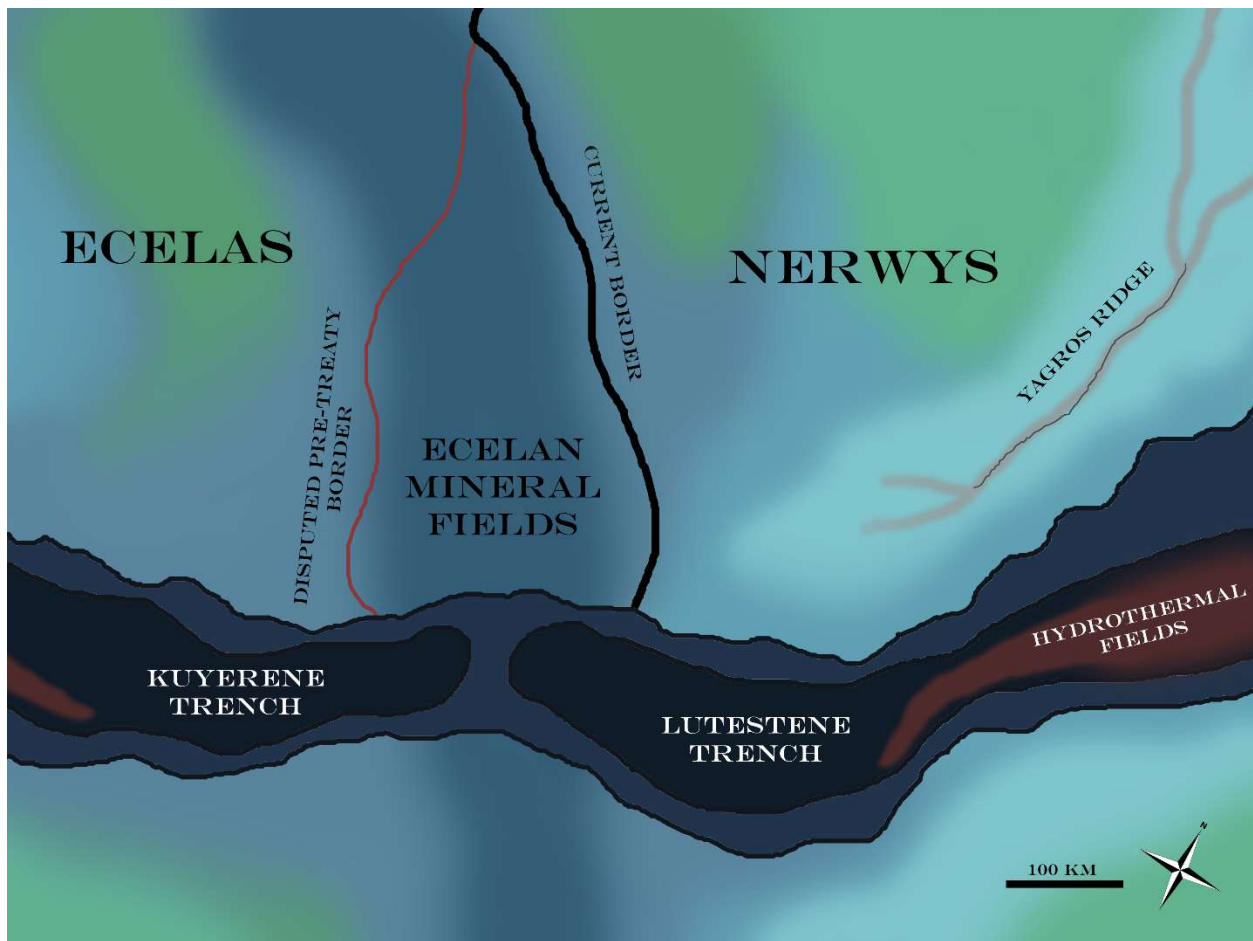


Worldbuilding Sample - The Deep King

World & Concept developed by El Schaefer

Setting: The planet Olia, fully enveloped by a worldwide tropical saltwater ocean, home to two races of merpeople, the tentacled cecaelia who live in the 50-500m depth range (the Reefs), and the eel-like elomea 1000-2000m down (the Trenches). More specifically, a region at the edge of the northeast occidental tectonic plate – above lie two cecaelian kingdoms, mountainous Nerwys and lowland Ecelas, while the bordering Lutestene-Kuyerene trench houses elomea communes, comparable in social and technical development to 14th century Earth.



Reef Biome: Due to the planet's proximity to its sun, waters in the 50-500m range maintain tropical temperatures. Olia has two moons – one smaller and closer which circles the planet twice daily, and one larger and more distant with a monthly circuit. These moons' tidal effects, along with changing temperatures causing water circulation, create oft-shifting currents. Undersea fields, hills, and mountains house thick kelp forests, lush seagrass beds, and reefs of coral and siliceous sponges. Schools of fish fly through the waters, rays and chelonian geruti skim the dunes, and squat crustaceans and mollusks burrow into the sand and rock. Most creatures develop cool, bright colorations to blend with their surroundings.

Cecaelia: Evolving from cuttlefish-like cephalopods, cecaelia have humanoid upper bodies which split into 6 muscular octopus-like tentacles from the sternum down (which help them to navigate the changing currents and open, varied geography of the Reefs), all covered in a smooth, hairless skin. These merfolk live in the Reef biome – above 50m they risk lightheadedness, sunburn, heat exhaustion, and shocks from electrical storms, while at 500m they begin to feel adverse effects of the high pressures, which become crushingly fatal beyond 750m. Cecaelia do have some bones in the central body mass to protect their vitals and assist in buoyancy, but most body structures are cartilaginous and/or muscular. Cecaelia have a biphasic sleep pattern, sleeping through the heat of midday and cold midnight, as well as the tidal lowering associated with these times. They have discerning color vision evolved to spot both predators and prey, and are highly physically aware in order to manage their many limbs and adjust to the ever-shifting currents.

Society: The cecaelia kingdoms of Nerwys and Ecelas are governed by semi-feudalist proto-mercantilist monarchies, with distinct hierarchies of nobility, scholars/clergy, merchants, and peasants. Cecaelian society is overall more individualistic, focused on personal achievement and status. Nerwys is built on industry and technology, mining and refining metals and minerals mined from the Yagros ridge, while Ecelas is more agrarian, its lowland plains being suited to farming. The two kingdoms have historically had a highly contentious relationship.

Trench biome: Waters below 1000m, unreachable by sunlight and under immense pressure, are consistently near freezing temperatures. Thermohaline circulation causes consistent uni-directional currents along the trenches. Steep stony ridges and cliffs border trench beds of sand and pebbles. Fields of hydrothermal vents are dotted with iron-shelled weld-worms, the chemical effluent carried on the current to sustain beds of chemosynthetic algae. Odd-bodied sharks and enormous jellies stalk the waters, bony fish and seahorses hide in rock shelves and weblike corals, and bottom-dwelling isopods and crustaceans grow to great sizes. Creatures develop reddish pigmentation to blend in the low light, if they develop any color, or even opacity, at all, and many bioluminesce.

Elomea: While sharing a common ancestor with the cecaelia, elomea have evolved to suit the trench environment – their long, thin, eel-like lower halves are suited to the high pressures, constant currents, and narrow spaces of the Trenches. Above 1000m, they begin to experience adverse effects similar to altitude sickness or the bends, which become fatal at 750m, while below 2000m they encounter compressive effects (much like cecaelia would if they tried to enter the Trenches). Elomea are bonier than cecaelia, with a full-body skeleton maintaining their structure at their habitable depth. Without sunlight or tides to mark time, these merfolk have a highly developed internal clock, and a ~2 day sleep cycle (40 hours awake, 16 sleeping, with days on Olia lasting 28 hours).

Society: The Lutestene-Kuyerene elomea commune of the is made up of a democratic federation of settlements (each largely centered on local industry) which run along the trench. Elomean society is largely collectivistic, focused on the survival of the group and respectful collaboration with each other and the environment. Fields of hydrothermal vents in the northern Lutestene are harvested for chemical and mineral resources, the effluent from which is carried on the currents and enriches the farmlands of the Kuyerene.

The L-K Divide: In 317 SL, cecaelian mining efforts on the Nerwyn-Ecelan border triggered a tectonic fault disruption which upturned the trenches, a 30km barrier of rock separating the Lutestene and Kuyerene arms. This devastation to elomean society and their subsequent unsuspecting call to the cecaelia for aid would define the next 30 years of these nations' history.

Timetable: An overview of the contextual and contemporary politics of Nerwys and its surrounding territories in the lead up to the Elomea Uprising.

	Royal Family	Nerwyn Politics	Ecelas	Trenches (Lutestene and Kuyere)	Science and Industry	Ecology and Environment
316 SL	Crown Prince Jes marries Lady Rahiya		Peace treaty between Nerwys and Ecelas		Mineral fields at the border granted to Ecelas	
317 SL	Crown Prince Rauss born	Keros abdicates, Jes crowned king		Lutestene reach out to Nerwys for aid		The L-K Divide
318 SL			Ecelas refuses to aid L-K relief			
319 SL	Princess Behrita born				Permanent communication lines between Lutestene and Nerwys	
320 SL				Lutestene-Nerwyn trade opened	Nerwyn industrial boom	
321 SL		Lutestene trench becomes Nerwyn territory	Nerwyn-Ecelan tension		Nerwyn-Lutestene pressurization research	
322 SL	Prince Sephtos born, Queen Consort Rahiya dies			L-K relief placed on hold		
323 SL	King Jes weds Princess Meodred		Ecelas-Nerwys alliance			
324 SL					Negotiation site established	

325 SL	Keros dies; Princess Noeh born			Lutestene- Kuyere communication		
326 SL			Ecelan mining slows		Cause of the L- K Divide discovered and suppressed	Ecelan mineral fields near depletion
327 SL		Nerwys exerts greater influence over Lutestene territory		Nominal renewal of L-K aid		
328 SL						
329 SL				Nerwys gains trade power		
330 SL				L-K connection efforts dry up once again		
331 SL			Kuyere refuse trade with Ecelan			
332 SL		Nerwys uses trench for waste disposal				Nerwyn waste begins to negatively impact trench ecology
333 SL		Nerwys imposes quotas on Lutestene	Ecelan attempts to annex Kuyere		Kuyere discover L-K cause	
334 SL		Nerwys refuses communication with Lutestene		Limited trade between L-K	Lutestene recycle Nerwyn waste	
335 SL		Princess Behrita engaged to Duke Leureus		Rebel groups begin to form		

336 SL			Duke Leureus dies in trenches	Rebel groups act up		
337 SL				Adalus joins the rebellion	Lustestene chemists study harmful Nerwyn waste	Ecological damage in trenches discovered
338 SL	Crown Prince Rauss engaged to Duchess Venoria	Nerwys refuses marital alliance with Lutestene			Elomea pressure suits prototyped	
339 SL	Crown Prince Rauss weds Venoria		Ecelas and Nerwys discuss renewing marital alliance			
340 SL				Adalus named “Deep King”		
341 SL						
342 SL		Prince Sephtos engaged to Princess Denikhe				
343 SL	Princess Hereba born					
344 SL		Princess Noeh captured		Elomea rebels strike against Nerwys		

Story Concept: Princess Noeh Phodossten of Nerwys is dissatisfied, frustrated, and downright bored of what everyone insists is her perfect life. What was the point of a royal education, of nurturing her political acumen, if she’ll never be allowed to use it? What use is that to her – the king’s fourth child, a girl, born to his foreigner second wife – in a golden age where peace and prosperity are already achieved? But when she is abducted by elomea rebels and brought before their mysterious leader, the so-called “Deep King,” she’ll get her chance to use her skills – and come to learn just how imperfect her world truly is.