

By The Light
Of This Silvery Cinder

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Cinder

Major Locations: Ferrous City, Sea of Dreamless Sleep, The Silver Forest, Nekropolis, Cinderspire

Languages: Lingua Primordia is the most common language, although Lingua Hydrae is spoken by the few Hydran natives in Nekropolis. The written form of Lingua Arcanae is seen often in outland artifacts and Nekropolis.

“While Our Mother Lorien fought bravely against the dark lord Tempus Fugit, her companion Buglurz was distracted with another battle—he fought against his lifetime enemy, Krak the Devourer.

“Buglurz swung his club, Char-End, wildly at Krak, unable to control his tormented anger at the sight of his friends in pain. But, Krak was larger and stronger than Buglurz, and swung a great battleaxe mightily at Buglurz over and over. Buglurz managed to block the blows, but the sheer force sheared the end of Char-End directly off, sending it flying.

“With the great magics being wrought by Our Mother and Fugit, and the arcane workings of Char-End, the end did not merely fall to the ground, but flew far into the sky.

“With an old friend’s help, Buglurz was soon able to join Our Mother, along with the Trickster, Zik. You know the rest of the story, I’m sure. But, the tale of that sliver of Char-End.

“When the world was born anew in the imaginations of the Companions, that sliver was far in the sky, yet received their unbidden wishes. It grew and grew into a huge crescent to fill the sky. Yet, it was tainted with Krak’s dark blood, and could not become a lush world like ours.”

--From a oratory by Tempura, High Priestess of Our Mother Lorien, and Keeper of the Records

Cinder is the near-barren moon of Primordia. It sustains life in various parts, but is, in general, a cruel, demanding place to live. The lower tip of Cinder holds the great Ferrous City, a Maker outpost and trading center. Further up the moon is the Silver Forest and the Great Apshai, as well as Nekropolis.

Cinder is not spherical in shape, but is a permanent sliver of rock, and hollowed like an oblong bowl. It rises and sets nightly in the extreme west of Primordia, beneath the Jixi Mountains. It is a large moon, covering at least an eighth of the sky at its highest point.

The main industries of Cinder are trading for water and food with the magical iron of Cinderspire and with Cetamorphs, the pet of the pampered.



Ferrous City

Population 4,500 (70% human, 12% Clockwork, 9% dwarf, 9% other (mainly Goblins and Hobgoblins—Ogres and Bugbears are very rare here))

Ferrous City is the largest, and only true city on Cinder. It is built almost completely out of iron, with iron buildings, iron roads, and giant clockwork clocks and automated carriages everywhere. The Maker presence is strong here, as almost every building has gears and screws somewhere in it—many houses have crank or steam-driven sunroofs; and the Maker Guild Hall is renowned for its steam-driven spiral moving stairway.

The Maker Guild Hall is the physical and governmental center of Ferrous City. It is an enormous three-story building with an iron clock-tower rising some 4 more stories above it. It is well-rumored that there are several underground layers to the Hall as well. Governmental matters, which are controlled by the Guild, are taken care of on the first floor, complete with court chambers, a jail, the constabulary, and civil offices. The second and third floor are for Guild members only (past the center circular opening, which rises all three floors on the spiral automated staircase—this is open for public riding from dawn until dusk.) On these second and third floor, new advances in Clockwork and gunsmithing are created and catalogued.

In addition to the Makers' Guild, Rooklawn's own Magliane Institute of Ensorcelry and Eldritch Enchantment have a small school here for Cinder students, and for the study of the moon's arcane properties.

The Crank

One of the marvels of Maker technology is The Crank. An enormous platform extending from the end of Cinder, The Crank is tipped with a steam-driven pulley which pulls gondolas up from Primordia proper during daytime hours when Cinder is lowest.

This pulley requires so much wood to generate the steam that there is always work for a strong bodied man on any expeditions to the Silver Forest, or for loading wood into the gigantic fireplaces.

The Crank is large enough to contain its own docking harbor for Airships and Dirigibles from below. The platform is home to the tourist industry of Ferrous City, with its numerous inns for sleep, restaurants (the most famous being 'The Stoked Cinder'—a full-grown Fire Dwarf would find their food spicy), and even a year-round fair called the "Aeschylus Amusement Town for Adults and Children A-like," with large moving contraptions used for riding on (including the world-renowned 'Ferrous Wheel'), and Clockwork plays.

The Sea of Dreamless Sleep

The Sea of Dreamless Sleep is the “bowl” of Cinder, the hollow interior. It is filled with a silvery silt, light enough that ships can sail across it on wind power, as on a water-ocean.

The Sea has several small islands and three larger islands in it. These islands are not known to be inhabited—however, it is hard to get to them in the first place. It is rumored—for good reason—that only a man with a strong mind, will, and body can sail the Sea without falling prey to its incredibly smooth ride, falling asleep within two hours. The lack of waves combined with the unearthly silence can bring a large man to his back, snoring. The silver dust of the Sea is prized for use in sleeping spells.

There are two ports in the Sea—Ferrous City, and Skullport, a very small town 15 miles from Nekropolis used only for trading.

Cinderspire

“Bugbears usta drive nails and glass and such into their clubs so as they’d hurt more. I don’t think that’s too nice, and maybe we better not do that no more—but I remember I had a good ‘un in Char-end—Char-sticker, I call it. That ‘un was nice.”

*--Buglurz, in **Stories about my Friends***

Professor Thomas Velnot of the University of Rooklawn, and explorer extraordinaire:

“If the myth of ‘Char-end’ is to be believed, the mile-tall growth on Cinder is the spiritual and arcane manifestation of a nail once stuck in the Lost Father’s club. If it is not believed—well, it’s a mile-tall cylinder, as big around as ten men holding hands in a circle, with no entrance, that is apparently not hollow. And it’s made of iron—but a strong, tough magical iron unlike normal. Hmm... perhaps the myth does make sense here.

“But, to continue, Cinderspire is far away from either Ferrous City or Nekropolis—probably a good week’s ride from Ferrous. It’s worth it, though, for the price you can get for the iron there in Ferrous—if you can avoid the spider monkeys.

“What’s wrong? They’re just monkeys—okay, I admit it, I was a little scared the first time I saw one too. I mean, six-inch fangs, six arms and rear web-shooters are pretty dangerous, especially on something as dexterous as a monkey, but they can be tamed. Anyhow, they have colonies all the way up the Spire—they build large web canopies that hang from it. If you’re quiet, you can see a whole spider monkey family living in one of these—if you’re not quiet, you can see them a lot closer.”



The Silver Forest

The Silver Forest is geographically located in the center of the light side of Cinder, halfway between Ferrous City and Nekropolis. Its name comes from the silvery bark of its native evergreen trees. Although they have dark green needles, the bark is an unnatural slightly reflective silver—it is prized for house building and picture frames. (This results in fierce competition for the wood, as it is also needed in the fireplaces for The Crank in Ferrous City.

The Silver Forest is also home to another commodity—the Cetamorphs. Cetamorphs are silvery blobs able to excude polyps to grab and swing from trees. They have the unique ability to absorb any and all magic cast at them. This ability comes at a price—their physical shape is bound into characteristics associated with the spells cast. For example, a Cetamorph that has had Polymorph Other (Squirrel) then Fireball cast on it would likely take the form of a flaming squirrel. These Cetamorphs are prized pets of Primordian nobles.

The Silver Forest is actually one of the most populated places on Cinder. It is home to several groups, including bands of feral children which build enormous treehouses in the air. It is not known what happens to these children as they become adults, as no adult has ever been seen with the children. The ages of the children range from two to approximately 14. Rumor has it that the children are cannibals, as they hunt down any intruders they find within the forest, using spears and crude bows. They do not generally speak Lingua Primordia, but instead have a crude pidgin language. They do, however, love Cetamorphs, making a Cetamorph hunt a dangerous thing indeed.

Apshai

The other two groups of inhabitants revolve around the center of the Silver Forest, Apshai, the gargantuan Mantis-God. This huge mantis rises from the trees beneath it to cast a shadow over the forest. Apshai seems to be immobile; however, its followers claim Apshai lives.



A group of humans live in a small town, commonly called Apshai, near the base of the Mantis-God. These humans are the Cult of Apshai, and worship the bug as their god. They are none too friendly to strangers, and have little need for trade.

The Cult are the only humans that can survive the Swarm, however. The Swarm is a third group of Silver Forest inhabitants—human-sized insects that seem to be relatively intelligent. The Swarm speaks no human tongue, although they are known to click loudly and make a shrill scream. These insects are extremely unfriendly to all humans except the Cult and, usually, the feral children of the Silver Forest.



Nekropolis

Population: 2 or 3 live; 750 intelligent undead (95% human, 5% other); unknown amount of non-intelligent undead

The Nekropolis is the center of necromantic power in, basically, the universe. While not inherently evil, it can be inherently repellent, and usually is defensive towards strangers—especially strangers with no necromantic ability. New necromancers are usually welcomed, at least for a while.

The Nekromancers of Nekropolis perform an elaborate ritual which actually turns them into undead creatures—their skin becomes bone-white and cold. Other necromancers are welcomed for a few weeks, but if they do not become one of the undead, they are eventually considered suspicious. This ritual makes the Nekromancers essentially immortal, but they can still be killed through usual mortal wounds and poisons.



The architecture of Nekropolis is Gothic, with a large amount of stonework. Bones are also used as a building material, for ornate walls, archways and ceilings. The largest building in Nekropolis is the Bone Temple, a cathedral dedicated to Typhus, Lord of the Dead. The building is built completely out of bone and has a spire topped by an enormous tooth, rumored to have come from a giant dragon-beast, or water-leviathan. The Temple is undead itself, and while it cannot move from its location, it can move its interior walls, open and shut doors, moan creepily and creak and sway.

The Nekropolis is also home to the Hall of Dead Words, one of the most extensive and certainly the most esoteric of libraries on Cinder or Primordia. Here, unliving librarians collect knowledge of the most hidden and arcane sort. This is also one of Nekropolis' few forms of trade—they charge the living great sums to have access to even one book.