

Dungeons and Dragons

And similar RPGs.

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Golarion

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Setting information

Golarion is a world originally created by Paizo as a setting for the *Pathfinder* table top role playing game system. It has historical roots in and many similarities to the Dungeons and Dragons Forgotten Realms setting. In glowfic, Golarion has been extensively adapted by lintamande and apprenticebard, which has resulted in significant divergence from Paizo canon.

A map of glowfic Golarion, made by Lethriloth, may be found [here](#).

Locations of Golarion include:

- Cheliox
- Galt
- Osirion
- The Worldwound

Gods of Golarion include:

- Abadar
- Achaekek
- Asmodeus
- Cayden Cailean
- Desna
- Erastil
- Iomedae
- Irori
- Kofusachi
- Nethys
- Pharasma
- Sarenrae
- Urgathoa
- Zon-Kuthon

Afterlives of Golarion include:

	Good	Neutral	Evil
Lawful	Heaven	Axis	Hell

Neutral	Nirvana	The Boneyard	Abaddon
Chaotic	Elysium	The Maelstrom	The Abyss

Notable threads

- [ask yourself if you could have predicted this \(Sandbox\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, apprenticebard
 - [Wiki page](#)
 - Note: If you are going to read any of lintamande's Golarion threads, it's worth reading this one first
- [the universe is not friendly to human concerns \(Sandbox\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, apprenticebard
 - Prerequisites: sequel to [ask yourself if you could have predicted this](#)
 - [Wiki page](#)
- [baubles and bangles \(Sandbox\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, Alicorn
 - [Wiki page](#)
- [fascinate \(Sandbox\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, Alicorn
 - [Wiki page](#)
- [Starstone \(subcontinuity of Silmaril\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, Alicorn
 - Prerequisites: none but benefits from prior exposure to Bells
 - [Silmaril wiki page](#)
- [raises some questions for gary gygax \(Sandbox\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, apprenticebard
 - Prerequisites: [with the time that is given us](#), and ideally at least one thread with lintamande's Osirian adventuring party
 - [Wiki page](#)
- [much of the world is lawless and cruel \(Sandbox\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, apprenticebard
 - [Wiki page](#)
- [Desperate Measures \(Sandbox\)](#)
 - Authors: lintamande, apprenticebard
 - Prerequisites: [much of the world is lawless and cruel](#)
 - [Wiki page](#)

- we know we once were gods (subcontinuity)
 - Authors: lintamande, swimmer963
 - Wiki page
- planecrash (continuity)
 - Authors: lintamande, larwain
 - Wiki page

Iomedae

We just didn't like Paizo's Iomedae that much and so rewrote her as a different character we find more interesting.

Concretely: Iomedae was born earlier and participated in the Shining Crusade for longer; she ascended at the age of 60, not at the age of 30, and while 'Joan of Arc but high fantasy setting with magic' is a fine gloss on her acts in her early 20s, she grew to become a savvy politician, tactical genius of a Crusade commander, and major reformer in Aroden's Church, ultimately establishing Lastwall and arranging its significant political independence from Oppara as part of an effort to build non-feudal, non-oligarchic, merit-based political institutions.

She was politically ambitious, decided pretty young that she wanted to be a god, and wrote her holy book and set up Her church before She ascended. She was also obsessed with ways that mortals could leverage divine intervention farther on the Material and did a lot of research into how to Commune more efficiently, the lowest-budget ways to request an intervention from Heaven, etc.

She also had a lifelong It's Complicated relationship with her ex-girlfriend, an evil archmage who is still around in the world today, quietly working against House Thrune under an assumed identity.

When She ascended, one of Her priorities was impartiality, not being biased towards the concerns and peoples that She happened to know in life, becoming the same god She'd be if She'd been born into a different country or different species. She no longer loves her friends, (with whom she was as a mortal very very close) any more than any other person, and they're all varying degrees of pained or bitter about this.

Her followers identify her primarily as the Lawful Good goddess of triage and tradeoffs, or the Lawful Good god of pursuing the destruction of the Evil afterlives. Her primary concern is marshalling Heaven's resources in the most effective manner, subject to the duties and obligations which Heaven has willingly agreed to because of the usefulness of being known to have made these commitments.

The paladins of different gods have different emphases; Iomedae picks the most paladins of any Inner Sea god. Her paladins aren't Lawful Stupid, though ones without a good theological education are often on fairly precarious ground, because she was working from a pretty sophisticated conception of what Law is. Her paladins adhere to extremely high standards of honorable conduct in war, including always conducting negotiations not just in a truthful manner but in a straightforwardly truthful one, no 'technically I only said...'. They don't torture prisoners, and interrogations under mind control require special certification; they don't start fights or kill people without adequate cause; they are generally part of a chain of command, rather than roaming adventurers.

One quirk of Iomedae's is that, because of their emphasis on Heaven's resources being expended as efficiently as possible, they tend to react to their own god's miraculous interventions with moderate consternation. Lastwall

runs a failure analysis every time they get a vision from their goddess, to determine whether they could have figured out what they needed to do without help and saved Her the intervention. They also obsess over optimizing Commune questions to avoid duplicate questions, group questions the answers to which will be highly correlated, maximize the informativeness of questions, etc. The result is in one sense a fine-tuned machine for interacting with their goddess in far more precision and depth than other churches are capable of, and in another sense a forbidding and inaccessible system where average fifth-circle priests of Iomedae will be incredibly reluctant to do a Commune if they're not certified and the church is under an unusual degree of centralized control.

Lastwall

(Note the above map shows Lastwall as the Gravelands, since it is using 2e lore. It will be incorrect-for-our-purposes in other ways as well.)

Lastwall pledged neutrality in the Chelish Civil War during its early years, when it didn't look like the *Asmodeans* were among the possible outcomes, and still consider themselves bound by it (and too busy to do much besides, between Belkzen, their watch over Gallowspire, and the Worldwound). The Church of Iomedae, though, is implacably opposed to *Asmodeus* ruling a country, and Alexeara Cansellarion (who we genderswapped, but that was accidental and isn't a necessary change) is assembling an army from his holdings in Nirmathas to do something about it.

Lastwall is legitimately a much more just and humanitarian government than has existed anywhere on Earth, arguably up to and including the modern day. It's not notably wonderful along any other axes, it is only a typical amount of competent for a government. But its laws are few and consistently enforced, it doesn't have special privileges for the nobility, its leadership are all ideologically committed Lawful Good people trying to meet their obligations to their people and the world, it does not engage in torture, it doesn't commit war crimes, anyone accused of a crime has the opportunity to clear their name under truth spell, there's notably little corruption, and its competitors are mostly doing medieval feudalism, by which point of comparison it looks astoundingly good. It is the only country in the world with a concept of illegal orders and mostly the only one paladins can work for without falling.

Golarion

Asmodeus

This page is a stub.

Golarion

Abadar

Abadar is the god of contractualist ethics and creation-of-value-through-exchange. Being a very alien and inhuman god He's done a moderately bad job of communicating this about himself. He holds himself and his priesthood to a fairly strict notion of fairness which is understood by mortals to be about evenly dividing the gains from trade insofar as these can be effectively estimated by both parties. His priesthood has the most developed theology of Law and has historically had fairly few concerns that might compete with their service to pure Law and accordingly is trusted to arbitrate international disputes.

Golarion

Shizuru and Tsukiyo

Paizo has Shizuru being devastated by the death of Tsukiyo and also Tsukiyo having come back and being completely fine. We have Tsukiyo dying and staying dead, and Shizuru having effectively had much of Her higher level functioning irreparably damaged thereby; She still picks clerics, but She's effectively a bunch of shards of attention reporting upwards to a central entity that can no longer make any decisions or take actions in response.

Golarion

Milani

This is a stub.

Golarion

Aroden

Aroden was murdered by a Milani-led coalition of the Chaotic Good gods when they realized they could destroy prophecy thereby, and free mortals from the subtle and indirect guidance of the gods towards the gods' purposes. Very few beings know this.

Spell Circles

We use the terminology 'spell circle' instead of 'spell level' to disambiguate from character level. A fifteen level wizard is a eighth circle caster; Mind Blank is an eighth circle spell; to cast Haste you need to be fifth level, as it is a third circle spell.

Spell circles are diegetic; people in-universe (who can make an appropriate knowledge check) know that there are different spell circles, that spellcasters can only cast so many spells of a given circle in a day, and that a given spell is (almost) always the same circle for all casters of the same type (All wizards cast fireball at third; all clerics cast plane shift at fifth, etc.).

Discrete character levels are *not* diegetic. No in-character distinction is drawn between a 5th-level wizard and a 6th-level wizard. Characters may notice that the latter's spells are slightly stronger, and guess accordingly that the latter is closer to achieving 4th circle, but things like "caster level" are continuous rather than discrete phenomena.

Golarion

Spells Which Exist

Some canonical spells do not exist, or exist but are largely unknown (often this means they're taken off the cleric list and only a few people have access to them). Examples include "Minor Creation", "Fabricate", almost everything from Occult Adventures, and other spells the widespread existence of which will lead to the setting being fundamentally different. Some have a different (weaker) effect, like Tears to Wine and Simulacrum.

Golarion

Geopolitics

Paizo tends to treat countries as basically doing their own thing; there are few geopolitical implications to regime change in one country, and none of the network of power-balancing alliances that were frequently a thing in Earth history. Borders are also less dynamic than in Earth history.

We think that a world where geopolitics works more like how real countries do, with changes to one country having ripple effects on the web of connections and geopolitical equilibrium, leads to a more interesting world to think about and write about.

Deopolitics

Some of this is maybe implicit in Paizo and other D&D settings, some of it we made up, I don't remember which is which. Gods are bound by treaty regarding their interventions in the Material Plane. Interventions are costly for gods; if your god has to send a miracle to stop a hundred thousand people from dying, there's probably something only a little less valuable than that which your god is unable to do because they were forced to make that expenditure here. This tends to make well-educated Good PCs reluctant to impose on their gods unless the need is very great, which I love as a GM, and it makes divine interventions a bittersweet moment: salvation always comes at a great and unknowable price to other people. By the same token, making an Evil god intervene to oppose you is a humanitarian act!

Empowering priests and paladins has some cost to a god, and only the most powerful gods can have ninth-circle priests, and generally only one. Most of the listed ultra-powerful priests of minor gods in the wiki are much less powerful. [Pharasma](#), [Abadar](#), [Asmodeus](#), [Sarenrae](#), [Gozreh](#), and [Nethys](#) have ninth-circle priests; that's it.

Lawful Gods possess tendencies consistent over time which are legible to other gods; not only do they (for example) not lie, but the fact they don't lie is something like mathematically verifiable; imagine they can show their source code to another god which can then see that for all inputs, this god does not lie. Chaotic gods don't necessarily lie or cheat or steal, but they don't have source code that other gods can verify; there is no way to look at them and know (even if you're a god yourself) that they will never lie, cheat, steal, etc. Mortals tend to have a profoundly confused understanding of the distinction between Law and Chaos because of course no mortal can show their source code to anyone, and they don't even tend to know it themselves.

The gods vary enormously in how accurately their concerns can be summarized in human terms. Claims that gods are lovers or are sister/brother/etc are generally just confused human approximations, if that. [Erastil](#) and his wife [Jaidi](#) are gods obsessed with the experience of mortals who tried on purpose to have mortal-like experiences such as love and sex, so those claims are more meaningful about them.

We kept the envisioning of [Shelyn](#) where she is not a god of sex and not herself the kind of being that has any interest in romance and sex. If you want to conceive of some gods as in some sufficiently conceptual sense fucking, [Desna](#) and [Cayden](#) and [Calistria](#) are up to something; [Shelyn](#) isn't. [Sarenrae](#) also isn't.

The gods that were participants in the war to bind [Rovagug](#) all took on responsibility for various monitoring of and countering of [Rovagug](#)'s influence on the Material. The end of prophecy made all of these obligations much much more expensive to fulfill and the gods have mostly taken expensive and disruptive steps towards securing countries on Golarion they can direct to do this work for them.

People generally have continuity of identity in the afterlives, and personality alteration in the Good afterlives is generally voluntary and on an informed-consent basis. Petitioners who don't have resurrections scheduled are sorted ~immediately, at least since the breaking of prophecy; everyone who hasn't sold their soul or such

receives a trial about their life, presided over by a psychopomp; Nirvana sends an advocate to every trial to argue even very evil people deserve paradise while other afterlives send people if they're likely to win/it's worth it for a long shot/anyone feels like it (Chaotic).

lintamande: (Why? Well, otherwise to my own sensibilities all of the afterlives were an ongoing atrocity, and I'm honestly more interested in stories where Good is Good than where Good is Evil in a different coat of paint. There are still, it turns out, a lot of hard problems in the world where Good is Good, trying quite hard, and genuinely quite admirable. See also the section on Iomedae.)

Gender Roles and Sexual Ethics

So at a high level, we made Golarion more sexist because we like worldbuilding around patriarchy, how economic and social conditions produce gender roles, how gender roles are affected by magic, etc. I absolutely understand why many gaming groups wouldn't want to get into these topics at the table, and you can skip this section.

A Non-Exhaustive List of Changes

There is not trivially available perfectly reliable contraception. There are good options for powerful magic users, but for the average person there are only the options that were available in the premodern real world: non-ideal condoms, teas that with mixed reliability and some risk cause an early-term miscarriage, poisons that effect an abortion at significant risk to the pregnant woman. Most of Golarion, like most of the premodern world, expects sensible people to refrain from premarital sex and judges people especially women heavily for engaging in premarital sex. There are sex workers in Golarion, for the most part women who do not have other options for employment; hiring sex workers would not be Evil under ideal conditions, but is in fact pretty Evil under the conditions that prevail in most of Golarion.

Babies get souls about twelve weeks after conception, which means that an abortion past the point where a pregnancy is detectable-by-fetal-movement is a killing that sends a soul to the Boneyard. The exact point where babies get souls is not known in universe; the fact abortion is Evil is known. Abortion and infanticide both happen frequently anyway.

There is somewhat less sexism than there was in any Earth-analogue country in 1800, as a consequence of the influence of gods (many of which directly concern themselves with the rights of women, most of which select female priests, and half of which are women insofar as gods have genders which is a bit complicated). There is still a lot more sexism than you are accustomed to in modern America, and most readers/players who haven't studied a lot of history are shocked by how much sexism there is.

Avistan has less sexism than Garund or Casmaron, because Avistan was until recently Arodenite, and Aroden was a mortal from a magitech industrial civilization that did have women's rights. But in almost all countries, men inherit over women, and in many countries men exclusively inherit; typical families are more concerned with educating their sons than their daughters; women typically cannot respectably live independently; women typically promise their husbands obedience in marriage. In Lastwall women have formal equality under the law; the majority of the leadership has still historically been male because their leadership comes from their officer corps. In [Lastwall](<https://www.glowlarion.wiki/books/regions/page/lastwall>) women with significant political and military careers are generally celibate, while men in such roles generally marry. In most countries, women are formally or informally barred from most careers; most universities will not accept women as students; in most countries with a vote, women don't have it.

Cheliox and Andoran were before the Chelish Civil War more gender-egalitarian than anywhere else in Golarion, and Hell has doubled down on encouraging casual sex in order to promote abortion and infanticide. In the rest of the Inner Sea, people associate casual sex with a deliberate effort by Hell to make people be Evil. There's widespread confusion about whether casual sex is itself intrinsically Evil.

Northern Garund and Casmaron are more sexist than Avistan. In the [Keleshite Empire](#) and the former Keleshite colonies including [Osirion](#), women who are not powerful spellcasters have very little ability to interact with the court system, open a bank account, leave their husbands, etc. If they are divorced (they broadly cannot initiate a divorce, and some countries ban divorce altogether) they will not get custody of their children. Female seclusion is not an uncommon tradition in the social classes that can afford it. Marriages are negotiated between a woman's parents and a man's parents. Public education is exclusively for boys. The Church of [Sarenrae](#) has been on a centuries-long campaign to raise the minimum age of marriage to 19, when it was often as young as 13. Abortion is generally illegal in Garund and Casmaron, and women's rights is associated with Avistan, with vice, and with the killing of children to enable the licentiousness of their parents.

In the opposite direction, we removed Hell being patriarchal because devils don't have gender. Hell is intensely oppressive on the basis of various status hierarchies but not this one specifically.

Golarion

Church of Abadar

This is a stub.

Golarion

Galt

Galt's revolution was more recent (10-15 years ago) and it is out of the revolutionary France stage and into the Napoleonic France stage. The Napoleon-like figure is Cyprian, a genius general ruling as dictator over a population pretty scarred by the Terror. He has conquered a few of the River Kingdoms and quite evidently has designs on Razmiran for a port on Lake Encarthan, though provoking a ninth-circle wizard is a risky business. Galt and Cheliix never actually arrived at a peace when Galt became independent, but the war is currently in a bit of an inactive state because to confront each other in more than Teleport-party-sized raids they'd have to go through Kyonin and Druma. (There is in fact some limited fighting there, but it's currently limited). Throughout the background of a years-long campaign he should capture some more River Kingdoms, and at some point an increasingly nervous Razmir will probably act.

Andoran

Andoran, unlike Galt, did make peace with Cheliox after their secession. That was under Infrexus, though, and Abrogail II intends to reclaim it once her army is in a state to succeed. (In this envisioning of the Andoren and Galtan revolutions, the wealthy and well-equipped Chelish army turned out to be a bit of a paper tiger when the revolutions started, with serious morale issues, absolutely zero ability of anyone to take any initiative whatsoever when cut off from their high command, and an officer corps selected entirely off skill at political games and not at all off skills at commanding an army. Gorthoklek, the pit fiend sent from Hell, now is trying to turn Cheliox's army into a credible fighting force.)

Andoran is also in a precarious position geopolitically, because the raids of slave ships throughout the Inner Sea has alienated them from Taldor, Absalom, Osirion, Qadira, and anyone else you can name who has ships in the Inner Sea. Making any compromises about slavery is utterly toxic in Andoran's political environment and marks you as probably a Chelish sympathizer, but this has pushed Andoren politics into a bit of a corner: at this point, they'll have few allies if Cheliox invades. Galt of course will come to their aid, but Cyprian's not the kind of person who'll give them their country back afterwards. He intends to reunite the Empire (Arodenite Cheliox, which stretched from Corentyn to Galt, and there are several candidates to stop him but it's also possible no one will.

Golarion

Rahadoum

Rahadoum, instead of having been an atheist state for thousands and thousands of years, is another recent breakaway state from [Cheliox](#) during the Chelish Civil War (the anti-theism makes more sense when there was briefly an *Asmodean* government in power). [Cheliox](#) intends to try to retake it; Rahadoum for its part wants to retake the province of Kharijite but doesn't realistically have the forces to do this.

Golarion

Molthune

The Nirmathas Border

The [Molthune/Nirmathas](#) border is both hotly disputed and in flux, with Molthune generally exercising power along the riverbanks and coast even well into what's labelled 'Nirmathas' and Nirmathas mostly having control over the interior even in what's labelled Molthune; this is more a civil war than a two-states war, though some people have proposed a partition somewhat like the one on the maps in the hopes of ending it.

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The Worldwound

It's a bit unclear in canon what the Wardstones do, and they canonically don't cover the whole area of the Wound. In our version, they project a forcefield that encloses the whole enormous area where the Abyssal rifts are. The strength of the forcefield depends on how far apart two Wardstones are, and they're generally every ten to fifteen miles, but in a few places the physical geography doesn't permit that and in a few others a wardstone fort has been overrun and the stone lost, and so in some places the wardstones are more like 30 miles apart. The forcefield functions sort of like a Forbiddance; demons cannot teleport across it, take damage when walking through it, and are stunned for some time after successfully crossing even if they make it. It's weaker where the forts are more distant.

Terrifying witch huts hold the [Irrisen](#) border and the border that is labelled 'realm of the mammoth lords'. No one outside Irrisen knows how they do it, but it's holding the demons back.

The southern edge of the Worldwound, where it borders [Ustalav](#), is actually a narrow strip of land that was originally [Sarkoris](#) and is now a protectorate of [Lastwall](#), which holds those Worldwound forts. The locals resent their foreign, arcane-magic-using defenders; [Lastwall](#) has its usual problem (see the bit about how we fixed the church of [Iomedae](#)) with not-without-reason thinking they're better than everyone else.

[Mendev](#) holds the eastern border of the Worldwound. [Mendev](#) and [Lastwall](#) would at a glance look like natural close allies, what with both being [Iomedae](#)-following countries trying to hold the Worldwound, but in fact that diplomatic relationship is incredibly fraught. [Mendev](#)'s nobility has limited patience for the influence of a foreign state in how they run their affairs (historically with nearly unlimited privileges). [Mendev](#)'s leadership also resents being deprioritized among the Church's many priorities, as they're under an existential threat and [Lastwall](#) seems willing to see them die of it.

The northern border of the Worldwound is held by [Cheliox](#), both directly by the Chelish army (northwest) and by divisions of the Hellknights, especially the Godclaw (northeast). These forts are supplied by Teleport. This is an extraordinary expense and no one but [Cheliox](#), which is funded by Hell, could possibly afford it. This limits everyone's ambitions to engage in another war in [Cheliox](#).

There is a treaty that restricts the ability of churches and governments that are signatories to mess with other signatories' Worldwound operations, which mostly prevents direct clashes between ideologically opposed allies. The treaty also protects (for example) Chelish defectors who go to the Worldwound to work as independent adventurers, and many adventurers at the Worldwound are 'sheltering under the treaty' in the sense of being wanted by one or more treaty-signatory governments who will arrest or assassinate them if they cease to count as protected by the treaty. The [Church of Abadar](#) arbitrates treaty violations.

Golarion

Kyonin

Kyonin is exactly the same as in Paizo's canon, except that it does not appear on any maps. Like all large forests full of monsters (all large forests), it is considered by humans and other participants in the human-dominant Inner Sea geopolitical order to be a part of the territory of a larger human polity (in this case Galt). Galt has no power there, but non-elf characters will think of the forest as part of the uninhabited or monster-inhabited bits of Galt, not as an independent polity.

Golarion

Zon-Kuthon

This is a stub.

Planescape

<https://glowfic.com/tags/1086>

Planescape

Notable threads

red tide at morning, heroes take warning: Actana!Areus is dropped on the Plane of Water

i'll be the princess:Amenta!Bell is dropped on Arcadia