

# Shadows of the Empire of the Sun

## Dungeons & Dragons 5e

### New Player Setting Introduction

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## Nota Bene

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## The Empire of the Sun

Between five hundred and three hundred and fifty years ago was the period of the Empire of the Sun. The nation-state of **Ish'El'Kahdur** rose to prominence among its neighbors, blessed with fertile lands, bountiful coasts and rivers, and rich mines.

Most critically, however, was the formal mastery of Wizardry. The first nation-state to create a Wizard's Collegiate, this coastal-located body gave the rulers of **Ish'El'Kahdur** a tremendous advantage in every aspect of agriculture, health, trade, diplomacy and war.

Within a single century, the now-named Var-Doh'El'Kahdar – literally translated as the Divine Empire of the Sun - spanned the entire continent, wrapping around the inland sea of the **Azure Highway**. The might of the Imperial Army and the Imperial Navy was without question, as was the authority of the various local Imperial Governors.

The Empire was ruled by a God-Emperor or a God-Empress, thought to be the same person whose single Soul passed from Ruler to Heir at death. This individual was master or mistress of Wizardry, and also carried the Blessing of the Divine Chain of Succession.

While the Empire is well known for ruling with an adamantine fist within a shadowsilk glove, this is regarded as the period of greatest peace and prosperity within the continental region.

## The Eclipse

Three hundred and fifty years ago, Apocalypse Cultists who infiltrated the Holy Phalanx assassinated the God-Emperor plunging the Empire into Civil War and chaos.

The God-Emperor is in his early teens, and leaves no heir. The Divine Chain of Succession is shattered.

While the Cult and those Noble Houses that supported it are violently and swiftly destroyed, the Empire is dealt a fatal blow.

## Twilight

From three hundred and fifty years ago to three hundred years ago, the Empire is ruled by not less than six different self-declared Kings, Emperors, or Divine Ruling Councils.

Each one falls to a bloody, destructive coup by rivals. The Capitol city is attacked twice from without, a situation considered unthinkable prior to the assassination of the God-Emperor. However, the greatest dangers within the Capitol are the dozens of warring factions. Most nights, the streets run red in orgies of aggression and retaliation.

The Imperial Army and Navy are pulled back from all around the Empire to the ancestral homelands, trying to maintain order. In many cases, the units recalled from the periphery do not arrive in time to hold off the looming disaster.

## The Long Night

Approximately three hundred years ago, the Empire collapses completely. Disease sweeps through the crumbling Empire, extinguishing any hope remaining.

While some Legions of the Imperial Army and Navy fight to the bitter end, many desert or simply disappear.

The hinterlands and outer coast areas are lost to savagery and barbarism. The "Burning Plague" and "Wailing Pox" devastate entire regions, leaving nothing civilized behind.

Dead begin rising from countless unsanctified graves on new moons. Records suggest entire fallen cities now crawl with the restless dead.

Rumors of the rulers of surviving towns making dark bargains with evil powers to save themselves from the roving bands of hungry beasts and aberrations.

Coastal areas begin to see horrific weather events that prevent ocean travel for weeks at a time. Stories abound of evil creatures emerging from the waves and storms to spirit away entire ships, and sea-shore villages.

The entire Empire is now a continental ruins, squabbled over in scraps by warlords and defenders, trying to stave off destruction, disease and starvation.

Few succeed.

## New Dawn

Seventy-five years ago to Present Day.

Small towns have regained enough stability and prosperity to begin ridding the areas around them of monsters and savage creatures. All remaining settlements are well-defended and self-sufficient fortress-towns of various sizes that seal their gates at night.

Towns are islands of safety and civilization in a sea of fangs and evil. The cost of defense against the dangers of the world surrounding them is non-optional. Food shortages happen less often. Most towns have worked fields around them, as well as ample stores within.

Trade is beginning to bloom between adjacent towns, as they rediscover the old Imperial Highways, or simply cut new cart-paths through the wilderness.

# Game Meta Info

## Game Rule-sets In Play

- Basic Rules
- Player's Handbook
- Dungeon Master's Guide
- Monster Manual
- Xanathar's Guide to Everything

Anything not included in this list must be discussed at the table-top with the group and Dungeon Master before being used.

## Player-Character Roles

The characters are one of several groups of individuals:

- Monster Hunters, striking at and destroying lairs and strongholds of creatures and beasts that threaten their home town
- Explorers, intent on re-mapping the wilds to allow greater trade and agriculture, and therefore prosperity, for their home town
- Merchants, trying to establish new or re-create old trade routes to increase their personal fortunes
- Relic Hunters, chasing after rumors and whispers of items of Holy or Wizardly magic that date to the earliest days of the Empire, or even older, for wealth and power.
- Settlers, intent on expanding the influence of civilization by establishing a new village or town, and securing it against the dangers of the wild.

## Restrictions & Notes

### Races

- Dragonborn & Tieflings whose actions are visibly of a good-alignment will have to deal with distrust and discrimination from a fearful population. (-2 TRUST, -1 REPUTATION)
- Dragonborn & Tieflings whose actions are visibly *not* of a good- alignment will have to deal with lynchings and bounty-hunters from a fearful population. (-3 TRUST, -2 REPUTATION)
- Half-Breeds will have to deal with suspicion and distrust from a fearful population. (-1 TRUST, -1 REPUTATION)
- Humans are generally accepted where ever they go. (+1 TRUST, +1 REPUTATION)
- Halflings are fearless Caravaneers, and have brought goods and medicines to many settlements across the Hinterlands & Periphery. (+2 TRUST, +1 REPUTATION)

### Classes

- Barbarians will have to deal with suspicion and distrust from a fearful population. (-1 TRUST, -1 REPUTATION)
- Warlocks will have to deal with lynchings and bounty-hunters from a fearful population. (-3 TRUST, -2 REPUTATION)
- Paladins are the heroes of the people everywhere across the Hinterlands & Periphery (+3 TRUST, +2 REPUTATION)
- Clerics of the Sun God are well loved by people in most places across the Hinterlands & Periphery (+2 TRUST, +1 REPUTATION)
- Bards are generally appreciated by people in most places across the Hinterlands & Periphery (+1 TRUST, +1 REPUTATION)



## Optional Rules In Effect

- Dungeon Master's Guide, PP 241 – Only Players Award Inspiration.
  - At the end of a gaming session, the GM will request private message “votes” for whose RP or Game Play the players all felt was remarkable. The player without an existing Inspiration and who gets the most votes will gain a token of Inspiration.
- Dungeon Master's Guide, PP 272 – Lingering Injuries; only when failing a Death Save by 5 or more.
- Player's Handbook, Chapter 6 – Feats; *“At certain levels, your class gives you the Ability Score Improvement feature. Using the optional feats rule, you can forgo taking that feature to take a feat of your choice instead. You can take each feat only once, unless the feat’s description says otherwise.”*

## House Rules

### Trust & Reputation

When dealing with significant Non-Player Characters (NPCs), the disposition of that NPC upon first meeting the Player Characters is modified by the aggregate of their Charisma Modifier (CHA), their TRUST and their REPUTATION. Lastly, for each 50 miles / 80km of distance from their home town, the Player Characters suffer a further -1.

This is added to a 2d10 roll; 7 represents a lukewarm or neutral initial impression. Higher is better. Lower is worse.

Total	Reaction
0 Or Lower	Immediately lethal action
1 .. 3	Openly violent & aggressive
4 .. 6	Refuses to help, will actively hinder
7 .. 9	Refuses to help
10 .. 12	Anonymous / Unknown

Total	Reaction
13 .. 15	Willing to help
16 .. 18	Willing to help, will actively contribute
19 .. 21	Openly welcoming & friendly
22 or higher	Immediately assistance / aid

The Player Characters start with 0 TRUST and 0 REPUTATION, modified by Race and Class. As they gain each level, they gain 1 point they can spend to improve one of these two items. While they functionally both do the same job, where the player opts to invest the improvements gives the GM RP insight into "how" the character is known to those he or she deals with.

### Universal Imbalance

When a Player Character rolls a "natural 20" or a "natural 1", they are affecting the very balances of Good and Evil, Law and Chaos. This ongoing, inherent set of conflicts tries to shift subsequent events towards itself.

Ergo, on a Natural 20, the Party gains an Advantage Token (ADV). This token conveys the "Advantage" condition to whatever Player Character chooses to use it. This can only be done with the consent of the entire party.

If the 20 is rolled as an Attack Roll, the Player Character can opt to take either the bonus damage, or the ADV, but not both.

On a Natural 1, the Party gains a Disadvantage Token (DSV). This token is used one of two ways:

- A Player Character opts to make a roll with the "Disadvantage" condition, or
- The Dungeon Master uses it to give an NPC adversary of the Player Characters the "Advantage" condition.

## Game Start Setting

The game will begin with the Player Characters at a Fortress-town. "Everyone Knows" the following:

- Dragons are real
  - None of either greater type have been seen in two generations near the Start Town.
- Undead are still there
  - Anyone that dies and remains un-buried without Last Rites has a chance of being raised as member of the undead on the following new moon.
  - There is persistent rumor of a curse upon the very land which causes this horrible fate.
- A Halfling Caravan a couple of years back brought a rumor that someone or something claiming to be the arisen God-Emperor is trying to restore the Divine Empire.
  - Most people think those Halflings were drinking too much.

## Religion in the Shadows

The dominate religion of the Empire was that of the God/Goddess-Emperor. The Celestial Realm was considered an extension of the Earthly Realm, and so was envisioned to be organized into an opulent, indulgent and powerful Imperial Court. The God/Goddess-Emperor was the Ambassador for the Earthly Realm to the Celestial Realm, and was thought to actually visit that Court for days at a time.

Each of the deities has their own agenda, are functionally rivals, and play a complex and subtle game with their peers via their proxies, agents and clerics in the Earthly and Celestial Realms to achieve it.

## Shadows of the Empire of the Sun - New Player Info

God/Goddess	Domain	Symbol
Delasuno, the Sun God, Emperor of the High Court	Light, Nature	Gold sun disk, with 21 rays
Luanadiino, Mistress of the Moon	Knowledge, Trickery	Silver moon disk, 1/3 inlaid with ebony, with 13 rays
Vikanuro, Lord of the Dance	Life, Nature	Three arrows, nose-to-tail, in a circle. The first is green, the second blue, the third is black
Namasin, Lady of Wilds	Nature, Tempest	Three green trees, a doe and a hawk
Pesnoj, Courtier & Courtesan of the High Court. Master of Storms. Mistress of Whispers.	Tempest, Trickery	Heart, Thunderbolt & 2 Drama Masks, arranged in a triangle
Trouropiri, Fey Ambassador of the High Court (M)	Trickery, Nature	A golden cobra with an onyx halo, and a tail ending in a feather, superimposed on a white cloud.
Milgrambo, Master of Ends	War, Grave	An onyx crescent turned on it's side, points down; above it, a silver great sword, below it, a sapphire tear-drop
Gesioanna, Dwarven Ambassador to the High Court (F)	Forge, Knowledge	Onyx anvil superimposed on a golden book, with three stars surrounding in a triangle pattern.
Varatino, Duchess of the Borderlands (the Afterlife)	Grave, Life	Green tower on a grey sky
Kupra'taro, Ambassador of the Infernal Realm	Grave, Tempest	Red Inverted Pentagram with a Black Candle superimposed upon it