1 to your AC and advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
- 4 **Celestial Guidance.** You can add your proficiency bonus to any Intelligence-based skill checks. If you are already proficient in one of these skills, you can add double your proficiency for it instead.
- 5 **Font of Starlight.** You regain one 1st-level spell slot whenever you take a short rest.
- 6 **Calming Moonlight.** You can use a bonus action to end one effect on an ally within 30 feet that is causing them to be charmed or frightened.
- 7 **Solar Flare.** Whenever a creature targets you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to quickly attempt to blind them. They must make a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or be blinded until the start of their next turn.
- 8 **Stardust.** You can cast Faerie Fire or Sleep at the 1st level without expending a spell slot. You can do so a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus.
- 9 **Blood Moon.** All foes within 15 feet of you must subtract 2 from all attack rolls and saving throws.
- 10 **Solar Core.** Whenever you roll initiative, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Artificer level. You also gain resistance to cold, fire, lightning, and radiant damage.

ASTRAL RITUAL

5th-level Cosmologist feature

Immediately before or after taking a long rest, you can conduct a 10 minute ritual infused with the magic of the night sky. You do not need to be able to see the sky to conduct this ritual, nor does it have to be nighttime, so long as you have your astrolabe to simulate the shifting constellations. You can grant one of two effects, depending on whether you conduct the ritual before or after your long rest.

Ritual of the Dusk. Choose yourself or one ally. Once within the next 24 hours, as a bonus action, this creature can release the celestial moonlight energy from the ritual, healing a creature within 30 feet for 3d8 + your Intelligence modifier hit points.

Ritual of the Dawn. Choose yourself or one ally. Once before the next long rest, this creature can take one additional action on their turn on top of their regular action and a possible bonus action.

SHAPE FATE

9th-level Cosmologist feature

Whenever you roll a Cosmology Die and get the same result as one of your previous rolls, you can reroll until you have a new result. Additionally, during a short rest, you can spend a 2nd-level spell slot to roll all of your Cosmology Dice again and select a new boon.

TWIN BOONS

15th-level Cosmologist feature

Whenever you roll your Cosmology Dice, you may choose two boons instead of one.

Note: When a Cosmologist casts spells via their astrolabe, they aren't using it like a sorcerer would an arcane orb. Instead, they are tuning a simulacrum of the spheres to focus the energy that is already around them. Much like other artificers, this magic is much more akin to masterful engineering than mystical wizardly invocations. The power comes from the cosmos: the Cosmologist merely coaxes this power into usable forms.



DRUID

At 2nd level, a druid gains the Druid Circle feature. Here is an option for that feature that is specific to the Arkus campaign setting: the Circle of Enark.

CIRCLE OF ENARK

Suggested Music: "Circle of Enark" by [McRoMusic](#)

Those who are most attuned to the natural magic of Enark are able to wield wooden tools and magic to devastating effect. While many druids might carry a quarterstaff and a shield as a last resort for when they run out of spells slots, druids of the Circle of Enark march confidently into battle with their enchanted wooden tools. Some of these druids wield this power to protect the wildlands from encroaching industrialists, while others serve Enarki interests, quelling rebellion and fighting foreign wars.

A given druid need not be from Enark in order to receive her gifts. Though many druids within this circle tend to be Enarki natives, simply coming into contact with the Ark may awaken this particular vein of druidic magic. Tales abound of Ledvasi wanderers who find themselves developing thick barky skin after a visit to Enark.

GIFTS OF ENARK

2nd-level Circle of Enark feature

You can use any piece of wood, including a quarterstaff, club, or shield, as a druidic focus. This means you can comfortably wield a weapon and a shield in battle without having to drop either to cast spells.

Your wooden weapon's damage die becomes a d8 unless it is already higher. You can use your Wisdom modifier instead of Strength or Dexterity for attack and damage rolls.

While wielding a shield, you can use your reaction when struck by an attack to absorb some of the blow. When you do so, roll a d6 and subtract the amount rolled from the damage you receive.

ENCHANTED GIFTS

6th-level Circle of Enark feature

You can attack twice, rather than once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn. Moreover, any attack made with a wooden weapon counts as magical for the sake of overcoming resistances.

While wielding a shield, you can expend a 1st or 2nd-level spell slot as a reaction when a creature attempts to attack you. If you spend a 1st-level spell slot, you can force one attack to be rolled with disadvantage. If you spend a 2nd-level spell slot, all attacks against you until the start of your next turn are rolled with disadvantage.

Finally, you can cast *Speak with Plants* without using a spell slot.

BECOME BARK

10th-level Circle of Enark feature

While you are not wearing any armor, your Armor Class equals 10 + your Wisdom modifier + your Constitution modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.



You can also use your Wild Shape to become a locally appropriate tree. While in this form, your size is large, and your HP and AC remain unchanged. You are immune to all conditions and resistant to all damage, but your movement speed is 0. You are able to detect and pinpoint the origin of any vibrations within 30 feet of you, but are otherwise blind and deaf to the world around you. While in the form of a tree, the only action you can take is to return to your normal form, though you may choose to remain a tree for up to 12 hours.

DRUIDIC PETRIFICATION

14th-level Circle of Enark feature

You can use your Wild Shape to attempt to petrify one large or smaller creature within 30 feet of you. The creature must make a Constitution saving throw or else turn to wood for 1 minute (see the rules about Petrification in the Player's Handbook.)

WHY WOULD YOU TURN INTO A TREE?

It might not be immediately obvious what use a druid would have for turning into a tree. Aside from purely flavorful reasons (e.g. being one with Enark), treeshaping has many tactical uses.

First and foremost, there are few better ways to blend in when stealth is a priority. Becoming a tree might prove invaluable if your ranger needs to reach higher ground, or perhaps establish a sniper's nest. If incoming damage is going to be unavoidable, treeshaping will allow you to weather a strong attack. Finally and least intuitively: there's no more relaxing (or clandestine) way to long rest in peace.

MONK

At 3rd level, a monk gains the Monastic Tradition feature. Here is an option for that feature that is specific to the Arkus campaign setting: the Way of the Blackflow.

WAY OF THE BLACKFLOW

The constant flow of energy seeping through the timelines is not unlike a monk's ki. By tapping into this quasi-magnetic energy directly, a monk can supercharge their combat abilities. While some monks focus on stealth, sheer power, or magical blasting, a monk following the Way of the Blackflow instead wields more nuanced effects. Through warping magical fields, these monks are walking electromagnets, able to heighten or dampen magical effects and discharge wild bursts of supercharged lightning.

Monks who train in an attempt to master Blackflow manipulation often suffer drastic side effects. Those that fail to perfect these mystic practices may succumb to sudden heart failure or blink themselves out of existence entirely. Even those that succeed often experience severe brain trauma, making them mentally unstable or prone to emotional outbursts. For this reason, there's a considerable amount of societal distrust of anyone who is rumored to tamper with Blackflow directly.

FLOW MAGNET

3rd-level Way of the Blackflow feature

As an action, you can spend 2 ki points to pull one metal item within 30 feet of you that is under 100 pounds directly to you. If it is being held by someone, that creature may make a Strength saving throw against your ki save DC to hold onto it.

This magnet also helps you to channel energy inward. You recover the ki point spent on Flurry of Blows whenever you use that feature to land a critical hit or reduce a hostile creature to 0 HP.

DESTABILIZE

6th-level Way of the Blackflow feature

You're able to disrupt the flow around others. You can spend 3 ki points to cast *counterspell* or *dispel magic*. Wisdom is your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Additionally, whenever you successfully trigger a Stunning Strike, you can spend 1 additional ki point to deal lightning damage equal to 3 rolls of your monk die to any one creature within 15 feet of you, including the creature you just stunned.

FLOW FIELD

11th-level Way of the Blackflow feature

Your mastery of Blackflow warps all of the energy around you. Whenever an ally within 30 feet of you uses their action to deal cold, fire, force, or lightning damage, they can add your Wisdom modifier to one of the damage rolls.

Furthermore, whenever an enemy within 30 feet of you is subjected to a saving throw from a spell or cantrip, you can spend 2 ki points to impose disadvantage on the saving throw.

OVERCHARGE

17th-level Way of the Blackflow feature

Your body is barely able to contain all of the Blackflow concentrated within. Whenever you recover hit points by any means, you can choose any number of creatures within 5 feet of you to take 2d10 lightning damage. If you spend 1 ki point, you can then immediately move up to your walking speed without taking opportunity attacks.

You cannot trigger this feature if you already have full hit points.

Note: Blackflow manipulation puts a serious strain on one's psyche. Unlike many monks who attain some degree of calm and inner peace, those following the Way of the Blackflow often end up a tad... kooky. If you're playing such a monk, feel free to highlight the toll this has had on your mental wellbeing. Don't shy away from it! Your neurons are *fried*.



SEEING LIKE A TREE: THE CULTURE OF THE THRENDLS

ON THRENDLS

"Because the threndls today are few in number, and because they are plants (and thus not terribly talkative), few gnomish doqters have attempted sustained fieldwork among them..."

"Threndl culture appears to be a kaleidoscopic, contradictory cypher. At the same time that individual threndls share few commonalities, all of them seem to recognize the same slate of obscure Fey-adjacent holy-days. Even as threndl bodies and inventions vary wildly in form, all require the same basic nutrients—nutrients that threndls seem to quietly savor..."

"In any case, what is known is less, surely, than what is left to be learned. The facts presented here are merely sketches, quilted together from scattered notes. In the dual names of strategic planning and love for every inhabitant of the Arks, all in this court would be wise to spend more time thinking with the tree-folk."

—Excerpted from the report of Doqter Tramppopo Banhelmond to the Short Table, 487 PC (Post-Cleave)

THRENDL QUIRKS

Threndls spawn out of the Arks themselves, but they are not miniature Arks per se. Instead—sculpted by random walks of ironblood quintessence—threndls display all manner of vegetal characteristics. For any given threndl, roll d4–1 and, in the event of a non-zero result, roll that many d20s, skipping repeats. Threndl player characters may choose to take one of these quirks in lieu of the Ark Defense of Permeable Vines racial features.

d20 Threndl Quirks

1 **Runic** – Very slowly, your skin warps into lines and whorls, expressing non-random Enark runes. Every game session, you may ask the DM for one clue based on your deciphering of the latest rune.

2 **Lichen** – You are a symbiosis of a plant and a fungus. You form spores. You are resistant to poison.

3 **Mildewy** – You are rotting due to a fungus. You are resistant to poison and fire but smell terrible. You have disadvantage on any Charisma-based skill check.

4 **Spicy** – Your flesh burns the mouths of non-photobionts. Any creature that bites you immediately takes fire damage equal to your character level.

5 **Intoxicating** – Your skin is covered in tiny “hairs” called trichomes that exude sweetly nasty volatile compounds. These cause non-threndls who lick you or spend a minute or more in close proximity to you to feel euphoric. Once per day, a creature can lick you to gain the effect of *bleess* for 1 minute.

6 **Rash-causing** – Your exterior is poison ivy. When you successfully strike a target with an unarmed attack, she suffers disadvantage on dexterity checks for a number of rounds equal to half your proficiency bonus rounded down.

7 **Bad-smelling** – One very large corpse flower blooms on your head for 12 hours once every three days. When it does, you smell so bad that non-threndls will not stand within ten feet of you. During this time, all melee attacks suffer a –2 penalty to hit you.

8 **Sap-weeping** – You exude a thick amber fluid. This allows you to walk up walls, but it also leaves a viscous trail behind wherever you go.

9 **Bamboo-boned** – You are very light and are resistant to damage incurred from falling.

10 **Attention-seeking** – You are adorned by small, sweet flowers that smell good and attract harmless pollinators such as bumblebees and butterflies. You have advantage on Persuasion checks.

11 **Nest-hosting** – Your body is a home to ants and bees. Every time someone successfully strikes you in melee combat, he takes 1 damage automatically.

12 **Branching** – Your upper body has begun to branch, forming two heads. You have advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, and stunned.

13 **Fruit-dropping** – For one third of the year, your body produces large, soft, sugary ovaries that can be eaten by non-threndls, satisfying their hunger and many of their nutrient requirements. You can also sell these fruits for a small profit. You may feel odd about doing so, however. Birds peck at you with abandon.

14 **Nut-dropping** – For one third of the year, your body produces small fruits with hard shells that can be eaten by non-threndls, satisfying many of their nutrient requirements. You can also sell these nuts for a good profit. You may feel odd about doing so, however. Squirrels attack you on site.

15 **Leafy green** – Your skin is watery, layered, and soft, like the leaves of a head of lettuce. These leaves may be frilly or scalloped, dark green or light, buttery or bitter. They peel off of you harmlessly and can be eaten by non-threndls. Eating your skin doesn't totally satisfy hunger or provide many nutrients, but some humans and elves will pay you well for a few leaves. Most other threndls consider you good-looking, if nonthreatening. Rabbits deal double damage to you.

Mature (incompatible with Immature) – You are old, 16 and thus very large—well over eight feet tall. You gain a +2 bonus to Constitution saving throws.

Immature (incompatible with Mature) – You are 17 young, and thus very small—well under five feet tall. You gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity saving throws.

Lawn-forming – You shed small seeds, like those of 18 grass, constantly. You are thus easy to track. You are also constantly re-greening the places you visit, and druids and Fey creatures trust you immediately (unless you are attacking or stealing from them).

Nonvascular – Your skin is dark green and loose, like 19 moss. You are resistant to slashing damage, but you cannot wield heavy weapons or armor.

Carnivorous (replaces Symbiosis feature) – You must 20 eat roughly the same amount of protein as an elf in lieu of photosynthesizing. For every 24 hours that you fail to do so, you gain 1 level of exhaustion.

THRENDL ODDITIES

Threndls are not known for technological innovation per se. That is a limitation, however, of gnomish and other non-threndl understandings of what a tool is. Many threndls are creative toolmakers, and grow—rather than smith or carve—a range of novel items usable by threndls and non-threndls alike. Here is a survey of some notable threndl-grown goods.

d20 Threndl Oddities

Blackleaf seeds – If planted, these small black pips 1 anti-grow within 1d2 rounds to spawn 2d4 undead threndl each! Anti-growth rips up living material, blighting the Ark branch on which it occurs in a 2d20-foot radius out from the seed.

Urushiol gloves – These fashionable blue-green leaf- 2 gloves were cursed by the ancients: putting them on causes the wearer to suffer disadvantage on all Dexterity checks. The gloves can only be removed via magic.

Parodia amulet – When worn, this cursed ball cactus 3 on a chain of dried coral immediately withers one limb (DM's choice) but, in exchange, makes the wearer immune to thirst and hunger. The amulet can only be removed by magic, after which the withered limb becomes gradually revitalized over the course of 2d4 days.

Thornbow – This hand crossbow shoots thorn- 4 covered, fast-growing bolts of living rose bush. When they hit, these rose-bolts cause 1d6 damage per round for 1d6 rounds. A creature can suffer the pricks of multiple rose-bolts concurrently.

Cartoleaf – This wide, dark green leaf slowly grows 5 into a map of your environs. You can feed it water to accelerate its map-making, or dry it out, halting its activity. Burying it for 1 hour will cause it to "refresh," thereby allowing for the creation of a brand new map.

Salt-bubble pipe – This woody tube, grown from 6 halophytes (salt-tolerating plants), produces savory bubbles when “smoked.” Smoking the pipe is soothing and heals 3d8 hit points. It can be used in this way once per day. Smoking salt bubbles immediately puts non-plants to sleep, however. Smoking the pipe takes one action.

Ladybug apartment complex – This miniature red-and- 7 black city looks something like a short cape made of toy wooden blocks. When worn, it gives a threndl or other plant-based creature immunity to poison and disease. (The ladybugs eat invading pests or succumb to the poison themselves, saving the wearer.) The complex has no effect on non-threndls, however, as the ladybugs—without aphids to eat—simply fly away.

Trichrome armor – This light (in fact: nearly weightless) 8 armor is made up of a green-purple wrapping of tiny, waxy hairs. It provides its wearer with an AC of 14 + Dex Modifier with no penalty to movement or encumbrance, and it requires no armor proficiency to don.

Crown of lichen – This fragile-feeling (but unbreakable) 9 gray-green circlet can be tapped and concentrated upon in order to provide the wearer with the ability to detect lies immediately and perfectly. Turning on the circlet costs 2d6 hit points and provides truth detection for 1 minute. Creatures that are immune to divination may still successfully lie to the wearer.

Epiphytic bracelet – Grown from a piece of one of the 10 magical epiphytes (air plants) that sometimes travel between Arks, this bracelet completely prevents its wearer from harming plants, including threndls. It also grants its wearer (threndl or not) immunity to radiant damage; this light is instead converted into energy.

Jasmine gloves – These soft, colorful living gloves 11 continually produce a volatile oil that non-plants find enticing. This gives the wearer advantage on Persuasion checks, as well as any check related to seduction.

Bleeding-tooth flame-vine shield-mask – This roughly 12 lid-shaped whorl of green vines, orange flowers, and drooping red fungus can be wielded as a shield or worn as a mask. It offers no bonus to AC, but it does look scary as hell. Whenever the holder/wearer is threatened, the shield-mask sprays out entangling vines covered in toxic red goop. This causes no damage, but it does give the holder/wearer advantage on intimidation checks.

Epiphytic tingly-shield – Shaped like a teardrop, this 13 semi-dry, waxy, bright green hunk of plant matter provides its holder with only +1 AC (as opposed to +2 for typical shields). Any melee opponent who successfully hits the holder must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or else become disarmed as the epiphyte's grassy leaves tie themselves around the offending weapon.

Epiphytic tool-claw – A cross between a green 14 clawhammer and a light brown gauntlet, this tool grants its wearer advantage on all tinkering and medicine checks. It must be watered weekly and sunned daily, or else it withers and enters torpor.

Plant disguise kit – Technically an epiphyte, the “kit” appears to be a huge green hat of palm leaves sprouting from a pillar of grayish wet “eggs” or balls of roots. These eggs are magical urpflanzen, or any-
15 plants. They cause the kit to grow wildly and change shape, helping its wearer blend into any plant-dominant environment. This grants anyone wearing the kit as a hat advantage on stealth checks in any such locale.

Cardoon helm – Covered in spikes and large pink
16 flowers, this tall, silo-shaped helm grants its wearer resistance to fire damage.

Clue juice – Exuded by extremely old threndls who are about to “take root” (and become one with their home Ark), this dark brown fluid is tart but safe to drink.
17 When imbibed, clue juice—aka meta tea—immediately gives the drinker one useful clue as to the current plot. (Alternatively, the DM can instead give the drinker advantage on all Wisdom checks for 1 hour.)

Flytrap neckerchief – This epiphytic pseudo-mouth of hinged leaves has a bright green exterior and a deep pink interior “throat.” When its roots are wrapped around a humanoid’s neck, the neckerchief gives the
18 wearer a special reaction: one per round, when the wearer is attacked, the hungry neckerchief reacts and attacks for an automatic 1d4 damage. Further, the attacker struck by the neckerchief must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become grappled for one round as the plant holds on.

Hypermanure – Concocted out of the mulched bodies of fallen threndls (and—it is rumored—dryads, satyrs, ents, and pixies), this deep brown stew smells horrible to non-plants but wonderful to threndls. If smeared
19 across the body, hypermanure heals a threndl or other plant- or fungus-folk 2d10 hit points. If ingested, touched, or even sniffed too aggressively, hypermanure poisons non-threndls for 1 hour.

Greenleaf vine-lute – A threndl lute looks to humans and gnomes to be a horrible deep green crab or spiky bag, covered in blotches of light gray (touch-sensitive lichenoid “buttons”) and trailing ragged vines. This particular instrument is a revered artifact of the Enark threndls. Even without any musical training, it allows
20 its holder to swiftly work out how to play a beautiful wind-song (inaudible to non-plants) that opens a gate between Silverleaf and Greenleaf. This gate—which looks like the stoma of a great, barely visible leaf hanging in the air—remains open for 4d4 rounds. The lute may be played in this way twice per day.

THRENDL RITUAL DAYS

Many holy-days are variously celebrated or quietly ignored by Enark’s threndls. To determine if any given day happens to be a threndl ritual day, roll a d20: on an 18, 19, or 20, it is! If so, roll on the table below.

d10 Threndl Ritual Day

1 **Blackleafmourn** – Complete silence for one day. No threndl may speak, or else she will become cursed.

2 **Moldyhours** – The hunt of penance for the death of the Ark (in one timeline): on this day, every threndl must hunt down and kill one gnome, dwarf, human, elf, or a creature from Blackleaf. If she does so, she becomes invigorated by arboreal magic, gaining 20 temporary hit points after every short or long rest for 1d4 days. Most threndls do not celebrate Moldyhours.

3 **Thorntea** – Every threndl tells the brutal truth about everyone else. No threndl may lie or else be cursed.

4 **Gallpale** – Funerals for threndls, trees, and Arks. All threndls must act performatively sad on this day, refraining from song and jest. Failure to do so results in a feeling of deep shame among all threndls.

5 **Threads-of-Paradise** – A gift-giving holiday! Every threndl must give each of their closest friends a gift. Failure to do so results in a feeling of deep shame among all threndls.

6 **Dew Naming** – On this day, threndls celebrate this year’s newly sprouted threndlings. No threndl may engage in combat. Failure to do so results in a feeling of deep shame among all threndls.

7 **Thunderbuzz** – A festival celebrating bees and “beer.” Each threndl must spend Thunderbuzz both becoming intoxicated and helping pollinators by planting flowering plants native to their Ark. (N.B., threndl “beer” is water steeped in rare-element rich soils; it tastes like batteries and is poisonous to other humanoids.)

8 **Eldersong** – An eating contest! Each threndl must compete to “eat” as much sunlight as possible for an hour or else go mad. Threndls will consult observatory doqters and travel great distances to be in the presence of optimal light from Arksol.

9 **Jitterpistils** – A dance festival! Each threndl must publicly dance for an hour or else go mad.

10 **Greenydream** – The holiest day of the year. No threndl may engage in combat, and every threndl must plant a tree or help restore a dying branch of an Ark. Failure to do so results in a serious curse. Doing so, however, results in a bonus of +1 to Wisdom until the following Greenydream.

BACKGROUND CONVERSION GUIDE

The Player's Handbook provides thirteen standard backgrounds that can be used in character creation. All told, these backgrounds cover the vast majority of potential societal roles most player characters will occupy prior to starting a campaign. In the original Arkus document, options for Flowmiller, Runist, and Vasculants were presented, but that only covers a small fraction of the total population of potential Arkus adventurers. The following section lists possible ways a given background may manifest itself in this setting.

ACOLYTE

Religious institutions and their customs vary wildly from faith to faith within Arkus. Whereas clergymen of the Bifold treat their work primarily as a job (that is: a means of acquiring wages as opposed to a higher calling), Vessels of the Church of the Ironblood Heart devote their entire lives to their calling. As such, Arkus acolytes are as diverse as the faiths they uphold.

Notably, even the particularly devout amongst Ledvasi elves rarely live their day-to-day lives in service of their faith. Religious posts are typically only held by most aged of Ledvasi elders, thus rendering the acolyte background a bit of an unlikely choice of an aspiring elven adventurer. Even these most devout of elves are free to enter romantic life bonds, to work other jobs, and generally live predominantly secular lives.

This is an appropriate background for any cleric or paladin, but plenty of other characters may have been acolytes before becoming adventurers as well. A druid who serves the Greenfolk or the Arks more broadly may have served in an informal druidic "church", and a Belgirist warlock who answers to a wicked patron may have cultish duties in their clandestine religious ceremonies as well.

CHARLATAN

It's not easy to be a cheat on Enark. A gnomish magister, with the aid of the unforgiving Plum Knights, will quickly crack down on anyone trying to take advantage of local economies because they protect the sanctity of private property above all else. That said, con artists are never in short supply. Despite gnomish legal harshness toward scammers, the reality is that tales of a lucrative deal will perk up plenty of ears.

You're most likely to find a charlatan in Aeolthiss, the wealthiest city in Krellfork. Clever politicking has left this city largely free from gnomish influence... meaning it's also largely free from an active police force. When crafting a charlatan character, consider what the target audience is for your scams. Are you tricking powerful Cosmologists into buying bogus mechanical supplies? Or desperate Runists in search of higher meaning?

Due to how poorly understood Blackflow is to the average Enarki citizen, plenty of charlatans peddle completely nonfunctional pseudo-arcana: resonant do-dads and trinkets that supposedly heal back aches or improve one's love life, but are in fact simple vibrating crystals with no additional properties.

CRIMINAL

While the charlatan dances around the law, a criminal wantonly breaks it. The only limit to what crimes you might perpetrate is your imagination. Do you burgle valuables from vaults in the Aroktery? Or do you falsify shipping orders from Storth, peddling the excess wares to your own sketchy buyers? Are you a hired killer working for Te'allos to sow discord? A hired killer taking out rival frondwrights on Levas? A hired killer working extralegally for the Sprike?

Not all crime is as "hands on" in Arkus as one might expect. The largest syndicate in Aeolthiss is the Vas Meric Boys, a team of counterfeiters, document forgers, and identity thieves who take advantage of Trunktop bureaucracy to swindle massive amounts of lucrative assets from under their noses. No violence, no breaking and entering: just perfectly executed "reallocation of assets."

As a criminal, it's worth considering whose laws you're actual breaking. If your crime simply transgresses a branch edict, you may be in no danger from the Plum Knights, though a branch's private police force could have a warrant out for your arrest. The labyrinthine nature of Enarki law makes criminals surprisingly common, if only because of how many layers of legal obstacles citizens may unknowingly face as they go about their daily lives.

Importantly, the nature of what constitutes criminality varies drastically from branch to branch and circumstance to circumstance. For example, Storthsap is totally legal within Withlimb. Ipso facto a Witherlimb sap dealer would be a merchant, not a criminal. A fine distinction in the eyes of the public, but a massive one in the eyes of the law.

ENTERTAINER

There is a wide gulf between what the wealthy gnomes of Overlook consider "entertaining," as opposed to that what the rustic halflings enjoy in their hollowed-out homes on Storth. While each Arkus culture has genres of popular culture under the umbrellas of various media, it's worth noting that elves are known for their music, gnomes for their theater, humans for their prose and poetry, dwarves for their sculpture, and halflings for their storytelling. That said, while improvisatory elven Hau'lo music is considered the height of culture on Ledvas, gnomes prefer contrapuntal harpsichord work. Media is culturally informed, so even the most epic of tabaxi oral prose would barely receive an ounce of acclaim from a Trunktop critic.

Of particular note is the threndl greenwaltz, a curative dance that counteracts blight. Threndls who specialize in greenwaltzing are considered both entertainers and conservationists depending on the context. A wealthy farmer may commission a dance solely to bolster their crops, but these performances are equally valid as forms of folk art.

In addition to the standard forms of entertainment common to bards in this and other settings, it is worth considering that the highest form of "entertainment" on Storth is cooking, and firbolgs are the undisputed masters of culinary excellence. Though their food is nuanced to the point of being nigh-on inedible to non-natives, even the most xenophobic of Trunktop gnomes recognize the artistry in Storthi haute cuisine.

FOLK HERO

"Hero" is ultimately a relative term. A human guard who slays a ravenous werewolf is inevitably a hero to his village, but also a murderer to that werewolf's next of kin. These sorts of quarrels are common amidst the complicated political climate of the Arks. Firbolg and Halfling militiamen are "heroic" when they defend their home from Sprike agitators, but this same act is likely viewed as an declaration of war from the Enarki point-of-view.

Te'allos is the prime example of an organization that breeds many contextually-dependent heroes. A freedom fighter who blows up a Vasculant caravan transporting valuable ironwood away from Krellfork is *arguably* a hero... depending on how much you value branch independence over the sanctity of life.

Of course, there are still unambiguous beacons of true altruism whose exploits may be revered by all. A volunteer who saves a cat from a flaming vibrafrond wreck is ultimately a *very good guy*, but those sorts of clear-cut paragons of the community are rare exceptions in Arkus. Even noble sentries who protect a town from a Blackleaf invasion will inevitably draw ire from the family of vampires who just became de facto refugees.

GUILD ARTISAN

Due to the impressive division of labor amongst Arkus societies, artisans make up a huge percentage of the working-age population. Anyone working in a Ritual Forge might qualify as a guild artisan. Anyone harvesting, packaging, and shipping megafruit would certainly qualify. Ledvasi frondwrights, Storthi distillers, and Auctaman smiths would all fall under this umbrella as well.

One important detail to remember is that groups of artisans who are able to make meaningful decisions about the way their work is conducted are particularly rare in gnomish society. Yes, there *is* a group of arkblood forge mechanics who have weekly meetings at a chancla hall in Trunktop, but they have little to no sway over acceptable labor practices. That sway wouldn't serve the centrally planned gnomish economy, and as such, collective bargaining or political lobbying is far outside the scope of what these labor groups are capable of.

Outside of Trunktop, these sorts of guilds are much more common. Notably, the vast majority of labor in Storth is performed by communal bodies who prefer to work smarter rather than work harder. Megafruit harvesters, home carvers, and craftsmen of all sorts go to great pains to be as efficient as possible so as to dedicate the largest possible portion of their lives to leisure. Inasmuch as there is any "political power" in Storth, it is mostly wielded by these labor communes.

HERMIT

Life in Arkus society is complicated and dramatic enough that just about anybody could be excused for wanting to retreat from public life altogether. When crafting a hermit, the main question you want to answer is what caused your character to withdraw from their community?

Arkbloods who attain their independence frequently decide to exit gnomish society, so as to avoid all remnants of their former shackles. Many abandon cities altogether, choosing to live in dense woods or murky swamps. Some theorize that this is due to their ironblood circulatory system, which makes these constructs (perhaps counterintuitively) closely related to threndls. Despite the curious image it may conjure, ascetic arkblood woodsmen are fairly common throughout Enark.

Gnomish doqters will often sequester themselves off from public life to devote all of their time to their studies. The sage background might be more appropriate for a doqter character, but for some the hermitical lifestyle is the defining feature of their origins stories.

Finally, some become hermits through no choice of their own. Threndls who spawn on Epi-Arks (described in greater detail below), or monstrous creatures who must avoid the prejudices of urban society inevitably live out their days in total solitude.

NOBLE

The most obvious example of nobility in Arkus are the Gnomish monarchy: the royal family and the various dukes, viscounts, and marquis. Though they do not have the same elevated status they once held due to the monarchy's waning power, they still own considerable land and property, and ultimately are granted freedoms in Trunktop society that would be denied to low-born gnomes.

Ledvasi nobility is yet again tied directly to age. Their gerontocracy creates a hierarchical system in which the older an elf is, the more status they have. If roleplaying a noble elf, you will have to account for the fact that your adventurer is accordingly geriatric.

Nobility is a totally foreign concept in orcish, tabaxi, halfling, firbolg, arkblood, and threndl societies. *Elements* of traditional nobility still exist to varying degree (land ownership, political influence, or accumulated wealth), but the fundamental structure of these communities makes the notion of a "noble tabaxi" a more or less meaningless statement.

OUTLANDER

Due to the wildly various terrains of the Arks and the space between them, a huge portion of Arkus is incredibly difficult to survive in. To make a life for one's self in the swamps of Witherlimb, the unrelenting deserts of the Unbroken, or the bizarre fungal blooms endemic to Storth, one must have total mastery over the natural challenges they face. Anyone who can create a life for themselves in the harsh environments inevitably must be a survivalist of the highest order.

Many threndls would likely be considered outlanders by default. The health of Enark demands a uniform distribution of threndls across its terrain, and so any threndl might find itself living a solitary life in the peaks of the Bark Range, the canyons of Krell, or on the banks of the Zizira river.

Many of the residents of Auctama—or at least those not directly involved with the war effort—live as outlanders: surviving primarily as nomadic hunter gatherers due to the near impossibility of subsistence agriculture on the Ark. The orcs and tabaxi each have unique ways of dealing with the drastic climate and terrain, features which likely make for excellent adventurers as well.

SAGE

When most imagine Arkus sages, they immediately think of gnomish docters and Cosmologists: those who study the world around them and dedicate their lives to the sciences and the arcane. Indeed, these academics and magi excel in their individual fields and are the most learned scholars of the Cosmos, Blackflow, engineering, and ecology.

Ultimately, the most learned of any race will likely flock to Krell if they seek an elite education. Despite many gnomish prejudices, university admission decisions and many research apprenticeships are free from racial discrimination. The Polyqius Academy in Krell is one of the most racially and culturally diverse locations in the entire world, and the four departments (Cosmology, Divinity, Botany, and Resonance) are open to all who earn their seat there.

However, only a narrow-minded onlooker would limit their definition of "sage" to these classic examples. A master elven brewer is herself a sage: a researcher and expert of the highest degree. Likweise, Te'allos bombsmith, while perhaps less nobly intentioned, can be a sage as well.

SAILOR

Boats of any variety are exceedingly rare in Arkus. Fishing vessels are use almost exclusively in Zizira Basin, and the occasional ferry is used to shepherd travelers across wider stretches of the Ledward River. That said, with no easy way to access the Deepdew (the great ocean that lies beyond the Shifting Soils), "sailing" in its various forms is an incredibly niche endeavor for the people of Arkus.

That said, those who make their living aboard vibrafonds should consider taking the sailor background. One might make a profession in the skies in a variety of ways: hauling cargo, piloting travelers, or even plundering other vibrafonds. Elven explorers in search of valuables on lesser Arks or halfling Storthsap dealers shipping huge quantities of narcotics across the sky would all constitute the Arkus equivalent of "sailors."

SOLDIER

Arkus is a highly militarized world. Though all-out war has not exactly broken out anywhere in the world presently, the various political alliances and half-peaces teeter on a knife's edge, and everyone knows it. Every faction throughout Arkus is ready to defend themselves at the drop of a hat, and so soldiers are ubiquitous on every Ark.

In Enark, the two main peacekeeping forces are the Sprike and the Plum Knights. Generally speaking, the Sprike are responsible for foreign concerns and the Plum Knights for the domestic. While theoretically a defensive force, the Sprike is almost universally used by the gnomish monarchy to enforce the diplomatic interests of Trunktop. They stand guard on Storth as miners extract resources and return them to Enark. They are also technically at war with Auctama, but the great distance means that the majority of armed conflict has been between minuscule battalions of Sprike soldiers arriving on Auctama for targeted tactical strikes.

The Auctaman armed forces are highly competent and organized. Orcs and tabaxi wield their rugged wilderness tactics to protect against Enarki invaders, and thus far have been largely successful. While the introduction of tabaxi into the war effort has gone smoothly, the strictly regimented Auctaman forces are ultimately still a force to be reckoned with. Due to the paramount importance of maintaining Auctaman independence, elite soldiers are considered to be the leaders of orcish society.

Storth's militia technically exists but is woefully untrained and barely functional. As Enarki plundering increases, the need for a competent defensive force grows by the day, but halflings and firbolgs seem to be much better at organizing their labor to harvest megafruit than they are at protecting their homes. Still, a growing number of Storthi are taking up arms to aid the effort to maintain independence.

Though not involved in any conflicts currently, the Ledvasi Navy is always at the ready. The Navy is all about striking from a distance. Archers and artilleryists aboard innumerable vibrafonds can absolutely bombard any would be attackers before they can get remotely in range. With the world's most talented archers and pilots, it is unlikely any force would dare oppose them.

URCHIN

Despite Enark's generally booming economy, many individuals fall through the cracks. Every city in Enark has an underclass that is completely unserved by the so-called "golden age of Enarki commerce." No amount of automation, innovation, or monetary policy can help a child who receives no benefits from their government. Capitalism simply cannot save those who either refuse or are unable to participate in the economy.

An arkblood who leaves the service of its master is technically free to do so, but it must then forego its wages, its housing, and free repairs. A goblinoid who tries to make its way in a city will get no favors from the prejudiced populace. Even a gnome with no skills worthy of a wage may end up on the streets given the total lack of protections against eviction.

Urchins are characters that the economy has failed, but they have their own set of skills as well. Are you a master of finding refuge in clogged veins? Or have you perhaps found a cluster of unoccupied chambers in the Aroktery to call your home? Inner Trunktop in particular is full of nooks and crannies that you might claim as your lair, and you may just pick up half the mechanical knowledge of a Vasculant along the way.

DUNGEON PROMPTS

While Arkus is indeed a vast and ancient land, the present day prosperity, technological achievement, and arcane knowledge eclipses that of any previous era. As such, adventurers will likely not spend their time trudging through awe-inspiring mausoleums filled with long-forgotten artifacts. Instead, Arkus campaigns typically emphasize contemporary environs: gnomish forges, vampire communes, and cultist lairs that are anything but abandoned.

This section of the document provides everything you need to start designing bona fide Arkus dungeon romps. Though this section is organized by general dungeon theme, you should always feel free to mix and match elements to craft the play experience that best fits your story and the goals of your players.

RITUAL FORGE

The pinnacle of gnomish industry and home to Enark's greatest artificers, Ritual Forges are likely to be a common destination for many Arkus adventurers. Though no two Ritual Forges are exactly alike, they all carry a huge amount of importance politically, economically, culturally, and arguably spiritually. Manufacturing is so central to the gnomish identity in Enark that it's woven directly into the Bifold faith. It's not unusual for a priest of Mexus to consult with a Cosmologist or vice versa.

Ritual Forges are inherently dangerous places. In addition to the constantly moving machinery, an active Ritual Forge is suffused with astral magic, heightening or dampening magical and physical effects in ways that can be hard for the uninitiated to predict. Arkblood mechanics have no patience for wandering outsiders and will efficiently remove intruders if they are seen as an obstacle to production.

RITUAL FORGE ADVENTURE HOOKS

A party might be drawn to a Ritual Forge to take advantage of its services, or to disrupt its activities. The Ritual Forge Adventure Hooks table provides some potential plot hooks for a Ritual Forge adventure.

d8 Ritual Forge Adventure Hooks

- 1 A power-hungry Cosmologist is building an **army of arkbloods** to stage a coup on the capital.
- 2 Te'allos freedom fighters have planted **explosives in a driveline** and set them to detonate in a nearby Ritual Forge.
- 3 A corrupt Cosmologist is suspected of **selling flowstones** to Auctaman military forces. The Plum Knights have deputized the party to investigate these claims.
- 4 A **rogue arkblood** has tasked the party with awakening a crew of mechanic arkbloods, thereby freeing them from their bonds of servitude.



The Trunktop Gazette is looking for volunteers to **pose** 5 as a **Cosmologist's apprentice** in order to investigate illegal working conditions.

An industrial accident produced a Leafgate inside a 6 Ritual Forge. A **horde of skeletons** now claim the Forge as their home.

A local tinkerer has invented a dangerous new weapon 7 but needs access to a Ritual Forge in order to construct it. She wants the party to help her **hijack** a Forge for just one night.

The party has come into a possession of a chunk of 8 **ironwood** ore and hopes to craft a powerful piece of equipment.

IRONWOOD FORGING

Suggested Music: "Ironwood" by [Music d20](#)

Deep in the trunks of Enark and Storth, ironwood is a substance formed by the naturally occurring magical compression of iron ore and the wood of the Arks. The result is an ore that is harder than steel when tempered but pliable enough to be used in both arms and armor as well as a number of magical implementations. Born from the magic of the Arks, ironwood is a natural receptor for magical enchantments and is known to imbue innate magical traits on pieces forged with it.



This floor plan is typical for Trunktop Ritual Forges. From a raised dais, a Cosmologist manipulate adjustable mirrors and lens to direct celestial light to fuel their mechanical magic. Copious flowstones power various motors and pumps. Atlases, charts, and manuscripts fill the overflowing bookshelves.



ARMS AND ARMOR

The process of forging arms and armor using ironwood is a well-kept secret by few master smiths, only able to be performed in Ritual Forges. When weapons and armor are crafted using these materials, they are granted the following attributes:

- Attack rolls made from an ironwood weapon inflict 1 additional die of damage on a critical hit.
- Armor and shields crafted from ironwood are immune to the additional damage from critical hits and do not count as metal armor for Druids.

While the base refinement is a work of art in and of itself, craftsmen and artisans have taken what was already remarkable and exceeded the expectations of all with magical weapons and armor that harness the tree power of the ironwood.

IRONWOOD THORNS

MARTIAL WEAPON (WHIP), MELEE WEAPON, VERY RARE (REQUIRES ATTUNEMENT)

This long, whip-like strand of refined ironwood bears more resemblance to an oaken vine than it does the traditional weapon it's modeled after, with thick barbed thorns lined up and down the length of cord.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. When you attack with this weapon, you can choose to grapple your target on a hit instead of dealing damage. A grappled creature can attempt a contested grapple check on their turn to break free.

Whenever a creature is grappled by the Ironwood Thorns, its wielder can use a Bonus Action to inflict 3d6 poison damage.

Additionally, attack rolls made with the Ironwood Thorns inflict 1 additional die of damage on a critical hit.

HAMMER OF EARTH SHATTERING

MARTIAL WEAPON (WARHAMMER), MELEE WEAPON, RARE (REQUIRES ATTUNEMENT)

This ironwood warhammer is finely crafted, with intricate patterns of earth and plant life etched through the handle up to the head of the two-sided hammer.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic ironwood weapon.

The Hammer of Earth Shattering has three charges, which recharge at dawn, every day. As an action, a wielder of this hammer can expand one charge and strike the ground beneath their feet, resonating the molecules of ironwood in the world around them in a concussive shockwave. Each creature within a 20 foot radius of the strike must make a Strength saving throw (the DC for which is equal to 8 + the wielder's proficiency + their Strength modifier) or be knocked prone and take 2d8 thunder damage. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage.

Additionally, attack rolls made with the Hammer of Earth Shattering inflict 1 additional die of damage on a critical hit.



ARMOR OF THE DRYAD

LIGHT ARMOR (STUDED LEATHER ARMOR), LEGENDARY (REQUIRES ATTUNEMENT)

While wearing this armor, it's not uncommon to mistaken its bearer for a Threndl, with twisting vines and leaves making up the armor's protective surfaces.

You have a +2 to AC while wearing this ironwood studded armor.

The armor has 3 charges. When a creature hits you or a plant you can see within 30 feet with an attack, you can use your reaction to expend a charge and send thorny vines to attack that creature. This attack counts as a magical ranged weapon attack and deals 2d6 piercing damage on a hit. All charges refresh at dawn every day.

Additionally, once per turn, you can use 10 feet of your movement to step magically into one living tree within reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 feet of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the second tree.

You are also immune to the additional damage from critical hits.



SHIELD OF THE LONGSTRIDER

ARMOR (SHIELD), UNCOMMON (REQUIRES ATTUNEMENT)

Carved with adornments and iconography of the Ark from which it was wrought, the Shield of the Longstrider embodies its creator's reverence of the wood.

While holding this ironwood shield, its wielder's speed increases by 10 feet.

Additionally, you are immune to the additional damage from critical hits.

CORRUPTED GNARL

The landmass of an Ark is ever-changing. As opposed to slow tectonic shifts, Arks are constantly growing and morphing, sometimes surprisingly rapidly. Usually this simply means a few inches of expansion per year, but under the right circumstances, the arboreal geography of an Ark can warp noticeably in a span of days.

An unhealthy portion of an Ark (either cut off from ironblood or imbued with dark magic) might produce an infected ligneous protuberance. These cancerous gnarls, if unchecked, can spread, spawn foul creatures, and even distort the Blackflow around it, creating unusual magical effects that can have drastic effects on nearby inhabitants.

In many instances, a corrupted gnarl can be cured if the underlying cause is addressed, though the longer a gnarl goes unchecked, the more dire its effects become. Any given gnarl might also point to a more systemic issue, which can eventually lead to self-perpetuating clusters of gnarls. Sometimes, a gnarl must simply be eliminated by conventional methods: some combination of fire and axes tends to do the trick.

CORRUPTED GNARL ADVENTURE HOOKS

No good ever comes from a corrupted gnarl. At best, it's a blighted mass of diseased wood. At worst, a corrupted gnarl is a monster factory that warps reality itself. The following list of adventure hooks presents a smattering of incentives for a party to approach one of these vile lumps.

d8 Corrupted Gnarl Adventure Hooks

- 1 A gnarl has supposedly formed due to a **botched disposal** of alchemical supplies. The corrosive nature of the reagents makes cleanup anything but straightforward.
- 2 Unprecedented **swarms of imps** suggest the presence of a nearby gnarl, though no one can ascertain its location. The party will have to either interrogate or track one of these imps to discover their source.
- 3 Locals have started consuming a **sweet sap** secreted by a nearby gnarl. Though those who consume this syrupy sap feel invigorated, some unexplained deaths suggest there's more to the story.

4 A gnarl at the bottom of Zizira Basin has begun to spawn enraged **aquatic beasts**. While these creatures have yet to harm any citizens, the basin's ecosystem is quickly collapsing.

5 A community on the tip of a Ledvas frond is at risk of **snapping** off its Ark altogether due to the weight of a knotted palm gnarl.

6 A **coven of hags** from Blackleaf have made their home inside a hollow gnarl in Witherlimb. They claim to have placed a curse on the people of Grimdocks that will only be unleashed if their home is destroyed.

7 A sect of clandestine **Belgirists** have been intentionally poisoning the soil to induce gnarl growth.

8 Flowmills across Elzandra have suddenly stopped turning, and local flowmillers surmise it must be caused by **Blackflow distortions** from a nearby gnarl.

GREEN GNARLS

While corrupted gnarls in Silverleaf or Greenleaf are blights on the landscape, in rare instances, a "Green Gnarl" will form in Blackleaf. These sylvan oases are botanical bastions in the otherwise nightmarish wastes of Blackleaf. Though they may seem idyllic and pure, be warned! The Fey creatures that these gnarls tend to spawn may be highly protective of their surrounded outpost.



OBSERVATORY

Whereas Ritual Forges have a direct impact on the day-to-day lives of every Enarki citizen, observatories have a more indirect effect. So much of gnomish efficiency relies upon a meticulous understanding of the Cosmos, a body of knowledge that is both always in flux and in high demand. Without a full grasp of the innumerable magical phenomena that arise from the patterns of the stars, Ritual Forges, the Pump, and even Flowmills would likely grind to a halt.

Unlike Ritual Forges which only exist in the heart of Trunktop, most observatories are in unpopulated areas, some only accessible by vibrafond. Though some doqters (gnomish researchers) claim this is to avoid interference from light pollution, blackflow fields, or other similar effects, it's likely that equally as many prefer to construct their observatories out of the way simply for the privacy it affords. No matter the reason, observatories are invariably filled with highly precise technical instruments, finely tuned arcane measures, and enough traps to keep any would-be vandal from disrupting the meticulous observations being conducted.

OBSERVATORY ADVENTURE HOOKS

Depending on the relationships between the party and gnomish sages, observatory doqters may serve as quest givers or assassination targets. Trips to an observatory might yield lucrative information or valuable items, so adventurers are often incentivized to make visits when possible. The following list of adventure hooks can serve as inspiration for some of the numerous reasons a party might end up in an observatory.

d8 Observatory Adventure Hooks

- 1 A wealthy benefactor wants to propose to his beloved when the **stars of romance** are perfectly aligned. He seeks cosmological advice from a notoriously reclusive doqter.
- 2 While exploring the swamps of Witherlimb, the party discovers an observatory that's **unmarked** on their maps. They find the building curiously empty.
- 3 A doqter needs a **rare interstellar gem** in order to focus her telescope. She tasks the party with acquiring one from the Church of the Ironblood Heart by any means necessary.
- 4 Rival doqters submit **conflicted findings** to Trunktop, and the Short Table wants the party to determine whether one has falsified their data or whether something stranger is afoot.
- 5 An **Auctaman rebel** has supposedly taken an observatory doqter hostage. When the party arrives, they find that the doqter has taken the orc in as a mentee.
- 6 After an astral forecast turns out to be stunningly inaccurate, the residents of Midvale have decided to **execute** the guilty doqter.
- 7 A now abandoned observatory is ripe for scavenging. Unfortunately, its previous inhabitant never got a chance to deactivate its **security system**.
- 8 An **amnesiac nothic** believes it fell from the Cosmos and has commandeered an observatory to try to find its way home.



CLOGGED VEIN

Despite the Vasculants' best effort, it's impossible to keep the veins and arteries perfectly maintained Ark-wide. When you're pumping ironblood to all of the branches of a 500 mile wide tree, you will inevitably end up with some faulty pipes. Any number of mishaps might cause a vein to clog or leak, and any number of beasts, plants, fungi, or spirits might end up claiming the then unused pipe as its home.

Luckily, the dwarven architects of this colossal plumbing project installed a series of access hatches that allow even large creatures to enter the dank passageways in the event of a stoppage. Adventurers may be called upon to aid in the more unsavory aspects of pipe maintenance, so it's not unusual for a squad of freelancers to delve into the circulatory system of the Ark itself.

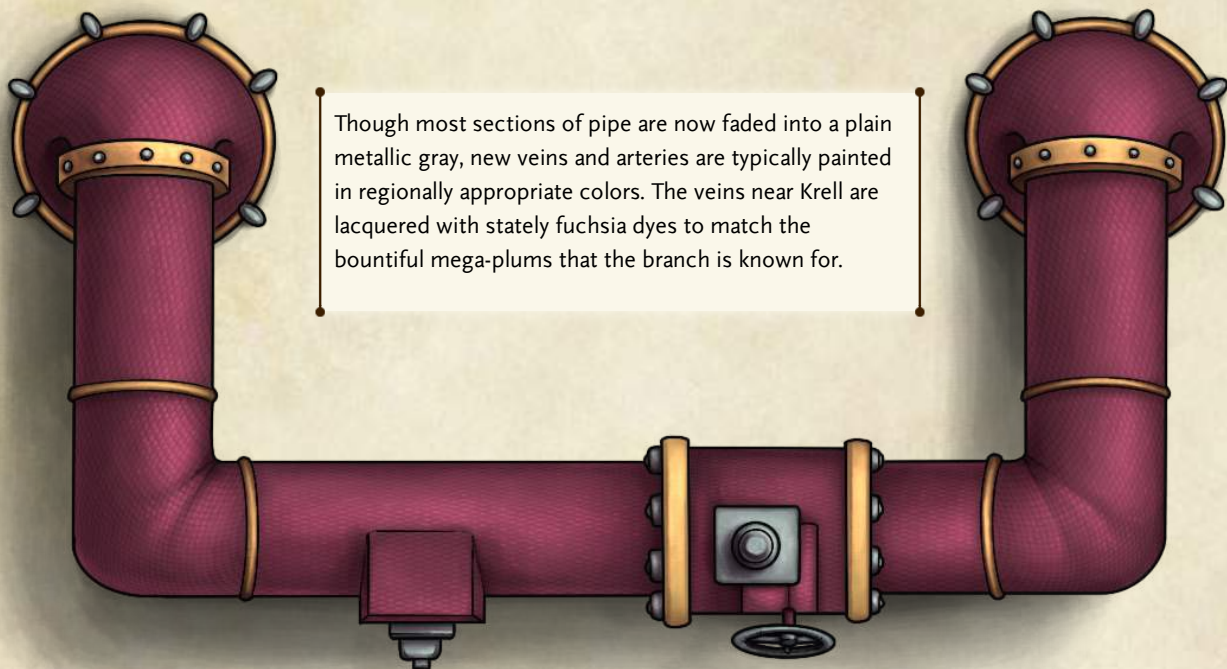
While it is easy to dismiss the veins and arteries of Enark as a glorified sewer system, the reality is much more complicated. In addition to a tangled web of massive pipes, this system also features complex dynamos that propel the ironblood to the furthest reaches of Enark's branches. It was also designed with numerous redundancies and seemingly counterintuitive designs, perhaps to thwart potential vandals, terrorists, or squatters.

CLOGGED VEIN ADVENTURE HOOKS

While a backed up pipe can be an excuse for a straightforward and linear dungeon slog, it can also be the centerpiece of a complex multilayered quest if intricate politics, magic, and technology are woven into the narrative. The follow list of adventure hooks provides some inspiration for how you can design nuanced adventures in Arkus's largest potential dungeon complex.

d6 Clogged Vein Adventure Hooks

- 1 The Short Table has fully shut off ironblood to a corner of Witherlimb. A **community of threndls** has moved into the now empty pipes to try to harvest and disperse what few drops of ironblood they can recover.
- 2 A **giant crocodile** has found its way into a vein and grown so engorged on ironblood that it clogs the entire pipe behind it. The magically fortified croc is either unable or unwilling to move.
- 3 A decommissioned section of pipe has become a base of operations for **Te'allos** leadership. The Plum Knights want the party to reconnect this section of pipe to literally flush out the rebels.
- 4 A calcified growth of ironwood ore has punctured through a section of pipe in the Inner Trunk. Squads of **prospectors** are racing through the vein trying to score a valuable haul.
- 5 Vasculant tinkerers have attempted to repair a clogged vein with **mechanical constructs**. When none of these autonomous drones return, the party is tasked with discovering why.
- 6 An **inexplicable Leafgate** spawning within a vein has drained an entire pipe of its ironblood. No one is sure how to close the Leafgate without getting swept away in the process.
- 7 The Vas Meric Boys have set up an **illegal horse racing track** inside a clogged vein near Aeolthiss. The Plum Knights want it shut down, but the local government thinks it's great for tourism.
- 8 A particularly derelict section of pipe leads all the way down to a known **illithid lair** deep in the Lower Trunk. Though the pipe was sealed off years ago, the local Vasculants begin to panic when they find its hatch unexpectedly open.



Though most sections of pipe are now faded into a plain metallic gray, new veins and arteries are typically painted in regionally appropriate colors. The veins near Krell are lacquered with stately fuchsia dyes to match the bountiful mega-plums that the branch is known for.



LEAFGATE

The most important thing to remember about a Leafgate is that it's double-sided. For every instance of a creature escaping Blackleaf and terrorizing Silverleaf, there's another of an innocent halfling being sucked out of her home and into an alternate reality of malevolent tree ghosts. Leafgates offer DMs a convenient plot hook for dropping players into one of the neighboring timelines, or instead pulling elements from these timelines into their own.

The most common source of a Leafgate is a technological mishap. A malfunctioning flowstone can burst and form one of these portals, but a talented spellcaster might also be able to summon one out of thin air. Furthermore, even just a particular cosmological circumstances might induce spontaneous Leafgates. From a narrative standpoint, Leafgates present an easy way to raise the stakes or simply introduce new elements to a stagnating story, but be warned that it can be difficult to reign in the chaos that constant unpredictable portals can foment.

Narratively, it's important to recognize that Leafgates are *consequences*. From a broad view, they are the result of a single act of greed hundreds of years ago. On a case-by-case scenario, they are also the result of technological arrogance, wizardly irresponsibility, or talented monks looking to escape a dire situation. The separate timelines each have their own share of problems, but each also exists in relative equilibrium. Leafgates shock this perilous balance by introducing foreign stimuli. A quaint Krellfork village is simply *not at tremendous risk* from day-to-day events, unless a vibrafond crash creates a portal to a parallel hell dimension.

LEAFGATE ADVENTURE HOOKS

Many Arkus adventurers will eventually find their way to one or both of the adjacent timelines. While the lore origins for these planes are unique, they are ultimately rough analogues for the Feywild and Shadowfell in a typical Dungeons and Dragons adventure. That said, if you want uniquely Arkus-themed adventures ideas relating to Leafgates, the following hooks may provide some inspiration.

d6 Leafgate Adventure Hooks

- 1 An assassin has intentionally summoned a Leafgate as a means of creating a distraction at a **fancy party**. Swarms of zombies are now ruining the soirée.
- 2 A **cadre of eladrin and a brood of vampires** have both become stranded in Stonesever. A romance between two young members of the opposing communities threatens the tenuous peace.
- 3 A Green Leafgate in Witherlimb has somehow **revitalized** a blighted portion of the tree. Gnomish diplomats are now trying to claim that this swath of healthy Ark is under the jurisdiction of Trunktop.
- 4 An unassuming farmer has been whisked away to Greenleaf, where she is **considered a God** for her agricultural knowhow. Now the Elzandra branch Manager wants to bring her home.
- 5 The party has uncovered a Leafgate deep in the **Lower Trunk**, allowing adventurous dwarves to mine for cursed ores in the depths of Blackleaf.
- 6 A man identical to the **gnomish King** has appeared out of a Leafgate near Trunktop. He claims to be the true king of Enark.
- 7 A **fraudulent oracle** escaped through a Leafgate after his prophecies were repeatedly debunked. After disappearing, many of his visions have come to pass.
- 8 **Shadows** haunt the ruins of Old Mildvale. Some believe these to be restless souls, slain in the massacre on the city. Others surmise they're simply migrants from a theorized nearby Black Leafgate.

Note: A monk with access to a flowstone may attempt to carefully shatter it in order to conjure a Leafgate. When doing so, roll a d20. If the number is greater than 20 minus the monk's level, they succeed! Otherwise, some sort of terrible mishap occurs: maybe the portal directs to the wrong plane, maybe the Leafgate is unstable, or maybe the resultant explosion deal catastrophic damage to the party.

EPI-ARKS

Epiphytes are plants that grow on other plants—mostly, on trees. The Arks host many epiphytes, some vining, some waxy-leaved, some flowering, some creeping, some nonvascular (that is, mossy)... The dwarves inside the trunks ignore them; the gnomes and humans above see them as sources of raw material; the halflings and firbolgs in the crevasses of the cypress bark of Storth treat them as just more aspects of their interconnected natural ecosystem.

Only the elves, in the earliest days of Arkus's recorded history, saw the various Epi-Arks as worthy of sustained research. The early resonant sorcerers, it is rumored, learned their art by studying the vines, and it is said that the resonant archmagisters dwelled in great singular Epi-Arks sculpted from living ferns, like green castles that float just beyond the trunk of Ledvas. They noticed that—since the Arks are much fewer in number per unit of area compared to the trees of a smaller forest—the Epi-Arks evolved to periodically float from mega-trunk to trunk. This phenomenon is rare, but it allows small amounts of material to flow from Ark to Ark. These drifting Epi-Arks are just as likely to be home to valuable resources as they are to house dangerous marauders.

What's more, the Epi-Arks themselves have their own properties. A few were home, at some point in Arkus's mist-shrouded past, to various alternative communities, breakaways from the societies of the branches. Very rarely, an Epi-Ark even enters Silverleaf from one of the other timelines...

THE LOTUS

The largest and most well-known Epi-Ark is known simply as “the Lotus.” This fractal, folded flower is massive in size: at least a mile in diameter, floating high above the skies of Arkus, higher than would ever be convenient for Ark-to-Ark travel. It has never landed on an Ark, and its flight patterns are erratic. Despite consistent observation by gnomish doqters, its trajectory is thus far completely unpredictable.

In addition to being a beautiful, divinely geometric botanical satellite, the Lotus has an additional property that has stilled the majority of research attempts: subtle vibrations in its leafy petals seem to warp the Blackflow around it and disrupt any form of magical resonance. As such, vibrafonds that attempt to approach it will inevitably stall out before reaching its petals. This has made close study of the Lotus impossible.

Based on what distant streaks of motion they can see through their spyglasses, skywatchers in Krell theorize that the Lotus is the present-day home of the majority of Arkus dragons. Dragons are a mysterious force in Arkus, far less common than in other campaign settings. Dragons are, however, occasionally seen flying above the Shifting Soils, or rarely landing on an Ark for the sake of ransacking the countryside or hoarding treasures. It is known that dragons are able to shapechange into humans, and many suspect that powerful figures all the world over might be dragons in disguise.

Generally speaking though, dragons are nearly as mythical in Arkus as they are in the real world. Some think they aren't real at all; some view them as a sort of legendary but endangered species; while others consider them an embodiment of divinity.

Ancient artworks and mythic texts seem to reference the races intermingling from Ark to Ark via dragons, but no one living has ever mounted a dragon. Is it possible that early humans explored the Arks on dragon wings long before vibrafonds became commonplace?

The prevailing theory is that the ancient dragons abandoned the terrestrial world ages ago, and now primarily reside in the Lotus. Most suspect that the dragons of old reside within its folds, though the nature of this interior space is a total mystery. The inner-Epi-Ark might be a nest, a teeming city, or some sort of non-Euclidean extradimensional pocket.

EPI-ARK ADVENTURE GENERATOR

Most Epi-Arks are no larger than an average city block, inhabited only by plants, fungi, and small animals, and contain few valuable resources other than those produced by these living things. Some, however, are far more complex and thus alluring to adventurers. To generate a random Epi-Ark, you can roll on one or more of the following lists. Rolling on all of them will generate a more rich but also more dangerous location.

d6 Type of Epi-Ark

- 1 **Bromeliad** – A primordial, spiky-leaved plant with deep veins, aerial roots, and a strong fragrance. Bromeliads are good at saving water in their leaves.
- 2 **Kapuka (griselinia)** – This small evergreen tree grows in cool regions, sometimes on other trees.
- 3 **Wood false brome (bunchgrass)** – Yellow-green, this plant is allegedly not native to any known Ark but is spreading rapidly, outcompeting other plants nearby. Scholars ponder whether it may have originated beyond the Deepdew.
- 4 **Fern** – Native to tropical Ledvas, the great “bird's nest” fern has fronds like banana leaves.
- 5 **Orchid** – Many beautiful flowering Epi-Arks are native to Storth. The most common type to float, however, is the queen of the orchids (AKA tiger orchid, sugarcane orchid), a giant variety native to Ledvas.
- 6 **Moss** – Many mosses grow on trees, including ballmoss, clubmoss, and haircap. Storth is particularly rich in mossy Epi-Arks.

INTERESTING PROPERTY OF THIS EPI-ARK (D6)

d6 Property

1 **Poisonous** – This plant releases toxins from its leaves that humanoids find noxious and disorienting. Once per hour, a visitor must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or suffer disadvantage on attacks for the following 60 minutes. When taking a long rest on a poisonous Epi-Ark, adventurers recover only half of their total hit points.

2 **Spore-forming** – The compounds in the spores of a fungus here cause humanoids to see things that aren't there. Once per day, a visitor must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer hallucinations while here, suffering disadvantage on Intelligence and Wisdom checks and saving throws but gaining advantage on Charisma checks. A creature may willingly fail this saving throw and succumb to the hallucinations.

3 **Dried out** – This Epi-Ark has been floating in search of rain. It's currently as dry as tinder, and it will go up in flames easily. Lighting any fire here, including a torch, carries a 1 in 4 chance per round of sending up the whole place, engulfing anyone here in a conflagration that deals an automatic 2d6 damage per round.

4 **Dying** – This plant has been parasitized or overharvested, or it has died naturally and is now rotting, falling to the Shifting Soils. Visitors can notice this on a DC 12 Perception check. They can then work out how many rounds they have until the Epi-Ark falls by making a DC 18 Nature check. The answer is 2d10 rounds.

5 **Bioluminescent** – This Epi-Ark has special compounds that give off dim light at all times. Visitors here suffer disadvantage on Stealth checks.

6 **Urban** – This plant is inhabited by some coterie of humanoids. Roll a d6, and then consult the Epi-Ark Denizens table.

d6 Epi-Ark Denizens

1 **Duergar** – The gray dwarves are not native to any known location in Silverleaf, but this exploratory team is excited to report back to their civilization (from Blackleaf? beyond the Deepdew? or some other plane entirely?) about the usefulness of the Arks. These cold-hearted miners represent a grave threat to the stability of the Silverleaf timeline. This Epi-Ark is built over in drab Byzantine stoneworks.

2 **Goblins** – These green kids just want to have fun... and perfect their ability to saw through the branches of the Arks, more easily getting at the goodies hidden inside. This Epi-Ark is littered with half-finished wooden palaces, workshops, and lean-tos for cooking/partying.

3 **Firbolgs** – These giant-kin are not evil per se, but they view this Epi-Ark as their home and are far more aggressive to outsiders than their Storthi counterparts. This Epi-Ark is one well-appointed though labyrinthine home made of mounded and shaped bark, which has been planted over by yet-more vegetation, including copious mosses.

4 **Gnomes** – Enarki single-tax separatists have moved here and built out a clean and orderly model town. They do not enjoy intruders, and they have contracted a private police force to keep out trespassers.

5 **Proto-Elves** – These ancient elves have been here for a *long* time. Perhaps these beings are near immortal, or perhaps they've simply reproduced in relative isolation from the other creatures of Arkus. These creature bear secrets from the earliest day of the world, and their architecture is almost alien in its idiosyncrasies.

6 **Dragons** – 1d4 dragons have decided to make this Epi-Ark their nest. Roll 1d4 to determine whether they've 1) been banished from the Lotus, 2) become stranded from the Lotus, 3) grown up perpetually cut off from other dragons, or 4) arrived in Silverleaf from an adjacent plane. This Epi-Ark is a lair that reflects the type of dragons inhabiting it.

RUMORS ABOUT THIS EPI-ARK (D6)

d6 Rumor

1 This Epi-Ark has been kept alive beyond its natural lifespan by a leaf- or bark-wrapped **Fey mummy**. Rumors hold that you don't have to kill the mummy to release it from its curse. And the Epi-Ark will not fall, if the mummy is freed, but instead grow permanently into the side of Enark's trunk.

2 This Epi-Ark needs humanoids to help it regrow the **Rhizome**, the great threndl crèche, and bring many more threndls to consciousness to aid Silverleaf. Restoring the vast, vine- and web-tangled crèche will require magical prowess and bravery...

3 This Epi-Ark needs humanoids to prune the rangy **Heart of Omens** inside its lower stem. This magical organ, which looks like an ordinary mass of light green plant flesh, is spawning its own strange immuno-plants to keep out would-be pruners. Anyone who drinks the pale, bitter water exuded by the Heart of Omens, it is said, sees the unchangeable future...

4 **It-That-Hungers**—a horrible, mountain-sized, tentacle-covered, undying entity from beyond this plane—has awoken and killed this Epi-Ark's ancestral Ark. It is now heading toward Enark... The Epi-Ark cannot easily communicate this fact to the adventurers, but it will try to signal them to investigate further. Threndls and druids, however, can pass a DC 20 Nature or DC 22 Insight check to pick up on the Epi-Ark's clues. An extraplanar epiphyte is an acceptable patron for a Warlock of the Great Old One.

5 The pale, chlorophyll-less **ghost plant** grows here in abundance. Enarki magi will pay handsomely for Epi-Ark ghost plant specimens, and the epiphyte itself will thank the adventurers for removing a burdensome meta-parasite. The only catch? These magical ghost plants attract actual ghosts, and anyone who dies near them soon returns, undead...

6 This Epi-Ark is home to the infamous **Reverberating Hind**, a sort of floating, faster-than-a-cheetah, sweetly scented plant-deer. Legend holds that whoever captures it may demand a single wish from the Archfey—but killing the emerald deer will bring down a terrible wrath upon Silverleaf, dooming the timeline...

STRANGE SITE IN THIS EPI-ARK (D10)

d10 Strange Site

1 **Blackleaf unsleeper chapel** – This bubble of plant from the Blackleaf timeline is an anti-sacred site for “unsleepers”—vengeful anti-threndls who spread blight instead of counteracting it... While here, all creatures take double damage from necrotic and half damage from radiant sources, and Turn Undead does not function.

2 **Gnomeworks** – LUMENKRAFT™ was the ancient production site of the REDHAT™ line of autognomes, a pre-Cleave predecessor to the modern arkblood. It is now home to d4 ghost gnomes, each of which has a signature spectral tool-weapon, pointed cap hiding technomagical servo-arms, and creepy laugh. There may even be some malfunctioning autognomes still in service...

3 **Dwarven printshop** – This combination art atelier/workshop is full of naughty magazines, books, complicated printing machines, hand tools, and booze. It seems to have been abandoned (d4): 1) earlier today, 2) recently, 3) years ago, 4) ages ago.

4 **Goblin chainsaw factory** – This longhouse is shuddering with audible commotion. Inside, 4d6 goblins are frantically manufacturing chainsaws under the supervision of an old hobgoblin smith. There's a 1 in 4 chance that the goblins have attached chainsaws to the heads of 3d4 of their pet wolves.

5 **Halfling ecoterrorist cell** – This sunny little cottage/earth ship is filled with corkboard-and-colored thread organizational diagrams depicting the social shape of and connections between various gnomish institutions. The whole place also smells like shit: the terrorists were or are using vast amounts of giant-bat feces to make powerful explosives. Other artifacts here include books and maps—including worryingly detailed maps of Krell. When the adventurers arrive, roll d4; the 3d6 ecoterrorists are: 1) here, 2) out and about nearby, 3) on the other side of the Epi-Ark, 4) permanently located somewhere else—because the Sprike is onto them! (1 in 2 chance that Sprike guards are still here, waiting to catch any “co-conspirators.”)

6 **Fey jail** – This airy, honey-colored cathedral is full of “Dream Thieves” frozen in sap, according to the signs on the walls next to the cells. An adventurer can release a thief by making a DC 20 Sleight of Hand check to pick a cell's locks. What a Dream Thief is and what releasing one will do is up to the DM—but at the very least, it will anger the Archfey who periodically wander through this Epi-Ark to gloat at their imprisoned foes. There is a 1 in 2 chance that the jail is guarded by a beholder of a [random type](#).

7 **Firbolg gin distillery** – Milling about the distillery are 2d4 drunk firbolgs. Hiding from them is one agéd (and very drunk) human writer who has finally finished the great Enarki novel. (It really is a tear-producingly beautiful comment on contemporary gnomish/human society in the branches.) Each firbolg has d4–1 random Storthian foods (see below) at any time.

8 **Minor threndel crèche** – This life-giving matrix—a great green womb covered in violet flowers—is desperately hungry. It cannot produce any new threndls without ingesting a large amount (15 donkey-packs' worth) of a random threndl food (see below). The Epi-Ark will reward anyone who helps the crèche resume its function. There is a 1 in 4 chance that a single baby threndl is here, in need of love and nutrients. (DMs should consider forcing the party to make a Wisdom saving throw or else be charmed by its cuteness!)

9 **Blue Leafgate** – This dark green-brown Epi-Ark—surrounded by a literal bubble of air—is a pocket of a newly discovered parallel split-world populated not by Arks at all, but by titanic fronds of kelp. In this timeline, when King Dorim's pickaxe struck true, the Shifting Soils and Arks were washed away by miles-tall waves, and slowly life regrew beneath them... This Epi-Ark has a 1 in 2 chance of being inhabited by merfolk, shark-persons, or any other aquatic denizens that might otherwise be difficult to introduce into Arkus campaigns. It exists unstably between both timelines, so the PCs must tread carefully or else exit Silverleaf and find themselves unable to return.

10 **Greenleaf bubble** – This Epi-Ark is actually a flying piece of ecotopia. It is lost, having arrived here in Silverleaf (d4): 1) only earlier today, 2) recently, 3) years ago, 4) ages ago. The great floating plant will reward anyone who helps it return to the proper timeline.

OTHER TIMELINES

The people of Arkus know about Blackleaf and Greenleaf because they are planarly “adjacent” to Silverleaf. That is: they can readily be accessed by various forms of gates or teleportation.

This should not be a limitation on other potential timelines. Any number of bizarre magical occurrences may have reshaped Arkus if the Cleave had had yet another cataclysmic outcome.

WANDERERS IN THIS EPI-ARK (D10)

d10 Wanderer

1 **Blackleaf blightsmith** – This gray elf sports a beard of mushrooms. They are here to forge many unsleepers (anti-threndls) to deaden as much of Enark as possible. They are quite evil but also intelligent; they will lie to the PCs and try to push them over the edge of the epiphyte if possible.

2 **Bear mummy** – Embalmed ages ago by an unknown magician (and/or jokester), the bear mummy is skinny, stinky, fast, and dangerous. It hates fire.

3 **Venomslaths** – These curious lawful evil beasts devote their lives to knitting quilts... out of humanoid bones! They wear intricate aprons of bone and vine.

4 **Needlefox** – This magical beast claims to grant wishes (it does not grant wishes). It will try to steal the PCs' stuff and run away. If attacked, it shoots needles out of its back. While a competent adventurer will quickly dispatch a needlefox (which has just 1 HP), the needles deal 4d6 piercing damage and require a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw to avoid.

5 **Duergar automonks** – These determined travelers seek to mine a new Ark. They ride giant skunks and are immune to both fear and reason. Their mechanical armor is powered by overcharged flowstones.

6 **The Idea of Honey** – This magical virus, which lives in jars of delicious honey, turns any PC who is exposed to it into a drone, obsessed with caring for nearby flowering plants. Any creature who tastes this honey or smells it deeply must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or else be possessed by the virus. They can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of their turns. Creatures immune to charm are immune to this effect and can freely consume the honey if desired.

7 **Chainsawwolves** – These goblin experiments smell of petrol and deal damage that “bleeds” round after round, inflicting an additional 1d6 damage exactly one round after first inflicting the damage. They also score critical hits on rolls of 18, 19, or 20.

8 **Flying bottles** – Like a flock of translucent doves, these broken bottles fly and tumble at random. They were made by the gnomish wizard and Arkhopper, Gläg the Curmuring (missing, presumed dead). There is a 1 in 2 chance that Gläg is actually alive, hiding out somewhere on this Epi-Ark. He is wanted in Krell for war crimes; the Short Table are offering a 500 gp reward for his head. The flaying bottles are individually weak but, en masse, dangerous. In battle, they function identically to a swarm of bats, except they are considered constructs as opposed to beasts.

9 **Mazeapes** – Hailing from either an unknown timeline, the Cosmos, the Deep Roots, or somewhere altogether more foreign, these gray apes have a primitive religion and are here in Arkus on a pilgrimage. They are friendly if treated with respect.

10 **Greenleaf quarantine enforcer** – This Fey paladin is here to punish anyone even thinking of entering Greenleaf and bringing with them the blight of Extractivism... She is incredibly powerful and wields a vorpal lasso that can either paralyze or cut in half its targets according to her desire. A DC 18 History or Insight check will reveal that she is a member of the Trim.

THE TRIM

The Trim is a clandestine group of anti-Blackleaf extremists. In addition to exterminating any known shadowy interlopers who may find their way to Silverleaf, the ultimate goal of the Trim and their elite Venator agents is to seal off Blackleaf altogether. While this would theoretically keep Silverleaf safe from vampires, shadow dragons, and the like, it would have unfathomable consequences on the passage of Blackflow, potentially disrupting every facet of daily life.

SECRET COMPLICATION REGARDING ANY ADVENTURE IN THIS EPI-ARK (D12)

d12 Complication

1 This Epi-Ark is birthing a child, which means it is physically ripping itself apart. It will become **unstable** for its humanoid visitors in a mere 2d6 rounds! The “child” it could be another Epi-Ark, an enormous thredl, or something far more bizarre.

2 This Epi-Ark is in mourning. It needs a suitable **epi-mate** or will become warped, spawning a Black Leafgate within 1 week.

3 The **Archwythch** of Greenleaf—a very powerful, ancient spellcaster—will be stopping by this Epi-Ark in 1 hour. She demands a tribute of teeth from each person who has an audience with her... She insists...

4 The elves want this Epi-Ark dead! It choked out a populated branch of Ledvas. The powerful **Ledvasi Navy** approaches in 1d4 hours...

5 A **gang** of firbolg scoundrels use this Epi-Ark for Storthsap drug deals. The PCs can fight off the scoundrels or accept their generous offer...

6 This Epi-Ark is home to the roaming **ghost** of a halfling child who fell down to the Shifting Soils. It is not evil, but truly insane, trapped in an endless cycle of falling and climbing, falling and climbing... There must be some way to help it pass on from this life without killing it.

7 Due to a magical plant pathogen, this densely foliated Epi-Ark is slowly **shrinking**. Anyone exploring it also shrinks at the same rate, and therefore noticing this eldritch change requires a DC 22 Perception or DC 25 Arcana check. The shrinking becomes noticeable upon leaving the Epi-Ark, however, as any humanoid who spends a day exploring it has their size reduced by one category.

8 The **Spike** are impounding this Epi-Ark to mulch it into Ironblood growing-chaff. There are 2d8 Spike guards here now, unconcerned, hanging out. The full battalion will float down in 2d10+3 rounds. This lumber-battalion has 500 soldiers, but only half were deployed on this mission, and only 3d100 could fit on their initial vibrafrond deployment. Still...

9 This Epi-Ark is also being explored by a narcissistic **paladin** from Krell named Buck Candlelandtern. He is not smart, but he is wildly competitive: he won't leave the PCs to “suss out all the glittering prizes” on their own. Buck is of the same level as the PCs. It is irrelevant whether this Epi-Ark actually contains any valuable spoils.

10 Yvaardashiir Light-and-Mass—an astral **tourist** (githzerai)—is here, looking to have “the most fun.” She gloms onto the PCs right away. She can read Enark runes. She is much higher level than any given PC. Her whims are unpredictable.

11 Delicious, orange-red **tomatoes** grow everywhere on this Epi-Ark. They make loud noises when handled and shriek horribly when eaten.

12 This Epi-Ark is a place of worship: **Archfey** will incarnate here and attack any who disturb the peace.

ARKUS CUISINE: TWO CASE STUDIES

A frequently overlooked detail when studying the various realms for your adventures is the dietary cultures of its people. Food acquisition, preparation, preferences, and customs can tell us a great deal about a given society, and Arkus's unique geography and biology has led to a highly diverse spread of food cultures. While the primary source of calories for the majority of sentient species throughout Arkus is the bountiful and various varieties of megafruit, the idiosyncratic diets of the threndls and Storthi provide a noteworthy look at how arboreal geography and xenometabolism intersect.

The following two sections mostly provide surface-level context for these two Arkus cultures, but optional mechanics are also provided for campaigns that want to prioritize particularly detailed roleplaying.

FOODS FOR THRENDLS (D20)

If you're playing a threndl character, you may feel left out when the rest of the partys call for a rest and break out their elven granola and gnomish biscuits. Roll on this chart when resting to determine what food you are hungry for!

Everyone knows that plants need sunlight and water, but most don't know that they actually need a whole bunch of other things found in soil, too. All plants need numbers 1 through 18, and some need rare elements as well. In addition, because threndls are intelligent, they also need love!

d20	Food
1	Sunlight
2	Wind (movement)
3	Carbon
4	Hydrogen
5	Nitrogen
6	Oxygen
7	Phosphorus
8	Potassium
9	Calcium
10	Magnesium
11	Sulphur
12	Boron
13	Chlorine
14	Copper
15	Iron
16	Manganese
17	Molybdenum
18	Zinc
19	Rare element (roll 1d6 below)
20	Love (social attention)

RARE THRENDL FOODS (D6)

d6	Rare element
1	Cobalt
2	Nickel
3	Silicon
4	Sodium
5	Vanadium
6	Magic

OPTIONAL RULE:

This additional requirement is ideal for survival campaigns, or any adventure that prioritizes the minutiae of moment-to-moment adventuring. If you choose to play a threndl, roll 6d20, rerolling repeats. These are the elements that you need to ingest in large quantities to live. Some (potassium, sulphur) can be found copiously in the soil on the branches of the Arks; others (nickel, copper) are expensive to eat in the quantities needed to keep a thinking, moving tree-person alive.

Weekly cost for a given element equals an amount of copper equal to the number on the list above (so, 4 for hydrogen, 16 for manganese). Your DM may decide whether a given element can be acquired directly from the soil and atmosphere or whether it must be purchased from a botanist or alchemical supplier. It's assumed that most threndls are able to receive their required nutrients in the soil from which they first sprouted.

If you lose access to these, you lose one hit die per day until you wither and enter torpor. After another 1d4 days, you "die," although cuttings from your body can be nurtured over 1d6 weeks and brought back to sapience and motility (à la a certain tree-person in the Marvel Cinematic Universe).

FOODS FROM STORTH, THE GREAT CYPRESS (D20)

Urbane inhabitants of Enark have many legends about the habits of the "uncivilized" firbolgs and halflings of Storth. Gnomes tell their children of the fearsome "treesquids" hunted with twelve-foot spears by the giant-kin, and how the little folk spend their days happily foraging for wild "coiling cobra-garlic" (pungent, quasi-intelligent tubers they supposedly use as noodles) and assiduously tending gardens of hearty "windybeans" (a rather obvious dig at the digestive prowess of the halfling). The Enarki even snicker about the Storthish propensity for snacking on "bed chips" (bed bugs).

In reality, the people of Enark simply cannot imagine the unique abundance of the cool conifer swamp that recursively grows on and around the Great Cypress. Listed here are twenty real Storthi delights, mostly shared across halfling and firbolg societies. They will not become common in Enark unless many more moss and orchid Epi-Arks float over from Storth (or the Sprike's merchant-soldiers take a sudden interest in low-volume, highly perishable valuables). Until then, wealthy gourmands searching out the "authentic" Storthish experience will pay Epi-Ark delvers well for ingredients.

Note: all of the ingredients in the dishes below are real plants and animals; in theory, one could, if foolish, test them. The author absolves himself of all consequence in that regard.

d20 Storthi Food

- 1 Beer-battered monkey flowers
- 2 Winter-tarragon gin served with crowberry garnish
- 3 Zombie ants (zombified by the *Ophiocordyceps* fungus), candied
- 4 Wild blue-flag vichyssoise
- 5 Creeping snowberry jam served with calypso-orchid crackers
- 6 Garlic chives topped with chopped showy lady's slipper (fun-size salad)
- 7 Deep-fried osprey feet "grasping" (wrapped around) cypress-smoked shelf mushroom
- 8 Oak-fern custard
- 9 Pickled beech-shoot "sausage"
- 10 Tea-soaked marigold flowers and venison jerky
- 11 Grouse eggs poached in sphagnum-moss "chocolate"
- 12 Lemon verbena, hyssop-leaved fleabane, and jewelweed salad
- 13 Basil cheese paired with liverwort tapenade
- 14 Lynx cutlets (illegal among the halflings)
- 15 Wolf shank with salsa of sedge, thistle, and (a very dash of) small enchanter's nightshade
- 16 Starflower clafouti
- 17 Brick-and-butter vine and twayblade salad topped with moose lips
- 18 Marsh-fern ravioli in butterwort sauce
- 19 Mad-dog skullcap and woodpecker enchiladas
- 20 Bog-orchid mince pie

OPTIONAL RULE:

Storthi foods are magically fortifying. When a PC eats a traditional Storthi food, they roll as many d4s as the number on the list above (so, 11 for grouse eggs, 16 for clafouti). For every 4 that results, they can choose to regain 1 hp (up to their normal max) or roll another d4. For every 4 that results from this second round of rolls, they regain one spent spell or, if they are not a spellcaster or have not spent slots, gain the ability to cast a random cantrip one time.

Additionally, the DM may rule that for every roll of a 1 on a d4 (either on the first or optional second set), the PC has an embarrassing bout of indigestion—burping and moaning so loudly that they cannot sneak for 4d6 rounds (cumulative, add 4d6 for each 1 rolled). This rule does not apply to halflings or firbolgs. For particularly exotic foods (or particularly sensitive stomachs), it is entirely within reason for a DM to require players to pass a Constitution saving throw to avoid more dire effects.

