

INTRODUCTION

Points of Light is the default setting of the new fourth edition, a place where civilization exists in isolated outposts scattered throughout a dangerous wilderness. The vision of *Points of Light* is specific: Civilization does not consist of widespread nations and empires, but small city-states or groups of villages that have banded together for mutual support and protection. Between outposts lies only monster-haunted wilderness dotted with the ruins of a once glorious past and darkened by the ever-present shadow of the unknown. I was inspired when I read about *Points of Light*, and I found myself thinking: How far can I extend this concept?

One of the most beloved early modules, published by TSR, is *Keep on the Borderlands*. It featured an enclosed wilderness map with a dozen or so encounters that tied together the Keep and the Caves of Chaos, and confined them to a small area that could be dropped into any DM's campaign.

Since *Keep on the Borderlands*, this aspect has seen little development. Hundreds of modules have been published with dungeons and other detailed locales, some so large that an entire campaign from 1st to 20th level can be spent exploring them. Many grand settings were published as well, but there has been precious little in between.

This product occupies the middle ground between the dungeon and the civilized world. It introduces four lands designed to fit into any DM's campaign with little or no work. Using these as a starting point, DMs can expand outward and send their players on new and exciting adventures.

OVERVIEW

Each of the four new lands presented in this product is designed to interpret the Points of Light concept in a different way. The people, monsters, and geographical features of each land provide a distinct flavor, and are designed to facilitate a certain type of campaign.

THE HEX MAP

Each land contains the following: a numbered hex map, an overview, an alphabetical listing of geography, a rumor chart, a wandering monster chart, and a series of detailed locales keyed by the hex number. The scale of each hex is marked on the map.

A grid of hexes, arranged in columns, make up the maps. The hex numbers are given in a four-digit format (1213, 0114, etc). For example, 0211 means that it is in the "02" column (the 2nd column of the map) and is 11 hexes down. Sometimes the hex number will not be clear because of the terrain in the hex. In this case you will need to count hexes.

This system of using hex numbers allows a DM to quickly look at where locales are on the map and what locales are near a location. This helps keep the map uncluttered and easy to read. Geographical features are composed of multiple hexes, and are labeled directly on the map. They are listed alphabetically in that map's chapter.

GAME SYSTEM

Since this product is generic fantasy, the stats are kept brief. Only class, level, or Hit Dice are given. You will need to look up precise stats and any other relevant game information for your game system.

A new type of holy warrior, called a myrmidon is mentioned in several places throughout this product. These champions of lawful evil deities should be treated as paladins with the opposite abilities (cause damage instead of cure damage, etc). They are sworn to the cause of their evil god in much the same manner as paladins are sworn to the cause of good.

ADVENTURING ADVICE

The format in which the four new lands are presented is designed to aid players in their exploration of the world. With a list of locales, it is easy for players to determine what is over the next hill, and what possible challenges they might face once they get there. In addition, since the players can largely be left to their own devices, this format allows the DM more time to focus on the core adventures in his campaign.

Not every hex location has a description, and the provided background information is only meant to be a loose framework. DMs are encouraged to add material and make the setting unique to their campaigns.

CAPSULE DESCRIPTIONS

Wildland

Set shortly after the fall of a large empire where civilization is on the brink, Wildland is the land most similar to the core concept of Points of Light. Historically speaking, the social and economic climate of Wildland are not dissimilar to the chaotic Dark Ages of Western Europe. Wildland is designed for beginning characters, giving them ample opportunity to explore the world, defend civilization, and rekindle the light against the monstrous hordes.

Southland

Southland is set on the frontier of a large kingdom. It is a relatively empty land, with only a few scattered outposts of civilization. There is plenty of room here for the players to carve out a realm of their own and push the frontiers of civilization outwards.

Borderland

Borderland lies on the frontier between two warring factions of an empire. For a decade, they have battled one another, and their continual warfare has devastated the region. Here the monsters are not nightmarish creatures of myth and legend, but man himself.

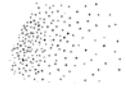
The Swamps of Acheron

The river Acheron snakes across the Astral Plane like a great, twisting serpent, widening eventually into a colossal swamp. The swamp is home to all manner of planar monstrosities, and is rumored to be the domain of the dark god Sarrath. Those unfortunate enough to be swept up by the mighty Acheron are often deposited here, forced to make what lives they can in the endless, stinking mire.

MASTER MAP KEY

Legend

Desert



Forest



Swamp



Escarpment



Paved
Road



Road



River



Trail



Castle



Keep



City



Town



Village



Hamlet



Mountains



Foothills



Hills



Ford



Lair



Ruin



WILDLAND

INTRODUCTION

There are a variety of events and circumstances that could produce a *Points of Light* setting. One example from our own history is the state of Western Europe after the fall of Rome in the 5th century, the oft-referenced “Dark Ages.” Wildland was designed using this historical era as a foundation.

BACKGROUND

The Bright Empire once dominated Darish De’Cour or “Land of the Great River.” When the Empire expanded into Darish De’Cour, two provinces were created—Darish, east of the river, and Tharvengia, west of the river. For centuries the Bright Empire prospered, standing as a pinnacle of learning, commerce, and religion. However, in the last century, two rival factions arose that would eventually tear the Empire asunder. The earthly followers of Delaquain, the Goddess of Honor and Justice, and Sarrath, the God of War and Order, long at odds with one another, eventually forced the Bright Empire into a ruinous civil war. Weakened by the internal struggle, the Empire could no longer defend its sprawling provinces from the predations of marauding barbarian tribes. This was especially true in the Tharvengian Province, and it was quickly lost.

The final downfall of the Bright Empire came when humanoid tribes (orcs, goblins, gnolls, etc.) attacked the barbarians living in the defeated province of Tharvengia, routed them, and drove them en masse across the Great River into Darish. After devastating the Darish, the barbarians moved into the Empire’s heartland to the east. In the battle known as The Shattering, the barbarians destroyed the last organized forces of the Bright Empire, ending the civil war not with a final victory but with a final collapse.

Ten years after the civil war, barbarians and humanoids dominate this region, and only a single town and a few villages remain as beacons of civilization. Shortly after the fall of the Bright Empire, the remaining forces of Delaquain helped the survivors, but their efforts were stymied when the followers of Sarrath seized control of Yellzurthi, the last town in Darish. The followers of Sarrath now use Yellzurthi as a base to launch attacks against what remains of Delaquain’s followers, striving for complete control of war-torn Darish De’Cour.

ADAPTATION NOTES

The Bright Empire can be any ruined empire in your campaign, and Delaquain and Sarrath can be replaced with any two gods that would likely be enemies. The length of time between the fall of the Empire and the “present” can be lengthened or shortened as you see fit. A longer period between the fall of the Bright Empire and the present might allow for more established civilized outposts, while campaigns taking place right after the fall would likely have to contend with an even more chaotic landscape. Lastly, any of the humanoid or barbarian tribes can be replaced with enemies of your choice.

GEOGRAPHY

Lake Bovil

Noted for its rich fishing grounds, this seven-mile-long lake lies on the southern edge of the Plains of Hegramoth. A swamp on the eastern edge of the lake presents some danger, as packs of stirges (1 HD) roam the mire in search of fresh blood.

