

Planetary Convulsionary Evolutionary 4e



Backdrop

The Past and its People

For thousands of years, the **Dragonborn** empire contended with **Mind Flayer** invaders from the moon and their enslaved **Githzerai** subjects for supremacy of the planet **Behemos**.

The Impact

First, the largest star in the sky...opened, a celestial eye presaging disaster. Then, an **asteroid impact** ended the world, breaking the backs of the Dragonborn Republic and the Mind Flayer “Empire of the Mind” and crumbling these super-cultures into a tapestry of microsocieties struggling to survive.

The Environment



The impact threw Behemos into chaos through tidal waves, elevated volcanic activity and super-storms. It also set off a chain of **magically accelerated evolution**, with monstrous animal and plant mutation occurring on the scale of months and years instead of millenia, the effects spreading from the asteroid’s point of impact, **Chicxulub**.

The Truth

Behemos is actually a psychic space-god in the form of a coiled, slumbering dragon. The moon is its ki focus or something. It’s locked in an astral agon with **Nemesis**, a planet-sized Beholder mistaken by the inhabitants of Behemos for a star. Chicxulub was the latest blow – and possibly the last – in their billion-year war.

The Strangers



What most inhabitants of Behemos call an asteroid was actually a space-weapon forged on Nemesis and guided by a crystalline artificial intelligence called **the Gate**. Since the impact, the scattered fragments of the Gate's consciousness have coalesced into **Shardminds** and other, less humanoid creatures newly awoken to a strange world.

Magic

Arcane, **Divine** and **Primal Power** are different models for the same fundamental forces: the **will-to-live** of space-gods like Behemos and Nemesis.

Before the impact, the Dragonborn and the Githzerai dug **dungeons** to harness this power: witting, surgical wounds designed to jumpstart Behemos' magical immune system.



The Dragonborn have a **rationalist** understanding of Behemos and have even cataloged the existence of Nemesis and other space-gods. The Empire-that-was raised the practice of dungeon-delving to the status of a science, primarily channeling magic power into items and Rituals.



The Githzerai have a **narrative and religious** understanding of dungeons. Since their liberation, Githzerai have sent heroic individuals into ritual labyrinths to undergo visionary quests and emerge as **living gods** and culture-heroes.

Every divinity in the *Player's Handbook* is a real, living individual, and anyone who wields **Divine** power has had some kind of personal contact with one of them. The language of Divine power is narrative, emotional and personal.

Warlocks and other **Arcane** characters “tune in” to the awareness of space-gods like Behemos or Nemesis. The language of Arcane power is rigidly systematic but prone to sudden rupture by divine inspiration, like a psalm in the middle of a physics equation. It concerns itself with proofs, frequencies, antennae and waves.

Primal power is new in the world since the impact: the barely-controlled invocation of Behemos's immune response to Chicxulub and resultant accelerated evolution. The language of Primal power is intuitive, animalistic and gestural.

Situation

A tapestry of extreme microclimates with fiercely determined microsocieties to match. Hunters pursue constantly mutating lizard mammoths across volcanic landscapes sizzling against glaciers that are actually flash-frozen tidal waves. Newly formed Githzerai polities weather the assaults of holdout Dragonborn legionnaires from tangled jungles that bloom a different color each dawn. Everywhere, people hold fast against the strange beings outside the walls and the even stranger evolutionary magicks loose in their own bodies.

Creating Characters

The player characters are by definition dangerous weirdo outsiders – even the most mundane is in telepathic communion with a spacefaring planet-god or empowered to rip holes in space-time by an incarnate myth. The immediate situation is extremely labile at this point: you can *fucking bring it* when creating characters and make the intense, trippy fantasy protagonists that you want to see.

Character Races

Choose one...



Dragonborn

Special backstory constraint: Whatever variety of Dragonborn you were (citizen of the Snakerib Urb, dragonblood vintner, Emperor of Melniboné), you are, by definition, the last.



Githzerai



Shardmind

Character Classes

Choose one...

Seeker (Primal Controller)

Warden (Primal Defender)

Warlord (Martial Leader)

...and hybridize with one.*

Warlock (Arcane Striker)

Sorcerer (Arcane Striker)

Avenger (Divine Striker) [Githzerai only]

**remember that hybrid Features/Powers often only apply to Features/Powers from the same class – so you won't get the damage buff from Warlock's Curse when using a Warden attack Power*

Other Character Features

Don't roll for Ability Scores. Pick one of the stat lines on p. 18 of *The Player's Handbook*.

Choose a Racial Background for your character.

PCs start at 3rd level.

Please feel free to use "Multiclassing" and "Skill Powers."

Pick any “Armor and Shields,” “Weapons,” or pieces of “Adventuring Gear” you like from the appropriate sections of Chapter 7 in *The Player’s Handbook*. In addition, wielders of Arcane or Divine Power start with +1 magical implements appropriate to their class.

Before Session 1

In terms of authorities, this will be pretty familiar.

You have backstory authority over your character. You can freely invent materials into your character’s backstory and (so long as it doesn’t contradict something in this document) the backdrop of the game. Or you can include no backstory. Either is fine – you’re not going to break anything that the impact at Chicxulub hasn’t already broken.

Before play I’ll look at your characters and distribute a number of magical items among the party appropriate to this number of third-level characters.

When we start the first session, I’ll riff about the immediate situation, what your characters’ know, etc. You will then each declare a Major Quest.

I’ll look at your characters, my characters, the location, the Quests and anything else, then hard frame you all into the first scene. Then, we can just play.

After Session 1

4e’s “Retraining Rules” in *The Player’s Handbook* are very generous in terms of revising your character as you play. However, I don’t have deep knowledge of this game yet, and you may realize that a choice you made in character creation is hampering your ability to have fun. You can use a “free” Retraining after sessions 1-2, if you want.