The world in one promise

Choose a clear experience and a small starting scope. A compelling world begins with a promise a reader can feel.

The experience

What should a reader or player feel? Name two qualities and one experience you want to avoid.

The premise in one sentence

In a place where ___, a person or group must ___, but ___ makes the cost unavoidable.

A place

One location that makes this world tangible.

A custom

An everyday habit that reveals a value.

A rule

Something people must work around.

The question beneath the setting

What disagreement can reasonable people have here? Give at least two defensible answers.

Start here

Name the first place, the people in focus, and the time span of the first finished piece.

Leave offstage

What can remain unknown for now? Keep distant history and geography small enough to manage.

Before you continue: Your premise suggests a choice, a cost, and a place to begin. It does not need to explain the whole world.

A premise put to work

Free sample: a completed example and a small exercise. Standalone material, unrelated to Astralith canon.

The Lantern Ferry: one clear promise

At Bracken Ferry, twelve shore lamps reveal a stone path across a dangerous river. The lamps burn the same reed oil that households need for winter. When a flood approaches, an apprentice must challenge the council's cargo priority before the reserve is spent.

Notice the cost

The crossing consumes winter fuel. What resource or relationship could make a useful power costly in your world?

Notice the choice

Two people need the same scarce opportunity. What sincere goals could come into conflict in your premise?

Three anchors that make the premise tangible

Place: the Lamp House, where the fuel ledger and release order are kept. Custom: families return empty oil bottles at dusk. Rule: all twelve lamps must stay lit, and a crossing window consumes twelve bottles. Each detail can affect a scene.

Let the choice leave evidence

Nessa helps the medicine cross by arranging temporary storage for some grain. The alternative is earned: the loft exists, its space is limited, and people must carry the sacks. Some grain is still lost. A later scene can show the shortage and the changed trust between Nessa, Oren, and Mara.

Try one revision

Change the scarce resource in your own premise. What choice changes with it? Keep the cause and consequence connected.

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