

# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup>

## MANUAL OF THE PLANES<sup>™</sup>



ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

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**Building on the design of previous editions by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson (1st Edition and earlier); David "Zeb" Cook (2nd Edition); Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison (3rd Edition).**

This book is also built from the bones of giants. From the initial planar visions of Gary Gygax and Dave Sutherland, through the original, inspiring *Manual of the Planes* by Jeff Grubb, with its contributions by Roger Moore and Ed Greenwood, to the vibrant PLANESCAPE® work of David Cook, Colin McComb, Michele Carter, and Monte Cook, the planes have been an ever-evolving cosmology. Other resources for this work include the 3rd Edition *Manual of the Planes* by Jeff Grubb, Bruce R. Cordell, and David Noonan; *Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss*™ by Ed Stark, James Jacobs, and Erik Mona; and *Fiendish Codex II: Tyrants of the Nine Hells*™ by Robin D. Laws and Robert J. Schwalb.

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# EXPLORING THE PLANES

**BEYOND THE** circles of the world await peril, power, and adventure unimagined. Fomorians brood in the purple gloom of caverns illuminated by dancing auras of wizard's fire. Titanic stone sphinxes half buried in white sand guard the gates of a forgotten deity's ruined heaven. Hooded sorrowsworn assassins glide silently through the streets of a city perpetually veiled in shadows. Demon princes brood on thrones of skulls in the terrible depths of the Abyss, plotting the destruction of the mortal realms and the ruin of all.

Welcome to the planes.

Great heroes face quests that require them to venture into the far corners of the cosmos in search of lore and treasure forgotten in the mortal realms. The boldest heroes are called to fight their battles across many different planes of existence, and venture into dimensions where few mortals have ever dared to go. Other heroes venture into the planes for nothing more than the desire to see wonders unimagined. To those who have studied their secrets, the planes offer infinite experiences and possibilities.

This chapter explains the basics of venturing into the planes, including:

- ◆ **Planar Traits:** The different qualities and characteristics that planes demonstrate.
- ◆ **The Cosmology:** How the components of the D&D® game universe fit together.
- ◆ **Portals:** Portals are the most common means of planar travel. Here's how they work.
- ◆ **Planar Vehicles:** When you can't find a portal leading to where you want to go, you have to find a different means of transportation.
- ◆ **Planar Hazards:** Learn about some of the more common hazards planar travelers face.
- ◆ **Sigil, City of Doors:** The most well-known demiplane is Sigil, City of Doors. No one knows who created it or how, but Sigil holds portals aplenty.
- ◆ **The Far Realm:** The Far Realm is "beyond" or "above" the normal cosmos.
- ◆ **The Plane of Dreams:** The nature of this plane is a matter for debate. The Plane of Dreams is a vast repository where dreams go when they are dreamt.







# THE PLANES AND YOUR CAMPAIGN

The world (sometimes called the mortal world or the natural world) of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game is only one piece of a much larger cosmos. The world is surrounded by the Feywild and the Shadowfell, parallel dimensions that lie tantalizingly close at hand. It stands on foundations of matter drawn from the seething Elemental Chaos that preceded creation. And yet, at the same time, the mortal world drifts as a lonely speck of light and life in the eternal expanse of the astral mists. All these realities that exist beyond the world of mortals are known as the **planes of existence**—or just “the planes” for those who come to know them well.

A plane is an alternate reality, an otherworld that exists alongside the world of mortals. Some planes are small, no larger than a city of the mortal realm. Other planes are nearly infinite in expanse. The planes are a place where you can create literally any adventure or story you can imagine. Given the incredible possibilities the planes open up for your D&D campaign, it's a good idea for a Dungeon Master to decide exactly how he or she wants to use the material presented in *Manual of the Planes*. Here are a few suggestions.

## THE ORIGIN OF MONSTERS

The simplest way to incorporate planar material in your campaign is to treat the planes as “the places where the most exotic monsters are from.” Even at low levels, heroes might encounter creatures native to other planes, such as the fey panther, the magma claw, or the spined devil. At higher levels, heroes encounter progressively more powerful planar beings abroad in the mortal world—beings such as vrock, efreet, or sorrowsworn. Each is clearly an outsider, a creature that does not arise within the natural order.

Some planar creatures are permanent residents of the mortal world. Other planar creatures may be summoned by mortals for sinister purposes, or may intrude in the world by venturing through portals the heroes must close.

## THE EXOTIC ADVENTURE

An exotic adventure is the most common model for planar campaigns. Many Dungeon Masters treat the planes as exotic locales that, on rare occasions, serve as the backdrop for otherwise normal adventures. Rather than exploring a dead archmage's ruined tower on a lonely hilltop a few miles outside town, the player characters explore a similar tower on the slopes of a mountain in the Feywild or drifting on an earthmote in the Elemental Chaos.

To make an otherwise world-bound adventure into a planar adventure, all you (the DM) need to do is provide a portal, a scroll with the right ritual, or a

magic item to convey the player characters from their native world to the site of the adventure. Ideally, the adventure should soak up at least some of the planar flavor of its setting.

## THE PLANAR PROGRESSION

Some campaigns follow adventure arcs that naturally introduce the player characters to ever-greater vistas of the cosmos as they rise in level. Player characters must learn how to successfully venture into these otherworlds to confront monsters and villains, to unearth lore, or to recover treasures that can be found only beyond the circles of the world.

In the beginning of their adventuring careers, player characters face the occasional monster from another plane. Once they've earned a few levels, they meet challenges that lie in fantastic locales just on the other side of mysterious portals, or find that their missions take them into the planes that lie closest to the world—the Feywild and the Shadowfell. Paragon and epic adventures hurl the heroes into the vastness of the Elemental Chaos or into the astral dominions of immortal powers. Learning how to reach the object of a quest, to competently navigate the vastness of the cosmology, and to deal with the supernatural perils of distant planes are adventures in and of themselves.

## THE EXTRAPLANAR CAMPAIGN

Some cities or strongholds of mortalkind exist outside the mortal world—for example, the eladrin realms of the Feywild, the shadowborn city of Gloomwrought, or Sigil, the legendary City of Doors. Many great heroes are natives of planes beyond the mortal world. Much as world-bound heroes might journey widely from city to city or kingdom to kingdom, extraplanar heroes travel from plane to plane as their own whims and purposes demand. Using knowledge of the universe's portals, rifts, and fundamental properties, even low-level characters can get to any place imaginable—although plenty of planes are so hostile or dangerous that no well-informed extraplanar character in his or her right mind would voluntarily venture there.

The best place for you to set a truly extraplanar campaign is Sigil. Planar-born player characters (natives to the planes) can get to any place imaginable through its myriad portals—even someplace as strange and unfathomable (to the planar-born, at least) as the mundane world. Or, you could also set your extraplanar campaign aboard a planar vessel such as a *spelljammer*, visiting new worlds with each adventure.

Most planes are much like the natural world. Mortal visitors find the air breathable, the climate endurable, and some amount of food and water accessible. However, each plane has its own unusual characteristics and embodies its own particular set of natural laws.

## TYPES OF PLANES

A plane's type describes its basic nature and place in the cosmos. The term "plane" applies to many different places. Sigil, City of Doors, is a plane, even though it's no more than a few dozen miles in extent. It drifts in the multiverse unconnected to any other physical reality. The Abyss is also a plane. It is many thousands of miles in extent, large enough to swallow planets, but it's only a finite region of the Elemental Chaos. A traveler can walk (or more likely fall) into the Abyss from the surrounding Elemental Chaos, but a different set of physical and metaphysical laws apply in the Abyss than in the Elemental Chaos. In that sense, the Abyss is a plane separate from the surrounding Elemental Chaos.

### PLANAR TYPE

- ◆ The world
- ◆ Fundamental planes
- ◆ Astral dominions
- ◆ Elemental realms
- ◆ Parallel planes
- ◆ Demiplanes
- ◆ Anomalous planes

## THE WORLD

The first of the planes is the world in which humans and other mortals are born and have their existence. The world often is known only by its name. For example, the sages of Faerûn call their world Abeir-Toril. Those who study such matters in the city of Greyhawk know their world as Oerth, and the sages of Ansalon know their world as Kryn. In reference to the planes, the world is sometimes known as "the mortal world," "the material world," "the natural world," or "the middle world," to distinguish it from the supernatural realms surrounding it.

## FUNDAMENTAL PLANES

The cosmos is composed largely of two infinite expanses from which all other planes formed: the Astral Sea and the Elemental Chaos. These planes are levels of reality in which countless specific locales exist like finite islands adrift in the infinite—the various astral dominions and elemental realms.

The fundamental planes provide the substance linking all the dominions and realms of deities and elemental powers together. To reach these specific places, a traveler must trek across the Astral Sea or the Elemental Chaos. Fortunately, planar portals and conduits make it possible to span vast distances with a single step—if a traveler knows where to find the portal he or she needs.

Although the fundamental planes are infinite, the known astral dominions and elemental realms lie within a finite distance of each other. If a traveler journeys through a fundamental plane into the trackless reaches outside the known dominions and realms, sooner or later he or she comes to the divine dominions or elemental kingdoms of different mortal worlds. Such a journey would be unthinkable long, and it would undoubtedly be easier to find or create a portal to reach them.

## ASTRAL DOMINIONS

The astral dominions are distinct planes that exist within the Astral Sea. Most are the creations of deities, and as such, each dominion reflects the aesthetics (or whims) of its creator. Dominions may have wildly different properties and characteristics. Some are the size of worlds, whereas others are solitary towers or small cities on the shores of the Astral Sea. In artwork and in literature, they are often depicted as majestic islands or floating shards of landscape surrounded by a gossamer sea as flat and smooth as mirrored glass.

Astral dominions are commonly regarded as the heavens and hells of the mortal world. The dominions are where most deities are enthroned. Deities claim some mortal spirits after death—those chosen for special reward, or trapped and tormented by devils or dark deities. However, most mortal spirits pass through the realm of the Raven Queen in the Shadowfell after death and then into the eternal beyond.

## ELEMENTAL REALMS

Within the Elemental Chaos lie countless elemental realms—domains where some powerful being has claimed a portion of the chaos and shaped it with will and purpose. Like astral dominions, elemental realms reflect the whims of those beings that create them. In artwork and literature, elemental realms are often portrayed as crude stone bergs and mighty structures floating in a churning sea of elements.

Although many elemental realms are the work of powerful elementals—for example, the efreet City of Brass—other realms are created by mighty mortals. Anyone of strong will and magical power can create anything he or she likes within the Elemental Chaos, and set a boundary around these creations in which the physical traits the creator prefers dominate. Scores of archmage towers, assassin strongholds, and mighty monuments lie scattered through the Elemental Chaos that were created by mortals centuries or millennia ago. Some still remain much as they were when they were made, whereas new masters have occupied others.

## PARALLEL PLANES

Close by the mortal world lie its echoes, the parallel planes: the Feywild and the Shadowfell. Parallel planes are strange copies of the material world. Where seas and mountains lie in the world, similar seas and mountains exist in these parallel planes. Yet they are not perfect copies. A thriving human city in the mortal world might be a forested vale in the Feywild and a haunted ruin in the Shadowfell. It seems that the Feywild's version of a locale in the natural world is a pristine memory of what that place was like in the youth of the world, whereas the Shadowfell's version shows a vision of how that same spot will look when its people pass away and it falls into ruin.

Although some natural features vary between these planes, the biggest differences between them are the structures of sentient creatures. The kingdoms and castles of the eladrin are not replicated in the mortal world or the Shadowfell. Similarly, the city of Gloomwrought exists only in the Shadowfell, and no city stands in the corresponding spot in either the mortal world or the Feywild.

## DEMIPLANES

The last regular type of plane is a demiplane—a unique place where anything might be encountered. Like astral dominions or elemental realms, demiplanes are things created by some power or agency after the formation of the world. They are not part of either the Astral Sea or the Elemental Chaos, but instead exist as bubbles of existence beyond the normal bounds of the cosmos.

Most demiplanes are small and secret. They're created to be refuges, vaults, or more rarely tombs or prisons. It takes extremely powerful magic to create something out of nothing. It's much easier to build a sanctuary in the Elemental Chaos than to create a secret plane of your own outside the bounds of the universe.

The most well known demiplane is Sigil, City of Doors. No one knows who created it or how, but Sigil holds portals uncounted that lead to every other plane of existence. Veteran planar explorers soon learn that Sigil is the first place to look when a door to somewhere else is needed.

## ANOMALOUS PLANES

The cosmology includes some planes whose exact nature is not clear. These include the Far Realm, the Plane of Dreams, the Plane of Mirrors, and other mortal worlds. Anomalous planes stretch the boundaries of an already fantastic cosmology. They are the weirdest of the weird. They are conceived of as beyond the normal cosmology of planes (even more “outside” than demiplanes), being created from the dreams of all mortals, existing on the other side of mirrors, or built on other mind-straining concepts. Adventures rarely present themselves in these locations, as anomalous planes are genuinely inhospitable to most outsiders. However, denizens of anomalous planes often find their way into the world.

## PLANAR STRUCTURE AND LAWS

The most basic question about a plane is its size. Is it infinite, or is it finite? If the plane is finite, how big is it?

The Astral Sea and Elemental Chaos are infinite. The mortal world (and therefore the parallel planes, too) may be infinite or it may not be. It depends on if one considers the vast starry void beyond the skies of the mortal world to be part of the world or if the stars are merely lights suspended inside a vast but finite crystal sphere.

### PLANAR STRUCTURE AND LAWS

- ◆ Layers
- ◆ Bounded or recursive shape
- ◆ Gravity
- ◆ Mutability



## LAYERS

Some astral dominions and elemental realms are organized into layers. These layers are distinct, geographically separate regions or domains. A layer is a subplane, and often has its own distinct flora, fauna, and features. However, the overall properties of a plane remain true no matter which layer of a plane a traveler ventures into. For example, the Abyss consists of hundreds of distinct island-continents of matter within the bounds of a single elemental realm. Many of these are the domains of individual demon lords, who create in their own layers conditions they find pleasing.

Most rituals of planar travel, portals, and conduits deposit travelers in a plane's outermost layer first. From that region, travelers must find their way into the deeper layers of the plane. Portals, or difficult roads or pathways that are often guarded, link the different layers of a plane. For example, most portals to the Abyss from elsewhere open into the first layer, the Plain of a Thousand Portals. From there, travelers can find other portals leading to deeper layers. They could conceivably fly or fall from one Abyssal layer to another through the vast, storm-wracked gulf of air, energy, and matter the Abyssal layers drift through, but the distances between them are vast, and the journey is unspeakably dangerous. Even demons prefer to use portals to move around from layer to layer.

## BOUNDED OR RECURSIVE SHAPE

Does the plane have an edge that you can reach, or do you return to the same spot by traveling in a straight line? The surface of the mortal world is recursive, because it's a sphere. Sigil is a recursive demiplane. The city fills the interior of a torus, so a traveler can't help but circle back to where he started by continuing in a straight line. On the other hand, a plane such as Hestavar or Arvandor is bounded. Travel far enough, and eventually you reach the edge—the shores of the Astral Sea, whatever form that takes in that plane.

## GRAVITY

Gravity works normally on the vast majority of planes. A few planes manifest one of two exceptional types of gravity: elemental buoyancy and subjective gravity.

**Normal gravity** is, well, normal. It acts as one would expect in the mortal world.

**Elemental buoyancy** is strange: Objects and materials native to the plane aren't subject to the force of gravity, but creatures and nonnative objects are. The Elemental Chaos experiences this type of gravity. Gigantic earthmotes, drifting boulders, and flowing seas arc through the "skies" and do not fall because they're held aloft by their elemental



buoyancy in the plane's natural stratification. You can pick up a rock and "hang" it in the air in front of you, and the rock floats there indefinitely. However, living creatures and their possessions are subject to "normal" gravity, and they can and do easily fall off floating earthmotes or plummet into fiery chasms.

**Subjective gravity** is a property of the Astral Sea and the Far Realm. If a traveler is standing on or in something he or she wishes to exert gravity on him or her, it does so. In other words, if you want to stand on it, you can.

Gravity remains in force even if the traveler leaps into the air or flies—as long as the traveler wants it to. Unattended objects do not experience gravity. Attended objects are subject to a traveler's will. If you drop something and want it to fall, it does—but you can't "will it" to "fall" back to you.

In the absence of gravity (in other words, when you don't want to be affected by it), a creature can fly through a plane of subjective gravity by exercising its will. This mode of movement is slow, however.

### SUBJECTIVE GRAVITY

On a plane that has subjective gravity, you can choose whether gravity affects you.

- ◆ You can stand on any surface equal to your space (1 square for most characters) or larger than your space.
- ◆ You gain the ability to fly at one-half your normal speed if not under the effect of gravity. You can hover, but you are a clumsy flier.
- ◆ A creature with the ability to fly can use its innate flying speed instead. It gains hover.

### MUTABILITY

One of the fundamental laws of nature in the mortal world is that things remain where they are and how they are unless some force works on them. Boulders don't spontaneously change to sand or melt into water unless something causes them to. Some planes are not so reliable.

**Divinely mutable planes** assume the form willed by deities (or other powerful beings) who own the plane. The deity of the plane can cause great palaces to appear from nowhere, create or replace terrain, change the form of creatures native to the plane, or alter the weather with a mere thought. **Normal mutability** (defined as mortal inertia and constancy) applies otherwise. Most astral dominions are divinely mutable, although in cases where several deities share the same dominion, they exercise control over only their specific realms within the plane.

**Unstable planes** feature terrain and elements that change continuously and randomly. The Elemental Chaos is the prime example. Although vast stretches are relatively calm for long periods of time,

change is inevitable. A great frozen sea might remain that way for centuries, only to shatter when an outburst of magma comes into being in its center and begins to grow into a range of volcanic mountains.

### INFLUENCE UNSTABLE PLANE (INTELLIGENCE)

Someone with a powerful will or armed with the right ritual can stabilize a portion of an unstable plane and hold it in the desired shape. The only questions are how long it takes to impose stability and how long the stability lasts once the being creating the stability stops concentrating. It's easy to freeze existing conditions in place, but much harder to impose entirely different conditions in an area.

**Move Object:** Standard action.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is based on the object's size—Tiny or smaller, DC 5; Small or Medium, DC 10; Large, DC 15; Huge, DC 20; Gargantuan, DC 25.
- ◆ **Success:** You move an unattended object. You move the object 1 square, +1 square for every 5 points by which you beat the DC.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to move the same object until after a short rest.

**Alter Object:** Standard action.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is based on the object's size—Tiny or smaller, DC 20; Small or Medium, DC 25; Large, DC 30; Huge, DC 35; Gargantuan, DC 40.
- ◆ **Success:** You change an unattended natural object into a different element or energy of the same size. For example, change a boulder into a ball of fire.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to alter the same object until after a short rest.

**Stabilize Area:** 1 minute.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is 5 + 1 per square affected.
- ◆ **Success:** You lock an area into its current form for 24 hours. Double the area or the duration for every 5 points you beat the DC by.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to stabilize an area until after an extended rest.

**Alter Area:** 1 minute.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is 20 + 1 per square affected. Add +10 to the DC if the area has been stabilized (see above). Double the area or the duration for every 5 points by which you beat the DC.
- ◆ **Success:** You change the terrain of an area for 24 hours. For example, change a bare rocky plain into a forest.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to alter an area until after an extended rest.







## PLANAR TRAITS

Some planes possess magical or metaphysical qualities that affect the powers and abilities of creatures. For example, the City of Brass lies in a fiery portion of the Elemental Chaos, and within this particular dominion characters find that powers with the fire keyword are enhanced, while cold powers in the city of the efreet are diminished.

Large planes rarely have planar traits that affect their entirety. Planar traits usually manifest in specific locations within a larger plane (such as a particular dominion within the Astral Sea or a particular realm within the Elemental Chaos). For example, the characters might stumble upon a forest in the Feywild that heightens one's powers of inveiglement, and all creatures in the forest gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls when they use powers with the charm or illusion keyword.

## PSYCHIC SIGNATURE

Planes other than the natural world possess a certain otherworldly quality. A mortal wandering the forests of Arvandor can sense that he or she is no longer in the natural world. Planar explorers can't always tell exactly where in the cosmos they are, but they can sense when they've passed from one plane to another. This phenomenon is known as a plane's psychic signature. Psychic signature has no other mechanical effect, although the impressions can be strong.

For example, a feeling of gloom permeates the Shadowfell. The Shadowfell's atmosphere is oppressive, and it deadens the spirits of its inhabitants.

A feeling of malaise slowly creeps over the visitor, deadening the spirit. On the other hand, the Feywild seems charged with some magical quality that sharpens the senses and intensifies the experience of being there. This intensification is enchanting in a pleasant place, but in the darker locales in the Feywild it magnifies the sense of danger and excitement as if such places were waiting in suspense for something wild and sinister to happen.

Astral dominions are marked by a sort of emotional relativity in which the viewer's emotional state colors things he or she sees, hears, and feels. When the viewer is calm and familiar with what he or she is looking at, things seem supernaturally clear and obvious. When the viewer is fearful or angry, things take on a dark, confusing overtone. When the viewer is resolved, he or she sees things as he or she is determined to see them—so a devil's insidious lies seem obvious to someone determined to resist them. However, when the viewer is wrongly resolved and stubbornly clings to a mistaken impression, the “truth” of his or her position seems just as obvious.

Elemental realms possess a psychic signature of mass and changeableness. Physical objects feel heavier and seem bigger, even though they aren't really. At the same time, objects appear to move as the viewer expects them to move, as if the viewer's will is what causes the flow of a river or the drifting of earthmotes in the sky. The sensation is nothing more than a strange sort of déjà vu, and it has no real effect other than bemusing those unfamiliar with the Elemental Chaos and its domains.

## THE WORLD AXIS COSMOLOGY

Although various campaign settings may have their own arrangement of planes, the default planar structure of the D&D game is the World Axis cosmology. The World Axis cosmology is so named because the mortal world and its parallel planes form an axis or pivot point linking the two great infinite planes—the Astral Sea and the Elemental Chaos. The world is therefore the fulcrum where elemental forces and divine forces meet. This model provides a mix of benign, strange, wondrous, and sinister planes you can use in your game without the necessity of designing your own unique cosmology.

The World Axis cosmos consists of a core of five planes that have their own discrete existence, plus scores of dominions or realms that are features or locales of another plane. The planes are:

**The World:** The mortal plane of existence is the natural world. This world may be Abeir-Toril, Athas, Eberron, Kryn, Oerth, or a world of your own devising. This plane also encompasses the space between worlds.

**Parallel Planes:** Inextricably linked to the natural world are two parallel planes: the Feywild (or Plane of Faerie) and the Shadowfell (or Plane of Shadow). They are the closest of the planes to the mortal world.

**Fundamental Planes:** The mortal world and its parallel planes exist between two great infinite expanses—the Astral Sea and the Elemental Chaos. The Astral Sea is dotted with smaller planes called astral dominions, the Elemental Chaos with elemental realms.

**Astral Dominions:** All astral dominions are clearly delineated from the surrounding fundamental plane. These are planes in every sense of the term. Some are the domains of deities. Others were abandoned or had their inhabitants and structures destroyed long ago. Major astral dominions include:



- ◆ Arvandor, the Verdant Isles
- ◆ Carceri, the Red Prison
- ◆ Celestia, the Radiant Throne
- ◆ Chernoggar, the Iron Fortress
- ◆ Hestavar, the Bright City
- ◆ Kalandurren, the Darkened Pillars
- ◆ The Nine Hells of Baator
- ◆ Pandemonium, the Howling Depths
- ◆ Pluton, the Gray Waste
- ◆ The White Desert of Shom
- ◆ Tu'narath, City of the Githyanki
- ◆ Tytherion, the Endless Night

**Elemental Realms:** In the vastness of the Elemental Chaos lie scores of elemental realms. Some of these, such as the Abyss, are differentiated enough from the surrounding elemental maelstrom to be planes within a plane. Others are specific locales within the chaos. Major elemental realms include:

- ◆ The Abyss
- ◆ The City of Brass
- ◆ The Ninth Bastion
- ◆ Zerthadlun

**Demiplanes:** Demiplanes are places that exist outside the fundamental planes. Each was created by artifice at some point in the past, since they do not naturally occur. Many demiplanes exist, but only a few are known by more than a handful of individuals. The most famous demiplane is Sigil, City of Doors.

**Anomalous Planes:** Finally, the cosmology includes some planes whose exact nature is not clear. Major anomalous planes include:

- ◆ The Far Realm
- ◆ The Plane of Dreams

## CUSTOMIZING THE COSMOLOGY

The World Axis cosmology only represents one of many possible planar arrangements for a D&D campaign. It's the default setting, and all upcoming 4th Edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game products assume that the World Axis cosmology is the one you're using in your campaign. However, you can create your own cosmology for your campaign.

We recommend leaving the parallel planes and fundamental planes in place. Many spells, effects, and monsters are tied to the Astral Sea, Elemental Chaos, Feywild, and Shadowfell. If you eliminate these "structure" planes, you may create gaps in the game rules. For example, if you get rid of the Shadowfell or greatly alter it, the Shadow Walk ritual would have to be changed, too. Relatively minor alterations are possible. If you don't want a goddess of death on your plane of shadow, you can remove the Raven Queen and her palace of Letherna, and move a similar deity of death to the astral dominions. It won't interfere with any rules operations in the game.

When considering your cosmology, make sure you address the following:

- ◆ A place for good-aligned deities, angels, and immortals to come from.
- ◆ A place for devils and evil-aligned deities or angels to come from.
- ◆ A place for demons and elemental creatures to come from.
- ◆ A place for fey creatures to come from.
- ◆ A place for shadow creatures to come from.
- ◆ A way of getting from one plane to another.
- ◆ A way for spells or effects referring to astral, elemental, fey, or shadow planes or creatures to function.

One of the simplest adjustments to the cosmology is substituting the deities of the core pantheon for the deities of a specific campaign world. For example, you can remove Bane from Chernoggar and replace him with Tuern the Merciless, the god of war in your own home campaign.

The next step up in difficulty is adding or deleting specific astral dominions and elemental realms. The exact number, name, and inhabitants of the various astral dominions can be switched out to reflect the Dungeon Master's campaign preferences. This customization leaves the fundamental planes and parallel planes intact, so planar travel works pretty much as it does in the core cosmology. As an example, you could add the plane of Ysgard (or Asgard) and several of the ancient Norse deities to your cosmology. If Thor replaces Kord in your game—or even exists as a rival or ally of Kord—everything still works just fine.

If you are ambitious, you can overhaul the basic planar structure. In your game, the Elemental Chaos may not exist, and all elemental creatures come from the natural world. In your game, perhaps, all the astral dominions and major elemental realms are parallel planes. Therefore, venturing to the domains of deities is a matter of finding the correct "echo" of the mortal world.

# NAVIGATING THE PLANES

Although many places in the planes are impossibly distant from the mortal world, the mortal world is riddled with rifts in the fabric of reality and hidden planar doorways. Volcanoes in the mortal world spew magma and burning ash from fiery seas within the Elemental Chaos. Rune-graven doors of iron protect gates leading to the Nine Hells. Mystic archways forgotten in ruined temples lead to the dominions of the gods themselves. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of doors to these infinite realms lie scattered across the world.

Although the means may vary, the methods of planar travel fall into one of several broad types: portals, rituals, vessels, and phenomena.

## PORTALS

A **portal** is a door or conduit created by powerful magic that links two distant points. In a way, portals are like backdoors in the universe, allowing a traveler to bypass the obstacles of distance and boundaries by stepping through. Permanent portals are often called gates, but they are few and far between. Many portals lead to destinations within the same plane, providing an expeditious means of covering vast distances. Others lead travelers to wondrous realms such as the Feywild, the Shadowfell, and even astral dominions. Rare and hidden portals may lead to places beyond the cosmology, depositing travelers in the Far Realm or on alternate natural worlds. Portals can also access demiplanes such as the city of Sigil, the sanctums of

archmages, domains of demigods, or dimensional vaults created to hold unspeakable entities.

Portals are curiosities. They stand in defiance to the natural order of things. It's within the power of mortals to construct new portals, but short of the most powerful rituals, created portals are fleeting things, consuming vast amounts of magic and requiring arcane mastery to sustain. Thus, permanent portals are subjects of much heated debate between scholars and sages, and theories abound about their origins and purpose.

One of the most common beliefs about independent permanent portals is that they are the natural products of an incomplete and flawed creation. As the primordials gathered the protomatter that would become creation, the protomatter clumps held gaps and fissures—holes worming through the work and leading to unexpected places. Another theory suggests the portals are remnants of the ancient wars between the primordials and deities, reflecting a universe damaged by their catastrophic struggle. Some portals may have been created by upheavals in the natural order as primordials died or were imprisoned and sealed away for all time. Other possibilities exist, many of which are upheld by different philosophies found throughout the planes. For example, the Doomguard (see page 141) believe the planes are in a state of decay, and that independent permanent portals are either the cause or the result of this march toward oblivion.

## MOVING AROUND THE PLANES

Here's a quick overview of the most common methods for traveling from the world to different planes.

**Portal:** A portal is a magical doorway that instantly teleports the user somewhere else. Portals might go anywhere, and many require specific keys or actions in order to function. A portal is the easiest way to get to another plane, but you have to find a working portal that goes where you want to go.

**Crossing:** A crossing is a place where the veil between the worlds is thin. Crossings lead to the Feywild, the Shadowfell, and other parallel planes. Crossings sometimes activate and function much like portals leading to corresponding points on the parallel planes. They also mark places where travelers can use passage rituals to reach the parallel planes.

**Worldfall:** Large areas of the Feywild—for example, certain eladrin cities—sometimes shift to the natural world or back again. A traveler in the area of a worldfall is carried along when the area shifts to the other plane.

**Passage Rituals:** If you're at a crossing to the Feywild or Shadowfell, the ritual Fey Passage or Shadow Passage

can transport you into the parallel plane. Passage rituals are easy ways to move to another plane, but are limited because you need to find a suitable crossing point first.

**Transfer Rituals:** The ritual Astral Sojourn or Elemental Transference shifts a traveler to a random point in the Astral Sea or Elemental Chaos. You don't need any kind of crossing point. If you have to find something lost or hidden in the Astral Sea or the Elemental Chaos, you might need to use a transfer ritual.

**Teleport Rituals:** The rituals Planar Portal and True Portal create short-lived teleportation circles that can take travelers to specific locations on other planes. If you know exactly where you're going and you have the sigil sequence to get there, a teleport ritual is the fastest way to get there.

**Planar Vessel:** Magical ships such as *planar dromonds* or *spelljammers* have the ability to serve as navigation foci for the Plane Shift ritual. The Plane Shift ritual is a comparatively easy ritual that shifts the vessel and all its occupants into another plane.